

# Old Pupils' Newsletter

Autumn 1999

Vol 1 No 1

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## Your Newsletter

Welcome to this first issue of the Old Pupils' Newsletter, and a special thank you to all those who have contributed news and articles. We hope to hear from many others over the coming months and years, so that the newsletter remains truly 'yours'.

Our aim is to keep former pupils and teachers from Moulsham Juniors informed about life at the school today, and in touch with each other. The newsletter will offer an opportunity to share our memories of schooldays and news of what we have been doing since then. The idea is to have three issues a year, each including:

- notes from the Headteacher, Mr Kemp, on recent school news and forthcoming events
- articles from former pupils and staff on their memories of the school
- notes by current pupils on aspects of school life today
- news from former pupils and staff, and
- requests for news of former class and schoolmates.

So far, we have a circulation list of some 130 addresses, mostly taken from the visitors' book many of you signed at the 60 Years Open Day held at the school in March. As Hilary Balm (nee Dye) explains on the next page, it was our renewed contact after that event which led to this newsletter being started. We have been able to add a few names and addresses of former pupils known to Hilary (who has lived in the Chelmsford area all her life) from her Moulsham Juniors and Chelmsford Technical High School days. But we are relying on the readers of our first issue to let us have addresses of any other of your Moulsham contacts who might like to have their names added to our circulation list.

With this newsletter we have enclosed a separate sheet to return with additional addresses. There is also space on it for you to send us your own news and/or memories, or any thoughts sparked off by articles in this issue. Any length from a paragraph to a couple of pages will be most welcome, and we can reproduce black and white photographs (though not colour, as yet) as long as the picture is reasonably clear. We look forward to hearing from you, by post or fax c/o the school, or even by e-mail from those who have braved the computer revolution, to [kathleen.boot@virgin.net](mailto:kathleen.boot@virgin.net)

Happy reading, and happy memories,

Kathleen Boot (nee Nash)



## How it all began

Many happy memories were revived when I went to the Sixtieth Anniversary Open Day in March this year.

I read messages from visitors earlier in the day and found that one of my contemporaries was looking for her classmates. A few days later, I was able to contact Kathleen Boot (nee Nash) for the first time in over 40 years! We had attended Moulsham Junior Girls School together from 1951-55.

We then decided to widen the circle by having a mini-reunion at the school fete on 19<sup>th</sup> June, joined by others from the same class:

Elizabeth Clarke  
Valerie Corby (nee Rudland)  
Marea Irving (nee Jones)  
Marion Lodge (nee Weston)  
Pam Scott (nee Harper)  
Jennifer Willmer (nee Bohannon)

We reminisced about all sorts of things, including country dancing in skirts made from blackout material with coloured ric-rac binding; school milk (either frozen or warm!) in bottles with cardboard tops; various members of staff and, of course, school dinners in the canteen (no longer in existence).

During the afternoon of the fete, I met the Headmaster, Mr Kemp, who suggested we might like to start a newsletter for old pupils of Moulsham Juniors. It seemed an excellent idea, and here we are with the first issue!

Does anybody else remember us, we wonder? If so, do get in touch.

Hilary Balm (nee Dye)



## Notes from the Headteacher

### New School Year

We continue to draw pupils from Moulsham Infants and Oaklands Infants Schools but recent housing development in the area has meant that this year our numbers in Year 4 have resulted in an additional class being established to bring our total up to nineteen classes. Among the many new initiatives being incorporated into school life is the Numeracy Strategy which now goes alongside Literacy Hour as the basis for teaching maths and English.

As a result of legislation, we have had to form our own Governing Body after having had joint governors with Moulsham Infant School since the schools opened. Our new chairman is Peter Ruane, a lecturer at Anglo Polytechnic University and for the first time alongside parent and teacher governors there is a staff governor elected by all staff who are not teachers. The new Governing Body is just getting to grips with its responsibilities including the Home/School Agreement that all schools are required to have. This agreement outlines some of the responsibilities of the school. The parents and the child are invited to acknowledge these by signing a copy of the agreement.

