

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Spring 2010

Vol 12 no 1

In this issue

page

- Hello again from Hilary and Kathleen 2
- School News from Headteacher Mrs Linda Hughes 3
- Peter Turrall, 1938: Moulsham pupils present and past 4
- John Land, 1942-46: My journey to school 5
- Mrs G L French (teacher), July 1946 Magazine article: Whipsnade 7
- April 1946: Mr Picken's letter from Palestine 8
- Notes on the photographs 9, 12
- Photographs: Std IV in 1946 (photo from John Land);
Mr Petchey retirement photo;
Iris Hazell (Clark) the first dinner ladies;
Meeting with artist Les Bicknell;
1982 pictures from Micky (Michaela) Venton (Davis);
School interior May 2009;
Myra Sankey (Shinkwin) 1945-49 10, 11
- More from Sue Bruns (Huscroft) 1965-69 12
- More from Debbie Robbins (Stone) 1966-70 14
- A letter from Micky (Michaela) Venton, nee Davis, 1978-82 15
- Moulsham Street redevelopment - discussions with artist Mr Les Bicknell 16
- Mrs Michelle Orchard: Learning support at Moulsham Juniors 18
- Playground games at the May reunion 19
- News in brief: Gillian Holland (Spooner), 1952-56, Hazel Offord, 1951-55,
Dave Sturgeon, 1958-62 Myra Sankey (Shinkwin) 1945-49,
Iris Hazell (Clark) 1939 20
- Obituaries: Geoff Boyce, Don Harris, Ken Turton 21
- Footnote from 1963 22
- School website
- Data protection

Hello again from Hilary and Kathleen

Spring is here at last, and with it the latest issue of the Moulsham Junior School Past Pupils' Newsletter. Thank you to everyone who has sent in their stories, news and pictures, including a very interesting article on page 18 from a current member of staff, Mrs Michelle Orchard, describing her developing role over more than 13 years as Learning Support Assistant and now Learning Mentor.

A special thank you to John Land, 1942-46, for two original copies of the April and July 1946 Boys' School Magazine, which we had not seen before. We have reproduced two articles from them, by teachers Mrs French and Mr Picken, in this Newsletter, along with John's own interesting recollections of his walk to school. By strange coincidence, Claire Houlton (Bigg), 1969-73, has since sent us a copy of the same letter from Mr Picken, commenting that 'Mr Picken was such a lovely man - my favourite teacher', a sentiment we know many of you share.

Earlier this term a number of local past pupils kindly agreed to talk to current pupils about life at Moulsham in the wartime years: Brian Emmett, Brian Greatrex, Gladys Gulliver and Joan Keyes (friends since Junior School days), Heather Turner (with her brother, Jim Fleming) and Peter Turrall. We understand that the pupils and staff were fascinated by their memories, which help to bring history to life. Peter Turrall records his impressions of talking to the children on page 4. Memories of the early years are very precious, and we would urge any of you who have not yet written your recollections of the 1930s and 40s to help us complete the picture of Moulsham life in that era. Written contributions from all periods, along with news and pictures, can be sent by email to kathleen.boot@tiscali.co.uk or by post to Mrs Kathleen Boot, 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG. We look forward very much to hearing from you.

We mentioned last time that Julie Lodge (Shipman) had lent us a 78rpm recording of the Girls' School choir in 1950. We are grateful to Bob Willis for transcribing from vinyl to digital, so that two of these charming songs can now be heard on the school website.

We look forward to seeing friends old and new at this year's Open Afternoon for past pupils on **Saturday 8th May** from 1-4pm at the school. Photo displays, refreshments and entertainment will feature as usual, and as a special extra this year, former Headmaster Les Kemp is organising a project on playground games, details on page 19. So do come along and meet up with your classmates and school friends, and join us for an enjoyable afternoon. Hilary will be making some of your favourite cakes as usual, but you are welcome to add to the feast by bringing some of your own if you wish.

Some of you have asked about making a financial contribution towards the production of the Newsletter. We shall as usual have a collection box available at the Open Afternoon, or if you are unable to be with us on 8th May, and want to make a donation, you might like to send a cheque (payable to 'Moulsham Junior School') to Mrs Linda Hughes, Headteacher, Moulsham Junior School, Princes Road, Chelmsford CM2 9DG. We usually suggest about £3 - £5 a year.

And finally, we can recommend enthusiastically that local past pupils drop in at the newly extended Chelmsford Museum in Oaklands Park, recently opened by the Duke of Gloucester. New displays include an excellent section on the major industries in which many of you worked (Marconi, Hoffman, Crompton Parkinson), with interactive working models for children. Well worth a visit!

Very best wishes from Hilary and myself,

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

School News from Headteacher Mrs Linda Hughes

As you are no doubt aware, schools are always under increasing pressure to improve their performance. Over the past year we have been focusing our efforts on improving children's writing. We have embarked on a project known as 'Big Writing.' It has proved to be very successful and very much enjoyed by the children, who I feel at first thought it would involve writing in large letters! It does not, and centres on providing fast, fun and lively teaching of the writing voice, through forty five minutes of oral and written activities and forty five minutes of independent writing.

The main focus of 'Big Writing' is to teach skills through VCOP which stands for: Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers, Punctuation. In the Vocabulary 'section' children are encouraged to use 'WOW' words, i.e. ambitious vocabulary. The 'Connectives' part helps the children to use a wide range of words and phrases for connecting thoughts and ideas. 'Openers' assists children in using a wide range of opening sentences and 'Punctuation' encourages and then celebrates when children use a wide range of punctuation correctly. To help the children use this correctly, the teachers embark on 'punctuation games' such as 'kung fu' punctuation which can be done to the song of 'Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting' which I'm sure many of you will remember from the 1970s. Watching children and teacher perform this is a joy to behold!!

The children are then asked to practise all of these skills and produce a piece of 'Big Writing.' The right atmosphere is created within the classroom where lighting may be dimmed, aromatic candles may be placed at the front of the room and calming music is played which is so quiet that it can only be heard if the classroom is silent. All of these changes create an almost 'electric' silence that the children love.

The final pieces of children's writing have been amazing and I have selected a few snippets for you to read:

"Soon it was time to go into the basement and there was a flurry of excitement as Mr Eastham took out the key and unlocked the door to the basement. Although Mr Eastham told us to be careful as there were steep steps we were all frantic to explore the basement. As we made our way down the stairs a wonderful sight met our eyes. The basement was a room full of pipes, boilers and other strange objects!" (Year 5)

"It was an ordinary day George was on a school trip at a war museum with his group. A look alike walked by and they mistook him for George. He tried to get back to the group but they had already gone but the look alike got left behind as well. George tried screaming and shouting but he couldn't get attention. When George saw the look alike and asked his name he replied, "Edward." Next they heard a voice saying that the museum was closing at eight o'clock. Edward and George were astonished. Luckily Edward had a blanket and a fold up mattress. George helped unfold the mattress and lay the blanket out. Suddenly George knocked a button opening all the cases and all the little German and British soldiers came out with tanks and planes and both countries teamed up to defeat Edward and George." (Year 3)

As a school we are now fully committed to this approach and I would like to thank Sarah Kiedish and Madeline Khan, our two English Co-ordinators, who have led this initiative so enthusiastically and efficiently.

I am also pleased to report on the progress of our 'edible garden.' I am delighted to have found support and sponsorship from John Ratcliff, one of the school's former pupils, and at the present time the garden structure of raised beds, pathways, sheds and water butts are being created ready for planting in the spring. Do go and have a look at the progress when you visit the school on 8th May from 1pm until 4pm for the next past pupil's afternoon when I do hope to see you.

