



The human race is not very fertile!



The headline was the opening comment made by Professor Alison Murdoch, Head of the Newcastle Fertility Centre, who gave the Gordon Holmes Memorial Lecture at our Annual Conference in May and was a delight to listen to.

Our conception rate is a mere 12-15 per cent compared to 80 per cent in baboons and 90 per cent in rabbits. But humans are very good at keeping children alive and hence the species survives.

The main focus of Professor Murdoch's lecture was on infertility, giving us an insight into a field of work that is very important to many women — that of IVF treatment. This in itself presents both moral and social controversial issues and Professor Murdoch selected some examples for us

to consider:

- designer babies – usually for medical reasons not aesthetic;
- saviour siblings – extremely rare e.g. a child brought into the world for bone marrow for his/her sibling — unacceptable to many people but what is right?;
- sex selection – not allowed in the UK unless for genuine medical reasons and for which permission has been sought e.g. when a gene is passed through one sex only; and
- family-balancing sex selection – rare in the UK but in Asia there is a demand.

Professor Murdoch went on to express concern over the extent that IVF treatment eligibility is very closely governed, which was appropriate some 35 years ago but she feels that women should be trusted to make their own reproductive choices based on their individual circumstances and be supported by society.

More women are now delaying having their first babies until their late thirties and consequently there is a 25 per cent higher risk to them and their child. Pregnancy complications can be more common in older women. This is a difficult decision for our young women

today – weighing up when to embark upon a pregnancy against a desire to build a career or to achieve financial independence.

'An excellent speaker' - was the opinion of the members who were fortunate enough to be in the audience on the occasion of the Gordon Holmes Memorial Lecture in Newcastle.

Ann Wiseall, Past National President



Professor Alison Murdoch at the BPW Annual Conference, and (top), addressing Conference.

Join us!

Membership of BPW UK costs £70 per annum (local fees may apply). If you'd like to know more about the benefits of being a member, please contact us for details: tel. 01277 623 867, email: hq@bpwuk.co.uk or visit our website www.bpwuk.co.uk



In my view...



Eating sorbet with a knife and fork, I heard the Mayor welcome the president of the Soroptimists to Alnwick Castle. Having ascertained that eating in this style was a peculiarity of the catering, not the traditional way in which Northumbrian Soroptimists celebrate their 60th birthday, I was delighted to be introduced. A fortnight later, we met again in the Royal Box of the Royal Albert Hall where the Women's Institute was celebrating its 91st AGM. Top Six leaders were all there and I was delighted to meet fellow presidents from the National Federation of Women's Institutes, National Council of Women, Townswomen's Guilds, Soroptimist International Great Britain & Ireland and British Federation of Women Graduates. Working together we have sent a letter to the main political parties asking what effort they are making to ensure more women come forward as candidates at the next election. Such collaboration is essential if we are to further the aim of BPW to encourage women to play a full part in civic life and I was delighted to sign the letter on your behalf.

This reminded me of a letter sent in 1949. With a general election in the offing, it was thought imperative to exert the utmost pressure upon every political party – in fact to “turn up the heat”. Kathleen Armistead, from Leeds, wrote to the leaders of political parties asking for their policy on equal pay and their replies were sent to club secretaries with suggestions for tackling the local candidates. Club representatives were asked to be present at all political meetings and to ask the candidate “Are you in favour of the rate for the job, and will you press your party, if in power, to put it into operation?” She also wrote to members, “Make no mistake about it, we are on the side of the angels, however Laodicean the Report of the Royal Commission may be. We do feel that this is a moral issue and that it is our responsibility to fight for it. Equality of pay is the only safeguard for men. While there is inequality there are always some jobs for which women are preferred because they are cheaper. Equality would mean the best person for the job irrespective of sex.”

BBC Radio Newcastle recently asked for my view on the final of the Apprentice programme being between two women. I said I must be the least surprised person in Britain. Why is it surprising that two women feature as the best in British business?

