

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Autumn 2008

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From Mrs Linda Hughes, Headteacher



Left: Mrs Hughes speaking at the September reunion

I am writing this and thinking about the wonderful week of activities that have taken place at the school to celebrate the school's 70th birthday. The children and staff have thoroughly enjoyed themselves and have learnt much about the school in the process. We are very grateful to all of the past pupils who gave up their time to come and talk to the children about their time at Moulsham. The children have also enjoyed poring over the photographs, papers and documents which were displayed in a temporary 'museum' in the school.

I too, have enjoyed reading the first log books of the school which were written by Miss Rankin and Mr Petchey. They paint a picture of a very different world and were often moving, particularly as they describe the way the teaching took place during the air raids. The inspectors seem to be for ever popping into the school but were not so interested in the teaching and standards but seem to focus on attendance, dinnertimes and putting in additional lighting and shelves in the PE shed!

One thing that hasn't changed though is the atmosphere and ethos that pervades the school. Many visitors to the school in the 1930's commented on the 'positive tone' and 'happy faces', and I can safely say this is still the case today. It was very evident when we raised a new flag on Thursday and all of the school waved their flags and broke into a spontaneous cheer.

We continue with our improvements to the outside environment of the school. The playground has been extended to allow for some grassed area, and games are being painted on to the playground. We have increased the number of seats and I was delighted and very grateful to receive a lovely bench from the Past Pupils along with some medals to be given to the year 6 children, who in the staff's opinion have contributed most to the life of the school. They will be much appreciated. Thank you.

We also wish the school to become an eco friendly school and if anyone can spare any time to work with the children and offer advice, in developing an 'edible garden', do please contact the school.



It really has been a fabulous time for the school and I would like to thank Kathleen, Hilary and Les Kemp, the previous headteacher, for all their help with the Past Pupils' evening. It was lovely to meet so many former students and I look forward to seeing you at the summer 2009 reunion and again when we celebrate the school's 75th!

26th September reunion: past pupils in South ('Girls') Hall for presentation of their gifts to the school

Open Afternoon 2009

Next year's Open Afternoon will be on **Saturday 16th May from 1-4pm**. Do make a note in your diary, and we look forward to seeing many of you again on that occasion.

Notes from Hilary and Kathleen

Welcome once again to the Newsletter. 2008 has been a wonderful 70th anniversary year for Moulsham Juniors and its past pupils and staff. We were delighted to see so many of you at the May Open Afternoon, and even more at the special reunion on the evening of September 26th, the finale of a week of celebration at the school. We have pictures of both events on pages 5-7, 10, 14, 19-20, and plan to put a larger selection on the past pupils' page of the school website, to complement those on the school's own photo pages.

In this issue we have news and recollections from friends old and new, including, on page 19, a special reflection on Moulsham days from former Deputy Head Glen Denham. Thank you all for writing in and sending your pictures. As usual, please keep sending your articles and photos by post to Kathleen Boot at 1A Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9PG or by email to kathleen.boot@tiscali.co.uk Changes of address to gerry.etherington@tiscali.co.uk, please, or by post to Kathleen.

From the beginning of 2009, we plan to take advantage of the revised postal rates by producing two longer Newsletters each year instead of three of the present size. These will be in the Spring (photocopied) and Autumn (glossy printed, with more pages), with the Open Afternoon in between. You will not be short-changed! This new arrangement will also help reduce the workload of the office staff, the volunteers who kindly deliver newsletters in the Chelmsford area, and those who prepare envelopes, labels and the newsletter itself. For those of you with computers, we are considering the idea of putting collections of photos from particular periods or events on the web page each summer, and can let you know by email when these have been added. Any comments or suggestions welcome.



Above: Trophy and medals presented to the school, for the 2 top year pupils who have contributed most to the life of the school



Above right: the playground bench, carved with the words: 'Donated by the past pupils to mark the 70th Anniversary of MJS'



Right: bouquets for Kathleen and Hilary at the 26th September reunion.



Left to right: Les Kemp presenting our gifts, Mrs Hughes addressing us, and part of Mel Rawlingson's Australian entertainment

The 70th Anniversary Reunion

After a very successful May Open Afternoon, we were very pleased that so many of you were able to return for the special September reunion to mark the opening of Moulsham Junior School in autumn 1938. About 130 of us gathered at the school at 7pm on Friday 26th September, some local, others from Devon, Monmouth, Hampshire and other parts of UK, and Mel Rawlingson and his wife Gai from Sydney, Australia. After signing the visitors' book for posterity, and collecting a name badge, we adjourned to the South ('Girls') Hall for drinks. In the hall were numerous panorama photographs to pore over and where possible add more names (many thanks to those who did so), and in the new Resources Room, formerly the girls' cloakrooms, was the 'little museum', an exhibition about the school and its history, which Hilary and Kathleen had set up for the current pupils to visit during the preceding week. We gather many of the pupils were intrigued by the gas mask and punishment book in particular!

At 8pm, a superb buffet, produced by the Infants' School catering manager, was available in the North ('Boys') Hall, and we were able to sit down to eat our selection of food in one of five nearby classrooms arranged by Les Kemp for the purpose. At 9.15pm, back to the South Hall where Les Kemp made a presentation to the school on our behalf, of a commemorative bench, shield and medals for pupils who make an outstanding contribution to school life. Mrs Hughes made a speech thanking us and welcoming past pupils to the celebration evening. Finally, Mel Rawlingson, who is a musician and entertainer in his spare time, was prevailed upon give us a few Aussie songs, using various traditional instruments including of course a didgeridoo!

The photos on this and other pages were taken mainly by the Headteacher's husband, Paul Hughes, or 1938 past pupil Peter Turrall, with a few from Kathleen's digital. If you have any others, do email them to us, please.

We are grateful to Mrs Hughes for hosting this special evening, and would like to thank everyone who helped to make the evening such a resounding success.

