

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Autumn 2000

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The snowball continues to roll

Welcome to the fourth issue of your newsletter. One year on from our first ever issue, we now have some 232 former Moulsham people on our mailing list, and more names coming forward all the time as word spreads. We know that many of you share the newsletter with interested friends and family. In one family, cousins have even been reunited after a picture printed in the first issue was sent to relatives living abroad! Wonderful!

When we agreed a year ago to take on the 'simple' task of keeping a mailing list and collecting up news and memories from past pupils, Hilary Balm and I had no idea how busy and rewarding the job would turn out to be. We have been amazed and delighted at the enthusiastic response to the project, and the detail and variety of the memories and articles which continue to arrive. Thank you to all who sent in articles and photos this time. It has been a great pleasure getting to know so many of you, through your long chatty letters, phone calls, the Open Afternoon, and in some cases meeting up with you to hear and ask about your recollections of Moulsham Juniors.

Since the last issue, we have embarked on a series of very enjoyable interviews with local people with a Moulsham connection. The first of these was Mrs Jean Roberts, school Manager and mother of three pupils at Moulsham Junior Girls. The second was former pupil Brian Greatrex, well known for his hard work over many years furthering the Arts in Chelmsford. Articles about both of these appear in the present issue. More recently, we had another delightful morning, this time with Mrs 'Poppy' Donovan, who taught for 25 years, first at the Junior Boys School and from 1969 at the combined boys and girls school when it became Moulsham Juniors. We shall have an article containing Mrs Donovan's affectionate memories of life at Moulsham in the Spring 2001 Newsletter.

Now a date for your 2001 diary. The Head Teacher Mr Kemp has kindly offered to set up another Open Afternoon for us next year - this time avoiding the Cup Final date! We understand that the football will be on an earlier Saturday in May next year, so we shall have our Open Afternoon on **Saturday 19th May**, from 1pm to 5pm, as before. This time, Mr Kemp hopes to include a short entertainment by present day pupils, demonstrating their steel band and Maypole dancing (we were interested to learn that it was Mrs Donovan who originally introduced Maypole dancing to Moulsham).

In the Summer issue, we raised the question of meeting the school's printing and postage costs for the Newsletter from an annual subscription. Those of you who wrote in reply were more than willing to contribute £3 a year, and some have already sent donations for a tree which will be planted later this autumn to commemorate our first Open Afternoon. On reflection, though, Mr Kemp believes it would cost too much in staff time, accounting and auditing, to administer a separate 'subscription' system for the Past Pupils' Newsletter. For the time being, he prefers to continue as we are, with no charge to those who receive it. There is of course nothing to stop each of us sending any amount we wish as a straightforward gift to the school (cheques payable to Moulsham Junior School). Money donated that way can then be used for books or any music, sports or other equipment, without having to set up a separate account. We should like to record here our special thanks to the school secretary, Lorna Blowers, and her colleagues, for their hard work copying and distributing our Newsletter.

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue, and that it will spark happy memories for you. You may notice that we have used a slightly smaller print this time, to include as many articles as possible in the same number of pages. Do keep sending in your memories, news and photos, please, to Kathleen Boot, 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG, or by email to kathleen.boot@virgin.net

Kathleen Boot (nee Nash) 1951-55

The end of Summer Term was the hectic time it has always been in primary schools. Our choir sang at the Royal Albert Hall, the Year 4 football tournament was probably the best ever due to help with refereeing given by parents and the Year 6 production of Ali Baba brought a tear to the eye. We still award the Turner Prize at the end of the year and this award is voted for by all the Year 6 children. For the first time in the memory of our staff, the recipients were a brother and sister, Luke and Carly Perry.

The holidays are a time when we undertake a full programme of maintenance work and the major task this year was to concrete the floor where the stage had formerly been in North Wing Hall. When the stage was removed the cross members for the new flooring were not sufficient for the weight it now has to support. Our tasks also included decorating the library, the classrooms in Fire House and all the toilets. We employ our own cleaning staff again following a period when we had to use contractors and this has resulted in an improved service. The highly polished hall floors at the beginning of term would be something every past pupil would have recognised and enjoyed as much as I still do.

This year we hoped to see the replacement of the walkway around South Wing Quadrangle. The project was due to start this half term but already has been delayed so the buckets collecting the drips around the present walkway continue.

The sale of the playing field beyond the Further Education College is proceeding slowly. Five years ago this land was declared surplus to need by Essex County Council and it is likely to be sold for housing later this year. The junior school has been allocated the part of the field that borders Princes Road as far as the college. Considerable work will be necessary to remove the mound and create two junior size football pitches as well as fencing the site and creating a planting zone along Princes Road to lessen noise and pollution from passing traffic.

Each school has to have a school improvement plan and one of the main items on our present plan is the focus on music which follows our last Ofsted inspection. We have purchased a set of steel pans using donations and money raised from when I was sponsored to have my beard shaved off together with a grant of £2000 from Fords. We have also purchased a set of ten African drums from Senegal and have already had a day long workshop this term when fifty children took part. At the Open Day on 19th May we shall include a programme of music and dancing during the afternoon. Our major fundraising this year will be towards the purchase of a piano for South Wing Hall.

