

Moulsham Junior School Past Pupils' Newsletter

Summer 2002

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More and more contacts

Over 375 past pupils on our mailing list now, and another record attendance at the latest Open Afternoon at the school on Saturday 18th May! At least 107 of you came along this year, many for the first time, and clearly enjoyed meeting former classmates, reminiscing over photos, chatting over tea and cakes, and watching the present pupils' energetic country and maypole dancing. Once again, we thank the Head Teacher, Mr Kemp, and his staff for making the reunion possible and giving up their Saturday to help us. As last year, past pupils from the Junior Boys' School were especially pleased to see the old Honours Boards brought down from the attic for the occasion. We are very grateful to the PTA for organising the refreshments for us this time, and to the children for turning out again to entertain us.

It was a great help to have Tony Brown, Elizabeth Clarke and Ken Turton joining us on the Friday afternoon to set up the displays of photos and memorabilia. Thank you to them, and to Pat Rushbrook (nee Davis) and Maureen Brown (nee Baker) for bringing along Pat's own impressive collection of pictures and items from the 1950s. On the day itself, we greatly appreciated the assistance of Anne Bromiley (nee Mussell) and Peter Turrall in manning the reception desk. This freed up Hilary and myself to talk to more of you, and to note down some of your anecdotes and recollections (see page 6).

We are gradually accumulating an impressive collection of Moulsham photos and documents. Thank you to all those who brought or sent pictures, school reports etc for us to copy and display on 18th May and/or at future Open Afternoons. Details of some of these are given elsewhere in the Newsletter. We can now put many more names to the various panorama photos you have sent us over the past three years. Special thanks this time to Dorothy Day (nee Spooner) and Yvonne Vale (nee Howitt), for poring over the 1948 Girls' School photo for us, and to all of you who added names to the lists on 18th May.

Former teachers

Since our last newsletter, we are pleased to have heard from two more former teachers, Mrs Judith Woricker (nee Flatt) and Mrs Mary Ubee, both of whom have kindly contributed to this issue. Mrs Woricker's picture of a school trip in 1960 (page 5) is the first we have seen showing Miss Pettet, who was Headmistress of the Junior Girls' School from 1949-69 (the school became coeducational with Mr Sturgeon as Head Teacher when she retired). We are unfortunately not able to get a very clear quality of picture reproduction in the printed version of the Newsletter, but any of you with computers should be able to print off a sharper version of the photo from the school website (details on page 9).

Apologies

Mr Kemp has asked us to apologise sincerely to any of you who may not have received the Spring Newsletter, or may have ended up paying excess postage and a 50p fine at the Post Office for it. Unfortunately some of the envelopes used last time were heavier than they should have been. Mr Kemp is confident that the problem will not recur in future, as the school now has a franking machine which weighs the newsletter plus envelope before applying the correct postage. We are very grateful to two of you who eventually brought the problem to our attention, and once again we offer our apologies.

As ever, do please keep sending your news and memories, photos for us to copy and return, and of course the addresses of any former classmates who would like to be added to our distribution list. My postal address is 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG, or you can email to kathleen.boot@virgin.net Very best wishes to you all from Hilary Balm (nee Dye) and myself.

Kathleen Boot (nee Nash)
1951-55

Notes from the Head Teacher, Mr L R Kemp

This term has been one where it has almost been impossible to pause to take breath. SATs tests, curriculum week, Year 6 residential and local visits, the summer Fete, the visit by children and staff from the Japanese School in London, sports days, District sports, football tournaments, Year 6 Production, Chelmsford and District Music Festival, educational visits to Colchester Castle, the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, Kentwell Hall, trial walking buses and performing at the Chelmsford Cathedral Community Festival appear among a much longer list of events for the Summer Term.

A very enjoyable feature of this time of year over the past three years has been the Past Pupils' Reunion held on a Saturday afternoon in May. Our increasing collection of memorabilia was again on display and each reunion brings more precious photographs and a memory challenge for former pupils to put names to the class or group photograph. Thank you to past pupils for the donations to help finance future editions of the newsletter and several larger donations to finance further planting projects and the purchase of two trophies.

The very important task of welcoming children from Moulsham and Oaklands Infant Schools who will be joining the school in September is taking place and builds up over the course of the term. Technology project, assemblies in the infant school; the Moulsham Mystery that takes children around the school to find the missing sports cup, visits to the computer suite, coming to see the year 6 production feature in what we think is a full programme of activities to familiarise the children with this school.

All Year 6 children in school either go on the residential visit to the Isle of Wight or a series of London and local visits. I had the good fortune to take part in both sets of activities working alongside many staff and parents committed to giving children a memorable experience. The children were a credit to this school and even the lad who pointed out to me I had fallen asleep during a film on space we were watching in the Imax cinema at the Science Museum did so in a whisper so I would not be embarrassed.

My regret is the demise of rounders as a Summer sport in many primary schools. We do have a Year 6 rounders club and we recently took two teams to play rounders against a Billericay school but it is a shame that the local rounders rally is no longer part of the sporting diary in the Chelmsford area. I would be delighted to receive any pictures of school rounders teams to add to our archive and help me recall the more leisurely Summer term days of not so long ago.

Les Kemp

Updating our address list and labels

Over the past few weeks we have been rewriting our address labels in smaller format and alphabetical order. If, as a result, you notice any inaccuracies in your name or address as it appears on the envelope, do please draw them to my attention, together with any missing postcodes. We have tried to check carefully, but are all too aware that mistakes can occur.

Many thanks to those who have notified us of changes of address. If any others of you should be planning to move in the near future, do please remember to tell us.