Eating in a more normal fashion, I was honoured to share in the celebration with BPW Leeds to mark their 70th birthday. As one of the oldest clubs in the UK, Leeds has a special place in BPW history. How did Leeds club begin in 1939 at such a terrible time in British history, flourish and continue into 2009? I believe it grew because Yorkshire members made friends for life. Not five hundred

close friends made through Facebook, but five friends made through BPW who will see you through the joys and sometimes the sorrows of life.

The Trades Union Congress passed its first resolution on equal pay in 1887. It took 75 years to get to where some women were paid an equal rate for some jobs. Pioneers in the quest for Equal Pay were the members of BPW Leeds. The Leeds MP, Charles Pannell, had his bill talked out, but with the support of BPW members eventually, in May 1954, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that he hoped to introduce equal pay for equal work in the Civil Service by seven annual stages. In time this was extended to local government, teaching and the administrative side of British Railways. So in 1961 the seventh and last instalment to implement equal pay was introduced in the Civil Service, Local Government, nationalised industries and teaching.

In 1951 Ruth Tomlinson, chair of the UN Committee of the International Federation, attended a conference of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva. The British government voted against Equal Pay. Demonstrations were held in Trafalgar Square followed by massed lobbying at the House of Commons. Inflation was the excuse given by the government for refusing to grant women their rights as workers, but women noted that inflation did not stop the highly organised groups of male wage-earners from gaining shorter hours with commensurate increases in overtime rates of pay.

The names of these two BPW leaders, Ruth Tomlinson and Kathleen Armistead, crop up again and again. Would they be pleased or dismayed that two young women lawyers explained at Conference 2009 about women's rights at work? What would they think of us as BPW members that there is still a massive pay gap? Some say it is 20%, some say as much as 40%. Some say it is only 7% if you take out the influence of part-time working. What would they both think of the word ‘only’?

Theirs are two gigantic footprints for me to follow in and I only hope to tread well in their footsteps. I do know I cannot walk alone. All BPW members must work with me to make sure that women can achieve their full potential in their chosen careers and be paid the rate for the job.

Best wishes

Sue Ashmore

National President



Tough Sport

Katy Storie has played rugby for England 20 times. Although proud of her achievements, she describes the struggle of balancing sport and work.



Katy speaking at Conference

Let's get a few things straightened out before we start...YES women play rugby, the same as men do, NO we don't wear special protective clothing like super-padded bras, YES we make full contact tackles the same as the men, NO it doesn't put us at risk of not being able to have children, YES we have a Six Nations tournament and World Cup the same as the men, NO we don't use a smaller sized ball, YES we do suffer from frequent black eyes and occasional broken noses, and finally, NO we don't wish we were men!

The Rugby Football Union for Women has been in existence since 1983. It began when a small group of women who started up rugby teams at university wanted to take things further, wanting all women to have the opportunity to play the sport they had fallen in love with, but that had traditionally been kept just for men. There are now over 20,000 women and 15,000 girls playing rugby, in over 350 clubs across the country.

The England women's team has been the most successful England rugby team in history – male or female.

We won the World Cup in 1994; were runners-up in 2002 and 2006 to the Black Ferns of New Zealand (next year's World Cup will be held in London); we have won an unprecedented four Six Nations titles in a row since 2005, including 3 grand slams; and we currently hold the world record for the longest unbeaten run of matches (20 victories in a row) by any International Rugby Union team in history.

Like all women's sport we have suffered at the hands of a very male dominated media over the years and as a consequence our existence, and more significantly our successes, have been largely invisible. Women's sport receives just 5% of all the sports coverage in the British media.

All of the England women's rugby team have full-time jobs or are in Higher Education. We have doctors, vets, teachers, policewomen, sport development managers, insurance brokers and lawyers within our ranks and every one of us has to somehow balance our demanding training and match commitments with our jobs – and somehow manage to fit in family and friends too.

Fortunately we have had increased

support from Sport England over the past six years and so when we are away on tour we get up to 50% of our loss of earnings paid.

Women's sport is certainly on the up. The last Olympics resulted in numerous gold medals for British women; the England women's cricket team won the World Cup in March; and the FA is poised to start paying some female players on centralised contracts. The landscape is definitely changing.

