

# Heathfield School

## early history



Miss Gayford

**1900** Miss Edith Gayford founded a small school at "The Firs" on Byron Hill, Harrow called 'Harrow Day and Boarding School for Girls'.

**1902** The School moved to a house at 12 College Road called "Heathfield". The name now became 'Harrow High School for Girls'.

**1921** Miss Gayford died suddenly. The school was taken over by Miss Marian Norris who had taught there since 1910.

**1929** The name was changed again, this time to 'Heathfield School for Girls'.



**Pupils Required!**  
 Harrow High School (Recognised by board of Education).  
 "Heathfield," College Road. (Minute from Metropolitan Station.)  
 Headmistress: Miss Gayford.  
 Staff of Highly Certificated Resident Mistresses.  
 Thoroughly modern Education.  
 Large airy classrooms.  
 Dinner provided at moderate charge for those pupils who come a distance.  
 Boarders Received. Large Garden.  
 Junior Department for quite young children. (Not Kindergarten.)  
 The above advertisement is taken from the "Harrow Gazette," Friday, 20th September, 1907. The paper was then the oldest local paper although it was only fifty-two years old. While clearing out a small cottage in West Street after a great friend had died, my great-aunt found this "Gazette" of fifty years ago, protecting the back of an old picture.  
 JANET WELCH, U.Vb.  
 In a similar advertisement, the adjective used of the Staff was certified.—EDITOR.



Miss Norris

Miss Norris wrote a vivid description of the School in **1910**:

*"To know College Road in those days, you must imagine a road of residential houses. On our side each house stood in its own garden, and in the month of May particularly it was a beautiful road to walk down, with a great many chestnut trees, lilac bushes, laburnums, and red may trees. The schoolhouse was just the double-fronted, three-storeyed part, and joined to the present dining room was a conservatory. At the back was a grass lawn with flower beds and a shrubbery."*

After Miss Norris had assumed control of Heathfield in **1921** work began on enlarging and modernising the premises. It shows much for Miss Norris's vision that she was able to do this during a period of severe economic depression.

Changes came gradually, beginning with a small hall in **1924**. The opportunity came the following year to buy the stables at the bottom of the garden, which were turned into classrooms but the school was still short of the facilities which would enable it to be recognised as an 'efficient school' by the Board of Education. A major building scheme was thus begun in **1929** when the West wing was built. This provided the school with a hall, a gymnasium and, most important, a science laboratory plus a number of other rooms.

In **1930** Miss Norris was able to approach the Board of Education for inclusion on their list of 'efficient schools'. Three inspectors duly arrived in March of 1930 and after a two-day inspection gave Heathfield the necessary recognition.

**HARROW HIGH SCHOOL**  
 "Heathfield," College Road,  
 Harrow  
 Principal - MISS NORRIS

Situated in a very healthy neighbourhood, the School Building faces South, and Classrooms are large, light and airy.

The Aim of the Principal is to provide a Sound Education, combined with a high and relaxed tone.

The Teaching is thorough and up-to-date for Pupils ranging in age from 5 to 16 years.

Boarders receive every home care and attention. Ample opportunities for Recreation. Good Garden with Court for Tennis, etc.

The Principal is assisted by a highly-qualified resident Staff of Certificated English, French and Music Mistresses.

*Prospectus sent on Application to the Principal*



# Heathfield School

## 1930s – 1960s



1st Netball Team 1931

In 1932 Heathfield was able to take advantage of the new developments in Harrow. College Road was changing from a suburban street with residential houses into a shopping area.



The houses next to Heathfield were converted into shops and the School was able to purchase their gardens. On this land was built a new Junior block, this enabled rooms in the main house to be used for a library and music room.



By the outbreak of war in 1939 Heathfield numbered almost 300 children and over 1200 girls and boys had passed through it since 1921.

The uncertainty engendered by the Second World War prevented major changes but a house, St. Keverne's at the bottom of Peterborough Hill was purchased for the youngest pupils.



St. Keverne's 1964



The Rt. Hon. Lord Birkett with Miss Norris at the opening of the Marian Norris Library on 31st January, 1962.

The last Fête helped with the cost of this Library.

With the proceeds of this year's Fête we hope to provide a film projector, a tape-recorder and other scientific equipment for the School.

The main achievement of the immediate post-war period took place on September 5, 1947 when Heathfield became a public school and was registered under the Companies Act with Sir Alfred Hurst, KBE, CB, as Chairman of the Board of Governors. In November of that year the school held its first Speech Day in the hall of Messrs. Kodak Ltd. Later Speech days were held at Wembley Town Hall and in 1974 moved to Harrow School Speech Room. Previous prizegivings had been held at the King's Head Hotel on the Hill. The girls had to wear white dresses and carry a bunch of violets.

Further building work was done during the 1950s with the addition of a new block of classrooms to include needlework and art and craft rooms.



Speech Day at Harrow School



To celebrate Miss Norris's 'jubilee' a new library was planned. The Marion Norris Library was opened on January 31, 1962 by Lord Birkett. Miss Norris retired two years later and was succeeded by Miss Johnson.

# Heathfield School

## 1970s – 1980s



Under Miss Johnson's leadership Heathfield continued to grow and flourish. Greater emphasis was given to career guidance as more girls looked forward to a working life rather than that of wife and mother.

