



girl up

**FEMINISTS
DON'T
WEAR
PINK**
and other lies
AMAZING WOMEN ON WHAT
THE F-WORD MEANS TO THEM
BY
harlett curtis

I PREFER A
Female
Lead

Feminist

PINK PROTESTER

With its endless skies and shifting sands and shingle, the Suffolk coast might seem an unlikely launch pad for a new young feminist movement but to Scarlett Curtis of Feminists Don't Wear Pink, Walberswick is home, writes **Anne Gould**

You might say that with her parents, her connections, her access to networks that most people will never reach, that Scarlett Curtis was always going to make her mark on the world. She's got a column in The Sunday Times called the Gen Z Hit List, she's written for or been written about in The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, In Style, Elle, Vogue and a host of publications besides. And in April – at the age of 23 - her first ever play is going to be staged at Ink Festival in Halesworth.

But with her shocking pink hair and campaigns about period poverty, feminism and activism and a massive social media following from across the world, Scarlett has created a movement that's very much on her own terms and reflects the world her generation are living in now.

Getting to this point though has not been easy – like many young adults she's battled with depression but in speaking out about what has happened to her has allowed others to do the same and helped people to understand the stress of growing up and being young in today's uncertain world. It's this and her determination to be open about subjects that have been unspoken and taboo that have already defined her as a thought

leader and influencer of her generation. Maybe it's not altogether surprising, considering her mother is the broadcaster and writer, Emma Freud and her father Richard Curtis is the film director and producer of Love Actually and Four Weddings and a Funeral.

Her writing and attitudes, she says, stem from her illness and depression – when she spent a lot of time reading works by feminists like Gloria Steinem, Audrey Lorde and Virginia Woolf and she loved what they were saying.

Unlike them, social media has enabled her to reach, connect and campaign on a wide variety of issues to a vast audience, encouraging 'activism' which could be as simple, she says, as recycling. "Thanks to the internet, the meaning of activism truly has changed. We can now mobilise en masse online and have a meaningful impact on the world when we activate ourselves. I believe that we can all be activists and if we just take simple, daily actions, we can all have an impact on the world."

Scarlett started The Pink Protest in early 2017 after becoming very involved with some grassroots feminist activism in New York

around the time of the 2016 election. "I came back to the UK and started the Pink Protest which is a community of activists committed to engaging in action and supporting each other. We are the home of the #FreePeriods movement, and exist in various mediums; from regular live events to online video content, to actual real-life protests".

A year ago the group organised a 2,000 person protest outside Downing Street and three months later the government gave £1.5 Million to address UK period poverty. So what of the epidemic of mental health and depression among young people? "I think the world has become more stressful and there are so many pressures on young people. Things like how expensive university is, how you have to be a success before a certain age. People are talking about depression more – there are a lot who have suffered for a long time and have never been able to say anything. The fact that we are more open about it now is amazing."

Personally, she says that she doesn't think she has fully recovered from depression because she still has bad days. "I do a lot of yoga – that really, really helps me. So does therapy and medication too." ►

About one and a half years ago she was approached to write a book about the young feminist movement. "I did not want to write a book myself I am far too young to do that, so *Feminists Don't Wear Pink* is a collection of writings from teenage activists to Hollywood activists and the profits go to a charity called Girl Up, offering training to girls across the world."

Her play at Ink (April 12-14) is something she was asked to do too. "There are five people who have been asked to write five-minute plays and this year the theme is Wellington Boots. I am not allowed to talk about it but it was a really fun and interesting thing to do and I'm really looking forward to seeing it."

She's been a regular at the festival over the last few years and is hoping that she may get the opportunity to do a Q&A session or some sort of panel opportunity at the festival to talk further about her ideas. "Hopefully by being involved it will encourage some more young girls to come along to the event."

Of course, Ink will also give Scarlett another reason to come "home" to Suffolk. "Walberswick has been the best thing in my life. I love it more than anywhere. If I had to choose between travelling to anywhere in the world and Suffolk I would choose to come home every time."

"What do I love about it? – it's the people, the sea and being part of a community like that." She says that as children they spent every holiday in Suffolk and she's still a regular weekend visitor too. "As a family, we went to New York for four years and it was really hard being away so when we used to come back to visit I'd spend more time in Walberswick than I did in London."

INFORMATION

scarlettcurtis.com
www.inkfestival.org

