



INSIGHT

TRINITY TERM 2024

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who beautifully designed the front and
back cover of this term's edition.



INSIGHT

OxWIB
OXFORD WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Insight presents: TT24 edition

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President's Introduction

On behalf of Oxford Women in Business I would like to extend a warm welcome to Trinity Term 2024 and thank you for reading our new Insight Magazine. I hope that you enjoy this collection of articles and that that you find it a useful resource in future terms.



OxWIB was founded in 2008 with the mission to connect women in the world of business, to provide a platform for inspirational women, to inspire the next generation of female leaders, and to broaden the meaning of business. This term, we have an exciting line-up of events and activities designed to expand your horizons, develop valuable skills, and connect you with industry leaders.

At OxWIB, we aim to increase accessibility to industries that are notoriously difficult to break into and showcase female leadership at the highest levels. This term we're hosting Demetra Pinsent, CEO of Charlotte Tilbury, and McKinsey Partner Rakhi Williams, whose insights inspired our members to aim high and provided powerful frameworks from which our members can look at their strengths to design their ideal career. Our hands-on workshops with AmplifyMe and Echios dove into the world of Finance and provided valuable technical training, key for success.

We also focused on building and strengthening connections in our community with ventures such as Coffee Roulette and our run and picnic with Oxford Development Consultancy. Our famous President's Ball, now truly one of the biggest events each term among Oxford undergraduates, further serves to broaden our reach and bring our community of motivated women together. Our new Demystifying OxWIB Initiative has reinforced how accessible our community is by sharing advice with prospective members and committee on how they can best get involved to reach their goals.

Finally, I would like to thank the Trinity committee for the hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm they have put into creating this amazing term card. It has been a pleasure to lead this incredible committee, and it is an honour to be a member of such a fantastic community of highly motivated and enthusiastic women.

I wish every reader of this magazine a successful and enjoyable term and look forward to meeting you at our events!

Your Editors and Insight Team

Hello everyone!
Trinity is such
a great term,
sun is out
and emotions
are high.

Wherever you
are in your
journey, the Insight team wishes
you good luck x. I'm Hongyin Pan, a
second year Economics and
Management student at Christ
Church. Working on this magazine
has been such a great experience,
and I hope that you'll have as much
fun reading it as the team had
putting it together. We've chosen to
not have one theme as the world of
business is so diverse and ever-
changing, instead you'll be guided
through various sections with a
great balance of business insights
and fun reads. I'd like to thank the
amazing OxWIB community for their
contributions, and our featured
guests for their patience and
generosity. If anyone is inspired by
any of the articles and wishes know
more, do reach out!



Hey! I'm Freja
Davis, a second
year Geography
student at
Hertford. I was
really excited to
work on the Insight
magazine this term. It was a
fabulous opportunity to gain so
many engaging perspectives from a
truly wonderful and inspiring group
of people, and gain a deeper
appreciation of the diversity of the
OxWIB community's passions. We
were super keen to ensure this
edition of Insight demonstrated a
range of creative interests, varied
outlooks and showcased the power,
ability and achievements of women*
and I feel extremely lucky to be part
of a really supportive and
empowering community. I am so
grateful to have worked with such a
fantastic and collaborative team, it
really has been a pleasure to
contribute to this magazine, and I
hope you enjoy it.



Katie McCall



Marysia Fanner Brzezina



Vedika Rastogi

HT24 Highlights

by Elisha Khannah

Committee Social: College Scavenger Hunt

The committee started off strong, with one of our best-ever socials! The membership team arranged a scavenger hunt across Oxford, ending in St Peter's College Bar

DVS Analytics Hackathon

In Week 4, we welcomed Data Vision Services for a hackathon event. They are a start-up strategy consulting firm, using big data to solve real world problems. Special shout-out to winning team – Johana & Golden – who received Amazon vouchers and fast-tracked applications for graduate roles at DVS.

Inspirational Women Series: Leah Chowdhry

A highlight of HT24 was our 'Inspirational Women Series.' This series invited speakers from a range of industries like finance, sports, and entrepreneurship. Here, we can see Leah Chowdhry being interviewed by our Events Co-Director, Lily.

Inspirational Women Series: Dr Doina Ionescu

In our next installment of the series, we welcomed Dr Doina Ionescu, the Managing Director for Merck in the UK & Ireland. She also represents Merck on the European Medicines Group, contributing towards the development of its policy positions and advocacy efforts.

President's Ball: Hollywood Glamour

Our famous President's Ball did not disappoint. Held in the stunning ballroom at the Randolph Hotel, the committee truly looked the picture of Hollywood Glamour.

Wednesdays Live (!) Podcast Recording

Now, we move to probably my favourite event of the term – the live Wednesday's podcast recording. Leading ladies, Melissa and Sophie, welcomed onstage their head producer to share insights into the business behind fame, and transforming their dinner-time conversations into a monumentally successful brand.

Handover Dinner

Our termly handover dinner was bittersweet, as we bid farewell to our exiting committee and welcomed plenty of new faces.

Woah, we're halfway there, Woah, livin' on a prayer

by Marysia Fanner-Brzezina

Hello! My name is Marysia and I am the Head of External Relations for the Trinity Term '24 OxWIB committee! I am a second year studying Theology and Religion at Pembroke College, which means that this time next year I will be in the thick of finals, graduation, and life beyond Oxford, something which - if I am being completely honest - is terrifying to me.

Before coming to Oxford, I was excited about beginning a whole new chapter in my life. I was hungry for freedom and greater responsibility, making new friends and embracing new experiences. Freshers' week and beyond was a lot of fun, and everything was new, shiny, and exhilarating.

On an emotional and academic level, I experienced a lot of situations that left me feeling insecure about who I was and where I was at. In my first year, aka my silly fresh era, I felt like I wasn't performing at the same level I had when I was in school. I felt like a bit of a failure for not living up to the expectations others set for me and the expectations I set for myself. I think the most important lesson I learned last year is that change is inevitable, often needed, and I should embrace growing as a person rather than limiting myself to the expectations I set and perceptions I held onto as a teenager.

This year I have taken a slightly different approach, having had an entire year to adjust to change and feeling more secure in myself and my abilities. I have engaged my interests and expanded my extracurricular horizons. Sometimes I have overstretched myself with my excitement for getting involved and stuck in. I would recommend you constantly check in with yourself and ensure you have the discipline and self-care to take a step back when you are feeling overwhelmed. I have also learned the importance of a routine, especially when you do a subject with few contact hours and therefore need the discipline to set and adhere to your own routine.

Deep down, past all the internalised emotions and insecurities, I know who I am and what I am capable of, and, crucially, I do not need someone else's opinion to inform that. It is nice to have it confirmed, but a degree classification does not make it any more or less true. With so much packed into three short years I feel I barely have the time to process it. Your university experience is a story of discovering comfort in your own limits, appreciating comfort in familiar and unfamiliar places, and creating a healthy relationship with yourself. Lean in!



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Startup Spotlight: Elevating Human Skills with LEVRA

by Hongyin Pan

Indya Sawyerr is a 2nd year Psychology & Philosophy student at Christ Church

Can you share with us your experience interning at a startup and what initially drew you to the startup world?

I have always wanted to have my own business and creating a start-up is a way to do that. I went to an OxWIB event and others, the advice I got was that the best way to get into entrepreneurship is to intern at a start-up and actually get some hands-on experience. It was mostly remote and I was quite involved in the actual tasks, being a small team everyone's effort mattered. I met with the CEOs prior to starting. When I returned I found that they were actually using the things that I worked on, so I felt valued. The day-to-day was less "exciting" than I expected, it's a lot of admin (meetings, calls, emails, etc.), and this was what everyone was doing, not just me, the intern!

How did you secure this position? Did you have any previous experience?

No previous experience with anything related to start-ups or working with companies. I went to the Oxford Careers Fair with Oxford entrepreneurs, and I saw their stand, thought it was interesting, and went up to talk to them. We talked about the product and we got on, there was no mention of internships or anything like that. I asked for their LinkedIn when I left, and followed up the next day inquiring about potential student opportunities. They replied and we set up a meeting for the following week (lightning fast). I think they were interested in me because of my background in psychology. Later on they told me that I made a really good first impression. This shows that it's really important to be genuinely interested and passionate about the company/product that you want to work with!

What were some of the most valuable lessons you learned during your time at the startup?

- 1) Importance of having a co-founder. I didn't realize the amount of daily work you need to do, just to share it with someone else would be so much better
- 2) Don't be afraid when something doesn't work.
- 3) Perseverance, don't give up easily!
- 4) Passion for the actual product that you are making. You have to put 100% effort into it knowing that it will probably fail, so it's not worth it if you're only in it for the money.

What do you think sets startups apart from more established companies?

The culture and the set-up of the people in the company. It was more casual. I could suggest changes to the actual product, and the CEOs would listen and actually consider my input.

What advice would you give to the WIBs interested in venturing into the start-up world?

Don't be afraid to NETWORK. Networking for a start-up is different compared to other industries. They are looking for people who are passionate about the same things they are. When they learned I did Psychology, what attracted them was not my knowledge per say but the thought that I could appreciate the product the same way they did. After this internship experience, I learned that networking doesn't have to be scary, it can be fun!

Also this internship was not paid (as it's sometimes the case with start-ups), but I managed to get funding from Crankstart, so another piece of advice is don't work for more than 2 weeks without getting paid (this is advice that I got from a CEO).

Intro to Investment Banking: Chat with a Bank of America Intern

by Emeline Yong

The finance industry is known for being notoriously hard to break into. For competitive roles like investment banking, preparation usually starts in the beginning of first year. This is because most banks only hire a very small number of graduate recruits as most positions are filled up by people who have performed well in their penultimate year summer internship in the same bank (this is known as “converting”), and the easiest way to get a summer internship role is to “convert” your spring week from the year before that (if your firm offers this opportunity).

I started applying for spring weeks maybe in Week 3 of Michaelmas, but if I could redo it I would honestly start preparing/applying before university starts for firms with rolling applications. This would’ve probably made my first term a lot less stressful. The most important thing about applications is to remember to apply early (if possible on the day the application opens) and that it is a numbers game. You can ask around as there are many application trackers/spreadsheets circulating the Internet compiling information about spring week application opening dates, closing dates, links to their website etc. Also, there are many diversity programs available so definitely apply for any that you are eligible for.

