



# ROSEBERY HOUSE A BRIEF HISTORY

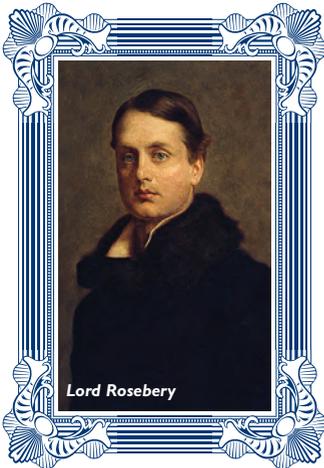


EPSOM  
COLLEGE

## The Fifth Earl of Rosebery

Archibald Philip Primrose, Lord Rosebery, served as Prime Minister from March 1894 to June 1895, when he was forced to resign due to ill-health. He was considered to be one of the most widely read young men of his time and declared as a young man that he had only three ambitions: to marry an heiress, to win the Derby and to become Prime Minister. He achieved all three by the time he was 40.

 One of the largest landowners in Britain, he owned the Durdans estate just outside Epsom, as well as Mentmore Towers and many other homes. He was a friend of Queen Victoria, a prominent racehorse owner and owner of Derby winners. Lord Rosebery was President of Epsom College over many years, visiting the Chapel regularly in his wheelchair on Sundays when he was wheeled up to sit beside the Headmaster.



From the 'Times' July 31 1899:

...Garibaldi was received with such honour as no one, except the Princess of Wales on her arrival, was ever received in London. (Cheers.) Why was it? Because he was a man, because people saw that he had the qualities of a man – not merely courage and integrity, but he was no self-seeker, he had no personal interests to gain, and he laid down the claim he might have had, and the millions he might have received, as if they were dross in comparison with his honour as a man. (Cheers.)

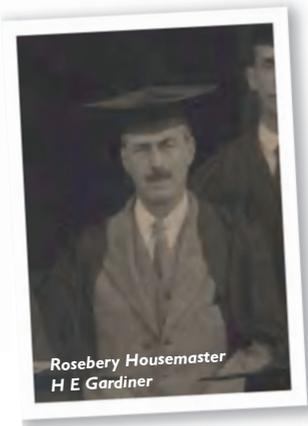
Now in England we do not honour those men because we can produce none like them, but because in the training which our schools give, we have not merely formed men but have been enabled to appreciate manhood. And do not think that you boys here, even the youngest of you, need fall short of the qualities of manhood because you have not reached man's estate. From the very moment you leave the nursery you can exercise some of the qualities of manhood. They can be exercised all through school life – those qualities, not merely of industry, but of self-denial, and that which perhaps shows the most manhood in a boy, the power to say "No." (Cheers.)...

## His Speech on Founder's Day in 1899

Lord Rosbery was educated at Eton under a notable Headmaster William Johnson Cory who was a great imperialist and believed in the mission of Christian gentlemen. Public schools at the time were places where building strong moral character was paramount. This accounts for a measure of exclusivity in public schools because not all candidates were thought to have the high moral standard that

was required. This ethos was reflected in Rosebery's speech at Epsom College on Founder's Day in 1899.

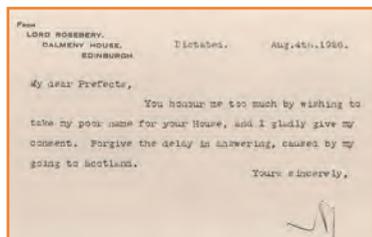
In the following months Rosebery accepted the Presidency of the College, in succession to the Duke of Abercorn, and established the Rosebery English and History Prizes, which have been presented each year since 1900. The Earl of Rosebery died in 1929 leaving a legacy of £450, which equates to £50,000 in 2008, using the gold price as a benchmark.



## The Creation of Rosebery House

Since the founding of Epsom College, day boys enjoyed a less formal existence than the boarders until 1926 when the first boys' day house was created. Prefects wrote to Lord Rosebery requesting permission to name the new house in his name. He gave his written consent in August 1926.

For the first ten years Rosebery was located in the Leverhulme Block. In 1936 it was relocated to its current position. Twice in its history Rosebery was divided to create additional boys' day houses; first in 1935 to create Crawford and again in 1969 to create Robinson. The present building was constructed in 1933 but is otherwise unrecognisable today. Originally corridors were external, with draughty doors all opening



outside. In 1986 a central corridor was created and the pottery workshop, which had been at the centre, was relocated to the John Piper Art School.

