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'Think big, act smart'
-Roxane Gay



Women's Issue

Fighting for women's rights: we celebrate International Women's Day

Where are the women?

- 13% Engineering academics are women
- More men hired for best paid jobs
- Twice as many male staff earning top salary

Charlotte Mason
News Editor

The University has hired more men for its top-tier jobs than women, and the institution's highest-paid salary bracket is dominated by male employees.

Figures from last month reveal that 76% of staff who earn the maximum salary are men.

In addition, the number of male employees currently outweighs females by more than half in the top pay scale.

By contrast, 64% of staff who earn the University's minimum wage are women.

The investigation found that a professor, who typically earns between £56,000 and £76,000, can expect to have only 24% of female colleagues on the same pay scale.

A University spokesperson explained, 'There is an uneven distribution of male

and female staff at particular grades and this is the cause of an overall gender pay gap of 19.3% within the University. This figure reflects national patterns and it should not be assumed that the University pay scales or recruitment practices are unusual or unfair.'

'However, this situation has encouraged the University to press ahead with current work on the University's Equality and Inclusion Strategy. Our work to support the career development of women includes implementing the recommendations from our Equal Pay Audits, as well as addressing inequalities within key career transition points and how the culture within the University can encourage women to enhance their careers through the different promotion routes.'

The Gryphon also found that teaching and research staff in the science subjects

are overwhelmingly male.

Over three-quarters of academic staff in the Environment department are men, with this figure rising to 85% for Maths and Physical Sciences.

The Faculty with the lowest proportion of female staff is Engineering, with 13% female academic teaching and research staff.

In contrast, 70% of teaching staff in the Faculty of Education, Social Sciences and Law are women.

Second-year Civil and Structural Engineering student Prithula Roy Choudhury said, 'I feel that women are underrepresented in engineering and because of this, many girls think twice before choosing it as a career. Girls are equally good in this field and we can often overtake our male counterparts, but we need more female role models to inspire us.' **Continued on page 2** ->



06.03.15

Weather

	HI	LO
Friday	cloudy	12 7
Saturday	cloudy	16 7
Sunday	rainy	11 2

Tweet of the Week

On #WorldBookDay we're looking at how improving prisoners reading skills helps to reduce reoffending.

-Ministry Of Justice
@MoJGovUK

Spot the typo... Maybe the MoJ should focus on literacy skills closer to home.

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Credits

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Associate Editors - Jamie Taylor, Ste Topping

News - Abba Klaa, Charlotte Mason, Jake Hookem

Features - Ruby Lott-Lavigna, Brigitte Phillips

Comment & Debate - Phillipa Williams, Ella Healing

Science - Alice Hargreaves-Jones and Michael Owen

Sport - Adam LeRoux, Peter White, Alex Bowmer

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Editor's Letter: Welcome to our women's issue

I'm sick of hearing people saying that women's rights no longer matter. They think that the battle has already been won.

Last year, walking home from a midnight finish after a long night in the office, I was walking down the lit streets of Moorland Road when a group of eight men decided to corner me. One of them squared up to me, and shouted 'get back into the kitchen, mistress!' whilst another grabbed me and groped me. The others laughed as I managed to break free, chanting 'slut slut slut!' as I broke free and bolted, tearful and distressed.

Had I done anything wrong? No. I just had the audacity to be a woman, walking down a street on my own.

Every day since I was thirteen, I have walked in fear of danger. More than 50% of the human population go through the same.

This is one of the several incidents I have endured because of my gender. The catcalling, groping, menacing comments and trolling seek to shame my womanhood.

It's not just a physical plague.

Women are assaulted throughout their entire lives. They are taught that they should favour one CYMK value over any other. They are told they should be sexually available upon a male's demand, yet will be ridiculed for being virginal or promiscuous. For women to have a career and a family is to struggle under the weight of 'having it all'. Women are asked about their significant other before they are asked about themselves. This is not even a basic compilation of the hypocrisy of the sexist society that we live in. This is a time-worn tale in which men are expected to be dominant forces of masculinity, and women are to fall in their wake.

Slowly, the world is waking up to the sexist turmoil that gender stereotypes perpetuate, and we are considering more and more issues. What does it mean to be a black woman? What does it mean to be a woman born in a man's body? Even this issue, which the team and I have worked so painstakingly hard on, fails to address some of these issues. Many of us do not fall into a definition of a BME student, nor are any of us trans'. We welcome your testimonials. We want to hear what being a woman means to

you.

Pathetic excuses are made by those scared of conviction. Do you believe that men and women should have the same social, political and economic rights? Then congratulations, you're a feminist.

People die because they are women. People are raped because they are women. People are beaten because they are women.

I hope that this issue adds to the discourse that makes sure no-one walks down a street alone, ever again. I do not mean a physical presence of another human being. We should all know, that we are hand in hand together, with none of us left alone, gasping and running in the dark.

Jasmine Andersson
Editor-in-chief

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Charlotte Mason
News Editor

Second-year Maths student Rebecca Jones told this newspaper, 'I'd say that about 90% of my lecturers and tutors are male, but I don't feel that their sex matters when it comes to how well they teach and help their students. I wouldn't feel any less comfortable going to a male tutor if I had a problem'.

Second-year French and Maths student Jenny Brown said, 'I've always found it strange that despite the number of women who study Maths at an undergraduate level, very few continue into academia. It gives off the impression that postgraduate mathematics is very much a man's world. I think the lack of female staff in the department reflects badly on the University'.

The statistics from February 2015 relate to the University's Single Pay Spine and Grading Structure, which includes lecturers, professors and Heads of Services.

The University was unable to provide statistics relating to staff earning over £75,851, due to the fact that the people earning over the said amount would be so small that staff would be easily identifiable.

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Leeds Marrow 24-hour cycleathon



Hugh Baillie-Lane

Leeds Marrow, the Student-led branch of the Anthony Nolan Trust, held a 24 hour cycle in the Union from 9am on Friday morning until 9am on Saturday morning. The event, nicknamed the 'Tour de Marrow' took place in the Union foyer and the event raised £470 for the Anthony Nolan trust.

Alex Olney, the group's President, said: 'We've had a few Leeds students, some current and some recently graduated, who donated their stem cells in need of people, following on from an Anthony Nolan campaign.'

Anthony Nolan is a charity that seeks to match individuals willing to donate blood stem cells or bone marrow with people who need transplants to save their lives. They also fund research projects to improve the understanding of the illnesses and treatments involved with blood cancer. Alongside this they act as a support, advice and information service to those who are suffering with blood cancer and their families.

A student who has donated her stem cells said: 'When I signed up I didn't think much more of it, but only a few months later I was contacted by Anthony Nolan, requesting a blood sample for a potential match.'

'I recently received a card from the patient which said that she felt a lot better and was hoping to go back to school in September. Knowing I contributed to this was a fantastic feeling that I can't even describe.'

Stem cell transplants are often the last chance for patients with blood cancers such as Leukaemia. 70 per cent of those who need a transplant rely on the donations of strangers whilst 50 per cent of those who need one fail to find a suitable match.

Exec candidates get grilled



This week's photo shows the students vying to be elected as LUU's Union Affairs officer being put through their paces. LUU Question Time allowed students to put their questions to candidates in all six categories as well as the two Gryphon Editor candidates. Image: Lucie England-Duce

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's a vagina

Elli Pugh

A piece of intriguing graffiti has appeared on campus in a number of locations. The meaning of the abstract design, which was first spotted in Edward Boyle, has been subject to debate among students over the past week.

Some have likened the mysterious symbol to a vagina. Ruby Lott-Lavigna told *The Gryphon*: 'Disseminating the image of the vagina is great. Everyone always doodles penises, why can't we have a few vaginas here and there? We should remember, however, that not all women have vaginas, and that it shouldn't be taken as a symbol for all women.'

Jake Leigh-Hogarth, a first-year History student, said: 'I saw it in the Old Bar toilets as well as Edward Boyle. This isn't just a random doodle - there's definitely meaning behind it.'

Jakob Vanucci, a second-year Mechanical Engineering student, commented that 'It's definitely more of a leaf than a vagina.'

While the student body ponders the meaning of the symbol, no person or group has claimed responsibility for the

appearance of the graffiti.

Some students have suggested the Women's Militia, an anonymous radical feminist group, are behind the symbol. The group have previously removed a sex doll from a roof in Hyde Park and attached posters around LUU criticising the 'Free the Nipple' campaign for limiting its focus to white women.

Responses from the university have revealed little.

Malcolm Dawson, Head of Security on campus, told *The Gryphon*:

'Graffiti is a form of Criminal Damage; perpetrators are committing a criminal offence, one which both the University and West Yorkshire Police take very seriously.'

'Removing graffiti is time consuming for University staff and can also be very expensive, wasting valuable resources that could be better used elsewhere in the institution.'

Do you know anything about the new mystery graffiti? Contact *The Gryphon* at news@thegryphon.co.uk



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©Ben Cook



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Your current Exec reflect on their time

Freya Govus **Welfare Officer**



you didn't expect. But I've managed relationships well with the University and brought in some changes I'm really proud of.

What are the most important issues for Welfare?

Mental health is the big one that's seeing lots of change on campus. The cost of living and finance are really important too. I'd like to see quite a political Welfare Officer next year to challenge things. We need to think about engaging postgrads because we've discovered that lots of researchers feel isolated, and I think it's important to work with faith groups to make sure students feel safe and happy on campus.

What's been your proudest moment?

The thing I've been most happy about is reducing the price of feminine hygiene projects in Essentials. But I think my legacy will be about putting mental health back on the agenda. We need a long-term strategy to make mental health services easier to access. This is such a huge change that will take time to happen but it's so important.

Charlotte Mason

Why are you re-running to be Welfare Officer?

I wrote this big Facebook status encouraging people to apply for my job, but then I thought, 'I want to do that!' I've enjoyed this year so much with my incredible team and the prospect of working here again is really exciting. There's so much still to be done. Big changes around the University's mental health services are coming into practice next year, and I want to be there when that happens.

How successful have you been?

I think I've been pretty successful, but it's easy to doubt yourself. So much of your manifesto is really hard to deliver and you're always faced with obstacles

Tom Dixon **Education Officer**



issues and recognise you can't do everything for everyone, which is key in a role that requires leadership.

What are your plans for the future?

I've got my final degree year to go back to once my term is finished. But in the long term, I'm interested in a career in academia or a leadership role in the third or public sector. My immediate plans following my degree are to travel and broaden myself a bit more – a characteristic instilled in me during my year in office.

Have you enjoyed your role as Education Officer?

It's an incredibly challenging role but despite that it's been an incredibly rewarding year. It takes a massive toll on your time, relationships and well-being. I'm not sure how well I've done that this year! The idea that you've influenced change at the highest level is incredibly validating. It's an amazing role and I feel really blessed to have done it.

Rob Andrews

What have you achieved as Education officer?

I believe I've done a good job supporting reps, raising debate and moving the University further towards blended learning in all areas. Part of my manifesto included moving more towards electronic education and tackling clashing deadlines, which was no mean feat as there are a lot of schools in the University which assess people differently.

What advice would you give to the new candidates?

You have to be capable of building relationships and being credible on what you are talking about. It is important to prioritise on certain

Gemma Turner **Equality & Diversity Officer**



made sure students know they should feel safer and able to report any incident they experience.

What has been the best and worst part of your job?

The worst part of the job has been not knowing everything from the beginning so when students come to me with a problem it was hard to relate straight away. But I now always think about how I'd feel in that situation; it's the best way to approach it. The best part is to be able to make connections with the University to get the message across. The cuts to the Disabled Student Allowance is something I've been nagging the Vice Chancellor about and he's responded that it'll be a positive change.

What are your plans for the rest of this year?

I want to make sure I solidify my objectives and make sure I finish them all off. One part of that would be to increase diversity within committees and society membership. I found it hard to join clubs and societies and wanted to make sure that the training is the best it can be for all committee members.

Abla Klau

How has this year been for you?

It's been so good. Now is the time to reflect and I've realised how much I've learnt this year. I came in with a few objectives and I feel like I've got through them quite well and it's really interesting to think about what I've learnt and what I didn't really know at the start of the year. I feel like it's been a really good year.

What do you think you've achieved this year?

