



Feminist & Women's Publishing & Cultural Industries

A GUIDE TO ARCHIVES AND RESOURCES

Produced by The Business of Women's Words:
Purpose and Profit in Feminist Publishing
University of Sussex

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Figure 1 Visiting the London Metropolitan Archives

© LMA, with kind permission from LMA, City of London

Figure 2 LSE online catalogue home page including The Women's Library

© LSE, with kind permission from LSE Library

Figure 3 The Working Class Movement Library in Salford

© Cal Cole, with kind permission from The Working Class Movement Library

Figure 4 Boxes at The Feminist Archive South, University of Bristol

© FAS with kind permission from Hannah Lowery

Introduction

This guide grew out of a research project, *The Business of Women's Words: Purpose and Profit in Feminist Publishing* (BOWW), which explored the dramatic story of the feminist publishing revolution of the UK women's movements of the 1970s-90s.

We examined how activists and entrepreneurs used business practice creatively to promote the transformative aims of the women's movement, despite many of them having broad antipathy and sometimes outright hostility to capitalist methods and ideologies.

Our guide highlights the archives and resources we used. It offers researchers, teachers, archivists, students, activists and businesspeople a glimpse into a hitherto under-appreciated heritage, which we believe has immense value.

Social movement-inspired business archives might hold similar content to other business archives: the documents, accounts, films, photographs, oral testimonies, adverts and digital records which all companies generate as part of their work. But they track special commitments and achievements, and come in many shapes and sizes, from Virago's literary delights to Welsh-language specialist Honno, to the oral history of campaigning group Women in Publishing, and the design insights of movement magazine

Spare Rib. We have thus drawn from catalogue descriptions published by the holding institution, adding a selection of personal 'top picks' to give a flavour of the histories offered.

Such collections cast light on the evolving history of today's urgent movements for corporate social responsibility, purpose with profit, and mixed economic as well as publishing models and products. We invite you to explore what they suggest about social, reputational, political, aesthetic and cultural value and capital, and how such considerations work with – and sometimes against – the equity or assets of a venture.

We equally want to pay tribute to the ethical features of feminist business archive construction itself. The creators and managers of this heritage are vital participants in contemporary history, and often extraordinary memory-keepers themselves.

We present these treasures as illuminating the story of women's struggle for autonomy, empowerment and creative expression. They offer exercises in – and examples of – radical enterprise which are perhaps even more relevant today as we struggle to address the climate emergency and promote social justice.

Margaretta Jolly

Professor of Cultural Studies, University of Sussex, January 2022

Book publishing

Virago Press

<https://www.virago.co.uk/>

Set up in 1973 and still going strong, Virago has been at the forefront in bringing women's writing to the widest possible readership.

Records of Virago Press at The British Library

British Library, Archives and Manuscripts

Reference: Add MS 88904

Extent: 518 files

Date: 1973-onwards

Includes author and editor files (1954-2008), files relating to publication series or broader subjects (1976-2001), general administration files (1987-2006), photographs (1975-2008), publicity materials (1980-1999) and Virago's anniversary papers (1981-1998).

The project to catalogue the archive was supported by Virago Press.

BOWW team top picks:

- Add MS 88904/1/11: Struggle to maintain relevance and profitability of Virago Modern Classics in challenging market conditions of the late 1980s/early 90s.
- Add MS 88904/3/1: Business Plan, 1987-91, used to secure investment from Rothschilds Ventures Limited as part of a leveraged management buy-out.
- Add MS 88904/3/2: Greater Access to Publishing administration file (1987-1988), includes minutes, correspondence and papers relating to a one-day conference.

Go to: https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do

RACHEL FOSS, HEAD OF CONTEMPORARY ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS, THE BRITISH LIBRARY

'We're privileged to hold at the British Library some major collections relating to feminist and women's publishing in the 20th and 21st centuries and we're keen to make them available for everyone who wants to do research. This Guide is a very valuable resource and I hope it will increase understanding of the fruitful dialogue that exists between business archives and personal archives.'

Carmen Callil Archive at the British Library

British Library, Archives and Manuscripts

Date: c.1940-2010s

Carmen Calli (b 1938) is an Australian publisher, writer and critic who founded Virago Press in 1973. She was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) in 2017 for services to literature.

Includes papers relating to the foundation and running of Virago Press, along with author and business files, personal correspondence, drafts and working material relating to Callil's own writing projects, catalogues and posters and born digital records.

BOWW team top picks:

- Add MS 89178/1/128-155: Virago receipts, 1976-81.
- Add MS 89178/1/114: Viking/APC, USA 1985-89, especially 'Report on a visit to America by Alexandra Pringle, January 1986, enclosed with New York itinerary and Viking Penguin Virago Modern Classics sales report, captured 17 January 1986'.
- Add MS 89178/6/1-35: Virago Press New Books and Complete List Catalogue. Series of catalogues promoting Virago Press new books and complete backlist of titles between 1974-97, with some special editions from 2001 and 2008 as part of Little, Brown Books.

This collection is a valuable complement to the Virago Press records and will be available for research in 2022. See British Library's Literary Archives and Manuscripts 1600 to present webpage <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/literary-archives-and-manuscripts-1600-to-present>

Contact: mss@bl.uk

Records of Virago Press at The University of Reading

University of Reading, Special Collections

Reference: MS 5223

Extent: 15 boxes

Date: c.1970-89

Includes financial records, correspondence, and stock books.

BOWW team top picks:

- MS 5223, 10, File 11/1: 'Notes on Oxford Visit to Blackwells', interaction with Oxford booksellers, November 1980.
- MS 5223, 10: 'Notes on Frankfurt', 1977, interaction with international publishers in late 1970s.

- MS 5223, 12: Correspondence between Kate Griffin, Sales Manager, and Hugh Dunphy, Sales Representative, West Indies, 1981, regarding publication of Phyllis Shand Allfrey's *The Orchid House*, first book by a West Indian novelist published in the VMC series (1982).
- MS 5223, 12: 'office equipment folder', of interest to media archaeologists and historians studying the material culture of the office.

Further material related to Virago Press can also be found in the University of Reading's archives of Chatto & Windus (CW) and Heinemann Educational Books (HEB 28/9).

