



The story of three London Deaf schools

Peter W. Jackson

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Peter W. Jackson

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Buildings Time Chart

- 1865 First Jewish Home for the Deaf and Dumb opens in Whitechapel, London.
- 1866 Jewish Home for the Deaf and Dumb re-locates to Burton Crescent, London WC1
- 1869 Jewish Home for the Deaf and Dumb re-locates again to Hunter Street, St. Pancras.
- 1875 Jewish Home for the Deaf and Dumb moves to Walmer House, Notting Hill
- 1899 Jewish Home for the Deaf and Dumb moves to Nightingale Lane, Balham.
- 1903 London County Council agrees to set up two new residential schools for deaf children, one for boys and one for girls.
Anerley Residential School for Deaf Boys opens in Crystal Palace, London SE20.
- 1905 Oak Lodge Residential School for Deaf Girls opens in Nightingale Lane, Balham, next door to the Jewish Home for Deaf and Dumb Children.
- 1934 The Jewish Home for the Deaf and Dumb changes its title to the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children.
- 1939 War-time evacuations: all three schools are sent to different locations.
- 1945 All three schools return to their former premises in London
- 1956 Anerley Residential School for Deaf Boys closes; Oak Lodge becomes a co-educational school for both deaf girls and now boys.
- 1965 The Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children closes, and is demolished two years later; a new school building is erected on the same site for Oak Lodge.
- 1968 Oak Lodge School for Deaf Children moves into the new building on the site formerly occupied by the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children.
- 2005 Oak Lodge celebrates its centenary.

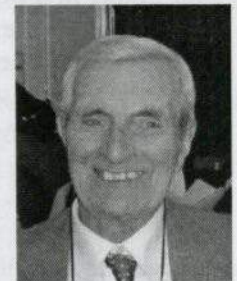
Note:

The now totally unacceptable words "dumb" and "mute" have only been used where they appear in contemporary material.

Preface

Sydney Merrifield, Head Teacher 1968-1986

I was appointed in September 1968 to open the new Oak Lodge building on the site of the School for Jewish Deaf children. Thanks to a superb team, cooks, cleaners, speech therapists, child care staff and teachers, the next 18 years were the happiest of my life. I had the privilege of working with so many splendid pupils, most of whom were very keen to learn. The attainments of these young people increased steadily with most of them passing public examinations. Their craft work was displayed at the World Congress of the Deaf in Stockholm in 1969, and also in Japan, the USA and many European countries.



We were all proud of our school - not a line of graffiti ever appeared on our walls; bullying was virtually non-existent. Staff worked hard preparing the pupils for life after school, arranging work experience, and placing them in employment or in Further Education. There was lots of hard work and lots of fun and laughter too. The reputation of the school was such that we were constantly bombarded with visitors from many parts of the world, ambassadors, politicians, Directors of Education, teachers and students, culminating in the visit of Her Majesty The Queen and Prince Philip in 1977. When I retired in 1986 and was succeeded by my son, Peter, the school went from strength to strength.

Peter Merrifield, Head Teacher 1986-2010

I was very lucky to become the Head of a very successful school in 1986 - but the first two years were times of great changes in education. The old 'O' Level and CSE exams were replaced by the new GCSE's; the Inner London Education Authority disappeared and Oak Lodge became a Wandsworth School.



'Local Management' meant that the governors and I had control of the school budget. In my first year at Oak Lodge, I managed a budget of £1600. In my last year we had a turnover of more than £4,000,000.

We set up the Wandsworth Hearing Impaired Service to support deaf and hearing impaired children in mainstream and special schools, which now included supporting families of babies diagnosed with a hearing loss a few days after birth. We established a post-16 education programme known as '16+'. We set up a service for deaf adults in local colleges, 'Deaf First' which had 70 students last year.

I was privileged to be part of the establishment of 'Corner House', an in-patient service for deaf children with severe psychiatric problems. This is the first such facility in the U.K. and the second in the world.

We developed a ground-breaking data system to show what our pupils are achieving. We endured four Ofsted Inspections. The last two described Oak Lodge as 'outstanding'. In fact, the third inspection carried out by a highly respected and experienced Head Teacher as the lead, told me that she had never been in a better school.

Perhaps the development of which I am most proud is the role which deaf people have had at Oak Lodge. When I arrived, there was one basic grade Hostel worker who was deaf (and she was very good). By the time I left, we had enabled 16 deaf people to become qualified and 30% of the

teaching staff were deaf, including a deputy head, senior teachers, teachers and highly skilled classroom assistants etc.

Oak Lodge is a bright light at a time when many schools for the deaf are closing or drastically reducing in numbers of pupils. We have taken on the task of a very challenging pupil population, with many refugee and asylum-seeking children, and traumatised pupils from war-torn parts of the world. We have proved that they can be successful citizens and successful members of the deaf community.

I am proud of that.

Introduction

It is a difficult enough task to produce a book about one particular school, especially if the author did not attend that school, but to write about TWO schools whose lives are interwoven around one particular site in South London becomes much more difficult, the more so when it becomes necessary to add in a chapter about a third school which merged with one of the two schools.

Because of this factor, it would not have been possible to research and complete the book without the help of many people. A full list of those who have contributed to the project are listed on pages 135 & 136. However, it is necessary at this stage to pay tribute to the efforts of a few special people who have made massive contributions to the project.

Elaine Lavery gave her time willingly and unstintingly to research for the project around the London area; she went on my behalf to the London Metropolitan Archives and took copies of relevant documents that I had previously identified. She also met with many former Oak Lodge girls of the 1930s-1960s era and succeeded in obtaining from them copies of photographs that they held and identifying the people in the photographs. In this task, she was greatly helped by Brenda Willoughby who deserves special praise for her support.

Ann Clements of the Jewish Deaf Association is another who gave her considerable time to the task of obtaining photographs from former members of the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children, and identifying the people in the photographs.

The help of Robin Ash proved invaluable in providing identification of former pupils of Oak Lodge in the 1970s-1990s era.

Several members of the current staff of Oak Lodge School gave their time willingly to scan well over a hundred photographs of the school's activities and its pupils from its archives.

Dominic of the RNID Library also helped by patiently scanning many photographs from the Selwyn Oxley Collection.

Arnold Rundle went to the trouble of writing several pages of information relating to Anerley Residential School for Deaf Boys.

To all of these people, many, many thanks.

This book is produced for the benefit of all those pupils who went to these schools, plus their descendants, at their request so that they may understand their history and to fill a gap within the British Deaf History Society's publications.

Peter W. Jackson
October 2010

Chapter 1: In the Beginning...

In the 1860s, most Deaf children in London were sent to the London Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb in Old Kent Road, a large non-denominational institution that had been in existence for over 70 years and one that taught through the combined system of sign language, fingerspelling, speech and writing. The school population included several children of the Jewish faith, and a man named Simon Lazarus Miers felt it was wrong that these children should be brought up in an institution where they received no benefit of their religious beliefs and instruction.

Simon Miers discovered that one prominent Jewish man named Henry Isaacs had two born-deaf daughters and he had chosen to send his daughters to an institution for the deaf and dumb in Rotterdam, Holland where the teaching was given in the German method (or Oralism, as it came to be known). Miers contacted Isaacs and the latter agreed to help to found a Jewish School for Deaf Children. Together with a third man, Aaron H. Moses and the support of Baroness de Rothschild, they put up the money to purchase a house in Whitechapel, London.

15 Mount Street, Whitechapel had accommodation for 6 children plus a teacher. Almost immediately, however, it was realised that the house was too small and that there was no room to expand to accommodate the sudden surge in demand of Jewish deaf children whose parents wanted them to go into this school.

The school was consecrated, in the Jewish practice, on Sunday 30 April 1865. For some reason, the school was actually called the Jewish Home for Deaf and Dumb Children, and the first teacher was the Reverend C. Rhind, who taught using the manual method, which was not exactly what those founding the school wanted. The main purpose of the school was to bring deaf children up in the Jewish faith, and it was at odds for the teacher to be a non-Jew. Also, Henry Isaacs was determined that the children should be taught by the same method as his daughters were being taught in Rotterdam, and accordingly, he went over to ask the headmaster there, Dr. Hirsch, to recommend a suitable teacher for the new school, preferably Jewish.

As it happened, Dr. Hirsch had a young man aged 20 on his staff that he thought very highly of, and that young man was Jewish into the bargain. William Van Praagh was brought over from Holland and engaged as a teacher at the new school. Van Praagh was subsequently to carve out a remarkable career for himself in London for the rest of his life, first as headteacher then headmaster of the Jewish Deaf and Dumb Home, then as Director of the Fitzroy Square School for Deaf and Dumb Children from 1874 onwards until his death in 1907 aged 62.

Van Praagh, who also liked to call himself a Professor of Vocal Physiology, remained a staunch Oralist all his life, attending the 1880 Milan Conference as a delegate, and giving evidence to the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and the Dumb in 1887 which eventually led to the establishment of Oralism in schools throughout Britain. His school, the Jewish Deaf and Dumb Home, was the first in Britain to adopt the Oralist approach to education of deaf children, and Van Praagh's specialist area was lipreading and articulation, contributing many articles to the medical and general press about these subjects.

The chronic overcrowding at 15 Mount Street led Van Praagh to persuade the founding committee that a new location was needed for the school, which subsequently relocated to 44 Burton Crescent in WC1 in 1866, thence to Hunter Street in 1869.

Van Praagh recognised that education of deaf children needed to begin at the earliest possible age, and fixed the age of admission at 6 years old. Interest in Van Praagh's work was widespread, and he was asked to educate non-Jewish deaf children at Hunter Street on a day basis only.

Some of the committee of the Jewish Home for the Deaf and Dumb began to feel that Van Praagh's policy of taking in non-Jewish deaf children for educational purposes did not fit in with the ethos for which the Home had been established, viz. that the Home was to be a place where Jewish deaf children would be brought up and educated in the Jewish faith, so Van Praagh was asked to cease this practice. He was unwilling to do so, and therefore resigned from his position as headteacher at the Jewish Home for Deaf

A large group photograph of the 1900-1901 school class. The group consists of approximately 40 individuals, including students of various ages and several adults, likely the faculty. They are posed in several rows on a grassy area in front of a large, multi-story building with many windows. A large, leafless tree stands to the left of the group. The students are dressed in early 20th-century clothing, with boys in suits and ties and girls in dresses or blouses. The overall tone is formal and historical.

The loss of such an excellent teacher caused the Jewish Home for the Deaf and the Dumb to cast its net wide for a teacher of similar excellence, who would also be Jewish, and they were fortunate to secure the appointment of Simon Schonheil from the Vienna Institute for the Education of the Deaf. Aged 34 at the time of his appointment, the successor to William Van Praagh had a reputation as a very able teacher of the Oral system. His young wife, aged 22 at the time of her husband's appointment, became the Matron of the Home.

Accordingly, the Committee secured a property named Walmer House in Walmer Road, Notting Hill at a lease of £1,600 per annum. The property had once been the Episcopal Palace of the Bishop of Norwich. Additional expenses for the modification of the accommodation both for the teaching staff and children pushed the amount required up to £3,600 and the committee faced a shortfall of £1,300 to cover all expenses. Once again, the generosity of the local Jewish population came to the rescue and the school was able to move into its new premises in November 1875, after another ceremony of consecration conducted by the Chief Rabbi of London, Dr. Alder. A report in the Jewish Chronicle dated 12 November 1875 stated

The 1881 census for 115 Walmer Street showed that there were 25 deaf children in residence on the night the census was taken in April, 23 of them listed as inmates and pupils and two girls aged 15 and 16 listed as inmates and dressmakers. Three of the pupils and the assistant teacher came from Poland; one other pupil came from Prussia. The census record runs over three pages, and includes Mr. Schontheil's five children and 6 servants (housekeeper, nurses and domestics) on the record.

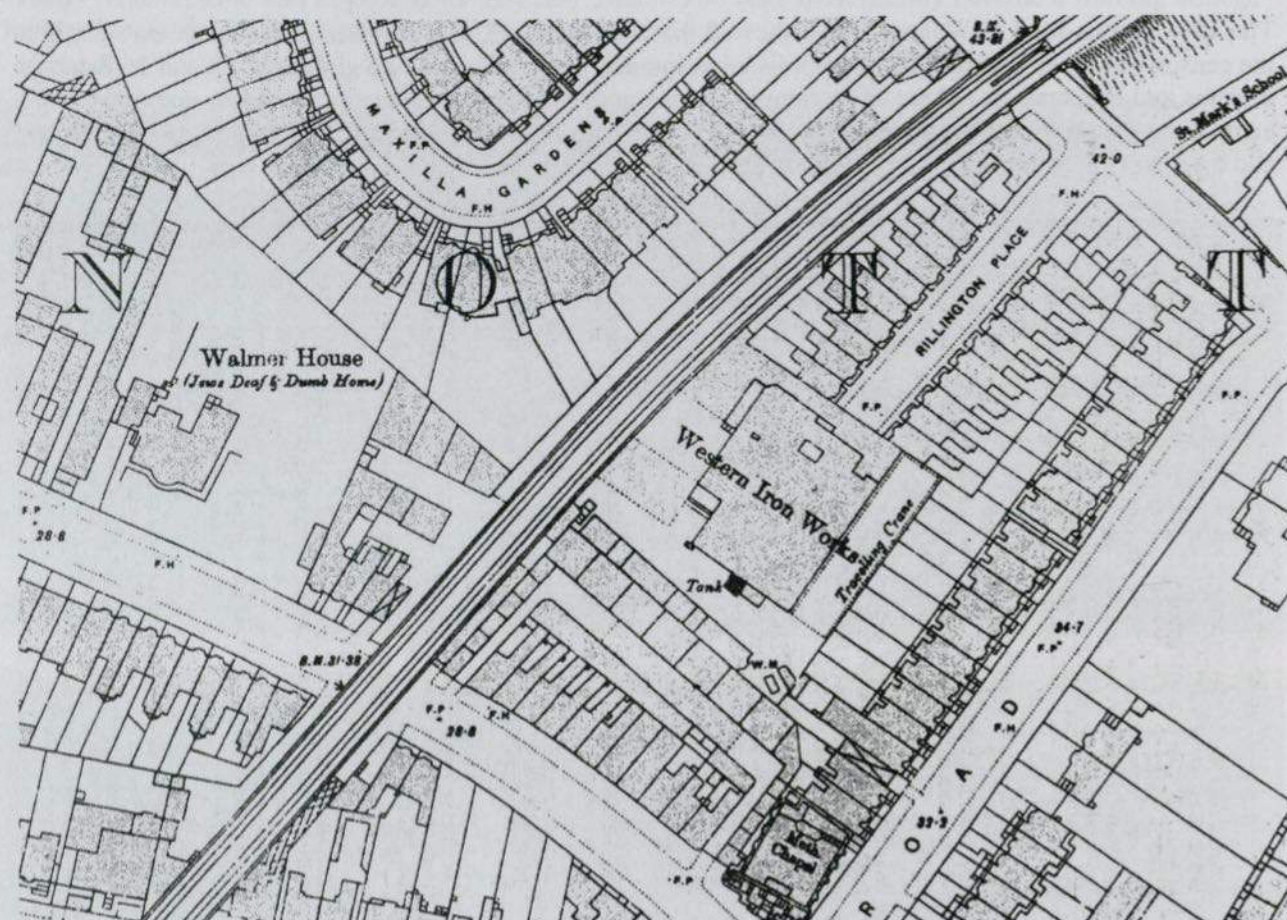
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The year 1881 was also remarkable for the visit of delegates to the Annual Conference of Head Teachers held in London who visited the school to see for themselves the results of the Oral system in use in the school. This was the year after the Milan Congress during which a tribute was paid at the Congress to the way which the Jewish School had pioneered its work under the Oralist system.

At the same time, Simon Schontheil chose to resign as Headteacher of the school, and a former assistant teacher of his, a Mr. S. Kutner, who was at that time teaching at the Manchester Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, was appointed in his place, with his wife as the Matron.

One of the first responsibilities of the new headmaster was to assist the committee in seeking out new premises to relocate to in order to comply with the 1893 Act. This was quite difficult, and it was two years before the trustees came upon a property just off Wandsworth Common that suited their purposes. The property was vacant, and had extensive grounds and was called The Grange and situated at 61 Nightingale Lane. The house had originally been split into two, and the Lane had originally been named Balham Woods

Lane. The purchase cost of The Grange was £4250 when it was acquired in 1897, but renovations and alterations to the property took a further two years before it could be opened as a school.



Ordnance Survey map dated 1895 showing the location of Walmer House in Notting Hill.

Note: Look at the right of the map next to the Iron Works - Rillington Place, where in the early 1950s the murderer John Reginald Christie lived.

Courtesy of London Borough of Wandsworth Libraries

Chapter 2: Early Years at The Grange

The difference between the old building in Walmer Road, Notting Hill and the new premises in Nightingale Lane were striking. The old school in Notting Hill was cramped, overcrowded and situated in an area which was densely populated; in contrast, The Grange had lofty and airy dormitories capable of comfortably housing up to 50 pupils in separate girls' and boys' parts of the building. It also had spacious rooms converted into use as classrooms and a workshop where woodwork lessons could be held. Next to the workshop was a new gymnasium whose fittings were due to a generous donation from a benefactor (Mrs. H. L. Cohen). There were also light and airy dining rooms, a well-fitted kitchen and spacious apartments for teaching staff.

The Grange was situated in spacious grounds and in close proximity to Wandsworth Common which gave the children opportunities for exercise.

The school, which was still called the Jews' Home for the Deaf and Dumb, was to remain in the same location for the next sixty years and more until it closed.

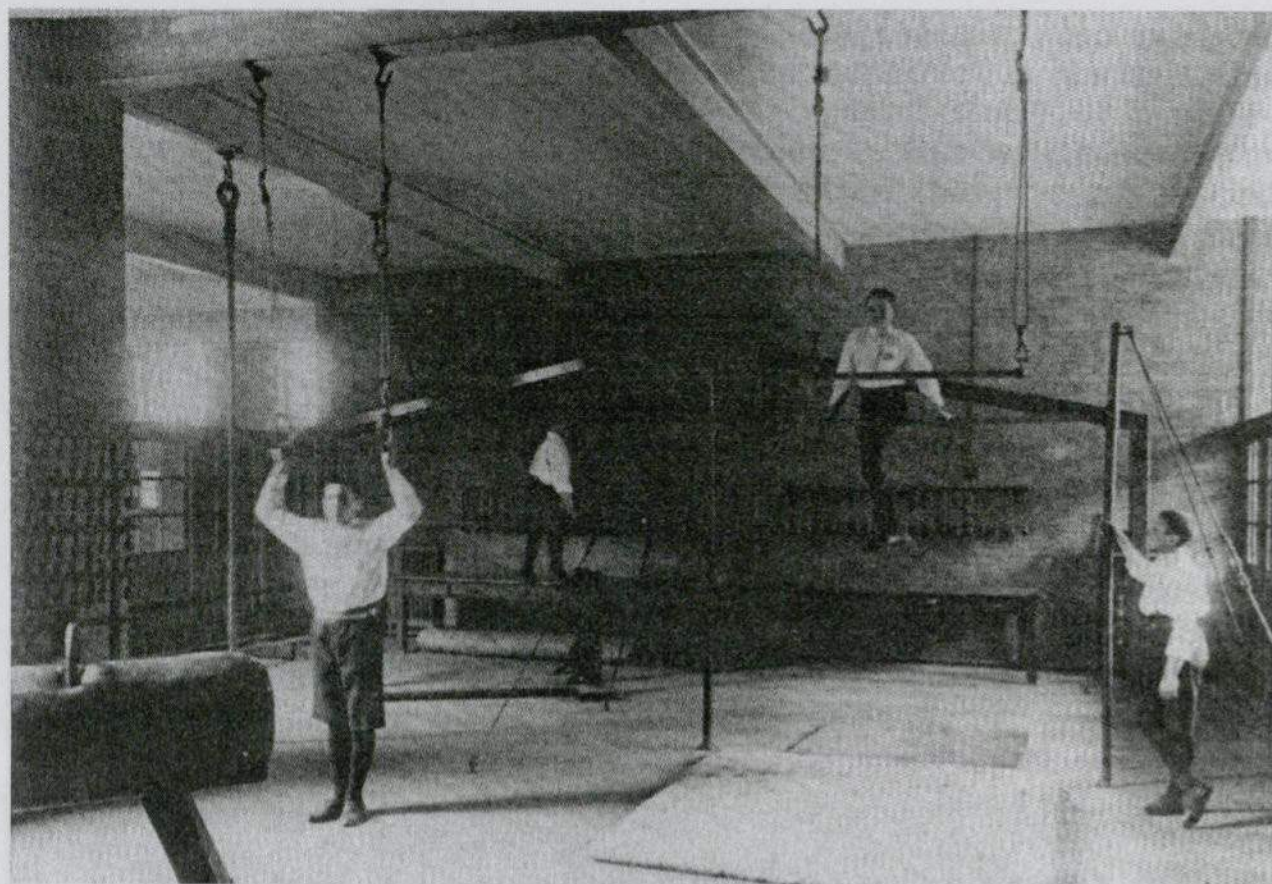


A drawing of the new school, as it appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 19 May 1899.

The Jewish Chronicle

The new building was consecrated by the Chief Rabbi on Sunday 14 May in front of a large audience, and the school opened with an intake of forty-three children (nineteen girls and twenty four boys) a month later in June 1899. The headmaster, Mr. S. Kutner, was assisted by four assistant teachers and one probationer. One feature that was missing from the new school was electricity. The committee had obviously baulked at the need for expenditure of £150 to install electric lighting, but this reluctance was soon to be shown to be very short-sighted indeed, for the use of gas lighting within the school was proving to be quite dangerous. This omission was rectified within the next ten years following yet another appeal to local influential Jewish people for funds amounting to £7000 for the upgrading of classrooms, additional dormitories and other general improvement works.

To held to raise this amount, the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home Aid Society organised a series of Cinderella Balls and other events throughout 1902 to 1904. This enabled work to commence on the building of a new wing that included a new spacious dormitory for boys, together with three masters' rooms, bathrooms and lavatories on top of a central hall on the ground floor which had five light and airy classrooms leading off



The new gymnasium in 1899
Courtesy of the Jewish Deaf Association



Mr. & Mrs. S. Kutner (sitting opposite ends, second front row) with some of the older boys and girls in the garden of The Grange, 61 Nightingale Lane, 1899
Courtesy of the Jewish Deaf Association

it. The new wing was heated by water, but open fireplaces were also provided in addition. Although the once spacious grounds were now much curtailed by the latest addition, there was still ample space for play-grounds for both boys and girls as well as a kitchen garden and excellent lawns.

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 increased number of children. To restore speech to the Deaf Mute is indeed a Human 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, 18, 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.
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JOSEPH JOSEPH, Esq., 144, Harley Street, W.
B. KIRCH, Esq., M.A., 14, Randolph Road, W.
HERMANN LANDAU, Esq., 38, Bryanston Square, W.
S. S. OPPENHEIM, Esq., 7, Clifton Gardens, W.
B. S. PAULSEN, Esq., 60, Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.
HON. WALTER ROYCE, 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.

The advertisement that appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* appealing for funds for further developments of The Grange.

Note the numbers of children now in the school, and how many more they wished to take in.
The Jewish Chronicle

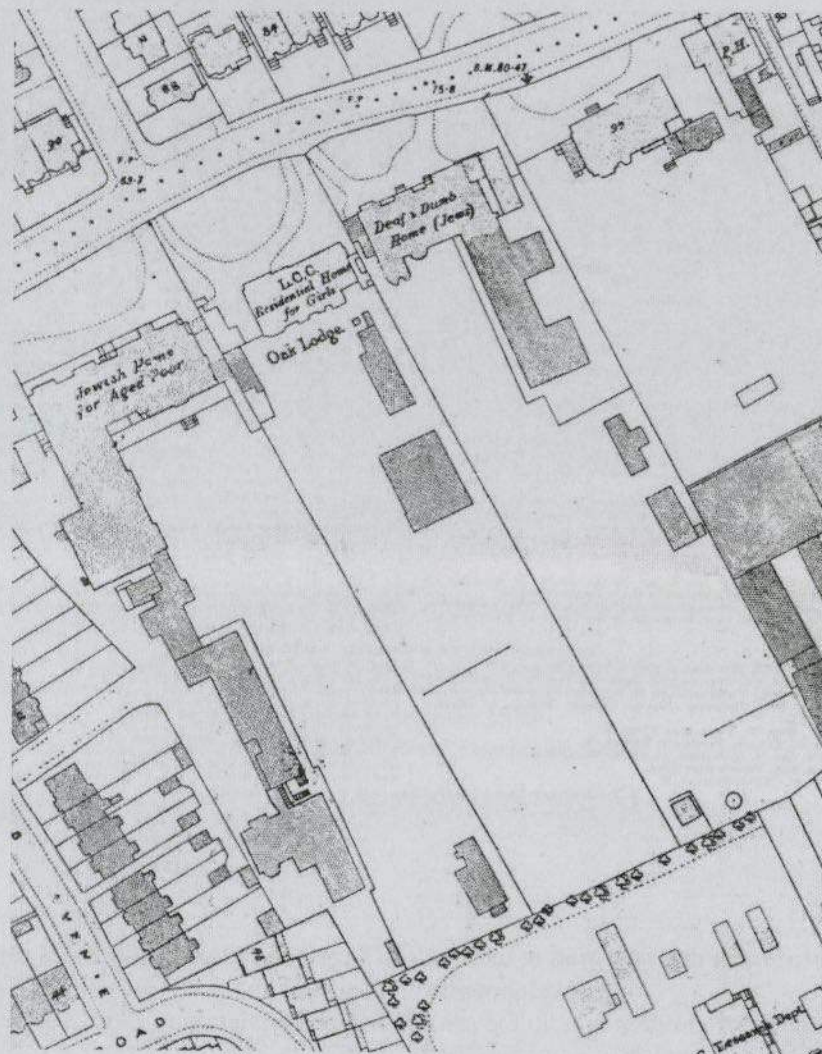
The new building was opened by H. R. H. Princess Christian, daughter of the late Queen Victoria, on 26 October 1905 in a ceremony that included brief displays of oral instruction methods given by Mr. Kutner and other members of the staff. After inspecting the new building, the Princess accepted a gift of three purses from three of the children, and took tea with the Chairman of the Committee, his wife, plus the Chief Rabbi and other dignitaries before leaving. The Royal visit excited the neighbourhood and crowds lined the street outside the school for a glimpse of the Princess.

In the same year (1905), two other important events took place concerning The Grange and the school.

The first event was that the school won the inter-schools gymnastics shield that was competed for annually by all schools for the deaf in Britain, the first (and only) time the Jewish school had ever won it - this shield was usually won by large residential institutions such as the Manchester Institution or the Derby Institution for the Deaf and Dumb or the Northern Counties School for the Deaf and Dumb, all of which had large gymnastics teams.