This year we are pleased to be selected by the Local Education Authority to be part of a project concerning Inclusive Schools. The focus is on improving our skills in responding to the needs of children with complex learning difficulties. As part of the project there is a research programme that will be looking at promoting independence with children who have a Learning Support Assistant working with them for long periods of time.

Our Curriculum Week this year will be taking Europe as our theme and each House will be studying one European country with South Wing Hall turned into a market place with a different European language being used each day.

I would like to record my thanks to Kathleen Boot and Hilary Balm for producing the Past Pupil's Newsletter and there is no more enthusiastic supporter of their hard work than I am.

Photos from the Open Afternoon, 20 May 2000



Beryl Graves (nee Tween), left, and Marigold Cook (nee Polley) pose for a photograph in the 'Girls' Hall'.



On the now enclosed veranda of the former Girls' School, pupils from the 1940s, from left to right: Jill Archer (nee Devonish), Beryl Brown (nee Goulden), Anne Holdsworth (nee Hammond), Marie Bevan (nee Martin), Jennifer Bailey (nee Rayner), Shirley Wood (nee Porter), Pauline Digby (nee Knight) and Joan Edwards (nee Ireland)

Mr Stanley Petchey, Headmaster 1938-1956

Many of our readers will remember Mr Petchey, who was Headmaster of Moulsham Junior Boys' School from its opening in August 1938 until he retired in 1956. He was well known within the Chelmsford community, and his tireless efforts on behalf of the National Savings movement earned him an MBE in 1954, followed by an OBE in 1960.

This photo shows Mr Petchey outside Buckingham Palace in November 1954 with his wife (right) and his sister Mrs D. Hart, after receiving his MBE.

Before transferring to the new Moulsham Junior School, Mr Petchey had been Deputy Head at Trinity Road School, and married Miss Margaret Fowler, one of the teachers there. His first teaching post was at a school in Rayleigh in 1910.



Darrel Reed, who recalls his schooldays elsewhere in this issue, reckons that as Headmaster at Moulsham, Mr Petchey "got it about right. He did have a sense of humour, but commanded a healthy respect from pupils - one look was enough! He was not over-tall, but burly as I clearly recall. Initially he was a frightening man to us trembling little 'first years'. He used to recount classics like Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Nicholas Nickleby from memory. He was so enthusiastic that we were all spellbound by his narration. Indeed I attribute my love of the 'classics' to him." Perhaps other readers can add more memories of Mr Petchey as Head? Several of you recall that naughty children were sent to wait under 'the Board', and were likely to receive a smack on the back of the legs if Mr Petchey caught them there when he came out of his office!

After his retirement, Mr Petchey remained an active and enthusiastic member of the community. In his 90s, he was still to be seen playing bowls, driving his Wolseley 1300 and helping out at the Christ Church London Road day centre for old folk, many of whom were much younger than himself. Mr Petchey had been a Deacon at the London Road Congregational Church for many years, as well as lay preacher and leader of the Bible Class. Later he became a Deacon of Christ Church. On his ninetieth birthday, 22 February 1981, the children from Moulsham Juniors sent him two huge birthday cards, and a group of them attended his birthday celebrations at Cooksmill Congregational Church.

Mrs Jean Roberts, Chairman of the School Managers

Either side of the main entrance to Moulsham Junior School today stand two tall and unusual trees, deciduous conifers rejoicing in the name of *Metasequoia Glystostaboides*. They were donated over thirty years ago by the then Chairman of Managers, Alderman Mrs Jean Roberts. Mrs Roberts still lives in Chelmsford, and Hilary Balm and Kathleen Boot had the great pleasure of meeting her this summer to hear about her long association with the school.

It was in 1940 that Mrs Roberts and her family moved to Finchley Avenue, Chelmsford, and her daughters Ann, Elizabeth and Helen all attended Moulsham Infants and Junior School. She remembers well the wartime years, when she accompanied the children to and from school every day, with packs of sandwiches for lunch before the days of hot school meals. Herself a former teacher, trained at Goldsmiths College, she became an active member of Moulsham Infants' Parent-Teacher Association during the 1940s.

In 1946, Mrs Roberts was elected to the Borough Council, and represented the Borough on the Mid-Essex Educational Executive. Co-opted to the Education Committee, she was appointed to a number of school managing bodies, and eventually became Chairman of the Managers of Moulsham Infants and Junior Schools.

The role of School Managers in those days was busy, but different from today's Governing bodies. The Managers had regular formal meetings with the Head teachers to discuss practical problems with the buildings or running of the school. They were also involved with the appointment of staff and Head Teachers, in consultation with the Education Office. They went into the classrooms once a month or so to report on the behaviour, morale and general atmosphere in lessons, but they had no role in budgeting and were not there to comment on either teaching methods or subjects taught.

An important aspect of being a Manager was liaison between the school and the Education Office, ensuring good public relations and cooperation. The Managers attended all Open Days, Sports Days and Christmas entertainments, and were recognised by parents and pupils alike, even if the latter had very little idea what the role of a Manager was! In the photo above, Mrs Roberts can be seen planting a tree (sadly no longer there) outside the Infants School, with the Headmistress Miss Roberts looking on, and the Infants themselves watching with their teachers outside the classrooms.

