



The Beginning ...

The Building

28<sup>th</sup> April 1900 - Works

At 21 meeting of the Works Committee of the Ilford School Board held at the Christchurch Road School on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of April, 1900

Present: Messrs. A.E. Willshire (Chairman), H. Gilbey, W.G. Faulkner, J Norton, W.H. Wiskar (Chairman of Ilford School Board, pictured Right), W.J. Cadness, & J .W. Rendall Moore (Clerk to the Board), and a representative of the Architect. Your Committee made a special point of inspecting the latrines at the Christchurch Road School, against which some complaints have recently been made. The flushing apparatus in connection with all the closets were found to be working entirely satisfactorily, with one exception, where a cracked pipe needs attention. This, however, in no way causes any inconvenience, as the accommodation provided is double or treble that needed for the numbers at present attending the Schools. With regard to the urinals, the Committee much regret that the water supply has not yet been laid on to the automatic flushing apparatus; but they are quite satisfied that the flushing by hand can be satisfactorily performed. No noxious smells were detected likely to cause danger or inconvenience.



Twins - **Una and Marjorie Baker** 1911-1917

The Baker family lived at 147 Balfour Road where we were born in 1904. Our brother Crofton was born in 1908, and sister Diddy (Eileen) in 1911. We went to Pontefract in 1909 for two years then came back to 7 Brisbane Road in Ilford in 1911 and went to Christchurch Infants School. We were nearly 7 years old. The Headmistress was Miss Edwards, and we called her "Governess". She was tall and slim, with a skirt to her ankles. She had red hair, and wore glasses. Each morning the children went into the hall for assembly. On our birthday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the birthday children were called out as usual. Marjorie went out and they sang the birthday song to her. I was too shy to go out, so Miss Edwards said, "I think another little girl has a birthday today", and encouraged me out to the front, and they sang again for me.

We always sang a prayer at the end of the afternoon:

Lord keep us safe this night,

Secure from all our fears.

May angels watch us while we sleep?

Till morning light appears.

One day the class was taken out into the playground to measure the children's shadows on the ground in the sunshine, and see how the shadows moved. The playgrounds had three big sheds in them, with benches

All round against the walls, where you could sit on cold wet days. In the classrooms, there were big

fireplaces, with high iron fireguards round them. On wet days children took off their wet socks and hung them on the fireguard to dry. There were big buckets of coal beside the grate which the caretaker used to fill up, and the teacher would put coal on the fire whenever it burned low. On very cold days, the children would take it in turn to sit near the fire, and then go to the freezing back of the classroom to give someone else a turn by the fire. There were about 50 children in each class.

The toilets were all outside in the playground, and were most unpleasant. The milkman used to come in and use the toilet, and the gates were not locked during the day. Nearly all the children went home to lunch. The Junior girls played in the Wellesley Road playground with the Infants at playtime, and the Junior boys played in the Balfour Road playground. There were three drinking taps in the playgrounds.

An ice cream cart waited outside the school gate in Christchurch Road every afternoon, but us twins never had money to buy ices. Our friend Clarice always had a penny for an ice. Our friends were Gladys Lambert and Clarice Sullivan. We would go out all day with our friends, walking through the farmland up to the Red Bridge, or out to the forest. We had a dog called Don who used to just wander out with us, and come home when he felt like it. I think we were very naughty girls. One day we took a neighbour's baby for a walk in its pram, and left it in the middle of the Melbourne Field, while we went to play, and the baby screamed and screamed. We used to play Knock down Ginger on the door knockers all down Brisbane Road, and hide behind the front fences.

Crofton started at Christchurch Infants School in 1913. Mamma went up to see the Headmistress, to see how Crofton was getting on, and Miss Edwards said, "Mrs. Baker, he is the naughtiest boy in the school." He was just as naughty at home, fighting with us, and scratching Diddy's face.

In August 1914 the First World War began. Dadda was too old to be a soldier, he was 44 years old, and anyway he only had one leg. It became very hard to feed a family of Mother, Father, Aunt and four children. Dadda grew vegetables and fruit in the garden and we managed. Great Aunt Maiy came to stay with us quite often. She liked a drop to drink and she used to go to the Bell, and often had to be helped home. The day before Christmas Eve 1914, she went to the Bell and some men carried her home on a door. They thought she had had too much to drink but she was really ill. Dadda sat her in the corner of the kitchen in 7 Brisbane Road, and she died. Her coffin was in the house all over Christmas.

Crofton was also ill. He had tuberculosis. He was only seven. Dadda wasn't surprised when he developed consumption, because he said it was in the family. It was quite common locally for children to die of the ordinary childhood illnesses. The cure for consumption was thought to be fresh air and healthy food, but there was very little food around because of the war. He got worse and finally died in October 1915. Marjorie and me and 4 year old Diddy were lifted up to kiss him good-bye in his coffin.

In the Infants boys and girls were in the same class. At the age of eight we went up into the Junior Girls, on the middle floor. The Boys were on the top floor. The end classrooms had step floors like lecture rooms. You could stay at Christchurch till you were fourteen, but we left at 12, in September 1917 to go to Senior Schools. In the top class the girls did housewifery, and cooked lunch in the upstairs of the Lodge for all the children who stayed to school dinner. Only one or two children stayed in each class. They made stews and cakes. The second eldest class did laundry, and they had to bring tea towels and pillow cases to practice on. One girl burnt a hole in her pillow case, easily done, as they had to heat flat irons on the stove. It was all hand-washing with hard blocks of soap, and a wash board.

All children sat at double desks with inkwells. Pens and pencils were handed out in the morning and counted back in. We had exercise books to write in. First thing every morning was a scripture lesson, three

Mornings a week it was the Old Testament, and two mornings the New Testament. When it was the New Testament the Jewish girls had to go outside into the Hall, where there were a few desks. The Headmistress, Miss Gibbs sat on the Hall platform. Miss Gibbs was a good headmistress. Children were terrified of her, she used to take out the poor readers. She was very strict. Two of the teachers, Miss Hodgson and Miss Lawrence used to shout. The other teachers, Miss Prosser and Miss Ewing, a tall fat woman whose sister taught in the Infants, were quieter.

When we were ten and in Miss Hodgson's class we had to write a letter, Dear Miss Hodgson, and Marjorie wrote under her name "silly" in very small letters. Miss Hodgson was furious but Marjorie denied all knowledge of it, honestly she didn't know who had done it. Going home afterwards I said how horrible someone had been to try to get Marjorie into trouble and Marjorie said, "I did it". I couldn't believe how she had lied. Phyllis Reynolds got the cane for taking someone else's orange. She didn't need it because they were quite well off.

During the war the boat taking Kitchener to Russia sank and we saw the flag lowered on the County School, next door. Lots of brothers and fathers were away. Gladys Grey in our class lost her father in the war and her mother had to go to work, and became a post woman. Evelyn Tomes's brother went to war and lost a leg. He was back home living with his family and Evelyn taught all the other girls swear words. Mamma would not let the us play with her because she was too common. There were very nice families living in Coventry Road, Mary Vanyard's mother helped her with her reading and she stood up and read to the class in a lovely clear voice.

When we were 12, I Went to Coburn and Marjorie went to Ilford County High. Dadda paid fees for us both. In 1920 we moved to 176 Wellesley Road.



**Infants Dancing Class, 1911.** Una and Marjorie Baker front 2<sup>nd</sup> from left and back right of the door. Alfred Bysouth is to the left of the door

May and Frank Morgan attended Christchurch between 1914 and 1924 Here they are with their classes.



A group Of Prefects, some seem very large for 14 years of age. Norman Strachan is Standing on the right. Behind them is the War Memorial engraved with the 1914-18 war dead, later placed in St.Margarer's Church.



Ilford Education Committee.  
**CHRISTCHURCH ROAD SCHOOL.**  
 JUNIOR MIXED DEPARTMENT.

Term Examination Report.

Term ending July 1914

Class 10

Name of Scholar May Morgan

SUBJECT	Marks Obtained	Marks Possible	REMARKS
Arithmetic	10	10	May has been a good girl.
Reading	10	10	
Copy Writing	9	10	
Drawing	10	10	
Handwriting	9	10	
Knitting	8	10	
Composition	9	10	
Painting	9	10	
Conduct	10	10	

Total - 121 / 130

Class Teacher A. L. Gibbons  
 Head Teacher A. L. Edwards

Ilford Council Education Committee.

Christchurch 15<sup>th</sup> School Boys' Department  
A. Bateman Head Teacher 15<sup>th</sup> July 1914

Frank Morgan has attended this school very regularly and punctually from child hood.  
 He is a very intelligent lad - well read, inclined to things mechanical and apparently adapted for an engineering career.  
 He was commended especially by his teachers for smart answering of questions.  
 His character has been excellent. He is willing and anxious to help and please, and has proved himself industrious and persevering.  
 Frank is in our top class and doing well. He has joined the school sports club with much success.  
 Signed Henry Bateman  
 Head Master

Until the opening of the new buildings at Gants Hill and Barkingside in the 1930s, the Dane building housed the Ilford County High Schools for Girls (ground and middle floors, Dane building), and for Boys, (top floor Dane building and the Park Building.) Hence the name "Old Parkonians" for the ICHS Old Boys' Association.

May Morgan's school report for 1914 and her brother Frank's Testimonial, received when he left Christchurch at the age of 14. Boys and girls stayed at Christchurch for their whole school career. Not until 1936 were all children moved on to separate secondary schools.

### **Marjorie Wiskar (nee Griffiths) 1922-1929**

I started at Christchurch School in 1922 when I was five, and this was my first awareness of the changing seasons. Cotton frocks and short socks in summer and being muffled up with a huge woollen scarf in winter. The latter to keep out the thick peasoup fogs which we had in those days. The twins next door but one took me to school every day, and brought me home again. Later I made new friends, one of which lived just six doors away. She was Kathleen Abel, and we kept in touch for many years. She had a great talent for art, and I always admired her beautiful pastels of flowers, while mine always looked a mess! In those early days one spent one's leisure, either playing in the street with a gang of friends (only horse and cart traffic), and when it was wet or snowing we were indoors, dressing up, painting, board games or jigsaws, etc.

Our headmistress was (I believe) a Miss Edwards and she was very kind and respected. I remember Armistice Day, when we all collected in the hall, and one mistress (a Miss Handley?) who had lost her fiancé in the 1914-18 war, would silently weep and embarrass us! Teachers were not supposed to have feelings. Then there was Empire Day when we all paraded and saluted the flag. One year I was Britannia's attendant, in a white dress! The school borrowed a brass fireman's helmet from the fire station for Britannia to wear, and somebody made a trident and shield!

Another memory was of the yearly visit of Mr. and Mrs. Spencer. I believe they were school governors. Mr. Spencer came to teach us country dancing in preparation for the yearly dance at the Town Hall. (Was it to do with the Primrose League?) We had drill in those days and later we played netball. We all went out at playtime and when wet we sheltered in two large sheds, with seats all round. When the bell went we lined up and marched into lessons. A large handbell was used, and it was a great honour to be "bell monitor" and ring it at the beginning and end of lessons. We started the day with a hymn and register, and finished with a hymn and a prayer. At all great events we assembled in the hall. My last teacher as I remember was Miss Lawrence who taught us geography? As I approached eleven years I was working for the 1 1+ exam which I duly passed and went to South Park Central School for a year then we moved into the resplendent new 'Beal Modern School' with grass playing fields and quads! Happy days.

### **Mary Levoi - 1929-1932**

We moved to Ilford in 1929 when I was 8, so straightaway I was put in the "big girls" on the middle floor of the school. Our class was in the hall and the headmistress was Miss Ewing. My younger brothers and sisters all started in the Infants with the kindly Miss Edwards as their Headmistress. In those days much was made of Empire Day on May 24" and my photo shows the cast of a play acted on Empire Day 1930 or 1931, when I was 9 or 10 years old. It was about the building of the Empire and Old Father Time (at the back of the picture), beard and all, and the schoolboy and schoolgirl (myself) provided the commentary. You can see a crusader, Clive of India, General Woolf who captured Quebec in Canada, Dr. Livingstone and Cecil Rhodes who famously met in Africa, Captain Cook, Charles I and James I (James VI of Scotland). The teachers must have worked very hard to make the costumes. Mine was no problem and the schoolboy was a girl called Dorothy Hummel who had short fair hair and she wore her brother's white shorts and cricket boots. I was surprised that after all these years I could recall the names of most of the cast of the play. Raymond Baxter's lovely talk on March 22" about his schooldays revived many memories for me. He commented that we walked to school, there and back twice a day. We lived in Cranley Drive so this was quite a distance. How our feet dragged sometimes! In very hot weather our mother would pack up sandwiches and walk with my younger sister in the pram to the park and meet us at the Melbourne gate and we would have a picnic under the trees I remember one day I fell down in the playground before



Girls and their dolls in the playground – 1925



Mary Levoi seated front left – Empire Day – 1932





Empire Day – 1933 – Including Joan English, Margret Valder, Joan Linsell and Dysliss Daniels

Walking home one dinner time, and Miss Ewing gave me first aid in the Hall. She was a terrifying person to us usually. She was a large lady who wore navy-blue dresses and coats and a very big black hat with hat pins, and black stockings and boots! She carried a small brown attache case when she went home. She was very kind to me on this occasion and when she bathed and bandaged my grazed knees I noticed to my astonishment that she had pink nail varnish on her nails.

My first teacher was Miss Hoyle who was very musical. She taught us our songs using hand signs and all the music in our books was in tonic sol-fa. We took part in a school choir festival at the old Crystal Palace - hundreds of us! One of the songs we learned was Schubert's "Erl King". It seems a strange choice for children and being rather an imaginative child, it frightened me with its story of the father riding through the forest with his child in his arms, with the Erl King calling to the boy and the father arriving home with a dead child. Even now it sends shivers down my spine.

We used to commemorate Armistice Day and wearing our poppies (which we used to buy at school for 1d.) we would assemble in the hall for a service and the Two Minutes Silence. It was all very solemn. One of the teachers, Miss Stenning, had been a nurse during the 1914-18 War and she invariably shed tears, and unthinking little creatures that we were, we always stole glances at her to witness the unusual spectacle of a teacher in tears.

Looking back I realise how hard the teachers tried to introduce us to worthwhile things. My brother Ron had violin lessons and I loved our English lessons. We were taught grammar very thoroughly and I enjoyed analysing sentences. We knew what nouns, pronouns, verbs and adjectives were. I remember, too, doing "best writing" by copying the poem "Young Lochinvar". We used pens with nibs and ink for this. I could be very naughty and giggly. We were given "The Forsaken Mermaid" to read for ourselves and my neighbour and I played a game called "sausage and mash". For every word beginning with you said "sausage" and "mash" for words beginning with It was hilarious and I remember being told to stand behind the blackboard for giggling. Twice I ended up sitting in the hall under the eagle eye of Miss Ewing for doing something I shouldn't.

When I came to the school on March 22nd I thought how welcoming and attractive it was. I remember long stone staircases, ginger tiled walls, wooden floors in the classroom which were tiered, and sitting in pairs in those desks with iron frames. There were few frills or refinements and the discipline was strict, but we were happy and expected school to be like that. I look back with gratitude for all the teachers did for me. I remember being coached for "the scholarship" in the lunch time and after school and I was fortunate enough to pass the exam and go to Ilford County High School, (now Valentines High) in 1932

### **Raymond Baxter - 1926-1932**

When, from birth, I grew up with my sister at 168 Wellesley Road it seemed to me, as a little boy, that this huge and beautiful school building must have been there for ever. Not until I received the invitation to the Centenary did I appreciate that, in fact, the building is only 22 years older than I am, and was a mere 29 years old when, at the age of seven, I became a pupil. And in 1929 the world was a very different place. We dressed differently, ate differently, and the pattern of our daily lives was different. This was a modern school building yet the toilets were on the other side of the playground, which occasioned active scampering about when it was raining.

We walked to and from school alone or picking up small groups of friends. In my case, I ran. I had calculated that if I left my front door when the bell started to ring I could just make the quarter mile into the playground before it stopped. I never saw anyone come to school by car. In those days car ownership

was enjoyed only by those earning above average income, and the family car garaged around Christchurch School was preserved for weekend trips to Southend or Clacton, longer holidays to Devon or Cornwall, or to visit relatives.

Then came the Second World War and everything changed — never to be the same again. I joined the Royal Air Force as a volunteer hoping to become a fighter pilot. My father, as a teacher in West Ham, was in a Reserved Occupation and, in any case, too old to enlist in the Army. So he volunteered as an Air Raid Warden. His Headquarters was Christchurch School. Nightly, throughout the 1940 Blitz, after his school duties, he would be “on patrol” wearing his black “tin hat”, in Wellesley Road and the adjacent blocks. When the shrapnel from our anti-aircraft guns, including those in Valentines Park, came clattering down, he would shelter in the nearest doorway.

Christchurch School was hit several times by “incendiaries”. All were extinguished by the ARP (Air Raid Precaution) personnel on duty — using stirrup pump and bucket. But there were several more serious local incidents. Houses were destroyed and their occupants killed.

My sister, 3 years my senior, was conscripted into “War Work”. She had to become a “factory hand” at Plessey’s — the Arms factory in nearby Ley Street. The repetition of her boring task on a production line and the “culture shock” of the change in her environment were too much. On the verge of a nervous breakdown, she was released to run the house for my father — and me, during the fleeting days when I was there.

#### **Empire Day - Queen Victoria’s Birthday**

From School Log

24th May 1937 - Being Empire Day National Anthem sung, Flag saluted and address by Headmaster. Suitable topical lessons given by Staff rest of morning. School closed for afternoon.

24th May 1940 - Empire Day was celebrated this morning. A collection was made on behalf of the Overseas League Tobacco Fund. £1.18.0. Was realised and forwarded to the Director General of the fund. The school was closed for Empire Day holiday in the afternoon.

24th May 1944 After Assembly and Prayers and Hymn the Headmaster addressed the children on Empire Day and their part in the Empire - now and later (Dinners and milk as usual) School closed this afternoon for Empire Day half-holiday.

*Marjorie’s infant class - 1932*



**Marjorie Tarran - 1931-1937**

What do I remember from my time at Christchurch? When I was first at school in the early 30s, the classrooms were still tiered — like the cinema!

At the end of my time in the Junior Girls, our classroom was in the hall — just screened off from the rest of the hall and whatever activities were going on there. When our Headmistress, Miss Ewing, retired at the end of 1936, the girls

and boys were combined under the head of the boys’ department, Mr Rogers.



