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| <b>Institution: University of South Wales</b>  |
| <b>Unit of Assessment: D29</b>   |
| <b>Title of case study:</b> Republishing Welsh Women's Classics  |
| <p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Since 1997 Professor Jane Aaron has been the founding and continuing editor of the series 'Welsh Women's Classics', published by the independent Welsh feminist press Honno with the aim of bringing back into print virtually forgotten texts, prefaced by scholarly introductions. Twenty-two volumes have appeared in the series to date, five of which Aaron edited and introduced. Their impact on the reading public and on higher educational institutions in Wales has been considerable; far more Welsh women writers – the majority of them published in the series – are taught, researched and read today than in the mid-1990s.</p>   |
| <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Professor Aaron started her researches on Welsh women writers in the late 1980s; she has to date published two monographs, 13 book chapters, 17 journal articles and 33 biographical dictionary entries on the subject. Her pioneering studies have recovered an important and hitherto neglected body of writing by Welsh women, and they have been well received. Both her monographs have won major Welsh literary prizes, and she has lectured extensively on Welsh women's writing, to academic audiences (63 conference papers/lectures), to historical societies and at literary festivals in Wales (27 talks/lectures), and on the media (12 tv and radio talks/interviews). Professor Aaron also co-edits the University of Wales Press' <i>Writers of Wales</i> series, with particular responsibility for the volumes on female authors, and in 2006 she founded the same press's interdisciplinary series <i>Gender Studies in Wales</i>. Nine volumes have appeared in this series to date, four of which have been devoted to literary themes, with two further literary titles currently in press.</p> <p>The first publication in that series, Aaron's <i>Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales</i> (2007), for which she was awarded an AHRC research grant, discussed the work of over a hundred writers, most of them out of print and the majority long forgotten. Through its use of postcolonial and gender theory to explore and articulate the complex reasons for the particular neglect of Welsh women's writing in English, it established a context which enabled a more accurate and nuanced understanding and appreciation of Welsh women's writing generally. It also pushed back the historical boundaries of the canon of Welsh writing in English, correcting the previous critical consensus that no significant Anglophone Welsh literature was published before the twentieth century, and exploding the widely-held notion that, in the words of the influential critic Gwyn Jones, 'the Anglo-Welsh genre has tended to be a masculine affair' (G. Jones, ed., <i>Classic Welsh Short Stories</i>, OUP, 1971, rptd. 1992, x).</p> <p>Her earlier 1998 Welsh-language monograph on the portrayal of Welsh women in nineteenth-century literature was published just after Aaron was awarded a Professorship at USW. Since moving to live and work in the Valleys, she has also researched and published on the twentieth-century female authors of the south Wales industrial townships, e.g. the novelist Menna Gallie. Women writers of the Welsh border country, e.g. Margiad Evans and Hilda Vaughan, became another area of research interest, on which she published in her co-edited volume <i>Gendering Border Studies</i> (2010), an international and interdisciplinary essay collection focussing on gender issues at global borders.</p> <p>International interest in her work is also evinced by the fact that she has twice taught Welsh women's writing modules at the University of Tübingen as Visiting Professor (in 1997 and 2004), and lectured on the topic in France, Germany and the United States. Her work has been published in German and Croatian journals and, through UWP's affiliation with the University of Chicago Press, it has also been disseminated in the States. At USW, her scholarship has been central to one of the most vibrant research areas in the English Unit, inspiring colleagues and emerging scholars – including Diana Wallace, Claire Flay and Alison Fauvre – to research in this area and produce editions for Honno's series.</p> |

