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'His Whole Nature requires Development': Education, School Life and Deafness in Wales, 1850–1914

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Summary. The history of deaf education has focused heavily on one major issue: the role of sign language and the rise of oralism as a means of suppressing the use of signs. This was a crucial debate which affected the lives of deaf children, informed social and cultural attitudes towards deafness and in many cases spurred resistance from deaf communities. However, other aspects of daily school life and the curriculum of Victorian and Edwardian deaf schools have rarely been commented upon. Focusing on the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Wales' first deaf institution, this article will examine the teaching of writing and moral, religious and industrial education, all of which constructed an image of the intellectual and moral capabilities of the deaf child. The article will argue that deaf children were prescribed a moral and religious identity, and played an active role in wider Victorian and Edwardian discourses of education and childhood.

Keywords: deaf history, Wales, physical education, history of childhood, history of education

Historians of Victorian and Edwardian deaf education have understandably focused their studies on language and the battle over signs and speech. In deaf institutions throughout Britain and Europe, educators attempted to remove signs from the classroom and replace them with an oral system designed to fully integrate deaf children into a hearing society, at the expense of their language and culture. The most notorious of these decisions came at the Second International Congress of the Deaf in Milan of 1880 and its declaration of the 'incontestable superiority of speech over signs'.[1] The effects of the oralism debate have been extensively outlined, criticised and problematised, making them without doubt the most written-about aspect of deaf history.[2] In Wales, the pupils of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb—Wales' first institution for boarding and educating deaf children—took part in this debate, being prescribed a 'combined system'

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[1]Second International Congress on the Education of the Deaf (1880) cited in Harry G. Lang, 'Perspectives on the History of Deaf Education' in Mark Marschark and Patricia Elizabeth Spencer, eds, *Oxford Handbook of Deaf studies, Language and Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 15.

[2]See, for example, Jan Branson and Don Miller, *Damned for their Difference: The Cultural Construction of Deaf People as Disabled* (Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 2002); Paddy Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2003); Harlan Lane, *When the Mind Hears: A History of the Deaf* (New York: Random House, 1984); A. F. Dimmock, *Cruel Legacy: An Introduction to the Record of Deaf People in History* (Edinburgh: Scottish Workshop Publications, 1993); Jonathan Rée, *I See a Voice: A Philosophical History of Language, Deafness and the Senses* (London: Flamingo, 1999).

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of speech and sign, complex linguistic hierarchy which included signs but publicly dissuaded deaf children from using them if other forms of language were available.[3] However, the pupils were also caught up in other debates about how to educate the deaf child. The 1892 Annual Report of the Institution outlined this distinction, highlighting that language was 'not the same as education' for the deaf pupil:

> His whole nature in its physical, social, moral, intellectual and spiritual aspects requires development. In his case the sentiments themselves—even the common one of natural affliction—demand special cultivation as well as the intellect.[4]

This statement of intent connected the experience of school for deaf pupils not just to language but to broader concepts of emotion and ability, all informed by the supposed 'natural affliction' of their deafness. It highlights the need to examine the other types of training at deaf schools, and the types of qualities they deemed necessary to instil in pupils before leaving.

Using the minute books, principal's reports and letters of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, this article will highlight areas of deaf education that have been largely undocumented in historical scholarship. The structure of the curriculum, the use of moral and religious training, and the creation of a gendered learning environment all helped led to a specific construction of the deaf child. By focusing on everyday aspects of their school lives, deaf children's prescribed identities become clearer. The uneducated deaf child that came to the Institution was considered an imperfect 'foreigner' to language, religion and morality. Almost all of their training was informed by a conception of deaf children as imperfect, consistently reminded of how their 'affliction' obstructed the course of learning. Yet despite this, they participated in a curriculum and educational environment which did not hugely differ from that of contemporary mainstream schools for hearing children, but was centred around specific, medical and tragic conceptions of deafness. There is little historical record of children's responses to their own education, but glimpses of their reactions can be seen through the writings of their teachers and parents, and their behaviour in the short moments when they were away from the institution's social and moral rules.

School Life in Deaf History

Historians of disability, deafness and special education are beginning to recognise the importance of lived experience and the lives of individual children within institutions.[5]

[3]See Mike Mantin, 'The Question of Oralism and the Experiences of Deaf Children', in Anne Borsay and Pamela Dale, eds, *Disabled Children: Contested Caring, 1850–1979* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012).

[4]Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *Forty-Fifth Annual Report 1892* (Swansea, 1892), 7.

[5]It is important to recognise the contested relationship of deafness and disability. Mairian Scott-Hill (known previously as Mairian Corker) wrote about the tensions and overlaps between the conceptions of deafness and disability. Her conclusions recognise the overlaps in ideology but highlight deaf people who disagree with the connection, who 'may also feel excluded from the disability movement [as well as hearing society] because the movement is seen to reflect the world-view in the way in which it is socially organised around phonocentric language "norms".' Mairian Scott-Hill, 'Deafness/Disability: Problematising Notions of Identity, Culture and Structure', in Sheila Riddell and Nick Watson, eds, *Disability, Culture and Identity* (Harlow: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2003), 89. In addition, those who see themselves as culturally deaf are often referred to as Deaf with a capital 'D', whereas a lower-case 'd' refers to deaf people who were not involved in the community, did not use sign

This can be compared to the somewhat pessimistic attitudes of early historians of special education towards the children themselves. A study in 1953 entitled *The Deaf and their Problems* described the first examples of the 'Asylum system' of early British deaf institutions a 'dumping ground' for 'revolting little scraps of humanity'.[6] Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky write that a consequence of the recent historiographical shift to the activism of disabled people has led to studies which treat special education institutions as potential sites of culture, debate and community.[7] These questions can only be asked once children are positioned as historical agents living through and potentially responding to their education. As Felicity Armstrong argues, the absence of the 'voices and perspective of disabled people' can create a 'historical silence in the majority of historical work on special education.[8] Although much recent scholarship on the education of deaf children has recognised their roles as sites of both oppression and of the formation of deaf community and identity, there has been very little work on the actual everyday goings-on, beyond some studies of individual schools.[9]

This article will use the substantial archival material of one school, the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, to address this historiographical gap. In minute books, principal's reports, letters and public annual reports, the Institution left records of its timetables, syllabuses and educational policies which, although almost entirely written from the perspective of those in power at the Institution, help piece together how the children's time was spent in education. The Institution held enormous significance as the first deaf school in Wales. The Institution began in Aberystwyth in 1847, the result of public meetings and an initiative to educate deaf children in Wales. Its first Principal, Charles Rhind, operated the school from a house where he accommodated two day scholars at first, rising to thirteen by 1849.[10] Only three years later, the Institution moved, along with all its pupils and staff, to a house in Swansea. The Institution took over a

language or acquired deafness in later life. See J. Woodward, 'Implications for Sociolinguistics Research among the Deaf', *Sign Language Studies*, 1972, 1, 1–7 cited in Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, 33. This article has opted not to use these distinctions as the term and ideological concept was not fully realised in the period from 1847 to 1914 which is studied here.

[6]Kenneth W. Hodgson, *The Deaf and Their Problems: A Study in Special Education* (London: Watts & Co., 1953), 150.

[7]Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky, 'Disability History: From the Margins to the Mainstream', in Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky, eds, *The New Disability History: American Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 17.

