COLCHESTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
OLD GIRLS'/ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER – Spring 2020

Marsyl's Musings

Sadly there will be no more Musing from Marsyl as she died in January - we shall miss her as she was a lively and very supportive member of Old Girls. Our thoughts go to her husband, Roderic, and their daughter, Jessica. Her obituary is on page 10.

Editor's Notes



These are unprecedented times with the Covid-19 virus but the CCHS OGA newsletter will still go ahead! Keep yourselves safe and happy over the next few weeks and months and try not to get too depressed by the interminable speculation and self isolation. (I prefer to say staying at home!) If we abide by the rules, it will be all right! I thought you might like to see the picture *(left)* of Lexden Road, Colchester, at the morning schools rush hour! Unbelievable! My thanks go again to those who have sent in such good articles. Please keep them coming! It is not difficult to email me (or call me for my postal address) and no great literary work is required! There are details of our different Colchester events and the relevant reply slips at the end of this newsletter.

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Information, news, comments, photos and articles for the next Newsletter by 30th September 2020.

STOP PRESS: EVENTS 2020 - SEE PAGE 12

NEWS FROM OLD GIRLS

Jean Johnson (Cuthew) 1951-56

I was at CCHS in the fifties and as I approach my eightieth year it fascinating to reflect on how life has changed. I hope the school leavers of today are grateful to have such interesting opportunities.

These reflections were stimulated by the article of Beryl Whent's memories in the last newsletter. The piece that interested me was the fact that Miss King had advised Beryl that she should stay on at School to study French at advanced level, after which she would have a really interesting job. However, her mother could not afford to keep her on at School for the Sixth Form. I have heard numerous reports of this. Many interesting vocations were missed. Indeed it happened to me. I had to leave at the age of 16 and the world lost what would have been a talented Primary School Teacher! Having said that, I founded a pre-School Playgroup, ran a Typing Agency, and had a really interesting and varied working life. I made sure both my children had the opportunity to go to university (my daughter was at CCHS). My two step-cousins, who were at the school during the decade before me, had to leave school at the age of 14; again for lack of aspiration on behalf of their parents but probably most of all for financial reasons.

Having read the fascinating obituary for Sylvia Manley in this newsletter in advance of printing, this is another aspect the leavers of today should reflect upon. Sylvia was fortunate enough to have her father in her life for several years, but the impact of his loss at such a young age must have been devastating. Even in the fifties we were still reaping the results of the Second World War. I knew of several girls at that time who never knew their father and others who never actually knew why or when their fathers had been killed.

The aim of everyone is to try and make the world a better place for the next generation. When we were at

school most of us didn't realise that CCHS gave us the training and confidence to do this. So, as Beryl said at the end of her article, "I have no regrets".

Once again **Joan Gurney (Appleton 1938-51)** has sent another fascinating article.

It is almost seven decades since I left CCHS in 1951 after three years in the Sixth Form. School Certificate and Higher School Certificate were behind me, 'A' levels had just been introduced, and gap years were virtually unknown. I said goodbye to Grey Friars and North Hill where the two departments of the school were based - two buildings which I loved and have written about extensively since then. I now feel that it is time to move on and record what happened later in my life; and so, with a few backward glances to the past, here is "What Joan did next!"



I was not very good at creative writing and imaginative composition during my schooldays but the paintbox was always my friend, and art was secretly my favourite subject with meadow flowers and wildlife being my chosen subjects, even from the age of six *(left)*. Water colours gave way to pastels, charcoal, oil paint, collage, brass rubbing and finally photography. My creations were never prolific but art has remained with me ever since those early days.



I had already decided that I would make teaching my career. I will not disclose which member of staff, when advising me on my future, said "If a girl is thinking about going into teaching she must study science; there is no future in art!" And so I succumbed, but I have never had any regrets; a university combined subject course in botany, zoology, geology and geography suited me very well. My mother had bought me a 'New Look' coat in the style created by Dior in the late 1940s *(right - Victoria and Albert Museum)*. I wore this for my interview to Reading University.

In the autumn of 1951 the effects of World War II were still evident. There was partial food rationing and clothing was in short supply. I still treasured a pair of pyjamas made for me - rather liberally - out of parachute silk abandoned locally after a plane crew had ejected. My parents farmed in Dedham and so we were relatively well-fed during the war years with meat, poultry, rabbit, milk, eggs, butter, vegetables, fruit and honey; there was even wool for blankets and feathers for pillows. In later years I felt extremely guilty when other people suffered so many shortages but managed to survive by 'Digging for Victory' and 'Making Do and Mend'. Nothing was wasted, however, and meagre scraps went into the 'swill bucket' which most households kept for feeding to the pigs in their back gardens.