Mrs Roberts was a very well known figure in the Borough. She was a JP, Chairman of the Juvenile Bench, and Mayor from 1961-62. Children from Moulsham Junior and Senior Schools were invited to the Mayor's banquet that year, as well as to the formal Mayor Making meeting, with a visit to the Mayor's parlour afterwards. I wonder if any of our readers remember either of those occasions?

Once her children had grown up, Mrs Roberts decided it was time to continue with her own education. In 1968, she started a degree course in sociology of education at the Middlesex Polytechnic, and on graduating with honours in 1972 became a lecturer at the Chelmsford College of Further Education, and later on a tutor for the Open University.

We are delighted to be in touch with all three of Mrs Roberts' daughters, and will be including an article from Helen, also a teacher, in our next issue.

Eileen Wheeler and friends, 1939

Along with her brother Selwyn, Eileen Wheeler was one of the first pupils to transfer to the new Moulsham Junior Schools when they opened in August 1938. This photo, from Eileen Wheeler's album, shows the first group of girls to go from Moulsham to Chelmsford High School in September 1939.



Back row: Sylvia Trump, Pamela Knightsbridge, Eileen Wheeler, June Sampson [?or Salmon],
Jean Parsons, Enid Warr.

Front row: Sheila Loveland, Kathleen Hillier [or Hilliar?]

The first year at Moulsham Junior Girls: Kathleen Duncombe

Kathleen Duncombe (nee Thorp), who lived close to the Wheelers and their cousin John Baker in Avenue Road, also remembers the thrill of attending Moulsham Junior Girls' School on the day it opened in August 1938. She was transferred there from Trinity School.

Kathleen writes: "I enclose a copy of a photo I hold precious - taken of the 10 of us who left Moulsham in 1940 and then attended the County High School for Girls during the whole of the war. There are two surnames I just cannot remember! You can see the posts on the left hand side - part of the wire fence which separated the girls' playground from the Junior Boys!"



Back row: Pat Roebuck, Sybil Bonvini , Renee Passmore, Eileen Steele, Olga Euston, Daphne Cole
Front row: Mary Tamkin, Heather Broadway, Eileen Cook, Kathleen Thorp

"It was quite chilly, windy and wet walking along the covered ways between the classrooms and the hall. I wonder if it was ever enclosed? [Note: Yes, it is enclosed, and much warmer nowadays!] Miss Firmin was our class teacher, Miss Wright was the music mistress and Miss Rankin was Headmistress. Those of us sitting the entrance exam used to have special coaching from Miss Rankin - sitting on the floor in her study. One more memory I have. I used to be the monitor who sold 1/2d bars of lovely Cadbury's chocolate at break times. (Our Headmistress at the County High School was Miss Cadbury!)"

On leaving the High School in 1945, Kathleen joined the Civil Service. She worked locally in the Inland Revenue for a short time, before being posted to London for 5 or 6 years with London Telecoms (then part of the Post Office). She then transferred back to Chelmsford to work for the Food Office at the rear of the Saracen's Head Hotel, and later for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in Beeches Road. After that she married, had three children, and now has five grandsons and one granddaughter.

Kathleen Duncombe's sister Pam, who is ten years younger, also went to Moulsham Junior Girls School (see News in Brief, page 17).

CCHS Old Girls' Society

Kathleen Boot has recently joined the Old Girls' Society of Chelmsford County High School for Girls, and has written a paragraph for their Newsletter about our Moulsham Past Pupils' Newsletter. We hope this may result in more contacts with former Moulsham pupils. If any others of our readers are interested in joining CCHS Old Girls, for a bargain life membership fee of £10, do write to the Membership Secretary, Mrs Mary Argent, at 137 Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex, CN13 2AA.

From the Boys School Magazine July 1939

The Junior School archive contains one copy of the first ever Moulsham Junior Boys' School Magazine, dated July 1939. It consists of five sides of 'foolscap' typescript, and contains stories and poems by the boys, a list of honours and prizes, football and cricket results, and reports of noteworthy events throughout the first year. We plan to reprint a few highlights over the next few issues of the Newsletter, and would be delighted if any of you could let us have copies of any other issues you may possess of the Boys or Girls School Magazines. We loved this poem by I Warren (Std 1) from the 1939 Magazine, a stern warning to any of us who enjoy a glass of red wine!

The Cask

The cold wind o'er the water swept
And startled the damsel who had just wept.
"And what had she wept for?" might you ask.
She wept for a lad who had drunk of a cask.

"And what is wrong with that?" you ask.
Well with red wine was filled this cask
So the lad who had drunk it was made drunk
And now has gone on the water and sunk.

In the foreword to the magazine, Alderman F Fox reports that "The School has had a remarkable success for its first year, now coming to a close. The work has been well carried through and the Ann Johnson Junior Award was taken by one of the boys [Thomas Hunter]. Attendance has been excellent and the School now holds the Attendance Shield. The places are quite full and already extension looms ahead. The Head, Staff and Boys form a very 'Happy Crew' and have set themselves a very high standard to live up to in the future."

Wartime memories from Maureen Rignall (nee Bidwell)

"I lived in St John's Road and went to all departments of Moulsham School, from the infants to the secondary school. I was born in 1937, so I suppose I must have started in the infants in 1942. I remember we had to have a gas mask to take to school. Just before I started I used to watch the children going past our house on their way to Moulsham wearing their gas masks on their backs rather like the children these days with their little back packs. I used to press my face wistfully against the window and say "I want to go to school with my 'gimmus' on my back" ('gimmus' being gas mask).