Contact: specialcollections@reading.ac.uk

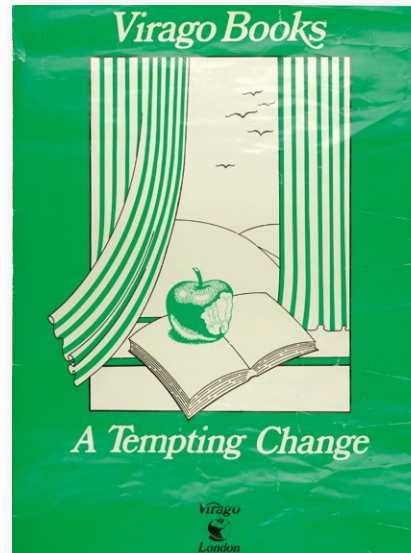


Figure 5 Virago Poster 004: Early promotional poster for Virago Press, c. 1975 © By kind permission of Virago Press

Onlywomen Press Ltd

Set up in London in 1974 by a collective of four women, Onlywomen Press aimed to print and publish writing that challenged gender and sexual stereotypes, deploying methods of work that were identifiably feminist. The company was dissolved in 2016.

Records of Onlywomen Press at The Women's Library@LSE

Reference: 6OWP

Extent: 45 A boxes, one OS box and one OS drawer

Date: early 20th century to 2017

Includes foundation and early papers (6OWP/1); minutes of meetings (6OWP/2-3); printed papers by OWP such as catalogues, leaflets and circulars (6OWP/3); general information on OWP and its history (6OWP/4-6); photographs (6OWP/6); events such as readings, conferences and book festivals (6OWP/7-8); financial and administrative papers, including office diaries and office instructions (6OWP/11); publications files (6OWP/12-34); distribution (6OWP/39-42).

BOWW team top picks:

- Photo album with early statements and photos of OWP workers at printing press.
- Template Author Contract, noting company shall print at own expense except in context of fire, floods, patriarchal sabotage P1020684.JPG.
- Statements explaining change of company name as not registered with Companies House/The Women's Press accompanying statement.
- Explanation for change of logo design.
- Job advert for sales & marketing manager for an Expanding Lesbian Feminist Press, approx 1991. 2019-11-15 17.01.39.jpg.

- Letter from accountant commenting on business plan to save the company, July 1993.

Note: Some related information about Onlywomen Press Ltd. is held at the Glasgow Women's Library (p16).

Contact: 020 7955 7229

library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk

DR GILLIAN MURPHY, CURATOR OF EQUALITY, RIGHTS AND CITIZENSHIP, LSE LIBRARY

'This guide is a great idea. We proudly look after the records of Onlywomen Press and other women's presses in The Women's Library at LSE. They tell the story of how women set up and ran these businesses, the highs and the lows.'

Sheba Feminist Press

Launched as an independent, diverse, not-for-profit workers' publishing co-operative in 1980 by group of seven women, Sheba Feminist Publishers (1980-1994) aimed to bring writing by Black, working class, lesbian and new writers of diverse backgrounds to publication.

Records of Sheba Feminist Press at The Women's Library@LSE

Reference 6SFP

Extent: 33 A boxes, one OS box, one OS folder, two textiles (uncatalogued)

Date: 1981-1994

Includes minutes, correspondence, publicity, press cuttings, publications including books and object (one banner).

This collection is uncatalogued and not generally available. Please contact the archive for further information.

Contact: 020 7955 7229
library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk

The Women's Press

Founded in 1977 with financial backing from Namara Ltd, The Women's Press began to publish in 1978, and was dedicated to publishing feminist fiction and non-fiction by outstanding women writers around the world.

Records of the Women's Press at The Women's Library@ LSE

Reference: 6TWP
Extent: 68 T boxes; c.10 metres books (uncatalogued)
Date: 1970s-2003

Includes editorial files by title; publicity files by title; administrative files including press releases, financial papers and advertising correspondence; production files by title; papers relating to Feminist Book Fortnight, the International Feminist Book Festival and similar initiatives; complete set of Women's Press catalogues; file copies of books; material relating to The Women Artists Diary.

Contact: 020 7955 7229
library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk

Honno (Gwasg Menywod Cymru/ Welsh Women's Press)

Established in 1986 by a group of eight women volunteers, Honno Gwasg Menywod Cymru/Welsh Women's Press is an independent co-operative press. Honno's first title was published in 1987, and it continues to flourish. Books which have been out of print for many years are reprinted in the series Honno Classics (Clasuron Honno). The press has received many awards over the years including the Pandora's Box Award for Women in Publishing in 2002.

Honno papurau/papers

National Library of Wales/Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru
Reference: GB 0210 HONNO
Extent: 9 boxes
Date: 1986-2009

Includes papers of Honno, 1986-2009, with minutes of committee and AGM meetings; correspondence; marketing material; unpublished manuscripts and reader's reports.

BOWW team top picks:

- Box 1: Features press releases, 1986-1999, including for Honno launch February 1987.
- Box 2: Includes 'Letter to shareholders, two years since Honno's launch (1989)', with a voting form to decide whether Honno should use printers based outside Wales; and files related to Honno's evaluation by the Books Council of Wales, 2005.
- Box 9: Includes reader's reports (1988-94); correspondence related to rights exploitation of Carol-Ann Courtney's *Morphine and Dolly-Mixtures*; material related to Feminist Book Fortnight, 1988-95; Honno's distribution deals with Turnaround and the Books Council of Wales.

Contact: **enquiry@llgc.org.uk**
<https://www.library.wales/>

Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications Limited

Founded in 1969 by Eric (b 1929) and Jessica (nee Carroll) Huntley (1927-2013), Black political activists and publishers, who played a prominent role in the Black Caribbean community, along with friends and associates. Incorporated as a company limited by shares in 1974.



Figure 6 Jessica Huntley (speaking). All rights reserved. Photographer unattributed. Courtesy of Huntley Archives at London Metropolitan Archives_ Archives Series Ref-LMA_4462_F_02_016_k

Papers of Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications Limited (Black Caribbean Publishers and Booksellers) at London Metropolitan Archives

Reference: LMA 4462
Extent: 24.2 linear metres
Date: 1958-2012

This was the first deposit from the African-Caribbean community to be made to the London Metropolitan Archives (in 2005), with additional deposits since that time. Includes business records with correspondence files, submitted manuscripts and photographs relating to published and unpublished authors, poets and artists. Also includes records of associated publishing organisations founded by Eric and Jessica Huntley.

Related material: the Huntley's publishing house and their campaigning and community work were complementary and supported each other. Their personal and business papers were housed together. See LMA/4463 for other businesses campaigns, politics and personal records.

