

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Spring 2000

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Not so 'Old' after all!

Welcome to the second issue of our Newsletter.

In the first issue, I used the rather elderly-sounding title of 'Old Pupils' Newsletter'. On the nicely-designed front cover, the Head Teacher tactfully amended this to 'Past Pupils' Newsletter', so now we have dropped the 'Old'!

Since November, Hilary Balm and I have been delighted to hear from so many of you. Some I had the pleasure of meeting individually or at Jennifer Bailey's Moulsham Reunion on 13 November(see page 10). Apologies to anyone trying to get in touch with Jennifer about these reunions: I misquoted the telephone code for Colchester last time - her number should be 01206 792945.

Other past pupils have been in touch by telephone or by returning the form at the end of the November Newsletter. A special thank you for all the new contact addresses you sent in. We now have over 160 names on our mailing list.

A wonderful surprise for me was to discover that Mr Harold Picken, one of the first teachers at Moulsham Junior Boys, still lives in Chelmsford. Once I had his address I was able to consult him on the Coronation pageant, which he organised in 1953. I am most grateful for his personal recollections of the occasion, which are included in the article on page ... Mr Picken sent his congratulations on our first issue, which he found very interesting. If anyone has addresses for other members of staff, do let us know.

Please keep sending in your memories, reflections, new contact addresses, and especially news of where you are now and what shape your lives have taken since leaving Moulsham. Material for the next (June) issue can be sent to me or Hilary Balm by the end of April if possible, c/o Past Pupils' Newsletter, Moulsham Junior School, Princes Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9DG, or via email to kathleen.boot@virgin.net

Just before Christmas, Hilary and I went along to one of the Junior School's Christingle services, which the Head Teacher describes in his report. The children's enthusiasm and enjoyment was a delight, and it was so moving, 44 years later, to be back in the very hall where we ourselves had taken part in Nativity plays and other Christmas celebrations.

Before our next issue we look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the Open Day for Past Pupils on Saturday 20 May at the school (see page 4). See you there!

Kathleen Boot (nee Nash)

School News

As forecast in the first newsletter for Past Pupils the second half of the Au Term was hectic. The diary included four Christingle Services, Christmas dinner, parties, Blue Peter Sale, Christmas Cracker production, the choir taking part in a Christmas Concert at the Cathedral, a day conference of the Downs Society, Christmas Bazaar, Mufti day all of which were in addition to the activities which are part of our ongoing programme.

The Christingle Services have been held for the past four years and perhaps will one day earn the title of a school tradition which is important part in the life of any school.

Each House has its own service with all Year 3 children receiving a lighted candle set in an orange with dried fruit representing the fruits of the world. Each service is supported by the choir with readings taken from a wonderful account of the nativity for children. By Toni de Paulo. It was a special treat to welcome the editors of this newsletter to one of our services.

This term has seen our new computer suite in operation with each class having a timetabled period in the suite each week. We have seen an improvement in children's skills over a relatively short period and our next step is to network the computers which we hope will happen shortly. Information Communication Technology is a curriculum requirement and the appointment of Mrs Carole Axford, as a part time Learning Support Assistant in the computer suite, together with the work of Mrs Amanda Woolmer, ICT Co-ordinator, Mr Terry Flitman, Deputy Headteacher and Mr Keith Hunter, Link Governor, means we are now on our way to meeting the targets we set ourselves following the Ofsted report.

Later this term a group of twenty four of our children will be taking part in the Chelmsford Girls High School production of Noah's Flood. This is one of several joint activities planned between the two schools and we have contributed to the Chelmsford County High School for Girls' bid for technology school status which will provide the basis for a growing link between the two schools.

A new venture for the school has been the House breakfasts held over four Wednesdays just before half term. A total of two hundred offerings of cereals, beans on toast and toast with a choice of honey jam or chocolate spread were served. A team of Year 6 waiters and waitresses provided excellent service and teachers from each House did kitchen duty.

A feature of our work this term which could be new to former pupils are the booster classes which all schools have to provide prior to the SA TS tests in May. We provide a programme of group tuition in English and Maths to Year 6 children.

New initiatives in primary schools have become a way of life and a colleague co last term that up to then there were seventeen we had to respond to. Each new initiative brings with it new requirements for governors and Headteachers, and I sometimes find my job unrecognisable from when I became a Headteacher twenty-four years ago. Recently due to the unfortunate illness of two members of staff I have been sharing a class with the Deputy Headteacher and also teaching for one day a week in another class. What has not changed in schools is that magic time when children delight in their achievement, progress or contribution to a lesson or activity. Former pupils walking around Moulsham Junior School today would perhaps focus on

the changes in the buildings, curriculum and resources from their time at the school but I believe the strength of our school is the introduction of the new alongside the best of the existing.

