



**DIOCESAN BOYS' SCHOOL
HISTORY OF HEADMASTERS**

1869-1878

Mr. William Monarch Burnside Arthur



Mr. Arthur

*Our Origin – Father in heav'n who lovest all.
O help thy children when they call.*

Since the British colonisation, plenty of Europeans were drawn to Hong Kong, an important military outpost and trading port in Asia, and some of them had left offspring in the city. However, due to the social norm against inter-racial marriage, many children had become orphans or were raised by their single Chinese mother.

This is the social background when Diocesan Home & Orphanage ("DHO") was established to provide lodging and education to the orphans in September 1869. By providing education, boarding and clothing to these children of both genders, and instructing them with a view to industrial life and the

Christian faith, DHO helped address a major social issue.

Mr. Arthur was appointed as the first master (Headmaster) of DHO in 1870, the second year when DHO established, whilst Mrs. Arthur was appointed as the matron.

During the days of Mr. Arthur, thanks to the donations from various sectors of the community, the operation of the School was largely sustained. DHO occupied a building at the corner of Eastern Street and Bonham Road, a site currently occupied by Bonham Road Government Primary School.

There were many notable graduates during this era; among the many first-generation graduates, two of them had particularly significant achievements and contributions to the society:

- Mr. Chan Kai-Ming (a.k.a. George Tyson, enrolled in 1870): A renowned businessman, banker, politician and philanthropist. Mr. Chan was a co-founder of Tai Yau Bank and also was the Vice-Chairman of The Chinese General Chamber of Commerce. For charity work, he had been the Chairman of the Tung Wah Hospital and a member of the Po Leung Kuk.
- Mr. Ernest Manning Hazeland (enrolled in 1875): One of the first Authorised Architects in Hong Kong under the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance. St. Margaret's Church, a Grade 1 historic building in Happy Valley, is amongst his many multiple building projects.



Taken in around 1903, the oldest existing photo of DBS students



Bonham campus - Taken in 1924



Mr. Chan Kai-Ming (first old boy on record)

1878-1918

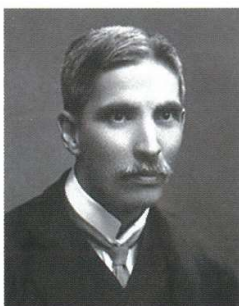
Mr. George Piercy Junior

Boys, Listen! We are 拔萃 !

From the late 1800s to the early 1900s, the population in Hong Kong almost quadrupled from just 120,000 in 1861 to 450,000 in 1911. Foreign merchants and Chinese labourers also continued to move in to the relatively stable environment of Hong Kong. During the same time, under the leadership of Headmaster Piercy, student enrolment at the School increased by more than tenfold.

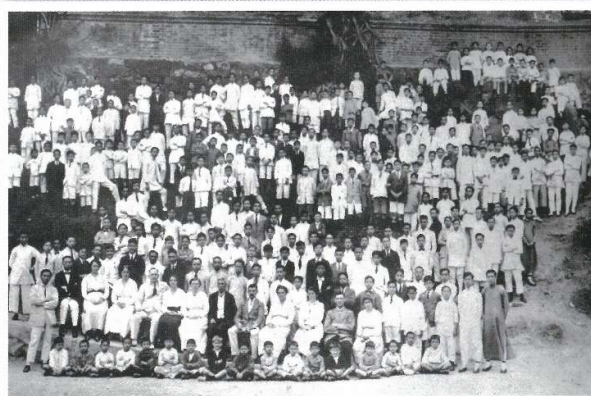
This was a period when Hong Kong was in need of competent men to serve in leadership positions across various sectors of society to cope with the growing city. Mr. Piercy became our second headmaster in 1878 in his early twenties, and would go on to serve the School for 40 years, the longest term among all the Headmasters. Our boys, given a wide and liberal education were blessed to be found fitting for professional, commercial and clerical careers.

Though not widely-known, Mr. Piercy represented a symbolic importance for our School. In the early days of Hong Kong, the locals used to call an institution by the Chinese transliteration of its director's name. As the dialectal pronunciation of 拔萃 was similar to "Piercy", the School adopted the elegant Chinese name 拔萃男書室 .



