

**COLCHESTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**  
**OLD GIRLS'/ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION**  
**NEWSLETTER – Spring 2021**

**Editor's Notes**

Many thanks to all those who have sent such interesting articles for this newsletter - this is certainly a bumper edition! I hope that these will inspire you all to write down your memories or how you have managed during the last year in lockdown. What have we all been doing with ourselves? Please let me know! It is not difficult to email me (or call me for my postal address) and no great literary work is required. There is also hope that we may have some events later in the year!

Kate Stubbs, the Marketing and Communications Manager at the School, is very interested in the history of the school and has set up a project to record items digitally so is asking for help - details in "News from the School". She is also hoping to acquire School Magazines since 1954.

Information, news, comments, photos and articles for the next Newsletter by 31st October 2021.

Contact details: Liz White: Tel: 01206 522713 e-mail: [alangwhite187444@hotmail.com](mailto:alangwhite187444@hotmail.com)

Can anyone throw any light on the picture taken below? No date is given but styles look late Edwardian or slightly later and so could be from the first days at the Art School in High Street (now the Co-operative Bank) or at Grey Friars. Does anyone recognise the round window or the fan light above the door?



**Events?!**

I really don't think that these sentences warrant the above heading! I am so sorry that all our events had to be cancelled during 2020. We were hopeful that perhaps the Garden Party would go ahead but at the time it seemed sensible to add that to the postponed list. We will be positive and are hoping that our annual Garden Party will take place this year on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> August but this will be confirmed later.

Jean Johnson Tel: 01206 579688

## What we remember from certain mistresses at school

Members of the committee were reminiscing on how certain aspects of our time at CCHS still reflected on our everyday lives. These are their memories of English and spelling.

**Mary Rickard** - I remember Mrs Learmont (who terrified me) telling us shiny new Lower Fourths in our first lesson that her surname was pronounced "Lurmont, not Leermont, as in 'learn' your lessons, girls". I told my father that when I got home and he said 'let's hope you don't have to study King Lurr'! It's always stuck in my mind since!

**Tina Powell** - I also remember the terrifying Learmont lecture. Also, that one collar and two socks were always necessary. Don't forget the difference between due to and owing to (with most of the world getting it wrong!); similar to, but always different from and, of course, the fact that Latin 'circa' meant around, so we can never do anything under certain circumstances!

**Liz White** - My memory is from Miss Overy "all right is not all right unless all right is two words"!

**Jo Edwards** - I can remember being told, both at Hamilton Road and CCHS, not to use the word 'nice' unless referring to the place.

**Jean Johnson** - We were bombarded with the correct spelling of the word 'government' - it always has an 'n'. My son, Nick, only spent one year at Hamilton and if ever I use the word 'nice' he still corrects me! Brainwashing in the early years seems to work.

Can you add to these? Please let me have your lifelong aides-de-memoires for our next issue.

## News from Old Girls

### OVERCROWDED

#### **Daphne Jones (Drabble) 1958-65**

When I started at Colchester County High School in September 1958 the building was almost new - about a year old. I recall going up Norman Way one very snowy day in January 1958 to take the eleven-plus exam at the school. I remember sitting at a desk in the hall taking the arithmetic, English, general and essay papers. I found the building wonderful. Like most I was used to old-fashioned school buildings and the CCHS had indoor toilets! Hamilton Road Infants and St John's Green Juniors had outdoor toilet blocks, and I expect most schools were similar. At the new CCHS (*right*) we also admired the big windows which we could look out of. Victorian and Edwardian schools had high windows in their classrooms, which primary school pupils were not tall enough to look from. The gym was marvellous too. I just longed to pass my exams and get a place at the school.



Starting in September 1958 had a few debits, but not many. There were a few leaks in ceilings when it rained, but buckets put out for the water was okay. The older teaching staff missed the beautiful building of Grey Friars, but we couldn't understand their feelings. We preferred modern things. We had not learnt in the late 1950s to dislike flat roofed buildings with all glass walls, which peppered town life in the 1960s!

We soon found, however, that the school was a little overcrowded. We were a large school year - five forms of about thirty pupils in each. The planners ought to have seen us coming, but they didn't. The builders soon arrived to take down the outside wall of the dining hall and an extension was built.

Then it was found that there was a shortage of classrooms. The year of girls following us in September 1959 was less numerous, but was still four forms. Where could the school put everyone? We all had a form room, but it seemed not enough rooms for all the lessons. They solved the problem by borrowing two

classrooms from Prettygate Primary School. Prettygate School was another quite new building, as most of this estate had new houses and new shops. The primary school had infants and only two junior years. They had not yet their third and fourth year juniors (now known as Years 5 and 6). In school year 1959-1960 we went over to Prettygate for some lessons. The two rooms I remember kept us separate from the primary school pupils. They had their own toilets and cloakrooms. We went, I remember, in a bus from the end of Norman Way in the mornings once a week or once in the six day timetable. At lunch time we made our own way back to our school via Bluebottle Grove. There didn't seem to be a problem of where to put everyone at Norman Way during the afternoon. Perhaps we used the dining facilities and hall in the afternoons? I can't remember.

During that school year two new pre-fab form rooms were erected. These were rooms U and V. I was in one of these in both my Lower V and Middle V years (Years 9 and 10). They were pleasant rooms with windows on both sides. They had their own cloakrooms and toilets, and were well heated. I expect they have long since disappeared for new buildings.