Last year, I did a spring week at Bank of America under the Investment Banking and Global Markets divisions. Over the course of the spring, we learnt all about the bank’s main lines of business through a series of presentations and talks. It was great in terms of experience as I got to learn a lot more about what you actually do in the roles that you read up about online, and how they all work together to make the bank operate. I also had the chance to learn more about other roles that I previously didn’t even know existed, or would have even considered applying for. They also arranged a range of activities for us, ranging from simulations for M&A, trading and risk management, to short group activities. Everyone was really friendly and we had the opportunity to talk to lots of people working at the firm (some of which were really senior). At the end of the spring, I had the opportunity to interview for one of the two divisions I applied to for conversion (I ended up choosing GM). Definitely do not be afraid to reach out to others who have done the same program before because they have been in your shoes before and will be able to give you invaluable program-specific tips that can help you get a return offer! I reached out to a couple of people before my spring through LinkedIn and the advice they gave me was super helpful.

How to get into the world of law

by Rose Evans

Personally having experienced rejection (and a lot of it) in my journey with law so far, I might appear to be unusually positioned to write an article entitled 'How to get into the world of law'; perhaps 'How do I get into the world of law?' would be more apt! Nonetheless, I want to offer my insight on the plethora of ways to involve yourself in 'the world of law' that lie outside of official opportunities such as law firm insight days in your first year, or vacation schemes in second year and beyond.

First of all, use your network!

Outside of OXWIB, there is the Oxford Women in Law Society which runs similar events designed to promote a route into the industry for female aspiring lawyers – for example, this term in Week 4 they are hosting a dinner with Simmons & Simmons – these firms are looking to sell themselves to you as the top women at Oxford, so enjoy being wined and dined and make the most of the chance to connect with top lawyers at top firms. Ask about work experience opportunities, and the trajectories of their careers too.

Look into the alumni networks from school, colleges, OXWIB or other societies and reach out to people who have been successful in the areas of law that you are interested in. I have been privileged enough to have Caroline Haughey OBE KC as my mentor because I made use of alumni networks, and her advice and friendship has been invaluable for my

development in the face of rejection and uncertainty.

Building and maintaining a network of support with other women in the field is a great way to immerse yourself in the world of law through their experiences, and to learn from them as role models.

Keep yourself up to date on the world of law through specialised awareness of current affairs (I recommend the Times Legal Supplement which comes out every Thursday) and sit in on trials at the Oxford Crown Court to gain an understanding of court proceedings and the role of a barrister (any member of the public is entitled to watch).

Lastly, definitely still do apply for the typical opportunities offered by law firms, internships available through the Oxford Micro-Internship programme, and any other means of getting legal experience. The most helpful way to improve your application is to apply, and as

frustrating as it is to receive the 'we regret to inform you...' email, you will have learnt about what firms are looking for, what the industry application process involves, and what you might be lacking. Hopefully the next time that I write for the Insight magazine I will have had

some success... but even if not, I will have exponentially improved my commercial awareness, learnt a lot more about myself and my own interests, and expanded my network significantly, all of which is progress towards finding the right fit for me within the world of law.

Technology: The impact of new technologies on the traditional "office job"

by Sophia Sukanuma

In today's fast-paced world, technology is transforming the way we work at a breakneck speed. From artificial intelligence to remote collaboration tools, innovations are reshaping the traditional landscape of the "office job." While preparing to enter the workforce, it's essential to understand the impact of these new technologies on our future careers.

One of the most significant shifts in recent years has been the rise of remote work. Thanks to advancements in communication technology, many companies now offer flexible work arrangements, allowing employees to work from anywhere with an internet connection. This flexibility opens up new opportunities, particularly those balancing career aspirations with familial responsibilities. Remote work eliminates the need for a traditional office setting, enabling people to pursue their careers while accommodating personal obligations. Whether it's caring for children or supporting aging parents, remote work provides the flexibility needed to maintain a healthy work-life balance. However, it's essential to recognize the challenges that come with remote work, such as potential feelings of isolation and difficulty disconnecting from work. As we embrace this new way of working, it's crucial to prioritize communication, establish boundaries, and seek out opportunities for collaboration to overcome these challenges.

Automation and artificial intelligence (AI) are also revolutionizing the way tasks are performed in the workplace. Routine tasks that once required human intervention can now be automated, freeing up time for more meaningful and strategic work. While some may fear that automation will replace human jobs, it's more likely to augment existing roles, creating new opportunities for innovation and growth. By developing skills in areas such as data analysis, programming, and critical thinking, we can position ourselves as valuable assets in an increasingly digital world.

Rather than fearing technology, let's harness its power to drive positive change and propel our careers forward.

In today's globalized economy, collaboration is now key to success. Fortunately, advancements in collaboration tools have made it easier than ever to work with

colleagues from around the world. Whether it's video conferencing, project management software, or virtual whiteboards, these tools break down barriers and enable seamless communication and collaboration across borders.

As technology continues to evolve, one thing is certain: the future belongs to those who are willing to adapt and learn. As undergraduate women, we must embrace a mindset of lifelong learning, continuously updating our skills and knowledge to stay relevant in a rapidly changing job market. Whether it's enrolling in online courses, attending workshops, or seeking mentorship opportunities, investing in our education is essential for future success. By staying curious and adaptable, we can navigate the complexities of the modern workplace with confidence and resilience.

Pen Pioneers: Journeying into the World of Student Authors with Hania Czaban

by Hania Czaban

My name is Hanna and I'm a second-year E&M student at Pembroke. I published two YA novels in Poland: "Cały ten czas" (which translates into "All This Time") and "Ostatnie światła gasną" ("The Last Lights Go Down"). This summer, I am publishing my third novel, the title of which I can't yet reveal!

What or who first inspired you to start writing?

That's a tricky question! Writing is one of these things that have always been somewhat present in my life, in one way or another. It might be a cliché to say that I've been writing ever since I can remember, but I am afraid this is largely true. When I was about five, me and my dad made a tiny DIY book from a matchbox. We cut out small pages from an old notebook, sewed them together and glued to the mini cover made from the matchbox. In this miniature book, I wrote a short story full of pictures and grammar mistakes. This is my first memory of realising that one day, I want to become a writer. By this point, I had already fallen in love with stories. I read a lot and kept getting inspired by the books I was reading. One of the most remarkable book series that hugely influenced my imagination was "The Chronicles of Narnia". My mum read me the first six books, but then refused to read the last one. She wouldn't explain why, and she said that if I wanted to find out, I had to read the last book myself—so I read the entire series again, this time including the last book. (I won't tell you why she didn't want to read it to me. If you want to find out, you have to read it yourself!)

The more I read, the more I wrote. In primary school, it was short stories and first chapters of books I would never continue. In secondary school – fanfiction which I embarrassingly published online. Seriously, I will never tell anyone my Wattpad nickname (everything is in Polish anyway.) And then, in high school, I became obsessed with fantasy. When lockdown came, I wrote my first book, "Cały ten czas", which got published one year later.

What makes a great story?

Emotions. This is what makes a story real – and it has to be real if we want it to win the readers' hearts. We read because we want to be elsewhere. We want to escape the routine or experience something we wouldn't experience otherwise. For this to be possible, the emotions in the book must be authentic.

This allows us to experience everything the characters do as we're reading. In some sense, we become the characters ourselves. A truly emotionally engaging story can make us develop a level of empathy for the characters like no other means of art. It allows us to read the characters' thoughts exactly as they are and understand the most hidden motives. Knowing what a character is feeling and thinking is like trying on a different life, and this is what reading is all about.

What is the most difficult part of writing a book?

Actually getting it written! Writing is always super exciting at the stage of brainstorming and planning the novel – but then you have to write these sixty or seventy thousand words down. A fun fact about writing is that it feels different every time you do it. Sometimes it can be thrilling and you immediately get whisked away by the story you're telling. Sometimes it feels more like a meditation. And sometimes you just stare at a blank page and nothing comes to your head, and every word you write seems to be the worst you could choose. This is the most difficult part – to keep going even though it feels rough, and the finish line is so far away you can barely even imagine it, not to mention seeing it!

After all, writing is hugely about perseverance. Before your story even remotely resembles a book, it requires days and days of doing the same exact thing – sitting in front of your computer and pressing keys on your keyboard. The most difficult thing is to keep doing it.

Can you walk us through the process of getting a book published?

Sure! It's slightly different in Poland compared to the UK (where, in most cases, you first need to find a literary agent who then reaches out to publishers on your behalf). In Poland, because the industry is much smaller, writers usually contact the publishers directly. In my case, after finishing my novel, I made a list of publishing houses that published YA literature in Poland. I then pitched a manuscript together with a synopsis and an author bio to roughly ten of them – and one got back to me!

Then we started working on the manuscript with an editor. In the meantime, we discussed the cover and started promoting the book online. Then, after many rounds of correction, the text underwent typesetting and was sent to print. And finally, in January 2022, the book was launched!

How do you balance your life as a published author with that of a student?

I won't pretend it's easy – because it's not! During term time, I try to separate these two and set myself specific time for writing, even if it's just an hour a day. During short vac, I usually split my time between writing and revision, and summer vacation is when I become a full-time writer!

In practice, however, these two areas overlap quite a lot, especially in the social media space. I want to share my love for writing with my readers and allow them to participate in the creative process. Yet, while writing is my biggest passion, being a student is such a significant part of my life that I can't really tell people about my books without mentioning Oxford and my degree, so I talk about it on my social media as well. I sometimes feel guilty for not consistently prioritising one of them. I am still learning that it's okay to sometimes switch focus between the two – and it doesn't mean that I'm less committed to any of them!

What advice do you have for anyone interested in a career in writing?

Read and write! Explore different genres and try to be analytical. While reading a great book, ask yourself what is so good about it. Equally, if you read a really bad one, try to identify what's wrong with it. Have your eyes wide open and get into the habit of writing down your thoughts and ideas. Having a notebook for that is probably the best thing to do. (Yet, personally I always struggle with writing my ideas down in one place. I usually scribble it down on receipts, margins, scrap paper and sticky notes, and half of them always gets lost. Would not recommend!)

My another advice is obviously to write! Practice makes perfect, and every sentence you write teaches you something, even if you delete it immediately afterwards.

But then my final tip is try not to delete the things you write. I know it's hard at times, but keeping what you've written really does give you a sense of progress and allows you to reflect on it in the future. And don't fall into the trap of editing your text forever before it's even finished. After you write a paragraph, a scene or a chapter, just move on. You'll have plenty of time for editing once you finish the manuscript. In fact, editing is quite counterproductive if you do it before you finish the first draft. It's more

effective to edit the manuscript once you have a wider context and already know how the book exactly ends!