The main thing includes the 'Zero Tolerance' project which I've implemented to make sure as many venues are trained on sexual harassment, which I'm really proud of. I've got two great project workers, so I've been able to look at feedback and make sure that it's the best training possible. I've also

Bradley Escorcio **Union Affairs Officer**



also had a question and answer session with students and the MPs for Leeds Central and Leeds North-West. In terms of taking our presence out across campus more, we are doing a little LUU on tour. We did our first one 3 weeks ago, and we popped up in cafes around the University and we're doing it again next week.

Do you have any advice for your successor?

Stay organised and try to get out of the office as much as you can. You can easily underestimate how important it is to go out and talk to students. Remember why you were voted in, and try and keep a focus on those objectives you set out in your manifesto.

What are your plans for next year and beyond?

To be honest, I'm not 100% sure yet. I'm just keeping an open mind at the moment, but I'd really like to do some travelling over summer and then get stuck into it for real after that.

Alice Handy

What do you think have been your greatest achievements?

I think one of the best achievements this year has been the work we did around 'Express Yourself'. We did a large amount of market research and got over 4000 students to fill out an in-depth survey, which was great. Another great thing we've achieved is getting the building project off the ground, and I'm really excited to come back and see it all transform.

In your manifesto, you spoke of getting more MPs into the Union and having more of a presence in Leeds. How successful has that been?

We had Rachel Reeves, the MP for Leeds West, on campus in December and we



in office so far

Fi Metcalfe **Activities Officer**



What has been your main achievement so far this year?

Meeting my fundraising objective. The clubs are raising more money than ever before, even though a lot of them have never done fundraising in the past, so I'm really proud of that. Also, creating a support culture around our sports. I pushed for our sports teams to make varsity supporter t-shirts, and we sold over a thousand, but I'd say the best is yet to come.

What do you aim to achieve before the year ends?

I have had policies passed at forum trying to reduce the cost of sport, and I'm researching into how Leeds compares to other Russell group universities for value for money. Also, I've been gathering info as

to why many of our groups can't currently access certain suitable rehearsal spaces on campus. This is especially important with the planned building works in the Union building.

How important do you think campaign videos are to getting elected?

It depends whether or not it plays to your strengths. If you're someone who is creative and you can talk about your policies while making it amusing then that's great. To be an officer you need to have the ideas and brains to do it, but you also have to be friendly, approachable and likeable too. People have criticised having videos, but I think it's actually quite important for showing their personalities, and with everyone being on social media, it's a clever way to reach people.

Have you got any future plans for life after LUU yet?

Yes, I'm in the process of applying and having interviews now for grad schemes at the moment. Ideally I'd really love to try and secure something, defer it and maybe work a ski season and on a cruise ship for a few months.

Jake Hookem

George Bradley **Community Officer**



Your campaign video went viral last year. Was coming into office an anti-climax?

Not at all! There is a really nice, slow start, over the summer, before Fresher's hits and everything just goes absolutely crackers. Everybody warns you in advance, and after Fresher's it's non-stop. No amount of preparation can get you ready for that. It's been difficult, but really rewarding.

Have you managed to deliver on your manifesto?

At the beginning of the year, I realised that some of my manifesto wasn't very well informed. For instance, one of my policies, the portal for local businesses, is basically what the Union job service is. My role there

is to support the good work that's already happening. On the other hand, my idea to create The Student Skills network should be online by the end of the year, probably as a Facebook page; we just need to prove that there's the demand.

What's been your best achievement?

We've made a significant step with the Rate Your Landlord scheme. After months of hearing from many different people, it's turned out to be a bit of a legal nightmare. However, I'm confident that it will happen within a year and I'm proud of having set that in motion. Also, in the next few months, I'll be chairing the Unipol Code renewal process, which only takes place once every three years, so it's a lucky opportunity to look after the best interests of students.

What advice would you give to your successor?

I've always thought that this should be a one-year thing. It's important to have fresh blood and fresh ideas, especially with the Community role, because it's so broad. I've done a lot of good work on housing, and I hope it doesn't get dropped, but if the next person decides to focus somewhere else, then that's the whole point. It's their prerogative.

Editorial candidates, who gets your vote?

We speak to the two candidates hoping to be elected as *The Gryphon's* editor-in-chief for the next year. Vote for them at luu.org.uk from March 9th at 9am.

Ste Topping



Why do you want to be Editor?

I'm really passionate about the paper. I've been working on it since the start of my time at Leeds. When I got here, it was the only stall I wanted to go to at the Fresher's Fair and even then, I knew this job was something I would want to do three years down the line. I started out writing for the Sports section, moving on to become Sports Editor and I'm now Associate Editor.

What are your ideas for content?

I want to rejuvenate the magazine and create new sections for Travel and Life, all about things to do in Leeds, on campus and with society events. I've been talking

to someone who can create an iOS app and I'm confident it would be available before Christmas. Lots of students access news online, so if we can push notifications to students' phones, *The Gryphon* will become their first source when there is a breaking story.

Why is it important for *The Gryphon* to support campaigns?

I feel we have a responsibility as a student publication where, if there is a motion that has support throughout the University, we should back that. *The Gryphon* has already supported campaigns such as FemSoc's campaign against Tequila and 'No to Censorship'. However, we would only support a campaign if there was a general consensus of student support behind it.

How will you get students involved?

It's really important to me to get readers involved through online polls, and I'd also create a feedback section to get student opinions about current issues. I want to increase readership by putting the paper in all Halls of Residences and in local businesses around Hyde Park and Headingley. Hopefully, this will help the word of *The Gryphon* to get out.

Elli Pugh

Ben Cook



homophobia and 'lad culture'. I'd also be keen for more music coverage. Leeds is really up-and-coming so I want students to make the most of the city during their time here. It's a great platform for our writers if we can get young, professional people in Leeds reading *The Gryphon* too.

How will you keep the newspaper fresh?

In the wider world of journalism, social media is changing the way we do things. *The Gryphon* has started to adapt to that world and we need to continue to adapt to get more news out to students. I'd love to develop the digital side and get online updates throughout the week, with the print newspaper to more in-depth perspectives on stories.

How would you promote a responsible newspaper?

There seems to be a sense that *The Gryphon* is looking out for itself. I want to build closer, more robust links with societies and make sure students know where the office is. I'd put a big sign on the door and maybe have an open hour for consultation, so they can come speak to me about any issues. I want to make the faces of all the editors more recognisable too.

Elli Pugh

Why should students vote for you?

Firstly, it's a great opportunity. But I want to make sure *The Gryphon* helps the students of Leeds get their voices heard and hold the Union (and the University) to account. I have experience with a variety of responsibilities with the paper. I've written for Lifestyle and Culture and became Online Features Editor in my second year. I've worked as Lifestyle and Culture editor and I'm now Associate Editor of *In The Middle*.

What changes would you make to *The Gryphon*?

I want the paper to be a campaigning tool. It's our social responsibility to address issues on campus and make a stand against problems like racism,



LUU's first ever Black Feminist society established



©Naomi Whittaker

Lucy Connolly

This week saw the formation of Leeds University Union's first Black Feminist Society.

The society aims to create a space for students to become familiar with the struggles of Black feminists. Students will be encouraged to engage marginalised feminist thought.

The society already has a number of events planned, including a reading group which takes place every Wednesday between 6pm and 7pm. Members are encouraged to bring their own texts and ideas along to the discussion.

A "Night of Black Arts" event has also been planned to engage Black students to participate in creative expression through art, dance and poetry performances.

LUU's BME co-ordinator, Naomi Anderson Whittaker, told *The Gryphon*, 'We want to push forward the importance of intersectionality, particularly around the areas of race and ethnicity, but also in other ways such as class and disability.'

She added, 'We really want to educate people about great black feminist thinkers, writers, poets, and academics, who are often not considered or referenced due to the centrality of Eurocentric, white norms, focuses and discourses in mainstream feminism.'

Miss Anderson Whittaker says the society was inspired by Susana Antubam, the NUS National Women's Officer, who said,

'When people talk about feminism, they're usually talking about it in the limitations of a Eurocentric perspective, or "white feminism". But if you take the word black (in its political sense, meaning non-white) we'd still be talking about a more realistic representation of gender inequality in the majority of global society.'

University in legal battle over squatting protestors

Charlotte Mason
News Editor

The University has confirmed that it is seeking legal advice to reclaim land as a dispute with protesters intensifies.

Activists from Leeds Community Project re-entered 6 Grosvenor Mount on Wednesday after being removed from the site last month.

The group claims that it was 'unlawfully evicted' following a six-day occupation in protest of plans to sell the University-owned land to private investors. Three activists were arrested during the incident, and later released without charge.

Leeds Community Project has since announced that it is planning legal action against the University.

In a statement, a representative from Leeds Community Project said, 'LCP strongly opposes the unlawful eviction and the actions of the University of Leeds and of the police. Therefore, we have legally re-entered the site to continue our primary goals. These include to immediately stop the sale of 6 Grosvenor Mount, open it up to the communities of Leeds and facilitate discussions exploring the potential of the unique infrastructure so it better benefits local communities and interested groups.'

On Thursday, Leeds CP tweeted, 'And finally another morning in the glasshouses...reading, growing, painting. Stop by, enjoy the site and #reclaimgrosvenor for everyone!'

Leeds City Council rejected a bid to award 6 Grosvenor Mount with status as a 'community asset' in January because the site is not currently used.

Over one hundred people expressed their support for the redevelopment of the site in February.

'#StudentsNotSuspects' : CTSB opposed by campaigners



©Abia Kloo

Alice Handy

A student led movement against the Counter Terrorism and Security Bill was initiated at Leeds University Union this week.

The campaign known as '#StudentsNotSuspects' aims to address

the implications of the targeting of minorities and criminalization of students with 'mental health issues'.

The campaign argues that university staff should not be legally obliged to 'spy' on students and that the new Bill causes a suppression of academic freedom and targets suspect and vulnerable communities.

The Bill also puts a legal obligation on public bodies, including university staff, school teachers and GPs, to monitor and report anyone they suspect of being at risk of 'radicalisation'.

Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, Vivian Jones has condemned the Bill, along with Sir Alan Langlands the Vice Chancellor of the University during last week's Q&A event in the Union, on the grounds that mental health problems should not be included within the definition of radicalisation, as defined by the government's PREVENT programme.

LUU Welfare rep, Lawrence Thompson who supports the counter-movement, said, 'we shouldn't confuse national security issues with ones concerning student welfare' and that the University should not be asked to 'investigate non-violent organisations'.

Harry Shotton, one of the campaign leaders urges students to 'oppose and work against such problematic legislations' in order to protect students and their right to express themselves.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill which was introduced by Theresa May, was given the Royal Assent making it an official Act of Parliament in February.

Your Say

'I think more community spaces are a good idea. It would be good PR for the university to give something back to people.'

Steve, Second year Geography



'I'm looking you in the eye and saying it's going to happen' – *The Gryphon* meets Labour Leader Ed Miliband



©Sam Broadley



©Sam Broadley

Jasmine Andersson
Editor-in-chief

Why did you come to Leeds for the youth pledge, in which you said that Labour will reduce student fees to 6k a year?

I think that Leeds students are great students — I would say that, wouldn't I! I think it's really important to say to Leeds students that there is a party that understands what they are going through. Times have been tough and I think people have been desperate for a party that will stand up for students, and we are, and that's why we're going to cut the tuition fees. That's why we're going to increase the grant and I think it's absolutely the right choice, and it's the fair choice. Yes it says the richest in our society are going to pay a bit more, but I think that's a fair thing to do and it's great to be in Leeds to do it.

Of course, we've seen a pledge happen before. We saw 2010 which saw fees tripled to £9000 by the coalition government. How can you comfort students like me who have been disillusioned by tuition fee promises and want to know that the pledge matters?

Well, that's why I've done what I've done. Years ago I made the statement about £6000 and lots of people said, 'he's not going to keep the promise. Once he's in that position, he's not going to keep the promise. I am going to keep the promise. That's why I've given you an unconditional promise today. This



©Sam Broadley

is going to happen, no ifs, no buts, Nick Clegg... this is going to happen. I'm looking you in the eye and saying it's going to happen. I want to restore people's faith in politics. One of the ways we're going to do that is by carrying out what we've promised.

Although some will welcome the £6000, critics have come forward and said that education should be free, and that the pledge doesn't go far enough. What would you say to those people?

