

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Spring 2003

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Keeping in touch with your school friends

Christmas and Half Term have sped past already, and we are now starting to make preparations for the next **Open Afternoon** at Moulsham Junior School, on **Saturday 10th May, 1-5pm**. We have more photos and memorabilia than ever to display this year, and we have heard from quite a lot of people planning to attend for the first time. So do come along and join us. As before, there will be refreshments, with Hilary's delicious home-made cakes, entertainments by present-day pupils, and a chance to wander round the classrooms and meet up with friends from way back. The famous Honours Boards from the Junior Boys' School will be brought down from the attic for the occasion, too, so you can refresh your memories of former classmates and schoolmates. As ever, we shall be very grateful for help with setting up the displays on the afternoon of Friday 9th May, and/or manning the reception desk or assisting with washing up on 10th. Any offers to Hilary or myself, please.

Our newsletter continues to circle the globe. We have regular readers in Canada, USA and Tasmania, and in this issue a new overseas contact, **Brian Judd**, 1938-42, from Baltimore, Maryland, USA (article on page 7). As before, you can read or download this and some earlier editions of the Newsletter on the school website: www.moulshamjuniorschool.org.uk. More locally, we continue to be amazed at the number of past pupils from the early years of the school who are still living in the Chelmsford area, and busy telling each other about the Newsletter and Open Afternoons. Thanks to all of you who have sent in addresses of new contacts, and of course to those who have taken the time to write down their recollections and/or send us photos of life in their Moulsham years. We know from our postbag that other readers are delighted to be reminded of the detail of their own childhood days. More than that, your memories form an important contribution to the historical record of life in the town and the county. Thanks to a suggestion from **Anne Holdsworth (nee Hammond)**, we have recently been in touch with the Essex Record Office, who confirm they will be interested to receive copies of the Newsletter, right back to the first issue, to be added to their library collections. We shall continue to send them a copy each time, so there will be a complete set for ERO users to refer to from now on.

Some of our new readers have asked if there is a formal annual subscription to pay for the Newsletter. The answer is no, as it would probably cost too much in staff time to keep records and accounts. But if you do wish to make a contribution to offset postage and production costs, please feel free to send a cheque for school funds generally. We suggest about £3 a year. Your generous contributions in recent years have been used to plant trees, shrubs and ornamental grasses in the school grounds on behalf of the past pupils. The address, if you do wish to send a cheque, which should be made payable to 'Moulsham Junior School', is: **Mr L R Kemp, Head Teacher, Moulsham Junior School, Princes Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9DG**.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Open Afternoon. Mr Kemp has suggested we might ask you to bring along an individual photo, if you have one, of yourself in your Junior School days (a photocopy would be fine, or we can take a copy from an original if not), for display in the Hall on the day. Please put your name on the back for future reference. As ever, we should also be glad to receive articles, news items and photos for use in our next Newsletter, as well as addresses of former classmates who would like to be on the distribution list. If you are unable to be with us for the reunion, please send them to me at 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG, or by email to kathleen.boot@virgin.net

With very best wishes from Hilary Balm (nee Dye) and myself,

Kathleen Boot (nee Nash)
Moulsham Junior Girls' School 1951-55

Notes from the Head Teacher, Mr Les Kemp

This school, together with thirteen other infant, junior, primary, secondary and special schools, form the South Chelmsford Consortium. Many of the schools now jointly employ a consortium finance manager and every few years we try to come together to hold a conference. This February we held our second conference. Of the approximate three hundred teachers present, over half had not been teaching at their present school in 1997, a figure I found staggering.

The two speakers were Professor Ted Wragg, Professor of Education at Exeter University, a frequent contributor to the educational press and the *Guardian* and Mr David Bell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, who had just published his first annual report.

Professor Wragg regularly teaches a reception class and a Year 5 class in one of his local schools and had the audience in the palm of his hand as he linked research about children's learning to his own visits to schools across the world. He warned that with the present overloaded curriculum, a child who goes to the toilet could miss the history of transport from the invention of the wheel to the first jet powered aircraft. He challenged the artificial divisions of time found in literacy and numeracy lessons and the Government's view that there was only one way to teach a good lesson.

Mr Bell linked his remarks to his recently published first annual report where he drew attention to the improvements in children's attainment as shown by GCSE and SATs results. Ofsted inspections had found that teaching now featured an increasing number of good or better lessons and his call was to build on these to generate a higher number of excellent lessons.

The link between both speeches was their reference to the magic element in teaching. On the whole we plan, resource, teach and use assessment more effectively, but that element of magic was still vital. It comes from a quality of relationship between children and teachers, from the skilful use of what children know to lead them to understanding something new, from a joint sense of being on a learning adventure and other factors which I confess I'm not skilful enough to name but know when I see them. I have the good fortune to sit in on many lessons and I'm not supposed to show what I think of the lesson until I give feedback to the teacher. Sometimes I get a tingle down the spine and I want to stand up and cheer when that magic is present.