The second event was that all the houses in Nightingale Lane were re-numbered. The number of The Grange was changed from no. 61 to no. 101 Nightingale Lane. Following this change in numbering, the

words The Grange were gradually dropped from the address and the address of the school was simply 101 Nightingale Lane. However, it was the third event which was highly significant! The London County Council decided to start a school for deaf girls next door!



Ordnance Survey map showing the location of the two schools, c1910
Map supplied by Robin Ash

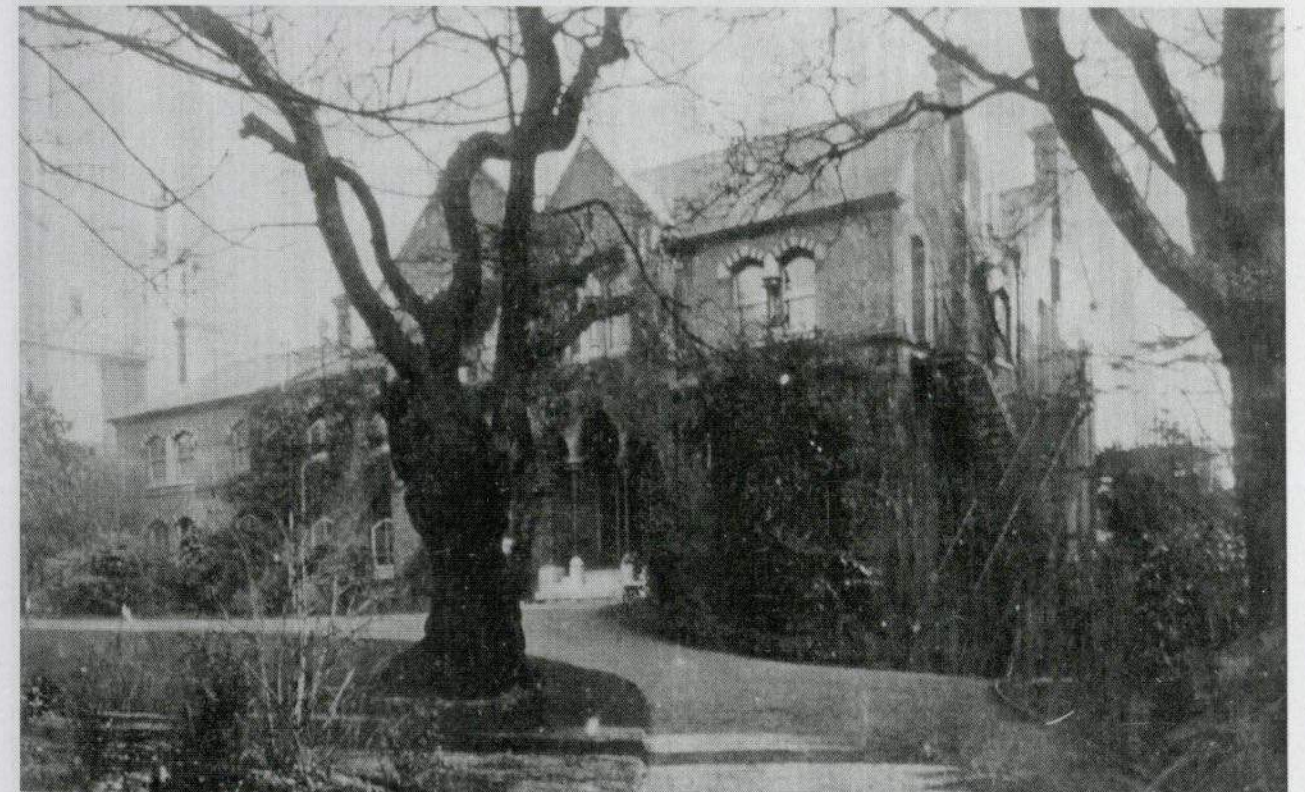
Chapter 3: Two New Schools

During 1903, the London County Council Special Schools Sub-Committee were given the task of setting up two new schools in the London area, one for boys and one for girls. The purpose of these schools was to replace the hotchpotch of small schools that had sprung up under the auspices of the Reverend William Stainer, sometimes known as the Stainer Homes. Many of these so-called Homes had become disreputable in terms of accommodation, the welfare of the children and their education needs, especially those who were in their early teens. Both of the schools had to be partly residential, and partly for day pupils.

The boys' school, Anerley Residential School for Deaf Boys, was soon up and running, as a suitable property had been quickly found, but the new residential school for deaf girls became beset by delays while the LCC Special Schools Sub-Committee searched for a suitable property. We shall return to the Anerley School for Deaf Boys in a later chapter.

It was not until the spring of 1904 that a suitable property for the girls' school was identified. Ironically, this came about from a request by the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home to the LCC Special Schools Board to consider taking over the educational side of the Home because of the need of the Home to pay its teaching staff on a parity with that paid by the LCC, and this was becoming a heavy drain on the Home's resources. Although nothing came of the Home's request to the LCC Special Schools Board at that time, it was noted that there was a vacant property next door to the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home that might be suitable for conversion to a residential school for deaf girls.

This beautiful old house, situated in what was to be renumbered as 103 Nightingale Lane, used to belong to the Curator of Kew Gardens and because of the many oak trees that graced the back garden, it was called Oak Lodge.



The back garden of Oak Lodge, with its oak trees that gave the building its name. c1909
Courtesy of Brenda Willoughby

Unfortunately, the conversions needed to make it suitable for a residential girls school and to meet with existing fire, health and safety regulations took longer than expected, and on 23 November 1904, the Board

of Education approved plans for the erection of isolation rooms, nurses' rooms and an emergency staircase for 27 residential places, plus 10 day places, and at a meeting of the managing committee for the Oak Lodge Residential School for Deaf Girls held on 9 February 1905, the Clerk to the Committee reported that the architect in charge of the conversion was of the opinion that it would be June 1905 at the earliest before the school would be ready.

At the same meeting, a report from the Chief Fire Officer of the London Fire Brigade was presented that stated additional work needed to be done to make the building more compliant with current Fire Regulations. It was estimated by the architect this additional work would cost £155.15s 0d and put back the opening for a further two months.

The managing committee also met with seven candidates for the appointment of Superintendent, and after carefully considering the candidates' qualifications, it was resolved to make a shortlist of three and forward the shortlist to the Special Schools Sub-Committee for a final selection to be made. The eventual appointment that was made from this shortlist was of Miss A. B. Hopson, who was 37 years of age, and who was currently Headmistress of the Shirley School, near Croydon. She had no experience of working with deaf girls, but had four years as a pupil teacher, two further years' training and twelve years experience in teaching. Miss Hopson was to stay at Oak Lodge as Superintendent for the next 25 years until she retired in 1930.

The new school finally opened on 28 August 1905 after a delay of over 12 months, with an initial intake of 22 boarders and 7 day pupils.

One of the peculiarities of the school before the second world war was that it took pride in calling itself a *seminary* for deaf girls.



Front of Oak Lodge Residential School for Deaf Girls,
taken from Nightingale Lane - note the name on the gate to the right.
Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library

Chapter 4: Jewish Deaf School Pictorial Record 1900-1939

In many of these photographs, memories of names and faces have faded with time, but wherever possible, names and the year the photographs were taken have been listed.



Mr & Mrs. Kutner with pupils, c1915
Courtesy of the Jewish Deaf Association



Miss Bird's class, September 1922
Pupils include Joe Coffman (extreme left), Edward Gold, Monty Nash, Nathan-?-, Jane Gedlovitch, Polly Gedlovitch (sitting in front of Miss Bird), Isaac Michaels, Ben Faber, Harry -?-, Hilda Michaels, Louis Britton and (on the extreme right), Leah Sugarman.

Courtesy of the Jewish Deaf Association



School group, in the school gardens, 1922.
The Principal, Miss Harriet Davids, is in the centre of the picture, middle row seated.
Courtesy of Jewish Deaf Association



School group pictured on Prize Day, July 1923
There are 4 sisters in this picture to the left; the eldest Annie Gedlovitch is at the back on the left of the girl in the Welsh hat, Polly and Jane Gedlovitch are seated first and second in the front row extreme left, with Debbie Gedlovitch with her hands on her sister Jane's shoulders. Other children identified in the picture are Abraham Silverman, the tall black-haired boy at the back, with Sarah Ash two places to the left of him in a Welsh hat. Leah Sugarman is seated in the front row to the right of Jane Gedlovitch, with Lionel Katz two places further along and Louis Britton at the extreme right. The first boy to the right of the girls in the third row is Frank Clements.

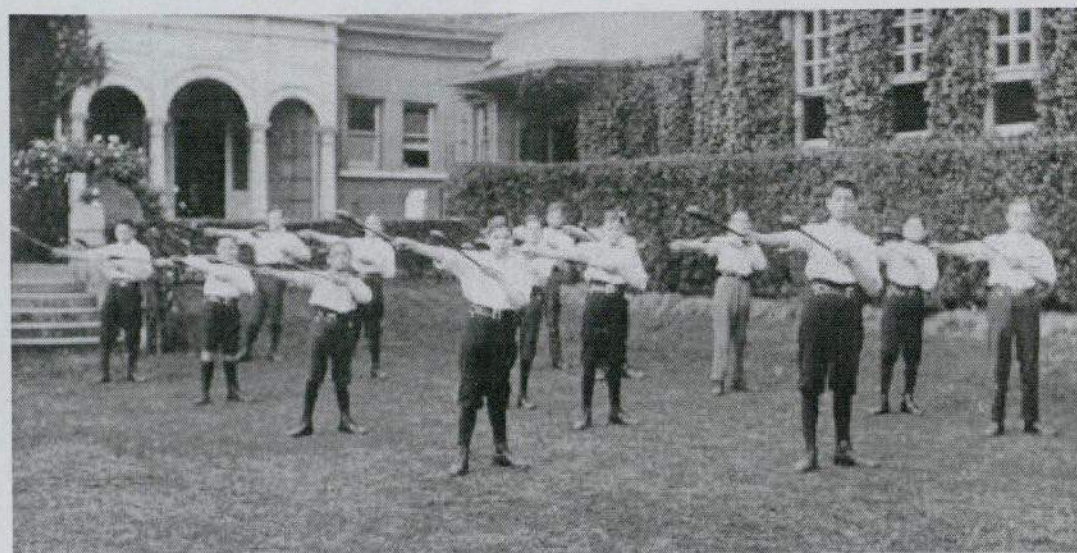
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Two photographs taken on Prize Day, July 1923
The girl on the left of the two in Welsh costume is Sarah Ash, but the others are unknown.
Photos from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, Courtesy of the RNID Library



Left: Group of female teachers in the grounds in 1923
Right: All the school teaching staff in the grounds, 1923;
Back row: Miss Wilshire, Mr. Musson, Mr. Hart;
Seated: Miss Cohen, Miss Davids, Miss Vine, -? -;
Photos from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, Courtesy of the RNID Library



Senior Schoolboys and Schoolgirls at drill, Prize Day 1923
Photos from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, Courtesy of the RNID Library



Prize Day, July 1923
 Gymnastics Display
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Front of School, Nightingale Lane 1925
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Teachers in 1925

Left to right: Miss Vine; Mr. Hart; Miss Metson; Miss Davids; Miss Cohen; Mr. Musson
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Teachers in 1927

Left to right: Miss Metson; Miss Davids; Miss Wilshire; Mr. Musson
Kneeling: Miss Vine & Miss Cohen
Courtesy of Israel Itzkovitz



Boy Scouts in 1927

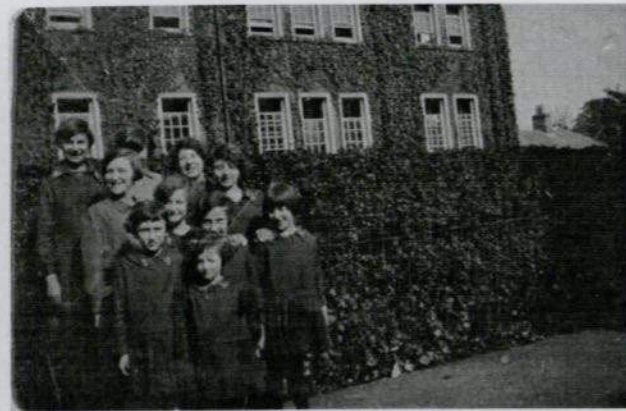
Left to right (standing): Frank Clements, Roger Hoffman, David Olsen, Sidney Rosen, Noah Yakson;
Left to right (seating): -?-, Max Weiner, Isaac Butneck, -?-, Isaac Marcovitch, Israel Yarrow
Courtesy of Israel Itzkovitz



Boy Scouts in 1927
(most names unknown)
Courtesy of Israel Itzkovitz



Prize Day, July 1928
Left to right: Polly Gedlovitch, Leah Sugarman,
Jane Gedlovitch, unknown
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Group of girls in 1928
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Group of girls in 1928
Back row: Eva Switcher, Rose Primack, Jane and
Polly Gedlovitch;
Front row: Leah Sugarman, Hilda Michaels,
Sheila Kafron, Jane Newman, Betty Sokolov
Courtesy of Jewish Deaf Association



Group of girls in 1928
Top: Jane Gedlovitch
1st Row: Minnie Goldberg, Belvin Katz,
Leah Sugarman, Rose Nabarro;
2nd Row: Eva Switcher, -?-, -?-,
Josephine Solomon;
3rd Row: Rita Willis, Bessie Myers, Betty Berger,
Renee Litman;
Front: Ena Halpern, Millie Nabarro, Irene Tash
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Group of girls in 1928
Courtesy of Jane Stryker

Girl Guide Activities 1927-1929



Summer Camp, Dorking 1927
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Summer Camp, Dorking 1928
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Girl Guide group, September 1928
Back: Eva Switcher, Celia Resnick, Hilda Michaels, Rose Primack,
Yetta Wascublatt, Polly Gedlovitch, Minnie Slevkin;
Front: Miss Veal, Betty Sokolov, Leah Sugarman, Betty Berger,
Renee Litman, Rita Willis, Sheila Kafron, Jane Gedlovitch,
Miss Orbell
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Girl Guide group at Summer Camp, 1929
From left to right: Rita Willis, Renee Litman, Hilda Michaels, Rose
Primack, Eva Switcher, Jane Gedlovitch, Sheila Kafron,
Minnie Goldberg;
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Jane Gedlovitch
at Summer Camp, 1929
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Prize Day, 1928
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Group of Girls, 1929

Top:

Theresa Goldstein, Dorothy Britton,
 Miriam Solomon, Ena Halpern,
 Daphne Gosney;

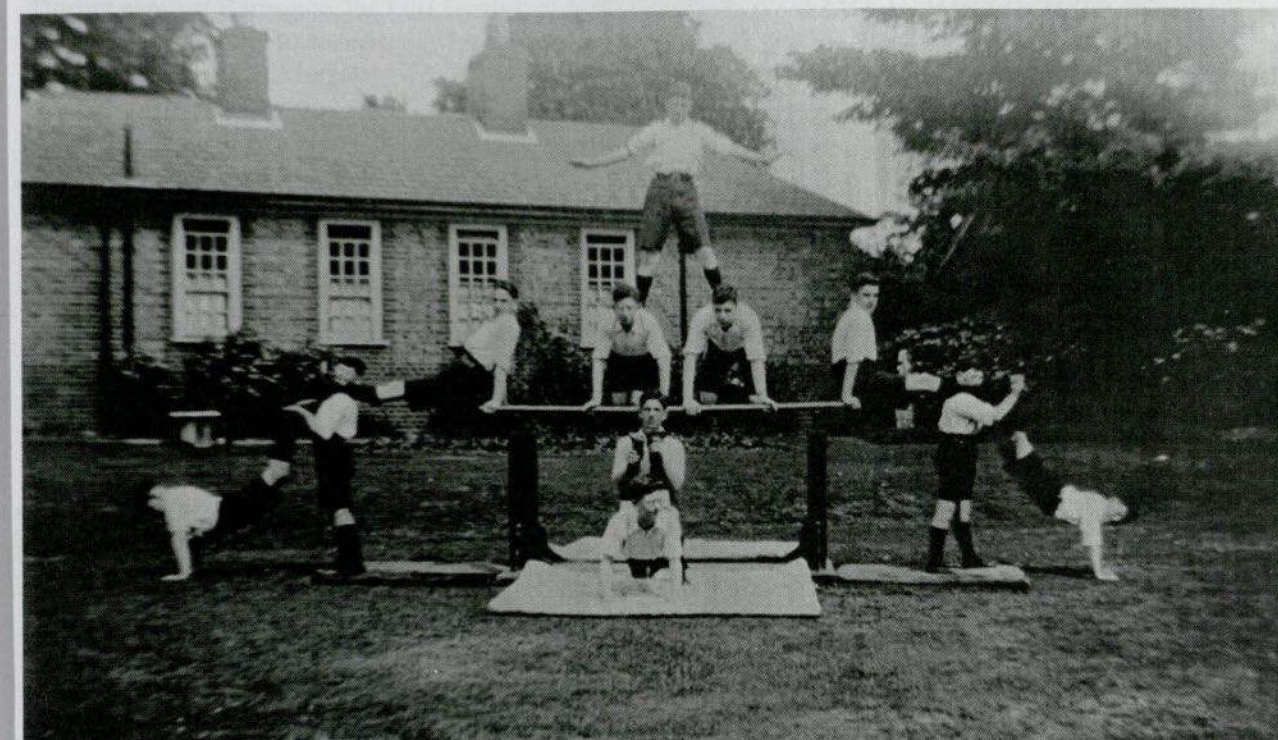
Middle:

Irene Adelman, Yetta Tuchinsky,
 Esther Curland, Millie Nabarro;

Front:

Esther Goldstein, Lily Joseph,
 Mildred Lee

Courtesy of Jewish Deaf Association



Above and below: Boys demonstrating gymnastic exercises, 1931
No names are available for the top picture; the names below relate to the bottom picture.

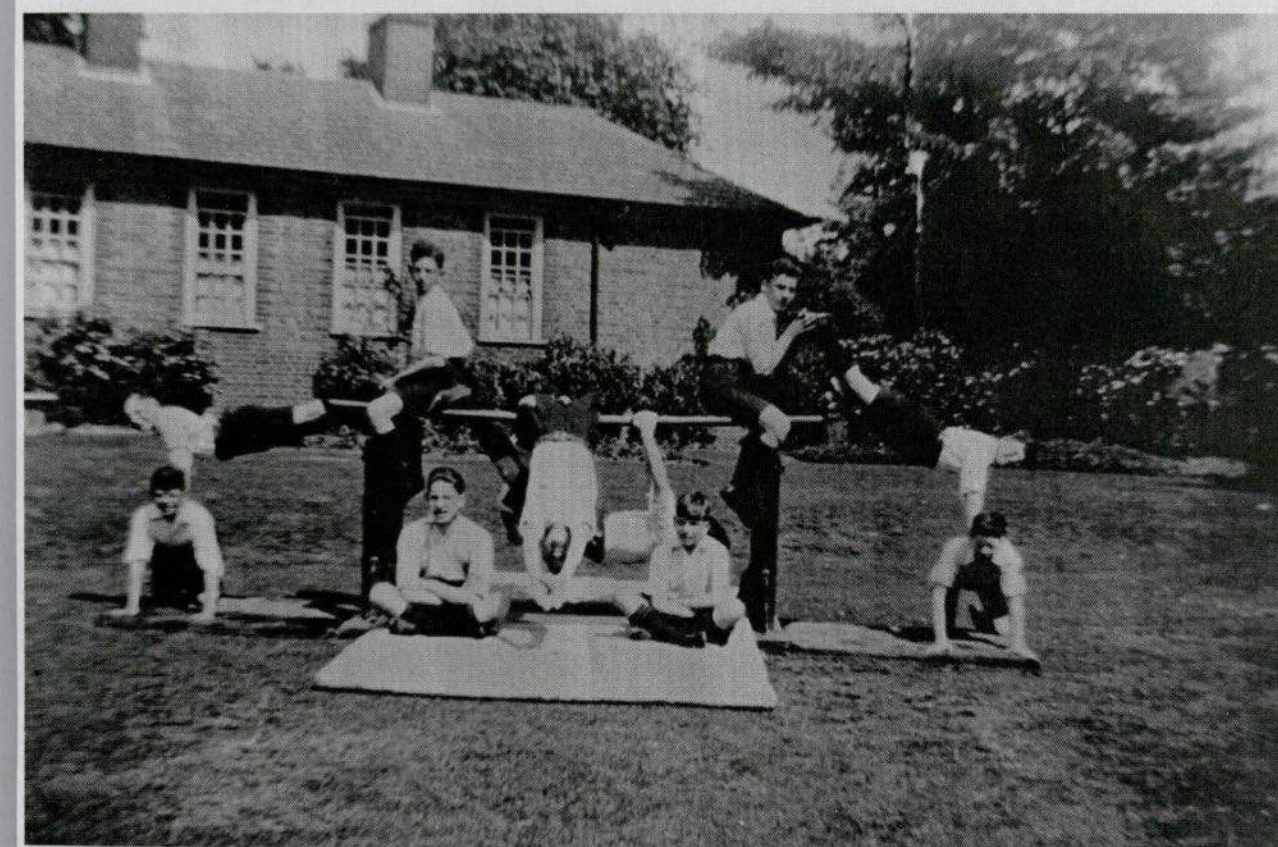
Boys on top:

Myer Israel, Lionel Katz, Coleman Nabarro, Israel Komber;

Boys on bottom row:

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

Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Girl Guide Activities 1930-1932



Left:
Girl Guides Jamboree, 1930
Courtesy of Jane Stryker

Right:

Playing tennis at camp, Ramsgate 1932
The girls from *left to right* are:
Jane Gedlovitch, Minnie Goldberg,
Rose Primack, Debbie and Polly Gedlovitch;
The older ladies seated in the deckchairs are
unknown.
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



At camp in Ramsgate in 1932:

Left to right:
Polly & Jane Gedlovitch,
(Lady Swathling?),
Debbie Gedlovitch, Rose Primack
and Minnie Goldberg
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Ramsgate, 1932
Left to right:
Rose Primack,
Unknown lady
Minnie Goldberg,
Jane Gedlovitch,
Unknown lady,
Polly Gedlovitch
Debbie Gedlovitch
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



During camp at Ramsgate, the Girl Guides
took the opportunity to spend a day on the
beach at Margate.

Right: Jane Gedlovitch on a horse on the
beach.
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Left:
Rose Primack and Minnie Goldberg
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Right:

The three Gedlovitch sisters,
Polly, Jane and Debbie
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Left:

The three Gedlovitch sisters, with an
unknown Guide who got herself into the
frame!
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



Right:

Debbie and Jane Gedlovitch,
Minnie Goldberg,
Debbie Gedlovitch
Rose Primack
Courtesy of Jane Stryker

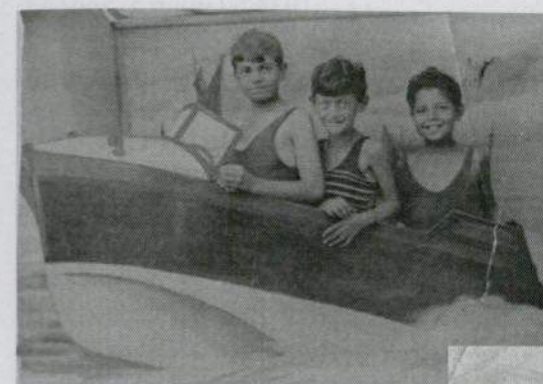




A day at the seaside, 1932
Left to right: Yetta Tuchinsky, Millie Nabarro, -?-, Jane Gedlovitch, Mildred Lee, Rose Nabarro.
Courtesy of Jane Stryker



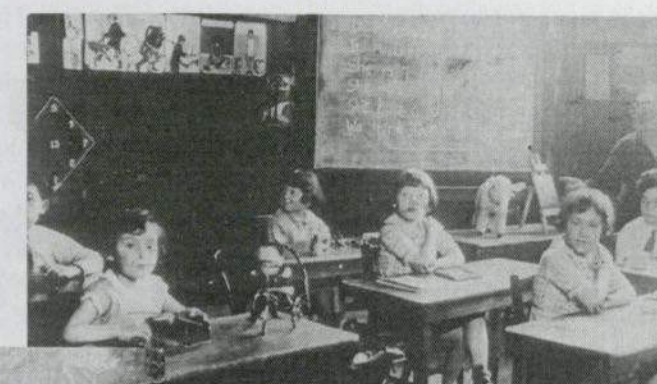
An afternoon out on Wandsworth Common, 1933
Back: Harry Newman, Israel Itzkovitz, G. Woolf, Isaac Solomon;
Middle: Sylvia Isaacs, Theresa Goldstein;
Front: Doris Fallman, Myer Solomon, Joan Lechem.
Courtesy of Israel Itzkovitz



Above:

Three little boys in a model boat

Left to right:
 Israel Itzkovitz, -?-, Harry Newman
Courtesy of Israel Itzkovitz



Above: 1935 class

From left to right:
 Harry Newman, Joan Lechum,
 Doris Fallman, Lily Joseph,
 Theresa Goldstein, Philip Sober(?)
Courtesy of Jewish Deaf Association



Above left: A group of boys, 1937

Names are not available for this picture
Courtesy of Jewish Deaf Association

Centre picture:

1935 Boys
 Harry Newman, -?- Israel Itzkovitz
Courtesy of Israel Itzkovitz



Above right picture: Prize day 1936

Left to right:

Myer Solomon, Sylvia Isaacs, Marie Solomon,
 Jack Hart, Joan Lechum, Doris Fallman
 Harry Newman, Lily Joseph
 and in front, Edward Abrahams
Courtesy of Jewish Deaf Association

Teachers 1934-1938



1934/5 Group

Standing:
Miss Davids, Mr. Hart, Miss Cohen,
Mr. Benham, Miss Metson,
Miss Carr;

Seated:
Miss Novinski, Miss Shackman
Courtesy of Israel Itzkovitz

Teachers and other School Staff,
1936

Miss Carr, Miss Shackman,
Mr. Lindley, Miss Wilkinson,
Mr. Benham, Miss Metson and
Miss Ballinson.

