

# *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*

## **Maud Louisa Holley's Story**

**Maud Louisa Holley was born on 14 September 1890, daughter of Richard Holley and his wife Eliza Mary, née Townsend. Just months later, when the census was taken in April 1891, Richard and Eliza, together with their two children, Henry Alfred aged two, and Maud Louisa aged seven months, were sharing their house at 7 Calderon Place, Hammersmith, with another married couple who had their widowed father and a niece living with them. Richard was described as a locomotive engineer and had lived at that address for more than ten years<sup>1</sup>.**

**Calderon Place is a small cul de sac off North Pole Road and still exists today. It is in close proximity to North Pole junction which was part of the extensive**

rail network enveloping that area at the turn of the twentieth century, when Richard Holley was employed as an engineer.



Excerpt from Ordnance Survey Map showing Calderon Place<sup>2</sup>

The death of Richard Holley of 7 Calderon Place, North Pole Road, Middlesex, occurred the following year on 10 July 1892, leaving Eliza Mary alone with two children to support. His will was proved on 28 July and Probate was granted to his wife Eliza Mary, Estate value £381.16s.8d<sup>3</sup>.

It is not known how Eliza coped during the years after Richard's death in 1892, but the family emerged again in 1898 when both Henry Alfred and Maud Louisa were elected to the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Poor, based in Old Kent Road, Surrey, and also in Margate, Kent. The history of this institution is well documented on the website of *A Few Forgotten Women*.

It was tempting to consider that Eliza Mary née Townsend might be a descendent of the Reverend John Townsend (1757-1826) one of the original instigators of the Asylum for the Support and Education of the Deaf and Dumb Children of the Poor, but the occupation of Matthew Townsend, Eliza's father, was that of a servant, born in Oxfordshire, and living at 2 Adam Street West in the parish of Marylebone in 1871, so it seems an unlikely connection.

There had been no indication on the 1891 census that either of the children had hearing problems, but they were both infants at the time and their hearing loss may not have been identified at that stage. Neither of their parents were recorded as deaf.

Entry to the Royal Asylum was by election, and the rules of the institution required that 'candidates must furnish a certificate of being deaf and dumb and, if elected, security for removal in the case of sickness or death'. In addition, candidates must be between 7 and 10 years of age, and have been vaccinated<sup>4</sup>.

The education that the Royal Asylum provided for the pupils included reading; writing; dictation; arithmetic; history; geography and drawing; additionally for the girls there was needlework and household work<sup>5</sup>.

Both Maud and her brother Henry were elected: Henry on 11 July 1898 and Maud on 9 January 1899, when their address was recorded as St Peter's Park, Maida Vale, with both Maud and Henry having been pupils previously at St Clements School, Notting Hill<sup>6</sup>.

On Maud's admission form dated 19 January 1899 a note had been added saying 'Parents not related' which indicated that the blood relationship between parents was considered a potential risk for deafness in the offspring. Her medical history showed Maud had had measles and whooping cough and recorded her mother Eliza Mary as a needlewoman living at 73 Brondesbury

Road, Kilburn. At Maud's first examination it was noted that she had received some oral teaching and knew some of the sounds, also a few words and that her apparent intellect was 'very fair'<sup>7</sup>. Maud was transferred to Margate from the London establishment at Old Kent Road on 8 August 1900<sup>8</sup>.

Her reports show that Maud made good progress: in 1899 she came third in a class of seven; in 1900 first in a class of twelve; in 1901 first again in a class of twelve; in 1902 she was third in a class of twelve; her conduct was consistently good<sup>9</sup>.

There is also a record of Maud having received prizes on at least two occasions: at the Prize Giving on 29 June 1901 she received a prize in oral classes XII 'For progress' and a Special Prize as well that was not identified, and on 14 December 1901 a prize in oral classes X 'For progress' and for Needlework<sup>10</sup>.