Following our successful Ofsted inspection last year when our delivery of Information Communication Technology was the main item criticised we have decided to give priority to the planning of a computer suite. The furniture, electrics, cabling and lighting are now in place and we await funding from the National Grid for Learning to purchase the computers.

This half term the choir have sung at Chelmsford Cathedral, a group of children and staff took part in the procession from Oaklands Park to outside the Saracen's Head to mark Chelmsford's 800 Charter Day and we have held a sponsored fitness event in aid of school funds. Our football and netball teams have started their fixture list and carpet bowls continues to flourish on a Tuesday morning.

Year 4 Children have visited Colchester Zoo this term and a theatre company have performed to Year 3. The produce from our Harvest Festival has been sent to a children's hospital and hospice in Albania.

The busy start to the school year is just a warm-up for the rest of half term when life becomes very hectic leading up to the school Christingle services and Christmas activities.

#### **School Project - Your help welcome**

We have held a number of fund raising events to purchase a set of steel drums. The fund was started by a donation from a local pharmacist, who is a parent of one of our children, a sponsored parachute jump, the loss of my beard at the Summer Fete, a session by Terry Flitman, the deputy Headteacher, in the Soak-a-Person stall and other contributions. The purchase of the drums will be followed by projects to raise funds to repair our set of handbells and the purchase of a new piano in South Wing Hall.

## Sixtieth Anniversary

The first event in the programme to celebrate our Sixtieth Anniversary occurred on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1998 when the Mayor of Chelmsford hoisted our anniversary flag and unveiled a plaque marking the event. This was followed by a whole school balloon launch with balloons reaching North Wales and Ireland.

The reunion in the Spring Term brought former pupils from across the country with the largest number drawn from the earliest days of Moulsham Girls and Moulsham Boys Schools. An exhibition of memorabilia was held in conjunction with the reunion, with contributions brought about by appeals in the Essex Chronicle and on BBC Essex local radio. A number of people met former school friends for the first time since leaving secondary school - forty years ago.

A time capsule has been buried in the front of the school to which every class contributed. The location is marked by a plaque asking for the box to be dug up in sixty years time.

Our curriculum week took as its theme the Second World War and a war time street was created in South Wing Hall. An air-raid shelter, first-aid post, a grocers requiring ration points, war time café, post office, bank and other features linked to the period were present. Every child and adult in the school was in costume and playtimes featured playground games that grandparents talked to the children about. (See photographs on page 6). A re-enactment society created the loudest noise of the week when they fired their field gun on the school field in front of the television cameras.

The Summer Concert, Summer Serenade, gave a large part of the programme to a war time radio show written by one of our teachers, Stephen Leatherdale.

The final event to celebrate this anniversary was when six hundred of us went to Legoland, Windsor for the day. It was an impressive sight seeing eleven coaches in our turning circle and it was a superb climax to what was I hope a memorable year for all involved with the history and present life of Moulsham Junior School.

L R Kemp  
Headteacher

### **Friends of Moulsham Junior School**

This group organises social and fund raising activities for the benefit of the school. This term money has been given to the school to buy maths equipment, reading books, collapsible goals for football, a tape recorder, storage boxes and books for our library. The first event this year was a beetle drive and the main event of the term is the Christmas Bazaar on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November at 1.45 pm.



**Curriculum Week  
May 1999**



Pupils in wartime  
costume enjoy trying  
their hand at go-karting  
(trolleys) on the school  
playground

## Teaching at Moulsham Junior Boys School in 1938

Some of you may remember Mr Harold Picken, a young teacher on the staff of Moulsham Junior Boys when the school opened on 21 September 1938. Here are a few of the memories he included in an interesting talk he gave to present day pupils in March 1994:

"On entering the front door of the building, that part on the right hand side was the Girls School, and that on the left the Boys School. Each school had its own Head Teacher and they were run independently of each other. Boys and girls did not mix. In the playground was a high wire fence which separated the boys from the girls, and you weren't allowed to talk to each other through it!

