

Tadley and District History Society projectnews

FREE

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Hospital Sunday, May 1922 – outside *The Fox and Hounds* public house, Mulfords Hill, Tadley

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About projectnews

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Comments and/or articles for possible inclusion in future issues of projectnews are welcome – please contact Carol Stevens; telephone: 0118 970 1578; email: DGWard@bigfoot.com.

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About TADS

Tadley and District History Society (TADS) was founded in 1984 for people with an interest in local social history, and in the broader scope of history and natural history. Monthly evening talks are held on the third Wednesday of each month, except August, at 8.00pm in St Paul's Church Hall, Tadley. These meetings are open to visitors.

TADS is a member of Hampshire Archives Trust and The British Association for Local History.

In October of this year Basingstoke Talking History, a project run by Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society in conjunction with the Willis Museum, published a book entitled *Taking the Pulse of Basingstoke*. Memories from before the National Health Service and up to the present day, it consists, in the main, of first hand accounts taken from interviews recorded on tape. Coincidentally, this issue of *projectnews* also deals with the subject of healthcare. Lionel Holmwood became a local practitioner at a time which coincides with many of those memories and the book gives us an insight into what his life as a country doctor would have been like.

Dr Lionel Holmwood

Lionel Snowdon 'Bobbie' Holmwood MA Cantab, MRCS, LRCP, was the local medical practitioner in whose memory the purpose-built health centre in Franklin Avenue, Tadley was named. The centre opened in 1973, shortly after his death.

Born in Brighton in 1889, the youngest son of Thomas Dyer Holmwood and Susannah Frederica, Lionel contracted Infantile Paralysis (Polio) at the age of ten which left him with a withered leg and he wore a calliper for the rest of his life.

Following his time at Christ's College, Cambridge he completed his training at the Middlesex Hospital. Being disabled prevented him from enlisting in 1914 and so he spent the war years working in London. However, his love of the sea soon drew him away from the city and at the end of the war he joined the The British India Line, becoming Hon Surgeon Commodore. He spent many happy years sailing the world until his sister decided that it was time he 'settled down'! She had heard that Dr Stanley Beale of Aldermaston was looking for an assistant and so he was persuaded back onto dry land.

He remained the junior partner until Dr Beale's retirement in 1933 when Lionel Holmwood purchased the Aldermaston practice for £4915 10s. The practice now also provided healthcare for Tadley following the retirement of Dr William Langley of Kiln House, Silchester Road.

The Holmwood family: his wife Helen, and daughters Mary (b1929) and Susannah (b1933) moved into the larger practice house on The Street, Aldermaston (The Brook House) where, in 1936 son Sean was born. Dr Geoffrey Wynne-Thomas took over as his junior partner, moving in to the adjacent cottage the family had vacated.

On the outbreak of the World War II, Dr Wynne-Thomas was called-up. This meant that Bobbie Holmwood had to manage with only intermittent assistance from other doctors. His greatest help was Nurse Marriott, the District Nurse. It was an exhausting task as the practice at that time covered a vast area including Bucklebury, Douai Abbey School at Woolhampton, a convalescent home at Englefield, HMS *Dædalus* (a WRNS establishment at Burghfield), Kingsclere, Ramsdell and Pamber Heath! After the war the main surgery was moved to Tadley and the Holmwoods moved



Lionel 'Bobbie' Holmwood with his eldest daughter Helen Mary in the garden of the partners residence: 'The Cottage' The Street, Aldermaston.

to 'Robinswood', Wolverton Road, Baughhurst.

With the advent of the National Health service in 1948, medical practices could no longer be bought and sold. Doctor Holmwood was the last doctor locally to have had to buy his practice. This made it necessary for him to serve 10 years with the National Health Service in order that he might

receive a pension, consequently he was 70 when he retired in 1959. In those 10 years, with the development of AWRE and the consequent increase in population, the number of doctors in the practice increased significantly. In 1951 Joseph 'Joe' Morland joined as assistant, later becoming a full partner.

Lionel and Helen Holmwood retired to a bungalow built in the grounds

of 'Robinswood'. Before his death in January 1973 he was able to resume interests related to his great loves: the sea and fishing, not possible during the earlier busy years. He thoroughly enjoyed visits to *The Pineapple*, Brimpton Common and meeting with his former patients there.

Our thanks to Susannah Skurray née Holmwood for providing the information for this article.