Many millions of pounds are spent annually on the development of teachers and others in education, frequently taking them out of the classroom but I'm still waiting for a course on 'The Magic of Teaching'. I used to teach with Mr Bell and he did have that magic in the classroom.

Tesco Computer Vouchers

Yes, it's that time of year again, and Moulsham Juniors are busy collecting Tesco computer vouchers. If you are not already saving them for any other school, Mr Kemp would be delighted if you would please send or bring them to Moulsham, to add to our growing collection, and help provide more new hard and software for the school. Thank you in advance.

Another date for your diary

The School Fete will be on the afternoon of **Saturday 21st June** this year. Past pupils are most welcome, and we plan to have a table with photos, memorabilia and copies of the Past Pupils' Newsletter. Do come along if you can, and join in the fun.

Martyn Edwards: Three generations at Moulsham

Last November, Hilary and I were delighted to meet up with former pupil **Martyn Edwards**, to hear about his family's three-generation connection with the school. Martyn's mother was Chairman of Managers at Moulsham. Martyn himself was at the Junior Boys' School from 1947-51. His sister Hannah (Nan), who is four years older, also went to Moulsham Infants' from the age of four, and spent just one year in the Junior Girls' School before transferring to the Junior Department of the County High School for Girls when she was eight. And for some time now, Martyn's daughter Helen has been a teacher at Moulsham Junior School, currently as Head of Year 3.

Martyn's mother, Mrs Elsie Edwards, was born in Bolton, Lancashire in 1896, trained as a teacher at Edgehill Training College in Liverpool, and taught in Bolton until her marriage in 1928. Then she moved south to Chelmsford, where her husband had lived all his life. It is just possible a few of you may remember Mrs Edwards on the staff of St John's School, Moulsham Street. She taught there until 1932, the year when married women were forced to leave the teaching profession. In a time of recession, it was felt wrong for married women to 'block' precious jobs needed by male breadwinners. Thankfully, this rule was abandoned as the economy improved, and in 1952, Mrs Edwards was able to return to teaching, at Elm Green Preparatory School.



During Martyn's time at Moulsham Infants' School (1945-47), the Head Teacher, Miss Roberts, set up a Parent Teacher Association, and both his parents became actively involved. In due course, Mrs Edwards was invited to become a School Manager at all three Moulsham Schools - Infants, Juniors and Seniors. She thoroughly enjoyed this work, and went on to be Chairman of Managers until 1965. Her photograph, left, was taken in 1961.

The family lived in Galleywood Road when Martyn and his sister attended Moulsham School. Across the road lived Miss Skilton, who taught at the Junior Girls' School from 1938 until the 1960s. Further along, close to what is now the SEAT garage, was Mr WCC Turner's bungalow. Martyn remembers Mr Turner as a kindly person, with the school's interests at heart.

Martyn's memories of Moulsham Junior Boys' in the late 1940s are of a serious and somewhat regimented school. He is sure that school is much more fun for the pupils nowadays. In his time, they sat in straight rows of desks, with inkwells and permanently blue fingers, and those at the top of the class sitting in the front row. School life was very competitive. There was pressure from both parents and staff to work hard and pass exams, and 28 boys passed the 11+ in Martyn's year. The Headmaster, Mr Petchey, was also keen on competitive sports and House competitions, and had a row of House flags on posts placed in order on the Hall platform to show which House was currently top.

Like many of his schoolmates, Martyn walked home to lunch each day, cutting through the Senior School grounds and along the unmade Longstomps Avenue. Life outside school was full and interesting. Without the distraction of television or computer games, families and children made their own entertainment. In those days, Gloucester Avenue stopped just beyond the Senior Schools. There were fields beyond, and footpaths through what are now the Tile Kiln and Moulsham Lodge housing estates. During the war a bomb dropped on one of these fields, leaving a large crater and creating an interesting diversion for the curious.

Martyn has vivid memories of the war, and says he still sleeps with the bedclothes over his head! He recalls the British and German bombers flying over; the sirens; gun emplacements in Central Park; and bursting barrage balloons. On one occasion, the air raid siren sounded while he and his parents were hurrying along Upper Bridge Road, and they ended up taking shelter in a chimney sweep's cellar. Everyone looked after everyone else at that difficult time. During the war, the buses were painted grey - first the roofs and eventually the whole bus. Martyn remembers how amazed he was the first time he saw a red bus after the war!