Courtesy of Jewish Deaf Association



Mr. Hart, the Principal,
with his dog, 1937
Courtesy of Jewish Deaf Association



Right:

Mr. Hart handing out prizes on Sports Day 1938
Courtesy of Jane Stryker

Chapter 5: Brief Notes - Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home 1905-1939

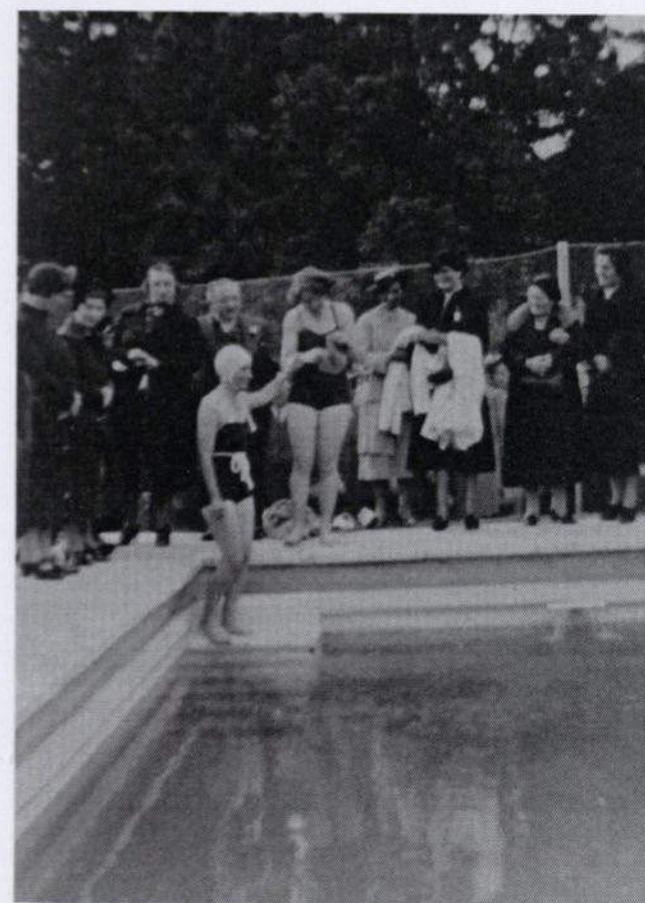
In 1905, Simeon Kutner had been headmaster for 11 years. He continued in his duties up to the onset of the First World War. This War caused some changes to be made in the school, and two teachers had to resign in order to enlist in the armed forces, leaving the school with a reduced staff. Like many other non-maintained schools, the Jewish Deaf and Dumb Home struggled with funds drying up. This must have placed a strain on Mr. Kutner, whose health had not been good for some time, and he died in August 1916.

The Senior Master, Mr. F. Musson, who had already been with the school since it moved into The Grange in 1895, assumed duties as acting head, relinquishing them when the school appointed Miss Harriet Davids as Principal in April 1917, and the staffing position eased somewhat at the end of the War when Simeon Hart, one of the teachers who had enlisted in 1914, rejoined the school at the end of the War.

The Home remained in debt throughout the 1920s, but managed to struggle on through fundraising activities and donations, and there was a contentious point amongst some Governors and staff that the use of the title Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home was outdated and creating difficulties with prospective new pupils' parents and local education boards, and in May 1934, the decision was taken to change the title of the Home to the Jewish Residential School for Deaf Children, a decision that was greeted with relief by many associated with the school.

In April 1936, Miss Harriet Davids retired from the position of Principal after nineteen years in the post, and the school appointed Simeon David Hart in succession. A member of the teaching staff for over 35 years, less war service, Mr. Hart provided some continuity for the school.

A worry for the Board of Governors was the declining numbers of Jewish children attending the school. From a Pupil Roll of 53 children in 1895, the number had fallen steadily and now in 1936, there were only 36 children on the Pupil Roll, despite the fact that the school could accommodate up to 80 children. Two years later, the numbers had risen for the first time in years to 39, and it was hoped that the increase would continue. These three admissions were actually from Germany (see next page).



The year 1938 saw an important facility added to the school when a 30 feet x 15 feet open air swimming pool was built in the grounds. This was the result of a sustained fundraising campaign by one of the children's' parents. At the same time, the gymnasium was re-equipped with the latest type of modern apparatus.

One of the teachers, Miss Shackman, was given the honour of taking the first swim in the new pool in the presence of an audience of dignitaries.

Subsequently, the pool became well-used by the children, but not for very long, because war clouds were gathering again over Europe for the second time in just over 20 years, and the school had to make some preparations for evacuating the children out of London.

In September 1938, tensions throughout Europe worsened when Germany threatened to invade Czechoslovakia and the Board of Education

Left: Miss Shackman opens the new swimming pool by taking the first swim, 1938

Courtesy of Jane Stryker

instructed local education authorities to evacuate all special schools in danger zones. The Jewish school was not subject to local education authority dictum but nonetheless had to comply with the order from the Board of Education. An hectic period followed during which Mr. Hart and Mr Benham tried to secure suitable accommodation, first in Sussex then in Berkshire. In a great upheaval, two lorries transported the school's furniture on 26 September to a village called Speen near Newbury, and several cars carrying the children followed them. A few days later, when Prime Minister Chamberlain returned from Munich waving aloft that famous piece of paper, "Peace in our time!", it was deemed by the Board of Education that the alarm was over, and everything was transported back to the school on the first few days of October.

In March 1939, permission was received from the Home Office to accept ten children from the Israelite School for the Deaf in Berlin, provided that these children were under ten years old. In addition, the permission included the right of the children to earn their living in Britain when they became sixteen years old and were ready to leave school.

On July 11 1939, 10 children under the supervision of Dr. Felix Reich, the headmaster of the Israelite School for the Deaf, crossed into Holland by train then crossed into England by boat. On 19 July, the children arrived at the Jewish School for the Deaf after a difficult journey. They were the last children to escape the Berlin School before the outbreak of the Second World War; three children from the school had earlier made the journey successfully and were already in the school. The rest of the children and the staff of the Berlin School were killed in the concentration camps after the Nazis shut down the school for good in 1942.



Dr. Felix Reich
National Deaf Archives

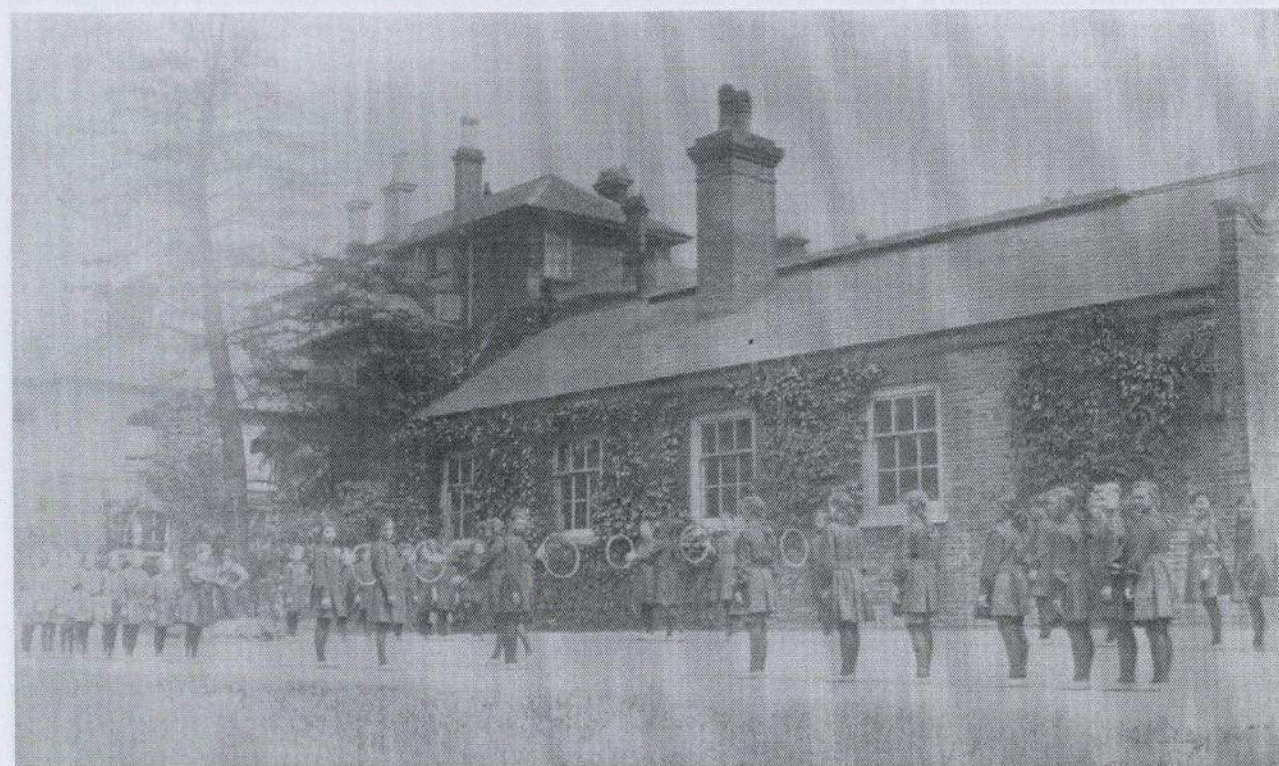
Chapter 6: Oak Lodge Pictorial Record 1905-1939



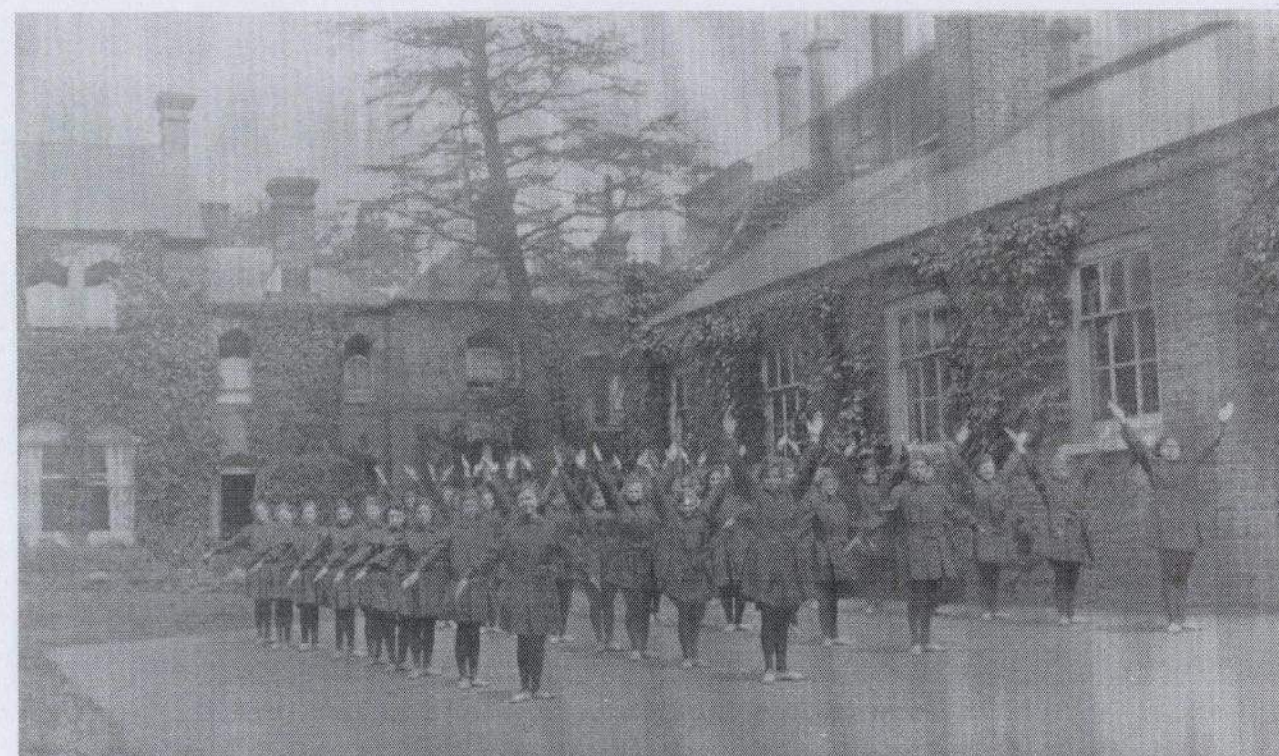
School group, dated 21 May 1921
Photo from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library



Another school group photo, early 1920s
Photo supplied by Robin Ash

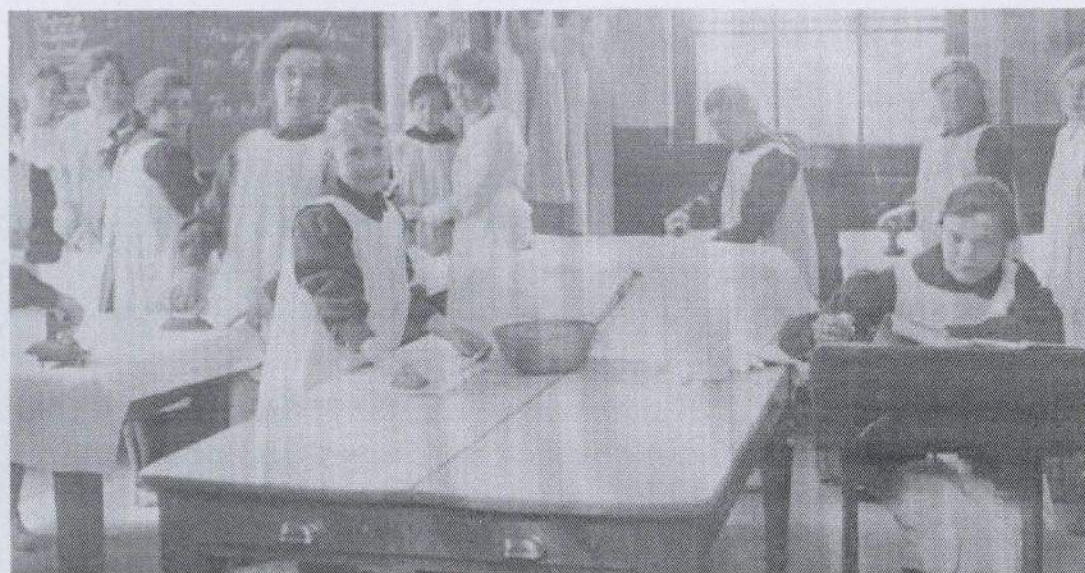


Above and below: Doing Drill, May 1921
Both photographs from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library



Above and below: Needlework class, May 1921
Both photographs from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library





Above: Ironing Class, May 1921

Below: Laundry Class, May 1921

Bottom picture: Bakery Class, May 1921

All photographs from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library



Three scenes of Open Air Classes, 1921

All photographs from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library



Children at play, May 1921
Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library



1922-23 School Group
Irene Hunt Collection



Getting ready for a new school:
Betty Harrison in 1929
Photo courtesy of David Paull



Schoolgirls on a day outing to Bognor Regis, Summer 1931.
Betty Harrison, aged 15, in foreground carrying hat.
Photo courtesy of David Paull



Group of Oak Lodge girls on the beach,
Bognor Regis, Summer 1931
Photo courtesy of David Paull



Senior girls in 1931;
Betty Harrison on the lower steps at the
front;
Louie Gibbons and Betty Stagg at the
back.
The two girls in the middle are not
known.
Photo courtesy of David Paull



Group in the Oak Lodge school garden, summer 1935
Back row: Elsie Hall, Dorothy Dennard, Elsie Killon, Mina Balfe;
Middle row: Alice Frey, Peggy Witchi, Joan Elliston, Elaine Prag, Louise Bellhouse;
Front row: Audrey Squires, Sylvia Austin, Violet Moore
Courtesy of Elaine Cohen



Sports Day 1935
Back Row: Alice Frey, Elsie Hall, Dorothy Dennard;
2nd Row from top: -?-, Alice Wilton, Elsie Killon, Dore -?-, Gladys Goddard, Elaine Prag;
3rd Row from top: Lily Price, Peggy Witchi, Joan Elliston, Margaret Middlemiss, Louise Bellhouse, Elsie Gregory;
Front Row: Peggy Wilton, Audrey Squires, Sylvia Austin, Violet Moore, Mina Balfe
Photo: School Archives



A visit to Anerley School for Deaf Boys, 1936
Back row: Joan Elliston, Peggy Witchi, Elsie Hall, Alice Frey, Louise Bellhouse, Mina Balfe;
Front row: Joyce Clarke, Winnie Pattern, Joan Hawkesford, Rose Middleton, Elaine Prag with Headmistress Miss Susan Lucy standing in the centre behind the back row.
Courtesy of Elaine Cohen



Group of girls, Summer 1937
Back: Joan Cleverly, Gladys Slough, Ivy Scotchmer
Front: Mabel Canzana, May Holmes
Photo courtesy of Gladys Norris



Group outside one of the Oak Lodge
boarding houses, June 1938

Gladys Slough, Nancy Ware,
Ivy Scotchmer

Photo courtesy of Gladys Norris



Teachers taking a break, 11th July 1938
Miss Latham, Miss Littlewood and Miss Buchanan

Photo courtesy of Gladys Norris



Group of girls, 1939

Back row: Pat Austin, Mary Adams, Nancy ware, Jane Chatfield

Middle: Mary Mann

Front row: Meg Dean, Alison Cross, Betty Currie, Nellie Sharpe

Photo courtesy of Gladys Norris



Girl Guides on the school lawn, 1939

Back: Jane Chatfield, Mary Mann, Mary Adams;

Front: Nellie Sharpe, Alison Cross, Betty Currie

Photo courtesy of Gladys Norris



Patrol Leader Gladys Slough,
holding the Oak Lodge School flag 1939
Photo courtesy of Gladys Norris

Chapter 7: Brief Notes - Oak Lodge Residential School for Girls 1905-1939

In August 1905 when Oak Lodge opened for the first time, there must have been both trepidation and excitement for both the new schoolgirls AND the new headmistress, Miss A. B. Hopson. For the girls, this was because they were being taken from where they had previously been educated to new surroundings as the first batch of a new school intake. Most of them came there either from the Hugh Myddleton School in Clerkenwell or other London County Council schools following the closure of the day schools called the Stainer Homes.

For Miss Hopson, it was to be a new experience because never before had she been involved with deaf girls. In any event, they both appeared to settle down, and Miss Hopson was to remain as headmistress (although her title was in fact superintendent) until retirement at the age of 62 in 1930. Under her stewardship, Oak Lodge was to become firmly established as a school of excellence for deaf girls.

Upon the retirement of Miss Hopson (who appears in the photograph on page 36 in the centre), one of the senior teachers on the staff, Miss Susan Meliscent Lucy, who had been Head Assistant for many years, was promoted to take her place. Upon Miss Lucy's appointment, it was decided to change the title to the more appropriate headmistress title. A familiar sight with her around the school was her collie dog.

The dog was apparently nicknamed 'Tell-Tale' by the girls because it used to "inform" Miss Lucy of anything the girls were misbehaving about, as illustrated by the following story. One lunch-time, the girls were served a meal they did not like, and some of them took the food off their plates and put it on a ledge underneath the table. The dog was attracted to the food, and the staff member who thought its behaviour was puzzling summoned Miss Lucy who ordered the girls to get up and turn the table over, and so the food was discovered! Henceforth, the girls had to eat whatever they were served, watched carefully by the staff.

Although situated next door to the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children, there was little contact between the schools, with a high wall separating them. However, one form of contact that happened was when Oak Lodge Girl Guides were formed. The Guides Captain was Miss Jones from the Jewish School, who came over every Tuesday to run the troop.

For most of the time, however, the two school groups did not mix unless they took part in inter-schools sports or gymnastics events.

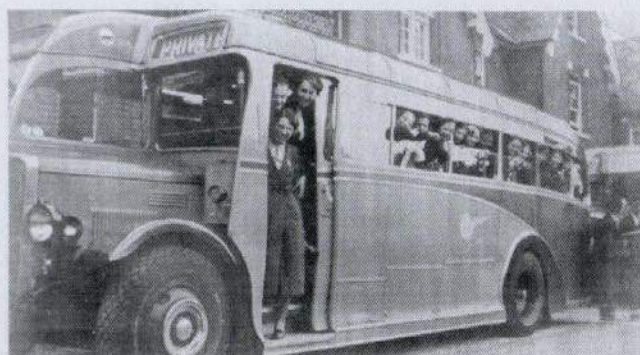
In 1938, the same Board of Education directive that caused so much headache to the Jewish School next door in an emergency evacuation due to the Munich Crisis was also the cause of Oak Lodge School being evacuated. On this occasion, the girls were evacuated to another London C.C. School, situated in Buckinghamshire and really for children with additional needs. This school was called, at that time, Rayners School, the children having been transferred there following the closure of Homerton School in Hackney by London County Council.



Rayners School, Penn, Buckinghamshire, 1920s
National Deaf Archives

The evacuation from Oak Lodge appears to have gone more smoothly for them than it did for the Jewish School, with all the girls being transported by two coaches. As with the Jewish School, when Prime Minister Chamberlain returned from Munich waving aloft that famous piece of paper, "Peace in our time!", it was decided the alarm was over, and the girls returned to Oak Lodge.

As it turned out, the whole evacuation thing was in reality a good exercise for the time when the school definitely had to evacuate London when the Second World War started as year later.



One of the two coaches used to transport the girls to Rayners School, Penn, Buckinghamshire in September 1938

Photo courtesy of Gladys Norris



The return from Penn, October 1938

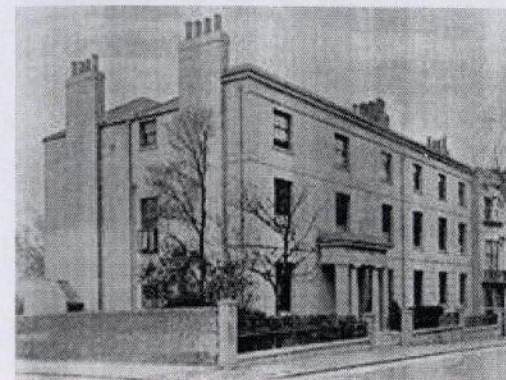
Photo courtesy of Gladys Norris

Chapter 8: The War Years 1939-1945

Due to both schools being in an area that was deemed to be vulnerable to air-raid attacks and therefore putting the children at risk, it was necessary that all children were evacuated to what might be termed safer locations, where the threat of enemy air-raids was much less. The evacuations for both schools were in two stages. In the first stage, in the autumn of 1939, the evacuations were made to locations on the South Coast.

The Jewish Residential School for Deaf Children was evacuated to the Brighton Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Eastern Road, Brighton, a school that was already fully in use, therefore putting the resources of that school under tremendous strain. The sudden influx of other children also caused the Brighton Institution to build more air-raid shelters.

Oak Lodge Residential School for Deaf Girls were evacuated to the Riviera Lido Holiday Club at Nyetimber, near Bognor Regis, which was certainly spacious with a seaside carnival atmosphere, but definitely not suitable as a school location, not that the girls minded - they enjoyed it immensely!



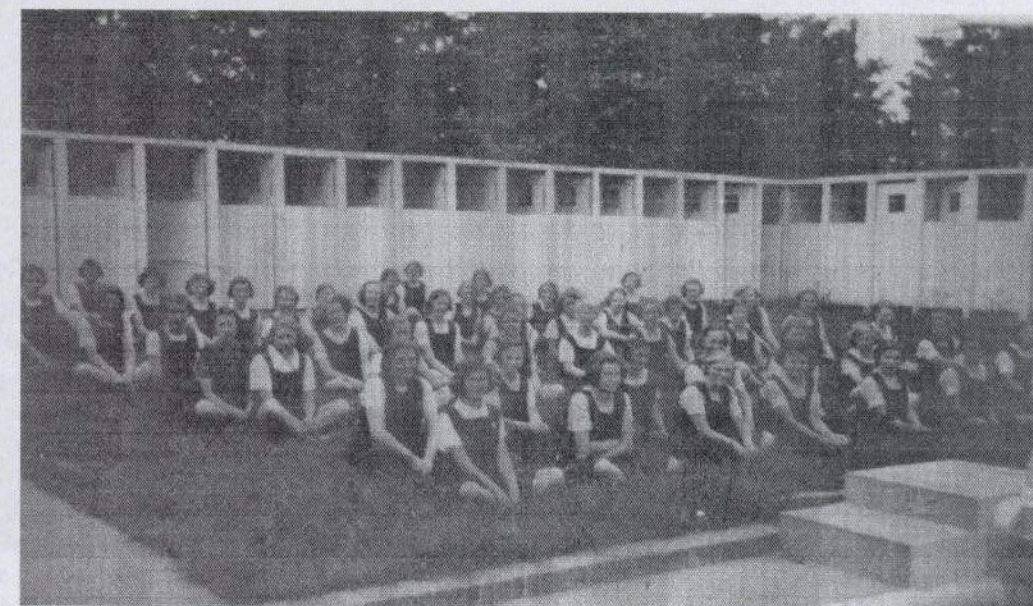
The Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Eastern Road, Brighton, to which the Jewish School was evacuated.

Photo: National Deaf Archives



The Riviera Lido Holiday Club, Nyetimber, Bognor Regis, the first evacuation location of Oak Lodge.

from a 1960s postcard



Oak Lodge girls on the swimming pool lawn at Nyetimber, 1939

Photo courtesy of Irene Skinner



Oak Lodge girls at Nyetimber, Bognor Regis 1939
Photo courtesy of Irene Skinner



JRSDC Girls at Eastern Road, Brighton, May 1940
Left to right: Theresa Goldstein, Marie Solomon, Lily Joseph, Miriam Solomon
Photo courtesy of Jewish Deaf Association

However, by May 1940, after the German armies had smashed their way through Holland and Belgium, pushing back the British and French armies until they reached the sea at Calais, finally resulting in the capitulation of France and the evacuation at Dunkirk, it no longer seemed a good idea that the school-children remained on the South Coast, with only a strip of water separating them from the enemy. Preparations were therefore set in motion to find alternative evacuation premises. This time, there was no mad rush but there was nonetheless a sense of purpose and hurry in the search for new locations.

Oak Lodge were fortunate to secure a large building called the Manor House, in the village of Lower Heyford, Northamptonshire (sometimes called Nether Heyford, and not to be confused with Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire). They moved into this building in June 1940, and remained there throughout the War until their old premises at 103 Nightingale were made fit again for occupation as a school.

Compared with many deaf schools that were evacuated during the war, the girls of Oak Lodge enjoyed five years peaceful existence in the beautiful rural surroundings of Lower Heyford, mixing well with the local population against whom they played netball matches.



The Old Manor House, Lower Heyford, Northamptonshire
Photo courtesy of Edith Tabrar

The RJSDC stayed on at the Brighton Institution a little longer, but in August 1940, the Ministry of Health were concerned at the overcrowding in the Eastern Road premises and suggested that the school should find a house which the Government would requisition for them. After viewing various properties in different parts of the country, it was decided that the most suitable building available was Havering House in Milton Lilbourne, near Pewsey in Wiltshire, and the children were relocated from Brighton to this building in September 1940.

Havering House was far from ideal, with cramped living conditions and many classes having to share the same classrooms. However, it was definitely better than sharing a building with another school, as had been the case in Brighton, and the staff and pupils created a good atmosphere of friendship and co-operation with each other.

Meanwhile, in London, both 101 and 103 Nightingale Lane had been bombed, with some resultant damage that took some time to repair after the war. It is not known what 103 Nightingale Lane, the site of Oak

Lodge School, was used for during the war, but the RJSDC premises next door at 101 Nightingale Lane were used by the Home Office as a Women Aliens Reception Centre.