We had no fridge - food was kept cool by lowering it down the well in a bucket. Clothes were washed in the kitchen sink and then put through the mangle. An open fire and a kitchen range heated the downstairs room and in winter there was often ice on the inside of the bedroom windows where there was no heating. I only remember a short period before electricity was connected and candles were abandoned. There was, of course, no television, but we often huddled around an art-deco style wireless for our entertainment.



My parents did not have a car (petrol had also been rationed) and travelling locally was on foot, bicycle, horseback, pony and trap or a walk to the nearest infrequent bus service. The school bus was a legend and deep snow never gave me a holiday from school! Steam trains, however, were the love of my life. I regularly tried to outrace them on my pony along a mile-long stretch of meadow which my parents owned, and ending at the Dedham signal box *(left)*, long since demolished after the Beeching reorganisation of rail networks in the 1960s.

In the 1950s a journey by steam train from Manningtree station to Reading was a lengthy process and quite an adventure. I packed my trunk which would go in advance, picked up by carrier from the farm gate by putting a flag in the front hedge to alert the driver to stop. It was then taken to the nearest railway station to

start its journey by train. I had not been away from home for more than a week ever before. Farming families never took holidays. I found myself allocated to a room in one of the all-girls Halls of Residence, overseen by a very fierce Warden who had strict rules about who you could entertain in your room and when! I did not feel at all liberated after my free-and-easy life on the farm but my studies acted as a consolation, although I missed my pony, Bronch, so much. He had been very successful in gymkhana events and together we had won many prizes.

There were elements of my time at Reading - both academic and social - that I remember with gratitude, affection and surprise, and the friends which I made and kept in contact with for many years. The scientific nature of my studies involved a lot of laboratory and practical work, dissections, field trips and research. No internet in those days for quick references! Vacation visits to far-flung places of the British Isles, such as the Isle of Arran, were all part of the exploration process.



One highlight of my studies was the collection of 100 pressed wild flowers which I had to assemble as part of a botany project. Each specimen had to be correctly identified and mounted to show the leaves, stem, flower and, where possible, the root and seed, together with a record of its habitat and date of collection *(right)*. At that time the countryside was rich in wild flowers, hedges were not slashed with mechanical blades, or pulled out and flattened, nor were roadside verges frequently trimmed. Collecting complete botanic specimens was not considered a crime and with hindsight perhaps there should have been more concern for the preservation of the environment, although I tended to avoid uprooting the rarer varieties, such as early purple orchids, which grew in abundance in one of the farm meadows. The collection took me a year to complete and the pressing procedures occupied a whole room in the Dedham farmhouse!

Grants for higher education, unlike today's loans which often inevitably result in postgraduate debts, were more readily available and tuition fees did not exist. I was awarded a Teaching Bursary but working for some part of the long vacations was still essential. I did fruit picking, potato lifting, vegetable gathering and other rural pursuits. This did leave time for additional studying as well as cycling and youth hostelling with friends, sometimes abroad.

Out the outset of our journeys we watched in trepidation the vehicles being swung by crane and dropped on to the deck. There was no roll-on, roll-off car ferry at Parkeston Quay in those days. We cycled across the enclosing dam of the Zuider Zee and eventually reached Denmark. During one vacation we acted as 'guinea pigs' at the Research Unit for the Common Cold. Neither of us caught a cold but each of us had an uninterrupted week of isolated study.

I followed my time at Reading by entering a teacher training college in the north of England to gain my Certificate in Education - yet another full day's journey by steam train each term. Here I added an additional dimension to my biological qualification by taking an extra certificate in Physical Education, which included the teaching of swimming. How could I possibly have foreseen the importance that this chance decision, almost taken on a whim, would have on my future life?



The swimming training was arduous - everything you were going to teach you had to be able to do yourself, and most of it took place in a pool in Newcastle. I had never been in an indoor pool before and the smell, heat and acoustics were such a contrast to the River Stour at Dedham and Flatford where I had learned to swim as a child. My school friend, the late Ruth Wheeler, lived in Flatford and we used to walk or cycle along the river bank, meeting part-way between Dedham and Flatford to have a swim amongst the waterlillies, mallards and minnows, beside a stark pollarded willow *(left)*. This was not the only activity which we

enjoyed together. In the hard winters of those days, the water meadows near Flatford bridge were deliberately flooded for ice skating *(right)* and this continued well into the 1950s. Ruth and I always hoped that the ice would be thick enough whilst we were both on holiday from our respective work or studies.