Two teachers on the boys' staff then were Mr. Kempson and Mr. Malyon. When I joined the Christchurch staff myself in 1964, they were both still there! They had returned after War service and stayed there until they retired! In the mid-1960s the classrooms still had coal fires. We were not allowed to put on any more coal after afternoon playtime!

#### **John Bray 1932-1938**

I remember my first day; we had to sit at desks in the main Hall. I was next to a girl called Jill, and I think we fell out over some plasticine we were given to play with. In the 1937 photo the headmaster was Mr Rogers, and two of the teachers were Mr Bames and Mr Kempson.

My sister, now eighty, started at Christchurch in 1926 and left in 1934. Her name then was Doris Bray. She remembers a Headmistress Mrs. Ewing and her teacher, Miss Lawrence.

#### **Munich Crisis 1938 from School Log —**

26<sup>th</sup> September 1938 - The work is disorganised owing to the initiation of the Emergency Evacuation Scheme for school children due to grave international complications and the threat of war. A parents 'meeting held this evening in the middle Floor being packed and corridors full necessitating an overflow meeting on upstairs floor. The Headmaster explained the tentative arrangements and a number of children were enrolled for the school party. Many also were enrolled for sections in other schools where brothers or sisters attend to try and keep families together Staff here in evening 6 — 10.30 clearing days queries and clerical work.

27<sup>th</sup> September - Several hundred people interviewed Headmaster from 9 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. Staff here in evening.

28<sup>th</sup> September — Enrolment continued...

29<sup>th</sup> September the Headmaster continued the clearing of lists as many children have left the Borough.

30<sup>th</sup> September — Official confirmation that scheme of evacuation in abeyance.

#### **Ron Smith - 1933-1939**

A Penny for a Cap?!

On progressing from the Mixed infants to the Junior Boys (an exclusively male establishment: it must have been about 1936) my mother gave me a two-shilling piece to take to school to buy a new cap. In those days all schoolboys wore caps; I don't remember any coercion, we just did wear caps, and they bore the letters CCS, blue caps for the mere infants but blue with a red panel for the Big Boys. Mother also gave me a penny (instead of the usual weekly halfpenny) for the Sweet Man who traded from a box tricycle at the corner of Balfour Road. -

Now the purveying of caps, ties and blazer badges was the province of the Headmaster. We used to think it was because he had nothing else to do, but in later years it dawned on me that it gave him an excellent way of getting to know each year's new boys. His little office was cramped enough without large cardboard boxes full of each size of cap but that did not deter him.

But spare a thought for the new boys (8 years old) summoned one by one to introduce themselves to the Headmaster, who was incredibly old and peppery and reputed (I) to be an expert in the use of the cane. By the time we left the Junior School we were beginning to realise that Taffy's bark was worse than his bite, but the new boys had to take him at face value and entered his office in great fear and trembling.

Such was the knocking of my knees that I failed to notice the trouble he was taking to put me at ease and ensure that the headgear really did fit my head. When the time came to pay catastrophe struck! Putting my hand in my pocket and feeling a large round coin I handed the Headmaster the forgotten my We both realised the error and my face was so red that I could only hope that the floor would open up to swallow me, but Sir apparently credited me with the best joke of the week. "A penny for a cap?" (He pronounced it cup.) My confidence slightly restored by his kindly laughter, I was able to find the required two-shilling piece and settle the bill (was it really I/ I Od (9p) for a school cap?). Such a trivial incident, but 60 years on I still remember Taffy Rogers with respect and affection.

1937 - St.Clement's Wolf Cubs: Back row: Bob Bell, Audrey Welch, Vic Butcher, John Newman. Middle row: —,—,—,—, Ken Westrop, — Gilman, Peter West. Front row: Alan Hallpike, John Burr, —, Ron Smith, —Brian Clewer, Kan Bargrove, Don Kingston, Laurie Burr.



Staff of the newly amalgamated Christchurch Junior Mixed School in the 1937 panorama photo. I to r: Mr Barnes, Mr Malyon, Mr Kempson, Mr Beverley, Mr Rogers (Headmaster), Miss Findlay, Miss Lawrence, Miss Harris, Miss McGowan, Miss Davison, Miss Royston.



### **Barbara Beiboer (nee Allen) - 1933-1939**

The Sweet Man had a stall opposite the Christchurch Road entrance. He sat by one end, without talking or moving. At the other end of the stall was a wooden box into which one dropped one's halfpenny or penny, selected a sweet and moved on.

Some child realised that it was by the sound of the coin dropping into the box that the sweet man knew payment had been made, and found that by picking up a coin in the box and dropping it, the same effect occurred. So one day, I did just that, I picked a coin up from the box, dropped it, and selected a bar of red boiled sweet. I did not profit from my ill-gotten gain for long, as the sweet was grabbed off me by another child.

The Wall's Ice Cream Man rode his trike past the Christchurch Road entrance most days, and stopped for sales. He would cut a milk-ice or an icy-pole in half for a halfpenny. At that time, most mothers gave their child a halfpenny a day with which to pay for a third of a pint of milk. I used to pass on the milk, and buy half an ice-cream instead, until the day my mother arrived to witness the transaction, and put an end to it.

There were a whole series of playground games, played in succession during the year. The Farmer's in his Den, In and out the Dusty Bluebells, What's the Time Mr. Wolf and Poor Jenny is a-Weeping were favourites. We also had seasons for marbles, whip and top, many handball games, skipping and yo-yos.

When I started school in 1933 our class was not in a classroom, but at the end of the Hall, and the Dane School end. We sat in rows at desks, double desks I think. It must have been very difficult for Miss Ball, whom I see as about forty, in black, with black hair taken back in a bun. She, of necessity, was strict with us, and we sat with arms folded a good deal of the time. I knitted an orange dress for a doll. It was much praised and I expected to take it home. But no. The doll was raffled. Everyone had to guess its name which was 'Sarah Jane'. I didn't win it, and the dress went to the winner. I was very disappointed.

I was in Mr. Kempson's class in 1939. I still have his autograph with the adage 'Labor Omnia vincit'. He was severe with us, but he got results. I finished top of the class. He was sarcastic at times. One line of boys was called 'The Generals' because they were not good at General Knowledge. My father took me to see 'Madame Butterfly', my first opera. In class I told the story, and named an aria. Mr. Kempson was delighted and gave me 5 house-points. If anyone was still on the way to school when the bell rang, one would run like mad to get to school before the doors shut. It was such a disgrace to be late.

### **Howard Blandford Baker 1935- 1939**

I was a diminutive pupil of the school between the ages of 5 and 9 years when my family lived in Cranley Drive. At the outbreak of WW2 we moved away and never returned, our home, initially let out in our absence, being subsequently demolished by a German bomb. Memories are now of course, somewhat dim but I do quite clearly recall Miss Lawrence the headmistress, who seemed admirably suited to that role. I also remember a Mrs. Brown and I think a Miss Good. The only male member of staff I can recall was a Mr. Malyon who never taught me but was by reputation a disciplinarian. He was, however, liked by the boys because of his enthusiasm for football. He also set a particularly high sartorial standard and appeared during the winter terms in a well-tailored black overcoat and grey trilby hat. He would, I would guess, be about 95 years old if alive today.



1933 Nativity Play - with Doreen Palmer, Beryl Curtis, Winnie Foale, Thelma Welch, Olive Laborde, Josie Thorpe, Margaret Valder, Elaine Smith, Joh Wright and Joan Linsell



Mr.Kempson's Class 4 — 1937 Left to right:

Top row: (Stanley?) Seligman, —, —, John Bourne, John Fletcher, Jill —, Don Kingston, Jack Freeman, Owen —, —, Ken Westrop.

Second row: Rob Kent, Sybil Dunham, (D.Gunther?) Helen Williams,—, —, Ken Nethercott, Joan Kay, Arthur Surrey, -----, Peter West, JeanLowen.

Third row: -----, -----, -----, -----, H.L.Kempson, T.A.Rogers, Irene Abrahams, Jean Honeyset, Sylvia--, Pamela---

Front row: P.Read, -----, -----, Ron March, -----, --- Limage, -----, -----, John Burr.

I can also remember a few of my fellow pupils, including Alan Greenly, Ronald Holder and David March. These was also a boy named Horsey whose name I remember chiefly because of Miss Lawrence saying to me in rather pressing tones on the one occasion that I was taken on a visit to the school after leaving,

“Surely you remember Horsey, Howard, don’t you?” when I seemed to have difficulty in recollection. I used to meet up with Anthony Walker on the way to school. Girls of course had no special attraction for me in those days and although I can vaguely recall one of two faces, no names come back.

I have travelled a long way since those days and the school will have changed too, although still contained within its rather austere Victorian building. I am pleased to think it is still there because, although it perhaps means less to me than the schools which I later attended, it must undoubtedly have given me a good foundation in life and played some part in preparing me for the rigours of the war years.

#### **1936 - Christchurch and the King. From the School Log-**

20<sup>th</sup> January At school assembly National Anthem sung and allusions made to the illness of the King. ”

21<sup>st</sup> January His Majesty King George V having passed away, flag was flown half-mast high, suitable hymn sung and address given at Assembly by the Headmaster.

22<sup>nd</sup> January the flag is at full mast for the proclamation of the new king, His Majesty King Edward VIII. 20 boys from Upper School attended at Town Hall 10.30 a.m. to hear reading of the Proclamation. ”

24<sup>th</sup> January In accordance with instructions from the Director and Official Memorial Service was held, an address being given by the Headmaster.

#### **Joan Davison - Pupil 1921-1927 - Teacher 1937-1939**

It was in January 1937 that I started teaching at Christchurch Junior Girls School. The Infants occupied the ground floor and the boys on the top floor. The Headteacher of the Girls Department retired in July of that year and the two departments were joined under the Headship of Mr. Rogers, whom I remember well and respected greatly.

I recall the large comer classroom which I occupied with over 50 children. The piano was housed in that room. This pleased me as I could play the piano and take music. However no sound would come out of that piano until I removed various impedimenta left by I know not who! — a violin bow, some rulers, some pens and one boy’s cap.

There were few cars on the roads in those days. Any car stopping at the gate in Balfour Road might contain a Government Inspector. A rota of two boys used to do their work in the bay of the hall and their job was to report to the Headmaster the arrival of any car. Should the car contain an Inspector, the boys went to the teachers with a piece of red chalk asking if they needed any! This was the signal that an Inspection was about to happen. I have wondered since what the boys felt when every teacher replied ‘no’.

Not every teacher could take music, so I had to go to other classes for this. One day, a lad in one of these classes said, “Could you put up the Christmas paper chains to give ‘Sir’ a surprise when he comes back. I agreed and placed the teacher’s high chair on the table and climbed up to start fixing a paper chain to the electric light shade. (In later days this was not allowed for fear of fire.) Of course, I slipped off that high chair, tearing my new dress as I tumbled and ‘Sir’ had to put up the decorations at a later date.

Incidentally,

an Inspector did arrive when I was taking music in that class one day. He sat at the piano which had been rolled in for me to take the lesson and he wanted to show me how I could do better something I was trying to do. As he struck the notes, the piano failed to function properly, whereupon he kicked the piano and left saying “You can’t teach music with an instrument like that.” - (See Report below)



Just before Easter 1939, Mr. William Torbitt, the then Director of Education, called to ask me if I would like to join the staff of the new Parkhill Junior School which would be opening after Easter. Of course, I was delighted at the thought of moving to a brand new building, so I left Christchurch after a stay of only 2 years and one term. Teachers might be interested to know that my salary in those days was £14.5s.0d. per month. In April 1938 I received my first increase, so that I then received £14.13s.4d per month.

I was able to recognise myself and several members of the staff from the 1937 school panorama photograph.

Here is that Report of H.M. Inspectors - April/May 1938 - After amalgamation Junior Mixed Department — the all-standard boys' department which occupied part of these premises for many years was decapitated in 1936, and the older boys were transferred to the Dane Central School. . . .

The Junior Mixed Department is accommodated on the middle and upper floors of the building; assigned to its use are fourteen excellent rooms and two good halls. Three rooms are not required for regular class teaching and have been reserved for the teaching of handwork and needlework. In time, no doubt, these rooms will be properly equipped for their special purpose.

In the matter of equipment a good deal is necessary, and an adequate supply of large sized maps for class teaching in addition to good atlases are mentioned here as examples only because of their importance. The piano which is accommodated on the top floor is also not helpful to the music lessons. Further, it is hoped that when an opportunity arises the authority will consider a supply of good pictures needed to enhance the attractiveness of the classrooms. ...

The standard of class teaching is on the whole good, and the instruction is adjusted to the varying capacities of the children. A number of suggestions relating to the schemes in English, history, geography and music were offered to the Head Master's consideration.

## **Staff - from School Log**

**Herbert Leslie Kempson** Reg.No.29/423] Commenced at Christchurch 26.8.29. Transferred to South Park Middle 20.4.36. Transferred to Christchurch Middle Boys 8.6.36.

**Harry C. Malyon** Reg.No. P33.944 (Formerly Student Teacher here) Commenced at Christchurch 14.1.35.  
**From School Log -**

2<sup>nd</sup> December 1938 — A party of children accompanied by Miss Davison attended Beal Modern School last evening to take part in a Eurythmics Demonstration.

## **Christchurch at War**

### **Christchurch Middle School Evacuation Scheme**

1. The Local Authority's Scheme, with further correspondence, copies of circulars to parents, lists and addresses of helpers and other relevant papers kept in box file labelled "Evacuation" in cupboard of storeroom adjoining Headmaster's Room.
2. Provisional Lists of Scholars to be evacuated. The September 1938 lists cancelled. Every parent has been circularised and now lists made in accordance with replies of parents up to 30<sup>th</sup> April 1939. Except in cases where parents object, arrangements are made for scholars of Christchurch Middle with brothers or sisters in the Dane School to travel with the Dane section. Lists to be revised through new admissions and leavers as such eventuate.
3. Squads. A provisional list of squads of 50's made. Members of same family grouped together; younger ones being generally placed with older. Each Squad Leader is a teacher. Helpers have been allocated to Squads.
4. Notification of Evacuation Circulars. An adequate supply has been prepared.
5. Rolls and Labels. Provisional Squad Rolls prepared. Labels written for every child on registers.
6. Clothing, Food, Luggage, Carriers and Gas Masks. Circular sent to parents on these points. New entrants to be advised on admission.
7. Addresses. Staff and Helpers instructed to notify all Holiday addresses (with dates) and any other changes of address.
8. Meeting of Helpers. The four departments forming the Unit are holding such meetings. TA.Rogers - Headmaster

### **CHRISTCHURCH MIDDLE SCHOOL EVACUATION SCHEME**

General a) every teacher to have a whistle

At the start of the war most of Christchurch children were evacuated to Suffolk. It isn't now remembered that the evacuation started on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, two days before war began.

The School Log notes:-

26.8.39 The School was re-opened today (Saturday) owing to the Crisis. All teachers were recalled from holiday by wireless and the parents were also told to send the children to school....

These were taken by two of the staff while the others carried on with the clerical work interviewing parents. School closed at 5.

27.8.39. The School was again re-opened (Sunday).... Everything was left in readiness for the evacuation rehearsal tomorrow. "

28.8.39. The children to be evacuated were grouped in 10s, duplicate lists were written, labels attached to children and kit and every preparation made for moving ofj... At 10.30 children assembled in Hall awaiting 'Go Forward' signal. Not received so children returned to school and left everything in readiness should the 'Get Ready for Evacuation' come in the afternoon or later.... In order to know how long to Station, time actually tested by walking distance. Miss Bracey and 2 children managed full route as required in 16 min. Allowance has to be made for carrying kit. "

29.8.39 Normal school as far as possible...

31.8.39 Work as usual during the morning. After evacuation notices were stamped and time of arrival inserted the children were sent home. All staff remained — till 4.30 to await further orders. Then just one single entry for 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 "School evacuated to Framsdon Suffolk.

101 children went to Suffolk. 11 Children with two teachers were billeted at Crowfield near Ipswich. 90 Children with 6 teachers, including Mr.Kempson, were at Helmingham, about 3 miles away. The Headmaster, Mr.B1atchly, and some teachers were recalled and the staff made house to house calls to find houses with Air Raid Shelters for use in the Educational Home Service for the remaining 211 children. Later, numbers of children grew to well over 400. Staffing was a nightmare. Throughout the duration of the War dozens of different supply teachers came and went. Classes were constantly being reorganised.

There was a second evacuation in June 1940. Government Plan IV. School Party No.IV7 12 paraded at 9.30 a.m. on 13th June. 140 children and 14 staff left school at 10.55 took trolley buses to Barking at 11.15 and left Barking at 12.25. They arrived at Radstock in Somerset in the evening. The remaining children and staff in Ilford were again reorganised.

### **Air Raids**

After the Summer Holidays in 1940 Air Raids began. On 26th August from 11.15 to 12.25 the children were in the shelters. The School Log notes "community singing". The Log records times and duration of 99 daytime, school day, Air Raids between 26th August 1940 and 7th March 1941. Some Alerts lasted only half an hour, others four or five hours. Sometimes there were three alerts in one day. There were Gas Mask Inspections; the children did Gas Mask Drill. Children were tired because of night time Air Raids, attendance was poor. Later, in 1944/45, 34 Doodlebugs fell on Ilford of the 2,419 in the London area. Ilford also received 35 of the 517 V2s which fell on London, more than any other borough.

### **Air Raid Shelters**

There was air-raid shelters constructed which were considered adequate during the Blitz but felt inadequate to deal with the threat of the V1 and V2 rockets. The School Log notes:- 28.8.44. The Education Authority considers that, due to the different type of missile now being used, the shelters are no longer suitable in the Christchurch building and until such time as they can be rendered more adequate the school will function in the Dane School building and use their shelters.



Stairs up from Dane School cellar today.

Luckily no expense was spared to make the shelters safe in the Christchurch building - The Log notes for 29<sup>th</sup> September 1944: Shelter accommodation has been made more adequate by means of corrugated iron sheets being placed inside the glass of the windows. - That must have made Hitler think again!

The downstairs cloakrooms were used as Air Raid Shelters in Christchurch School, four classes in each cloakroom! These areas are now used as kitchens, library, storerooms and teaching areas. Only one is still a cloakroom.

On 4th October 1940 Mr.Malyon was given permission to return home as his house had been partially demolished by a High Explosive Bomb. An then on 31st he ceased duty at Christchurch to report for duty with H.M.Forces.

In June 1944 the Flying Bomb Raids began. School Log 3rd July 1944 Flying Bomb Raids on and off all day. Only a few minutes out of shelters. A "trickle" of children to be evacuated - only IO parents agreed.

