

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.

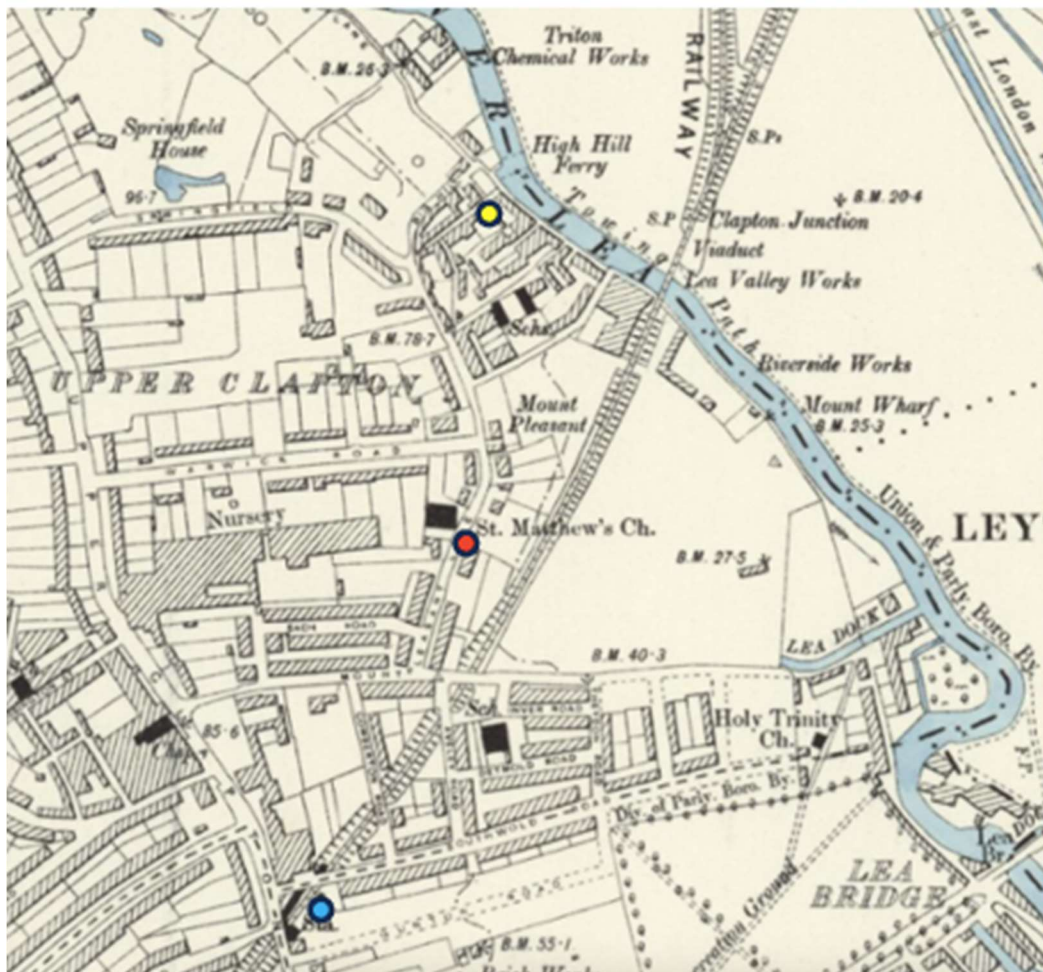
Jane Maria Barrott's Story

Jane Maria Barrott was the only deaf child born into a hearing family in Clapton, north east London on 5th May 1873. She was also my paternal grandmother.

Jane was sixth of the seven children born to Henry, a local journeyman carpenter and Caroline Stocker, who originally came from Hampshire. At some time within the two years before her birth, the family had moved down from Stamford Hill to The Buildings, Elizabeth Terrace where they remained, though in different numbered houses, throughout the time Jane lived at home.

Elizabeth Terrace was one of several narrow streets off Harrington Hill, close to the River Lea near the High Hill Ferry. It is not named on the OS maps and its probable location shown on the map below (yellow dot) is derived from the enumerator's route taken in the 1881 Census. They were close to St Matthew's

Church (red dot) where Jane was baptised and near to the newly opened Clapton Station (blue dot).



OS London Sheet III.SE Revised: 1893 to 1894, Published: 1894 to 1896 ©NLS (CC-BY)

When Jane was born her oldest brother Alfred was seven; Elizabeth, her only sister was six; William four and Edward two; her youngest brother Fred arrived three and a half years after Jane.