Obviously we'd always want to go further, and that's why I said for the longer term we'd look towards the graduate tax. I think it's right that we do that. People know it's tough times, and people want to know that we get it, and

we get the circumstances that people are facing. People don't want skyless icons and they had that with Nick Clegg. But let's not have pie in the sky promises. Let's have something we can meet. That's what we've done today.

Right-wing parties are illustrating a predilection for the sciences over the arts

I think it's really important that this is an across the board fee cap. There was a really good question from the audience about the importance of the arts subjects. Creative subjects are incredibly important to the future of our country. I take this incredibly seriously, and spoke earlier on in the week about the importance of the arts. I don't have two classes of subjects in my mind. I think it's really important that we help

all students in all subjects.

Students graduating this year will have paid £9000 fees and will graduate with the looming threat of unpaid internships and unaffordable housing. What can Labour do for them?

We want to make a difference to unpaid internships, and we're going to have more to say about this in the coming weeks. I think it's really important to distinguish the difference between internships and employment. When you're working month after month after month on no wage you're technically employed, and that doesn't create a great future for our young people. We are going to have to look at it, so watch this space.



Under the Covers: An Interview with the Vagenda

Features Editor *Ruby Lott-Lavigna* talks to *Holly Baxter* and *Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett*, the brains behind the hugely successful feminist website, the *Vagenda*, and authors of *The Vagenda: A Zero Tolerance Guide to the Media*.

Ruby Lott-Lavigna

Not wanting to mess up this opportunity to interview the *Vagenda* editors, I arrive at Rhiannon's house (one half of the *Vagenda*) embarrassingly early. This leaves me with two options. Either knock on the door and just hope my extreme punctuality doesn't make me look uncool, or stand outside like a stalker. Naturally, I opt for the latter.

I've wanted to meet the two editors, Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett and Holly Baxter, for a number of years now. Not only because I love the *Vagenda*, a witty website designed to call bullshit on magazine culture and beyond. Or because they published a great book in 2013 entitled *The Vagenda: A Zero Tolerance Guide to the Media*. But because, back in the summer of 2012, I tentatively sent an email asking if I could write for them. They were one of the first websites that ever agreed to publish any of my work, and since then I've been eternally thankful for the presence of the *Vagenda* in a world full of GQ, 50 Shades of Grey and Bic pens.

Two things struck me when I began talking to Holly Baxter and Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett. The first thing was the emphasis they put on the website being funny. It is funny, and I've never laughed at anything like quite like the *Vagenda*, yet somehow I had labeled the website as simply 'feminist', a pit that many of their critics fall into. (Of course, it's a comedy website, I think. Damn sexist brain.) The second thing was that the *Vagenda* didn't intend to start as a feminist website. "We set it up for media criticism and stuff. We were talking about the portrayal of women and things but we didn't attach the label 'feminist' to it consciously.

"We never thought of it as a feminist website, we thought of it just like a funny website. But then the media did this whole 'the fourth wave of feminism' thing, and said ours and some other people were at the forefront of it and it was obviously feminist. When they said that we were like 'yeah, sure' but it wasn't consciously set up using feminism."

The website was set up in 2010 by the two university friends and a group of other journalists, and unexpectedly blew up overnight. "We didn't even

really know what going viral was," says Rhiannon. They then found themselves thrown into the media limelight, suddenly heading the online movement of online feminism. "It was really strange, we didn't have a twitter, we didn't have any social media presence. We had no idea where it had come from.

"One minute I was just literally living in that cupboard there [Holly points to

would circle around my Facebook, from one friend to another. As a result, we (without realising) began critiquing and analyzing the world around us as feminists. My friends and I would read it, thinking it was hilarious, and then would realise 'oh, all these ideas align with feminism. Huh.' It was a glorious online Trojan horse of feminism, right when we needed it.

a masters in Gender Studies," Holly adds.

"We wanted it to be for everybody, for every woman on the street, not kind of some exclusive thing where you need proper terminology."

In 2012, after the success of website, and the development of the pair's journalism careers, they got offered a book deal with publishing house Square Peg. There was a big demand for a



a small room-cum-storing cupboard next to the living room in Rhiannon's flat), and the next, people were coming in with photographers and were taking pictures of us and being like 'this is where it all began!'"

The *Vagenda* hit a niche. It pioneered a style that was hilarious and clever, speaking to thousands of young women who had a lot of things to be pissed off about. I remember it well: their articles

"We tried to be a bit more populist about it and be more open and accessible and I think accessible feminism hadn't really existed before this did for very long.

"...we set up the blog for girls like us, and for the kind of girls that we went to school with, and our mates. We weren't necessarily embroiled in that kind of academic discussion."

It was for women, "who weren't doing

book, and they were able to be selective with who they were published by. It marked a clear change in the zeitgeist: post-*How To Be A Woman*. Feminism had become financially worthwhile. Feminism had become mainstream.

The book released a mixed response, which is essentially a euphemism for: the press thought it was far too light, and not rigorous enough in its fact checking. Germaine Greer, in one of her madder

moments, wrote a review which the *New Statesman* titled "The Failures of New Feminism." Notable moments of the review include the brutal deconstruction of the name which, according to Greer, "like much of the wordplay on the blog and in the book... doesn't really work, being neither amusing nor informative." Ouch. It goes completely bizarre toward the end as Greer writes the sentence, "The human breast, like the bovine udder, will not squirt unless compressed." It's got to be the strangest review I've read.

"Poor Germaine," says Rhiannon.

None the less, Greer is an important figure, if a little out of date, and understandably the review would have been a blow to the authors. "It was a real low point for me" says Holly, "because...when they said 'Germaine Greer's going to do it' we were like 'God, Germaine Greer!' She's such a feminist powerhouse. I thought, well, there are going to be things – because she's so



Alfie Hope ©

much more experienced and she's been writing for so much longer – that she'll pick up on and she won't like or she won't get on with; but ultimately I'm sure she'll see it as something really positive that the younger generation are doing. And the fact that there really wasn't a single positive word in there and that she ended on 'pouring bile into a blood won't change anything... It felt, actually, nasty.'

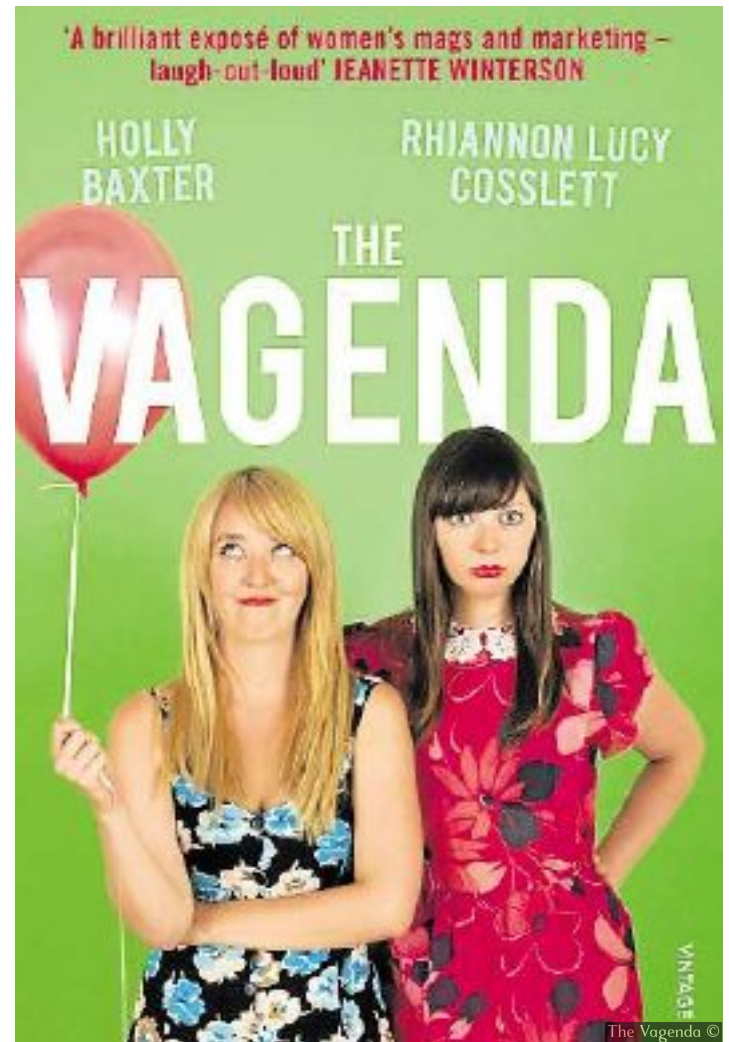
Rhiannon manages to put a positive spin on it. "Well, I sort of saw it as par for the course because Germaine Greer has insulted pretty much every young feminist that's come out in the last twenty years. She did it to Suzanne Moore, she did it to Naomi Walsh, she's done it to everybody."

Much like my ignorant paraphrasing of the *Vagenda* blog that overlooked its clear comedy element, the reviews similarly ignored or overlooked the fact that the book was a piece of satire and humour. I've read it, and I knew it wasn't going to be an academic discussion on the discourse of cis heteronormativity. What the *Vagenda* did, is write a feminist book that I read by the pool on holiday. And that is a space where the discussion of gender and oppressive beauty norms has almost certainly never reached. That's exactly where the book succeeded; it brought feminism into a place where it hadn't been previously.

There was something upsetting in the way most (often, female) reviewers had cut into the *Vagenda* book, succumbing to the almost sexist stereotype that all women were just out to get each other. The reviews were pedantic, picking up on bizarrely small parts of the book, as if they were looking for something to critique. "There were journalists who had been sharpening their pencils for two years just waiting to get back at us [for critiquing their work in magazines like *Grazia*] because it's embarrassing to be ridiculed, especially to be held up for doing something hurtful and sexist. It was like, you know, little girls getting too big for their boots, I think that was a factor as well."

Just like the website, the book gave an entry to feminist for those who felt alienated by it. They avoid using terms like 'the patriarchy' until the end, attempting to create a tone and style that hadn't been blacklisted by the *Daily Mail*. They've been doing this their whole career: In a slightly controversial move in 2015, the *Vagenda* started a campaign to "rebrand feminism," with *Elle* magazine. Depending on how look at it, it was either democratizing feminism, or giving into the idea that feminism was a dirty word.

They dealt with this issue when writing the book. "If we opened up with 'this is why you should hate the patriarchy', I think a lot of people would put the book down." Says Holly. "Unfortunately, if you're writing, and you're conscious that part of your audience are teenagers who have been fed a lot of shit from the *Daily Mail* about how evil ugly disgusting feminists are going to destroy little boys' lives, you have to reel them in a bit, before you start explaining those words and talking about them because they are very loaded terms now. It's a shame, and I don't think the answer is renaming feminism to 'Equalism', I really feel we



should hold onto the word feminism. It has a rich history that doesn't need editing out."

This will always be the central debate around the *Vagenda*. By using humour, and a style that's limited but easily accessible, does the *Vagenda*

intelligentsia of journalists, but the young girls who spend their evenings watching make-up tutorials on YouTube for hours. That's not to say that there aren't flaws to this style, and they're aware of the criticism they've received. Ultimately though, you have to take the

“When they said ‘Germaine Greer’s going to do [the review]’ we were like ‘God, Germaine Greer!’...the fact that there really wasn’t a single positive word... It felt, actually, nasty.”

reach out to a new audience, or does it generalise feminism by 'dumbing down'? As Rhiannon points out, "It's got teenagers into these kinds of issues, and we know that because they've said that to us."

I know that, for one, I can't wait to give the book to my twelve-year-old sister. That's always been the place for the *Vagenda* – not the London

Vagenda on its own terms, and that's to reach people like my little sister, who are just beginning to understand what a sexist world they live in.

Saying that, there's a fair amount of blow job-based humour in the book. So I might wait a few years before passing it over.



Roxane Gay: “Think big, act smart”

Editor-in-chief **Jasmine Andersson** speaks to *Guardian* US columnist and ‘Bad Feminist’ **Roxane Gay** about her heroes, intersectionality, and Scrabble.



Jennifer Silverberg ©

Jasmine Andersson
Editor-in-Chief

What is the definition of a feminist to you?

Feminism is pluralistic. There are multiple definitions and ways of approaching feminism. That said, we have to start somewhere. A feminist believes women are equal to men, and should be able to move through the world in the same way men do. Our bodies should be free from legislation. We have to care not only about women whose life experiences are similar to ours, but also those women whose experiences are different.

