

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Summer 2006

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Farewell to Mr Kemp . . .

For past pupils of Moulsham Junior School, Head Teacher Les Kemp will always be a very special person. In 1999, he came up with the brilliant suggestion of starting this Newsletter. The idea was to make a link between the present school and its history, and to encourage past pupils to feel part of the continuing school. He could scarcely have imagined how popular his initiative would be with former 'Moulshamites'. In the seven years since the Newsletter first rolled off the school office duplicators, the distribution list has risen to well over 600, not counting all those who see copies brought home by present-day children. During this time, many enthusiastic readers have contributed their own stories and photographs, from the opening of the separate Moulsham Junior Boys' and Girls' Schools in 1938, through the years of the Second World War and the post-war period, on to the merging of the two schools in 1969, and as pupils in the combined Moulsham Junior School in more recent decades.

Mr Kemp's other stroke of genius was to set up the annual Open Afternoons for past pupils. Starting in May 2000, he invited us to meet up at the school, to bring and share pictures of our time here, to chat over tea and cakes (even pouring the tea for us on occasion), and to watch displays of maypole and country dancing by present pupils. From the very first reunion, former pupils came from far and wide, and many come back year after year. Dozens of you have written to express your appreciation of these occasions, and we are pleased that Mr Kemp has so obviously enjoyed meeting past pupils from throughout the school's history, and showing them that the traditions of Moulsham continue to inspire the present generation. To see at first hand the courtesy and respect so evident in his dealings with the children has also been a real pleasure for us. The current school motto 'Each working for all' is clearly taken seriously.

With each new issue of the Newsletter, and each annual reunion, valued school friendships have been strengthened and renewed over these seven years, and in some cases long lost cousins or other family members have been found again. In the course of their careers, Moulsham pupils have travelled to the four corners of the earth, and it is great to be back in touch with former classmates now living in Australia (as reported in this edition), America, the Far East and many parts of Europe. Wonderful, too, to discover that large numbers of you, especially those from the early years, have continued to live locally in the Chelmsford area, and many have children or grandchildren of their own at the school.

Thank you, Les, for bringing the past pupils together. We are very grateful for all you have done for us, and we hope you will remember us all with affection, as we shall you.

OUR BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY RETIREMENT, AND A VERY BIG "THANK YOU" FROM US ALL!

In this issue

Something Mr Kemp has always encouraged is getting in touch with former teachers and other staff from the school, who have their own interesting stories to tell. In March this year we were delighted to meet up with former Infants' School Headmistress, Mrs Pat Sturgeon, wife of former Moulsham Junior Boys' School Headmaster, Mr Tom Sturgeon. An account of our afternoon with her is on page 4. Another theme in this Newsletter is the Australian connection. From the 1950s, we have news this time from both Coleen Benham (page 9) and Jenny Pickles (Hann) (page 11) in Australia, and our contact list is expanding all the time. Do keep sending your news, memories and addresses of other past pupils who would like to see the Newsletter, to Kathleen Boot at 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG, or by email to kathleen.boot@tiscali.co.uk We look forward to hearing from you. Very best wishes to you all from co-editor Hilary Balm (Dye) and myself.

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

... and Farewell from Mr Kemp

Over the last year I've visited my dentist on too many occasions due to broken teeth, and the service I've received has been superb. My dentist recently finished her degree, and sometimes has sought the advice of other dentists in the practise, but her confidence has grown, together with my admiration of her skill. It has made me look at the work of our young teachers, who themselves have just left university.

Recent research findings show that headteachers rate the initial skills of young teachers very highly, and my experience here at Moulsham agrees with that. Schools now give greater support to new teachers, and if I was starting my career again I'd want to do it in a large school such as Moulsham, but at the same time have fewer government directives as to how to do my job.

Knowing I'm going, I keep producing mental lists of things I've been pleased to be involved with. This is my list, but not in priority order because I found that task far too difficult.

1. Five new classrooms and the replacement of the two walkways have given a new feel to the whole school and allowed the establishment of a library which was located in the reception area when I first arrived.
2. A frequent question now asked of applicants for headship is "What would you go to the wall for?" For me it would be the House system at this school which I think has brought considerable benefits.
3. Curriculum weeks have often featured in the memories of Year 6 children, particularly the weeks where everyone has been in costume.
4. More focus has recently been placed on how children learn, and we have recently done some school based work on this theme. I'm sure this will be an increasing feature of staff training in the years to come.
5. I've been able to appoint some outstanding teachers, and some have had the opportunity to go on to be headteachers. I enjoy visiting their schools and seeing ideas in place that they have taken from Moulsham. Sometimes they have amended those ideas for the better, and I wish I could wind the clock back and start again.
6. Educational visits have allowed some children to become stars in a new situation. The most recent Year 6 residential visit and the London and local visits both brought complimentary remarks from people working with the children, and members of the public who came across one of our groups.
7. The school owes so much to the Friends of Moulsham Junior School, and the hard work of the committee has brought a multitude of benefits to the school. I believe the children of committee members benefit from seeing their parents contributing to the common good.
8. The turning circle was bare of trees and shrubs on my arrival and the planting programme over the last ten years has certainly improved the front of the school. The creation of the Tina Reynolds Garden in South Wing Quadrangle marks a sad episode, but a wonderful opportunity for future children at this school.
9. The governors have been a real strength of this school under the leadership of Willis Field. Their devotion of time and energy has been remarkable.
10. This is the only primary school I know of that has a Past Pupils Association, and the annual reunion and the newsletters have been a major contribution to uniting past pupils.
11. I've laughed a lot, and thank you to everyone connected with MJS for making my ten years pass at a speed I can hardly believe.

