

Past Pupils' Newsletter

Spring 2007

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Greetings from Hilary and Kathleen

Welcome to the Spring 2007 issue of the Moulsham Junior School Past Pupils' Newsletter. As ever, we are grateful to all those who have written letters and articles, or chatted to us on various occasions since the last issue. In particular, we thank Pauline Digby (Knight) for the vivid memories of her friend Anne Holdsworth (Hammond) on page 6. Many of us will remember Anne's enthusiasm for local history and the stories and pictures she herself contributed to the Newsletter. She will indeed be greatly missed.

On page 4, we have notes from a fascinating morning's discussion with Cllr Philip Firth, whose connection with Moulsham as both parent and School Governor goes back 35 years. Currently Chairman of the Infants' School Governors, Cllr Firth has added substantially to our understanding of the role of Governor and the development of the Moulsham schools over the years. We hope to have more about Moulsham Infants in future issues, so do let us have any of your own recollections, as Adrian Smith has already done on page 12.

Not long now until the 7th annual Open Afternoon for past pupils, and we look forward to seeing many of you again from 1 - 4.30pm on Saturday 28th April at the school. Patrick Durrant (1947-51) is doing a magnificent PR job this year, bringing the reunion to the attention of local newspapers, radio and television stations as well as distributing posters to local shops. Some of you may have heard mention of the Open afternoon on Essex Radio, or seen the article in the Weekly News in late February, in which he encouraged past pupils from all eras, 1940s through to 2006, to join us on 28th April. We have already had several positive responses, and understand Patrick has even come across a past pupil on the staff of one of the local papers he contacted. We hope you too will encourage any former classmates you know to come along and enjoy the afternoon with us. If you have any photos from your time at school, do please bring them along - we will return any originals promptly once they are scanned in to our computer archive.

It is always interesting to hear from former staff at Moulsham Juniors, and we are pleased to have news from Mrs O'Riordan, Mrs Fox and Mrs Leverett on page 13. Hilary and Kathleen also enjoyed a coffee with Les Kemp just before Christmas, and were not surprised to hear that he is keeping very busy in 'retirement'. Among other activities, he is working both with trainee teachers, and actively promoting a scheme called 'Keep on Reading', which emphasises the importance of parents continuing to read books to their children even after they have become fluent readers. We look forward to seeing Mr Kemp again at the Open Afternoon. As some of you will know, Deputy Head Glen Denham left Moulsham Juniors at the end of the Autumn Term to take up a challenging position in charge of a unit for children temporarily excluded from mainstream schools. Mr Denham told parents that "My decision to leave was a tough one, but I was looking to extend my experiences and challenge my own teaching and move out of my comfort zone". We shall miss his encouragement and tremendous enthusiasm, and we send him our very best wishes for success in the new job. Mr Ceri Jones, currently at a Redbridge school, has been appointed to be the new Deputy Head from April.

As usual, please keep sending your photos and articles for 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.

Hilary and I wish you all a Happy Easter, and hope to see many of you at the reunion on 28th April,

Kathleen Boot (Nash)

Moulsham Junior Girls' School 1951-55

School News

Unfortunately Mrs Hughes is unable to provide a report for this edition due to personal reasons. We look forward to receiving her report in the next issue. Instead of the usual report from the Head, we have this time made a small selection of interesting extracts from this term's weekly school newsletters from Mrs Hughes to Moulsham Junior School parents:

(5th January)

Welcome back to 2007 and I hope it's a happy and healthy one for you and your families. The Christmas holidays flew by, and I hope you all had an enjoyable break. This term as usual looks like it's going to be a very busy one, with lots of events planned. Mrs Thomas is enthusiastically planning a science week in March for all of us to enjoy.

American Day - Thursday 18th January

On 18th January, our school lunch will have an American theme, with the following menu: Beef burger in a bun; Veggie burger in a bun; BBQ baked beans; sweetcorn; French fries; Ice cream and sprinkles. Children can wear non-uniform on that day, but it must include red, white and blue to keep with the American theme. There will be a free raffle with prizes for those children who have a hot school dinner. [It was reported the following week that 400 lunches were served - quite a challenge!]

Improvements to our playground (23rd February newsletter)

Great excitement this week. Our Landscape Architect met yesterday with myself and the school council and shared the initial plans for the school playground. They are very exciting, and as they are based on the children's ideas, are very grand and will probably be expensive. Areas planned include a vegetable and flower garden, stage and amphitheatre, shaded seating area, Tarzan trail and buddy bench. The architect is now going to give us some final costings and divide the work into phases. As soon as this is done, I will organise a display in school so that you can see the plans as well as the children.

Year 5 homework

Pupils in Year 5 [3rd year of Junior School] gave in their first homework project this week and we were overwhelmed by both the quantity and quality of the work. Pupils' presentations varied from word processed fact files to 3D papier mache models to powerpoint presentations. The feedback from pupils has been incredibly positive, which is clearly reflected in what they have produced.

Clubs

Throughout the term there have been reports on the amazing number of school clubs and after school activities enjoyed by current pupils. These include Choir, Science Club, Spanish Club, Bowls, Basketball, Mini-Bridge, Keep Fit Club, Games Club, Steel Band, Speed Stacking Club, Gymnastics, Netball, Tennis, Table Tennis . . . wow!