Mrs Kathleen Boot, 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG

Mrs Judith Woricker, pupil and teacher at Moulsham Juniors

Mrs Woricker (nee Judith Flatt) was a pupil at Moulsham Junior Girls' School from 1946-48, and returned later as a teacher. She has kindly sent us some very interesting photos, including this one showing Headmistress Miss Pettet and other Girls' School staff on an outing in 1960 - the only picture we have so far of Miss Pettet and Miss Skilton. Mrs Woricker thinks the photo was taken on a boat trip from Harwich. The staff, in the centre of the picture, are: (seated left to right) Miss Pettet, Miss Skilton and Miss Barton, and (standing behind them), left, Mrs Alty and right, Miss Cook. Can anyone identify the lady directly behind Miss Pettet, please? Or any of the pupils on this 1960 excursion?



Mrs Woricker writes: "I was away from Chelmsford during the war, but returned afterwards and had about two years at Moulsham before going to the High School. I was in the same class as Ruby Orrin, Pam Wisbey and Carol James. After teacher training, I returned to teach for four years, from September 1957. I look back on both periods with fond memories. They were good times!"

Mrs Woricker's younger brother, Andrew Flatt, was in Mr Picken's class some ten years on, and made the presentation to Headmaster Mr Petchey on his retirement. Andrew received the Ann Johnson award for his year.

Happy memories and a fishy tale from Mary Ubee, teacher September 1970 - April 1974

I joined Moulsham staff in the September of 1970, following my marriage, and moved into a house on Moulsham Lodge. When I started at Moulsham there were twelve new members of staff all starting at the same time, and Moulsham was at that time the biggest Junior School in Essex.

A number of things stick in my mind about my time as a teacher there. One was the sheer size of the school and the amount of walking between halls and classrooms. I had come from a twelve class school in Redbridge, where over half the children were Jewish and where my first classroom had been the dining hall. The second thing was how cold it was at Moulsham Juniors, because none of the corridors

were enclosed, so when you went off for assembly or to P.E. you were literally out in the open air. It was far too involved to go and get coats from the cloakrooms, so everyone moved very quickly from one place to the other, but no running or talking was permitted. Mr Sturgeon was the Head Teacher then, and he absolutely amazed me because he knew every child by name. As there were over seven hundred pupils at that time, I was quite impressed by that.

The staff had large blue books, and every Monday we had to give Mr Sturgeon an account of what we had done the week before and what we planned to do in the week to come. There would always be some cryptic comment if we had somehow not managed to achieve all we had forecast. We had our books back by lunchtime, and I for one always wondered what comments I would get about my planning.

I am still in touch with several of the staff who started with me, and when we recall our Moulsham days we remember Mr Sturgeon with a great degree of respect but still a bit of caution. I too have fond memories of Harold Picken, who was such a gentleman; Joyce Allen whose skills with paint and all things artistic were absolutely amazing; Joan Taylor and her country dancing; Peter Davidson and his violin; and Poppy Donovan and her wonderful Welsh accent as well as the netball and rounders tournaments that seemed to be forever taking place.

My first classroom was "out in the huts" as we called it, and my room was next to a Miss Stratton, later to become Mrs Dowsett. She had decided to put a fish tank in her classroom and we spent quite a bit of time after school one night getting it all ready, but alas had not yet got any fish. Anyway, she and I had lead our respective classes across the playground for Assembly next day, and then playtime followed, so there was probably about forty minutes before we went back to the huts. Suddenly there was an almighty scream from my colleague! I rushed into her room expecting I don't quite know what, only to find her gawping at the fish tank, which by now had several large fish in it! Her now husband had crept into the classroom while we were in Assembly and deposited them in the tank without anyone seeing him. We are all still very close friends, and when we are together often chuckle about the morning the fish suddenly appeared.

I left Moulsham in April 1974 after losing a baby, and went to a school in Havering. But I came back to the Juniors as a parent, not a teacher, when my eldest son transferred from Oaklands Infants. Mrs King was the Head Teacher by then and the corridors had started to be enclosed. Teaching methods had changed, too, and some of my significant memories of that time as a parent and member of the PTA were the magnificent topic books the pupils made. I still have those of my three cherubs. Some of the staff now teaching my offspring were still the same as when I had taught there myself.

Following my four years at Moulsham Juniors, I went to Havering, and only left there in August 1975 as I was expecting my first son Robert, who is now twenty-six. I then had two more children: Helen, who is twenty-five and got married last summer, and Philip, who is twenty-four. Neither of my sons lives in Chelmsford now, but both are still in touch with friends they made at the Juniors. I went back to teaching soon after my youngest son started at London Road Nursery, and at first did termly contracts at a variety of schools all over Essex. In September 1984 I went to a school in Basildon, where I taught until 1999, when ill health meant I had to stop teaching. Soon after my daughter transferred to the Juniors, my husband died very suddenly during the Christmas holidays, and I will always be grateful to the staff then at Moulsham for their wonderful support to us as a family at that time. As for myself, I remember my involvement with Moulsham both as a teacher and a parent with great affection.

Snippets from the Open Afternoon on 18th May

Jean Turrall (Pennack) remembers being very happy at the lovely new Moulsham Infants School when it opened in 1938. In the Juniors, she was especially fond of singing lessons with Miss Wright, and went on to enjoy piano, choral work and opera, nowadays singing in local choirs. She recalls that Miss Wright drove an Austin Ruby. The Headmistress of the Junior Girls' School, Miss Rankin, was a stickler for discipline; Miss Sawday and Miss Firman slightly less so. Miss Rankin lived near Mrs Blanche Turrall (mother of Jean's husband, Peter) in Widford, and when the two of them played Scrabble together, the Headmistress was sometimes accused of inventing words. Sound familiar?

