

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Spring 2006

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In this issue

As Head Teacher Les Kemp's retirement approaches, and the search for a successor begins, Les has written us a splendid piece on page 3 about the current selection process, comparing it to his own somewhat hilarious experience when he was interviewed back in 1994. Continuing the theme of retirement, we have rounded up what we know about 'leaving do's' for previous Moulsham Head Teachers in an article on page 10, and look forward to hearing any personal recollections you may be able to add.

Once again we have a separate sheet of professionally printed photos, on pages 8 and 9, including pictures of two well-known Moulsham characters, Boys' School teacher Mr Gardiner and caretaker Mr Collins, at the time they retired. A special thank you to Pat Cox, Dave Sturgeon and Mrs Alma Gallacher for other photos printed in this issue, and to Mrs Gallacher for giving up an afternoon to tell us about her life as a 'dinner lady' (article p.12).

Our archive of Moulsham pictures is increasing steadily, and will be on display at the Open Afternoon in May (see below). If any of you have other pictures relating to the school, its pupils, staff or history, please do get in touch. You can send photos and articles by email to kathleen.boot@tiscali.co.uk, or by post to Kathleen Boot, 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG. News, memories and changes of address will also be appreciated. We promise to return the originals of any photos sent by post.

Let's meet up again at the Open Afternoon

March already, and it's nearly time for the next annual reunion for past pupils of Moulsham Junior School. This year our Open Afternoon is a little earlier, on Saturday 6th May, from 1-5pm as usual. We hope the change of date may make it possible for some of you, who are normally on holiday mid-May, to be with us. As ever, we are very grateful to Mr Kemp, his staff and the PTA for making the occasion possible and helping with teas, entertainments, and all the other arrangements. Last year about 145 past pupils came along, and we hope to see even more this year. If any of you who live locally could help us move tables and set up the photo display on Friday afternoon, 5th May, or help with the reception desk on the day itself, Hilary and I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Another date for your diaries in the near future is the School Fete on Saturday 24th June, starting at about midday on the school field. This is always a very lively affair, with numerous stalls, games, and displays, music, dancing, and plenty to eat and drink, too. For the past few years we have had a Past Pupils table at the fete, and enjoyed meeting former 'Moulshamites' from all decades of the school's history. We are impressed by the number of families where grandparents, parents and present-day children have all been educated at one or more of the Moulsham Schools, and are so obviously proud of the experience.

Tesco computer vouchers

. . . and finally, it's that time of year again, and if you are not already collecting Tesco computer vouchers for any other school, Mr Kemp would gratefully receive any you can spare, to add to the Moulsham Junior School collection.

Very best wishes, as always, from Hilary Balm (Dye) and myself. We look forward to meeting many of you at the Open Afternoon on 6th May, and meanwhile, we hope you will enjoy reading this latest issue of the Past Pupils' Newsletter.

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

Notes from the Head Teacher, Mr L R Kemp

In a recent survey of school governors, the appointment of a headteacher was listed by the majority of governors as the most important task they undertook in a wide range of duties. The way appointments are made has changed enormously since I was first appointed a headteacher thirty years ago. Then, all the candidates arrived at the school after lunch and had approximately a thirty minute interview. We then all sat in a small room drifting into silence before the door opened and a clerk from the Area Education Office came in and invited one candidate to return to the interview room where the Chair of Governors would formally offer the post. Then the Area Education Officer would go and tell the other candidates they had been unsuccessful and tell them they could claim travel expenses. The successful candidate was also offered travel expenses but only received them after starting work at the school to ensure they turned up on the first day.

The present appointment of a headteacher to replace me involves two days of activities and interviews. Candidates will be asked to meet with groups of pupils, share a story with a class, take an assembly, identify possible areas for school improvement, give a presentation, undertake an in-tray exercise, have small group discussions with governors and undertake a formal interview. We will not be having what somebody has described as "death by vol-au-vent" where people are asked to have lunch with the candidates and give their views about them. I confess there will be "death by cream tea" when the candidates will be meeting staff over afternoon tea. As candidates finish the tasks they will leave and await a call from the Chair of Governors after the full governing body have deliberated over the recommendation of the interview panel. A School Development Adviser will take part in the interviews and give feedback to the unsuccessful candidates to assist them with future applications.

My interview for the headship here took place on a single day and I nearly rejected the opportunity to attend because it clashed with sports day at my own school. It was agreed I could leave Moulsham after lunch to go and do the sports day and return afterwards for my presentation and interview. I set out sports day very early before changing into a suit and dashing to this school. I remember being asked to do an in-tray exercise but I have no recollection what it consisted of. My presentation had to be on The Way Ahead but I was late back from the sports day, having changed back into my interview suit, and my felt tip and couple of pieces of paper looked out of place with all the computer generated material of the other three candidates. I thought I stood no chance of getting the job and gave my school number to be contacted at as I had a school function that evening. I didn't get a call and it wasn't until I got home that I learnt the Chair of Governors had for some reason been unable to get through to me at school and I needed to ring him. I did so and learnt with true amazement that I was being offered the job. Then I had to negotiate my starting salary. I must confess this was a new experience for me.

I wonder if asked to do all the things now required of candidates whether I would have got the job or whether the School Development Adviser would have been having a chat with me about doing better next time.

