

Past Pupils' Newsletter

**** 70th Anniversary Year ****

Spring 2008

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In this issue

page

- Happy 70th anniversary, Moulsham Junior School 2
- From the Head Teacher, Mrs Linda Hughes 3
- Special reunion for past pupils on 26th September 2008 3
- Suggested 70th Anniversary presents to the school from past pupils 3
- August 1938: the first pupils arrive at Moulsham Junior School 4
- Brian Emmett, first day pupil at Moulsham Junior Boys' School 5
- Maureen Biggins (Little), first day pupil at Moulsham Junior Girls' School 6
- More about the first day - snippets from earlier Newsletters 6
- September 1938 - The Official Opening ceremony 7
- 1939-45: The war-time years 9
- Some of your wartime memories 10
- Notes on the photographs: Don Post, Sue Hunter (Rawlingson) 11
- Photographs, 1938, 1941-2, 1939, 1960, 1988 12,13
- Notes on the photographs (continued) 14
- Margaret Smith (Tomalin), 1944-49 15
- Peter Turrall, 1938: Were you a Marconi employee? 16
- Averil Wilcox (Clarke) 1960-64 remembers all those school trips 17
- More responses to Gerry Etherington's Autumn 2007 article 18
- News in brief: Wendy Mason (Shipman) 1948-52, Peter Linn 1952/3-55 19
Sue Kemp (Hayden) 1951-55, Juliet Jones (Lindars) 1951-55,
Suzanne Kettle (Bulbeck), 1949-53, Mrs B Baggs (Morella), 1940
Ian Marshall, 1946-51
- Obituary: Vernon Makin 20
- School website address 21
- Data protection legislation 21

Happy 70th Anniversary, Moulsham Junior School

And special Happy Anniversary wishes to those of you who were present at the opening of the new Moulsham Junior Schools seventy years ago this August. At the latest count, we are in touch with 63 past pupils from 1938 and a total of 287 who started at Moulsham Juniors during the first ten years. We hope to see many of you at the reunions on **Saturday 10th May** and **Friday 26th September**, which are of course open to all past pupils from 1938 through to the present day. More about these reunions below and on page 3.

At the beginning of this 70th anniversary year, our Spring issue of the Past Pupils' Newsletter includes some background on the opening and early years of the school. We thank **Mrs Shirley Russell**, mother of past pupils Ian (1968-72) and Andy (1969-73) for helping our research back in 2004 by digging out relevant press reports from 1938. Your individual stories and photos over the years have of course provided an abundance of information. In addition to new articles by **Brian Emmett** and **Maureen Biggins (Little)**, we have included a few short extracts from articles which others of you have written over the past 9 years in earlier issues of the Newsletter. We are fortunate, too, that the first Headmaster of Moulsham Junior Boys' School, Mr S W Petchey, kept detailed records in his School Log Book, and instituted a yearly school magazine recording events, achievements, activities and schoolwork. Thank you to all those who, over the years, have sent us copies of school magazines, together with programmes of plays and pageants. Sadly, Moulsham Junior Girls' School kept sketchier records, and had no equivalent of the boys' school magazine. We are all the more grateful to pupils from the Girls' School who have been able to fill in some of the missing details, and would be delighted to hear from any others, from either school, who have yet to record their experiences for the Newsletter.

In the Summer issue, we plan to focus on the 1950s and 60s, but we will be equally pleased to hear from past pupils of any decade of the school's history. Articles, news, memories and photos can be sent as usual to me, Kathleen Boot, at 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG or by email to kathleen.boot@tiscali.co.uk Please note that my virgin.net email address is no longer current. Changes of address and additions to the mailing list can be emailed to gerry.etherington@tiscali.co.uk who is doing a great job sorting out and looking after our records.

A special thank you to the three of you who kindly responded to the plea for help with creating an index to the nine-year output of Past Pupils' Newsletters (yes, we started in 1999). We gratefully accepted the first offer, from **Tony Rayner**, 1956-60, who has already made an impressive start on this project.

All good wishes from co-editor Hilary Balm (Dye) and myself,

Kathleen Boot (Nash) 1951-55

Open Afternoon, Saturday 10 May 2008, 1-5pm

We look forward to seeing as many past pupils as possible at the annual Open Afternoon on Saturday 10th May at Moulsham Junior School. Do please encourage any schoolmates you may be in touch with to come along too. We would like it to be a really special occasion. If you can help for a couple of hours on the reception desk, we would be very grateful. Hilary is busy baking cakes as usual, but if any of you would like to bring along some home-made cake, scones or biscuits, we would be delighted to hear from you.

From the Head Teacher, Mrs Linda Hughes

Welcome to another edition of the Moulsham Junior Past Pupil Newsletter.

2008 is a very special year in the life of the school as it is the 70th anniversary of its opening. We are planning to celebrate this event during the week beginning 22nd September. Many activities are planned and we would love to hear from anyone who could help us with their memories of their times spent at Moulsham. If you would like to help us either by writing down your memory or by coming in to speak to the children, do let us know.

We are continuing to develop the playground and the next phase is to improve the fencing, paint some games on the playground and provide some seating. These are, of course, extremely expensive developments and we are hoping that to celebrate the school's 70th birthday past pupils might consider a donation towards the cost of a bench. [Editor's note: please see below on how to contribute to this and other suggested gifts].

In the meantime I look forward to seeing you on Saturday 10th May.

Special reunion for past pupils on Friday 26th September 2008

As Head Teacher Mrs Hughes mentions above, the school is having a whole week of celebrations for the 70th anniversary in late September, almost exactly 70 years from the date of the Official Opening of the Moulsham Schools on 21st September 1938. The week will conclude with an extra reunion for past pupils at the school at 7pm on Friday 26th. Tickets will be available at a small charge to cover the cost of refreshments. We will let you have exact details of the cost, and how to apply for your tickets, in the Summer Newsletter. If we know earlier, we will distribute leaflets at the Open Afternoon in May and notify you by email if we have your address. Some of you have asked if spouses are also welcome, and we can confirm that the answer is yes. So do keep your diaries free!

Suggested 70th Anniversary Gifts to the School from Past Pupils

At the September 26th reunion, we plan to present the school, on behalf of all past pupils, with a trophy and a playground seat to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Moulsham Junior School. Our idea is that the trophy should be awarded annually for the next 5 years to the boy and girl in year 6 (top year) who have contributed most to the life of the school. A shield and the names of the winners would be on display in the school, and a smaller shield given to each of the ten pupils concerned to keep. The playground seat would have a plaque identifying it as the gift of past pupils to mark the 70th anniversary. Former Head Teacher Les Kemp is kindly negotiating the purchase of these items on our behalf. At the Open Afternoon in May, we will have a special collecting box for all who would like to contribute to the cost of the bench and trophies. If you cannot attend but would still like to make a donation, you are invited to send a cheque payable to 'Les Kemp' to Kathleen Boot at 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG. I will then record and acknowledge these and forward them to Les.

August 1938: The first pupils arrive at Moulsham Junior School

On the morning of Monday 29th August 1938, the two new Moulsham Junior Schools on Princes Road Chelmsford, one for girls, the other for boys, opened for enrolment and registration. Boys' School teacher Mr R G Hymas describes the occasion in the 10th Anniversary (1948) edition of the school magazine, of which he was Editor:

'That first morning the Headmaster, Mr S W Petchey, and his five assistant masters, Messrs A G Burt, W W Gardiner, G B R Hudson, R G Hymas and H J Picken, welcomed to the Junior Boys' Department of the new schools two hundred and thirty-four scholars. The late Alderman J O Thompson and Mr F Fox, then Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of the Borough of Chelmsford Education Committee, were present to see the start, and to leave their very best wishes for the future with the staff and boys.'

