

**COLCHESTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**  
**OLD GIRLS'/ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION**  
**NEWSLETTER – Autumn 2022**

**Editor's Notes**

It has been a busy and very hot summer. Now we are complaining about the wet and windy weather! I have received little from Old Girls, memories or news, and this is very disappointing as we all enjoy reading about what you have done since you left CCHS. This only seems to happen when an Old Girl dies! Please let's have some more from you before your sad demise reminds your old friends of what you got up to!

I note in the 1952-53 School Magazine (70 years ago!) that similar problems were experienced then by the OG Magazine Representative (Miss R L Phillips) who wondered "whether Old Girls realise that she has to dig, like a dog for a bone, for the scraps of news she manages to collect. She would be immensely helped and cheered if Old Girls would *send* her their news. She would like long letters of course – but would be really grateful for three lines on the back of a postcard, just to say where you are and what you are doing – especially if you could remember to put the date of the year in which you left."

Times don't seem to change except that today all you need to do is email me - no great literary work is required but photographs would be very welcome. Once again, however, I am indebted to Joan Gurney for her continuing saga. It is so entertaining and informative but she says that this will be her last. I hope not!

We were delighted to welcome Kate Stubbs and four CCHS leaving girls to our Garden Party in September. The girls chatted to many Old Girls (and were also very helpful). Let's hope we can continue to do this!

If you would like me to make contact for you with anyone who has contributed to the Newsletter please email or telephone me and I will see what I can do!

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Information, news, comments, photos and articles for the next Newsletter by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

**RECENT EVENTS** – many thanks to Jean Johnson for her organising skills!



Coffee morning at Officers' Club April 2022



AGM (and Garden Party!) September 2022

**For the next Grey Friars Coffee Morning details see page 13.**

**Tina Powell (1968-75)**

**Public Speaking Competition**

When in the lower sixth, I was persuaded to take part in the English Speaking Union's annual schools competition. We had to have a team of three: a speaker; chairman and proposer of the vote of thanks. Miss Wiggins, the head of the English department, took charge of coaching us, and decided I should be the chair,

as I had “presence” and could “keep control” - although I would need to do something with my “unruly hair”!

On the evening of the competition, each speaker would work with the other two people from an opposing team. All the chair and proposer were told beforehand was a brief resume of the speaker we would be working with, and the subject of his/her speech. The team who were given our speaker struck lucky: “Are Love’s Labour’s Lost on the Adolescent, in a World Manipulated by the Mass Media?” All self-evident (and considerably ahead of its time, as this was back in 1974). The young man I would be introducing was to speak on “A Different Kind of Failure”. What to do?

Miss Wiggins told me I should announce his name and the title of his speech, and then declare, “He is well-suited to discuss this”. I was not convinced that was a good idea, and queried the matter with Miss Wiggins. Surely that would suggest he was a failure? Miss Wiggins, in her inimitable slow and throaty monotone, assured me he would be talking about comprehensive education. Despite having failed his 11+, and having to attend “only a comprehensive school”, he was now studying for ‘A’ Levels, and hoping to go to university. Did she know something I didn’t? The letter from the ESU gave only the title: no mention of education systems. Miss Wiggins was adamant. The matter was not open to discussion!

On the stage, I duly introduced the speaker. “His topic this evening is “A Different Kind of Failure”. He is well-suited to discuss this subject...”. At this point, the audience burst out laughing. I paused, raised an eyebrow and, once the laughter had ceased, continued, “He is well-suited to discuss this subject, because he is studying ...”

The speaker stood and began by explaining he was to talk about the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins!

At the end of the competition, while we awaited the results, Miss Wiggins said nothing about his failure to talk about comprehensive schools, but was less than pleased that I had “not taken it seriously”. A few minutes later, the judges appeared, and announced they had made their decision. We won! The judges commended our speaker - but also commended the “stature” of the chair, who had controlled the audience “impeccably” and “displayed magnificent comic timing”. Miss Wiggins’s silence was deafening!

## **Joan Gurney (Appleton 1938-1951)**

### **What Joan did next – Part 6**

My second granddaughter was born in 2002 which was another great joy for me and another aquatic potential to nurture!

My swimming programme at the Adult Community College, which had been built up over a number of years, was a significant casualty in the reorganisation and reduction of classes by Essex County Council which began in 2005. All swimming classes, except swimming teacher training, were withdrawn. This left a substantial library of books intended for swimming teachers in training, and others involved in this aspect of the curriculum. These had been paid for by several sponsors and gifts from many people. The clearance of the Grey Friars contents was scheduled to be completed in the shortest possible time and many things were saved from the skip at the last minute by several dedicated followers of the Grey Friars story. The swimming programme itself had been described as a model of excellence in curriculum design, with its opportunities for students to progress to more advanced aspects of the subject, or to make a sideways move on to different styles and interpretations of aquatics.

In those very last days of Grey Friars as a college, a final day of appreciation and goodbyes was held, and also an inclusion in the annual Heritage Open Weekend of viewing in September 2007. This gave people the chance to take a last look at this beautiful classical building with its history, architecture and meaning that it held for many in their educational and social lives, either as ex-pupils of CCHS, or as students, past and present, of the college which was about to close. Members of the college staff who assisted on these days were overwhelmed by the response. Vast numbers, not only of students and tutors from adult education, but alumnae from its time as the Junior Department of CCHS, eagerly came to experience, perhaps for the last time, the aura of a much loved building, and to remember the chances which it had given

them in life but opening unexpected doors to them. Nobody at that moment had any idea what its fate would be after the sale, and whether there would still be access for the public.

