

# *The Sun* covers them up, ending topless tradition

LONDON, UK: Phwoar no more: British tabloid *The Sun* has quietly ended a decades-old tradition of putting topless women on page 3 in a setback for schoolboy fantasies. It is a move that was welcomed by women around the country...

## We haven't gone anywhere

Your guide to Page 3 online



The images might have disappeared from the newspaper, but they're still online, for anyone interested... (Images extracted from *The Sun* website)

*The Times*, which like *The Sun* is owned by billionaire media tycoon Rupert Murdoch's News UK, said on Tuesday that last Friday's edition of the tabloid was the last to feature a nude model after 44 years.

"*The Sun* will no longer feature topless models on page 3," *The Times* said, adding that the change had been on the cards since billionaire Murdoch last year described the custom as "old-fashioned".

Education minister Nicky Morgan, who is responsible for women and equalities in the cabinet, was quick to welcome the news.

"This is a long-overdue decision and marks a small but significant step towards improving media portrayal of women and girls," she said.

"I very much hope it remains permanent."

The tabloid is the country's best-selling newspaper and has a circulation of around 2.2 million.

It played down the story, with head of public relations Dylan Sharpe described it as "speculation".

"*The Sun* hasn't said either way what's happening to page 3," he told AFP.

## The big cover-up

Tuesday's edition featured a photo of actresses in bikinis frolicking on a Dubai beach on page 3, while Monday's edition had a model in lingerie.

A tag line at the bottom of the page on Tuesday invited readers to view the online edition for topless photos of "Lucy from Warwick", implying that nudity may have shifted from print to the web.

The pin-ups have featured in the newspaper since 1970 when 20-year-old German model Stephanie Rahn became the first "Page 3 Girl" and the feature became something of an institution for two generations of British males in line with the paper's macho swagger.

In an indication of the national import of the news, the question was even raised at a briefing by David Cameron's spokesman, who said the prime minister's view was that "editors' decisions are for editors".

The page, which launched the careers of models Samantha Fox in the 1980s and Katie Price in the 1990s, has also long been criticised as sexist.

An active petition to stop *The Sun* featuring topless models gathered more than 217,000 signatures.

But a poll by Yougov in 2012 found 61% of respondents in favour of keeping the pin-ups.

The No More Page 3 campaign welcomed the apparent change in a Facebook posting, calling it "truly historic news and a great day for people power".

The campaign was founded in 2012 by actress Lucy-Anne Holmes with support from groups including Girlguiding UK, Mumsnet and Breast Cancer UK.

Holmes reacted cautiously to the reports.

"*The Sun* hasn't suddenly decided that women say, think and do interesting and incredible things," she told BBC 2's Newsnight programme.

"It's still basically saying women are here for decoration but it's a step in the right direction."

## **No sex please, We're British - and it's Sunday**

*The Sun's* Irish edition had already banned topless girls in 2013, saying it had "a different audience" to the British edition.

*The Sun on Sunday*, which was launched in 2012 after Murdoch's *News of the World* was forced to close because a scandal over phone hacking, has never featured topless women.

There were also signs in recent months that *The Sun* was relenting to pressure.

Every Friday in November, the newspaper featured a footballer in boxer shorts on its page 3 to encourage men to test for testicular cancer.

On Tuesdays, its Page 3 Girl of the day also asked women to check for breast cancer.

It still ran into trouble last year, however, for an advert offering the chance to win a date with a Page 3 model as a prize in a fantasy football competition.

But model Jodie Marsh sent out a series of angry tweets lashing out at critics of the photos.

"I loved doing page 3, it was good money, I felt powerful, I was definitely in control," she wrote.

"Telling girls they shouldn't do page 3 is not being a feminist. Women should do whatever they want."

Source: AFP, via I-Net Bridge

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>