The Infants classes work in Dane cellars, and juniors in our two ground floor lobbies - four classes in each lobby. The last Air Raid noted in the Log ended at 12.44 p.m. on 5th March 1945.

### September 1939 - Tony Walker 1935-1940

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September.

After days of rehearsal, this is it. Evacuation. We assemble in the playground, each with knapsack and gasmask. Forming a long crocodile, we proceed to Ilford Station, accompanied by tearful and worried parents. To keep families together, some schoolchildren are taking their pre-school brothers and sisters with them. Many teachers are also with us.

After a lengthy wait at the station, we eventually board a special empty train; steam- hauled of course, and commences our journey into the unknown, many of us with excitement, rather as we would if going on holiday. At last, we arrive at a large station and we all alight, under strict supervision. It was Ipswich in Suffolk, although I was uncertain about this at the time. We walk.

Cloakroom, shelter for 4 junior classes



Again in procession, to a nearby assembly room, which may have been in a school. Again, after refreshments and much organising - and re-organising! - we are taken onto buses and set off into the countryside. Eventually I and three other boys are deposited outside a country cottage occupied by an elderly couple. We are taken in, and settle ourselves for the evening; we share one bedroom.

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September

After breakfast we wander around the garden, complete with duck pond, and out along the lane. Unsupervised, we all feel rather lost, in a totally strange land. We enter a farm complex and venturing into a large barn we come across machinery. Foolishly I try to turn a large gearwheel and squash my little finger between the still-moving teeth! Panic stricken, with the finger top hanging off and bleeding heavily, I run out together with the other boys, across the lane and into a field occupied by servicemen under canvas. They inspect me, unsure of what to do other than apply a field dressing. Suddenly, like a miracle, a uniformed lady goes cycling by — the District Nurse! She is called over, attends to my injury and seeks help. A little later I am taken by car to the local doctor and detained. What was happening now, I was unsure, but in hindsight I realise what a commotion I was causing. Later in the day, I am taken by car to hospital (The East Suffolk) in Ipswich. I find myself warded, prepared for theatre, anaesthetized and out for the count.

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September

I am told by doctors the top joint of my little finger had to be removed. There is the distant sound of a siren! War had been declared although I was unaware of this at the time, being in a somewhat confused state.

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September

On the ward various people visit me, some probably teachers desperately trying to rectify the situation. I believe my parents now knew of my predicament and the anxiety it must have caused remains in my mind for ever.

Several days later I am discharged and taken, not back to the cottage but to a large, fully moated country mansion, Helmingham Hall. Here I join up with other Christchurch scholars and this remained my base until January 1940 when my parents brought me back to the London area. We stayed with my grandparents at Gidea Park and my schooling resumed at a local college, which had not evacuated its pupils.

#### **Life at Helmingham Hall**

There was no main sewerage, only outdoor earth privies: water from tanks supplied by wells; lighting was paraffin lamps; heating solid fuel fires. The Hall had two draw bridges, both operational. The moat and other lakes were well-stocked with fish and this offered a pastime for several of the male teachers. The estate was large with many deer and rabbits everywhere, the latter often being the main meat course for the evening meal. The owners, the Tollemache family were, I think, away but house and ground staff were still in occupation although we were supervised by the school teachers. One particularly I recall — Mr. Kempson, the senior master at Christchurch who had a fearsome reputation. Never in his class, I knew the symbol of authority was the cane permanently on his desk. At Helmingham he used it frequently (it came with him!) My bedroom, shared with three other boys, was above that used by him. One night, making too much noise, we were suddenly aware of his presence and the cane was vigorously deployed about our nether regions.

The Air Raid Wardens' hat in the Wellesley Road playground, which has intrigued generations of pupils, looks much jollier now it is brightly painted. It still has war-time shelving and lockers inside.



By day we all had to walk a mile or more to a local school for some basic education, the Christchurch teachers being with us. Lunch was invariably suet pudding with meat for first course and suet pudding with syrup for dessert! This may have suited the local children but was not to our liking and much was wasted, to the annoyance of the village schoolmaster who considered us to be ungrateful townies.

Helmingsham village was very basic; all water being collected from the pump. I think there was a local store but my recollections are hazy. All in all it was an interesting five months. I have never been back but perhaps one day I will make a visit.

#### **Gas Masks (From School Log)**

17.6.41 Gas Mask Inspection by Wardens (in Room 6) all day today. 250 examined (75 faulty)

18.6.4] Continued until Noon. A further 13] examined and 43 of these faulty.

20.6.4] Gas Mask DRILL (in accordance with L.E.A. 's wishes and Bd of Education Circular 1551/ 10th May 4]) practised today for the first time.

#### **Patricia Cardy 1935-1941**

(Written in 1948)

I started school just after my fifth birthday, but I think I should say that my education began some time before that, as I was fortunate in possessing an elder sister Eunice who was as anxious to teach me as I was to learn. I longed to go to school and eagerly learnt to write my name and address, and became familiar with letter sounds. I copied her way of drawing people and felt very proud of my efforts. I remember most poignantly the overwhelming dismay I felt when first parted from my Mother. I felt bewildered and desolate when led by a stranger into a classroom filled with children. Many of them were crying and had hankies pinned to their shirts and dresses.

The classroom was filled with rows and rows of solid-looking desks, in each of which two children sat. I was invited to choose my desk companion, and as I picked on a little girl who was seated next to her twin brother, my choice was disregarded and I was placed beside an extremely fat little girl, who repelled me so much that I refused even to look at her and sat in a most anti-social position with my back to my companion and my legs sticking out in the gangway. There were two classes within the one room, and these were divided by screens. To the best of my memory there were 45-50 in each class.

We had to pay a halfpenny for our daily bottle of milk and these were collected each morning in a large red tin. I later decided that my halfpenny could be much more profitably spent on liquorice bootlaces, black jacks or aniseed balls from the sweet man who could be found at the school gates with his barrow each morning. However, my naughtiness was subsequently discovered and I was duly punished.

We wrote our figures in chalk on sheets of pastel paper and put the appropriate number of dots by the side. I felt deeply humiliated on one occasion when I was publicly shamed for making two dots so large that they became fixed together. Figure eight was our chief difficulty. Curiously enough we were never taught to add except by dots. I have always been particularly weak at Mathematics and I found that even when I left the Juniors I could add together two numbers only by visualising dots. We learnt to read from very old-fashioned books, and I found the names of the children were unfamiliar. I had never heard of a little girl called Floss, or a boy by the name of Sid. Words such as dell, hob, and lad were not explained by the teacher and must have mystified many of us. And how depressing some of the reading matter was — “The bad lad sat in the sad pit.”

In the second Infant class we learnt to count and when we could each reach one hundred we were given a toffee. I remember keeping mine for weeks because I was so proud of it.

Once a week we had a singing lesson when we were amalgamated with another class. We had to sing up and down the scale before any songs were sung. Scripture stories were not a daily feature of the timetable, although we said prayers each day. Physical education was termed “Drill” in my Infant days, and as its name implied, it was a rather regimental business. We were divided into four teams and stood one behind the other either on the playground or in the hall. The movements we were required to make were mainly jerky and followed staccato orders from the teacher — “bend! stretch! one! two!”

I cannot recollect having any actual nature lessons in the Infant School but I do remember that in one class we kept caterpillars in jars and watched their progress with keen interest. At the age of seven the boys and girls were separated for Handiwork and Needlework lessons. I envied the boys for I hated needle work and didn't know one end of a knitting needle from the other. I was frequently in trouble because my hemming looked more like vertical tacking.

I well remember the day of King George V's death. The teacher asked us who had died and many children said the baker or the milkman. Children knew so little of the adult world then. How much wider is their knowledge of current affairs now with the television and wireless in practically every home. The Coronation of George VI followed the next year and we were each presented with a blue memorial book by the Lady Mayor, and taught to curtsy to her and say ‘Thank you, your Grace’. Later that week we were treated to a Punch and Judy Show in the hall, and I was very much frightened and tearful. Punch seemed to me a nightmarish creature, and I hated his peculiar strident voice, and wished he would stop hitting people on the head. Empire Day was celebrated each year. We would troop on to the playground, the girls in gay hair ribbons of red, white and blue, all proudly waving our Union Jacks. There would be a grand march round and then we would stand to attention to sing the National Anthem before returning to our classes. The junior department was on the Middle Floor, where almost immediately we were

taught to use pen and ink and to do cursive writing in place of printing. I had a gala year when I came top in every exam, although I was described as absent-minded by my teacher.

While hurrying home from school one dark evening, I was accosted by two small boys. One of them threatened to bash me but the other laid heavy stress upon the advisability of first ascertaining who my teacher was. Believing my own teacher to be of a rather meek and mild disposition I had the presence of mind to name one of the ogres on the staff (Mr. Kempson) and was immediately released by both boys who scurried away with all speed into the darkness.

In September 1939 I was evacuated along with hundreds of other children to Ipswich. Soon after our arrival many of us were told to attend a beautiful new school, which had been completed only a few weeks prior to our arrival. Most of us had emanated from the old type of school building and were delighted to find ourselves in a very light, airy building with rubber floors and sliding doors. In addition to all this, there was the luxury of inside toilets built for rainy days.

The London children were found to be ahead of the Ipswich children and until my return to Ilford three months later I had a delightfully easy time. Soon after I returned I was put in the Scholarship class. The headmaster, Mr. Blatchley, obviously needed a secretary, for on the day I entered this class I was delegated with another girl to spend a fortnight in the hall to assist the Headmaster. We took messages to class teachers; we made lists, counted school badges money, and also found time to have lots of fun too. A rota was made out for this duty and in due course our turn would come round again. We were highly delighted but I doubt whether our parents would have been had they realized what was going on. We no longer had any History, Geography or Nature lessons, and I was undismayed as hitherto they had proved so boring. Speech training lessons had not been thought of although many of us certainly needed them. We no longer had any drill or games and spent much of our time trying to work in the room reserved as an air raid shelter.

In September 1941 I set out for the Ursuline Convent School feeling very smart in my splendid new uniform.

#### **Warships Week – 20<sup>th</sup> March 1942**

Programme —

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> — 2.0 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. — Concert for all children

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> A 2.0 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. — Concert for parents of Infants

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> — 2.0 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. — Concert for parents of junior Mixed.

Thursday) 26<sup>th</sup> (2.0p.m. at Dane Central School for Junior Mixed)

2.15p.m Whist Drive for Christchurch parents.

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> Concert at Dane Central Boys' for Infants.

Weather permitting School will go into Adelaide Road to see the procession.

Excerpt from the School Log:

“Warships Week. By permission of the LEA the time table is in abeyance.

“A Concert has been arranged for ....parents. Every class is submitting 1 or more items but owing to time and absence and changes of Teachers. All these items could not be accepted. Items include singing, percussion band, plays. Dramatized stories. As class items and some dancing. singing, elocution and pianoforte solos for individuals.

“Miss Matthews and Miss Anderson will act as Stage Managers. Mr.Sutton with usual readiness has decorated and prepared the Hall and Stage — also provided lighting effects.



30.3.42 £149.14.0. worth of National Savings Stamps were sold in the School during Warships Week. Concerts and Whist Drive made £2 7for King George Hospital. "

### **Jack Dudley 1941-1946**

I started at Christchurch School when I was six or seven and I left in 1946 aged eleven when I passed the Scholarship to the Ilford County High School for Boys at Barkingside. I lived at 83 Balfour Road. During the war there were few staff and for a time we used to attend for half days, mornings one week and afternoons the next. My mother kept me home until I was almost seven and until the School Inspector caught up with us.

I have many memories. Crying most of the first day. And being in Miss Croft's class. She hit the back of my legs with a ruler because I was talking in Class. Miss Anderson, a young teacher who we all loved. Ginger haired Miss Williams who caned my friend who said "bottom" in answer to a quiz on parts of the body. Mr. Kempson, an ex RAF Sergeant, a good teacher who used to think he was still an NCO. He had a cane called Thomas. He made naughty pupils stand on their desks during lessons, feeling very foolish. He took the final Scholarship class. The terror of the Scholarship and the fear of not getting to Grammar School and having to go to the Secondary Modern next door.

The Headmaster was Mr. Blatchley who did a good job during the difficult wartime years. He caned my hand for kicking a football after the bell went. Of the pupils there was Molly Banthorpe who I thought I was in love with. David Nichols whose father ran an engineering shop in Ley Street. Jean Torrance who we all wanted to kiss. Nova Shipley, Rosie Brandon, Norman Morrish, a close friend in the Infants. Alan Watts, John Levin, Derek Bluston, Cyril Cymberg, all close friends in the later years. There was Wyndham who came into school later who was from South Africa and was extremely fair haired. We admired him because he could play tunes on his teeth with a pencil. And there was a talented boy, Dudley Stevens, who could sing very well, who made a successful career on the stage as a dancer, who died about 10 years ago.

We used to listen to the radio for lessons at certain times in the Main Hall and do Music and Movement when we all danced round and the boys would try to misbehave. At one lesson taken by a very elderly man we were issued with slates which must have been left over from pre-war years. The only heating was from coal fires in the classrooms and milk was warmed up in front of the fires for the mid-morning break. Morning assembly was for the whole school in the Hall and there was a system of monitors who carried out some simple tasks for the teachers. I never got to be one of those. I think I was a quiet shy boy most of the time. I was not evacuated during the war. We decided to stick it out at home in the Anderson and Morrison shelters but my family did go to the Midlands for a short time when the war became too frightening. My father worked at Plesseys in Ley Street which was making Radar equipment, and the railway line was near, so the bombing was very bad during the first part of the war. Later there were "Doodlebug" V1 flying bombs, and a V2 rocket fell on the Super Cinema opposite Ilford Station. Lucky it was empty. I used to go to Saturday Morning Pictures there.

### **Air Raid Damage**

From School Log - 31.1.44

Saturday Night — 29<sup>th</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> inst. The Dane Central School sustained damage by fire caused by incendiary bombs. (Xch although roof received slight damage was intact on all floors. ) Water caused further damage to the Dane — all floors — belfry — large part of roof bombed out. Dane Boys therefore to use Annex and Xch Top Floor until further notice. Our dinner room used by us only, not Dane.

## War Weapons Week 19<sup>th</sup>- 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1941

Dear Parents, War Weapons Week: Our School Effort. Next week, commencing May 19<sup>th</sup>, a series of concerts, competitions, exhibitions, and other items of interest, will be staged at the School for your amusement.

The children have already reached a high pitch of enthusiasm but the success of our efforts depends entirely upon you, so will you please, during this week, purchase all your National Savings Stamps, Certificates and Bonds at the School. The children will do their part, WILL YOU COME AND DO YOURS? We append a detailed time table and trust you will support every effort with true Christchurchian spirit.

Yours truly, L.A.A.Blatchly. G.I.Ewing

<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<b>Mon.19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>1.30 to 3.30</b>	- Dress Rehearsal for school children only. Parents not invited but selling centre will be open.
<b>Tues 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>2.00 to 3.30</b>	- Concert for parents and friends of children in classes 6, 7, 8, 9. Admission 6d.
<b>Wed 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2.00 to 3.30</b>	- Exhibitions of war relics, handwork, needlework, hobbies. Parents and friends of children in classes 1, 1A, 2, 3, 3A. Admission 3d.
	<b>2.30 to 3.00</b>	- VISIT OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR
	<b>4.15 to .....</b>	Jumble sale. Many bargains. All invited, bring your friends.
<b>Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>2.00 to 3.30</b>	Exhibitions (repeat) for parents and friends of Classes 6, 7, 8, 9. Admission 3d.
	<b>5.30 to....</b>	Whist Drive. Admission 1/- Please support. Commence 6.00 p.m. prompt.
<b>Fri 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>11 to 12</b>	Pageant in Playground. All admitted free.
	<b>2.00 to 3.30</b>	Concert (repeat) for parents and friends of classes 1, 1A, 2, 3, 3A. Admission 6d.

National Savings Stamps, Certificates and Bonds will be on sale from Monday to Friday during school hours. Bring your money, we will do the rest. Help us to make our school one of the busiest and most successful selling centres in the Borough. All Money raised on concerts, competitions etc. will be given to King George Hospital in the form of National Savings Certificates.

### Programme of Concerts for War Weapons Week

Class 1A      Song There was a mouse  
Class 2      Play The Wise Woman of Gotham.

Biddy (An old woman of Gotham) Myra Davies

William	Roy Gerken.	A short husband	Norman Clewer
Hodge	Alfred Orriss.	His tall wife	Barbara Ettinger
Soldier	Malcolm Kittle.	An old man	James Beckett
King	Peter Jonas.		
Men.	Peter Deilhenn, Peter Humphreys, Ernest Goodey		
Women:	June Darken, Barbara Quince		
Children:	Patricia Wheeler, Patricia Branch,		
Introduction:	Joan Hayhoe		

**Class 3 Play****King Alfred and the Cakes**

King Alfred	Laurie Torrance
Herdsman	Godfrey Boreham
Herdsman's wife	Rosalyn Williams
Edgar (their son)	Geoffrey Smith
Thanes:	Brian Wood, Michael Yeekes
Introduction:	Doreen Jones
Conclusion:	Vera Allars
Postscript:	Jean Stattle

**Class 6 Play****Don 't Sneeze**

The Man	Brian Smith
His Son	Alan Carr
The porter	David Dunham
Three goblins:	
Grumble	Jean Garstang
Grim	Pamela Neave
Grizzle	Beryl Prior

**Class 7 Play****The Old Woman In The Shoe**

Old woman:	Janet Aplin
Children:	Shirley Steward, Joyce Reading, Margaret Harding, Eileen Willats, David Abel, Lawrence Gaunt.
Fairy Queen:	Jean Hough
Fairies:	Sylvia Howells, Barbara Carpenter, Jeanette Stremke, Betty Allen

**Class 9 Percussi0n Band****Class 8 Play****the Queen of Hearts**

The Queen	Margaret Cole
The King	John Vaughan
The Knave	Brian Pagett
Messenger	William Stevenson
Maid	Pamela Savage

**Class 1A Play****Ten Little School Children**

English girl	Eileen Needham
Irish girl	Barbara Nobbs
Negro boy	Robin Watson
American boy John	Windhagauer
Chinese girl	Jean Day
Scotch girl	Patricia Saunders
Bush boy	Thomas Mudd
Egyptian girl	Rose Fellows
Indian girl	Rita Heins
Eskimo girl	Mollie Sewell

## **Peace**

The end of the war was marked with a distinct lack of emotion in the School Log —

8.5.45. School closed for today and two days following in consideration of Victory Day in Europe. However, they allowed a little unstiffening of upper lips —

11.5.45. School re-opened. The last hour of the afternoon was spent in victory celebrations in the playground. Class I entertained the school with a programme of dances.

