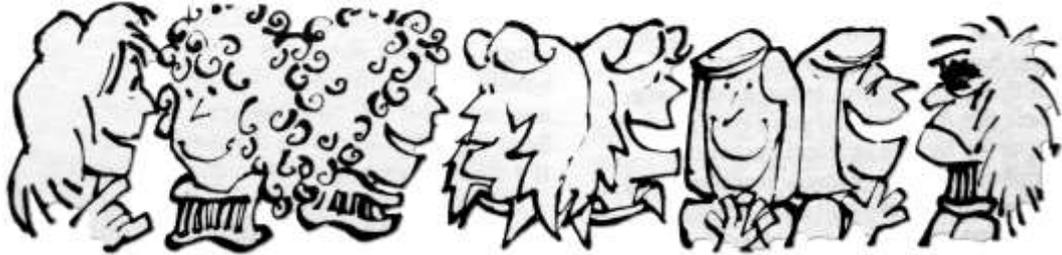


# Liberating Histories

An important aspect of the Liberating Histories project is recording the experiences of actual readers of feminist magazines, **people like you**. This is Laura's response.



## Introduce yourself...

**How/when did you first encounter a feminist magazine? How old were you, where were you living, who introduced you to the magazine/s?**

That would have been *Spare Rib*, I was 22, had recently moved to London after graduating from university, and I think I had probably read about the inception of SR on the Guardian Women's Page. It would have been the very first issue.

**How did it feel, reading a feminist magazine for the first time?**

I really can't remember very well - I had already been reading such feminist literature as was already available at the time, i.e. around 1970. So there would have been some familiarity with the ideas.

**Did you encounter feminist magazines through the women's movement, or the other way round?**

I think it was a back and forth - I certainly discovered women's groups and meetings through *Spare Rib* (and I think other publications), and then discovered other less mainstream-published magazines at various conferences.

**What features or aspects of the magazine(s) stand out to you most vividly/are most memorable? Did you have favourites? Dislikes?**

The personal stories - and then, after I had been reading *Spare Rib* for a considerable duration, that the same issues kept coming around again in rather regular recurrence. Some of them, when I look back, were perhaps a bit niche and inward-looking and focused on particular groups.

**How involved a reader were you? Were you a subscriber? Did you send in letters or listings?**

I can't remember whether I actually subscribed to *Spare Rib*, which was fairly readily available in newsagents, but I subscribed to others - which I probably found out about either at conferences, or in the listings in SR. Can't remember if I ever wrote in. There was one - I forget the title - it was a sort of news roundup and listings magazine, possibly for London? - sometime around 1980 or so I did respond to a call for volunteers but they seemed to want much more commitment than was going to work with also having a job.

**Did reading feminist magazines influence your politics or daily life? If so, how?**

As mentioned above, I joined local women's groups (1972-4, 1978-81) as a result of seeing them in the listings in SR - I was already defining myself as a feminist (in fact I would say I had done so since I first saw the term defined when I was aged 8 or so).

**As a reader of feminist magazines, did you feel part of a larger network or movement?**

Definitely - in particular during a period when I had moved away from the area where I had been in a CR group, to one where there didn't seem to be any feminist activity, they kept me feeling part of things, and informed about events that I could occasionally get to, also the opening of feminist bookshops.

## **Do you still read feminist magazines now? If so, are they print or digital?**

Occasionally when my attention is drawn to something or other, but not regularly - partly because a lot of them seem directed towards a younger generation, and partly because at my age, there's a sense of 'been there, done that, had those arguments 40+ years ago'.

## **Did your mother read feminist magazines?**

While my mother was in her quiet way quite a feminist, I don't think she did, except in the sense that there was sometimes a certain 'stealth feminism' in some of the mainstream women's magazines of the sixties.

## **Looking back, how much impact do you think feminist magazines had?**

In a time before the internet and social media, they were the way we found out about feminism (or 'women's liberation') and the various issues and the networks and the activities that were going on. I think maybe that's what I remember - that they gave a sense of a community out there even if one felt cut off from any actual community around one - more than anything to do with content, debates, etc.

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## **About the project**

Liberating Histories tells the stories of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) through UK feminist magazines and connects these stories to women's activism today.

## **Want to tell us your story?...**

We are collating stories of the women, like you, who read magazines like *Spare Rib*, *Red Rag*, *Outwrite*, *Mukti*, *Scarlet Women* etc. and the impact they had on their lives and attitudes.

If you would like us to include your story in our archive, [check out this page](#) on our website to find out how to get involved.