Peter Turrall, 1938: Moulsham pupils present and past

As mentioned on page 2, Peter Turrall was among those who volunteered to talk to current Moulsham Junior pupils about the wartime years. He very much enjoyed the experience, and reports as follows:

'I was escorted to Mrs Hughes' class, where I met approximately 30 pupils of Class 6WR plus three other teachers who wanted to listen to my life as a pupil of Moulsham Junior School during the 1939-45 Second World War.

I sat in what the teacher called "The Golden Chair" and in something like 50 minutes, related various events, including air raids, collecting souvenirs of bullets, crashed planes etc, blackouts, children's games, rationing, holidays, punishments (including being listed in the famous Punishment Book), and the slapping at the back of my legs by Mr Petchey the Headmaster for climbing on the School roof to retrieve a tennis ball. The pupils were most intent on listening and I gave them a flavour of what it was like to have lessons in air raid shelters and the rationing of food, clothing and furniture, the disasters of bombs dropping and the absence of male teachers who had gone to join the armed forces. I think they were very surprised at the separation of boys from girls in classes and also in the playground.

I was thanked heartily by various members of the class and later on I received some wonderful reminders of my visit by letters and drawings prepared by the pupils. The children were extremely polite, well dressed and asked lots of questions. It was a pleasure to see young people and the interest they took in my experiences. I look forward to a further visit.'

Looking back to 1938, Peter has also been wondering what became of his then classmates. He writes:

'I often look at the photograph which appears at every Reunion of the class of "Daddy" Gardiner's in which I was a pupil, and wonder where these people are now. It would be nice to hear their stories of what happened after they left Moulsham Junior School. I mention their names below with a comment if I have seen or met them in recent years

Roger Fletcher(deceased), Brian Judd (in USA), David Saltmarsh (Surveyor in Yorkshire), Martin Lee (his dad had a Laundry business in Baddow Road), Raymond Thorne, Ralph Smith (deceased USA), Derek Smith, Kenneth Mann (deceased), John Whittle (still lives in Chelmsford), Raymond Hatherley (attended last Reunion), Raymond Sewell (met him in recent years), Tommy Howes (his dad had Hairdressing business in Baddow Road), Dennis Poulter, Derek Meadowcroft (deceased), Brian King (deceased), Ronald Hancock (still lives in Chelmsford), Ivan Brown (lives in Chelmsford), Peter Smith (well known local Chelmsford Amateur Operatic Star), Kenneth Walls, Colin Mallows, Magnus Anderson, Billy Harris, John Spooner (deceased), John Southgate, David Smith, David Bell (lives in Somerset), Charles Dickerson, Robert Bedford, Douglas Whipps, Granville Allen (evacuated to Canada), Derek Boon. Reg Baldwin (lives in Galleywood and attends Reunions), Ralph Turbin (attends Reunions), Brian Horsley, Peter Vinall.

Other people around at that time were: Raymond Perry, Roy Springett, John Perrin, Donald Post (Cornwall), Colin Dowsett, Maurice Dowsett, Michael Ansell, Philip Parsons, Wesley Holden (lives locally), Bernard Ewings, John Reed, Basil Skippen, Ray Bush (deceased), Reg Folkard, Michael Brangham'.

[Editor's note: Magnus Anderson & Kenneth Walls are in fact already on our mailing list, and it would be lovely to have news from them and anyone else on Peter's list.]

John Land, 1942-46

When I was at Moulsham Junior School (MJS) in the early 1940s, I lived in Bruce Grove, which, other attractions and distractions allowing, was a 15 minute walk from school. There was a large population of other MJS students nearby, all about the same age. The following come to mind: Beryl Rayner (now my wife), her sister Jean Rayner (now Dudman), their cousin June Blomfield (sister of Barbara Chilvers) who has lived in Canada for over 50 years, Clive Barker (owner of a Greengrocery store in Moulsham Street), Malcolm Varley (now unfortunately dead), the Shipman family who I lived next door to, David, Julie, Wendy and Martin; Stella Webb, who was my other neighbour, Peter Rolfe, who I believe became a teacher, John and Vera Morella and many more.

The journey to and from school consisted of a series of places and events which captured one's attention. Firstly was the walk into Wood Street where often soldiers wounded in the war would be walking. They were dressed in bright blue uniforms and were often bandaged, plastered, walking with sticks or crutches as they recovered from their injuries. They were billeted in St John's Hospital, which was used solely for this. One memory was that these men rarely spoke to local people, unlike other servicemen that I met. Perhaps their experiences were responsible for this.

Next stop was a fuel depot at the bottom of the road, which had been operated by Shell and BP. During the war all fuel supplies were controlled by the Government and all the tanker lorries were painted grey and had the word 'POOL' in white on the side. Two Irishmen named Colin and Paddy worked at this depot and they were very popular because they lodged with Malcolm Varley's family and were renowned for their generosity and humour. They would often wait outside the depot and be responsible for my lateness at school. They also had the added kudos, in my eyes, of working in a very dangerous place. Alongside the depot was the entrance to Crompton Parkinson's Sports Ground. My father worked for this company on Writtle Road and this gave me dispensation to play on the field; unfortunately most of my friends' fathers didn't, so they had to use the ground illicitly until either Head Groundsman, Dick Cooper or his assistant, Ted Plaistow appeared, to move them on. The sports ground was also a short cut to Princes Road via a gate in the corner, which was sometimes locked, so it was only used on the way home. The sports ground is now underneath Tesco's Store.

At the turning into Princes Road was "The Bovril." This was a triangle of waste ground between Princes Road and New London Road. It was so called because of a huge advertising board there which always displayed Bovril adverts! It disappeared when the roundabout was enlarged. It was a favourite place to visit because in the bushes was a brick and concrete war construction of tunnels and niches. What it was used for I never knew, but it provided an excellent play area for whatever games could be devised, usually involving 'guns' and 'bombs.' On the opposite side was a transport cafe which over the years has evolved into what is now a motel. In those days it was known as the 'Sunbeam' which it certainly wasn't! Steamed up windows, bedraggled curtains and a car park of gravel, well endowed with potholes, the 'Sunbeam' held little interest, but nearby was an area of anti-tank blocks known as 'Dragon's Teeth', which again leant themselves to various games involving climbing and hiding. Also in the middle of the road were concrete plugs that could have steel girders slotted into them, again as anti-tank devices. I often wished I could see them installed, but fortunately they never had to be used.

From the cafe there was a high fence at the side of the sports field to the back gate. To my memory it was here that the 'Widford Gang' (mentioned in several Newsletters) would ambush or catch up with their victims and mete out their punishments if you weren't fast or smart enough. Bullying was a fact of life in those days as it is now.

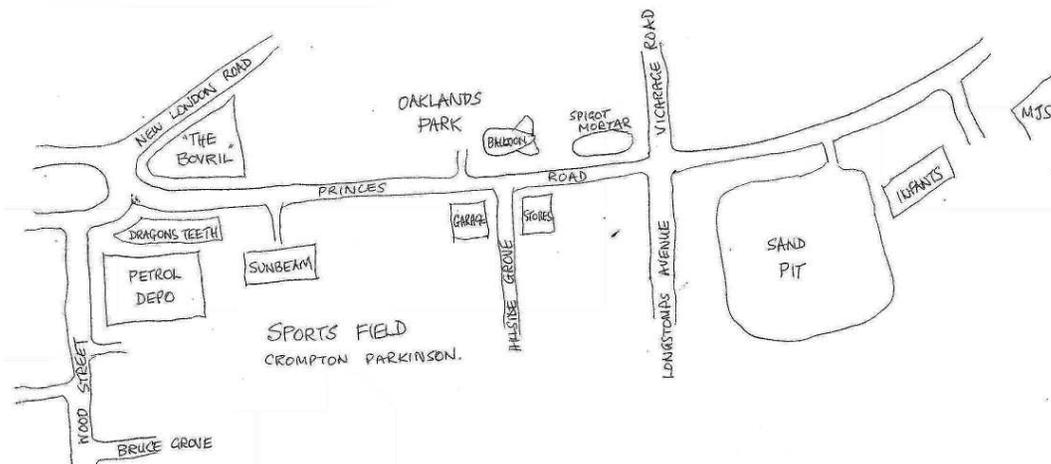
At the bottom of Hillside Grove on one side was a garage which later became a petrol station and on the other side was Bullass Stores which is where my mother obtained her ration of eggs and sweets. The lady who served (Miss Bullass?) was a very kind and friendly and popular with her young customers.