Next term will see SATS, Year 6 residential and local visits, Four Corners of the World, our curriculum week which has a creative arts theme, Sports days, performances as part of the Chelmsford Cathedral Fringe, our choir performing at the Albert Hall alongside many other activities. Our Summer Fete is on Saturday 17 June and pupils are warmly welcome to join us on a warm June day when tea, candy floss or a go on the coconut shy might be your first port of call.

The school was delighted to receive the School Curriculum Award 2000 which recognises the school's strong links with the community. In June two children will be going to the Barbican to collect the award. The school is presently one of a small group of Essex schools moving towards meeting the accreditation requirements of The Essex Schools Award. Our initial work is focussed on the playground. The School Council organised a Mufti Day, cake sale, and line of coins which raised £500 for playground equipment. You can spot our teachers and midday staff on the playground now by their high visibility coats and radios, as part of our aim is to provide a secure and stimulating playground for our children. The sad part for me is the need for CCTV cameras, alarms and other security measures in a primary school.

Elsewhere in this newsletter are details of an Open Day for former pupils and I hope I have the pleasure of welcoming you again to Moulsham Junior School.

Vouchers

Wherever you shop and almost whatever you buy you will be, at sometime during the year, faced with an announcement that here is your opportunity through collecting vouchers to provide your local school with computers, books, musical instruments, art materials or sports equipment. We collect all vouchers and particularly welcome the Tesco computer vouchers and vouchers for Books for Schools.

We often do an exercise with older children on how much shopping has been purchased to gain sufficient vouchers to obtain a computer. The size of the answer usually brings a few gasps. Please mention our plea for vouchers to friends and neighbours and if you would act as a local collecting point this will give our total a very welcome boost.

School Bell

We believe that the school would originally have had a bell in the tower above the front door but we cannot find any reference to it in the log books or by talking to former pupils. It is our wish to mark the new millennium by installing a school bell and if you would like to contribute to the Bell Fund please send your donations to the Bell Fund c/o Moulsham Junior School, Princes Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9DG. Cheques should be made payable to Moulsham Junior School. Further details can be obtained from the school.

The list of all donors will be published and invitations extended to the service of dedication

NEWS FLASH

A parent found an old bell in her garage which was left by the previous occupants. The bell is ideal for our use and our next task is to restore it and build a framework in the tower above the main entrance. A plea for help to fund this work is only being made to former pupils and our target is to see the bell in place by the Open Afternoon in May.

The Classroom in 1938

In this second extract from an article he wrote for Moulsham pupils in March 1994 (not a talk as mistakenly reported last time), **Mr Harold Picken**, a young teacher at Moulsham Junior Boys School in 1938, describes the daily routine in the classroom:

"When you came into school, you lined up in classes at the back door and marched in single file when told to do so. Having settled quietly at your desk, the teacher would come in and all the class stood up until told to sit again. The classes were large - about 50 or sometimes more. Children were not allowed to move freely about the room or talk to each other during lessons. They sat in straight rows and were expected to sit upright with their arms folded when listening to the teacher, or with their heads down when working!

The boys normally wore suits or 'jerseys' (sweaters), always with short trousers. They didn't go "into long'uns" as we said until they moved up into the Senior School. 'Trainers' hadn't been invented, and the footwear was leather boots or shoes. Teachers wore suits too - no sweaters or shirtsleeves for them!

The Class Timetable was rigidly adhered to. Each teacher had a large book called "The Syllabus", in which all the schemes of work were laid down. At the end of each week the teachers recorded what had been done in the Class Record Book, and it was sent to the Headmaster for checking on Friday afternoons.

Great emphasis was placed on the "Three R's" - Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic. English on the timetable was split into several separate lessons, such as grammar, spelling, composition, reading, literature and poetry. All subjects had a good supply of excellent textbooks, with enough for one book for each pupil - I can't remember books ever being shared. The word 'mathematics' didn't appear on the timetable - there were separate periods for arithmetic and mental arithmetic (daily), practical arithmetic and geometry.

What is now known as RE (religious education) appeared on the timetable as Scripture. This was a very important subject, with a special Syllabus of mostly Bible study, both Old and New Testament. So important was it that once a year a priest came to the school and tested the children on their knowledge. He then presented a written report to the school stating how satisfactory the result was - some of these are preserved in the School Log Books. The boys didn't mind these Scripture Tests, because they usually took place in the morning and the afternoon was given as a holiday!

