



The Broomhall Nursery Times

HAPPY
80TH!!
Price 2d

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BROOMHALL NURSERY PUPILS GROW AN OAK

We are planning to work with children and adults in our community to create a new artwork reflecting the 80th anniversary theme of oak.

We shall "grow" the mosaic oak tree on the wall adjacent to the nursery's main entrance using the many fragments of blue and white pottery and old glass bottles excavated from the nursery grounds during recent building work.

Adults and children will work together to create the branches using cement, pebbles and shells. The children will craft oak leaves from pebbles and shells pressed into cemented wooden cut outs.

A collection is being launched to fund this project – any donations are most welcome!

FIRST PUPILS DOROTHY AND BRIAN GO BACK TO SCHOOL

When Broomhall Nursery opened its doors in September 1930, two names on the first day's register were that of Dorothy Barker and Brian Clayton.

Today, they return to play an important part in our 80th anniversary celebrations – and to see how things have changed.

Dorothy Crossland (née Barker) came to nursery in an era in which cleanliness and fresh air were championed. "We all had our own overalls which were hanging for us on a peg every day and also our own towel, soap and tooth brushes." Naps were taken on folding beds outdoors in all but the chilliest of weathers (see page 3).

In a sign of how attitudes to healthy eating

have moved on since the 1930s, lunch at that time was typically toast topped with dripping.

At today's celebrations, Dorothy and Brian will have a chance to look nostalgically back to their carefree nursery days. They will also be able to compare notes with some other early pupils who are due to attend the garden party.

In recognition, though, of their place as the very

first in Broomhall's roll, Dorothy and Brian will be helping Sonia Sharp, Executive Director for Children, Young People and Families at Sheffield City Council with a special job.

The three of them will plant a commemorative oak tree in the school grounds.

It is hoped that this oak will shade and shelter future generations of Broomhall children for many years to come.

SHEFFIELD'S OLDEST NURSERY CELEBRATES 80TH BIRTHDAY IN STYLE WITH GARDEN PARTY FOR STAFF AND PUPILS PAST AND PRESENT



Broomhall's current staff and pupils, pictured in May 2011

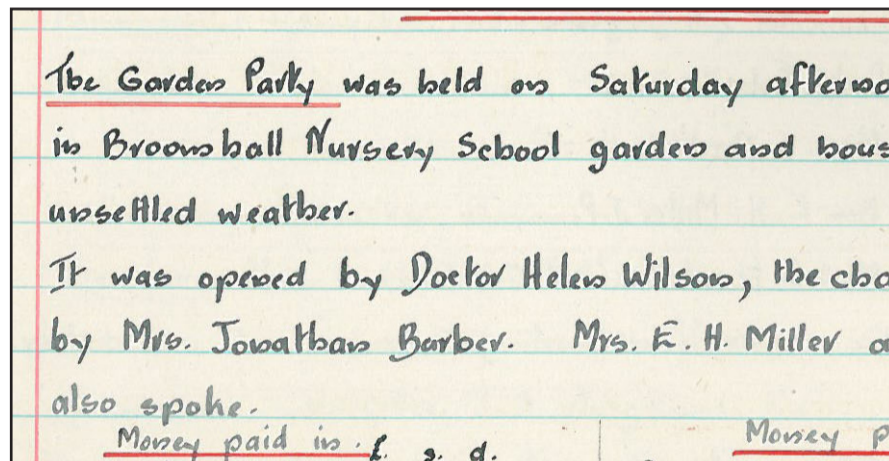
Welcome to our Broomhall Nursery Times anniversary newspaper. We hope you will enjoy reading the wonderful stories from the past 80 years at Broomhall. It has been an exciting time researching the long, happy and varied past of our nursery. We have been reminded what an important part of so many children's and adults' lives Broomhall has been, and made us all feel privileged to be part of its history. We would like to thank all those that have contributed to the newspaper and supported our 80th celebrations. The hard work will certainly be appreciated by everyone today, but also by generations to come. We will have a fantastic record of the years Broomhall Nursery has been dedicated to providing a wonderful environment for young children, their families and staff to grow and learn together. GILL PEACOCK, HEADTEACHER, 2011

A LIFETIME AGO

It trips quickly off the tongue – "eighty years". We know it's a long time, but how exactly have times changed?

When Broomhall Nursery opened, George V was King and Ramsey MacDonald was Prime Minister; the Empire State Building was completed and sliced bread went on sale for the first time.

