

# A History of St Chad's College 1925 – 1975

## FIFTY YEARS

The passing of the Education Act of 1902 which provided for the extension of education to the secondary stage presented a new challenge and financial burden to Catholics if they were to provide their own secondary schools. This challenge was accepted and from that time great efforts were made to establish Catholic secondary schools wherever they were needed.

The lack of a Catholic secondary school for boys in Wolverhampton had long been felt and, indeed, emphasised by the fact that there existed for girls the long established Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, conducted by the Sisters of Mercy. The nearest grammar school for boys was St. Philip's, Birmingham, too distant to serve the Catholic population of Wolverhampton and neighbouring towns.

Such was the situation in 1923 when a young priest, Fr. Maurice Woulfe, was appointed to the parish of Wednesfield. His church was a temporary building; there was neither presbytery nor school, neither primary nor secondary. In spite of all the work before him he considered that the most essential task was the provision of a secondary school for boys.

It so happened that in 1924 there came on to the market a property that would be very suitable for the establishment of a school — Oldfallings Hall. Fr. Woulfe had already obtained permission from; Bishop Glancy to establish such a school, so on August 13th, 1924 he wrote to the Provincial of the Marist Brothers in Dumfries stating that " The clergy and laity of Wolverhampton are anxious to start a secondary school for our Catholic boys in this district where such a school is a great necessity ..... We have got a very fine site for the school within two miles of the centre of Wolverhampton town. There is a good substantial residence — Fallings Hall — of large dimensions occupied by Sir Richard Paget until twelve years ago. The grounds contain 13 acres, about 8 acres of fields, a beautiful lawn, garden and kitchen gardens, stabling, coach-house, electric light, etc.

" The clergy of Wolverhampton and laity are willing to buy this site and offer it to one of the teaching Orders on condition that they will start a secondary school for us, a private one first, of course, and when all is ready, one approved and sanctioned for grants.

" The Director of Education here, the chairman and committee have promised to do everything in their power to have the school sanctioned, provided of course, the teachers have proper qualifications.

" This is a unique opportunity for your excellent Order to found an establishment here, so great a Catholic centre, and may I ask you, on behalf of the clergy, laity and our ecclesiastical superiors to consider the establishment of such a school and we shall readily present you with the site to show our goodwill ..... The clergy will be glad to know at once, this week, if there is any hope of obtaining the services of the Brothers."

How was it he chose to ask the Marist Brothers ? A friend of his had spoken to a Marist Superior in Ireland of Fr. Woulfe's great wish to establish a school and the Superior had said that if Fr. Woulfe would write to the Provincial, the proposal would probably be accepted.

In spite of Fr. Woulfe's urgent representations the Brothers were not able to commit themselves at once. On September 17th, 1924, Fr. Woulfe wrote to the Provincial, Brother Cyprrian, in reply to a letter from him. " I am disappointed that no decision has been reached. As you know, I have put in a bid for the Hall, but so far I have not had a reply as Sir Richard is away. As you know he is asking £4,000." (Fr. Woulfe's bid was £3,000). "Some of our Catholic people are suggesting an alternative site, Oxley Manor, on the Stafford Road ; but the price of that is £6,000. It is a more modern building, but I believe the district is not so healthy nor are the grounds so well laid out."

Fr. Woulfe's bid for £3,000 elicited a reply from Sir Richard : " Your intention to retain the Hall and the grounds in their present condition naturally appeals to me and so far as I legitimately can I shall be anxious to meet you in the matter of price for the sake of saving the Hall from destruction and leaving it in such good hands. On the other hand, the Hall and the grounds as perhaps you know, are not my own property ; I am only tenant for life, and in that capacity, though I have the right to sell the property, it must be at the full market value. I am afraid that £3,000 could not be taken to represent the full market value of the property."

Support for the proposed school came from Archbishop McIntyre who wrote to Canon Hymers on October 1st, 1924, requesting him to call a meeting of the clergy of the district to be served by the school so that they could express their approval and co-operation with the project. This meeting was held and on October 9th, 1924 the Archbishop wrote to Canon Hymers : " I thank you for your letter giving particulars of the meeting about the proposed school at Old Fallings. I am glad to learn that the idea was welcomed and that all present (with one exception) agreed to do their best to ' make it a success."