A whole hour of celebration — they really knew how to enjoy themselves in those days!

## **Alan Jones - 1942-1948**

To begin with I was a very unwilling pupil. My first memory of attending the Infants was having to be dragged into school on the first morning by my mother . . . she was pulling me into school with both hands whilst I leaned backwards pulling against her in the opposite direction! Eventually (hearing all the noise) my first Class Teacher, Miss Jones, came to the rescue.

Miss Jones later married and became Mrs. Richardson. Other teachers who taught at Christchurch during my time in the Infants School were Miss Bracey, Miss Croft, Miss Denning and also Miss Randell, who joined the school a year or two later with Miss Jackson who was Head Mistress.

The Primary, or Junior School, on the first and second floors of the building was run by the Headmaster, Mr Blatchley. Other teachers included Miss Anderson, Mrs. Barfield, Mrs. Cooper, Mrs. Gayland, Mr. Kempson, Mr. Malyon, Miss Parry, Mr. Russell and Miss Williams. There was also a Mrs. Bennett who taught on an occasional basis.

My best friend throughout all the years I attended Christchurch was Tony Taylor who lived at 86 Coventry Road with his two younger brothers Trevor and Rodney Taylor. Other pupils I remember include Ralph Allard, Peter Atkinson, Ron Narnes, Roy Beatwell, Brenda Bennett (daughter of the teacher), Brian Couldron, Donald Crow, James Cundy and his aunt Elizabeth Cundy, David Hole, John Johnson and his cousin Raymond Tree, Fred Jones, Kenneth Playford, James Summers and also Ron Nightingale who lived close to the school entrance in Christchurch Road.

My sister, Doris Jones, also attended Christchurch from approximately 1928 until 1934. She remembers sharing a desk with Raymond Baxter.



**Lorna Power** (nee Barker) 1944-1950

My parents moved to Ilford from the Midlands in 1942 when I was just three. We left a new house and had to come to a rented house at 155 Thorold Road. My parents considered private schooling, but on talking to a head teacher at our church, she had no hesitation in recommending the local primary school, Christchurch Primary. So when the time came I started in Miss Stoneman's class. I remember playing with water and sand and that we sat on oval woven coloured mats to listen to stories. One day a girl wet her pants while sitting on one of these mats — I hoped I wouldn't have to sit on it later.

Although I made good progress, according to my reports which I still have, I did seem to get into all sorts of trouble. I walked to school from Thorold Road by myself and one day I saw some beautiful crocuses in a front garden. I went in and pulled them up and took them to my teacher at school. My mother was sent for and Miss Jackson somehow sorted it out. I remember standing in Miss Jackson's office and the silhouette pattern around the wall. I just could not resist flowers — I already knew the hundred wild flowers in the Will's cigarette card book (collected by my Grandad) by the time I was three. I had found many of them in the fields behind our house in Marston Green (Waryvickshire). Later on I got into trouble from my mother for picking wallflowers on someone's allotment. The allotments were on the other side of Thorold Road from us where some houses had been bombed flat.

Having had to move from the Birmingham area because of the bombing there, we then had to return to relatives when my father was called up. Because of this I missed certain weeks from Christchurch Primary in the spring of 1944. I did not like my 'evacuee' school and was glad to return to my school. At first School milk came in pint bottles and was poured into china and Bakelite beakers. They always smelled like milk and were not very white. One day I returned after lunch a few minutes late. I knew it

Should be an art lesson upstairs, but everybody else had gone into school and I couldn't remember the way to the painting room so I ran home again. A feature of the school I remember clearly was yards of passages lined with white tiles and the sparkly bits in the steps. All the classrooms had a brass slot on the door which said 'accom.50'. For a long time I thought it said 'acorn'.

My report from Miss Stoneman on July 25, 1945 had been duplicated on an agar jelly slab. My next teacher, class 3, was Mrs. Boyek, into this class came a new girl, Olive Sparrowhawk. I was chosen to look after her and we sat together. Each desk was made to seat two pupils, but they were of a very silly design. The top surface of the desk was hinged lengthwise, so that the front half could be lifted up. There was a shelf underneath with our books on it. When the front part of the desk top was lifted up the sides which were also hinged swung out and the whole thing collapsed with a tremendous clatter. Because of this commotion we were forbidden to lift the front part of the lid. One day the two children in front of us lifted their desk lid and the whole desk fell over. Olive and I thought this was incredibly funny and couldn't stop laughing, so in order to hide our faces, and without thinking, we lifted our desk lid too. To our horror our desk fell over as well and we dissolved into paroxysms of giggling. Mrs Boyek was so cross with us she sent us outside the door. I remember resting my hot cheek against the cool wall tiles still giggling with Olive. Along came Miss Jackson and smacked both our bottoms. I still cannot recount this incident without laughing.

When we were in the infants I remember a young teacher playing the piano we filed out of assembly and I am still reminded of this every time I hear the second movement of Beethoven's 'Pathétique' Sonata and the 'Entr'acte' from Schubert's Rosamunde.

In autumn 1946 I moved upstairs to the juniors and was in Class 4 with Miss Crofts. She was a kind, grey-haired comfortable-looking lady teacher. She read the Just So Stories to us and I have never forgotten them. We had a teacher for needlework, Miss Williams. She was young and glamorous with her hair up on top in curls and long varnished nails. She made us queue up for the next piece of embroidery thread which was often very short. Towards the end of ten Miss Williams asked me to ask Miss Crofts permission to go to her class to finish my embroidery. After playtime I returned to my own class. I was very surprised when Miss Crofts greeted me with a big hug. 'Where have you been?' she said, 'We thought we'd lost you'. In the spring ten in Miss Crofts' class my love of flowers got me into trouble again. My father kept hens in the back garden and as we had several varieties we had brown and white eggs. One day I saved the boiled egg shells from breakfast and made a humpty dumpty with a brown egg shell at the bottom and a white one at the top. I put thin plastic arms and legs on it and made the feet out of melon pips. I drew a face on it and took it to school to show Miss Crofts. On the way home carrying my humpty dumpty I passed one of the older boys who was carrying a small branch of cherry blossom. I thought this was so beautiful that I offered him my humpty dumpty in exchange. The next morning my cherry blossom was faded and I wished I had not parted with my humpty dumpty. I went to school and told Miss Crofts that this boy had taken it off me. Miss Crofts sent for the lad concerned and found out the truth. Miss Crofts let me know, very kindly, that I had been telling lies. Wasn't I a Horrid Child'?

After Miss Crofts' class, I went into Class 3 in the juniors with Mr. Russell. I remember being blackboard monitor in this class with Gwyneth Bennett. It was our duty to clean the board and write the date on it at the top. We were allowed to go into school early to do this and as I lived nearer the school than Gwyneth I always got there first. One morning she got there before me. She had managed this by not doing her hair before she came to school. She had long ginger plaits and they and the rest of her hair looked very slept in. We spent a lot of time drawing on the blackboard before we did our real job of leaving it nice and clean. The blackboard itself was very tall with a wooden frame mounted on a

wooden stand and it swung right over (probably regarded as very dangerous nowadays). The classroom had an open fire which burned coke. It had a heavy fireguard of black bars around it. There was a bucket of coke and a shovel which required a coke monitor. Milk now came in 1/3 pint bottles which came in a metal crate. This was put in front of the fire, especially when the milk arrived frozen and standing up out of the top of the bottles.

About this time the school acquired brand new gymnastic equipment. There were shiny benches, some wooden fences and high stools. The high stools had beautiful pale suede tops. We climbed, jumped, and wove ourselves in and out of The Apparatus in our vest and knickers. For a while, in Mr. Russell's class,

we had a student teacher, Miss Dunn. She was nice and kind and keen on nature study. I already had a couple of observers' books and from then on I was inspired to collect them all. I remember that we quite often used pastels in art lessons — very messy. Once we made a linocut. Sets of coloured pencils were not available. School pencils were plain wood 'utility' and only available in red, blue, and green and yellow.

One benefit of moving to Ilford was that next door lived a little girl a year younger than me, Thelma Baker. We became great friends and played a great deal together. We are still close friends nearly sixty years later. In the boys' playground was a large heap of coke next to the school building. The boys were always getting into trouble for running all over the coke heap and spreading it over the yard. Thelma and I thought that this must be great fun, so one evening, or perhaps it was during the holidays, we went to school when nobody was there and ran up and down the coke heap. Then we had another



Cinderella, 1950.

Back row: l to r; Mr. Blatchly, David Sawyer, Carolyn Dunn, Pamela Cattini, Alan Darrock, John Hare, Derek Daniels, John McIntosh, John Gibson, Mr. Kempson.

Middle row (standing): Alan Bourne, Janice Jones, Christine Moss, Anne Raymond, Jean Phippen, Keith Strudwick, Frances Harding, Maureen Dickens, Audrey Mutton, Frances Gardiner, Diana Amphlett, David Bellman.

Front row (seated) Jacqueline Underdown, Connie Lake, Maureen Sizeland, Gwynneth Bennett, Brian O'Neil, Pauline Lamood, Lorna Barker, John Bain, Bernard Brandon.

good idea. As we had never seen a boys' toilet we went in and had a look! The girls' toilets were also in a block across the yard. The toilet paper was kept in a National Milk tin in the hall and we had to collect what we needed before we went to the toilet.

There were some very large gates between the girls' playground and the Dane Secondary Modern School. We could see very little of the inmates but the place sounded terrifying to me.

Sometimes we had PT in the school yard. We stood in rows behind each other and jumped about and waved our arms. During these lessons we also played team games such as tunnel ball. There was no school field. What few sports there were in the juniors were held in Valentines Park. We had a barn, with an open front and a wooden seat running round the inside of it, to play in on wet days.

A memory of one small boy remains in my mind although I cannot place him in time. I can see him sitting by himself in the hall wearing a leather helmet and crying and sobbing loudly. I could not imagine why he cried too often. He could not or would not answer anybody. I wonder now if he was a Polish refugee or perhaps one of the children that Jewish parents in Nazi Germany managed to get out of the country. Other than the bombing we were too young to know other horrors of war or to be able to compare it with peacetime which we had not known.

In 1948 I moved up to Class 2, where Mr. Malyon was my teacher. My reports improved during this year: we certainly had a good grounding in the entire subject we needed before starting on the 11+ year.



Christmas 1946 Back row: I to K Rosemary Lay, Ann Harris, Doris Day, Christine Coles, Marion Fabian, Carolyn Goodey, \_ . Middle row: Maureen Bryan, Pamela Bacon, Sheila Gerecht, Colin Clewerl Billy Webber, Steven Foreman, Roy Sharland, Brian Hobbs. Front row: Brian Lamb, \_ , Margaret Wetherby, Margaret Mitchell.

My final year is the one I remember most vividly. Class 1 with Mr. Kempson (Kempo) was an unforgettable experience. He was not very tall and the top of his head was bald: across his head he combed a few strands of long hair from one side to the other. We used to man/ei at how this disobeyed the law of physics and never fell out of place. He wore a sandy sports jacket and grey flannels. He had piercing brown eyes and never smiled. He was very strict and had many different ways of keeping up in order and making us work hard. His aim was to get us all through the 11+ exam and we also shared this aim. The fact that nearly all the class of 45, half the year group, succeeded is testimony to his methods. He must have achieved a pass rate for the school that was way above the county average. Nothing was to be allowed to interfere with or distract us from his teaching. He kept our attention at all times by his lucid explanations and if we allowed our attention to wander for an instant punishment was swift in coming. He had a cane which he swished about, but never used on anyone. He didn't need to; inattentive or disruptive pupils were given essays for punishment. We sat in separate desks and got on with our work in silence.

Mr. Kempson kept a spare desk full of old exercise book paper and any whispering or other distracting behaviour was dealt with by a call to the monitor to give out paper for an essay to be written. One thing he could not bear was the banging of desk lids. If anyone dropped the lid he would immediately shout, "Essay quick, monitor, crash-bangin g around here making my head bad!", and the unfortunate scholar would have to fill two pages with writing about noise. I was given a punishment essay to write only once. As a special favour to a few of us who had finished early and done our work well, he allowed us to take out our Silent Reading books and read, while he taught the others. So well had he taught us to pay



attention that I continued to listen to him? He noticed this and pointing accusingly shrieked, "Essay quick, monitor, inattention, not reading your book!" He did praise us when we did good work but those children who were not up to standard were treated with sarcasm. The mistakes of some children were held up as an example to us all. "Give us the months of the year, he would say, "January, February, March, April, May, June, Larkspur!". This followed a mistake in an English test. There was a Geological specimen on the window sill. It was a piece of rock like part of a sphere about two inches thick. At any stupid answer or low mark, Mr.Kempson would point triumphantly at this rock, "Do you know what that is? It's a piece of skull." Mr. Kempson tried to ensure that we were well prepared for the next phase of our education. He did his best to teach us correct grammar, pointing out that if we did not know our own language how would we get on with a foreign language where words have gender. I can remember him saying: "You won't know what gender is, you'll think it's something to eat like a gander!"

One day Mr.Kempson asked the class a question. Nobody knew the answer. We felt the tension mounting as we cast about in our minds to find the right answer to please him. Suddenly he swung the cane angrily over his head and down sharply to the floor. He hit the chalk lying in the slot of the blackboard. It shot in two pieces across the room, one to the left, the other to the right. He bent his head right down to hide the fact that he was nearly laughing. We sat tight in our seats and did not dare twitch a muscle.

One day we heard that Princess Elisabeth (the present Queen) was coming to open some new flats at Budoch Court at Goodmayes. Three pupils from Mr. Kempson's class were chosen to represent the school at the opening. I was chosen along with Connie Lake and Stuart Berkovich. We were given bus tickets to get ourselves to Budoch Court. We were seated on a low platform at the back of a marquee, but we did not see the princess at all for all the adults standing in front of us. It was most disappointing, as apart from this occasion there were no visits out of school as there are nowadays.

Mr.Kempson had monitors for different jobs and we loved being chosen. There was an ink monitor who was required to pour ink from a large crockbottle into a white enamel teapot-like container with a slender spout and then to pour ink into each inkwell. There were monitors for coke, blackboard, milk and two duty monitors who sat in the hall working and were sent on messages by Mr.Blatchly, the head teacher. His office was upstairs above the cloakrooms with a small window which looked down upon the duty monitors in the hall. Here the secretary, Mrs.Suttle, would call the monitors and give them instructions. There were tea monitors for the staffroom, trustworthy scholars to make the tea or wash up. I could see my house and back garden from the staffroom window and could wave to my mother. One day we dropped a Bakelite saucer out of the window. Mr.Malyon's PT lesson was taking place in the yard. We crept downstairs fearfully, but managed to retrieve it without being seen.

The most enjoyable monitor's job I had was looking after the nature table. When there was no fire in the fireplace a blackboard was placed across the fireguard and this became our nature table. It was my job to find jam jars or fishpaste pots to put any specimens into. I had to identify these plants and write labels for them. Considering this was a town environment it was surprising how many varieties of flowers and grasses were brought in. Undoubtedly, bomb sites provided many of these examples. It was great fun to go flower hunting in neglected gardens of bombed houses. Rosebay willowherb, woundwort, black horehound, and many more were, to me, exciting to discover.

Mr. Kempson's military discipline ensured orderly entrances to and exits from the classroom. We would line up in silence and single file to come in. We sat in the order of where we came in the previous week's test. At the end of lessons, Mr. Kempson would give the order "Stand!", then "Gangways March!" We then filed out in silence by rows when told. Registration was called by our surnames. 'Amphlett, Barker, Bennett, Brown, Cattini, Collins, Cox, Dickens, Dun, Gardiner, Harding, House.' (That was the girls).

On Friday mornings Mr. Blatchly took assembly and hymn practice. During the last couple of years at school we had new hymn books and school uniform was introduced — gymslips and school beret. I was shocked and very sad to hear of his sudden death soon after I started at the Grammar School (Ilford County High for Girls).

With Mr. Kempson we worked our way with great thoroughness through arithmetic, from multiplication tables to sums and problems; English, from Spelling and dictation to reading aloud and composition, a whole paper on general intelligence, religious knowledge, nature, music, lettering, art and needlework (not for the boys, they did hand-work). Then came the day before the scholarship exam. We had to file past one by one and stroke Mr. Kempson's lucky elephant. If we hadn't realised it before, this moment



brought it home to us, that he was a most caring ally to all of us and really gave his utmost to ensure that we did well. I can never describe how wonderful it felt to hear I had passed for the grammar school. The rest of my academic achievements, at grammar school and university, rested on the thorough grounding I received at Christchurch Primary.

#### **Dave Sawyer 1944-1950**

I first joined the school in early 1944 in Miss Croft's infant's class along with about 45 other children. Although air-raid warnings were a normal part of the routine, adequate precautions were taken and we all accepted them. However, later in that year the V1 flying bomb became a real menace because of its unpredictability and surface blast effects. I believe that the parents of the Infants school were advised to have photographs taken of their children for identification purposes should the worst happen. So my mother duly took me to the photographer and together they conspired to produce this little piece of family history. Fortunately, the school escaped unscathed and with hindsight, the incongruity of this photograph becomes apparent.

In reality, the 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' wearing an immaculate white satin blouse, black velvet trousers and white bootees bore absolutely no relationship to the little oik in scruffy clothes, Elastoplast on both knees, front teeth missing and hair like fuse-wire recently energised, zipping around the school like a grasshopper on Speed !! If the worst had happened, I can just imagine the rescuers pulling my little body from the debris, holding the photograph up to the light and saying, "Aha! We know who this little chap is." Maternal delusion was ever thus!



Everyone has their childhood memories of special school friends with whom they may or may not have kept in touch with over the years, or they may remember some of the 'characters' memorable for other reasons. I remember one such individual who falls into the latter category. He was a boy called George.

