

## FoTWL Annual Reports for 2022-23

### *Chair*

As will be seen, this has been a busy year for the Friends, and I will happily begin by thanking all those who have made our activities possible. The members of the Executive Committee have offered continuous support and advice: Susan Pares, as Secretary, has kept our procedures up to the mark, as has Lorna Hawthorne, as Treasurer; and Lorna and Judith Bourne, our Membership Secretary, will be reporting separately on the development of a membership database which has already begun to improve our administrative efficiency.

Without Dr Gillian Murphy, LSE Library Curator for Citizenship and Equality, it is hard to imagine how either our Zoom or in-person events could materialise as they do – on time, in place and (for the in-person arrivals) very agreeably catered. The reward for doing so well is, of course, to be asked to go on doing well, and we sincerely hope to enjoy Gillian's academic and practical help for years to come. Thanks are also due to LSE's head of archives, Anna Towlson, together with Emma Pizarro, who have given invaluable help in the organisation of our Movement for the Ordination (M.O.W.) recording project, of which more below.

LSE's Librarian, Nicola Scally (formerly Wright), retired at the beginning of 2023 and received our warm thanks for the years of her support, and good wishes for the future. Nancy Graham and Beth Clark kept up communications with us during the 'interregnum'; Nicola's successor Niamh Tumelty, of Newnham College and Cambridge University Library, is now in post and we hope very much that she will be able to join us at some of our meetings before long.

### Acquisitions

Our longstanding commitment to enhance TWL's collections and publicise their value to the research community has continued in a variety of ways. We have acquired items for the Library from the estimable Friend Elizabeth Crawford and other sources, and Friend Caroline Derry has throughout the year kept a sharp eye on auctioneers' sites, and has entered the bidding on our behalf. This year a musical theme has developed. Shortly after the 2022 AGM, we purchased the sheet music for 'The Suffragette Two-Step' (published 1913) and the lyrics of 'The purple white and green' (to be sung to the tune of 'The wearing of the green'). This inspired us to hold a New Year's musical party in LSE's Shaw Library, generously catered by LSE; proceedings were rounded off, of course, with a rousing rendition of Ethel Smythe's 'March of the Women'.

Greatly encouraged, in March 2023, we acquired more musical items, including 'That Ragtime Suffragette' and 'The Women's Marseillaise' – in due course to be circulated and studied for next year's party!

Our most recent purchase comprises 4 volumes from the library of Vera Jack Holmes; 'association' copies of (mainly pseudonymous) works by Holmes' friends and fellow suffrage campaigners such as 'Michael Field', signed and annotated by the members of this early feminist grouping.

We have, in addition, augmented TWL's online resources by funding the digitising of two journals of the Catholic women's movement, *The Catholic Suffragist* (1915-1918) and its successor publication *The Catholic Citizen* (1918-1966). More online materials are likely to feature on next year's list of acquisitions.

### M.O.W. Recording Project

Ever since TWL's archives of the Movement for the Ordination of Women were deposited and catalogued, we have been wanting to record veterans' reminiscences of this campaign. A questionnaire was developed, and contacts were made, but Covid intervened. This year we have at last resumed the project. The interview group comprises Mandy Barrie, Lorna Hawthorne, Vivien Hughes, Rosemary Seton, Anne Summers and Carmen Mangion, to whom particular thanks for devising and managing our complex workflow. Accuracy and confidentiality are key values: agreements, following the ethical guidelines of the Oral History Society, are signed by both parties; transcriptions are made of each interview and sent to the interviewee for any editing thought necessary; recordings and agreed transcripts are deposited at TWL and deleted from private computers. Interviews conducted so far have been thoroughly enjoyable experiences on both sides, and the Friends' funds are more than sufficient for the requisite recording machines, transcription fees, and travel expenses.

