

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Summer 2003

Vol 5 no 2

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More and more new contacts

At the Open Afternoon on 10th May this year, past pupils from Moulsham converged from Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, all corners of Essex, of course, and even Wales and Florida USA. We counted well over 200 visitors, including a hundred and fifty former Junior School pupils, plus friends and family members, and several ex-Senior School pupils, too. At one point the queue to sign in was snaking right out on to the drive! It was a wonderful reunion, bigger and better than ever, and we were delighted to see so many 'first-timers', including 49 completely new contacts. Good, too, to see some new faces from the 1960s and 70s, as well as the ever-expanding ranks of wartime Moulshamites. Thanks to John Spooner for writing to the Essex Chronicle reminding local people of the event, and to the Weekly News, who printed a short article and picture from Moulsham Junior Girls' School the 1960s, which attracted the attention of a number of pupils from that period.

Many thanks once again to Mr Kemp and his staff for making the reunion possible; to the PTA for running the refreshments; and to the present pupils for giving up their Saturday afternoon to demonstrate steel band music, maypole, country and line dancing - it was all very much appreciated. We are also grateful to those past pupils who kindly helped with setting up and taking down photo displays, or manning the reception desk. Special thanks to Pat Rushbrook (Davis) for once again setting out her wonderful collection of 1950s memorabilia, and to Marion Lodge (Weston) who cheerfully took on the role of roving reporter to collect stories and comments from some of those present.

Various people brought interesting new photos and memorabilia along to the Open Afternoon. Many of the pictures are included in this Newsletter, and more will be on display at the next reunion. Thank you very much for all of these. We are gradually amassing a considerable archive, which will be of value to present and future generations of Moulsham pupils, as well as precious reminders of our own part in the history of the school and the town. We have received such a lot of pictures and articles in recent weeks, that we have decided to send out a bumper edition this time, rather than hold over material for the Autumn Newsletter and risk creating a backlog. Don't let that stop you sending in your news, pictures and memories, however - we would be sad to have to send you an extra slim volume next time! As usual, please send material for the next Newsletter, and names and addresses of any other past pupils who would like to be added to the distribution list, to Mrs Kathleen Boot, at 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG, or by email to kathleen.boot@virgin.net

Your recollections of life in Chelmsford over the years are also of great interest to two of the staff at the Chelmsford Museum in Oaklands Park, Dot Bedenham (Keeper of Social History) and Ian Hook (Keeper of the Essex Regiment Museum). They would like to hear from any of you who have detailed recollections of popular entertainment in Chelmsford (especially the role of the former Corn Exchange), and/or National Service with the Essex or East Anglian Regiments. Details on page 12. Do please get in touch direct with Dot and Ian if you can help.

Happy reading, once again, and very best wishes from Hilary Balm (Dye) and myself. We really enjoy meeting so many of you, putting together the Newsletter, and helping organise the reunions. That said, the Newsletter would be nothing without your own fascinating memories and letters, so don't hesitate to send even just a few paragraphs from your own recollections, to help build up an ever more detailed picture of life 'back then'.

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

Notes from the Head Teacher, Mr L R Kemp

Sometimes you are faced with the disasters and not the successes you hoped for and in my career there have certainly been enough disasters to provide a list of difficult memories. Here at Moulsham, I'm daily greeted when I first walk into the building with the sight of the bell rope which is connected to the bell in the tower above the front entrance. The bell was donated by a parent who found it in their garage when they moved in. I arranged for a firm to both build a cage from which to hang it and to put in a pulley system in order for it to be rung five minutes before school each day. It never worked properly and a recent report by an inspector of church bells said the bell was the worst he'd ever come across and the ringing mechanism was always liable to be temperamental. We are awaiting a visit from a representative of the White Chapel Bell Foundry who will tell me what I have to do to rectify the situation but a new bell is a certainty. I can see a lot of car washes necessary to put this one right.

The planting programme I started when I first came to the school has, I hope, removed the stark appearance that previously applied to the front of the school. Recently, some of the trees in front of the school have died and have had to be removed. The trees were not close to each other and of different ages so I don't know what the problem was. We hope to raise the funds to plant three more trees in November and we will keep our fingers crossed for sturdy growth this time.

The pond in South Wing quadrangle is a very popular feature and children often watch the fish if they can see them in the luminous green water. We have tried different materials to try and clear the water but without success and the most recent advice we have received is that there is too much water for the depth of the pond. We'd welcome help on setting a clear action plan for improving the pond and if you have a pond and been faced with similar problems and successfully dealt with them, please give me a call.

From previous newsletters, past pupils will know how busy this term is and there is a real danger that you don't enjoy the many activities but tick them off the list when completed and rush on to the next. I did enjoy a recent visit to the school by teachers from our partner schools in Anzio, Italy and Annonay, France and ideas for developing the link between the three schools came thick and fast. The present project is a joint video showing dance activities in the three schools. Past pupils often talk about their memories of Country Dancing and the black skirts worn by the girls are often mentioned.

News of current school activities and copies of this and earlier issues of the Past Pupils' Newsletter can be seen on the school's website: www.moulshamjuniorschool.org.uk.

We now have over 450 past pupils on our mailing list, not counting all those who receive copies of the Newsletter via present school pupils, or read it on the website. We cannot of course divulge addresses, but if you wish to contact anyone whose name you have seen in a Newsletter, we will gladly pass on letters on your behalf if we have a contact address. Best to check first with Kathleen Boot, on 01245 263142.

Pictures and jottings from the Open Afternoon, 10 May 2003

Douglas Fawcett (1938), known to many of you as former Chairman of Chelmsford City Football Club, made the journey from South Wales to be with us at the Open Afternoon. He echoed the comments of many of those present when he wrote afterwards: "To see so many old friends and class mates, many of whom I had not seen for a very long time, was for me a moving occasion. There was so much to talk and reminisce about, that time literally flew by. This was my first visit to the Junior School since I departed to the seniors in the far distant 1940s, and to stand once again in the main hall and the three classrooms I attended brought memories flooding back. Much has changed in Chelmsford over my years, but what pleases me is that when they built Moulsham School, it was built right. After all these years, very little has changed. Although the classrooms were not open plan in my day, principally they have stayed the same, and outside, the brickwork looks as good as ever. I would like to convey my thanks to all who made this day possible, and I hope this first visit will be one of many I make the 600 mile round trip for. It was worth every mile of it for me."