Note from the editors

We will of course report in due course on Mr Kemp's retirement celebrations. It sounds as if fun and games will be the order of the day. In a recent weekly newsletter to parents, Mr Kemp reported: "To mark the sixtieth anniversary of the opening of this school, we took the whole school to Legoland for the day. When I talk to children who were at the school at the time of that visit, it is often their number one memory. We are repeating the visit in June, when there will be a whole school visit to Legoland. We have booked the coaches, booked Legoland and started to look for very long range weather forecasts."

The Morella family and their friends: memories of the 1940s

The Morella sisters, Elizabeth (now known as Ann) and Una, and their brother Gavin, lived in Upper Bridge Road in the 1940s, and all attended the Moulsham Schools. Very many thanks to Una for sending us her recollections, together with those of her sister and her sister-in law June Morella (nee Atkins), who has now been married to her brother Gavin for 50 years. Congratulations to June and Gavin on their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

We hear first from **Una Osmond (Morella)**, who was at the Junior School from 1944-48:

"I have very happy memories of all my school days. I was at Moulsham Infants from 1942, then at Moulsham Juniors, before passing the 11+ exam to go to the Chelmsford County High School for Girls in 1948.

We Morellas lived in Belle Vue, Upper Bridge Road and walked to school through Oaklands Park, whatever the weather! We had school dinners and we had to eat everything on our plate. I was very lucky as my Auntie Rose was a dinner lady and when she saw that I was struggling (especially with spinach), my plate was quickly collected! I was rather naughty and, after a few slaps from Miss Sawday, my sister Ann was called and she was told off - often getting the blame for my behaviour!

Among my friends from Moulsham days are Pamela Brown, who lived in Beehive Lane (Pam and I are still the best of friends) and also her husband, John Denny. Other friends include Pat Holden, Dorothy Armstrong, Joan Ponsford, Pauline Perkins, Marigold Polley, Dorothy Smith, David Harper, Derek Tuck, Gordon Watts and Gladys Atkin (whose sister June married my brother Gavin) to name just a few.

I moved to Brighton in 1956, after working in Chelmsford, first at Dr Russell's dental surgery and then at Lloyd's Bank. In Brighton I worked again in the bank, before having 2 daughters. I am now 68 and have 4 grandchildren and 1 great-granddaughter."

Una's elder sister **Ann Smith (Morella)**, known at the time as Elizabeth, attended Moulsham Infants' School from 1939-41, Moulsham Junior Girls' School from 1941-45, and completed two years at the Senior Girls' School before leaving at age 13 to go to the Mid-Essex Technical College. Ann writes: "My memories need to be triggered by someone! It's a long time ago! Of course it was wartime and it was a big part of our life then, to hear the sirens, run for the shelters and wait for the "All Clear" to sound.

In those days, everyone walked to and from school. We had quite a long walk - going via Elm Road, Rothsay Avenue, Vicarage Road and then along Princes Road to school. We often used to go through Oaklands Park, stopping to climb on the big cannon gun, which was situated in front of the museum. This sometimes made us late! I remember when we knew we were going to be late in Senior School, we used to go in the top gate off Gloucester Avenue and sneak in after Assembly. Miss Howard, the Headmistress, had her office overlooking the long drive and would watch for latecomers entering the school this way! I'm sure we were caught out before long.

Our Mothers didn't take and meet us out of school in those days, and even when we started school at 5 years old, we walked with our siblings and friends. I remember some of those friends, especially Betty Cousins, Margaret Stock, Angela and Ivor Copsey, Joan Ponsford, Pauline Perkins, and Betty, Pat and Dorothy Smith. The teachers I remember specifically are Miss Rankin, Miss Wright, Miss Howard, Miss Stokes and Miss Barton (for some unknown reason, I was one of her favourites!). Everyone, I am sure, remembers Miss Rankin and Miss Wright driving their little car to school. Not many teachers, or people for that matter, had cars in those days, so it was quite memorable. They lived in Widford Road and as our Auntie and Uncle also lived there, we felt a bit special!

My youngest sister, Una, reminded me of the time she stuck out her tongue behind a teacher's back and was spotted in the act. I was hauled out of my classroom and had to go to see the Headmistress, where we were BOTH told off!

During my two years in the Senior School, I was an active member of the Dramatic Club, together with my friend, June Atkin. June, incidentally, is now my sister-in-law, having been married to my brother, Gavin for 50 years (August 2005). I remember every morning we had Assembly and one pupil had to go on the stage to read a couple or so verses from the Bible. I loved doing that, so if they were short of a volunteer, I always put my hand up.

I can't quite remember when school dinners were introduced, but I recall the cost of 5d (2p) per day - 2s 6d (12p) per week! We had suet puddings (stodge), thin custard, or semolina most days. They were awful. Looking back, those were happy days. When we drive past the school nowadays, I always think back."

Last but not least, we hear from, **June Morella (Atkin)**, who was in the same class as Ann: "It was with a mixture of curiosity and apprehension that I walked up the long drive to Moulsham Juniors with my mother in the Spring of 1942. I had already attended seven schools in South London, Kent and Northamptonshire, and I was only nine years old. Miss Barton, with her happy smiling face, welcomed me into her class and, as I settled into my desk next to Elizabeth Morella, I wondered how long I would stay. Elizabeth (who later took her second name of Ann) looked after me very well in the early days and I was soon joining in playground games with her friends.

