



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

**British Library of  
Political and  
Economic Science**

# **LSE Library Report to Friends of the Women's Library Annual General Meeting**

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Martin Reid, Deputy Director of LSE Library

Maria Bell, Learning Support Services Manager; Dr Debbie Challis, Education and Outreach Officer.

Dr Gillian Murphy, Curator; Anna Towlson, Archives and Special Collections Manager

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## Report from LSE Library

### LSE developments

The new School strategy, LSE 2030, was officially launched in April. It includes three priorities areas for development:

1. Educate for impact
2. Research for the world
3. Develop LSE for everyone.

The 'Educate for impact' strand includes explicit commitments to embed enquiry based learning and research practices at all levels in the curriculum, which provides the Library with excellent opportunities to extend the use of archival materials in teaching. We have already begun seizing these opportunities and have organised a joint workshop with the LSE Teaching & Learning Centre for teaching staff to explore the use object based learning in their programmes and hope the Women's Library will have a central role in these developments.

As part of the commemoration of the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, LSE has officially renamed three of its key campus buildings after central figures in the British suffrage movement - Pankhurst, Fawcett and Pethick-Lawrence Houses – on Clements' Inn. The newly-titled buildings were unveiled in a ceremony by HRH The Countess of Wessex on Friday 23 November 2018. The event also featured contributions from author, activist and former LSE student, Caroline Criado-Perez, alongside former LSE visiting professor and great-granddaughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, Dr Helen Pankhurst. In advance of the renaming event, LSE Pro-Director for Research Professor Julia Black commented, "LSE is closely connected with the suffrage movement in many ways: with our history, our location, the extensive material of our library and our wide-ranging research into inequality. We are delighted to be able to strengthen this connection further, while celebrating a landmark moment in gender equality and political history."

Photographs from the renaming reception can be viewed on [LSE Flickr gallery](#).



## Women's Library developments

### Acquisitions

We continue to actively develop the collections.

#### Suffrage acquisitions:

We reported last year on the acquisition of a number of rare suffrage items, including Emily Wilding Davison souvenir napkin and WSPU arrow brooch.

- This year saw the purchase of 12 more original suffrage items for the collection, including 5 generously funded by the Friends for the collection. Highlights include:
  - Women's Freedom League badge, ribbon and sash
  - rare copy of *The Child*, an autobiography by actress and suffrage campaigner Maud Arncliffe Sennett (Friends purchase)
  - several items from suffragette Isabel Seymour collection, including her minutes of an early WSPU meeting at Clement's Inn (Friends purchase)
- We also purchased some modern objects from Gillian Wearing's Suffragette City collection, inspired by the suffrage movement, including a limited edition embroidered handkerchief and a tea-set.
- We are very grateful to Diana Dollery for donating a WSPU bow brooch on the occasion of her Diamond wedding anniversary.

#### Additions to existing collections

- British Federation of Women Graduates: additional papers from the BFWG offices
- St Joans International Alliance: correspondence and papers created/collected by Helen Stewart, a former SJIA President
- Letter from Claire Madden to her daughter Etain, outlining her commitment to feminism and explaining why she chose not to marry. The letter was written in August 1944, and left with a solicitor to be given to Etain in the event of Claire's death. But Etain predeceased her mother and the letter appears never to have been sent.

#### New collections

- Elizabeth Brunner, Lady Brunner (1904-2003): papers re the National Federation of Women's Institutes, Keep Britain Tidy and Women's Group on Public Welfare
- Doreen Stephens (1912-2001): unpublished autobiography including involvement in Women's Liberal Federation, Married Women's Association and the Equal Pay for Equal Work campaign, as well as her work as a television producer and executive specialising in women's and children's programmes.

#### Provisionally agreed, aiming to transfer this summer

- British Housewives League: papers, mainly 1970s onwards. Founded in 1947 to defend family life and campaign against rationing and rising food prices. Since the 1970s best known for its opposition to Britain's membership of the European Union.
- The Women's Council: papers. Founded in 1931 as the Women's Advisory Council on Indian Questions, with the aim of bringing British women's organisations in England into touch with the Indian women's movement and in particular the activities of the All-India Women's Conference. After India attained independence in 1947 the Council focussed on supporting women in South East Asia in their efforts to improve education and social welfare.

## Catalogues and cataloguing

### Online catalogue

We launched our new online catalogue on 6 June 2019. This includes the catalogues for The Women's Library archives and museum collections, alongside catalogue for all our other archives collections. Researchers can choose to focus their search on The Women's Library collections or to search across the collections in their entirety. The new catalogue also features new branding and a streamlined search interface, developed in line with user feedback. We are grateful to members of the Friends for their help with usability testing.

