

## Deaf School to 1907

(notes partly based on research by Dan Hershon)

The new head teacher was Mr Clyne from the Glasgow School in 1852. It is suggested that Mr Clyne was deaf himself. However, Mr Webster continued a critical correspondence through the newspapers, creating such a problem that the committee in 1855 resolved:

*"...in future, Mr. Webster be not allowed to enter the doors of the Institution upon any occasion whatever."*

and at the same time, the Secretary claimed of Mr Webster:

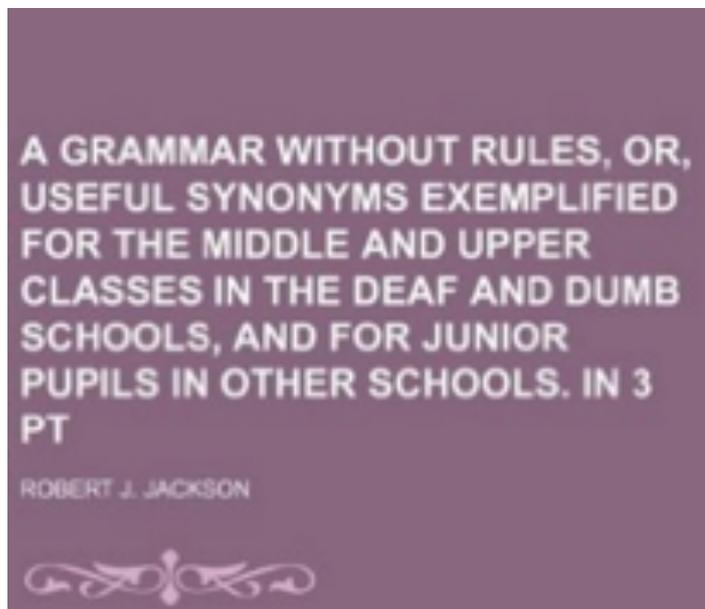
*"...he succeeded, notwithstanding his written stipulation to the contrary, and his positive disavowal of any such intention, in withdrawing the whole of the private pupils from the Institution, preventing applications for the admission of others coming to the knowledge of the Committee and securing them for his own private establishment."*

However, Mr Clyne also had problems when asked to continue to teach out of hours (as his contract allowed) because he wanted more money.

The school moved again in 1858 across the road to larger premises. Mr Clyne appears to have been successful in general terms in the education of pupils but only lasted until 1862. The School was not recruiting enough pupils and the Committee wanted to cut costs. They began to look for a different head teacher.

At the end of 1862, Mr Clyne was dismissed and Mr Jackson from the Birmingham school took over. He appears to have been successful and wrote a book of instruction for teachers and schools to use in 1868.

Mr Jackson suggested increasing the school day to 8 hours and brought in religious instruction and gymnastics. However, he was also told off for teaching in sign language, instead of just in fingerspelling which was the policy of the school at that time.





His major contribution however, was the design of the new school in Tyndall's Park. The picture was taken later after the school was closed but gives a better indication than previous drawings. It cost £4,500.

Mr Jackson decided to leave in 1873, before the school was ready and William Barnes Smith took over. The school opened in 1874; one of the teachers was Miss Yeoman who had been a Deaf pupil at the school. She left in 1876 to marry Sidney Smith, who was also a former pupil. The Smith family had a long association with the Deaf community in Bristol. Their son Charles Smith also attended the school.

Mr Barnes Smith brought in the Oral method in 1878 but the school continued to use signing with the children.

The school reached its jubilee year in 1891 (report extracts from the Bristol Mercury).

**THE DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION.**  
**JUBILEE CELEBRATION.**  
The Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Tyndall's park has attained the fiftieth year of its age, and in celebration of its jubilee there was a most interesting reunion of former pupils and friends at the Institution last evening. In the large gathering of silent guests many different ages and various walks in life were represented, but in every case there was nothing but credit to be reflected upon the Institution whose golden birthday they were celebrating. It would

In the evening about 150 persons (including 115 old pupils) sat down to tea, at the invitation of Mr Philip Vaughan, of Redland, the meal being served by Mr Hatton. After an excellent repast, an adjournment was made to another room, where preparations were made for the delivery of a few addresses. The Rev W. Hazeldine presided, and amongst those present were the Right Rev. Bishop Marsden, the Rev R. W. Southby, Messrs W. H. B. Kay (hon. sec.), A. E. Hudd, Edward Thomas (missionary to the deaf and dumb), Townsend (of the Edgbaston Institution), W. B. Smith (head master), and others. All the addresses were interpreted by Mr Townsend, who was eagerly followed and evidently fully understood by the afflicted but intelligent audience, and there was no lack of appreciation of any good point or acceptable sentiment, the applause being frequent and hearty. Prayer was briefly offered by Bishop Marsden, after

The Barnes Smith years were seen as successful with many pupils finding and keeping jobs. He acted as interpreter on occasions and was fully involved in the setting up of the Adult association in 1884. He continued with signing in the school but this was under pressure from the Education acts and the setting up of State schools in Bristol.

system taught by Mr Smith and his assistants is the French or manual system, which is capable of almost every conceivable mode of expression, and is readily apprehended and comprehended by the learners themselves.

Despite this, the school had appointed Mr Gill as an assistant and he was deaf himself. He stayed in the school for 20 years.

There was considerable disagreement between the school and the Inspector Mr Eicholz who appeared to criticize at every opportunity. There were also problems with the Education Authority. Because of the uncertainty and the existence of Kingsdown school which was Oral-only, parents began to withdraw children and the schools was not viable any longer.

By the early 1900s, the new State schools were paying salaries more than double what the Deaf school paid. When Mr Barnes Smith retired in 1907, the school closed down.

However, they did manage to have a big party to celebrate the retirement of Mr Barnes Smith (extract shown)

Mr EDWARD THOMAS rose to read an address accompanying a presentation of a handsome gold drawing room clock, with ornaments, to Mr and Mrs Smith. The following is a brief abstract of the address:—"In the name of a large number of pupils, parents, and friends, as well as those who have received their education elsewhere, we present to Mr and Mrs Smith a fourteen days' drawing room clock, with ornaments to match. By this gift we wish to express our esteem, and thus publicly to acknowledge our feelings towards them. In connection with the presentation we have received a large number of letters, some from former scholars and others from parents, which contain grateful references to the benefit received at this school, and especially to our old master and friend, Mr Smith. We feel sure that to no family in England are the deaf and dumb as a class more indebted than to the Smith family (applause). The work of the late Rev Samuel Smith amongst the deaf mutes of London is well known, and in his younger brother, Mr Wm. Barnes Smith, the deaf and dumb have a true friend" (applause).

Mr SIMS, a former pupil of the institution, made a statement in regard to the finances connected with the presentation, and remarked upon the readiness with which the proposal was taken up by all who were asked to subscribe.

Mr SMITH, who responded, said that all their thanks were by no means due to him, for much of the work of the institution was done by his assistants, Mr Gill and Mrs Sidney Smith.

Mr T. MCCARTHY and Mr S. SMITH (other old pupils) also addressed the meeting, and hearty votes of thanks were passed to Mr Vaughan for his hospitality and to Mr Townsend for acting as interpreter.

The remainder of the evening was occupied with the production by some of the old pupils of a specially adapted version of "L'Enfant Prodigue," which was received with the greatest pleasure.

The proceeds of the sale of the school, created the BDIDD charity, which later became the Bristol Trust for the Deaf and still exists.