'Handicraft' lessons were done not in the normal classrooms but in a special room situated between the Girls and Boys schools. This room had a long bench down one side, a large cupboard for storing things and a gas ring for when heat was needed for any job, such as

boiling the glue! Physical education was called PT (Physical Training). The school was well equipped with apparatus and we were proud of the standards we could reach. There was always a weekly period called Hygiene, which would be called biology today. Music appeared on the timetable as Singing, for this was mostly what it was. The school choir was a delight to hear.

Another strange period was Writing - at least twice a week. Each class had a large pattern pinned up in the room showing the style of writing everyone had to do. The teacher would painstakingly write on the blackboard the practice piece to be copied by each child. It was a style known as 'cursive' (meaning 'easy-flowing!'), rather like the old-fashioned 'copperplate' writing - thick strokes down, thin strokes up - how difficult it was for some children! Ballpoint pens hadn't been invented and children had to write with a penholder and steel pointed nib. The nib was dipped into ink kept in an inkwell in the desk. What a mess! Of course when anything was written on paper, the ink was still wet and had to be dried with a piece of blotting paper which soon became saturated and often resulted in smudging the whole lot!

The school had a motto, displayed in the Hall: "Work and be happy". This is what we did and what we were. I often meet ex-pupils - they have of course grown out of all recognition by me. Some are now 67 years old [in 1994] and have retired from their work. I am always happy when they tell me they enjoyed their schooldays at Moulsham."

Photographs from 1939

Selwyn Wheeler, who started in Mr Picken's class in 1938 and moved shortly afterwards to Mr Hymas' class, has provided these two photographs from 1939. The first, below, shows the staff of Moulsham Junior Boys at that time. In the back row are Mr Morgan (left) and Mr Hudson. In the front row, from left to right are Messrs Burt, Gardiner, Petchey (Headmaster), Hymas and Picken.





The second photograph is of Mr Hymas' class. There were about 52 boys in the class, though not all appear in the picture. Most look extremely tidy in suits and the maroon Moulsham School tie. Faces Selwyn can identify are, in the back row, left to right, Tween, Wiseman, Hinsley, Mr Hymas, ?, Wilson, Leggerton, Downs, ?, and Chapman. In the left hand row or desks, from back to front, are Harvey, ?, Smeaton and Cornell. In the centre row of double desks, again from back to front, Sheppard and Selwyn Wheeler, Brazier and ?, Smith and Pyle, and at the front Orrin and ?Harris. At the back of the third row of double desks, ? and Peacock, then Baker and Wallis, ? and ?Barnard, and at the front, ?Dowsett and ?Lock. The far row, from left to right, includes ?Williams, Ackrill, Peacock, Lander and ?.

Selwyn, who lived in Avenue Road opposite Dorset Avenue at that time, recalls walking to and from school, lunchtime included, with his cousin and friends across open fields. Apart from Avenue Road and Loftin Way, which was nearing completion, there were virtually no buildings between Beehive Lane and Princes Road. The whole area was farmed, mainly pasture. There were many majestic elm trees and in autumn a seemingly unlimited crop of wild mushrooms. Selwyn also recalls malted milk tablets, both plain and chocolate flavoured, being issued to the pupils as food supplements during the war years. Not infrequently these tablets were pushed through the wire fence partitioning the playground, as a special gift to a favoured girl.

Selwyn takes issue with John Spooner, a contributor to our first issue, on the delicate question of who was the fairest of them all. He contends that "Although Eileen Steel was a beauty - and for that matter still is - undoubtedly the most beautiful girl in the Junior School was Pat Roebuck, whose father owned a wet fish shop, with an open front, in Moulsham Street."



Selwyn in 1939

Across the fields to Moulsham, 1938-9

John Baker, a cousin of Selwyn Wheeler, and pictured on the second photograph above, also has memories of the Junior School from the day it opened in 1938. He writes:

I started school at the Friars Infants School (Miss Golding, Miss Dyer, Mrs Wright?) to which we walked from our house in Avenue Road, Great Baddow, and home again each day. I then went to Trinity Road Juniors (Mr Petchey, Mr Goodwin, Mr Salisbury?) to and from which we also walked every day.

In 1938 I transferred to Moulsham Junior Boys' School, and I think it was probably in walking across the fields from Avenue Road that my interest in things rural had its roots. I joined the class where Mr R G Hymas was the teacher and can well remember Mr Picken, Mr Gardiner, Mrs French and other faces whose names I cannot recall.

Mr Petchey was also a friend of our family through association with the London Road Congregational Church, and for years before his death he used to call me his 'No. 1 Pupil'. I believe this was because mine was the first name on the school register! I accept that I was in the top class and that my name (Baker) was well to the front of the alphabet, but Jimmy Adams was also in my class, so where was he?