I remember Miss Rankin coming into the class at frequent intervals, trying to instil in us our duty to look after our clothes and keep them clean. She always finished up by telling us that the suit she was wearing at the time was well over six years old. As we had lost most of our possessions (including the cat) in the London Blitz, I couldn't imagine anyone having anything that was six years old!

I remember doing handstands and cartwheels on the playing fields with our skirts tucked into our knickers and playing ball games on the walls of the air raid shelters. I shall never forget chanting our times tables with Miss Barton, always smiling, and wondering if I would ever be as light on my feet as Miss Firman, who taught us country dancing with the help of a wind-up gramophone. Miss Sawday's spelling bees were good fun, too.

My two and a half years at Moulsham Juniors were the happiest and most carefree of my schooldays and looked back on with affection. I went on to Moulsham Seniors, where I stayed for three years, leaving in 1948 to go to Secretarial College.

Ann Morella remains my good friend to this day. She has been my sister-in-law for 50 years, as I married her brother, Gavin, in 1955. He was also a Moulsham schoolboy, but that's another story. Some of the other names I remember are Shirley Patterson, Greta Kemp, Jacqueline Johns, Muriel Passmore, Billy Hatch, Janet Saltmarsh and Margaret Spendlove."

Chelmsford County High School for Girls - 100th Anniversary celebrations

Pupils who went on to the County High School for Girls in Broomfield Road may like to know that a reunion for past pupils of the High School is being arranged for 24th June 2006 at the school. All 'Old Girls' are welcome to attend. More details from the County High School, or, if you prefer, Kathleen Boot will gladly pass your name and address to one of the organisers, who has been in touch with her.

Getting to School - Patrick Durrant, 1946-50

To get to school on my first day at Moulsham Infants in 1944, my mother and I had to negotiate our way across the field at the back of our house in Moulsham Drive. When I say negotiate, I mean we had get through a herd of inquisitive cows in the field to the old A12 Princes Road.

When I went to the Juniors, in 1946, I went with other children. This was because my mother had now got a job to help make ends meet, as did a lot of housewives after the war. Also, just previous to this, my father had a serious road accident and broke his leg, and was not able to work. By now, getting to school was becoming second nature, and other children living nearby were coming with me to school through our garden. My father had given me strict instructions to make sure that the gate at the top of the garden was always shut. Needless to say, on one occasion, I didn't quite get the latch across to secure the gate, and two or three cows managed to get through the gate and into Dad's garden! Fortunately, my mother was home from work that day (she used to work in Lipton's next to Woolworths - does anybody remember this shop?). She bravely managed somehow to get the cows back out through the gate before they could do much damage to Dad's vegetables. It was at this point that 'being grounded', as they say today, would have become a new word for me to learn.

After being at the Juniors a short while, I was coming home from school one day when I found that the farmer, who I think was R.H.Currie, had now ploughed the field up. So rather than getting my shoes muddy, I had to find another way home. I decided to walk down Princes Road towards the Army and Navy roundabout. About 2 hundred yards down Princes Road was a footpath going left, that went through between the allotments into Moulsham Drive opposite St. Johns Road. Here I turned left, and walked up Moulsham Drive to my home opposite Oaklands Crescent. Does anybody else remember this footpath? [Editor's note: the footpath still exists, but now goes through a housing development]

Another way to get to school was to go up Moulsham Drive towards Vicarage Road but turn left just past Teager's orchard, which had a wall surrounding it. Here was sort of a footpath that led to Princes Road. I am not sure, but I think it was on this piece of land that the Grove Tennis Club was built. Now Mr Teager's wall was not that difficult to climb, and although my Dad grew apples in his garden I am afraid I found that the saying "Stolen fruit tastes best" might be right.

It was at the Juniors that I became friends with Geoff Barnard, and we are still close friends to this day. A teacher called Mr Burttt became our football coach, and he got together the team that won the cup in 1949/1950. The photograph of the team is always on display at the annual reunion. Mr Burttt lived in Oaklands Crescent, as did another teacher, Mr Hales, who also had a little orchard . . . but I am not going to say any more on the subject of apples!

In 1950 I went to Moulsham Seniors and this presented me with another way to get to school, because during the 1950s, Moulsham Lodge Estate was built. On my second hand bicycle, I could ride up Longstomps Avenue, turn left into Gloucester Avenue and then into the back way of the seniors. I now know that this entrance has now been further developed to gain access to the school.

After I left school, I started work at Hoffmanns as an apprentice toolmaker, and at the age of 17 I got my provisional driving licence. Now in 1957 the Suez crisis developed, and those of us who had a provisional licence, and were waiting for a driving test, were not allowed to drive on our own without a fully licensed driver alongside. In those days, every other Friday night in the Senior School hall, there was a social evening, and here we "Rocked and Rolled" to Bill Haley etc. After much discussion with my father, he allowed me just this once to go in his car to the social. It was a great feeling to drive up to the Senior School through the main gate and up the driveway. As far as I was concerned, I had now completed all my different ways of getting to school even though now I had left. I had walked, ridden my bike and finally driven a car.

