

**THE HISTORY
OF THE
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL
FOR
JEWISH DEAF CHILDREN**

(Formerly the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home)



1865 – 1965

TO: EX-PUPILS AND FRIENDS

My apologies for delaying the list
of errors within:

"HISTORY OF THE RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL FOR JEWISH DEAF
CHILDREN"

Please place your copy in your
book to treasure.

Yours sincerely

Colleen Daniels

Errata

- Page 10.
1st para. Episcopal Palace (not Episocpa Palace)
- Page 34.
7th para. Princess Christian was born on 25 May 1846 (not 1946)
- Page 37. Photograph of Mr & Mrs Kutner and pupils - circa 1910 (not 1925)
- Page 40.
1st para. Elaine Cohen and her brother Joseph went to the Hugh Middleton School after they left the Jews Deaf and Dumb Home (not before).
- Page 49.
3rd para. Joan Lechem "took the leather chair" (not chain)
- Pages 57- 59 The actual names of the Headmaster of the Berlin Deaf School is Dr Felix Reich (not Onkel Felix Reich or Dr Felix Richt)

Page 67 Photograph of classroom circa 1955 (not 1951) -

Back Row :-

Sally Littleboy, Faith Bennett, Pat Graville, Sara Olsen,
Paula Fathers, Melanie Berger

Front Row :-

Harvey Clements, Linda Miller

Page 68 Photograph of Summer 1953

Back Row :- (some missing names)

Third Row left :-

Terry Mills, Eve Cochrane, Alan West

Third Row :-

Ivan Clements, Brian Dondo, Ann Miller

(some missing names in third row)

Pauline Bone and Sara Olsen are next to Mr Benham
behind Nita Harvey

Front Row (the little ones) :-

Sally Littleboy, Janet Brewster, Alan Roberts, Faith Bennett,
Paula Fathers, Lionel Wolfe, Moshe Moshy, Melanie Berger,
Pat Graville, Harvey Clements, Nicky Savory

Page 70 Photograph of Sports circa 1957 (not 1955)

Front Row :-

Second from left - Paula Fathers (not P Feathers)

Next row, second left - Sally Littleboy

Page 70 Photograph of Musical Session circa 1953

Pat Graville is next to Mr Denton.

Page 105.

2nd para.

Miss Grace Vines (not Miss Grave Vines)

Page 111 Appendix Two - Donors

The following names should be added to the list - they were missed out by mistake - Mr & Mrs M Binysh

**The History
of the
Residential School
for
Jewish Deaf Children**

**Written
by
Ex-pupils and staff
of the
Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children**

**Research
by
Joan Weinberg**

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Foreword

We learn many things as we get older over the years, such as new technology, improved services for Deaf People. Even Deaf People themselves are now able to use the telephone independently. Television has become more accessible – we can follow many TV programmes with captions and/or sign language. We have something to look forward to the future.

But how many of us are looking into our past. It is admitted that in some cases it could be seen as a negative point. Nevertheless we need to know more about our school – something we never knew after all those years. Many facts about the history of our school have never come to light until now.

It is time for us to dig out the hidden information about the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children. It is possible that the RSJDC was the only Jewish School for Deaf Children in Europe after the Second World War. It brought a number of Jewish Deaf Children from Europe to this school in London.

The eleven little Jewish Deaf Children were brought into the school from Germany, just before the outbreak of the war in 1939. This was for the children's protection. How many of us knew about this story? What happened to them? And many other stories. There are so many questions that need to be answered.

It became apparent that there was no written history of the RSJDC in a book apart from a booklet written in 1965. This book sets out to fill in those missing gaps with stories written by the ex-pupils of the RSJDC. It reveals the history of the school that appeared lost.

With thanks to an enthusiastic group of ex-pupils, we began to establish this book because we felt it is important to show our pride in a school where we learnt how to preserve our Jewish Culture and respect it.

Now this is the result – a book full of stories, anecdotes, snippets, photos, and many more to answer all those questions that were in our minds for a long time. It is a book to remind our future generations that there was a Jewish Deaf School in the history of Education for Deaf Children.

Enjoy reading.

Mika Brojer

Co-ordinator of the RSJDC Old Pupils Association.

Acknowledgements

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I wish to thank the following people for reproducing materials which I prepared for this book:

Mr Edwin Denton; Mrs Hannah Benham; Mrs Pat Goldring; Mrs Ruth Myers and Mr Israel Itzkovitz.

I also want to thank Mr Mika Brojer for his cooperation and manuscripts and to Mrs Elaine Cohen and Mrs Rosie Ross for assisting me at Norwood Child Care and Jewish Chronicle Library.

I am most grateful for the permission to reproduce their photographs given to me by Mr Myer Solomon, Mrs Ruth Myers and the former pupils of the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children (formerly Jews Deaf & Dumb Home) and also their manuscripts.

And finally, the help of Mrs Sandra Primack with her typing manuscript has been of unestimable value.

While everyone mentioned above has contributed to the manuscript, no one except myself is responsible for its shortcomings or mistakes.

This is the place to record my obligation to Mr Mika Brojer who first presented me with the idea of the project.

Joan Weinberg
May 1992

Editor's Notes

It is never an easy task to conjure up this type of book when facts are incredibly hard to find particularly in the early days of the School. It is therefore with great thanks to Joan Weinberg for her great diligence and enormous patience that she achieved so much and made my work easier to compile and edit. Other people involved in this work, Mika Brojer (coordinator) and Colleen Daniels (secretary), contributed magnificently to the book. They had the difficult job keeping people happy with the progress of the book, among many other duties they had to perform.

If time was not a prerequisite, the book would have been more complete with definite facts. As it was not possible, many of the people, places and dates of the photos in the book are not yet known. However thanks must go to those people who helped Joan identify the photos as much as possible.

If the size of the book was not a problem, it would have been wonderful to include everything about the school that was printed in various newspapers, magazines, other periodicals and conference papers. As again this was not possible, it was left to me to try and extract the important pieces and include them together with the outstanding contributions made by the ex-pupils and staff of the school. However It is hoped a small museum will be set up to display various materials pertaining to the school. This could include all the cuttings in full - particularly from the Jewish Chronicle.

These printed exhibits of which many are reproduced either in full or in part throughout the book show the changing attitudes and awarenesses of both the deaf and hearing communities over the hundred years of the school's existence. It is interesting to show that what they thought a hundred or fifty years ago would not see eye to eye with many people today such is the changing trend of the society.

Who would have visualised the changing pride of the deaf community when people lauded the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home as being the first school of its kind in England to use the oral system? It is not exactly something to be proud of but deaf people may have felt that in those days. Again who would have detected the overpowering patronising of the do-gooders towards the deaf "and dumb"? Did the deaf people feel this as much as today's deaf people do? Whatever happened did happen and this book tries its best to convey the changing moods and trends of the years that passed through the school. That is by including the extracts faithfully as much as possible to give the reader a feel of the history. We hope we have succeeded.

Finally I want to say it has been an enjoyable task compiling and editing this book and now I understand and know the school better than I ever would if I had not done this work especially the fact that, being a Jewish Deaf Londoner, I never went to that school. It is something I regret for I enjoy the Jewish culture and feel proud to be part of it.

David Jackson
May 1992

Prologue

A house in Mount Street, Whitechapel, was the original site of the Institution. It had accommodation for six children.

It was consecrated by the Chief Rabbi on 30th April 1863 and opened around 1864.

With the increasing number of children seeking admission, a meeting was convened on the 1st of November 1865. It resolved that an Institution be established for the reception, maintenance, education and apprenticing of the deaf and dumb children of the Jewish Community of Great Britain.

A larger house at Burton Crescent, Old Kent Road, was taken on lease and consecrated on 30th of December, 1865.

With the probable influx of Jewish emigrants from Europe, there was a need for a bigger home. Larger premises were found in Walmer Road, Notting Hill in 1875 and, finally to cope with an ever-increasing number of admittances, to the premises at "The Grange", 61, Nightingale Road, Wandsworth Common - it was indeed numbered 61!

Now read on and see its history reveal in front of your eyes....

Chapter 1

The Idea – before 1865

It began in the Old Testament. There were evidence that hands and facial expression were used as part of communication in the early years. There are many examples of groups who developed this ability to communicate visually.

Some groups used this method of communication as an art form, for example the Hindu religious dancers and mime actors during the Roman Empire. The dancers told stories about their gods using an elaborate gestural system. In Rome, at the time of the Emperor Nero, mime actors could convey a wealth of meanings solely through gestures, many of them vulgar.

Groups that used this form of communication as a means of everyday communication independent of spoken language developed in several very different settings.

Of these groups who have used or still use a sign language, the most notable are various aboriginal tribes, monks of the Benedictine Order and deaf people. The aborigines of Australia developed their sign language for use in hunting, and at other times when speech is not permitted, perhaps when silence was needed in order not to distract animals or even sleeping wives! The presence of sign languages amongst these aboriginal people suggests that their use goes back to prehistoric Man.

The Plains Indians of North America did more than raise their right hands and say 'How'. They developed their sign language to the point where they could tell long stories at formal gatherings.

Monks belonging to religious orders first founded by St Benedict (AD 529) have been required to take a vow of partial or perpetual silence. Spoken words were considered unacceptable, signs were not. Certain signs were created and passed along. Many monasteries still have a thriving sign language, though it has been restricted by monastic rules and by the fact that it is not the users' main language.

The most important group using sign language as the most preferred form of communication were and are still the deaf people. It is when the deaf person is not alone, for instance within a family where several members are deaf, for such a family forms a small community of its own. The potential for creating or developing a sign language is enhanced in a family, and mutual support makes each deaf member more assured and assertive than the isolated individual. The motivation for non-deaf family members, particularly children of deaf parents, to learn sign language is also increased.

The presence of deaf families even before the fourth century AD is revealed in the Talmud, the Hebrew book which recorded the rabbis' interpretations of Jewish law. Here it was recognised that 'a deaf-mute can hold conversation by means of gestures', a statement that suggests such conversations were interpreted to the eminent rabbis by hearing family members. Deaf people were permitted to marry (and divorce) by gesture, and among the possible matches considered were those of two deaf brothers from one family to two deaf sisters from another, indicating that this happened often enough to need discussing. There must thus have been quite a number of deaf families scattered among the various Jewish communities nearly 2000 years ago. But this apparent acceptance of sign language did not mean that deaf people had full status. Speech was held to be sacred in religious ceremonies and legal dealings, and as they could not recite the formulae, they were not eligible to participate.

It is interesting to note that until 1860, the education of the Deaf in Britain had been conducted by means of the manual and sign method. This method was commonly known as the "French system", since it was adopted from the original system introduced into France in 1760 by the elderly priest Charles-Michel, Abbe de l'Epee.

The priest knew nothing about previous educational experiments and theories even in his own country. In the 1760s he gave religious instruction to two deaf sisters. Finding that he could not communicate with them by speech or writing, he set himself to learn the signs that the sisters were using. As his work developed, he attracted other pupils from among the thriving deaf community of Paris, of which Pierre Desloges was a member. Soon he had sufficient pupils to set up a school, which was the first to be open to all without fee.

The development of education for deaf children in Great Britain actually started in 1760 when Thomas Braidwood established the first British deaf school in Edinburgh. He later moved to London to set up a new private deaf school and in 1792 the first charity deaf school was opened in Bermondsey under the charge of his nephew, Dr Joseph Watson. This school, known as the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb in London, moved to Old Kent Road in South West London. Amongst Dr Watson's pupils were several Jewish children, who came from families amongst the large Jewish population in that area.

Meanwhile in 1816, Thomas Gallaudet, a clergyman from the States, came to Europe seeking information about educating deaf people. He was rebuffed by the Braidwoods whose teaching methods were closely guarded and kept secret. He eventually found what he needed across the channel, in Paris. He managed to enlist the services of a Laurent Clerc to join him in the States to develop a school for the deaf and blind children. Laurent Clerc was a deaf pupil who developed into an outstanding teacher for deaf children.

In 1860, Mr Van Asche, a pupil of Dr Hirsch of the Rotterdam Institute, came to England at the request of a wealthy Jewish merchant named Mr Solomon of Manchester, to educate Solomon's deaf-mute son. Previously Solomon was dissatisfied at the way his son was being taught.

Mr Asche taught his pupils, using the German, or oral system, and subsequently opened a private school in London. In the same year, 1860, a school was opened in Northampton, and it is believed that the system used was the pure oral system. However, it was not until 1865 that the oral system was brought to the notice of the general public.

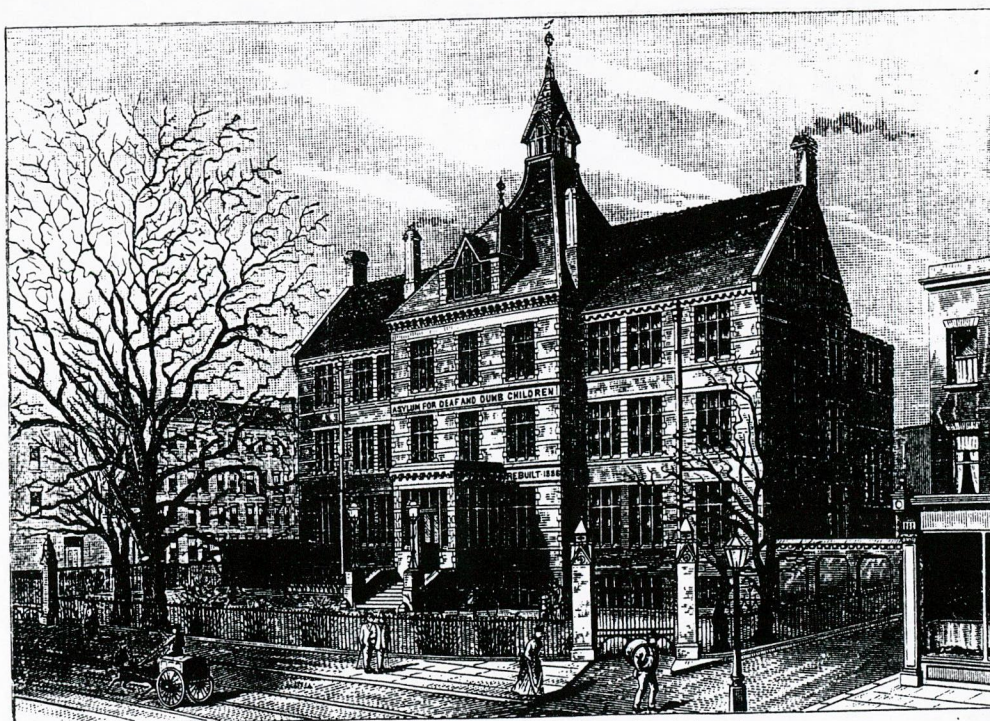
It was a matter of some concern to several notable Jewish men of that time that deaf Jewish children should, by virtue of their handicap, be prevented from receiving the benefits of the teachings of the Jewish faith. In exactly the same way, many hundreds of years before, devout men of various faiths, amongst them being St John of Beverley, had striven to educate the deaf mute in order that he might be able to enjoy the inestimable blessings of a knowledge of the Divine purpose. Among these Jewish men was a Mr Henry Isaacs, later to be knighted for services to his country. He had two daughters, both born deaf.

With a natural concern for providing the best possible education for his children, Mr Isaacs had made exhaustive enquiries into the methods of educating the deaf then in use, and had finally sent his daughters to the Institute in Rotterdam, where they were educated by the German system, introduced into Germany years before by Samuel Heinicke, at approximately the same time as the "French" system was gathering force in Paris.

In 1864 a Mr Simon Lazarus Miers learnt that there were three or four Jewish deaf mutes in the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in the Old Kent Road. He thought that for the benefit of their religious beliefs and instruction they ought to be in Jewish surroundings. A committee was formed which resolved 'that an institution be established for the reception, maintenance, education and apprenticing of the Deaf and Dumb Poor Children of the Jewish Community of Great Britain.'

This committee of Jewish men included Simon Miers, Aaron H Moses and Henry Isaacs. They sought financial assistance with which to establish a school specially for Jewish Deaf Children. They were fortunate enough to have the backing of Baroness Mayer De Rothschild and in 1865 they bought a house at 15, Mount Street, Whitechapel, E1.

Other school's main benefactors included Mr Bernhard Baron, Sir Edward Stern and possibly Mr Solomon. This brought the question often raised for discussion by Anglo-Jewish historians of the role played by the established, wealthy 'West End' Jews in assisting the poor of the community. Was their main motive self-interest, as some would claim? Were they prepared to help an organisation only upon their own terms? Wherever the truth may lie, the Jews' Deaf & Dumb Home would appear to be an example of straightforward charitable endeavour to help those in need, with no strings attached.



Asylum for Deaf and Dumb, Old Kent Road, London.

Chapter 2

The First Premises— 1865 to 1899

An extract appeared in the Friday April 28th 1865 edition of the Jewish Chronicle which mentioned –

"The Consecration of a Home for Deaf and Dumb Children of the Jewish Persuasion will take place on Sunday, April the 30th instance at No. 15, Mount Street, New Road, Whitechapel Road. The Reverend Dr Adler will officiate at the ceremony, supported by several ministers of the various congregations. Service at 1 o'clock precisely."

The school started with six children for a short period. Their first teacher was the Reverend C Rhind, who taught by the French or Manual system. Henry Isaacs, however, by demonstrating the results achieved with his own daughters, was able to persuade the school committee to engage a teacher conversant with the German or Oral system. The committee accordingly asked the Head of the Rotterdam Institute, Dr Hirsch, to recommend a suitable teacher for the post. Dr Hirsch sent a Mr William Van Praagh, one of his own pupils. The committee appointed Van Praagh, and requested that he also trained some Jewish teachers in the Oral method. Thus to this school belonged the honour of being the first Oral establishment in Britain. The school was dependant on voluntary contributions, as were most of the other schools in Britain, and appeals for funds were frequently made to the Jewish communities.

Van Praagh was tireless in his efforts to secure the interest of the general public in the oral method of educating the deaf, and it can truly be said that he was instrumental in swaying public opinion towards the time when the Oral system was to be almost unanimously adopted in Britain. He fixed the age of admission at six years, showing that he was conscious of the necessity for making an early start with the deaf pupils if they were to reap full benefit from the oral system.

In his *Jubilee History of the Jews' Deaf & Dumb Home, 1865-1915* the Reverend Isadore Harris wrote that 'without exaggeration it may be said that it was chiefly through Mr Van Praagh's instrumentality that the new method of teaching deaf mutes was subsequently adopted by the country at large.'

The curriculum of the school comprised Arithmetic, Articulation, Calisthenics, Drawing, Geography, Grammar, History, Lipreading, Needlework, Writing and, for the Jewish Children, instruction in Hebrew and Religion. This was a very ambitious curriculum for the times, as the notion that a deaf pupil could benefit by education in normal subjects to this extent was, if not new, at least rare.

It was not compulsory at that time for every school authority to make provision for the education of deaf children in special types of school until the Elementary Education (Blind & Deaf Children) Act, 1893.

Two interesting extracts appeared in an article about the Jewish Home for Deaf and Dumb Children in the May 5th 1865 edition of the Jewish Chronicle -

"The nucleus for an institution, the want of which has been long and painfully felt in our midst, was formed last Sunday by the consecration of a home, wherein deaf and dumb children will be trained and educated according to Jewish principles, and in the practice of Mosaic rites. The mutes of our persuasion have hitherto been compelled, for want of a similar institution amongst us, to seek an asylum in the establishment in Old Kent Road, and other places where Christian notions and ideas were instilled into their minds, to which under the eyes of missionaries they form Christian associations, and are thus entirely lost to Judaism; and it was to remedy this evil that some benevolent persons, actuated by a love for their religion and a desire to provide for the religious welfare of the deaf and dumb children of our community, have taken the matter in hand, which has resulted in the opening of a Jewish home, situated at No 15, Mount Street, Whitechapel, where at present accommodation is afforded for five inmates, which number it is intended to augment as soon as sufficient funds shall be forthcoming, and a more spacious building secured. As regards the seven Jewish children now in the Asylum in the Old Kent Road, it is not proposed to withdraw them from that institution, but to admit them into the new home if they voluntarily come forward."

The same article added that Mr Miers, the promoter of the charity, gave his speech of thanks to those who attended the consecration service. A part of his speech is reproduced here

"The impulse to this home was given some eighteen months ago when I was requested to interest myself for a Jewish child, and I saw that impropriety of sending Jewish children to Christian asylums. I endeavoured in vain at the time to form a home for Israelitish inmates; however this child, and at a later period two others, were admitted into the institution named (*Old Kent Road*). Owing to the interest lately taken in the matter by the community, and through the correspondence published in the Jewish Chronicle, I renewed my exertions in the good cause, and through the generous and ample assistance of Baroness Mayer De Rothschild, I am happy to say that I have succeeded so far. The offers of help I have received are both numerous and liberal. I must emphasize that the home is not committed to any system of instruction, but that the home would enquire and adopt that which is the most efficient."

The audience gave a resounding applause.

From its original home in Whitechapel, the School, renamed as Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, had already moved, in 1866, to premises at 44, Burton Crescent and then to Hunter Street in 1869. Both premises were again consecrated by Dr Adler, the Chief Rabbi. These moves were necessary to cope with the growing number of Jewish Deaf children. Already there were eleven Jewish Deaf children, all having been taken from the Old Kent Road establishment.

It is interesting to see an account that was published on 24th of May in 1867 with regard to the premises at Burton Crescent - this is reproduced in full here -

Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home 24-5-1867

44, Burton Crescent, W.C.

The Committee have much pleasure in publishing the annexed Balance Sheet, approved and passed at a Meeting of Subscribers.

F E Davis, Treasurer, in account with the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, from November 1865 to May 7th 1867.

	DR		CR
To Donations and Subscriptions received	1747-02-00	By Repairs, 44, Burton Cres. as per contract	485-18-00
Sale of Fixtures, Mount Street	5-00-00	Rent, rates and taxes	56-12-04
Interest on deposit	54-14-00	Ditto Mount St., previous to removal therefrom	42-13-02
		Fire Insurance	1-01-00
		Stationery, Printing & advertisements	35-19-09
		Education & books, Mr Rhind	35-11-01
		Clothing, Linen & Blankets	56-06-05
		Furniture & Bedding	116-14-07
		Wages	19-06-02
		Medical attendance	1-17-06
		Washing	2-07-11
		Bread & flour	25-07-08
		Meat	57-10-10
		Milk & butter	19-00-06
		Grocery	4-07-07
		Vegetables	4-18-04
		Beer	4-03-04
		Food	115-08-03
		Sundries & housekeeping	45-16-10
		Balance carried down	779-01-10
	1806-16-00		1806-16-00
to Balance Investment account		£379-01-10	
		<u>£400-00-00</u>	
		<u>£779-01-10</u>	

Fredk. E Davis, Treasurer.

We have compared the above account with the books and vouchers and find the same correct.

Samuel Harris)
Joseph Myers) Auditors

Evidence of the general interest in Van Praagh's work can be seen by the fact that he was asked to educate non-Jewish children as well, which he agreed to do. A fee for non-Jewish children was fixed at £10 per annum, day pupils only. However in 1874 the number of non-Jewish pupils fell away to two. It was decided to abandon the scheme, and keep the School for Jewish children only. This decision gave dissatisfaction to some of the school committee, who resigned, and opened a new school for the deaf, non-denominational, in Fitzroy Square, London.

Van Praagh became the Director of this new establishment, which later served the dual purpose of school and teacher training college. It was from this college that Van Praagh wrote his book called *"Plan for the Establishment of Day Schools for the Deaf and Dumb"* which he subsequently read at a Head Teachers Conference in Doncaster in 1882.

The loss to the Jewish School of the services of an excellent teacher was seen at that time to be the gain of a much larger part of the deaf community. Van Praagh carried on his ceaseless efforts to spread the doctrine of the benefits of the Oral system until his death in October 1898 at the age of 78 in Rotterdam, Holland.

Application by the committee to the Vienna Institute for the Education of the Deaf led to the appointment of Van Praagh's successor, a Mr Simon Schontheil of Vienna, who was a very able teacher of the Oral system. Mrs Schontheil at the same time became matron of the Home, in which capacity she had exercised the most conscientious and loving care.

In the same year (1874), the school received a certificate from the Local Government Board, recognising it as an efficient school for the education and training of the Deaf and Dumb. This meant children from outside London were now admitted to the School, fees being met in part by the Local Guardians. Now children attended from all parts of the country, and they were educated and trained to earn their own living and become useful members of the community.

The March 5th 1875 edition of the Jewish Chronicle included an item about the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home

"The fourth annual report of this institution has just been issued. We learn therefrom that there has been a comparatively large increase of inmates in the Home. The consequence is, that besides the Institute being crowded, rooms are hired for the accommodation of some of the inmates elsewhere. This expense together with the cost of the engagement of an assistant teacher, has largely increased the expenditure, which amounts to nearly £1,000. The proceeds of the ball in April last amounted to £1,400.

The progress of the pupils is rapidly increasing under the able and watchful charge of the Principal, Mr Schontheil. The need of larger premises is a want which has been felt for some time. Walmer House, Walmer Road, Notting Hill, a house suitably adapted to the requirements, has been secured. The cost of the lease is £1,600, payment of which has just been concluded. Certain modifications will be necessary for the accommodation of the children and teaching staff. These arrangements (together with others by which further enlargements can be made if necessary) will, it is expected, be carried out in June or July. The amount required will be about £1,800. Only £2,300 is in hand to defray all these estimated expenses, which amount altogether to £3,600. For the remaining £1,300 we heartily appeal to our generous and ever open-handed brethren, confident as we are that a ready response will be made to our appeal."

Also in the same paper, an item about the annual general meeting of the governors and subscribers of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home included two speeches first made by a Mr B Kisch and the other by the Reverend P Magnus. Their speeches are transcribed in full here -

Mr Kisch - The past history of the institution is known to its friends, and its progress, since Mr Schontheil has become its director, is known to all who have visited and watched its progress. The institution will shortly be located in more appropriate quarters. The committee has the good fortune with its finding a new site for the Home. The committee had taken much trouble and had inspected many houses and sites before they met with success. The purchase of the new site has been completed within the last fortnight. It is to be hoped that when the Home is removed to its new quarters, our friends will not cease taking interest in the institution. I also hope that it will be visited more frequently and impressed upon our friends to make the advantages of the Home as much known as possible in order to enable afflicted children to partake of the advantages it affords."

The Rev. P Magnus - "I wish to congratulate the subscribers on the fact that nearly all the obstacles which, at one time threatened the existence of the institution, have been overcome, and that the opposition to the institution have been swept away. I have to say that there are still a few, happily only a few, individuals who withheld their support from the institution on account of its exclusiveness. As a Home, it is necessarily exclusive, and so are the characteristics of the Jews' Orphan Asylum and the Jews' Hospital at Norwood, which are both exclusive. No one recognises more fully than myself and my colleagues the advantage of Jewish children mixing with children of other denominations. But we also recognise the sanctity of a Home which should never be invaded by a difference of religious belief. With regard to another objection, viz., that a Home is not required and that a Day School would be sufficient, I want to maintain that the arguments we have offered are so conclusive that I trust this objection will not be raised again."

Two months later, a large and influential meeting was held in the Long Parlour of the Mansion House, in aid of the Association for the Oral Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb. Among those luminaries who attended this meeting were the Lord Mayor, Earl Granville, Mr Leopold De Rothschild, Lord Houghton, Sir Charles Trevelyan and the Duke of Westminster. The May 14th 1875 edition of the Jewish Chronicle gave a full account of this meeting. It is worth repeating parts of that report here.

The Lord Mayor - "The number of teachers is still inadequate to the wants of any school for the deaf and dumb, as experience proves that for the efficient instruction of the deaf and dumb one teacher is required for every ten or twelve pupils."

Earl Granville - "I have frequently visited the institution in Fitzroy Square, and I must confess that I have never seen a number of children looking more happy or having so much confiding trust in the kindness of their masters and mistresses. I have observed great proficiency in drawing and writing, and I am especially struck with their great facility and ease in answering the questions put to them orally by their master, Mr Van Praagh, of whose ability and patience it is impossible to speak too highly."

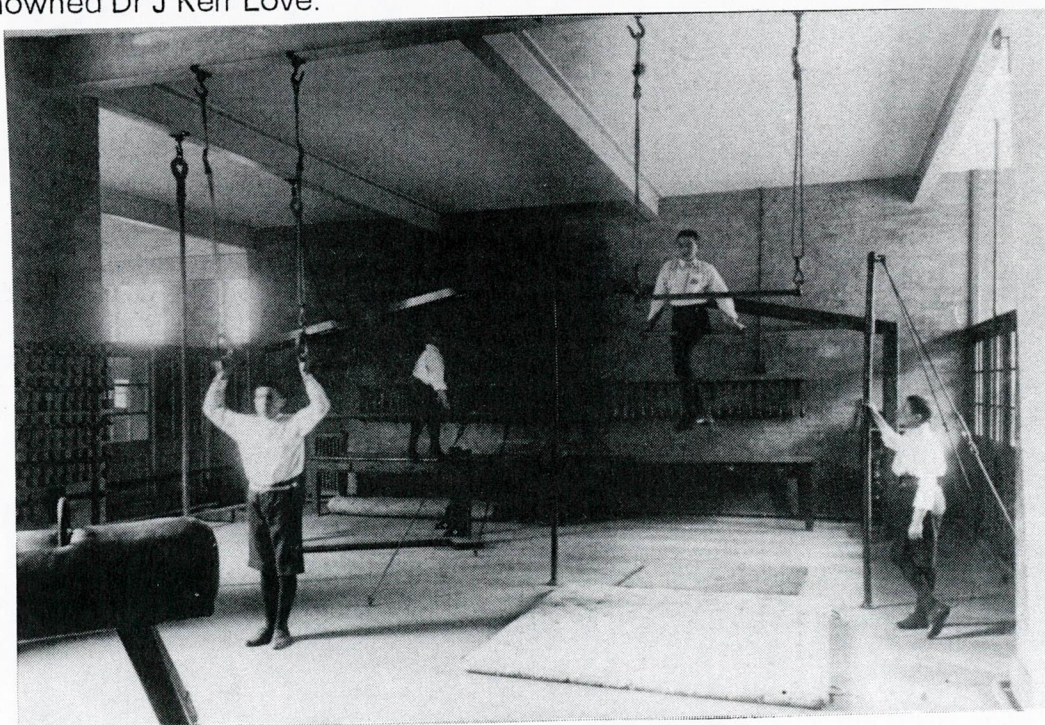
Mr Leopold De Rothschild - "It came to my knowledge that there are about 25,000 deaf and dumb people in the United Kingdom alone, and I cannot help thinking what blessings would result if training schools, similar to that in London, were established throughout the country. The great difficulty, however, rests in the fact that a large number of skilled teachers will be required, as we all know that it is hardly possible for one teacher to educate more than twelve in one class. The cost of education is about £20 per child annually."

In the following week's edition (May 21st 1875) of the Jewish Chronicle reported on the second annual report of the Association for the Oral Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and included an amusing statement -

"We do not regret to learn that the children have not yet a gymnasium, because many gymnasia that we have seen appear to us neck and limb-breaking apparatus."

As a result of the subscribers' generosity, the School moved in November 1875 to new premises at Walmer House in Notting Hill.

