



HERE COME THE GIRLS!

WHAT does it mean to be a woman today?

Wigan has a long and proud history of strong, intelligent and independent women.

Legend has it that Wigan women were the first to wear trousers instead of skirts while working at the top of Wigan's famous mines.

But do women in the borough still wear the trousers today? Do they still feel proud and strong to be of the fairer sex?

Girls across Wigan and Leigh attended a special day at Rosebridge High School on March 7 to mark International Women's Day.

Hordes of young women aged 12 - 25 came to the free event to join in discussions asking why women don't get paid as much as men in professional sports, and what would they change if they were Prime Minister.

An active highlight of the day were the dance and drama sessions run by Ali Khan from The Big Comedy Shop.

Herself a stand up comic, Ali led the girls through amusing warm ups and taught them how to put together their own comedy sketches.

Within half an hour the girls were brimming with confidence performing their skits in front of the groups.

Fifteen year old Jessika Longshaw, a Lowton High School pupil, said: "Today

has been great. I really enjoyed the drama workshops because I love drama and I want to be an actress."

The Big Comedy Shop also performed a play about sexuality entitled Cathy.

Later, Mayor of Wigan Cllr Rona Winkworth also dropped in, providing her own inspiration to the young women.

Lowton Girls Group came along and gave everyone a Fairtrade banana to mark the work they have been doing to promote Fairtrade Week.

Zara Manoehoetoe, 17, said: "We've just been on a residential trip to London and went to the Fairtrade headquarters.

"When we came back we did an event at Lowton High School and we've also done an event at Manchester Uni to promote Fairtrade.

"This year they are trying to break the record for people eating Fairtrade bananas, so we ordered 150 of them to bring along and give out today."

With so many young women coming to mark the event, have fun together, make new friends and share their knowledge on things like Fairtrade, it's clear women across Wigan Borough know a thing or two about putting their best foot forward.



Natasha Harris, 18, from Platt Bridge,
says: "My child makes me proud. Being able to carry her for nine months was amazing and now she is totally dependant on me. Women also do a lot of work inside and outside the home that they are not given credit for. Blokes take a lot longer to mature."



Jessika Longshaw, 15, from Lowton,
says: "My mates. Girls definitely have more best mates. Lads seem to hang around on their own a lot more, whereas girls will have a bigger group of friends."



Anna Hule, 13, from Lowton,
says: "Girls are less aggressive than boys. Girls are much nicer and more understanding. I think as a girl you have a lot more friends who stick together."



Katie Taylor, 18, from Bickershaw,
says: "I am proud of my son. He has made me grow up a lot. Girls have better mates. Lads always seem to change their mates and end up fighting, whereas girls stick together a lot more."



Danielle Round, 18, from Platt Bridge,
says: "My child - Terrence. I got pregnant at a young age and it was difficult, but now it just makes me proud that I have created him. And I look after him all by myself and in my own home - that makes me a proud mum."



Jackie Perkins, 15, from Leigh,
says: "Girls are just better. They are much more sophisticated and mature. Girls are a lot smaller than boys and they do say that good things come in small packages."

What makes you proud to be a woman?

