

CHELMSFORD
COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL
For **GIRLS**

OLD GIRLS SOCIETY – Spring 2008

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NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL

PLEASE SEND YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES TO MARY ARGENT AT

ogs-member@maryargent.com

This is a reminder that we can send newsletters to you by email, and, as you will appreciate, it will save us postage and help our finances. Two would be helpful, one email address for home and also an alternative one, perhaps one at work or college.

If your email address is at Hotmail, we often find that this provider bounces back the newsletter. We think this is because of the limited access provided to you by Hotmail. You may need to remember to clear out your inbox on a regular basis.

Also, we now ask all school leavers to provide us with two email addresses, one at home and one at work or college, so that we have a spare address if one fails.

Please also read the item about Parent Mail on page 6 about receiving school newsletters, which can be sent in future by email to you directly from school.

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www.cchs.co.uk

The views expressed by contributors 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 Member

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter for 2008. It is always a delight to write to you at this time with so much to look forward to in the year.

Our main event of this year is our AGM and Mothers and Daughters Reunion, which take place in the School Hall on the evening of Saturday June 28th. We are supporting the J's Charity this year, and you will find more information about this in the newsletter. I know that each year some of you decide to come back for the first time after many years. We are really pleased to meet everyone and will make you feel most welcome. You may also have a chance to look around the school on that occasion which brings back many fond memories. Please check at the end of this newsletter to find out how to get your ticket.

I hope you will enjoy reading our newsletter. It is lovely to receive letters or emails from you about any news that you have. We are also interested to hear about any of your own Reunions that you may have held.

Enjoy reading your newsletter.

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

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CONGRATULATIONS, VICTORIA

Harry Thomas was born on 1 March to our Treasurer, Victoria Tiffen and husband, Paul. Harry weighed in at a very healthy 8lb 4oz and is absolutely lovely. Victoria said, "I can't believe how much time one little baby takes up!" Yes, Victoria, we can believe it.

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MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS –REUNION 2008

We know from our database that we have quite a few mothers and daughters in the Society. Daughters, please encourage your mother to come back to school with you for Reunion. Mothers, get your daughter to keep that date free – 28 June 2008.

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NEW MEMBERS 2007

Bob Owers, ex-Deputy Head, who is now Head of Churston Grammar School, Devon.

NEW MEMBERS 2008

Jennie Bengé, Stephanie Cocks, Kelly Griffiths, Laura Stonebank, Mabel Turner (née Roots), Valerie Wordley, Nicole Clayden,

Sixth Form Reps

Yasmin Dick (2006-07), Isobel Harris (2006-07), Phili Maliska (2005-06), Angela Wipperman (2005-06), Melissa Purkis (2007-08), Nancy Rowe (2007-08)

DINAH MCNICOL – A LIFE REMEMBERED

On 16 November 2007, the body of Dinah McNicol was found at the former home of Peter Tobin.

Dinah went to our school from 1985 to 1991 and grew up in the village of Tillingham. She was a quiet person who gained 7 “O” levels and “A” levels in English, History, RE and General Studies. But she never returned to school for Speech Day to celebrate her success. During the long break between A-levels and University, Dinah and some other friends went off to a music festival near Brighton. But she never returned.

Dinah always was a free spirit and had learned to take care of herself and her father after her mother died. But it was very unusual for none of her friends to know her whereabouts and it didn't seem right when she made no attempt to collect her results or find out if she had secured a place at a university. As time passed, the more serious her absence seemed. In 1992 Crimewatch reconstructed her disappearance, and in 2005 her story was retold in the Daily Mirror.

The case was reconsidered in 2007 by the Essex Police Investigative Review Team which regularly reviews all unsolved or unexplained cases of missing people, deaths and sex offences. Essex detectives then started a detailed examination of a house at Margate, first finding Vicky Hamilton and then Dinah.

One of her teachers said –

A trip was organised to Florence each Autumn half term for year 13 pupils. The trip involved two whole days of travel by coach, one there and one back. Of course the coach went through several countries. It always frustrated me that students were not more interested in the scenery. With its huge windows, the coach journey was like a 24-hour silent documentary on geography, architecture and sociology. Dinah is the only student, of hundreds over the years, whom I remember as being glued to the window. No doubt she chatted to people etc - but she watched everything, saw everything and, I think, took it all in. It is significant because Dinah was fascinated about the world. I suspect that she lived her life absolutely to the full - but she was intrigued at the potential that the world had to offer.