In one of those years we had a school fair planned to raise money for the school swimming pool. But we had made an error! The date clashed with the FA Cup Final. What would we do? The Dads especially would not come. They would want to watch the match on television, and there was no way then to record the final. Then an idea occurred. We would hire a couple of television sets and put them in the pre-fab classrooms. They could bring their families in their cars and watch television whilst their wives and daughters wandered round the stalls outside and spent money. I believe the fair did well!

### **Joan Gurney (Appleton 1938-51)**

#### What Joan did next - Part 3

The 1960s were some of the most exciting and enjoyable years of my life, and as the decade neared its end, I looked back on the numerous changes which had taken place since my childhood and schooldays at CCHS. My haircut had evolved from the tied-back-with-a-bow style dictated by the school regulations that nothing should hang below the collar, to the 'frizz' influence of the post-war home perm and the 'bee-hive' of the late 1950s, before finally settling into a version of the Mary Quant bob with a fringe, which I have retained ever since. The long flowing curtain style was just beginning.

Post-war economies saw girls' dresses and skirts made from recycled fabrics. These, in turn, gave way to the delicate pastel shades and patterns of Horrocks cotton dresses in the 1950s. I still have several. Then came the brilliant colours of the 1960s - but the red, white and blue check of the CCHS summer wear went on and on! Television also established itself in the 1950s, but still only in black and white. By the 1960s it was beginning to replace the radio as a form of evening entertainment. Twenty years earlier I remember returning each day from school to listen to Children's Hour with Uncle Mac, and some years later, Dick Barton, accompanied by its captivating theme music, The Devil's Gallop.

Becoming a mother in 1966 gave me new eyes to look at children's playground games. In my Preparatory years at Grey Friars, break times were taken up with skipping, ball games, hopscotch, cat's cradles and glove puppets. During one term at CCHS we each made our own glove puppet and gave a performance in a makeshift box theatre (*right*) on the Grey Friars tennis lawn. The cat, front stage, was my own handiwork and the forerunner to our first real piece of needlework - a pair of knickers in the school summer dress material! Some fitted, many did not! A partial revival of the puppet era saw Andy Pandy dominate children's television programmes in the late 1950s and early 60s.



The game of marbles seems to be the only remnant of past playtimes which has survived throughout the successive decades. I remember playing a hybrid game of marbles, called 'Wallsie' against the wall of All Saints House which backed on to the Grey Friars playground. This game gave the winner a scoop of up to ten marbles instead of a single one. It also gave me a passion for hiding away and storing the older, more interesting decorative ones as a collection. Many years later this inspired our son, aged 6, to do the same

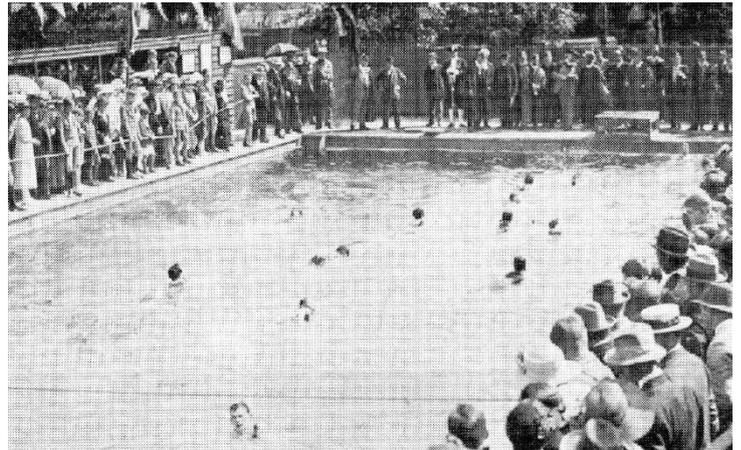
when he wanted something to collect. By the time he went to university ten thousand rolled around the house!



A new liberality pervaded the 1960s but it was also a decade of contrasts - the cropped hair of the skinheads and the long hair of the hippies, the platform soles of girls' shoes and the beginnings of the stiletto heel (*left*) which would continue to punish posh wooden floors with a rash of miniature craters punched into the surface! What would Miss King, the CCHS headmistress in my time, have thought of these successors to the black lace-up plimsolls and stout outdoor shoes?

So many dramas and real-life stories unfolded in the newspapers during the 1960s that there was no need to seek out the stimulation of fiction. The Profumo Affair came to light and the defection to the West of the Russian Ballet's superstar, Rudolf Nureyev, in 1961 and his subsequent remarkable dancing partnership with the much older Margot Fonteyn which rejuvenated her.

Underlying all this uncertainty was an apparent frustration inherited from the 1950s when many people felt that the school leaving age of 15 and the lack of schools with sixth forms and post-school opportunities to study new subjects and develop new interests, gave very few the chance to go to university. The Central Council of Physical Recreation was one of the first organisations to recognise this and in the mid-1960s they started to introduce courses for adults who had never learned to swim. Most state schools did not have their own swimming pools, and other pools where tuition was available were few and far between.



CRGS had a freezing cold open-air pool built in 1923 (*right*) and CCHS did not have its own until 1962.