Jane's first application to the Margate School was in July 1881 and like many applicants, her first attempt was unsuccessful. However applicants were allowed two attempts and the 1032 votes she secured that July were carried forward to elections the following January when she received enough votes in total to be 15th of the 18 girls offered a place. A few votes less and her story could have been very different.

When Jane was first elected to the school, an entry in the register notes that she could hear to some extent, had some intelligible speech and that she had been at the Reverend Stainer's school for four years.ⁱ William Stainer, brother of the composer John Stainer, started teaching deaf children in south London

as a teenager in the 1840s and had made it his life's work. The London School Board, established in 1871 to provide elementary education for all children in London, sought Stainer's assistance to educate deaf children.

Stainer (who lived in Hackney and was a curate at St Matthew's Church in Bethnal Green) started with a single class but expanded to different parts of London and even established boarding houses for children who lived too far from one of the centres for daily travel.ⁱⁱ There was a boarding house in Bethnal Green at this time, which suggests there was a school close enough for Jane to attend while continuing to live at home.ⁱⁱⁱ She was certainly at home at the time of the 1881 Census. Stainer was fluent in sign language, but he promoted the oral system in the schools and homes, and that would have helped prepare Jane for her seven years at the *Asylum for the Support and Education of the Deaf and Dumb Children of the Poor*, as it was called at the time.

On 16 February 1882 Jane took up her place in the Oral Department at St Lawrence, Ramsgate. She obviously thrived at school, doing well in her studies and playing a full part in school life. She was at Ramsgate until 1887 and regularly won prizes for Lip Reading; in 1885 she received a prize for Needlework and in 1886 for Using Speech out of School. At the December 1885 Prize Giving, Jane took the title role in the pupils' performance of *Little Red Riding Hood*.^{iv}

Jane was at the school in Ramsgate when the large site at Margate was being redeveloped and expanded. In September 1886 a reporter from *The Globe*, a London newspaper, spent a day visiting both Ramsgate and Margate to understand more about the oral method. At Ramsgate, he observed classes and met pupils who would be moving to the new buildings in Margate at Christmas. One of the children named in *The Globe's* report is "*Jane Barrott, a particularly intelligent lassie of 13*".^v In later life, Jane used to tell her children that because she was proficient at lipreading she was chosen to demonstrate this to a visiting "bigwig" whose ill-fitting dentures made the task unusually challenging and that she had struggled to maintain her composure and resist an embarrassing fit of giggles! Perhaps this was *The Globe's* anonymous reporter?

When Jane moved on to Margate in 1887, she continued to flourish, winning prizes for Good Conduct, for a composition on Cruelty to Animals and for

Swimming. She became a Monitor and in December 1888, at the end of her schooldays secured the pupils' own vote for Good Fellowship.

After school, Jane continued to live with her family. At the time of the 1891 Census, 24 year old William was a goldbeaters' skin maker, 14 year old Fred was an errand boy and 17 year old Jane a Greengrocer's assistant.

During at least part of this time Jane was attending St Saviour's Church for the Deaf and Dumb on Oxford Street (roughly opposite where Selfridges is now). The church was erected in 1875 by the Royal Association in Aid of the Deaf and Dumb (RADD - now Royal Association for Deaf People) on land given by the Duke of Westminster and it was designed with sightlines suitable for services to be conducted using sign language.^{vi} There was also social space; classrooms and a library.



Mike Gulliver, William Lyons (2017): Historical images of UK deaf community. University of Bristol [Non-Commercial Government Licence for public sector information](#)

Another person attending St Saviour's at the same time as Jane was a deaf tailor, about ten years older than her. Originally from the east end of London, Timothy McCarthy had been abandoned in the Limehouse Children's Establishment aged five after becoming deaf. At 12 he had been sent to

Tyndalls Park School for Deaf Children in Bristol, travelling back to the workhouse each summer and at Christmas. When he left school, the RADD arranged an apprenticeship for him with a tailor in London and he was lodging near Regent's Park.

The story Timothy McCarthy told his children was that in order to make her acquaintance, he had followed Jane and at Clapton Station had asked where the young deaf woman lived. It obviously worked, the banns were called in their respective Parish churches and they married on 4th September 1897 at St Matthew's Hackney, where Jane had been baptised.