And it's goodbye from me.

L. R. Kemp

Mrs Pat Sturgeon

From time to time, Hilary and Kathleen have the privilege of meeting people who have figured significantly in the history of the Moulsham Schools. It is always a pleasure to hear their memories and reflections first hand. In March this year, we spent a delightful afternoon in the company of Mrs Pat Sturgeon, known also to many past pupils as Miss Purdie. She was Head Teacher of Moulsham Infants' School for 20 years (from 1967-87), and, from 1976, the wife of Moulsham Junior School Headmaster Tom Sturgeon.

Mrs Sturgeon was born a Chelmsford girl, and has spent most of her life so far in or near the town. From her family home in Vicarage Road, she went first to the small Dame School, with just a dozen pupils, on the corner of Mildmay Road and St John's Road. She was four years old, and remembers crying for the first three days, after which she decided that school was not so bad after all, and recalls asking the teacher: "When I'm a big girl, can I come and help you?" From then on, she enjoyed school enormously, and always had the ambition to be a teacher herself. Her aunt was already a Grammar School teacher, so perhaps the teaching genes ran in the family.

From the Dame School, young Pat moved on to Chelmsford County High School for Girls, first in the preparatory department, and then right through to the sixth form of the main school. These were the war-time years, and for a while the 'prep' department lessons had to be held in a nearby private house, while air raid shelters were constructed at the school. The High School Headmistress at that time was Miss Cadbury, who continued in that role until 1962. Mrs Sturgeon recalls other long-serving staff at the school, too, including Miss Barr and Miss Clark. She thoroughly enjoyed her time there, and became an enthusiastic cricket, tennis and hockey player.

It was at age 16, and still set on a teaching career, that Miss Purdie, as she then was, first encountered Moulsham Junior School. In those days, students wanting to go on to Teacher Training College were required to do a 4-week teaching practice first, in return for which they would receive a £15 grant during training. Miss Purdie was assigned to Moulsham Junior Girls' School, where she gained her first experience of teaching in Miss Barton's class. Miss Pettet was Headmistress at that time. Fortunately, nothing at Moulsham Juniors seems to have put Miss Purdie off the idea of teaching, so the next step was to apply to a Training College.

By now it was just after the end of World War II, and priority for training college places was naturally given to returning service personnel wanting to teach. As a schoolgirl, Miss Purdie could not find a place immediately, and even toyed with the idea of becoming a hospital almoner instead. But teaching was what she really wanted to do, and she eventually gained admission to the new Balls Park Teacher Training College in Hertford, located in an old house with large shared rooms. The annual intake of just 50 trainees was ruled with a rod of iron by a very strict Principal called Miss Wingate, sister of Orde Wingate, who led the Chindits force in war-time Burma. The student teachers all lived in college, with definitely no visitors allowed in their rooms.

After her 2-year training course, Miss Purdie took up her first teaching post at a school in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, returning to Chelmsford one year later to be with her Mother, who was not strong. From then on until her marriage she lived at home in Vicarage Road. She taught for five or six years at Kings Road Infants' School, very much enjoying the daily routine of classroom teaching and working with very young children. The idea of applying for a post as a Deputy Head occurred to her at about this time, but as she was still a rather young teacher, she was advised by Mr Primmer, Divisional Education Officer for Mid-Essex, to widen her teaching experience first. So she taught for a further three years at Gobions School in Romford, and then took a post as Head of a small Infants' School in Chadwell Heath, with just three classes of about 48 pupils each. This experience stood her in good stead when the post of Head of Moulsham Infants' School eventually became vacant in 1967,

and she applied. When offered the post, Mrs Sturgeon recalls that Mr Primmer commented: "There now, aren't you glad you took my advice?"

Even before she came to Moulsham Infants' School, Miss Purdie was well-known to numerous children living in the Moulsham area for her work as Brown Owl of the St John's Brownies, and as a Sunday School teacher at St John's Church, where she also served on the PCC, was confirmed, and eventually married Mr Sturgeon.