Next to the stores was a vacant plot which was a short cut to Longstomps Avenue and the Senior School. This is now built on.

Opposite was Oaklands Park with its museum, slippery cannon to climb on and a Barrage Balloon station; one of probably 15 to 20 in the town. Also in the park was a 'Spigot Mortar' mounting. Just inside the park at the junction of Princes Road and Vicarage Road was a mound covered with tall trees - mostly conifers. In amongst the trees was a fortification sunk into the mound which contained the mounting. This was a mortar designed as an anti-tank device controlled by the Home Guard. It was taken out of use early in the war because of the danger to the crew of the weapon back firing! The spigot is no longer there.

During the war, Longstomps Avenue and Vicarage Road formed a cross-roads with Princes Road. While at the seniors school, it was a 'dare' to cycle full pelt down Longstomps and go straight across into Vicarage Road. It wasn't all that dangerous because traffic was very light and consisted mostly of military vehicles in convoys which were quite slow moving. I can remember one accident though, which was unrelated to cycling. It involved the Courtman twins and I believe Dudley was injured, though not seriously. Also I remember a boy, I think it was Peter Murphy, riding to school on the cross-bar of his father's cycle. He slipped and his leg was caught between the forks and the wheel.

The last attraction on the journey to school was the sand pit, which was very close to the Infant School reception class. At the beginning of the war while I was in the infants it was reported that a German 'lone-raider' had dropped bombs in the pit. Mine and other parents kept us off school for several weeks after that. The pit ceased production at times and then became an attractive, but dangerous play area for some children. Finally, and sometimes late, I would arrive at school. Wood Street and Princes Road certainly held attractions on my journeys to and from school.



I went to Moulsham Seniors after leaving in 1946 and after two years, unusually, went to King Edward Grammar School until 1952. I then spent seven years in the Merchant Navy as an apprentice and navigating officer. I then worked for Procter & Gamble and J. Sainsbury until, in my 40's I became a teacher at two Middle Schools in Suffolk before retiring. One colleague during this time was Judith Summersgill who later became Deputy Head and Acting Head at Moulsham Juniors at about the time of the schools 50th anniversary. My wife Beryl, left the Juniors in 1943 and spent 4 years at the County High School for Girls from where she became a telephonist and supervisor at the Chelmsford GPO Exchange. Following the arrival of our two children she trained as a teacher at Brentwood College and spent 18 years teaching in Suffolk. We now live in Bury St Edmunds and only occasionally visit Chelmsford, although our original contact with the newsletter is a cousin of Beryl, Barbara Chilvers (nee Blomfield) who lives quite near the school. We hope to attend the next gathering in May.

Also enclosed with John Land's letter were three snapshots taken of Mr. Gardiner's class in 1946 and the names of those pupils that he can remember. One of these is printed on page 10, with names on page 9. In addition, John has sent us two school magazines from 1946 which we have not seen before, and two articles, one from each, are reprinted below.

1946 Visit to Whipsnade

The July 1946 Boys' School Magazine, of which John Land has sent us an original copy, contains the following article by teacher Mrs G L French, describing the first school visit after the war:

'On July 6th, a party of boys, about to leave us for Secondary Schools, and eight members of the Staff visited Whipsnade Zoo. The morning was cloudy but the forecast promising and soon after nine o'clock two well-loaded Ashdown coaches left Moulsham. A cross-country route was taken and the greater part of the way lay between fields promising a rich harvest, through pleasant villages, and past ancient manors, farm-houses and churches. The interest in all this was great at first, and if, during the three hours' trip, it waned, boredom was kept at bay by seeking the quaintest pub name, counting the different kinds of coach encountered, singing favourites of both wars, or delivering running commentaries on the progress of the three cars accompanying the expedition.

By the time the journey ended the weather was perfect, and as soon as all were inside the gate, they found the nearest picnic spot, and lunched happily on a hill-side commanding a wide and pleasant view. Once hunger was appeased it was decided that all should wander at will seeking what most appealed until four o'clock. Those three hours of sight-seeing sped all too soon. Some lingered longest where the elephant played her mouth-organ; some stood entranced beneath the giraffe's long neck and supercilious stare; the thrill of the lions at large held some; while others marvelled most at the intricate markings on tiger's head or zebra's leg. Bears appealed to all, but argument waxed hot as to which was really best, the brown bear who sat up so confidently, the polars whose white fur dazzled, or the thirteen footer who swam so well. Some there were who swore that none could really beat the monkeys while many had their greatest thrill within the precincts of the bird sanctuary.

It was said of one boy that his total of ices eaten outnumbered that of the animals seen, but however that may be, it was definitely not a Moulsham boy who, standing with two dainty Manchurian cranes in front of him, musk oxen with their calves lowing at his back, spotted deer stealing by his left side and two Gibbons climbing so intriguingly to his right, said: "Dad, wouldn't it be fun to live at Whipsnade - then we could eat ices every day."!

Alas, at four all had to assemble on the hillside again, this time for tea. Then there was a quick rush to your real favourite, a conducted tour to some monster you had missed, or one more climb down the slope for buffalo wool, and it was time to get to the gate to be counted. The ride home through the golden evening seemed so much shorter than the morning trip - a few songs, a few games, some little talk of the wonders seen, and kindly drivers were putting us down near our homes. Whipsnade had come and gone, and the school's first outing since the war had been a great success. G L FRENCH'

John Land recalls that he went on this Whipsnade trip, but adds: "I must admit my memories were rather vague. The journey by coach stands out because such trips were very unusual during and straight after the war. My longest journey until then was to visit my aunt in Braintree. Also the freedom that we were allowed after seeing the animals and the excitement of running and rolling on the slopes of the Chilterns. In retrospect it was a wonderful initiative on the part of the school to give us such an experience."

Mr Picken's letter from Palestine, April 1946: a Visit to a School in the Holy Land

In the April 1946 Moulsham Junior Boys' School Magazine, also sent to us by John Land, the Editor notes that "One of our masters, Mr H J Picken, is still in the Army. At the present time he is a Sgt Instructor in the Army Education Corps in Palestine. We have much pleasure in printing the following contribution from him." We also have pleasure in reprinting it in this Newsletter:

'For some time I have been stationed in a camp on the mountain side overlooking the Sea of Galilee. The Sea is known now as the Lake of Tiberias, and the little town of Tiberias lies on its shores, 700 feet below sea level. Tiberias has been described as "a shabby, squalid little town which crouches like a beggar on the lakeside - a town of rags and dark eyes and dark cellars, of little jumbled shops and narrow streets." It was in this Arab town that I had the opportunity, in January, of visiting a Government Arab School. I was introduced to the headmaster through the Arab interpreter of the unit with whom I am working.

Education in Palestine is not compulsory and the boys of this school were all "volunteers". They enter the school at the age of seven years (if there is room to take them in) and follow a course of education very similar to our own until they reach the age of fourteen. The subjects they study are very much the same as those in our schools except that they are compelled to learn English. I was amazed at the standard the boys in the top class had reached in the English language. On my second visit to the school I was invited to take an English lesson with these boys. They were reading John Buchan's story "The 39 Steps" and all of them were eager to read passages to me. They could answer my questions about England but they had some very strange ideas about our country and some of the answers I received were very amusing.