There were six classrooms in each school - five ordinary classrooms and one handwork room. The playing fields were small, they were just the grass areas between the Senior and Junior Schools. What are now your large playing fields at the back of the school were farm lands on which sheep and cattle grazed.

There was no Moulsham Estate. As you looked from the playground towards where Moulsham Estate is now built, there was a white farmhouse with strawberry fields and a cherry orchard which had gorgeous pink and white blossom in the Spring. In later years, on Moulsham Estate, people found strawberries growing in their gardens. This puzzled them because they hadn't planted them! There was also a pond where dragonflies used to breed. Many often got trapped in the classrooms in summer. Even though the pond was filled in, dragonflies inhabited the area for years afterwards." .....

..."It was something quite new to most children to be in a classroom with so many windows and so much fresh air. Everything around them on that first day or so was 'sparkling new' and 'squeaky clean'. It was quite a job for pupils to concentrate on the teacher when there was such a lot of interesting traffic going along the A12. There were no mature trees or shrubs to block the view, and we were not allowed to block out the lower windows.

I well remember teaching a class one hot sunny day - one of those days when it was difficult to hold the boys' attention for any length of time. All of a sudden one boy, who was normally very quiet and attentive, turned his head towards the windows and let out a loud cry of astonishment: "Cor - look at that!", he cried. With that, the rest of the class stood up, turned to the windows looking on to the A12 and expressed their astonishment with loud cries of "Cor! Cor!" - it was quite out of character for any of them.

In the next instant I found myself looking towards the A12 and there, being towed slowly along the road, was a crashed RAF bomber. None of us had ever seen such a sight before. Little did we know, however, that a few months after that World War II would start, and sights like this would - sadly - become common during the six years of the war. But that is another story."

## Memories of 1938

I remember in 1938 being told by my mother that I would be able to go to a new school near my home on Bouverie Road. The brand new school was on Princes Road, a short walk along St John's Road and then cut through the allotments (which is now a residential area) about fifteen minutes walk. This would be much nearer than the hour long journey to Trinity Road School in Springfield, which I had attended for several years.

Thus it was on a fine morning that I set out for Moulsham Junior School in 1938 on its Grand Opening Day. Masses of us stood in the boys' playground, which was divided from the girls' playground by high iron spiked railings. As our names were called, we went into our brilliant airy classrooms. I went to Mr Gardiner's room. (We called him 'Daddy Gardiner' under our breath). I remember on occasions he chased some pupils round the classroom. (The naughty ones, not me!)

The Headmaster was Mr Petchey whom I knew and had already met on the wrong end of the cane at Trinity Road School. My second class was with Mr Picken. He also taught PE and was very athletical, especially with his toe, which sometimes connected with one's posterior if you were inattentive.

Halfway through this year I was sent into Mr Hymas' class. He was the senior teacher, and this was in preparation for the Exam to go to the Grammar School, as my parents wished me to follow in my brother's footsteps and go to the same school. Being non-academic, I duly failed the Exam. This proved no great disappointment to me as my real enjoyment with school was the friendship I formed with fellow pupils. I recall that journeys to and from school were great fun. Many times I roller-skated along Lady Lane and up Princes' Road with Jack Smith and Peter Cousins, Peter Vinal, John Southgate, David Smith and many others.

We knew very few girls owing to the segregation. I knew a few who had been at Friars' Infant School with me, Jessie King, Jean Prior, (Jean threw my school cap into the quarry near the school. I can't think why). She married a Minister of Religion, and still owes me a cap! The best looking girl was Eileen Steel.

I looked forward to Summer holidays in 1940. We were told we would have one week holiday and one week school, this to alternate for twelve weeks ... but fate was about to strike. One Saturday that summer, I was returning from the Swimming Baths in Waterloo Lane, along Moulsham Street, near Woolworth's, when I saw my older sister coming in the opposite direction to meet me. She said, 'You are going to Canada in a few days.' I was transfixed. My head buzzed with the thought, 'I will be with real Cowboys and Indians at last, after just seeing them at the Regent and Odeon on a Saturday morning. I will be one of them.'

