

# Chelmsford County High School for Girls

## Alumnae Newsletter



### Inside this issue:

Headteacher's Welcome .....	2-3
Mrs Nicole Chapman .....	4-7
Mrs Bernice McCabe .....	8-10
Three Generations of CCHS .....	11-13
German Exchange Visits - Backnang .....	14-15
Music, Drama and Dance this Year .....	16-17
Speech Day 2019 .....	18
Senior Prefect Activities - Student Perspective .....	19-21
Examination Results 2019 .....	22
From the Archives .....	23
News from Former Students .....	24-26
Interviews with Former Students .....	27-31
Supporting Literacy Across the School .....	32
Reunions .....	33-34
Tribute to Mr Nick Minnican .....	35
In Memoriam .....	36-37
Mrs Sue Brignall .....	38
Memories of Bancroft .....	39-40
Then and Now .....	41-42
Meet our Senior Prefects, Alumnae Relations .....	43
Staff who Left in 2019 .....	44-46
Staff who Joined us in 2019 .....	47
Building Update .....	48
Training the Next Generation of Teachers .....	49
Class of 2019 .....	49
Teacher Training at CCHS .....	50
How Can Former Students Help CCHS? .....	51
Keeping in Touch .....	52

Flyer—Building a Future Appeal Fund

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Issue 4



## Headteacher's Welcome

What a privilege it is to address you as the new Headteacher of Chelmsford County High School for Girls. This is a very special school community for me, having served as Deputy Headteacher since 2011. Moreover, my youngest sister studied for her A levels at CCHS and my youngest daughter is currently in Year 10. As I begin my headship I would like to provide you with an insight into the ambitions and thinking that will shape the next phase in the development of the School. At a moment of change it is important to reflect and contextualise, to then provide a rationale for action and development.

**The past – what is our inheritance?** CCHS is a proud grammar school community, with an illustrious history. As Mary Kenyon notes in, 'A History of Chelmsford County High School' (1982): *"Chelmsford County High School had its official opening ceremony on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1907. Miss Mabel Vernon-Harcourt was the first Headmistress. There were 76 pupils on the School roll at this time, with the age range initially 12 to 18 years. In June 1916 Winifred Pickering became the school's first University success when she gained a First Class degree at Girton, Cambridge."*

**The present – what is our 'state of the union'?** Mrs Chapman, the Governors and staff crystallised the ambition of the School community by creating a vision and a set of aims: *"Our vision of developing the leaders of tomorrow is evident in our commitment to the pursuit of excellence. In achieving their individual potential our students make a valuable contribution to the local and global community"* – CCHS School website. Moreover, Mrs Chapman and the Governors were relentless in their work to secure funding to enable the School to expand, most recently through the Selective Schools Expansion Fund (SSEF). This tenacity has provided a wonderful opportunity for us to take the School forward, with a Sports Hall, a new teaching block and a new Sixth Form Study Centre and Library.

**The future – what is our ambition?** We, as the guardians of a significant inheritance, have chosen to honour this legacy by defining and pursuing an ambition for CCHS to be a progressive grammar school, committed to excellence in girls' education and empowerment:

- ♦ **We will be pioneering** – an additional form of entry from September 2020, with a determination to achieve greater social diversity; a growing and evolving school community. Working with our increasing number of partner primary schools, we will share our expertise regarding teaching able students from all backgrounds to ensure that talent and aspiration are served.
- ♦ **We will be engaged** – teaching & learning practice will be strengthened by working with the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE), with leadership & management practice being developed through our work with the Prince's Teaching Institute (PTI).
- ♦ **We will be dynamic** – students will be provided with a wealth of opportunities as we work with the Association of State Girls' Schools (ASGS) in the UK and the National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS) internationally, to instil confidence, fire ambition and promote advancement.

**The process** – how are we going to realise our ambition? We will amplify, and so fortify, our School vision and aims, as well as pursue links between Faculties, to cultivate core values, which will direct and drive our work: citizenship, meritocracy, challenge, duty, imagination, enlightenment and tolerance.

- ♦ **Developing the leaders of tomorrow** – citizenship: inspire future citizens to think for themselves and to act for others.
- ♦ **The pursuit of excellence** – meritocracy: provide students with an outstanding education, with students doing their best in all endeavours.
- ♦ **Fulfilling individual potential** – challenge: motivate students to acquire new knowledge & understanding and stimulate them to develop new skills & attributes.
- ♦ **Contributing to the community** – duty: ensure students conduct themselves with civility and compassion at all times, supporting each other and looking beyond themselves.
- ♦ English Faculty (Drama, English and Psychology) and Creative Faculty (Art, Music and PE) – **imagination**.
- ♦ Mathematics Faculty (Computing, Economics and Maths) and Science Faculty (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) – **enlightenment**.
- ♦ Humanities Faculty (Geography, Government and Politics, History and RS) and Languages Faculty (French, German, Italian, Latin and Spanish) – **tolerance**.

If you visit the School website you will find a promotional film, which was produced by Oliver Steele, who, until recently, taught English at CCHS. Oliver started his teaching career with us, having first started his professional life as a film-maker and documentarian. He has decided to return to this now, but he will be working with us across this year to make an ambitious film about CCHS. We will be making a documentary to mark, celebrate and showcase our expertise in educating and empowering able girls since 1907. We work in the shadow and spirit of Mary Wollstonecraft, Millicent Fawcett, Emmeline Pankhurst, CCHS alumnae, et al. and we wish to capture on film what is special about the School and why what we do is so important. A group of students from across all year groups will support Oliver this year to make this film, the working title for which is: *Building a future for our girls – my school, your school, our school*.

So, as we move through the 2019-20 academic year, we will work hard to provide students with a safe, caring and stimulating learning environment, as we begin to write the next chapter in the life and development of CCHS. This is both our obligation and privilege as we serve and innovate in the spirit of our School motto: *Vit-ai Lampada Ferimus*.

Please know that, as former students, you are always welcome to return and visit your School. It is always wonderful when individuals or groups come back to this community.

**Mr Stephen Lawlor**  
**Headteacher**



# Mrs Nicole Chapman, Headteacher 2007-2019

As Mr Lawlor notes in his introduction, the achievements of his predecessor have been considerable and the school is grateful to her for twelve years of unceasing hard work and commitment to developing so many aspects of the school.

Mrs Chapman came to CCHS in April 2007 after five years as the Headteacher of Gravesend Grammar School for Girls and a variety of posts in schools including Frances Bardsley School and the Coopers Company and Coborn School. She started her teaching career in Dagenham in the early 1970s and brought to CCHS a huge amount of experience and the confidence borne of years of responding to the increasing challenges of state education in this country.



Born and educated in France, Mrs Chapman brought to CCHS a commitment based on her own experience of the French education system that every student should have access to the broadest possible education. She also brought to the school a much-needed sense of direction and purpose; this had been allowed to lapse a little in the interregnum between Mrs Curtis' retirement on health grounds and Mrs Chapman's appointment almost two years later. Immediately keen to get the measure of her new school, she set about interviewing every member of staff in her first months in post and also made sure to see every member of both Year 11 and 13. Out of these interviews and the work of both governors and the leadership team came a new statement of the school vision as 'developing the leaders of tomorrow' and the three aims of the pursuit of excellence, the fulfilment of individual potential and of commitment to the local and global community. It was therefore natural that CCHS made a considerable commitment to exploring and then offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme as an alternative to A levels. Whilst funding pressures as austerity made its mark in education meant that the school could not afford to deliver the IB after 2017, both students and staff benefitted from the enrichment of the curriculum which it represented.



*22nd January 2008 – Mrs Chapman pictured during the opening of the new Music Centre (left).*

*Mrs Chapman pictured on Commemoration Day in April 2010 (right).*



## Mrs Nicole Chapman, continued...

The early years of Mrs Chapman's headship also saw considerable rationalisation of the curriculum for Years 7 to 9 and the end of some initiatives which had not proved their worth. The teaching staff much appreciated her clear judgement about what was a good idea worth pursuing and what was an ephemeral trend that offered little to this school beyond some low-level bandwagon riding. Whilst encouraging staff to be innovative and reflective in their practice, Mrs Chapman was always able to reassure staff that traditional and established patterns of teaching and academic rigour had much to commend them. At a time when some educationalists increasingly question the role of knowledge in the curriculum (one visitor to CCHS recently arguing that 'there is no point in teaching knowledge now we have Google'), Mrs Chapman's commitment to good sense and high standards in the classroom meant that staff continued to feel confident in their practice and that their judgements were respected.

Mrs Chapman was committed throughout her headship to the highest standards of behaviour and dress from her students. A new uniform was introduced with purple kilts that were less susceptible to the 'thousand natural shocks' often inflicted on the previous two uniforms and a number of students found a need to reflect seriously about the standards of behaviour expected in a school. A dress code and then a uniform code were also



*Mrs Chapman – Year 10 Celebrations, July 2019*

introduced for sixth form students. However whilst Mrs Chapman's high standards could make for some uncomfortable discussions on occasion for a very few students, parents and staff, her commitment to the welfare of all in the school was very real. Indeed, in reaction to the increasing pressures under which teenagers exist, her headship saw a wholesale revision of the school's pastoral system and the development of a team of Year Leaders. Certainly this has done much for the quality of both pastoral support and safeguarding in a period when the demands made in both areas are increasingly serious.

On her very first visit to CCHS after her appointment Mrs Chapman entered through the old dining room entrance for the Christmas Concert in December 2006. Some readers may remember the old room 34 (for many years the haunt of Mr Zambellas) which sat outside this entrance. On that occasion Mrs Chapman and her husband Kevin resolved that, as Lenin might have said 'something must be done' about the rash of demountable classrooms which then disfigured the site. It is testimony both to Mrs Chapman's personal drive and vision as well as to the quality of successive business managers that she appointed (Mrs Mary Cherry, Mrs Susan Hoefling and now Mrs Melissa Mulgrew) that under her headship CCHS was able to raise nearly £10 million to rebuild and extend the dining room entrance, to build the Dame Margaret Anstee Centre for Languages and to provide new classrooms, a new sixth form common room and new study spaces. At the time of writing we have seen the demolition of Bancroft and are eagerly anticipating the start of work on its replacement and on the new Sports Hall, as well as the rebuilding of the Gym to accommodate the new school library. Alongside these developments Mrs Chapman continued to ensure that the site staff were able to do much to improve the look of the older parts of the school. Once the new buildings are completed in 2021 CCHS will have facilities appropriate to its work in the twenty-first century. To achieve this against a background of austerity and swingeing budget cuts is no small achievement. Some readers who remember CCHS as a much smaller school may regret that increasing the school's intake has been the way to unlock a good deal of this funding. However we are confident both that giving more girls the opportunity to experience CCHS is the right thing to do and that the values and systems of the school are so strong that the increase in numbers will be well handled and a positive experience for all.

## Mrs Nicole Chapman, continued...

Mrs Chapman's steadfast commitment both to supporting all events in school and to representing the school at a national level must also be recorded. There was scarcely a school event in her headship at which she was not present and students and staff much appreciated her supportive presence. She also ensured that the voice of CCHS was heard in Whitehall and Westminster and on national bodies such as the Association of State Girls' Schools and the Grammar School Heads' Association. This renewed commitment to lobbying and discussing national issues was of huge benefit to the school and ensures that it continues to be at the forefront of national and international discussions.

At a time when education is experiencing a recruitment crisis and staff turnover continues to be a concern in all schools, Mrs Chapman's energies were much directed to recruiting the very best staff for her school and to supporting teaching and non-teaching staff as they developed their skills and their careers.

Mrs Chapman retired at the end of August 2019 after 46 years in education. A significant majority of her staff were not even born when she started as a teacher and yet her energy and enthusiasm did not fade one bit as retirement approached. Indeed she was heard to wonder if perhaps she shouldn't have stayed another year or so to 'see the new buildings in'. However her husband Kevin had retired some years earlier and she was in many ways keen to move on to the next phase in her life, spending more time at her home in Provence and taking longer holidays than the schedule of a headteacher allows. CCHS said farewell to her with two special assemblies and a formal reception attended by staff and local dignitaries. At this she was presented with framed copies of a poem especially written by Jessica Steadman (Year 12), a pen and ink drawing of the school by Jessica Shaw (Year 12) and a piece of music composed by Caroline Penn (CCHS 2011 to 2018). A ballet to this music was choreographed and danced by Scarlett Mann (CCHS 2011 to 2018) and Molly Ramidge (Year 8) and other music was performed by senior students.



*Mrs Chapman pictured here during the formal reception that was held in her honour in Summer 2019.*



# Mrs Nicole Chapman, continued...

Mrs Chapman wrote in her farewell letter to parents that:

*'As I complete my final term at CCHS I wish to place on record that the past 12 years have been some of the most enjoyable in my 46-year career in education.*

*I have greatly enjoyed working with and for such wonderful students whose intellectual interest and energy are second to none. It has been incredibly gratifying to watch them develop into young women who have fledged with confidence and the determination to find their place in the world. I hope they remember to make a difference and to remain true to what their school has taught them.*

*I have been fortunate in leading a team of dedicated teaching and support staff who have supported me in maintaining the high standards we demand of ourselves and our students. I am proud to have guided the careers of so many, always prepared to give their students great opportunities within and beyond the classroom...*

*...Finally, I wish to thank parents who have unfailingly supported the School in our tripartite partnership. Your daughters are amazing, not only are they focused on achieving their best, but they are also supportive of each other and are acquiring the characteristics which will help them live happy and fulfilling lives. It has been a privilege to guide them and I have every confidence in the team to continue what we have started. I have appreciated the many messages and gifts I have received from you, and your daughters, thank you'.*

Mrs Chapman's commitment, judgement and energy have been pivotal in everything that CCHS is today. We wish her a long and happy retirement.



