

THE HOUSE THEY BUILT, FROM AGE TO AGE

To appreciate the story of the Diocesan Boys' School, one needs to realise that, behind every step taken and every milestone attained, lie the tireless efforts and spirited hearts of its people. Thus, perhaps the best view into the history of DBS is through the perspectives of its leaders and their eras, each a unique and indelible part of the School's tale.

A humble start, and a noble cause

The first foundation of the School was in the form of an earlier institution established by the Society for the Promotion of Female Education in the Far East ("FES") and Lady Lydia Smith, the wife of the first Bishop of Victoria, in 1860. It was given the name "Diocesan Native Female Training School" ("DNFTS", 日字樓女館), and affiliated with the Diocese of the Anglican denomination in Hong Kong. The Committee started the school on Bonham Road, with a small concrete house on a paddy field. It was ordered that the English language be used in the school so as to provide students with an English school environment. The school soon became mired in controversy and financial difficulties, and in 1868 the second Bishop of Victoria, Bishop Charles Richard Alford, placed the school under his immediate supervision.

1869-1878: The beginning for the boys, under the first headmastership of Arthur

On January 30th 1869, Bishop Alford issued an appeal to extend the benefits of education given in DNFTS to children of both sexes, and this proposal was met with a liberal response. Under a new constitution and a new committee, the "Diocesan Home and Orphanage" ("DHO", 日字樓孤子院) was established for English, Eurasian, Chinese and other pupils at the same site in September. The objectives of the institution were to receive children of both sexes and to board, clothe and instruct them with a view to industrial life and the Christian faith according to the teachings of the Church of England.



*Mr. William Monarch
Burnside Arthur*



Bonham Road campus c. 1924

In July 1870, Mr. William Monarch Burnside Arthur (雅瑟先生), born in Surrey, England on December 21st, 1839, of the Garrison School was appointed Master (Headmaster), and Mrs. Arthur was appointed Matron. During the days of Mr. Arthur, there was no significant increase in student numbers, but donations from various sectors of the community became more regular, thus helping to sustain the operation of the School. In 1878, the School was placed under the Grant-in-Aid Scheme by the Education Department, based on its academic performance.



Map of Victoria c. 1870, showing DHO (circled on map)

Mr. Arthur resigned that same year due to his wife's poor health. After his resignation he became the second master of the

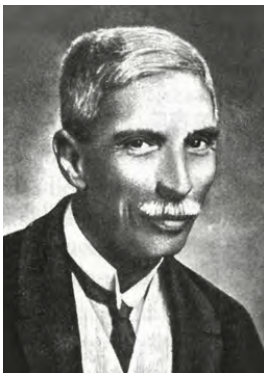


Upper ground of the Bonham Road campus

Central Government School (now Queen's College), the first clerk of the magistracy and the principal of the Police School. Mr. Arthur returned to England after retirement in May 1900 and passed away in Cornwall on January 27th 1912.

As suggested by the third Bishop, Bishop John Shaw Burdon, the School Committee decided to receive no more boys, but to allow those who had already been admitted to remain. However, this decision was later strongly opposed by Mr. William Keswick, a member of the School Committee, who had not been able to attend the last meeting, and the decision was finally reversed: instead, no more girls would be received as boarders, though they would still remain day-scholars, and the School was to become a boys' school.

1878-1917: Evolution into a boys' school under Piercy, and becoming 拔萃, his namesake



Mr. George Piercy

On November 1st 1878, Mr. George Piercy (俾士先生), the third master of the Government Central School, was appointed Headmaster, and his wife was appointed Matron – an unwritten rule from 1869 that a husband and wife team should hold these positions respectively. Mr. Piercy was born in Canton (now Guangzhou) on September 13th 1856. His father, The Reverend

On November 1st 1878, Mr. George Piercy (俾士先生), the third master of the Government Central School, was appointed Headmaster, and his wife was appointed Matron – an unwritten rule from 1869 that a husband and wife team should

George Piercy, was an English missionary and the founder of the Methodist Church in Hong Kong. Mr. Piercy was later educated in England, and from 1874 onwards, he worked as an instructor of English at Tungwen Kuan (同文館) in Canton.

Mr. Piercy was a devout Christian, and every Sunday he would personally engage the boarders to attend the morning service at St. Peter's Church in Sai Wan and the evensong at St. John's Cathedral. He was strict and severe, demanding great discipline from his students, and he was very interested in the education of Chinese boys.