The ceremony of consecration again conducted by Dr Adler, was reported in the November 12th 1875 edition of the Jewish Chronicle. The president of the proceedings, Mr F D Mocatta gave a very long account of the history of the Home in its first ten years. He mentioned that there were 24 children receiving the benefits of the institution, and of this number there were five whose parents/friends contributed the sum of £120, a notable effort. One of the Christian friends of the Home, the Reverend L D Bevan gave a short speech which emphasized the importance of Jews and Christians to draw nearer to each other. A Mr E A Davidson made the observation that besides the educational benefits of the Oral System, it was beneficial to the health that the speech organs and lungs should be exercised, and he further stated that it had been shown that the incidence of consumption was greater among deaf mutes than amongst other people, owing to the inactivity of the lungs! This view was shared in later years by many medical authorities, amongst them being the renowned Dr J Kerr Love.



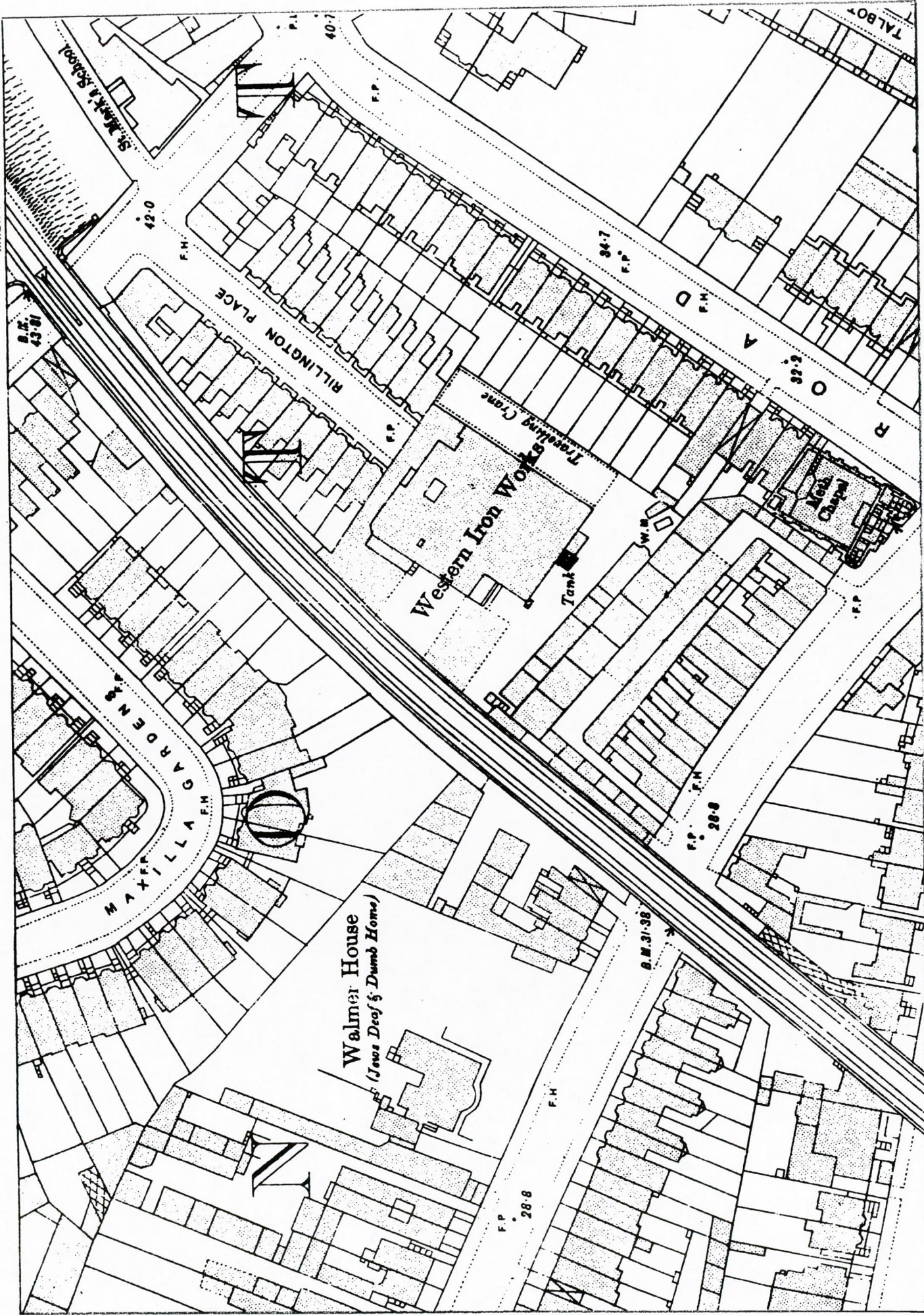
The earliest photo of the RSJDC - boys in the Gymnasium at 61, Nightingale Lane, 1899.

Walmer House was once the Episcopa Palace of the Bishop of Norwich. It had been adapted for the purpose of the Home in a very skilful manner under the direction of Mr H H Collins. The Jewish Chronicle gave a full description of the building -

"The institution has been nearly rebuilt. A complete storey had been added to it, and two new wings. On the ground floor is situated the director's private apartments, Committee Room, spacious School Room and a Work Room. From this latter apartment, access is gained to a covered play-ground on the garden level, which leads to the dining hall, this latter being in communication with a well-appointed kitchen and scullery, surrounded with larders, stores, and other culinary conveniences. The first-floor is appropriated to the boys' dormitory, a spacious and well-lighted and ventilated apartment, affording space for fifteen beds. Adjoining the dormitory are the lavatories, bath room &c. A room is appropriated on this floor for the accommodation of two paying boarders (boys). An apartment has been devoted to an 'infirmary,' so that in the event of illness, isolation can be immediately put in force. This apartment is provided with every requisite. On the second floor are situated the girls' dormitory, affording the same accommodation as provided for the boys. Bath, lavatory, &c., are also provided on this floor. Here is also provided another dormitory for two paying boarders (girls). Bed-rooms for the domestics &c., shut off from the main portion of the building, are located on this storey. Every department has been kept separate and distinct, and yet incorporated with the design and purpose of the structure, so that due supervision, economy of service and adequate discipline can always be maintained. The sanitary arrangements deserve special commendation, and are, as Dr. Richardson described them, very perfect and complete; they have certainly been carefully considered and scientifically designed. The general and main principle which guided the architect, was to cut off all connection with the drainage, and to thoroughly ventilate all soil and other pipes. A new and complete system of drainage had been laid down, and we have no hesitation in expressing our belief that the hygiene of this institution will be of a perfect character. We congratulate the Committee upon having made the sanitary provisions of this institution a salient feature. No portion of the outlay has been more wisely expended. The architect is Mr H H Collins, of No. 5, Queen Street, E.C. who has made a special study of sanitary work, and has here practically illustrated that which he has written and advocated for many years. We should not omit to mention that the school rooms are spacious and well-lighted, and a small and well arranged synagogue is provided on the ground floor. The building is surrounded with a spacious garden, which has been entirely redesigned and well drained, under the direction of the architect and which only wants planting with shrubs to enhance its beauty, which, we hope, the liberality of some of our readers will soon supply. The cost of the works has been about £2,000. The builders were Messrs. Moreland and Nixon of Old Street, St. Lukes."

The following page shows a part of one of the earliest Ordnance Survey map (O.S. 1:1560, London Sheet V1.S7) printed in 1895 - Walmer House is clearly shown in the middle to the left. Note Rillington Place on the right near the top - it was the site of the 1950 murders committed by John Christie.

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The aim of 'oralism' was, on the surface, humanitarian – that of 'restoring deaf-mutes to society' through speech and lipreading. The fact that a great many deaf persons had already been restored to society through education was irrelevant, since these deaf persons did not communicate 'normally'. Speech would 'humanise' them. Oralism, as we have seen, was not a new idea. In some countries, notably, Germany, oral theories had predominated from the beginning, although deaf Germans still used German Sign Language. But now, with the support of powerful men like Bell, the new oralists became fanatical in their efforts to eliminate sign language from education.

It was not enough that this should happen in one classroom, or one school, or even one country – it had to be world-wide. Therefore in 1878, for the first time, an international congress of those concerned in the education of the deaf was held in Paris. It attracted only 27 teachers, mainly European supporters of oralism, who thus had an opportunity to link up and confer.

Two years later the infamous 1880 Milan conference of teachers of the deaf was chaired by Abbe Tarra, a renowned Italian teacher and firm exponent of the Oral system. Like the previous one, it could hardly be called international. Of the 164 participants, 87 were Italian, 56 French, 8 English and 5 American, with 8 from other nations. The programme of the Congress and the way it was governed allowed little discussion to take place. On the final day, the Congress voted overwhelmingly in favour of a resolution that in teaching the deaf 'the pure oral method ought to be preferred.' Only the 5 Americans, there on behalf of 51 schools and over 6,000 pupils who used American Sign Language, voted against the resolution, but the rule was one man, one vote. Therefore it was almost unanimously decided at this conference to adopt the Oral system in most countries.

History would have been different for deaf people in Europe if the Congress had been held in the States. So much for the mind to dwell on!

Tribute was paid at the Milan Congress to the way in which the Jewish School had pioneered in this work in Britain. One of these tributes was delivered in a speech made by the Head teacher of the School for the Deaf in Doncaster, the Reverend W Ware.

At subsequent conferences of Head teachers, similar tributes were paid many times, and at the request of Richard Elliot, Headmaster of the school at Old Kent Road and Margate, many delegates from all parts of the country visited the Jewish School to see for themselves the results obtainable under the Oral system.

In the words of Dr Buxton, Secretary of the Society for the Training of Teachers of the Deaf, "On the morning of the last conference some of us went together to Mr Schontheil's school. We saw then what opened our eyes. Then commenced the moving of the waters of which we see the results today." Here Dr Buxton was referring to the practically unanimous adoption of the Oral system in Britain after the Milan Conference.

At a conference of Head teachers in 1881 in London, Schontheil gave a report of his methods of teaching and it is interesting to note one of his comments – "Rarely write, never gesticulate, always speak. Do not cut up your words and sentences. And let emphasis clearly mark the chief sounds, radical syllables, and the most important words. Lipreading will then be easy, the voice will sound naturally, speech will come forth spontaneously, and the double affliction of being deaf and dumb will undoubtedly be overcome!" Would he repeat those words today? It would be interesting!

The International Congress of Teachers of Deaf Mutes was held in Brussels and among those who took part in the proceedings were Dr Hirsch, the Director of the Rotterdam Institute, Mr S Schontheil, Principal of the Jews Deaf and Dumb Home, and Mr William Van Praag, Director of the Institute for the Oral Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in London. Incidentally Dr Hirsch was elected a Vice President of the Congress.

In 1884 the Jewish School received a Silver Medal from the International Health Exhibition, the President of which was H R H the Prince of Wales. In this and in many other ways the school was well-represented at educational conferences and meetings.

Meanwhile a pupil from the Home had the honour of reciting the customary blessings at the West End Synagogue. This was reported in an edition of the Jewish Chronicle and prompted Mr Schontheil to write a letter. This was printed in the May 22nd 1885 edition -

To the Editor,

Sir, In reference to the paragraph in your last issue stating "that at the West End Synagogue on Saturday the 30th, one of the inmates of the Jews Deaf and Dumb will be called to the Law and will audibly recite the customary blessings" permit me to say that besides reciting the blessings, the boy will read audibly the פְּרָשָׁה (1) beginning Num. XI, V, 30, this meaning of which is perfectly clear to him, and I hope that his articulation will prove to those who will hear him that the Jews Deaf and Dumb Home is not altogether unsuccessful in the philanthropic work, it has undertaken.

S Schontheil
Walmer Road, Notting Hill, May 17th 1885.

In 1887 Sir Phillip Magnus became the President of the School Committee, and served on a deputation to Lord Cranbrook on the subject of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission, appointed by the government to enquire into State Aid for schools for the Blind and Deaf. Thus, in 1893, the Jewish School became eligible for a capitation grant from the Government of the maximum amount, £5. 5. 0d. £2. 2. 0d of this was to be devoted to handicraft instruction, and as a result of this interest in handicrafts received a new impetus in the school

This new interest in handwork was stimulated by the appointment of Mr S Kutner, as Headmaster, on the resignation of Schontheil after twenty years in that position. Kutner, a former pupil of Schontheil, had been the Senior Oral teacher at the Royal School for the Deaf in Manchester. As a result of Kutner's special interest in handwork, the school was awarded a gold medal at the Paris exhibition of 1900.

He was also responsible for the publication of a vocabulary book "*Vocabulary for Deaf Children*" in which progressive lessons in language development were copiously illustrated. Far in advance of its time, this book was still used in some lessons at the Jewish school towards its last years.

(1) This is loosely translated as a paragraph - its actual translation is Parashah. This refers to a biblical passage in the Torah dealing with a single topic and being read at the synagogue.

Kutner also became President of the Teacher's Society, a body which met monthly to discuss professional subjects. During this period great pains were taken to keep the physical instruction on a high level, and for several years the school held a shield awarded by the National Physical Recreation Society.

In 1895 the School Board of London agreed to pay a full grant of £27 per annum for the education and maintenance of any Jewish child the Board sent to the school, day pupils receiving a reduced grant of £12. Later the London County Council reduced the full grant to £12, the remainder being covered by an agreed Government grant under the terms of the 1893 Act which also sought "for the better instruction of the deaf and dumb." Also under the terms of the same Act it became imperative that the school found new accommodation, as the Notting Hill premises failed to fulfil the requirements of the Act, considering the increasing number of pupils.

Extracts from the Jewish Chronicle, the first on 29th of April 1898, a summary of the report of Her Majesty's Inspector at the recent examination of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, and the second on 17th of June 1898, regarding an appeal, are worthy of inclusion -

"This school is doing excellent work. The lip-reading, grammar and general intelligence of the highest class are exceedingly good, and all the work gives evidence of great care, thoughtfulness and skill in the instruction. The school has earned £165-7-6d being the maximum grant per child."

"A further appeal is about to be made in order to complete the fund for the new premises in Clapham. Mr Edward D Stern, the President, will head the list with a second donation of £1,000, which he has handed to then Honorary Secretary, the Reverend I Samuel."

This was to comply with the requirements of the 1893 Act. Eventually the school moved in June 1899 to extensive premises, The Grange, 61, Nightingale Lane, Wandsworth Common, SW12 and opened for the reception of about fifty children.

Originally, the area on the south side of Nightingale Lane to Balham High Road was all part of Balham Farm, which goes back to medieval times.

In the early 1800, it was owned by Mr. John Bellamy, a wealthy farmer, originally from Taunton, Somerset. He was also a wine merchant and caterer to the House of Commons.

It was possible that the houses between Wandsworth Common and the Nightingale Lane Public House were built some time in the 1820s or early 1830s. The house is shown on the Clapham Tithe map of 1838 but the Battersea Library does not have the index to the map. So the owner is unknown.

The first known occupant in 1860 was Mr Thomas Capps when the house was called "*Combe Lodge*". He lived there until around 1873.

Some time in the next few years the name was changed to "*The Grange*" and was occupied by two families. One family was headed by Mr. Thomas W. Brooks, occupying the house from 1878 to 1895. The other family was the Remfreys. A John Remfrey is shown in occupation from 1878 to 1884 and then Leonard Remfrey, a surgeon, from 1887 to 1889 and then his wife continued in residence until 1895.

The house appeared to have stood empty for a couple of years until it was purchased for £4250 by the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home in 1899. The property was actually acquired in 1897 and opened two years later after probable renovations. The school became firmly established at the Grange and it was the last move for the next sixty-six years to 1965 when the school closed down.

The September 1897 (Vol. VI, No. 71) of the British Deaf and Dumb Association's magazine "The British Deaf Monthly" included a full account of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home and its Head Master. It is reproduced on the next three pages in its original format.

The Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home and its Head Master.



O the munificence of the late Baroness Mayer de Rothschild is due the foundation of an institution, that, since 1864, in a quiet, unostentatious, but thoroughly practical way, has provided instruction

for deaf and dumb children of Jewish race. It is the first and only distinctly Jewish institution of the kind in Britain; and has historical interest as the first British institution to adopt the pure oral method.

Mount Street, Whitechapel, was the original location of the institution, the entire cost of which, for six months, was borne by the foundress. Mr. Charles Rhind was the first head-master. In 1865 a committee was formed, of which Aaron H. Moses, Esq., was elected president. The Rev. J. Samuel was then formally appointed hon. secretary, and is still efficiently performing the duties of that office.

Mr. William Van Praagh was appointed director and head-master in 1867, when the oral method was introduced by him.

In 1870 non-Jewish day scholars were admitted, and a school opened in Hunter Street, W.C., where instruction was given to the inmates of the Home and the day scholars. In the same year the Institution for the Oral Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb was established by Mr. Aaron H. Moses, and some other members of the committee of the Home, at which the non-Jewish pupils attended for instruction. The school in Hunter Street was then discontinued, the inmates of the Home being taught as before in their own Institution.

Mr. Aaron H. Moses, who, in founding the new institution, had severed his connection with the Home, was succeeded, as president by the late Mr. S. L. Miers. In 1872 Mr. Van Praagh retired, and Mr. S. Schöntheil became director and head-master. The Home was removed to larger premises in Walmer Road, Notting Hill, where it still remains, in 1875. In the year 1894 Mr. Schöntheil resigned the directorship, being succeeded by the present director and head-master, Mr. S. Kutner. As president, the late Mr. H. L. Cohen succeeded Mr. Miers, in 1873, and was succeeded by the late

Sir Baron H. Ellis, K.C.S.T., in 1879. Sir Philip Magnus, who has been president since 1887, has just resigned the office.

The Jew's Home can hardly yet be said to be an institution with a history. The few facts we have been at considerable trouble to obtain, are practically all there are of moment. Since the later and present condition of the institution represent the individuality and experience of Mr. and Mrs. Kutner, a brief sketch of their career has here its proper place.

Mr. Kutner's earliest education was received at the Borough Jewish Schools, in the south-east of London, from 1867 to 1874. With the intention of entering the ministry, he began in the latter year to attend the Jew's College, Finsbury Square. After two years, however, he abandoned his theological studies in favour of his present vocation of teaching the deaf, entering the Jew's Home as an assistant under Mr. Schöntheil. Here he remained until 1882, for a considerable time being the only assistant, and having not only to teach, but also to supervise boys and girls, and to do other work. Mr. Kutner's life at this epoch (it must be borne in mind that the school was a small one) however, could not have been so hard as that which has caused the teacher-supervisors to rebel, for he found time to take his drawing certificate at the Birkbeck Institute. He looks back on these years as among the most profitable of his earlier life, when he had ample opportunity of gaining such practical experience as has been of the greatest value in his work since.

The controversy upon methods, then at its height brought the leaders of the profession to see the work at the "Home," and from some of them Mr. Kutner received much encouragement. This historic visit took place in June, 1877, at the close of the first Conference of Head-masters and other Workers for the Deaf; and the visitors included the late Mr. Andrew Patterson, his son, Mr. Colville Patterson, the late Dr. Buxton, the Rev. W. Stainer, and some other head-masters of institutions. As a result, Mr. Andrew Patterson became a convert to the oral method, and by degrees introduced it into his own institution, the Old Trafford Schools, Manchester. From the favourable impression made by Schöntheil's pupils upon the visiting experts, we may date the birth of the present popularity of the oral method.

In 1882, Mr. Kutner was appointed senior oral teacher at old Trafford, under Mr. W. S. Bessant, then virtually in charge of the institution of which,

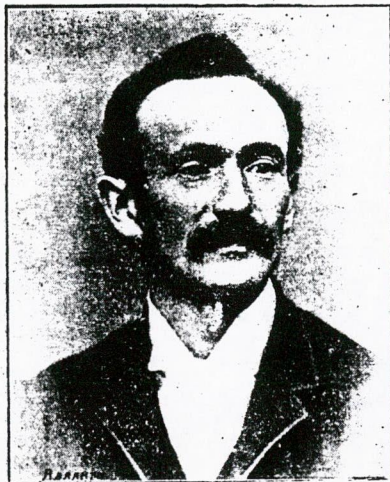
on Mr. A. Patterson's death, in 1883, he became head-master. Subsequently Mr. Kutner became joint drawing master with Mr. Raphael Muckley, and on the latter's resignation became solely responsible for this department. He also assisted some of the less experienced teachers to acquire the then novel method, and afterwards received junior teachers to train, some of whom passed the examination of the College of Teachers, at Paddington Green.

With Mr. Bessant's sanction, Mr. Kutner introduced Kindergarten, and superintended the same all the time he was at Old Trafford—1882-94. In 1891 he was appointed head-master of the Evening Continuation Schools for the Deaf and Dumb, an important feature of which was a series of lantern lectures, interpreted manually.

his present position, as head of the institution where he had learned his profession, with his wife as matron.

And let it be mentioned here that Mrs. Kutner as matron, has been and is a great success. From the management of her tiny household in Manchester, she bravely went to undertake the many cares of a small and struggling institution, and is now rightly proud of her bright and healthy-looking charges. She is also the mother of three bonny little girls, who help to lighten the path of duty for her and her husband.

Mr. Kutner at once set to work with well-directed energy. Upon his appointment his first efforts were directed to securing a proper playground and offices for both sexes, in addition to other urgent requirements. About this time the



MR. KUTNER.



MRS. KUTNER.

Living out of the institution, Mr. Kutner was enabled, besides continuing his studies, to take part in Jewish communal work. He became hon. secretary of the Manchester Jewish Working Men's Club, of over 1,000 members, and on his resignation was the recipient of an illuminated address.

In December, 1891, Mr. Kutner was married to Miss Blema Wood, who was for several years senior teacher at the Manchester Jews' School.

On retiring from Old Trafford, August 1st, 1894, Mr. Kutner was presented with an American roll-top desk, subscribed for by the committee and staff. The following month saw him installed in

extension scheme, now in process of being carried out, was formulated. The school was brought up to the standard of the Education Department, and in 1895 Mr. Kutner had the pleasure of earning the coveted maximum grant. He instituted a half-yearly examination of the pupils in June and December, at which persons interested in individual inmates were invited to attend.

Among the important features introduced into the Home by Mr. Kutner, may be named: systematic arrangement and revision of school work; periodical examinations; systematic physical instruction and manual work; house and laundry work for girls; religious services in Hebrew and

English adapted to the capacity of the children; annual sports; annual fortnight at the seaside; visits to museums, &c.; pleasant winter evenings; magic-lantern displays; monthly teachers' meetings for the reading and discussion of papers; and a teachers' library.

Since Mr. Kutner's appointment the Home has been filled to its fullest extent (31 pupils in 1896), and a number of applicants are awaiting admission.

The school will presently be removed to new premises at Wandsworth Common, with accommodation for 60 pupils.

The year 1896 was again marked by the earning of the maximum grant of £5 5s. per child. The "Excellent" award for drawing was also obtained. The "Sports" held in July, attracted a large audience, and produced enough for the purchase of a magic lantern and accessories. The school, affiliated to the National Physical Recreation Society, was inspected for the first time by a competent judge, who awarded the boys one gold and two silver medals.

The latest Government Report, published last May, contains the following passages:

"The order, tone and attention and interest of the children are all good, and the children seem to be bright, happy, and well cared for.

"The instruction is very skilfully and methodically planned and revised by Mr. Kutner, and the progress made, especially in articulation, lip-reading and general knowledge, is exceedingly good. The lessons in language seemed to me [H.M.I.] to be particularly well devised, but in many points the knowledge and power of expression gained, gave evidence of very laborious and skilful training."

On March 26th last, there was a meeting at the Mansion House in aid of the extension scheme, at which Mr. Kutner gave a public demonstration of oral work.

Mr. Kutner is on the Executive of the College of Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb, Paddington Green, an Institution Representative of the N.A.T.D., and Treasurer of the National "Union" of Teachers on the Pure Oral System. He is also an esteemed contributor to the *American Annals of the Deaf*, the *British Quarterly Review of Deaf-Mute Education*, and the *B.D.M.* His institution ranks second to none in regard to educational efficiency, and in provision for the health, comfort and general well-being of the pupils and teachers alike.



Chapter 3

The Grange before the Wars— 1899 to 1914

"Almighty Father! Thou art merciful and gracious, the comfort of the sad, the strength of all who suffer. Thou sustainest the afflicted with Thy might. Thou consolest them with Thy tenderness. Thou dost cherish them with Thy Fatherly compassion. Thou sheddest Thy love upon the hearts of Thy children of earth. Thou fillest them with a sacred impulse they cannot resist to plead the cause of the poor and needy, to succour the distressed, to deal lovingly and gently with Thy afflicted creatures whose ears seem to be closed in eternal silence. Thou endowest man with knowledge and teachest mankind understanding. Thou revealest Thy laws to the patient, persevering searchers after truth and enablest them to unseal the lips of the mute, and thus open the door of their captivity, that they may take their part in the world of life, and action around them. Thou hast inspired Thy servants with the earnest desire to establish this Home. In Thy name we consecrate this house to its sacred purpose, to shelter and to train our deaf and dumb children. Take this dwelling under Thy protection. Shield this abode that no evil befall it. May sickness and sorrow not come nigh unto it; may peace and affection ever abide within its walls. Vouchsafe unto the teachers a spirit of wisdom and understanding, of unfailing patience and gentleness, that they may be even as shepherds to their little flock, guiding the lambs to the green pastures of knowledge and pity, leading them beside the crystal waters of purity and virtue. Pour Thy blessing upon the pupils, that they may prove themselves worthy of all the loving solicitude lavished upon them. Open Thou their lips, that their mouth may declare Thy praise. May they go forth from this house diligent and honest, worthy Jews and Jewesses, worthy citizens of this land.

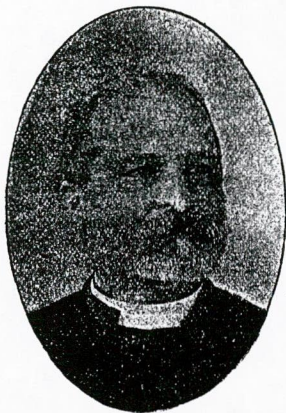
Recompense with thy loving kindness those who have not 'given sleep to their eyes nor slumber to their eyelids,' until they found a resting-place for our deaf mutes. Vouchsafe Thy blessing unto all who maintain and uphold this work of wisdom, mercy and compassion. Bless all labours that are wrought in a pure spirit of charity. Speed the coming of the time foretold by Thy holy prophet, 'And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the Book and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness,' when full spiritual hearing and insight will be vouchsafed to us all, when we shall understand Thy Holy Word and walk in Thy ways with unswerving fidelity and heart-whole loyalty. Amen!"

This was the consecration prayer recited by the Chief Rabbi Adler in honour of the new buildings of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home at The Grange on 14th May 1899.

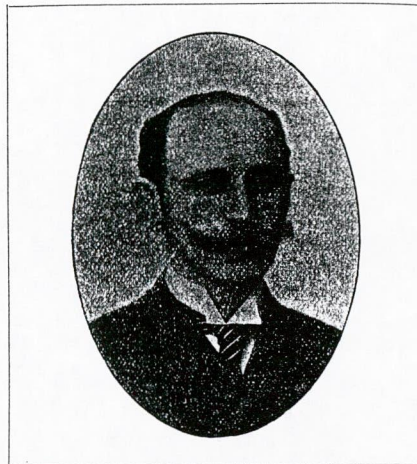
The important occasion was reported in the May 19th 1899 edition of the Jewish Chronicle of which the opener is reproduced in full on the next page with a drawing of the building.

JEW'S' DEAF AND DUMB HOME.

Consecration of New Building.



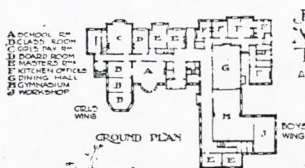
Rev. I. SAMUEL,
Hon. Secretary.



Mr. EDWARD STERN,
President.



Sir P. MAGNUS,
Ex President and Vice President.



JEW'S' DEAF AND DUMB HOME
NIGHTINGALE LANE, S.W.
THE GARDEN FRONT.
ALTERATIONS MADE BY EDWARD STERN ESQ.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE BUILDING.
GARDEN FRONT.

The report began with this passage "The new buildings of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, The Grange, Nightingale Lane, Wandsworth Common, were consecrated by the Chief Rabbi on Sunday last. There could be no greater contrast than that between the old Home in Walmer Road, Notting Hill, situated as it was in a thickly populated locality, and its present habitat, in close proximity to Wandsworth Common, and with plenty of other open spaces near. The Grange stands in extensive grounds, which in fine weather will be a health-giving resort for the inmates, and where they will find ample recreation in the gymnasium. Naturally several additions were requisite to the building and these additions have been admirably constructed, and give plenty of space and air. The dormitories are large, lofty and airy, and the beds very comfortable. Leading from the dormitories are the bathrooms, bright and well fitted up. A leading feature is the fine indoor gymnasium (the gift of Mrs Henry L Cohen) from which one passes to the workshop. The school and dining rooms are worthy of the highest praise, and the teachers' apartments and the bedrooms leave nothing to be desired. Equal merit may be claimed for the domestic arrangements and it need only be added that the boys' dormitories and playground and those of the girls are in different parts of the premises. The entire interior presents a handsome appearance - and especially is this the case with the corridors - and the Architect (Mr Leonard Stokes) and Committee are to be congratulated on the noble addition they have made to the charitable institutions of the Jewish community in London."

There was a large attendance present at the consecration ceremony. Many of those present gave stirring speeches and among those worth including here are those by Mr Edward D Stern (the President of the Home and brother of Lord Wandsworth), the Rev. I Samuel, the Chief Rabbi Adler and Sir Philip Magnus.

Mr Stern, who formally declared the building open at the close of the consecration service, said during his long speech, "The new building has not arisen like a fairy palace, for it gave us, the Committee, a great deal of trouble, and we bothered our Architect from early morn to dewy eve. Many of the improvements which had been effected were due to the excellent ideas of Lady Magnus, and to the expert skill of Mr B Birnbaum. Of the Hon. Secretary (the Rev, I Samuel), his efforts, his untiring devotion and his pertinacity. it is impossible to say too much. He had made the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home the one great object of his life. It is the only institution of its kind in this country for the oral instruction of deaf-mutes. Many people did not consider such a Home necessary, for in their opinion people need not trouble about children who were deaf and dumb. In that Home those afflicted children are dealt with in such a way that they understand what is said to them, and through being taught trades they are apprenticed and thus put in the way of earning a livelihood instead of being a burden to the community. It is hardly right perhaps for me to say that it is not a blessing to be a Jew. It is certainly a misfortune so great that even their bitterest enemies cannot wish them a worse fate. I hope that with the blessing of the Almighty the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home may, in its new habitation, prosper in its beneficent work."

The audience gave him a rousing round of cheers. The Rev I Samuel responded with "I have been present at the inception and birth of the Home, and have been connected with it for thirty five years. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that I am full of affection for the Home, which has secured an admirable President in Mr Stern, and a warm friend in his amiable wife, whose care for the institution cannot be overrated. During its existence hundreds of children have been educated and equipped with all that is necessary to be skilled mechanics, and I am proud to say that not a single case has occurred of an inmate who, in after life, had brought discredit on the Home. I appeal to its friends to restore the deaf mute to society through the Home, and to make it in the future as prosperous as it has been in the past."

The Chief Rabbi made an interesting comment about the deaf person and the Talmud which partly confirms what had been said in the first chapter of this book about the Hebrew scroll "The oral instruction of the deaf mute is no new thing, for in the Talmud (Chagiga) it was related that a deaf mute attended diligently at lectures, and when some years had passed it was found that he had mastered the whole of traditional lore. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that through Jews the lip system had been introduced into this country whereby children were released from captivity and were enabled to take part fully in a life of the outer world."

