

CHELMSFORD
COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL
For **GIRLS**



OLD GIRLS SOCIETY

Autumn 2009



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NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL

Please send your email address to Mary Argent at ogs-member@maryargent.com

Being able to email the newsletter to you, via a web link to the school web site, is a great help to us. It saves a lot of time and effort (we now address and stuff over 800 communications to you twice a year) and you can calculate the cost of that to Society funds.

Many thanks to all of you who have already supplied an email address. But please bear in mind that you sometimes change your email address, so don't forget to let us know. Also, do let us know of changes to your name and current postal address, so that we can send a printed copy.

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BIRTHS

On 18 September 2009, William Michael, a son to Anya Radford (née Liversedge) (1987-94) and husband Mike, a brother for John born in September 2007.

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www.cchs.co.uk

The views expressed by contributors to this magazine are not necessarily the views of the editor

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Janice Shepherd
"Tall Trees" 4 St John's Road
Billericay CM11 1AB

Dear Members

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter. I find it hard to believe that yet another year is nearing its end but it also means that another Newsletter is here for you to read! I do hope that you enjoy the letters and memories contributed by our members. We always love to hear about what you have been doing so please continue to write to us. Also in this issue you can read about our recent Reunion and other events that have taken place. So settle back and happy reading! We really do thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes from Janice Shepherd, Your Chair
E-mail: janiceshepherd@btconnect.com

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NOTABLE ALUMNI

There has been an exciting addition to our Old Girls web site - a section called Notable Alumni. Click on this link and you will find a list of eleven of our past pupils who have achieved recognition in their special fields. If you know of any other old girls, living or dead, who you think should go into this Hall of Fame, please let us know, and we will endeavour to add their names to the list.

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REUNION 2009

Our new style afternoon reunion proved a real success this year, with 70 members enjoying a splendid tea party with scrummy savouries plus yummy cakes made by our committee member, Jenny. There was a video message from Head Teacher, Mrs Chapman, and some beautiful piano playing from one of our students, Simone.

As well as those members who regularly attend, we had younger ladies coming back to meet their classmates for very special reunions, who we contacted via websites FriendsReunited and Facebook. Also, from Cambridge we were delighted to see Elizabeth Odom (left 1944) and her sister, Lesley Warren, (1932-39) with their long time friends and former schoolmates, Christine McKee (née Kelsey), and Jane Berthoud (née Moody) (1947-54). They found their names inscribed on the boards of honour in the hall, and you can see their pictures on our web site, plus other pictures taken at reunion, and a picture of your dedicated and hard-working committee.

As this was a new format, we gave out evaluation forms. As always, there were as many views as there were guests, and we are now looking at the results, in order to provide better reunions for you all.

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MY LIFE IN TURKEY

I left CHS in 1999 and headed off on the long journey all the way to APU Chelmsford to study midwifery. Within a couple of months I had left the course, was working full time in Abbey national and applying to start a primary school teaching degree. Fast forward a few years and you'll find me living in Fethiye, a beautiful seaside town in Southern Turkey. Anyone who knew me when I was at CHS would never have believed I would end up where I am now. I am not a (working) teacher. I am not a midwife. I own a small hotel along with my husband, and I am a full time Mum to our precious 18-month old girl called Ayse. So what happened? LOVE and holiday romances can last!!! So many of CHS survivors go on to real academic careers - I don't quite know how I ended up here. But I can tell you that I am happy and enjoying the challenges that living in Turkey has to offer.

Turkey is an amazing country, stuffed full of spectacularly beautiful places and amazing history. I own and run a small hotel in Oludeniz, one of the most photographed beaches in the world. Life here is certainly different from Chelmsford. The pace is a lot slower, as with most Med countries. This is good and bad. It is nice not to have to worry about sticking to deadlines or due dates (even on bank loans - within reason!) but at the same time it is SO frustrating to sit and wait for a workman, only to find out his idea of showing up 'on time' is sometime that week! Nothing gets done properly, or on time, or to the uptight standard we British know and love. But the people will do anything for you, will trust you to pay later and give you a lift anywhere. Anytime.

Sad to say, the Essex reputation follows us everywhere and my husband still prefers to say I am from Chelmsford rather than from Essex! How silly. But it makes me laugh and he has yet to realise that Turkish men have as bad a reputation back home as Essex girls do here. And sometimes we meet someone who has been to Dukes!!

