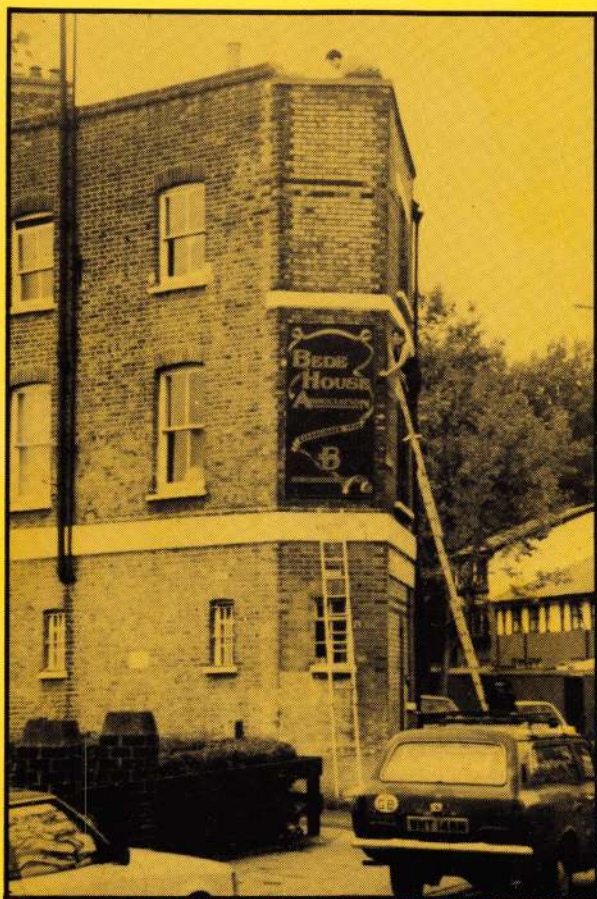


BEDE HOUSE ASSOCIATION



Fifty Years 1938 ~ 1988

THE HISTORY OF BEDE HOUSE
1938-88

By Susanna Watson

"Bermondsey thereupon acquires a dubious character in the minds of those who fly through it on the top of those innumerable brick arches, and who have not time to inquire into its more solid characteristics."

(Dickens. Household Words)

"It was a place of rows and rows of Victorian terraced houses, squashed into the area, dotted with factories making leather and leather goods, glue, jams, pickles, custard, biscuits, sweets, chocolates, with warehouses on the wharves by the River."

(Mary Hailey - resident)

FOREWORD

I am glad to have the opportunity of introducing this story of the first fifty years at Bede House in Bermondsey.

I myself first became involved in Bede House in 1948, when I was teaching down the road at Greenwich, and used to come to Bermondsey by tram along the Jamaica Road. I have been committed to it, in a whole variety of capacities, ever since.

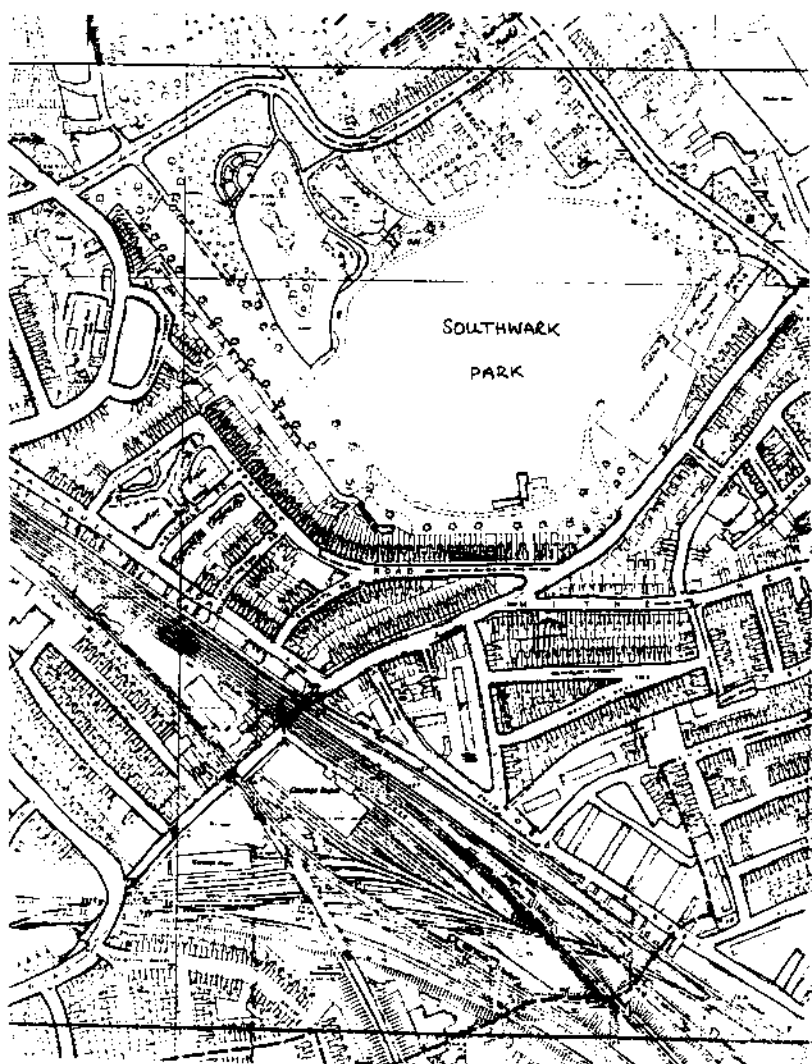
Now forty years on, I value its existence and its good neighbourly activities more than ever. There are three main reasons. First, its firm setting within the Christian inheritance which brought it to birth. The impetus is less overt than it was; it none the less remains crucial. Second, the adaptability that as a community it has always shown in radically changing circumstances. Third, the friendships that have formed between all sorts and conditions of individuals and groups as a consequence of its truly caring for people.

This booklet celebrates our first years, in a way which vividly exemplifies the characteristics I have tried to identify. That is why we all want warmly to thank those who have helped in its publication, particularly its author, Susanna Watson, who wrote it when she was recently working with us, and Clare College.

Now we look forward to the next half-century, confident in the knowledge that the foundations for further developments have been firmly yet sensitively laid.

THE HONOURABLE KENNETH LAMB

June 1988



Pre-War Bermondsey

The Princess Club and the Founding of Bede House

"To bring a refining, elevating influence into the dull lives of the factory girls of Bermondsey".

"Nellie Hooker was unquestionably our leader and source of strength...She needed no Women's Lib or Sex Discrimination Act to establish her position; she was just herself. She would not have been thought of as a holy person (indeed that would have set her into fits of laughter), but she was a woman of Christian conviction and prayer...She drew people round her by the force and gaiety of her personality. She flooded the minds of residents and helpers, who had already done a day's work in the City, with ideas, possibilities and opportunities, motivating them into growth and action. 'So many possibilities pass through my mind that I can hardly see straight about them', is a characteristic phrase from one of her letters."
(Herbert Steer)

Nellie Hooker, educated at Roedean, came to Bermondsey as a resident at the Time and Talents Settlement and in 1927 was appointed Warden of the Princess Marie Louise Settlement in Jamaica Road. The Princess Club, as it was known locally, was run under the aegis of the Church Army and was staunchly Establishment, founded in 1907 at a time when "slumming" was fashionable in high society, and when Nellie Hooker took over it consisted of two small clubs and a hostel for girls. Within the next seven years club membership rose to about a thousand including, unusually, a mixed club, and the settlement was as ecumenical as Nellie was able to make it:

"Well, we didn't talk about ecumenism then - it was interdenominationalism, which is an even worse word. And, of course, before the War, it was a terribly dirty word." (Courtenay Covell)

Activities in the clubs were the usual variety of dancing, football, boxing, sewing and weekend trips away and the settlement is

remembered affectionately by one ex-member as a "free and easy sort of place":

