

## TRIBUTE - Remembering Elaine Cohen 2.4.1920 - 3.6.2017

**Elaine Cohen was for many years part of the life and soul of JDA Day Centre. Her niece, Jenny Nathan, was her much-loved and close relative. At Elaine's funeral, Jenny gave a moving tribute to her aunt, whom she called 'a very special person in my life.'**



My Aunt Elaine was born in West Hampstead on 2 April 1920, the daughter of Lily and Jack Prag and sister to Recca and Jo Prag [whose son, Tony, is also part of the JDA community].

Elaine was **educated at the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children** in Nightingale Lane and she was evacuated to

Birmingham during the war after they were bombed out of their house in Somali Road.

**She was a member of the National Deaf Club for 60 or 70 years** and appeared in some of their plays. She was, of course, also an active member of JDA.

In August 1940 she was bridesmaid to my mum and dad at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St. Johns Wood and on 18 June 1946, I was her bridesmaid, together with Jeanette Rubenstein, Adele, Paul and Justin's mum and their cousin Coreen.

**Elaine's marriage to Joseph Cohen was a long and happy one.**

They were active members of JDA and loved joining all the activities. They also loved giving parties and their Silver Wedding was a very smart black tie dinner dance.

**When it came to their Golden Wedding**, I wanted to give them something special. We decided that we would take them to Paris for the day by Eurostar. They could not quite believe that this was possible. It was only when we were on the 'Bateau Mouche' on the Seine and Joseph saw the Eiffel Tower that he really believed they were in Paris.

Elaine worked as a dress machinist and Joseph worked as an expert cutter in a clothes factory. Sadly Joseph's eyesight began to deteriorate as he had Usher's syndrome and in later years Elaine had a hard time looking after him as he was totally dependent on her.

After Joseph died Elaine became even more involved with **JDA, which was a lifeline to her**. She used to love the bus coming to collect her on a Wednesday morning, going for lunch with friends, then joining in whatever activity was arranged for the afternoon. In fact we all were worried if she did not appear in the JDA magazine at least five times in each issue!

**Elaine was not just an aunt to me but a good friend** and we would often go to Brent Cross shopping for clothes. She often wore me out before she was tired herself!

**She had amazing energy** and this is what made it all the more sad when she had an accident in her flat and badly broke her leg followed by many months in hospital. She returned to her flat but it was evident that she needed full-time care and that is when she moved to Kestrel Grove Nursing Home.

We were so grateful that she was able to be there as **the care was absolutely fantastic**. It may have been difficult to begin with as they had never had a resident who was Deaf but they tried to learn some signing and slowly Elaine got used to being there.

**Perhaps it was her feistiness that kept her going so well.**

She lived there for three years and during this time, JDA, particularly Janet Coombs, visited her regularly. Janet was always welcome, even when other visitors were sent away!

**Janet even managed to arrange a few visits to JDA's Day Centre** as well as bringing her great friend Marie to see her at Kestrel Grove.

I saw Elaine about two weeks before she passed away. I realised she was definitely unwell when I took her regular copy of

Hello magazine with pictures of the Royal Family in it and she was not interested in looking at the photos. **She had always been an ardent admirer of the Queen and the Royal Family** and this proved to me that she was definitely unwell.

We all have our own personal memories of Elaine and I shall always think of her as **an example of a strong, energetic woman** who loved her family, friends, the Royal Family and the JDA.

**May her dear soul rest in peace.**



▲ Elaine and her niece Jenny at a JDA Dinner.