Anne Holdsworth (Hammond), 1943-47, recalled that Miss Sawday lived at 1 Vicarage Road in the early 1940s, as did Miss Selby, a teacher at the Senior Girls' School. Miss Firman lived in Upper Roman Road. When Miss Rankin retired as Headmistress of the Junior Girls' School in 1948, girls from the Senior School who had known her were allowed to come back to say goodbye. Anne also remembered Mrs Hughes, the crossing lady (were they called 'lollipop people' in those days?), whose daughter Joan was in her class. Even in those days, Princes Road was thought to be a dangerous road, though nothing like as busy as it is today.

Adrian Smith, 1948-52, had just returned from visiting his brother **Roger**, 1952-56, in Moscow. Roger and his Russian wife moved there to live after he retired from his post of lecturer in science at the University of Lancaster. Adrian greatly enjoyed his three weeks with them, seeing life in Russia 'from the inside' rather than as an ordinary tourist. He noted that the schoolchildren in Moscow still played the old games like hopscotch. The children there are clearly loved and cared for, but facilities are limited to a few dusty yards and small parks. Adrian visited one family living in a twelfth floor flat, who, having nowhere local to play, regularly took the metro to the open spaces and woods outside the city.

Tony Brown, 1952-56, was in the same class as Adrian Smith's brother Roger, whose name he pointed out on the 1956 Honours Board. Tony recalled how boys guilty of some misdemeanour were in those days sent to stand under the bell until the Headmaster, Mr Petchey, came out of his office to administer chastisement. On one occasion, Roger Smith happened to be standing quite innocently under the said bell, but Mr Petchey came out and whacked him on the back of his legs anyway, without asking why he was there! What impressed Tony Brown, was that on discovering his mistake, Mr Petchey went into Roger's classroom and apologised to him in front of the whole class.

Another of Tony's memories is that the whole of his class, when calling out their names for the daily register, gradually adopted nicknames or abbreviated forms (Tony Brown became 'Bron', Roger Smith 'Smithie', and so on). The teacher Mr Hodgson tolerated this for a while, but eventually clamped down. A further variation of this trick, whereby the boys replied 'yea' instead of 'yes' when their names were called, was also stamped out when the master threatened to hit the next boy who said 'yea', and did so! Tony brought along a number of photos and school reports from his Moulsham days, which we have copied and will display at future reunions. Right is one of his school photos.



Betty Clarke (Slater), 1943-47, and **Neville Clarke**, 1942-46 wonder how many other married couples there must be who first met at Moulsham Juniors? Betty went on to the Girls' High School, and Neville to KEGS, and managed to meet after school despite the Headmistress Miss Cadbury's best efforts to discourage 'fraternising' with the lads down the road.

Betty Dowsett (nee Taylor), 1945-49, is another Moulsham girl who married a Moulsham lad, in her case Hill Dowsett. They had three children and now have six grandchildren. Betty is interested in gardening and crosswords as well as her family.

Hugh Piper, 1940-42, kindly brought this photo to the Open Afternoon, complete with autographs on the back of it. It shows Mr Gardiner and Mr Petchey with the group of Scholarship boys who passed the exam in 1942.



Back row (left to right): Ray Bush, Paul Turner

Second row from back: Hugh Piper, John Evans, Alfred Samuels, Peter Moore, Alan Warr, Ray Lydamore, Robin Sampson

Third row from back: Roy Knightsbridge, Brian Hutchins, Gerald Smith, Stan Ketley, Michael Mason, Denis Wick, Colin Judd

Front row: Dennis King, John Donovan, Kenneth Higgins, David Trump, Donald Post

Anne Bromiley (Mussell) (1939) mentioned that her step-mother, Mrs Winifred Mussell, was a dinner-lady in the Infants' school. Some of you may remember her.

David Bloomfield, 1947-51, went on to be an apprentice at Christy's, leading to a career in engineering. His special interest nowadays is golf.

We were pleased to see **Marion Lodge (Weston)** 1951-55 and her husband **Geoff**, 1948-52, again this year. Marion wrote afterwards to say it had been great fun to see so many familiar faces:

"Good to see Valerie (nee Rudland) and Elizabeth Clarke again. Pam (nee Harper) is going to tell her brother David to join in next year. He was in the same year as my brother Derek. We noticed Judy Dunmow in one of the pictures. Where is she now? She used to live in Waterhouse Street. We met up with June (nee Flint) who also lived there too. So some surprises in the afternoon. Geoff was amazed to see Pat Durrant after about 40 years, and Michael Smith, who is a cousin of our best man Antony Newman Smith. I am pleased Mr Kemp and his caretaker are so kind to let us have our meetings at the school. It was good to see today's children dancing round the maypole, too."

Kes (Kerry) Gray, 1968-72, was one of the younger past pupils we were delighted to welcome to the Open Afternoon. He remembered Mrs Donovan as a brilliant teacher, and the school caretaker, nicknamed 'Noddy', a young guy who was always helpful in retrieving tennis balls from the roof and throwing them back down to the boys. Kes remembered the incinerator on the boys' playground, near the water fountains, obviously unprotected, as the lads could pull back the doors to see the roaring flames within! Kes is a contributor to the 'friendsreunited' website (see below), which he recommends to anyone with an interest in Moulsham Juniors.

Paul Toms, 1968-72, was also at the Open Afternoon, with **Mary Griffiths (nee Toms)**, 1964-68. Paul has sent a photo of the 1972 football team, including, to the best of his recollection, Malcolm Knight, Shane Champion, Kerry Gray, Lee Darg, Graham Moore, Stephen Poole, Richard Hiskey, Paul Toms, Tony Nicholas, Stephen Monk, Michael Kilby, Kevin Dunbar and Gary Barker. The teacher/manager, Mr Newton, and two supporters, Andrew Piper and Neil Watling are also in the photo, which we enlarged for the Open Afternoon display. The same picture can also be seen on the friendsreunited website.