1897. Marriage solemnized at <u>St Matthew's</u> in the Parish of <u>Hackney</u> in the County of <u>London</u>								
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.
59	September 4 th 1897	Timothy McCarthy	33	Bachelor	Sailor	88 Belcombe St Forest Green	Charles McCarthy (deceased)	Book-binder
		Jane Maria Barrett	24	Spinster	-	6 Elizabeth Street	Henry Barrett	Carpenter
Married in the <u>Ch. of St Matthew's</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by _____ or after <u>Banns</u> by me,								
This Marriage solemnized between us,		<u>Timothy McCarthy</u>	in the Presence of us,		<u>Henry Barrett</u>	<u>John Colbeck</u> William Raper Chaplain of St Barnabas Deptford SE		
		<u>Jane Maria Barrett</u>			<u>Elizabeth Barrett</u>			

The marriage was witnessed by Jane's father and sister. Unusually, the Register is signed by two clergymen. Rev G H Colbeck of St Matthew's was supported by Rev William Raper, Chaplain at St Barnabas Church, Deptford. St Barnabas was London's second purpose-built church for the deaf and Mr Raper will have provided simultaneous sign language interpretation.

Jane must have kept in touch with her old school as there is a final note on her Leaver's Record, "Married September 1897 to Mr McCarthy a deaf mute ladies' tailor educated at Bristol School".^{vii}

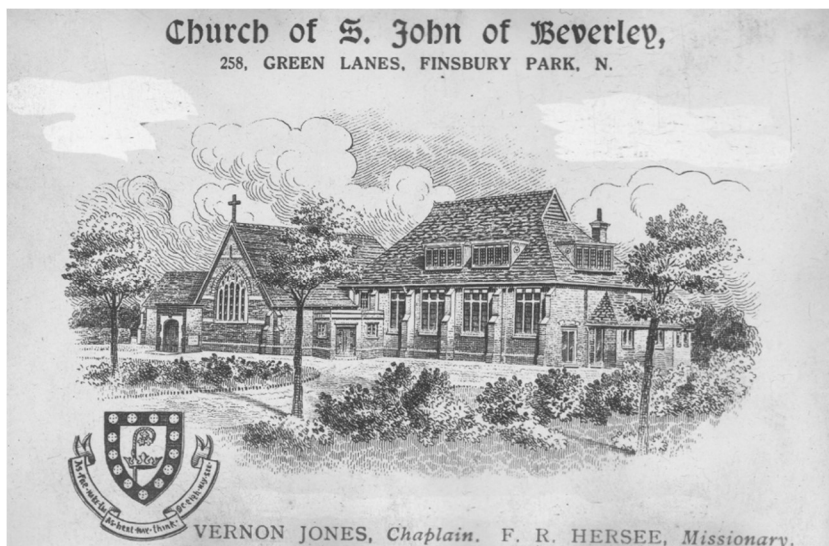
At the next Census in 1901, Jane, her husband and their first child Kathleen, were one of four households living at 7 Southwold Road in Clapton. Their next child, Edith May (Molly) was born in May 1902. Jane's mother, Caroline died in September 1908 and by the 1911 Census Jane's father Henry (now retired) and her sister Elizabeth were living in rooms at 1 Southwold Road. It's not clear if the two households were ever neighbours in Southwold Road as by 1911, Jane and her husband and children had moved across the River Lea to Perth Road, Leyton. By that time, they had had two more children; Aubrey Lawrence James was born in 1904 but sadly died at 18 months. They seem to have

moved fairly frequently in the early twentieth century. At the time of Aubrey's death the family was living in Rensburg Road, Walthamstow, and he was buried at the local cemetery on Queen's Road.^{viii} Jane's next child, also a boy, was born prematurely in January 1908. This was my father, Timothy William who was born at Mount Pleasant Lane, Clapton.

Jane's older children remembered food shopping in the evening in Walthamstow when prices were reduced, and sometimes visiting the cinema – cinema before the 'talkies' was suited to both deaf parents and their hearing children. Although Jane could speak, her husband did not. Jane's preferred means of communication was sign language which was used at home and in which the children were fluent.

The family moved again, this time to 44 Priory Road in Tottenham where, in 1913, Jane gave birth to twin girls, Patricia Claudia and Eileen Meta. The family stayed in Tottenham, moving just a few streets away to 6 South Grove where they occupied the whole house.^{ix} Timothy sometimes worked for himself and was sometimes employed as a tailor and the family was stable.