[cont'd on next page]

"To get to school, I used to walk through a cinder path and then up Princes Road. Having passed along the same road recently, it is difficult to remember the way it was some 40 years ago, now that all the open fields are covered in houses and supermarkets.

I very much enjoyed my visit to the 60th anniversary open day in 1999. The school has changed so much with such events as the merger with the boys' school and the closing in of the veranda. I still remember the high wire fence separating the boys' playground from the girls and seeing Mr Petchey shouting at the boys and being glad that I wasn't one as he stood in his trilby hat going red with fury!

I was amazed when I looked in the music room at the sophisticated instruments. I can remember one or two drums, triangles, cymbals and castanets and little else, although I also remember the country dancing and dancing skirts made from blackout material.

Miss Rankin was headmistress when I was there and among the staff were Miss Wright, Miss Skilton, Miss Barton, Miss Firmin, Miss Sawday and Mrs Norris, who became Mrs Taylor. I can see Miss Rankin now, standing on the platform in her sensible suit and shoes, her hair in a neat bun and smiling her lovely smile. She was a firm but kindly lady. I was punished on just one occasion for talking, and had to walk around the veranda during playtime until Miss Norris came along, all smiles, and said she thought I had done enough and could go. I loved the milk break, especially if you were lucky enough to have an extra bottle if some were left over! I also used to have malt and cod liver oil from school. These used to be lined up on the window sills in tins for those who had ordered them, to collect.

There was one Christmas song that we used to sing, from which I only remember one line: 'Little green fir tree, tall and slim', and a carol that is not sung any more, which I really liked: 'How far is it to Bethlehem? Not very far. Can we see the stable inn lit by a star? Can we see the little child? Is he within?' etc. As we broke up for Christmas, we followed one another in a snaking line in and out of the hall. At the same time singing 'Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat; Please put a penny in the old man's hat; If you haven't got a penny, a halfpenny will do; If you haven't got a halfpenny, well God bless you!'

My other thoughts are of playing ball games against the wall near the back entrance, opposite where the air raid shelters were. Another pastime was where the children would all group around in a circle and the extroverts among us would show off party pieces, one at a time. A popular one that I remember was a song called 'Sweet little Alice blue gown'. The performer would sing the song and do the actions, and everyone else would clap.

I left the senior school in July 1952 and went to Marconi's and later to County Hall. I was married at St John's Church in Moulsham in 1959. After living locally in Great Totham, we moved to Gloucestershire in 1972. We have two children, a boy and a girl, three grandsons and a new granddaughter. I still maintain contact with two Moulsham pupils, Marlene Beckett (nee Snowball) and Anne Tenneson (nee Rowse). Like Daphne Farrow, I return to Chelmsford from time to time, as I still have my mother in Maldon. I often wonder if I am passing people that I used to know and no longer recognise."

Note: Sadly, Maureen's sister Janet, another Moulsham pupil, died earlier this year. Her obituary is on page 17.

Brian Greatrex, Front Door Monitor

One morning in August, Joy Bome kindly asked us over to coffee, to meet her friends and fellow past pupils of Moulsham Juniors, Brian Greatrex and his sister Anita (now Anita Lawford). Anne Tenneson, nee Rowse, joined us too, and we all enjoyed a hilarious session exchanging memories and anecdotes. We very much hope that Anita and Anne will put pen to paper for us in a future newsletter, as they too have many tales to tell. This article records a selection of Brian's recollections and observations.

Brian joined Miss Weller's reception class at Moulsham Infants in 1941. He was a lively child, much given to pranks and frequently in trouble. His early education included the discovery that Miss Denn, the stern and strict Headmistress, was extremely handy with a ruler! Pleasanter memories of the Infants include Miss Cook's lessons in painting, raffia work and (even for the boys) knitting. He is proud of having knitted himself a waistcoat. At morning milk-break in the Infants, each child took his or her own enamel mug to a large churn in the corridor dubbed the Milk Bar, where Miss Knight doled out the slightly warm milk with a great ladle. Later on, the daily milk came in 1/3 pint bottles with cardboard tops recycled as templates for woollen 'bobbles'. The Infants School was well provided with gym and playground equipment, but Brian does not remember the children ever being allowed to climb on it! It was also 'verboden' to roll down the grassy slope by the playground.

The Greatrex family lived in Widford Grove, a quiet cul-de-sac where everyone knew each other and the children all played together in the road. Some Widford Grove children went to private schools, but the Moulsham contingent included Paula Turner, Joan, Marion and Victor Miller, Sheila, Mary and Paul Overett, Anthony and Stephanie Jenkins, Michael and Geoffrey Cable, as well as Margaret, Brian and Anita Greatrex. They all walked to school each day, past the Wood Street roundabout's barrage balloon during the war years, and if any of them forgot their gas mask they would be sent home to fetch it. On rainy days, rows of small wellies stood outside the classrooms on the verandah. At that time, the school was still surrounded by farmland, with cornfields right up to the playground railings.

