

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Summer 2004

Vol 6 no 2

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A Sunny Open Afternoon

It was another memorable Past Pupils' reunion on Saturday 15th May, this time with bright sunny weather to match. Over 130 former Junior School pupils, together with friends and relatives, descended on the school en masse, to enjoy an afternoon of reminiscences, renewed acquaintances, tours of the building and grounds (including the former caretaker's house on this occasion), tea and cakes, and an expert demonstration by present pupils of maypole, country and line dancing. Many thanks to everyone involved in the preparation and organisation. And a special thank-you to Mr Kemp and his staff for making these reunions possible. We know they are much enjoyed and greatly appreciated.

It was good to see a mixture of familiar and new faces at the Open Afternoon. Some of our 'old faithfuls' travelled long distances to be with us again, from Yorkshire, Liverpool, Wales, Suffolk, Surrey, Hampshire, and beyond. Among the younger faces were a sizeable contingent from the 1970s and 1980s, and a number of past pupils whose parents were also ex-Moulshamites. We have news and photos from several of you in the report on pages 4-5 and elsewhere in this Newsletter.

In his welcome leaflet for the Open Afternoon, the Head Teacher, Mr Les Kemp, reported that the new school bell has been ordered from the Whitechapel Foundry, and will be installed in the bell tower by the end of June. It will be rung for five minutes before school each day - a lovely idea. Mr Kemp is also grateful for the many donations received from past pupils towards the cost of producing and distributing the Newsletter. If any of you would still like to contribute and were unable to be at the Open Afternoon, you can if you wish send a cheque (payable to 'Moulsham Junior School') to Mr Kemp at Moulsham Junior School, Princes Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 9DG. There is no formal subscription fee, but we suggest about £3 a year.

In this issue

Once again, we have a varied and interesting selection of news and recollections, many of them sparked off by pictures or articles in earlier Newsletters. Thank you to all our contributors, and we look forward to hearing from yet more of you over the coming months. Material for the Autumn Newsletter can be sent to Kathleen Boot at 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG or by email at kathleen.boot@virgin.net. Unless you receive the email version, you will notice that the current issue of the Newsletter is in the 'traditional' photocopied format. Mr Kemp is still planning to have one issue printed during the coming school year, so that we can enjoy a better reproduction of some of the older photos you have given us.

Help with the Newsletter

Now that we have over 500 on our mailing list, and an ever-expanding collection of Moulsham photos, we are appealing for one or more volunteers, preferably living in the Chelmsford area, who would be willing to help maintain the computerised address list and labels, and/or manage the photo archive. Details of both these requests are on page 6, and we would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in taking on either or both of these tasks.

Greetings to you all, and very best wishes for a pleasant summer from Hilary Balm (Dye) and myself.

Kathleen Boot (Nash)
1951-55

Notes from the Head Teacher, Mr Les Kemp

"At what battle did Nelson die?"

This was the question asked by the education officer showing my group of Year 6 children around St. Paul's. So far the children had impressed us with their answers to questions about the famous people whose tombs are in the crypt. A few hands went up and the correct answer was given, followed by a sound similar to a steam train, which was my major sigh of relief.

This is the busiest educational visit term, when Colchester Castle, Oaklands Museum, Hyde Hall, Kentwell Tudor re-enactment, the Isle of Wight, Hatfield Forest, Boulogne, the Japanese School, London and many other locations play host to children from this school. When I talk to Year 6 children on their last day of primary education about their memories of the last four years, the educational visits feature very strongly amongst their most vivid memories. At first the memories are about sandwiches seized by seagulls, someone being sick four times on the coach, losing their purse with all their spending money in. Digging deeper brings memories that demonstrate the high degree of interest and knowledge retained from going on visits.

This year's Year 5 trip to France visited Boulogne for the first time. A visit by the Year 5 Co-ordinator to plan activities the children would do, and undertake the risk assessment, took up longer than anticipated due to stormy weather, resulting in the cancellation of the return ferries. As leader of any group, it is the unexpected you dread. On this visit the ferry was fifteen minutes late each way, one group was late back to the rendezvous point and before somebody else tells you, I confess it was my group, as I was holding the map upside down, and a supermarket where the queues on the tills often involved British customers with trollies containing hundreds of pounds of food and alcohol. The sense of relief teachers have when you arrive back at school is enormous, because you want to get it right.

There are new regulations concerning educational visits, and each school must now appoint an Educational Visits Co-ordinator and ensure they are trained. The French trip required the permission of the Headteacher, Governors, the school's Educational Visits Co-ordinator and the Local Educational Authority Educational Visits Co-ordinator. For the teachers leading the visit, it involves liaising with the coach company, and through them the ferry company to book a meal on the inward journey, the passport authority, holding a meeting for parents, briefing the parents accompanying the visit, risk assessments, preparing an activity booklet, solving the unexpected problems and keeping fingers very tightly crossed for fine weather. Leading a successful visit is a wonderful feeling.

Have you any memories to share of school trips from Moulsham Juniors?

As Mr Kemp notes, school trips are often among our strongest memories of school life. They may be brief local visits to museums, markets or buildings of special interest, or even, in the 1950s, to inspect and admire the potato-clamps in the neighbouring farmer's field on Princes Road. At the other end of the spectrum are 'mini-holidays' involving several days away, like those to Somerset and Stratford-upon-Avon, described by Dave Sturgeon and Sue Davis in this issue. And in between, all-day outings to London, Colchester and many other places. If you have any favourite recollections, do please put pen to paper, or even fingers to keyboard, and send us your stories for future editions of the Newsletter.

Open Afternoon, 15th May 2004

John Spooner, 1938, who lives in Hampshire, had come to stay with his daughter in Chelmsford for a couple of days, so was able to be with us at the Open Afternoon as usual. It was good to see him again, keen as ever to meet and chat with old and new friends at the reunion. He had the unexpected pleasure this year of meeting his niece **Elizabeth Reid (Stokes)** at the school, attending the Open Afternoon for the first time. John's sister, **Dorothy Day**, was unwell and sent her apologies. We hope she is feeling better again now. John's memory goes back to the time when the Moulsham Drive area was still green fields, and the stuffed bear in Oaklands Museum was all the more terrifying for not being enclosed in a glass case, as it is nowadays.