Malcolm Robinson, 1939, was one of several at the Open Afternoon who commented how amazed and pleased they were that people continued to send in their stories to the Newsletter. Hilary and I are also delighted to hear from so many of you - do please keep sending in your news and memories.

Those who sent their apologies for being unable to come to this year's reunion include **Kathleen Duncombe (Thorp)**, **Judith Mills**, **Marea Irving (Jones)** and **Yvonne Vale (Howitt)**. **Norman Kerridge** missed the date in his electronic diary, sadly, and has resolved to revert to the kitchen calendar to remind him next time!

Websites of interest

The school website is now up and running, at www.moulshamjuniorschool.org.uk As well as current information and pictures of the school, there is a Past Pupils section, where you can find a copy of the latest Past Pupils' Newsletter, and download the photographs in a clearer form than we are able to reproduce in the printed newsletter. Do have a look next time you are browsing.

Also of interest is www.friendsreunited.co.uk , where the Moulsham Juniors page includes not only year-by-year lists of past pupils who have registered, but interesting sections on School Memories and Teacher Memories. You can add your own recollections to these (as long as they are not slanderous!), and there is a space for posting photos too - currently only one picture, so there is scope for adding a lot more that we know exist.

My life and times at Moulsham, 1939-42, by Peter Charles Smith

I mention my middle name with a purpose: to avoid confusion with that great all-round entertainer Peter Smith [article in Newsletter of Summer 2001]. Right from day one at school, if the teacher sent for one of us the other would appear. I too was to do my bit on the boards, so to speak, but did not rise to the heights of the legendary Peter Smith. We met at the 18th May reunion and had a chat.

I cannot say too much about my life and times at school, as I was always conspicuous by my absence. Not through choice, I might add, but through illness and evacuation to my late Welsh stepfather's sister. But here goes. I stand to be corrected if I say 'hello' to Margaret Haldane (nee Laurence) - I believe you lived opposite 215 Bramlin Terrace, where I lived with my grandparents and my now 95 year old mother. Also on your side was the late Brian Draley, son of the local barber, a Master Ketley and a giant of a person Master Pitts. On my side lived Brian Kemp, who still lives in Chelmsford, and also a Miss Smith and her husband who was to become a Chelmsford City supporter, who I still meet at ASDA, Chelmer Village.

I can still remember one Mr Murphy, the truancy officer, pacing up and down outside my grandparents' house muttering "When will he be coming back to school?" With a cluster of boils and an enormous carbuncle on my neck, that was to be some time. I also remember being given 6d a day to have my school milk. Alas the Tuck Shop was too great a temptation, until the owner informed my mother of my indiscretion and put a stop to that little caper.

My mother was to marry a Welshman who was working with her at Marconi's, Waterhouse Lane. We moved to 80 Marconi Road, right between Hoffman's, Christy's and of course Marconi New Street. We had a barrage balloon next door, which caused more problems than it cured, i.e. mother's chimney pots coming down with the balloon almost every time. If Goering paid too much attention to this part of Chelmsford, off to Dowlais near Merthyr I would go. At one time I had three months without going to school. I remember the land mine that dropped and devastated Town Street, and V1 and V2 bombs. I used to share the Anderson Shelter with the Norfolk family.

I certainly remember Mr Turner's outings to the pictures: Henry V and Great Expectations. To this very day I still jump when the convict leaps out at the boy Pip, when the film comes on the television. I also had my bedroom window opposite Marconi's factory, and from 10.30 to 11 every evening I heard Music While You Work from somewhere in East Anglia.

I can remember that walk (or run) from the bus to the Senior School. It appeared I was the only one in a hurry to get to school, inasmuch as Mr Hutchinson mentioned it in Assembly. Needless to say, there was a clattering of hooves as the whole busload was giving chase behind me! Does anyone remember that giant owl that perched itself on the tree on the Infants' side? I certainly remember Just William being read prior to the holidays, and seeing it on television later. I also remember Mr Gardiner, the music teacher, and recall a devious person putting a drawing pin on his piano stool. To his credit, he did not lose his cool, just removed the offending pin and carried on playing. I recall Onward Christian Soldiers, and, believe it or not, Run, Rabbit, Run being given a rendering in Assembly.

I left the Senior School from the late Mr Bradley's class, 2c, at age 14. Mr Bradley retired to a senior citizen's centre in Springfield. Mr Hutchinson, the Senior School Headmaster, I last saw organising senior citizen outings on buses near the railway station, where I worked at that time. My own life has taken full circle - I now live in a flat on the site where I once played amongst the bomb ruins.

[Note: Since writing this, Peter has been in touch with several other former pupils, who he hopes will join our mailing list and come along to future reunions.]

More jottings from Peter Turrall MBE, Moulsham Junior Boys 1939-42

Having left School and joined Chelmsford Borough Council Town Clerk's Department, I decided I would like to become a Solicitor. However, after going back to the Tech. on a Commerce Course, which included languages, and finding out that I had to do five years as an Articled Clerk, I changed my mind and looked elsewhere. Meanwhile a brown envelope arrived advising me that it was time to join Her Majesty's Forces for National Service. I ended up in the Royal Artillery stationed at Rhyl in North Wales as a Signal Instructor, after a technical course at Catterick Camp in Yorkshire. The prospect of being in Rhyl for two years, continuously training "rookies" in technical/electronic signalling, did not please me. I managed for some considerable time to escape this environment by volunteering to play sport. This meant I was able to tour the UK, playing on some super grounds with budding County Cricket players and professional footballers, while still holding my own in the Western Command teams.

