

Women's History Online Resources

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Supervisor	Polly Russell (Curator, Contemporary Archives and Manuscripts, Politics and Public Life)
Department, Location	Contemporary Archives and Manuscripts, Politics and Public Life - St Pancras, London
Start date/timeframe	Ideally between May and August 2019
Duration	3 months (or part-time equivalent). We would prefer for this placement to be done full-time, but if necessary it can be undertaken part-time, working a minimum of 3 days/week on site at the Library.
Remote-working	If required, the placement could be undertaken working from home for 2 days per week (or part-time equivalent).
Context for placement	
<p>The placement will be based in the Department of Politics and Public Life, part of the British Library's Contemporary British Collections section. This area of the Library works with primary source archive and manuscript material from 1949 to the present (include digital material), and we work closely with colleagues in other departments including literary collections, contemporary publishing, sound collections and oral history. The department's role is to acquire, catalogue and conserve archival and manuscript material, to raise awareness of these collections and make them available to researchers. The department also organises events, exhibitions and develop services to enhance resource discovery both onsite and remotely around specific subject areas.</p> <p>The department is currently preparing a major exhibition called 'The Fight for Women's Rights' (to open in April 2020) that will draw from the Library's unique collections relating to women's lives and activism and look at the evolution of women's rights in the UK since the Enlightenment.</p> <p>This PhD research placement will help develop on-line resources for researchers, students and secondary school aged children around the subject of women's history and women's rights, to be launched on the British Library website at the same time as the exhibition. In particular, the student will work with curators and members of the Learning and Web teams to develop a Women's History subject page and contribute to an innovative on-line digital map of the evolution of women's rights.</p> <p>The Women's History subject page is intended to be a first port of call for researchers and students looking for collections relating to this subject area at the British Library. The digital map project will involve working closely with web designers, the Learning team and curators to identify stories, develop content, to source images and write copy text. Both these projects will add to existing British Library on-line content relating to women's history and activism (Sisterhood&After, Spare Rib and Suffragettes) and help develop the Library's collections and services around this vital and current subject.</p>	
Expected tasks and outcomes	
<p>The PhD research placement will involve identifying and enhancing existing online material, developing new content on the basis of archival research and selecting suitable primary source material to illustrate key events within the history of women's rights. The student will also have the opportunity to publicise their research via social media channels, a blog and a short presentation to BL colleagues in the Contemporary British Collections section.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the student will spend approximately two months working on the Women's History Subject Page and one month working on the digital map of women's rights.</p> <p>Women's History Subject Page</p> <p>The student will draw on their own knowledge of women's history and rights to audit and assess existing online content including subject guides on the British Library website. On the basis of this assessment and in discussion with the department the student will determine what content requires updating or editing and will liaise with relevant curatorial colleagues to agree changes. The student will also determine any gaps and negotiate with curatorial colleagues which of these to prioritise and</p>	

create content for. This will involve working across different curatorial areas, identifying collections across a range of formats and producing research guides, collection descriptions and item-level articles to enhance existing on-line content.

The student will work closely with members of the Web Team to create the new subject page to ensure it complies with British Library on-line requirements. They will take a lead in identifying relevant images.

With advice from the marketing team, and drawing on their own knowledge, the student will identify relevant list-serves, online and hardcopy newsletters, research projects and key academics to support the promotion of the new online resource. They will write promotional blogs and undertake social media activity.

Digital Map of Women's Rights in the UK

Working closely with the Women's Rights exhibition team and colleagues in the Learning department the student will help identify stories and associated collection items for inclusion on the digital map

Once particular histories have been agreed, the student will conduct independent research locating relevant British library collection items to be digitised and included in the map. The student will take ownership of writing the associated labels and longer articles to accompany material and histories they have identified.

Towards the end of the placement the student will be invited to give a short presentation to Contemporary British colleagues about their work, prepare a post for a [BL blog](#) with the possibility of expanding this into an article to be published in the Electronic British Library Journal ([eBLJ](#)). There would also be the opportunity to write further blog posts on material discovered while conducting the placement.

Training and experience expected to be gained by student through the placement

This is a unique opportunity to work alongside curatorial staff in one of the premier research libraries in the world, and to apply top-level research skills in a non-university environment. The student will gain an awareness of British Library collections and catalogues, particularly as they relate to women's history, activism and rights, and throughout the placement will have the opportunity to work with a range of archival materials and formats.

The student will learn about the processes involved in staging a major exhibition and will help develop accompanying on-line content, which will last well beyond the exhibition. They will gain valuable experience in writing web content, working on website development and a digital map project.

By writing for the BL blog, which is geared towards a general audience, they will have the opportunity to develop their writing skills and gain experience in communicating complex research ideas in an accessible manner.

The student will collaborate with a range of British Library colleagues across different departments and will develop skills to work with others to ensure the widest possible impact of their research. They will gain an understanding of how individual projects and outputs contribute to the Library's broad strategic vision and therefore develop an awareness of the professional standards and governance required within a large public organisation.

Required knowledge and skills

- Expertise in some aspects of women's history from the 17th century onwards
- Excellent writing and communication skills

This is a training and development opportunity open to current PhD students only. It is not intended to lead to a permanent post at the Library. Please note that the Library is unable to provide a stipend for PhD research placements. Applicants must obtain the support of their PhD supervisor in advance and, as part of their process, consult their HEI to ascertain what funding is available to support them.

Application deadline: 5pm on Monday, **18 February 2019**. Information on how to apply is available on our website: <https://www.bl.uk/news/2019/january/phd-research-placements-2019>