



GRASSROOTS

an original six part returning
drama series by John Godber

GRASSROOTS

Yorkshire's Friday Night Lights

Overview

Grassroots is a drama about community, about triumph over adversity and about hope for a better future. Set in a post Brexit and post covid world where levelling up is the watch word. In this world, Grassroots will put individual everyday challenges against the collective drive and ambition of a woman's rugby league team. Levelling up is a revolution but all revolutions have to start at the Grassroots.

The Precinct

Grassroots is set in Hull, Yorkshire's only maritime city. After years of neglect and cycles of boom and bust, this once great city is starting shine again with investment and growth. But with this comes an ever expanding gap between rich and poor. Set against this back drop is Hull Kingston Rovers ladies team. An eclectic group of young women who come together for a few hours each week, to put aside their everyday trials and tribulations to play the game that they love. The real precinct however is the worlds of our team, as they balance their real world jobs, family lives, hopes and ambitions with the close and empowering community that is Hull Kingston Rovers

The Tone

Grassroots will be a fun place to be. The drama will not shy away from real world issues, after all these young people are the future, and its huge burden on their shoulders, but rugby brings them together in a common goal and a real sense of team spirit. However, as with everything in life, it's not plain sailing. Women's Rugby like so much of women's sport is under represented and under-funded. Permanently in the shadow of the men's game, these women have to fight that much harder. Through this plucky eclectic band we laugh, cry and cheer them on to be the best they can be.

The Voice

Grassroots is about family. Family in the community, Family on the field and family in the home. Created and written by the Hull based multi award winning literary giant of a family, John Godber, Jane Thornton and new talent, Elizabeth Godber. Grassroots has a totally unique perspective in a world that is so close to their hearts. Grassroots has family through it like a stick of rock



GRASSROOTS

created by John Godber

written by Elizabeth Godber, Jane Thornton and Nicola Quilter.

A community is nothing without the team and the team is nothing without the community.

When an Australian super star sporting couple arrive in Hull, the explosion sparks a team and community coming together around the sport they all love. GRASSROOTS is a timely story of women who play the toughest sport on the planet, with an international spin.

Every Tuesday evening a group of disparate young women travel across Yorkshire's only maritime city to get fitter, stronger, and kick ass at Rugby League. Former martial arts expert Jessie has taken months to cajole this rag tag team of nail technicians, police women and ice cream vending piano players to come together, but some nights they are more interested in catching up, than catching the ball. They came looking for fitness, but they have found friendships and escape from their challenging domestic lives. This is more therapy than sport, a place to share their troubles, gather emotional support, keep secrets and build self esteem. There's more to the Robins Ladies team than simply training, a new community is being built, and some people don't like it!

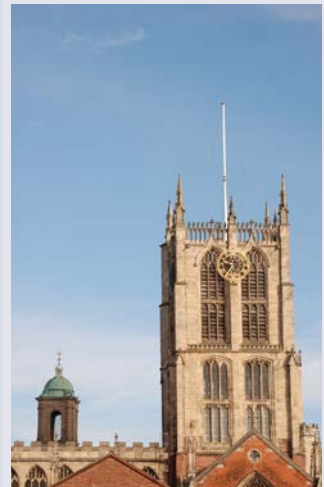
Kirra Kelly, an ex-professional Australian star of women's rugby league, has moved half way across the globe to follow her husband's rugby career, giving up friends, family and her own promise as a coach. A decision she may already be starting to regret as she deals with the culture shock of east Hull compared to Brisbane. Desperate to find