And lastly, editing the text while still writing will make it you feel like the process takes forever and you'll be more like to give up at some point. Finishing a book is the best feeling in the world and the best motivation to keep writing. It makes you believe that you actually can finish a book – so prioritise completing the manuscript over making every sentence perfect!

(By the way, your writing will never feel perfect when you look at it. It's a sign of making progress. Get used to the thought that writing is an ongoing process of learning which never stops. And honestly, it's the best and the worst thing about it.)



Fashion and Designing

with Saffron Rutter

Instagram: @saffron.rutter, @saf.the.store

Sustainable clothing designer, illustrator and educator. Creative lead and manager of Art & Fashion Design programmes at InvestIN Education.

Can you walk us through a typical day-in-the-life of a designer? The mundane everyday, the highs, and the lows

So right now I'm very much in the initial stages of launching my brand, SAF, having previously just made one-off pieces under my own name. I think the biggest misconception people have about this is that as a designer with your own brand you're spending the majority of your time sketching, choosing fabrics etc - in reality this is about 10% of my work at the moment! There's a lot of behind-the-scenes admin that needs to happen, and as an independent designer you also need to be a social media expert, copywriter, website designer, stylist, photographer, business strategist, maker and about a million other things. This means that every day looks totally different for me, some days i'm learning about SEO and trying to understand website code, and some days i'm spending hours trying to source a very specific buckle - but this variation is part of what I love about having my own brand. I'd say the biggest high for me is seeing my work on people, be it in a publication or on someone who has bought a piece from SAF. The idea that someone likes something I have made enough to incorporate it into their outfit, or in the case of publications, use it as part of their own creative output when it comes to styling, photography etc, fills me with so much joy. The low is probably the sheer expense of being a designer - being so full of creative ideas that you can't yet afford to make can be frustrating, and you often have to work multiple jobs in order to sustain yourself while you run your business.



What drew you to the creative industries, and why fashion design in particular?

My whole life I've known I wanted to do something creative. I remember as a young kid making these little fold out paper wardrobes and sketching clothing designs inside. I would carry a sketchbook or sheets of paper everywhere, and

industry can be increased exponentially if I can educate the next generation of designers on how they can have a more positive impact on the planet.

Now that I'm fully settled into this role and have recovered from my fashion burn out, I have reduced my hours so I can develop my brand alongside my other work - but it's a tricky balance that I'm still getting used to!

What inspires you to create?

Everything! I truly believe inspiration can come from literally anything, and my work has been inspired by everything from shadows on a wall, to the pattern on a bus seat. Sometimes I like to solve problems with my design, sometimes I design purely based on visual aesthetics, and sometimes my designs have a rich history and meaning behind them. Of course, other designers and artists are always going to inspire me, but I think the most interesting work comes from a blend of inspiration from all different places.

I also work with students a couple of times a year, and seeing these young designers with so much passion and creativity really inspires me and makes me fall back in love with clothing design. It's sort of a symbiotic relationship - I provide them with the tools they need to succeed, and in turn they remind me why I love designing.

As someone who has firsthand experience in the fashion ecosystem, what do you believe are the most important qualities for success in this environment?

Resilience, drive, and creativity. Solving problems is such a crucial part of any business, whether you design or not, and if you can combine that with your creative skillset it will allow you to come up with solutions that will hopefully take you a long way. In terms of technical skills - if you want to be a designer I would learn how to make and sew (helpful not just in making garments but also to understand how to design better clothing), how to draw technical illustrations and create spec packs (and probably how to use clo3D, though I'm still on that journey myself), learn about different fabrics and their uses (not just describing something as "cotton" but also what kind of cotton - Twill? Muslin? Canvas?), and finally understand how to design and create in a more sustainable way.

You are a big spokesperson for sustainability in fashion, what do you think could be improved in the fashion industry to make it more sustainable? and why is it important?

I think the biggest misconception about sustainability is that it's a totally black and white issue - something is either sustainable or it isn't. In reality, it is almost impossible to measure every intricacy of how sustainable the complex supply chains behind most garments are, and a lot of it is up to interpretation. For example, some people consider wool to be an unsustainable resource, as it comes from an animal, but others believe that as long as there are certifications in place that mean that animal is not harmed, then it should be considered a sustainable and renewable resource. But you then have the issue of certain certifications being untrustworthy, which along with manipulative language and sometimes just straight up lying is what leads to fast fashion brands being able to greenwash their products and fool their customers. This is why I believe transparency (both by brands and throughout the supply chain) is crucial in creating a more sustainable industry - allowing customers to make more ethical decisions that align with their own morals and vote with their wallet for a more sustainable industry. For example, I am currently working on a leather bag that will be released in the coming months. I completely understand that many people will not consider leather sustainable (for the record, in the majority of cases I do not consider it sustainable either), and will not agree with buying an animal-based product, especially when the tanning process is usually so toxic. However, I have made the decision to use leather as it is very durable, long lasting, patinas well and the leather I have sourced is deadstock, full-grain leather from the furniture industry, so for me, this is a higher quality and more sustainable option that is making use of material that would otherwise go to waste, compared to buying it new. In my experience, real leather also lasts far longer than vegan alternatives, and acquiring it as deadstock allows me to offer it at a price that I would not be able to if I was buying the leather straight from tanneries, so although it is not affordable for all, buyers are getting a very high quality product for much cheaper than other options that use the same type of leather.

I hope that by providing this explanation as to why I make these decisions, and how mindful I try to be when making them, I can not only prove that I am trying to be transparent with my practice and not greenwash customers by pretending there is a perfect, 100% sustainable option for everything, but also help educate the general public on what they should be looking for in a garment. I would encourage all of those trying to create a sustainable brand to do the same - use your platform to educate and encourage transparency in this industry.

One thing stopping this transparency becoming more commonplace is that as a society we have become so used to cheap clothing that if designers do try to use 'sustainable' materials and ethical labour, the garment will end up out of most people's price range. And I get it! We're in a cost of living crisis and a lot of people can't justify spending £100's on one garment (myself included). But there are also many statistics that prove that the people buying from the very worst fast fashion sites are not those who can't afford anything else, but those with stable incomes that have the money to invest in higher quality pieces (the average Shein shopper earns \$65,300 annually according to a recent report by UBS securities). I believe that creating a more sustainable industry is not only up to designers, but the responsibility of the people purchasing these clothes too.

I am definitely not perfect, but I try to consider decisions as carefully as possible when shopping for clothing, and to really try and think it through rather than being sucked in by uber cheap prices and hyper specific trends. Ask yourself - will I wear this piece for a long time? Does it feel high quality and durable? Could I buy a second hand option instead?

What advice do you have for WIBs interested in the industry of fashion and designing in particular?

Designing is ultimately about problem solving. Use this skillset to tackle the issues that you will inevitably encounter when starting your business. Be creative, and apply this to everything you do. Change the industry for the better, but also, don't be too hard on yourself if it doesn't happen overnight - it's a journey!



FEMALE LEADERSHIP



How to Start a Successful Business: Interviews with Three Award-Winning Female Founders

Chloe O'Connor

Chloë Downes is the Forbes 30 Under 30 founder and CEO of SHFT, a talent management agency that focuses on improving diversity in the online influencer space. In 2023, SHFT won bCreator's Boutique Talent Management Agency of the Year. As a founder, Chloë won Ad Week 'Future is Female' 2023 and was a Rising Star finalist at the Black British Business Awards 2023.

Kim Seeley is the co-founder and director of Syntegrity Solutions, a specialist IT consultancy providing integration, identity and access management expertise. Syntegrity works with world-leading organisations including Allianz, Microsoft and the Australian Government. Having gained over 20 years of experience in IT, Kim is currently on a career break sailing around the world.

Erim Kaur is the founder of ByErim, a luxury haircare brand, and is the largest sikh influencer in the UK. Since its founding in 2019, ByErim has brought in more than £2.5 million in sales. In 2022, Erim was named the Judge's Choice on NatWest and The Telegraph's 100 Female Entrepreneurs to Watch.

How did you come up with an idea for your business?

CD: I started off in an influencer marketing start-up as a very junior person and worked my way up to managing a whole roster of talent by myself. I was there for just over a year and then got poached by another agency. I helped them to build the talent management arm of their agency, so I got practice in terms of building a company without too much pressure on myself. I worked there for just over a year and then decided I wanted to start my own thing, so I started SHFT.

KS: As a former employee of IBM, I was familiar with their use of IBM Business Partners to deliver projects where there was a shortage of skills. When IBM released a new product called DataPower, it was a very popular solution for many businesses but there was a massive shortage of skills. I had a strong systems integration background, and my co-founder had a strong security and identity management background, and DataPower brought the two together.

EK: The process of ideation was probably the easiest part. I always knew it would be a hair oil and always knew it would be my grandmother's formula. I always knew it'll be called ByErim and it would look a little like the way it does. Accept the easy wins, be it the ideation start or the branding or packaging.

How did you go about turning your idea into a reality?

CD: Starting a talent agency is quite an easy business to start because you don't really need much capital - there's no product or anything like that. You don't really need to buy anything and you don't really even need a space. All you need is a laptop, a phone and an internet connection. So it was quite easy for me to start. In terms of the starting roster of talent that I had, they were quite big names because people already knew me. My brother's a graphic designer, so he did the logo, and I built the website myself.

KS: Initially, we worked with IBM and registered as a business partner with their procurement team. This involved passing a number of technical and sales exams to prove our competency in the products. After a couple of years, we needed to become more independent in order to grow and started looking for direct clients. With our proven track record in implementation and happy customers willing to provide references, and a lucky break we secured our first direct contract and things really picked up from there.

EK: I first came up with the idea in January 2019 and launched in December, so it took me around a year from the original concept. I began by segmenting the idea into smaller tasks like deciding upon a logo, finding a factory, trademarking everything, etc. Segmenting the process into small tasks helped me feel accomplished when I'd achieved something from the list and stopped it from being so daunting.

How would you describe your leadership style?

CD: I've had a ton of jobs and, to be honest, I've never been completely happy at any job I've had. I feel a lot of companies are very focused on profits and not on the people. I thought 'if these people cared about the people that work for them more, they would actually be a more successful company'. So a big focus for me is treating people nicely and making sure people are happy. My hope is that nothing ever feels forced so I make sure everyone in the team feels included in decisions, especially around social activities. I've also tried my best to make the space as accepting and open as possible. I think it's really important to foster a culture where people feel that they can say their opinion or ask a question and they're not going to be shot down for it.