BOWW team top picks:

- LMA/4462/C/01/021: Beryl Gilroy: 'Black Teacher': correspondence, draft manuscript.
- LMA/4462/C/01: Books, Files and Manuscripts 1990-2000. Includes critique by Morgan Dalphinis, letters from Gilroy discussing publishing and racism, letters concerning Gilroy's novel 'Inkle and Yarico' and information from Vantage Press Classification Businesses Access Restrictions.
- LMA/4462/J/01: Letters from police and replies from Jessica Huntley refuting police accounts regarding response to attacks. Includes letter from playwright Michael Abbensetts expressing outrage and giving donation. Copies of replies to letters of support from booksellers, artists and the public. Available for general access.

- LMA/4462/L Greater Access to Publishing, set up in 1987 and affiliated to Women in Publishing. An independent campaigning group of women from various cultural backgrounds working in the publishing industry. Their companies included The Women's Press, Virago, Longmans, Harrap Columbus, Black Ink, Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications Limited, Arawide and Springboard. They aimed to highlight publishing as an option for Black women.
- LMA/4462/M: International Bookfair of Radical Black and Third World Books 1981-2000 (co-directed by Jessica Huntley).

Contact: ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk

BEVERLEY MASON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, FRIENDS OF THE HUNTLEY ARCHIVES AT LMA

'We are grateful for Jessica Huntley's vision and foresight - womanist, radical activist, publisher and community leader, whose commitment to social justice, educational activism and creativity, coupled with her diligence in record keeping of the business activities and artefacts from her family's personal lives, has provided a rich resource reflecting 60 years of Black British heritage. Deposited at City of London, London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) in 2005, the Huntley archives comprise one of the largest collections of Caribbean and African cultural heritage, and was the first major deposit from the African-Caribbean community in London to an established archive. Jessica and Eric's story provides the baseline for understanding the Black British experience from the 1950s onwards.'

SALLY BEVAN, SENIOR ARCHIVIST, LONDON METROPOLITAN ARCHIVES

'Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications Limited was named in honour of Toussaint L'Ouverture and Paul Bogle, figureheads of Black rebellion against the slave trade, to stop the voice of Black history from being silenced and to disseminate it to as wide an audience as possible. The production of a guide such as this will only help to strengthen and support the use of such valuable collections and ensure they are made known to as wide an audience as possible.'

Beryl Foster Archive

Foster co-founded Notting Hill Press Ltd in the late 1960s alongside Linda Gane and later Mike Braybrook and Senta Kandler. The press was part of a movement of community activism in West London in the 1960s-70s including the Notting Hill Community Workshop and Notting Hill People's Association. Notting Hill Press Ltd. allowed local community and action groups to design and print their own material using in-house equipment. Beryl Foster later worked with Women's Aid and other services tackling domestic violence against women.

Archive of the publisher and activist Beryl Foster at the British Library

Reference: Add MS 89305

Extent: 20 files

Date: 1968-2017

This archive covers largely the early organisation of Notting Hill Press Ltd. between 1968-1971.

Go to: searcharchives.bl.uk

Contact: mss@bl.uk

Attic Press/Róisín Conroy Collection

Róisín Conroy was co-founder and publisher of Attic Press and an activist in the Irish women's movement. In 1978 Conroy and Mary Doran set up IFI (Irish Feminist Information) as a feminist organisation concerned with the publication and dissemination of information relating to women in Ireland. In November 1984 IFI separated its training and publishing functions by launching feminist publishing house, Attic Press.

Attic Press/Róisín Conroy Collection at University College Cork, Ireland/ Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

<https://libguides.ucc.ie/AtticPress-RoisinConroy>

Reference: IE BL/F/AP

Extent: 133 boxes & ephemera

Date: 1963-1991

The core sections relate to 1) the activities of Conroy while working as a librarian within the research unit of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU); 2) Irish Feminist Information (IFI) and 3) to Attic Press. Not all titles published by Attic Press are in this collection. The remaining material is most likely with Cork University Press which took over Attic Press in September 1997.

The collection includes records relating to International Feminist Bookfairs, Women's World Festivals and International Interdisciplinary Congresses. Talks given by Ailbhe Smyth and Nell McCafferty can be found among the sound archives (BL/F/1566). Papers relating to women's groups and associated organisations are also present.

Contact:

specialcollectionsarchives@ucc.ie

Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project

A Leverhulme-funded research project partnership between the British Library, University of Sussex and the Women's Library.

Sisterhood & After at The British Library

British Library, Sound Archive

Reference: C1420

Extent: 60 audio interviews and verbatim transcripts; 10 documentary films

Date: 2010-2013

The project interviewed 60 feminists who had been active in the UK women's movements in the 1970s-90s, and commissioned 10 short documentary films by director Lizzie Thynne. Recording and films are available at the British Library. A rich online resource features over 100 clips, teachers' packs and articles. See in particular **<https://www.bl.uk/sisterhood/articles/feminist-literature>**

BOWW team top picks:

- C1420/44: Kirsten Hearn, disability rights activist and founder member of Sisters against Disablement, Feminist Audio Books and Lesbians and Gays Unite in Disability **<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/kirsten-hearn-feminist-audio-books>**
- C1420/36: Ursula Owen, publisher and editor, founder director of Virago Press, chief executive of Index on Censorship 1993-2006, and founder of the Free Word Centre for literature, literacy and free expression **<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/ursula-owen-popularity-of-virago-books>**
- C1420/52: Barbara Jones, director of Straw Works, a design, build and training company specialising in

strawbale building <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/on-tools> Although not in the publishing sector, Jones has much of general relevance to say about trading and economic philosophy from a radical feminist perspective.

- C1420/35: Michele Ryan, founder member of South Wales Women's Film Group and Red Flannel films. Again, although not in publishing, Ryan offers insights into parallel questions of independent and collaborative film production from a socialist feminist perspective. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/red-flannel-liberating-women-on-film>

Contact: sound-archive@bl.uk

More information at (<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/sound/ohist/ohcoll/womenshistory/womenshistory.html>) and at the project's British Library Learning website at www.bl.uk/sisterhood.