Many thanks to **Norman Kerridge**, who brought his digital camera along, and promptly emailed us with a number of pictures of those at the reunion, including this one, showing some of you poring over old photos in the 'Girls' Hall'.



Among the younger past pupils with us for the first time this year, we were pleased to meet **Margaret Regan (Whent)**, 1977-81, and **Sarah Haynes (Gipson)** 1971-75. They both had strong memories of country dancing (with the famous black skirts). Margaret recalled going to a dancing competition once at a boarding school in Ongar, and Sarah remembered having to use a large cupboard to change into her dancing skirt, in order to preserve modesty! Sarah also recalled being on the stage of the Civic Theatre with the school choir on another occasion. Margaret rightly pointed out that we were seriously short of photos from the 1970s at the Open Afternoon. We hope to remedy this in future, starting with a sort through the remaining archive pictures for which we have not so far been able to identify names or dates. We should also be glad to hear from any past pupils from the 1970s who may have pictures we could copy for the Newsletter and/or reunions.

We were especially pleased to welcome former member of staff, **Mrs Judith Woricker (Flatt)**, to the Open Afternoon. Mrs Woricker, who was herself a pupil at Moulsham Junior Girls' School in the 1940s, brought along a number of interesting photos, one of which was taken at the school's 21st birthday celebrations in 1959. Although the original print was tiny, it has enlarged remarkably well.



Mrs Woricker's brother, **Andrew Flatt**, attended the Junior Boys' School, passing through quickly, in three years instead of the usual four, and was chosen to make the presentation to Headmaster Mr Petchey on his retirement in 1957. Andrew now works for the United Nations in Thailand.

Eric Woods, another 1938 pupil, kindly brought along this photo of Mr Picken's class in 1939, in the same series as pictures we already have of Mr Hymas' and Mr Gardiner's classes in the same year. We are delighted to have this addition to our archive. If any of you recognise yourself or classmates on the picture, do please let us know. We will also put an enlarged copy on display at next year's reunion.



Brian Campion, 1939, is another great enthusiast of the annual past pupils' reunions, and told us afterwards that he had never talked so much in his life! Brian recalled that for one summer during the war, when air raids were becoming more frequent, pupils only attended school from 9am to 1pm, six days a week, leaving the afternoons free. The children were told that if there was an air raid on their way to school, they should run on to school if they were over halfway there, otherwise they should go home. We imagine there may have been some curious calculations of the halfway point in individual journeys. Brian was in Mr Gardiner's class, and recalled how easy it was to distract him in history classes by encouraging him to tell them stories about his life in the First World War. He also remembered Mr Hudson, another teacher, who had a deformed hand, in which he could nevertheless hold a piece of chalk to flick at any pupil not paying attention. Brian recently had occasion to visit his home, and told this story - Mr Hudson's wife said now she knew why he always kept chalk in his pocket!

Congratulations to **Valerie Corby (Rudland)**, 1951-55, now the proud grandmother of baby Benjamin Corby.

Jennifer Rolf (Double), 1948-52, brought a copy of her Turner award certificate, and still has the book she received on that occasion: *Round the Year Stories*, by Maribel Edwins. She recalls that her twin sister **Ann**, with whom she shared the Turner Prize in 1952, chose a book on birds.

Sheila Childs (Hammond), 1956-60, recalled the harvest festival at the Junior Girls' School in 1958. On this photograph, taken by the Essex Weekly News, she can identify (front row, from left): Sandra Eades, Christine Platt, Carol Robinson, Catherine ? , and (sixth girl further along) Anna ? . In the centre of the back row, with glasses, is Linda Gridley.



Harold Shergold, 1945-49, remembered singing lots of rounds in Mr Metcalfe's music lessons, He also recalled that Mr Gardiner would sometimes fall asleep! Harold went on to Moulsham Senior Boys' School, and in December 1952 joined the Navy. He served on HMS Ganges for five years from January 1953, and travelled all round the world.

Surprise, surprise! **Geoff Barnard** has sent us this photo of the 1950 Moulsham Junior Boys' football team, and along with it, a picture of six of the original team who were all present at the 10th May Open Afternoon! A seventh member of the team, **Roger Dennis**, still lives in the Chelmsford area, but was unfortunately not able to attend on that day. Geoff and his pals would be pleased to hear from anyone who knows what happened to the four 'missing' team members - **Mel Rawlingson, Roger Bell, Dickie Leadwith and Mickey Spencer**.



**Above: 2003 reunion: Back row, left to right: Ray Brame, Norman Stevenson, Geoff Barnard
Front row: Bunny Dowsett, Alan Smith, Patrick Durrant**



**1950: Back row, standing left to right: Ray Brame, Norman Stevenson, Geoff Barnard, Mel Rawlingson, Roger Bell, Dick Leadwith, Roger Dennis, Mickey Spencer
Front row: Mr Petchey, Bunny Dowsett, Alan Smith, Patrick Durrant, Mr Burt**

Geoff goes on to recall that former Headmaster Mr Petchey was a customer at his barber's shop, City Barbers in Upper Bridge Road, calling in on his way to the Falcon Bowling Club. He writes "We often laughed about school events and he once said his form of punishment would result in him being locked up today, but I do not think it did us any harm at all". Geoff says he looks forward to the Newsletters, and to next year's reunion.

Raymond Brame, 1948-49, one of Geoff Barnard's team-mates, remembers Moulsham Junior Boys winning the Andrews Cup in about 1948. He played outside left in the winning team, which beat Trinity Road School 3-1 in the final. **Alan Smith, 1947-50**, also pictured on the previous page, says he has a photo of the 1948 team.

