

CLARENCE HIGH SCHOOL – A BRIEF HISTORY(1914 -1966)

(Compiled by : B. Krishnarajulu, Class of 1965)

Clarence High School is now(in 2020) 106 years old. It had a humble beginning on 1st December 1914 and was then known as “ The Fraser Town European Day School” and located at a small building on Palm Road. The School was opened by the brothers Alfred and Walter Redwood who had come from England to Bangalore, India as young men, along with their Missionary mother Mrs Anne Redwood. We shall briefly trace the History of the School during it’s first 50 years, as gleaned from various sources.

The Redwoods- their early life and work

Anne McDonald was born on 16th July 1850 at Arisaig, Scotland. (Arisaig, incidently, lies on the historic ‘Harry Potter’ railway that runs between Fort William and Mallaig !). In 1881 she came to India to serve in a Christian Orphanage in Kolar (KGF) in the then (Kingdom of) Mysore.

William Alfred Redwood was born on 20th January 1856 at Devon, England. He came as a missionary to India in 1882 and was at the same Orphanage in Kolar.

Anne and William were married in 1885 at the St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Cubbon Road, Bangalore (initially known as St. Andrews's Kirk of the Church of Scotland)

They left Kolar and went to work at the Brethren Mission in Malavalli(near Mysore city). Their work spread to Kollegal and Mandya (towns near Mysore city). Their four children- Alfred, Annie, Walter and Grace were born during this time. At these places they opened a school(Malavalli Boys School, Kollegal Girls School), a dispensary and started an Assembly. Most of these school children were orphans, handicapped or homeless. The Mission trained them in some livelihood skills and saw them settled in some profession and even arranged marriages for a number of them!



Back to England and then finally to India

In 1895 owing to Anne’s ill health the family left for England on a furlough. After leaving Aden, Mr William Redwood took ill of a tropical fever on board the ship. Sadly, he passed away shortly and was ‘buried at sea’ in the Red Sea. Anne, with her four children, carried on to England. They took a house in Weston Super Mare, Somerset, England. Alfred and Walter Redwood were enrolled in **Clarence School**, located nearby at Clarence Road North, Weston Super Mare. This school had been established in the early 1800s and both Alfred and Walter received their early education here. The school had a lasting influence on the family and when, years later, the brothers started a School in Bangalore, they decided to name it after their Alma Mater.

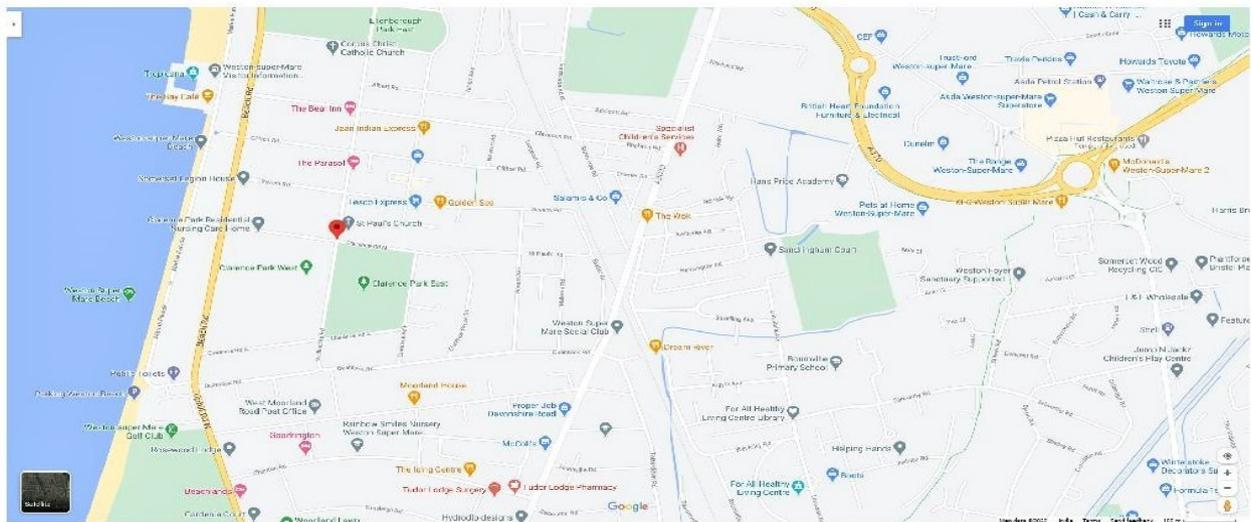
In 1896, Anne left England (with Annie and Grace) to return to India, leaving Alfred and Walter to continue their studies in the School. They, however, returned to England in 1900 and stayed on till

1910. In 1910, at the age of sixty, Anne and three of her children-Alfred, Annie and Grace returned to India. The younger brother, Walter, joined them in 1914.