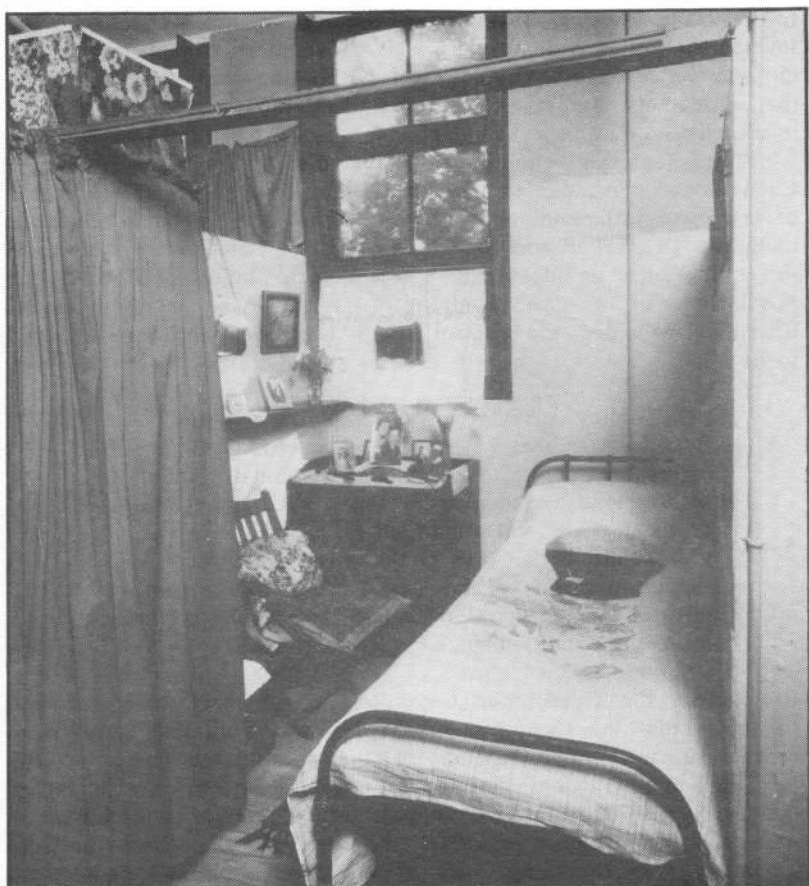
"The clubs all closed with short devotions in the Chapel below the hall, then the helpers adjourned to the main house for coffee - and talk. How we talked!" (Mary Hailey)



Princess Club Junior Drill Team c. 1890s.

Apart from the clubs, there was a mid-day canteen for factory girls, nursery and maternity clinics and a carpentry workshop run by unemployed carpenters. The hostel had accommodation for eighteen girls, some of whom were trained for domestic service by the "Club Ladies", a practice which is perhaps difficult to see as progressive - unless we view it as a precursor to the Youth Opportunities Programme:

"When you visited the Princess Settlement - it sounds very snobbish - but it didn't strike me as peculiar that you'd have afternoon tea in Nellie's office served by a parlour maid in a dark dress and apron and cap." (Courtenay Covell)



Cubicle at Princess Settlement c. 1930.

Nellie, although she came from a wealthy family, did not work as an independent lady of means, but insisted on a salaried post as the start of a concerted effort to bring 'professionalism' into the work of the Settlement. Her salary in fact paid for two other workers and the settlement soon became recognised as an effective training ground for social work students from London University. It was said that there was "a mission on every street" in Bermondsey and her next step was to join with some of the other settlements as the Bermondsey Christian Youth Council, which hoped to offer some sort of coordination between the various voluntary agencies.

In 1937 the Physical Training and Recreation Act was passed and for the first time voluntary as well as statutory organisations were eligible for Treasury Grants towards training and equipment. If the settlements and clubs in Bermondsey presented a united front it was likely that they would receive money for extensive facilities which no settlement could contemplate alone. The Christian Youth Council was persuaded to take the initiative in calling a conference of the more influential people involved in social work in the area, including Dr. Salter and Dr. Scott-Liddett. After much discussion the conference decided that a committee should look into the possibility of a new community centre run "under general Christian influence and control", with a residential house attached to it:

"The policy envisaged, very experimental and flexible, was that of peaceful penetration of the community centre. The residents, actually living in Bermondsey, would develop a real appreciation of local needs and would, therefore, share in the new centre better than could outside experts. As regular attenders at the centre, they would gain positions of personal influence that would provide leadership and guidance." (Herbert Steer)

But before the Conference Committee could meet, they received the news that the Executive of the Princess Club had resolved to close the settlement "owing to the dilapidated state of the buildings and an acute shortage of money". It was the height of the Depression and financial support was a real problem, but there was also a suspicion amongst the staff of the Club that the Executive was becoming wary of the democratic and ecumenical group over which they governed. The threat of closure gave a fresh slant to the deliberations of the Conference Committee and they began to consider the more immediate problem of salvaging the Princess Club and its thousand members and of keeping Nellie Hooker and her group of helpers in Bermondsey. Approaches made to the Princess were unsuccessful and they were firmly told that "it would be against the Princess' principles to be responsible for giving over the work to a committee who might allow it to be run on methods of which she disapproves", although, ironically, the premises were later sold to the Royal Arsenal Cooperative Society.

With the international crisis in 1938 and War imminent, it became increasingly important to find an alternative site for the clubs.

Funds were low and it was decided that the vision of a new community centre would have to wait for later realisation, and that in the mean time, it was imperative to find a much smaller base:

"And the thing that encouraged the group to go ahead was the fact that the old boys and girls of the clubs, whether they were in employment or not, ran dances and raffles and so on and, unbeknownst to us, suddenly came along one day and presented us with four hundred pounds - which was a terrific sum in those days - and told us to find somewhere local to live and not to think of leaving Bermondsey." (Courtenay Covell)



Princess Club members. Whitstable 1930.

But even with the encouragement of club members, the position was beginning to seem hopeless, until someone discovered a dilapidated bakery for sale on a corner of Southwark Park Road. First impressions were hardly enthusiastic - "it seemed impossibly small with the basement room, where the dough had been mixed when it was a bakery, covered in trails of dirty flour." But it was selling for only £400 and their resident architect, David Nye, could

do all the necessary repairs for another £1200. So on the 15th October, it was decided to proceed with the purchase and to ask Nellie Hooker and Princess Club residents to come and live there. Princess Marie Louise donated the equipment and furniture from the old settlement and, by February 1939, the life of the new community had begun. There are numerous theories about the exact reasons for the settlement's name: "Bede was forever trying to keep peace between the religious denominations".... "Bede and his abbot were the sole survivors of the Jarrow community after a visitation of the plague and he lived to rebuild the community"... "He studied and wrote books and also translated the Gospel of St. John into Anglo Saxon for the benefit of less educated folk".... "There were no Bedes in the phone book". But, in any or all respects, the Venerable Bede was felt to be a suitable and inspiring figurehead for a community which described itself as "a Fellowship of men and women who desire to understand the Christian Faith and live the Christian life and are actively engaged in some work of service for their fellow men." Six months later, war was declared.

The Origins of the Settlement Movement

"Not Money but Yourself".

The idea of a community or settlement within an urban area was by no means a new one. During the nineteenth century there was an ever-increasing awareness of the social problems of urban life, prompted both by fears of revolution and by humanitarian concern. Information about conditions in working class London reached public attention through 'social explorers' like Henry Mayhew and James Greenwood, and its impact culminated in the publication of "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London" in 1883. This anonymous essay, probably written by Andrew Mearns, was made the subject of a perfectly timed campaign in the Pall Mall Gazette and led to an extraordinary burst of correspondence and interest.

The need for reform was strongly felt within the Church and many clergy were aware that it did little to alleviate the suffering of the urban poor. It was also important politically for the Church as an institution to be seen to be taking a lead in the area of social reform. In the early nineteenth century the general but not



Bede House Prior to Renovation

unquestioned assumption was that the solution lay in the building of more churches. But by the middle of the century there was a growing feeling, encouraged by the philosophy of the Christian Socialists, that if the Church was going to enlist members of the working classes, it would have to shed its middle class image and adapt itself to meet their particular needs. More churches would solve nothing - a change of approach was needed. There was a revival of the parochial ideal, with its dual social and spiritual role: the Church of England, as the established church, belonged to the people and should serve the whole community, not just its own congregation.

This change of outlook by the Church of England was accompanied by a rash of other movements which attempted to make religion more accessible and attractive. Mission Halls were thought to be less alien and daunting than traditional churches, bands and uniforms were used by Salvation and Church Armies and the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Movement held informal, hour-long services whose motto was "Brief, Bright and Brotherly". There were constant worries that such movements would degenerate into pure amusement ("that word Pleasant savours of sensationalism") and that their supporters might compromise their religion too far in their efforts to coax people towards worship. But, excessive or not, they represented an attempt to embody the move in theological thought towards a more practical, sacramental approach to religion. As God was made man, it was argued, He can be made manifest in all aspects of human life, however mundane. The barriers between sacred and secular were broken down, as the Word became Flesh, and the soul reached and transformed through attention to physical needs.