Little did I know at that time that the real purpose of sending 12,000 of us children to Canada was that we were picked for our Physical and Mental capabilities, to re-produce if England was annihilated!

Finally, on arrival in Canada, we were accommodated in a large dormitory, and on going to bed were instructed by our Supervisor to repeat the following prayer:-

'If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.'

My reaction was complete amazement, I thought, 'Have I come all this way to die?'

John Spooner

### **Nostalgia: Moulsham Reunions**

I attended Moulsham Junior School in the forties, and last year some 35 of us met to see what we had been doing with our lives and to reminisce about our schooldays.

This gathering started about seven years ago with just six of us who were all in the same class meeting for lunch in Chelmsford. As we got talking, everyone knew of other people who attended the School, and the word has spread.

We have old photographs to show and tales to tell, so if you are interested in coming along and know anyone else who at some stage went to Moulsham School we shall be pleased to see both you and them.

My name was Jennifer Rayner (now Bailey) and I look forward to hearing from you on Colchester (01206) 792945.

Jennifer Bailey

## Moulsham School Songs

I wonder if any of you remember singing a Moulsham school song? The first one we know of, framed in a beautifully hand written version, clearly dates from the early days of Moulsham Junior Boys:

"Let us sing of this School where, under its rule,  
We prepare for our manhood to come,  
Let us spread far its name, its honour, its fame,  
To all places under the sun;  
Uphold our tradition, advance our position -  
"Work and be Happy", we'll sing,  
And "Moulsham for ever!" and "Moulsham!" again  
Resound, till the rafters ring.

Let us strive to be true to the Red and the Blue  
Which blend us together in youth;  
Let kindness guide us, whatever betide us,  
And cheerfulness, humour and truth.  
In our games and our toil we'll ever be loyal -  
"Work and be Happy," we'll sing.  
And "Moulsham for ever!" and "Moulsham!" again  
Resound, till the rafters ring."

A later version, dated 1972, has words and music by Mr R A Peachey, and was presumably written when the Boys and Girls Schools amalgamated to form the present day Moulsham Junior School. The instruction at the top of the music urges us to sing "with enthusiasm"!

"Now let us join our voices in a cheerful song  
About the Moulsham School to which we all belong:  
The buildings and the playing fields, the gardens and the lawns,  
The roses with their glowing petals and their thorns;  
The halls in which we meet to sing our hymns and pray,  
The rooms in which we occupy ourselves each day;  
The river that runs past us - not the Chelmer in full flood,  
But the traffic flowing fast along the A12 road.

All this is but the setting for our work and play;  
The efforts that we all should make from day to day  
To study in the classroom or to play a zestful game -  
To work and to be happy is our constant aim.  
We think of all the children who have gone before us here  
And built a fine tradition for us year by year.  
We'll follow their example, and make this our foremost rule:  
To be a credit to our Moulsham Junior School."

## Did you Attend Moulsham Junior School with this Little Girl?



Her name was Daphne Farrow. Daphne was at the School from September 1943 until she went to Moulsham Secondary School in 1948

I was approached to write this article for the newsletter and when I considered what I would write, I was transported back to another life. After sixty-three years my life has taken many turns.

You have just celebrated your Sixtieth Anniversary, this means I must have been one of the first pupils to attend the School. As it was to turn out my education was to be completed at Moulsham Schools.

I heard about the Reunions, via a friend, only after they had occurred. I felt very disappointed to have missed them, as we still come to Chelmsford regularly. I often drive along Princes Road and I have seen the School expand over all the fields that surrounded it when I was a child.

I frequently wonder about my fellow pupils of that time, do we pass each other in Chelmsford - all changed beyond recognition? They too may have moved away and live elsewhere as I do. I remember quite a few of the teachers' names. Miss Rankin was the Headmistress. She apparently taught my father when he was a child. She appeared very old to me, as did most of the teachers. We were strictly segregated from the boys - is this still the case I wonder?

Of course the Second World War was at its height during my primary years. How fortunate we were to be of an age where the enormity of it completely escaped us. Rushing out to the Air Raid Shelters was a welcome relief from class, although we always had to chant our times tables.

