

CELEBRATING 110 YEARS OF OUR KEY STAGE 2 BUILDING

During the Easter holidays, the Key Stage 2 Building of our school celebrated 110 years since it opened on Wednesday 2nd April 1913. It was originally intended to open in 1912 but unfortunately the correct permission had not been granted by the education ministry. This is why the stone on the school building says 1912 even though the school building was not opened until 1913. The price of the build was £4,296. It was built on land that was formerly occupied by Peele House which had burnt down in a fire in 1892 and the plot left empty for many years. The brick wall behind the school car park is all that remains of the old Peale House. In 1911, KCC bought the central portion of land from JR Coles to build a new school. Prior to this, the Loose National School (later Loose Elementary School) had been located in the village on Malthouse Hill. It opened in 1843 and the foundation stone still exists above its former location.

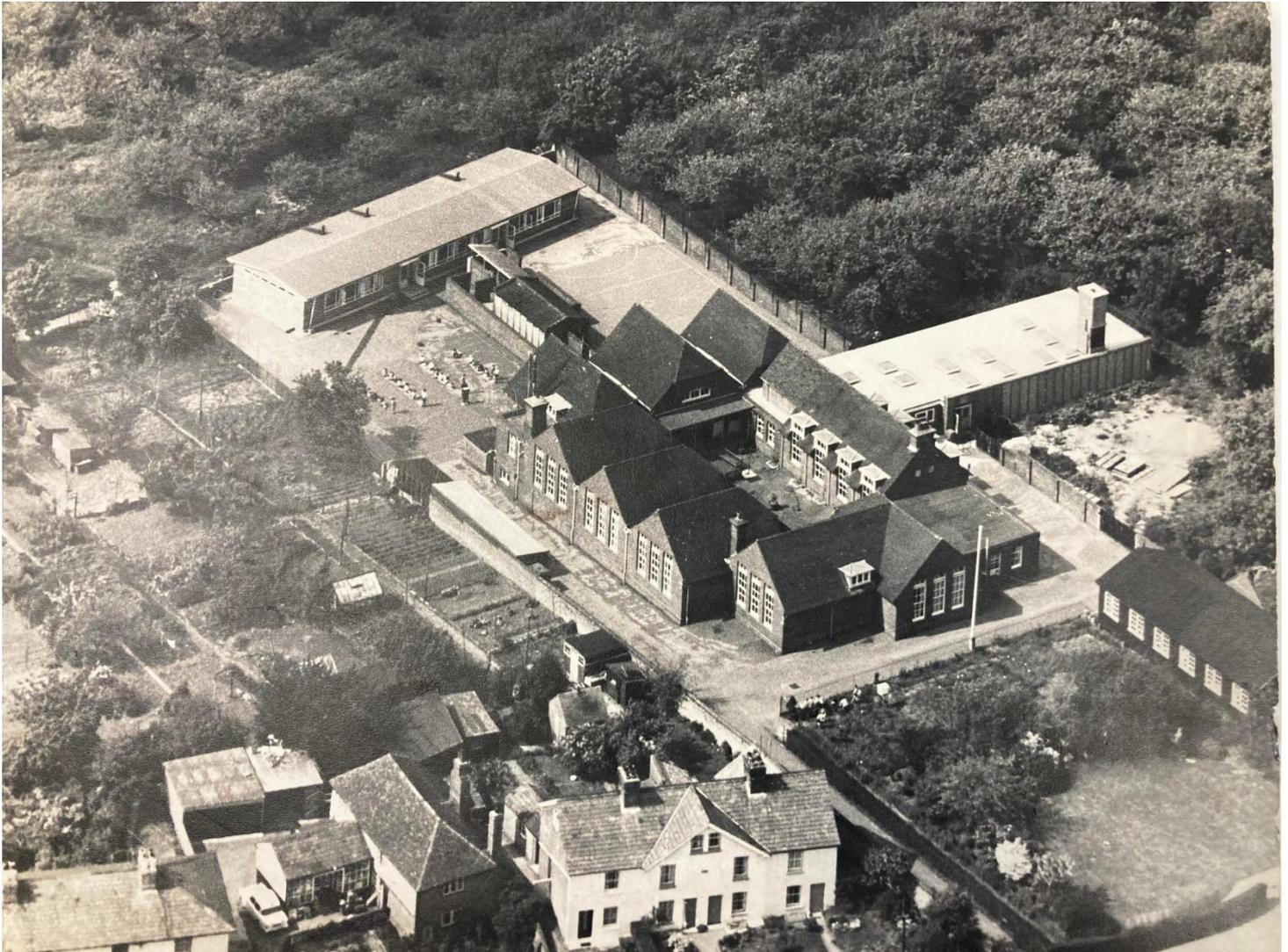
When the school opened at its new site, the Headmaster from Malthouse Hill, Tom Griffin Richards moved with it and remained as the head until 1921. He was followed by John Julett Knuckey and then Richard Loftus Waldron until 1956. In 1939, all teaching staff were recalled from their summer holidays due to the start of the Second World War. On the 1st September, the school was opened as a reception centre for Evacuees. School term eventually began on the 25th of September but no more than 150 children were allowed on site at the time so they alternated days between Juniors and Seniors. By October, they needed to reopen the old school on Malthouse Hill for evacuees and infant age children for 5 days a week. They also used other locations including the church, the WI hall and the Chequers pub. Trenches and air raid shelters were built but there was not always enough warning to get to them so senior boys patrolled the playground with a bell watching out for doodlebugs. If the bell rang, the children would hide under the desks. By 1943, all male teachers had been called up so the staff was all female and Miss Pankhurst (as the youngest teacher) ran the boys' football team. On 27 July 1944, a flying bomb fell in Loose landing at the top of Lancet Lane but fortunately, there were no casualties at the school and little damage to the buildings.

