

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Spring 2005

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Update from Hilary and Kathleen

The special printed Fifth Anniversary edition of the Past Pupils' Newsletter last Autumn was clearly much appreciated. The printers did a fine job with both the layout and quality of the photos, and we were delighted to hear from so many of you who recognised faces on the pictures or recalled the events and people mentioned. Thank you for all your letters, phone calls and emails. This time we are back to our 'normal' photocopy format, but we do hope to produce more printed issues in the future, perhaps one a year.

Sad news

Following Dave Sturgeon's report of his father's failing health in the Autumn 2004 Newsletter, we were very sad to hear that former Headmaster Tom Sturgeon died on 30 December 2004. We are grateful to Dave for sending us the text of the address he gave at the funeral, extracts of which are included in the obituary on page 4.

Just a week after Mr Sturgeon's death came more sad news. Much-loved Moulsham Infants' teacher Mrs Herries (nee Godfrey) suffered a stroke just before Christmas, and died on 5 January aged 84. Tributes from Hilary Balm (Dye) and Joan Atkins are on page 5. We will gladly print further recollections of both Mr Sturgeon and Mrs Herries in future issues of the Newsletter.

In this issue

Very many thanks, as ever, to all the contributors to this issue of the Newsletter. Everything you write about life in your schooldays helps create a valuable record of the history of Moulsham and Chelmsford. Your memories often spark off those of other readers, too. This time, 'change' and 'end of an era' seem to emerge as particular themes. As well as the obituaries, we have Jennifer Bailey (Rayner)'s reflections on the recent demolition of Chelmsford Bus Station, and Kes Gray's entertaining account of the changeover from two separate Moulsham Junior Schools to a combined school in 1969. We have noticed so many changes in Chelmsford of late. Familiar old-established shops like Clarkes and Bolingbroke and Wenley's town centre department store have disappeared. We hear that the Pavilion Cinema, as well as the bus station, is to be demolished. Even the Army and Navy pub, a familiar landmark at the end of Princes Road, is about to be sold and redeveloped. If you have special memories of these or any other notable features of Chelmsford life, do please drop us a line. Your recollections will probably ring a bell with many other Newsletter readers. Please keep sending your photos, news and recollections to Kathleen Boot at 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG or by email to kathleen.boot@virgin.net - we will print as many as possible.

Open Afternoon Saturday 14th May 2005

We look forward to seeing many new and familiar faces at the 6th annual Open Afternoon for past pupils of Moulsham Junior School on Saturday 14th May. Once again we have taken care to avoid Cup Final Day, though sadly we know the date clashes with some of your holiday plans, for which we apologise. Do come along if you can, and bring any other Moulsham friends who might not yet be aware of our Newsletter and reunions. We have an ever-expanding collection of panorama and group photos to display, from 1938 to recent times, and there will be the usual opportunities to sample Hilary's home-made cakes, chat with old school friends, watch dancing displays from current pupils, and look round your former classrooms. See you there!

For those of you who like to attend the annual School Fete as well, the date this year is **Saturday 25th June**. We look forward to meeting some of you there.

Best wishes from Hilary and myself.

*Kathleen Boot
Moulsham Junior Girls' School 1951-55*

Notes from the Head Teacher, Mr Les Kemp

My mother was the worst cook I have ever known. My brother and I often discuss this feature of our childhood and realise that it was linked to her own childhood when, after the early death of her father, some of the children including my mother, were placed in a Catholic orphanage. Sunday church services were the only time they saw their mother although they were not allowed to speak to her and any other contact was limited to half a day a month.

As a child my mother never witnessed anybody prepare a family meal and this skill eluded her throughout her life. There were no scales in the kitchen or even a recipe book in the house and the same meal would be repeated day after day.

My father was a better cook and for the last twelve years of his life he prepared all of the meals. His childhood also had been very fragmented because his mother had died at a young age and he and the six other children had been passed around the extended family.

Money was always short and he would always use whatever materials he could find about the house to carry out a repair, rather than buy a spare part. Shoe polish tin lids were cut, bent into shape to be wound around the handle of the kettle to hold it in place. Time did not matter, or appearance, but a job achieved without spending money was a job well done.

I think about my own children and the children at Moulsham Junior School and wonder about the lifelong habits and skills they learn in their family life. My wish is that they gain a sense of involvement and an understanding of contributing for the common good. The parent who puts away a couple of chairs at the end of a meeting, stacks crockery on the trolley, makes coffee for everyone or attends a meeting becomes an important role model.

Today in education we are often asked for evidence or proof of something well done. My example is the recent Friends of Moulsham Junior School Family Bingo Evening. This event was sold out and at the end of the evening the hall was cleared away in record time because so many people helped. This would have delighted my dad because it did not involve money and it also delighted me because my mother had not supplied the refreshments.

School motto and House names

Pupils at Moulsham Junior Boys' School will no doubt remember the original school motto: 'Work and be happy', displayed on a board in their assembly hall (now the North Hall) as a daily reminder and encouragement to the lads. This board was presented, as were the honours boards, by Mr W C C Turner in 1942. We are not aware of any equivalent motto for the Junior Girls, though 'Look sharp' might well have served the purpose (perhaps you have better suggestions?). When the two schools combined in 1969, we assume that 'Work and be happy' was retired, along with the honours boards and the first Boys' School song, which starts:

'Let us sing of this school where, under its rule,

We prepare for our manhood to come . . .'

Kes Gray's article (page 13) suggests the motto was still in use until then, and also notes that on joining up, the school switched from bird-name Houses to royal Castles.

The present school motto, 'Each Working For All', is to some extent a play on words. The initial letters are the same as those of the four current House names: Earth, Water, Fire and Air. The present motto chimes nicely with the hopes Mr Kemp expresses in his report, above, for the children to gain a sense of involvement and contributing to the common good - a fine Moulsham tradition.

Obituary: Mr Tom Williams Sturgeon, Headmaster 1957-82

Mr Sturgeon was well known to many of you as Headmaster of Moulsham Junior Boys' School from 1957, and then Head Teacher of the newly combined Moulsham Junior School from 1969 until his retirement in 1982. We were very sad to hear of Mr Sturgeon's death on 30 December 2004, following several years of suffering Alzheimer's disease. On behalf of all past pupils, we send our deepest sympathy to his sons Dave and Chris and to his widow, Mrs Pat Sturgeon.