When did you first realise that you were a feminist?

I’ve probably always been a feminist but there was definitely a time when I was not comfortable claiming the identity because I worried about what it said

about me. I began openly embracing feminism in my thirties when I began to understand what feminism is and how much it has made possible for me.

Why do you think people struggle to identify themselves as feminists?

There is, unfortunately, a great stigma attached to the word “feminist”. People hear that word and think of anger and separatism and lots of other nonsense that’s not accurate. It’s also strange because given the ways in which women are marginalized, anger is a perfectly appropriate response.

What is the biggest concern of inequality for women today?

It really depends but one of the most critical concerns is reproductive freedom and unfettered access to affordable means of birth control. Subsidized childcare is also critical, as are maternity and paternity leave.

As an Haitian-American feminist, you have to deal with the difficulties of race and gender inequality. How can the feminist community rally around to better understand intersectionality?

Feminists need to realize that we’re not only women, we also inhabit other identities at the same time and we need to consider this breadth of identity and how it affects women’s lives.

I wouldn’t call being a Haitian American woman a double-edged sword, though. Who I am is not a liability.

Your bestselling book, *Bad Feminist*, acknowledges that human beings can be contradictory in their actions whilst still being a champion of gender equality. What do you think is your most significant patriarchal achilles heel?

I love romantic comedies, way too much.

Who is your hero?

My heroes are many but my first and longest lasting heroes have been my parents.

What advice would you offer to student feminists in regards to how they can effect change on campus?

Think big, act smart.

What is your highest Scrabble score?

My highest score is probably around 580.

What do you hope for women’s rights in 2015?

I hope we spend less time discussing the word feminist or who can claim it and spend more time acting upon our feminism. ■



Comment

Tax on tampons

Ella Griffiths: Why are we taxed for something we can't help?

International Women's Day

Rachel King discusses why we are still in need of feminism

This Girl Can

Clio Tsivanidis on why This Girl Can is a breath of fresh air

Justice for Men and Boys

Eleanor Healing argues why this radical party desires inequality, not justice

We shouldn't be taxed for bleeding, period.

Ella Griffiths

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Women who menstruate have to pay tax on top of what they already have to fork out for sanitary products because they are classified as non-essential, luxury items.

Let's be honest with ourselves: if men had periods, sanitary products would be free, or at the very least tax-free. I'm not saying that in a resentful way. I'm saying it because guys would simply not stand for having to pay, let alone be taxed for the material between their legs which allowed them to go about their business.

To clarify, I am in favour of paying taxes. I'm especially in favour of companies like Apple and Google paying them. I am not in favour, however, of being taxed for a bodily function over which I have no control.

This isn't because I feel personally aggrieved that the money isn't going in my pocket, though I could definitely use it to buy an extra pack of sanitary pads. The extra money - estimated to be around three pounds a year - is for most

“Anyone who has either experienced a period or knows anything about them knows that there is nothing luxurious about the feeling of menstrual cramps”

of us, not that much. But for the poorest women in our society, three pounds could be the difference between eating and going hungry. Besides, it's the principle, isn't it? It's always the principle.

There is no logical justification in the classification of sanitary products as non-essential, luxury items. Anyone who has either experienced a period or knows anything about them knows that there is nothing luxurious about the feeling of menstrual cramps or discovering your purse is empty when you've run out of tampons. Without affordable sanitary products, those women who menstruate are prevented from leading a normal life, both in public and in private.



huffingtonpost.com

It's even more baffling when you study the list of supposedly 'essential', tax-exempt products. This once included men's razors. If making women pay extra for unwanted bleeding while men are afforded the luxury of shaving off their beard isn't discrimination, then I don't know what is.

Perhaps the most illogical item currently on the list is incontinence pads, which are essentially the same product as pads. Also included are various exotic meats, flapjacks and Jaffa Cakes. Call me crazy, but I would rather pay 20 per cent VAT on some Jaffa Cakes and know that I wasn't being taxed for being a woman. Those who do not menstruate can think of this Jaffa Cake tax as a small price to pay for not dealing with periods every month for most of their life.

In an ideal world, I would like sanitary products, like contraception in this country, to be free. After all, menstrual hygiene, like contraception, is

a health issue. Unwashed rags carry the risk of vaginal infection, even urinary tract infection.

Sadly though, we may be waiting a while for that. For an item to become exempt from tax, all 28 member states in the EU would have to agree on it. And to be fair to past governments, the tax was reduced to 5 percent back in 2001, the lowest it can be under EU law. George Osborne's next budget is this

“In an ideal world, I would like sanitary products, like contraception in this country, to be free”

month and it's unlikely that we will see any change in that. However, the very least we can do is lobby whoever is in power after the General Election to bring this issue up in European Parliament.

If the UK could stop taxing its women for menstruating, it would set a precedent around the world, in countries

where menstruation is still horribly taboo and products are inaccessible. In India for instance, an AC Nielsen survey in 2011 found that only 12 percent of women use sanitary pads because of the stigma that surrounds monthly bleeding. UNICEF estimates that 10 percent of African girls don't attend school during their periods. Without affordable, accessible products, having periods can mean missed education, missed work and missed pay.

Women have bigger battles than this to fight all over the world. But I am a firm believer in starting small, with what we can change, and making sanitary products affordable and accessible is just that.

Laura Coryton is campaigning to have the tax on sanitary products reduced to 0%. To sign her petition, visit <https://www.change.org/p/george-osborne-stop-taxing-periods-period>



I still need feminism, and so do you

Rachel King
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Sunday 8th of March is International Women's Day. Cue the mild grumblings of 'Surely we don't need that anymore, the feminist war is won!' and 'That's misandry. What about Men's Day?' It is worth noting that some of these queries are not without merit; male suicide is terrifyingly high, boys are still being told that they can't play with dolls or wear pink and women from many walks of life are indeed climbing the career ladder higher than ever before. But caring about men's issues doesn't detract from blindly obvious inequality, and being better than being publicly silent, jobless, voteless baby-machines does not mean we have equality.

We still need feminism itself for such a large number of reasons, that I almost can't believe that I'm having to repeat them. But sadly, they still need to be hammered home. In April 2014, the gender pay gap in the UK was 9.4

per cent, or about £100 per week, and that is before including factors such as race or non-binary genders which increase the disparity hugely. Surveys regularly report that upwards of 60 per cent of women have experienced sexual harassment. Out of the 650 UK constituencies 320 have never elected a woman, and there have only ever been 12 female MPs who belong to an ethnic minority. In 2013, 31 million primary school aged girls worldwide were not in education compared to 4 million boys, and 1/3 of the world's illiterate population were women. Women are

...being better than being publicly silent, jobless, voteless baby-machines does not mean we have equality

still being groped in nightclubs and catcalled on the streets. Menstruation is still causing embarrassment, shame, bad health, and financial strain for women the world over. Female celebrities are still being judged on their appearance rather than their merits. In fact, all women are

still being judged on their appearance rather than their merits. Children's toys are still divided by gender. Paternity leave is still not equal to maternity

Women's clothes never have any sodding pockets and I still have to shave every innocent hair off my body before I feel remotely attractive

leave. There are rarely baby changing facilities in men's bathrooms. Bras are still being pinged in schools. Women's clothes never have any sodding pockets and I still feel compelled to shave every innocent hair off my body before I feel remotely attractive.

That is the list of someone who has led a privileged life: I can only imagine how much longer it would be if I hadn't.

It's important that we keep using the term feminist. To call it something that doesn't allude to women's issues undermines the fact that we are still facing a global hierarchy based solely on gender. Rejecting the term feminist undermines decades of work women

before us, who had to fight far harder, to be heard. So if you don't identify as feminist for fear of being branded a man-hating lesbian, then think about whose opinions you're valuing. If you don't identify as feminist because you think these issues don't affect you, which is unlikely, then think about those whom they do affect. If you don't identify as feminist because you think it doesn't address discrimination you face, then join the movement and change that.

There are times when I doubt feminism. But then I remember one of those statistics, and I remember why it matters. It is my hope that the feminist movement will continue to grow and to become more inclusive; I strongly believe that there are as many kinds of feminism as there are kinds of women. We will still need International Women's Day as long as there is systematic oppression of women, and I will still need feminism until my list of reasons for needing it is totally and utterly blank.

This Girl definitely Can

Clio Tsivanidis
History
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When I first saw the 'This Girl Can' campaign advert in the cinema, one of my first thoughts was 'finally'. Finally, an advertisement encouraging women to exercise because they love their bodies, not because they hate them.

We've all heard of 'thinspiration', or 'thinspo' as its come to be known. We've been warned about the toxic websites set up to encourage eating disorders and sharing dangerous 'tips and tricks' with its followers. Most people would agree such sites are abhorrent. 'Fitspo', however, is a slightly more nuanced issue. Formulated as a 'healthy' response to thinspo, last year saw the 'strongnotskinny' hashtag brandished across magazines and websites all over the country. Undoubtedly, for some, fitspo is a wonderful thing, and I hesitate to criticise it entirely. Yet, while it doesn't encourage you to starve yourself or advocate exercise as a means of self-torture, I believe there is a certain insidious underbelly to it.

Search '#fitnotthin' on Instagram and you'll generate a variety of the same images. Girls often in skimpy gym gear, charting the changes in their bodies via 'progress pics' and listing extensive exercise regimes. While there is nothing wrong

with being proud of your appearance, encouraging exercise merely as a means of achieving that 'perfect' body can often detract from it being something healthy. What's more, the photos of food that appear alongside the hashtag are often limited; there is an obsession with 'clean' choices, 'cheat' days and 'naughtiness'. Essentially, the vocabulary associated with food choices is dripping in moral judgements. Subconsciously or not, then, both the photos of the food and the

Unlike other campaigns, it does not shame women who do not fit into the binary of 'thin' or 'curvy'

impossibly toned and lean bodies that accompany #fitspo encourage negative comparisons amongst men and women. For many of us, the type of body promoted is as unattainable as the frighteningly thin bodies displayed on these 'thinspiration' websites, and I worry that the body image obsession it generates perpetuates the view that a woman's worth is based on her appearance.

This makes the This Girl Can advert a breath of fresh air. Unlike other campaigns supposedly aimed at also empowering women (Dove, I'm looking at you), it does not shame women who do not fit into the binary of 'thin' or 'curvy'. Rather, the women it features are of all different

shapes, sizes and abilities. Not once, though, does it have to tell us these women are 'real'; the advertisement lets them speak for themselves. Most refreshing though, is the implicit message that these women are exercising as a form of enjoyment, stress relief, or simply to have fun with their friends rather than to develop rock-hard abs in order to be appreciated by society. Tellingly, the shots that zoom in on specific body parts do not sexualise them, but emphasise the strength of the woman in question. Instead of hovering over cleavage, close-ups focus on a powerful leg kicking a ball, or pounding down on pedals. These women are kicking ass at sports, some of which are traditionally deemed 'masculine', such as football, and in doing so add a completely new meaning to the phrase 'like a girl'. Women aren't meant to sweat, or look anything other than put together, yet as conveyed through

the huge grins plastered on their faces, these women aren't conforming to sexist standards, and they expect you to 'deal with it'.



twitter.com



Injustice For Men and Boys

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Mike Buchanan wants to scrap the Equality Act. Despite statistics showing the contrary, he claims that women's rights have gone too far and that women really have no interest in 'scientific' jobs. Most shockingly of all, he also demonises female rape survivors who are attacked when intoxicated. But Mike Buchanan isn't just a random member of the public with an opinion. He has his own political party: Justice For Men And Boys.