Dinah had had a difficult childhood. She had just finished school and, at 18, she was for the first time free to do what she wanted, to experiment, travel and savour life. For the first time she was free to fly - and it was exactly at this moment that she was murdered. There could be no greater tragedy or worse injustice.

However, sixteen years on, I've understood something else about the tragedy. Whenever I think of Dinah, I see her as a beautiful 18-year old, full of life and courage and alternative imagination. I have grown older and, perhaps like all those who knew her then, time has wearied and tarnished me, and the inevitable disappointments and difficulties that life can bring have changed me from who I was then to, perhaps, the lesser person I am now. But this has not happened to Dinah. In my memory she is still perfect and always will be because she cannot be damaged by time. Dinah lost her life, but that tragedy can have a meaning for us, in that it gives us all new resolve and a new pleasure in being alive.

A note from her Head Teacher

Thank you for letting me write about Dinah McNicol for the Old Girls Newsletter. I was so sorry to learn the tragic truth about Dinah and I remember at the time the great anxiety about her and what might have happened. 1991 seems a very long time ago, but I remember she was such a bright and lively girl with an original approach to dress - her personality came through in that way! She traveled to school a long way from Tillingham, but despite this, managed to do exceptionally well in her exams, achieving four A Levels.

Bernice McCabe, Head Teacher 1990-97 THIS YEAR'S REUNION - AND THE J'S

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HOSPICE APPEAL

Our reunion meal this year will be provided by a team of volunteers from The J's, a worthwhile charity based in Chelmsford, and the profits from our raffle will go to this good cause. Among the catering team are some of our Old Girls who will be trekking in Japan in 2009 to raise funds for The J's. Mary Fox, Jan Cocks and Sue Bell will be starting in Osaka and will cover about 80Km following the Buddhist Trail, visiting the temples, waterfalls and mountains. There are still some places left so if you would like to join them please get in touch with The J's.

Please look at the website www.thejshospice.org.uk. For those of you without a computer, here is some information taken from the website.

The "J's" Hospice Charity was launched in Essex in 2004 with the aim to build and equip an age-appropriate hospice for young adults age 18 - 40 years of age. Letting young people be young people. The "J's" will be the first stand-alone hospice for young adults, providing hospice and respite care in a friendly environment.

THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE J'S

Jonathan Whiffin was a fun loving, outdoor typical teenager who enjoyed socialising with people of all ages. His greatest love was dolphins and the J's logo represents this. Despite his disabilities it did not stop him enjoying life. Jonathan was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy at the age of 3 years. Jonathan used children's' hospices from the age of 14 years to the time he died in January 2002.

THE PROPOSED BUILDING

To build "The J's" will cost £5 million, which will include all the furnishings and equipment. Once built the running costs will be £1.5 million each year.

PROVIDING THE BEST POSSIBLE CARE AND SUPPORT

"The J's" will have the best possible facilities. There will be 10 bedrooms all with en suite, accommodation for families and friends, facilities for recreation, entertainment and study in an attractive and relaxed environment.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The aim of The J's is give a young adult the opportunity to continue their education. The J's will provide library facilities and a suitable environment to study, including the use of computer programs and links to established educational facilities that would have been available to the less disadvantaged individuals, who have not been forced into care by their life limiting condition. The J's will provide educational facilities for health care

professionals to give training in all levels of palliative care. In particular it is hoped it will be instrumental in the ongoing training of the front line GPs, nursing staff and home health visitors.

**EMAIL: THEJSHOSPICE@BTCONNECT.COM
OR CALL THE J'S FUNDRAISING OFFICE ON 01245 351514**

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THE OPENING OF THE NEW MUSIC CENTRE

Our Music Centre was formally opened on Monday 21 January. At 2.40pm Dame Evelyn Glennie officially unveiled a plaque and cut, not only the ribbon, but also a specially prepared celebration cake made by Debbie Herron. That afternoon former staff, friends, governors, students and the local business community joined in sharing the celebration. Pictures can be seen via the school website, www.cchs.co.uk/news-events/news-nl.php - school newsletter January 2008. **We will give tours of the Music Centre at 5pm before Reunion.**

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MOCK INTERVIEWS AT SCHOOL IN OCTOBER 2008 - CAN YOU HELP?