### 3. References to the research

**Key outputs** from the research described in the previous section:

- *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), viii + 248 pp. ISBN 978 0 7083 2060 0
- *Pur fel y Dur: Y Gymraes yn Llên Menywod y Bedwaredd Garrif ar Bymtheg* [Pure as Steel: The Welsh woman in nineteenth-century women's writing] (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1998), x + 249 tud. ISBN 0 7083 1481 3
- 'Taking sides: Power-play on the Welsh border in early twentieth-century women's writing', in Jane Aaron, Henrice Altink and Chris Weedon, eds., *Gendering Border Studies* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), pp. 127-141. ISBN 978-0-7083-2170-6
- 'Valleys' Women Writing', in Alyce von Rothkirch and Daniel Williams, eds, *Beyond the Difference: Welsh Literature in Comparative Contexts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), pp. 84-96. ISBN 07083 1886 X
- "Women in a Wales without miners", in Eberhard Bort and Neil Evans, eds, *Networking Europe: Essays on Regionalism and Social Democracy* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 111-127. ISBN 0-8532-3941-X
- 'Zene u potrazi za velškim identitetom' ['Women in search of a Welsh identity'], in *Kolo: Casopis Matice hrvatske* [Croatian literary journal], 2 (2000), 301-311. ISSN 1331 0992

#### Evidence for the quality of the research:

- *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity* won the Roland Mathias Prize in 2009, and was a leading output in USW's 2008 RAE submission. Favourable reviews for *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales* include: Louise Miskell, *Planet*, 187 (2008), 106-7; Kirsti Bohata, *New Welsh Review*, 80 (Summer, 2008), 25-33; Cathryn A. Charnell-White, *Taliesin*, 133 (2008), 143-145.
- *Pur fel y Dur: Y Gymraes yn Llên Menywod y Bedwaredd Garrif ar Bymtheg* won the Ellis Griffith Prize in 1999, and was in USW's 2001 RAE submission. Favourable reviews for *Pur fel y Dur* include: Deirdre Beddoe, *New Welsh Review*, 46 (1999), 89-90; Ruth McElroy, *Planet*, 136 (1999), 102-103; Huw M. Edwards, *Taliesin*, 107 (1999), 119-122.
- 'Taking Sides' is included in REF2014 outputs.

### 4. Details of the impact

As the founding series editor of 'Welsh Women's Classics', which up to 2011 was entitled 'Honno Classics', Aaron (with Katie Gramich as co-editor of the series from 1997-2008) has ensured the wider recognition and appreciation of Welsh women's achievement as writers, internationally as well as in Wales itself. In 1997 the works of virtually none of the authors reprinted in the series were in the public domain and they had not been for generations. Today sales of 'Welsh Women's Classics' total over 14,000; best sellers amongst them include the short story anthology *A View Across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales 1850-1950* edited by Aaron (1,648 sales, and currently on the English literature syllabus at the universities of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea); a poetry anthology, *Welsh Women's Poetry 1460-2001* eds. Katie Gramich and Catherine Brennan (1,369 sales); and, among the individual novels, Menna Gallie's *The Small Mine* (1,531 sales) and Amy Dillwyn's *The Rebecca Rioter* (1,282 sales). While these figures indicate its reach, the significance of the series is evinced by public recognition of its appeal as an unique and pioneering project, and by its influence, in particular, on the teaching and researching of Welsh writing in English at the higher education institutions of Wales. (In the data provided below, care has been taken entirely to exclude all reference to teaching, research and publishing by USW staff and students.)

In fact, a quiet revolution has occurred in Welsh writing in English studies. During the twentieth century, very few women authors were included in its canon; in 1989, for example, the only Welsh woman writer taught in Aberystwyth University's English department, one of the few which at the time offered Welsh writing in English modules, was the Welsh-language novelist Kate Roberts, taught in translation. Since Honno commenced operations, however, the ratio of women authors to men on the syllabuses has changed dramatically and continues to increase. 16 Welsh

## Impact case study (REF3b)

female authors featured on English literature syllabuses at Aberystwyth, Bangor, Swansea and Cardiff universities in 2010 compared to 20 male authors, and 33 women to 44 men in 2013. Of course, these changes are in part the result of the long-term effect of the second wave of the feminist movement, but female-authored texts could not have been taught had they not been readily available. Of the 33 women writers taught in 2013, 21 had been reprinted in the Welsh Women's Classics series.

