

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-68557-4 - The Jubilee Book of the Girls' Public Day School Trust 1873–1923

Laurie Magnus

Frontmatter

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GIRLS' PUBLIC DAY SCHOOL TRUST

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PLATE I



Mrs WILLIAM GREY

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The JUBILEE BOOK *of the*
Girls' Public Day School Trust
1873–1923

by

LAURIE MAGNUS, M.A.

Vice-Chairman of the Council

CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
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P R E F A C E

THIS BOOK is the outcome of the wish of the Council of the Girls' Public Day School Trust to commemorate in written form the jubilee of its foundation. The occasion was commemorated orally by a solemn Service of Thanksgiving, celebrated, by permission, in St Paul's Cathedral, on Friday, June 1st, 1923, when the memorial sermon was preached by the Very Rev. Dr Inge, Dean of St Paul's.

Our jubilee is a movable feast. The Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Girls' Public Day School Company (later, the Trust) were registered on June 19th, 1872; our last School, at Birkenhead, was opened on September 24th, 1901. Each of our Schools keeps its own anniversaries, but since the active work of the Trust started in 1873, when its two first Schools were opened, the present year is, properly, its jubilee.

I did not know, when I undertook to write the book, how heavy the task would prove. Still less did I know how amply I should be assisted, nor how inadequately I should rise to the hopes of my assistants. When I add that my two chief coadjutors have been two past Headmistresses of Trust Schools, Mrs Woodhouse and Miss Hastings, whose names and acts are recorded in Chapter IV, it will be seen that a high standard was set to me. Mrs Woodhouse, a member of our Council, entered the service of the Trust in 1878, and Miss Hastings, a member of our Education Committee, in 1876. Thus, their co-operation dates back almost to the beginning of our existence, and the chronicler in 1923 has enjoyed the unique advantage of drawing on their memory as well as on their stored enthusiasm. Another valuable coadjutor has been my colleague, Mr G. H.

Hallam, who contributed several sections to Chapter IV; and the proofs of the whole book have been read, to its great advantage, by the Chairman of Council, Mr Llewelyn Davies, by the Hon. Lady Digby, Vice-President, and by the Secretary, Mr Maclean. They have saved me from many mistakes, and made many useful suggestions. In what is lacking still, I am to blame.

I have not used all the material with which I have been so generously supplied. It was difficult to draw the line between a book replete with details relating only to our Schools and a book which might possess some interest in the history of education in the nineteenth century. Thus, I have not included lists of names of holders of scholarships, prize-winners, and so forth. Nor have I referred, except in passing, to the work of the Schools in war-time. It was a wonderfully creditable record, kept up with undiminished vigour till the end, but, after all, everybody was doing it. More doubtful, perhaps, is the decision to omit specialist contributions on such topics as Music, Drawing, Physical Training, Games, Training for Teaching, the Junior School, etc. They seemed to me to lie a little outside the scope of a jubilee volume, and my colleagues have been good enough to leave me discretion in the matter.

But a few words on some of those topics may, perhaps, be added here. Thus, Kensington, pre-eminently, and Streatham Hill are among the Schools with a special interest in music, and reference may be made to the article on "Music" by Miss Ethel Home, Headmistress at Kensington, in the *Journal of Education*, October, 1922. A debt of gratitude is due to our Music Advisory Board, and particularly to the late Dr C. H. Lloyd and to Dr Ernest Walker. Drawing, again, has been included in our curricula since the earliest days, and we passed through various experiments till, in 1909,

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an Art Advisory Board, consisting of Mr George Clausen, R.A., Prof. Tonks, Mr Selwyn Image, Mr Vignoles Fisher and Mr A. S. Hartrick, gave us the benefit of their expert help. They inspect and examine the Schools periodically, and have drawn up simple canons of art-teaching for the use of the mistresses, with the result that the Board of Education says: "The Board feel no doubt that the influence of the Art Advisory Board as at present exercised, with the annual opportunity to review the work being done in the Schools, helps to maintain interest and effort among the teachers and to ensure a high standard of work. I am to add that the Inspectors were greatly interested in the exhibition of works. They were impressed by the generally excellent quality of the teaching and the knowledge and understanding of the purpose and limitations of school work which were shown." A tribute should be paid in this connection to the splendid work of Miss Welch in the Clapham High School Art Training Department.

We take, too, no little pride in the Training Departments of some of the larger Schools, where the main principle was laid down by the late Miss Gavin, of Wimbledon, in a paper read in 1906 before the Head-mistresses' Association. A teacher's preparation, she said, should "proceed more from the concrete to the abstract," and "the theoretical work in such training should be supplementary to the practical work."

Fuller extracts may be permitted from a memorandum prepared for this volume on the Junior School, since its place in secondary education has become, or is becoming, a somewhat urgent question of administration and finance. In this connection the following paragraphs are of general interest:

"Provision is made in all our Schools for children from the

age of five, a separate house being taken for them in many instances. The parents' appreciation is shown by the fact that almost as many little boys as girls under the age of nine (after which boys are not usually admitted) are to be found in their preparatory classes.

In most Schools the conditions provided for the little ones are such as all lovers of children desire to secure for every child in the land—a garden, with trees, flowers and birds—bright, airy class-rooms—a large room where free movement is possible—classes small enough to allow of much individual guidance—skilled observation of health and development.

In the next stage of the Junior School which according as the little girl's progress fits her to go forward may be from the age of 7, 8 or 9 to 10, 11 or 12—the aim is the successful linking of the earlier stage with that where Secondary education begins. A broad base of interests, and the power of grasping new facts and new ideas intelligently, are the educational aims kept in view, rather than the attainment of a definite standard in particular subjects. It is well known that under the same conditions different children progress at very different rates in learning, e.g. to write correct English or to work Arithmetic; and that some who have much difficulty in one or other of these subjects may possess reasoning power or artistic gifts far above the average.

Many girls pass through their School from the lowest to the highest Form; they are found to be an element of stability and a channel of good tradition that are of the utmost value."

The Council would very much deplore any threat to the maintenance of these Departments.

I spoke above of the heaviness of this task, but I meant really the heaviness of the responsibility. It has been a labour of love to compile the book, and I can but hope that it is not quite unworthy of the noble lives which it commemorates.

L. M.

THE ATHENÆUM,
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June, 1923.

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THANKSGIVING

*Though ye have passed, our Ladies of the Schools,
Who laid the stones, and set the temperate rules,
And broke untrodden paths with Spring reveal'd,*

*We do not pass, who, in a later day,
Your chosen message with new valiance say,—
“Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd.”*

*Behold, our gardens flourish with your flowers,
Sown in a time austerer far than ours,
But, ah! how much less frugal in design.*

*We have outgrown the halls ye wrought to build,
But the large hopes that haunt them, unfulfil'd,
No perishable tenements confine.*

*There climb our thoughts to meet you, our thanks climb.
We seek you on the tranquil heights of time,
Bringing one garland from our fifty years.*

*Take it, this pious tribute of our love,
This emblem of the plan ye guard above,
This human utterance framed for sainted ears.*