

A Brief History of the Garden Suburb School.

On May 17th 1909, the Garden Suburb Temporary School was opened with the admission of 36 children, and with a staff of two. It was housed in the hall of the Institute in Central Square.

These seem like halcyon days, when the school was closed for frequent holidays - merit attendance, school sports, Sunday school treats and the visits of dignitaries, including the Ex-King Manuel of Portugal who heard the children sing. "As many lessons as possible were taken out of doors in fields, the weather being ideal" runs the log book. But there were problems too. In that building the children caught cold readily, and after the age of eight children attended Bell Lane School which meant a considerable walk for them and anxiety to parents.

As far back as 1907 negotiations had begun with the Garden Suburb Trust with reference to a site for a school. Eventually land was offered where the school now stands and although it was unusual to have a school on the boundary of the parish the Hendon Education Committee accepted with gratitude. From then on the matter of the 'Garden Suburb School' became something of a nightmare to the Committee. The design of the school had to be in keeping with the architecture of the Suburb and the first plans for a two-storey building were rejected. Parents grew agitated by the delay and a protest meeting was held on Willifield Green.

At last, on February 3rd 1913 the new school building was opened with much acclaim. There were two main blocks, one for the Infants and one for the Senior Departments. In each there were five classrooms providing accommodation for 50 children in each and one for 60 children - 620 children in the entire school. There were three head teachers, Mr. Kamester for the boys, Miss Line for the girls and shortly afterwards Miss Chilton for the Infants. It was the first school in Hendon to have electric light, and it was equipped with a Cookery and Laundry Centre, and a Manual Training Centre for the boys.

War-efforts in the First World War included a potato-growing campaign by the boys both inside and outside the school grounds, and the coming of the Belgian children. This began with three refugees but eventually extended into two classes in the Senior School and two in the Infants with three Belgian members of staff. "The Belgians have gone to the woods for a walk" announces the log-book in October 1918 - although this was not one of the "brisk walks" made necessary by continuing boiler failure in the early part of that year.

Between 1918 and 1928 many new activities were introduced. It is interesting to note that on December 1st 1922 a crystal wireless was set up and in 1924 two classes listened to the first important experiment in broadcasting for educational work in schools. Perhaps it is worth adding here that the first experiments in Spund Films in the Borough of Hendon were conducted in this school in 1931.

In 1928 there was a considerable re-organisation in the administration of the school. There were now two departments consisting of a Junior Mixed Department which included the Infant Department and children up to the age of 8 years, and the Senior Mixed Department consisting of children over 8 years and up to 14 years of age. Mr. Kamester now became head of the Senior School, with Miss Line as headmistress of the Junior Mixed School.

At the outbreak of the Second World War a system of home-tuition came into existence, but as soon as trenches were constructed in the grounds the school opened again and operated throughout the war in spite of difficulties due to enemy action. On September 26th 1940 a land-mine was dropped, landing on Willifield Green and the Infant School, which at that time was nearest the Green, was severely damaged.

When the school re-opened, some Infant classes occupied part of the remaining building and some were housed in pre-fabricated accommodation. In 1944 and 1949 five light-structure classrooms were erected for their use, and for a period admission to the schools was restricted to Hendon residents. During this difficult, over-crowded time some Junior and Senior classes were held in the Staff Room and in the Hall.

The beginning of school dinners dates from the Second World War. The school log book states that on November 24th 1942 120 dinners were served in the School Hall, having been cooked at the Central Kitchen and ~~transferred~~^{delivered} to the school.

On September 11th 1947 the Senior children (over eleven years) were transferred, together with three teachers, to Goldbeaters Secondary Modern School. This created more space in the Junior Department and there followed twice yearly promotion of the top Infant classes to the Juniors which eased the overcrowding in the Infant School. It culminated on September 5th 1950, when 240 children were absorbed from the Infants into the Junior School which was now divided into eleven classes, with a total roll of 434. The Infant School now had 285 children on roll, arranged in seven classes.

During the next few years gradual improvements were made to the old school building, and plans for the new building were materialising.

On June 19th 1950 the new school kitchen and Dining Hall were opened, and in 1953 a hot water system was installed into the cloakrooms. During the mid-summer break in 1957 eleven classrooms had their sloping floors levelled, and later in the year parquet flooring was put down. At the beginning of 1960 oil heating was installed (hopefully, now more "brisk walks" now to warm up pupils and staff)

On 12th September 1960 the new building was occupied by the Junior School. This comprised seven classrooms, an Assembly Hall, medical room and offices. This time plans for a two-storey building had been allowed to go through. Five classrooms in the old building were retained for use by the Juniors, and the Infant School moved into the remainder of the old building, at the end furthest from the Green. In recent years, the small field across the cinder path was taken over by the school.

Since the first major re-organisation in 1928 the Junior School has had five headmasters:- Mr.Kamester, Mr.Price, Mr.Alben, Mr.Keefe and Mr.Goodliff.

The Infant School was taken over from Miss Chiltern^{on} by Miss Line, who was followed by Miss Hornsby, Miss Pearson, Miss Burley and Miss Galloway.

The school has been fortunate in having also a series of excellent school keepers, Mr. Turvey, Mr.Lewis and Mr.Collis.