As the season approaching is World Cup year I am investigating potential fundraising opportunities to enable me to offset some of the growing costs incurred by playing international rugby. All of the England players are aiming to try and take some time off work in the World Cup season so we can train more often as a squad and with our strength and conditioning trainers and have a chance to recover properly. So if any BPW members have contacts with companies or organisations who may be interested in sponsoring me I would be so happy to hear from them.

Email: katy@wsff.org.uk.

Tel: 07890 944151

A day in the life...

Steve Borthwick, England Men's Captain

6:30 am
7:30 am Gets up and heads to Saracens training ground
8:30 am Breakfast provided, paid for and cooked by club kitchen
9:30 am Team training session at Saracens
12:30pm Lunch at the club
1:00 pm Post-lunch rest before strength / conditioning training
3:30 pm Pool recovery session then head home for the day
5:30 pm
7:00 pm
9:00 pm
9:30 pm

Catherine Spencer, England Women's Captain

Gets up and grabs breakfast before leaving for early morning training
Strength and Conditioning Training at Bath University
Swift shower and energy bar and change then heads to the office
Starts her day's work for Bristol City Council
Grabs lunch at desk to make up flexi-time for time off for rugby
Gets back to work
Still at work
Leaves work to head home and grabs a quick bite to eat
Drives to club training
Finishes club training
Quick dinner and bed!



Conference Round-up

Challenges remain, according to Amélie Leclerq, Regional Coordinator for BPW Europe

Amélie Leclerq picked up a recurring theme at Conference – that even after 80 years of the BPW organisation there were still many challenges for women to overcome in finding their rightful place in the workforce and society and in achieving financial independence.



The current crisis facing many economies and societies is linked to the consequence of long-term thinking whilst continually trying to solve short-term crises.

Official figures show that banks which have a significant number of women on the board of directors are doing better than others. In fact, having women in decision-making positions makes for a better society.

In the UK only 13.9% of women hold positions at boardroom level. The official pay gap is 21% whilst the European average is 17.4%. The 'at risk of poverty' population

includes more and more women and especially pensioners and young women with children.

Amélie suggested that the challenges for BPW remain:

- to raise awareness of the real situation of women;
- to analyse our own country to find the policy gaps which BPW needs to address;
- to train our members;
- to lobby government, employers' organisations and trade unions so that actions follow good intentions;
- to follow through long-term tasks in a world seeking instant gratification (can we prove that long-term actions work?); and
- to find new ways of harnessing individual strengths for the purpose of collective actions.

In conclusion Amélie reminded members that when the UN was founded, Eleanor Roosevelt complained that there were no women in the countries delegations. BPW UK heard and acted; a petition started by BPW ultimately initiated the UN Council for Women.

Christine Nendick, BPW Yorkshire

Women and the Law

Topical Law in relation to women was the theme of a talk given at this year's BPW Annual Conference by two working female members of Dickinson Dees, a firm of lawyers based in Newcastle.

Hilary Cranston and Lisa Robertson explained employment law issues relating to women in the workplace, the gender pay gap, the 2009 Equalities Bill and flexible working. These interesting and experienced speakers also dealt with maternity/paternity leave and said that, as yet, no men had applied for flexible working hours.

Discussion was chaired by Elizabeth MacArdle of BPW Morpeth and Hilary and Lisa were thanked by Morpeth member, Margaret Trotman.



Hilary Cranston, above, and Lisa Robertson, below, address the Conference audience



Join us and Vote for a Change

It is time we change the way we do politics!

Our political system is not fit for purpose. The expenses crisis has revealed a nation governed by a political elite that has stopped listening and who are accountable to no one but their party machines.

Power needs to be put back into the hands of the ordinary citizen. That starts by letting US decide how we want to vote for our MPs. Our relationship to our MPs begins at the ballot box, and the politicians have lost the right to set their own rules. We demand a referendum on a new, more proportional, electoral system, which makes our votes count and the politicians listen!

Electoral
 Reform
 Society



Question Time

One of the highlights of the conference was saved until late on the Saturday afternoon and it was certainly worth waiting for. The panel was very balanced both in terms of political parties and of the local, national and European perspective.

The session was chaired by Norma Huddy, a Past National President of BPW UK.