Oludeniz is an incredible place for a holiday. If you haven't been yet then you should come. You will love it. Whether you love action packed (paragliding, rafting, scuba diving...) or simply lying on a beach all day, there is everything for everybody here. And as an Old Girl I'd love to see you. Last year a girl who was in my year stayed at the hotel, totally by chance. Such a small world. But if any other Old Girls would like to come check out our website www.lyciandreams.com send me an email, mention OGS and I will give you all a 10% discount at any time.

I look forward to seeing many of you soon. Have a great summer!

Kate Tokgoz (née Bennett, at school 1992-1999)

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CHOKS - Form K - 1952-57 - 'Let Friendship Continue'

The above motto belongs to the N.A.T.C. (National Association of Tangent Clubs), the members of which are previous Ladies Circle members who join Tangent when reaching the age of forty. As with two of us, I'm sure there are several members amongst the Old Girls of the High School.

But the sentiment of the motto could also be so applicable to eight of us pupils from Form K who were at the school for the five years mentioned above and for whom friendships were forged back in 1952. In 1957 we went our separate ways, but through the Old Girls Society we met up again in 1983 and for the past twenty-five years have remained such very close friends. We formed our own Society:- CHOKS (Chelmsford High Old K's Society), affectionately named after our Head, Miss Cadbury.

When we reached the milestone of our fiftieth year in birthdays, 1991, we celebrated at Larkrise Primary School, where one of our group, Valerie Webb (née George), was Head Teacher. For that event we were able to gather another twenty or so ex-pupils from the three forms of our Year. In 2007, to mark the fifty years since leaving school, six of our eight travelled to Peurto Banus in Spain to celebrate the occasion.

The eight of us continue to meet up for a meal at least four or five times a year, this being quite easy due to the fact that we all live within a radius of about forty miles of each other. But undoubtedly the highlight of each year is our "Summer Camp" weekend, held in August or September. As you will realise we are well beyond our prime so sleeping rough under canvas isn't an option! We take turns to host the event in our homes, where any men who are in residence beat a hasty retreat for two days! We appoint a Form Captain at our AGM and spend hilarious times together, always returning from these weekends feeling relaxed, well fed, rejuvenated and sixteen again!

We eight have led varied but always fulfilling lives and we are blessed with reasonably good health to continue for we hope many more years. We have shared both laughter and sorrow, supporting each other through bereavement and family anxieties as well as the more joyous occasions. We have a special bond for which we can thank Chelmsford County High School. Five of us will be attending the School Afternoon Tea on September 19 and will again relive the special years we spent there.

The Class Of '52:- (in order of Register!)

Carol Chew (now Mrs Nicholson), Valerie George (now Mrs Webb), Deanna Hart, Anne Kearsley, Sylvia Mulley (now Mrs Bacon), Primula Patient (now Mrs Rayner), Frances Roe (now Mrs Liggett), Margaret Rose (now Mrs Ashton).

Prim Gordon Rayner (née Patient), at school 1952-57

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WORKING WITH PANDAS

I am an old girl of Chelmsford County High School – from 1964 to 1971. Upon leaving school, I went on to study French but in fact now find myself working on environmental issues. I work for WWF (the Worldwide Fund for Nature). Sometimes the acronym can be confusing but I think the black and white panda logo is recognisable anywhere. WWF is a global environmental organisation working on everything from fisheries to forests, from freshwater to climate change and in virtually every part of the globe.

I am currently living and working in Brussels interacting with the European institutions on policies that affect developing countries – in particular how environmental issues and climate change are considered in the planning of European development cooperation. Being in the heart of Europe, colleagues from all corners of the globe come to visit or pass through and, from time to time, I also get an opportunity to visit them. Mostly my

travels are within Europe but I have also had the opportunity to travel further afield to see some of our environmental programmes on the ground. I haven't actually seen a panda in the wild – very few people have!

I live in a lively and central part of Brussels which is popular with ex-pats of many different nations and cultures and is also famous for some of Belgium's Art Nouveau architecture. It is off the usual tourist track of the Grand Place and Mannekin Pis, but of course I do take visitors there who want to sample "moules et frites" and Belgian beers.

