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To get involved in the Riveters contact Hazel at <a href="mailto:womens@umsu.manchester.ac.uk">womens@umsu.manchester.ac.uk</a> or join us on facebook - The Riveters (UMSU Women's Rights Collective)

## From your women's officer

The Riveters (Women's Rights Collective) have had an eventful, and media-filled, semester. With Reclaim the Parks featuring in local and student media, Feminist Fridays making it front page Student Direct, and the furor over the M.E.N.S Society, we've really been in the limelight.

But now it's time to look at the media from our own perspective, to debate what's going on and search for the positives. In this edition, it seems, Riveters are finding inspirational women in the media, but negatives still abound with trans women's exclusion, and women's sexuality seen only from a man's perspective.

And then there's the representation of feminism in the media, which hasn't been much mentioned - where are we, who are we? Well we're here! And we're a disparate group of people who believe in a common cause of women's liberation and gender equality. You'll struggle to make us agree on more than that but that's the beauty of feminism - it's not about everyone having one stance on everything, it's about being unified for something beautiful, something idealistic yet attainable. So revel in the diversity and the controversy, and enjoy.

“Masses of people think that feminism is always and only about women seeking to be equal to men. And a huge majority of these folks think feminism is anti-male. Their misunderstanding of feminist politics reflects the reality that most folks learn about feminism from patriarchal mass media.”

bell hooks

## Towards a television future

When it comes to celluloid depictions of women, you can do worse than turning on your television. No, really. The last decade has proved a veritable goldmine of positive representations, depicting women as the creatures they actually are, rather than what men want them to be. Television series have been at the forefront of these representations, allowing for more nuance and growth than a 90 minute film could ever hope to achieve. That's why *Sex and the City* could work as feminist television – and why the film did not.

By working through the medium of television, we as viewers have been spoilt for choice in terms of representatives which have run the genre gambit. Whether it is Kima Greggs from *The Wire* or Buffy Summers from the series that bears her name, if you avoid the endless repeats of *Friends*, there are some really interesting portrayals of women to be seen.

Now, I'm not saying that everything is wonderful in the land of television. Far from it. Women are still highly underrepresented in script-writing rooms and a large majority of female characters still only exist to talk about men. But to my eyes, there has definitely been a seismic shift in the past decade or so.

Take *Mad Men* for example. Straight off the bat, I doubt that most people would consider a show set in a New

York advertising agency in the early 1960s to be a place where strong female characters could exist. But they certainly do. And it's one of the few shows where the discussion of gender roles is explicit, and not something allegorical and inferred. Despite my love for a good allegory or seven, I find *Mad Men* refreshing due to its frank discussions and depictions. Betty, the wife of Don Draper (the lead character and executive at the aforementioned advertising agency) could have literally stepped out of Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, surrounding as she is with suburban ennui and the emptiness that fills her life. Joan, the queen bee of the office, is the office manager and helps hold the business together; however, she is a victim of misogyny in her own way when her fiancée rapes her, due to his resentment of her sexuality. Peggy, the newcomer to the office, is promoted to assistant copywriter, but only after much office politicking, as her talent isn't respected by her male colleagues. Although this might sound macabre, *Mad Men* allows for identification with all three women, as well as reminding the audience how far we've come (and how far we still have to go).

Another one of my favourite depictions is Lieutenant Kara 'Starbuck' Thrace off the rebooted *Battlestar Galatica* series. Science fiction arguably leads the way for some progressive politics – as demonstrated by the first interracial kiss on American television in the *Star Trek* franchise.