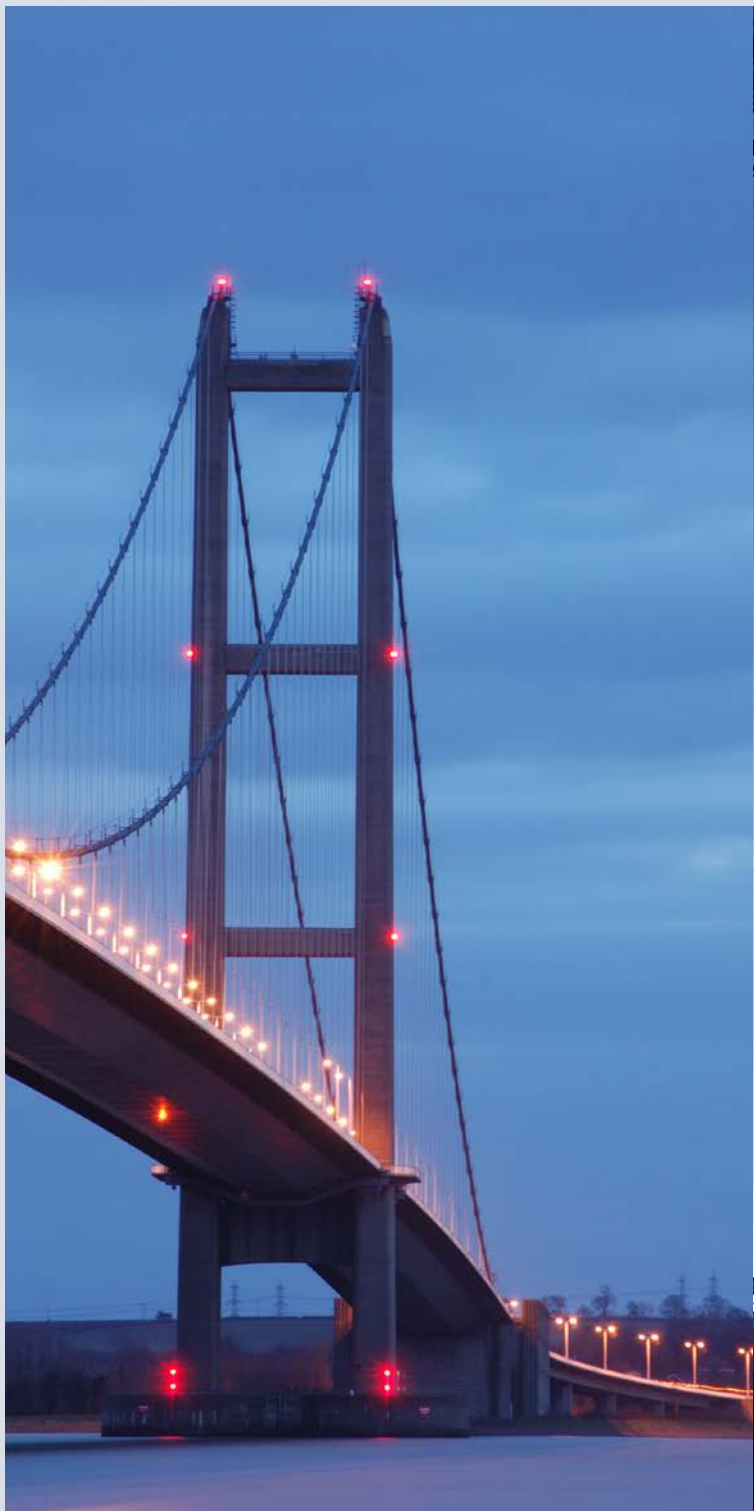
purpose in her new found home, Kirra persuades Jessie to let her help coach the Robins ladies. But not everyone welcomes the arrival of Kirra, she trains hard and that commitment is difficult to find when you are juggling school, work, families and hostility to women joining the game. For these twenty something's, this charismatic Aussie comes from a world of money, and professionalism they simply do not recognise. And for Kirra her demotion to grassroots training, makes her resentful and puts a strain on her already brittle marriage, as her husband Ashton, becomes a local star.

Over time Jessie begins to feel pushed out of a team she has worked hard to build, without it, what has she got? But these women are tight, no woman will be left behind. And gradually the whole team, Kirra and Jessie alike realise, that the true strength of a team is not how hard they train but how they work together and always have each others back.

No matter if they win or lose it all starts at the grassroots!

Australian writer Nicola Quilter will be part of the writing team of this exciting new show







Meet the Characters

THE NEW COACH

KIRRA KELLY

35. Former Jillaroos player, and Australian Cup winner. Regarded as one of the best female rugby players in Australia. Attractive, and bubbly, her sun kissed life and ability has given her a formidable confidence. What's disarming however, is that she is hugely likeable and self-deprecating, but has an acid wit. She is effortlessly straight forward, good company, and likes a beer! Worldly and travelled she may struggle with the claustrophobia of her new life in east Hull, but she is determined to try to make it meaningful. She is from a close family, who she misses. Her two brothers play in Australia, and she has a close bond with her mother, who noticed her athletic ability when she was six. Kirra and her husband Ashton, who will play out the twilight of his career in Hull, live in a small enclave of antipodean players and their wives near the Humber Bridge.

THE SEVENS TEAM

JESSIE (Captain)

25. Live-wire and ebullient captain; had school troubles but now training to be a plumber's assistant with her brother's firm. Lives with her boyfriend in Hull's Old Town. He is a personal trainer. She has a five-year-old daughter who she adores to a previous boyfriend. Powerful, but sensitive, funny but driven, and takes no prisoners, since she was a teenage judo competitor. From a large and off the rails family where she had to fight for everything. Shudderingly abrupt, but this covers a deep insecurity of not being good enough. She is proudly Hull born and sees it as her mission to grow the ladies team. Naturally athletic, she is a remarkable dancer and clubber, she is easily the life and soul of any party, and desperate to be a good plumber and an even better mother.

