

# RIPLEY COURT SCHOOL

1893 1993

100 YEARS OF HISTORY



If you can cast your mind back to a time when Queen Victoria was on the Throne, Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister, Mr. Grover Cleveland was President of the United States of America, Prokofiev was two years old, the Boer War had not yet been fought and the Irish Home Rule Bill was being discussed in Parliament you have reached the far away years when Ripley Court School, and much else besides, was young.

## Ripley Court School . . . One hundred years.

"The old Portsmouth Road runs straight through Ripley High Street, but the heavy traffic is diverted over the Ripley by-pass. The village is thus left in comparative peace to enjoy its many delights, among them the village green behind the High Street, and Dunsborough Park when it is open to the public . . . As we leave Ripley by Rose Lane, notice Ripley Court on the left. This was once The Priory and is of various dates from 1667 to the 18th century."

*(The Wey Valley by D. Goodacre)*

"To the left, down the road to Ockham is Ripley Court with a five-by-two bay front of c.1730 in a rough imitation of Hawksmoor or Vanbrugh, and complex glazing bars to all the windows."

*(Anon.)*



*William Gooch 1919.*

In 1886 a school called Durston House was founded in Ealing by Mr. Ben Pearce and his brother Mr. Robert Pearce. Both were graduates of Trinity College, Dublin and keen to become worthy school-masters. In 1888 Mr. Robert Pearce married Miss Mable Perks and in 1893 they moved to Ripley to start the boarding school, Ripley Court having purchased the property from Mr. William Wainwright.

Mr. G. Onslow married Mr. and Mrs. Pearce's daughter Angela in 1916 and in 1922 joined the staff of the school as Assistant Headmaster. By this time the School was being run by Mrs. Pearce, for Mr. Pearce had died in 1917.

During the Second World War the School moved to Betton Strange Hall near Shrewsbury and Ripley Court became a Maternity Hospital to cope with overflow from the Westminster Hospital. Sadly, Mrs. Pearce did not return to Ripley Court for she died in 1943. Thus it was that Mr. and Mrs. Onslow took the pupils back to Ripley Court in 1946, and continued in charge of the School until Mr. Onslow's death in 1952.

In 1953 the School was sold to Mr. Ashmore who remained as Headmaster until 1956.

In 1956 Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Newte bought the School and began the task of turning it into a modern Preparatory School. This they did with typical skill by increasing the number of both boarders and day pupils and elevating the reputation of the school in the local area. Much new building was undertaken and the School, now a thriving centre of education, became a Charitable Trust in 1968.

Mr. and Mrs. Newte retired in 1978 and Mr. J. W. N. Dudgeon, who had been Assistant Headmaster since 1968, took over as Headmaster, with Mrs. Dudgeon being responsible for most of the non-academic and non-sporting activities. Expansion and rebuilding continued, and the School now has some 265 children of whom a small, but valued, group are girls: day-children come to Ripley Court from most of the local areas, including Ripley, The Clandons, Woking, Guildford, The Horsleys, Weybridge, Byfleet and Walton. Boarders come from various parts of the Country and from overseas.

## The Thirties

The sports offered by the school were expanding – shooting was popular and Warren 1, presented a Shooting Challenge Cup when he left the school at the end of the summer term. Drill was also a major part of the curriculum.

Drill prizes were presented at the annual prize giving and a Drill display formed a pleasant interlude in the programme of races at the sports day in June, 1935. A Sergeant Major Hayden taught drill and boxing.

At this time the first girl entered the school. She was Rose Onslow, the daughter of Guy and Angela Onslow. In November, 1935, she played the part of Catherine Parr in a school play and "looked very charming in her costume and maintained the right uncompromising attitude throughout." However it must have been a lonely life for a little girl. Family matters were also mentioned in the school magazine of the autumn term, 1936, which recorded the death on 24th August of Benjamin Pearce shortly before his eightieth birthday. He had in fact retired as Headmaster of Durston House in 1929 when Mabel Pearce took over in a more full-time capacity, eventually being replaced by Nicholas Pearce.

## Onwards & Upwards!

In the Spring of 1983 the stable yard cobbles were removed and tarmac put down to ease walking.

In December 1983, a new car park was built for the parents in front of Little Court. At the Staff Meeting at the end of the Autumn Term, 1983 plans were discussed for a new Sports Hall to be built near the now stagnant pond and for the Dining Room to be extended and given a more homely atmosphere and plans were being made for the Easter 1984 skiing trip.

In 1984 the Defty Sports Hall and Dining Room extensions were completed and in 1988 the Barrington block, including a Science Laboratory was built.