### **A Brief Chronology of My Life Since Moulsham School Days**

I left Senior School in December 1951, commencing work at Crompton Parkinson in January 1952. Married my husband Ron in January 1956. Moved to Doncaster with my husband's occupation in 1966. We then moved to Dundee where we had our only child, a son, Adam in 1972. From Dundee we moved to Sunderland for three years. Twenty three years ago we moved to Bromley in Kent, where we still reside.

continued

I have been closely involved with all the schools my son attended and I have been a Governor of a large Comprehensive School here for twelve years. Eight years ago I became a Magistrate in Bromley.

I do hope I will be able to attend the next reunion and hopefully meet someone there who will remember me

Daphne Stonely (nee Farrow)



Moulsham Junior Girls School Choir in about 1969 with conductor Pamela Greenwood  
Photograph from Sue Bruns - see page 15.

## Memories of Moulsham Junior Girls' School, 1943 - 1947

It was January 1943 when I first attended Moulsham Junior Girls' School - at that time the academic year was the same as the calendar year - and I recall being put on the school bus in Moulsham Street and transported directly to the school gate.

I attended the school for four years, the first two of which were during the war. Classes were regularly interrupted by air raid warnings, when we all had to evacuate to the shelters until the "all clear" siren sounded. I do not recall any panic or fear, I suppose we were all much too young to realise the seriousness of it all. We did not do lessons in the shelter, but spent the time singing.

The teachers I recall were Misses Wright, Skilton, Barton, Firman, Norris, Sawday and the headmistress, Miss Rankin. Later I remember a Mrs McCarthy joined the staff to teach one of the younger classes. In those days all the classes were large, and on one of my reports which I still retain, it was noted that the number in class was 53!

My first year at Moulsham Juniors was with Miss Skilton and subsequently with Miss Barton, Miss Firman and finally Miss Sawday. Despite the large class numbers, there was good discipline and we all had a thorough grounding in the "Three R's" which stood us in good stead for life. Learning tables "parrot fashion" did not seem such a chore as we probably only spent a few minutes on it each day. We had lessons on reading, writing, poetry and composition, spelling, arithmetic, scripture, history and geography. I remember in particular Miss Skilton's geography classes - she had a large wooden tray in the corner of the room and for each area of the world we were currently studying, we would make plasticine models of the place in question. For example, when we were learning about the Eskimos, I recall the tray being covered with cotton wool on which were placed a mirror (to depict a frozen lake) and plasticine igloos, seals and kayaks. I have often thought that this was an excellent and enjoyable way to introduce young pupils to geography.

Miss Skilton and Miss Wright were the teachers responsible for music lessons. We learned all the usual school songs and, in the early years, we had a little band comprising tambourines, drums, triangles, cymbals and castanets; I think of this little band whenever I hear the "Trumpet Voluntary" as it was one of the tunes we tried to play.

At Christmas time each class prepared a little play and performed it in front of the rest of the school in the hall. I can hear Miss Rankin now with her "Bravo" whenever she praised her pupils for a deed well done.

Although materials were scarce during my time at the Junior School, we were not really aware of it, as we had never known anything else, and we were taught to be quite good at improvising. We made all sorts of things from "bits and pieces", I remember we made spill boxes (everyone had coal fires in those days) out of scouring powder tins we cut the tops off and covered the rest with some form of coloured paper, probably a wallpaper remnant. We learned to do simple needlework, by hand, of course, and I still have in my possession a tray cloth I made at school.

All classes had P.T (P.E I think it is called today) several times a week in the school hall, or, in the summer - weather permitting - we would go out to the playing field, where we would sometimes play rounders. Miss Firman was particularly keen on P.T and country dancing and I seem to remember that her classes proved to be somewhat more energetic.

School milk in one-third pint bottles was available to all pupils at morning break time. School dinners were also available - at five old pence per day or two shillings and one penny per week! The school bus also operated during the lunchtime though, for those children who wished to go home for lunch.