Photographs (pages 8 and 9)

Picture 1) Pat Cox, 1942-46, sent us this picture in response to the photo on page 2 of the Autumn 2005 Newsletter. She writes:

"Thank you for the latest newsletter, which as always is such a pleasure to receive. I was amazed when I opened it to be faced with an excellent photo, courtesy Jean Taylor (Whittle), of the Elm Road Victory Party, which I had never seen before. The amazing thing was that I had just had an enlargement made of a similar photo [see page 8], taken at the same event by my Dad, this one showing all the parents as well. Unfortunately, I do not appear on either photo as I was in bed with chicken pox at the time. I missed all the fun, but the Misses Luckin-Smith, who hosted the event in their garden, sent up a small bottle of lavender water to me as a present.

The children in the front row, left to right, are Molly Barnard, Sheila Cox, Geoff Barnard, Phyllis Little, Paulette Little, Linda Broadway, Douglas Barnard, Jean Whittle, John Whittle, John Barnard (held by) Alec Fulcher. The adults, left to right, are Miss Luckin-Smith, Mrs Barnard, holding Ronald, Mr Broadway, Miss Luckin-Smith, Mr Alf Little, Mrs Little, Heather Broadway, Mrs Cox, Mrs Broadway, unknown, (hidden) Bonny Broadway, Mrs Whittle, Mr Whittle.

As regards the school dinners at the Junior School during the war years, I clearly remember that they were brought by lorry in steel canisters from a place called 'Witham'. I had no idea where that was, but it was clearly too far for boiled cabbage, and boiled fish (a nauseating combination) to be transported! We girls were hustled into close packed benches at long tables arranged in the class room at the far end, on the opposite side to the Hall. Faced with the above meal, I recall telling the teacher I felt unwell and unable to eat my dinner - the smell was enough to turn the strongest stomach - and being urged to "eat up!" had the inevitable result. I was sent home, and I recall nothing more on this subject!"

Picture 2) will be a familiar figure to many of you. Music master Mr W W Gardiner joined Moulsham Junior Boys' School when it opened in autumn 1938, and remained until his retirement in 1959, aged 70. He was also organist and choirmaster at Widford parish church. This photo, in typical pose, shows Mr Gardiner conducting the choir on the occasion of the school's 21st anniversary celebrations in 1959, the year of his retirement.

Pictures 3) and 4) are from Dave Sturgeon, 1958-62. These two photos of the Chelmsford gasworks were taken by Dave during a class visit in May 1962, and described in the Summer 2005 Newsletter. In an age of digital cameras, it is sometimes a surprise to see how beautifully sharp and clear were pictures taken with simpler 'box' cameras and a reel of black and white film.

Picture 5) Mr Lyons' class in the snow, 1961. Picture from school archive. If you can identify any of the lads in the picture, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Picture 6) Photo from the Essex Weekly News, June 1972, showing caretaker Mr Hubert Collins with Moulsham staff at his retirement party after 32 years of service. Mr Collins and his wife were presented with a cheque, a case and a bouquet. In his retirement he looked forward to spending more time on his hobbies - he was a keen amateur photographer. Also in the picture (front row, left to right) are Junior Boys' School Headmaster Mr Petchey, Infants' and lower Junior Girls' School teacher Miss Cook, and Junior Girls' School retired Headmistress Miss Pettet. Please let us know if you recognise any other faces, perhaps including Senior School staff.

Picture 7) from the School archive, shows the North (Boys') Hall corridor just before the building work in 1988 which enclosed the former verandas and included new classrooms opposite the Hall entrances.

[continued on page 10]



1. 1945 VE Day party (left)
2. 1959 Mr Gardiner (below left)
3. and 4. Gas works in 1961 (below right)
5. 1961 Mr Lyons' class in the snow (bottom of page)





6. 1972 Mr Collins' retirement (above)
7. 1988 North Hall before enclosure of verandah (left)



8. 1989 'Lollipop man' Tom Mahon (above)
9. 1982 4th year art class (left)
10. 1997 Midday assistants (below)



On the theme of getting to school (article, page 6), crossing patrols have long been a feature of the school day at Moulsham Juniors. Picture 8) is from a 1989 press cutting in the School archive, recording that Mr Tom Mahon, who patrolled the crossing outside Moulsham Junior School at that time, had graduated from the Open University with an arts degree at age 58.

9) A happy picture of a 4th year art class in 1982. We would be grateful for any names of people you recognise on the photo

10) This photo of the Midday Assistants was taken in about 1997, and was kindly lent to us by Mrs Alma Gallacher, front right (see article on page 13). All the other staff in the picture are still midday assistants at Moulsham Juniors, and the approximate number of years they have served is shown in brackets after their name. Back row, left to right: Jan Turner (11), Linda Glasscock (12), Jill Kent (19), and Sonia Butling (13). Front row, from left: Jane Gregory (14), Lynne Figg (17), Marion Rich (22) and Alma Gallacher (24).

Retirement celebrations for Moulsham Juniors' Head Teachers

As current Head teacher Les Kemp approaches his final term before retirement, we have been looking back at the records of earlier Head Teachers and their leaving celebrations. We hope some of these will bring back memories of your time at Moulsham Juniors. So, let us start at the very beginning . . .

