

Further information on the development and History of the College

Following the opening of the College in 1920, plans for a lecture hall were submitted to the local council for approval in 1926. Two years later an extension was added. This lecture hall was situated behind the Chantry, and as it had a stage and lighting facilities, dances and plays were produced and the Brothers allowed it to be by the villagers of Chingford.

In 1933 Hallwoods of Clyde, Manchester, moved on site and started work on the 'New Building' that became the College we all knew until it was demolished in the early 1970's. This was necessary because the College was expanding, and more room was required for boarders. The building consisted of eight classrooms on the first two floors, and the second floor was to be used as a storeroom. An assembly hall was to be built from the centre of the building projecting towards the back, but was never built. While the new building was being completed the Chantry was renovated.

At the outbreak of the Second World War the College was evacuated to Stanstead in Suffolk, and on the way the first air raid siren was heard. Later, with the opening of Stainsby Hall in Derbyshire the College moved there together with pupils from St Aloysius College, Highgate, and those not going to Stainsby Hall were catered for at a large house in Crescent Road, Chingford. Whilst the College was evacuated, the building was converted for use by the Civil Defence, in case of a gas attack. The ground floor windows and doors were all sandbagged (see photos in Autumn 2009 Newsletter). The playground was used as a car park for a variety of Civil Defence vehicles and ambulances. Brother Peter who was in Crescent Road at the time was a member of the Civil Defence.

In January 1945 a V2 flying bomb fell at the junction of Pole Hill Road and Kings Head Hill and the Venturi, weighing about 5 cwt, came through the roof of the lecture hall behind the Chantry, and although the hall was badly damaged there were no casualties. It was also about this time that the evacuees from Stainsby Hall and Crescent Road returned to the College. The damage to the hall was never made good and it was used subsequently as a store and a bicycle shed for the many pupils who cycled in from various surrounding towns. In my time, during the summer months, a group of us used to meet up at Gants Hill in Ilford every morning and cycle in via Gates Corner, Woodford Green and Friday Hill, trying to beat the 145 bus to the Bull and Crown.

In 1950 the long serving chef, Joseph Mason, came to Chingford to cook for the Brothers and he was there until the College closed in 1970 whereupon he moved to 'Cleeves' the Brothers Novitiate in East Moseley.

In 1959 plans for changing rooms on the football ground at Sopers field were submitted to the council but such plans never came to fruition due to a number of reasons but mainly finance.

In 1965 work began on a new gymnasium following a big drive to raise the funds by both the Headmaster, Brother Fergus, and the Parents Association.

Sadly in 1970 the College closed, the site sold and both the College and the Chantry were demolished in preparation for redevelopment

This article has been culled from various sources including articles from old Newsletters and College magazines.

My thanks to all 'contributors'

Andrew McGovern - Archivist