*Mrs Chapman pictured above with her Executive Assistant, Mrs Bates and some of our Sixth Form students at the ASGS conference in London in March 2019.*

# A Tribute to Bernice McCabe, 1952-2019

## Headteacher from 1990 – 1997

*A Personal Memoir by David Pattrick, Head of English from 1993-2014*

My first encounter with Bernice, inevitably, was at interview. I was ushered into The Presence by the duty tutor group (a typical Bernice innovation, designed to give even the youngest students leadership responsibility) to be met with the wide, solid desk bespeaking majesty; the flowers, the light, the airiness of the room; the scent of something clearly exotic and expensive; and the lady herself, as young and glamorous as rumour had led one to expect. And then something rather different - instead of the Torquemada technique, Bernice's message seemed to be (as at every interview she led in which I participated): convince me; make me want to employ you. You had to respond to this while manhandling a scalding hot coffee cup with a miniscule handle. After she offered me the job, she casually added that the school was overdue an Ofsted inspection and could I make myself free for a staff weekend to prepare for it?

*Picture taken from the Programme for the Service of Thanksgiving that took place at St Paul's Cathedral in November 2019.*



This conference was my first, fascinating, opportunity to observe Bernice in action. Whatever nerves she may have felt about Ofsted (and, in this her first headship, her reputation and that of the school were certainly on the line), she came over as supremely cool and clear about what was needed. Not for her the bought-in faux inspection by retired hacks; nor was she going to throw statistics at the inspectors, nor force everyone to write minute-by-minute lesson plans, for she showed so well in her own lessons that I observed (and she was adamant that I should observe and appraise her teaching) that essential ability to take a lesson into uncharted territory in response to the insights of superb teenage intellects. Instead, the school was going to display and dazzle with the quality of its staff and its learning: the talents of all would bring us through and all had their individual part to play. And this was not empty Churchillian pastiche: the whole weekend was designed to raise morale, to unify purpose. The result was not a forgone conclusion but the culmination of exhaustive strategy and management.

Ah, management. Bernice was the first Head I had met with an MBA: her ideals of management predictably were, for the time, unconventional. Bernice gave her middle managers a good deal of freedom to set the direction for their own departments, but with this we shouldered full responsibility for outcomes, particularly in terms of examination results. She felt that the staff deserved the best, and encouraged them to attend high level courses (and, incidentally, laid on good food and wine at inset days); in return, she expected commensurate commitment from us: she hated and would not accept sloppiness, laziness, vapid excuses. At the same time, she was understanding when things went wrong in people's personal lives, dealt with an attempted suicide showing great sensitivity, and defended her staff when they incurred unjustified criticism.

## A Tribute to Bernice McCabe, continued....

She created a management team that added enormous value to the school in David Taylor and Suzanne Hall, even if for them implementing and supporting Bernice's latest initiatives was a constantly exhausting process. It was a surprise to many that neither of them was appointed as her successor. Bernice also brought the school bursar into her leadership team, recognising that finance would be crucial to the delivery of her goals and that this could best be achieved by being one of the first schools to apply for academy status. Unfortunately, not even his command of Excel spreadsheets could persuade the DES to part with enough to deliver all the new building that was needed: compare (as Bernice must have done) the CCHS library provision, scanty even before Messrs. Bramley and Owers laid their leaden hands on it, with the lofty wonder at North London Collegiate. She had a penchant for spotting talent in staff as well as in students: she appointed one teacher because she felt that a school like CCHS ought to have a place for someone as intellectually gifted as he was organisationally dysfunctional; ironically he, like some other young proteges whose careers she promoted, did not return the favour by supporting her radical agenda. Similarly, Bernice encouraged girls to show independence of spirit but was less enthused when this was directed against her in, for example, a student sit-in. By the time she left, however, the ethos of the place had palpably improved: old revanchists had either gone or (mostly) decided (sensibly) that for them a directional makeover was overdue.

Having a member of senior management in your department can be a mixed blessing. At worst, lessons don't get planned or delivered because "something important" turns up; results suffer: however you get the blame larded with plenty of advice of how the SLT member would have done things differently and better. I can honestly say that the best part of my own relationship with Bernice was teaching with and alongside her. We decided to choose Penelope Lively's *Moon Tiger* from the A level syllabus, and worked throughout on delivery of lessons on it. I learned a lot from her feminist perceptions of the novel and teaching. Her commitment to her classes was steadfast – she did not cancel lessons and made herself generously available to her students to talk over essays and progress. She was a terrific asset to English teaching in the school. She shared one or two traits with Claudia Hampton, the protagonist of the novel, including the ability to turn heads when she entered a room and to make anyone, from one of the office staff through to HRH, feel for the time that she was with them that they were the most important person in her life. Even if one sensed an element of manipulation, one still marvelled and basked.



The legacy of Bernice to CCHS is difficult to assess, not least because her successor was not keen to celebrate that legacy. Bernice never commanded the funds needed to transform the buildings, with the new science block, for all its improvements on what had gone before, all too obviously a compromise between aspiration and cash. Her message to girls when they departed, that they should go forth and be wonderful, will have resonated with and empowered all who heard it. Perhaps her last gift to the school was to establish its qualities once and for all in the public eye: never since her departure has the school so commanded the summit of the league tables, trouncing all the rival grammar schools in Essex, or been named School of the Year in the *Sunday Times*, or attracted so much publicity and envy, or been visited and praised by both Head of Ofsted and Prime Minister. We did not fully know how lucky we were to have her until she went.

# A Tribute to Bernice McCabe, continued....

There was an element of the cool enigma about Bernice. Part of what made her such a fascinating individual was the life outside school which was hinted at but seldom made explicit. In the sixth form revue, when students were given licence to make fun of their teachers, the actresses who represented her seldom got her right, beyond the characteristic flick of the hair and what was parodied as an obsession with a Middlesex town at the west end of the Piccadilly Line; at least if you were cast as her you could convince your parents that you had to go out and buy something fabulous to wear. Similarly, although her appearances at assembly smacked of the dynamically theatrical, she seemed surprisingly reluctant to shed her persona (when all around her were shedding theirs), in the staff pantomime. One facet though that has not been much mentioned in the tributes that have flowed since her death is her sense of fun – an unforgettable moment, for example, was her inability not to LOL when one teacher asked at the end of a long staff meeting devoted solely to the subject just exactly what this Key Stage 3 thing was. You could catch her eye sometimes when something similarly ludicrous had been said or had happened and know she was struggling to maintain a serious composure. And my most poignant memory is of her reading in assembly from a work, love of which we shared, T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*. I cannot read some of that poem without hearing again that silvery voice ("excellent thing in woman" as King Lear said of his favourite daughter) declaim it with perfect sense of cadence born of an innate feel for language.

*We die with the dying:*

*See, they depart, and we go with them.*

*We are born with the dead:*

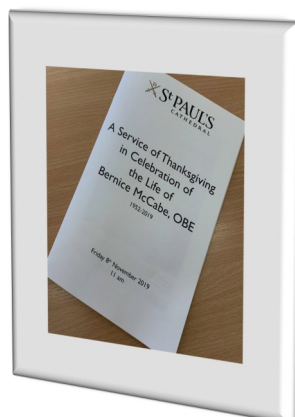
*See, they return, and bring us with them.*



*Bernice McCabe pictured above and left in 1992 with former Prime Minister Lady Thatcher, Mr Bebb (Chair of Governors) and Mr Simon Burns MP.*

Bernice McCabe O.B.E. was Headteacher of CCHS from 1990 to 1997 and afterwards Headteacher of North London Collegiate School.

She sadly died after a year's illness on 18th February 2019.



# Three Generations of CCHS

One of our current Year 13 students, her mother and her grandmother, who also attended CCHS were interviewed by Shraddha and Wafia, our Alumnae Development prefects. Their fascinating stories are below.

"It was a privilege to welcome my grandma and mum into CCHS a few weeks ago. Having left in 1953 and 1984 respectively, it is fair to say they could see many changes - not just in terms of the improvement of facilities (apart from the gym, which was exactly the same for my grandma!) but also in terms of the subject options. CCHS girls today have so many more choices and freedom to express themselves through those, which definitely wasn't as much of a possibility in my grandma's, and even my mum's time at the school. However, one thing we all agreed on was that the ethos and principles of CCHS haven't changed: the girls love learning and work hard." - Bethan Evans



Talking to 3 generations of CCHS girls made us realise and appreciate the huge development made in the school in terms of both academic and extracurricular activities that are available to us as well as the strong community spirit that CCHS has created between alumnae and current students.

Below are some highlights from the interview that was conducted with Bethan's Grandmother (Annette Balls) who was at the school between 1977 and 1984 and Bethan's Mother (Alison Brock) who was at the school between 1946 and 1953. (Shraddha and Wafia)

Has your life taken the path that you thought it would after leaving CCHS?

**Annette:** No, because I wanted to be a hospital almoner. You won't know what they are: they have gone out now but they were people who organised a lot of jobs around the hospital such as admissions and patient welfare such as aftercare and care homes. I wanted to do that but I ended up going to Marconi and doing secretarial work and became a personal assistant for the Drawing Office Supervisor.

How was your 'exam experience' throughout school?

**Annette:** We used to have exams every year in every subject and we used to have general school exams such as GCSEs and O Levels.

**Alison:** We also had end of year exams and were also told class position and sometimes position in the year which was very daunting!

What were the school rules?

**Annette:** I think it's much freer and easier now because we couldn't run in the corridors. Teachers would also stand in the entrance to the hall and as you walked in they would correct your decorum. They were definitely just as interested in how you dressed and how you acted as they were about your academics.

*This has definitely changed as the school still cares about how we present ourselves but there is also now a greater focus on other things. But one thing that we discovered when talking to Bethan's Grandmother and Mother (that hasn't changed) is the constant dilemma about the appropriate length of a pinafore/ skirt. There is also still no running allowed in the corridors now!*

# Three Generations of CCHS, continued....

What was the house system like when you were in CCHS?

**Alison:** We had 4 houses: Chancellor, Pennefather, Hulton and Tancock which are the same colours that you have now and they were based on famous people.

**Annette:** That was the same for us and house events included hockey, tennis, netball but not anything that you girls have now like house decorated classrooms, house cakes or house show. I think ours were more serious.

*(Both Bethan's Grandmother and Mother were very amused by the idea of another house event called House Pancakes where you are timed to see how many times you can flip a pancake in a set time!)*

**Alison:** You didn't know what House you were in before you joined the school but if you had a member of your family who had been to the school, you had to be in the same House unless you requested otherwise.

I didn't want to be in the same House as my mum because she was in Hulton—that was red and my favourite colour was blue so I wanted to be in Chancellor. But I had a really scary form teacher in Year 7 - Mrs Burns who taught biology, who was quite frightening, and I put my hand up and said that my mum was in Hulton but I didn't actually want to be in Hulton and that I wanted to be in Chancellor. She kind of shouted at me and said of course that was absolutely fine and I didn't have to be in Hulton.



**Annette:** Actually when I was here Chancellor was the best House - I don't know how they got the best sports people but they used to wipe the floor with us all.

What subjects did you start with in Year 7?

**Annette:** We started with English Literature, English Language, French, Maths (which was divided into arithmetic, algebra and geometry) as well as Cookery, Needlework, Music, Chemistry and Biology. But I personally didn't like science very much. We also had to take 10 O Levels and 3 A Levels. One thing I do remember was that in needlework we had to make knickers! We would have to measure from the waist to half way towards the knee and the waist and length had to be scaled almost 2 times. My brothers thought it was hilarious and they ended up looking like bloomers. I don't think anyone actually used them though!

**Alison:** We also had needlework but rather than knickers we ended up making pyjamas which were in a kimono wrap style. We also took French in year 7, then Latin and German in year 8. I took Biology, Chemistry, Maths and General Studies (which was higher than an O Level but not a full A Level qualification).

# Three Generations of CCHS, continued....

What is one of your favourite memories during your time at CCHS?

**Alison:** My momentous moment was when the school got its first computer. I remember that it was so exciting because we used to have a register where we had to sign in and a rota if you wanted to sit in front of the computer. It was used for binary programming. We also used to have a computer club but it's really difficult to have a club when there's only one computer to use. It was really exciting times!



**Bethan:** Which is crazy now because every classroom has a computer and we also have dedicated computer rooms for Computer Science lessons.

Were there any extracurricular opportunities available such as sports clubs?

**Annette:** Yes, there were extracurriculars but actually I wasn't that sporty. The school did have a very good reputation for tennis and hockey though and when I was here, there used to be tennis tournaments and I used to be an umpire.

