

Life is all about challenges, whether it's climbing Mount Everest, performing surgery on the queen, or in my case writing this speech. There's no way to go into a difficult task fully prepared, because life will always throw something in your way that forces you to adapt, such as the year 12 whose duck quacking ringtone wouldn't stop going off while I was writing this in the study room. But that's the whole point of a challenge, it isn't meant to be simple, otherwise, everyone could do it.

During lockdown, over the past two years, I'm sure everyone picked up a hobby to help pass the time. Possibly it was baking, running or reading. Whatever it was, you challenged yourself to do something new or to improve something you may already have been doing, and that's not something to just brush off. It takes commitment, desire and determination, something that you should be proud of yourself for.

Now I don't imagine Frances Mary Buss, had she experienced a lockdown, would have been tuning her FIFA skills in pro clubs with her team if she were alive these days, but I do know that she would have been challenging herself in a different way throughout the lockdown and past it. She probably would have been doing something a bit more important, such as continuing to oppose the patriarchal order by fighting gender bias, supporting those who have been oppressed and re-educating those who do oppress.

Frances Mary Buss was all about challenges. She grew up in a society that didn't accept women as equals, they grew up to be housewives, destined to bear the children of entitled men. But she didn't, instead, she had the drive to be more than another piece in the large jigsaw of life. Buss didn't want to slot in, she wanted to disrupt and combat the centuries-long tyranny of educational restriction on young girls. She began teaching at fourteen and was partially in charge of her mother's school at 16. During her spare time, she was a student at Queen's College, earning degrees in multiple subjects. By 23 she was the Headmistress of her own school.

Frances Mary Buss' actions of suffrage include campaigning for girls to be allowed to sit public examinations and enter universities. This success not only exists in the United Kingdom but it extends all the way around the world in communities as far as South Korea and South Africa, where her teaching philosophy and legacy live on. However, in contrast to those schools, ours was set up with the aim of providing a high quality and comprehensive education for young girls. To this day, thanks to the hard work of so many people, this continues.

As a male student in a school set up by a woman for women, you may be forgiven for thinking I may feel out of place, but I can assure you that I can speak for all the boys when I say we are all truly Camden Girls at heart. Feminism is defined as a range of socio-political movements and ideologies that aim to define and establish the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the genders. From the fun we all had raising copious amounts of money by raving in the corridors on a pink day, conga dancing

around the block with the main school and raising money from passers-by, to the support sessions set up to help with mental and sexual health in the sixth form as well as the student-led LGBTQ+ club, Camden has helped pioneer wave after wave of feminists that I'm sure Frances Mary Buss would be proud of.

Frances Mary Buss' favourite flower was the daffodil, so I'd like to thank her on behalf of the school's finance team for not picking a more expensive option like roses or orchids. Daffodils tend to sprout in spring, symbolising resilience for surviving over the winter and new beginnings being one of the first plants to sprout after the new year. From the people who work in the library and study room after the school day is over, to the Head Girl Team and the Senior Prefects who always work their hardest to run exciting events and come up with ways to improve the school, to all the teaching staff for working to provide us with the best education possible. A special shout out goes to Ms Camillo and Ms Schofield and the Sixth form team for keeping the 6th form ticking over, by organising interesting speakers week in week out, always being there to talk to and helping out with the logistics of running the larger events. And Ms Law who somehow has managed, very successfully, to fill the enormous boots left by Ms Kitcatt.

This school year has had much to celebrate. New friendships were formed, culture day was fabulous, the Christmas show was a right laugh, despite the awful jokes that Lulu and I performed to buy time for the next acts to get ready, and best of all Ruble the pet therapy dog returning for the 6th form to spend time relaxing with. And all of this would never have happened if Frances Mary Buss hadn't stood up for what she believed in. Nobody forced her to challenge the opinions of those around her, but she stood up to their archaic views and challenged them, just like Camden students still do, despite it sometimes being easier to ignore the issues and carry on like nothing is wrong, and that's what makes Camden so special.