I first met George in the Infants' school and was immediately fascinated by his appearance and mannerisms. He appeared to be constructed entirely from comers. Everything stuck out, ears, shoulders, elbows, knees etc. and his feet permanently pointed at 'ten to two'. Even his head was angular, complete with a very pointed nose on which was perched a set of pre-NHS spectacles. His other disadvantage was that he seemed to be completely devoid of physical coordination and moved in a peculiar jerky fashion rather like a poorly operated marionette. To make up for this however, he was of a friendly disposition, with a sunny nature, extremely energetic and possessed of a boundless enthusiasm for everything that he did. It was these qualities that made him a (painfully) memorable character to

me. Small children down the years have always had their favourite playground games and in the mid-1940's, we at Christchurch were no exception. The small boys had a penchant for fastening their raincoats at the neck using the top button only and without putting the arms into the sleeves, we would hold onto the bottom comers of the garment. With arms outstretched, we would swoop around the playground making aircraft noises whilst attacking each other in mock dog-fights. George was particularly fond of this form of play and would join in with his usual enthusiasm but Nature had another trick up her sleeve for him. For some unknown reason, after about ten minutes of extreme physical exertion, George's glasses would steam up, severely affecting his navigation. The net result was that he would hurtle round the playground like a demented bat, bouncing off walls, railings etc. and cutting a swathe through the children like a scythe through com. The carnage had to be seen to be believed. Field dressings were applied to knees, elbows and any other part of the anatomy that came into contact with either George or the playground and eventually he was firmly but kindly instructed to desist.

Being a reasonably obedient lad, he complied and for a short time injuries were minimised. To compensate him for the deprivation of his favourite form of play, George was first made 'Ink Monitor', swiftly followed by 'Blackboard Monitor' and the resultant devastation was unbelievable. We all trooped into the classroom one morning to find a beaming George looking like a diminutive Black & White Minstrel, covered in chalk dust and ink. The teacher was quietly sobbing in the corner of the classroom. I forget who the kind soul was now but her next move was to suggest an even more hazardous part for George to play in the daily routine of our class.

In those far-off days, certain calendar events such as 'Empire Day' and 'St. George's Day' were celebrated at schools around the land, often being marked by either a holiday or a rini-pageant. The teacher's suggestion for the class celebration of St. George's Day of allowing him to play his namesake was not well received by the Headmistress. Miss Jackson was appalled at the mental picture of George clutching a wooden sword and dustbin lid, chasing children dressed as dragons around the playground. The additional costume of a cardboard helmet and visor would have compounded George's steaming-up problems and the resulting destruction would have been on a monumental scale! The whole event was suitably toned down and by way of compensation; George was allowed to return to being a Spitfire once again with strict instructions to be 'more careful in future'.

I vaguely remember first seeing Mr. Kempson at some time during the middle 1940's and I seem to remember that he was in RAF uniform. Perhaps other ex-pupils may be able to confirm this. As we progressed through the junior school, stories were passed down to us by older pupils and some teachers to beware of this man. His reputation for discipline and hard work was formidable. He could create order out of chaos in the playground merely by appearing in our midst. A hard stare was enough to stop anyone in their tracks and even the rowdiest of boys were instantly on their best behaviour.

Finally, our tum arrived and in trepidation we entered our first day in Class 1. It lived up to our worst fears. Mr. Kempson allocated seats to all of us, carefully placing suspected idlers and troublemakers where he could keep an eye on them and a formidable eye it turned out to be, he missed nothing. He was, as old photographs show, a fairly short, stockily built man with thinning hair worn in a kind of 'Bobby Charlton' style. Copious amounts of nasal hair, searching eyes that missed nothing topped off with beetle-like brows completed the daunting visage. He always seemed to wear a light grey suit, which presumably was to lessen the effects of the vast quantities of chalk dust that he managed to produce.

On that first morning, he strode up and down in front of the class telling us exactly what he expected of us and that it was his task to see that all of us passed the 'Eleven Plus' exam. He left us in no doubt that this would be the case because we were 'all going to work very hard indeed!' He emphasized each point by whacking his cane on the desk, producing a fearful crack each time and I for one, shivered at the prospect at ever coming in contact with this formidable weapon. It was about three feet long, as thick as

an index finger and bound at each end with Elastoplast tape, which presumably was to prevent pieces flying off, thereby minimizing unintentional injuries. With one arm behind his back and head down, he would slowly stride up and down between the rows of desks, flicking the cane against his trouser legs. It produced the desired effect, for we kept our heads down and 'worked very hard indeed!'



Christchurch Junior Mixed Football team 1950

L to R, Back row: A.Dewar, J.Bain, J.Griggs, Mr.Brown, D.Sawyer, B.O'Neil

Front row." D.Stocker: D.Salmon, A.Bourne, M.Jonas, S. Woolf, R.Davis, D.Bellman.

The first few weeks passed, we began to relax a little and a few adventurous individuals began to test his mettle. Whilst furiously scribbling on the blackboard, his acute hearing detected a faint whisper at the back of the class. He whirled around and with unerring accuracy, a piece of chalk streaked across the room and struck its target. Then menacingly advancing towards the offending individual to retrieve the chalk, he grasped the hair just above the ear between forefinger and thumb and slowly lifted the unfortunate pupil to his feet. Impressive stuff! I always found the art of levitation difficult under these circumstances, because my knees always got caught on the underside of the desk whereupon he would proceed to issue admonition, finishing with the immortal words: "Is any of this sinking in boy?"

He had other ways in which he made his displeasure known and one of these was to employ rather gruesome rhymes to make his point. For example, using his cane, he would poke a boy in the chest and the prodding would emphasize the rhythm in the appropriate passage. I remember one day concentrating hard on a piece of work and chewing the end of my pen when he must have spotted this and prodding me

Rhythmically he intoned:

Little Willie from his mirror, licked the mercury right off

Thinking in his childish error, it would cure the Whooping cough.

At the funeral his mother smartly said to Mrs. Brown 'Twas a chilly day for Willie, when the mercury went down.

Another pupil, this time a girl, had told a small 'porkie' to evade trouble and calling her out to the front of the class, he placed his hand on her shoulder and recited to us all:

Matilda told such dreadful lies

It made one gasp and stretches one's eyes.

Her Aunt, who, from her earliest youth

Had kept a strict regard for truth,

Attempted to believe Matilda

The effort very nearly killed her

His masterpiece, as far as I was concerned however, came after a stern lecture about being too boisterous at break times, running down the stairs and possibly causing an accident in the process. He finished the lecture thus:

'There's been an accident!' they said

'Your servant's cut in half; he's dead!'

'Indeed!' said Mr. Jones, 'and please send me the half that's got my keys.'

I was most impressed and wrote it down at the time.

Another of his mannerisms was to write on the blackboard and then proceed to thump the text with the board rubber to make a point. Clouds of dust would issue forth and settle on the pupil who sat nearest to the board. Poor Peter who occupied this position on account of his myopia was the unfortunate recipient and after a while, would sneeze violently. A veritable dust storm would erupt from his head and set the rest of us off. Mr. Kempson would then retrieve the hooked pole from the corner of the room and open a window.

In due course and under his watchful eye, we eventually stepped up to stroke the 'lucky elephant' before taking the dreaded 'Eleven Plus' exam and I think that we all managed to pass. On the last day of term before finally leaving amidst a mixture of tears and whoops of joy, he gathered the whole class together. He told us that if anyone had problems settling in to in their new school, they would be welcome to come and see him at any time and I think that it dawned on many of us for the first time that he really did care about his pupils.

After the summer holidays, we all set out on the next stage of our academic careers in our new schools and on the first day I found myself confronted by a giant of a man with a booming voice. This was my new House Captain, the late lamented Bernard Bresslaw. He strode up and down in front of his new charges instructing us to join in as many of the school activities as possible. I therefore found myself belonging to the chess club, fencing club, debating society et al in short order. What a Carry On! This new life swept me off my feet and I quite forgot about dear old Christchurch school for a whole year. Our summer term finished about a week before the junior schools and I remembered Mr. Kempson's invitation. With a new-found confidence, I arrived at the door of Class 1 just before the mid-afternoon break and knocked quietly before turning the handle and opening the door. I was met by forty pairs of eyes staring with incredulity at this interloper who had the temerity to intenupt proceedings and a familiar face that was beginning to take on a shade of purple. However, noticing my new school blazer, his face broke into a smile and I was instructed to wait while he dismissed the class. He then invited me down to the staff room and over a cup of tea; he listened intently smiling like a favourite uncle, while I related my experiences over the past year to him. Finally, he escorted me to the school gates with his arm around my shoulder, encouraging me in a gentle voice to work hard but above all to enjoy myself. He shook hands with me at the gate and waved farewell, while I with a lump in my throat, threaded my way thoughtfully homeward. I did not go back to the school again for fifty years until the recent re-dedication and I never saw him again. After the re-dedication ceremony, I sneaked into the old Class 1 and stood in the same spot that I had occupied all those years ago and closed my eyes to absorb the atmosphere once again. I swear that I could hear a voice saying: "Is any of this sinking in boy?" It certainly was! It is axiomatic that 'Schooldays are the happiest days of our lives' and mine most definitely were.

In retrospect, Mr. Kempson carried out his task to the full, launching countless small people into the next stage of their lives, perhaps giving some of them the opportunity that they thought they would never have. He was, after all a man of his time and contrary to our first impressions and some painful experiences, a caring man who had a gentle side to his nature. He did his best for all his pupils. I will never forget him.

In those far-off dark days of WW 2 as I grew into infancy, music slowly began to impinge on my consciousness. My mother played the piano; the wireless (radio) was on all day for news bulletins and music of all kinds constantly filled the air. I was particularly fond of the 'Warsaw Concerto' which was played at least twice a day, when I would rush to the radio to turn up the volume only to be told to turn it down before the valves blew up! When, in 1944, my mother enrolled me at Christchurch school, she was told that the school had a very good track record in music and children of musical ability were particularly welcome. My fate was sealed.

She quickly engaged the services of a piano teacher and giving me a few starter lessons herself, packed me off complete with music case, to the teacher who lived in the next street. She would peer at me over her pince-nez spectacles intoning the notes of the scale whilst I, hypnotized by the metronome, became all fingers and thumbs. Reports were not good so my mother gave me extra practice on our piano at home, located in the 'front room'. At that time, 'front rooms' were only used on high days and holidays and to be seated at this imposing piece of furniture, complete with candleholders, was a dubious privilege. The piano was located on the opposite side of the room to a large bay window, so that anyone playing the instrument had their back to it. I was dutifully engaged in practice at about 4.30pm on a beautiful sunny afternoon in the mid-summer of 1944. The room was warm, mother was making tea and I was making progress, all was right in my little world. Suddenly I began to feel uneasy. I started shivering and felt the hair on my head begin to slowly rise. The room became icily cold and an unbelievable feeling of terror swept over me. Petrified, I leapt to my feet and knocking over the piano stool with a crash, fled from the room slamming the door behind me. I ran into the next room where our indoor Morrison shelter was located and flung myself under it, burrowing into the various cushions and pillows, which made up my bed.



1948 Mixed Swimming Team with MnMalyon, left. Boys Team members were John Wigington, David Newman, Barry Collins, John Newman, Eric Symonds and Philip Hornby.

Girls Team members were Kathleen While, Barbara Summers, Marion Carley, Rosemary Bunting, Pamela Wigington, Pauline Meider and Carolyn Bann with reserves Carol McDermott and Carolyn Goodey.





The 1946 choir consisted of:- Back row: Kathleen White, Ivan Sinkings, June Chapman, John Howe, Jacqueline Lescott  
 Next row: Mr Blatchley, ?, ?, Dorothy Stearn, Shirley Pearman, Tony Bennett, Miss Anderson  
 Next row: Marion Stockei; Edna Puttnam, Derek Bunting, ?, ?, Margaret Cole, Theresa Wright, Valerie Cox, Dudley Stevens, Jean Torrance.  
 Front row: Brian Cauldron, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, Dorothy Wickens, Joanne Cobb, Sheila Taylor Also in the picture unidentified are: Shirley Smith, Margaret Paine, Margaret Neave, Betty Smith, Janet Macklin, Audrey Nichols, Ray Hammond, Pauline Screech, Sheila Tayloi; Harriet gers, Michael Hayward, Ralph Allars, Peter Jones and Joan Cawdron.



### Prize giving - 1950

From School Log

13. 7.50 -Departmental Prize Distribution. Alderman John Barker Mayor of Ilford and the Mayoress attended school this afternoon at 3.0 pm. The Mayor presented the prizes and House Cups.



Prizewinners, left to right: Connie Lake, Maureen Sizeland, David Stockei; Marion West, Audrey Mutton, John Griggs and Lance Gunney (holding the Cricket Cup) with the Mayor and Mr Blatchly.



Festival Of Britain celebrations in the Playground - 1951

My mother, hearing the slamming of the door and noticing the absence of piano noises, came into the room and was trying to pull me out when there was the unmistakable sound of an explosion. The house shook, sounds of breaking glass were heard and it was obvious that one of the dreaded V1 flying bombs had landed nearby. When the dust had settled, my mother and I emerged from the shelter to look for signs of damage and after searching both upstairs and down, no evidence could be found. It was only when she opened the door to the front room that a scene of devastation was found. The whole of the bay window had been blown in and long slivers of glass were sticking out of the front of the piano. The poor thing was a total wreck but not half as much as I would have been, had I still been sitting there! The mess was duly cleared up, the front windows boarded over and the piano covered with a dustsheet. With the amazing resilience that small children have, I happily resumed my football practice in the garden, although feeling slightly miffed that someone out there obviously did not appreciate my playing. Piano lessons were to be a thing of the past but I have believed in guardian angels ever since!

The next obvious progression was to the Recorder and I was duly equipped with the said instrument that fitted snugly into a brown case. In spite of protestations from my father and a number of neighbours, I made good progress, even the cat returned home. I had no trouble reading the simple music as there was only the one set of 'telegraph wires' to deal with and I would quickly memorise each piece set for the class. I only had one problem, which was to get carried away sometimes and overblow the instrument producing, as most people will know, a piercing squeak. This was almost as disruptive as the earlier triangle incidents and I was constantly warned to play pianissimo.

Recorders, in common with all other instruments operated by human breath, suffer from the same problem of 'accumulated fluid' and mine was certainly no exception. Small boys down the ages have always had a pretty disgusting taste in the things that they eat and drink and the residue from my diet of bubble-gum, liquorice and fizzy pop condensing in the instrument was indescribable. The bacterial count would have been of great interest to Porton Down and the adhesive properties, when set, would put today's cyanoacrylates to shame! The obvious rules of hygiene were rigidly applied and my recorder was regularly taken apart and carefully washed to prevent organic welding of the two halves from taking place. Whilst actually in use however, the only remedy, was to point the instrument at the floor, shaking it gently and as anything performed gently was totally alien to my nature, the inevitable happened. After some months, the washing process must have weakened the joint between the two halves, as one day, during a practice, I shook my recorder and the class recoiled in amazement as the mouthpiece flew across the room and shattered against the wall. Much to everyone's relief, I never played the recorder again. Mother was getting desperate.

I was by now, moving up in the junior school and Mr. Blatchley was on the prowl for potential members of the school choir. Mother's optimism rose. I am sure that most ex-pupils will remember his selection process of walking slowly around an assembly of children who were singing, listening intently as he did so. He would smile benignly at each child that he chose and patted them on the shoulder. An attending teacher made notes and the chosen ones later informed of their selection. It was unfortunate that on the day that we had our collective audition, I had been chewing an infected piece of 'Spanish wood'. This was in fact, a rather stringy root of liquorice which not only did awful things to the digestion, but small splinters would occasionally lodge in the throat. It was a kind of juvenile chewing tobacco and most small boys were very fond of it at the time. My throat was very sore and my voice had declined into a croak when we were launched into our test piece. Mr. Blatchley must have instantly realised that something was amiss, as his usual smile was not present. With a worried frown, he was trying to work out how a bullfrog had managed to get into the hall to disrupt proceedings. Threading his way through the piping trebles, he stopped in front of me and blanching visibly, he gently but firmly placed his hand over my

mouth. Nodding to himself, he led me away to the far side of the hall and putting his fingers to his lips, silently guided me to a chair. There was obviously no place in the choir for Louis Armstrong impersonators and so ended my musical career at Christchurch School. Mother was inconsolable.

In 1947, I went to stay with a Flemish family in Bruges, ostensibly for the summer holidays. For reasons that now escape me, I ended up living with them for about four months. During that time, being an only child, I gleefully escaped from my new home whenever I could and blended in with the local families and their children. When I eventually returned to Christchurch School, the staff retreated in terror at this little horror who now spoke pidgin English liberally sprinkled with a stonking array of Flemish swear words. I was very popular for a time with the other boys who would bribe me with sweets to teach them some of the more colourful ones. To prevent the school from eventually descending into a form of bi-lingual anarchy, I was taken in hand by Miss Jackson for special lessons in order to return me to normality. I think she also objected to my smoking habit which I had also acquired. My parents were mortified.



Back row, L to R: Mr Kempson, Bridger Rommel, Pamela Tallett, , Carolyn Goodey, \_ . Front row." Philip Hornby, , Gillian Sabel, \_\_. Christine McLennan, Doris Day.

### Ronald Frost - 1945-1951

Of rationing and all that. Those old enough to have been around during and after the Second World War, albeit as young children, may remember being taken by mothers to shop in Ley Street, near the junction with Adelaide Road. Situated there was a range of shops at which ration books were to be used — especially for those families who lived fairly close to the school.

To jog a few memories, and to recall it as best I can, the following were some of the shops in question:

Humphries - The Butcher The Brothers Fellowes - Grocers (butter pats and bacon slices) Allens - Greengrocers Kippens - Bakers Two other non-ration book shops were Charlie Lowe (Ironmongers, Oil, Paraffin, Firewood, etc.) And Masons for Fish and Chips. Shopping in those days was a lengthy process — self-service had not been invented. For young children it became an exercise in patience, particularly when mums stopped to exchange news and to discuss wartime hardships.

Immediately after the War, I can remember greeting friends and simultaneously enquiring of their families' well-being with the phrase, "Hello, Tommy, (or whoever). How's your mother off for dripping?" Older readers will appreciate the significance of this.

### **Rationing**

Rationing continued for 9 years after the war, including sugar and sweets. This kept sweets in short supply and they became a valuable commodity. The School Log for 12<sup>th</sup> December 1949: The Infants School was burgled during last evening and 10lbs of sweets saved for the children's party were stolen. Somehow, it seems the sweets were replaced as the Log records for the 15<sup>th</sup> December — School party in the Hall, parents visited the school to see the decorations and tables... Each child received a present and two ounces (56 grams) of sweets from Father Christmas.

This situation continued into the Fifties but was starting to ease — School Log for 13<sup>th</sup> December 1951 — ...Christmas party in the afternoon. The parents had been most co-operative in supplying jellies and sugar Cakes were made by selected parents and we were fortunate in receiving two gallons of ice-cream from another parent. The tables looked most attractive with jelly and ice-cream, cakes, lemonade and crackers.