The boys attend school every day except Fridays and Sundays. This is because the Muslim Arab observes Friday as his Sabbath and the Christian Arab observes Sunday as we do. All their afternoons are given up to practical subjects such as woodwork, science and gardening. They are very proud of their school garden which, incidentally, had a fine crop of tomatoes and beans in it (in January). Football and basketball are their favourite games.

I regret to say that their building (three storeys with a flat roof and built of stone blocks) in no way compared with yours, and I believe they thought I was exaggerating when I told them all about your school.

Unfortunately there are not enough schools in Palestine and many of the Arab children who are keen to learn cannot be admitted to schools as there is no room for them. When the boys reach the top class of the school (they are promoted by ability) those who wish can take a secondary school entrance examination and if they are successful they can then pass on to one of the few Arab secondary schools. These schools are found only in a few of the larger towns like Jerusalem and Haifa.

This is a country of vast and rugged mountains with deep valleys and in which there are few bus services and even less trains. It is impossible to ride a bicycle any distance on the winding mountain roads. As a result of this if a boy gains entrance to a secondary school he cannot travel daily from his home (which may be a Bedouin tent) and must be accommodated in or near the school. This is very expensive and the Arab cannot normally afford it. Thus a great many bright boys lose opportunities of a good education.

Both the masters and the boys of the Tiberias school were very keen to know all about your school. I told them of the work you do, the games you play, your school motto and the building in which you work. They have Moulsham School address in their visitors' book and they have all agreed that it will be the first place they will visit if they ever come.'

Notes on the photographs

Picture 1 page 10: Standard IVA 1946 with Mr Petchey and Mr Gardiner (Photo and names from Brian Meadowcroft, John Land and Ken Turton)

Back 2 rows, left to right: Ray Barnes, John Shearman, Peter Huff, Ken Turton, John Watson, Fred Skipsey, Derek Canfield, Cliff Thorrington, Geoffrey Piper, Laurence Wisbey, Victor Barker, ? Wright, John Land, ? Milsome, Bruce Pinder, Alan Hills, Roderick Williams, Robert Cox, Michael Hart, Tony Dines, Derek Weston

Middle row, kneeling or seated: David Tarbun, Donald Myall, ? , John Watts, Miss Buncl (student teacher from Saffron Walden), Mr W W Gardiner, Mr Petchey (Headmaster), Barry Gunn, Cecil O'Brien, Nicholas Debenham, Jimmy Simpson, Trevor Taylor, Derek Ellcock

Front row: Ken Jolly, Derek Murphy, Keith Baker, David Jones, Dave "Lofty" Bateman, Brian Gandy, Mickey Wright, Dudley Wallace, Tony Lodge, Brian Meadowcroft, David Harper

Picture 2 page 10: This photo of Headmaster of Moulsham Junior Boys' School, Mr S W Petchey, was printed in the school magazine of Summer 1956, a special issue marking his retirement after 18 years in charge of the school. The magazine records tributes from several well-known officials and friends of the school. The following excerpts give an idea of the high esteem in which he was held.

(From Mrs J P Roberts, Chairman of Managers): On many occasions, I have called at the school unexpectedly, often at most inconvenient times. But always there has been the same courteous welcome, the same beaming smile, the same invitation to come right in and join in whatever activity is in progress.

The school has a fine reputation. In educational achievement, in sport, in the general behaviour and bearing of its pupils, Moulsham has earned nothing but praise from all sides.

(from Mr B E Lawrence, Chief Education Officer, Essex Education Committee): Those who know his school well are impressed above all things by the fact that it is a happy place, a testimony to the man whose unfailing courtesy, friendliness and generosity of spirit is largely responsible. . . . It would be sad to think that Mr Petchey's retirement meant the cutting of all ties with his life's work, but it is pleasing to know that his long and honoured connection with the National Savings Movement in schools is to continue and will remain a strong bond which will still preserve his connection with the educational world in Essex.

(from Mr W C Primmer, Mid-Essex Education Officer): For 18 years, chiefly notable for difficulties, shortages and improvisations resulting from the War and its after effects, he has guided the development of the School and brought it to the high standard of efficiency and public regard which it now holds. Records show that his appointment preceded the opening of the school by nearly twelve months. . . I can well imagine the eager anticipation and planning that must have occupied his mind during 1937 and 1938 as his new command took shape. . . . I can with full sincerity say on behalf of the Education Committee the "Well done!" which is the reward of good and faithful service.

(from "Our old friend and benefactor" Mr W C C Turner): Under Mr Petchey's leadership the School was opened, and he has guided it during the years when its pattern of reputation and traditions have been built. They are something of which the School can be proud.

It is certain that most of the boys who are and have been at the school will look back to their period there with pride and pleasure. Long may it continue to work for the spiritual, moral and physical benefit of many hundreds of boys, making them develop into fine Englishmen, good citizens and happy in the work of their chosen careers.

(notes on the photographs are continued on page 12)



1. Above, Standard IVA in 1946 with Mr Petchey and Mr Gardiner (photo from John Land).
2. Left, Headmaster Mr Petchey's retirement portrait, 1956
3. Below left, the first Senior School dinner ladies. Left to right, Mrs Phoebe Clark, Mrs Dorothy Clark, Mrs Alice Brown and Mrs Duncombe. Photo from Iris Hazell (Clark), daughter of Mrs Phoebe Clark.
- 4 and 5. Below right, Artist Les Bicknell talking about the Moulsham Street development with Elizabeth Poole, Ted Caton, John Whittle, John Reed and Malcolm Robinson.





6 - 8. Above and left, 1982 Photos from Michaela Venton (Davis). Above left is her classmate Fiona Spence; above right, a group on the 1982 school trip to Canterbury mentioned in the Autumn 2009 Newsletter. Left, a birthday party group the same year



9 - 11. Above, Thank you to Peter Turrall, 1938, for these atmospheric pictures of the school corridors and classrooms at the May 2009 Past Pupils' Open Afternoon - very different from the sober wartime and postwar period!

12. Right, Myra Sankey (Shinkwin), a Moulsham Junior Girls' School pupil from 1945-49, seen here enjoying a carriage ride in Seville in May 2009



Notes on the photographs (continued from page 9)

Picture 3 page 10 was sent to us by Iris Hazell (Clark), 1939, and shows the first Senior School dinner ladies. From the left, they are Mrs Phoebe Clark (Iris' Mum), Mrs Dorothy Clark, Mrs Alice Brown and Mrs Duncombe. Iris writes: 'Thank you for keeping me in touch with lots of names from the past. I started at Moulsham Junior Girls' School in Miss Wright's class in 1939. She asked Daphne Hall to befriend me as I had come from Friars Infants' School and did not know anyone. We are still friends and she was my bridesmaid in 1954 together with another Moulsham girl Marian Greenwood who unfortunately died in 2004 with cancer.

On page 14 of the last newsletter, I remember the Senior Girls' production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* well. The winter was very bad and the school had to close while they had no coal, but Miss Stokes asked all the cast to go to rehearsals, taking with us hot soup and hot drinks. We waded up Princes Road with snow going into our boots. Miss Stokes lived in Stratford and had to walk from the station. I was a lady in waiting in the play, but remember the wonderful way Gwen Cave played Puck.

Pictures 4 and 5 page 10: See article on the Moulsham Street Redevelopment plans, page 16.

Pictures 6-8 page 11: names and background information in Michaela's article on page 15.

Pictures 9-11 page 11: Photos taken by Peter Turrall at last year's Open Afternoon.