Attracting women into politics

The panel was united in the opinion that it is important that more women become involved in politics. All-women shortlists, however, caused much discussion. Referring to the success of all-women shortlists in the Labour party (98 of the 125 female MPs are Labour), Roberta Blackman-Woods broadly supported the idea, but only as a temporary measure. She supports the new Equalities Bill which will allow parties to use this device to encourage women until 2030, by which time it is hoped that the situation will have markedly improved. Anne-Marie Trevelyn took the opposite view on all-women shortlists, feeling that women should be elected for who they are and not to fill a quota. Pamela Hargreaves sees the problem as being broader than gender because age (and thereby the economic necessity of working) is also a major factor. Fiona Hall explained that until 1999 in the European Parliament there was a great imbalance, but the system has changed and 'zipping' has been introduced whereby candidates are chosen on the basis of man-woman-man-woman – a much fairer system and therefore more effective.

Stamp Duty on shares and securities

A motion was passed at the conference in Edinburgh in 2007 asking for the Government to bring forward legislation to exempt all forms of approved pension schemes from Stamp Duty on shares and securities. None of the panel had first-hand knowledge of this, but both Roberta and Anne-Marie promised to look into it and report back to BPW.

International trade

Fiona started the discussion by commenting how important it is to build up international networks to promote businesses. Pamela drew on her own experiences in her 'day job' which is the promotion of entrepreneurs. Working with the Confederation of British Industry, Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and the Institute of Directors she stressed the importance of building up networks at all levels if businesses are to fulfil their potential. Serious as the current economic problems are, she sees them as an opportunity for women who want to take control of their

with panelists:

- **Roberta Blackman-Woods, Labour MP for Durham**
- **Anne-Marie Trevelyn, prospective Conservative candidate for the Berwick area**
- **Pamela Hargreaves, Deputy Mayor of Hartlepool**
- **Fiona Hall, Liberal Democrat MEP for the North East**

working lives especially through the use of technology. As with the issue of women in politics Roberta emphasised the need for education, this time to provide young people with the skills that are so essential in the work environment.

Maternity and Paternity Leave

Pamela summed up the dilemma for many people in that she is supportive of the concept, but accepts that the cost implications can be difficult for businesses, especially small ones. She sees more time flexibility as being the way forward. Anne-Marie also felt that flexibility is the key especially for female employees as they tend to appreciate the benefits of such a system and be more loyal than men. Fiona reminded us that the European Parliament is now more supportive of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). At one time large firms dominated policy making in Brussels, but now there is a growing acknowledgement of the role, problems and importance of SMEs.

Northern Ireland

Recently it has been announced that the Conservatives are to be associated with the Northern Ireland Unionist Party. Roberta, who comes from Northern Ireland, believes that it is up to the people of Northern Ireland to decide who their political representatives should be. Fiona reminded us that the Liberal Democrats had been working with the Alliance Party in Northern Ireland for some time.

The 'E' word

In the midst of MPs' expense revelations, inevitably our thoughts turned to the 'E' word, expenses. The panel were asked whether attention on politicians' private lives detracted from their good work or put people off politics. The universal feeling was one of shame about the situation. They all felt that there was an urgent need to reform the system and make it more transparent. It was with sadness that they agreed that people's view of democracy has been damaged by the revelations of the previous few weeks.

The time allocated for the session seemed all too short for what was a very lively and stimulating event.

Sue Brown, Past National President



Left to right: Roberta Blackman-Woods, Anne-Marie Trevelyn, Pamela Hargreaves and Fiona Hall



Ruth Tomlinson Award

Ruth Tomlinson CBE was the fourth president of BPW, in its silver jubilee year. The award advertised here recalls a remarkable woman. The Commission on the Status of Women began on 21 June 1946, to look at gender equality and the advancement of women. Funded as part of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it has moved on from initial concerns about the nationality of married women, forced marriages and voting rights, to overseeing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

In 1949, Ruth was the International Federation's representative on the UN Commission on the Status of Women held in Beirut in the Lebanon. As the national president at the time, Kathleen Armistead remarked that members had become part of a democratic process that was making history.

