

Mary Jane Lovell

Miss Lovell was a distant relative of William Lovell Who in the early 17th century made provision for a school to be built at Stickney (near Boston, Lincs) and whose name the secondary school there now bears.

At the age of 15 years Mary taught in the small village school before taking up missionary work in Africa. Due to ill health she decided to come back to live and teach in London, later moving to St. Leonard's-on-Sea, Sussex. There she met a couple, the husband a converted blind Druze. who were going to the Lebanon and who told Mary of the needs of the blind in the Middle East. They asked Mary to accompany them and from 1893 to 1895 she devised the first Arabic Braille code and transcribed many works into it.

We know how Miss Lovell was led from the Lebanon to the Holy Land and how she founded her first Home for Blind Girls in Jerusalem and then at Bethlehem; the privations under which she suffered with her young charges; her life of sacrifice, prayer and devotion in her love for those who came to regard her as "Mother of the Blind". After her home-call on 15th June, 1932 the work was continued by Sitt Adele and Miss K. (Mamma) and still continues today to witness to the present generation of the faith of the founder and the Lord she loved.

The memorial plaque of Palestinian tiles brought from Jerusalem and framed in wrought- iron by friends in Scotland was received by the Rector, Rev. G. Turner, on behalf of the Church at Stickney and as Miss K has since written, "the beautiful service of Dedication, the warmth of the friendship shown and the many displays of affection and kindness by the friends at Stickney, some of whom are linked by family ties to dear Miss Lovell made her long journey from Jerusalem to Stickney so very much worth while".