

# Postscript - After 1987

As the contributions in this book illustrate, playgroups and the playgroup movement in Wales grew and flourished from the early beginnings in 1961 to become a major contributor to pre-school education through into the 70's and 80's. After the Wales Region of PPA was formed in 1976 the Association continued to grow. A grant from the Welsh Office had increased year by year and the number of Field Staff had also increased.

In the 1970's Scotland and Northern Ireland had become independent and it became clear that the then Wales Region also could better serve the membership by being independent. So at the National Annual General Meeting in Birmingham in 1987 a proposal that the Wales Region should become independent was agreed. Therefore on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1987 an independent Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association (Wales PPA) was formally inaugurated at a special meeting of all the membership called at Aberystwyth where it adopted its own constitution. From 1987 to the early 1990's the number of groups increased dramatically. Each of the county associations, branches and all the individual groups had their own constitutions. The need for change was evident so in the early 90's external consultants were employed to carry out a Management Review of the Association and their findings and recommendations were passed on to the membership. After much consultation these proposals were accepted at the Annual General Meeting in 1995 where it was agreed to form a Company Limited by Guarantee to be managed by a Board of Trustees (National Council) consisting of members of the Association from across Wales. Many changes in its management and structure were to follow. A new committee structure and also a new staffing structure were developed. Part time Development Officers became full time Executive Officers and the management of the Association later moved to Newtown in Mid Wales.

By 2007, Wales PPA, a registered educational charity, was the largest provider of pre-school care in Wales outside the state sector. Membership

of the Association consisted of playgroups, parent and toddler groups, full day care groups, interested individuals and companies. Over 30,000 pre-school children and their families were involved through 1,100 Wales PPA members across Wales. The annual Welsh Assembly core grant had risen to £260,000 but the overall income was now over £1m including income from sponsors, supporters and fund raising.

With increased emphasis on the importance of the early years in education, Wales PPA has risen to the challenge to raise standards in their groups ensuring that playgroup provision caters for all areas of early learning. Undoubtedly the organisation will forge ahead with new vigour to meet the demands of the twenty-first century but hopefully it will retain the spirit and ethos of this unique form of pre-school provision.