The tranquillity of the School was not to continue. Harrow was thriving and the council wished to develop the centre where Heathfield stood. If the School was to continue, a new site would have to be found and so the search began.

This task was to be the responsibility of a new Headmistress, Mrs. W.E. Ribchester, who took over in 1974. It was hoped to build a new school on the site of the existing sports field on the edge of Harrow. After a long battle the planning authorities turned down the scheme in May 1979.



*Lacrosse Team*

Mrs Ribchester and her Board of Governors refused to be downhearted. After further negotiation Heathfield was offered the site and buildings of Pinner Sixth Form College.

After 80 happy and successful years at College Road, Heathfield packed up its belongings at the end of the Summer Term



*Mrs Ribchester with Sixth Formers moving the school sign to the new building in Pinner*

of 1982 and moved into its new premises ready for the start of the next term and a new phase in its history.

The first years in Pinner were devoted to making the interior of the building suitable for Heathfield's needs in catering for pupils from 7 to 18 years. One very important asset of the new site was the adjoining sports field with its netball and tennis courts. No more long walks to get to a distant sports field!

In 1987, the Board of Governors decided to join the Girls' Public Day School Trust. The Trust had been responsible for providing education for girls in a number of schools throughout the country since 1872. Heathfield thus became part of a large organisation and had access to greater funding and support. The Dowager Duchess of Gloucester formally welcomed the School into the Trust in a ceremony held at the School in 1988. She planted a tree to commemorate the occasion.

The first benefit of this change was the planning and building of a new junior department. This was opened in 1988 and allowed Heathfield to take children from the age of 4.

Mrs. Ribchester retired in 1987 having successfully seen the School through this very difficult period. She was replaced by Mrs. J. Merritt.



*Physics lesson 1970s*



*Mrs. J. Merritt (left) and the Dowager Duchess of Gloucester (centre).*

# Heathfield School

## 1990s – 2006



Miss Juett

In the closing decade of the century new educational ideas came thick and fast, many of them resulting from developments in technology. First Mrs. Merritt and, from 1997, Miss Christine Juett have driven development to ensure pupils can confidently face the new century.

Dedicated computer rooms have been made and by 2006 the school had a network of over 200 workstations and laptops. All machines have Internet access, email, school intranet and virtual learning environment. Every girl has ICT lessons and the subject can be taken at GCSE and A Level. Interactive whiteboards, printers and scanners are provided throughout the school.

The most exciting building developments have been the construction of a 25-metre swimming pool and sports hall. Their completion in the Spring of 2000 allowed the old gymnasium to be converted into a new and larger library.

Since then the school has completed a new Music Suite, Careers Room, updated the

Science laboratories, Arts, Textiles and Maths rooms.

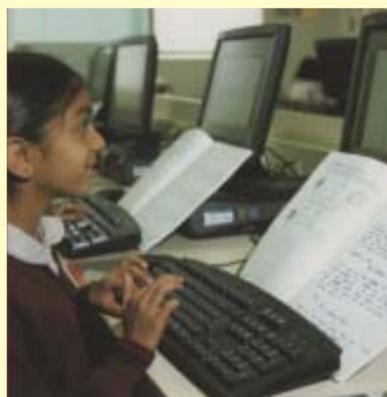
A new Drama Studio, dining room and additional Sixth Form accommodation were completed by 2005.

Heathfield received national recognition with the award of the Sportsmark and the Silver Artsmark.

The Millennium and the school's first centenary was celebrated with 300 old girls who attended a grand lunch party with the school Governors and school staff past and present. A time-capsule on the history of the school was buried in the

school grounds. The Thanksgiving Service was held at Pinner Parish Church.

Heathfield continues to promote the aims of Miss Norris – the pursuit of academic achievement and personal potential within an intellectually stimulating, caring and secure environment. The School has had over a century of academic success and is looking forward to the next hundred years with optimism and enthusiasm.



Junior School ICT lesson



25- metre Swimming Pool



Rehearsal for the Bath Music Festival 2006

Heathfield School  
Beaulieu Drive  
Pinner  
HA5 1NB

Tel: 020 8868 2346



Girls' Day School Trust

[www.heathfield.gdst.net](http://www.heathfield.gdst.net)



Architect's impression of renewed school frontage



Architect's impression of new Sixth Form Leadership Centre

### The Future

The World of Work is changing. At Heathfield we are developing an innovative response to these new 21st Century challenges by building on our academic success in three areas – Leadership, Enterprise and Language skills

### Leadership

- A new Leadership Centre is being built for the Sixth Form which will use the latest technology to offer specialist courses and links with businesses in Britain and abroad
- Leadership training for all Sixth Formers with specially designed modules to develop transferable life skills

### Enterprise

- Enterprise Education across the curriculum for every year group, including the Juniors, developing the skills of teamwork, decision-making, creativity, risk-taking and flexibility
- Young Enterprise programme extended to include Juniors and to Key Stage 3
- Personal and Professional Development programme giving each student a personal challenge programme including leadership skills, citizenship, thinking skills, financial literacy and decision-making

### Language skills

- Reforms based on the global significance of languages
- From September 2006 Heathfield became the first school in Harrow to have Mandarin Chinese in the core curriculum for Juniors and Seniors
- Spanish to be the main European language taught in the Junior School
- Links with schools around the world for curriculum projects, e-pen pals, exchanges and visits