

Middle Articles

MEDICAL HISTORY

Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children, London: Centenary of "The Queen's," 1867-1967

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One hundred years ago the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children was established in Bethnal Green by the Misses Mary Elizabeth and Ellen Phillips. Their social conscience was stirred by the terrible scourge of Asiatic cholera in 1866 which spread rapidly through the east of London. This epidemic threw a pitiful light on the way children of the poor lived. In the squalor and overcrowding the sick, ill-clothed, and ill-fed children drew attention to the urgent need for a special hospital. The population of Bethnal Green and Shoreditch was nearly a quarter of a million. In the hospitals' annual report of that time we read: "In the great city of London, which till a few years ago possessed no hospital for children, out of every 100 children 24 die annually during the first 2 years of life, and during the next 8 years 11 die out of the remaining 76. These children perish, not because there is in them (in most cases) any dangerous sickness but for want of sanitary and medical knowledge in respect of their tender lives."

Early Days

In the first part of the nineteenth century the establishment of special hospitals met with opposition, especially in the case of children's hospitals, for many thought that it was essential for the mothers to care for their own children. Florence Nightingale in 1860 wrote that "the causes of the enormous

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child mortality are perfectly well known, they are chiefly want of cleanliness, want of ventilation, and want of whitewash: in one word, defective household hygiene."

On 12 July 1867 the Misses Phillips rented a house in Virginia Row, Bethnal Green, and set up the "Dispensary for Women and Children." As the patients so thronged the building, it was decided that children only would be treated. The next year the work was transferred to 125 Hackney Road, near to Shoreditch Church, where in addition 12 cots were provided. Soon this building too became inadequate, and in 1870, with the financial help raised by a bazaar at Cannon Street Hotel, the freehold of 327 Hackney Road (part of the present site of the hospital in Goldsmith Row) was purchased. From this humble beginning the hospital enlarged to its present size. In the early days annual subscribers had the privilege of recommending a number of children as outpatients and/or inpatients in proportion to the amount subscribed. Otherwise the charge of two-pence was made for an outpatient attendance and inpatients paid 2s. 6d. per week. This payment had a salutary effect, permitting genuine cases to be seen, and "upheld the self-respect of people, so that they would not be regarded as paupers." The children had to be brought in the arms of their parents, but when too ill to be so transported nurses visited their homes. In 1898, owing to the large number of the more prosperous parents seeking treatment, an inquiry officer was appointed to check the abuse, and in 1903, with the appointment of Miss Miller Jones, this post became that of lady almoner.



Miss Mary Elizabeth Phillips.



The North-Eastern Hospital for Children, Hackney Road.



Mrs. Alex Fox (née Ellen Phillips).

Raising of Funds

The Phillips sisters were members of the Society of Friends, and likewise the Foundation Committee under the Presidency of Joseph Gurney Barclay consisted of prominent members of that fraternity—William Beck, John D. Fry, J. Lister Godlee, Edmund Pace, and Nathaniel Tregelles. Thus from the beginning the hospital benefited by the benevolent philanthropy, wisdom, and business initiative of this pioneer committee. At first, in 1868, there was only a handful of generous benefactors, but gradually funds were sought for expansion. Bazaars, concerts, and dinners were organized to meet the cost of new buildings. Soon Royal Patrons, Queen Victoria and the Royal Princesses, and civic and ecclesiastical dignitaries graced these efforts. Voluntary subscriptions and funds increased to pay for future projects. City companies, merchants, bankers, and also friends of the hospital contributed, and individual gifts were numerous. In 1877 the Children's Association was established "to promote an interest among children of the upper classes in the welfare of children of the poor, to provide funds for the maintenance of the hospital and to encourage the use of the talents and leisure time of children to benefit the hospital and its patients." Later such funds as the "Stamp Collectors' Fund" started by Mr. Glenton Kerr, the secretary, and the "Little Folk's Fund" did much to spread the name of the hospital abroad. In 1893, through the generous gift of £10,000 by Mr. John Horniman, the building fund was set up. In 1897 a three-day bazaar was held at Queen's Hall to raise funds for the additional building. The Duchess of Connaught, the Duchess of Marlborough, and the Duchess of Newcastle performed the opening ceremonies. Many other distinguished personages and friends took an active interest in the hospital. At the turn of the century H.R.H. Princess Louise opened the new building and 134 beds became available.

Medical and Nursing Staffs

From the beginning the hospital was equally fortunate in having a distinguished medical staff. In 1867 (Sir) Jonathan Hutchinson and (Sir) Morell Mackenzie became the first consulting surgeon and physician respectively, and (Sir) Wilson Fox's name was later added as consulting physician. He was a fellow student of Joseph Lister, and, like Hutchinson, was also a Quaker. These great clinicians introduced promising colleagues to serve on the staff, such as the erudite Dr. William B. Woodham, Dr. A. E. Sansom, and Dr. W. Cayley as physicians. The last two actively served the hospital for 15 years.