Last summer we were joined in the office temporarily by a student in her final year of law at university in Brussels. Imagine my surprise when I found out that she was also an old girl of CCHS – although a considerably newer old girl than myself.

Sally Nicholson (née Palmer)

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A NEW BOOK WRITTEN BY ONE OF OUR OLD GIRLS

Jennifer C Kelsey (née Bannell) was at CCHS from 1967 to 74. Her first book is called "A Voice of Discontent", and is subtitled "A woman's journey through the long Eighteenth Century". The book provides a fascinating insight into women's history, showing how some women writers in the 18th and 19th centuries voiced their discontent with the limited role they were expected to play in society, and the sometimes radical suggestions they were to make for the future. Even for those who did accept the status quo, there were ways to make use of, or even exploit, the situations in which they found themselves. A copy has been deposited with the school library. Jennifer writes in the on-line magazine Her Storia, and you can read about this topic: <http://www.herstoria.com/discover/writingswrongs.html>. Also her book can be ordered on line: http://www.troubador.co.uk/book_info.asp?bookid=700

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THE 1940s SCHOOL SONGS

Patricia Clayton (née Poole) at school 1940-47 emailed to say, "I was interested to read that there was a competition to find a new school song. When I was at school during the war, the school hymn which we sang at Commemoration every year was 'Our Father, by whose servants', but we also had two other school songs, 'Glad Hearts Adventuring' and 'Pioneers'. Are these two songs sung nowadays? If so, have they been recorded? I should be very interested to know."

Mary Argent asked Patricia to recall the words of these songs, to see if this jogs the memory of other older members. She sent the first verse of each song.

Glad Hearts Adventuring

Glad hearts adventuring, the way is wide,
Valour and faith shall shield the pilgrim's side,
Constant and undismayed, your journey past,
Across the hills of time, home lies at last.

“Glad Hearts”, according to an on-line search, appears to be a unison song, words by M A Macdonald, music by Martin Shaw (1975-1958) and it is the current school song for Huntleys Secondary School for Boys in Tunbridge Wells. The song continues thus –

CHORUS - Glad hearts adventuring, the city of God dawns,
Take to the trail again, sisters follow the star.
Honour and sleepless love, where'er ye roam,
Shall watch beside the camp and guard the home.

Your comrades wind and sun, your book the world,
Your lamp the unaltered law, your flag unfurled.

CHORUS - The sword may fall to rust and kingdoms fail,
Still stands your promise sure, love shall prevail.
When you are old and grey when youth is gone,
Still shall you sing to those who follow on.

You will see the words “sister” in verse two – which seems less appropriate to an all boys’ school. I can find no indication of a tune for this song.

Pioneers

All the past we leave behind,
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing,
So we go our unknown ways,
Pioneers, O Pioneers!

Research shows that the song continues –

Not for delectations sweet, not the riches safe and palling,
Not for us the tame enjoyment; never must you be divided,
In our ranks you move united,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world, all the joyous,
All the sorrowing, these are of us, they are with us;
We today's procession heading, we the route for travel clearing,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

On and on the compact ranks,
With accessions ever waiting, we must never yield or falter,
Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never stopping,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

The words are by the American poet Walt Whitman (1819-1892), and it is usually sung to tune 173 in the 1925 edition of Songs of Praise.

The words of both these songs sound very much of their time, encompassing religious sentiments, women seeking new social status, optimism about creating a new world after war, and about the British Empire.

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More letters, please, - we would all love to hear from you



Email from Janet Crafer
1 June 2009

The Spring Issue of the Old Girls Society newsletter has just been forwarded on to me. I am very sorry that I have not let you know that I moved here to Auckland in New Zealand in December 2007.

I was a pupil at the High School from 1945 to 1952. I studied physiotherapy at The London Hospital from 1952 to 1955, and worked in Canada, Australia, Switzerland, and in private practice in Westcliff and Leigh-on-Sea for 25 years until I retired. My husband and I decided rather late in life to immigrate to New Zealand to be close to our two daughters, Angie, who lives in Auckland, and Sue, who lives in Sydney, Australia. We have found a lovely new home with magnificent views of the Hauraki Gulf, and we spend our time when not idling the hours away looking out at the view, playing bowls and bridge. I enjoy walking on the beautiful beaches or in the bush and still play tennis once a week. We have had no regrets making this huge move except for missing our life-long friends. Our greatest joy is being able to see our daughters and their husbands, Angie at least once a week, Sue not so often - but she is now just across the Tasman Sea instead of the opposite side of the world!