On the afternoon of 22nd July 1949, the staff, scholars, managers and friends of the Headmistress Miss Winifred Rankin assembled on the school lawn to bid farewell to the first of the Moulsham Junior School Head Teachers to retire. Miss Rankin had served for eleven years, from the opening of the new school in September 1938 through the wartime and early post-war years. On that afternoon, a series of speeches of appreciation was made, by the Chief Education Officer, Mr Primmer, His Worship the Mayor, the Head Teachers of the other Moulsham Schools, and Miss Firmin on behalf of the Junior Girls' School staff. The Mayor presented a handsome mahogany grandfather clock to Miss Rankin, together with a cut glass salad bowl and an album containing a complete list of subscribers, with autographs of visitors, staff and scholars. Some of our readers may well remember the occasion. School closed for the summer vacation the following day, and Miss S E Pettet, formerly Deputy Head at Manningtree Junior School, took up the post of Headmistress in September 1949.

The first Headmaster of Moulsham Junior Boys' School, Mr Stanley Petchey, served for eighteen years from 1938, retiring in the summer of 1956. We included an article in the Summer 2005 Newsletter about the retirement pageant "The Festival of Moulsham", which was presented by the boys and staff, under Mr Picken's direction, on 19th July. There followed a ceremony attended by the great and the good of the Essex educational world, with speeches by Mr D Bungey on behalf of Essex County Council, Mr Primmer for the Divisional Executive, and Councillor Mrs J P Roberts for the Managers. One of the pupils, Andrew Flatt, made a presentation on behalf of all the subscribers to the generous testimonial fund, and Deputy Headmaster Mr Hymas presented a picnic set on behalf of the staff. School broke up on 27th July, and Mr Petchey retired officially on 31st August 1956. After one term with Mr Hymas as acting Head, Mr Tom Sturgeon was appointed Headmaster with effect from the beginning of January 1957.

The Junior School Head Teachers at Moulsham nearly all served for lengthy spells. Miss Pettet and Mr Sturgeon remained in their posts as Heads of the separate Junior Girls' and Junior Boys' Schools until 1969, when the two schools combined. In the summer of 1969, Miss Pettet finally retired from teaching, after 20 years as Headmistress of the Junior Girls. On the evening of 16th July, she records that "we held our Annual Concert to a packed audience in the Civic Theatre, and it was an extremely

polished performance, with violins, recorders and choral speaking. The full choir sang "The Happy Prince". At the end, Mrs Edwards, supported by the managers, presented Miss Pettet with a battery electric clock". A few days later, on July 22nd 1969, Miss Pettet was presented with a beautiful bouquet, an album containing photographs of the whole school and signed by all the girls, a stainless steel fruit dish and a dress ring. Tea was later served by the staff to Mr Bungey, Mr Primmer and other invited guests, and in the evening the staff took Miss Pettet out to dinner and presented her with a pair of binoculars.

From September 1969, the co-educational Moulsham Junior School came into being, with former Boys' School Headmaster Mr Sturgeon as its first Head Teacher. Mr Sturgeon was the longest serving of all the Junior Heads at Moulsham, retiring in April 1982 after no less than 25 years and one term. To mark the occasion, the school put on a series of concerts, in which all the pupils participated. The preparations must have involved a lot of hard work, and on March 15th, dress rehearsals finally took place, with the Oaklands and Moulsham Infants attending separate performances in the morning and afternoon. The following day, the second and third years performed their concert items, together with violin pieces and songs by the fourth year choir, to a crowded audience of 240 parents and friends. Afterwards, the Deputy Head, Mr Davis, presented Mr Sturgeon with the first of his leaving gifts - a lawn rake, strimmer and propagator. On 17th March, the first and fourth years, plus a dancing team, performed to a further 220 parents and friends, and after this concert Mr Sturgeon received a cassette recorder.

The full concert was given on the evening of 18th March, from 7 to 9.30pm. Half of the audience was specially invited, consisting of friends of the school, and past and present staff. At the end of an excellent show, Mr Davis made a third presentation, this time a workmate bench, a power tool and a jig saw, all on behalf of parents, staff and friends of the school. Clearly Mr Sturgeon was planning an active retirement! The concert was followed by a wine and cheese party for the invited guests, and Mr Sturgeon received a photo album of school events over his years as Headmaster. The party broke up at 11.30pm.

The end of term service was taken by Mr Sturgeon, with Mrs Sturgeon also present. At this, to complement all the garden and DIY equipment, the Moulsham children gave a more relaxing retirement present of a garden lounger, three cases, two brandy glasses and an album of their work. Mr Sturgeon formally left his post on 18th April, to be replaced by Mrs Pat King, previously Head of Hockley Primary School.

Mrs King served as Head of Moulsham Juniors from April 1982 until December 1991, apart from school year 89/90, when she was on secondment and Mrs Summersgill stood in as acting Head. Mrs King was the first Head Teacher to leave Moulsham Juniors before retirement, and went on to join the County Inspectorate. The school Governors made their presentation to her after the Christmas performance of "Alice in Wonderland" by year 6 children on the evening of 17th December. Do any of you remember this occasion? The school log book records that "the quality of the children's singing and drama was quite outstanding". Two days later, on the afternoon of 19th December, a carol service was enjoyed by the whole school, after which ex-pupils, by then at Moulsham High School, presented Mrs King with a bouquet of flowers, and the Junior School children gave her a golf bag and trolley.