Mike and Maureen Rignall (Bidwell) had set out at 6am from Gloucestershire to be with us again this year. Maureen was in Miss Skilton's class with John Spooner's sister Dorothy. Like John, Maureen recalled the stuffed bear in Oaklands Museum, and adds in a recent email: 'I was also unnerved by the fighting tigers who had spots of blood on them. I used to look at them in awe, even though they were encased in glass. The curator used to appear silently from the shadows as we went into the museum, just to keep an eye on us. I thought he was almost as frightening as the exhibits! My friends and I went to the park a lot to play. In the Autumn, we used to collect conkers under the huge trees in the grounds, and beech mast I suppose they were, those little wooden flower shaped pieces we used to paint pretty colours and make into brooches. Several years later, my husband and I (he was my boyfriend at the time) played tennis on the courts, so I have fond memories of Oaklands Park as it played a big part in my early life.

'In St. Johns Road, where I lived, we used to play ball games, our own version of tennis and tied my mothers washing line to one of the lime trees lining the road. One person would be turning the rope with several of us skipping. I can remember my father having to climb up into one of the trees to retrieve a ball lodged in it. In the winter he would quickly knock up a wooden sledge for us to play with.. We also made slippery glassy slides on the ice in the road and during these activities we only had to move out of the way for the occasional vehicle. Some of these playmates went to the Catholic school in London Road and I think the others went to Moulsham.

'As a small child, I was taken to the Vicarage Road church hall to Sunday School. I can remember being in their show and performing a ballet dance with another past pupil of Moulsham Juniors, **Elizabeth Allen**. Later I was persuaded to be a Sunday school teacher, in which duty I was joined by **Anne Tenneson (nee Rowse)**. We did this at the church hall and later in the church. We were confirmed at St. Johns by the then Bishop of Chelmsford (I still have the group photo). In December 1959, Mike and I were married in St John's Church, by the Reverend Bardsley. The ladies choir sang for us and my boss from the County Hall, Mr. H. Wheeler played the organ, he was the sub organist and let me once have a go on it. I won't say I played it!'

Peter Turrall, 1938, well known to many past pupils and Chelmsford residents, kindly manned the welcome desk again this year. Peter floated the idea of having a specially designed tie for sale to former Moulsham boys, and scarves for the Girls' School past pupils. He has experience of bulk purchase at reduced prices (probably around £10 for a scarf, assuming minimum sales of 100 or so, and £8 for a tie, on sales of 200). We would be interested to know how many of you might be interested in such a venture, and especially any ideas you might have for a suitable colour and design. Peter is offering a prize of two bottles of wine for the best design submitted, which should specify colours and, if necessary, wording. Why not have a go!

We still have some copies of Peter's book, *Chelmsford, a Stroll through Time*, available priced £8, of which half will be donated to the school. Please contact Kathleen or Peter if you would like a copy.

Eric Woods, 1938, brought along this photo (below left) of Moulsham school friends (left to right) **Doug Fawcett**, **Brian Campion** and himself cutting a dash on rollerskates at Butlins' holiday camp, Skegness, in 1947, and a picture of the same three again (below right) at the Open Afternoon in May 2003. As you see, still very recognisable!



Peter Charles Smith, 1938, is another of the 'first day' pupils who like to meet up at every Open Afternoon. He also enjoyed helping out supervising bouncy castles at the 2003 School Fete. We were pleased to see him again on 15th May, but sorry to hear that he is (at the time of writing) under observation in Broomfield Hospital and unlikely to be able to join us at this year's Fete. Our best wishes for a speedy recovery, Charley.

Elsie Hills (Braid), 1951-55, has kindly lent us her original panorama photos of Moulsham Senior Girls' School in 1954 and 1958, and the Infants' School in 1959. We have taken copies to display at future reunions, and will be inviting you to identify any faces you recognise. Sadly, Elsie told us of the recent death of her best friend at Moulsham Juniors and Seniors, Judith Dunmow, and has written an appreciation of her life and friendship on page 17 of this Newsletter.

It was also good to see **Geoff and Marion Lodge (Weston)**, 1951-55, again this year. Marion noted that the collection of mementos is growing, and how much everyone enjoyed seeing old friends from the past. She thanked Hilary and Kathleen especially for organising everything and keeping the records straight.

Elizabeth Wright, who still has her Sandringham House Prefect's badge, and was at Moulsham Junior School from 1973-77, came to the Open Afternoon together with her friend and former classmate **Elizabeth Reid (Stokes)**. In addition to Prefects, they recalled that the post of Head Girl also existed, rotating every two weeks so that a good number of girls could preside during the course of the school year. Elizabeth Reid (Stokes), who now has a child at the school herself, thought a previous Newsletter correspondent had mistaken the colours belonging to the five Houses. These should be:

Caernarvon, red; Windsor, yellow; Buckingham, blue; Sandringham, green; and Balmoral, purple. The most house-points awarded by the end of each week was announced in assembly, with the winners being awarded a pennant made of felt, with a handle. The two friends also mentioned the Pop Club run on Friday lunch times by Mr ("Footy") Firth. This was held in the North Hall for 4th years only, with the blinds pulled down!

Gary Saville, 1952-56, has three individual school photos from his Junior School years, including this one from 1955. Gary lived in Mildmay Road, and attended Friars Infants' School before Moulsham Juniors. His mother, Mrs Gladys Saville, was a dinner lady at the Moulsham Schools, the manageress of the school canteen at that time being Mrs Shute. Gary had two sisters, Jean and Chris. He was a member of the school cricket team, of which a photo was taken by Mr W C C Turner in 1956. He has also left with us a photo of a sports day at Moulsham Junior Boys' School, which we shall display at the next reunion in the hope that others of you can identify the occasion and any names.



