

Oldbury Grammar School

(or a Brief History of Times Gone By)

Nov 1903	Oldbury District Council proposal to form new secondary school
Sept 1904	Oldbury Secondary School opens in Flash Road CHH Walker appointed Headmaster at £200 pa School has 49 students, 60 pupil teachers and 3 other staff
July 1905	First Speech Day
Aug 1905	New school prospectus. Fees set at £3 per annum
May 1906	First School concert
1907	First football, hockey and cricket matches against other local schools
Oct 1908	P Henderson appointed Headmaster
Nov 1908	First Old Pupils Association meeting
Dec 1908	Library founded with 100 books
Aug 1911	GH Crisp appointed Headmaster Number of pupils has dropped to 79 and only stay average of 3 years
Dec 1912	Radical reform of curriculum to include "Commercial Subjects" eg shorthand
Jan 1913	Streaming of classes begins
July 1913	First University successes
1914	First proper playing fields in local park
July 1915	Formation of Cadet Corps
1915	Extension to buildings
Mar 1919	First temporary gymnasium at local Drill Hall
Sept 1919	School now grown to 238 pupils and 14 staff
May 1920	First "Olburian"
June 1920	Sudden death of Crisp - "a brilliant and enthusiastic reformer"
Sept 1920	JG Howarth appointed Headmaster
Dec 1920	Revival of Speech Day (suspended during 1914-18 War) School song "40 years on" is sung at Speech Day Four "Houses" established - Kings, Queens, School and Trinity
July 1921	Return of Sports Day
Dec 1921	2nd "Olburian" printed by WH Smith and Son
May 1922	Moat Farm sports ground used for the first time
Jan 1923	First free school places
Aug 1924	First Girl Guides meet under Miss Tweedie (1923-65)
Nov 1924	First plans for a new school
Sep 1926	First music Society formed by TL Davies, FRCM (1914-49) First PTA meeting First School play organised by Mrs SAG Jones (1921-57)
Oct 1926	New School opened in Moat Road on site of playing fields; Cost £37,000 Name changes to The County High School, Oldbury
Dec 1926	New School song written with words by Howarth and music by Davies
July 1927	Outdoor swimming bath opened
Oct 1927	Memorial window to 8 boys killed in action in World War I
Aug 1928	Joint Societies formed by Mrs Jones
1932/33	Sixth form has grown to 38 pupils and fees to £12 per annum
June 1936	JG Howarth retires
July 1936	Dr CC Howard appointed Headmaster

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- Preparatory department closed
- 1937 Major redesign of School layout with new Domestic Science lab, Gymnasium, Art room and larger Library, Geography and Music rooms.
- July 1937 First presentation of Jephcott House Championship Athletic Cup
Retirement of Miss Massey who had been senior Mistress since 1914 and replaced by Mrs Quayle (1914-53)
- 1941 Continuing music festivals under TL Davies and plays under Mrs SAG Jones
Dinner Scheme established with cook and 2 assistants at cost of 6 pence
Shortage of wood means Woodwork replaced by Gardening
- 1944 Education Act changes School name from County High to Oldbury Grammar although not formally used until Speech Day 1947
- 1945 Number of pupils exceeds 500 with 42 in the sixth form
Dr Eric Dawes university scholarship established
Joint Societies resumed
- 1946 Cresconians revived and Amateur Dramatic Society re-formed
- May 1948 Two memorial tablets unveiled by School Captains to the dead of two wars
- Autumn 1948 School orchestra formed
- Aug 1950 Student Christian Movement meets for first time
- 1951 Boys gym club and cross-country running started
General and Higher School Certificate replaced by GCE
- July 1951 400 pupils went to Festival of Britain in London
- 1952 Gramophone Society founded by Mr JB Richards (1922-65)
- June 1952 First School Leavers' Dance and first "Cresconians" Ball
- June 1953 Coronation marked by new stage furniture designed by Mr FL Hawley (1930-66) and a book "Elizabeth our Queen" given to every pupil
- 1954 School Jubilee Year and Organ Fund started
- June 1955 Outdoor swimming pool - which had been declared unfit for human use in 1951(!) - finally covered in asphalt
Beard Cup for National Savings presented for first time to School House
Revival of Cresconians Annual Dinner
- May 1956 Dawes Memorial Organ dedicated and played by Dr FE Dawes
- March 1957 Sudden death of Mr BC Pearson after 30 years
- June 1957 Miss SAG Jones retires after 36 years
- June 1958 Miss JM French retires after 37 years
- 1957/8 Most successful football season ever; Played 24 Drew 1 Lost 0; Goals for 149 against 29. Won Birmingham Schools Cup for 2nd time
- Feb 1958 First performance by School Dance Orchestra led by Mr JS Eacott (1939-72)
- 1959 Junior Dramatic Society starts
- Autumn 1960 New School stage completed and used for "The Beautiful One" and Writers' Circle had first meeting both under Mr H Laycock (1951-73)
- 1961/62 First overseas teachers from USA and Malaya
- Aug 1961 First part of new Science Block completed
- 1962 This led to enlargement of Geography room and kitchens
- July 1963 Dr CC Howard retires after 27 years

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- Aug 1963 HA Aykroyd appointed Headmaster
1963 onwards Numerous clubs spring up; Chess, Debating, Angling, Judo, Stamps etc.
Feb 1964 First Careers Convention
1964 Significant changes to curriculum bring in Economics, General Studies and course leading to O/A-levels in Music
Jazz Group and French Choir formed
1966-67 Keith White becomes National Schools high-jump champion and represents England against France
1967-68 Football team wins Birmingham Schools cup in two successive seasons
1968 Retirement of Mr JB Richards (44 years), Miss DF Tweedie (42 years), Mr FL Hawley (36 years), Miss GM Firth (29 years) and Mr Mitten (Caretaker for 40 years)
- Aug 1970 LE Jennings appointed Headmaster
1971 Formation of Parents' Association
Start of external 3-week residential courses for pupils in geography, geology, biology and history
Reintroduction of teaching German
June 1971 Joint Societies replaced by Sixth Form Society
June 1972 Speech Day held by candlelight after electricity cut during strike
1972/73 School Rock Group 'Leviathan' and Madrigal Group formed
Mar 1973 Death of Mr H Laycock after illness (23 years)
Dec 1973 Proposals for reorganisation of Secondary Education in County Borough of Warley accepted
Feb 1974 Final Speech Day

OLDBURY GRAMMAR SCHOOL officially ceased to exist on 31st August 1974

In conclusion, I reproduce here part of the epitaph written in 1980 by Mr AAL Pearce - History Master (1948-1974 : died Sept 2000) - at the end of his book about the School and to whom I extend a great debt of thanks for his assistance with these notes....

"The objectives to which the school directed its pupils with varying degrees of success were excellence and quality, both of intellect and personality, in a belief that the needs of the able were as important as, though different from, the needs of the less able...

Almost seventy years ago the Headmaster, CHH Walker expressed the hope that from Oldbury Secondary School "...there will be some who will pass in due course from the School to the universities and take prominent places in the learned professions..." His hopes for the future have been abundantly fulfilled..

Oldbury Grammar School.... set an example which succeeding generations of pupils and teachers may emulate and equal but will find very difficult to surpass."

AALP 1980

Semper floreat praestantia

Tony Newey (1951-59)