One of the first swimming courses for adults organised by the CCPR took place one evening a week at the old Garrison Pool, and I was fortunate to be asked to be one of the tutors. I adapted my teaching techniques and used a variety of learning styles, as I thought fit. The whole experience was an eye-opener at that time. Motivation, attendance and success rates were high and the courses were repeated for several years, eventually being taken over by the Colchester Evening Institute, as it was then called. I was no longer teaching full time having swapped the classroom for the swimming pool after our son was born. Swimming teaching fitted into weekends, evening and school holidays when Gerald, my husband, was free from his teaching post at CRGS and could child-mind. Bedtime, bath time and supper time took on a new dimension!

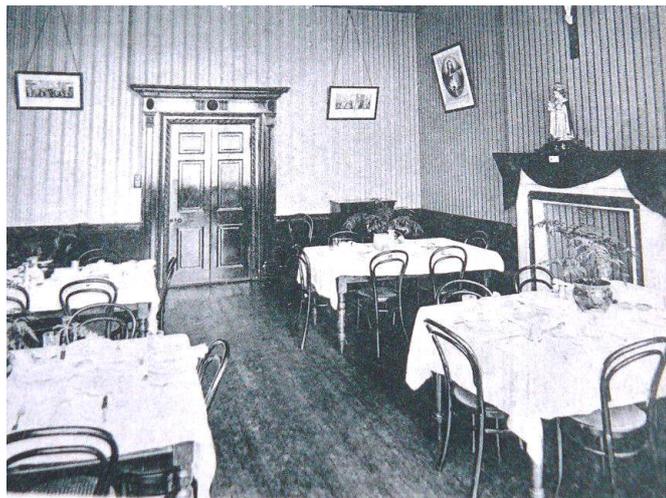
The breakdown of barriers in society continued but there was still frustration felt by many people that they had not had the opportunity to go to university. I did not fully appreciate that, in the 1950s, only 4% of school leavers went to university, but now I feel very privileged to have been part of that percentage. This inadequacy was to be put right by Jenny Lee in Harold Wilson's Government at that time. With great foresight and extensive and magnificent planning the Open University opened in 1971 - satirically called 'The University of the Air'! Intended for anyone with or without any previous qualifications, its academic year ran from January to December. With my newly acquired experience of how adults learn from my tutoring of the CCPR swimming courses, I felt I must undergo this new format of education for myself and so I enrolled as a student. I could not possibly have foreseen that this innovative method of distance learning would bear a close resemblance to the replacement educational procedures of schools and universities during the Covid lockdowns of 50 years later.

With some concessions for my previous qualifications, I completed my degree in Sociology, Psychology and Education - subjects a little different from my earlier studies - three years later, and was amongst the first students to graduate. Looking back on these years I have the greatest admiration for those students who had no previous qualifications and took seven years at least to complete their degrees whilst working full time, bringing up a family, coping with a disability or caring for an elderly relative. I had my mother to child-mind, and my husband for his after-school duties. The Open University went some way to dispelling the myth that adults are too old to learn anything new.

Each student shared a personal tutor and had a few face-to-face lectures held at schools or colleges in the evenings. Television programmes (black and white) were scheduled for early mornings and late at night. Teaching materials were sent out by post, experiments were set up in the kitchen and specimens - like sheep's brains - came in parcels! A little later, cassette recordings were also used. All methods of study were historic - no internet, smart phones or today's advanced devices. Each course studied involved a week-long Summer School held at conventional university campuses during the long summer vacation.

My time with the Open University gave me a greater personal understanding and interest in how adults learn and so, in 1974, when the part-time post of Deputy Principal came up at the Adult Education Centre in Grey Friars, I applied. This was the Administrative Centre, but other Colchester schools were used as evening venues for various subjects including the newly built Sir Charles Lucas School which had its own swimming pool.

Although I had visited Grey Friars several times during the intervening years since my school days, my first visit, after my appointment, was nostalgic. Grey Friars still had a hold over me with its magnificent stained glass windows, its imposing architecture and its mystery and peacefulness amidst the hubbub of the town centre. I relived the day when, as a 6 or 7 year old, I got my finger stuck in a hole in the playground wall, the story of the ghost on the top floor, and the formal disciplined morning Assembly. I went into my favourite classroom - the garden room - with its huge bay window and the imposing marble fireplace (*left*).



Now in the more liberal 1970s when even 'streaking' was commonplace, it was difficult to imagine that at the time of this photograph (possibly 1904) the sight of classical nude female figures carved in marble on the fireplace surround, had to be shielded from the innocent eyes of schoolchildren by a cloth drape to cover them!

The programme for adult education was developing fast when I joined the staff in 1974. Many of the classrooms which I remembered from my schooldays had new functions. The grand Assembly Hall now housed Flower Arranging and Scottish Country Dancing, the former science laboratory next door, was a Typing room, the room on the floor above was for Art classes, and the quiet peaceful top floor was set aside for Yoga.

There were only two swimming classes at this point in time and both at the Sir Charles Lucas School. I was based at this school three evenings a week overseeing all the classes there. The Principal, the late Mrs Enid Bishop, gave me 'carte blanche' to develop the swimming programme to meet demand. What happened to this programme in the next ten years was almost unbelievable. Every swimming pool of every type in Colchester which could be used, was used, and every aspect of swimming and all types of classes were introduced throughout the 1970s. These ranged from Swimming Teacher Training, though Swimming for the Blind and Disabled, to more Advanced Survival and Life Saving and Parent/Child and Baby Swim. Several sponsorships were picked up on the way and students and tutors alike began to excel. Awards were showered upon them for their efforts. At the peak of this success there were between 150 and 200 varied swimming classes per year with 30 tutors in action. The swimming programme allowed progression from class to class both to higher classes or laterally to other aspects of swimming.

