

The 160th Anniversary Clock

We all like to receive presents on our birthday or at Christmas or at Chinese New Year. These are special times when we celebrate the occasion with family and friends. They are also times when we are reminded that another year has passed by. Some of the presents we receive might only last a short while before they are worn out, broken or simply out of fashion. Some presents last much longer and in the case of very special gifts might remain with us throughout our lives.

As you know, our College is celebrating its 160th anniversary this year. This fact led to my thinking about what present we could give to the College to recognise such a memorable occasion. At last week's assembly I spoke about The Reading Room and the collection of books that we will be purchasing. I thought that The Reading Room would be a very appropriate anniversary present for the College. But I also felt that we should purchase an anniversary gift that could be placed close to the boundary wall of the College on Bonham Road. After thinking about a variety of possible items I came to the decision that the College needed a clock. I was not thinking about a small wall clock, as we have in the entrance lobby, but a large clock that could be seen from some distance away.

There are very few clocks in the western mid-levels. In fact, the only one that I can think of is across the road at the University of Hong Kong. Placed in the clock tower above the old main administration building it would have dominated the local landscape and been seen far away one hundred years ago. Sadly, the relentless construction of high rise buildings in this part of Hong Kong has all but hidden the HKU clock to anyone who is not close by. I imagine that very few people would look at the university clock today high above Bonham and Pokfulam Roads.

So what about our new clock? It will be placed on top of one of the two entrance walls either side of the gates on Bonham Road at the top of the emergency staircase from the Upper Playground. It will be a large round traditional clock with two faces; one side pointing toward St. Stephen's Church and the other toward Wong Ming Him Hall. The clock will be easy to read up to 60 metres away and will be illuminated at night. Unlike the University clock our timepiece will be looked at by all pedestrians, drivers and passengers making their way along Bonham Road. I imagine that within a short period of time it will become a reference marker for all who use

Bonham Road enabling them to check if they are early or late or to double check the accuracy of their watches. I'm sure it will be referred to by you although I must emphasize that the official time, the time that determines whether you are late to school, will remain the clock in the entrance lobby to the College.

The new clock will be called 'The 160th Anniversary Clock' and these words will be placed on the wall close by. The clock has been kindly donated by a small group of alumni who considered this instrument to be a fitting gift to the College during an anniversary year.

What might you, the students, give to the College to celebrate a special anniversary? At my previous school the graduating class of each year would present a small gift to the College as a way of saying 'thank you' for the years spent at the school. I remember one graduating class giving a pair of candlesticks for the Chapel, another class a framed photograph of the school, and in another year the graduating class gave a bench seat that was placed next to the basketball court. The gifts were generally inexpensive yet meaningful tokens of the boys' appreciation. If each Form 7 graduating class since the College moved to Bonham Road in 1951 had presented a small souvenir then today we would have a special collection of 60 mementos of their time at St. Paul's. Maybe the graduating Form 6 and Form 7 classes of 2012 might like to consider starting a meaningful tradition at the College.

As for The 160th Anniversary Clock it will be installed in a few weeks time with the 160th Anniversary logo placed at the centre of its two faces. I trust you will agree that this is a meaningful gift to the College on its special anniversary.

Dr. J.R. Kennard