We were sad to learn from **Rosemary Goulden (Head), 1947-51**, that her brother **Peter Head**, who featured on a 1948 photo displayed at the Open Afternoon, died of a brain tumour in 1989 at the age of 51. He had stayed in Chelmsford on leaving school, and worked for Barnsten the builders.

Among the former Senior Girls with us on 10th May, Marion Lodge (Weston) spoke to **Jeanette Selway (Murphy)**, Juniors 1952-6, and **Sandra Sullivan**. In the 1950s there was a pond in the middle of the Senior Girls' quadrangle, and Jeanette remembered getting trapped in it on one occasion.

Douglas Brooker left Moulsham Junior Boys' School in 1947, and went on to the 'Tech'.

Wendy Bishop (Marshall), 1961-65, is married to Kevin, and has two sons, Matthew, 19, and Daniel, 17. Wendy was a medical secretary before she had her children, and then worked instead as a nursery assistant with pre-school children (and still does so). Like many of us, Wendy remembers the country dancing skirts in black fabric with bands of coloured braid. At the Open Afternoon, she met **Hilary Balm (Dye), 1951-55**, and **Tony Berry, 1949-53**, both of whom also lived in Wallace Avenue during their schooldays.

Sandra Copsey (Halls) saw herself on the 1964 photo reprinted in the Weekly News on 1st May, and came along to the Open Afternoon - the first time she had been back since leaving the Junior Girls' School. Sandra went up to Moulsham Senior Girls' in 1964.

First time back for **Joyce Porter**, too, who was at the Juniors' School in 1938. Joyce has lived in Chelmsford all her life, and remembers Headmistress Miss Rankin and her class teacher Miss Wright.

Rosemary Cowell was at the 50th Anniversary reunion in 1988, and afterwards enjoyed helping with a school project by telling Moulsham Junior pupils about her life in 1938. She came into school every four weeks for the duration of the project, which went on to win an award. Rosemary's grandsons, Dean and Stuart, now in their twenties, were also pupils at the school.

Welcome to another newcomer, **Geoff Boyce, 1943**, whose last form master at the Junior Boys' School was Mr Hymas. Geoff went on to the Senior School, and passed the 13-plus exam to the 'Tech', where he studied engineering. After serving as an apprentice, and doing his National service, he became a draughtsman to Marconi's. There he worked for 45 years, retiring early aged 61. At Marconi Radar he worked for a while with another Moulsham 'old boy', **Arthur Humphreys** (see article on page)

From the 1960s, we were pleased to meet **Diana Allen (Rawlingson)** and **Jennifer Mildenhall (Green)**, who spent two years in Moulsham Infants before joining the Junior Girls' School. Among the Infants' teachers they remembered were Mrs Palmer, whose two daughters went on to the Juniors', Mrs Rodd, Mrs Judd and Mrs Dancer. The Junior School staff included Mrs Alty, Mrs Shoreland and Mrs Mutton, and one year they had two teachers at the same time. In those days there was a tuck shop in the central lobby, with potato puffs, chocolate biscuits and other snacks on offer.

Beryl Chivas (Janes), 1945-49, was pleased to see the photo of **Martyn Edwards'** mother, **Mrs Elsie Edwards**, in the Spring 2003 Newsletter, as she had been a family friend. Beryl remembered her parents going on holiday with Mrs Edwards. Like **Pauline Wilson (Gandy)**, (see article on page 16), Beryl has clear memories of Miss Rankin and Miss Wright's joint retirement celebration in 1949, at which the whole school sang 'Where ere you walk'. Her husband **Geoff Chivas'** sister Jackie was in the same year as Beryl.

Meriel Howe (Barnard), 1952-56, was one of four Barnard children (sister Brenda, brothers Mervyn and Dilwyn) who all went to Moulsham in the 1950s. The Junior classes were large in those days - 48 in Meriel's class - and the girls sat in rows of double desks. Miss Pettet was Headmistress, and Miss Skilton taught music. Meriel thought percussion was absolutely wonderful. In sewing lessons, she made embroidered guest towels and chair backs, which she kept for many years until her parents finally threw them out. A lesser-known duty at school was that of Tea Monitor, which meant she was responsible for making tea for the staff at break time.

Marion Lodge (Weston), 1951-55, is currently having a very busy and interesting year as President of her local WI. Last year, for the first time, she and her husband **Geoff** spent some time in America, and described her experience in a round robin from which we reprint short extracts:

'Our first flight over 'The Pond' happened towards the end of August, when we flew to New York for a couple of nights. Then we drove on to Boston and Maine. Eating toasted bagels for breakfast, we learnt to buy just one sandwich for lunch between the two of us! Crossing into Canada, we arrived in a very clean Quebec City and saw our first Mountie in glorious sunshine. We liked Ottawa, where we ate beaver tail - no, not a real one, just a tail-shaped pancake with different toppings. The fruit in the market was artistically displayed in little baskets; even the carrots stood to attention! In Toronto we had dinner in the revolving restaurant at the top of the CN Tower, 1150 feet up in the air!'

'At Niagara Falls we went mad and had a helicopter flight over the falls followed by a Maid of the Mist boat ride. I had imagined this waterfall to be out in the country, but the town itself buzzed like Blackpool. We did visit nearby Niagara by the Lake, all too perfect for comfort, with manicured flower beds, shiny cars and horse-drawn carriages. Then at last we were in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, fulfilling the reason I wanted to visit this country, as I had long been interested in the Amish and their patchwork. We visited a farm, where we had a typical farming Amish meal of several courses! Amish are quite prosperous in their community, and do not use mains electricity (they can generate their own). Their houses have only blinds at the windows, as curtains are decoration. Most of their clothes are black, except for ladies' shirts, which can be blue, green, red or purple. Women have to learn to fasten their skirts with pins - only the men are allowed buttons! Moving on to Washington, we saw The White House, the Space Museum (the lunar module looked like a Heath Robinson experiment!) and the Art Galleries. Then finally to Philadelphia for the Independence House and the Liberty Bell, and back to New York. Covering over 2,200 miles, we enjoyed our first taste of America and Canada.'