As many rooms as possible on the ground floor were open to those who just wanted to wander and enjoy the atmosphere that Grey Friars had always created, but visitors could also sign up to take a guided tour of approximately 45 minutes, covering all floors and part of the garden. Alan Skinner and I acted as tour guides and although we both tried to cover the history of the building and its site, inevitably my emphasis was on its occupancy by CCHS between 1920 and 1957, and Alan's was on the Adult Education College aspect of it from 1965 to 2006. The number on each tour had to be increased and time extended because of the excessive demand and the valuable reminiscences of visitors which demanded compulsive attention.

The comments and appreciations after these events were endless. The "Comment and Remarks Book" was bursting at the seams and most of the entries ended with "You must put all this into writing". Alan and I did our own very final goodbye to Grey Friars after those two exhausting, but very satisfying, weekends. We looked at each other and said simultaneously "We've got to write a book".

From that day onwards our work on the Grey Friars book began. We did not know how long we would still have access to the building and who the new buyers would be. Nor did we know if it would still be open to the public after the sale.

We began a lengthy search of the building from attic to cellars looking for historic finds and discarded artefacts. We took endless photographs and uncovered older ones. We talked to notable historians, explored ancient documents, visited libraries and looked into the archives of CCHS and Adult Education in



Colchester and beyond. Later we even salvaged items dug up by the developers in the garden. In all our research we had the dedicated help of numerous interested people. The whole exercise developed into a Sharing Project, and we received support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The book began to take shape and after seven years it was eventually finished. Meanwhile the protective awning and scaffolding had gone up at the front of Grey Friars (*left*), and minor alterations, decoration and restoration would follow.

Our book was published in 2014 just before the opening of Grey Friars as a hotel. It became "book of the week" at the Red Lion Bookshop during that Christmas period and sales included many copies posted out as a Christmas present to CCHS Old Girls living in distant parts of the world. Our wishes had come true. The buyers of Grey Friars, OMC Developments, had sensitively and tastefully restored the magnificent architectural features of Grey Friars, and as a hotel it would, once more, be accessible to the public.

Once again, Alan and I had a preview of the building just before it opened as a hotel. We, of course, looked at each room with hindsight and prior knowledge of its previous use when it was a college, school and even the priory of the Franciscan nuns between 1904 and 1919.



The impressive Hall with its stained glass windows, originally the nuns' chapel, later the Assembly Hall of CCHS (*above left*) and Flower Arranging venue for the Adult Community College, was now the hotel's dining room.. The former CCHS dining room (*above right*) was now the hotel's Reception area with access

to the garden, All Saints House and High Street. The mezzanine floor of CCHS, which Alan recalled in his



County High School, Colchester (Grey Friars)

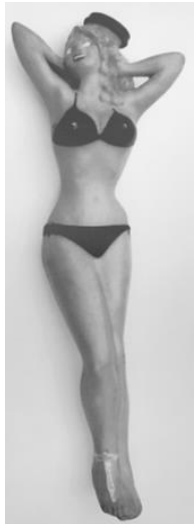
days as Principal of the College) housed his office (and two others) was now the Honeymoon Suite. The garden room below, everybody's favourite space, was now the bar with its extension into the original 1755/80s library. In the days of CCHS occupation this had been the cosy secluded hideaway of the headmistress (Miss King). It was a terrifying experience to be 'sent to the head': I only achieved this once and I vowed never to go again! The small rail-back chair which stands in the window (*left*) I found discarded and abandoned in the attic during my rescue of the Grey Friars contents and it remains a

souvenir of my episode of misbehaviour!

The big bay windows of the bar have an inset opening with steps down to a wall-planned all-weather terrace with wicker chairs, tables, umbrellas and awning which overlooks the original tennis lawn of CCHS. It is overshadowed on one side by the 400 year old Holm oak which features in the end papers of the Grey Friars book. Its visiting squirrels still like to aim twigs and nuts on to visitors below. All is spectacularly lit up at night (*right*).



Although my official working life at Grey Friars College had ended, I could not keep away from it – only an excuse was needed to drop in for coffee or a snack. I was still collecting my Bathing Bygones, giving talks, writing articles, lending items to museums, teaching swimming regularly and tending my wildlife garden all the way through the seven years of book preparation.



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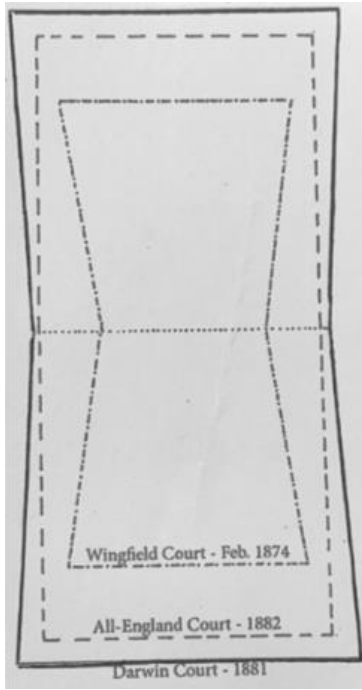
In 2007 I set up my own exhibition – nearly every aspect of my collection was on display in a very big space. I had discovered over the years of exhibiting that it is not only the very rare, valuable, attractive or oldest objects which cause the most interest but very often the ultra modern, quirky, amusing ones give the utmost pleasure. A favourite piece in my collection is the rubber hot water bottle modelled on the famous 1950s film star Jayne Mansfield (*left*) wearing her notorious red bikini. It causes mirth and mystery because it resembles a free-standing sculpture, but the black beret which she wears is really the cap for filling the interior with hot water.