My parents bought me a very special camera for my 21st birthday to encourage my interest in photography and help me to record essential images for the projects which I was still engaged in during my final years of study. I went home for the weekend to help choose it from a shop in Ipswich. It was immediately after the 1953 East Coast Floods in February of that year. The journey by bus and train from Dedham to Ipswich along the estuaries of the Rivers Stour and Orwell presented a scene of devastation which I shall never forget, but it provided me with images of future flood defences for a final thesis. The camera was a great success and gave me another interesting experience when I had to declare it at customs on returning from the continent. A small detail on the receipt was incorrect and I was held in custody at Harwich like a spy until it was rectified!

The mid 1950s to the mid 1960s I remember as my teaching decade. My first post was in a secondary modern girls' school in Ipswich. After three years I moved to Harwich County High School. By this time I had learned to drive and my father had bought a car - which of course I borrowed! Women drivers were still very much in the minority and were treated with great respect and some surprise! After another two years I moved to the Gilberd County Technical School in Colchester. In each of these schools I taught biology, PE, geography and swimming. The latter became more and more part of my role in the curriculum. Memories of all subjects are still in sharp focus - the Fore Street Baths in Ipswich, a listed building, the icy cold wind lashed with salt spray which, in winter, sprinkled both teachers and sportsmen on the playing fields high above the estuary at Harwich and the little butcher's shop at the bottom of North Hill in Colchester which supplied 5th formers with hearts, lungs, kidneys and eyes for dissection. How they loved being asked to collect the items for me!

More and more swimming teaching came my way. Saturday mornings were taken up with life-saving classes at the former Garrison Swimming Pool. So many young people have since told me what an important part it has played in their later lives - as training programmes recorded rescues and awards for bravery.



My move to the Gilberd Technical School in 1960 where I stayed for five years, was the first of two extraordinary moves which brought back the past so forcibly. This was because the site of this school was no other than "North Hill" *(left)* which was the CCHS building I had left as a pupil in 1951 and here I was, once again, returning to it as a teacher! It had not changed a bit. The terraced site still had its tennis and netball courts and the lower sloping field was still there where we tried so hard to play hockey with the difficulty of hitting the ball uphill.

It hardly seemed that it had been nearly ten years since I was here in my school uniform and gym shoes with, occasionally, a violin or tennis racket under my arm and now I was laughing and sharing with my present day 5th and 6th form pupils the joys and surprises of changing fashions and musical tastes in this new era - the Beatles, Mary Quant, the Beehive hairstyle and the emergence of the miniskirt. But the rest of the story is still to come. How I love recording it!

From the School Magazine 1960-61

Mabel Johnson was the first Head Girl of CCHS. She trained at St Katherine's College, Tottenham, and then taught at Canterbury Road - now St George's School - until her retirement in 1958. Here are her memories of the school from the very early days.

When I was asked to write an account of the beginnings of the Colchester Secondary School for Girls, I started to cast my mind back over the years. I realised the many changes which have taken place in school life and I found myself making comparisons with schooldays then and now.

At first the School was housed in the Albert School of Art and Science, in the premises now occupied by the Rep (*now in 2020 the Co-operative Bank*). We shared the building with pupil teachers and art students. *(In 1912 the school moved to the newly built North Hill site.)* There were two long, large rooms downstairs - one occupied by the Art School. At the far end was another room called the Apse, which is now the back-stage *(of the Rep Theatre)*. In the Apse we had our Art lessons. Upstairs were the Laboratory, Staff Room and a large galleried classroom, where we also had morning assembly. Additional accommodation was provided in St Peter's Parish Rooms and to reach these we made a journey through the churchyard. Here, there were folding desks and I well remember one collapsing in front of me when the teacher banged heavily upon it to press a point home!

In the early days there were about ninety girls in the School and they came from the surrounding district, including the Clacton and Harwich areas. Miss M Collins BA was Headmistress and she had a full -time staff of four and two part-time Art teachers. We had no school uniform, but after a time straw sailor hats trimmed with a hat band of navy blue and silver - the school colours - were introduced. We were always expected to wear gloves in the street. We played Tennis and Netball on the ground now occupied by the Gilberd School *(now 6th Form College)* and in our time a large orchard still flourished there. Whilst four girls were playing on the only tennis court, the rest of us walked among the trees or rested in their shade!

One of the highlights of my school days was the first Christmas Party, which was held in the Masonic Hall, Abbeygate Street. In the evening each form contributed an item to the concert and our effort was four National Songs. For these we were attired in English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish costumes.

During the summer Miss Collins invited us to a Hay Party at Hadley's Farm in Ipswich Road, where she lived. We romped in the hay and afterwards had a sumptuous tea. Another notable occasion was the performance in the Moot Hall of scenes from "Twelfth Night", which was attended by many important local people.