Apologies were received from **Margaret Haldane (Laurence)**, **John Barnard**, and **Brenda Valentine (Reed)**, who were unable to be at the reunion this year.

E-mail distribution of Past Pupils' Newsletter

As far as possible, we deliver Newsletters by hand to past pupils who live locally. If you currently receive your copy of the Newsletter through the post, and have a computer, would you perhaps be willing to download each issue from the school website or receive an email copy instead? This would help reduce the school's postage bill. We can email the Newsletter in Word or pdf format, whichever you prefer. Please let me know at kathleen.boot@virgin.net Thanks

Wartime Recollections from Arthur Humphrey,

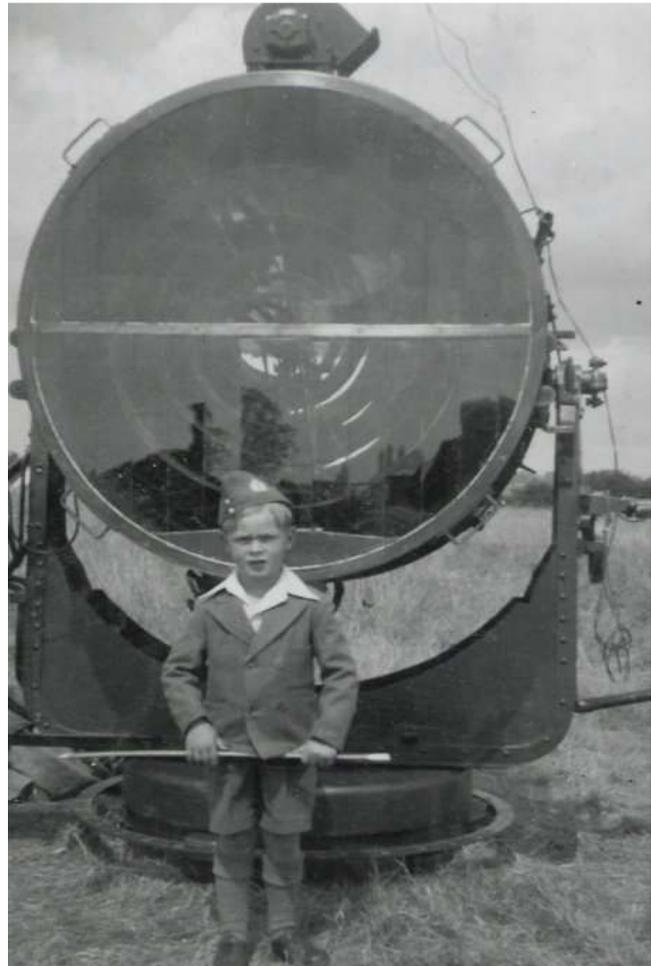
As promised in the Spring Newsletter, Arthur continues his childhood recollections with this article on life in wartime Chelmsford:

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

Soldiers appeared, and occupied the wooden huts that had been built in the corner of the field, about 200 yards from the end of our back garden in Waterhouse Lane. A Bofors gun was installed in a protective revetment. The ammunition was stored in a structure built from concrete blocks. This building remained for many years after the war. The sergeant in charge of the site kindly let us wander about the camp and amuse ourselves on the Bofors gun, the right hand handle providing barrel elevation and the left, azimuth movement of the complete gun assembly. The searchlight had been installed to illuminate enemy aircraft flying overhead on night-time raids. Following an air raid warning the searchlights would illuminate the night sky with pencils of light (see picture); the Bofors gun opening up with rapid fire. Rockets installed in what is now Central Park, adjacent to the river, could be heard whistling as they made their way aloft to entangle the propellers of the enemy aircraft with skeins of wire.

A barrage balloon site had been installed in the adjacent field, bordering on Waterhouse Lane. This was operated by Airforce personnel. We children used to watch the balloon being raised and lowered via a steel cable. An electrical storm was instrumental in bringing the balloon crashing down one day. The greasy cable stretched across our garden, held aloft by the fences and hedges and the houses on both sides of Writtle Road. The junctions of Crompton Street and Waterhouse Street with Writtle road were provided with conical concrete tank traps and underground explosive mine emplacements. Half way down Waterhouse Street, a heavy machine gun site had been positioned in readiness for the expected invasion. The stainless steel pivot and steel skeleton that supported the gun may still be there, buried beneath the concrete. [Right is a picture of young Arthur in military outfit in front of a searchlight].

Chelmsford was badly hit during the raids, with many areas damaged by high explosive munitions and incendiary devices.



Chelmsford was a primary target of the German Airforce, because of the large incidence of industry involved in war work. Marconi's and Hoffman's and the railway line were the prime targets. Evidence of this was obtained following the war, when a model of the Marconi factory was found in a Luftwaffe command centre. Hoffmans was badly damaged and a mass grave in Writtle Road Cemetery bears witness to the severe loss of life.

The top of Upper Bridge Road, adjacent to the railway bridge, passed every day on the way to school, suffered a direct hit, demolishing a number of houses. Andrew J Begent depicts areas damaged by the raids in his book, Chelmsford at War. We as children spent time searching the bomb craters in the open fields for shrapnel, until warned off by civil defence staff, who spoke of the dangers of phosphorus picked up on shoes, which could subsequently ignite. The area behind what was Foreman's Timber yard was struck by a V2 rocket, which caused shock damage as far as the Pavilion cinema.

My brother Alf worked at an electrical shop in New London Road until he joined the Airforce in 1942, training as a pilot in Canada. My elder brother, Charlie, was in the Navy, serving at that time on HMS Warspite, having joined up at sixteen. Dad worked at Marconi's in New St, having spent the First World War fighting in France. Proximity to the guns had left him deaf in one ear; he also sustained a broken leg, which, set under field hospital conditions, left him with a severe limp.