In 2012 I attended the Olympic Games, keeping my promise to my father 44 years previously when he had wanted to take me to the revived post-war Olympic Games in 1948 (*right*) but did not want to interrupt my School Certificate year and also raise the wrath of the headmistress, Miss Ruth King!



The highlight of this second decade of the new millennium belonged to my husband, Gerald. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the history of sport, he was invited to Her Majesty the Queen's Golden Jubilee Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in 2012 and I was also invited to accompany him (*left*). His archive of racquet sports has always outshone my Bathing Bygones Collection and this was a just reward for him. Guests were not allowed to take cameras into the grounds but this did not prevent us from venturing on to the tennis court at Buckingham Palace – an image which would be imprinted on our memories indefinitely.





This brought back a similar experience of 2009 when Gerald, after much research, was the first person to discover Charles Darwin's original hour-glass shaped concrete tennis court (*left*) at his house in Downe, Kent, which he had laid down for his children just before his death in 1882 to replace an earlier grass court which was nearer to the adjoining terrace of the house. We both stood together there, holding a racket of the same period (*right – court hourglass shape just visible to the left of Joan's shoulder*). My biology teacher, Miss Roper, never told me during lessons on evolution that Charles Darwin sometimes played tennis (but more often watched his family playing) whilst he contemplated his completed masterpiece "On the Origin of Species 1859". Nor did CCHS offer Greek as a subject so that I could translate this early version of tennis known as Sphairistike.



I took my last class for swimming in 2015. This was not a retirement from work, but a rest from a pleasurable activity which had rewarded me over 60 years of teaching with the joy of seeing a few thousand children and adults achieve their goal of learning to swim – a strange turn-around when, on leaving CCHS in 1951, I had never considered swimming as a career.

2022 marks 71 years since I left CCHS. Over these years many things have changed – fashions, domestic appliances, hair styles and entertainments. Some things have come and gone forever, others have remained as favourites and several have been revised and reinstated as classics, never to be forgotten.

One of the early black and white films (made during the war years of the 1940s) was "Brief Encounter". It is now considered one of the most romantic films ever made. Its theme music, Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No 2, brought classical music to the forefront, and it has remained in Classic FM's top ten favourites for several years. The remote Carnforth railway station in Cumbria, where it was filmed and the story played out, remains a tourist attraction to this day.

The liberality of the 1960s and 1970s produced many legends which have been glorified today – the Mary Quant bob and the miniskirt which has become shorter and shorter as the years have passed. Her achievements are celebrated in the Mary Quant film recently released. These two decades were also rich in producing new artist and entertainers and many of these are now immortalised. The Beatles' music is still played; ABBA has briefly reformed; "The Good Life" is currently being filmed and not to be outdone "Allo, 'Allo" is occasionally shown; "The Two Ronnies" regularly appears at Christmas and "Dad's Army" goes on and on.

Opposition to the new liberality of the 1960s would have been felt by the occupants of Grey Friars at this time when the Senior Evening Institute was just beginning there. Mary Whitehouse, the morality campaigner, lived in Ardleigh and had an office in All Saints House next door. She set out to censor new plays, new art, television, sex, nudity, bad language and mockery of religion. No doubt Miss King, with her high standards, would have approved of her opinions.

My CCHS school text books could never have predicted the varied, rare and bizarre weather conditions experienced during my lifetime. I first enjoyed an unusual sighting of the Northern Lights over the night sky in Dedham during the early 1940s and was told by my parents that I would never see it again unless I went up to the Arctic Circle, but twice in 2022 the same phenomenon has been visible. Other unpredictable and unexpected events were the East Coast floods of 1953; a decade later the prolonged winter followed and in 1987 the Great Hurricane came. A variety of unfamiliar weather features also manifested themselves – ash clouds from an Icelandic volcano and red sand from the Sahara.

Looking back at all the multitude of experiences and variety of activities in my childhood and early days at CCHS my life could have been very different. My father, as a young man in 1912 and the eldest of ten children, decided to go abroad looking for work and to seek his fortune. He spent 17 years firstly in China, then Australia and finally Canada before returning to England in 1929 and marrying. He made many friends in Australia and kept in contact with them.

At the outbreak of World War 2 in 1939, I had just started in the Preparatory Department of CCHS at Grey Friars, and had made several friends, some of whom would shortly be evacuated to the West Country. Concerned for my safety if the enemy invaded the east coast and occupied East Anglia, my parents arranged for me to be evacuated to the new friends in Australia who were willing to welcome me with open arms. All plans were made and finalised when a ship carrying children was torpedoed with great loss of life. All arrangements for my departure were cancelled immediately.

I stayed here, living in the attractive East Anglian countryside attending CCHS, a school with the highest educational standards, and eventually established a rewarding career at the Adult Community College, both housed in turn at Grey Friars, one of the most interesting and fascinating buildings in Colchester; all of these have influenced every aspect of my life. I so nearly had to swap all this for a life with koalas, kangaroos and eucalyptus trees! However attractive this might sound, I am glad that my roots were firmly established here and I have no regrets. I might even have returned home with an Australian accent.