Whilst the accommodation and amenities of our school days were not to be compared with those of today, we had one advantage which will commend itself to my readers. The school was in its infancy - our classes were small - and my form never exceed twelve pupils!

Further interesting notes about Win Greenfield (1940-45) who died last year Tina Powell

I first met Win, on the day I started work with the Inland Revenue (now HMRC), and, about a year on, it was decided I should sit next to her, as I completed my initial TOHG (tax officer, higher grade) training. By chance, I was in the ladies – and discovered the acoustics were such that I could hear every word being said, in the office next door. I heard Win expounding, at great length, so that the young, effete management inspector was left in no doubt of her displeasure at having to look after a trainee, when she had so much of her own work to do! Diplomacy was needed, I decided!

When, a few days later, Win was explaining the lay-out of my new desk, I saw an opportunity to remark, "I believe we have a mutual acquaintance". Win was intrigued – and delighted, when I then explained that one of my close Guiding friends had seemingly started work at the tax office, with Win. That was the key which unlocked a friendship which continued until Win's death last year, and, while I only sat next to her for a little over a year or so before moving off, to start my inspector training, we always stayed in touch and, whenever my work commitments allowed, we would meet up for lunch, with other old colleagues.

At one such lunch, about 8 years ago, the talk was of family history, and I spoke of tracking down some distant cousins. Win wondered if I might be able to help with a small family mystery: a poem, written by JB

on 22nd February 1866 to his wife, on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary. I undertook to see what I could do – and, a few weeks later, was able to show Win, and her sister, Heather, the family tree I had drawn up, and to advise that JB was Joseph Barker, their great-great grandfather, a bricklayer, who had married Susannah Kingsbury, at St Mary's at the Walls, on 22nd February 1816.

In 2014 Liz White investigated further and the poem appeared in the Lexden History Group's newsletter. The Barker family had lived in Rose Cottage, Lexden Heath, on the north corner of Heath Road and Straight Road. Joseph died on January 21st 1870, but Susannah lived on in the home, until 16th May 1885 and was shown on the 1881 Census as an 83-year-old laundress. The couple are buried together in Lexden churchyard, near the corner with Church Lane and Lexden Road, although their headstone has been lost.

Lexden Rose Cottage – February 2nd, 1866

A few lines on entering my Fifty-first year of marriage and my Seventy-fifth year of my age.

Bless God He has preserved us
That we might live to see
Fifty years a married life
And keep the Jubilee.

Thank God we are both in good health
Though I am very lame
I've suffered much for years past
And I still remain the same.

Thank God our children are grown up
And are all of(f) our hands
And some are living far away
Though not on foreign lands.

The Oldest one is forty-nine
The youngest Twenty-five
But of all the Children we have had
There is but nine alive.

We have twenty-eight Grand Children now
Without going any further
And if I live before long
I shall be a Great Grandfather.

I little thought the day we married
That we should live to see
So many happy years together
And keep the Jubilee.

Catherine Bullen Foundation



The following report by Robbie Bryson appeared recently in the Colchester Gazette. Since her death, Catherine's parents, Roger and Linda *(left)* have devoted their lives to improving education and medical care in Namibia where Catherine died in 2002.

A foundation set up in memory of a much-loved medical student raised more than £1,700 at its annual charity lunch. Named in honour of a late Colchester County High School for Girls student, the Catherine Bullen Foundation was set up to fight poverty in rural Namibia. Catherine died suddenly from severe gastroenteritis while visiting the African country on her way to a medical placement in Tanzania and Zambia in 2002. Since her death the foundation set up by her parents, who live in West

Mersea, has raised thousands for projects in Namibia, including its latest scheme to build a multi-purpose hall at a primary school.

The latest charity fundraiser was held at Titash Indian restaurant. The venue was packed with friends, family and supporters of the charity who helped raised a total of £1,716 through donations, a raffle and an auction. A spokesman for the charity said: "After an excellent meal provided by Dil and his staff, the diners were updated by Roger on the foundation's current project which is a multi-purpose hall at the Omuhaturua Primary School Hostel in Otjimanangombe.

"This will provide a venue for school assemblies and meetings which are currently held outside, come rain or shine, a place for the hostel children to go in the evening after darkness to play indoor sport such as netball, volley ball and table tennis. "It will also provide a venue for the community to hold meetings and to have an indoor covered market at the weekends. "The hall is scheduled to be completed in April this year." Work has already begun on the foundation's next project which is to provide a borehole for use by Eiseb Primary School and the area's health clinic.