[8]Felicity Armstrong, 'The Historical Development of Special Education: Humanitarian Rationality or "Wild Profusion of Entangled Events"?', *History of Education*, 2002, 31, 5, 437–56, 438. This methodological issue has also been translated to modern-day scholarly understandings of disabled children, as seen in Davis and Watson's argument that disabled children should be treated as social actors in order to illustrate 'the fluid nature of disabled children's lives within schools' and their responses and criticisms. J. M. Davis and N. Watson, 'Where Are the Children's Experiences? Analysing Social and Cultural Exclusion in "Special" and "Mainstream" Schools', *Disability & Society*, 2001, 16, 671–78, 672.

[9]For examples of these see: Anthony J. Boyce, *The History of the Yorkshire Residential School for the Deaf, 1829–1979* (Doncaster: Doncaster M.B.C. Museums and Arts Services, 1990); George Montgomery, *Silent Destiny: A Brief History of Donaldson's College and the Origins of Education of Deaf Children in Edinburgh, Scotland and the World* (Edinburgh: Scottish Workshop Publications, 1997); Patrick Beaver, *A Tower of Strength: Two Hundred Years of the Royal School for Deaf Children Margate* (Sussex, 1992); Cedric J. Moon, *A Tale of Three Deaf Schools in South Wales* (Middlesex: British Deaf History Society, 2010); Neil J. Alderman, *Joseph and Mary: A Case Study in Deaf Family History* (Middlesex: British Deaf History Society, 2011).

[10]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Second Annual Report of the Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Aberystwyth, for the year ending 30th June 1849* (Aberystwyth, 1849), 8.

house in Picton Place, Swansea, in 1850 and moved to its larger premises in 1857.[11] From there, the number of pupils expanded according to budget and building projects, reaching 40 in 1874–1875 and 83 by the 1914 term as a new wing was installed.[12] From the beginnings of the Institution, the organisation was conducted by an ever-present Principal and Matron and a Committee who met regularly, mostly separately from the Principal, to discuss domestic arrangements and matters relating to the Institution's finances and publicity. The everyday business of schooling was left to the principal and assistant teachers, and it is these everyday workings which form the basis of this article.

Educating the Deaf Child

From its beginnings, the Cambrian Institution presented itself as a school which accommodated deaf children from all backgrounds, including poor children who would otherwise have no means of education. Early Annual Reports described the Institution as a rescuer of 'poor deaf and dumb children in Wales'.[13] The Institution heavily utilised the Poor Law to pay for many pupils' clothes, travel and maintenance. Many parents could not pay the full school fees, and the school made a continuing effort to scrape together enough for many pupils to begin their education through dealings with local Boards of Guardians. After financially tumultuous early years, the school showed more of a willingness to bring in the Guardians to tie up various loose ends, and a number of pupils in particularly difficult circumstances were received as 'free pupils', though the Institution's financial circumstances limited who could be admitted for free. Some were only temporarily allowed free admission (one boy was admitted after a summer essentially on trial as a free pupil), whilst others took into account an agreement to contribute to the 'services of the house'.[14]

Many of the children's parents were employed as labourers—often in docks or in agriculture—or worked in the coal mines of Wales. Most occupations show that the majority of children came from working-class, industrial or agricultural backgrounds, but this was not homogenous. Pupils traceable from the 1881 census had parents who worked as bakers, carpenters and a 'Bankerman', whilst the 1891 census shows children from the families of a boiler maker and a printer.[15] In addition, the standard practice of accepting 'parlour pupils', educated and accommodated privately with the headmaster, was in place from 1849. This sparked a debate among the board leading to the conclusion in 1852

[11]H. Jones, 'An Outline of the Historical Development of the School for Deaf Children in Wales', *The Journal of the British Association of the Teachers of the Deaf*, 1985, 9, 9–10; Alderman, *Joseph and Mary*, 75.

[12]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Forty-Second Annual Report of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1889* (Swansea: J. Wright, 1889), 21; Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Sixty-Seventh Annual Report of the Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1914* (Swansea, 1914), 10.

[13]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Fourth Annual Report of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1851* (Swansea: W. Morris, 1851), 8.

[14]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb minutes, 7 August 1860; 1 September 1864, West Glamorgan Archive Service, Swansea (henceforth WGAS, E/Cam 1/2),

[15]These results were found by cross-referencing the addresses found in letters sent home to parents at Summer and Christmas vacations in the years around 1881, 1891 and 1901 with the corresponding year's census.

that 'no difference henceforth is to exist amongst the Pupils …'[16] Just one year later, realising the financial incentive, the decision was reversed entirely: 'The plan of taking parlour-boarders … has decidedly answered, having this two-fold use,—first, of benefitting the funds, and secondly, of raising the tone of the other pupils.'[17] Their presence was seemingly not just financial but moral—confirming the class assumptions inherent in the uneducated deaf child.

According to the Institution's timetables, six hours of the Cambrian Institution's timetable was devoted to general lessons.[18] Through these, the children of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb became actors in the oralism debate through their classes in sign and speech, but this was only one part of their educational experience. A consistent theme was the importance of writing, which was seen as the key method of disseminating information and building literacy. Charles Baker of the Yorkshire Institution for the Deaf and Dumb remarked during his visit that the Institution's current teaching was too muddled and dwelled on 'more in the minds of their respective Teachers than with actual reference to the acquirements and capabilities of the Pupils'. Baker's solution was an intensive course of language with writing placed at the forefront.[19]

This written course of English was linked strongly to the image of the deaf child as lost and uncivilised and without a language. The learning experience of the deaf child, wrote Baker in 1852, is 'like the foreigner acquiring a new language', though it is harder as 'the foreigner possesses a language of his own … without such a standard the deaf and dumb are under immense disadvantage'.[20] In this case, the image of the deaf child as a 'foreigner', freed by a programme of language, was carried from the classroom into the public sphere through the Annual Reports. The 1892 Annual Report stated that language, particularly written English, was the key to 'the opening of one door after another of the prison of his mind', the only way to prevent the deaf child from being 'a foreigner everywhere, even in his native land and among his own kindred'.[21] A programme of written learning was being developed over time, albeit one which needed to be justified by melodramatic conceptions of the deaf 'foreigner'.

What the pupils of the Cambrian Institution actually learned and wrote about would have varied, from child to child and over time. A list of school subjects appeared in the 1888 Annual Report which encompassed Language, Writing, Articulation and Lip-reading but also Arithmetic, Geography and General Information. Sacred History, Religion and Gymnastics were also included, which will be discussed later in the article. By 1906, a full syllabus had been drawn up which encompassed a much wider set of topics. There were now six classes according to ability. Class 1 was schooled in the 'elementary sounds' of articulation and lip-reading, and written language began with companions' and teachers' names and basic nouns. By class six, lip-reading was attempted to be taught 'in all

[16]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Fifth Annual Report of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1852* (Swansea, 1852), 9.

[17]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Sixth Annual Report of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1853* (Swansea, 1853), 8.

[18]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb minute book 1867–1887 (WGAS, E/Cam 1/3). This was an insert in the minute book.

[19]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb minutes, 15 January 1852.

[20]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb minutes, 15 January 1852.

[21]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *Forty-Fifth Annual Report 1892*, 6.

lessons', writing was based on news, stories and compositions, and facts in geography, nature study and English history were taught.[22]

This curriculum expansion ran parallel to other schools of the time, regardless of whether they were for deaf pupils. As Anne Digby explains, many early elementary schools were based heavily around the 3-Rs, the teaching methodology being the whole-class, simultaneous 'object lesson' in which teachers and their assistants observed the object in question.[23] Subjects such as grammar, geography and history became ingrained in the school curriculum only when the Education Department began to offer grants for examination-specific subjects (in 1867, for example, for grammar, geography and history), and many schools introduced these subjects only gradually after this.[24] Thus the Cambrian Institution, itself coming under increasing inspection as a result of the 1893 Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, indicates that special education followed an educational path set by elementary schools across the spectrum, at largely the same time. The special education institution should therefore be situated more firmly within wider educational developments.

