'Women driving the new economy' and where better to explore this theme, than in the enterprising city of Newcastle upon Tyne.

The Royal Station Hotel played host to delegates from Business and Professional Women UK (BPW UK) this weekend. They were joined by the BPW International President Jasmin Darwich (Mexico) and International Vice President Amany Asfour (Egypt).

The Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor Hazel Stephenson formally opened the conference with a stirring Civic Welcome extolling the virtues of the city, the influence of local women in education, for example Dame Eleanor Allen, in politics, Kathleen Brown who strove to achieve women's suffrage 100 years ago, and adding that she herself is a second generation Lord Mayor.

Conference welcomed today's dynamic women equivalents. Nikki Gott inspired delegates on her challenging career in today's ever changing economy, while Emily Cox represented Virgin Money and presented statistics on the 'glass ceiling', and the 'permafrost' just below it.

Lynne Hobson explained the workings of parliament and encouraging young women, who traditionally don't vote, to exercise their hard fought for, given rights. This is particularly relevant with the recent announcement of a 'snap' general election, which will take place on the anniversary of suffragette, Emily Wilding Davison's death.

On an international theme, Dr Manizha Hadi gave the perspective of today's Afghani women still facing ignorance around sexual health and cultural barriers to seeking medical assistance. These issues were echoed by Sarah Miller (Millin Centre) and Jo Curry (Changing Lives) the difficulty of vulnerable women in starting and growing their own businesses.

Headmistress of the Newcastle High School for Girl's, Hilary French, showcased the continual fund raising activities supported by the 1,100 pupils and staff, and the ways of encouraging young women to make their own decisions about their career pathways.

New and existing members look forward to celebrating 80 years of BPW UK in 2018.