To find out more about the charity or donate to its funds, visit www.namibia-aid.org.uk

News from the School with thanks to Kate Stubbs, Marketing and Communications Manager CCHS

An e-newsletter which records all the sporting, charity, arts, academic and community events that take place at CCHSG is published every half term. You can find copies on the CCHSG website:
https://www.cchsg.com/index.php/about/newsletter
You can also keep in touch with news from CCHSG on Facebook via colchestergirls or Twitter @CCHSG_

CCHSG Wins Three Prestigious SSAT National Awards for Attainment and Student Progress

CCHSG is to receive three Educational Outcomes Awards for exceptional 2019 results from the Schools, Students and Teachers network (SSAT). Educational outcomes data analysis from SSAT has shown that the school is in the top 10% of selective schools nationally for both attainment and progress at GCSE. The school was also recognised for being in the top 20% of selective schools nationally for student attainment at A Level in academic subjects. Sue Williamson, Chief Executive of SSAT said: "Congratulations to Colchester County High School for Girls on winning three SSAT Educational Outcomes awards. This success is down to the superb learning and teaching, outstanding support and inspirational leadership of students, staff, parents and governors. You have made a huge difference to the lives of the young people in your school. Thank you." SSAT

New Swimming Pool and Multi-Purpose Hall Opens





The official opening of the new facilities at CCHSG has had to be postponed, but students have already been making good use of the three teaching rooms, huge multi-purpose hall and swimming pool contained in the new teaching block. The hall provides a much needed expansion of the indoor sport facilities. It will also be used as an additional space for assemblies and an exam hall. After some delay caused by archaeological investigations, the work on our new library and arts block is now also progressing quickly. Due to open in September, the building will contain a fabulous new library and resource centre and two new art studios.

CCHSG awarded Gold Status in National Citizen Awards

We are delighted to announce that the National Citizen Service has awarded CCHSG Gold status. This is in recognition of the fact that in 2018-19 over 50% of our Year 11 cohort participated in their summer activities. As well as a plaque, we received a certificate from the Prime Minister. The National Citizen Service is open to all 16 and 17 year-olds in England. It helps young people build skills for work and life, while they take on new challenges and meet new friends. They have a short time away from home and take part in a team project that will help their community. The National Citizen Service is the country's fastest-growing youth movement. It aims to engage young people in activities which will help them to 'succeed in new challenges, embrace new experiences and make their mark on the world.'

Partnership Working and the Alpha Trust

The Senior Leadership Team and Governors have always worked to develop close collaboration and partnerships between CCHSG and other local schools. Since 2013 CCHSG has been the lead school in NEETSA (North East Essex Teaching School Alliance) which is an umbrella organisation of local schools providing continuing professional development for teachers and support for schools in North East Essex. In 2017 CCHSG became lead school in the Colchester Teacher Training Consortium (CTTC). Based on the school site, this is a partnership of over 40 primary and secondary schools and colleges delivering school based graduate teacher training. CTTC is now training over 90 new teachers each year. Please do not hesitate to contact CTTC if you are interested in teaching as a career see www.colchesterttc.org.uk

Since 2018 CCHSG has been a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), initially working with The Gilberd School and recently joined by Manningtree High School and Home Farm Primary School. Being part of a MAT can provide the individual schools with access to better resources and support. Like-minded schools who share core aims and values can work very closely and constructively together. The collaborative working of the Trust will be of enormous benefit to students, by increasing the educational opportunities offered to them, enabling the sharing of good practice across schools, offering greater opportunities for staff development and also in providing potential financial savings which can then be used to enhance educational provision. We are currently focusing on the transition from primary to secondary school and working with local primaries to better understand the needs of our Year 7 students. We have also brought in a number of initiatives to support access to CCHSG by students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Dora Love Prize won by Colchester County High School for Girls (from Colchester Gazette)

A prize-winning case study focusing on the plight of women detained in a concentration camp during the Holocaust was described as "exemplary" by competition judges. Colchester County High School for Girls scooped the top award in this year's Dora Love Prize. The accolade was set up in 2012 in the name of Holocaust survivor Dora Love. It asks secondary schoolchildren to develop projects which link the genocide to examples of intolerance and discrimination displayed today. The Holocaust, carried out in Europe by the Nazis during the Second World War, saw the systematic extermination of some 11 million people due to their ethnicity, religion, beliefs or sexuality.



(left: Frank Bright, Holocaust survivor, with students)

Colchester County High School students shaped their project around a study of the women-only concentration camp Ravensbrück. The school's presentation explored the treatment of the women in the camp and how those stories related to issues faced by contemporary women, such as domestic violence. Their submission included a mannequin dress in the style of those worn by the women of Ravensbrück, but embroidered with headlines from current newspaper stories about female discrimination. In the year ending March 2019, around 1.6 million women in England and Wales were subjected to domestic violence.

The students created a website and hosted community events focusing on their chosen subject. They fought off competition from 15 other schools to clinch the prize. Judges described their entry as "exemplary".