KS: I have a fairly relaxed and open leadership style. I don't like to micromanage, but I do expect our consultants to own the communication with the clients whose projects they are working on. Depending on the project, we conduct daily standups or weekly reviews so we can be aware of who is doing what, if anyone has any spare time we can use, and any issues they are struggling to resolve. I like people to be proactive, I don't want people who see any issues encountered as someone else's problem to deal with.

EK: Recently I did a survey with my team about our culture and the most common themes that came back were family, openness and diversity (which we are very, very proud of). I myself am a night owl and I always struggled working in offices where I had to be up for 8 or 9 am. Knowing how my own productivity was stifled, I think it's really important to give the team the option of flexible working. I also try to lead my team by empowering them to communicate to each other through me. I will take the blame for any mistake my team makes; I'm just proud of them for going out there and trying, despite the mistake. The moment I won't take the blame is when they make the same mistake twice.

How do you handle working with others to shape your vision and deliver value for your customers?

CD: The first member of the team who joined was Adam, who I'd worked with at my previous agency. The reason I brought him on is because he's someone who has skills that I don't and I think that's really important. When you're kind of starting a business you need to recognize that you don't know everything and rather than trying to learn everything, it's good to get other people that know things you don't. Adam comes from a more traditional talent background, so he has more experience in TV and celebrity type things. I knew he would be helpful in areas that maybe I didn't know about. A year and a half into the business, we were a team of four.

KS: I'm a co-founder, so the vision is really shared with others and collaboration has been integral in our business since day one. On that note, I think coming up with a clear vision for your business is a fundamental step in your success. It means that you can easily decide what work to bid for and chase after, because you can ask "will winning this project go towards achieving our vision?" We have annual planning meetings to revisit our vision and strategy and decide if we are on course. We put a review system in place for every project we deliver and every customer we work with and get feedback on how we can do better. We also ensure our employees receive access to the best training. Another thing to consider is an exit strategy – what is the end goal for your business? Mine was to run for 10 years and be turning an \$x profit. We are now in year 14, having achieved that target, and we continue to work towards new targets.

EK: The hiring process is what I've recently started to take seriously. Going to university and studying business and then starting my own business did not really teach me much about the fundamentals of leadership, hiring, and the more soft skills that are required to run a successful business. At the beginning I chose people that I liked, but now I'm in the position of choosing

people that I know are actively better than me in every single aspect of their job so I can learn from them. Working with others has really empowered me so I can focus on other things and has allowed me to hear different perspectives so I'm not operating or creating products within the bubble of my own preferences.

Have you run into any difficulties during your career that you believe can be attributed to your gender?

CD: I would say not particularly, but I'll preface this by saying I don't really see the way I navigate the world as "a woman". I think any issues I've had have mainly been due to my race and my class. I will say that the industries I've worked in have all been industries where there's a lot of women, like events and marketing. But these industries are also very middle class, so I tried to drop my South London accent for a long time. I think it's also important to think about the intersectionality of these things because I probably have had issues due to being a woman but because my class and the race probably supersedes those things, I'll always look at it from that lens prior to me looking at it from a gendered lens.

KS: The IT industry is still very "blokey", especially in Australia, but I didn't encounter very much sexism there. There were times when I haven't felt well supported in my career at IBM and have certainly experienced sexism working at IBM in the UK (sometimes from senior women – something that really surprised me). That is going back 20 years though, and the industry has continued to improve in that time. This early sexism just fortified my resolve to work for myself when I felt I had enough experience and put all those politics behind me!

EK: Originally, when I was looking for a factory to create my best selling hair oil, I really struggled to be taken seriously on the phone. It may have been my voice, it could've been due to my gender and it could've been due to the fact that I was introducing the concept of an influencer owned brand as that may have put people off when they work in a very traditional industry. I remember asking my dad for help on these phone calls and he explicitly told me that he wouldn't because I needed to learn how to do it myself. Luckily I managed to.

How do you think the world of business and more specifically your industry can improve on representation and empowerment?

CD: Something about SHFT is that, if you look on our website, we actually don't mention the word diversity or inclusive anywhere because you shouldn't need to. You shouldn't have to say that you stand for those things, you should just be doing it. I think quite often you look at a company's website and they'll

have diversity and inclusivity in massive words but you look behind the scenes and they're not actually doing anything. Also, generally when you're from a working class background, you won't have been told how to progress within an industry. I had absolutely no idea when I was more junior that you could ask for pay rises and promotions or negotiate your starting salary because my parents didn't know those things and I didn't even think to ask them. So I think it's really important that those skills are given to people from working class backgrounds. From an industry perspective, it's also really important that companies shift what they look for when hiring. When I hire, I'm looking for transferable skills rather than whether or not you have a degree.

KS: We always need more women in senior roles, but also a gender neutral system of appraisal. Quite often if you are being assessed for senior roles, your interviewer and assessor will be male and will assess you with what he thinks strong leadership entails which will likely focus on more male attributes. So you either have to come across as more manly to make the grade and risk not being true to yourself, or risk your strengths being not appreciated as much for what they are. We need to stop associating good leadership with men.

EK: I think it's great that a lot of faces in beauty are women who are speaking to women. This is one of the industries that has really been at the helm of female empowerment but I would say this approach needs to be taken within different industries like finance, law etc where there is so much opportunity for women to take space and hold space for one another.

What does a day in your life look like?

CD: Every day is different, but basically I manage a roster of talent. Sooner or later in the future, I won't do that, I'll just manage the team that manages the talent. Generally, I'm doing emails, negotiations and contracts for my talent, and overseeing the junior members of the team. I also oversee general business stuff like finance and rough targets. Sometimes I go to events and meetings; there's a lot of events in this industry.

KS: I check emails, respond to any urgent ones. I set reminder alarms are set and review any notes for meetings. Then, I check in with the admin team and follow up on any work that needs to be done to communicate with clients. I also write and review proposals. There is some other legal and technical stuff, like ensuring we meet specific standards, comply with legislation and have the appropriate certification. There is a lot of reading, analysis and thinking on top of actually writing and delivering any work.

EK: So I usually wake up around 10am as I'm a night owl and mornings aren't my favourite. I try to maintain a routine for myself: shower, pray, have coffee,

emails again until lunchtime. Essays/presentations, longer time boxes, say 25 minute chunks (silence your notifications!), and then take a 5 minute break. Be an owner, take responsibility. Get constructive feedback and don't be offended by negative feedback. Don't be afraid to say "no".

EK: To anyone looking to start a business, I would say don't overthink things. I would say though that it's really important to realise that once your business starts to become successful you are no longer going to be doing the thing you are most passionate about; I'm not the person doing the day-to-day posting on social media or creating the videos. I'm now working on leadership, delegation and team work. I'm a big fan of writing tiny tasks on my to-do list. The feeling of writing it off once you've completed a task is incomparable. So create a thorough to-do list, have it on your laptop, phone or even a piece of paper. For uni, don't dive into a revision schedule or exams without a clear plan. Try and utilise multiple different ways of learning: record your notes and listen to them back when you're walking, create flash cards, teach people things, and use kinetic learning.

What's your ultimate goal for your career? Any plans for what to do next?

CD: It's a tricky one for me because something I was working towards for a long time was making the Forbes 30 under 30 list, which I made last week. So I've been feeling a bit weird for the past week because I was like "what do I do now?" But I think one of my main focuses is really helping people from my background to get into the industry. I want to diversify the marketing industry and make it fairer for people of colour and people from working class backgrounds. I'm currently in the process of building a non-profit to do this. I want to leave it as a better industry than how I found it.

KS: The business is still profitable, still running and being taken care of by someone else now. At this moment, I am enjoying the challenge of short-handed ocean sailing and travelling the world. I get to meet all different kinds of people and I love it. Right now, I have enough and am enjoying what I am doing. I could always go back if I need to, but right now I'm tackling a completely different set of goals.

EK: I really want to expand ByErim into retail. One of my goals is to be in Selfridges and Harrods and everyday I'm getting closer to that. I'm also really excited about expanding our product line. The next product is such an obvious fit for ByErim and myself alike. I know those who are fans of the brand are also fans of myself so I'm super excited to launch it!

Empowering Entrepreneurs: 5 Female-Owned Gems in Oxford

Emily Daniel

The Handle Bar Café & Kitchen

Owned by Celine Wills, The Handle Bar café is known for its unique combination of a bicycle workshop and a café, offering a cozy atmosphere for visitors to enjoy coffee, food, and the company of fellow cycling enthusiasts.

The business, which has been running since 2015, tries to use the freshest local ingredients in the food they serve and can cater for all, whether you eat meat, or you are vegan, there is something for everyone!

Hoyle's

This independent, family run games shop is co-owned by Emily Scaysbrook. Hoyle's has been based on Oxford's High Street since 1997, and here you can find a range of games, both traditional and modern, for you to enjoy with your family and friends. They also run social events, such as 'Chess and Cheers', where you can partake in a social chess night with drinks!

Tap Social

Tess and Amy Taylor are co-owners of the Tap Social Movement. The Tap Social Movement is a social enterprise craft brewery, bakery, and hospitality organisation that creates training and employment for people in prison and prison leavers. Through this, they are giving Oxford's residents and visitors the opportunity to "drink beer that tastes good and does good."

The Missing Bean

Vicky Troth is co-founder of The Missing Bean, which first opened in 2009, in Central Oxford. They freshly roast their speciality coffee beans, five days a week and also deliver coffee beans across the UK. Their original café can be found on Turl Street, serving food from their bakery, as well as coffee.

Oxford Yarn Store

The Oxford Yarn Store, owned by Lizzie Web, offers yarn of multiple different colours and textures. As well as the yarn sold, the store offers a range of workshops, social gatherings and special events with guest speakers. Established in 2012, you can find the Oxford Yarn Store on North Parade Avenue.

Interview with former Chief Editor of Cherwell

Hongyin Pan

Bintia, a second-year PPEist at Lincoln was previously on the news section of Cherwell and was editor-in-chief of the paper during Hilary term

What motivated you to pursue journalism, particularly in a leadership role?