Picture 12 page 11: Myra Sankey (Shinkwin), a pupil at Moulsham Junior Girls' School from 1945-49, is seen here enjoying a carriage ride in Seville in May 2009 - "another 'must-do' completed". 2010 is a special year for Myra, marking 40 years since her kidney transplant in July 1970. Myra tells us that March 11th is World Transplant Day, and she is waiting to hear if Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge is going to mark the date this year with herself and another lady, who lives in France, both of whom have had their kidney transplants for 40 years.

Myra writes: 'I was born here in Chelmsford, and attended Moulsham Infant, Junior and Senior Schools. I went to Chelmsford Technical College in 1956 for a 2-year Pre-Nursing course, and started full-time Nursing Training in 1958, working in all the Chelmsford Group hospitals, including Broomfield, which was then a TB hospital. Later, because of health problems, I left nursing, and in 1968 worked in the Cardiograph Department at the Chelmsford and Essex Hospital. Then in 1969 I was referred to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge for treatment, and had a kidney transplant in July 1970. From 1976 I worked as a Community Dental Nurse for the Mid-Essex Health Authority, studying for the Dental Nurses' Examination at night school at Dovedale College, Moulsham Street. I finally left this job in 1994.'

Myra counts herself fortunate to have kept well and enjoyed many super holidays. She is grateful to Professor Roy Calne's expertise which has allowed her to live life to the full. Her niece Jane Finch is currently involved in fundraising for the Addenbrooke's Kidney Patient Association by making a variety of seedmats suitable as gifts for birthdays, weddings, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day etc, including herbs, wildflowers and poppies, and will shortly be setting up a website: www.simplyseedmats.co.uk

Sue Bruns (Huscroft), 1965-69: Teachers I remember

Mrs Taylor

A lovely lady, always quietly and elegantly dressed in shades of browns, creams and beiges - I recall she had a crocodile skin (mock-croc maybe?) handbag which she used to place on her desk and I think she may have had matching shoes! (Taking notice of her footwear was probably because, when younger, I always used to like to try on the high heeled shoes that my aunt wore and clip-clop around our house.)

When I had to go up to Mrs Taylor's desk to show a piece of work, I used to look at the top of her head and wonder why she always had a tortoiseshell comb or a thin hair-band, also in her trademark shade of brown, to hold back her fringe.

I believe we all took it in turns to do various tasks in the classroom, one of which was filling the ink wells when we were learning how to write neatly with our ink pens. I also remember having to sharpen everyone's pencils using the large green sharpener which was mounted on the cupboard top at the front of the classroom - this took a while as each pencil needed several turns of the handle to get a nice sharp point, though care was needed not to overdo it and break the lead.

In Class 10 we had swimming lessons and on a Tuesday morning we were picked up by the Princes Road entrance and travelled to the local baths in a double-decker bus - I think we all learnt to swim in a very short time.

I don't recall Mrs Taylor ever having the need to raise her voice in the classroom, so we must have been a relatively well behaved bunch. I think it was wonderful that she was able to teach us about most things, a variety of subjects which prepared us for moving on to our senior schools. Apart from the normal lessons, she taught us country dancing and netball, and Verbal Reasoning to get us through our Eleven Plus. Mrs Taylor would often surprise us with a spelling test so we were always kept on our toes. Mental arithmetic was usually the first lesson on a Monday morning, after the register had been taken and those of us who were having school dinners, had paid our 5 shillings dinner money! Mum sent me to school with two half crowns in a white envelope to hand over to Mrs Taylor with express instructions not to lose it on the way to school.

We even had prayers and singing in the classroom and one I do remember singing (from a navy blue book) I think began with the first line 'Who is Sylvia, what is she?'

Miss Bell

I remember that Miss Bell, who took Class 9, was wonderful at all things arty and she would come to some of our lessons and teach us to draw. She did a marvellous drawing in coloured chalks on our blackboard of a monkey in a tree, eating a banana - no one wanted to rub it out! She came in as well to read us a story of an afternoon, she propped herself up against the back wall and we were treated to *The Land of Green Ginger*, by Noel Langley. This story really did give me the giggles, hearing all about Omar Khayyams' Tent Shop and a character called Ping Foo - I think I was told off for sniggering too much.

Miss Bell wore brighter colours than Mrs Taylor and I think she had a favourite turquoise dress which I really liked and hankered for! She also used to wear a lot of black eyeliner.....why does that remain in my memory I wonder?

I recall she got her own pupils to make lovely lamp bases from old wine (Chianti?) bottles, smeared with plaster and studded with small stones and shells and these wonderful pieces of art were all lined up along the windowsill in her classroom for all to see and admire.

Miss Pettet

Now I think we were all rather afraid of Miss Pettet; maybe it was just because she was the Headmistress or, for my part, because she would take our class for Needlework and I was not very good at it! We made the usual tray cloth, a Gingham apron with simple cross-stitch for our Mums and an embroidered handkerchief, but when I was called to the front of the class to show her one of my efforts, she said it was dreadful, and I had to unpick it and start again! I think I slunk back to my seat with a beetroot face and tears smarting behind my eyes. To this day I am useless with a needle and thread and must just be a lost cause!

Debbie Robbins (Stone) 1966-70: Fourth year at Moulsham Juniors

In the Autumn 2009 Newsletter, Debbie described the daily school routine, various playground activities and listed the names of some of the girls in her year. Her first year teacher was Miss Fisher (who married and became Mrs Bacon). Her classroom was 'a pre-fab type building at the bottom of the Boys' School playground, which smelt of plimsolls, musty PE kits and slipper bags'. After the summer, Debbie moved up into Mrs Clements' class. Mrs Clements was patient and kindly, 'a northern lady with curly red hair and a loud voice'. Debbie recalls disliking arithmetic, but thinks she must have done well in Mrs Clements' class because the following year she joined the A stream with Miss Smith, the netball coach, as her class teacher. Headmistress Miss Pettet retired during her third year, and Debbie remembers her fondly as a 'kind old lady who really loved children'. And finally, the fourth and last year of the Juniors, which Debbie describes enthusiastically as follows:

"And then came class 4, the class of Mrs Jane Taylor. Mrs Taylor expected high standards from her class and generally got them. I had dreamed of being in her class since I began at the school and was so happy to be promoted to the A stream in class 3 as this meant a chance to be with Mrs Taylor next year. She was a smart, sophisticated lady who drove a Rover 2000, the smartest car in the teachers' car park. Mrs Taylor saw her top class as representative of the school and any 'outside of school' activities carried very strict rules of behaviour. But they were fun. I was lucky enough to be in the school choir and to sing around the old people's homes at Christmas and at a folk festival in the Civic Theatre. Other schools would laugh at the Moulsham girls who when they sang, were told to stand with their hands cupped together in front of them, to open their mouths wide and move their heads as they sang. But these were the kind of old fashioned standards of the school at the time.

Class 4 monitors had all the best jobs: ringing the school bell, 24 times, no more, no less; tuck shop monitors, all the little jobs that made a 10 year old feel important. The big event for the school that year was the mixing of girls and boys, but not for class 4 as it was felt that the presence of boys in the class would have a detrimental effect on our 11 plus exam results. So class 4 remained girls only for that year, although we did mix with the boys at lunchtimes. Each table of eight in the canteen had two table leaders, a boy and a girl from the top class. My opposite table leader was a hugely tall boy called Russell Lane and I was so embarrassed to speak to him at first, but by the end of the year we were on good chatting terms. Table leaders were responsible for pouring the water from large copper jugs and generally keeping order over their table of little ones.

Another first time event as the school became mixed that year, was the formation of houses. There were five: Sandringham, Buckingham, Caernavon, Balmoral and Windsor. House points were awarded each week for good work or good deeds and in Monday morning assembly, the number of points would be read out and the house captain would come forward on the stage and hold up the house flag. I never thought house points could have been awarded fairly, because Buckingham was very often top of the league - there must have been a lot of clever people in Buckingham! I was in Sandringham house, usually middle of the league, never at the top, though fairly close a few times.