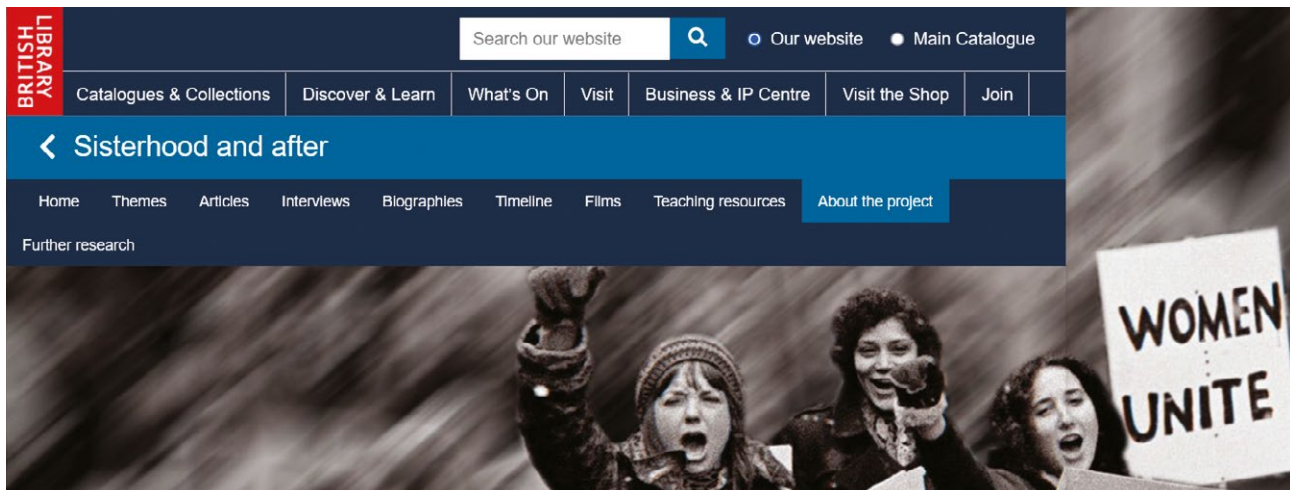


Figure 7 Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project web resource at the British Library © the British Library

Authors' archives

Material relating to women and publishing can also be found in the archives of individual writers, ranging from correspondence with publishers to contracts and financial records.

Examples in the British Library include the archives of Angela Carter, Beryl Bainbridge, Phyllis Bottome, Eva Figs (particularly in relation to Figs' editing of Macmillan's series on women writers), Penelope Fitzgerald and Margaret Forster.

Other organisational archives at the British Library which may be of interest include the Society of Authors Archive (1876-1982) and the Macmillan Archive.

For more records of publishing houses see the Archive of British Printing and Publishing at the University of Reading, which also holds additional records from the Macmillan Archive.

To find authors' and publishers' archives in other repositories use the Location Register of English Literary Manuscripts and Letters at the University of Reading or search The National Archives' Discovery website which includes the National Register of Archives.



Figure 8 Innovative and brilliant books from feminist and women's publishers and presses since the 1970s © Tom Reeves

Magazines and periodical publishing

Spare Rib

Published from 1972-93, this now iconic magazine known for its eye-catching design and wide-ranging content was a key platform for women's movements in the late 20th century. Run as a feminist collective.

See its origins at:
www.bl.uk/spare-rib/



***Spare Rib* correspondence and Boston Women's Health Book Collective materials at the Feminist Archive South (FAS)**

University of Bristol, Special Collections

Reference: DM2123/1/
Archive Boxes 52-56
Extent: 5 boxes, plus one box of unredacted material (not for giving to readers)
Date: 1972-86

Figure 9 *Spare Rib* cover, Feb 1978, Issue 67 © Val Wilmer

Includes papers relating to the running of *Spare Rib*, 1972-86. Of the six sub-series, the first is mainly concerned with the business, e.g. distribution, financial information. The last contains papers published by the Boston Women's Book Collective, therefore available elsewhere.

These two sub-series are open and accessible to researchers, although some items containing personal information have been redacted and the redacted version is available to researchers.

The remaining four series consist largely of readers' letters to *Spare Rib*, some of which were published in the magazine. As predominantly including personal data, these papers are restricted.

BOWW team top picks:

- DM2123/1/Archive boxes 56: 1974-5 minute book recording the editorial collective's debates and decision making.
- DM2123/1/Archive boxes 55 and 56: Correspondence with distributors, including Seymour Press, New English Library, Moore Harness, COMAG (shared with Vogue), and the specialist in radical journals, the Publications Distribution Co-operative.
- DM2123/1/Archive boxes 56: Correspondence with Virago Press discussing shared origins, and books for review.

Contact: 0117 928 8014

Email: special-collections@bristol.ac.uk

www.bristol.ac.uk/library/special-collections/



Figure 11 *Spare Rib* cover, Feb 1977, Issue 55
© Michael Ann Mullen

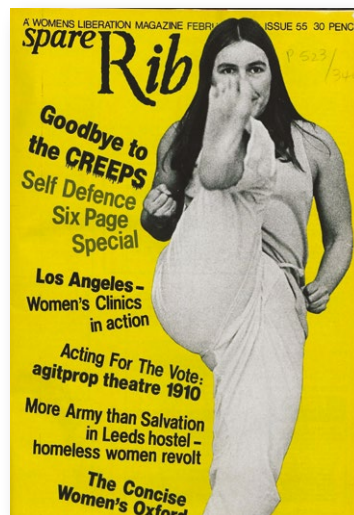


Figure 10 *Spare Rib* cover, Nov 1976, Issue 52
© Michael Ann Mullen

HANNAH LOWERY, ARCHIVIST AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS MANAGER, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

'The Feminist Archive South is delighted to hold four boxes of materials which shed light on the working practices of the *Spare Rib* Collective, and to make them accessible to researchers. It is great to have them featured in this guide, and we'd welcome visitors to come and explore and also our other holdings relating to the women's liberation movement c.1969-2000.'



Figure 12 Visiting the London Metropolitan Archives © LMA, with kind permission from LMA, City of London

Records of *Spare Rib* in the Greater London Council Papers at the London Metropolitan Archive

The Greater London Council gave financial support to *Spare Rib* between 1982 and 1986. The magazine also received funding from the GLC's Industry and Employment Committee.

This collection also holds similar records from a range of other feminist publishing enterprises, including the See Red Women's Workshop.

Reference: GLC/DG/WCSU/5/53/s20, GLC/DG/WCSU/5/53/s21

Extent: 125.75 linear feet full collection of the Women's Committee Support Unit

Date: 1982-1986

The archives have been arranged into grants files; International Women's Day papers; miscellaneous.

BOWW team top picks:

- Readership survey, commissioned in 1985 to meet funder requirements.
- Regular budgets showing growth of *Spare Rib* in terms of staff, sales and publishing projects, as well as details of capital raised through issue of shares in the limited liability company originally established in 1972.
- Surveys and policies from the *Spare Rib* collective describing work on inclusion and outreach.

Contact: ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk

The Spare Rib resource at the British Library

British Library, Archives and Manuscripts

Reference: <https://www.bl.uk/spare-rib>

Date: 1972-93

The curated **British Library Spare Rib site** offers contextual essays and selected magazine content including <https://www.bl.uk/spare-rib/articles/listings-and-the-feminist-marketplace-in-spare-rib-1972-1993>

It features a pioneering digital map created by the Business of Women's Words team from the magazine's listings and letters pages, revealing a coast-to-coast network of feminist traders and customers as well as readers, activists and centres.

www.bl.uk/spare-rib/map

The full run of hard copy magazines is also available to British Library readers on site at the British Library in St Pancras and Boston Spa.