It was still wartime when Brian moved up to the Junior Boys School in 1943. If the alarm sounded, lessons were transferred to the air raid shelters. In autumn and winter, when the children went home at dusk, it was dark and gloomy in the cloakrooms because of the blackout regulations. The cloakrooms contained a round water fountain operated by a footbar, but you needed considerable strength to operate it. Brian's first teacher at the Juniors was Mrs Huxley, then Mr Hymas, Mr Hodgson, and in the top year Mr Hymas again. As it happened, he spent almost two years in the top class, being caught at the time the school year changed from January-December to September-July. Brian was a keen volunteer for responsibility, a quality which has remained with him. At the Juniors he was attendance monitor, requiring him to report every day the number of pupils in his class (usually 52) which would then be recorded on the attendance board. Another of his duties was front door monitor, which involved racing his Girls School counterpart to be first to open the front door if a visitor rang! He thinks there was probably no school secretary to perform this task during the war. In the top year, he was head of Green House.

After Moulsham Juniors, Brian moved on to KEGS, and eventually became an engineer at Marconi's, though for his first ever holiday job he remembers peddling out to Seabrooks Farm in Boreham for the backbreaking work of budding young apple trees. The community spirit fostered at Moulsham blossomed into enthusiastic voluntary work for the town. In adult life he became the youngest Church Warden in the Diocese at the Church of the Ascension in Maltese Road. He was also Technical Stage Director for the Chelmsford Arts Festival when it began in 1962 at the Regent Theatre, moving in 1964 to the Civic Theatre, and was Vice Chairman from about 1968. More recently he has taken on the demanding but enjoyable role of Technical Director of the annual Chelmsford Cathedral Festival. In 1999, Brian received a Civic Award for services to the Arts in the Borough.

Happy schooldays 1949-52

Darrel Reed attended all three Moulsham schools, and was at the Junior Boys' School from 1949-52. The following extracts are from a series of detailed letters recalling his life and friends at Moulsham.

"At that time, and indeed during all of my schooldays (they were many of the happiest days of my life), I lived on Baddow Road near the Army and Navy roundabout and either walked or cycled to school in all weathers. Not for me the luxury of being "delivered" to school by car! I'll never forget being grateful for the water taps adjacent to the lay-bys, for the convenience of the allotment holders on Princes Road. Many a time I quenched my thirst to and from school during hot summers.

I will always remember Miss French, who used to cycle in from Howe Green. I can attribute that lady with sparking off my interest in nature; birds, flowers, trees and all manner of things pertaining to wildlife. Mr Hodgson stands out too. A big burly man with a great sense of humour, who played the role of the Ogre, or maybe a giant, in a school play. Could it have been Jack and the Beanstalk, I wonder? What I do clearly recall is that the "boy" was played by David Simmons, a chum of mine, whose grandfather ran, single-handed I believe, a small printing shop on the old Baddow Road. Mr Hodgson used to dub pupils in his class with nicknames - for example one of my chums had the surname Roper and was called "Stringy"! Other teachers were Miss Moses, Mr Ellis, Mr Hymas and Mr Gardner who played the piano and the organ at Widford Church. He lived to a ripe old age. And how could I forget Mr Picken, with that luxuriant moustache, wonderful head of hair, highly polished shoes, sports jacket and flannels - he was always very smart. Another name crops up in my memory bank: possibly in my third year we had a Polish teacher called Mr Scraba or Skraba - either way, it was pronounced "Scrarba". I believe he took us for general subjects. He spoke good English and had a good sense of humour.

I'll never forget Mr Petchey announcing to every class the death of King George. So many memories come flooding back: the blackbirds' nests in the honeysuckle around the quadrangle; the wartime shelters on the edge of the playground; the super "slides" on the playground after snow and ice; and swapping cigarette cards. We seemed so innocent then, playing five stones, compared to today's youngsters with their mobile phones!

I read with interest Barrie Stevens' recollections in the last Newsletter. He mentions two "Houses", Woodpeckers (green) and Yellowhammers (yellow). I am sure the other two were Kingfisher (blue) and Wren (brown). I can clearly recall that boys in Wren House could wear a wren lapel badge, made from a farthing coin (which depicted a wren) with a safety pin soldered on the back. I was envious of that, as I was in Kingfisher! In games, we wore the appropriate coloured band of material to identify us. It was like a narrow sash worn over one shoulder and across the chest.

Can anyone recall going to the Festival of Britain exhibition on the south Bank in 1951? I did. I was 10 years old and can clearly recall the Dome of Discovery, the weird Skylon, the Festival Hall (now the Royal Festival Hall), and, most exciting of all to me, a Britannia class pacific steam locomotive on display, though I can't remember the exact name.

Names of contemporary pupils I remember are Tony Smith (who emigrated to Australia in 1955 and remains a firm pen-pal), Mervyn Vallance (a gifted watercolour artist), Barry Tarling (who used to run and perhaps still does run a hairdressing salon in Chelmsford), Roy Bainbridge, Clifford Griffin, Michael Smith, Raymond Pryor, Richard Bond, Nigel Williams, Derek Roach(e), Stanley Harvey, Victor Miller, Brian Porter, David Stevens, Tony Thorn(e) and Brian Rippingale. I'm sure Mr Hymas had a son at school when I was there, but I cannot recall his name. Perhaps someone else can?

