

**Deafness is a disability but it need not be a handicap.
Loss of hearing is no joking matter.**

Given real support, encouragement and understanding, deaf and hard of hearing people can enjoy the kind of full and active existence that all of us would expect... and we have many members who can prove it!

More than four decades ago, the Jewish Deaf Association came into being, providing a pioneering club and day centre which proved to be a haven for Jewish deaf people caught up in the problems of the post-war world.

That club is still open. But today the JDA takes on a much wider role: as a champion and advocate of the needs of Jewish deaf people throughout the country.

**Listen to the silence –
then hear the need.**



In these pages, we've invited the people we serve to do what they would find most difficult if you met them face to face – to speak openly about their silent world.

All we ask of you is this.

Listen to the silence. Then hear the need.

“It's quite true that deaf people, and in our case deaf Jewish people, tend to stick together. There is always a gap between the hearing and the non-hearing world which technology can narrow but can never quite bridge.

As Chairman of the JDA Central Committee, my job is to make sure that deaf people in our community can lead as full a social life as they wish. We run and plan our own activities without interference.”

Martin, 38, Ilford

We are very proud of the accomplishments of JDA members. In finding work despite innumerable obstacles and difficulties. In bringing up both hearing and deaf children. In providing for themselves an ever widening framework to lead enjoyable, stimulating and purposeful lives together with their children, families and friends.

The British Jewish Deaf Sports Organisation – headed by one of our younger members, Simeon Hart – comprises both individual athletes and teams, who compete to the highest standards in many sports, including football, badminton and squash.



The BJDSO team made its debut visit to Israel in the Summer of 1991, to compete with their Israeli counterparts at the Helen Keller Centre in Tel Aviv. The trip which the JDA helped to sponsor was highly successful and has opened up new horizons for Jewish deaf sportsmen and women, who have already proved that they can compete in sports at all levels – both in the deaf and hearing worlds.



“I was a shul goer all my life until I became dependent on a hearing aid. Then for years I couldn't hear what was going on so I stopped bothering. Now they've fitted an induction loop system, I feel a whole part of me is back in action again.”

Sheila, 62, Barnet

One of our major campaigns over the past few years has been for the Jewish community to face up to its responsibilities by fitting induction loops in all public buildings. Gradually this is happening – but far too slowly.

We've offered to pay all or part of the cost (around £1,000) of fitting a loop system where a synagogue just can't find the funds. (We're able to do this because of a special grant negotiated for this purpose.)

Now – after protracted discussions with the JDA – the London Beth Din has, under certain circumstances, sanctioned the use of induction loops on the Shabbat and Jewish Festivals. We regard this as a major advancement for normalising the religious lives of Jewish deaf people and urge all synagogue committees to install the loop system as a matter of urgency.



Deaf families sign happily together. The Jewish Deaf Association organises a number of sign language classes which are attended by social workers, policemen, medical staff and carers who often need to communicate with hearing impaired people in the course of their work.





JDA President, George Gee, lights the candles at Chanukah – just one of the major Jewish festivals celebrated at our North London headquarters and Day Centre, which are attended by many of our members and their families. Services and prayers are interpreted into sign language so that everyone can participate in the proceedings.

“How can I be satisfied with what we do for our members? The more I see, the more I realise what needs to be done”

Pat Goldring, JDA Executive Director

As the person responsible to the JDA Committee for carrying out its work, Pat Goldring seeks to initiate a wide-ranging series of programmes that will be of real assistance to deaf and hard of hearing people within our community.

These include:

● RESOURCE CENTRE

Due to open in the Winter of 1991 at JDA Headquarters and going 'on the road' when funds permit, the Centre will house a comprehensive range of environmental aids for deaf and hearing impaired people – from hearing aids and special attachments for the phone to Minicom systems and lights which flash to show the doorbell is ringing.

The Centre, which will be manned by an experienced professional worker backed up by volunteers, will also offer a wide selection of leaflets, books and information for deaf people, outlining social services, benefits and other information which might be needed by a deaf person or someone caring for one.



Executive Director Pat Goldring teaches basic sign language to a group of children from the Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade. The JDA is keen to encourage visits from groups of youngsters representing Cheder classes, youth groups or fundraising committees, who are interested in meeting deaf people and learning more about the deaf world.



● PROJECT KOLEINU

A shared project with Norwood Child Care and the Association for Jewish Youth, Project Koleinu seeks to identify every deaf or hard of hearing child in our community so as to ensure they receive the very best in secular and Jewish education and in their social life.

The Project aims to establish a selection of self-help groups for deaf Jewish youngsters, ranging from mums and toddlers groups to social groups for teenagers. With the help of the AJY, a computer network is being set up to help Jewish deaf youngsters to communicate not only with each other but with the hearing world too. Knowledge of computers will also help to improve job prospects for youngsters, as the commercial world relies more and more on technology to handle its business.

● SOCIAL WORK SUPPORT

The JDA would like to widen its social work team so as to spend more time with people who often discover real problems in finding their way in the hearing world. The JDA acts as an advocate, speaking out for people who are literally unable to speak for themselves. Without our support and assistance, confrontations with officials can become a permanent worry.

When a deaf (and elderly) person goes into hospital, the problems magnify. Hearing people are frequently confused and concerned about their treatment; for the deaf, the experience of illness without understanding is a nightmare. The JDA when alerted interprets, explains and calms unnecessary fears and acts as a channel of communication between patient and medical and nursing staff.

● AWAY FROM IT ALL

On a happier note, the JDA organises holidays and outings for its members with a full recreational programme, spared the worry of making themselves understood in a strange environment. Extensive time has to be spent in planning these activities and in negotiating with different local authorities to arrange subsidies for the participants.



