

OBITUARY – ALICE SLUCKIN, O.B.E.



SMIRA is very sad to announce that our Founder, Alice Sluckin OBE, passed away in Norwich on 15th February at the age of 99 years. Over the years she has touched many people's lives throughout the world and will be remembered by everyone who knew her with admiration and affection. She leaves two sons and a number of grandchildren.

Alice had a truly remarkable life. She arrived in Southampton from Czechoslovakia in 1938, at the age of 19, to take up a post as a children's nurse. She never saw her family again, her parents, sister and younger brother all perishing during the Holocaust.

Alice went on to move to Cambridge, where she met and married her husband, and then on to Durham and finally to Leicester in 1964. By this time Alice had become a Senior Psychiatric Social Worker and her husband had taken up a post as Professor of Psychology at Leicester University. It was during this time that Alice became interested in 'Elective Mutism' as it was then called, although very little was known about the condition. She took some principles of Psychology to try and help children she encountered on her caseload and carried out various research, publishing a number of papers. She was to prove one of the first in her field, advising on a number of high-profile cases and television documentaries. In 1992 she founded SMIRA as a small local group, but was proud to see it expand to the larger organisation it is today, and in 2010 she was awarded the O.B.E. for her work with children and families.



*Alice at her 99th Birthday Party,
pictured bottom right*

Alice will be greatly missed for her caring, humanity and wisdom to the end. She had a huge network of friends and former colleagues and always knew someone who could help out in a tricky situation or pass on their own particular expertise. Until the end she maintained a keen interest in Selective Mutism and SMIRA's work and was always happy to try and help those affected by the condition.

Alice only retired as our Chair some 18 months ago, when her health began to fail. Last July, just after her 99th Birthday Party, she left Leicester to be nearer her son in Norwich, where she passed away after a short illness.

Rest in Peace Alice.