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Girls gossip about radio award
 By *Phil Vinter*

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Anna Cookson, centre, with panelists from Oxford FM 107.9's Girls' Talk, which is up for a New York Radio Award

A radio show which flushes out the secrets of the gossipy conversations that take place between women in club and pub toilets, has been nominated for a top international award.

Girls' Talk on Oxford FM 107.9 has been shortlisted as a finalist in the best music/personality show category at the prestigious New York Radio Awards, which attract hundreds of entries from around the world.

The Sunday night show lifts the lid on exactly what women talk about when they disappear to the powder room together for a 'girly chat'.

Host Anna Cookson heads up the on-air 'girly team' which fields questions and comments on a wide variety of topical and often taboo subjects from female listeners.

In its first six months, the edgy two-hour show has dealt with issues ranging from breast cancer to sex in relationships.

Although the show is promoted as being "by girls and for girls", Ms Cookson said it had also attracted a significant number of male fans curious to find out more about the opposite sex.

She said: "There is not really a space for girls to chat and so this show gives them that opportunity. It is for girls by girls, although there are quite a few guys who listen and if they text in, then that's fine.

"Some people don't have a best mate they can turn to and we can bounce ideas around.

"We don't claim to be experts but we do get experts in if we are talking about a particular issue.

"One listener described it as a big girly sleepover for the whole of Oxford, where you pour yourself a glass of wine, sit back on the sofa and listen in."

Ms Cookson has up to four other "girlies" on the show each week to provide a variety of viewpoints on the issues discussed.

She added: "We've all worked hard to build up the show from scratch and I think it's a unique concept which is proving very popular."

Programme controller Ian Walker said he was delighted the show had been nominated for such a major award.

He added: "We have had a really good response since we launched it. Before that, I could not get the phones to ring, but now we get scores of calls every Sunday night.

"I came up with the idea for the show when I was sitting in a pub one night and a group of girls I was with disappeared off to the bathroom en masse. I thought 'what do they talk about when they are in the toilets?' and devised the show from that."

The show is on Oxford FM 107.9 on Sunday nights between 8pm and 10pm.

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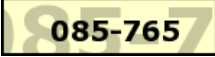
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