Sir Philip Magnus, who had been connected with the Institution for twenty-eight years, commented that "It may be said that the Home has gone *Mehayel el Hayel* (from strength to strength) and I am sure all of you will join me in the hope that it may grow and prosper in the building which has been consecrated today."

The next occasion the Jewish Chronicle reported on the Home was in the August 30th 1899 edition when it commented on the Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, &c., of the United Kingdom. An interesting part of that report is reproduced as follows

"The effect of the introduction of the oral system into this country has been very marked; the original Association in Fitzroy Square was followed by the formation of the Ealing College for teachers, and by the adoption of the pure oral system by the School Board for London and by many of the provincial and Scotch Boards, and the establishment of several private schools and by the introduction of special oral departments at Margate and Manchester. Founded upon the evidence of Mr Van Praagh, the history to the change to the oral system in France, which arose from the International Congress at Milan, is traced in the following manner 'In 1749 a Monsieur Pereire, who was a private tutor of deaf children, taught his pupils to speak. In 1875 a descendant from the same family (the celebrated banker) wishing to commemorate his ancestor's work, established a school in Paris, under the direction of Monsieur Magnat, a very eminent and able teacher. Monsieur Magnat gradually associated with himself several clever men (medical men and others), and called a conference in Paris in the year 1878, at which they agreed to institute international congresses. These congresses have resulted in great benefit to deaf children abroad, and also in this country. In 1880 one of these congresses was held at Milan, which resulted in the conversion of almost every Frenchman there present, including Monsieur Frank, who was sent by his government to protest against the oral system. The French Government sent out commissions of inquiry and came to the conclusion that the pure oral was the best system, and they have universally adopted it; they have very little difficulty in converting the teachers, who have taught it with the greatest enthusiasm.' Mr Van Praagh's statement of claim in favour of State aid being given for deaf children is embodied in full in the Report with the remark that the case is therein 'fairly stated.' Under the heading of Religious Instruction mention is made that the Commission 'found that the pupils in the Jewish School of Mr Schontheil (the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, Walmer Road, Notting Hill) were taught Hebrew and read it; there is a small synagogue in the school."

The early 20th century saw British Sign Language gradually disappearing from the classrooms. Along with it went deaf teachers, who were considered unable to teach by speech and lipreading. The Home as well as other deaf schools began to turn out "oral successes". However these were usually restricted to partially deaf and deafened children. There were some "born deaf oral successes" but they were usually of deaf parents or with middle or upper class backgrounds.

There were "oral failures" across the whole range. Most children continued to use BSL throughout their school days, often in the face of punishment. Ironically, by the time they left school, the "oral successes" were using a blend of signs and English. They looked down on the failures who were still using BSL. The latter, because they could no longer get information and instruction in their own language, and because the world was becoming more literate, could no longer compete in education or employment. They accepted an inferior status once again.

In 1900 an article written by the Rev. Isadore Harris appeared in a publication called "Israel", and gives a fairly clear picture of the type of teaching going on in the School, and, indeed, in most oral schools at that time. He mentioned the beautiful grounds in which the boys learnt gardening. The gymnasium, workshop and needlework rooms also came in for special mention. The writer watched certain classes at work. The young children were taught articulation at the same time as reading, that is, they watched the teacher make a sound, they imitated it, then pointed out the particular sound on a wall chart. In the senior classes the lipreading was excellent, and Mr Kutner pointed out to the visitor that all mistakes in lipreading were corrected orally, before being written on the blackboard. In reply to questions from the Rev. Harris, Mr Kutner gave as the average pupil's attainments on leaving the following abilities: the possession of a fair knowledge of language; the ability to converse with and understand their friends, and, to an extent, strangers; some knowledge of geography, history, arithmetic, grammar, Hebrew, religion, Scripture and drawing. In addition to this the girls were taught sewing and housework, the boys woodwork, cardboard modelling and gardening.

An interesting article appeared in the November 29th 1901 edition of the Jewish Chronicle - it was written by a "cycling correspondent"! It is reproduced in full -

Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home

"To instruct the deaf no art could ever reach.
No care improve them and no wisdom teach." - Lucretius.

On the confines of Wandsworth Common, about four miles to the south-west of Hyde Park Corner, lies the pretty building of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home. This institution was originally started with the assistance of the late Baroness Mayer de Rothschild, and was opened in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel in the year 1863 for the accommodation of three deaf and dumb children. As it grew in size it was successively removed to a small house in Burton Crescent, and to Walmer Road, Notting Hill. Eventually sufficient funds were obtained to provide for its increased requirements, and the present house, "The Grange," was purchased and opened for the reception of about fifty children in June, 1899.

I called one afternoon to visit the Institution, and was received by the cheery Matron, Mrs Kutner. She bade me welcome, and I sat in her bright sitting-room until her husband, Mr Kutner, the Director, was able to see me.

Mr Kutner is a man of intelligence and wide interests. He has just celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his connection with the Institution, though it has not been an uninterrupted course. About twenty years ago he left the Home and became senior teacher at the Old Trafford Deaf and Dumb Home in Manchester, where he remained twelve years, returning after that period to take up the position of Headmaster at Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home. In conversing with him I noticed his remarkably clear enunciation of speech which I take it must be the result of a long habit of careful utterance.

In the conduct of the Institution, which, at present, houses forty-three children (nineteen girls and twenty-four boys), Mr Kutner has the assistance of four teachers and one probationer. Of the two assistant masters one has always been in "deaf work," as he laconically expressed it to me.

It appears that there is great difficulty in obtaining teachers for the deaf and dumb, and although it cannot be denied that the work necessitates a superlative amount of patience and mental strain, - not less on the part of the children than on that of the teachers, by the way, - still this should not deter young men and women of our community from being trained to what the last Report of the Committee refers to as "so lucrative, interesting and, above all, so humane a profession."

At whatever age a child enters the Institution (and I am told that children are eligible from the age of six) it takes from three to four years to teach him to read from the lips and to articulate, and constant care is necessary during this period to prevent him from falling back into the habit of communicating by gesture.

No "finger-language" is known at the Home. In my school days when boys used to prompt each other under the unsuspecting eye of the master, by means of finger-language, it was not generally known that any other language was taught to deaf mutes, and it was a revelation to me when I first visited the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home many years ago to see how much could be done with the children in teaching them, to translate their thoughts into words.

Chatting on those subjects, I accompanied Mr Kutner round the building and was shown the dormitory wing, where all the boys sleep together in one room, and the girls in another.

I thought it a pity that the electric light had not been installed in the Institution. It would have preserved its cleanliness and added to its comfort. Perhaps the £150, which I am told is required to provide it, will be found soon, as also about £500 for a swimming bath, which is much missed. In Notting Hill the Public Baths were quite near the Home, so that the boys could go and practise swimming. Here the baths are too far away, Mr Kutner says; "but surely the Committee should arrange that the boys and girls be sent to the baths occasionally, whatever the distance." They are sent to London for "Town Rambles," which are not nearly as useful, though pleasant enough.

I saw the Infirmary, which has three beds for girls and four for boys - a cottage block at the end of the garden - built by Mrs James Stern, this year, in memory of her late husband, and the laundry, added also this year, where the linen of the Institution is washed, and where some of the girls assist. The grounds are of two acres in extent, and contain an open-air gymnasium, and there is a vegetable garden, tended by the gardener with the help of the elder children, which produced enough last summer to suppress almost entirely the greengrocer's bill.

The boys and girls always learn, and occasionally play, together under supervision; but they each have their own playground.

The winter gymnasium and workshop are large and airy. In the former magic-lantern entertainments are given occasionally, and these, the annual sports, and the various excursions are provided for out of a fund of about £25 placed by private donors in the hands of Mr Kutner.

In the workshop I saw some cabinet-work of better finish than any I have seen in any similar Institution. The boys have a special master to instruct them, and, unlike normal boys, are very patient and therefore produce better results. It is a fact that each boy when he leaves to be apprenticed at the legal age of 16 is already a fair mechanic, and after very little while in a shop or factory is equal in capacity to any apprentice of two or three years' standing.

In the refectory, which was formerly the billiard room, hangs a replica of the portrait of the Rev I Samuel which was presented to him after his successful and arduous labours in collecting funds for the purchase of the present building. Mr Samuel has been the *deus ex machina* of the Home since its very foundation, and he must be proud to contemplate the present high position that the charity occupies in bringing it to which he has taken so important a part.

No doubt it is known that there are in existence day-schools for the instruction of the deaf and dumb under the aegis of the School Boards - there are thirty to forty such centres - and it is a burning question amongst teachers whether these or Institutions do the more useful work. From what I have gathered I should certainly think the latter, because more individual attention can be given where children are under continuous observation, as they are here, than otherwise, and because the grading of the children can be better effected in Institutions than in day-schools. The Board School have adopted a half-way measure in some cases by boarding out children who attend day-classes. Under this system a certain measure of supervision is exercised.

The condition for their entry as inmates into the Home is simply that the children shall be deaf and dumb, shall be poor and shall be Jews. The Home holds a certificate for the admission of 34 boarders and 22 day scholars - the latter of any religious persuasion; but it seems little use has been made of this subsidiary provision. Outside the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home it is not believed that more than a dozen Jewish children are to be found in schools in any part of England. It has been conclusively proved, though perhaps the fact is not generally realised, that very few children are actually born deaf. There are instances, of course, and in the school there are two, both members of a family of nine children all born deaf, of parents who were congenitally the same. But in nearly every case the complete deafness has arisen from illness or accident in infancy. The deaf and dumb intermarry, and where the deafness is not congenital nearly always have normal offspring. It often happens that a deaf and dumb man marries a normal woman, but rarely does the opposite occur.

Every boy is, as I stated, apprenticed when he leaves the School, and Mr Samuel S Oppenheim undertakes the herculean task of finding the masters for the boys and supervising the lads during their term of apprenticeship. It is not difficult to find masters, apparently, but it were well if a higher class were available. The idea seems to be to select small shops, where it is supposed that the lad will have a better chance of learning his trade, but it is forgotten that in those days trades are so divided that in small shops only a minute part of the particular trade is practised, or mere slop-work. Better, therefore, would it probably be to put a lad in a large factory, where he would at least learn more.

I was told that since the school was opened nearly 200 children have been educated there. It is curious to note that in all deaf and dumb schools the boys outnumber the girls, but the reason for this is not very clear.

A blind and deaf girl was admitted into the Home this year, but though given a patient trial could not be retained, as there are no facilities at the disposal of the Institution for the special treatment which such a case demands. In reading this in the Report, one's memory goes back to the case of Laura Bridgeman, who was also born blind and deaf, but who was successfully taught through her acute sense of touch to communicate her thoughts by means of finger-language. This case is many times referred to by Darwin in his "Expression of the Emotions," and elsewhere, being quoted by him as evidence to prove that many of our emotions are expressed instinctively, and not as a result of imitation.

I endeavoured to obtain some information as to the present position of past inmates. So far as Mr Kutner knows all are earning a living. One, Marcus Barnard, is a designer of wall-paper, and travels up and down the country selling his designs. He left the Home some twenty years ago. Another former pupil, Moses da Costa - a delicate boy - started as a cigar-maker, and now employs several men in Glasgow. He brought a sovereign with him the last time he came to the Home "for the poor deaf and dumb." So far, as the girls are concerned, the same rooted objection to domestic service exists here as elsewhere. "Of course it would only be practicable to employ them in the Home, where provision could be made for half a dozen girls, but no inducements will bring the parents to see the advantages of this, and as a consequence the Institution does not include any former inmates on its staff. There is one old pupil at Sir George Faudel-Phillips' embroidery factory doing well; another is a mattress-maker and another a button-holer, and so on. Mr Kutner is in constant correspondence with old pupils, and last Purim twenty-five came to the Institution to join in the revels. They were smart-looking men and women he assured me.

Many visitors come to see the Home, including not a few would-be teachers, whose object is to watch the methods adopted. In the visitors' book, dating from 1868, I noticed the names of Dr Symes Thompson, the late Dr N M Adler, Sir Henry Thompson, Mr Leopold de Rothschild and Professor F Max Muller, each commending the work and ways of the Institution.

I wish that I could dilate on Mr Kutner's methods of teaching the children or on the satisfactory Government Reports issued annually since the school was certified in 1891, but space does not permit of it.

I will only mention one other detail of interest. There is a noticeboard in the schoolroom, on which are posted short letters from any child who can think of anything to write to interest the others. The collected letters are called very aptly the "School Newspaper," and I will give two samples :-

"Rosen has not returned to school yet, as her brother, Philip, has got the fever. I think he has gone to the hospital. I am very sorry for him. The girls are very sorry that Rosen has not returned. They miss her very much."
- Jenny Defries.

"Last Saturday afternoon the girls saw a horse slip and fall down in the Northcote Road." - L. Merskey.

The Committee say in their Report that "they are confident that the Institution only requires to become better known to receive greater support." I trust that by these Notes I shall have helped in some small way to effect this better knowledge.

A report in the December 4th 1903 edition of the Jewish Chronicle announced the opening of an East End Club for the Jewish Deaf - "its object is to provide amusement and recreation for Jewish adult males who suffer from deaf-mutism, the members being able to some extent to employ speech." Its president, Dr Eichholz, gave a speech of which a part is reproduced here - "the necessity for such an institution was foreseen by Miss Smart, who had worked for many years among and for the Jewish deaf at the Summerford Street Board School, and who had held the opinion that for many reasons the adult male Jewish deaf were unable to gain that comfort from clubs which other deaf people were obtaining. She, therefore, set to work until she brought the opinion of some members of the community to bear upon the necessity for such an institution. Miss Smart then secured the assistance of Miss Harriet Davids, a fellow-teacher in the same school, and it was entirely owing to those two ladies - to Miss Smart, their Christian friend, and Miss Davids, their Jewish Hon. Secretary - that the progress of the Club was due."

The report continues with this somewhat amusing paragraph "Mr Abraham Fink (a member of the Club and a former inmate pupil of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, who was once deaf and dumb, but has been cured of his dumbness) spoke quite audibly and intelligibly, expressing, on behalf of himself and the members, thanks to Dr. and Mrs Adler for their visit."

The Rev. I Samuel made this observation "It is a satisfactory feature that all the boys and girls trained in the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home and apprenticed to various trades have managed to maintain their independence, and that in no single instance have one of them applied to the management for pecuniary assistance."

In the same report Mr S Schontheil said that he looked forward to the time when there would be no necessity for special clubs for the deaf and dumb, and when they would be able to receive such instruction as would enable them to join ordinary clubs!

Mr S Kutner said that as all teachers felt an interest in their pupils after leaving school, it was a great satisfaction to him to know that, after finishing their day's work, the ex-pupils of the Home would be able to enjoy the society of those better favoured than themselves, and to receive their good counsel. He was not so sanguine as to look forward to the time when the deaf and dumb would be able to join ordinary clubs. He thought it was too much to expect. The "interpretation" by means of silent spelling, although no reproach to the oral method, showed that it had its limits. He thought they might be satisfied if a fair percentage used a fair percentage of speech, and he, therefore, considered they were doubly indebted that night to the presence of the interpreter, the Rev. Mr Gilby.

If both Mr Schontheil and Mr Kutner were alive today, they would have not made those comments!

Mr S S Oppenheim made an amusing statement "I am glad to say that I have been able to obtain masters for all the apprentices from the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, and to state that they were all well-behaved, and some of the masters even told him that they liked them better than those who could speak." This moved the audience to laugh.

The club was to last for another fourteen years when it closed down in 1917. Miss Davids became Principal of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home and pressure of this new work did not allow her to continue the duties at the club. No-one appeared willing to take over where she left off.

It is interesting to note that a bookcase-bureau, presented to Miss Davids by the members of the club, is now in the possession of Elizabeth Tesler, her niece. It has an inscription on it saying -

Presented to Miss H Davids
by the members of the
East End Social Club for the Jewish Deaf
in grateful recognition of her
services of Hon. Secretary,
April, 1908.

Between July 1902 and September 1904 there were various reports in the Jewish Chronicle about meetings held on behalf of the Home with the accent on seeking funds from the Jewish community. The Home was seeking financial assistance to help achieve its aims to accommodate more children - at that time the Home was one of the few Jewish Institutions most scantily supported. A large advertisement was printed in the September 16th 1904 edition of the same paper, making an appeal for £7000 - the advert is reproduced here as it appeared in the paper -

JEWS' DEAF AND DUMB HOME,

"The Grange,"

61, NIGHTINGALE LANE, WANDSWORTH COMMON, S.W.

SIR EDWARD D. STERN, *President.*

REV. I. SAMUEL, *Hon. Sec.*

Urgent and Special Appeal.

£7,000 REQUIRED.

The Government Department—Board of Education—insists on the extension of the Home.

They have condemned the Class Rooms as too small.

The Dormitories have been overcrowded for a long time.

11 Children are waiting for admission.

There are now 53 Children in the Home.

Postponement of Instruction inflicts irreparable injury on Deaf Mutes.

Educational Efficiency for Deaf Mutes depends mainly on

Elementary Instruction received in their Early Years.

Efficient Education is the anxious consideration of the Committee.

Plans for extension have been submitted to the Board of Education and approved.

The work must be commenced at once ! ! !

£5,500 is required for New Building, Furniture and Equipment.

£1,500 is necessary to meet deficit of current year and that for

next 2 years.

The annual expenditure necessarily increases with the increase

number of children.

To restore speech to the Deaf Mute is indeed a Humane work !

It equips him for the battle of life.

NO APPEAL HAS BEEN MADE SINCE 1895 ! ! !

THIS ONE IS MOST URGENT AND COMPULSORY ! ! !

PRAY GIVE LARGELY AND AT ONCE !

DONATIONS WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED BY

Sir EDWARD D. STERN, President, 4, Carlton House Terrace, S.W.

Sir PHILIP MAGNUS, Vice-President, 16, Gloucester Terrace, Hyde Park, W.

ISAAC SELIGMAN, Esq., Vice-President, 17, Kensington Palace Gardens, W.

S. L. LAZARUS, Esq., Treasurer (Messrs. Lazarus Bros.), 3, Drapers'

Gardens, E.C.

B. BIRNBAUM, Esq., 36, Devonshire Place, W.

JAMES CASTELLO, Esq., 45, Porchester Terrace, W.

EDGAR COHEN, Esq., 4, Hall Road, St. John's Wood, N.W.

J. EISENMANN, Esq., Belsize Park Road.

S. FALK, Esq., 25, Clifton Gardens, W.

SIGMUND HIRSCH, Esq., 25, Sussex Square, W.

J. B. JOEL, Esq., 10 and 11, Austin Friars, E.C.

ALPHONSE D. JOSEPH, Esq., 8, Upper Hamilton Terrace, N.W.

JOSEPH JOSEPH, Esq., 14, Harley Street, W.

B. KISCH, Esq., M.A., 11, Randolph Road, W.

HERMANN LANDAU, Esq., 30, Bryanston Square, W.

S. S. OPPENHEIM, Esq., 7, Clifton Gardens, W.

B. S. FAUDEL PHILLIPS, Esq., 50, Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.

HON. WALTER ROTHEMILD, M.P., New Court, E.C.

And by the Rev. I. SAMUEL, Hon. Sec., 74, Sutherland Avenue, W.

A Preliminary List of Donations will shortly be published.

A Cinderella Dance was organised by the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home Aid Society for Saturday, February 4th 1905 - it was advertised in the October 28th 1904 edition of the Jewish Chronicle. It is reproduced as it appeared at that time

<p>JEW'S DEAF & DUMB HOME AID SOCIETY.</p> <p><i>Preliminary Announcement.</i></p> <p>THE SECOND ANNUAL</p> <p>CINDERELLA DANCE</p> <p>of the above Society</p> <p>Will take place on SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4th, 1905.</p> <p>— AT THE —</p> <p>CANNON STREET HOTEL, E.C.</p> <p>Ladies and gentlemen wishing to assist in the sale of Tickets will oblige by communicating with:—</p> <p>(Mrs.) I. GOLDSTEIN } Joint Hon. Secs., I. NATHAN } Dance Committee.</p>

A most absorbing article appeared in the December 30th 1904 edition of the Jewish Chronicle which is well worth its full inclusion here -

MAKING THE DUMB TO SPEAK!

A Visit to the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home

[From a Correspondent]

When, some months ago, I became first practically acquainted with the oral system of teaching the deaf and dumb, I was deeply moved by the pathetic character of the exhibition, but the morning which I spent recently at the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home was replete with happy experiences, derived - need I say? - not from seeing some fifty little fellow-mortals afflicted with the deprivation of the facilities of hearing and speech, but from the knowledge that, in spite of these terrible infirmities, they are being trained in pleasant surroundings, by kind and patient teachers, to take their place in the ranks of the world's workers, and earn their livelihood like normally equipped men and women.

Those who know the great part hearing and speech play in ordinary educational establishments will understand the magnitude of the task which the teachers at the Deaf and Dumb Home are required to face. Naturally, the education there given cannot proceed along the ordinary lines. The development of the power of speech in those who have it not is necessarily a laborious process, involving the expenditure of a great deal of time and patience on the part of both teacher and taught, and it would be too great a strain to concentrate attention mainly on this object. Consequently, the authorities at the Home endeavour simultaneously to develop to the fullest extent the faculties which the children possess unimpaired. manual training, therefore, occupies a very large place in the curriculum of the Home, and a good measure of the success of this department is the fact that all past pupils have obtained situations in various trades. But it must not be supposed that it is solely with this end in view that the training is given. It takes its place in the general educational system, which it is necessary to employ for deaf-mutes. For it must be borne in mind that, lacking the power of speech from babyhood, the inmates are also devoid of the power of expression. They possess ideas which they are unable to translate into intelligible formulæ.

I reminded Mr S Kutner - the genial Headmaster of the Home, to whom I am indebted for much information - of an article, which I had recently read, entitled "*The Vindication of Mr Squeers*," in which the author showed that educationalists were coming to approve of the system of combining the practical with the theoretical.

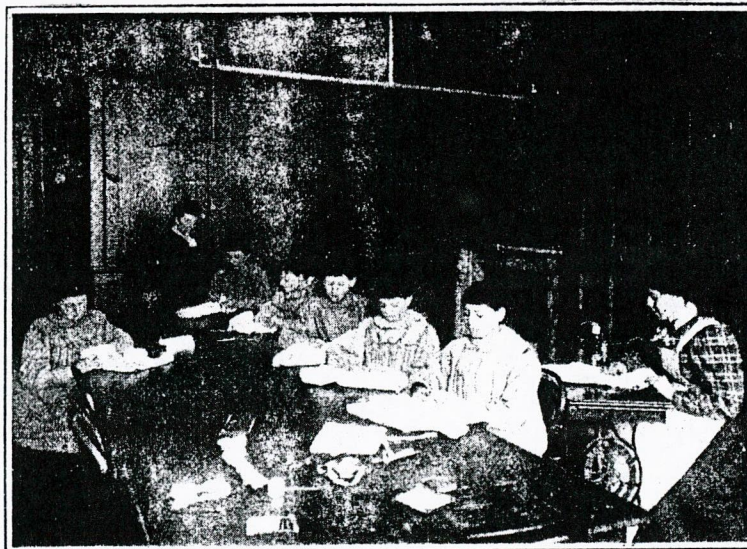
"Where's the first boy?"

"Please, sir, he's cleaning the back-parlour window."

"So he is, to be sure," rejoined Squeers. "We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it."

This method, or rather, its reverse, is an essential part of the scheme of teaching at the Deaf and Dumb Home, and it is the work of eye and hand which forms part of the basis of the higher intellectual processes of orderly expression and intelligible speech. There is, however, nothing mechanical in the manual work. Mere imitation would not bring about the logical sequence of ideas to which expression has ultimately to be given. Nothing is done without first a drawing being made with mathematical precision. The children are, from the beginning, graphically taught what an inch is, and acquire the use of ruler, set-squares, and compasses. Everything is measured out, and the object made to the actual size of the drawing, or to scale. From objects made of paper the pupils proceed to cardboard and woodwork. They acquire the use of tools, and an accuracy and precision which stand them in very good stead after they leave the Home, for they have a considerable advantage over the purely mechanically trained workman who could not make a drawing of what he proposed to turn out. The boys make models of all the school furniture, and turn their skill to practical use in the construction of benches and cupboards. The fruits of their artistic training are shown in the excellent decorative work with which they treat some of the objects they produce, and in their drawing and recreation books, in the latter of which their fancy is given full scope, and the result is extremely interesting. The boys likewise take it in turns to work in the grounds and obtain a practical knowledge of gardening. I was shown green-houses full of cuttings ready boxed for next year.

The girls similarly do much of the house-work under supervision, and work in the laundry where all the washing for the Home is done. I saw one of the elder girls at work. Looking the picture of health, she had a remarkably clear articulation, and I was told that she was quite a capable laundress. The girls do excellent needlework and fancy work.



Girls' Workroom.

But all this, though exceedingly interesting, is put in the shade by the main work of the Home - making the dumb to speak! I saw the work in all its stages from the smallest newcomer to the advanced class, who already speak well. Mr Kutner showed me a little girl who was just learning how to produce the elementary consonant and vowel sounds, and, as he himself admitted, this is the most interesting part of the whole instruction. The first sound taught is that of the letter p. The teacher points to the letter on the chart, shows the child how the sound is produced by the opening. It is taught the other consonants, and not being able to hear, it is made to feel the varying gradations of vibrations and breathings, constant practice bringing familiarity. Of course, the pupil is entirely dependant upon sight for receiving the communications of the teacher, and mistakes occasionally arise through the similarity of mouth formation between certain letters or syllables. Thus, Mr Kutner asked a boy in the workshop who was making a chest of drawers to bring the drawing by which it was being constructed. The boy brought a drawer, the two words being very similar. The pupils find more difficulty in pronouncing some vowels than others. The little girl above referred to could not produce the sound of ee and Mr Kutner had, by means of slight pressure under the chin, to bring back of the tongue into the required position. After much patient practice the child will be able to do it without assistance.

To an advanced class of boys and girls, Mr Kutner gave a dictation lesson. The class repeated each sentence after him, and the children took it in turns to write on the blackboard. "This gentleman is Mr _____, of the *Jewish Chronicle*, who has come to see the school with the object of writing an article about it. . . ." Mr Kutner thought they had never seen the word "article" used in this sense, and this proved to be the case; it was quite pretty to see the gleam of intelligence when I used the word "composition," which explained everything to them. The following conversation was then carried on between Mr Kutner and the pupils and owing to the clear enunciation of the latter, I had not the slightest difficulty in understanding everything that was said:

"Why is the article to be written?"

"They want to know how the pupils do their lessons."

"The object is to bring the Home under the notice of the Jewish public so that they may give money to help to pay for the new building. We want £7,000, and if Mr _____ tells the people that we have a good school perhaps they will send some money."

"Mr _____ will give a description?!"

"Yes, quite right. Perhaps he will say something about me also; would you like him to say something about me?" (I prompted this question.)

"Yes, he will tell the people you are very good."

"Mr _____ told me he would like the pupils to have a gymnastic competition with some boys of the Jewish Club. Would you like that? Aren't you afraid?"

"No!" (Vigorously)

"Do you think you could beat them?"

"Yes, I think so."

"You must send them a challenge. (Explained "challenge"). Have you ever seen the *Jewish Chronicle*?"

"Yes."

"Do you think you could write an article for the *Jewish Chronicle*?"

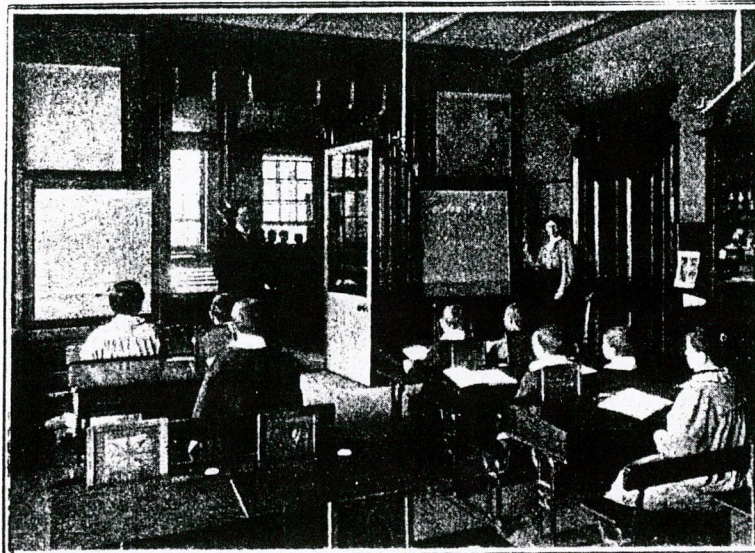
"Yes."

"You think you could? I don't think you are clever enough. Do you think I could write an article for the *Chronicle*?"

"Yes, about the Home."

"Very often when we have a treat I send an account to the paper." (This appeared to occasion great surprise among the children.)

One of the boys addressed a pathetic question to me: "Are the boys of the *Jewish Chronicle* hearing boys?" A short geography lesson followed. The children found Hull on the map, and a discussion ensued on the North Sea outrage. The children evinced a very keen interest in current events. This was also betrayed in the recreation books, which are full of drawings of Russian and Japanese battleships, etc. The pupils have a very good substitute for a magazine in the shape of a news-board, on which they post up various items of interest concerning themselves and the Home. Some of the personal information supplied is very touching. For instance, a new pupil will record that he arrived at the Home last week, and that he did not cry a bit - "only babies do that"! Candour, Mr Kutner explained, is a characteristic of deaf mutes. They are solely concerned with giving expression to their thoughts, and have no acquaintances' with the art of concealment. Voltaire's thrust "Ils n'employent les paroles que pour deguiser leurs pensees," cannot be applied to the inmates of the Home.



A Classroom.

Reference has been made to gymnastics. The idea of a competition between the Home and boys of one of the Jewish clubs was suggested to me by the fact that the Home holds the shield for gymnastics and drill won in competition with all the Deaf and Dumb Schools of the country. I was shown some gymnastic exercises by some of the boys, and I can testify to their skill and agility. Cricket and football are also great features.

Last, but not least, it was particularly gratifying to notice that their specific Jewish instruction was not lost sight of, for, in addition to their knowledge of the elements of religion, they were able to read Hebrew fluently, and to translate short prayers as well as a few verses of Genesis.

At present there are about fifty pupils. When the building operations, now in progress, are completed, there will be accommodation for thirty more. The extension is urgently required, for there are many afflicted children for whom accommodation could not hitherto be provided. The Home has come deservedly to be recognised for what it is, a place where the children are made happy and comfortable, where their faculties are developed scientifically with results that abide during the whole of their lifetime. I cannot conclude without paying tribute to the work of the staff of the Home. Their gentleness, their patience, their skill, the absolute sympathy which they create between them and their pupils deserve unqualified praise, and if it is only in recognition of their devoted labours, and the administrative work of the Rev. Isaac Samuel, the indefatigable Honorary Secretary, I feel sure the community will give the Home all it requires.

The number of children desiring admission into the school necessitated the building of a new wing, which was opened on October 26th 1905, by the H.R.H. Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, daughter of Queen Victoria. She declared "I have great pleasure in declaring the new Wing open." This followed the proceedings which took place in the dining room and gymnasium (thrown into one) of the old building. The Princess was very interested in a demonstration of the children's attainments. This was reported in a supplement to the October 27th 1905 edition of the Jewish Chronicle of which the first page showing a photo of the Princess is reproduced -

Jewish Chronicle: October 27th, 1905.

Supplement

— TO THE —

JEWISH CHRONICLE.

OCTOBER 27, 1905.