Glasgow Women's Library, The Lesbian archive

The Lesbian Archive and Information Centre was set up in London in 1984, funded by the Greater London Council. It came to Glasgow Women's Library in 1995, and now comprises one of the most significant LGBT historical collections in the UK, with material spanning from the 1920s to the present day.

The archive contains partial and complete runs of:

- LGBTQ journals and magazines such as *Urania*; *Arena* 3; *Sappho*; *Outrage*; *The Pink Paper*; *Shebang*; *On Our Backs*; *The Ladder*; *Outwrite*; and more.
- Feminist publications including *London Women's Liberation Newsletter*; *WIRES*; *Trouble and Strife*; *Off Our Backs*; *Merseyside Women's Paper*; *Heresies*; and more.

Go to <https://womenslibrary.org.uk/explore-the-library-and-archive/the-archive-collection/the-lesbian-archive/>
Contact: 0141 550 2267

E: info@womenslibrary.org.uk

Figure 13 The Spare Rib digital map created by the Business of Women's Words
© The British Library

Hall-Carpenter Oral History Archive at the British Library

The archive is a major collection of interviews relating to gay and lesbian experience in Britain.

Named in honour of novelist Marguerite Radclyffe Hall and writer on social and sexual reform Edward Carpenter, the original oral history project was established in 1985 as part of the Hall Carpenter Archives, set up in 1982.

After the closure of the archive the written papers were given to the London School of Economics and the oral history collection, including correspondence and some transcripts, was donated to the National Sound Archive in 1989.

References C456/01-64 comprise the collection. See the British Library's oral histories of sexuality, reproductive health and prostitution section for more information.

BOWW team top picks relating to feminist publishing:

- C456/69 Nettie Pollard interviewed by Margot Farnham in 1990: talks about Rotunda Press, *Quim* magazine.
- C456/81 Sophie Laws interviewed by Margot Farnham in 1990: talks about Onlywomen Press, *Wires*, *Outwrite*, *Spare Rib* and *Trouble & Strife*.
- C456/105 Liz Kelly interviewed by Margot Farnham in 1991: talks about the *Trouble and Strife* collective.
- C456/110 Roberta Henderson interviewed by Margot Farnham in 1991: talks about Red Rag, feminist newsletters, publishing first issue of *Outwrite* on International Women's Day, 1982.
- C456/113: Marie Mulholland interviewed by Margot Farnham in 1991: talks about Maeve publishing.
- C456/114: Linda Blyth interviewed by Margot Farnham in 1991: talks about *Red Herring* magazine.

Find out about the history of the Hall-Carpenter Archives at the LSE History blog: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsehistory/2017/02/01/glad-to-be-gay-the-hall-carpenter-archives-at-lse-library/>

Booksellers, distributors and agents

See British Library <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/oral-histories-of-writing-and-publishing>

Women in Publishing

British Library, Sound Archive

Reference: C1657

Extent: 30 oral histories, varying in length from two to 10 hours

Recorded interviews with 30 women who worked in publishing in the 1970s-90s, the heyday of Women in Publishing and more generally of women's activism in the UK, in partnership with the British Library.

Listen to extracts at the Women in Publishing oral history website <https://www.womeninpublishinghistory.org.uk/>

BOWW team top picks:

- C1657/29: Jane Cholmeley, bookseller; WiP member; co-founder of WiP Oral History. Co-founder of Silver Moon Women's Bookshop with Sue Butterworth and Jane Anger in 1984.
- C1657/07: Jane Anger, bookseller. Active in WiP and Feminist Bookfairs.

Both interviewed by Sarah O'Reilly.



Figure 14 Silver Moon Women's Bookshop © Jane Cholmeley, by kind permission of Jane Cholmeley

JANE CHOLMELEY AND PENNY MOUNTAIN, DIRECTORS OF THE WOMEN IN PUBLISHING ORAL HISTORY

'What a treasure trove of resources this guide reveals. We hope that students of publishing and the Women's Liberation Movement will plan many happy research projects using it – and especially enjoy the role that oral history can play in capturing women's activism in the publishing world.'

Contact: sound-archive@bl.uk

A full run of Women in Publishing's newsletter WiPlash is held at the Feminist Archive South, University of Bristol, Special Collections.

<http://feministarchivesouth.org.uk/>

Book Trade Lives

British Library, Sound Archive

Reference: C872

Extent: 118 oral histories

Date: 1998-2006

Begun in 1998 as a National Life Stories project to record the experiences of people who had worked in UK publishing and bookselling from the early 1920s to 2006. Featuring 118 in-depth interviews, the collection has been digitised as part of the British Library's Save Our Sounds project.

A CD with extracts from the project entitled Book Trade Lives was published by The British Library in 2002. Over 80 interviews from Book Trade Lives were used in *The British Book Trade: An Oral History* (British Library, 2008 and 2010), edited by the project interviewer Sue Bradley.

See also: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/oral-histories-of-writing-and-publishing>

BOWW team top picks:

- C872/118: Margaret Busby OBE, publisher, editor, writer and broadcaster, co-founder of Allison & Busby.
- C872/110: Philippa Harrison, former MD of Macmillan and CEO of Little, Brown involved in acquisition of Virago in 1995.
- C872/095: Sue Butterworth, co-founder of Silver Moon bookshop.

Contact: sound-archive@bl.uk

Black Cultural Archives

BCA is the UK's only national heritage centre dedicated to collecting, preserving and celebrating the histories of African and Caribbean people in Britain.

Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race collection at Black Cultural Archives

Reference: ORAL/1/3

Extent: 64 minutes, approx.

Date: 2010

Gerlin Bean speaks of setting up Sabarr Bookshop, in Brixton, London, one of the UK's first Black community bookshops. Sabarr focused on Black writers, children's books and posters, sourcing books mostly from the USA but also from local publishers.

The shop was based in a building that had initially been squatted by community leader and activist Olive Morris, with her friend Liz Obi in 1973. The squat became a hub of political activism and local community groups.

Gerlin Bean was a member of the Black Unity and Freedom Party (BUFP), founded in 1970. She launched the organisation's Black Women's Action Committee after attending the 1970 National Women's Liberation Conference at Oxford University: one of only two Black women present.