"We must bring a message of good news to the body.
We must recognise its needs - its need of pure air
and healthy homes, and also its craving, especially
in the days of youth, for leisure and amusement and
even excitement." 1

The desire for social reform and the belief that this was the responsibility of the educated classes was strong in many of the country's public schools and universities, where practical action could also provide a means of escape from intellectual and religious doubt. In 1869 Edward Thring, headmaster of Uppingham, founded the first school mission. Anxious for reform, he also felt that it was important for the boys to know something of a very different way of life and saw the mission, at least partly, as a training ground for any work which they might undertake in the colonies when they left school. In the same year John Ruskin held a meeting in Oxford to discuss the possibility of forming a colony of Oxford men in London. Individuals like Edward Denison and Arnold Toynbee had already 'settled' in this way, but it was not until 1883 when Samuel Barnett, a clergyman from Whitechapel, addressed a congregation at St. John's College Oxford, that the University Settlement began to take a tangible form. The idea, embodied first in Toynbee Hall, was that a group of university men should live as a community in a deprived area of London to foster a sense of trust and understanding between the classes:

"A mission has for its aim conversion. A settlement has for its aim mutual acquaintance." 2

The founders of Toynbee Hall did not maintain that the class system should be destroyed, but that urban areas should be given a squirearchy which constituted a part of the 'natural' order. Residents of Toynbee Hall, it was hoped, would set a good example by the way they lived and also take active responsibility on local councils and school boards. In many ways Barnett's ideas were progressive. Although he was inspired by Christianity, his own faith was unorthodox and intellectual freedom was encouraged. 'Neighbourliness' was at the centre of his philosophy and he always emphasised that the educational side of a settlement was two-way; that the settlers were there to learn as well as to teach. Ultimately he dreamed of the expansion of the small, collegiate life of Toynbee Hall into a University of East London, which would transform the drudgery of the working life:

"A great democratic university, as popular and far reaching as the Medieval universities were." 3

He was not without his critics and as early as 1885 an article in the Spectator took a cynical view of academics who dreamed "that the inhabitants of East London...were to be regenerated by undergraduates and the sight of aesthetic furniture and Japanese fans."

But the movement continued to develop and, although the individual settlements differed in their approach to their work, in 1920 they joined in the Association of Residential Settlements which had sixty-one founder members. Not all of these had been started by colleges and many had a more conventional religious basis than Toynbee Hall. Even within a small area of Bermondsey there were several such institutions - Cambridge House, Time and Talents, Bermondsey Settlement, Docklands Settlement and Charterhouse - and with so many variations on the theme of 'a Settlement', some form of umbrella organisation was essential to discuss general aims and ideals.

The Second World War

"Doodles and Rockets".

"There were no ack-ack guns: the Germans had come up and set the Docks alight and they just used the Docks as a beacon. I've never been so terrified in all my life, because in the distance one would fall and explode and the next one nearer - would the next one be on us huddled in the basement Chapel shelter, or pass on to explode in the Park? Oh the relief when it was the Park! And the all-clear went and I went up and it was quite uncanny. The Docks were still blazing - you never saw such a firework display - and yet it was far enough away for us not hear any noise. But the light was so great that it had woken the birds up and there was this light and the peace of it all after the bombing. And, although it was only 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, the birds were singing. I shall never forget it." (Courtenay Covell)

The Second World War devastated Bermondsey and the original purpose of Bede House "of experimenting in building a Christian Community which would be able to take its part in shaping a better society" was swamped by the pressing need for emergency relief. Residents scattered, and in 1941 Nellie Hooker was forced to resign in order to look after her parents, but agreed to remain as Warden, though living outside the community. This left only four residents led by Stella Masterman, the Bursar, who had met Nellie at the Time and Talents Settlement and had come with her to the Princess Club. There were financial worries as well with so few residents and it was impossible to hold fund-raising events under war-time conditions.

However, if the War forced Bede House to change its plans, there was no shortage of work for it to do, with so many immediate problems to be tackled. War, perhaps more than anything else, will foster a sense of community in a neighbourhood and the crisis, ironically, provided an immensely effective launching pad for the new settlement. The Chapel in the basement was used as an air-raid shelter and the house became both a report centre with an active Boy Scout Messenger Service, and an official Citizens' Advice Bureau, answering enquiries about evacuees. Its



Medical Aid.

advantage as a small scale voluntary organization was the ease with which it could adapt itself to meet a new situation. When the LCC schools closed down, Nellie Hooker and the Warden of the Oxford and Bermondsey Club were instrumental in establishing Children's Occupational Centres in the area for returned evacuees. And, as the schools began to reopen on an hourly basis, they were able to replace these with Play Centres where children could go when not attending lessons. Much of the work was inevitably relief work, supplying food and clothing after official rest and feeding centres had been destroyed by bombing. The very day after the first air-raid, Bede took over the Southwark Park Working Men's Club and ran it as a feeding centre:

"No-one had the keys of the Council's food store, so out came our emergency supplies, which were basically flour and potatoes and that sort of thing,

and I was faced with this mob of three hundred men, women and children who had got no homes. And it was absolutely marvellous what the neighbours came up with - complete legs of lamb and all the rest of it. And we got the ovens going, stews were made and vegetables came in and we put on a fantastic dinner. And we were just about to sit down to it and the sirens went - it was an air-raid! And we all looked at each other and wondered what to do. But, fortunately, before it all got cold, it cleared up." (Courtenay Covell)

Even some of the work which was not connected specifically with the war had a very personal basis which now seems unconventional. There is, for example, the story of Miss Ploon Rissik and the baby, told by one of the residents at the time:

"A committed Quaker, she had adopted a little girl, who had begged her to buy her a baby brother or sister when she went shopping. Ploon didn't - but she did come back one day with a baby in her bicycle basket! She was visiting one of her blind folk, and found the old man and his wife with this baby crawling round them on the floor, sucking a piece of kipper. It had been dumped on them by a young granddaughter, whose current boy-friend did not want the child. Bede House managed to borrow a pram and other necessities and kept it for a few weeks until an adoption could be arranged. We never knew what Ploon would do next!" (Mary Hailey)

Despite calls for the immediate supply of food and clothing and the visits to the air-raid shelters with tea, films and games, attempts were made at the same time to develop the community at Bede House into the experimental social centre it was originally supposed to be. Before the War Miss Hooker had been anxious to alert the residents to the situation in Germany, making everyone read the 'Brown Book of Hitler Terror', and they were put in touch with refugees from Reich, some of whom came to live at Bede. At the height of the Blitz, a German called Dr. Glazer was acting Warden while his wife ran a children's day nursery, which allowed mothers to go to work in the munitions factories. Attempts were made to keep in touch with supporters by sending out letters and information and holding monthly meetings,



Lady Gomm Memorial Hospital: War damage.

although these were discontinued for most of the War. Regular discussion groups were held within the house, linked with the Christian Frontier Group, whose aim was the dissemination of Christian ideals in the industrial world. Whilst recognising the value of the work which they were doing, it seemed important, as far as it was possible, to discuss the function of Bede House and wider aspects of social work, so that they could emerge from the War as a body of opinion respected by the community and Local Authorities and able to adapt to the post-war regime:

"For small groups such as Bede House Association, it must be a year of deep thinking about the future. The coming of the Social Services will take away the necessity for much of the ambulance work that has occupied the Settlements in the past. The building of community centres and the new Educational plans should provide all the necessary facilities for the physical and mental development of the young folk.

Whether faith in God and the spirit of unselfish service will be maintained and the real opportunities provided for developing the highest form of leadership may depend on the contribution the voluntary bodies bring to the new order." 4

The challenge was a very real one. During the War the role of the settlement as relief centre was a relatively simple one whose value could never be questioned, but despite the efforts of the residents to prepare themselves, redevelopment of the area was to present a far more complex, if less obvious, set of problems than its destruction had done.

Post War Development

"To share in the rebuilding of the present drabness and ruin after the War".

With the top rooms uninhabitable and the ceilings down in the Scout Room and Chapel, Bede nevertheless escaped lightly from the Blitz and the Community could begin to look towards its future. In fact the direction in which they should go was soon abundantly clear. In 1941 the Lady Gomm Memorial Hospital had been bombed and the Kilburn Sisters, who were working there under the aegis of the Church Extension Association, had been forced to move out to Wimbledon. The building was gutted, but structurally quite sound and the trustees, Mr M.C. Carr-Gomm (who was a founder member of the Bede House Council) and Colonel Barstow, offered it to the Association for a peppercorn rent on a ninety-nine year lease and to be used as they thought best. The area had recently been surveyed by the Bermondsey Council of Social Service and found to be very short of recreational facilities, with fourteen youth clubs within a half mile radius of Bede destroyed by bombing and 75% of the schools in a similar state. So, at a meeting on 8th February 1946 it was decided to accept the offer of the hospital and the two adjacent houses for a nominal rent and to convert it into a youth centre. With authorisation to proceed given by the Ministry of Education and a gift of £2000, a Development Committee was formed to set about raising the money for the rebuilding of the Hospital and providing

staff. At the same time the Convent of the Sisters of St. Anne in Jamaica Road was bought in a badly damaged state and let out to the District Boy Scout Association whose Commissioner, Harry Wigzell, was the Chairman of the Bede Council. A few months later Bede House was officially registered as an Association under the Companies Act of 1929, with the word "Limited" omitted from the name.