JEWES' DEAF AND DUMB HOME.

Opening of New Wing by Princess Christian.



[Photograph by Lamottier, Ltd., 22a, Old Bond St., W.]

H.R.H. PRINCESS CHRISTIAN.

Sir Edward Stern began the proceedings with his usual style of speech:

"Your Royal Highness, Ladies and Gentlemen, I can hardly find words to thank Your Royal Highness sufficiently for your very great kindness in coming here today; you can have no idea of the great pleasure and satisfaction your visit has afforded to all of us. I know perfectly well that there is nothing extraordinary in your kindly presence on such occasions as this, for you seem to spend nearly the whole of your time for the happiness and welfare of others."

He proceeded to tell the Princess the history of the Home. He explained why this new building was needed -

"A larger building was found to be necessary, and in 1897, the Diamond Jubilee year of our beloved Queen Victoria, this property was acquired, and the building duly opened two years later. Unfortunately, the number of applications for admittances has grown so rapidly that the Education Department insisted on an enlargement, and this wing has been built, which Your Royal Highness has so graciously consented to open today, and I only hope and trust that when you inspect it you will be pleased and satisfied with all you see. I may tell you that this was the first school in England where all the oral instruction of the deaf and dumb was taught, and thus these poor children are enabled not only to understand others, but also to make themselves understood, and so are put in the way of gaining their own living instead of becoming a burden on their fellow-creatures. With the permission of Your Royal Highness, the headmaster will, in a few moments, show you the way in which the children are taught. It requires, as you may well imagine, great patience both on the part of the teacher and of the pupil. Ladies and Gentlemen, I will not detain you any longer, but will ask you to pass a vote of thanks to Her Royal Highness for her great kindness in coming here today."

Purses were then presented to the Princess by twenty three children. Three of them were deaf "and dumb" - A Reubens, V Simon and Master L Weisberg. The staff of the Home as well as those involved with it had their children present in this occasion as well - they were D Kutner, I Samuel and Master Eichholz. The total amount contained in the purses was £286.12s - this probably went to the School Fund.

Mr Kutner, the Headmaster, gave a brief display of the method of oral instruction. The display was given in three sections. The first was the method of instruction to very young children, who recognised elementary sounds, vocal and non-vocal, from Mr Kutner's lips, and read them from a printed chart. The next section was of children able to form these sounds into words and to describe simple objects. The third section was of advanced pupils who repeated and wrote from dictation complete sentences. The children wrote the following on the board: "The visit of H.R.H. Princess Christian is a great honour to the Home. The Princess is a member of the Royal Family. Queen Victoria used to take a great interest in the education of the deaf and dumb."

The National Anthem having been sung, the Princess proceeded to inspect the new building -

"The new buildings consist of a central hall or large school room, where all the children can assemble with five well-lit classrooms opening off it, with lavatories and cloakrooms etc. These rooms all have glazed brick dadoes about 4 ft. 6 ins high so that cleanliness is ensured.

On the first floor is a commodious and well-lit dormitory for boys with three masters' rooms, wardrobe room, baths and lavatories. The staircase is fire proof but there is an extra exit provided for use in case of fire. The whole building is heated by hot water but open fire places are provided in addition which can be used if desired at any time.

In character the exterior of the building is similar to the additions made to the original house by Mr Leonard Stokes, Architect, when the property was acquired some few years back, and though the once beautiful grounds have been much curtailed by the last additions, yet ample space still remains for a good lawn, playground for both sexes, and a charming kitchen garden.

The new buildings have been erected by the contractor, Mr C P Roberts of 138, St Pauls Road, Highbury, under the direction of the Architect, Mr Leonard Stokes of 2 Great Smith, St. Westminster."

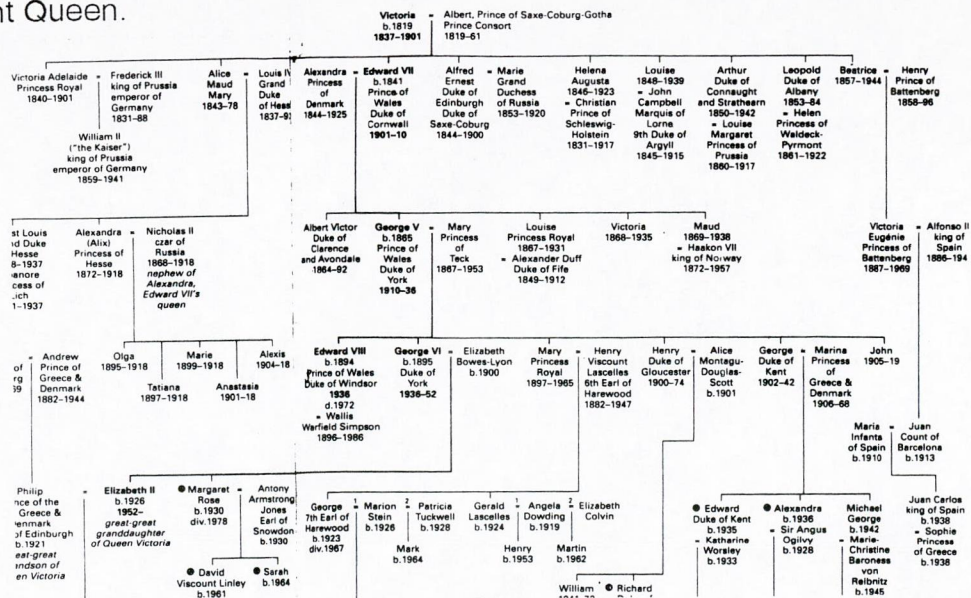
The new central hall had an exhibition of needlework, carpentry, etc. The Princess was fond of needlework - she founded the School of Needlework in a house in Sloane Street, London in 1872. The children were present, and the Princess asked several questions as to the method of teaching. Her Royal Highness partook of tea in a private room with Sir Edward and Lady Stern, the Chief Rabbi and Mrs Adler, Lady Samuel, Sir George and Lady Faudel-Phillips, and Mrs H Woolf.

A copy of the programme, specially bound in purple Morocco leather, embossed with a gold crown, and lined with silk-watered end paper, was presented to the Princess.

In attendance on the Princess were Colonel Ray, her equerry, and Miss Loch. Her Royal Highness had come by motor from Windsor, to which she returned after the ceremony. The proceedings attracted considerable attention in the neighbourhood.

The Princess was born on 25th May 1946 and known as Princess Helena Augusta Victoria (or affectionately known as Lechen). She was the third daughter and fifth child of Queen Victoria. She was a sister of King Edward VII at the time of opening the wing. She was married to Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein at Windsor on July 5th 1866. Queen Victoria promoted this marriage because Prince Christian agreed to live in England as his territory was appropriated by Austria and Prussia.

She died in 1923. If alive, she would have been the great-grand aunt of the present Queen.



Financial support of the Home was always a top priority alongside with the education of its children. One would wonder how the money was spent per year. An example is the year ending December 31st, 1908 of which the Treasurer's Cash Account is reproduced in its original form below and on the next page -

Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, The Grange, 101, Nightingale Lane, Wandsworth Common, S.
Dr. **Treasurer's Cash account for the Year ending December 31st, 1908.** *C,*

RECEIPTS.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	EXPENDITURE.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s.
Ordinary Income.				By Balance (overdraft due to Bankers) 1st Jan.,				189 14
To Subscriptions (see pages 32-44)	428 15 6			Maintenance.				
" " Jews' Deaf & Dumb				Meat ...	243 16 11			
" " Aid Society ...	157 10 0			Fish ...	68 2 4			
		588 5 0		Milk, Butter and Cheese ...	139 9 10			
Donations (see page 64) ...	298 5 0			Bread, Flour and Rice ...	110 14 5			
Dividends ...	634 18 9			Grocery ...	115 0 11			
		933 3 9	1519 9 3	Vegetables ...	46 10 10			
PAYMENTS—SCHOOL BOARDS.				Cash in lieu of Board during				
London County Council ...	410 9 8			Vacation ...	30 0 0			
Manchester ...	50 16 8			Washing ...	37 19 4			763 15 3
Glasgow ...	15 0 0			Clothing ...	121 4 7			
Sheffield ...	13 13 3			Sundries ...	86 4 4			
Salford ...	29 11 1			Furniture ...	17 19 0			
Leeds ...	12 12 0			Coal ...	87 11 6			
Newcastle-on-Tyne ...	42 6 2			Gas ...	69 5 11			420 4 8
Wolverhampton ...	25 0 0			WATER, RATES AND TAXES.				
Liverpool ...	58 5 6			Tithe Rent ...	0 19 10			
Gateshead-on Tyne ...	8 3 10			Parochial Rates and Taxes ...	149 10 6			
Edinburgh ...	20 0 0			Water ...	29 2 7			179 12 11
Burton-on-Trent ...	25 0 0			Insurance (Life, Fire & Accident)				27 6 4
Bournemouth ...	25 0 0			Repairs ...				256 19 2
Glamorgan ...	25 0 0			Salaries—Teaching Staff and				
			760 18 2	Matron ...	661 5 0			
Pupils ...			10 0 0	Wages (Servants and Gardener) ...	178 7 5			839 12 5
Grant from Education Department ...			267 6 3	Henry Hart Memorial Prize ...				4 0 0
Sundry Receipts—				Medical Attendance and Medicine ...	24 14 4			
Return of Deposit to Water Board ...	10 0 0		10 0 0	Stationery, (School Books) ...	25 4 4			
Extraordinary Income.				Printing, Annual Reports, &c. ...	20 19 4			
To Legacies (see page 66) Invested as on other side			454 0 0	Postage ...	13 16 3			
				Advertisements ...	2 4 6			
Total Income			3021 13 8	Audit Fee and Verification of				
Overdraft due to Bankers, 31st Dec.,			252 9 11	Stock ...	3 11 6			
				Premium for Apprenticeship of				
				former Inmates ...	5 0 0			
				Collector's Commission ...	0 19 9			
				Secretary's Salary ...	40 0 0			
				Interest on overdraft at Bankers ...	0 7 11			
				Grant to Library ...	2 0 0			
				School Fees refunded ...	10 0 0			
								148 12 11
				Total Expenditure				2630 8
				Purchase of £492 15 9 London County Council 3% stock				454 5 1
			£3274 3 7					£3274

I have audited the above Statement with the books, accounts and vouchers relating thereto and certify same to be correct. I have verified the Statements of Assets.

LIONEL H. LEMON.
 (Messrs. L. H. Lemon & Co.) Chartered Accountants.
 32, King Street, Cheapside.

January 13th, 1909.

ASSETS.		Interest received.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
New South Wales 3½% Stock	2030 13 8		71 1 2
Cape 3%	2300 0 0		69 0 0
Natal 3%	1750 0 0		52 10 0
Queensland 3½%	1800 0 0		63 0 0
Victoria 3½%	1500 0 0		52 10 0
Western Australian 3%	1400 0 0		42 0 0
India 2½%	1622 13 3		40 11 4
... 3½%	1677 7 11		23 14 0
... 3%	618 13 8		18 11 0
City of Cape Town Corp Loan	100 0 0		4 0 0
Leicester Corporation	1008 18 6		31 15 8
Bombay and Baroda Railway	122 12 10		4 5 8
*Southern Mahratta	308 0 0		27 1 4
Metropolitan 2½%	301 18 9		7 10 11
Japanese 5% (3000 yen)	308 5 0		15 6 3
Birmingham Water Co.	30 0 0		1 1 2
London County Council	3674 1 3		99 19 3
Chinese Bond	100 0 0		4 15 0
Transvaal 3% Loan	210 0 0		6 16 0
	£19861 4 10		£634 18 9
Freehold Premises of the Institution			
Endowment for Bed, the late Miss Anna Maria Goldamid. David James, Esq. Mrs. Rebecca Bonas. Ann. Subscription in Perpetuity of the late Henry Lealie Esq., Birmingham. For Henry Hart Memorial Prize Fund.			

Of the 64 pupils who left between 1901 and 1910, 24 were stated (in 1915) to be in good work, 6 in promising circumstances, 6 in fair employment. Five of the girls had married.

The Street Directory of Balham, Tooting and Merton published in 1906 had the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home listed with its address shown as 61 Nightingale Lane. The Home was next door to a J.P. (a Mr Clifford J Brookes) living at no. 59 (his house was known as Glenbrook) and to a Mr Frederick John Griffiths at no. 67 (also known as the Wilby Lodge). Presumably buildings were being erected between nos. 61 and 67.

In the ensuing years new buildings were erected on vacant land between the Home and Glenbrook at no 59. In the next edition of the same Street Directory published in 1912, the Home was listed as 101 Nightingale Lane. This time its new neighbours were, at no. 99, a Mr William Gilbert Allen, and at no. 103, the London County Council Residential Home for Girls.

Dr Eichholz, H M Inspector for Special Schools, highly commended the language training of the school, and pronounced the school to be a model of its kind. Unfortunately the income from the school funds did not keep pace with the expansion of the establishment, and in 1911 the Committee proposed to the L.C.C. that they take over the educational side of the school, the religious instruction to remain under the control of the committee. The school was heavily in debt, partly as a result of the high fees which had to be paid to teachers to keep on a level with salaries paid by the L.C.C. These negotiations were still being discussed when the outbreak of War in 1914 put a stop to this and many other similar matters of importance to the educational world.

Chapter 4

The First World War and Changes- 1914 to 1938

The Great War also known as World War I caused great misery to millions of people everywhere. The Grange was deeply affected with its funds drying up. Nevertheless it soldiered on.

There were no evacuations from the Home during the war years 1914 to 1918. However there were some slight changes in the staffing of the school. Letters of resignation were received from Mr Simeon David Hart and Mr Taylor, both teachers, in order that they could enlist for the period of the war. Their resignations were accepted, their engagements to terminate on 25th March 1915.



Mr S Kutner, Mrs Kutner and pupils, circa 1925

Over a year later Mr Kutner died on the 16th of August 1916, aged 55 years. His obituary was published in the August 18th 1916 edition of the Jewish Chronicle:

KUTNER - We regret to announce the death on Saturday of Mr Simeon Kutner, Principal of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home. Mr Kutner had been in failing health for some time. He was born in Poland in March 1861, and was educated in England. In 1882 he was appointed Senior Oral Teacher at the Royal School for the Deaf, Old Trafford, Manchester. He resigned in 1894 to become director of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home. He obtained a Diploma of the College of Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb (first on the list) in 1887. He was on the executive of the College of Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb and the National Association of Teachers of the Deaf, and he was treasurer of the National Union of Teachers on the pure Oral system. He was the author of '*Kutner's Aid to Solid Geometry*,' '*The Grange Reading Charts*,' and reading books for children. He was a contributor to various educational journals. His funeral took place on Tuesday at the Willesden Cemetery. The Rev. E Levine read the Burial Service.

Mr Frank Musson, a fellow teacher, was engaged as the acting headmaster in 1916 until Miss Harriet Davids, also a teacher, assumed the position of the Principal on April 19th 1917. Miss Davids earned £400 per annum as the Head. There were two reports of scarlet fever in her time at the school.

The war ended much to everyone's relief. Mr Hart sent a letter asking that he be reinstated on his leaving the army. It was agreed to re-engage him at a wage of £1.50 per week.

The Annual Meeting of the Home was reported in the July 11th 1919 edition of the Jewish Chronicle -

Sir Edward Stern commented that they were met together for the first time since the signature of peace. **"Though it might be imagined that this little place is far removed from the troubles of the world, we have had great trouble and anxiety during the war. Bombs had fallen quite close to the school, and the cost of upkeep had increased enormously. In addition we have had great difficulty in maintaining an adequate staff. Now that peace had been signed we hear that there will be great rejoicings and revelry. There are so many people who have lost their sons and relatives and who would not feel exactly inclined for revelry. But the young people should realise that peace has been restored and that that is an occasion for rejoicing."** He commented on the visitors who were present - Mrs De Sola, daughter of the late Rev. Isaac Samuel, Sir Philip Magnus and Miss Annie Landau. **"Miss Landau is one of the best teachers in the world or at any rate in the Jewish Community. She has guided the Evelina School in Jerusalem through a great many troubles and brought it to the pitch of being one of the greatest schools in the East. During the war she had conducted a school in Alexandria, which had earned the praise of all the authorities."**

He shifted his speech to the Home itself and Miss Davids. Miss Davids **"showed admirable skills in conducting the Home. She has shown what a woman could do. This is the first time that a Jewish school in this country has been completely managed by a woman and it has turned out a great success. The number of children remains about fifty. I am glad it is not more, as it shows that there are fewer deaf and dumb; but Miss Davids believes there are Jewish deaf and dumb children in other schools. We are seeking a new teacher of domestic economy, a subject which is very popular among the children and extremely useful. It is gratifying to find that the employers, who have taken some of the children as apprentices, are anxious to keep them on after their apprenticeships end, showing that they work extremely well."**

Sir Edward Stern, continuing his speech, congratulated the Rev. M Adler, their Hon. Secretary, on his safe return, and on having won the D.S.O., the first Jewish clergyman to have done so.

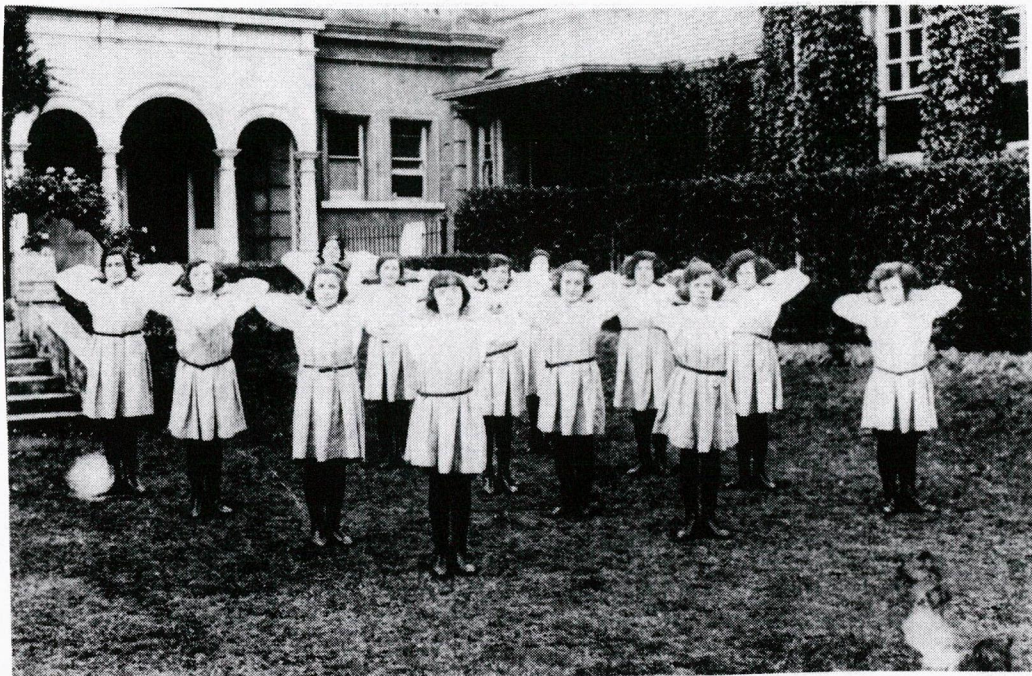
The speech then concentrated on the Home's finances **"I must emphasis the financial difficulties of the Home, due to high prices. We are in debt, and are confronted with the necessity of carrying out extensive repairs. I propose to give £500 towards wiping out the deficit of £2,000, and I hope the others will follow my example."**

Mr Joseph, Treasurer, said that the income last year (1918) had decreased by £500, whereas the expenditure had increased by £570. Mr M Cash pointed out that last year, apart from the contribution of the Aid Society, the Community only subscribed £346 to the Home. He could not believe that the Community were callous to the needs of these afflicted children. The Rev. M Adler, D.S.O., added that there was a small support from the provinces. The Home had 21 children from the provinces, but only received subscriptions amounting to £12, of which £8 came from one town.

On July 12th 1920, a proposal was put forward that the name of the Institution be changed to "*Residential School for Jewish Deaf*" the term "*Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home*" being deemed inapplicable to a school contracted on oral lines. This came about because ideas towards the education of the deaf were undergoing a significant change. Whereas hitherto residential institutions for the deaf were considered asylums, or places of refuge for the deaf mute, they were now being thought of primarily as schools. Accordingly many institutions changed their names.

After some discussion on this resolution, it was decided to defer the discussion for the time being. It could be done at a special meeting of all subscribers to the Home.

A notice of motion to change the name of the Home came twice on May 29th 1921 and July 9th 1922. Both were withdrawn.



Senior Girls' exercises on the lawn, 1922
(Some of the girls are recognizable) :-
Annie Gedlovitch?, Sally Gilbert, Pearl Rosenberg
Betty Sokolov, Rose Butnick

One of the pupils, Bernard Weinberg, was admitted at the age of six years old to the Home in 1922. He travelled by train from Manchester with the guard in his carriage "I was never told where I was going till I met my Aunt who took me straight to the school. That night in the boy's dormitory I came out of bed, roamed around, looking for my mother till I was wandering about in the girls' dormitory. One of the teachers heard me crying and put me in one of the older girl's bed and slept with her for the night!"



Group of boys, 1927

Back Row: (from left to right)

**Monty Maselski, David Michaels, Joe Rosenberg,
Isadore Alper, Harry Sanitsky, Hyman Olinsky**

Second Row:

**Edward Gold, Nathan Sennitsky, Israel Marcovitch,
Isaac Michaels, Joe Coffman, Nola Yackerson**

Front Row:

**Bernard Weinberg, Abe Weinstein, Bern Farber,
Lionel Katz, Leon Hasseck, Israel Komber**

Two children joined the Home between 1926 and 1928 – Elaine Cohen (nee Prag) and her brother Joseph. Their mother, Lillie Prag (nee Greenstone) was a member of the Jewish Deaf Club for seven years. Lillie had Mr Kutner as her headmaster when she was at the Home before her children. Elaine and Joseph knew Mrs Kutner and her three children very well. The Kutner family lived in Cricklewood near where the Prags lived. One of the children, Dorothy Kutner, became a teacher of the Hugh Middleton Deaf School, also the school of Elaine and Joseph before they were transferred to the Jews' Deaf & Dumb Home.

On March 5th 1926 the school received the recognition of Kashrus (1) under the Beth Din (2).

On July 19th of 1926, the brass plate bearing the title of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home for the children was made and placed on the outer gate. It was also reported that the accommodation at the home was large enough to accommodate 80 children, but there have never been more than 65 children on the register. Also it was agreed to receive children from the age of 4 years old upwards. The Minutes of the Meetings were typed for the first time on the 16th May.

A child, Rosie H Ross (nee Primack) went to a deaf school in Clerkenwell in 1924 when she was 9 years old. She found everything so strange as it was a mixed crowd. She could not feel her Jewish identity there until she was transferred to the Home in 1928 **"it was like home from home there. I was happy to be there, I made many friends"** of whom some of them she still keeps in touch to this day **"We visit each other. I have my happy memories of three years."**

(1) Kashrus means fitness, generally applied to things and persons that meet Jewish religious requirements. It is for the most part used in the sense of food ritually clean and edible – kosher meaning fit to eat.

(2) Beth Din is a court of three men well versed in the religious laws of Judaism.



Girl Guides, 1928 – Back Row:
 Eva Strutchnick, Celia Resnick, Hilda Michaels, Rosie Primack,
 Yetta Wascublatt, Polly Gedlovitch, Minnie Slevkin
Front Row:
 Miss Veal, Betty Sokolov, Leah Sugarman, Betty Berger, Renee Litman,
 Rita Wills, Sheila Kaftron, Jane Gedlovitch, Miss Orbell



Girls circa 1929 – Back Row:
 Theresa Goldstein, Dorothy Britton, Miriam Solomon, Ena Halpern, Daphne
 Gosney
Second Row:
 Irene Adelman, Yetta Tuchinsky, Esther Curland, Millie Nabarro
Front Row:
 Esther Goldstein, Lily Joseph, Mildred Lee

Albert Sandler was admitted to the Home also in 1928 – he was four years old "I was dressed in girl's clothes and my long hair was styled with lovely ringlets. On my first night I was taken to the boys' dormitory, one of the senior boys was told to undress me, thinking there were no room for me to sleep in the girls' dormitory! You can imagine his amazement, realising I wasn't a little girl at all!

Still retained my hairstyle, I returned home for the holidays, my mother decided (probably was told to) to cut my locks. I protested, refusing to let her. I demanded to keep my locks exactly as my sister's beautiful hair. She gave in till that night during my sleep she was successful. The next morning, shocked, I howled with dismay!"

The Rev. Michael Adler wrote a most interesting letter of which is reproduced in full here –

38 Hallam Street
London, W1
8th March 1928

TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
JEWISH METROPOLITAN NON-PROVIDED SCHOOLS

I visited the classes of the Jewish Deaf and Dumb Home at Wandsworth yesterday in order to inspect the instruction given in Religion and Hebrew. I saw the teachers at work and also put questions to the children, who showed great interest in their lessons.

The general results are satisfactory, the pupils – in spite of their serious handicap – having acquired a considerable amount of knowledge. They read Hebrew quite well and have learned a few passages of translation of the Prayer book. They are taught simple Bible Stories and gave excellent answers to questions upon the observance of the Sacred Days and Religion.

I have suggested to Miss Davids, the Principal, that the use of suitable books which the children could read for themselves would help them very much, and am drawing up a Syllabus in detail for the future. It is desirable that this Syllabus should be within the compass of the children – who naturally learn rather slowly, and they should concentrate upon subjects that are essential for their religious development.

The atmosphere of the School is very Jewish and the children grow up fully devoted to their Faith.

MICHAEL ADLER.

During that year of 1928 a few things occurred which are worth relating here:

In one of the fire drills, the fifty children had been roused from their sleep and had left the building within two and a half minutes! It was a great achievement considering the number of children and it showed that the drill was working well.

The Home had its Prize Day – it took place on 15th July 1928. This is the first piece of evidence that came to light during research. It may or may not be the first Prize Day. However it was verbally said that the first Prize Day occurred at the turn of the century.

A new telephone line was installed in the Home during that year – it was registered as BATTERSEA 3833.

In the Treasurer's report issued on 10th December 1928, it showed the cost of maintenance and education was £118. 3s. 5d per annum per child.

Benny Weinberg, when he was about 14 years old, related a story he had with Arthur Nabarro "We had some privileges with Miss Davids, our Headmistress, to take the monogrammed despatch case, sometimes on my own, to the President of Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, Sir Edward Stern's London Home in Carlton House Terrace near Pall Mall.

On my first visit I felt very nervous when the liveried footman opened the door and beckoned me to follow him to the servants' quarters downstairs after giving him the case. Arthur and I had a nice tea of sandwiches, scones and cakes with the footman, butler and about six servants. I enjoyed watching the tingling bells indicating the numbered rooms in the box, fixed on the wall. After tea, Arthur and I were called in our turn to follow the butler upstairs to meet Sir Edward Stern in his study. Using his hearing horn, himself going a bit deaf, he talked slowly, asking us a few questions to test our speech and lipreading. I believe there were a few other pupils who had done the same trip as us."

At the Annual Meeting of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, which was reported in the May 18th 1930 edition of the Jewish Guardian, the Treasurer, Mr Percy H Joseph in response to the usual opening speech by Sir Edward Stern said, on submitting the Balance Sheet "The accounts this year is not altogether unsatisfactory, and a number of items on the income side shows increases over the previous year, viz : subscriptions £77, donations £91, grants by Education Authorities £379, fees in respect of paying pupils £44, grants from Sunday cinema entertainments £72, and increases in legacies £587. The contribution from the Aid Society is the truly magnificent sum of £910, and it is with our most grateful thanks to the President, Mr C Van Praagh, to the Treasurer, Mr Lionel Stephany, and the Hon. Secretary, Mrs I Stephany. At the end of 1928 the Home was indebted to its Bankers to the extent of £3,860, but this has now been liquidated as a result of their Appeal Dinner held this month. Finally I have been associated in the work with the Rev. Michael Adler for a number of years, and I feel the severance with deep regret." Incidentally the Rev. Adler retired from his post as the Home's Hon. Secretary after many years. The meeting was also reported in the May 17th 1930 edition of the Jewish Chronicle.



Circa 1930

Back Row:

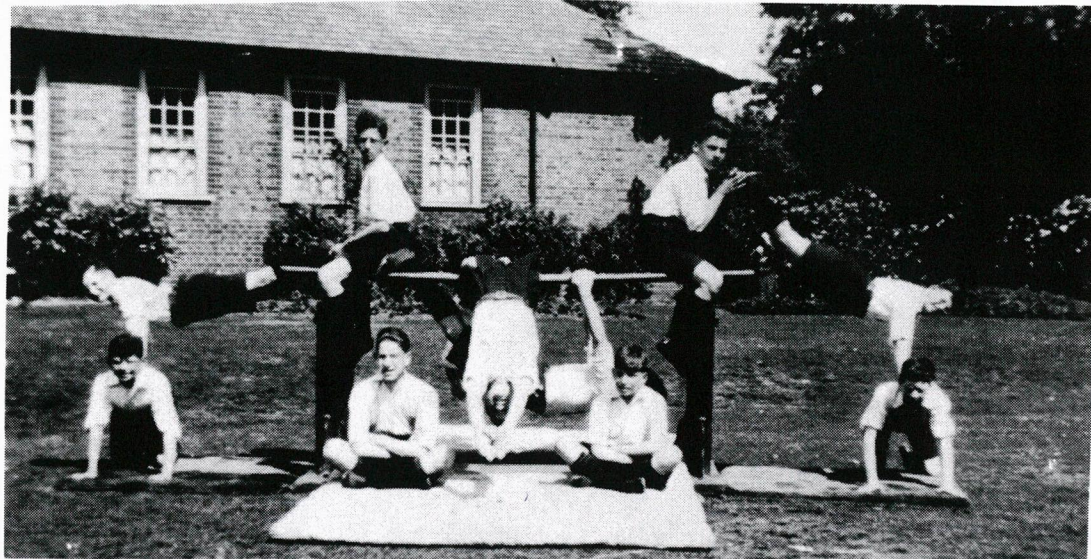
Mr S Hart, Miss Wilshire, Miss Metson

Front Row:

Miss Novinski, Miss Ballinson, Miss H Davids, Miss Cohen

At the Annual Court of Governors and subscribers on May 17th 1931, Sir Edward Stern commented that the small number of children at the Home was possibly due to the objection to the Institution being called a "Home". Many Jewish deaf children were sent to the London Council Schools nearer their homes. In those schools they did not receive any religious instruction. Miss Davids felt sure they would get more pupils if the Home were called "a residential school". Consequently on July 15th 1931 it was decided to choose provisionally a new name for the Institution as "Jewish Residential School for Deaf and Dumb". It was resolved to consult the solicitors as to what legal steps were necessary.

A few months later, on 24th September 1931, two members forwarded a motion that the name "Jewish School for Deaf and Dumb Children" be chosen. It was agreed to put this forward for ratification at a General Court shortly.



Boys' Gymnastics on the lawn, 1931

Back Row:

Myer Israel, Lionel Katz, Coleman Nabarro, Israel Komber

Front Row:

Abe Weinstein, Hyman Olinsky, Arthur Nabarro, David Michaels, ?



Group of Headmistress, Teachers and Matron, 1927

Back Row:

Miss Metson, Miss H Davids, Miss Wilshire, Mr Musson

Front Row:

Miss Vine, Miss Cohen

A report was made by an appointed inspector on 29th December 1931 on behalf of the Association of Jewish Metropolitan Non-Provided Schools:

JEWS' DEAF AND DUMB HOME

On the Sunday of my recent inspection, (December 1931), there were three classes made up as follows :-

Class 1 taught by Miss Davids, the principal, consisting of 4 boys and 4 girls.