The following extracts are taken from the address given by Mr Sturgeon's son Dave at Mr Sturgeon's funeral on 17th January 2005:

"Born in March 1920 at Barrow near Bury St Edmunds, Tom Sturgeon left Colchester Royal Grammar School in 1937 and went to work at a sugar beet factory, moving on soon after to work at the Greene King brewery in Bury St Edmunds, 25 miles from home from where he cycled every week. He entered King Alfred's Teacher Training College and qualified in 1940. He always said that he survived with someone looking after him, and this became true when he narrowly missed joining the Suffolk Regiment from which only a few returned. In fact, he joined the Royal Armoured Corps in August 1940 and was posted to 17/21st Lancers in England and then to the 25th Dragoons in India. He was commissioned and posted to 45th Calvary, Indian Army and was then demobbed in 1946.



He started teaching at St. George's School, Canterbury Road, Colchester in September 1946 and became Head of Castle Hedingham School in 1953, moving on to become Head of Moulsham County Junior Boys School in 1957. This later doubled in size when he was appointed Head of the combined boys' and girls' school in 1969. He enjoyed 36 years in teaching, 29 of which as a headmaster before retiring in 1982. He had also been a long serving member of the National Union of Teachers.

He married Eileen in 1941 and had two sons whose names elude me! [Chris and Dave!] Sadly, after 34 happy years of marriage, Mum died in 1975. He married Pat Purdy [former Head of Moulsham Infants' School] in 1976.

In 1959 he survived hours of difficult surgery, ending up with his ileostomy. He was told afterwards that he would otherwise have had only 2 weeks to live. Following his operation he joined the Ileostomy Association, serving as secretary to the local branch. In 1969 until 1977 he became Chairman of the National Executive Committee, during which time a revolution occurred in the care which the Ileostomy Association was able to give to its members and the medical profession to their patients. Locally he served as chairman, and later secretary, to St John's Hospital League of Friends, and also worked for The Citizens' Advice Bureau. He was a freemason for over 50 years.

Tom Sturgeon was always one to offer help and assistance. He found time to listen and help those in need. He led by example, and took a very keen interest in his family. He was a warm, welcoming host on many occasions at family gatherings and official meetings. It has been said that Tom was something to everyone: Dad, Son, Brother, Cousin, Nephew, Uncle, Husband, Grandad, Great Grandad, Head of the Sturgeon Family, Worshipful Brother, Teacher, Headmaster, Chairman, President, Host, Neighbour and to all a friend. "

Obituary: Mrs Margot Herries, nee Godfrey, former teacher at Moulsham Infants' School

Joan Atkins, 1943-47, writes:

'It was with great sadness that we learned of the death on 5th January 2005 of Mrs Margot Herries. Mrs Herries taught in Moulsham Infants School during the 1940s and 1950s, when she was known to her pupils as Miss Godfrey.

As a former pupil of Friars Infants School, I did not really know Mrs Herries until I joined the Rainsford Evening Youth Centre in the early 1950s, where she and her future husband, Peter, served as part-time assistant wardens. Margot, as we teenagers knew her, had a very warm personality and a good sense of humour, hence she was not just a person in authority, but a friend.

We were all pleased when, a few years ago, Margot was able to accept an invitation to attend one of the regular Moulsham School get-togethers organised by Jennifer Bailey (Rayner) and we believe that she thoroughly enjoyed meeting and chatting with a number of her former pupils of many years ago.

Mrs Herries - formerly Margot Godfrey - will be remembered and missed by all who knew her and sincere sympathy is extended to her husband, Peter, her daughters and grandchildren in their sad loss.'

Hilary Balm (Dye), 1951-55, writes:

'Miss Godfrey (later Mrs Herries) was the reception class teacher when I started at Moulsham Infants' School in 1949. She was so welcoming and reassuring to the new intake, and I particularly remember her wonderful smile and her gentleness. Being in Miss Godfrey's class was an ideal introduction to my school life. I was recently reminded by her daughter, Sara, who read the eulogy at the funeral service, of Miss Godfrey's bicycle! In my time it was a black one with dress guards covering the rear wheel! I wonder if others remember it?'

YOUR LETTERS

From Lawrence Hopkins, 1938-40:

"The Autumn 2004 Newsletter was most interesting, and awakened memories of times long past. I was a pupil in Mr Picken's class from 1938 to 1940, after transferring from Trinity Road School. My parents had previously moved from Sandford Road to St Vincent's Road, Moulsham, in 1937.

The main reason for this letter is in response to the request for information and identification of the boys in Mr Picken's class. Thinking back to that period, I was rather a dozy individual, subject to frequent periods of day-dreaming, much to the exasperation of Mr Picken. Consequently, I am unable to identify other boys in the class, but think I can recognise myself as the rather sullen looking individual second from front in the second row of desks, sitting on the left hand side as viewed. However, if anyone else lays claim to this boy I am sure their memory will be better than mine.

A memory, which may be shared with other pupils who attended the first day, is of the assembly in the playground, where we were shepherded into groups of presumably prospective classes, and the teachers were lined up in front of us, although not in any particular order. I can remember thinking "I wonder which one will be allocated to our group - hope it's that young man at the end with his college scarf draped around his neck". And as it happened, that young man turned out to be Mr Picken. Other memories include the marked contrast between Trinity Road and the Moulsham Schools. Moulsham School appeared so light and airy, with aesthetic qualities that would be difficult to find their equal some 66 years later."

From Marcus Knight, 1939:

"Congratulations on the Autumn 2004 issue of the Newsletter, magnificently printed! Several of the recent issues have reached me via my eldest son's family - his wife, Karen, is a parent Governor, and granddaughters Lydia (now moved to the Seniors), Suzanna and Abigail (moving up next year) have been pupils at Moulsham Juniors. For some time, I have thought that I should write to you, and this latest issue made me finally decide to do so. I must be somewhere in the photographs on page 2 of the Autumn 2004 Newsletter. I was certainly in the same class as the boys listed by the top photo, with Mr Hymas, but I do not recognise myself. My wife Margaret (nee Hewitt), was also at the school, a founder member, as was I.