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The character of Starbuck in the original 1970s series of *BSG* was male, which was

then turned on its head in the 2000s reboot. Although there was some fan resistance at first, people came to embrace the new Starbuck wholly, and for good reason. For she is as brave, complicated, courageous, intelligent and kind as any male character I have ever seen. And she isn't the only one. There's also President Laura Roslin, initially dismissed by everyone for being "a schoolteacher" who proved herself to be more than capable for her new position. Like *Mad Men* though, the strength of *BSG* came not only in the form of its female characters, but also with the storylines it chose to pursue. Not content with just dealing in explosions and space debris, *BSG* wandered into scenarios of sexual abuse and forced pregnancies with a gravitas and dignity not usually found on the big screen, let alone its smaller cousin. Plus, in *BSG* universe, gender equality has been achieved! Watch it in hope for our future.

All in all, the state of television has me hopeful for yet more positivity. If television is supposed to be escapism, I can think of no where that I'd like to escape to more, in terms of depictions and representations. When receiving an award from the organization Equality Now, the creator of *Buffy*, Joss Whedon said that he created strong female characters like her because people kept asking him why. Because the concept was so alien in other depictions. Thankfully now, television is proving him wrong.

Megan Venter

## **Rosie's Rant: Ageism? Kinda. Sexism? Definitely!**

A few months back a storm of controversy was whipped up over the replacement of 66-year-old choreographer Arlene Phillips by 30-year-old pop star Alesha Dixon as a *Strictly Come Dancing Judge* on the BBC.

Accusations of ageism were flung around as Dixon seemed to have little qualification for the role, apart from having won *Strictly* in 2007 and being younger and very pretty. When Dixon's first performance on the series turned out to be flat (or worse) these charges seemed set to stick.

But this is not ageism, if it was then Len Goodman, a male judge in his mid-60s, would also have been up for 'replacement'. It's sexism, pure and simple.

I'm not being a hyper-sensitive feminist, this is just an all too familiar scenario in the world of television.

Whilst the likes of Jon Snow and Trevor MacDonald remain 'silver fox' news anchors as the grey hair and wrinkles set in, Moira Stuart and Zeinab Badawi got early retirement. Okay, so they didn't actually retire, but you know the score. It's great to see so many women reading the news now but why do they have to be pretty and under 50?

Fair's fair, the BBC says it's now "actively seeking an older female news reader" to counter accusations of ageism (this is post-*Strictly* controversy), but it can't be trying that hard can it? Are you telling me there are no women over 55 who are willing and capable of reading the news? Pull the other one, it's got varicose veins on...

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Rosie Riveter

## Medi-ocrity?

While delaying the writing of a particularly arduous essay, diversionary tactics become appealing, and while aimlessly trawling around the BBC news website I came across an article that provoked thought (alas not about the essay subject!) Jill Berry, president of the Girl's Schools Association, is quoted within the piece as suggesting that "schools would be betraying girls if they did not tell them about challenges they might face". This is not to say that Mrs. Berry thinks that girls should not aim high, or should not aspire to maintain both a working and family life, but put simply, to quote the article; "Encouraging girls to "have it all" is not realistic and they need to know their lives will be more complicated than that."

Mrs. Berry's comments raise an interesting debate; which can also be generalised to the media. While we wish to see women respected and empowered within the media, could this type of coverage go too far; putting pressure on women to achieve a 'superwoman' ideal that is often simply unrealistic given the harsh realities of society today? Many women successfully maintain both a working and family life, and do a damn good job of it; but achieving this balance is ultimately extremely challenging and generally fraught with difficulty. Do idealized images of the 'empowered, independent, has-it-all' woman risk making certain women feel inadequate if they decide they cannot, or indeed simply

do not wish to, cope with multiple commitments? The depressing and unfortunate fact is that we continue to live in a world where, should a woman enter the workplace, her wages may be almost entirely depleted through covering her resultant childcare need; in such a situation it is understandable that women should choose to remain in the home, particularly given the shocking gender pay gap. A myriad of other factors may influence such decisions, or provide obstacles to women.

