

# Jane Humphries

## LYING FEMINIST OF THE MONTH



[J4MB](#) presents the December 2015 **Lying Feminist of the Month** award to [Jane Humphries](#), Professor of Economic History at the University of Oxford. On the *Today* programme on BBC Radio 4, during a discussion on 'feminist economics', Ms Humphries referred to 'the persistence of the glass ceiling'. The audio file of the discussion is on the J4MB YouTube channel – [here](#).

The glass ceiling – the feminist belief that men discriminate against women when making senior appointments – is a baseless myth (one of many, of course). On the basis of merit, we would expect women to occupy fewer than 5% of FTSE100 board positions. The evidence to back up this assertion is in footnote (2) on p.68 of the J4MB [2015 general election manifesto](#). Women currently occupy 25% of FTSE100 board positions, so they're already highly *over*-represented on those boards.

Far from there being a glass ceiling, the stark truth is that men actively advance women into senior positions, regardless of their aptitude for the positions. In 2010, soon after coming to power at the head of a Conservative-led coalition, David Cameron appointed Lord Davies of Abersoch – a *Labour* peer – to report on ways to increase the proportion of women on major corporate boards. One key recommendation in the ridiculous [Davies Report](#) (2011) was that if FTSE100 companies didn't 'voluntarily' increase the proportion of women on their boards from 12.5% to 25% by 2015, the government should consider introducing legislated gender quotas. The companies responded to the bullying by taking on more female directors, 96% of them as non-executive directors.

[Campaign for Merit in Business](#), an organization allied with J4MB, presented [evidence](#) to House of Commons and House of Lords inquiries in 2012, demonstrating a causal link between increasing female representation on corporate boards, and financial *decline*. So while the glass ceiling doesn't exist, it would be a perfectly rational response to the proven negative impact of female directors on corporate financial performance.