Contact: 020 3757 8500
info@bcaheritage.org.uk

The Co-operative Heritage Trust

The **trust** preserves the heritage assets of the co-operative movement in the UK, holding collections which tell how the movement began and grew, and its influence on the social, economic and political history of the country. The trust is based in Rochdale, where the co-operative movement first emerged.

Jane Watts, founder member of the York Community Bookshop: recollections

Reference: GB 1499 WTOH/4
Extent: three digital recordings, track one most applicable, 52 minutes approx.
Date: 2018

Based at Walmgate, York, the bookshop operated as a workers' co-operative of five women and three men from the mid 1970s-mid 1980s. Watts speaks about the structure of co-op, how it was run, connections to other co-op businesses, and involvement with the Federation of Alternative Bookshops.

Contact: 01706 524920
museum@heritagetrust.coop
archive@heritagetrust.coop

www.co-operativeheritage.coop/

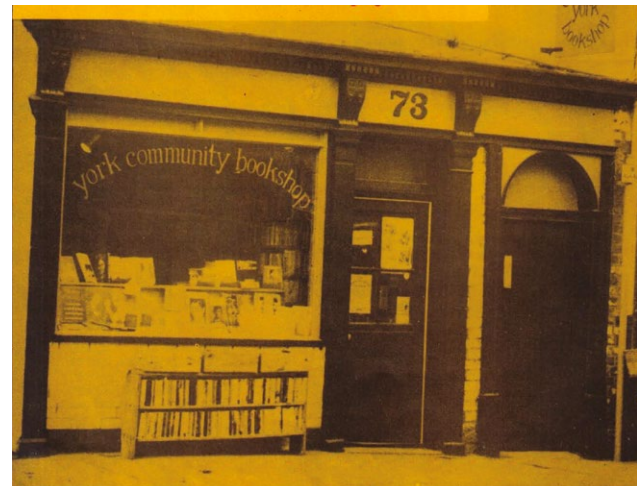


Figure 15 York Community Bookshop

The Lesbian History Group

Founded in 1984 at the height of second wave feminism after a lesbian studies conference, the Lesbian History Group continued till 1995, and was re-established in 2015 by some of its original members.

Lynn Alderson, co-founder of Sisterwrite Bookshop, Islington, London: recollections

Audio recording and PDF transcript accessible via Lesbian History group website.

<https://lesbianhistorygroup.wordpress.com/talks/>

Extent: 51 minutes approx.

Date: 2016

Lynn Alderson worked with Mary Coghill and Kay Stirling to set up Sisterwrite and helped run the bookshop during its first three years. Sisterwrite opened in 1978 and traded until 1993. Run as a workers' co-operative, it also had a café – Sisterbite – where women could meet, and hosted

activist organizations. Sisterwrite sold a range of UK and imported lesbian books and magazines that were difficult to obtain elsewhere.

The Feminist Library

The library based in Peckham, London, holds a large collection of Women's Liberation Movement literature, operates as a community space and supports research, activist and community projects.

Members of Sisterwrite Collective: in conversation

<https://feministlibrary.co.uk/in-conversation-with-members-of-sisterwrite-collective/>

Date: 2020

Members of the collective in discussion. Features Ferha Farooqui, Yvette Ellis, Sheila Auguste, Rachael Cox, Sakthi Suriyaprakasam, and Sylvia Parker.



Figure 16 Sisterwrite Bookshop; Islington, London June 1986 © Jenny Matthews



Figure 17 Sisterwrite Bookshop exterior; Islington London June 1986 © Jenny Matthews

Federation of Radical Booksellers

Until the mid-1980s there were radical bookshops in towns across Britain. Many joined The Federation of Alternative Bookshops, set up in 1975 as a support network and to help with aspects of bookselling. Renamed the Federation of Radical Booksellers in 1981, it ceased to operate in 1992 as the bookselling trade hit hard times, especially with the closure of the Net Book Agreement, which regulated book prices and enabled booksellers large or small to sell at the same price.

The Alliance of Radical Booksellers has recently been established to pick up where the Federation left off
<http://www.radicalbooksellers.co.uk/>

LYNETTE CAWTHRA, LIBRARY MANAGER, WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT LIBRARY

‘Our Library’s founders Ruth and Eddie Frow were proud that their love of books created a unique and valuable resource for people wanting to know more about working people’s lives and political beliefs. They’d be really pleased to see material from our collection featured here in the broader context of women’s radical struggles, and with the aim of using archive material not just to explore the past but to change the future.’



Figure 18 The Working Class Movement Library in Salford © Cal Cole, with kind permission from The Working Class Movement Library

Papers of the Federation of Radical Booksellers at the Working Class Movement Library, Salford

Reference: ORG/RADBOOK
 Extent: 11 boxes
 Date: 1975-93

Includes constitutions, proceedings of conferences and other meetings, newsletters, co-ordinators’ reports, membership lists and questionnaires, material from member shops, internal memos, external correspondence, publications, and financial records.

Some files relate to issues in which the Federation and its members had a direct interest, including attacks on bookshops, censorship, the Net Book Agreement, and the ‘Stop the Clause Campaign’ (relating to the Local Government Act 1988).

Contact: 0161 7363601
<https://www.wcml.org.uk/contact-details/>

Papers of the Federation of Radical Booksellers in the Personal Papers of John La Rose at the George Padmore Institute, Finsbury Park, London

Reference: LRA/01/0295
 Extent: one file
 Date: 1986-88

Includes leaflet, agendas and booking information from annual conferences held by the Federation of Radical Booksellers; co-ordinators’ reports which include news of fire-bombing of the Third World Centre in East London. Material sent to John La Rose from Richard Sylvester, Director of THAP (Tower Hamlets Arts Project) Books Ltd.

Contact: 020 7272 8915
info@georgepadmoreinstitute.org

The 1984 International Feminist Book Fair Collection

British Library, Sound Archive

Reference: C154/1 and 2

Extent: 38 recordings

Date: 1984

Begun in 1984, the International Feminist Book Fairs ran biannually until 1996, taking place in London,

Oslo, Montreal, Barcelona, Amsterdam and Melbourne. Recordings include organiser Carole Spedding and writers Audre Lorde and Grace Nichols.

See also *Feminist Book Fortnight: A Short History* by Eleanor Careless at <https://blogs.sussex.ac.uk/businessofwomenswords/feminist-book-fortnight/>

Contact: sound-archive@bl.uk



Figure 19 The 1st International Feminist Book Fair, Jubilee Hall Convent Garden London 1984; © Jenny Matthews, by kind permission of Jenny Matthews

The International Book Fairs of Radical Black and Third World Books, 1970-2005

The International Book Fairs of Radical Black and Third World Books took place in London between 1982 and 1995. There were 12 in total. International Book Fairs and events also took place in Manchester (1985-1991; 1995), Bradford (1985-1993), Leeds (1993; 1995) *and* Glasgow (1993; 1995).