Be that as it may, my time at the school was short, as on September 1st 1939 my family evacuated to Sudbury, Suffolk and I lost touch, not returning to Chelmsford until December 19th 1945. I then went to Chelmsford Grammar School until July 1947. While I was there I decided I wanted to become a school teacher and was assigned to Moulsham Junior Boys to do a month's student teaching. That was a very happy month, but after two years National Service in the Army my plans changed.

Since then the water has flowed very quickly under the bridge. My wife and I had three children and they had seven, so we have a very busy time here in Ipswich.

John Baker

Moulsham reunions

As mentioned in the first issue, Jennifer Bailey (nee Rayner), who was at school in the forties, has for the past seven years been arranging reunions in Chelmsford for former pupils of Moulsham Junior and Senior Girls Schools. The most recent was held at the Saracen's Head on Saturday 13th November, when 23 of us met for a buffet lunch to share news, memories and photos. Anyone interested in attending future meetings can contact Jennifer on 01206 792945.

Odeon Memories

Having lived in Chelmsford for the first thirty years of my life, how very sad I felt in 1990 when I learnt that the Odeon Cinema in Baddow Road was to be pulled down and a car park built in its place. Today we have vast leisure centres and 'multiplex' cinemas with four or more screens, but nothing can replace the hours spent in my childhood at the 'real' Odeon.

In the late 1940s after the war, 'Saturday morning pictures' at the Odeon was a favourite with many of the Chelmsford youngsters. We all queued up in a long snake in good time for the start, handed over our 9d entrance fee, and piled into the large auditorium with its tip-up red plush seats. In those days before television, we were thrilled to see all the cartoons and films, and, to make sure we came back the next week, the serial, usually a Wild West adventure.

As we grew older, our boyfriends of the moment took us to the 'pictures', usually once a week, to see the film stars, many of whom we tried to copy in both dress and hairstyles. The cinema conjured up a make-believe world. In the early 1950s, with our tube of red Max Factor lipstick and mostly homemade clothes, we did our best and thought we all looked like Doris Day, Susan Hayward, Lesley Caron or Natalie Wood!.

Even more vividly than the cinema, I remember the Saturday evening dances which took place in the first floor ballroom at the Odeon. If you did not go to a dance on a Saturday evening you were certainly not one of the 'in crowd'. If you could not get in at the Odeon you thought the world would come to an end! On the door there was Albert who looked at your entrance ticket, which cost 3/6d (17½p). Inside there was a live band to dance to, with Jerry on bass and Mick Clark singing. We used to know what time it was by what tune was being played!

During the interval we all used to go to the Long Bar, the Nag's Head or the Windmill, too grown up to put on a coat regardless of how cold it was or whether it was raining or even snowing. Afterwards we made our way back to the ballroom. How many of you can remember how, for the last couple of hours, there were so many people who had slipped in that we could hardly move? You see, perhaps we had started the evening at a dance at the Shire Hall, Crompton's or Marconi's, but not seen 'that certain someone'. Well, there was only one other place they could be - the Odeon.

Thank you ODEON for helping me to grow up. I can never forget you.

Jennifer Bailey (nee Rayner)

A letter from the Double twins

Jennifer Rolf and Ann Watt, nee Jennifer and Ann Double, were at Moulsham Junior Girls' from 1948-52. This picture was taken after winning the Good Companionship Award in 1952.



We have some very happy memories of our school days at Moulsham Infant and Junior Schools.

We lived in Gloucester Avenue, which had about 31 houses and was a cul de sac. The Schools were surrounded by the gravel pit and the cornfields where we used to play after school. We walked to school with Molly Pearce and sometimes Ann Blair who both lived in unmade Longstombs Avenue. We walked down what appeared to us a long drive, passing the Senior Schools and the air raid shelters. We always went home for lunch.

There was no school uniform, clothes were still on ration and needed clothing coupons in 1948. Our mother made our dresses and coats and knitted our cardigans, getting two for the price of one! We used school plimsolls and at the beginning of the new term we had to go to the store room to give our shoe size to get our PE shoes.

We sang in the school choir and remember going to Chelmsford Corn Exchange to sing in competitions. One year we won the cup with our rendition of the Skye Boat Song - 'speed bonny boat like a bird on the wing over the sea to Skye' - we can hear it now! Miss Skilton conducted us, and we were so proud!

We enjoyed the spelling-bees we used to have in class. We lined up around the classroom and Miss Sawday (we think) asked us spellings. If we got them right we stayed at the front of the line, but if you made a mistake you went to the end of the line. We also did a lot of times tables work, this was also fun.

We enjoyed sewing and knitting - we knitted fair isle mittens and made Punch and Judy puppets in felt. We frayed pieces of cotton and silk material to make stuffing for soft toys. We did this in our spare moments - we preferred the silky material as this frayed more easily.

