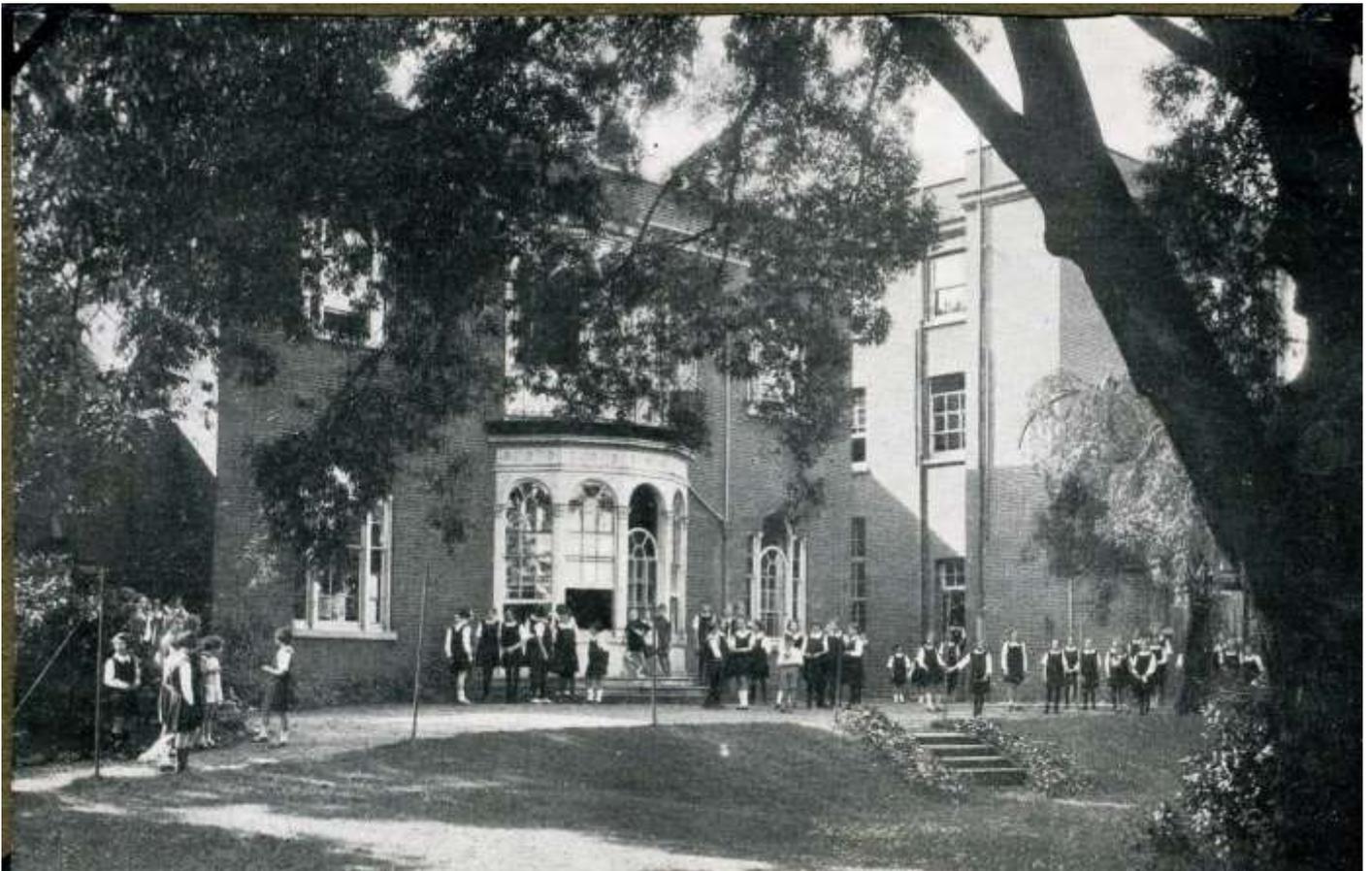


In 1920, the nuns returned to France and the County High School for Girls moved in to use Grey Friars for their Lower School. The pictures below are a formal gathering in 1923 and a gym day sometime in the 1920s. Two famous alumnae were Betty Little (Beth Chatto), the world-renowned horticulturalist, and Pamela Brown (Masters), author of novels for children.