Specialties

Gradually during the century general medicine and surgery made way for special disciplines, and the hospital kept abreast of medical progress. Though anaesthesia and antiseptic methods were adopted in the hospital in the early days, the scope of surgery was limited at first to opening abscesses, removing necrotic bone, treating injuries and deformities, and an occasional tracheostomy and lithotomy operation. The first "chloroformist," Dr. John Poland, was appointed in 1880; before this the residents were instructed in anaesthesia, and in fact Dr. Sansom, who was a friend of John Snow, in 1865 wrote his book, *Chloroform: Its Action and Administration*. In some hospitals an extra salary was paid to the anaesthetist, but it was not until 1870–80 that the specialist posts were established. Later other specialists followed, for in 1895 Mr. Sydney Stephenson became the first ophthalmologist, and two years later Mr. John W. Pare started a pioneer special dental clinic for children.

In 1898 electric lighting was installed throughout the hospital, and the 7th Duke of Newcastle, who was a Life Governor and later a member of the Management Committee, in the same year presented the gift of the "complete and very powerful Roentgen Rays apparatus." It was to be supervised and examined at the cost of two guineas annually. By this gift the hospital was the first children's hospital to possess such an apparatus. This event was celebrated by a soirée—"plants for decoration, an extra porter, and a band were engaged" for the ceremony.

In 1910, the ear, nose, and throat and the skin departments were started by Mr. W. G. Howarth and Dr. H. G. Adamson. Other specialties followed, so that now most of the special branches of paediatrics are represented.

Before the first world war in 1914 women became eligible for two of the resident medical appointments, and the late Dr.

NEW HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN AT SHOREDITCH.

This morning a fancy bazaar is held at the Cannon-street Hotel, concerning which it may be useful to give a few heads of information. Under the special patronage of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess Christian, the Prince and Princess of Teck, and the Princess Louise, it is to be opened by the latter in person, who, in a certain sense, is acting for the Queen; for her Majesty has taken the deepest interest in the labour in hand, and has contributed personally to the stalls; while the Princess of Wales, the Crown Princess of Prussia, and other members of the Royal Family have sent goods worked by their own hands, or selected by themselves, in the hope of increasing materially the fund on behalf of which the bazaar is held. It is desired to enlarge the scope of a Children's Hospital now working in Shoreditch, and her Majesty and family who, as is well known, send annual presents of toys, and, in other substantial modes, testify their interest in the excellent establishment in Great Ormond-street, are earnest in their wish to aid the project for which to-day's bazaar is held, in the most direct and unmistakable way. We have just visited the modest little establishment now open, have endeavoured to master the principle upon which it is carried on, and have come away profoundly satisfied that those who show themselves of the Queen's way of thinking by supporting the bazaar to-day will further an institution which is admirable in its

was necessary to limit it to children only. In April, 1868, the present house was taken in the Hackney Road, the services of a second medical officer and of a qualified dispenser were procured and a dispensary opened four days in the week. Before this, it must be understood, a lively interest had been roused in the neighbourhood, and the appointment of an influential committee, and the receipt of handsome donations and subscriptions gradually followed. The good things are and prospered. The benevolent impulses and constant care of its fair founders met with their reward, and in February last year two small wards, containing twelve beds, were provided, in addition to the outpatients' department, and the new hospital for children was established. It has not yet been able to exceed the limit named, though the little cribs are arranged as near to each other as is consistent with sanitary conditions, and though the most pitiable cases are pleading for admission within its doors. Up the narrow stairs, and down in a light and cheerful bedroom on the first floor, where a stout and motherly looking nurse reigns over her little charges with a loving hand and where toys and picture-books are being played with and turned over by wan little sufferers, who turn a wistful eye to the new comers while such of them as are strong enough answer questions as to their condition and treatment with a grateful smile. They are eminently well cared for. The reigning ailment of all health is reduced what is coarse and elevated what is tender in their little faces, until no visitor could suppose them to be of other than gentle nurture and blood. We shall again avoid the dull catalogue of their complaints. Why distress t

Excerpt from the *Daily News*, 16 May 1870.

Helen Mackay (paediatrician 1916–59) recalled that the hospital served both “as general practitioner as well as consultant for children miles around.” In the neighbourhood there was still much poverty and undernourishment. Rickets was very common and so also were anaemia and dental caries. Gastroenteritis then had a death rate of about 50%. “No treatment, other than skilful nursing, was available for very many of the patients in the medical wards.” Between 1920 and 1930 there was a “grim period of unemployment,” after which the living standard gradually rose, and because of better feeding and care the health of children improved. About that time paediatrics became a specialty, and some 25 years later paediatric surgery was established as an entity. In the 1930s additional buildings were completed—Princess Elizabeth Ward (1930) to accommodate infants and nursing mothers; an enlarged dental department, massage and light department (1934); a new outpatient department (1938); and new casualty, pathology, and x-ray departments and observation ward (1939)—thus 160 beds were available in London and 44 beds at Bexhill.

