



Formerly known as the Women's Research and Resource Centre, the Feminist Library was set up in 1975 by a group of women to record and document the Women's Liberation Movement and safeguard its history.

Completely run by volunteers, the library has had a rich and varied history, and despite often lurching from crisis to crisis, the Feminist Library is still going strong nearly 35 years later.

We are open every Saturday from 11 to 4:45, and at other times by appointment. Occasionally we are closed for special events, such as Saturday 10th October for Feminism in London conference, so do please check www.feministlibrary.co.uk before visiting.

We are pleased to announce that the Feminist Library Pamphlet Collection has found a safe home at the Bishopsgate Institute Library. As was discussed in the last edition of our newsletter, we at the Feminist Library were extremely worried about the condition of the pamphlet collection and had to make the decision to find a new and safe home for the collection. The collection's current home was not at all suitable for the precious material, much of which is completely unique, and we therefore had to make the decision to find a new home so as to preserve the documents for future generations. We are delighted that the Bishopsgate Institute Library are taking the collection. They have the facilities and funds to preserve this precious material. It will remain as an autonomous whole within the library's archive and will forever be known as the "Feminist Library Pamphlet Collection". The Bishopsgate Institute Library is home to much other radical political material and the move will enable the collection be accessible to a wide range of people. The first batch of our pamphlets has been moved and work has begun on conservation and cataloguing. You can visit the Bishopsgate Institute Library catalogue at www.bishopsgate.org.uk/catalogue to check on progress, (type feminist into search box).

The pamphlet collection going to Bishopsgate will free up a significant amount of shelf-space, thus giving us some much needed room to sort and display the many treasures that are to be found in the Feminist Library which are currently inaccessible.

The Feminist Library is once again becoming better used: there has been a marked increase in the amount of people visiting and using the library, with several feminist groups using the library for meetings. The Feminist Library is well on its way to regaining feminist "hot spot" status.

The legacy recently received by the library from the estate of Ethel Buddle was a very useful amount at this point in the library's history. It enabled us to employ a consultant who has contributed her skills and time to help us define a way forward for the library.

We have now decided that we would like to move forward by maintaining an ongoing activist Feminist Library within a space where perhaps community and feminist groups could have meeting space, visit the library and use the facilities, and at the same time, work towards conserving our more fragile and unique material in a more formal environment, where it would be more appropriately cared for and permanently available.

An important part of this vision is the creation of the Feminist Library virtual catalogue, which will be available online and list all our holdings, wherever they may end up. The collections group is still ploughing ahead with the Cataloguing Project, which you can keep up with on Twitter (twitter.com/feministlibrary). We will also be discussing the project as part of the 'Open Source Libraries' panel at Internet Librarian International, (www.internet-librarian.com). Keep an eye on our website for further updates about our new catalogue and get in touch if you would like to help out.

Lots of new people are getting involved in the library as volunteers. The library is completely run by volunteers and there's always room for more. If you would like to get involved in the running of the Feminist Library, do please contact us, we'd love to hear from you.

We have just renewed our lease with the council, thereby safeguarding the future of the Feminist Library for at least three years. However this is dependant on significant and continuous fundraising on our part. If you would like to become a Friend of the Feminist Library and are able to commit to making a regular monthly donation to the library by standing order, please visit our website at www.feministlibrary.co.uk where there is a copy of our standing order form or email us at admin@feministlibrary.co.uk.

DO YOU REMEMBER OLIVE MORRIS?

Olive Morris was born in Jamaica in 1952 and joined her family in London when she was 8 years old. From the age of 16 she was an active member of the Brixton Black Panther Movement and started, along with other women, the Brixton Black Women's Group. The group was set up to address the particular issues faced by black women and to offer support and advice. It operated out of Olive's flat on Railton Road until it relocated to Stockwell Green and became the Black Women's Centre. Olive was also central to the squatter campaigns of the 1970s. She died tragically young at the age of 27.

The Remembering Olive Collective (ROC) is made up of women of all different ages and backgrounds. Their aim is to create public and permanent memories of Olive Morris and raise awareness of who she was and what she stood for.

They meet on the first Wednesday of each month, at the Lambeth Women's Project (166A Stockwell Road, SW9) to share research and information on Olive, which will come together as a permanent collection at Lambeth Archive to be made public in October 2009*.

We were pleased to host ROC's last meeting at The Feminist Library where the group were able to combine discussion with onsite research, within our collection of periodicals, pamphlets and books.

Do You Remember Olive Morris? If you knew Olive or the groups she worked with or have some interesting material for the ROC archive please do get in touch at olivemorrishq@gmail.com.

To find out about ROC's work to date and how to get involved please visit:
www.rememberolivemorris.wordpress.com



Picture: Olive Morris speaking at a rally against police brutality outside Brixton Library (ca. 1972) taken from

www.rememberolivemorris.wordpress.com

*Launch of the Olive Morris Collection Wednesday 21 October 2009, 7pm at Brixton Library.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL: ring 020 7926 1075 or email blackhistorymonth@lambeth.gov.uk

Happy 10th Birthday to **Persephone Books**, an independent women-run publishers and bookshop. Persephone Books reprints neglected classics by 20th century (mostly women) writers. Each of the 83 books is intelligent, thought-provoking and beautifully written. *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day* by Winifred Watson was made into a film starring Frances McDormand which has raised the profile of Persephone, and now most bookshops stock some of their titles. They also have two shops of their own in London: 59 Lamb's Conduit Street, London, WC1N 3NB and at 109 Kensington Church Street London W8 7LN. Go see or check out their website www.persephonebooks.co.uk.