**Alison:** In my time, the PE teacher was very keen on hockey and so the hockey team was very strong. The astro-turf wasn't here and so the hockey pitch was the grass field at the back of the school. We had a swimming pool as well which was always cold.



Now looking back what does the school still mean to you?

**Annette:** I have some fond memories of CCHS it was a good start to life.

**Alison:** I was very happy because I was just able to develop in an environment where being a girl meant you could have equal opportunities to the boys. Looking back it was good times.

What advice would you give to your younger self?

**Alison:** In terms of choosing subjects, choose what you enjoy not what you think would be useful because in the future there will be careers you haven't even thought of yet.

**Annette:** I would say don't take it all too seriously; I honestly did. I worried about it because you're a big fish in a small pond when you come here and it is a bit disconcerting. We were a mixed bunch and I hated the first year because it was so different. I went from being one of the best in the school to this school where there was a lot more talent. But I did have a good time.

Overall, it was amazing to hear their school experiences and although CCHS has changed over the years and we no longer have to make questionable needlework projects, the strong ethos of the school remains constant - giving opportunities to girls to allow them to succeed in the future. These messages have been echoed in reunions that we have had this year: through hearing ex-CCHS students' stories and seeing the close relationships they still have with their old school friends the strong sisterhood that CCHS creates has been demonstrated time and time again. (*Shraddha and Wafia*).

# German Exchange Visits – Backnang

2019 saw the thirtieth anniversary of the German Exchange visits between CCHS and Das Gymnasium in der Taus in Chelmsford's twin town of Backnang. Over the years many hundreds of students from both CCHS and Backnang have benefited hugely from the chance to live alongside an exchange partner and to learn more about culture and language. The exchange has normally been offered to students in Years 9 and 10. However in recent years Year 12 students have also participated and enjoyed work experience placements alongside their time with their host families.



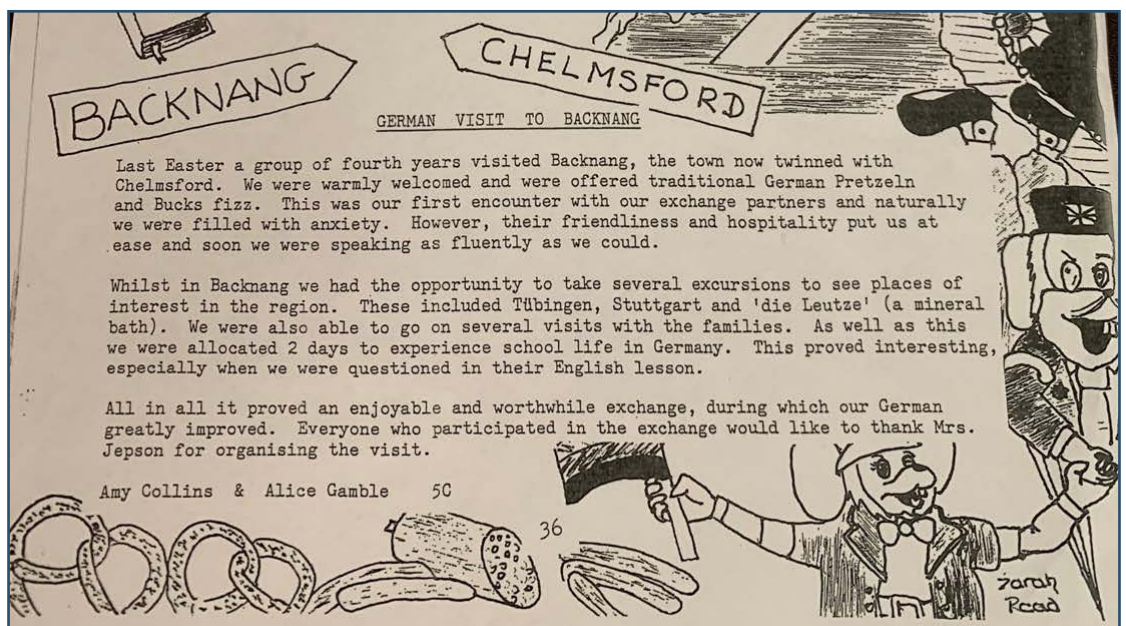
The accompanying photographs show students in Backnang in the past few years. Some readers will recognise Mrs Chris Lowe, former Head of German, who continues to support the exchange and the real links and understanding that it has helped so many students to develop and to enjoy.



# German Exchange Visits – Backnang continued...



Featured right is an extract written by Amy Collins and Alice Gamble, then of 5C, that was featured in the school magazine after the first exchange in 1989.



# Music, Drama and Dance this Year

2019 has been another excellent year for the extra-curricular life of the school in very many ways, with students relishing the challenge of a huge variety of activities from Young Enterprise to Cyber First by way of Origami. However the mainstay of the school's extra-curricular work has continued to be our series of concerts, the annual school production and the annual student led dance show.

The Christmas and Spring concerts saw a huge number of students performing a wide range of music in their ensembles. Mr Lamberti, our Director of Music, has recently started a Jazz Band and their performance of the Dean Martin standard *Sway*, with the singing of Isobel Churches (Year 13) took the Spring Concert audience far away from the CCHS Hall, perhaps to a smoky room in 1950s Manhattan. The excellent performances in both concerts from senior students in the Symphony Orchestra and the student led Gospel Choir and Cantatrici Chamber Choir and from younger students learning the art of performance were much appreciated by sell out audiences. The Gospel Choir entered the National Festival of Music for Youth in Birmingham and much enjoyed performing in Birmingham's Symphony Hall.



*The Gospel Choir performing at the National Festival of Music for Youth in Birmingham earlier this year.*



*Our students and music department staff are committed to rehearsing hard prior to performances to ensure the excellent standard of concerts is maintained every time.*

The summer Cabaret Concert gave younger musicians their chance in the limelight and left the audience sure that CCHS Music will continue to succeed as these students move up the school.

## Music, Drama and Dance this Year, continued...

Music and Drama came together in January for an excellent performance of *Oliver*, Mrs Foley's swansong show as Head of Drama. The cast was drawn from across the school and were accompanied by a band of student musicians. Both actors and musicians helped to produce a memorable run of shows with stand out performances from Chloe Connolly (Year 9) as Oliver and Isobel Churches (Year 12) as Nancy (pictured below).



*Oliver* was swiftly followed onto the CCHS stage by *Trendsetter*, the school's 2019 Dance Show. Research indicates that there has been a Dance Show every year since the early 1990s and this year's show was again ably led by the school Dance Officials. They assembled, choreographed and rehearsed a huge cast to provide a magnificent spectacle of different styles of dance performed by groups from all years in the school. As were the concerts and *Oliver*, the Dance Show was brilliantly supported by our technical team of Mr Simon French (Performing Arts Technician) and Mr Mark Rowell (Science Faculty Leader) whose combined expertise and ambition produced lighting design and sound support of professional standard. We remain grateful to the CCHS Parents' Association for their continuing support of school productions.



# Speech Day 2019

Older readers of the *Alumnae Newsletter* will perhaps remember school Speech Days being held in the Odeon Cinema (now replaced by a more modern 'multiplex') or in the Chancellor Hall (now long closed and empty). However younger readers will be more familiar with Speech Days held each spring in the august surroundings of Chelmsford Cathedral.

For our 2019 Speech Day we were privileged to welcome as our guest of honour Baroness Grey-Thompson, CBE, DL. Tanni Grey-Thompson is one of Britain's most distinguished Paralympic athletes and she has followed her athletic achievements with a distinguished career of public service. She spoke warmly and in a very down-to earth manner about her careers and the lessons she had learned and was delighted to be introduced to a number of members of G House, which is formally known as 'Grey-Thompson House'.



*Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson pictured with Mrs Chapman and Mr Steve Miles, Chair of Governors.*

*She is also pictured here chatting to students informally before the event.*

We were also very glad to welcome back those who left Year 13 in the summer of 2018. They were presented with their A level certificates and those who sat GCSEs in 2018 were presented with their certificates. Baroness Grey-Thompson also presented a great number of special prizes to top performers in each A Level subject and to those who had made notable commitment to Dance, Drama, Sport, Charity and other areas of the extra-curricular life of the school.

Staff and former students much enjoyed the opportunity to catch up at the reception held after the event in the Central Baptist Church.



*Year 12 & 14 students (left and below) collecting their A Level certificates and special prizes.*



# Senior Prefect Activities – Student Perspective



At the beginning of our time as Senior Prefects we decided to focus on the idea of Breaking barriers both individually and as a school.

We quickly realised that in order to break these barriers and succeed we needed to work together as a team and collaborate not compete.

The highlight of our year was our 'Paint for the Prince's Trust' event in July.

We organised boards and designs for the younger years to paint in order to raise money for the Prince's Trust, which provides support to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The entertainment ranged from singing and gymnastics to Latin ballroom dancing. As a team, we worked tirelessly before the big day to organise stalls and music performances and buy painting equipment. Even with some questionable paintings created by the younger years, the board paintings turned out to be a success.



This collaboration certainly came with challenges, but seeing it all put together made it so worthwhile. Despite the sun burn and even when the ice cream van didn't arrive, the initial disappointment soon gave way to a new wave of creativity that allowed everyone to thoroughly enjoy the day.

Overall, the event was hugely successful as we were able to raise over £1,550 for an amazing charity.

## Senior Prefect Activities – Student Perspective, continued....



Over the year, we have been fortunate enough to attend conferences, organise tours and represent our school as we've welcomed visitors into our community.

Most recently, five of us were invited to attend a Women of the Future Conference in London, in which the importance of supporting others was strongly emphasised by the keynote speaker Jules Chappell and in the positive discussions we had with the ambassadors.

As a team we have all had individual roles that have contributed to the school and have allowed us to develop our interpersonal skills and contribute back to the CCHS community.

[Abbie and Heather](#) have been working alongside the Parents' Association, and have helped to ensure that the money raised is put to effective use by reporting back to them the needs of students in our termly meetings. They have helped raise money for the school for, amongst other things, new iPads, a printing press for art, textbooks, and a new microwave over this past year. These have helped to benefit the school - as a community and individually.

Student Voice has been the platform through which many of the voices of the younger years have been heard. [Jess and Anna](#) have been the senior prefect representatives that have led this role. These meetings have demonstrated the true enthusiasm that CCHS girls have in making positive changes in our school environment. They have taken on board the innovative suggestions, whether that is proposing new ways of building self-confidence, or devising new lunch queue systems to overcome the ever-pressing issue of an overcrowded canteen. All in all, they have shown how much change can be initiated through working collaboratively.

The student representatives, [Jess and Lily](#), on the Better Buildings Committee, have helped in developing the project 'Building a Future for our Girls,' which began last year with the loss of Bancroft. We've been amazed at how eager everyone seems for the final teaching block to be unveiled and, as this project progresses, it will be truly wonderful to see how the wider school community collaborates with any final fundraising.

The Sixth Form Council representatives, [Bethan and Lara](#) have been impressed with the passion that Sixth Form students have towards their community. They've been extremely impressed by the turnout to the meetings and the involvement they've had in improving our Sixth Form. They have been really focused on improving the Sixth Form educational experience, in terms of teaching and learning and have thoroughly enjoyed interacting with the other students to discuss what can be done to make everyone's Sixth Form experience that little bit better.

# Senior Prefect Activities – Student Perspective, continued....

Throughout the year, we have also had the opportunity to work with and meet several ex-CCHS students as the prefects in charge of alumnae relations. We have been fortunate enough to connect with many inspiring and successful women, one of whom was Jenny Ball who was helpful in the organisation of our event.

Through several conversations during alumnae reunions we discovered very quickly that it is rooted in our history that we do not like swimming!

However, at the end of the day, one thing that many of the former CCHS students commented on was the strong ethos of the school, which still hadn't changed in over 50 years.

Through all of our activities this year it has been a pleasure to interact with all ages across the school, from Year 7 through to Year 13 and without their constant support very little of what we achieved would have been possible.

We hope that our small creations will remain visible in school as a reminder of the progress we have made and also to reiterate that in order to break barriers we have to work together and collaborate not compete.

Thank you.

Wafia Hussain and Shraddha Arshanapalli

Senior Prefects, Alumnae Development, 2019



*Our Senior Prefects and many others have attended and organised some inspirational and empowering events this year, all contributing towards developing our leaders of tomorrow.*



# Examination Results 2019

CCHS students enjoyed another summer of excellent examination results, showing that our students continue to be amongst the top performers in the country.



At GCSE 84% of results across all subjects were at the highest grades of 9, 8 or 7; 32% of these results were grade 9s.

14 students achieved 12 or more GCSE passes at the very highest grades.

At A level 84% of results across all subjects were at A\*, A and B and 17 students passed 4 or more A levels at the top grades of A or A\*.

Two students passed 5 A levels at these top grades and our top performing student was Julie Tang, who was awarded A\* grades in all five of her A levels. Julie is now studying Natural Sciences at Cambridge; of the nine other students who achieved three or four A\* grades another three are studying Natural Sciences at Cambridge, three are studying Medicine, one Mathematics, one Civil Engineering and one Psychology.