Tragedy struck on 30 January 1943 when Simeon David Hart, the Principal of the RJSDC, died suddenly, aged 62 years. He had given 41 years of service to the school as a teacher and as a Principal, and had succeeded Miss Harriet Davids as the Principal only seven years previously in 1936. Senior master, Mr. Leslie Benham, took over as acting Principal for the duration of the war on 1 February 1943, subsequently being confirmed as full Principal at the war's end.



*Above and below: Two different views of Havering House, Milton Lilbourne where the RSJDC spent the war from 1940 to 1946
Photo: Courtesy of Harry Newman*



*Another view of Havering House, Milton Lilbourne
Photo: Courtesy of Harry Newman*



*Oak Lodge girls and staff at the Old Manor House, Lower Heyford, near Northampton
September 1941
Miss Susan Lucy, the headmistress, is see at the back, far left, carrying her dog!
Photo courtesy of Gladys Norris*



Above and below: Oak Lodge School netball teams while at Lower Heyford, Northampton

Above:

Back Row: Edith Cheriton, -?- Hilda Weems, -?- Dorothy Hemp, Roma Locke, Joyce Harper;

Middle row: -?-, Renie Francis, Betty Biggs, Dorothy Barr, -?-, -?-, Sylvia Symonds

All the girls in the front row are unknown.

Below:

Back row: Anne Levy, Pamela Withers, Pat Airey, Sylvia Symonds, Dorothy Hemp, Edith Witchell, Joyce Harper;

Front row: Christine Bicknell, stroking Miss Lucy's dog, Joan Jones, Betty Granham, Doris Pearrett, Betty Gant, Dorothy Barr, Hilda Weems, Edith Cheriton, Roma Locke.

Photos courtesy of Edith Tabrar



Oak Lodge Girl Guide troop at Lower Heyford, Northampton around 1942-3

Back Row: Lily Whitmore, Mary Biggs, Betty Gant, Thelma Smedley, Margaret Capp, -?-, -?-, Grace Kelly, -?-, Daphne Gosney;

4th Row: -?-, Doris Watson all the others unidentified or unknown);

3rd row (middle row): -?-, Jean Simmonds, -?-, Jean Read, Betty Rayner, Josephine Day, -?-, -?-,

Second Row: Joyce Winch, Sylvia Symonds, Peggy Theobald, -?-, Lily Watson, Pamela Withers

Front row: Margaret Capp, Irene Caxton, Norta Walsh

Note: it is possible some of these were local village hearing girls who joined the troop.

Photo courtesy of Betty Clifton



A group photograph of Oak Lodge girls at Lower Heyford, Northampton c1944-45

Photograph supplied by Robin Ash



Mr. Leslie Benham, who took over as Acting Principal of the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children in 1943 on the sudden death Mr. Hart
Photo courtesy of Coleen Daniels



Ex-pupils of the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children visiting Havering House, Milton Lilbourne, in 1999
Photo: Courtesy of Harry Newman

Chapter 9: The Return to London - RSJDC & Oak Lodge

The RSJDC returned to its old premises at 101 Nightingale Lane, Wandsworth Common on 13 May 1946, and the building was reconsecrated the next afternoon, Sunday 14 May. By this time, Mr. Leslie Benham had been confirmed as the full Principal.

The school had been hit by enemy bombs on two occasions during the war, and although repairs had been carried out, there was still need for redecoration and structural improvements, especially to remove all signs of its occupation as a Women Aliens Reception Centre. One of the senior boys, Jack Hart, remembered that he had been one of those asked by Mr. Benham to come into the school and help to move round furniture and to clean up the premises ready for its re-occupation as a school. The School Committee had asked the London County Council for financial assistance in maintaining the school. In this, they had the support of the Ministry of Education but the L.C.C. would only pay for the annual education costs of the Jewish deaf children, and refused to pay any maintenance costs. In contrast, children from outside the London area had their full annual and education costs paid for by their local education authorities, so with over 50% of the 40-odd pupils that started in September 1946 coming from within the London area, the financial position of the school became quite serious, leading to increased debts.

The School curriculum needed to be revised, to reflect the current requirements of the Education Act, 1947 and on top of general curriculum subjects such as Arithmetic, English, History, Geography, Physics and Art, the children took evening classes, some in a local L.C.C. college. Subjects for girls included typewriting, general domestic sciences and dressmaking whilst boys studied electricity. Once a week, the children also had evening classes in Hebrew in the school.



The Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children, pictured in 1946
National Deaf Archives

In contrast, Oak Lodge School was more fortunate.

Although two bombs had also hit the school in the war, the damage was more manageable and being a London County Council maintained school, the repairs were effected much more speedily than those next door at the Jewish school, which as a private non-state maintained school had to find the money to pay for whatever damage it could not claim back from either the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence or any other government department.

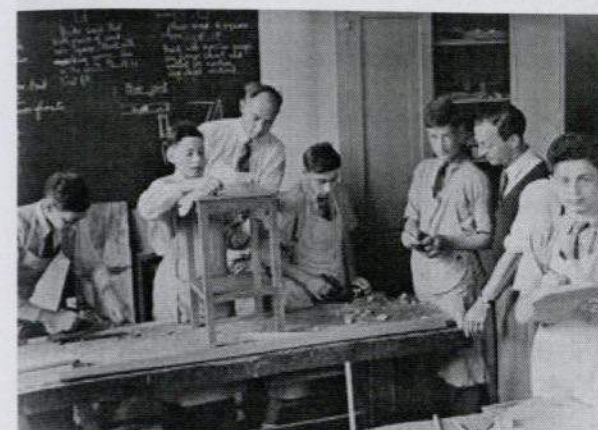
As a result of quicker repairs to the school premises by the L.C.C., the school was able to re-open for the start of the 1945-1946 academic year, with all the furniture, school equipment and personal effects brought back to Wandsworth from Northamptonshire.

The number of girl-pupils when the school re-opened was 42, according to the records held in London Borough of Wandsworth archives.

As soon as the school settled back into its London routine, Miss Susan M. Lucy, the headmistress who had held the school together throughout the war, made it known that she wished to take up retirement as soon as a replacement could be secured. Ever popular with the girls, with her dog, she would be sorely missed by the girls.

In March 1946, it was announced that Miss Dorothy Ivy Brodie would assume the responsibilities of Principal with effect from 4 March 1946.

Chapter 10: A Pictorial Record - Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children 1946 to 1956



A Woodwork Class, 1949

Left to right:

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

Photo courtesy of Harold Fallman



A visit to West Ham Deaf School, 1950

Back: Harold Fallman, Maurice Lawrence, Mr.
Denton, Jackie Goldman, Albert Kelberman, Bernard
Polchar; *Front:* Joshua Hassan, Ruthie Rapaport,
Loretta Silverman, David Townsend, Alan Gold,
Benno Icgson

Photo courtesy of Harold Fallman



Left:

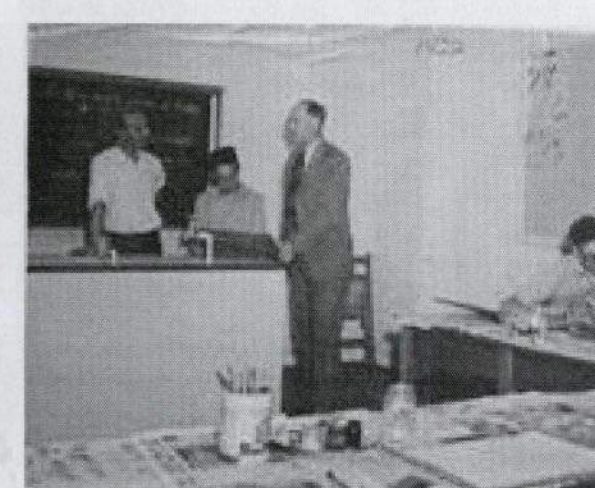
The cast of the school play,
Oliver Twist, 1950



The RSJDC Troop of the Jewish Lads Brigade, 1950

Left to right: Alan Gold, Joshua Hassan, Harold
Fallman, Benno Icgson and Maurice Lawrence

Photo courtesy of Harold Fallman



A classroom scene, 1950

Left to right:

Mr. Cook, Kenneth Silver, Mr. Benham,
Harold Fallman

Photo courtesy of Harold Fallman



Taking part in a pageant, 1951

This photo shows all staff and pupils in fancy dress for a pageant.

Those in the *front row* include: Greta Polchar, Miss Elkin, Mrs Benham (holding a arrow-holder), David Sober, Ruth Danziger, Mr. Anistis, Doreen Smolovitch, Jackie Goldman, Mr. Benham (with the Dumb placard), Loretta Silverman, Gerald Litman, Miss Buckell, Bernard Polchar, Miss Ballinson, Mr. Denton (with the Blind placard)

Photo: Jewish Deaf Association



Football Team 1950

Back: David Townsend, Harold Fallman, Mr Edwin Denton, Benno Icgison, Alan Gold

Middle: Joshua Hassan, Maurice Lawrence,

Albert Kelberman, Kenneth Silver, Leslie Bieber

Front: David Hirshman, Michael Clifton

Photo courtesy of Harold Fallman



Cricket Team 1951

Top Row: David Townsend, Alan Gold, Harold Fallman, Joshua Hassan, Leslie Goodman, Leslie Bieber, Benno Icgison

Front Row: Kenneth Silver, Michael Clifton, Edwin Denton (Teacher), David Green, Alec Gray

Photo courtesy of Harold Fallman



Staff and Pupils 1951

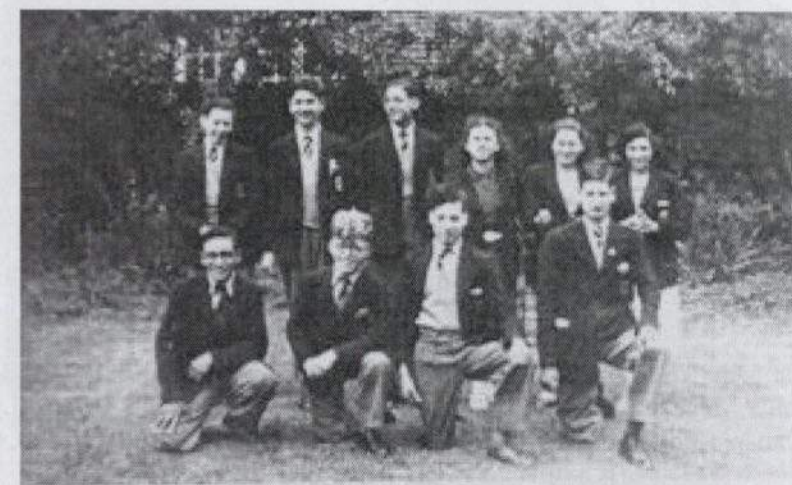
Back row: Alan Gold, Joshua Hassan, Albert Kelberman, David Townsend, Harold Fallman, Benno Icgison, Maurice Lawrence;

Third row: Brenda Feltz, Rachel Lubin, Richard Caesar, Ivan Hart, Mary Willard, David Hirschman, Roy Martin, Leslie Kaiser, Alec Gray, David West, Ann Gordon, Anthony Spielsinger, Terry Mills, Lydia Gandscomb, 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, Reneé Cole;

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

Photo courtesy of Harold Fallman

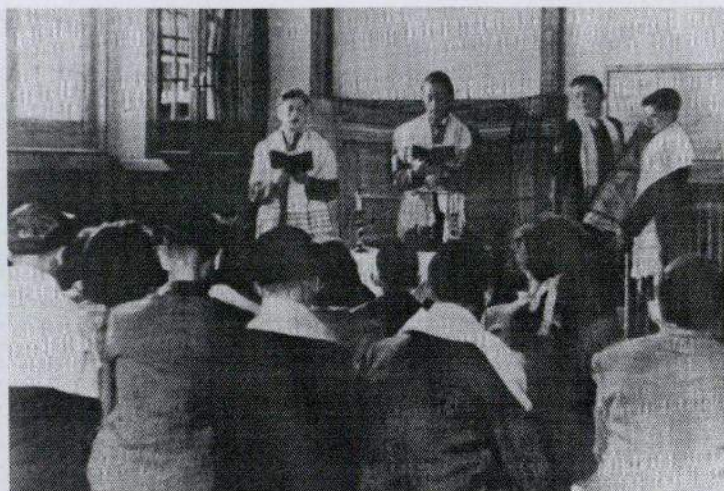


School-leavers Group 1952

Back Row:- Alan Gold, Leslie Goodman, Harold Fallman, Ruthie Rapaport, Rachel Lubin, Reneé Cole;

Front Row: Joshua Hassan, Michael Clifton, Leslie Bieber, Benno Icgison

Photo courtesy of Harold Fallman



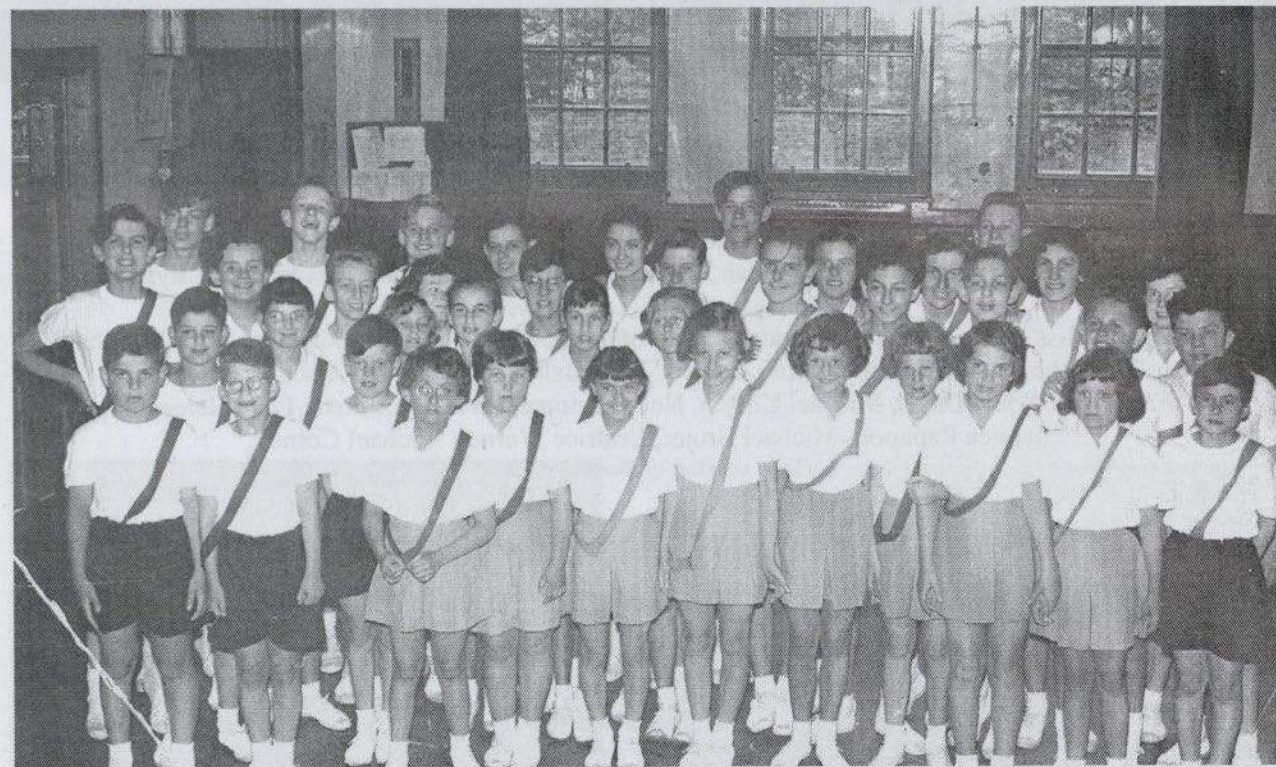
Prayer Meeting, 1952

Facing camera: Albert Kelberman, Mr. E. Denton, Maurice Lawrence, David Townsend;

In front, with backs to camera:

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

Photo courtesy of Jewish Deaf Association



PE Class, 1955

Back row: Anthony Spielsinger, N. Ictchner, Terry Eyre, David Jessel, Terry Mills;

Second row:

David West, David Solomon, Jennifer Everett, Ann Miller, Brian Dondo, F. Bennett, 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, Maurice Urbach, M. Berger, S. Littleby, Linda Miller, J. Mocks, Alan Roberts, J. Menczer.

Photo courtesy of Miriam Solomon

Chapter 11: Brief Notes - Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children 1946 to 1956

Soon after the school had returned to Nightingale Lane, it was evident that expenditure was always going to exceed whatever income the school received, partly because it was not getting the support the school felt it deserved from London County Council, and the overdraft rose into alarming figures, but despite this, the school continued to provide a first class education to its pupils, several of whom were successful in gaining admission to the first grammar school for deaf children to be established in Britain, Mary Hare Grammar School, Newbury, Berkshire.

In order to raise money, the RSJDC Society continuously held Garden Fetes and other events such as concerts which were supported by Jewish artistes giving their services free. In this way, the Society managed to keep the overdraft within reasonable limits and finance much-needed improvements within the school, including new kitchen equipment. The hard-working headmaster, Leslie Benham, also continuously made appeals to the Jewish community in London for subscription and donations to keep the school going, and looked at many different ways to keep costs down.



Mr. & Mrs. Leslie Benham, with their daughter sitting on the school steps.

Photo: Colleen Daniels

The number of pupils at the school varied between 43 and 51 over the ten years following the war, although the school had residential accommodation for 80 pupils. However, in all its history, the school never reached that number, the highest being just over 60 in the 1920s. In his report dated 31 March 1955, Mr. Benham stated that there were 49 children at the school, 25 boys and 24 girls. Of this number, 20 were non-Jewish.

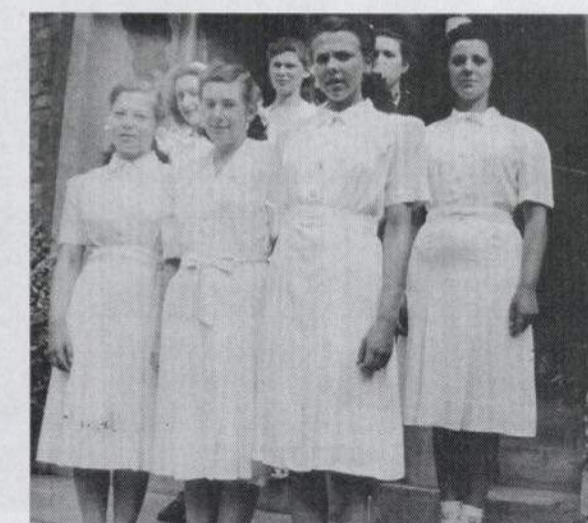
In addition to this number, the school had three girls who were being educated at Oak Lodge next door, as Oak Lodge was no longer a residential school and did not have sleeping accommodation, so any girl who was unable to go home on a daily basis boarded in the Jewish School. No doubt, this arrangement with London County Council helped the finances of the Jewish school!

Chapter 12: A Pictorial Record - Oak Lodge School 1946 to 1956

(Rachel Segal)
Rene Segal
Kosky.



A badly crinkled photo of a Fancy Dress event held At the school around 1947
Most of the girls' names are not known, but the *middle four at the back* including the one in the nurses' outfit are Louise Mouse, Ruby Parker, Betty Cooper and Iris Steele;
Middle row: Mrs. Newman, Miss Duke, Mayor of Wandsworth, Canon Sowter, Miss Small & Daphne Robinson;
The two at the end of the *front row*, right, are Violet Watt and Maureen Miles.
Photo: School Archives



Two photos of senior girls on Prize Day, 1948
Not all the girls have been identified, but the tall one at the back of each photograph is Betty Cooper;
The one kneeling on the left in the left photograph and standing extreme right in the right photograph is Pam Hutchins;
The one kneeling in the middle on the left photograph and standing extreme left in the right photograph is Rose Pope.
Photos: School Archives



Visiting a London museum in 1948
Top row: Gladys Wade, Lily Ruby;
Middle: Beryl Peverel, Margaret Brooks, Jean Andrews;
Bottom: Miss Bass (teacher), Pam Gurney, June Wilcox, Anna Hersangel, Vera Gray, Sheila Walsh.
Photo courtesy of Lily Brown



Performing a show, 1950
 Joan Simpson, Doreen Allen (at the back), Peggy Ash, June Wilcox, -?- (from India), Barbara Strutt,
 Gwen Eatwell.
Photo courtesy of Gwen Eatwell

Inset: Peggy Ash performing a dance
Photo courtesy of Robin Ash



Brenda Pittman getting ready for
 her new school, 1950
Photo courtesy of Brenda Willoughby



Walking to school, Winter 1950
Left to right: Maureen Cribb, Margaret Butlet, Maureen Leggett
 & June Kirby
Photo courtesy of Robin Ash



Group of Oak Lodge girls:
Back row: Rita French, Audrey Wright, June
 Kirby, Jean Foll;
Middle: Betty Gingell, Brenda Pittman, Julia
 Casey;
Front: June Dudley, Doreen Arnold
Photos courtesy of Brenda Willoughby



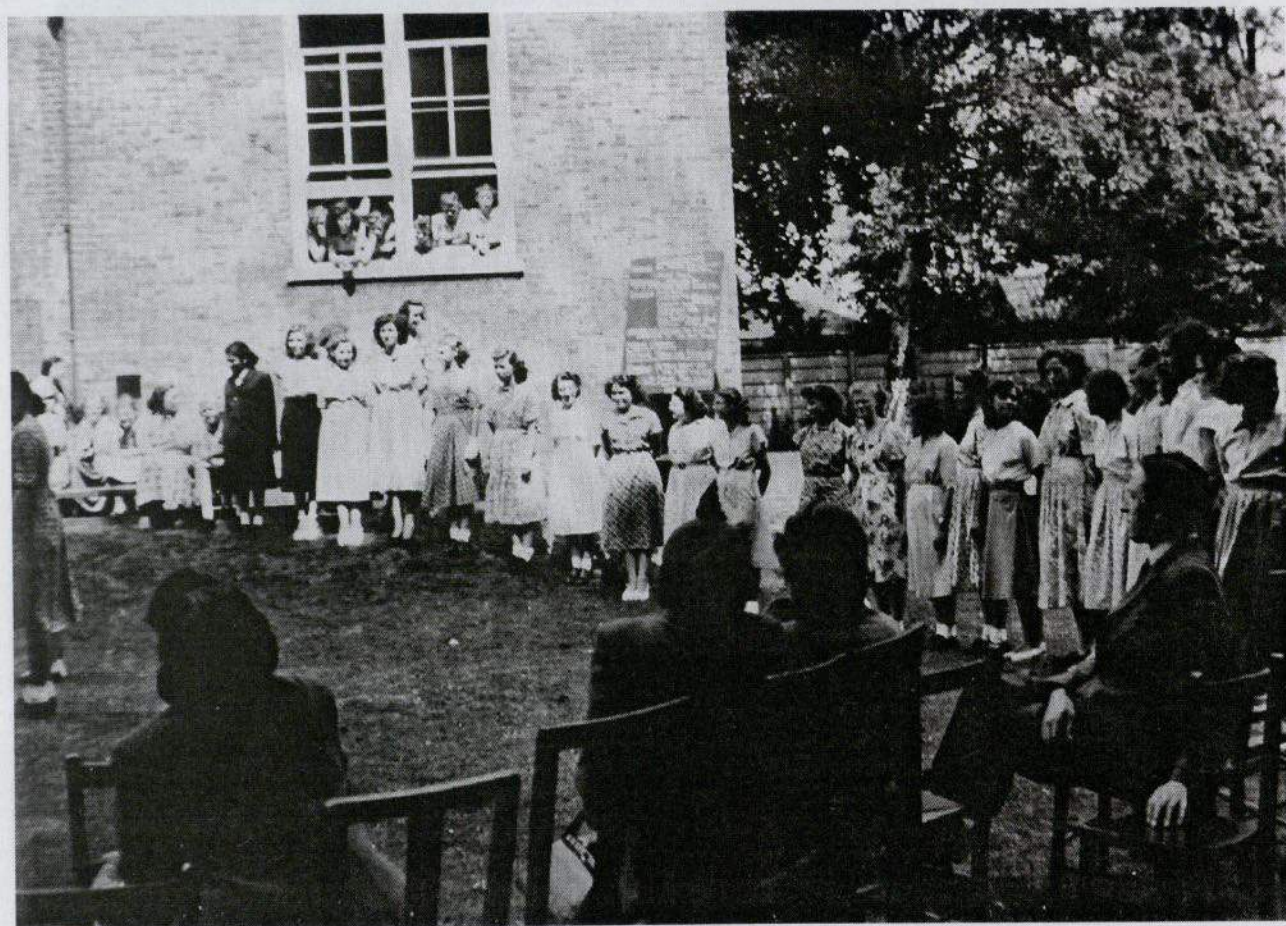
Another Oak Lodge girls group:
From left to right: Bottom: Rita French &
 Barbara Scott
Middle: Maureen Leggett, Shirley Tobb &
 Sylvia Taylor



Summer fete, 1951

On the stairs: Jean Wade, Shirley Tubbs, June Dudley, Maureen Ferguson, Josephine Trollope, Doreen Arnold, Brenda Pittman, Josephine Smith-Jones;
On the ground: Margaret Fowles, -?-, Barbara Strutt, Rita French, Pat Newton, Joan Richardson, Nazwa, Pauline Glover, June Kirby, Audrey Stevens, Jean Foll, Monica Lee-Thomson, Joan Woolner, Betty Gingell.

Photo courtesy of Brenda Willoughby



Open Day in 1951, with the girls lined up to receive prizes.

Photo: Courtesy of Robin Ash



Christmas Show 1951

Left to right: -?-, Maureen Cribb, -?-, Joan Simpson, Peggy Ash, Audrey Wright

Photo: School Archives



Miss Nicholson's class in 1952 showing girls working whilst the teacher gives one-to-one speech training to one girl, and *below*, the same teacher giving one-to-one speech training to Jean Cole.

Photos: School Archives





Scenes from Classrooms, 1952

Left:
Mrs. Elsie Mundin using
microphone to give auditory
training to (from left to right):
Shirley Fry, Ann Waldron,
Julie Marks, Shirley Moore,
Brenda Wallace and Jean Cole

Needlework class,
(from left to right):
Betty Gingell, Jean Foll,
Pauline Clover, Molly Curtis (with
the dummy), Maureen Ferguson,
Brenda Pittman, Audrey Wright
with Rita French behind.



Domestic Science

Connie Lawrence,
Mrs Barnsall (teacher),
Pat Newton & Sheila Harber
(girl on the left unknown)

Language class
(using auditory methods)

The girls: Ada Isles, -?-,
Shirley Fry.