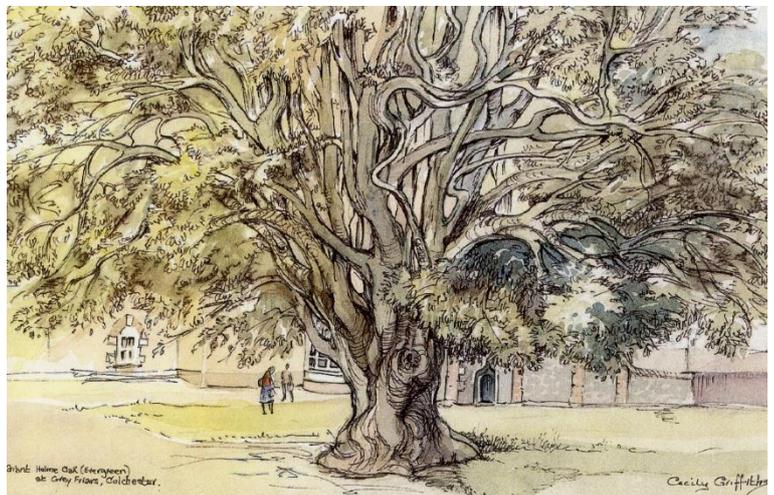
The Grey Friars swimming team entered the 1980s on a triumphant note. By this time it was known countrywide for its achievements. The sponsored 'Adult Learn to Swim Campaign' had produced in a year more successful adults who had learned to swim than any other recognised centre in the country. That sparked off another award. Tutors themselves were awarded for the outstanding efforts and in 1981 blind students, the late Andrew Miller, and the late Joan Hilliard, were recognised and awarded for their swimming achievements and treated to a swim with the Olympic gold medallist, David Wilkie, by the sponsors, Cadburys.

The culmination of this decade of success came in 1983 when the Eastern Region of the Sports Council announced that Grey Friars had been awarded their special trophy for the most outstanding contribution to sport in its programme of swimming for adults, including the training of teachers and swimming for the disabled. I received the trophy on behalf of Grey Friars at a special ceremony (*right*).



I hardly had time to notice the changes in fashions and tastes during the 1970s and 1980s because my swimming programme expanded so rapidly; but our son, Anselm, who was now of school age, kept me up to date. The Magic Roundabout on television, with Florence, Zebedee and Dougal, became one of his, and my, favourite programmes. I thought I was regressing to my childhood until I discovered that other adults also enjoyed their political exchanges! I also developed a liking for ABBA and even tried the new playground passion for the Space Hopper (*left*).

As the 1980s were drawing to a close, I often contemplated how ironic it was that Grey Friars had reached a peak performance in the teaching of swimming to adults when it did not even have its own swimming pool. In the early days of CCHS (1920-1957) it did have a bathtub-sized pond, with a few newts, which I used to sit beside each springtime in the late 1930s, or wander carefully amongst the yellow aconites which carpeted the ground under the canopy of the ancient Holm oak (*right*).



But there was still an unpredicted drama to come which would complete the story of the 1980s and change some aspects of the landscape for a considerable time.

**PS to (Newsletter Autumn 2020)**  
**Susan Kerr (Everitt 1939-53)**

**Miss Collier and Miss Thornberry**

I met both these lovely ladies long after they had retired. My Aunt, Mary Harvey, was school secretary at CCHS for many years and made many lasting friendships amongst the teaching staff. On retiring, Miss Collier and Miss Thornberry moved to Sussex and opened a small guest house at Ardingly and my Aunt took me to stay there on several occasions. With a warm and welcoming atmosphere and, of course, delicious meals, I enjoyed these holidays very much. Still known as “Collier and Thornberry” with no “Miss” or first names, my Aunt was known by them as M Har! Very happy memories.



Photo of CCHS Staff in 1923 - I can identify two of the staff. 3<sup>rd</sup> from left is Miss Overy who was my form teacher at Grey Friars and 5<sup>th</sup> from left is Miss Crosthwaite, the head teacher prior to Miss King.

### Memories of School Hockey

How many reached the heights of a school team? I was a member of the school netball team in the early 1950s. We were a very successful team thanks to the inspired coaching of our sports teacher. Originally from one of the Scandinavian countries her name was, I think, Miss Van de Spey (though I have to admit my memory is rather foggy on names!). She taught us various “set piece” moves, “the grapevine” took the ball rapidly up the court to our brilliant goal shooter, Abby, who rarely missed a shot. On the team I played at wing attack. In the critique in the school magazine was a comment on me which amused my mother very much: “she springs well”! Our sports teacher also took gym (PE) and ran an after school group for Scandinavian country dancing which I enjoyed. On special occasions she wore her traditional national costume to add atmosphere to the dance group.

For netball matches I think we wore a short navy blue wrap-around skirt (I remember struggling with press studs and hooks and eyes to keep it in place), white blouse, white socks and canvas plimsolls. The plimsolls had to be perfectly clean for a match; the laces had to be removed and the shoes and laces whitened with liquid “Blanco” which took ages to dry. Our team colours were shown during school hours by a girdle, a long loosely woven red and white webbing sash worn round the waist and fastened with a necktie type knot on the left side for the netball team and at the back for the hockey team. The tails of the girdle reached down to the hem of our school skirt. One away netball match remains in my memory. It was against New Hall, a private girls’ school near Chelmsford. Not only was this the farthest away we had travelled to a match, which we won easily, but we were entertained afterwards to a lavish (by post-war austerity standards) sit down tea served in the school refectory.