Although the list of classes expanded, the sources vary as to the pupils' own experiences with this programme. While many children went through the programme with few issues, transcripts of pupils' progress reveal a long process in the case of those deemed to be 'slow' at their work. In 1898, a parent was sent a copy of their son's language progression over the previous six years. The pupil had started in February 1892 with writing his own name, and was learning adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions by 1898. Yet it was remarked the boy's progress had been 'very slow', and 'he does not get on very well with boys who are superior to him, as he is considered stupid'.[25] The struggles of the 'less gifted' pupils were not just acknowledged but elaborated upon in the Annual Reports. One pupil, who had repeated sentences from an advertisement in a piece of written work, was described as such: 'Needless to say, the poor boy understood nothing whatever of the advanced language he had borrowed, though that makes his diligence all the more commendable.'[26] Public opinion may well have been drawn to this appealing image of the hard-working deaf boy, but the story in the report reminds us that the course of copying and writing taught at the Cambrian Institution may have been completely unsuccessful in some cases. A number of factors contributed to pupils' struggles. These included large classes, financial restraints and, as constantly mentioned by the Principal and Committee, pupils being sent for instruction late in their lives. Parents who stated their expectations for their children's achievements were often told that the pupils' capacities for language and memory were now limited and they should have sent their children there when they were younger.[27]

[22]Principal's Letter Book 1906–9 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/6). This was included as an insert in the letter book.

[23]Anne Digby and Peter Sarby, *Children, School and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Macmillan Press, 1981), 36. See also Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870–1914* (London: Rivers Oram, 1996), 115.

[24]Digby and Sarby, *Children, School and Society*, 34.

[25]Letter from B. H. Payne to Joseph Hall, 12 August 1898, Principal's Letter Book 1897–1900 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/4).

[26]Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Sixty-Sixth Annual Report of the Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1913* (Swansea, 1913), 14.

[27] Letter from B. H. Payne to Mr Thomas Davies, 11 April 1878, Principal's Letter Book 1876–80 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/1) Letter from B. H. Payne to Margaret

Publicity material suggests the Cambrian Institution did not hide the tedium of the curriculum but acknowledged it as inevitable. The intellectual work at the Institution was 'educational, not creative', lamented the 1898 Report. The focus was on imparting the means of acquiring knowledge, which meant that 'little remains for imparting to him any store of knowledge itself'.[28] The appearance of this comment in a public report suggests an acceptance of pessimism regarding teaching knowledge to the deaf child. The fact that language was being taught at all seems to have been deemed impressive enough.

Industrial and Physical Training

The qualities of 'usefulness', industriousness and independence through work were displayed proudly as important aspects of education for deaf pupils, but their actual teaching in the Cambrian Institution was complex. In publicity and at Annual General Meetings (AGMs), the rhetoric of the Institution shared with many special education institutions the desire for deaf children to achieve as close to economic independence as possible and stop being a 'burden' to society. The 1889 AGM opened with a dramatic speech: 'Without [education] their lives are a blank, and they are a burden on their friends or on the community.'[29] Private communication to potential donors also advertised that the Institution placed the child 'intellectually and morally, in a position to earn their own livelihood'.[30] This narrative of the disabled 'burden' who is rendered able to find work and contribute to society is one familiar to all historians of Victorian and Edwardian disability and deafness: the doctrine of 'economic rationality' is argued by Anne Borsay to be a common feature, not just of special education, but of attitudes towards disability as a whole: disabled inmates of workhouses and recipients of medicine were all regularly treated by professionals with an eye on their ability to work.[31]

Yet despite playing to this rhetoric, in reality the pupils' experiences of industrial training at the Cambrian Institution did not simply involve being equipped for a designated trade and then sent off into a new life. The reasons for this were partly financial: the Institution regularly struggled to maintain its basic operations, particularly before the advent of state funding, so specialist industrial training would have been difficult to justify. The school decried its inability to afford an apprenticeship fund to aid pupils after their school life, thus lacking a feature of a number of other deaf institutions. For example, in the 1890s, the Yorkshire institution acquired a fund of £3,400 to support apprenticeships for its ex-pupils.[32] However, the lack of specific industrial training was not just economic but pedagogical. Thus, when a member of the Luton Board of Guardians wrote to the Principal in 1877 to ask if his pupil was learning a specific trade, he received

Jones, 20 September 1892, Principal's Letter Book 1889–93 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/2).

[28]Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Fifty-First Annual Report of the Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1898* (Swansea, 1898), 9.

[29]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 6.

[30]Letter from Joseph Hall to the executors of the late H. D. Griffiths, 12 May 1877, Principal's Letter Book 1876–80 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/1).

[31]Anne Borsay, *Disability and Social Policy in Britain since 1750: A History of Exclusion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 197. See also David M. Turner, '"Fraudulent" Disability in Historical Perspective', *History and Policy* (2012) <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-130.html>, accessed 8 July 2014.

[32]Boyce, *History of the Yorkshire Residential School*, 62.

a reply which stressed that, like nearly all other institutional deaf schools, the Cambrian Institution 'is professed only educational, and not specially industrial'. Mechanical training, he argued, was 'more properly the business of after-life', and would encroach on time set aside for 'moral and intellectual training' and their 'indispensable literary education'. Moreover, adding industrial training to the children's schedules would cause 'serious detriment to the health of our pupils'.[33]

Other deaf institutions had been undergoing the same debate: pupils at the Old Kent Road school in London had originally been taught trades directly, but this position was dropped presumably for a similar set of reasons.[34] The position was not explained by pessimism for deaf employment: 'trades could be taught as easily to deaf mutes as to hearing children', the Cambrian Institution's Committee decided in 1886, but the pupils' time at the Institution did not allow the space to do so.[35] Thus while the public face of the Cambrian Institution played up to the demand to equip deaf pupils for a world of work, the act of spending time preparing the child for a pre-defined vocational role was seen as impractical and undesirable; training in language took priority.

This attitude was somewhat at odds with the new rules set out in the 1893 Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, which made education compulsory for all blind and deaf children.[36] The 1889 Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb &c. of the United Kingdom had recommended 'technical instruction in industrial handicrafts' for deaf children as part of the curriculum, facilitated by the Education Department.[37] Industrial education was made compulsory, with institutions granted funds if they could provide industrial training, in a classroom and grounded in theory, for four hours a week. Immediately, the Institution worried about having 'the teaching of trades ⋯ put upon us': the current classes of drawing, wood and modelling (for boys) and needlework and cooking (for girls) were deemed enough.[38] This struggle continued, the Institution unable to receive the necessary grants for instruction because it was unwilling to provide 'four hours a week. ⋯ upon theory expressed in language above the comprehensive of the average deaf and dumb pupil'.[39] Eventually, the school received several grants from the Education Department. By 1897 this comprised a 12-month grant for Industrial Training for girls over 14 and a six-month grant for Manual Instruction for girls under 14 and all boys.[40] Yet even in public, the Institution was attacking the designated four hours a week necessary for the Education Department's grant.[41]

[33]Letter from Payne to Mr Erskine Austin, 13 February 1877, Principal's Letter Book 1876–80 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/1).

