

# Her Edit

FOR THE INDEPENDENTLY MINDED WOMAN



Issue Seven  
September/October 2014

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## The Age Issue

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Mike Heyworth  
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Her Editor



## Welcome to Her Edit

I once worked with a very famous British actress who was launching an event for a charity I was working for. It was a glorious sunny, blue-sky day and the press photographers were keen to take pictures outside. The actress, in truth more celebrated for her beauty than her acting roles, was reluctant to have her photograph taken in daylight.

Although an incredibly attractive woman, anyone at the age of 60 is not going to look like the ingenue they did 40 years ago and this intelligent, articulate and generous woman - she was giving her time to a charity after all - was clearly aware of it. The beauty I might have envied her for, seemed more like a tyranny.

It is tiresome that, as women, our value is still so often predicated on how we look, or more accurately, how young we look. How many high profile women are celebrated not for their careers or achievements, but because they look younger than their years, as though that is an achievement in itself?

One year on from our first issue of Her Edit seemed an appropriate moment to celebrate the best parts of getting older. For myself, life seems to have been on an upward trajectory. I was happier in my twenties than my teens, then again in my thirties and as I near the end of my fourth decade, I revel in the experiences I've had, the wonderful people I've met and the friendships I'm blessed with.

Her Edit has and continues to be a fascinating and rewarding adventure. The team and I would like to thank everyone who has shared the journey with us, particularly for the extraordinary generosity of our contributors. We are fortunate to have exceptional and inspiring material in this issue. Please share this issue with friends and colleagues - there is much to celebrate in being one or more years older.

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@Nagib El-Desouky

# Lost in transition

Writer, academic and DJ Lulu Le Vay talks straight about the reality of getting older

'Being a woman in her mid-to-late forties no longer means feeling undesirable or irrelevant.'

PHOTOGRAPHS  
Courtesy Lulu Le Vay



@LuluLeVay



# A

As a healthy, fit, youthful woman in my early forties, I didn't expect to be going through perimenopause quite so soon. And to be frank, it has been a bit of a shock.

For those who don't know what this is, it's the lead up to menopause, which can last several years. It's the same sort of thing: mood swings, hot flushes, sore breasts, swollen uterus, anxiety, insomnia, irregular periods...it's a bundle of laughs which for some reason no one told us about. I'd never even heard of it until earlier this year when my body started wreaking hormonal havoc.

When I was growing up in the 70s, there was this ill perceived notion being perpetuated by the media that women entering this phase in their fertility would be well into their fifties, frumpy and plump with grown-up kids, a dodgy haircut sodden with

unruly grey streaks, lipstick on her teeth, and no sex life whatsoever. A dried up old has-been of a woman whose blossom of youth has been sucked out of her quicker than you can say 'vaginal dryness'.

Well, times have - and are - changing. Older women are beginning to lose this archaic stereotype - thanks to the likes of Helen Mirren and Viv Westwood. And due to society's obsession with youth, wellbeing, and women's life path becoming more focussed on a career rather than family (one in five women now remain childless), the more mature woman is appearing - and feeling - more youthful and vibrant than ever before.

Being a woman in her mid-to-late forties no longer means feeling undesirable or irrelevant. One only has to glance at the fashion rags on the shelf to see who's still rocking it in our cultural sphere. Kate Moss is more desirable and successful at 40 than she's ever been before.

But regardless of the shift in societal and cultural perception and representation, our bodies won't - and aren't - taking any notice. Our fertility will continue to age, even if we are not. And this is where the tension lies.

As an unmarried woman with no kids, who quite happily doesn't live with her partner, at 43 I don't feel I have 'properly' grown up. I do own my own apartment and have a successful career as a writer, but I still engage heavily with youth-orientated activities.