The next problem was that of raising the money to buy the property. This was a matter to be settled between the Diocesan Finance Board and the local clergy. After some discussion the chairman of the Finance Board assured Fr. Woulfe that the Diocese pledged itself to give all the financial support that was necessary to make the scheme a success, though it was expected that the local clergy would give guarantees proper and adequate in such a case.

Meanwhile on October 18th, 1924 the Provincial, Brother Eldred, had written to Fr. Woulfe : " The Provincial is not able to open a new school without the approval of the General Council of the Institute in Turin. In asking for approval we must be able to put before the General Council the conditions upon which we propose to open the new school."

These conditions were set out by Canon Hymers :

" The proposal is that if the land and premises known as Old Fallings Hall, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton, is secured, the Marist Brothers shall :

1. Open a private school not later than September 20th, 1925.
2. Proceed to erect buildings for a secondary school according to plans approved by the Bishop.
3. Carry on such a secondary school at their expense.

4. In case the school should not prove a success and the Marist Brothers wish to retire, they shall give the Diocese first refusal of the whole property (taking into account the amount already provided by the Diocese in purchasing the original property) and, in case the property is sold, the amount so provided by the Diocese to be the first charge on the proceeds."

These conditions were put before the General Council in Turin and approval was given for the opening of the school.

Fr. Woulfe now made a definite offer of £3,250 for the property and this was accepted by Sir Richard. Fr. Woulfe was then authorised to arrange with Mr. Vincent Gosling of Wilcox, Taylor & Co., Solicitors, the purchase, contract, transference of deeds, etc.

Even at this late hour there seemed to be some misunderstanding on the part of the diocesan authorities about the handing over of the property to the Marist Brothers. However, this difficulty was soon resolved. The documents were prepared, the necessary signatures appended and the hall and estate handed over to the Marist Brothers.

Very encouraging news was received by Canon Hymers in a letter dated January 22nd, 1925 from the Archbishop : "Five hundred pounds have been promised towards the repayment of the capital to be borrowed for the secondary school at Wolverhampton, provided that the like sum be raised by local effort for the same object by June 30th next." The date was subsequently made September 30th.

To take advantage of this generous offer Canon Hymers formed a small committee of clergy and laity to decide the best way of raising the money. They decided that a garden fete should be held at Fallings Park on Bank Holiday, August 3rd. This proved to be a very successful event and over £700 was realised.

Brother Liguori had been appointed headmaster of the new Marist school. Born at Tarmon, Drumkeerin, Co. Leitrim, he had entered the Marist Brothers Novitiate in Dumfries in 1902 and made his final profession in 1911. He graduated from the University of London with a Bachelor of Science Degree and was appointed in 1918 as Headmaster of St. Mary's Intermediate School, Athlone.

After three years there he was transferred to St. Joseph's, Dumfries, and later taught for some years at St. Mungo's Academy, Glasgow. He had shown outstanding ability as headmaster and teacher in these posts and was now called upon to be responsible for the founding and developing of this new Marist School. Two Brothers came to Wolverhampton with him. Brother Walthen and Brother Ralph.

His first task was to undertake alterations and new building to provide classrooms and other facilities. The work comprised the remodelling and conversion of the stable and coach house into three classrooms, the building of a toilet block and a verandah giving a sheltered walk between the new classrooms and the house. The work was completed at a cost of nearly £3,000.

In May, 1925, Brother Liguori was able to give notice to the Catholics of Wolverhampton that the school would open in September, that the syllabus would include all the subjects usually taught in secondary schools, and that the fee had been fixed provisionally at £10 a year.

On the opening day, September 22nd, 1925, there were in attendance 37 pupils who were formed into three classes and housed in what is now called the Old School, but perhaps, in spite of its expensive face-lift, more commonly referred to as 'the stables.' The name of the first pupil on the roll is that of Bernard Leo Marren and the first boy to arrive at the school on opening day was Gerald Holdcroft who was to be ordained a priest in 1950.