# Thomas Feverel Mer



*Thomas Merton author of 'Elected Silence', Circa 1929.*

*Merton Trier's mother was the niece of Miss Hendewerk, the wife of Benjamin Pearce, and although Mrs. Trier and her husband lived only four miles away from Ripley at West Horsley, both Merton and his brother were boarders at Ripley Court. Merton's cousin Thomas Feverel Merton, who later became a Trappist monk and is well known in Catholic circles for his religious writings, was also a pupil at Ripley Court.*

"Now that I was going to go to school in England, I would be more and more under her wing. In fact, I had barely landed, when she took me on one of those shopping expeditions in Oxford Street that was the immediate prelude to Ripley Court – a school in Surrey. Aunt Maud and I had a great conversation about my future. She had just bought me several pairs of grey flannel trousers and a sweater and some shoes and some grey flannel shirts and one of those floppy flannel hats that English children have to wear."

"It was not the first time I had met the headmistress of Ripley Court. She was a bulky and rather belligerent-looking woman, with great pouches under her eyes. She was standing in a room in which were hung several of my father's paintings. She had probably been looking at them, and considering the error and instability of an artists's way of life when Aunt Maud mentioned the fact that we had been talking about my own future."

I was received at Ripley Court, although the summer term was almost over, more or less as if I were an orphan and some kind of a stray that required at once pity and a special, not unsuspicious kind of attention. I was the son of an artist, and had just come from two years

## Modern Development

Ripley Court was one of the first prep schools to teach science. It was introduced even before it became a Common Entrance subject. At first Physics, Biology and Chemistry was taught with the use of Esso Kits which were boxes of books and equipment that were sent from school to school. Often the boxes arrived incomplete and therefore proved rather unsatisfactory. Eventually Mr. Newte asked the staff whether any of them could teach science. Neville Dudgeon had joined the school in 1963 to teach history and he offered to teach the early stages of science since he had an 'O' level in that subject!! In time he went on to obtain an Open University Science Degree in 1974. The garage was converted into a Science Laboratory and the boys began to attend young people's science lectures in London. A new Science Laboratory – more spacious and better equipped – was built in 1988.

When the Common Entrance syllabus introduced an optional French Oral Section, it was decided that the boys would benefit from tackling it. So the French language became important and visits to Calais and Boulogne were organised to encourage the boys.

In 1975 the boys began to go on school cruise ships – in particular the Uganda – to such places as the Holy Land. Stephen Newte, the Newte's son, organised these for many years and eventually the job was taken over by Jeremy Snow, and later by Mr. Anthony Turner the head of Classics.

In 1969, Ripley Court became an Education Trust with a Board of Governors chosen from a variety of professions. Peter Barrington was the found-



*The old corrugated iron classrooms.*



*The swimming pool being built.*

The Old Boys' Society and Ripley Court Magazine had both fallen into obscurity – despite Life Members fees of the former, but in the Summer of 1994 the Magazine was revived under the Editorship of Mr. R. Muncy.

1993/1994 sees our 100th anniversary. It is hoped that Ripley Court will continue to flourish and produce the types of young men and women of whom Robert and Mabel Pearce would have been proud.



# ton – Elected Silence

in a French school, and the combination of artist and France added up to practically everything that the headmistress and her friends suspected and disliked. Besides, to crown it all, I did not know any Latin. What was to be made of a boy who was already in the middle of his fourteenth year and could not decline 'mensa' – had never even opened a Latin grammar?"

"But Ripley was a pleasant and happy place after the prison of Lycee. The huge, dark green sweep of the cricket field, and the deep shadows of the elm trees where one sat waiting for one's innings, and the dining room where we crammed ourselves with bread and butter and jam at tea-time and listened to Mr. Onslow reading aloud from the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: all this was immense luxury and peace after Montauban.

And the mentality of the red-faced, innocent English boys was a change. They seemed to be much pleasanter and much happier – and indeed they had every reason to be so, since they all came from the shelter of comfortable and secure homes and were so far protected from the world by a thick wall of ignorance – a wall which was to prove no real protection against anything as soon as they passed on to their various Public

Schools, but which, for the time being, kept them children.

On Sundays, we all dressed up in the ludicrous clothes that the English conceive to be appropriate to the young, and went marching off to the village church, where a whole transept was reserved for us. There we all sat in rows, in our black Eton jackets and our snow-white Eton collars choking us up to the chin, and bent our well-brushed and combed heads over the pages of our hymnals. And at last I was really going to church.

On Sunday evenings, after the long walk in the country, through the lush Surrey fields, we gathered again in the wooden drill-room of the school, and sat on benches, and sang hymns, and listened to Mr. Onslow reading aloud from Pilgrim's Progress.