At a time when women are still under-represented in STEM subjects, CCHS is proud of the way that its students are continuing to break barriers and challenge expectations. Of particular note are the achievements of Ina Kruger, Kate Routledge and Cindy Wu, each of whom achieved four A\* grades.

Ina (pictured left) recently represented Great Britain at the International Biology Olympiad in Hungary, achieving the highest score of anyone in the UK team and coming 66<sup>th</sup> in the world.

These results ensured that in the *Sunday Times 'Parent Power' guide for 2019*, CCHS was ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in Britain, up from 28<sup>th</sup> last year. Compared to similar high-performing girls' grammar schools CCHS is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in England. The school is obviously very proud of these figures but is prouder of what they signify – that the hard work of staff and students is continuing to give CCHS girls the very best start in life and the widest choices of future courses and careers.

We look forward to welcoming those who finished Year 13 last summer back to their Senior Speech Day in Chelmsford Cathedral in April 2020 and hearing then of the successes they have gone onto since last summer.

## From the archives....

(July 1941 Magazine):

**Allotment Club Report (War)** *At the beginning of Autumn Term 1940 the Sixth Form created a Gardening Club to cultivate parts of the school field for the war effort, and a plug was dug in the second field. Six keen members wanted a larger plot and Miss Ridd appealed for more ground. Eventually plots were marked out on the School field and Miss Cadbury had these double dug as her contribution to the Club. Early scepticism faded and over 240 people joined the Club, sometimes whole forms.*

*Each form's representative, the Sixth Form members and staff comprised the General Committee which held a Committee meeting that was held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1941 when the aims of the club were announced by Miss Ridd.*

*The aim was to provide the school dinners with garden produce at a reasonable price and sell surplus vegetables to members. Funds were raised by: collecting 'bun' pennies and farthings; a Work Week in March collected a considerable sum of money; half-pennies for the dancing dinner hours; Miss Weston asked every member to bring in one lump of sugar to allow her to make coconut ice which was very successful (more sugar came as the result of the first appeal than the second one). The money raised was spent on tools, canes, watering cans, fertilisers and seed potatoes - fortunately all seeds were given. The Junior School especially worked very hard with the co-operation of many staff after school, dinner hours and in the holidays - volunteers having come forward for the summer holidays. The garden was now flourishing and some 7 dozen lettuces had already been sold to Mrs Brundle*

*(caretaker's wife and school cook) for school dinners.*



It was of particular interest to read this fascinating article (left) about the allotment club, taken from the 1941 school magazine, because CCHS is currently in the process of setting up a new gardening club.

Students have expressed their enthusiasm for undertaking this project. We hope it is as successful as its predecessor!



*The Brundles are pictured above in a photo that was taken around 1920.*

*They were associated with the school (as caretaker and school cook) from 1907 until 1945. Mr Brundle had a break in service during the First World War (Royal Flying Corps), and Mrs Brundle retired in 1944.*

# News from Former Students....

We are always keen to hear from former students about what they are up to post-CCHS. Feel free to contact us by emailing [oldgirls@cchs.essex.sch.uk](mailto:oldgirls@cchs.essex.sch.uk) or by posting your news on our Alumnae Facebook group page (CCHS Alumnae).

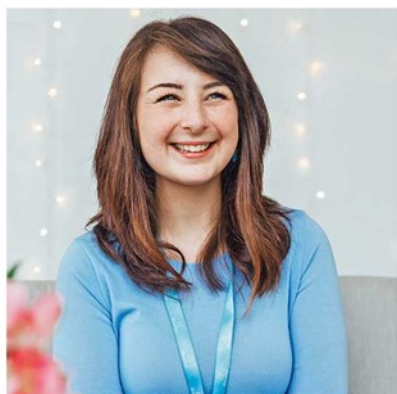
Celia Dillow (née Denny), 1974–1980 contacted us in March 2019 via Facebook to tell us about her success as 'New Travel Writer of the Year' with Bradt Travel.



Heather McCallum, who left CCHS in 1986 for Oxford University has been in touch after visiting us on our Open Evening. She is now Managing Director and Publisher at Yale University Press, London. She reported that she was very interested to visit her old school and witness the changes to the site since she was a student here. We wonder if she remembers the School Production from 1986, and if she was involved in it? (Picture below).



CCHS Alumnae



We heard from the mother of Faye Savory (29) about her success in being nominated and shortlisted for Hello magazine's #HelloToKindness award back in June 2019.

Mrs Savory told us: 'Faye's social enterprise [Bearhugsgifts.com](http://Bearhugsgifts.com) has to date kindly donated over 600 hugs to seriously ill children, their siblings, parents, carers and grandparents.

*She is a huge advocate for accessible employment and has attended Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament to discuss this.*

*She was a winner of the Prince's Trust Enterprise award and a proud Prince's Trust ambassador'.*

Apparently Faye's motto is 'always be a little kinder than necessary'. She is described as a positive and inspiring role model, not only for her achievements, but also for her strength in overcoming adversity when she became ill and had to leave her job as a speech and language therapist.

## More News from Former Students....

Sarah James, who left CCHS in 2001, is working as Executive Producer for Strictly Come Dancing 2019 (recently running on BBC1). On their website, BBC1's Suzy Lamb, MD Entertainment & Music, BBC Studios said of Sarah: *'Sarah James is hugely talented, we have worked together before. She has a wealth of experience, having been Strictly's Series Editor for the last two years and I'm delighted she is taking on the Glitterball baton as Executive Producer in 2019'.*



Sian Miller, who left CCHS in 1999, visited our Sixth Form Open Evening in October and followed up afterwards with an email. When she was a student here, Mr Moore was her Economics teacher, so it was very interesting for her to meet him again this year when she attended the SF Open Evening with her daughter! She also told us a little about her life beyond CCHS which has seen considerable business success:

*'I left school and went straight into work in 1999 where I qualified as an Accountant alongside my full time job. By 23 years old, I had my first child and I set up my own business – a children's day nursery. This business grew from humble beginnings to a multi-site operation with centres spanning from East London, through Essex and into Suffolk. It grew over 14 years to a multi-million pound turnover business, employing 200 staff across the nurseries, out of school clubs, holiday clubs and mobile creches. The business won many awards including being shortlisted for Nursery Chain of the Year. I won Essex Young Entrepreneur of the Year in 2007. We won awards for our Training and Staff Development. In 2014, I won "Entrepreneur of the Year" at the National Entrepreneur Awards, which led onto consultancy roles in other businesses as I wound down my time in my business. We were approached by a large corporate last year and in January this year, I sold the business. I was able to retire, aged 38. It was lovely to bring my own daughter back to CHS last night and see how the school has developed'.*

From the archives....

(July 1941 Magazine):

**'War Activities.** *The form not only collected much salvage, but started an 'Old Clothes Club' when clothes and toys of all kinds were brought by many members of the School and piled in the corner of the form room. Needles and darning wool came out every dinner-hour and lots of clothes were sent to different homes and bombed families'.*

Charity work continues to be a strong ethos of this school. Amongst other charity work, our students are currently collecting for CHESS to help homeless people in Chelmsford.

Please remember to update us on your recent news. Ways to do this are included on the final page of this newsletter.

## More News from Former Students....

Celia Crossley, née Clarke, left in 1978, and updated our Alumnae group during 2018:

*Now based in North Essex in a small village near Colchester. Enjoyable career as Chartered Accountant and then Finance Director/Senior Accountant roles in variety of businesses small and large (latterly in the city at Barclays Bank). Researched, wrote and published local history book about Newton Blossomville in 2000. Took early retirement several years ago and am now very/too busy as director of Healthwatch Essex and Roman River Music, Committee member of North East Essex CCG Health Forum (in which role I sit on NEECCG Finance and Performance Committee), former Chair and now member of PPG. I also run a small property business I started several years ago and keep my hand in as director of another minute property management business. In retirement I learnt to paint and took various study courses on local history, paleography and local history. Director of Music at our church where, until recent hip op, I played organ. Remarried in 1995 and now enjoying life as grandmother of beautiful granddaughter (born 2012)....I see Wendy Eastaugh and Hansa Bhatt regularly and would be very interested in a CCHS reunion of our year group and indeed meeting up with anyone from our year.*



Aerial views of the school site. The photo left was taken around 1939-40 and the photo below, left, in the late 1950s before the addition of the new Hall, Library and other buildings in the 1960s.



We are so fortunate to have these archived photos reminding us of the incredible history of our school.

*Please remember to update us on your recent news. Ways to do this are included on the final page of this newsletter.*

# Interviews with Former Students

Shraddha and Wafia, our Senior Prefects for Alumnae Relations, interviewed some former CCHS students. Below is a record of what they had to say.

**Sarah Williams**

If you could tell your year 7 self one thing, what would it be?

Please wear your rucksack on both shoulders. It really is a lot better for your back.

What are your funniest and most prominent memories of CCHS?

My most vivid memories are house events with special mention of our performance of Abigail's Party for House Drama and Copacabana for House Music. But the funniest was probably writing the Sixth Form Revue, which we obviously thought was completely hilarious – less so the teachers I imagine.

Did any teachers make a particular difference to you?

My history teachers unquestionably. But I want to particularly mention Mrs Brignell who was always so kind and allowed me to take Religious Studies at A level even though I had not taken the subject at GCSE. She also led our school trip to Parliament – where I later worked for nearly seven years.

Which house were you in and what was your favourite house event?

I was in S House and my favourite event was House Decorated Classroom Competition. Our (winning) The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe entry in Year 9 was a highlight.

Which subjects did you do at A level and how did they help you beyond the sixth form?

I studied History, English Literature and Religious Studies at A level. I went on to read Modern History at university, which I

loved, and the skills I learnt at school and during my degree such as research, analysis and constructing arguments, I often use at work. I also go to the theatre regularly and always enjoy watching plays that we studied at school.

Has your life and career followed the path you thought it would when you left CCHS?

I live in London like I'd always hoped but I work in environmental policy and had not planned to do that. I had always been very interested in politics so worked in Parliament once I finished university for an MP whose job it was to scrutinise energy and climate change policy. From there I joined an organisation focused on combatting climate change.

Is there anything you would have liked to change about your time in CCHS?

I would have tried harder to learn French. I am trying again now.

Have you visited the school since leaving? What's surprised you that has changed/stayed the same?

I recently visited school again for the first time since leaving. I was surprised by the number of new buildings but the gym changing rooms were still exactly the same!

What advice would you give a sixth former who doesn't know what career to go into?

When I was a sixth former I had absolutely no idea that the job I do now even existed. I think what is crucial is working out what you are good at and what interests you and exploring from there. There will be a job out there that fits or you will be able to make one.

# Interviews with Former Students

**Sandali Wickrama:**

If you could tell your year 7 self one thing, what would it be?

Work hard to achieve your goals, but don't forget to have fun – you'll remember things like house cakes, water fights in the field and days spent with your friends much more than the number of full marks and well-done stickers in your books.

What are your funniest and most prominent memories of CCHS?

There are too many to choose from! But I think it would be between our expedition to Japan or every house event all the way back from year 7.

Did any teachers make a particular difference to you?

I had so many inspiring teachers during my time at CCHS, those who encouraged my passions and believed in me when I was at my lowest and without whom I would not be where I am now. It would be unfair to mention anyone specifically by name, but those that made the greatest difference know who they are, and some of them, I'm lucky enough to call my friends to this day.

Which house were you in and what was your favourite house event?

I was in S house (whoo whoo!)

My favourite event was house karaoke by far; it's just brilliant.

Have you visited the school since leaving? What's surprised you that has changed/stayed the same?

I've been back a few times! I still feel a sense of community at the school, which is so lovely. But with all the new buildings I did get lost a few times.

Which subjects did you do at A-Level and how did they help you beyond sixth form?

I did biology, chemistry, history and English literature.

I needed biology and chemistry to get into medical school, so I think it's clear how they've helped me beyond sixth form!

As for history and English literature, they were definitely the more rogue choices! English didn't just massively improve my communication skills, books and poetry are still some of the best ways I cope with stress. As for history it taught me how to critically analyse the world around me – to trust, but verify everything that I read and hear.

Has your life and career followed the path you thought it would when you left CCHS?

In some ways yes, because I'm due to graduate as a doctor in 2020 (fingers crossed!) But I never expected that along the way, I would head up two volunteering organisations at university, complete a degree in Global and Public Health and volunteer at UN refugee camps in Palestine. I always thought medicine was interesting, but I had no idea of the avenues it would open and the passion it would instil in me. My goal is to follow on from my experiences and pursue a career in global health, particularly working with vulnerable populations in conflict affected areas.

What advice would you give a sixth former who doesn't know which career to go into?

The future is scary but try not to worry too much! On paper it's easy to look at some of my achievements to date and assume the journey there has been simple and straightforward, but this really wasn't the case. If you don't know what career you want to go into or even if you don't make your grades (like I did), it doesn't matter – everything happens for a reason. If all you do is work hard, learn to love and respect yourself and others, try to make a difference to the world around you and speak out for what's important, everything else will work itself out (at least that's what I've found!)

# Interviews with Former Students

## Jenny Ball

If you could tell your year 7 self one thing, what would it be?

Well, she would have been my first year self, rather than Year 7 (because I am that old) but actually, I wouldn't tell her anything – I have no regrets and wouldn't change a thing.