I cannot remember all the details, but the school participated in the National Savings scheme, which was heavily promoted in the country at the time, and this encouraged pupils to save.

I said we were well disciplined and so we were, but children being children, we often misbehaved in one way or another, mostly talking in class! There was no caning or detention but we were punished either by having to stand outside the door (and enduring the humiliation of explaining to Miss Rankin, if she happened to come along, what you were doing there) or walking round and round the verandahs a given number of times during break-time. The verandahs, I should add, were open to the elements then.

Miss Rankin did not teach a class, but, at set times during the day, she did coach those of us in Class five who wanted to take the eleven-plus, and this coaching certainly gave us an insight into what we could expect in the examination.

Miss Rankin always led the assembly each morning with a prayer and a hymn - oh how I remember our singing of "Jerusalem" and another hymn we sang quite often then but which I have never heard since "What heroes thou hast bred, oh England my country"; I suppose because of the war years, the patriotic words were more meaningful.

I have good memories of all the teachers who taught me at Moulsham School, they were strict, yes, but very fair and I think they were all excellent at their job. To them I would like to echo Miss Rankin's favourite expression of praise - BRAVO!

Joan Atkins

## Sue Bruns (Huscroft): Moulsham Junior Girls in the Sixties: The Best Days of My Life

It is often said that your schooldays are the best days of your life - and I for one can wholeheartedly agree!



I began my schooling at Moulsham Infants in September 1963 with Mrs Appleton. I recall being shown to a desk and picking up a book on trains to look at. This is a vivid memory, the cover had a picture of a green steam engine on it! I certainly didn't cry when I waved goodbye to Mum, although there were plenty of others who did. I progressed to Mrs Bell's class and enjoyed playing in the Wendy House and colouring in my workbook. Miss Warboys was my final teacher in the infants and memories include playing with cuisenaire rods for counting; copper jugs to teach us about liquid measurements and listening to stories in the afternoon sitting next to a blond haired boy called John Lewis! (Remember, end of school then was at 3.45 pm). I was also thrilled to be able to read 'Janet and John' to the headmistress and getting a 'well done' for my efforts.

Junior school life introduced me to single sex classes and the junior boys were separated by a corridor inside, and a very high wire fence outside between the playgrounds! My first teacher in the juniors was a Miss Fisher. She was a very petite lady and as I recall left to get married and then emigrated to Australia - was it something we said?! Mrs Clements was my second year teacher and it was in her class that I met Heather Bury who was to become a very good friend. We still exchange Christmas cards and she is now a very young grandmother!

In my final year at Moulsham, I was fortunate to be with Mrs Taylor. A lovely lady who had a penchant for wearing clothes in various shades of brown and beige. Mrs Taylor gave us regular mental arithmetic tests and schooled us in 'verbal reasoning' which was then the basis for the 11-plus exam. I heard I had passed this exam on the morning we were going on a visit to the Houses of Parliament. It made the day even better. During this last year, I was a milk monitor and a porch monitor - the latter 'office' gave me the dubious power of being able to evict children from the cloakrooms at break times! I also thoroughly enjoyed country dancing and remember we put on a display at St John's Hospital Fete with Heather as my partner. We also had a country dancing party with ice-creams being supplied by the school - wonderful!

I have enclosed a photo (see page 12) of our school choir performing 'The Emperor's Nightingale' at the Civic Theatre Chelmsford with Pamela Greenwood conducting us through our paces! I have genuinely wonderful memories and I wish all current and future pupils of Moulsham the same.

## Then and now: science lessons

One of the greatest changes in the junior school curriculum since many of us were at Moulsham must be the teaching of science. When Harold Picken started teaching at the newly opened school in 1938, he noted that the stress was firmly on the "three R's" (more about the 1938 curriculum in the next issue of the newsletter). The nearest thing to a science lesson was one period a week of "Hygiene", which he thought would be called Biology these days.