Cecil Paine, a pathologist at the Sheffield Royal Infirmary, achieved the first recorded cure using penicillin (of an eye infection).



Handwritten notes from the headteacher's log on the 1938 Garden Party

1938 GARDEN PARTY

Broomhall Nursery has a venerable tradition in garden parties.

The first was on 9th July, 1938. We wonder if any early pupils who are here today may remember it?

Due to unsettled weather, the party was held in the house as well as the garden.

It raised £7 9s 7d in funds for the nursery.

Stalls included pennies in the bowl, a bran tub, skittles and hidden treasure.



HEADS OVER THE YEARS

Broomhall has had only nine headteachers through the eight decades of its existence. Here, current head Gill Peacock, who has been at the helm since 2005, shares her experiences. Previous incumbent, Joan Fallows, who was headteacher for 21 years, also tells of the highlights of her time at Broomhall.

GILL PEACOCK, CURRENT HEADTEACHER

My first memories of Broomhall were as a volunteer in 1979. Having recently qualified as a Nursery Teacher

I was keen to gain some experience in a nursery school with a reputation for excellence in early years practice. I met very dedicated and caring staff and happy children who soaked up all the wonderful learning experiences on offer each day. You could not fail to be impressed by the extensive gardens and equally impressed by the confident way children explored and used the learning environment both indoors and out.

In 1987 as Head of another nursery in Sheffield, it was a pleasure to return to Broomhall each term to meet my headteacher colleagues from the other five

nursery schools. We would share developments in Early Years education and face the inevitable challenges for schools together as a sector dedicated to the very best provision for young children and their families.

In April 2005 I was appointed Head, not only of the school but also of the newly designated Children's Centre. It was an exciting time not just in Sheffield but nationally as professionals worked more closely together to offer a wider range of services to support children and families. Our nursery provision for under threes had been developed and increasingly flex-

ible session times were available to support parents in work and training.

I have always felt privileged to be part of a nursery with such a culturally and socially diverse community. Our families and staff speak 24 different languages and come together each day to play and learn together. We have a very committed and enthusiastic staff team and very supportive parents and community, who are always seeking ways to improve our provision for children. Reading the headteacher's log from the past 80 years, this has always been the case.

During recent years our reputation as a very inclusive nursery has been illustrated by the increasing numbers of children with complex and additional needs who are able to come to nursery each day to join their friends in play. The staff have undertaken a great deal of training to ensure all our children are well supported.

So as we celebrate our 80th anniversary I feel fortunate to have

played a small part in Broomhall's long history but know it will be our continued work together – children, families, staff and the community – that will ensure we have a long and happy future.

Gill Peacock

JOAN FALLOWS, HEADTEACHER 1983–2004

I arrived at Broomhall in January 1983 to one of the worst winters on record but I was delighted to find a wonderful outside area which we could exploit to the full. That winter we were able to sledge and make snow balls and snow men – and women – and really enjoy this magical space. As the winter turned to spring the numerous trees and shrubs sprung into life and provided extra play areas for the children to climb on and hide in. The snowdrops were the first flowers to appear and then the daffodils provided a real splash of colour. These were added to over the years but the appearance of



Joan Fallows, headteacher from 1983 to 2004

the snowdrops as you walked up the path in late January was always the first sign that winter was over.

Over the years we had to have some of the old trees taken down because of decay but we kept them to lie them down so that they became horses or spaceships or boats or whatever the children's imagination could discover. When they finally began to rot the children used old spoons to dig into them to see if they could find any bugs. When the foliage was in full bloom it was great to have places to make dens and get away from the grown-ups.

The children were able to develop naturally without being watched all the time.

Summer brought the sandpit into prominence and the old paddling pool (no longer there) was another dimension. During warm days the children could be outside all day with all the 'inside activities' outside as well. Making dens for mini-beasts and then examining them under a microscope was a real revelation for all the children. The playground was a true extension of the classroom.

When autumn came the outside was again magical

with all the leaves to play with – a nightmare for the caretakers but wondrous for the children. Bonfire night was celebrated with a fire and sparklers and bonfire toffee – not good for the teeth but oh so lovely!

The first year of my headship showed me what a wonderful place Broomhall was – both inside and out – and how important to all the children and families it had been, was and would be.

I worked with exceptional staff and great families and I wish Broomhall a very Happy 80th Birthday.