### Memories of Rosebery Laurence Dopson (1942-47)

Walking up the iron staircase, that is my abiding memory of Rosebery. And hoping not to have to walk down it after the roll call in order to report to Room One', where there would be a line-up of prefects, one holding a cane.

The isolation of Rosebery House; it was the first building I saw coming to College each morning from my home, Hill

House, 151 Higher Green. It was the most distant from the main classrooms and had a distinct advantage: the prospect of catching a glimpse of the Bursar's attractive teenage daughters. One had two opportunities; on the walk from Rosebery up the drive or while waiting to see Mr Warburton at the entrance to his house, 4 The College.

One could smile happily at the thought if one was there to get an exeat signed. If one had been sent by a Form Master for punishment it was a different matter.

When I came to Rosebery in 1938 it was clear that war with Germany was only postponed. I remember the digging of trenches on what had been the original College football ground in front of the Chapel. Classics master S.S. (Sissie) Frere, a trained archaeologist, carried out a careful excavation when an Early Bronze Age burial was disturbed. He subsequently became a professor. (What happened to the dead man? Was he reburied on or near the site?)

In 1944 two guided missiles, known as 'doodle bugs', were dropped within a mile of the

College. Although the *Epsom College Register 1855-1954* records, without much damage', this is not the case. The house opposite ours was demolished, and our own severely damaged, as my mother and I discovered when we clambered out from under the ceiling-covered dining room table.

One thinks, of course, of one's Rosebery friends: John Budge whom I kept in touch with until his death in 2002; or William Cakebread who went on to become a master printer and re-bound an old cookery book for me. But what happened to Anthony Franscella and Richard Kelly-Wiseman? Furthermore, did any of us wonder about the politician, Lord Rosebery, and why our house was named after him? Will it be of interest to the girls who are to follow us?

### Hugh Oliver (1942-47)

During my time in Rosebery, the presence of anything remotely feminine at the College was (with the possible exception of the Bursar's daughters) strictly verboten. The first official relaxation of this rule happened in the chilly winter of 1947 when the prefects were given

permission to hold a Saturday dance in the Tuck Shop. Inevitably, the boarders expected us day boy prefects to supply most of the dancing partners, and for my part I managed to round up some dozen compliant young ladies. Alas, a week before the dance, I was caught by housemaster Pete in the Rosebery Bin with a forbidden electric fire on and was promptly de-prefected. Consequently, I was unable to attend the historic dance to which I had supplied a fair number of the company.



**Peter Dodd (1943-47)**

During my time, Rosebery was divided into six units, three up and three down. On the ground floor I recall: Senior Box Room with showers and loos; Junior Box Room also with showers and loos; Classroom used by Pete Warburton and the prefects' "Bin" at the end nearest the door. Upstairs I remember the



Senior Day Room and a Junior Day Room. There was a classroom used by a master called Dodgson who taught French. I'm not sure how much I learned as we seemed to spend our time trying to wind him up. I recollect sticking a pin through a rubber, attaching it to the leg of my desk and lighting it to make an interesting smell. By the time the poor old chap had noticed it, the evidence was quenched and removed!

There was also the carbide torture which entailed putting a small piece of carbide in your inkwell thus producing a foul stink (and thinking about it afterwards, creating a highly flammable gas!). During the war some of us had carbide-burning bicycle lamps, as batteries were difficult to get hold of.

Access to the top floor was by an iron staircase up the south side of the building leading to an iron balcony running the length of the College Road side. There were two bicycle sheds between the building and College Road at right angles to the fence. They had corrugated iron roofs and could fit about 60 bikes. There were no other buildings between Rosebery and College Road.

I think we had to be at school in time for Chapel at 8.30am daily and we were not released until 6 pm. Cycling from Tadworth took me about 20 minutes to school and around 40 minutes going home up the hill. It was quite difficult in the winter as it was dark and we



could only show a small slit of light from our cycle lamps by covering the glass with cardboard. By the time I got home there was two hours of prep – and it did take me two hours!