Mr. Piercy

Mr. Piercy considered sports to be vital for the development of esprit de corps in the School, which was then an innovative approach to education as far as Chinese culture was concerned. The students at that time had to go as far as Stonecutters Island or Lai Chi Kok for swimming and to use the playgrounds in Robinson Road, West Point and Causeway Bay for games such as cricket, football and tennis.



Taken in Bonham campus in 1918, with members of staff including the retiring Mr. Piercy and Mr. Sykes.

In 1879, the School Committee decided to no longer admit girls, and to commence the acceptance of a limited number of local Chinese boys as day scholars. In 1891, the name of our School was changed from DHO to Diocesan School and Orphanage ("DSO"); in 1892, DSO had become a boys' school, as all the girls were transferred to Fairlea Girls' School (a forerunner of Heep Yunn School). Subsequently, in 1902, the School was further renamed to Diocesan Boys' School and Orphanage ("DBSO") after the Diocesan Girls' School and Orphanage was instituted.

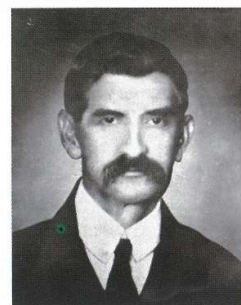


Bonham Campus

Mr. Henry Sykes

Mr. Henry Sykes, the senior master of the School, assumed the role of Acting Headmaster twice while Mr. Piercy was on leave and became Resident Master after Mr. Piercy moved out of the campus with his wife in 1909.

Following Mr. Piercy's retirement in 1918, Mr. Sykes should have naturally stepped into the headmaster's position. However, Mr. Sykes was a bachelor and had no intention of getting married, whereas an unwritten rule of the School had been that a husband and wife team should fill the positions of headmaster and matron. Nevertheless, this did not undermine Mr. Sykes' contribution to the School. Students loved and respected Mr. Sykes – due to his full engagement with the School and boys, he had left behind an even deeper impression on pupils than Mr. Piercy did.



Mr. Sykes

Mr. Sykes was largely responsible for the excellent academic results obtained by the students in the early part of the century. In the 1912 annual report, Mr. Piercy commented as follows on the results of the Oxford Local Examinations from 1889 onwards: "These show that the School is second to none in the Colony, and ought to tend still further to increase the number of scholars, as they show that the School is undoubtedly giving a most thorough and successful education." Under the leadership of Mr. Piercy and Mr. Sykes, DBSO was recognised as one of the best schools in Hong Kong not only academically but also in sports.



DBS Farewell Dinner to Mr. Sykes in 金陵餐廳

The School had nurtured boys who would assume important positions in various sectors of society in both Hong Kong and across southern China, including:

- Dr. Sun Yat Sen – then known as Sun Tui Chew 孫帝象, founder of modern China, studied in DHO for a few months from 1883 to 1884 at the age of 17.
- Mr. Frederick Southey – responsible for building the Beacon Hill Tunnel in the Hong Kong portion of the Kowloon-Canton Railway in 1906, the largest engineering feat in Asia at the time.
- Sir Robert Kotewall – promoted Cantonese opera and served on both the Legislative Council and the Executive Council. Kotewall Road, situated in the mid-level on the Hong Kong Island, was named after him to remind people of his contribution to Hong Kong.
- Dr. Li Shu Fan – appointed as the first Minister of Health in the history of China and the Chairman of The Yeung Wo Nursing Home, the forerunner of the Hong Kong Sanatorium.
- Professor Chan Wing Tsui – Ph.D. from Harvard University in Philosophy and Chinese Culture, a prolific author of books and articles on Chinese philosophy and religion.

