



MISS WILLIAMS AND HER STAFF C.1938

School of Thought

'From this place draw true inspiration' (school motto)

Josie Thurston visited Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School recently in the wake of their centenary.



Words: Josie Thurston Photographs: Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School

Walking up to the school's main entrance you cannot fail to be impressed by the sheer grandeur of this beautiful building. One hundred years on, time has been kind to the exterior of this educational institution, however, as I arrived I was met by several pupils dressed as musketeers, an amusing contrast - but more about that later.

Built at a time when little emphasis was placed on girls' education, in fact, the idea had been scotched a mere twelve years earlier (the suggestion was only



made at the time in order to net additional fees for the Headmaster of the existing Grammar School for boys), a school for girls became almost an historical event.

Life was far removed from the classes of today, with a full-time staff of just four the emphasis was on spreading yourself over several disciplines. Quite often pupils would have the same teacher for Latin as you would for sewing.

The war years brought about quite a change for the girls and teachers, who had to combine lessons with 'Raid Drills'. Much of



TODAY AT KESTEVEN AND
GRANTHAM GIRLS' SCHOOL

the land in the school grounds was turned over to growing produce and the building was reinforced with stronger walls and sandbags everywhere.

The war also brought about changes to daily routine as The Camden School for Girls was evacuated to share the building. 'Operation Double-Shift' as it became known, meant splitting the lessons into two parts of the day – The Kesteven and Grantham Girls being taught in the morning and the London girls in the afternoon.

During this period in history, the

Butler Act of 1944 turned the education system on its head. The aim of this was to provide education for all, which, whilst in principal was encouraged and positively welcomed as it allowed for non-scholarship or fee paying families to enrol their child into the education system, there were drawbacks for the school itself. There had been a long running Kindergarten in operation at the school which was forced to close and any extra curricular facilities such as music or dance lessons had to cease. This was an upsetting



MR. BURKS



THE MODERN SCIENCE LAB



LADY MARGARET THATCHER UNVEILS A PLAQUE MADE IN HONOUR OF HER BECOMING THE PRIME MINISTER

event at the time as the school had rapidly become successful in these areas and even performed in The Queen's Hall, London.

Just prior to this event, a rather stubborn but highly successful pupil entered the classroom. Margaret Roberts became a pupil from 1936 to 1943 and was later to step through the doors again in 1960 as the newly appointed MP for Finchley, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, as a guest speaker.

Mrs Thatcher's father had a heavy influence on the school, still remaining the longest serving School Governor. As a mark of

respect for his services to the school, a new assembly hall was built and named in his honour.

Leaping forward to modern day, the relatively new Headmaster, Mr Burks, has thoroughly grasped the ethos of the school and truly embraces the school motto. His enthusiasm for ensuring that the pupils receive the best possible education in an environment that is enjoyable and will serve as a platform for the real world is highly evident. The team of staff on board today share his vision and the results reflect this.

Returning back to my original

observations of the school, there was a reason for the girls being dressed in such unusual attire. The school participates in literature days and the younger pupils are encouraged to get into character! The school is very proactive and enjoys seeing the successes of the World Challenge, the regular exchange programme and the numerous sporting and musical achievements.

Whilst the building may have grown and fashion changed. The school remains a high-achieving institution with many traditions of the past still standing.



THE OLD GYMNASIUM



SCIENCE IN THE EARLY YEARS



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