At the Junior Girls' School, housed in the southern half of the same building, 202 new pupils were welcomed by the new Headmistress Miss W A Rankin and her staff: Miss M S M Firmin, Miss W M Huff, Miss G F Skilton, Miss G M Sawday and Miss I Wright. After enrolment, the boys and girls were sent home for the rest of the day, while staff in both schools stayed on to complete the paperwork. Lessons began the following day, Tuesday 30th August. To quote Mr Hymas again, "So began our School. Quickly and unobtrusively we settled down in our new surroundings. So much so that within a fortnight of the opening, Mr F Fox wrote in the School Log Book: 'Everything appears to be in good order, surprisingly so for the short period the School has been running'." More about Mr Fox and his unflinching support for the schools in our next newsletter.

Many of the children and staff at Moulsham Junior Girls' and Boys' had previously been at the small Widford Church of England School (average 66 pupils including infants) or the larger St John's Church School in Moulsham Street (with about 327 junior-age pupils) which had served the local area for 77 years. Both of these had less than ideal accommodation and facilities, and were closed in July 1938. Brian Emmett and Maureen Biggins (Little) recall their experience of the transfer to Moulsham on pages 5 and 6. Friars School (average 124) did not close in 1938, but became a school for infants only, with many of the older children and one staff member, Miss I Wright, transferring to the new Moulsham Schools.

The design of the new Moulsham Schools was very modern and spacious, with room for 300 boys and 300 girls in six 50-pupil classrooms each, and handicraft rooms for each school. Looking to the future, space had been left on the eastern side to allow for eventual expansion to 450 pupils in each school. The Junior and Infants' Schools and the Caretaker's house were all built by a local firm, Messrs Geo J Hawkes & Sons of Chelmsford, at a cost of £45 per place. The Senior Schools were built by another Chelmsford firm, Fredk J French. The windows were supplied by the Crittall Company in Witham.

Many of the first pupils at the new Moulsham Juniors came with friends from their previous schools. There were also quite a few familiar faces among the staff. Miss Rankin, Headmistress of Moulsham Junior Girls, had been in charge of the Widford School, and the other two former Widford teachers, Miss Knight and Miss Wood, joined the staff of Moulsham Infants' School. Mr Petchey, Headmaster of the new Moulsham Junior Boys' School, had previously been Deputy Head of Trinity Road Juniors in Springfield. From St John's School, Mr Hudson and Mr Gardiner transferred to Moulsham Junior Boys' School, and Miss Firmin and Miss G F Skilton to Moulsham Junior Girls. Some of these stayed on at Moulsham until retirement, as did Miss Sawday, who came to the Junior Girls' School from Trinity Road School. Miss Denn, Head of St John's Infants, became Head of Moulsham Infants, and another teacher from St John's, Mr E C Shuring, whom many of you will remember, joined the staff of the Senior Boys' School.

Brian Emmett, first day pupil at Moulsham Junior Boys School.

I started my school career at the age of five in 1936 at Kings Road School. In 1937, my family moved to Goldlay Gardens, just off Baddow Road, and I transferred to St John's Church of England School in Moulsham Street. This was an early Victorian building, with a large hall accommodating all the classrooms, partitioned off with screens, through which could be heard everything going on in the next class. The children sat on forms and were still using slates to write on. The windows were high up from the ground and the toilets were outside exposed to the weather - not a place to linger. The gravel playground was dusty when dry and muddy when wet. Characters from Charles Dickens would have been at home!!

I left St. Johns and the Infants at the end of the summer term, July 1938. I can still remember quite clearly that first September morning in 1938 when Moulsham Junior School first opened. For a seven year old, what a mixed set of emotions. Wonder, at these vast buildings, all light and airy and shining. Awe, at the male teachers and the Headmaster Mr Petchey standing on the stage, an imposing figure like Captain Mainwaring from Dad's Army. And trepidation, fearful of what was to come. I can still recall that smell of fresh paint, polish and the beeswax applied to the lovely parquet floor.

All the boys from the Widford, St John's and Friars schools were herded towards the rear of the main hall, and waited as our names were called out and we were allotted to our various classes. We went and stood in a line behind the teacher for that class. I joined Class One, Room One, and the thing I am not able to remember is the teacher's name. No doubt someone can.

Room One was the class nearest the hall. The outer wall of the room was almost entirely glass windows and looked out over to the Infants School. There were chairs to sit on and desks with lift up lids and ink wells. There were pens and pencils, rubbers and exercise books and a roll around blackboard - all very different from St John's. To my astonishment the toilets were indoors, heated and with wash basins and a drinking fountain. What luxury! The playground was asphalt and there was also a playing field. In those days the winters were very severe and when it snowed heavily we boys would make long slides and see who could slide the furthest while still standing on two feet.

I remember one day during the war when we were in the playground, and heard the distinctive noise of the engines of a German Dornier Bomber and then the whistle of falling bombs. We all rushed back to our classrooms to collect our Gas Masks and then on to the Air Raid shelters. Of course by the time we reached these the bombs had dropped. Fortunately for us, they fell in the Curries Farm fields adjacent to the school, causing no damage. The Alert sirens sounded soon after.

I progressed though the school without too much distinction, good or bad, and I managed not to be sent to Mr Petchey's study. The tales from the boys that had been was enough! During the war some of the male teachers were replaced by females, Mrs Petchey being one. I can remember her collecting for War Savings Stamps. I took the Eleven Plus exam, but failed. Was it any wonder, when we had spent a great deal of time during the previous two years in the Air Raid shelters? Those who passed were a credit to the school and themselves

Although I was never the recipient of a Turner Prize, I did get to know Mr Turner quite well. He was a colleague of my Father's at Crompton Parkinson's and also a close neighbour of my Grandmother in New Writtle Street opposite the football ground. He would invite me round and he would tell me about his life and we would discuss how people should conduct their lives which stood me in good stead in later years. All in all my time at Moulsham Junior School was a very happy one. Brian Emmett, 1938-42

Maureen Biggins (Little), first day pupil at the Junior Girls' School

As a seven-year-old in September 1938, I was one of the first pupils to attend the sparkling brand new Moulsham Junior Girls' School. From the age of four, I had been at Widford Church School. There, the large rooms held all the village children aged four to fourteen. The three teachers, Miss Rankin, Miss Knight and Miss Woods, moved schools with us, the latter two teachers to Moulsham Infants and Miss Rankin as Headmistress of Moulsham Junior Girls.

I lived in School Cottage, next door to the Widford School (where incidentally I was late for school almost every day!), and now I had the long walk along Princes Road to the new school. How my little legs suffered. Maybe we were all over-awed at first by the size of the school, and the hundreds of pupils attending the three new Moulsham schools. But gradually our fear turned to pride at attending such a lovely school. Miss Skilton was my first teacher at Moulsham, and that first day she told us she was new to the school too, and every bit as nervous as us. That made us feel much better.