He focused on the academic education of the students, and the School gained satisfactory results in the Cambridge



Mr. and Mrs. Piercy in 1939

and Oxford Local Examination scholarships. He was closely in touch with the business interests in Hong Kong, and the School prepared boys for bilingual apprenticeships and subsequent careers in merchant houses and banks along the China coast, with notable graduates being Henry Gittins (洪千), Adolph Zimmern (施燦光), and Robert Kotewall (羅旭龢). Dr. Sun Yat Sen was also a day boy in 1883, and he was known as Sun Tui Chew (孫帝象) at school. Mr. Piercy was also able to maintain the School in good and clean condition during his leadership, a time when infectious diseases were common and Hong Kong was threatened by the outbreak of epidemics (the School won twice the inter-school hygiene competition, considered an extracurricular activity at the time).

僕性孫名文字載之號逸仙籍隸廣東廣州府香山縣生於一千八百六十六年華歷十月十六日幼讀佛書十二歲畢經業十三歲隨母往夏威士島始見輪舟之奇滄海之間自是有慕西學之心窮天地之想是年復回華文遂留學依兄入英藍督所學之書院肄業英史三年後再入美人所設之書院肄業此為島中最高之書院初擬在此滿考即往美國入大書院肄業專門之學僕兄因其切慕耶穌之道恐文進教為親督責者令回華是十歲時也抵家後親者無所責隨其姊居鄉數月即往香港再召英文兄入拔萃書院數月之後轉入香港書院又數月因家事離院再往夏島數月而回自是停習英文後治中國經史文學二士歲改習西醫先入廣東省城西教士所設之博濟醫院肄業次年轉入香港新創之西醫書院五年滿業考拔萃時二十六歲矣此從師港學之大者也

Excerpt from Dr. Sun's biography

THE HOUSE THEY BUILT, FROM AGE TO AGE

Nevertheless, the old and worn-out school building could hardly meet the needs of the expanding number of students, and this led to the construction of a New Wing in 1891. Due to a legal issue related to the holding of land for expansion, the Home had to change its name slightly and was henceforth called the “Diocesan School and Orphanage” (“DSO”). It was known as 拔萃書室 in Chinese, adopted due to the closeness of the pronunciation of 拔萃 to Piercy.

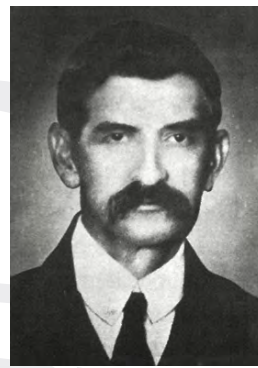
The students were active in extracurricular activities in Piercy’s time. Music at the School can be traced back to 1896 when the first music organisation came into existence as a drum and fife band. Sports were popular as well, and inter-school competitions were organised. In football the School was the holder of the Junior League Cup, and in cricket the School was very strong, having formed teams that were unbeatable among schools in Hong Kong. The School first participated in out-of-school activities in 1894, and it was registered as a participant in the Belilios Medals, which was later called the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

In 1892, DSO became a boys’ school for the first time as all the girls were transferred to Fairlea Girls’ School (later merged with Victoria Home and known as Heep Yunn School) under the superintendence of Ms. M. Johnstone. She also played an important role in establishing the Diocesan Girls’ School and Orphanage (“DGSO”) in Rose Villas in the vicinity of DSO on Bonham Road in 1899. To distinguish itself from DGSO, DSO renamed itself the “Diocesan Boys’ School and Orphanage” (“DBSO”) in 1902.

In 1917, Mr. Piercy resigned his office. He had been Headmaster for 39 years, the longest tenure of any Headmaster, and during his time the School expanded

quickly, nurturing many talents and ranked as one of the top schools in Hong Kong. He passed away in Victoria B.C., Canada on October 3rd 1941, aged 85.

1909-1917: Sykes, the resident master who taught every boy, and who was loved by all

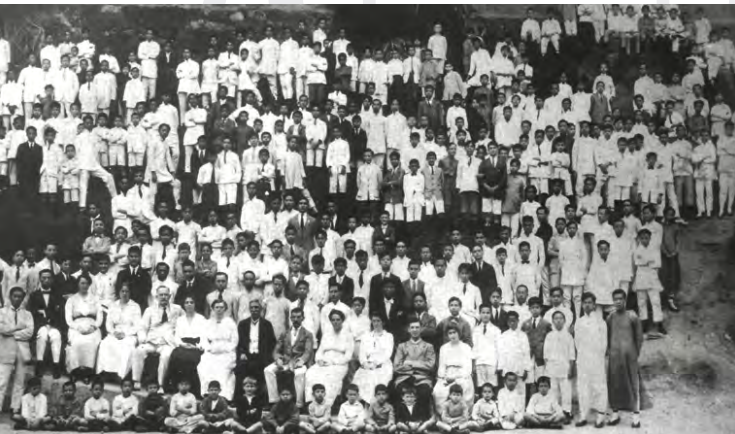


Mr. Henry Sykes

During his tenure, Mr. Piercy was always assisted by capable second masters, including Mr. B. Tanner and Mr. Henry Sykes (賽克思先生). Mr. Sykes came to DSO in 1898 and succeeded Mr. Tanner as the second master after the latter became the head of Queen’s College. He acted twice as Headmaster while Mr. Piercy was on leave.

