

Woodstock School

LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN STATE OF UTTARAKHAND, WOODSTOCK'S CAMPUS COVERS MORE THAN 250 ACRES OF PROTECTED FOREST ON THE FOOTHILLS OF THE HIMALAYA.

Situated between 2000 and 2300 metres (6500-7500 feet) above sea level on a south-facing slope, Woodstock School enjoys spectacular views over the Doon Valley, the Tehri Hills and the ancient Shivalik range. From its highest ridge one can view Himalayan snow peaks including the majestic Bandarpoonch peaks (6,316 m) which was summited by 17 Woodstock staff in 2011.

A proud heritage of over 160 years

The earliest days of the school coincided with the dominance of the East India Company. Though the school was managed by Americans during the Raj, at times it provided refuge for families who opposed British rule in India. The school has witnessed two world wars, Indian independence and partition, and several subsequent political upheavals; all of which can all be traced in the alumni and history of the school.

A chronological history:

1854 - Establishment as a "Protestant Girls' School" in Landour.

Four ladies, appointed by the London Society for Promoting Female Education in the East, arrived at Calcutta en route to their appointment as the first staff of the new "Protestant Girls' School." One decided to get married, so she did not make it to Mussoorie. The other three – Mrs Bignell, Miss Aytoun and Miss Birch – arrived and established the school in Cainville House, in Landour.

1856 -Protestant Girls' School moves to Woodstock:

The school moved to Woodstock House, rented (and eventually purchased) from Colonel Reilly of the Royal Engineers, but retained its name. Upper Woodstock and Woodstock Cottage (now Tafton) were also owned by Col Reilly, and were later incorporated into the school.

1857 - The beginning of the Raj

The First War of Independence raged across northern India, with troops of the East India Company under siege in Delhi and Lucknow. When the uprising failed, the British government brought India under direct rule, and the British Raj began.

1862 -"Woodstock School" becomes the school's permanent name

A year after the school was known as "The Woodstock Establishment", the permanent name "Woodstock School" was chosen.



Woodstock School

1872 - Woodstock School sold and purchased

The lack of staff and the lack of funding caused the school to close in 1871, and the house was offered for sale by the London Society. American missionaries Rev Woodside and Rev Kellogg urged the women of the Presbyterian Church in the USA to enable the purchase of Woodstock as a school for the children of missionaries. There was a warm response, and \$10,000 was raised for the purchase of the school.

1876 - More non-missionary students enrolled in Woodstock School

1897 - Student number increases, majority still from non-missionary families

Records show that there were 111 students, including 24 boys, all boarders. The majority of girls were still from non-missionary families. There were about 15 staff who, among them, taught a range of subjects including Logic, English Literature, Music, Art, Latin, Greek, German, French, Urdu and Physiology.

Although the school was purchased primarily for missionary children, Woodstock had always enrolled European and Anglo-Indian students. The roster in 1876 was 36 non-missionary girls in boarding, and seven-day scholars – boys from missionary families. 1910

The ruckus over Halley's Comet - The day of the advent of Halley's Comet was anticipated with much fear in Woodstock as elsewhere. As the school gathered for evening prayers, a sudden violent gust of wind tore the roof off the building, blew in all the windows, extinguished the candles and filled the room with dust and debris. "One little girl danced up and down screaming 'The comet's tail's come! The comet's tail's come!' over and over. Girls clung to each other in tears – loud sobbing, screaming, wild running around the place." Through it all the Principal, "Daddy Andrews," continued his prayer.

1910 - School's urgent response to cholera outbreak

Cholera struck. Two staff died, and the whole school was evacuated to Upper Woodstock and a house near Wynberg-Allen

1911 - The purchasing of Midlands Estate and the first ever Woodstock Old Students' Association meeting.

The Midlands Estate was purchased, with the intention of founding a training college. This was built over the next few years and in operation just as the First World War broke out in 1914. Woodstock had been training teachers since the late 1890s, but Midlands, or "The College," provided self-contained space for 60 students. 1911 also saw the first meeting of the Woodstock Old Students' Association which is still in full swing today.



Woodstock School

1922 - Rev Allen Parker becomes principal of Woodstock School - for 18 years

Rev. Allen Parker became principal of Woodstock. During his 18 years tenure, he oversaw dramatic changes in the school, particularly in the facilities, including Parker Hall, the High School building, Hostel (built on the site of the "Woodstock Garden"), the Quad, Hanson Field, and the Principal's Cottage. Allen Parker truly changed the face of Woodstock, and most of his work still stands today.