I have many vivid war time memories at the College. We were all encouraged to grow our own food and, being a day boy, I did not have to go to school on a Sunday so I was detailed to work in the garden for two hours every Sunday morning. In addition, I had to clean out the rabbit hutches once a week – we bred rabbits for food – and as a result I would still never choose rabbit to eat. I refused to kill and gut them so when my Father was posted to Belgium in 1944, the rabbits were all sold to the local butcher and four ducks arrived, which were considerably less work!



**Ralph Hickling (1947-52)**

In my time Rosebery had a reputation for its annual play. I think most houses did do a play but ours was the best production and the Rosebery play was an eagerly anticipated event. I hope it is still so. I remember we performed *The Winslow Boy*, *Off the Record* and *The Moon in the Yellow River*. I think it was in the latter that Wilson-Pepper (greetings!) played the part of a cantankerous old lady who insisted on keeping her bicycle in her bedroom, and shortly after the opening carried it down a very rickety

"The Moon in the Yellow River"  
(ROSEBERY)

This was far above the usual standard of house plays, not only in the big things but in the smaller details as well; there was about the whole production an air of quiet assurance which put it in a class by itself. The characteristic touches were the short piano interludes (admirably played by Kay) after the house lights had gone down, and the dignified insistence of the programmes.

...one could not always hear... was a slight tendency... above... was

All was not of course, Blanaid, or he sure about for Dobell (who suffer his eyes) to lapse into a rather half-hearted Irishmen the absence though Morrison at Ireland = v Ula Englishman, Contr unavoidable (beec ease as that very.

The rest is all vituperative; and sophisticated and sophisticated the suave of the charm realization of What took

CHARACTERS

A Chambermaid	.....	E. W. T. ARLEIGH
Tom O'Leary, M.P.	.....	F. J. A. CRONIN
Miss Connolly	.....	B. A. FERRIS
Miss Foster, R.N.	.....	J. K. BRUCE
Wardens Divided	.....	B. P. COOPER
Sean Lushmore	.....	A. W. BRISTON
Miss Lushmore, R.N.	.....	E. T. V. BLAIR
Admiral Sir Macdonald	.....	J. R. WATSON-PATER
Charles, R.N.	.....	C. C. H. LEVINGS
Angelo-Forsyth, R.N.	.....	R. B. HUR
John Collyer	.....	R. K. CLAY
Old Howard	.....	
Miss Lucy Thompson, M.P.	.....	

SCENES

ACT I  
Scene 1.—In a room in a Portsmouth hotel. 10 p.m.  
Scene 2.—The washroom of H.M.S. "Herring". 12 noon.

ACT II  
Scene 1.—The living room of Admiralty House, 12 Downing Street. 7 p.m.

ACT III  
The same. 10 p.m. (next morning).

Y. A. C. COMMISSION  
C. J. M. O'NEILL (producer)



**Richard Gover (1951-55)**

It's hard to recall any particular Rosebery stories although in the 1950s the Day Room was pretty basic and austere, not that we noticed. Although I didn't see the new CCF armoury when I visited last year it made me recall that when we were preparing for the CERT A exam we were allowed to take a Bren gun back to the Rosebery changing room to practise. This was an ideal time for dismantling and re-assembling the weapon. Possibly someone else can confirm this. Maybe we weren't supposed to do this but we did and I cannot see that being allowed today.

**David Ramsay (1951-56)**

My recollection is that Pete Warburton was widely liked and respected both as a maths teacher and housemaster and that he ran a very well organised 'house'. His teaching certainly helped me to get some quite decent A levels!

I was playing full back in a rugby house match v Granville when (not as fearlessly as reported) I threw myself at the feet of the Granville left wing 'flyer', Kingston. After waking up with concussion in the 'san', Mr Warburton, following various medical check-ups, kindly drove me home to my mother who was not only a little surprised but also probably very grateful.

improvised staircase, much to the amusement of the audience.

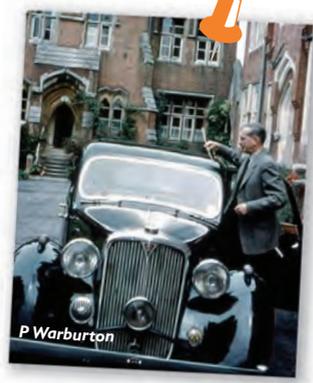
**John Mason (1949-54)**

In those early days after WW2, no one really discussed the hardships they had suffered, typically British as one might say. Many of us were being brought up in single parent families as many parents were lost in action or in raids. Now more than 50 years later, one hears a little more, and realises how difficult it was for children to cope. I remember a younger member of Rosebery telling us of how all his clothes came from the second hand store. And of course there was still rationing and coupons and food was scarce.