Some pictures from the reunion



Above: 'Museum' exhibition; Les Kemp with current teachers Andrea Taylor and Clare McIntyre at the bar.

Left: Former teachers Carol Leverett and Mary Ubee.

Below: Studying the panorama photos; Looking through Mr Sturgeon's presentation album; Supper in one of the original classrooms; Supper in one of the newer (1970s) classrooms.



List of staff and past pupils at the 26th September reunion

Girl pupils' maiden names have been used for ease of recognition. Apologies for any omissions.

Staff:

Mrs Linda Hughes
Ceri Jones
Les Kemp
Ashleigh Cameron
Catherine Duthie
Louise Jeffries
Jackie Kirkham
Steve Leatherdale
Carol Leverett
Lesley Mann
Clare McIntyre
Helen Miles
Clare Norton
Lindsay Parkes
Phil Reynolds
Helen Russell
Octavia Singleton
Clare Smyth
Jo Stapleton
Sally Taggart
Mary Ubee

1930s

Cyril Bridge
Gwen Bridge
Gladys Brown
Cynthia Carter
Brian Emmett
Gordon Evans
Peter Eves
Heather Fleming
Evelyn Gridley
Mary Jiggins

Ray Hatherley
Eric Langridge
Ronald Langridge
Anne Mussell
Jean Pennack
Joan Porter
John Reed
Malcolm Robinson
Eileen Steele
Jean Taylor
Pauline Thorne
Peter Turrall
Ralph Turbin
Jean Whittle
Eric Woods
Estelle Wright

1940s

Pamela Bell
Audrey Brangham
Gerald Britton
Mary Calver
Hill Dowsett
Martyn Edwards
Angus Fleming
Tony Gayler
Clifford Griffin
Gus Gowers
Alan Hammond
Rosemary Head
Arthur Humphrey
Ivy Jolly
Joan Lamb

Eileen Perkins
Shirley Puxley
June Raven
Melvyn Rawlingson
Adrian Smith
Jean Turbin
Ken Turton
Jim Whybrow
Michael Wilkinson
Terry Wright

1950s

Malcolm Banham
Angela Brown
Jennifer Brown
Hilary Dye
Jane Escott
Judy Everard
Jean Everett
Christine Gentry
Rosemary Gentry
Christine Jolly
Vic King
Christine Knight
Chris Lucking
Jenny Lucking
Pat MacClinton
Les Morley
Kathleen Nash
Mick Polley
Mike Purkiss
Lesley Rayner
Tony Rayner

Una Rayner
Angela Rawlingson
Janet Rawlingson
Keith Rawlingson
Susan Rayner
Aileen Squires
Pauline Tarbun
Barrie Stevens

1960s

Shirley Beeson
Claire Bigg
Eunice Bishop
John Escott
Paul Keenan
Sandra McCarthy
Pauline Stevens
Sue Watts

1970s

Clare Attridge
Garry Batt
Nikki Batt
Brenda Beeson
Sarah Gowing
Melissa Head
Luci Mayhew
Jeffrey Porter

2000s

Gemma Newson
Chelsea Newson
(present pupil)



Some faces from 1938

Above: Ralph and Evelyn Turbin (Gridley) with Jean Day (Turbin); Malcolm Robinson; Ray Hatherley with John Reed Left: Brian Emmett with Arthur Humphrey; Pauline and Gordon Evans



From left, Eileen Geer (Steele) and Mr Geer; Eric Woods and Peter Eves; Eileen Bartrup (Perkins), Audrey Spellar (Brngham) and Heather Turner

Jim Fleming, 1938: a wartime childhood

Jim Fleming, one of a family of eight children, was born in 1929 at 15 Tennyson Road, Chelmsford, and moved shortly afterwards to a larger house in Brownings Avenue. In September 1934 he started at Kings Road School, first in the Infants, where Miss Wadley was Headmistress, and then the Juniors, with Mr Moon as Headmaster. As the family kept growing, they needed a larger house, and were moved to Widford in about 1937. Jim transferred to St John's School in Moulsham Street, where Mr Harvey was Head and Mr Gardiner was a teacher. In a memoir written for his grandchildren, Jim takes up the tale:

At St John's School, classes were divided by a large curtain, toilets were outside and the playground was gravel. I stayed here until the school closed in 1938. In the meantime, the new Moulsham School was being built, and in 1938 I was a new boy when it opened. My first teacher was Mr Harold Picken, and my next was Mr ("Daddy") Gardiner.

In 1939 some fool started a war. My dad was called back into the army (he had been a soldier since 1914 and in the Territorial Army since the end of the first war). At the start of the war the men of the village built an air raid shelter under the A12 road bridge, which was close to our home. We spent a great many nights under the bridge. Later on in the war we, like a lot of other people, had what was called an indoor shelter. All the boys of the village were told to do things to help. For example 11-12 year olds acted as messengers from the ARP post in the old village school behind the church to the head warden's HQ. It was a good 5 minute sprint, and at night time it was very spooky, running past gravestones. One night a landmine dropped and lit the sky up a very bright bluish white colour. We always went in two's, and I think I broke the four-minute mile that night! 12-14 year olds had to fill sandbags etc, and 15-year-olds and upward were firewatchers at night.

While at school we had a section of ground which we dug and cultivated food, as all food was rationed, We also collected any thing to help the war effort. When air raids were on, and we were not at school, we could stand and watch dog fights in the sky. Any planes that crashed, we would look and see what we could find that might be useful, and the same with bomb sites. We had to walk nearly every where. There were no school buses. To walk to school was nearly a mile, and halfway there was a painted line on a fence. When an air raid siren sounded, depending on which side of the mark you were on you either ran to school or you went back home, always hoping you were on the home side of the mark.