We were a motley crew. Some pupils had all of the maroon, gold and navy uniform, but most had just part of it, until our parents could afford to add to the bits we had. I started with the snug-fitting choche-type hat and the tunic, quite a long one so I could "grow into it" - some of us would have done credit to St Trinian's! But I think we all took great pride in our new school and what uniform we had, and felt as good as the pupils at the High School and the Technical School

Of course the war slowed down our education a lot. We were very limited how much we could learn in the air raid shelters with the aid of three electric lights for the whole of each shelter. But our pride remained - our school and our teachers were the BEST! Maureen Biggins (Little)

More about the first day: snippets from earlier Newsletters

In earlier Newsletters, other first day pupils have contributed their own impressions of that first day. Here are a few extracts from their recollections: **Phyllis Chatelier (Little)**: 'There was great excitement when we were informed that a lovely new school was being built on Princes Road and that we would be going there. I recall that we were able to go with our parents for a preview of a then modern, state of the art school with light wooden desks and chairs, one each instead of a bench, and sliding blackboards which were green. There were huge windows for which we light-starved children were very grateful. There were new toilets and wash basins and a lovely drinking fountain. The assembly hall had a stage with real velvet curtains! I was just under eight years old and felt the luckiest child on earth.' **Alan Roxby**: 'I had not even seen the school until that day - it was brand new. In fact the bricklayers were still building the bicycle shed, and painters were going round touching up the spots they had missed. All the pupils and teachers were new to the school. As we waited in the playground, looking around for someone we knew, we formed into little groups, all smartly dressed in a grey suit, jacket and short trousers, and wearing a new school cap and tie.' **John Spooner**: 'It was on a fine morning that I set out for Moulsham Junior School in 1938 on its Grand Opening Day. Masses of us stood in the boys' playground, which was divided from the girls' playground by high iron spiked railings. As our names were called, we went into our brilliant airy classrooms.' **Peter Smith**: 'I was one of several transferred, in 1938, from St John's School - a Victorian building with windows well out of reach of most boys and offering no glimpse of the outside world to distract our enquiring minds. Moving to Moulsham School gave us all the nicest possible culture shock. Bright, airy classrooms with virgin desks (not a scratch on them) and huge windows, offering wonderful views.' **Bert Bearman**: 'I have vivid memories of the opening of the Moulsham Schools in 1938. My brother **Bob Bearman** and I

attended Trinity Road School; he is 13 months younger than me. Pre summer 1938, our parents received a letter from the school telling them that, after the summer holiday, I was to attend Moulsham Senior School. We then requested that, as my brother and I were to be parted, could he attend Moulsham Juniors? The request was granted. The question then arose "How do we get there?", as we lived at Brook End, in Springfield. The answer from the Council was "You walk!". Springfield School Seniors were also notified that they were to attend Moulsham Senior School. Some of the pupils lived in the wilds of Springfield and in the White Hart area - they were also told to walk to school.irate parents collectively protested that, as there was no transport, we were not going to Moulsham School. We went on STRIKE! It was a long summer that year - it lasted 16 weeks. Eventually it was resolved and we were all given season tickets to travel on the service buses.' Commenting on the location of the new school, teacher **Harold Picken** observed: 'As you looked from the playground towards where Moulsham [Lodge] Estate is now built, there was a white farmhouse with strawberry fields and a cherry orchard which had gorgeous pink and white blossom in the Spring. In later years, on Moulsham Estate, people found strawberries growing in their gardens. This puzzled them because they hadn't planted them! There was also a pond where dragonflies used to breed. Many often got trapped in the classrooms in summer. Even though the pond was filled in, dragonflies inhabited the area for years afterwards. ... It was something quite new to most children to be in a classroom with so many windows and so much fresh air.'

September 1938: The Official Opening ceremony

The official opening of the new Moulsham School complex, with its Infant, two Junior and two Senior Departments, was held in the Senior Boys' School Assembly Hall, just over three weeks after the beginning of the first term. In the 1948 school magazine, Mr Hymas recalls: "To the people of Chelmsford the new schools were a great attraction. Hundreds gathered on the afternoon of September 21st 1938 for the official Opening Ceremony by the then Mayor of Chelmsford, Councillor J T Bellamy, and when on the three following days all Departments were thrown open to the public, thousands availed themselves of the opportunity of inspecting in detail the lay-out of the Schools."

At the Opening Ceremony, one of the Junior pupils, Ruth Haldane, aged 7, presented the Mayoress with a bouquet of cream roses, and in the entrance hall of the Senior Schools, the Mayor unveiled a stone tablet commemorating the opening of the schools. The Essex Chronicle's write-up of the speeches given on that occasion by Alderman J O Thompson, Chairman of the Borough Education Committee and Cllr J T Bellamy, Mayor of Chelmsford, make interesting reading. There had obviously been a fair amount of local controversy over both the cost and the siting of the new schools, and the then Vicar of Moulsham, Revd Brownless, had been vehemently opposed to the closure of the St John's Church of England Schools. At the end-of-term church service in July 1938, Revd Brownless is quoted by the Essex Chronicle as declaring the closure of St John's School after 77 years to be "a misfortune, almost a calamity". While he deeply regretted the closure, however, he did admit that "As things were, I do not think there was any other course open. It could not be helped. The [St John's] buildings are old and in many ways inconvenient - not in the least in accord with present-day requirements. There is not sufficient land for rebuilding the schools and it would have been impossible to raise money for a site and new buildings by a voluntary effort. When we look at the palatial buildings erected to replace them and think of the great cost, it will be obvious to all that the people and well-wishers of St John's could not possibly raise the money."

Alderman Thompson, in his address at the Official Opening, took pains to justify the Borough Council's decision in detail. He argued that the £100,000 cost of building the five new Moulsham schools represented good value for money, especially as the Board of Education (the national authority) was

prepared to foot half the bill. Defending the choice of site, he pointed out that "when the time arrived for the building of the schools, the Board of Education intimated that a site of at least 15 acres would be necessary - four times that required before the [first world] war, to provide playing fields and playgrounds. We are now almost exactly in the centre of the southern school area which these buildings are to serve." Responding to concerns about road safety, Alderman Thompson added that there was little traffic on Princes Road at times children were coming to or leaving school, and traffic patrols would be provided, with particular attention being given to education in "road sense". He could not have foreseen in 1938 just how important such training would become as traffic increased!

Speaking more generally on the trends in education which made the school reorganisation desirable, Alderman Thompson is quoted in the Chronicle report as explaining that: "The St John's and Widford Church schools have been closed; the borough has developed rapidly, and is still doing so; and thirdly, a new system of elementary education has been introduced in accordance with what is known as the Hadow Report [published in 1926]." He pointed out that the main recommendation of the Hadow report was the break in the child's education at age 11, and continued: "The function of the Junior School is to that of preparation for the senior stage, to give children a mastery of the tools and elements of instruction, and to enliven and open their minds and interests for the more complex courses of the post-primary stage. . . . One of the interesting points of the curriculum of these junior schools is the appreciation of the child's desire to create and not merely to copy. Hence we have added subjects such as handwork, needlework and other arts and crafts."

As for the buildings themselves, Alderman Thompson was "struck by the airiness, brightness and colour everywhere - the practical application of hygienic principles, particularly in regard to sunlight and fresh air. The classrooms are all of the latest approved type, with verandahs on the inner side grouped around quadrangles laid out with grass and flower beds, the upkeep of which will form part of the normal work of the children. The walls of the rooms being plastered internally and brightly coloured, provide light, sunny, well-ventilated and cheerful workrooms for the children."

