

# Past Pupils' Newsletter

Autumn 2002

Vol 4 no 3

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## Welcome to our tenth issue

Hard to believe that it was just three years ago, in Autumn 1999, that Hilary and I sent out the first ever Past Pupils' Newsletter to some 130 former 'Moulshamites', not knowing what the response would be. The response was in fact amazing. We are delighted that so many of you have shared your memories and news via the Newsletter, and turned up to one or more of the three successful Open Afternoons which the Head Teacher, Mr Kemp, has so kindly arranged for us at the school. For this our tenth edition of the Newsletter, our circulation list has risen to around 400, not counting all those who receive copies from present pupils or from friends and relations. We believe that our Newsletter is very unusual, perhaps even unique, in circulating to past pupils of a Junior School - it shows what a strong and positive influence Moulsham Juniors has had for so many of us.

### Date of next Open Afternoon

For those who haven't yet made it to a reunion, as well as those looking forward to a repeat performance, there is another chance to come back to school on **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2003**. So please put the date in your diaries, and we look forward to another bumper crowd at the fourth Open Afternoon. The date is a week earlier than in previous years, to avoid the Cup Final, and we hope this will suit some of you better. If you still can't make it, or even if you can, why not try to come along to the **School Fete on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June**, where, with your help, we plan to have a Past Pupils' table with photos and copies of past Newsletters.

This term has seen a change of office staff at the school. Both Lorna Blowers and Rosemary Cannon, known to so many past pupils and teachers, have taken early retirement after more than 20 years with Moulsham Juniors. Hilary and I would like to express our gratitude to both of them for their invaluable help over the past three years. We thank Lorna, too, for writing the interesting article on page 4, detailing some of the many changes she has seen during her long association with the school. We wish Lorna and Rosemary a pleasant and happy retirement, and at the same time, welcome the new office staff, Jo Allen and Harriette Duncan. We look forward to working with them on the continued production of the Past Pupils' Newsletter.

At the beginning of October, Hilary and I very much enjoyed meeting new teachers at the school, together with representatives of the Governors and PTA, over coffee during morning playtime. We must be getting old, as all the new staff looked unreasonably young (it's not only policemen!), but it was fascinating to hear their first impressions of the school - very large, very lively, and such a tremendous range of out of school activities available to today's children. The parents obviously give a great deal of support in running the long list of clubs, too - there is even a Fencing Club. Although Moulsham Juniors has been a combined mixed school since 1969, different from the two single-sex schools some of us knew, it is still recognisably 'our' school in the enthusiasm and energy of the staff, and the happy, dynamic and friendly atmosphere of the place. Mr Kemp's report on page 3 gives a flavour of the amazing depth and variety of life at Moulsham Juniors' today.

Thanks once again to all who have contributed to this issue of the Past Pupils' Newsletter, and to Norman Kerridge, who has converted the photos into smaller byte-sized format for distribution by email and posting on the school website. As ever, we look forward to hearing from more and more of you with your own memories, stories, photos and news. Do please keep sending us addresses of any of your former school mates who would like to be added to the mailing list, too, My address is 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG, or email at [kathleen.boot@virgin.net](mailto:kathleen.boot@virgin.net).

Best wishes to you all for the coming Christmas season from Hilary Balm (Dye) and myself

*Kathleen Boot (nee Nash) 1951-55*

## Notes from the Head Teacher, Mr L R Kemp

I spent an afternoon of half term working in an inner city primary school in Bristol. I made simple reading books with children in a class of six year olds and finished the afternoon telling stories. Throughout the afternoon I got question after question from the children about this school and what things we did. After school I talked with teachers about the work of the two schools and it helped me put into perspective the challenges I face against those of my colleagues in Bristol, for whom I have tremendous admiration.

I've since made a list mentally about the things I've really enjoyed this term here at Moulsham Junior School:-