On September 25th, the College was formally opened by His Grace, Archbishop McIntyre. Solemn High Mass was celebrated at S.S. Peter and Paul, North Street, at the invitation of Canon Swift. Canon Hymers was the celebrant and Canon Villiers preached the sermon for the occasion. The blessing of the premises was performed by Mgr. Cronin.

During the year the number of pupils increased to 60 so that by the end of the year rooms in the Hall were being used for classrooms.

Another task to be undertaken at this time was to clear and level the orchard to convert it into a playing field. Brother Egbert, a member of the staff at the time, who was to return to the college later, recalls his impressions of these years in these words : " I recall the task of changing an old country house into a boarding college where some 60 pupils, full and half-time boarders and day students were living, eating and learning within the old ivy walls and lead roof. From the flat roof of the Hall one surveyed the country parklands, lanes, commons, etc. on all sides and the beginnings of

the new housing development schemes of Low Hill. The Brothers cleared the ground for games by pulling down the trees with bare hands and a pulley system. The lawn, Dutch garden, orchard and vegetable garden were the pride of life to all visitors."

The clearing of what is now the football field of its trees and the levelling of the ground was a major undertaking and Brother Liguori often told the story as an example of what could be accomplished by personal effort and perseverance.

Meanwhile the governors and headmaster had been negotiating with the Board of Education in order to secure recognition. The early correspondence did not seem to suggest that this would be easily obtained. However, in the early days of December 1926, the Board's Inspectors visited the school and as a result of their highly favourable report the college was placed on the list of efficient secondary schools and fully recognised for grant earning purposes to take effect from January 1st. 1927.

Further development of the school was seen in the advent of boarders in 1927 and the increase in the number of pupils to over 100. More accommodation was now necessary and the governors prepared plans for the building of a new school block. The new building would comprise three classrooms, a library, science laboratory and art room. Tenders for the new building were considered in March, 1928 and that of Messrs. M. A. Boswell, amounting to £6,040, was accepted.

The financing of the project was made possible by a loan from the Archbishop of Birmingham. The loan was to be repaid in annual sums of £600 beginning in 1931, the rate of interest being 5%.

The new school building was officially opened in 1929 before a gathering of the governors, local educationalists and friends of the college.

In his report to the Governors in December, 1929, the Headmaster stated that there were 130 pupils on the school roll; 15 of these were boarders. 79 pupils were from the County Borough, 40 from Stafford County and 11 from outside the County; in July, 9 pupils had sat the School Certificate Examination and 6 of these had returned to form the first Form Six. The Headmaster also pointed out that the full social and formative function of the college could not be attained until there was a school hall in which school assemblies, meetings of parents, dramatic and musical performances could be held. However, it was quite impossible to undertake the cost of such a building at that time.

After this meeting the governors went to the art room where they addressed the pupils and staff and the certificates gained in the July examination were distributed.

The further development of the college at this time was hampered by the financial situation. During the years 1925 to 1929 the Brothers had spent over £10,000 on the college and although the Wolverhampton Education Authority gave a grant-in-aid in 1928 of £400 and the Board of Education made a grant from 1927, the annual deficit was running at about £2,000. In these circumstances an application for a grant was made to the Staffordshire Education Authority, but no grant was given.

At the end of the school year in 1931, Brother Liguori had completed his six years of office as headmaster and director of the community, so according to the rule of the Institute resigned from these positions. His pioneering work at St. Chad's had been most successful; he had established the college on firm foundations and its subsequent development was to prove the success of his work. He was held in the highest regard by the clergy, educational officers and public representatives of the town. St. Chad's was fortunate in having for its first headmaster such an outstanding member of the Marist congregation.

Brother Louis was appointed to succeed Brother Liguori as headmaster and director of the community. He had spent some years at the Brothers' House of Studies where he was responsible for the training of future Brothers, had taught at St. Joseph's, Dumfries, and at the Marist School in Greenock, Renfrewshire.