I will be brutally honest here: this party absolutely terrifies me. Not just because they compare feminists to Nazis (considering the Nazi's attitudes towards women and the LGBT community this comparison is absurd), but because fundamentally, they don't really seem to

society are stemmed from a patriarchal culture and the demonisation of everything 'feminine', it should make sense that feminism will fix these issues. Men's suicide rates are higher than that of women, because needing help in that regard is considered 'emotional' and 'feminine', and these traits are considered humiliating for a man to have. Male survivors of abuse and rape often stay silent about what has happened to them; because these crimes are more commonly committed against women, for a man to suffer the same fate is again 'feminine' and 'weak'. Mothers are often favoured in child custody battles because child-rearing is seen as a 'weaker', female role. Feminism advocates for a change in this, for it to not be 'shameful' for a man to speak up about an attack against him, and for it to not be humiliating for a man to seek help for a mental illness, or to want to care for his children. Sadly, something

appears to have been lost in translation. Feminism is a movement for gender equality, but it often gets blamed for the problems men face instead. We forget that it's the feminist movement in the US which lobbied the FBI to categorise rape against men as being just as serious

“We forget that it's the feminist movement in the US which lobbied the FBI to categorise rape against men as being just as serious as rape against women.”

as rape against women. It's feminists who advocate equal parental leave. It's feminists who support male survivors of rape and abuse. Prolific male feminists such as Terry Crews, Joseph Gordon-Levitz, Mark Ruffalo and many more have also publically acknowledged that patriarchal expectations are harmful to

all genders, and the feminist gender-equality movement will help overcome these issues.

When women finally seem to be on the path to an equal foothold in this world, the idea that it has gone too far is ridiculous. It's a skewed perception; the fear of being treated the same way women have been for centuries, and Mike Buchanan is afraid. If somebody really wants to help men and boys they shouldn't waste their vote on Buchanan's twisted policies. Instead, they should support and donate to charities such as Men United (men's health) and ManKind Initiative (for male rape and abuse survivors). They are the people doing the real good, not this frightening extremist party.

“Justice For Men And Boys aims to completely turn the clock on women's employment and health rights”

truly care about men at all. Rather than help men in areas where they may be at a disadvantage, Justice For Men And Boys aims to completely turn the clock on women's employment and health rights. According to Mike Buchanan, women being more domesticated is a natural thing, and any indicator of them being forwarded in the economy or socially is unfair in his books. He aims to actively take women out of high ranking jobs (despite the fact that only 16 per cent of board directors are female) to place men in these positions. His agenda is frightening. The same way UKIP intends to ruin the lives of those who benefit from multiculturalism and same-sex marriage, Justice For Men And Boys seek to take a retrograde step with gender equality.

Since the inequalities men face in



wtf.org

Women's rights: a brief history

Women over 30 granted the right to vote

Women gain equal voting rights to men

Contraceptive pill made available

Equal Pay Act passed

Rape in marriage made a crime



The Big Debate

Can you be a Page 3 girl and a feminist?

“Telling girls they shouldn’t do page 3 is NOT being a feminist; women should do WHATEVER they want! Women should empower and encourage other women. For that is the only way to truly be “equal” and have rights...”

–Jodie Marsh



YES

Charlotte Gray

In the last few years, the *Sun*'s notorious 'Page 3' feature has become a go-to example of the lingering and anachronistic misogyny that underlines our society. The 'No More Page 3' campaign has gone from strength to strength and *The Sun* has been banned from sale in our own union because of this very feature. In January, the newspaper showed that they were unfazed by the controversy surrounding their feature by removing Page 3 only to bring it back the following day. Rather than respecting the views of those who oppose Page 3, they've started to use the backlash to gain publicity whilst making a mockery of its critics. Their blasé

attitude sadly suggests that Page 3 isn't going anywhere soon.

But when thinking about how next to tackle Page 3, it is important that the spotlight remains on *The Sun* itself rather than on the models who feature in it. It is counter-productive to the feminist movement to dictate what women should do with their bodies and perpetuates the false idea that feminism is an uncompromising movement with a strict entry policy. After all, the single unifying principle that underpins the idea of feminism is that of gender equality. So really, it's a backward step to undermine the pursuit of this equality for the sake of a disagreement over

what a woman does with her own body.

The real issue with Page 3 models identifying as feminists is that posing for *The Sun* is a lot different than doing the same for any other medium. Female nudity has an unsettling place within a newspaper. Setting aside the questionable journalistic value of the newspaper itself, the casual placement of specifically female nudity in between the weather and current events is a problematic one. It normalises the objectification of women by removing the naked woman's body from the sexual sphere and dumping it in the everyday. Allowing the blatant sexualisation of women in a newspaper sets a worrying

precedent for everyday life.

It is important for women to be able to choose how to use their bodies free of judgement; but there is a time and a place for it which is dependent on the medium and intention. It is also important that feminism remains an inclusive movement as this is the only way that real gender equality can be achieved. *The Sun* is clever, but Page 3 isn't. Page 3 models who identify as feminists should be able to do so, but should also take a critical glance at the corporation that they're baring their bodies for.

NO

Li Disbury

It seems quite clear to me that you cannot simultaneously be a Page 3 girl and a feminist. To say that you are a member of a movement seeking to establish the equal place of women in society is not a claim that you can make whilst being a daily 'fuck you' to the very idea of that movement. Page 3 girls are a daily reminder that women are more-often-than-not seen as nothing more than sexual objects by an alarmingly large amount of men. They are a daily perpetuation of the 'Dapper Laughs' mind-set.

There is no equivalent objectification of males to the objectification of women on Page 3 of the *Sun*, and this is an

important point to remember: when we talk of Page 3 girls we are talking about the third page of the highest selling national newspaper in Britain – not a top-shelf magazine – and every day that page bears a manifestation of the inferiority of women in society, and every day it helps reinforce that perceived inferiority.

A large step towards establishing the equal place of women in society would be to abolish Page 3, for how can women seek equal roles to men in society if society does not even see them as having equal worth as people? When women are still seen as mere objects by so many men, how can we possibly

expect to see an equal representation of women in Parliament, say, or a more equal number of females on boards of directors helping to lead large companies? By getting rid of Page 3, we would be making a clear statement that it is no longer acceptable to view or treat women in this manner and that it is time for society to progress towards a more harmonious situation.

As long as Page 3 exists, I do not think that the cause of feminism will be able to advance towards these noble and necessary ends. Thus I do not think you can call yourself a feminist if you are a Page 3 girl; you are an accepted display of daily, national misogyny and this is

clearly not compatible with the ideals of feminism. This should not be mistaken as a criticism of the girls themselves who appear on Page 3, but instead as a criticism of what this represents and the attitudes they arguably justify by appearing on Page 3. I think it is irresponsible and unfair to label this a case of 'telling women what to do with their bodies', rather it is asking women to respect themselves enough as people to fight the perception that the only thing that matters about them are their bodies. If this can be achieved then I doubt that the cause of feminism will have ever been quite so strong.





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Destructing science's glass ceiling: The article that shouldn't have to exist

Holly Edwards

A simple Google search for 'women and science' brings up a plethora of web sites aiming to encourage women in the subject. But weirdly, when I see this, I get an uneasy feeling. I am a woman in science, I should be glad these organisations exist. I start asking myself questions – have I turned against feminism? Do I think it's not really that big of a deal?

Thankfully I was relieved when I realised the answer to these questions was no. What makes me uncomfortable is that these organisations have to exist at all. They highlight the fact that there are still problems with both the number and treatment of women in science.

History shows us that the situation has got better, although there is still a long way to go. From the 16th and 17th centuries when the dominant opinion was that women in science were at odds with their domestic duties – "anyone engaged in serious intellectual endeavours should have a beard" according to Immanuel Kant – to the rise of scientists such as Carolina Herschel, Mary Fairfax Somerville and Ada Lovelace in the 18th and 19th centuries.

From then on women's participation in science was increasingly accepted, with a rise in educational opportunities. Marie Curie became the first woman to win the Nobel prize in 1903, making it the double in 1911, and to this day is the only person to win both the Chemistry and Physics Nobel prizes. But women involved in science faced some extraordinary battles for their work to be recognised and faced significant discrimination along the way. They often worked "voluntarily" as faculty members, were written out of textbooks and saw their life's work attributed to

male colleagues.

Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Esther Lederberg, Chien-Shiung Wu and Lise Meitner are examples of these women who all have something in common. They were all shut out of receiving the Nobel prizes between the 1940's to the 1960's. They all had to stand by and watch their male colleagues take all the credit for work that they had substantially contributed to.

Many argue that Rosalind Franklin should also be in this list, but she died before her colleagues received the Nobel Prize for uncovering the structure of DNA. The award is never awarded posthumously, so we will never know if she would have received the prize along with Watson and Crick, although upon receiving the award they failed to credit her. Watson even questioned Franklin's place in the industry, and Crick admitted that they used to have a patronising attitude towards her. She was also criticised for her presentation. She did not wear lipstick or revealing clothing as women believed that to gain recognition they had to hide their feminine qualities.

Clearly things are not quite that bad now, but sexism is still present. The Everyday Sexism Project allows women to catalogue sexism they experience on its website. These comments include "maths is not for girls", "it's good to have a skirt at a meeting", "you are too pretty to do science", "maths lecturer described a graph and why all the women would recognise it as shaped like a washing line", and "being told at a university interview that I'll probably get an offer as not many girls apply for my course, and they like having 'girls' on the course to keep the boys in check".

I can add to this my own experiences

of working my way up, from what some might call a "soft science" through jobs and a masters, to my current PhD in engineering. I have seen sexism in many different forms throughout this time. The only time it nearly brought me to breaking point was in a job in which a more senior engineer sexually harassed me. The company knew about it, but wanted to sweep it under the carpet as he was needed in the company and I was just a temp. Others told me: "he always has a different girl he does this with, this time it's you".

Maybe the most notorious controversy concerning women in STEM came in 2005 from Lawrence Summers, the then President of Harvard. At a conference on Diversifying the Science and Engineering Workforce, Summers proposed a hypothesis that there were more men in science owing to the

A more senior engineer sexually harassed me. The company knew about it, but wanted to sweep it under the carpet as I was just a temp

difference in "intrinsic aptitude" between men and women. This is believed to have led to his resignation the following year as Harvard President and cost him his job of Treasury Secretary for the Obama Administration.

But was Summers entirely wrong? After all, there are studies that do show that women's brains are different to men's. Firstly men do

have bigger brains, but in terms of intelligence it really isn't about the size, sorry guys. Men have 6.5 times more grey matter than women but women have ten times more white matter than men. This is likely to account for the differences in how women and men think, accessing different parts of their brains for the same task, but it does not tell us anything about intelligence with IQ scores being

unaffected. All it tells us is that men and women may think about problems differently. Scientific research teams would benefit from a mix of both men and women to find the best solutions to problems.

There is also evidence that women's interest and ability in science is more a nature vs. nurture issue. Many scientists believe that a difference in cognitive testing and choice of career results from a culture where science is a boys subject being embedded into girls at an early age; one of the issues is the difference between boys and girls toys. Whilst some shops, such as Boots, have recently stopped gendering toys, others have only given lip service to the issue.

In August 2014 Lego brought out a limited edition set called the Research Institute made up of three female scientists. This was in response to a seven year old's letter to the company that went viral, in which she complained of the lack of female professional Legos. But this hasn't seemed to change the overall ethos of the company. On their website, Lego has a category called 'Girls'. In this section you can find Heartlake Lighthouse, Elsa's Sparkling Ice Castle and Naida's Spa Secret, whilst products such as their art range seem to feature exclusively men.

Maybe it's time to start realising that encouraging women into STEM courses and careers is much more effective when dealt with at a young age by targeting both boys and girls. By making it culturally acceptable that women have just as much a place in STEM as men, many of these problems of discrimination and lack of women taking these career paths can be solved.

A saying that came about in the 18th century regarding women's roles as "equal but different". This has traditionally been seen as an insult but there is a lot of truth in it. We are of course equal, but it is our differences that can lead to better scientific research and understanding. This does not just include the differences between women and men, but also between race, age, location, hobbies and all other qualities that let us see the world in different ways.

As for me, I am a woman in science, and I hope that I can encourage others to follow. But this is not my definition. I am a scientist, I am an asset to my subject area and I love what I do. My hope is that in the future articles like this do not need to be written, as all scientists, whoever they are, will be treated equally. ■



DonSmith/Alamy ©



The little known Lacks legacy

Hilary Robinson

Henrietta Lacks is a name you might not recognise, but probably should. Thanks to Lacks' cells, scientists have developed a polio vaccine, and done research into AIDS, radiation, toxic substances and gene mapping. They were also the first human cells to be successfully cloned. Lacks was never thanked for her contribution to science, but disturbingly, she was never made aware that any cells had been taken from her body.

Born on 1st August 1920, Henrietta Lacks was an African American woman raised by her grandfather in Virginia. Henrietta had her first child aged 14 with her first cousin, David Lacks, who she later married and had a further four children with.

