

GREAT GAFF, YOUR MAJESTY



● All aboard for Buckingham Palace – the coach party from the Stamford Hill day centre.

Buck House gives deaf group the red-carpet treatment

A COACHLOAD of discerning day trippers from Stamford Hill were treated like royalty when they became the first deaf group to visit Buckingham Palace.

The owner couldn't be there to show them around – she has decamped to Scotland for the summer while her subjects traipse through her London pad.

But her absence didn't spoil the party for the group of 30 from the Jewish Deaf Association day centre in Cazenove Road.

"Actually I think they were more upset about not seeing the corgis than they were about missing the Queen," said JDA director Pat Goldring, whose group received the red-carpet treatment on their arrival.

"Our coach was allowed to drive through the front gates past all those people queuing. That was probably the most thrilling part of the visit."

Palace officials have limited the number of places available to disabled visitors, and Mrs Goldring had a Herculean task trying to squeeze her group in this summer.

"I'm so glad I was there, it was the biggest thrill of my life," said an awestruck Edna Sandler. "It was nothing like I expected. I could never have dreamed it would be so grand and so beautiful."

The group weren't expecting to see family snaps, well-thumbed copies of the *Sporting Life* and half-empty tumblers of scotch – reputedly Her

Majesty's favourite tippie, but they were unanimous in their disappointment at not catching a quick glimpse of the Queen's home life.

Only the state rooms are open to the public and the group's biggest gripe was the absence of a banquetting table in the state dining room.

"They told me they'd had to move the table out of the way to get all the visitors through," said Mrs Goldring. "It was a shame, but I'm sure they'll iron out problems like that when they've been open a bit longer."

by JULIE COULSON