

Belmont Historical Timeline 1946-2015



This project was created by a small group of Belmont students in the 2016-17 school year to commemorate 67 years of history of the school at its former Jacklin Road location with a focus on key events as opposed to individual people. The students interviewed former graduates, researched the school archives and perused the collection of old Belmont yearbooks in search of information. We are very grateful for the contribution of so many Belmont grads and staff members, who shared their memories and provided a number of original photos.

Compiled by Cindy Cullen, 2017

1946: SD 62 Students no longer welcome at Vic High



Vic High *(Tony Sprackett photo)*

Prior to 1946, no high school existed for students in SD 62. Teens from the Western Communities, including Sooke, had to travel into town to Vic High to continue their education after grade 8. When SD #61 trustees declared that they would no longer accept new out-of-district students due to overcrowding, two new high schools were proposed for the Western Communities.

1946



Belmont Telephone Exchange (photo from John James on the Old Victoria site)

School District 62 trustees purchased a ten acre tract of land from Mr. E. Peatt to build a school for students who attended Langford (Ruth King), Colwood, Happy Valley, Metchosin and Rocky Point elementary schools. District officials negotiated the sale of a number of old World War 2 army huts from the former anti-aircraft camp in Colwood to be used as the framework for the new building. “Belmont” was selected as the school’s name, likely because the catchment area met the same general boundaries as the Belmont Telephone Exchange. However, as the construction process would take some time, the grade 9 students would need a temporary home for the 1946-47 school year.

Milne's Landing: 1946-47



First grad
Class at Milne's
Landing (*photo
taken from
Sooke Mirror,
Elida Peers*)

Milne's Landing School opened in 1946 to serve high school students in the Sooke area. It was located at the site of present-day Edward Milne School and was built from World War 2 army huts that had previously been used at the Milne's Landing Army Camp. Mr. John Wilkinson was appointed principal.

1946-47: Sketch of the Albert Head Annex found in the Belmont archives



In 1946-47, the same year Milne's Landing opened in Sooke, a one room school house, commonly known as "The Annex," was established at Albert Head for one year while Belmont was being constructed. As Albert Head Annex was considered a subsidiary of Milne's Landing, Mr. Wilkinson acted as principal for both schools. Mrs. Kay Maughan was the teacher of 30 grade 9 students, twelve of whom would later form the core of Belmont's first graduating class in June, 1950.

1946-47: Albert Head school photo



Back Row *L-R: Ronnie Brousseau, Roy Mills, Werner Schneider, Ramon McTavish, Tom Howard, Barry Lucas, Dale Absalon, Wallace Helgesen, Bob W.*

Middle Row - *Mrs. Maughan, Mary Chow, Elsie May Thornett, Ian Thow, Bill Eminson, Ray Helgesen, Clarence Creasser, Norris Mills, Harry Mathias, Kay Rhode*

Front Row – *Mona Hansen, Gwen Silman, Ann Ford, Edith Richardson, Ruth Conibear, Helen Cuche, Mary Guiney, Shirley Williams, Isabel Helgesen, Holding slate - Joan Hemsworth*

1946-47



*Werner Schneider
relaxing at recess*



SOME OF THE GIRLS.



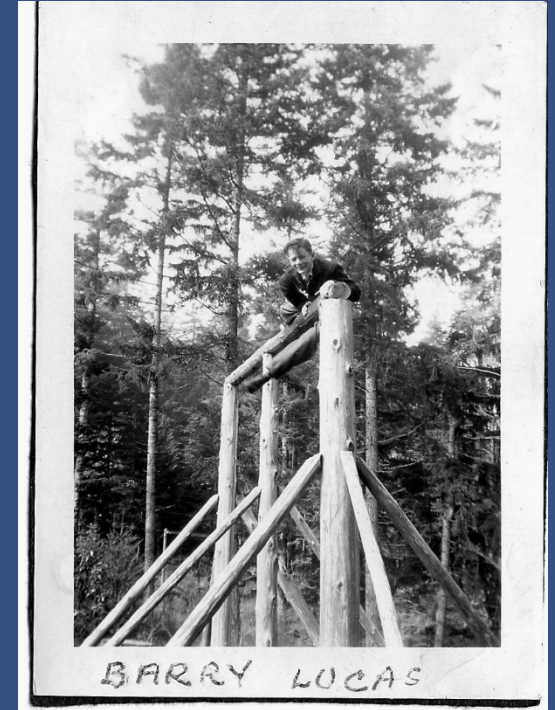
A FEW OF THE BOYS

The Annex was located next to the Albert Head military fort, and the students were allowed to use the DND fields for soccer and softball games, or just to relax during lunch breaks. Mrs. Maughan recalled that occasionally the students resorted to more creative forms of exercise: “Once in awhile, when the urge became too strong, a game of run sheep helped to work off a little energy – and incidentally caused the odd noon-hour to be lengthened while some erring sheep were found.”

1947: Albert Head Annex



Tom Howard, Barry Lucas and Dale Absolan on the outhouse roof



Barry Lucas perched on the swing set crossbar

The lack of formal playground equipment didn't stop the grade 9 class, particularly the boys, from finding creative forms of climbing apparatuses, including the outhouse roof and the top of the swing set.

1947: Albert Head

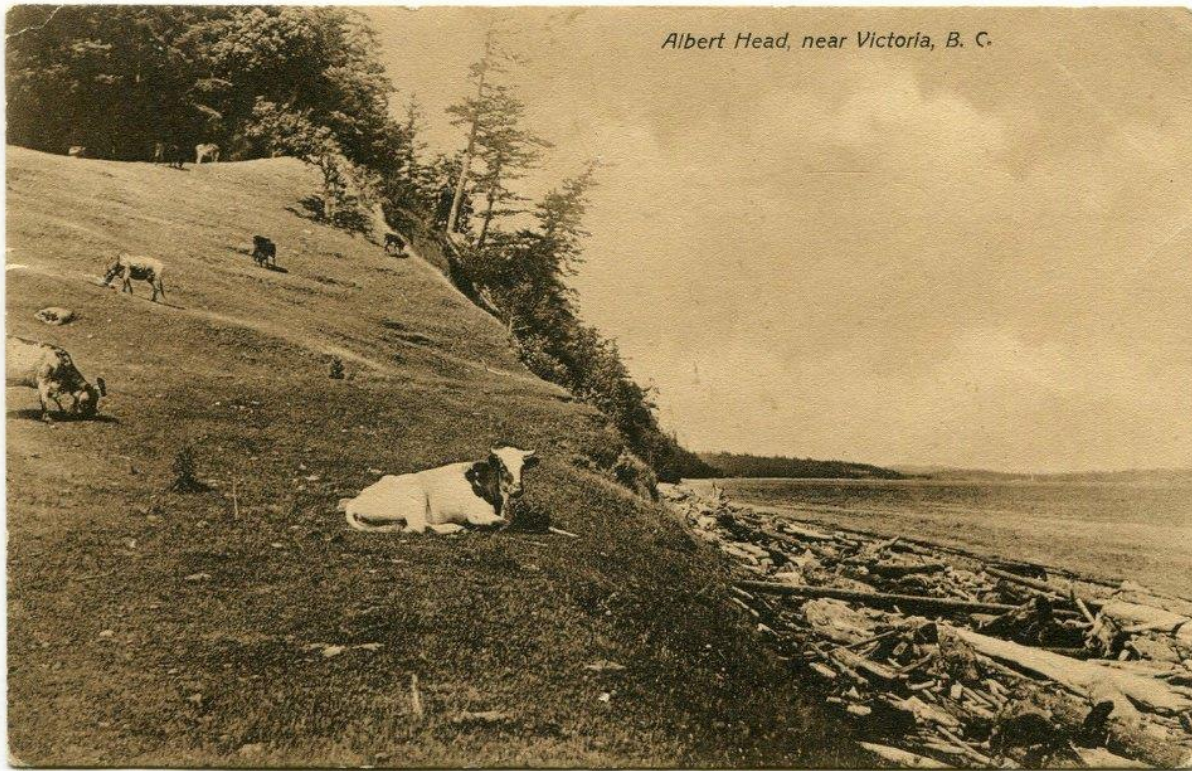


Mary Guiney, Helen Cuche and Mary Chow behind the Albert Head Annex

1947: Albert Head Annex



Werner Schneider, Barry Lucas, Ian Thow and Roy Mills on the Albert Head Annex stairs. The small building contained one wash basin and was heated by a woodstove at the back of the room. There were no indoor washroom facilities so students and staff had to use nearby outhouses.