Mrs Sheila White became Head Teacher on 1st January 1991, leaving in Summer 1994, but we have no details of her departure - perhaps some of you can recall the occasion? From September to December 1994, Mr B G Day was Acting Head Teacher, until, in January 1995, the present Head, Mr Les Kemp, took up the post he has occupied with such remarkable energy, enthusiasm and commitment ever since. We shall report on his retirement celebrations in our next Newsletter. Meanwhile, if you have any recollections or pictures of presentations to past Moulsham Junior School Head Teachers, we look forward very much to hearing from you.

A visit to the Museum of London in 1978

The Moulsham Junior School magazine for 1978, entitled *Mumbo Jumbo Sapient (Wise Rubbish)*, included an entertaining and remarkably well-observed report by **Nigel Bruguier**, Class 3.2, of his class's visit to the Museum of London. The following extracts give a flavour of what was obviously an interesting and enjoyable trip. If any of you remember the occasion, or are in touch with Nigel (sadly, not yet on our mailing list) we would love to hear from you.

"On Thursday, 13th April 1978, Class 3.2 went on a trip to The Museum of London. We all got to school on time except Andrew Cook. We all trooped out of the car park and had to wait twenty minutes for the Wells Continental coach. We left at 9.20am, and I sat next to Matthew Cook. Matthew took out his Star Wars Storm Trooper pad, and we counted petrol station signs. Esso won with twelve, Shell came second with seven, Total and Mobil got joint third with four each.

We arrived at 10.50am, and had to cross the road by a high road bridge, which Matthew didn't like because he is afraid of heights. We went up steps in the museum to a cupboard where we hung our coats. Then we went into a room where we had a lecture. There were boxes with cushions to sit on and chairs at the back. The guide used a projector to show slides of Roman and Tudor London. The river used to be very crowded with ships because of trading. The only bridge on the Thames was London Bridge. It was covered with buildings and at either end on the toll gates there were the heads of criminals on spikes. All over London there were very narrow streets and the whole of London was surrounded with a wall. Outside the wall was just countryside.

We were then shown some things from the Tudor and Stuart periods. The Tudors had no forks, so he showed us a Tudor spoon made of pewter, the popular metal of the day, and a knife with a bone handle and iron blade. The Stuarts began to use forks, but they only had two prongs. Clay pipes came into fashion and people had different ideas about tobacco. Some said it was bad for you and others said it was good, even in those days.

After the lecture we went to have our dinner in a specially provided room. We then went round the galleries in parties and I went with Matthew Cook and John Clarke, First we went to the Tudor and Stuart rooms. I liked the armour and the weapons best, and they had a gigantic cannon there. There was a very large and probably very valuable collection of jewels in a large case found at Cheapside. As you walked into the Tudor section you saw lots of banners hanging up. In the clothes section, I liked the gloves that had very slender fingers and were embroidered round the ends with pearls and gold thread.

Some children managed to go and see the mock-up of the Fire of London. When we went in it became dark and a sudden wind blew. Samuel Pepys started talking and a model of the city lit up as if it was on fire. Samuel Pepys said three quarters of London had been burned during the fire. Although this was a dreadful catastrophe, it did help stamp out the plague.

After we had looked all round the Tudor period, we went to the book stall and I got a 60p guide which shows all about London. There is a window in the museum which overlooks part of the old London Wall. This wall has a Roman base and a medieval top. On the ground floor of the museum we saw the Lord Mayor's coach. It was quite large and made all of gold. It is only used on the day of the Lord Mayor's Procession and cost £870.00 when built.

We did not get time to see all the museum, as we had to leave at 1.45. On the way back, Matthew counted cars. Ford finished first and then came Leyland. We arrived back at school at 3.30pm. On the way home I bought a Star Wars Mallow Shape ice cream even though it was raining. I thoroughly enjoyed the day, and would like to thank Mrs Donovan, Mrs Barker and Mrs Cook for coming with us, and the Curator of the Museum for giving us an interesting day."

Mrs Alma Gallacher, Midday Assistant

After all the interesting correspondence about school dinners in recent issues of the Newsletter, Hilary Balm (Dye) and Kathleen Boot (Nash), both 1951-55, were especially pleased to have the opportunity in February to chat to Mrs Alma Gallacher, one of the current 'dinner ladies' (midday assistants) at Moulsham Junior School. Mrs Gallacher joined the Moulsham team in 1982, having previously worked in Moulsham Infants' School on a voluntary basis, looking after a child who had spina bifida. She very much enjoys working with children, and her own three sons, Paul, Mark and Kevin, were all pupils at the school in the 1980s. We have pictures of them on a number of class photos which have been on display at Open Afternoons and some reprinted in past Newsletters. Paul went on to KEGS in 1982, while Mark (1980-84) and Kevin (1982-86) moved up the road to attend Moulsham High.