[34]M. G. McLoughlin, *A History of the Education of the Deaf in England* (Liverpool: G.M. McLoughlin, 1987), 7.

[35]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb minutes, 1 November 1886 (WGAS, E/Cam 1/3).

[36]Blind and deaf children were to be educated up to the age of sixteen. This was to be in a day school or institution, but voluntary institutions had to comply with the Act's instructions and have regular visits by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools. Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act 1893.

[37]Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, &c., of the United Kingdom (1889), 620.

[38]Letter from Payne to Joseph Hall, 31 January 1893. This letter was discussing the proposed 1893 bill immediately after its release.

[39]Letter from Payne to Hall, 9 April 1895, Principal's Letter Book 1889–93 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/2).

[40]Letter from Payne to Hall, 16 February 1897, Principal's Letter Book 1897–1900 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/4).

[41]Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *Annual Report 1897*, 11

This is, of course, not to deny that the school saw it as a necessity to instil their interpretation of an industrious spirit into its deaf pupils. Often household chores were used to justify the lack of direct industrial training: subscribers were reminded that the 'cheerful faces of the pupils while at work show the pleasure they take in this employment of their leisure hours'.[42] The chores here replaced vocational training as the main vehicle for teaching pupils industriousness and how to be 'useful'. This work also corresponded to gender roles: as well as a shared duty to clean and dress their bed; male pupils were asked to do outdoor work and working the force-pump, whilst girls mended under-clothing and waited on officers.[43] The ideal of the independent deaf child, aware of his or her heavily gendered social and work duties, could be created in ways other than formalised industrial training. As the school's focus on industriousness and productivity increased, more of the children's own time would have been dedicated to these educational issues. Thus more classes in domestic work, kindergarten [pre-school], woodwork and drawing were added, and at times the pupils were taken outside of the Institution for their now-compulsory training: the local Manual School was used for classes from 1896.[44]

This debate highlights the complexity of the Victorian association of disability, deafness and work. Deaf pupils were very much part of the philanthropic and educational desire for self-help and economic independence, but the specificities of what this involved were subject to debate. The discussion took on different parameters in blind schools, many of which were more focused on teaching specific trades, and deciding whether to teach *only* industrial training, as opposed to reading and writing.[45] The Swansea Institution for the Blind, for example, was strongly dedicated to industrial training, its publicity material portraying education as a prerequisite to the need for being trained in a specific field of work.[46] The shifting debate and changes in legislation came, of course, amidst a more general climate of the separation of work and school and a reduction in child labour. In mainstream schools, the 1870 Education Act had begun to replace children's early obligations to work with educational provision, and the age restrictions for 'half time' divisions between work and school were being gradually raised, rising to the age of twelve by 1900. The need for improved industrial training to combat the 'Boy Labour Problem'—of lack of industriousness and vagrancy—was widely discussed.[47] In the Cambrian Institution, the deaf child took on a complex role defined by economic rationality and

[42]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Twelfth Annual Report of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1859* (Swansea, 1859).

[43]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Thirty-First Annual Report of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1888* (Swansea: The Cambrian Steam Printing Works, 1888), 16. The pupils' chores could occasionally be as tiring and inconvenient as the industrial training which they tried to avoid. In 1896 Principal Payne complained to the Honorary Secretary that the boys working the boilers and furnaces were coming back from their tasks dirty and it was interfering with their lessons: 'Their friends would be surprised to find all the work they have to do.' Letter from B. H. Payne to Joseph Hall, 24 February 1896, Principal's Letter Book 1895–7 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/3).

[44]Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *Annual Report 1897* (Swansea, 1897), 7.

[45]Mary Wilson Carpenter, *Health, Medicine and Society in Victorian England* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 130.

[46]Swansea & South Wales Institution for the Blind, *The Nineteenth Annual Report, for the year ending 31st December 1884* (Swansea, 1884), 3.

[47]See Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 220–9.

resistance to teaching pre-defined trades, but one that corresponded to national trends for state-funded non-disabled pupils and industrial schools.

The teaching of physical training, meanwhile, gradually gained an increased presence on the curriculum. These attitudes can be seen to correlate with a shifting educational discourse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries towards physical education, exercise and fresh air. Educational reformers advocated open-air schooling, in which pupils were taught outdoors. The system was designed to escape the city and provide an educational system close to nature. Contrasts were drawn between the crowded and smoky cities from which many of the children came, and the ideal environment of the open air. Schools sprang up quickly: in London, the Bostall Wood school at Plumstead opened in 1907 with pupils educated amidst 20 acres of wooded grounds.[48] Potts argues that these schools, designed in part for children with physical and mental disabilities, were a signal of the increasing influence of doctors and medicalisation in special schooling, the open air providing a means to cure children's 'defects'.[49]

Similar attitudes were developing at the Cambrian Institution. This was partly a consequence of increased pupil numbers and access to funds: the environment of the school became equipped for physical training with the introduction of a separate gymnasium in 1905.[50] Physical exercise had appeared on the curriculum before. In Annual Reports from the 1880s onwards, other arrangements were outlined, including programmes of exercise and attendance at other facilities such as the gymnasium of the Young Men's Christian Association of Swansea.[51] It is, of course, wholly possible that exercise was practised in the early days of the Institution too: before the gymnasium routine, 'drill' had appeared on the school timetable, and contemporary photographs show pupils taking part in whole-class drill exercises.[52] This type of military-style drill was a common feature particularly of boys' schooling from the 1870s.[53]

One year after the new gymnasium was built, exercise time was raised and physical education was described by the Principal as essential 'not only to the mental but also to the moral development of the pupils'.[54] Much like work, exercise was presented as essential to development in deaf children's character. This correspondence between the physical and psychological is noted by Roger Cooter as a defining, but understudied, feature of early-twentieth-century programmes for children's welfare, as ideals of gender and

[48]Frances Wilmot and Pauline Saul, *A Breath of Fresh Air: Birmingham's Open-Air Schools 1911–1970* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1998), 6; Carolyn Steedman, 'Bodies, Figures and Physiology: Margaret McMillan and the Late 19th Century Remaking of Working-Class Childhood', in Roger Cooter, ed., *In the Name of the Child: Health and Welfare, 1880–1940* (London: Routledge, 1992), 23.

[49]Patricia Potts, 'Medicine, Morals and Mental Deficiency: The Contribution of Doctors to the Development of Special Education in England', *Oxford Review of Education*, 1983, 9, 181–96.

[50]'Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb: Historical Retrospect' (The National Archives, Kew, ED 224/18), 1.

[51]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *Annual Report 1884*, 5; Letter from B. H. Payne to Mr Thomas Bowen, 8 May 1896, Principal's Letter Book 1895–7 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/3).

[52]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1893* (Swansea: J. Wright, 1893), 21; Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Sixty-Second Annual Report of the Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1909* (Swansea, 1909).

[53]Digby and Sarby, *Children, School and Society*, 35. See also Davin, *Growing Up Poor*, 124.

[54]Letter from B. H. Payne to unknown recipient, 5 September 1905, Principal's Letter Book 1903–6 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/5).

morality became ingrained in initiatives such as the open air schools and the School Medical Service.[55] The moral incentive of physical education was pointed out by contemporary educational reformers; James Kerr described open-air schooling as 'a most efficient engine for turning out good citizens'.[56] Thus the Cambrian Institution was part of a national discourse, linking conceptions of good character and social well-being with physical education and health.