### **Extracts from the CCHS School Magazine 1952-53**

These are obviously very dated, but extremely interesting to read as they conjure up some very similar but also very different attitudes of the time. *Let me have your comments, please!*

#### **Inter-schools Discussion** M Sparkes, J Leatherby (Lower VI)

The group continued its good work during the term giving us a good excuse for letting off steam. We travelled round to the schools concerned and in our turn acted as hostesses. Numerous subjects were hotly debated, ranging from serious religious themes to such frivolous subjects as “All handsome men are slightly sunburnt”. Arguments on equality of the sexes usually end in a battle royal, and political questions always set the boys talking through their hats.

#### **Debating Society** M Fisher (Lower VI)

A Debating Society was formed in the Summer term and Mrs Stacey kindly agreed to take the chair at the meetings. Meetings have been held fortnightly apart from the interruptions for examinations, and the following subjects have been debated: “Oral examinations should replace written ones”; “Animals should not be kept in captivity” and “Capital Punishment should be abolished”. I am sure we all enjoyed these debates and we look forward to our meetings next year when we hope to be joined by the new Upper V.

#### **The advantages of not having a television set** C Jones (Middle V 22)



We have not got a television set and though many people would think it a “My dear, fancy having to manage without a television set” kind of situation, there are many advantages attached to this state of affairs. We are able to have the light on in the evenings so that we can get on with our reading, knitting, sewing, homework or anything else we may wish to do. At the same time, we usually have good entertainment from our “old-fashioned” radio. All my family still have good eyesight except for my brother (who watches other people’s television!) because we do not strain our eyes watching the screen closely.

People who have television are usually compelled to ask neighbours in to watch it and I have heard, some of these neighbours occasionally get a little “excited” at a fight they are watching and are apt to try and copy the tactics. This sometimes cases an unfortunate person to be injured. Our family is still intact.

Because we have no television, our pantry is usually full, and not suffering from the onslaught of neighbour viewers. These are but a few of our advantages and yet ..... and yet ..... I don’t think I would refuse a television.

### **Liz White (Bailey 1960-66)**

With a serious lack of copy from Old Girls I am including more memories from CCHS in the 1960s!

The system of punishment was theoretical rather than practical – but it seemed to work. For a minor contravention of one of the many rules an Order Mark would be awarded to be held on your school record and noted in your school report. Three of these would automatically earn a Conduct Mark, one of the worst penalties for a young school girl. For major contraventions a Conduct Mark would be awarded directly. Detentions were given out infrequently and seemed to be more a waste of time for both pupil and mistress than of any great significance. Lines were a great favourite with some mistresses as the girls would have to spend their free time in purposeless activity. To the girls concerned, it was just a laugh as this punishment was not recorded and didn't take long to complete. In my form particularly, few of these punishments were incurred and whether this was due to the calibre of girl, mistress or school I shall never know.

“House Points” were awarded for exceptional work. I received them occasionally and was very proud but really had little to show for them!

Such accumulations of House Points were reported to your School House, as were Order and Conduct Marks and these latter marks could be detrimental if too many were acquired during the school year, denying the award of top House in the school. There were eight houses named after the English Royal Houses, ie, Plantagenet (dark blue badge), Anjou (pale blue), Hanover, Tudor, Stuart, Windsor, York and Lancaster. (I'm afraid I can't remember all the colours, so let me know for future newsletters.) This system was started by Miss Vashon Baker in 1953. I was allocated to Plantagenet House with the grand motto “We sweep all before us”. We had regular House meetings, fortunately in school time, and were presided over by our own Head of House, secretary and treasurer. All positions were held by sixth formers and we never thought we would ever reach such dizzy heights as those, but of course, in time we held those posts – I became Treasurer of Plantagenet House – and it wasn't that hard! After I left I was astonished to see it recorded in the school magazine that I was its “efficient” treasurer! Competition was encouraged between the Houses and there were endless hockey, netball, tennis, rounders matches, etc. I don't remember ever winning one, but as long as the weather was fine I didn't mind playing.