In 1909, the Piercys moved off campus after Mrs. Piercy resigned as Matron, and Mr. Piercy gave up his post as Warden as well. They were succeeded respectively by Mrs. Tuxford and Mr. Sykes, and Mr. Sykes, who commanded the respect and admiration of all students, became the de facto head of the School. He was largely responsible for the excellent Oxford Local Examination results obtained by the students in the early part of the century. It was also through his discussion with Mr. Piercy that a science laboratory was built. A very good disciplinarian who was a stern yet loving teacher, Mr. Sykes never resorted to using his cane as punishment.

After Mr. Piercy resigned, the headmastership was offered to Mr. Sykes, provided that he get married so his wife could act as Matron; but he had no intentions of marriage and declined to be nominated as a candidate for the role. Subsequently, The Reverend Featherstone was appointed as the new Headmaster, and Mr. Sykes resigned and left Hong Kong in 1920. After his return to England, no one was able to find him, and he was sorely missed. Mr. James Lawrence Young Saye, one of his students, remembered him as follows: “Boys feared and respected him and when he glared at you over his spectacles and muttered ‘boy, boy, boy’, even the strongest was known to quake. But underneath a forbidding exterior he was an extremely kind man. Many times each night, he would



School picture with Mr. Piercy and Mr. Sykes in 1918

go around the dormitories and tuck in the blankets of small boys with turbulent dreams.” In the words of Canon George She, another one of his pupils: “I saw a good deal of Sykes and I think we all loved him.”



Farwell dinner for Mr. Sykes on April 10th, 1920

1917-1931: Featherstone and his legacy: the blessings of a new home on the Hill

The Reverend William Thornton Featherstone (費瑟士東牧師) was born in Liverpool, England on March 10th 1886. He graduated from Oxford University and served as a clergyman at St. Peter Seamen’s Church in the neighbourhood of DBSO, in Sai Ying Pun. From 1914 onwards, Rev. Featherstone taught Scripture at DBSO and was appointed Headmaster in late 1917.



The Reverend William Thornton Featherstone

Rev. Featherstone was a man of great vision and vigour. During his time, he introduced a club system (later renamed house system) and Speech Day as



Original architectural sketch of DBS

he wished to change DBSO into an English-style public school and also make it more international. He saw the importance of globalisation, and would regularly visit



School picture in 1921

parents and old boys along the China coast and in Southeast Asia. During the summer holidays he held tours to meet parents in places such as Swatow, Amoy, Formosa (now Taiwan), and Manila. The School’s good name in the Chinese community in these places attracted quite a large number of students, and students of more than thirteen nationalities were observed during Featherstone’s time. He also consolidated the Prefects system, including establishing the Head Prefect role, which was first taken up by Kor Bu-lok, a Taiwanese student of the class of 1919.

To Featherstone, sports were a means of fostering “esprit de corps” among the boys. Sports prizes were hence discouraged from 1919 onwards, and no leagues were joined as they encouraged professionalism and “pot-hunting”. Under the same ideology, the establishment of Speech Day, which involved speeches by students and exhibitions and demonstrations of their work and skills, represented a discontinuation of any form of prize-giving ceremony. To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the School, Mr. Featherstone also published the School’s first history book in 1930, titled “The Diocesan Boys School and Orphanage, Hong Kong: The History and Records, 1869–1929”.



DBS campus in 1926

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Temporary campus at the northeast corner of the intersection of Nathan Road and Prince Edward Road

Understanding that the Bonham Road campus would not be suitable for the expanding DBSO, and with visions of a new school that was spacious and well equipped, Mr. Featherstone proposed moving the School to Mongkok, where he saw the development potential of the area and the merits of being situated on a hill, and his dream was realised in 1926. However, soon afterwards in 1927, the British military authorities commandeered the new campus as a hospital for the British Shanghai Defence Force due to the socio-political unrest at the time. The School was temporarily moved to “Ten Houses” (the current site of the Mongkok Police Station) at the corner of Nathan Road and Prince Edward Road. By the time of the School’s return to the hill a year later, the third storey of the main building had been added by the military.