Dates for your diary

Past pupils living in or around Chelmsford are invited to come to an **Auction of Promises** at the school from 7-10.30pm on Friday 20th April, to raise funds towards the playground refurbishment project. The cost will be £5, to include a fish, chicken or vegetarian supper, and you may bring your own soft or alcoholic drinks. Please contact the school office for tickets - there is an upper limit of 90 tickets, first come, first served.

This year's **school fete**, to which you are also very welcome, will take place on Saturday 23rd June from 12 noon until 3pm.

Peter (Charlie) Smith, an enthusiastic youth-clubber in the 1950s, tells us there is to be a joint reunion for former members of the **Moulsham and Rainsford Youth Clubs** on 2nd June 2007 from 8-12pm, at the Chelmsford City Football Clubhouse on Melbourne. Tickets, £10, to include buffet and free raffle, are available from City Barbers in Upper Bridge Road, or contact the organiser John ("Nutty") Hazell on 01245 356784.

"WOT have you done wiv your TEEF?" Recollections from Councillor Philip Firth, Moulsham Governor for over 25 years

A few weeks ago, Hilary and Kathleen had the great pleasure of meeting Borough Councillor Philip Firth, who is Deputy Mayor of Chelmsford this year and has for over 25 years been an active and enthusiastic Governor of one or more of the three Moulsham Schools. He is currently Chairman of Governors for the Infants' School.

It was way back in 1964 that Mr Firth and his wife moved from London to the house on Moulsham Lodge Estate where they have lived ever since. They enjoy the 'village community' atmosphere of Moulsham Lodge, which was built in the 1950s. Like themselves, many other families have 'put down roots' there, with three generations of the same family having often all attended the nearby Moulsham Schools. Mr and Mrs Firth's own son, Stuart, started at Moulsham Infants aged 5 in 1972, and continued through the Juniors and Moulsham High School to University entrance.

In 1981, Mr Firth was asked by the late Bob Harmer, then County Councillor for Chelmsford South, if he would be willing to serve as a Governor at Moulsham. He readily agreed, and was at first on the Governing Boards of the Infants, Junior and High Schools. In those days, the duties of school governors were considerably lighter, and the Bank for which he worked was keen to encourage community connections and happy to allow Mr Firth the necessary leave of absence to attend the termly Governors meetings and school visits. In November the same year, Mr Firth was also elected Borough Councillor for Moulsham Lodge Ward.

The Head Teachers, when Mr Firth became a Governor, were Mr Andrews (High School), Mr Tom Sturgeon (Juniors) and Mrs Pat Sturgeon (Infants). Mrs Sturgeon, formerly Miss Purdie, had married Tom in 1976. In the Junior School, Mr Sturgeon was succeeded in 1982 by Mrs King, then by Mrs White (1992) and eventually Les Kemp (1994 - 2006). In the Infants' School, Mrs Sturgeon was followed by Mrs Tyson until 1997, when the current Head Teacher Mrs Alison Smith took over.

By the time Cllr Firth had spent his first three years with all three Moulsham Schools, the duties and responsibilities of school governor were gradually expanding and developing. The Bank he worked for was no longer so willing to allow him the necessary time off to serve at all three Moulsham schools. So for the next couple of decades he cut his involvement back to the Junior and Infant Schools, which were run by a joint board of Governors. More recently, just a few years ago, Central Government recommended that infant and junior schools should no longer have joint governing bodies. Having to choose between the two, Cllr Firth plumped for the Infants School. He has always enjoyed the particular spontaneity and outspokenness of very young children, as well as recognising the tremendous value and importance of the earliest years at school. I guess most if not all of us remember our first day at school, and the impact those early teachers and classes had on us.

An example of the Infants' directness and honesty which always makes Cllr Firth smile occurred one day when he was at Moulsham Infants after a visit to the dentist. Two of his front teeth had just been extracted. There was a fire drill at school that day, and as the children followed instructions and lined up in the playground at the end of the drill to be counted, one little boy turned round, stared hard at Cllr Firth, and demanded loudly for all to hear: "WOT have you done wiv your TEEF?"

Another story he told related to the Queen's visit to Chelmsford in July 1988, to commemorate the centenary of the Borough. As Mayor of Chelmsford that year, Cllr Firth accompanied Her Majesty on the 'walkabout' that day. The road was lined by excited schoolchildren, many of whom had brought a single flower or posy to offer to the Queen. As she approached, one small child, obviously very keen to present his offering, and totally oblivious of protocol, thrust the flower firmly through the railings and

hollered joyfully: "Ere y'are, Queen!" Cllr Firth was impressed by how relaxed and happy Her Majesty was with the children, after the formality of the earlier ceremonies at the Cathedral, Shire Hall and County Hall. As the Queen accepted more and more bouquets from the children, the flowers were handed on to a policewoman walking just behind. At one point the policewoman had disappeared to transfer a load of flowers elsewhere, and Councillor Firth found himself taking over the role. Both he and the Queen had a smile at the sight of the Mayor, in all his dignified robes and chain of office, processing along Duke Street with his arms piled high with flowers.