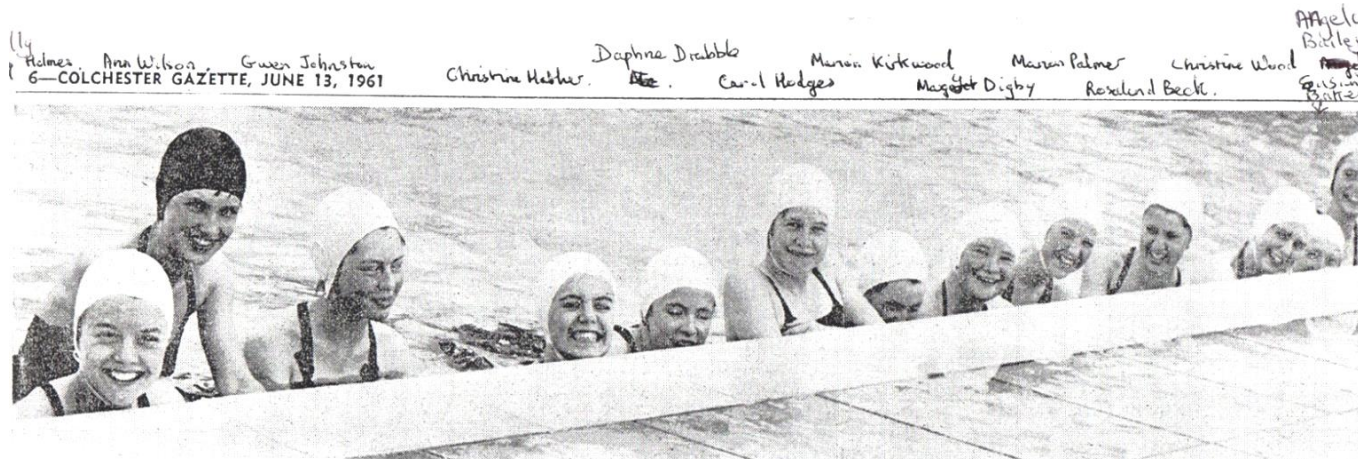
I was a proud member of the School Second Netball team and travelled around quite a bit, sometimes playing for the first team, if someone was ill. It seems my obvious prowess was not much appreciated as my role as a team member was never recorded in the School Magazine, much to my chagrin! I was quickly out of breath if I played anything but shooter, but was fortunately quite accurate in that position helping to win a tournament when I managed not to miss once! I enjoyed Wing Defence but having to cover two-thirds of the court was a lot when Shooter only covered one third! I sported the School second team colours, a loosely woven narrow sash carefully tied around the waist to leave two long ends falling over the left hip. The first team had white crossbanding on their colours, but I never managed to get one of those! Netball and rounders in the summer were my particular games. I was fortunately able to hit the rounders ball some distance, allowing me sometimes to saunter round the pitch, but hockey I hated. I wore glasses and, amongst others, was terrified of being hit in the face and splintering my glasses. This never happened but it was a very real and not uncommon fear.

I was also not so good at tennis which we played in the summer. Although I could hit the rounders ball with no difficulty and run and aim with a netball, I could not co-ordinate a tennis racket and ball. I did very occasionally umpire at school matches or act as ball boy to the school team, but even then I only succeeded in tripping on the tennis net and sprawl bleeding over the court! My father had been a county tennis player for a short while in Northamptonshire and used to encourage us to play. I really thought I had achieved something when I nearly beat him, only to discover that he had been playing lefthanded!

Mrs Pipe was our games mistress and although she was considerably more feminine in appearance than many games mistresses, she could make verbal mincemeat of anyone. The staff must have known from very early on those who would excel in games and those who wouldn't. In particular, few girls seemed to really enjoy hockey and to be forced on to a windswept field in the depth of winter with only short box pleated culottes, aertex top and if it was really cold, a cardigan, was cruelty in the extreme. We would chase around after the hard little ball, leaving the keen girls to do most of the real work, and get shouted at for not keeping up. My usual position was wing, ensuring that I had very little contact with the ball, let alone the game, for

a good half an hour. I would spend my time appearing to enjoy running up and down the hockey field after a ball which, if I was lucky, remained a good fifty feet away. After such vigorous exposure to the elements we usually returned to the changing rooms, frozen and red raw from the wind and weather.

We also had to be quite stoical when forced to “take advantage” of the school swimming pool which gave no protection at all from the elements. This had been built in 1961 with funds (£2,500) raised by our own ardent activity and was conveniently placed just outside the gym. It was so exposed to all the elements but couple of years later a rather inadequate six foot high wooden fence was erected around it and whether this was to shield the class from the worst excesses of inclement weather or prying eyes we never knew. We were told we had to go into it when the water temperature reached the sultry heights of 55°F (13C), ie, we could just about break the ice! It was unbelievably cold and for a non-swimmer, which I am to this day, the



pleasures of the water became remoter by the minute. I think I did splash around in the pool twice in my regulation black nylon swim suit and white skull-tight rubber bathing hat and vowed I would not do it again.

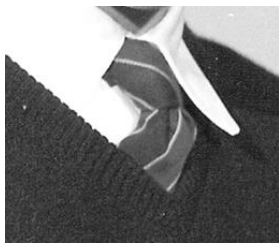
It was amazing how many girls developed incurable athlete’s foot (what a misnomer!) and verrucas, not to mention the longest menstrual periods in history (tampons were not so commonly used in those days) to excuse them, by parental letter, from the horrors of the swimming pool. Together with the usual line of girls and, armed with one or more of these excuses, I eagerly joined those lucky enough to escape this particular torment. In the end the mistresses gave in and didn’t argue with the hard core of dissenters, especially as we moved further up the school – it wasted too much of their valuable lesson time with those who *were* keen on physical activity of any sort – and we were allowed to play tennis, in a very desultory manner as no one was watching, (apart from the rest of the school peering from their class windows!) However, if we had failed to escape the lesson, we were then expected to have a shower, ie, strip and run into the showers with all the others in the class. This was not popular and none of us really enjoyed running naked in front of our peers, even though the hot water seemed appealing. However, the water was not always hot, the towels inadequate - even if you had remembered to bring one - and to try and dry off and put on school uniform in a crowded and wet changing room in the five minutes allowed was well nigh impossible.

Gym lessons could be more frightening than games lessons. We wore regulation navy interlock knickers (some even had pockets!), our aertex shirts, with our names boldly embroidered during Needlework lessons, and no socks or shoes, unless you suffered from the very useful verrucas or athlete’s foot. I preferred to plead athlete’s foot and wear plimsolls as it was hard work jumping around on the wooden floor or climbing up wall bars in bare feet. I found these lessons terrifying as if you fell it hurt and then you were shouted out for falling in the first place. I failed miserably to climb ropes, balance on bars or vault the leather horse and succeeded in nothing! The only protection from the wooden floor was a series of thin rubber mats, but I really don’t remember any serious injuries being incurred by girls, whether good at gym or not.