A balance is needed; I'm sure none of us want to see a media representation of women as mere objects, whose only value is within Page 3! Women should certainly be encouraged to aim high, though perhaps with, as Mrs Berry suggests, a recognition that difficulties do remain; with the current recession in particular heightening concerns that employers may be increasingly hostile to measures such as flexible working. In an ideal world, the media would give more coverage to the underlying issues that contribute to such difficulties, such as inadequate childcare provision; helping to encourage further legislation and attitude changes.

Just a little something to consider.... while you are avoiding that essay!

(The article I'm referring to is available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8358991.stm> )

# Creative Corner

## Name It

Stop saying you're fat when  
You see you are thin  
Do you know that you're seething?  
What feelings be- pain bleed see  
Lost your way again  
Name It instead

They tell us emoting is evil  
Angry at myself for slipping into  
trap  
Set steady they for us  
I know it's there  
Kind of like default self-  
destruction  
In place of purposeful production

No looking out  
Heads turned in  
Hands by your sides or sit on 'em  
Twiddle your thumbs until you're  
done  
Come to focus on the self, think of  
no one

All the hyperaware  
Looks beyond a stare  
To what's hiding out down there  
Most choose not to care  
In blissful denial, truth soon barely  
laid  
Smile when you catch your eyes in  
the mirror  
A snarl for those who dole out fear

Aiden Sisler

## Something Lost

There's something about it I  
just can't explain  
Something about her I just can't  
retain

A lost memory  
A forgotten face  
A lingering feeling  
Of an unknown place

There's something in me I don't  
know what  
Something in me that she's got  
A shivering mouth  
A quivering hip  
An unexplained look  
Of a powerful grip

And there's something about  
her I can't forget  
Something about it I'll never let  
Go, despite my turmoil and  
hope  
My love and my lovers  
Something about her I just can't  
let go.

Anonymous

## How to FEEL Good Naked.

I agreed to write this article after a somewhat embarrassed admittance to watching *How to Look Good Naked* - Gok Wan's infamous TV show, which seeks to make women take off their clothes, put on better fitting ones and subsequently take them all off again in public – and quite enjoying it.

Not because there are naked women on the TV – the amount of nakedness in the media long ago stripped any form of arousal from it. Not because I secretly would like a best friend like Gok who called me 'girlfriend' – that would annoy me after five minutes. And not because the programme has any suspense – **they always strip at the end.**

No, the reason I quite enjoy *How to Look Good Naked* is because it makes me cry. Every time I watch it, without fail, my eyes well up and **I have to suppress my emotions to avoid embarrassment.**

Why does 'Auntie' Gok's show make me cry? Because it's refreshing to see women celebrated for who they are. Too often 'makeover' TV shows such as *10 Years Younger* and *Extreme Makeover* celebrate women only after their body shapes, faces and hair have been altered beyond all recognition. Gok takes women whose body confidence is so low they are repulsed by the sight of themselves, and **by the power of positivity, an injection of confidence and the flash of a camera, he leaves them feeling like stripping** in public because they

are proud of how amazing they look naturally, no magic (or cosmetic surgery) involved.

It's not about being skinny or looking a certain way, it's about showing how beautiful all women naturally are. It's about making us sit up and want to challenge the way society has made women feel so utterly rubbish in our own skins.

And it's working, the petition started by the programme, to get body confidence onto the school curriculum is (at the time of writing) the fourth biggest petition on the Number 10 Website. According to Gok, **"we need to teach the next generation that what we see in the media is not a fair representation of the real body"**, a sentiment with which I wholeheartedly agree.

The main problem I have with Wan's programme is that it shows the situation as being so bad that only an overtly camp man calling us "girlfriend" and telling us we "look fabulous" can make us realise we're stunning.

But that doesn't mean there is no hope. I say we, using Gok's example, take this view that every woman is beautiful to the streets. I say we dish out the compliments, we get body confidence on the school curriculum and we start to experience the positivity the show inspires. Because, **girlfriends, we really are all beautiful, wonderful, powerful and amazing women** – and we should celebrate this more!