Earlier the same day, the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh were at the Borough Council offices to sign photos of themselves to adorn the Mayor's Parlour. The two photos were neatly laid out, surrounded by cardboard mounts and with specially bought pens ready for the signing. Unfortunately, the Queen's pen would not write - the lid having been thoughtfully taken off in advance, the nib had dried out. No problem, however. The Duke commented that this often happened and he had a simple and practical solution: Lifting one corner of the cardboard mount around the photo, he scribbled underneath it until the ink began to flow. Another instance of the Duke's down-to-earth and informal approach was his comment as he stood with Cllr Firth just before the formal lunch. The Queen herself had selected the menu for the occasion, together with a range of appropriate fine wines to accompany the food, but the Duke enquired jovially "Where's my pint, then?"

As the years passed, school governors have become ever more closely involved with the work of their school. At Moulsham Infants, sub-committees have been set up to advise on Personnel, Finance and Premises; Teaching and Curriculum; and, most recently, Salary Review. Cllr Firth serves on two of these, and is also responsible for liaising with teaching staff on the subject area of Art. In contrast to his early days, Cllr Firth now expects to be in school about once a week for various meetings and visits. This he very much enjoys. He quotes problem-solving as one of his principal motivations in life, and both as a governor and a councillor gets great satisfaction from being able to sort out a difficulty or help find a way forward.

Nowadays, induction courses are provided for new governors, together with specific courses on areas such as child protection. In addition to the governors appointed by local authorities, specialists with relevant experience in personnel, finance, etc can be co-opted, and play a very useful part in the work of the committees. Parent Governors, elected exclusively from parents of children currently at the school, also play a vital role. Like the Junior School, Moulsham Infants is fortunate in having an active and supportive Parents Association, called SMILE (Supporters of Moulsham Infants' Learning Experience). The Infants' School's recent outstanding Ofsted Report described a happy, well-run and very successful school. Staff, parents and Governors are all to be congratulated on this success.

We are grateful to Cllr Firth for sharing his experiences as Governor with us, and hope his obvious enthusiasm for the work may encourage others who may be considering this as an area where they too could make a contribution for future generations of schoolchildren.

Addresses

Thank you to all who have sent addresses of friends and family who were at Moulsham Juniors and would like to receive our Newsletter. We have added a dozen or so to our mailing list since the last Newsletter, and are now in touch with over 650 past pupils, not counting those who receive copies of the Newsletter via existing pupils. If you yourself move house, do please remember to let us have your new address. Many thanks!

A lifelong friend: Pauline Digby's tribute to Anne Hammond

Thank you to Pauline Digby, 1941-45, for this moving tribute to her schoolmate Anne Holdsworth (Hammond), 1943-5, who sadly died on 15th October 2006:

"Anne Holdsworth (Hammond) was born on 20th April at her home in Upper Roman Road, Chelmsford. I was just two years old and lived opposite the Hammonds, and was delighted to meet 'baby' Anne and watch her grow into a new playmate for me.



Anne started school at the Friars school, off Moulsham Street, which I already attended, and when we reached the age of seven we both came to Moulsham Junior Girls School. I was very proud to escort Anne to and from school twice a day, both carrying our gas masks. Princes Road (then the A12) was very busy with long convoys of Army lorries, but there was a school crossing patrol Officer to see us safely across the road - after the convoys had passed. On our way home after school, we loved to stop and chat to the airmen manning the barrage balloon. Anne and I were great friends, playing together in our virtually traffic-free road. In winter we made long slides down the centre of the road, on which our Mothers put salt at the end of the day, to prevent people slipping over during the black-outs. We played hop-scotch, marbles, and bowled our hoops and spun our tops up and down the road.

During the war years, we had sales outside our house and concerts inside, the money earned going to Mrs Churchill's Aid to Russia Fund. Our shed was used as a museum for pieces of Roman pottery and glass kindly donated by Colchester Castle museum. Both Anne and I had piano lessons with Miss Olive Beasley who lived in our road, and we often played duets together. After I moved to the other side of Chelmsford I did not see Anne very often until she moved from Gloucester Avenue to Baddow Hall Crescent.

Anne worked in the offices at Hoffmann's when she left Moulsham Senior school, and then in a local jewellers after she married. When her husband, Maurice, died, Anne learned to drive their Morris Maxi car and spent many hours helping neighbours and friends with transport, baby sitting and house and garden minding, also befriending local dogs and their owners. I visited Anne in St Joseph's Nursing Home three days before she passed away, and we had a lovely chat remembering our childhood, the fun we had together and our old neighbours. Anne told me she knew she would be with Maurice again one day and three days later that wish came true.

We shall miss Anne at our reunions - I think she only missed the last one through ill health - and she always looked forward eagerly to them. Many happy memories of Anne will remain with all those who knew her and her happy smile. "

Right: Anne (third from left) and Pauline (second from right) at the School Open Afternoon in 2000.



Two schools of thought, by Don Smith 1942-46

During the 1939/45 World War I attended three schools. The first was The Friars Infants' School which was in Friars Place, a short road linking Moulsham Street and London Rd. It's very difficult now to visualise it, if you stand alongside that teeming Parkway, which bisects our town centre. The Headmistress was Miss Amey, who you have read about in previous Past Pupils Newsletters.

