



THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

### COWBRIDGE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

The school at Cowbridge was originally known as "Cowbridge Free School" and was founded in 1608 by the Strading family of St. Donats Castle. Sir Leoline Jenkins bought the school from the Stradings and bequeathed it to Jesus College, Oxford who remained in charge until 1919 when Glamorgan Education Committee took over. It became known as "Cowbridge Grammar School in the year 1862/63.

The school is situated near the South Gate of the town and the original buildings of Sir John Strading stood until 1847, although in the 1730's they were in need of repair and a boarders' dining room, chimney and the school's first fireplace were added. These buildings eventually fell into total disrepair and, in 1847, one, Hugo Daniel Harper, agreed to become headmaster on the condition that the school was renovated. This was duly agreed by Jesus College, Oxford and the final adjustments of a dining room and master's house were completed in 1852. Successive headmasters complained bitterly about the inadequacy of the building. From time to time various buildings have been added to the original, including a playshed and carpenter's hall in 1894, and in 1898 the corridor and adjoining classrooms. In two of these classrooms "Founders" and "Seys" stained glass panels were erected bearing the arms of the founder and benefactors of the school. In 1903 the present bell was hung. In 1932 the school took possession of the Old Hall (the present Adult Centre) which considerably helped the problem of accommodation. The official opening of the new Gymnasium and Dining Hall took place in September 1938. During 1949-50 two new form rooms and a sixth-form chemistry laboratory were added, and a biology laboratory in 1956. In 1964 the Old Hall was closed down and temporary classrooms erected in Mill Lane.

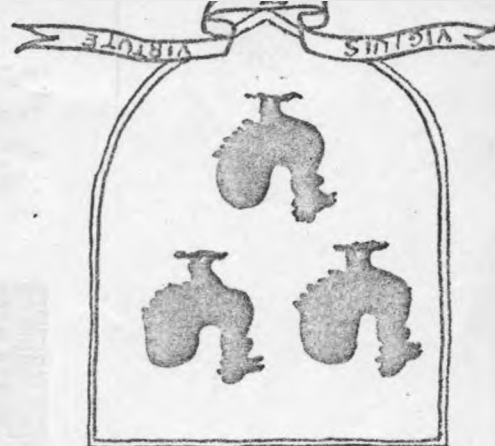
During the school's first century it was dominated by its founders, the Stradlings and Sir Leoline Jenkins, and then in 1721 one, Daniel Durel, became headmaster and remained there for forty-two years, during which time the numbers in the school rose and declined periodically. The syllabus was a classical one, with Hebrew being taught to the boarders on Sundays for an additional fee of £1 or £2 per annum. A steady stream of boys went up to Jesus College, Oxford as Sir Leoline Jenkins had envisaged. In later years Durel's health declined and he retired at Christmas 1763, but during his time he contributed towards the cost of a new ring of bells with his name being inscribed on the second. Until 1847, the school still functioned as in the days of Durel.

In the 1840's education in Wales went under strict review and especially the lack of knowledge of the English Language in Wales. Cowbridge school fell into decline around this period, mainly because there were no longer closed awards to Oxford, and free boys were educated at the school. It was less attractive to fee payers. However, under a new headmaster, Thomas Williams, the school flourished again with the number of day boys expanding as never before. He was succeeded by the Rev. J.C. Morson in 1870 under whom the school achieved academic distinction never known before or since.

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After Morson's headship there ensued series of discussions, letters and petitions which finally led to the transfer of control of the school from Jesus College, Oxford to Glamorgan Education Committee in 1919. During some of these discussions it was decided that a separate day school for girls was to be set up in Cowbridge on a site remote from the Grammar School.

During all these lengthy legal battles, the school still functioned daily. A school magazine "The Bovian" began in March 1894 and was issued once a term until 1974. In this magazine in June 1900 was the first mention of the Cowbridge High School for Girls. An Old Boys' Association was formed in 1903, the first Old Boys' dinner being held in the Park Hotel, Cardiff on the 26th November, 1903.

Mr. Richard Williams assumed the post of headmaster in January 1919 and eventually on 9th October, 1919 the final version of the long fought-over plans were passed by King George V and came into being one month later. The school was now in the hands of Glamorgan Education Committee.

During Richard Williams' headship the proportion of day boys to boarders increased and also during the twenties debating and amateur dramatic societies and two orchestras were formed, due mainly to the efforts of a Mr. E.A. Reid. Now a Reid Memorial Prize for English is awarded annually. Annual sports and rugby (in 1874 Cardiff R.F.C. played their first away match against Cowbridge Grammar School) were still played, the highlight of each rugby season being an away match which, in the Cardiff area, was followed by afternoon tea at the Carlton Hotel - long since demolished.

In 1938 Mr. J. Idwal Rees became headmaster. The school was not affected by the war, although some evacuees came to Cowbridge. During the war each form raised money to buy guns or ammunition.

In 1942 the house system was revised, now with only four houses, Seys, Durel, Leoline and Stradling. On 9th November, 1949 the School's Memorial to the old boys fallen during the war was dedicated.

In 1951, under the Education Act of 1944, the School became a County School, maintained by the County. The headmaster was no longer in charge of the boarding house but maintained everything on behalf of the County. Cowbridge Grammar School was made an ordinary County Grammar School bearing the title "Cowbridge (B) Grammar", the letter 'B' standing for boys. In 1953 school uniform was made compulsory.

In 1958-59 the 350th anniversary of the school was honoured by a series of functions which ended with a summer concert in July 1959.

Boarders remained in the school until July 1975.