Brother Louis found that St. Chad's was now a well established school of 145 pupils. In the previous summer 22 candidates had been presented for the Northern Universities Joint Board School Certificate Examination of whom 16 gained the School Certificate including 5 Matriculations. Four of these pupils had returned to Form Six to study for the Higher Certificate. Pupils had also been entered for the Prospective Teachers' Religious Examination.

With the increasing number of senior pupils in the school the prefect system was now introduced.

The lack of a gymnasium depriving the school of so many opportunities of developing extra activities was ever more keenly felt, so it was decided, in 1933, to build. The plans drawn up by the architect, Mr. E. Bower-Norris, were accepted, and the contract awarded to Mr. John McLean (Coven). Building work began in August and the gymnasium and classroom were ready for use after Christmas. The cost of the building was £2,000.

An official opening of the new gymnasium by His Grace, the Archbishop of Birmingham, the Most Reverend T. L. Williams, D.D., M.A. was held on May 3rd, 1934.

Another important event of the same year was the publication of the first school magazine under the title Blue and Gold and it has continued to be published annually, keeping more or less to the original format. The first issue contained articles on the history of Oldfallings, a brief survey of the development of the college during its first ten years, an article on the founder, Fr. Maurice Woulfe, a diary of events of the year with appropriate rye comment. House notes, reports on the

activities of the various societies, results of the sporting activities, contributions in prose and verse and an Old Boys' section.

The first issue set a pattern that apparently satisfied everyone and Blue and Gold has proved a valuable record of life at the college and a link between the school and past pupils ever since.

From this first issue it is seen that sporting activities had been well developed. House matches in football and cricket were a regular part of school life and there was a full fixture list of football and cricket matches with other schools. In athletics the results of seventh annual sports meetings were reported.

In 1935, Brother Louis introduced another event which also has become an annual occasion, namely, the distribution of prizes and certificates. The event was held in the gymnasium on November 14th, 1935. The Archbishop of Birmingham, the Most Reverend Thomas L. Williams was the guest speaker. Many parents and friends were present.

On this occasion Brother Liguori, the chairman, made special mention of the help the local education authority had given the school in all stages of its development whereas a neighbouring body " had never given the college their sympathy or even the blessing it had a right to expect."

These remarks referred to the fact that although about 40% of the boys were from the County of Staffordshire no grant-in-aid was received from the county.

The pattern of this first prizegiving day has been followed each year. For some years the event was held in the gymnasium, but as the number of pupils increased it was held in the Community Centre, Showell Circus, and still later in the Civic Hall in the town centre. In recent years, for reasons of expense, it has been held once more in the gymnasium.

In 1936 there were 180 pupils in the school and whereas until now the college had been staffed by Marist Brothers, there were made the appointments of the first laymen, Mr. H. Gilchrist, B.A., Mr. H. Twist, B.A. and Mr. O'Hara, B.A. The last named resigned at the end of the year to take up a post at Stonyhurst College and another layman, Mr. T. M. Martin, B.A. was appointed to the staff in 1937.

Brother Louis had now completed his six years as headmaster and director of the community and the Provincial and his Council decided to appoint him as headmaster of the new senior mixed school at Saltley, Birmingham. This became known to the governors before Brother Louis had tendered his resignation from St. Chad's.

The surprise and concern of the governors at this decision was expressed in a letter to the Provincial from Fr. Woulfe. He wrote that it was the opinion of the clergy that in the eyes of the local education authority the status of St. Chad's would suffer when it became known that its headmaster had been removed without reference to the governors to become headmaster in a school under a neighbouring authority ; they regretted the lowering of status of the headmaster of St. Chad's by removing him to become headmaster of a senior elementary school and that the education authorities in this country would be unwilling to appoint Religious if they could be appointed or removed at the will of superiors without reference to managers or governors ; the governors also feared that the departure of Brother Louis would gravely endanger both the tradition and good name enjoyed by the college.

In his reply the Provincial (Brother Liguori) wrote that he and his Council were quite confident that fears for the welfare of St. Chad's would be allayed when the new head was appointed ; that the resignation of Brother Louis would be formally made at the next governors' meeting ; that Canon Law insisted that superiors could not retain the direction of a house for more than six years. " As for the idea that the change would be in any sense a degradation for Brother Louis," he wrote " we do not think or act along those lines. When my period of office is over I may be sent to teach a class in an elementary school. If so, I hope to do it well ; at least, I shall try."