Class 2 taught by Miss Cohen, consisting of 4 boys and 5 girls.

Class 3 taught by Mr Hart, consisting of 3 boys and 5 girls.

There were, in addition, about 12 children who, because they were either recent entrants or too young, were not yet receiving Hebrew and religious instruction. The hours and days of instruction are :-

Sunday	1 hour	
Monday	1 "	
Wednesday	1 "	
Friday	1 "	
Sat. morning	1 "	
	5 "	in all

The Syllabus consists of Reading and translation from the Prayer Book and the Sefer Moshe (1), Bible Stories, and the usual subjects of religious instruction. Miss Davids, quite rightly, takes the beginners, the most difficult class.

It was with considerable diffidence that I accepted the invitation to inspect the Hebrew and religious instruction given in this Home. The want of experience in teaching children suffering from so grave a physical disability, and the want of knowledge of what may be expected even when the children are taught by skilled teachers, employing the best modern methods, made me hesitate to act the part of an examiner, and more so the part of a critic or adviser. It was therefore with considerable surprise, and no little pleasure, that I found the children reading and translating the Hebrew exercises, eager to answer and answering quite intelligibly the usual questions in all the subjects of the curriculum. Quite appreciable progress is made from class to class and several children in the top class made creditable attempts to translate English sentences into Hebrew. Of course, not always equally forward in their work; so much depends upon the degree of deafness from which a child suffers; but progress is generally good and often marked, and one gets an agreeable impression that the Jewish boys and girls in this Home are enjoying their life in a Jewish atmosphere. Mention should be made of the good written exercises dealing with both Hebrew and Religion.

If one may venture on advising, the addition of graphic historical episodes and the lives of Great Jews in Jewish History of the Middle Ages and more recent times would be a desirable and welcome broadening of Jewish knowledge. The extent to which this is possible must be determined by Miss Davids in consultation with her assistants.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION
OF JEWISH METROPOLITAN NON-PROVIDED SCHOOLS.

December 29th 1931

(1) Sefer Moshe means a principle book of Moses.

At the Annual Court of Governors and Subscribers held on Sunday 22nd May 1932 at the Home, Sir Edward Stern was concerned that the number of pupils had not increased. He felt it was probably because parents preferred to keep their children at home, and did not realise how important it was that they should receive Religious education, which they did not get at the London County Council Schools.

He added that the Senior Master, Mr F Musson, was retiring at the end of the following summer term after 37 years' faithful service.

The Committee deeply regretted that in consequence of the economic depression, the salaries of their admirable teaching staff had had to be cut.

On a better note from that meeting were the facts that among the positions found for the boys who left in 1931 were apprenticeships to Cinema Sign Writing and Mechanical Dentistry, as well as cabinet making, etc. The girls were placed mostly in dressmaking and tailoring firms, where the needlework which they learnt at the Home had stood them in good stead.

Mr Musson's letter of resignation is reproduced in full here -

"Dear Sir,

In accordance with the Rules of my appointment as head assistant master in your school, I now desire to give the required month's notice of my resignation of the post held in your service for the past 37 years to take effect as from July 31st 1932 and terminate on August 31st 1932.

I should like to take the advantage of this opportunity afforded to once more thank you and my deep appreciation for the great honour conferred on me on July 10th that I shall miss the happy years spent in your school goes without saying.

Yours faithfully,

F Musson."

Mr Musson was very popular with the pupils, especially when involved in sporting activities. It was known by a few pupils that he was a member of the Great Britain Gymnastics team which took part in the first Modern Olympic Games in Athens in the summer of 1896 when he was 29 years old.

The 1932 Prize Day saw Benny Weinberg win the Julia Montague Medal for Lipreading for the second year running. The medal was presented to him by Lady Stern, second wife of the President, Sir Edward Stern. Incidentally Julia Montague was a pupil of the school - she was the daughter of Lord Swaythling. A photo of the medal will be found in Appendix Two.

On April 17th 1933 Sir Edward Stern died at his London home – an obituary of this great man appeared in the April 21st 1933 edition of the Jewish Chronicle which is reproduced in full:



SIR EDWARD STERN

The death of Sir Edward D Stern, Bart., we regret to announce, occurred at his London Home, 4, Carlton House Terrace, S.W., on Monday.

Edward David Stern was born in London seventy-eight years ago. He was the second son of the late Viscount de Stern, who died in 1877, a brother of the first Baron Wandsworth, who died in 1912, and a cousin of the first Lord Michelham. Educated at King's College School and London University where he graduated, he became later a fellow of King's College. He entered the family banking firm of Stern Brothers, of which he was for many years head, and was a director of the Midland Bank. Sir Edward was keenly interested in many and diverse activities and whatever he did he did thoroughly. In the Community, without playing any leading role, he held many honoured positions. He was a Vice-President of the Anglo-Jewish Association and was acquainted with several of its schools in the East. He held a like office at the Jews' Free and Infant Schools and the Norwood Jewish Orphanage. He was one of the oldest members of the Council of the West London (Reform) Synagogue, where he was a regular worshipper and which he at one time served as Warden. His chief interest, however, was in the welfare of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, of which for many years he filled the Presidential Chair. Being himself deaf, he appreciated the handicap of the infirmity, so that the school had his best thought and most generous interest. Sir Edward had many interests outside the Community. He was a keen Volunteer and afterwards a Territorial and served for over twenty years as an officer of the Berkshire Yeomanry. Though too old for overseas service at the outbreak of the War, he did his share at home as Colonel of the 3rd Surrey Volunteer Regiment. He was a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, the Royal Statistical Society, and the Royal Society of Arts. He was a prominent member of the Coaching Club, and his team of blue roans was a conspicuous feature at all meets of the Club in Hyde Park. In politics he was a Unionist and President of the Unionist Association at Chertsey, where his country seat, Fan Court, was situated. He presented a recreation ground to the district, and in 1928 gave an additional three acres of ground to the town as a football field. He was President of the Agricultural Association and of the local branch of the League of Mercy (he held the Order of Mercy), and founded a Nursing Association at Chertsey in memory of his first wife. He was a member of the Council of the Chertsey Handicrafts School and a Governor of St Bartholomew's Hospital, to which he gave £25,000 in 1922. He also made several gifts of £10,000 to London hospitals. Sir Edward was a magistrate and Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Surrey, and served as High Sheriff in 1904 when he was knighted, being made a baronet in 1922. In February of this year, Sir Edward laid the foundation-stone of the new extension of the West London (Reform) Synagogue. He had headed the building fund with a donation of £5,000, and Mr Philip S Waley, Chairman of the Council, said that without Sir Edward's help their task would be practically impossible.

He married first, in 1883, Constance (daughter of the late Sir George Jessel, master of the Rolls) who died in 1918, and in 1925 he married Sybil, second daughter of the late Sir Adolph Tuck. He had no children.

The funeral took place on Wednesday morning (19th April 1933) at the Jewish Cemetery, Balls Pond Road. Among those present were Mr Percy H Joseph (Treasurer of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home) and Mr I Goldstein who was representing the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home Aid Society. A number of the boys from the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home were also present.

Their Majesties the King and Queen sent to Lady Stern a message expressing their heartfelt sympathy on the death of Sir Edward Stern.

The following Annual Court of Governors and Subscribers of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home was held on 29th May 1933 with a new President in Major Frederick C Stern, cousin of the late Sir Edward Stern. The President paid tribute to the memory of the previous President who had been a member of the Committee since 1882 and President for forty six-years. His interest in the Home was shown by the fact that he had left it £60,000.

The School, Major Stern pointed out, had forty-two pupils. They had housing for some eighty boys and girls, and whether they could help some other institutions which had not got that housing was a question which they were considering at the present moment.



Children in Wandsworth Common, 1933

Back Row:

Harry Newman, Israel Itzkowitz, G Woolf, I Solomon

Second Row:

Sylvia Isaacs, Theresa Goldstein

Front Row:

Doris Fallman, Myer Solomon, Joan Lechem

The momentous day, May 31st 1934, came at last when, at the General Court, the name of the Home was officially changed to "**The Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children**". Gratifying indeed that the word "*Dumb*" was dropped. The laws contained in the document submitted to the meeting and for the purpose of identification subscribed by Mr Frederick Stern became approved and adopted.

All the discussions over the changing of the name took fourteen years so it must have been a great relief to all concerned with the school to have a more meaningful title. Also it was a victory for those who fought against the word "Dumb". Admittedly the school had had a high standard of speech training for sixty-nine years, yet so hard do old customs die that even at this time the deaf were commonly referred to as the "*Deaf and Dumb*". It is sad to say that this entirely misleading term is still in common usage today, even among the professional classes.

A pupil by the name of Joan Lechem (known now as Joan Weinberg, the researcher of this book), who was admitted to the Home in 1932, was fascinated by the room thermometer hanging on the wall behind Miss Davids' desk near the window in the Assembly Hall. She wondered what it was for:

"One day during the winter 1934, I, at the age of 5 years, took the leather chain behind the desk and stood on it to have a closer look at the thermometer and then touched it. To my dismay it fell on to the floor, broken.

Terrified, I tried to put it back but the hanging nail came off! Panicked, not knowing what to do, I left it on the desk.

The next morning after the prayers (the children usually assembled for prayers every day in the Assembly Hall before the school routines started), Miss Davids told the children to stay on. She went to her desk and got the room thermometer out of the drawer. In her hand was a cane. She asked who broke it. Nobody spoke till I, with my legs shaking, finally came forward. Miss Davids stared at me, seemed shocked as I was so tiny. She must have thought how on earth could have I reached it?! However I was never caned, thank goodness!"



Children's Performance on Prize Day, 1935

Leslie Levy, Israel Itzkovitz, Philip Nabarro, Kevin Perry,
Dorothy Britton?, Harry Newman, Josie Solomon, Sam Nabarro,
?, Marie Solomon, Miriam Solomon, Sam Nabarro, ?, Marie Solomon,
Miriam Solomon, Millie Nabarro?, Theresa Goldstein, Martin Binysh

At the end of the April term, 1936, Miss Davids retired from the position of Principal, which she held for nineteen years. Mr Simeon David Hart was appointed Principal in succession to Miss Davids. Mr Hart, himself, had been a member of the teaching staff of the School for thirty-five years. He took up the post with effect from April 19th 1936.



Mr and Mrs S Hart, Bognor Regis circa 1936

Mr Hart was very interested in all forms of progressive changes in education, and was especially interested in the use of hearing aids to develop to the utmost degree residual hearing in the deaf. Accordingly, in 1936, a Multitone group hearing aid was installed, at first as a fixture in a separate room. This proved unsatisfactory, as it was not always convenient to move classes to this room, leaving all their teaching apparatus in their own classroom. In the following year, 1937, the aid was made portable, which proved to be a much more satisfactory arrangement.

The aims of the school were, in these pre-war years, to "train and educate children to earn their own living, and to instruct them in Religious Knowledge." To fulfil these aims the curriculum included two afternoons per week in what might be termed "pre-vocational training." Boys were instructed in woodwork, with a view to a future apprenticeship to a cabinet maker, gardening, boot-repairing and shoe-making, tailoring and book-binding. The girls received instruction in domestic science, in a cottage in the school grounds specially altered to suit this purpose, dress making, and limited instruction in laundry work. Physical education had always been an important part of the curriculum, as witness the winning of a shield awarded by the National Physical Recreation Society for many years, and right up to the outbreak of War the children received expert tuition in a well-equipped gymnasium. This attention to physical well-being was fully justified, as could be seen by the firm, purposeful way in which the children walked about, and responded quickly to new situations. Every weekend the children went for walks in the local parks, and often these walks formed the basis of the lessons during the ensuing week. Education through personal experience had been long accepted as a worthwhile method of instruction at this school.



Day Outing at Bognor Regis circa 1936

Back Row:

?, Daphne Gosney, Hannah ?, Millie Nabarro, Theresa Goldstein,
Esther Curland, Josie Solomon, Irene Adelman, ?, Mildred Lee

Second Row:

Miriam Solomon, Dorothy Britton, Lily Joseph, Doris Fallman

Front Row:

Joan Lechem, Shirley Diamond, Jean Matthews, Maurice Laurence,
Eileen Fisher, Catherine May, Ross Mansell, Sylvia Isaacs



Day Outing at Bognor Regis circa 1936

Back Row:

Lenny Moss, Raymond May, Isadore Schlisselman?, Sam Nabarro,
Josie Solomon, Hannah ?, Millie Nabarro, Esther Curland

Third Row:

Albert Sandler, Leslie Levy, Israel Itzkowitz, Jeffrey David, Philip Nabarro,
Harry Newman, Esther Goldstein, Ena Halpern, Irene Adelman, Mildred Lee

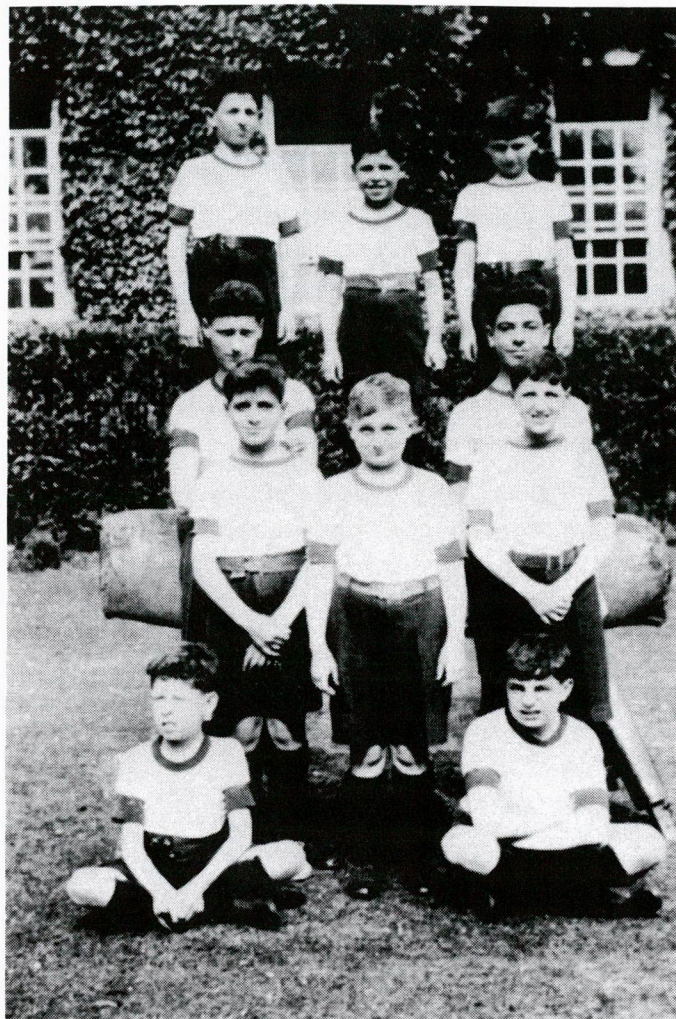
Second Row:

Martin Binysh, Kevin Perry?, ?, Daphne Gosney,
Joan Lechem, Dorothy Britton, Miriam Solomon,
Theresa Goldstein, Lily Joseph, Doris Fallman

Front Row:

?, ?, ?, Sylvia Isaacs, Maurice Laurence, Shirley Diamond,
?, Jean Matthews, ?, Catherine May?, Eileen Fisher, ?, Jack Hart

The Annual Court of Governors and Subscribers held on July 2nd 1936 at Major F Stern's residence, 16, Montagu Square, W. London highlighted the fact that there were thirty-six children at present on the roll of the School. They had room for many more. Major Stern asked those present at the meeting if they knew of any deaf Jewish children to encourage their parents to send them to the Jewish School, where they would receive a first-class secular education and also a religious education.



Boys in their Sport Clothes circa 1937

Back Row:

Leslie Levy, Harry Newman, Martin Binysh,

Second Row:

Raymond May, Philip Nabarro, Kevin Perry
Albert Sandler, Sam Nabarro

Front Row:

Jeffrey David, Israel Itzkovitz

Since 1905 there were no reports of extra additions to the building until 1938 when the foundation of the cement swimming pool, measured to 30' by 15' and 4' deep, was built on a waste ground at the back of the lawn. Mr Mansell, father of one pupil and the members of the R.S.J.D.C. Committee Society collected funds to provide it. They held the first garden fete at the school on Sunday June 12th 1938. Lady Lucas opened the function. The children loved the fete! A farthing, half-penny, one penny, threepence and sixpence were spent! Lavish refreshments were provided for 1/6d per head in 1938 (at today prices, that would be 8p!).

At the annual Court of the Governors and Subscribers of the Residential School for Jewish Deaf children which was held at the residence of Lady Lucas on 20th June 1938, the President, Major F Stern, said there were thirty nine children at the School - a small increase of three children since the 1936 meeting. The gymnasium had been re-equipped with modern apparatus of the latest type. They were grateful to Mr Mansell, who was President of the newly-formed Parents' Society of the School, for his efforts to collect funds in order to provide a new cinema and an open-air swimming pool for the School.



Swimming Pool in the back of the garden, 1938

Back Row:

Miss Metson, Irene Adelman, Daphne Gosney,
Theresa Goldstein, Lily Joseph, Miriam Solomon

Seated:

Maurice Laurence, ?

In the pool:

Joan Lechem, Miss Ballinson, Eileen Fisher, Shirley Diamond,
Loretta Silverman, Sylvia Isaacs, Miss ?, ?

So much to look forward to and yet they were not to know what befell them ahead. The outbreak of the Second World War.

Chapter 5

The Second World War and Evacuation – 1938 to 1945

With the impending war, Mr Hart faced extra work on top of his important duties. He was into his third year as the Principal and now he had to take charge of the emergency evacuation in the Autumn of 1938. He managed to do an evacuation report detailing what had been done and what actually happened. This was for the benefit of the School Committee – his report is reproduced in full here:

REPORT ON EVACUATION

28th September to 6th October

I will preface my remarks by saying that during the whole of the evacuation and return to School, I was in communication with the President, who assisted me in every way.

The evacuation was carried out in accordance with instructions issued by the Board of Education and was done in common with all Special Schools in possible danger zones.

The arrangements were left in the hands of the Local Educational Authorities and as this School is its own Authority, the onus of acting devolved upon the School.

The date fixed for the removal of all London school children was Thursday, September 29th, so I decided that we should move on the 28th, as congestion on the road and rail would have made matters very difficult particularly with very little children, and the fact that transport might all have been commandeered.

Arrangements as to what school property to take and how the school personnel could be dealt with, required quick decisions. Many of these proved to be unnecessary as the crisis passed, but had it developed, they would have been fully justified. The preliminary decisions were mainly as follows:–

1. To try and find a house in a safe locality to which the whole school should be transferred.
2. To discharge all maids, send them home with a month's salary in lieu in notice and their fares, and to re-engage them should they wish to return, later.
3. To take all teaching staff and matrons, leaving the handyman as caretaker, should he be willing to stay.
4. To take Mr Benham's wife as one could not have left her behind, while Mr Benham was resident with us.
5. To lay in stocks of non-perishable food stuffs (for this I had the authority of Miss Schlesinger).

6. To take non Jewish day children as they were outside any other scheme of evacuation.
7. To ask the gardener and laundresses to join us if we should find a house where their services would be of value.
8. To arrange the removal of children by private cars.
9. To buy fish, eggs, butter, milk, vegetables locally and have meat (1) sent down from London.
10. To take an amount of essential bedding and furniture, etc., pending more permanent arrangements being made.
11. To effect the evacuation of children without consulting parents.
12. To billet the children and staff in cottages at Speen, near Newbury, and use the village Hall as headquarters (tentative arrangements to do this had been made two days before leaving London.)

On September 23rd the crisis seemed to be developing and having heard from a friend of a vacant house in Sussex, I decided to inspect it.

On Saturday 24th I sent off Miss Wilkinson and Mr Lindley with orders on our wholesalers for a supply of provisions. Being Saturday there was no possibility of getting them delivered (2) but with great initiative they obtained transport and brought the goods back.

I detailed Miss Shackman to get in touch with removal contractors and get the option on transport for the evacuation on Wednesday, 28th or Thursday, 29th. Being the quarter's end all had been booked for local removals. Fortunately she had friends at Shepherds Bush who are hauliers on a large scale and they promised to meet any demand made upon them. I myself went into Sussex, interviewed the agents of the house already mentioned, visited the house and then went on to consult with the President. This project eventually fell through.

Mr Benham was spending the weekend at his home village of Speen, near Newbury and while there, he obtained the addresses of a number of vacant properties in the neighbourhood, which might have answered our purpose. I recalled Mr Benham and discussed possibilities.

On Sunday 25th, I solicited and obtained offers for the provision of private cars by which to take the children out of London. These were provided by members of the R.S.J.D.C. Society, parents of the children and friends of the staff.

On the 26th I went to Newbury and visited a number of houses. The insuperable difficulty seemed to be the limited time in which to get the formalities of agreements completed. While in the neighbourhood, Mr Benham was able to obtain offers of temporary accommodation in the village of Speen and also the use of the Village Hall, as a centre from which to work, pending negotiations concerning one house which might have answered our purpose.

(1) Kosher meat had to be obtained from Jewish Butchers in London.

(2) Saturday is a Jewish Holy Day - when Jewish people are not permitted to do things but sit and pray at their synagogues or at their homes.

The choice of this village was guided by the knowledge that, being less than one mile from the town of Newbury, it possessed, main drainage and company's water, thus ensuring the health and cleanliness of the children.

While I was away, two days in all, removal men and staff were busy, sorting out and packing essentials which were to accompany us.

On Wednesday morning, September 28th, two lorries arrived and loaded up, followed later by the cars. The convoy left the School in charge of Mr Benham and Miss Shackman. I remained behind for about three hours to settle certain outstanding matters at the School. I gave Mr Benham £50, with instructions to call on the way at a House Agents at Reading and try and secure the afore-mentioned house for immediate occupation by paying a deposit. As it happened, the head of another private School had the same idea and, fortunately as it turned out, beat us by ten minutes.

By nightfall some of the children were housed on their own mattresses with their own bedclothes in empty rooms in the village, while others had been found accommodation in some of the better houses in the village.

As by this time, the crisis seemed to be passing and the children were comfortably housed, the President agreed that the search for a house should be discontinued.

On Sunday October 1st, Kevin Perry, the non-resident day boy developed tonsillitis and the doctor was called in. I communicated with his parents who came and took him home.

The new Matron who had been recalled from a holiday to accompany us, found little to do under these emergency conditions, so I suggested that she should resume her holiday which she did.

On Monday October 3rd, the President decided that it was safe for us to return. A lorry came down from London and took back the bulk of our goods, which had been temporarily stored in the town of Newbury. I also instructed the contractors to send a man to the School to assist the gardener and handyman in replacing the furniture. It was not possible to bring the children back either on the following day or Wednesday, owing to the Incidence of the Day of Atonement.

On Thursday morning at 8.00a.m. a lorry cleared the balance of provisions, cooking utensils and bedding and was followed in the afternoon by a coach with the children.

Life in the village was most happy and our thanks are due to all at Speen for the hearty welcome and assistance that they gave us.

The children breakfasted in their cottages, having taken rations with them overnight. The Midday meal and tea were served in the village hall. The Principal and his wife lived at the local Inn, as it had the one telephone in the village and Mr and Mrs Benham were also there. In the evening after all the children were back in their billets, the staff gathered at the Inn for a substantial evening meal.

We were fortunate in obtaining the Village Hall. It is a solidly built brick building, with cooking facilities and all other necessary amenities, including ample sanitation. I enquired what the charge would be but the Trustees of the Hall, preferred that we should give a donation. This I feel should not be an ungenerous one, as the many kindnesses and little thoughtful acts, added much to our comfort.

To my staff I must pay the highest of tributes. Their one thought all the time was for the welfare of the children. Whatever task needed to be done, however menial, was done with efficiency and willingness. Although all were very tired, they gave of themselves unsparingly. In this tribute I must include Mrs Hart, who acted the mother to all of us. The weather was very wet and on several occasions, the little ones were taken by car to their billets. I feel that the devotion of the staff should be recognised, if only by a personal letter of appreciation.

The gardener, handyman and laundress laboured unceasingly in getting the school clean and straight ready for our return, and proved themselves valuable servants. I also wish to place on record the valuable help which Mrs Benham rendered us.

From this report it will be gathered that the arrangements although made quickly, were efficient and satisfactory in every way.

I have not yet had time to go into the financial side very closely, but estimate that the total cost will be in the neighbourhood of £130. In considering these figures, the fact must be taken into consideration that many transactions had to be done without the time or opportunity for obtaining estimates or comparing costs. I trust you will approve of what I did.

May I suggest that some permanent scheme should be evolved so that the necessity for making provision for the safety of the children and comfort without ample time for consideration should be obviated, particularly in view of the unsettled political situation and of the fact that a number of our children are of a very tender age and have to receive daily and sometimes hourly attentions which cannot be carried out satisfactorily under improvised conditions.

Two months later the Chairman of the School Committee received a request from a Mr Bendeim who wanted the committee to receive nineteen children from the Israelite School for the Deaf in East Berlin. Mr Bendeim said that he was in a position to collect funds in aid of these children.

This was considered on the 20th February 1939 at a meeting. After discussion, it was resolved that the president would go to the Home Office and ascertain whether the committee could take children born in 1929 and after (about nine children) and that when they reach the age of sixteen, these children would be allowed to work in the normal way as other children. It was hoped that the Home Office would agree in writing, in which case the committee would be in favour of bringing these children over from Germany, provided that they were normal apart from deafness.

It was suggested that Mr Benham would go to Germany to see these children. The headmaster of the Berlin Deaf School, Dr Onkel Felix Richt, his wife and four children had obtained visas to go to Palestine as it was known at that time. The committee agreed to offer them hospitality at the RSJDC during the time they were in England.

On 22nd March 1939 the Authority agreed in principle to the committee to take in six boys and four girls from the Berlin School as long as they were ten years of age and under. These children would be allowed to earn their living in England when they became sixteen years old.

So it was July 1939, indeed a momentous month, when the school welcomed Jewish Deaf children from Germany.

Anne Senchal (nee Marscher) gave an account of her experience as a refugee coming from Berlin -

"I remember on 11th July 1939 we caught the train to Holland. There was Marion Schlessinger (now called Marion Intractor) aged 11 years old, Heni Sauntag 8 years old, Ruth Danziger (now known as Ruth Fallman) 4 years old, myself 10 years old, my brother Horst Marscher 11 years old, Klaus Silberg 9 years old, Manfred Scheinrock age not known, Lothar Beiber (Leslie) 3 years old, and one more of whom I cannot remember - maybe there were only eight children with our headmaster Onkel Felix.

Onkel Felix had been in prison in Poland but was freed on Chanukah day. We had an enormous party so he wanted to be with us.

On the ship we looked at the horrible breakfast. White bread! We arrived at Liverpool Station on 12th July and Mr Benham met us. He took us to the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children. That day there was a garden fete.

Everyone went straight to have a bath and went to bed at 4 o'clock. The next day we were surprised to see Jakob Silberman, Klaus Kornick and Margot Wydra who were already there before us. They comforted us.

About six months later Miss Elkan came and became a teacher. Everybody loved her.

Onkel Felix was not with us. He was sent to the Isle of Wight to a prison. I do not know why but I learnt that he died.

It is a shame that Klaus Kornick and Klaus Silberg are missing. Now there are two loyal friends left who go to the deaf clubs - myself and Ruth Fallman.

I was terribly miserable at the RSJDC all the time I was there - until I got married. When the war started on September 3rd we were all evacuated to Brighton for a few months and then evacuated to Havering House, Pewsey, Wiltshire.

I was very envious to see many parents who came to see their children. I cried a lot. Catherine May (Venville)'s mother always comforted me and gave me some sweets and fruit. Catherine's mother never forgot me, always gave me something. In my heart I shall never forget her kindness.

I believe that I learnt from her my kindness to handicapped children."

During evacuation to Brighton, Anne cried for her parents on many nights. One night she crept into Joan Lechem (Weinberg)'s bed for comfort. That became the pattern for a while until Anne settled down. Their beds were next to each other so sometimes Anne slept in Joan's, some other nights Joan slept in Anne's.

Another refugee from Berlin, Ruth Fallman (nee Danziger) gave her account which tells us what happened to Dr. Richt :

"There were about nine or ten children including myself, arriving in England on 19th July 1939 under the escort of Dr Felix Richt. It was just two months before the outbreak of World War II. I was a little girl, who had attended that school in Berlin for about a year, where I met Benno Icisson, Leslie (Lothar) Beiber, Anne Marscher and others. Leslie, Benno and I were the youngest children to enter and left the school.

Dr Richt had suffered at the hands of the Nazis by torture. They freed him in time for his appearance at the deaf school for the celebration of Chanukah – that was in December 1938. The children and staff were shocked by his appearance with his shaven head and walking with a limp, using a cane to help him along.

Dr Richt knew what was happening in Nazi Germany even before the War started. He wanted to escape with the deaf children from his school. He had an idea to escort the children with the permission of their parents to England. There were other deaf children of rich families who emigrated to England before us.

Somehow he was sent to the Isle of Wight to stay in a prison like other Jewish people, a safe place as the Nazis wanted them (see editor's note below) (1) Leslie Bieber's grandfather who was Rabbi Auerbach, was in the Isle of Wight too. Dr Richt never got in touch nor visited the deaf children after 1939. He taught in a school for hearing children in Blackpool. He died around 1968. His daughter and possibly relatives now live in South America.

As for myself, I grew up with the children. I was like an orphan without any family. I got in touch with my parents twice a year via the Red Cross to Shanghai in China. My parents, brother and grandmother had escaped to Shanghai in 1939. My brother and grandmother returned to Germany around 1942 as they thought it was safe to live in Germany but unfortunately they perished in a concentration camp.

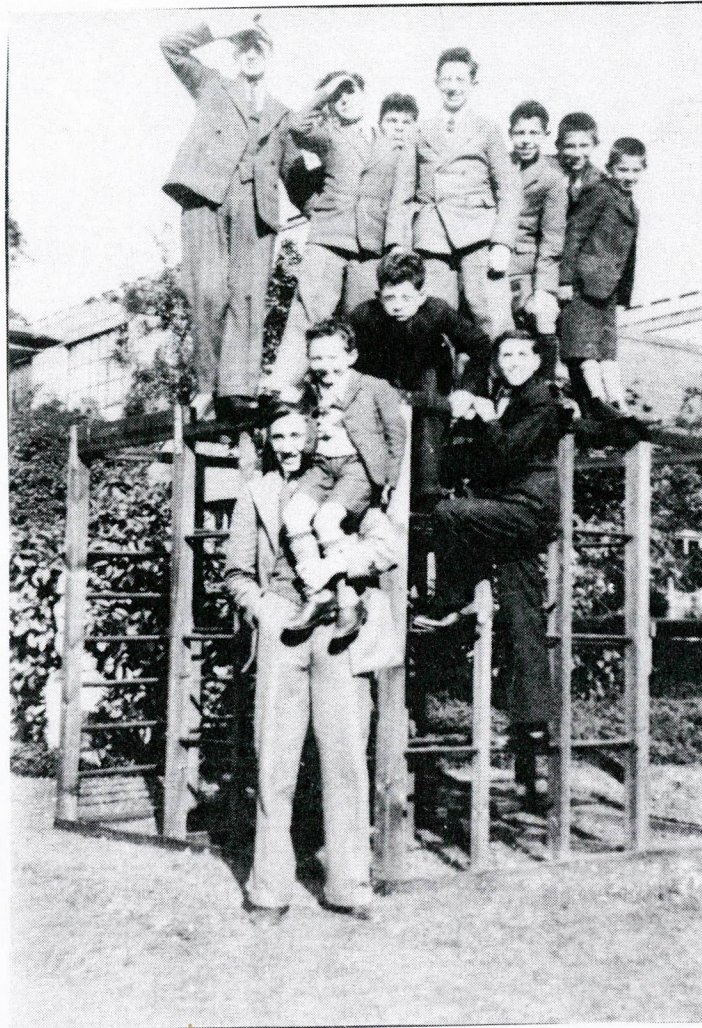
I first met my husband, Harold, in Brighton, whose sister Doris Fallman was an ex-pupil of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home. He was not yet a pupil of the RSJDC until we evacuated to Havering House where he joined us.