- A group of Year 5 children played the African drums at the very enjoyable Sunday morning Harvest Festival at St John's.
- A packed hall of children and adults taking part in a FOMS Beetle Drive, then receiving more help than ever before so we cleared the hall in record time.
- A poem written by a Year 6 child that had lines that took my breath away.
- Class assemblies that demonstrated a passion for different Shakespearean plays.
- A game of conkers in the playground.
- Our computer suite for several lunch times when it was full of children entering details of their fantasy football teams and the good-natured banter associated with that. My own team can only do better.
- A School Council that made spending and action decisions, demonstrating a wonderful approach to their task.
- The Ghana Gold film canisters containing money for our partner school in Ghana, together with a list of jobs the children undertook to raise that money.
- A maths lesson planned by a group of teachers that I delivered to a class and this presented me with a way of teaching consecutive number factors so much better than the way I previously taught this subject.
- Ice skating and sponsored fitness, both of which received more parental help than ever before.
- Listening to a song that the choir had recorded for a CD which will also contain songs by choirs from our partner schools in Anzio and Annonay.
- Several pieces of History homework where the child had gone those extra steps to present their work so well.
- A library full of children at lunchtime with one Year 4 talking passionately about a book she had read.
- I recommended the film 'The Importance of Being Earnest' to a Year 6 child who very thoughtfully described how she felt about my choice of film.
- Forty-five children practising cross country on the field during their lunchtimes, ready for an event organised by the Borough Council.

### **School website**

Once again, you can read copies of this and earlier Past Pupils' Newsletters on the Past Pupils' page of the school website at [www.moulshamjuniorschool.org.uk](http://www.moulshamjuniorschool.org.uk) , where you will also find information and pictures of current school activities.

## **Twenty-three years with Moulsham Juniors - Lorna Blowers remembers**

It is now twenty-three years since I first set foot over the threshold of Moulsham Junior School. My eldest son was due to start at this school in the September and I was attending a parents' meeting for new pupils. Mr Sturgeon was then Headmaster and we filed into the hall. I remember seeing all the staff seated on the platform and Mr Sturgeon telling us kindly but firmly our responsibilities as parents.

Mr Sturgeon retired about eighteen months later and Mrs Pat King was appointed to the headship. Many changes took place in response to directives from "the powers that be". The desks were replaced with tables and chairs, the large roller blackboards were changed to white boards and the teaching became thematic.

I started working at the Junior School in 1983 as a Welfare Assistant. I was part of a job share working on Mondays and Tuesdays 10.00 am to 2.00 pm with a delightful lad who is now about to get married! . The job of Welfare Assistant has now changed to Learning Support Assistant. Although I was employed to assist Ben, his needs were physical and so I mainly helped in the class listening to children read, helping to make topic books and any other task that the teacher needed help with. I worked with a wonderful group of teachers starting with Brian Poole, Lois Cakebread, John Firth and lastly with Brian Davies, the Deputy Headteacher who was successful in applying and being appointed to a headship in Clacton. While helping Brian Davies I often worked on the BBC computer we had in the classroom and when the school secretary, Ivy Kirkpatrick, retired after twenty-two years, he encouraged me to apply for the position. To my astonishment and delight Mrs King appointed me and I joined Rosemary Cannon in the school office and we have worked together for the last sixteen and half years.

The office had an upright typewriter, which must have come out of the ark and, shortly after taking up the position, Mrs King bought a lovely electric typewriter for the office. We really felt we had joined the modern world. We still had a Gestetner duplicator and when the electrics packed up, my colleague, Rosemary Cannon and I would turn the handle interminably.

Mrs King was seconded for two terms to the Advisory and Inspection Service and Mrs Judy Summersgill became the Acting Headteacher. Mrs King returned to school for two terms before moving permanently to the Advisory service and Mrs Summersgill was successful in becoming a Headteacher in Wickford. Mrs Sheila White took over from Mrs King and was with us for two years before moving to Stratford upon Avon. During the time that Mrs Summersgill was Acting Headteacher, things began to change in the way the office was run. We were computerized. Children's records and the finances were transferred onto the computer and Rosemary and I had new skills to learn.

For the last seven years I have had the pleasure of working with Les Kemp and I have seen enormous changes, mainly because of the requirements from the DfES and the LEA. The work we now have to do on the computer has increased significantly. Most of the information from the DfES or from the LEA will now come via the computer, and all records, surveys and forms will be sent electronically. I have really enjoyed my years at Moulsham Junior School and look back with amazement at all the changes that have occurred since my son first started twenty-three years ago. In all I have worked for four Headteachers in nearly twenty years at Moulsham and I stopped counting teachers I worked with when it reached seventy.

I wish my successors long and happy years with, I hope, less major changes than Rosemary and I have seen.

## **Congratulations to Kes Gray, children's author**

In our summer issue, I mentioned that Kes (Kerry) Gray was one of the younger past pupils to join us at the Open Afternoon on 18<sup>th</sup> May. Kes was at Moulsham Juniors from 1968 to 1972, and remembered Mrs Poppy Donovan as a particularly brilliant teacher.