We were delighted to see so many past pupils from the 1970s and 1980s at this year's reunion. These included **Jeff Porter**, 1980-83; **Tracy Brown**, 1972-76; **Mickey Kenton**, 1978-82; **Patricia Bell**, 1968-72; **Tony Turbin**, 1971-75, **Sarah Haynes (Gipson)**, **Dawn Wiggins (Waldney)**, **Rachel Edney** and **Catherine Daintree**, all from 1977-81; **Emma Gowers**, 1985-89, **Johanna Miller (Gower)**, 1983-87; **Sarah Harrington**, 1979-83; **Melanie Pavitt**, 1982-83; **Amanda Beech**, 1981-85, **Gillian Edney**, 1979-83; and **Sharon Beech**, 1979-83. Special thanks to those of you who helped put names to a considerable collection of 1980s photos which had been languishing unidentified in the school archive.

Address list and labels: can you help, please?

To ease the workload on Hilary and Kathleen, we are looking for someone, preferably living in the Chelmsford area, who would be willing to take over the computerised address list, keep it updated, and let us have the latest version of the address labels by email or on disk, to print off before each Newsletter distribution. For the address list, you will need the 'Excel' programme on your computer, and 'Word' for the address labels. Please contact Kathleen at kathleen.boot@virgin.net if you can help.

Past pupils' photo archive: can you help please?

We would also be delighted to find a volunteer to keep and update our photo collection. This involves scanning in new pictures, saving them in date order, and updating computerised name lists to accompany some of the panorama and group photos. In addition, a printed copy of each photo is stored and laminated for display at Open Afternoons. We are currently trying to set up an index, using 'Excel', recording the name, date and source of each picture, and information on which Newsletter it appeared in. If you live in the Chelmsford area and would like to take on the photo archive, we should be very glad to hear from you. Please email Kathleen at above address.

Phyllis Chatelier (Little) 1938-45, first-day pupil and Moulsham caretaker's daughter

My old friend and "ex boy-next-door" neighbour John Barnard from Chelmsford days kindly sent me a copy of the Moulsham Junior School Past Pupils' newsletter Vol.6 No.1. It was a joy to read, and the memories came flooding back. As John Barnard is always telling me to write down my history of Moulsham School, I have decided to do just that. At 73 years, I remember things so clearly in my early years - ask me what I did yesterday and I cannot remember.

I was born in Elm Road and my first school was the old St.John's Church School in Moulsham Street where Miss Denn (a formidable lady) was the head, and Rev. Brownlass was the vicar of the Church. Through my five-year-old eyes, the school seemed dark and sombre with benches and forms to match, with the exception of the first infant class, which held a rather beautiful old rocking horse, which was quite high. Teacher had to lift us on and off when we had the privilege of using it. In later years, I would sometimes see Miss Denn, a lonely figure, sitting on a bench in Oaklands Park. She loved to chat, and was no longer the "much-feared lady at school".

There was great excitement when we were informed that a lovely new school was being built on Princes Road and that we would be going there. I recall that we were able to go with our parents for a preview of a then modern, state of the art school with light wooden desks and chairs, one each instead of a bench and sliding blackboards which were green. There were huge windows for which we light-starved children were very grateful. There were new toilets and wash basins and a lovely drinking fountain. The assembly hall had a stage with real velvet curtains! I was just under eight years old and felt the luckiest child on earth.

Our Headmistress was Miss Rankin, and her long time companion Miss Wright was the teacher of the first class in the Junior Girls' School. These two grand ladies were approachable, you could talk to them about anything. No longer were we told to "Be Silent" - we could voice our concerns and they would listen and advise. They and all the teachers at that time, Miss Skilton, Miss Huff and I think Mrs Moses all encouraged us to take pride in our school and our Country, all very patriotic. Whilst in Miss Wright's class it was coming up to Christmas and the rumblings of war were prevalent so..."Shall we make a big Christmas pudding?" Nothing could get us down, so we all contributed to the ingredients and all had a stir of the mixture in this massive bowl which was duly cooked by dear Miss Wright and when the great day arrived was re-heated and served with a large spoon of custard.

The following June, my baby sister was born, Paulette Jones (Little) who now lives in Cambridgeshire. Miss Rankin and Miss Wright, who were well informed that I was going to have a baby sister, gave her a pretty little dress and informed mother that if she had had a boy I would have been most upset. I remember the names of many classmates at that time: Jean Gibson and Dorothy Eaves from the Galleywood Road, Beryl Woolnough who had a younger sister Christine, Ruth Haldane, Maureen (or Margaret) Tricker and Beryl Forte. From Elm Road there were John, Douglas, Geoff and Molly Barnard, and Jean and John Whittle. My dear late friend Sheila Cox and her younger sister Pat with whom I am still in contact. I worked at Writtle Agricultural College after completing shorthand and typing lessons at evening school, and my cycling companion to and from Writtle was Jean Gibson.

When the air raid shelters were erected on the school playing fields we did feel safer. However, there were other attempts to get at little children playing in the playground. I wonder if anyone remembers the day when, having returned to school after dinner, the enemy hedgehopper low-flying aircraft machine-gunned us? Our then caretaker Mr Perrin shouted at us to "get down" but it was all over so quickly we were rather bemused. But I recall we helped locate the spent cartridges with strict instructions that we must not touch them. No one was hurt. The air raids on Chelmsford and surrounding areas were bad, and the very worst night the siren went off no less than 13 times. The

balloons were awesome whenever we had an unexpected thunderstorm, for they were easily struck by lightning. In spite of the endeavours of the air force lads to wind them in, one could see the massive inferno dropping from the sky. The Oaklands Park balloon was struck and the house opposite had a large piece of flaming balloon on the roof. As my daddy was in charge of the stirrup pump, he was called to climb the ladder and extinguish the fire. While we were all watching, we didn't know our chicken shed was ablaze from another piece that had fallen in our back garden and the poor hens were going potty!

When my time at Moulsham Juniors' ended I was eager, though a little apprehensive, to get to Senior Girls, with its art room and the teacher Miss Gay, who taught me how to paint and gave me a real love of art which I have to this day. The sewing room was not high on my agenda. It took almost two years to finish my cookery cap and apron - no machine sewing, all by hand. Cookery with Miss Eden brings memories of stews made out of anything available; scones; fairy cakes filled with wartime mock cream which in turn was made from margarine, sugar and yes, dried milk...to us it tasted great. I always managed to get my dish of the day home for my parents and sister to taste, but my darling little sister always managed to scoff her efforts on the way home, even the chocolate powder and dried milk donated by the U.S.A! I must mention the English and Drama teacher Miss Stokes who always wore wooden clogs. I loved acting in the end of term concerts, and there were some talented girls there, one of whom had a great singing voice, I think Diane Lawson was her name. She used to sing "In my sweet little Alice Blue Gown" whilst wearing a pretty long pale blue dress. The library, which was over the main entrance, held a host of beautiful books, which we could borrow, and we treasured them.