I am fitter now than I was in my twenties, and I've gone back to school to finish my PhD. I also have a

passion for music that hasn't dwindled since I was a kid. As well as being a fitness music consultant, my DJ career has taken off over the last 18 months becoming more than simply a sustainable source of income. It makes me feel youthful and alive. I'm being booked to play in fashion outlets, bars and private members' clubs, and the fact that I am zooming towards my mid-forties has not once been perceived as an issue.

I'm seen as cool, attractive, talented and fun, but breaking out into a hot flush mid-DJ set with what feels like a prolapsing uterus, is a blunt reminder that you're quite clearly not as young and hip as you like to think you are. Even if the sharp blonde hairdo and chic threads perhaps suggest otherwise.

And it brings you down to earth with a bang. All you want to do is down tools, go home to bed with a mug of cocoa and pull the covers over your head.

**'...breaking out into a hot flush mid-DJ set...is a blunt reminder that you're quite clearly not so young and hip as you like to think you are.'**

So for many of us, the conflict is that our fertility and our bodies are ageing, yet we continue to pursue and thrive on a youthful outlook and lifestyle. But you know what? I refuse to have it any other way. As author

Doris Lessing once said:

"Your body changes, but you don't change at all. And that, of course, causes great confusion."

Lulu Le Vay is resident weekend DJ at the H&M store in Oxford Street or catch her at the House of St Barnabas in Soho, London.

Read more at <http://lululevay.wordpress.com> and follow Lulu on twitter @LuluLeVay

# Old age tension



Professor of Contemporary History at King's College, London, Pat Thane highlights the gender inequality that exists as we get older.

Pat is a Fellow of the British Academy. Her publications include *The Long History of Old Age and Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? : unmarried motherhood in twentieth-century England* with Tanya Evans.

Most 'older people', ie. c. 65 plus, are female. Women tend to live longer than men and have done so throughout history, a fact about the supposedly 'weaker' sex that men have often found surprising.

In Britain now, males, on average, live around 78 years from birth, females 82. Most who reach 65 can expect to live to about 83 and 86 respectively, and to remain healthy and active until 78 and 81. But these are averages spanning the great diversity of later life experience.

In particular, social and economic inequality affects life expectancy as it does everything else. People living in poor areas, such as inner-city Glasgow, die on average 15 years earlier than the rich in places like Kensington.

Yet women live longer despite

the fact that they tend to be poorer than men in old age. This is because they are more likely to live alone, on a single income, and that income is likely to be lower than that of older men. Most married women currently receive lower state pensions than men or single women who have been employed all their adult lives.

In any case, the state pension has never provided enough to live on, since it was introduced in 1908. Many people supplement it with occupational pensions, but fewer women than men qualify for these, even now and there were fewer still in the past. If they do, the pension is likely to be lower than for men because it is normally linked to years of work and level of pay.

Women are likely to work fewer years because they have caring responsibilities, and they generally earn less than men. Also,

because women earn less they are less able to save for a private pension. Those whose pensions and other income are not enough to live on can apply for a means-tested state supplement, currently the Pension Credit, which about one-third of pensioners receive: they are overwhelmingly female.

Inequalities earlier in life continue into old age and there is little sign that they will diminish in the foreseeable future.

These facts should make us question fashionable arguments about 'baby boomers' enjoying the fat of the land and round-the-world cruises at the expense of younger generations. This may be true of a lucky minority, mostly men, but not of the majority of pensioners, mostly women, living on low incomes. Nor does it give credit for the support older women and men give to younger people and others, caring for

grandchildren (1 in 3 working mothers rely on grandparents for childcare), disabled relatives and friends, giving financial help to children and grandchildren when they can, and through extensive work with voluntary organizations.

Another reason why women may work fewer years or receive lower pay and lower pensions is discrimination at work as they get older. This seems most blatant, or it has certainly been most publicised, in the media, where there have been high profile cases of women in their fifties, or even younger, no longer deemed fit for public viewing, while paunchy, wrinkled men go on and on.

In 2011 Miriam O'Reilly successfully sued the BBC for age discrimination, when she, aged 53, and three other women presenters, in their 40s and 50s, were dropped from presenting *Countryfile*, amid comments about their ageing looks. An older male presenter was kept on.

