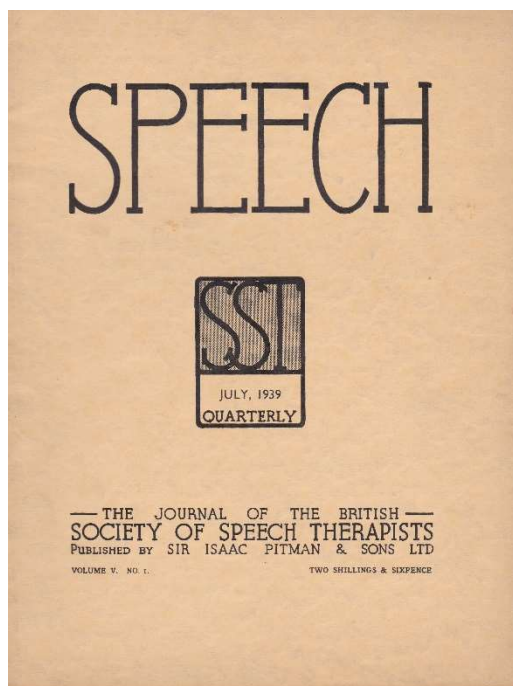


## Maud Wohl (née Kenny) MA, LCST (1914-1975): an innovative Scottish speech therapist

Miss Maud Kenny became an Associate Member of the British Society of Speech Therapists (BSST) in June 1939. This is documented in the last issue of *Speech* (BSST's journal) before the start of the second world war. As far as I can establish, Miss Kenny didn't qualify through a formal examined course in speech therapy – there were very few recognised courses in the UK at that time. Her route was through an Arts undergraduate degree at Glasgow University, teaching experience in Dunbartonshire, two years of clinical experience at the Notre Dame Child Guidance Clinic in Glasgow and an interview. (Speech therapy as part of a team approach at Notre Dame Clinic is described in a 1939 paper in *Speech* 4/3 by Sister Marie Hilda, who was headmistress there.)



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I was able to track her career through Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists documents held in the University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections. Miss Kenny became County Therapist for Dunbartonshire Education Authority in 1941. I learnt how the service developed and was run in a detailed 1949 article, which includes case statistics from 1941. By 1948, the now Mrs

Wohl was Area Representative for Scotland on the Council of the College of Speech Therapists. She was also by that time a lecturer at the Glasgow School of Speech Therapy, whose historical collection is also held by Strathclyde University Archives and Special Collections.

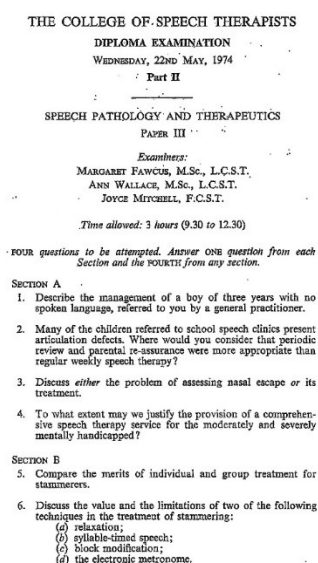
Her initial innovation for me to highlight is the first reported survey of an entire county's school-children (at least in the professional body's journal). It was carried out by the five speech therapists in Dunbartonshire, including Elizabeth Stark:

<https://stratharchives.tumblr.com/post/619281330125111297/guest-blog-post-rachel-e-betty-stark-speech> (accessed 20 January 2021) during the school year 1948-49 and included more than 20,000 children! This provided early objective incidence data for developmental speech and language disorders.

A woman of her time, Mrs Wohl took a career break in the 1950s after having her children but returned to speech therapy as a lecturer in the Glasgow School of Speech Therapy some years later. Her second clearly innovative phase was in the mid- to late-1960s: the development of the electronic metronome, a device to promote fluent speech in people who stuttered or who had other disorders of fluency. It looked like an in-ear hearing aid and could be set to deliver regular beats at different speeds to pace their speech. Although not now used, this device became mainstream enough at the time to appear as an exam question into the next decade. I plotted its development and use through reading or reading about:

- a conference paper
- a one-day seminar held in the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow that attracted therapists from Scotland, England and Wales
- talks to speech therapists in Dorchester and the West Riding of Yorkshire (these perhaps took place in other locations around the UK too)
- adverts in *Bulletin* when the electronic metronome became commercially available
- an evaluation of its effectiveness in the journal.

Professor Jois Stansfield reminisces about it: *She came to Manchester when I was a student to demonstrate the electronic metronome - it ticked and flashed and gave me my first migraine!*



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### **Price List:**

User's Handbook	50p per copy
Clinimet	£26.25 + £2.00 (4 books supplied)
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Standard Model	£12.60 + 50p (1 book supplied)

In *Bulletin* 241, May 1972

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giving light and four separate simultaneous sound leads. This instrument is used in initial training when several patients can be initiated in the use of the instrument together.

### **2. THE CLINICAL MODEL**

which has two leads, one for the patient, the other for the parent, therapist or other helper, simultaneously hearing the signal.

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which the patient uses regularly in the communication situation.

*N.B.* This Company holds a patent for this instrument. It is therefore illegal for anyone to copy and produce a similar instrument for the treatment of non-fluent speech.

xvi

In *Bulletin* 273, January 1975

Mrs Wohl held various roles on College committees through her career. For example, she chaired a working party on the changing role of the speech therapist, she was the College delegate for the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics in 1973 when UK entered the European Union and was a member of the journal editorial board for many years. A final example of her

innovation lies in her last speech therapy role as the department head for the Leicester speech therapy course from 1970 where she developed a purpose-built department.

Maud Wohl was certainly an innovator. Her work encompassed speech therapy practice (both in the public and private spheres), management, teaching and research - with resultant service and technological developments as well as improved clinical effectiveness. On her death, a volume of the *British Journal of Disorders of Communication* (10/2) with papers on stuttering was dedicated to her (p. 82) - a fitting memorial.

With thanks to Professor Jois Stansfield for her collaboration in developing this blog-post.

Linda Armstrong, January 2021