1926 - Hostel opens to accommodate boys and married couples

Hostel was opened after ten years of planning, fundraising and building. It had accommodation for 60 boys and living quarters for a married couple as supervisors.

1929 - A third of the 300 enrollees in primary school

School enrolment was 300, a third of which was in the kindergarten/primary department. Classes took place wherever there was room, including down at Midlands, and plans were laid for the building of High School, the ground having been levelled the year before.

1932 - New assembly hall named "Parker Hall"

The new assembly hall was completed, and the Student Government voted for it to be named "Parker Hall", and arranged for a brass name plate to be inscribed and placed. It is still there. School enrolment reached 400. As part of the renovations, a goldfish pond was built on what is now known as "Parson's Terrace." During the winter, all the fish were relocated to the old, semi-indoor hostel swimming pool for warmth.

1933 - The College becomes accommodation for girls

Changes in government regulations led to the closure of The College as a teacher training facility. The increase in numbers in the school meant that it was ready to be reused as dorm accommodation for girls.

1934 - Renovations on Quad buildings complete

Work on remodeling the Quad buildings was completed, involving extensive alterations of levels, and construction of new floors.

1937 - Rev Allen Parker believes his idea of creating a playing field is possible

Allen Parker devised the idea of constructing a playing field, now Hanson Field. He commented to a colleague: "Every engineer I have consulted tells me a playing field cannot be made there. I believe it can be done, so we are going ahead."



1939 -WWII affects foreigner registration process

Following the outbreak of the Second World War in September, all foreigners over the age of 16 had to be registered. The Parkers finally departed from Woodstock.

1941 -Residence for smaller boys; Midlands came into being.

1941 - Quad fire burns all 1940 student records

A fire in the Quad destroyed all the student records for 1940, and damaged many other records. Many records in the school archive display their charred edges.

1942 - Woodstock accommodates refugees from Malaysia, Burma and Thailand

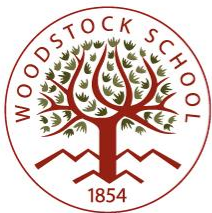
Mussoorie was overflowing with refugees from Burma, Malaysia and Thailand, following the Japanese invasion. The school took in as many children as could be accommodated. Whenever one left to sail to the US or UK, another stepped right in. Woodstock was also full of British soldiers on leave and undergoing convalescence – accommodated at Midlands and Ridgewood, and they were present at many social events.

1947 - Hundreds leave Mussoorie after Indian independence and partition

Following Indian independence and partition, Mussoorie was affected by the rioting that gripped large parts of India. "Overnight our bakers and sweet sellers were on their way home to Tehri and the majority of our Mohammedan neighbours were placed in a special camp for their protection. Enough unpleasant incidents occurred to necessitate the imposing of curfew in the bazaar." (Woodstock History, Vol 1)

1948 - Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi was assassinated. The Board minutes for that year included this statement: "The Board of Directors paused in respect for Mahatma Gandhi, whose death has taken from the country such a great leader. As a statesman his leadership places him among the immortals of history. As a citizen, his integrity, high idealism and courage have given a great example for all the nation."



Woodstock School

1954 - Woodstock School celebrated its centenary

1959 - Woodstock becomes first Asian school to gain US accreditation

Woodstock gained US accreditation through the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (MSA). It was the first school in Asia and only the third outside the US to achieve this recognition. The Dalai Lama visited Woodstock, and is presented with a gift of Rs 1500 for Tibetan relief work. Woodstock School celebrates its centenary.

1961 - Advanced Placement exams added in High School curriculum

The Board of Directors recommended the introduction of Advanced Placement examinations as part of the High School curriculum. Beginning with English, courses were gradually introduced. Biology and History were amongst the last in 1972.

1963 - Dalai Lama visits Woodstock school for the second time

A second public visit by the Dalai Lama, who addressed the Woodstock community in Parker Hall. Pearl Buck, Nobel-winning author, who had visited the school earlier, wrote a foreword to the Class of '63 yearbook: "It may be a good thing to live on the top of mountains and on the edge of precipices – you learn early not to fear the heights and depths

1969 - Graduating class dress in Indian attire

The first graduating class to dress in Indian clothes for their Commencement ceremony. Before then, the tradition was for white and black formal dresses and suits.

1970 - High School building extended to accommodate new library

An extension was added to the High School to enable the expansion of the library and its rededication as the "Vera Marley Library." Later, two more floors were added on top to provide additional classroom space.