And school life returned to normal with staff returning from the services. The School Magazine 1946 —

### **Staff changes**

We are glad to welcome back to the school the following men teachers who have been serving with HM Forces, Mr.H.L.Kempson from R.A.E Mr. H. C.Malyon from the Army Mr.E.J.Russell from the Royal Navy I am sure they bring back a wider knowledge of the world, a far deeper understanding of their fellow humans and mayhap a greater sympathy for all human frailties. The school must profit from their wider experiences.

#### Miss Crofts Retires

1952 Newspaper Report —after 38 years teaching at Christchurch School, Miss G.M. Crofts retired on 24<sup>th</sup> July, when presentations were made to her on behalf of past and present pupils and staff. An armchair was presented to her by pupils on Wednesday and on Friday the Staff handed her three volumes of Cowards' Handbook of British Birds. During her life she has spent much of her spare time bird watching. Miss Crofts received a handbag and a cheque from former pupils on Thursday. The presentation was made by Alderman Colvin. Alderman Colvin said that the work of the teaching staff in Ilford had earned a reputation second to none in Essex. Teachers such as Miss Crofts had been largely responsible for this. "I thank you very much indeed for the magnificent and grand work you have done, not only with the scholars at this school, but for this town and the County of Essex," he said. Miss Crofts replied saying that she had enjoyed her work at the school. It never seemed that spending 38 years at one school was like getting into a rut. Every year the scholars had been deferent in temperament and character Miss Crofts also received a bouquet from 12-year-old Margaret Mitchell, a former pupil now at the Ilford County High School.



Maypole Country Dance team, Festival of Britain 1951



Front row: Margaret Young, Valerie Austin, Rosemary Cunningham-Snell, Margaret Grist, Frances Cowie, Kay Lowi

### **Mary Winter (nee Turner) - 1948-1955**

My earliest memory of Christchurch is Miss Snowden who was my teacher first year juniors. We were the last class she took before retirement. She taught us "joined up writing" and I remember sitting round the fireguard with a lovely coal fire roaring while she read us *Worzel Gummidge*. Some of us were taken to visit her at her home in Billericay (which was then a small village) after she left.

Mr Malyon took us swimming and encouraged me in that, not with a lot of success I have to say! In my last year I remember going to the grocers and asking them to meet the large Kellogg's Cornflakes boxes from which St. Paul's and the other buildings in the pageant were made.

Coronation year was the year we all walked over to the Regal Cinema and watched the *Conquest of Everest* and stood in the playground singing *Land of Hope and Glory* and *Hearts of Oak*.

### **Mr. Pethybridge's Pageants** from School Log -

13.7.55 — Open Air Pageant "London in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century" presented in the Boys' Playground from 2.15 to 3.05. Part I "The Plague", Part II "The Fire", Part III "The Rebuilding". Two 10ft x 6ft x 14ft models of St. Paul's old and new were constructed for this Pageant by Mr Malyon. 180 children took part from IA, IB, IIA and IIIA. Parties of 20 from Newbury Park and 30 from Gearies J.M. were present. Also the whole of the Infants Department formed the audience. 14.7.55. — The Pageant was repeated in the Girls' Playground before more than 300 parents. Miss M. Neve, County Drama Adviser for East Essex, was present and expressed appreciation. Tea was served to visitors in the Staff Room afterwards. Several parents have written in a complimentary manner. (Rehearsals in "school time" commenced only 8 days beforehand.) The script was entirely original.

Children from class 1 and class 1A – 1950 – Golden Jubilee Celebration



**Front Row** Frances Harding-Gwyneth Bennett- ?- ?- ?-Michael Butcher-?-Christine Moss- ?-Gwen Turnbull- ?

**Second Row** Pauline Larwood- ?- ?-Marion West-George Hogarth-Michael Jonas- ?- ?-Terry Darrant- ?- ?

**Third Row** Brian O 'Neil-Jaqui Underdown-Connie Lake-Barbara Preston-Maurice Cackerton-John Bain-DianeAmphlelt- ?-John

Hare-Alan Bourne-John McIntosh-Henrv Puttnam-Audrey Mutton-Birgit Rommel- ?- ?

**Fourth Row** John Griggs- ?-Gillian House-Frances Gardiner»Pamela Cattini-Maureen Dickens-Carolyn Dunn-Lorna Barker- ?-David Stacker-Jean Phippen- ?-Maureen Sizeland- ?-Michael Brown-Derek Daniels-Peter Wright-David Bellman-Joan Brown-Anne Raymond.

**Heads at back**?-Derek Gooch-Alan Darroch

**Carolyn Dennis** (nee Goodey) 1945-1951

Around the time of V.E. Day in May '45 we were all given a copy of a letter from King George VI and a bag of sweets wrapped in something that looked like pale blue satin. We were told that we were being given the sweets because everyone was happy about the war being over and I wondered how it was possible to live without a war going on since I'd not known anything else at that point.

A month or so before the above we had an air raid practice. We were escorted into the shelter which, I seem to remember was to the left of the Wellesley Road gate. The shelter seemed very dingy and felt cold. I didn't enjoy the experience.

When we were in the junior school, around 1948, there was a raffle for a banana! I had never seen one and I don't think I'd even heard of such a thing at that time. The whole school assembled to see the boy who won the raffle being presented with the banana. I thought he was really lucky in spite of the fact that it was a rather small green specimen. I thought that was what bananas were like for another couple of years or so until they appeared in the shops.

I remember having to walk across the playground, often in wet or cold weather, to go to the outside toilets. I remember the dreadful smell that permeated the school when the dinners were delivered each day. I remember playing all kinds of different games at playtime, particularly "two balls" against the wall and "bumps" with a long skipping rope. There were various rhymes to go with this and it involved staying in the air long enough for the rope to go under the feet twice at certain points in the rhyme.

When we were in Mr Kempson's class there was a boy called Dennis Salmon who often seemed to be caned. He was taken just outside the classroom door and one day the end of the cane flew off and came into the classroom. I used to feel really sorry for him.

**Frances Pullan** (nee Butterworth) 1947-1952

My teachers were Miss Crofts, Mr Brown, Mr Malyon, Mr Kempson, Miss Dane and Mr Pethybridge the Headteacher. I also spent two terms in the infants with a teacher possibly called Miss Fewtrell.

A few memories.

Assembling in the hall to hear the announcement of the death of King George VI.

Singing the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers".

Taking one's turn at being school monitor — two of us would sit at desks in the hall, having been given work to do. We were responsible for running errands for the headmaster and ringing the bell at the end of lessons.

Free school milk usually served warm (unintentionally) which put me off milk for a very long time.

Keeping silkworms.

An outing to High Beech.

Skipping games in the playground.

Jumping off the steps at the school entrance, I managed to twist my ankle, having jumped off the highest — it is still swollen today!

Going camping at Hope Cove and being intensely homesick.

The cane being used, particularly by Mr Malyon and Mr Kempson.

Intense pressure from Mr Kempson leading up to the 11 + examination, doing endless practice papers, especially intelligence tests and chanting tables.





Recorder Class - about 1950

**Back row**, l to r: Keith George, Pat Jones, Jean Kershaw, Dorothy Biggs, Janet Smith, Maureen Gibson, Helen Harris, \_\_, \_\_, Pat Watling, Edwin Mutton, Mr Brown.

**Third row**: Miss Croft, \_\_, Gloria Milne, Blanche Leach, \_\_, \_\_, \_\_, Silvia Condon, Marion Ettingei; Geraldine Lepine, Sonia Bramley, \_\_.

**Second row**: Josie Pardon, Ann Britten, Maureen Tascher, Jean Howells, Lesley Butcher, Olive Dean, \_\_, \_\_, Susan Kiekny, \_\_, Joan Harley,

**Front row**: Laurence Miustone, Alan Lander Brian Bundy, \_\_, Christopher Goodey, \_\_, Keith Plaister, David Hart, \_\_, \_\_.

**Festival of Britain** from the School Log

21.6.51. — dancing in Valentines Park this evening. Maypole and Country Dancing. Teams from this department took part.

**Pamela Parker** (nee Newman) 1947-1953

I started at Christchurch in Miss Stoneman's class. During the first morning we were taken out into the playground and I must have been daydreaming because when I looked around all the children and Miss Stoneman had disappeared. After a panicky few moments I ventured round the corner of the building and was relieved to see the class in the big playground.

There are a few infants' memories:

Never having a 'go' on the drums or cymbals being very wary of the boys. Managing to never visit the outside loos, not in 6 years. Taking our own toys to school on Friday afternoons. Going to school in the holidays to have the free milk.

In the juniors we had Miss Croft, who didn't like girls tucking their hankies inside their knicker legs. Then we had lovely Mr. Russell, who patiently trained our lively class to dance very complicated patterns round the maypole. We wore red, white and blue and danced in the park for the Festival of Britain celebrations in 1951.

Mr Malyon was strict but good humoured. He took us swimming which involved a lot of walking in twos and a bus ride along the High Road. It was a good outing every week. Mr Malyon took a very glamorous lady to the gala; she had a shot silk bow in her hair. Mr Malyon warned us about what life was going to be like next year in Mr Kempson's. He said he would see us falling past his window in little pieces.

We would see Mr. Kempson's class standing at attention in single file outside his door and then at the command of 'Quick march' march silently and smartly into a dreaded unknown.

There was a lot of tension involved in being in Mr. Kempson's class. If you knew the answer to a question you put up one hand; if you didn't know, you put up two. To answer you began with 'Please Sir' and ended with 'Sir'. Many playtime detentions were given, and Mr. Kempson was never seen without the cane, which he constantly flicked against his leg. He would often leave the room and peep through the window in the door in the hope that someone would be speaking. We were called by our surnames and drilled as if we were army recruits. Even the trip to High Beech was a grim affair, made worse by the cocoa from the hotlock.

The Coronation was that year. The coal was cleared away and a garden was put in the space in the boys' playground. This involved the 'sensible' children working very hard while the rest of us sat silently in the boys' shed. For the celebration we all learnt 'Land of hope and glory' by heart, but otherwise most of us sat in heavy silence during rehearsals and the performance.

Other than the 3 Rs there was a needlework lesson each week with Miss Dane, which involved a lot of unpicking, an enjoyable art lesson, and a radio nature programme. We did a lot of intelligence tests in class one, and learnt some poems by heart. 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' has proved very useful whenever I have needed to recite from memory! Mr Kempson did have very memorable gym lessons. We were very good at making human pyramids and standing on our heads.



1952 - Recorder Band

**Back:** Miss Dane, ---, Josie Pargon, Sonia Bramley, ---, Marion Ettinger, Elaine Dean, David Hart  
**Third:** Janet Smith, Geraldine Lepine, Joan Harley, Blanche Leach, Maureen Gibbon, Pat Watling, Hilary Smith, Jean Kershaw.  
**Second:** ---, ---, ---, Christopher Goodey, ---, Brian Bundy, Susan Kirkby, ---, ---.  
**Front:** ---, ---, Keith Plaister; ---, Edwin Mutton, ---, Jean Howells, Helen Harris.

1952 - Swimming Team with Mr. Malyon  
 Front row, left to right: Helen Fox, Barbara Cash, Pamela Newman, -----.

Mr Kempson demoralised us by telling us we would fail the scholarship, but the day before the exam we had to stroke his lucky elephant.

Assemblies were serious. I was publicly smacked twice. Once was for pretending to be blind and knocking over the only girl in the school who had a broken arm. The other offence I'm too ashamed to admit to!

I can just remember Mr Blatchly as a stem and distant figure with vast detentions of children crouched on the hall floor.

Mr Pethybridge was gentler and taught us the hymn 'Master, the tempest is raging', which he rightly said we would remember all our lives.

In spite of everything we were able to giggle a lot with our friends at playtime. The skills I learnt in Christchurch playground impress my grandchildren today. I can juggle two or three balls and remember all the rhymes, I can play fivestones and swingball, and I'm not bad at marbles. I wish I could skip and play 'higher and higher'.



## The Coronation - June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1953

From the School Log:

21.5.53. Coronation Service. Councillor L. V. Drew, Chairman of the Board of Managers, was present at a special morning assembly. A Prayer for the Queen was led by the Headmaster. A hymn was sung, the Scripture lesson read. Councillor Drew then presented one child from each class with a souvenir book "Royalty in Essex".

Coronation Celebration. From 2 to 4 p.m., in the Balfour Road Playground, all the children and over 500 parents saw National and Maypole Dancing, a Pageant of Service to the Country, and sang Coronation and national songs. Afterwards the visitors were invited to see the decorated School Hall, and Souvenir Books were distributed to all children.

22.5.53. School closed for Whitsun and Coronation holidays at 4 p.m. today. (School reopened 4<sup>th</sup> June.)

10.6.53. The whole school and staff and 10 adults for supervision visited the Regal Cinema this morning to see "Elizabeth is Queen Cost of admission, 6d per child, was covered by the sale of programmes on 21.5.53., so all children went free of charge.



Wellesley Road Coronation Party, June 1953, in the bottom hall of the school



1952 Netball Team Back row, left to right: Mrs. Fewtral, Ann Ruckman, Elizabeth Lyons, Christina Dean Front row: é , Rita , Ann Allen ?Jennifer Gibbon ?

1953 - Coronation celebration? Scottish dancing in the playground. Front left then clockwise: David Hart, Geoffrey Lann, Jean Howells? Sonia Brantley, Brian Bandy, , Edwin Mutton, Helen Harris.



Centre back: Terry Phillips. 5th row: Howard Bretman, Janet Morris, Joan Harley, Sonia Brantley, Pat Watling, Graham Raine. 4th row: Sylvia Condon, Dorothy Bills, Hazel Honeyman, Olive Dean, Blanche Leach. 3rd row: Gloria Milne, Lesley Butcher Pat Jones. 2nd row: Maureen Gibbon, Helen Harris, Linda Passfield, David Hart, Geraaldine Hay. Front: Ann Bruten, Jeaan Kershaw.



Fire Dance - 1955 Part Of Mr Pethybridge's Pageant of 17th Century London. Dancing to "Hall of the Mountain King"

**Barbara Haler (nee Newman) 1949-1956**

My earliest memory of Christchurch School is before I actually started, coming in during the holidays with my big sister to have our milk. Not every child would come for their bottle of milk so there was some over for younger brothers and sisters. I remember standing just inside the doors by the glass roof and trying to suck milk up a squashed and disintegrating paper straw. Did the teachers have a special instrument to make triangular holes in the milk bottle tops?

In Miss Stoneman's class, in the big corner classroom I remember having the honour of looking after the blue tea set, until I was caught drinking water out of the teapot spout. We stood in a circle round a big table to read *Mother, Mother See kitty* and I mouthed the words along with everyone else, dreading my turn. We had soft-covered Beacon Readers with word lists at the back and yellow and brown pictures. We played scores in the shed with the bigger girls, one of whom was always Miss Hope. The rest of us sat on the gritty concrete and put our hands up. The game was always called scores, not schools. I dreaded being caught by the chain of children who would encircle you and chant Pinch or Punch or join in the Ring. I never wanted to join them because the chain ran so fast you were dragged over, but the alternative was too dreadful to contemplate.

We did a lot of skipping, running into and out of a long rope, chanting "Keep the kettle boiling you mustn't miss a loop". Most people had their own ropes, and we competed on how many bumps we could do.

In the 4s in the juniors, Mrs Lankester memorably said, counting me there are 50 of us in this room. Poor Mrs Lankester. I remember the red handprints her slaps left on my legs, which is presumably how she coped. I liked Mrs. Alsop in the 3s, and used to go with my friends and meet her as she walked to school from Warwick Gardens, to help carry her bag. And it was while in her class that dear Mr Malyon



The rebuilt St. Paul's after the Fire of London. With Mr Pethybridge, Mr Malyon (the builder) and assorted Puritans.

Picked me out to help paint the scenery for the school play. The Plague It was a huge model of old St. Paul's Cathedral, and seemed to me to be quite magnificent. I have no pictures of it, but I remember painting zig-zag Norman arches. The following year when I was in Mr Malyon's class he built what seemed to me a lifesize model of the new St. Paul's for the second part of the pageant, The Great Fire of London, and I proudly helped paint that one too.

I remember enjoying country dance lessons, and the dance Thady you Gander, which I thought was Thady Uganda. We performed some country dances at a festival at the Town Hall, all the girls in matching skirts and sashes. The Town Hall stage seemed very small for us to dance in and the slope was most off-putting.

Mr Pethybridge wrote plays, some in rhyming couplets, for the children to act. Apart from the pageants that were presented at the Town Hall, he wrote Cinderella when we were the top year. I was shocked and delighted when he arrived in a hymn practice and sang Any Old Iron to us, just like a music hall act. It made such an impression on me I can still picture it now. Never in my experience had an adult ever before tried to please or entertain children. On the one occasion I was Hall Monitor I don't think I had to run any errands. The little bay window high in the corridor wall over the cloakrooms would open and the School Secretary calls down for the monitor. I think I sat and did the required pages of Objective English (soft brown cover) and Fundamental English (soft green cover), glad of the peace and quiet away from Mr Kempson.

The work was constant practice for the 11+ arithmetic, English and intelligence tests, with an exam once a month. We were sat in order around the classroom after each exam, according to our position. We sometimes painted on Friday afternoons, but often missed this as a class punishment. We had a weekly recorder lesson with Miss Dane, and for some reason I remember the whole class standing on their desk seats in one recorder lesson, presumably as a punishment for something. We listened weekly to radio Nature Study programmes, and History programmes, the only thing I remember from this was drawing a Ballot Box. We had little green books to do this work in, with lines at the bottom and space at the top for

a drawing. The middle finger of my right hand was always blue from the inky pens, and it was terribly difficult to write neatly. The nibs got full of lumpy fibres from the soft paper we wrote on.

At the Christmas Fancy Dress party my mother made me a Mad Hatter's outfit with tail coat and my Grandfather's top hat. I took the hat off to dance the Gay Gordons and Mr Kempson put it on. He wore it for the rest of the afternoon.

The day before the 11+ exam we were given a pen holder with a new nib in, and a spare nib. I lost my spare nib on the way to Dane School on the morning of the exam. Was it the afternoon, back in school, or the next day, Mr Kempson collected in the spare nibs? Why I didn't say I had needed to use it sir I don't know. I said please sir I had lost it sir. When? Please sir on the way to the exam sir I said. You can imagine the anger and ridicule that provoked.

Before leaving Christchurch I collected autographs from everyone, like all the children did. Mr. Kempson wrote the same thing in most people's books. I think he chose a new verse each year. Do not waste time for that is the stuff life is made of. I've remembered that, and how to dance the Gay Gordons, (now 'Gey Gordons' I read in the paper) and chunks of The Inchcape Rock, and if you want a drawing of a ballot box you have only to ask.

