



Joy Merryweather returned to Martin Primary, where she'd been at school in the 1940s.

Joy's memories of her Martin days

A special guest joined the staff and children of Martin School when they celebrated the school's 100th anniversary in February. Joy Merryweather went there from 1944 and now lives in Lankaster Gardens.

She joined both assemblies for the junior and infant children and shared her memories of life at the school almost 70 years ago. Children from each class stood up in turn to ask their questions.

Top of the list was "Were you naughty?" to which Joy said she tried not to be. "Did you get hit on the hand?" asked the next pupil. The infants listened in silence as Joy remembered how she was regularly hit over the knuckles with a ruler, and all because the teachers said her writing was too big.

Joy told the children how her favourite lesson was sums, how there were no uniforms in her junior days, and how

she'd regularly walk home to Leslie Road for her lunch before returning to school in the afternoon.

The assemblies finished with the children singing *We'll Meet Again* and *The White Cliffs of Dover* specially for Joy, who was very touched, as well as presenting her with a thank you card.

Joy said afterwards: "The songs were beautiful. *The White Cliffs of Dover* particularly reminded me of my father. It's been fascinating to be back in the school after all these years and it's surprising that the buildings and the classrooms really haven't changed all that much."

100 years of Martin School

Martin Primary School opened a year of celebrations to mark its 100th birthday with a day of Edwardian teaching and two very special assemblies.

Children of all ages and staff came dressed as they might have done on the day the school opened in February 1913. Girls in bonnets and smocks walked with their hands together in front, while boys in caps and shorts held theirs behind their back. (See our front page picture.)

In the classrooms the children's desks had been rearranged into strict rows and there were slates and chalks for writing and sums. One teacher reported that her class said it was the best day of lessons they'd ever had.

School governor Roger Chapman said: "This centenary day has brought alive the history of the school, not just as a celebration of 100 years, but also by looking back over the years and using all the stories as part of our teaching throughout the year."

Tales from two wars

Roger's research into the school's log book has found some fascinating tales. One entry from September 1915 recalls how 30 girls were given time off to attend Holy Trinity Church for the funeral of their classmate Phyllis Wren, said to have died of fright during a night raid by Zeppelins over north London. Phyllis, 13, fell dead a few steps down the stairs of her home in Leslie Road. An inquest jury returned a verdict of death from natural causes, possibly an undiagnosed heart condition.

The school had a torrid period in 1940. On 24 August, there was the sudden death of Miss Piggott, headmistress of the junior school since it opened in 1913. Three days later, the school was closed owing to "being in the danger zone of a

delayed action bomb". School life was seriously disrupted for the next three weeks and staff and pupils spent much of their time in the seven air raid shelters that still ring the school. They also missed their daily deliveries of milk as one of the two local dairies was put out of action, presumably by bombing.

Preserving the past

Martin School has been granted £10,000 in Heritage Lottery Fund support to invest

in preserving the school's history in digital form for future generations, as well as recording oral histories from pupils past and present.

A number of special events are planned for this centenary year, including an archaeological dig week in April. Preserving evidence of the past is particularly important as Martin School gets ready for building works that will help it increase its pupil intake.



A new look for Martin School

Barnet Council has issued an image of how the new extension at Martin Primary School will look.

A two-storey block will be built on the existing car park at the side of the school in Plane Tree Walk, providing seven new classrooms in all. A new multi-use games area will be installed on the school field and three of the four World War Two air raid shelters in front of the school will be demolished to make way for a relocated car park. Work on the expansion is expected to start soon, as the school celebrates its 100th anniversary.

Stanley Field photos

Friends of Stanley Field have announced their first annual photo competition. There will be winners from different categories.

Winning photos, which will be made into calendars, will be displayed at the East Finchley Festival and shown in *THE ARCHER*. Send your best photographs of the field to friendsofstanleyfield@gmail.com or c/o Robert Simon, Maths, LSE, Houghton St., WC2A 2AE. The deadline for entries is 15 April 2013.

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