Brother Michael was appointed headmaster in 1937 in succession to Brother Louis and remained head until 1941. Brother Joseph Anthony joined the staff to teach French, having just returned to England after many years in the Argentine. Two other Brothers who are still teaching at the college joined the staff at this time ; Brother Godric in 1938 and Brother Anastasius in 1941.

A notable event of these years was the honour and privilege accorded the college of being chosen as the centre for the Birmingham Diocesan Eucharistic Congress in 1938. This was an event of national Catholic interest and was fully reported in the Press.

The " Express and Star " described the scene in these words : " The park field in front of the Marist College became a huge open air church on Tuesday. With the blue sky for roof and the gnarled columns of stately trees for pillars and the sun streaming brightly through the fresh green leaves, 5,000 people assembled for Pontifical High Mass in the morning. How deeply the roots of Wolverhampton go into the venerable past was brought vividly to the mind yesterday when among the stately trees of St. Chad's College, Roman Catholics from the Birmingham Diocese met at the Eucharistic Congress. Wolverhampton is a progressive, modern, industrial town it is true, but it was a centre of light and earnest faith centuries ago, and nothing could be more fitting, than that, amid the clangour and secularism of a modern Whitsuntide, thoughts should be turned to the more serious meanings of the season. It was anticipated that between 18,000 and 20,000 people attended the Congress and a special first aid post was kept busy during the heat of the day attending to fainting cases and minor casualties."

The " Catholic Times " gave the following description of the events of the day :  
" Wolverhampton was the scene on Whit Tuesday of the fourth and most successful of the

Birmingham Diocesan Eucharistic Congresses. The civic authorities seemed to be conscious of the honour. All through the streets and along the main roads to the town were to be seen specially prepared signs directing visitors to the Congress. All roads led to St. Chad's College. It proved a perfect spot for the Congress for there are many acres and beautifully wooded parks surrounding the college and, in the midst of these, in a gently sloping meadow the Congress altar had been erected. Flanked by wide screens and banked with scarlet geraniums and sheafs of lilies, the alfresco sanctuary made an impressive picture and there, gathered before it, were crowds which grew from five to six thousand for the Pontifical Mass in the morning to 20,000 in the evening when the great procession of the Blessed Sacrament took place.

The departure from the college of Brother Ralph in 1938 marked the severance of a link with the first days of the college. He had come with Brother Liguori and Brother Walthen and so was one of the pioneers who had helped prepare for the opening of the college. He had been sports master during his thirteen years at the college and had been the 'father' of the boarders, their counsellor and friend. Brother Andrew was appointed to replace him.

The building of the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes was undertaken at this time. It was the work of Brother Edward James, Mr. McGhee and some friends from the parish.

On the outbreak of war in 1939 the college had to remain closed until protection against air attack was provided. Four underground shelters were built alongside the football field and the school re-opened in November. The boys were instructed to carry their gas masks at all times, but gradually, as the danger of gas attack receded the practice fell into abeyance.

Although the work of the college continued for the rest of the war, there were many reminders of the war situation. The lay masters had left to join the Forces, senior pupils joined a unit of the Air Training Corps, work was undertaken for the Forestry Commission at the summer Forestry camps, the afternoon session now ended early to enable the boys to get home before black-out. One benefit resulting from the war was the Government's provision of a meals service and pupils were able to buy a mid-day meal served in the British Restaurant in Showell Circus. This wartime measure has continued in the school catering service since that time.

A memory of the war years is the visits to the college of Old Boys in the Forces before embarkation or when on leave, and the letters from all theatres of war. 171 Old Boys are known to have joined the Armed Forces. Of these, 24 made the supreme sacrifice of their life.

The Roll of Honour that hangs in the school corridor is a reminder of the sacrifice made by these brave and generous young men.

Brother Denis had succeeded Brother Michael as headmaster in 1941 and had guided the life of the college through the difficulties imposed by the war. He resigned in 1941 and Brother Brendan, who was then a member of the staff, was appointed in his place.