After a report by the Architect, H W Allardyce FRIBA, describing the planning, design and construction of the Schools, the Chairman called on the Mayor of Chelmsford, Cllr J T Bellamy, to address the assembled guests and formally declare the schools open. Cllr Bellamy also praised the buildings: "They are magnificent, as fine as any of their kind in the country - and this is a work for posterity as well as for ourselves. . . . From what I have seen of the schools already, there is no doubt that the health of the children is bound to be greatly improved, owing to their being educated in well-lit and well-ventilated premises, plus the other amenities, such as facilities for drying clothes, midday meals, physical training in proper gymnasia, playing fields and craft rooms." As well as making the pupils' lives "fuller and happier", the Mayor hoped that "one further great asset of such a school as this will be the inculcation of a real patriotism, not only for the locality but for the nation at large." Consciously or unconsciously looking towards a future where Britons would soon be called upon to defend their country, Cllr Bellamy declared that patriotism is "love of country, born of familiarity with its history, reverence for its institutions, and faith in its possibilities - and that is evidenced by obedience to its laws. When I was at school and learnt Virgil, his description always inspired me: 'the noblest motive is the public good'. That is what I commend to the consideration of the young people in our schools today. That is the motive which has inspired us to provide these schools".

The Mayor then declared the Moulsham Schools open, and some songs were 'rendered pleasingly by the school choir' as the Essex Chronicle records. There followed various presentations and votes of thanks, and the ceremony closed with the unfurling of the flag, the unveiling of the commemorative stone tablet, and finally the National Anthem.

1939-45: The war-time years

Moving forward in his account of the first ten years of Moulsham Juniors in the 1948 School Magazine, Moulsham Junior Boys' School teacher Mr Hymas writes:

'Before the beginning of the second School Year Great Britain had declared war on Germany, but even that momentous event was not allowed to disrupt the routine of the School more than could be helped. True, a number of evacuees were enrolled; there were first-aid lectures and anti-gas courses for the staff to attend; and for the children periodic gas mask drill. Even so the full meaning of that fateful decision of September 3rd was perhaps not fully appreciated until just after Easter, 1940, when work commenced on the School air raid shelters. Then as the space which had been left for future classrooms was gradually filled by the shelters, the true import of the war became apparent.

'However, the shelters were ready not a day too soon, for with the start of the "Battle of Britain" they really came into their own. On August 19th, 1940, the School Log Book records that "at 1.45 p.m. bombs dropped in the vicinity." That was the first of some 282 occasions on which the School used those shelters, spending times in them varying from five minutes to nearly five hours. At no time, however, did the School receive bomb damage.

'Throughout those troublous, and sometimes exciting, times the staff and boys did not forget the School motto of Work and be Happy. Results of the Scholarship Examinations continued to be gratifying - 7 in 1939, 9 in 1940, 16 in 1941 and 21 in 1942, figures which prove how unsuccessful Hitler was in disorganising the scholars' studies.

'In the autumn of 1940 three of our staff, Mr. A. G. Burttt, Mr. R. G. Hymas and Mr. H. J. Picken, all within a month, were called up to His Majesty's Forces. Mr. Burttt, before his return five and a half years later, was to travel with the First Army through North Africa, and then with the famous Eighth Army through Sicily and Italy; Mr. Picken, nearly six years away, finished up in Palestine where, just before his return to England, he visited a Government Arab school at Tiberias (Galilee) and spoke to the boys there about Moulsham, the name of our School being entered in the Arab School's Log Book; Mr. Hymas remained in this country as an instructor in Anti-Aircraft Command. For those of the staff remaining at Moulsham there was the no less arduous ARP work of wardens' duties, fire-guards and the like.'

For the 1941 Moulsham Junior Boys' School Magazine, the Headmaster, Mr Petchey, invited staff on active service to write a few lines for the pupils. Mr Picken's letter is particularly memorable, and reads in part:

'I am not your teacher now but a soldier friend of yours. I am one of those khaki clad men that you see every day doing his bit in the army to help beat that monstrous ogre Hitler. Today every citizen (which includes each one of you) must carry on his work with one aim in view - to win the war. We shall win, too. Have no doubt in your minds about that. You can all play your parts in the fight by keeping a stout heart, making yourself useful and obeying orders.

If you are continuing to attend school regularly, doing as you are asked to do and learning all you can, you are playing your part satisfactorily. How can I be helping to win the war if I am doing just the same as I was in peace time, you may ask. Hitler's raids on civilians are done to upset the routine of our daily life. If he could completely do this he would beat us. But he cannot do it. He has rained destruction on our big cities but the people have not run away from their jobs. They are sticking to their jobs and beating him. You 'go to it' and stick to your jobs and you will be shortening the time we are all longing for - till peace comes again.

Wishing you all Happiness and Good Luck,
Your sincere friend, Sapper H.J. Picken'

Some of your wartime memories

Arthur Humphrey: 'The war had begun in 1939, and I recall that Mum had made the blackout curtains from an old horse blanket, to ensure that no chink of light could appear from the windows. The households were each issued with stirrup pumps and rubber hoses in case of fire from incendiary bombs. Dad and I assembled a large steel shelter in the front room, which Mum and I occupied when the sirens informed the community that a raid was about to start. Our attempts to build an underground shelter down the garden had earlier come to nothing as it rapidly filled with water.'

Jim Simpson: 'To get to school there was a varied selection of routes.....Oaklands Park detour to test out the infamous Widford Gang...thence on to Princes Road, checking the state of the red brick wall at the top of Vicarage Road, for penny rubbing....or the scrumping possibilities of the apples beyond,....or through Fred Skipsey's house, watching him devour a boiled egg, . . . thence over the field to the Main Entranceor up the 'Cinder Track' waking up 'Bundles' and on to Princes Road, picking up debris from the night's sky battles...perspex, to carve the rings for the local beauties, or barrage balloon segments, that I think our mothers made into knickers for our older sisters.'

Phyllis Chatelier (Little): 'When the air raid shelters were erected on the school playing fields we did feel safer. However, there were other attempts to get at little children playing in the playground. I wonder if anyone remembers the day when, having returned to school after dinner, the enemy hedgehopper low-flying aircraft machine-gunned us? Our then caretaker Mr Perrin shouted at us to "get down" but it was all over so quickly we were rather bemused. But I recall we helped locate the spent cartridges with strict instructions that we must not touch them. No one was hurt.'

Diane Berthelot (Lawson): 'The war did not stop us having fun, but I did get annoyed when the siren went off during drama class, which I loved, but never during maths! The air-raid shelters were brick built, and had a peculiar damp, musty smell. One air raid sticks in my mind, the one where Marconi's received a direct hit. We could see the flames from our back bedroom window.'

Anne Holdsworth (Hammond): 'I well remember those days, sitting in the shelters, but did not realise the emotional traumas of the time. I realise now how lucky we were that the school was not hit. We all had to carry gas masks.'

Alan Roxby: 'Living in Lynmouth Avenue, this is the thing I remember most about the war: being in a table shelter with Mum, Dad and two girls from the Land Army one day when the bombs dropped. The windows came out, the door flew off into the garden, and parts of the ceiling came down. All you could do was lie in the shelter (Dad would not let me go out), and watch the anti-aircraft gunfire, searchlights and flashing from exploding bombs. When it got a little quieter, I went with Dad to look round the rest of the house, by the light of the searchlights outside. Most of the windows were missing at the back, but only one at the front.'

Brian Meadowcroft: 'I recall spending the night of my seventh birthday under the drawing-room table, whilst a violent bombing raid raged all around, nearby Crompton's works being the target of the German planes. In the morning, on my school-bound journey, as I crested the summit of Crompton's railway bridge, I was astonished at the devastation wreaked on the houses in Upper Bridge Road. On another occasion, I remember seeing the wreckage of a downed German fighter plane that had crashed into a house in London Road, near the Rising Sun pub.'