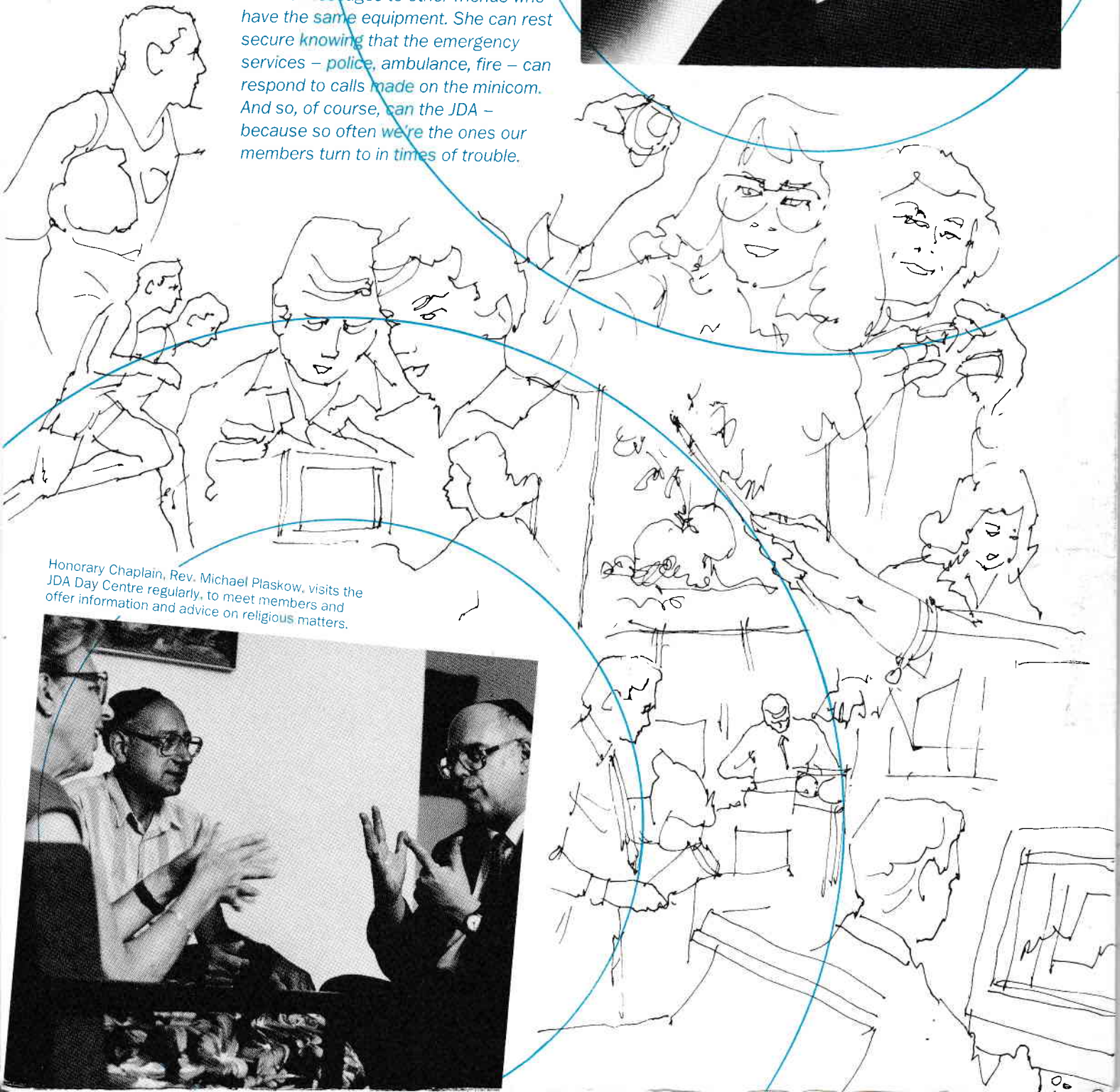
Two young sisters and their mother, all of whom are deaf, converse in sign language. The JDA acts as a channel for advice and information to parents of deaf children on a range of topics – from special needs schools and religious education, to suitable hearing aids and the latest equipment to help teachers in mainstream schools communicate with hearing impaired pupils.

“ I was trapped at home until they gave me a minicom telephone ”

Rose, 72, Hackney

We all complain about the size of our telephone bills. But none of us would contemplate living without a phone. For Rose and countless other deaf people like her, unless a hearing person was present in the room, the phone had no use whatsoever.

In the three years since she was given a minicom by the Jewish Deaf Association, Rose, who has no family close by, can “talk” to her daughter in Canada who now also has a minicom... thanks to the JDA. Rose can tap out and receive messages to other friends who have the same equipment. She can rest secure knowing that the emergency services – police, ambulance, fire – can respond to calls made on the minicom. And so, of course, can the JDA – because so often we’re the ones our members turn to in times of trouble.



Honorary Chaplain, Rev. Michael Plaskow, visits the JDA Day Centre regularly, to meet members and offer information and advice on religious matters.



“Why should I give money to the JDA? Disabled people get all they need from the Government”

Anonymous caller, Hendon.

In fact, the JDA does not receive any funding whatsoever from central or local government, even though it sometimes has to help eke out its members' income, where they have had problems with heating bills or when benefit payments have either been halted or delayed.

Instead, the JDA relies totally on donations from individuals, trust funds and money left to it in legacies.

No deaf person wants to be a burden on society. All of them want to have as many opportunities as possible, without the humiliation of discrimination – at school, work or in their social lives. But they rely heavily on the new technology available – and caring support.

At the JDA, we can give them both – but we need funds and workers who can help us to raise more.

If you can do either, please contact the JDA at the address below...



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