Jennie O'Hara

## The LOOKING good naked conundrum

We all know the premise of *How to Look Good Naked* - a woman with low self-esteem is adopted by Auntie Gok, and coached until she is confident enough to take part in a nude photo shoot and a catwalk show. **So far, so affirming.** So what is it that makes me suspicious of this supposed agenda of liberation?

My main problem with HTLGN is the illogicality in the show's premise. Women appear on it to learn to love their bodies and be confident in the way they look, but **ultimately validation is found in taking their clothes off for the cameras, for husbands and partners, and the male gaze** of Gok Wan. Along the way he treats them in a way that shows no sensitivity towards the body dysmorphia these women have suffered throughout their lives.

Participants have their current wardrobes displayed for ridicule, while more glamorous friends and relatives give sound-bites about their insecurities. And of course, image is always the root of the problem, not a symptom of something deeper - **how unthinkable that women might battle anything more serious than cellulite.** When confidence is instilled in them, it is not due to true satisfaction with their bodies but rests on magic knickers and wearing the 'right clothes for their shape', under strict guidance from Gok. He may not advocate cosmetic surgery, but **dishing out control pants is about as positive as slapping a label marked "unacceptable" on girlfriends'**

**curves.**

The name of the show really cuts to the heart of it – it is about looking good, not about any deeper empowerment. The narration suggests that taking part is an intense emotional experience, and the programme is formulated so that the same is true for the viewer. Yet it seems to me that **Gok's approach does not heal the wounds of self-loathing, but rather covers them with prettier plasters.** It shouldn't be a revelation to us that liberation isn't top of Channel 4's agenda. Yet while viewing figures are their priority, Gok's double-bluff is more disturbing than that.

A wave of the Fairy Gok-mother's wand may leave you with a manicure and a capsule wardrobe, but not the authentic love for yourself that the show promises. In fact, its agenda is to further enslave you to wearing what is dictated as right for you, what is deemed feminine, and what is certified as sexy. Let's not be sucked in. **Real liberation is refusing to accept the standards of beauty which the media sets** – so thanks but no thanks Gok, we can decide for ourselves how to look good naked!

Kat Brealey





## Objecting to Objectification

*"50 Big Ones", "When Boobs Collide", "wet and wild pics"*. These slogans and their accompanying images of oiled-up, barely-clad women, spread-eagled on the front covers have been a permanent fixture on the top shelves of magazine sections nation wide. Yet these particular slogans are not reserved for hardcore porn magazines; they are taken from the *"lads' mags"*, and more disturbingly, from national newspapers, items which, by their accepted wide circulation in society, have paved the way for the normalisation of the objectification of women (and gay men).

The effect of the images of 'page three girls' in tabloid newspapers and the topless women who constitute a large proportion of the content of 'lads' mags' is threefold:

Firstly, by mass marketing these images, these magazines are suggesting that they're not harmful to women. The combination of glamour models with legitimate news items and jokey football commentaries creates a false normalisation of a woman being nothing but a commodity and activity, blurring the fact that women are exploited through Zoo and Nuts' *weekly nipple counts* and in The Sun and The Daily Star for (literally) naked profit.

Secondly, there is the effect these images have on teenagers, especially boys. The Institute of Education has revealed that 66% of young people say that the media is a "useful or very

useful way to find out about love, sex and relationships". But the airbrushed women we find in lads' magazines and on Page Three do not give an accurate representation of the female figure and enforce an ideology that centres on a very narrow definition of the 'ideal woman'. This false representation can lead to broadly unattainable expectations of women in society.

Lastly, and maybe even more worryingly is the effect on women and especially teenage girls. They suggest that for women, one of the highest accolades they can hope to achieve is to be found sexually attractive by stripping for a photographer. Successful women, from film stars to Apprentice finalists have appeared in issues of Nuts, Zoo and Maxim, despite the fact that their successful male counterparts do not feel as compelled to do a similar thing.