On leaving Moulsham Juniors, Martyn went to a boarding school in Oxfordshire, following in the footsteps of his sister Nan. He lost touch with most of his Chelmsford friends at this point, though one other Moulsham pupil, Adrian Smith, did come to the school a year after him.. Later in life, Martyn became an accountant, and still works in London. He is married to Pauline, who went to the Technical High School in Chelmsford. They have a son, Philip, as well as their daughter Helen, who teaches at Moulsham Juniors.



This photo was taken in the summer of 1951. Names Martyn remembers are:

Back row: Peter Coombes, Derek Hammond, Keith Vass

Centre row: Martyn Edwards, ? Bradley, Raymond Bradshaw, Alan Prior, Brian Skilton

Front row, seated: Michael Dutton, Julian Mason, Alan Radford, ? Mosley, ? , Michael Spencer, Roger Bell, Michael Rose, Donald Reid. (Name of boy immediately behind Michael Spencer not known)

Baddow Meads and other childhood haunts

In response to **Peter C Smith's** article in the Autumn 2002 Newsletter, **Derek Mussell (1939)** writes: "I have never put pen to paper so often, but the Newsletter starts distant memories when I read it. The Baddow Meads! It was our playground during the summer time. We would walk from Longstomps Avenue along Princes Road to the Army and Navy pub and up to the river bridge, down the steps at the side, and across the meadows to the café. Remember Tizer, and the cash back on the bottle? We would fish for roach and gudgeon with a small ball of new bread on the hook, and eat our Marmite sandwiches. If we had the cash, we might hire a rowing boat or a canoe for half an hour - imagine today, allowing a child to take a boat out like that: the danger! But I can never remember anyone drowning, and swimming in the polluted water as we did, we must have swallowed plenty in the process - yet I'm still here. I can remember the better swimmers diving off the footbridge by the locks. It must have been about 15 feet high [just under 5 metres], and **Don Eagle** was one of the boys I recall doing it. I remember one summer afternoon the air raid warning went off and over came a formation of 30 or 40 German bombers. One of our fighters came out of the clouds above and dived through them, firing. The pilot then bailed out and I can see him now drifting down. The German formation broke up and flew back the way they had come without dropping a bomb."

"Another place that our 'gang', **David Brick, Derek Phillips, Tony Bush** and sometimes **Jimmy Greenwood**, would spend hours was Hylands Park. We would walk to the railway bridge at Widford, down the steps, across a gravel lane (now, I think, Waterhouse Lane), and through a pig farm. Then across the river Wid and into the park, armed with catapults to pot rabbits and suchlike, or be chased by an elderly gamekeeper if he saw us. We would stay all day, fortified by the Marmite sandwiches! Do children still get conkers (horse chestnuts), I wonder, or go scrumping in Taylor's Orchard - alas no longer there, I suspect - in the Star Fields at the top of Longstomps Avenue? Reading through the list of names in the Autumn 2002 issue, I recall **Brian Champion, Brian Cushing**, a MacGovern who lived in Finchley Avenue, and **Doug Fawcett**, who I think was also at Cromptons with me. I think Doug married Nora Newey, who was once a girlfriend of mine. Happy days! I also remember the Dowsett family, who lived at Widford. Thanks for an interesting Newsletter."

Hilary Balm (nee Dye), 1951-55, has tracked down a couple of photos showing the Baddow Meads café in the early 1960s, on the occasion of an outing with members of the Young People's Fellowship of High Street Methodist Church, Stone Bridge, Chelmsford. Do any of you recognise yourself in this one?



A letter from Brian Judd, 1938-42 - now a Professor in Baltimore, Maryland, USA

An old family friend in Chelmsford sent me a copy of the Summer 2002 issue of the Past Pupils' Newsletter, with the suggestion that I look at the photograph on p.7 to see my brother Colin. That's what the caption says. But the boy just behind **David Post** is me! Colin was at that time only aged 7, and came along to the School later. (He is now a retired vicar of a parish in Bradford, and I am sending him a copy of this letter.) Most of the boys in the photograph I remember well, because we all went to the Grammar School together; but I was delighted to read about **Peter Turrall**, whom I lost contact with (apart from a table-tennis match when we were 16 or 17 -- in a context I can no longer recall). In fact I have a copy of that photograph myself. **Mr Gardiner** taught me piano lessons privately and opened the world of classical music to me; I still play, sometimes with other instrumentalists. My old copy of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words" contains his notations for me; he found a second-hand copy and passed it along to my parents and me.

I recall **Mr Petchey** vividly: he told us the plot of "Hamlet" most excitingly and recounted his days in the trenches during World War I. He also walloped me and a boy called **Clark**, who pinched me during class and thus provoked a return pinch from me. We both must have winced: I can see Mr Petchey now -- barrelling down on us (we were sitting in the back row, naturally). I thus learned early that one must occasionally suffer for matters of principle.