Maud's final exams in 1906, at the age of sixteen, showed her to be an able and accomplished pupil with these results: Religious Knowledge 81%; Articulation 60%; Lip Reading 100%; Language 78%; General Knowledge 81%; Geography and History 88%; Arithmetic 82%<sup>11</sup>.

Five years later in 1911 at the time of the census which was taken on 2 April that year, Maud was working as a workroom maid at the Royal Asylum for Deaf and Dumb Children (which had been renamed in 1908) at Victoria Road, Margate<sup>12</sup>.

Maud's next appearance in the public record occurs after another ten years have passed, when, at the age of thirty in 1921, she was working as a washroom maid at the District Nurses Home at 4 Randolph Road, Maida Vale, whilst still in the employment of the Royal Asylum for Deaf and Dumb Children, Margate<sup>13</sup>.

Perhaps now is the moment to return to Maud's brother, Henry Alfred, who was elected to the Royal School with Maud. When Henry Alfred was first

examined in March 1899 it was noted he had attended a 'deaf class' previously, but his results were not at all satisfactory. He was now improving a little: 'has some hearing and fairly good mental capacity'. At his second examination in February 1900 it was recorded he was 'pretty sharp'<sup>14</sup>. He was sent to Margate from the Old Kent Road establishment on 24 August 1899.

Like Maud, Henry appears to have made good progress: in 1898 he came fifth in a class of ten; in 1899 fourth in a class of ten; in 1900 fifth in a class of twelve; in 1902 first in a class of twelve; in 1902 first again in a class of twelve. Henry, like his sister, was also awarded prizes, the first at the Prize Giving in December 1901 in oral classes IX 'For progress' and again in June 1902 in oral classes VII 'For progress' and also a Special Prize on this occasion<sup>15</sup>.

In 1911 Henry, aged twenty-two, was employed as a tailor and living alone at 73 Albany Street, Regents Park. He was single and working in Hammersmith, but no details of his employer were shown<sup>16</sup>. Henry Alfred Holley sadly died, aged thirty, in the June quarter of 1920<sup>17</sup>.

Meanwhile, Maud had continued her employment under the auspices of the Royal School for Deaf Children but on 20 July 1924 she was married to Thomas Edward William Marson, in the parish church at Putney, both were aged thirty-four and both gave their address as 23 Gay Street, Putney. Thomas's occupation was recorded as 'engraver', no occupation was noted for Maud. Both signatures on their marriage certificate were signed in very neat handwriting as can be seen on the extract below<sup>18</sup>.

1924		Marriage solemnized at <i>the Parish Church</i>			in the Parish			
		of <i>Putney</i>			in the County of <i>London</i>			
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
305	<i>Twentieth</i>	<i>Thomas Edward William</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Engraver</i>	<i>23 Gay Street Putney</i>	<i>Edward Charles Hanson</i>	<i>Painter</i>
	<i>July</i>	<i>Maud Louisa Holley</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>23 Gay Street Putney</i>	<i>Richard Holley</i>	<i>—</i>
	<i>1924</i>							

Married in the *Parish Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Church of England* by me, *Thomas Edward William Hanson* in the presence of us, *Lily Hanson* and *E. A. Hanson*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *Maud Louisa Holley* and *Edward Hanson*

It is interesting to note that Thomas had also been a pupil at the Royal School. In 1901 Thomas, aged 10, had been in Margate at the Royal Asylum for Deaf and Dumb Poor, as it was then described<sup>19</sup>.

Thomas had returned to his parents' home at 23 Gay Street, Putney, by 1911, and had become apprenticed to an engraver<sup>20</sup>. By the time he and Maud married in 1924 his father had died and Thomas and Maud took up residence with Thomas's mother and siblings.