We played on the school field in the summer and made grass houses out of the freshly mowed grass. We also played along 'School Alley', a driveway at the back of the playground. Here we made houses out of stones and brought containers, flour, cocoa etc from home to mix up various concoctions. The caretakers, Mr Rose, Mr Little and Mr Collins were all very helpful.

The Good Companionship prize was awarded to a pupil in the final year, chosen by the other pupils and teachers. This prize was given by a gentleman called Mr W C C Turner and in 1952 we won the prize with equal votes! We still treasure the books which we won.

We did not have a television set, but one of the lucky ones was Mary Garland, who lived in Links Drive, Widford. Occasionally when there was something we wanted to see, for example the Billy Bunter stories, we would walk home with Mary, along with Anita Greatrex, very excited, to watch the programme.

The staff we remember were Miss Cook, who first taught us in the Infants school and then moved up to the Juniors when we did, Miss Skilton, Miss Firmin, Miss Barton and Miss Sawday. Our head teacher was at first Miss Rankin then later Miss Pettet.

In 1950, probably in Miss Barton's class, we were given the names of girls in Christchurch, New Zealand, who wished to become penpals to girls in England. I, Jennifer, received the name of Margaret Butcher, we have been corresponding for 50 years and have developed a real friendship. Margaret and her husband John now live in Auckland, they have been to stay with us on several occasions, the last time in 1998 for the wedding of my daughter. Our husbands are both accountants and we are both grandparents. Instead of writing about our dolls we now exchange news on grandchildren! Back in 1950 I didn't expect to meet up or even still be in touch (sometimes by email) 50 years later.

After Moulsham School we went to the County High School, then Jennifer worked in the Pathology Laboratory at Chelmsford and Essex Hospital and Ann went into banking. We both married and each had two daughters within weeks of each other. Jennifer now lives in Writtle and Ann in Orpington and we are both grandmothers too.

Jennifer Rolf and Ann Watt, 'The Double Twins' (nee Double)

1953: The Coronation Celebrations (Part I)

On 6th February 1952, the School Log Books record that wireless programmes were interrupted at 10.45 am to announce the death of King George VI. Kathleen Nash's elder sister, Helen (now Helen Green), remembers being in the Hall at the time, enjoying a Music and Movement broadcast. Miss Pettet, the Junior Girls' Headmistress, went round to the other classrooms to impart the sad news. When she asked if we knew the name of the King, many of us didn't. Until then, as a class of seven-year-olds in the days before television, some girls had only a very hazy notion of the British monarchy. But not for much longer.

Two days later, at 11 am, the Girls School assembled in the Hall to hear the broadcast of the Proclamation of the Accession of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, read from St James' Palace by the Garter King-of-Arms. The following week, on 15th February, we heard part of the King's funeral, also on the 'wireless', while the Boys' School had a special assembly with two minutes' silence, a hymn, prayers, a talk on the life of King George, and the National Anthem. In due course we heard that the Coronation of the new Queen would not take place until the summer of 1953. It seemed a very long time to wait.

In the meantime we turned our attention back to the details and highlights of ordinary school life. The student teachers from the Saffron Walden Training College came as usual for their month of practice, which we enjoyed. In May 1952, the Girls' School Choir won the cup at the Essex Schools Music Festival, placed first in every class. In July, 92 of us went on a trip by Water Bus from Greenwich to Lambeth Pier, and thence to the Zoo. In January 1953 disastrous storms struck southern Essex, especially Canvey Island, and we were busy collecting garments for the WVS to distribute to victims of the floods. Only as Spring 1953 approached did our minds turn once again to the coming Coronation festivities.

The Junior School Pageant

The date of the Coronation was to be Tuesday 2 June 1953. For Moulsham pupils, the whole of the previous week was the Whitsun (half-term) holiday, with three extra days holiday (1-3 June) added for the Coronation celebrations. On the last day of school before this long break, Friday 22 May, a special Coronation Pageant was performed by children from the Boys' and Girls' Schools in front of the main entrance. Parents and the remaining pupils watched from the grass in front of the school, and, amazingly, the sun decided to shine!

Groups of children, representing each of the Commonwealth countries at that time, assembled in the car park behind the caretaker's house. Central figures for each of the Dominions were played by girls from the 'top class' (eleven-year-olds). The figure of Britannia was portrayed by Judith Parsons; Canada by Janet Free; Australia, Paula Turner; South Africa, Valerie Bradford; New Zealand, Angela Yarrow; India, Barbara Butcher; Pakistan, Anne Barnes; and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Jennifer Mussel. Many other boys and girls (listed beneath the photograph) formed the 'supporting cast' for each Country group, all of them dressed in costumes made or designed by Mrs Taylor, Miss Barton, Mrs Moses, and Mrs French. The pageant was a joint effort between the two schools, with Mr Harold Picken, a teacher at the Boys' School, in overall charge.