I have spent my life mainly in academia, with positions at Oxford, Chicago (where I met my wife Josephine), Paris, Berkeley, and, finally, Baltimore, where I am now a Professor Emeritus at John Hopkins University. I have worked in theoretical atomic physics, and I still have an office on campus and go into the laboratory on most days. I've written a few books, and I'll get a copy of a paperback reprint of one of them off to you, all being well, in the coming week. [Note: received as promised, and will be on display at the Open Afternoon on 10th May]. I have my arithmetic and composition books from the first day at Moulsham Junior Boys School: I'll xerox the first few pages of them and include them with the book. The arithmetic book starts, I see, at September 5, 1938, which might well have been the very first day the school opened. I notice that the master, I think **Mr Burtt**, put a cross against my addition $2416+1309+385+4136=8246$, forcing me to do it again lower down the page. Needless to say, I got the same answer as before! That was on 7th September 1938, possibly in the first week of classes at the new school, when the staff were having teething troubles.

It was wonderful to read your Newsletters (I've downloaded the Autumn 2002 one from the web) and read about activities and incidents that I had long forgotten. **Don Smith's** recollection of **Mr Hodgson's** use of bizarre nicknames for the boys tallies with what my brother Colin told us at home (I never had that master for any of my classes).

Chelmsford - "A Stroll Through Time": Special Offer

Peter Turrall, 1939-42, reports that his book on Chelmsford 55 years ago is selling well, and is available at leading Chelmsford bookshops. He gives lectures to local groups on the subject of Chelmsford, and The Essex Chronicle and BBC Essex have both interviewed him on the book. He is now offering copies to ex-Moulsham pupils at a special price of £10 plus postage. 50% of the proceeds from this special offer will be donated to the school towards the cost of producing the Newsletter. Copies can be bought at the Open Afternoon, or ordered from Peter at 96 Patching Hall Lane, Chelmsford, CM1 4DB, or by email to peter_turrall@lineone.net

Autumn reunion of the 1942-46 girls.

On Saturday 9th November 2002, **Jennifer Bailey (nee Rayner)** arranged another of her regular reunions of girls from her classes at Moulsham Junior Girls' School, 1942-46 and the Senior Girls' School. The picture, right, shows Jennifer in her Junior School days. This year about 26 former classmates were able to take part in the reunion, and Hilary Balm (Dye) and Kathleen Boot (Nash), though not ourselves in the class of 1942, were delighted to join in, at Jennifer's invitation.



People we chatted to include the following:

Edna Swayne (Mathers), whose father was well known as a children's party entertainer. Edna has kindly offered to look out the interesting diaries he kept, and write an article about her father and his work for a future Newsletter. We look forward to that. Edna herself has many memories of World War II, especially the sound of 'doodlebugs' overhead. She could always tell the difference between 'theirs' and 'one of ours'. Edna's mother was very hard of hearing, and relied on her to listen out for bombers. On one occasion, Edna recalls feeling very guilty for not having warned her as quickly as she might that a 'doodlebug' was approaching, leaving her mother racing to the shelter with her baby sister Stella at the very last minute. As well as the other classmates at the reunion, Edna is now in touch with **Joan McAllister (Hughes)**, who lived in Widford, along with her brother **Peter Hughes**. Edna will let Joan have a copy of this Newsletter.

Yvonne Rush (Auston) was at the Junior School but not the Infants. She remembers the knitted patchwork blankets each child had to keep at school in case they were obliged to stay in the shelters overnight during an air raid. Yvonne travelled on the Galleywood school bus every day, getting on at the end of Loftin Way.

Marion Bell (Smith) attended Moulsham Infants' and Junior Schools, before going on to the 'Tech'. She then did business studies and worked in the District Valuer's Office of the Inland Revenue for 42 years.

Margaret Pitt (Roberts) was at Moulsham throughout her school life, and went on to become an audio typist. Margaret remembers Moulsham as a lovely school, where she had lots of friends. She now enjoys the company of her children and grandchildren, and is especially fond of reading.

Joan Tredgett (nee Ponsford) is in touch with **Shirley Davis** (a year older) in USA, and **Pamela Wiggam** from her own class, who she hopes will be able to attend the next get-together. Joan pointed out that **Miss Firmin**, one of her Junior School teachers, lived near her in Upper Roman Road, not Upper Bridge Road as suggested in an earlier Newsletter.

Margaret Linge (nee Stock) found that the teachers at Moulsham Juniors were rather strict and severe. She remembers being dismayed on hearing that the school leaving age was to be increased to 15, and in fact stayed an extra year in the Juniors herself. Her brother Frank Stock was 6 or 7 years older, and went to Friars School until Moulsham Juniors opened in 1938. Margaret hopes that Frank will be able to come to the next Open Afternoon.