The Caribbean Peoples' International Bookfair *and* Bookfair Festival (1987-1988; 1992) was a related event organised by the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union (OWTU) in Trinidad.

The founders were New Beacon Books, Race Today Publications and Bogle L'Ouverture Publications. They had worked together since 1975 when the Black Parents Movement had been formed in North London, active in many campaigns, including the New Cross Massacre Action Campaign [see GB 2904 NCM]. John La Rose (New Beacon Books) and Jessica Huntley (Bogle L'Ouverture Publications) became joint directors.

Papers of the International Book Fairs of Radical Black and Third World Books at the George Padmore Institute, Finsbury Park, London

Web: <https://catalogue.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/records/BFC>

Reference: BFC

Extent: 34 boxes

Date: 1970-2005

Includes plans and materials for each fair.

Contact: 020 7272 8915

info@georgepadmoreinstitute.org

Music, design and crafts

Women's Revolutions Per Minute

Women's Revolutions Per Minute (WRPM) was an independent, feminist music distribution network trading 1978-2005. It purchased music recordings from record companies, music distributors, and artists and sold on wholesale to independent and corporate retail outlets (including women's centres, bookshops, and music shops) and by direct sale to customers.

Papers and recordings of Women's Revolutions Per Minute

Goldsmiths, University of London, Special Collections & Archives

Reference: WRPM

Extent: 17 series, comprising 27 boxes of business records, plus 1,565 audio recordings

Date: 1974-2011

The collection contains business records, and a collection of the music sold by the company 1977-2005, comprising vinyl records, audio cassettes, and CDs. It includes corporate management and financial records; business, procurement and sales correspondence; sales catalogues; marketing and promotion records; posters, postcards and songbooks; periodicals; clothing.

BOWW team top picks:

- WRPM/3: Business Correspondence 1978-2007, relating to commercial operations and general enquiries received by the company.
- WRPM/5: Sales Correspondence 1979-2005, between company and wholesale and direct sale customers.
- WRPM/9: Affiliation Records 1980-1999, business records and correspondence relating to feminist music organisations to which WRPM was affiliated. Covers affiliations to the women's music distribution networks WILD (Women's Independent Label Distributors) and Euro-WILD.

Contact: [**special.collections@gold.ac.uk**](mailto:special.collections@gold.ac.uk)

See Red

A radical campaigning and publicising organisation run as a women's collective between c.1974 and the late 1980s, See Red designed and printed its own posters, postcards and calendars, and took on design and print commissions for other organisations. Initially run without grant-aid, with the women contributing up to three working days weekly while earning a living elsewhere, it received funding from the Greater London Council between c1983-1986.

Papers of See Red at The Women's Library@LSE

Reference: 5SRW
Extent: half an A box
Date: 1974-1984

Includes correspondence; notebooks containing minutes; press cuttings; poster catalogues and photographs showing members at work in the screen-print workshop.

Contact: 020 7955 7229
library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk

The Women's Press (design)

Papers of Suzanne Perkins, art director of the Women's Press at The Victoria & Albert Museum, Archive of Art and Design

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/archives/unit/ARC107404>
Reference: AAD/2011/12
Extent: 44 files
Date: 1977-91

Includes Women's Press publications including new books list and order forms (1980-91), covers, cartoons and diaries (1987-93); correspondence between Perkins and

'Eye Magazine' regarding the colour dayglo together with information related to fluorescent inks and paints; branding and marketing material including posters (1977-87), postcards and ephemera.

Available for consultation in the V&A Blythe House Archive and Library Study Room by appointment only. Access to some of the material may be restricted, noted in the catalogue where relevant.

See page 7 for the Women's Press Collection at the Women's Library at LSE.

Contact: 020 7942 2000
Email: **hello@vam.ac.uk**

The Business of Women's Words

British Library, Sound Archive
Reference: C1834
Extent: 18 oral histories
Date: 2018-2020

Includes life history interviews with 18 feminists active in cultural and creative industries associated with the women's movement in the UK in the 1970s-90s. It is part of a Leverhulme Trust-funded research project 'The Business of Women's Words: Purpose and Profit in Feminist Publishing', a partnership between the British Library, University of Sussex and the University of Cambridge.

See also:

- **<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/sound/ohist/ohcoll/womenshistory/womenshistory.html>**
- **<https://www.bl.uk/womens-rights/articles/print-purpose-and-profit-women-in-publishing>**

BOWW team top picks:

- C1834/02: Ruthie Petrie, *Spare Rib* collective member (1978-82), editor at Virago Press (1982-94), becoming an Editorial Director in 1987; founder of the Publishing Programme of the Disability Rights Commission.
- C1834/06: Tsehai Berhane-Selassi, *Spare Rib* journalist and editor, developing transnational and global South coverage.
- C1834/07: Claire Thompson, marketing director and co-owner of Turnaround Publisher Services, one of the UK's longest running radical distributors.
- C1834/10: Philippa Brewster, founder of Pandora Press at RKP, editor and agent.
- C1834/12: Anna Coote, journalist and feminist economic policy advisor.
- C1834/17: Kate Griffin, sales director at Virago 1979-1982; later Publicity, Sales, Marketing Director Profile books.
- C1834/18: Susheila Nasta MBE, founder of *Wasfiri* magazine of international contemporary writing.

Contact: **sound-archive@bl.uk**

For more information see: **<https://blogs.sussex.ac.uk/businessofwomenswords/>**



Figure 20 The Business of Women's Words logo © Nicola Streeten

Further resources

Best Practice Site for Business Archives

Information to help businesses manage their archive collections, aimed at company personnel with no prior knowledge or expertise in archive management as well as business archive practitioners.

<https://managingbusinessarchives.co.uk/>

Dr Alix Green at the University of Essex demonstrates how a company's archives can help solve current business problems. Her work on past pay policies at John Lewis helps inform the company's pay strategy and she is writing guidance on how companies can use historical documents to benefit their business.

<https://vimeo.com/354630125>

FLA (Feminist and Women's Libraries and Archives Network)

Building connections, knowledge and solidarity between libraries and archives which hold material dedicated the lives and histories of feminists and women. These may be dedicated institutions, or more general ones which consciously collect feminist or women's material.

<https://fla-network.com/>

The National Archives

A non-ministerial department, and the official archive and publisher for the UK Government, and for England and Wales. Offers expert advice in information and records management, and a leadership role for the archive sector. Holds over 1,000 years of iconic national documents, and works to secure the future of physical and digital records.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

National Archives Discovery

Lists more than 32 million descriptions of records from The National Archives and more than 2,500 archives across the country. Over 9 million records are available for download.