The story writing lessons at Moulsham Juniors must have made a real impact, as Kes has recently been nominated by the Independent on Sunday as one of the top ten children's authors in the UK. He says that his introduction to the world of children's books has been somewhat meteoric. To his surprise and delight, his charming illustrated story book for younger readers, 'Eat Your Peas', pipped J K Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson to win the overall Children's Book Awards in 2000 and also won three other awards that year. Kes now has three publishers and 8 more books due for publication next year. Congratulations are most definitely in order!

Kes has kindly sent a copy of 'Eat Your Peas' for the Moulsham Junior School library, together with a further story of the cheeky young heroine Daisy, entitled 'Really, Really'. Mr Kemp, the Head Teacher, was very impressed with both, and planned to use them in school assembly. So if you are looking for Christmas presents for any of your own young friends, children or grandchildren right now, look out for titles by Kes Gray and illustrator Nick Sharratt. They come well recommended by children themselves, as well as Book Award panels. 'Eat Your Peas', published in paperback at £4.99 by Random House, is described by Thomas aged 7 as 'funny, cheeky, silly', and by Michael aged 7 $\frac{3}{4}$  as 'the best book in the world', while Amy aged 8 reports that 'even my mum wants to read it'. Praise indeed! 'Really, really' is published in hardback at £9.99 by Bodley Head, and is just as enchanting.

## **Class of 1943**

On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November, **Jennifer Bailey (nee Rayner)** has organised another of her annual get-togethers for past pupils who were in her class at Moulsham School. Most of the group started at the Junior Girls' School in 1943, and many continued together into the Senior Girls' School afterwards. Hilary Balm (nee Dye) and Kathleen Boot (nee Nash), though not ourselves members of the class of 1943, are very pleased to have been invited to look in once again this year, on behalf of the Newsletter, with notebooks at the ready.

Jennifer's group has been meeting for many years now, and also attends the Open Afternoons en bloc. The regular autumn reunions, held over Saturday lunch at a Chelmsford hotel, are always a lively affair, with shared photos and memories provoking a stream of stories, laughter and cries of "do you remember?" We look forward to meeting the 'gang' again on 9<sup>th</sup> November, and hope to collect yet more recollections and anecdotes to include in the next Newsletter.

If any other small groups of past pupils meet up informally from time to time, and would like to share your joint memories in the Newsletter, we should love to hear from you, too. If you would like to start up your own class reunions, why not follow Jennifer's example? If it would be helpful, we could pass on your ideas to any other past pupils we know of in your year.

Hilary and Kathleen would also be pleased to hear from individuals who perhaps don't have time to write their own recollections at length, but would be willing to be 'interviewed' for the Newsletter. We can always write your stories up for you, clearing them with you before publication.

## Christmas then and now

In earlier issues, several of you have mentioned Christmas entertainments and festivities at Moulsham Juniors over the years. Pantomimes, concerts, carols, and themed decorations in the school hall, to name but a few. My first ever Christmas party, in the early 1950s, was in the canteen, which stood just across the school drive, next to the Infants' School. I shall never forget the excitement of dressing up in my first party frock (rose pink taffeta, with scalloped hem and frills, lovingly made by my mother when pretty fabrics became available in the post-war years). And the veritable feast of jelly, blancmange, iced cakes and trifles, unmatched by later Christmas parties for the children of Marconi workers, which some of you may also remember.

The highlight of Christmas at school for many of us was the Nativity Play, though by the 1960s, other sorts of Christmas plays obviously featured occasionally as an alternative. Mrs Judith Woricker, a pupil at Moulsham Junior Girls' School from 1946-48, and later a teacher there herself, has sent us this picture of a Christmas play from 1959-60. Perhaps some of you recognise yourselves or remember the occasion?



In recent years, a new form of Christmas celebration has been introduced by the current Head Teacher, Mr Kemp: the Christingle service. With such a large school (19 classes now), and the National Curriculum allowing little time for rehearsing a play or pantomime, the Christingle service is a good way of involving all the children in the celebration. Each of the four school 'Houses', Earth, Air, Fire and Water, holds its own Christingle on four successive afternoons, and there is room in the Hall for parents and other visitors to come along. Hilary and I have enjoyed attending on a couple of occasions. The Christingle consists of a lot of lively carols and Christmas songs, many with accompanying actions, interspersed with individual children reading different parts of the nativity story. Towards the end of the service, the first year children (Year 3 as it is now known), line up to receive a lighted candle stuck in an orange, an old Moravian tradition. It is a moving moment, and from the looks of intense concentration on their faces, you can believe it is an occasion the children will remember all their lives.