Lessons in school were broken off when an air raid started, and we went to the shelter for the lesson to continue. The trouble was, two or more classes would be in the same shelter, so the teachers found it very hard to teach. In the early part of the war, children from London were evacuated to Chelmsford and to accommodate these children we had to share our school. We went to school in the mornings (8 till 1 pm) and they went in the afternoons. The drawback was that we all had to go to school on Saturdays. In the summer time the older boys were asked to help out on the farms,

haymaking or picking up potatoes. I used to do a paper round in the mornings, delivering 120 papers for 3 shillings (15p) per week. In the afternoons I was also an errand boy after school - pay for this was 4 shillings per week plus tips, total 6 shillings (30p).

I stayed at Moulsham Senior Boys' School until I was 14, and old enough to go to work

First day pupil Joan Wade (Lamb)

I was one of the first pupils when the school opened in 1938, and joined the Infants classes under Miss Longhurst and Miss Wood, and Headmistress Miss Denn. I then went through the Junior and Senior Girls' Schools, finally leaving in 1947. I have many memories of my schooldays, but unfortunately few photographs as, during wartime, film was hard to come by. I well remember Misses Wright, Firmin, Sawday, Barton and Huff and Headmistress Miss Rankin. In fact Miss Wright, a lovely lady, had a great influence on me with reading and writing and it was through her that I learned to appreciate the written word. She always said that bad writing was bad manners as it was meant to be read by someone. I remember her entry in my autograph book: 'Good, better, best, never let it rest, till your good is better, and your better best'.

The teachers in the Seniors I remember as the Misses Gay, Simmons, Eyden, Mansfield and Headmistress Miss Howard. I also remember Miss Alden, who for some reason unknown was always referred to as 'Polly' Alden. We didn't think she was aware of this, but I heard later that she always knew!



I would think that the photo above was taken in the early 1940s. I am the lanky one second from the right in the front row. It would appear to be the cast of a play as some are 'dressed up' in the back two rows. I recognise some of the girls in my class - Dorothy Holden, Enid Parish, Ruby Vaughan, Margaret Lawrence, Irene Gooch and Valerie Clark. Others I can recognise but can't remember their names. I have a second photo, taken a few years later in the Senior School. This shows the cast of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which I played the part of Lysander, though I can't recall the names of the other budding thespians!

Estelle Bausor (Wright) Memories of Moulsham Junior Girls' 1938-42

We were pleased to meet both Joan Wade (Lamb), author of the previous article, and her Moulsham school friend Estelle, for the first time at the September reunion. Here are Estelle's recollections from the earliest days of Moulsham Junior Girls' School.

- My teachers: Miss Wright (1938/39), Miss Skilton, Miss Huff (39/40), Miss Firmin (40/41), Miss Sawday (41/42) and Headmistress Miss Rankin.
- I was pleased to find that Miss Wright knew my birthplace, Ormskirk, Lancs, and I gave her some Ormskirk gingerbread bought on my summer holiday there in July/August 1939. Miss Wright shared a house with Miss Rankin at Widford.
- A class production of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*: my low-pitched voice meant that I voiced "Grave Old Plodders".
- Poetry, including *Sea Fever* by the then Poet Laureate John Masefield, when the teacher explained the analogy "wind like a whetted knife".
- Reading about Gladys Aylward, the missionary who worked with children in China. This was made into a film starring Ingrid Bergman, who was nothing like my mental image of that "small woman".
- I dreaded country dancing with the doughty Miss Firmin, who was like a German with her hair crossed in plaits at the back of her head.
- Air raids meant that we spent the period between the wailing siren to signify Enemy Aircraft, and the single signal for All Clear in the brick-built shelters which were often dark and damp. We sat on benches either side, and learnt odd bits of information, or were entertained by the more musical pupils.
- The oddities were: learning the 16 times table (which I have always remembered), and how to spell words such as Necessary and Mississippi. A pretty girl, Joan Gwyllim, with a sweet Welsh voice, sang "Beneath the Lights of Home", a sentimental song made popular by Deanna Durbin.
- We sang folk-songs, and learned about Cecil Sharp who had travelled the country to collect these songs before they died with the ageing people who knew them and their origins.
- When we were raid-free, playground games were important, especially those involving numbers of girls. The leader of these games was Betty Herries, who joined soon after the school opened, and was seated beside me as she was from the North - Birkenhead.
- Until I started at Moulsham, I had been known to my family and friends as Stella, but I had to use my full name in Class I to avoid confusion with Stella Boulter.
- Other pupils whose names I recall were: **Brenda Mison**, who remained a friend until her death in 1998; **Valerie Morris**, who lived in Longstomps Avenue; **Bridget Walkey** from Cornwall - she moved to Vicarage Road, close to Miss Sawday's home; **Hazel Morella**; **Vilma Payne**; **Olive Smith**; **Jean Sprawling (or Sprawline?)**; **Daphne Morse**; **Lily Chapman**; **Molly Mansfield**; **Elizabeth Mason**; **Margaret Murphy** (her Father was the School Attendance Officer); and the Austrian twins **Helga and Evalina Bass** - they were a great novelty and the only foreigners we knew; everyone wanted to be their friend.
- I remember being happy at Moulsham, and realizing over the years how well we were taught, by dedicated teachers, and how good the discipline was, both at school and at home.

More pictures from the September reunion



*Above, left: Joan Keyes (Porter), Gladys Gulliver and Jean Turrall (Pennack); right, the Rayner family
Below, left: Adrian Smith and Martyn Edwards; right, another of the 'new' classrooms*



Arthur (Gus) Gowers, 1941-45

Following the Open Afternoon in May this year, Gus wrote: 'It was good to be there again, after some 63 years, and to see that the building has been modernised sympathetically. Here are some memories of my four years at the School:

1941-42. 1a. Miss Huxley's class. Excellent views across Currie's fields when one thought that she wasn't watching. I don't remember any air raids that year.

1942-43. 2a. Mrs Skipsey's class (the refreshment room at the Open Afternoon). Good views of passing A12 traffic and movements along the main school road. I think that paper was placed on the lower panels to discourage this.