When I was old enough, it was up to the new Moulsham School, standing straight and tall alongside Princes Road, which was, in those days, the official Chelmsford bypass. Again, it is hard to picture. After the ageing Friars School it was, to a small boy, slightly intimidating, but not for long though. Mrs Skipsey, Mr Hodgson and the headmaster, Mr Petchey treated pupils kindly and fairly, as did their colleagues.

The war was well underway at this time and young teachers were not available due to the call up for the three armed services. Our teachers were mature and very good. That however worked well for young innocent boys, who most nights were startled at being woken up to the sound of German aircraft flying overhead and then the frightening 'crumps', and huge bangs of their bombs which were falling all around. Fathers, in the main, were away in the services or out on Home Guard or Air Raid Precaution duties. So it was left to Mum to ensure we were looked after and comforted as both of us were crouching under the stairs or in a neighbour's shelter. Later came the indoor Morrison shelters. Being a little scared and frightened, (who wasn't at those times?), I would repeat over and over to myself our class register of names, almost thirty of them, in my head. I could hear Mr Hodgson calling them out in his own inimitable style. This gave me some small comfort as the list of boy's names in alphabetical order rolled through my head.

The teachers at Moulsham Juniors, either male or female, were a definite source of continuity, alertness and perception in those most harrowing times, though we children did not realise it then. Possibly the teachers themselves were also unaware, but they certainly had 'the right stuff' in bucket loads!. Sixty years on, the proof is in our newsletters. As a boy I wasn't the sharpest pencil in the box. Arithmetic was my bug bear. Other lessons I could cope with, but mental and general arithmetic would make my brain seize up to a standstill. 'Work and be Happy' was always an encouraging thought! The daylight and nightly air raids continued, and if arithmetic lessons were interrupted with us trooping off to the shelter, I would breathe a sigh of relief. An air raid was preferable to the brain-numbing mental questions fired at you, such as. 'If you bought goods for 3s.9½d, how much change would there be from 5 shillings?'. The 'houses', as I recall, were colours: I was in blue house. There must have been some brain-boxes in it, as usually more marks were achieved than the other houses. My contribution was minimal.

On the night of Sunday 13th October 1940, my Dad, along with his colleague, Percy Atkins, (Joan's Dad) were on A.R.P. patrol in Upper Moulsham and London Rd. The Mayor's house (John Ockleford Thompson CBE, DL, JP) received a direct hit from a heavy stray bomb. There was a huge explosion, and the Mayor and five others died instantly. My Dad, along with Joan's Dad, suffered from the blast, but were still able to attend the rescue along with others during the following hours. My Dad had much difficulty talking of this event in the months and years ahead. As time went by he suffered a breakdown. Long hours working at Hoffman's, together with nightly A.R.P. duties, all took their toll. Dad wasn't alone with ill health, physical and mental fatigue at this time. He was sent to Hillborough House, Methwold, Norfolk to recover, along with many more patients. He did recover, but never again was he his old self. In view of this he was transferred to Hoffman's factory in Stonehouse, Gloucester, three miles from the town of Stroud. Eventually he was allocated a prefabricated sheet bungalow, very, very basic, and it was set for Mum and I to join him. Therefore it was goodbye to Moulsham Juniors and hello to a Cotswold village school.

Stonehouse was a small Cotswold village at that period, in the country, but it did have a railway, canal, and a USAAF base not too far away. A college had been appropriated by the War Department, for the duration. Compared to Chelmsford, it was to me the other side of the world!. Exciting it certainly was. The train ride there, air raids en-route, the stations jammed packed by all the travelling service personnel, it was breath-taking: noise, movement, unusual sights, sounds and people in the thousands.

Once settled in Mum took me to the village school for enrolment. My Mum was half Welsh and proud of it. The village school headmaster was a Mr Hughes, a Welshman, so on introduction Mum felt easier. Until, that is, he accused her and her family of being foreigners and the like, invading his school with pupils from the other side of England. Mum could be prickly when aroused, and she brooded for days following this school interview. However, I was accepted, and joined all the Cotswold children.

The school was as unlike Moulsham Juniors as was possible. It was built of Cotswold stone, over the main doorway was a bell tower, not used as it was wartime. Girls to the right, boys to the left, then all classes were mixed, something I had to become used to. Below this imposing bell tower was a large engraved tablet, naming it a 'NATIONAL SCHOOL' erected in the very early 19th century then 'enlarged' around the 1860's, so it was old. The playground was wide, with recent classrooms erected on the far side, possibly to allow for the influx of us foreigners! The small lane leading down from the village to the school was shielded by plane trees.

My first day was good. In fact it was the start of two years that were memorable, quaint. In hindsight, a wonderful attribute, the classrooms we sat in were reminiscent of Miss Beedell's in the 'Little House on the Prairie' stories. Dark walls, high windows, a blackboard that always squeaked, old fashioned desks and inkwells. Not at all like Moulsham Juniors, with its green roll around boards, its many windows, and daylight always streaming in. My first impression was the local dialect, not at all like my Essex twang, but in this I was not alone. Several children, like me, were from pastures far away. If Moulsham teachers were mature, these Cotswold teachers were elderly, but they knew their job. Learning by rote was their way.

