

March 2024

# THE SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE PAST, PRESENT - AND FUTURE?



## Welcome to our newsletter!

### March across the project

This month, the University College London team have been exploring the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh. Highlights include lots to do with the rise of 'junk' food (however defined) in the School Meals Service, and campaigns to encourage pupils to take up free school meals, which is a recurring issue we're encountering from sources and conversations across the project.

Across the project, we have also successfully applied to present at a number of conferences this summer. As a team, we will be speaking at the Children's History Society conference in Newcastle, Social History Society in Durham, International Standing Conference for the History of Education online, and finally the British Educational Research Association in Manchester. We're set for a busy summer!



The Sheffield and Wolverhampton teams visited our partner school, Field Lane Junior, Infant and Nursery School. As part of the school's Get Together Coffee morning, we talked to parents, staff and members of the local community about their childhood experiences of school meals. We loved listening to everyone reminisce about their experiences and looking through old photos and diaries from the school. Field Lane also raised a fantastic £393 for charity at the event!



The Sheffield and Wolverhampton teams also kindly received a tour of a partner school in Lincolnshire. We enjoyed seeing lunch time in action, the food education facilities at the school, and sampling a school meal ourselves! The school keep wellies outside of each classroom so that getting muddy isn't a barrier to the children getting outside and planting in the raised beds.



In a change to our usual Featured Photo, this month we're sharing a short video celebrating the opening of a new school in Kent in 1959. Part of the film highlights the school's approach to food education, making girls into 'efficient housewives'! Thanks to Mike for sharing this clip and taking the time to talk to us about his school meal memories! You can watch the video on Youtube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pe23n-Z6Lg>



The Sheffield team presented work on our oral history interviews for only the second time at the History of Experience conference in a very chilly (-7!) Tampere in Finland this month! The paper used the concept of 'communities of experience' to understand how individual experiences of school meals might connect to society, to better help us to understand changes to people's interactions with the School Meals Service over time.