A year later the TV appearances of the classical scholar Mary Beard, aged 57, were criticised by AA Gill, a male critic of similar age, on the grounds that she was 'too old and ugly to be useful'. The relevance of which to her expertise in classical history is unclear.

Women being marginalized, denigrated or worse once they pass menopause has a long history. Despite myths about older people being more respected and cared for in 'the past' there is no sign of this in history.

In the 17th century older women were the group most likely to be persecuted as witches; they were also deemed scary because they were believed to be sexually voracious once they no longer feared pregnancy.

Still, in the 1930s a popular Music Hall song was 'Nobody loves a fairy when she's 40', the lament of an ageing actress that she could

'Despite myths about older people being more respected and cared for 'in the past' there is no sign of this in history.'

no longer get work in pantomime, a complaint still familiar from female actors.

Also in the 1930s, working single women demonstrated against being dismissed, especially from public-facing work, at earlier ages than men because they were thought no longer presentable.

Their protests helped to bring about a lower pension age

for women - 60 instead of 65, introduced in 1940.

Male and female pension ages are now in the process of being equalized because a man protested to the European Court, which agreed in 1990 that this was an example of sex discrimination against men. The UK government responded by gradually raising women's pension age to that of men, but the original reason for women's lower pension age hasn't gone away.

It is not only at work that older women, and men, experience discrimination. It is rife in the health service. A particularly blatant example is that automatic invitations for breast cancer screening stop at age 70 although the disease is most common in women over 70. Among all too many other examples, there is evidence that men and women past age 65 receive poorer care after suffering strokes and when mentally ill.

Something that has changed is that older women and men are now more likely to protest against inequitable treatment which in the past they often regarded as another of the normal penalties of growing older.

There is a lot to protest about, especially for women.

# 50 shades of freedom

Jill Dawson is the best selling author of eight novels including *Watch Me Disappear*, *The Great Lover* and *Fred and Edie* which was shortlisted for the Whitbread Novel of the Year and the Orange Prize.

Her latest work, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, won this year's Harper's Bazaar short story competition.

Jill told Her Edit about valuing friendship and finding confidence at 50.



PHOTOGRAPHS  
Courtesy Jill Dawson



'Why so much nostalgia for childhood and youth? Is there a taboo against admitting that for some of us this was not a happy time?'

**W**hen I reached the age of fifty a friend sent me the most fabulous email which should be mandatory for everyone reaching that age, like a telegram from the Queen:

'Fifty is fabulous. You get a liberating "fuck it, I'm 50" gene kicking in. Things that worry you, no longer matter. You don't sweat the small stuff. You care less about how you look. Or what people think of you. I found it truly freed me up from a lot of crap. Promise ...it's a time to rejoice.'

It strikes me now, two years later, not only how right she was, but

that the single thing that has made the most positive difference to my experience of ageing is my women friends. I've cherished friendships and not taken them for granted.

In your teens and twenties it might be all about romance, in your thirties settling down with a partner, but along the way the women you spend time with will be your mirror and a greater influence on you than (or a bracing antidote to) media versions of womanhood.

Of course there is a world-wide obsession with remaining young and a dread of admitting that as human beings we do actually come to an end one day. We wind

down, we wear out. There's no Botox, no yoga, no HRT or mystery product that can make that outcome any different. You need something – some people – to set against that.

For my 50th birthday party I organised a small party with cocktails and 'novelty' food in Drink Shop Do in London for six of my close friends. It had that hen party flavour and volume, the shrieking and laughter that women's get-togethers so often have. But none of them were women I'd spent a hen night with, nor were they the girlfriends I'd had in school or university.