Selwyn Wheeler, who lived in Avenue Road opposite Dorset Avenue at that time, recalls walking to and from school, lunchtime included, with his cousin **John Baker** and friends across open fields. Apart from Avenue Road and Loftin Way, which was nearing completion, there were virtually no buildings between Beehive Lane and Princes Road. The whole area was farmed, mainly pasture. There were many majestic elm trees and in autumn a seemingly unlimited crop of wild mushrooms. Selwyn also recalls malted milk tablets, both plain and chocolate flavoured, being issued to the pupils as food supplements during the war years.

Pauline Digby (Knight): 'The uniform prior to the war was maroon tunics or pinafore dresses and yellow small check blouses, but of course uniform was impossible during the war because of rationing for clothes. As I remember, the Headmistress, Miss Rankin, always wore a straight-skirted suit of Harris Tweed in an orange/rust large check design. During the war we collected books for waste paper salvage and received badges for the number of books we were able to bring to school. I think the highest award was a 'Captain' badge. We spent hours at home 'ravelling' (ie fraying out scraps of material to make stuffing for soft toys etc). Some of it was used to stuff the 'Squander Bugs' we

made to enforce the war effort of saving.' **Margaret Haldane (Laurence):** I remember walking to school along Princes Road when the American convoys passed by, and the Americans would throw masses of sweets on to the grass verges for us to scramble to get. I remember taking screw top jars to school to be filled with drinking chocolate powder. Also Horlicks tablets at 4 for 1d. The teachers did the dispensing.' **Jean Taylor (nee Whittle)** was one of several Moulsham Junior Girls who collected money for Red Cross parcels during the war. In her case there was a special reason: her friend Valerie Cass's father was himself a Prisoner of War: 'Valerie and I used to have a stall in my front garden and sold books, toys, flowers and anything else we could get hold of to sell.' **Don Smith:** 'Morning assembly in the main hall is indelibly printed in my mind, with the wooden block floor (still there, I see), and the boards full of boys' names, far cleverer than I, written on them. On the back wall of the stage was the school motto 'WORK and be HAPPY'. The Headmaster, Mr Petchey, took assembly, with the hymns 'Jerusalem', 'All things bright and beautiful', 'Fight the good fight' and many more, all blasted out!'

Notes on the photographs

1. **A 1938 Time Capsule.** This piece of card from a cigarette packet was hidden in a wall cavity by one of the builders of Moulsham Junior School in 1938. It was discovered there 46 years later during redecoration in Spring 1984. If anyone knows of **Mr P Hawkes** or his family, we would be delighted to hear from you. Would he perhaps have been a family member of Messrs Geo J Hawkes & Sons, the Chelmsford firm which built the Junior Schools? The date, April 27th 1938, was written in pencil on the reverse of the card.

2. **1941-42 Football team.** Very many thanks to **Don Post**, another of our 1938 pupils, for this picture of the Junior Boys' School football team of which he was part. Don modestly claims that "I may have been playing for my enthusiasm rather than my ability, but I am standing at Right Back with the team displayed in the 'old-fashioned Soccer formation. At either side of the Backs are the two reserves, D. Cork and P. Crosier, standing next to Messrs Hudson (the coach!) and Petchey (Headmaster) respectively. The football was leather, very heavy when wet!" The names of all those on the photo are:

Back row, from left: Mr Hudson, D Cork, Don Post, Peter Moore, John Christie, P Crosier, Mr Petchey (Headmaster). **Middle row:** Ray Bush, John Marden, Pat McGovern **Front row:** Brian Brewer, Gilbert ('Titch') Dowsett, John Evans (wartime refugee from Tottenham), Nigel Gardiner (younger son of teacher Mr Gardiner), Reg Bell.

3. **1939 Mr Gardiner's class.** **Don Post** also writes: "Some of the excellent photos in the Newsletter have reminded me of many of the boys I knew. Because of 'overcrowding' in those early days, I was 'moved up a year', but then caught up in the last year by other pupils of my own age. I clearly recall John Spooner, whose obituary was reported in the recent issue. We were classmates both before and after his evacuation to Canada. Coincidentally, whilst working on claims for Royal Insurance in Southampton in the early '60s, I did, in fact, negotiate a case with him at the 'Midland"! Mentioning Canada, many of the older folk amongst us will also remember (Dr) Ray Bush, who died in Toronto in 1990. It may be of interest, to some who do not know, that he is commemorated in a new centre of Princess Margaret's Hospital there, and also in a "visiting professorship", in recognition of the work he did in the fight against cancer.

"Having looked again at the 1939 photo of Mr Gardiner's class, I believe I am one of those 'missing' or 'cut off', as I think I sat at the front, next to Magnus Anderson, who was sometimes referred to as my 'twin'! Due to my having been 'moved up' a year, this was my early recollection of John Spooner. Many of the other faces are still familiar to me, especially that of my old friend Martin Lee, who lived just along from me in Baddow Road, and with whom I have kept in touch over the years." The names of the pupils shown on this photo are:

(continued on page 14)



1. (above) 'Time capsule' from the construction of Moulsham Junior School in 1938



2, (above) 1941-42 Football team (picture from Don Post)



3. (left) 1939 Mr Gardiner's class

4. (below) Summer 1960, photo from Sue Rawlingson (Hunter)





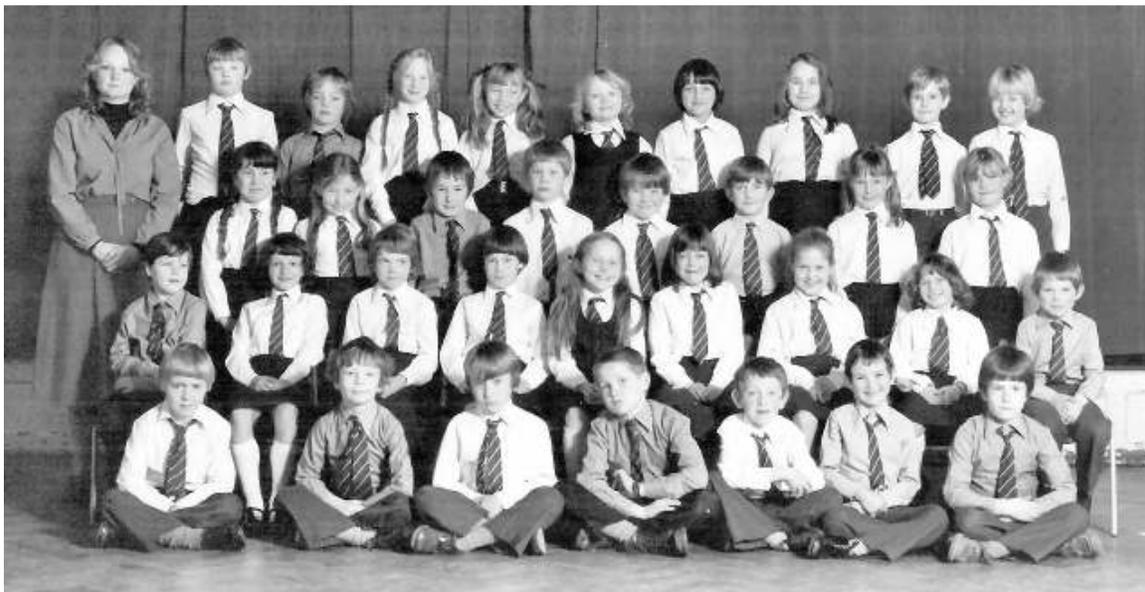
5. 1988 50th party, Infants' School (photo from Sue Rawlingson (Hunter))