Construction of the third storey of the DBS main building

The original plan was to sell the old site on Bonham Road and use the revenue to pay for the construction of the new premises. However, due to economic depression after the Canton-Hong Kong strike-boycott that erupted in 1925, the buyer of the old site went bankrupt. In 1926, the School Committee had to accept the government’s offer of \$253,500 for the old site and in addition applied for a loan of \$175,000 with a high interest rate of 8%, resulting in the School becoming mired in severe financial problems. Close to heartbreak, Mr. Featherstone left the office in 1931, and later became the vicar of St. Paul’s Church in

Hook, Surrey, England, until his death in Surbiton in 1944.

While it is unclear exactly when the School changed its name from DBSO to DBS, Featherstone referred to the School as DBS as early as 1918, and subsequently he tended to use this name whenever he mentioned the School. Despite the unfortunate conditions under which he left DBS, his dreams and visions, coupled with his actions to realise them, left behind the splendid legacy of a new campus, in itself a rare and precious endowment.

1932-1938: Salvation and consolidation under Sargent



Mr. Christopher Birdwood Roussel Sargent

Mr. Christopher Birdwood Roussel Sargent (舒展先生) was only 26 years old when he headed the School in 1932, invited by Bishop Charles Ridley Duppuy of Hong Kong. He was born into an ecclesiastical family in England on June 4th 1906, and was educated at St Paul’s School and St Catharine’s College, Cambridge and became a successful physics master at Wellington College, Sandhurst. He was the first professional schoolmaster that DBS had as Headmaster.

Upon his arrival, the School bore a huge debt of \$145,000, and was in danger of being taken over by the government, possibly for use by the Central British School. With intelligence and determination, Mr. Sargent saved the School in three ways. First, he appealed for donations and asked every member of the School Committee to endorse an interest-free loan. Second, he sold the ridge east of the present-day drive to The Kadoorie Estate and concluded a deal with the government so that the School’s mortgage rate would be reduced drastically. Third, he opened new classes,



DBS steps c. 1930’s



DBS campus c. 1930's

raised the school fees and redecorated the campus, making the building look new, light, fresh and airy. Classes filled up rapidly, and the School's reputation, together with its income, went up by leaps and bounds, with all debts cleared by around 1940.

It was in Mr. Sargent's days that the school magazine was born, in July 1934 originally as a biannual publication, and from the third issue onwards it was named "Steps" by The Reverend L. L. Nash. Mr. Sargent's deep love of music laid the foundations for the musical traditions in the School, where he was



DBS Hall c. 1930's



DBS Boarding School c. 1930's

music master as well. He had a collection of opera records and every Friday night he conducted a programme on opera over RTHK. Sports and extracurricular activities were also encouraged. He founded the boy scout troop in 1932, re-established prize-giving on Speech Day, and continued Mr. Featherstone's tradition of summer tours. When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, a Shoe Shining Club was organised under the support of Mr. Sargent to raise funds for the Nationalist Government, and boys went to schools around Hong Kong, polishing shoes for both teachers and students.



Cover of 1939 Steps

The eloquence, negotiating skills and entrepreneurial methods of Mr. Sargent saved the School and successfully revived its excellent reputation. His short tenure was a time of consolidation after a period of rapid expansion.

In order to provide pastoral care to the students, Mr. Sargent was ordained, and later in 1938 he was consecrated as the Assistant Bishop (later Bishop) of the Diocese of Fukien (Fujian), which forced him to resign from DBS. Bishop Sargent carried out a remarkable ministry, but his extraordinary life was unfortunately cut short when he fell sick and passed away in Fujian in August 1943.



DBS Shoe Shining Club

THE HOUSE THEY BUILT, FROM AGE TO AGE

1938-1955: Goodban made the School the best of its kind

In 1938 Mr. Gerald Archer Goodban (葛賓先生) was recruited by Bishop Ronald Owen Hall to succeed The Rt. Rev. Sargent, whom he resembled in several respects – a professional schoolmaster, able, young and musical. He was born in Chiswick, West London, England on March 13th 1911. After graduating from Tonbridge School, he won an open classical scholarship to attend Lincoln College, Oxford, reading Greats (as the classics are called there). He graduated in 1933 and became a classics master at Bishop's Stortford College, and was also the travelling secretary of the Student Christian Movement.



Mr. Gerald Archer Goodban

Attracted by the international characteristics of DBS and its orphanage aspect, he accepted the offer by Bishop Hall despite the Sino-Japanese War having broken out in 1937. Mr. Goodban further promoted musical education, taking the lead in forming the Hong Kong Schools Music Association in 1940, and also taking part in organising and establishing the Interschool Society of Music and Drama. On top of administrative duties, he also taught subjects such as English language, English literature, history and scripture.