### Talks Programme

Our talks programme continues to attract excellent speakers, and to reveal archival holdings and histories of female activism which deserve to be better known. Last year's AGM featured Catriona Beaumont on 'Bridging the Gap: locating intersections between the Women's Liberation Movement and historic women's groups in England, 1960s-1970s, via the LSE Women's Library archive'. Our thanks to her, and to all our speakers over this past academic year, where we have had a focus on individual and group biography. We heard from June Purvis on Christabel Pankhurst; Mary Honeyball on Edith Summerskill M.P.; Joanna Williams on the pioneer suffragist Lydia Becker; Lucy Rodgers on

Pernel Strachey and others of the first Cambridge cohort of ‘university women’; Sue Brown on the writer Julia Wedgwood; Mary Joannou on the suffragist and Labour activist Clara Rackham; Christine Wise on the artist and suffragist Bertha Newcombe; and Carmen Mangion on St Joan’s Political Alliance - and What Catholic Suffragists Did Next.

These meetings have all been ‘hybrid’, i.e. Zoom and in-person. The technology has had its teething troubles, and we are pleased to learn that an upgraded version is to be installed for Room 01 in time for next autumn term’s programme. But we do also hope for the pleasure of more of your in-person company!

### Essay Prizes

We inaugurated our musical afternoon in January with the presentation of the 2021-22 MSc Essay Prize to Vartika Rastogi. We look forward to hearing more about her research during our talks programme of 2023-24. At the time of writing, we have not yet received submissions of 3<sup>rd</sup> year dissertations and M.Sc. theses using TWL material; we hope to report on prizes in the autumn newsletter to the Friends.

### *Treasurer’s report for EOY 2022-23*

The Charity started the year with £63082.89 in the bank, and ended the year with £100,984.69. Our expenditure for the year was £9444.05 and our revenue £47345.85, making the movement in funds an increase of £37,901.80. In March we received a legacy of £42,557.35 from Valerie Elizabeth Millman, and are most grateful to Freya Ellingham of Mind, who co-ordinated the responses from all the beneficiary charities from this estate. We are also awaiting a further legacy from the estate of Sally Billot, but the solicitors are, I believe, trying to locate all the beneficiaries before they can distribute the funds.

Our expenditure was £3,713 on donations to TWL, or services such as digitisation. We have spent £4,500 on the database and there is a balance of £1,500 to pay on completion. Costs of FoTWL meetings amounted to £268.45 plus the Essay Prize of £500. Finally, our administration costs were £462.60. We shall be looking for greater expenditure in 2023-24, and discussions are underway on how this can best benefit the Library.

Lorna Hawthorne    May 2023

## *Membership Report*

Membership numbers currently stand at 215. We have continued to gift membership to all our speakers over the past academic year. Membership is in the process of being automated, which is part of our new database system.

In 2022-2023 we have continued to augment TWL holdings through purchase of rare items and digitization programmes, and members are sincerely thanked for their continued support. Any queries can be sent to Judith via the Friends email: [friendsofthewomenslibrary@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthewomenslibrary@gmail.com)

Judith Bourne     May 2023

### *Looking to the future:*

By next year's AGM we shall, all being well, offer you a modified and improved website as well as a report on the completion of our recording project.

In the meantime, the Executive Committee wishes you all a restful and refreshing summer break.

Anne Summers, Chair; Susan Pares, Secretary; Lorna Hawthorne, Treasurer; Judith Bourne, Membership Secretary; Amanda Ariss; Catherine Clay; David Doughan; Mary Evans; Jean Gooding; Jane Grant; Mary Joannou; Anne Logan; Gill Sutherland.

Our Annual General Meeting took place as scheduled on 29 June 2023, and warmest thanks are due to the LSE Library staff who arranged beautiful accommodation, an excellent buffet, and a display of recent acquisitions for TWL.

No resolutions or motions had been received from the membership, and no requests for elections or co-options to the Executive Committee. All current members having formally indicated their willingness to remain in post, they will serve for 2023-24, and their names will be found on our website's 'Who We Are' page. All reports submitted to the AGM will shortly be found on the 'Formal Reports' page.

Our guest speaker, Dr Mari Takayanagi, Senior Archivist at the Parliamentary Archives, delivered a fascinating lecture on women - other than MPs - who

worked in the Palace of Westminster, the subject of the newly published *Necessary Women: the Untold Story of Parliament's Working Women*, co-authored with Elizabeth Hallam Smith.