What are your funniest and most prominent memories of CCHS?

We recently had a reunion visit to the school in March and I could barely remember any of the memories that my fellow students talked about – I was starting to wonder if I had been at school with them after all! But some of the most positive memories that have stuck in my mind were from the field trips – including Boulogne, Florence (History A Level) and Yorkshire (Geography A Level) which were fantastic experiences.

Did any teachers make a particular difference to you?

We had some great teachers and you always remember the ones who managed to have a great sense of humour in their dealings with us – too many to mention them all but Mrs Hickman and Mrs Walker (Geography), Mrs Roe (History), the late Mrs Oliver and Miss Hughes/Gulliver (French) are a few that immediately come to mind. With apologies to all the others that I haven't mentioned!

Which house were you in and what was your favourite house event?

For a short time, I was in Pennefather but then we moved to CHS and I was in C House. I don't remember much in the way of House events – but my favourite definitely would not have included Sports Day!

Which subjects did you do at A level and how did they help you beyond the sixth form?

I did History, Geography, English, French and General Studies – and then went on to study History at Durham University for no other reason other than it was my favourite subject!

Has your life and career followed the path you thought it would when you left CCHS?

I did not have a career plan at the point I left CCHS other than to go to University and then figure it out from there. It was whilst doing some work experience in the university holidays that I came across HR as a potential career. So when I got to the end of the second year at university and still did not have a particular career plan in mind – I decided to apply for a graduate scheme in HR. I secured an HR graduate placement with Ford and was there for nearly 18 years doing a wide variety of HR roles including as UK HR Director. I then decided to take a complete career change – and moved to the youth charity, The Prince's Trust where I took up an operational role working with young people before most recently becoming the Manager for The Prince's Trust operations in Essex.

Is there anything you would have liked to change about your time in CCHS?

No. I was fortunate – school and the academic way of studying happens to suit my learning style and I was fortunate to have good friends, a supportive family and lots of interests that I could get involved in. That is often not the case for so many young people so I know how lucky I was and am.

*The school in 1957.*



# Interviews with Former Students

**Jenny Ball continued....**

Have you visited the school since leaving?

What's surprised you that has changed/  
stayed the same?

Yes, a couple of times – most recently a re-union visit in March and subsequently for the summer festival organised by the Senior Prefects which supported The Prince's Trust. It was good to see the old part of the school largely unchanged but also lots of expansion and investment since I left in 1992. It was also great to see a much greater diversity of students – that struck me in particular. I was also pleased to see the same levels of positive affirmation, confidence and aspiration being encouraged as it was when I was a student and for all the generations beforehand.

What advice would you give a sixth former who doesn't know what career to go into?

Don't worry that you don't have a career plan. I certainly didn't. Still don't! Just make sure that whatever next step you choose – it is something that you actually like or want to do. Otherwise you are less likely to succeed and whether you do or not, you won't enjoy it. Then just keep your eyes and options open and you will come across what is right for you. And don't feel you have to be locked in to one career plan for life – it is perfectly possible to change careers. Just do a bit of financial planning to give yourself the freedom to do so, in case you need to take up a role on a lower income whilst you learn the ropes in your new career path.

When I met up with some of my former classmates earlier this year – our experiences covered everything from healthcare, finance, legal, charities, education, public sector, self-employed and we had or were living as far away as New Zealand and Columbia whilst others, myself included, had not left Essex. There are a wealth of opportunities out there including ones that are right for you.

**This former student preferred to remain anonymous.**

If you could tell your year 7 self one thing, what would it be?

Try to remember that things may feel strange at first, especially if you do not know anyone. You *are* meant to be there! Be friendly and outgoing and you will soon feel that you fit in.

What are your funniest and most prominent memories of CCHS?

I learned to be open minded and appreciate the diversity of the world. I don't remember too many funny moments – I came from a tiny village school some miles away so most of my time was spent trying to feel that I fitted in.

Did any teachers make a particular difference to you?

The best, most influential teachers made me feel that what they were teaching was relevant to me and my future life, instead of expecting us just to learn abstract concepts etc. (As a teacher myself, I always tried to put the student at the centre of the learning, e.g. "If you were a child in Roman-ruled England, what would your life be like, your daily routine, how did the Romans keep order and how would this affect you as a child in those times?" This approach worked for all subjects).

Which house were you in and what was your favourite house event?

Tancock. I do not remember any house events.

Which subjects did you do at A level and how did they help you beyond the sixth form?

Higher education was not the culture for girls in my family. I had to leave CCHS at just 16 and take a shorthand and typing course. No one at CCHS intervened and suggested to my family that I had further potential.

# Interviews with Former Students

**Continued from previous page...**

Has your life and career followed the path you thought it would when you left CCHS?

No. I decided at 11 that I wanted to be a teacher. Having left school at 16, at 31 with 2 small children, I embarked on an A level in English and passed with the highest grade. I went to Brentwood Teacher Training College and received a 1<sup>st</sup> for teaching practice and a Distinction in Education. I became a headteacher at the age of 46. Later I did an advanced diploma in education and at the age of 55 I achieved a Master of Education at Cambridge University. Latterly, I became a Consultant for the National College of Leadership. This involves assessing, facilitating learning and coaching potential and newly appointed headteachers.

I had the self confidence and motivation to manage these achievements as a mother and later as a serving headteacher. I am sure that my time at CCHS ensured that I had the aspiration to enable me to achieve later in life.

Is there anything you would have liked to change about your time in CCHS?

I wish there had been more pastoral care and that my potential had been pointed out to my parents.

Have you visited the school since leaving? What's surprised you that has changed/stayed the same?

I have visited several times as a Tutor and Assessor for National Professional Qualification for Headteachers and as an Old Girl. Pastoral care is much better. There is a greater awareness and provision for diversity and a much more positive ethos where the partnership between staff and students is much more mutually supportive.

What advice would you give a sixth former who doesn't know what career to go into?

Take the A levels which interest you and follow these at university. Take time at university to find out and experience as many avenues as possible which may relate to your subjects and interests. Above all, keep your mind open and don't panic if a career doesn't come to mind that quickly. Also, later, it may be preferable for you if your future career bears no relationship to the subject you studied. Achieving a degree is evidence that you have the intellectual capacity, motivation and work ethic to ensure that you will succeed in any career you choose to follow later.

All good wishes for your future whatever you choose to do.



# Supporting Literacy Across the School

Our CCHS Library is proud to stock many books and to encourage the use of these for research and for pleasure in these times of ever increasing online activity. Some of our parents and alumnae have kindly bought and donated books to the Library using our CCHS Amazon Wish List and we have included the instructions below should any of you wish to do the same.

There are books on the list that are priced at just a few pounds, or you may of course wish to purchase your own special book choice as a donation for the academic enrichment and enjoyment of our students. When the books arrive a name plate will be added to the book to recognise your generous gift to the School and this has proved popular by both the book donors and the students.

The link to the list is [Here](#) and more information from our school Librarian on how to make a purchase is included below.

*If you are interested in making a purchase, please:*

*Log in to your own Amazon account*

*Click on 'Your Lists and Find a List'*

*Type 'CCHS' into the search box*

*Select 'CCHS Library'*

*Review the list of books and select a book you wish to purchase*

*Add the selection to your basket*

*Proceed to checkout*

*Tick 'This is a gift'*

*Under the CCHS School address select 'Deliver to this address' OR add the following:-*

*Angela Martin*

*01245 245722*

*Chelmsford County High School*

*Broomfield Road*

*Chelmsford*

*CM1 1RW*

*And select 'Deliver to this address'*

*In the box 'Enjoy your gift..' make sure your name appears or delete to make your gift anonymous*

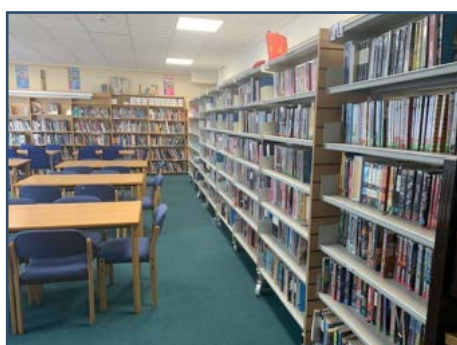
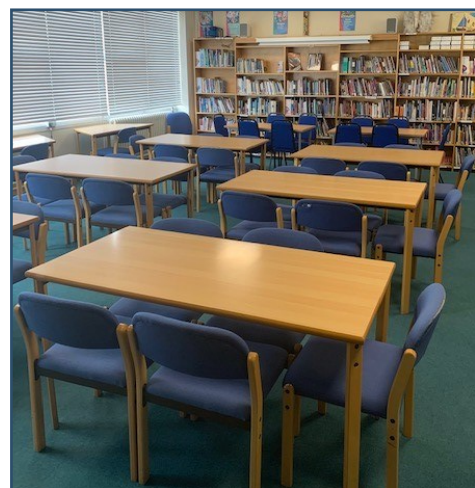
*Save gift options*

*Continue*

*Pay for your items in the usual way and the books will be delivered to CCHS*

**Thank you for supporting us with this initiative.**

**Mrs Martin, CCHS School Librarian**



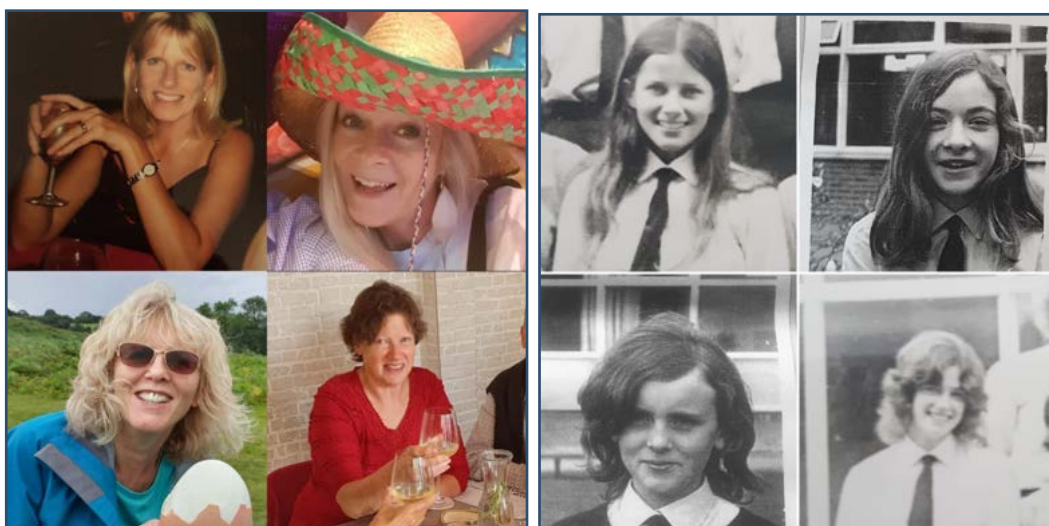
# Reunions

We have continued to be very glad to welcome back former students to reunions. This year we have hosted reunions of those who left CCHS in 1992, 2005 and 2009. On each occasion we welcomed over 30 former students for tours of the school and an update on how things have changed since they left. We were also pleased that the 2009 reunion was joined by a number of retired staff who were keen to catch up on the successes of those they remembered so well.

We also hosted smaller visits from a small group who joined the school together in 1969 and another from the class of 1958.



*Class of 2009 who visited in September 2019 (above).*



*The ladies (left) joined CCHS in 1969 and the pictures show them in 2019 and in 1969.*

*It was wonderful to receive these pictures.*

*Students from the class of 1958 are pictured right. They visited in July 2019.*



## Reunions continued...

It has been a real pleasure for staff and the Senior Prefects who assist with Alumnae Relations to meet so many former students (or in the case of some long-serving staff, to meet their former charges once again). For students who left before about 1985 we are often able to find material which relates to them in the school archive and this both we and they find fascinating. Sadly much of the archive material relating to students from the 1990s was destroyed by flooding some years ago and record keeping in the early days of computerisation seems to have been slightly sketchy. Nevertheless we can occasionally find a few gems.

If you would like to organise a reunion (large or small) of your contemporaries do please contact Mrs Rae Dale in the school office – [rdale@cchs.essex.sch.uk](mailto:rdale@cchs.essex.sch.uk) – who will be pleased to assist you. We are sure that you will find it fascinating, especially as the school campus changes so much over the next three years, and we much look forward to hearing from you.



*Class of 2005 who visited in March 2019 (above and left).*



*Class of 1992 who also visited in March 2019 (above and right).*



# Tribute to Nick Minnican, 1981 to 2019



In November 2019 a small group of staff, students and family gathered outside the Music Centre to plant a tree in memory of Mr Minnican.

Mr Minnican was appointed as Assistant Headteacher in charge of teaching and learning in 2017 and joined CCHS after having great success in his previous role as Head of Science at St John Payne School.



An inspiring and gifted teacher of Chemistry, he quickly made a big impression on the school. His enthusiasm for everything he undertook was infectious and staff valued hugely the supportive and positive way in which he encouraged them to develop their teaching. Similarly his students massively appreciated his positive outlook and his conviction that all of them could grasp even the most esoteric aspects of the Chemistry syllabus. Mr Minnican was also a gifted musician—a guitarist and a pianist—and we regret that we were not able to hear him play more often. He was an excellent Assistant Headteacher and would have made a fine Headteacher.

