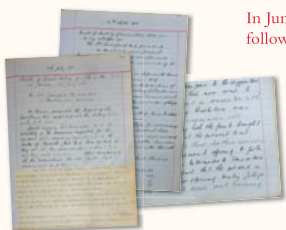


1911
2011



CO-EDUCATION BEGINS IN WESLEY COLLEGE



In June 1911 the Wesley College Trustees put the following proposal to the Methodist Conference:

This committee, having had the fact brought under their notice that at the present time there is no school in the three southern provinces under Methodist management offering to girls the advantages of an Intermediate education, suggests to the Conference that the present is a suitable occasion for opening Wesley College to girls who desire to secure such training as will fit them for professional and business careers.

*Original minutes from 1911 meetings
to discuss co-education*

Dr T J Irwin, Principal 1910–1945,
reflected at the Prize Giving in
December 1911:

After very careful consideration the Governors decided to open the doors of this College to girls. Co-education has been adopted in many countries with excellent results... There is no doubt co-education cultivates greater mutual knowledge and respect and those best qualified to judge assert that the moral tone is higher than when boys and girls are educated separately.



Prize winners and exhibitors, 1912



The Wesley College Quarterly,
December 1911 noted:

What a number of fresh arrivals there were! Fancy having to find room for eighty newcomers; what a delightful task. And then the girls have come! We extend to them a 'céad míle fáilte' and promise to be on our best behaviour.



Wesley College Quarterly, 1911

At the start of term, September 1911, Wesley opened its doors to twenty one girls, six of them boarders.

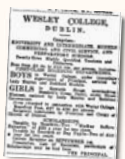


*Class containing some of the first girls with
Mr Storey 1911-12*

1911
2011



CO-EDUCATION IN WESLEY COLLEGE



“On this hotly debated question of co-education versus segregation we have no doubts. We are giving equal emphasis to ‘co’ and ‘educational’. We feel this is the natural order and that the balance of good is on the side of co-education both while pupils are at school and afterwards.”

Rev Gerald Myles, Principal, 1947 – 1977



Junior School Pupils, 1915

“The teachers were definitely harder on the boys, especially the male teachers.”

Heather Hughes, Class of 1972

“I remember Wesley as a genteel place; boys would doff their caps to passing staff and would always hold doors for girls and female staff.”

Elaine Bradshaw, Class of 1956

“The Latin teacher gave out to girls for rolling up their sleeves in hot weather, saying they were not washer women!”

Barbara Bardon, Class of 1960



Drill display by banders under Sargeant-Major Hastings, Tullamore, Sports Day, 1923

“Even though we were a co-ed school effectively it was in name only. The playgrounds were strictly segregated, as were the dining rooms.”

Elaine Bradshaw, Class of 1956

“Apart from free Sundays, the only free time out of school that girls, up to sixth year, were given was one Thursday in the month. We were let down town after school for two hours.”

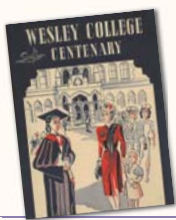
Jean Clarke, Class of 1966

1911
2011



CO-EDUCATION IN WESLEY COLLEGE

Right up to the 1940s co-education was narrowly interpreted and strictly supervised. The boys were always called by their surnames while the girls had their surnames prefixed by 'Miss'. Casual conversation between boys and girls was discouraged and they did not have meals together until the 1950s.



Editorial from Wesley College Centenary, produced by the Old Girls' Union, June 1945 reads:

For the later years of Wesley's history, girls have gone forth to share with their brethren the burden and heat of the day, and have continued to win golden opinions from those with whom they laboured in University, Mission Field, Professions, Commerce, and Domestic Spheres.

Holey Centenary Magazine, 1945



Egworth Gardening Club, 1948



Deportment - a novelty sport by Sports Day 1959

"Two girls in my form wanted references from Mr Myles to apply for Air-Hostess positions - he refused saying that no Wesley girl is going to be a glorified barmaid!"

Rosalie Garratt, Class of 1967

Good Conduct medals were awarded annually to a day-boy and a boarder-boy on the vote of their fellows, but those awarded to the girls were originally for "ladylike deportment".



Tullamore, 1921/22



Girls Drams Group, 1942

1911
2011



CURRICULUM

Up until the 1950s there were more boys in the senior classes as some girls left after having completed the commercial and secretarial class that existed until the 1930s. The curriculum in this class was: English, French, Business Methods, Book-keeping, Domestic and Tots. Later in the 1950s boys could choose Science or Drawing, while girls were given the choice of Domestic Science or Art.



Leaving Certificate Results for J.S. Richardson, Class of 1957, handwritten by the then Principal, Rev. Myles



Winter, 1957

‘It was decided that I could study Science at a later stage if my grades in Mathematics were good enough. I was persuaded to be patient... The real liberation was being able to take Chemistry and Physics at Leaving Certificate.’