### New catalogues

The following catalogues have all been completed and are now available to search and browse on our online archives catalogue.

- Jill Craigie
- Fawcett Society
- Elizabeth Brunner
- Alice Abadam

Catalogues for British Federation of Women Graduates and St Joan's International Alliance have also been updated to include new acquisitions.

## Digital collections

We have published the first two tranches of women's suffrage publications on our Digital Library. Items now available include suffrage pamphlets from the Cavendish Bentinck collection, suffrage society magazines and suffrage society annual reports. The third and final tranche of material, including annual reports of the British Commonwealth League, will be published this summer.

## Supporting research

### Projects

Two research projects are using collections in The Women's Library as resources bases:

- Jill Craigie: Film Pioneer, an AHRC-funded project led by the University of Sussex
- Married Women's Association – research by Dr Sharon Thompson, Senior Lecturer of Law at Cardiff University funded by the Socio-Legal Studies Association

### Reading room use

- 974 visits to the reading room to consult material from TWL archives and special collections (1301 visits for the same period last year)
- 2459 items from TWL archives and special collection material consulted in the reading room between August 2018 – May 2019 (2974 for same period last academic year)

### Conferences and workshops

- In May 2019 we hosted *Escaping the Doll's House*, a study day on women, the arts, war and work in the period 1910-1920, organised in collaboration with the Centre for Everyday Lives in War, University of Hertfordshire.

- In September 2019 we will host the 28<sup>th</sup> Women's History Network conference, *Professional Women: the public, the private, and the politic*. Panels will explore the 'professional woman' in all periods, nations and forms, including papers on women law reform campaigners, women and politics and women activists. A draft programme is available on the WHN website, and registration is open until the end of August.

### Conference papers by staff

Dr Gillian Murphy. "Jill Craigie: feminist filmmaker" at British Women Documentary Filmmakers 1930-1955 symposium held at LSE, 5 April 2019.

Dr Gillian Murphy. "The Sacred Year 1919" at "Escaping the Doll's House: Women, the Arts, War and Work 1910-1920" at LSE Library, 17 May 2018.

Dr Debbie Challis. In partnership: learning and engaging with the Suffrage Resources at the Women's Library, LSE, paper given at Education, College Women and Suffrage: International Perspectives, Royal Holloway, University of London, 13-14 June 2018.

Dr Gillian Murphy. "Suffragette mothers: the prison letters of Alice Ker and Mary Ellen Taylor". Women's History Network conference, Portsmouth, September 2018 (to be published in 2019).

Dr Debbie Challis. "Suffrage activism: who speaks for me?". London Group of Historical Geographers, London. 2019.



## Exhibitions

*At Last! Votes for Women*, our 2018 Library Gallery summer exhibition, ran from 23 April – 31 August 2018. The centrepiece of our Suffrage 18 anniversary programme, the display featured prison diaries, leaflets and letters detailing tactics, such as 'rushing' the House of Commons, and material showed how the campaign continued to the final years of the First World War. It was visited 9,334 times, our most popular summer exhibition to date, including 33 curator-led group tours.

After closing at LSE, the exhibition transferred to Cambridge Museum where it ran from 15 September – 11 November 2018 and attracted an additional 1000 visits.

### **Make a Stand exhibit, LSE Atrium, November- December 2018**

LSE Library exhibited the Mayor of London commissioned *Make a Stand* display of life-sized images of the women and men who campaigned for female suffrage. This exhibition became the focus of the renaming ceremony for the LSE Towers on Clement's Inn to Pankhurst, Fawcett and Pethick-Lawrence Houses.



### **(In) Memoriam, November 2018**

By the art collective Ignite, this exhibition brought the 5 victims of the Whitechapel murders in 1888 to the forefront to address the imbalance that exists when women are victims of violence and often are invisible in histories and reporting.

### **The Sacred Year 1919: women and the professions**

Our current Library Gallery exhibition is *The Sacred Year 1919: women and the professions*, which opened on 1 May 2019 and runs until 8 September. Marking the centenary of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, the display uses material from the Women's Library to show how this Act was a turning point in widening employment opportunities for women. It's had 2879 visits so far, with many positive comments in the visitors' book e.g. "delighted to stumble across it en route to somewhere else. My mother was a great supporter of the Fawcett Library."

***Women and Westminster***, an online exhibition on Google Arts and Culture created as part of our *Women and Work* season, which uses images from The Women's Library to tell the stories of some pioneering women MPs.

Material from The Women's Library also featured in ***Giving Peace a Chance***, our Lent Term exhibition examining the quest for peace in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, curated in partnership with Professor David Stevenson (LSE International History).