Throughout my time at CCHS I enjoyed sports including rounders at Grey Friars. Another team game which was great fun was when a line of girls stood one behind the other, about an arm’s length apart, and a netball sized ball was first passed between our ankles to the girl behind. The last girl in the line ran to the head of the line and this time the ball was passed over our heads to the girl behind. This was repeated until each girl had a turn at running to the head of the line. I can’t remember what this was called or how many were in a team but it was played competitively against other classes. Does anyone remember the name of this game or how many were in a team? It was such a good game combining the need for co-ordination, agility, flexibility and speed. An answer to present day obesity amongst the young, perhaps!

At North Hill I enjoyed tennis in the summer but was never very expert at it so I learned to be an umpire as I did not want to lose the contact with the sport or the boys at CRGS!

Hockey, played on the sloping sports field at the lower end of the North Hill grounds where the Sixth Form College now stands, was my least favourite sport. I was often placed on the left wing, rarely getting a touch of the ball but getting very cold with number hands! A long jump pitch was also on this lower field but during my time at North Hill it was discontinued, the reason given - “it was dangerous to the girls’ internal organs.” No comment!

## Reflections from an Octogenarian

**Jean Johnson (Cuthew 1951-56)**

I'm beginning to question if I have become old? Am I becoming a little less tolerant? Are some of my valued lifestyle habits becoming out of date? Is this generational or is it the effects of Lockdown?

If I receive mail, where the envelope has obviously been recycled using a sticky label over the original recipient's name, then I smile. I recognise the kindredship. I know it will be from someone of my generation. Yes. That group of people which also cannot bring themselves to cut string on a parcel because if untied carefully it could be reused. Did you realise that some paper can be recycled more than once? When I was at Secretarial College in the 1950's it was suggested that used large envelopes should be slit open, flattened, and used for notes and draft letters.

I know that every generation feels that they have become left behind, but my age group has faced an unprecedented steep learning curve. My children are relieved that I have embraced much of the modern technology (I suspect because they realise it saves them a lot of aggro). Lockdown did not introduce me to on-line ordering – done that for years. During the few months my friends and I have continued our Spanish class on Zoom with great success and, as I have family abroad, I am so grateful for Skype and WhatsApp.

So if I am happy with the above, why the niggles? They are not caused by Lockdown but possibly some of the advice on how to cope with it has made me indignant. Do you know that if you make your bed before starting your day, or if you never leave dirty dishes in the kitchen overnight, it will make you feel better? Amazing advice! Some of us have been acting in this way for years: it's called organisation and discipline! On TV the sloppy text subtitles really grate. Apparently someone "insighted" that mob to invade Capitol Hill. On the subject of spelling, I never misspell the word "government". I still remember dear Miss Fletcher (History) inserting "n" several times in one of my essays on what I had called the "goverment" of the day.

I find the format of many TV programmes very strange – many of them are not at all relaxing. Every nature programme portrays how difficult life is for the animals, reptiles etc. It becomes nail-biting as we watch their struggle. Even DA is guilty of this. Many documentaries use the same format. Also have you noticed that many TV documentaries reprise the previous content after each advert break, as though we can't remember what we saw a few minutes earlier? Do we have such short attention spans? Really? Those of us who remember sitting uncomfortably on the hall floor at Grey Friars for some talk or recital certainly learned how to concentrate.

Are all these new ideas being portrayed really new? My family were highly amused with my exasperation when a well-known TV cook announced that to stop a skin forming on custard one should sprinkle it with sugar. Why was I cross? Because it was presented as a new, original idea, whereas I knew my Mother had been doing it for years.

After all this grumbling I decided to go for a brisk cathartic walk. Several people overtook me. I have to accept it. My brisk walk has deteriorated into a brisk plod. I concede. I am old!

## More Memories of School Hockey

**Kathleen Wilson (1946-51)**

It was the photograph that began it all. Just after I started at Grey Friars the school magazine covering the previous year was published. That photograph piqued my interest, showing the unbeaten 1<sup>st</sup> XI Hockey Team with Miss Holmes. I had not, at that time seen any of those players or even played the game.



(left) Hockey Team - 1<sup>st</sup> XI 1945-46 - can anyone put the names in the gaps?

Back row from left: Thelma Smith RW, Barbara Boshier RI, Pat Baylis LI, Pat Noon CF, ??, ??, ??

Front row from left: Mary Holmes GK, Margaret Clachan RB (Capt), Miss Holmes, ??, Marion Payne LW

Also in the photo B Simpson, LB, O Davidson RH, J Ratcliffe CH, M Barber LH

Another whole year had to pass before

hockey lessons began. My earliest experience of any sort of a 'game' of hockey occurred at the end of January in my Upper IV year when the transport to Park Road playing fields failed to materialise and we stayed at Grey Friars. We played on one of the hard-surfaced netball courts! Whether these were 11 or even 15-a-side I am not sure, but I remember the court was rather crowded. It was difficult to even get on the court and by default I became the last line of defence. It was hard to be sure whether it was my hockey stick or my feet which played the ball. It was exciting and maybe that was the reason I played in goal as a first choice position thereafter.