Gillian Garratt, Class of 1965

‘...there was also the Choir, which was very good but for girls only!’

Pat Maybury, Class of 1965

‘There was no choice of subjects at all – the whole form studied Latin, French, Irish, English, Geography, History, and Maths.’

Joyce Malcolm, Class of 1945

Wesley College Prospectus 1968:

The new Home Economics kitchen measuring 50ftx30ft, will be in the Assembly Block. Its modern design and equipment will provide for the teaching of cookery, needlework, laundry, household knowledge and hygiene. All girls except those taking Experimental Science and a few taking Commerce or Art take this subject.



Domestic Science class, 1925/26

‘For boarders there was supervised study after tea with no distraction of television, and then off to bed with lights out at 9pm.’

Lorna Reid, Class of 1968



Prize Day, 1963



Young Scientist, 1994



1911
2011



SPORTS

‘I was the goalkeeper on the junior hockey team that won the Schools Cup in 1944. For years I treasured that cutting from the Evening Herald that referred to Olive Downer, who scored the goals, and to me for “many fine saves”. Regrettably, my sporting career was all downhill after that!’

Irene Morrow, Class of 1945



First Girls Hockey Team, 1911/12



Wesley College 1st Senior IX Hockey Team 1923-24, winners of the Leinster Cup

‘The greatest thrill and honour was to be included in the squad of hockey players who went to Belfast or Waterford to play in interschool friendly games. The modern day equivalent for students would be a school trip to France.’

Marjorie Wallace, Class of 1964

‘... sheep droppings all over the hockey field, the walnut tree at the goal post, the monkey tree, the bird graves with little crosses by the tennis courts, and from our dorm window trying to see into the windows of Bloomfield (the boys in the bathroom!)’.

Diana Holmes, Class of 1960



Hockey Coaching: players from 1983 watch Mr Blackmore in action



Gymnastics in Ballinure, 1982

‘I always enjoyed the important matches not least because we were allowed to leave lessons early!’

Marian Egan, Class of 1960



Junior Sports Day, 1964



1911
2011



CO-EDUCATION IN WESLEY COLLEGE



Summer Frook Uniform, 1962

More girls than boys were enrolled in Wesley College after the Second World War, possibly because some families perceived that co-education was more appropriate for their daughters than for their sons.

In an interview in an evening newspaper article entitled "Famous Schools of Ireland" in 1956, the Lady Warden of Epworth, Mary Margaret Smyth, is quoted: Being an Old Boy and Old Girl of the same school is quite a bond. But practically all of these attachments begin years after the boys and girls concerned have left Wesley. We keep them much too busy for such things while they are still here.

'Ha! Ha! Wishful thinking on Smyth's part.'

Comment by a girl pupil from the class of 1957

'We had film show nights on Saturdays which were always great; afterwards we would all walk back down town to get the bus home together, boys and girls.'

Margaret McMillan, Class of 1965

'The rule was to always wear the beret outside; invariably it would come off halfway up Harcourt Street as I rushed to catch a train.'

Ruth Eóan, Class of 1958



Hilary Kikysnick, 1963



Price Day, 1971

'He picked up very quickly that the girls in the class were budding feminists and after that began almost every class with the greeting "Good morning men!"'

Heather Morris, Class of 1982

'There was an expectation girls would go to college. My parents had certainly taken it for granted that I would.'

Inez Fletcher, Class of 1968

'I was quietly reminded one day by the Vice Principal that "A loud laugh bespeaks a vacant mind".'

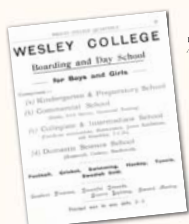
Heather Hughes, Class of 1972



1911
2011



HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED...



Wesley College
Advertisement, 1913

‘My most memorable walk to school was the morning after the end of World War 2. We made little Union Jacks, and waved them as we marched our way to school; much to the amusement of the passersby.’

Phyllis Spence, Class of 1948

‘In the main school building I remember that one year the heating was non-existent; I think due to shortage of funds to keep it working! Some teachers made us exercise for a few minutes to warm up!’

Marian Egan, Class of 1960



Maths Class, 1981
Class in 1957



‘Back then a major treat was to be in line for the thick heel of Johnston, Mooney and O’Brien’s bread.’

Jean Clarke, Class of 1966

‘Another teacher was named ‘juicy’ simply because his most popular phrase was: “D’you see”’.

Inez Fletcher, Class of 1968



Egmont House, 1962

‘We went to church twice on Sunday, once in the morning to your regular church, and once in the afternoon at the Chapel at Wesley before our parents picked us up for a few hours of freedom!’

Diana Holmes, Class of 1960

‘Times have changed, almost beyond recognition, but the principles of equal opportunity, social justice, tolerance and integrity promoted in Wesley are as important now as they were a century ago when co-education was introduced.’

Elsbeth Henderson, Class of 1961



Wesley College, 2011