In the midst of the war, the students showed their support for the Nationalist Government with patriotic fervour, as shown by the formation of the Shoe Shining Club prior to Sargent's departure. In May 1939, a student strike resulted when a Taiwanese student, who had the best qualifications, was appointed Senior Prefect, as Taiwan at the time was governed by Japan and he was thus technically a Japanese subject.

With the Black Christmas in 1941, Hong Kong was taken over by the Japanese army. The School was occupied by the Kempeitai and used as a military hospital to serve Japanese soldiers. Many, including Mr. Goodban's staff, who had joined the Royal Hong Kong Regiment at the outbreak of the Pacific War, were interned at prisoner of war (POW) camps, and

Mr. Goodban was in the Shamshuipo POW camp. Many old boys joined the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps and more than 50 of them sacrificed their lives in the defence of their homeland. They are commemorated by the War Memorial Tablet outside the School Hall which was unveiled in 1949 by Henry Gittins, an old boy, who had lost a son and two sons-in-law during the war.



DBS campus under Japanese occupation

Though the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, the School was still occupied by Japanese patients. It was not until March 1946 that Mr. Young Saye, together with four boys, took over the vacated School. Mr. Oswald V. Cheung (張奧偉先生) and Mr. Bertram John Millen Monks acted as Headmaster successively until Mr. Goodban's return in November. He immediately started restorations as he resumed office.

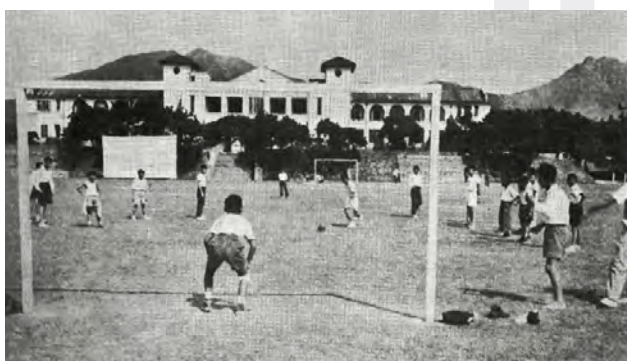
In the first few years, "Steps" was re-initiated, the Sargent Memorial Chapel was dedicated and the tuck shop was opened. In 1949 a new house system, together with the Piercy Challenge Shield, was introduced. The existing five houses were named after Mr. Sykes and four previous Headmasters, i.e. Messrs. Arthur, Piercy, Featherstone and Sargent. As



Construction of the old gymnasium, music, geography and art rooms

the School continued to flourish, a new gymnasium, music, geography and art rooms, a science wing and the Headmaster's House were built, and the construction of all but the science wing was completed in 1952. The Diocesan Preparatory School with classes from Primary 1 to 4 was opened next to Christ Church on Waterloo Road in the same year.

Mr. Goodban was a strict disciplinarian, and he introduced the school uniform in the same year, to foster a sense of community and to eliminate “exotic” or untidy appearance. His sense of charity was evident, as he espoused giving through the Gift Day Fund, whereby a small sum of money, usually ten or twenty cents, was collected from each student on a voluntary basis every Monday morning and the money collected was donated to needy organisations.



The field in 1952

In 1953 Mr. Goodban submitted his resignation because his children had to return to England for schooling as one of them required special care which was not available in Hong Kong. Mr. Goodban’s philosophy of providing an all-round education became a guiding principle for his successors, and he was regarded as outstanding by many people at that time. Words of admiration from Governor Grantham at the 1948 Speech Day spoke of Mr. Goodban’s dedication and hard work: “I have met a great number of old boys from this school and I have come to have the highest regard for them and from them I have judged the school.”



Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Goodban at Christ Church

In April 1955 the School bade farewell to the man who made it the best of its kind in Hong Kong. After returning to England, he taught in turn at Charterhouse School, Rugby College and Marlborough College. In 1959, he succeeded as the principal of the King’s School, Grantham, and stayed until retiring in 1972. He passed away in 1989 at the age of 78.

1955-1961: The boys one thousand-strong, embraced by George She’s egalitarian ethos



The Reverend George Samuel Zimmern

The Reverend George Samuel Zimmern (施玉麒牧師), also known as Canon George She, was the first local citizen, Eurasian and old boy to become Headmaster. Born on February 17th 1904, he attended DBS, followed by Oxford University in England where he read Modern Greats (philosophy, politics and economics). He came first in the General Ordination Examination at St. Augustine’s College, Canterbury in 1933 and was qualified as a barrister-at-law in Gray’s Inn, London in 1934.