Moulsham School also produced a film star (in a lower class and about three years younger). Her name was Maureen Rippengale and she was known as Carole Leslie. Sadly she died young very tragically.

At the age of twelve, my tonsils had to be removed as I had suffered long bouts of illness. There was no room in the hospital so, like many other children, the operation was performed at home on the dining table. The upside of that was I was allowed a daily portion of ice cream from the hospital for a week or two.

After the war my father left Hoffman's to work at Moulsham School as caretaker to the Infants and Junior Schools whilst Mr Collins (who was Mr Perrin's son-in-law) concentrated on the Senior Schools. He was there many years until he retired at 65 years old, but sadly, mother was ailing and died two years later. Father tried to keep going but missed her so much and developed angina. He died in my arms at the age of 69. He loved the school. I still keep and treasure the slide photographs that were taken at his and mother's retirement presentation by Councillor Mrs J.P. Roberts, and I still have some of the many gifts he was given at that time by all three schools.

In 1951 I met and married an overseas Graduate Apprentice from Crompton Parkinson's and we lived in St Albans for over 30 years. My husband's firm relocated to Northants and we moved to Wellingborough. My husband retired just over 14 years ago. We moved to our present home on the outskirts of Newquay in Cornwall to a bungalow with a large garden bounded by a stream and wall to wall mallards, which keep us busy especially now. With all the ducklings hatching, they are always hungry. We celebrated our Golden Wedding on a P & O Cruise in 2001 and on the actual day were in the beautiful city of Florence to admire some more wonderful art.

I do hope my memories bring home some likewise to those who were at Moulsham at the same time as me, there on the very first day the school opened. I am still very, very proud and appreciative of my school.

Derek Murphy, 1942-46. letter from Norway

It seems that the family always remembered my comment on returning home after my first day at Moulsham Infants School. "School is all right, but I don't think I'll bother to go tomorrow". Perhaps it was just as well that I was persuaded to change my mind. The next day I sat next to Angela and created Moses in the bull-rushes from a lump of grey well-kneaded plasticine for Miss Knight. We lived in Lynmouth Avenue and grandfather Murphy, who had just retired from running his greengrocer's shop in Moulsham Street, thought it was a long way for a four-year old to walk to school twice a day. On retirement he had kept the greengrocer's trade bicycle with a huge front carrier, so until the age of five I was delivered to Miss Knight in the same way as potatoes and cabbages, and for that matter, cucumbers, had been delivered to Moulsham Street customers. I am a staunch Gemini so in May I was five and grandfather announced - in the same way as the British public said of Maggie Thatcher some fifty years later - "Enough is enough". He turned his attention to his tomato plants and I was left to find my own way to Moulsham Infants. There was a short cut from Moulsham Drive through the allotments to Princes Road. Allotment holders seemed to be on 12 hour shifts drinking tea and Digging for Victory and took a certain dislike to packs of Moulsham Infants' pupils stamping their way through newly sown vegetable plots on their way to complete Moses in the bulrushes. The long way round from Lady Lane could be dangerous as well, as this was the time of the Battle of Britain and the German air force seemed to use the wide open road for practice runs, so for a five-year old it was a difficult decision to make. The irate allotment holders or the wrath of Goering.

There was automatic promotion after the summer holidays and I met Miss Parker, who dazzled the class with her red varnished finger nails and then a year later Miss Cook, who made sure we could read before we joined the junior classes across the road. We stood in a ring with Miss Cook in the centre encouraging us to read exciting stories about sea gulls and turnips. This all went very well until one of the six-year olds pinched Miss Cook's bottom. We then sat at our desks to read aloud the same stories of birds and vegetables.

In September 1942 life started at Moulsham Junior School. How fortunate we were to have Mrs Mosely as our teacher. She was strict and lovely and she laughed a lot and let us become very fond of English history. We were able to use our imagination and drew scenes to symbolise the knowledge we had acquired. I still have my drawings of Hereward the Wake in rubber boots cocking a snook at a figure that appears more like a character from the Wizard of Oz than William the Conqueror, and lager-lout Henry Tudor waiting at a bus-stop with his six wives. I sat next to Roderick Williams and Geoffrey Piper. Roderick was a very patient and careful artist. I was fast and slapdash. I had Alfred burning the cakes before Roderick had even started to think which colour sheet of paper he was going to use.

For the next two years I was held spellbound by the teaching of Mr Hodgson. I made up my mind that when I grew up I didn't want to be a train-driver, or for that matter play right wing for Arsenal, but I wanted to be a teacher like Mr Hodgson. His enthusiasm for encouraging us to learn was always tinged with a great sense of humour. It was not all talk and no chalk as his drawings on the board sent ripples of laughter through the class. He smoked a pipe and there are rumours, which 60 years later must remain as rumours, that he cut a hole in his gas mask for his pipe. We always sang a hymn at the end of the day. It was frequently "The day thou gavest Lord is ended, the darkness falls at thy behest", and on one occasion a small voice piped up at the back of the class "Please sir, it is still light, it's not dark" Mr Hodgson's reply? "Shut your eyes boys and then it will be dark".... And so to "and earth's proud empires fade away" A gruff voice rang out through the classroom, enough to deafen the teaching of Mr Gardiner next door: "This does not include the British Empire". Standard Three and especially the boy getting the most number of sums right - usually Derek Canfield or Roderick Williams - monitored the program of Monty's Desert rats sweeping Rommel and his panzarkorps out of the Sahara by

planting flags in the map of North Africa. The weather was also recorded using special Hodgson methods.