The column on page 3 by Diane Berthelot (Lawson) made very interesting reading, because my family lived next door, and heard many rehearsals!. On the same page, the sight of Mary Tamkin brought back more memories. Of course in those days the boys and girls were segregated, but she and I were in the same violin class, taught by Miss Wallinger in London Road (the 'big' house opposite Queen's Street). Somewhere in my files I have photographs of those days, which I will try to look out for you."

From Julie Kilgore (De'Ath), 1963-67

"A dear friend of mine sent me the Autumn Newsletter. I think it's great. My name is Julie Kilgore now, but I used to be Julie De'Ath. I attended all three Moulsham Schools starting with the Infants, Juniors and then the Seniors (graduated in 1972). Just like my sisters and brother: Christine De'Ath, Gloria De'Ath and Keith De'Ath. I started school in 1961, and I have a copy of the picture that was taken in the same year. I now live in America, and have done since 1981. I was in England this past October, and I always drive by the School. I would love to stop by sometime, just to reminisce. Some of the peoples names I remember are Andrea Williams, Sandra Champ, Sandra Brown, Jasmine Gyps, Jane Durand and her side kick Debra (I don't seem to remember her last name), also a girl named Kathleen. I also remember Richard Geer and Larry Lamb. We used to talk through the fence that divided the school playing area. I remember that on Sports Day I used to run very fast, so I got a lot of Certificates. I also went on to run for Mid-Essex when I reached the Senior School."

From Helen Roberts, 1952-56:

"Congratulations on the new glossy newsletter.

The girl on the left of the Scottish sword dance photo [page 10] is Jane Chapman, who lived in Great Baddow and was a friend of mine. I think the photo must have been taken in 1956, the year I left. I remember my father making the sword, which was made of balsa wood and pivoted in the centre. There were 4 rounds of the sword dance, and I swear that I can remember every step of each of them. For some years it was my party piece to dance them. But I haven't probably got the energy nowadays to actually take my feet off the floor to dance them. I had the impression it was the first year that the sword dance had been part of the dance display which was performed in the courtyard."

Changes of address and email addresses

Many thanks to all those who have been in touch recently to let us know their new postal or email addresses. We have updated our record, and would be grateful if others would also kindly let us have new addresses when you move. We should also be particularly glad to have up-to-date email addresses for Martin Jackson and for former teacher Mr Peter Davidson, for whom we have no postal addresses. If anyone is in touch with either of them, could you please ask them to let us have their current email or postal address if they would like to continue receiving newsletters.

More from Diane Berthelot (Lawson), 1939-42

As promised in the Autumn 2004 Newsletter, here are some further memories and news from Diane:

'When I was ten, my Uncle Les asked me to join his small concert party, which toured round Essex at weekends to help the war effort. We entertained, one snowy day, at Broomfield Hospital. I can visualise the scene now. Wounded soldiers and airmen lay on mattresses in the big hall. I was shivering as I tapped my way through a song and dance routine. You see, all the doors and windows were open as it was a TB Hospital at that time. As you can guess, I caught a heavy cold, but it was worth it to cheer those poor chaps up.

There is one incident I recall which was frightening, but also exciting. There were 3 or 4 of us trailing home from school in the rain one day when suddenly there was a roar as a Nazi plane skimmed over our heads, popping its machine guns. We dived into a ditch beside Princes Road. We were lucky, as all of us seemed to be okay, but what an exciting tale we had to tell on reaching home.

My Dad became an Air Raid Warden with his friend Mr Brooks who lived a few doors away. When the siren went they were quickly out parading the streets and proudly wearing their tin hats. In later years when I sang at private functions and could not get a pianist, Dad would accompany me on the piano. He played this instrument beautifully, even though he could not read a note of music! At Moulsham, I felt honoured to sing at school events, especially at morning assembly. Art classes were also a joy, and to this day I happily paint miniature water-colours, although it is a little more difficult now with only one eye to work with.

I went happily through Senior School remembering Miss Howard, the Headmistress who managed to place me in a job as Junior Clerk in the Further Education Department at County Hall. I was happy there working my way up the ladder, so to speak, and joined the Chelmsford Operatic and Dramatic Society as my main hobby. I played many roles over the years but one part I will never forget is the part of 'Nanette' in 'No No Nanette' when I was fifteen.

In 1959 I flew to Paris with a friend for the Easter weekend. It was on this trip that I met Peter. After meeting again we got engaged and were married at Chelmsford Cathedral in June 1961. Our son David was born in August 1962.

In 1977 I injured my spine, which put paid to my dancing days. That's when my painting really took off. August 1981 saw the sad death of my Mum. Two weeks later Peter and I were involved in a serious car accident. It was a miracle we survived. The angels were certainly looking after us that day.

In 1987, we moved to Norfolk. Peter managed to get a job at the Ross Food Factory at Worstead, 6 miles from here. I joined the North Walsham W.I. Market where I could sell my cards, notelets etc. When Peter retired he also joined the Women's Institute, baking delicious cakes and pastries.

Through my poetry books, I had the privilege of reading some of my poems over the air on Radio Norfolk on the Maggie Secker programme. I really enjoyed that. It was quite an experience!

I made many friends at Moulsham Junior School and still keep in touch with several of them. I would like to thank Phyllis Chatelier (Little) for her article in the Summer 2004 Newsletter, opening the door on happy memories of school days at Moulsham Junior School, and also for remembering me in a long blue dress, singing Alice Blue Gown.'

Pat Cox: Early days at Moulsham

We were delighted to receive these two photos from Pat Cox, taken on her way home from Moulsham Infants' School in 1940. The smaller picture shows Pat (left) with her big sister Sheila in Princes Road. They are both wearing their gas-mask boxes which had recently been issued. The other picture was taken the same day at "the swings" in Oaklands Park, which was on their way home from school. This photo includes a distant relative of Pat's mother's who was evacuated to Chelmsford from the East End of London, and came to Moulsham School for a time. Pat comments that it is remarkable that this child is wearing black stockings, an article of clothing completely unknown at Moulsham School as far as she was aware, and utterly out of fashion at the time!



Pat has sent us the following evocative recollections of her time at Moulsham Infants' School, and has promised to follow them up with memories of Moulsham Juniors as time permits.

'The building of the Moulsham Schools in 1938 within walking distance of our house in Elm Road, was a stroke of good fortune for my parents, who were wondering where to send my sister and myself, when we got to school age. It was also equally fortunate for us, as we received a very fine foundation to our education there.