Eileen Helgesen Downs (Belmont grad of 1952) noted these cows probably belonged to her father and were allowed to roam free during the day.

Helen Vallis McKay, a former Albert Head student, described her grade 9 year as a fun, family-like atmosphere, where close friendships were formed. Although almost all of her memories were very positive, she recalled one spring day when the students couldn't resist the temptation of heading to the beach for lunch, and arrived back on mass very late to class. Mrs. Maughan was not pleased and assigned the entire class an after-school detention, which meant students missed their bus connections and a number of them had to walk many miles to get home. According to Helen, punctuality was not an issue for the rest of the year!

1947-48: Belmont School's First Official Year of Existence



Original Belmont – army barracks 1947

In September, 1947, a couple of weeks behind schedule, Belmont Secondary School opened its doors to students from grade 7-10. The building consisted of five former World War 2 army huts that had been converted into a series of classrooms that encompassed 9,000 square feet. Kay Maughan's Albert Head contingent became the new grade 10 senior class, while students from Langford, Metchosin, Colwood, Happy Valley and Rocky Point Elementary Schools filled the junior classes. Mrs. Maughan was joined by teachers Greg Cook, Ann Davidowski, and Harold Parrott to round out the first teaching staff. Mr. Cook was given the role of teacher-in-charge as Mr. Wilkinson remained the official principal of both Milne's Landing and Belmont for one more year.

Mike Winship: Belmont's first custodian

Dedication

*We sincerely dedicate our
1954-1955 Year Book to our
custodian and friend
Mr. Winship.*

Sometimes we can find what we so urgently need if we look carefully about us. I have been asked by your Editor to center my remarks on citizenship. If we need an example of a good citizen to augment what we learn about citizenship in the classroom, it seems to me that we are singularly fortunate in having that example in Mr. Winship. This issue is being dedicated to him on the occasion of his retirement. For many years we have observed him exhibit keen sense of responsibility, loyalty, and generosity. Nothing was too much for him if it was for the good of the school and the "kids" in it. Even his impatience with those who misbehaved must be respected. In his earlier years as a soldier of the First World War, as Chairman of a School Board for many years, and as spokesman for his fellow miners, he has earned the right to be named a "Good Citizen." Now he leaves us and his example.

Good-bye and thanks, "Mike."

A.H. Stephenson,
Principal.

*Tribute to retiring
custodian Mike Winship in
the Belmont annual*

Another important member of the staff was the well-respected custodian, Mike Winship, who had an office in the school's basement. Aside from his regular custodial duties, he capably handled an assortment of carpentry and general maintenance tasks. Mr. Winship was a baseball fan and some of the early grads recall him inviting the boys down to his office to listen to major league broadcasts on his large radio.

1947-48: A Year of Construction



Mrs. Maughan on the steps of Belmont's main entrance.

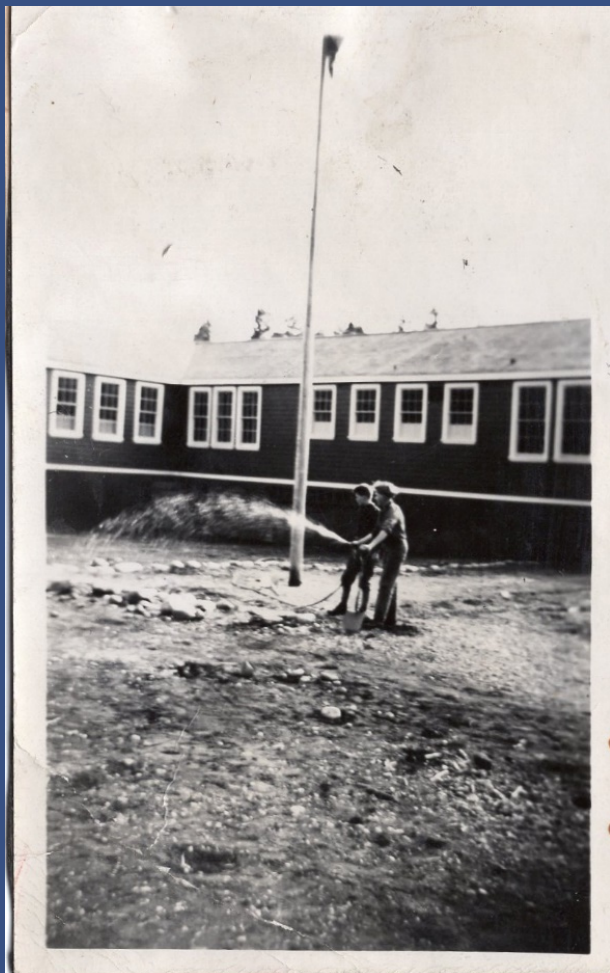
The 1950 Pioneer Edition of the Belmont annual described some of the obstacles faced by staff and students during the construction process: *“No one will forget that year – no furnace until late in the fall; carpenters in and around the building hammering, sawing, pulling nails, and running electric sanders. The classes were moved here and there while rooms were painted. The halls were cluttered with saw horses and wall board.”*

1947-48: Clearing the Land for Playing Fields



Construction was not only occurring on the Belmont army hut building; there was also the herculean task of converting rugged land into school playing fields. Clearing the land was tough physical work, as many of the larger boulders and stumps had to be first loosened with a pick-axe and then loaded into trucks or wheelbarrows to be carted away. Besides helpful volunteers, students with detentions would be sent outside to gather a specific quota of rocks as a consequence for truancy or other disciplinary infractions.

1947-48



Two boys hose down the dusty area in front of the school.



Students load rocks into Mr. Winship's pickup truck.



Students and staff clear rocks and stumps from land that would later become the school's playing fields. Many early grads recall this felt like a never-ending process, as each new rainfall brought a fresh supply of rocks to the surface.

1947-48: First Sports Teams

Belmont Wolves



Back Row L-R: Shirley Williams, Isabel Helgesen, Helen Cuche, Helen Vallis, Edith Richardson, Kay Rhode, Mrs. Maughan, Mona Hansen, Elsie Mae Hornett
Front Row L-R: Mary Guiney, Ruth Conibear, May Chow, Joan Hemsworth

Belmont Sluggers



Back row L-R: Dale Absalon, Ian Thow, Harry Mathias, Clarence Creasser, Ronnie Brousseau
Front row L-R: Norris Mills, Ray Helgesen, Ray McTavish, Bill Eminson, Werner Schneider

1947-48 saw the formation of Belmont's first sports teams, the Wolves and Sluggers softball squads. In the spring of that first year, Belmont and Milne's Landing held their inaugural Inter-High Sports Day, which would become an annual tradition and create significant rivalry between the two schools. This event consisted of four softball games, as well as a series of track and field events. Points were awarded for each victory and the "Legion Cup" was presented to the winning school.