## School caretakers and the Attendance Officer

Following the article about caretakers in the Summer Newsletter, we have received some interesting additional information. **John Barnard**, 1941-43, tells us that **Mr Little**, who lived next door to the Barnard family in Elm Road, had two daughters, Phyllis and Paulette, who now live in Cornwall and Kettering respectively. John is still in regular contact with both of them.

**Betty Dowsett**, 1945-49, mentions another well-known figure, **Mr Murphy**, the Attendance Officer, in her article on page 12. **Maureen Biggins (nee Little)**, 1938, recalls that Mr Murphy had a daughter Margaret at Moulsham, a couple of years older than her, who went on from Moulsham Juniors to the County High School. Maureen also came across Mr Murphy in his capacity as Attendance Officer on just one occasion, but it was more than enough, as you will hear. In her childhood, when houses were chilly and antibiotics not yet available, Maureen suffered badly from bronchitis for several weeks every winter. One year, after being away ill as usual, she was due to return to school just in time for a series of English and Maths tests. Having missed the work being tested, she was terrified at the thought, but her pleas to her mother to let her stay home a few more days fell on deaf ears. She was packed off to school regardless, but decided on her way that she would hide in Oaklands Park until the end of the school day. This seemed a clever idea until Mr Murphy, obviously one step ahead of any would-be truants, loomed up before her, all six foot plus of him, scaring the life out of her and catching her by the scruff of the neck. From there she was unceremoniously marched to school, just in time for the dreaded tests. As predicted, she failed them dismally, but fortunately her teacher, Miss Skilton, was sympathetic to her plight, and in fact let her do an alternative English test, which consisted of just writing a lovely story. If ever she saw Mr Murphy again, she would turn tail and run! Sadly, when her mother found out about the escapade, Maureen got a 'good walloping', and another from her stepfather when he returned from work. Having herself experienced more corporal punishment as a child than she felt either necessary or desirable, it is perhaps some sort of poetic justice that Maureen later spent 15 years of her working life as a school first-aider with special responsibility for detecting signs of physical abuse.

## Sweetshops and Lifebuoy Soap - more memories from Derek Mussell, 1939er

The Summer Newsletter sparked a number of memories for Derek Mussell, who we were pleased to meet at the Open Afternoon with his sister Anne (the six Mussell children all came to Mousham Juniors). Derek writes: 'I loved the photo of the boys who had just passed the eleven plus, among them **Denis King** looking smart and polished. Mrs King kept all her children like that, and they always used Lifebuoy soap, which had its own clean and distinctive smell. Denis and I started at the same time at Friars Infants, I from Longstomps Avenue and he from Moulsham Drive, a walk we did four times a day. If on the way we met the three wheeled baker's cart, Hances, I think, from Anchor Street, we would buy two fresh rolls for a halfpenny and eat them on our way to school if we had any money. We were firm friends and went to stay at each other's homes once in a while, until he went to the Grammar School and we went our separate ways.

'The real reason for writing is the letter from **Jean Wyatt (nee Pryor)** [page 16, Summer Newsletter] and the mention of a sweetshop. I was trying to remember the sweetshops in Moulsham Street (I knew them all!), and suddenly it all came back to me: My father was an architect, but should have been a mechanic, as there were always cars in our drive or garage, being mended. One of his friends was "Jack" Pryor, and I remember going through the shop, which was very narrow, with my father, to a wonderful workshop out the back. "Jack" (was that his real name?) was a very quiet, shy person, and let me ride his Norton motorbike down Longstomps Avenue by myself at about 12 years old! I could not believe my luck! I don't think I ever met Jean Pryor, but I hope she now knows one person who remembers her family shop!

## **Baddow Meads and other memories from Peter Charles Smith, 1938**

Since our Summer Newsletter, Peter 'Charley' Smith has sent us more memories of his 'life and times' in the early days of Moulsham School. Here are a few of the highlights:

**Baddow Meads** featured large in the lives of many Moulsham children. Peter asks; "Does anyone remember the Meads Café at Sandford Mill and the concert party that used to entertain nearby? And the boats we could hire? And some very sore toes and feet where we used to learn to swim? Once a school friend and I decided to camp on Mr Fleming's meadows. That expedition lasted only one night - we had a visit from a farm hand who informed us in no uncertain manner that our presence was not welcome! Does anyone remember the fun fair that used to station itself at the corner opposite the roundabout? Or the Russian Cossacks who did a goodwill tour which took in Chelmsford? They were an awesome sight as they rode through the town and did a show on Baddow Meads. When Saturday morning pictures came into being, there was great rivalry between the Regent gang (remember Uncle Bill?) and the Odeon lads (the 'posh lot' went there). One week the film pictured a Rugby game, so off we all went to Baddow Meads afterwards. It ended with Yours Truly being kicked in the front teeth. Back we came, and that was the end of that adventure!" Peter remembers that during World War II, there was a Prisoner of War camp on the Meads, though he doesn't recall seeing many guards about.