On the 21st November 1949 I was reunited with my parents aboard on the Queen Elizabeth ship in New York City. I could not recognise my mother but my father was easily recognisable."

War broke out on September 3rd 1939. In February 1940 the children and staff were evacuated to the School for the Deaf, Eastern Road, Brighton. This was arranged by the L.C.C. It was necessary for that school to make additional air raid shelters to accommodate the children and staff.

(1) Dr Felix Richt, already a target of Nazi aggression in his homeland, may have been subsequently arrested in England suspected of being a German spy. By the time his innocence was confirmed the war had begun and he was unable to return to his school to save the other children.

The Board of Deputies asked Mr Hart what arrangements were being made at Brighton for the celebration of Passover. It was resolved that parents who wished to have their children home, they could do so provided that they fetched them from Brighton.



Boys circa 1938

Back Row:

**Isadore Schlisselman, Philip Nabarro, Israel Itzkowitz,
Leslie Levy, Harry Newman, Myer Holder, Isaac Holder**

Front Row:

Lenny Moss, Jack Hart (sitting on Lenny's shoulder), Jeffrey David, Albert Sandler

On 2nd August 1940 the President was notified by the Ministry of Health who suggested that the school should find a house for the Government to requisition for them. Various houses in different parts of the country were visited. The most suitable one available was Havering House in Milton, Pewsey near Marlborough in Wiltshire. The children and staff were moved for the second time to this house in September 1940.

Conditions were far from ideal, space was cramped, everyone lived on top of each other, and often different classes had to share the same classroom. The staff, however, were able to give more time to their pupils than would have been possible before, with the result that a very good atmosphere of friendship and co-operation existed between the staff and children.

Mr Hart died suddenly at Havering House on 30th January 1943, aged 62 years. An obituary was printed in the February 5th 1943 edition of the Jewish Chronicle which is reproduced in full:

Mr Simeon David Hart was principal of the Residential School for the Jewish Deaf Children. Previous to his appointment to this position a few years ago, in succession to Miss Davids, he was for many years on the teaching staff at the school. The Rev. B N Michelson, in a tribute, writes of Mr Hart's great devotion to his charges and of the way he trained them to take their place in the community.

He had given 41 years of service to the school as a teacher and as a Principal. Mr Leslie Benham took over for the duration of the war as an acting Principal on 1st February 1943. Subsequently he was confirmed as the full Principal.

Mr Benham's service to the deaf began earlier than it did for the school. He was a "probationary teacher" at Rayners before proceeding to Culham College, Oxford, and then to Manchester University for the Diploma Course. His career as a qualified teacher began in Brighton, but before that he was with the doubly handicapped deaf at Penn for two years. He joined the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home in 1934. His wife, Mrs Hannah Benham, joined a year earlier in 1933. They were not married at that time until 1936 and their only daughter Ann was born in 1937.

An able and devoted teacher and administrator, Mr Benham also travelled widely in search for new ideas for the education of the deaf, bringing to this country many innovations seen abroad. In this way he was following in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor, Mr William Van Praag, the first Principal, who introduced the oral system to Britain.

The war ended in 1945. The children and staff returned to 101 Nightingale Lane on 13th May 1946. The school committee again attempted to negotiate with the L.C.C. for financial support, with the approval of the Ministry of Education, but no satisfactory decision had been reached. Other Local Education Authorities paid in full the annual education and maintenance costs for Jewish children from their areas, but the L.C.C. would only pay education costs. This meant a deficit of £80 per child had to be met by the school. As more than 50% of the children came from the London area, the position was very serious. Each year the school debts grew.

It has often been wondered by ex-pupils what became of their school at 101 Nightingale Lane while they were at Havering House. A part of a letter from the Home Office will clear those enquiring minds -

"You will be interested to know that the Home Office and Ministry of Home Security Staff List of May 1941 shows 101 Nightingale Lane as a Women Aliens Reception Centre, rather than a home for female internees. The school was rented to them till the end of the war."

Chapter 6

The Post War Years – 1945 to 1959

Since 1945 the nursery facilities improved and there were sixteen children under five years of age residing in the nursery wing. Other improvements have been the installation in a special room of a group hearing aid, designed by Dr T S Littler of Manchester.

The changes in the school were very apparent particularly between 1936 and 1949, mainly because of the changing trends everywhere. Mr Benham had an aim which he practised for the whole of his time at the school "To give a general education, broad in outline, so that the child will have an extensive fund of experiences, both actual and vicarious, on which the child can draw to help it to meet and overcome difficulties experienced in adult life. To ensure a capacity to adjust to new social conditions, and to thus enable the child to become a useful socially competent citizen. To give a knowledge of religion and the Jewish faith, so that the child is not denied the comforts that come from spiritual knowledge and beliefs."

On 26th April 1946 Miss Harriet Davids died during Passover at her home, "*Lawnsmead*", West Clandon, Guildford, Surrey. She was the daughter of the late Samuel and Elizabeth Davids. She was deeply mourned by all who knew her.

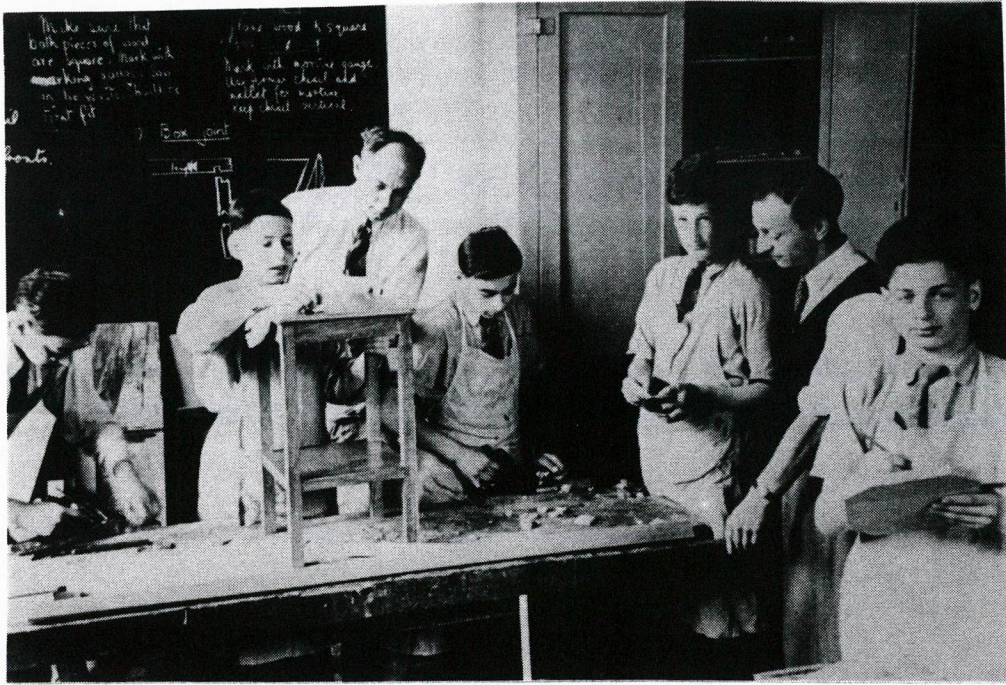
In a report from the 19th July 1946 edition of the Jewish Chronicle it mentioned that the School was reconsecrated:

The Residential School for the Deaf, which had been evacuated during the war, returned recently to its old premises at 101, Nightingale Lane, Wandsworth Common, and a service of reconsecration was held last Sunday afternoon (14th July 1946). The Rev. Philip Cohen officiated.

The school, which was requisitioned during the war, was badly blasted on two occasions. Repairs have been carried out but the school is still in need of redecoration and structural improvements which the Committee are planning to carry out as soon as possible. There are at present forty children, ranging from three to sixteen years at the school, for whom there is a large staff of fully trained teachers (one to every eight children) under the headmastership of Mr L J Benham.

The children are trained for a trade, the boys mainly in tailoring and the girls in dressmaking. But Mr Benham hopes to start classes for electrical engineering and typing. At the request of some of the pupils he has already approached the L.C.C. to arrange for them to attend vocational training courses at evening class.

Colonel F C Stern expressed the Committee's staff as well as the matron and her staff. Mr Benham said they needed the co-operation of everyone. Deafness, he said, was the least understood handicap of all and, therefore, most deserving of interest.



Carpentry 1949

Harold Fallman, Alan Gold, Mr L Benham, Joshua Hassan, Benno Icgson, Mr E Denton, Albert Kelberman

Mr Benham did not let the pupils down – he revised the curriculum, to reflect the modern trend, which included Arithmetic; Language; History; Geography; Nature Study; Elementary Physics; Electricity; Civics; Reading and Art. Physical Education, including all kinds of games, was held at least four times a week for all classes. Twice a week the senior boys attended parades of the local Jewish Lads Brigade, travelling on their own. In 1948 two of the partially deaf boys practised drumming with the Brigade's bugle band. The boys also had evening classes every week in which they studied Electricity, Hebrew and Tailoring. The senior girls attended once a week, also on their own, to the L.C.C. evening classes in typewriting, while on other nights they learnt Hebrew, dressmaking and general domestic science.



Jewish Lads Brigade 1950

Alan Gold, Joshua Hassan, Harold Fallman, Benno Icgson, Maurice Laurence

Mr Benham had succeeded in many ways in achieving his goals – to improve the educational standards of his pupils. Several children were successful in passing the entrance examinations to the Mary Hare Grammar School and Burwood Park School and this bore testimony to his work. In 1949 Valerie Greenfield was one of the first pupils to gain a scholarship for entrance to the Mary Hare Grammar School. Before her Gerald Litman went to Dene Hollow which eventually became the Mary Hare. He was known as "**black eye patch**". Mika Brojer was the first RSJDC pupil to enter Burwood Park School. He was admitted to the RSJDC when he was three years old:

"I went home daily for two years because there was no bed available for me at the school. When I was five, there was a bed for me in the Junior Girls Dormitory! I slept there for a few months until I was transferred to the Junior Boys Dormitory. Oriel, my sister signed bedtime stories to me regularly at home – this gave me the confidence in myself. I didn't have that at the school – this was something I missed.

One day at the school I broke a window in the gymnasium. I reported the breakage immediately to the duty teacher. I was taken to the front room and stood in the corner until Mr Benham came back from an outing. I think it was more than three hours in my pyjamas and dressing gown. I was freezing cold and very sleepy. At last Mr Benham tapped on my shoulder gently and I woke up, not realising where I was. After a few minutes, I came to and explained why I was standing in the corner as if I was a Dunce. Mr Benham asked me to go to bed and to see him in the assembly in the morning.

The next morning, after all the children had gone into their classrooms, I was alone in the assembly. Mr Benham made me bend myself over his knee and he smacked my bottom with his bare hand three times. I cried loudly and offered him an old threepence coin to replace the window! He kindly refused to take the money.

As I entered my classroom, I was very withdrawn. Miss Reading, who was on duty the night before, held my hand and told me to sit next to her. She comforted me and explained to the children how honest I was to report the breakage at once. She gave me two good marks – this lifted up my spirits. I felt proud of myself!"



Cricket circa 1949

Back Row:

David Townsend, Alan Gold, Harold Fallman, Joshua Hassan,
Leslie Goodman, Lothar Bieber, Benno Icgison

Front Row:

Kenneth Silver, Michael Clifton, Mr E Denton, David Greenberg, Alec Gray

There is an amusing story from Ruth Lawrence which showed the lighter side of Mr Benham:

"When Maurice and I were at School, I could not stand him and his friend Albert. Albert and I were of the same age – actually we were born on the same day! I was the only girl with long plaits. Maurice kept on pulling them and I complained many times to the headmaster. He caned Maurice each time! I was so fed up with Maurice that I left school – I was unhappy.

The funny thing is that we got married in the end. Mr Benham, the headmaster, was invited to our wedding and remarked 'You still marry him after all those troubles with your plaits!'

We have been married for 36 years."



Prize Day circa 1950

As the picture is a bit blurred, a few pupils were recognized by Ann Hart (nee Gordon)

On 14th August 1950 there was a meeting of the Executive Committee. The minutes that were read were on one page, unlike many of the minutes we have come to take for granted – pages and pages! A complete reproduction of these minutes are included here:

"A Meeting of the Executive Committee was held at 6, Angel Court, on Monday, 14th August 1950.

Present (Colonel F C Stern (Chair), Mrs Goldstein, Miss Lucas, Miss Schlesinger, Mr Jessel, Mr A D Joseph, Mr John Myers, of Messrs. Myers, Davies & Co. attended.

Apologies were received from Mr Benham, Rev. Cohen, Mr Lechem.

Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the 27th February 1950 which had been circulated, were taken as read and signed.

Vote of Congratulation to Miss Schlesinger on being awarded the M.B.E. in the Birthday Honours' List.

The Chairman in moving this said that Miss Schlesinger had not only worked for the benefit of this School but also for many other Institutions.

Vote of Congratulation to Mr and Mrs Lechem on the marriage of their daughter (Joan - a former pupil at the School) to Bernard Weinberg (also an ex-pupil at the School).

This was moved from the Chair and unanimously passed.

Consideration of the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 1950.
These were presented by Mr Myers and unanimously passed.

Finance.

The following had been received.

(a)	Aid Society	£50
(b)	Legacy - Simeon Greyham	£50
(c)	J E Joseph Charitable Fund	£90
(d)	Donations:-	
	Friars Lodge	£8. 8.0
	Dollis Hill Synagogue Ladies Guild	£3. 3.0
	B'nai B'rith Brighton and Hove Lodge	£2. 2.0
	Booth Street Relief Institution	£52.10.0
	South West London Ladies Guild	£5. 5.0
(e)	Financial Statement was presented	

Consideration of the Annual Report.
This was passed with sundry amendments.



School circa 1951 - Back Row:

Alan Gold, Joshua Hassan, Albert Kelberman, David Townsend,
Harold Fallman, Benno Icgison, Maurice Laurence

Third Row:

Brenda Feltz, Rachel Lubin, Richard Caesar, Ivan Hart, Mary Willard, David Hirshman,
Roy Martin, Leslie Kaiser, Alec Gray, David West, Ann Gordon, Anthony Spielsinger,
Terry Mills, Lydia Handscomb, Linda Smith, Alan West, Jacqueline Smith,
Brian Dondo, Terry Eyre, Ruthie Rapaport, Lothar Bieber

Second Row:

Miss Darlington, Miss Burke, Miss Roachman, Mr Cook, Miss Reading, Mrs H Benham,
Mr L Benham, Mr E Denton, Miss Eubeka, Miss Ballinson, Miss O'Driscoll, Renee Cole

Front Row:

Sonia Davis, Michael Clifton, Neil Kaufman, Clive Welshman, Ivan Clements,
Jessica Rapaport, Michael Brojer, Leatrice Werner, Michael Corney

One of the pupils of the School, Gerald Litman, trained to become a Dental Technician. Around 1952 he became the first person to win the Guy Lashington Award by the Board of Guardians for his outstanding work in his profession. He eventually married Valerie Greenfield.

The brass plate bearing the title of "*The Jews' Deaf and Dumb Children*" was made and placed on the front outer gate in 1926 and was then removed in 1954.

The eighty-fifth Annual report was issued for the year 1955-56. In it there are some interesting facts "The average number of children at the School during the past year remained at fifty-one, three pupils left and a six-year old boy from Antwerp was admitted." (Georges Lehrer)

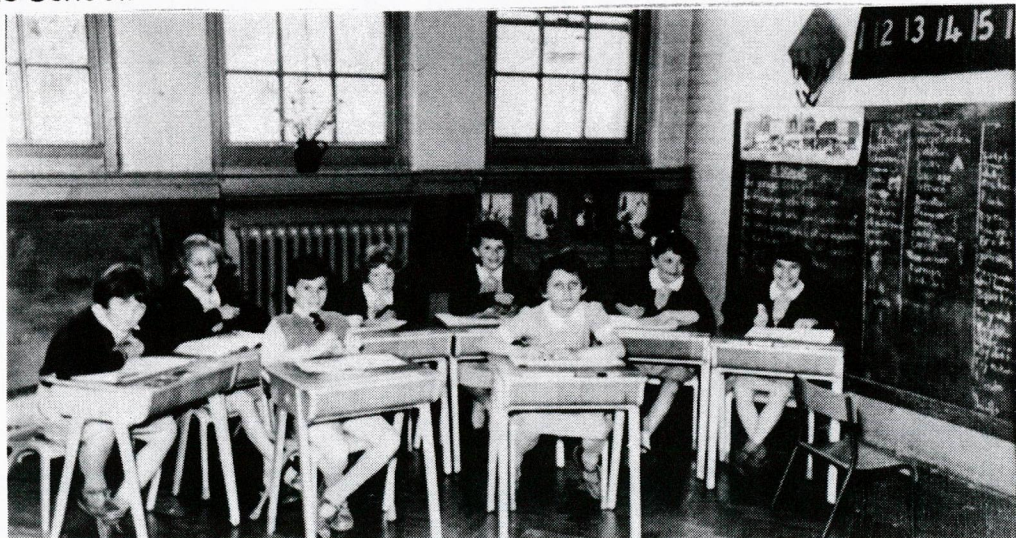
"The President, Sir Frederick Stern, received a knighthood in the New Year Honours' list for his services to Horticulture. he has been a member of the Executive Committee since 1912 and succeeded his cousin, the late Sir Edward Stern, in the office of President in 1933."

"Brenda Feltz, who left at the end of the Autumn term, is taking a course of Business training at Pitman's College."

"The R.S.J.D.C. Society held their Annual Garden fete at the School in July, which was a great success financially. It was also a reunion of past and present pupils of the School with their friends and relatives. In December, instead of the usual Dance, it was decided to organise a Celebrity Concert at the Princes Theatre. Many well-known artistes gave a very enjoyable entertainment, which was compered by Mr John Sadler, who gave his services on that occasion."

"The R.S.J.D.C. Society gave a donation of £500 to the 90th Anniversary Appeal and defrayed the cost of the installation of new gas-cookers and a hot-plate cupboard."

"In September the School implemented the arrangements made with the London County Council in offering boarding accommodation to those of their pupils who live too far to travel daily to the Oak Lodge Senior Girls School for the Deaf, situated next door to the School. Application has been received for similar facilities to be offered to boys from the Versailles Road, Anerley, School when it closes down at the end of 1956, and the classes are transferred to the Oak Lodge School."



Classroom circa 1951

Back Row:

?, Leatrice Werner?, Pamela King, ?, ?, ?

Front Row:

~~Richard Caesar~~, Linda Miller

Harvey Clements -67-

"The Bank overdraft has been reduced from £14,000 to about £8,000. At present the School has a loss of about £2,000 a year. This cannot go on for ever. If the Jewish Community wish to continue this school for Jewish Deaf children, subscriptions and donations must be found by them to cover this difference between the income and expenditure. This school has a reputation as one of the best schools for the deaf in the country, even receiving pupils from abroad. If it is to be continued at the highest efficiency the money must be found."



Summer 1953

Back Row:

Mr E Denton, Linda Smith, David Greenberg, David West, Brenda Feltz, David Jessel, Ann Gordon, Michael Corney, Lydia Handscomb, Leslie Kaiser, Leatrice Werner, Anthony Spielsinger, Jessica Rapaport, Terry Mills, ?, Alan West, Kenneth Silver, Pamela King, Mr Cook

Third Row:

Jacqueline Smith, ?, ?, ?, Maureen Urbach, David Solomon, ?, Neil Kaufman, Ivan Clements, ?, Ann Miller, Richard Caesar, Mary Willard, Jennifer Everett, ?

Second Row:

?, ?, ^{IVAN HART} Miss Ballinson, Mr L Benham, Mrs H Benham, Miss Reading, ?, Miss Daly

Front Row:

Little ones not known

Mr Benham gave his Headmaster's report:

"On the 31st March 1955 there were forty-nine children in the School, twenty-five boys and twenty-four girls, including twenty non-Jewish children. In addition to the above, there were three girls resident at the School but who received education at the Oak Lodge School for Senior Deaf Girls. Ages range from four to sixteen and they are accommodated in six classes. They are drawn from the following Local Education Authorities: London, Middlesex, Coventry, Devon, Essex, Hampshire, Kent, Liverpool, Manchester, Surrey and Sussex. There are also three children from overseas.

Two girls and one boy left during the year. One of the girls was taken to the United States to see an ear specialist in the hope that an operation might restore or improve the hearing. Unfortunately nothing could be done. The second girl left in December, and is now attending a commercial college for training as a typist. The boy was transferred to a Partially Deaf unit. A six-year old boy from Belgium was admitted during the year.

David West, aged twelve, sat for the entrance examination to the new Technical School for Deaf Boys, which was opened in September, 1955. Although successfully passing the written test, he was not accepted in face of the very strong competition for the four places available.



Netball circa 1952

In spite of changes in staff, steady progress has been maintained in all educational pursuits. For this year senior boys and senior girls have been in separate classes. Subjects in the curriculum of the top classes include: English Language, Hebrew and Religious Knowledge, Speech, History, Geography, Citizenship, General Knowledge on Current Affairs, Art, Arithmetic, and various forms of Handwork. Senior children continue to attend evening classes in Tailoring, Electricity, Occupational Handicrafts, Cookery, Typing, and Embroidery. Hobbies are encouraged.



Football Match circa 1954

During the holidays many of the children are given special tasks involving individual research. Parents are invited to assist in this work, and by doing so they not only help in the education of their child, but also acquire a closer understanding of the problems created by the handicap.



Sports circa 1955

Back Row:

Anthony Spielsinger, N Icitchner, Terry Eyre, David Jessel, Terry Mills

Second Row:

David West, David Solomon, Jennifer Everett, Ann Miller, Brian Dondo, F Bennet, Jacqueline Smith, Esther Menczer, Richard Caesar, Michael Corney, Lorraine Nyman, Lydia Handscomb, R Gillan, P Bune, Alan West, M Wilcox, Ivan Clements, Linda Smith, Michael Brojer, Colleen Koblentz, Neil Kaufman, Pamela King, Leslie Kaiser

Front Row:

Harvey Clements, P Feathers, J Brewster, P Granville, Sarah Olsen, Maureen Urbach, M Berger, S Littleby, Linda Miller, J Mocks, Alan Roberts, J Menczer

Auditory training is given throughout the School through individual and group hearing aids. It is hoped to acquire two new pieces of equipment which will assist children to improve the quality of their speech. The R.S.J.D.C. Society has agreed to defray the cost of constructing a Speech Pitch Indicator by which voice modulation can be made visible. The other piece of apparatus is an Individual Auditory Training Unit which is specifically designed to help the profoundly deaf child.



Musical Session circa 1953

Lorraine Nyman, Sara Olsen, Maureen Urbach, ?, ?, ?, Mr E Denton

The Arts and Crafts Centre continues to provide the necessary facilities for a wide variety of craftwork. During the past year the heating has been supplemented by the installation of slow-combustion stoves and a Black and Decker Electric Drill and Lathe Outfit provided by the S.W.A.N. Committee.



Junior Class circa 1955
Back Row:
Mrs H Benham, Mary Willard
Second Row:
Michael Brojer
Front Row:
Neil Kaufman, Clive Welshman

As a denominational school, Religious Instruction remains an important part of the curriculum, and in addition to learning elementary Hebrew the children observe the Festivals and Services."



Prayer in the Assembly Room circa 1952

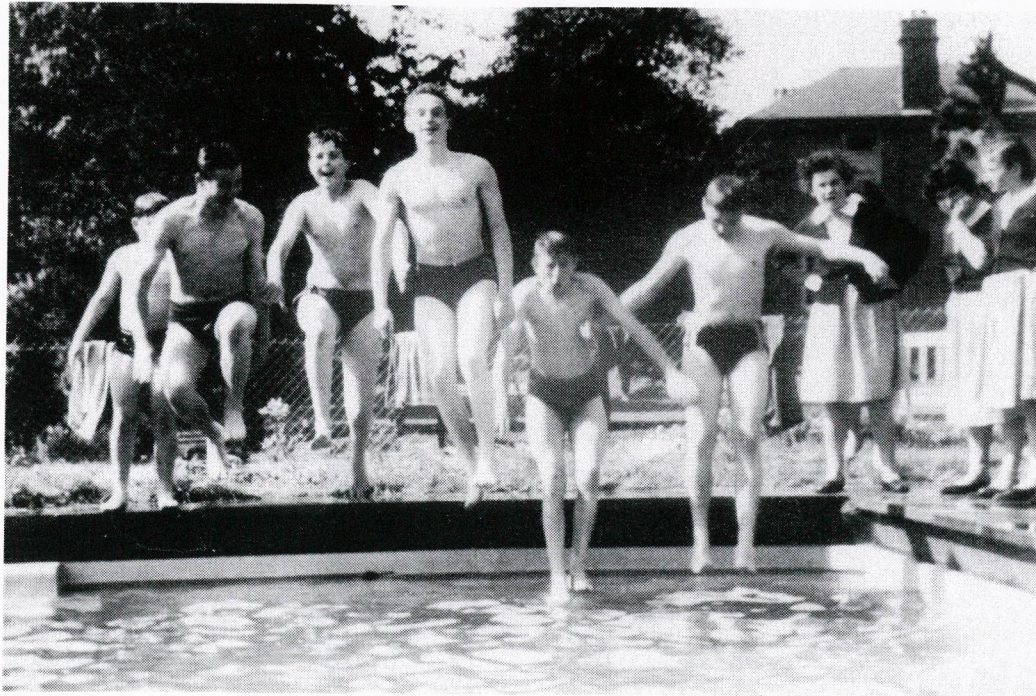
Back Row:

Albert Kelberman, Mr E Denton, Maurice Laurence, David Townsend

Front Row (their backs shown):

**Joshua Hassan, Benno Icgison, Michael Clifton,
Harold Fallman, Ruthie Rapaport, Alan Gold**

It was reported that in 1957 that since the swimming pool had been built, no child had left the school without being able to swim!



Swimmers jumping into pool circa 1955

The School's Annual Prize Day, as usual, saw many proud parents seeing their children involved in many activities and receiving awards of all types. They were invited officially by invitation cards. One of the ex-pupils, Colleen Daniels (nee Koblentz), was kind enough to lend this card that was sent to her parents for the 1958 function -

THE PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE OF THE
Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children
request the pleasure of the company of

Mr & Mrs Rollency

On Wednesday, 2nd July, 1958, at 3.15 p.m.

at the

Annual Prize Day

Guests of Honour:

MR. VICTOR MISHCON, D.L., L.C.C.
AND MRS. MISHCON

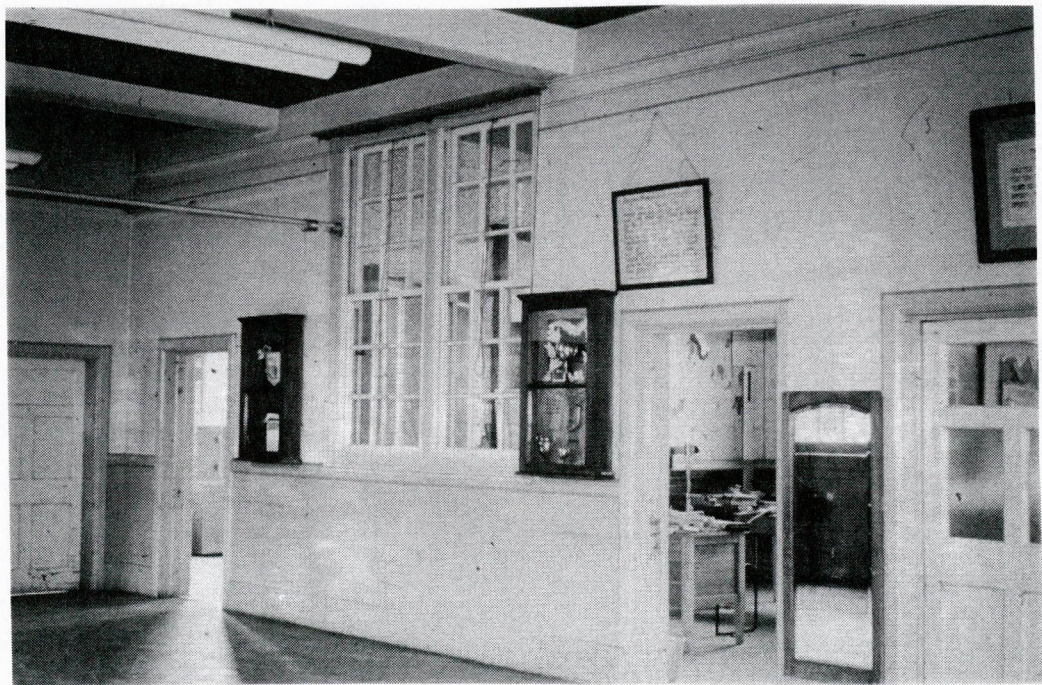
R.S.V.P., 101 Nightingale Lane, S.W.12

Tea

The next two pages show photos of the interior of the school as it was around the fifties.



The Corridor leading to the Assembly Room and classrooms



Assembly Room



Junior Classroom



Dining Room – the open doors lead to the gymnasium

Chapter 7

The End of an Era – 1960 to 1965

No-one sensed it would happen. The School was approaching its end. The reason for its eventual demise is outlined later in this chapter but let us read more about the pupils' experiences in those years. Four girls ganged together and came up with their interesting article:

THE FOURSOME'S SCHOOL LIFE **by Jacky Yong (nee Alick), Linda Woolfe (nee Nabarro),** **Sandra Drake (nee Cohen) and Ruth Steiner (nee Spain)**

"On October 18th 1991, we, as the foursome, made our attempt to relive our school memories. We met in Victoria, London. We were last together in 1965. This is part of our joint contribution specially written in time for our May 1992 reunion.

In 1953 Jacqueline (known as Jacky) first came to school and Linda came shortly later that same year. Sandra joined in 1958 followed by Ruth aged 8, who left her local hearing school in Southend. We usually treated Ruth like our faithful servant as she did not mind collecting the newspapers for Mr Benham and also buying some sweets for us at the Tuck Shop nearby. Her favourite sweet was Milk Gum.

Ruth was unsettled with her new school life and she cried a lot. However she got over it quickly. She never forgot her best "surprise" when she was allowed to go home for the weekend. She recalled being sent out of the dining room for refusing to eat some particular food.

Our class teacher, Miss Sansom, was moody – we knew the signal when she wore her red dress. Also Miss Sansom got fed up with Ruth during French lessons. Once Miss Sansom, in a rare good mood, arranged something for us on April Fool's Day. She made us search for vital clues in our treasure game before we were rewarded with some sweets hidden around the tree on the school grounds. She even fooled us with our hearing aids when we nodded pretending we were taking heed but in fact she had removed our batteries beforehand!

