

FEMINIST ARCHIVE NORTH 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015
Report to the AGM on 10th October 2015

Our main ongoing activity during the year was preserving and cataloguing existing and new material donated to the Feminist Archive North (FAN). FAN's workroom moved in March; planning and organising this proved time consuming. We also made material available for researchers, organised and participated in events and meetings, trained new volunteers, passed duplicate material to other feminist sources, and raised funds.

Volunteers

During the year 19 volunteers worked at FAN. 6 regular volunteers, including the 3 trustees, came to FAN once a week, and another 4 came less regularly. 2 other long-term volunteers worked from home producing a newsletter and documenting the Women into Science and Engineering (WISE) collection. All these women are aged 60+ and veterans of the second wave of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). The other volunteers, all short-term, were either Second Wave (and ongoing) feminist activists who donated material and came in to sort it out; recent graduates volunteering before leaving for full-time work; or students.

Donations

New donations included:

Material from feminists from the Second Wave of the WLM, mainly based in West Yorkshire and the North of England, consisting of newsletters, leaflets, pamphlets, cuttings, conference papers, letters, photographs and more. One fascinating collection contained a very thorough documentation of the successful campaign for reinstatement by Mary Winter, the Burnley bus conductor who in 1978 was sacked for wearing a lesbian badge to work

Homeworkers Worldwide – a second collection to add to their original donation

Asha Women's and Children's Centre, Leeds 11 (formerly the Asha Neighbourhood Centre for Ethnic Minority women, and on its inception in 1985, the Asha Neighbourhood Project for Bangladeshi Women)

Leeds Animation Workshop – a selection of their research material

Researchers

FAN provided material for 20 researchers during the year, 9 fewer than in 2013-14 but The Pavilion research project, resulting in a film, was ongoing for the first 9 months of the year and took a lot of input.

The Pavilion, founded in Leeds in 1982 as a Women's Photography Project and later Centre, was unique. It hosted national exhibitions of feminist work, organised talks and events, undertook extensive socially engaged arts and photography work with local women and girls, and offered a dark room. The 2014 project aimed to showcase and contextualise the Pavilion; this required extensive use of FAN's collections, not just the Pavilion's own donation, by the two male researchers. Volunteers were kept very busy sourcing and supplying material. The eventual film was screened several times at Leeds Hyde Park cinema, but proved much more of an art film than the feminist documentary audiences were expecting.

Other researchers included current or former academics/students researching material for their books or papers, and people seeking material for exhibitions. We welcomed trades unionists, writers, LGBT activists and a BBC researcher. Popular searches were Spare Rib, WIRES, Women's Report, and local WL newsletters and conference papers and reports, especially Scottish, Welsh and Yorkshire. Others included the Norwich Women's Centre collection; LGBT material; campaigns against violence against women; Black women's organisations, publications and campaigns; feminist moving image, art and media publications and campaigns; Rock Against Sexism; Shocking Pink; socialist feminist publications, conferences and posters.

Events and Projects

Throughout the year: FAN participated actively in the new Feminist Libraries and Archives (FLA) development meetings and gatherings, usually held at Nottingham Women's Centre. Jalna Hanmer, Lou Lavender and Carolyn Cable attended these meetings.

August: in Work Week, classified and catalogued our large collection of pamphlets

September: FAN Newsletter produced and distributed.

October: with Leeds University Department of History, FAN co-organised a symposium in Special Collections. *Women, Gender and Sexuality in Leeds Archives* brought together archivists, academics and activists working on women and gender in Leeds archives. We explored the possibilities of collaboration, engagement with the public and promoting the role of archives beyond the University.

November: audio interview with trustee Al Garthwaite and filming of the FAN workroom by The Pavilion as part of their large-scale research project (see Researchers, below)

November: trustee Jalna Hanmer attended the House of Commons for a meeting about the origin and early years of the Women's Aid Federation of England.

December: Dr Kate Dossett, senior History lecturer, Leeds University, called a meeting at FAN with trustees Jalna Hanmer and Al Garthwaite, Leeds Animation Workshop and the director of the Hyde Park Cinema to discuss fundraising for an archive project on feminist film-making from the 1980s, focussing on FAN material

including films by Leeds-based Vera Media (VM), Leeds Animation Workshop (LAW), and the Women's Film, Video and Television Network (WFTVN) collection. The WFTVN, 1983-1989, was London-based but operated nationally, involving in the beginning Terry Wragg from LAW, and later Al Garthwaite of VM, who chaired the network from 1986. £1,500 was raised from a University fund, post-doc researcher Gina Denton employed and plans made for a national workshop and cinema screening in Leeds in May.

February: FAN organised a session for 19 women in the University's International Development Network, displaying material from our international collections including CHANGE, the Subordination of Women (SoW) collection from the University of East Anglia and their I.D. course, and Homeworkers Worldwide.

March: FAN used the material from the International Development display plus examples from our European Collections for our International Women's Day exhibition at Special Collections. 30 people came.

Promoting the Feminist Archive and FAN

July: FA leaflets sent to the University of Plymouth for their conference on the history of the WLM.

October: leaflets supplied for the Feminism in London conference.

FA and FAN leaflets and information were also provided for the events listed above.

FAN moves within Special Collections

Moving the FAN workroom took a significant amount of planning, preparation and packing, and again time spent unpacking and rearranging. However, this has resulted in much improved systems for storage and office management, and most of us prefer our new workroom.

We have also spent a lot of time in the Stacks, where much FAN material is stored, checking, re-organising, ensuring that we know exactly where material is shelved and entering this on our database.

Fundraising

Individual volunteers fundraise for FAN, collections are held at events, and a number of feminists send monthly standing orders so we can buy archiving materials. Trustees Jalna and Al, Terry Wragg from Leeds Animation Workshop and Dr Kate Dossett applied for and raised the money for the feminist film-making project described above.