1971 - School adds new beds in Midlands and recruits from outside India

Fifty new beds added to Midlands. The school began actively recruiting outside India to offset the decline in numbers of missionary families in India.

1972 - Woodstock Board of Directors commit to turning school into a Christian International School

After considering a number of options for Woodstock's future in a changing world, including amalgamating with Kodaikanal, or becoming an Indian school, the Board of Directors committed itself to the strategy of becoming a Christian International School. This initiated a five year process of planning, beginning with a year of working out what the philosophy and policies of the new school would be.



Woodstock School

1977 - Launch of Activity Week and first ESL department

After years of developing field trips of various sorts, a whole school Activity Week was initiated, which continues to this day. Also this year, the first ESL department was created, which within a year had 28 students from grades 1-11.

1978 - School choir performs "Messiah"

The school choir performed extracts from the "Messiah" with the Delhi Symphony Orchestra.

1980 - Hiking and reforestation programmes in Woodstock

With a hiking programme in full swing, a reforestation programme was introduced. Seedlings were raised in seed beds and hikers were encouraged to take some along as they walked.

1982 - Construction of Alter Ridge dormitory in Ridgewood field

Alter Ridge dorm was built on the site of the Ridgewood playing field. Alter Ridge was remodeled during winter 2013, and reopened in February 2014. It now houses grade 5-8 girls.

1984 - Students demonstrate unity during Activity Week trips

Indira Gandhi was assassinated, prompting anti-Sikh riots. Woodstock students on Activity Week trips went to places of safety, and a Sikh student was hidden by students when their bus was stopped by rioters.

1992 - Woodstock sends students home to safety after demolition of Babri mosque

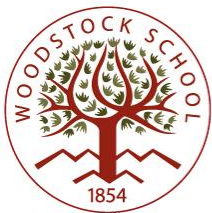
Following the demolition of the Babri mosque on 6th Dec. 1992, the school cancelled the last two December exams, closed the dorms overnight and sent students back to their homes. The father of one of our students, a senior police officer, arranged for a police escort with the student buses all the way to Delhi.

1993 - The Media Centre opens

The Media Centre, built with a grant from American Schools and Hospitals Abroad, was opened.

1996 - "Service through Excellence" becomes the guiding principle for a 15-year development plan

"Service through Excellence" was written after extensive staff consultations. This was a strategic plan to guide the school over the next 15 years, and it became a blueprint for Woodstock's continued development as a Christian International School.



2000 - First ever Win Mumby basketball tournament

Win Mumby basketball tournament began. Win Mumby was a former PE teacher from Woodstock who coached the Indian Olympic team in the 1930s. Win Mumby Memorial All India Tournament is now one of the top Interschool basketball tournaments in north India.

2001 – Support of Nepalese students

The entire school gathers to support Nepalese students affected by the assassination of Nepal's royal family. The new state of Uttaranchal (now Uttarakhand) was inaugurated. Following the assassination of the Nepalese Royal family in June, an all school special gathering was held in Hostel to support the Nepalese students.

2003 -Hanifl Centre for Outdoor and Environmental Study opens, Midlands reconstructed

Opening of the Hanifl Centre for Outdoor and Environmental Education and the completely reconstructed Midlands.

2004 - Woodstock celebrates 150 years of "service through excellence"

Woodstock's 150th anniversary was celebrated by a large gathering of alumni on the hillside, and the issuing of an Indian postage stamp. It also marked the end of the 150 Capital Campaign which raised over \$6 million for school improvements, including the reconstruction of Midlands and the building of the Hanifl Centre.

2007 - Ridgewood dorm ready to house boys from Grades 5 to 8

Ridgewood dorm was completely refurbished. It now accommodates boys from grades 5-8, including the reconstruction of Midlands and the building of the Hanifl Centre.

2009 - Win Mumby gym opens

Opening of the Win Mumby gymnasium. This impressive facility, funded and built by alumni, supports a wide range of sports and activities.

2011 - New hostel funded by alumni opens and houses boys from grades 9 to 11

Opening of the new Hostel. Funded and built by alumni, the building accommodates boys in grades 9-11, and features a half-olympic sized swimming pool and an impressive range of indoor facilities.

2013 - Newly renovated Alter Ridge accommodates juniors

Opening of the newly renovated Alter Ridge girls dorms. Funded and renovated by alumni, the building houses older girls.
