

“When a woman has scholarly inclinations, there is usually something wrong with her reproductive organs”. Friedrich Nietzsche, 1875. This arresting attitude, this pervasive sexism, is what Frances Mary Buss dedicated her life to, to ensure was an attitude eradicated from ours.

Each year, on this day, I've sat in this hall, (right over there), enamoured by the head girls and boys speaking so eloquently, and managing so gracefully to tie aspects of their lives with an element of our Founder's being, a concept I was naively captivated by, until I realised how unbelievably daunting it would be when coming to write my own. To be completely candid, just a few months ago it utterly perplexed me how each individual managed to so seamlessly and differently speak about Frances Mary Buss, interspersed with their own respective experiences at Camden.

However, soon after this intimidating realisation, I discovered the secret. The elusive key to flawless Founder's Day rhetoric, so fastidiously hidden by Ms Kitcatt and the head girls. And here, armed with abundant research about our founder herself, I bring it to you.

Frances Mary Buss was a polymath. She was acutely educated, (largely by herself) and highly intelligent; a virtual expert in French, German and Geography. If her 'scholarly inclinations' had not offended the patriarchy enough already, Miss Buss went on to become one of the most notable pioneers for women's education in history, and a suffragist.

At 23 she became the headmistress of North London Collegiate, and at age 43 she founded this very school. Still, Miss Buss was not sufficiently satisfied with the extent to which she had angered male-chauvinists globally. So, in 1847 she became the founding president of the 'Association of headmistresses'; an organisation campaigning for the endowment of girls' schools everywhere.

So you see, any aspect of our lives, any Camden anecdote, can be seamlessly drawn to Frances Mary Buss because she did virtually everything she could do, and even the things she couldn't, whilst weighed down by the shackles of disenfranchisement and the words of every person who adopted a similar stance to that of Friedrich Nietzsche. She inherently laid the very foundations that we're standing on, and anyone who walks in this building will concur that her spirit is anything but lost on the Camden Girl.

Whether it's protesting avidly against climate change, bombarding our MP's with passionate letters urging them to address the refugee crisis, religiously attending the infamous Camden 'feminist society', or even sparking engaging political debates in what was supposed to be a Geography lesson, Buss's spirit almost visually emanates from us.

Whether we notice it or not, it's there from the day we walk through the Camden School for Girls gates in year 7, or more accurately, wait for our fingerprint to be rejected 5 times before calling the reception and then walking through those gates, it's there.

'It doesn't really matter what [women] write, as long as they're young and beautiful'. Donald Trump. 2018. It's easy to be disheartened by our current climate of fake news and almost dystopian crumbling politics, and it's easy to feel like we haven't come an awfully long way since 1875.

However, as I look around this room, I don't see women who are defined by 'scholarly inclinations' or 'reproductive organs', but rather the Chimamanda Ngozi Adichies, the Frida Kahlos, the Maya Angelous, and the Frances Mary Buss' that this world really needs.

Because the protestors will become the CEOs, the letter writers; politicians, the feminist club members; journalists and activists, and the Geography debaters; lawyers. Soon, our political climate will be coloured with the faces in this very room. So, though it's easy to be disheartened, it's even easier to be inspired. Just spend a day at Camden.

So, to all the women in the room; keep your scholarly inclinations, be proud of *all* of your organs, and write, if not solely to spite the most powerful man in the world. And to the men in the room, the prefects, teachers, and guests; whether you're a student here or not, you'll find the Buss spirit oddly contagious. Embrace it. Be a Camden Girl.

With exams, and grades, and general organisation, these last couple of years haven't been the easiest. But for me, the most difficult part of my school career will be leaving it; saying goodbye to the impassioned teachers and students who have moulded me, for better or for worse, so that in a few years I will be a Camden Girl outside of Camden.

"How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard"; Winnie-the-pooh. 1926.