Doreen Dennis (nee Cooper) attended a private Junior School, but went on to Moulsham Senior Girls' School in 1948, where she joined Jennifer Bailey's class. She lived in Baddow Road, and knew other Moulsham children, including **Margaret Haldane (Lawrence)**, who lived next door but one, **Audrey and Ann Butcher**, **Heather Staines** (now sadly deceased), **Rosemary Gardiner** and **Marion Dracey**. Some

of you may also remember Doreen's mother, Mrs Cooper, who died last year. She ran a wholesale grocery business on Baddow Road, between the Army and Navy and what was then Porter and Howard's (now Hadler's the motorcycle shop). Doreen's grandfather was a cobbler, and had a shop on Beehive Lane.

Myrtle Williams and **Maureen Stanbury** both went to Trinity Road Juniors and then on to Moulsham Senior Girls' School, and will be known to many of our readers. Myrtle is still working as a nursing sister at St John's Hospital in Chelmsford. On leaving Moulsham she went straight to work, but in 1953 attended the Technical College for a pre-nursing course, followed by full nursing training, and has been working in the nursing profession ever since. Maureen and several others of those present had happy memories of the popular Senior School drama club, which met on Thursdays after school. **Miss Stokes**, the English Teacher, pressed all members of the drama group into service. If they were not immediately involved in that day's rehearsing, they would be set to paint scenery or dye material for costumes. Among the productions put on were Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew and A Midsummer Night's Dream. Other teachers at the Senior Girls' School who made a strong impression were **Miss Simmonds** (maths), **Mr Edwin**, (geography) and **Miss Gay**, (science).

One or two of the group were still in touch with Mrs M Herries, better known as the much-loved Infants' School teacher, Miss Godfrey. As a result, we were pleased to be able to send past copies of our Newsletter to Mrs Herries, who wrote expressing her thanks, and saying she had "read and re-read them several times".

Since the reunion, Jennifer has managed to track down a programme for the Senior Girls' Dramatic Club's production of 'The Dragon of Tingalam', from around 1948/49, and a photo of the cast, both of which we shall display at the Open Afternoon. She has also sent us the following photo from the reunion for the Newsletter. From left to right, it shows **Kathleen Boot (Nash)**, **Joan Tredgett (Ponsford)**, **Hilary Balm (Dye)**, and **Margaret Pitt (Roberts)**.



Life at Moulsham School in the 1940s Arthur Humphrey

We lived in Waterhouse Lane, a delightfully unmade lane leading on to Writtle Road at the top, and running parallel to Waterhouse Street and Crompton Street. Waterhouse Lane narrowed to about ten feet wide, with high banks on either side bordering the allotments. Further down, the lane passed Marconi's and the English Electric Valve Co, on its way down to the river, passing what was then the refuse dump. This accounts for the large difference in height compared to the surrounding fields, as a result of the build up of detritus over the years. We used to search the dump, looking for treasures such as old pram wheels and axles for the construction of trolleys. The area has since been grassed over and is now a small golf course.

Mr and Mrs Moody and their children the twins **Roy** and **Ray**, a younger brother **Ron** and sister **Joyce**, lived next door. **David Reeve** and **Michael Jones**, with whom I used to play, lived a few yards across the lane. A double decker bus appeared in the lane one day, occupied by children from London. I remember that we took in two boys of about 10 years of age for a short period, during the war. A family at the top of the lane took in a boy, **Malcolm Soames**, from London, who became a childhood friend.

The writer joined Moulsham Infants' School in 1940, at the age of five. I joined **Miss Wood's** class at the end of the Infants block, adjacent to the grassed mound. We used to spend playtimes tumbling down the slope: difficult, as one had to avoid crushing the cardboard box housing the gas-mask carried at all times. When the siren sounded, we were ushered to a brick built shelter, which was built at the bottom of the sports field, separating the infants from the senior school. Strictly, the shelter would have been of little use for other than low level blast effects. We used to watch the fighters attacking the German planes from the shelter opening. One could see the tracer bullets winging their way. I remember Miss Woods saying, "come away from the doorway - you may get shot". Such was life in the Infants in the early 1940s.

Mr Petchey was headmaster of the Junior School. I recall a number of teachers at the school, including **Mrs Skipsey**, **Mr Hodgson** and **Mr Gardiner**, who took the senior class. My memory of the lessons is somewhat fragmented. From time to time, I see Mrs Skipsey's son, **Fred**, shopping in Chelmsford, steering his motorised vehicle through the crowds. My attempt at passing the eleven plus was not successful. For some reason the included angles of a triangle did not equal 360 degrees, which may have been the reason for my failure. It must have been the influence of the war. Lunch was served in **Mrs French's** class, where celery soup loomed large on the menu.