Joan Fallows



Gill Peacock, our current headteacher

A FAMILY AFFAIR

A family with three generations of involvement at Broomhall are here for today's celebrations.

Five-year-old Connie Kirby recently left to go to Hunters Bar Infant School, after her grandma Christine Stoddart completed 27 years working here as a teacher.

In between, Fiona Kirby occasionally helped mum Christine by reading to pupils. She says it was an obvious decision to send daughter Connie to Broomhall:

"I never looked at any other nurseries", says Fiona. "My mum had worked here and a lot of the teachers are very experienced. It may not have the fancy

equipment you see at some other nurseries but it has a very caring feel to it. It's a community feel."

Christine began her stint at "a very special place" in the 1970s.

She admits she tried to leave Broomhall a few times, but adds: "Whenever I went to other places, I wondered what I was doing. There was a lot of good

work done here, and the grounds and the atmosphere were fantastic.

A lot of the current staff have been there a long time – that tells you something about the school and the camaraderie.

I left 12 years ago but I still see a lot of the staff on a social basis. We're an extended family."



Connie, Fiona and Christine, three generations of the Kirby family

SUE'S SIX DECADES AT BROOMHALL

Sue Pearson has had many occasions to visit the Nursery, in many different roles. The first time was in 1948, having completed her nursery nurse training at Kenwood Nursery training Centre.

Later, as a nursery teacher at Grace Owen Nursery School in the 1970s and 1980s she frequently visited Broomhall to learn and compare.

What Sue calls "my very special visits" were in the 1980s and 1990s, when six of her

grandchildren attended – and now, with one of her great-grandchildren, Kobbie.

So what has changed in these 63 years?! "Not too much, I am pleased to find. The ethos of caring for each individual child, the opportunities of learning through play, the fun, the laughter, the singing and the story telling have remained constant through the years."

"Some things have come full circle. In 1948, we were still in the post war era, with nurseries open 12 hours each day – this had enabled mothers to partici-

pate in essential war work. The nursery nurses were required to cover these hours, 6am to 6pm, often working a split shift!"

"There was special attention to children's health, rationing was still on and cod liver oil and concentrated orange juice were provided as well as milk and lunches for all. There was much emphasis on the outdoors and the afternoon nap taken by all was outside whenever possible."

"Stacking the collapsible wooden framed beds was probably responsible for

many bad backs amongst staff," she adds.

"The school's nursing sister was a frequent visitor – her cure for most bumps and injuries seemed to be gentian violet administered with a single cork from the bottle! Health and Safety hadn't arrived! Then you would see children displaying purple marks on their faces and elsewhere. All wore brightly coloured aprons (made by us) displaying their individual logos."

"It was clear, that then as now, children enjoyed and learned from their nursery experience."



Everything outdoors, including having a good wash in 1936

First make your bed.... In 1959, naps were taken outside as early in the year as February



A LONG-TERM RESIDENT OF BROOMHALL REFLECTS

I moved to Broomhall in 1987, to live with my husband who had bought a house here a few years earlier.

At that time, the area still had a reputation as a red light area with street prostitutes. There were also blues clubs and people selling cannabis on street corners.

Two things changed the atmosphere quite quickly.

One was the "housing action area" in the early 1980s. The council wanted to demolish and completely rebuild whole streets, as many houses were in very poor condition. But local people campaigned to have the money spent on refurbishing existing houses and creating community gardens and allotments.

Later on, the Sunny Bank estate was built and the Broomhall flats (opposite Springfield School) were demolished and

replaced with terraced housing and small apartment blocks.

Secondly, some one-way streets and barriers were introduced, which made it harder for kerb-crawlers to circulate.

The quality of the housing and the street-scene improved, and many of the original residents stayed on, which accounts for the strong sense of community.

Broomhall is very mixed. There have been African Caribbean people here since the 1950s, as well as

Somalis, Yemenis, Pakistanis, Indians and many other groups.

In recent times, more Somalis, Middle Eastern and Eastern Europeans have arrived.

The other big influx is students, as landlords convert family houses for multiple occupation.

Many of my contemporaries lived in Broomhall as students or young professionals, but moved on to quieter, posher places. I am one of the die-hards who still loves living here.

I know there are troubles – revelers, drug dealing and some community tensions.

But when I am working in our front garden, pushing my wheelbarrow to the allotment, cycling into town, or walking to a meeting at the Broomhall Centre, I know many of the faces in the street and Broomhall is home to me. I'll think long and hard before I ever move away.

