



FIRST HEADMASTERS OF NEWINGTON COLLEGE: Silverwater to Stanmore 1863-1899

**150 x Signed limited edition prints
to mark the College's 150 years**

This print is from an original oil painting by Australian artist **Rodney Pople**, created for Newington College's sesquicentenary in 2013. The original oil painting is in the collection of the College and displayed in the Founders Building at Stanmore.

The group portrait of the College's first seven headmasters combines recognisable features of the College's two premises over those years – Newington House on the Parramatta River in Silverwater (1863–1880) and the current Stanmore site (1881–1899). The details of the settings, together with the headmasters' appearance, clothing and accoutrements, are based on photographic archives, publications and information shared with the artist by College archivist, David Roberts.

The first seven headmasters were appointed under a system of dual control. Their role was similar to that of a second-in-charge, reporting and working with the College President. (Subsequent headmasters, commencing with the appointment of Prescott in 1899, assumed autonomous authority of the College.)

In the painting, the first seven headmasters are positioned in chronological order of their time at the College from left to right across the canvas, each displaying some personal characteristic and aspect of his legacy to the College. In the background on the left stands Newington House, known as the "country school by the river", with its adjacent chapel, original school bell and the old Newington wharf. The College's founder Rev. John Manton and his family are shown in front of the house. On the lawn and in the centre of the painting, games of rugby are underway, the boys wearing the distinctive Newington College black and white striped jerseys with the long white knee breeches of the day. On the right side of the image is the Founders Building on the new Stanmore campus and the first College flag in its original position.

Newington College



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NOTES ON THE HEADMASTERS, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

Thomas Johnston (1864–1866)

Reverend Manton laid the initial guidelines for the school and engaged the young Reverend Moulton as interim headmaster in 1863, until the first Headmaster Thomas Johnston could arrive from England to take up his position the following year. Johnston was a classical scholar and established a sound academic basis for the College. He had a wooden leg, resulting in a slightly awkward gait.

George Metcalfe (1867–1869)

Keen to further the College's academic standards by having a university graduate on staff, the new President Joseph Fletcher appointed George Metcalfe BA to work with him as Headmaster. Born in London, Metcalfe taught at Melbourne Grammar before moving to Sydney to join the Newington College staff. He introduced Australian Rules football to the College and is depicted here holding the rounded style of football used at the time.

Michael Howe (1869–1877)

An Irishman with a deep interest in literature, he established the Newington College Cadet Corps and supported the College's successes in cricket, football and shooting. He made the most of the grounds for sport, recreation and cattle grazing and was also known to use a "flicker" (cane) as a disciplinarian aid.

Joseph Coates (1877–1883)

Under the guidance of College President Joseph Fletcher, Coates presided over the move from Silverwater to Stanmore in 1880. He was a classics and history scholar with a good business mind. A left-handed man and exceptional cricketer, Coates oversaw the rise of sporting success at Newington College.

William Williams (1884–1892)

A literature scholar, Williams transformed the Newingtonian into a printed publication and introduced the "Judgement book", the first iteration of the current black Diary. More scholarly than sporty, Williams expanded the curriculum to include singing, drawing and French, and reluctantly agreed to the cattle being moved from the oval onto the Stanmore Road paddock.

Arthur Lucas (1892–1898)

A scientist, botanist and geologist, Lucas undertook improvements to the oval and planted many trees around the grounds. He is seen here with a native wildflower in his hand and an echidna at his feet: he shared his scientific curiosity and interests with the Newington students and community by taking the boys on botanical excursions and establishing a small zoo of native animals in the grounds of the College.

Edward Cornwall (1898–1899)

Cornwall was headmaster for only six months as the College transitioned from the dual leadership system towards Prescott's appointment as the first autonomous headmaster in 1899.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: Rodney Pople is a leading Australian artist whose work is held in the National, NSW, Queensland and Victorian State collections, as well as in regional, university and private collections around Australia. Educated at the Tasmanian School of Art, the Slade School in London and the New York Studio School, his work has been included in many curated and award exhibitions since the late 1980s, including the Blake Prize for Spiritual Art (Highly Commended 2006, 2007, 2010); the Archibald Portrait Prize, Wynne Prize for Landscape (Highly Commended 2008) and the Sulman Prize exhibitions at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, winning the latter in 2008. Other awards include the Redlands Westpac Art Prize (2006), Kings School Art Prize (2008), NSW Parliament Art Prize (2009) and Glover Art Prize (2012). Pople is represented by Australian Galleries in Sydney and Melbourne.

A limited edition of 150 prints, each one numbered, signed and dated by the artist, are available for purchase in 2013, with profits going to the New Women's support of visual arts programs at Newington College.

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