Then along came Miss Tyler, a younger woman, late thirties would be my guess. Short, plump, with her hair in a permanent bun. She wore brown sensible clothing and exuded maternal friendship. No one gave her any lip, and she could read stories that held us all spell-bound. She was well travelled, and her experiences around the globe were often wound into stories. I prospered well under her tutelage. After a few months we had tests and, lo and behold, I came second! First was a girl called Marina. At Moulsham I had always dragged along in the lower echelons. My parents were astounded. Dad had a theory, but wouldn't tell me what it was!

It was a long walk to the school, shorter if you went via the village, but who wanted that? We were all out for adventure. Over the fields, alongside the graveyard, more fields, then the school hove into sight. We adventurers were being beckoned for a few hours. Every trip to school was different in some way. The seasons changed: spring flowers, acres of woodland carpeted with bluebells which squeaked when pulled to give Mum a bunch at home; long hot lazy summers; a colourful autumn with fallen leaves deep to your knees. Snow, ice, sledges down the slopes, spring thaw with floods in the fields. At Christmas there was snow. The surrounding countryside, with the Frocester hills black in the distance, was similar to what Alfred Bestall painted for his many Rupert Bear stories.

The war as I had known it was non-existent. Only the wireless and the daily papers kept us up to date. In two years, only two air raids had occurred, with no sound or sight of the enemy overhead. That wasn't to say it applied to all the Cotswolds, they certainly had their share to cope with.

The war ended on May 8th 1945. My Dad was transferred back to Hoffman's, Chelmsford, in 1946. So my last week at Stonehouse School came around, then the last day. Lovely Miss Tyler, on that long ago afternoon, had me out at the front of the class and told them I was leaving, her hand rested on my shoulder. As a leaving present she gave me a large sea shell, which she had collected on her wanderings. "You will always be able to hear the sea in it, Donald", she said. To this day I still have it, and yes, you can still hear those waves.

On return to Chelmsford we had no house to live in, so my Nan had us live with her and my auntie. It was very cramped, but there was no alternative. We were once more back in the Moulsham area. Mum again enrolled me at Moulsham Juniors, once more meeting Mr. Petchey. Mr Hodgson, whose class I was allocated to, welcomed me back with me standing at the front, totally embarrassed. It was as if I had never been away. My new house was 'brown'. After a while I was moved into Mr Hymas's class, and his reports were usually, 'must try harder', 'must concentrate'. As expected, I was always in the lower half.

Then it ended. Seniors beckoned, worrying rumours scurried round. It was going to be tough stuff. All the fretting was unwarranted, however. Moulsham Seniors was very good. Then we moved into a house the other side of Chelmsford, and it was 'start all over again'.

News from William (Bill) Brown 1954-55

We were pleased to hear recently, via the friendsreunited website, from William (Bill) Brown, who was a pupil, albeit briefly, at Moulsham Junior Boys' School from 1954-55. Bill writes:

"I was one of several children who were transferred to Moulsham from Sandon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School in November 1954. We had been transferred from the Essex County Council Children's Home called Evebrook at Howe Green (the building is now a Nursing Home). Our new home was at Farleigh on New London Road, which later became the Hospice. I suppose about 8 of us went to the Moulsham Junior Schools, and my elder sister Jean and a few others joined the Senior school (Jean later became head girl).



Bill Brown at Moulsham Juniors

Moulsham Junior Boys was a huge culture shock. There were more children in each class than there had been in the whole of Sandon School, which catered for the whole 5-11 age range in one large classroom under the eagle eye of Miss Stanley. The new curriculum was obviously very strange and I can remember particularly having to write a composition on Chelmsford by-pass, which then ran in front of the school grounds. Unfortunately, having had a very rural upbringing until this point, I hadn't a clue what a by-pass was, so ended up writing a story about biplanes on a fly past. Mr Hymas was the class teacher and he must have been baffled by my story!!

The Headmaster then was Mr Petchey. He used to visit the top class on a Friday afternoon to read a story to us - I can distinctly remember being baffled by his choice which was 'The Thirty-Nine Steps' by John Buchan - a complete mystery to most of us. The class was organised so that, after our weekly

tests, the top pupil sat at the head of row one, with the second behind him and so on right round the class until number 36 sat in the far corner. Each week we had to move and hoped to reach the top!! Who says competition is bad!

We were separated from the girls' school by a wire fence, and each school was a separate unit, although we did visit for the occasional assembly. I can still smell the sweet aroma of cheap perfume to this day!

Playground games included marbles - everyone had a bag full - and cigarette card flicking. We also played miniature cricket with marbles and half a ruler as a bat. Tennis ball lobbing over the roof also seems to have featured. Fights were commonplace and I remember having a dust-up with a lad called Martin Everett, egged on by my best friend David French. The fight finished in the Head's room where we both received a slippering. Other pupils' names I remember are David Barnes and a lad who went on to play County Cricket for Essex, Brian Ward I think his name was.

