

**Women's Page Contributors to The Guardian**

(Polly Toynbee, Liz Forgan, Posy Simmonds, Jill Tweedie)

Audio Guide transcript

This was commissioned by the Guardian to celebrate the contributions to the paper of its feminist writers on the controversial women's pages in the 70s and 80s. Editors Mary Stott and Liz Forgan sit with cartoonist Posy Simmons and columnists Jill Tweedie and Polly Toynbee. Posy Simmonds, Mary Stott and Polly Toynbee reminisce about the sittings:

PT: 'We were 5 women who'd been quite prominent on the Guardian Women's Page at a time when the Guardian Women's Page broke away from the traditional mould. We were the first feminist women's pages on any newspaper. We were completely shocking to the world of women's journalism. Sitting on the far left of the picture is Posy Simmons who was a great star. She's a wonderful artist cartoonist. She wrote brilliant cartoons and I was very lucky because my column appeared above her strip cartoon and everybody turned to her first.'

PS: 'I'm sitting on the left of the painting and next to me on the sofa is Jill Tweedie. And it was very sad because she was dying of motor neurone disease while the painting was being done. While it was being painted lots of people and friends would drop in. So it was as though it was a sort of salon. I mean everybody knew she was dying and they all came to see her. And I can remember there was quite a lot of wine being drunk and we laughed a great deal I remember.'

PT: 'Everybody wanted to see Jill. Jill was such a charismatic figure. Everybody wanted to be with her. Everybody was drawn to her. She was so funny and clever and interesting and surprising and unpredictable. She was just one of those people everybody liked to around.'

MS: 'I'm Mary Stott and I'm on the far right of this picture. It's a great treasure to me because of course we haven't got Jill any more. I can't look at it without feeling sad because of course I was very fond of Jill and it was terribly sad to me that she died.'

PT: 'Mary Stott was really the first woman's editor who made that break. And she was the first person that Jill Tweedie went to work for and Jill was really the explosive writer about women's issues at a time when people just didn't write about the kind of things she wrote about.'

MS: 'She was really quite young – I've forgotten how old – in her 50s I think. And here I am 92 so she was quite a kid to me.'

PT: 'Then sitting on the sofa with Jill is Liz Forgan who became a woman's editor later. I'm the one sitting just behind Jill's shoulder leaning over the sofa as if I was kind of whispering in her ear.'

MS: 'And then my granddaughter she went with me to see the unveiling I think. And she said 'Gran you look very grumpy' and I said 'not grumpy darling, thoughtful'.'