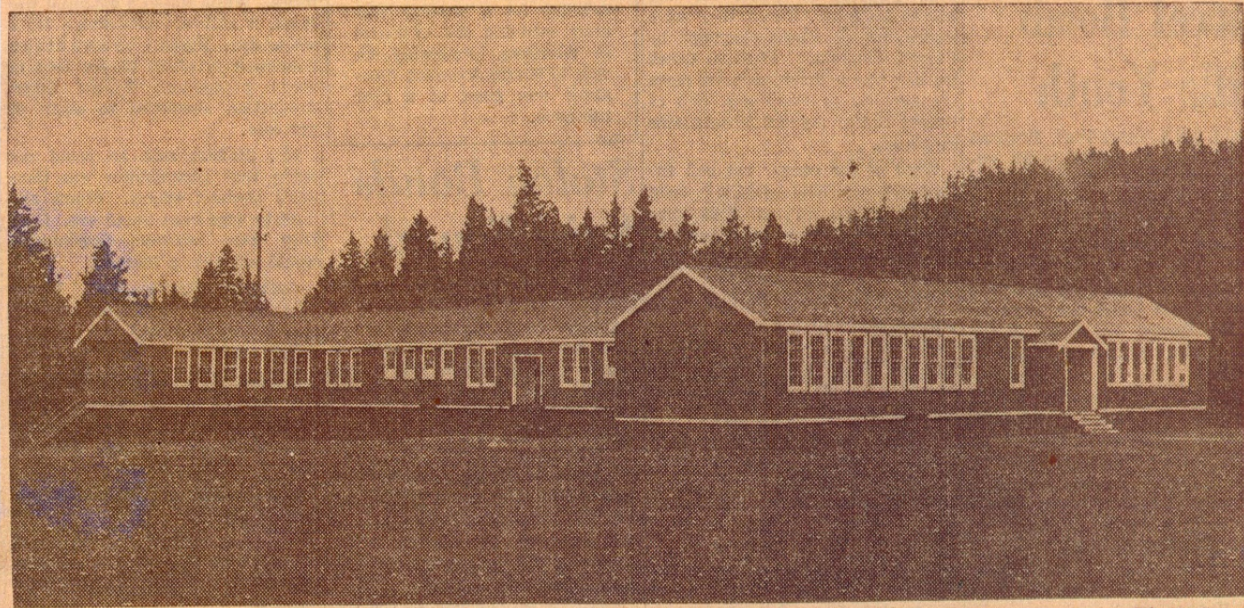
May, 1948

The Daily Colonist

THE OLDEST DAILY ON THE PACIFIC COAST—ESTABLISHED 1858

VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, TUESDAY, MAY 4, 1948

New School Constructed From Former Army Huts



—Colonist Photo.

Army huts from Colwood that housed soldiers during the war will have a younger class of occupants when Belmont High School at Langford is opened Friday. The school, 110 by 180 feet with five classrooms, auditorium, nurses' room and rest rooms, has been fashioned from huts transported in nine sections. Hon. W. T. Straith, K.C., Minister of Education, will officially open the school at 7:30 p.m. Friday at a ceremony sponsored by trustees of School District 62 (Sooke).

By the spring of 1948, the finishing touches had been completed, and the Minister of Education, W.T. Straith, attended a formal ceremony to officially declare the school open.

1947-48: Belmont Grade 10 Class



The grade 10's, many of whom had been at Albert Head the year before, formed the senior class at Belmont. Notice that Mrs. Maughan is still their teacher.

1947-48: Belmont Grade 9 Class



Unlike the grade 10's who mostly had attended Albert Head School together, the first grade 9 class came from a variety of elementary schools. Before long, they had bonded into a close, cohesive group.

1948: First Celebratory Year-End Dinner



The 1947-48 year was both a challenging and rewarding experience for Belmont staff and students, and lasting friendships were created. In June, the senior grade 10 class enjoyed an evening of celebration that included a dinner prepared by their mothers. Many of the seniors would continue for two more years at Belmont, but others would leave school early to join the work force, or even to get married.

1948-49 House System Established



1950 Belmont Band



1948-49 Senior Boys' Softball Team

Back Row: Terry Ridley, Werner Schneider, Vernon Smith, Norm Richardson, Eric Helgesen, Ronnie Brousseau

Front Row: Mr. Stephenson, Ray Helgesen, Alan Robertson, Bill Parker, Mr. Parrott

In September, 1948, new Principal Archie Stephenson initiated the house system at Belmont. Mr. Stephenson believed that friendly competition instilled character in young people and encouraged all Belmont students to participate in extracurricular activities. The students were divided into multi-grade houses (A, B, C or D) and students could earn points for their houses by competing in lunch-hour intramural sports, participating in band, drama or choir, or by joining one of the many clubs or teams offered at the school. Every student had an opportunity to earn points for his or her house, and many grads from this era felt this system helped to foster a strong sense of school community and pride.



NEWSPAPER CLUB 1952

1952 Newspaper Club



1949 Junior girls' softball team

*Back row: Betty-Jean Osborne, Joan Richardson, Miss Frewing, Shirley Moseley, Louise Carnegie
Front row: Barb Rainey, Judy Ranns, Pat Kennedy, Arlene Fortin, Irene Woodruff, Cynthia Lelliot, Jo-Ann Malloch*



1950 Students' Council

Just a few of Belmont's many extracurricular opportunities



Senior house captains Frances McCormick and Ronnie Brousseau (holding trophy) and the other members of the 1950 winning House

House points were recorded daily on four large thermometer posters in the main hallway, and students followed the updated standings with great enthusiasm. On occasion, demerit points were deducted from a team's total, for infractions such as poor sportsmanship or inappropriate language. At the end of the year, the victorious team was awarded the coveted Henry Birks Challenge Cup.

1948-49: Victory Against Milne's Landing



Mrs. Kay Maughan presents The trophy to Alan Robertson, captain of the Belmont boys' softball team. The Maughan Cup was named after her late husband, Herbert Maughan, who died in World War 2.

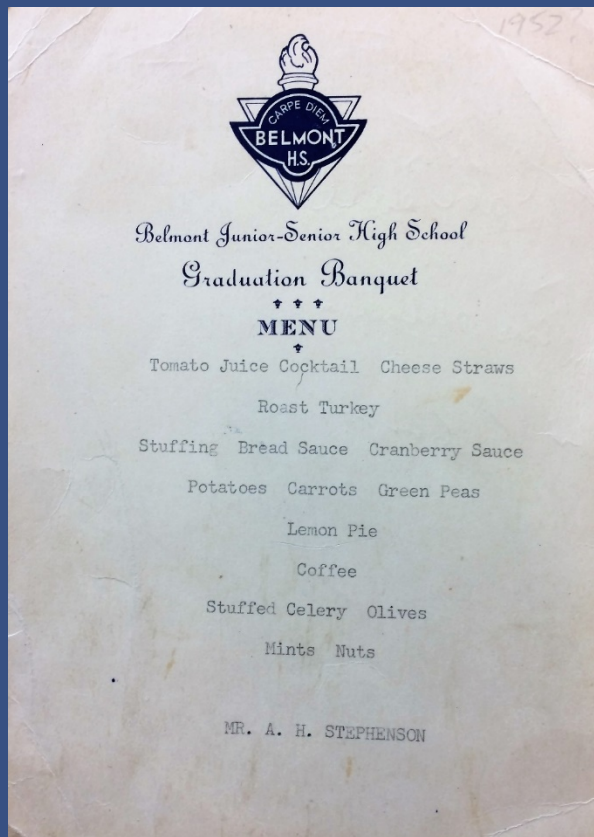
Belmont students established a friendly athletic rivalry with Milne's Landing School. The two schools held a fiercely-contested competition every spring that featured a number of senior and junior sporting events. In June, 1949, Belmont defeated their Sooke Counterparts for the first time.

Belmont Band



Along with an expanding athletics program, music was also a valued activity at Belmont. Don Kerley, the school's first band teacher, laid the foundation for a vibrant music program that would continue to thrive for the next 65 years.