Every year the school's Parents Association holds mock interviews for sixth formers to prepare them for University application interviews. The girls attend offices in the Chelmsford area (away from school, their comfort zone). They submit a personal statement or CV so the interviewers working in pairs know about them in advance. The interview is carried out in a formal but friendly way, and the girls get feedback afterwards. I think you know what's coming next.... we need your help. We are looking for people to act as interviewers during this year's sessions in October. If you have some expertise in this area, perhaps recruitment or personnel, the girls would benefit hugely from your experience. If you lack hands-on interviewing experience, but would still like to help, then we can match you up with an experienced interviewer. It's not a huge time commitment... one weekend morning or afternoon would be a real help. The dates are in October. In addition we need people to act as receptionists for each session, to make sure the system runs smoothly and to reinforce the realism of the experience. We know the Old Girls are always very supportive of the school, so we are hoping you can help this time round. One of the OGS committee members, Jan Cocks, volunteers her offices as the interview venue. If you want to know more, or volunteer, please email Sian Hurrell on sian.hurrell@hotmail.com

Many thanks

CCHS PARENTS ASSOCIATION

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NOTES FROM OUR SIXTH FORMS REPS 2007-08

I am Melissa Purkiss and I am an Old Girls' Society Prefect along with Nancy Rowe. I am currently studying for A-levels in English Literature, History, French and German, and am also studying for extra GCSEs in Italian and Russian, with a view to study French at University.

MELISSA PURKISS

My name is Nancy Rowe and I am one of the two Senior Prefects appointed to work alongside the Old Girls' Society for the coming year. At present, I am studying English Literature, History, German and Latin for my AS Level exams and I am hoping to read English Literature at University. I have just been appointed as Editor of the school newspaper and I am currently setting up a new Poetry Society in school. In the Summer I will take part in the school expedition to Patagonia, South America, which I am particularly looking forward to. I hope this brief description of things I'm doing in and around school has given you an insight into my character.

NANCY ROWE

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PARENT MAIL® – AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR SOCIETY

The school has recently subscribed to ParentMail®, a database which allows the school to send information to parents by email and text messages more easily. The service is already being used by more than a thousand schools around the UK. This is so that parents can receive information from the school in a more reliable and efficient manner, no longer needing to trawl through the contents of their daughter's school bags.

In order to setup ParentMail®, the school is collecting parent email addresses and mobile telephone numbers. The school stresses that the ParentMail® service is registered with the Data Protection Registrar and guarantees that all information supplied will be kept completely confidential between the school and ParentMail®. There is NO advertising associated with the scheme.

The school hopes that parents will join this scheme which is totally free to parents. School messages will be sent from the e-mail address messages@parentmail.co.uk. It is necessary that this address is added to the user's email address book (or approved sender list) in order to prevent messages being blocked by SPAM/JUNK filters.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR SOCIETY

When ParentMail® is fully up and running, our members wishing to participate can receive information directly from school at no cost, for instance the school newsletters that many of you requested and appreciated in the past. (You will recall that we had to make a charge for this service to cover handling and postage.)

If you think you would like to be included in this scheme, please let us know. You can email ogs-member@maryargent.com and your interest will be passed on to the school. There is also a reminder for you with the Reunion application form.

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WE LOST TOUCH WITH SOME OF OUR OLD GIRLS IN SPRING 2007

Every time we send out a new newsletter, we get some returned, so we're asking for your help in tracking down members we have lost touch with recently. Do you keep in touch any of these girls? Can you give us new addresses, or prompt them to contact us? Any news at all would be gratefully received.

Joanne Britter (néé Plumbridge) of Rayleigh, left school 1989
Joyce Chennells of Chelmsford, left school 1934
Celia Crossley (néé Clarke) of Newton Blossomville, at school 1971-1978
Louise Fuller of Feering, at school 1996-2003
Helen Gibson of Chelmsford, left school 1986
Susan Harries (néé Watson) of Newton-on-Trent, left school 1981
Katharine Kelsey (néé Bassil) of Hammersmith, left school 1986
Lorraine Molyneux of Braintree, at school 1993-2000
Kate Simmons of Burnham-on-Crouch, at school 1996-2003
Jenny Smith of Chelmsford, left school 1999
Pat Sturgeon (néé Purdie) of Boreham, left school 1947
Joy Wieser (néé Fuche) of Austria, left school 1948

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

Email
29 September 2007
To: Mary Argent

I probably wasn't a typical High School success story, fairly average at most things. I did manage to get in to the Royal Veterinary College, but discovered that London had a lot more to offer than studying so didn't complete the course. Whilst reviewing my future options, I took a job in the path lab at Moorfields Eye Hospital, adding an HNC in Medical Laboratory Sciences and a research scientist husband to my portfolio.