1943-44. 3a. Mr Hodgson's class. Art master, I think, excellent with lightning sketches on the green roller board. Promised ten marks to any pupil who correctly finished maths before he did. Not many takers. Had a habit of saying, 'I will answer questions until the bell goes' - if the lesson ended early. This usually happened a few seconds before the bell sounded. Instead of calling the register, as we all knew the order of calling quite quickly, we were allowed to answer our names (or alternatives) in alphabetical order. For example, a pupil named Western was allowed to call 'Eastern', and I was 'SREWOG' as I was always a little backward!

1944-45. 4a. Mr Gardiner's class. More air raids by this time. We left the main building by the headmaster's room main door and ran along the outside of the classrooms to the shelters. As soon as we all heard the siren we had to stand up but not rush toward the door until told. This was usually preceded by 'Don't forget your books'

Miss Huxley's place was taken by Miss Howe about 1942-43. Miss French taught a class, nicknamed 'The Remove' as they had no classroom of their own and occasionally used a spare classroom in the Seniors buildings. Due probably to heating fuel shortages, for a short time one winter the school only opened from 9am to 1 pm. but this included Saturdays. Those of us in 4a preparing for 11+ had additional instruction in the Staff Room out of hours - possibly during this period.

We watched hundreds of Dakota aircraft towing gliders right above the School on 'D' Day, June 6. 1944. One cast off, due to some mechanical fault, & landed in Currie's fields some half-mile from the School. Local ladies picking peas in the field right next to the playground sometimes threw handfuls of un-podded peas over the fence - much to our joy.

Mr Collins or Mr Little (caretakers) went by ladder on the flat roofs of the toilet block occasionally to throw down balls and home-made toy parachutes that had become lodged there.

Mr Petchey immediately banned 'spud guns' when a schoolboy craze broke out in mid-war. Said it was a waste of good food. Mr. Petchey was in the habit of making frequent tours of the premises and on his return to his office would enquire of any miscreants 'standing under the board' outside his office as to the nature of their transgressions for which they had been sent, and would administer smacks to the thighs on the spot. Very difficult to return to the classroom with tears in the eyes in front of one's classmates and if one returned smiling one was in danger of being sent back. How we envied those few 11 year olds with long trousers.

Fairly early in the war, school meals arrived in containers by truck from outside (sometimes late), and were served in the main hall. Tables were kept under the stage and moved by 'volunteer' pupils. Later the dinners were served in the class room nearest the Staff Room.

Mr. Gardiner held singing practice in the Hall after assembly - perhaps on one day a week, but after a couple of songs had a habit of telling us of his love of music and this lead to little actual singing. Mr. Petchey was aware of this and could be expected to turn up at the Hall after just a few minute's lack of singing. This lead to an immediate resumption. Senior boys were allowed to grow vegetables between the shelters on the A12 side of the playground and were allowed to call into classrooms to sell same. Also, Senior boys took over A12 crossing duties when the regular adult patrol man was absent.

Occasionally went home to Finchley Avenue for dinner, and on one occasion was stopped opposite the school gate by the Crossing Patrol as a long Army convoy was passing, (toward Harwich), several of us being kept there for 10-15 minutes. We were aware that our teachers had seen us waiting and received no reprimands for our enforced lateness. I remember Trucks of 9th. USAAF stationed at Boreham airfield driving up the School drive laden with servicemen. I believe that they were allowed occasionally to use the Gymnasium there.

On failing the 11+ and going up to the Seniors, I was taught by Mrs Petchey in Class 1A. I think that she left as male teachers returned from Active Service - probably in 1946-47. I understand that she had in fact taught at the Juniors for a short time.

I remember looking forward to Games afternoons on the field and usually in the winter Mr Hudson would enter the classroom, give a 'theatrical shiver', and announce that it was too cold outside and that we would have an impromptu 'Sports Quiz' in the classroom instead.

Do you remember Brian Wilder, 1946?

I was born in Chelmsford, at 111 Moulsham Drive, in 1939, right next door to Mel Rawlingson (another Moulsham Junior School Past Pupil who came into the world two weeks after me), and just a field (in those days) away from the school. I would love to make contact with friends from that time. My email address is wilder@smartchat.net.au and my postal address P O Box 128, Mosman, NSW 2088, Australia.

I remember attending a pre-school Kindy and being taken on the back of my mother's bicycle, sometimes during air raids. I guess I attended Moulsham Primary from around 1944-5 until around 1950. I have a long strip School photo from 1946.



We moved to Surrey just as I was about to start High School and returned to Chelmsford around 1956 when I attended the Mid Essex Tech to do my GCE exams. Above is a photo from that period showing me driving an Austin 7 in the annual Chelmsford Fair Parade through the town, with, right, a photo showing me as I am now !

I worked in book publishing in London until I got called up for National Service in 1959, which I served in the RAF in the UK and in Germany. Soon after I was demobbed, I married (Springfield Green Church) in 1961, a Dutch girl, Helena Haks, the daughter of family friends from Amsterdam. After two years back in publishing, in 1963 I was offered a transfer to Australia on a three year contract, and we came - and we're still here ! Helena has been a weaver all her life and is currently the VP of the NSW Arts and Crafts society, Craft NSW.

We've been lucky to get back to Europe nearly every year (holidays added on to business trips) and I spent the next forty+ years in book publishing. I was MD of Harper & Row Publishers (now HarperCollins) for 15 years, McGraw-Hill for 5 and then three as director of Melbourne University Press. We now live in Sydney in a largish home overlooking Sydney Harbour, close to Taronga zoo, which we've had for 31 years. We have three children, all born here in Australia, and five grandchildren. Our first born, Martijn, was partly educated at University level here (Hons degrees in Economics and Law), in the UK (Masters in Law at Cambridge) and a post masters diploma in International law at the International Court of Justice in the Hague. So he managed to sample all his cultural backgrounds during his education !