1950 Graduation Celebration



*Graduation
Dinner Menu*

Belmont's first graduation class of 1950 consisted of sixteen students, twelve of whom had started at Albert Head Annex as grade 9's. The ceremony was a formal event, as the grads, dressed in their gowns and suits, were joined by their teachers for an evening of festivities. The ceremony began with the granting of diplomas and presentation of a variety of awards. The students were assembled in alphabetical order, and each graduate had to introduce the person beside them and give short speech about their classmate's accomplishments and future goals. That student then came up to the stage to receive his or her diploma, along with a commemorative sterling silver chain and pin. After a short break, the grads and their teachers gathered in the home economics classroom to enjoy a delicious turkey dinner prepared by the mothers and served by the grade 11 students. The celebration continued with a dance in the school gymnasium that had been decorated with a Mardi Gras theme. Students and staff danced to music played on old 45 records selected by a local DJ. Attendees remember the event as a special time to celebrate with their small group of classmates whom had become like family.

June, 1950: The first graduation class of Belmont Secondary



Back Row: Ron Brousseau, Clarence Creasser, Harry Mathias, Werner Schneider, Mrs. Kay Maughan (teacher), Ray Helgesen, Tom Howard, John Roberts, Mike Waterman

Front Row: Gwen Silman, Helen Vallis, Helen Cuche, Edith Richardson, Mary Chow, Dorreen Neff, Gaye Jacobson (Missing: Wallace Helgesen)

1953-54



Each June, from 1950 until present times, the unveiling of the Belmont yearbook has been a highly anticipated event, particularly for the grade 12 graduating class. The first book was named the “Pioneer Edition”, while the next three annuals were entitled the “Blue and White”.

In 1953-54, student council representatives and various staff members met to brainstorm a new yearbook name and mascot. Mrs. Dawson, Belmont’s home economics teacher, had a keen interest in indigenous culture and suggested Belmont adopt a thunderbird as the new school mascot. Members of the committee were enthusiastic and named the bird “Keenyai Yuens,” a Haida term that translates to “Bearer of Good News.” Students and staff agreed that Keenyai Yuens would also be an appropriate title for the school’s annual.

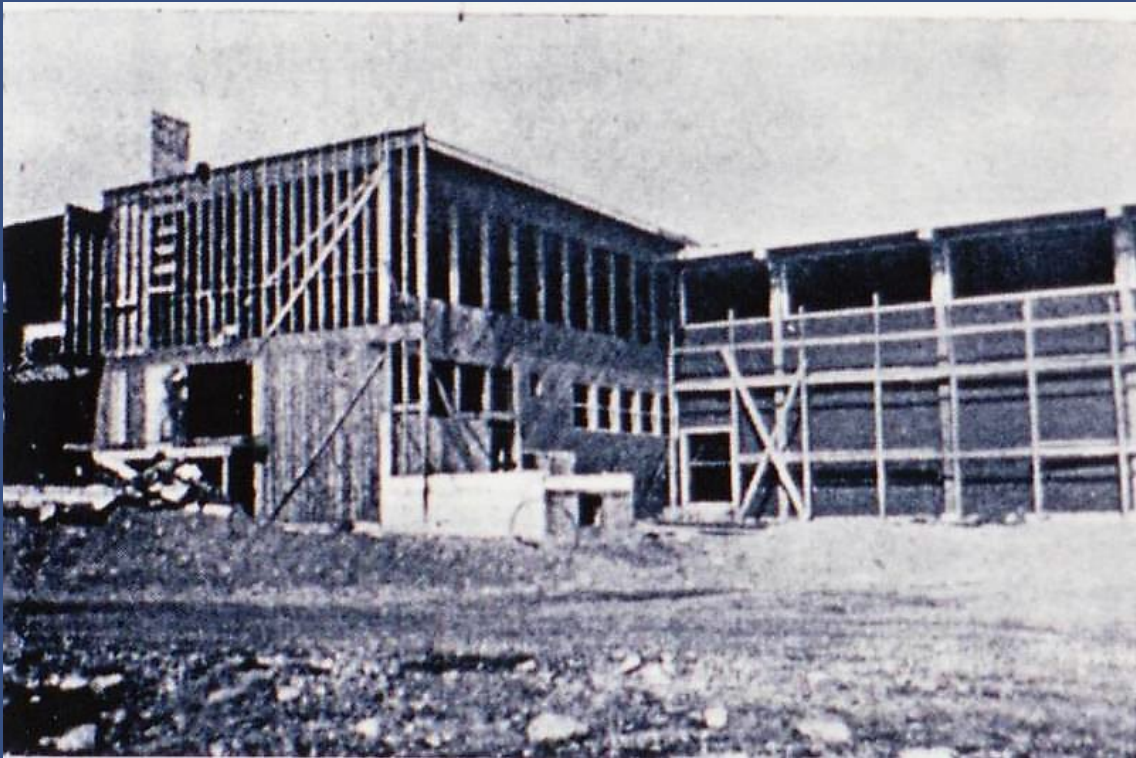
1953-54



In 1953-54, the PTA and School Board put forth a concerted effort to finally finish the one acre Belmont playing field. Yearbook writers Muriel Pollack and Robin Price describe the procedure. *“So far, the work accomplished by the school board has been levelling the ground and applying topsoil. The PTA supplied the lime which was put on the soil last fall. Several work parties were formed to remove rocks. The successful laborers were rewarded with refreshments supplied by the school board. The girls were present to boost the morale of the stronger sex.*

There was a ceremony to commemorate the completion of this monumental task, but the celebration was perhaps premature... As this 1955 boys' soccer team photo illustrates, large rocks still littered the surface, and soccer and softball players continued to suffer scrapes and lacerations on a regular basis.

1954-55: A Modern New Building



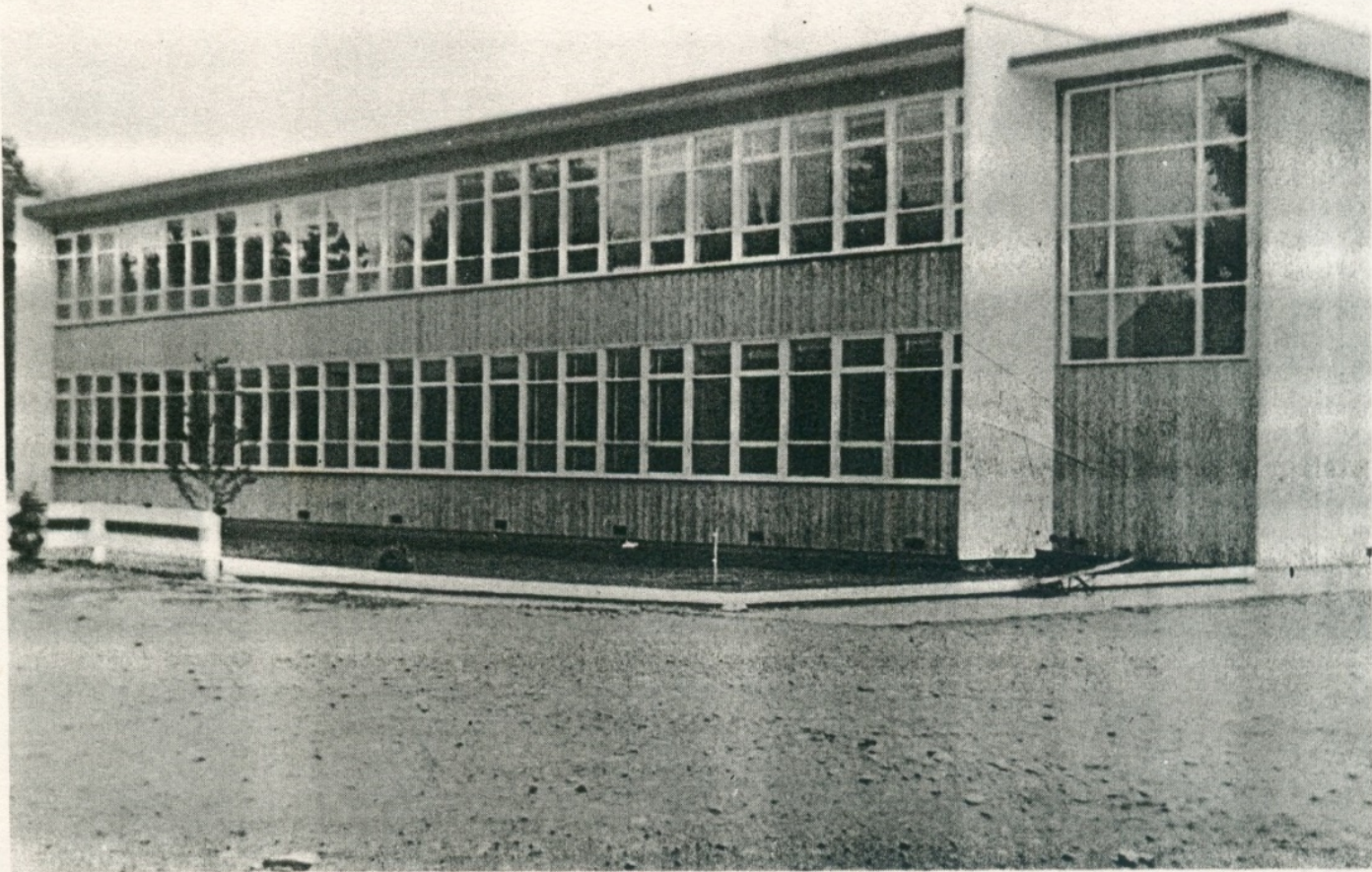
View of the back of the school under construction