Loose School between 1941 and 1948 consisted of one brick building containing 2 small cloakrooms and seven classrooms – 3 of which were divided by a movable partition and one long room which was used for Woodwork (boys) and Domestic Science (girls). There were also 2 hutted classrooms

where the drive is now. At the back of the building were 2 playgrounds – boys and girls separated – and at the front of the school was a kitchen garden cultivated by top year boys supervised by the headmaster. The children in Infant and Junior classes lived locally but, at age 11, children from Boughton, Linton and Farleigh could also attend. They were brought in by bus. This made the older classes rather large – Miss Pankhurst started off with 52 one year. They left when they were 14/15. PE lessons took place in the playground and games happened on King George V playing field over the road. After the war, the infant classes returned to the main school and took over the two hatted classrooms.

In 1960 more land was bought by KCC to extend the school and in 1964, KCC compulsorily purchased the meadow to build Loose CP Infants School. In 1968, Loose School became 2 separate schools, Infant and Junior. The Infants school had 241 children on roll - 6 classes with 40-42 in a class. On 23rd April 1968 (55 years ago), the head teacher of the Infants, Miss Amy Johnstone wrote in the school log book that they were still awaiting the arrival of the tables and chairs for the dinner hall and the hall curtains! Later, Miss Eileen Dunn, the head of the infants wrote in the school log book for the final time on the 1st September 2000, due to the advent of computers and emails making them no longer necessary. In 2003, KCC applied to replace the two temporary hatted classroom units in the junior playground with a purpose-built extension of two storeys to the main building. This extension was then added to with extra classrooms which explains why the brickwork looks different on half the extension building! The infant and junior schools later became federated and in September 2014, the school became a Primary school under the leadership of Mr Darren Webb. Eventually, the school formed the Coppice Primary Partnership with Coxheath Primary and later St Katherine's, Snodland.

Last year, I asked for any memories from ex pupils of Loose among staff and families. Thank you so much to those who shared them with me. They had many special moments to share from their time at the school. I am always happy to receive any more through the school office. I have also been fortunate to access some of the school log books, old photographs and the “**Loose Threads**” magazines. It feels very special to be a part of such a long history at Loose Primary school. During my research, I also found out that my reception class teacher Mrs Linton-Smith came to work at Loose Infant School a few years after teaching me in 1979. It was lovely to see photographs of her as she played such an important role in my life. **Mrs Whittaker, History Lead**



Loose Primary School

Date unknown, found while clearing out a former storage room.

It shows the mobile hutted classrooms on what is now the KS2 playground and the toilet block down the middle splitting it into separate boys' and girls' areas. Some children appear to be outside, maybe doing PE. It also shows the area in front of the school which was used as allotments for older pupils to grow plants. The wall running down the left-hand side of the school is there. The quad area is in the middle of the building as now and there is an extension on the back where the KS2 cloakrooms are now. There is no school hall though. Where our school playing fields are now and Waldron Drive beyond, it is all woods. Perhaps Waldron Drive was named after the School Head Teacher, Richard Waldron who was at the school for 33 years. The Infant building has not been built yet.

So, the date could be anything after 1913 and before 1968. I would estimate 1930s or 40s maybe. Sadly, there was nothing written on the back.

Mrs Whittaker



Last photo taken at old school site



The "new" school building



1940s staff in the Quad outside what is now Coral Classroom



**A 1950s class when the school motto was:
Courtesy, Honesty, Loyalty**



Loose staff in the late 1970s

It is no longer considered necessary to keep school log books as so much data is kept on file, disc etc, and information is sent via E-mail at the speed of light, so, with regret I will no longer be writing in this book.
Aileen Dunn
1.9.2000.

The last entry in the Infant School log book in 2000