On leaving Moulsham Seniors, I was employed for 10 years by the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co, mainly at the Waterhouse Lane site, then 12 years with the Hoffman Manufacturing Co. In 1978 I joined Marconi Radar, and was transferred to EEV when the radar site ceased operating. I am at present still working at Waterhouse Lane, with Marconi Applied Technologies, where I see my old Moulsham chum Pat Durrant on a daily basis. I married Ronnie Webster (from the Technical High School) in 1967. She teaches at Baddow Hall Primary School. We have been living in Great Baddow for the past 33 years. My eldest daughter lives in Cheshire; the youngest teaches at a school in Braintree."

School photographs: can you help?

We are gradually putting together a collection of panorama and group photos to laminate and display at Open Afternoons, together with lists of as many names as we can identify. Where copies are clear enough, we plan to include them in future Newsletters too.

The earliest panorama photographs we have are of both Girls and Boys Schools in 1948 and 1949. Darrel Reed and his colleague Pat Durrant have already managed to identify a remarkable number of boys from the 1949 photo, and are still at work compiling their list. But they are having to use the two part version reprinted by the Essex Chronicle some years ago, and unfortunately a small central section of the original is missing. Has anyone got a complete copy of the 1949 Boys School panorama photo they would be willing to lend us, please? We would love to take an enlarged copy for our archive, and another to allow Darrel and Pat to complete their list of names. Darrel has also made some helpful notes about what became of several of his schoolmates, which we shall include in the next Newsletter.

We do have complete copies of the other three panorama photos mentioned above, and Hilary Balm is working with various people to identify as many former pupils and staff who appear on them. If you think you could help with the identification, do please get in touch.

If you have a panorama or group photo from any other year, we should also love to hear from you. So far we have pictures of

- Mr Hymas' class of 1939
- Moulsham Infants 1950
- The Coronation pageant 1953
- Girls School PE display 1954
- Boys School group 1959
- Boys School pageant 1959/60

This last picture was sent in by Barrie Stevens, who has identified almost 30 boys on it. We plan to print it in our Spring 2001 Newsletter, together with Barrie's recollections of the occasion and some of the participants.

And of course, do keep sending in your photos of individuals and small groups at Moulsham, with or without a few paragraphs about the people and events portrayed. Each little piece of the jigsaw helps to build up a more and more detailed and fascinating picture of Moulsham Juniors over the six decades and more since it opened in 1938.

Commerce and Contraband *More recollections from Barrie Stevens, Moulsham Junior Boys, 1959-60*

Pocket sized transistor radios, then just coming in, were subject to confiscation as were catapults, sling shots, cap guns, spud guns and the notorious .177 "Gat" air pistol obtained from Pope and Smiths in Back Street for 17s6d. Barry Tew from Moulsham Drive who went on to work in electronics and obtained a "radio ham" licence at very young age, got away with his DIY transistor when in "3b" as it was considered educational and thus "science", but also could only be heard using an earpiece. Also banned were felt tip pens and ball-points, fireworks, matches and pen knives.

As electronics developed apace, special educational kits became available, and I brought to school a "Transtronic" set whereby you could build seven different radios, from crystal diode receiver to morse and speech transmitter, and then disassemble them again. The morse set could interfere with BBC reception several houses around.

This was Chelmsford of course and in those days Chelmsford was Marconi's. Many boys amassed a collection of writing instruments with draftsman's propelling pencils and small books of fine sandpaper for smoothing pencil leads; all stemming from Marconi's drawing office! We nearly all experimented with different fountain pens, which I think were allowed in the third and fourth years. Otherwise it was school issue pencils and scratch pens! Platignum then made very serviceable pens but the pride and joy was a "Conway Stewart" with its 14kt gold nib then obtainable in Clarkes for 17s6d! Nibs of 9 and 12 kt were held to be inferior. Some pens were pre-war and might now have been collectable. One boy, Paul Hancel I think, whose father was German, possessed a curious German pen with a capillary glass nib. The cartridge pen evolved as a less messy way of filling the pen than levers, rubber bulbs & etc. Does any one recall the "squeezezy" ink bottle by Stephens which measured just enough ink into a shallow well? It did not catch on. Inky fingers, spillages and leaks into pockets were a constant hazard.

Most of us acquired our own geometry sets, pencil cases and you knew that you had arrived when a Christmas or birthday resulted in a tin box full of "Lakeland" coloured pencils from Keswick, then considered to be the superior product. Stationery items had a short life. Rulers became chipped from "sword fighting" and would not draw straight lines. Erasers were chewed, chopped up, soaked in ink and flicked across the room. Text books and exercise books were frequently bound in protective brown paper or wallpaper and even repaired by the boys in lesson time; all of which counted as "craft lessons"!

"Swapping" was rife but occasionally the Head acted as Arbitrator if some boy had made a bad bargain which prompted a parental letter to the school! Sometimes goods had to be swapped back again! There was a great trade in stamps, cigarette cards and "tea cards," the equivalent item from packets of tea. Cards could also be acquired by "flicks". Cards were set up against a wall and the rival player flicked cards at them knocking them down. I forget the rules but either you lost your cards or won theirs! Marbles and conkers were traditional, with the conkers coming from the A12 dual carriageway outside Widford. It was the fatherly duty to throw sticks into the trees and bring down the horse chestnuts! Conkers were allowed provided that we picked up the pieces!