Mrs Pipe’s main authority, other than head of games, was maintaining discipline in the school. School uniform was her *bête noir* and woebetide any girl who contravened the regulations. School gymslips for the Lower School and grey pleated skirts for the Upper School were supposed to be exactly three inches above the floor when kneeling. This, of course, did not account for any growth and to be fair unless the skirt was very short nothing would be said. However, a great deal was said when the mini skirt became fashionable and we all tried to raise our hems by turning the waist band over and over, to be quickly let down again if



danger (Mrs Pipe) approached! Blouses had to be tucked in and no sleeves were to be turned up. Cardigans and jumpers had to be the right navy and could only be removed or replaced during school hours if approved by the mistress of the lesson. The blue, red and yellow ties (*left*) had to be knotted correctly with no extra long or short ends. White socks or natural coloured stockings had to be worn but we did win the day eventually and were allowed to wear thicker black stockings when they became the height of fashion. We argued, of course, that they were more practical and warm and didn't get caught on the rough edges of the chairs and tables as did the 15 denier stockings. There were no tights in those days and we all had to wear suspender belts or, if really daring, the new hold-ups. I



always had trouble with suspender belts as the clips were lightly painted metal which inevitably wore through to the bare metal very quickly. As a result my skin readily erupted in eczema causing great irritation and soreness, leaving red, raw and bleeding patches front and back of each thigh. Similarly the rubberized grips on the holds-up caused problems, but I was not the only one to suffer this and we would have loved to wear tights if they had been more readily available.

There was also a navy blazer with the school badge (*right*) and motto "Wisdom Giveth Life" on the top left hand pocket. The winter uniform allowed for a navy coat or gabardine mackintosh. Many girls had the popular duffel coats with hoods which were warm and successfully concealed the hated beret! An important part of the uniform was the fully adjustable regulation belt, a three inch wide leather and navy buckram strip with integral zipped purse on the right side and a three ball clip. They were actually quite practical and saved many a lost or stolen purse as these belts would be put in a large box at the beginning of each gym or games lesson together with watches for safe keeping. However these belts were also the curse of many pupils, especially as they were deemed unfashionable and uncomfortable. Mine was not uncomfortable as I was very slender and if anything it would hang loosely on my hips! In the summer we wore red/blue/green and white striped shirtwaister dresses gathered at the waist with our purse belts.



We all tried to cheat the system and modify the uniform rules, but the real uniform discipline problem was the cherry red wool beret. This was supposed to be worn on the head in a straightforward way, but it was the era of beehive hair styles and many girls would spend hours in the cloakrooms backcombing their hair and securing a very flattened beret or even a beret folded in half, on the back of the beehive with many hairgrips. This was frowned upon heavily by Mrs Pipe and her minions, but it was great fun seeing how far you could go and how often. I never had any luck with backcombing as my hair was too fine and slippery to hold any hairstyle other than pudding bowl. If the berets got too wet (or, perish the thought, were put in hot water!) they would shrink and lose their bright colour – what an invitation to schoolgirls trying to beat the system! The other tactic guaranteed to upset the powers was to keep turning the little stalk in the middle to leave a hole and then pull some hair through it. You always knew if a girl had been caught without the beret as she would be wearing it all day or at least into assembly – this troubled few girls and even earned some kudos amongst the less adventurous!

## OBITUARY

**Pauline Millatt (Nice 1945-50)** sadly died in June this year. She regularly attended our local events.

### Tribute to Pauline by her daughter, Sally (also an Old Girl!)

Pauline Nice was born in 1934. Her dad was a carpenter and the family lived in Copford. In 1939, on the first day of the Second World War, the family moved to a bungalow built by her dad in Stanway. Pauline recalled that she was at her grandmother's and her dad cycled all the way to Tiptree, returning with her on the cross bar of his bike. Her brother David remembers that during air raids the family hid under the dining room table with tin trays around the edge for protection, which he and Pauline thought was great fun at the time!





Pauline attended CCHS from 1945 to 1950. It was in the second year that she met Beryl Pettitt who would become a lifelong friend. Pauline left school when she was 15. (*left: CCHS North Hill 1947: Pauline Nice, Daphne Goodwin, Beryl Pettitt, Barbara Hatton, Gaye Lomonaco.*)

She and Beryl returned from a few days away and found out that Pauline's mum had been to the Labour Exchange and got her a job! She worked in the office at British Road Services and went to night school to study book-keeping. When the company relocated to Ipswich, Pauline didn't like the commute, so in November 1953 she took a job as Sales Ledger Clerk with HE Williams, which later became the well-known Colchester shop, Williams & Griffins.

In her spare time, Pauline learnt bellringing at Bures Church. As she became more experienced, she also started ringing at St Peter's Church in Colchester where Harry Millatt was the Tower Captain. Harry was 19 years older than Pauline and a formidable character in ringing circles. He started giving her lifts on his motorbike and romance blossomed. They announced their engagement at Christmas 1954, and were married the following summer. They had 4 daughters: Wendy, Rosemary, Sally and Lesley (all Old Girls of CCHS!).

