

A brief History of Edgarley

Edgarley became the 'Junior School' for Millfield in 1945 when Jack Meyer, realising the need to accommodate increasing numbers of younger pupils arriving at his school in Street, bought the house and grounds from his friends the Thomas-Ferrands, who had seen their family home suffer from Army occupation during the war.

Edgarley was originally part of an iron-age settlement around Glastonbury Tor, defended by the Ponter's Ball earthwork which lies just this side of the village of West Pennard. In post-Roman times the earthwork would have formed part of the defences of the local British chieftain against the Saxon invaders, a struggle which was of course ultimately lost. We know that in the late 7th century the land was granted to the Abbey by a Saxon chieftain, thereby becoming one of the so-called Glaston XII hides.

Up to the Dissolution in 1539 Edgarley probably belonged to the Abbey chanter, but for the next 200 years it had a confused history, first as a part of the Abbey Estate then separate from it. Originally the property belonged to the Crown but it subsequently passed through many hands before, in the middle of the 18th century, coming into the ownership of a Wells family, the Porches, who also owned Glastonbury Abbey for a number of years in the middle of the 19th century, hence the considerable amount of Abbey stonework to be found here, particularly in the Summer House or 'Hermitage', as it was known in their day.

The Porch family was large, wealthy and influential for a time, enlarging the medieval and Georgian house considerably in the 1880s, but it suffered several setbacks around the turn of the century, which led to the estate being sold to the Thomas-Ferrands in 1915.

The fascinating but often sad story of the Porch family can be read in [this online history](#)

The school itself was initially very much a 'crammer', under the direction of Boss himself. By the late 60s, however, a much larger proportion of pupils, including increasing numbers of girls, was transferring to Millfield Senior instead of other public schools, and by the mid-80s numbers reached nearly 500, with a corresponding improvement and expansion in facilities. Around this time a pre-prep school was started on the site of the old St Louis Convent school in Glastonbury, later re-locating to the Edgarley campus, where it now shares the extensive grounds and amenities such as a Recital Hall, a new Drama Hall and Sports Hall, an indoor Swimming Pool and an Equestrian Centre.

Like its senior counterpart, Edgarley has always stood by its founder's ethos of attempting to discover and nurture whatever talent a young person has. It has gained an international reputation for sport and its success with dyslexic pupils, but it also

achieves excellence in many other areas, not least music and the arts. Successful Edgarley Old Millfieldians include politician Ruth Kelly, immunologist Dr Peter Openshaw, cricketer and Chairman of Selectors David Graveney, photographic travel journalist Max Milligan, financier Roland Rudd, rugby internationals Chris Robshaw and Matt Perry, and Formula 1 racing driver Lando Norris.