I'm retired now and enjoy travelling and playing tennis, which I learnt to play in Oaklands Park hitting balls endlessly with Mel Rawlingson ! Since we are only two minutes from Balmoral Beach, we swim a lot too ! I do hope some other past pupils from my time will remember me. I'd love to get in touch again.

Mel Rawlingson, 1946



Mel Rawlingson with (left) his schoolmate Jim Whybrow and (right) his wife Gai and Brian Emmett

Dr Carolyn Gibbs (Butterworth) 1956-60

Thank you to Carolyn Gibbs, one of four Butterworth children to attend Moulsham Junior School, for the following news and memories. Carolyn has also sent a photo of her class with Mrs Alty and Miss Pettet, along with names of some of her classmates. Given the space constraints of this printed issue of the Newsletter, we are saving the photo for the Spring 2009 edition. Carolyn writes:

It has been very thought provoking reminiscing on my schooldays at a point when I am beginning to plan to my retirement years! I remember some interesting times at the Junior School, some happy and carefree and some more troublesome, but all were character building in various ways and have shaped my interests and attitudes to later experiences. It must have been 1956 when I went into the Junior School as I know I transferred to Maldon Grammar in 1960. When I left Grammar School I decided to move away from home, go to work and see what life was about before settling into a career. I worked in a children's home in Nottinghamshire, then eventually returned to Essex to help open a training centre for what were then called 'mentally handicapped' children. From this I went to college and after a few years back in special education in Benfleet, I moved to a mainstream school and then eventually into headship in Basildon. After this I took a headship in Norfolk and then moved to Sussex to the Advisory Service, where after four years as a Link Adviser moved to my current role as Adviser for Continuing Professional Development. I have been married twice but have no children although I have had responsibility for many during my career. I spend my spare time travelling, gardening, visiting theatres and galleries and enjoy swimming and reading. I am also currently learning Spanish hoping to return to Peru to do some voluntary work with children when I retire.

I always got on well with my school work but I enjoyed the variety of experiences that were offered, both academic and practical and this has been a strong feature of my later years. Although I chose not to go to university, as I wanted to see what life had on offer, I have since studied through various professional development programmes and achieved a Masters degree, an MBA and a Doctorate in Education which I gained in 2006. So Moulsham must have laid good foundations for lifelong learning, and plenty of tenacity!

Some of my strongest memories are of playtime activities, for example the 'houses' we made in the piece of roadway to a gate near the air raid shelters. We used to make these houses from single layers of bricks wrapped in fabrics, colour the steps with chalk and arrange flowers in pots. Playtime was full of barter, exchange and competition for the best plot. Other outdoor activities were practising handstands on the field and also ball skills to see who could juggle most balls. I would get in serious trouble from my mother for going home with grass stains on my clothing and handstands were deemed to be very unladylike, but then I was quite a tomboy!

I also recall that crochet was in fashion as a playtime pastime, for some time and we would swap threads and share skills to create some unusual creations. Playtimes were certainly very full and creative and no doubt underpinned many of our later skills and interests. It is interesting how playtimes have become a focus for development in schools in recent years, perhaps health and safety eliminated those things we enjoyed as children.

Amongst my teachers I recall Miss Gurton who I think was a very young teacher; I think I found it quite difficult settling in as I had moved into the infant school in April before transferring to the Junior School. I had already learned to write cursively at Springfield School and this had not been taught at the time at Moulsham. I dutifully wrote and posted a letter as part of our English work, only to have it held up to the class and made to own up in front of all about writing in this manner! I expect my writing was just as undecipherable as it is now. I was forbidden to write cursively until taught the Moulsham way!

Miss Skilton was our music teacher and I always enjoyed singing and band. I think I played a drum and a triangle, nothing very musical. We had music in colour codes so we knew when to play and Miss Skilton played the piano. Outside school I went to piano lessons and my teacher said I would never make a concert pianist so perhaps that's why I had the percussion instruments! However it was in a singing lesson that I had my biggest disappointment as I was thrown out of the choir for not paying enough attention. I spent too much time looking out of the window! But then I still love being outside and with all those fun things we did at playtime - perhaps that explains why.

I still have a red tablecloth that I embroidered when Miss Pettet took us for sewing. It has a floral spray embroidered in white repeated around the edges. I had to trace the design by hand and keep my hands clean to sew it. It was entered in the competition at the Corn Exchange and achieved Highly Commended and on that occasion we met Cliff Michelmores who gave out the prizes. I also clearly remember making a pink and white sundress and doing cross stitch on binca canvas.

One of the classes I was in had a small library shelf where we could choose books to read and I remember reading about explorers such as Vasco de Gama, Christopher Columbus and others and finding out about faraway places. I always think my love of travel came from these awakenings and the stories my godmother who worked abroad as a nurse, told us. Most of our classrooms also had a nature table where we could bring in items from our weekend walks. In the summer we would do country dancing wearing black skirts with brightly coloured braid around the edges and at the end of term there would be a dance display in the quadrangle and a PE display for parents to see. The schools then had an outdoor veranda which opened onto a central grass lawn. This was lovely in the summer as it helped to keep the classrooms cool but in the winter the milk that was stored in the crates on the veranda would freeze. So would the toilets, which were very cold and certainly not built for lingering in!

I recall a rigorous and explicit system of testing in the 3 Rs; this took place monthly and the results were published on a list at the front of the class. Not only that but in one class I remember we sat in order of our results, so those at the front right were the 'tops' and those at the back left were the 'bottoms'. I am sure this would not be allowed today. I remember getting bored with sitting in the same row so I decided to not do very well one month to see what it was like sitting further across the class. This was not an exercise to be repeated I discovered, incurring wrath of parents and teachers! Similarly I also remember in writing that those girls who needed help with spelling got lots of attention so on one occasion I took my spelling book to ask for help but was clearly told I knew very well how to spell it and to sit down and get on with my work! In my later years as a teacher I often recalled these experiences which served to guide me in what I valued and to remind me of how things are perceived from the child's view. I often chuckled in amusement at my pupils' behaviour when they tried me out, knowing what a challenging pupil I must have been at times!