Mr Gardiner was the teacher of the scholarship class - preparation for the dreaded 11 + examination. Mr Gardiner was strict and rode a bicycle that can only be described as the model that replaced the penny-farthing. On one occasion he was pedalling his way down Lady Lane when a well-concealed voice behind a privet hedge shouted repeatedly "Old Daddy Gardiner!". It was ascertained to have been me, and as a result I was dragged up in front of the class and dressed down. I should be ashamed of myself "Remember what happened to balding Elisha. The children mocking him were eaten by the bears (Kings 11). I trembled because a trip to Whipsnade Zoo was just over the horizon and I would have to watch my step. Later it was discovered that the voice from the privet hedge was not mine. It couldn't have been as I was eating steak and kidney pudding at 24 Moulsham Drive when the incident occurred. Again I was called up in front of the class and Mr Gardiner apologised profusely and went on to say that even teachers sometimes made mistakes. Later in life I worked for 40 years in Teacher Education in Norway and always bore this statement in mind.

The headmaster, Mr Petchey, was peppery, had a loud voice, and was a Congregationalist lay preacher. He was very proud of his school and later longevity was his strong point. The great centre of his interest was the "Attendance Board" on the wall between the scholarship classroom and the entrance to the reception area for his office. Every week he chalked up the attendance percentages and should there be a week without anyone being absent the headmaster would visit each classroom with the good news and everyone was allowed to go home 15 minutes early. This was bad news for poetry lovers because poetry was on the timetable for the final lesson on Fridays. The "Board" was also the place for Mr Petchey to make announcements to the school. Slightly red-faced, he just stood there with no need of a loudspeaker to bark out messages, which in all probability were heard by the allotment holders enjoying their fifth cup of tea of the day. Incidentally, by this time peace had been declared in Europe and also between the allotment holders and the Moulsham hordes invading their potato patches, since Ken Turton's mum let us use her back garden as a short cut from Lynmouth Avenue to Princes Road. The Second World War was now just a memory, a memory of huddling under desks to sing 10 Green Bottles during air raids. "London's Burning, London's Burning" was later added to the programme when we had rushed to the brick air-raid shelters and Mr Hudson's pipe gave a smell of authenticity. And the "Board" had a third role; it was the Moulsham Junior School Tyburn Tree. Found guilty of a serious misdemeanour, pupils were sent out to wait under the "Board". The wait was often long and one had time to repent of crimes committed. Then the moment had to arrive, the appearance of Mr Petchey who took up the challenge of justice and slapped the criminals on the back of their legs. Remember that this was the time when, come rain come shine, we all wore short trousers as an integrated part of the school uniform.

Mr Petchey presided over Morning Assembly. We sang loud and long "Onward Christian Soldiers", "Fight the good fight", with Mr Gardiner thumping on the piano to give a Friday pub-night sing-song at the "Army and Navy" sensation. On occasion there was a visitor to the assembly, a Mr W.C. C Turner, who had donated a "Sportsmanship" prize to the school. The 1939 winner was Ray Hinsley, who later played for Chelmsford City. This was when Denny Foreman was wheeling in the goals for the City and not when the team was languishing in the depths of Dr. Marten's league. Mr Turner accompanied his visit with a ten-minute lecture, a mixture of assortments from "Scouting for Boys" and excerpts from what sounded like an after-dinner speech by the chairman of the local borstal. Then there was the day Mr Turner was shocked that we were unable to sing "Guide me, O Thou great Redeemer" and firmly asked Mr Petchey to require teachers to make sure we were well-versed in the words of the hymn. Mrs Moseley did her utmost to suppress a giggle, Mr Hodgson almost dropped the pipe he was fondling and Mr Gardiner probably thinking what havoc Old Testament bears could wreck in the situation, gave a

worried look. How would standard 4A face up to the choral challenge of singing the wonderful Welsh hymn tune of Cwm Rhondda?

There came a day when it was announced that school dinners were to be served at a cost of 5 pence daily, the amount to be collected by the class teachers. Mr Hodgson then used his organising ability so that a class administrative council was set up to challenge the duties of the milk committee and the weather recorders. Basically the dinners consisted of mutton stew and fish and chips and poor Standard 1B had to evacuate their classroom and move into the hall to sing loud and clear while their classroom was turned into a school canteen. Mrs Carter cycled all the way from Galleywood to be head dinner lady and she had her support army of other dinner ladies as well as the dinner boys, who were selected by Mr Petchey as the least frequent visitors to his "Board". Dinner boys were given a special status by being qualified to dole out mashed potatoes to the hungry lads, who were taking a curious attitude to the contents of the mutton stew. As far as I know there was no "Twist, Oliver" in the school registers. All afternoon the school smelt of boiled cabbage.

In my final term at Moulsham, radical ideas pervaded the headmaster's office. Democracy was to be introduced into the school via a school council, consisting of the Mr Petchey, Mrs French, Mr Hudson and two boys, in this case Michael Hart and myself. The headmaster went into what is currently recognised as a Vladimir Putin mode and at the first meeting he insisted that the two junior members of the council should sit on the floor. The first item on the agenda was whether we were to sit on the bare floorboards or on the rug! On reflection, I stand in full admiration for the comment by General William Booth of the Salvation Army "A committee should have five members and four of them should always be in hospital".

After being away so far and so long from Moulsham I was delighted read of former pupils. Brian Judd was the same age as my sister Margaret, who is proud of the fact that she taught Brian to knit. Just imagine the headlines "Moulsham pedagogue teaches American science professor to knit". If I remember correctly Brian showed his early scientific interests by building an observation platform in his back garden in Lady Lane. His younger brother, Colin and I were given permission to use it on occasions. We didn't get any nearer the stars, but we did see Don and Keith Harper kicking a tennis ball around in their Burns Crescent back garden. Alan Roxby was our neighbour in Lynmouth Avenue. He was a gentle giant who looked after his invalid mother, but as the years slipped past, Alan extended his welfare zone to most of the residents of the top part of the avenue.

So Moulsham years were happy years. Thank you Mrs Mosely for your laughter, Mr Hodgson for your sense of humour and "Old Daddy Gardiner" -oops there are trolls and bears in the Norwegian woods - Mr Gardiner for admitting that teachers sometimes make mistakes. Mr Petchey, it was a privilege to sit on the rug in your office!

