



HAVE SOME FLOWERS: Jean Bezent with two Year Seven pupils

Sharing tales across the ages

Report by **Antony Thrower**

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FORMER students of a college which moved from Folkestone at the outbreak of the Second World War discussed old times at a recent reunion.

Kent College was originally based in Bouverie Road, Folkestone, when it was first opened in 1886.

It survived the First World War but moved to Pembury in September 1939 due to fears for pupils' safety.

The college celebrated its 125th anniversary with a commemorative tea at the Grand,

which was attended by pupils past and present.

Michael Stainer, whose great grandfather John helped found the college, said: "It is one of the oldest girls' schools in the entire country."

"Although it was established in 1886, the bombing of Folkestone in May 1917, which killed 71 people in Tontine Street, resulted in a mass exodus of students from schools in Folkestone.

"The months leading to the Second World War filled the governors with trepidation and in July 1939 Arthur Atkinson arrived from London with the

signed contract for Pembury.

"They moved on September 1, the very day Hitler invaded Poland."

The empty building was later commandeered by the Government and used for children evacuated from London but the college never returned. Two current Year Seven pupils presented oldest surviving pupil Jean Bezent with a bouquet of flowers.

Headmistress Sally-Anne Huang commented: "The girls were thrilled to meet people related to the school's founders and wonderful ladies who had been pupils here during the Second World War."



REUNION: Pupils past and present outside the Grand with head teacher Sally-Anne Huang, centre