Thus, just about the time when I most needed it, I did acquire a little natural faith, and found many occasions of praying and lifting up my mind to God. It was the first time I had ever seen people kneel publicly by their beds before getting into them, and the first time I had ever sat down to meals after a grace.

... When the holidays were over and I went back to Ripley Court, Father crossed over to France. The last I heard about him was that he was at Rouen.



ing Chairman and one of its keenest Governors was the ever-generous Frank Defty.

In 1977, the Orchard Block was opened to house the more senior boys and to contain English, History and Senior French Rooms.

In 1978, Mr. and Mrs. Newte retired. Neville Dudgeon became Headmaster. Also in that year the original classrooms were removed and in their place was built the Newte block contained six rooms – a classics room, Mathematics room, music room, art room, games room and a coaching and television room. Since then the television room has been converted into a modern computer room. The music room has also been moved.

In September, 1983, the Little Court had their own modern block built with a large hall and three light and airy classrooms for the Cowboys and Indians, and the new four-year-old class – Settlers. When they were moved into the new block, the First Year and Music departments were given new quarters. Subsequently to move to an even more modern building in 1988. The Wooden House which has been a sanatorium, classroom, study, staff room and staff accommodation was demolished to make way for this. Thus history retreated in the face of progress.

The boarders began worshipping at Ockham Parish Church on Sundays during Mr. Ashmore's time, and the school has expanded to such a degree that three carol services are now needed to accommodate all at the end of the Christmas Term.

The Centenary Carol Service was held in the Chapel of Charterhouse School to enable the whole school to be together for this special occasion.

Day girls began entering the Main School in 1977 and special netball, cook-

ery and ballet classes were arranged for them.

The boys still work towards their Common Entrance Examination or Scholarship exam at 13, whilst those girls who wish, sit an 11+ Common Entrance examination to the Public School of their choice.

Association Football, hockey, cricket, rugby football, gymnastics and swimming are still the main sports, although an option system allows those interested to pursue air-rifle shooting, cross-country running, golf and orienteering. Sports Day, the Swimming Gala and Fathers' Match are important events in the school calendar.

The end of term concerts still take place, with the Easter Term being devoted to a musical and the Summer Term to a leaver's play.

Much emphasis continues to be put on the 'all-round' child. Cramming and undue pressure is frowned upon and numerous staff meetings allow for each child to be discussed as much as necessary. The school emits a friendly, family-like atmosphere where the individual counts.



"... And to get up to date with the staff; during the late 'seventies, the 'eighties and now the 'nineties I have been served and supported by a great variety of able staff and friends. My first Deputy was Mr. John Godfrey, a first-rate man and a renowned teacher of French. John retired just about three years ago and many of you will no doubt remember him. At that time too Jeremy Snow was an inspirational Assistant Headmaster, and Bernard Hunt a splendid Senior Master and teacher of English. Both the latter are now Headmasters of their own schools. My present Assistant, James Porter, is, too, a

talented contributor to the running of the School and a very able organiser; and John Hawkins has shown much resilience to survive for so many years as Head of Mathematics during an era of almost constant change. Merab Opie, now teaching in Worcester, I remember as an excellent head of our pre-Preparatory Department. Clifford Davies served us for years as our Head of Classics, and before him we had the scholarly Anthony Turner. Within the Boarding House we remember with great fondness Jill Thompson and Sue Pritchard as kind and effective Matrons. Terry Bennett and Richard Muncey were much loved middle-school men. In the study 'Liz Sturges and Olive Jones were always towers of strength in every respect. And I must mention Percy Cole who was our amiable handyman and 'just everything person' for so many years, up until his death four years ago.

I daresay that there are a number of worthy people whom I have not mentioned and I know that they will forgive me because they will know that their contributions have been much appreciated as has been their friendship; for I have always felt that the staff of our school have been friends, mutually supportive in all that they have done.

I choose to mention none of our more recent staff, (but I should mention my wife who has, with her European good sense, guided me frequently back to reality and my children who have always understood,) for I would quite simply be naming all of them. I have been extremely fortunate, thus far, to work with so many people whom I can, and with justification, admire. I continue to admire their contributions and their loyalty.

I should allude, too, to the many parents who have supported to school over the years and, perhaps, in particular to those who have served in the capacity of Form Representatives, Committee Members or, horrid word, Chairpersons of the Committee. A succession of excellent people have come forward year after year to give their time and their services to the school. I am immensely grateful for all that they have done and look forward to their efforts in the future.