The nearby hospital, St Johns, held a summer fete each year and this year Moulsham were asked to send a country dance team of about 15 or 20 to give a little performance. I dreamed of being picked but wasn't. The team was selected and practice soon begun. But then, quite unexpectedly, another audition was held and to my amazement and sheer elation. I was chosen. Not only that, but one or two girls got to dance a tiny piece alone during one of the dances and I was one of them. Things like that never happened to me normally - it was one of the happiest highlights of that school year.

Then came the 11 plus. Those who passed were given the choice of several schools around Chelmsford and those who didn't went on to Moulsham Senior School at the top of the drive. It was a sad day for some bosom buddies who were separated by their results. A common order of choice was the County High School, the Technical High or a fairly new comprehensive called Boswells. I must have scraped through the 11 plus by the skin of my teeth, as Boswells was my next destination.

With a sinking feeling, I got up for my very last day at Moulsham Juniors. I didn't want to leave. I loved my teacher Mrs Taylor. I loved dancing and art and assemblies (especially hymn practice on a Friday morning) writing stories, playground games, I even liked school dinners most of the time although it wasn't the done thing to admit it. I wanted so much to stay cocooned in that safe little world that I knew and loved (apart from the arithmetic!).

Many tears were shed as the school bell rang for the last time and we filed out down the corridor, outside and on to the next stage in our lives, going from being big fishes in a little pond to being the smallest youngest fishes in a very much bigger pond. I often went back to visit Mrs Taylor, who greeted all her old girls as though they were VIPs, setting the class a task while she took the time to listen to what they had to say. I will never forget her.

Micky (Michaela) Venton (nee Davis), 1978-82

Having so often thought I would put pen to paper after reading an article in the Newsletter that brought back memories, seeing the names of all the pupils who visited Canterbury in 1982 has finally made me sit down and write.

I've enclosed a couple of photos taken on the trip, the girl surrounded by branches is Fiona Spence, who years later made my nails look beautiful for my wedding after a few months of heavy duty DIY on our house had reduced them to shreds! Hard to believe that I can only locate a couple of pics, when my children go on school trips with their digital cameras, I'm quite used to them returning with dozens of pictures at a time.

Canterbury was our first trip away without parents which involved overnight stays, it was a wonderful experience for us all, although regrettably when I called home the first night, I was none too happy as dinner had included green potatoes, and I was rather worried that they were trying to poison us all.

The bunk bed photo from the room we shared consists of (left to right) Juliet Sharman, Joanna Southin, Emma Balaam, Lisa Wakeford, Sara Blaney & Fiona Spence.

The third photo which was taken about the same time is actually from my 11th birthday, back row Sara Blaney, and just seen Fiona Spence

Next row Sharon Robertson (who was at Moulsham for some time but I believe had moved away by this year, Alexandra Whelan (now proud Mum of 2 boys) Kerry Smith, Gary Snowden (passed away some time ago I believe) Me, Nerissa Payne (who passed her 11+ and went on to the Girls High), Kirstie Charlton.

The other rows were of younger friends and relatives, including in front of me, with my hands on her shoulders, my sister Antonia Davis another Moulsham girl.

I had a fantastic time at Moulsham, and so many of the articles bring back fond memories. Around this particular year however events that specifically stand out include:

- Mrs Franklin and her passion for making us country dance, along with my constant dancing partner Sabatino Ciambriello.
- Mr Davis deciding that I really talked far too much and building a six foot wall of ply-board or possibly large cardboard sheets around my desk one day, in the vain attempt to make me quiet. (Would he get away with that today I wonder!)
- A Victorian day where we used old fashioned ink quills and had a dunce's hat, and were fed gruel and bread for lunch.
- Wonderful memories of the Canterbury trip including Nicola Schiff buying a mountain of candles from the Cathedral to take home as presents, and then being taken off to light them there!
- Writing our own novels and having them made into proper looking books. Mr Davis arranged for two copies of them all to be made, one of which he was going to use to start a library of children's books made by the pupils for the pupils who followed us. I'm not sure how short lived this venture was, but if anyone should come across my personal "Space Age 1999" book, I'd love to see it again!

PS Although my youngest sister did not make it into this photo as she had yet to arrive, I'm sure Roanna Louth (nee Davis) would love to see her name in print too, if any of this makes it into a future edition. (Quite frankly our Mum Sue Davis nee Hawkes seems to get a mention in almost every copy, so I figured it was our turn!)

Moulsham Street redevelopment plans

In early January, we were approached by Mr Les Bicknell, an artist, who has been awarded the job of working with Chelmsford Borough Council on the planned redevelopment of Moulsham Street. As part of his background research, before deciding on a design for an art work in the new-look Moulsham Street, he asked if we knew of any past pupils willing to share their memories of the area and talk about the changes which have taken place in Moulsham Street in particular. We made a few enquiries of local residents, and were pleased when Elizabeth Poole (Waring), Ted Caton, John Reed, Malcolm Robinson and John Whittle agreed to join Hilary and Kathleen for a morning with Mr Bicknell on 27th January.

At the meeting, we were interested to hear of similar projects which Mr Bicknell had undertaken for other East Anglian local authorities, producing public art works, usually in stone or metal, sometimes incorporating wording, images or symbols reflecting the history and character of the location, and its meaning for the local people. He had already spent some time in Moulsham Street noting the variety of buildings and the way people used the street. He wondered how we, as a group of older residents, related to the street and the way it had evolved.

I think we were all conscious of the 'village' character and feel to Moulsham Street. In our younger days it had been possible to do all our shopping and errands there without needing to cross the Stone Bridge into Chelmsford High Street. Today we still have a post office, chemist, and newsagent's, but many of the other shops are hairdressers or more specialist shops. In the past there had been sweet shops, selling dolly mixture and jelly babies, and 'fancy goods' shops with ornaments, pictures and novelties - "things that were not really necessary", in our words (which perhaps says something about

our austerity-period values!). There had always been numerous public houses, though, and Elizabeth Poole recalled the Amusement Arcade, from which she was banned, run by Alfie and his wife and containing a shooting gallery.

We were also aware of the long history of Moulsham Street. At the St John's end of the street was the old Victorian school, which John Reed and others had attended before the brand new Moulsham Juniors opened in 1938. The old building was dark, with high windows, and the classrooms were divided off by felt curtains. John recalled being caned by mistake in assembly on his first day as another pupil with the same name declined to step forward! Opposite St John's there had in the past been Godfrey's Rope-making business (hence the terrace near St John's Church named Hemp Cottages). There had also been an iron foundry, and during World War II a 'British Restaurant', where off-ration meals could be bought for one shilling. Around the corner in Queen Street had stood the original Crompton factory known as the 'Arc Works', destroyed by fire in 1895 and rebuilt soon afterwards in Writtle Road.

At the other end of the street, near Parkway, which sadly cut part of Moulsham Street adrift from its roots, stood the Salvation Army Citadel, and next to it the old Workhouse, which some remembered burning down. Between Parkway and the Stone Bridge, the Regent had originally been the Cross Keys pub, then a theatre, a cinema, a bingo hall and finally a pizza palace before its present incarnation as the Chicago Rock Café. Another Moulsham Street business we recalled was Mr Dennison's cycle shop. All in all we had a very enjoyable morning sharing memories, impressions and opinions, and ended by looking at pictures of old Moulsham Street in various books published over the years by Chelmsford historians Hilda Grieve and John Marriage.