Mr Minnican was diagnosed with cancer in early 2018 and his commitment to this school throughout his illness is further testimony to the strength of his character. He continued to teach his examination classes and even when very seriously ill his outlook remained optimistic and his zest for life did not diminish. Although in the autumn of 2018 he was much recovered and hopes were high that he would return to full time work, this was not to be and he died in June 2019. A man of deep Christian faith who was a worship leader in his church, Mr Minnican was firm in his understanding of what death meant and he and his family were hugely supported by their church community as well as by friends and family. He leaves a wife and three young sons with many memories of a loving father and a good man. This school mourns his passing as both a friend and a valued colleague.



*The tree and accompanying plaque in memory of Nick Minnican.*

*Art work (right) by one of our talented students, displayed in the Art Exhibition, June 2019.*



# In Memoriam



We heard from Celia Steward (née Bellamy) in May 2019. She wanted to inform us of the sad passing of her life long friend Josephine Watkins (née Hosford) in December 2018.

Josephine attended CCHS from 1955 to 1962. Celia told us that Josephine 'was a Type 1 diabetic from early childhood and courageously managed her condition throughout her life until she died at the age of 75'.

We also have news of former student Julie McCreadie (pictured below) who sadly passed away at the age of 72 earlier this year. She became the UK's youngest female newspaper editor and has been described by family and friends as having an 'immense kindness, energy, and zest for life'.



Kirstie Jackson contacted us in July 2019 to tell us about the death of her aunt Mary Williamson (née Mallinson), on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019:

*'She was a pupil at Chelmsford County High School from 1935 to 1943, and then she went to Somerville College Oxford, to study French; her name used to be on your Honours Board. She then returned to teach at Chelmsford County High School as French Mistress from 1951 to 1953, until she left to take up a post in a French University at Nancy.'*

*Miss Cadbury said in a reference how she normally regarded it as unwise to employ an old girl on the teaching staff but was happy to make an exception in her case and would like to have kept her as a permanent member of staff'.*

Kirstie attached a copy of the Eulogy from Somerville College, Oxford and this is included overleaf.



A Corner of the Library.

CHS - A Corner of the Library (June 1943 magazine)

Sketches by CCHS students that were included in our school magazine in 1943 and 1944.



CHS - Christmas 1943: Sixth Form nativity play, Laurence Housman's 'Bethlehem'. (July 1944 magazine)



# In Memoriam, continued from previous page



Eulogy from Somerville College, Oxford, for Mary Amity Williamson, former student and teacher of CCHS.

My aunt Mary Williamson, who died on 16 April 2019, was known and loved by many people in the different areas of her life. For some she was a talented teacher who boosted the talents of her pupils, others knew her through her church and charity work.

Mary was born on 28 December 1924 in South Hanningfield, Essex. Her father James was a farmer and her mother Mary (née Bispham) had been a teacher. Mary was the second eldest of five children. After studying hard at school she won a place at Somerville College Oxford to study French, achieving a BA in 1946, her Diploma examination in Education in 1947 and MA in 1950.

Her Principal at Somerville commented that, "she has a large element of human kindness in her nature, and will always be eager to help her fellows in need. She...is the kind of person one would like children to be with."

A fellow student at Somerville was a certain Margaret Roberts; later to be better known as Maggie Thatcher. They shared digs in Mary's 4<sup>th</sup> year and Maggie would borrow Mary's evening dresses to entertain the hierarchy of the Tory Party invited to speak in Oxford.

After completing her Diploma in Education at Oxford, she worked as a teacher in England – at schools in Purley, Chelmsford and Camberwell – and at schools and universities in Nancy and Brest in France. From 1963 to 1969 she was the senior French Mistress at Park School, Preston. From 1969 to 1977 she was Head of Modern Languages at Wirral County Grammar School for Girls. Following her marriage she taught French, English and Religious Studies at Lavant House School in Sussex.

In 1976, she married Father Joe Williamson. 'Father Joe', as he was known, was one of the Church of England's great characters known for his work amongst the poor in the East End of London in the 1950s and early 1960s. He later set up the Wellclose Square Trust to help women who wanted to escape prostitution. Mary met Father Joe as a supporter of his work, and later worked alongside him to help raise funds. They lived on the seaside in East Wittering, near Chichester and Mary was a loving wife to Joe in his later years before his death aged 92 in 1988.

She lived independently in Taunton until she was 92, happily hopping on the bus and going into town for lunch. Her independence was curtailed when she suffered her first stroke in 2016, but she retained the warmth and sense of humour that had characterized her life.

My memory is of a favourite, exuberant aunt who always had time for us. She would announce her arrival, by blasting her car horn all the way down the long farm drive. She would entertain us with mystery tours in her Triumph Herald, stories and games. Mary had a considerable talent for drawing and painting especially portraits and excelled at crossword puzzles, winning many prizes.



CHS 1939  
Uniforms, winter & summer

*Above is the CCHS uniform that Mary would have worn during her time as a student here.*

# Mrs Sue Brignell – tree planting, May 2019

In last year's Alumnae Newsletter we paid tribute to Mrs Sue Brignell.

Since then a tree has been planted in the school grounds in her memory.

Grown from seed by Mr Bob Seabrook, a long-serving member of the school's cleaning team and a friend and neighbour of Sue and Geoff, the tree was planted by Sue's husband Geoff in August 2019.



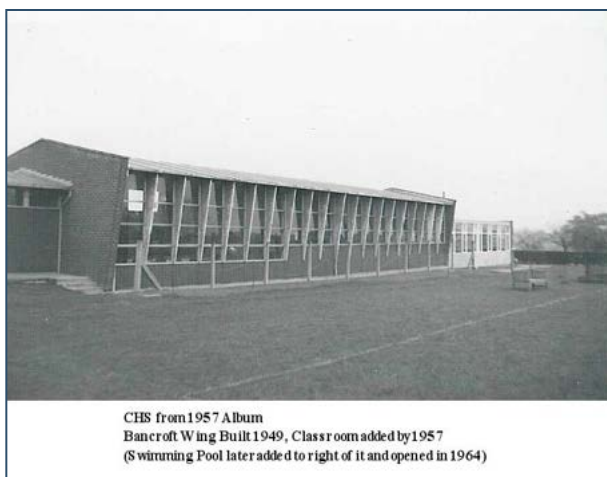
Geoff spoke movingly about Sue's love of trees and his hope that 'her' tree would be a lasting tribute to the school in which she worked for so many years.



The school has recently heard that Geoff and Sue's daughter, Victoria, was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of Downing College, Cambridge on 22nd November 2019. Victoria read Classics there in the 1990s. Downing College said on their website:

*'Victoria Brignell is a radio producer on BBC Radio 4's In Our Time and a disability champion. She has been paralysed below the neck since she was six. She is Chair of Action on Disability, which provides a range of services to disabled people in London. She is also a trustee of Magpie Dance, a Commissioner on Hammersmith and Fulham Arts Commission, and Chair of Hammersmith Amnesty International Group. She has written widely about disability issues, including for the New Statesman, where for four years she wrote a regular feature. She studied Classics at Downing, matriculating in 1994'.*

Followers of our Alumnae Facebook group will have been aware of the progress that has been made regarding the demolition of Bancroft to make way for the new teaching block. We were really interested to hear the memories you shared on the Facebook page and have included a few here, alongside some pictures of Bancroft through the years, taken from our archives. The notes saved at the bottom of the photos have proved invaluable to understand and remember the history of the building.



*'I remember it well and an extension was added at the far end in about 1955. We spent our 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a classroom there which was used for our Geography A level with Miss McKenna in 1958-60. It was a very light building compared to the other ones. Miss Bancroft used to come to some special days ....and always told her story about the Ides of March!'*

*'I was there 1956/61 and Miss McKenna terrified me along with Miss Wright, music teacher, although I thank her for introducing me to Beethoven'.*

*'It was our science block back in the 80s. I managed to break a window by pinging a stone off my tennis racket on what were then new courts. Mrs Hall the chemistry teacher was not very impressed at my antics disturbing her class'.*

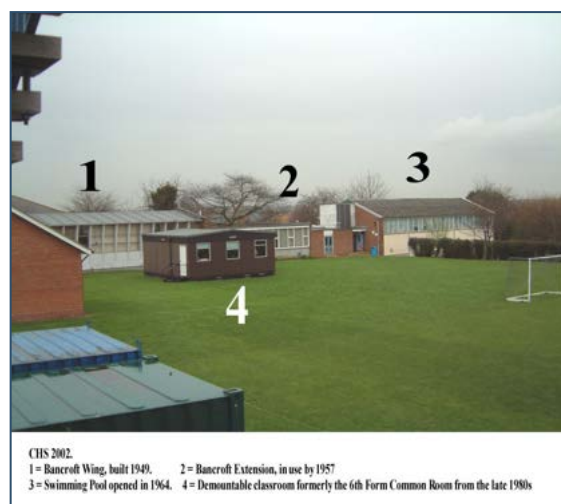
#### **Extract from a school magazine (1950)**

*On 4th July 1950, on Miss Bancroft's 80th birthday, she was able to visit the Bancroft Wing which had been named in her honour. It was built of aluminium sections and work had begun on its construction in 1949.*

*'Bancroft was a science block for my first year (93-94) until the current science block was built. It was then converted into classrooms and used mainly for languages (plus the drama/dance studio) after that'.*

*'Bancroft was just science labs when I was there – 1976-83. We used to have Physics lessons down there with Miss Harris and/or Mrs Witter'.*

*'I remember dissecting frogs with Miss Burns and learning the life cycle of a spirogyra off rote. It's thanks to Miss Burns that I got an A in A level Biology. I can see it's necessary (demolishing Bancroft) but it will still be the end of an era'.*



*'I have to admit to being at school when Bancroft was built. Memories of sitting in a Geography lesson with Miss McKenna, watching the hockey players on the field and longing to be out there, although I did eventually become a Geography student!'*



CHS 1995-6: Rear of school, view from Fire Escape towards Bancroft.  
 1) The Cadbury Science Building (pointed roof) beyond Bancroft was opened in 1994  
 2) The future Technology Lab, opened in Nov 1997, is sited where these pupils are working.  
 3) To left of Bancroft, just visible, is apex of 6th Form Demountable Common Room.  
 It was funded by the Parents' Association in the late 1980s. It was moved into the field to use as a classroom when the combined Drama Suite/6th Form Common Room was built in 1998.

*'I remember getting my A level results envelope from Mr Patrick in one of those rooms'.*

*'I remember using the dance studio regularly for rehearsals for year 7-9 production of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and also for rehearsing for the annual dance show.'*



*'I remember how proud the school was to have had this block named after the former headmistress. All our science lessons were in here other than the old biology and chemistry labs in the main block opposite Mrs Greenwood's music room. We spent lots of time with physics in the room at the end and chemistry in the lab half way down with Mr Cahill or Mrs Fletcher 1981-1988'.*

*'I remember having needlework in the far room in my first year. Miss Cottle was the teacher who got married and became Mrs Glover. Not many teachers were married then'.*



*'There was a real live bat caught up in the big black curtains once during our lesson. Of course it then flew round the classroom before being rescued. Highlight of the year!'*

*'I remember sitting in one of those rooms doing a biology exam in the heat of the summer. I think we had to dissect a fish (herring I think) as part of the exam. One pupil passed out and had to be taken to the sick bay. The smell was horrendous!'*



This final photo above was taken in September 2019 following completion of the demolition.

# Then and Now – how things have changed....



Pictured left is an Art class in full swing in 1950. The students look fully engaged and are certainly enjoying the task in hand. The formality of the classroom, with just a few pictures on the wall and the individual, front facing wooden desks for each student, is quite striking compared to the more spacious and 'lighter' feel of today's classroom, pictured below and below, left.



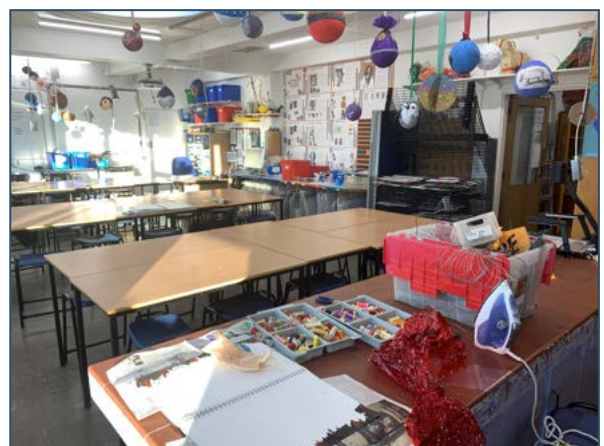
Here, Art work of all descriptions is displayed in and on any available spaces – including some hanging from the ceiling – and the table layouts encourage more collaborative work as well as providing a flat space for students to test their ideas.



With the new building work that is possible due to the funding CCHS has recently received, we are hoping to enlarge the Art department facilities as space will be provided when the Library (currently situated below the Art department) moves from this location.



We look forward to sharing pictures of all our new facilities with you when building work has sufficiently progressed.