It was September 1940 when I started in the Infants, aged four, and I still remember the first morning, crying in the lavatories, with my sister and her friend valiantly urging me to cross the playground and enter class one. I still have a clear picture of it all, with the asphalt playground, the verandah all round with classrooms opening off, the toilet block in the corner and the brick air-raid shelters (just constructed) along the edge of the field. At the far end was a bit of grass with a lovely new climbing frame, which I looked at longingly, but never had the courage to approach. My sister was told to take charge of me for our walks to and from the school four times a day. This went well until one afternoon, when an air-raid warning caused us all to leave our classes and move into the air-raid shelters. On emerging after the "All Clear", my sister was told by one of the teachers to "Hurry off home". This she did, apparently forgetting her younger sister who was in a different shelter! I was found wandering about on my own after all the others had departed. Luckily I remember little about it.

I must have been a very nervous child at first, because I clearly remember one occasion, when it got to lunch break, (mid-morning break for milk and anything you had brought to eat) the playground had become a swirling mass of boys and girls, all shouting and screaming, I was too frightened to make my way to the lavatories (sorely needed), until a very kind little girl called Cherry[?] offered to accompany me, and walked with me around the verandah. How grateful I was to Cherry, and how I marvelled at the boldness of Barbara Carstairs (a girl in my class) to be seen playing alongside the boys in the midst of this swirling mass of children.

My earliest recollections of the class are very vague, but I do remember sitting on a straw mat on the floor of the assembly hall, having *The Wind in the Willows* read to us, probably on a Friday afternoon. Later on, things definitely looked up. At an early stage we were divided into "readers and non-readers" and since my sister and her friend, Phyllis Little, had started teaching me to read before I entered school, I went straight into the "readers". At this time I recall a boy in my class, small of stature, with very blond hair, name of Christopher, who had lost the top of two of his fingers in an accident. I also remember there was a boy called Donald, who had very dark eyes, which I found very attractive. However, I figured out that it was no use getting interested in Donald, because you could only marry someone with the same colour eyes as yourself! (This on account of both my parents having bluish-coloured eyes).

I suppose it was in the second year that we got onto "sums". Does anyone remember the "sum-cards"? These were white postcards on each of which was written a simple adding-up or subtraction question. They were filed in a shoebox by the teacher. You went up to collect a card and when you had worked out the answer, you exchanged it for the next card in the box. In this way the child worked at his or her own pace. Presumably the sums got a little harder the further back in the box you got.

When it came to the painting class, I was in my element! There were two wooden easels in our classroom, and on one occasion I was chosen, along with John Black, to use one of these easels, standing at the front of the class, while the others worked at their desks. About the same time, one of the staff made us a baker's shop, out of wood and paper, and large enough to walk into. The idea was that we went to the shop to buy goods, and in this way learned to use money and count out change. We had a wonderful time making buns and loaves out of sticky papier-mache and painting them to look quite realistic. John and I were given the special responsibility of painting the roof for it. I remember this chiefly because I managed to knock the pot of paint all over the floor!

One other event remains in my mind concerning the same John Black, which made him quite notorious. He shared a desk with the aforementioned Barbara Carstairs and it seems one day he took it into his head to cut the buttons off her overcoat! I do not know the reason. However, Barbara's father came up to the school and, in front of the class, John Black had to make a full apology for his misdemeanour.

One of my last recollections of the Infants Department is the toy fire engine. This splendid red vehicle was (I think) donated by a parent, and was considered very special indeed. It was kept in the assembly hall and was reserved as a reward for the boy or girl who had been the best behaved during the week. The said child was allowed to pedal it around the hall in solitary state, during the Friday dinner break while others looked on enviously through the glass doors. I was awarded this honour on one occasion, but remember it as a rather lonely business, and I don't think the "driving bug" had got hold of me by then.'

Pat adds that she enjoyed the Autumn 2004 Newsletter. It mentioned several people she knew, in particular the Barnards (Geoff) and Linda Broadway, who lived next door to her, with her two older sisters.

Memories from Jennifer Bailey (Rayner), 1943 and her classmates

And so the latest blot on the landscape of Chelmsford is in the process of being demolished. I expect you have guessed it is "The Bus Station". Built in 1937 in the fashionable Art Deco style, in its heyday it must have stood out amongst the nearby buildings. At our annual get-together last November with fellow Moulsham girls, we thought we had better commit to paper some of our Bus Station memories. Having been born in the mid-thirties, these are some of our recollections of our childhood.

Our most vivid recollections were of the school holidays when our mothers used to take us to the seaside. The best way of ensuring you would be able to travel to your destination was to go to the Bus Station. Sometimes the scheduled double-decker bus was full and a "relief" single-decker was provided. One of the seaside towns was Southend on Sea. It was quite a long undulating ride with lots of sharp bends: (before we had heard of by-passes!). Not happy to wait until you reached the beach to eat your Mother's sandwiches, you tucked in from your paper bag. In many cases, after a few miles and more sharp corners, the paper bag came in very useful!

Maldon was the other place so many of us recalled - a shorter distance to their Promenade Park. As children, we thought this was the "seaside". In fact it was a man-made lake edged with sand, where we could build sandcastles, paddle and amuse ourselves. Mothers looked on from the grassy park banks. At the end of the day, a trail of tired children made their way back to Maldon Bus Station to stand in a long queue to wait for the bus back home.

The Bus Station became a different meeting place when we reached our teens. Perhaps we had been to the nearby Public Library after school or was this just an excuse to wait in the Station to see the boys from the Grammar and Technical Schools?

The cheapest way to London was the Bow bus when we were visiting relatives in the London area. With our new found independence after leaving school and working, stopping along the way to visit either Brentwood, Romford or Ilford, we thought we were looking and buying in the London shops!!

Transport in the 1940s and 1950s was so very different from today. There were few families who owned a motor car and a train journey would have been a rare occasion. When the new Bus Station is built, will it still hold the same magnetism as it did all those years ago because of the reliance now of the motor car. Time will tell.

I would like to thank all my Moulsham classmates for telling me their stories of trips from the Bus Station. To this day, I still go to Maldon and often meet my school chums. We walk down a quaint High Street down to the Promenade Park and remember those days when we thought we were at the "seaside". But nowadays we don't have to rely entirely on the bus!!

School website

The school website address is www.moulshamjuniorschool.org.uk
Copies of this newsletter and previous issues can be found on the past pupils' page.

