

Artarmon Public School celebrates its Centenary - A brief history 1910 - 2010

by Margot McKay

WW1 and earlier: The possibility of opening a public school at Artarmon was first raised in 1907. It took three years to get approval from the Department of Education, to purchase the land and build the two-room school. Artarmon was growing rapidly and it was thought that the many Artarmon children travelling by train to Chatswood were at risk from accidents.



The school as it was in 1910

The school opened in October 1910 with Miss Eliza Cowan as Mistress, one assistant (Miss Hancock) and a class of 66 children. At this stage the school had an infants' department only. Soon after, the land between the original school site on McMillan Road and Barton Road was sold to the department by Mr W Cleland for £900.

In March 1917 the school completed an extension: an upper storey of two rooms was built over the existing building. Artarmon became a full primary school. That same year John Pugh was appointed first permanent headmaster and the first P & C was formed. By 1918 the average attendance was 272 pupils. John Pugh was then succeeded by Andrew Garden and shortly afterwards by Jonathon Machin. By September 1919 there was a staff of 8 teachers and 462 pupils.

Between the Wars: In the early days, overcrowding became a problem and pupils were often housed in weather sheds. The sheds were soon enclosed to make classrooms but enrolments were increasing by about ten pupils a week thanks in part to the popularity of Mr Machin. By 1920, portable classrooms were also introduced to cope with the student increase.

In 1924, four new classrooms were built fronting McMillan Road. Jonathon Machin was a sick man by now but worked until his death in August 1925. Because of his popularity, a bell tower was erected in his memory.

Colin Moody succeeded Jonathon Machin and by May 1927 the enrolment was at 786 pupils. Overcrowding was once again an issue. Relief came in 1928 with a new building on the Abbott Road site at a cost of £9108. The school was then divided into three

departments; the boys in the new building and the girls and infants remaining in the old one.

George Ridley was headmaster from 1928 to 1932 and then Kenneth Finch until January 1934.

By 1935 George McCartney was the headmaster and at the beginning of 1936 Artarmon became the third school in NSW (after Woollahra and Erskineville) to have a special class for gifted children. This was the start of the OC (opportunity class) at Artarmon Public School.

William Rannard was the headmaster over the war years and then Harold Mathews took over in January 1946.

Post WW2: After the war, the first flute and recorder bands were formed but only the boys were allowed into the flute band. From these simple beginnings Artarmon is still recognised as a leader in music today.

The Oslo Canteen, run by Kay Grant, became operational in 1947. Mrs Grant served the children lunches continuously for 20 years, retiring in 1967. Her policy was to provide a healthy lunch to the children. Brown bread with healthy fillings and fruit was the norm although many children remember the chocolate filling in crusts (butter, sugar, cocoa). In 1951 some parents requested the chocolate filling be taken off the menu, but it continued well after that: the pupils won!

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history

Craftsmen Office Interiors NSW Pty Ltd moved into the Artarmon area (Cleg Street) in 1992. We made the choice of Artarmon due to the close proximity to the city and north shore, as well as the Artarmon area's great village, public transport, parks, plenty of trees and great plans for the suburb's future. We purchased a property in Reserve Road (The Enterprise Centre) in 2000, in one of the new industrial/commercial estates that have been established in Artarmon and have brought a wide range of businesses to the area. The Progress Association, local members and businesses are contributing greatly to Artarmon and we are proud to be part of this.

company

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If you require quotations or ideas on your existing office fit-outs please contact one of the persons below.

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The school as it is today

Also in 1947, and under the leadership of Harold Mathews, the school was classified as a School for Special Purposes and Experiments in Education. The school taught, for example, spelling with and without a typewriter. The school also introduced mechanical aids such as the Tachistoscope and Reading Rate Controllers.

The 60s: In 1960, Jubilee Celebrations were in full swing and the Jubilee Assembly Hall was built. Many children helped fund the project by holding backyard fetes, hobby exhibitions, stamp and coin shows and auctions. Class magazines were written, typed, edited and bound by pupils and sold. The hall was completed in 1962 and officially opened in 1964. In 1967 a physical education program was introduced and some 60 fathers worked for two weekends to install equipment. After 22 years as Headmaster Harold Mathews retired in 1968 and John Nicholson replaced him.

The 70s: From 1971 a new assessment scheme to replace exams was introduced and children's work was evaluated by the class teacher as each term progressed. The 70s also saw three choirs in training as well as the flute and drum bands and junior and senior recorder groups plus a small group of violinists. In sports there were two softball, two cricket, two netball and two rugby union teams. 1972 saw two big changes: Harold Nicholson introduced the teaching of English as a second language and the Ladies' Auxiliary donated a language machine to assist. 1978 also saw big changes: a language teacher for non-English speakers was appointed and Elizabeth Walker was appointed as the first woman president of the P & C. In 1979 after ten and a half

years Harold Nicholson retired and Lance Richardson was appointed as his successor.

The 80s: In 1985 Artarmon celebrated its first 75 years and a history of the school was published.

2010: Artarmon Public School now has 760 students, a smaller number than in 1927. We still have our choirs which include Kameraigal Choir (Years 5/6), Cowan Choir (Years 3/4) and the Year 2 Choir. Our bands comprise a Senior Band, Concert Band, Junior Band, Training Band, Jazz Band 1 and Jazz Band 2. The school sporting teams compete in soccer, netball, otag and Aussie Rules. In addition, the school also has a string group, guitar group and debating teams. This year the school is growing again with a new two storey building that will house a new library and three new classrooms. The old library which is currently located in the original building will be refurbished and made into the administration offices.

*The school will be holding a **Centenary Celebration event on 23 October, 2010.***

If you would like further details please contact the school at artarmon-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au or 9411 1950 or see the school website www.artarmon-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

The school is also in the process of documenting the last 25 years of its history. If you have any memories, photos or memorabilia you would like to share, please contact Margot McKay at margot@whichhue.com.au or 9413 1058. ■



APS Prefects (above) and house captains joined 7000 other primary school students for an inspirational day at the National Young Leaders' Conference in March this year

Exciting activities leading up to Artarmon Public School's 100 year celebrations

by Jane Cozens

The school is gearing up for its centenary and a different theme has been assigned to each school term.

Term 1 – Multicultural. The highlight was the successful Multicultural Festival on Sunday 27 February which proved a great way of welcoming new families and connecting with the culturally diverse families represented at the school.



Multicultural day 2010

Term 2 - Academic. To celebrate the academic history of the school and to stimulate creative, innovative and academic acumen, primary students will be attending The Artarmon Academy for eight weeks. A wide variety of courses are being offered, some examples being ethnic percussion, Artarmon history, movie making, Shakespeare, ancient Egypt, geology, fishing and the history of food, of which students can elect two. They will gain experience working with students and teachers other than their usual and all courses are designed to stimulate, challenge and introduce students to new areas of learning while enhancing thinking skills.

Term 3 – History. Students will be looking at the history of the school and the suburb, one decade per week for ten weeks.

Term 4 - Centenary, with the big celebrations happening on Saturday 23 October 2010. ■

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