Plaque donated by the grad class of 1955 to commemorate the new building

1954-55 was an exciting time as construction was completed on a permanent new Belmont building at a total cost of \$177,000. A formal opening ceremony occurred January, 23, 1955 when the minister of education, the Honorable R.G. Willison, presented the key to the school to Belmont principal Archie Stephenson and student council president Bernard Wachter. The grade 11 and 12 students had their classes in the new rooms, while some of the junior classes were still housed in the old army huts.

1956



Belmont Jr.-Sr. High School

The completed new school (front view facing Jacklin Road)

1955-56: New Gym opens



Top Row – C. Nikkels Second Row - J. Craddock, K. Rhode Third Row –R. Yates, M. Staton, Mr. Gower, B. Craddock, A. Reece, K. Valleau, D. Smith, Front – B. Haines

The brand new gym led to the creation of a number of new Belmont teams and clubs. This photo shows teacher Frank Gower, with his boys' tumbling squad.

1955-56



In 1956, the Sports Council decided to replace the original alphabet house team designations with aboriginal names, and the Council selected four local First Nations groups: Kwakwaka'wakw, Tsimshian, Toquots, and Salish. Along with the new names, each house was also designated an animal emblem or crest: the Raven, the Bear, the Killer Whale, and the Beaver. The Sports Council also added “Tribal Track Meets” to the list of popular House events, as students competed in running, throwing, and jumping events, as well as fun competitions such as three legged races, piggy-back relays, and egg tosses.

1956

Aboriginal House Symbols



Raven



Killer Whale



Bear



Beaver

1956

First Graduation ceremony in the new gymnasium



*Marilyn Moseley, Carol Sudhues, Larry Rantz, Ken Brousseau, Dick Smith, Gail Thomson, Audrey Morgan
Mrs. Phyllis Dulmage (homeroom teacher), Maxine Kennedy, Carolyn Hiscock, Beverley Erickson,
Sheila Arden, Joan Middleman, Robin Price*

1959



Belmont School: View from Jacklin Road



In the 1950's, Belmont didn't have an official mascot and only the basketball teams had names that continued from year to year. The senior boys were the Braves, the senior girls the Bravettes, the junior boys the Huskies and the junior girls the Belles. Bill Spotswood later changed the name Bravettes to Tomahawks. The current Belmont Bulldog name and mascot would be adopted in 2001-02. Other sports occasionally came up with an original team name for that particular year (for example, the 1960 soccer squad were the Butchers.) Whatever the name, school colours remained consistent: royal blue and white.

1960

Elizabeth Fisher School opens



The Board of School Trustees of School District No. 62
(Sooke)
cordially invites you to the
Official Opening
of
The Elizabeth Fisher Junior High School
3067 Jacklin Road, Victoria, B. C.
on Wednesday, June first,
nineteen hundred and sixty
at eight o'clock p.m.
R.S.V.P.

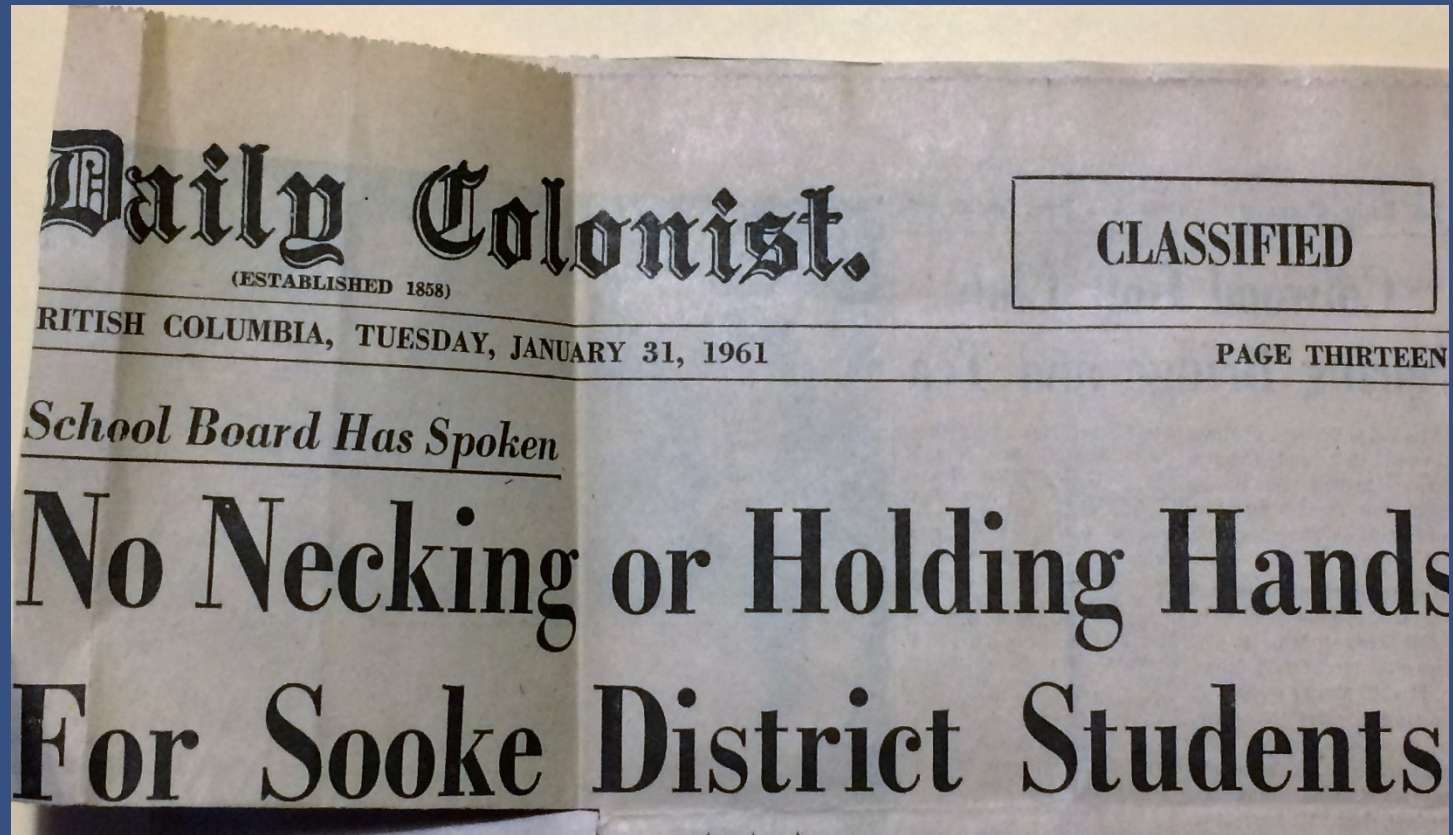


Elizabeth Fisher grade 8 class, 1965

In 1960, Elizabeth Fisher Junior High opened for students in grades 8-10 and Belmont became grade 11-12. Named after the first female teacher in the Metchosin School District, the new school was built mere meters away from its sister high school, Belmont, but staff wanted each school to be distinct entities and to establish their own culture. For this reason, a two-foot metal fence was erected between the two buildings and served as a barrier to maintain the strictly-enforced separation between the junior and senior students. The students reveled in a time of sock hops, muscle cars and rock and roll. Dressed in corduroy slacks and pleated skirts the students of Elizabeth Fisher experienced a special atmosphere in its halls and classrooms. Teachers were an important part in making the school a home away from home, with their doors always open and even being up for an occasional piggy-back fight at lunch.