They were friends I've made at crucial moments in my later adult life. One I shared an apartment with as a young mother in my 20s (now a major campaigner for Greenpeace); one I'd met in Amherst in the States in a job I had there in my early 30s (single parent, survivor of so many things I don't know where to start, gifted poet); one was the founder of a complementary health centre, now a doula, and reflexologist

(I was married at that point, for the first time, and a new mother again at forty)...another a terrific, accomplished novelist and Booker judge (met during the early days of my publishing career).

They were all women I've met as an adult. Because adulthood has been where I've been happiest and where I've felt most at home.

Why so much nostalgia for childhood and youth? Is there a taboo against admitting that for some of us this was not a happy time? For me, it wasn't just a horrible time, but a period coloured by falseness, by not feeling like myself. I was a false child; eager to please. I can't explain it any other way.

I stayed in relationships with boyfriends I didn't really love. I had an eating disorder, trying to shape my body into something it could never really be. I applied for jobs I didn't want because I couldn't trust that what I wanted – to be a writer, a novelist, to work alone, from home – was actually a possibility for a girl like me, from

a background like mine. And the thing I lacked, the thing that I now have that helps the most with anxiety, or with meeting any challenge is experience.

There is great comfort in knowing I've been there before, I've handled it; I can do this. And that comes with age.

I feel I didn't hit my stride until my early 30s, when I published my first novel, bought my first flat, completed a Masters degree, met my future husband. I changed my name around this time, and most of my friends now call me Ruby rather than Jill (in fact for half of my life that has been my name) and somehow it is a simple way to differentiate the troubled girl I was from the much happier person I am.

Perhaps for some lucky individuals that is not a late gift, perhaps they had that miraculous confidence as a child. For me it is something very hard won, and precious, and I wouldn't trade the feeling for all the youthful skin and toned abs in the world. Let young people

have those: they need them as compensation for the pain, confusion and self-consciousness that characterises youth.

I once taught a writing workshop in Singapore where a young woman student stood up and read a poem for me in which she mentioned admiringly and more than once my 'creased' hair and 'creased' face, describing them as beautiful. She obviously did not expect me to be offended and so I decided not to be.

At fifty you get the face you deserve, apparently. Well, so my face is a bit creased; I have a lot of laughter lines from those high volume shrieking sessions with my women friends. I can live with that.

Read more about Jill's work at [www.jilldawson.co.uk](http://www.jilldawson.co.uk) and follow her on twitter @JDawsonwriter

The Tell-Tale Heart is published by Sceptre and explores the changes in a 50 year-old man after he receives a new heart in transplant surgery.



@MarkBigelow

# On being an older model

Alex Bruni Lopez y Royo is a model and a writer. A former full time academic, she retains a link with the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London where she is Research Associate of the Centre for Media and Film Studies.

She has recently become more involved in academic research on ageing and is bringing to it her personal experience as a model, working across the commercial and editorial sector.

Alex is also an active member of All Walks Beyond the Catwalk, an initiative founded by Caryn Franklin, Debra Bourne and supermodel Erin O'Connor to challenge current perceptions of body image on and off the catwalk.

Alex's blog is at <http://alex-therealdoesnoteffaceitself.blogspot.co.uk>



In more recent years a new category of models seems to have sprung up, that of the 'older model', a notion that frankly does not mean very much – older than whom? Sometimes this 'older' model is also very vaguely referred to as 'mature' model.

But incongruous as these terms are they have found a place in our vocabulary and we have come to understand them to be a catch-all label denoting models who are now at the very least forty years old going up to eighty plus.

The reason why this newer cohort of models has been added to the mainboard of a few model agencies seems to be the result of some broad recognition that more images of older people, as wearers of fashion and as consumers of products, ought to be seen in order to tap into the 'grey pound' (or 'grey dollar').

It is the older model as wearer of fashion that is something of a novelty, as ageing people have been seen in advertisements for some decades, albeit in highly stereotypical roles and never wearing any remotely fashionable clothes. For example, to point out a common stereotype, it is not unusual nowadays for women in their early forties to have very

young children yet in the world of advertising women in that age group can only be middle class mothers with teenage children, possibly wearing pearls and twin sets.