On my release I wanted to do something more than work in an office. The opportunity arose when I saw an advertisement for the post of Installation Draughtsman at Marconi Wireless and Telegraph Company at New Street Chelmsford. I was pretty good at drawing and decided to apply, ending up in the Installation Drawing Office planning radio and television stations and outside broadcast vehicles. Later I was asked to join the Broadcasting Sales team where I worked on major projects with the BBC and the ITA. Promotion soon followed and I had my own area of sales covering the UK, Middle and Far East. After a few years travelling the world, spending weeks and sometimes months out of the country, I was appointed Head of Overseas Sales where I had some 20 engineering salesmen generating overseas sales for the Company, which eventually became part of the GEC-Marconi empire.

After twelve years of virtually living out of a suitcase and missing the growing years of my children, I took the post of Company PR and Publicity Manager with a team of some 20 people involved in Exhibitions, PR, Press, Publications and Company Newsletters. This was a very interesting job, in which I stayed until my retirement in 1997. Then followed three years of operating in my own business of PR and Publicity and contracting back to Marconi's for three days per week covering similar work.

In 1984 I was a founder member of CHARMS (Chelmsford Action for the Relief of Multiple Sclerosis) being Chairman for twelve years and President for the last six years. This is a Hyperbaric Oxygen Unit based at Springfield giving MS patients the opportunity of relief through oxygen applied under pressure in a large tank with simulation as would a submarine be subjected to at depths of 33feet. In the past 3 years I have also been Chairman of Chelmsford Mencap. Our main aim is to offer help and advice to people with Learning Disabilities, and recreational facilities including our Gateway Club where some 80 members meet every Thursday evening. On behalf of Chelmsford Mencap, I am a Governor of Thriftwood Special School in Galleywood near Chelmsford. I am particularly pleased to offer my services here as my young Grandson, who has Downs Syndrome, attends this School.

Retirement as a word for me does not exist. I do have some leisure time to spend with my family and walking our dog Katy. I also play golf at the weekend, and table tennis on Friday evenings at the RAFA Club. However, one event which gives me real pleasure is that I organise an annual Service in Chelmsford Cathedral each October for people with learning disabilities, where those people who are less fortunate than ourselves take part in music, drama and singing. If you get time, come along on October 6th at 2-30pm you will be most welcome but, bring a handkerchief as there is never a dry eye when these young people are performing.

Note: Copies of Peter's book on Chelmsford 55 years ago, entitled **A Stroll Through Time** are still available priced £11, of which 50p from each sale is donated to Mencap and 50p to the Cathedral Appeal Fund. Orders by post to Peter at 96 Patching Hall Lane, Chelmsford CM1 4DB, or by email to peter_turrall@lineone.net

Jenny Canham (nee Eve) 1954-58: More news from the Fifties, please!

Since re-discovering contact with Moulsham through Sarah Tytherleigh, a present pupil who attends our church in Brentwood, and visiting the Open Day in, I think, 2000, I have enjoyed receiving the Past Pupils' Newsletter. However, there has been very little news from my Moulsham Juniors years, 1954-58.

A brief history of my life is that after attending Moulsham (as I lived in Moulsham Drive), and Chelmsford County High, I trained as a physiotherapist, married Robert Canham, and worked in Chelmsford at St John's and Broomfield Hospitals. We have two sons, Paul and Mark, born in 1972 and 1975. When Robert went into full-time ministry in the United Reformed Church, we moved to Brentwood, but I continued to work in Chelmsford until we moved to Lancaster last October - it was then too far to commute! - and I was ready for a change.

I have found some photos from my last year at Moulsham Juniors, 1958. [Note: These have been enlarged and copied for display at the next Open Afternoon]. Country dancing was a real favourite; I loved the special black skirt with the coloured binding round and my 'kilt' and swords for the Scottish dancing! My partner was Sheila Goleby, who I have seen once or twice since those days. On my group photo from that year are Susan Sparks, Monica Allen, Marion Ainsworth, Elaine Aldred (younger than the rest), Helena Berezniika (spelling?), Pat Cave, Sheila Goleby and Barbara Daglish. I have looked at a panoramic photo of my last year at the Infants' School, 1954, and a few other names I remember are Linda Gray (I met up with her again when I went to work at Broomfield), Andrena Mace, Penny Shuring, Helen Bishop, Christine Bell and Pauline Hayes. And weren't there the Ransome twins, one of whom died of polio?

The other delight of my time at Moulsham was singing in the choir with Miss Skilton, and competing at the Music Festivals held in the Corn Exchange - sadly a casualty of the 1960s' 'development' of Chelmsford town centre. The other teachers I remember are Miss Barton, Mrs Taylor, and of course Miss Pettet, the Headmistress. Through our church, then London Road Congregational, we also knew well Mr Petchey, Head of the Junior Boys' School, where my brother, Peter, six years my senior, attended. It has been good to hear news of Mr Petchey, and see photos. We were privileged to know him up to the time of his death; he was a great character.

We have settled well in Lancaster. Robert is the Minister at Trinity URC and I am working at Westmorland General Hospital in Kendal. On a clear day I have wonderful views of the Lakeland fells on my way to work!

Best wishes, Jenny Canham, nee Eve, and called Jennifer by the teachers!