"Dinky", "Corgi" and "Matchbox" toys were owned by most boys. A "run" would be set up in a corner of the playground but for some reason the window ledges of the classrooms facing the playground were used at playtimes for display and trade; a miniature road full of used car dealerships!

It seems to me that toy guns were then more popular than today and I think that as a society we would, if allowed, be just as fascinated by guns as are the Americans. Certainly I see many people wearing "camouflage" clothing. Many boys then owned a toy "Tommy gun", Colt 45, Luger or Winchester rifle, all capable of loud sound effects! We had cap bombs too! Cap reels were 1d each in sweet shops.

Do you remember Heather Staines?

Sue Davis, who was at Moulsham Junior Girls' from 1960-64, writes:

"In the Spring 2000 issue of the Newsletter, a photo of the country dancing group 1950-51 was reproduced. One of the dancers was Heather Staines, a cousin of mine. Sadly, she died in 1973, leaving a husband, Bob and two small daughters, Jane and Clare. Having seen this article, Bob thought it would be interesting to contact some of her contemporaries. So if you remember Heather, please write to me, Mrs Sue Davis, 5 Moulsham Chase, Chelmsford CM2 0TA and I will pass your letters on."

While at Moulsham herself, Sue recalls that Miss Pettet was Headmistress, and her teachers were:

Miss Templeton	Class 2,	1960-61	
Miss Barton	Class 4	1961-62	
Miss Aldridge	Class 6	1962-63	
Mrs Alty	Class 8	1963-64	(also Deputy Head)

She continues: "I don't remember Miss Templeton being at the school after she taught me, so possibly she left in the summer of 1961. I think Class 7 had a lady called Mrs Shacklady, who was very interested in art. I also remember Miss Skilton teaching music and taking a group of us to perform in the Corn Exchange. There were also country dancing competitions and demonstrations which I took part in.

Each year there was a school outing. I think it was Colchester Castle in the first year, Canterbury Cathedral in the second, Chessington Zoo in the third, and in my last year - something I think was a first - a trip to Stratford on Avon for four days. Mrs Alty was very interested in Shakespeare and as it was the 400th anniversary of his birth she arranged this trip for class 8. We stayed in a holiday camp and were taken by coach to visit all the attractions - Shakespeare's house, Anne Hathaway's cottage, Mary Arden's house, etc, finishing with front row seats at the theatre to watch Richard II."

In the Summer issue, we asked if anyone recalled a playground rhyme about the big ship on the alley-O. Sue has tracked down a printed version of it which certainly sounds familiar, though she wonders if there may have been more verses in our day:

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| 1. The big ship sails on the alley, alley O,
The alley, alley O, the alley, alley O.
The big ship sails on the alley, alley O.
On the first day of September. | 3. The big ship sank to the bottom of the sea,
The bottom of the sea, the bottom of the sea,
The big ship sank to the bottom of the sea,
On the last day of September |
| 2. The captain said "It will never, never do,
Never, never do. Never, never do."
The captain said, "It will never, never do,
On the first day of September." | 4. We all dip our heads in the deep blue sea,
The deep blue sea, the deep blue sea.
We all dip our heads in the deep blue sea,
On the last day of September. |

In our next issue we shall be hearing from Sue's classmate Sally Waller, with more recollections of the teachers Sue mentions, and other memories of lessons, music and playground games at Moulsham. Sally also remembered the words of the 'Alley alley O', which seems to have survived for over a decade since Hilary and Kathleen recall it from the early 1950s. Thank you to both Sue and Sally

Pupils 1946-1960

In the Summer 2000 Newsletter we gave a list of pupils with whom we are in touch from the years 1938 to 1945. To be added to that list are:

- 1938, boys:** Reg Baldwin Brian Emmett Ralph Turbin (not Turner, as incorrectly recorded last time)
girls: Jean Bayes Kathleen Duncombe (nee Thorp) Margaret Adams (nee Greatrex)
Eileen Wheeler
- 1941, girls:** Eileen Wade (nee Saunders) - not Evelyn Wade as incorrectly recorded last time.
- 1943, boys:** Brian Greatrex

Moving on, we are in touch with the following past pupils who started at Moulsham Juniors in the years 1946 to 1960.