We used to walk to school via Oaklands Park where naturally the playground was a great attraction and where I lost my front teeth in an accident on the slide and never made it that day! (Thanks to Tony Allen from the Farleigh Home, who attended Moulsham Seniors with his sister Dorothy; his younger brother, Freddie also attended Moulsham Juniors). I seem to remember an old Army truck parked permanently just past Longstomps Avenue on some waste ground, which again proved an attractive plaything!

The School Hall had an honours board, sponsored by Mr WCC Turner, that listed all the Eleven Plus 'successes'. I'm not sure what his connection with the school was, but he photographed us all on the grass and gave us copies to keep as mementos, a print of which I still have somewhere, and if I can get the technology sorted out I'll send a copy. The Eleven Plus itself was conducted at the Grammar School where we sat on huge chairs, legs swinging in the air and noses just about reaching over the top of desk lids. We were tested in mental arithmetic, arithmetic including problems, English Grammar, story writing and finally an intelligence test! I was keen to see my name in lights, and not surprisingly failed the exam at the first attempt, but succeeded after an 'oral' examination. I can never remember seeing my name on those boards and have always wondered what happened to them. Does anyone know where they are now? I subsequently became a boarder at Colchester Royal Grammar School and moved on to University before enjoying(?) a career in teaching."

Editor's note: We hope to meet Bill at the Open Afternoon this year. Yes, the honours boards are still stored at the school, and will be brought out again for display on that occasion. Bill has now tracked down and sent us the group photo he mentioned, of Standard IVA in 1955, taken by Mr Turner, and another of the Farleigh Home children, including Bill's sister Jean. We will display these at the Open Afternoon and print them in the next Newsletter, when we plan to have a glossy page of photos. As for Mr Turner, whom many of you have also mentioned in the past, we did some research in 2001 and produced an article about him in the Autumn Newsletter that year which we have copied to Bill. We will gladly send a copy to anyone else who may like to see it.

Kes Gray, 1968-72, dedicates a book to Moulsham Juniors

Fantastic that Kes Gray has dedicated his latest story book, Twoo Twit (with gorgeous illustrations by Mary McQuillan) "to all you bright sparks at Moulsham Junior School". The story is about a silly young owl, who will not go to school. We will have a copy on display for you to see at the Open Afternoon. Kes tells us he is currently busy writing more Nellie the Monster Sitter stories - do look out for them!

Silver Jubilee Pupil: Alison Barker's School Books, 1977-79

Alison Barker is clearly a well-organised person, having kept her neatly-written exercise books and projects from Moulsham Junior School for thirty years and more. We are delighted that she has now passed them on to us as part of our growing record of the life of the school.

Alison started at Moulsham Juniors in 1976, with Mrs Healy as her first year teacher, Mrs Clarke in the second year, and Mrs Donovan in the third year. Her time here included the Queen's Silver Jubilee year, noted in Alison's 'School News' diary on Friday March 11th 1977 with the following entry: "At school, because it is the Queen's Silver Jubilee (25 years on the throne), our school celebrated by buying 3 silver birch trees. Mr Petchey, who was headmaster for twenty-eight years before Mr Sturgeon, came and put some earth in it, like the Queen does." On a more personal note, the same day, she records under 'My News': "On Thursday, I sold my bike to someone and I got my sister's, and my sister got a lovely good new one." Younger sisters everywhere will sympathise!

Alison's first and second year 'Listening and Reading' workbooks, which others of you may also remember, formed part of a series produced for schools by the Science Research Association. The exercises seem to have consisted mainly of gap-filling, multiple choice listening tasks, puzzles and riddles, with Reading Progress Charts for the pupil to keep a record of their achievements. In the third year, more traditional English exercise books (red cover) appear, along with Maths books (grey cover) and an impressive collection of individual projects. Maths was clearly a strong subject, with extensive work from 'New Oxford' or 'Beta' textbooks, covering fractions, pounds and pence (definitely simpler than pounds, shillings and pence!), calculations in metric measurements, as well as the old favourites of long division and multiplication.

Alison's third year English exercise books bear witness to a thorough study of punctuation, grammar, and vocabulary. There are also regular comprehension tests and what, in the 1950s, we called 'compositions'. One of the latter, entitled Helping Others, includes this universal insight into family interactions: "At home I help my mummy do the washing. I also help her with making the beds, and doing the cooking. I help my Grandma and Grandpa up the stairs as they are old. I help my dad wash the car. Sometimes they make me help, when I do not want to. Other times, when I want to help, they just tell me to get out of the way." Ah yes, we remember it well.

Another interesting exercise, this time from April 1978, was to write about changes you would like to see at Moulsham Juniors. Alison's wish list included

- "having girls in one class and boys in another, as I want to sit next to girls",
- not having to do homework, because "we are not meant to have homework, but the teachers think we like it. Most homework is projects. When I am doing my homework and my friends are playing outside, I feel I want to play with them"
- "more sports equipment, so we could have more games"
- "swimming about twice a week, because I'd like to learn to swim", and
- I would like to have games drawn on the playground, such as mazes etc"

We suspect today's pupils might well come up with similar lists, and of course the reorganisation of the playground is a project of intense current interest at Moulsham Juniors, as Mrs Hughes mentioned in last term's Newsletter.