Before returning to DBS, he was a priest, barrister and magistrate, and also a famous social activist who engaged in founding charities and reviving schools



Student life in the 1950’s

that were closed during the war, being in charge of education in Sheng Kung Hui. He was master of St. John’s College, and as a close friend and supporter of Bishop Hall, who played a vital role in contributing to social welfare in the colony, he was one of the founders of the Street Sleepers’ Shelter Society, the Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs Association, the Housing Society and a number of workers’ children’s schools. After the war he was ordained as a deacon and then a priest of St. John’s Cathedral, which he helped to save from bankruptcy.



Construction of the New Wing

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Bishop Hall's determination to appoint Rev. She as the next Headmaster reflected his foresight that Hong Kong would one day be returned to China, and thus his view that it was necessary to initiate the process of making the School a more indigenous institution over a period of time, believing that a gradual transition of leadership from European to Eurasian to Chinese would be most appropriate.

Rev. She was a soft-hearted man, determined to help the poor. He saw the expansion in the population of Hong Kong, and he knew his mission in the School was to increase the accommodation to help bear the burdens on society that would come as a result of the population growth. In the short six years of his headmastership, the number of students rose from under 700 to nearly 1,100. He opened the school gates to boys from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and introduced the Garden Fête in 1955 to raise funds for needy students. He also practised the principle of ethnic equality within the School and helped to affirm the dignity of Chinese in the School's culture.



The Rev. George She

Rev. She founded Goodban House in 1956, and during his time the New Wing, including the science wing, was completed. He also built heavily on the solid foundation in music. The School Orchestra was organised in the same year and Chinese instruments classes were started in 1960, which laid the foundation for the formation of the Chinese Orchestra. The School won the trophy for the Best Boys Choir in the Music Festival in 1957 and 1958.

Rev. She always regarded himself as a "caretaker" of the School and felt that Mr. Lowcock should follow in the footsteps of Sargent and Goodban – to be a young headmaster and take on the responsibility as early as possible so as to fully utilise his talents. In 1961, Rev. She retired and joined his family in Bristol, England.



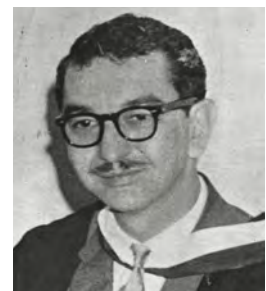
The first School Fete in 1955

Before his departure he was appointed honorary canon of St. John's College. Rev. She worked at Bristol Cathedral School for seven years from 1962 onwards, and was made priest-in-charge of Christ Church with St. Ewen in the City of Bristol until his death on November 19th 1979.

The essence of Rev. She and his headmastership could perhaps be seen through Bishop Hall's words of address to DBS, on the occasion of Rev. She being appointed honorary canon: "If as a Bishop of the Church I could do what I liked, I would establish a new Doctorate, a Doctorate of Christian Charity. The first award would go to your Headmaster, though I know he would say that any kind of honorific recognition of Christian Charity is abhorrent to such a holy and sacred thing. It is a man's heart that is the final test of true manhood. Those of you, both staff and students, who have let your Headmaster infect you with his generous warm-heartedness will have found the most important thing that can be found in school, or Church, or in everyday life."

1961-1983: Lowcock strove for the School's freedom, and ignited amongst its boys the spark of independence

Mr. Sydney James Lowcock (郭慎墀先生) was born to a family of British and Parsee descent in Hong Kong on December 11th 1930. He was the great-grandson of Henry Lowcock, one of the earliest School Committee members of the DHO. His father, also



Mr. Sydney James Lowcock

named Henry, who was a merchant and civil engineer, died during his service with the Royal Air Force in World War II in Karachi in 1943. He and his family were taken as POWs by the Japanese in 1942 when living in Canton, and were interned in Shanghai. They were among the last to be arranged as exchange for Japanese POWs and subsequently travelled by boat to Lourenço Marques in Portuguese East Africa (now Maputo, Mozambique), followed by travels to India where they lived till the end of the war. Mr. Lowcock attended Karachi Grammar School until his return to Hong Kong towards the end of 1946, and the next year he enrolled at DBS, followed by admission to the University of Hong Kong eighteen months later to study physics. One year after his graduation in 1952,



Graduation dance in 1964

he was recruited by Mr. Goodban and returned to DBS, teaching physics and also taking up the role of sportsmaster. Bishop Hall had intentions for him to eventually take over as Headmaster, and he succeeded his remote cousin Rev. She in 1961.