It is no surprise that the Manchester Evening News reported that "up to 63% of young women aspire to be glamour models rather than doctors or teachers". This obsession with appearing sexually attractive has placed an unhealthy amount of importance on women's looks and the narrow social construction of beauty that shouts from the covers of these magazines. Although these magazines are not the only cause of bodily insecurity, they reinforce the same messages: it's no wonder that in the last five years breast augmentation has risen by 150% percent and cases of eating disorders continue to increase.

Most worrying is that the arguments for Page Three are often peddled by women, convinced of the 'empowering' nature of

lying in ones' underwear in order to titillate consumers, the flippant 'they want to do this to themselves' justification or the theory that as feminism has come so far, we as women have earned 'the right' to look at these images and partake in the objectification that men have.

Opponents of page three and lads' mags are not opposed to open sexuality. What they are opposed to is the clear sexual distortion on their pages. The portrayal of women as passive objects who will contort their bodies into sometimes painful positions in order to satisfy men's urges is wrong and the suggestion that this form of exploitation is representative of the most sexually liberated women is laughable.

Improved sex and relationship education in schools, including images of real men and women, and open discussion of these images that we find in the media may help young men and women to appreciate beauty in a non-degrading way that removes women from being purely objects of desire.

The Riveters' Feminist Fridays aims to fight back against the negative messages that page three sends out to society. By covering entire newspaper and magazine displays in leading high street retail shops with anti-objectification slogans, the placing of age restrictions on lads' mags, alongside engagement with the public, we aim to highlight the misogyny and degradation in the images that have become absorbed into our culture and encourage people to think about what exactly they are buying into. By repeating this demonstration

regularly we stand a better chance of involving more people in our campaign, thus setting the wheels in motion for a mass objection to the presence of these demeaning images in our mainstream media.

Chloe Glover



## Trans-media

Transwomen differ from cis-gendered women in that they suffer a double gender oppression. For instance, transwomen suffer a higher rate of domestic abuse and hate crime and face increased discrimination in the workplace.

This is highlighted quite strongly in the media. A perfect example is the film Priscilla: Queen of the Desert. It offers a perfectly stereotypical portrayal of transwomen- both drag queens and transsexual women. It has its rare moments of a more accurate portrayal, for instance when we gain an insight into the life of Bernadette. It explores how she has had to 'toughen up' in order to survive, how she was shunned by her family, and how she faces oppression within the trans 10

community itself, let alone outside.

The media coverage of the film also illustrates well the discrimination and insensitivity that someone like Bernadette would face. Even in official trailers the film is described as being about '3 men', and in many reviews Bernadette is referred to as a 'he'. This mirrors the huge media outcry when during her Oscar acceptance speech for her portrayal of the murdered transman Brandon Teena, Hilary Swank referred to Brandon as a 'he' ; she was subsequently forced to apologise by the media backlash.

Occasionally, media coverage of transwomen can offer a more accurate portrayal, and even have a positive affect. The oft-used example is of Coronation Street and Hayley Patterson. At first Coronation Street producers faced media attacks for even contemplating having a trans character, whilst trans support groups condemned its poor portrayal of transwomen. After a few months, and as Hayley's story progressed, a more sympathetic portrayal was given, as it raised awareness of discrimination that transwomen faced - in the workplace, in attempting to get married, to adopt, and more generally the level of acceptance that transwomen can have in wider society. Julie Hesmondhalgh was praised for her portrayal, which was helped by continued collaboration between Coronation Street producers and trans groups. Now, Hayley's transsexuality is very rarely mentioned, as she has now completely integrated into her local working class community.

Unfortunately, Coronation Street is not

entirely representative of media coverage of transwomen. When the media covers the lives of real transwomen it is often not only wrong, for instance in its use of pronouns, but it portrays transwomen, and trans people in general, in an appalling light. It is often sensationalist. For instance, in local papers, when a transwoman has been charged with a crime, that crime becomes even more terrible because it was a transwoman who committed it.