The story of the part each country played in the Commonwealth was narrated over the loud speaker system and appropriate music played as each group appeared in turn from behind the house and walked in formation to the front of the school. There they formed a tableau around the central figure of Britannia. Mr Picken recalls that it was all very colourful, with costumes, flags and banners. Rule Britannia, Land of Hope and Glory, and I Vow to Thee my Country were played and sung with patriotic fervour, and the National Anthem became the grand finale. School and parents joined in the singing, conducted by Miss Skilton, the Junior Girls' music teacher, and accompanied by Mr Rhodes on the piano, Junior Boys on recorders and Junior Girls on percussion. As a special treat after the pageant, the pupils all received ice-creams, and we went on our way rejoicing at the prospect of our extra long half-term holiday and the special Children's Day to be held in Central Park on June 1st, the day before the Coronation. More about this in the next issue.



This photograph of the pageant appeared in the Essex Weekly News on the following Friday, 29 May 1953. Apart from those already noted, the children taking part in the pageant were listed as: Boys: K Mackman, J Ryan, David Eyre, Jack Royle, G Penpack, H Gandy, G Lodge, E Jacoby, K Hemsley, J Winson, R Winson, M Cowell, D Ward, D Roblin, D Mann, K Spearman, Langton, A Toms, W Bateman, A Youell, J Barker, D Oliver, J McLoughlin, K Haldane, Banham, R Oakley, R Hazell, A Holland, W Clarke, R Ash. Girls: C Pearsons, C Combes, M Grace, L Andrews, E Phillips, S Sullivan, C Rolf, J Hayes, M Gillam, R Samuels, S Knight, S Spencer, C Baldwin, C King, C Goby.

Marion Weston recalls the Fifties



Marion Lodge (nee Weston) , pictured here aged 10, was at Moulsham Junior Girls from 1951-55. Her husband Geoff attended Moulsham Junior Boys School and then King Edward VI Grammar School.

When we moved from the Infants to the Juniors, we had Miss Gurton as our teacher for the first year. Miss Skilton followed her, then Miss Barton and finally Mrs Curtis. Miss Gurton and Mrs Curtis were young, and Misses Skilton and Barton older teachers. We had handwriting lessons with Miss Barton, where we would copy out poems or texts using pen-nibs in holders and dipping them in china inkwells let into the desks. We had monitors for various tasks, and someone always ensured the inkwells were full. As I had long hair in bunches, occasionally someone sitting behind me used to dip my hair in the inkwells! During embroidery lessons with Miss Barton I made a picture of Queen Elizabeth I with various stitches and sequins on a 12" (30cm) square of calico.

Like other past pupils, I remember Country Dancing and Music and Movement in the hall, which now seems quite small! Miss Skilton taught us music, and we played on various percussion instruments, triangles, tambourines and cymbals. I also remember writing a 'book', possibly in Miss Gurton's class, called 'A Well-Deserved Reward', in which a brother and sister spotted a man walking stealthily by their house and managed to knock him out thinking he was a burglar, when he was in fact a long lost uncle! We had to make the book cover and illustrate it throughout. I loved the nature walks along Princes Road towards Curries Farm - these were the only outings I remember. In the classroom we grew runner beans held in place with blotting paper in jam jars.

On Open Days our Mothers (never our Fathers, who were at work), came during the afternoon to see our teachers for a progress report while we sat at our desks in rows doing our work. There always seemed to be about 48 girls in each class.

When we were in Miss Barton's class, Miss Pettet, the Headmistress, came in one day to give us a talk. It must have been springtime, as she was upset at the poor eleven-plus results of the year above us. I became so worried about this I didn't eat for a week as I was nervous of failing and letting her down. When a year later I duly went to the High School to sit the examination, I was seated in a room, the lower part of which had long brown tiles and felt very cold. I did my best although I was very nervous, and eventually a few weeks later was summoned again to the High School for an oral examination conducted in front of the

headmistresses of the High School and Mid-Essex Technical School, as it then was. The outcome of this interview was my entry to the 'Tech'. On another occasion, Miss Pettet came to us in Mrs Curtis' class to insist we did subtraction in a different way, which she felt was quicker. Since then I have been more likely to make mistakes in subtraction!

I always went home for lunch at Waterhouse Street, off Writtle Road. I think I walked in the mornings and evenings, and at lunchtime sometimes caught a bus to London Road cross roads, by the Cherry Tree public house. I then walked over Crompton's bridge to and fro' in the opposite direction to the Crompton's workers.