He had taught for many years at St. Joseph's College, Dumfries, before coming to St. Chad's to teach English.

An immediate matter that confronted the governors was the decision to be taken in relation to the Education Act of 1944 ; that is, whether it would be advisable to apply for Voluntary Aided Status and cease to be a direct grant school. The effects of this would be that fees would be abolished and that entry to the school would be open to all such pupils who would benefit from a grammar school education.

The education authority would assume responsibility for the maintenance of school supplies, interior repairs and the payment of the salaries of the teaching staff. It would also be responsible for the payment of other staff such as the caretaker, school cleaners, kitchen staff, etc.

There were many advantages for the Catholics of the area and for the college authorities to be gained from this new status, and application was made to the Ministry of Education for the college to be recognised as a Voluntary Aided school.

The application was successful and this status was granted from September 1st, 1945. One consequence of this was the decision to close the preparatory class and the small boarding section of the school. Both of these measures helped to make better use of the space available in the new circumstances.

Another matter to be considered were the plans published by the Wolverhampton Education Authority for the reorganisation of education in Wolverhampton in so far as they affected the college. In the proposed development it was suggested that St. Joseph's Secondary Modern School be associated with St. Chad's, as a bi-lateral secondary school which would provide in the new buildings all the requirements for the Catholic secondary boys. There would be two schools on the St. Chad's site, the heads of each school would be jointly responsible to the governors of the bi-lateral school. The cost was estimated at £105,000 for 600 pupils. Of this the owners would be required to contribute £52,000.

A meeting, suggested by the Director of Education, Mr. Lonsdale Mills, was held at the Convent of Mercy High School on November 30th, 1948. His Grace, Archbishop Masterson was in the chair and there were representatives of all interested parties. Although the scheme was considered to be beneficial from the social consequences it would have, it was thought that the property at St. Chad's, where the balance of field, park and buildings seemed just right, would be spoilt by the further encroachment of buildings. No decision was taken and these plans were, in fact, to be replaced by others.

The closure of the British Restaurant in 1946 posed a serious problem. Already there was need for further accommodation in the school and now room had to be found for 100 boys to take a mid-day meal. Efforts were made to have a canteen built, but without success. The only solution possible

was to use the gymnasium as a dining room.

After the morning teaching session, rolls of coconut matting were spread out to protect the floor, trestle tables and chairs set out and dinners served from the food containers that had arrived from the central kitchens. After dinner, the tables and chairs were stacked, the coconut matting rolled up and the hall was available again as a gymnasium. This very burdensome arrangement continued for many years and was only to end when further building was undertaken.

Brother Louis returned to the college as headmaster in 1948 and remained until his retirement in 1955.

The year 1950 marked the Silver Jubilee of the college and a number of events were arranged to celebrate the occasion.

On October 11th, the Feast of the Motherhood of Our Lady the school assembled at the church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Oldfallings, where a Solemn High Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated. The celebrant was the School Founder himself, assisted by Fr. Purcell and Fr. Wyles.

In the afternoon the senior boys took to the playing fields to take part in a jubilee football tournament. At 4 o'clock they adjourned to the gymnasium to enjoy a sumptuous meal. On the following afternoon it was the turn of the juniors. The special guest referees were two players from the Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club, Mr. Jimmy Mullen and Mr. Eddie Russell, an old boy of the college.

At social gatherings on each evening. Brother Louis gave an outline of the history of the college. An article in Blue and Gold describing the events of the day concludes : " Spiritually and materially we have celebrated our Silver Jubilee. When the time comes to mark the occasion of its Golden Jubilee, we feel sure that the pleasing memories of these past days will still be present in the minds of all the present pupils."

The additional classrooms to accommodate the larger number of boys who would be eligible now for grammar school education was becoming a matter of urgency and plans were prepared to enlarge the school for a second entry stream, which would, in effect, double the number of boys in the school.

The development was undertaken during the headmastership of Brother Thaddeus, who had come to the college in 1953 as Classics Master and who now, in 1955, was appointed Head.