In 1951, Henrietta went to the John Hopkins hospital (the only local hospital which would treat black patients) with pains she aligned to having a 'knot inside of her'. During examination, Henrietta's doctor found a tumour in her cervix, which turned out to be a malignant squamous cell cancer. The cancer was caused by the uncontrolled multiplication of epithelial cells. These types of cells line the outer layer of the skin, the surface of most body cavities, and the lumen organs, such as the gut or vagina. They used a cancer therapy which involves placing a radiation source near the tumour. It was during this treatment that two samples of Henrietta's cervix were removed without permission, both a healthy and a cancerous sample.

Despite repeated treatment and blood transfusions, Lacks passed away on October 4, 1951, aged 31, due to both an acute kidney injury, a complication of the cancer, and the spreading of the cancer throughout her body.

Henrietta lived on in science due to the immortality of her cancer cells. The immortality allows the cell to be stimulated to continuously divide, and avoid the process known as cellular senescence (when cells continue to function normally, but cease to divide). George Gey named the sample HeLa, after the initial letters of Lacks' name. The cells quickly became in high demand, and Gey donated them freely to any scientists requesting them. Consequently, Lacks' cells were produced on a mass scale.

During this entire process however, not one person in the Lacks family was notified of the use of the cells. Henrietta was a poor, unschooled, black woman, whose own views were not once considered. Despite the unbelievable profit made by pharmaceutical companies and scientists using the cells – a single tube of HeLa cells costs around £175 – the Lacks family saw none of this money, even though they so desperately needed it. Henrietta's second child – Elsie – was committed to the Hospital for the Negro Insane (now known as Crownsville State Hospital) to receive inadequate and outdated treatment; money made from the cell line could have provided Elsie with much more beneficial treatment, meaning that she may have survived into her 20s, rather than dying so prematurely at 16.



henrietalackslegacy ©

There was no uproar, not even when the background to the world's most famous cell line became public knowledge, while the law allowing doctors to use patient's cells/tissues without their permission was never changed.

Whilst there is the principle of 'Informed Consent' in medical research in our day and age, there is no clear law regarding the ownership of human tissue/cell specimens, and who controls their fate. As a result, whilst the chances of deception on such a large scale are limited now, there is a chance that similar experiments could be carried out without the patient's knowledge.

Rebecca Skloot is one of many people shocked by this story, and took it upon herself to raise awareness by

publishing the book, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. The key conclusion Skloot draws is that "tissue is so often dehumanised – it's referred to in medical reports and documents, and no one ever seems to remember that for every single biological sample that's used in any laboratory, anywhere, there's a person."

Henrietta Lacks was a wife, a mother and the key to many incredible medical discoveries. Neither she nor her family have benefitted in any way. It's hoped that as this story continues to spread – with a film version of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* in the pipeline – the Lacks family will get the recognition they deserve. ■

The Week in Science



Lisa S/shutterstock ©

Tobacco Kills Two Out of Three Smokers

A four-year follow-up study of more than 200,000 people has shown that as many as two in every three cigarette smokers will die from the habit. The study published in BMC Medicine this week estimates that smokers will die 10 years earlier than non-smokers. In better news, people who quit before the age of 45, their mortality was almost the same as never-smokers.



Martin Le-May ©

Furry little daredevil

Amateur wildlife photographer Martin Le-May caught orthinologist's unaware with this stunning photograph of a cheeky little weasel hitching a ride on the back of a woodpecker. The photograph was taken at Hornchurch Country Park and it's been suggested that the weasel was probably trying to attack the bird before it took off in shock. Both managed to escape the ordeal with their lives.



theautismblog ©

Autism caused by genetics

A study on 516 twins by researchers at King's College London concluded that autism is caused by genetic make-up in 74-98% of cases. 181 of the teenagers had autism but identical twins who share the same DNA were far more likely than non-identical twins. Both twins had been raised in the same household to try and minimise environmental effects although they have not been ruled out.



BBC ©

African synchrotron bid gathers pace

Africa looks to become the setting for a brand spanking new synchrotron as momentum gathers pace behind the idea. A meeting is scheduled for November at the European synchrotron ESRF in Grenoble to discuss the idea further. Synchrotrons are accelerator that produce X-rays; X-rays can be used in a raft of applications such as fluorescence studies, medical imaging and chemical analysis.



Annabel Croft: Exclusive Interview

Alex Bowmer talks to former top-30 player and Eurosport pundit **Annabel Croft** about gender equality in tennis, the state of the British game, and the potential stars of the future

Has women's tennis done enough to address inequality of the sexes? It seems to be one of the only sports where men and women enjoy fairly equal status.

Billie-Jean King has been one of the main drivers behind the formation of the WTA and is a big reason that women are now able to make a living from playing tennis. All the players have her to thank for the fact that the tour even exists. She fought for women to have equal prize money, because I think she felt she was as marketable and putting as many bums on seats as the men were. Now they offer equal prize money in the Grand Slams, and in Dubai. However, the popularity of the women's game has dropped a bit recently, but I think the interest is coming back with the emergence of all these new youngsters. I definitely think tennis is the only sport where women have equal prize money, all the way through. It's not true that all tournaments offer equal prize money, and it has to be said that quite often the turnout for the men's week is quite a bit higher than for the women's week.

What more needs to be done to address equality of the sexes?

One of the things women are fighting when they are competing at tournaments like Miami and Indian Wells – where the men's and women's tournaments are held at the same time – is centre court coverage and a lot of air-time on TV. The tournament scheduler has a difficult situation to contend with, as he has to listen to the demands of players like [Novak] Djokovic, [Roger] Federer and [Rafael] Nadal on the one hand, and players like Serena Williams, Maria Sharapova and Caroline Wozniacki so it is difficult to accommodate everyone. The scheduler also has to consider the TV audiences around the world as well, and therefore has to think about which matches will cater to the Asian market. Serena Williams is a respected player, but if she is not selected to play that day, you've got the WTA fighting for their players because they want the TV coverage. These events are definitely market-driven.

Which female players would you say have done the most to push women's issues to the fore?

Venus Williams is one player who has done a lot for women in that respect. She has spoken up and taken quite a prominent role. She seems to enjoy standing up for women, and has appeared on the board at the WTA, and has had a big say in some matters. It's interesting, because I didn't think she would be someone who would get involved in that sort of thing.

Would you be a supporter of five-set matches in the women's game?

I am not in favour of it actually. They tried it in America a few years ago when Steffi Graf and Martina Navratilova were at the top of their game, and introduced it at the end-of-season championships. It wasn't popular and also became very difficult for TV to schedule it, and when I had to cover Dubai and then, the following week, the men's matches, the women's



matches have tended to be an awful lot longer, as for some reason the points tend to last longer than in the men's game. You can imagine that best-of-five sets for women for a TV scheduler, you can't plan the adverts,

“I am not in favour of women having five set matches... most players would accept it, but there just isn't the demand”

so this is why the American TV company who aired the end-of-season championships dropped it.

I can sympathise with people who argue that it may be unfair that someone playing best-of-five sets earns the same amount. Given the fitness levels of the modern player, if there was a serious offer put on the table about women playing five sets, then I'm sure most players would accept it, but there just isn't the demand. Also, when I watch men play five-set matches at Grand Slams, when you consider how injured a lot of the players are becoming now, it's not worth it. It's not like footballers who turn up once a week to play a match. Tennis players are playing every other day, and sometimes back-to-back matches, so you can imagine if you play five hours one day, and then come back and play five hours the next day.

Wimbledon was the final Grand Slam to introduce equal prize money, and their argument had been that because women only played best-of-three sets, they had time to play in the doubles or mixed doubles events, boosting their prize money, and therefore get more money than the men by being able to compete in all of these events. In addition, they argued that unless the value of the women's tour outside of the Grand Slams was the same value as the men's tour – so if the women's game is not the same marketplace outside of the Grand Slams as the men – then they should not command the same prize money.

Do you think that the game will become increasingly physical?

It's very physical. If parents ask me for advice on what their child should do to get to the next level, I would say they need to get out and get fitter than they have ever been. It's almost an athlete's training, as well as the tennis. It wasn't really like that, it was more tennis-based. You used to go for a run and do a few sprints, but now the level of fitness that's required and the athletic ability, it's extremely professional. I think that's equally as important as hitting tennis balls every day.

Why do you think Britain has struggled to produce top-level players consistently, compared to countries like France and Spain?

I don't feel that we always have enough competition at an early age. If you have enough breaking through then we all push each other. When I was growing up, I had loads of juniors around me that were pushing me all the time. You're fighting for your position all the time, and the trouble is that we only have one or two on the men's and women's side. Heather [Watson] did have Laura Robson as competition, but Laura's been injured for over a year, and it's really hard. As a junior, I went abroad and Heather went abroad to train. I went to America when I was 15, and it's really tough to train back here in this kind of climate and condition. Then you head out to Florida to play in 80% humidity, and you feel sick on court because you have no energy, as you're not used to that kind of heat. I think it's impossible not to train there and acquit yourself well in these tough conditions all around the world. It is also tough to keep playing tournaments locally over here, whereas in Spain, if you go to Barcelona, they have hundreds of tournaments for parents to take their kids to, and the level is very high. In addition, you don't have to travel very far to get to a local tournament. Whereas here, you have to travel hours to get to a tournament, and parents have to then stop what they are doing with their other children and dedicate everything to the one child, and it's logistically very tough, and it's actually very preventative.



Heather Watson had an excellent start to the year. Do you think that she can really put down a marker this year, having been dogged by injuries in the last few years?

She has had an unbelievable run in that, after she contracted mononucleosis, she then for the first time in her professional career saw her ranking decline, which was a difficult thing for her to witness. She had to go back to qualifying for tournaments and back into smaller events, and it wasn't very glamorous, but she worked hard and got herself right back up in the rankings. She's just a grinder. The problem that Heather's got is she isn't like Pliskova who has this massive serve and can just bang down aces and motor through service games. However, Heather has to grind every game out, and if you look at her matches during the course of the year, so many of them go to three sets and that is difficult to keep up. She has these peaks and troughs, so it's really tough for her. Also, she is quite pint-sized compared to a lot of the women, many of whom are around six foot tall. She doesn't have big weapons or big reach on the court, so it is quite an uphill battle for her, but I admire the way she goes about her business, and she works hard. She applies herself and is a great competitor and match-player, but it's really hard for her to keep maintaining it week-in, week-out. A player who bucks the trend when it comes to height is Simona Halep, who's only 5ft 6in, but is ranked third in the world. She managed to overcome that, but I think Halep has a little more pop on the ball than Heather, and is more powerful and smooth. Heather's working on all the right aspects of her game, but it's hard.

Who are the rising stars of women's tennis that we should be looking out for?

Madison Keys is one. [Karolina] Pliskova, who got to the finals in Dubai. She's 22, and a rising star, she has the most phenomenal serve. She's a slightly late

developer, but now her tennis is really starting to come good and she has had a fantastic start to the year. She's served over 100 aces already this year, which is right up there. Her service motion is similar to Serena Williams', in that it's very smooth and very fluid. Keys is someone I really like. There's another girl called [Belinda] Bencic, who is only 17, and she got to the fourth round of the US Open last year. She's got a really calm head on her. [Eugenie] Bouchard was someone who rose through the ranks last year, and reached three Grand Slam semi-finals, including the final at Wimbledon. This

“What Murray was looking for when he appointed Mauresmo was a calming influence, which she provided. Lendl may not have been so forgiving”

year is going to be difficult for her, it's always difficult to replicate the performances during a breakthrough year, so all eyes will be on her. She was overpowered by Kvitova in last year's Wimbledon final, but it was still a great run to the final for her. Some have questioned whether her technique is quite as good as it should be, but she certainly makes up for that with her determination.

Do any of those have a chance of Grand Slam success?

I don't know about this year, but having said that, women's tennis is in an interesting period. At the moment, Serena Williams is clearly the dominant force.

If she plays her best tennis, there is no question that she is the favourite for any Grand Slam title. She came out firing on all cylinders in Australia, which she didn't do the year before. She is clearly still hungry for titles because she wants to surpass Steffi Graf, who is on 22 Grand Slams. Serena is on 19, so she could equal that this year, which is very possible. If she suffered an early exit, the field would be blown wide open in women's tennis. You've always got the 'old guard' – Sharapova, Azarenka – who is starting to play better tennis again – and Halep, who is becoming more experienced and got to the final of the French Open. I would say that she would be the next favourite to win a Grand Slam after Serena, but after that, I think it is up for grabs. After Bartoli won Wimbledon a couple of years ago, you never know what might happen.