I have fond memories of my days at the school and am still in contact with Mildred Hunter, Anne Dixon (née Millar), and Marlene Fell who lives here in New Zealand.

Best regards, **Janet Crafer (née Saltmarsh)**

Email from West Mersea
9 August 2009

Hi Mary, Here is a little potted history for you.

I retired earlier this year on the 31st March. I started at CHS in 1960, and developed a strong interest in all things science related, enjoying most those periods spent in the labs. When I first left school, I worked for the Animal Health Trust as a microbiology research technician whilst also training as a Medical Laboratory Technician (now Biomedical Scientist). I then worked in virology research at May & Baker's before joining the NHS in 1973 at Colchester where I changed disciplines to Biochemistry. I went on to spend the next 36 years there, never losing my enjoyment for the laboratory environment. During my employment I held the Fellowship of the Institute of Biomedical Science and Chartered Scientist status and progressed through various career levels until I became Pathology Services Manager; a position I enjoyed for the final 8 years of my career. One of the highlights of the last few years has been working with Essex University and NHS colleagues from other Essex and Suffolk hospitals to introduce a Biomedical Science degree - for this work, I was awarded an honorary senior lecturer post.

Best wishes, **Diane Groom (née Poulton) at school 1060-65**

Email 28 May 2009

Hi Mary

I was at CHS from 1970 to 1977. I left school and worked in London and Chelmsford until I married in 1981. My husband and I lived on a farm in the Wickford/Rayleigh area and had 2 children. Rachael is now 25 and John 23. Unfortunately the marriage did not work out and I remarried in 1997. We now live in the North of England where I come from originally. I trained as a primary school teacher after my divorce and would have liked to do supply teaching after my return to the North but as we live in such a rural area this was not possible. I got a job at the local National Trust property for the summer but ended up being there for around 18 months. I am now working for an international learning programme which helps students from pre-school to around 18 years old with maths and English. Early days yet but I'm enjoying it so far. I now use my middle name of Elizabeth which I have always preferred.

Lorraine Sharpe (formerly Philpot née Thompson)

Email 19 May 2009

Hello Mary

I was interested to read the email from Sara Hodges (née Belsham) who was in my class at CHS. When I left in 1975 I joined what was then the Inland Revenue as a Direct Entrant Executive Officer. Having been used to an atmosphere where women aimed high, I think I was stunned to discover that the majority of senior posts were held by men. I quickly discovered, however, that we were in changing times and opportunities were available for women, although maternity leave was still somewhere on a distant horizon. All that changed in the late eighties and I was able to return to work after a break of five years during which I had two children, Anthony who went to Colchester Grammar School and is now a junior Doctor in Birmingham and Dominique who left CHS five years ago and is currently sitting medicine finals in Hull.

I still work for what is now HM Revenue and Customs and consider myself very fortunate to have benefitted from family friendly employment terms which have allowed me to juggle career and motherhood. I work in London at the moment as a Deputy Director, the commute is exhausting but I love the buzz of working in the city.

I can still remember my first day at CHS - I sat next to Christine Gent who I believe is now an NHS Consultant in the Essex area and made firm friends with Marion Dorset who lived in the Conservative Club in Moulsham Street with her parents and is one of your committee members. When Dominique was at the school I was transported back to those days and heartened to find that the values were the same, hard work and a sense of responsibility but also friendship, humour and a sense of belonging.

I married in 1976 and Tony and I were together for twenty-five years and divorced in 2001. I have an excellent wedding photograph including many of my classmates from CHS, Pauline Breedon, Anne Barton, Margaret Gibson to name a few. I would love to hear from anyone who was at school from 1968-1975.

Chris Smith (née Cowell)

Dear Mary

Thank you for the invitation to the Ruby Reunion. It certainly doesn't seem that long ago since we all left school! Unfortunately I shall not be able to attend as we are going to be away. This is the especially good side of being retired! Having always been in education or looking after children, it is with great joy that my husband and I now take holidays outside the school holidays. I have tried to write a brief history of my life since school, so here goes!