Perhaps Rosebery was little different to other houses at the College. We had though, our Housemaster, Peter Warburton. Perhaps he did not know our innermost secrets and sufferings but he could imagine a lot. Although we perhaps did not think of it at the time, he was very discrete. He was a father and friend to us all. His kindly advice helped many throughout their lives.



This short appreciation of those days at the College would not be complete without my thanks to all the Masters: Henry Franklin, Norman Collyer, Chris (Chaps) Gaman, Rex Goddard, Mr Wallace, Dennis Barnham, to mention but a few. To them we owe so much, and often we have been unable to thank them enough.





Apart from being on duty for the Queen two years on, this was my only visit to the sanatorium!

### John Waygood (1956-62)

In April 1962 I was ignominiously reduced to the ranks from my position of College Prefect by Henry Franklin, one week before my, and his, departure from Epsom College. The reason: I played a joint leading role in a multitude of pranks carried out on April Fool's Day 1962 which I could list with some pride. Happily, I was reconciled to Henry soon after:

There is much I remember...

Cycling to school at warp speed to the sound of the Chapel bell. We had to get there before it stopped ringing!

Nightmarish cricket fielding practice with Charlie P. (F E Pagan, Esq., Housemaster). He had a bat, we had our red hands. We had to stand in a circle

around him and lob him the ball, which he would then crack back at us....

As a prefect in the Bin, I recall that glorious aroma of



toast, jam and milk boiling over.

Chipping in with a shilling for that famous advert placed in The Times for a new bursar; and the mighty shockwave that ensued.

Perfecting wrist action, but not for bowling, with a gym shoe and the wall – for unmentionable corporal punishment. I could go on and on.....

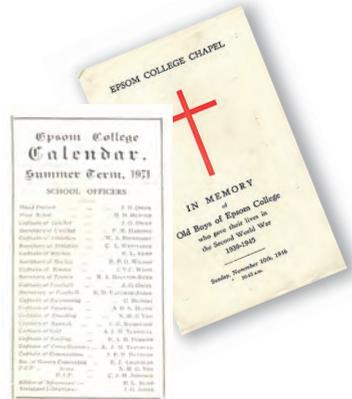
### Phil Hogg (1969-73)

In my time it was stated that boys at Rosebery House were entitled to admission to the 'Rosebery Stand' at the Epsom Racecourse provided they were in school uniform and house tie. It would seem that our predecessors were actually allowed out of school to attend the races but not so in my time!

My great uncle, Ralph Hogg (1930-33), who lived in Australia most of his life, visited the College whilst I was a pupil in 1972. Two things had not changed since his time: Big School and the doughnuts in the Tuck Shop. We also visited Chapel and I shall never forget the emotion of Ralph reading the plaque on the wall of Old Epsomians who gave their lives in WW2, and discovering just how many of his friends and fellow pupils had died.

I can recall Rosebery prefect,

Nicholas Wittchell (1967-71), the notable BBC newsreader and correspondent, reading out the house roll call/register and house prayers with his trademark clarity and authority. I also remember him as being a keen fan of the Loch Ness Monster. One day a large poster appeared in the quad proudly advertising a lecture on this. The poster was in fact a painting by Steve Raw (1965-70) dramatically showing the monster which attracted the ire of Alan Parker (2nd Master). He slapped a notice on it demanding to know "why



Nick Wittchell had not obtained permission to put up such a large poster'.

### Alan Kent (1971-76)

This is not a memory that Mr Carter would enjoy, but I doubt we fooled him anyway! Rosebery, in my day, was probably not the most 'regimented' of the houses, but that was what made it special. One of my most vivid memories was when I was in



**A C Carter**

the 5th Form. Smoking was a very popular after lunch ritual. A vast number of Rosebery colleagues smoked including most of the prefects and the Head of House. One afternoon we congregated in the changing room after lunch. It was a fine day so the quarter light windows were open. Mr Carter strode across the lawn and had to pass the changing room to get to his office as he always did after lunch. The smoke coming from the windows would have given a good impression of quite a serious fire raging inside. Happy Days.