Ruth was awarded the first United Nations fellowship offered by our International Federation or indeed by

any women's group. As part of her 10-week United States visit she attended the Status of Women session in New York which followed up from Beirut and amongst other things addressed Ruth's questionnaire with its groundbreaking research into the lives of British women.

During the war, Ruth worked for the Ministry of Labour and joined Leicester club at its beginning in 1942. Although initially a teacher, Ruth became the first woman general secretary of a union and was well used to handling labour disputes and trade agreements. She was known for her "quick, puckish humour, wit and warm personality."

As well as spreading news about BPW throughout Argentina, Turkey, Greece and Germany she led the drive for members in the UK. When she handed over the president's role in 1956 membership stood at 17,523.

So work begun by Ruth Tomlinson all those years ago has grown in importance. This award recalls a fine human being and leading campaigner.

RUTH TOMLINSON MEMORIAL FUND

Registered Charity No. 275264

Do you know of any individual, male or female, who is suffering from physical handicap or disability and is challenged in their daily life in some way?

Would a grant or award of money or equipment help them to improve his or her changes of employment or enhance their quality of life?

If so, they may be eligible for help from the Ruth Tomlinson Memorial Fund.

Application is simple: write to BPW UK Limited's office explaining his/her disabilities and the reason for wanting a grant and the amount requested.

The application must be sponsored by a BPW member.

*Sue Brown, Chairman,
Ruth Tomlinson Memorial Fund*

Probus Women's Housing Society Ltd.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in London on Friday 22 May 2009. Three board members stood for re-election and three new board members were elected unopposed.

It was reported that the two Loan Stock issues during the year had been successful and that the Society intended to offer one Loan Stock issue per annum in future. The Society was in a strong financial position. There is currently one vacant flat at Hoylake and there had been a lot of renovation work done to that property during the year under review. There had been a short-term void at the Cambridge property.

Following a ballot for a new Society logo during the meeting, with a choice of it being in orange or green, the green one was the popular choice and it will appear on the Society's literature in future.

Judith Webb

BPW Representative

BPW Awards

June O'Dell Award

As part of its commitment to enable members to achieve their potential in their chosen career, BPW UK has the June O'Dell Award. This is an annual award of up to £500 given to assist members, with two or more years' membership of BPW, in the development of their skills and for further training in their chosen career. Alternatively it can be used towards training for a completely new career.

Application forms can be obtained either by contacting the BPW Office or via the website. The date for current applications to be returned to the BPW Office is 31 January 2010, which may seem a long way ahead, but will soon be upon us.

International Award

Members are invited to submit an application for the 2010 International Award, a bursary of up to £1,000 to enable a BPW member to carry out an international project or undertake an overseas visit of their choice. It must be completed during the period 1 January to 31 December 2010.

Applicants must have been a member of BPW for at least twelve months prior to the date of application and continue to be so in 2010. Applications should be made by 31 January 2010 on the official application form which is available from the BPW Office or via the website.



ELECTION TIMETABLE 2009-2010

Election timetable for Board Members

July 2009	Nomination forms available
24 July	Completed nomination forms for Finance Director received at The BPW Office
Mid-August	Voting papers for Finance Director to members
11 September	Voting papers for Finance Director received by National Returning Officer (those sent elsewhere would be invalid)
18 September	Result of election for Finance Director advised to members (results available from the BPW office by telephone if required earlier)
1 October	Finance Director takes office
11 January 2010	Completed nomination forms for Directors received at the BPW office
Mid-February	Voting papers for election of Directors to members
8 March	Completed voting papers for Directors received by National Returning Officer (those sent elsewhere would be invalid)
	Candidates notified

Please note: Voting times vary annually according to the date of the Annual General Meeting.

Nominations are invited for the following positions on the Board of BPW UK Ltd. With the exception of the National President, all other Directors who are eligible for a further term in office must be nominated and elected annually.

