

CHAPTER

2

---

# Chalking Up Significant Milestones

---

TIMELINE

**1816** – Proposal to set up a school on Prince of Wales Island is submitted to the Government by a committee headed by Reverend Robert Sparke Hutchings in February. Proposal is accepted and on 21 October the Prince of Wales Island Free School opens in a rented house in Love Lane. Its administration is in the hands of a Board of Directors

**1821** – Moves to new buildings on Church Square

**1891** – Board of Directors decides to appoint British-trained university graduates to be the school's headmaster. The first to be appointed is William Hargreaves who laid the proper foundations of the school, sealing its reputation as a top educational institution

**1897** – Reconstruction of school on Farquhar Street in two stages. First half of school is built in 1897. Second half of school opens in 1907

**1905** – Introduction of games, sports and extra-curricular activities to supplement the academic programme

**1909** – First school magazine is published



**1821**

## The Free School's first proper building on Church Square

**1911** – Organises its first Athletics Meet

**1915** – Launch of scouting movement

**1916** – Celebrates its 100th anniversary

**1919** – School gets overcrowded and search for new site begins

- 1920** – Government takes over management of Penang Free School
- 1923** – Science is added to the curriculum
- 1924** – Construction of new school on 30-acre site in Green Lane (renamed Jalan Masjid Negara)
- 1927** – Introduction of the House system for sports and activities
- 1928** – Official opening of Penang Free School as it moves into Green Lane and is converted into a secondary school. Former school becomes primary school and is renamed Hutchings' School. Expansion of programme of sports, games and extra-curricular activities
- 1931** – Launch of school prize awards. More sports and extra-curricular activities are added
- 1932** – New emphasis given to Science studies with the opening of a new Science Block



**1897**

### First half of school building on Farquhar Street

- 1936** – Special Science Class is set up to prepare students for the London Matriculation and Queen's Scholarship Examinations. Preparatory classes are also introduced for students keen to take up medical studies in tertiary institutions
- 1941** – Outbreak of World War II and Japanese Occupation disrupts school life. Penang Free School is occupied by the Indian National Liberation Army
- 1945** – Begins rehabilitation to replace furniture and equipment destroyed during the war. School reopens with an enrolment of 603 students

- 1947** – Restored to former glory. Sports and extra-curricular activities are revived
- 1950** – Formation of School Band
- 1951** – Sixth Form education is introduced. School also admits girls for the first time to Sixth Form classes
- 1955** – Opening of Pinhorn Memorial Library for Sixth Form students
- 1957** – Penang Free School loses Government status and becomes a national-type fully assisted secondary school run by a Board of Governors. Malaysian Secondary Schools Examination is launched as a basis for selecting the cream of primary school leaving students
- 1958** – Opening of a Sixth Form block and hostel on 21 October to provide accommodation for out-of-state students. School becomes a hub of Sixth Form education in northern Malaya. Formation of Chess Club and Stamp Club



## Prince of Wales Island Free School celebrates its 100th anniversary

- 1959** – Automatic promotions system is introduced, doing away with the previous system of retaining students for another year if they failed their examinations

**1962** – Formation of Electronics Club

**1963** – Appoints its first Asian headmaster Tan Boon Lin.  
Launch of Penang Free School Development Fund to raise money needed for building new facilities

**1966** – School holds Sesquicentenary Celebrations

**1969** – Opening of new Khutub Khanah Tunku Library named after Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, an Old Free and first prime minister of Malaysia who contributed \$100,000 to the project. He officiates at its opening on 29 December

**1972** – Three new buildings are added — Nuffield Science Block, Industrial Arts Block and a new Hostel Block.  
The previous hostel is converted into classrooms

**1975** – Chalks up enrolment milestone of 2000 and a teaching staff of 87

**1978** – Main gate and school arch donated by Old Free Ch'ng Eng Hye is erected adding a distinctive feature to an already impressive set of buildings

**1988** – Form One students are introduced to a new KBSM (Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah) or Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools

**1989** – The teaching of a new subject “Kemahiran Hidup” (Living Skills) is added to the Form One curriculum

**1990** – New two-semester system is introduced. School also adds to its facilities with the opening of two new blocks of classrooms, science laboratories, a basketball court and parking area for staff

**1991** – Celebrates the 175th anniversary of its founding

**1992** – Embarks on a single session school system with the construction of two new blocks

- 1994** – Side gate at Free School Road is added, paid for by C.A.Goh, an Old Free and troop leader of the 7th Georgetown Scout Troop
- 1995** – Introduction of a compulsory IT (Information Technology) education programme for all Form 1 students till Form 3 in line with the national education policy to produce computer literates
- 1996** – Launch of Penang Free School Foundation to help the school achieve greater heights in education and preserve its rich traditions
- 1999** – Upgrading continues with two new blocks added
- 2006** – Introduces the teaching of French and Arabic to its curriculum and establishes wireless connection
- 2007** – Wins prestigious ‘Cluster School of Excellence Award’, one of only 30 given to schools in Malaysia
- 2016** – School holds Bicentenary Celebrations



Penang Free School celebrates  
its 200th anniversary