

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in September 2024, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of pupils at the Royal Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Poor (later The Royal School for the Deaf), Margate, Kent and The West of England Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Exeter, Devon

Lydia Dorothy Deag's Story

Lydia Dorothy Deag was born on 12 November 1889, her parents were William and Lydia from Walthamstow. She was deaf from birth.¹

In 1891 Lydia was living at 37 Chelmsford Road, Walthamstow. Her father William was a goldsmith from Birmingham.² There were five other children at home.

Lydia was baptised on 5 July 1892 at St James church in Walthamstow.³

On 19 January 1899 Lydia was 'elected' to join the school.⁴ It was noted that she had both measles and whooping cough as a child. She first attended on 4 September 1899. At her first examination it was noted that her voice was

guttural. Her "Apparent Intellect" was moderate, she had 1 year's oral teaching but with very little result. She was sent to the Margate Asylum on 17 January 1901.⁵ It was noted that when she was in London she was absent 278 times. However this appears to be due to being sent home with ringworm rather than absenteeism.

By the time of the census in 1901 Lydia was living at the District Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Children of the Working Poor at Margate. She was 11 years old.⁶ In 1901, she was only absent 81 times and this reduced over the years until 1905 when she was only absent 21 times. The school did not teach their pupils sign language, they were taught instead to lip-read. Inmates were taught reading, writing, dictation, arithmetic, history, geography and drawing. The girls were taught needlework and household work. On leaving, inmates could apply to be apprenticed to suitable employers.⁷ Lydia left the school on 19 December 1905 at the age of 14 years old.⁸

Lydia's father William died in May 1909, he was buried on 9 May at Queen's Road Cemetery.⁹

In 1911 Lydia was living with her widowed mother and her sisters Ivy and May at 10 Sylvester Road, Markhouse Road, Walthamstow. Lydia was working as a collar dresser.¹⁰ They were all still living together on the 1921 census. Lydia was working as a presser for Carlton and Booker tailors. They were living at 2 Rivaz place in Hackney.¹¹ Lydia's mother died in 1922 and it looks like from then Lydia, her elder sister Ivy and younger sister May were the three musketeers.

In 1939 the 3 sisters were still together, living at 9 Belle Hill, Bexhill on Sea. Lydia was working as a mantle presser.¹²

May died in 1960. Ivy died on 4 March 1966 and Lydia followed on 21 April 1966 at 24 Downlands Close, Bexhill on Sea.¹³

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Sources

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⁴ Admission records. DEAG, Lydia Dorothy. 19 January 1899. Ch192/R1/1/1 Entry 5461 Admission Records Application for Admission 4325-7615 (1880-1925). Kent County Council Archives and Local History Service

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⁷ Children's Homes. Asylum for the Support and Education of the Deaf and Dumb Children of the Poor, London/Margate. <https://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/LondonAsylumDeaf/>: accessed 10 September 2024

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¹³ Testamentary Records. National Probate Calendar. Probate: London, 26 February 1970. www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 31 August 2024