1918-1931

The Revd William Thornton Featherstone

Foundation of our Beautiful Home

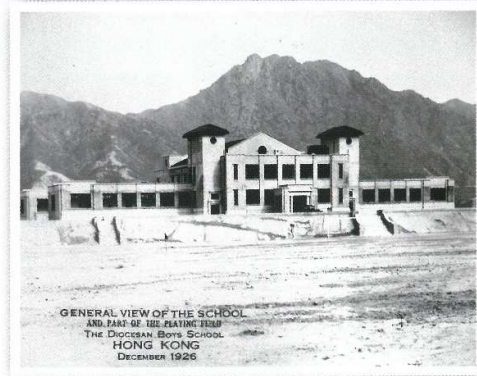
Revd Featherstone originally came to the East to work for the Missions to Seamen. As an Oxford graduate, he had been invited to organise the School's scripture examination in 1914, and was appointed as the Headmaster by the School Committee in November 1917. He formally took up the Headmastership on 1 May 1918.

Due to expansion, the School needed to relocate to a larger campus from Bonham Road. Revd Featherstone chose the current campus site, as he liked that "it was situated on a hill, that it would never be blocked and there would always have valleys around it and get the breeze from all quarters." Revd Featherstone oversaw the challenging relocation process from 1918 to 1928.

The journey to our new campus would prove to be far from smooth. Due to economic depression after the Canton-Hong Kong strike-boycott in 1925, the buyer of the old Bonham site had gone bankrupt. In order to raise the required funding, the School Committee had to accept the government's offer of \$253,500 for the old site, and applied for a loan of \$175,000 with a high interest rate of 8% per annum. Despite all the challenges, the new campus was completed in 1926 and the School moved over in March. However the School soon received bad news – the new campus had been requisitioned by military for use as a hospital for the British Shanghai Defence Force. As a result, the School needed to use a temporary premise at Prince Edward Road – the current site of Mongkok Police Station – in 1927 before returning to the Hill a year later.



Revd Featherstone



Mongkok Campus taken in 1926



School Drive c.1930. It can be discerned in this picture that there was no pedestrian path beside the Drive

Other than setting the foundation of our current campus, Revd Featherstone had made plenty of lasting changes to the School. He was the first one to call the School DBS, instead of DBSO. He also established the house system (blue, brown, green and yellow) to encourage sports and other activities, first for the boarders and later for the whole School. Moreover, he advocated a "no-prize" principle, and replaced the prize-giving ceremony with "Speech Day".



Temporary premises at Prince Edward Road in 1927



Revd Featherstone and the Prefects Board, 1918/1919

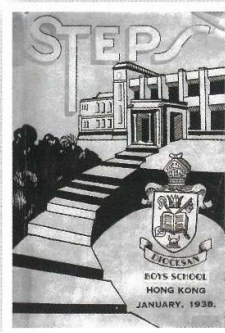
1932-1938

The Rt Revd Christopher Birdwood Roussel Sargent

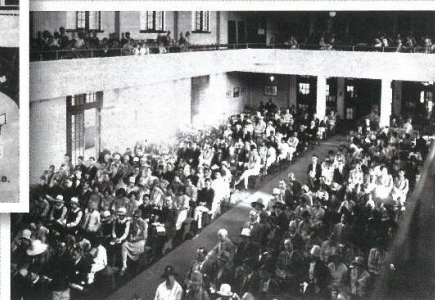
Out of the Red and Blossom

Following the relocation of the School from Bonham Road to Argyle Street in 1926, the School faced an unprecedented obstacle to overcome: a huge debt of \$145,000. According to history books, the School would cease to operate by the end of 1932 had the negative balance not been overturned by then.

Then came Mr. Sargent in 1932. Graduated from Cambridge University, he was the assistant headmaster at Wellington School, England, for four years before his appointment as Headmaster at DBS. Young, energetic and talented, Mr. Sargent wasted no time in dealing with the School's financial crisis, with innovative ways including inviting Committee members to buy "debentures", selling part of the east ridge of the Drive to the Kadoorie family, negotiated with the government to reduce mortgage rate, and raising school fees after renovation. As a result, the debt was finally cleared in 1940.