After assuming office, Mr. Lowcock decentralised the administration by appointing teachers to posts with designated responsibilities, such as senior master, bursar, warden, and careers master. He relaxed a number of rules to make life easier for the students – white to grey trousers during the drought to decrease the laundry frequency, and a simplified school blazer badge for lower costs, among other measures. An adaptable and can-do approach meant that school would run uninterrupted in spite of the elements or other disturbances in the city. Hampered redecoration work and roof repair due to inclement weather and typhoons would not take out morning assembly, but instead take it out into the



DBS campus in 1977



Class photo with Mr. Jacland Lai

open on the lawn. During the riots of 1967, night and dawn patrols by senior boarders, sometimes led by the Headmaster, watched over the School, which carried on its daily routines.

The main celebration of the Centenary took place in October and November of 1969, by which time the New New Wing and the swimming pool had been added to the campus. The School was open to the public, to view a diverse range of students' exhibitions, demonstrations, and performances. At the invitation of Mr. Lowcock, Mr. William J. Smyly, a previous teacher, started the school history project in the late 1960's. Though not eventually published, the manuscript includes materials and interviews now regarded as treasures.

In a time of many policy changes in the education sector, Mr. Lowcock fought hard to provide students with continuity in their



Inter-school athletics meet

education and in an inclusive manner. He tried to keep the primary section (P5 and P6) in the School, as he believed that the boys who entered DBS in Primary 5 would not need to sit for the Secondary Schools Entrance Examination and would thus be more able to enjoy the all-round education provided by the School. He was also most unhappy about a ruling which meant the School would lose its free hand to admit students from overseas. However, he managed to prevent the

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Inter-school athletics meet

government from segregating the students into three-year and five-year tracks, by winning support for an equal number of streams per form from Forms 1 to 5. He was adamant that for the boys to be loyal to the School, the School had to first be loyal to them.

Mr. Lowcock said: “Thomas Jefferson once spoke about American government. He said that the government that governs least is best. Least is best. With due appreciation for the overall guidelines, it seems to me that this can also be said of education.” And so his laissez faire approach induced and permitted a blossoming of entrepreneurial initiatives from the students, including some social and civic experimentation, such as a student vote on the length of the lunch hour, and when the kitchen was temporarily taken over by the boarders. With regard to disciplining via caning, while Mr. Lowcock was not the first Headmaster to implement such a measure, his use of the cane was memorable to his boys to say the least; at times it carried a lesson on collective responsibility, and in many cases was deemed a badge of pride for a Lowcock boy.

The School became not only a major force in athletics but was also an enthusiastic and strong player in music and other activities.

The Apple Race was introduced in 1969, and the Timing Squad was formed. “Olympus” (吡報), a monthly news-sheet introduced in 1963, was later discontinued and revived as “Not Rigmorole” (粹聞) in 1978, and “Steps” acquired its Chinese name 集思 in 1974.



Governor's centenary visit

In 1983, Mr. Lowcock announced his retirement due to poor health, a shock to both staff and students. On departure it was realised that his retirement fund had nearly been depleted since most of his income was spent on his boys, and without fanfare the old boys found for him a house in Clear Water Bay. In these quiet and peaceful surroundings, Mr. Lowcock found his inner strength and regained his health and wits, and also wrote a collection of short stories, “Seven Grains of Rice”. He passed away in Hong Kong on January 26th 2012 at the age of 81.

1983-2000: Traditions preserved under Lai, who guided the School to new heights



Mr. Jacland Lai

Mr. Jacland Lai (黎澤倫先生) was the first Chinese Headmaster of the School. He was an old boy and an experienced teacher who had worked in DBS for over 20 years, and his deep-rooted associations with the School ran throughout his entire family. He set out as Headmaster to preserve the traditions that have made DBS unique, relating a Christian education to the ever-changing life of the community, and he held on to the values of serving the community, offering students opportunities to grow into the very best, openness and trust within the School, and the deep love and loyalty students have for the School that has persisted across generations.

Mr. Lai worked hard to establish more scholarships, prizes and awards for achievement in both academic and extracurricular activities, including the re-introduction of school colours. He marked the School's 120th anniversary in 1989 with the publication “Perpetuation”, covering a brief school history, and the first Parents' Day was introduced in 1993, in order to provide a formal occasion for parents to meet with the teachers.



Speech Day in the late 1990's



Inter-school athletics Grand Slam in 1991

Despite a level of prudence needed in spending and the difficulty of obtaining funding from the government for repairs and upkeep, Mr. Lai oversaw a number of renovations and modernisation during his time such as the building of the Language Laboratory and Demonstration Room, the rewiring of school premises, the repainting of the school walls, and the computerisation of the School with the setup of the computer rooms throughout the campus.