By now that teaching has also affected the topics chosen for postgraduate research. Before this century, theses on Welsh women writers listed in the National Library of Wales' catalogue were so few they could be counted on one hand, but of the nine PhD theses on Welsh writing in English (excluding those by USW students) listed from 2008-2013, three were on male authors, two on women writers (both novelists reprinted in Welsh Women's Classics), and four included chapters on both sexes' writings. Published criticism in the field has also been marked by a similar shift. In the mid 1990s records indicate that annually the ratio of critical studies on Welsh Anglophone women authors in relation to men was less than 1:10, with 4 outputs on women writers published in 1994 compared to 61 on men, and 9 outputs on women to 91 on men in 1995. By 2008, however, that ratio had changed to 23 women to 65 men, while in 2009 it improved again to 22 women (17 of whom had been reprinted in the Honno series) to 45 men, and 24 studies comparing work by both sexes.

Lay readers too have welcomed the series. Each of the volumes has been favourably reviewed in print and/or broadcast media; and public bodies with responsibility for the arts in Wales, like the Welsh Arts Council and Literature Wales, have been vociferous in their praise. The series has proved particularly popular with book club members throughout the country, with Honno's move to digitalize all its Classics also being welcomed. For a variety of historical reasons Welsh culture was until very recently more than usually dominated by male voices, a bias much exacerbated by the fact that so few of the works by women who did succeed, against the odds, in becoming published writers were kept in print. But readers today want their literature to represent as fully as possible the heterogeneous diversity of past and present Welsh life. The Welsh Women's Classics series is helping to correct the gender imbalance, and provide a varied array of role models for the next generation of prospective Welsh women writers. Its impact in terms of its national significance for Wales has been profound and is likely to prove long-lasting.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. The titles and sales (indicated in square brackets) of the series to date are as follows:
  - Jane Aaron, ed. *A View across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales 1850-1950* (1999, rptd. 2003) [1,648]
  - Jane Aaron and Ursula Masson, eds, *The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage* (2007) [296]
  - Elizabeth Andrews, *A Woman's Work is Never Done* (1957), ed. Ursula Masson (2006) [657]
  - Amy Dillwyn, *The Rebecca Rioter* (1880), ed. Katie Gramich (2001, rptd 2003) [1,282]
  - -----, *A Burglary* (1883), ed. Alison Favre (2009) [262]
  - -----, *Jill* (1884), ed. Kirsti Bohata (2013) [144].
  - Dorothy Edwards, *Winter Sonata* (1928), ed. Claire Flay (2011) [196]
  - Margiad Evans, *The Wooden Doctor* (1933), ed. Sue Asbee (2005) [379]
  - Menna Gallie, *Strike for a Kingdom* (1959), ed. Angela John (2003, rptd. 2010) [857]
  - -----, *The Small Mine* (1962), ed. Jane Aaron (2000; rptd 2003, 2010) [1,531]
  - -----, *Travels with a Duchess* (1968), ed. Angela John (1996; rptd. 2010) [669]
  - -----, *You're Welcome to Ulster* (1970), ed. Angela John and Claire Connolly (2010) [294].
  - Katie Gramich and Catherine Brennan, eds, *Welsh Women's Poetry 1460-2001* (2003) [1,369]
  - Eiluned Lewis, *Dew on the Grass* (1934), ed. Katie Gramich (2006) [578]
  - -----, *The Captain's Wife* (1943), ed. Katie Gramich (2008) [516]
  - Allen Raine, *A Welsh Witch* (1902), ed. Jane Aaron (2013) [156]
  - -----, *Queen of the Rushes* (1906), ed. Katie Gramich (1998) [686]

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- Bertha Thomas, *Stranger within the Gates* (1912), ed. Kirsti Bohata (2008) [270]
- Lily Tobias, *Eunice Fleet* (1933), ed. Jasmine Donahaye (2004) [576]
- Hilda Vaughan, *Here Are Lovers* (1926), ed. Diana Wallace (2012) [215]
- -----, *Iron and Gold* (1948), ed. Jane Aaron (2002) [603]
- Jane Williams, *Betsy Cadwaladr: A Balaclava Nurse* (1857), ed. Deirdre Beddoe (1987; rptd 2007) [838]

2. To corroborate the list of titles and sales given above, contact the editor of Honno Press [1]. For general information on Welsh Women's Classics, see

<[http://www.honno.co.uk/chwilio.php?func=pori\\_adran&adran=Classic](http://www.honno.co.uk/chwilio.php?func=pori_adran&adran=Classic)>.