The move from Leyton to Tottenham roughly coincided with the completion in December 1913, of St John of Beverley, a new Institute for the Deaf and church on Green Lanes, near Manor House.^x



Mike Gulliver, William Lyons (2017): Historical images of UK deaf community. University of Bristol [Non-Commercial Government Licence for public sector information](#)

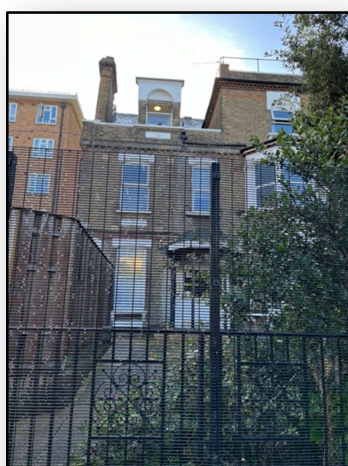
It's not clear what part Jane played in the life of the church. Five children including infant twins, must have curtailed her social life. Her husband though, was very involved as Secretary of the Social Club and lay reader in the Church^{xi}. He clearly shared the love of performance evident in Jane's schooldays as he

was singled out for mention in a local paper on at least two occasions for his performance in fundraising entertainments.^{xii}

Timothy McCarthy died aged 71 in March 1935. By December 1935 all Jane's children had either married or were otherwise living away from home and there was one grandchild, born in 1925. At the time of the 1939 Register Jane was living in Enfield with her daughters Eileen and Pat and Eileen's husband Maurice. She is described as 'incapacitated'.^{xiii}

It's not clear where Jane lived during WWII or with whom, but at some point, between 1939 and 1948, she moved into Brunswick House, 321 Green Lanes, Manor House. Brunswick House had started out as the 'Hostel for Deaf and Dumb Girls who have no homes and are lonely in their affliction'. Clearly, by the time Jane came to live there it had extended or changed its original remit and was caring for elderly deaf women. The hostel had first been established on a larger site nearby that had to be given up in 1930 when the Piccadilly Underground Line was extended to Manor House.^{xiv} The driving force behind the original hostel was Mrs Herbert Jones, mother (not wife as is suggested in the article referenced) of the Rev Vernon Jones, Chaplain to the Deaf in north London.^{xv}

At the time Jane lived there, 321 Green Lanes was directly opposite St John of Beverley. The house still stands but the church has been destroyed several times by fire.^{xvi} It was replaced by the small community centre shown below^{xvii} with the RAD logo clearly visible on the left in the photo.



321 Green Lanes in 2024 with St John's Deaf Community Centre opposite ©Sue McCarthy

Jane Maria McCarthy (previously Barrott) died on 30th December 1948 at the age of 75 leaving five adult children well established in life and three grandchildren. (The fourth wouldn't arrive for another five and a half years.) Her name lives on in the following generation.

Sue McCarthy, October 2024

Sources

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- ⁱ Ch192/R2/1/4 Entry 4512 Register of Children Old Kent Road [4127-5255] (1876-1894)
- ⁱⁱ <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/library-rnid/2012/03/09/william-stainer-teacher> accessed 1/10/24
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/LondonStainer/> accessed 1/10/24
- ^{iv} Programmes of Arrangements for Prize Giving at Margate July 1883-December 1888
- ^v *The Globe* 20 September 1886 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> accessed 30/9/24
- ^{vi} <https://www.archiseek.com/1875-st-saviours-church-for-the-deaf-dumb-oxford-street-london/> accessed 2/10/24
- ^{vii} Ch192/R8/1/1 Entry 153 Leavers Records: Registers of Children Leaving School (1877-1895)
- ^{viii} Death certificate for Aubrey McCarthy
- ^{ix} Census 1921/RG15/06793/0545/01 accessed Find My Past 2/10/24
- ^x Hornsey & Finsbury Park Journal – 05/12/1913
- ^{xi} Written account by Molly McCarthy May 1988
- ^{xii} Hornsey & Finsbury Park Journal – 3/8/1917 and 26/12/1917
- ^{xiii} 1939 Register accessed through Find My Past
- ^{xiv} <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol8/pp204-211> accessed 2/10/24
- ^{xv} <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/library-rnid/2014/10/31/brunswick-house-hostel-finsbury-park-and-green-lanes-1919/> accessed 2/10/24
- ^{xvi} <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol8/pp204-211> accessed 3/10/24
- ^{xvii} <https://harringayonline.com/group/historyofharringay/forum/topics/views-across-manor-house-from-deaf-hostel-for-ladies-c1920-with-a?page=1&commentId=844301%3AComment%3A1177525&x=1#844301Comment1177525> accessed 30/9/24