The first article that I picked up at a News meeting ended up being on the front page of the next print, and arguably that's what motivated me to get involved in student journalism. There's something so satisfying about completely delving into a topic and then turning all this information into something interesting for the readers. Once I became a section editor, working on breaking news, investigations, and altogether more interesting topics motivated me further. I had the chance to report on big political figures and cover various protests, while simultaneously bothering the university with Freedom of Information requests and annoying hacks by digging for information. Cherwell eventually became such a big part of my life that it felt natural to take on a leadership position and play a more active role in shaping the paper.

In what ways do you believe your experiences in student journalism have shaped your leadership style?

Running a paper with over 80 people has certainly helped me understand what kind of leader I would like to be. To me, this includes being open to new ideas and having enough trust in your team to not micromanage (which does hinge on having a good team in the first place!). At the same time, I find being present very important, so that you're approachable, know what's going on in different areas of the paper, and are able to help when it's needed. A large portion of my work as editor ended up being troubleshooting and making sure everything runs smoothly, which takes up more time and effort than you might think.

Another thing I learned is when exactly to push people to do their best. Especially with breaking news, it's important that these go out as soon as possible, and sometimes the pressure to get that done is needed. Giving feedback and being honest is important too, so that people know what has to be improved.

Can you tell us about a particularly memorable or challenging moment during your time as Editor-in-Chief, and how you navigated it?

The most challenging moments are always getting the Week 0 and Week 1 prints done. We had the additional difficulty of having a new printer, which meant that we had to reorganise lay-in times at a later stage than we wanted. We were very open with the team regarding what was happening, which certainly helped pull that off! My co-EiC, Anuj, and I also ended up working on the first paper until 5am to get everything done in time and were absolutely exhausted afterwards. However, being able to hold our first print was completely worth it.

There's also always challenging moments with publishing contentious stories and knowing how to best respond to backlash. For these sorts of articles, there's usually a lot of discussion about what should (and can legally) be included, to the point where we discuss specific phrasing and words used. We do get quite a few emails of people asking us to take down or change articles, which isn't always easy to navigate. I think it helped a lot seeing how my previous editors responded to these situations and having a very good understanding of defamation.

What strategies do you employ to foster collaboration and teamwork within your editorial team?

I firmly believe that people will work better together if they're attached to what they're working on. This is why in-person meetings are so important. We have the biweekly lay-ins, where each section of the paper works together to 'lay-in' their part of the print. Ultimately, I think having the chance to shape the paper yourself and getting to know who you're working with better – which invariably happens when you're preparing print pages for a couple of hours – motivates people. I used to also bring snacks to the senior editorial team lay-ins to make these a bit nicer and ensured that sections like the creative or the new video team actually had in-person meetings, so that at the very least people knew who they were working with and weren't as detached from the paper.

We also had section editors help with deliveries, which is another great way of integrating people further into the paper. Besides these, we organized a couple of social events throughout the term and encouraged our deputy editors to do the same within their sections. Collaboration and teamwork are

essential in Cherwell anyhow, since cross-editing is such a big part of the process, so I think the best way we enhanced this was by making people more invested in Cherwell and enjoying what they're working on.

How do you view the representation of female leaders in the media, and what changes would you like to see in the industry?

I feel as though female leaders tend to be scrutinized more harshly than their male counterparts in both the media and the broader discourse. There's a lot of discussion of the personal lives and looks of successful women, when this is largely irrelevant and not nearly discussed as intently for men in positions of power. In this aspect, the media is crucial because they have the ability to frame the discussion and the way female leaders are portrayed. I would personally like to see the media industry set forth a more positive example by generally reporting more on female leaders and focusing on their achievements and careers.

Do you have any advice for the WIBs interested in student journalism or even a future career in journalism and media?

My advice for anyone looking to get into journalism is to gather experience and skills wherever they can. Oxford has so many options and niches that there truly is something for everybody out there. If you're interested in writing news, for instance, attend one of the Cherwell news meetings and see if you'd like to write an article. Or alternatively pick up a commission or even pitch something yourself! University is the perfect time to acquaint yourself with journalism, especially because zero experience is needed at this stage

Networking is (unfortunately) also a big part of journalism, but Oxford offers so many opportunities for that too. There are lots of speaker events with journalists organized by various societies, where you can hear about how different people broke into the industry (which is especially interesting if they didn't go down the traditional City master's degree route). The best thing to do is just starting somewhere, figuring out what you enjoy, and then getting as much experience and useful connections as possible.

The top corners of the page are decorated with stylized leaves. The top-left corner features a cluster of light pink and peach leaves with green veins. The top-right corner has two larger, more detailed leaves in shades of orange and pink with prominent red veins.

DIVERSITY **AND** **INTERSECTIONALITY**



Where's the box? Recognising the power of dyslexic thinking

Grace Hind

Should I speak my piece or hold my peace? – Be it on a job application, with a new tutor, or to friends asking me to spend less time studying and join them in the pub, this thought always arises when I face the choice of whether to disclose my dyslexia: an aspect of myself that I sometimes wish was different. Reflecting on the above phrase, I recognise a certain irony, as "holding my peace" seems to lead me away from "peace" and into a box where I actively struggle to fit.

But this does not make the choice an easy one as there are many false assumptions about dyslexia: that it is negatively correlated with intelligence, that the term simply labels an inability to read and write correctly, and that it is not even real. Furthermore, the negative opinions seem more pervasive than the positive facts. Despite dyslexic people often excelling in communication, creativity, and lateral thinking – traits which help to explain why the likelihood of dyslexia amongst self-made millionaires is up to four times the national average (BBC, 2003) - only 3% of the public view dyslexia positively (YouGov, 2017). This one-sided attitude can permeate self-perception, further fuelling the imposter syndrome which comes with achieving success in systems (such as education and academia) which use traditional benchmarking - measuring dyslexics against the very things we find challenging.

Consideration of this status quo leads to a broader question: how can we recognise the value of dyslexic thinking without diminishing the challenges that dyslexic individuals face? I recently discussed this complex issue with Jo Rees - dyslexia specialist, social media influencer, and author of 'Don't Forget To... Smile: A memoir uncovering the hidden difficulties of Dyslexia' - distilling the many thoughts which arose into one; the answer seems to lie in increased understanding. However, what this entails specifically depends on whom the "we" (above) refers to.

In the business realm and academic sphere, it is too often assumed that dyslexic people are "less than" and, consequently, that accommodating their needs requires significant effort from those around them. However, education and training around dyslexia reveal that accessibility is not necessarily an

onerous task; it may be as simple as providing an agenda half an hour before a meeting so that dyslexic individuals have the opportunity to use their divergent skill set effectively, supporting themselves to excel. Deeper understanding also helps foster empathy and patience, two virtues that are no less significant at a first-personal level.

Here, the "we" shifts from organisational to individual. Jo's thoughts on addressing dyslexia-related imposter syndrome centred on truly understanding how dyslexia manifests itself in oneself. Whilst meaningful relation to the stories of dyslexic "poster people" like Richard Branson and Albert Einstein is rare, imperfection is universal, whether one is dyslexic or not. Any path to success will incorporate this insight, be it deliberately or subconsciously. An understanding of one's own dyslexia can aid contextualisation and acceptance of dyslexic errors, helping one focus on the unique path which plays to their dyslexic strengths. After all, the tortoise did win the race!

Finally, when the "we" refers to society as a whole, what is required is an empowerment of dyslexic thinking. Dyslexia is better described as a nuanced difference than as a straightforward lack, a difference which has proven highly lucrative to businesses, to individuals, and to thought more abstractly. Wider recognition of the power of dyslexic thinking should generate many benefits in many realms. A significant move towards this came in March 2022, when "Dyslexic Thinking" was recognised as a vital skill by LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network. The platform's dyslexic users now have the chance to showcase this aspect of themselves, an act which serves the dual purpose of advertising personal strengths and shifting societal perceptions. So, in March 2022, it was not a difficult choice for me to disclose my dyslexia.

Interview with Chantal Davies

Freja Davis

Chantal is currently a professor of Law, Equality and Diversity in the School of Law at the University of Chester. She has experience in corporate law and now sits on multiple boards and committees that promote equality diversity and inclusion, including being Co Vice Chair and Member of the Law Society Women Solicitors Network Committee and a Member of AdvanceHE EDI Committee.

Would you be able to talk me briefly through your career path and explain your current role?

I came from a low socio-economic background, state school environment to study Law at Brasenose College, Oxford, and realised quickly that commencing my qualification journey in a commercial practice was going to be the best way to achieve my goal of contributing to improved social justice: specifically equality, diversity and inclusion.

I had the immediate clear goal of studying for my degree but realised that being able to have a positive impact on society was an important subsequent goal for me. After qualifying and practising in commercial practice with Eversheds and Davies Wallis Foyster, I moved to work with the Equal Opportunities Commission specialising in gender equality law (one of the bodies which merged into the now Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2007). I led a number of legal test cases and headed up a unit dealing with wider enforcement cases for example leading on a big formal investigation into sexual harassment at Royal Mail. Having a young family led me to move into academia as a lecturer at the University of Chester which provided opportunity for better work life balance than legal practice as it involved less travel and greater flexibility.. I think there is more flexibility and support for women with a young family nowadays and with the increase in the opportunities that technology has provided it is far easier to balance work with wider responsibilities. From there, I developed what I call my 'second career' gaining my PhD and building a research profile and external reputation which led to me becoming a Professor of law in 2018.

What do you think is important when aspiring for a successful career?

I think it is so important as women to map out your journey, be strategic, work out how you will be able to progress. Ask yourself as you make decisions, where will I be in 2 years, 5 years etc. The women at senior levels tend to be goal-oriented so even if it doesn't come naturally to you, strategizing and mapping back is often a great way to achieve your goals.

When I went into the academic world, I realised my progression would be limited without a PhD so achieving that became my next goal. I have also learnt that it's ok to say no. Prioritising those tasks that will help you achieve your goals and having to say no to things or delegate is important. So my advice would be to give yourself permission to say no at times. Mentoring is hugely important but equally important is to make sure people pass that on when they gain experience and progress. Making time for your family is equally important - don't sacrifice family and don't work yourself into the ground trying to do the impossible either. I recently came across the term 'Ikigai' that I really resonated with which means finding your purpose to life in accordance with your value set and where you feel fulfilment as well as recognising what you can contribute to society. I think this is important.

I saw you've completed lots of work in gender equality as well as other inclusivity commissions, could you tell me a bit about that?