I returned to study full time as an Occupational Therapist, qualifying from Salford in 1991. I considered many career options, from teaching to medicine to nursing. I kept returning to O.T. as it seemed to embody the values I believed in - enablement, independence and choice. It was a career I had not been aware of at school; indeed I have to confess I still lean towards students with a degree of life experience and maturity.

Being very scientific, I had assumed I would practice in the Physical field. But during my training, I found that I was drawn to Mental Health. On qualifying, I obtained my first post in Psychiatry in Greater Manchester. I was fortunate to work with a broad range of clients, both in-patients and outpatients, with a wide range of diagnoses. I also worked with some excellent staff, Occupational Therapists, nurses and creative therapists. One of my good friends from this time emigrated to Perth, and I am Godmother to her daughter and have visited several times.

My next post was in the same area, working in the community with people who experienced severe and enduring mental illness. My role was to enable them to maximise their independence by maintaining or improving skills, and to achieve optimal functioning in self-care, leisure and productive occupations. After this I gained a more senior post, setting up a service for people in the community with anxiety and depression. This involved running a lot of therapeutic groups, which I had an aptitude for.

My husband's promotion involved another relocation, this time to South Wales, and I took a post as Head OT for mental health services in Swansea, which was quite a challenge. I did this job for 6 years, and relocated to the Midlands just over 2 years ago. I took a temporary job in Community Learning Disabilities, a change of direction and another challenge. I then applied for a permanent position as Head of service for Learning Disabilities in North Warwickshire. This has been my biggest challenge to date, and involved setting up a service from scratch. The client group is mainly people with offending histories, who have come through the criminal justice system or from special hospitals. Our job is mainly to reduce their risk of re-offending so they can live safely in the least secure accommodation according to their levels of risk. It means working within very different boundaries, and working with people who have become quite institutionalised at times. Educating staff about the benefits of Occupational Therapy for these clients is a big part of the job. Working for the NHS through numerous reorganisations has also had it's own challenges, but I still believe passionately in what I do and will probably carry on for a few years yet!

Pip George, 1975-1983

Sherborne, Dorset
11 June 2007

Dear Mary Argent

My school friend, Audrey Mascall (née Sweet), sent me her copy of the CHS Centenary school newsletter. I was interested in the article "Memories of School 1936".

I started in the Prep School at the age of 7 in 1932, in the halcyon days of Miss Bancroft. I remember Miss Peers as the most wonderful person, kind but firm, and a teacher *par excellence*. We all looked forward to Friday afternoons when we had story time and Miss Peers read from the Pilgrim's Progress. At the back of the classroom there were some bookshelves on which were books such as Granny's Wonderful Chair and the Story of the Rolled Oat. Although I can remember the names of some of the other girls in the class, one has always stuck in my memory – she was called Desdemona Ishbel Coates!

I was afraid of some of the teachers when I moved on, particularly Miss McKenzie who taught history. When she appeared with a sheaf of paper in her hand, we knew we were in for a test! Also Miss Phillips who taught maths - she managed to reduce me to tears every arithmetic lesson. Miss Blacker, the games mistress, was very forward-looking and sometimes we spent the whole of Wednesday afternoon playing cricket in the bottom field. This led to my love of cricket in later years.

Miss Roughton, the music teacher, was most talented and I recall that the choral society was invited to sing on BBC Children's' House, when we met Uncle Mac and Auntie Elizabeth. On Speech Days, Miss Roughton always wore glamorous evening dress. It used to get so hot on the top tiers of seats in the Corn Exchange that sometimes girls fainted.

I seem to remember that there were about 400 girls at the school then. We had splendid Christmas parties when we decorated our tea tables and afterwards played games. At the end of the proceedings, the Sixth Form, of whom we were much in awe, came into the hall singing "Here we come a wassailing among the leaves so green".