Advertisers like the idea of a fictional granny of average height, whatever that may be, somewhat frail, with short grey hair, wearing a cardigan and very unimaginative clothing, who can be used to

## 'It is the older model as wearer of fashion that is something of a novelty'

advertise pension plans, retirement homes and such like.

But in real life we are faced with a very broad range of 'grannies', of varied ethnicities, whose bodies are very different indeed. A sizable number of older models seems to have come in to fill a gap, but this gap will not be filled that easily. The bodies and overall looks of these women and to a lesser extent, men are, one way or another, aspirational – or are they? Who defines what is aspirational?

The notion of just one type of older model needs to be hastily reviewed so it addresses issues

of body image and corporeality rather than framing the question as to do solely with age and ageing. Age is, when all is said and done, a complex issue, underpinned by the notion of diversity – we are diverse in our youth and continue to be diverse as we age. It is this reframing that will determine how fashion can creatively engage with age and its representation.

This is why discussing older models is important. Who are they? Do they have any leverage? Can they in any way help to make a positive change in the overall perception of ageing? Can or do they speak?

The latter is already a question that breaks away from the norm, as models have always been objectified and thus muted. Like children – and often they have been, and are, just overgrown children, given the industry's penchant for youth – they should be seen but not heard. But older models, often coming to modeling as a second career, do have the gift of speech and can be most articulate.

Ever since I began modelling, in my mid forties, I have been asking myself questions. I am now in my fifties. Mine was not a Cinderella story - you will find that the model scouted while shopping in a department store by an elite model agency is often an embellishment



of a much more banal truth. Agencies receive enquiries by the hundreds every week and have 'drop in' days, in other words, the majority of models, of all ages, tend to apply to be considered for the job.

In my case I just had an opportunity to model as a one off. It was not meant to be at all serious, but I enjoyed the experience and decided to look into it and see what I could make of it. My curiosity had

been awakened, thanks to a photo shoot.

I discovered a fascinating world, a little harsh perhaps, though not harsher than other environs, and very exciting for me: I used to teach visual culture and performance and here I found myself in a milieu where images are everything and where the model is a silent performer, but a performer nevertheless.

What I would like to emphasise is the creative aspect of modelling, something that is often lost sight of and which I believe is within the reach of everyone who wants to have a go at being in front of a camera. To a great extent, if this were embraced – I do not mean it has to be done as one's profession after all not everyone who draws or plays music does it professionally – it could really have an impact and make some significant changes.

**'I want to be able to do cartwheels and do the splits, run and lift weights when I am ninety.'**

The more images we see of women and men who are now in their middle to later years, the more images we see that celebrate diverse ageing bodies, the greater chances we have to change perceptions of ageing at all levels in our society and culture. It is sad that we have been indoctrinated into thinking of ageing as something to fear and abhor, because ageing is part of living.

When I was twenty, I used to think that life after thirty was not worth living, as I would be old. Now I am so grateful that I did not die before I turned thirty and I do not regret in any way the changes in the way I look. They mark my experience of living!

We need to see more positive images of people as they age, images that honour their bodies. This is a crucial point. I do not believe at all in the ideal of bland 'agelessness' which is being touted as THE goal. However, I do believe in encouraging people to be more physical and look after their bodies in order to get an optimum performance throughout their life.

Cosmetic surgery and looking as if I had been frozen in time

means nothing to me, but fitness means everything and giving myself physical challenges is what I thrive on. I want to be able to do cartwheels and do the splits, run and lift weights when I am ninety. It is possible and it a wonderful goal to set oneself.

When I began modelling I was advised to keep my hair in a conventional bob so that I could be used for commercial work. For a while I did, but then I got incredibly bored with the look, I had always worn my hair long throughout my life, at one time I was even able to sit on it. So I grew it again.

This act of defiance was immensely helpful: through it I asserted my uniqueness and now my long hair is what ensures bookings. It is also a conversation topic. Sometimes young girls might comment that they love my hair and I always reply, 'Wait a few years and you will get hair like mine'. It always breaks the ice.