That year(1914) Alfred was married to Molly Dunn, who was from New Zealand. They had one son, Charles Robert Redwood, a doctor who settled in England . Walter Redwood was married to Jeanie Loch-head Fleming in 1918. Both the couples took a very active part in setting up and running the School.

Anne Redwood continued her work in Bangalore- the founding of the Bethesda Assembly, Clarence School (by her sons) and her work among women and children. After 22 years in Bangalore and a long life of service, she died in 1933.

Location of the old Clarence School at Clarence Road North , Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset, UK



The old building has apparently been brought down, and a new building stands in that location. The plaque in a War Memorial records the fact of the existence of Clarence School(whose alumni served in WWI)



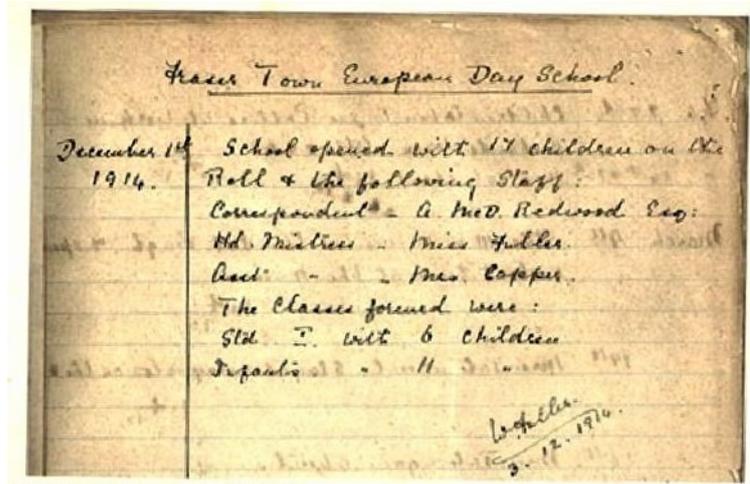
A photograph from an Album of Clarence School, Weston Super Mare, Somerset, UK (Alfred and Walter had left the School in 1910 & 1914 respectively)

Clarence High School- beginnings

On December 1st, 1914 (Mr Alfred Redwood's birthday – now celebrated as Founders' Day) the School was started in an old building on Palm Road (now Madhavraya Mudaliar Road). It was a modest building with a tiled roof. The School was then known as "Fraser Town European Day School"



The small building on Palm Road
the first location of Clarence School(1914)



The first official noting of Clarence School

The School began with 17 students – 11 in Infants and 6 in Std I. Two ladies Mrs Capper (Asst Mistress) and Miss Fuller (Head Mistress) comprised the teaching staff and Mr Alfred Redwood was the Correspondent. Shortly thereafter, in early 1915, the School shifted further up Palm road to a building that became the Fraser Town Post Office. (The Post Office operated from this very building from 1920 till after 1966, when it was remodelled) The School, was then renamed "Clarence School" by the Redwood brothers in deference to Clarence School in Somerset, England where they had received their early education. That school meant so much to them that they wished to "commence a school that will be to the boys and girls of Bangalore, what our school has been to us"

The old Fraser Town Post Office Building, the second location of
Clarence School(1915-1920)



In 1920, the School shifted to a spacious Bungalow on Hall Road

The Bungalow on Hall Road, the third location of Clarence
School(1920-22)



Early years of Clarence High School

In 1920 the land in Richards Town (where the School is now located) was identified. This piece of land was hotly contested for; in fact, the Bangalore City Authorities wanted the Police Lines to be constructed on it! The Resident (now would be called the Governor) in Bangalore, Mr P. Barton was fully supportive of the efforts of the Redwood brothers and provided all the necessary support. The Redwood brothers raised funds from Churches in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the USA and purchased the land.



The land (in 1920) which became the site on which Clarence High School was built

The first Annual Sports Day was held on 29 October 1920 in the newly purchased compound, with many parents and the general public donating money towards the prizes!