Past Pupils' Newsletter on the school website

A reminder that recent issues of the Past Pupils' Newsletter can be read and downloaded from the school website, together with news of current school activities. The website address is www.moulsham-jun.essex.sch.uk/index.htm

If you currently receive the Newsletters by post, and would be willing to read it on the website instead, please let Kathleen know by email, at kathleen.boot@tiscali.co.uk.

Festival of Britain 1951

Thank you to **Jill Hazell (Gozzett)** for lending us a copy of the *Official Guide* to the 1951 Festival of Britain to display at the Open Afternoon, along with a souvenir tablet of soap. The soap was inscribed on one side with the Festival emblem (what I suppose we would call the 'logo' these days), and on the reverse a picture of the 1851 Great Exhibition one hundred years earlier. Jill and her husband both visited the Festival of Britain in 1951 with their schools, though they did not know one another then.

At the Open Afternoon, these items brought back memories for a number of former Moulsham pupils who had enjoyed going to the Festival of Britain. In earlier Newsletter articles, some had already recalled how impressed they were with the varied exhibits and the instantly recognisable shape of the landmark Skylon sculpture. There was a real sense of excitement at being able to have a day out at a major national exhibition, after all the rationing and restrictions of earlier post-war life.

The full-page colour advertisements in the *Official Guide* reflect this new sense of optimism and progress. The international airline BOAC, for example, 'flying to 51 destinations on all six continents'. Hoover Limited, taking pride in the fact that their products were 'saving millions of housewives from hard, wearisome drudgery, not only in Britain but throughout the world'. English Electric, Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co Ltd, Chelmsford, and numerous other world leaders in industry and commerce. Some of the other products advertised in the *Guide* (many still well known today) evoke strong memories for the children of the 1950s: Sharpe's toffee, Ovaltine, Horlicks, Cow and Gate, Heinz, Prestige, Macleans, Cussons Imperial Leather and His Master's Voice, to name but a few.

The scope of the Festival of Britain was wide-ranging and ambitious, exhibiting both pride in the nation's past and hope for the future. Some of you no doubt remember the Dome of Discovery, with its displays on polar exploration, outer space, sea and ships, and the living world. At a more domestic level, the emphasis seems to have been on design solutions to what are seen as the 'problems' of modern living. The 'Homes and Gardens' Pavilion, for example, illustrated practical furnishing schemes to cope with six characteristic 1950s issues: the child in the home; the bed-sitting room; the kitchen (eating in the kitchen and coping without domestic help!); hobbies and the home; home entertainment; and the parlour (often just a corner of the general living space in the modern post-war home).

The 'New Schools' pavilion set out to display 'the kind of tools and the sort of environment that are now being devised for the schoolboy and schoolgirl, if they are to get the best out of contemporary education'. The *Guide* points out that the 1944 Education Act empowered local education authorities to 'provide a full and efficient education for every child in the country between the ages of five and fifteen'. Again, the focus was on design and equipment. As the *Guide* goes on to explain:

'The process begins with the Nursery School: so does the designer's set of problems. His first job is to devise a classroom setting in which children between the ages of three and five will find it agreeably easy to learn to become members of their class, and to feel, however dimly, some responsibility to their fellows.

'As soon as the five year old goes to a Primary School, he starts to master the general tools of learning. Now he needs fresh equipment in the way of desks and chairs and libraries; and it is time for the whole paraphernalia that will enable him to take part in physical education, and art, and drama to be placed at his disposal.

'When, at the age of eleven or more, the schoolchild passes on to his Secondary School, he may choose to start specialising, and his speciality will demand more new equipment, such as laboratories, crafts-rooms and workshops.

'Thus, each new phase needs new tools and a fresh background. The 'New Schools' Pavilion ends up with a fully furnished classroom, in which there is displayed a "Project": that is to say, a co-operative exercise in which all members of the classes take part. . . . A "Project" easily enlists a child's natural curiosity; it stimulates him into trying out in practice all the skills he has learned - and it impels him to pool his surmises and discoveries with those of his fellows. In fact, the "Project" is a fair sample of the trend of modern education in Britain today.'

How simple it all seemed then - just provide the right furniture and equipment, set the pupils working at "projects", and abracadabra, the children will learn! Nevertheless, it is fascinating to look back at this 'snapshot' of education in the 1950s through the eyes of the Guide to the Festival of Britain. From it, we can recognise both how influential this approach was at the time, and how much things have changed in the half-century we have lived through since then.

Jonathan Waring, 1954-58: Violin classes at Moulsham Junior Boys' School

Having seen Tony Brown's 1956 photo of violin lessons in the Spring 2004 Newsletter, Jonathan Waring has sent us this picture of a group playing in the Boys' School Hall. Note the 'Work and be Happy' motto board. From left to right, the musicians are identified as Jonathan himself, Michael Eyre, Tony Brown, ? Gutteridge, Steve Marriott, Roger Endesby, and the last name unknown. Jonathan was taught violin privately as well as at Moulsham, and went on to learn the piano. He used to go for lessons at Mrs Clayton's house in Vicarage Road. He recalls that the Moulsham violin master Mr Giddy had a very good violin, but like his instrument was 'highly strung'. What he learnt of music theory and practice was valuable, though Jonathan confesses he never went on to use it.



More from Dave Sturgeon 1958-62

In the Spring 2004 Newsletter, Dave shared his recollections of the 1959 school trip to St Audries, Somerset and other memories of Moulsham Junior Boys' School. Some photos of the Somerset trip were included in the previous Newsletter, Autumn 2003. When we sent Dave copies of two further pictures of the visit, he was delighted to recognise himself on this one. "The beach-combing boy on the left is me!" he writes, "I reckon it was taken the same day I lost my 'found' woggle. No idea about the other two boys. I remember having that stick to cling to . . . I was only 8 at the time and there were all those big boys to keep up with!"