At the outbreak of the second world war the Queen's was designated as a hospital for civilian casualties only, on the assumption that there would be a mass evacuation of all children from London; but gradually the child evacuees returned to East London, and so the children's outpatient and casualty department were reopened. In the Battle of Britain period of 1940 large-scale evacuation of children returned. The sick children of the Queen's Hospital with those from Princess Elizabeth of York, Shadwell, were accommodated at an improvised hospital at Ashdene in Hertfordshire and at Bayford. Both of the main hospitals received their share of the air raids and bombs that fell heavily on East London, but the buildings survived without major damage.

When in 1868 the hospital first moved to Hackney Road it was named the “North-Eastern Hospital for Children,” becoming “The Queen's” in 1908. With the amalgamation in 1942 of the “Princess Elizabeth of York Hospital for Children” (formerly the East London Hospital for Children, Shadwell), the new title the “Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children” was acquired under the patronage of H.M. the King and H.M. the Queen and H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth. Other branches of the

hospital are the Little Folk's Home at Bexhill (1930) and the country hospital at Banstead, Surrey—a gift from Mr. Stanley Garton—completed in 1948. In 1948, with the National Health Service Act, the hospital became part of the N.E. Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board. In 1963 the Shadwell branch was closed for economic reasons. That hospital, formerly the “East London Hospital for Children,” had a parallel beginning with the Hackney Road branch, but its history is another story. Since 1946 regular postgraduate teaching has been undertaken in association with the Institute of Child Health, and more recently undergraduate students attend for paediatric training.

The Hospital Today

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital today is a busy general children's hospital for acute cases, and with its 270 beds serves the neighbourhood, and by reason of its special interests young patients also come from all parts of the country and overseas. Through the close links with maternity units, many newborn babies are admitted, and their congenital disorders and malformations are a special study in the hospital. The changing pattern of disease in children today shows a large increase in the work among the youngest age groups. The special investigations, techniques, and modern treatment call for increased space and staff. The present and future generation of nurses, doctors, and patients will find encouragement in the very generous support given by the Hayward Foundation to the hospital's Research Appeal Fund for the building of a new diagnostic unit and research laboratories. These new additions will help to keep the hospital in the van of medical progress. Funds are still needed to endow these enterprises. Furthermore, it is hoped that a new operating-theatre suite with an intensive care unit and a new nurses' home, to replace the old residence, will be built, and that perhaps additional wards will be planned by the next decade.

The fulfilment of these plans would be a legacy worthy of those members of the Society of Friends who founded the hospital 100 years ago.

MEDICAL EDUCATION

Training of Nephrologists

Two recent publications^{1,2} have recently appeared dealing with the training of nephrologists. A memorandum¹ by the Renal Association defines nephrology as “the study of renal structure and function in health and disease, including the prevention and treatment of diseases involving the kidney and urinary tract at all ages.” The memorandum envisages two types of renal unit—*major units*, which would serve a population of about 2 million and would usually be situated at teaching or major district hospitals; and *subsidiary units*, which would serve a population of about 200,000, and would preferably be associated with a major unit. The major unit would contain 60 beds, including 10 for intermittent haemodialysis. It would undertake the full management of all types of renal disease, including renal trans-

plantation; the training of nephrologists and urologists; research; and the co-ordination of the subsidiary units in the area. The subsidiary units would be mainly concerned with intermittent haemodialysis.

The staffing envisaged in the memorandum comprises two or three consultant nephrologists; two or three urologists; two or three whole-time senior registrars (one surgical); and six medical registrars/senior house-officers (divided between medicine and surgery). Staff to provide a 24-hour specialist ancillary service would also be necessary.

The report of the Royal College of Physicians' Committee on Nephrology² recommends that nephrology should be recognized as a specialty of medicine. It considers that it will be necessary to provide special training for both nephrologists—that is, consul-

tant physicians almost wholly engaged in the specialty—and general physicians with a special interest in nephrology. The committee suggests that after the pre-registration year nephrologists should spend a year in gaining further experience in a hospital post, or in a laboratory or research post. Thereafter two years should be spent in general clinical medicine at registrar (or equivalent) level, and four years at senior registrar (or equivalent) level, with at least six months' experience in dialysis at some stage of training.

REFERENCES

- ¹ *Training of Nephrologists*, Memorandum of the Executive Committee of the Renal Association, 1967.
- ² *Committee on Nephrology: Report*, 1967. Royal College of Physicians of London.