And then there have been, and are, the children; ever challenging, ever fun, ever rewarding. Their variety has been infinite and their different personalities educational. 'The child is', truly, 'father of the man' – and mother of the woman..."

N.D.



The gymnasium (Defty) 1984.



Michael and Ruth Newte 1968.  
(Headmaster 1956–1978)

## HEADMASTERS AND HEADMISTRESSES OF RIPLEY COURT SCHOOL

1893

Mr. Robert Pearce

1917

Mrs. Mabel Pearce

1917

Mr. Church

1925

Mr. Guy Onslow

1952

Various Salaried  
Headmasters

1953

Mr. D. F. Ashmore

1956

Mr. W. M. Newte

1978

Mr. J. W. N. Dudgeon

## Roll of Honour 1916

Bone, R.J., D.S.O., Flight Commander, R.N.  
Bowles, G. P., Lieutenant, R.N.  
\*Bowles, J.C., Lieutenant, R.E.  
Bristow, F.A., Sec. Lieutenant, 12th Durham Infantry.  
Bristow, H., Sec. Lieutenant, M.G.C.  
Burton, G.P., Sec. Lieutenant, A.S.C.  
Buchan, T.O.M., Captain, Queen's, Acting Brigade Major.  
Camroux, M.M., Sec. Lieutenant, R.G.A.  
Cattley, G.A., Sec. Lieutenant, 4th Dragoon Guards.  
Chambers, F.G., Lieutenant, R.A.  
Channer, G.O. de R., Captain, 2/7 Gurkha Rifles.

Chave, P.G.E., Private, Shropshire L.I.  
Cleverly, G.C., Sec. Lieutenant, Queen's.  
\*Crichton, H.R., Sec. Lieutenant, 54th Sikhs.  
\*Damiano, W.H.A., Sec. Lieutenant, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.  
Daniel, R.D.M., Lt.-Corporal, 2/14 London Scottish.  
Daw, C.B., Sec. Lieutenant, 5th Seaforth Highlanders.  
\*Davenport, F.M., Captain, Oxford L.I.  
Davy, H.N., Lieutenant, R.E.  
Daw, F.B., Sec. Lieutenant, R.F.A.  
\*Daw, H.W.B., Sub. Lieutenant, R.N.V.R.  
Eiloart, B.H., Captain, 34th Sikh Pioneers.  
England, M.O.F., Sub. Lieutenant, R.N.A.S.  
Frost, N.M., Sec. Lieutenant, Royal Welsh Fusiliers.  
\*Gledstones, S.A., Lieutenant, Bedfords.  
Green, L.P., Sec. Lieutenant, East Surreys.  
Grice, O.H., Lance-Corporal, 2/28 Artists' Rifles.  
Grice, P.H., Ass. P.M., R.N.V.R.  
Hubbard, T.O.B., Major, R.F.C.  
\*Jefferys, M.G., Sec. Lieutenant, 10th Middlesex.  
\*Jones, C.H., Captain, 11th R.W. Fusiliers.  
Jones, T.B., Lieutenant, 9th Royal Fusiliers.  
\*Judge, W.S., Sec. Lieutenant, R.F.A.  
Laurance, L.G., Captain, 6th Worcesters.  
Leigh-Clare, H.J.L., Sec. Lieutenant, 34th Poona Horse.  
Leigh-Clare, C.O.L., Lieutenant, 1/5 South Lancashires.  
Mallett, K.L., Sec. Lieutenant, 2nd Bedfords.  
\*Martin, A.D. de R., Captain, R.E.  
\*Martin, D.F. de R., Sec. Lieutenant, 5th Northumberland Fusiliers.  
Martin, E.C. de R., Captain, M.C., K.O.Y.L.I. Brigade.  
Myles, A.V., Lieutenant, 9th Bhopal Infantry.  
\*Myles, P. H., Lieutenant, 41st Dogras.  
Neale, F.S., Private, 13th Royal Fusiliers.  
Nightingale, G.W., Legion of Honour, M.C., Captain, 1st Royal Munsters.  
\*Nixon, N.C.I., Sec. Lieutenant, 8th Bedfords.  
\*O'Brien, Hon. D., Sec. Lieutenant, R.F.C.  
Pearce, G.O., Sec. Lieutenant, 5th Manchesters.  
Perks, H., Captain 2/7 Middlesex.  
\*Pocock, F.P., Surgeon, R.A.M.C., M.C.  
Potter, J.C., Sec. Lieutenant, R.F.C.  
Prescott-Roberts, P.A., Captain, A.S.C.