I loved playing 'up the houses', which were set out each side of the drive which still leads to nowhere at the back of the playground. Spare bricks would mark out each 'house' and fabric pieces covering each brick denoted sofas or chairs to be sat upon at playtimes and chat with friends. I suppose in a way it was a giant forerunner to Lego! Also at playtimes we re-enacted the Jennings story books with friends from the year above us, each person taking different characters. Geoff and I cannot recall cattle and sheep on the fields beside the school in our day (see p. 7 of the Autumn 1999 Newsletter) - only crops. But I do remember seeing fox hunters walking through the crops one time all in their hunting pink.

I hope that my recollections may jog someone else's memory into life so they can send in something on their own experience of Moulsham Juniors.

Marion Lodge (nee Weston)

Then and now: PE and sport



Marion Weston has sent us this photo of a PE demonstration at the Junior Girls' School in 1954. Many of the mothers are sitting in front of the long air-raid shelter, which has since been replaced by classrooms. Nowadays there are also two new classrooms in the quadrangle, and the open-fronted verandah between the classrooms and lawn has been enclosed with a wall and windows so that the children can move in comfort from room to room. In the fifties, the third-of a-pint bottles of school milk often froze in severe winter weather as they stood in crates on the verandah outside each classroom until playtime!

The girls in the foreground, from left to right, are Isobel Travis, Susan Stiles, Susan Hayden, Marea Jones, Janet Bidwell, Janet Bullock, Pauline Tarbun, Marion Weston and Valerie Rudland. Behind them in the queue, from left to right, are Miss Barton, Christine Combes, two unidentified classmates, then Hazel Offord, Janice Newcombe and Juliet Lindars. We wonder what the Health and Safety Executive would make of the equipment on which Isobel and Susan are balancing!

This picture of Miss Barton in 1954 is the only photo we have seen so far showing a member of the Junior Girls' School staff. Does anyone have pictures or recollections of any of the others? In the next issue we will list the names of as many of the staff as we can find, in the hope of jogging memories.

Games

Many of the photos we have within our small collection of memorabilia feature sports teams and former pupils attending the Sixtieth Anniversary reunion had vivid memories of playing for school teams, or taking part in PE and games lessons at school. Our games teaching now has a detailed curriculum plan and takes children through a series of experiences which includes rugby, Tennis, football, basketball and netball.

The biggest change since I started teaching is that the whole class undertakes all the different games activities. We still have sports teams and this year our football team has been revived and captained by Alice Brownfield. The team got through to round two of the Year 6 Senior Cup. Netball has also been revived within the school and parents play a crucial part in its growth. Recent years have seen the growth of out of school sports clubs for junior age children and many of our children attend local football and netball clubs.

Sports included in our programme of school clubs are; indoor four-a-side football for Year 4, carpet bowls held on Tuesday before school, fencing with a qualified coach who is a parent, tennis run by a local Lawn Tennis Association coach for which children pay a termly fee, and a games club for Year 3 as an introduction to a range of games. A recent introduction is weekly football training session led by coaches from West Ham Football Club.

A survey of the children in 5E showed that a third of children in the class do take part in a range of sports activities outside school but only two took part in team games. At lunchtimes many were involved in active games with eleven playing football, seven taking part in games of chase, six skipping, five playing imaginary games and one talking to a friend.

One of the games lessons each term will now be devoted to traditional playground games. If you have any memories of games you played while at this school such as skipping rhymes or how you selected the catcher in tag games please let me have them to share with our present children. One way of selecting the catcher was sent to me by a grandparent of a present pupil. It started *ip dip sky's blue* - perhaps you remember the ending?

(by the Head Teacher, Mr Kemp)

Life at and after Moulsham School: Joy Bome (Sparrow) (1947-51)

Having read the first issue of the Newsletter, I can only say "yes, I remember that in just the same way", or "good heavens I had completely forgotten that". Some people certainly have a better memory than mine. I remember in the Infants filing out to the cold brick air raid shelters to practice what to do in case we needed to go there in a hurry, and I remember those splintery wooden benches we were made to sit on. I also remember the toilets with draughts and no privacy! Does anyone else remember that strange unreal smell and feeling in the entrances to the head teacher's office in both the Infants and Junior Schools? Was it just fear or guilty conscience or did it really exist?

I remember the arguments in the extension to the Junior playground about who was the last owner of the 'houses' which we 'built' with all sorts of odd bricks at play times and dinner times. What architects we were!

School dinners have always been a topic of conversation and my memories of these are of junket for dessert, which I hated, horrible peas, lovely chocolate pudding, shortbread, and terrible dishes of semolina with a dollop of red stuff in the middle! I remember the silence which occurred when a dish was dropped on the hard brown canteen floor, while we all wondered who was in trouble for the accident.