Much of the money for Lady Gomm House came from the War Damages Commission and there was a large grant from the Lord-Mayor of London's A.R. Distress Fund. But the Council realised that with the expansion of Bede House, it was becoming increasingly important to extend and strengthen the group of individuals on whom it depended. A rallying leaflet, "Are you aching to live in Bermondsey?" was issued to encourage the residential side and in May 1951 they held the first meeting of ex-members of the Princess Club interested in the new venture. Overseas visitors were welcomed and Community was justifiably proud of its list of contacts from Haywards Heath to Tanganyika which made up the Fellowship of Bede House:

"An Indian Christian was with us for a while. Like most members of the Mar-Thomas Church (believed to have been founded by the Apostle Thomas), he was a Mr. Thomas. He and his wife arranged an Indian supper, with all the girls dressed in saris; we ate the food with our right hands, and made a sorry mess of it! But it was great fun!" (Mary Hailey)

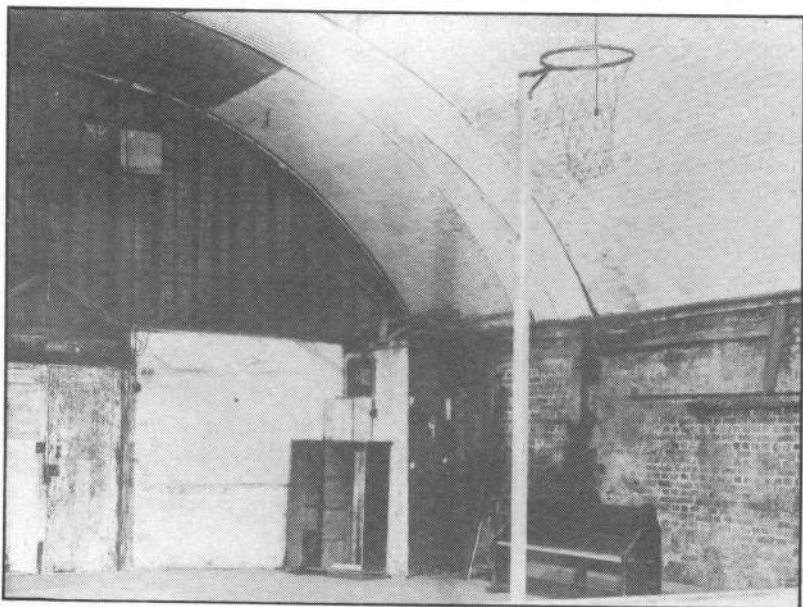
This support was valuable in practical ways but, more importantly, such an international fellowship was seen as a symbol of reconciliation in a war-torn world:

"Knowledge is understanding and without understanding we can never approach a condition which will make for permanent peace throughout the world." 5

The ideal is a high one and it is frequently difficult to reconcile the ambitious claims of Bede House at this time with the scale of the venture itself. To a certain extent they were aware of this and there was some doubt whether constant streams of visitors would contribute much towards international harmony; it was, one resident complained, more like an international transit camp than

a community. However the impression that it made on its visitors was considerable and the response of the South African minister who stayed there is representative of many:

"Bede House is like my home and I shall always miss it. My love and admiration for England and the English people will always be associated with Bede House." 6



Clare College Railway Arch.

It was argued that however small the venture, it was, like a monastery, still an incarnation of the ideals behind it, "a seed-bed in which thought and action would germinate".

Similarly the clubs were viewed as an outward and visible sign of the community's Christian foundation as well as being vital in a practical way to the well-being of local children. Whilst Lady Gomm was being rebuilt, Bede was given for a nominal rent the use of a railway arch owned by the Clare College Mission, which had been used for the Mission's clubs and for evening services during the war:

"It was a filthy place, impossible to clean, with the trains going overhead all the time. There was a big hall with a stage in front, two small rooms behind and a kitchen of sorts in the middle."
(Barbara Buntton)

A club leader was appointed, but there were frequent maintenance problems and it was only when Lady Gomm House was opened in November 1948 by the Lord Mayor of London that the club work could really develop. With a residential community and a youth centre near by, Bede was close to realising the dream of the Conference Committee in 1937. But Nellie Hooker, who had inspired the original plan was not able to see it through to completion. Three months before the official opening, she handed the Wardenship over to her successor, Noel Nye.

The Nyes had been associated with Bede House from the beginning and David, Noel's brother, was the honorary architect who had done so much work on 351 Southwark Park Road and Lady Gomm. Noel had helped at the Princess Club but since then had gone to work with displaced persons in the American zone of Germany. She was evidently very different from her predecessor, less obviously forceful, though with a deep-seated strength of character:

"She was a very intelligent person. The Nye's were cultured, their Christianity was across all barriers of Creed. They were men and women of God - you can't describe it in any other way."
(Courtenay Covell)

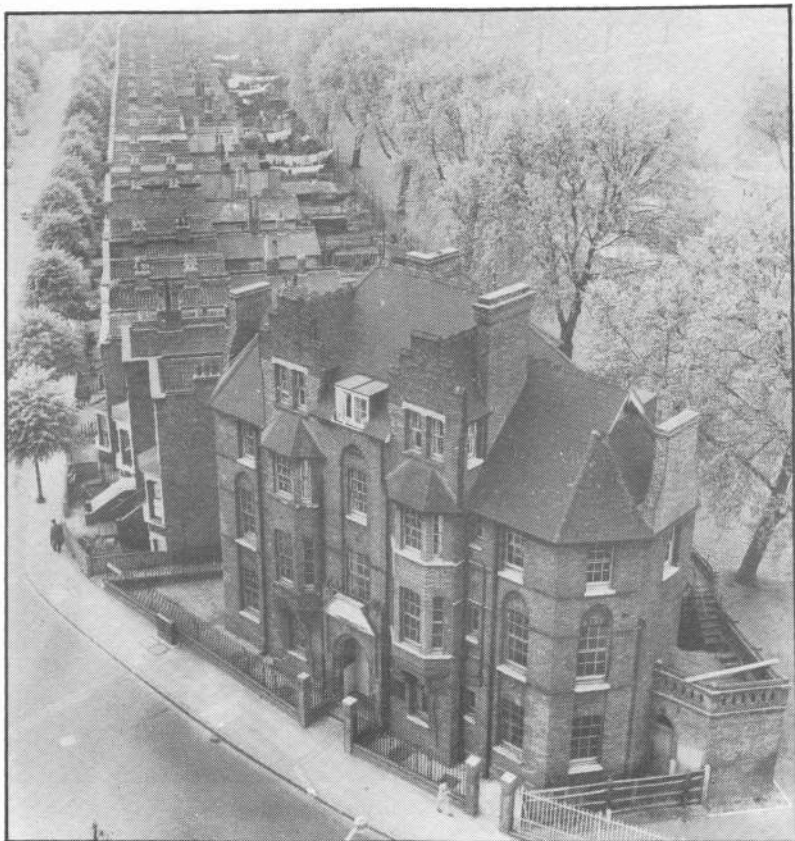
Her sense of fun is remembered by other residents, as well as the determination with which she undertook to make Bede House an active and useful part of Bermondsey. Before Lady Gomm opened she sent all the residents out to do a survey of the surrounding houses to find out what the local inhabitants thought would be needed in the way of clubs, acting on a policy more accepted now than it was then. Within a short time there were seven clubs meeting two or three times a week. During the day the LCC held Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics in the building and there was a Mothers' Club, a club for Veterans and, a little later, a Leisure Club for the physically disabled. In the evenings the various youth clubs took over and there were classes in anything from boxing to ballet.