School District 62 Imposes Morality Code

1961



In 1961, Mr. Ron Weir, the chairman of the School Board announced a series of new guidelines intended to monitor student conduct. One of the most controversial edicts called for the strict separation of the genders. Besides the ban on any display of physical affection such as holding hands or kissing, girls and boy were not permitted to sit alone together at lunchtime or be in cars together on school property. Predictably, Belmont students were not happy about the new regulations and voiced their displeasure to the media. Even some of the teachers were opposed and felt the rules were too restrictive and would be very difficult to enforce.

School Dances

1963

P R O G R A M M E

1. Waltz .. Just grads and dates. Name	11. Bunny Hop Name
2. Waltz .. Grads. and Parents. Name	12. Spot Dance (Waltz) Name
3. Ladies Choice Name	13. Schottische Name
4. Mixer Name	14. Ladies Choice Name
5. Spot Dance Name	15. Jive Name
6. Jive Name	16. Elimination (Slow) Name
7. Slow Name	17. Charlie McCarthy Name
8. Bingo Name	18. Polka or Minuet Name
9. Twist Name	19. Slow Name
10. Broom Dance Name	20. Home Waltz Name

*1963 Belmont
dance card*

School dances were popular social events in the 1960's. Sometimes DJ's were hired to play the popular records of the day, while other times, local bands performed. Mingling was strongly encouraged and students would try to fill their dance cards with an assortment of partners for each of the dances, of course saving the slow dances and "home waltz" for their special dates. Spot dances were popular, as the couple finishing closest to an unknown pre-determined location when the music stopped would win a prize.

Explosion rocks Elizabeth Fisher School

1964



April 13, 1964 started out like any other regular school day at Elizabeth Fisher, but at 10:30 am, students and staff were startled by a loud explosion in the first floor boys' washroom as a homemade pipe bomb detonated in one of the toilet bowls. The explosion shattered the bowl into little shards, seared paint off the ceiling, and sent black smoke and dust into the hallway. Fortunately no one was in the washroom at the time and there were no injuries. Former student Glenn Willing recalls that all the boys in the school were immediately herded into the gymnasium and lined up in alphabetical order. The RCMP arrived and took out the boys one by one to interview them and try to find out what happened. They determined the act was an ill-advised prank and the individuals responsible were surprised about the force of the device and remorseful for their actions.

September, 1972: Final game of Canada-Russia Summit hockey series

1972



Recollection of an Elizabeth Fisher student: Marianne Young Crabb

“I had just moved to Langford from Victoria and was terrified of all of these strangers. I was in grade Eight and I didn't know a soul! I don't remember which teacher he was that told us we had to watch the game because it was going to be history, but am glad he did. I liked hockey ok back then but didn't watch it intentionally. So even though I knew the sights and sounds of the game and knew of Bobby Hull and Bobby Orr, I did not know any of the players on the Canada team. I was not alone in this but we basically got a free period so we went to watch the game. It gave me a sense of belonging that helped me feel a bit more welcomed there. As far as I know, most of the school was 'invited' to watch the game. As it progressed and the excitement grew and the excitement on everyone's faces also grew, we became more than strangers, we became Canadian hockey fans! Did we go crazy at that goal.??? OMG yes!! It felt like the building shook with the yelling and stomping and slapping of hands! It was one of the biggest memories I have of that school. It was the day that I felt welcome.”

Elizabeth Fisher and Belmont Schools Unite

1973-74



Elizabeth Fisher

In the late 1960's, School District 62 trustees decided to combine Belmont and Elizabeth Fisher to create one large school for students in grades 8-12, and construction began to physically join the two buildings. In 1973-74, Belmont-Fisher Secondary School officially opened its united doors amidst considerable controversy. Due to poor planning and a lack of initial enthusiasm, the new combined school had a rocky start, but as time went on Belmont-Fisher began to find its way and the students and teachers came to create a school that united them all. After only two years, the student body voted to drop the hyphenated name and the school reverted back to Belmont Secondary School. Historical ties were preserved, as the Belmont library was officially designated as the "Elizabeth Fisher Library," and Mrs. Fisher's picture was prominently displayed above the entrance.

1974

Reach for the Top Challenge



“Reach for the Top” was a popular game show in the 1970’s, and Belmont fielded a team that competed against different Vancouver Island schools.

1974

Belmont Music Annex Ablaze



On the afternoon of February 2, 1974 fire broke out at Belmont-Fisher School in a Fine Arts annex near the north end parking lot. Eight students were in the building to work on a movie they were creating for a school project. The fire was triggered by foam chip-filled gymnastic mats that had been pushed up against a heater and was fed by gas leaking from one of the student's motorcycle which ironically had been moved inside the annex for safekeeping after having been vandalized in the school parking lot the previous evening. When the students discovered the only fire extinguisher in the building had been stolen, they tried unsuccessfully to extinguish the fire, first by stamping on the flames and then by throwing water on the gasoline-soaked foam chips. As the situation escalated, they made the wise decision to evacuate the building. By the time Langford Fire Department arrived on the scene, the building was enveloped in dark clouds of smoke. The firefighters successfully extinguished the fire, but not before an estimated \$35,000 damage had occurred. The students all escaped uninjured, but unfortunately their movie and all the video equipment were completely destroyed.

A New Belmont Crest

1977



Belmont's original crest was created by Mr. Palsson's art class in Belmont's early years and consisted of a simple navy blue and white design with a billowy torch on top and the phrase "Carpe Diem" draped across the middle. In 1977, Belmont underwent a process to create a new crest and held an open contest for grade 11 and 12 students. The winner was grade 11 student Brian Cyr. His design went through five different stages as he researched many crests, predominantly family ones. He finally decided upon a crest that featured a shield that contained a sun rising over the mountains ("belle mont") which Cyr thought sounded similar to the French term for beautiful mountain, a book to represent learning, and a torch in the background, which as Cyr recalls, symbolized the light of knowledge to dispel the darkness of ignorance.

Belmont Mosaic

1979



Two years later, in 1978-79, Ms. Nancy Adam's yearbook class created a large "Welcome to Belmont" mosaic, with the new Belmont torch as its centerpiece. A large sheet of plywood provided the base, and students proceeded to glue the mosaic tiles on top of the wood. The finished mosaic was then attached by clips to the wall in the main school hallway, where it remained until June, 2015.

1986

Belmont Students Set Sail



On Monday, March 24th, 1986, three years of planning and hard work came to fruition, as the “Centerfold” sailing ship made her maiden voyage on Langford Lake. This was the culmination of a three-year project, spearheaded by Brian Boag, teacher sponsor of the Belmont sailing club. There had been a number of enthusiastic students ready to join the sailing club, but they were missing one important item: a boat. Rather than rely on expensive rentals from facilities in town, Mr. Boag, along with the support of several other staff members, decided to construct their own vessel: a 31 foot schooner that would seat eight passengers. They also added a unique feature: the boat would fold in half to allow for easier storage and transport. This characteristic would lead to the selection of the “Centerfold” name. Many staff members, community businesses and students volunteered time or resources to work on this project.

