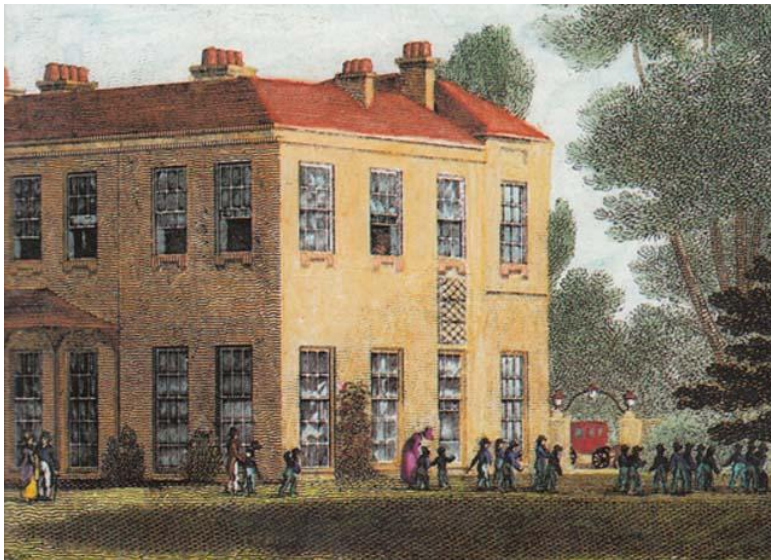


The History of Temple Grove School

Temple Grove was founded in 1810 by the Rev. Dr William Pearson, a schoolfellow of the poet Wordsworth. Ordained when he was 26, he was a founder of the London Astronomical Society (he built an observatory in the grounds of T.G.) and a friend of the Prime Minister, Spencer Percival, murdered in 1812.



The building which housed his new school, a Jacobean mansion in East Sheen, took its name from a previous owner, Sir John Temple, and boasted a room called Swift's study, after Jonathan Swift, secretary to Sir John's brother Sir William Temple. Although close to London, Temple Grove was then a country estate.

Among the earliest pupils of the new school were the two sons of the Duke of Wellington. In 1817 Pearson handed over the school to the Rev. Dr Pinckney, his second-in-command, described by Disraeli, whose younger brother was a pupil, as "that wretched Pinckney". Temple Grove is in fact anonymously described in Disraeli's novel *Coningsby*. The numbers rose to a hundred and twenty and included a future Governor-General of India, the Marquess of Dalhousie. In 1835 the first layman took over, Jonathan Thompson. The Rev. George Rowden, succeeded in 1843 at the age of 23 and reigned until 1860. By this time, pupils were no longer exclusively drawn from the ranks of the aristocracy but included the sons of the merchant class.

In charge from 1860 to 1880 was the redoubtable Ottiwell Charles Waterfield, known from his initials as the Cow, a brilliant teacher and a great beater, under whom the school reached its peak of success and fame. Pupils of the time included A.C.Benson, the future author of "Land of Hope and Glory"; his brother E.F.Benson, creator of *Mapp and Lucia* (his novel *David Blaize* is a portrait of Temple Grove); M.R.James, writer of ghost stories (*A School Story* is explicitly set in Temple Grove); Lord Grey of Fallodon, Britain's longest serving Foreign Secretary (1905-16), and author of *The Charm of Birds*; and the sons of Sir Charles Napier,

responsible for the conquest of Scinde (which he supposedly reported with the pun *peccavi*, "I have sinned"). The curriculum was almost entirely confined to Latin and Greek literature, although Euclid's propositions were recited and German and French were taught: an earlier French master had served under Napoleon in the retreat from Moscow.

The Cow's second master, the Rev. Joseph Edgar, succeeded in 1880, and the Rev. Hubert Allen ruled from 1894 until 1902. Also retiring in 1902 was a matron called Underwood who had served the school for 38 years and after whom a dormitory was named. At this time Queen Mary's brothers were at Temple Grove, riding over each day on ponies from White Lodge. Pupils in these final years at East Sheen included the composer Balfour Gardiner, great-uncle of Sir John Eliot Gardner; George Bell, the future Bishop of Chichester; the composer, Sir Sydney Nicholson, who founded the Royal School of Church Music; Francis Grenfell, who won one of the first V.C.s of the Great War, and his twin brother Riversdale; Sir Richard Livingstone, a distinguished classical scholar; and Sir Ronald Storrs, the first British governor of Jerusalem, who had been associated with Lawrence of Arabia in the Arab Revolt .