When they got married Pauline gave up her career to be a home maker. Each Friday she would cycle home from town, bags balanced on the handlebars of her bike with a week's shopping for a family of 6, and often one of the children in a seat on the back! Pauline enjoyed knitting and sewing, making the girls' dresses and cardigans, and later the bridesmaids' dresses for Rosie and Sally's weddings.

With the children growing up, in 1981 she decided to apply for a part time job at Shrub End Post Office. She was up against people far younger than her, but she got the job as she was the only candidate who could add up the stamp book correctly! She worked at the Post Office for over 35 years until she was over 80. Although she said she would leave when they brought in computers, she went on the IT training and carried on. She loved the job, and got to know many local people when they came to collect their weekly pensions.

Bell-ringing was Pauline's biggest passion for 70 years. She rang her first peal in 1953 for the Coronation, and also rang with Harry in a peal to mark their engagement. She rang regularly at Shrub End church and was the secretary and treasurer for the tower, welcoming visiting bands of ringers. She was a long-standing member of the Ladies Guild of Ringers and the Essex Association of Change Ringers. At the age of 83 Pauline had a knee replacement and, much to the astonishment of the surgeon, after the operation she asked if she could still climb a ladder! She was, of course, keen to get back up the bell tower, managing to continue bell-ringing until Covid restrictions brought things to a halt.

Pauline's faith was very important to her. She was an active member of All Saint's Church for over 50 years, and co-ordinated the distribution of the monthly church magazines.

Pauline and Harry were married for 48 years until he passed away in 2003. They celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary in 1995 by going on a hot air balloon ride over Colchester. In 1996 they flew for the first time, visiting Lesley in the USA, and ringing the bells at Washington Cathedral. Pauline also went on various holidays organised by the church, including trips to Europe, and bell ringing holidays in the UK.

For the past 36 years Pauline lived in Stanway, in a bungalow built by her dad, Henry, in the 1960s on the piece of land next to where she lived as a child. She loved being outdoors and was often seen weeding or trimming the hedges. Despite her mobility declining, Pauline was very independent and was determined to continue living in her own home.

Pauline had 8 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Her daughters all followed in her footsteps by studying at CCHS. Over the years Pauline kept in contact with a number of her CCHS school friends, and continued her connection with the school through the Old Girls' Association. She enjoyed attending the annual garden party and regular coffee mornings, the last time being at the Grey Friars in May (*right*).



Pauline passed away unexpectedly, but peacefully, at home on 3rd June, at the age of 87. A service to celebrate her life was held at Shrub End Church on 8th August, with

the bells being rung before and after the service.

Pauline's daughters describe her as selfless, modest and compassionate, but also calmly determined. She was a loyal and trusted friend to many people, a good listener, with a heart of gold.



Middle V B from 1949 – names (*below*) recorded by Pauline

Jillian Andrews	Gill. Rayner	Marilyn Goff	Elizabeth Barton	Ann Butcher	Miss Borchby	Mary Clibbon	Elizabeth Hollis	Jeanette Hart	Judy Hunwicke	Pam Rodd
Ann Bryant	Janet Hogg	June Lessey	Anne Bayley	Jennifer Lebbell	Pat Wheeler	Moya Clarke	Rosemary Gollifer	Anne Robins	Kathleen Playte	Heather Johnson
Mary Hickey	Beryl Pettitt	Daphne Goodwin	Barbara Hatton	Pauline Nice	Gaye Lomonaco	Gwynneth Best	June Aberdein	Anita Lloyd		

## NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL -

With thanks to Kate Stubbs, Marketing and Communications Manager

### CCHSG GCSE & A Level Results

In August CCHSG was delighted to celebrate the best ever results in the history of the school. We were pleased to welcome back many of our Year 11 in the Sixth Form this September and hope that Year 13 will keep in touch as they move on to the next exciting stage of their lives. Each year around 95% of Year 13 progress on to university, with over 60% gaining places at highly selective Oxbridge and Russell Group Universities. Students also secure places at a range of other destinations such as: RADA to study Technical Theatre, Art Foundation Courses, Internship at Bank of England, University for the Creative Arts to read Fashion Design, Music Conservatoire, and the University of East Anglia to read Nursing.

In addition to academic success the school aims to provide a “broad, well-balanced and personalised curriculum”, offering wide-ranging extracurricular and co-curricular activities. The regular “Matrix” days allow students in Years 9, 10 and 11 to experience aspects of the curriculum, such as Computing, Electronics or Art, that they may no longer be studying as examination subjects. Staff regularly provide students with the opportunity to take part in external competitions such as those run by the Literacy Trust and Routes into Languages Spelling Bee. All our Year 7 students take part in Shakespeare performances and our excellent productions, such as last term’s “Blockbusters”, showcase of drama, music and dance,

which allowed some 230 students to be involved in a variety of roles. Our many extracurricular clubs enable students to pursue their individual interests and students are also encouraged to run their own clubs. Societies such as Economics, MedSoc and VetSoc, by inviting guest speakers to share their professional experience, also provide invaluable support for student progression.

In recognition of the quality of the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) aspects of the school curriculum and co-curriculum, the school has recently been awarded the highest (Gold) National SMSC Quality Mark. The inspectors were particularly impressed by the extra and co-curricular clubs and activities, with students praised for their “high aspirations and desire to contribute positively as future citizens of an international society”.

