A Brief History of Women in Research and Innovation

1961 — America achieves human spaceflight thanks to the contributions of mathematician Katherine Johnson

1964 — Dorothy Hodgkin receives a Nobel Prize for uncovering the atomic structure of penicillin & vitamin B12

1967 — A postgraduate student, Jocelyn Bell Burnell, discovers the first radio pulsars

1983 — Sally Ride becomes the first known LGBT astronaut and the youngest American in space

1988 — Evidence for the existence of dark matter is discovered by the astronomer Vera Rubin

1992 — Mae Carol Jemison becomes the first African-American woman in space

2008 — Françoise Barré-Sinoussi receives a Nobel Prize for identifying HIV as the cause of AIDS

2009 — Ada Yonath becomes first Middle Eastern woman to win a science Nobel Prize

2013 — South African chemist, Tebello Nyokong receives a Lifetime Achievement Award

2014 — The Presidential Medal of Freedom is awarded to physicist Mildred Dresselhaus for her pioneering work on carbon science

21st Century & Beyond — Throughout history, women in science have done amazing things for human progress. From pioneering medicines to advanced engineering & tech, a woman's place is and always will be in STEM

1960 — Jane Goodall begins her +55 year study of wild chimpanzees in Tanzania

1956 — The atomic structure of DNA is captured by Rosalind Franklin, allowing identification of the double helix

1953 — Navy Rear Admiral Grace Hopper programmes an early proto computer, making coding history

1947 — Nuclear fission is discovered by physicist Lise Meitner

1944 — 'Queen of the Hurricanes', Elsie MacGill, begins an engineering career that will see her immortalised as a comic book hero

1942 — Chien-Shiung Wu disproves an accepted law of nature, revolutionising theoretical physics

1939 — Trailblazing electrical engineer, Caroline Haslett, is made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire

1929 — Actress & inventor, Hedy Lamarr, patents a radio-controlled defence system used to protect allied torpedoes

1916 — British forces begin using a fan, invented by Hertha Ayrton, to dispel toxic gas on the Western Front

C.2700BC — Birth of the first known female scientist, Merit-Ptah, later a chief physician in Ancient Egypt

1721 — Lady Mary Wortley Montagu introduces smallpox inoculation to the UK

1786 — Astronomer Caroline Herschel discovers the first of her 8 comets

1811 — Palaeontology history is made when Mary Anning discovers ichthyosaur remains in Dorset

1832 — Prominent sociologist, Harriet Martineau, publishes her first book on economic theory

1843 — The world's first computer programmer, Lady Ada Lovelace, publishes notes predicting the future of computers

1902 — Natural scientist turned author, Beatrix Potter, publishes her first book: The Tale of Peter Rabbit

1911 — Marie Curie becomes the first person to receive 2 Nobel Prizes, thanks to pioneering work on radiation

Science & Technology Facilities Council

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