The first stage of building provided a new wing consisting of two laboratories, one for biology and the other for physics, four classrooms and the provision of a cloakroom and offices by adapting two former classrooms. The tender of William Whittingham Ltd. was accepted and the work was completed in 1960. In September of that year 60 new boys were admitted, thus making the first two-form entry.

In 1961 the second stage of extension was begun. This provided for five classrooms, an art room cum geography room, a new gymnasium and a well-equipped kitchen. The former art room was converted into a much needed library.

The total cost of the extensions was over £80,000. Financial help from the Government was provided, but even so, the sum of £36,000 remained to be paid. The Brothers of the St. Chad's community accepted responsibility for this debt and so Brother Thaddeus sought the help of parents, friends of the college and Old Boys to raise the money. This help was readily given.

For many years the Development Society, the Mothers' and the Old Boys' Association maintained a variety of efforts to raise the money. Garden fetes, Christmas bazaars, whist drives and jumble sales, all contributed in paying off the debt. A major source of revenue were the football pools, organised by Brother Arthur, who was assisted in the ' pools room' each week-end and for many years by many willing helpers, among whom were Michael Lewis, Malcolm Hammond and Peter Murray. In the first two years, 1956-58 £12,000 had been raised; by 1960 £24,000. The debt was finally paid off in 1967.

This remarkable achievement was due to the generosity and goodwill of so many friends of the college.

During the years 1946 to 1962 the teaching staff had consisted of Brothers with one and then two lay masters. As the two-form entry advanced in the school more lay staff were appointed so that the lay staff soon outnumbered the Brothers.

A new staff room to accommodate the staff was built in 1962 at the cost of £4,000.

Brother Thaddeus completed his six years as headmaster in 1961. He could be well satisfied with the successful developments he had directed. The work had taken toll of his health, but after a period of rest he resumed teaching at St. Joseph's, Dumfries. He has been a governor of the college since his resignation and so is a frequent and welcome visitor.

Brother Drostan succeeded Brother Thaddeus as headmaster, a position he held until 1965. During this time the two-form entry reached Form 5 and there was already a demand for more places in the school. Plans were drawn up for a three-form entry but the building project was not permitted by the Ministry of Education although supported by the local Education Authority and the Inspectorate. It was also necessary to consider increased accommodation for the larger numbers that would enter Form VI in the next few years.

Meanwhile steps were being taken to improve the playing fields and give more playground space. The Dutch Garden was levelled and the trees of the orchard and of the paddock in front of the Brothers' house were felled. An all-weather football pitch was laid in the former orchard and the paddock was levelled for a sports field. The North Drive disappeared under the enlarged playing fields.

Saturday morning school and Wednesday afternoon devoted to sporting activities had been the

practice since the school opened. Now a change was proposed and parents were asked to express their preference. 75% were in favour of Wednesday afternoon school and this was introduced for a trial period of one year and has remained so.

Brother Arthur, the deputy head, was appointed to succeed Brother Drostan. He had taught at St. Joseph's and after graduating at Glasgow University he was appointed Assistant Master of Novices in the Novitiate in Athlone. He joined the staff of St. Chad's in 1947.

His dynamic energy will be remembered by all who were at the college in his time. His mid-day 'professional football' league in which practically every boy took part aroused great enthusiasm. His annual presentation of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera became an established tradition which built up a wide circle of friends.

He became deputy head in 1955 and the great help he gave Brother Thaddeus during the period of development was a major factor contributing to the success of the project.

Two problems confronted Brother Arthur as headmaster. The first was that raised by the Government's educational policy being committed to comprehensive schools. Local education authorities were asked to submit plans, for the development of comprehensive schools in their areas. Thus it was that the Director of Education invited the governors and headmaster to meet him to discuss how St. Chad's might fit into the general scheme of comprehensive education.

In the discussion the Director expressed the view that the present site of St. Chad's would not be suitable for a Sixth Form entry comprehensive school as there would be insufficient room to provide playing fields.

He suggested that the only possible use that could be made of St. Chad's was that of a Sixth Form College. He also expressed sympathy with the Catholic community who had done all in their power to implement the 1944 Act and were now being asked to scrap what had been built up at such great sacrifice.