**Michael W S Harper (1982-87)**

I remember how nervous I was starting as an M4 in this squat little building stuck in the corner of a beautiful campus. We soon learned the ropes.

I remember the clanging and banging of people running along the infamous Rosebery iron balcony and stairs.

I remember the excitement of having toast for mid morning break when in the sixth form.

We fell upon the loaf as though we were starving.

I remember the familiar smell of Rosebery when you first opened the door upon returning after summer holidays. Old books, cleaning solution and perhaps last year's lost sock.

Dr.Young walking across the lawn towards Rosebery, a lookout would give us a sixty second warning of his approach so the mischief could end. How smart we thought we were, but usually the windows were open and how well sound does travel across a quiet lawn.

I remember us all singing from Jungle Book for the inter-house music competition. Monkeys we were; first prize for enthusiasm but unfortunately not for musical quality.

I remember the buzz and pulse of excitement running through everyone on the last day of term.

I remember David Young having tremendous concern for an Upper 6th in his final term trying to do his A Levels, whose home life was falling apart.

I remember how devastated we all were when our friend and housemate Jonathan Williams (1982-87) was killed just weeks after the end of our final year. For many of us it was our first brush with mortality. For David Young he had lost one of his boys. Rosebery was a great family for five years. These things I remember:

**Jason Gilford (1984-89)**

I have fond memories of working

for David as a member of the stage crew. Being of limited academic and sporting ability but pretty good at art (and viewing sawing and drilling as proper man's work) and wanting to impress and perhaps help my housemaster; I signed up for a weekly regime of banging nails into bits of wood and swinging around on the stage frame. It was great fun and much better than marching around in a musty old uniform or being pumelled to death on a pitch. Unfortunately, it never carried much kudos. The opportunity to show off a Phillips screwdriver around the quad with nonchalant cool was never really a match for a sports colours tie. Stage dust or a bruised thumb was never a match for a dislocated shoulder!



Still, the activity was worth doing for the sheer amusement factor. My fondest memories were watching David and Murray heatedly debate who was the superior master of the jig saw. There was always great anticipation waiting for David to exclaim, with despair, that the measurements he had given to a student had not been followed accurately which resulted in the door frame being too small for the door; or the hinges being put on the wrong side; or flats being painted the wrong colour; or one table leg being shorter than the other..... resources were always very limited.

**Laurence Hynes (1992-97)**

I think to surmise one single anecdote from my five years in Rosebery is almost an impossible task. However Mike Hampshire was always keen to impress on us an ability to discern fact from fiction, and the important from the trivial, therefore I will try...

One memory that does stand out for me is my sister's near destruction of the wall at the front of Rosebery. My sister, although not an Epsomian, knew lots of the older Rosebery boys. From the beginning I was known as her little brother, which was a disadvantage. One summer's evening she, having recently passed her driving test, came to pick me up from school in her



brand new, shiny Volkswagen Golf. Being a newly qualified driver, she completely misjudged the distance between her vehicle and the wall. Rather than making a smooth arrival, pick up and departure, she managed to decimate the corner of the wall to such an extent that it was no longer really a corner. What made this all the better was that it was done in full view of the house with many members from all the year groups present. From that day onwards I was no longer the brother of the sister, but rather the sister was the sister of the brother... me! When I returned to the College last summer for Mike Hampshire's Rosebery do, I was delighted to see my sister's legacy lives on, provided you know where to look!

**Tom Chatfield (1993-98)**

I still remember, as a 13-year-old newly arrived in Rosebery, the impossible glamour of sixth formers' studies: these rooms four friends shared, with their cosily collapsing armchairs, their desks and posters and stereos, their strewn plates and mugs. This was what it was all about. If I hung on for long enough, this would be me in three years' time, quaffing tea in a chair, feasting upon hot buttered toast. This was what being at a House in a big school was all about: belonging to a place you could, in due course, call your own.



- Rosebery Housemasters and Housemistresses**
- Herbert E Gardiner 1926-29
  - Thomas W M Halliday 1929-31
  - Percival Warburton 1931-53
  - Francis E Pagan 1953-64
  - A C (Nick) Carter 1964-78
  - Dr David J Young 1978-92
  - Michael Hampshire 1992-2008
  - Natasha Wilson 2008-



Rosebery House photo 1988