The foundation stone for the first building was laid on 1st December 1920 and construction began in 1921. The work had to be stopped at foundation level for lack of funds! A local businessman who was moved by the distress of the Redwood brothers motivated many others to contribute and the work went forward. The new School building was occupied, after a short dedication ceremony, on 18 September 1921. The formal inauguration took place on December 19, 1922 by the Resident, Mr Barton and his wife.

Pictures from 1921 & 1922



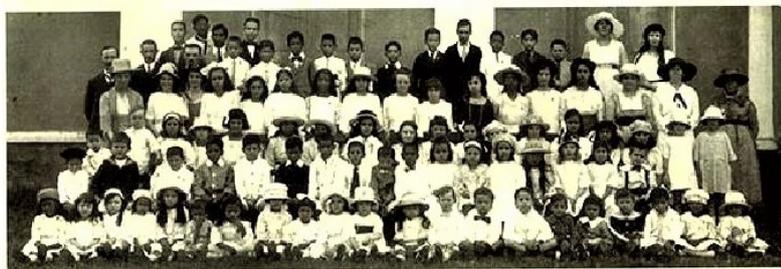
The Built School

Clarence High School (1922-1951)

From the opening roll of 17 children in 1914 the number reached 100 in 1923. In 1926, two additional classrooms were built and outhouses added. The Hall was enlarged and a permanent stage erected. Mr Wilfred Wilcox (from Brecks School, Ooty) who married Grace Redwood, joined the brothers in the administration of the School in 1931. Mr Wilcox worked relentlessly to get it upgraded to a High School. It then became Clarence High School ! For many years Clarence was the only School in Bangalore offering Physics and Chemistry, as subjects in the Senior Cambridge, to both boys and girls!

In 1936, three more classrooms and a cycle shed were added. In 1941 there were minor additions to the buildings and in 1942 an excellent Science Room was built. Mr Wilcox worked in Clarence School as the Principal for 19 years till his retirement in 1951. He was on furlough during 1946-48 and during that time Mr Arthur Flack (from Australia) joined the School as Acting Principal. On Mr Wilcox's retirement in 1951, Mr Flack took over as Principal and served the School for the next 31 years till his retirement in 1983.

The Redwood brothers remained on the Board of Management of the School till 1960. All through their stay in Bangalore, it was Clarence High School that held all their affection. Alfred settled in England, where he passed away on 13th March 1962. His wife Molly Redwood predeceased him in 1950. Walter settled in New Zealand with his wife, Jeanie. He died on 30th June 1983; his wife had departed in 1982.

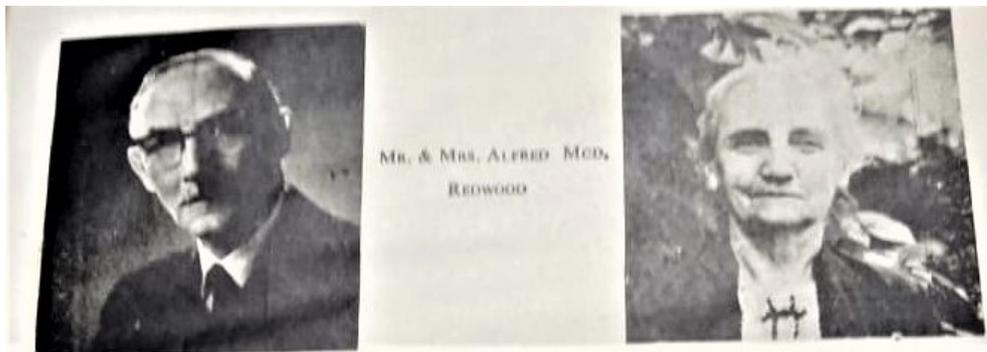


Some pictures of the students and the building taken in the 1920's.