Councillor Jillian Creasy, Broomhall resident since 1987



Advert by the Central Council for Health Education in 1955

A GARDENER'S TALE, SQUIRE?

Long-serving nursery staff Mandy Squire and Su Gardner trawl their memory banks and harvest their green-fingered favourites. They've got 60 years of Broomhall Nursery experience behind them and have seen many changes along the way. But, for Bungalow teachers Mandy Squire and Su

Gardner, the best thing about the nursery has stayed the same since day one: "It's the garden," says Mandy. After 32 years' service, she can still remember the day she walked through the gates for her interview, kicking the autumn leaves as she went. "I remember thinking: 'I hope I get this job.' It was all because of the garden."

"I'd been for interviews at other places, but as soon as I walked in, I knew this was the place. It's really special." Su, a relative novice, having worked here for 28 years, agrees that the outside space marks Broomhall out. She recalls: "We used to have an allotment out the back. I can remember being upstairs and looking out at the

sunflowers and nasturtiums (watercress). The children used to put the nasturtiums on their bread and called them 'Paradise Sandwiches.' They were delicious." "We also used to have a big, stone paddling pool. That was one of my favourite things. We used to let the children take all their clothes off and go in the paddling pool. The staff

used to go in too." With perfect timing, Mandy butts in: "They did have their clothes on! You couldn't do it now." Fun and laughter is never far away at Broomhall nursery. "It's a very happy environment," smiles Su. "The children come in with different smiley faces every day and the staff are wonderful," adds Mandy. "I've



Mandy Squire and Su Gardner – in the garden

made some really good friends." Some of those friends straddle the generations, with Mandy and Su now teaching the children of their former pupils. Su points out: "We know three generations of their families." Looking across the nursery at the current crop, she decides: "When their children come, maybe that's when we'll leave!"

The nursery retained its paddling pool from its early days until the 1980s



Broomhall Nursery Headteacher Miss Packer (left) with Mrs Vere Jolly and children at the Vere Jolly Annex (above right and below)



Prince Charles visits Mushroom Lane Annex in the 1970s

MEMORIES OF MUSHROOM LANE

It was a sad day when Mushroom Lane Annex closed in 2005. Yet the staff, parents and children who were part of it have very happy memories. The nursery was built in the 1970s as part of the University of Sheffield psychology department as a place for staff and students to study

the behaviour of young children. It was tucked away underneath the psychology building at the top of Mushroom Lane, close to Weston Park Museum and the Children's Hospital. Described by a parent as "the best hidden secret in Sheffield," the 20-place unit had views through the trees over the sports ground. Shirley Webb recalls: "It was a

wonderful place to watch the birds, squirrels and rabbits. Going to the museum and the park was a simple journey, only a footstep away. A trip to Orchard Square in town on the bus, or Meadowhall to the bookshop on the tram with staff, parents, babies in buggies and children was an adventure!" "Strong bonds were built between staff and

the families who used the nursery over the 30 years it was open." "It was often cold in the playground but having a real shed to play in was great – it was a house, a hospital, a fire station, a space rocket – the children's imagination was endless. Having toast for snack on Fridays was a welcome tradition." "Memories are made of this."

VERE JOLLY NURSERY

Named after its founder, Vere Jolly Nursery was, like Mushroom Lane, an annex to Broomhall Nursery. Children generally came to Vere Jolly Nursery from the surrounding flats. Some mothers and grandmothers would stay and help out informally. They would tidy the nursery and help bring some of the equipment inside as there was some vandalism. Relationships between staff and parents, some of whom were isolated, were very good. Interaction

with staff gave parents a chance to raise any concerns that they might have. Parents assisted on trips to the pet shop, for hamster and fish supplies, or other provisions. Staff made the most of the limited outside space, but this was sometimes supplemented by trips to Broomhall's garden.

Nursery nurse Lynne Walker remembers: "Vere Jolly Nursery was part of a community, which played an important role in bringing people together. It gave young children a place to play safely and experience a social and learning environment, close to where they lived". In the 1970s, Prince Charles

was a visitor to the nursery. The Broomhall flats, beneath which the nursery was situated, were demolished in the 1980s. At this point, the staff and some of the children moved to Broomhall Nursery. "I enjoyed my time at Vere Jolly and look back at it fondly," says Lynne.