I sit on a number of external bodies providing advice and support usually in relation to EDI policy and legislation. More recently I have been researching and advising in the area of environmental and wider sustainability and quickly realised that it has huge links to my field of social justice so it made me see the broader picture and further solutions to other problems that I wouldn't have otherwise recognised. Interdisciplinary working is key and reaching out of your field so you don't get too blinkered is so important. Sitting on national committees can be important to ensure your voice can be heard and assist in driving change. Excellent first steps might be to become a school governor at your local school or do voluntary work in an area you can use your experience to assist, it is all valuable experience that will build social capital and ensure your voice can be heard.

Which modes of change do you think are most effective and successful?

Is it social media? Education in school curriculum? Legislation?

The law can only do so much in pushing for social justice. Often, culture change requires education at every level and in order to aspire to true equality, there needs to be senior buy in...difficult to do. There has to be a need for action and not just a tick box exercise. For organisations, senior leaders often need to see the business case to recognise the importance of diversity - profit and loss advantages for improving equality etc, and hard facts. This can sometimes be the best way to persuade senior leaders to buy into the changes you would like to see. Ground level culture changes through education is equally important and having a voice by sitting on committees that feed into policy making.

How did you find the journey of becoming an advocate for change? Young women championing equality are often met with negative feedback, branded with an associated eye roll - were these challenges that you faced? How did you overcome these?

We live in a constantly shifting and polarised society currently. The legislative framework is there to enable and protect women but this can be less effective against insidious threats to women's rights. When I first commenced work as a young lawyer, I was called into my boss's office in the past and told off for being "bohemian" because I wore trousers. Equally, it wasn't unusual that women would be demoted or dismissed for being pregnant in the legal sector. Such obvious discrimination thankfully isn't so commonplace now, but we are dealing with unseen issues - micro aggression rather than obvious things. Micro aggressions have a significant impact on female progress, things like seeing women as 'trouble makers' when they speak out when a man would be seen as confident or expecting women in the workplace to carry out the less lucrative supporting roles. The big glaring issues still exist as well, there is still an almost 30% gender pay gap in the legal sector. There are still huge gender equality issues to conquer. We have to be resilient in trying to address these issues. Being clear about the specific issue you are trying to address is helpful. True change involves getting people to buy in. Cultivate male allies as well as female allies. Lack of understanding is sometimes the reason for reluctance to change. Be transparent and you are more likely to get the buy in and ensure your voice is heard.

Do you have any other pieces of advice that you could kindly share with our OxWIB members?

Be Strategic. Map out your goals and how they can be achieved.

Work towards your goals. Don't be afraid to have balance in your life.

Get your voice heard in the right places - social media is very accessible- but be strategic not just knee jerk reactive. Get in the right spaces to achieve change - women's committees, OxWiB is a fabulous example of this good space.

And finally.....imposter syndrome - we can all suffer from it, it is in all of us and it's ok. We will all fail at times and make mistakes but deal with them by picking yourself up and trying to develop your self-belief rather than feeling you have failed.

After all, it's the things you don't succeed in where you learn the most.

Harnessing the hidden strengths: How ADHD can be your superpower

Elouise Kerby

Perspectives of ADHD are progressively shifting, from that of dysfunction and disorder to a condition with distinct strengths. Individuals with ADHD can possess a multitude of unique qualities, including heightened creativity, risk tolerance, intuition, energy, and resilience. Their ability to hyperfocus on topics of interest also underscores their distinctive cognitive profile. While these characteristics exist on a spectrum and vary from person to person, they collectively challenge conventional perceptions of the neurodevelopmental disorder. However, while individuals with ADHD may possess such qualities, it's essential to recognize the spectrum of experiences within ADHD, including the attentional, social, academic and occupational challenges many individuals face. Nonetheless, neurodivergent individuals are more appropriately described as functioning differently, rather than functioning deficiently.

To quote Einstein, 'Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.'

Unconventional genius

Creativity is one advantage people with ADHD often possess, facilitating out-of-the-box thinking and unconventional problem-solving to gain novel insights into complex issues. Their unusual approaches to problems can yield wholly original ideas, something highly regarded and widely desired in various fields.

The entrepreneurial edge

People with ADHD can exhibit greater risk-taking behaviours and are more willing to pursue radical ideas, often leading to entrepreneurial success. Their resilience and inclination for innovation allow them to thrive in high-pressure environments. Their adaptability, characterised by spontaneity and quick strategical pivots, can also employ a competitive edge to business ventures.

Seeing what others miss

Some individuals with ADHD demonstrate exceptional pattern recognition and intuition, able to discern subtle connections and identify emerging trends. By thinking dynamically and associatively, some individuals can spot patterns and

opportunities that others may overlook. This heightened sensitivity to detail enables them to make quick and insightful decisions with original perspectives, whether in business, creative endeavours, or interpersonal interactions.

Paris Hilton, a prominent entrepreneur and influential media personality in fashion and entertainment, described her experience with ADHD as follows: "I am a risk taker; I am creative. My mind is always moving. I am always thinking of new ways to do business ... I think it gives me this drive and edge I needed to succeed. It can be a superpower if nurtured in the right way!"

The power of obsession

Intense periods of concentration on tasks or subjects of interest are common among individuals with ADHD. This fixation can be leveraged to produce remarkable productivity, particularly in academic or professional research settings. Their 'tunnel vision' highlights the importance of pursuing a career of interest to fully harness their potential.

Sir Richard Branson, a business magnate and billionaire who has spoken of having ADHD, identified an opportunity in the airline industry and became fixated on the idea of creating a high-quality, customer-focused airline. His ability to hyperfocus allowed him to immerse himself fully in the complexities of the airline business, from negotiating deals with aircraft manufacturers to designing innovative in-flight services. This dedication helped Virgin Atlantic become a major player in the aviation industry, challenging established competitors and revolutionising air travel.

Reframing challenges

Despite conventional views of hyperactivity as a deficit, individuals with ADHD bring contagious energy and enthusiasm to projects, inspiring others and driving collaborative efforts forward. Their resilience and strong coping mechanisms acquired from living with ADHD serve them well in navigating life's challenges. Hence, ADHD could be reframed as a neurodiverse asset.

Practical Strategies

As well as embracing these traits, it's important to manage the challenges through strategy and external support, in order to leverage strengths. Time management techniques, such as breaking tasks into smaller, manageable chunks and utilising visual schedules or reminders, can help mitigate

procrastination and improve productivity. Timers, alarms, and focus apps like 'Flora' can help you stay on track, and digital note-taking apps can keep important information easily accessible. It's important to be flexible and experiment with implementing different strategies, once you find the right combination you can manage and use your unique cognitive profile to your advantage. Additionally, fostering self-advocacy skills is crucial in academic or professional settings, where individuals can communicate their needs, seek accommodations, and advocate for themselves effectively. Building a supportive network of friends, family, and professionals also provides valuable encouragement and guidance. By embracing these strategies and seeking appropriate support, individuals with ADHD can harness their strengths and thrive in various aspects of their lives.

In short, individuals with ADHD should give themselves the freedom to be creative, take risks, and direct their focus towards rewarding endeavours. While this variety of nuanced cognitive strengths shouldn't be romanticised or likewise their challenges oversimplified, it's important to highlight the benefits of embracing neurodiversity and the value of alternative perspectives to business and broader aspects of life.

Additional resources

Podcasts

'The Faster Than Normal Podcast'

This podcast is full of success stories from people with ADHD. Listen to rock stars and CEOs discuss how they found success in their lives and work despite an ADHD diagnosis. This podcast is a great listen if you need help changing your mindset about how ADHD may affect your future. Listen here.

'Taking Control: The ADHD Podcast'

Nikki Kinzer, PCC, is a certified ADHD coach. She helps people develop positive strategies to manage time, get organised, de-stress, and make themselves more productive. Listen here.

Support Groups

<https://www.adhdcare.co.uk/?p=online.resources>
www.livingwithadhd.co.uk

The Oxford Hub: Advocating for Change

Emily Daniel and Millie Hennessy

This term, as part of our outreach initiative, as a committee we have chosen to sponsor 'The Oxford Hub', a local charity in Oxford. As the OXWIB outreach team, we are passionate about fostering meaningful connections and creating positive change within our community. We believe in the importance of collaboration and supporting initiatives that align with our values of empowerment and inclusivity. Promoting The Oxford Hub allows us to showcase the impactful work being done to address inequality and empower individuals to thrive. We are hoping to highlight their efforts to create a more equitable and inclusive society, while also providing our members with the awareness of opportunities to engage in meaningful volunteer work and community-building activities. Together, we can make a tangible difference and contribute to building a brighter future for all members of our community.

Founded in 2007 by a dedicated group of students at the University of Oxford, The Oxford Hub emerged from a shared vision for more effective coordination among student charitable organisations. Since its inception, The Oxford Hub has evolved into a vibrant hub of social activism, running diverse volunteering programs and community projects aimed at fostering thriving communities and addressing inequality. One notable initiative is the Windale Community Hub, situated at Windale Primary School in the Leys, OX4. This innovative space serves as a focal point for local groups striving to combat disparities in health, education, and opportunity, embodying The Oxford Hub's commitment to grassroots collaboration and community empowerment.

Among The Oxford Hub's array of impactful programs is 'Big Brothers Big Sisters', a mentoring initiative that cultivates long-term friendships and support networks for individuals in need. Additionally, the 'FELLOW' program exemplifies the organisation's dedication to inclusivity by offering free, friendly English language support to Oxford residents seeking to enhance their language skills. Through the 'Schools Plus' program, The Oxford Hub addresses educational inequality in Oxford by providing free tutoring and academic assistance to local pupils aged 7-18, thereby striving to create a more equitable educational landscape for all. These are just a few examples of the many initiatives which ensure that The Oxford Hub continues to be a driving force for positive change, inspiring students and community members alike to actively engage in the pursuit of social justice and collective well-being.



SPOTLIGHT ON OTHER SOCIETIES

Oxford's First Society for Women

By Katie McCall

Before looking to the future, it's important to remember where we started and see how far we've come. From Oxford's first society dedicated to women's right to a degree to the many existing societies we have today.

The Society for Oxford Home Students was invented in 1879 to attract women to Oxford's doors. This was despite the fact that they were still not allowed to obtain a college degree here and wouldn't for another 40 years! This society meant women could stay in housing across the city and attend lectures and classes just as the other, matriculated students did. The only difference is the women weren't given a degree at the end of it.