6. (above) Souvenir badge from the party

7. 1968, Moulsham Junior Girls' recorder group (photo from Julie Sherman (Aves))



8. (below) 1979-80 Mrs Bragg's first year class. Picture from James Fish, 1979-83



(note on photo 3, continued)

Standing (from left): Ray Sewell, ?, David Saltmarsh, Ray Thorne, Ralph Smith, Derek Smith, Kenneth Mann, Peter Turrall, Mr Gardiner, Peter Vinal, John Whittle, Robert Bedford, John Davey, James Fleming, Ray Hatherley, **Back row (seated):** Tommy Howes, Dennis Poulter, Derek Meadowcroft, Brian King, Reg Folkard, Ivan Brown, Peter Smith. **Second row:** Roger Fletcher, Martin Lee, Ronald Hancock, Charles Dickerson, (Bunny) Boon, Ralph Turbin, Colin Mallows. **Third row:** Billy Harris, John Southgate, David Bell, Douglas Whipps, Tony Miller, Kenneth Walls. **Front row:** John Spooner, David Smith, Granville Allen, Reg Baldwin, Magnus Anderson. **Missing** are, we believe, Keith Lodge, Ian Gardiner, Dennis Martin, Alec Fulcher, John Howitt, Don Post and Peter Wild. Among those sadly no longer with us: John Spooner, Ralph Smith, Kenneth Mann, Roger Fletcher and Brian King (names from Peter Smith et al).

We also have 1939 photographs of Mr Picken and Mr Hymas' classes, which are displayed at our annual reunions, but have not so far tracked down any corresponding photos of Mr Hudson's or Mr Burt's classes. If any of you have copies of these, we would love to hear from you.

4. **Junior Girls, 1960.** Thank you to **Sue Hunter (Rawlingson)**, 1959-63, for this photograph of her class, taken in the summer 1960. Sue writes: "I am afraid I cannot remember all the girls' names. I found the photograph recently when having a sort out! I really do not know how I managed to have this, as my parents rarely bought any school photographs, it must have been pester power! The names I remember are:

Back Row: Pat Thorpe, ?, Wendy Little?, ?, Carol Hobbs, Valerie Lee, Pat Seldon, Ann Palmer. **Middle Row:** Marion ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, Louise MacFarlane, ?, Janet Merry, Janet Sampson. **Front Row:** ?, Diane Hills?, Susan Rawlingson, ?, Ella Reynolds, Jane Jeffrey. [Please let us know if you recognise other faces]

I do recall being bought the school uniform, as my father had to borrow a car and we travelled to the school uniform shop in Rayleigh. The uniform consisted of a grey tunic with small school badge on and round the waist you had to wear a claret coloured sash tied like a school tie, white long sleeved blouse, a claret V shaped cardigan, a claret blazer trimmed with blue and white twisted cord with the school badge on the pocket, a claret beret with the school badge on and of course the school tie which was claret with blue and white stripes.

Another memory I recalled was when in your fourth year (now year 6) the school still had an afternoon playtime and you were expected to take it in turns to go to the small kitchen opposite the staff room to fill a large kettle with water, place it on the old fashioned gas cooker, light the gas using matches! Layout cups and saucers, return to your class, then just before playtime return to the kitchen to make a very large pot of tea for all the teachers."

5. and 6. 1988, 50th anniversary celebrations.

On to more recent times! Sue Hunter (Rawlingson) also sent us this 1988 photograph taken in the Infants School of the 50th birthday party which she and her children attended. This picture was mentioned in the article about Moulsham Infants' School Head Teacher, Mrs Irene Tyson, in the Autumn 2007 Newsletter, and we are delighted to have a copy. Sue was even able to let us see the badge that the children received (photo 6). The design was reproduced on adhesive labels which were attached to cardboard circles to make the hats.

7. This picture, taken in 1968, is from Julie Sherman (Aves), the only photo we have of a Girls' recorder group. Do any of you recognise yourself or others? If so, do please let us know.

8. Another group from James Fish, who wrote his school recollections for us in the Summer 2007 Newsletter this time of Mrs Bragg's first year class in 1979-80. Names are as follows: **Back row, left to right:** James Fish, Dean Harris, ? , ? , ? , Alison Fairhead, Jackie Heap, David Hutchinson, Aaron Goodwin **Third row:** Sharon Kermak, Tracey Kennett, Paul Greening, Martin Eade, Philip Hendry, Robert Edge, Justine Harvey, Julie Watts **Second row:** Michael Carter? Helen Gordon, ? , Caroline Hutchinson, Rebecca Isom, Hayley Knight, Wafa Hamcari? Alison Hewitt, Christopher Holder **Front row:** Stuart Harrison, David Howe, Darren Foster, Jay Hardy, Mark Ettridge, Ian Darrill, Matthew Heath

From Margaret Smith (Tomalin) 1944-49

The first I was aware of an association of former pupils of Moulsham Junior School was a trailer on Essex Radio giving details of the reunion last year. Although unable to attend, I have since appreciated receiving the termly newsletter, especially when the contributors and people mentioned are my contemporaries or from their surnames are likely to be their siblings. I am now looking forward to being able to attend next year's special reunion.

I am Margaret Smith, formerly Tomalin, and I attended the Junior School between 1944 and 1949. I started in Class 2 with Miss Skilton, then with Miss Barton, Miss Firmin and lastly Miss Sawday. Whilst in Class 3, a new rule was implemented (could it have been related to the 1944 Education Act?) - you must be a certain age by August 31st. before you could move up into the next class. Being four days too young, I had to repeat the year with Miss Barton. I was so pleased to see her photo in the last issue and agree that, although strict, she was fair and I enjoyed being taught by her. For me that extra year in her class resulted in a marked improvement in my educational performance and may well have determined what happened in the future.

I was fascinated to read in Geraldine Etherington's assorted memories of the house building from old bricks between 1960 and 1964. Could these have been the same old bricks that we used in the forties? It was essential for us to get out early at playtime to ensure that none of our precious walls, furniture or kitchen appliances were stolen. I am sure that today such bricks would be outlawed on the grounds of health and safety! Not only did we 'build' houses with bricks but when the field was mown and the cuttings left in a heap we collected the grass and built less permanent structures.

Other pastimes during our breaks were playing ball against the outside wall of the toilet block, recognizing film stars from their initials (D.D. for Deanna Durbin comes to mind but I never recall seeing a film in which she starred) and group skipping reciting 'Jelly on a plate'. To my shame, I remember being summoned by Miss Rankin, tapping on the staff room window that overlooked the playground, because she had witnessed me receiving a note through the wire netting from a boy. I never did see what had been written inside.

One of our sewing projects was to make a shoe polisher which entailed unravelling loads of material, leaving bits of thread everywhere, in order to have sufficient stuffing to make it firm. In hindsight, I think the shapeless pink nightdress, whose long French seams I laboriously sewed, must have been a rather ambitious project to be attempted by children of junior school age. One year I recall a student on teaching practice taking our class when we made a concertina folder of brown paper with hard back ends covered with a design using potatoes.

For nearly all my time at Moulsham dinners were eaten in Miss Norris' classroom (one of two classrooms separating the schools). I well remember the occasion when my empty plate was held up as

an example of someone who had eaten up all their spinach. It was only in my last few weeks that the new canteen opposite was completed and the much improved food was served from large bowls (white on the inside, cream outside) by two dinner ladies, Mrs. Ponsford, Joan's mother and Mrs. Heseltine, Eileen Jay's aunt. As someone who always enjoyed my food I did appreciate the second helpings I was offered.