We remember our cookery lessons at Oak Lodge School, next door, and the nice female teacher, who showed us how to make tea and to serve the best cups and saucers with teapot and delicious homemade cakes to scoff up later.

One of the boys, Moshe Moshy, always bit his finger nails during lessons. One day the teacher, Mr Denton, who was fed up with him doing this, decided to cut his own finger nails and placed them on a drawn up paper in the shape of a round plate with cutlery to serve them. This embarrassed Moshe while we all had a good laugh!

Visiting the dentist was most terrifying for us as we looked at our name written on the blackboard for appointments. At the time, we did not have any anaesthetics for treatment. It was done with fillings from a horrible drilling machine whirring into our teeth. It really tortured us – the nurse held our arms behind. Eye tests were held in the surgery. There, an optician, a Mr Spiro, gave each girl eyedrops for tests, and we could not see anything properly for the whole day. Our sight were so blurred that we seemed to lose focus of everything. We were all given glasses to use and wear at school. Linda was the only one who dared to throw them away in the dustbin!

Every November, the school organised its firework display on the school grounds and it was enjoyable to watch, except Ruth who was so nervous that she was allowed to watch the display from inside Mrs Benham's classroom. Also there was this annual school play in the school hall where all the parents and visitors came to watch. In the show called "Joseph", one of the boys, Alan Murray acted as King Pharoah and Linda was chosen to play as a dancing slave. To her embarrassment, her bikini top began to fall down to her waist while dancing in front of the whole audience! She quickly turned round to face towards King Pharoah who must have blushed!

We decorated the dining room and assembly hall every Chanukah and remembered how we used to make colourful paper chains etc. There were games - we crawled under the chairs stacked together to form a tunnel with sheets over us, to reach for our presents through a giant mouth with teeth (made of cardboard) opening and closing.

For Yom Kippur, we all got up very late in the morning, missing our breakfast. Children aged 13 years and under fasted half of the day. Older children fasted all day and had to put up with the non-Jewish children in the dining room eating food. The smell from the kitchen was very tempting. We were asked to take a long walk but, instead of that, we decided to travel to Leicester square by tube, then we had a meal at the Wimpy Bar. All of us were treated by Jacky. We returned to the School in the late afternoon to face the big meal that was to break the fast. How naughty of us as we were so full we did not want anything to eat. The matron must have thought we were on hunger strike!

We never forget the fateful day, probably the saddest day of our school lives when our headmaster suddenly died. Sandra was ill with a cold and also suffered from a skin allergy. She was in bed and was told by one of the cleaners who earlier had heard of the bad news. Jacky happened to pop in to see Sandra upstairs and she learnt of the news. With Jacky's silence, everyone was told to gather in the Assembly hall where the sad news was broken. Ruth ran off, full of emotion.

Due to the decline of incoming new pupils, it was inevitable that the school had to be closed down. The children were allocated to Tottenham where a new hostel was built at Talbot Road. At the end of our school year, we did not have to wear school uniform which was great because we hated to wear our brown knickers! One snag was that we had to wash up our dishes in absence of the kitchen helpers. Even so, the freedom was wonderful for us. We moved to the former boys' dormitory. We could not use the outdoor swimming pool. Instead we went to the indoor pool in Balham. On the last week, we packed up everything in school and we visited Margate School for deaf children to deliver school furniture which were bought by them. We did swim in their swimming pool.

Our school matron, a German lady named Mrs Ebbecke, used to be very rough and tough on us. Well, she unexpectedly turned out to be an angel during our last days, missing us so much. We, the girls, moved to stay at the hostel in Tottenham and went to Tottenham Deaf School in Philip Lane for lessons. We went to the hostel - ten minutes walk from the Tottenham school - and had our lovely lunch cooked by "Aunty" Alma, our good cook. We were the last senior girls with the younger ones, Maria Olsen, Mira Levy, Carolyn Nabarro and a few little ones. They may probably remember their last days as well."

King Pharoah, alias Alan Murray, related his time at the R.S.J.D.C. between 1960 and 1964:

"To write a brief account of my time at the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children, as one of the last boys who was transferred to Blanche Neville School in Tottenham, was not an easy task. There were so many things that happened during the school's last days. My contact with Jewish children began in Spring 1960 when I was told of my Jewish origins and need to learn the rudiments of the Jewish life for my eventual barmitzvah.

I remember well as I entered the impressive imposing Victorian buildings on the first day with my parents. At the door, there was a tall man with a warm smiling face, Leslie Benham, Headmaster of the school for some twenty years. He greeted us and escorted us to his study. We were then introduced to Edwin Denton who was to be my class teacher for the next two years. I was apprehensive about what to expect until I met my new classmates - Linda Nabarro, Jacqueline Alick, Sandra Cohen, Ruth Spain, Alan Roberts, Georges Lehrer, Leon Lebor and Moshe Moshy, who welcomed me in sign language. I could not believe my own eyes, they were actually signing! From a strictly oral environment of my former school, Blanche Neville School where I spent the first seven years, the emphasis was mainly on aural and speech development and the use of sign language was totally forbidden, to a place with free expression of hand movements in sign language was a cultural shock. The RSJDC used what was known as Total Communication and this helped me settle down.

Included in the school curriculum was a Hebrew lesson. I could not learn Hebrew very well. So helpless was I that I bullied my good mate, Moshe Moshy, into helping out with Hebrew for two years. When he was placed at Mary Hare - I was stuck. Daniel Goldstein who conducted the Hebrew class at that time realised I could not do Hebrew - it was a matter of months before my barmitzvah! All were in a state of panic so I was given an English transcript of the Torah to read out to the Assembly at the RSJDC.

Matron assistants came and went, and, in 1962, we had a certain care assistant who covered her face with a very thick make-up and whose authority was questionable due to her feebleness. We took advantage of that and she constantly submitted to our demands. One evening, all the pupils in the dining room, instructed her to allow us leave the room for evening recreation. This care assistant, fully aware of her weakness, somewhat resolved on a hard stance and told us to be quiet and said she would decide when the time was appropriate for us to leave the room. This came out of the blue. Anger for a rebellion developed and 'Pupil Power' became a formidable force, so by unanimous agreement we all stormed out of the room leaving that care assistant stunned.

So pleased were we with our new power that it was much to our disappointment it ended so soon when Daniel Goldstein, teacher on duty, asked us to meet in the Assembly Hall for a chat. He explained that it was wrong for us to dispute the care assistant's authority - nothing more was said!! Soon afterwards she left.

We had a certain deputy matron, a German, who was very strict and who brought a reign of terror to us all. Uncompromising and inflexible, she insisted I had to finish off the dark chocolate spread on white bread (which I loathed) before retiring to bed. That was when I found myself alone at the table. So when I declined to eat, she slapped my face and force-fed me which resulted in my being very sick and ill the next day. Since then I was allowed to have a choice of food.

In 1963, a new School regulation was imposed, forbidding signing, and this introduced a pure oral method of instruction. Anyone caught signing was to be punished by being named on the chalkboard in the Assembly Hall. Fortunately, this ruling was short-lived as there were too many names listed on the chalkboard which resulted in the defeat of pure oralism – an overwhelming victory for 'Pupil Power'!

Later in the same year, an announcement was made to all the pupils that the School Governors, owing to financial restrictions and decreasing numbers of pupils, had decided to close down the school in July 1965. All were to be transferred to Blanche Neville School and a new Jewish Hostel was to be built in Tottenham Hale. The news came as a great shock to us, only months after we had been told that the school had a good future as there were some talks of building an extension in the back garden for new multi-gymnasium and arts/crafts centre.

Leslie Benham, a very kind gentleman who worked extremely hard for the school and well-being of his staff and pupils, suddenly passed away in February 1964. I remembered him telling the boys off for not straightening up during the morning assembly. That was the last we saw of him before he died in his private sitting room half an hour later. Hannah Benham who also taught at the school, is now residing in Switzerland and the only member of the school staff whom I am in constant contact. Edwin Denton was recalled from his new appointment at a Tottenham PHU unit to take over the school until its closure in 1965.

I was the only senior boy at the end of March 1964, the others having reached their school leaving age or transferred to other schools, so I applied for an early transfer back to Blanche Neville School instead of waiting another year. July 1964 was the last I saw of the well-maintained school founded by Mr Van Praagh in 1865."

Mr Benham was prepared for the eventual closure of the School. It was getting to the point when the School outran its useful life seeing that there were fewer Jewish Deaf children. Then it happened suddenly. He died on February 25th 1964 after 29 years' service as teacher and Principal in the school.



Mr Benham in his Principal's Office

An obituary was included in the April 1964 edition of "The Teacher of the Deaf" journal -

OBITUARY

MR L J BENHAM

We deeply regret to announce the sudden and unexpected death of Mr L J Benham, at the Residential School for Jewish deaf Children, on February 25th.

Mr Benham was spared a long illness; in fact, he took morning assembly only a few moments before his death; but the loss sustained by his friends and by the College is immeasurable. His service to the deaf began earlier than it did for most of us, as a "probationary teacher" at Rayners before proceeding to Culham College, Oxford and then to Manchester University for the Diploma Course. His career as a qualified teacher began at Brighton but he was already on the staff of the Jewish School when his predecessor, Mr Hart, died (also in harness) and Mr Benham agreed to carry on, in a temporary capacity since he was not a member of the Jewish faith. However, the Managing Committee soon came to appreciate to the full the sterling qualities of this unassuming man who, regardless of creed and dogma, has served Jewish deaf children - and their parents - with unstinted devotion for so many years since that first "temporary" appointment.

We are left now with only the memory of a man who never spared himself; a man who never dressed his shop window, but whose goods were always of the highest quality, the quality which needs no advertising; a man whose transparent honesty inspired immediate confidence, in whose friendship trust and integrity were always explicit. At meetings of the College executive he spoke perhaps infrequently, but always to the point, and as a result, his words were always received with respectful attention.

His own attitude is perhaps best illustrated by his response when asked by his Managing Committee what gift he would most appreciate to mark the milestone of his 25th anniversary at the school. He replied, "**Something which no-one can give me; time to travel in Europe, to visit other schools for the deaf outside the British Isles.**" Here, of course, he underestimated the donors, because they were able to give him just that; time off to fulfil his dream; and no-one ever proved himself more worthy of such fulfilment.

To Mrs Benham, who now faces alone the retirement, which they had planned so soon to enjoy together, and to Mr Denton who dons the heavy mantle of his responsibility in winding up the school he served so long, we offer sympathy and encouragement for a future which can never be the same without his gentle and unassuming presence."

The last headmaster, Mr E Denton who was also a teacher, assumed the position of Principal. Mr Denton wrote an interesting autobiography which is reproduced in full, even if some of the things in it have already been said earlier:

"I was born on November 25th 1917. Both my parents were born profoundly deaf. My mother was a refugee from the Russian pogroms, arriving in this country when she was one year old just before the turn of the century. She was one of fourteen children, of whom four were born deaf. The family lived a typical East End existence, and all the hearing members were very successful in business, their progeny taking to the legal profession.

My mother married a deaf Gentile, whose family were very committed Christians, my own cousin being a vicar in the Anglican Church. I need hardly say that both sides of the family were not very happy with the situation. This history of family tensions, coupled with the severity of the parental handicaps, played a large part in the shaping of my own feelings about life in general and religious intolerance in particular.

My mother had four children, three boys and one girl. The first three children were born hearing, the fourth, a boy with hereditary profound deafness. I was the third child.

Our upbringing was fairly normal, considering the era. The two older children left school to work for one of my mother's cousins, while I won various scholarships and went to a minor public school. During this time my deaf brother (Reggie) attended the R.S.J.D.C. as a day pupil, and I frequently went to the school for the usual functions, thus becoming well-known to the other pupils and staff.

Reggie's teacher was a Mr L Benham. At that time most of the teachers were non-Jewish, mainly because of the difficulty of attracting qualified Jewish teachers of the Deaf who were in any case very scarce. The two school principals during my acquaintance with the school were Miss Davids and later Mr Hart.

Mr Benham and his wife Hannah, also a teacher on the staff, conscientiously carried out their duties both at Nightingale Lane and later in Wiltshire, when the school was evacuated for several years. Both of them were committed Christians, but were always very punctilious in ensuring that all the Orthodox functions were observed.

At the end of hostilities in 1945 there was no obvious Jewish candidate to take over the Principal's duties. The Governors asked Mr Benham, who was an acting Principal since the death of Mr Hart in 1943, to continue as Principal, this time on a permanent basis.

I should mention here that the performance of religious functions and observance of Orthodox rules were in the capable hands of the Matron, Miss Ballinson, who carried out these duties for many years, both pre-war and post-war, in a dedicated and exemplary fashion, the needs of the pupils always a primary objective. Mr Benham himself studied the whole field of Jewish history and Orthodox laws, including a basic knowledge of classical Hebrew, to be better able to teach the pupils in these matters.

It was about this time that a group of Jewish refugee children came to the school from Germany, in time to join the exodus to Wiltshire and then to return with the school to Nightingale Lane. The story of these children and their great success in making new lives for themselves in this country bears witness to the dedication of the school and domestic staff, but can only be mentioned briefly in this short resume, but possibly it would be of interest to mention one particular case which has just received publicity.

Ruth Danziger came to the school in 1939 from Germany as a tiny frail child, having a family history which is so typical of the tragic events of Nazi concentration camps. I first met Ruth when I took up my teaching duties after the war.

I served in the Army as a Territorial soldier from 1935 to 1939 having been a cadet at my school in the Officers Training Corps. Then came six years of Active Service home and overseas, being finally de-mobbed in 1946.

While on demob leave, I happened to walk past the front entrance of the school in Nightingale Lane when I was hailed by Mr Benham, who invited me in for coffee and a chat. On learning that I had no fixed plans for my future, he asked me to consider a career in teaching the deaf. I already had sufficient qualifications to enter a University, which I had not done before because of the war. He persuaded me to apply for a Diploma course at Manchester University, where special arrangements were available for returned "warriors" to study towards a Teacher of the Deaf qualification. The rest is history.

I started in Nightingale Lane as an unqualified teacher, while awaiting admission to Manchester University, in 1946. Mr Benham asked me to be responsible for Religious teaching throughout the school, which meant that I had a great deal of leeway to make up, having not touched the subjects since my barmitzvah. Coming from a mixed religious background and profoundly deaf parents who did not favour an Orthodox upbringing did not help.

However, I enjoyed the act of teaching, even though I had no deep religious feelings myself and on the whole I think both myself and my pupils benefited from the ensuing years. With Miss Ballinson's help we observed strictly all the Holy days and Barmitzvah instruction. We always enjoyed a theatrical performance to celebrate the great historical events to the delight of the whole school and enthusiastic parents and friends.

In these stage shows some of the most gifted performers were the German refugees, who brought to the stage continental exuberance and uninhibited dramatic performances, made all the more intense by the traumatic backgrounds they remembered. One of these children was Ruth Danziger. After many years of loneliness, she made contact with relatives in the U.S.A. and eventually went to make a new life for herself in America.

Her old friends, pupils and teachers kept in touch with her over the years especially Mrs Benham, now living in Geneva with her daughter.

During Ruth's time at the school, she was taught briefly by a young Welsh student, Howard Williams, who left eventually to carve out his own distinguished career as a fine teacher of the deaf and later a great Headmaster. On his retirement Howard travelled extensively to Russia and the U.S.A. in particular. While visiting Gallaudet College he was taken to an exhibition featuring many incidents and tragic family histories of the Holocaust. To his surprise, one of the exhibits was the story of Ruth Danziger, whose early life was spent in concentration camps and who lost most of her family in tragic circumstances. She then told the story of her escape to England and her upbringing as a residential pupil in Nightingale Lane. She remembered the teachers who instructed her and helped to dim the terrible memories of the past and she specifically recalled her main teacher who continually made her laugh in storytelling time.

When Howard saw my name in the exhibition, he also remembered our days together when I was helping him to develop his sign language ability and on his return to England he wrote to me to say that he was going to try to mount a similar exhibition here.

Most of the main events in the school during the years after the war up to 1965 are well documented in the minutes of the Board meetings which records, with one exception, are held by the Norwood Foundation. However, there are certain interesting highlights which could be mentioned, which are not immediately obvious by reading the minutes.

One of these is connected to the present day expansion of television facilities for the deaf. The first programme of this kind started in 1950 on BBC TV in the shape of a monthly half-hour for deaf children at 5pm. The RNID was consulted by the producer to recommend a presenter for the programs who was -

- a) accustomed to facing the public
- b) adept in the art of communicating with the deaf
- c) used to working with and teaching deaf children
- d) who at the same time could interest hearing children in the programmes.

The RNID recommended me for the job, among others (including Mr Benham) and the first programmes had different presenters each time. Eventually I was appointed to do all the programs and so I did for fifteen years, presenting 180 programs in all. Naturally the programs went out live in those days, which was very unnerving but exciting. They were all in black and white, and my job was not only to present them, but to write the scripts and collect items for the shows, such as sea-shells for a summer sea-side setting and ears of corn for an autumn or late summer show.

The programs always had a number of deaf pupils on the set and the Nightingale school had a great deal of free publicity whenever I could manage to take my own pupils there!

Later I also appeared in several scientific programmes, whenever the study of sound and its effects necessitated a live demonstration, always with my own pupils where possible.

My connection with TV survived the shift from B/W to colour to the early editions of "The Programme for Deaf Children" but gradually full time professionals took over the programmes and I played no further part.

I have mentioned these events in some detail because they had a considerable effect in publicising the Jewish School for the Deaf.

In the years after the war, many requests for places at the school came from Education authorities who had no facilities for deaf children of their own. Nightingale Lane was the only school for the deaf in London with residential facilities. Therefore many applications came for places for non-Jewish children from all over the U.K. The Governors were concerned that the number of Jewish applications were dropping heavily and so as a temporary measure a small number of non-Jewish pupils were admitted and thus ensuring funds to keep the school economically viable.

Gradually the balance of pupils changed until there were many more non-Jewish pupils than Jewish. A series of special meetings were held and a decision was taken to close the school on its 100 years anniversary.

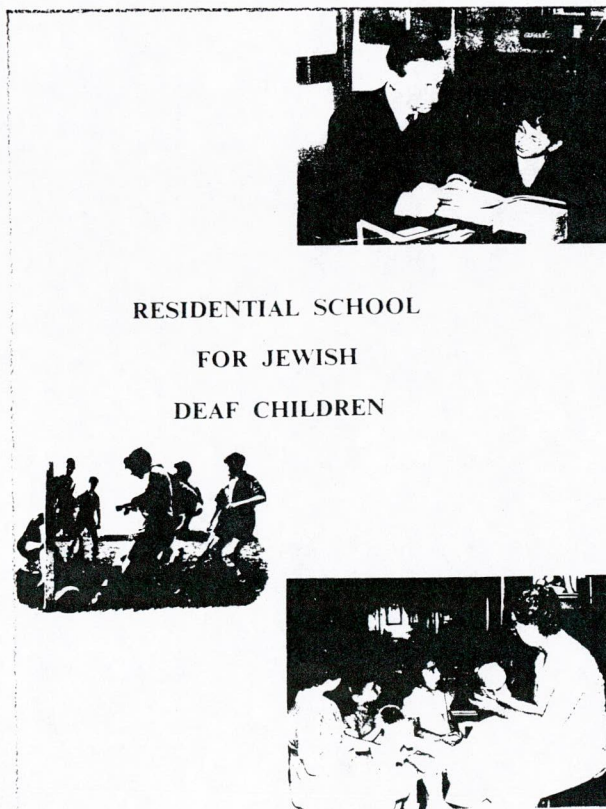
It was decided to sell the property to the then L.C.C. (later called I.L.E.A.) on condition the land was used for the education of the deaf. A hostel was to be built in Tottenham, so that the pupils who needed to be resident could attend the local day school for the deaf, live during the week at the hostel and receive the necessary religious instruction etc.

At the time I had been the Deputy Headmaster for many years, and it was decided that I should take a teaching post at the Tottenham day-school to prepare the way for the eventual admission of our Jewish pupils. Mr Benham was going to retire when Nightingale Lane was closed but tragically died of a heart attack in 1964. I was recalled to take over the Headmasters's position and thus remained there until the closure in July 1965. I then took an administrative post with the London Borough of Richmond until my retirement in 1982."

A Garden fete was arranged at the School on June 21st 1964. It was organised by the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children Society. The admission ticket, as shown below, was on a green card - note the phone number of the Honorary Secretary - in those days the STD code system was not yet implemented:



Around the same time a brochure of the School was produced. It must have been planned long before the decision was made to close the school. This is reproduced exactly as it was when it was circulated (the next ten pages are in actual size with the cover below -



RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR JEWISH DEAF CHILDREN

(Registered with the Board of Deputies)

101 NIGHTINGALE LANE WANDSWORTH COMMON LONDON S.W.12

TEL. BATTERSEA 3833

HON. OFFICERS

Life Vice-President: Colonel Sir Frederick Stern, O.B.E., M.C.

President: Miss H. M. Schlesinger, M.B.E.

Hon. Treasurer: The Hon. Hugh Cohen.

Chairman, House Committee: Miss Joan Lucas.

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Lady Stern, J.P.

Mrs. H. Mathews.



שמיע

This is a word known to all Jewish people, wherever they may be, it supplies the basic reason for the School because the children who attend it cannot hear.

It is through hearing that the social facilities of civilization are acquired. Through this particular sense we learn to speak and to understand and use language forms by imitation of sound patterns heard. Our education, social activities, exchange of ideas and indeed our whole way of life depends upon our ability to understand and to communicate through the sense of hearing.

The person lacking facility in hearing can so easily become withdrawn and lonely, and cut off

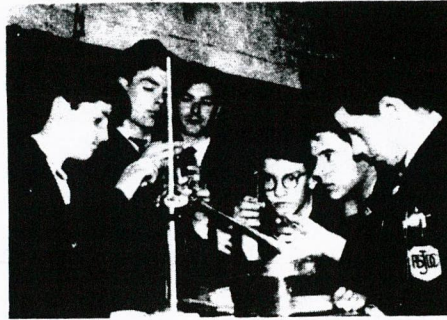
from educational, vocational and social opportunities by an invisible handicap.

The Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children, since its establishment in 1865, has been dedicated to providing the essential means of communication—expression through speech and writing, and understanding through lip-reading and the written and printed word—to children handicapped by deafness.

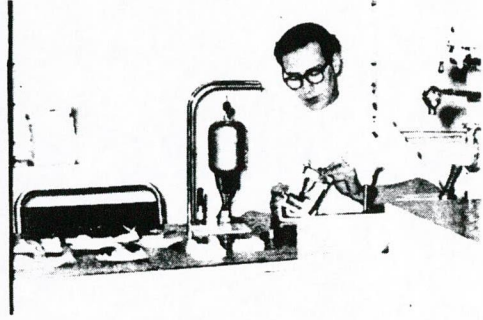
The aim of the School is to produce well-adjusted, self-confident individuals able to find self-expression, financial and social security, ability to take part in religious observance, and happiness in the normal environment of the world in which they are to live.



THE BEGINNING. *Infant receiving Auditory Training.*



EDUCATION. *Senior pupils interested in Scientific Experiment.*



THE FULFILMENT. *Dental Mechanic with his own business.*

THE SCHOOL

A school and home such as the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children depends upon two factors: a human need for its services, and voluntary support and leadership to provide the means of fulfilling the need.

The care of the young, the old and the handicapped has always produced ready and generous support from the Jewish Community, and one of the proudest achievements was the foundation in 1865 of a special school to satisfy the needs in education and religious upbringing of Jewish children handicapped by deafness.

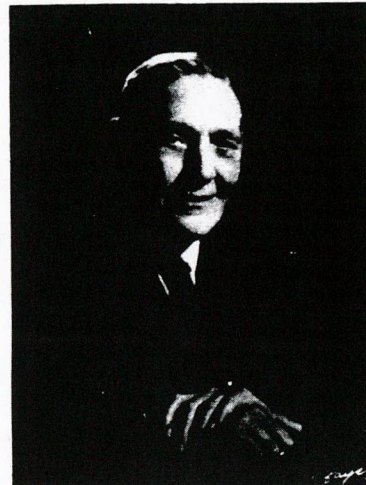
In the only school in the British Commonwealth, and in the whole world outside Israel, specially founded and dedicated to help these Jewish children, began a new system of education which was to be adopted and practised throughout the world. Under the direction of its first Principal, Mr. William Van Praagh, it became the first school in England to adopt the "Oral System" of teaching the children language through lipreading and to express themselves in audible speech.

From Whitechapel, with six children, via Notting Hill, in 1895 the school moved to its present address with its spacious grounds and accommodation for sixty children.

The affairs of the school are now conducted by an Executive Committee who decide on matters of policy and finance. In addition to this there is a House Committee which meets

monthly at the School to examine and pass for payment the House Books and to hear the Matron's Report. This Committee also inspects the building and recommends to the Executive what repairs and alterations require to be made.

A non-Maintained special school recognised as 'efficient' by the Ministry of Education, and open to inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors, it is also registered with the Board of Deputies of British Jews.



SIR FRED STERN.

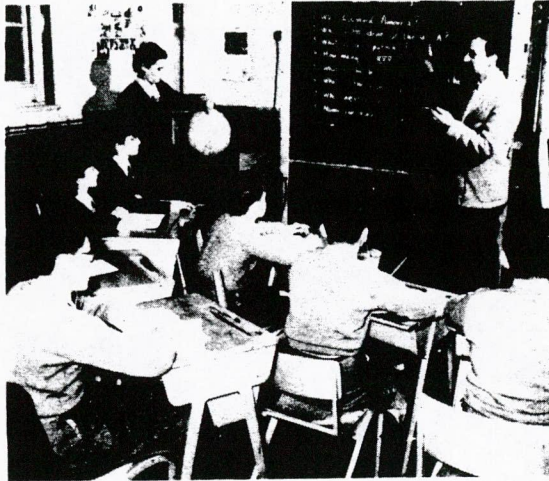


MISS SCHLESINGER.

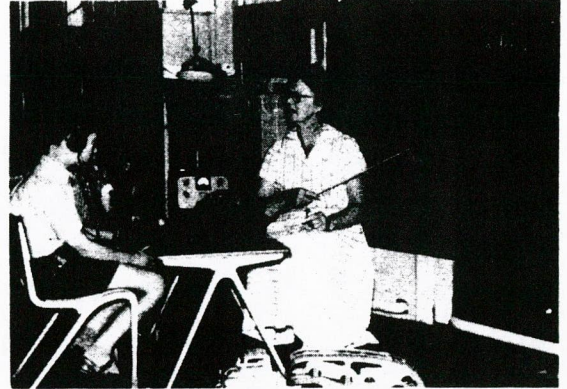
EDUCATION

For the hearing child, learning to speak and to use language is part of the natural process of development, for it is able to absorb speech and language 'patterns' through the year, and by imitation to express them by speaking. The deaf child lives in a world of silence into which neither words nor sounds penetrate and can only acquire the conventional means of communication through the senses of sight and touch, and he must learn by artificial and laborious means what his hearing brother acquires without conscious effort.

The sooner a deaf child receives instruction, the easier is he able to communicate his needs and so reduce his natural feeling of frustration. Children may be admitted to the school from the age of three years, and parents receive advice on and instruction in the ways in which they can help the child, the teacher and themselves to overcome this barrier of lack of communication.



As his vocabulary broadens, he is able to express himself more fluently through speech and writing, and to understand more complex language forms. His interests are widening and formal school subjects are introduced.



With growing confidence, through lipreading and any remnants of hearing, the young deaf child learns to understand that everything he can see has a name which can be expressed either in speech or in writing.



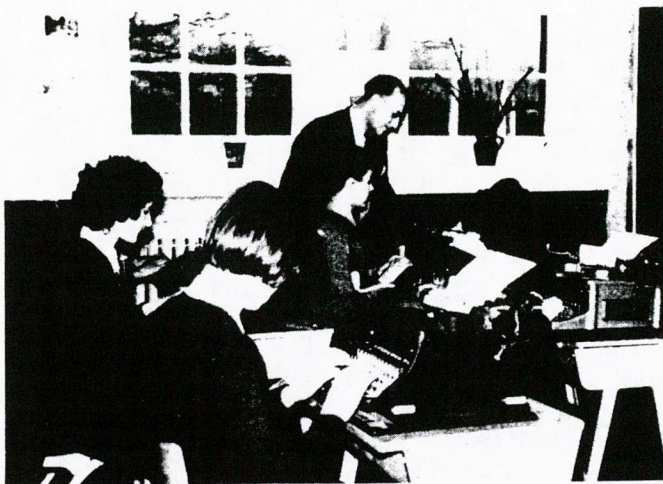
Side by side with this he learns the codes of social behaviour by which he can live in accord with his family and friends, he develops good habits, and confidence in those who help him and in himself.

All classrooms, pleasantly decorated and acoustically treated, are equipped with modern furniture and the very latest technical aids to teaching, including the Multitone Telesonic Loop System for auditory training and Ampli-vox Speech Trainers for individual work. Every child has its own powerful, high fidelity Multitone transistor hearing aid. Through the endeavours and generosity of a Jewish Aid Society, the school became the first to be

completely equipped with this latest electronic aid to hearing.

In recent years, several children have been successful in passing the entrance examination to the Mary Hare and Burwood Park Grammar Schools for the Deaf.

Ample facilities are available for handicrafts and practical subjects for boys and girls, including woodwork, leatherwork, needlework, bookcraft and science.



As a senior pupil, he studies all normal school subjects according to his ability. He is also encouraged to develop dexterities in various forms of handicraft and activities. He accepts responsibilities and privileges and is ready to help the younger children.

RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Since the children are normal in intelligence, energy, curiosity, mischief and interest, and they desire to do all the things that hearing children do, every effort is made to make residential life a free, friendly and exciting experience in a homely environment.



Facilities are available for many social, physical and out-of-school activities such as Television, Films, a model electric railway, a photographic club, gymnastics, billiards, badminton, football, tennis, cricket, netball, dramatics, Scouts and Cubs, model aircraft construction, dancing and a variety of hobbies. There is also a Library



and a Quiet Occupation Room for seniors. The school is co-educational in its widest sense, and boys and girls mix freely and combine for most of the activities mentioned.

The Children's dining hall and dormitories are tastefully decorated, and furnished in modern style.

The majority of the children return to their homes at week-ends, which offers the advantages of an ordered but happy communal life during the school week, and the family environment at week-ends and holidays, bringing a closer understanding and association between parent|teacher|child|home and school. Children who remain at school during week-ends generally come from distant parts of the country and from overseas as far as Persia, Yugo-



slavia and Belgium. They enjoy the extra freedom and special arrangements made for their entertainment and occupation, and all of them spend occasional week-ends and all holidays away from the school.

In the grounds are swimming and paddling pools, and facilities for many forms of activities.



RELIGIOUS TRAINING

A knowledge and understanding of the religious beliefs of the parents is the birthright of every child, and it is the soundest foundation in the building of character and in the teaching of the ethics of social behaviour.

The School, with its Jewish foundation, is run as a home under the laws of Kashrus with a Jewish staff to ensure adequate instruction and training of the children, and observance of the Holy Days. Daily Prayers, services at week-ends, Festivals and Holy Days, instruction in Hebrew

and religious observance, the building of the succah, the enjoyment of Chanukah, Purim and other Festivals, and the preparation for Bar Mitzvah all form part of a communal life and of education in its fullest sense.

