



PRESS RELEASE: 27 January 2025

INSPIRATIONAL HARROGATE WOMEN HIGHLIGHTED FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2025

Past and present inspirational Harrogate women are being brought to new audiences as plans are underway to celebrate this year's International Women's Day (IWD) on 8 March. Harrogate has many inspirational women, and thanks to a new local partnership between Harrogate Film Society, Harrogate Town AFC and Soroptimist International of Harrogate and District, a year long programme of events is being planned rather than just a single day.

As a pre-launch event, Harrogate Film Society will be screening ***Copa '71 The Forgotten Women's World Cup*** at Harrogate's Odeon on Monday, 3 March. It will be introduced by Sarah Barry Chief Executive of Harrogate Town AFC and Kate Donan, Head of Women's Football.

Paula Stott Chair of Harrogate Film Society said: "We are very excited to be showing this wonderful documentary on the big screen and we are very grateful to Sarah Barry and Kate Donan for coming along to introduce it and answer questions afterwards."

The first Women's World Cup was held in Mexico City in 1971 - twenty years before the first official FIFA's Women's World cup. Telling its story, ***Copa '71*** was first released in cinemas last year and features the pioneering women - some would say the Forgotten Lionesses - who took part. Sadly, this historic event had been written out of sporting history - until now.

At that time, female footballers were used to being obstructed, overlooked and ridiculed at home. They played on park pitches to handfuls of spectators. So the players were unprepared for the reception they received in the tournament's host country. A tournament that was witnessed by record crowds: more than 110,000 attended the final between Mexico and Denmark, the biggest crowd for a women's sporting event to date.

The full programme of the local IWD 2025 events entitled ***Women Winning*** will have a strong focus on Harrogate women and those connected with the wider district who have made it in all walks of life including the arts, business, education and sport together. There will also be an ancillary programme of exhibitions, films and talks.

Christine Anderson, President of Harrogate Soroptimists, said: "IWD has been celebrated for well over a century but its main message has never wavered, it is used to reflect on the extraordinary accomplishments of women."

Harrogate's inspirational WW2 veteran 101 year-old Sheila Pantin will launch Harrogate's International Women's Day when she will be 'In Conversation' at a free to attend event at St Peter's Church at 2.30pm on Friday, 7 March 2025. As well as being one of a handful of women physical training instructors during the war, Sheila was one of the first British service women to enter a German concentration camp in April 1945. Once demobbed, Sheila became a pioneering PE teacher.

For full details of ***In Conversation with Sheila Pantin and Copa '71*** and tickets visit <https://www.harrogatefilmsociety.org/women-winning>

Media contact: Lynne Mee email: mee.lynne2@gmail.com mobile 07702 313776.