I also discovered that waiting for agencies to bring you work is only half of the story, you need to be proactive and I have never hesitated putting myself forward for work and freelancing – at

worst people will simply say no to my enquiries but rejection is part and parcel of a model's life and you learn to deal with it. It's never personal, but it helps you to understand how the whole thing works.

As a result of my brazen attitude I have been able to work with very talented creative people who have allowed me to perform as a model without them being hung up on my age. One of them is Marie Schuller, from ShowStudio, who used me in a couple of her fashion films and music videos.

We can all be models. By this I mean, let's have more images celebrating ageing people on Facebook, Instagram and various other social media. The more of them we see, the more we will begin to take ageing in our stride as normality, rather than as a shameful aberration on the ideal of eternal youth.

I would like to think that older models like me are here to say that there is no shame in growing old and that conventional thinking can and should be challenged.



@Nagib El-Desouky

# Celebrating a golden age

Her Edit's editor, Jayne Phenton, meets the remarkable archaeologist Beatrice de Cardi as she celebrates her hundredth year

In 2008 I organised an event to mark International Women's Day celebrating the contribution of women in the UK to heritage. The then Minister at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Margaret Hodge, attended along with around 100 of the UK's foremost women archaeologists, historians and academics.

However, the star of the show was undoubtedly archaeologist Beatrice de Cardi whose long and distinguished professional record was slightly eclipsed in the media by the fact that she was then 93 and still working on archaeological sites in Syria. In an interview with the Independent, she was billed as 'part-Indiana Jones, part-Miss Marple' while the [BBC](#) hailed her as possibly the world's oldest archaeologist.

It occurred to me that as a society which prizes youth above all, we equally reserve our approbation for those who exceed our given three score and ten. I was delighted to catch up with Beatrice shortly after she celebrated her hundredth birthday this year. While longevity may be something we all aspire to, the most salient thought I took home from our meeting was that a remarkable life is not defined by number of years we clock up, but how we use them.



@CouncilforBritishArchaeology

**L**ike most archaeologists I've encountered, Beatrice's interest began as a child, but her life-long fascination has been with collecting surface material.

'I never succumbed to digging little holes.'

Our lives are inevitably shaped by the times and circumstances we live in. Beatrice's father was a successful ship broker and her family were clearly very comfortable, enabling her to study at University College London in the 1930s. She attended the lectures of archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler and assisted on his dig at the Iron Age hillfort of Maiden Castle, one of the first large scale excavations in Britain.

When her father died, it transpired that the family had been dependent on a trust fund which had now expired upon his death.

'We were well-heeled one week, then had nothing the next. I needed to get a job.'

Wheeler offered her a job as his secretary at the Museum of London and they began a life-long friendship.

'I was scared stiff of him for the first three weeks. He was a big influence on me. I learnt so much during that time, about the museum and about museum politics. He was a good friend throughout my life. Whenever I came back from abroad, the first

point of call was always Mortimer Wheeler to tell him about it.'

The war intervened and the museum was closed. Beatrice was 'borrowed by the foreign office' looking for someone 'unflappable' to work for the Ministry of Economic Warfare in China. She loved working abroad and her taste for travel was fuelled.

She became an assistant Trade Commissioner in India; then, with partition, took the opportunity to move to Karachi - the main draw being the opportunity to carry out field surveys in western Baluchistan.

If there is another significant

**'If I wanted to make an expedition abroad, I'd have to sacrifice two years leave.'**

figure in Beatrice's life then it must be the Punjabi tribesman Sadar Din who she has described as her greatest teacher. He was, she says, illiterate, but had a remarkably retentive memory and they developed a lasting friendship and working partnership in the field, collecting ceramic sherds, copper objects, bone and flint.