My mother Mrs Sparrow was secretary in the Infants' School for about twenty years. She started work with Miss Roberts, then Mrs Hallett, Mrs Davies and finally Miss Purdy, who later became Mrs Sturgeon. My mother is quite well and living near to me in Springfield. She often hears a name from the past and says "Oh, I remember him/her when he/she started school", and then invariably follows some reminiscences of the child or their parents.

When in later life I left college I did some teaching in the Junior Boys' School and I well remember teaching the earlier version of the school song to some very reluctant boys! Mr Picken, Mr Hodgson, Mrs Donovan and many others were teaching there at the time. I got married just before teaching there to Roger Bome and left when I was expecting our son David, who is now teaching at Great Totham Primary School after he taught at the Rodings Primary School and then the Cathedral School. My daughter Helen also teaches and is Head of String Teaching at the Kings' School (the Cathedral School) in Ely. Roger, David and I are very involved in a local group called Caprice - the Essex Wind Orchestra. We work very hard with about eighty musicians and give concerts locally to support local and national charities. Please look out for our name and come to hear us!

When my children were older I returned to full time work co-ordinating the instrumental music in Mid Essex for Essex County Music Services. During this time we introduced instrumental teaching into Moulsham Junior and Secondary Schools and for a short time I also found myself teaching the clarinet at Moulsham Secondary School. Moulsham School has constantly touched my life, even when I came in a couple of times several years ago to listen to whole days of music, dance and drama in order to make helpful and encouraging comments to the children.

I still dabble in a little clarinet teaching by working at the High School and the Grammar School for a few hours each week, and I conduct Caprice, which is also heavily involved with the Chelmsford Town twinning with Annonay in France and Backnang in Germany, and takes a great deal of time and energy. I have so many memories of all parts of Moulsham School - good, funny, bad, sad and all things in between and I look forward to hearing news from many other people.

Joy Bome (nee Sparrow)

Caprice - The Essex Wind Orchestra

In her article above, Joy Bome mentions briefly the successful work she does raising money for local and national charities through Caprice, the Essex Wind Orchestra. Readers might be interested to know more about this.

Some twelve years ago, Joy approached the Adult Education authorities with the idea of forming a wind orchestra as an evening class for students who would otherwise have no chance to play in groups once their full time education was finished. Ten players enrolled at Boswells School in 1987, forming the Wood-B Band. As the numbers and standard grew, the orchestra changed its name to Caprice, and gave its first concert in St Andrews Church, Hatfield Peveril in October 1989 in aid of Chelmsford Hospice and the Church Urban Fund for Inner Cities. At this point a decision was made to give all future concerts free of charge to help local and national charities raise funds. To date over £59,000 has been raised from these highly enjoyable concerts. There are now some 85 players in Caprice, with an age range of over sixty years.

Do come along to a Caprice concert if you can. The next two in Chelmsford (tickets from James Dace, Moulsham St or by ringing 01245 258629) are:

18th March: Shire Hall, 7.45 pm. Theme: Marching and Dancing. Tickets £6.

23rd September: Civic Theatre, 7.45 pm. "Last Night of the Proms" Charity concert. Tickets probably about £6.

News in Brief

We have heard from many past pupils, several of whom have promised to send articles or news items for future issues. Thank you to all of those. Others who have contacted us include:

Peter Gridley, who attended Moulsham Infants and Juniors from 1941, and then went on to Chelmsford Technical College. Peter moved to Cambridge in 1962 and seven years later to Ross-on-Wye. He writes in appreciation of the newsletter, but notes that girls/ladies are obviously better at keeping in touch than the lads! Perhaps he will find some familiar faces at the Open Day on 20 May, which he hopes to attend.

Ken Andrews, a pupil at Moulsham Juniors and then the Senior School until Easter 1954 - "a lifetime ago!". His sister Lynda, now living in South Africa, was at the school in the fifties, followed by their brother Paul. Ken says they too will be interested in the newsletter.

Rev. Colin Reader, who was at Trinity Juniors but became a pupil of Moulsham Senior School from 1942. He knew Mr Petchey as an old friend and neighbour when young. Colin would be interested to hear from readers of this newsletter who may have known him at the 'Seniors', and wonders if there have been any reunions, newsletters or other attempts by former pupils of the Senior Boys to keep in touch with one another. His address is 20 Little Meadow, Writtle, CM1 3LG.

Malcolm Robinson, who was at the Juniors from 1939 and went on to the 'Tech' in 1943. Malcolm heard about the newsletter when he met Mr Picken in the supermarket! Malcolm still lives in Chelmsford, a couple of stone's throws from the school.