Even so, this represented a turning point for women's access to education in Oxford and a major step towards societies such as OxWIB existing today. Without the perseverance and drive of those women to seek an education, to eventually earn the right to matriculate in 1920, and be treated equally to men, the world would be a completely different place. What we can easily take for granted, was restricted to them completely.

Now there are countless Oxford societies that are dedicated to supporting wom*ns' diverse interests and goals, from Oxford Wom*n in Government (OxWIG) to female college football teams, Oxford Wom*n in Computer Science (OxWoCS) to Oxford's feminist society, to name only a few.

Interview with the President of the Northern Society

Katie McCall

Madgey is a third year French & Arabic student and the current President of Oxford's Northern Society. She is also Access and Outreach rep for Pembroke College and works with mentorship schemes to promote access for State school students.

What inspired you to take on the role of President within the Northern Society?

I have always been proud of my northern identity, but it was coming to Oxford that made me hyper aware of how important it was to me. When I started first year, it was as if all of the northern aspects of my identity felt highlighted, and I started to become aware of things that I'd never fully perceived before, like how I speak and my accent in tutorials, or not being able to properly access things like work experience as they frequently based in the south. At first I really struggled with impostor syndrome because of these differences, but it was when I started finding other northerners in Oxford that I realised that feeling is often shared, and I could start to speak more confidently about these aspects of my identity. Getting involved with Northern society, and having now become president, has allowed me to really embrace my northern background and find so many other people that have such similar experiences. Also, northern soc is without a doubt one of the best social spaces in Oxford, so that's always a win!!

What does it mean to you, as a woman, that you hold this role?

Sometimes I forget the extra achievement that it is to become president of any society as a woman. Having a position like prez means I can help others start the conversation about what this means, but it also encourages me to champion intersectionality within northern society, as many people from northern backgrounds are also from other variants of access backgrounds as well. If we look at those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, for instance, wom*n from these backgrounds struggle much more than men to be proud of their identity and overcome self-doubt, and are less likely to talk about their experience. Holding this position as a queer woman within northern society creates that chance to talk about the different forms that regional identity can take, and how we can start talking about this more productively.

How do you stay motivated and inspired in your role?

It's honestly quite easy to stay inspired with the amount of amazing people that get involved with northern soc. We have such a great committee for starters, and we all piggy-back off of each others' ideas, meaning there's constantly something more to be said. On top of that, the people that come to our events are always down for a chat about northern identity, and it's really inspiring to see everyone's unique regional experience at Oxford, and hear how they want to contribute themselves.

What advice would you give to other wom*n who are interested in taking on leadership roles within a university society, based on your experience as President?

I would argue that it's quite easy for things like impostor syndrome to dissuade wom*n from leadership roles, and especially in a university like Oxford, it can be difficult to feel like you belong in that role. With the workload as well, it's also typical for wom*n to feel that they're not capable of juggling a leadership role on top of their academics.

In my personal experience, being in an environment like Oxford and surrounded by other students can start to lay doubt about how much time you have to give to a leadership role, but I really think it's about trusting yourself in them moments and having your own back. You are just as capable as others, and you have an entire committee to support you!

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For people interested in joining the Northern society, what can they expect in the future?

First of all, I want to be able to continue northern soc's tradition of holding a social space for those from a northern background. That is one of the most crucial things we can do for northern students, and it was definitely something that I relied a lot on in my first year to feel more relaxed in such a different social environment. In terms of new projects, we're also extremely excited to get some in person outreach work in the schools of our own committee members. Northern soc will soon be contributing back to the schools which have helped us all get into Oxford (keep an eye on our Insta), and I think that is such a great thing to be part of. As well, we want to hold virtual panels for schools, and raise awareness about the inaccessibility of internship/career opportunities within the north. Finally, we want to continue to highlight the amazing achievements of current northern students here at Oxford, by expanding our Student Spotlight series to northern students outside of our committee that have massively contributed to the Oxford community.

Looking ahead, what are your goals and aspirations for yourself, both within the society and beyond?

As for the northern society, I want to carry on contributing to its support of welcoming current students. Beyond that, I would love to keep contributing to access and outreach work, as that played a major role in my place at Oxford and I know how much difference that can make to someone's future.

Women's Football: "Who Cares?"

By Lilla Berry

"Who cares?" It's that age old question, tirelessly posed to advocates for women's sport all around the world. It's that question that stops you in your tracks, aggressively halts any discussion where the notion of women and sport may audaciously intersect. It's that terrible question that has haunted feminists for decades, that has cast its dark shadow over us since the very dawn of women's sport.

So let us attempt to disentangle this most infamous brain teaser, this ancient conundrum. Let us turn, and ask ourselves the very same question: who cares?

England Football captain Leah Williamson tackled the problem herself in a recent interview with former international Alex Scott. In Scott's documentary *The Future of Women's Football*, Williamson discussed the patronising nature of remarks like 'who cares' and added that she finds it difficult not take to heart. "It's my game" she said, "I'm here to protect it."

She continued to align the idea of asking 'who cares' with the threat of erasing women's football from the media, under this claim that there isn't enough interest: "It's like if you don't like it, it means it can't exist".

Indeed, asking 'who cares about women's football' assumes that the game doesn't generate sufficient support, and that therefore it shouldn't be mainstream. There is an inherent sense of arrogance in the question which assumes that the individual's opinion is that of many. Williamson acutely highlighted this absurdity with a comparison to men's sport: "I don't particularly like watching fencing, but I don't tweet to say that I don't...If it was men's sport it wouldn't happen, it wouldn't be spoken about in the same way - if you're a football fan and not a rugby fan you don't want rugby to not exist, you just think that football's better so you just watch football. But if it's women, then it means we need to remove it."

She observed here how the remark 'who cares' demands a kind of erasure. She then smiled at Scott and casually declared "Right, well, we're not going anywhere."

Williamson, of course, is right, because women's football isn't going anywhere. In fact, the sport has been popular for a lot longer than many people are led to believe. The women's game dates all the way back to World War I, where among the mass mobilisation of women into the workforce there also occurred a surge in women's sport, and matches between all-female teams took place regularly. In the early 1920s, top teams such as Dick Kerr Ladies F.C attracted up to 45,000 fans to their games. People, it would appear, have cared about women's sport for a very long time. Eventually, the women's game became so popular that the F.A decided to ban it, insisting that "the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and should not be encouraged". Having rebuilt the game from the ground up after a 70-year ban, women's football is now soaring into new heights. The England Lionesses recently generated a colossal amount of support during their 2022 Euros campaign, which brought home more than a shiny trophy. Their victory was of paramount importance to the development of women's sport in the U.K, and there followed an enormous wave of interest in women and girls' football in its wake. Whilst our heroines dominated the media, the number of female players registered with the F.A rose by 12.5 per cent in the year following the Lionesses' triumph. And as the number of players increased, so did their support – even smaller clubs such as Cambridge United FC reported a 30 per cent increase in attendance for their first women's match that took place after the Euros final.

Perhaps, then, we can answer our question in numbers. If you ask those who attended the UEFA Women's Euros Final, they'll tell you that 87,192 people cared about that match. And that was just the live spectators; according to the BBC, 50 million people tuned in to watch the same event on T.V – that's 50 million more people that cared. In fact, the BBC reported that a record audience of more than 365 million people who viewed the tournament overall.

There have been many smaller moments that have showcased a rise in women's sport like this across the last season. The Chelsea Women set a new record attendance for their match against F.C Barcelona, with 39,398 people that cared about that Champions League game. And over in Bournemouth, a girls' U12s team have recently made headlines for coming top of their all-boys' league; the Queen's Park Ladies have been dubbed 'The Invincibles' after a successful 22 games against boys' teams, losing none of them, and scoring 69 goals whilst only conceding 11. Their triumph here is two-fold; the girls' and their coaches succeeded in persisting against prejudice and rejection, but also succeeded in making a name for themselves whilst doing so. Both their

sporting victories and their subsequent recognition in the mainstream media reflects a society brimming with people who, evidently, really do care.

And it's not just women's football that is emerging into new horizons. Women's rugby too is on the rise - in 2023 the RFU announced that the number of adult women playing rugby had grown from 25,000 to 40,000, and the numbers are only growing. The report added the hypothesis that this statistic will become 100,000 by the year 2027. The Red Roses, England's Women's Team have played their role in this movement, drawing in record crowds every year with their Six Nations campaign, at home and away.

Women's sport everywhere is expanding. The London Marathon also reflected these developments, with an almost equal number of men and women signing up for the race in 2025, the narrowest margin so far. This fact becomes all the more astounding when we consider that women couldn't legally run a marathon until 1975.

The list of successes goes on. Historically, however, feminist triumphs have rarely gone unopposed, and the emergence of women's sport is no exception. Popularity inevitably manifests resistance. A BBC questionnaire in 2020 found that the number of British sportswomen trolled on social media had doubled since a previous questionnaire in 2015. Meanwhile, companies such as HerGameToo published statistics stating that 91.9 per cent of women surveyed had seen sexist abuse delivered to a female athlete online, with 63.1 per cent saying they had experienced sexist abuse online because of football. And this digital dismissal of the women's game is not only published by anonymous individuals but also by authoritative figures in the world of football. Earlier this year former Premier League player Joey Barton was circulating in the news for his deploring comments towards female football pundits, which claimed that that "Women shouldn't be talking with any kind of authority in the men's game. Come on. Let's be serious." He declared in the same tweet that he refused to be able to take women's opinions seriously in the men's arena. He later criticised international Mary Earps for being crowned Sports Personality of the year in 2023, tweeting "So the best sports person this year is...A Women Goalie" (Spelling 'woman' wrong.) He continued to claim that he would score 100 out of 100 penalties against the England and Manchester United goalkeeper. Clearly, Barton intends to exclude women from conversations surrounding the sport, believing them to be neither physically nor mentally capable enough to participate.

Attitudes such as his penetrate the women's game in attempt to set it back. But these endeavours are ultimately counterproductive. It should be noted that Barton is still demonstrating that he cares about women's football - he certainly cares enough to tweet extensively about it. And in doing so he ignites an extremely important nationwide conversation.

Against claims like Barton's, we can revel in the success of women's football, and bring its triumphs into the spotlight. Opposition is inevitable, and debate is vital, because in situations like these we're seeing the women's game come out on top, over and over again. The tens of thousands of fans flocking to see these women are far louder than the voices of their opponents. Men like Barton cannot hold back the tide.

