**Friends of the Women’s Library**

Minutes of the AGM, 5 pm, 25 June 2020

As the Covid-19 pandemic made a physical meeting impossible, the 2020 AGM of the Friends of the Women’s Library was conducted by Zoom, using the WL@LSE Zoom account by courtesy of Gillian Murphy and Maria Bell, to whom thanks are due. The chair Anne Summers hosted the meeting.

The minutes of the FotWL 2019 AGM, the chair’s annual report for 2019-2020 and the LSE Library report presented to the FotWL AGM for 2019 were circulated as attachments to the chair’s email letter to Friends of 3 June 2020. In her email, Anne presented a short financial report and sought Friends’ agreement to deferring elections to the Executive Committee to the end of 2020. She also provided Vimeo links to two short films made by Lucy Thane on the occasion in 1998 when Cambridge women undergraduates of the interwar years, who had not been allowed to take degrees during that period, were honoured by the University.

The following joined the Zoom session at one point or another: Anne Summers (chair), Lorna Hawthorne (treasurer), Susan Pares (secretary), Gillan Murphy (LSE Library), Maria Bell (LSE Library), Catherine Clay, Jane Grant, Jean Gooding, Susan Cohen, Mary Pat Larman, Elizabeth Crawford, Susan Crane, Gill Sutherland, Jean Garriock, Bella Hobson, Vivien Hughes, Mary Joannou, David Lawrence, Carol Cooper, Carrie De Silva, Sandy Shulman, Rachel Kolsky, Mary Evans, Gill Kirkup, Jan Goodyear, Valerie Fehlbaum.

Katharine Milcoy, former membership secretary and website manager, was prevented by illness from joining the session.

The chair greeted visitors to the session, the first time the Friends had organised a Zoom meeting. Anne said this was a technique she still had to master. The possibility of a remote talks programme would have to be considered, maybe as soon as July or August, and she would seek views, via email, about doing so. Asked if LSE had plans for the new academic year, Gillian Murphy said she could not give a definite answer yet. Maria Bell said that the School was moving towards some resumption of services, with hybrid teaching arrangements, as they welcomed new students.

Rachel Kolsky spoke of her wide, and positive, experience of Zooming, which permitted very flexible arrangements. She felt Zoom meetings might suit many among the Friends and pointed out that the location of speakers could be immaterial.

Anne explained that the FotWL website is presently frozen. Katharine Milcoy’s illness threatens her reading vision, and she has not been able to work on the site. Anne is liaising with Jan Bourne, who designed the website, and with the membership secretary Judith Bourne and hopes to modify the site in the coming month.

Anne then recapped the salient points of her report: the first part of the 2019-2020 talks programme was successful, but the second half, from March, had to be abandoned. She hopes to reinstate the scheduled speakers. On acquisitions to the Women’s Library holdings, the Friends have managed to reserve a number of items with Elizabeth Crawford’s agreement, for eventual delivery to TWL, and are still on the lookout for fresh items. Cynthia Cockburn’s archive will in time be brought into the Women’s Library. It was secured with considerable help from Jane Grant.

Progress has been made on the project to record interviews with women involved in the Movement for the Ordination of Women, with a large number of both interviewees and interviewers lined up. It is intended that hard-copy transcripts should be made. Interviews were set to go, but have been halted by the Covid-19 pandemic. FotWL has yet to buy the necessary equipment, but intends to keep to this project.

Anne highlighted the legacy of £5000 the Friends had received from Rita Pankhurst, former Head of Library Services at the City of London Polytechnic, who died in May 2019, and said she would welcome suggestions on how to mark Rita’s gift, possibly through a purchase of books.

The FotWL’s funds are in a healthy state, with a balance at the end of the 2020 financial year of £59,159.87. Documents relating to the AGM will be placed on the Friends’ website in due course.

In the ensuing discussion, Mary Joannou congratulated Catherine Clay on the success of the *Time and Tide* project she has been nurturing. Catherine confirmed that the website for the project would be launched in about two weeks’ time and that Friends would be notified. There will be a limited print run of the centenary edition of *Time and Tide*.

Returning to the effects of the lockdown in the current pandemic and to the problems of easing out of it, Anne pointed to the impact on research facilities and the question of ventilation in confined rooms; Rachel Kolsky highlighted the problems posed by public transport; others mentioned the closure of public toilets, and disrupted holiday plans.

Carrie De Silva told the meeting about her Women’s Street Names project and her quest to discover hidden women. She plans a series of short biographies. Further names could be added in.

There was a short discussion about statues. Anne was doubtful about the wisdom of pulling them down. Mary Joannou asked us to look at the aesthetic considerations.

Catherine Clay gave a toast to Anne for her successful handling of the meeting. Anne then wished us all goodbye until the restarted talks programme.