Prynne, A.J.F., Sec. Lieutenant, Devons.  
\*Prynne, E.G.F., Lieutenant, 15th Royal Fusiliers.  
Prynne, H.F., Corporal, 1/2 London Yeomanry.  
\*Pitt, G.H., Lieutenant, Sherwood Ranges Yeomanry.  
\*Rawlinson, C.V., Dec. Lieutenant, 3rd Dorsets.  
Reynell, A.W., Sec. Lieutenant, R.F.C.  
Rilot, B.A., Private, 16th Middlesex.  
Simpson, R.M., Lieutenant, 11th K.O.Y.L.I.  
Sutton, C.M., Private, 49th Canadians.  
Sutton, L.H., Cadet, In s of Court O.T.C.  
Sutton, R.W.A., Private, A.S.C.  
Sutton, W.J., Private, D. of C.L.I.  
Taylor, J.H., Sec. Lieutenant, A.S.C.  
\*Vaughan, B.R., Corporal, 1st Natal Carabineers.  
Vaughan, I.P., Sergeant, 1st Natal Carabineers.  
Willis, F.W., Captain, R.G.A.  
Woollatt, L., Private, 20th Royal Fusiliers.  
Woollatt, R.H., Sec. Lieutenant, K.O.S.B.  
\*Yule, G.U., Captain, R.E., D.S.O.  
Yule, J.S., Captain, R.E.  
Yule, R.A., Captain, 8th Reyputs.  
\*Wood, C.A.B., Sec. Lieutenant, 1st Essex.  
\* Killed in action.

## "Pro Patria"

RONALD C.B.A. DANIEL. Reported missing, presumed killed in action in Northern Norwegian waters on 8th June, 1940, aged 39. He was at Ripley Court 1911–1912, and from 1914–1916 a cadet on the training-ship H.M.S. Conway. From 1916–1918 he served with the Royal Naval Reserve in H.M.S. Centurion, and was subsequently transferred to the British Isles Steam Navigation Company, remaining in their service for a number of years. During the present war he volunteered early in 1940, and was appointed Lieutenant R.N.V.R. serving in H.M.S. Juniper.

JOHN M. KEDDIE. Killed on active service on 4th January, 1941, aged 19. He was Sergeant-Pilot in the R.A.F., and was just about to receive his commission at the time of his accident. He was at Ripley Court 1930–35, and afterwards at Haileybury, where he was eventually head of his house.

JOHN EDWARD OLIVE came to Ripley in May, 1929, and went on to Wellington College in September, 1933. He joined the R.A.F. in the

autumn of 1939, and soon became a Sergeant Observer. In the early spring of 1941 he was sent to Libya, and was killed while flying in December, 1941. He refused the commission offered to him because he felt that he wished for no personal advantage from the dreadfulness of the war. He was a cousin of Mrs. Pearce.

ERNEST RONALD PEACOCK. Reported missing, presumed drowned, May, 1941. He joined the R.A.F. in the summer of 1940, and after a few months in Canada was nearing the end of his operational training at the time of his supposed accident. He came to Ripley Court in 1930; overcoming his physical handicaps by sheer force of character, he did well at both cricket and football. He went to Shrewsbury in 1935, where he was House Monitor, and gained his house cricket colours. The Salopian says: "He had a strong sense of duty, and developed the essential qualities of a leader, with an understanding readiness to give a helping hand where it was needed."

EDWARD COTTERILL SCHOLEFIELD. Reported missing, presumed drowned, December, 1941. He was Flying-Officer in the R.A.F.V.R. and Intelligence Officer attached to a Coastal Command Squadron. He was Mrs. Pearce's nephew, and was at Ripley Court from 1918–1923, when he went to Harrow, afterwards qualifying as a solicitor.

BERNARD ROMANOFF. Killed in action, March, 1942, aged 27. Born in Russia, he came to Ripley Court in 1920. He won many sports prizes and was captain of cricket in his last year, 1928, when he went to Berkhamsted School. Here he played for the School, both at rugby and cricket, was captain of his House XI, and a school prefect. In 1936 he was commissioned as Acting Pilot-Officer in the R.A.F., gaining his wings in the following year; in 1938 he joined a communications squadron, and had the honour of piloting several distinguished persons. In 1939 he was promoted Flying Officer. In 1940, after returning from France, he was transferred to a Paratroop Training Squadron; later, at his own request, he was transferred to a Bomber Squadron, becoming Squadron Leader in December, 1941. In 1936 he won the Wakefield Trophy Gold Medal for Boxing. In 1930 he founded with D.G. Hewlings – now himself in the R.A.F. – the Ripley Court Old Boys' Society and was its first treasurer.



Mr. & Mrs. Neville Dudgeon 1978–