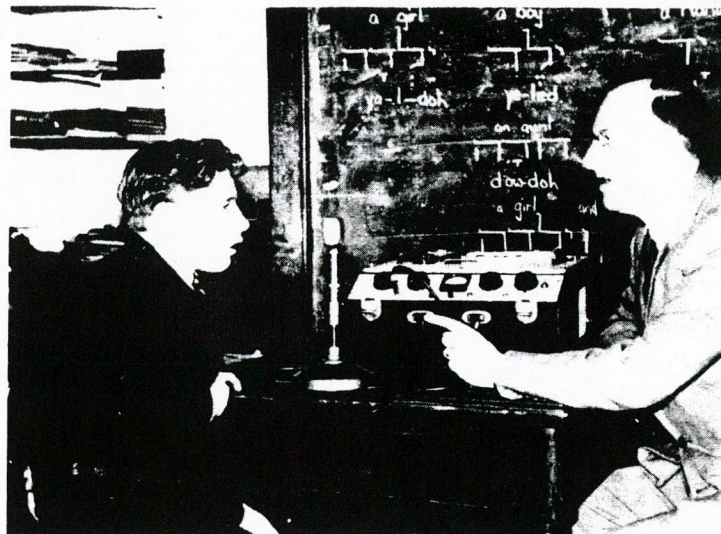
A proportion of non-Jewish pupils, living in the same environment and receiving instruction and training according to their religious denomination, attending their services and being confirmed, creates the ideal situation for understanding and social integration.

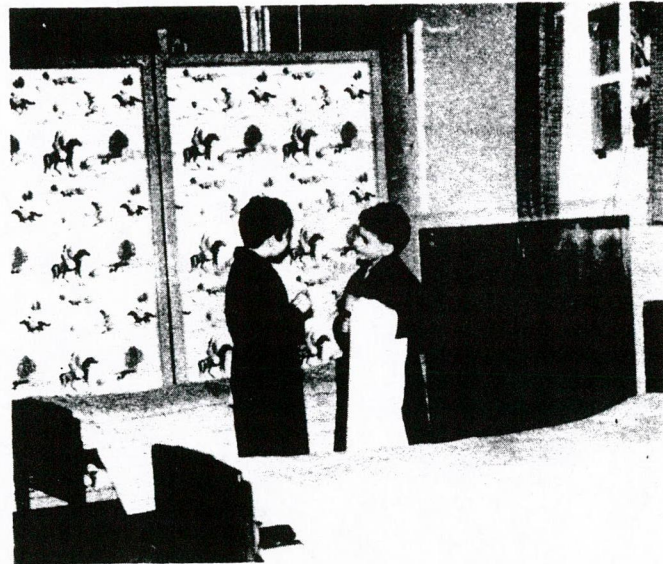
MEDICAL ASPECTS

An established physical disability needs constant revision by specialists for, in view of medical advancement, discovery and improved techniques, there must always remain some hope of amelioration. In the case of a child handicapped by deafness, it is important that frequent and comprehensive tests be made, not only of the physical condition, of hearing loss and voice production, but also of general health and especially sight, upon which the child has to rely so extensively.

The school is fortunate to have the services of a team of highly qualified specialists covering all medical aspects, and regular inspections are the rule, and immediate treatment is given under the best conditions.

The school is well equipped with electronic diagnostic and instructional apparatus with which children's residual hearing can be accurately assessed and utilised in the classroom.





AFTER CARE

The fulfillment of educational endeavour is to be observed in the happy, well adjusted, confident and economically independent young people after they leave school.

Through the interest and advice of the After Care Committee, pupils at 16 or 17 years of age are found employment suited to their particular aptitudes and abilities. For example, former pupils have been trained as Commercial Artists, Dental Mechanics, chefs, spectacle-frame makers, Electronic and Surgical Instrument makers, tailors and cabinet makers; comptometer operators, copy typists, Powers-Samas Electric

filing operators, and for taking employment in various forms of dressmaking and needlework establishments. A very close relationship is maintained between them and the school, not only during the first few years but throughout their lives.

As a follow-up to school life, pupils in the London area are encouraged to join the Jewish Deaf Association which has well equipped Club and Hostel premises. Facilities for spiritual, recreational, social and cultural activities are available.

Although the school derives revenue from grants by Local Education Authorities, we express our thanks to the many Jewish Charitable Societies which have provided much valuable educational and recreational equipment. Without their support it would not have been possible to carry out the modernisation and decoration of the School, and to arrange the many "treats" which make the residential environment so happy and homely. It is not possible to record the many organisations and individuals by name, but mention must be made of the R.S.J.D.C. Society which is composed of parents of present and past pupils and their friends. It has been actively engaged on behalf of the school for over twenty years, and is represented on the various school Committees.

In addition to those who have helped financially, the school is fortunate in having a fully qualified teaching and house staff, who are able to provide the high standard of educational and social training which is the birthright and essential need of these handicapped children.

STAFF

HEADMASTER Mr. L. J. Benham

ASSISTANT TEACHERS Mrs. H. E. Benham.
Mr. E. M. Denton.
Mr. D. Goldstein.
Mrs. D. Gaudiere.

MATRON Miss R. Ballinson.

MEDICAL OFFICERS Hon. Consulting Physician:
Dr. Claude Elman, M.D.
Hon. Aurist:
Anthony Radcliffe, Esq., F.R.C.S.
Dentist:
E. Kosins, Esq., D.D.D.
Hon. Aurist:
Harold Kisch, Esq., F.R.C.S.
Hon. Oculist:
I. Spiro, Esq., F.R.C.S.
School Medical Officer:
John C. Darneley, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S. (Lond.)

HON. SOLICITORS: Messrs. Jacobson, Ridley & Co.

HON. SURVEYOR: J. A. Denny, Esq., F.A.L.P.A.

AUDITORS Messrs. Myers, Davies & Co., Chartered Accountants,
67, Broad Street Avenue, Blomfield Street, E.C.2.

BANKERS Messrs. Coutts & Co., 15, Lombard Street, E.C.3.

SECRETARY Mrs. Elizabeth Tesler.

Epilogue

Two years after the closure of the school, Alan Murray returned to the site "as a matter of curiosity, I passed Nightingale Lane, Clapham – it was sad to see that the school had already been grazed into the ground."

On the next two pages are photos of the school being demolished –



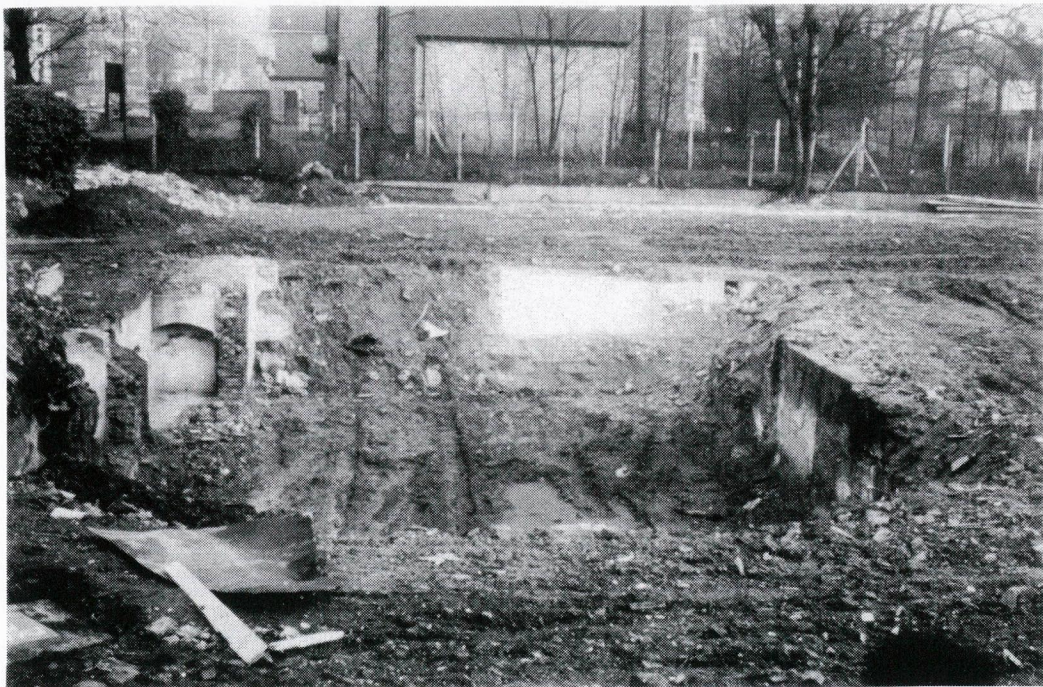
Demolition of the School (Front)



Removal of furniture, etc. from the Assembly Room



The front part of the school grazed down



And the back part of the school completely demolished

The condition made by the Governors of the RSJDC that the property be used for the education of the deaf when it was sold to the Education Authorities was fulfilled. The old Oak Lodge School was demolished and rebuilt on the very ground that, for one hundred years, was the site of the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children and before that, the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home.

To this day, the Oak Lodge School has this address -

OAK LODGE SECONDARY SCHOOL
101 Nightingale Lane
LONDON
SW12 8NA

The foundation stone of R.S.J.D.C.'s new centre at Talbot Road, Tottenham was laid by the President, Miss Hilda Schlesinger.

Following a service conducted by Rev. Reuben Turner, Miss Schlesinger was presented with an inscribed trowel to commemorate the occasion.

Making the presentation, the Hon. Hugh Cohen, joint treasurer of the school, thanked the President for her work in the past. "Without you, this new centre would not have been built" he said.

"It is hoped to open the new premises in September. The present headquarters at Wandsworth have to be vacated by the end of July."

The September 17th 1965 edition of the Jewish Chronicle had a page spread of the new hostel of which a part is reproduced here -

"Once again the pioneering spirit has quickened. From the old building in Wandsworth, the work has been transferred to a modern, specially built and equipped Centre in Tottenham, nearer the concentrations of Jewish population in North London. To meet the needs of our present fast-changing world, the educational policy has been given a new look, too, extending its purpose to help all Jewish deaf children of school age, whether resident or not. For those children who need to remain resident, the Centre provides a Jewish home and, to supplement their education at a nearby school for the deaf, the very full programme of activities during the evenings and week-ends includes Hebrew teaching and Jewish religious instruction, which is not provided at all elsewhere for Jewish deaf children. Extra speech training is also given, one room being fitted with the most modern auditory training equipment.

But the needs have been borne in mind also of the Jewish deaf child of school age living at home. For these, often lonely and frustrated, the Centre is open, providing the opportunity to participate in the many activities, recreational, and educational, that are organised. In this way we have extended our work, i.e., to offer companionship and a fuller life to any Jewish deaf schoolchild rather than limiting our help to a restricted number of children in a residential school."

A subscription/donation form appeared on the same page spread - £100,000 was asked for the endowment of the new centre. A Dinner was arranged to mark the centenary of the closed school. It took place at the Dorchester Hotel, London on Sunday December 19th, 1965.

The Hostel continued for the next ten years at Talbot Road – that is until 1975. The Governors decided it was no longer economical to run the Hostel in its present form with an ever-decreasing number of Jewish Deaf pupils. It was considered that the remaining children could move to the Jewish Deaf Association's premises in Cazenove Road. However the Governors decided it was not viable because it would mean mixing the children with the adults. It was not in their best interests.

So it was agreed to build a new but smaller Hostel next to the Woodford School. It took two years to build. This meant there was nothing available for the Jewish Deaf children during that period. Their parents could not wait that long so were forced to put their children in different schools.

By the time the new hostel was completed, there were only two or three Jewish deaf children waiting to be admitted. The Governors were alarmed by this and met again. They made this fateful decision – the new hostel would close down!

However it would not be demolished but to be handed over to the Woodford School to be used for educational purposes.

While the new hostel was being built, the last President of the RSJDC, Miss Hilda M Schlesinger died on July 25th 1976. A part of her obituary from the July 30th 1976 edition of the Jewish Chronicle says

"A life of voluntary social service among her fellow Jews came to an end on Sunday when Miss Hilda Marian Schlesinger died at the age of 88.

Miss Schlesinger was born on May 17th 1888 in London of a family with a tradition of public service.

The deaf found in her a great friend. She was chairman of the Association of Non-Maintained Schools for the deaf, vice-president of the Jewish Deaf Association and at the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children she was president and chairman of the house committee.

The MBE was awarded to her in 1950 for her social work for the Board of Guardians and other organisations.

In 1963 she received the Henrietta Szold Award, presented by Children and Youth Aliyah to outstanding personalities in the field of social service."

Mr Denton produced what is probably the last leaflet in connection with the Jewish Deaf School and the Hostel – this is reproduced in full on the following pages –

The Former
Residential School
for
Jewish Deaf Children

Nightingale Lane, Balham



1865 — 1965

Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children

In 1965 the Residential School for the Jewish Deaf Children (R.S.J.D.C.) closed its doors for the last time, thus bringing to an end one hundred years of full time residential and educational provision for Jewish Deaf children from the four corners of the world.

Residential and religious education continued in another form for a further twelve years, but this is mainly the story of a unique school which started as the result of the dissatisfaction of a business man in Manchester, Mr. Solomon.

In 1865 the education of deaf children was mainly provided by large residential institutions maintained by Christian charities. Mr. Solomon had a deaf son and was averse to sending him to such a school.

Finding two other Jewish business men with similar problems, he persuaded them to join him in opening a small school for Jewish deaf children in North London, in the belief that the high number of Jewish residents there would be willing to support such a school.

The Asylum for Deaf and Dumb Jews opened in 1865 with a handful of pupils in the converted house, but numbers quickly grew, and more suitable premises were found in Nightingale Lane, Balham in South London a year or so later.

Teaching Deaf children in these days was mainly by **manual** methods, but the Governors of the Jewish school were continually on the look out for the most up to date methods and they heard of a new **oral** system being pioneered

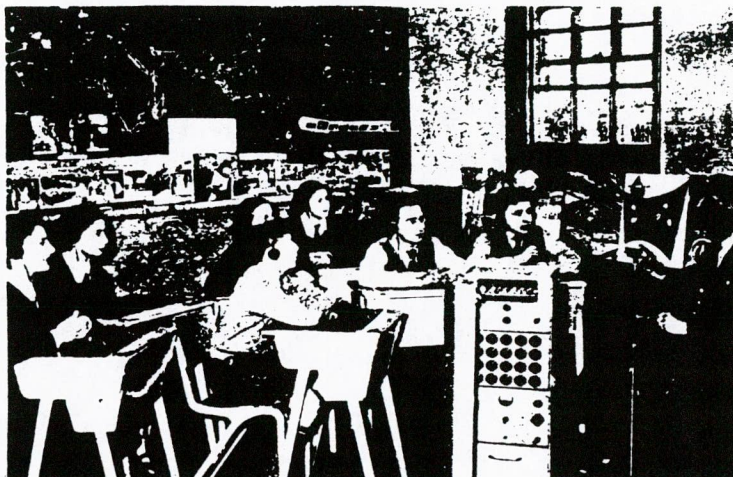


in Holland by a teacher of the deaf, Mr. van Praag. He was persuaded to come to London, and the Jewish school thus had the honour of being one of the first schools in Britain to use the now universal 'oral' system.

With the full co-operation of the school Governors, a succession of progressive and dedicated headmasters continued this policy of keeping up with the latest teaching equipment and techniques, a policy only made possible by the dedicated and willing help of Jewish communities all over Gt. Britain and the rest of the world. At one time there were pupils in the school from over 20 countries including Africa, the U.S.A., and South America.

A full programme of religious education was a major part of the curriculum, leading up to and past Barmitzvah for the Boys, and Jewish household management for the Girls. All Holy Days and Festivals were strictly observed, and past pupils were always welcomed to return when help with religious occasions such as marriages and childbirth was needed.

In the 1930s, the name of the school was changed to The Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children, as being more in keeping with the times, and also by this time financial help was available from local educational authorities on a per capita basis.



As the years went by, more and more educational provision became available to deaf children in their own areas, at home and abroad, thus giving parents the choice of having their children at home. Eventually there were insufficient pupils to make the school economically and educationally viable, which factors finally led to the closure of the school in 1965. The School Governors decided to open a hostel for Jewish Deaf Children in North London, and this provision was maintained for a further twelve years.

Mr. E. Denton

Last Headmaster of

The Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children

Printed by J. E. Emanuel & Co. 57A Lawford Road, London N1 01-254 9338

Appendix One

The Staff Between 1865 to 1965

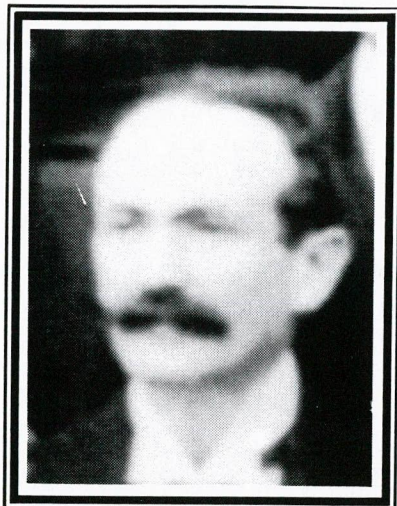
(including Presidents)

Presidents

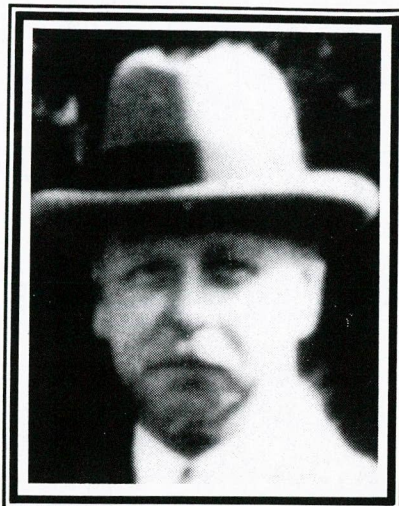
Mr Aaron H Moses (5 years)	- 1865-1870
Mr S L Miers (3 years)	- 1870-1873
Mr H L Cohen (6 years)	- 1873-1879
Sir Baron H Ellis (8 years)	- 1879-1887
Sir Philip Magnus (10 years)	- 1887-1897
Sir Edward D Stern (36 years)	- 1897-1933
Major Frederick Stern (25 years)	- 1933-1958
Miss Hilda Schlesinger (7 years)	- 1958-1965
(plus 11 years as the Hostel's President)	- 1965-1976

Principals

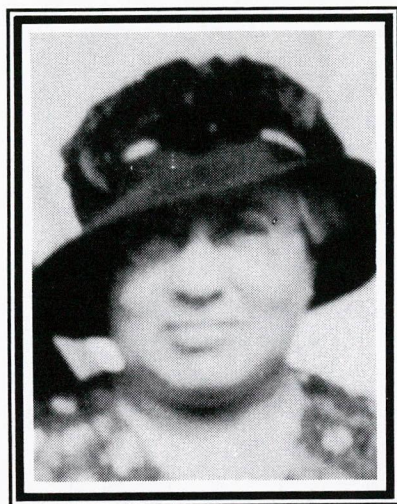
Mr William Van Praagh (9 years)	- 1865-1874
Mr Simon Schontheil (20 years)	- 1874-1894
Mr Kutner (22 years)	- 1894-1916
Mr Frank Musson in an acting capacity (1 year)	- 1916-1917
Miss Harriet Davids (19 years)	- 1917-1936
Mr Simeon David Hart (7 years)	- 1936-1943
Mr Leslie J Benham (21 years)	- 1943-1964
Mr Edwin Denton (1 year)	- 1964-1965



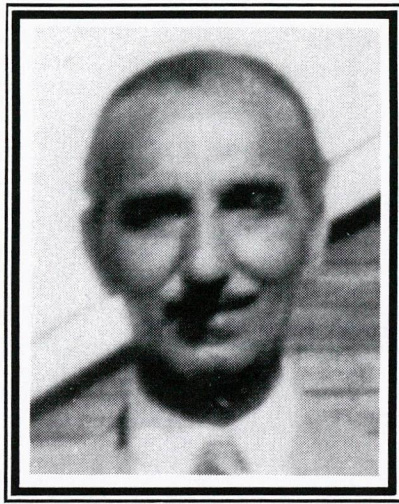
Mr S Kutner



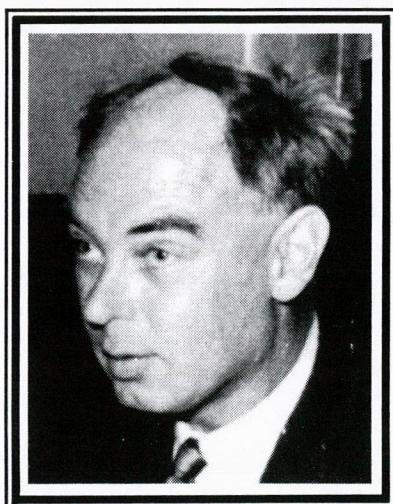
Mr Frank Musson



Miss Harriet Davids



Mr Simeon David Hart



Mr Leslie Benham

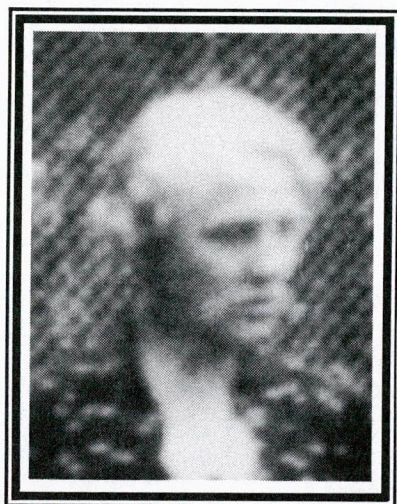


Mr Edwin Denton

Teachers

There were many excellent teachers with such tremendous amount of patience teaching hundreds of deaf children who entered the School in the hundred years of its history. It has been impossible for the researcher, Joan Weinberg, to include all of them in the book. The following list shows teachers who have done a great deal to enhance the standing of the school -

Mr Simon Kutner (2 years)	- 1874-1876
Mr Frank Musson (37 years)	- 1895-1932
Mr Simeon David Hart (35 years)	- 1901-1936
Miss Metson (33 years) [died in 1954]	- 1906-1939
Mrs Hannah Benham (nee Iliffe - 29 years) [currently living in Geneva, Switzerland]	- 1936-1965



Miss Metson



Mrs Hannah Benham

Former pupils, in their seventies at the time of the first edition of this book going to press, may remember Miss Grave Vines who was a teacher at the Home between 1928 and 1931. They may wonder why her services were abruptly terminated.

It was discovered that she had misappropriated some of the girls' pocket money and saving bank accounts. She and her mother had been interviewed and Miss Vines, who appeared unfit to have the care of the children at the time, was given permission to leave the school.

She had been examined by a mental expert. His opinion was that she was suffering from hysteria and malingering. A sum of £20 was given to Miss Davids to repay the children's saving bank accounts.

Matrons

Mr Israel Itzkowitz kindly provided this mine of facts about the matrons who were employed at the School.

Mrs Maria Teacher (2 years)	- 1865-1867
Miss Matilda Miers (5 years)	- 1868-1873
Mrs Helen Schontheil (21 years)	- 1874-1895
Mrs S Kutner (22 years)	- 1895-1917

Mrs Kutner was asked to resign in 1917 due to complaints by teachers. Teachers would tender their resignations unless the situation improved.

Mrs Kutner caned the children for wearing certain garments without her permission - what could these garments be?

In 1909 there was a letter of complaint from the house at the back of the school, saying that "the noise on Sunday morning caused by the screaming and chuffing of feet of the children - it is unbearable and there must be some ill treatment, not only on Sundays but every other day. My two sons have been ill and they complained about the noise. Could the playground be moved further away from the house as it is almost near the window?"

Not known (7 years)	- 1917-1924
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There were no records of the replacement(s) until 1924.

Miss Mary Cohen (14 years)	- 1924-1938
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In 1925 Miss Cohen wanted the kitchen arrangements to be reorganised and it was then resolved that steps be taken to purchase all necessary utensils in order to carry out the wishes of the Beth Din.

In 1926, the Secretary reported upon his interview at the Beth Din with reference to the Kashrus at the Home. The Beth Din suggested that in future:

1. the purchasing of hind quarters be stopped (this was agreed)
2. all meat must be koshered before being sent to the Home (Not agreed but the Beth Din be notified that every care would be taken that the meat be properly koshered.)
3. a Jewish supervisor be appointed to the kitchen

In the same year, 1926, the Cookery Class was re-opened with two lessons a week. Miss Cohen was re-engaged to take charge.

Miss Cohen had to resign in 1938 due to illness. She was granted the sum of £120.00 as a gratuity in recognition of her services to the school for fourteen years.

The House Committee was asked to advertise and engage a new Matron. It was suggested that a German or Austrian refugee might be employed in this capacity.

Mrs Rosenswerg (1 year)

- 1938-1939

Mrs Rosenwerg resigned in 1938 and the vacant position was offered to Mrs Hart, wife of Mr Simeon Hart, until the end of World War II.

Mrs Hart (4 years)

- 1939-1943

In 1943 the Committee felt it was essential that the Matron should be a Jewess and it was, therefore, suggested that Miss Ballinson be offered the position of Matron and that Mrs Hart be asked to resign.

Miss Ballinson (20 years)

- 1943-1963



Miss Ballinson had been with the staff since 1931. On April 30th 1963 the Chairman received a letter from Miss Ballinson expressing her wish to retire at the end of the following August. This was accepted with great regret by the Committee in view of her outstanding long service to the school - 32 years.

Mrs Ebbecke (2 years)

- 1963-1965

Appendix Two

General Facts

The researcher, Joan Weinberg, came up with various interesting facts which are worth including -

School Uniform 1865-1965

It has not been possible to trace old photographs of children in their uniforms between 1865 and 1897. The earliest photo is of boys in the gymnasium (see page 9) in their knee-length shorts, long sleeved white shirts and black stockings.

In the early 20th century, during the Edwardian era, there is a photo of a group with Mr & Mrs S Kutner (see page 37).

It shows the boys wearing grey high buttoned collarless suit, white stiff Eton collared shirt, black stockings and ankle length boots.

They wore grey neckbuttoned wool jerseys during schooldays.

The girls wore long ankle length dresses in three different styles -

1. Long smock, yoke trimmed with frills in same fabric, white lace sewn inside the collar, long gathered sleeves into cuff bands.
2. Yoke, gathered bodice, flared skirt, collar as above, long "leg of mutton" sleeves.
3. Only one child showing in smock with high full gathered yoke with velvet neckband, possibly in the shade of blue or grey.

The girls' hair were cut short probably to avoid lice infection. During that time long hair with huge bow tied at back were in fashion. Note in the photo two children in front of Mr and Mrs Kutner - possibly their children.

1920-1929 known as the Roaring Twenties saw the hemline of women's dresses shortened to knee length, exposing their legs!

The girls wore tunic uniform (see page 39). With the help of a magnifying glass, it is possible to see the pattern print fabric of the tunic, perhaps made for the Summer terms - with white blouse, loose black belt, black wool stockings and ankle length boots.

The boys (see page 40) wore grey single breasted suits, waistcoats or sleeveless pullovers, soft collared shirts, grey kneelength socks and black shoes. Colours of neckties seem to vary - they do not look like school ties.

There was a major change of clothing between 1930-1939. The boys wore double breasted grey suits, white or pale grey shirt, red and navy striped ties, grey socks and black shoes. Red lettered "R.S.J.D.C." embossed on navy badge was introduced in 1934.

The girls wore navy blue box pleated tunics belted with soft tie (coloured ties for sports), navy winter coat, blazer, cardigan and wide brimmed hat, white shirt, black stockings, grey or white socks for small children.

In summer the girls wore pale blue buttoned dresses with gathered skirts and navy collar and cuffs.

Later in 1938 the senior girls made summer dresses in four different shades of fabric - pink, yellow, blue and green with tiny white flower print.

In winter the girls wore thick woollen vests and fleece buttoned bodices. When washed in the school laundry, these garments became tough and very irritating to wear. I remember hiding my vest under the mattress leaving me only in the bodice! Eventually I was caught and punished!

1940-1946 - due to World War II the school was evacuated. The children wore the same clothes but allowed to wear their own clothes in the weekends and other special days.

1946-1965 - the changing of colour for the uniform to brown and yellow! For girls, brown skirt, blazer, cardigan, etc. First appearance of beret instead of hat, in brown shade with yellow letters embossed on badge. For boys, as for the girls but with grey flannels.

Sport clothes - there are photographs elsewhere in the book throughout the years 1897 - 1965 which show different kinds of clothes. These were continually changed to keep up with the fashion of the day.

Religious Education

A full programme of religious education was a major part of the curriculum, leading up to and past Barmitzvah for the boys, and Jewish Household management for the girls. All Holy Days and festivals were strictly observed, and past pupils were always welcomed to return when help with religious occasions such as marriages and childbirth was needed.

(supplied by Edwin Denton)

Annual Garden Fetes

The first one was in 1938 when money was needed for a swimming pool. it became a permanent fixture interrupted by the World War II when the school was evacuated.

These fetes were resumed after the War from 1946 till the closure of school in 1965.

Annual Prize Days

Possibly since the turn of the century, Annual Prize Days were usually held in July, a week or so before the children left for their summer vacation.

There were displays of gymnastics, dancing, craftwork, woodwork, dressmaking, tailoring, etc.,

Prizes were awarded for lipreading (photo of medal for lipreading – see below); dressmaking, tailoring, carpentry, etc. Also book awards on leaving school.



Numbers of children admitted to the School

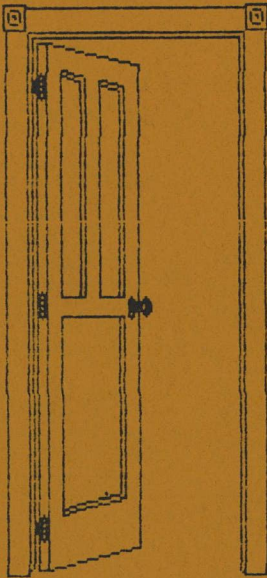
The highest number of children admitted was 63 in 1910 and the lowest was 15 in 1965.

Appendix Two – Donors

The following people have kindly contributed towards the Reunion activities :-

Mr E Abrahams
Miss D Bagley
Mr J Barry
Mr & Mrs Brackman
Mr M Brojer
Mr & Mrs J Cohen
Mr & Mrs D Custin
Mr & Mrs A Daniels
Dr & Mrs G Daniels
Mrs D David
Mr & Mrs D Fallman
Mr & Mrs H Fallman
Mr & Mrs G Fine
Mr & Mrs K Gibbons
Dr J Glazer
Mr & Mrs G Goldsmith
Rabbi H Gryn
Mr & Mrs Handscomb
Ms L Handscomb
Mr & Mrs I Hart
Mr & Mrs J Hart
Mrs M Hart
Mr & Mrs M Israel
Mr I Itzkowitz
Jewish Deaf Circle
Mr M Kinn
Miss H Kirstein
Mr & Mrs M Lawrence
Mr H Levy
Mr & Mrs B May
Mrs D Mountcastle
Mrs J Nathan
Mr H Newman
Mrs R Pelton (Wembley Ladies Guild)
Mr & Mrs K Perry
Mrs S Primack
Ms Z Primack
Mr & Mrs H Rich
Mr & Mrs C Rifkin
Mr & Mrs D Ross
Mrs R Ross
Mr P Rubenstein
Mr I Schlisselman
Mr & Mrs S Senchal
Mr M Solomon
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The door is half closed – it is like this book.
It will never be closed for it can be read again and again.....



The back of the school building and lawn.