Janet Crafer (nee Saltmarsh), 1941-45 - an apology

Apologies to Janet for omitting to give her maiden name in the article on page 11 of the Spring 2002 Newsletter (though it did appear on the contents page). She was of course Janet Saltmarsh when she was at Moulsham Junior Girls' School, and the photo accompanying her article shows her with her brother, David Saltmarsh, who is on our mailing list too. Thank you to one of David's classmates at the reunion, who pointed out my omission. [Note: now corrected in Spring 2002 email version]

Coronation Year: The Great Standard IV Mystery

In previous issues of the Newsletter, we have described the 1953 Coronation celebrations for school children in Chelmsford, and especially the joint pageant of Moulsham Junior Girls' and Boys' Schools, masterminded by Mr Harold Picken. In this Golden Jubilee year, some of you might also enjoy the following extract from the Summer 1953 Boys' School Magazine, entitled 'The Great Standard IV Mystery':

'In the early part of this year, on entering Standard IV room one would notice a group of boys huddled in the far corner in earnest conclave. This party would immediately break up when so disturbed and saunter away with unconcerned looks of innocence. One might also have observed that these same boys, severally or individually, made frequent visits to Mr Petchey's room, though none of them was, as boys go, a naughty boy.

After some days, however, as is so often the case, the secret became too weighty to be contained and the Class Teacher was admitted into the select circle - he was required to act as banker. Shortly afterwards the whole of the class was enlightened and, moreover, invited to subscribe to the enterprise. This invitation was accepted in many cases.

By this time the Staff became acquainted with the secret, as its functioning necessitated a Staff Meeting. This was held, after which the staff might have been seen walking in a body about the lawn, pausing here and there and pointing to various parts of the flower beds, with much nodding of heads and questioning discussion.

Some weeks later, Mr Devenish was seen removing straw from the ends of two branch-like objects and planting these in the School Garden. The next morning the group of boys was called on to the platform at Assembly and the secret was out: Mr Petchey announced that these boys had bought for the school two rose trees to commemorate the Coronation of our Queen, Elizabeth II.

Two brass plates were inscribed, mounted and presented to the School by more good friends. The following Thursday, April 30th, the School Managers and one or two of the boys' parents arrived and took their places on the verandah in front of the Hall. As it was raining the School assembled round the remainder of the verandah instead of on the lawn where we had hoped to be. Mr Petchey explained to us all what was about to happen and how it had come about. Alan White and Peter Church then dashed into the rain, placed the inscribed plates in position by each rose tree, returned and addressed a few words to our guests. Mrs Roberts, Chairman of the Managers, spoke to the whole assembly. She said that not only was the provision of the rose trees a kind and fitting action to mark the Coronation, but the trees would stand as a reminder for many years to come, even, she hoped, when the present boys' children were at the School.

Mr Petchey thanked Mrs Roberts on behalf of us all, and the ceremony ended with the singing of the National Anthem.'

If any of you remember this occasion, or other aspects of the Coronation year celebrations, do drop us a few lines with your recollections. We know that a surprising number of you still have your copies of the purple-covered 'Royalty in Essex' book presented by the County Council to all school children; the tins of chocolate distributed at the Children's Day in Central Park, Chelmsford just before the Coronation; and the medals handed out in school when we returned from an extended half-term holiday in June 1953.

School caretakers and other characters

Kes Gray's mention of Moulsham caretaker 'Noddy' in the early 1970s (page 9) caused us to wonder how many other non-teaching staff you may remember from your schooldays. We should be glad to print any recollections or anecdotes in future Newsletters. To start the ball rolling, we have references to four other caretakers, in material sent in by **Maureen Biggins (nee Little)**, 1938, **Anne Holdsworth (nee Hammond)**, 1943-37, **John and Shirley Wiffen**, 1946-50 and 1952-56 respectively, and **Barrie Stevens**, 1959-61.

Maureen recalls that the first caretaker, when the school opened in 1938, was a **Mr Perrin**, whom she remembers as a very elderly man, and a keen member of the Salvation Army. He lived in the school house at the Princes Road end of the drive, with his son-in-law, **Mr Hubert Collins**, who took over as caretaker a couple of years later.

Some while ago, Anne sent us a press cutting and photo of the retirement of **Mr Collins**, who was caretaker of the Infants', Junior and Senior Schools for no less than 32 years, until May 1972. As well as his nightly tour of the three schools to ensure that all windows and doors were locked, Mr Collins had to deal with any emergency which arose. The most memorable of these was apparently during the Essex floods of 1958, when he and other school staff had to work flat out to clear a flooded boiler room and gymnasium.

When Mr Collins retired, the staff of the three schools arranged a surprise farewell tea party for him, with a thank-you speech from the then Chairman of the Junior School Managers, **Mr Guy Shearwood**. Mr Collins was presented with a cheque, a case and a bouquet, and said he looked forward to spending more time in retirement on his hobbies of photography and bowls. He was a keen member of the Hall Street Methodist Bowls Club. We think that Mr Collins' daughter Linda came to the Junior Girls' School in the late 1940s. Is anyone still in touch with her?

John and Shirley remember a **Mr Little** (no relation to Maureen), who must have been a colleague or assistant of Mr Collins', and who also lived in the school house. They think he had a daughter called Pamela or Pauline. Specific memories are of the caretaker burning rubbish in the large incinerator, with the sliding metal top, in the playground by the toilets nearest the road (the boys' playground). If anyone was 'ill', ie sick!, the caretaker came with sawdust to 'mop up'. He must also have arranged for milk to be placed outside the classrooms from the large stack of crates left by the milkman on the road outside the school. John comments; 'I suspect he kept a low profile as most Caretakers did until recently; I speak from some experience as my last responsibility at work in a London Borough was, amongst other things, for . . . yes, Education Department Caretakers!'