#### Old Girls’/Alumnae Association School Leaving Award

As part of the continuing links between the OGA and the school, CCHSG is very grateful that the OGA annually recognises a student nominated by the school, who has demonstrated qualities of merit outside their academic studies, by presenting them with an award. Poppy Sudgen was this year’s recipient in acknowledgement of her many contributions to the school community, such as her frequent starring roles in the annual school productions, her role in the organisation of Form Prefects, her active participation in the Head Student Team and her role, via Student Voice, in anti-bullying week. Poppy was also commended for her unwavering positivity in supporting those around her. We were delighted that Mrs Liz White was able to attend the Year 13 Leavers’ Assembly to talk to students and present the award on behalf of the OGA (*right*).



Poppy, alongside fellow Year 13 students from the Head Student Team, Viv Ghiglino, Alice Mainwood and Tomi Oladapo-Akinruli were very pleased to join the OGA for an enjoyable afternoon at the OGA Garden Party in September this year. Poppy has now started at Cambridge, studying Modern Languages. She wrote the following letter to the OGA in thanks:

Dear CCHSG Old Girls’ Association,

I was very touched to receive the Old Girls’ Award at the end of my time at CCHSG and would like to thank you so much for the lovely card and generous cheque. I feel honoured to have been chosen for such an award and have put the money towards my fairly extensive university reading list.

Finishing school this term was very bittersweet. I absolutely loved my seven years there; staying for A-levels was an easy decision. I feel very fortunate not only to have had such a brilliant education, but also to have completed it somewhere I felt so comfortable and happy. I realise I am lucky to be able to look back so fondly on my secondary school experience.

In the Autumn I am hoping to start at Cambridge to study Modern Languages. This in itself is something I certainly could not have achieved without the support I received at school; my teachers’ encouragement and guidance were exceptional, and I benefited in particular from the 1-1 support of our language assistants.

In preparation for my degree I am planning to spend some time in both France and Spain this Summer, and I also look forward to climbing Snowdon at the end of July with a school friend.

It was lovely to hear about the Old Girls’ Association at our leavers’ assembly, and I know I speak for many of my peers when I say how keen we are to become active members of the Association.

With very best regards,  
Poppy Sudgen

#### Recent recipients of the OGA Award:

In 2021, due to COVID restrictions the usual Leaver’s Assembly did not take place. Mia Urwin (*right*) was presented with the award in acknowledgement of her many contributions to the school community, particularly her sustained contributions to the annual school productions, her running of Medsoc; her active participation in Student Voice in Year 12; her contribution to “Time for Tolerance”; her role as a Wellbeing Ambassador; tutoring



students and supporting those around her. Mia progressed on to Oxford to study Medicine and is making the most of the opportunities on offer there.

In 2020 Sophie Carling received the OGA Award in recognition of her promotion of Music and Drama within the school. She also edited the school's student magazine, "The Kilt". Sophie also represented the views of students in Student Voice and was part of the Head Student Team. She progressed on to Cambridge to study English Literature.



In 2019 the award went jointly to two students: Alex Webster-Hirst and Daisy Thomas (*left with Liz White*). Alex was recognised for her contribution to Music within the school, running the recorder ensemble and doing her own arrangements of music for the group. She also contributed as a musician to many other extracurricular music clubs and participated in a variety of concerts and performances. Alex studied Chemistry at York, and is now working in Kyoto, Japan on a placement, having started to teach herself Japanese while in the Sixth Form.

Daisy Thomas was Editor of "The Kilt" and took the publication from strength to strength, organising her team of Year 13 editors admirably and encouraging more students to get involved. She represented the English department in assemblies on the importance of journalism, mentored other students and took a prominent role in Shakespeare Club and 'Oxbridge English'. She also represented the school in the European Youth Parliament and took a prominent role in school productions. Daisy progressed to Robinson College, Cambridge, to study English. During her time at Cambridge she was Chair of the Ethical Affairs committee and a prominent member of a number of activist groups such as the "Living Wage Campaign" and "Climate Justice Group".

The latest CCHSG news and updates are shared in our e-newsletter, published on the school website [www.cchsg.com](http://www.cchsg.com), every half term. The most recent edition can be accessed via our website:

<https://www.cchsg.com/ipages/flipbook/5>

### **EVENTS - Jean Johnson**

The OGA is gradually returning to our social events programme. This year we have had two Coffee Mornings - one at Colchester Officers' Club and the other at Greyfriars. It became obvious that few people were able to attend an AGM in July, so this was postponed and took place later, the start of the very popular Garden Party held on 5th September in Liz White's garden in Lexden. Although I wasn't able to attend (I was away on a very enjoyable holiday organised by someone who had been in my class at School), I was delighted that members passed the suggestion that we would subsidise our popular Coffee Morning at Greyfriars. These had become rather expensive, but are still well attended. Therefore we have decided to book a final Coffee Morning for the year at Greyfriars on Tuesday 8th November. Please return the reply slip below by 2<sup>nd</sup> November if you wish to come.

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### **Coffee Morning at Greyfriars Tuesday, 8th November 2022 10am to 12 noon.**

£7.50 per person. Guests welcome (please write their name{s} overleaf)

Name: ..... Tel: .....

I enclose a cheque for £ ..... (made payable to CCHS OGA)

Please return this form by 2<sup>nd</sup> November to Mrs J Johnson, 10 Landseer Road, Colchester CO3 4QR  
([jeanjons@btinternet.com](mailto:jeanjons@btinternet.com) Tel: Col 579688)