JADE (Prop)

19. Shy, lacks body confidence but loveable and tough, joined the team to get fit because it was cheaper than the gym. Lugubrious sense of herself, almost to the point of being destructive. Training to be a bus driver. From a family of long-distance coach drivers. Compulsive eater but an awful cook. Not academic, aggressive and dour, on the surface seems uncomplicated; but hiding social anxiety issues. Hull born. Father's recent blood clot is a concern, as is her Mother's smoking habit. Only child, loner seeking solace, the team are her only friends.

TAMMY**(Hooker)**

28. Full of vim, muscular presence, very charismatic; outwardly gay and proud. She works with donkeys on an East Yorkshire Coastal farm and at East Park, Hull. Part-time life guard too. Loves the outdoor life and simplicity, maybe living in the wrong time. Cares for her mother who has early onset dementia. Her older brothers are used car salesmen. She is a talented crafter up-cycling old furniture and selling it online. Currently without a partner, though hopeful.

NAOMI**(Prop)**

26. Highly motivated MMus student at Hull University studying music. Food bank volunteer who works in a Gelato bar part-time, talented pianist. Private and proudly independent, but secretly yearns recognition and friendship. She wants to leave the area, and her short temper can be a problem. Fearless and outspoken, she is a stalwart, even though she is dealing with an over bearing Security Guard father who is an ex-player and protective, he dislikes her involvement with the team. Hull born, and totally comfortable with herself in a widely Caucasian city. She is a bag of contradictions.

LOIS**(Scrum half)**

23. Fashion conscious, and stylish and cool. Bright but way-ward, easily lead. Funny, scatty and impish, utterly unreliable. Poor time keeper. Nail technician and beauty therapist. Loud mouth, opinionated and loveable. Party animal and social secretary. Her social life is dizzying: men, jobs, brothers, aunties, sisters, knock off clothing. Well connected to an undercurrent, of night clubs, pubs and Skip Hire firms. Love Island dreamer, wannabe social media influencer. Financially ambitious. Life time Hull Kingston Rovers fan! Aspirational. Serial blamer.

ALESHA**(Stand off)**

20. Focused over planner. Works in a Fish and Chip shop but wants to be a Firefighter, has been turned down twice, but still single minded. Prickly, frightening and unapproachable. Appears to lack empathy, but hides deep insecurities about her abilities, family life is difficult, she lives with her free-spirited sister after clashing with her mother's new man. Unable to drive she goes everywhere on her bike, and knows the city like the back of her hand. Father not on the scene.

ELLIE**(Centre)**

17. Great player and good company, but unreliable in all departments. Still at sixth from college, she is as passionate about musical theatre as she is rugby. Hull born, inveterate story teller, some say, liar. The estate she lives on has a hold on her, wants to go to University but doesn't feel like she can leave the estate. Moody, unpredictable, instinctive! From a broken marriage, brothers play rugby locally but have had some run-ins with the Police. They ridicule her abilities on the field.

KATYA**(Winger)**

20. Super confident Ukrainian born. Very fast girl who can't always understand the rules and is a little scatty. Assimilated into life in Hull but her Catholic parents live in another world. She has taken to the clubbing life in the city and sees herself as more native than the locals. She works and lives above the family shop, with her parents. Her A levels grades were poor so she missed out on a University place, and feels like the family failure especially since her brother is studying Chemistry at Leeds University.

SOPHIE**(Sub)**

24. Hull born. Desperately trying to shed weight. Short sighted, works in the warehouse at Asda. Drives a fork lift, shifting pallets. Hopelessly optimistic despite dire financial circumstances. Fascinated by fish and the sea, and local history. City of Culture volunteer member for cultural events which she supports enthusiastically. Totally committed. Lives with her boyfriend who she met at Asda. She is close to her Grandfather an ex- trawler-man. She has dyed hair, piercings and an alternative fashion sense. Huge Manga fan.

The major characters from the parent club who facilitate the girls' team:

TOM

50s. Sport Science Masters graduate, likeable and roguish, looks unapproachable at twenty stone, though extremely sensitive. Unlikely advocate for women's rugby league, employed as development officer for the parent club. Also, unofficial protector of the girls when necessary. Vast knowledge of rugby trivia. Woke, excellent snooker player, perhaps secret online gambler. Tragic romantic, worships every member of the squad. Hull born.

SHAUN LOWE

49. Owns the parent Rugby Club. Hull born, read law at Hull University. Self-made, wealthy. Had aspirations to play. Second marriage. Charismatic and attractive solicitor. Runs large successful legal firm with offices on the Marina, owns a yacht; runs a charity for the underprivileged in the city. Charming Stoical but caring, hard but fair. Business first however. Lives in the leafy west Hull villages.

DONNA

55. Ex-Police woman. First Aider. Teaches First Aid in Hull schools, a mother figure for the team. If the team have a problem Donna will sort it. Divorcee, who has had no children.

