A library of our own: the potential for a women’s library in Wales

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2006
DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed ……………………………………………………………………………………..

Date ……………………………………………………………………………………..

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by citations and footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Date ……………………………………………………………………………………..

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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Date ……………………………………………………………………………………..
ABSTRACT

Though there are approximately 400 women’s libraries or information centres internationally they are not generally the focus of research within either library studies or feminist research.

This thesis addressed this gap in relation to women’s libraries in the British Isles, focusing particularly on Wales where there is currently no physical women’s library. The research analysed the nature of current women’s libraries; examined their place within librarianship and feminist research and investigated whether there is potential for a women’s library in Wales.

Interviews were held with staff at nine women’s libraries or archive projects: Archif Menywod Cymru/Women’s Archive of Wales, Feminist Archive (South), Feminist Library, Glasgow Women’s Library, Swansea Multicultural Women’s Resource and Training Centre, Women’s History Project, Women in Jazz, Women’s Library, and the Women’s Resource Centre.

The findings reveal three models of women’s libraries: research-orientated institutions; community-based women’s resource centres and online databases of material pertaining to women. A fourth model is developing in Wales: that of distributed donations of material in local record offices.

On the positive side, all the physical women’s libraries have extensive and important collections, and they provide spaces for women’s learning. Conversely, they are constrained by limited financial and human resources. They are not closely engaged with librarianship or with feminism; and librarianship and feminist research do not appear to be closely linked to them.

Given the resource implications of creating and maintaining a physical women’s library in Wales, possible future developments include a mapping exercise of women’s archives in Wales; raising awareness of the value of women’s archives; and developing the work of Swansea Women’s Centre to meet contemporary information needs of women.

Whilst these organisations contribute to the field of librarianship and archives there does not appear to be the potential to create a physical women’s library in Wales along traditional lines.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my supervisor Dr Geraint Evans, Department of Information Studies, University of Wales Aberystwyth, for all his help, support and advice during the PhD process. Diolch yn fawr iawn Geraint.

I also wish to thank my second supervisor Dr Anoush Simon, for her support and advice during the PhD process.

I wish to thank the Department of Information Studies for financial support in the form of a PhD bursary, without which, this work would not have been possible.

I also wish to thank all the participants who so generously gave of their time, allowed me to interview them, and shared their knowledge with me.

Final thanks go to friends, family, and particularly Karl, for seeing me through the lengthy, and sometimes arduous, process.
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<th>Full Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>AMC/WAW</td>
<td>Archif Menywod Cyrmu/ Women's Archive of Wales</td>
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<td>ANW</td>
<td>Archives Network Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>CILIP</td>
<td>Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals</td>
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<td>CIPFA</td>
<td>Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy</td>
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<td>CyMAL</td>
<td>Museums Archives and Libraries Wales</td>
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<td>EOC</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities Commission</td>
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<td>GWL</td>
<td>Glasgow Women’s Library</td>
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<td>HLF</td>
<td>Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
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<td>IFLA</td>
<td>International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions</td>
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<td>IIAM</td>
<td>International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAIC</td>
<td>Lesbian Archive and Information Centre</td>
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<td>LMU</td>
<td>London Metropolitan University</td>
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<td>MLA</td>
<td>Museums, Libraries and Archives Council</td>
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<td>NLW</td>
<td>National Library of Wales</td>
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<td>RSLP</td>
<td>Research Support Libraries Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTWI</td>
<td>Round Table on Women’s Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLIC</td>
<td>Scottish Library and Information Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWC</td>
<td>Swansea Multicultural Women’s Resource and Training Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCAS</td>
<td>Universities and Colleges Admissions Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHELF</td>
<td>Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Women’s Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLM</td>
<td>Women’s Liberation Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRC</td>
<td>Women’s Resource Centre (London)</td>
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