What have you made of Amelie Mauresmo's progress, and why do you think female players are averse to hiring female coaches?

Traditionally, female players have always hit with male players, due to the fact that they tend to hit the ball quite a bit harder, so that when they go back to hitting with female players, they have a lot more time to think. The coaches tend to chop and change, but most of them are established. A number of female players may prefer a male coaching them, as they tend to be more direct. What Murray was looking for when he appointed Mauresmo was a calming influence, which she provided, and her ability to listen to him and be sympathetic when he was feeling fatigued, whereas Lendl may not have been so forgiving. Murray found the approach more sensitive, but the litmus test for Murray will be whether he can win a Grand Slam under his new coach. Murray clearly wants to do as well as possible and feel vindicated in the appointment that he has made. Murray is also working with a psychologist, and he has been taking all these notes on court, which is a new innovation for him, and hugely significant.

Women in sport: Who to look out for

Peter White

Women's sport is in the headlines more than ever, and with plenty of British stars in action over the coming months, there is plenty to get excited about.

The women's football World Cup in Canada kicks-off in June with England being the sole British representative. The Three Lions have been drawn against old rivals France in Group F, along with Colombia and Mexico. Mark Sampson's side will be hoping to improve on their best-ever quarter-final finish that they equalled last time out in 2011, and their first game against *Les Bleus* will provide a strong indication of how far they really can go. England are currently competing in the Cyprus Cup in preparation, and Wednesday's comfortable 3-1 win over Finland suggests that the side are in good shape.

In rugby union, the women's Six Nations is currently underway

and France have set the pace with three wins from three. A late penalty from Ireland's Niamh Briggs last Friday condemned World Champions England to their second defeat of the series which leaves them with little chance of adding the Six Nations crown to their global title. England are seemingly going through a tough transition period following the introduction of several new players and the departure of long-serving coach Gary Street. The side will be hoping to recapture some form ahead of their final two games against Scotland on 13th March and France on 21st March.



With Laura Robson still on the sidelines with a persistent wrist injury, women's British tennis hopes rest largely on the shoulders of Heather Watson. Whilst starting the year strongly by securing her second WTA title at the Hobart international in January and subsequently

climbing up to 38th in the world rankings, Watson has since claimed just one victory over an unranked opponent. After a disappointing defeat in the opening round of the Australian Open, she will be hoping for an improved run ahead of the French Open in May.

England's netball team will travel to Sydney for the World Cup in August with hopes of going further than they ever have before. With several youngsters joining established stars such as Jo Harten and Geva Mentor in the side, England's squad is as strong as ever and many are tipping them to reach a World Cup final for the first time in their history.

The 2015 Women's Ashes will get underway in Taunton in July, with the series being contested across all three cricket formats for the third time. One test match, three one-day internationals and three Twenty20 internationals will be played over a month across England and Wales and the hosts will be hoping to retain their title after a tight victory down under last year.

In Athletics, the European Indoor

Championships kick-off this weekend with young starlet Katarina Johnson-Thompson vying for gold in the pentathlon. Following a frustrating 2014 in which a foot injury prevented her competing at the European Championships and Commonwealth Games, Johnson-Thompson is one of the world's form athletes after breaking British records in the long jump and high jump in recent weeks. The Liverpoolian is also targeting heptathlon success at August's World Championships in Beijing, but will undoubtedly be challenged by the return of Olympic champion Jessica Ennis-Hill.

Following a successful Commonwealth Games for the home nations, 2014 ended brightly for women's swimming with Siobhan-Marie O'Connor, Fran Halsall and Hannah Miley all shining at the Short Course World Championships in Doha. Six-time world champion Mark Foster has recognised the squad as the 'best for 30 years' and the girls will be hoping to take this great form into the main World Championships event in Kazan in July.



Australia hoping for ODI success

Euan Cunningham
Cricket

As the World Cup – cricket's premier limited overs competition – continued this week, the most likely winners have started to emerge. Several teams have shown that if they can keep up these early performances and take them into the knockout stages, it will be almost impossible to stop them.

The hosts Australia are definitely one of these teams, as their recent mauling of Afghanistan demonstrates. They have shown themselves capable of amassing enormous totals, with a mammoth 417 scored against the cricketing minnows, and have also shown their potential to reduce various sides' batting orders to a state of chaos and ruin, as England will testify. David Warner, Aaron Finch and Glenn Maxwell have all been impressive with the bat, while the Mitchells Starc and Johnson have been the usual suspects with the ball.

New Zealand have also retained the confidence and swagger that comes with being both hosts and tournament favourites. Their win against England, as well as their white-knuckle-ride success against Australia by one wicket – surely the game of the World Cup

so far – has done nothing to dispel the impression that the Black Caps really could go all the way. Brendon McCullum's ultra-aggressive style of captaincy has certainly reaped rewards, and with qualification from the group stage essentially already sewn up, maybe now is the time to try out different players and really utilise the entire squad.

South Africa have recovered from their initial setback against India – who are themselves looking ominously powerful and impressive – to take control of their own destiny in the tournament. Their success has been based on the relentless batting, with AB De Villiers in particular producing some utterly incredible hitting. This World Cup will forever be known as the tournament when 400 became a very realistic and attainable score; something no one surely would have predicted, even just a year ago.

England, meanwhile, face two do-or-die games against Bangladesh and then Afghanistan, both of which they will probably have to win in order to advance to the quarter finals.

At the start of the tournament this was really the minimum expectation for the team, even considering that the

squad is not particularly impressive. Failure to reach the knockout stages would probably have serious consequences for several members of the England ODI team, and indeed possibly the coaching hierarchy as well.

The fact that the ghost of Kevin Pietersen is again looming large must not distract the team; it is time for Eoin Morgan's men to prove they deserve to be part of the national side once and for all.



cricket.au ©

Squeaky bum time in Premier League

Nancy Gillen
Football

With the end of the Premier League looming, it is becoming clear how things will turn out. But with the fights for the Premier League title, Champions League places and survival all very tight, anything could happen in the remaining two months.

First to the battle for the top spot. For much of the season it has been between the holders Manchester City and Chelsea, and this is still the case.

Chelsea are currently in pole

position, having had an excellent season, as Jose Mourinho continues to weave his magic down at the Bridge. The recent addition of the Capital One Cup to the trophy room will give them further confidence.

Manchester City aren't far behind though, despite having a disappointing 2015 with defeats to both Liverpool and Arsenal in the past two months.

Arguably Chelsea have the hardest run in, with Southampton,

Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool still to play, and Man City could

take advantage of any potential slip ups.

Unless both teams make a severe blunder over the coming months,

the teams in the positions below them should not threaten their title hopes. They are in a fight of their own, attempting to secure a Champions League place. Arsenal, Manchester United, Liverpool, Southampton and Tottenham are all

battling for the remaining two places in the finest football tournament in Europe.

Arsenal seem to find themselves in this situation every season and so have the most experience in grinding out the necessary results, and Manchester United will be wanting to reclaim their place among European football's elite. Things are so close, however, that Liverpool, Southampton or Tottenham could claim the places if results go their way. Liverpool's form of recent times, as the only unbeaten team in the Premier League in 2015, could prove dividends, and a crunch tie with United at Anfield on March 22 could go some way to deciding who clinches a European spot.

The struggle for Premier League survival has the potential to be even more exciting than the race for the title, with at least six

teams seriously threatened by relegation.

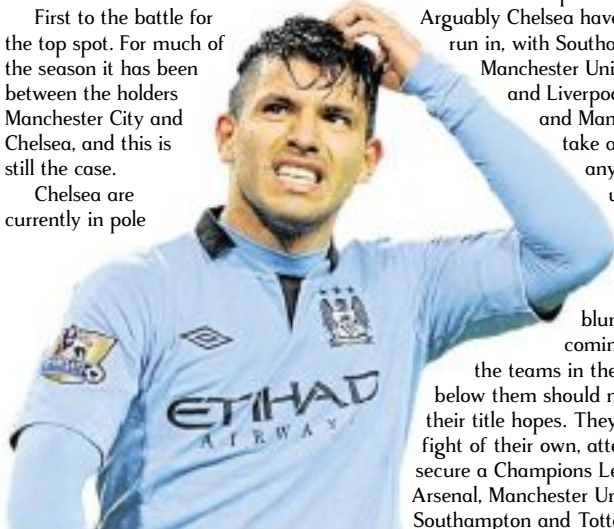
It looks as though Leicester are returning to the Championship after a season in the Premier League, but will it be Aston Villa, Burnley, QPR, Sunderland or Hull that join them?

Though unlikely, a slip up from Everton, West Brom or Crystal Palace could also see them get tangled up in the scrap. The amount of teams involved show that those currently at the bottom have every chance of moving up the table if they

achieve good results, meaning it's all to play for at the bottom of the table.

With only two months left until the end of

the Premier League, the remaining fixtures are going to be extremely intriguing.



Gryphons win crucial relegation clash

Euan Cunningham
Men's Hockey
Leeds Uni 2s 3-1 Durham 3s

On what was a tension-filled Wednesday evening at Weetwood, Leeds men's hockey 2s won an extremely important game against Durham 3s, all the while knowing that defeat would probably consign them to relegation this year. Their opponents, who were bottom of the table going into the match knew that only a win was good enough for them.

Leeds started confidently, passing the ball with purpose and assurance. Although there were no clear-cut chances in the opening minutes, the spectators who crammed the sidelines and vocally backed Leeds could tell who was the better side, and so redoubled their efforts to get behind their team.

Durham were looking flustered, with one of their defenders' persistent complaints earning him a short, sharp reprimand from the referee, who told him exactly where he would go if the backchat continued. It did not, but Leeds' early pressure did. Eventually the all-important goal arrived with 17 minutes played. Some pinball around the D led to a Leeds short corner, and when the ball was swept back to the edge of the box there was Tom Berry to stroke a powerful drive into the far corner, beyond the despairing dive of the Durham keeper.

With the score at 1-0 going into the

break, what Leeds needed immediately afterwards was a period of calm, composed passing, just to settle everyone down. What they got was a Durham equaliser almost immediately from the restart. A very well-worked move led to a Durham forward being one-on-one with keeper Nicky Thompson, who stood no chance as the ball was knocked casually into the far corner.

At 1-1 the tension soon returned. Knowing that a draw did not really help either side that much, both teams pushed forwards in an attempt to win the game and take a giant leap towards safety. They did so of course in the full knowledge that this would inevitably leave gaps in the defence. It was Uni who exploited one of these gaps first, earning a short corner after some good play on the left hand side. The ball was sent back to the edge of the box and was set up for Will Flett to strike. He hit a thunderous shot which flew into the roof of the net and almost took it off its moorings. It truly was an exceptional goal, and coming this late into the game it was hard to escape the feeling that this was the knockout blow Leeds had been searching for.

Captain Gareth Wright

made sure his side maintained their shape and discipline after the goal, and set about frustrating Durham in the final minutes. The best way of doing that as it turned out was by going straight back up the other end and scoring another fine goal. After the ball broke to him on the right hand side of the box, George Bucknell made light work of the tight angle by slamming home an unstoppable volley, another brilliant goal and surely enough to make the points safe.

And so it proved, despite late efforts

by the visitors to somehow get back in the game and keep their season alive. The Gryphons kept the ball well in the final few minutes and were rewarded after what seemed like an interminable wait in the cold night air by the sound of the final whistle, which was greeted with jubilation both on the pitch and the sidelines.

This result ensured survival for the Gryphons with one match still to play with a thoroughly deserved 3-1 victory and ultimately saw their opponents relegated.



Beth Moorley ©

Try something new with Adam LeRoux

Frequent readers of *The Gryphon's* sport section – and I know there must be one or two of you out there – will have seen the success of our ultimate frisbee teams over the course of this year. They have put in strong performances at the Indoor Nationals for both men and women this year and claimed first place for both in Outdoor Regionals. The team are as good as any university side in the country. So I joined them up at Weetwood for a training session to see what makes this frisbee so ultimate after all.