Moving up to the senior school I was placed in **Mr Davies'** class (1A, as I recall). It was Mr Davies who was instrumental in getting me to understand what education was all about. I found him an inspirational teacher. Up to that point I suppose the war had coloured our lives and education. Moving up a year landed me in **Mr Bartlett's** class. He would stand no nonsense, and quite right too. His 'snitchers' were famous, and involved the use of a plastic rule. He took us for art, which involved us in drawing a grid of squares and colouring the repetition of inscribed patterns, a disciplined approach to art, one had to admit, which successfully eliminated any creative dimension.

Attempts at further education were doomed to failure, as that year I failed the 13 plus. All in all, attendance at Moulsham Senior Boys' School was a relatively enjoyable (endurable) experience. Woodwork under **Mr Pearce** and metalwork under **Mr Trevelyan** provided useful practical skills facilitating the construction of a bedside cabinet with a compartment for a chamber pot, a bookcase and a raffia topped stool, together with a tap wrench. There were lighter moments as when one of the free thinkers (probably from Galleywood) hung a dead sparrow from the neck and attached it to Mr Pearce's door with a note suggesting that he may enjoy the same end. **Mr Smith** the senior teacher

(4A) endeavoured to impart some knowledge of the outside world of commerce. His grey trilby hat provided some evidence of membership of the middle class and something to aspire to.

Serious science was taught by **Mr Richardson**, where one learned how to project a tin can into the air by exploding the gas contained therein. I can still feel the measured impact of **Mr Bradley's** slipper on my derrière for committing the unforgivable sin of talking in the lines. Human rights had yet to flourish. Promotion to ink monitor and milk monitor was instrumental in encouraging me to seek out administrative posts in later life. I was elected captain of Rhodes House, and this elevation provided me with the opportunity to hone my public speaking skills, as when presenting the cumulative marks gained by Rhodes each month. League tables were even then were looming on the horizon.

Having reached the age of fifteen in the summer of nineteen fifty it was time to leave the cloistered and structured environment of academia and enter the outside world. An apprenticeship at Eastern Garages was followed by forty-three years at Marconi Research, adequately filling my days and nights.

All in all Moulsham was a meaningful experience, but . . . don't mention the war!

[Note: In our next issue, Arthur recalls the effect of World War II on everyday life in Chelmsford, and on his family in particular]

The Meadowcroft family

Also at Moulsham Junior Boys' School from 1942-46 was **Brian Meadowcroft**, who has sent us three photos of Standard IVA in 1946. All will be on display at the Open Afternoon, and one is reproduced below with names Brian has been able to identify, with the help of his former classmate and ex-neighbour **Derek Weston**.



Back row: Alan Hills, Vic Barker, ? , ? , Donald Myall, Laurence Wisbey, Bruce Pinder, Robert Cox, ? , Roderick Williams

Middle row: Brian Gandy, Dudley Wallace, ? Watts, ? Wright, ? Jordan (in shadows), David Harper, Keith Baker, Tony Dines.

Back row: "Lofty" Bateman, Tony Carter, Cecil O' Brien, Mickey Wright, Brian Meadowcroft, ? Jones, Derek Weston

Brian writes: " I am the youngest of four brothers, all of whom spent Junior School time at Moulsham. My eldest brother **Kenneth** (1938-39) was followed by **Derek** ((1938-41) and **Roy** (1940-44). All three started their education at the Widford Church School. The opening of the new school at Moulsham saw them all transfer to it, the oldest two to the Juniors, and Roy to the Infants. Roy recalls that on the first day, big brother Ken was deputed by our Dad to pick Roy up from the Infants, to take him home, but I guess the excitement of spending school-time in such luxurious surroundings was too much. Ken forgot his instructions, leaving a quite distraught and frightened five-year-old thinking he might have to spend a night under a desk, or on the rocking Mickey Mouse. That was not to be - he was escorted home by a policeman, he remembers.

In 1949, Ken emigrated to Australia, having done his National Service, with the Royal Navy, in that same country. My wife and I recently visited him there, and quite a lot of time was spent talking about those past years. He told us that **Miss Rankin** was his Head Teacher at Widford, and moved to take over the same position at the new school. He recalled that she was quite a disciplinarian.

Derek, after first working for the local Rural District Council for a few years, enlisted into the Royal Marines, but was later discharged on medical grounds. It was just a few years later that he was diagnosed with MS, from which he died in 1985.

Roy spent his working life with Marconi/GEC. His leisure hours have been, and still are, filled with athletics, first competing and then officiating. In recognition of his dedication to the sport, this year sees him as President of the Essex Athletics Association.

