

Friends of The Women's Library
Registered Charity number 277165

Annual Report 2023-24

This has been a busy year for the Friends, with a varied programme of events designed to further our principal mission: that of supporting the continuance and growth of The Women's Library, and promoting and extending its use. In all that follows we have been solidly supported by the staff of LSE Library, most particularly Dr Gillian Murphy, Curator for Citizenship and Equality; and we look forward to maintaining close relations with the Library's new Director, Niamh Tumelty.

Our focus on TWL's 20th century collections has been largely maintained for this year's programme of events - which has not been limited to seminar presentations. The latter have continued to be held in person and on Zoom, and we warmly thank our speakers: Mari Takayanagi spoke on her latest publication, *Necessary Women: the Untold Story of Women Working in Parliament*, co-authored with Elizabeth Hallam Smith; Kate Murphy spoke on *Hilda Matheson: a life of Secrets and Broadcasts*, her latest research on women at the BBC, co-authored with Michael Carney; our MSc prize-winner Vartika Rastogi spoke from her dissertation on *Mukti* magazine; Jane Grant reported on her work-in-progress on the journalist and activist Mary Stott; and in a particularly lively session Sally Alexander's thoughts on 'being an archive' at TWL were supplemented by contributions from different generations of readers who had consulted her papers.

In addition, Jill Liddington's presentation on her latest publication *As Good as a Marriage: The Anne Lister diaries 1836-38* was co-hosted with LSE Library in March, and in the same month LSE hosted an evening celebrating TWL, with a drinks reception, behind-the-scenes tours, and a series of 'lightning talks', including that of Jane Grant on the history of TWL since its origins in the suffrage campaigns.

Our ventures beyond the talks programme saw us welcome in 2024 with an afternoon of suffrage song – many thanks to Chris Ruff of Morley College Chamber Group for his gallant accompaniment of our efforts; in February a number of us enjoyed revisiting our past at the exhibition *Women in Revolt! Art, Activism and the Women's Movement 1970–1990* at Tate Britain, which stimulated much good conversation when we repaired to the café for tea; and our June visit to the Amelia Scott Centre at Tunbridge Wells, where archive collections complement those held on the suffragist and social activist Amelia Scott at TWL, illuminated the contribution former suffragists made to local government and national reform in the interwar period.

As our Treasurer, Lorna Hawthorne, reports, we have spent just over £8,500 on purchasing additions to TWL's collections, as well as on conservation projects. Our purchases included a very rare Order of Service for the funeral of Emily Wilding Davison and many items of suffrage material, including 'ephemera' such as musical scores, songsheets and playscripts; we have also purchased interwar publications including scarce copies of *Time and Tide*. The Committee's thanks go to Caroline Derry for her sleuthing and bidding in the world of manuscript and rare print auctions, as well as to Elizabeth Crawford for giving us first refusal on items of interest in her catalogues. It is good to have Friends in all the right places!

We have continued our project of recording interviews with veterans of the Movement for Ordination of Women, to supplement TWL's holdings of the M.O.W. archives. This project will

be completed in the summer months of 2024, and huge thanks are due to Carmen Mangion for organising our workflow, and to her, Mandy Barrie, Lorna Hawthorne and Rosemary Seton for carrying out the interviews, which reveal the great variety of the social and religious backgrounds of these pioneers.

Our Treasurer has also taken on the management of important new projects from which we hope she will be resting on her laurels by the time of our next Annual Report. Because our membership and email listings have manifested errors and omissions over the last few years, Lorna has engaged contractors to reform and fully automate our database. She has also engaged contractors to, respectively, redesign our online image and restructure our website. These projects are ongoing and we hope you will all enjoy the results before too long; many thanks are due to Lorna for bringing her professional expertise and energies to these projects in addition to the ongoing task of managing our finances.

As ever, thanks are also due to our Secretary, Susan Pares, and to all the members of the Executive: Amanda Ariss, Judith Bourne, Catherine Clay, David Doughan, Mary Evans, Jean Gooding, Jane Grant, Mary Joannou, Anne Logan and Gill Sutherland for their input of many, many hours of practical advice and support and academic expertise over the last 12 months.

Anne Summers

Chair, Friends of The Women's Library

Treasurer's Report FY 2023-24

We started the year with £99,785 and ended the year with £9,0313. Expenditure over the year amounted to £14,831. Revenue was £5,359, made up of membership subscriptions and donations. No legacies were received this year.

£8,511 in total was spent on donations to TWL:

- £1,133 on four volumes, by Amber Blanco White, W. E. Henley, and two by 'Michael Field'
- £2,360 for nine items of suffrage ephemera
- £1,270 for the restoration of papers belonging to Millicent Fawcett
- £250 for 34 copies of Time & Tide
- £1,310 for five periodicals
- £501 for a letter from Sylvia Pankhurst to Mr King 26th July 1915
- £450 for papers of the NUWSS Croydon branch
- £1,088 for the order of service for the funeral of Emily Davison
- £49 for the exhibition catalogue for Women in Revolt, and two leaflets

£1652.30 was spent on the project recording recollections of the Movement for the Ordination of Women in the Church of England. This project is ongoing.

Administration costs were £4,668. These included £3,075 for our new website, which is currently under construction.

The membership database has proved to be of infinite value in updating our membership records and efficiently recording subscription data.

Lorna Hawthorne

Treasurer, Friends of The Women's Library