This was the first of many occasions when the future of the college was discussed. The situation of Catholic schools in the neighbourhood has gradually changed so that some of the first proposals on the future of the college can no longer be considered. However, it may be said that the general policy of the Brothers in matters of this nature is to fit into the pattern of education decided upon by the Hierarchy under which they serve.

A second problem facing the headmaster was that of providing suitable accommodation for Form Six. Efforts were made to obtain financial assistance from the Ministry to build a Sixth Form block, but without success. Nor was it possible to acquire demountable classrooms at this time.

The problem came to be solved by recalling and carrying out a proposal put forward by Brother Victor at the first post-war general meeting, of the Old Boys' Association. Brother Victor had taught at the college for 19 years from 1929 to 1948. He had been secretary of the association all through the war years, had taught most of the Old Boys who were in the Services and had made every effort to keep in touch with them. At that post-war meeting he had proposed that some memorial should be erected to the Old Boys who fell in the war. This had been unanimously accepted. Now it was considered that the opportunity had arisen to take action on the matter.

A committee consisting of members of the Old Boys and Parents and Friends Associations was formed to consider the project of building a centre that would serve the needs of the two associations as well as the educational needs of the Sixth Form. Their deliberations and actions resulted in the building of the Marist Centre, of which Mr. Maurice Gay was the architect.

The Centre consists of two large lounges which with the use of folding doors may be made into one large room capable of accommodating about 300 people. There is a licensed bar, a spacious entrance hall and a well equipped kitchen. The first floor provides three rooms and a small kitchen and a balcony overlooking the playing fields. The cost of the building was £28,000.

The building of the Centre has proved a most worthwhile project. It provides excellent facilities as a social centre for the Associations attached to the college. It has also provided those requirements which are now regarded as essential for Sixth Form students.

In 1968, Brother Arthur was elected Provincial of the British Province of the Congregation and so resigned from St. Chad's. His election as Provincial was a great tribute to his personal qualities which had been recognised and appreciated by all who knew him, and also, of his work to St. Chad's.

Brother Dominic, who had come to the college in 1957, and was head of the English Department, now became headmaster. Brother Anastasius became Director of the Community. This was the first time that the two offices had been separated; an arrangement that eased the burden of work and responsibility for the headmaster.

This period was marked by the approaching retirement of Miss M. Caddick and of Mr. T. M. Martin, both long-serving members of the college staff.

Miss Caddick came to the college as secretary in 1947. For 23 years she devoted herself wholeheartedly to the well-being, and smooth running of the college by her efficient work and she was most patient with all the demands made upon her time by boys and staff. She was looking forward to and preparing for her retirement when she became seriously ill. Her death after a short illness on June 20th, 1970 was felt as a personal loss by all at the college. The Silver Rose Bowl that the staff had wished to present to her on her retirement remains in the secretary's office, always kept full of flowers by the secretarial and school domestic staff, in memory of a well-loved colleague.

The retirement of Mr. Martin in 1973 was made a memorable occasion by the Brothers, the lay

staff, the pupils, the Mothers, the Parents and Friends and Old Boys' associations. Each group arranged particular events to mark the occasion and make presentations. One special event was the Holy Mass in the parish church, concelebrated by five priests. Old Boys of the college, at which, before a large congregation Mr. Martin was made an Associate Member of the Marist Congregation.

Among others who have given long service to the college are Mr. Redmond and Mr. Boulton, caretakers, and in the Brothers' house. Miss P. Williams and Mrs. Vickers.

A present preoccupation of the headmaster is to pay off the debt of the Marist Centre. Once again the Mothers, the Parents and Friends and Old Boys' Associations have been active in promoting ventures, to raise the money. Among the new efforts introduced were the '200 Club' and 'interest free loans.' As a result the debt of £28,000' has been reduced at the rate of £3,000' a year, so that now only £4,500 remains to be paid.

As we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Foundation of the College we thank God for His constant help and protection. Important decisions on the future pattern of development of the college have still to be taken and we ask His guidance.

Whatever changes may be brought about we confidently trust that the standards and traditions established over the years will be maintained.