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

Archives Hub

Use the Archives Hub to find unique sources for your research, both physical and digital. Search across descriptions of archives, held at over 350 institutions across the UK.

<https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/>

The Business Archives Council

Founded in 1934 to promote the preservation of business records of historical importance, provide information on business archives and modern records, encourage interest in and study of business history and offer a forum for custodians and users of business archives.

<https://businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/>

The International Council of Archives

Founded in 1948 to promote the preservation and use of archives around the world, working for the protection and enhancement of the memory of the world and to improve communication while respecting cultural diversity.

<https://www.ica.org/en>

The British Records Association

Founded in 1932 to encourage and assist with the preservation, care, use and publication of historical records.

<https://www.britishrecordsassociation.org.uk/>

The Oral History Society UK

Founded in 1973, the society promotes the collection, preservation and use of recorded memories and plays a key role in facilitating and developing the use of oral history.

<https://www.ohs.org.uk/>

A note on future collecting

We hope that this guide is useful in demonstrating the reasons why it is important for feminist, women's and social movement enterprises to document their business histories and for researchers, archivists and new activist-entrepreneurs to engage with them. We are inspired by the National Archives' Business Archives Strategy's view that collecting business records has social value. Produced by The National Archives and its partners, the Business Archives Council, Society of Archivists, Museums Libraries and Archives Council, the Welsh Government (through CyMAL), Economic History Society and Association of Business Historians, the strategy prioritises:

- Raising awareness among businesses of the value of their records and archives, and providing guidance and support from the professional archive community.
- Increasing the number of corporate sector business archives and of business collections in public sector repositories.
- Raising the profile of business records with the public, and throughout the national archival network, while promoting wider usage and exploitation.
- Raising standards in caring for business archives through best practice exemplars, professional training and an improved funding and support infrastructure.

The value of these collections also reflects feminist archival principles and aims which include:

- Documenting, framing and sharing underrepresented women's lives and gender relations with active participation of users, including skilling them in archival practice, such as in creating metadata.
- Capturing protest and political history: in a business context this might include design and marketing records and objects; activist-entrepreneurial stories via oral history.
- Valuing ephemera, intangible heritage and digital assets, including archiving the daily, ordinary actions of small businesses in conversation, email, websites, receipts, training.

Current 'feminist' economic models as well as businesses, may include freemium, crowd-sourcing, match-funding, alternative currencies, social enterprise, non-profit, copyleft, collective share-holding in addition to reshaping or claiming traditional business models in a post-digital, global economy. At the same time, women and gender-based activism is rethinking gender categorisation and the means for alliance and collaboration across multiple differences. This is a challenging but exciting moment and there is much to consider in how innovative and utopian businesses might be tracked and remembered in future.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/business-archives-strategy/>

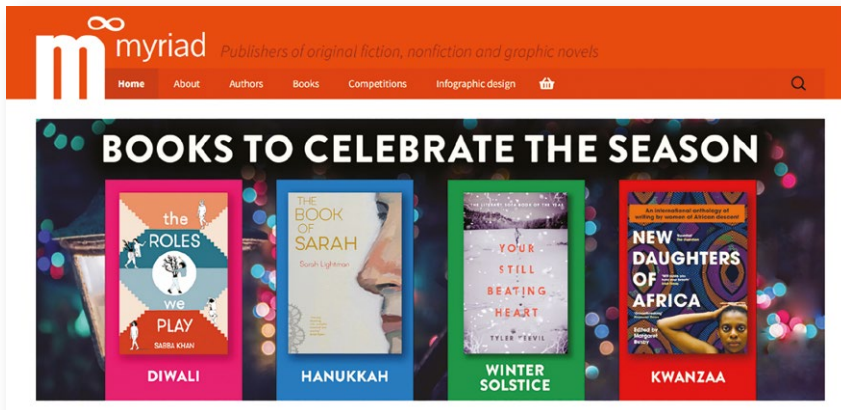


Figure 21 Myriad Editions website header, designed by Vicki Heath-Silk, Nov-Dec 2021, reproduced with kind permission from Corinne Pearlman

CORINNE PEARLMAN
COMMISSIONING EDITOR AND
CANDIDA LACEY, MANAGING
DIRECTOR AND PUBLISHING
DIRECTOR, 1998-2021, MYRIAD
EDITIONS

‘Myriad has a wealth of literary and business archives to care for, physically and digitally, dating back to its days as a packager of topical atlases, and becoming the independent publisher of original fiction, graphic novels and feminist non-fiction that it is known for. We’ve been actively discussing how to archive, so the guide is a real encouragement to help us find a home.’

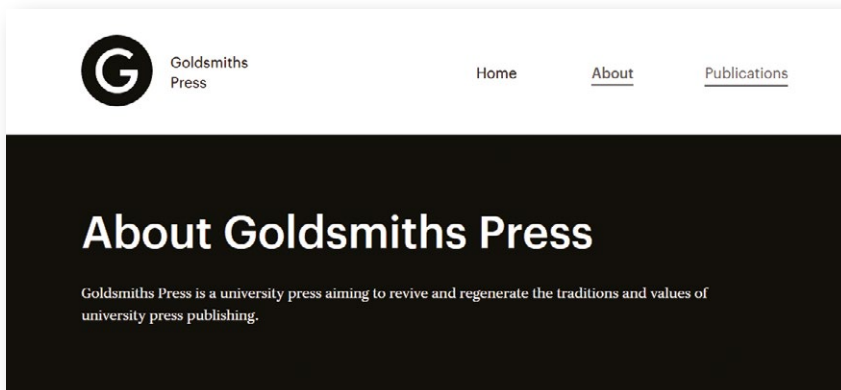


Figure 22 Goldsmiths Press website header 2021, reproduced with kind permission from Sarah Kember

SARAH KEMBER
DIRECTOR, GOLDSMITHS PRESS

‘I can tell you now that I’ll be using this guide. Goldsmiths Library is starting to archive our books but this is invaluable for thinking about how to preserve all the other documents behind our press’s work and highlights the importance of public archives.’

Please see our website for more about the Business of Women's Words Project at the Universities of Sussex and Cambridge: <https://blogs.sussex.ac.uk/businessofwomenswords/> Contact boww@sussex.ac.uk

We are very grateful indeed to our partner The British Library, to the Leverhulme Trust for funding the BOWW project and to Lucy Delap, Polly Russell, Rachel Foss and D-M Withers for their help in developing this guide.

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