All photos: School archives



Art Class

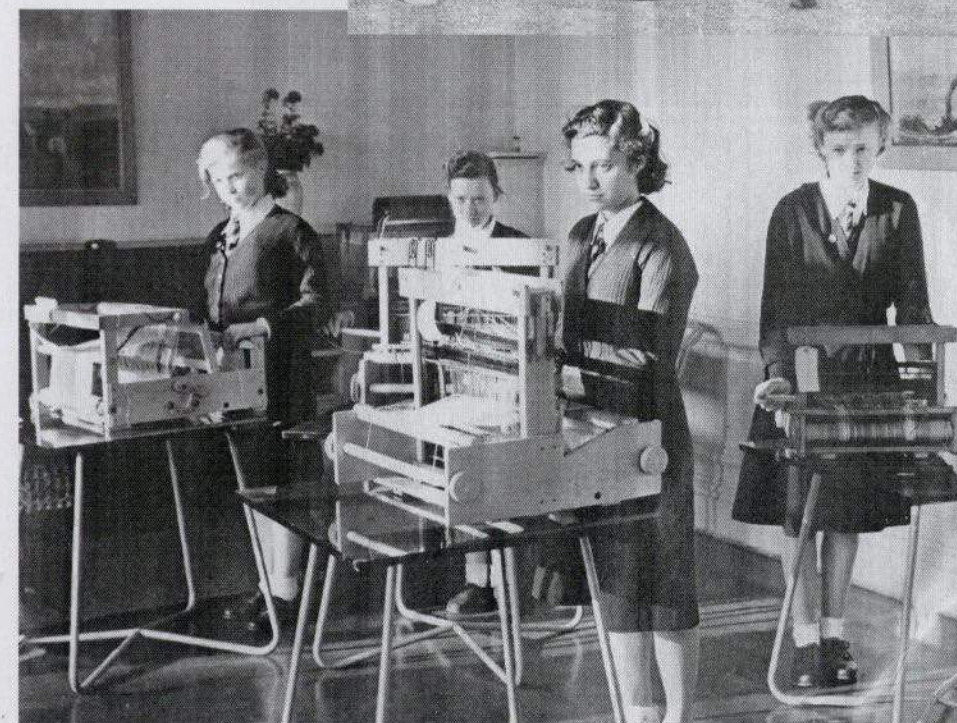
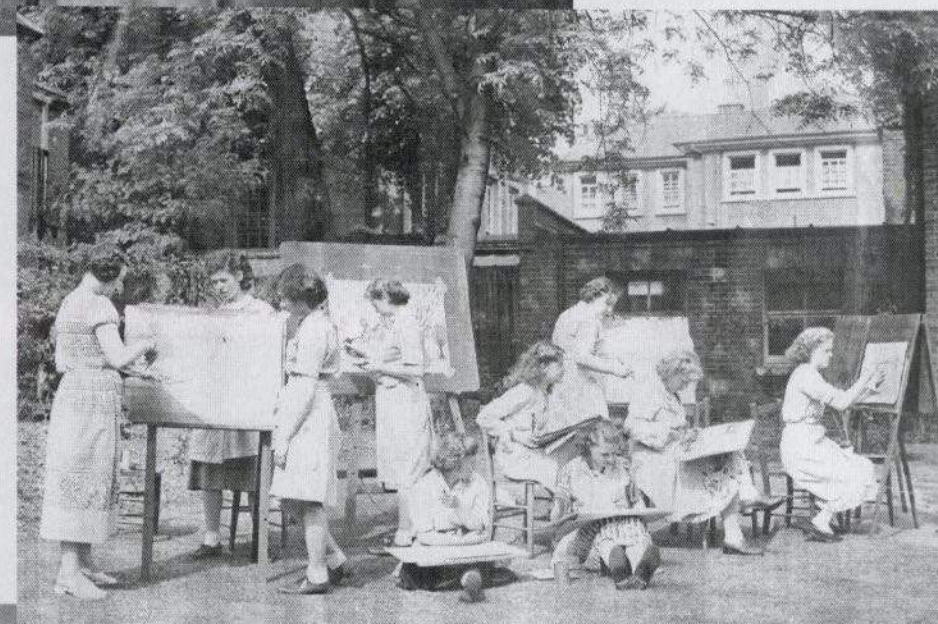
From left to right:

Shirley Fry, Ann Waldron,
Ada Isles, -?-,
Monica Lee Thompson

Outdoor Art Class

From left to right:

Teacher Miss Milliney,
-?-, -?-, Pauline Clover,
-?-, Moira Wagner,
Julia Casey,
Maureen Ferguson,
June Woolner,
Maureen Leggett



Weaving Class

From left to right:

June Woolner,
Jean Salmone,
Sheila Harber,
Rita French

All photos: School archives



Morning assemblies were a regular feature of Oak Lodge school. In the picture above, teacher Mrs. Elsie Munden is at the piano while the girls sing.

All photos: School archives



Needlework class

Left:

Rose Thrower facing the camera, Najwa from Israel next to Rose, and Irene Dunne sitting opposite the two girls; Pauline Clover dressing the dummy.

The girl facing the wall at the back, and the one in the checked skirt are unknown.



Dressmaking Classes:

Left photo: Irene Dunne, Shirley Fry at the back;

Middle: Miriam Coomis, Joan Richardson, Pat Newton, Connie Lawrence;

Front: Betty Gingell, Julia Casey, Jean Foll, Brenda Pittman.

Right photo from the left:

Jean Cole, Ann Waldron and Connie Lawrence at the front table;

Sheila Harber, Sally Isles and Marion Sydney at the back table.



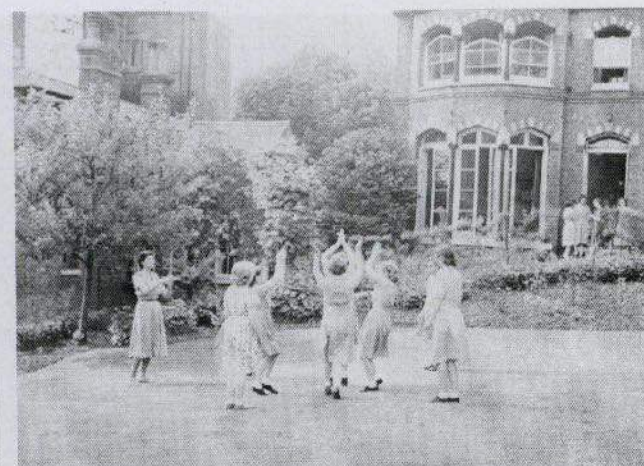
Left:

Mrs. Munden's Language class with Maureen Ferguson writing on the blackboard;

Facing Mrs. Munden:

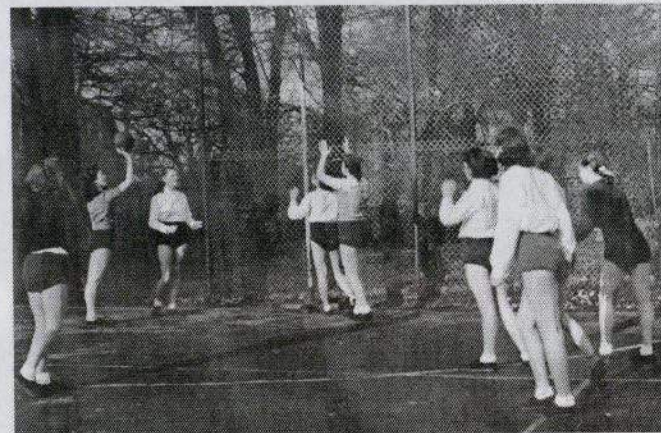
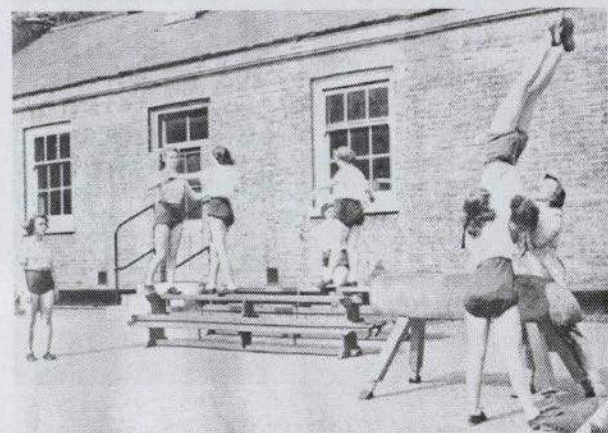
-?-, Sheila Harber, Betty Gingell, Julia Casey, Brenda Pittman & Jean Foll

All photos: School archives



Country Dancing

The girls at Oak Lodge had plenty of opportunities for sports and leisure activities; in the photographs above, Miss Nicholson is conducting a Country Dancing lesson in the gardens.



Physical education and sports activities were also well-catered for, with PE lessons in the yard, and netball matches against other schools.



The girls were encouraged to take lessons in archery in the school grounds. In this picture, Molly Curtis is taking aim at the target board.



Girl guide activities were also encouraged; in this picture, Jean Foll and June Woolner are pegging a tent

All photos: School archives



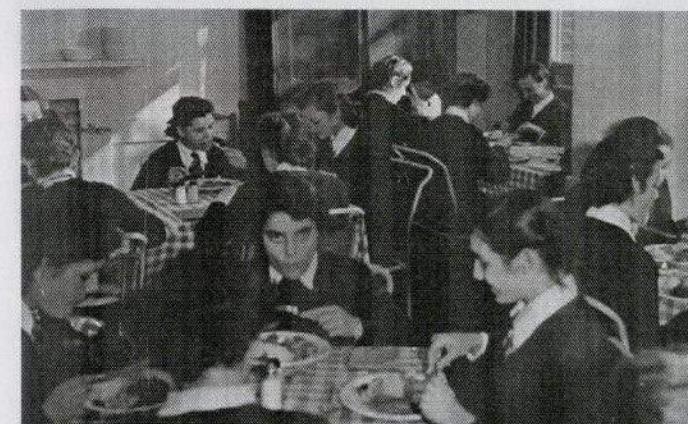
Domestic Life at School, 1952/3

Girls at Oak Lodge School had a full range of duties and activities associated with being resident in a school, including cleaning teeth, washing, cleaning shoes, helping with the serving of meals.

The top *left* photograph shows Miriam Coomis cleaning her teeth, and Ada Isles with Ann Waldron completing their washing. The top *right* photograph shows girls doing a task that is universally disliked by everyone who boards in a school - cleaning shoes! Those involved are Jean Coles, Ann Waldron, Miriam Coomis and Ada Isles.

Below *left* shows the girls having their dinner;

Below *right* shows Matron Miss Quinn preparing a new ear-mould for Ann Perry, with Ann Waldron and Jean Foll looking on. Getting new ear-moulds for their hearing aids was a regular chore deaf children had to put up with.



Bedtime!

In the dormitory at the back facing the garden, Housemother Miss Payne prepares to draw the curtains, whilst Connie Lawrence (*right*) is already fast asleep!

All photos: School archives



Brenda Pittman, Sheila Harber & Julia Casey in 1952
Photo courtesy of Brenda Willoughby



June Dudley & Brenda Wellard in 1953
Photo courtesy of Margaret Parker



In school back garden wearing winter uniform in 1953
Back row: Irene Dunne, Sheila Harber, Miriam Coomis, Lilian Carroll, Betty Gingell;
Front row: Celia Dovey, Ann Waldron, Joyce Woolner, Julia Casey, June Woolner.
Photo courtesy of Brenda Willoughby



In the school grounds, 1953
Back: A maintenance worker, Audrey Wright, Sheila Cooke, Jean Foll, Maureen Ferguson;
Front: Jean Cole, Sheila Harber, Mary Goodwin, Pauline Glover
Photo courtesy of Margaret Parker



Out in the street, 1953
A visitor from the USA, June Dudley, Sheila Cooke, Margaret Butler
Photo courtesy of Margaret Parker



Sheila Harber and Miss Evans, 1953
Photo courtesy of Brenda Willoughby



A line-up, 1953

Mary Goodwin, Julie Marks, Margaret Butler, Pat Newton, Ada Isles, Lily Carroll, Sheila Harber, Audrey Wright, Sheila Cooke

Photo courtesy of Margaret Parker



A class group, 1953

Back: Sheila Cooke; Audrey Wright;

Middle: Lily Carroll, Sheila Harber, Miss Cooper (teacher); Pat Newton, Ada Isles;

Front: Julie Marks, Mary Goodwin

Photo courtesy of Margaret Parker



A group of girls in the gardens in 1953

Back row: Lily Carroll, Sheila Cooke, Sheila Harber, Margaret Butler, Audrey Wright, Ada Isles;

Front Row: Pat Newton & Mary Goodwin

Photo courtesy of Margaret Parker



Travelling home together, 1953

Sheila Cooke, Margaret Leggett, Brenda Wellard, Margaret Butler, with a partially blind girl from another school in front

Photo courtesy of Margaret Parker

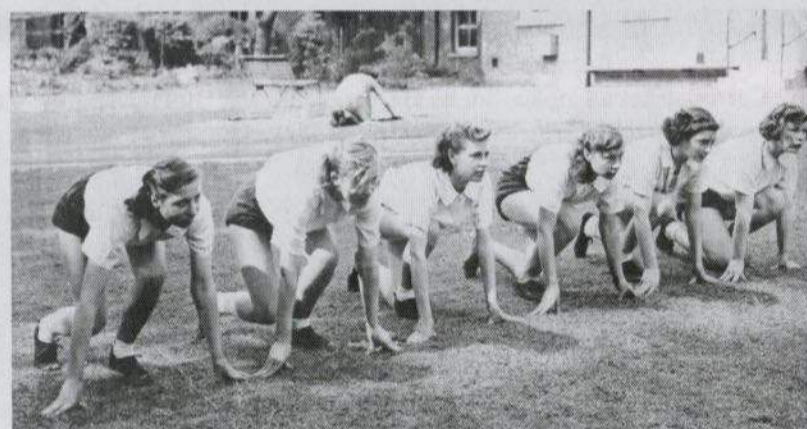


Left: Margaret Butler in 1953



Right: Sheila Cooke in 1953

Photos courtesy of Margaret Parker



Sports Day, 1953

Above, from left to right: Ada Isles, Sheila Harber, Margaret Butler, June Kirby, Jean Foll, Shirley Moore

Below: Margaret Butler doing the high jump

Photos: School archives



Chapter 13: Brief Notes - Oak Lodge School 1946 to 1956

The school returned from its war-time premises in Northamptonshire in September 1945 to find that much work needed to be done to put the building back to what it had been before the ravages of the war, and the girls had to put up with gangs of workmen at various times repairing the school.

The headmistress, Miss Susan Meliscent Lucy who had put off her retirement to see the school through the war and its return to London decided that it was now time for her to take up her long-delayed retirement. A farewell party was held on 16 February 1946, attended by over 250 past pupils of the school, which showed the high regard in which she had been held by her charges.



*The retirement of Miss Lucy
from Ephphatha, April-June 1946*

Miss Lucy was replaced as headmistress by Miss Dorothy Ivy Brodie, who did not stay long, moving on to the Ackmar Road School in 1950.



A group of teachers in 1951.

Left to right: Mrs. Barnsall, Mrs. Thomson, Miss Evans, Miss Coates & Mrs. Mordin

Photo courtesy of Brenda Willoughby

The next headmistress, Miss W. (Helen) Wilkinson was recruited from the Royal School for Deaf Children at Margate where she had been senior girls' mistress. She was to stay with Oak Lodge for the next 18 years, and see it through many changes.

On the 2nd and 3rd March 1953, the school was subjected to a full inspection by an inspector appointed by the London County Council Education Committee and parts of the report made for depressing reading, being critical of the school, its accommodation and parts of its curriculum. In particular, the living accommodation came in for great criticism and was termed very inadequate. The building in which the residential accommodation was based was said to be very cold in winter, with a need for better heating. The main bathrooms were said to be in the basement with a stone floor, which added to the cold conditions, especially in winter. The dining room, common room and kitchen were condemned as inadequate and in need of considerable improvement, especially washing up facilities which led to poor hygiene. Storage of clothing was kept in a central store due to lack of space in the dormitories and was very inconvenient for the girls. It was deemed a matter of priority for attention, especially in view of the discussions for the proposed transfer of the boys' school at Anerley to Oak Lodge. This could not take place without considerable improvements to the layout of the residential accommodation.

Although there were 24 girls still resident in the school at the time of the inspector's report, it was at that point that it was decided that Oak Lodge would stop accepting pupils on a residential basis, the main reason being that it did not seem appropriate any more to function as a partly-residential school, and negotiations took place with the Residential School for Jewish Children next door, which had ample unused residential accommodation, to have some girls board there instead of using the poor hostel accommodation at Oak Lodge. Most of the girls subsequently became day-pupils. The girls who moved out to reside in the Jewish school found themselves with plenty of room in the dormitories with ample storage space, and better bathing facilities. Another plus was that the Jewish school had much better heating than their old hostel in Oak Lodge!

With regard to school subjects, the report highlighted the girls poor reading abilities and comprehension of English. It was said that even among the senior girls, few girls could read alone with any real understanding and the Inspector strongly recommended that the school provided women's magazines, illustrated newspapers and picture reference books in order to broaden the girls knowledge.



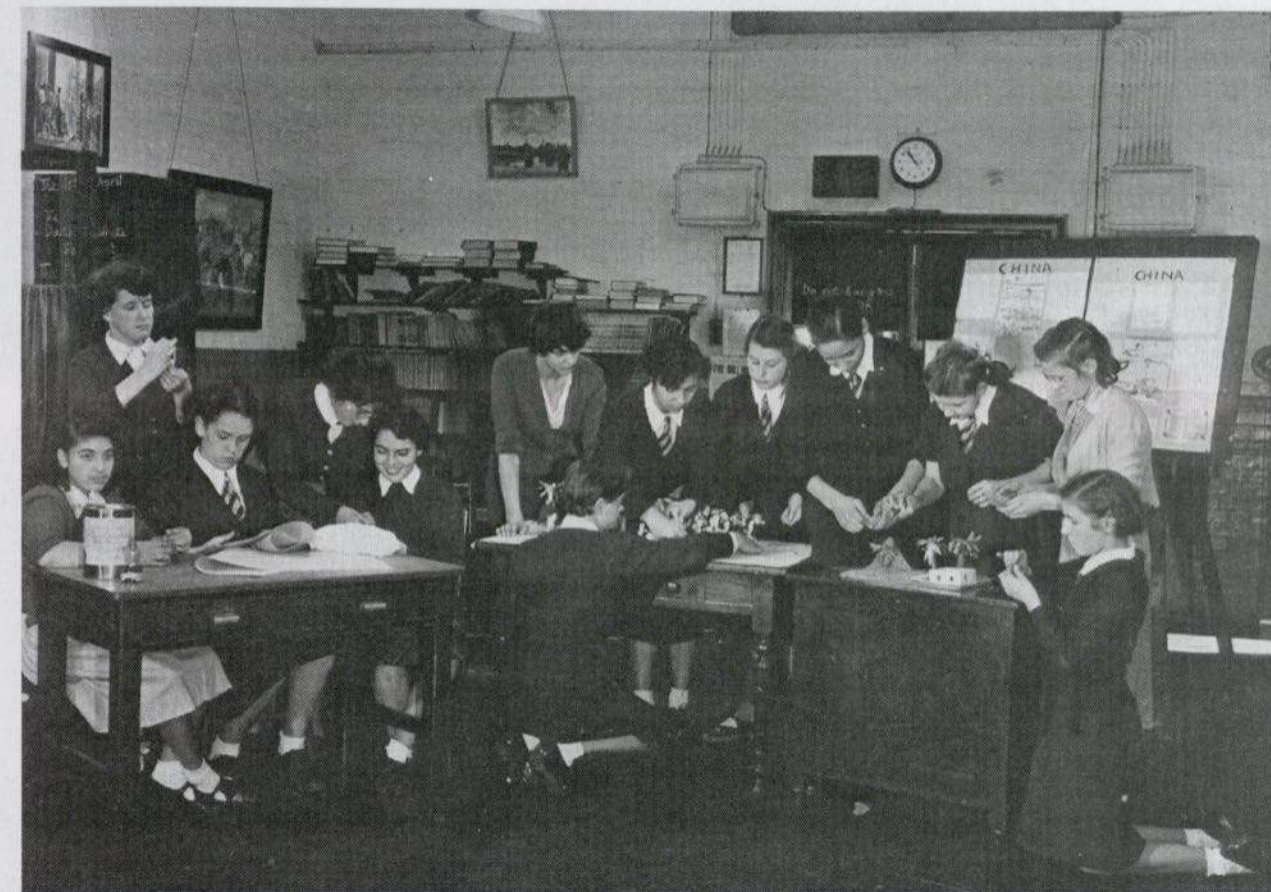
The rather tatty sign that hung on the gates leading into the school (pre-1965)

Photo: Robin Ash

Although the school was praised for its housecraft, needlework and art classes which were all deemed to be above standard, the inspector felt that there needed to be more time spent on the teaching of history, geography and arithmetic which all suffered because so much time was devoted to speech training, language and lip-reading. The school was praised for its provision of physical education activities, including swimming lessons and netball matches, but the small hall used for gymnasium came in for some criticism, particularly the quality of the floor which was deemed to be unsuitable for the purpose.

The report concluded that the school had a pleasant, healthy atmosphere and that the girls left school to go into jobs and were able to hold them, but emphasised there was a need for more careful planning of the curriculum to try and overcome the lag between reading vocabulary and comprehension, and also to further improve fluency in speech.

The conclusion also praised the school for its encouragement for the girls to join in activities organised by the London League of Hard of Hearing Clubs!



Miss Nicholson's class doing a project about China. The school inspector's report noted that not enough time was being given to teaching the girls history, geography and arithmetic.

Left to right:

-?- , Irene Dunne, Marion Sydney, -?- , Najwa, Miss Nicholson, -?- , Jean Salmone, Rose Thrower, Miriam Coomis, Ann Waldron, -?- and Marjorie Petite kneeling at the end.

Photo: School archives

On 23 June 1955, the school celebrated its Jubilee. Miss Beryl Gray, one of the leading members of the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company, came in a handsome veteran Benz car (c1900) as the guest of honour to present prizes, and some staff members dressed in Edwardian costume to celebrate the occasion. There was a giant marquee in the garden, and many old pupils of several generations from far and wide came to join in the celebrations, together with parents of the girls currently in the school, and friends of the school.

The following academic year, September 1955 to the summer of 1956 would be the last time ever that the school could be called a girls' seminary and massive changes would take place. The boys of Anerley Residential School for Deaf Boys would be coming and the school would become co-educational!

Chapter 14: Anerley Residential School for Deaf Boys

It would seem appropriate at this stage to devote a chapter to Oak Lodge's sister London County Council school, the Anerley Residential School for Deaf Boys. Both schools were the result of the decision by the council to stop financing a range of day schools called the Stainer Homes which had fallen in some disrepute, and establish two separate residential schools, one for boys and one for girls, where L. C. C. could exercise its full responsibility for the provision of care as well as the provision of education.

London County Council could only budget for building of one new school, and started to build Anerley Residential School for Deaf Boys in 1901, and it was able to open its doors to new pupils for the first time in December 1902. A purpose-built building with large airy rooms, the school was located in Versailles Road, off Anerley Road in what is now the London Borough of Bromley. Oak Lodge was less fortunate, and it took until 1903 to acquire a suitable building, and as we have seen in a previous chapter, there were delays in its opening due to the extensive alterations required to the building.

The first headmaster of Anerley was Mr. J. O. White, who was only there for six years until 1909 when he became headmaster at Margate. He was succeeded by Mr. R. F. Boyer. When the school started, there were about 20 boys, and increased to between 50 and 60 prior to the start of World War II. Numbers declined to around 36 resident boys and 6 day pupils in 1950, and continued declining to around 25-30 around 1953.

Because of its spacious grounds, Anerley's boys excelled at sports, especially football and at cricket at which sports they competed successfully against other local (hearing) London schools, usually winning their matches. It also hosted annually the London Deaf Schools' Annual Sports Meeting, where all London deaf schools competed for trophies. Anerley's excellence at sports also saw the school provide many former pupils as athletes to the International Games for the Deaf in the early years (1924, 1928, 1931 and 1935)

In 1930, Mr. Boyer retired on grounds of ill-health and was replaced as headmaster by Mr. H. Clegg, who was still the headmaster when the second world war broke out in 1939.



A 1920s picture showing a group of boys at the front of the school
the Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library

The war treated Anerley quite badly, certainly in comparison to other schools for the deaf. In the "September Crisis of 1938", which had already caused disruption to Oak Lodge and the Jewish Residential School for Deaf Children, the boys and the staff of the school were evacuated to the Royal Cross School for Deaf Children in Preston!



The evacuation to Preston at the time of the Munich Crisis, September 1938
*Left: The three coaches that brought the boys and staff of Anerley to Preston;
 Right: The Royal Cross School for Deaf Children, Preston
 Both photographs from the National Deaf Archives*

When the War actually broke out in 1939, it was decided that Preston was not appropriate for Anerley's boys, the main reason being that the Preston school was inadequate to cater for two schools, so on 14 September 1939, the 52 boys from Anerley were moved again, this time to the Royal West of England School for the Deaf at Exeter, which had more spacious accommodation. For the next eighteen months, the two schools shared the accommodation at Exeter with considerable adjustments being made to preserve each school's independence, which was quite a challenge for everyone, especially with fire-watching duties, black-out alerts, food rationing and clothing restrictions. A Medical Officer's Report for 1941 stated there was a sharp increase in illness amongst the schoolchildren and attributed this to overcrowding, poor ventilation and depression. There were cases of Measles, Whooping Cough, Influenza, Coryza, Tracheitis, Bronchitis, Tonsillitis, Jaundice, Pleurisy and Scabies, which in particular proved very difficult to get rid of.

In 1942 whilst still at Exeter, the Headmaster Mr. H. Clegg suddenly died in his office. Mr. E. W. Stannard, who had been a teacher with Anerley since 1924, was appointed headmaster in his place.



The Royal West of England School for the Deaf, Exeter
Photo from the National Deaf Archives

In April and May 1942, the German Luftwaffe suddenly switched its bombing raids to the south-west of England as part of a campaign that came to be known as the Baedeker Raids. The Baedeker raids were conducted by the German Luftwaffe's *Luftflotte 3* in two periods between April and June 1942. They targeted strategically relatively unimportant but picturesque cities in England. The cities were reputedly selected from the German Baedeker Tourist Guide to Britain, meeting the criterion of having been awarded three stars, hence the English name for the raids. Baron Gustav Braun von Stumm, a German propagandist reportedly said on 24 April 1942 following the first attack, "We shall go out and bomb every building in Britain marked with three stars in the Baedeker Guide."

The cities attacked in the first period were Exeter on 23/24 April and on 3 May, and Bath on 25/26 April. Bristol was also attacked during the same period. The deaf community suffered quite badly during these raids, with several people killed in Exeter, the Bath Deaf Institute being completely destroyed, Bristol's school for the deaf was also severely damaged and had to be pulled down. In Torquay, the Deaf club was also destroyed by the only bomb that fell on the town in this period!