We as a family suffered a heavy loss when my brother Alf was killed in 1945, when his Wellington bomber crashed in Wiltshire returning from some mission. I remember the coffin being placed in the front room draped with the Union Jack. Brother Charlie was home on compassionate leave. He wanted to open the coffin, but the lid had been sealed, no doubt to protect the family from viewing Alf's injuries. All the crew members died, with the exception of the rear gunner. The impact of the plane hitting the ground caused the turret connections to fail and the turret to roll away. The rear gunner was able to walk to a farmhouse about a mile away, nursing a broken arm. By a strange sequence of events, we were able to meet the rear gunner, Jim Done, and his wife, at the farmhouse last year, where we had been invited by the farmer, a child of 12 at the time. The navigator's sister had earlier contacted the author of a book chronicling the airfields in Wiltshire, which was instrumental in bringing us all together. The farmer showed us the diary he had kept all those years ago, describing the events. He took us to the crash site and showed us the broken tree branches, which the plane had impacted prior to crashing. He recalled the ammunition belts hanging from the branches torn from the wings of the plane. The navigator is buried in the churchyard at Pewsey, and brother Alf is buried at Writtle Road Cemetery. The rear gunner described the final moments prior to impact and the efforts he had made trying to save crew members following the crash.

MOULSHAM SENIOR GIRLS' SCHOOL GOLDEN JUBILEE REUNION

Did you leave Moulsham Senior Girls' School in 1953? Dorothy Day (nee Spooner) is arranging a reunion on the evening of Wednesday 15th October 2003 to celebrate the 'Golden Jubilee' of girls who were in her year. Some who have already expressed an interest are Pat Barton (Jameson), Ivy Clark (Osborne), Jill Hazell (Gozzett), Betty Dowsett (Taylor), Margaret Tatham (Grimwood), June Seymour (Flint), Doreen Rayner (Parmenter), Jackie Mann (Jones), Doreen Purvis (Corinne) and Pat (Hamilton). Any other former pupils who left the Senior Girls' School in 1953 and would like to attend the reunion, are invited to contact Dorothy Day (Spooner) and Mary Offord (Stevens) as soon as possible please, at 116, Sandford Road, Chelmsford, CM2 6DH

Home for dinner, by Don Smith, 1942-44 and 46-48

In the Spring Past Pupils' Newsletter, a line from Martyn Edwards' reminiscences brought back to life an incident that I had not thought about for some considerable time. As noted, some Moulsham pupils went home for a quick midday dinner. In my case, it was twenty minutes to reach home. Twenty minutes to gulp Mum's war time meal, then another twenty minutes for the return trip. Just enough time to reach school before the afternoon lessons commenced. In those days, I usually ran both ways, Oaklands Park being preferable to Vicarage Road, as it was easier on the grass! All the while wondering if those two fighting tigers were still grappling with each other in the shut down museum.

The day this incident occurred, the sky was blue, with only a few white contrails on high denoting aerial activity. On my return, I always paused at the British Restaurant opposite St John's Church. Peering through an open door, I could watch tired, worn people eating as if it was their last meal. Then it was along St John's Road and Vicarage Road to Princes Road. In St John's Road, I had to stop again where a flourishing buddleia bush hung over the pathway, its blossom attracting varied butterflies, bees and insects. The fluttering and flittering always seemed so calming.

Realising that if I hung around much longer, I would be late, I ran on, into Vicarage Road. And then the air raid siren went off. Funny how much louder it seemed when you were outdoors, not in a house. I picked up speed, and into Princes Road I turned, Peters and Barham clanking away busily in the sand and gravel pit. Over the noise came the sound of aircraft engines. Clearly I recall looking up to see a M.E.109 closely followed by a Hurricane, its roundels easily visible. Opposite the gravel pit was a long red brick wall, so I crouched down beside it, well aware I was caught out in a daylight raid, with an air battle going on overhead.

I remember to this day hearing clinking sounds, and saw brass cartridge cases bouncing in the road. I would have liked to collect them up, but didn't have the nerve. Minutes later, I looked up and could see the sky was clear, so, making up my mind, I took a deep breath and left the shelter of the wall. I raced off to the Moulsham Junior School air raid shelters, which I could now see. A teacher appeared outside the nearest, waving urgently. "Come on, Smith, run, boy, run, run!", he shouted. He moved aside to allow me to dart into the gloomy shelter, with its smell of brick, cement and dampness. Boys sat in line on the slatted seats. The end occupant moved up a bit, letting me collapse on the end. "You wounded?" he whispered. "No, just out of breath", I gasped. Then from the outside came the sound of the 'all clear'. We all trooped into the sunshine and afternoon lessons. Back in those days, it was just a way of life.

Do you remember the Corn Exchange?

Did you ever go to any concert or other event at the old Corn Exchange on Tindal Square? Do you recall any of the bands who played there? What were your impressions of the place? If you have any memories of the Corn Exchange, Dot Bedenham, Keeper of Social History at Chelmsford Museum in Oaklands Park, would like to hear from you. Some of you may have picked up a copy of her questionnaire at the school on 10th May. If so, do please complete and return it as soon as you can. If you have not had a questionnaire, and would be able to help, please contact Dot at the Museum. Telephone: 01245 615102.

Did you do National Service with the Essex or East Anglian Regiments?

Ian Hook, Keeper of the Essex Regiment Museum in Oaklands Park, has just opened an exhibition telling the story of National service in the Essex. He is keen to send questionnaires to anyone who served between 1945 and 1963. If you can help, please get in touch with Ian: Telephone 01245 615101

Ted Caton's eye-view of Moulsham Juniors and beyond

Ted Caton, 1941-45, has sent us these two photos from 1945:



Scholarship boys: **Back row:** Eric Hayward, Barrie Sydenham, Peter Rolfe, Terence Carter
Middle row: Edward Caton, Brian Cooper, Donald Courtman, Dudley Courtman, Peter Sherman, John Boulter **Front row:** Leslie Cater, Geoffrey Chivas, Roland Dennison, David Sharman, Keith Willis



Whole class: **Back row:** Eric Hayward, Ian or Eric? Haldane, Geoffrey Robinson?, Barrie Sydenham, Peter Rolfe, Peter Sherman, Peter Croft, Terence Carter. **Middle row:** Edward Caton, Brian Cooper, Donald Courtman, Dudley Courtman, David? Sutton, Ronald Voyce, John Boulter.
Front row: Leslie Cater, ?, Geoffrey Chivas, Roland Dennison, David Sharman, ?Elliott, Keith Willis.
Is it Mrs Skipsey in the background? Her son, Fred, is a near neighbour of Ted's.