John Daldry, 1947-51: The Past Pupils' Newsletter: a source of happy memories

I was very pleased to read the article by Phyllis Chatelier, nee Little, in the Summer 2004 Newsletter. I was myself thinking of writing a short story about Mr Little, who was caretaker of the school when I was a pupil between 1947 and 1951. You see, Mr Little was my Uncle Alf. Those who benefited from a Moulsham education will by now have worked out that Phyllis and her sister Paulette were my cousins.

Uncle Alf's wife, Auntie Beat, was my father's sister and they lived in Elm Road, next door to John, Doug and Jeff Barnard (all Moulsham pupils), who I remember well and our paths have crossed from time to time. I cannot say the same about Phyllis and Paulette. To my regret, I had lost contact with both of them, and was therefore delighted to read Phyllis' article. We have now made contact and I thank the Past Pupils' Newsletter most sincerely for enabling this to happen. Having shown Phyllis' article and my draft of this one to my sister Wendy, I find that Wendy had been in postal contact with Phyllis and Paulette all the time. However, without the Newsletter, I would not have got in touch with them again.

Phyllis' article, along with others I have read in previous issues, brought back memories that, in the main, are nice to recall. I certainly remember playing football in the playground, and how the tennis balls would often be lost on the roof of the air raid shelter. Never fear, Uncle Alf would regularly go where no pupil was allowed to, and retrieve balls by the bucket load.

My attendance at Moulsham Juniors was after the war, so I found Phyllis' wartime memories of great interest. When not yet at school, I can remember watching spitfires and hurricanes chasing the doodlebugs, and standing on my grandmother's front step in Crompton Street during a storm and watching the barrage balloons burn with their bright red flame.

Like Phyllis, I moved on to the Senior School. The story was that first years got pushed into the fishpond in the playground, and that many other unpleasant acts would befall us. Not so. By the time I arrived, the fishpond had been filled in, and a whole new world opened up. In particular, for me, it was a world of music and drama.

Phyllis also mentions Maureen Rippingale, otherwise known as actress Carole Lesley. She was the cousin of Linda and Brian Rippingale who were born and brought up in the house next to my parent's in Waterhouse Street. Although he was a couple of years younger, Brian and I were close friends until we both started work at the age of fifteen.

I entered local government and worked for the Borough Engineer at Chelmsford, whilst Brian joined the police force. Some years later, Brian was tragically killed whilst on duty but I and my sister are occasionally in contact with Linda.

I remember very well Phyllis's late husband, Cecil. Indeed we all used to go on holidays together to Lowestoft, and Cecil used to take excellent home movies of us all enjoying ourselves. My father will have featured on some of them and how I would love to see them again. My memories of my father are somewhat limited as he died when I was twelve. Who knows, Phyllis's article may have made this possible.

After the death of my father, things were difficult but as I progressed through the Senior School, my confidence grew due to my interest in music and drama. Thanks to Taffy Jones, whose nationality needs no explanation, I used to sing hymns during his religious instruction class and at morning assembly. Keith Lodge was another who sang. Many years later, I met Keith again on a golf course and he had made a great success of running his own engineering company. Thanks to Mr Wheelhouse, the drama teacher, I was also introduced to drama and, through school plays and the like, met another old boy, Peter Smith, who encouraged me to join the Chelmsford Operatic and Dramatic Society. This very middle class

society allowed me at the age of fifteen to appear in the musical "Dear Miss Pheobe" at the Regent Cinema in Chelmsford, now unfortunately a nightclub. Thereafter I acted, sang and danced in many shows including Will Parker in "Oklahoma" and Riff in "West Side Story". I also enjoyed some professional work and the time for decision arrived. Do I try my hand at being a full time professional actor or do I get a proper job?

The latter was the case. Music and drama took a back seat to four nights a week at Mid Essex Technical College to get five O levels at GCE to enable me to study for the Royal Town Planning Institute Exams. To relieve the frustration of study, I joined Chelmsford Rugby Club and the Chelmsford Wrestling Club. Quite a change in lifestyle really! This enabled me to enjoy an active social life without conflict with my studies. I later went to London University, became a town planner, left local government and started my own town planning practice and the rest, as they say, is history.

Whilst my wife, my daughter and I all have proper jobs, my son does not. He is, with our blessing, working in the film industry. He was Production Co-ordinator for the recent film, Troy, and appears to be succeeding in a vocation in which his father feared to tread. However, as a result of my years at Moulsham I was given the chance. I will never forget the opportunities that opened up for me following my school days at Moulsham Juniors and Moulsham Seniors.

Obituary, Helen Rose Green (Nash), Moulsham Junior Girls' School 1949-53

My sister Helen died unexpectedly, aged 62, on 9th December 2004. She went into hospital on that day for open heart surgery intended to improve her quality of life, but, tragically, did not recover from the operation. She is sadly missed by her husband, four children, and all her family and friends.

Helen was born in Chelmsford in 1941. It being wartime, with my parents living in Crompton Street, right next door to Crompton's works, Helen was sent to stay with my Grandmother in Halstead for safety. In fact, she remained there until she was nearly seven, returning to join her younger sisters and brother in time to attend Moulsham Infants' School for a while before moving up to the Junior Girls' in September 1949. I gather it was something of a shock to find she was not an only child after all!

I was two years behind Helen at school, and remember her playing 'up the houses' with the older girls (Angela Yarrow, Paula Turner, and Sandra Thomas are names which spring to mind). In true Moulsham tradition, she was also skilled at doing handstands or two-balls, even three-balls, against the air raid shelter walls at playtime. In school, Helen was especially good at maths, but also had a good memory for stories. When she went on from Moulsham Juniors to Brentwood County High School for Girls as a boarder, she would return in the holidays with gripping versions of the latest books she had been studying at school. I remember her squeezing every last ounce of suspense and horror from her detailed account of Pip's first encounter with the convict in Dickens' Great Expectations. Later in life, she was a great fan of Terry Pratchett, and converted me to Discworld as well.