Transsexual women are often referred to as 'Sex change men', 'transvestites', 'men who believes themselves to be women', without care for what the actual words mean, and without scant thought of what it actually means to be trans. On the other hand, sympathetic documentaries are sometimes broadcast that are well-researched, and actually give a positive, accurate and humane account of the emotional and psychological journey that transwomen go through.

In the feminist movement itself, particularly around supporters of the rabidly transphobic Julie Bindel, there is still stigma of transwomen - that they are still really men, and that they therefore have male privilege; failing to account for the fact that transwomen are often rejected by 'both' genders. It is only recently for instance that Reclaim the Night marches have been trans-inclusive, and even now transwomen face an uphill battle to be accepted into the majority of women's groups and liberation campaigns.

Despite the increasing number of

positive exceptions, transwomen are often appallingly represented in the media. By embracing new ideas of gender and trans-inclusivity, the feminist movement can play a key role in tackling transphobia, and increase the strength of their movement to boot.

Robi Folkard



Hilary Swank as Brendan Teena

## **Women in (media) history: Dorothy Parker (1983 – 1967)**

Known for her sharp wit and wisecracks, Dorothy 'Dottie' Parker was a political and controversial American poet, writer and critic. Parker's childhood was unsettled, losing both her parents and her brother during her teens. It was during this time she began writing poetry as a way of escaping, selling her first poem to Vanity Fair in 1913. She was later hired by the magazine, as a staff writer and theatre critic, a position unheard of for a woman during this period.

However, her highly critical reviews began to offend powerful producers and in 1920 Parker was fired.

Parker's most productive writing period began after this point, she was fast earning critical acclaim for her cutting humour and witty writing style, with one of her quips "heterosexuality isn't normal; it's just common".

As well as providing wisecracks and clever writing, Parker was involved in political protests and debates, starting in the late 1920s when she protested in the streets of Boston against two Italian immigrants being sentenced to death. She was arrested for loitering, which she claimed to be her proudest moment, and after this, she helped to set up the Hollywood division of the anti-Nazi league.

Parker's private life was always of interest. Her first marriage to Edwin Pond Parker in 1917 ended because of their substance abuse – as well as her affairs. They divorced after she had an abortion, following an affair with Charles MacArthur, and made two suicide attempts. Dorothy married again later on in 1933, to Alan Campbell, and they remained so until after his death of an accidental overdose in 1963.

Despite the tragedies Parker endured throughout her life, and her depression and suicidal tendencies, she remained a sharp and humorous writer, and many of her witticisms will remain in print and contemporary, making a deep-seated impression on writing today

Natalie Booth

## The gender of physics

It is a question nearly as old as the origins of women's empowerment; with Physics being the ideal equilibrium between Maths, Chemistry and Philosophy, **why is it still so dominated by men?**

Undergraduate numbers for these subjects are more or less even nowadays, and yet women are vastly underrepresented in Physics. With its constituent parts becoming increasingly popular and accessible for girls, and with girls excelling in them all, it is no longer a plausible argument to suggest that it is a subject more suited to the male brain. Anyone who can do Maths and has a fascination with the underlying realities of the Universe is an ideal candidate.

A fellow physicist once suggested to me that this is not a question of any importance. He was of the opinion that Physics should not be **“wrapped up in a girl friendly box”** because science is objective, detached – it should not matter who the scientist doing it is. Those wishing to pursue the advancement of knowledge should be encouraged, and if it so happens that more men are of this persuasion than women then that is just the way it is. With so many puzzles still to solve, Physics does not have time to mollycoddle girls into study. But does this address **why** there are more men than women entering into it?