Mrs Gallacher has seen several Head Teachers come and go at Moulsham Juniors during her years as midday assistant: Mr Sturgeon, Mrs King, Mrs White and most recently Mr Kemp. Among the teachers she remembers particularly are Mrs Brooks, Mrs Donovan, Mrs Healy, Mrs Franklin, Mrs Gough (Paul and Mark were in her class), Mrs Cakebread, Mr Firth and Deputy Head Mr Davis, who left to take up a Headship elsewhere at the end of 1986. She recalls that it was Mrs King who started up the Parent Teacher Association, which flourishes to this day. Before then, as many of us will remember, parents were not normally included in school life, except perhaps on Open Days and at concerts.

Mrs Gallacher has kindly lent us a photo of herself and seven of her colleagues, which is reproduced on page 9. Other colleagues she has worked with include Sandra Chilvers, Winnie Jellicoe, Mary Reeve, Eve Reynolds and Jean Stockley. The last two mentioned are themselves past pupils of the school.

When Mrs Gallacher started work as a midday assistant in 1982, lunches were still cooked and served in the old canteen next to the Infants' School, pictured on page 3 of the Autumn 2005 Newsletter. At some stage during the 1980s, however, the canteen roof space was overrun by nesting starlings, with a severe risk of contamination of the kitchens and eating areas below. Pest control action was unsuccessful, so the canteen was closed, and eventually demolished. With the canteen no longer available, meals for both the Infants and Juniors were henceforth prepared in the Infants' School kitchens, as they still are today. At first the Juniors' lunches were transported across to the Junior School to be eaten in the Hall, but more recently the 40 or so Junior School children having hot school lunches have gone across to the Infants' School each day to eat. Of the remaining Juniors, most bring their own sandwiches, and about 30 eat a cold lunch prepared by the school (a "Pips pack", containing sandwich, fruit, crisps, cake and a drink). Only one pupil goes home to lunch.

The present cook is Barbara Turner, ably assisted by three other ladies. One of these, Sue Matthews, has been there over 25 years, and another, Pam Watton, about 17 years. As far as possible, the hot lunches are all home cooked, using fresh vegetables and fruit, with fresh mixed salad available daily. The menus rotate over a three week period, with not a 'turkey twizzler' in sight! Typical main dishes include roast chicken, roast turkey, lamb pie, shepherd's pie, pasta bake with tuna, lamb stew, chicken risotto, plus vegetarian options such as home-made cheese quiche, vegetable risotto, cheddar whirls and vegetable curry. Mrs Gallacher notices that the Wednesday roast lunches are especially popular, and is a little surprised at how much the Juniors (unlike Infants, apparently) enjoy that old favourite school lunch dessert of rice pudding with jam. At £1.70p a day, hot school meals sound like a real bargain.

From time to time a special themed lunch is on offer, open to all pupils interested. There was for example an Italian Lunch in January this year, with a choice of Margherita Pizza or Spaghetti Bolognese, tomato pasta or garlic bread, peas or sweetcorn and salad followed by ice cream and toppings. Not surprisingly, it was a great success. Somehow this all seems a far cry from the mince and mash days of the canteen in the 1950s.

The Midday Assistants today operate in two teams, one indoors and the other outside. The inside team supervises the cooked lunches in the Infants' School and the two Junior School halls for packed lunches. They use a system of boards to indicate which class can proceed next to the hall for their lunch. Year 6 (4th year) pupils usually go first, on the basis that they will probably eat faster. Mrs Gallacher is one of the indoor team, supervising either the hot or cold lunches. The outdoor team, meanwhile, supervises the playgrounds, and are all qualified First Aiders.

By 1pm, all the lunches have to be completed, and pupils ready to return to afternoon lessons. After a final tidy round, Mrs Gallacher and her colleagues have finished for another day.

OBITUARY: Mrs Dawn Brooks

We were sorry to hear of the sudden death in January 2006 of Mrs Dawn Brooks, formerly Mrs Balaam, a much loved teacher at Moulsham Junior School from September 1973 to December 1987. Mrs Brooks went on to be Deputy Head at Great Totham Primary School, a post from which she retired four years ago. We would love to hear from any of you who remember Mrs Brooks at Moulsham, and hope to print a detailed appreciation of her work and influence in a future issue. Meanwhile, we send our condolences to her daughter Emma, who was a pupil at Moulsham Juniors from 1978-82, and to the rest of Mrs Brooks' family.

OBITUARY: Donald Alfred Meadowcroft, 13/6/29 - 21/7/05.

We were also sad to receive news of the death last July of past pupil Don Meadowcroft, who always enjoyed reading the Past Pupils' Newsletter. His cousin Brian, also a Moulsham pupil, has kindly sent this obituary, composed with the help of Don's widow, Joyce. We send our heartfelt sympathy to Joyce, Don and all the Meadowcroft family.

" Don lived all of his life in Galleywood, with the exception of the time he spent serving in the Royal Navy. Living in Galleywood did not qualify him to attend Moulsham Schools, but, due to a family bereavement in 1938, he moved, temporarily, with his mother to the catchment area for the Widford Church School, and subsequently transferred to Moulsham Juniors when it opened in 1939. He went on to the senior school, leaving to take up a plumbing apprenticeship with local company French's. This employment did not give Don the satisfaction that he sought, so at the age of 20 he decided to see something of the wide world, and enlisted into the Royal Navy, serving for 8 years on HMS's Theseus, Illustrious and Albion, visiting spots the world over, which also included some UK land base postings. It was whilst on one of these postings, at Boscombe Down, that Don met Joyce, who was serving with the Women's RAF.