On leaving school at 18, Helen was accepted for an apprenticeship in radio engineering with Marconi's, and proceeded to litter our bedroom floor with amazing and precarious assemblages of wires, radio valves etc which occasionally produced audible sounds. We had to be jolly careful where we trod! It was at Marconi's that Helen met her husband, Edwin, a fellow apprentice. They married in 1962, moved to Shropshire a few years later, and had four lovely children who were fully computer literate long before their teachers. Later, Helen and Edwin became active members of the Baptist Church, and were both Deacons of Madeley Baptist Church at the time of her death. Her funeral, just before Christmas, was a rousing celebration of her life as well as a time for friends and family to support and comfort each other. Helen's memory lives on in our hearts.

Kathleen Boot

Moulsham Junior School Memories 1968-72 Kes Gray

I joined Moulsham Juniors on the cusp. It was 1968, one year before the boys' school merged with the girls' school. What very different schools they were and became.

I was perhaps a little less apprehensive than most pupils on my first day, because my best friend and neighbour Timothy Roe had moved up from the infant school one year before. He met me that morning, shepherded me into the assembly hall, pointed me in the right directions and became my trusty guide for the first few days while I found my feet.

It was handy having a mate with a year's experience of school already tucked under his belt. Or so I thought. What I hadn't reckoned on was that Tim had also had a year to make enemies. Within three days I found myself ambushed at the Dorset Avenue end of the school drive by some of his older adversaries. To my horror my new school cap was snatched from my head and hurled onto the corrugated roof of the Senior school. I walked home in cap-less silence that afternoon and when I returned to the school the next the day to retrieve it, I got my mum to do the asking. It wasn't the start that I had been hoping for, but the moment my cap sailed up onto that roof I knew that the innocence of my Infant School days was long gone.

Moulsham Junior School was Big Boys stuff. It was a place of learning, instruction and admonishment. There was fun to be had, but every breathing moment was tempered by a strict sense of discipline and propriety. Prefects marshalled the corridors ('*Don't run*', '*Stay off the grass*') and the playground. ('*Stay out of the air raid shelters!*'). At lunchtimes, yellow badges goose-stepped along the dinner queues, checking boys' feet for plimsolls and hands for grime. Any pupil who hadn't acquainted his hands with the carbolic smelling squirty soap prior to dinner or had been in too much of a rush to change properly after PE would be unceremoniously sent *to the steps*.

In Junior School terms, being sent *under the board* was the equivalent of being transported to Australia. The board in question was a blackboard, located in full view of the school lawn and uncomfortably close to Mr. Sturgeon's office. Boys sent under the board would have to stand meekly beside it until the dark suited arm of the headmaster eventually drew them into his office.

Discipline was everything, or so it seemed to me. Although the cane was used sparingly by the headmaster the threat of it was ever present. Corporal punishment was a part of school life in those days especially for unrulier pupils in their final year. In fact it has to be said, some teachers achieved considerable notoriety through their individual approaches to class discipline. Of course for an impressionable 8 year old, fact and myth blurred big time, but I was reliably informed by Timothy Roe that if you wanted your side burns twisted go to Mr Dunston. For a whack with a two foot wooden ruler, ask Mr. McGinley. For the cane, see Mr Ogden or was it Hodgson? And for a referral to the headmaster, see Mr. Picken. Sounds grim, but it wasn't. Moulsham Junior Boys school was a wonderful school, strict but fair, regimental, but Boys Own.

Play times were a hoot. If I wasn't flicking cards, I was playing conkers (without goggles and body armour), peering at daddy long legs, dropping litter into the incinerator, stamping on icy puddles, queuing for the tuck shop, grimacing at the poo spattered toilet pans, trying to wee higher than my mates, or staring up at the school roof where the tennis ball had invariably been toe poked. Cue Noddy, the world's finest and most genial caretaker, who would drop everything to scale a ladder for you and then shower you with all of the balls that had accumulated on the roof over the previous weeks. What a great bloke Noddy was.

Not so great, was the school milk; in the summer, too warm and creamy and in the winter too cold and icy. The only thing I enjoyed drinking less as a child was syrup of figs. School dinners were something that I did look forward to though. Chocolate custard or strawberry custard, ladled liberally over feather light slabs of vanilla sponge, the smell of the canteen on a good day, (Hungarian goulash, spam fritters) or the reek of the canteen on a bad day (cheese flan) are all still fresh in my mind.

In fact so much of that first year is still with me. Memories of my teacher Mrs Docwra, my first encounters with a bottle of Quink, listening to the Borrowers in class, learning never to use the word 'nice' descriptively, singing 'Work and be Happy' the school song, marching out of assembly to 'Onward Christian Soldiers', the sight of that roaring log fire in the winter staff room, the quest for house points and the names of the five houses themselves; *Wren* (brown flag) *Yellowhammer* (yellow flag) *Kingfisher* (Blue) *Robin* (Red) and my own house *Woodpecker* (Green).

By the time that the end of year exam results were posted on the wall in the corridor just along from Mr. Picken's Class, I had the oxygen of a Boy's School coursing through my veins. I was steeped in the culture of the place, cowed by the Turner Award winning plaques that lined the assembly hall walls and drilled into obedience by the long standing traditions of a strict Boys school.

Cue the girls. When the chain link fencing that separated the Boys' and Girls' play grounds was removed in 1969, two things ran through my mind. One was that the length of our football pitch had effectively doubled. The second was that I would see Pinky again. 'Pinky' (Catherine Pinder) had been my unofficial girlfriend in Infant School. (Unofficial in the sense that I hadn't actually got round to telling her). Now after an enforced separation of one year we were destined to meet again. Things got even better for me when we were reunited only desk lids apart in Mr. Davidson's class. I was head over heels in love with Pinky throughout my Junior school years and insanely jealous of any other potential suitors (Mark Alexander, David Petch). Needless to say, by the time we left Mrs. Taylor's class in 1972, I still hadn't got round to telling her.

The arrival of the girls changed the school forever. Out went the disciplinarians, in came country dancing. Out went the rousing school song and in came a limp tambourine tapping tribute to *little raindrops and grains of sand*. The cane was never spoken of again, side burns were never twisted and two foot wooden rulers became well, two foot wooden rulers. The transformation from Boys school to Mixed school was swift, but the adjustment was remarkably painless.

Kiss chase became a playtime option, although football was much preferred. At least fifteen minutes of every lunch time would be spent choosing teams. Manchester United would invariably play 'Ajacks' (Ajax) with the air raid shelter at the lower end of the playground providing one goal, and two jumpers at the other end providing the other. We played with tennis balls, although the games sometimes achieved Premiership status with the introduction of a bigger bouncier plastic ball.