An extract from the book “ Brethren Missionary work in Mysore State” by Ken Newton(1975)

Clarence School:

In 1910 the first of the Redwood family returned to India, settling in Bangalore. On 1st December 1914, Clarence School was opened with seventeen children on the roll.⁷¹ The school remains a fitting tribute to Alfred and Walter Redwood. Till 1932 the former bore most of the burden of this fast-developing school. There were times of real financial crisis when it was thought that the school would have to be closed. Yet, in 1923, Walter Redwood could testify that the miracle always happened and they were saved from ruin. In 1931 it had been decided to close that school because of lack of finance and only gifts from New Zealand on the day the letter was to be cyclostyled, and an offer of help from Mr. Wilcox, changed this purpose.⁷² Mr. Wilcox (who married Miss G. Redwood) came from Brecks School, Ootacamund, and remained as Principal of Clarence School till 1951. He is credited with being a tireless worker and excellent disciplinarian. Apart from his heavy responsibilities at Clarence he ran four Tamil elementary schools.⁷³ Clarence School with 518 pupils continues today as a Christian English medium School with classes from Kindergarten to Grade II and, since it does not take grants from the Government, is free to teach Scripture daily in all classes. It thus continues to fulfil the purpose of its founders. Fees which cover expenses are now charged for all pupils.



Mr Alfred and Mrs Molly Redwood



Mr Walter and Mrs Jeanie Redwood

Clarence High School (1951-1966)

Academics

Mr and Mrs Flack(from Australia), had arrived in Bangalore to join Clarence High School in 1946 . He was Acting Principal for two years (till 1948) when Mr Wilcox was on leave. Mr Flack took over as Principal in 1951 and served the School till his retirement in 1983. He served the School for 37 years in all. There were two furlough breaks during the years 1951-1966; one in 1958, when Mr J A P Lawrence took over as Acting Principal and then again in 1965, when Mr John H Martin was Acting Principal. Mrs Flack was the first Kannada teacher of Clarence School (1961). She taught Kannada to the 'Class of 1965' in 1961 when they were in Std VI. Mrs Flack had learnt Kannada during the war years in order to assist in care-giving at the Military Hospital, Bangalore. She always very actively participated in School activities such as Annual Sale Day and Annual Sports Day .

In his preface to the 1954 issue of The Clarencian, Mr Flack had written “ Finally, let our motto be the password: Our Utmost for the Highest. We rally to this and press on”. And in his farewell speech to the Class of 1965, in 1966, he said “ When the going gets tough, the tough get going!” He personified all these characteristics during his service in Clarence. He was also a very good Chemistry teacher (for the senior classes); having graduated from Australia with a specialization in Chemistry and having worked, for some time thereafter, in the lab of a Chemistry Nobel Laureate !

During the years 1951-1966, Clarence had a host of remarkable teachers who were very admired and respected by the students. They helped foster and build intellectual and moral capacities of all the students they taught through their knowledge, discipline and sincerity . They were, notably:

In the Kindergarten Section : Miss Emma Horton(Headmistress) and Mrs E M Stanley(Asst Headmistress, who later took over from Miss Horton).

In Middle School : Miss M E Bailey and Miss Kathleen Watters.

In High School : Mrs L Cherian(Science and Mathematics), Miss P Weber(Geography), Mr S Subbarayan(Hindi), Miss J Khanna(Hindi), Mrs G Solomon(Mathematics), Mr J H Martin (English and Scripture), Mr H Henning(Physics) and Mr A Flack(Chemistry).

Co-curricular activities: Mr J Lucas(Cubs & Scouts), Mr H Henning(Crafts & Woodwork), Mrs Gordon(Music) and Mr Zachariah(Office Management).

Infrastructure development

During the years 1951-1966, Clarence saw some new buildings come up. In 1954 a new KG room was built; it served as classroom for Std II during the years 1954-66. In 1955, Mr Alfred Redwood laid the foundation for two new rooms between the Science Room and the main building. The rooms were named Redwood House, in honour of the Founders for their dedication to the cause of the School. These rooms served as classrooms for Std X and XI for a long time thereafter. In 1956, the Music Room was built. It was here that Mrs Gordon, an expert pianist, trained and regaled a host of students in the ways of Western Classical Music. Many of her students very creditably passed the Exams of the Trinity College of Music! In 1959, the Carpentry Room was expanded and many more work benches were added. It was here that Mr Henning trained a host of students in Crafts such as Paper Mache, plywood cutting(to make toys) and Carpentry(wood planing, cutting, joining etc)

Construction of three classrooms, above the rooms on the Clarke Road side, began in 1963 and were declared open by the Deputy Mayor of Bangalore, Mrs Grace Tucker on 20th October 1963. This new block was named after Mr Wilcox in honour of his service to Clarence School(1931-1951) and for getting it upgraded to a High School.



The Wilcox Block (1963)

Construction of three new classroom above the Science Room and Redwood House. These were completed and opened after 1966. (visible on the left of the photograph below)



A view of the School as it stands today(2020)