In my last year our class produced a nativity play which we went on to perform at the Widford Women's Institute. I was one of the kings and, appropriately dressed, the three of us walked up the aisle between the ladies, carrying our gifts, each singing a verse of ' We three kings of Orient are' I am not sure I would have the confidence to do that now.

Peter Turrall asks: Were you a Marconi employee?

Past pupil Peter Turrall MBE, also from 1938, is Vice Chairman of the Marconi Veteran Association. Knowing that many former Moulsham pupils have worked at Marconi's over the years, he has written this piece about plans for a Marconi Heritage Centre and would love to hear from you if you have any artefacts or documents you would be willing to contribute:

"With the demise of The Marconi Company, Chelmsford has become an important part of the history of communication. It was here in a small factory in Hall Street and later in a much larger factory in New Street, that worldwide communication and broadcasting in many forms was designed and produced.

In 1899 Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company was established in a small factory in Hall Street Chelmsford where some 26 men were employed until 1912, when a purpose built factory in New Street was opened. During the next 90 years, many thousands of people were employed. The Company, later known as The Marconi Company, expanded and had offices and factories in many parts of the UK and the world. In New Street in later years, Marconi Communication Systems was established producing some of the finest communication equipment, television and sound broadcasting transmitters, black and white and colour television cameras, telecine, outside broadcast vehicles, mobile radios, satellite communication and marine equipment etc.

Marconi Radar Systems, originating in New Street, moved to the old Crompton Parkinson factory in Writtle Road and produced some of the finest radar equipment extensively used in airports, civil and military sites as well as on ships and aircraft. The Aeronautical Division moved to new premises in Basildon where manufacture of products for both civil and military applications took place. At Great Baddow The Marconi Research establishment was set up providing many of the requirements and advanced techniques for products utilised in all the Marconi local companies. Marconi Marine originally at New Street set up a factory and offices at Westway, where they produced wireless and navigation equipment for ships and ports as well as training wireless operators engaged by many shipping companies throughout the world.

Chelmsford was Marconi, with factories and offices and training establishments in many parts of the town including Great Baddow, Waterhouse Lane, Baddow Road, Beehive Lane, London Road, Widford, Writtle, Roxwell Road, Broomfield, Springfield etc. The local businesses relied on the workforce of Marconi and houses and recreational facilities were set up to cater for the many requirements of the Chelmsford Marconi employees.

Now that the Marconi main factory has been sold, the only remaining building on the New Street site likely to remain whole is the 1912 front building in which Marconi himself had both his office and laboratory. The remainder of the site apart from one or two minor areas will be demolished to make way for a massive housing project with small shops but no industrial applications.

The Marconi Veterans Association is working closely with the new owners of the site, Messrs Ashwells of Cambridge, with a hope that a Heritage Centre can be set up within the front building to remember the work of Marconi with documentation, artefacts and audio video memories of people who worked at New Street or any other part of the Marconi establishment. This would be an asset to the town and also a tourist attraction.

This is the last chance that Marconi in Chelmsford can be remembered, and I am asking if you worked at any of the Marconi units, would you write to me and give your support for the setting up of this Heritage Centre. In giving this support, it will encourage both the new owners and Chelmsford Borough Council, to recommend that the life and work of our Founder and the people who worked for the Company are recognised.

We are collecting artefacts, letters, magazines, photographs and any other equipment or documentation from ex-employees for use in the Heritage Centre. If you have any of these and are willing for them to be used by the Marconi Veterans, then please contact me as soon as possible. Whatever you do, please add a codicil to your will ensuring any Marconi artefact or documentation in your possession is not destroyed on your demise. I look forward to hearing from you."

Averil Wilcox (Clarke) 1960-64 remembers all those school trips.

I have just read my copy of the Autumn 2007 Moulsham Junior School Past Pupils' newsletter and was pleasantly surprised to see the photographs from Gerry Etherington (Butterworth) and the extracts from her school diary. I was not fortunate enough to own a camera in those days, so it was great to see those photos. Gosh what a long time ago that was!

I do remember being put in the stocks with Gillian Norton at Colchester Castle! The museum guide asked for us two because he thought we both had long enough legs! The group picture at the Castle was of (from left to right) Gail Whetnall, Susan Hawkes, Jackie Butler (I think behind), not sure about the next girl, Sandra Halls?, Susan Willis and Helen Golding. The other photo with the group standing in front of the doorway has Gail Whetnall, not sure who that is peeping between, but behind her is Margaret Prah, and then there is that mystery girl again!

The Jacqueline in the photo with the goat at Colchester Zoo was Jackie Butler. I remember being asked to hold a fox during one of the talks we had there.

I have fond memories of my time at Moulsham, especially from the last year under the watchful eye of Mrs Alty. She was an inspiring teacher and was very proud of her class. We all really enjoyed our visit to Stratford Upon Avon. I think Mrs Alty and Miss Pettet were extremely brave to take such a large group of girls on a residential trip! Nowadays the ratio of teacher to pupil would not exceed 1:10. I certainly don't remember any other adults being present, apart from the coach driver!

Our parents were encouraged to write us a letter while we were away so we would not be homesick. I have kept mine and it shows the address as the Bearley Holiday Camp. I remember Mrs Alty being rather annoyed with the management of the camp. It did not appear to be completely finished as there were lots of walls that needed plastering and tiling in the bathrooms to be done. Still, we made the best of it. There was a prize for the best-kept dormitory, which my group won and when we returned there was another prize for the best diary. I can't remember who won that, but I still have mine somewhere.

We were taken to see a production of Richard 11 at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. We visited Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Shakespeare's birthplace, New Place, Holy Trinity Church and the special Exhibition for Shakespeare's 400th birthday. I can still remember the lines we were taught from Richard 11, but much preferred The Merchant of Venice, which we studied back at school. Mrs Alty made sure that we could all quote " The quality of mercy is not strained....."

I wonder if anyone else remembers being taught very rudimentary French conversation? We would spend part of one afternoon in a darkened demountable listening to a tape and watching slides of little stick-men and then trying to repeat together. " Ou est la gare? La gare est ici."

I have vivid memories of country dancing in our black skirts with coloured braids. Once we took part in a competition at the Corn Exchange. Other memories include:

PE in the hall in our vests and knickers!

Swapping beads and 'precious' gems with each other.

Wet lunch times when we all went into the hall and each class had a box of assorted games to play with. My favourite was Pick Up Sticks.

Playing netball and rounders with Miss Mutton.

The Mid Essex Music Festivals held at the newly built Civic Centre.

Potato Puffs - whatever happened to them?

Five shillings dinner money - usually two half crowns!

The brick 'houses' we made and played in.

The Christmas Plays - I always fancied myself as a bit of an actress!

I went on to the Girls' High School after Moulsham. I still live in Chelmsford and I am a teacher myself - Mrs Alty would have been surprised! I am currently teaching at Broomfield Primary School and have a Year 5/6 class, although I have taught all the primary range.

Keep up the good work, I enjoy finding out what everyone is up to nowadays!