At the Cambrian Institution, emphasis in this area was sometimes placed on the child's deafness, as breathing exercises and marching were seen as the most important aspect of physical education. 'Many of the Deaf are mouth-breathers', wrote Principal Payne to Honorary Secretary Joseph Hall in 1905. 'They also shuffle instead of lifting the foot, not being aware of the sound so caused as it reaches hearing people.'[57] A programme was formed which stressed the moral and social importance of physical education, whilst applying it to specific attitudes towards deafness and disability. Whether the realities of the programme corresponded to what appeared in the material is uncertain, but for the pupils, this shift may well have been appreciated: it meant an increase in the variety of education, and was accompanied by changes to their dietary plans which added different food and extra meals—mealtimes had increased from three to four times a day between 1885 and 1913.[58] The physical programme on offer might be seen partly as a natural consequence of more resources and organisation, and partly a result of the gradual medicalisation of deaf children.

Religious Training

Religious feeling was thread throughout the operations of the Cambrian Institution. The Christian spirit of the philanthropists who contributed to the running of the Institution was expected to be matched by the pupil having religious knowledge and awareness by the end of his or her time at the Institution. For the pupils, religion pervaded their everyday lives and lessons. Neil Alderman's book on his grandparents' life at the Institution recalls that Principal Benjamin Payne's sign name was based on the bible he kept in his breast pocket.[59] Pupils read the Bible and scripture lessons were a feature of the curriculum. These lessons from children's scripture readings in the mornings were repeated on Saturdays, and again at the religious events on Sundays.[60] A Sunday service was held which was also visited by deaf adults in Swansea, and Sunday school was held afterwards.[61] Sunday schools of the period were the product of evangelical fervour for religious education and, in the nineteenth century before compulsory education, acted as a

[55]Roger Cooter, 'Introduction' in Cooter, ed., *In the Name of the Child*, 8.

[56]Potts, 'Medicine, Morals and Mental Deficiency', 187.

[57]Letter from Payne to Hall, 5 September 1905, Principal's Letter Book 1903–6 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/5)..

[58]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb Minute Book 1867–87 (WGAS, E/Cam 1/3), 'Sketch of the Organisation of the Cambrian Institution of the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, 22nd August 1885; Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *Annual Report 1913*.

[59]Alderman, *Joseph and Mary*, 18.

[60]Letter from Payne to Reverend J. Cynddylan Jones, 14 March 1891, Principal's Letter Book 1889–93 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/2).

[61]Letter from Payne to Mr John Greenslade, 30 March 1899, Principal's Letter Book 1897–1900 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/4).

crucial outlet for those who might not have had any other access to education.[62] Tholfson argues for their importance not just as centres of religious education but of teaching values such as honesty, morality and obedience.[63] The Cambrian Institution shared this attitude, framing its other lessons around the central necessity for religious education.

Religious education was presented publicly, of course, as essential to all pupils' well-being. At an 1856 meeting of subscribers, Committee member Mr Moggridge announced that, if deaf children were not educated, the mind would either be 'thrown back on itself', with no communion with the outside world, or become 'incorrigibly wicked'.[64] The Principals probably did not subscribe to this hyperbole, but a sense of urgency was still visible. At the 1885 conference for head masters, Benjamin Payne presented a paper which argued for the centrality of religion to deaf education: 'If [the teacher] does not give it, what is the chance of its being efficiently given to the Deaf and Dumb at all?'[65] Yet his paper also presented arguments which revealed a deeper level of meaning than simply rescuing the 'savage'. His paper linked Christianity not just to the general need for education but to the linguistic specifications of his school: namely, the use of signs. 'Have [critics of manualism] traced the part of gesture in sacred history? ⋯ Gesture was employed in prayer and praise as long as the Jews were a nation.'[66]

These differing perspectives are a reminder of the varying role of religion in the deaf curriculum. Its potential function as a form of social discipline should not be ignored. Indeed, the presence of religious instruction in wider Victorian education has been portrayed by some historians as a way to teach, as F.M.L. Thompson wrote, 'preservation of the social order, the protection of property, and the prevention of disturbance or insurrection'.[67] For deaf children, not only were these values instilled in religious training, but the uneducated and unreligious pupil could be reduced to sub-human without religion. Yet Payne's comments highlight the use of religion to defend sign language and deaf communities. This dual function is a point explored by Neil Pemberton, who argues for the use of Christianity as both a trope for melodramatic sympathy towards deaf subjects of charity and as a tool for deaf people themselves to argue for the importance of sign language. Deaf missionaries, he found, could present sign language as a holy and 'natural' language which allowed its users to escape the 'curse of Babel' and be close to nature.[68] Whether the pupils and allies of the Cambrian Institution subscribed to this particular religious interpretation of deafness is uncertain, but it is important to note how

[62]See Digby and Sarby, *Children, School and Society*, 17.

[63]Trygve R. Tholfson, 'Moral Education in the Victorian Sunday School', *History of Education Quarterly*, 1980, 20, 80.

[64]*The Cambrian*, 19 December 1856.

[65]B. H. Payne, 'Religious Privileges for the Deaf and Dumb', in *Proceedings of the Conference of Head Masters of Institutions and of Other Workers for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb, 1–3 July, 1885* (Margate, 1886), 87.

[66]*Ibid.*, 90.

[67]F. M. L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830–1900* (London: Fontana, 1985), 144. Gunn's argument of religion as a form of class division are also applicable here. See Simon Gunn, 'The Ministry, the Middle Class and the "Civilizing Mission" in Manchester, 1850–80', *Social History*, 1996, 21, 22–36.

[68]Neil Pemberton, 'Deafness and Holiness: Home Missions, Deaf Congregations, and Natural Language: 1860–1890', *Victorian Review*, 2009, 35, 65–82, 71.

aspects of Christianity could bring pupils together as well as subject them to images of deafness as suffering or ignorance.

The strength and type of religion practised, with regards to both denomination and fervour, could also differ amongst deaf institutions. Specific institutions for Jewish and Catholic deaf children existed and one of the reasons for the departure of the former Principal Alexander Melville from the Cambrian Institution in 1862 was his dissatisfaction with the supposed non-denominationalism of the Institution's teaching. Although it was primarily a political division amongst the Committee, the argument did encompass debate about educating the pupils. Melville thought the Unitarian aspect of the committee, as explained by the Bishop of Llandaff who waded into the discussion, '[prevented] him from duly instructing the children in the principles of the Christian faith', despite having a board that included Unitarians, Baptists and Church of England members.[69] This general non-denominationalism is one area which set apart the Cambrian Institution from state education: its staff and board desperately tried to avoid the kind of tension between religious denominations that was encompassing British schooling, and epitomised by the Cowper-Temple Clause of the 1870 Act. Its focus on a more generalised morality for the deaf child was much stronger than any denominational belonging.

Morality, Discipline and Resistance

An important part of the religious training offered at the Institution was the great significance its curriculum placed on the development of morality and good character. The Cambrian Institution was similar to many contemporary hearing schools in its association of religious instruction with 'moral training'.[70] Yet the latter should be explored further: the model deaf pupil whom the school was constructing was somewhat at odds with the images of pity, innocence and affliction which were used to encourage the public to donate. By 1914, a different type of 'character' was being advertised at the heart of education:

> Some regard education as the development of wage-earning capacity; some, as instruction in the duties of citizenship; some, as the teaching of a particular means of communication. Not a few educated persons are ready to do lip-homage to the description of education as 'the formation of character', but the very few are prepared to give practical effect to that accepted definition.[71]

'Character', therefore, was by now the most important aspect of deaf education, and could be constructed as a secular quality as well as being overtly religious. The goal was for the Cambrian Institution to produce a morally aware deaf child. The religious and industrial training detailed above were essential components of this teaching, but the entire personality and behaviour of the deaf child was seen as in need of shaping. The need

[69] *The Cambrian*, 27 March 1863. This is explored further in Mantin.

[70] Gordon and Lawton trace the interrelation of 'moral training' and religious education in the Victorian schoolroom, noting that the 'moral education campaign' spearheaded by figures such as F. J. Gould and the Moral Instruction League attempted to separate religious from moral education, though this movement did not see a significant amount of success. Peter Gordon and Denis Lawton, *Curriculum Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), 78–100.

[71] Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *Sixty-Seventh Annual Report*, 14.

to educate the lower ranks of society in moral principles was, of course, an important component in the discourses of charity and poverty largely dictated by the values of the middle classes, and given urgency with the widening of democracy.[72] The application of this to deaf children was complicated by the fact that they were presented as largely incapable of emotion, as blank slates for a specific moral code.

The practicalities were laid out in the 1892 Annual Report. This type of education would, it was hoped, lead to recognition of citizenship and patriotism, which could be expressed by emotional reaction: 'tokens of their sympathy and concern' could include, for example, a Royal bereavement. The piece also suggested that figures within the school were seen as essential to this emotional and moral development: 'It is observable how largely the humanizing influences of the lady teachers control the currents of the pupils' thoughts and lives.'[73] School, therefore, was presented not just as a centre of linguistic, industrial or religious training, but as a place to 'humanize' the child and teach a sense of emotion. This is part of a wider scenario recognised by Carolyn Steedman, who points out the link between the development of child psychology or physiology and wider social developments; reformers such as Margaret McMillan explored children's emotional and bodily development as a whole using new social interpretations of childhood.[74] As the examples from the Cambrian Institution suggest, this concept of emotion was informed heavily by social factors: the concept of citizen and nation (both British and Welsh), or the gendered qualities introduced by the female teachers.

As this suggests, the separation of boys and girls in the Institution corresponded to a moral code based heavily on domestic roles and gender exclusivity. Conservative values and male/female separation was, of course, a common feature of Victorian schooling.[75] The separation of boys and girls at the Cambrian Institution may have been motivated by complex attitudes towards the potential intermarriage of deaf children.[76] Indeed, the architecture of the Institution was specifically designed to keep boys and girls as distant as possible. The Committee in 1859 recommended a division in the accommodation entrances because it was 'highly improper that male and female pupils should have one common place of entry thereto'.[77] An order was placed in 1899 to put obscured glass into the boys' dining room back windows 'to prevent boys looking into girls' department and talking to the girls'.[78] The fact that this was happening at all suggests that male and female pupils were talking to each other and forming friendships. Furthermore, the actual impact of this separation should not be overstated. Some opportunities existed for male and female pupils to mix: the playground and outdoor exercise areas were accessible to

[72]See, for example, M. J. D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1786–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[73]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *Forty-Fifth Annual Report*, 7.

[74]Steedman, 'Bodies, Figures and Physiology', 19–44.

[75]See Thompson, *Rise of Respectable Society*, 149. As Davin points out, gender separation in school did receive some criticism such as that of Robert Louis Stevenson in 1881: 'the little raft between the sexes is extraordinarily widened by simply teaching one set of catchwords to the boys and another to the girls'. Davin, *Growing Up Poor*, 119.

[76]This is explored in relation to the Cambrian Institution in Mantin, 'The Question of Oralism'.

[77]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb minutes, 5 July 1859 (WGAS, E/Cam 1/2). This, too, was common in most schools. See Davin, *Growing Up Poor*, 19.

[78]Letter from B. H. Payne to Joseph Hall, 6 August 1899, Principal's Letter Book 1897–1900 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/4).

both boys and girls.[79] However, it is still important to place this carefully-regulated attitude towards male and female relationships within the everyday environment of the Cambrian Institution.

The pupils had a number of lessons and tuition based on manners and conduct. This became a more visible part of the curriculum over time. By 1894, a specific course in 'manners' and 'training' appeared on the course list in the Annual Reports.[80] The most notable way in which morality was actively enforced, however, was through the actual management of pupils, each of whom were screened for moral character and hygiene. The rules stated that children could be removed for 'contagious or infectious disease, or of gross misconduct, or of unfitness', and in many cases this was actively enforced.[81] It was a regular occurrence for a pupil to be removed for 'extremely filthy' personal habits which were felt to threaten the moral upbringing of the other children.[82] This may well have been a response to wider educational developments to this extent—Davin points out that hygiene and cleanliness were seen to be a 'humanizing influence', and after the 1870 Act, social commentators expressed the hope that hygiene and cleanliness were to be instilled in children for the good of the race.[83] It is notable that, in the Cambrian Institution, this complaint often went hand-in-hand with accusations that they were 'intellectually deficient'. A boy who fell under this category, for example, was recommended to be sent to an 'Asylum for Idiots' at once.[84] Although the Institution was indeed open to all deaf applicants, some cases of personal habits were deemed damaging to the specific moral environment being created. A hierarchy of disability was implied, with mental disability occupying a lower position than the 'affliction' of deafness.

The moral environment which the children experienced was one of discipline and regiment, again linked to the interpretation of the uneducated deaf child as unaware of the need for discipline and obedience. Corporal punishment was avoided, however. Discussing a misbehaving boy in 1895, Principal Payne wrote, 'Public opinion would not sanction the severe corporal punishment of a deaf and dumb lad, so my hands are in a measure tied no matter what the boy might do.'[85] An 1896 article in the religious deaf magazine *Ephphatha* may have painted the Cambrian Institution as 'a refreshing spirit of *bon camaraderie* apparent' between the staff and pupils, but this balance centred on strict obedience: '[Payne's] word is law in the school, and none can command more cheerful obedience.'[86] The focus on discipline at the Cambrian Institution was rooted in the contemporary desire for obedient, well-disciplined children. This was affected by the Institution's status as a voluntary-run school, with subscribers expecting results: if a pupil or ex-pupil was seen to be immoral or undisciplined, the staff worried it would reflect

[79]Letter from Payne to Hall, 28 May 1896, Principal's Letter Book 1895–7 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/3).

[80]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1894* (Swansea: J. Wright, 1894), 26.

[81]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Thirtieth Annual Report of the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1877* (Swansea: Herbert Jones, 1877).

[82]Principal's Report , 4 February 1863 (WGAS, E/Cam 2); Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb minutes 3 September 1873; 10 October 1873; 7 September 1870 (WGAS, E/Cam 1/3).

[83]Davin, *Growing Up Poor*, 141.

[84]Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb minutes, 3 September 1873 (WGAS, E/Cam 1/3).

[85]Letter from B. H. Payne to Mr Lewis, 29 May 1895, Principal's Letter Book 1895–7 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/3).

[86]*Ephphatha: A Monthly Magazine, Published in the Interests of the Deaf*, 1896, 1, 78.

badly on the training they received. When an article appeared in the *South West Daily News* which implied that a 24-year-old pupil had stayed in the school receiving money from the Board of Guardians, Principal Payne wrote to the school's Honorary Secretary expressing concern that 'the public might draw the inference that he was still in the position of a pupil here; that discipline was so lax that he was allowed to go about and do as he pleased.'[87] The anxieties say much about how public discourses of the deaf pupil dictated their moral education: this exchange suggests that, if pupils were not seen to learn the principles of discipline, obedience and work, the school feared being viewed as a failure.

This example equally demonstrates the school's uneasy relationship with older pupils. The minimum age for a pupil of the Institution dropped to seven in 1863 having begun higher; a boy of eight was rejected in 1853 for being too young.[88] This close regulation of age was a result of the uneducated deaf child being considered by many in deaf education as being close to an infant. An 1897 teaching manual by Richard Elliott of the Margate branch of the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb in London demonstrated this: 'The pupils for whose use [of manual sign] is intended are, as yet, in intellect, little more than infants, and as such require to be treated.'[89] Adult pupils were accepted but seen as potentially damaging to the younger pupils, who may well have looked up to them or been influenced by their behaviour. The parent or guardian of a 17-year-old pupil was warned of this delicate balance in an 1892 letter:

> You might please tell him that he is to be obedient to the teachers, and truthful, and he is take no notice of the servants or female pupils as long as he is a school boy. ⋯ He will soon be the eldest here and he must be perfectly straight-forward and proper in his behaviour.[90]

These strict guidelines demonstrate the importance placed on behaviour, conduct and, particularly, the relationship between male and female deaf pupils. Older pupils were seen as potentially initiating inter-gender relationships deemed unsuitable for the children. By 1908, a tense discussion about adult inmates had taken place between the Principal and Honorary Secretary, in which a full list of matters with older pupils was produced with 'morals' and 'discipline' given priority over the longstanding issues of where to accommodate and how to supervise them separately. An older boy telling the girls in the washhouse that an assistant who was 'a liar' had caused particular anxiety.[91]

When discussing adult pupils, much debate and controversy amongst Principals and Committees concerned where in the UK they came from. If an adult applied from Wales, he or she was given preference for education at the Institution over an application from England. A letter from the Midland Deaf and Dumb Institution in Derby enquiring about

[87]Letter from Payne to Joseph Hall, 11 March 1903, Principal's Letter Book 1903–6 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/5). This appears to have been a matter of confusion and miscommunication over finances: the pupil, who had left as a lodger in Christmas 1899, was being paid for maintenance by the Board of Guardians, of which the Principal claimed to be unaware.

[88]Cambrian Institution minutes, 3 November 1853 (WGAS, E/Cam 1/1).

[89]Richard Elliott, *A Course of Lessons in Elementary Language for the Deaf Together with a Course of Elementary Lessons in Arithmetic, following an Intuitive Method of Teaching* (London: Deaf and Dumb Children's Asylum, 1897).

[90]WGAS, E/Cam 5/2, Principal's Letter Book 1889–93, Letter from B. H. Payne to Mr D. Leyshon, 16 January 1892.

[91]Letter from Payne to Joseph Hall, 12 October 1908 Principal's Letter Book 1906–9 (WGAS E/Cam 5/6).

a prospective adult pupil from Peterborough promised that 'there is no deaf-mute [in Wales] "too old" for instruction', but the Peterborough case would be dismissed: 'We try to serve our own district'.[92] A number of isolated pupils came some significant distance, including one each from Scotland and Ireland. This might have been a result of local Boards of Guardians or School Boards sending pupils to the Institution, or parents choosing the Institution specifically. Alternatively, it could be the result of an agreement between the Cambrian Institution and another deaf school. Although the Institution expressed a sense of pride for taking in cases who would otherwise be rejected by other schools, they could be a source of resentment for the Cambrian Institution's Committee and Principal. The Principal wrote of English pupils in 1906: 'We have received over twenty, all of them adult, difficult, exceptional or pauper cases or with "combined infirmities". ⋯ We are referred to as a "dumping ground".'[93] By now, with the 1893 Act ensuring English deaf pupils were educated, the Principal hoped that the limited accommodation would be given exclusively to Welsh pupils (the Welsh language, though, stayed entirely absent).

Some of the pupils may well have subscribed to the Cambrian Institution's system of discipline, but it should not be assumed that all would have passively accepted it. Acts of resistance and response can be seen in the internal school records. It is important to point out from the outset that the misbehaviour which appears in the records might not be an accurate reflection of how frequently and severely pupils misbehaved, but this is an aspect of everyday life which is worth investigating and has largely been ignored by historians of special education. Everyday acts of misbehaviour present a challenge, as it is difficult to judge whether to interpret potentially minor acts of misbehaviour as a rejection of the school's principles. A number of historians working on children's experience have utilised this interpretation. Stephen Humphries, for example, presents a perspective on working-class educational life in which activities such as attacking teachers, school strikes and even 'larking about' are portrayed as an expression of class conflict.[94] Robert Adams has also examined the 'largely neglected' area of child protest, seeing it as an important constant in the history of education and a crucial site of children's agency.[95] In the case of deaf children, it is important to ask whether the acts of rebellion at the Cambrian Institution were a direct rejection of the education and interpretation of deafness prescribed to the child, or simply part of the experience of all schoolchildren, regardless of the type of their education. It is extremely difficult to attach the interpretation that misbehaviour represents a rejection of institutionalisation—as Davin points out, 'complaints of extreme insolence and insubordination are to be found in almost any logbook'.[96] The pupils' motivations are largely invisible in the sources, but resistance and dissatisfaction may well have been part of their motivation.

[92]Letter from Payne to W. R. Roe, 28 January 1890 Principal's Letter Book 1889–93 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/2,). Emphasis in original?

[93]Letter from Payne to Hall, 1 May 1906, Principal's Letter Book 1906–9, (WGAS, E/Cam 5/6)

[94]Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels?: An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth, 1889–1939* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), esp. 87, 112.

[95]Robert Adams, *Protests by Pupils: Empowerment, Schooling and the State* (London: Falmer, 1991).

[96]Davin, *Growing Up Poor*, 124.

Pupils of the Cambrian Institution could certainly misbehave. Acts of 'indecency and insubordination' were reported and sometimes dealt with using expulsion.[97] Other stories of rebellious children become visible in Minute Books and letters: mischief, fights and damage to property were all recorded. Sometimes details and potential causes were mentioned which might have been a result of the relationships with pupils and teachers or their everyday routine at school. An argument between pupils resulted in a girl pushing a pupil's head through a large glass panel, which was explained by the Principal as a product of her being 'awkward and [requiring] training'.[98] A pupil was expelled in 1908 for striking two staff members. The violent act was seen as potentially prone to copying by his peers, 'the Deaf being influenced, as, from the very nature of their infirmity, they must be taught and trained, by what they see—by example only.'[99] A few months after he had left, the pupil's father wanted him re-admitted after supposedly the boy had been 'running loose in the streets'. 'It is easy', wrote the Principal, 'to understand the father's desire to throw the boy back upon us at the expense of the moral injury to this school.'[100] The incident suggests that acts of violence and resistance could take place at the Institution for a variety of reasons, including the potential threat of their lives at home and negative influences from 'the streets'.

One act which may have sent a message of resistance and response was children running away. This might have been irregular but several instances were noted of pupils running away on the first day they entered the Cambrian Institution. Two boys who ran away together in 1889 were found, and the incident did not occur again because 'they understand that they must do what their teachers tell them to do whether they like it or not'.[101] Once again, resistance was discouraged as being against the moral code of the Institution, and the boys' behaviour was blamed on poor home discipline. Other cases of running away provide the historian with a rare glimpse of the reactions deaf children might have had to their school: not all accepted their new lives in the Institution. Upon arrival in 1899, a new boy who was admitted by a School Board Officer 'without notice, and without a friend with whom we could exchange information', ran away as the staff were listing his clothes, and was found later in the police station.[102] The sources hint at unease with a new life in the Institution, though it is questionable how far this was a comment on the Cambrian Institution in particular, as their exits on the first day may well have been because of a fear of new surroundings and the removal from their parents. Nevertheless, reactions such as this are difficult to detect considering the sources available, which almost all come from the perspective of those in charge of the Institution. Resistance may not have been widespread but as Colin Heywood writes, those instances that do appear need to be recorded: children, he argues, were not simply 'passive

[97]WGAS, E/Cam 1/2, Minute Book 1855–66, Minute book, 6 February 1861.