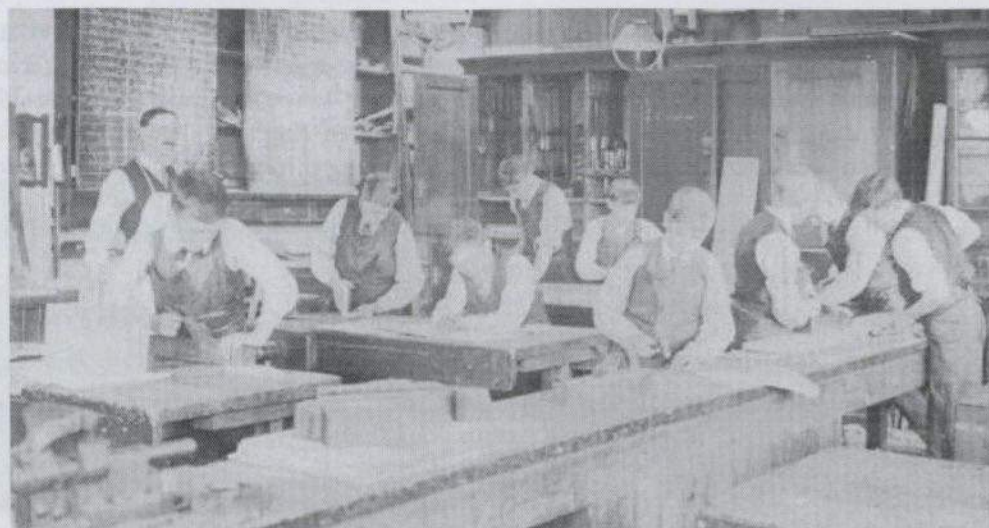
The Royal West of England School for the Deaf received two hits in the raid of 3/4 May, one of which was an unexploded bomb. In addition, blasts from high explosives dropped on Topsham Road, the main road that ran past the school, caused substantial damage to the building. Many of the school records belonging to both the Exeter school and Anerley were destroyed in the air-raid, but the sensible habit of sleeping children on the ground floor prevented casualties. By 8 May, all children at the Exeter school had been returned to their homes, and Anerley's boys were evacuated to another location, this time at Banstead in Surrey, but they did not stay there for long. By September 1942, they were back in their own school in Versailles Road, Anerley! Amazingly, the school stayed in Anerley throughout the rest of 1942, 1943 and it was not until the flying bomb blitz started in June 1944 that they were evacuated again, when the school buildings suffered superficial damage.

The school was first re-located to a Miners' Hostel in Maltby, Yorkshire, where they stayed a few weeks before being dispersed to a Miners' Camp in Warmsworth, near Doncaster where they stayed until the end of the War.

Amazingly, the school was able to return to Anerley almost as soon as the end of the war came about, because there was only minimal damage to the school from any war-time activities, although it had been in use as a Civil Defence centre during the last year of the war.



Anerley Residential School for Boys
 The fact the building is bedecked with flags, and there are markings on the field indicate that this photograph was taken on a Sports Day
 (date unknown - but post-war)
Photo: National Deaf Archives



Top: Carpentry Class, 1921

Middle: Cookery Class, 1921

Below: Tailoring Class, 1921

All photographs from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library



Top: Cricket practice, 1921

*Middle: Rest period after dinner, waiting to go back into class, 1921
Note the donkey on the left of the picture!*

Below: Boys walking back into class after dinner ready for the 2 pm start, 1921.

All photographs from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library





Above left: Well-kept gardens in the school grounds; in the building at the side, there were the dining rooms and wash room for older boys on the ground floor, and older boys bedrooms on the upper floor, together with a duty teacher's room.

Above Right: This was the "workshops" block, with the left of the building being used for woodwork, and the middle side was the tailoring room. Later, when tailoring was discontinued, the room was used for shoe-repairing instruction. The right side of the building was the bakery, where bread and cakes were produced by the boys.

Below:

Outdoor classes, May 1921.

It was a feature of not only Anerley School, but also Oak Lodge, to hold classes out-of-doors in good weather

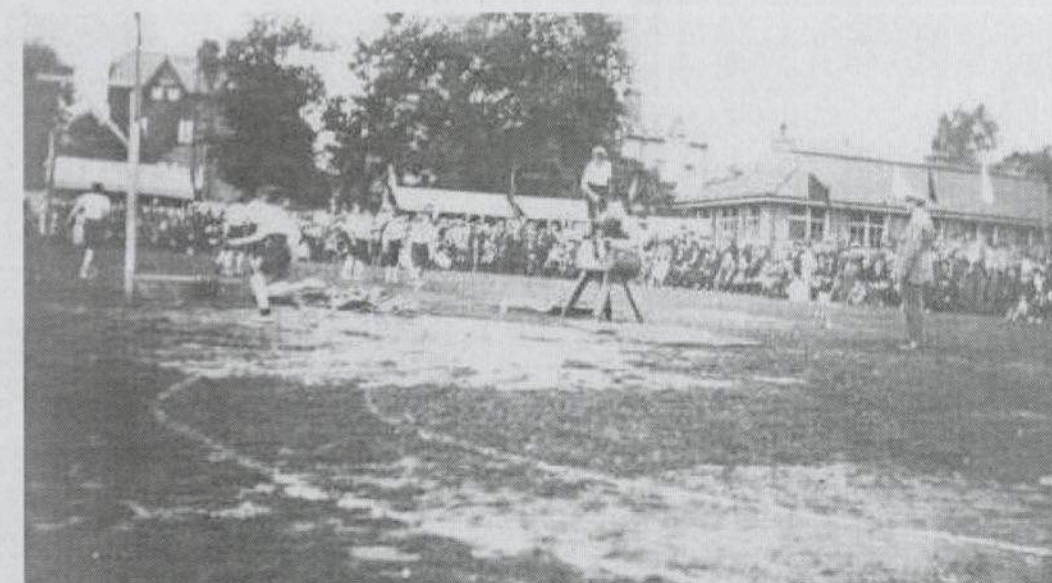


Sports Day, July 1921

The 1921 Sports Day was blessed with superb weather which attracted a considerable crowd to watch the activities taking place.

It was a complete contrast the following year in July 1922 when Sports Day was ruined by terrible weather, which turned the fields into mud, as seen below.

All photographs from the Selwyn Oxley Collection, courtesy of RNID Library





Photos from c1930 (exact year not known)

Above: A gymnasium scene

Below: The woodwork room

Both photographs from the London Metropolitan Archives LCC/EO/SS/1/56



The 1948-49 Anerley Football Team

Back Row: Tony Orna, Arnold Rundle, Fred Steele, Arthur Monk, Eric Collier, Jeff Chandler, Les Cowper;

Front Row: Ted Edwards, Tom Strang, Bill Willoughby, Tony Brooker, Bill Simpson.

Photo: National Deaf Archives



Anerley Cricket team 1949

Back row: Fred Epps, Tony Orna, Charlie Lauri, Bill Willoughby, Les Cowper, Robert Cunningham (Umpire);

Front row: Bill Simpson, Arnold Rundle, Bill Choat, Arthur Monk, Tony Brooker

Photo: National Deaf Archives



Christmas at Anerley, 1949.

Anerley had four "houses" into which the boys were divided, Lawrence, Reay, Stanley and Moberley Houses. Inter-school house competitions were frequently held in sports and other activities. During Christmas 1949, each house was asked to make Christmas cakes which would later be used in the school play, *King Alfred and the Cakes*.

Top left: Arnold Rundle, Arthur Monk, Leonard Cowper and Douglas Chandler hold the cakes;

Top right: The play, *King Alfred and the Cakes* featured (from left to right) Charles Lauri, Ronald Horstead, Robin Madden and Tony Orna.

Photos courtesy of Arnold Rundle



Snowfights in heavy snow on the playing field, Winter 1949-50.

The dog in the foreground was a stray adopted the headmaster, E. W. Stannard, and named Max

Photo courtesy of William Christmas

Anerley activities in 1946-1951



Left:
William Christmas learning bricklaying
Photo courtesy of William Christmas

Right:
Preparing for an inter-house sports match
Photo courtesy of William Christmas



Left:
An inter-house "touch rugby" match
Photo courtesy of William Christmas

Right:
An inter-house cricket match
Photo courtesy of William Christmas



Left:
Staff versus Boys Cricket Match
Photo: National Deaf Archives



Some of the staff and boys in May 1950.
Photo courtesy of William Christmas

On Saturday 13th December 1952, Anerley Residential School for Deaf Boys celebrated its 50th anniversary with an Open Day. Starting at 2.30 p.m. with an opening ceremony and a speech by Miss Amy Sayle MBE, the chairman of the London County Council's School Managing Committee, and one of the principal speakers in the afternoon included the M.P. Edward Evans, who was a former headmaster at the East Anglian Schools for the Deaf, Gorleston-on-Sea.

The day would continue with an exhibition of work by the boys, presentation of prizes by Miss Sayle, and a physical education display before closing at 7.15 p.m.

PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS	
Honorary Chairman of the London County Council Mr. DOUGLAS A. G. FRIEDMAN	
Chairman of the London County Council's School Managing Committee Miss AMY SAYLE MBE, M.A., M.P.	
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS	
Member of the Opposition Party Mr. NORMAN KENNEDY, M.P., M.P.	Member of the Opposition Party Mr. FREDERICK CHERRY, M.P.
Chairman of the Education Committee Mr. R. McKEOWN-WATSON, M.A.	Chairman of the Special Education Sub-Committee Mr. LEONARD R. BROWN, C.B.
First Chairman of the Special Education Sub-Committee Mr. D. HUGHES, M.A.	Chairman of the Parent-Teacher Council Mr. A. K. COOKE, M.A.
Education Officer of the London County Council Mr. JOHN BARNES, M.A., M.A.	Assistant Education Officer Miss D. A. PLATT, M.A.

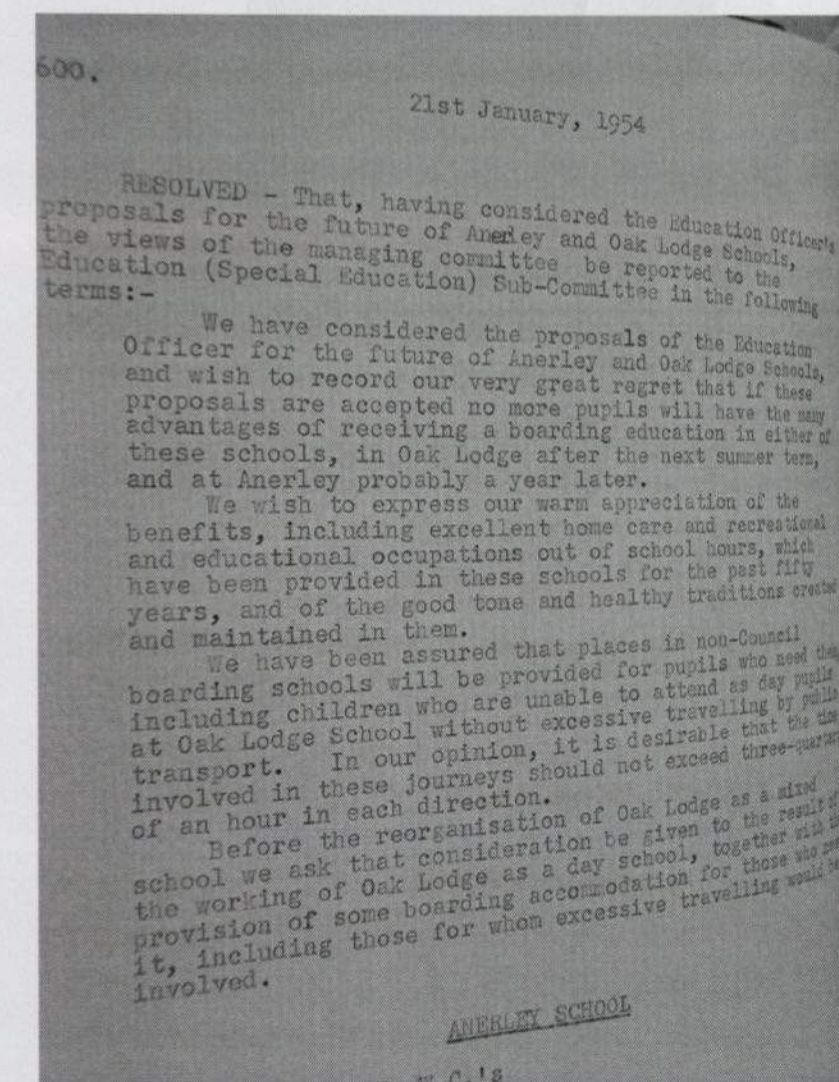
The programme for the Open Day,
13 December 1952
London Metropolitan Archives



Fifteen-year old Jimmy Hunt is seen showing a round loaf he had baked to Miss Sayle.
London Metropolitan Archives

By the end of 1953, it was painfully clear that Anerley Residential School for Boys was no longer becoming viable as an independent entity due to dwindling numbers. At this stage, there were only 32 boys in the school, including 8 day pupils, and almost all of these boys were from the London County Council area. Whereas in the past, several boys had come from outside the London area (for example, Arnold Rundle had travelled from Plymouth to board at the school, and so had Arthur Monk, who came from the Bedfordshire area), very few boys now travelled to attend the school because of changes in Local Education Authority policy. It was viewed that the catchment area for a London County Council school should be just that, pupils drawn from London itself.

On 21st January 1954, the management committee of the London C. C. schools authority considered a proposal from the Chief Education Officer that no further boarders should be accepted to either Anerley or Oak Lodge Schools, and that plans should be put into effect for Oak Lodge to become a mixed school. The management committee had, of course, already received the report of the school inspector who had visited Oak Lodge in March 1953 and had condemned the standards of the residential accommodation at that school. It was resolved that consideration should carefully be given to developing Oak Lodge as a mixed school, which meant that alterations had to be carried out to the school to accommodate boys, i.e. building of separate toilet facilities and games changing rooms. It was clear that some time would be needed for these alterations to be carried out, and but that the long term aim would be to locate an educational establishment for both girls and boys on one site - Oak Lodge.



Extract from the minutes of the Management Committee of London C. C., January 1954
London Metropolitan Archives

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15th November, 1956

Proceedings of Committee

6. Increase in Games and Recreation Fund, 1955-56. 20.200
Committee (18.7.56).
Increase in rates or school meals. Education Social
Education Sub-Committee (17.5.57).
Teacher School - 100 for independent schools. Motion
Committee (18.7.56).
Admission and improvements to Junior School and Main
and re-decoration of schoolmaster's house. Education Social
Education Sub-Committee (17.5.57).

RECEIVED.

Minutes of Another Meeting held for the first

7. Report by the Education Officer on arrangements for the
closure of the school.

RESOLVED - That it be placed on record that the committee
deeply regret the closure of Amherst School after so many years
of devoted service to the town and their grateful appreciation
the loyal and willing service of its acting headmaster,
Mr. C.S. Miller, and his teachers, the said were made at
the domestic staff on behalf of the school.

Next

8. Report (16.11.56) by the visiting medical officer.
RECEIVED.

Another school meeting

9. Report (16.11.56) by the visiting education officer.
RESOLVED - (1) That the proposed acquisition of the premises
in the Game and Recreation Fund, 1955-56, be approved.
(2) That letters be appreciated for the late local men
to the school be sent to Mrs. E.H. Buxton, Headmistress, and
retirement; to Miss J. H. Buxton, Headmistress, and to Mr. A. H.
transfer to Army Hill Training College and to Mr. A. H.
certificates on his pending transfer to a new school as
unattached schoolleaver.

Report on Staffing Inquiry

10. The Chairman requested orally. Written reports from
Mrs. Anner and Mr. Glyn.

RECEIVED.

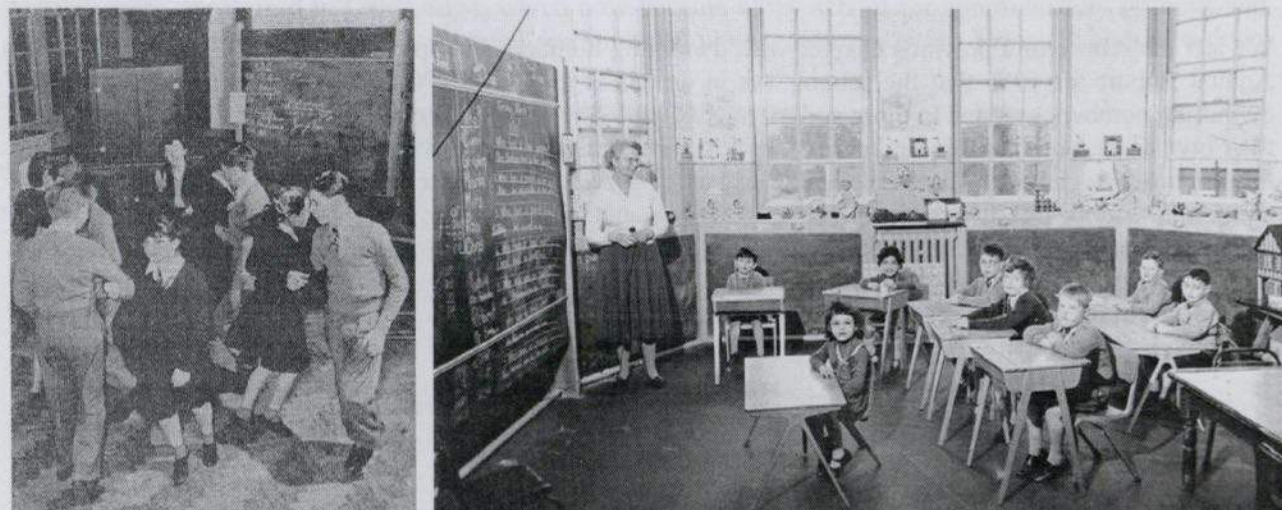
Mrs. Walton requested her inability to visit
Evaluation of book
on the basis, we should

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We left the school in a previous chapter with dwindling numbers and spiralling costs. It was stated in the Annual Report for 1956 that the school was in deficit of around £2000 per year. Part of the reason for dwindling numbers was due to more and more educational provision becoming available to deaf children in their own areas, both at home and abroad, giving parents the choice of having their children at home rather than at boarding schools. Even the fees arising from the provision of residential accommodation for deaf children attending Oak Lodge next door made only a small dent in the overdraft, and much of the work of the RSJDC Society went towards keeping the overdraft down to manageable proportions and ensuring that the school continued to provide an education of high standards for Jewish children, although more and more deaf children being accepted at the school were non-Jewish. The school had no choice if they wanted to survive.

Jacqueline Alick	Pamela King
Faith Bennett	Leon Lebor
Melanie Berger	Sally Littleboy
Pauline Bone	Misha Vljacic
Janet Brewster	Roy Martin
Michael Broer	Ann Miller
Richard Cayzer	Linda Miller
Harvey Clements	Terence Mills
Ivan Clements	Moshe Moshezadeh
Eve Cochrane	Linda Nabarro
Higham Corney	Lorraine Nyman
Brian Dondo	Sally Olsen Sara
Jennifer Everett	Jessica Rapaport
Terence Eyre	Alan Roberts
Pauline Fathers	Jacqueline Smith
Brenda Feltz	Linda Smith
Raymond Gilham	David Solomon
Patricia Graville	Anthony Spielsinger
David Greenberg	Maureen Urbach
Lydia Handscomb	Leatrice Werner
Ivan Hart	Alan West
Nita Harvey	David West
David Jessel	Mary Willard
Leslie Kaiser	Lionel Wolfson
Neil Kaufman	

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Classroom scenes, 1957

Left: Children learning to dance to music

Photo: National Deaf Archives

Right:

Junior children's class with Mrs. Benham

Photo courtesy of Miriam Solomon



Junior Class in 1957

Left to right:

Linda Nabarro, George Lehrer, Joshua Menczer, Misha Vlajcic (at the back), Lionel -?-,
Moshe Moshy, Leon Lebor, Jacqueline Alick and Alan Roberts

Photo: Courtesy of Linda Woolfe



Sports Day photographs 1957

Top picture:

Back row left to right: David West, Terry Mills, David Jessel, Terry Eyre, Richard Cayzer,
Lydia Handscomb, Norman Kitchner, Anthony Spilsberger;

Second row: Leslie Kaiser, Neil Kaufman, Pamela King, Colleen Koblentz, Michael Brojer, Linda Smith,
Ivan Clements, Mary Williard, Alan West, Raymond Gilham, Michael Hyman, Jacqueline Smith,
Brian Dondo, Jennifer Everett;

Third row: David Solomon, Ann Miller, Faith Bennett, Esther Menczer, Lorraine Nyman, Pauline Bone;

Front row: Joshua Menczer, Alan Roberts, Jeffrey Monk, Linda Miller, Sally Brewster, Melanie Berger,
Maureen Urbach, Sally Olsen, Pat Granville, Janet Brewster, Paula Fathers, Harvey Clements.

Bottom picture:

Same group of children, all lined up ready to go...

Front line: Lydia Handscomb, Jennifer Everett, Ann Miller, Lorraine Nyman, Esther Menczer,
Pauline Bone, Jane Brewster, Pat Granville, Faith Bennett, Sally Littleboy, Linda Miller;

Middle line: Terry Miles, David Jessel, David West, Terry Eyre, Sarah Olsen, Richard Cayzer,
Paula Fathers, Brian Dondo, David Solomon, Jeffrey Monk, Joshua Menczer;

Back line: Norman Kitchner, Colleen Koblentz, Mary Wilcox, Ivan Clements, Raymond Gilham, Michael
Corney, Alan West, Leslie Kaiser, Neil Kaufman.

Top picture: Harvey Clements; bottom picture: Jewish Deaf Association





School group in 1958-1959 wearing summer uniform,
with Matron Miss Ballinson and Mr. E. Denton on the left;
Back row: Richard Cayzer, David Solomon, David Jessel, Raymond Gilham;
Second back row: Ann Miller, Colleen Koblentz, Lydia Handscomb, Jennifer Everett, Lorraine Nyman,
Maureen Urbach & Jacqueline Smith;
Front row: Melanie Berger, Esther Menczer, Janet Brewster, Joshua Menczer, Linda Miller, Sally Littleboy
Photo courtesy of Colleen Daniels



Mrs. Benham's class 1958-9
Alan Roberts, Leon Lebor, George Lehrer,
Moshe Moshy, Misha Vljacic, Ubawka Popovic with
Linda Nabarro & Jacqueline Alick kneeling.
Photo: Courtesy of Linda Woolfe



Music Therapy 1958-1959
Mr. Denton conducting Colleen Koblentz and David Jessel
Photo courtesy of Colleen Daniels



Needlework class, 1958-1959
Mary Willard, Jennifer Everett, Esther Menczer,
Ann Miller & Colleen Koblentz
Photo courtesy of Colleen Daniels



Children in party hats,
1958
Photo courtesy of Colleen Daniels



In the back garden, 1959
Ann Miller and Colleen Koblentz
Photo courtesy of Colleen Daniels



Linda Nabarro in 1959
Photo courtesy of Linda Woolfe



Netball practice, 1960
Photo courtesy of Miriam Solomon



Left:
Speech therapy lesson, 1960
Photo courtesy of Miriam Solomon



Right:
Friday evening Kiddush, 1960
Miss Ballinson, Mr. Denton, Miss Diamond and
David Solomon, Michael Hyman & David Jessel
facing others.
Photo courtesy of Colleen Daniels



Left:
Mr. Denton conducting a music therapy
lesson, 1960
Photo courtesy of Miriam Solomon



Right: In class, 1960
David Solomon, Colleen Koblentz,
Richard Cayzer & Michael Hyman
Photo courtesy of Colleen Daniels



Left: Typing class, 1960 with Mr. Cook
Colleen Koblentz and Mary Williard on the
left and possibly Alan West at the back with
the teacher. Girl on the right Ann Miller.
Photo courtesy of Colleen Daniels



Top picture: Children at play in the gardens, 1961
Photo courtesy of Miriam Solomon

Right picture: Children with Mr. Benham on a
day out to the seaside, 1961

Bottom picture: On another day out, stopping at a
restaurant (not the pub!) for a break, 1961

Left to right:
Unknown boy, George Lehrer in blazer, unknown girls,
Joshua Menczer, Jack Swartz showing his backside,
Leon Lebor and Mr. Denton;
Mr. Benham in the background.
Other two photos: National Deaf Archives





Rehearsals for school play in the
gardens, January 1961

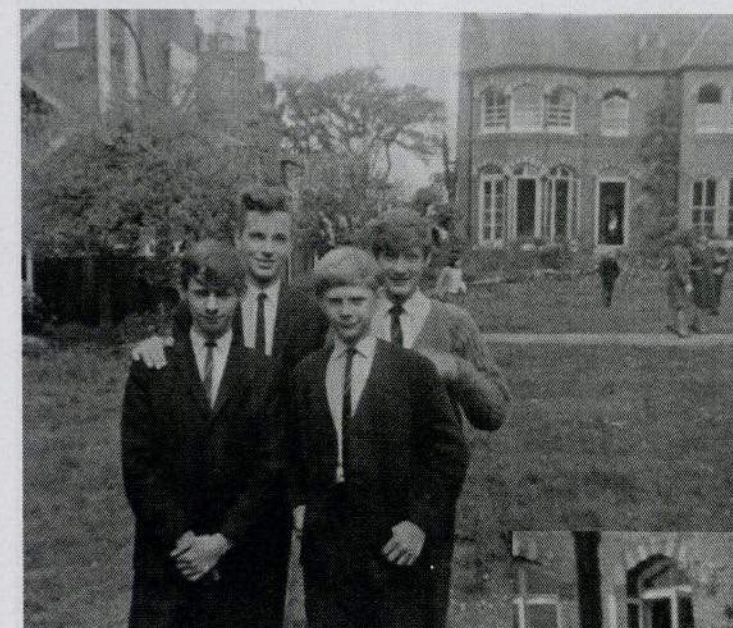
Miriam Solomon and Harold Woolf

Photos courtesy of Miriam Solomon



Rehearsals for school play, Great Expectations, 1964
Sara Olsen and Joshua Menczer as the principal characters
Photos courtesy of Miriam Solomon

Chapter 16: A Pictorial Record - Oak Lodge School 1956 to 1968



Pupil groups, 1963-4

Left:

Back: Richard Dunn, David King
Front: Barry Gibbs, Tony Holland

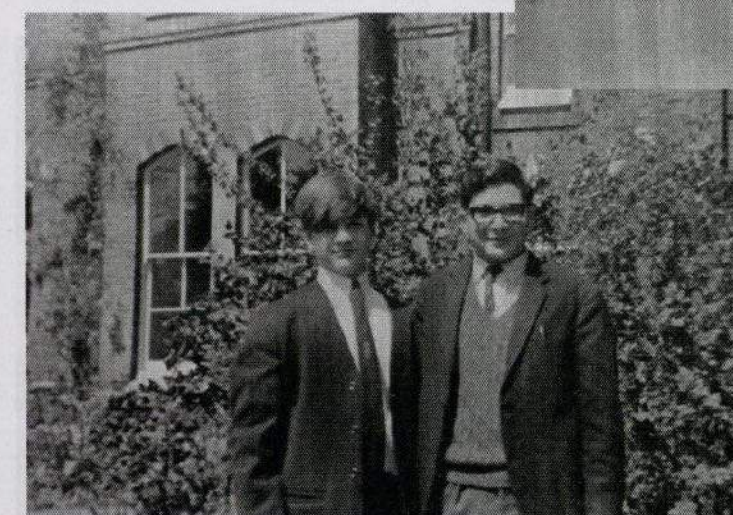
Right:

Lesley Edwards, Heidi Langley



Left:

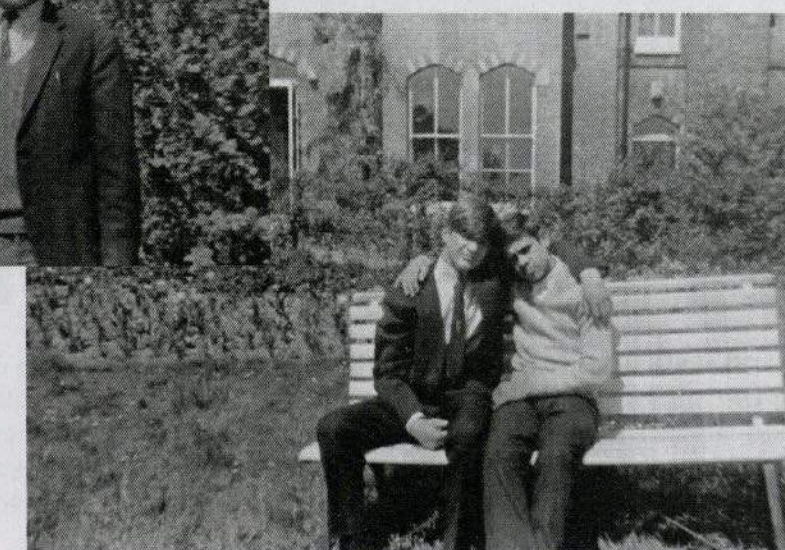
George Smith, Harvey Clements



Right:

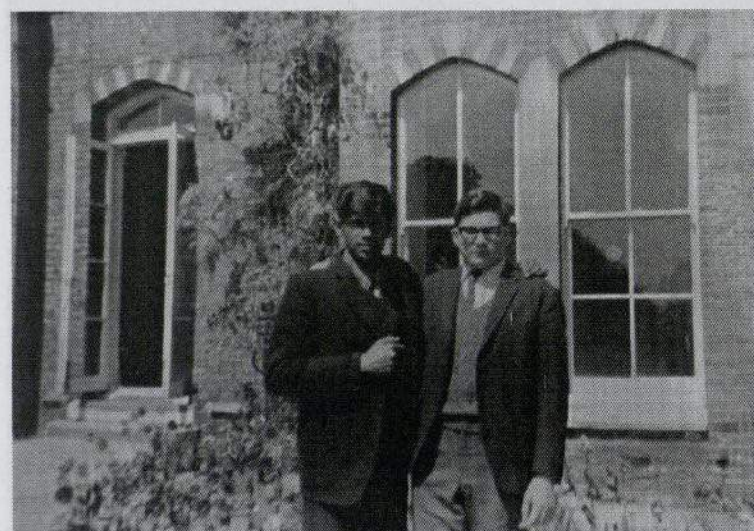
George Smith, Tom Smith
(not related)

All photos courtesy of Harvey Clements





Oak Lodge girls in the garden, 1964
Back row: Sally Michaels, Veronica Cooper, Pam Pope, Pauline Stanton, Linda James;
Seated: Sheila Ashton, Rea Chistfidou, June Smith, Lesley Edwards
Photo courtesy of Harvey Clements



Harvey Clements with another boy At the school, 1964
Photo courtesy of Harvey Clements



The Headmistress, Miss W. Wilkinson,
 cutting her retirement cake, 1968
Photo courtesy of Harvey Clements

Chapter 17: The End of an Era, Beginning of a New...

The mid-1960s saw many changes in Nightingale Lane, changes which signalled the end of a remarkable era, and the beginning of a new in the education of deaf children in the street. It began with the sudden death of the Principal of the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children, Leslie Benham, in February 1964 in his study, moments after reprimanding several children at Morning Assembly for not straightening up. He had served the school as a teacher and Principal for 29 years.



Mr. Leslie Benham, in a familiar pose in the study where he was found
 dead on 25 February 1964.
Photo courtesy of Colleen Daniels

At the time of his death, the unequal struggle to keep the school going in the face of ever-rising costs and dwindling pupil intakes had taken its toll, and the sad decision had been taken to wind down the activities of the school in preparation for its eventual closure. Part of these preparations involved the transfer of some children to the Blanche Neville School in Tottenham, where a hostel was build for the benefit of Jewish children who would board there during the week and receive instruction in the Jewish faith whilst attending the Blanche Neville School as day pupils. One of the teachers of the Jewish school, Mr. Edwin Denton, was transferred to the Blanche Neville School to help to prepare the assimilation of Jewish deaf schoolchildren into their new day school.

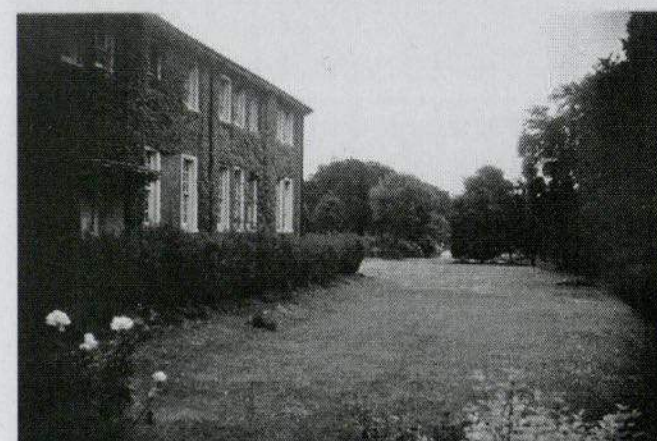
On the sudden death of Mr. Benham, Mr. Denton was recalled to assume the duties as Principal at the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children with responsibility for winding up the school he had served for so long. At the time of his appointment, it was clear that there were more non-Jewish children in the school than those who were actually Jewish, and because of its position as the only deaf school with residential facilities in London, more and more authorities were requesting places for their children at the school, something that the RSJDC Society was reluctant to accept least it diffuse the uniqueness of the school as a Jewish school. Another danger was that if the school lost its unique character as a Jewish school, it would lose the support of the London Jewish community who had rallied to its support with generous financial contributions for many years.

The sad decision was therefore taken to close the school permanently on its 100th anniversary in 1965. This meant that Mr. Denton would only be the Headmaster for the last 15-16 months of the school's life, and by the time it closed, the remaining children had either been allocated places in Blanche Neville School, or in Oak Lodge School next door, which by then was in desperate need of improved facilities to cater for its function as a co-educational school. The influx of boys from the old Anerley School for the Deaf had put a

strain on its facilities and this was known to the RSJDC Society who entered into negotiations with the London County Council for the sale of the school and its grounds on the condition that the land was to be used for the education of deaf children.

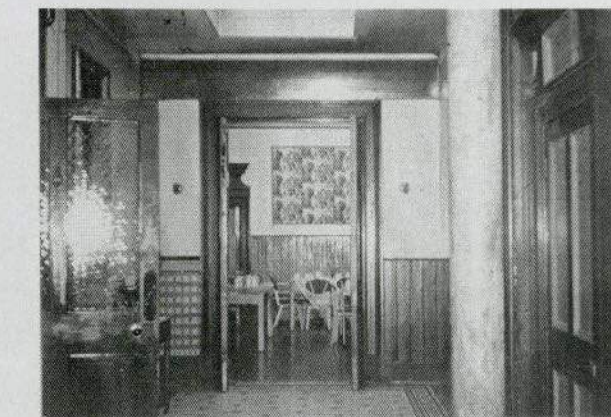
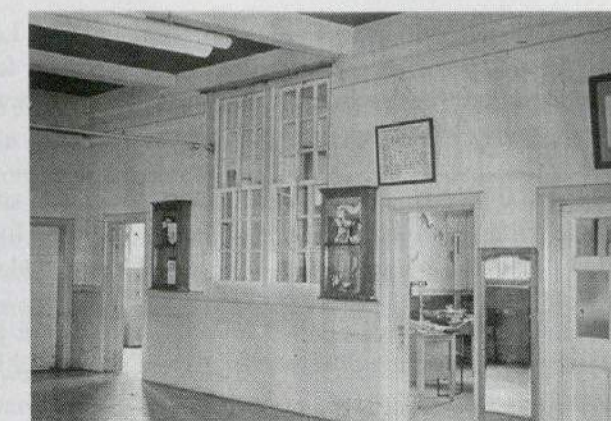
London County Council was replaced by the Greater London Council in 1965 and responsibility for education of the 12 inner London boroughs delved to the Inner London Education Authority. One of the first functions of the ILEA regarding the education of deaf children was to look at the situation of the now closed Jewish Deaf School and Oak Lodge next door. It was decided that the Jewish school would be demolished and a new school building would be erected on its land. Oak Lodge School would be moved into this new building from its present premises which would then also subsequently be demolished.

It took time for these plans to come into fruition and it was not until 1967 that demolition work started on the old Jewish School.

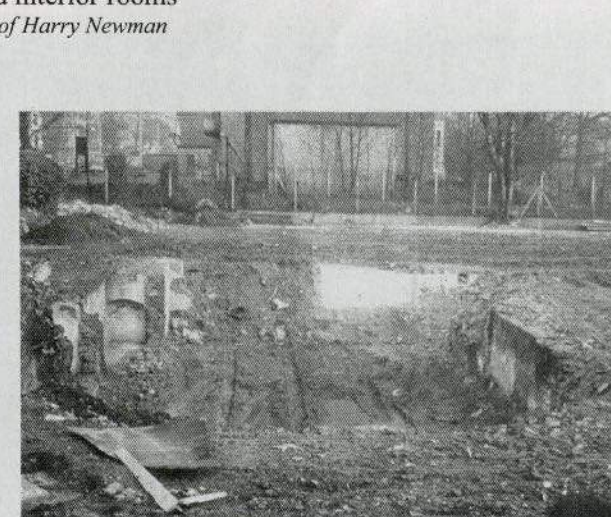


A sad sight,
scenes of desolation as the Jewish School for
Deaf Children is abandoned and awaits
demolition.

Photos courtesy of Harry Newman

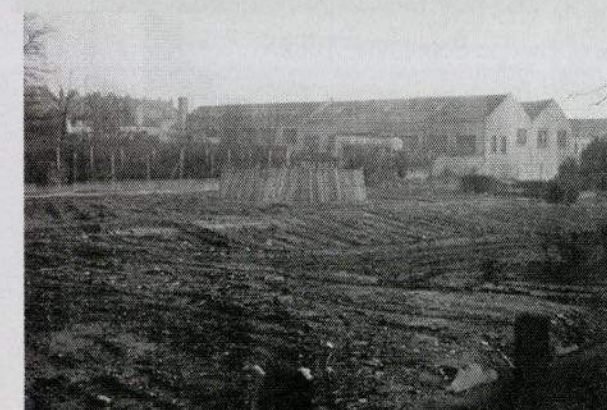


The abandoned interior rooms
Photos courtesy of Harry Newman



The demolition site

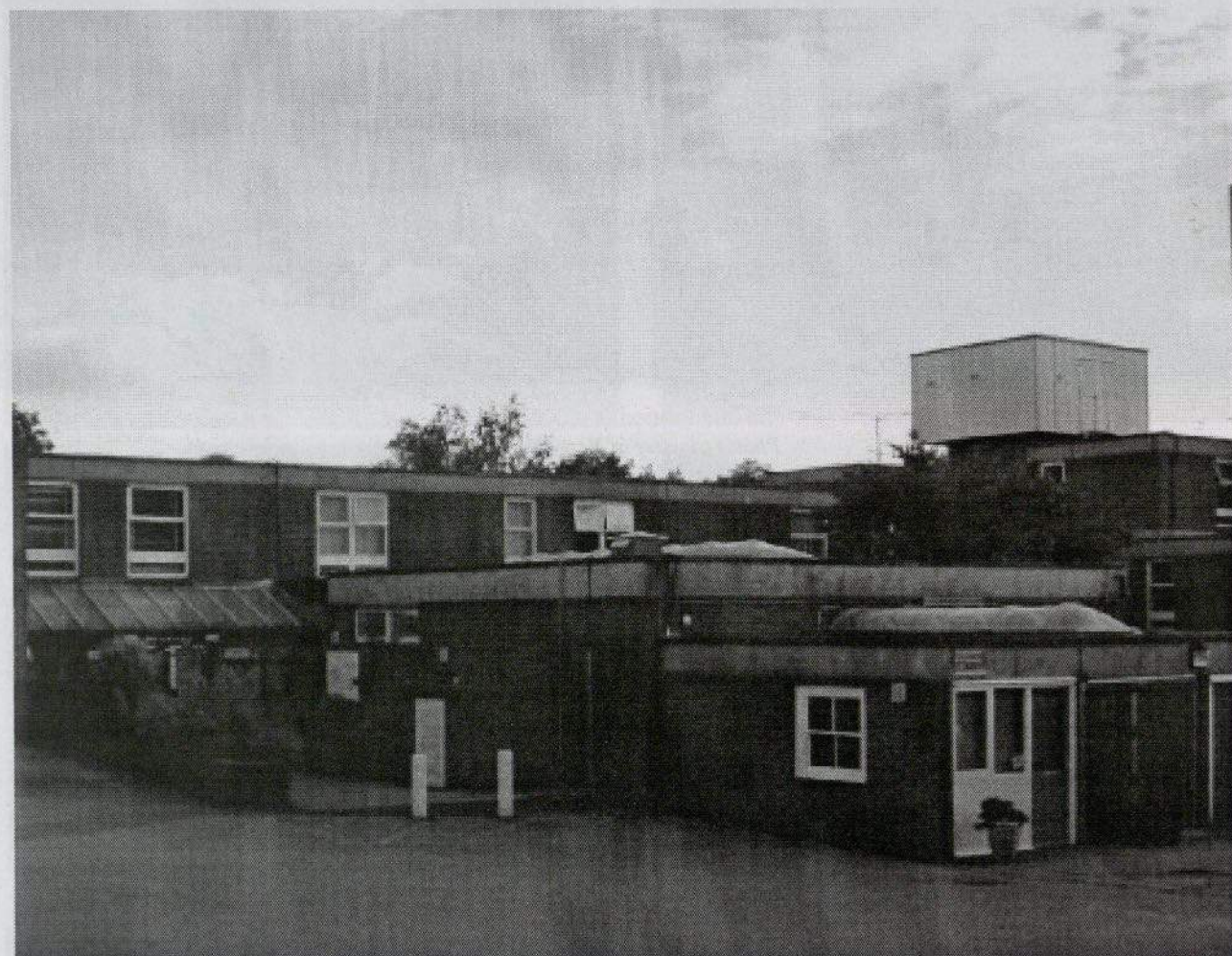
Photos courtesy of Harry Newman



Whilst the demolition was going on, the new Oak Lodge School was being erected, and it was decided to aim for a September 1968 opening. This was ideal for two reasons - the Headteacher, Miss W. Wilkinson would formally retire in July that year, and the new school could start with a clean broom with a new Headteacher. This would be Mr. Sydney Merrifield.

The new school was built quite quickly, and it was amazing to think that the total cost required to build the whole school (including the new hostel to cater for those who boarded during the week) was a mere £241,000. In addition, the furnishings and equipment cost a further £23,000.

When the new school opened in 1968, there were just 40 boys and girls, with six full-time teachers to provide the education. The teachers were supported by three part-time teachers who taught art, mime and music.



The new Oak Lodge school building opened in September 1968
Photo: School archives

Chapter 18: Oak Lodge School 1968-1990

With the new school, a hostel was also built for those children who needed to stay during the school week, going home at weekends as, with the closure of the Residential School for Deaf Jewish Children, the accommodation that they previously offered was no longer available.

There were also many other changes, especially in the delivery of the curriculum under Sidney Merrifield and the provision of educational facilities outside the school. For example, pupils now started to take, and pass, real examinations, something that had not happened before in the old Oak Lodge.

The school also started to make use of the Inner London Education Authority's mountain education centre at Tyn-y-Berth in lower Snowdonia from 1974 onwards, enabling children to undertake various outdoor pursuits, such as hill-walking, mountaineering, canoeing and so forth.



Above and left: two views of the ILEA's Outdoor Pursuits Mountain Centre at Tyn-y-Berth in Snowdonia.
Photos: School Archives



A group of schoolchildren getting ready to go to Tyn-y-Berth, 1974
Photos: School Archives

The 1970s saw one of Oak Lodge's most important events in its history, when during the Queen's Silver Jubilee Year in 1977, Oak Lodge was one of the two schools in London chosen for her to visit. Months of preparations went in to the visit, including the building of a new toilet in case she wanted to use it. The Queen spent 40 minutes in the school, and met children and staff. During her visit, the Head Boy described his work experience in the factory that made the Queen's handbags.



The Royal Visit, 1977

The Queen is introduced to some of the children by Mrs. Williams (in hat and glasses)

Photo courtesy of Debbie Rooney



Class of 1978: School-leavers

From left to right:

June Quest, Erica Williams, Raymond Brimacombe, Ruth Waddams, Mark Mitten, Joy Lewer, Colin Kellman, Barbara Kelly, Lula Louka, Carole Finnegan, Cleveland Jardine, Yvonne Beckford, Ron Dixon.

Photo courtesy of Ruth Waddams.



Oak Lodge School staff and pupils, 1981

Photo: School Archives

By 1981, the pupils at the school were doing well in their examinations - a far cry from 1953 when "few girls could read alone with any real understanding", and the progressive school had now added overseas trips to Switzerland to the school activities. Other activities included running their own Fashion Shows:



Lindsey Gosling with a doll in a fashion show

Photo: School Archives



Some of the classes of 1983 posing with their teachers and the Headteacher, Sydney Merrifield

All photos: School Archives



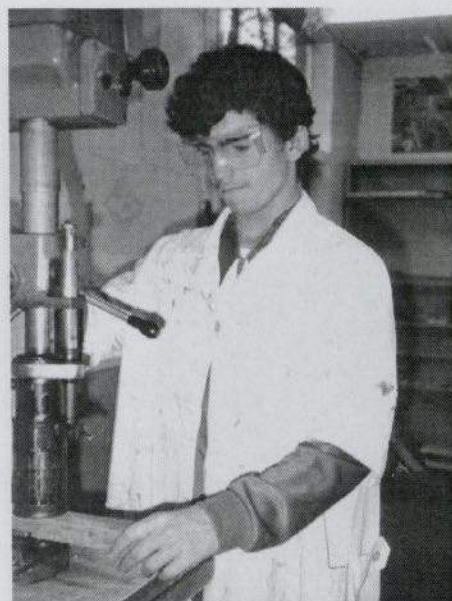
Oak Lodge pupils and staff huddle on a lake steamer in Switzerland in 1984, one of the school's first annual overseas trips supported by the local Rotary Club.

Photo: School Archives



Oak Lodge's traditional annual journey to Wales in 1985; Fifteen children went on this trip - Satvinder Chawla, Daniel Miller, Martin Cueto, Louise Stanton, Habib Ahmed, Michael McNee, Gudjar Khan, Andrew Pudney, Simon Mower, Gracie Miller, Paul Laffney, Ophelia Konje, Mandy Brown, Peggy Lee and Derek Chase. They were accompanied by Mr. Merrifield, Mr. Beeson, Mrs. R. Morris and Miss J. Dalling. It was Mr. Merrifield's last ever trip with the school before he retired.

Photo: School Archives



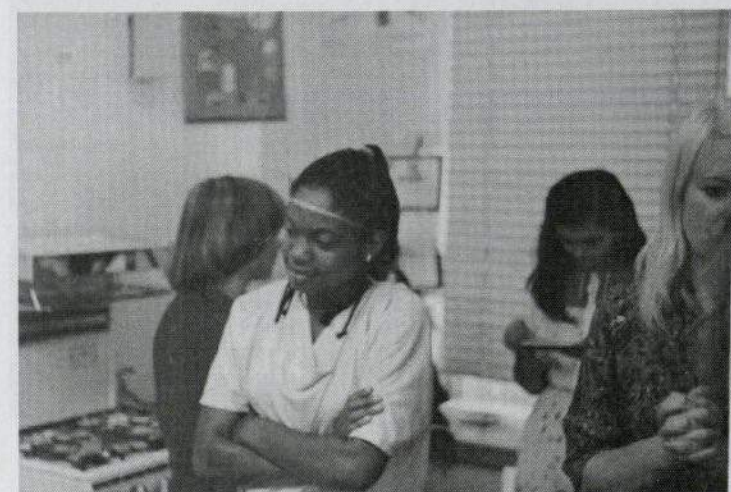
Andrew Pudney doing woodwork



A special occasion in the school
Left to right:
Su Lyn Hwang, Margaret Teeley, Jessica d'Souza, & Mrs. Denton

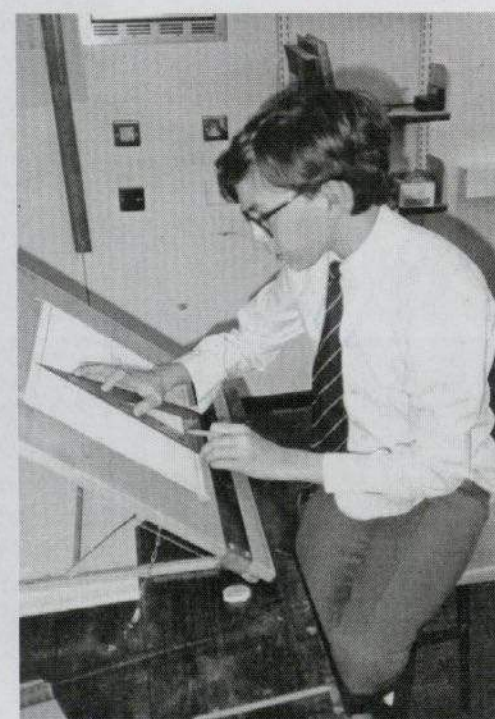


Above left to right:
David Foot, Graham Carswell, Ian Jackson & Gerard Gaughan
Below left to right:
Dawn Myatt, Barbara Burke, Sharon Tebbutt & Mrs. Turner



School Life in 1983/1985

All photos: School Archives



Below: Craig Hughes



The Deaf artist Trevor Landell was a frequent visitor to Oak Lodge, helping pupils with art projects.

Above left:
Kevin Harewood, Robert Gray and Sudie Bakare pay attention to Trevor's points;

Above right:
Nicola Billet, Charlotte Redden and Lorraine Fortune doing a project with Trevor;

Below right:
The art room!



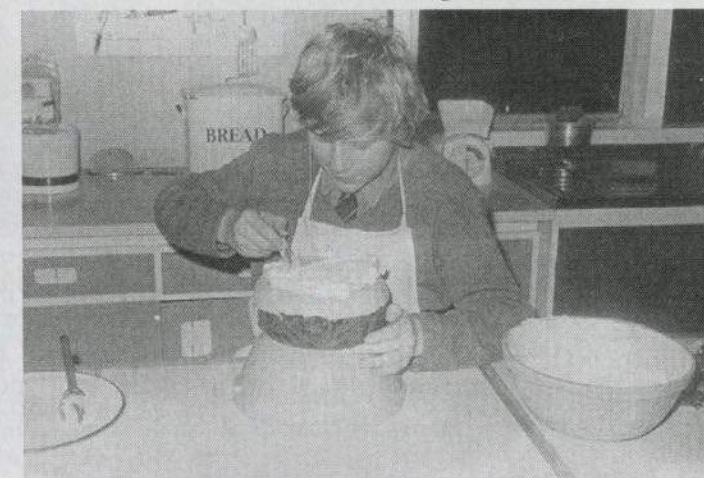
School activities

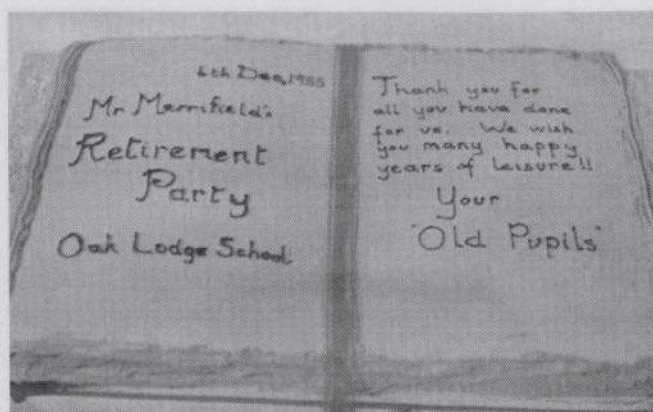
All photos: School archives



Left:
Needlework was still traditional in the early 1980s

Below:
And cake-making too!





Mr. Sydney Merrifield's Retirement party, 6 December 1985
A special cake in the shape of a book was made for the retirement party, and Mr. Merrifield was snapped on camera shedding a few tears at the send-off he was getting.
Photos: School Archives

The end of 1985, and the beginning of 1986, brought the end of one era and the beginning of a new for on 6th December 1985, Sidney Merrifield retired after being Headteacher for 17 years and in an unique twist, his son Peter Merrifield was appointed in his place, taking up his duties in January 1986, and over the next four years, there were some important changes within the school.

The examination system changed in 1987, with all pupils now sitting GCSE examinations. This was followed in 1988 by the introduction of the National Curriculum for all schools, which meant that Oak Lodge was now no different in the subjects it provided from any other school.

A new activity centre was added to the school's outdoor pursuits portfolio in 1989 when a group of children were taken to the Sayers Croft Field Centre in Ewhurst, near Cranleigh in Surrey.