In the early fifties, revolutionary modern technology took a tentative foothold in schools, in the form of lessons on the radio. One of these was a weekly broadcast on Nature Study, which seemed to focus mainly on wildlife in the countryside. Many of the pupils at Moulsham Junior Girls at that time enjoyed the opportunity to sit quietly at our desks after afternoon playtime while a disembodied voice from the square wooden radio speaker on the top right hand corner of the front wall of the classroom entertained us with life histories of insects, trees or whatever. From time to time these programmes would be supplemented with real live Nature Walks, to admire the hips and haws in the autumn hedgerows or see the potato clamps in the fields alongside Princes Road. "Serious" science, such as chemistry and physics, had to wait until secondary school level.

How very different from today, when science and computer technology form an important part of the curriculum from an early age. Some at least of the year six pupils at Moulsham Juniors are clearly enthusiastic budding scientists already, as this report from them shows:

"In science this term we have looked at electricity, forces and magnetism. The best thing is when we do an experiment and it's lovely when we make circuits because you know you have to make the bulb light up. It's really frustrating when you have finished the circuit and nothing happens and you have to go back and do it again. When we did forces and gravity we had somebody standing on a chair and dropping a flat sheet of paper followed by a screwed up piece of paper. We found air pressure played a part in the speed at which they dropped to the floor."

Perhaps some of our readers can fill us in on how science was taught in the intervening years between those early days and the present?

Year six pupils / 1950s pupils

## **Obituary: Professor Ralph Charles Smith OBE**

We were saddened to hear of the death of Professor Ralph Charles Smith OBE, who was born in Chelmsford on 29 August 1930 and died on 13 October 1998 in Buckingham. He married his wife Mary in 1956 and has three children, Elizabeth, Helen and Robert, and six grandchildren.

Ralph Smith attended Moulsham Junior Boys School until 1942, and his name is on the Turner Award honours board at the school. After his death, a cousin sent the school a copy of a published obituary, which reads:

"Ralph Smith was an inspirational influence on thousands of students as one of the founding fathers of the Open University. He helped create a whole new system of learning from its inception in 1969 when he was appointed Professor of Mathematics.

Professor Smith's academic vigour sprang from an unlikely background. An only child, he was born into a farming family, although his own father had moved into the building trade. Ralph excelled at King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford and went on to read a maths degree at University College, London, and then gained a doctorate in meteorology at Imperial College. During his time as a graduate student in London, Ralph fell in love with a young school teacher who sang in his church choir. He sent her a Valentine's card with the message, "Could you sing a little louder? I am hard of hearing." They met and were happily married for more than 40 years.

As a national serviceman, he served as a flying officer in the RAF and then spent four years in the Meteorological Office before returning to academic life.

Friend and colleague Professor Malcolm Johnson said: "Ralph had a zest for life. He used his great intellect and personal talents to labour with and for others, to achieve high ideals in education. He worked at tremendous speed, with endless energy. Yet he was a good listener, ready to take good ideas from anywhere and anyone. And humour was always there. For Ralph, life and work were fun."

## **HELP**

After the display of photographs and memorabilia at the 60 Years reunion I am in the embarrassing position of being unable to return three priceless photographs. Two belonged to Mrs Shirley Wood (nee Porter) and were of an outdoors PE lesson taking place near the south end air raid shelters. One photograph showed Shirley Porter doing a handstand and the other showed a group of girls doing PE. The other photograph showed a classroom from the Infant School with children painting, writing and working with blocks. This photograph belongs to Mrs Sandra Thomas.

If these photographs were returned to you in error please could you return them to the school.

## **A date for your diary**

The Head Teacher has reserved Saturday 20 May 2000 for a reunion of former pupils at the school, with afternoon tea and an opportunity to look round the school as well as meeting up with chums and classmates. Further details in the next issue of this newsletter.

Next time .....

- More from Mr Picken: the curriculum in 1938
- Coronation celebrations
- Then and now: sport and physical education

and of course articles, photos and news updates from old pupils and staff

Please send in written contributions and photos (which we will return) by the end of January 2000 at the latest, to:

Mrs Kathleen Boot  
Old Pupils' Newsletter  
Moulsham Junior School  
Princes Road  
Chelmsford  
Essex CM2 9DG