

A Room Full of Amazing Women



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"It was such an honour for me to have hosted the 2019 awards. Thank you so very much for having me. This room is a very special place to be. You look around and see bravery, resilience, intelligence, kindness, compassion, inventiveness, inspiration and humour. And that's just Lorraine Kelly. Seriously though, I wouldn't be anywhere else and I so enjoyed honouring some remarkable women while hearing from and talking to so many inspirational others"



Women like **Councillor Rakhia Ismail**, the first Somali born woman to hold the position of Mayor in the UK. Now Mayor of Islington, she arrived here as a refugee in the 1980's. and has also created Back2Basics, a charity supporting marginalised women; and solicitor and

senior civil servant **Elizabeth Gardiner CB** who serves as the First Parliamentary Counsel and is responsible for drafting all government Bills that are introduced to Parliament.

Another impressive first is provided by **Dr Julie Maxton BE** who having been the first woman in 550 years to be Registrar at the University of Oxford, has now become the first woman in 350 years to become Executive Director of the Royal Society. Julie is also an Honorary Fellow of University College Oxford, a Benchet of the Middle Temple, a Freeman of the Goldsmith's Company, and a Board member of Engineering UK, and the Charities Aid Foundation.

Then there's **Winsome Pinock**, an award-winning playwright, academic and dramatist who has become the first black woman to have a play performed at the



National Theatre. Responsible for producing and directing plays as well as cultivating writers like Winsome, we welcome **Lucy Davies** who was Executive Producer at the Donmar Theatre and founding Executive

Producer at the National Theatre of Wales before becoming the Director of London's Royal Court.



In the music world, **Chi Chi Nwanoku OBE** trained as a national 100m sprinter before taking up the double bass after a knee injury abruptly ended her athletics career. A founder member and principal

professor of music at the Royal Academy, Chi Chi founded Chineke! Orchestra-Europe's first orchestra made up of BAME musicians in 2015. Starting her music career much more recently is 21 year old **Jess Gillam** who made history in 2016 as the first saxophonist to reach the final of BBC Young Musician of the Year.



Another inspirational young woman is **Gabrielle Anne-Marie Mathews**. Still only in the 3rd year of her medical training to become a doctor, she has been selected as a member of the new NHS Assembly, the guiding coalition of leaders overseeing the NHS Long Term Plan (one of just 50 people). She is also a member of the British Youth

Forum and a young ambassador for the charity Step up To Serve which runs the #iwill campaign.

Stepping up to serve is something we see many of our guests doing and we're delighted to be hosting wonderful national leadership role models in **Carolyn Jones**, the Royal Navy Head of Media Operations, **Ruth May**, the highest ranking female in the Armed Forces, and **Baroness Evans**, the Leader of the House of Lords.



the UK's first Master Fishmonger, train driver **Kelly Dodd** and **Emma Roddy** who is a chimney sweep and accredited member of The Guild of Master Chimney Sweeps.

Social acceptance and inclusion is increasingly vital in society today so it's heartening to see so many of our guests dedicating their time to running projects which support those on the margins, give a helping hand to those who need a voice or mental health support, a place to be included or a practical helping hand to get in to work.



Alexandra Hoskyn, a social worker in Manchester, persuaded cafes in her local area to allocate a 'Chatter and Natter' table which anyone could sit at and chat with others. This beautifully simple idea, to help those struggling with loneliness, has not only grown around the UK but has now been adopted internationally too, earning her a well deserved Innovation for Ageing award.

Another simple but inspiring idea was cooked up by young dietician **Hannah Style** who persuaded her local Sainsbury's to help her provide regular meals for people in the local homeless shelter in a project called Feast. Hannah is now spreading the vision nationally with the help of a grant from The Evening Standards Dispossessed



Fund and one from the Women of the Year Foundation. **Maria Lenn** is Suiting and Booting vulnerable unemployed young men to help them back in to work.

Naomie Lea is campaigning for mental health support for young people and **Francesca**

Findlater is running Bounce Back which trains people in prison in construction industry skills so that they can find employment on release.

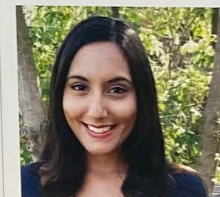
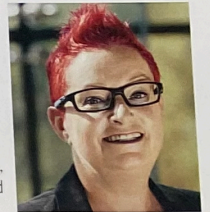


The Women in the room



In the field of science we have women leading very exciting projects and innovations. Working on the cutting edge of healing technology is **Karen Kirkby**, a Professor of Proton Therapy Physics, who is directing an exciting international proton research and innovation project to deliver direct patient benefits.

Dr Sue Black, a digital skills expert, social entrepreneur, consultant and international keynote speaker is Professor of Computer Science and Technology at Durham and champion for women in computing. A single mum of 3 living on benefits in a women's refuge at the age of 26, Sue is an amazingly inspirational and determined woman who is a fantastic role model for young women.



Reaching for the stars in science we have 'Rocket Woman' **Vinita Marwaha Madill** who is an advocate for women in STEM and is currently based at the European Space Agency where she is working on future human spaceflight projects as a Space Operations Engineer.

Coming back down to earth we're delighted to have with us the very green fingered **Jilayne Rickards**, one of the top new names at this year's Chelsea Flower Show, and **Anne-Marie Powell** who has designed two new gardens for



RHS Wisley's new HQ this year and is now busy designing Country File's Anniversary Garden at Hampton Court.

We wish we could say something more about everyone here, but there's definitely one more thing we want to say to all of you – and that is that the Women of the Year Lunch salutes and applauds each one of you for your achievements and your inspiration.

Many thanks to Jane Hanson for compiling these pages.