Another of Mr Collins' colleagues must have been **Mr Langton**, who Barrie Stevens recalls was killed on the A12. In his long and interesting essay on Moulsham Juniors, parts of which we have quoted in several earlier Newsletters, Barrie writes:

'How many recall Mr Langton, the school caretaker who was killed on his bicycle at about 7.15pm one night after work? He had stopped at, or near to, the traffic island then situated in the middle of the A12 between Longstomps Avenue and Vicarage Road. Today, the underpass runs under the spot where then many fatal accidents occurred.

The dynamo on Mr Langton's bicycle having stopped concomitant with his having ceased pedalling, the lights went out and the remaining reflector was not enough to make him visible to an approaching car on the London-bound side. I recall the incident being announced by Headmaster Mr Sturgeon at morning assembly. We had a collection and I think that £15 was paid for one of those square inscribed stone vases with a raised and pierced metal dome for holding individual flowers. Contemporary pupils may care to locate this memorial.'

Names you may remember

Yvonne Vale (nee Howitt), 1945-49, was told about the Newsletter by Jill Hazell (nee Gozzett), and has enjoyed reading the latest issues. Yvonne was in the same class as Pam Drennan, and also remembers Anne Wilshire, Judith and Shirley Pinder, Rosemary Atkinson, Isabel Oxbrow, Maureen Rainbird, Dorothy Spooner, Gillian McPherson, Jean Clough, Joan Davis and Jean Collins. She and Dorothy Day (nee Spooner) were able to identify an impressive number of names from the 1948 panorama photograph.

Michael and Susan Wilkinson (nee Rayner) have sent us some very interesting photos, which we shall laminate for next year's Open Day. These include pictures of two Chelmsford landmarks in the 1960s - the Methodist Church near Stone Bridge being demolished in winter 1962, and Marriages Mill in early 1963, before the river was filled in as part of the Essex River Authority flood prevention scheme. There is also a picture of Moulsham Lodge Estate under construction in the 1950s. From Moulsham Juniors, Michael sends a photo taken by Mr Turner of the boys who passed the 11-plus in 1949. These are: Francis Greatrex, Jimmy Porter, Malcolm Stearn, Terry Ledwith, Basil Campen, Michael Watson, Michael Poole, Michael Ingram, Roger Shennan, Richard Kay, David Butt, Peter Kistrup, Colin Wright, Brian Reading, ? Stephenson, Gerald Canfield, Michael Wilkinson, Michael Clarke, Reg Grover, Alan Garwood, Michael Bulbeck, and Jimmy Eades.

Sue's photos include two from Miss Cook's top year Infants' class in 1947/8. Faces she can identify are Peter Eve, Adrian Hill, Sylvia Valentine, Josephine Hill, Susan Rayner (herself), Mary Garland, Jennifer Double and Anita Greatrex. Some have not changed all that much in the intervening years! Sue and her two sisters Una and Lesley, came to the 50th Anniversary of Moulsham Juniors in 1988, and can be seen together on photos taken at that time outside the old school canteen and in the cloakrooms, swinging on the coat pegs, which was absolutely forbidden! There are also pictures of the old water fountains in the cloakrooms, and the old 'roll-over' blackboards (or were they dark green?)

Elizabeth Clarke, 1951-55, has provided a delightfully posed photo of 11 members of her Infants' School class in 1949, showing children at play with toys of the period. These include a large wooden Mickey Mouse rocking horse (or rocking mouse, if you see what I mean), a doll in a pushchair, a model steam engine and various types of building blocks. We will display the photo at the next reunion, in the hope that some of you may recognise yourselves and perhaps remember the occasion. Elizabeth has also given us a 1959 photo from her Senior School days, including many girls who had been to Moulsham Juniors. Faces she has identified are: Myra Eves, Ann Tiffen, Elsie Braid, Judith Dunmow, Lesley Francis, Valerie Rudland, Gillian Hudswell, Aileen Squires, Shirley Adcock, Aileen Flack, Una Rayner, Jacky Slade, Pat Bartlett, Dorothy Jiggins, Katherine Crane, the Brett twins, Maureen Bruce, Jean Staples, Sylvia Garwood, Heather Cawley, Freda Rogers, Diana Warne, Margaret Goodchild, Mary Harry, Suzanne Bulbeck, Dorothy Aichison, Jackie Rich, Virginia Smith, Hilary Gower, Ann Tuttlebury, Angela Brown, Pat Bolger, Wendy Brotherstone, and the teacher, Miss Simmonds.

Contacts 1938-41: An update to our mailing list shows that we are now in touch with the following people from the early years of the school. Please let me know of any corrections necessary. We will include a further instalment for later years in the next Newsletter:

1938: Magnus Anderson, John Baker, Reg Baldwin, Roy Barnard, Jean Bayes, Cynthia Bendall (Carter), Gordon Bennett, Vivienne Bennett (Daniels), Maureen Biggins (Little), Ivan Brown, Kathleen Duncombe (Thorp), Roy Eaton, Brian Emmett, Peter Eves, Jim Fleming, Eileen Geer (Steel), Les Gunn, Pamela Gunn (Brown), Brenda Halls (Eves), Alan Harvey, Wesley Holden, Brian Kemp, Keith Lodge, Vernon Makin, Derek Mussell, Olga Parker (Euston), Reg Podd, Donald Post, Charles John Reed, Ray Sewell, Margaret Shoulders, Peter Smith, Peter Charles Smith, John Spooner, Evelyn Turbin (Gridley), [continued]

1938 continued: Ralph Turbin, Heather Turner (Fleming), Peter Turrall, Eileen Wheeler, Selwyn Wheeler, John Whittle, John Williams, Derek Wiseman