School trips to France in 1965 and 1971



Two visits to France, staying both times at the Ecole du Moncel near Paris. Above, 1965, trips to Chartres Cathedral and central Paris (boys only; note uniform with caps). Below, 1971, mixed group, more informally dressed, inside and outside the school building. These pictures are from Headmaster Mr Sturgeon's collection.



Was this Mr Picken? A letter from Don Smith, 1942:

"Very recently my wife Margaret and I had an intensive tour of WW2 Normandy beaches in the week of June 6th to commemorate the D Day landings on Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword beaches. This was with The War Research Society. We were on the bus approaching Hermanville-sur-Mer for Sword Beach. The tour historian was telling us of the series of events, facts and figures. He concluded this information by relating to us a story of a nurse from the town who, dressed in her uniform, passed by the German sentries and proceeded down onto Sword beach. Her aim was to help and assist with the wounded and injured soldiers there. Amongst the many she attended was a British soldier named Thornton who she ultimately befriended and became married to each other spending their lives together.

The historian went on to tell us that the War Research Society were told of this little human story by one of their travellers some ten years or so ago. He told us this traveller's name was Mr Harold Picken! Later that day I quizzed the WRS management about the incident but they could only recall it and could come up with no further details. I told them of Mr Picken from Moulsham School, how he had served in the war in the army and that this sounded just like him. They were impressed that this could well be so, also the fact that I was one of Mr Picken's post war pupils.

I feel deep down this was Moulsham's own Mr Picken."

Rounders and netball at Moulsham Juniors



1967: Under-14s Mid-Essex Rounders champions

Back row: Far left is Ralph Ricks and far right is David Gridley
Front row from left: Micky Gribble, Richard Geer, Richard Pinder

This photograph is from the collection of former Head Teacher Mr Tom Sturgeon, 1957-82. When we showed it recently to Mrs Poppy Donovan, also on the Moulsham staff for 25 years from 1957-82, she immediately recognised the winning rounders team which won the Mid-Essex Under-14s Rounders Trophy in 1967, beating various senior school teams on the way. Between them Mrs Donovan and Richard Geer have recalled some of the names. Do let us know if you can tell us more. Richard, who was a keen all-round sportsman, comments: 'I remember playing rounders under the supervision of Poppy Donovan very well... I know we went and played in external tournaments - was it at Boswells? I seem to remember that we very successful! Funny, but when I first started working for British Airways 30 years ago I started to play again.... it is taken very seriously in many parts of the country, and in fact the world. I still have my coveted Certificate from when I won the Turner Sportsmanship award in 1967 and my gift of a dictionary signed by Tom Sturgeon! It is still in pretty good nick!'

Netball Winners in 1981

Another picture from Mr Sturgeon's collection, this time the girls' netball team from 1981.

Let us know if you recognise any faces



Andrew Crowe in Mrs Tutton's class, 1979-80



Thank you to Andrew Crowe for sending us this picture of Mrs Tutton's third year class in 1979-80, and another from the following year which we shall include in a future issue. Names he remembers are:

Back Row: Lisa Diss, Karen Foster, Lee Green, Peter Jones, Neil Hibert, Russell Iliffe, Jane Delves, Clare Green. **Third Row:** Mrs Tutton, ?, Christine Clarke, Justin Hardy, Robert Hopkins, Nigel Hammond, John Hutchins, Judith Croxon, Jennifer Beale. **Second Row:** Kevin Knox, Laura Garvey, Judy Kraucamp, Nina Foley, ?, Janina Rich, Jackie Crabb, Claire Ellis, Andrew Cook. **Front Row:** Ben Cook, Andrew Huxon, Tony Martin, Andrew Crowe, Paul Crossley, Craig Lane.

1984 Sue Ellis in Mrs Healy's 3rd year class (Year 5)



Back row, from left: 1. Sarah Edwards 2. Simon Weedon 3. Rachel Blackman 4. Neil Clark
5. Lorraine Baldock 6. James Charlton 7. Michelle Butcher 8. Rachel Davey

Third row, from left: 1. Barry Roberts 2. Carl Butler 3. Yvette Bental 4. Hayley Denney
5. Anna Chigwell 6. Mark Allison 7. Stephen Fairhead

Second row, from left: 1. Karen Cleale 2. Dominique Blewers 3. Paul Carvell 4. Malcolm Murphy
5. Darren Denmer 6. Stephen Felton 7. Amanda Berry 8. Wendy Filomena 9. Mrs Healy

Front row from left: 1. Gary Kemble 2. Sue Ellis 3. Jodie Lamb 4. Claire Darcy 5. Michelle
Conway 6. Jennifer D... 7. Robert Brown

Sue Ellis writes: I recently attended the 2008 Moulsham Junior School Summer Fete, as my daughter Alisha is in year 3. I went to Moulsham Juniors myself when I moved to Chelmsford in 1982.

I came across the Past Pupils' table as we were walking round the fete, and noticed a file with photos from the 1980s. I had a look and was totally delighted to find this class photo from 1984, when I was in Mrs Healy's class. It was nice to be able to put names to almost all the children, as there was only one name written down before. [Note: we have since been able to add most surnames, but please let us know of any incorrect spellings]



The school has changed quite a lot since I went there, and the bomb shelters have gone at last. I remember my two years at Moulsham Juniors with great fondness, especially going to Kentwell Hall and Canterbury. The picture, left, is from the Kentwell Hall visit.

My daughter recently asked me what sort of homework we were given in my day. I chuckled and said it was 24 years ago and I can't remember if we had homework or not! I'm ashamed to say my memory isn't what it was when I was nine!

Former Deputy Head Glen Denham: From Moulsham to Mayhem!

