



Elizabeth Windsor

Following on the theme of education, I am writing about a lady who had an influence on the education of girls in Macclesfield. Mary Elizabeth Windsor was headmistress of Macclesfield High School for Girls for a relatively short time, between 1907 and 1910, but achieved a great deal in that time.

Mary Elizabeth Windsor was born on 23 December 1870 in Old Trafford, Manchester, a daughter of James Windsor, a cotton manufacturer and merchant, and his wife Sarah Needham Windsor. She was educated at Manchester High School for Girls. In 1888 she passed the Higher Local Examination, with a distinction in arithmetic and mathematics. She gained a scholarship at Newnham College, Cambridge in 1887 and passed the Mathematical Tripos in Class II in 1891. In June 1907, she was awarded an M.A. from Trinity College Dublin.

Her career included, among other posts, mathematical and form mistress at Roedean School, Brighton, a mathematical and second mistress at Whalley Range High School Manchester and head mistress of the Ladies' College, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Miss Windsor arrived in Macclesfield from Nova Scotia in September 1907. She introduced the school to netball, which she had seen played in Canada. She gave two trophies for netball, and shields for drill and games. She also gave prizes for the best dolls and scrapbooks made for poor children at the Infirmary and the Workhouse. She also started form libraries with gifts of books.

In 1909, the school moved from Park Green to new buildings on Fence Avenue. At the end of the summer term 1910, she moved to a post at Ludlow Girls High School. In 1915, she returned to Canada as headmistress of the Trafalgar Institute, Montreal and, later, she was head mistress of Bridgnorth Grammar School for Girls. Miss Windsor, returning to Macclesfield in 1931 to make a speech at the Jubilee Speech Day, remarked that she did not think the Governors had made a bad choice in asking her to speak, because she represented a bridge between the old school and the present one, "And we all know," she added, "what useful things bridges are."

Miss Windsor died on 12th December 1954. 'An appreciation of Miss Windsor, Headmistress' published in the Macclesfield High School Old Girls' Society Newsletter 1955 reads 'She became headmistress at a time when much was happening in the educational world. Her organising abilities, were well tested when the County took over the school and numbers in the school increased enormously. She taught mainly English and inspired a real love of literature. She was always enthusiastic about our games and also about our dramatic efforts, which we had to produce every fortnight from current literature or history. But looking back I feel that Miss Windsor was rather in advance of her time for Macclesfield. Many of her ideas and innovations

were found startling by some parents. Some even objected to a school uniform in the shape of a gym tunic!