Cover of Steps in 1938



Speech Day in the 1930s



Mr. Sargent (front row – fifth from the left) and the Shoe Shining Club students



Mr. Sargent

The Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937. While Hong Kong, as part of the British Empire colony, was not under attack yet at that time, the tremors of war could not be missed. Supporting the mission to raise money for war relief in China and to propagate patriotism and nationalism, Mr. Sargent established the DBS Shoe Shining Club, mobilising our boys to different schools and public gatherings around Hong Kong, including as remote a place as Sha Tau Kok, to offer shoe shining services for donations or to deliver provisions to refugees. A charity concert was organised on April 1938, in which a Cantonese play entitled "The Scar of Nation 《國殤》" brought the audience to tears.

Our school magazine, then a biannual publication, was introduced in this era. The magazine, formally named "Steps" in the third issue, became the imprint of our School's portfolio throughout the years, and beyond. While the steps reminded our boys each day to remain grounded in humbleness as we reach higher and fight stronger, the "Steps" magazine recorded our illustrious history in grace every step of the way.

Mr. Sargent had been instrumental in recruiting more students, by opening more classes and decorating the campus, making the School building look new, light, fresh and airy. He also re-established the prize giving ceremony on Speech Day, extended the house system to cover all students in various sports, and supported the formation of different clubs and societies.

Mr. Sargent was ordained to the holy order of diaconate and priesthood in 1934 and 1935 respectively, which legendarily happened in the School Chapel during his tenure as Headmaster at DBS. As he was later appointed as the Assistant Bishop (and then Bishop) of the Anglican Diocese of Fukien, he was forced to resign and leave the School he loved in 1938. Albeit with short duration of his headmastership, Bishop Sargent navigated the School to turn the tables and enhanced its reputation.

1938-1955

Mr. Gerald Archer Goodban

Beacon in the Time of Turbulence

Mr. Goodban became the headmaster of DBS at the age of 27 in 1938. As an Oxford graduate, Mr. Goodban worked as a travelling secretary of the Student Christian Movement, before becoming a classic master at Stortford College. Attracted by the international characteristics of the School and its orphanage aspect, he accepted the offer to succeed Bishop Sargent.

At the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941, Mr. Goodban joined the Royal Hong Kong Regiment. Upon the fall of Hong Kong in December 1941, he was interned at the Shamshuipo Prisoner of War camp, while Mrs. Goodban and their child were taken to Stanley. The School was occupied by the Kempeitai and was used as a military hospital for Japanese soldiers. Many Old Boys had joined the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps – more than 50 of them sacrificed their lives in the defence of the homeland and overseas during WW2, including Mr. Henry Lowcock, father of Headmaster Mr. Lowcock.



Acting Headmaster Mr. Monks and the boarders, taken in 1947



Mr. Goodban



The WWII Memorial for Old Boys



Construction of the Art Room



Opening ceremony of the Gymnasium in 1952

Despite Japan's surrender in August 1945, the School was occupied by their patients until March 1946, when Mr. Young-Saye, together with four boys, took over the campus. After the Goodban family was released in 1945, they left for England to recuperate, and returned and resumed office in the next year. During that period, Mr. Oswald V. Cheung and Mr. Bertram John Millen Monks had acted as the Headmaster.

The School rapidly recovered alongside Hong Kong's own recovery. A new tuck shop and a new dormitory were built in 1948 and 1949. A new complex (comprising a gymnasium, a music room, a geography room and an art room) as well as the Headmaster's residence, was built in 1952. The Diocesan Preparatory School was also established on Waterloo Road in the same year.

School uniforms were formally introduced in September 1949 to foster a sense of community and to eliminate "exotic" or untidy appearance. The new dress code aimed to "express both the man and the School, to be in fact simple, manly, unostentatious and serviceable."

In 1947, the School re-established the house system and added a fifth one, the red house, and in 1949, the house system was renamed after Headmasters' last names.

Mr. Goodban was enthusiastic about music and took lots of efforts to promote musical education in Hong Kong. He took the lead in forming the Hong Kong Schools Music Association in 1940, and organising and establishing the Inter-School Society of Music and Drama. He also helped run the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival, organised for the first time in April 1949. He started the popular Friday noon-time concerts which stimulated a great deal of interest in classical music among DBS boys.



