

Hundred and fifty ...and going strong



The old school building.

St Joseph's Boys' High School is all geared up for its sesquicentennial celebrations.

Began way back in 1858, St Joseph's Boys' High School, Bangalore is celebrating its 150th year, or the Sesquicentennial of its inception. That's a massive milestone for any institution and as A G Krishnaswamy the Old Boys' Association President and Brian D'Lima the Secretary reveal, Old Boys' will be coming to the school from all over the world in the first week of September this year to celebrate this momentous occasion.

boarders and 80 day scholars. The building was erected at a cost of Rs. 16,000 but seemed to have been badly constructed. So in 1894 the college was shifted to its present position as St John's Hill was considered isolated from the Cantonment. Then the numbers of students had increased to 100 boarders and 89 day scholars. However the school suffered a setback when in 1902 the Plague created panic in Bangalore and numbers dwindled to 157 totally.

molished and rebuilt. Fr Michael John the then Principal, undertook the enormous task and now a spanking new building stands in its place. And a first for an all boys school in Bangalore, girls have been admitted into Standards XI and XII.

Old Boys of the school include Cricketers Rahul Dravid, Robin Utappa, Hotmail founder Shabbir Bhatia, Builder Irfan Razak, Olympic swimmer Rehan Poncha, cartoonist Mario Miranda, among a host of

Steven de Nazareth



The new St Joseph's school building.

Through an yellowing copy of the 1927 school annual which was printed on glossy art paper the chequered history of the school unfolds. These annuals were gifted to the school by William (Bill) Fernandez, an Old Boy who lived to be 102 years old.

The history of the school states that in the 1840's a plot of land was bought on St John's Hill for Rs.1,000 from a French widow by the Paris Foreign Mission (Missions Etrangeres de Paris). It was only in the year 1858 that a school for European boarders was begun called St Joseph's Seminary. At the time the school had 64

The school remained under the French Missions for eighty years. By then the school had grown to 1,300 boys. In 1923 the school and college became separate entities, but the French Missions were suffering from dwindling vocations which meant a severe shortage of priests. This was when the Jesuits took over in 1937. While showing complete appreciation for the work put in by the priests of the French Foreign Mission, being experienced educationalists they brought in their own rules and guidelines in running the institution.

From 2001 to 2006 the entire school building was de-

big names.

From this tiny beginning like the proverbial acorn, has grown the mighty oak, that the Josephite institution stands for today. Fr Celestine Sera is the current Principal of the school and manages 2,300 students. Hundreds of young, well-rounded 'gentlemen,' who have spread across the globe, come out of its illustrious portals, year after year. In September, it is to the solid formation that they inculcated at St Joseph's, that they gratefully give thanks and return to celebrate in solidarity.

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