

PICTOR HOUSE or STOCKDALES

These notes are extracted from a book by Dr Eric McPherson called "60 Years of Service the History of Stockdale's 1953-2013".

I was asked by the society what I knew of the history. Sadly, I knew very little, but I knew someone who worked there so I contacted her and within an hour she came round to my house and loaned me the book mentioned. Thank you, Mary Muldoon.

The first approach to form a group that was to support people who were termed "Spastics", people who suffer from Cerebral Palsy, was an article in the Stretford and Sale Guardian 30th January 1953, when a Mrs Doris Brown of 4 Melvin Ave Wythenshawe asked for an organisation to be formed in Sale with a view to assisting in the education and "a fuller way of Life" for those affected, her son was affected by Cerebral Palsy.

A number of people responded, and half a dozen people met in the Sale child welfare centre (Chapel Road?) and eventually after a number of meetings became part of the national spastics society in January 1954, and by February formed the Sale Branch.

The society had a dilemma very soon after, as Mrs Brown's husband had to move through work to Formby, so a replacement for her Chairman's position had to be found. Mrs Lil Stockdale was already a member and took the position.



In 1958 another member Mr Arthur Ashworth expressed a desire to move to a smaller property and sold Pictor House to the society at very reasonable terms.



In 1964 a Mr Richard Herne (Mr Pastry a children's entertainer) donated a hydrotherapy pool (he donated over fifty around the country). Then in 1968 it was visited with many TV and theatre stars including a Vera Lynn, later Dame Vera Lynn.



Pictor House was enlarged with the acquisition of the adjoining houses. Number 34 the adjoining property was the first, in April 1971, and was to be used as residential facility for children or parents. The other house numbers 30 and 32 were bought by compulsory purchase in 1975.

In 1970 an act had been passed changing the provision of education and this began to be felt from 1971. This act was largely the result of the hard work done by, Jack later Lord Ashley.

Later this resulted in Cheshire County Council accepting responsibility for the education and upkeep of the buildings. Various changes were made and not always agreeable to the resident committee. Then in 1973 a major blow, Lil Stockdale was forced to resign. The dedicated work that she had pursued enabling the society to start with no money in 1953, to the position they were now in was amazing, and a credit to her and her associates.

This vacancy was fortunately filled by her colleague and President William Sayle-Creer, who was willing to do it on a short - term basis. In honour of her work, the centre was opened 6th June 1975 by Baroness Masham of Iffon (The Countess of Swinton) and was called "The Lil Stockdale Centre".



The centre acquired a formidable reputation covering a vast area and multiple authorities. Then in 1974 the Local Government was reorganised and Sale became part of Trafford and lost all connection with Cheshire. This created a problem particularly for the maintenance of the buildings and other issues.

Then in 1980 Lil Stockdale died with what the President called "A spirited Fight" then in 1984 the now vice President William Sayle-Creer also died, after serving in various roles since the early 1950's. An amazing role covering thirty years.

This centre has brought together many people over the years, from TV stars and local celebrities such as Violet Carson and Pat Phoenix (Ena Sharples and Elsie Tanner in Coronation St) and people in need because of an affliction and local volunteers, and together they created something that we can be proud of.

This society moved on to other premises on Harboro Road and another on Hillcrest. They had to give up the building Pictor House where they had their first premises.

I have not elaborated on the detail since the acquisitions of these premises, as the book only goes to 2013 and the information is more official.

I had the photo of Dame Vera Lynn, taken from a lady's clippings book, that her Nieces donated to me some years ago, and the society did not have that information, so they were pleased with this news to them.

I wanted to provoke members of The Ashton & Sale History society to contribute to the history of this amazing organisation. Please if you have any photo's, memories or any contribution please share it.