Mr. Goodban conducting our School Choir

1955-1961

The Revd Canon George Samuel She, JP

Serving Post-War Hong Kong

At the end of the war, the population in Hong Kong was estimated to be only 600,000. However, people soon returned home after the war, and when large influx of people arrived as civil war broke out in China in the late 1940s, Hong Kong's population rapidly grew to 1.8 million by end of 1947. Together with the baby boom after the war, population ballooned to over 2.5 million in 1956.

Seeing the rapidly growing population after the war, Revd She, our sixth Headmaster, was determined to help the poor and needy. Revd She had increased the number of students in the School and relaxed the admission requirement, providing education for the underprivileged and creating an equal school environment for everyone. He embraced students from all backgrounds, especially those from the grassroots. In his six years as the Headmaster, the number of students had increased from 600 to 1,100.



Bishop R.O. Hall, Col. Dowbiggin and Revd She inspecting the newly built Science Wing



Construction of "New New Wing" in the 1950s



Archbishop of Canterbury visiting DBS, accompanied by Bishop Ronald O. Hall, Revd She and Mr. Lowcock



THE HEADMASTER SPEAKS

Revd She spoke at the first Garden Fête, December 1955

Revd She was the first local citizen, Eurasian and Old Boy to have become the Headmaster of the School. He was a well-known social activist who had participated in founding charities and reinvigorating schools closed during the wartime period. He was also in charge of education in Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican Church). He was one of the pioneers in contributing to the social welfare in Hong Kong, and co-founded the Street Sleepers' Shelter Society (香港露宿救濟會), the Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association (小童群益會), the Housing Society and various workers' children's schools.

The appointment of Revd She was a milestone – the School wished to implant gradual transition of authority from European to Eurasian-to-Chinese for an indigenous institution. Considering his Eurasian identity and the family background in Hong Kong, Revd She was the perfect candidate.



Revd She

He founded Garden Fête in 1955, the objective of which was to raise funds to cover tuition fees for students in need and to strengthen the relationships between students, parents and Old Boys. He advocated the principle of ethnic equality within the School and helped to affirm the dignity of Chinese in the School's culture. In 1956, Revd She founded Goodban House and the Science Wing ("New New Wing") was built during his time.

Revd She made huge contribution in building a solid foundation in music in the School. In 1956, the School Orchestra was established, followed by the commencement of Chinese instrument classes in 1960, which laid a solid foundation for the formation of the Chinese Orchestra.

1961-1983

Mr. Sydney James Lowcock, MBE, JP



Mr. Lowcock

Inheritance of Love and Respect

The School welcomed the 7th headmaster, Mr. Sydney James Lowcock, in 1961. Mr. Lowcock was an Old Boy who graduated in 1951, and was recruited by Mr. Goodban in 1952 as a teacher. He was appointed as the Headmaster in 1961, succeeding Revd She. Mr. Lowcock's tenure lasted for 22 years until his retirement in 1983.

Mr. Lowcock's education philosophy was liberal and broad-based, leading to a harmonious balance between the two branches of education – music for the mind and sports for the body. In particular, athletics had become a big part of the School and was extended to the Old Boys' community. The Diocesan Boys' School Athletics Club ("DBSAC") was founded in 1969 by Mr. Lowcock. He also introduced Apple Race in 1969.

From many Old Boys' descriptions, Mr. Lowcock had always been a fatherly figure in the School – much respected and loved by the students. His nickname 蝦餃佬 came from the shape of his signature mustache, which resembled the famous Chinese dim sum.

The year of 1969 marked the centenary of DBS, and there were a series of celebrations throughout the year. To name a few, celebrations included concerts, photographic competition, opening of the DBS outdoor swimming pool and the visiting of the Governor of Hong Kong of that time.

Many major social events had happened during Mr. Lowcock's era. In 1963, Hong Kong saw a serious drought, and water restriction policy was introduced.