# Then and Now – how things have changed....

Science lessons in the 1950s took place in the addition to the main school that was built in 1930-31 and the classroom appears to have been organised with all the work benches facing forward. This gives the room more of a 'formal' classroom feel than today's science labs that provide benches in layouts that aid collaborative group work as well as facilitating better routes around the lab to access equipment without disturbing other students in their work.



CHS SCIENCE, 1950



CHS SCIENCE, 1950



The Science Block that today's students enjoy (pictured below, left) was completed in September 1994 and provided 8 rooms as well as prep rooms and a faculty office. This has allowed students and science staff more space for teaching and practical work and has been an invaluable step forward in the provision of science facilities at CCHS.

As always, with expanding schools and general progress, we require more science teaching space and this will be allocated within the next phase of new build, replacing the science classrooms that existed within Bancroft before its demolition.



CHS 24th September 1930  
Miss Bancroft laying 2 Foundation Stones  
for the new Science Laboratories



# Meet our Senior Prefects for Alumnae Relations

Shraddha and Wafia (pictured right) have had an excellent year as Senior Prefects, with a specific remit within their post of Alumnae Relations. As well as the school events, charity fundraisers, reunions and other activities in which they have been involved, they also found the time to interview some former students for this newsletter. We hope you enjoyed reading these interviews earlier in this publication.



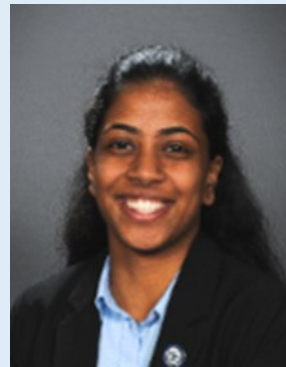
The photo above shows Shraddha and Wafia alongside the other Senior Prefects for 2019.

Alicia Chu and Sophia Pisano (pictured right) are the 2020 Senior Prefects who will be concentrating on Alumnae Relations. They will take up their posts in January and are looking forward to their year in office. They are keen to be involved in any reunions that you, as former students, might wish to arrange.

Remember to contact Mrs Dale (details on the final page of this newsletter) if you would like to organise something.

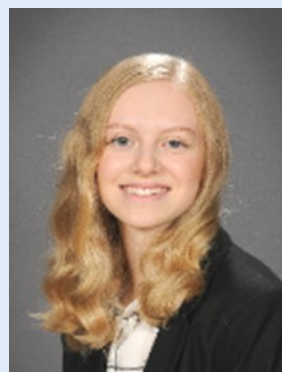
2019

**Shraddha and Wafia**



2020

**Alicia and Sophia**



## Staff who Left in 2019

**Mrs Nicole Chapman**, Headteacher from 2007 to 2019. Mrs Chapman's contribution to the school is fully discussed elsewhere in this newsletter.



**Dr Helen Huckvale**, Teacher of Biology and Head of UCAS.

Dr Huckvale started at CCHS in September 2001 having previously taught at Chelmsford College. She quickly won the respect of her students for her detailed knowledge of all aspects of Biology and Bio-Chemistry and the quietly authoritative way in which she approached her teaching. Indeed, for a number of years she provided expert leadership to the Biology Department. Dr Huckvale was a sixth form tutor for many years and her expert knowledge of the university system and of UCAS was much appreciated by her students. In 2013 she was appointed to lead on Careers and UCAS advice and her careful guidance and meticulous reference writing was certainly instrumental in the success of so many students in taking up their university places. Some readers will also remember her appearance in a number of school pantomimes. A thoughtful and valued colleague, Dr Huckvale's interests range widely beyond Biology. Her love of reading, knitting, walking and skiing amongst many other interests give her an immense hinterland to her scientific expertise and made her a fascinating companion.



We wish her every happiness in her well-deserved retirement.

**Mrs Sally Foley**, Head of the English Faculty and Subject Leader for Drama. Mrs Foley (or Miss Bakewell as she then was) started at CCHS in September 2007. Over her time here she distinguished herself as an excellent teacher of curricular drama and an innovative and gifted producer of school shows. Her lessons were always excellent and the quality of work she oversaw for GCSE and A level was outstanding. She was always determined that every student should have experience of live theatre and many readers will remember the theatre trips which she organised.

As well as overseeing a number of student-led lower school productions Mrs Foley produced and directed six hugely successful and innovative whole-school productions. These productions were pioneering in their use of technology and video recording as well as of space and movement and Mrs Foley's encouragement and high standards were instrumental in eliciting excellent performances from her casts and in making excellent use of the talents of the school's musicians and actors.



Mrs Foley is now taking a career break to spend more time with her young family.

## Staff who Left in 2019, continued....

**Miss Abby Lawrence**, Teacher of Chemistry. Miss Lawrence joined the Chemistry Department in 2016 after completing her teacher training at CCHS. A lively and enthusiastic teacher, she quickly built strong relationships with her students and threw herself into all aspects of the life of the school. Her commitment and verve were much appreciated by her classes and her colleagues. Miss Lawrence left us to take up a post in educational publishing.



**Mr Oliver Steele**, Teacher of English. Mr Steele joined the staff at CCHS in September 2016 having completed his training here. His classes much valued his enthusiasm and his obvious passion for the study of literature as well as his creativity in the classroom. A gifted and passionate filmmaker, Mr Steele has left us to work in the film industry. However his short publicity film for CCHS can be viewed on the school website and he is currently working with a group of students on developing a much longer film about the life and work of the school.



Mrs Sandra Youngs, Subject Leader of German. Mrs Youngs (or Miss Spiller as she then was) joined the school in September 2016. Born in the former DDR, she brought enthusiasm and a fresh perspective to the German department and her students much valued the insights they gained from her lessons. After the birth of her daughter Mrs Youngs left us to take up a post in Ipswich so as to be better able to spend time with her family.



The school also continues to mourn the untimely death of Mr Nicholas Minnican who served as Assistant Headteacher (Teaching and Learning) from September 2017 until his death in June 2019. A full appreciation of Mr Minnican appears elsewhere in this newsletter.



## Staff who left in 2019, continued....

Many readers will also remember the following long-serving members of support staff who left us in 2019:

**Mrs Christine Weakley.** Mrs Weakley joined the school in 2000 and was a stalwart presence in a number of administrative roles throughout her time with us. Over the years her responsibilities took in reprographics, student records and filing and office support. Latterly she was appointed as the Attendance Officer for Years 7 to 11 and gave huge administrative support to the lower school pastoral team. She made a huge contribution behind the scenes to the great success of the annual Year 11 Leadership Conference and we wish her every happiness in her retirement.

**Mrs Alison Lamb.** Mrs Lamb joined the school in September 2002, initially in a teaching support role. Over the years she took on more and more responsibility for things as diverse as ABRSM music examinations, trips and visits and the administration of cover for absent staff. In her last year in post she was also responsible for writing the school timetable and the multitude of associated tasks. Mrs Lamb also regularly accompanied school trips and somehow acquired responsibility for decorating the school Christmas tree each December. She and her husband have relocated to Derbyshire and her capacity for hard work and her intimate knowledge of a host of school systems are much missed.

**Mrs Fran Nel.** Mrs Nel joined the school in the autumn of 2006 and worked as Assistant Finance Officer until last July. Her cheerful approach to her work helped to make the Finance Office a welcoming destination for any teacher running a trip and her efficiency in dealing with orders, payments, music lessons and trip funds did a great deal to make the school run smoothly. She was also a regular member of the staff team on the annual Italian Exchange and her organisation and command of the language were invaluable. Similarly her work in organising staff social events was appreciated by all of us. We wish her well in her retirement.



*The picture (left) was taken in April 2007 when we celebrated 100 years of CCHS.*

*Mrs Nel is kneeling at the front, right, Mrs Lamb is standing third from right and Mrs Weakley is standing fifth from left.*

## ....and those who joined us....

**In September 2019 CCHS welcomed the following new staff:**

Mrs Emma Ledwidge – Deputy Head, Curriculum



Mr Adam Selby – Subject Leader for Drama



Mrs Jane Lockwood – Teacher of Mathematics (part time)



Miss Amanda Bray – Teacher of Biology



Mr Bradley Copper – Teacher of English



**The following joined us during the autumn term:**

Ms Katherine Angerer – Subject Leader for German



# Building Update

Firstly, let me introduce myself. I took over as Business Manager in January of this year after 25 years in investment banking. Having been a Governor at a local primary school for over 7 years now, I decided that I would like my next career move to be into education where I could hopefully use my experience to give back to the community. There was really only one school where I wanted to be though, so when this job came up a little earlier than I intended to leave the city, I felt I had to apply anyway. 30 years after I left CCHS as a student, and a few years after my eldest left here, I'm back as a staff member and (without wishing to sound too saccharine) it feels like coming home.



As you may be aware, we are extremely fortunate to have been awarded a grant to build new facilities at our school. A new teaching block, including science laboratories, and a sports hall will open for use by September 2021 and bring our campus up to date to support our increasing student population of 6 forms of entry from September 2020. Many of you will remember the school gym, which was built in the 1920s, and appreciate that it is no longer adequate to support the range of sports that we provide or the number of students we teach. We will be redesigning it to be a new Library and Sixth Form study space – keeping as much of the original 1920s design as possible. We had to say goodbye, with mixed emotions, to Bancroft in the summer to make way for the new building so the campus is already changing ahead of this exciting project.

At the end of this Newsletter, you will see that we are launching an appeal to help us raise funds to fit out our new buildings and bring our swimming pool, a rare commodity in schools these days, into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Whilst we have been given a significant amount of money by the Government for our new buildings, it doesn't include things like sports or science equipment. Nobody likes to ask for money, but in the current challenging funding environment we would be extremely grateful if you would consider supporting our appeal in any way that you can so that our current and future students can benefit from the facilities needed to support the same learning opportunities that we were given.

We will be issuing regular updates on the building programme as it progresses via the newsletters, however for more regular news please join the CCHS Alumnae Facebook page. (Details on how to do this are on the final page of this Newsletter).

*Front page of the flyer that you will find at the end of this Newsletter, giving you more information about our Appeal Fund.*



# Training the Next Generation of Teachers at CCHS

If you are interested in pursuing teaching as a career, your former School can support and employ you. We have trained a number of strong graduates in the past, working with the TES Institute to secure their QTS (Qualified Teacher Status). We would pay your training course fees, pay you a salary, provide you with a subject mentor and a professional studies programme.

Alternatively, you might want to pursue a more traditional route into teaching. We work closely with the Billericay Education Consortium to train graduates on a PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate of Education) course.

Have a look at the flyer overleaf for more information, and if you would like to discuss routes into teaching and the opportunities that CCHS can provide you with, please do contact me via: [hbates@cchs.essex.sch.uk](mailto:hbates@cchs.essex.sch.uk)

Thank you.

**Stephen Lawlor**  
Headteacher



## Class of 2019 – final week

The final week for Year 13 is always a memorable one, including various themes for dressing up through the week. The picture below was taken on House day, when students dressed according to their House letter.





## Teacher Training

### AT CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

#### DEVELOPING our own teachers

*From teacher training to educational leadership – nurturing and inspiring the teachers and school leaders of tomorrow through excellence in personalised training and development.*

#### Have you ever thought about teaching and how you would go about training?

Chelmsford County High School for Girls works closely with Billericay Educational Consortium, University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, and most recently, Essex School Direct to help you make that aspiration become a reality.



#### **Billericay Educational Consortium**

Billericay Educational Consortium work with a large network of partnership schools in Essex and Havering who are passionate about training and developing outstanding and confident teachers.

BEC provide bespoke training of the highest quality, and over the last five years 100% of trainees have passed the course with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and gained a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) with 60 Master credits in conjunction with University of Suffolk (UoS). With extensive experience as an initial teacher training provider of 25 years, and rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, the programme offers a real balance between hands on classroom experiences and the theory underpinning educational practice.

If you are interested in finding out more about training at **Chelmsford County High School for Girls** then come along to **Billericay Educational Consortium's Get into Teaching** event on **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020**, hosted by The Billericay School 4:30 -7:00pm, where you will be able to find out more information, including the application process. Contact [becky@billericayscitt.com](mailto:becky@billericayscitt.com) to book your place.



#### **Essex School Direct**

Essex School Direct enjoy a successful partnership with Tes Global, who have a reputation for innovative, online learning. Based at the lead school, Davenant Foundation School (Loughton, Essex), Essex School Direct work as a partnership with 20 other schools in West Essex, Harlow, Chelmsford and Havering.

All partnership schools have made a commitment to work together through the School Direct programme with the provider Tes Institute to offer the very best of school-based teacher training programmes. The programme will seek to maximise time spent in the classroom by ensuring that the face-to-face professional studies programme is of the highest quality and delivered within our locality.

Essex School Direct are committed to attracting, training and developing both graduates and career changers to enable all schools within our area to reach the same level of excellence and quality of provision thus ensuring that all our trainees achieve their full potential.

If you are interested in finding out more about training at **Chelmsford County High School for Girls** then contact [teachchelmsford@essexschoolirect.com](mailto:teachchelmsford@essexschoolirect.com)



#### **University of Cambridge – Faculty of Education**

The Faculty provides high quality courses rated as outstanding in all areas by OFSTED in their last inspection. Our trainees are always in demand from headteachers and many of our ex-trainees go on to positions of school leadership very quickly. We consistently receive outstanding feedback from our trainees on course evaluations.