The club which was regarded as all-important as an indication of the success of the Association was the Social Club for young adults. There was a general and growing concern about juvenile delinquency and clubs were envisaged as places where the "exuberance and energy of youth" could be channeled into peaceful pursuits. But ideas of self-development were also emerging and voluntary organisations reacted against the tendency of the Welfare State simply to provide material support, discouraging initiative and responsibility:

"We must realise that today the needs of the local community are less concrete, less tangible than in the first post-war years...The stimulus of immediate reconstruction and the common bonds formed in the shelter days have almost disappeared. This has left a vacuum and one of the most pressing needs as I see it today is to fill this void by giving to the community a fresh stimulus for self-development. Therefore, one of the chief purposes of the House in years to come will be to provide opportunities for creative activities. Here members may use their abilities to the fullest extent and follow their own initiative in getting things done for themselves by themselves." 7

The aims of developing local leadership and 'responsible citizenship' were central to the philosophy behind the clubs and the first experiments were made on the Social Club. Its members had to be over seventeen and it was managed by a self-appointed committee independent of Bede House. Half of the subscriptions were paid as rent for a room in Lady Gomm and donations were made to help with the running of the other clubs. By 1951, under the chairmanship of Joe Haines, the club numbered 76, at least two-thirds of whom had come up through the junior clubs. Responsibility was encouraged in these as well, with groups of children being put in charge of particular pieces of equipment. The 1951-52 report tells proudly how certain groups had raised money for equipment in their clubs rather than relying on the Association as they would have a few years earlier, and of the advent of the Club Magazine, "Challenge"; so there was at least some success. But the same report contains another article which has an all too familiar tone:

"It is easy to despair of their destructiveness, noisiness and anti-social behaviour.... Table tennis, darts, the radiogram blaring out



Lady Gomm House.

jitterbug rhythm, the pub, the dance hall and the cinema seem to be the only things that really matter to the majority of our young people. It is difficult to get members to accept office and responsibility." 8

One gratifying fact was that most of the volunteers were members of the Social Club, and residents and volunteers were indispensable; one volunteer remembers having the Play Centre with its sixty 4 - 10 year olds in her sole charge.

The clubs, within the inevitable cycle of successes and failures, ran



Senior Club - Lady Gomm House.

well, but traditions of self-examination and adaptability established in the early days of Bede House were maintained. Fundamental questions about the need for a settlement in Bermondsey were met with a resounding "Yes" almost before they had been asked, but more detailed questions about the role they should have were carefully considered. The desire on the one hand to act decisively within the community and, on the other, not to impose themselves was frequently discussed and is indeed an inescapable paradox inherent in the idea of a settlement. Settlers live as 'neighbours' on a par with the rest of the community, but will inevitably, as well-educated philanthropists, be anxious to take up positions of leadership and actively encourage social reform. Nellie Hooker appreciated the advantages of "being on the spot doing nothing":

"We have no new scheme, no rigid five-year plan to offer. We seek rather to be available." 9

And yet "doing nothing" was never really an option and "being available" was hardly a passive state when it involved the establishment of a whole series of youth clubs.

As in the War, Bede wanted, amoeba-like, to change its shape to answer the specific needs of the community, and in this it was again mirroring the characteristics of the Settlement Movement as a whole:

"Resting as it does on such a broad, purely human basis, it could not be tied down to any detailed programme. Crystallisation would have meant in this instance, more than any other, immediate death and a denial of its most characteristic ideals." 10



The Veterans' Club.

The Dockers' Club is a good example of this adaptability and seems to be remembered with particular affection by people involved at the time. It was run by the Surrey Docks Welfare Committee and began in 1952 when the Docks were beginning to close. Dockers were guaranteed a basic rate of pay provided that they clocked on once in the morning and once in the early afternoon. But as there were fewer jobs than there were Dockers, many were turned away and had nowhere to go before the afternoon shift. So, first a room and the canteen and then the whole premises of Lady Gomm were made available each morning. The club grew to have over



The Dockers' Club.

300 members and every year held a football match at "the Den" with the local police, the proceeds of which went to the Association funds. It continued at Lady Gomm until 1960 when it was moved to a new centre at the Docks.

Adaptability is important for a settlement but, to fulfil its role, many people felt that there should be, at least, a statement of general policy. As far as practical work was concerned, there was no lack of a sense of direction after the acquisition of Lady Gomm House, but their intentions were not actually laid down. From 1946 onwards, the Association held annual conferences to assess their progress and plan for the future. It was at the 1948 conference that the first policy statement was drawn up:

"The fellowship of Bede House aims through its life and social activity to show the spirit of Christ at work in the world, and seeks with those whom it meets in friendship, work and prayer, to enter into the full life of the Church of God."



*Elfinsward Conference 1948. Seated left to right:
Noel Nye, Harry Wigzell, Mrs. Carr-Gomm, Stella Masterman.*

1956 - 1970

"Leaven in the Lump".

In a sermon preached in 1963 at the service of thanksgiving to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of Bede House, the Bishop of Woolwich looked at the first twenty-five years as "the story of three remarkable women". In 1956 Noel Nye was forced to resign, suffering from cancer, and was replaced by Dorothy Furness, the third of the remarkable trio. She held a diploma in Social Sciences from Liverpool University and had worked for many years in personnel management:

"She was always very generous, even when she was misunderstood. That laugh of hers bubbled out of a tremendous human sympathy. She knew that the hard, censorious spirit is the very essence of sin - not just a social mistake." 11

Her background gave her a particular interest in local industries and she was keen to involve them as much as possible in the affairs of the Association, partly as a source of funds, but also to provide more general support within the community. Another link which she was at pains to foster was the one with Clare College, Cambridge, a connection which had been developing gradually over the previous decade.

Clare's involvement in the Bermondsey-Rotherhithe area had in fact begun over two centuries earlier in 1730, when the College had acquired the patronage of the parish of St. Mary's Church. So when in 1885 the college joined the ranks of those committed to the alleviation of suffering in London, it chose Bermondsey for the site of its mission:

"Mr. King [the first Missioner], having procured some lodgings in his part of Rotherhithe, began his work on a Sunday morning by going out into Southwark Park accompanied by some Clare medical students from Guy's, armed with a wooden chair; from which chair the Missioner preached to such audience as collected." 12

A year later the Church of the Epiphany was built in Abbeyfield road, from which the Missioner ran a variety of social and religious activities. But by the 1950's the College had begun to feel that a change of approach was needed in its association with Bermondsey. In 1959 they decided not to reappoint a missioner but to treat the whole area of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe as "the future sphere of influence of the College Mission" and, in the same year, Dorothy Furness was coopted on to the Clare-Bermondsey Committee. Undergraduate visits to the Mission were, in effect, frequently visits to Bede House and two Clare Men had become residents. The then Master, Sir Eric Ashby, asked a group of students to do a survey of the area to assess how Clare could most effectively use its funds. The conclusion, which cemented the Clare-Bede link, was that "the part that Clare can play must inevitably be modest and marginal...it should work through agencies already established." Both the College and the Settlement were anxious that the link should remain a personal one and attached great importance to the educational side of this mutual exchange. Conferences were organised in Bermondsey for undergraduates to discuss both local and national social issues. In return, Bede received some funding and another source of residential and voluntary help.

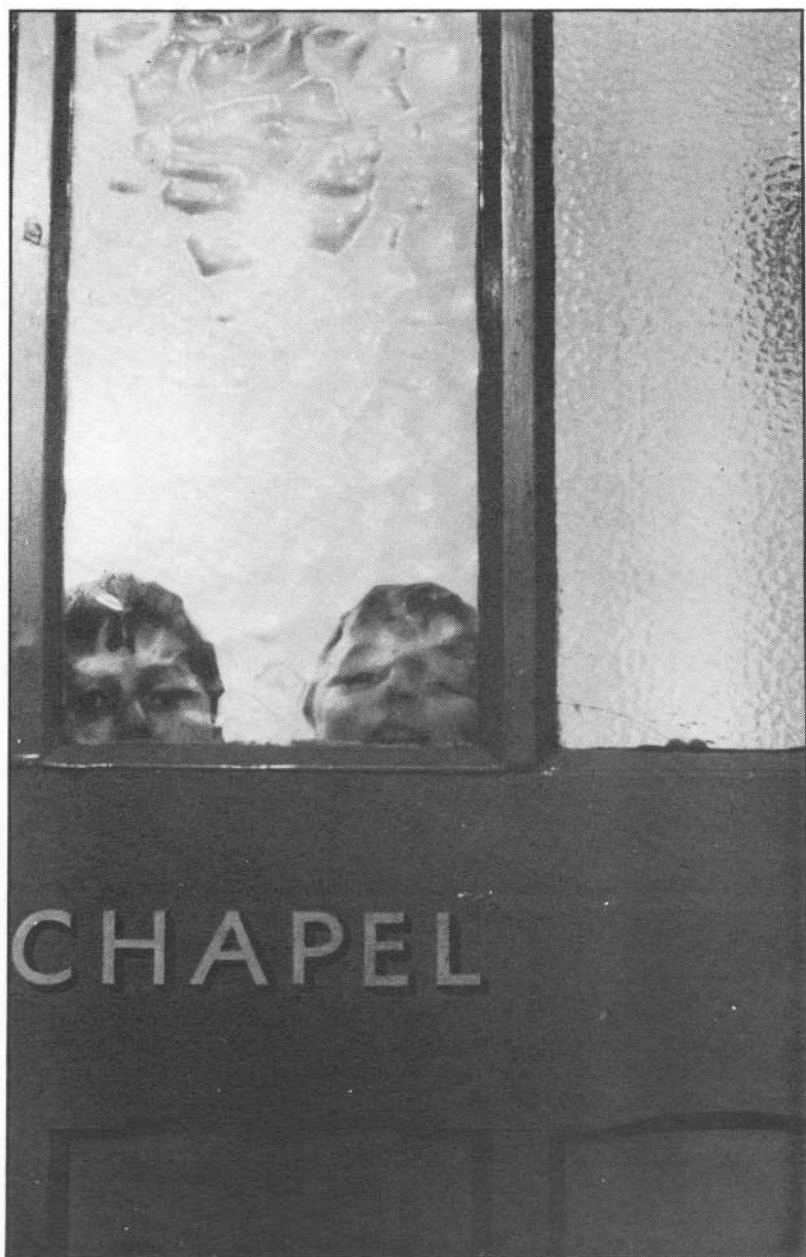
The predominant theme of Dorothy Furness' era at Bede House was the need for a new Youth Centre. Clubs continued to expand and in 1957 they had reached full capacity with a considerable waiting-list:

"The Youth Clubs in Lady Gomm House were the core of our work; crowded, noisy, impossible to supervise satisfactorily in many different rooms, even with a lot of helpers, but despite that, a place where friendships were made. On Sunday evenings, each of us took a brief service into which all present, including the rowdiest, were shepherded, whatever the reluctance. This was a responsibility rightly viewed with apprehension and only truly successfully conducted by Bob Mellish, our M.P., on his annual visit." (Roger Harrison)



The Clare Club.

The new housing in the area was increasing the difficulties, with the inevitable problems arising from the influx of 'outsiders' into a closely-knit community and the isolation and loneliness of people moved into the new blocks of flats. Ideas for a brand new building were mooted; it should be located near to the residential quarters and have two halls, a variety of activity rooms and a Chapel at its centre to seat at least 150 people. In 1962 negotiations began with the London County Council for a joint venture as a part of the proposed housing development in Abbeyfield Road. Three years earlier, Bede had officially been



recognised by the LCC as a Community Centre and received a grant towards the Warden's salary, but this new extensive collaboration would be the first of its kind and paid tribute to the Association's past efforts to cultivate good relations with the statutory authorities. The start of the building itself depended on the LCC and the Ministry of Education, who would between them pay 75% of the capital costs, which were eventually agreed at £30,000. So Bede began its second major appeal for funds, approaching local firms, charitable trusts and the staunch circle of Friends.

However, once again, the completion of the Centre was to be missed by the Warden who had initiated the project. There were many delays as the Association worked its way up the Ministry's list of priorities, and in January 1966 Dorothy Furness died. Two months later, as if to signal the end of an era, Stella Masterman also died, ending her fifty-year association with Bermondsey during which time she had worked at Time and Talents, the Princess Settlement and had supported three Wardens at Bede House as Bursar:

"We will always remember her smoking endless cigarettes, telling Committee members how badly off we were, doing the Times crossword and cycling over to Lady Gomm to pay the wages."
(Harry Skewes)

Kate Woodhouse was appointed acting Warden, to be given the post permanently the following year, and it was she therefore who oversaw the actual building of the new Centre which did not begin until May 1969 and took two years rather than the projected nine months to complete. It was officially opened in January 1971 and, by the end of that year, all the clubs had moved from Lady Gomm and the Centre was fully operational, with two youth clubs each evening and a variety of activities during the day. It was not as elaborate as Dorothy Furness' original conception with only two large rooms and four smaller ones, but it was built in the same style as the surrounding estate which was important as a symbol of Bede's integration with the larger community of Bermondsey.

The clubs were still at the centre of the Association's activities and in that respect the 60's saw a real consolidation and growth in its work. However, it was an era of change in attitudes to social work with an increasing emphasis on community development, and one in which accepted standards were much scrutinised. In the 1967 Annual Report it is asked "whether it is possible to ask our young

people to concur in aims which they do not fully understand or readily appreciate", and by 1969 the statement of the Aims, with its specifically Christian tones, had been moved from a prominent place on the inside front cover of the Report to a discreet corner on the back. The imposition of ideas and new standards, which was an inevitable part of the early settlements however much they argued to the contrary, was now viewed as patronising and unacceptable. The existence of a community by definition implies



The new Centre.

a degree of separation from the rest of the world, and if that community is united by a common philosophy, the sense of division will be even greater. The dangers of introspection were acknowledged early in Bede House's history, but by the 1960's it was felt that, like the new centre, the community itself should merge, as far as possible, into the life of the surrounding area. How it could do this without losing its distinctive religious nature was a question posed but not answered - "Above all, we need to rediscover our true Christian character." One partial solution was the appointment of a Pastoral Worker, Joanna Taylor, to work outside the confines of Bede House, befriending and supporting

people not reached by the more exclusive club work. The aim was anything but "aggressive evangelism" but, nonetheless, was intended to encourage "the more specific type of Christian work". The scope was enormous and with a detached worker it was possible to have the sort of flexibility which the settlements wanted within their communities, but could never achieve. Perhaps the project was too unstructured, but it met with considerable success with individual groups of people, particularly a group of boys who had been thrown out of all the clubs and who formed an ad hoc club meeting in the Pastoral Worker's flat.

There were many questions asked about the manifestation of Bede's Christian nature and its role in general in the later 60's. Questioning and redefinition were a traditional part of the settlement, but during these years there is a sense of a very real anxiety which cannot simply be overcome by a reaffirmation of aims and ideals. Waiting to move into the new Centre had been unsettling and the housing development around it added further to the changes in the area. 1967 was called "A year of search. A search for our own identity." It was clear that the settlement would have to change radically to meet social changes and the current theories of community development, but the actual nature of the change remained elusive.

The Modern Bede House

"A golden opportunity for reassessment".

For all its determination not to stagnate, the reviews, discussions and conferences, there had been very few major changes in Bede's activities and, on the whole, any questioning resulted not in change but in reaffirmation. But by the 1970's change was imperative and in the opening of Charles Woodd's first report, the worried questions of the late 60's are answered by a decisiveness bordering on the iconoclastic:

"Unlike most others, this Annual Report is concerned firstly with the future and only secondly with the past."

By this stage many people were beginning to think that the

Settlements' days were over and that it was impossible to bring them up to date unless their whole basis was changed. It was essential if they were to get funding for such institutions to maintain an entirely professional image, which demanded a definite, objective policy independent of the individual personalities who would carry it out; the future of Bede, and the Settlement Movement as a whole, was in opposition to its own roots. The new policy statement was long and detailed and seemed at once to go against the spontaneous, flexible ideal of "being on the spot doing nothing", which was at least in theory held in Nellie Hooker's time. But there was little that was radically different from the policies which had always governed the Association. It was worded so that whilst appearing decisive and 'professional', it was in fact sufficiently flexible to allow maximum room for manoeuvre and stated in contemporary language much that had been implicit all along:

"Bede House is an independent institution committed to the following aims:

- To work with and serve the people of Bermondsey in the caring way exemplified by Jesus Christ, so as to help them as individuals, groups or as a community to realise their own potential.
- To contribute to the process of social change
 - through encouraging mutual aid, self-help and the sharing of responsibility
 - through providing opportunities for greater communication between individuals, groups and organisations in Bermondsey and from the wider society
 - through playing an advocacy role where necessary."

The last point caused some consternation as it was felt that it could be contrary to the Association's non-political foundation and to the requirements of the Charity Commissioners. But with so much development going on in the immediate area and in the Docklands, it was important that they should back local feeling in any argument that arose.

Even if the new statement was in the nature of a reassessment rather than a revolution, there were considerable changes in the way it was put into practice. The one that faced the most opposition was the gradual demise of the residential element of the settlement. The cossetted existence of full board and lodging

was by now unfashionable amongst those emerging from university and it was becoming difficult to recruit suitable residents. The first experiment, which gave a very specific purpose to the close-knit, easy atmosphere of the community, was the Residential Project, whereby three of four individuals who particularly needed a stable environment were invited to live at the settlement. There had been a similar scheme earlier when a resident had been referred to Bede House by the Borstal Aftercare Association, but in the early 70's, after some experiment, a more formal relationship with the Social Services evolved. The residential community was reduced to seventeen, with tighter control on acceptance, and the houses made vacant were let to people who helped with Bede's work, but wanted more independence. The project had some success, but the community was not really able to cope with the demands made upon it and, a year later, it was discontinued.