[98]Letter from Payne to Mr Gwilym Thomas, 19 September 1906, Principal's Letter Book 1903–6 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/5).

[99]Letter from Payne to Hall, 7 December 1908, Principal's Letter Book 1906–9 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/6). Emphasis in original?

[100]Letter from Payne to Hall, 6 May 1909, Principal's Letter Book 1906–9 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/6).

[101]Letter from B. H. Payne to the Reverend Tom Reeves, 18 July 1889, Principal's Letter Book 1889–93 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/2).

[102]Letter from Payne to Hall, 17 January 1899, Principal's Letter Book 1897–1900 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/4).

victims' of education: 'they had some capacity to select, manipulate, resist and above all escape with their friends'.[103]

The brief moments for which children were allowed outside the institution thus deserve attention. The holidays represented for many deaf pupils a chance for liberty, leisure and—often in spite of attempts to bring their education into the home—respite from schoolwork. Many pupils used their holidays to join friends and participate in social lives; letters show children playing in the street and visiting friends whom they had few chances to see other than in the holidays. For a number of children—particularly from poor backgrounds—this made their leisure time a source of continued regulation and anxiety from the school. With the children away from the school gates, the attention was focused on the streets. A number of worried reports emerged of children meeting undesirable associates and exploring the streets alone at night. Those found on the streets did indeed receive reports from the school framed by the issue of control. When looking to 'board out' a child, it was attempted to avoid him or her 'running off to his holiday associates in the streets'.[104] Their activities on the street, it was feared, would affect their overall character and behaviour in the school.

The attitudes shown by the school were emblematic of the street's place in the imagination of the Victorian and Edwardian reformer as the primary location for danger and morally problematic behaviour.[105] In the letters, children can be seen using the street as an outlet for recreation and the types of leisure which set off moral alarm bells. Most potent of these was the pub, where some older pupils were spotted. 'I am told that when at home he goes about among the public houses, and seldom returns home sober', reported Principal Alexander Molison on an 18-year-old pupil of five years in 1863.[106] The potential presence of alcohol was of particular alarm. Drunkenness and alcohol were both major facets of popular concern about working-class leisure hours. At the Cambrian Institution, this may well have been informed by particular debates relating to Wales; the Welsh Sunday Closing Act of 1881, for example, was a reaction to media reports of public drunkenness.[107] Even if their fears were exaggerated, the letters suggest that deaf children were taking part in street culture and causing worry amongst the staff. The staff of the Institution assumed a quasi-parental role for the children, replacing the absent parent by regulating their moral environment.

When discussing the pupils' home lives, the Institution's staff often showed suspicion and sometimes outright contempt for the pupils' parents. They were blamed for misbehaviour or immoral habits shown by the pupils on their entry or return to school. Dirtiness, lack of clothing and unsatisfactory hygiene could all be attributed to poor parenting. As the school's medical resources and facilities expanded, the message became stronger. In the 1911 Annual Report, the poor health of some pupils was blamed on

[103]Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), 171.

[104]Letter from Payne to Hall, Principal's Letter Book 1906–9, 28 May 1909 (WGAS, E/Cam 5/6).

[105]See Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class and the Male Youth Problem, 1880–1920* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 130–3.

[106]Principal's Reports 1860–76, 2 December 1863 (WGAS, E/Cam 2).

[107]Andy Croll and Martin Johnes, 'A Heart of Darkness? Leisure, Respectability and the Aesthetics of Vice in Victorian Wales', in Mike Huggins and J. A. Mangan, *Disreputable Pleasures: Less Virtuous Victorians at Play* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 155.

'perversity', a poor hospital system, and 'ignorance on the part of the parents'.[108] Other attacks on parents' upbringing were conveyed through further Annual Reports. The lack of home training and continuation of education was often raised. The Annual Report of 1900 complained that pupils were 'over-indulged and given too much of their own way'. The Principal continued that, 'Notwithstanding the attention which the country has during the last thirty years given to education, the training of the young remains a subject which is not properly understood, and it is therefore not surprising if it is not duly carried into practice into the homes of the deaf.'[109] This attitude was not exclusive to the Cambrian Institution. The Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb &c. of the United Kingdom of 1889 complained that the majority of deaf children had been 'entirely neglected and allowed to run wild' at home before entering Institutions.[110] The children's deafness was portrayed as making them especially vulnerable to moral corruption, but these attitudes could mirror more general contemporary fears of working-class laziness and immorality. The distrust of parents at the Cambrian Institution, then, seems to reflect the contemporary demonization of the working-class parent, who in the Institution's publicity material is pitted at odds with both the innocence of childhood and the helplessness of disability.

Conclusion

This article has presented snapshots of everyday life at the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, including everyday aspects of the running of deaf schools that have been almost entirely ignored in their histories thus far. The possibility of a comprehensive picture of educational experience is limited: its sources are limited almost entirely to staff and teachers' perspectives, and for pupils, it is largely only the unconventional reactions deemed recordable by the staff of the Institution which have been captured. Yet it is still possible, using the reports, minute books, letter books and educational plans, to see a glimpse of what life was like for the children of the Cambrian Institution and how this developed over time. Crucially, by doing this, the educational environment, the changing curriculum and the moral and religious principles underpinning the Institution can be recovered, and form a strict idealised image of the deaf child which is yet to be explored fully by historians.

All of these aspects of school life were connected to wider discourses of deafness, education and childhood. The programme of written learning was built around the notion of the uneducated deaf child as a 'foreigner' in need of total ethical and linguistic training. The interconnected development of religious and moral training was also informed by this concept, as these qualities were necessary to educate pupils seen as in particular need of Christian education and a standardised moral code. The Institution was based on religious interpretations of deafness from the outset, but religious teaching became more

[108]Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Sixty-Fourth Annual Report of the Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1911* (Swansea, 1911), 9.

[109]Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *The Fifty-Third Annual Report of the Royal Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Swansea, for the year ending 30th June, 1900* (Swansea, 1900), 10.

[110]Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, &c., of the United Kingdom (1899), 333.

ingrained in the curriculum according to resources and Principals' teaching styles. Elsewhere, a doctrine of self-help and independence was being formed, influenced by images of the deaf child as a 'burden' to friends and family. These interpretations all used narratives of deafness at their heart, but at the same time ran parallel to the development of identities of hearing children in mainstream schools.The Cambrian Institution's transition from 3-Rs to specific academic education followed the path of British state education, and both special education and the general education of pauper or 'ragged' children could be framed by concepts of ignorance, immorality and self-help, all further informed by class, gender and religion.[111] Yet it must not be assumed that deaf children passively accepted their moral readjustment: holidays, runaways and school misbehaviour all demonstrate a limited degree of resistance to their education. In using these everyday facets of educational life to ask questions about identity and attitude, the educational image of the deaf schoolchild becomes part of a national picture that stretched far beyond the walls of the deaf institution.

[111]See for example, Michael Sanderson, *Education, Economic Change and Society in England 1780–1870* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1983), 20; Borsay, *Disability and Social Policy*, 108.