Hospitals and Infirmaries

Medieval hospitals were charitable institutions founded by religious bodies, craft or merchant guilds and private individuals. Probably the earliest English 'hospital' was St Leonard's, York which was established c937 and which, by 1280, housed 229 sick. Two of the most well known London hospitals, St Bartholomew's and St Thomas's, were established in the 12th century. However, most medieval hospitals were dissolved as part of the Reformation (1534-). The term 'Infirmery' most commonly refers to the sick-quarters within an establishment eg monastery, school, workhouse.

The voluntary hospital

The need for a hospital would become acute as each town grew with the development of better communications and industry. By the start of Queen Victoria's reign many of what became known as 'voluntary' hospitals had already been built: Westminster, London 1720, Guys, London 1726, The Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford 1770. By the mid 19th century there were 230 such hospitals in England and Wales of which the Royal Berkshire Hospital was one. Completed in 1839 it was opened by King William IV on 27 May. Many of the very early hospital buildings were restructured or re-built as a result of the influence of Florence Nightingale, who advocated 'Pavilion-plan' hospitals.

Typically, a group of the local 'great and good' would raise funds to establish a hospital. In contrast to the drab and functional appearance of the workhouse, voluntary hospitals were usually lavish buildings designed to encourage donations from wealthy benefactors. The benefactors retained control, appointing staff and recommending patients for treatment. To-day, patients are usually referred to a hospital by their general practitioner but in Victorian times hospitals were the first point of call for the sick and injured. Admission was usually via a letter from a hospital benefactor. This power to admit the poor added to their superior social status. Surprisingly, as to-day, hospitals were open day and night and 100s of patients were received daily.

The voluntary hospital excluded certain types of patients on moral, social and medical grounds to concentrate on the curable and interesting cases. The aged, infirm or incurable therefore ended up

in the workhouse infirmary. The voluntary hospital also depended on the workhouse to take in discharged patients once the acute stages of illness had passed. At the other end of the social scale, those patients who could afford to pay for private treatment were turned away! Patients were expected to be grateful for the advice and treatment they received; some would offer the doctor a tip but others assumed the hospital was funded from local taxes, in fact the doctors were unpaid. Their income came from treating wealthy, private patients in their home with the hope of making good social contacts. This voluntary doctoring was looked upon as experience.

By the late 19th century voluntary hospitals offered a range of treatments and services not too dissimilar from those of the 21st century; an Out-Patients department, x-rays, operating theatres, anaesthetic, a pharmacy and dispensary, a kitchen providing hot meals for patients, a laundry, a mortuary and chapel, and a hospital almoner to attend to patients social and dietary needs.

Funded hospitals

Could be loosely termed local authority hospitals

Asylums

Lunatic asylums were the first publicly funded hospitals. Prior to 1808 the mentally ill were treated as criminals, paupers or vagrants. In the 19th century such large numbers were deemed to be 'lunatics' that only the dangerously insane were sent to the asylum, harmless cases were kept in the workhouse. The main aim of an asylum was to protect the public rather than to treat the patient. By 1890, in England

and Wales, there were 66 county asylums, each comprising between 500-800 beds.

Hospitals for infectious diseases

Also known as Isolation and Fever hospitals. The isolation of patients with diseases such as TB and smallpox was imperative to prevent the spread of infection. Some local authorities waived the charge to patients in order to protect the local community. Where no local authority hospital existed patients were isolated in special accommodation within the workhouse. Sometimes the lunatic asylum doubled as an isolation hospital.

Poor Law infirmaries

When, in 1834, the 'outdoor' relief for the poor was abolished and people were admitted to the workhouse instead, no thought was given to the poor who may also be sick or infirm. As a result only a rudimentary hospital service existed. Charles Dickens described the 'foul wards' of Wapping workhouse: "... infamously ill-adapted for the passage upstairs of the sick or downstairs of the dead". Although the visiting doctors were paid, the daily care of patients was in the hands of 'nurses': other able bodied paupers. The doctor generally paid for any medication he prescribed which inevitably led to poor treatment. Despite the bad conditions and pay many doctors carried out Poor Law work, but in severely poverty stricken areas recruitment was difficult when there was little opportunity for private practice.

In 1867, as a result of a commission to investigate the condition of London's workhouse infirmaries, an Act was passed enabling Poor Law Unions in London to separate infirmaries from



The Cottage Hospital, Hackwood Road, had only eight beds when it opened in 1879. Renamed Basingstoke Hospital in 1924, it underwent major improvements throughout that decade. Recuperating patients went on to Cowdrey Down Hospital at Basing.