For our Lower V year we had this new experience of 'life with the seniors' at North Hill, with streaming, new class mates and teachers. We also had to choose our winter sport - netball or hockey. For me the choice was easy. Hockey it was to be. Although hockey sticks and a ball could be taken to the grass at the bottom of the steps at North Hill, and many of my lunch breaks occurred there, our games lessons took place at Park Road with much cherished time lost on the bus journeys from and back to North Hill.

An exciting time occurred for me towards the end of the Spring Term. Quite unexpectedly our teacher, Miss Owen, asked me if I could play that day (a Thursday) after school - in a match for the school 2<sup>nd</sup> XI versus St Mary's School. I suspect that match was arranged at short notice since it does not appear in the match record for that year. A quote from my schoolgirl diary states 'We won the match 5-0 and I didn't play too well.' I remember being shouted at by my team mates as they saw me play a ball - and it happened again a few minutes later. After the match I was quietly asked if I had been taught that a goal could not be scored if the ball had been hit from outside the circle. As the answer was no I realised my hockey education had begun in earnest. On the Saturday morning there was an intense hockey practice for a Lower V team to play the other years in a 'tournament' the following Tuesday. I was lucky enough to play in that team along with RB Mary Greenacre, LB Joy Vince, RH Ann Watson, CH Margaret Edwards, LH Shirley Frost, RW Dorothy Robinson, RI Shirley Jones, CH Helen Hancock, LI Heather Blundell and LW Ann Harland. Of course, being in our first full year as hockey players we were at a disadvantage and we lost all our games, i.e., versus Middle V 0-5, v Upper V 0-1 and v VI form 0-8. It was quite a challenge but one I thoroughly enjoyed, even if it meant facing Pat Moon, Head Girl with 1<sup>st</sup> XI hockey colours, as the VI form Centre Forward!

Those years as a 13 year old stay in my memory and I can still picture the scene at the change of ends in that last match. Mary Holmes, VI form GK, had enough time to carve her initials into the scorched goal line, and as it was one of her last matches at school I thought it a fitting memento of her four years in the school 1<sup>st</sup> XI.

However, it was my Middle V year which stands out in my memory. It was fortuitous and lucky for me that both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> XI goal keepers had left the school in the summer. At the end of the second week in September we were back at school and whenever possible I was playing hockey. At the end of the first week there was a school hockey practice on the Saturday. I was lucky that near my home there was an area of hardstanding and a convenient low brick wall where I could go along with a couple of soft balls and practice stops and kicking. I was there that Friday evening preparing for that Saturday practice. Those Saturday practices for teams as well as after school sessions continued during the rest of September. Goalkeeping pads were produced at North Hill for me and a few other girls in an attempt to find other goalkeepers. Those lunchtime sessions became more purposeful. The whole of the width of those steps at

the bottom on the grass paddock became the goal (far wider than a normal goal mouth). I was bombarded with shorts, firstly from two of the players just a year above me that I knew slightly out of school, then another couple nearer my age joined the sessions. I believe they may have been instigated by Mary Long the Hockey Captain, because she occasionally joined those session with another couple of VI formers, thus gradually introducing me to goalkeeping sessions with them. At the end of the month I was invited to a team meeting about clothing for sports, short wrap-around skirts would be an innovation. I was also issued with my hockey girdle. I was bubbling inside because it was not plan red (2<sup>nd</sup> XI) and certainly not red with a white crossed pattern (1<sup>st</sup> team netball) but red with a white zigzag pattern (1<sup>st</sup> XI hockey)! It was with great pride that I wore that girdle, not just for matches but in school for the whole of the hockey season. Those girdles hung like a tie down the front of the left thigh in school but were worn down the middle at the back for matches (away from hands and sticks).

Matches began in October, the first two were away from home and for the first at Halstead Grammar School, two of my class mates came as supporters (another of Mary Long's ideas!), so I was not travelling alone with all the VI formers and senior girls. The second match was versus Northgate School in Ipswich and my diary states 'Had a lovely morning' and I realised I was playing in a team whose standard I had not previously experienced. Not only that but in this team were two of those players, Thelma Smith and Pat Moon, who had appeared in that early photograph of the unbeaten team of four years earlier. Those initial matches brought home to me how privileged I was to be there, meeting girls from other schools and experiencing their facilities. Although the majority of the team were VI formers and prefects, I was treated as just another team player, even if I was a rookie goalkeeper. We had other team meetings. I remember a serious one when we discussed the possibility of entering the Essex Schools Tournament. Those girls in that team were respected school members, many of the not only excellent sports players but also very bright academically. The playing record that season was: played 11, won 8, drew 1 and lost 2.

It was not all serious hockey for we had some fun too. I remember one occasion when one of our fast players collected the ball and set off upfield. Somehow her new wrap-around skirt came undone and dropped away from her waist. With no more than a slight hesitation in her stride, she stepped out of the skirt and continued on upfield! Needless to say nothing came of that attack as for the rest of the team were like me - helpless with laughter. On other occasions one of our players, with no public transport on Saturdays for matches, would be driven to matches, home and away, by a parent accompanied by a younger brother. Our short knock-ups prior to matches were enlivened by the tricks of those three family members. Our team mate took her knock-up seriously like the rest of us, but the other two would play all manner of shoves, barging, trips and dodging out of the way of maliciously hit balls, when suddenly the daughter of the family would join in also. They were very funny. It is the time comradeship of team sport that is so unique, helping, cajoling, instructing, working and enjoying company and even sharing team mates secrets. They were all experiences I encountered that year.