More recently, Peter Turrall, who has a tremendous knowledge of the history of Chelmsford and Moulsham, was able to meet up with Mr Bicknell in town and point out important sites and buildings. Peter writes:

'I met him in Chelmsford Cathedral and began with the Mildmay Memorial in the Cathedral where this famous family in the 16th Century were the owners of vast lands in the Moulsham area and where Sir Thomas Mildmay built Moulsham Hall (now demolished but standing in the area occupied by Moulsham Drive.) and dedicated Alms House in upper Moulsham. Whilst in the Cathedral I showed him the memorial tablets for Judge Tindal who was born in Moulsham Street. We then took a gentle walk through the town arriving at the Stone Bridge where on the other side of this Moulsham Street started. He took note of the demolished Wesleyan Church where now stands the skyscraper Cater building and then viewed the former Regent and the shops leading up to Baddow Road corner.

I also advised him that where the Co-op Store stands was once the home of the town Gaol and later turned into an Army Barracks before the Co-op took over. We walked over the bisecting road known as Parkway where we viewed the area of Roman excavations before the road covered them up. Going further up Moulsham Street I was able to point out a number of shops which originally stood including Budd's bakers, Green's Butchers, Mason's newspapers and books, Bata's shoes, Palmer's horsemeat, Rider's prams and toys as well as the old Salvation Army Citadel opposite which is a Bank building and on the side a plaque denoting the birthplace of Judge Tindal. We also noted some of the original public houses including The Windmill, Bay Horse, Kings Arms and The Cricketers, St Johns Church and Lower Anchor Street where Crompton's first started and also Clarkson's who made the first steam buses which ran through Chelmsford. Further up Moulsham Street we noted the Mildmay Almshouses, but time did not permit to visit the Museum where a lot of artefacts relating to the Roman era are housed. On our return to the Cathedral we noted the small roads and alleyways off Moulsham Street and the Marconi Wireless and Telegraph Company building on the corner of Hall Street and Mildmay Road.'

Mr Bicknell was pleased with both the group meeting and Peter's tour, and we look forward with great interest to the eventual design and creation of his (and 'our') artwork in the redeveloped Moulsham Street. It will be good to see the finished piece in situ and think 'we met the artist and perhaps helped in some way to shape his work'.

Mrs Michelle Orchard: Learning Support at Moulsham Juniors

I started working at Moulsham Junior School in September 1996, on the same day as Mrs Janet Allen, who during her years with us was regarded as a very talented teacher. She recently retired and has gone back to live in New Zealand. I miss our chats, as being of a similar generation we used to discuss how things had changed from when we were young ... not only in education. We keep in touch with phone calls, emails and old fashioned letter writing! The only other teacher who has been at the school longer than Mrs Allen is Mr Hindes, who has been there quite a few years now. Both my children knew and liked him.

Before Moulsham Juniors, I had worked for two years at Oaklands Infants' School as a Learning Support Assistant (LSA), working with two little boys with Special Educational Needs. I was asked by the head of Moulsham Juniors, Mr Les Kemp, who had only been at this school himself for less than a year, if I would transfer to the Juniors with the two boys, as continuity of support would help to make the transition to junior school more successful.

My own two children went to Moulsham Juniors quite a few years ago, so I did know the layout of the school, but as a member of staff it seemed very daunting. I remember walking in on my first day, and thinking... what have I done! The school seemed huge, as it probably does to the year 3 children when they start. The staff only amounted to 30 at the time and I was one of six LSAs. There were two admin staff, the Head, a part time Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), 16 teachers and four Mid Day Assistants (MDAs). I was also a MDA for one of the children who came with me from Oaklands. Nowadays, the staff numbers around 80, including the Head, Deputy Head, seven admin staff, two SENCOs, over 30 LSAs, and I believe 15 MDAs. We also have a display assistant, a speech and language assistant and an IT technician, as well as 24 teachers, a site manager and cleaning staff.

I was contracted to do only 2 hours a day to start with. I had only been there about a month when one of the LSAs had an operation and would be off work for a few months, so I was asked to cover her hours. I was soon working every morning, all morning. Gradually over the following months and years, my hours increased to full time. I have over the years worked with all year groups and with children who had various Special Educational Needs, and have seen and been part of many changes over the past 14 years.

The role of the LSA has changed so much over the years, and the titles too have changed. I have been called a Welfare Assistant, Non-teaching Assistant, Teaching Assistant, and Learning Support Assistant. LSAs were first used at MJS in the 1990's and their main job was to hear children read, help the children learn their spellings and to be a general classroom helper. Now the LSAs routinely do assessment, deliver tests and carry out specific individual work for children who need extra help. A far cry from when my generation was at school in the 1960's.

I have been on numerous school trips to many locations, and worked with some very interesting children, some of whom I still see occasionally around town. I have seen many members of staff come and go. Some have moved away, some have gone on to be Heads or Deputy Heads of other schools. Two of the LSAs who were there when I started, Mrs Figg and Mrs Glascock, are still at school now, and I have enjoyed working with both of them. Interestingly the original four MDA's are still the

same, Mrs Gallagher, Mrs Butlin, Mrs Gregory and Mrs Kent, who was so kind to me when I first started, as lunchtimes were so different from the ones at my previous school.

I have also seen physical changes to the buildings and surroundings. A row of tiny saplings that I helped to plant about 10 years ago have now become a massive hedge, screening the playground from the car turning circle. Last summer we planted 150 saplings along the edge of the field. As soon as we had planted them we had the driest few months possible, so we had to carry buckets of water down the field to keep them alive! I am looking forward to seeing them grow into mature trees.

Three years ago our new Head, Mrs Linda Hughes, decided that the school would benefit from having their own Learning Mentor, a role which is relatively new, but is becoming increasingly popular. I applied for the job, managed to get short listed and after a very thorough interview, I was the successful applicant. I enjoy my current job even more than being an LSA. For me it was time for a change, and fortunately I feel I made the right decision when I decided to apply. The opportunity to work in this pastoral role came at just the right time. I work closely with parents and children who are having difficulties, addressing their needs and helping those who require assistance for a variety of reasons to overcome barriers to learning, enabling them to achieve their full potential. I work very closely with Mrs Hughes and Mr Jones, our Deputy Head. There are now a few schools in Essex who have a Learning Mentor, but as far as I know we are the first school to have one in Chelmsford.

Three years ago there was a vacancy on the governing body for a non teaching governor. I decided to apply as I do care very much about the children and their learning, surroundings, future and happiness. So now I am one of the 14 governors of Moulsham Junior School. I hope I will be at the school for a few more years and who knows what the future will bring...

Playground games at the May reunion

Many of you have told us in the past about the various playground games and activities you enjoyed during your time at Moulsham Juniors, and the dipping and skipping rhymes current in the Girls' School. Mention has been made of hopscotch, conkers, marbles, five-stones, flicking cigarette cards, ball-games and cat's cradle, to name but a few. Games accompanied with singing, such as 'The farmer's in his den' or 'The big ship sails on the alley-alley-oo' were popular in some decades, and chasing games like 'Statues', 'What's the time, Mr Wolf?' and numerous variations of 'Tag' or 'He'.

Former Headteacher Les Kemp is keen to collect up memories of all your favourite playtime activities, especially if you played a game called Poison or you attended the Girls' School and used anything available to make the outline of houses and villages ('Up the houses').

At the Open Afternoon on 8th May, Les plans to be in the North ('Boys') Hall with a tape recorder, together with quantities of jacks, cigarette cards, cat's cradles, marbles and yo-yos. You are invited to recall your childhood through playing the games and to refresh your memory by looking at the small collection of books on playground games, skipping rhymes and chants that will be on display. We are looking for the cigarette card flicking champion, although if Kes Gray, a former pupil and author, is present, we are doomed to second place at the best.

Skipping is not compulsory but memories of skipping rhymes would be invaluable.

We look forward to ringing the bell for break time, and to your company at this display.