By the third year, the house football team beckoned. With the arrival of the girls, birds had been replaced by castles. *Sandringham* (green) *Windsor* (red) *Buckingham* (blue) *Balmoral* (purple?) and *Caernarvon* (yellow). From house team I progressed to the school team. I was never a great footballer. I could hoof for England and had energy to spare, but as captain I left the skilful play to the others. Parked safely in the middle of the field, where I could duck out of a header, certain that it wouldn't bounce and go in, I would watch in admiration as our star players went to town. In Gary Barker, we had the best goalkeeper in the league, in Shane Champion we had the closest thing to a Bobby Charlton volley. In Lee Darg, we had a forward built like Rooney and in Graham Moore we had Billy Whizz. We had a good team, and after coming back from 2-0 down against Ingatestone in the first round of the Andrews Cup to win 3-2, we progressed all the way to the final where we met a far better team (Witham Templars) and lost 4-0. Setting a true Captain's example, I cried like a baby after the match.

I think it's fair to say, most pupils lived for playtime. Derek Beeson, certainly did, swapping his entire collection of bound 'Tell Me' comics for David Chambers' larder full of caramel wafers. I don't remember any fights or bad feeling between anyone, just football, football, football and the occasional sunny flirtation with the girls.

It was all so much fun. I remember the partial solar eclipse that darkened the play ground one lunchtime, the end of year plays, the carol concerts at the local hospitals, the Boys V Girls netball match, the Teachers V Pupils rounders match, the giant black and white humbug that Michael Henderson gave me one sunny lunch time, sports days, the trip to Ingatestone Hall, the trip to London to see 'Give A Dog A Bone', David Chambers' invincible conker (or was it a piece of meteorite?), the smell of cut grass and toadstools on the school field, the swapping, reading PG Tips tea cards on the way home from school, coming in one Saturday morning to sit the 11+, playing British Bulldog, assemblies on the lawn, the Gas alert in assembly, the smell of the soap in the wash rooms, the rows of clothes pegs, the rolling blackboards, the blue hymn books, packets of Glees, the rain gauge, black jacks, fruit salads, batman cards, football cards and best of all, being sent home when it snowed.

Without a shadow of a doubt, my days at Moulsham Juniors comprised the happiest four years of my childhood. My prize for best teacher has to go to Mrs. Donovan, who to my mind was a friend and teacher in equal proportion.

My award for the most eccentric kid in class has to go to Jeremy Thackeray, who sucked his hankies and doubled as a dustbin, eating blotting paper soaked in ink, drawing pins and pencils to order. I suspect he may have gone on to invent the Pot Noodle.

Hello also, to all these names from the 68-72 period that despite the thirty years that have passed are still present in the misty recesses of my mind:

David Moore (Lortle), Christopher Dowsett (Tibby), David Peplow, Nathan Bearman, Richard Stockley, Paul Toms (Menal), Claire Sweeny, Lyn Sudbury, Trevor Cooper, Michael King, Caroline Massam, David Smith, Erika Mitchell, Jean Staplehurst, Louise Daniels, Mark Fossey, Clive Wheatstone, Robert Dullidge, Kevin Dunbar, Christopher Smith, Carole Rees, Malcolm Knight, Joanna? Granville (Granny) Suzanne Webber, Mrs. Wilkinson (dinner lady) Mrs Shepherd? (dinner lady) Stanley Greatrix (card flicker) Gavin Farrow (year above), Paul Brookes, Theresa Marshall, Stephen Cooke (year above), Richard Hiskey, Susan Wilkinson, Gary and Raymond Owers (year above) and the short blond boy in Class 4.2 (best friend of Clive Wheatstone) and dark pony tailed girl with a fringe in Class 4.1 that I can see as clear as day, but infuriatingly can't put a name to...was it Sharon Hollocks or Horrocks?!

Editors' note: As many of you will know, Kes Gray is a highly successful children's author. He has already had about a dozen children's picture books published, including the popular 'Eat Your Peas'. His first full-length story, 'Nelly the Monster Sitter', will be in the bookshops from 17th March, priced £4.99. It has been shortlisted for Ottakar's Children's Book Prize, and Kes has been named as one of the current Top Ten children's authors. He will be following up his new book with two further Nelly stories later this year. Congratulations, Kes!

Mumbo Jumbo Sapient: school activities in 1977

In the Autumn 2004 Newsletter, we promised more extracts from the 1970s Moulsham Junior School magazine, Mumbo Jumbo Sapient (which translates as 'wise rubbish'). Here are a few activity reports from the 1977 issue. Perhaps some of you remember taking part, or recall other favourite hobby groups at Moulsham Juniors?

Photographic Club, report by Fiona Healy

We hold a photographic club on a Wednesday at half past three till four fifteen. We use the first aid room, which we call the dark room. In the window we put up blinds which are made from black plastic, and there is a safe light to let us see what we are doing. Afterwards we put objects on the photographic paper, then we turn the main light on for three or four seconds. These objects leave their shadow on the paper, but you cannot see it until the paper has been developed.

Stamp Club, report by Andrew Eversden

At stamp club we swap stamps and look at stamps and we try to find out where stamps come from, if the owner does not know. We also try to guess how old they are and how much they are worth.

The Old People's Project, report by Karen Carpenter

The first part of our Old People's project each year is to raise money to help them. We do this in June when we hold a sponsored walk around our school field. Last year we raised £260 for the elderly. We take an interest in the ladies of the Geriatric Ward of St John's Hospital. In the summer, once a month, they are taken out in the afternoon for a drive by minibus. They come to School about four o'clock and we give them afternoon tea. They usually stay for about half an hour. Last Christmas, we entertained forty senior citizens from Purbeck Court at Great Baddow. They came to School about one o'clock and were given a Christmas dinner in the canteen. During the afternoon they were entertained in the school hall by the Choir and Orchestra and they joined in the singing of Christmas carols. After this we gave them afternoon tea and presented them with gift vouchers.

Chess Club, report by Clifford Ray and Michael Warder

When we came back to School in January, Mrs Healy sent out a notice to say that a Chess Club was going to be formed. There was great excitement throughout the School and lots of people came to the first meeting. They didn't all come again. The number of people who come to the Chess Club has slowly increased, but we would like more players so that we can build up a better team.