Position	Post Holder	Elected	Term of office	Eligible for re-election
National President	Sue Ashmore	May 2009	2 years	N/A
Finance Director	Gwenne Martin	October 2008	4 years	Yes*
Director	Pam Bellis	May 2009	2 years	Yes**
Director	Christine Nendick	May 2009	2 years	Yes**
Director	Linda Poole	May 2009	2 years	Yes**

* Served one year of a four year term ** Served one year of a two year term

Election timetable for Regional Teams

July 2009 mailing	Nomination forms to clubs
18 September	Completed nomination forms for Regional President and Regional Finance Officer received by Regional Administration Officer
5 October	Voting papers for Regional President and Regional Finance Officer to reach members
2 November	Closing date for receipt of voting papers for Regional President and Finance Officer to Regional Returning Officer (those sent elsewhere will be invalid)
23 November	Members notified of results
7 December	Completed nomination forms for Coordinators/Officers received by Regional Administration Officer
1 January 2010	Regional Finance Officer takes office Regional President takes office at the Regional Annual General Meeting
4 January	Voting papers for Coordinators/Officers to members.
8 February	Closing date for receipt of voting papers for Coordinators/Officers received by Regional Returning Officer (those sent elsewhere would be invalid) Candidates notified.

Please note: Regions with Annual General Meetings earlier than the end of February will need to adjust the above dates.



70 glorious years at BPW Leeds

One of the founder members of Leeds club in 1939 must surely be smiling down on present day members. Kathleen Armistead took over from Beatrice Gordon Holmes in 1946. Four years later, she had increased membership from 9,557 to 14,000. Women in BPW Leeds and in the wider membership joined Kathleen Armistead's campaign for equal pay – including rallies in Trafalgar Square and lobbying at the House of Commons.

Founder members of BPW Leeds were going to be 'movers and shakers' according to the local press. Seeing them at an inaugural dinner also 'gave the lie to that popular idea that working women are gawks and frumps.'

Certainly the president of BPW Leeds, Doreen Flanigan, and regional president, Jean Benericetti, celebrated in style at the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Leeds.



Ann Franckel (left) and Pamela Prior

Diary Dates



- 18 August Top Six meeting, Birmingham
- 5 September Visit to Burghley Horse Trials, organised by BPW Colchester
- 27 September Fourth Fun Golf Day at St Clere's Hall Golf Club, followed by 'Brush up on your French' session
- 9 October BPW Llandudno Dinner, Imperial Hotel
- 27 March 2010 National Final of the Public Speaking competition at Oswestry
- 23/24 April 2010 AGM and National Conference, Belfast

Celebrating 50 years' membership of BPW



Nikki Bennett-Willetts presented the BPW 50-year celebratory brooch to... (on the left) Evelyn Hudson, BPW Morpeth... and to Vicky Pryor, BPW Sittingbourne (collected on her behalf by Monique Lee).



Walk with BPW Scotland

BPW Scotland are having their annual long distance walk this year on St Oswald's Way from Seahouses to Hexham, starting on 13 September and finishing on 18 September.

The end of walk lunch is on Saturday 19 September at The Angel Inn, Corbridge, 12 for 12.30pm, and we would be pleased to see any members who would care to join us either for part of the walk and/or the lunch.

For further information or to book for lunch, please contact Maureen Craig on 01555 661891, or email maureencraig01@tesco.net. Numbers for lunch please by 5 September.

The Editor and Publisher accept no responsibility for articles, letters and other matter, including advertising, submitted and subsequently published in this magazine or mailed with it. Published material does not necessarily express the official views of BPW UK.

BPW News is published quarterly and is only available to members of BPW UK or through annual subscription of £18

Published by Business and Professional Women UK Limited. Company Registered in England & Wales No: 2882435. Registered Office: 23 Star Hill, Rochester, Kent ME1 1XF

Correspondence details: BPW UK Limited, 74 Fairfield Rise, Billericay, Essex CM12 9NU Tel: 01277 623 867

email: hq@bpwuk.co.uk www.bpwuk.co.uk
Editors: **Sue Ashmore** (sueashmore@hotmail.com) and Judith Mashiter (judith@mooredge.co.uk)
Designer: **Judith Mashiter** (judith@mooredge.co.uk)
Photo clipart © Hemera

Data Protection
Members are advised that their data are being held on computer and all data are being processed pursuant to the Data Protection Act. They are used only for the purpose of BPW business and all members are obliged to use any information about other members only for the purpose of BPW.