

Looking back at Bents Green Pre-School

We are exploring our history and memories, if you have any you would like to add we would love to hear from you. Please email emma.s.wassell@gmail.com

Hazel Wassell and Brenda Bell were the founders in 1968/9 joined by Edna Clayton, Margaret Cole, Nancy Rust, and Margaret Startup among others. It started as some simple childcare whilst the ladies met for 'Young Wives club' on a Monday afternoon, later when their children went to school the ladies met in the evening, which was the beginning of the long running 'Mondays/Ladies at 8' group. We believe Hazel and others set up morning groups for the next lot of new parents in the community and over time it blossomed into longer sessions through the week, becoming a daily morning playgroup. It became supported by the Teaching and Learning Alliance and then in order to take advantage of Government vouchers, it officially became an Ofsted registered Pre-School in 2000.

There have been a handful of much loved Playgroup/Pre-School managers over the years, including Kath Iveson, Alison Donaldson and Stella Pilkington, supported by a wonderful team of deputies and practitioners, all having lasting affects on the children they cared for over the years.

Kath shares a favourite memory:

"We were doing our nativity play in church and the angel came in to give the baby to Mary who said 'I don't want it!' I whispered to her 'Take the baby and put it in the manger!' She looked straight at me and said 'I DON'T WANT IT!' I said to Joseph 'Take the baby and put it in the manger!' he said 'I don't want it either!' At which point the Little donkey shouted 'I'll have it!' The audience were all in stitches!

Another Nativity memory from Kath

"We had a boy who was very lively. I asked him, could he please stand still watch me while he was a king. The next day he came to me and said 'Kath did I do good yesterday?' I said 'Yes you were a little star!' he gave me a strange look and said 'No I wasn't I was a king!' Bless him!

Kath also fondly remembers very popular Pre-School trips.

"We always went to Sundown adventure park or White Post Farm. One year we had 3 coaches, plus 3 cars leave preschool. We went the 1st week of the holidays so past pre schoolers could come with us."

Yet another highlight was the fundraising Bents Green Pre School Cookbook around 2006/7. Famous faces like Gordon Ramsey, Nora Sands and the Duchess of Devonshire even got involved!

As well as having a recipe appearing alongside Gordon Ramsey, Alison has so many happy memories 'I loved working with that age group - such a rewarding job - watching them grow in confidence and ability for the next stage.'

Memories through the decades

1960s

Jane remembers going to the group as a toddler when it first started, playing in the sandpit and on the trundle trucks.

1970s

In the 70s Jane also remembers helping out at the playgroup, her favourite memory was reading a book called 'Robert the Racehorse' the front cover was on upside down so it always made the children laugh!

1980s

"My Mum says they had mini cereal boxes which my Brother and his friend used to hide under the table to eat! I have a photo of me and my friend standing very proudly next to a sunflower which looks as big as us! I met with that friend only last week for a coffee and an ice cream over 30 years later!" Laura

1990s

Phil went to Pre-School in the 90s, he remembers the paint pots, easels and the popoids! He also used to borrow the same video from their library and he asked to keep it when they got rid of them in later years, he still has it today! 'The staff were all so loving, friendly and caring' he said.

2000s

Jude, "I have lots of happy memories of Bents Green Pre School. I loved playing outside on the bikes and climbing frames. All the teachers were very nice, my favourite memory was pirate day."

2010s

Sam loved making a 'triple' on the computer game, and the construction blocks. Lois loved playing outside on in the mud kitchen. Lois also loved story time and the trampoline. N.W liked the fact they got a choose a different activity every day and K.K. loved the outdoor play.

2020s

Joel, now enjoying his first year at school loved playing with the train track, painting and going outside. He loved playing with his friends too. 'I miss Pre-School because it was my favourite place to go!' he says.