The maiden voyage was a much-anticipated event, and a news crew from the Victoria Colonist Newspaper covered the launching of the Centerfold. Brian Boag captained the ship and was accompanied by students James McHardy, Francie Tobeart, John Fisher, Rob Kipps, and Cameron Lait.

1997-98

First Provincial Sports Championship for Belmont



Coach Mike Toakley atop a fire truck



*Standing: Barb Gilbert (manager), Mike Toakley (coach), Theo Riecken, Derek Lucik, Bryce Goddard, Gary Venn
Sitting: Adam Stevens, Ben Gollmer, Dustin Price, Darren Goss, Mike Strandlund, Jeremy Douglas*

In November, 1997 a hardworking and dedicated senior boys' volleyball team travelled to Kelowna, where they captured the AAA Volleyball Provincial Championship title in a thrilling five set match against the #2 ranked Claremont Spartans. The final point was scored from the end line with an ace serve from team captain Ben Gollmer, ending the game with a score of 18-16. This made them the first ever Belmont sports team to win a provincial banner. The most valuable player of the tournament was middle blocker and Grade 12 student, Darren Goss, who would later compete internationally for Team Canada in beach volleyball, and Ben Gollmer, Mike Strandlund, and Dustin Price all earned All Star recognition. Upon arriving home, the boys were honoured at a special school assembly and were escorted by Langford fire trucks to Jasmine's Restaurant where they enjoyed a complimentary lunch.

2001

A New Belmont Mascot



Belmont's 2015 senior girls' basketball squad, the last girls' team to play an interschool game in the Spotswood Gym, stand in front of the huge Bulldog mural.

In 2001, a group of Belmont students from Mr. Waterlander's First Nations 12 class approached school administration to request that the Belmont sports teams adopt a new name and mascot. The students explained that the traditional names chosen in the late 1950's, the Tomahawks and the Braves, were no longer culturally appropriate. The school officials agreed and decided to let the student body and citizens of Langford help choose a new name to represent Belmont's athletics. For that transitional 2001-2002 school year, Belmont had no official mascot while the selection process unfolded. All current students were polled, and the Goldstream Gazette posted an article asking for community input. Some popular suggestions included the Renegades, Bluehounds, Terriers, Boa Constructors, Xtreme, Killer Bees, Blue Bells, and Bulldogs. After careful consideration, Belmont students and staff voted for all school sports teams to be known as the Bulldogs. The 2003 grad class raised the funds to be able to pay for a new mural to be painted on the wall in the school's Spotswood Gym.

2006

First Belmont 10,000 Tonight Food Drive



*Rachael Brown,
Coordinator of
Belmont's 2011
10,000 Tonight
(Goldstream
Gazette photo)*

On December 6, 2006, Belmont students conducted the first annual 10,000 Tonight food drive, to try to gather 10,000 non-perishable items for the local Goldstream food bank. The event was first proposed by grade 12 student Cameron Gray, who had been involved in similar initiatives at his former high school in Penticton and he enlisted fellow Leadership student Megan Blaquiere as his co-chair. These two individuals mobilized the Belmont student body to get involved, while Leadership teachers Troy Harris and Kevin Harrington helped with some of the logistical details. December 6th turned out to be a cold and rainy night, but despite the inclement weather, Belmont students knocked on 5000 houses and were overwhelmed by the generosity of the community. Troy Harris recalls the electric atmosphere in the gymnasium that night as the boxes of food continued to accumulate, and he says the moment the number “10,000” appeared on the big screen and the crowd erupted with excitement was perhaps his proudest moment as a Belmont teacher. By the time the final count was done, the students had collected 15,000 items! Not only has 10,000 Tonight remained an annual Belmont tradition, leadership students from Royal Bay, Edward Milne and Claremont high schools have also adopted the event, as Cameron Gray’s legacy lives on.

2011

Belmont Students Walk for Change



Local MLA John Horgan joins students from Todd Powell's class to promote the petition for two new schools.

Ravi addresses student body



Maurine Karagianis, Ida Chong, Ravi, John Horgan, & George Abbott

In all of Belmont's history, there has never been a bigger student project than the student walkout of 2011. Spearheaded by grade 11 student Ravi Parmar, the goal was to convince the provincial government to replace aging Belmont with two brand new schools. Ravi, along with his fellow AVID classmates and teacher Todd Powell, created a petition and used social media to voice their concerns about the duct taped hallways, worn carpets in the classrooms and asbestos warning signs above the water fountains. The actual walkout took place on Friday May 27, 2011, in the last block of the day, with about three quarters of the student body participating. Teachers were supportive, but were not able to encourage a walkout. After a short rally on the back field, students lined up along Jacklin Road with home-made signs held high. Many drivers honked their horns in approval and the event garnered extensive media attention. A week after the walkout, Ravi met with the BC's Minister of Education, George Abbott, at the Legislative Building, and formally presented the students' request. Several months later, the government announced funding approval for the construction of two new high schools in the Western Communities: Belmont and Royal Bay.

2014

Celebrating Diversity



Belmont GSA T Shirt



Huge Rainbow Mosaic



2003 Inspirational Mural

In 2014, the Belmont GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) group, initiated a school-wide project to make a pledge for inclusion. The group decided that a large school-wide mosaic would be a great way to spread their message. Under the leadership of teachers Danielle Huculak and Dan Taft, the students received donated materials from local businesses: a huge plywood panel from Slegg Lumber and tins of paint from Deluxe Paints. All Belmont staff and students were encouraged to dip their hands in paint and leave their handprints on the mosaic. Students and staff also signed a formal pledge promising to stand up against all harassment and not to engage in any bullying behavior. On April 20th, National Acceptance Day, during a lunchtime ceremony and barbecue sponsored by the GSA, the huge rainbow mosaic was unveiled, high on the north end wall of the Belmont building. Fittingly, the rainbow was placed in close proximity to another large mural, painted by Belmont student Elizabeth Harrison in 2003, that read “All the darkness in the world cannot overcome the light shed by a single flame.”