Some of you may have seen an interesting article on Baddow Meads in the Essex Chronicle on 9<sup>th</sup> August this year, by local historian John Marriage. During the war, when travel was restricted, this area was a popular venue for family outings and picnics - the nearest most people could get to a summer holiday. Peter drew our attention to this article, especially as it contained a photo of the very café he mentions above. We will have a copy on display at the next Open Afternoon. Nowadays the area is quiet and rarely visited, but we were interested to read in the Chronicle article that the current draft Borough Plan does offer a hope that Baddow Meads may yet come back to life as a country park. We are sure many former Moulsham children would be delighted.

**In search of former schoolmates.** Peter has successfully tracked down a number of other lads from his Moulsham schooldays, and we hope to hear from some of them in due course. He tells us that he has recently spoken to **Brian Kemp**, who lived near him on Baddow Road; **John Davey** of the Painter and Decorator family; one of the **Green** brothers, who lived opposite the Beehive pub; and he regularly sees both **David and Donald Harris**. He recalls that **John Shearman** lived in Van Dieman's Road - it was his brother who organised the Chelmsford VE and VJ celebrations at the old Corn Exchange. Peter's abiding memory of these celebrations is that "Yours Truly received a punch on his 'hooter' by a drunken sailor who was hell bent on climbing up a lamp post, with great difficulty"! One of Peter's great interests throughout his life has been football (more on this next time). He has recently been in touch with ex-Moulshamite **Doug Fawcett**, who became Chairman of Chelmsford City Football Club, and now lives in Wales.

**Christmas parties.** "If I may mention my late Grandfather, who gave my mother and me a roof over our heads in my childhood, he was a great one for family Christmas gatherings and party games. This stood me in good stead in later years at the now defunct Eastern National Omnibus Company's Repair, Storage and Head Office parties. My late aunties and uncles carried on the family tradition of Christmas parties, becoming 'Mine Hosts' at the Shire Hall."

**Moulsham reunions.** "I would like to thank you all for the way I was received at the last reunion. I consider myself very lucky to have been a Moulsham School pupil, and thank all the past teachers for their patience, discretion and kindness to 'Charley' at that time. I hope to see you all at future reunions."

Pictures



Mrs Donovan with a group of Moulsham Juniors on a class visit to Chelmsford Market, 1960s



Jenny Eve (front of left-hand row) and friends demonstrating a Scottish sword dance in 1958

## **Moulsham memories from Don Smith, 1942-44 and 1946-48**

It was with much pleasure that I was able to attend, for the first time, Moulsham Juniors' Past Pupils' Day on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May this year. It is my ambition to be able to attend many more in the future.

As a boy, I had two sessions at the school, 1942-44 and then, on the family's return to Chelmsford, 1946-48. I then moved on to the Senior School at the top of the drive, before moving home once again. As you can detect, I frequented quite a few learning establishments! For two years, a small village school in the Cotswolds was idyllic, but my most endearing memories are from Moulsham Junior School, even to this day.

I remember Mr Hodgson's class, where we all made weather charts, keeping them updated every day, with different colours showing the weather changes. We also constructed cardboard aeroplanes, where I first learnt what an undercarriage was! During those years, all children had a mid-morning bottle of milk, about a third of a pint. These were brought round by milk monitors. Mr Hodgson must have taken pity on these monitors, because he designed and built wheeled milk bottle trolleys - two, if I remember aright. In my mind's eye, I can still see the monitors trundling these around the verandah.

One day after assembly, I recall Mr Hodgson being very cross at the slurred and gabbled reciting of the Lord's Prayer. He cancelled the lesson schedule, then went through the Prayer a word at a time, teaching us to repeat it clearly and concisely. When in church now, I always think of this lesson.

When I rejoined the Juniors in 1946, it was Mr Hodgson who stood with me at the front of the class, hand on my shoulder, and informed the boys who I was and where I had been, and asked them to make me feel welcome - which they all did. At register calling time, providing he was in a jovial mood, Mr Hodgson would try to catch the class out by altering our surnames. A few I can recall are: Barker was Woof-Woof; Barnard was Farmyard; Hammond was Hambone; McGovern was Mac; and I of course was Smudger. The other deviations are lost in the mists of time, I'm afraid.

