

Feminist Archive North

Trustees' Report for AGM October 15th 2011

Activities

The main activity during the year in Leeds was continuing to preserve and catalogue material donated to the Feminist Archive North (FAN). Over the year this work was undertaken by 20 volunteers who were trained to undertake cataloguing tasks from the basic preservation of material to entries on the database. The cataloguing of the Jalna Hanmer Donation is continuing. The major collections being catalogued at present are Home Workers Worldwide, a Leeds based organisation set up to support the movement of homebased workers around the world and Change, a UK based organisation which produced reports on women's status in most countries throughout the world.

Newsletter

A group of volunteers produced our 2011 Newsletter.

My Learning Journey

Our first contribution to the My Learning Journey, an on line resource for schools, colleges and the general public, on Education and Job Opportunities, is still being much used. We are currently working on the next My Learning Journey; Feminist Activism and the Fight for Equal Pay.

Leeds Women's Anti Apartheid Group Collection

This group, whose collection is housed in FAN, were a major part of anti apartheid activism in Leeds. This summer Leeds City Council held an exhibition in the City Museum commemorating the struggle and work in Leeds which led the council to twin with Durban and Nelson Mandela receiving the freedom of the city. Colourful material from Leeds Women Against Apartheid formed a large part of the exhibition. And FAN volunteers who were also part of Leeds Women Against Apartheid took part in a project with 6 schools. A DVD has been produced.

By the mid 1980s when South African State Oppression and township violence was escalating, a group of women in Leeds, experienced in feminist organising set up a women's group. It was affiliated to Anti Apartheid and rapidly became a very effecting campaigning force with a focus on women and children. Links were made between Leeds women's groups and the Women's League in Pretoria. Funds were raised for them as well as publicising the struggle.

FAN's contribution to the exhibition and project is ensuring that women's activism is not "hidden from history".

International Women's Day

An exhibition focussing on feminist activism in Leeds was held in the Brotherton Room as part of Leeds University's celebration of 100 years of International Women's day. We displayed posters, photographs, articles about activism, leaflets newsletters and T-shirts. They covered Male Violence Against Women including Domestic Violence, Rape, Child

Sexual Abuse, Sexual Harassment and Pornography. It included photographs from Reclaim the Night Marches. There was a large display of material from Leeds Women Against Apartheid. Other struggles featured included Clause 28. A video and CD from Bolton Women's Centre played all day. It included links with current campaigns and groups such as SARSVL, CROP and Leeds University Campaign Against Sexual Harassment. There was a small display in the University Library foyer

Comments included "Wonderful Display – Inspirational Stuff" "I didn't realise FAN had such treasures in its archive." "Really enjoyed looking at the exhibition" "Nice to see the Anti Apartheid Collection" "Great to see Leeds Women's History"

Presentation at ARLIS Conference

The Feminist Archive North was invited to give a 20-minute presentation followed by questions at the ARLIS UK and Ireland conference held at the University of Leeds in July 2011, as part of its Images of Activism session. ARLIS UK & Ireland is the Art Libraries Society, the professional organisation for people involved in providing library and information services and documenting resources in the visual arts. Their 2011 conference title was Weaving New Futures: Collaboration and Reinvention in the Digital Age. Trustee Al Garthwaite presented an extract from one of the films held by FAN, Yorkshire Women of the 20th Century, and showed pictures of some of FAN's diverse posters, T-Shirts and badges, while describing their origins and analysing and contextualising their message. She also displayed 1990's khatwa (embroidered textiles) from Homeworkers Worldwide's donation to FAN, a 1970's T-shirt with the slogan No! To Male Violence, and a framed poster promoting attendance at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp in 1982. The presentation was well received by the 75 approx. art librarians present, 80% of whom were women, and provoked 15-minutes of questions and discussion. This was an excellent opportunity to promote the Feminist Archive to a very relevant audience.

Fundraising

Individual volunteers continued to fundraise for FAN and this has been a major source of funds for the purchase of acid free boxes etc for the safe storage of material.