For myself, my recollections of my four years under Mr Petchey, W W Gardiner, Mr Hodgson etc, are recalled with happiness. So many of my memories are associated with the war, which is not surprising, it being a large part of our life then. I, too, recall the walks to school, when nearly all the traffic was military, be it convoys of British or American troops (who occasionally threw packets of chewing gum down in response to requests from us children), or prisoners-of-war being transported to their work. I recall spending the night of my seventh birthday under the drawing-room table, whilst a violent bombing raid raged all around, nearby Crompton's works being the target of the German planes. In the morning, on my school-bound journey, as I crested the summit of Crompton's railway bridge, I was astonished at the devastation wreaked on the houses in Upper Bridge Road. On another occasion, I remember seeing the wreckage of a downed German fighter plane that had crashed into a house in London Road, near the Rising Sun pub.

My journeys to school were not always so macabre. We usually walked through Oaklands Park, and I can recall trying to see what lay behind the shutters at the Museum, or sometimes sneaking in, and to be a little frightened of the brown bears in the showcase in the foyer. On snowy days, I recollect the slides that were developed on the hard-packed snow at the end of Finchley Avenue, near its junction with Vicarage Road. It seems in my mind now, that the slide was at least 20 feet (or should I say 7 metres) long. It was quite an achievement to stay standing for its whole length. The lack of traffic in those days meant there were few interruptions to our fun.

In the playground, I recall the wire fence that divided the girls from the boys, through which one would sometimes urge a third party to deliver an invitation to a girl who had caught one's eye, to "go out" with you. Little did I know that, on the other side of the wire, in her early Junior years, was **Patricia Sherman**, who some years later would become my wife. Pat spent the years 1945-49 in the Juniors, following her sister **Barbara** (1943-47) and brother **Peter** (1941-45). I well remember viewing an older pupil's painting of a war scene, depicting a tank battle, in an art display in the school hall. My admiration of the painting was so great, that I always remembered his name, although I didn't know him. Maybe it helped that he won the W C C Turner award that year. The artist? Peter Sherman,

later to be my brother-in-law! Small world, wasn't it? He joined the Army at the earliest opportunity, and when he finished his service after 22 years, he was a member of the country's, if not the world's, most elite military unit.

Reverting back to my own time at Moulsham, my only claim to fame is that I was the first (and maybe the last?) pupil to go on to Braintree County High School, as a result of my 11+ efforts. Most pupils/parents' second choice, after KEGS, was the Maldon Grammar School, but for whatever reason, my father thought that BCHS should be the establishment given the onerous task of finding some talent in his son. When I had to travel to what seemed the farthest reaches of the county for an interview with the Headmaster, my father could not accompany me, so a teacher, Mr Metcalfe, escorted me on a Hicks bus to Braintree. I have never known whether the distinction of having my name added to the Honours Board was achieved. [Note: we can check at the Open Afternoon in May]

In later years, many hours were spent under the supervision of Mr W W Gardiner, since not only was he my teacher in school time, he was also my choir master and organist at Widford Church. So choir practice, Saturday weddings and Sunday services saw him in charge as well. He had two sons, **Ian** and **Nigel**, who also attended the school. Other pupils I knew with 'authoritative' parents were **Derek Murphy**, whose father, as noted in previous articles, was Schools Attendance Office, and **Fred Skipsey**, whose mother was a teacher.

Some further family connections are my cousin **Donald Meadowcroft** (1938-39) and my step-sister **Betty Dowsett (nee Taylor)** who had some recollections published in a recent Newsletter, and her husband **Hill Dowsett**. My cousin Don was a Galleywood boy, but when our mother died, leaving Dad to look after four young boys and carry on working, Aunty came to live with us, bringing Don with her and so qualifying him for Moulsham School."

Names from the mailing list - 1950s

In the Summer and Autumn 2002 Newsletters, we listed names of people on our distribution list who were pupils at Moulsham Junior Boys' and Girls' Schools from 1938 to 1950. First, we can add one more name for 1938, Frank Stock, and for 1940, Dorothy Benjamin (nee Holden). Then, during the 1950s:

1950: Pat Bower (Bates), Yvonne Brooker (Youell), Jennifer Davidson (Mussell), Valerie Hines (Brett), Alan Lonsdale, Una Lowe (Rayner), Jean March (Pascoe), Christopher Raven, John Southgate, Susan Waldney (Christian)

1951: Maureen Baker (Brown), Hilary Balm (Dye), Kathleen Boot (Nash), Janet Brown (Bullock), Geoff Cable, Pauline Carr (Weavers), Elizabeth Clarke, Valerie Corby (Rudland), Angela Eaton (Brown), Aileen French (Squires), Philippa Haining (Waring), Brenda Haley (Everitt), Marea Irving (Jones), Marion Lodge (Weston), Anne Oddy (Bowerman), Pat Rushbrook (Davis), Cynthia Schofield (Pledger), Pamela Scott (Harper), Carol Southall (Standen), Malcolm Taylor, Jennifer Willmer (Bohannon)