Park Prewett Farm was purchased in 1898 for the building of a mental asylum however, before its completion it was commandeered for use as a military hospital during World War I. It finally opened as a mental hospital in August 1921.

the workhouse and stipulated that they should be under the control of a Medical Superintendent, not the workhouse master. The Act did not relate to the provinces but a recommendation was made that "...the sick should be divided according to the type of case". As a result many infirmaries were improved or rebuilt and gradually many of the infirmary admissions were non-paupers, although inevitably there was a stigma attached to being such a patient.

The cottage hospital

The stigma attached to the Poor Law infirmary and the distance from the nearest voluntary hospital for rural communities led to the establishment of cottage hospitals. As the name implies they were small, homely places, in contrast to the impersonal large 'town' hospital.

Fundraising

Once established, the voluntary hospital relied totally on donations and subscriptions for its survival. By the 1860s medical advances and the success of the system resulted in financial difficulties for most hospitals. Traditional ways of fundraising through gala dinners, charity balls, concerts and lectures attended by wealthy and prominent citizens was no longer enough. Paying beds for the better-off and a weekly subscription scheme for the working class were introduced. £50,000 was raised for London hospitals via commemorative stamps to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

The annual expenditure of the Royal Berkshire Hospital in 1886 was £6,000, double that of 1856. Annual subscriptions provided a large part of this income: £2,480 was received from

nearly 800 subscribers amongst whom was Queen Victoria. By now even the Poor Law Unions were subscribing together with Friendly Societies the Co-Operative Society, Huntley and Palmer's biscuit factory and rail employees to name a few. Annual subscriptions entitled their working members to hospital admission tickets. A strong bond began to exist between the community and the hospitals. Gifts in kind were frequent, especially at Christmas. One such donation of game and poultry was sent with the stipulation that 'the hares were for the officers and the rabbits for the patients'!

Privileges for subscribers were introduced at the Royal Berkshire, to encourage giving. A donation of £1,000 would cover the endowment of a bed in the name of the donor, £500 a cot. Patrons and subscribers names still exist in the hospital, eg Benyon Ward.

Some means of obtaining further financial support from the wider general public resulted in the establishment of a 'Hospital Saturday' and/or 'Hospital Sunday' in most villages, towns and cities. London and the south were slow to initiate what had been a custom in the north for many years (Glasgow 1840s). A meeting on Saturday 1 February 1873 at Mansion House, London was attended by such well known people as Mrs Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson and Sir Anthony de Rothschild to establish the first annual Hospital Sunday in London. The first annual Hospital Saturday began the following year.

Hospital Sunday began as a day when the collections from all denominations would go to the local hospital funds. In Reading this began in 1881. On 16 July 1887 the first Hospital Saturday took place. Saturday was pay day for most workers and collecting boxes would be

seen in the streets, at canal locks and factory gates. However, the medical profession were sceptical of this method of collecting. *The Times* printed a letter on 4 November 1874 from the Medical Press which said "...it would have the effect of conferring upon all the right to demand hospital attendance and medicine in consideration to their donation ...a penny a week for 12 months would have yielded £300,000. And what have they given?" Regardless, the collecting continued and Hospital Sundays became increasingly popular. The parade, with banners flying and bands playing, marched from street to street, village to village. The Baughurst event occupied the whole day. Special services were held in fields and halls where the sermon paid tribute to the work of the local hospital and specially written hymns were sung. The Baughurst Sunday collection in May 1905 raised £21 13s 11d and was forwarded to the Royal Berkshire Hospital fund.

In 1929 local authorities took over the workhouses and the infirmaries became municipal hospitals. Voluntary hospitals continued to suffer financial difficulties. During World War II all hospital services were unified, paving the way for the creation of the National Health Service.

References etc

- The Royal Berkshire Hospital 1839-1989*; Margaret Railton, Marshall Barr.
- The Victorian Hospital*; Lavinia Mitton.
- The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History*; David Hey.
- The Local Historian's Encyclopaedia*; John Richardson.
- Concise Oxford Dictionary*.
- Hants & Berks Gazette*.
- For information regarding local healthcare, see *Around Tadley – fact and fable* and *Around Tadley – people and places*.

100 years ago – Hants and Berks Gazette, July – Dec 1905

Date	Page	Village	Topic
08.07.1905	6	Tadley	Dispute about Timber Work Absolom Cottrell against John Buckland at County Court. C
29.07.1905	7	Baughurst	Policeman posted PC Gregory moved to Pennington and succeeded by PC Oakley. C
29.07.1905	7	Baughurst	Choir outing to Bournemouth, courtesy of Rector and Churchwardens. C
29.07.1905	7	Baughurst	Reading Temperance Band's annual concert in Mr James' meadow, Causeway Farm. C
29.07.1905	5	Mortimer	Halter stolen at flower show.
05.08.1905	8	Tadley	Tadley Revel Monday Dinner provided by Mr Benham, landlord of <i>The Fighting Cocks</i> . C
05.08.1905	8	Tadley	Foresters' 'Pride of Tadley' Court celebrated anniversary at clubhouse, <i>The Fox & Hounds</i> . C
12.08.1905	7	Baughurst	Tabernacle Anniversary Services Miss Scutler of Basingstoke preached.
12.08.1905	7	Ramsdell	Cottage Garden show Ramsdale and Ewhurst Garden Association at Hollybush Meadow.
19.08.1905	7	Ramsdell	Charge of housebreaking John Weston accused of breaking into Mr Thomas Powell's house.
26.08.1905	7	Aldermaston	Thomas Eastman charged with firing two ricks at William Kemp's farm. £200 damage.
02.09.1905	6	Baughurst	Lecture on National Defence by Colonel Lynden-Bell. C
02.09.1905	6	Baughurst	Special service after church bells were repaired and re-hung. C
02.09.1905	6	Tadley	Mr & Mrs John Stacey celebrated 25th wedding anniversary (many names). C
09.09.1905	3	Kingsclere	Kingsclere Stable Retirement of John Porter.
16.09.1905	4	Pamber	Sale of Tile Barn Farm by Mr James Smith (retiring from farming).
30.09.1905	6	Mortimer	Congregational Church Harvest Thanksgiving Service in 'quaint little building'.
07.10.1905	8	Charter Alley	Mammoth marrow grown by Mr Froome of West Heath: 28" long, 21" round, weight 55lb.
07.10.1905	6	Ramsdell	Evening School commences on 10 October. Particulars from Mr Frogbrook. C
07.10.1905	6	Ramsdell	Tenant in prison Order to eject John Weston from cottage at Sheepwash, Ramsdale. C
07.10.1905	6	Pamber	Frank Kimber & Frederick Hunt summoned for non-payment of 'sectarian priest' rate after peaceful protest. C
04.11.1905	8	Baughurst	Reading Room opened by kind permission Mr Stokes of Inhurst House – games etc.
18.11.1905	7	Mortimer	Lecture in Primitive Methodist Chapel 'The Mischief Making Member' by Revd Pickett.
18.11.1905	6	Baughurst	Waif Saturday Annual collection by children of National School £213s 6d collected. C
18.11.1905	6	Tadley	A Bag of Nine Rabbits Three Tadley boys accused of poaching. Fined 10 shillings each. C
18.11.1905	6	Silchester	William Broadhurst ejected from cottage belonging to Duke of Wellington (rent £4 10s pa). C
25.11.1905	6	Pamber	Arthur Long accused of stealing a sack of chaff valued at half a crown. C
25.11.1905	8	Silchester	Roman Ruins annual supper for dig members at <i>The Crown Inn</i> .

100 years ago – national and international, July – Dec 1905

Date	Topic
03.07.1905	Albert Einstein propounds Theory of Relativity.
12.07.1905	Birth of Prince John, 6th child of the Prince and Princess of Wales, later King George V and Queen Mary.
05.09.1905	Treaty of Portsmouth (New Hampshire) signed to end the Russo-Japanese war.
09.09.1905	Thousands are killed in earthquake in Calabria, Italy.
12.09.1905	The Japanese navy's flagship 'Mikasa sinks', 544 die.
05.10.1905	The Wright brothers make record flight of 38 minutes.
27.10.1905	Treaties between Norway and Sweden signed, completing the severance of the union.
02.11.1905	Terrible massacre of Jews reported from Russia.
18.11.1905	Prince Carl of Denmark chosen to be King of Norway.
04.12.1905	Prime Minister Mr Balfour tendered his resignation to the King.
05.12.1905	Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was appointed Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury.
31.12.1905	Great damage reported by a gale that raged during the weekend.
Among those born at the time were: Clara Bow, the 'It Girl' (29 July) and Howard Hughes, tycoon, aviator and film director (24 December). Among those who died at the time were: Alfred Waterhouse, architect of Reading Town Hall and The Natural History Museum (22 August) and Thomas John Barnado, founder of the Dr Barnado Homes (19 September).	

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