ZINE WORLD – One of the things I love about zines is that they are made for love not money. They can be and are, about absolutely anything. They are usually home-made and simply printed. They are alternative magazines. If sold they are sold cheaply.

The world of zines is ever growing with zine fests happening all over the world and distros (zine distributors) offering a massive range of material to buy. Check some of the online distros such as www.actedistribution.org, all-girl collectives Love to Print (lovetoprint.blogspot.com) and hand me down distro (handmedowndistro.org.uk) which specialises in women's health and politics.

The London Zine Symposium 2009 which took place in May was an awesome display of independently made zines, books, art mags and prints, including some by our very own Feminist Library volunteers - Una's innovative *Spratz - a Feminist Kidzine* compiled by the CRAP! Collective (Child Rearing Against Patriarchy) using contributions from kids and adults and Sarah's *Its Good Being A Girl*, a general celebration of what women are doing and have done. Both are available at the Feminist Library, along with other feminist zines such as *Subtext* and *Bust* (a US alternative glossy).

There is a tradition of women zine making which goes back to the Suffragettes and led to the production of many of the pamphlets in the 1970s and 80s in the Feminist Library collection. It then came to the fore in the 1990s again with the Riot Grrl feminist indie zines. The independent nature of the making and producing of zines means anyone can have a go free of the influence of big corporations. Sick of the sexist glossies? Then alternative zines by and for women are out there for all to access.

Go along to 56a Infoshop at 56a Crampton St, London SE17 3AE, just down the road from the Feminist Library, a radical social centre in South London and see a whole range of zines, comics and books. They buy and sell zines. Also come along to the Feminist Library to see our zine collection and be inspired to have a go yourself. - Sarah O Mahony

Listings

Saturday 10 October 9:30am – 5pm
Feminism in London '09 - Pornification, the pay gap, eating disorders.... Where do we go from here?

Conway Hall, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL.
Speakers include Susie Orbach, Beatrix Campbell, Sabrina Qureshi, with lots of workshops including activism training, what's wrong with prostitution, and raising children in the age of porn. For more information and to register visit www.fil.btik.com or email feminismlondon@yahoo.co.uk

8 October 2009 – 31 March 2010
Ms Understood: women's liberation in the 1970's Britain
The Women's Library, London E1 7NT
This exhibition celebrates the 40th anniversary of the country's first national Women's Liberation Conference at Ruskin College, Oxford and explores the prelude, birth, rallies, media, fashion, politics, disagreements and victories of this crucial phase for improving women's rights. For more information ring 020 7320 2222 or visit www.londonmet.ac.uk/thewomenslibrary.

The Feminist Discussion Group has returned to the Feminist Library. The group meets monthly, usually on a Tuesday at the library from 6:30 to 8pm. It is a women-only group. For more information on the group and details of the next meeting email bmichelel9@yahoo.co.uk.

Monday 19 October 6:30 – 9:30pm
Tea With Mrs Pankhurst - Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1B 3LS
Theatre production exploring the lives of Emmeline Pankhurst and Selina Cooper- for one night only at the TUC.
Free admission – seats will be numbered so booking essential. To book tickets visit www.tuc.org.uk/serucevents, email serucevents@tuc.org.uk or ring 020 7467 1220

Tuesday 27 October 7:30pm
No2Eggsplotation Campaign Launch at the Feminist Library.
Meeting to discuss and organise feminist response to proposals to pay women for egg donation. For more details visit www.no2eggsplotation.wordpress.com or email no2eggsplotation@riseup.net.



FROM OUR ARCHIVES: Were you on this demo against the Abortion (Amendment) Bill in 1975, or do you know anybody who was? There are more photos of actions taken against this Bill on our website (www.feministlibrary.co.uk), and we would like to hear from anybody who took part, to help expand our feminist history.

Recent Acquisitions in the library

Ireland's Hidden Diaspora: the 'abortion trail' and the making of a London-Irish underground, 1980 – 2000, Ann Rossiter (IASC Publishing, 2009) This book is the story of London-Irish women who supported women from Ireland and Northern Ireland before, during and after the journey to London to get an abortion. With first-hand accounts and oral histories, this book documents the often hidden work of the Irish Women's Abortion Support Group (IWASG) and the Irish Abortion Solidarity Campaign (IASC) over a twenty year period from the early 1980s.

On the evening of Friday May 22 the Feminist library hosted a talk by **Sabrina Chapadjiev**, editor of *Live Through This*, (Seven Stories Press, 2008). Over 30 people attended the successful and thought-provoking event. *Live Through This* is a collection of original stories, essays, artwork, and photography, by Nan Goldin, Eileen Myles, bell hooks, and other cutting-edge artists, and is a fearless exploration of women's silent rage, the power that can come from internal struggle, and the possibility of transforming this burning force into fierce and enlightened work. Sabrina discussed the themes that came up when she was editing the pieces with the authors.

The Feminist Library is happy to make its rooms available for groups, subject to availability for a small donation. We also have access to a large meeting room in the building. Please contact us if you would be interested in using the rooms.

Exit Moonshine: Coming Out and Carrying on, Joy Howard (Grey Hen Press, 2009)
A beautiful collection of poetry documenting ten years in the life of a "lesbian-come-lately" coming out in the eighties.

The Feminist Library Newsletter
ISSN: 0951-2837

Contributors: Una Byrne
Kate Lomax
Sarah O Mahony
Gail Chester

Contact Details:
The Feminist Library
5 Westminster Bridge Rd
London
SE1 7XW
admin@feministlibrary.co.uk
www.feministlibrary.co.uk