

Women to watch

You may not know all their names but these women have shattered prejudices about age and sex. Philippa Kennedy hears how lateral thinking helped, not hindered, their careers

Beverley Aspinall, Managing Director

Judy Craymer, Global Producer

Louise Moore, Publishing Director

"Women are good in the retailing world because we love shopping"

Beverley Aspinall, 46, joined John Lewis as a trainee and later became Managing Director of Peter Jones, overseeing the store's makeover. She's now the Managing Director of Fortnum & Mason and is in charge of the store's major revamp. Her second husband is personal financial manager David Aspinall. She has a daughter Eleanor, 16, and a son James, 14.

"One of my first reports as a graduate trainee at John Lewis was from a manager who said I had 'no management potential'. I'd come from York University, which was a hotbed of feminism at the time, and suddenly I was loading vans!

The rebuilding of Peter Jones was a complicated job because of the size of the £100 million project. But we finished early and on budget. The Fortnum's job takes me to

a new level of responsibility. We are driving an atrium through the building and we're doubling the size of the food halls. I think women are good in the retailing world because we love shopping.

I work long days, but devote myself to the family at weekends. My only regret is that I should have taken more time out when I was younger. Once you have a mortgage and children, you don't do it."

"In publishing you can have the big job and the family life"

Louise Moore, 42, is Publishing Director of Michael Joseph (Penguin) and discovered authors Lisa Jewell, Caro Fraser, Adele Parks, Nuala O'Faolain, Marian Keyes and Jane Green. Married to John Bond of HarperCollins, they have three daughters: Nell, 10, Ella, eight, and Ruby, five.

"In publishing you can have the big job and the family life if

you focus. I leave on the dot and I can go home and read and edit.

My lucky break came when I was assistant editor at Methuen. I was talking enthusiastically about a book cover and was overheard by the managing director. I think he thought I had a real commercial bent and wanted to market the book I was talking about. He asked me to set up a new paperback list

called Mandarin. Then author Lesley Pearce sent me the manuscript of *Georgia* and I couldn't put it down. I bought it for £12k. She's now one of our top three authors.

Winning Editor of the Year at the 1999 British Book Awards was so pleasing because I was pregnant. All the others were men, whose books were literary rather than commercial women's fiction."

"Follow your dream and don't be rattled by negative people"

Judy Craymer, 47, is Global Producer of the hit musical *Mamma Mia!* She became assistant to Tim Rice and met ABBA's Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson, persuading them to make a musical that told a story using their songs. Judy mortgaged her flat to finance her idea and is now in the Top 100 Rich List. She's single.

"It took 20 years to get *Mamma Mia!* off the ground. Persuading

Benny and Bjorn to let me use their songs was the clincher. I had to raise a lot of money and persuade a lot of people that it would work when so many were telling me it wouldn't.

I was trying to get it up and running while doing my day job. I didn't think much further than opening in London, running for a couple of years and returning the investment. Now there are 11 productions all around the world,

with ticket sales generating more than \$8 million a week.

I have no family commitments. When you're in your twenties you imagine you'll get married, but things change. *Mamma Mia!* has brought huge rewards. Now I'm a bit selfish to share my life with someone.

My advice for other women is to follow your dream, listen to good advice, but don't be rattled by people being negative." >>>

FASHION: Beverley wears: black trouser suit, Caracère; white top, Beverley's own; shoes, Zara; ring, Swarovski. Louise wears: top, Shirin Guild; trousers, Marthe Francois Girbaud; pumps, Chloé; jewellery, not diamonds at Historic Originals. Judy wears: black suede jacket, Balenciaga; white crop jeans, Seven; black vest top, La Perla; shoes, Judy's own; watch, Chanel; bracelet, Lanvin; Donna Karan