1969 - teacher training at Keswick Hall, Norwich, followed by a degree at Girton College, Cambridge. I then spent 3 months teaching in Connecticut and decided to return after I had completed my probationary year. However, whilst teaching at Boswells, I met my husband, a scientist and production manager at EEV! We married in 1975 and are still happily together. Teaching in the US was confined to the past! We had Adam in 1978 and Gemma in 1982. I returned to teaching part-time at New Hall School once both children were well established at school. Adam went to KEGS and is now a Quantitative Researcher at an Investment Bank. Gemma came to New Hall and is now a Prime Broker at a different investment bank! They both live in London and we see them and their respective girlfriend and boyfriend often.

I taught at New Hall for 20 years, moving from a part-time Geography teacher to a full-time Head of Middle School, still teaching Geography and some Maths. I retired nearly 2 years ago so as to be able to enjoy more free time with Ian, my husband, who had retired some years previously. Sadly my beloved father died 3 years ago and retirement has enabled me to spend much more time helping my mother and taking her out and about, although even at 82 she is still very independent and drives herself locally to friends and shopping!

Since retiring I have been investigating my family history and I have also taken up a long forgotten hobby of painting and drawing. The latter has reunited me with my Geography teacher of Year 8 and 9 at CHS - Mrs Wilkins! She is still an excellent teacher and runs the Art Group I have joined. I have also joined a gym and realise that I rather wasted the PE opportunities available at school! Mind you I am not a team player of games and enjoy the solitary swimming and exercising that I can now do.

Retirement also enables me to visit and explore London more often and I thoroughly enjoy discovering the less well-known parts of the city. These visits also combine lunch with one or other of the children.

I do hope that the reunion is a success and please pass my very best wishes to anyone that might remember me. I was the secretary of the society at one time in the 1980s and know how much hard work is involved in organising events!

Yours sincerely, **Susan Strudwick (née Platt)**

Hello Mary, thanks for your email and sorry to take so long to reply.

I left the CHS in 1964 and went to Lloyds Bank in High Street, Chelmsford. I married Brian in 1968 and had two girls in 1975 and 77.

In 1985 we emigrated to New Zealand and have lived here since then apart from four years living in Perth, Western Australia, where my family are now.

I am still in touch with Phyll Brown; she was at school with me and was bridesmaid at my wedding. We always get the school photo out whenever we are together and try to remember everyone's names. Miss Harris was our first teacher and Miss Cadbury was Head Mistress when we arrived in 1959.

I work at a local hospital as an audiometrist for ENT specialists and hope to retire soon!

Regards, **Pat Deeks (née Banks)**

(If you want to get in touch with Pat, let us know and we will pass on the message – Ed)

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GWEN AND PHYLLIS

One of our Old Girls, Gwen Phillips (née Cass), was expected to celebrate her 100th birthday on 28 September 2009. However, she died peacefully a few short weeks before that date at one of Chelmsford's private nursing homes where her sister, Phyllis, still lives.

Gwen and Phyllis were born at Witham, but soon moved to Chelmsford, where their father owned a well-known cycle shop, H H Cass, in Chelmsford High Street. After their father's death, Gwen ran the shop until it closed in the late 1960s. Gwen and her sister, Phyllis, were at CHS in the 1920s and 30s.

Miss Edith Bancroft was Head at that time, (our second Headmistress after Miss Mabel Vernon-Harcourt), and all of you will remember the 1950s block of classrooms named Bancroft Wing. (These tired facilities are soon to be replaced by a new Language Centre.)

Gwen's sister, Phyllis Cass MBE, also an Old Girl, celebrated her 95th birthday day on 29 September 2009, the day after her sister's anniversary.

(News taken from "Cathedral Life", the newspaper of Chelmsford Cathedral.)

