

Holocaust survivor Klaus dies after rediscovering his roots

★ A DEAF and dumb Holocaust survivor died last week just three months after returning to his Jewish roots.

Klaus Silberman was born in Berlin where he was educated in a Jewish school for the deaf and dumb.

By the beginning of 1939 it was obvious that, as "useless Jews", the special school's pupils would be one of the first of the Nazi targets.

Klaus was fortunate enough to have been one of the 10 children smuggled into Holland by a teacher at the school.

From Holland, Klaus made his way to London from where he was evacuated to Wiltshire where he settled.

Sixteen years ago he was transferred by a national organisation for the deaf and dumb to Hennessy House, a Catholic hostel on Manchester's Rochdale Road.

Security

Then, after 50 years without any contact with Jews, he turned up on a Shabbat morning three months ago at Higher Crumpsall Synagogue.

Being an unfamiliar face, he was questioned by security which was rather awkward considering the fact that he was deaf and dumb.

However, he eventually managed to communicate the fact that he wanted to say a prayer for his parents who had died in Auschwitz.

Once inside the synagogue he was immediately befriended by Mendel Beale, of the 45 Aid Society, who together with chaplain Rev Gabriel Brodie, visited him regularly at Hennessy House.

In the presence of an interpreter, Rev Brodie asked Klaus why he had suddenly decided to attend synagogue.

motioned that he wanted to wrap himself in a tallit.

Rev Brodie gave him a tallit, together with two pairs of tsitsit and a kippa and Klaus began attending Higher Crumpsall Synagogue every Shabbat morning.

His last appearance was for Kol Nidrei after having attended the 45 Aid Society Memorial Service at Agecroft Cemetery the previous Sunday.

Rev Brodie told the

Jewish Telegraph that at Klaus' funeral last week he delivered his longest eulogy ever. He kept pausing whilst Hennessy House priest Father Hollywood interpreted the oration into sign language for the surviving residents present.

In addition, Father Hollywood told Rev Brodie: "It is wonderful and providential that Klaus returned to his roots after 50 years."



Klaus Silberman