



NOTTINGHAM GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Experts in educating girls from 4-18 years

Leading. Learning. Loving it.

NGHS CELEBRATES 140 YEARS PIONEERING GIRLS' EDUCATION

SOLID FOUNDATIONS

Nottingham Girls' High School is marking its 140th anniversary, celebrating its impressive history and promising future. A year of festivities is planned which began with the school's annual Celebration and Awards Evening at Nottingham's Albert Hall, an event which recognised the incredible academic achievements, sporting success and community service of its GCSE and A Level students.



Before the 1870s, when the school was established on Oxford Street, schooling for girls was predominantly fixed by social class and there were limited opportunities for working class girls to receive an education past their primary school years. In 1871, Maria Grey, an educationalist and writer, proposed the creation of a national movement which would promote women's education, demanding that girls should have access to schools that would be places "not only of instruction but of education in the full sense of the word".

The proposal led to the formation of what is now The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), the UK's leading network of

24 independent girls' schools and two academies across the UK. Nottingham Girls' High School was the sixth of these schools to be founded in 1875, with just 34 students. Now, it has a student body of over 900, the largest in the GDST, and is Nottingham's only independent day school for girls aged from four to 18.



PIONEERING HERITAGE

Searching through the archives, the school's history is peppered with moments that broke with tradition and the stereotypes of the times, paving the way for girls to gain greater equality with their male counterparts.





In 1881 the school established a football club for its students which provoked much debate about its suitability. Some felt that football was 'too dangerous for young girls' and frowned on them 'imitating the pursuits of men'. The school stood by its decision however and the football club remained a popular activity amongst its students.

In 1888, a gymnasium was built after students petitioned for the same standard of physical education as boys, publishing this excerpt in a school newspaper: "It has been allowed at length that a girl may distinguish herself in Mathematics as well as a boy...but it is not yet allowed that rowing is as fit and proper an exercise for a woman...but women can row and girls ought to have gymnastics".



Strides were also taken in the sciences. The first purpose built laboratory was constructed at the school in 1899, with chemical working benches to accommodate nearly 30 pupils, a fume cupboard, a muffle furnace and "all that the scientific heart can desire". Student

Mary Browning, eventually went on to become the first woman in England to obtain a Doctorate in Physics at London University in 1922.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914 inevitably meant that school activities gave way to war work of various kinds. The school staff also dedicated their service to the war effort, including French Mistress, Miss Margaret McFie, who lent her service in 1915. Margaret spent the war years at St Dunstan's, and then in Serbia, Corsica and Bizerta - she was one of very few women to be decorated with the Order of the White Eagle, a wartime merit for her work in Serbia.



In 1922 the school opened its doors to girls from state primary schools in the form of scholarships. At the same time, it introduced a mandatory school uniform so that there could be no distinction of wealth amongst students.

The threat of war in September 1939 meant the school, which had been commandeered by the Army, needed to relocate from its home in Arboretum Street to emergency accommodation in Ramsdale Park. The war years form a distinct chapter in the school history. With quite extraordinary speed the school adapted to its new way of life.

The Education Act of 1944 marks an important landmark in the history of the school. The Junior School with its 22 sister GDST schools was still recognised for Direct Grant and eventually, the three local authorities funded 50% of the total number of places. The O Level, which



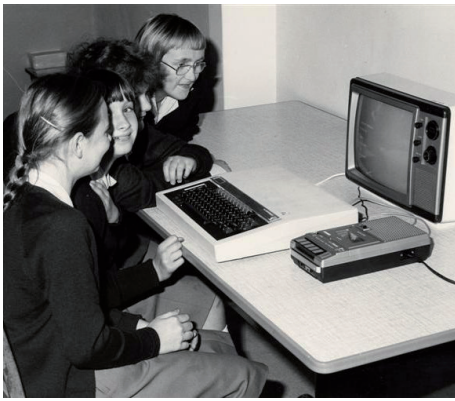
replaced the old School Certificate, led to greater flexibility in Sixth Form courses and the enormously increased grant for further education and the number of State Scholarships had a big impact on senior students.

In 1945, the School's seventieth birthday was celebrated with a series of parties and the performance of the staff play 'The Rose and the Ring'.