Speaking after the event, Professor Rainer Schulze, who founded the prize in memory of Dora Love, said: "The enthusiasm, the creativity and the commitment shown in all projects were truly amazing and inspiring. In truth, all the projects were winners because they showed we all stand together with people who are discriminated against."

High-flying Colchester school is one of the worst-funded in Essex (from Colchester Gazette)

A high-flying Colchester school is one of the worst-funded in Essex, new figures have revealed. The huge disparity in funding per pupil across Essex's 77 secondary schools has been laid bare in new Government data. Figures from the Department for Education found Colchester County High School for Girls, which regularly tops exam tables, receives £4,668 per pupil. It has 780 pupils. It was only beaten in the list of poorly funded schools by Saffron Walden County High School, which was allocated the lowest per pupil sum of £4,622. Stanway School was the fourth worst funding getting £4,714 per pupil. In contrast Clacton Coastal Academy, which has 1,120 pupils, received £6,809 per pupil - that's among the three highest amounts awarded to schools in the county. Colchester Academy, which has 745 pupils, received £5,864, putting it in the top ten for best funded schools. It was revealed the most funding per pupil went to Basildon Upper Academy, which received £7,169. The new figures cover all state-funded maintained schools and academies in England.



(left) Gillian Marshall, headteacher, and Sixth Form pupils

Schools funding comprises budgets set by the local authority alongside cash from Government grants. A national funding formula, first announced by the Government in 2016, will replace more than 150 different formulae with one nationwide system. According to the School Cuts campaign, which is backed by the National Education Union, Colchester County High School for Girls, is facing a £348,086 shortfall this year, which equates to a loss of £446 per pupil.

Executive principal Gillian Marshall said: "For a number of years, alongside other local education leaders, I have been making representations about the impact of year-on-year school funding reductions. "The significant cuts faced by all schools across the country continue to be a cause of concern. At our school we work continually to develop strategies to minimise the impact on curriculum delivery and student experience. It is pleasing that the extent of this challenge has now been recognised."

Last year, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a reform package which would see £14 billion invested in primary and secondary schools up to 2022/23. There was also a further cash boost schools which fall below what will become the minimum amount – £4,000 per primary pupil and £5,000 for secondary children. The Department for Education spokesman said: "We recognise schools have faced cost pressures in recent years - that is why we are levelling up funding to ensure all schools have the right investment to deliver an outstanding education. This means that every school in the country will see per pupil funding rise at least in line with inflation next year."

Longitude Explorer Prize (from Essex County Standard)

A group from CCHS has secured their place in the Longitude Explorer Prize. The team developed Project Assist, an AI enabled sensor network which tracks vulnerable elderly people in their home. *(AI - Artificial Intelligence, ie, robot!)* It then alerts a family member if something is wrong, for example, if their relative has had a fall.

The programme also communicates with the vulnerable person during times of crisis via speech recognition and text to speech to reduce panic. It will connect them to a professional who can give advice and contact emergency services with all the details.

The team will do battle with 39 other groups aged between 11 and 16. They will receive resources and expert mentoring to develop their concept ahead of a Dragons' Den style pitch later this summer. The prize recognises tech solutions to some of the big challenges of our time.

The winning team will be awarded £25,000 for their school or youth group in July. Three runner-up teams will each also receive £10,000.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said "It is incredible to see how these finalists have thought up innovations to tackle global challenges, from devices that detect health problems to robots which can remove plastic waste from our seas. Technological innovation is important to grow the UK economy. We are supporting young people to pursue careers in this area through schemes like the Longitude Explorer Prize".

(With the Covid-19 situation it is not clear whether this prize will go ahead with the Dragons' Den format but we wish the team well and await further news.)

OBITUARIES

Marsyl Knott (Stothard 1943-61)

Jo Edwards (Mabbitt 1960-67)



We know that you will all be very sorry to hear that our President, former Chairman and long serving Committee member, Marsyl Knott (Stothard) passed away in hospital on 6th January 2020. She was 81 years old.

Marsyl was born in Colchester and spent her childhood at 32 Wavell Avenue, a home that she was to return to in 1979 with her husband, Roderic, and where she lived for the rest of her life.

She started in the 'Pre' at Grey Friars at the age of 5 and leaving when she was 18 to train as a teacher at college in Derby. Completing her course, she returned to Essex and worked at St Luke's Primary School in Tiptree where she met her future husband. In 1966 she moved to Prettygate School and in 1970 married Roderic. Their daughter, Jessica, was born in 1973. Later, Marsyl taught for a further 20 years at Dedham Church of England School. She was an extremely good teacher who made learning fun and apparently she also taught circus skills! Why am I not surprised?