As mentioned in the Spring issue, Dave was recently in touch for the first time in years with former schoolmate **Barry Reed**. The following is a further selection of memories 'cobbled together' by Dave from their exchange of emails:

"Barry started at Moulsham Infants School in 1956. Miss Godfrey was our first teacher. She got married whilst we were still there - became Mrs Herries. We had a collection and bought her a set of kitchen steps. I joined the infants a bit late as I had moved to Chelmsford when I was 5+. I can remember crying in Dad's office - across the road in the Junior School, of course - every morning before he brought me over. I also remember a girl who liked eating soil in the playground! Do you remember going out to watch the Queen driving past? We waited for what seemed like hours.

Barry recalls going to another class before Mrs Pennock, the last Infants class, but he doesn't remember the name of the teacher. He remembers that it was about this time that Chris Mumford stuck a rubber in his ear and had to go to hospital. Mrs Pennock used to read to the whole class: 'The Wishing Chair' by Enid Blyton.

Who was there with us? Some names we can remember: Peter Sparrow, Mark Greenwood, Philip Payne, Tim Wright, John Boyle, John Killick, Billy Baxter, Colin Harris, Terry Collett, John Berezni (was it him with that very long yellow scarf he used to wear over his head or was that Robert Reynolds?), Graham Deakin, Alan Franklin, Andrew Shepherd, Robert Reynolds Chris Mumford (Welsh guy, bit of a bard, used to stand in front of the class and tell us stories about an earwig) ... there must have been loads more.

Miss Sally Martin was our first year Junior School teacher and we all loved her (except for when I tried to write 'immediately', got stuck, and she told my Dad). We were heartbroken when she got

married. We formed the choir at Widford Church. Didn't we have a small orchestra for that as well and I played recorder? Barry thinks he recalls Tim Wright being slapped by her because he couldn't do his seven times table.

We had Mrs Poppy Donovan in the second year. She got us to write a series of stories where we had to invent all the characters and the town etc., Barry remembers Mr Viv Hodgson in the third who used to give us 20 mental arithmetic questions every morning after assembly (but I have no memories of him teaching me at all. How strange). Mr Harold Picken taught us in the fourth. He once gave Barry the cane for moving. (Mr P. was ex army. Did you know that when he bought his first car, it was kept immaculately even to the extent of him polishing the engine? Strange people, these teachers!) Mr P. was setting up a slide projector or some other mechanical device just beyond his competence and leading to intense frustration. He had appointed an informant to stand at the front of the class and tell him IF ANYONE SO MUCH AS MOVES! Barry's desire to breathe being greater than his fear of a beating meant that he was singled out. He regards this as an injustice, even today! I remember Mr Picken trying to impress us by grabbing a wooden school chair with one hand at the bottom of one leg and lifting it up. Also, if we were working silently and we looked up because of some disturbance outside, he would shout out, 'Even if a bomb is dropped outside, you carry on!' Barry remembers that we used to do the music in assembly, but I've completely forgotten this! Our favourite was Nimrod from the Enigma Variations. We both really liked it and played it whenever we could. Barry thinks that we had the choice of what to play but he really can't recall any others. I guess Adam Faith was out of the question.... I have to believe that it was my Dad to blame!

I remember the country dancing. I loved it. It was good fun, with the kilts as well. We also did bell ringing - Dad taught us, I think. Never could get the hang of it properly - and maypole dancing. I guess the pagan connections must have passed us by at that tender age. In the first year we performed a play called The Jackdaw of Rheims, not a word of which I can remember. Barry was one of a pair of jackdaws who spent a hot summer afternoon sweating steadily beneath a black outfit and a black painted cardboard beak, secured over his nose by elastic that ran behind his head. I don't remember what part I played. I do remember building a ship for some such presentation on the lawn in the fourth year. What was that about? I can't imagine that we did the whole of 'The Ancient Mariner'!

Editors' Note: Looking at the school log book for 18 July 1962, we have tracked down an item in the Display Day programme called 'The Golden Vanity', Verse Speaking and Mime by Class 4A, trained by Mr Picken, costume by Mrs Field, and, yes, . . . "Boats by L. Penn"! Does any other reader remember the occasion or the role of the boats in the presentation?

As for the Jackdaw of Rheims, some of you may remember Barrie Stevens' account and large group photo of the 1959 pageant in the Spring 2001 Newsletter. Barrie's picture included both the Jackdaw in his costume and the suitably attired Lord High Cardinal Archbishop of Rheims. The school log book records that the 1959 pageant, celebrating the 21st anniversary of the Moulsham schools, was devised by Mr Picken and written by Mr Hodgson. Dress rehearsals were watched on 7 July by the Junior Girls, and on 13th July by 160 Infants and 150 Secondary Boys. No doubt some of you were there. On 14th July itself, as well as the pageant, there was a service of dedication conducted by the Reverend Pattinson, and certificates were presented by Mrs Romanes, Chairman of the Divisional Education Executive. Other guests included Mr Primmer, Divisional Education Officer, Mrs J Roberts, Chairman of Managers, the Mayoress, former Headmaster Mr Petchey and his wife, Canon Pike, Mr Farthing, Mr W C C Turner, and Dr Stephens, Head of the Technical School. In the following week, on 25th July 1959, came another memorable occasion - the retirement, aged 70, of Mr W W Gardiner after 50 years of teaching, 21 of them at Moulsham Junior Boys' School.

1964: An excursion to Stratford on Avon, by Sue Davis, 1960-64



Front row, from left: Janet Bell, Geraldine Butterworth, Christine Parker, Anne Waters, Susan Hawkes, Valerie Ogden, ? , Mary Norris, Janet Freeman, Linda Pavitt, ? , Jane Watkinson, Claire Jarman. **Second row:** Linda Harrington, Christine Yallop, Margaret Prahl, Christine Martin, ? , Gillian Norton, Averil Clark, Elizabeth Williams, Jill Hollingsworth. **Back row:** Jackie Butler (far left), Janice Grant and Susan Harrison (on steps of coach).

It was forty years ago when this photograph was taken, on Tuesday 9th June 1964, as we waited to board the Boon's coach (registration number PTW 268), bound for Stratford on Avon. We were in Class 8, accompanied by our teacher, Mrs Alty, the headmistress, Miss Pettet, and the coach driver, Mr Bloomfield, who was known to all as "Bunny". After nearly six hours, we reached our destination. The first thing we had to do was go and post a letter to our parents to say we had arrived safely. These letters had been written in school, complete with stamp, the previous week - there were no mobile phones in those days!