As the Deputy Headteacher at Moulsham Junior School from Sept 2004 to Dec 2006 I was fortunate enough to experience some of the Moulsham magic. I had come to Moulsham from being an Assistant Headteacher at an outstanding Thurrock secondary school, Gable Hall. I always wanted to get back into Primary school teaching and the opportunity to work with Les Kemp was one that any aspiring Headteacher could not pass up. Working with Les was an honour and privilege and in my 20 years in teaching he stands out as the best Headteacher that I have ever seen... although he would lose paper work like water from a leaky bucket and it's only now from the safety of my new office in my new school that I can say that the coffee he made me every morning at 7am could strip paint and remove molluscs from the oldest seafaring vessel afloat! What stood out for me was his absolute love of children and the way he embraced the whole community His selflessness and never ending optimism in trying circumstances, were an inspiration to me and the staff.

I believe that the two key things that we need to give children at school before anything else is a sense of belonging and a sense of well being. He accomplished both easily and took us all along for the ride.

I left Moulsham to be the Senior Leader in Behaviour Management in Thurrock. I was also the Headteacher at the Secondary Pupil Referral Unit (an education system for excluded pupils) and in

charge of setting up two further facilities for students that would not be mainstreamed back to school. It was very challenging and enormously rewarding and heart breaking at the same time. An opportunity then arose for me to take up a position as a Deputy Headteacher at Woolwich Polytechnic School for Boys, the largest Boys secondary school in the UK. It's so big that I'm one of four Deputies.

The boys are from largely ethnic minorities and I am fortunate to be led by another outstanding Headteacher in Byron Parker. The 'Poly' is situated in Thamesmead in the borough of Greenwich and there is a great deal of deprivation in the area. The culture and the ethos of the school are superb and it is a real treat to be working here. The behaviour of the boys is outstanding and the results the school gets makes the Poly a national leader in Boys achievement.

My plans for the future are to become a Headteacher of a challenging inner city London School. However, I will always remember Moulsham Junior School with tremendous affection and I can only say that I was an extremely lucky teacher to have been a staff member there. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff members both past and present that I worked with. Their dedication and commitment is second to none and I believe that under Mrs Hughes they are extending their horizons and embracing new initiatives and exciting changes. Best wishes to the past pupils association and I commend their efforts as a key and vital link that keeps the past deeds of pupils and staff to the forefront of the pupils that are at MJS today. Lastly but by no means least, thank you to all the fabulous pupils at MJS. They made teaching there a very special time and the support of all the parents made my job so enjoyable.

Pictures from the May 2008 Open Afternoon



Left, former staff Carol Leverett and Poppy Donovan with Hilary and Kathleen. Right, Tudor dancing



Above, Brian Emmett and Peter Turrall at the welcome desk. Above, right, Teatime

Peter Smith, 1938, and the Young Generation

2008 is, for me, a year of anniversaries, for not only is it seventy years since I first stood in line in the playground of Moulsham Junior Boys School, waiting to be taken into my first classroom with its acres of glass windows, green roller boards, brand new desks, in fact brand new everything, but it is sixty years since I took my first steps on stage at the Regent Theatre and forty years since I was jointly involved in forming what is now known as the Chelmsford Young Generation Amateur Musical Society.



Looking at ten years with the eyes of an adult it seems no time at all but for a child, ten years can seem like an eternity. In the years between 1938 and 1948 much happened. We had six years of war for a start and at the end of it I lost my mother and had to grow up fast. It was then that someone suggested I might like to join the Chelmsford Operatic Society who were shortly to audition for their next production. I had always been interested in music so I thought I would give it a try. I was accepted and now sixty years later I am about to appear in my ninety seventh show in Chelmsford.

In 1968, the Operatic Society was fortunate enough to be given permission to stage one of the first amateur productions of Lionel Bart's "Oliver!" Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society had never needed a large group of children for a production before so we advertised and over ninety turned up for auditions. As the performing date grew nearer I got to wondering what was going to happen to all the 'kids' once the show was over - they were all very keen but there would be nowhere for them to carry on 'acting'. I mentioned my concerns to my friend Stan Parsons, himself an old Moulsham boy and Chairman of the Society, he agreed with me and not long afterwards we formed the CAODS Junior Section. Stan was on the P.T.A at Great Baddow School and managed to talk the Headmaster into letting us use the school as our base and to stage productions there in the Christmas holidays. Our first production was a pantomime "Robinson Crusoe", it was a great success and J.J.Gordon, the Headmaster, became a very good friend to us allowing us privileges which, in hindsight, were probably over generous. In 1973, for financial reasons, we became independent of our parent company. We adopted the name Chelmsford Young Generation and Mr Gordon became our President. The following year we engaged a new young, professional, director, Ray Jeffery, and from that moment our fortunes changed. Ray was a true professional and expected nothing but 100% dedication from us all. Under him we soon acquired a reputation for slick, fast moving musical productions and won critical acclaim from both press and public.

Whilst we were at Great Baddow, I think it is fair to say there was not a great deal of drama being done in the schools generally. Our members were drawn from schools all over the Chelmsford district, so we decided to stage some extra performances, during the last week of the Christmas term, and invite other schools, including Moulsham, to attend. We built tiered seating for Primmer Hall at Great Baddow School, and gave three or four performances to packed houses. The productions were quite spectacular with big sets and enormous casts and showed just what could be achieved on a school stage. These shows appeared to be greatly appreciated by our young audiences and I feel played some part in the subsequent resurgence of school drama in Chelmsford.

In 1978 we decided to stage a 'one off' production of "West Side Story" at the Civic Theatre. The day of our very first music rehearsal was marred by the sudden death of Stan Parsons, but with somewhat heavy hearts we carried on. The show was a huge success, and what was initially intended to be a one off presentation became an annual event. In time we transferred all our productions to the Civic and Cramphorn Theatres. In 1982 we took an already successful production of "Godspell" to the Waterford International Festival where we won several awards, including Best Post War Musical, the

admiration of the Festival committee and a greatly enhanced reputation which, I am told, is still remembered by the Irish to this day.