Marsyl had a great love of both music and drama. She joined Colchester's Junior Rep and then Colchester Theatre Group, the Harcourt Players, the Alresford Players and the Stour Valley Players. She was willing to turn her hand to more or less anything, from acting to stage management, directing and piano playing. She was a very accomplished pianist. She also taught drama to children on Saturday mornings, including my son. Marsyl was an enthusiastic member of the Shrub End Townswomen's Guild taking part in both their Drama Group and their Choir. My mother was also a member and I used to be invited to their Christmas parties. Every year, by popular request, Marsyl and Margaret Thompson, also a teacher, would sing Rossini's Duet for Two Cats. They were hysterically funny and their performance was far better than any professional rendition I have ever heard, even the version played at her funeral!

In the 1980s, Marsyl decided to join the Open University graduating in 1990 at Brighton having made some lifelong friends.

After retiring from teaching and beating breast cancer, Marsyl launched herself into other activities. She and Roderic travelled extensively throughout Europe. She involved herself in all sorts of community activities (including street parties and pancake races) and she was a member of Colchester Cellar Club for she and Roderic really appreciated fine wines. She also thoroughly enjoyed crafts, including origami, and her friends always looked forward to her wonderful handmade Christmas cards.

Then suddenly, in 2014, Marsyl suffered a severe stroke which seriously affected the right side of her body. She could no longer stand, nor could she communicate easily. For someone as gregarious, active, caring, and fun loving as Marsyl, this must have seemed like the end of the world but she refused to be miserable.

She taught herself to do cross stitch with her left hand. She tackled jigsaws and, much to our pleasure, she still came to a number of OGA events. She missed the AGM we held at Grey Friars just before it reopened as a hotel, when we were offered guided tours of the building, but she was able to join a subsequent tour given after one of our coffee mornings there. She was thrilled to bits! She came to garden parties at Liz White's home and joined us for lunch at the Colchester Institute. She was determined to do as much as she could. She was a very brave woman.

We will miss her very much indeed. Her mischievous, offbeat sense of humour, her kindness and generosity, her pragmatism and ability to take everything in her stride, however shocking, were legendary. Her zest for life was inspirational.

Marsyl's funeral, attended by many Old Girls, was followed by a reception at Grey Friars, a place that was always very dear to her.

Sylvia Manley (King-Rooney 1925 – 2019) John Manley (son)

Sylvia Doris Manley was born in Colchester on 12th April 1925 to Cyril and Doris King-Rooney. Her father was a First World War I hero, mentioned twice in despatches, wounded three times and awarded an MC for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Sylvia first attended Miss Chignall's School. She then proceeded to Colchester High School for Girls.

Her father signed up for service in the Second World War and was stationed in Cairo. The letters between Sylvia and her Father are telling in their tenderness. Cyril was a very fine tenor and was a frequent performer with Sylvia, who performed as a ballet dancer.

In 1942 the family received a telegram to say that Cyril was missing at sea. He was involved in an infamous incident in the Atlantic that has been retold in books and a film: The Sinking of the Laconia. The survivors of the torpedoing of the Laconia were put into lifeboats. One of the principal survivors, Nurse Hawkins, remembered a soldier in her life boat that she was sure was Cyril – he shared his last emergency ration with all the others in his boat. They were taken aboard the U-Boat that had sunk the Laconia. When the US Air Force bombed the U-Boat they were again put in lifeboats before it submerged. Cyril was never seen again. Sylvia's mother hoped that he had landed in North Africa, had lost his memory and one day would come back. For over 20 years she held that hope. It was a vain hope as the evidence was very much that Cyril had severe injuries.

In 1949 Sylvia married Harold Manley. It was 1957 before John was born, and two years later David. This family of four together with Sylvia's mother lived in Athelstan Road. In 1980 Harold died of bone cancer. Both her sons were away at University doing PhDs, John in Bristol and David in Sheffield.

Sylvia and her mother went on many road trips to Sheffield and Bristol in an increasingly old Renault 5 – overtaking police cars at 80 mph on the M4! This was the time that Sylvia started much overseas travel, first visiting John at University in Milan and then Toronto. After that she and a couple of friends went abroad regularly, being more adventurous than the younger people in their tour parties taking light aircraft flights, but not bungee jumping.

Her mother died in 1993 leaving her on her own in Colchester. She moved to a flat in Shrub End and had an active social life with CCHS friends, bowls and art classes.

In 2013 she moved to Sheffield in a warden-controlled flat. In 2016 it became clear that she needed a care home environment, largely because of her reduced mobility. She moved to Bristol, and died in Druid Stoke Care Home on Monday 18th November at the age of 94.