Despite her mild grumbles about homework, Alison produced an impressive array of projects on a wide range of topics, neatly written and beautifully illustrated, with a special affection for postcards and felt-tip pens. Each is stapled inside a light card cover, again carefully designed and illustrated. The subjects are: The North American Indians and Hiawatha; About Castles; About Cats; Florence Nightingale; Use the Green Cross Code (this one includes a lot of arithmetical work relating to

transport and traffic, as well as pieces on road signs, traffic lights and keeping your bicycle in good order); and a project following up a visit to the London Planetarium and Zoo.

Very many thanks to Alison for letting us have these exercise books and projects. We will have them on display at the Open Afternoon, and would love to hear from any others of you who have kept schoolwork from your days at Moulsham Juniors. Individual 'projects were certainly already in use at Moulsham Junior Girls' School in the 1950s and maybe earlier. Perhaps others of you can recall writing and illustrating them? Hilary and Kathleen (1951-55) remember, for example, writing a series of chapters on the different ingredients of a Christmas pudding, learning where and how sultanas, oranges, flour, eggs, suet etc are produced, together with a history of Christmas customs and the chance to stir a real pudding under Miss Barton's watchful eye. If the newspapers are to be believed, project-based learning is once again very much on the agenda as a means of combining different areas of the curriculum. What goes around does seem to come around.

Hilary's project on Currie's farm

Hilary and Kathleen remember another project from their days at Moulsham Junior Girls' in the early 1950s, which involved walking along Princes Road in a crocodile, to inspect and admire the potato clamps in a field belonging to Currie's Farm. Potato clamps were long ridges of earthed-up stores of harvested potatoes, if our memories serve us aright. In those days, Currie's Farm extended from Princes Road to Beehive Lane and beyond, surrounding the new Moulsham Schools and taking in land which has since developed as Moulsham Lodge and Tile Kiln estates. Many of you have recalled walking across the meadows to school, and many of your parents and grandparents, including Hilary's father, may have worked on the farm or in the office over the years. Hilary is currently gathering up memories of the farm and its lands for an article in the Summer Newsletter. She is already in touch with one or two other past pupils, but would love to hear from any of you who may have more information or recollections to contribute. Emails or letters to Kathleen or Hilary, please.

Coconut slice

Hilary is once again busy baking cakes for the Open Afternoon, among them the popular coconut slice. For those who would like to have a go themselves, here is the recipe:

Ingredients:

Base: 2oz margarine
2oz caster sugar
4oz self-raising flour
1 egg
3 tablespoonfuls raspberry jam (mashed)

Topping: 3oz coconut
3oz caster sugar
1 egg

Method: Grease and line a 7" square cake tin. Cream the margarine and sugar. Add the flour and egg. Spread over the base of the tin. Spread the top with jam. For the topping, mix the coconut, caster sugar and egg well together, and spread over the jam. Cook above the centre of the oven, gas 3, 160 degrees centigrade or 325 Fahrenheit, for 30-40 minutes or until the topping is evenly brown. When cold, remove from tin and cut into slices.

Your letters

We were delighted to hear from several of you who were able to put names to faces on the photos included in the Autumn 2006 Newsletter. First of these was from **Linda Sewell (nee Pavitt)**, 1960-1964, who recalls: "The boy with blonde hair on page 6, top right photograph, next to the chair, is Stephen Woodyard. He later went to Maldon Grammar School, as I did. The girl with Miss Pettet on page 7, top photograph, is Gail Whetnall. She later went to Chelmsford County High School for Girls." Thank you for these names, Linda. We will add them to the record. Linda also wrote about the article on Miss Skilton [p. 8], on being picked to sing in Assembly: "In my first year at the Junior School I was picked to sing the 3rd verse of 'Around the throne of God, a band'. In my last year I was 'promoted' to sing a verse of 'All creatures of our God and king', the 'Allelujah, Allelujah' being considered high notes! This experience must have done me some good as I have been singing in various groups ever since. More recently as an alto in St. Cecilia Choral Society and, currently, as a soprano in Chelmsford Singers Choral Society.



I was in Mrs Alty's class in my final year. I remember going to Mrs Alty's house, in Springfield, for tea(!) and meeting her only son Richard who she adored (was she a widower?). I also remember doing the Saturday morning shopping for Headmistress, Miss Pettet, at the local shops, Moulsham Lodge parade and taking it back to her bungalow for her to unpack. Would that be allowed nowadays? - probably not!"

Adrian Smith, 1948-52, writes: "I am able to tell you that the Infant School Headmistress shown on page 6 of the Autumn 2006 Newsletter is Mrs Davies. I met her once, when I spent half a day observing in the infants' School as a student teacher, starting my post-graduate training (I also spent a day in the Junior Boys' School, and three weeks teaching in the Senior Boys, a time I enjoyed very much). Mrs Davies said to me: "The Infants' Schools may be the Cinderella of the education system, Mr Smith, but I can assure you all the problems start here". She did not know she was preaching to the converted - I have always thought that what happens to children in the very early stages of life count the most. My own enthusiasm for maps and exploring the countryside goes back to pushchair days. My father's grandmother gave him some foreign postage stamps when he was four, and he ended up as President of the Essex Association of Philatelic Societies!



