

Leatherhead & District Local History Society

Potted Histories No 79

Parsons Mead School - Littlewoods Swimming Pool - Ottways Lane Ashtead



Parsons Mead, Ashtead, Surrey

The school opened in 1904 with forty-five girls aged between ten and eighteen, by the beginning of WWI there were ninety-five girls, both boarders and day pupils. The head mistress was Miss Jessie Elliston. Miss Elliston opened her first school in Woodfield Lane. Previously she had been governess at Leatherhead Vicarage. She bought Parsons Mead, paying for it by instalments. As we all know it was to become one of the best known schools in the area.



Littlewoods Swimming Pool Ottways Lane Ashtead

In about 1930 Edgar Littlewood built swimming pools in the garden of his house 'Littlewoods' in Ottways Lane, opposite Parsons Mead School. There were two pools – a small one for young children and learners and a large one with diving boards for those who could swim. Parties of children came from the local schools, especially Parsons Mead to be taught to swim by his daughter, Mrs Brooker.

In 1957, the school ceased to be privately owned and was made an educational trust. Alas, Parsons Mead closed on July 7, 2006. The school's trustees said they were unable to keep the school going after the number of pupils fell below the break-even point.

For the full story of the school I suggest you read - An Act of Faith: Hundred Years of Education at Parsons Mead School by Barbara Dawson - 2006.

Goff Powell

Correction to Potted History No 78 Gimcrack Hill (August 2015 edition) - The skid pan mentioned was never removed and is in fact still embedded in the wall.

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