#### **Frances Wackett** (nee Eggington) 1949-1956

One memory my mum told me of Andy's early days at school was of him being brought home by the Infants School secretary at arm's length with very full pants and trousers. Mum's reaction was to take him straight up to the bath and peel him off there.

I remember Sports Day in Valentines Park. In the egg and spoon race, on the word go my legs locked and I fell flat on the ground. Me. Pethybridge picked me up and then proceeded to inspect the ground — for holes? I have fond memories of Mr. Malyon's kindness when I first attempted to swim a length — it took me three shots. I remember Mr. Leach and his plimsoles box. If you picked a small size he changed it for the largest. It was better to pick a middle sized one to be punished with.

I remember Mr.Pethybridge and his 'lines' competition with Gerald Francis (a pupil) during Gerald's last week at school.I remember Alan Jarvis'sjackdaw standing outside St.Clement's Church while we were going in for our Christmas Carol Service and telling people to "Come along in". The jackdaw's name was Satan.

I remember being a flame with a costume of yellow, orange and red crepe paper, performing to the 'Ride of the Valkiries'.

I remember the milk bottles being warmed by the side of the fire after being brought in with their tops half an inch above the bottle. I remember being taken home by a pupil of Dane when a real peasouper came down before home time.

#### **Janice Langfield** ~ 1952-1957

I have many memories of Christchurch. I can remember my first day. It was in November 1952 and it was pouring with rain. I moved house in October 1957 so had to leave. One of my clearest memories is one that is probably shared by every pupil who ever attended the school and I often think of it. Friday hymn practice. Every Friday morning the whole of the





#### 1954 Country Dance Team

**Back:** Mrs Fewtrell, Eric Kendrew, Colin Seaman, John Perry, ---, David Watts, Rodney Phillips, Mrs. Alsopp.

**Fourth:** Michael Holdsworth, Pauline Ruckman, Leslie King, Sheila Haynes, Marion Kaye, Ann Taylor; Janet Kline, Margaret Baker Ian Wealthy, Malcolm Allen.

**Third:** Rita Chandler; April Heasman, Pat Payne, Jean Harris, Kay Richmond, Cherry Parker, Rosalind Bye, Barbara Newman, Pat Gordon.

**Second:** Valerie Barnard, Sandra Morris, Carol Stevens, Pat Summers, Diana Tigue, Kay Broomfield, Carol Rickwood, Audrey Hay.

**Front:** ---, Christopher Warren, Robert Day, Lesley---

Primary school had to practice hymns. The top floor was used by the top two years and the middle floor the lower two years of the school. Of course after a while, with the teacher making us practice the same hymn over and over until we sang it to her satisfaction, we would start to get bored with it all. This is where Mr Pethybridge was a very wise headmaster. He would let us practice for a long time and then he would visit each floor in tum and tum the practice into a fun period while also getting us to sing the hymns for him. Where the teacher had used "hard teacher tactics" he came in like the jolly uncle, telling us stories and making us laugh a lot. It broke the monotony for us as well as obviously giving support to the teachers who were blessed with this job each week. We used to wait for his visit. It was always the same routine. The top floor first and then the middle. When in the middle hall one always know when he was about to come because we could hear the other floor practicing above us and then all of a sudden there was a change in the singing and then lots of laughter. We used to look at one another and think "he is on his way".

Prior to Coronation Day we had a visitor to the school who spoke to each class in tum. I was so young I cannot remember what the talk was about but I remember being given a book which I still have. Every child in the country received one. Just before Coronation Day we had a Mayfair in the playground which was a special event for the Coronation. It was a sunny day as I remember it. I was in the first year infants so we just sat on mats and watched the older children. There were



1955 - The two oldest year groups perform the Pageant of the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of 1666. The story included Newton demonstrating gravity with a bucket of water and Harvey proving to Charles II that blood circulates round the body.

Maypole dancers and a May Queen. The Maypole was probably borrowed from St. Margaret's Church just up the road on the corner of Perth Road. They had a Mayfair every year. I remember school plays at Christmas time and the carol service at St. Clément's Church and mothers used to come along to the church too.

During the war my father was not able to go in the forces as he had injured his thumb badly prior to the war. It did not bother him but it kept him out of the forces. Away from work he was a local part-time firefighter during those years when everyone had to do their bit. I can remember my mother telling me that one night there was a fire at the school and she went up the road to watch as one does in these situations. My father and colleagues were inside the school and she could hear him giving our orders to the others although she could not see him. I do not know what started the fire, whether it was directly due to the war or not, but it must be in the records somewhere.

Another very strong memory I have and one that made a very big impression on me is that we had quite a lot of children at the school on my time that came from Dr. Bamardoes Homes. There were a few in my own class. At the end of the day I can remember coming out of the school gates and there was a coach waiting to take the children back to Bamardoes. Being so young at the time I believed all the children at the home were orphans. It was not until later I realised that some of them were there for other reasons, even short-term ones. I can remember feeling very sorry for them and thinking how lucky I was that I only had to walk down the road a little way and my Mum and Nan were waiting for me to arrive home and that my Dad would be coming home from work soon. From one of the staircases in school I could look out of the window as we all went past and I could see into my garden and on Mondays I could see my Mum hanging out the washing.

#### **Staff**

Relations weren't always good between the Infants and juniors. Note in the School Log – 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 1952 On Tuesday when Mr Clulow's sister rang, Miss Hope answered the phone. On hearing that the caller wished to speak to Mr Clulow, she replied. "This is my lunch hour. I don't know where he is, and if I rang upstairs there wouldn't be any reply." She then cut off the call, having made no endeavour to assist, or even to take a message which could easily have been delivered by a child ... or even a teacher! As it was intended for a teacher. D.G.Pethybridge

**Andrew Charles Eggington 1946-1982 at Christchurch 1952-1958**

My brother Andrew was five in November 1951, and I should imagine he started at Christchurch after the Christmas holidays. He was not an angelic little boy despite his mop of platinum blond hair and must have had many a scrap with or without his best friend Tony Rickwood. He, like me, travelled through the school below A stream but he was an athletic boy doing well in running, swimming and high jump.

From Christchurch he went on to Dane and got high enough grades to attend H.M.S. shore bases Collingwood and Fisguard for Officer Training.

On entering the navy it was discovered that through a mix up at birth registration his full name was Anthony Charles Andrew Charles Eggington and it is this that is found on the Falklands Memorials in London, Portsmouth and the Falklands. The memorial plaque in St.Margaret's Church says Andy.

His first ship was H.M.S. Galatea and his last H.M.S. Sheffield. Sheffield had been on sea trials since October 1981 and was on its last leg towards home when it was ordered to join the Task Force going to the Falklands. H.M.S. Sheffield was hit by an Exocet missile on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1982 and Andy was killed in the Control Room doing the job he had trained for.

He was based at and lived in Portsmouth with his wife Christine who he married on April 6<sup>th</sup> 1972. They had no children. By Frances Wackett

**Diane Sharman 1952-1957**

My first memory of school was being in Mrs Beale's (I think) class where my best friend Christine Barber was. In this class was my first boyfriend Peter Brown. As a present I gave him a one of my dad's billiard balls as a giant marble, much to the concern of our teacher and my father. Other teachers I think were Miss Shoulder, I remember her for the way she gave a good smack on the inside of the arm! And Miss Philpot, the prettiest teacher I'd ever had. I think there was a Miss Truelove. I think the headmistress was Miss Hope and in the juniors Mr Petherbridge.

In 1953 we celebrated the coronation by having a pageant and each class did a nursery rhyme. Our class did 'I had a little nut tree' and I was 'I'. My only claim to fame. My mum made me a yellow dress out of crepe paper and I had to dance round the tree. My best friend Christine Barber was the maid hanging out the clothes in 'Sing a song of sixpence'. This all took place in the playground.

I can remember that once a week we used to listen to a radio broadcast on nature and this particular one was on 'bluebottles'. We then had to write about them, and then read them out. One poor unfortunate boy hadn't been listening and started to read, "Bluebottles are made of glass and we have drink in them." I think he had only got that far when Miss Shoulder of smacking on the inside of the arm fame, called him out and proceeded to smack him on the inside of the arm. For those of you who in these days do not get smacked it was ouch!!



Some names of friends and pupils, Christine Barber, Ashley — Bond, Judith Brodie, Cherry, Kay (older than me) Victoria with long plaits, Peter Brown. My brother Christopher also went to the school. He is 15 months younger than me so wasn't there long and has very little memory of his time there. We lived at 81 (now changed to 87) Wellesley Road. I was very very happy at Christchurch.

**Alison Butterworth 1952-1959**

I remember being very upset because I could not go to school with my big brother John as soon as I was 5 years old because my birthday was in November. I could not start until the following January. My first teacher's name was Miss Bracey and she kept sweets in her cupboard for special treats. A girl called Doreen achieved fame by being sick after drinking her school milk — it was always warm but I always drank mine up. I'm not sure if it was in this class but I remember being absolutely terrified by a story that was read to us about a fox and chickens — perhaps this explains my dislike of horror films. I also remember colouring in a Christmas pudding on a Christmas card and being told I should do it a different way, but absolutely refusing to do so. I remember a

Christmas party at school with lots of games and a real Father Christmas coming with a sackful of presents but have no recollection of what I received. I must have been in the Infants still at the time of the Coronation because I remember standing in lines in the boys' playground at the back of the school and receiving the commemorative book which I still have somewhere. I think I wore a red, white and blue ribbon in my hair. I went upstairs to the Junior School in 1955 and was in 4A but I cannot remember the name of the teacher at all. I progressed to 3A with Mr Malyon, who I liked although he could be quite strict. I used to be terrified that I would get into trouble if I forgot my swimming things. I didn't enjoy learning to swim — I was quite frightened of the water and going under but I did learn despite my fears. We went to the Baths in Ilford High Road but I can't remember whether we had to walk or went on a coach. My sister, Frances, tells me that she walked because she remembers her dripping wet hair!

I have fond memories of Miss Dane because I loved singing and was in the recorder group. I eventually played the treble recorder as well as the descant. I also loved country dancing except for one memorable occasion when I energetically danced into the side of the piano and ended up with a lump the size of an egg on my forehead and a black eye for days afterwards to everyone's amusement. I particularly enjoyed wearing the special skirts and taking part in the Festivals at the Town Hall.

My teacher in 2A was Mrs Cunningham who I liked very much. It was she who noticed that I couldn't see the black board very well which resulted in an eye test and my having to wear NHS glasses which I was very self-conscious about. I was sad to leave her class particularly as I then moved up into 1A with the dreaded Mr Kempson who was very strict. This year was stressful too because of the 11+ examination and constant tests. The highlight of the year was a day out to High Beech — our school dinners were even brought out for us to eat in Wellington Hall — no packed lunches in those days. These dinners arrived every day from Fairlop School, I believe, where they were prepared centrally as most schools did not have facilities for cooking. I was lucky in that I went home for lunch every day except on Fridays when my mother, who was a teacher, had to do dinner duty. I am not sure where she taught at this time, it could have been at Christchurch but not until at least 1955 when my younger brother, Andy, was old enough to go to school. We spent a lot of time chanting tables in 1A and a poem called Abu ben Adem (I think) often as a punishment at the end of the day. A happier memory was taking part in the school pageant which was based on the Norman Conquest and we all had to dress up as Anglo-Saxons. The only school photo which I possess, apart from the individual portraits, is of my class as the chorus. I remember rehearsals with Mr Pethybridge and a battle scene to the music of the Sabre dance. It was performed at school in the playground and also at Ilford Town Hall. This was particularly nerve-wracking for me because I had to make some sort of introductory speech all by myself on the stage at the beginning of the performance. Being an Anglo-Saxon of course, I could not wear my glasses so thankfully the audience was just a blur! We walked to the Town Hall for a rehearsal one morning, I remember, which was the day after the fire at Harrison Gibson's which completely gutted the store as well as an adjoining draper's shop and was so fierce it lit up the sky that night and could be seen from all around, certainly from my house in Coventry Road.

I also remember Sports Days in Valentines Park. I was a good runner but my best sport was the High Jump and I came top in my year. I think I was lucky in having long legs! Doing so well in these sports meant I was picked to take part in the district sports at a sports ground in Seven Kings called Cricklewood, but I was up against much better opponents so didn't win any prizes despite hours of practice in the school

playground with Mr. Malyon. I remember running in the relay race on a very hot day and being desperate not to come last — I think I managed to finish third.



The Norman Conquest pageant, part 1 - 1956 L to R." , \_ , Eric Kendrew, Robert Day, \_ , \_ , \_ , April Heaseman, Jean Harris, Rosalind Bye, Sheila7laynes, Kay Broomfield, Rodney Phillips, Carol Rickwood, Margaret Hanson, Barry Woolf, Malcolm Allen, Ian Welthy, seven helmeted soldiers

Sheila White (nee Russell) 1954-1960

My earliest recollection of Christchurch School is of a terrible disappointment! Because I could already read I missed out reception class. This classroom had a beautiful wooden rocking-horse which I never got to ride on. I was so cross with my mum for teaching me to read.

I remember singing lessons with Miss Dane, who, I believe, was the daughter of Councillor Dane. Other staff were Mrs. Tight, Mrs. Cunningham (Cunningham-Snell), and Mr. Malyon — my favourite teacher of all teachers! I was a good girl so had little to fear from these kindly but strict teachers! As has been mentioned by other contributors — the lasting memories are of the freezing outside toilets (I would rather “wait” all day than use them!). Also the blazing fires where we could dry wet clothes in the winter. The teacher also warmed our little milk bottles. Yuk!

Even good girls quaked at the thought of Mr. Kempson. I can still remember the sinking feeling in my stomach on the first day of the autumn term. Any misdemeanors — dropping a ruler, whispering, getting a sum wrong — were punished by the giving of lines or essays. I only had a handful of these during my year but some boys never managed a playtime during their whole time in Mr. Kempson’s class! I have sent my photo of Mr. Kempson on the trip to Windsor.

But he achieved what he intended — getting everyone of the 45 of us through the 11 +. I went on to Ilford County High School for Girls (now Valentines High). I became a primary school teacher and have been teaching since 1970. I have never given lines or an essay as punishment in my life.

**Judi Embling (nee Sparrow) 1953-1960**

My first day at Christchurch was a disaster. I had never left my mum before (no pre-school in those days) and could not bear the thought of parting. Miss Hope the headmistress would not let me join Miss Bracey's class until I stopped crying. I had to stand by the fish tank in the hall till I stopped. Feeling isolated, with my poor mum getting more and more agitated because she felt I would stop crying if I joined the other children, I just bawled even louder. The louder I cried the more Miss Hope affirmed that I could not join the class, I went home for dinner and finally made it in the afternoon where I found Miss Bracey whom I grew to adore.

(Having worked in a reception class I have found that little children usually soon settle when they are in the classroom; with a cuddle, reassurance and the realisation that the other children are not crying even the very upset soon settle; no banishment to the fish tank!)

As infants we had to take our reading tests in Miss Hope's office, which was built into a recess in the Hall, painted blue (I think) with lots of panelled glass. I can remember entering the office and standing still as I read down the long lists of words that would test how good I was at reading. I came to the word orchestra which, having learnt the CH makes 'ch' sound, I read as Or-chest-stra. This was not allowed; I struggled but could not get my head round the fact that 'ch' was pronounced as 'kes'. As I could not say the word orchestra I was asked to define it "It's a thing that plays, Miss Hope" I was getting hotter and more anguished! To this day I do not know if I was allowed this word.

We were country dancing and Rodney Minkey kept doing it wrong, he did use to make us laugh. Well, Mrs. Lankester took exception to this and pulled his knee length short trousers up his leg and smacked him. I laughed through nerves (as I always did, "wipe that smirk off your face, Judith Sparrow") and at the sight of seeing Rodney with his long shorts up his leg. Needless to say I got a slap as well and yet I was good at Country Dancing.

Class 3a - It is so true that a good teacher can have a massive impact on schooling and attitude. I was probably a child that presented mildly challenging behaviour in school. I did not always get on with teachers and must have been a pain. Outspoken, confident; traits that did not go down well in the 1950s. However, I liked Mr Malyon and he liked me and he liked pineapple chunks and Leslie Smith and I used to buy them for him. I can see him now with his kind face, big moustache and twinkly eyes. I did the best I could for him, gaining the highest place I ever attained, in his class. Thank you Mr Malyon, you were a great teacher, firm but fair, firm but funny.

Mrs Buzby was the teacher in Class 2 and I don't think we gelled too well. Another teacher, Mrs Cunningham had a really handsome son who was a couple of years older. One day Mrs Cunningham asked me if I would look after her son's (Robert I think) mouse while he was away at boarding school. What an honour, but it was a few weeks after Robert had gone back to school and I was in charge of the mouse again that it gave birth to myriads of savage baby mice. Hybrids, half wild and half brown. "Did the mouse escape at all while Robert had it at home?" I asked. (Sue Mart and I bred rabbits at home and knew about these things.) "Yes," she said, "It had." I'm not sure what the outcome was but I know my mum was not best pleased. Mrs Thompson made us do handwriting, apparently our handwriting was so bad that we had to practice it over and over again. Being the class spokesman, I was asked to say that we thought this was unfair and that we were all going to go on strike. Bearing in mind it was 1959 this was rather bold behaviour. We me, Angela Lovegrove and Leslie Smith stayed down in the outside toilets at afternoon play. Needless to say the whole class was with us till it came to the crunch; everyone else went back to class! The three of us shut ourselves in the loo, but nobody came. We crept outside and looked up at the window, nothing was happening. So of course at going home time We had to go up to the classroom to get our coats, a huge reprimand and a report to Mr Pethybridge. I may be wrong but I got the impression that Mrs Thompson perhaps admired our tenacity and fortitude.



1955 - Junior Staff: Back row, lto r: Mr. Malyon, \_\_, Mr. Leach. Middle row: \_\_, Mr.Pethybridge, Mr.Clulow, Mr. Kempson. Front row, Mrs.AlsOpp, \_\_ \_\_ \_\_, Mrs.Lankester, \_\_, Miss Dane

**Terri Stanley** (nee O'Connor) 1953-1960

Following in my family footsteps — my mother Winnifred Rosa Wheeler 1925 and my uncle Frederick Wheeler 1930 were all ex-Christchurch pupils. (Fred tells me he helped organise the Coronation Celebrations in 1953.)