Now, I don't know about you, but I enjoy a bit of recreational disc throwing every now and then; on a beach in the height of summer, or in Hyde Park as you clamber over the hordes of picnickers and sunbathers to retrieve an inerrant throw. There's nothing quite like a frisbee landing on a stranger's freshly made cheese and pickle sandwich to break the ice.

So to be told to bring football boots and plenty of water with me obviously meant this was no place for a barbecue, and the flip flops had to be put away.

For those unfamiliar with ultimate, it's a high-octane and hugely entertaining sport which can be played both inside and outdoors. With teams of seven playing – which can be mixed or single gender – on a football pitch sized area, it can be tiring if you're not up to the mark, trust me. The aim of the game is to keep the disc from touching the ground as you attempt to pass to your teammate in the opposition's end-zone, which earns your side a point.

It almost sounds easy when written down, but as the training drills began, and the tactics come out, the game took on a whole new side. With cuts and pulls and all sorts of other names being thrown around, the jargon is definitely something to get your head around. The players would seamlessly perform renditions of different moves over and over again; no wonder they are one of the country's best teams.

As the training drills came to a close, I was getting compliments for my throwing technique; those hours spent trying to avoid knocking down sandcastles and sabotaging barbecues had obviously paid off. With confidence sky high we moved on to playing some real games, where I could really test my mettle.

This is where the experienced players really came into their own, with international players in the team like Alice Beeching pulling out every trick in the book. Backhand, forehand, overhead, upside down, whatever which way the disc would end up in a teammate's hands – and there was me over the moon with being able to get it going in a straight line.

You can pull out all the tricks you like with the disc but if your defence isn't up to scratch you are never going to get anywhere in this game. In ultimate it's all about concentration, as you man-mark a player each and keep track



Will Stanley ©

of their every move. One quick slip and they're away to the end zone, leaving you chasing their shadow, so you've got to be on guard at all times.

This is where I got my moment to shine. As one elusive runner stormed clear of the defence and, with my delegated attacker also lurking, a pass got thrown forwards. It was down to this novice to stop what looked like an easy point for the opposition, and boy did I. A full stretched leap, like a bearded ginger gazelle wearing a Plymouth Argyle shirt, saw me get fingertips to the disc and cut out the move. For all of three seconds I was the hero, caked in mud, but it was worth it – what an experience.

I was expecting to be carried off the pitch on their shoulders after such a move, but that's just the norm for these guys. Plenty of verve, plenty of skill, and a great bunch of characters to boot. It's a great sport that anyone can enjoy, and mixing with such quality players makes it all the more better.



Beckett comeback to crush Gryphons

Nancy Gillen
Women's Football
Leeds Uni 2s 1-4 Leeds Beckett 3s

It was a case of intense university rivalry for the Leeds Uni women's football 2s on Wednesday, as they faced Leeds Beckett Carnegie 3s.

After emphatically winning their last fixture with a 4-0 trouncing away at bottom side York St John and saving themselves from relegation, the Uni side were hopeful that they could transfer that performance into this game against

a strong opponent and push further up the table.

It certainly looked like a win was a real possibility when the game kicked off, with the Uni team immediately testing the Beckett defence and looking the more threatening. This initial dominance paid off, as Sian Smith took advantage of Beckett's shaky defence, breaking free to fire in a well-taken goal.

The balance of play soon swung though, as Beckett finally kicked into gear, and the game became an end to

end affair with both sides coming close to adding to the score line. Beckett's pressure increased, and while the Uni defence held them at bay for some time, the visitors equalised and then took the lead in quick succession. The half time whistle blew on what had been an intriguing and well fought 45 minutes.

The home side continued to assert the pressure as soon as the second half began and Uni found it hard to keep their play flowing. They still had a few good chances which could have changed the direction of the game in

the favour of the Gryphons.

Beckett side soon had their third goal though. Uni continued to fight but with the result of the game effectively determined, Beckett got a fourth.

The remaining 20 minutes of the game passed with little incident, and the final whistle confirmed the 4-1 scoreline in Beckett's favour. Despite a valiant effort, the Leeds Uni team had failed to defeat their rival team.

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Row with the flow



Alice Stephens-Mayor
Rowing

The senior women's squad took an eight and a quad to the BUCS event in Boston last weekend. The eight raced in the first division, placing an impressive seventh out of 30 in the intermediate category.

The women had a massive confidence boost when they discovered not only had they placed highly overall in the UK, but their time was quicker than a 'championship' category eight. The quad put in an admirable performance, as after various injuries and a last minute crew change, they placed 10th in the intermediate category. Squad captain Helen Brown says the day was a success, with the girls putting in a "great foundation for the future."

The senior men's squad entered an eight and four this year. The four had a typical rowing early morning start of 5.30 and arrived to face an extremely tough and competitive category- the men's intermediate fours. The four raced professionally with novice cox Amy Robinson putting in an outstanding performance for her first race, and the crew placed 17th.

The afternoon brought much

stronger winds for the eights category, however this did not deter the men who put in a fantastic performance placing 10th out of 27. It was an extremely close race, with LUUBC only coming 10 seconds away from the top five. Senior men's captain Joe Croisdale said the squad are now working hard towards the national event 'Head of the River' in London.

Overall, it was an extremely positive weekend of racing. Unfortunately due to windy conditions, the novice crews were unable to race on the Sunday, however with the amount of dedication and training demonstrated in recent months, the novices will no doubt be putting in promising performances in the coming races.

The future is looking bright for LUUBC. They have come from a sports society training over an hours drive away in York four times weekly, to training in a brand new £1 million boathouse in Leeds. Also with the very exciting appointment of the new Head of Rowing and coach Dan Grant, the foundations are there for some even more impressive results for the rest of the Head season and into the summer regattas.



Leeds taste frisbee success in Outdoor Regionals



Sarah Norman
Ultimate Frisbee

Leeds Ultimate Frisbee Club has once again had an extremely successful weekend, with both the men's and women's 1s winning their respective outdoor regional tournaments, earning them both places at Nationals. For the men, they earned one of only two Division 1 spots at Nationals.

Despite a shaky start, the women comfortably won all their pool games on Saturday, holding their second place seeding into Sunday's matches. No one really knew what to expect with this women's team, with several key players away at GB commitments, the squad was made up of both experienced and developing players. Experienced handlers Rachel Douglas, Katie Lear (GB u23) and Rachel Finch (GB u23) worked the disc up the pitch to key point-scorers Alexis Soo and Jess Gregson.

The men also won all their pool games on Saturday, holding their third place seeding. Given that the men's team placed second at Indoor Nationals earlier in the year, the squad for outdoor regionals was expected to be very strong, and they did not disappoint, bringing a very experienced team to the tournament. This team included GB players Will Carter and Rob White, Ireland player Nicolas Peters, as well as ex-captain Nick Moss and current

captain Dan Lovesey.

Sunday's games were stepped up a level as the top teams from the region fought it out for a place in the final, and places at Nationals. However as well as tough games for our teams on Sunday, the weather also decided to play its part, bringing 45 mph winds and rain to the pitches. Such extreme weather made playing conditions particularly difficult, but also highlighted the really skilled players in attendance at the tournaments. Those players with most experience seemed unfazed by the wind, simply using their knowledge of the sport and skill to work around it. The wind meant that games often turned into a trading of upwind and downwind points, which meant that at times the results of the toss to decide which teams start at which end, was pivotal to the end result.

This contributed to the 15th place position for the men's 2s. The team, despite being more inexperienced than the first team, demonstrated great promise and skill, particularly given that a large number of players only picked up the sport in September. Stand out developing players were key point-scorer Josh Holden and strong defensive player Mike O'Sullivan. The team even managed to get a crucial upwind point thanks to a pitch length huck by Captain Nick Mortimer.

Despite the adverse weather

conditions, both first teams reached the final on Sunday, with the men's 1s playing Sheffield in a close game with both teams breaking through the wind and scoring some upwind points. Men's Captain Dan Lovesey reflects that for the 1s to go undefeated all weekend in what has been shown to be a very difficult region was very pleasing, with the whole team raising their game. It was also impressive to see everyone coping so well with the difficult weather conditions.

The women's 1s came up against Loughborough yet again this season, having previously lost the semi-final to the same opposition at Women's Indoor Nationals.

Captain Amelia Kenneth puts the women's success down to 'coming out fighting for every point and utilising each individuals strengths on the pitch'. We can be proud of the entire club for playing hard in gruelling conditions, gaining experience for all our developing players and being rewarded with a double Leeds victory.

This is shaping up to be an extremely successful season for Leeds Ultimate Frisbee, particularly with the recent announcements that so many of our players have been selected to represent Great Britain, and one player for Ireland. The society look forward to the Nationals in April where they are no doubt hoping to dominate.



Badminton 1s (M) 5-3 Liverpool 1s

Badminton 2s (W) 6-2 Keele 1s

Basketball (W) 29-72 Newcastle 1s

Fencing (M) 127-105 Newcastle 2s (Cup)

Fencing (W) 114-131 Manchester 1s

Football 4s (M) 1-1 Huddersfield 2s (Cup)

(Loss on pens)

Football 1s (W) 7-0 Sheffield 1s

Football 2s (W) 1-4 Leeds Beckett 3s

Football 3s (W) 1-4 Leeds Trinity 1s

Hockey 2s (M) 3-1 Durham 3s

Hockey 2s (W) 3-1 Durham 4s

Hockey 5s (W) 4 - 1 Hull 1s

Rugby League 2s 38-12 Hull 2s

Rugby Unions 1s (M) 7-39 Bristol 1s

(Championship)

Rugby Union 2s (M) 12-26 Durham 3s

Rugby Union (W) 76-5 Liverpool Hope 1s

Squash 2s (W) 3-1 Newcastle 2s

Tennis 1s (W) 0-12 Manchester 1s

Volleyball (W) 1-3 Northumbria 2s





We take a look at the Premier League and matters at both ends of the table p. 20



Yet more success for Leeds Uni ultimate frisbee sides at Outdoor Regionals p. 23



The Gryphon talks exclusively to tennis ace Annabel Croft p. 18



Leeds Uni Boat Club put in a strong performance at the BUCS head p. 22



Lucie England-Duce ©

Uni suffer cup semi-final heartbreak

- Cup run ends at hands of league leaders
- Uni can't retain early lead as Northumbria fight back to reach cup final

Daniel Nixon
Women's Volleyball
Leeds Uni 1s 1-3 Northumbria 2s

The Gryphon Centre played host to the Women's Northern Conference Cup semi-final tie on Wednesday where Leeds Uni lost 3-1 to a ruthless Northumbria 2s side.

Despite the two teams being in the same league, Leeds knew that they were in for a tough test with the Newcastle-based outfit unbeaten and ten points clear at the top of the Northern 2B division.

The first set began in a very anxious manner with both teams battling through some long, tense rallies. As both

Leeds and Northumbria entered double figures, no-one must have told Amber Chen and Tassie May about the visitors' unbeatable form. Pinpoint serves and unstoppable spikes left the Northumbrian frontline shell-shocked. Northumbria tried to send in some of their own tantalising serves, but time after time İrmak Gökçesu was there with an impressive dig from the back-line. The visitors missed their serve at set point, handing Leeds the opening advantage in what could only be described as a perfect start.

Despite the promising opening, Leeds found themselves 0-4 down at the start of the second set. However, some superb serving from Martina Santantoni, as well

as powerful spikes from Nicole Morgan gave the home side an unbelievable run of points which saw them turn the score around to 8-4. Northumbria began to show their form and they eventually took the second set comfortably to make the score 1-1.

Many would have expected Northumbria to push on and dominate the third set, but with so much at stake, Leeds refused to give up. Northumbria did score their fair share of points but Leeds always seemed to have an answer. Nicole Morgan and Ashton Hills kept replying to Northumbrian winners by returning their own. Santantoni, the Leeds setter, unfortunately went off injured which seriously disrupted the

home side's flow. The visitors unleashed some ferocious spikes which even left Gökçesu with little chance of a return. Eventually Northumbria won that all important third set, leaving them favourites to claim a place in the final.

Uni looked disheartened as they entered the fourth set which allowed Northumbria to stamp their authority on the game. The final 20 minutes just seemed like a formality for the visitors who cruised through, earning them a spot in the final against either Manchester Met or Bangor. Leeds will now concentrate their attention on their final game of the league season at home to Sheffield Hallam 1s next week as they look to end the campaign on a high.