1952: Tony Brown, Graham Fairbrass, Catriona Moule (Shuring), Angela Pavelin, Eve Reynolds (Letch), Helen Roberts, Diane Spinks (Ellcock), Lesley Taylor (Rayner), Shirley Wiffen (Adcock)

1953: Judith Tucker (Pink), Alan Twitchett, Robert Wiffen

1954: Stephen Bewers, Tim Biglin, Jenny Canham (Eve), David Clark, John Macauley, Richard Mussell, Claire Newman (Fairhead), Philip Raven, Helen Taylor (Bishop)

1955: Dilwyn Barnard, Sheila Childs

1956: Martin Dobson, Mick Purkiss, Tony Rayner

1957: Jane Bird (Mussell)

1959: Susan Hunter (Rawlinson), Barrie Stevens

Please let us know of any amendments or additions. Thanks

News in brief

First, apologies to **Peter C Smith**, whose contribution on football we have had to leave over to the Summer issue because of lack of space. It will be combined with other material for an article on sport.

Thank you to **Margaret Haldane (nee Laurence)** for her phonecall with news of folk mentioned in the Autumn issue. At one time, Margaret lived in Longfield Road, next door to **Jack Pryor** (p.7), whom she describes as a kindly, quiet, shy man, who taught her middle son to shoot. She knows that **John Davey** (one of two brothers in the painting and decorating firm mentioned on p.8) died quite recently. **John Sherman** (same page) died some time ago. Margaret is also in touch with the mother of **Peter Ratcliffe** (school leaver 1947, p.11), and tells us that Peter was awarded the CBE in 2002 for his contribution to road transport and work with disabled and disadvantaged children. Our congratulations to Peter. Peter's father invented the Ratcliffe tail-lift used on lorries, and had a garage in Baddow Road. He was also King of the Water Rats (an actor's charity) for some time, and his wife was a wonderful fund-raiser.

Pam Outhwaite (nee Drennan), who lives in Canada, writes: 'Thank you so much for the latest Newsletter. Reading through it, my memory kicked into gear, and there were so many names I recognised. One particular name that stood out was that of my old friend **Janice Phillips** (1944). I really love receiving this Newsletter - my days at Moulsham are much more vivid in my memory than those of later school years. A few more names that come to mind from those days are **Tony and Michael Feakins** and **Freddy Frost**. They lived on the same road as I did, Hamlet Road, along with Janice and **Eira Phillips**.'

Some of you may have caught a glimpse of children's author **Kes Gray**, 1968-72, on the Blue Peter Book Awards programme on television, on 15th December. As we reported in the Autumn 2002 Newsletter, Kes' attractive picture-book 'Eat Your Peas' had already won the overall Children's Book Award 2002. The same book was also short-listed for the Blue Peter finals. On this occasion, 'Eat Your Peas' was pipped at the post by a story about a pig, but Kes nevertheless had a fantastic day.

Dorothy Benjamin (nee Holden), writes: ' My brother, who is on the mailing list, is Wesley Holden. He came to stay with us this year and brought a couple of Newsletters for me to see. I remember so many of the teachers that I feel I would like to be part of the fellowship. I keep in touch with one friend from my schooldays, **Margaret Haldane (nee Laurence)**, and would like to hear from or about others. After leaving Moulsham Seniors, I went to Chelmsford Tech, 1946-9. I then worked at Brown and Son Ltd (now Travis Perkins) until 1958, when I had my daughter, Lynn. I had a son, Stephen, in 1961. I lived in Great Canfield, near Dunmow, from my marriage to Bob in 1956 until 1999, when we moved to Wiltshire to be near our daughter. I am very interested in tapestry and bobbin lace-making, and my husband and I have recently joined art classes, including botanical drawing, with North Wiltshire College.

Bob Campen emailed to say he was sorry to hear of **Dan Biglin's** death (Autumn 2002 Newsletter). He adds: 'I didn't really know the Biglin boys, though we knew each other's names. They lived at 33 Moulsham Drive, and I was friendly with **Jimmy Bulbeck** who lived at no. 35. We would walk to school via the cinder path, which was between Moulsham Drive (roughly opposite St John's Road) and Princes Road. It initially turned the 'wrong way', behind the gardens of the Biglin/Bulbeck and neighbouring houses.'

We look forward to welcoming a number of past pupils from Moulsham Senior Schools to our Open Afternoon this year, including **Sylvia Pitts (nee Rawlinson)**, her husband **Keith Pitts**, **Albert ("Bert") Digby**, and **Brian Blundell**, all of whom have many friends who were at the Juniors.