

Back in Time - 3 - Stafford Road and Froebel House

by John Rabbitt

The terrace of three impressive Victorian houses on the left hand side in the photograph 'Stafford Road 1900' are fortunately still with us. From census records we can see that they were all occupied in 1886.



Stafford Road 1900



Stafford Road 2020

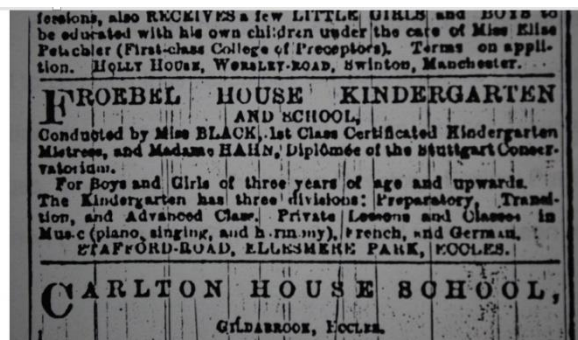


From left to right the three houses are named: Palgrave House, Froebel House and Glenthorne. The middle house has a fascinating history in that it was once a Kindergarten, undoubtedly why the name Froebel House was chosen. The house was initially owned by John and Betty Black who named it Froebel House. They had two daughters, Florence and Annie both in their mid-thirties in the 1880s. Florence was a widow having married a German and had lived in Germany, her married name was Hahn and she had two children.

Annie Black had been trained in the principles of the Froebel methodology of teaching at the Manchester Kindergarten Institute. It's no doubt her sister had experience of Froebel's schools from her time in Germany. Friedrich Froebel (1782 - 1852) was a German Educationalist of some importance. In Froebel's view, the school's function is to encourage natural development and he coined the phrase "kindergarten", not a garden in which children play, but one in which the children are plants and where the teacher is the gardener who helps them to develop.

A Froebel kindergarten had been founded in Bloomsbury in 1854. Over 20 years they spread throughout the country and were favoured by wealthy parents. The two sisters established a Kindergarten at Froebel House which would appear to have been very successful.

Below is a copy of an advert for the Kindergarten published in the Eccles, Patricroft, Winton, Monton and Barton Thompson Directory of 1887.



**FROEBEL HOUSE KINDERGARTEN
AND SCHOOL**

Conducted by Miss BLACK, 1st Class Certificated Kindergarten Mistress, and Madame HAHN, Diplôme of the Stuttgart Conservatorium.

For Boys and Girls of three years of age and upwards. The Kindergarten has three divisions: Preparatory, Transition, and Advanced Class. Private lessons and Classes in Music (piano, singing, and harmony), French, and German.
STAFFORD ROAD, ELLESMERE PARK, ECCLES

Advert for the Kindergarten

----- End of Article -----