Maud and Thomas remained living at 23 Gay Street, Putney, and were still there when the 1939 register was compiled at the beginning of the Second World War. Thomas's mother, Louisa, born 26 October 1866, was listed as a widow with 'unpaid domestic duties', the usual description in this register for women without paid employment. Thomas's sister, Lilian, born 31 May 1900, a shop assistant at a china and glass retailers, was also resident. She was single in 1939 but would be married to Herbert Messenger seven years later in 1946. At the same address, but listed as a separate household, were Maud and Thomas, both born in 1890, Maud on 14 September and Thomas on 9 May. Thomas's occupation was described as 'general engineer' and Maud with 'unpaid domestic duties' but still, in 1939, both were noted as being 'deaf and dumb'<sup>21</sup>

Maud was the first to die on 2 June 1960 when she and Thomas were living at 16 Atherton Court, Wendelsworth Estate, London SW10. Administration was granted to Thomas Edward William Marson, retired engraver; Effects £300.13s.2d<sup>22</sup>. Thomas lived on without Maud for a further ten years, until he too died aged eighty in 1970.

The Royal School for Deaf Children was central to Maud Louisa Holley's development given her initial disability, though her apparent academic achievements were not recognised in her later working life which was limited to domestic service. Maud's story includes the influence of the school on two male pupils who also received their education from this institution in the early years of the twentieth century. Both Maud's brother, Henry Alfred, and her husband, Thomas Edward William Marson, received education and training that provided them with the basis for skilled employment for the rest of their lives.

## Sources

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<sup>1</sup> Source The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891; Class: RG12; Piece: 44; Folio: 40; Page: 27; GSU roll: 6095154

<sup>2</sup> Ordnance Survey London (Land Registry Edition) VI.56, Surveyed: 1893, Published: 1915.  
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<sup>3</sup> Ancestry.com. England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Margate Royal Asylum Programme June 21 1902

<sup>5</sup> Royal Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Poor, Summer Fete, Saturday June 21st 1902

<sup>6</sup> Ch192/R1/1/1 Entry 5505 Admission Records Application for Admission4325-7615(1880-1925)

<sup>7</sup> Ch192/R2/1/6 Entry 238 Register of Children Old Kent Road [1-369] with transfers to Margate

<sup>8</sup> Ch192/R2/2/2 Page 90 Headmaster's Register of Children: Old Kent Road (1891-1904)

<sup>9</sup> Ch192/R2/1/5 Entry 5469 Register of children: Old Kent Road [5256-5670] (with transfers to Margate)

<sup>10</sup> Margate Royal Asylum Prize Givings 1901.doc

<sup>11</sup> Ch192/R8/1/3 Entry 197 Leavers Records: Registers of Children Leaving School (1902-1912)

<sup>12</sup> RG14PN4501 RD63 SD2 ED19 SN9999 Findmypast accessed 25/09/2024

<sup>13</sup> The National Archives RG1504452 27 Findmypast accessed 25/09/2024

<sup>14</sup> Ch192/R2/1/5 Entry 5434 Register of children: Old Kent Road [5256-5670] (with transfers to Margate)

<sup>15</sup> Margate Royal Asylum Prize Givings 1901.doc

<sup>16</sup> Findmypast 1911 census RG14PN657 RG78PN23 RD9 SD1 ED6 SN68 Accessed 25/09/2024

<sup>17</sup> HOLLEY, HENRY ALFRED 30 GRO Reference: 1920 J Quarter in KENSINGTON Volume 01A Page 206  
Accessed 25/09/2024

<sup>18</sup> London Metropolitan Archives; London, England, UK; *London Church of England Parish Registers*; reference Number: P95/MRY1/394 Accessed via Ancestry 25/09/2024



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<sup>19</sup> Source Citation Class: *RG13*; Piece: *824*; Folio: *31*; Page: *4* Accessed via *Ancestry* 27/09/20

<sup>20</sup> The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911* Accessed via *Ancestry* 27/09/2024

<sup>21</sup> Source Citation The National Archives; Kew, London, England; *1939 Register*; Reference: *RG 101/616B*

<sup>22</sup> <https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk/search-results> Accessed 27.09.24