She had been without a father for 77 years, and a widow for 40 years. She was independent and determined to be in control of her life. She particularly valued the friendships created through school, work, sports and other interests. She was very loyal to her friends. And in return they were very loyal to her. The last family event she was part of was the wedding of her eldest Granddaughter, Alice, who married Sebastian, another medic, in Bristol at the end of August 2019. It was a day of fun for her.

Events - 2020

This is the third version of the Events page! We started out with a full programme but the current health situation has changed our plans.

Details of all our events for the year were sent out to interested members in early March. Our first one – lunch at the Colne Bistro was scheduled for 2nd April. That has now, of course, been postponed. I have decided to list the other events as originally planned, just in case the situation improves rapidly, but I doubt the first two, in May and June, will go ahead. On a positive note, we can look forward to the Garden Party in the open air which we hope, by that time, will be acceptable.

On **MONDAY, 4th May** a Coffee Morning has been arranged – 10 am to 12 noon – at the Colchester Officers' Club. Parking is available (non-Club members please park at far end). Telephone me for directions if necessary. Price £5.50 – coffee/tea and cakes.

WEDNESDAY, 17th June. Lunch at the Chinese Restaurant – Bamboo House - in Military Road. Arrive 12.30. Cost £17.00 including Coffee.

AGM SATURDAY, 18th July 10.45 for 11 am THIS IS NOW CANCELLED AS THE SCHOOL IS CLOSED

TUESDAY, 18th August. The annual Garden Party, held at Liz White's Garden in Lexden. £5 or you can pay on arrival – but telephone/email me to let me know if you intend to come. Liz's house is 187 Lexden Road.

Finally, we return to **Grey Friars on THURSDAY, 1st October. 10 am to 12 noon**. £7.50. If you wish to have lunch in the Restaurant afterwards please make sure you book personally in advance or alternatively Grey Friars would welcome you to stay on for a bar meal after our Coffee Morning.

Some members have already paid in advance for lunch, etc. I will be in touch with everyone to discuss how to refund them. In the meantime, please telephone or email nearer the time if you want to know if events will be going ahead.

Jean Johnson Tel: 01206 579688 Email: jeanjons@btinternet.com

(below) Colne Room luncheon 12th November 2019





REPLY SLIPS - please return to CCHS OGA/Alumnae Association 10 Landseer Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 4QR Tel: 01206 579688 Email: jeanjons@btinternet.com

COFFEE MORNING at COLCHESTER OFFICERS' CLUB – MONDAY, 4th MAY (reply by 27th April) 10 am to 12 noon

Name: ……Tel: …… (Block capitals please)

I enclose a cheque for £ …….. ... (payable to CCHS OGA - £5.50 pp)

Please write the name(s) of any guests on the back of this slip. Please return this slip to Mrs J Johnson 10 Landseer Road, COLCHESTER, CO3 4QR

CHINESE LUNCH AT BAMBOO HOUSE – WEDNESDAY, 17th JUNE (reply by 10th June) Please arrive 12.30. Pay separately for any desserts & drinks

Name: ……. Tel: ……(Block capitals please)

I enclose a cheque for £ …. ..... (payable to CCHS OGA - £17.00 pp)

Please write the name(s) of any guests on the back of this slip. Please return this slip to Mrs J Johnson 10 Landseer Road, COLCHESTER, CO3 4QR

AGM AT THE SCHOOL on SATURDAY, 18th JULY (reply by 11th July) - 10.45 for 11 am

Name: …… Tel: …… (Block capitals please)

I enclose a cheque for £ ……..... (payable to CCHS OGA - £8.50 Lunch & coffee/£2 coffee only)

Please return this slip to Mrs J Johnson, 10 Landseer Road, COLCHESTER, CO3 4QR

AFTERNOON GARDEN PARTY at 187 Lexden Road on TUESDAY, 18th August (reply by 11th August) 2.30 pm to 5 pm

Name: ……Tel: …… (Block capitals please)

I enclose a cheque for £ …….. .. (payable to CCHS OGA - £5 pp) or pay on arrival, but telephone/email if you intend to come.

Please write the name(s) of any guests on the back of this slip.

Please return this slip to Mrs J Johnson, 10 Landseer Road, COLCHESTER, CO3 4QR

COFFEE MORNING AT GREY FRIARS THURSDAY, 1st OCTOBER (reply by 19th September) 10 am to 12 noon

Name: ……Tel: …… (Block capitals please)

I enclose a cheque for £ ……..... (payable to CCHS OGA - £7.50 pp)

Please write the name(s) of any guests on the back of this slip.

Please return this slip to Mrs J Johnson, 10 Landseer Road, COLCHESTER, CO3 4QR