In 1957 Don returned to 'civvy-street' and in that same year married Joyce in Leamington Spa, returning to Well Lane to live. Don took up employment with local companies Godfrey's, as a Blinds Fitter, and Cramphorn's and Brace's as a driver. Don's interests included gardening and motorcycling (during his time whilst based in Scotland he acted as a Despatch Rider). He was at one time a volunteer driver for the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Sadly, suddenly, on 21st July 2005 in Broomfield Hospital, Don passed away, leaving Joyce, children Graham and Lynn, and grandson Liam."

News in brief

Congratulations to **Daphne Stonely (Farrow)**, 1944-48, and her husband on their Golden Wedding in January.

Thank you to **Reg Baldwin**, 1938, and his wife for their Christmas card, in which Mrs Baldwin notes that "In 1938, UK must have been getting well on its feet to build a new state-of-the-art school, Moulsham Juniors. My husband always says that Hitler changed everything, but 1938 saw a big change too. My husband, the eldest of seven children, was the first to go from Widford Church School to Moulsham Juniors. Reg Baldwin (Ike), Stan Baldwin (Nipper), Yvonne (now Tiffen), Ron (Tulip), David (Lolly), Ken (George) and Christine (now Bennett), all attended Moulsham Juniors. It is a great pleasure to us that our two youngest grandchildren now attend the school."

Many thanks also to **Diane Berthelot (Lawson)**, 1938, for sending us a beautifully illustrated booklet of her Christmas poems, which we will display at the Open Afternoon.

Anita Brooker (Gray), 1946-50, writes: "I went to the Open Day for the first time this year, and what a lovely afternoon it was. I met a lot of old friends from the past. I went to the school 1946-50. I also met my husband there. His name was Michael Brooker. Sadly, he died three years ago. It was lovely to find his picture and mine on the old school photos."

Susan Simpson (Holden), 1954-58, saw her photo on page 2 of the Autumn 2005 Newsletter: "In the picture on the bottom right, the two ladies having a cuppa are myself (right) and on the left Angela Wren (Stiles). We were at Moulsham Juniors together from 1954-58. We sat next to each other, and have remained friends ever since. When we went to the Open Afternoon in May, it was the first time either of us had been back since leaving. It seemed quite strange. Obviously it has changed quite a bit, for example no grass where we used to do country dancing; the open plan classrooms; and having boys and girls together (unheard of in my day). I can also remember having a small bottle of milk every day and being milk monitor.

"There was a photo in the Hall of the 1959 21st Anniversary Pageant, with an arrow pointing to one blond haired boy, marked 'one of the Simpson twins'. Well, it was Clive - I couldn't see Keith on the picture. How do I know? Well, I am married to their elder brother Martin, who is seven years older and also went to the school!

"See you again in May. We both thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon and seeing the photos of yesteryear."

Thank you to **Diane Lawrence (Woollett)**, 1946-50, for responding to the cry for help on the back page of the Autumn 2005 Newsletter. The photos we could not identify are hers, and show classmates from Moulsham Senior Girls' School. We shall display copies at the Open Afternoon. One of the photos was taken in 1954, outside Kings College Chapel, Cambridge, after Evensong. Diane says "the four girls are Ann Wilsher, Judith Pinder, Rosemary Atkinson and Pam Wright. Miss Wright was the Music teacher when I first went to the Seniors and, when she left, a Mr. Smith took over. He was a lovely teacher, very jolly and he was the one to take us to Cambridge, he also entered the choir into a competition. We were pretty awful compared to the other choirs, but he made it fun." Another picture, featuring Jacqueline Bartlett, was taken on a school trip to Aberystwyth, Wales probably in 1953/54. "My recollection of this trip is that it rained most of the time and I can remember we went on a walk and ate date sandwiches in a barn. In the evenings we had to put pen to paper and record our day's activities. We did visit Devils Bridge and I bought two pots, duly marked with Devils Bridge, to take home to my parents. I am not sure why, but I still have these two pots sitting on my desk!! My sister (Pam Woollett, 1941-46 Juniors) and I really enjoyed our first visit to the Open Day this year. We were on quite a "high" when we left and we both met a few people of our time at Moulsham. I am going to try

and persuade my brother (Tony Woollett) to come next year. I believe he started when the Juniors was first built."

Kathleen Boot has recently made contact via the friendsreunited website with past pupil **Coleen Benham**, who emigrated to Australia with her family in 1955. She remembers how very helpful Headmistress Miss Pettet was before she left, giving her tests and a report to hand on to her school in South Australia. Coleen has kindly agreed to write an article for our next issue, and we look forward enormously to that. Quite amazingly, she was also able to put us in touch with another Moulsham friend from the same era, **Joyce Moody**, who still lives locally and now hopes to join us at the Open Afternoon in May!

Always good to hear from **Richard Geer**, 1963-67, who wrote about his action-packed trip to Florida in our last issue. Richard has now come across three more football photos from his Moulsham Junior days, which we will add to the Open Afternoon display and print in a future Newsletter. Many thanks, Richard.

Data Protection Legislation

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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