Some of the first children at the Sayers Croft Field Centre, Ewhurst, 1989
Left to right: Avalon Andries, Joanne Henderson, Victoria Carty, Brian Kelly, -?-, Paul Williams, -?-, (at the back), -?-, Matthew Squire, Abdul Goni, Mobin Sadhan, Andrew French, -?-.
The ones at the front are Justin Hypolite and John Savva.
Photo: School Archives



Children at Sayers Croft, 1989
Left to right:
Mobin Sadhan, Joanne Henderson & Victoria Carty
Photo: School Archives



Children enjoying canoeing activities, 1989
Photo: School Archives



The school staff and pupils, Summer 1989
Left to right:
Front row: Marcia Farren, Sibel Hussein, Lucy Rahman, Marcel Rodrigues, Rohel Miah, Audri Quasim, Nirmal Thakkar, Justinm Hypolite, Rajan Padhiar, Abdul Goni & Mr. Roger Beeson;
Second row: John Savva, Mathew Squire, Mobin Sadhan, Shaista Khan, Brian Kelly, -?-, (the boy with his hand covering his face), Andrew French, Avalon Andries, Helen Haslam, Carly Warburton, Michelle Presley, Donna Brown, Samia Hussien, Susan Rahman, Ryan Pendley, Dwain Rield, & Mrs. Williams;
Third row: Ms. Dornan, Mrs. Denton, -?-, -?-, Mrs. Lawley, Ms. Kappelhoff, Mr. Rowland, Mr. Peter Merrifield (Headteacher) Mrs. Turner (Deputy Head), Ms. Rix, Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Foot, Mrs. Edge, Ms. Loombe, -?-, and catering manager;
Fourth row: Debbie Gibbs, Yesim Huseyin, Eleanor Trafford, Rebecca Roper, Rohema Begum, Lisa Price, Vanathy Vartharaja, Yasmin Haruna, Richard Jeffers, Maria Maynard, Caroline Jahans, Kirandeep Bolina, Hong Hong Tran, Yashica Razik, & Kerry Lowe;
Back row: Lynne Chinery, Michelle Tripp, Nyree Alderson, Yvonne Osbourne, Georgina Georgiou, David Martin, Dennis Reid, Jermaine Kinsman, Vejay Lopez, Mohammed Ali, Bijal Jhala, Jonathan Mills, Robin Ash, Daniel Smith, Donna Sharp, & Victoria Newman.
Photo: School Archives



Another trip to Switzerland organised by the school with help from the local Rotary Club, 1989;
Left picture: Iqbal Uddin, Steven Marsh and Murden Bernadine try to decide how a camera works;
Right picture: Abdul Shafi in a pensive mood in a Swiss mountain restaurant.

Photos: School Archives



The full group that went to Switzerland in 1989

Back row: Njoura Beck, Daniel Sturm, Murden Bernadine, Nicole Henry-Lucas & Mr. Banks;
Middle row: Akik Ahmed, Sameera Chitke, Hollene Williams, Cynthia Pacheco, Daniella Hayes & Mrs. Barton;

Front row: Iqbal Uddin, Abdul Shafi & Steven March

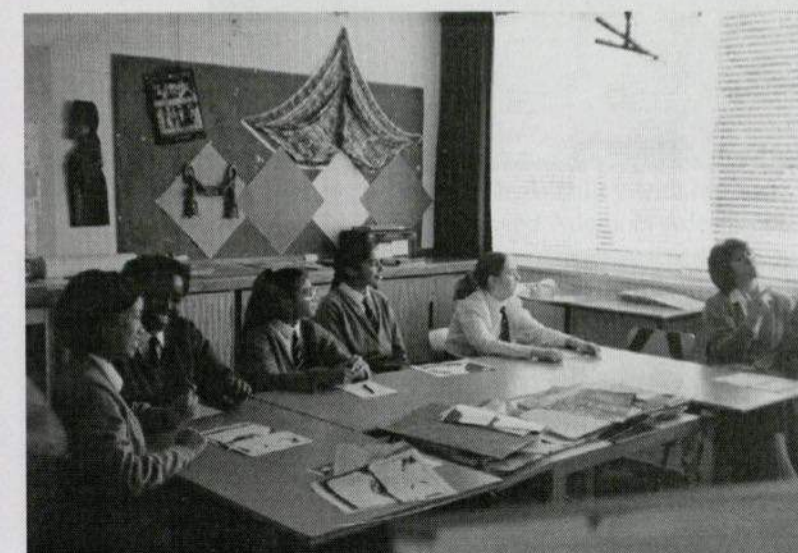
Photo: School Archives



Teachers 1988/9

Standing left to right: Ms. Dornan (Typing teacher), Mrs. Lawley (Librarian), Ms. Kappelhoff (Drama), -?-,
 Ms. Bailey (PSHE), Ms. Rix (English), Mrs. Williams (Maths), Mr. Rowland (DT teacher);
Seated left to right: -?-, Mr. Beeson (Communication/PE), Mr. Peter Merrifield (Headteacher),
 Mrs. Turner (RE), Ms. Loombe (English), Mrs. Thomas (Food Technology), Mrs. Edge (Maths),
 Mrs. Foot (School Secretary), Mrs. Denton (Arts & Textiles)

Photo: School Archives



Ms. Rix teaching

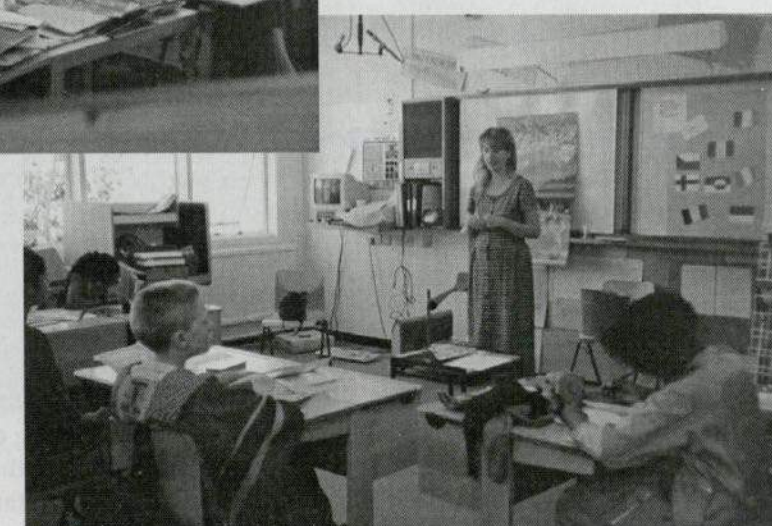
Photo: School Archives

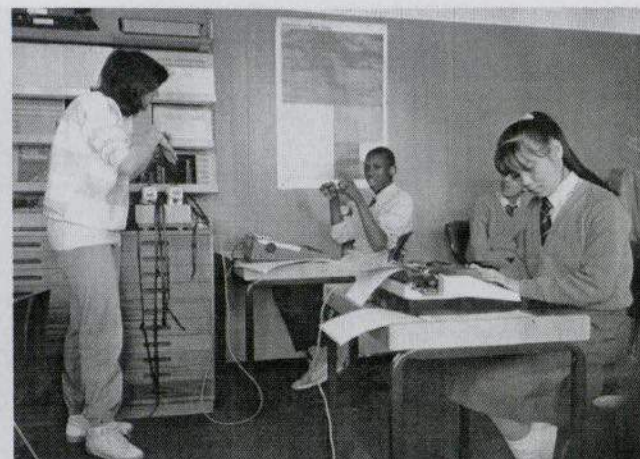
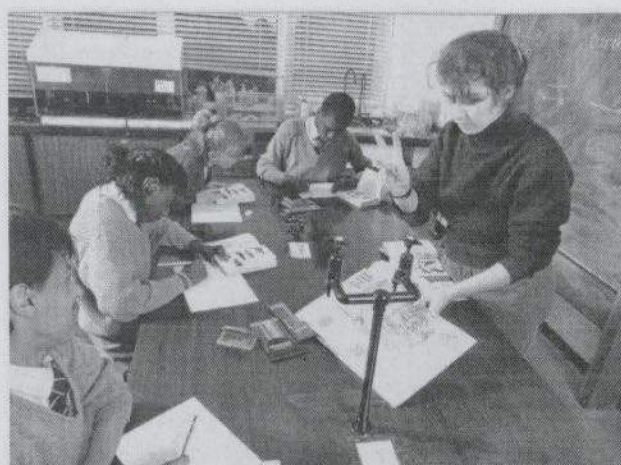
Children in class:

Left to right:

Yen Lieu, Melanie Scarlett,
 Roona Rahman, Navjyot Mata,
 Michelle Cullinane with
 Ms. Kappelhoff on the far right.

Photo: School Archives





School activities 1989-1990

Above left: Kirandeep Bolina, Maria Maynard, Victoria Norman and Richard Jeffers in the science lab;

Above right: Mrs. Dornan standing signing to Richard Jeffers, with Kirandeep Bolina at the back; Hong Hong Tran is typing.

Left picture: Georgina Georgiou signing a point to someone

All photos: School Archives



The school got in famous sports stars as part of encouraging children in National Reading Week

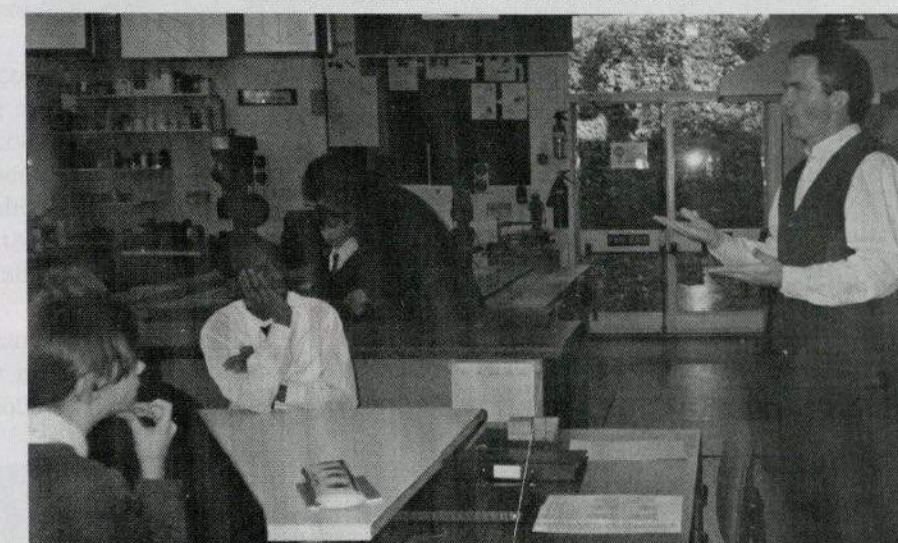
Above left: Dennis Reid, Vejayan Lopez & Dwain Reid with famous footballer Garth Crookes;

Above left: Marcia Farren, Sibel Hussein and Dwain Reid with famous javelin thrower Tessa Sanderson.



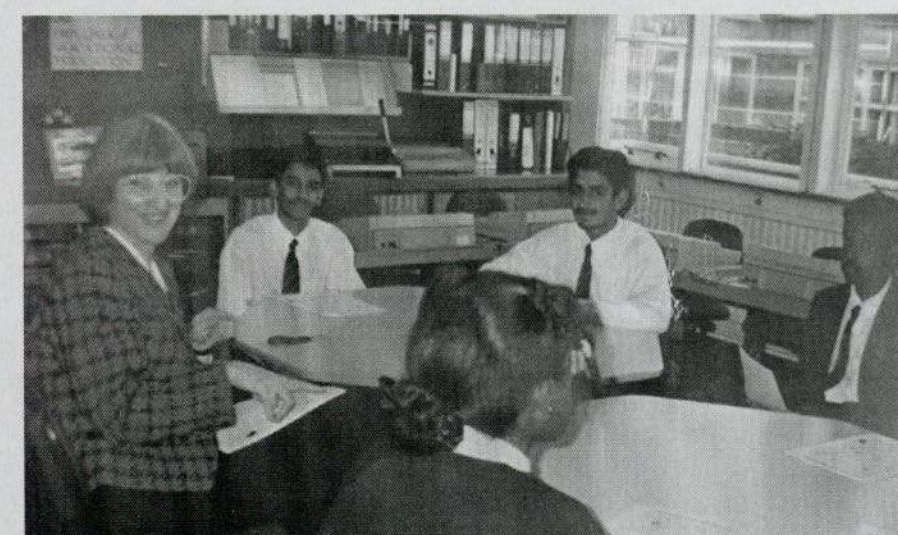
Mrs. Barton and her class 11B

L.to R: Cynthia Pacheco, Nicole Henry-Lucas, Steven Marsh, Murden Bernadine & Hollene Williams



Mr. Whalley with his class 9E:

Rebecca Bauer and Ademola Aderibigbe in the foreground



Ms. Dornan with her class 10D:

Saifur Rahman, Imran Khan, Abdi Gas, Sameera Chikte

All photos: School archives



The Southern Deaf Schools Sports Association Athletics Championships, held annually at the Tooting Bec Athletics Track were always looked forward to by staff and pupils alike. In these pictures taken on 6 June 1990, we see in the *top picture*, Ryan Pendley on the far left at the starting line for one event, and *middle picture*, Robin Ash trying on his track shoes under the watchful eyes of Mr. Peter Merrifield, Headteacher. The *bottom picture* shows how even those not taking part can also feel so animated.



All photos: School Archives

Chapter 19: Oak Lodge 1990 to 2010

By the time the school opened for the new academic year in September 1990, responsibility for managing the education system at Oak Lodge had been transferred from the Inner London Education Authority, which now disbanded, to the London Borough of Wandsworth. This led in the following year (1991) to the borough's Hearing-Impaired Service being based in the school.

There would be more changes in Oak Lodge during the 1990s, starting with the introduction of a new 16-plus Department for deaf students over the age of 16 in 1992. This expanded three years later in 1995 with the opening of the new 16 Plus Centre for 16-19 year-olds. In the same year (1995), Oak Lodge started a new communication and support service for deaf adults in local colleges. These latter developments had been helped by the decision of the London Borough of Wandsworth to allow the school to become responsible for its own budget.

In 1995, Oak Lodge was also for the first time subjected to an Ofsted inspection. The inspectors reported that Oak Lodge *"was a good school with very good and some excellent features"*. Four years later, the school was subjected to another Ofsted inspection which merely said that Oak Lodge was a *"very good school with some excellent features."*

Oak Lodge continued to develop its own ethos towards the end of the century, showing great commitment in recruiting and training deaf staff, becoming the first school in the country to enable a deaf person to become a trained teacher of the deaf through the now-discontinued licensed teacher scheme. The school also developed a new Communication Policy and Practice which became recognised throughout the world. The new policy showed the school's commitment to sign language, and started to run classes for staff, parents and the public at Levels 1, 2 and 3. As part of its commitment, the school joined with the British Deaf Association in promoting BSL Week.

For three years between 2000 and 2002, there was a School Achievement Award scheme for excellent achievement by the pupils of any school, and Oak Lodge won it for each of the three years that it was operated, another sign of what an excellent school Oak Lodge had become.



Some of the children with Jeff McWhinney, Chief Executive of the British Deaf Association, during Deaf Awareness Week, 1999
Photo: School Archives



Sports and leisure activities were a regular feature of Oak Lodge.

Above: The Oak Lodge team in an away match against Ovingdean Hall School, Brighton in October 1990;
From left to right, standing: Justin Hypolite, Paul Williams, Abdul Goni, Dwain Reid, Sector Tay-Agbozo, Adam Flynn and Ryan Pendley;

kneeling: Mathew Squire, Avalon Andries, Brian Kelly, Rajan Padhiar & Audri Quasim.

Below: Riding lessons with Michelle Presley (white horse) and Jermaine Kinsman (brown horse).

Photos: School archives



The school encouraged the pupils to participate in national deaf schools football competitions, such as the one at the Royal School for the Deaf, Derby, in 1992 above.

The Oak Lodge team are shown above immediately to the right of the man in the beard, with the shield that they won.

Standing from left to right: Wajeed Saeed, Daniel Simmonds and Nicky Sneath;

Kneeling left to right: Ayub Ali, Shyloh Morally (with the shield), Lee Cleary and goalkeeper Shaun Harris

Photo: School archives



Fun & Games: Art teacher Darryl Bedford paints faces on two young girls

Photo: School archives

Pupils in Summer, 1992



Melanie Scarlett, Michelle Cullinane and Lorraine Fortune



Navjot Mata, Kevin Harewood and Maria Mills



Sudie Bakare, Scott Smith & Roona Rahman



Jason Taylor & Yen Lieu
All photos: School Archives



Oak Lodge has a policy of encouraging artistic development, and these photos show various aspects of artwork done by recent pupils.

All photos: School archives

Two important events happened in 2005.

The first was the third Ofsted inspection of the school. A six-person inspection team led by Lead Inspector Vanessa Wilkinson spent four days in the school between 3rd and 6th May. The report stated there were 92 pupils in the school from all over Greater London drawn from 24 different local education authorities. Of the total number of pupils, 73 were from diverse ethnic backgrounds with 21 different languages being used in their family homes; 29 of the pupils were identified as refugee/asylum seekers and a further 15 pupils were stated to be in public care. This shows how the school population had changed from, for example, the summer of 1951 (school fete photo, page 64) where all the girls were ethnic White British.

The Report mentions that the school had a weekly boarding hostel, where 23 pupils currently resided from Mondays to Fridays. Deaf Culture and sign language were stated to be important aspects of the school's provision and that meeting the communication needs of pupils was one of the school's prime objectives.

The Report stated that the quality of education provided by the school was very good, with a very good curriculum that provided excellent opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. The strengths of the school were :

- Teachers and support staff had outstanding skills in signing which enabled all pupils to learn and achieve well;
- The considerable dedication of the headteacher and senior staff had ensured the school continually developed and improved upon itself;
- The excellent opportunities for enriching the curriculum and community links supported pupils' learning extremely well;
- The outstanding care and welfare of all pupils gave them confidence to learn and develop into mature, responsible adults;
- The attitude of pupils to their work was excellent, as was their behaviour.

There was one significant 'black' mark against the school; accommodation was said to be cramped and there was insufficient space for staff and pupils. The accommodation in the hostel was said to be unsatisfactory and for Post 16 students, it was poor - echoes of the 1953 Inspector's Report which saw the old Oak Lodge residential accommodation condemned and residential pupils transferred to better accommodation in the Jewish School next door!

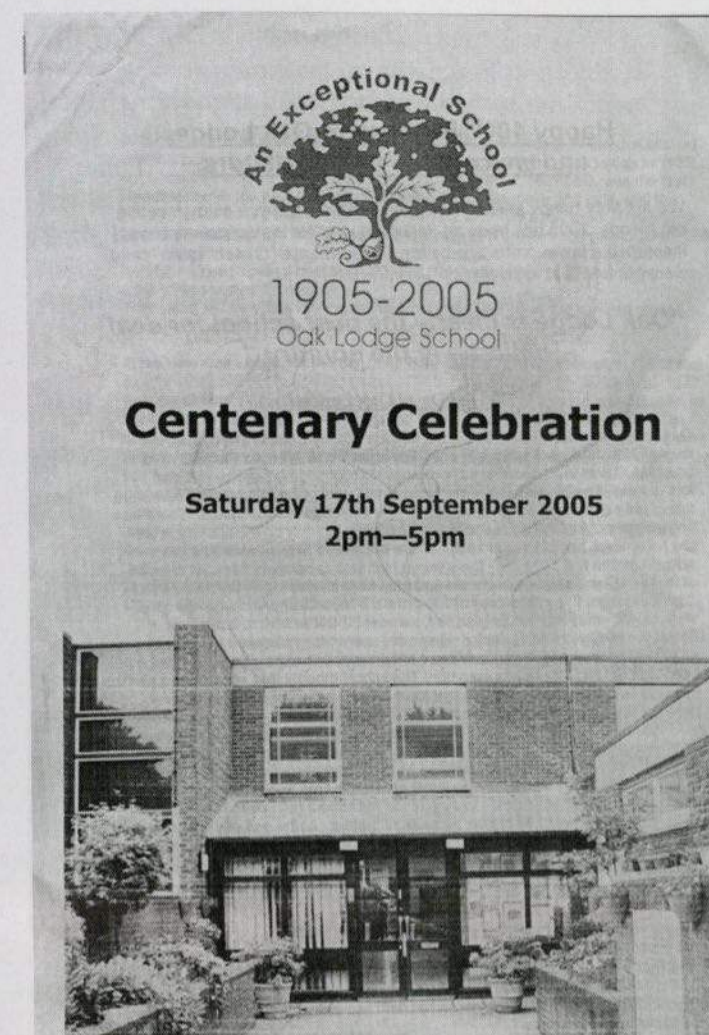
The overall evaluation, however, was that:

'Oak Lodge is an exceptional school. There is an outstanding commitment to the pupils on the part of all those who work in the school. As a result, pupils' achievements are very good and teaching is very good overall. The school is led extremely well and management is excellent. The school provides excellent value for money.'

As might be expected from the previous page, the inspectors praised the school's provision for art and design, supported by teachers' very enthusiastic approach to the subject which encouraged pupils and students to be very creative in their work. The one 'black mark' for art was that the 'accommodation for art is unsatisfactory.'

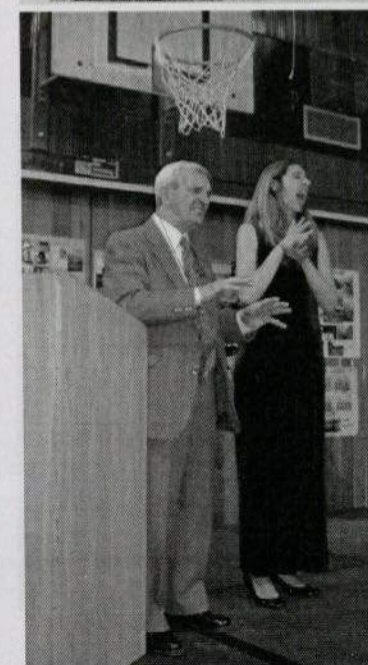
The school achieved Grade 1 in 14 out of the 23 categories, with most of the other categories awarded Grade 2. The only Grade 5 awarded was for the accommodation and resources! Clearly, the school needed to work in this area.

The second most important event during 2005 was the School Centenary. In an era when many schools for the deaf have closed due to mainstreaming and poor provision for deaf pupils' education, the fact that Oak Lodge reached its centenary despite the sometimes poor inspection reports, particularly of the 1950s, spoke volumes for the dedication of school management and staff to keep it going. It must have helped that the school is based in London with a large catchment area, serving the whole of Greater London, and that one of the main strengths of the school was meeting such a diverse ethnic school population.



The Oak Lodge School Centenary
Celebration

17 September 2005



Mr. Sydney Merrifield
(Headteacher 1968-1986)
making a speech at the
Centenary celebrations
Photo: Debbie Rooney



Some of the old pupils who attended the Centenary celebrations.
Back row left to right: Lorraine Robinson, Dione Briscoe & Mary Fallon;
Front row: Konce Hhan, Ophelia Thomas, Debbie Rooney, Tina Pathak,
& Samantha Merry
Photo: Debbie Rooney



More of those who attended:
Left picture from left to right:
 Tina Pathak, Lorraine Robinson, Dione Briscoe, Debbie Rooney and Ruthlen Fuller

Bottom picture:
 Mr. & Mrs. Merrifield with Debbie Rooney



Left picture: Debbie Rooney with Ms. Dornan

Bottom picture:
 Mr. & Mrs. Merrifield with Dione Briscoe and her daughter and Tina Pathak behind.



Left picture
 Mr. Merrifield cutting the centenary cake

All photos courtesy of Debbie Rooney



Mr. Peter Merrifield, the headteacher since 1986, became ill during 2008, and was absent for a long while before he took retirement on grounds of ill-health. He was not replaced until the summer of 2010, when Mr. Roger Legate was appointed as Head of the school, with the title of Principal. In the interim, the school continued to function very well, led by acting headteacher Ms. Denise Morton.

It was subjected to a fourth Ofsted inspection in early 2010, when a small, three-person team led by Greg Sorrell accompanied by an Additional Inspector and a Social Care Inspector descended upon the school on the 29th and 30th January.

The Report described the school as a residential special school for up to 22 boarders, and an unspecified number of day pupils drawn from up to 25 local authorities across London and beyond. At the time of the visit, there were 69 pupils and 12 in the Sixth Form. It was said that there were almost twice as many boys as girls in the school, from many diverse cultures with 17 different languages being the first language in pupils' homes.

Oak Lodge was said to be 'an outstanding school that successfully demonstrates its aims that include enabling the pupils and students to take pride in themselves as deaf people and in their achievements.' It was given Grade 1, the top grade, for its overall effectiveness. It was also awarded Grade 1 for the effectiveness of the sixth form, its achievement and standards, the personal development and well-being of pupils and students, the quality of teaching and learning provision, care, guidance and support, and the leadership and management of the school - a total of seven Grade 1 awards out of the nine areas inspected, whilst the Curriculum and Other Activities was awarded Grade 2, though there was no criticism of any sort over the Curriculum provision.

Where the school fell down - once again - was in the provision of its boarding facilities. The quality was described as good, but there were several points made where improvements were needed. Most of the improvements were recommended as a result of feedback from those who used the boarding facilities. The recommended improvements that were needed to meet National Minimum Standards (NMS) in social care included:

- A dated record needed to be kept of staff receiving training in the administration of medication (NMS 14);
- Window restraints were to be fitted to all young people's first floor bedroom windows (NMS 26);
- Single bedrooms should meet the recommended minimum floor size of 6 square metres (NMS24.8);
- The single pane windows in single bedrooms to be double-glazed (there were complaints about the coldness of the bedrooms in winter) (NMS24);
- A daily log of incidents and events within the hostel needed to be kept (NMS19);
- The services of a Standard 33 visitor is required to conduct unannounced monitoring visits once a term (NMS33).

In addition, the report made the point that the number of showers and toilets within the hostel were barely adequate to meet the needs of active teenagers, but that the school was trying to get funding to improve these.

One other point the report made that the school ought to consider was to make internet access available to the boarders within the hostel.

At the end of the visit, the Lead Inspector, Greg Sorrell, issued a very nice and positive letter to all pupils and students within the school:

Dear pupils,

Thank you for making me and my colleagues so welcome last week. It was a real pleasure for us to see just how well you are doing in your outstanding school and also in the hostel.

I was so pleased to see how well you all do at school and thank you so much for the warm welcome! I can tell you that you go to an outstanding school and it's clear that you enjoy your lessons. All the staff work very hard to help you learn. The quality of teaching is outstanding and this helps you to do as well as you can. Your behaviour is excellent and attendance is good. The care you take moving around the buildings is really good to see. We know the school has plans to improve the accommodation. You make outstanding progress and you told me just how much you enjoy learning. I know you enjoy the responsibilities given to you as school councillors and prefects. The school does all it can to make sure you keep fit and healthy. You have excellent relationships with the school and with each other. The school also helps your parents so that they may communicate even better with you at home.

I am asking the school to do a couple of things to help the school be even better for you. One is to look at ways in which some of the subjects you learn can be taught in different ways. The other is to ensure that your school reports show just how much you have improved in the subjects you learn.

Good luck!

Yours faithfully

*Greg Sorrell
Lead Inspector.*

On the basis of this report, therefore, the future of Oak Lodge as a school for deaf children seems assured, and good luck to them!





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