Inter-school basketball

Under Mr. Lai the School reached new heights in both academic and non-academic pursuits. An increasing number of students received distinctions in various subjects each year in both the HKCEE and HKALE examinations, leading to more DBS boys being accepted into top universities worldwide, and for the HKCEE in 2000 the School achieved a 100% pass-rate for the first time in its history. Orators, musicians and sportsmen of the School achieved outstanding results – 18 firsts in the Speech Festival for one year, 14 titles in the Music Festival for another year, and multiple claims to the Omega Rose Bowl, after not having won it in 18 years.

After 17 years of loyal service, Mr. Lai retired in August 2000. His devotion to the School, perseverance and compassion for the students gained him wide respect in both the School and wider education circles in Hong Kong.

2000-2012: The new millennium under Chang, a time of unparalleled expansion and change



Mr. Terence Chang

Mr. Terence Chang (張灼祥先生), an old boy who had served as principal at three other schools, was appointed to succeed Mr. Lai in 2000 as the ninth Headmaster of DBS, and with the new millennium came a time of new challenges in the education sector, as well as achievement milestones and momentous changes for the School.

During Mr. Chang's early days as Headmaster, the Student Council and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) were formed. In 2002, the School Committee decided to move DBS from aided to join the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) which eventually took effect on September 1st 2003. Additionally, the through-train primary school, known as the Diocesan Boys' School Primary Division (DBSPD), had its first and partial intake of students in 2004, and it further expanded its intake of students aged between 6 and 12 in 2005. The staff development programme became a regular and increasingly frequent feature, and in 2010 the School was authorised as an International Baccalaureate (I.B.) World School.



The opening of the DBSPD in 2004

THE HOUSE THEY BUILT, FROM AGE TO AGE



The 6th World Choir Games in 2010

Under Mr. Chang's tenure, a number of buildings were erected, namely the Primary Division (2004), the Mrs. Tsai Ming Sang Building (2005, also known as the School Improvement Project, or SIP), the Samuel Tak Lee Building (also known as the Sports and Dormitory Complex), the Michiko Miyakawa Building (also known as the I.B. Building, which also houses the St. Augustine's Chapel) and the Yunni & Maxine Pao Auditorium. Because of the physical expansion, some old buildings and facilities were demolished, including the Headmaster's House and the Gymnasium Complex (including the Art Room, the Geography Room and the Music Room). However, new facilities were introduced including the Chi Track on the school field and the Glass Pavilion. A bird's eye view of the campus over the years would have shown a constant map of buildings for over three decades since the late 1960's (when the New New Wing and the swimming pool were completed), followed by significant transformations all in the new millennium.

The students' accomplishments continued to shine, extending the scope and boundaries of participation and achievement, and their school life saw changes that also reflected the School's heritage and history. Worldwide and international competitions became new arenas of pursuit for the School's musicians, who brought home many wins and trophies, and many sportsmen were selected to represent Hong Kong in international and open competitions. Exchange programmes brought students from other Hong Kong schools and from overseas to the campus, and Speech Days with students invited to give a speech became a tradition again, which was something that Mr. Featherstone would do back in the 1920's. George She House and Lowcock House were also founded during Chang's time to honour the sixth and seventh Headmasters of the School.

On September 1st, 2011 Mr. Chang declared his retirement the coming August, and on Speech Day the following January, the appointment of Mr. Ronnie Cheng, Deputy Headmaster and Music Maestro, as Headmaster-designate was announced by The Right Reverend Louis Tsui, Chairman of the School Committee.

The perpetuation of heritage under Cheng

Mr. Cheng is the tenth Headmaster and the fifth old boy to lead the School. At his first beginning-of-academic-year address to the School, he thanked Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Lai, the role models and father figures who were Headmasters when he was a student – the first of many roles he has played at the School since then: student conductor, Music Maestro, Dean of Culture, and now Headmaster.

The achievements continue unabated, and new peaks continue to be scaled by the boys, with their Headmaster loving and supporting them all the way. The story continues to be written, but what matters the most is not the details of what summits are reached in what year, but that the story carries on, and does so in the spirit as delineated by Mr. Cheng's words, at his Headmaster's memorial service: "Dearest Mr. Lowcock, I cannot promise you that we will never fail. But I promise you that we will never fail to try."



The tenth Headmaster, Mr. Ronnie Cheng

This summary of the history of DBS borrows heavily, in terms of both photos and text, from the book "To Serve and To Lead: A History of the Diocesan Boys' School", and for this we, the Dinner Committee, would like to express our heartfelt thanks, appreciation, and gratitude to the authors, Mr. Fung Yee Wang of the Class of 1955, and Dr. Moira Chan-Yeung, also of the Class of 1955, who, as a student of the Diocesan Girls' School, studied at DBS for three years, and whose grandfather, father, husband, brothers and brothers-in-law either studied or taught at DBS.

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