(left) The garden room as a classroom in the time of CCHS (right) a 1950s class on the terrace.

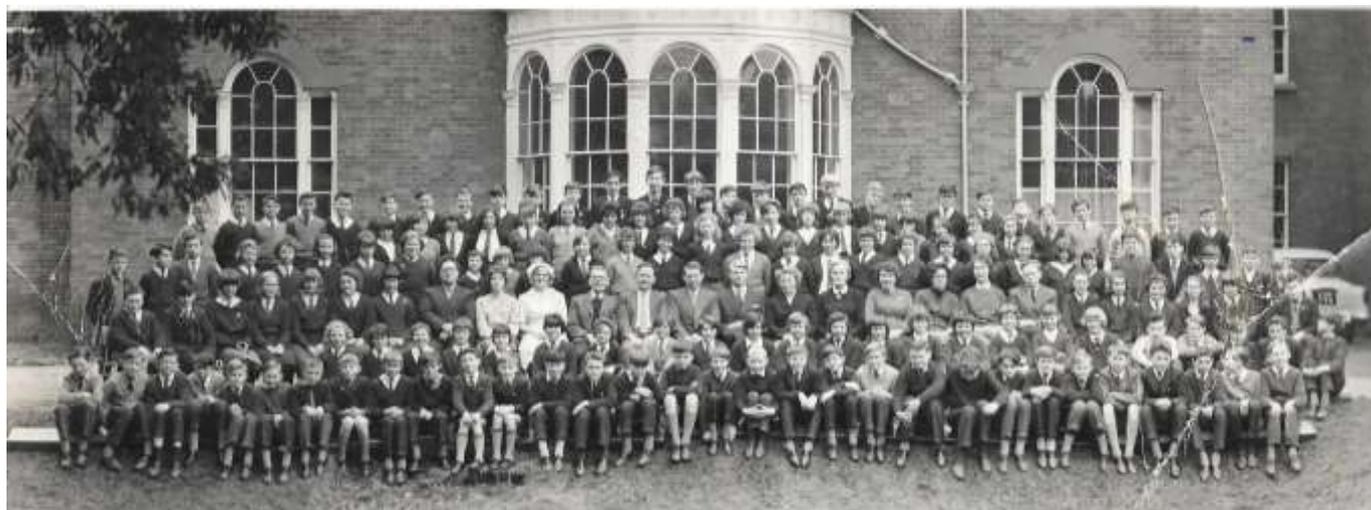


When CCHS moved to Norman Way, Grey Friars was used as temporary accommodation for new schools such as Monkwick and Philip Morant and extra space for departments of the Technical College (notably the Music School), St Helena School and the Borough's own Senior Evening Institute for adults (originally based at Alderman Blaxill School)



(above) Monkwick

(below) Philip Morant



When the various users in the 1960s had finally moved on to their new or augmented accommodation, the only tenant left was the Senior Evening Institute, which, by virtue of its full-time access to the whole campus, dropped the 'evening' in the title and became the Colchester Adult Education Centre.

It operated successfully for the next four decades, gradually broadening its curriculum, until, re-designated as Colchester's renowned Adult Community College, it gained the status of a centre of academic excellence and one of the leading adult colleges in the UK. As well as recruiting tens of thousands of local adults for courses to extend, or in many cases re-visit, their education, its specialist Summer Schools and lecture programmes brought people to Colchester from all over the country, and even worldwide.

(below) Adult college staff in 1995



The garden room remained everybody's favourite classroom (below, left, an Italian language class) and a preferred venue for events such as the Members' Association's meetings (right). Many prestigious visiting speakers specifically requested this room for their lectures.



In 2005, the owners, Essex County Council, embarked upon a reorganisation of its adult education provision, withdrew Grey Friars' college status, removed the senior managers and the governors and managed the service from County Hall. In 2007 they sold the premises. The garden room is now the bar of a 5-star hotel for which the premises have been skilfully and sensitively renovated, preserving the Georgian and Edwardian craftsmanship for the town.



*The full story of the whole site can be found in the fully illustrated book "Grey Friars – Colchester's Forgotten Corner" from Red Lion Books, High St CO1 1SZ 01206 578584 redlionbooks.co.uk or ebay.co.uk*