DBS was amongst the earliest schools to go out of uniform in order to save water in laundry. For the same reason, grey trousers for school uniform were eventually introduced, when white trousers were the standard. Also, in 1967, a riot broke out and had lasted for months. In response to the social unrest, the School had set up a tight security watch. New fences were put up and street lamps were installed along the Drive. A guard house (aptly named Check-point Charlie) was constructed just inside the front gates. Regular night and dawn patrols, drawn from the senior boarders and the resident masters, watched over the School during the period.

For his contribution to society especially in education, Mr. Lowcock was appointed a Justice of the Peace (JP) in 1969 and awarded Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1976.



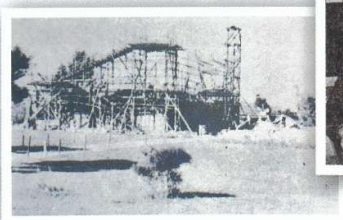
Apple Race in the 1970s



Governor Sir D. Trench visited our School during Centenary. Accompanied by Mr. Lowcock



News clip regarding water rationing.



Headmaster House was nicknamed Har Kau Uk, as Mr. Lowcock was the last headmaster who lived there, throughout his tenure of 22 years



Centenary press conference with Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Jacland Lai attending

1983-2000

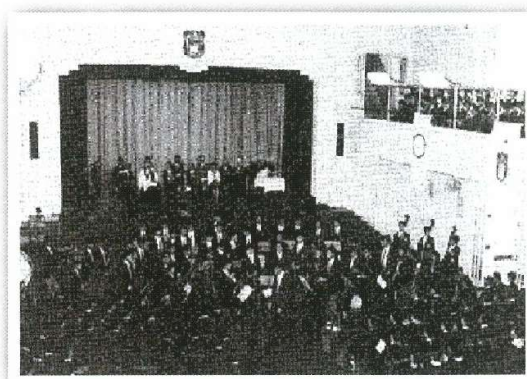
Mr. Jacland Chak-Lun Lai

Exemplary All-Round Development

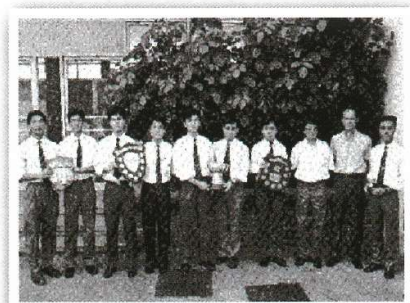
Mr. Lai was appointed as the headmaster in 1983. Born and raised in Hong Kong, he went to DBS before studying Physics in the University of Hong Kong. Upon graduation in 1962, Mr. Lai came back to his alma mater as a science teacher. He ended up serving the School for 38 years, including 17 years as the Headmaster.

Mr. Lai was an exemplary figure in the Hong Kong education. He was active and influential in participating in the government's education policy setting in late 1990s. Mr. Lai had also taken major roles in different institutions and government bodies: he was a member of the University Grants Committee, the Appointment Board of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, a founding member of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, etc.

Mr. Lai emphasised the all-round development of the School. During his tenure, he had implemented various policies leading the School into academic excellence, including reintroduction of mid-term examinations, and expansion of scholarships and prizes in a time when financial support was not in abundance. The first "Parents' Day" was organised in 1993 to foster close relationship between School and families. All the sowed seeds reaped rich rewards in significant improvement in public examinations performances, with DBS achieving the first ever 100% HKCEE passing rate in 2000. There was also increasing number of students being admitted into top universities, with their impressive performances bringing much honour to the School, such as teachers being invited to the U.S. for prize ceremony attendance.



Speech Day (1991)



Omega Rose Bowl (1992)

Extra-curricular activities also flourished under Mr. Lai's leadership. In the year 1990-91, DBS obtained 18 firsts, nine seconds and 15 thirds in the Annual Schools Speech Festival. In 1992, for the first time in 18 years, the School won the Omega Rose Bowl (now known as BOCHK Bauhinia Bowl) for being the overall champion in inter-school sports competitions. DBS went on to win the honour six more times in the following seven years. In music, the orchestra, choirs and ensembles also won many awards in the Music Festivals. In 1996, the Chinese Orchestra was the only overseas group invited to perform at the 75th Anniversary of British Federation of Festivals for Music, Dance and Speech. In 2000, the orchestra, choirs and ensembles won altogether 14 titles in the Music Festivals.