Ultimately, women's football is on the verge of something revolutionary. For hundreds of years, female athletic talent has slipped through the cracks, banished and untapped. Now that talent is finally coming to light. A child born today is born into a world where women are selling out stadiums, and will not know anything different.

And why does all this matter so much – why do we care? It matters because women are overturning centuries of oppression, and shifting accepted patriarchal values. The ideology that women are weaker, and inferior can finally be diminished, in sport, and subsequently in other elements of society. The women's game is special in this way, because every match has meaning: whether on a grassroots pitch or an international stage, every pass, every tackle, every goal is proving a point: it proves that women want to, can, and will play sport. And in the words of the Captain herself, "We're not going anywhere."



RECOMMENDATION CORNER



Interesting Reads

by Elisha Khannah

It's important for us WIBs to stay connected with the world around us. But, that doesn't mean getting stuck in long, dry academic articles about experiences far different to our own.

Below, I've put together a list of some of my favourite reads. These dive into a range of topics - from commercial fluency, to mastering leadership, and drawing inspiration from (who I believe) are the trailblazers of our time. They also span various formats, like how-to-guides, data-driven exposés and the classic novel. The goal? To debunk the myth that wider reading requires infinite time and a PhD.

1. Female CEOs in the Making? - Emma Jacobs, The Financial Times

It's no secret: women reaching the top of the corporate ladder is rare. Only 8% of CEOs are women. Ever wonder how those select few make it there?

This article uses data from top companies to analyse common pathways to CEO, and how this has changed over the past 20 years. It shows that CEO positions are overwhelmingly recruited from male-dominated sectors, like Operations and Finance. By contrast, divisions with higher concentrations of women, like HR, Marketing, and Sustainability, rarely produce members of the C-Suite. Jacobs goes on to present novel insights into how the growing number of women in entry-level roles fails to produce similar equality in the top jobs. She also makes interesting recommendations for what companies should change, and how women can take advantage of these findings in their own work life.

Top Tip: Anyone with an Oxford log-in has a free subscription to the Financial Times! This is an amazing way to keep up with the world of business (and save yourself the £500 annual fee).

2. Educated - Tara Westover

Tara Westover's memoir is something you have to read to believe. She was born into a family of religious fundamentalists, sequestered in the Idaho mountains. Her father, Gene, a man besieged by paranoia and (what was likely) severe mental illness, refused his children any aspect of modern life. This included basic medical care and education.

But, Tara could never shake her desire for more: more music, more learning, more of life beyond the mountain. So began her journey to teach herself all of the things she'd been denied, secretly learning a school syllabus in her bedroom and eventually becoming a Gates Scholar at Cambridge University. All the while, having to make peace with a family who could forgive her betrayal.

This book has stayed with me everyday since I first read it 4 years ago. The image of a scared, 19-year-old learning about the existence of the Holocaust in a crowded lecture hall is made vivid by Westover's incredible writing. Your stomach drops as her class-mates shun her, mistaking confusion for bigotry. I cannot recommend this more, especially for students who might struggle with the displacement of Oxford culture, and Imposter Syndrome. It showcases the power of education, and how different life experiences enhance your work, inimitable by anyone else.

3. The Demise of the Girlboss - Samhita Mukhopadhyay, The CUT

'Girlboss' is an interesting word. What began as a way to describe innovative female leadership, is now the butt of many jokes. This is often evidenced by the 'downfall' of the generation of 'girlboss' female leaders, including Theranos-CEO, Elizabeth Holmes, and the founders of Reformation and Glossier.

But, how should we feel about the word? Should we laugh? Should we lament the damage done to feminism? Should we be grateful we got this far?

Mukhopadhyay argues that the answer is all of the above. Whilst being an obviously flawed archetype, 'girlboss' was the start toward normalising women in positions of power. We have along way to go in making this image more inclusive, and cementing these changes in real-life. But, history has shown us that change is incrementable. 'Girlboss' was simply our first step.

4. How poor Kenyans became economists' guinea pigs - The Economist's 1843 Magazine

Most of the data we use today comes from studies known as RCT's or Randomised Controlled Trials. This basically means that treatment (the thing we want to investigate) is randomly assigned to 50% of subjects, leaving the others in a control group (with no change at all). We use RCT's as a tool to study cause and effect, allowing decision-makers to scrutinize the impact of everything from education, to medicine and internet-access. It's our gold standard.

The issue with these studies lie in the ethical implications: the real people they impact, the ways in which researchers rarely pay attention to them, and the fact we have no comparable alternative. Take investigating the impact of direct cash transfers on the trajectory of impoverished communities. It wouldn't take a genius to guess that the control group might harbour some animosity toward their neighbours, receiving 3x the average annual income because researchers simply said 'it's the way it works'.

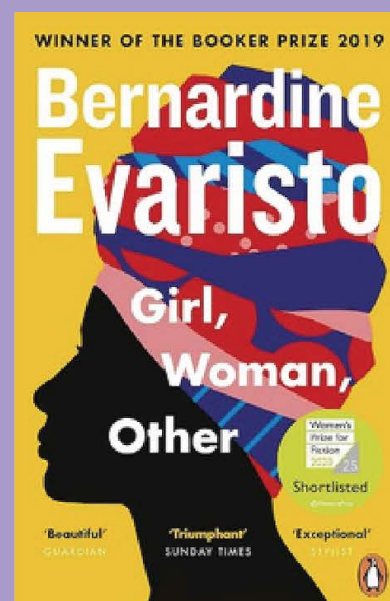
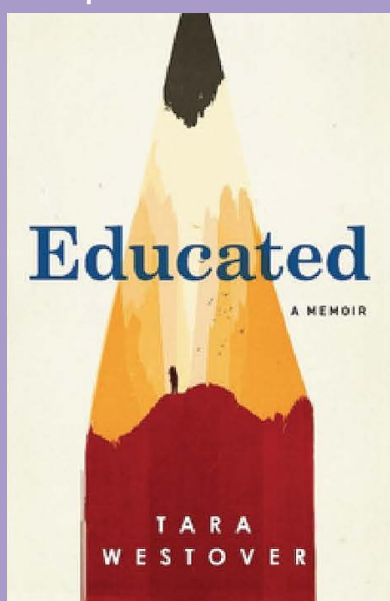
This article does an incredible job of humanising data. Interviewing real-life participants in RCT's you come to understand their countless flow-on effects, and the things the 'discussion' section of your academic journal doesn't mention. This is a special highlight for students who use research everyday in their degree, and like me, never knew where it really came from.

5. **Girl, Woman, Other - Bernadine Evaristo**

Any 'interesting reads' list would be incomplete without a classic work of fiction. And, *Girl, Woman Other*, is truly timeless.

This novel is a spiderweb of 12 narrators, each buried within their own slice of history. It's told in hybrid-form - some in prose, some in poetry - to eventually bring these women together in a genius degree of interconnection (Sidenote: I would actually love to see a diagram of how all of the characters relate, Evaristo is probably my literary idol for this).

Written with the intention of investigating the diversity of experience in modern Britain, especially within women of colour, Evaristo amplifies those parts of life often left unspoken. Highly readable, and highly relatable, you won't want to put it down.



OxWIB Playlist!

OxWIB's main goal is to ensure that every wom*n knows just how powerful they are. That's why the OxWIB committee has collected some of our favourite, most motivational songs into a playlist to push you to reach for the stars.

Set my heart on fire - Majestic x The Jammin Kid x Céline Dion

LABOUR (the cacophony) - Paris Paloma

Dreams (2004 Remaster) - Fleetwood Mac

Tears Dry On Their Own - Amy Winehouse

Always on my Mind = pet shop boys

Good Luck, Babe! - Chappelle Roan

Let's Stay Together- Al Green

Lone Digger - Caravan Palace

Show Me Love - Alicia Keys

Me Jones = counting crows

Back Pocket - Vulfpeck

B.I.L.L.S - Towa Bird

God Is a Woman - Ariana Grande

Espresso - Sabrina Carpenter

Vienna - Billy Joel

Resources to boost your Financial Literacy

by Julia Smits

Financial literacy is complex. It is an ongoing battle to scroll away from the crypto bros, with a remarkable ability to penetrate seemingly everyone's algorithm, and find trustworthy resources. Crypto is not per definition a poor asset class but for the bulk of people trying to get reliable and long-term growth of savings, the overexposure to speculative trades crowds out their confidence. A resource that demystifies the world of investing and kickstarted my investment journey is the 12 Steps to Get Started Investing podcast from EquityMates – available on your favorite podcast app ;).

While Insight is, unfortunately, not sponsored by this podcast, it is hard to resist recommending them for their clear, concise, and entertaining content. True to its name, the podcast consists of 12 episodes, less than 30 minutes each, that equip you with all the tools to make your first investment by the end of it. In the worst case scenario, it will empower you to understand what everyone is talking about and call out the crypto bros.

Equity
Mates
INVESTING



Podcast Picks

By Millie Hennessy

Working Hard or Hardly Working with Grace Beverley: Ep.80 How to Rewire your Brain for Resilience + Success with Professor Steven Peters

Writer of the Chimp Paradox speaks to Grace about overcoming our 'chimp brain' to ensure we can achieve what we want to. One of my key takeaways was about how we view ourselves and how that impacts us. For example, making sure we change mindsets from "I have anxiety" to "I can have anxious thoughts" and similar switches to separate the feelings from us as people. An amazing listen that puts some of our anxious thoughts into perspective.

No Bull Business Women: Artist Frankie Noller

"Chat to everyone... you never know who they could end up becoming"

Frankie and Sarah talk about networking in the art industry. Whether you're interested in working in art or not, it's still a great listen to learn skills in networking. One of the most interesting parts for me was the importance of connecting with people at the same stage as you, not just those ahead of you. You don't know where they'll end up in the future, and when you're 40, having other successful 40 year olds, rather than just those that are retiring, in your network is so helpful.

Off Menu: Ep 185: Florence Pugh

Whilst the two I've mentioned are brilliant listens for the business-minded, I have to say I am partial to a fun podcast, and Off Menu is exactly that. In this episode they're joined by Oxford-raised Florence Pugh as she talks about her dream menu, growing up in Oxford and her outstanding Hollywood career. Everyone should have a good, laugh-along podcast, and I cannot recommend this enough. Other standout episodes include Dolly Alderton and Stanley Tucci.

Honourable mentions:

'How to Fail with Elizabeth Day' and 'Full Disclosure with James O'Brien'