Follow-up from Gerry Etherington (Butterworth), 1960-64

Following on from my article in the Autumn newsletter I was delighted to receive emails from Sally Waller (Golding) and Sandra Copsey (Halls) and to know that Averil Willcox (Clarke) and Linda Sewell (Pavitt) had also been in contact. Between us we managed to put a few more names to the photos. It was also reassuring to know that other people had retained similar memories of events and trips at Moulsham Junior Girls. The names for the Autumn 2007 Newsletter photos (some definite, some maybe!): **Picture 2:** _Front row: Left to right: Gail Whetnall; Susan Hawkes; Denise Lodge; Susan Turner(?); Susan Willis; Helen Golding Back row (facing front) Jackie Butler. **Picture 3:** Front row: Left to right: Gail Whetnall; (between ?); Denise Cook (?) (girl to right?) Back row: Margaret Prah. **Picture 4:** (Colchester Zoo) Jackie Butler

News in brief

Many thanks to **Wendy Mason (Shipman)** 1948-52, for sending us a copy of her Infants' class photo taken between 1946 and 1948. We will have it on display at the May Open Afternoon, which Wendy and her sister June both hope to attend.

Peter Linn, 1952-55, who lives in Australia, responded to a message on the friendsreunited website, to say that he was at Moulsham Junior Boys' School from 1952/3 to 1955, when his father was posted to Stebbing as village bobby. Peter writes: 'I recall a couple of names from my class - Philip Alexander, Freddie Jones, John Molloy, Rosalind Gibney, Vivienne Butcher. My sister Pat was there a year ahead of me.'

Sue Kemp (Hayden), 1951-55 has strong family connections with all three Moulsham schools, and she, her brother and mother have all enjoyed reading recent Newsletters. Sue writes: 'I attended Moulsham Infants and Junior Schools before going on to the [Chelmsford] Girls' High School. After qualifying as a teacher I came back to the Infants' School, where I taught for six years until my first daughter was born. She worked briefly as a classroom assistant in the infants' department after her marriage. My daughter, husband and their baby daughter have recently moved to Longstomps Avenue, their house backing on to the playing fields alongside the schools complex. Life seems to go in circles - I started my married life in a rented house in Longstomps! My brother attended Moulsham - infant to secondary. My mother did supply teaching at the Juniors and worked part time for several years in the Secondary Girls' School with Miss Howard. Hopefully I can dig out some old photos and write an article sometime in the future, and will certainly aim at coming to the Open Afternoon in May and the September reunion.'

We were also pleased to hear from another 1951-55 pupil from Moulsham Junior Girls' School, **Juliet Jones (Lindars)**, who says that her memories of that time are rather hazy, but gradually come back as she reads what other people have written. Juliet says 'I was particularly interested to see Gerry Etherington's contribution [in the Autumn 2007 Newsletter]. She lived opposite us in Moulsham Drive and she and her sisters were playmates of my sisters.'

Among recent additions to the Newsletter distribution list are **Marion Jennings (Kettle)**, 1972-76, and her mother **Suzanne Kettle (Bulbeck)**, 1949-53. Marion emailed to say 'A copy [of the Newsletter] was recently passed to me via a work colleague and my Mum (another past pupil) and myself have spent a couple of happy hours reading it. I think I even spotted my face in the photo of the 1975 carol concert'. We are delighted to hear from Marion. And hope she and her mother will be able to join us at the Open Afternoon.

Another new contact is **Mrs B Baggs (Morella)**, cousin of Ann Una and Hazel. She attended St John's School for a short while before transferring to Moulsham Infants and, in 1940, Moulsham Junior Girls' School. Mrs Baggs is looking forward to coming to the Open Afternoon and hopes to bring her friend **Viola Lee (Nurse)**.

We were pleased to have an email very recently as follows: 'My name is **Ian Marshall** and I was at Moulsham Juniors from 1946 until 1951. My older siblings **Anne (now Cook)**, **Bob (sadly deceased)** and **Nancy (now Land)** were also pupils there. It was whilst visiting Anne that I saw the newsletter (Autumn 2007) for the first time (2 of her grandsons are "Moulsham Boys"). What a fascinating read - so many memories came flooding back: Mr Petchey and those (fortunately rare) moments "under the

board"; his scarlet face when agitated and his storytelling which brought Shakespeare dramas to life; the teachers Mrs Moses, Messrs Hodgson, Burt, Hymas & Pickles; trimming the quadrangle grass with scissors in preparation for end of school year open day and a trip to the Festival of Britain.'

Ian continues: 'I was particularly interested to read about **Mel Rawlinson** and his brother **Keith**. We were in Boys Brigade together, as were **Nick Turner** and **Patrick Durrant** who were also mentioned in the newsletter About 1955/1956 Mel, Nick, **Dan Biglin** (another Moulsham Boy) and I were all members of **The Saints Skiffle Group** (together with two non-Moulsham lads, Chris Anthony & Brian Atkinson). We used to rehearse at the Baddow Road Congregational Church, and played a numbers of "gigs" (don't think they were called that then) at venues such as the Marconi Club, Keene Hall, Pavilion - Saturday Morning pictures- and even the Ilford Palais! Inevitably our paths took us in different directions and although I only live up the road in Kelvedon, I have lost touch - so your newsletter really helped to bridge the years.'

Obituary: Vernon Makin

One of our first-day Moulsham pupils from September 1938, Vernon Makin, died on 3 December 2007, and will be greatly missed. The following tribute is from his daughter Pamela.

'Vernon will be missed, not only by his loving family, but by many hundreds of people in Chelmsford, whose lives he has touched. Born and bred in Chelmsford, he was brought up by His parents, William Cyril and Lillian Makin, in the guidance of the Salvation Army. Many of his childhood years were spent in Broomfield Hospital, suffering from tuberculosis. But God in his kind wisdom brought him through. Vernon met Sallie when she was sweet 16 and they married in 1955 and shared 52 years of marriage, producing three loving daughters.

Although he had missed a lot of his schooling, he went on to study at evening class at Chelmsford Technical College, and landed a job at Essex County Council, where he worked hard for 41 years, making many good friends, attaining promotion and working finally as section leader in the Computer Section. He was also very active in Nalgo and became a life member. He was a keen badminton player, which many of you will remember. At the age of 58 he took early retirement.

Vernon was a great family man, had a wicked sense of humour, and as many will recall, liked to play practical jokes. His children had so much fun with him. He also gave long hours to the Royal British Legion on various committees, following its motto of 'Service not self'.

In his retirement years he was voted to be an Essex County Councillor, a job into which he put every ounce of effort. He was on many committees including; the Fire Service, Social Services and Education. He will be greatly missed as a Governor at Mildmay Junior School and at Moulsham, where his wisdom and common sense was well received and used to the benefit of the schools. His work for the Conservatives spanned decades, working for many elections and committees and in later years enjoying the facilities of the Club in Moulsham Street, where he indulged in his favourite tittle and a flutter on the machine. He enjoyed running the bingo there for many years, which entertained the members.

Having sailed through a triple heart by-pass in 2001 and fought pneumonia July 2006, Vernon continued as a volunteer Poppy Appeal collector right up to November 2007, when he raised over £500 on Saturday at Tesco's even though his health was suffering. There is so much more I could say of Dad's contributions to making life a better place for all of us. We will all miss you Dad, but know that you are still close to us now and always.'

School website

Copies of this and earlier issues of the newsletter from Autumn 2004, containing memories and photos from many other former members of Moulsham Junior School, are on the past pupils' page of the school website: www.moulsham-jun.essex.sch.uk/index.htm Well worth a look.

We have very few paper copies of pre-2004 Newsletters, but can send copies by email from the first issue in Autumn 1999. You will probably need broadband to receive these, as those with photographs are rather bulky. Requests to kathleen.boot@tiscali.co.uk

Tesco computer vouchers

If you are not already collecting Tesco computer vouchers for any other school, Moulsham Juniors would be delighted to receive them - it takes a very large number to qualify for useful school computer equipment!

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.

The views expressed by individual contributors in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the Head Teacher, School Governors or Editors.