Ted has recently joined our newsletter mailing list, and writes:

"The Newsletters I have read are full of names from the past and have brought back many memories. With I believe the sole exception of **Terry Carter**, who went on to **Maldon Grammar School**, all the successful Scholarship boys in the top photo were with me at **King Edward VI Grammar School** but I have heard very little of any of them since I left there in 1950. **Eric Hayward** was for many years the **Chelmsford Salvation Army Bandmaster**; **Geoff Chivas** (whose father worked with my own father) was at one time active in the **Old Chelmsfordians' Association**; **Dudley Courtman** used to run a sailing/activity centre at **Heybridge Basin** for **Newham London Borough Council** and is now **Chairman of the Chelmer Canal Trust**; **Roland Dennison's** father had the cycle shop in **Moulsham Street** from which I purchased most of my bike "bits".

"Through the friendsreunited website I am now in touch with **Peter Rolfe**, a childhood friend and neighbour, and **Dudley Courtman**. As well as Peter Rolfe, Bruce Grove neighbours whose names I have spotted in the newsletters include **Clifford Thorington**, **Clive Barker**, **Marion Bell (Smith)** and **Judith Woricker (Flatt)**. I was surprised to see in Judith's contribution in the Summer 2002 issue that she "was away from Chelmsford during the war" as I was convinced that she and her mother had shared our family's air raid shelter on at least one occasion. I know that, with my mother and two brothers, I spent nights in her family's home while our respective fathers were out on ARP duty - although Judith's father was later conscripted into the Army. Others with whose fathers my own father was associated in one way or another are **Peter Turrall** and **Norman Kerridge**.

"While at County Hall I worked at one time or another with **Michael Wilkinson**, **John Williams** (if he's the one I think he is!), **John Shearman** (who, sadly, passed away a couple of years ago), **Jennifer Willmer (Bohannon)**, and **John Macaulay**. Also at County Hall was **Jenny Rayner**, now **Jennifer Bailey**, who arranges annual get-togethers for pupils in her class. She was one of the "couple of other young ladies in the office at Chelmsford" mentioned in my book [see next paragraph] as having written to me at **RAF Hednesford** after I had been called up for **National Service** in the **Royal Air Force** in **November 1952**.

"I still have copies of my book, "An Erk's-Eye View" to sell, and will donate £1 to school funds for any book sold to a past pupil, either through the Newsletter or at a reunion. Although the purpose of the book is to tell the story of my **National Service**, there are introductory chapters dealing with my early life in **Chelmsford**, a period which included the war years and time at **Moulsham Infants' and Junior Boys' Schools** and the **Grammar School**. For most of my **RAF service** I was fortunate to be in **NATO** at **Fontainebleau, France**, working on the personal office staff of the **Commander, Allied Air Forces Central Europe (Air Chief Marshal Sir Basil Embry, KCB, KBE, DSO, DFC, AFC, RAF)**.

I mention in the book that, when I started at the **Infants' School**, I sat next to a little girl named **Sylvia Welland** and wondered what became of her. Does anyone know? I believe she came from **Galleywood**."

Ted Caton's book, "**An Erk's-Eye View**", is published in paperback as **ISBN 0 9533030 0 4**, and costs **£7.50** plus, if it needs to be posted, **£1** towards the costs of postage and packing. It has **176** pages and contains **52** photographs. Our resident book-reviewer (**Hilary Balm**) recommends it as a thoroughly good read. You can reach Ted at **108 Moulsham Drive, Chelmsford CM2 9PZ**, or by telephone on **01245 256790**

Friars Infants' School 1941-43 - memories from Anne Holdsworth (nee Hammond)

Like many Moulsham Junior School pupils, my infant days were spent in the Friars' School in Chelmsford, which was situated in what is now the dual carriageway of Parkway. It was a red brick Victorian building on the right hand side of the road between Moulsham Street and New London Road.

The building had two storeys and two entrances, one for girls and one for boys, but the girls' entrance only was used. This was on the left-hand side facing the building. Perhaps because my years there were wartime years, and the need to get to the shelters would have been urgent, only the ground floor was used for classes at that time. I had an uncle who attended this school in the very early 1900s, and in those days the boys were taught upstairs and the girls downstairs. The photo, right, was taken in 1964



There were three classes. The reception class, with Miss Bedford and Mrs Eagling, was in a classroom at the back. The second class, taught by Miss Day, had half of the hall, which went all the way across the front of the building and was divided by a screen in the centre. The top class, with Miss Amey, had a room behind the hall. Each teacher took all subjects, including physical exercise - today called gym - which was taken in the playground, weather permitting. This was of the 'arms stretch and turn your body from side to side' variety, as there was no gymnasium in the school. There was no playing field, either, just a concrete playground, so no opportunities for games or sports.

Heating in winter was supplied by coal fires in each room, and the back room also had a tortoise stove. No double glazing or central heating! Blackboards and easels were used by the teachers, and in the back room the teacher's desk stood on a platform. Our writing was in pencil only. These were very thick pencils, painted orange, and the paper was quite thick too, which makes me think it was of pre-war quality. We had the usual lessons of reading, writing and arithmetic, and sometimes a story would be read to us. I would think the number of pupils in each class was about 50, and we sat on tip-up benches, two to three pupils to a desk.

Graph-style books were used for arithmetic lessons, one figure to be written in each square. In the top class, printed cards were used, over which we had to place tracing paper - we got two lessons in one, as we had to trace all the figures on the cards and supply the answers as well. Drawing was achieved using pastel crayons, with a tissue sheet between each page. We had our singing lessons in the hall. The song I remember most was "The little white chapel". Another I cannot remember quite so well was called "Butterfly".