A theatrical company visited the school once each year, arriving by coach, and performed Shakespeare plays for us. I can remember *The Tempest* vividly. It was my first experience of that sort of entertainment and I was spellbound.

We had a school song called "Glad hearts adventuring, The way is wide, Valour and faith shall shield the pilgrim's side".

Yes, I have many memories of my school days, both good and bad, but were they the best days of my life? – probably not.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Filbey (née Mills)

Email
17 February 2008
To: Mary Argent

Many thanks for sending the Autumn and Spring newsletters, it was good to catch up.

You ask what I have been doing since leaving school.....well I went to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama from school. I graduated from there three years later. Then went to Homerton in Cambridge to do the Post grad cert. In education, I have taught music in various primary schools in Essex and a middle school in Bucks. I took early retirement at 55 so that I could do more piano teaching. I now work for Essex Music Services as a piano and keyboard teacher and really enjoy it as a change from class teaching. I even came back to the High school as a piano teacher at the Wed evening music school for two years. I gather that the new long-awaited music block is now finished. I shall have to find a way of coming back to have a look at it. Having taught the piano in the old caretaker's house on Wednesday evenings, anything must be more luxurious than that!

I was a pupil at Cathedral Primary in Chelmsford and went from there to the High School in 1960. I now teach the piano at Cathedral school two days a week. Since retiring I seem to have re-visited all my old schools which has been a lovely experience.

It was great to hear from you and I look forward to receiving my newsletters again,

Very best wishes

Marion Stretch (néé Sculthorp) 1960-67

Nayland, Colchester
2 November 2007

Dear Janice

I enjoy reading the CHS Old Girls Journal. I was at the High School from 1937-1946 and enjoyed it very much. I left to go to the Royal Academy of Music, where I had won a violin scholarship.

My intention in writing to you is to tell you about my eldest daughter's career and achievement. She is Elizabeth Bungey (now Elizabeth Parker) and she worked at the BBC Radiophonic Workshop for several years and is now a successful composer of music for television mainly. This year she was honoured by the University of Staffordshire with a doctorate and was nominated by the Department of Electronics for her music and her inspiration to young people. I know she has always appreciated the encouragement she was given by Mrs Gaitonde when she was Head of Music.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Bungey Miller (formerly Barbara Gannon) left school 1947

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<p>IN MEMORIAM</p> <p>On 26 April 2005, Jane Denton (née Windley) of Ickenham, Middlesex, who left school in 1971. We were informed by her family.</p> <p>On 11 January 2008, Eileen Ford (née Baker) of Woodbridge, Suffolk, who left school in 1933. We were informed by her daughter.</p>

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SEARCH

If you'd like us to search for schoolmates from your year, we are happy to do so in our extensive database (we do make a small charge of £1.50).

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YOUR PRIVATE REUNIONS

We hope you will let us know of any reunions we help to initiate. If you can write an account of the event, all our readers would be very interested. And of course, make sure ALL of you come back to meet up for the school reunion, too.

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YOUR COMMITTEE 2008

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

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

Victoria Tiffen (née Booth)
Treasurer
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Jenny Jemison (née Spencer)
Minutes Secretary
jenny@jemison.go-plus.net

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

Glenda Griffin (née Weigold)
General Member
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Mary Booth (née Towers)
General Member
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Mary-Ann Dunn (née Collett)
General Member
maryanndunn2004@yahoo.co.uk

Melissa Purkiss
Sixth Form rep
melpurkiss@hotmail.com

Nancy Rowe
Sixth Form rep
nancyerowe@yahoo.co.uk

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

ANNUAL REUNION DINNER
Saturday, 28 June 2008 at 6.30pm

School tours from 5pm-6pm
including a visit to the new Music Centre

Please send me ticket(s) at a cost of £12.50 each.
I enclose my cheque for £ payable to CHS OGS, plus sae.

Name (PLEASE PRINT)..... Maiden Name

Years at school, from/to

Address (PLEASE PRINT)

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Return to: Victoria Tiffen, OGS Treasurer, 6 Carnation Close, Chelmsford
CM1 6XR, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

PLEASE RETURN as soon as possible so that we can confirm
the catering arrangements.

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Parent Mail®

To: ogs-member@maryargent.com

As the Society is no longer able to send out school newsletters, I am
interested in being contacted by ParentMail® in order to receive these.

My email addresses are:

Home:

Work/college: