

Foreword

In writing this brief history I am grateful for the assistance of many people who have been involved with the 'Children's Rest' in one capacity or another. Without their contribution it would not have been possible to gain an insight into day to day life at the 'Rest'.

Elizabeth Brocklehurst (nee King) introduced me to the project; she and Anne Kinsella provided me with the initial data for this booklet. Carole Chapman, Administrator for the 'Children's Rest School of Recovery Charitable Trust' supplied me with documentation relating to the charity.

Miss McMarn and Mrs Twist related their experiences as pupils at the 'Rest' in the pre-war era. Mr R McManus wrote of the involvement of himself and his wife in scouting and guiding at the school. Miss Brown worked at the school as a physiotherapist, in the immediate post-war period and described the nature of the childrens' ailments and the daily routine of the 'Rest'.

In the war years the school was requisitioned by the Admiralty and used to provide accommodation for Wrens. Mrs Truscott and Mrs Armstrong have related some interesting anecdotes of their time as stewards in the house in this period. I am very grateful to Mr Ralph Shepherd, a trainee telephone engineer in 1942, who has provided detailed information of a prestigious visit by Eleanor Roosevelt in November 1942 and the BBC radio broadcast she made from the house. Ian Ralston in the American Studies faculty at John Moores University was able to locate extracts from the original speech from the archives.

The principal source of information on the school between 1959–1980 was Miss R Hall, who was Headmistress from 1968 until the school closed in 1980. She provided both lively and informative memories of the school and miscellaneous written and photographic material which illuminated school life.

Gerry Kinsella has provided an informative insight into the changes which have taken place in the building in the last 4 decades. As a former pupil of the school he has been a driving force behind the acquisition and renovation of the building for 'Greenbank', where he is Chief Executive.

Thanks to The EL Rathbone Charitable Trust for funding publication costs for this re-print (first published in 1998). Any proceeds from the sale of this booklet will go to 'Greenbank' (registered charity number 513814).

Introduction

This booklet summarises different periods in the history of a well-known building in the Greenbank landscape from 1895, which is now occupied by Greenbank College. Anecdotes and records from its time as 'Greenbank School', 'Home', 'Rest School', 'Ackerley House' and now 'Greenbank College' illuminate the human story behind the bricks and mortar. Photographs of the rooms over the years display the ways in which a structure is modified to accommodate changes in usage, culminating in the refurbished educational centre of today.

It must be stressed that as with all historical accounts, what is presented here, is a reconstruction of the past on the basis of evidence that has been currently located. The survival of evidence is rarely systematic; it is often by pure chance that records, letters or photographs turn up, usually in the most surprising circumstances. Additions to this edition bear witness to this.

Where possible the descriptions of events have used quotations made at the time, in order to interpret circumstances using the expressions of those who experienced them. In the case of the 'Home' and 'Rest School' the written evidence was mainly from the perspective of the administrators (the Trustees and staff) rather than the recipients (the children). Many of the photographs of children from then are undated and not annotated. If anyone can throw further light upon them or who has information about how the children felt about their environment, it would be gratefully received. In the course of compiling these chapters the vocabulary used is that in the documentation, and apologies are given for any offence that it causes. However, the terminology, in itself, is an indicator of the attitudes at the time towards children with disabilities. Changes in the language used to describe the children, also reflects the progress in their care and education.

The building in Greenbank Lane has encompassed different aspects of Liverpool's history. It is located in the 'leafy suburbs'

of south Liverpool and is bordered by two of the city's most popular areas of green space, Sefton Park and Greenbank Park.

In the thirteenth century the whole area was part of the deer hunting park belonging to King John; it later became part of the Earl of Sefton's estates. Greenbank land was purchased by William Rathbone IV in 1807, while Sefton Park was bought by Liverpool Corporation in 1867. The unhealthy environment of the central wards of the town encouraged those, with the financial means, to move out of the increasingly overcrowded commercial districts.

When the Rathbones' moved to Greenbank House, it was viewed as a country retreat, away from the cares of the town. As will be shown in this booklet, the importance of providing a healthier environment than the town centre influenced the subsequent developments of the building.

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Chapter 1

Greenbank School 1888 - 1912

The building in Greenbank Lane (now occupied by Greenbank College) was constructed in 1895 for Greenbank School, a preparatory school for boys. Founded by Herbert Spearing, the school was originally located in the 'Hollies' or 'Holy Lea' in Greenbank Road. He aimed to establish a preparatory school to groom boys for entrance to public schools. Spearing was described as having "shrewd educational opinions of utilitarian trend."

The school motto was "Be strong of good courage". He believed in integrating boys gradually into boarding school life, ensuring "All must get the right food, at the right hours, without exhausting intervals, exercise and games, as well as lessons and a timetable to correspond."

The school attracted local boys, chiefly from Aigburth, Mossley Hill and Sefton Park. When Spearing withdrew in 1890 parents were sufficiently concerned to form a committee of governors to deal with the vacancy. Charles Cotterill was appointed; he maintained the progressive ethos of the school.

The approach and healthy environment proved so popular that new buildings were constructed to accommodate the school in Greenbank Lane. The school took its name from the Rathbone's mansion and it is listed at this address in 1895. The building was designed by W.E. Willink (Front cover) and included a swimming bath (Plate 1), offices, classrooms (Plate 2), dining hall (Plate 3), a covered court (Plate 4), a carpentry shop and the headmaster's house. The main boarding house (Plate 5), known as Westfield, was erected 100 metres away.

An examination of the roll reveals that many of the boys subsequently took up places in the most prestigious public schools including: Eton, Harrow, Charterhouse, Uppingham,

Shrewsbury, Sedburgh, Clifton and Lorrette, also nearer to home Liverpool College and Birkenhead School. Sadly, the roll also recorded that many were to give their lives in the carnage of the First World War, adding poignancy to the school motto.

From 1898 the school increasingly lost pupils to a preparatory school in Hoylake, which attracted two teachers from Greenbank and offered a healthier environment, on the river, away from the spreading urbanisation of Liverpool. In 1903 Elliot Kitchener, nephew of the famous general, was appointed to give the school a new direction.

Rewards and punishments were minimised

“Rewards should be the acquirement of knowledge and industry for their own sakes.....not egotistic competition”. Class prizes and sports medals were abolished. Punishments were considered a matter for parents.

However, the school continued to lose pupils and therefore the revenue to survive. In 1911 Hardeman became headmaster, but the school was forced to close in December 1912.

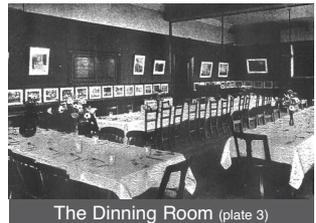
It was in 1915 that the building was purchased for use by the ‘Children’s Rest’.



The Swimming Pool Bath (plate 1)



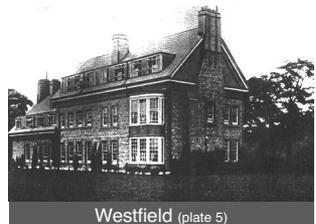
The Headmaster's Classroom (plate 2)



The Dining Room (plate 3)



The Covered Court (plate 4)



Westfield (plate 5)



Chapter 2

The Children's Rest 1897 - 1913

The establishment of the 'Children's Rest'

The 'Children's Rest' was opened in April 1897 at 8 Livingston Avenue. It was established, as stated in the 1905 Annual report, "to meet a long-felt want for a Home for children who were either incurable cripples or who were suffering from diseases requiring prolonged care, good food and above all, fresh air. The Hospitals and Convalescent Homes usually admit patients for limited periods only and, when discharged from these Institutions, the children have to go back to their own homes where it is often impossible for them to receive the treatment which their condition often requires."

The report recognised the additional pressures created by the inability of parents to provide the food, appliances and attention necessary for the care of a sick child. It also commented; "Where cruelty, drunkenness, or neglect are added to poverty, the condition of the sick child is even more pitiable, and the need for outside help the greater", including, in certain circumstances, the removal of the child from its family.

A well known photograph of Emily Place in 1897 (Plate 6) illustrates the living conditions endured by many in the town. In 1886 Farrie described a court in Fontenoy Street, "The house is occupied by a man and four children. They have absolutely nothing, no light of any sort and no food....by the flickering light of the match we see the 'home' of this wretched family. They are going to bed and the cellar door has been lifted off its hinges and laid down upon the floor the room....this door acts as a bed for the children, the father having used his clothes to cover them then settles on a wooden box as....there is nothing but the stone floor to lie down on and the room is absolutely bare of everything except for a small box which serves as his bed."

Grove House

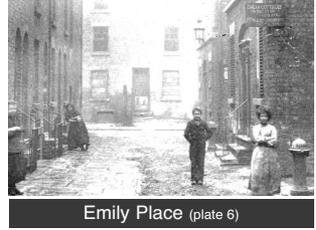
In 1899 the 'Home' moved to 'Grove House', Penny Lane, in order to accommodate the increased number of patients. It remained at 'Grove House' until the move to Greenbank Lane in 1915.

The 1905 Annual Report described the Home as having, "a sunny aspect and the rooms are large and airy. There is a fair sized piece of ground attached to the house where children can play and be sheltered from the wind. There is also a capital greenhouse which is delightful for them in wet weather and which can be utilised in winter for an extra play-room, when they are unable to get out of doors. In addition to a large play-room, we have wards on the ground floor, where those confined to a bed have a cheerful outlook and can be in touch with the more fortunate patient."

The report continued to emphasize the importance of open-air treatment, of keeping the "little patients" out of doors and of opening windows. Such an environment certainly contrasted with the fetid houses and courts of the central districts of Liverpool.

The importance of open-air treatment was enshrined in the objects of the 'Children's Rest' and listed in Annual Reports throughout this period.

In addition, at this time the Kyrle Society provided two cots for the 'Home'. The



aim of the society was to enhance the lives of poor children by giving them access to the beauty, for example, of flowers or painting; aims that were sympathetic to the principles of the 'Home'.

The Annual Report stated the objects of the 'Home'

Objects of the Home

1. To provide a place for children where chronic cases, not eligible for Hospitals or Convalescent Homes, can receive medical attention, good food, and fresh air.

2. Not to remove all parental responsibility.

Every effort is made to make the parents pay, in each individual case, as much as their circumstances will allow.

3. To give the children open air treatment.

They are out of doors for as many hours of the day as possible, and there is a glass house where they can take refuge on cold days and enjoy all the sunshine there is.

4. To give them a good Elementary Education.

Many of the children were too ill to have attended the special schools from their own homes.

5. To provide Religious Instruction.

This is given by Clergymen of the various denominations to which the children belong.

6. To teach them handicrafts.

Besides baskets, rug, and artificial flowers they make their own clothes and have learnt embroidery and chair-caning.

The members of the committee reflect the philanthropic activities of the wives and daughters of some of the most prominent men in Liverpool commerce. As will be shown many of them took a vigorous interest in the day to day life of the 'Home'.



“Members of the Committee in 1906

President

Mrs W Rathbone, Greenbank, Wavertree

Committee:

Mrs Deacon, 8 Ullet Road.

Mrs Herdman, Croxteth Lodge, Ullet Road.

Mrs Richard D Holt, Derwent Lodge, Wavertree

Mrs Langton, Barkhill, Aigburth.

Mrs Place, Gateacre Lodge, Gateacre.

Mrs Ernest Tate, Brookhurst, Bromborough.

Hon Secretary

Miss Broadbent, Woodcroft, Woolton

Hon Treasurer

Mrs Hugh Rathbone, Oakwood, Aigburth.

Hon Medical Officers:

Consulting

J Tawse Nisbet, M.D.C.M.

Visiting

A Burns Gemmel, L.R.C.P.E, M.R.C.S.

Matron

Miss Brown”

The Rathbone and Holt families were closely associated with the Children’s Rest throughout its existence providing direction as well as administrative and financial support for the charity. It continued the tradition of social responsibility, which had placed the Rathbones’ at the forefront of philanthropic efforts, to provide charitable services for the poor of Liverpool throughout the nineteenth century.



Illnesses and Treatment of the Children

The Annual Reports for this period showed that there were between 26 and 29 children in the 'Home' at any one time. The number of admissions through the year ranged between 3 and 14, with discharges of between 3 and 10 and only 8 deaths. The 'Home' was therefore able to care for a small proportion of the children in need of treatment. The criteria for admission were that children should be,

“(a) Incurable cripples, or

(b) Suffering from diseases requiring prolonged care.

(c) Not older than twelve years, (girls), ten years (boys)

No infectious cases, or cases of mental disease, shall be admitted into the Home.”

The reports of the Medical Officer, Dr A Burns Gemmel showed the main forms of childhood illness treated by the 'Home'. They were spinal curvature, rickets, tubercular diseases, caries of limbs, hip disease and heart complaints. The links between many of these illnesses and poverty and malnutrition is evident. The open air environment was one part of the treatment and the 'Home' was always appreciative of vegetables, fruit and eggs in its reports.

Dr Gemmel was valued for the untiring attention he at all times gives to the children. The consulting Medical Officer Dr J Twase Nisbet, one of the initiators of the Home in 1897, visited until his death in 1909; “during the twelve years....he has given endless time and thought to its (Home) welfare. He will be greatly missed by the children, who were very much attached to him.”

Dr Nesbitt and Dr Gemmel were able to report no major outbreaks of infectious diseases in the 'Home' during this period. This was to the credit of the 'Home', especially when it is appreciated that in 1882, according to the Medical Officer of Health, the average age of death in the town was claimed to be 21. Many of the deaths resulted from diseases of poverty, which thrived in overcrowded accommodation, with poor sanitation. From 1908 children benefited from the voluntary treatment by



Miss Holland a masseuse, who also took an active part in fundraising. She resigned in 1912 owing to pressures of work following a period of illness.

In 1909 concern was expressed with regard to the attention that should be given to the children's teeth and Committee secured the services of Mr Frank who agreed to attend the children for a small honourarium.

Miss Lowry, the teacher, along with the matron, Miss Brown and the members of staff were held in high esteem by the Committee, which stated (1911) they, "deserve the greatest praise for their devoted care of and interest in the children. The Committee feel they cannot sufficiently express their appreciation."

The medical care the children received in the 'Home' was certainly better than that which their peers living in the poor districts of the town could expect. The surroundings from which patients were drawn and their problems were described.

"Alice M's mother is the caretaker of a very tall office building and as she lives in the attics, at the top of 104 steps and Alice is the only child, she has a very lonely life. The child has been ill since she was a few months old. She is now twelve and has always lived in these attics, so she has never had the chance of playing with other children, her only playmates being dolls. Except on the days she went to the Hospital she seldom saw the streets, but on fine days her mother took her up through a trap door on to a small platform on the roof, and, tying her to the telegraph pole there, left her to take the air, while she did her work."

"Gerald P. used to lie on his double splint, practically all day alone, while his mother, a widow, was out at work. When he came to 'The Rest' he was paralysed, but can now run about as actively as possible."

Alice M. was admitted on 7th June 1906, and diagnosed as



having “abscess of thigh”. She was provided with a Kyrle Society cot and discharged “much improved” on 18th September 1906. Gerald was admitted with Potts’ curvature on 20th February 1903. In 1906 the result was “unable to walk when admitted, now runs about”. The visit of a subscriber illustrated the success of the treatment in the case of Mary, “I was delighted when I called, to see the change in little Mary. I knew the child previous to her entrance to the Penny Lane Home, and the child’s changed appearance is wonderful. She had a look of settled despondency and misery, very sad to see in a child and now she looks so bright and cheerful and happy and can run about and take an interest in many things. I was delighted to see her.”

Mary entered the ‘Home’ on 14th August 1906 with spinal curvature and the result was “Very much better.”

Income and Expenditure

The Annual Reports contain specific details of income and expenditure. As would be expected, the greatest costs were the food and the salaries and wages, which accounted for £530-32s-0d of the £982-10s-7d spent in 1905, and £642 3s-4d of the £1,081-16s-2d spent in 1913.

From the outset the ‘Home’ established the responsibility of the parents to pay part of the cost of maintaining the child. In 1905 this was approximately 2/6d or 3/6d per week. At this time a docker could be paid 4/6d to 5/- a day; however, the work was irregular and it has been estimated that he might find work on three days in a week.

The ‘Home’ relied heavily upon charitable contributions, as is shown in the accounts. It was also grateful for gifts not only of food, but of blankets, linen, flowers and above all children’s toys and clothing. Garments were donated by the Needlework Guild amongst others. Nonetheless, the bulk of the income came from subscriptions. Subscriptions and donations were forthcoming from many of the leading families in South Liverpool.



The Annual Reports also record individual enterprises undertaken to raise funds including Dramatic Entertainments; one in 1906 raised £32.

In 1908, an adverse balance was increased by the installation of electric lighting and the re-building of the garden wall, so necessitating extra fund raising efforts.

In 1909, Sir Squire Bancroft gave his farewell performances of his “celebrated” reading of the “Christmas Carols” in St. George’s Hall, to assist in clearing a debt of £300. The Hall “on this occasion was packed to overflowing” the net result being £111-2s-5d.

In the same year the ‘Green-Room Amateur Dramatic Society’ gave a performance which provided over £67 for funds and Mrs Ernest Tate held a sale at house which realised £185. With three large gifts the debt was cleared.

In 1911, £45 was collected towards the cost of painting the outside of the house. In addition to structural work, donations in these years provided beds, cot, bath chairs and spinal carriages.

Concern was raised in 1913 because of a decline in funds and parents’ contributions, owing to the notion that the National Health Insurance Act would finance the voluntary charities. In fact, the Act only made provision for the residential treatment of tubercular diseases, so leaving many conditions to be funded by other means.’

The Sale of Children’s Work

An object of the ‘Home’ was to provide the children with handicraft skills, which would enable them to make their own clothes and articles for sale. In 1906 the children were shown to have made these items themselves, “8 girls overalls, 10 boys shirts, 16 combinations, 6 carriage gowns, 4 nightgowns, 7 knickers, 10 pinafores, 2 frocks, and 3 blouses.”



In 1906 the sale of children's work realised £5; in 1913 it made £37-8s-2d. The range of articles included baskets, rugs, artificial flowers, cane chairs and embroidery.

A scheme was begun - the 'Cripples Workshop', to provide the training which would enable those leaving the school at twelve or thirteen to be self-supporting, so that they would avoid "the great danger of drifting back to their undesirable surrounding." The Annual Reports contained examples of placements:

1906 - An older girl admitted with a heart complaint had recovered sufficiently to be put on the staff. A girl who left to be apprenticed to a gold-chain maker found the working conditions and hours injurious to her health. She returned to the 'Home' where she earned her keep as a sewing maid.

1910 - A girl who had resided at the 'Home' from the age of five to eighteen was apprenticed to a dressmaker "where she is giving every satisfaction." Another girl returned home where it was hoped she "by her sewing, will be able to partially keep herself."

Some Events for the Children

The principle sources relating to this period in the history of the 'Children Rest' have been the Annual Reports for 1905, 1906, 1908 - 1911 and 1913, which have survived. As these have focused on the administrative and financial structure of the 'Home' they provide only a glimpse of everyday life.

The sections above relate to the medical, educational and spiritual care of the children, but were unable to give details of how the children felt. It is evident, that for many of the children admitted to the 'Home' the living conditions, food and general environment was a vast improvement upon their own home. The success of the treatments as described in the Annual Reports attest to this.

However, these advantages have to be weighed against the disruption and distress which might have been caused to a child



removed from its parents and only able to see them at limited times. Such issues remain a matter of speculation.

The references to some of the social activities are listed below,

1909- "They (the Committee) also have to thank Messrs Whipple & Co., for wiring the Christmas Tree electric light."

1911- "Mrs.Lyle Rathbone kindly arranged that all those who were able to go in a char-a-banc should see as much as possible of the Coronation festivities and managed to procure an excellent place for them. The Lord Mayor kindly sent them 10/- to be spent on coins, and they received cakes, cups, badges, etc, from other kind friends, and Miss Earle gave them a beautiful tea."

1911- "The Scouts, Company 33rd, have shown very kindly interest in our cripples, giving them several entertainments and visiting them at several times. The Committee thank the Company most sincerely."



Chapter 3

The 'Children's Rest' in Greenbank Lane

The Move: 1915–1916

The Trustees of the 'Children's Rest, acquired the building on 6th July 1915. The Annual Report of 1916 shows the children to be resident in the school. The new building enabled the 'Home' to accommodate a much greater number of children; 48, on 31st December. Some are depicted playing in the large court, with others looking on (plate 7). Many of their activities in this report reflect national responses to wartime events and conditions.

The children were received at the 'Rest' from a number of sources: Liverpool Education Committee, The Invalid Children's Aid Association, The Soldiers' and Sailors' Family Association, The Boards of Guardians and through private recommendations.

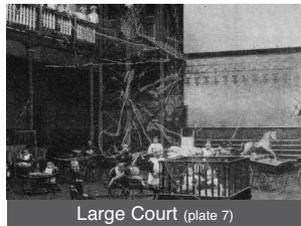
Illnesses of the Children

The illnesses of the children admitted were undergoing a change. Rickets, infant paralysis and heart complaints continued to feature prominently. There was a slight decline in those suffering from curvature of the spine. However, the most obvious change was the absence of those with conditions associated with tuberculosis, with the exception of a former pupil in the 'Home' who was retained to help with sewing.

Income and Expenditure

The financial dependence upon gift donations continued. Reflecting the pressures of the war, the Committee reported the necessity to increase charges for patients from 5s to 7s–6d, owing to the increasing rise in food prices. The cultivation of a garden by children, with the help of the gardener, provided potatoes and vegetables. Additionally, Mrs Hugh Rathbone presented the 'Home' with, "a number of chickens, which, under the careful supervision of the gardener, have done well providing the children with eggs and affording them much interest. It is satisfactory to note that the cost of their food is more than repaid by the number of eggs they produce."

The Committee expressed their appreciation to Mr Evans who was also responsible for the swimming bath. The profits from the swimming bath fell by £9-3s-8d as a result of increased fuel costs and the lack of custom.



Education at the 'Home'

The 'Home' was visited in May 1916 by Dr. Muriel Bywater, Medical Inspector of the Board of Education, who, "expressed her approval of the work being done in the Home; especially commending the careful records of children's work which are kept by the teachers. She recommended some changes with regard to the timetable of the school children, which have since been affected."

These included an extension to the time spent in the garden. Subsequently, the Upper Division spent 1.5 hours a week cultivating their two plots of land for flowers and vegetables.

Miss Pendleton's Report of 1916 (Headmistress) described the activities undertaken by children. The children received lessons in the three R's and in handiwork; including making cardboard furniture, rug making, basket making and work on china. She reported the appointment of a needlework mistress, "who takes the girls in plain needlework, such as the making of garments for themselves or



for the children of ‘The Rest’ and, also takes mending and darning with the boys and girls of the Upper Division.”

Pupils knitted scarves, socks and eye bandages for soldiers. These were sent to the Liverpool Pals Depot. They also collected £1-1s-4d for comforts for men at the front.

The children benefited from three educational events. On 10th April Mrs Hugh Rathbone took some of them to see pictures entitled “Britain Prepared.” On 24th May they received a lecture on “Empire Day” given by Mr George Rathbone, and on 13th December Miss Maxwell entertained the children with slides of a journey to the North Cape.



Chapter 4

Life in the 'Rest': 1920-1939

After the war the accommodation in the 'Home' attracted public bodies, which sent children from the locality and further afield. In 1920 they were listed,

1. Education committees – Liverpool, Rutland, Derbyshire.
2. Boards of Guardians – Toxteth, Basford, Hartlepool, Barrow-in-Furness
3. Roll of Honour Society
4. Personal Service Society
5. War Pensions Committee
6. Child Welfare Associations – Liverpool, Birkenhead”

In 1920 a Nursery was opened, but in 1923 the pressure for places caused the Committee to limit places to school aged children. While the school took children from outside the town; the 'Rest' was “primarily for Liverpool children”. The number of children residing in the 'Home' between 1920 and 1939 varied from 42 to 52.

Illnesses and Treatment of the children

In 1920 rickets infant paralysis, spinal curvature and heart complaints were the chief ailments of the children. Between 1920 and 1937 the incidence of those admitted with rickets declined. However, this is not necessarily evidence of an improvement in living conditions, as throughout the period some children were admitted with malnutrition and tubercular diseases, the latter reappearing after an apparent decline prior to 1913.

A wide range of illnesses were treated in the 'Home'. The Annual Report of 1923 described the changes, “there are more children suffering from cardiac trouble, rheumatism and debility..... There are also many crippled children, who generally make a long stay and greatly benefit from the massage and open air treatment they receive.”



From 1928 the proportion of children suffering from rheumatic endocarditis increased, in many years being the most prevalent condition. By 1937 the number of children with mitral stenosis had grown. Throughout this period the children received regular eye and teeth checks. There were outbreaks of influenza and incidences of measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough, mumps and diphtheria. Only one or two deaths a year occurred.

In 1934 there is reference by Dr Prideaux, the physician, to immunising the children against scarlet fever and diphtheria. Miss McMarn, who was a child residing in the 'Home' in the 1920's, remembers that during an outbreak of scarlet fever she was unable to see her mother for three months. She can recall the distress this caused her as a child of 8 or 9. As earlier, the medical care received by the children in the 'Rest' was a great deal better than their parents could have afforded if they were at home.

The Annual Report of 1937 described the use of ultraviolet ray equipment. Eight hundred treatments were carried out during the year, with exposure to ray for 10 minutes. "The record shows that many of the children derive much benefit from the treatment. No specific effect on the heart is obtained, but the general tonic effect is very marked, and in the majority of cases a steady increase in the patient's weight and well-being is recorded..... 'Can I go on sunlight, please' is a frequent plea and if the request had to be refused there is great disappointment."

Income and Expenditure

Throughout this period the 'Children's Rest' continued to be supported by the charitable endowments, subscriptions and donations of individuals. It is a measure of the continuity of that support that so many family names reappear consistently, some going back to the foundation of the 'Home' in 1897.



Increasing the 'Rest' received an income from Education Committees and charitable organisations. In 1937 these included authorities located in Rutland, Durham, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Sheffield, Chester, Bury and Burton-on-Trent. This would indicate the paucity of the provision for the children with disabilities and the contribution made by the 'Rest' to that provision.

The Sale of Children's Work

Throughout these years, just as before 1914, the children produced goods which were sold to raise funds for the 'Home'. The manufacture of the items provided the children with the sort of skills which would enable them to be self-sufficient on leaving the 'Rest'. From 1924, in addition to those already described, the range of articles included a vegetable and flower stall selling radishes, lettuces and turnips grown by the children. The sale made £33 profit.

In 1925 Miss Bell, of 'Calderstones Preparatory School', invited the 'Rest' to have a stall at her Garden Fete to sell their work.

In 1929 the sale of children's work and the Mothers' Day raised £53; the surplus money, after expenses, being used for buying and equipping the magic lantern.

Education

On 1st April 1920 Miss Nelson was appointed to succeed Miss Pendleton in the school. She was assisted by Miss McHugh in the junior Class and Miss Steer in the Nursery. In her report of 1920 she states the attempt,

"where the need is greatest, to take children individually and to teach them the use of simple apparatus to deal with things rather than to learn words by rote...this method is being very successful."

By the standards of the time such teaching methods were advanced for all children the 1921 reports states.



“The method of using apparatus in the Junior Form, especially for reading, writing and composition, has proved most valuable, and it is interesting and pleasant to find how much the younger members of the class have improved in these subjects.”

The Post Office Saving scheme was set up, with 21 children contributing. The library was also re-organised and the gift of books requested. This would suggest changes in the educational emphasis of the school. Also in 1921, pupils “gave a very good performance of ‘Bluebeard’” at the Annual Meeting.

This is the first reference to the children actually participating in such performances; previously, they were the spectators. This is further evidence of a more active curriculum for the pupils.

The 1922 Report makes reference to a Senior Form as well as a Junior Form. In the same year, at the Annual Meeting, the children performed two sketches “The Mischievous Brownie” and “The Three Bears.” The school initiated a “Mother’s Day” in the Christmas Term, during which mothers were able to go to the school, watch their children at work, and listen to a concert of carols, songs and recitations.

Advances in the curriculum, demonstrated in such events, could also have been influenced by the changes in the nature of children’s ailments, which made such activities possible, a factor confirmed by Miss Nelson in 1925, “work at the Rest becomes more interesting, and in a sense more hopeful, because the children’s ailments, as a rule, are diagnosed at an early stage, and therefore they leave so much improved in health that they are able to take a normal place in life.”

In 1923 mothers were also entertained in the summer. Children were able to participate in a gardening competition and a pianola was given to the school by Mrs Clayton. In 1925 the intake of the school was such that senior classes were



discontinued and the school was able to further develop the experiences it could provide, "Nature rambles in the park have continued through this year, and are much enjoyed." In 1926, "The gramophone is now included in the present school programme of work, and gifts of records of classical music would be very welcome as we wish to teach the children to know and love good music."

In many ways this reflected a continuity with the ideals of the Kyrle Society, whose commitment to providing beauty for the poor, influenced the founders of the 'Rest'.

The broadly based education of the children continued with plants and aquariums in the classrooms (1928), physical exercises to music, canaries and gerbils in school, magic lantern slides (1929) and budgerigars (1934). From 1931 the school was considered suitable by Liverpool University, for student practices.

Some events for the Children

In this period the range of events undertaken either by the children themselves, or provided for their entertainment expanded rapidly. A comparison with the period prior to 1914 reveals a very different environment for the children.

1920:- "At Christmas the children very much enjoyed an afternoon of Carol singing, arranged for them by the students of the University; and the pleasure of the annual party in January was greatly enhanced through the kindness of Mrs George Smith and Miss Dorothy Melly, who with children from the Montessori School in Allerton, arranged an entertainment of songs and dances."

The Carol singing became a regular function at the school.

1924:- Girls from Aigburth Vale High School "came again to give a Performance of Fairy Play." In addition, children visited Liverpool Cathedral, hearing "the Evensong



Anthem from the Lady Chapel Gallery.” They returned home via the Pier Head “for many it was their first sight of the River and the ships.” Fourteen children visited the theatre to see “Peter Pan”.

1928:- The children were given tickets by Mrs George Rathbone for a Performance of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at the Playhouse. “The Afternoon was one of pure enjoyment and will long be remembered by the Children.”

1932:- “Mrs Creed gave the Children a delightful musical recital and talk; Miss Eleanor Moore spoke to them about school work in Palestine, and illustrated her talk with lantern slides from her own Photographs; Miss Fry lectured on India, and brought her native Costumes to show the children. Afternoons such as these are much appreciated; they keep the children in touch with the outside world.”

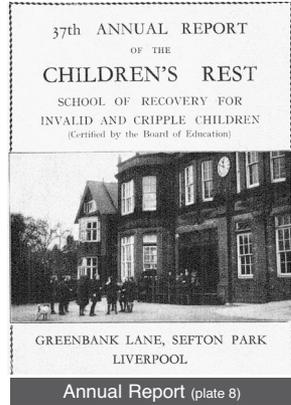
1933:- Miss Lloyd from the Liverpool School of Social Science spent two days at the school teaching the children folk dancing. Miss Powell gave the children an account of the Passion Play at Oberammergau, with slides.

1937:- To celebrate the Coronation the children received a holiday on the 12th May and a Coronation mug.

These extracts serve to illustrate the range of experiences provided for the children, especially within the context of their time. They also demonstrate the commitment of the ‘Rest’ to educate the children about the wider outside world.

The cover of the Annual Report shows pupils outside the building under the clock (Plate 8).

Mrs Twist sent photographs of herself in the school grounds, by the sundial, in 1939, (Plate 9). Not long afterwards the second world war began and along with other children she was evacuated.





Chapter 5

World War Two – Requisitioned by the Navy

The evacuation of the ‘Rest’ left the problem of occupancy. It was decided on 23rd November 1939 to put the property in the hands of Boulton, Son and Maple with a view to letting it. On 19th December an offer made on behalf of the Royal Liver Friendly Society was accepted and on 9th January 1940 the draft of a lease was returned for consideration to the Society. The attention to detail in the minutes of meetings is meticulous, down to the purchase of an additional front door key, the disposal of a wireless, the sale of blankets, and an inventory of furniture for storage, disposal or rental.

The meeting of 8th April made first mention of interest in the building by the Admiralty. It is unclear from the sources, so far available, when the Admiralty took over the property. However, the Battle of the Atlantic began in earnest in March 1941 and many Wrens were to be employed at the “Western Approaches”, the underground nerve centre for the battle. It could reasonably be surmised it was at this point the Admiralty were seeking to accommodate their female officers. Further, the 1942 Annual Report of the ‘Rest’ states that if the Admiralty continued to use the building until the end of 1943 the “Home” would be “entirely free of debt.”

Two ex-Wrens who lived in the ‘Rest’ described various aspects of life there. Mrs Truscott and Mrs Armstrong served in the house as stewards, between 1944 and 1945. They remember Greenbank House and Westfield also being used as W.R.N.S. quarters, with Gledhill utilised as a sickbay. The ‘Children’s Rest’ was also known as Ackerley House at this time. They remembered the building being used as officers’ quarters for those working at the Liver Buildings or waiting to board ship.

On a tour of the building in August 1998 they could identify many of the rooms. They remembered their rooms in what had been the teachers’ rooms, in the original Headmaster’s house. It



was on the second storey in the attic they told of “Aggie” the ghost they had encountered, dressed in a long white robe standing in their room.

It was reported to them, that she was a woman looking for her son and that in the large room at the end of the quadrangle, which had been used for overnight stays, chairs had been overturned and bedding pulled onto the floor.

In the kitchen area they recalled the mortuary slab being used for making pastry and the mortuary itself being a tuck shop. Also they related how the caretaker would leave the scullery window ajar so that Wrens could scramble in after the doors had been locked for the night.

A similar episode features in “All the Sweet Promises”, a novel by Elizabeth Elgin, whom they remembered as having being billeted in the house.

Another writer amongst the Wrens in accommodation on the Greenbank site was Edith Pargeter (alias Ellis Peters) probably best known for the ‘Brother Cadfael’ mysteries. She used her experiences working at Derby House and in the Wrens quarters in her novel ‘She goes to War’. Her vivid descriptions suggest that she lodged at Greenbank House, with references to moorhens on the pond. The character’s initial feelings were of ‘a dismal room’ shared with fifteen’. As the weather settled ‘The house is bright and sunny and there’s a garden, frosty now and full of rimy shrubs, but with considerable promise for summer’. Edith Pargeter received the British Empire Medal for her devotion to duty in W.R.N.S.

A Visit by Eleanor Roosevelt and a BBC Broadcast

Thanks to Ralph Shepherd, the details of a prestigious visit to Ackerley House, during the W.R.N.S. occupation has been rediscovered. In 1942 he was a trainee telephone engineer with the Post Office. On the afternoon of 8th November, with two other gangs, he was sent to erect cables from poles at the rear of Princes Road Synagogue to Ackerley House, where the cables



passed to B.B.C. engineers. On completion Ralph was told that the cables were to be used for a broadcast by U.S. First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, who was to visit Ackerley House that evening.

Mrs Roosevelt had arrived at Paddington Station on 23rd October to be greeted and hosted at Buckingham Palace by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Her aim was to meet American forces and to glean information on the role of working women on the home front. She was especially interested in the range of jobs and the traditional male skills women had acquired. To this end she called at: Air Auxiliary Stations to meet male and female pilots and mechanics; factories; a depot producing and distributing clothing; US Army camps; various Red Cross clubs and a maternity hospital throughout England. Reports of the locations were vague owing to security considerations.

Her BBC broadcast took place at 9.15pm on Sunday 8th November 1942. It drew on her observations during her tour. She praised the spirit of the British People in the face of adversity, the hospitality shown to US forces and the vital contribution of women workers to the war effort. This was reassurance for the families 'at home' that the American troops were coping well with the climate and the black-out. Her concluding words emphasized that the sacrifices being made by the British and Americans must make for a better future, that has learned from the mistakes of the 1920s and 1930s and that looks at the world 'on international lines' where all accept responsibility so that 'the vision of God's world ruled by justice and love may become a reality'.

The local press covered the 'surprise' visit. Mary Ventris in the Liverpool Echo concentrated on Eleanor Roosevelt's personal qualities, saying "there is an infectious warmth about her" and the "friendliest smile, great charm of manner and her energy is boundless." Of the broadcast Mary commented "you will have noticed how slight is her accent" and of her appearance her "well cut black clothes.....sensible black calf shoes which had the appearance of being British rather than American in



manufacture.”

The Liverpool Daily Post focused on the public events of the day; lunch at the Adelphi Hotel, a call at a dock side warehouse where American goods were received and despatched and at an American supply ship, a visit to a American Army camp and finally taking the salute from Wrens at St. Nicholas Church before travelling to Ackerley House.

From her own column Eleanor Roosevelt describes activities at the house after the broadcast; ‘we returned to the big recreational hall where the personnel put on a really excellent show. I discovered that many of the songs must be the same for all of us, as: ‘Just a Song at Twilight, sung by two young sisters and ‘A Bicycle Built for Two’, carried me back to my childhood’.

In her autobiography she summed up her impressions of the British people: ‘This was a nation at war, going through moments of great uncertainty and stress. But what I have often marvelled at has been the people’s staunchness and their ability to carry on during the years after the war and accept the drabness of their lives’.

Eleanor Roosevelt’s tour of Britain and the broadcast from Ackerley House played an important part in unifying American and British war objectives and strategies, in the emphasis placed on the common cause of the military and civilian populations of both countries.

The occupation by the Admiralty did indeed provide the ‘Children’s Rest’ with the opportunity to clear its debts by 1943. In 1945 the Admiralty vacated the property and the next stage in the history of the ‘Children’s Rest’ commenced as the Committee entered negotiations with Liverpool Education Committee, to administer the ‘Children’s Rest’ School’ jointly.



Chapter 6

The Post War Years

A Fresh Start: 1947

In February 1946, the Children's Rest (Ackerley House) was de-requisitioned by the Admiralty. This left the Committee of the 'Children's Rest' with the decision of whether the school should continue to function as previously, or whether it should consider handing the premises over to Liverpool Education Committee to administer.

In April 1946 the Committee was informed that the building was about to be vacated by WRNS Council Minutes, 17th June 1946 resolved that the school should be named the 'Children's Rest School of Recovery' and it provisionally approved the allocation of rooms to accommodate 50 handicapped children and the necessary staff.

Liverpool Education Committee expressed an interest in re-opening the school as a specialist unit for children with Cerebral Palsy. It felt that children with cardiac conditions, who had been prevalent in the school prior to 1939, were now adequately served by the hospitals.

A council report 11th March 1947 estimated that in Liverpool a "probability of about 90 cases. It is, however, thought that the number of cases which could receive beneficial treatment on the lines of this report will be approximately thirty or forty."

The plan was to initially admit 20 spastic children to be educated alongside other physically handicapped and delicate children, with the proportions to be varied if "the treatment shows signs of success". The 'Children's Rest' Committee discussed the matter at length, being aware of the cost of administering such a school, of the needs of children with other disabilities and of the cost of the required expansion of the school.



Negotiations with Liverpool Education Committee resulted in an agreement between the city and the 'Children's Rest' (29th April 1947), in which the premises were leased to Liverpool Education Committee for 30 years (with an option after 15 years), to be administered by a Committee comprised of 6 members of the Education Committee and 5 members of the old Committee. Continuity in the administration of the school was established in the roles of Mr B Lyle Rathbone and Mr George Holt as Trustees maintaining their family's involvement in the charity. Also Mr D Large served as Treasurer to the Trustees and Mrs Wilkes, Miss Todd and Miss Niven continued as members of the Committee.

The Children's Rest School of Recovery' reopened, admitting as before, children with a range of disabilities from a wide catchment area. Children came from Liverpool, Lancashire, Cheshire, the Isle of Man and North Wales. It took 50 children aged between 6 - 16 years.

Mrs H Stopfort was Headmistress and Miss Savage the Deputy Headmistress. Miss U Brown the physiotherapist has provided memories of day to day organisation of the school, which is supplemented by an article in "The Liverpolitan", June 1950.

She worked in a specialist unit within the school set up to cater for children with Cerebral Palsy. It was one of only four in the country; the others being located in London, Portsmouth, and Birmingham. There were usually about 12 children in the unit, who were integrated into the general school activities, being withdrawn from lessons for their treatment.

The child received an individual programme, which involved the children learning to control and co-ordinate their muscles and developing a sense of balance, using equipment such as a shortened ski for walking, and mirrors so that the children could see which muscles they were moving. A special chair was designed and constructed by Mr Barlow for the children. It offered them increased back support. The Liverpolitan article summed up the work of the school and the Cerebral Palsy unit:



“The medical and teaching staff of the school are working together to help each child as far as possible to become a useful and self-supporting citizen. The success of the school is shown by the marked improvement seen in children in the school and also by the fact that in some cases children have benefited so much that they can transfer to day schools to complete their education.”

The routine of the day consisted of Assembly, class lessons, milk break, lessons, then lunch. After lunch all the children rested on beds in the hall. This was followed by lessons and tea. In the evenings the children undertook activities such as community singing, knitting, needlework, basketwork and reading, having a drink before bed. In the summer they were able to use the swings and see-saw on the school field. Again the curriculum had moved forward to enable the children to receive a comparable education to other children, but modified to meet their needs. Miss Brown paid tribute to the foresight of Mrs Stopforth in this move forward.

Visiting occurred on alternate Sundays and on Saturday morning there was an outing to buy sweets. Where possible children went home for the school holidays. There were also outings to the pictures and places of interest. In addition to teaching staff, care was provided by four resident care assistants, with extra help from nurses on secondment, a part-time speech therapist and a part-time occupational therapist. Some of the transport for visits would have been provided by a motor brake. The school Minute Book refers to the Trustees offering to build a garage for the vehicle (25th April 1950).

Chapter 7

1953: Onwards and Forwards

In January 1953 Miss Long was appointed as Headmistress and a new phase in the history of the school began. At that time the main conditions of the children were heart disease, coeliac disease and asthma. There were 5 children with Cerebral Palsy.

On 26th July 1953, Emily Evelyn Rathbone died. It had been her drive which had founded and established the 'Home' in 1897, and her practical approach which underlined the ethos of the school. Close links between the Rathbone family and the school continued throughout its existence.

Miss R Hall began as a teacher at the school in January 1959 and as was said in the introduction, it is with her that the 'Rest' has been documented from this time through to its closure. She provided many of the newspaper articles and photographs of the later years, as well as illuminating life at the school.

Physical activities

It was during this period the school, under the leadership of Miss Long with the advice of Miss Gee (advisor) introduced the Essex Apparatus. The aim was to improve the activities available for coeliacs at the school. It was the first school of its kind to have PE on the



Using the Essex apparatus
(plate 10)



Photograph used in advertisement
(plate 11)



curriculum. Plate 10 shows some of the children using it. Plate 11 featured in an advertisement for the apparatus.

A report on the apparatus stated that it rapidly attracted the attention of children who were chairbound and that with support on either side, "Children who previously had made no attempt to walk nor shown any inclination to try were clamouring for a turn." The equipment enabled the children to strengthen their muscles and improve their co-ordination, whilst thoroughly enjoying themselves. Their pleasure is evident from the photographs. The staff found the benefits included learning to share, an adult appreciation of the needs of their peers and the opportunities to exchange skills. The staff commented that the children were more alert in class with an improvement in their work as they gained confidence.

The importance of physical activity to the health and well-being of the children is a consistent element in the life of the school from this time. From its foundation, in 1967, members of the Challenge Club participated in the 'Olympics' at Stoke Mandeville. Their achievements were recorded in the 'Weekly News' 17th July 1975. Many won medals: Debbie Johnson, aged 12 netted six medals in various events. The chairman of the Challenge Club was quoted, "The object of the games – and our club – is to give disabled children an opportunity to challenge their handicap."

The initial needs of thalidomide children were met by the 'Children's Rest'. A newspaper article ('The Liverpool Echo', 18th May 1972) reported that after a period of assessment in 1959, twenty pupils were integrated into main stream schools. In 1964 the Committee provided the school with funds for equipment to cater for the needs of the thalidomide children it was to take as day pupils. The same newspaper article reported that day pupils are transported to the school for 9.30am and finish at 3.00pm.



Handicrafts

When the school opened, in 1897, the sale of children's work fulfilled two functions; Firstly, in teaching the children handicraft skills such as sewing and basketmaking, the school was giving pupils the ability to earn a living in adulthood and acquire independence. Secondly, the sale of goods provided a modest income which was used to purchase the raw materials. By the 1960s the function had changed. It was used to encourage the children to help others. Marion Jacobs, in Class 2B, wrote in 1966, "Last term we had a sale of work for Oxfam. The money is to help hungry people in other lands. I helped to get the hall ready. A lot of people came and they bought everything there was. The money will buy some good meals for hungry children. We are glad that we can help other people."

School Life

In 1968 Miss Long retired and she was awarded an MBE in the New Years Honours. Miss Hall was appointed Headmistress and remained at the school until its closure.

It was in these years that the school admitted a number of children with spina bifida. Also other special schools began to offer facilities and the composition of the 'Rest' changed.

The school continued to acquire the equipment to provide the pupils with a broad education and a preparation for adult life. An example, is the re-organisation of the craft room in 1969, which entailed the provision of facilities for pottery, wood and metal activities, also an electric cooker, under the supervision of a craft teacher. In 1971 a Linisher Machine and Kiln were purchased.

In 1974 children were able to study for CSE's in English, Environmental Studies, Home Economics Art and Design. These subjects along with Mathematics and Religious Education were taken by all pupils. Pupils were also expected to do about an hours homework, which could involve written exercises or reading. Again the school was responding to changes which had taken place in mainstream education.



Parts of a booklet describing the routine of the school outlines some of the extra-curricula facilities provided in the 1970s:

“In the main school building, in addition to the usual school rooms there was a library, a large physiotherapy room, and a bed-sitter. The latter contained furniture and fittings chosen by the pupils, in order that groups could practice independent living. Upstairs there was also a large common room with facilities for table-tennis, billiards and table-football. Pupils had a coffee bar where they could make their own evening drinks. Next door was a small carpeted room, with easy chairs, television and record player.”

Evening activities were also available to day pupils. They consisted of Rangers, Guides, Scouts and a Youth Club. The Challenge Club (mentioned on page 36) met on Wednesday evenings at Quarry Bank School. A Senior Challenge Club existed for those over 17.

Chapter 8

Gerry Kinsella – A Personal View of the ‘Children’s Rest’

As was stated in the Forward, Gerry Kinsella has experience of Greenbank Lane, both as a former pupil of the ‘Children’s Rest’ and currently as Chief Executive of ‘Greenbank’. His memories provide an insight into how the pupils perceived their educational experiences at the ‘Rest’. Gerry started at the school at the age of 8, having spent one term at Dingle Lane and having received no formal education prior to this time. He spent long periods of childhood at Heswall Hospital in an iron lung or on a frame to prevent scoliosis of the spine.

His earliest memories are of a restful and welcoming environment. There was a strict daily regime with a set time routine: up at 7am, breakfast at 8am, Religious Studies at 9am, lunch at mid-day and a rest period on folding camp beds in the Hall, between 1 and 2pm. During this time there was no reading or talking. Bath then bed was at 6pm, with lights out at 6.30pm. Hence, the name ‘Rest’ was most appropriate. Meal times were very slow as it took a long time to serve the food and many needed help feeding. The custard and gravy was lumpy!

Children slept in dormitories, six to a room, along the top corridor. There was no privacy or dignity. Care assistants saw to all your physical needs. Gerry remembers a massive flu epidemic. A prefect system was introduced, but it only lasted one term. Prefects tried to stop a child reading a comic in the rest period. The child promptly crawled under campbeds, knocking pupils out of them, in an attempt to escape and causing havoc.

With regard to education, English consisted of reading and copy writing. Art seemed progressive with the opportunity to sketch, shade and draw cartoons etc. There was a lot of handicraft work. In Maths Mr Forbes made lessons interesting with lots of mental arithmetic. He also introduced the children to chess. Gerry observed that playing against some profoundly disabled children, with little communication and movement, gave him



and his peers a deep respect for the children, who played chess to a high level and so had plenty of cognitive ability.

Gerry thoroughly enjoyed the freedom of PE Miss Hall introduced beams, ropes, bars and the vaulting horse in the main Hall. It allowed the children to try and experiment. He remembers the horse: a handstand onto the horse, walking on hands along it and jumping off to land again on hands.

Pupils were allowed to undertake more adventurous routines and some of the cotton wool protection was dropped. He observed that staff were pioneering in some of the PE work and soon he became strong and physically fit (a further testament to the Essex Apparatus). Whilst at the 'Rest' Gerry took part in the Paraplegic Olympics (referred to above), winning a bronze medal for swimming and taking part in the quarter-finals of the basketball.

Gerry acquired a fossil collection from his days at Greenbank either collected from the grounds or outings. Visitors were allowed for two hours every second Sunday. Holidays were spent at home, otherwise children were residential. Gerry always felt considerably better off than his brothers and sisters, being well fed, clothed and warm, while they lived in a two bedded terraced house with no hot water and an outside toilet which backed onto Fontenoy Street (described in 1886 on page 10).

When he got into the seniors, Gerry grew in confidence, and developed a social outlook on disability matters. He has recounted some episodes which contributed to his view. There was tranquillity at the school until two older boys, who were physically able, started to attend. They bullied lots of children. A committee of seven physically disabled children was formed and it was decided to confront the two boys and if need be to resort to violence. At the point of confrontation a scrap developed and Gerry and others received a thrashing from the two boys, until staff intervened. The two boys left soon after and calm was restored. From the incident, children developed a sense of



collective action and strength in numbers. It gave them the courage to attempt more adventurous activities.

On one occasion, it was the consensus of opinion that pupils should be able to stay up and watch 'Mr Ed' on television at 6pm. The television was in the main Hall and night staff had a chair on the balcony overlooking the Hall. It was Gerry's task to act as a decoy, going down to the cellar to make a noise, ensuring that staff member followed him. Gerry climbed up through the coal hole whilst another child locked the cellar door. He climbed back into school through the pantry window (previously used by the Wrens) to be rewarded a front seat and a 'jam butty'. Collective action at the end of the programme helped everyone back to bed and released the staff member. This grand plan was only successful on two occasions. But soon after, lights out went to 7pm and watching 'Mr Ed' was permitted.

Greenbank was surrounded by a wooded area, with grass at the back of the Greenbank Scout hut (now University Halls of Residence). Gerry said that to a child on two callipers it seemed like a dense forest, with stories of swamps and one-legged swamp monster. Children would save up 6d to buy a can of soup or beans and build a camp fire in the paddock to cook for themselves.

Gerry remembered stories of Agnes the ghost (seen by the Wrens) as having been suggested by an Australian care assistant, Miss Connor. She claimed that Agnes a former maid, died of a broken heart and that she resided in what is now Room 23 over Reception.

Gerry made enormous friendships with some severely disabled people over the years. Many went on to be successful in later life, for example, Bert Massie as Chairman of the Disability Rights Commission; John Baines became a computer programmer and Joe Woollam, a careers officer.

Gerry left Greenbank at 16, to his last term at Sandfield Park and he was the first Greenbank pupil to sit an O'level although he did



not know what an O'level was at the time. Again many of the pupils of this era returned to education and took degrees in their late 20s and 30s.

Chapter 9

Parties and Dramatic Performances

Throughout these years there were parties for the children, theatre visits and dramatic performances given by the pupils. As with the visits, described later, many have been recorded in photographs, a sample of which are included in this booklet. (Plates 12–14). It is possible that some readers of this booklet may recognise themselves, or friends and have memories which could bring the photographs to life. It is obvious from the quantity of photographic evidence, only a very small sample of which is included here that there were many events.

At Christmas the children performed traditional Nativity plays. Carol Services took place in the school. The children were also given parties and entertainments. There was also a Christmas Fair which was used to raise money for the school. In 1973 the school was able to purchase a colour television for the pupils from the proceeds of the Christmas Fair and donations from the local school.

Music played an important role in the pupils' education and entertainment. A newspaper article in 1969 describes the musical instruments designed by Philip Bailey, a researcher at Liverpool University. The purpose of the specially



Party fun (plate 12)



Cakes and jellies (plate 13)



Sing along time (plate 14)



designed instruments was “To help those kids live fuller and more active lives. They are designed to encourage the children to use their limbs, perhaps for the first time.”

Over the years the pupils attended concerts at the Philharmonic Hall, for example, in 1966, 1971 and 1972. In the school newspaper of 1966 Valerie Carmichael, then in Class 1 wrote a detailed description of one such visit. It included music by Glinka and Mozart, with traditional songs performed by Gateacre Comprehensive School Choir and West Lancashire Masonic Choir.

The Head Teacher’s Report of 1971 refers to an explanation of instruments and a concert performed by peripatetic music teachers and to regular visits made by pupils to C F Mott College for Craft and Music lessons.

The pupils also experienced dramatic productions from visiting theatre groups.



Chapter 10

Scouting and Guiding

Scouting and guiding played a prominent role in the social life of the children. I would like, again, to express my thanks to Mr Ron McManus who has furnished me with a detailed account of the establishment of the 17th Wavertree Group which was founded for the residents of the school in 1959.

The group soon included boys, who were ferried in from other special schools: Abbots Lea, Dingle Lane and Sandfield Park. The pack flourished and was augmented by cub, guide and brownie packs. His wife Mrs D McManus ran the Brownie pack. Mr McManus described camping expeditions. After having raised the money for new tents and camping equipment, their first camp was Tawd Vale near Ormskirk, a Liverpool Scouts camping site. He remembers the camps as an annual event, taking place over August Bank Holiday, moving later to Bispham Hall, Billinge, because the flatter terrain was more convenient for wheelchair access. The scouts were involved with the main body of the movement.

“We took part in all District and County events including Swimming Galas and Church Parades. We had a very close liaison with a cub pack at the Royal School for the Blind, Wavertree.”

He recalls a weekend spent at Baden-Powell House in London with the School for the Blind Cub Pack, “We received special permission to watch the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace and arrangements were made for us to stand at the edge of the parade ground. We travelled to London by train. On arrival at Euston a fleet of ambulances with a police motor cycle escort ferried us straight across London and through the gates of the Palace. Thousands of spectators stood outside peering through the railings. We felt very honoured.”



The trip also included a visit to the Tower of London, various museums, and a steam boat ride to Greenwich.

The children recorded their trips to camp in diaries and in the school magazine. Their enthusiasm is expressed in the detailed description of events and they serve to demonstrate the benefits the children gained from such activities. As Mr McManus said in his letter, "Camping gave them a sense of adventure and encouraged them to be independent."

A summer camp in 1965 was remembered in the school magazine 'Greenbank Gazette', 1966: "Last summer I went to camp with the scouts. The first day I was there we went into the wood. We made a dish stand. On the Saturday we were washing the dishes and Paul was frying an egg when the fat spat out at him and burnt him a bit. The next day we went to Southport. We went on the Big Dipper and the Rifle Range. On the last day we had an extraordinary dinner it contained six tins of soup and three packets of eggs all mixed together, and for tea an omelette one foot wide and two feet long. On the way back one of the cars had a puncture in the rear tyre. We all enjoyed ourselves very much. Timothy Toner. Class1." (Timothy Toner went on to become a world class power lifter.)

In the same magazine there is an account of an Easter Parade: "When we went into the room, we made Easter Bonnets out of coloured paper. Then we had to walk round in them and Edward's and Ameenah's were the best. The guides gave a little puppet show of 'The Little White Bull'. Valerie was dressed up as puppet and sang a song Called 'You Need Hands'. After that we had supper; rolls, sausages-on-sticks, crisps, burny-biscuits, pineapple and cheese-on-sticks stuck in a grapefruit and cakes. We had orange juice and the grown ups had coffee to drink. We had a camp fire by candlelight and sang 'Rock my Soul', 'In a Cottage', 'Cumbayah', 'Camp Fires Burning'. Then we gave Angela her wedding present. Ameenah gave her a table cloth from the Brownies and Val gave her a pyrex dish and a cruet set from the guides. We hope she will be very happy. Kate Dowling. Class



2A.” In 1966 the children ventured further afield to Edinburgh: “22nd June 1966. After breakfast we went on a big coach, and we past a field and saw some sheep and Highland Cattle. We went through lots of villages. When we got to Edinburgh we saw 2 guards marching up and down outside the castle and we got out of the Bus, and some of us went inside the castle. We also saw Holyrood Castle and went down ‘THE ROYAL MILE’ and Princes Street. Then we went on, till we got to the Forth Bridge, and we went over it to Dunfermline. By Peter Hannratty.”

It is fitting that Mr McManus should make the final comment on the Brownie and Scout movement at the ‘Rest’, “My wife who ran the Brownie pack and my self who had the Scouts were full of admiration for all the children. Their cheerfulness and courage were astonishing. Many thanks are due to all the volunteer drivers, assistants and all involved in the running of the various sections at Greenbank. May I say that we gained as much as the children from our experiences over the years.”



Chapter 11

Educational Visits

Other activities included educational visits and trips to Southport Chester, Llangollen and Colomendy. Plates 15–16 show the children enjoying their outings. The ‘Minute Book’ refers to a weeks holiday in Llangollen in October for which the Committee would provide an extra £10 so that the children might have an “outing or treat”. In 1964, £20 was provided for this purpose. The 1962, 1963, and 1964 information booklets, produced for the children, contain details of the major natural and architectural features of Llangollen and Caernarvon, as well as general geographical and historical background. The field trips contained all the elements of a mainstream Environmental Studies project. Local buses and taxicabs provided the transport for many of the outings. In the ‘Greenbank Gazette’ 1965, a visit to Southport was described: “On Wednesday the 23rd June we left school at about 10.30 a.m. We arrived in Southport at about 12.00 p.m. then we all went into the Marquee for our dinner. After that we went, with the person who was in charge of us, to the fairground. The infants went to the Peter Pan Fair, while the Seniors and Juniors went to the Pleasure Land Fair. I went on the Cyclone, the Motor Speedway. The Ghost Train, the Swirls and the Walzers. Then I went on the Bingo twice. After that I went into the Café. I had a hot dog and some oranges. Paul Smith Class 1.”

With the aid of volunteer coach and car drivers and Liverpool cabbies trips to Southport became a regular feature of life at the school. The trip on 1st July 1971 was recorded in the ‘Weekly News’. It shows the pupils being sent on their way by the Lord Mayor, Charles Cowin, complete with mayoral coach. Celebrities included most of the Everton team and manager Harry Catterick and Liverpool entertainers Jimmy Tarbuck and Gerry Marsden. The paper commented, “The Annual outing has become one of the biggest social events on Merseyside. With over 150 drivers ranging from taxi drivers to housewives, dedicating one day in the year to ensure these unfortunate

children have the day of their lives every year.”

While the tone of the comment might be questionable today, it is apparent the trip were undertaken with the best of motives. Drivers from the Green Lane bus depot volunteered their services. In a news bulletin from the depot 1 November 1967 the response of one of the children to a day out at Chester Zoo is recorded: “Dear everybody thank you for taking us to Chester Zoo safely and back. We enjoyed the dinner very much. Three girls came and did a play for us on Monday. I think the monkeys were best. It’s a pity they don’t give Elephant rides, I think the marmots were nice too. Our teacher has lost her voice. Tommy 3A class.”

The children visited Colomendy from 8 – 15 September 1972. Miss Hall prepared a report on the holiday to the Governors. Anyone who has taken children to Colomendy will know that it is a demanding experience for staff and pupils. The staff took a party of 19 children with the following disabilities: 7 spina bifida, 5 spastic, 2 arthrogyphosis, 2 heart, 1 congenital hip, 1 hydrocephalus and 1 muscular dystrophy. Seven could not walk at all and most of the others could only walk short distances. The staff consisted of 2 teachers, 4 medical and child attendants, 1 occupational therapist and 1 caretaker.



A day trip to Southport (plate 15)



A day at Chester Zoo (plate 16)



The children used classrooms, the grounds, the museum and the swimming pool. The children were able to benefit from their association with pupils from mainstream schools in dormitories and from their involvement in social events. However, staff found difficulties with steps, bathroom and laundering facilities and the distance of staff accommodation from the children. The same year saw the purchase of a new mini bus.



Chapter 12

The End of an Era

In 1975 younger pupils were moved to Harold Magnay, so from this time the school admitted pupils over the age of 11. From 1979 there were discussions with the Education Committee regarding the continued need for the 'Children's Rest School of Recovery', owing to a decline in the child population in Liverpool and the North West, from which the school drew its pupils. Sadly the school closed on 17th. December 1980. The closure of the school marked the end of an era. Throughout its history there are elements of continuity and change. It is evident that the founding of the 'Home' and charity in 1897 was the response to an observed need and an example of the practical philanthropy for which the Rathbones are renowned. The school was committed to offering children the skills which at the time, were perceived necessary to enable the children to become self-reliant adults. It is evident that the school and the Trustees responded to changes in societies' attitudes and perceptions of the children's needs. Often it was seen to be in the forefront of education advance and conversely, it was criticised for failing to adapt sufficiently quickly to progress in social opinion. Whatever view is taken of the 'Rest School of Recovery', it is important that it and its administration are assessed within the framework of their time and not from our perspective in the twenty first century.



Chapter 13

'Greenbank' from 1982

The building fell into disrepair between 1980 and 1982. Gerry Kinsella expressed his shock at seeing the damage wrecked on the premises by a combination of vandals and the elements. There were pools of water, block floors had lifted, cast piping had burst, and the building was riddled with dry rot. Initially the charity 'Greenbank', established in 1983 rented the premises, for a peppercorn rent, from the Children's Rest School of Recovery'.

Greenbank's mission is: To enhance the opportunities and status of people with disabilities through education training, employment, transport and recreation. The vision, commitment and determination of all those involved has led to the establishment of 'Greenbank College' and 'Greenbank Sports Academy' on the site of the 'Children's Rest School of Recovery' and 'Westfield' respectively in Greenbank Lane today. The origins, implementation and development of these and other initiatives have been very eventful and often ground breaking. They are currently the subject of research to be published separately.

More information about Greenbank's services can be found at greenbank-project.org.uk. A brief overview of key events at Greenbank since 1983 are listed here



Chronology

1982 – A public meeting was held to discuss and prioritise the needs of disabled people

1982 – Gerry Kinsella ‘pushed’ from Lands End to John O’Groats to raise approximately £30,000 to repair the Greenbank College building using the skills and talents of volunteers

1982 – Greenbank took over ownership of the building

1983 – 2 February Greenbank registered as a legal entity – a charity to enhance the opportunities and status of disabled people

1983 – 17 September official opening of Greenbank building by Dr Rathbone

1984 – Development of Higher Skills initiative to offer vocational skills training

1985 – Opening of ‘consortium of cooperatives’ at Edwards Lane, Speke including a joinery and engineering workshop and catering service

1986 – Single storey extension at rear of Greenbank building to accommodate expansion in training

1987 – Development of transport service to tackle this barrier to learning and employment

1988 – Formation of Gable Housing in partnership with Habinteg to build 36 accessible houses and bungalows in Norris Green – later handed to Liverpool Housing Trust

1989 – Official opening of Smithdown Road Complex by Greenbank President BL Rathbone incorporating a vegetarian restaurant, charity shop and engineering works (later to become Chevron)

1989 – Big Push 2 Tandem Wheelchair Push (Gerry Kinsella and Vinny Ross (leaving from Liverpool Football Club – pictured above)

1991 – Establishment of Helping People into Business enterprise training course

1992 – Chevron expands to purpose built premises at Brunswick dock with an official opening by Michael Portillo

1993 – Opening of Graphic Solutions print and graphic design service at Smithdown Road complex

1996 – Establishment of Independent Living Unit to provide



personalised long term support for disabled students

1997 – Expansion of number of training places on offer at Greenbank via FEFC funding

1998 – Closure of Smithdown Road Complex

1998/9 – Final funding secured for the construction of the Greenbank Sports Academy.

1999 – 8 September official opening of the Greenbank Sports Academy by HRH Princess Anne

2000 – International Road Race on Wheels

2001 – £100,000 investment in IT equipment to support education at Greenbank College

2002 – Opening of Powersuite at Greenbank Sports Academy

2002/4 Greenbank College closed for refurbishment. Training services re-located to Greenbank House

2004 – Move back to refurbished Greenbank College. Official re-opening by Alison Lapper 9 November

2005 – Closure of Chevron

2006 – Development of Foundation Degree Inclusive Sports Development

2007 – Refurbishment of Greenbank Sports Academy



Conclusion

There is a strong element of continuity in the history of the building in Greenbank Lane referred to at different times as 'The Greenbank School', 'The Children's Rest School of Recovery', Ackerley House and 'Greenbank College. With the exception of the war years the building has always been associated with education. For the most part it has been associated with the education of disabled people. Its function has been to enable those with disabilities to achieve independence within the wider community, including earning a living and developing confidence through physical activities. This has been reflected in the links forged in the local community. From its earliest days in Greenbank Lane the 'Rest' took children on outings and hosted invited speakers for the children. The programmes of study changed over time in response to changes in society.

The building has undergone a Renaissance through the work of the charity 'Greenbank'. The refurbishment and re-opening of 'Greenbank College' on the site has brought the building into its second century and the second millennium.



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