

PRESS RELEASE

Dulwich Hamlet FC vs VCD Athletic
Celebrating International Women's Day
Saturday 7 March 2015, KO 3.00pm



International Women's Day

Dulwich Hamlet will be celebrating International Women's Day on Saturday 7 March (KO – 3pm) during the home game versus VCD Athletic. The day will be an opportunity to celebrate the contribution that women have made to Dulwich Hamlet and our local community. South London girls and women's football teams will be invited to attend the game for FREE. The game will also be attended by successful female football journalists and bloggers.

Dulwich Hamlet has always prided itself in ensuring that Champion Hill is a ground that ALL are welcome. The late Pat "the rattle" Mitchell was a legendary figure at the Hamlet. She was a lifelong fan and jointly ran the supporters coach to away games for many years. Fiona Scurlock, Dulwich Hamlet Supporters' Trust Board member, recalled "I saw Pat the first time I came to Dulwich. You could hear her voice and rattle as soon as you walked in. I remember being pleasantly surprised that a woman was leading the vocal support". In 1995, when Pat was asked about how she would improve life in Southwark, she said that she would "bring different people together to settle their differences." Well said Pat!

Despite role models like Pat, sexism is still prevalent and not tackled sufficiently by many football clubs and institutions that govern our game. You just have to look at the media over the last few years for high profile incidents bringing football into disrepute. As long as this behaviour is tolerated, then the game will not change.

Hamlet fans have been very proactive in tackling discrimination in the game. Fans have stamped out sexist chants on the terrace, and have even revised some songs with amusing lyrics that everyone can sing along to. The many female fans attending games shows how welcoming the atmosphere is at Champion Hill for all.

Claudia Jukes, head of sponsorship & charity liaison at Dulwich Hamlet, said "We have made it clear this season that we are not just campaigning against discrimination, but are actively encouraging ALL of our community to attend our games. The anti-homophobia friendly versus Stonewall FC was testament to this, and the free ticket offer to new LGBT fans that followed. We are therefore delighted to continue to underline the message that Champion Hill is a great place to come for women by supporting International Women's Day. Come and be part of our community."

Mel Hughes, a regular fan, said "I've been coming to Champion Hill for over 10 years and have always been made to feel welcome by the club staff and fellow fans. I am therefore really pleased that the club are providing free tickets to local girls and women's football teams. The Rabble is for ALL – no matter your gender, sexuality, race, ability or creed."

Notes to editors

1. Dulwich Hamlet FC is a football club in the Ryman League Premier Division (3 divisions below the Football League). Attendances rose by over 36% last season. More and more fans are being attracted to non-league football as a result of being priced out of league football. New fans to Dulwich Hamlet FC have been amazed by the standard of football on offer from manager Gavin Rose at Champion Hill. Dulwich Hamlet FC has become known in non-league for circles for playing passing and attacking football. Fans have also been flowing through the gates attracted by the vibrant colour and noise created by "the Rabble" behind the goal.

2. The club is fully committed to working with, and reaching out to, the local community to build the support base. The club is proud to lead the way on initiatives such as today in non-league football, and are pleased to work alongside the Dulwich Hamlet Supporters' Trust on these initiatives. The "Rabble" welcomes ALL to Champion Hill, and has a firm self-policed stance against any sexist, homophobic or racist abuse.

3. 2014/15 has marked a proactive campaign at Champion Hill to not just be against homophobia, but to encourage more LGBT fans to the club. The campaign started in September 2014, when the Supporters' Trust approached manager Gavin Rose and the first team for their assistance. Hamlet consequently became one of the first non-league clubs to support the Rainbow Laces Day initiative and wore the laces in an FA Cup tie against Worthing. A grant was then obtained from the anti-discrimination Fare network to produce two Dulwich Hamlet and Altona 93 anti-homophobia banners, one of which is on permanent display behind the Dog Kennel Hill end of the stadium, with the other was taken to our sister club, Altona 93, in Hamburg.

4. International Women's Day is celebrated annually on 8 March, thousands of events are held throughout the world to inspire women and celebrate achievements. A global web of rich and diverse local activity connects women from all around the world ranging from political rallies, business conferences, government activities and networking events through to theatre performances and fashion parades. And now, at a football game! More can be found here – www.internationalwomensday.com.

5. The Dulwich Hamlet Supporters' Trust is an independent, democratic, not for profit organisation. We want Dulwich Hamlet FC to be a leading example of a financially sustainable football club that is owned by the fans and has a secure long-term home in East Dulwich. More information can be found on the Trust at – www.dhst.org.uk.

6. Pat "the rattle" Mitchell was a lifelong fan of Dulwich Hamlet. Sadly, Pat passed away in May 2013 aged 89. The following is an excerpt from the Southwark News in 1995, which clearly demonstrates her commitment to the club.

**SOUTHWARK
PEOPLE**

**PAT
MITCHELL,
DULWICH
HAMLET
SUPERFAN**



A dinner and dance at the Hamlet after a good game.

What is your favourite food?
Steak.

Where is your favourite holiday spot?
We once had a lovely holiday in Austria.

What was your first job?
I've always been a housewife.

Do you have any pets?
Not at the moment. I love all animals except cats.

If you were stranded on a desert island what object would you want with you?
A big picture of all the Dulwich Hamlet players.

What would you do if you won the lottery?
Give half to Dulwich and half to my family.

Where is your favourite place in Southwark?
Champion Hill.

What makes you angry?
Lies.

What do you like about Southwark?
It's got the best football team in the world.

How would you improve life in Southwark?
Bring different people together to settle their differences.

Are you married? Any kids?
I'm married to Ron and we have two children, John and Susan

Where and when were you born?
At Guy's Hospital over seventy years ago. I'm not saying exactly when.

How long have you supported Dulwich Hamlet?
About fifty years. I can't say exactly how long, but it seems like my whole life. I hardly ever miss a game, home or away.

Who is your favourite player?
Dave Darvill, the goalkeeper who played in the sixties. But Frank Murphy's brilliant too.

Have you ever had a nickname?
They call me 'The Rattle'. I've got a rattle

which I use at the football.

What is your favourite film?
I haven't been to the pictures in years.

What is your favourite TV programme?
Eastenders.

What music do you like?
Opera and ballet music. 'Swan Lake' is my favourite.

Who is your ideal date?
My husband Ron. He's wonderful.

What are your hobbies?
Dulwich Hamlet. I haven't got time for anything else.

What is your favourite drink?
Half of lager.

What is your favourite pub in Southwark?
I don't go to pubs, just the bar at Champion Hill.

What is your idea of a good night out?

7. More information can be found on the official website - www.dulwichhamletfc.london and independent fan website - www.dulwichhamlet.org. Contacts - Claudia Jukes (Sponsorship & Charity Liaison, Dulwich Hamlet): 07905 444688; Mishi Morath (Community Development, Dulwich Hamlet Football Committee): 020 7525 0055; and Duncan Hart (Dulwich Hamlet Supporters' Trust spokesperson): 07812 366730.