With rising inflation it was soon obvious that the only way of ensuring that the residential side was economically viable was to make all the accommodation self-catering. At first there were regular communal meals at Bede House, but as more space became necessary for project workers and staff this was abandoned. In 1976 the management of the accommodation was taken into the hands of the Hyde and Southbank Housing Association and a few years later the houses became self-managed. The gradual dissolution of the close community existence, which had been the corner-stone of the Association, was viewed with considerable distress, especially amongst the older members. In 1963 Nellie Hooker had written to Stella Masterman, "it was the group or community that was and is important. The gospel story of the twelve men is, I know, unfashionable today, but I could have done nothing without you, Wigzell etc.etc." At the same sort of time a younger Warden, Dorothy Furness, was writing, "I am conscious that when the residential community is strong in its prayer life and service, then the spirit of dedication is mirrored in the atmosphere of the clubs." For many, the community, and more specifically the Christian community, was Bede House. Discussion about the future of the residents in the 60's had concluded that they were essential to the running of the clubs and to the process of 'infiltration' into the neighbourhood through everyday contact with local people. However, it was argued by supporters of the new scheme that the abandoning of the close community would actually make Bede more accessible to those outside. The building itself could be used by local people and the slightly more anonymous image of the settlement would lessen the danger of



The Annual Fair

appearing patronising. 'Infiltration' by young men and women in full-time work outside Bermondsey was necessarily limited and did not in any case depend on them living together. Most other settlements had replaced their residents with trained social workers and outside voluntary helpers and it seemed appropriate for Bede to follow suit.

There were certainly no signs of Bede House becoming any less involved in the locality and, if anything, the reverse was true. The emphasis from now on was on community development, "working with groups of people to help them achieve their communal goals". Organisations like Triple 'S' (Southwark Service Scheme), which tried to encourage untapped voluntary help in the Borough, had been associated with Bede for some years. But there was an increasing concentration on promoting and supporting self-help groups and work through Tenants' Associations, culminating in 1977 in the founding of the Rotherhithe Forum by Charles Woodd and Connie Hockley as a gathering place for local groups and individuals to discuss policies in community work. But still the most popular result of this cooperation between local groups was the Fair, which had been held every Summer since Noel Nye's era:

"There was a procession of carnival length through the streets from Lady Gomm to the school, followed by a formal opening by some celebrity. On the evening of the Fair day, the residents used to organise a dance which was held in the school premises. Apart from the income these events produced for the Settlement, they also brought together in a way hardly experienced at other times of year so many of the people involved with Bede House: staff, residents, club members and the people of Bermondsey." (Herbert Steer)

New ventures by the Association were also very much in keeping with the Wolfenden Report on voluntary organisations (1976-77) which suggested that they had a particular role as resource centres. In 1973 Bede met with a group from the Manor Methodist Church, the Social Services Department Area Team and local Tenants' Associations to discuss the possibility of establishing an Advice Centre. At the time the whole of SE16 boasted only one firm of solicitors and, apart from information in public libraries, local people had only their M.P.'s fortnightly surgery to go to for help and advice. In June a small office was opened next to the Manor Methodist Church with one legal session each week staffed by a group of five lawyers, and a second general session on Saturday mornings staffed by social workers. Gradually the Centre expanded; a stall at the market in "The Blue" was introduced and by 1976 they had acquired premises in the shopping centre and Urban Aid funding for a full-time worker. Two years later it was open daily with a second worker and three trainees funded by the Manpower Services Commission.

This was perhaps the first time that the settlement ideal of 'experiment' was really put into practice at Bede. Almost every year there was talk of a new plan and the life of the Association must have seemed unstable and frenetic compared with the more measured advances of the past. Some of the schemes were short-lived, either unsuccessful or superseded; the second hand shop on the ground floor, which made a little money and encouraged people to come into Bede, and the Scott Lidgett Alternative to School Project which worked with a group of Fourth Year boys unable to cope at school. A much more permanent educational venture was the Adult Literacy Project, begun in 1976 in the rooms made vacant by the departed residents. As with the Advice Centre, there was found to be a serious lack of local resources for adult literacy with the only existing provision at ILEA's Frobisher Institute in Peckham, and Cambridge House in

Camberwell. At first Bede's project was run by voluntary tutors, a high percentage of whom were local, but after two years the teaching was taken over, first by tutors from the Frobisher Institute and then by two part-time workers funded by the London Docklands Development Corporation.

Another successful idea which emerged originally from the Rotherhithe Forum, was the Print Place, a workshop producing leaflets and posters for local groups. Initially they were equipped for silk screen printing which they did both on the premises and at local youth clubs, but gradually more sophisticated machinery was acquired. Perhaps, however, it was the Adventure Project which, more than anything else, exemplified the ideals of the Association - that they should be working through local groups and acting as a resource centre. The idea behind the Project was to help to meet "the chronic deficiency of constructive opportunities for young people to find risk and adventure in the



Adventure Project: Canoeing.

overplanned concrete Bermondsey environment", and it sought to achieve this through a particular emphasis on outdoor activity. This was not an entirely new idea. There had been a number of very successful playschemes with the Manor Methodist Church and St. Mary's Rotherhithe during which, with the help of local volunteers and students from Clare College, groups of children had been taken camping in Sussex and Wales. Back in 1963 the Association had acquired a minibus and accepted that the role of the clubs was changing:



Adventure Project.

"There is a new access to a far wider world,
and to a security for which the older generation
sought in vain. Security has now become a
bore and adventure is wanted." 13

But the Adventure Project was to take this idea much further than
it had gone before and develop its own specific aims and
objectives:

Aims:

- To expand and broaden the experience of young people in
the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe area through adventure
related activities of all kinds, and in particular outdoor
pursuits
- To encourage self help by enabling local community groups
to broaden their scope of provision for young people

Objectives:

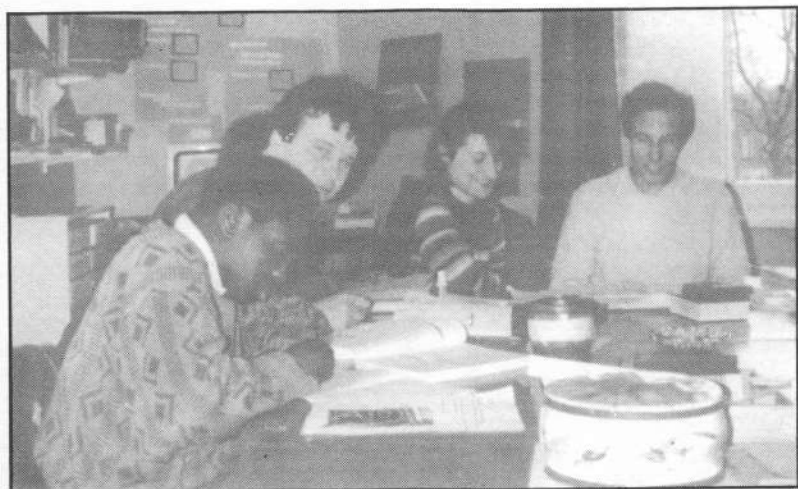
- To develop an information service
- To acquire a stock of equipment
- To organise a programme of adventure activities
- To establish contact with local groups

In 1978 one hundred children were involved in trips organised by the project, camping, pony trekking, hiking and canoeing and five other local clubs had used the equipment for their own expeditions. With the appointment a year later of a second full-time worker, it looked ready for further expansion.

The work of Bede House continued under Peter Polish, who was Director from 1980 to 1984, and these years saw a consolidation and expansion of projects begun in the 70's. The Literacy scheme, which in 1979 ran six classes in basic literacy, became the Education Centre, providing Maths and English teaching from Elementary to "O" Level. The Print Place, with the help of Urban Aid funding, grew from offering duplicating into a fully equipped off-set litho printing workshop, and there was a similar expansion of the Adventure Project. Trips ranged from a single day's canoeing to a climbing holiday in the Dolomites and in 1984 there was a total of fifty-four expeditions. Specialist activity groups developed - a cycle repair workshop, a climbing group and a canoeing group which eventually formed itself into the autonomous Bede Kayak Club. There were new departures as well. In 1982 Bede joined with Cable & Wireless, the London Borough of Southwark and the Manpower Services Commission in setting up Southwark Microtech as a Y.T.S training workshop in computers and electronics. Though beset by staffing problems, the project is now established with nearly a full capacity of forty trainees, many of whom have found employment in related fields.