To be continued .....

## **Obituaries**

Malyn Stone (Brown 1949-55) - by Della Parker (Nixon 1949-56)

Malyn was extremely sporty at school. She captained the Tennis Team and played hockey for the 1<sup>st</sup> Eleven. She left school to follow her father into HRMC and later worked on the tax affairs of private clients.

Her love of sport carried on and playing at Lexden Tennis Club was her greatest joy! Later she took up golf. In marked contrast she also became an expert demonstrator of Sugar Craft. The flowers she made to decorate cakes were incredibly delicate and perfect replicas.

At some point in all her hobbies and activities Malyn accepted responsibility and became Captain, President and Chairwoman.

She married John Stone in 1964 and had a son, Nick, and a daughter, Charlotte. John died in 2019 and in the same year Malyn developed heart problems. In January this year she was admitted to hospital where she test positive for Covid and sadly died on 18<sup>th</sup> January.

### Jacky Windsor Hall (Francis 1949-56)

by her husband, John, and daughters, Bridget and Suzannah

Some years ago, after we had returned to Colchester, one of Jacky's friends at an Old Girls' function said that Jacky had had it all: marriage, children and grandchildren, travel and a career. Jacky agreed - she had lived a very full, fruitful and gracious life.

During our 60+ years of married life we lived in Edinburgh, Liverpool, Newcastle, Singapore, Sungei Patani, Malaya, Bergen-Belsen and Werl in Germany, and London. We returned to Colchester where we first met and had both been at school, Jacky at CCHS and John at CRGS. She became a Quaker in 1963.



Jacky had an exemplary career in translation. A friend from the Institute of Translation and Interpreting sent us a newsletter from 1999 in which she explained how an early interest in languages began aged just 9 or 10 with her sister's French exchange student,. However, she didn't go to university and study Dutch and Indonesian until her late 40s, reflecting her earliest life in Europe and South Asia. Her longest time away from home was when she spent her year out in Leiden, living in a student house as a mature student and then later travelling around Java as a native for two months, touring the country on buses and staying with Friends (Quaker) and friends whilst picking up the language.

Along the way Jacky has used her languages in the Friends world by translating letters from East Timorese, acting as a Friends World Committee link, and attending Friends World Gatherings. In Germany she worked as a translator and interpreter for the Royal Military and was a prison visitor to convicted murderers serving life sentences. She was one of only three Dutch-English medical translators, and translated essential infectious disease information for circulation across Africa and this work is still on line today. She also translated from Dutch a manual of early practice in in-vitro fertilisation. She set up a successful translation business, working for 15 years and only retiring aged 70. Another important factor in her life was visiting prisoners in UK and writing to prisoners on death row in the USA. She even went to Jackson, Georgia, to meet one of them. She would also advocate on behalf of transgender women in hospital for their right to dignity and grooming support.

She was always a campaigner, but was hands on. In Singapore she packed Penicillin for the North Vietnamese, in 1982 she joined the huge Embrace the Base protest at Greenham Common and also took part in an all night vigil in London when the missiles arrived.

She contracted Covid in hospital following an emergency hip operation after a fall. She died in St Helena Hospice and because of the lockdown restrictions, the family used FaceTime every day to keep in touch.

### NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL

Kate Stubbs, Marketing and Communications Manager

She writes: "Over the next term a new section will be created on the CCHSG website with the aim of sharing information about the history of the school and making some of our archive material, such as early school magazines, publicly available. **If members of the OGA have school memorabilia or photographs that they would be happy for CCHSG to share, Kate Stubbs would be delighted to hear from them** via [kstubbs@cchsg.com](mailto:kstubbs@cchsg.com). The school is particularly looking for copies of school magazines from the years 1954 to 1969 and post 1977 - can you help?" Readers can also access the latest CCHSG e-newsletter on the website at <https://www.cchsg.com/latest-newsletter/>

Kate has been putting the history of the school in the CCHSG newsletter and the first part is below. This could well stimulate your memories of the school and these could be included in their project.

**CCHSG has been educating students in Colchester since 1909** and much of the information shared here was originally collated as part of a publication to mark the schools fiftieth year and the booklet produced as part of the school's centenary celebrations in 2009.

The Colchester parents of 200 years ago did have an option to educate their daughters, but only in the most superficial and expensive way. In 1762 a "Young Ladies Boarding School" was established on North Hill, offering English and Needlework at the then expensive fee of £14 a year. French, Music Writing and Arithmetic were available each at an additional cost. Not until the 1890s were female students in Colchester able to access an education of real value which prepared them for Matriculation and the examinations then used for university entrance. In 1900 the main employment available for Colchester's women would have been as domestic servants, in one of the town's two silk mills, or in the local tailoring industry. In the first printed number of the CCHSG school magazine, in 1914, a student wrote:

"A girl who has a career has many more advantages than one who has not. She is far more independent and helpful to others and herself. She is dependent on no one for food and clothing, and has much wider views of life altogether.....There are a great many openings now for girls. In Victorian times it was considered unladylike for a girl to do anything but stay at home or go out as companion... Nowadays everybody has far broader views, and there are innumerable careers for girls. Teachers are wanted in many branches... There are also many positions as clerks and secretaries, which women can obtain. Agriculture in many branches, bee-keeping, dairy work or poultry farming is suitable work for women... In fact, there is hardly any field of work that is not open to women today. Of course, in every case a good training is essential...." (1914, p6).