### **External loans**

The Women's Library collection has continued to be in high demand for use in external exhibitions, and over the last year we have loaned over 125 items to 13 different institutions. We are particularly glad to have been able to loan items for display outside London, including

the Portico Library in Manchester, Taliesin Arts Centre Salisbury Arts Centre and Nottingham Contemporary.

## Public Engagement



Events at LSE ■

In figures:

- 35 public events organised at / by LSE which attracted 1,567 people
- 1 external exhibition (Sheroes): 300
- 3 events for museum / library sector: 74
- 1 Private View of exhibition: 50
- 4 external public events with active participation by LSE Library staff: 347 (Museum of London, Tower of London, Kings College London, Tower Hamlet Archives)
- 3 LSE Staff Networks / student events: 63

The flagship programme to mark the centenary of the first women getting the vote in 1918 was year-long programme of events, exhibitions, performances, workshops, literary talks. The programme drew on the rich material of The Women's Library collections. The programme focussed on the historical perspective in the first half of 2018, with a variety of authors who had used the collections for their research including, Jane Robinson on *Hearts and Minds*; Elizabeth Crawford on *Suffrage Artists*; Diane Atkinson on *Rise Up Women!*; June Purvis on *Christabel Pankhurst*; Sumita Mukherjee on *Indian Suffragettes and Helen Pankhurst on Deeds not Words* and Hilary McCollum on *Sapphic Suffragettes*.

In the latter half of 2018, we invited activists and artists to react to the suffrage campaign and focus on current and future campaigning. In October, the Library and LSE EmBRACE hosted a panel discussion including Dawn Butler MP on Black British Feminism with a fantastic audience of 142 attending.

Comments on social media included,

"Fab to be back in a lecture theatre this evening for #LSEsuffrage18 discussion on #black #british #feminism. Always love listening to @DawnButlerBrent. Blown away by intellect & eloquence of the student on the panel, what a remarkable young woman. Thanks to all involved."

So many young people in the audience, I'm truly inspired by the energy and wish to see Black feminism thrive and for it to challenge racism and transform our societies into more inclusive communities #LSESuffrage18

Rosie Ferguson gave a lunchtime talk on the work of Gingerbread to mark their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and commented afterwards, "Proud & energised after speaking @LSELibrary on 100 years of @Gingerbread. How much we've achieved! Yet so much more to do... #wearethe1in4 #LSEsuffrage18"

Art featured throughout the Suffrage 18 programme and in October, there was a half day seminar on *Art and Suffrage* and in November, the Library exhibited *(In) Memoriam* by the art collective Ignite alongside a walk around the sites of the victims of the Whitechapel murders of 1888.

Two events in October and November were aimed at a younger audience.

- A Q & A with author Sally Nichols in her book *Things A Bright Girl can do* was held with Tower Hamlets Archives at their Ideas store as part of their Women's Hall programme.
- Women in Media today: a masterclass with Samira Ahmed.

The Library closed Suffrage 18 with *Stand up for Suffrage* on 14 December, an informal event reviewing the year hosted by Naomi Paxton and included speakers, Ros Ball, Subhadra Das, Holly Parsons, Hayley Kruger, Amara Thornton and Debbie Challis.

The Library has maintained the [Suffrage 18 webpage](#) as a legacy site recording the activities of the year access to recordings of a selection from the successful Suffrage 18 programme.

### **"Giving Peace a Chance: From the League of Nations to Greenham Common" Lent 2019**

During Lent term 2019, LSE Library held events related to the theme of 20<sup>th</sup> century peace, inspired by the archives and special collections on "Peace and Internationalism". This exhibition included stories on the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Greenham Common, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and Pat Arrowsmith. Our five accompanying public event had 201 attendees.

### **2019 [Women at Work series](#)**

On International Women's Day 2019, LSE Library launched its programme around *Women at Work* to commemorate 100 years since the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. The programme has examined areas of work that have only relatively recently appointed women to senior positions. Highlights have included:

- [Women in the City](#), took place on International Women's Day 2019 with an audience of 130. Three female leaders in business and finance shared their experiences from their varied careers, including Pavita Cooper, Bronwyn Curtis, Elisabeth Steeman with Chair Grace Lordan.
- [Rachel Reeves MP](#) discussed her book *Women of Westminster* in April 2019 and shared information with Professor Nicola Lacey about female politicians and the struggles they had. 110 attended.
- Rt Revd and Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE, Bishop of London spoke on *Women and the Church* in an event co-hosted by LSE Faith Centre in April 2019.