In the top class, the girls had to knit and sew, but I cannot remember what the boys did during these lessons. Perhaps some of the boys can tell us? Our knitting lessons involved making a kettle holder in garter stitch, and for sewing we had to make a handbag. This was achieved by weaving coloured wool into a canvas, which had a woven hole pattern in it, providing small holes to keep our stitches in a straight line. When this part was completed, the canvas was lined and folded into three. The two sides were sewn up, press-studs put in as fasteners, and a plaited string handle attached.

When I first went to Friars School, the only drink available was cold water, given to us by the teacher. We all used the same cup, which would certainly not be allowed today! Eventually, milk was obtainable, and straws were also issued. Another important feature of infants' school life was the toilets. These were situated at the far end of the playground, boys to the right and girls to the left. By the 1940s, these had been modernised to the flushing variety, but there were no washing facilities.

I am not sure when Friars Infants' School closed and was eventually demolished, but I think it may have been between 1965 and 1970. I have very happy memories of my years there.

Right: Photo of Anne at Moulsham Juniors in 1946 or 1947



A Letter from Pauline Wilson (Gandy), 1947-51

I have attended the last two reunions, and have very much enjoyed meeting up with so many old school friends. I started attending Moulsham School in 1945, going through the Infants', Juniors' and finally the Senior Girls' School until 1955, when I was Head Girl that year.

My memories of the school and teachers are very happy ones. I can remember Miss Rankin and Miss Wright's farewell, when the whole school had to learn two songs to sing to them - 'Where ere you walk', and a made-up one, 'Farewell Miss Rankin'.

I vividly remember the days in the school choir, when we would go to the Corn Exchange to compete with other Essex schools for the Music Cup, which we often won!

I lived in Loftin Way during those years, and either bussed to school or walked across Currie's fields (now Moulsham Lodge Estate). When I first left school, I worked at Marconi's in Great Baddow, and then moved to Marconi's at Writtle, where I met my husband Brian Wilson, who worked as an apprentice there. At the time of my marriage I had moved on to work at the Police Headquarters in Springfield.



We married at London Road Congregational Church in Chelmsford in 1962 and for 8 years, lived in Coggeshall. Since then we have lived in Bury St Edmunds, where we brought up our two daughters. I now work for Suffolk County Council in the Special Needs and Psychology Service of the Education Department. I greatly enjoy my work, which is very interesting.

I look forward to meeting more old colleagues at the next reunion.

[The photo above is Pauline's only picture of herself at Moulsham Junior School, taken in 1949 outside the main entrance]

Memories and pictures from Bill Bateman, 1950-54

I read one of the Newsletters for the first time a few weeks' ago, and it prompted me to search through my mementoes. I had some good times at Moulsham Juniors. I was well into sports of all kinds, and captained the football team in the photo below, taken in the 1953-54 season:



We won the Andrews Cup that season, but I'm ashamed to say I can't remember who we played or what the score was! The boys on the photo are: **Back row, left to right:** Mick Polley, John Southgate, Mick Calver, Dave Tripp, Tony Berry, Bob Faint?, Mick Roblin (who broke his leg in the semi-final); **Front row:** David Woodward, John Clark, Bill Bateman (captain), Mick Rawlingson, Chris Hughes. Sorry about the missing corner - I hope someone out there could lend me a copy to get a new one done.

I lived in Longstomps Avenue at the time (you couldn't live much nearer) and I can remember often kicking a stone all the way to the school gate without letting it go off the path - good training for football. And how many other kids would try to get to school without treading on a crack in the pavement? If you saw an ambulance, you'd have to hold your collar and not let go until you saw a dog! Pretty difficult - but who first thought it up?

I remember fondly Mr Hymas reading chapters from adventure stories on a Friday afternoon. Occasionally, Mr Petchey would come into class and tell us a story from Dickens, just from memory. One morning a week, we would have an extended assembly and Mr Hodgson would take us for community singing. It was great belting out 'Onward Christian soldiers', 'To be a pilgrim', etc, accompanied by Mr Gardiner at the piano. I still remember all the words, and what a thrill it was to finish off with the School Song - yes, the rafters really did ring!!

The photo below was taken during the pageant held at the school to celebrate the Commonwealth in Coronation Year, 1953. We three represented Canada. Left to right, Graham Pennack, Bill Bateman, Eddie Jacobi.



I left Moulsham Juniors in 1954 to attend what was then the Mid-Essex Tech, in Market Road. I was the only one of the '11-plus' boys to go to the Tech, so I knew nobody when I got there. It was a shock to have girls in the same class, and you did your best not to sit next to one!



This picture of the boys who passed the 'Scholarship' in 1954 was taken by Mr W C C Turner, who also wrote the names on the back. They are: **Back row, left to right:** Paul Davis, David Eyre, Peter Pitts, Derek Horsnell, Trevor Davies, Roger Williams, Robert Hazell, Geoff Frost, Peter Church (sportsmanship award), Alan White. **Middle row:** Peter Gunnell, Graham Potter, Paul Watson, Chris Cave. **Front row:** David Woodward, Bill Bateman, Stuart Collard, Michael Bolger, Michael Hayes.

From Australia to Medway United: A True Football Story by Peter Charles Smith, 1938

This entertaining tale comes from Peter Charles Smith, one of many former Moulsham boys who took an active interest in football both at school and in later life. He writes:

There are occasions in life when we have time on our hands and wish to do something worthwhile with it. In my case, this came with the introduction of organised Sunday football in Chelmsford.

My story starts back in 1933, when it appears that the Co-op held a special week to promote Australian produce. That was in the days when all shops proudly displayed their wares on the pavement, out in front of their shops. The old Co-op grocery shop in Duke Street, Chelmsford, was the winner of a competition for the best Australian Week display, and the branch was duly presented with a cup and stand. The cup had a map of Australia on it, and features later in this tale.