In 1892 a School Board was formed in Colchester with representatives from the churches, the Co-operative Society and the trades council. This body was responsible for setting up 6 schools, by 1895 3,910 children were attending free local schools. The 1902 Education Act abolished the School Board and replaced it with a Borough Education Committee. The founding of CCHSG came as part of the modernization and development of education in Colchester driven by this local authority at the turn of the twentieth century.

The school was originally located in the Albert Hall in the High Street (later the Co-operative Bank), under the Headship of Miss Mary Collins, until its intended premises at the top of North Hill, which is now the Sixth Form College, were completed in 1912. In 1909 there were just 67 students in four forms. By 1914 numbers had risen to 165 and many different aspects of the school community we know today were already developing. There was a uniform, of navy pleated tunic and velour hat; a red and navy blue tie was added in later years. In 1914 the Preparatory department was opened in "St. Peter's Parish Room", and Swedish gymnastics, Cookery, and Class Singing became definite parts of the School curriculum (1927, p6). The school magazine of 1927 presents the new school badge, which features for the first time on the front of the magazine, and was designed by a Mr Gurney Bentham. Bentham was an academic and editor of the Essex County Standard for 59 years, who was also three times Mayor of Colchester. The motto "Wisdom Giveth Life", which we still refer to, was chosen by Head teacher Miss Crosthwaite, this comes from Ecclesiastes, chapter 7, verses 11-14:

*Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.  
For Wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that  
wisdom giveth life to them that have it.*

At a time when many mottos were in Latin, "*She particularly chose an English motto so that no girl, if asked what the words on her badge meant, would be unable to explain (1927, p4).*" It was in this year that the school also thanked Miss Crosthwaite and wished her well. She departed to become Head of the prestigious Wycombe Abbey School after 15 years at CCHSG.

The CCHSG ethos of striving for excellence across a wide range of extra-curricular activities was also in evidence from the very start. Everyone played games, and the first Sports Day took place in 1914, before being suspended over the war years to resume in 1922. With races such as the "Girdle Race" and the "Tunnel" from the 1920s the Sports day prizes awarded to the winning Form Groups were pictures. "The two halves of Upper VA won the Flag and Cross and Tunnel Team races, thereby gaining for their form-

room the “Card Players” and the “Earl de la Warr... the prize for the highest number of points gained by Lower VA was a statuette the “Seated Mercury” (1927, p13).

CCHSG’s record of sporting success also started early. In 1923 and 1924 it is recorded that netball team beat every school on the fixture list. Once activities resumed after the War, students eagerly participated in Rounders, Netball, Tennis and Hockey tournaments, with permanent members of the school teams being awarded their “colours”. While this was a source of pride, the school magazine also published “criticism” of the players which might have been less positively received. Members of the 1953 netball team were variously described as “a good shooter but sometimes a little erratic” and demonstrating “some spectacular intercepting, but must be careful not to barge in her eagerness to intercept the ball.”

A Drama Group and “Story Club” were started and also a Debating Society, at which in 1914 the resolution that “Women should be granted the Parliamentary franchise” was carried by nine votes to three (1914, p9). Women over 30 were finally to get the vote in 1920. There were also exchange visits with French students, school concerts and performances such as Oliver Goldsmith’s “She Stoops to Conquer”, Open Days and parents’ evenings. In 1924 the Historical and Archeological Society (HARK) began a long and active existence and a Music Club began regular concerts and recitals. A Sixth Form was founded, from which students progressed on to Girton College, Cambridge and other universities.

Later, in 1920, when the school had grown to over 400 students, the County Council bought and adapted Grey Friars House, and a buildings next door as accommodation for the Juniors and for the boys and girls in the Preparatory School. As the 1920 School Magazine records “The Upper School has been in parties to visit the new building, and everyone envies the Juniors for being in such a delightful place” (1920, p1). For 37 years, Colchester County High School operated on a split site, linked by the High Street, with junior pupils at what is today the Grey Friars Hotel at the eastern end while senior pupils were taught in the same building as the technical school pupils at what is now the Colchester Sixth Form College off North Hill. An early commitment to broadening access was evident in the 25% of the places at the school that were reserved for scholarship students. Not unlike the school today, some students travelled considerable distances to school, using the bus and train. There were even “train prefects” to look after them. Some students even travelled in by horse, and one family came by carriage, with the eldest sister driving, and the horse being stabled during the day at the Fleece Hotel in Head Street.

The CCHSG magazine for 1946-7 features an article written by a student about the history of the Grey Friars building tracing its history back to 1714 and its various incarnations, including the period immediately preceding the occupancy by CCHSG, when it was a boarding school run by French nuns.

Information, research and recollections about the early years of the school have been included in a history section on the Grey Friars website <https://www.Greyfriarscolchester.org.uk>

An accompanying local history book, by Joan Gurney and Alan Skinner, outlining the history of the Grey Friars site since Roman times, was published in 2014 by Access Books.

It is available from Red Lion Books, [www.redlionbooks.co.uk](http://www.redlionbooks.co.uk)