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A BIG HELLO TO ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS

Class of 2009

Charlotte Allen, Frances Bailey, Charlotte Bettley, Aamena Bharmal, Katherine Bettany, Alessandra Bittante, Gemma Brown, Rachel Cook, Bianca Coughlin, Stephanie Eaton, Rosalyn Falconer, Francesca Gage, Isabella Gage, Emma Gauntley, Hannah Gibbs, Hannah Groot, Hollie Hall, Danielle Hamblin, Jennifer Hammond, Chantelle Hankin, Phoebe Harris, Mavinda Johal, Anna Jorysz, Katharine Joyner, Michela Khan, Katy Matthewson, Katherine McKenna, Nicola Medici, Julia O'Mahony, Anisha Patel, Priyal Patel, Emily Plumb, Isabel Prodger, Melissa Purkiss, Jasmeet Rai, Katie Reed, Amelia Rolfe, Rebecca Pigney, Nancy Rowe, Lucy Sawyerr, Poorna Sharma, Francesca Smith, Jemma Smith, Rosie Swaine, Charlotte Watkins, Sarah Williams, Rebecca Willey, Rebecca Willis, Meredith Willsher, Carmen-Sofia Whitham-Agut, Emily Woods.

AND LAST BUT BY NO MEANS LEAST

Felicity Wright (née Gage), (1972-79) a new member, who is now a singing teacher, has been working with our school choirs.

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YOUR COMMITTEE 2009-10

See our pictures on the website

Janice Shepherd (née Litchfield)
Chair, janiceshepherd@btconnect.com

Mary Argent (née Cook)
Membership Secretary & Newsletter
ogs-member@maryargent.com

Victoria Tiffen (née Booth)
Treasurer, victoriabooth01@yahoo.co.uk

Jenny Jemison (née Spencer)
Minutes Secretary,
jenny@jemison.go-plus.net

Jan Cocks (née Whatton)
General Member
jazzyjan@blueyonder.co.uk

Marion Lewis (née Dorsett)
General Member,
marionl@robert-e-lee.co.uk

Mary-Ann Dunn
maryanndunn2004@yahoo.co.uk

Glenda Griffin (née Weigold)
General Member, rbobgriffin@aol.com

Mary Booth (née Towers)
General Member,
marybooth01@yahoo.co.uk

Emma Law Sixth Form rep
emma_c_law@yahoo.co.uk

Livi Baker, Sixth Form rep
livibaker92@hotmail.com

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CAN YOU HELP US FIND THEM AGAIN?

Here, again, is the list of members whose newsletters have been returned and we have lost touch with them. Any news would be gratefully received.

Helen Baker-Falkner of Nairobi, left school in 1967
Helen Barker, lately of London, left school in 1985
Julia Bunting (née Wright) of Chelmsford, left school in 1974
Phyllis Cass MBE of Chelmsford, left school 1932
Barbara Chippendale of Billericay, left school 1974
Amanda Clarke of Chelmsford, at school 1993-2000
Julie Claydon of Witham, at school 1972-79
Anna Dixon (née Wright) of Danbury
Patricia Fletcher (née Whitehorne) of Wiggington, Yorkshire, at school 1962-69
Mary Frayer (née Gibson) of Broomfield, left school 1935
Elizabeth Grogan of Brentwood, at school 1995-2002
Anne E Goss of Chelmsford, left school 1971
Brenda Hindley of Hythe Marina Village, at school 1951-58
Melanie Hogger of Stock, at school 1995-2002
Amy Jones of South Woodham Ferrers, at school 1992-94
Anne Kliskey (née Walter) of Chelmsford, left school 1981
Amy Kirkwood of Chelmsford, at school 1994-2001
Sarah LeMonde of Chelmsford, at school 1995-2002
Martine Le Roy of Chelmsford, left school 1981
Josephine Living of Chelmsford, at school 1993-2000
Sharon Mascall-Dare of Dunmow, left school 1988
Jill Millwood (née Cornhill) of Lewes, left school in 1956
Ruby Morgan (née Fulcher) of Springfield, left school 1926
Jean Orenstein (née Roberts) of Navestock, at school 1955-57
Kate Poulton of Mill Green, at school 1988-96
Christine Radford (née Norton) of Chelmer Village, left school 1940
Helen Thomas (née Atkinson, of Tiptree and latterly Australia, left school 1979
Katja Vega (nee Fleischmann) who was in Chicago, but we now think as gone to an academic post in Australia.
Christine Walker (née Jaggard) of Woking, left school 1974
Caroline Welch of Billericay, left school 1980

IN MEMORIAM

Winnifred Newman (née Davies) of Witham, who left school in 1947. We were notified by a neighbour.