In the early 1960s, when a lot of people had to work six days a week, there were some employees who wanted to play football but because of their working hours could not play in the organised Saturday games. Among these were staff at the Co-op, Essex Chronicle, GPO and others. So they got on the phone to each other and sometimes played unaffiliated (and sometimes pretty unorganised) Sunday football instead. The refs had to change outside the Melbourne changing rooms.

Unfortunately, it all went wrong. Such was the popularity of Sunday football, that Saturday footballers started playing on Sundays as well, and some of those who could only play on Sundays found themselves sidelined. All this was eventually brought to the notice of the local football chief, who promptly got on his bike one Sunday morning to investigate. On his way, he met a well-known footballer setting out to play unaffiliated Sunday football. This was strictly not allowed for players who were signed up to play in organised football on Saturdays.

At that time, I was employed at the Co-op warehouse. There I spotted the Co-op cup mentioned above, sitting lonely and unwanted on top of an old cupboard. This, I might add, some thirty years after it had been presented. I made representations to the management with an idea: Why not introduce affiliated Sunday football, and use this cup for Sunday cup finals at Chelmsford City Football ground? After some negotiation, this was agreed. The cup was given a good clean-up, with everything removed bar the map of Australia.

Being employed at the Co-op, I got to hear that the Co-op football team was to play the Cricket team one week at Admirals Park. I took my neighbour's dog for a walk to the park, to watch the game. Poor old dog! It found itself tied up, while yours truly was hijacked to run the line. The following Sunday, the Co-op played at Mountnessing. A ref was required, and, yes, yours truly did the honours. Then there came a day when a well-meaning local football organiser managed to get himself into financial trouble one way or another. I paid out the grand sum of £30, and inherited a football team! I lived in Medway Close on the Chignall estate at that time, and so the Medway United team was born. The team stayed with me for five years, until I decided to get married. I felt I couldn't manage a football team and a marriage. Regrettably, the team then folded up, never to play again as such. As for the cup, I can report that it is still in use today, as the runners-up trophy for Division 2 of the Chelmsford Sunday League.

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

Names from the mailing list - 1960s

In our next issue, we will update our list of contacts from 1938 to the 1950s, and add names from 1970s onwards. Meanwhile, here are the names we have of contacts from the 1960s. Please let us know of any amendments or additions.

Start year 1960: Diane Allen (Rawlingson), Jane Brewster (Thorogood), Stephen Cooper, Sandra Cooper (Halls), Susan Davis (Hawkes), Gail Diplock (Whetnall), Barbara Green, Christine Parker, Sally Waller (Golding), Anne Waters, Averil Wilcox (Clarke)

1961: Anne Cowell (Aves), Susan Johnson (Jiggins), **1962:** Nick Parsons

1963: John Lewis, Angela Poulton (Long), Russell Travers, David Vermont

1964: Pauline Clarke (Stevens), Mary Griffiths (Toms), Helen Islip (Brigham), Martin Lee, Bill Lumley, Sandra McCarthy, Jenny Mildenhall (Green), Clive Woods **1965:** Kevin Bowen, Lynne Burnand (Brown), David Prince, Charles R Reed, Simon Rudge, Julie Sherman (Aves)

1966: Paul Keenan, Alison Sutterby (Reeve), Martin Vermont, Lesley Watts (Allen), Susan Webster (Watts), **1967:** Susan Logan (Lang), Karen Vellacott

1968: Stewart Court, Heather Tate (Pope), Paul Toms

1969: Lynn Ayling (Harden), Patricia Bell (Turbin), Heather Brigham, Claire Houlton (Bigg), Kathryn Lee, Andy Russell

STOP PRESS: School Fete, Saturday 21st June

A warm sunny afternoon, much enjoyed by visitors of all ages. Hilary and Kathleen set up our Past Pupils' stall next to the beer tent (where else?), where we had a good view of entertainments and demonstrations in both arenas on the school field (which was a ploughed field behind the playground back in the 1950s). There were lots of stalls and sideshows on both the playground and the field, and the proceeds from the afternoon were going towards a new piano for the school.

We were pleased to see some familiar faces, and to meet a number of past pupils we hadn't come across before. Wonderful that **Brian Judd**, 1938-42, who lives in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, was able to drop in during a stopover in UK on his way to a conference in Poland! We were delighted to meet him, as was Head Teacher, Mr Kemp. Brian said he scarcely recognised Chelmsford, walking up to Moulsham from the railway station, past his childhood home in Lady Lane. All those new houses along Princes Road! (We can't get used to them, either). **Peter Charles Smith** especially enjoyed the strawberries and cream, and bought some home-made cakes for his 96-year-young Mother. He also had fun helping to supervise some of the bouncy castles. Former Deputy Head **Mr Flitman** stopped by for a few words - he is enjoying a busy life as Head of Wickford Juniors, and he and Mr Kemp help each other at their respective school fetes.

We were glad to meet more past pupils from the 1960s and 70s, as well as some from our own era and earlier. They included: **Mara Moorcroft (Dragisic)**, whose brothers and sisters George, Peter, Karin and Milan were also at Moulsham Juniors in the 1970s; **Adele Myers**, 1959; **Scott Richardson**, 1964; **Linda Saunders**, 1953, who has three sisters, Ann, Gwen and Janet, all Moulsham girls (Linda's school friends included Valerie Evans and Yvonne Newcombe); **Kathryn Lee**, 1969, whose elder brother Howard is now a Head Teacher in Suffolk; **Claire Houlton (Bigg)**, 1969; **Denise Hale**, whose children are now at the school. Denise would like to know if anyone remembers the pit behind Currie's Farm being used by the Home Guard during the war - can anyone help? **David Cole**, 1954, went on to the Seniors in 1957. **Nicola Miller** attended Moulsham Infants, Juniors and Seniors, and is having a reunion this week with about 30 classmates who were at the Seniors in 1987 - we hope to hear how that occasion went. **Pat Barker (Sutton)** went on to the Girls' High School, and also had brothers and sisters at Moulsham. We hope to hear more from some of these people in due course.