Although the Young Generation never set out to be a stage school, many of our three thousand former members have gone on to train for the profession and a number now have permanent positions in London theatres. Others are appearing with such prestigious companies as the Royal Shakespeare and National Theatres, one receiving an Olivier Award nomination, while still more are working in films, television and radio, one being an award winning investigative correspondent and presenter for ITV News.

As you may have guessed, I am particularly proud of Young Gen and whilst we pride ourselves on being 'Something to sing and dance about', at a time when media reports concentrate so much on the negative side of youth, I think we might also adopt the Moulsham motto " Each Working for All".

News in brief

Some of you may have seen pictures in the local press showing **Kes Gray**, 1968-72, at Colchester Zoo signing copies of his latest children's book, 'Daisy and the Trouble with Zoos'. Congratulations to Kes on his continuing success, and thanks for volunteering as one of the past pupils who came and talked to current classes during the 70th Anniversary celebration week. A great time was had by all.

Ray Hatherley, 1938, a schoolmate and lifelong friend of **John Reed**, also 1938, has joined our Newsletter distribution list and attended the 26th September reunion. He writes: 'I started at Moulsham Junior School in 1938 and left in 1942. When my family moved to Theydon Bois, my father got a job as gardener at Birch Hall. I got a place at the Mid-Essex 'Tech' in 1943, so we moved back to Chelmsford to Guy Harlings [in New Street, currently housing the Cathedral offices]. We lived in a converted barn, father was resident gardener, and we looked after the Cathedral School and Hall and of course the 5 acres of Guy Harlings. Early one Sunday morning we were in a mess when a doodle bug landed in the swimming baths. Luckily we were not hurt in bed, just covered in plaster and glass. We left Chelmsford in 1958 and moved to Ipswich.'

During the latest stage of her 'Friendsreunited' project, **Gerry Etherington** heard from **Douglas Nice**, who wrote: "I was a pupil at Moulsham Junior School from 1941 and the Headmaster was Mr Petchey (who lived in Sandford Road, and was also Chairman of the local National Savings Group.) During my stay in the school my teachers included Mrs Skipsey, Mr Hudson, Mr Gardiner. My sister **Kathleen** attended the Junior Girls' School. I have in my possession the brochure that was produced at the opening of the group of Moulsham Schools (Infants, Junior and Senior)"

Julia Pearce (Day) 1957, writes: 'My big sister June took the opportunity to remind me to get in touch. Some things never change in life! As I have been away from Essex since 1973 it was strange to find how many names in the Newsletter I could remember from a long time ago. I hope to be able to come to the meeting in the spring and look forward to having more memories revived. Please contact me or feel free to pass on my name to anybody who was a contemporary, either of me or my deceased brother, Michael.'

Anne Waters, 1963-64, emailed us after reading the Summer Newsletter: " As usual, I enjoyed going back in time to schooldays very much, even if it does always make me feel a bit nostalgic." Anne was unable to make it to the reunion, but wished us well and added: " I'd like to say 'hello' and pass on my best wishes to anyone who was in my class (1963-4) in the Junior Girls. If anyone remembers me they are welcome to email me at anne.waters@tiscali.co.uk ."

Others who sent their apologies and special greetings to those attending the September reunion include **Doug Fawcett**, **John Whittle** and **Peter Smith**, all 1938, and **Ted Caton**, 1941.

Martin Robb, 1963-7, recently discovered the Newsletter on the past pupils' page of the school website, and has written us an interesting article which we will include in the Spring issue.

We were pleased to meet **Barrie Stevens**, 1959, for the first time at the September reunion, and he too has written us an article for the next Newsletter.

Christmas 1944 - a poem by Diane Berthelot (Lawson), 1938

It's Christmas 1944

And Great Britain's still at war,
Mr Churchill keeps hopes high,
As the troubled days slip by.
Shopkeepers, by law, must look
At everybody's ration book.
Mum sweetly smiled at butcher Ben,
And he sent round a plump young hen,
It's in the oven slowly cooking,
Gran is basting it and looking
Just to see that all is well -
Oh, what a delicious smell.
It's dried eggs in the Christmas pud,
Not much fruit, but should taste good.
After all this Christmas fare,
Dad hands out small gifts with care.
In the corner stands a tree,
With twinkling lights - a joy to see.
Gran is rocking in her chair,
Pins are slipping from her hair.
She's had a drop or two of sherry,
And now she's looking pink and merry -
We'll have a sing-along till three
Then listen to His Majesty.

Another log goes on the fire,
And from the wireless sings a choir
We listen to the joyous sound,
While home-made sweets are handed
round.
We hope the siren will not go,
As it has just begun to snow.
The shelter is a street away
It shouldn't happen Christmas Day.
Blackout curtains are pulled tight,
It really is a chilly night.
I shed a tear for brother Len
Who's with the Army corps in Rennes.
Sister Lyn's a land girl now,
I'd love to see her milk a cow.
She never seemed a country girl,
Not like our little sister Pearl.
I pop my head outside to see
The snow now falling heavily.
Everywhere is still and white,
A fitting end to Christmas night.
Our cottage now is dark and still,
Please, God, bring peace - I'm sure you will.

Happy Christmas to you all



1974 Christmas decorations in the South ("Girls") Hall

School website

Copies of this and earlier issues of the newsletter from Autumn 2004, containing memories and photos from many other former members of Moulsham Junior School, are on the past pupils' page of the school website: www.moulsham-jun.essex.sch.uk/index.htm Well worth a look.

Data protection legislation

Please note that for the purpose of compiling the Past Pupils' mailing list, and for no other purpose whatsoever, your name and address is being held as a computer record. If for any reason you object to this, would you please inform us immediately in writing. Unless we hear from you, your consent is assumed.

The views expressed by individual contributors in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the Head Teacher, School Governors or Editors.