News in brief

Gillian Holland (Spooner) 1952-56 has emailed to say: 'My name is Gillian Holland, maiden name Spooner. I attended Moulsham Junior School in the 1950s. I have just moved house in West Sussex, my new neighbour is Kathleen Duncombe (Thorp). We have just discovered that we both attended both Chelmsford County High School and Moulsham Junior School - we almost feel related! Kathy has lent me back copies of the Newsletter. I have found my name mentioned and my beloved late husband's name Alan Holland. Alan was a friend of Mick Polley, who is mentioned in a few letters. I have also found the name Tony Brown whom I remember even before we both went to Moulsham. I have loads more in my head that I would love to chat about as I absolutely loved my days at School!'

Hazel Richards (Offord) 1951-55, who we were delighted to see again at the 2009 Open Afternoon, tells us she has been writing her memories of Moulsham Drive, where she lived at number 151 as a child. Many other past pupils lived in the road (several still do), and we plan to include Hazel's research in a piece on Moulsham Drive in the next Newsletter. Meanwhile, Hazel has commented wryly, in response to the Spring 2009 Newsletter article on singing in choir festivals: 'My enduring memory is of singing Nymphs and Shepherds every year. It would not be an understatement to say that I loath this song now as a result and remember quitting the school choir, much to the annoyance of Miss Skilton (I could sing in those days). I had been offered the 'job' of collecting the milk money from all the classes which just happened to coincide with choir lessons and I readily took it on.'

Dave Sturgeon, 1958-62, read the Autumn 2009 Newsletter with interest, especially Howard Norman's mention of Dave's father, Mr Tom Sturgeon, who was Headmaster from Jan 1957 - April 1982. Dave writes: 'Thank you for the latest newsletter and all the hard work you do to produce it! In relation to Howard Norman's article, on page 10 Dad is mentioned in a memory about which I knew nothing before. How many other misdemeanours did he commit and never told us about? I wonder why!

Just for the record, he goes on to write about me joining Essex Police. In fact it was my brother, Chris. He joined as a cadet at 16 and then moved to the Metropolitan Police, eventually becoming a dog handler. I became a teacher in Maidenhead & then Uxbridge, retiring from that in 2005. I worked for the National Blood Service for about a year & then, strangely, joined the police! As a civilian I work at the Front Counter at Windsor or Maidenhead Police Station. Part of my job is recording driving licence details etc for those caught speeding!

Secondly, you are very good with your cross references: as I was reading Barrie Stevens' article, p11, I was going to write to remind you of my memories of the trip to the gas works (never heard of it referred to as The Castle!). Lo & behold: you were well ahead of me with your own reminder. Interestingly, Barrie's memories of the whole project could have been mine word for word. It all came flooding back. I wonder how many years Harold Picken ran those trips; how many children risked their lives above the furnaces; how many now understand so much more about the town's council, drainage etc!'

Carolyn Gibbs (Butterworth), 1956-60, was pleased to see the complete list of names for her 1960 class photograph in the Autumn Newsletter, and writes: 'It was great to see the responses to the photograph and have the names filled in; thanks to Jane Bird for her help. I have now added this to the photo which is in my family & life events album I put together for my 60th birthday earlier this year. I keep in touch with Doreen Bradford (Woolley) at Christmas so will send this on to her.'

Bill Brown, 1954-55, was in touch to say 'I have been unable to attend reunions recently due to the fact that I have a Saturday job tutoring in maths and English, but hopefully will be able to attend with my big sister Jean in tow next year [ie this May] as I have finished Saturday work. Jean didn't attend the Junior School, but did become head girl of the Senior School.

'Missing persons': In the Autumn Newsletter we listed a number of people with whom we had lost touch, and we were very pleased to receive up-to-date email or postal addresses for many of them as a result. Among them we were delighted to hear from Col John Lewis, 1965-69, who has been a serving Army officer for many years and therefore regularly changing address, and Helen Camblin-Smith, who writes 'I attended the school in the 1970's. I have had one daughter pass through the school who is now at Chelmsford College and my youngest daughter is now in the last year at MJS.' Thank you to all those who responded, and others who have notified us of more recent changes of address. We do like to keep in touch.

Obituaries

Geoffrey Richard Boyce

We were sad to have the following news from Geoff Boyce's cousin, Pam Rowland:

'Sadly Geoff passed away on August 24th 2009. I'm afraid I 'm not sure of the exact dates he was at Moulsham Junior School but he was 72 years old this July.'

Our records suggest that Geoff was at Moulsham Junior Boys' School from 1943. We know that his classmates will be very sorry to hear that he is no longer with us.

Don Harris

We mentioned the sudden death of Don Harris, 1942, in the last Newsletter, and are grateful to his lifelong friend Fred Johnson (Moulsham Senior Boys' School) for writing this appreciation of Don:

I first met Don in 1c Class at Moulsham School (Mr. Barnes' class) in September 1946. It was the beginning of a good friendship which lasted until he died suddenly on 3rd August 2009. We progressed from 1c to 4b Mr Danny Clark's class - he was a great teacher! - until we left at 15 years of age, Don at Easter, me in July 1950. We both had apprenticeships, Don with Mr Newman-Smith of Grove Road to be a painter and decorator and me with J. W. Coward as a plumber.

We started dancing classes upstairs in the old Corn Exchange, mainly as a way of meeting members of the opposite sex! We later moved on to dances in and around Chelmsford: Hoffmans, Odeon and, best of all, at Crompton Social Club in Writtle Road - all now gone. We became very fond of Jazz. This was the glue that served to bind our friendship. We especially liked Big Band Jazz: Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Ted Heath and, most of all, Stan Kenton. We spent many a Saturday afternoon in Daces Record Shop in London Road driving the manager to distraction!

We did National Service about the same time, 1956-58, and we periodically wrote to each other. I was stationed in Germany and Don in Hong Kong where he became a 'Disc Jockey', as they were then called, for the Camp Radio Station.

After National Service we continued to carry on much as before, local dances, Sunday night concerts in Romford and Chelmsford. We both had girlfriends so we went as a foursome. In June 1960 I married Anne and Don was my Best Man and I have twice been his Best Man. He brought up two fine boys, on his own, having to leave work to do an admirable job. Don was not a shy person as he could strike up a conversation with anybody on bus or train etc. He had a great sense of humour and was often the life and soul of the party.

The last 10 to 12 years he had been very contented living in his bungalow in Boreham. I used to visit him regularly and occasionally we went with a couple of friends for a pub lunch. We last went out two weeks before he died to see The Essex Youth Jazz Orchestra at The Methodist Hall in Rainsford Road which we thoroughly enjoyed. I suppose, a fitting end to our friendship.

Ken Turton

Another very sad loss: we have just heard that Ken Turton, 1942-46, one of our faithful Newsletter deliverers and a kind friend to many local people, passed away on 2nd March. We hope to include a full obituary in the next issue. Meanwhile we send our deepest sympathy to Ken's family.

Footnote from 1963

In his foreword to the Summer 1963 Moulsham Junior Boys' School magazine, Headmaster Mr Tom Sturgeon included the following thoughts, which have proved true for many of us:

'This year our school is 25 years old. In those 25 years about 2,800 boys have attended this school. Today, those boys are scattered all over the world, from Chelmsford to Australia, to Canada and elsewhere. What a wonderful thought that some of you reading this magazine may one day find yourselves thousands of miles away from here. . . . When our school opened, it was still a wonderful thing to fly to Australia or fly the Atlantic; now such things are an everyday occurrence.

. . . . No matter how far you travel from Moulsham, you will always remember the friends you made at school, and those friends will always hold a special place in your life, I hope that the memories those friends' names will bring back to you will include happy memories of the time you spent at Moulsham. They certainly will if you practice what you sing so well: 'Work and be Happy'.

School website

Copies of this and earlier issues of the newsletter, 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 the earliest 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

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.