- 1946, girls:** Jennifer Perry (nee Leeks)
boys: Alan Smith John Wiffen
- 1947, girls:** Elizabeth Blackburn (nee Roberts) Joy Bome (nee Sparrow) Jill Cable (nee Ruggles)
Linda Saunders (nee Broadway) Anne Tenneson (nee Rowse)
- 1948, girls:** Shirley Brown (nee Cooper) Jennifer Rolf (nee Double) Ann Watt (nee Double)
Anita Lawford (nee Greatrex)
- 1949, boys:** Darrel Reed
girls: Diane Clarke (nee Wright) Helen Green (nee Nash) Diane Phillips (nee Barker)
Jaki Smith (nee Joyce)
- 1951, boys:** Geoff Cable
girls: Hilary Balm (nee Dye) Kathleen Boot (nee Nash) Janet Brown (nee Bullock)
Elizabeth Clark Valerie Corby (nee Rudland) Phillipa Haining (nee Waring)
Brenda Haley (nee Everitt) Marea Irving (nee Jones) Marion Lodge (nee Weston)
Pamela Scott (nee Harper) Carol Southall (nee Standen) Jennifer Willmer (Bohannon)
- 1952, girls:** Helen Roberts Shirley Wiffen (nee Adcock) Catriona Moule (nee Shuring)
- 1953, boys:** Alan Twitchett
girls: Judith Tucker (nee Pink)
- 1954, boys:** John Macauley Robert Wiffen
girls: Jenny Canham (nee Eve)
- 1959, girls:** Susan Hunter (nee Rawlingson)
boys: Barrie Stevens
- 1960, girls:** Jane Brewster (nee Thorogood) Sue Davis (nee Hawkes) Gail Diplock (nee Whetnall)
Anne Gallagher (nee Waters) Christine Parker Sally Waller (nee Golding)
Averil Wilcox (nee Clarke)

If your name is not here and should be, it may be that we do not know your start year. Please let us know of any additions or corrections. Thanks.

News in brief

Brian Emmett attended Moulsham Juniors from the day it opened, when the old Moulsham church school closed. He remembers being in the playground on the day bombs were dropped in the adjacent Curries fields.

Joan Atkins has written to follow up a request by her classmate **Anne Holdsworth (nee Hammond)** for the words to the hymn "What heroes thou hast bred". She found them in "Hymns of Praise":

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| 1. What heroes thou hast bred,
O England, my country!
I see the mighty dead
Pass in line.
Each with undaunted heart
Playing his gallant part,
Making thee what thou art,
Mother of mine! | 2. Then let me take my place,
O England, my country,
Amid the gallant race
That is thine;
Ready to hear thy call,
Ready to give thee all,
Ready, whate'er befall,
Mother of mine! |
|---|--|

Joan also remembers a hymn for the beginning of term, starting something like:

"Lord receive us with Thy blessing
Once again assembled here"

Anne Holdsworth (nee Hammond) has also sent us some further recollections, including songs and playground rhymes, which we shall include in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Pam Smith (nee Thorp), sister of Kathleen Duncombe (article on page 7) also went on to Chelmsford High School. After that, she writes, "I did my general nurse training at Charing Cross Hospital, followed by midwifery in Sheffield. I practised 'middy' on the district of Paddington before spending a year working in New York City. That was a good opportunity to see USA and Canada, and I tried to make the most of it. On returning I worked as a midwife again in Surbiton until marrying in 1969. I'm very fortunate to have two children: Michael, who is an accountant, and Helen who works in the Home Office. I've worked as a Health Visitor for many years and now, although retired, I do some relief work which I really enjoy. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading the Moulsham School Newsletters."

If you haven't yet made it to a **Caprice concert** in Chelmsford, **Joy Bone** would be delighted to see you at any or all of the following. Contact phone number for tickets is 01245 258629.

- November 19th, Shire Hall 3pm, Children's Concert. Tickets £3 adults, £2 Children.
- December 2nd, Christ Church, New London Rd, 7.30pm, Farleigh Hospice Nowell Christmas Concert, tickets £6.
- December 9th, Chelmsford High School, Broomfield Road, 7.30pm: Candlelit Supper in aid of the Home Farm Trust. Price to be confirmed.

The Caprice Wind Orchestra continues to support numerous local charities through its concerts.

Where are they now?

Do you sometimes wonder what has become of this or that schoolmate from Moulsham Juniors? In our next issue, we should like to start a column on people you would like news of. Who knows, some other reader might be able to put you in touch again or at least bring you up to date with their progress. Do write to Kathleen Boot or Hilary Balm, c/o Moulsham Junior School, Princes Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9DG, with any names for the list.

Obituary: Janet Cable, nee Bidwell

We were very sad to hear of the untimely death in February this year of Janet Cable, nee Bidwell, after an 8-month battle against bone marrow cancer. Janet was a pupil at Moulsham Junior Girls' School from 1951-55, and was married to another Moulsham pupil, Geoff Cable, for 34 years. They have two children, Nicola and Richard, and four grandchildren, Sophie, Lauren, Jamie and Courtney. Janet's elder sister Maureen (see article on page 9) was also at Moulsham.

Those of us in Janet's class at the Juniors remember her as a bright, lively and unfailingly cheerful girl. She studied shorthand typing before leaving Moulsham Senior School, and started work at the accountants Polkinghorns in Chelmsford. She then went on to work at Peat Marwick in London, and Crow in Maldon. After marrying, Janet took up part-time catering work at Roamer's restaurant in Maldon and the Bembridge Hotel in Heybridge. Janet and Geoff lived in Maldon for most of their married life

From 1990, Janet became well known as the administrator and later the manager of the Maldon Carers' Centre. Geoff is proud of her dedicated work for the Centre, and recalls that her enthusiasm continued unabated right up to the moment she was taken ill. She was closely involved in moving the Centre to its present base at Brickhouse Farm, Maldon, and was responsible for organising a visit from Princess Anne, who came for the official launch of the new premises. This photo shows Janet receiving a cheque on behalf of the Maldon Carers' Centre.

We shall remember Janet with affection and admiration, and send our deepest sympathy to Geoff, Maureen and all the family.