### **External projects**

We have supported a number of external educational projects:

- **HLF-funded *Greenham Women Everywhere***, an 18 month project to interview the women who formed the Greenham Common Peace Camp between 1981 and 2000. The oral history will form the basis of a specially-designed website and a nationwide exhibition. The interviews will be archived here as part of The Women's Library.
- EU-funded project run by the Clapham Film Unit and UK section of The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to mark the centenary of the 1919 Zürich Peace Conference. Volunteers are researching the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom delegates who met in Zurich in 1919 as part of the International

struggle for women's rights and to respond to the terms of Versailles Peace Treaty. The research will be used to create a documentary and booklet.

- **Tower Hamlets Women's Hall project** (HLF funded) – in addition to loaning items for the exhibition, Dr Debbie Challis provided 3 workshops at LSE and Tower Hamlets studying the work of the East London Federation of Suffragettes (ELFS) and using their research to produce a newspaper inspired by the ELFS's paper, *The Woman's Dreadnought*. We also co-hosted a children's event with author Sally Nichols at Tower Hamlets Local History Library.
- **Luton One Stop Advice Centre 'Women of our Era'** - HLF funded project to highlight the ever-changing roles of women from the 1960's through to today. Education officer, Debbie Challis provided research workshops for participants and the outcome was an exploration of the variety of roles women have held over the last decades and comparative study that was published.
- **Legacy of Endell Street Military Hospital** – Digital Drama followed their successful *Deeds not Words* project with this follow up project to research what happened to the women who ran the Endell Street Military Hospital after WW1 and the building that had housed their medical activity and the 27,000 soldiers they treated during the war. A team of 10 volunteers worked on a Heritage Lottery funded project to research, record and present podcasts of our findings. LSE Library's Education officer provided research workshops for the volunteers and there was a pop display in the Library of the original exhibition with an additional Legacy panel.

## Education

### Schools

LSE Library has been growing its schools provision. It continues to host an increasing number of visits from schools, primary and secondary. The suffrage centenary led to schools organising visits to coincide with their own activities to mark the anniversary. The Library's Education and Outreach Officer, Debbie Challis has been successful in creating teaching resources drawing on The Women's Library collection.

- **Suffrage 18** Teachers' notes and PowerPoint presentation based on LSE Library's *At Last! Votes for Women* exhibition, which concentrates on the campaign for women to have the vote from 1908 to 1918. They can be adapted for the Votes for Women topic in Key Stage 3 History and the development of the political system of government in Key stage 3 Citizenship. They can also be used as part of the Equality and Rights module in GCSE History AQA & OCR.
- **Eyewitnesses to Peace 1918-1920** An education resource focusing on individuals who witnessed the aftermath of the First World War in Britain and Europe and tried to improve the fragile peace through documents from LSE Archives, including the Women's Library Collection. These notes and presentation cover 'Peace-making' and the formation of The League of Nations for the early part of the 'inter-war years 1918-1939' topic at GCSE level, with extra content that can be adapted for A Level.
- **Changing Role of Women** Resources for schools include a timeline of the main legal changes affecting women from 1918 to 1929 [The Changing Role of Women 1918-1929](#). This can be used in topics around the changing role of women in British society, particularly between the wars, in History, Sociology and Religious Studies. [A 'newspaper' of case studies of women](#) (Helena Normanton, Mithan Tata, Mary Stott, Maude Royden)

featured in *The Sacred Year 1919: women and the professions* exhibition from law, journalism and the Church as well as contextual information. This can be used for comprehension exercises or topic information for the 'changing role' of women in British Society.

- **School visits**

**Suffrage 18:** 835 students and teachers from 10 school visits

**Giving Peace a Chance:** 68 students from school visits

### Higher Education

We hosted visits for:

- LSE Gender Studies students, LSE Power (LSE professional women's network) and LSE student society Women in Politics.
- 12 external higher education courses, including University College London, Kings College London, London Metropolitan University and the University of Virginia.

Feedback from a UCL student visit from MA Gender and Sexuality course:

"I found the archive visit and guidance from Gillian really useful. First I enjoyed having the opportunity to read through folders from the archive, second being shown the extent of the archive. It has encouraged me to take a look at the archive itself and I definitely benefitted from being shown how to search for terms and how to navigate the online catalogue."

### Community

#### Suffrage 18

- Training / Formal Adult Learning: 70
- Informal Adult Learning (Adult Groups / Tours), 21 groups: 353
- 3 Peer Groups (Professional): 80

Community projects supported by LSE Library with workshops included the Tower Hamlets Women's Hall project and Luton's One Stop Youth project and Surrey's March of the Women project.

The Library has hosted professional heritage group meetings which has enabled us to demonstrate the work being done to widen engagement with the Women's Library collection to other heritage organisations.



LSE Library, June 2019