Another vivid memory I have is of Mr Hymas (I'm sure it was him) digressing from the timetable and proper lesson by telling us in detail how a Royal Air Force engineer, Frank Whittle, had invented a powerful jet engine for an aircraft. An aircraft with this engine, a predecessor to the Gloster Meteor was flying successfully. While this improvised lesson took place, the whole class was captivated.

Morning assembly in the main hall is indelibly printed in my mind, with the wooden block floor (still there, I see), and the boards full of boys' names, far cleverer than I, written on them. On the back wall of the stage was the school motto 'WORK and be HAPPY'. The Headmaster, Mr Petchey, took assembly, with the hymns 'Jerusalem', 'All things bright and beautiful', 'Fight the good fight' and many more, all blasted out! When I hear these on 'Songs of Praise' on TV, I am transported back in time, and can still recall most of the words. Did Mr Petchey know, in those far-off wartime days, what he was imprinting in our heads?

During my recent visit on Open Day, I was able to sit exactly where I used to gaze out of the window to Princes Road. I fully expected to hear the shout of "Pay attention, Smith, stop dreaming!" A modern day saying is 'What goes around, comes around'. It happened to me. In the 1960s, I instructed an evening class in that same room where I once sat as a boy vacantly gazing out of the window!

After leaving school, I worked in the motor trade, and concluded my career owning and running , with my wife Margaret, our own Limited Company. I am now retired and live in Galleywood. I enjoy reading, touring England in our motorhome, and visiting Canada. I have three grand-daughters and three grandsons at Moulsham School, following in my footsteps. I feel proud to have led the way.

## From the July 1947 Moulsham Junior Boys' School Magazine

With the article we have printed on page 10, Don Smith kindly sent us a copy of the July 1947 magazine . Here are a few extracts:

**From the Foreword by Headmaster, Mr Petchey:** 'It is hard to believe that barely four months ago, when our Easter issue was circulated, we were in the grip of one of the severest Winters in living memory: with so much snow that even BOYS! - believe it if you can - began to weary of it. The mid-day games in the Hall of marbles, "fag"-cards, twos and threes, etc etc, day in, day out, week in, week out, seem now but a faint memory. Abundance of snow has given place this term to long days of brilliant sunshine and warmth." [Maybe some of you still remember the famous winter of 1947?]

**A school in Germany.** From an article written by Mr E J Rankin, one of many ex-servicemen training to be a teacher after the war. He spent a month at Moulsham Junior Boys' School as part of his course at Wimpole Park Training College - some of you may remember him:

'Just over a year ago I left Germany, the country we fought for many years and which in the end we defeated. During the time I was in Germany I had a chance to visit one of their schools. The town did not look at all like Chelmsford. Nearly all the houses, shops and big factories had been blown up by bombs and the broken bricks were still lying in big heaps in the roads.

'The people of this town lived in cellars, for their houses had been blown down. The school I saw was also in a big cellar, as the school building was just a large pile of broken bricks. The children had electric light in the cellar and were taught by three old teachers. Each teacher had a class of 50 children. So many children wanted to come to this school in the cellar that, in order to teach every one of them, no boy could have more than two or three hours at school each day. Although each boy and girl had a pencil and a piece of paper, there was only one book in the class for each lesson, and this book was used by the teacher

'The children were very clean and dressed in bright, cheerful colours, but many of them did not have a lot to eat, and some had neither shoes nor socks to wear. They had a meal when they left the school each day, but not a meal like you have - just one bowl of watery soup and a piece of very dark-looking bread. Perhaps at home they would also have a cup of coffee and a slice of bread and jam for breakfast, and some bread and potatoes before they went to bed at night.'

**From the Puzzle Corner:** [answer on page 14]

My first is in 'bus but not in van,  
My second's in girl but not in man'  
My third is in eat and also in ate,  
My fourth is in mate but not in fete.  
My fifth is in date but not in prunes,  
My whole is on rations.