Miss Purdie served for 20 years as Headmistress of Moulsham Infants' School. Her staff were a mixture of ages, and she brought in changes gradually rather than suddenly, working particularly hard with the newer and younger teachers. When she first arrived there were three untrained teachers to supervise too. She felt it quite a responsibility to be in charge of a total of some 50 staff, including midday assistants, caretakers, school secretary Mrs Sparrow, and other support staff. Many of these were themselves long-serving, like Miss Purdie, and she is convinced that this contributed significantly to the stability and success of the school.

As Headmistress, much of Miss Purdie's time was of course taken up with organisation and administration, but whenever possible, she liked to fit in some 'real' face-to-face classroom teaching, stepping in for example to cover unexpected staff absences. She particularly enjoyed reading stories to the older children - Heidi, Winnie-the-Pooh and Grey Owl and the Beaver being among her favourites. As now, children only stayed in the Infants' School for two years, possibly a term or two more, depending when their birthday fell, but Miss Purdie always noticed the rapid change as they gained in confidence and mastered the basic skills.

The 1970s saw numerous experiments and initiatives in primary school teaching. Miss Purdie oversaw the introduction of the Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA), a simplified spelling system used in the early stages of reading, before the children graduated to what they called "grown-up" reading. In her experience, ITA worked very well, especially for encouraging slower readers. Reading tests took place regularly every year: no marks were dropped with the introduction of ITA, and some very good results were achieved. Miss Purdie liked to hear the slower readers herself whenever time permitted. The arrival of "new maths" also had an influence on teaching methods, and on 15th February 1971 there was of course the changeover from pounds, shillings and pence to the new decimal currency, which many of us remember as somewhat challenging!

Miss Purdie was a firm believer in discipline. The children were mostly well-behaved and the parents supportive. At the termly meetings for new children and their parents, she would make it clear that she did not normally smack naughty children, but in extreme cases was prepared to do so and would notify the parents in writing the same day. This was generally accepted, and smacking rarely occurred.

Among the staff, formality was the order of the day. They rarely met socially out of school, and in school they still used surnames, unlike Moulsham Juniors, where the staff knew each other by their first names. At the joint Infants/Junior School staff party for Miss Purdie's engagement to the Junior School Headmaster, it was difficult for those proposing toasts to decide whether to ask the guests to raise their glasses to 'Miss Purdie and Mr Sturgeon' or to 'Pat and Tom'!

After their marriage in 1976, Mrs Sturgeon moved from her home in Moulsham to live in Boreham, and she and Mr Sturgeon continued their work as Head Teachers of the Infants' and Junior Schools respectively. Mr Sturgeon retired in 1982, after 25 years in charge, and Mrs Sturgeon in 1987 after 20 years. Two other teachers, Lily Dixon and Daphne Wasket, retired from Moulsham Infants' the same day as Mrs Sturgeon, and the three of them met up every few weeks thereafter, with other teachers joining them later as they retired. Mrs Sturgeon is still in touch with some of these, including Margaret Judd and Mrs Thompson, whose husband was Head at Trueloves School,

Ingatestone. Sadly, two other teachers, Miss Rodd and Deputy Head Mrs Palmer, who feature on the 1959 picture printed in our Autumn 2005 Newsletter, both died of cancer just before Mrs Sturgeon retired.

The Sturgeons both liked to keep in touch with Moulsham Junior School, and Mr Sturgeon returned after retirement to open the new school library, in the former classroom immediately to the left of the main entrance hall. As we reported in an earlier Newsletter, Mr Sturgeon died in December 2004, and Mrs Sturgeon is herself no longer mobile. She was however especially pleased to have a telephone chat recently with the present Head Teacher, Mr Les Kemp, and we are most grateful to her for sharing with Hilary and Kathleen a fascinating afternoon of recollections of her life in teaching, and in particular the twenty enjoyable years at Moulsham Infants' School.

This year's Open Afternoon

Once again, it was a great pleasure to welcome friends old and new to the annual get-together at the school, and to share another afternoon of memories and latest news. Many thanks to **Derek Weston**, 1942-46, **Tony Brown**, 1952-56, and to Hilary's husband Hugh, for helping to set up the photo display; to Pat Rushbrook for bringing along her impressive collection of Moulsham memorabilia; and to **Pat Durrant**, 1947-51, and his wife, who kindly manned the reception desk. We are also very grateful to the parents and staff who served the tea and cakes; to present pupils for their much-appreciated dancing displays; and of course to Mr Kemp for master-minding the whole occasion.

We were as usual impressed by the distances people had travelled to be with us. **Doug Fawcett**, 1939, came all the way from South Wales; **Maureen Rignall (Bidwell)**, 1941-45, from Gloucestershire, and **Ray Allen**, 1943-47, from the West Midlands to attend with his brother **John**, 1945-49. Others of you came from Norwich, Brighton, Long Sutton, and Wendover, as well as all corners of Essex and the Chelmsford area. We hope you all had a super day, as we did.