"Mrs Davies was a smart young woman, and a contrast to Miss Roberts, who ruled the Infants in my days there (1946-48). Miss Roberts was peppery and fierce. I have never forgiven her for bawling out in front of the whole school: "Adrian Smith, stop picking your nose!"

From **Jenny Pickles (Hann)**, 1951-55: "I enjoyed reading the latest newsletter. A familiar name in this edition for me was Cynthia Baines, a year younger than us, she and her siblings lived in or off Loftin Way, near me, and I think we might have been in the same Brownies or Guides group." Jenny also had the pleasure of meeting up with former classmate **Hazel Richards (Offord)** in Australia in the autumn, and enjoyed shared excursions to the city of Sydney, the Blue Mountains, and a day at Kuringai National Park.

Alan Brown, not himself a Moulsham past pupil, got in touch via friendsreunited to say: "I am trying to get information on Moulsham Secondary Modern Boys' School in Princes Road, Chelmsford. I came across a book awarded to a John Gardiner in 1956-1957 for 'service and leadership as a school prefect'. It would be nice to find out if he wanted his book back. The headmaster's name was Mr J.V.Jenkins. I bought the book from a second hand stall and John Gardiner's was inside." Alan has now kindly sent us the book, *Flames in the Sky* by Pierre Clostermann, a set of 'inside stories' about war in the air, including what happened at Pearl Harbour. If any of you are in touch with John Gardiner, do please let Kathleen Boot know, so we can arrange to return the book to him.

By coincidence, **John Daldry**, 1947-51, has sent us a photo of Moulsham Senior Boys' School prefects just two years earlier in 1954/55, taken on the front steps of the school. This includes Headmaster Mr Jenkins and Deputy Head Mr J F Smith, together with some 19 prefects. Many of these lads would have been at Moulsham Junior Boys' School before 'going up to the Seniors'. Together with his former schoolmate **Tony Pennack**, John has succeeded in identifying 14 of the boys on the photo. We will print the picture and names in the next Newsletter, and have both on display at the Open Afternoon.

Apologies to **Ray Allen**, whose 1947 photos of his schooldays appeared on page 4 of the Autumn 2006 Newsletter. Ray points out that "In the Maldon Photo, unfortunately Bruce Pinder and David Harper have joined to become Bruce Harper". We will correct this on our master copy.

News from former Moulsham teachers

From Mrs Valerie Fox:

"The Autumn 2006 Newsletter brought back so many memories, particularly of the staff with whom I worked. At the time I joined Moulsham it was an all boys school, a bit daunting and unheard of for me as I did not have many years experience. Headmaster Tom Sturgeon was having difficulty finding a new member of staff and interviewed me in his lounge one Saturday afternoon just before the beginning of term, offering me the post on the spot. He must have been really desperate!! I joined at Easter 1965 and left at Christmas 1966 as I was expecting our first baby. They were five of the happiest terms of my teaching career. We were a close knit team and everyone supported each other through good and bad times. We met socially as well as at work - Tom somehow managed to persuade a group of us to go to barn dances! I kept in touch with Tom until his death and am still in touch with Poppy Donovan.

My husband worked for Xerox so we moved around quite a bit including a four year residency in the U.S.A. We have a son and daughter, both married, 2 grandchildren and another expected in May. Four years ago we moved to the Cotswolds and tell ourselves every day how lucky we are. It is so beautiful. I also have a very good friend, Diane Lawrence who attended the school and goes to the reunions along with her sister. It would give me the greatest pleasure to receive the news letters- unfortunately I don't have any photos of those days but I do have very happy memories."

From Mrs Carol Leverett:

"I was delighted to receive the Moulsham newsletter this weekend - Mary Ubee was with me and it prompted us to mull over past times together! I would like to be included in any future mailings and I will hunt out old photos which may be of interest. 28th April is in my new diary already!"

From Mrs Anne O'Riordan:

"Thank you for the copy of Moulsham Junior School's Past Pupils' Newsletter. It is very interesting reading, and good to see pictures of Tom Sturgeon, Head-teacher in my time! I taught at the school from 1979-85, and thoroughly enjoyed my time there."

Obituary for Ray Bradshaw 1940 to 2007

We are very sorry to hear of the death of Ray Bradshaw who, who attended Moulsham Infant and Junior Schools from 1945 to 1947 (Infants) and 1947 to 1951 (Juniors). Ray started school together with Gerald Britton, who writes:

"It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of Ray Bradshaw. Ray collapsed and died suddenly whilst on a walking holiday on the island of Madeira with his wife Chris.

Ray left King Edward Grammar School in Chelmsford to go to Durham University where he studied Maths and Physics before embarking on a career in computer sciences. He spent much of his time working overseas in Yugoslavia (where he met Chris) and Singapore in the security printing industry. He was keen to help young people and had great interest in the West Bank Symphonia and the Woodland Trust, both of which were associated with the education of the young. He was also a keen sailor, crewing for friends and going as far afield as the Bay of Biscay.

Ray's mother, Mary, is still living on the South Coast, close to his sister, Barbara, who also attended Moulsham Infant and Junior Schools. Ray leaves a wife and two daughters, Clair and Alice."

Copies of this and earlier issues of the newsletter are on the past pupils' page of the school website:

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

Data Protection Legislation

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