'I didn't strip a site ever; just took materials that indicated date and source. It was all handed over to the museum in Pakistan and they allowed us to export a small study collection to the Institute

of Archaeology. It probably sat in a box under someone's desk for some time until it was transferred to the British Museum, where it is now. It was rare material.'

At home the bombsite legacy of the war created pressure for a central archaeological body and led to the establishment of the Council for British Archaeology. Beatrice returned to the UK to become its Assistant Secretary, later Secretary, a post she held until her retirement in 1973.

This was essentially the day job. The day after she retired she was on a flight to the Middle East.

'If I wanted to make an expedition abroad, I'd have to sacrifice two years leave, finance it myself and organise everything in my spare time. Then afterwards, I wrote up my findings at night. It was only when I'd become known that I could get grants from the British Academy and other foundations, but a lot of the work could be done on chicken feed.'

Beatrice's pioneering work has taken her across Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf and the United Arab Emirates.

She describes it as 'quite a solitary career, but it is fun if you have someone who does the bits you can't do. I was usually away for a short time, at most a month.'

In 1950, Beatrice was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. She generally dismisses the notion

that she has ever been treated any differently because she is a woman, often quoted as saying 'I am not a woman or a man when I am working in the Gulf or anywhere else. I am a professional and they have always accepted that.' However, on this occasion a conservative, male dominated Fellowship and an archaic voting system almost thwarted her.

'I got in....just! Quite a number blackballed me. There was a section who didn't want women. I got in by the skin of my teeth.'

This year the Society awarded her its highest honour, the Gold Medal.

Beatrice never married. She and her fiancé planned to marry in Calcutta, but he was killed in the war and a later attachment wasn't free to marry. She didn't have a desire for children and her life seems characterised by an independent spirit.

Beatrice's sister was 11 years older and led a more conventional life, attending finishing school in Belgium and becoming a teacher and bee keeper in Sussex. She would have loved a job in agriculture, says Beatrice, but it was not the 'done thing', just over a decade seemingly defining very different directions in life.

Of course I have to ask what career Beatrice would have pursued if it hadn't been archaeology; she pauses, 'a ballet dancer.'

Then she adds with a slightly withering look, 'I knew what I didn't want to be and that was



From left to right: Television presenter Dan Snow, Beatrice, historian and broadcaster Michael Wood and Director of the CBA Mike Heyworth after Michael Wood had delivered the 34th Beatrice de Cardi lecture at the British Academy earlier this year.

a school teacher. I remember when I graduated, Hugh Gaitskell was one of my tutors and he suggested I go into the rag trade because I used to design and make a lot of my own clothes.'

Beatrice de Cardi seems to represent a cohort of pioneering women who found opportunities for independence in the slightly extraordinary times in which they lived. She remembers leading archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon who was head girl at her school 'rushing down, hitting her hockey ball at you. Terrifying.'

'I don't think I would change anything. It may sound shocking to say, but I enjoyed the war,

apart from losing the man I would have married. The war gave one opportunities you wouldn't otherwise have had.'

Beatrice does not subscribe to the Independent's view of her.

'I identify and date prehistoric material. I'd like to think I have an academic image, not that of an adventurer.'

Whether it's because of, or in spite of, the times in which she's lived, Beatrice de Cardi lived an extraordinary and inspiring life. She still shines as an independent and pioneering spirit. Age is irrelevant.



# Creating a new role model

Taylor Houchen is 11 years old and together with her aunt, award-winning performance artist Bryony Kimmings, created Catherine Bennett, an antidote to the over-sexualised and commodified pop stars generally offered up as role-models to girls and young women.

Taylor and Bryony have performed the show *Credible, Likeable, Superstar, Role Model* to rapturous audiences in tours across the UK and in Australia.

In our first issue, *Her Edit* spoke to Bryony about her ambitions for CB (as Catherine Bennett is known to her fans), the women who have inspired her and her hopes for her niece and girls of her generation. To mark our first birthday, we invited Taylor to share her thoughts on the future, performing and what it takes to manage a superstar like CB.