Total visitor numbers were down a little this year, at just over 100, possibly influenced by the earlier date and less-than-Spring-like weather. **Peter Smith**, 1938, and **Evelyn Baker (Cox)**, sent their apologies as they were both involved in auditions for the casting of the Young Generation's next musical production, 'Oliver!' on the same day. A few of our staunchest supporters were sadly unwell, including **Peter Turrall** and **John Spooner**, both 1938ers. We do hope they are all fully recovered again now. Other apologies included **Mike and Sue Wilkinson (Rayner)** 1945 and 1948 respectively, **Pam Smith (Thorp)**, 1948-52 and **Kathleen Duncombe (Thorp)**, 1938.

In his welcome leaflet, Mr Kemp drew attention to the new school bell, cast and mounted by the famous Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London, which was demonstrated at intervals throughout the afternoon. He thanked the many former pupils who had made a donation towards this project. A recent building project has been the refurbishment of the children's toilets, and starting in July a new classroom is to be built in the South Wing [former Girls' School] quadrangle. This quadrangle has recently seen the removal of the pond, and construction of new paths and a new pergola. The school is now raising funds to buy a wind vane for the pergola, and when complete, the new garden will be dedicated to the memory of Tina Reynolds, a young teacher at Moulsham Juniors who died last year.

Among the first to arrive at the Open Afternoon were **Dinah Cowell (Reed)**, 1952-56 and her daughter **Debbie**, 1973-77, together with Dinah's former classmate **Jean Marsh (Pascoe)**. Jean has kindly lent us two photos of country dancing at Moulsham Junior Girls' School in the early 1959s, and the two friends were able to put names to quite a few of those in the pictures. We will include one or both in a future Newsletter, printed on glossy paper.

Anita Brooker (Grey), 1947-51, brought two further pictures of Moulsham Senior Girls, one taken at St John's Hospital Fete in 1954, the other at a Widford Summer Fete at about the same time. Again, we are grateful for photos and the accompanying names, and we have taken copies for the display collection.

As you know, we have very few pictures from the 1960s and 70s as yet, so we were especially pleased when **Julie Sherman (Aves)**, 1965-69, produced a lovely picture of her recorder group in 1968, taken just after their recorder exam. Other girls on the photo include **Janice Daniels**, **Karen Chambers**, **Claire Woolnough** and **Susan Lee**. We will print this picture too in a future Newsletter.

We were glad to welcome **Peter Moore**, 1938, who came along with his brother **Colin**, from 1943-47. As children, they lived in Waterhouse Street, and Peter was a member of Widford parish church choir at the same time as Peter Turrall. He recalls that the choirboys were paid one shilling [5p] for each wedding and funeral they sang at - a small fortune in those days!

Peter 'Charley' Smith, 1938 (not to be confused with Peter Smith, 1938 mentioned above), said he had enjoyed reading the article in the Spring 2006 Newsletter by the **Morella sisters, Ann and Una** and their sister-in-law **June (Atkins)**, who married **Gavin Morella**. Gavin was a couple of years ahead of Peter at Moulsham, and it was he who first gave Peter the nickname 'Charley'. It happened at the Central Youth Club, held in the former Friends Meeting House opposite the railway station. Gavin, along with school friends **Peter Joslin** and **Peter Rankin**, was present at a show in which Peter Smith played the part of King Charles. A little while before, Prince Charles had been to see a performance of *Much Binding in the Marsh*, at the end of which actor Richard Murdoch had famously called out to the royal visitor "Good Old Charley" (and lived to tell the tale!). Remembering this, Gavin had caused much laughter in the audience when he too called out "Good old Charley" as Peter took his bow as King Charles at the end of the youth club show. From then on, the name stuck!

Gordon Thorp, 1941-45, was wearing an RNLI sweatshirt and Hilary asked what (if any) connection he had with the Lifeboats Institution, knowing that he lives well inland! He explained that RNLI has groups in all parts of the country, but his Grandfather Thorp was a lifeboatman in Aldeburgh, and in 1898 he was a member of the crew trying to launch the rowing (? with sails) boat when it overturned on the beach. He was the last surviving member of that crew. His grandfather is also the grandfather of **Kathleen and Pam Thorp** (Gordon's cousins).

Angela Wren (Stiles), 1954-58, and her former classmate **Susan Simpson (Holden)**, members of the 'Wallace Crescent gang' in those days, came together to the Open Afternoon. They had been to Moulsham Senior Girls' School together after the Juniors, and have kept in touch ever since. Angela recalled that she spent several of her childhood years in and out of hospital, and joked that she was recognised at school by the bandage round her head!

Dilwyn Barnard, 1955-59, came along with **Fred Morley** from the same year. They first re-met 13 years ago, when Fred had a message at work to ring "Bill" about work matters and discovered that "Bill" was Dil from his schooldays! Fred remembers **Peter Reeve** and identical twins **Dennis and Michael White** - he thinks they were electricians.