3. For the reading lists for Welsh writing in English modules, see the relevant undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea universities. The syllabuses for 2013 are currently on the universities' websites.

4. For Welsh writing in English postgraduate theses from 2008-2013, see the 'Theses Collection Wales' in the National Library of Wales catalogue, <<http://cat.llgc.org.uk/cgi-bin/gw/chameleon?lng=en&skin=theses>>. The catalogue numbers for the theses referred to are as follows: 2011/0375, 2011/0883, 2011/0770 (on male authors only); 2013/0256; 2012/0332; 2011/0710; 2010/0931 (comparative, including chapters on male and female authors); 2009/0236; NLW ex 2595 (on female authors only). That last listed thesis, on Margiad Evans' *The Wooden Doctor* (reprinted by Honno in 2005), was awarded a PhD from the University of Rennes, an indicator of the international reach of the series.

5. For the data on publishing, see the annual bibliographies of criticism on Welsh writing in English for 1994 and 1995 in the journal *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, vols. 2 and 3 (1996 and 1997); for the 2008 and 2009 figures see the online 'Bibliography of scholarly work in the field of Welsh writing in English, 2006-2010' on

<<http://ijwww.wordpress.com/bibliography-of-scholarly-work-in-the-field-of-welsh-writing-in-english/2010-2/>>, the *International Journal of Welsh Writing in English's* website,

6. To corroborate the esteem with which the series is held by the Welsh Arts Council, see, for example, Professor Dai Smith, Chair of the Welsh Arts Council on

<[http://thelibraryofwales.com/low/english/news\\_archive-62640.asp](http://thelibraryofwales.com/low/english/news_archive-62640.asp)>: 'The women's press Honno [...] have done terrific work in bringing women's literature back into print'

7. To corroborate the esteem with which the series is held by Literature Wales see, for example, <<http://www.literaturewales.org/archive/i/138660/n/51/>>: 'Honno Press has reprinted, in its Classics series, four terrific novels by Menna Gallie. This [...] helps to reassert Gallie's position in the Welsh literary canon and offers readers and scholars fascinating and complex texts with which to engage.'

8. For favourable media reviews see, for example, the Welsh national newspaper, the *Western Mail's* interviews and columns on the Honno classics over the years (e.g. 27:04:13, 3:11:12) and its serialization of Eiluned Lewis's *Dew on the Grass* when it was republished by Honno in 2006; or a well-informed review article on Bertha Thomas, Amy Dillwyn, Allen Raine and the series' three anthologies in *The Latchkey: Journal of New Women's Studies*, iv (2012), <<http://www.oscholars.com/Latchkey/Latchkey4/br/honno.htm>>; or Clare Morgan's review of Hilda Vaughan's *Here Are Lovers* in the *TLS*, 19:10:12.

9. For book club enthusiasm, see for example a member of the Bangor 'Reading Wales' book club, on *A View across the Valley*. 'You only have to scan the author biographies at the back of the book to understand how Welsh women writers have been neglected over the past 200 years [...] in many cases there has been no republication of the authors' work [...] If it wasn't for Jane Aaron's edited collection I would probably never have come across these unique short stories'

(<<http://readingwales.wordpress.com>>); or, from another reader, 'liking' Vaughan's *Here Are Lovers*, 'I wouldn't have thought of reading this if it hadn't been one of the book choices for our local reading group, but did find it fascinating.' <<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Lovers-Honno-Classics-Welsh-Womens/dp/1906784442>>

10. For the series' over-all impact, see, for example, *New Welsh Review*, 80 (2008) 29: 'It is difficult to imagine a Welsh literary landscape without the Honno Classics series.'