The Faculty of Education will accept applications for September 2020 entry from mid-October 2019 until 30th June 2020 or until the course is full, whichever is earlier. The number of places available in each subject is limited and competition is high so we recommend that applications are made early in the cycle.

If you are interested in finding out more about training at Chelmsford County High School for Girls then enquiries should be addressed to [pgce-admissions@educ.cam.ac.uk](mailto:pgce-admissions@educ.cam.ac.uk)

# How can former students help CCHS?

## Careers information:

Could you come back to School to inspire our Year 9 and Year 12 students with details of your career? Every year the School organises a Careers Evening where we invite volunteers to explain their careers to our students and help inform them for their future choices. This year the event will take place on Thursday 13th February starting at 7pm. If you are able to help in any way, please contact Mrs Wendy Newton (email [wnewton@cchs.essex.sch.uk](mailto:wnewton@cchs.essex.sch.uk)) for more details.

## Mock interviews:

Can you help provide interview practice for our Sixth Form students? This could be for University entrance or work opportunities. We are particularly interested in hearing from those with experience as dentists or in pure science. Please contact Mrs Rowan Carroll (email [rcarroll@cchs.essex.sch.uk](mailto:rcarroll@cchs.essex.sch.uk)) if you are able to assist with this.

## Lunch-time talks:

We are keen to expand the number and range of these highly successful sessions which have run for many years. Their aim is to promote interests and debate that extend beyond the curriculum and to give students a sense of the different areas in which their successes at school can take them.

If you have a particular area of expertise and would like to engage in discussion with our students, please contact Mrs Rowan Carroll (email [rcarroll@cchs.essex.sch.uk](mailto:rcarroll@cchs.essex.sch.uk)).



*In our article on Speech Day 2019 (earlier in this Newsletter) we mentioned that Speech Day used to be held in the Odeon Cinema.*

*To the left is photographic evidence of this: the Queen Mother who was guest of honour in 1962 is leaving the Odeon with Miss Pattison (Headteacher) after attending the Speech Day on 23rd February that year.*

# Keeping in touch....

## CCHS Alumnae on Social Media



Our 'CCHS Alumnae' Facebook group continues to grow in members. We regularly post news from the school, items from the archives as well as pictures from reunions and occasional news about former students. We also enjoy seeing the posts from our group members which include anecdotes and pictures from their time here. Through this facebook group our former students are re-connected with each other and with CCHS.

The closed (private) group now has over 1,260 members and if you would like to join it please search for 'CCHS Alumnae' on Facebook. We will be delighted to welcome you to our growing list of members.



The old and the new: the Dame Margaret Anstee Centre for Languages was completed, and joined the main school buildings, in 2013.

Chelmsford County High  
School for Girls  
Broomfield Road  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM1 1RW



Our Facebook Alumnae  
private group can be  
found at: [CCHS Alumnae](#)

You may also wish to  
follow the school on  
Twitter:  
[@CCHS4G](#)



## Alumnae Reunions

The School is always keen to receive visits from former students and, as you will have seen earlier in this magazine, we hosted highly enjoyable reunions this year, including those from the classes of 1992, 2005 & 2009. We look forward to hosting other reunions through the coming year.

If you are organising a reunion for your year group and would like to include a visit to the School, please contact Mrs Rae Dale ([rdale@cchs.essex.sch.uk](mailto:rdale@cchs.essex.sch.uk)) who will be happy to help you plan this. Please also email any photographs/ details of reunions to Mrs Rae Dale and Mrs Rowan Carroll ([rcarroll@cchs.essex.sch.uk](mailto:rcarroll@cchs.essex.sch.uk)) so that we can include these in future newsletters and in the Alumnae section of the School's website.

If you are trying to get in touch with former friends, you may be able to link up with them through our private CCHS Alumnae Facebook group (details above). However, it is also worth checking for contact details with the School. We cannot give out contact details to others, but we can contact them on your behalf to facilitate the link. Our electronic database of members means we can quickly find former students by their leaving year, or by name.

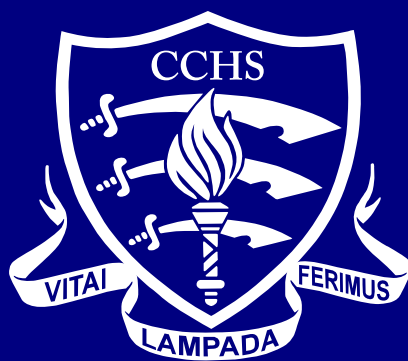
If you are in touch with other former students, please encourage them to sign up to this via our [website](#).

*Pictured right is the reunion of the Class of 2006 who visited in 2016.*



# Building A Future Appeal Fund

## Chelmsford County High School for Girls



[www.cchs.co.uk](http://www.cchs.co.uk)

### Appeal Fund for:

Equipment provision for new science laboratories

Sports equipment for the new Sports Hall

Modernisation of the swimming pool



Artist's impression of completed campus

*Building a Future for our Girls*



Chelmsford County High School for Girls (CCHS) is a proud grammar school community. CCHS was opened in 1907 to provide girls with academic education.

We, as the twenty-first century guardians of this significant inheritance, have chosen to honour this legacy by defining and pursuing an ambition for CCHS to be a progressive grammar school, committed to excellence in girls' education and empowerment.

As we move forward, and expand to six forms of entry, we are continuing to partner with local primary schools to share our expertise regarding teaching able students from all backgrounds and ensure that talents and aspirations are served. To succeed, we need facilities that match our vision.

We will be constructing a new Sports Hall, catering for an expanded range of activities on offer, and a new teaching block incorporating science laboratories to complement our existing science block.

As the PE department moves out of the existing 1920's gymnasium in mid-2021, this will be re-modelled into a new library and sixth form study facility, allowing us to create additional art facilities in the existing library block.

CCHS continues to excel academically and we believe these new facilities will allow us to continue supporting not only the academic success of our students but also the creative and sporting achievements that develop the leaders of tomorrow.

Our current students benefit from the generosity of former students, parents, staff, friends and Governors. Through their gifts, we were able to add a dedicated music centre in 2003, a language block, dedicated to alumna Dame Margaret Anstee, in 2013 and the Mary Kenyon Lecture room and sixth form common room in 2019. We hope that you will consider leaving a legacy to help us build a future for our girls.



Stephen Lawlor, Headteacher

**"They reap not  
where they  
laboured, we reap  
what they have  
sown; our harvest  
may be garnered by  
ages yet unknown"**

**School Hymn  
(George Wallace Briggs)**





## CCHS – The New Buildings

We are very fortunate that we have been awarded funding from the Selective School Expansion Fund to construct our new buildings, facilitated by the demolition of Bancroft in August 2019, and we aim to occupy the buildings in May 2021.

As part of our successful bid, we took out a loan of £200,000 and will contribute a further £200,000 from school reserves; however, this money is earmarked for the capital development of the campus and not allowed to be spent on science and PE equipment, or the work required to bring our tired 1960's swimming pool into the 21st century. We need to raise approximately £200,000 more to support the funding of equipment and urgent modernisation of the pool.

The **Teaching Block** will provide:

- ◆ **4 new science classrooms**
- ◆ **Integrated prep. rooms**
- ◆ **5 general teaching classrooms**
- ◆ **Sunken external plaza for external teaching and recreational use**



Teaching Block

The **Sports Hall** will provide:

- ◆ **4 badminton courts**
- ◆ **An indoor netball court**
- ◆ **Dance Studio**
- ◆ **Fitness Suite**
- ◆ **Gym / Teaching space**
- ◆ **Spectator facilities**
- ◆ **Sprung Floor**



Sports Hall

**To maximise these new facilities, we need to furnish them with the equipment needed, including:**

- ⇒ Digital microscopes, basic science equipment such as pipettes and beakers
- ⇒ Fitness suite equipment, trampolines, PE equipment.

# Financing of the Building Project



Expenditure Item (incl. professional fees)	Estimate (Bid approximation)	Funding Sources
Enablement Works (Bancroft Demolition)	£320,000	Government Funding = £6,200,000
Teaching Block	£2,710,000	Government Loan = £200,000
Sports Hall	£2,920,000	School Reserves = £200,000
Library & Gym Repurposing	£650,000	
Science Equipment	£20,000	
Sports Equipment	£80,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,700,000</b>	<b>£6,600,000</b>

**Our initial fundraising target relating to the new buildings: £100,000**





## CCHS – The Swimming Pool



**Our initial fundraising target relating to the pool: £100,000**

We appreciate how privileged we are to have a swimming pool at CCHS, and are grateful to our predecessors who had their own fundraising campaign to build it originally.

The pool was built in the early 1960's and is in very good condition for a facility of its age, however it is suffering from signs of ageing and requires investment to make it energy efficient and fit for 21st century teaching and community use

The pool plays a significant part in supporting local primary schools and local community groups in providing water space that is otherwise significantly lacking within the local area, as well as offering opportunities for our students to become confident swimmers, an irreplaceable life skill, and for the School to host competitions.

We feel strongly that we have a community responsibility to modernise and maintain the pool for the foreseeable future; however, the decline in real terms funding for schools over recent years, along with ageing plant and buildings does not make it viable to support from school reserves alone.

Expenditure Item (incl. professional fees)	Estimated cost (excl. Contingency)	Funding Sources being investigated
Plant upgrade	£165,000	Sport England (matched funding up to £150,000)
Remodelling internal layout and upgrade changing facilities	£220,000	School reserves
Re-lining pool	£65,000	Chelmsford City Council
<b>Total</b>	<b>£450,000</b>	

## Opportunities to help



We are hopeful that with the help of our School community and supporters that we can raise the £200,000 needed to complete the equipment of our new buildings, and preserve our swimming pool for future students and the community.

**Our appeal is available through our TotalGiving page  
<https://www.totalgiving.co.uk/appeal/OurFuture>  
or via the Building a future for our girls section on the school website  
Please remember to declare Gift Aid if you are a Tax payer**

## Other ways to donate

- ⇒ Buy a brick – £50 per brick for 2 lines of wording. Click [here](#) for Donation Form or complete Form on page 7.
- ⇒ For those who are able to donate £1,000 or more, we will be commissioning a donor's board, which will be prominently displayed in one of the new buildings. We will also feature your name on our website.
- ⇒ We are happy to discuss opportunities to name a room, for larger donations – we would anticipate these to be upwards of £5,000.



We are grateful for all donations and thank those who contribute to supporting School and our Parents' Association through a number of opportunities, including:

- ♦ Purchasing refreshments at our many school events
- ♦ Participating in Parents' Association events
- ♦ Donating refunds from trips and book deposits
- ♦ Regular payroll giving
- ♦ One-off donations
- ♦ Purchasing through 'Amazon smile'

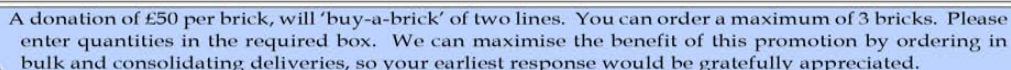
Please click [here](#) to view the CCHS short film



TO (Name and address of your bank)

I (your full name)

(your address incl postcode)



**Brick Inscription** (*text will be centred and engraved as it appears below*)

### Brick 1:

[illegible]

### Brick 2:

[illegible]

**Brick 3:**

[illegible]

If you do not wish to Buy-a-Brick, you can make regular or single donations, as follows:

**For regular donations by standing order:**

(Please tick amount) £20 ☐ £30 ☐ £50 ☐ £100 ☐ other ☐

£

OR, I would like to give a **single donation** of:

£

<b>I request you pay to:</b>	Barclays Bank, 2 High Street, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1BG
<b>Account No:</b>	70068748
<b>Sort Code:</b>	20-19-95

For the credit of CCHS Capital Development Limited quoting the reference number. (for official use only)

for a period of seven years (for Years 7-13) (84 payments) starting on

□□ / □□ / □□

**OR**, for a period of two years (for Years 12-13) (24 payments) starting on

□□/□□/□□

**Your Account name:**

Account No:

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**Sort Code:**

□ □ □ □ □ □

### Gift Aid declaration

☐ I would like all donations made to **CCHS Capital Development Limited** or **Chelmsford County High School for Girls** from the date of the declaration and all future donations to be Gift Aid donations until notified otherwise. I declare that any donations in the current tax year and in the future made by me to CCHS Capital Development Limited (the benefiting charity) or Chelmsford County High School for Girls in return for which I receive no direct benefits, services or favours, shall be treated by the Charities as a Gift Aid donation. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify the charity if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

**Signature:**

Date:

**Please return completed forms to:**  
CCHS Capital Development Limited  
Finance Department  
Chelmsford County High School for Girls  
Broomfield Road  
Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1RW

Thank you!

**Thank you for your support!**



***'Building a Future for our Girls'***



**Chelmsford County High School for Girls**  
Broomfield Road  
Chelmsford  
Essex CM1 1RW

 **@CCHS4G**

**T: 01245 352592 . E: [office@cchs.essex.sch.uk](mailto:office@cchs.essex.sch.uk)**