Helen Islip (Brigham) 1963-67, mentioned **Linda Collins** (daughter of School Caretaker, Hubert and his wife, Olive). Helen thinks Linda went to Chelmsford County High School. She married Alan Brisbane in 1974, has a daughter, Davina, born 1980. At one time Linda worked in County Hall, Chelmsford, but now lives in the Saffron Walden area. We look forward in due course to printing Helen's memories of her time at Moulsham Juniors, which she rashly agreed to write up for the Newsletter. Miss Pettet was still Headmistress at that time, and Helen recalls that Mrs Alty, a teacher known and loved by many of you, died in 1966, while Helen was at the school.

Good to see **Michael Smith** and his cousin **Anthony Newman-Smith**, both from 1948-52. Anthony told us this was only his second trip back in over 50 years. Michael particularly remembered Headmaster Stan Petchey telling classic stories from memory on Friday afternoons - his rendering of 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens had held the children spellbound

Marion Lodge (Weston), 1951-55, wrote to us after the Open Afternoon, as follows: "I attended Moulsham Reunion with my brother Derek again this year, and although occasionally my husband Geoff also accompanies me, this year he decided to stay at home working on his latest oil painting - an unfortunate decision. Towards the end of the Reunion Derek and I decided to have one last look at the photographs in the hall and whilst doing this I was aware of somebody next to me, I looked up and looked again, the man with the familiar face scolded me, I had apparently already walked past him in the corridor! It was **Tony Newman-Smith**, our best man in 1965! The last time we met was about 4 years ago, when we visited him in Surrey. He now lives in Lincolnshire and we are in Buckinghamshire, so how did we collide in Essex? Tony's cousin **Michael Smith** had brought him along to the old school reunion. I'm so glad he did, and pleased we made one more tour of the school before leaving, or we would have missed each other. It was fun meeting up and exchanging the latest news of our families if only briefly, but we made an arrangement that Geoff and I will catch up again with Tony and his wife Noreen in the Autumn. Geoff will probably accompany me next year, as he was sorry to have missed his best man. Who knows, there may be more surprises awaiting us at Moulsham Reunion."

And finally, for those of you who enjoyed Hilary's Malt Loaf so much at the Open Afternoon, here is the recipe. Kathleen, who never learnt any baking at school, can confirm that it is not only delicious but also very simple to make. It is so moist that you can even eat it without butter if you wish:

1 cupful All Bran
1 cupful soft brown sugar
1 cupful sultanas
1 cupful milk

Soak above ingredients overnight.

Next morning add 1 cupful self-raising flour and mix well.

Grease a 1lb loaf tin and bake for 1hour 30 minutes in the centre of oven at Gas mark 2, 150 C, or 300 F (reduce temperature for fan ovens)

Remove from tin when cool. Leave overnight before serving

NEW SCHOOL WEBSITE

Good news! The new school website is up and running, and has several issues of the Newsletter on the Past Pupils' page. We plan to put all future issues on as they become available. Do have a look - there are some very interesting pages, including colourful pages of work by current pupils. The address is:

www.moulsham-jun.essex.sch.uk/index.htm

From Moulsham to Oz, Coleen Benham (1950 - 1955)

I was born in Sussex in 1945. When I was 5, my parents, 2 brothers, Terry and Bob and I moved to Waterhouse Lane in Chelmsford, to live with my mother's elderly widowed aunt, who was ill and needed care. Our next door neighbours were the Bowermans and Mrs Dines, an elderly widow. Dad worked for Marconi's, riding his bike there each day. Terry started an upholstery apprenticeship, Bob attended Essex County Grammar School and I went to the Friars Infants School. Mum had her hands full caring for us all as well as her invalid aunt.

At about 6 or 7 I started at Moulsham Juniors, where girls and boys were separated back then. I had met and become good friends (still am) with my neighbour, Joyce Moody, who was in the class ahead of me. We caught the bus to school on Writtle Road, sometimes stopping at the nearby sweetshop if we had any pocket money left. I still remember barley sugar twists, sherbet with licorice straws, dolly-mixtures, gobstoppers, bulls-eyes, ice cream in wafers and bottles of Tizer.



I enjoyed my years at Moulsham. I can't remember my teachers' names but I do remember Miss Pettet, the headmistress. I can still "see" the senior girls playing hockey on the playing fields and remember the sloping playground where we made "slides" after it snowed, which was wonderful fun. Country dancing was one of my favourite lessons and I was very proud of the black skirt my mother made with coloured bands on the bottom. I also enjoyed music and desperately wanted to play the cymbals or drums but was never fast enough in the rush for instruments, always ending up with a triangle or castanets.

Among classmates I remember are Cynthia Baines, Kathleen Nash, Gillian Spooner and Lyn Sweetman. Our class performed the "Owl and the Pussycat" in front of the whole school. We made our costumes in class and painted loads of green paper for the pea-green boat. However, I was terrified when I saw the audience and barely whispered my few words. In June 1953 we watched goggle-eyed the Queen's coronation on our neighbour's TV. All the children were given New Testaments and a purple 'Royalty in Essex' book - I still have both. In 1954, Moulsham took part in a national handwriting competition and a number of us received awards.

In the 1950s, Waterhouse Lane was a T junction with Writtle Road, certainly not the busy cross-road it is today. There were miles of open fields full of crops and lovely wild flowers, right across to the River Wid. I have several memories of those fields and the river. My brother, Bob, then about 13, while trying to make a camp site, accidentally set a field alight. Fortunately, not much damage was caused, the fire brigade quickly extinguished the fire and Bob made a hasty exit.

During Easter 1952, Bob, his friend and I, were building a "hide" in the fields to shoot at birds with Bob's air pistol (imagine kids today being allowed to even own one!). Bob's friend was playing around with the pistol and accidentally fired it, hitting me in the chin. Bob took me home covered in blood to my shocked parents. Luckily no permanent damage was done, the slug was removed in hospital and a couple of stitches and lots of bandaging followed. Bob's pistol was confiscated and for a while my friends called me "Father Christmas".

Joyce and I loved playing in the fields. We weren't supposed to go as far as the river but there were rumours of an old WW2 army munitions camp near there and a bomb crater in the middle of the river, so we ventured over there occasionally. We never found either, but one day, I accidentally fell in the river. Unable to swim or touch bottom, I clutched frantically at the grass on the bank trying,

unsuccessfully, to pull myself out. Joyce, was out of sight, and at first thought my yells were part of the game we were playing, but thankfully, soon realised they weren't and rescued me. Luckily it was a warm day and I was able to dry out before going home, so our parents didn't find out until years later.

Fridays were special in our house - Mum did the shopping and bought our favourite comics, the Eagle and Dandy for the boys, the Girls Crystal and School Friend for me. Hardly anyone had TV then - the radio was our entertainment. Journey into Space, Mrs Dale's Diary and Life with The Lyons, were our favourites. I remember Bebe Daniels Lyon was always aged 32 (and so was her mother!).

On Sunday afternoons, if the weather was kind, we went for walks and bought an ice-cream. Sometimes we caught the bus to Oaklands Park, where my parents played golf and I remember running through mounds of beautiful coloured autumn leaves there. Then it was home to Sunday tea of meat or fish paste sandwiches, or sometimes my special favourite, watercress. Those were lovely carefree days playing with local children - no cars in the streets then. Apple scrumping was a delicious pastime, rounders a favourite game, using front doors as bases, until the owners became sick of the thumps and made us move on. Tying their doorknockers together with string then knocking on both doors at once was our way of retaliating.

In 1953 Mum's auntie passed away. My parents, who had often considered emigrating, now decided to go ahead. Miss Pettet heard we were going to Australia and a few weeks before I left, was kind enough to spend several days personally giving me tests so that my new teachers could receive an up to date assessment of my abilities. Mum was in the hairdressers a couple of weeks before we sailed and explained why she wouldn't be in again. A female reporter in the next booth, overheard her and arranged to do an article about us, which appeared in the Essex Chronicle on 11 Feb 1955.

We sailed for Australia on 23 February 1955 from Tilbury on the Orontes. It was so cold the ship had icicles hanging from it. I remember sadly watching the last of England disappear as the ship sailed but there was little time to dwell on it as we were shown to our cabins to sort out our living arrangements for the next 4 weeks. Mum and I shared a cabin, as did my brothers, while Dad was next door with another man. The first night was rough in the Bay of Biscay and many passengers were seasick. Some time later when we reached warmer climates many suffered sunburn from enjoying the welcome sun too much. Meals on board were served by stewards in huge dining rooms and beef tea and other refreshments were served throughout the day. I soon discovered that to discard leftover ice cream overboard into the wind was not a good idea.

We passed the Rock of Gibraltar and entered the Suez Canal, docking at Port Said. We were not allowed ashore due to the Suez crisis at the time, so many small boats, containing men wearing brightly coloured bandanas, came hastily towards the ship. I was frightened and thought they were pirates but Dad assured me they just wanted to sell their goods. This was an interesting procedure accompanied by lots of shouting and misunderstanding due to language differences. The selected goods were sent up in baskets on ropes to passengers, who returned the agreed money in the basket.

We sailed on through the Canal and the Mediterranean, seeing camels, palm trees and miles of sand on either side. At Aden and Colombo we went ashore. The climate was warm and humid and the atmosphere exotic, with spicy aromas, milling crowds and colourful goods for sale. The food stalls were swarming with flies and I was shocked by the poverty, young children begging and many people sleeping in the streets.

We crossed the Pacific to Western Australia, then on to Port Adelaide, South Australia, arriving on a very hot day in late March. Our home for the next 3 months was a fairly basic hostel in Adelaide. Nearby was a lovely park where I enjoyed the smell of eucalyptus trees, heard kookaburras laughing,

watched black swans swim on the river and cuddled a koala at the local koala farm. Jobs were plentiful then and Dad and my brothers soon found employment.

I remember the headmaster at my first new school giving Miss Pettet's comprehensive report a cursory glance, before telling my mother that he was putting me with a class 2 years younger than me, as "she wouldn't know any Australian history or geography", to which Mum, rather annoyed by his attitude, replied "well, it shouldn't take her long, there's not much of it, is there?" However, his will prevailed and I was back to writing with pencil again after writing in ink for 2 years. I didn't settle well at that school, which was co-ed, something I wasn't used to, and spent much of each day calculating how many hours, minutes and seconds it was until home time. I was glad when we moved to a house about 8 miles from Adelaide, where I went to a school I much preferred. Despite all the disruption to my education, I succeeded in passing each year and continued to 3rd Year High School, after which I was employed as a typist.

In 1966, I married Ray, a fellow immigrant. We had a daughter and son and I returned to part-time work after they started school. Ray and I are now enjoying early retirement and hoping for some grandchildren soon; however, our children are un-cooperative on this matter.

In 1998, after a 43 year absence for me (36 for Ray), we returned to England for 10 weeks and had a wonderful if somewhat emotional time reuniting with family and friends, including Joyce, and revisiting places remembered from childhood, including Moulsham. Sadly my parents have passed on now. Terry and Bob live locally and are retired. They are both happily married with grandchildren.

It is probably hard to believe but despite being shot and almost drowning, some of my favourite childhood memories are of Moulsham and Essex.

More contacts from the 1950s

The invisible wires of the worldwide email network have been humming busily these past few weeks, with news and memories from the 1950s flying between former Moulsham classmates. It was **Peter Smith**, 1938, who gave us the address of **Jenny Pickles (Hann)**, who was at Moulsham Junior Girls' School from 1951-55, in the same class as Hilary and Kathleen. Jenny now lives in Sydney, Australia, but is in touch with several other former classmates from her Chelmsford days, and has passed on news of the Moulsham Junior School Past Pupils' Newsletters and reunions. We hope to hear from some of them too, and look forward to meeting up with Jenny during her trip to England this summer.

Here are a few extracts from Jenny's recent emails:

" Mike and I have been married for well over 40 years, and our children are Robert, Andrew and Suzanne. Rob has 4 children, all delightful, but I'm obviously biased. We live in Sydney and feel very much at home here after 25 years.

We lived in Gt Baddow, off Patchinghall Lane, and then Galleywood, before we moved to Australia, and have been back reasonably regularly since 1987. I job-shared as a lab technician at Gt Baddow School from 1975-80, and continued this work for a further 5 years at a high school here in Sydney. Apart from some study at Dovedale College for the lab work, I didn't apply myself to further learning until my children were at university. I then did a diploma in social sciences, and joined Barnardos as a family support worker, before becoming a probation officer, from which I retired in 2002 after a spate of health problems. I was back there within 4 months, as a part-time temp, and have done several contracts with them since. My latest venture into formal learning was a graduate diploma in counselling and psychotherapy (graduating in 2005) in which there was also a large clinical component. I intend at some stage to volunteer in one of the local welfare agencies. Meanwhile I'm back at my old office which is within walking distance of home.

Unlike you, I was not happy at Moulsham. I was re-zoned after two happy infant years at Galleywood. I suspect as an only child I was too timid to cope with the large classes and all the seemingly big seniors rushing up the drive, or pushing on the bus! Some of the names on the list you sent for 1951-55 were strange to me - **Anne Bowerman, Pat Davis, Carol Standen, Heather Cawley, Ann Davies, Sheila West** - so perhaps they were in the other class. But what about **Julie Ball, Jean Hutton, Ann Tuttlebury, Maureen Brown and Joy Gowan**? I thought **Sylvia Drinkwater** left well before 1955? There was also **Jennifer Parrott** when I was in 1st year juniors, but she left. **Marea Jones** was in the Operatic and Dramatic Society, my parents' great hobby, so I saw a bit of her after school days. I also remember **Marion Weston**. Actually I counted 9 of the girls on the list who went on to the County High School, as I did. In a game with my grandchildren a few years back, I managed to list almost every one of the 50-odd girls in our primary school class! Sad to know some have died. I'm not sure if I or my mother have any old photos but I will have a look. I seem to recall some of a dancing or PE display we did for an open day. One of my friends, the year behind us, says she went to an open day at Moulsham a few years back and found it very interesting."

Jenny was able to put us in touch with **Hazel Offord**, also 1951-55, who in turn is in regular contact with **Juliet Lindars** and **Sue Hayden** as well as her cousin **Aileen Squires**, who is already on our Newsletter distribution list. One day, perhaps, we shall find all 50+ of our Moulsham Junior class - that would be fantastic!

News in Brief

Another past pupil who has recently made contact is **Gerald Britton**, who emailed us to say: "**John Wiffen** has passed on to me vol 8 no1 of your 'Past Pupil's Newsletter', which I found most interesting. John came to see me recently and we discussed our days at Moulsham and we were able to identify a number of pupils and all the teachers from a 1948 panorama school photo. (Good value at 3 shillings and 6 pence).

I think that I attended the Infants from 1945 to 1947 and the Junior School from 1947 to 1951. I failed the 11+ and went on to the seniors for two years before passing at age 13 to go to the Tech. At this time I lived in Hillside Grove and walked to school by the A12 Chelmsford bypass. My older sister, **Anne**, also attended Moulsham Infants and Juniors before going on to the High School at age 11.

In his article about getting to school, **Patrick Durrant** mentions **Geoff Barnard**. I think that I was in the same class along with the likes of **Ray Bradshaw** and **Peter Coombs**. **Geoff** went on to the seniors, but as I left at age 13, I lost touch. After leaving the 'Tech' I studied for an accountancy qualification and after a few job moves, which eventually took me to Nottingham, I became Finance Director and Assistant MD for a lace manufacturer before retiring at age 60 in 2000.

I met my wife at the 'Tech' and we have two children (our son also went into the accounting profession and now works at Next at the head office near Leicester)."

Many thanks to **Catharine Daintree**, 1977, for letting us have the names of some of the pupils on the 1982 art class photo printed in the Spring 2006 Newsletter. The people she recognises are:

By the window (from front to back, each desk left to right): ?, ? , Stephen Clark(e), Ashley Clint (?), Billy Bishop, Tony Groves or Gareth Chandler, back row unknown.

Nearest camera: Anita Edwards, ?, Abby Gable, Alison Teahan.

Did anyone recognise any more of the group? If so, please do let us know.

OBITUARY: Geoffrey Caton, 3/10/35 - 9/3/06

Geof was the second of three brothers, all born in Bruce Grove and pupils at Moulsham Junior Boys' School during the early 1940s. Time spent in air raid shelters didn't prevent his progress to KEGS in 1946 where, three days too young to leave at the end of his fifth year, he had to spend time in the sixth form before embarking on a career in Essex County Council's Treasurer's Department. By the time of his early retirement on health grounds, Geof had worked his way up to Systems Analyst in the Computer Department, where he became somewhat in demand as a "troubleshooter".



National Service in the RASC from 1954 to 1956 saw Geof posted to the troubled Suez Canal Zone where he rose to the rank of sergeant, working at GHQ Middle East Land Forces at Fayid in Egypt and involved in the HQs' eventual transfer to Cyprus. Only recently Geof was proud to receive his Suez Campaign medal, awarded for service in what was at the time a war zone. The accompanying photo shows him, with live ammunition and fixed bayonet, about to commence guard duty at Namur Camp.

Geof became a stalwart of the Great Baddow Branch of the Royal British Legion, acting at times as Bar Steward, Secretary, Treasurer and Deputy Standard Bearer. His coffin was preceded into the crematorium chapel by the Standard of the Branch.

Scenery building and one, (only one!), excursion into acting with the Widford Players in the 1950s led Geof into a lifetime love of the theatre. For many years he was Secretary of Chelmsford Operatic Society; he built sets and "props" for Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society and the Young Generation; for twenty years he ran CAODS Advance Booking Office for tickets; he was awarded a Life Membership of the Society; and this year was presented with the Betty Worrall Award as Society Member of the Year - for the fourth time.

For thirteen years he also designed and built sets for the Cromer and Sheringham Operatic Society, where he was known as "The Guv" and "Sir Geof of Chelmsford". Geof may have inherited his love of the theatre from his father, who for many years acted as Secretary and Producer of the Crompton Parkinson Amateur Dramatic Society. He made one fleeting stage appearance in a Society production - dressed as a sailor and wearing stage makeup on one side of his face only!

Although he hadn't been in the best of health for several years, Geof's passing at home in Hillside Grove on 9 March 2006 was unexpected. He leaves a widow, Gill, and son, Andrew.

OBITUARY: Peter Galley, 1937 - 14th March 2006

Jim Whybrow has written to us as follows:

"With regret I have sad news of Peter's death. He was a Moulsham School pupil, 1942-47 approx, one of the original 'Widford Boys'. But in recent years he lived in the Ipswich area. He was loved by family and friends, and will be greatly missed."

Other deaths

At the Open Afternoon we were sorry to hear of two other deaths of former Moulsham Junior School pupils. A notice had been seen in the Essex Chronicle recently of the death of Derek Ellcock, who some of you may have known, and we were also told that Melvyn Durrant, who features on the 1948 boys' school panorama photo, had passed away.

REQUEST FOR PHOTOGRAPHS of Ray Gozzett

Jill Hazell (Gozzett) writes: "My brother Ray Gozzett passed away on 10th August 2005, aged 70. He lived in France with his wife Jacky and two young children, Jack who is 8 and Jodie aged 6. He also has two grown-up sons Simon and Richard. If anyone has any old photos of his time at school I would really love to hear from you. Would you please phone me on 01245 356784, as I would really like to have copies made for his children."

Can anyone help? If so, do please get in touch with Jill.

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.

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