**School leavers in July 1947: (Std IVA):** Raymond Allan, Clive Barker, John Bentley, Geoffrey Boyce, Douglas Brooker, John Carter, Raymond Copsey, Brian Cushing, Thomas Filby, Roy Finlow, Edward Francis, Brian Gandy, Anthony Graham, Peter Gridley, Roy Hammond, Neil Heard, Barry Hills, Brian Howes, Darrell Hughes, Roy Joslin, Peter Lanyon, Anthony Lawson, Alan Lightfoot, Brian Lillywhite, David Lodge, Derek Lydamore, Robert Marshall, Peter May, John McGovern, Donald Myall, William Osborne, Anthony Paterson, John Pettengill, John Ratcliffe, Edward Sampson, Barry Seabrook, Donald Smith, Clifford Thorington, Gordon Watts, John Wilkes, Clive Williams, Michael Wright, Keith Harper. **(Std IV):** John Barnard, Robert Brewer, John Cook, Robert Cousins, Francis Evans, Bernard Goulden, Thomas Harris, Edward Jeffrey, Colin Moore, David Mussell, Anthony Pizzey, Michael Rogers, Brian Saunders, Colin Soutter, Raymond Sullivan, Roy Wade.

## **A letter from Betty Dowsett (nee Taylor) 1945-49**

I came to the Past Pupils' reunion this year for the first time, a little apprehensively maybe, but I was so glad I decided to come. I have also received my first Newsletter, which jogged a lot of memories, and which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Perhaps it is because I was always off school ill, that my memories of the Junior School are not very strong. I do recall, however, that because of poor health, Miss Howard used to come to my classroom just before break times, take me on to the verandah, and stand with me while I drank my milk. Mr Murphy, the Attendance Officer [see also page 7] was a regular caller at our house, and I know my Mother got fed up with him knocking at the door!

I grew up in Waterhouse Street, with June and Pam Flint, Jean Collins, Joan Dennis and Maureen Millward. We all walked to school every day, whatever the weather. Up and down Cromptons Hill, along London Road, to and through Oaklands Park, and along Princes Road. In those days, when it snowed, it really snowed - remember? One day, Maureen Millward and myself started with a snowball at the school, which we rolled all the way home. Naturally we were very late home, and our Mothers were frantic with worry. My Mother often told the story of how the first thing she saw was a giant snowball turning into the street. Happy days!

Going back further in time, I recall the convoys in wartime, driving along Princes Road, and sweets being thrown to the children as we walked to school. Also, I think it was when we were in the Infants' School, we were given chocolate powder and I well remember dipping my finger in and eating it all the way home. Not so with the malt we were given, I might add!

Does anyone remember the 'plays' that were put on by pupils, on the school field at dinner time? Lines of stones to make the stage. Also the homes we made on the road to the farmland that had gates at the end. Although he was one of the boys' teachers, I remember 'Daddy' Gardiner, who lived near me in Writtle Road. He played the organ at St Mary's Church, Widford, and cycled everywhere.

I am hoping that next year I will be able to recruit a couple more 'Old Pupils' to attend the reunion, as well as my husband Hill Dowsett and brother-in-law Bunnie Dowsett. I am also in touch with Dorothy Day (nee Spooner).

### **Obituary: Dan Biglin 1940 - 2002**

We are very sad to report the untimely death in August this year of Dan Biglin, a pupil at Moulsham Junior Boys' School from 1947-51. We send our sympathy especially to his surviving brother Tim, also at Moulsham Juniors' in the 1950s, and Tim's family. Dan will also be missed by Kathleen Boot and her brothers and sisters, whose half-sister Bertha was Dan and Tim's late mother.

Dan will be remembered as a gentle, quiet, and very private person. He lived in Chelmsford, and worked as an engineer at Marconi's until a few years ago. Following the early death of his beloved wife Ann in 1995, Dan threw himself whole-heartedly into their shared passion for archaeology, studying for relevant diplomas. On his retirement, he worked enthusiastically on numerous archaeological 'digs' in Essex and elsewhere, specialising in patiently piecing together Roman pots unearthed in the course of excavation. Early this year, sadly, he was diagnosed with cancer, and despite his impressive determination and optimism, lost the fight on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2002. We remember with particular gratitude the calm, supportive and supremely professional care of the staff at Farleigh Hospice.

### **More names from the past**

In the Summer Newsletter, we listed past pupils we are in touch with, who started at Moulsham Juniors in the years 1938 to 1941. To these we can now add the following:

**1938** Wendy Bryant (Rousseau), Doug Fawcett, June Pinder (Matthews), Jean Wyatt (Pryor)

**1939** Margaret Jinman (Tricker)

Moving on from 1941, our circulation list includes:

**1942** Mary Allen (Culver), Victor Barker, Brian Campion, Neville Clarke, Brian Meadowcroft, David Mussell, Don Smith, Ken Turton, Derek Weston, Elaine Wheeler (Ackrill), Betty Youell (Thorogood)

**1943** Joan Atkins, Jennifer Bailey (Rayner), John Barnard, Marion Bell, Gillian Britton (Robinson), Betty Clarke (Slater), Marigold Cook (Polley), Joan Edwards (Ireland), Vera Evans (Lloyd), Angus Fleming, Beryl Graves (Tween), Brian Greatrex, Peter Gridley, Anne Holdsworth (Hammond), Yvonne Howard (French), Colin Moore, Jill Ridgwell (Hart), Yvonne Rush (Auston), Betty Sharpe (Watts), Graham Slater, Jean Stockley (Rolfe), Edna Swayne (Mathers)

**1944** Pam Barker (Wisbey), Gerald Canfield, Patricia Fleming (Hallihan), Francis Greatrex, Janice Green (Phillips), Ruby Lightfoot (Orrin), Shirley Rush (Attridge), John Shipp, Roger Stevenson, Daphne Stoneley (Farrow), Arthur Whybrow, Jim Whybrow

**1945** Ken Andrews, Corinne Barker (Wilson), Geoffrey Barnard, Pat Barton (Jameson), Betty Dowsett (Taylor), Tony Gayler, Daniel Hallihan, Jill Hazell (Gozzett), Harold Shergold, Yvonne Vale (Howitt), Michael Wilkinson.

**1946** Marie Bevan (Martin), Michael Cable, Bob Campen, Pat Durrant, Norman Kerridge, Jennifer Perry (Leeks), Ewan Rayner, Jim Simpson, Alan Smith, John Wiffen

**1947** Elizabeth Blackburn (Roberts), David Bloomfield, Joy Bome (Sparrow), Jill Cable (Ruggles), Ivy Clarke (Osborne), Dorothy Day (Spooners), Valerie Lodge, Linda Saunders (Broadway), Anne Tenneson (Rowse), Pauline Wilson (Gandy), Ann Wolger (Saunders)

**1948** Shirley Brown (Cooper), Martyn Edwards, Rosemary Goulden (Head), Mollie Gresty (Barnard), Joy Halstead (Josephine Hill), Anita Lawford (Greatrex), Richard Littaur, Darrel Reed, Jennifer Rolf (Double), Pam Smith (Thorp), Michael Smith, Ann Watt (Double), Susan Wilkinson (Rayner)

**1949** David Brooker, Sylvia Chard (Sullivan), Diana Clarke (Wright), Helen Green (Nash), Derek Hines, Gillian Partridge (Hymas), Diane Phillips (Barker), Jaki Smith (Joyce), Sandra Thomas, Brenda Valentine (Reed)

**1950** Pat Bower (Bates)

If I have any of your names or dates wrong, do please let me know. If you would like to get in touch with a former schoolmate, I will gladly give them your address if you ask me to (I will not of course divulge addresses without your express permission).

## News in brief

**Hilary Balm (Dye)**, 1951, who has lived in Chelmsford ever since her schooldays, often meets former pupils from Moulsham Juniors or the 'Tec' around the town. In July, she bumped into **Ann Wolger (nee Saunders)** on her way to the Post Office. Ann was at the Juniors from 1947-51, and had three younger sisters, Pat (aka Gwen), Jane and Linda. She remembered that when the Headmistress, Miss Rankin, retired, she had the honour of presenting her with a bouquet. Ann had learnt a speech off by heart, but when the moment came, she found she had forgotten all the words, and just mumbled something instead!

**Graham Evans**, 1954-58, emailed to say his brother had shown him the Spring and Summer Newsletters and having read through them would love to join the distribution list. He was surprised to read that the School Song was written by Mr Hodgson, as he thought it was by the music master Mr Gardiner. It was in fact a joint effort. As Headmaster Mr Petchey recalled in the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of the Boys' School Magazine in 1948:

"After the 1943 Harvest Festival, the Headmaster asked Mr Frank Fox to accept the School's appreciation of his long and honoured association with the Department as Chairman of the Education Committee [note: and also the first Chairman of Managers] in the dedication to him of the School Song. Mr Fox accepted and in December of the same year at a moving little ceremony in the School Hall, he was presented with a framed copy of the Song. The School Song was the outcome of a general desire on the part of the staff for the School to have its own song for use on special occasions. It seems only appropriate, therefore, that the Song was the joint work of two Moulsham masters; Mr V Hodgson, who joined the staff in March 1941 was responsible for the words and Mr W W Gardiner set them to music"

For any of you who, like Graham, cannot quite remember the words, and didn't see them in our first issue, here they are:

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."

**Answer to riddle on page 11: BREAD**