In 1975 the school launched its Centenary Appeal to mark its 100th anniversary. The aim was to raise £150,000 for bursaries to be awarded to girls based on academic merit and their financial need. The amount was reached within the year, and by 1978 the Appeal had amassed over £163,000 - helping 16 local girls to secure a place at the school which otherwise wouldn't have been available to them. The bursary programme is still in place at the school today, and has supported dozens of students over the years.





FUTURE OPPORTUNITY

140 years on, with Head Sue Gorham at the helm, Nottingham Girls' High School encourages the same enterprising spirit and can-do attitude in its students, investing in innovative new facilities and breaking gender stereotypes wherever it can. Upnah Wood was created for students - a specialised outdoor learning area which features a climbing wall, low rope course and fire pit where the girls are taught bush craft and team building skills.



Construction also began in March on the schools £9m performing arts centre - The Squire Performing Arts Centre (The SPACE). Once complete in 2016 the state-of-the-art building has been purposefully designed to widen access to the arts and for developing community led projects.

As well as performance facilities for the whole community, The SPACE will be used to give Nottingham Girls' High School students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience, learning the skills of professional theatre technicians such



as lighting, sound recording, box office and back stage.

With a firm foothold in the city, a passionate ethos at its heart of providing dedicated girls education, and a long history demonstrating the opportunities it can provide for girls across Nottingham, the next 140 years look set to be as promising as the last.

INSPIRATIONAL ALUMNAE

As a GDST school, students at Nottingham Girls' High School have access to an established network of over 65,000 female role models to tap in to opportunities and share expertise. Notable GDST Alumnae include recognisable figures such as Mary Berry, Dr Miriam Stoppard and Emma Bridgewater.



Former students of Nottingham Girls' High School include figures such as Dame Stella Rimington - who attended the school between 1946 - 1953. Dame Stella



joined MI5 in 1969, working in a number of roles including counter-subversion and counter-terrorism, before becoming the first woman ever to be promoted to the rank of Director General in 1992.

Under her management, the Service led the fight against Irish republican terrorism and a policy of greater public openness was established. Since retiring from MI5 in 1996, Dame Stella became a best-selling author and has published a number of novels set in the world of intelligence and counter-terrorism.



Rosemary Squire OBE, a Nottingham Girls' High School student between 1967 and 1974, developed a passion for the arts at school and went on to co-found the Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG), the world's number one live-theatre group. ATG has 45 venues in Britain, the USA and Australia, and is recognised as one of the most prolific international theatre producers.

Awarded an OBE in 2007 for Services to Theatre, Rosemary made history in 2014 by becoming the first woman ever to



win the UK EY Entrepreneur of the Year award. Alongside her husband Sir Howard Panter, Rosemary has topped The Stage 100, a list of the most influential people working in theatre and the performing arts, for six consecutive record-breaking years.

Alexandra King who left the school in 2004 is a television producer and reporter at United Nations Television in New York. Her stories are broadcast worldwide to hundreds of media outlets including BBC World, CNN International, and MTV.



Alexandra gathers UN stories and raw footage from the front lines of global conflict and crisis and delivers unbiased news coverage of them. In her career Alexandra has covered the crises in Libya and Syria, the conflict in Darfur and the



humanitarian response to the tsunami in Japan, as well as interviewing Stevie Wonder, Gordon Brown and Bill Clinton.

Most recently, Alex became the first female video producer to accompany a UN General Secretary, which she did during a tour of Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and Ethiopia.



TODAY

Today, Nottingham Girls' High School is the top school in Nottinghamshire for GCSE and A Level results. It continues to support girls through its successful Bursary Scheme, enabling bright girls to receive the best education possible; continuing what Maria Grey set out to achieve in 1871. Through its outreach programmes the school maintains its strong relationships with the local community, charities, businesses and schools - engaging with over 40 local Primary Schools in project-led activity days. Last year alone, its Sixth Form students logged over 5,000 hours of volunteer work and the school raised almost £15,000 for 17 local charities.



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Nottingham Girls' High School
9 Arboretum Street, Nottingham NG1 4JB
t: 0115 941 7663 enquiries@not.gdst.net
nottinghamgirlshigh.gdst.net
[facebook.com/FriendsofNGHS](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofNGHS)