Mr. Lai



DBS Music Department 1987-88



Our campus was newly computerised in the 1980s

2000-2012

Mr. Terence Cheuk-Cheung Chang

Marching into the New Era

An Old Boy of DBS, Mr. Chang was appointed as the Headmaster in 2000. Mr. Chang had contributed his life to education and had received a wide acclaim for his service in Hong Kong. He is also an enthusiastic author and columnist with numerous publications on education.

During his era, the School had successfully navigated through rapid education reforms. The Parent-Teacher Association ("PTA") and Student Council were inaugurated in 2000 and 2001 respectively. By transforming to a Direct Subsidy Scheme school in September 2003 and opening the Primary Division ("DBSPD") with the first intake of students in September 2004, the School was able to enjoy a greater autonomy in admission, continuously focusing on all-round development.

Small-class teaching was adopted to provide an effective learning environment for the students. The International Baccalaureate ("IB") programme was also introduced in 2009, offering students an option to pursue an international academic certificate for further overseas study. All the transformation had allowed the School to enrich students' learning experience and strengthen their competitiveness.



Mr. Chang



First Year of PTA in 2000



The Opening of DBSPD in 2005



Sports and Dormitory Complex



IB Building

Major infrastructure were built during Mr. Chang's era, including the DBSPD campus (2004), the School Improvement Programme SIP Building (2005), the Chi Track (2006), the Sports and Dormitory Complex (2008), the IB Building (2011) and the Auditorium (2012). The establishment of these facilities not only enhances the School's environment, but also lays the foundation for future developments.



International Choir Competition in Germany in 2007-08



St. Augustine's Chapel

2012-present

Mr. Ronnie Kay-Yen Cheng

Preserving the Undefined Heritage

Mr. Cheng became the 10th Headmaster of the School in 2012. Before then, Mr. Cheng has served as the Deputy Headmaster and Dean of Culture for 6 years, overseeing the establishment of the IB curriculum, as well as the development of extra-curricular activities.

As an Old Boy, Mr. Cheng joined the School as a music teacher and soon became the Head of Music Department. Mr. Cheng is a globally recognised music conductor and has led the DBS ensembles to consecutive world championships and the male choirs to No. 1 World ranking. Six Old Boys have come back to the School to be teachers due to his influence – four of them have chosen to become music teachers.

Mr. Cheng's teaching style is widely recognised as altruistic, intensely personal, and influential. He provides an open and liberal platform for every student to discover their unique calling. He is enthusiastic to inspire students, teachers and alumni to maximise their potential. He has a strong belief in a fair and liberal learning environment, and is determined to preserve this legacy in the School.



Mr. Cheng



World Choir Games in 2012



Operation Mangkhut in 2018

In recognition of Mr. Cheng's achievement in the field of education, he was awarded the Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize as one of the Top 50 Educators in the World in 2017. In the same year, he was also awarded the Civic Leadership Award by the Changing Young Lives Foundation (成長希望基金會-公民領袖獎) and the Men of Hope Award – Children's Advocate, by the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital Foundation (港安醫院慈善基金).

As an Old Boy and a teacher at DBS for more than 17 years, Mr. Cheng has an excellent relationship with the alumni community. He was actively involved in the setup of the DBS Foundation, helping underprivileged students to develop their talents without being deterred by financial concerns.

In September 2018, Super Typhoon Mangkhut had caused severe damage in the city and to the DBS campus. Broken tree limbs and branches were scattered all over the campus. Mr. Cheng launched "Operation Mangkhut" where he united all staff and the 1300+ students along with their parents in a campaign to clean up the campus to fortify our hill.

As Mr. Cheng has famously proclaimed in his School Opening Address in 2012, 拔萃是一輩子的事; under his leadership, the School continues to see new generations of boys carrying forward the DBS spirit in blazing trails for the common good.