1939: James Kerr Adam, Jill Archer (Devonish), Frank Barker, Anne Bromiley (Mussell), Marjorie Cousins (Watts), Gordon Evans, Pauline Evans (Thorne), Reg Folkard, Renee Gulliver (Passmore), Mollie Hermon (Bloomfield), Hugh Piper, Malcolm Robinson, Muriel Sampson (Passmore)

1940: Margaret Adams (Greatrex), Brian Cooper, Margaret Haldane (Laurence), Sylvia Hayward (Flack), Mrs M Linge, Jean Taylor (Whittle), Mrs Diana Turbin, David Witham

1941: Marlene Beckett (Snowball), Beryl Brown (Goulden), Geoff Chives, Kenneth Cook, Pauline Digby (Knight), Janet Francis (Smith), Eric Hayward, Marianne Lee (Littaur), Maureen Rignall (Bidwell), Gordon Thorp, June Tiffen (Porter), Joan Tredgett (Ponsford), Brian Turbin, Margaret Turk (Spendlove), Eileen Wade (Saunders)

News in brief

Some of you will have read in an earlier issue about the popular Caprice Wind Ensemble, founded and run by **Joy Bome (nee Sparrow)**, 1947-51, which gives concerts in and around Chelmsford in aid of local charities. We understand that the next performance is to be a Prom Concert on September 21st at the Civic Theatre. Tickets are on sale now from either the Civic Theatre or Chancellor Hall.

Maureen Biggins (nee Little) was the daughter of Mrs Little, mentioned by Peter Turrall in the Spring 2002 Newsletter. Maureen took a trip down memory lane and revisited Moulsham Junior School last year. She writes: "In 1938, I came with my teachers Miss Rankin, Miss Wood and Mrs Knight, from Widford Village School, from a school with two classrooms, outside loo and heated by an open fire, to the terribly large Moulsham School. The first day or so I was constantly lost. I was also very tired, as, having lived in the cottage next to the school in Widford, I now had four trips a day, walking back and forth along Princes Road to and from school, as the school buses did not collect the Widford children. In 1939, Mother bought me a cycle (on weekly instalments, of course), and I spent the war years dodging army lorries, tanks and the occasional German aircraft on my school trips. In the event of an air raid during the journey along Princes Road, we were invited to shelter at the Sunbeam Café, on the site now occupied by Tesco's petrol station. The owner, a Mr Grenville, was, I believe, Australian, and had two children, Terry and Denise at Moulsham.

But the memory that is most vivid is "The Nativity". As Christmas 1940 neared, Miss Firman decided to put on a nativity play for the school. She selected her cast with great care, and I was chosen as Mary. I was over the moon, I would be the best Mary ever. I practised hard and was word perfect. Come the great day, the school was assembled in the hall and we began. Apart from a couple of mishaps, such as a shepherd wetting her knickers in fright and Joseph tripping over the crib and sending Jesus skating across the stage, all went well. I had even got over being upset when Miss Firman wouldn't let me call the baby Reginald, after my boyfriend of the time. Halfway through, however, the worst thing that could happen did happen - the siren went. Everyone knew the drill, and all headed for the air raid shelters in an orderly manner, but when a German bomber appeared overhead we all broke into a gallop. There was the shepherd pulling her woolly sheep along the ground, the Angel Gabriel with tinsel wings and halo flapping furiously, and Mary (me) holding baby Jesus (Reginald) by the arm, all going hell for leather to the shelters. I never forgave the Germans for spoiling my first and, may I say, my greatest stage appearance! Memories, great memories!"

Jean Wyatt (nee Pryor), another of the 1938 'crowd', has written to say how much she enjoys receiving the Newsletters: "When I left Chelmsford in 1955, I seemed to leave all my memories behind, and not until I received the Newsletter were they revived. It has been really good to think 'Oh yes, I do remember that", and even to see my name mentioned as throwing a boy's cap into the quarry - ?! (my memories are that I wouldn't say boo to a goose!). Of course, the Newsletter has been published at the right time for retired folk, for me at any rate, having time to sit down and read and ponder.

One memory I do have is wearing my mother's navy slacks (bought specially for going down the dugout each night) and a gown of some sort on a Toy Town play. I remember rehearsing, but don't remember any performances. It would be marvellous if someone else recalls being, perhaps, Larry the Lamb - I was the Mayor. On reflection, I realise that was probably later, at the Senior School, but it was definitely in the Juniors that we had a married teacher, the first ever, and she impressed upon us that we should always say 'Herr Hitler', as it was rude otherwise!

I shall certainly get in touch with Peter Turrall, to see if his book mentions my old home in Moulsham Street, a tobacconist and sweet shop next door to the Pawnshop. Many thanks for the joy the Newsletter has given to 'Old Moulshamites'.

Among the interesting documents brought along to the Open Afternoon and now copied for future display, we are delighted to have **Brian Champion's** colourful Overseas League Empire Day Certificates from 1940 and 1941, received for supporting Commonwealth service personnel.

Mr Kemp was pleased to hear from **Olga Parker (nee Euston)**, who said "They were great days at the Junior Girls' School, and I well remember that first day, September 1938."

Jim Whybrow, 1946-1950, was shown the Newsletter by his brother **Arthur**, 1944-48, on a recent visit to Chelmsford, and is keen to receive future issues. Jim is the youngest of four brothers, Peter, Arthur, Walter and himself.

. . . **And finally, from the 1963 Boys' School Magazine:**

'A robust boy finished his account of the Bazaar held for the Freedom from Hunger Campaign thus: "The amount raised was £23.12s.9d, all of it is going to children - like ourselves - who cannot get enough to eat". Parents please note!'

Data Protection Legislation

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