I joined Christchurch Infants School in 1953, but do not remember anything very much about this momentous event, apart from the reception class Wendy House, and having to stand up in class and recite over and over the tables until we learned them, and could earn a gold star. Over the course of this first year I had so many prolonged bouts of illness, that the school decided it would be most beneficial for me to start again, and from being the youngest in my year in 1953 (my birthday is 5<sup>th</sup> September), I then became the oldest in 1954. Like others before me I remember the freezing toilets and the cold playtimes (you had to go out regardless of the weather conditions). The only consolation was the huge sheds that we would play in if we really couldn't bear to get wet. I used to love paddling round the one and only tree in the playground — it was a real contest to see how fast you could go, without the water sloshing over your boots!

We used to get free milk (gold top) in my time. Being milk monitor was a big job, and a great honour to be chosen. In the winter, quite often the milk would be frozen, lolly-like. In summer, however, it was a different matter and could be luke-warm and almost rancid. But we drank it anyway. I seem to remember that later on in summer we had small bottles of orange squash which was a distinct improvement.

We had a school dance at Christmas, but to ensure that everyone took part (no boys were allowed to stand and ogle) we had dancing lessons — “The Virginia Reel”, “Gay Gordons” to name but two of the many we were taught, wonderful fun.

Sports Days were also a big highlight held over Valentines Park on what I felt was the bumpiest course possible for racing. Unlike today, competition was everything and we all really wanted to win.

Many other people have mentioned Miss Hope, Infants School. Personally I cannot remember her. But to me Mr Pethybridge (Mr.Pepperpot as we lovingly called him) was a God. Wise, funny, strict and caring, we would do anything to be his helper, a truly wonderful man.

#### **1957 Pageant**

The clock was turned back 891 years on Thursday by Christchurch Juniors when they presented a pageant, "The Last of the Saxon Kings", in the school playground.

Written by the Headmaster Mr.D.E. Pethybridge the pageant is presented in three parts over three years. It took a year to write, in verse and song. Choreographer of dance sequences was Mr.Pethybridge. He introduced verse to be spoken by several children at once, mainly for the benefit of those players with weak voices.

All the costumes for the pageant were as authentic as it was possible to make them. They were copied from the Bayeux tapestry, depicting William of Normany's invasion of England.

The 200 children taking part were aged between 9 and 11. The scenery and costumes were made by the children under the supervision of teachers. The cast included Jimmy White and Peter Venables as monks, Malcolm Oliver David Collins and Robert Woolf as Norman soldiers, Bishop Odo was Tony Walton, King William, Graham Orchard, Queen Matilda, Lesley Pitt, and Jill Nicholas, Stephen Brooks and others were Saxons.



Cutting and sticking in 1965 From rear left anticlock- wise: Susan \_\_, Karen \_\_, Paul Usher, Helen Newland, Sharon \_\_, Antonia Roberts, Vivienne Stifi'.





Chorus of the School Pageant - 1959

**Back row,** l to r: Monica Smith Doreen White, Marian Day \_\_ \_\_ \_\_, Enis Wiskar, Sylvia Jennings, Alison Batterworth. **Middle row:** , , , , , , , Pat laty, Penelope Gordon, Neil ? **Front Row:** Kathleen Frost, Diane Clark, Margaret Cash, \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_, Graham West, \_\_, Graham McLean, John Kelly, Fm"/< ?



1966 Christchurch Football Team. **Back row,** l to r.' \_\_ \_\_ \_\_, Clive Clark, Alan Barley, Les Steinert, Alan Curtis, Alan Kendal, Peter Jacobs, \_\_ Tomlinson , Freddy \_\_ \_\_/Inderson. **Front row:** Michael Goss, Ashley Joseph, Peter F ishe/3 \_\_ Trevor Anderson, \_\_, Alan Jacobs.

**Tim Jacobs 1958-1964**

Where to start? Perhaps by quoting from my 1960 Busy Book (apologies for the spelling of a 6 year old) "I have had 6 teachers Mrs Perry, Miss O'Brian, Mrs Yelles, Mrs. Beckley, Mrs Thomas and Mrs Hall. Mrs. Yelles was terybly boring but Mrs Beckley was telling us stories and making us watercress sandwiches" Upstairs into the juniors, with Mrs Cunningham-Snell as my teacher in 4A. I came first in the December 1960 exam and was awarded a prize of "Every Boy's Handbook". Reading this treasured possession again today, I see that Burnley were holders of the FA Cup (Y) and "if progress continues at its present pace, uninterrupted by war, man may well make the first space journey within your lifetime." Eat your heart out, Nostradamus.

Mr Malyon was the 3A teacher who taught us joined-up handwriting. The style was modelled on that of the headmaster, Mr Pethybridge. With only a little effort, I can revert from my present minimalist scrawl to those beautiful curlicues. Which shows the quality of the teaching, I suppose. Progression to the top floor and a year in 2A with Mrs Busby, about which I have no lasting memories beyond playing foot cricket in the playground, using the trees by Balfour Road as wickets. And I also came third in the sack race on Sports Day in Valentines Park, which was the acme of my primary school sporting career. I served a time as an assembly hymn-sheet monitor. The hymn sheets were large heavy pads, over a hundred sheets of about A1 size (probably then called emperor quarto or something equally romantic) hanging on the hall wall. They had to be lowered on their rope, flipped to the appropriate page, hoisted and the rope fastened to a cleat. There were two pads per hall and I recall a degree of healthy competition between the monitors responsible for each set.

And so to 1A with Mr Kempson. The horrors of dip-and-scratch pens! Woe betide the poor soul who spilt a drop while filling an inkwell from the jug kept by Mr K's desk: a playtime forfeited to scrub the floor. The mishaps of previous generations had permanently coloured that area a dull blue, so the punishment had little practical purpose — but it certainly made us more careful! I wonder if the stains are still there. Mr K bemoaned the loss of the Crystal Palace, where he had taken school trips before it burnt down (thirty years earlier) He took us to Windsor Castle but I had the feeling this was a “second best”. I remember getting to the rendezvous for the return coach journey a few minutes late, to be met with his stock annoyance phrase of “You must be soft, boy”.

The man was a tyrant (or so it seemed to a 10 year old) but he had a human side - magic tricks at Christmas, talking about his beloved dahlias and occasionally bringing in a prize bloom, letting us look at football programmes after his frequent visits to Wembley. And he got me and so many others through the 11+, which was the whole point really, wasn't it?



26th May 1965 The school play “An Egg for Easter”.

L to r: Denise Elingford, Claire Norris, Bill Porter, Louise Gantzler, Dierdre Warren, Valerie Hawkins, Susan King, Lynn O'Keefe, Julie Hull, Ian Watson, Robert Atwell, Frank Stedman, Jim Davis, Tim Jacobs,

James Argent  
 Villain – Mr Jagers ..... Tim Jacobs/James Argent.  
 Co-hero – Mr Grady ..... .. Robert Attwell/Ian Watson  
 Heroine – Mrs Gray ..... .. Susan King/Dierdre Warren  
 Her kids - Charlie Gray ..... .. Chris Terran/Frank Stedman  
 Mary Gray ..... .. Julie Hull/Lynn O;Keefe  
 Mabel Gray ..... .. Elizabeth Dovaston/ Valerie Hawkins  
 Neighbours - Mrs. Proctor ..... .. Trudi Pitts/Louise Gantzler  
 Mrs Perry ..... .. Claire Norris/Denise Elingford  
 Co-hero - Stranger ..... .. Jim Davis/Bill Porter



**Lisa Nandi 1966- 1972**

I remember my first day at Christchurch clearly; particularly as I was the only child who cried when my Mum left — and I managed to start a few others off too! Still, we soon recovered and my lasting memory of that day was playing in a very nice Wendy House.

There are many memories attached to my time at the school but perhaps my proudest moments were firstly, winning the Egg and Spoon Race at the Sports Day in Valentines Park. My secret? Slow and steady, whereas everyone else was in too much of a hurry and kept dropping the egg! Secondly, I won first prize in the fancy dress competition. Well, actually my friend Kenneth won it dressed as Julius Caesar but, as I was his Cleopatra, I reckoned where he went, I went. My aunt had made me a magnificent costume and spent hours sticking sequins on to a very glamorous head dress. I know we had some photographs taken but sadly they cannot be found.

A few painful memories stick in my mind. Falling over in the playground, for example, and grazing my knees. We were always sent to see the nurse, who lived at the top of a flight of stone steps and she would tend our wounds with something very stingy (possibly surgical spirit?). We were always very proud if we were given a plaster and tried very hard to get one, even if the damage was minimal.

I can also remember being bitten by a gerbil in Miss Bailey's class. The poor thing had recently had babies and was obviously very frightened. When I picked her up, she sank her teeth into my hand and I can recall saying quite calmly "Would someone please remove this gerbil from my finger". I wasn't put off, however, and ended up taking one of the babies home --he lived very happily with us and enjoyed running about in the living room, chewing up everything in his path.

Of course I remember our introduction to Sex education. Very innocent stuff in those days but we were shown a video of a woman giving birth. One of the boys in my class was sick and another passed out. No stamina, these men.

I generally have very happy memories of Christchurch and I am looking forward to seeing it all again — I'm sure it will seem very small inside. I hope I will get the chance to see the medical room where the nurse used to dry our tears and stick on our plasters!



Front left then anticlockwise: Helen Newland, Janet Lovely, Dorothy Olive, Penelope Cole, Paul Usher, Paul Rowlands, Susan \_\_, and Elisabeth Davis.

**Meryl Spinks (nee Joseph) 1966-1972**

I remember: - The cloakrooms and coat pegs with little pictures on. The sickroom at the top of stairs, where many a knee was stung with ointment. Being excluded from assembly because I was Jewish. I sat in the classroom with Valda Campbell drawing pictures which was fun, but I would have preferred to have been singing hymns with everyone else. The few times I stayed for school dinners — thank goodness I went home for lunch most of the time. Singing 'Kelvin Grove' in singing lessons. I have never heard it since leaving the school and would love to know more than the first line. The Sports Days in Valentines Park and the heats in the playground, where some boys were horrible to me because their friend fell at the line and I got to the final by default.

Playing naughts and crosses — boys v girls in lesson time. If you got a question right you sat on a mat as a naught or a cross. Donald Campbell sitting next to me and nudging me for the answers in the weekly maths test. Dressing up as a Japanese doll for a Christmas party. They were always fun, especially making the decorations. The class hamster who was lost for weeks and then found in the paper cupboard. Missing an important rounders match, when the team were counting on me (as if!)

Our final year being so good with Miss Shedley as our teacher. She let us perform our songs and dances in front of the class. We made a huge Chinese dragon after our visit to the Commonwealth Institute (which wasn't as good as I remembered when I returned to it 10 years later). Collecting matchboxes as a hobby and Anthony Lecomber giving me a matchbox with a beetle in it. I was told off for screaming in class.

On my final day at school being very brave and then crying my heart out when I got home.

## Timothy Haler - 1979-1985

When I started at Christchurch Infants my first teacher was Mrs. Holder — a tall sensible teacher with a fondness for beige knitware. I remember having to queue up after PE lessons with lots of other little boys and girls for her to tie my shoelaces because I didn't know how to. Once there was a certain amount of embarrassment when I got to the front of the queue only to have it pointed out to me that my shoes were on the wrong feet so I had to go back to the end and queue up all over again.

It was seen as a sign of great maturity and masculinity amongst the boys in my class, I discovered, to have an interest in football. Often I was asked what team I supported, (clearly a trick question) and the choice that was offered to me was West Ham, Spurs, or Liverpool, who I think came from Liverpool Street Station. My best friend Marc Tieman supported Spurs so I decided I should too. Sure enough, my emotional investment in my new club paid off when they won the FA cup the following day. I believe that, lacking my continued support, they no longer ascend these heights of success.

The only sport which rivalled the popularity of football was marbles. There were several different types of games you could play with marbles, all of which could be played either for fun, for Swapsies or Keepsies. Keepsies was strictly banned, both because it encouraged gambling, and due to the extreme nature of the violence which it spawned. You could often spend some time playing round after round of marbles, surrounded by a fascinated audience, (why did marbles draw spectators, but not football, I wonder?) and a couple of lookouts, in case the game attracted the attention of any dinner ladies who might try to break it up. The different types of marbles had different names and values according to their colour and size. An Ordinary, for example, would have to beat a Big 'Un three times to win, or a Jumbo five times. When a dinner lady came over you would have to pretend that you were all crouched on the ground in a tight huddle for a different reason entirely, and no, you certainly weren't playing Keepsies.

Marbles reached the peak of their popularity when I was in Mrs. Ellett's class. To my great shame, I was once driven so wild by my desire to acquire marbles that I attempted to steal one of Michelle Levine's marbles. I was immediately caught red-handed, and suffered a tremendous sense of guilt, begging Mrs. Ellett not to turn me in to the police. Fortunately Mrs. Ellett's strict but compassionate handling of the situation saved me from a life of crime and I have been a most law-abiding citizen ever since. In 1983

Christchurch School got its first computer, a BBC with 64K of RAM, which sat on a trolley and got wheeled from classroom to classroom. Each class got two weeks with the computer per year. I remember the excitement when it became our class's turn to have the computer. Two of us were picked, one morning at a time, to go and use the computer for an hour. Eventually it got to my turn. I sat down at the computer with, I think, Daniel Reed, in a high state of excitement and although, no, I can't remember any of what I did in my hour with the computer, I do remember being very impressed by the whole experience. Soon afterwards the trolley was wheeled out of the classroom and I didn't see it again until sometime the following year.

There was great delight when we were told that we were going to be in Mr Carr's class in our top year in the juniors. Mr Carr was considered very cool because he told jokes and sometimes wore a tracksuit. The reason for the tracksuit was that he had something to do with the school football team, I think, so it was unfortunate that my time in his class coincided with a sudden resurgence of off-ground-touch, which was a sport he didn't teach. Actually it turned out that being in Miss Woodman's class next door to us was slightly cooler than being in Mr Carr's class, because she was a drama teacher and they did class assemblies that people remembered afterwards. I can still remember that they did a fine assembly about what the school was like in Edwardian times, which involved everyone dressing up. I have very fond memories of being in the second coolest class in the school.



### **CHRISTCHURCH'S CENTENARY**

**Elana Mossey - 1993-2000**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2000 was a special day for Christchurch Primary School; it was the school's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. For weeks the pupils and staff have been preparing a special day inviting past pupils, parents teachers and special guests.

When the day came everyone was very excited and looking forward to the afternoon. The sun was shining brightly and it was quite warm which was very lucky. The celebration began at 2 pm and was supposed to end at 3.30pm, but it didn't actually end until 3.45. To start the celebration all the year groups watched a string quartet that played five pieces of music including 'Over the rainbow' from the Wizard of Oz. Once they had finished their final tune everyone was led by their teachers down to the playground where the real partying began!

All the pupils were seated in their places on the ground in the playground where all the parents, staff and guests were waiting. Everyone then watched as the Mayor of Redbridge made a speech and unveiled the school's plaque, which had been newly made because the old one was unreadable.

The teachers then moved their classes over to the other side of the playground, around the stage. When the noise had quietened down Mr Chaplain, past head teacher. Made a speech and introduced Raymond Baxter, past pupil and TV presenter, who also made a speech that was quite long and old- fashioned, but interesting in parts. He then made his way over to the school garden and pulled off the cloth to reveal the school's sculpture 'Openness', which was made especially.

The entertainment carried on with Kelly Brown, past pupil, singing 'I have a Dream' by Abba, and it was also done by Westlife. Khalid Patel, the chair of the school council, then made a speech, which was very brave of him! The school's dance group, Gemini, then danced to 'Heartbreak Hotel' by Whitney Houston. The school choir then sang 'Hitchin' a ride' and Ocean Commotion', which they also sang at the Royal Albert Hall. The choir then sang the school's song which was written especially for the school's Centenary. Then we all sang 'Happy Birthday' to the school. Finally, some younger children did a country dance, which was very cute and entertaining. All in all it was a fantastic and fabulous day that I hope everyone enjoyed.

## Centenary Open Day and Summer Fair – 17<sup>th</sup>/ 18<sup>th</sup> June 2000

The forecast was “very warming” and it was. What we have come to expect . . . real Christchurch weather. The day dawned bright and hot, and staff and helpers began before 7 o’clock, buying and preparing food for the expected crowd, laying out tables of books from the School Archive, and putting up the exhibition. About 100 acceptances had been received, but through the day 231 ex-pupils and staff signed in. Many people brought guests with them, so we had a lovely crowd.

All new arrivals were looking through the Visitors’ Book to see who was already there. Overheard snippets of conversation, “I haven’t seen you for thirty years!” “Oh yes, she was my bridesmaid!” “You used to live next door to ...” “I was in the same class as your . . . .” “I’m looking for ...” Even people who found no ex-classmates found plenty of people to talk to. The years and wrinkles disappeared and Mr.Kempson was discussed to bits. Memories of Old Kempo provided a whole section of the exhibition. Nearly everyone attending had some experience of him; he has left a mark in all our lives. We all found our names in the Enrolment Registers (many people taking photocopies of their page), and searched the school Log Books for our own bits of the history of the school. There was a very interesting exhibition of photos and memories, maps and history. The map of the bombing in Ilford was of particular interest to a lot of people, and continued to interest present pupils through the following week.

The children of the School Council worked hard showing our guests around the school, and were very polite and welcoming hosts. They also sang the school Centenary Song most beautifully at the Assembly. During the morning we had an Assembly with hymns, a Bible reading and a talk from Gwen Roper, our Head Teacher. The singing was grand, far better than when you were at school.



A wonderful lunch was prepared by Christchurch Friends Association, and served in the Nursery And in the Top Hall. We were glad to see none of You had lost your appetites, and every scrap of Food was eaten.

Sunday was the School Summer Fair. Each Year Group in the school chose a decade of the last Century, and dressed up accordingly, Year 6 were Victorians, down to the Nursery and Reception Classes who were the future, “what I want to be when I grow up”. This included fairies and firemen And footballers and everything in between. We Had Twenties flappers and gangsters, sixties flower children, punks, evacuees and land girls.

Staff - 1940s - Wartime



Year 2 – 1920s Flappers and Gangsters



Year 5 – Punk



Year 4 – 60s Flower Power



Year 6 – Victorians





It really caught the imagination of the children and parents who responded with enthusiasm to the fancy dress theme. Almost the whole school turned out, well over 600 children and the entire staff, and we blocked the roads around the school for nearly an hour with a long procession led by a lorry with decorated float. It was great. The weather was wonderful, almost too hot. Afterwards there was a Playground Street Party with sideshows, dancing, singing and refreshments.

It was a super weekend.

Dancing on the stage in the Balfour Road playground to entertain the crowds.