The School Orchestra, report by Suzanne Reeves

Mr Davidson runs our orchestra, and at the moment we have about thirty-six players. In the string section we have violins and a viola. I am the first violin and I lead the Orchestra. The other players are called second violins and they don't play the tune as I do. Our wind section consists of two clarinets, a trombone and three types of recorders - descants, trebles and tenors. We also have a glockenspiel, which is our percussion section. We meet every Friday morning during hymn practice, when we rehearse. The events we play in during the year are the Harvest Festival, the Christmas Concert and the Spring Concert. At the Christmas Concert, we were delighted to hear Mr Sturgeon say we were the best Orchestra Moulsham Junior has ever had.

Rounders Report, by Mrs E Donovan

So far the season has proved extremely bad weatherwise for this summer game. However, we have at last managed to have a practice, for all four teams interested in playing for the School. We are looking forward to playing in the forthcoming Inter-Schools Rounders Tournament, the Inter-House Rally and, especially, for the children anyway, the Staff v Children match. This always proves to be a highlight of the season, in spite of the fact that some of us might appear to the children to be beyond these hectic endeavours!

PDSA report, by Steven and Graeme Jones

As you know, this year is the Queen's Silver Jubilee year, but this year is also special for the PDSA as well. It is the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals' Diamond Jubilee, which means the PDSA is sixty years old. Today, the Dispensary's modern treatment centres are very different from the old cellar where the founder, Mrs Dicken, first set up a hospital for animals. Our 'Hive' has also changed. We have set up a committee to help Mrs Tutton run the Hive. The committee members do jobs such as selling magazines, enrolling new members and giving out badges when they have been earned. We have enrolled a great deal of new members since Christmas. Every two months we have a magazine full of puzzles, stories and useful information. The money we collect goes towards treatment for animals, and fully equipped vans which go round the country giving free treatment for pets whose owners cannot afford to pay vet fees. We have recently been awarded a certificate of merit for outstanding work in 1976. We are now trying to earn another for 1977 by collecting postage stamps and holding a sale of books and toys.

News in brief

Arthur Humphrey, 1942-46, looks forward to the Open Afternoon. He recently bumped into an old school friend, Colin Pitts, who was a projectionist at the Pavilion Cinema. Arthur recalls queuing on Saturday mornings at the back of the Regent cinema (as was), waiting eagerly for the next episode of Johnny Mack Brown. "Whilst queuing we watched the rivals streaming past to attend the Odeon, hurling insults at each other as one is mind to do at that age."

Betty Bilic (Cant), Moulsham Senior Girls' School 1938, finds the Newsletters very interesting, and they bring back many happy memories. She remembers various names of pupils in the Junior school, as they often had older brothers and sisters in the senior schools, whose job was to take them to school and bring them safely home.

Brenda Haley (Everett), 1951-55, who lives in Florida, hopes to be coming over to Chelmsford this summer to visit a couple of aunts, and would like to time her trip to coincide with the Open Afternoon. We do hope it all works out, and look forward to seeing her again.

Selwyn Wheeler, 1938, and his wife **Elaine (Ackrill)**, 1942-46, are sorry that they will be away again for this year's Open Afternoon, celebrating their wedding anniversary, but they send everyone their good wishes. Selwyn has put us in touch with another ex-Moulsham pupil, Robin Page, whom he met recently, playing jazz in a pub in Maldon.

John Williams, 1938, featured on the photo of Mr Hymas' class on page 2 of the Autumn 2004 Newsletter, and was able to identify further names (Warren, Rush, Lock(e)), which we will add to the list. He also recognised the boy on the extreme right of the front row of Mr Picken's class, with a book open in front of him, as John Smith, a boy who was born on the same day as himself. John also recognised the name of teacher Mrs Ursula Franklin in the picture of 1979-80 staff on page 11, and was able to tell her about the Newsletter and reunions. John himself lived in St John's Road as a child, and attended a variety of schools - St John's; St George's School at the corner of Mildmay Road, run by Miss Stock; Trinity Road Juniors; Moulsham Juniors; St Gerard's; and eventually St John's Billericay, where his academic life really took off. He has many memories of Moulsham and Chelmsford from the 1940s onwards, and we hope he will share some of them with us in a future Newsletter.

Among the new recruits to the Newsletter distribution list is **Peter Thorne**, 1939, who was shown the Autumn Newsletter by a friend, and was thrilled to see all the pictures from the early years. Peter started at Moulsham Infants in 1938, and continued through the Junior and Senior schools.

We were very pleased to hear that **Peter 'Charley' Smith**, 1938, is well and truly back on his feet after a series of hospital visits. He is looking forward to seeing us all at both the May reunion and the school fete this year. Meanwhile, he is 'back at work', so to speak, in his role as 'Peter the Poster', taking round fixture lists for Chelmsford City Football Club, to be displayed all over the town, and helping to distribute the Essex County Football Association magazine. He was delighted to see an article on football coaching at Moulsham High School in the Winter 2004 issue, of which he has sent us a copy. Many thanks to 'Charley', and best wishes for a full recovery of health.

Bob Wiffen, 1952-57, has kindly sent us his copy of the souvenir programme for the 'Festival of Moulsham' - the Pageant and Presentation Ceremony on 19th July 1956, to mark the retirement of the first Headmaster of Moulsham Junior Boys' School, Mr S W Petchey MBE, whose name, as the programme says, "is synonymous with Moulsham". This contains not only the whole text of the pageant, as written by Mr Hodgson and devised and produced by the legendary Mr Picken, but also a complete school roll for July 1956. More on this in our next Newsletter.

Also in our next Newsletter, an article on a school project on Chelmsford by **Dave Sturgeon**, 1958-62, who has sent us the original work, complete with his own photos. Many thanks to Dave for this.

James (Jim) Simpson, started at Moulsham Junior Boys' School 1946

We were sad to hear from Jim Simpson's wife, Anthea (not herself a Moulsham pupil), that Jim died on 31st August 2004. Anthea wanted us to know that Jim got great pleasure from the Newsletter and from re-establishing contact with so many from his childhood. We send our condolences to Anthea and the family.

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Please note that for the purpose of compiling the Past Pupils' mailing list, and for no other purpose whatsoever, your name and address is being held as a computer record. If for any reason you object to this, would you please inform us immediately in writing. Unless we hear from you, your consent is assumed.

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