In 1902, Allen was succeeded by the Rev. H.W. Waterfield, nicknamed 'Bug', a cousin of the Cow. The school colours of black and green were introduced, and, with East Sheen now surrounded by streets and cemeteries, the school was moved in 1907 to the healthier surroundings of Eastbourne. Waterfield's reign was the longest in T.G.'s history. In 1932 a Scout Troop was established. Eminent pupils of this period included the Shakespearean producer Tyrone Guthrie and the wartime air ace Douglas Bader.

In 1935 the Bug's successor Meston Batchelor moved the school out to the country, taking a 21-year lease on Heron's Ghyll from Lord Rankeillour. The house had been rebuilt by the poet Coventry Patmore in 1866, with J.F. Bentley as architect (he is even more famous as the designer of Westminster Cathedral).



Now, the stable block was converted to provide a chapel and a gymnasium, and work (chiefly boy labour) was started on digging out a swimming pool. Batchelor encouraged nature study in the idyllic grounds and started the almost unbroken 50-year run of Gilbert & Sullivan productions. The number of boys was reduced to the magic figure of 59, a number not exceeded for 20 years. The school remained at Heron's Ghyll throughout the war, though poised to move to Hereford in the event of an invasion. Dog fights overhead were witnessed during the Battle of Britain and a doodle bug exploded in Duck Wood in 1944, leaving a huge crater. A loyal wartime teacher who eventually clocked up 17 years was Iveagh Capel-Slaughter: after her retirement, part of the top floor continued to be known as "Beyond Mrs Slaughter's".

In 1956 Batchelor purchased Heron's Ghyll outright and turned the school into a charitable trust, with Geoffrey Hall as first Chairman of Trustees. He retired the next year and the trustees appointed Oliver Lough as the first salaried headmaster. A house for the Lough family was built in 1958, and Colt bungalows were built in the grounds to accommodate that new phenomenon, the married prep-school master. A science lab was fitted up in the cellars. In the late 'sixties and early 'seventies further modernisation occurred. New classrooms were constructed on East Lawn. The front door was moved and the upper gallery of the main staircase converted into a dormitory. Another dormitory was built on next to the headmaster's house and a new Common Room was created by blocking up the former archway. Numbers rose to 120.

Under the headship of the Rev. Tim Sterry (1975-80), the land between the drive and Catholic church was bought and became Lough's Field. A gymnasium was opened by Brian Johnston (OTG) and named in memory of Geoffrey Hall. Day boys began to be admitted to the school in small numbers.

Sydney Beresford-Davies (1980-1991) presided over great changes to the school: day-boys became an increasingly large component; a pre-prep department was opened in a purpose-built extension to the stable block; and finally girls were introduced. A hard court was created on Lower East Lawn and a theatre, the Brewer Hall, was ingeniously designed to fit into the cellars and the well.

After the short reign of Simon Blackmore (1991-1992), Michael and Jenny Lee (1992-2001) took over. In 1993 they merged the school with St Nicholas, Uckfield, and the combined establishment, on the Heron's Ghyll site, was re-named Temple Grove with St Nicholas. In 1994 David Gubbins (OTG) became the first president of the Old Pupils' Association.

Finally, under Martin Kneath (2001-2004), the Trustees were persuaded by adverse economic circumstances to close the Heron's Ghyll site and to direct the resources and traditions of Temple Grove into fresh channels towards raising standards of primary level education.

A list of Old Boys from Temple Grove's second century who have caught the public eye would, with undoubted omissions, include the following: Brian Johnston (cricket commentator), Giles Waterfield (former director of Dulwich Picture Gallery; novelist - *The Hound in the Left-hand Corner, The Long Afternoon*), Nick McDowell (novelist), Pen Hadow (explorer who made the first unsupported solo trip to the North Pole), Mark Pougatch (sports commentator), Crispin Whittell (playwright), John Aspinall (socialite and zoo-keeper), Jeremy Hunt (shadow arts minister), Giles Whittell (journalist and travel writer: *Extreme Continental*), Martyn Rix, (botanical explorer and author), Dom Gregory Dix (author of *The Shape of the Liturgy*), David Brewer (historian of modern Greece: *The Flame of Freedom*), Francis Rolt (author of *The Last Armenian*), Jon Stock (author of *The Riot Act*), Francis Pryor and Piers Crocker (archaeologists), Alexander Talbot-Rice, Andrew Stock and Francisco Centofanti (artists).....