Moreover, to miss out on women Physicists is to leave a vast wealth of intelligence untapped. Physics needs innovation, and the fresh perspective

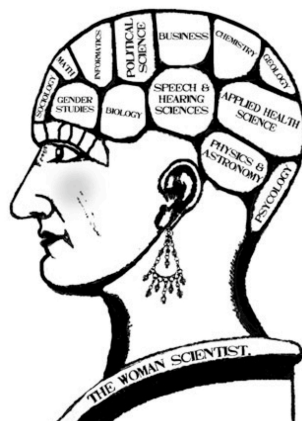
of the female mind could help think about stale problems in new ways.

It is not a case of enticing girls with patronising, domesticated examples. (One report I read suggested without a hint of irony that the case studies of irons and washing machines should be used instead of trains.) Physics is not about cars, planes and bombs; it is about the mysteries of the Universe, a theme which appeals to anyone with a sense of curiosity.

It is not interest that is the problem, but confidence. Studies in schools have shown that despite being just as able as their boy counterparts, girls lack the self-belief to take Physics study further. Young girls see the subject as being too difficult and find it intimidating, and this is exasperated by a lack of role models and unsupportive and outdated attitudes from lecturers and academics.

Most of the women I know who study Physics confess that at least part of their motive is a desire to prove themselves as equals and to fight the stereotypes. We need to empower more girls to have the confidence to do this and fight the competitive and male-orientated nature of the Natural Sciences.

S a m a n t h a  
Carter



# Get involved!

## Who are the Riveters?

The Riveters are the women's rights collective who believe feminism, as agreed by the Riveters, is the overthrowing of the patriarchy for the liberation of genders and campaigning for women's rights. We're non-hierarchical and inclusive to all genders.

## How do I get involved?

- The Riveters meet every Thursday at 5.30pm in the Advice Centre (first floor, Students' Union, Oxford Road)
- Anyone can write for the Riveter, please email your suggestions for contributions over to [womens@umsu.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:womens@umsu.manchester.ac.uk)
- Join the Facebook group (The Riveters-The UMSU Women's Rights Collective), email list (email request to above address), or just pop along to the Women's Office.

## Am I allowed to get involved?

Yes! Anyone can be a Riveter! Our meetings are open to everyone and we pride ourselves on striving to be accessible and will facilitate access needs to the best of our ability. We also pay up to £5 per hour to help with childcare costs. And we have tea and biscuits!

## What is there to get involved in?

- There's this magazine for a start!
- If you're reading this in the New Year, there's still time to get involved with the play so get in touch - first meeting is 1st February
- International Women's Day - the Riveters will be doing something for IWD on 8th March so keep an eye out.
- Women's Week: 19th-23rd April - campaigns, fun, feminism, a play, and reclaim the night!

## Campaigns

- Feminist Fridays! Every last friday of the month we go to a newsagent to cover objectifying and sexist magazines in brown paper envelopes bearing our own feminist slogans.
- Women Working Worldwide Flower Campaign - on Saturday 13th Feb we'll be taking flowers to the streets of Manchester to campaign against bad working conditions for women on flower plantations. Join us on Wednesday 3rd Feb at 6pm in MR for info!
- There'll be a Reclaim the Night North in April where we'll have a march around our dangerous spaces and a rally afterwards. There'll also be some reclaim the parks running up to that!

So come along and get involved!

## The Women's Office

Come along to the Women's Office (first floor Students' Union) for free pregnancy testing, emergency tampons, condoms, femidoms and dental dams. You can also just come for a sit down and a cup of tea, or if you need confidential, impartial advice. There are also cheap mooncups on offer - a reusable menstrual cup!

## The Library

There is also a wealth of books, films and documentaries on women, feminism, gender and sexuality. The library also has an extensive range of main-stream and home-made zines for you to peruse.

The Women's Office is a child friendly space with a few games in it, and you are free to breast feed here too.

So get borrowing, and get active!

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For more information visit <http://www.umsu.manchester.ac.uk/womens>