The whole trip cost £7, but when you consider that our ticket to see Richard II at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre cost 30 shillings (£1.50p), and entry to the various places we visited on average 6 shillings (30p) each time, this did not leave a lot for travel and accommodation. We stayed at Bearley Holiday Camp, which was in the process of being built. I wonder if it still exists?

For many of us, it was probably the first time we had been away from home without our parents, but I cannot remember anyone being homesick. We did not have much time to think about home because we were kept busy rushing from place to place. Some people do the 'Grand Tour' - in 1964 Moulsham Junior Girls' School "did" Stratford on Avon!

[Sue has enclosed with her article a fascinating set of photocopies of the diary she kept on this trip. It includes notes and pictures of the various places visited, copies of entrance tickets, even the bag used to hold her chicken sandwiches, and a beer-mat from Bearley Holiday Camp. Also included is her record of the visit to the newly-built Coventry Cathedral (consecrated in May 1962) on the final day of the trip. Many thanks for sending us all this, Sue - we shall keep it carefully with our other display materials ready for the next past pupils' reunion.]

Obituary: Judith Dunmow, August 1943 - April 2004

We were sad to hear from Elsie Hills (Braid) of the death of her best friend, Judy Dunmow. Elsie and Judy were together at Moulsham Junior Girls' School from 1951-55, went on to the Senior Girls' School, and trained as nurses together. Elsie has kindly written the following appreciation of her friend, and had a letter from Judy's mother saying that Judy still talked about her school days right up to the end.

"We first met in the playground of Moulsham Junior Girls' School. It was a cold, miserable morning, and Judy was so sad because her father was very ill in hospital. We soon became friends. Judy loved school, whereas I hated it, but we both loved dancing, and enjoyed wearing our black skirts with coloured bands. Seeing Judy, and being able to dance, made life bearable for me.

We progressed to the Senior School, and our friendship became stronger. All the different dance classes, we joined and enjoyed them all. By the time we were fourteen, decisions had to be made about our future. We decided to go into nursing, but needed two O-levels, and our education did not provide for this. Luckily, they started a programme of further education the next year. We were able to stay on at school, and also take evening classes in shorthand and typing. Both of us enjoyed these classes, and we worked really hard to obtain our qualifications.

There are two particular incidents I remember from those days: My mother had bought new curtains and just put them up, when Judy and I were invited at short notice to a fancy dress party. We had nothing to wear, and no time to make anything. I came up with the idea of sewing the tops and sides of the curtains together, leaving a hole for our head and arms. We found some cord, and went to the party as "a pair of curtains" (very original at the time!).

Our fifth year consisted of six girls and twenty boys. Most lessons were taken on the boys' side of the Senior School. Our classroom was the Library, upstairs over the Head Teachers' offices. All our books were kept in a cupboard on the landing. On one occasion, the boys had annoyed us again (hidden our books or something similar). We were so cross we decided on revenge. With tacking thread and using large stitches, we sewed the bottoms of their shorts together, and tied their football boots together loosely with bows, so it would be easy for them to undo. We then shut the cupboard and waited. They were furious, and so was their games master with them for being late. Part of our punishment was to apologise to the games master. This we did, and explained why we had done it. We were very lucky to get off lightly. On the girls' side of the school, the teachers were much stricter.

After this we were at College two days a week, learning the theory side of nursing, and at the hospital the other three days doing practical work. We entered the Chelmsford Carnival several years running, and won first prize for our "St Trinians Girls" one year. These last four years, Judy and I shared everything - the joy and elation of romance, and crying on each other's shoulders over our broken hearts. At eighteen, we both started nursing at the Chelmsford and Essex Hospital. Life was good, and we still went dancing and double-dating whenever we could, making the most of this happy time.

After our training, I married Bernard Hills. We have three sons (Judy is Godmother to our eldest), and now five grandchildren. Judy worked in Southend for a time, and then at Broomfield Hospital. She then married John Stewart, and went to live on the 'Ethel Maud', a barge moored at Maldon. On holiday in Spain, John fell from a balcony and suffered a stroke. He survived and was taken to Stoke Mandeville Hospital. He managed to get about in a wheelchair, and eventually went back to work, but then sadly died. Judy still kept in touch with me and visited when she could.

Judy then left England and went to work in Denmark. In 1989 she married a Dane, Steen Laursen, and lived there ever since. She was very happy with Steen and his extended family, and still kept us up-to-date with her life.

At Christmas, we received a card, but no letter - it would come later. Sadly, instead, I received a letter from her sister Bridget, telling me Judy had died of cancer. The funeral was in Denmark, and her ashes will be brought back to Norfolk.

Judy has been a true and wonderful friend. I have so many memories. I even have a rose called 'School Girl' (our favourite flower), so I shall never forget. Thank you, Judy, for sharing your life with me."

News in Brief

Thank you to those who responded to our question in the Spring Newsletter about the 'mystery photo' from November 1945 (p.17). **Dorothy Benjamin (Holden)** says: 'I am nearly convinced it is a photo of my great friend at that time, **Ruby Vaughan** (now Mrs Smith). We were at the Senior School together until 1946 when I left to go to the 'Tech' aged 13. The only thing that makes me hesitate is that she would have still been in the Senior School in 1945. If the person in the photo is wearing a nurse's cap, it may not be Ruby.' The headgear certainly does look as if it might be a nurse's cap, and **Adrian Smith**, 1948-52, writes: 'I wonder if the photo on page 17 is of the school nurse, whom I remember from a few years later? She once shamed my brother during a medical examination, telling him loudly in front of his friends "YOUR EARS ARE DIRTY" '. Any further suggestions or comments about the 'mystery photo', please?

Stop Press - School Fete 26th June 2004

It was great to see so many past pupils on 26th June, and to have Brian Emmett, one of the first day 1938 pupils, to declare the fete open. Despite the wind and cloud, we escaped the threatened downpours, and had a very enjoyable day. From past pupils we met at the fete, we have added several new names to the Newsletter distribution list, and we look forward to receiving photos and written contributions promised by a number of former Moulsham pupils.

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.