1985 saw another change of Director with the appointment of Jenny Bentall Williams and although many of the projects run by the settlement within the last two years remain much the same, their aims are changing to meet new needs and new priorities in central and local government funding. With the present unemployment crisis there is an ever increasing emphasis on training schemes that will enable people to learn new skills relevant to today's employment market. For example, the Adventure Project has always been concerned with informal education, but now hopes to provide more formal training for young people to become instructors in the expanding field of outdoor leisure activities. Similarly the Print Place not only encourages users to participate and learn printing skills but is also taking on trainees who attend over a period of 6 months to a year, almost as apprentices, to learn the full range of printing skills in a work environment.

Other training opportunities have recently been set up: the creche



The Education Project.

is funded through the MSC Community Programme and offers training and work experience in child care. Currently being developed is an introductory training course in catering skills for people with learning difficulties based on work experience in a lunch time cafe. There are also ideas of bringing together users of the Education Centre with the Print Place facilities to form a local writing and publishing group as well as a retail outlet for books and educational videos. But these ideas are still on the drawing board.

But to run training programmes is not enough unless both the organisation and its services are firmly rooted in and involved with the local community. There has therefore been something of a return to the ideals of community development, and Bede has recently appointed two part-time Outreach Workers whose job is to establish links with members of the local community, help them to form self help groups and to put them in touch with our other services and projects. In the future it is hoped that more local people will be involved in determining how projects develop. Outreach work provides a crucial link between the training projects and services at Bede and the local community. The response to this in its first few months has been exciting and led to a variety of different groups meeting including an over 50s swimming group, photography, music and movement for mums



Creche

and toddlers, indoor bowls, a rambling club and a group for isolated young women.

Links with other communities are also important, such as the link between the new development area and the old estates of Bermondsey, and the link between the more affluent areas of the City and South East London and the Inner City. A flat has been made available to two volunteers, resurrecting something of the residential side of the settlement, and it is hoped that links with Clare College will be strengthened. With major changes in the way the Government is supporting the inner cities and the limitations of local authority spending, it is a challenging time for the Association to rethink its role in the community.

Settlements have always prided themselves on their adaptability, their sensitivity to change within the communities in which they work and their willingness to set up and close down projects according to demand. Bermondsey has changed out of all recognition over the last fifty years from the poverty and unemployment of the thirties, the bombs of the Second World War, the municipal housing estate development of the post war period leading into the high-rise, high density rebuilding of the sixties and seventies. Moreover, these decades saw the gradual closure of the Docks and corresponding decline in local employment and service. The redevelopment of the eighties by the London Docklands Development Corporation has been no less dramatic and has brought its own challenges. Many of the new garden estates are privately owned bringing a wealthier group of people into the area, which is at the same time becoming more multi-cultural. In the thirties the Association was working within a homogenous community, both socially and culturally - the other side of the Old Kent Road was 'foreign'. Fifty years later Bede House is adapting and developing its projects to meet the needs of a new and rapidly changing Bermondsey.

Footnotes

- 1 Sermon by first Trinity Missioner 1887. Quoted in College Missions and settlements in South London 1870-1920 Dickie p67
- 2 Samuel Barnett ibid p59
- 3 'Toynbee Record' quoted in Churches and Working Classes Inglis p63
- 4 Stella Masterman Annual Report 1943
- 5 Nellie Hooker Annual Report 1946
- 6 Annual Report 1956
- 7 Noel Nye Annual Report 1949-50
- 8 Noel Nye Annual Report 1951-52
- 9 Nellie Hooker Annual Report 1945-46
- 10 Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement Picht p2
- 11 The Revd. Leslie Timmins Annual Report 1965
- 12 Clare College Annual 1947
- 13 Annual Report 1960

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Stuart Beare: Undergraduate on 1961 report of Clare
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Barbara Bunton: Resident 1948-51 and 1955-58

Richard Carr-Gomm: Resident in Bermondsey and founder of
both Abbeyfield and Carr-Gomm
Societies.

Courtenay Covell: Belonged to the Princess Club. Was
appointed fund raiser in 1969 and has,
with the help of Evelyn Covell, done
subscriptions since 1960.

- Phyllis Cunningham:** For many years organised the Annual Fair at Bede.
- Mary Hailey:** Shared accommodation with Stella Masterman during the War and helped with Bede's work until joining the W.R.N.S. in 1941.
- Joe Haines:** Resident in Bermondsey. Ran the Social Club at Bede. Now a Director and Assistant Editor of Daily Mirror Newspapers Ltd.
- Roger Harrison:** Resident at Bede and former Chairman.
- Edmund Heward:** Former Liberal Councillor for Bermondsey and Rotherhithe. Until retirement from the Chair at Bede was Honorary Solicitor. Now one of the Association's patrons.
- Eva Holloway:** Resident 1940-1941
- Suzy Johnston:** Archivist at Clare College Cambridge.
- Hon. Kenneth Lamb:** Former Chairman and currently serves on Council.
- Kate Pritchett:** nee Woodhouse. Former Warden of Bede House.
- Rose Salter:** Resident of Bermondsey. Member of the Princess Club and volunteer at Bede for many years.
- Harry Skewes:** Resident 1949-1964
- Tina Stanley:** Resident, and now Chair of the Executive Committee.
- Herbert Steer:** Vicar of St. Augustin's Church, Honorary Chaplain of the Princess Club and active in establishment of Bede. Much of the early part of this history is based on the Rev. Steers' own history, "How Bede House came into being."

Andrew Sutton: Current Chairman of Bede House.

Jenny Bentall Williams: Current Director of Bede House.

Charles and Joanna Woodd: Former Director and Pastoral Worker respectively.

I would also like to thank the staff at the Southwark Local Studies Library and, finally, the Master and Executive Committee of Clare College Cambridge, who have helped considerably in the financing of this project.

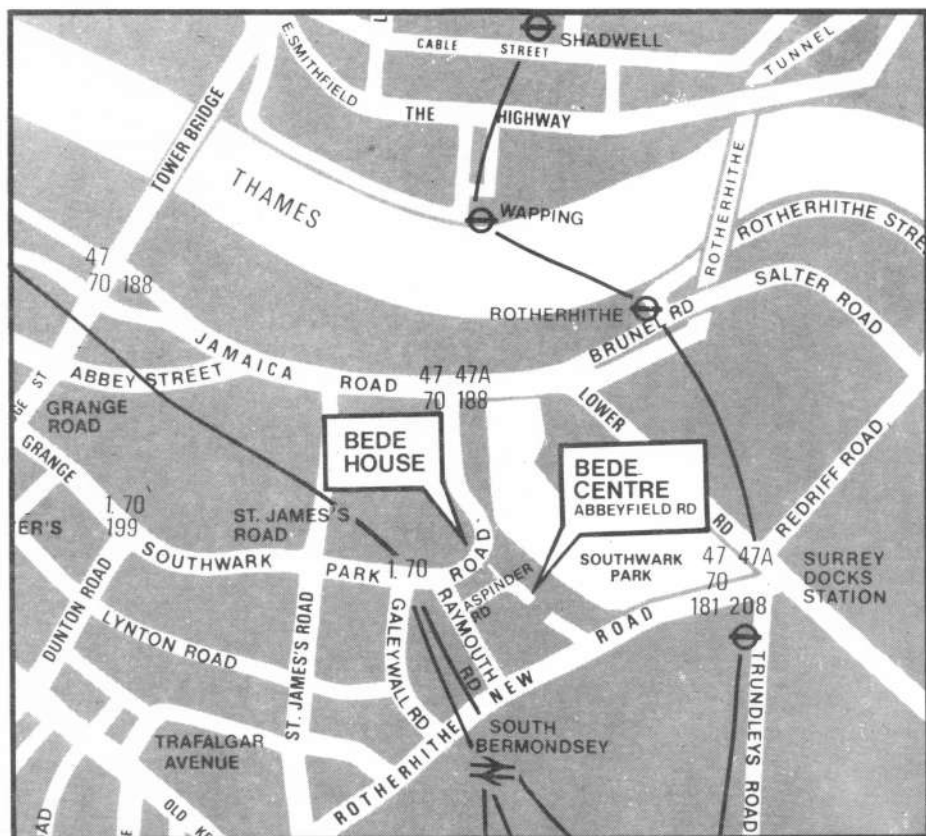


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**The Bede House Association aims to
extend the range of opportunities
open to local people and respond to
the problems they face, living in the
inner city.**