**U**ntil you and Bryony created CB, who were your role-models and are the people who inspire you different now?

Mum and still is. Jessie J and Emma Watson. Still the same, but also CB.

Catherine Bennett is a palaeontologist, rides a bike and loves tuna pasta. Are those things you like and why did you choose those things?

Paleo because it's really different. Riding bikes and tuna pasta because I love it. I chose them because I wanted her to be a bit like me.

You're CB's manager - what's been the most challenging thing about the job?  
All the questions! Questions from Aunty Bry, so many of them, and I didn't realise there was so much to a human being!

What have you enjoyed most about doing the shows?

Meeting new people, spending more time with Aunty Bry, and the travelling, but I don't like being away from home too much.

Have your friends all been to see the show and what did they think about it? Are they all CBeasties (the name given to CB fans) now?

None of them have been to see the show, because it hasn't been anywhere close, but when CB came to school lots of them seemed eager to learn about her and I think some are now CBeasties. I do know one year four girl came to see the show at Soho which was nice.

What are you most looking forward to about growing up?

Probably having children.

Do you think boys are treated differently to girls and, if so, in what way?

Yes they are. I think it's because all people think boys should like superheroes and football and stuff like that, and girls should like princesses and dance, also stuff like that, whereas actually girls should be allowed to enjoy football and boys dance, and like their own things and not be bullied by that.

What do you think adults could do to make girls feel more confident about not following the crowd?

Parents should talk to them about it and explain that it's great to be different to everyone else. Try and persuade them to be different.

You and Bryony went to the Houses of Parliament. There's a general election next year; what would each of the main political parties have to promise to make you vote for them?

Promise that they would ban smoking because that's something that I absolutely hate.

If we could grant you three wishes, what would they be?

1. No smoking
2. Everyone to be equal
3. More dance equipment.

Follow Catherine Bennett on twitter @RealCB or read more at [www.catherinebennett.so](http://www.catherinebennett.so).

For information about Bryony Kimmings visit [www.bryonykimmings.com](http://www.bryonykimmings.com)

# Her Agenda

## Get with the Project

Get a career and life MOT at this event organised by We Are the City. Project YOU will help you shape your own personal plan, give you the skills you need to raise your profile and provide you with ideas on how to invigorate your career, life or business.

20 September  
Visit [www.wearethecity.com/20092014-project-career-life-mot-wearethecity-development-event](http://www.wearethecity.com/20092014-project-career-life-mot-wearethecity-development-event)

## Creative writing

Rewriting Your Story: A Creative Writing Workshop for Childless Women is for anyone interested in writing, looking to create a new narrative for women without children.

26th October 2014  
Visit [www.gateway-women.com/workshops/rewriting-your-story](http://www.gateway-women.com/workshops/rewriting-your-story)

## Angels delight

Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism is the first exhibition in the UK to explore the role of women in the Surrealist movement.

26 September - 10 January  
Visit [www.manchestergalleries.org/angelsfanarchy](http://www.manchestergalleries.org/angelsfanarchy)

## By g.o.d's good grace

Growing old disgracefully is a women's network aimed at empowering its members to lead full and active lives. There are groups across the country.

For details visit [www.growingolddisgracefully.org.uk](http://www.growingolddisgracefully.org.uk)

## Beauty in older women

This acclaimed exhibition of work by Italian photographer Ed Zollo challenges perceptions of older age. At the Letchworth Arts Centre until 29 September 2014.

Visit [www.letchwortharts.org/node/1330](http://www.letchwortharts.org/node/1330) or follow the blog on twitter <https://twitter.com/BeautyOlder>

## A Woman without Secrets

Part of the ARTISTS ROOMS tour programme, Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art hosts this exhibition of work by American artist and sculptor Louise Bourgeois.

Visit [www.visitmima.com](http://www.visitmima.com)

# Her Edit

FOR THE INDEPENDENTLY MINDED WOMAN

Issue Eight  
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[www.heredit.com](http://www.heredit.com)

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