May, 2015

Farewell to Belmont celebration



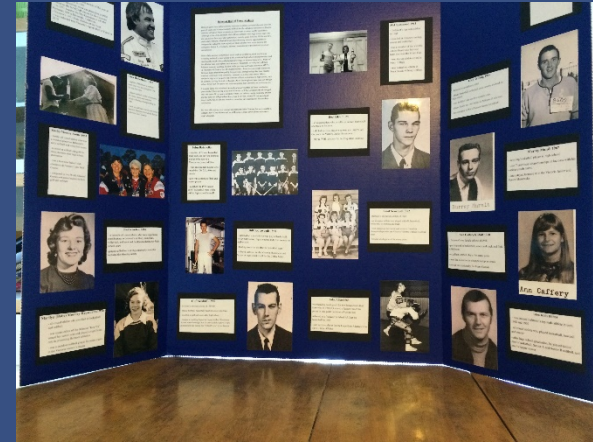
Ray Miller



Helen Vallis Mackay



*Glenn Willing and
Lloyd Powell*



Belmont Sports Hall of Fame Panel

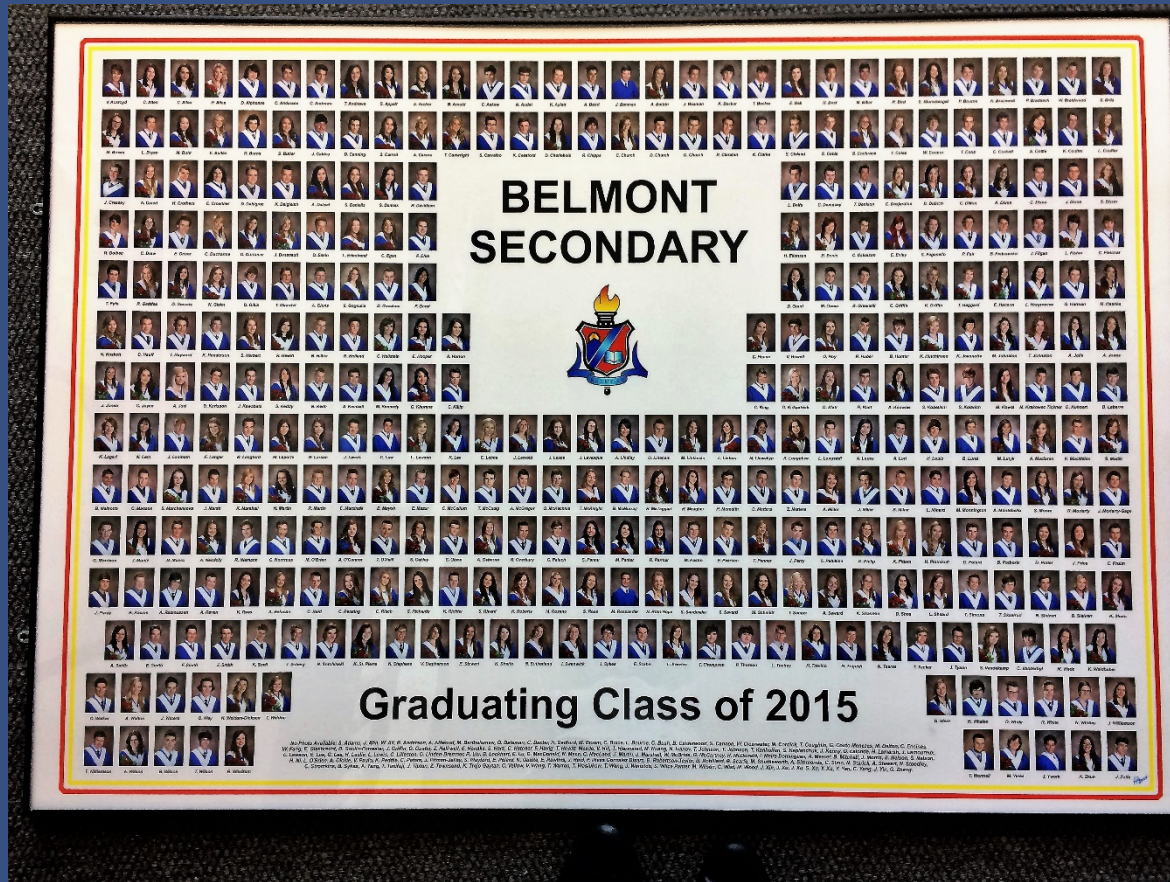


*Unearthing
the time
capsule*

Saturday, May 8th, 2015 was the date of the largest gathering in Belmont's history, as approximately five thousand former grads came out to pay tribute and say farewell to their alma mater that had existed at its Jacklin Road location for the previous 67 years. Six of the classrooms were set up as decades room, and pictures and other memorabilia from each time period were prominently displayed, while popular songs from each era played in the background. The Spotswood gymnasium featured large poster boards that outlined many of Belmont's most memorable athletic achievements and included the unveiling of the school's Sports Hall of Fame recipients. Outside, people could enjoy barbecued burgers and listen to musical performances by both current and former students. One highlight was the Peace Jeep band, which had played at Belmont dances back in the 1960's. In the afternoon, students and dignitaries dug up a five-foot-long green sewer pipe time capsule, buried by the grad class of 1998 as part of the school's 50th anniversary activities. As the instructions with the time capsule stated it should not be opened until 2048, it was transported intact to the new Belmont School to be re-buried at a later date. The culmination of the Farewell to Belmont celebration was the Torch relay, where Ray Miller lit the "Essence of Belmont" torch, which was passed to grads from each of the seven decades of the school's existence, and ended in the hands of Spencer students Tyler Hardy and Eve Debay, part of Belmont's future grad class of 2018.

Final Grad Class at the Old Belmont

June, 2015



In June, 2015, just one month after the huge Farewell To Belmont celebration, approximately 450 grade 12 students crossed the stage in their blue and white gowns at Uvic's Farquar Auditorium, to commemorate the final graduation ceremony for students attending the Jacklin Road building. It was a bittersweet moment for many former grads living in the Langford, Colwood, Metchosin, and Highlands municipalities, as the old school, despite its age and physical shortcomings, held many wonderful memories. However, the predominant emotion was excitement about the new opportunities two state-of-the-art high schools would provide for the community.

2015

Demolition of the old Belmont



A bulldozer cleans up debris from the south end of the Jacklin Road old building.

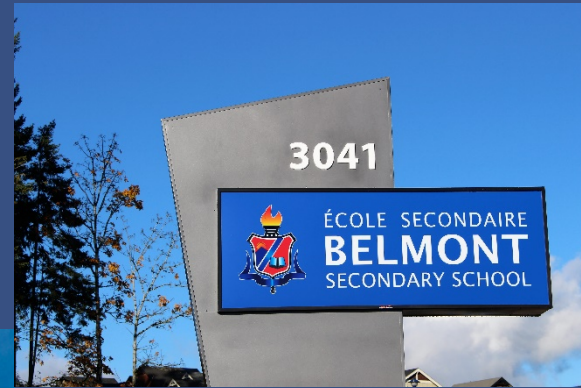


Construction of the new building on Langford Lake Road.

The dismantling of the Belmont building started even before the school year officially ended, as interior components, starting with bulletin boards and hall cabinets, were gradually removed. Several months later, demolition crews arrived to take down the outer walls, and by the end of 2015, all that remained on the site was a barren field. It only seemed fitting that if one examined the ground closely, you would notice that rocks of varying sizes had once again risen to the surface, reminiscent of the way the site looked sixty-seven years earlier when construction first began on the old army hut building.

Sept. 2015

A New Era Begins



In September, 2015, the new Belmont building welcomed over 1200 students from grades 9-12 on the site of the former Glen Lake Elementary School.

2016

Some Key Contributors to the Belmont Timeline Project



From left to right: Mike Gibson (class of 1957), Helen Vallis Mackay (1950), Olivia Godek (2018), Savannah Purdy (2018), Hannah May (2018), Andy Krogstad (1956), Ryana Emile (2017), Mattie Duddridge (2017), Emma Emile (2017), Gracie May (2019), Jena Janmohamed (2018), David Ranns (1952), Bert Ridley (1952)
Seated: Judy Ranns Partridge (1952), Shirley Moseley Smith (1952)

Credits

We would like to acknowledge some of the individuals who contributed a significant amount of time to this project. Thanks to them for their valuable contributions, and to all the other people who helped us document Belmont's rich history.

Ray Miller: Belmont principal who first envisioned the Belmont history timeline and supported the project in so many ways

Student Research Team (under the direction of teacher Cindy Cullen): Mattie Duddridge, Emma Emile, Ryana Emile, Olivia Godek, Jena Janmohamed, Gracie May, Hannah May, Savannah Purdy

Belmont Grads: Charlene Burles, Marianne Crabb Young, Eileen Downs, Mike Gibson, Andy Krogstad, Helen Mackay, Ravi Parmar, Judy Partridge, Lloyd Powell, David Ranns, Bert Ridley, Alan Robertson, Shirley Smith, Carol Varcoe, Glenn Willing

Belmont staff: Nancy Adams, Judy Bellis, Brian Boag, Muzz Bryant, Cathy Davis, Troy Harris, Tom Holmes, Danielle Huculak, Cathy Lavoie, Russell Morrison, Patti O'Neill, Evelyn Seltzer, Michael Toakley, Eric Tolman

Kelly Darwin: owner of Seriously Creative Graphic Design Company who created the hallway display

If anyone notices any errors or has a picture and information about a significant Belmont event not included in this timeline, please email Cindy Cullen (ccullen@sd62.bc.ca)