ASHTON KELLY

33. Former Brisbane Broncos Prop. Highly regarded player, eternal optimist and occasional man-child. Doesn't take life too seriously, rugby is in his blood. Easy going and always up for a laugh which can be grating in times of seriousness. A glass half-full type of person.

Other episode characters include family, parents and friends which create the community the girls live in.



THE WRITER TEAM

John Godber

John Godber OBE is a BAFTA winning TV writer and playwright whose plays continue to be performed all over the world. Over time he has worked with Euston Films' Eddie Joffe, for three years with Anthony Minghella on Grange Hill, two years with Sir Phil Redmond one establishing Brookside and with Emmy Awardwinning Sita Williams, on Granada TV's Crown-Court. He wrote Blood Sweat and Tears - about World Judo Champion Karen Briggs, for BBC TV, Play for Today directed by Nick Renton and wrote and directed Up N Under for Entertainment Film Distributors. He has won two BAFTA's for his work in children television in 2005 for a film produced by multi Children's BAFTA winner Hilary Durman. Since then he steered Hull Truck Theatre Company into a £15 million pound new theatre in the centre of Hull which he helped design, and was instrumental in Hull being awarded City of Culture status in 2017, he received an OBE for his services to the Arts in 2018.

Jane Thornton

Jane Thornton is a playwright, director and actress who has lived in Yorkshire for sixty years. As an actress Jane specialised in physical roles on both stage and TV. She was taught Judo by six times World Judo Champion Karen Briggs for the BBC play for Today, Blood Sweat and Tears, and appeared opposite Sean Bean in My Kingdon For a Horse for BBC TV. As a theatre director she has worked on the West End, Barcelona and Belfast. She is author of many popular plays and adaptations which have been performed world-wide. In 2005 she won two BATFA's for a film made in Hull for BBC Childrens Television. She has also written for Channel Four and for BBC 1 in Bloomin' Marvellous, a sit-com for Sarah Lancashire, and helped develop the BBC 2 series Chalkface produced by Chris Parr. She was awarded a D.Litt for her contribution to the arts from Hull University in 2022.

Nicola Quilter

Nicola Quilter is an English-Australian director and screenwriter living in London. She has a development deal for her TV series, COMBUSTIONE, with StoryFirst and has been commissioned by them to write the Pilot and shape a new series, Out Of Time, for Lord Michael Dobbs (House of Cards). She is also working on a political thriller set in the Middle East with Canadian showrunner Ian Weir. Nicola wrote, directed and produced TREASURE, starring Samantha Bond, for the BBC's Culture In Quarantine. Her script DISC made top 10 on The Red List (USA), was a finalist in We-screenplay scifi competition, selected for JETS and signed to Global Genesis USA. Nicola also works as a script consultant and is on the board of Euroscript and has worked on many scripts in LA, Bollywood, the UK and Australia. In a former life, Nicola was a resident character on HOME & AWAY, has appeared in shows for the BBC in Radio and TV, Channel 7, Channel 9 Australia and Sydney Theatre Company.

Elizabeth Godber

Elizabeth Godber is a 28-year-old playwright, poet and screenwriter born and bred in Hull, East Yorkshire. A graduate from Hull and Leeds Universities she has recently adapted The Comedy of Errors for the new Shakespeare of the North theatre. She is a product of Channel Four's Radom Acts programme and the BBC upload programme. She is also a slam poetry winner, and was recently broadcast on BBC Radio 6 with her piece Forget Me Not. Along with running one of the UK's only dementia friendly theatre companies, she liaises with the Universities of Yale, Stanford and Delaware on her Ph.d where she focuses on marginalised female writers within the canon.



To keep the Australian storylines fresh and authentic we will be working with a brilliant Australian writer Nicola Quilter. We will also be working with an experienced and exciting female Australian director for the opening episode and the casting for the key role of KIRRA KELLY the all important coach will be handled by an Australian casting director.

CAST



Kirra
Eryn Jean
Norvill
(attached)



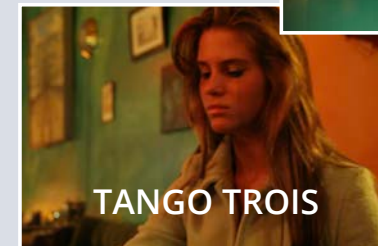
Ashton
Josh Helman
(attached)



Tom
Mark Addy
(attached)

DIRECTOR

Approaching great Australian Director Gracie Otto



Behind the scenes

Grassroots is set in Hull and is about Hull. John Godber is passionate about supporting local creative talent through his theatre projects. It is the producer's intention to extend this ethos through training and empowering of local talent both on and off screen. Grassroots is a story about a community and we want that community to be reflected in every part of the project.



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