

The History of

CROWBOROUGH WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



1897 - 1948

CROWBOROUGH WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

*A Short Description of its Origin
and Development*

by the President

Mr. W. H. HILL

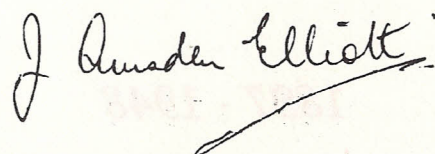
1897 - 1948

PREFACE TO HISTORY OF CROWBOROUGH WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

It is a great privilege to be asked to write a few words to introduce this history of *our* Hospital because it is really an account of the wonderful work done by individuals and the people of Crowborough and district.

The Hospital has an enviable reputation for fund raising enabling us to give first-class treatment to both in and out patients, thanks to our dedicated staff, G.P.s and consultants.

We have chosen this year to launch our history as a celebration of the saving of the Maternity Unit and for what is hoped to be a very bright future for our Hospital.



Retired G.P.

CROWBOROUGH WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL A short account of its origin and development

As the current year 1947-48 is likely to be the last year of the Hospital as a voluntary institution supported by funds raised locally and managed by a local Committee and Officers, it was considered desirable to put on record in a more accessible form than the Annual Reports, the story of the rise and development of the Hospital and so pay a tribute to the supporters and annual subscribers and donors who made possible without outside aid, an institution of which Crowborough may well be proud. It will thus provide a permanent record which will, it is hoped, be of some value to all interested in this institution.

Origin - Nursing Association and Home 1897-1914

We must go back 50 years to understand how the Hospital came into existence. To omit a short account of the earliest days would leave in obscurity the reason for the unusual lay-out of the present buildings, and a great deal of information about early developments and the struggle for existence would be missed. Moreover, the early history of its origin will no doubt be of interest to Crowborough residents who have forgotten, if they ever knew, the former difficulties which managers and supporters were able to overcome and lay the foundations of an institution worthy of the place. Further, even those concerned with the management of similar hospitals, often so anxious and difficult a task, may find in the arduous struggles here described, some interest and encouragement.

*"Suave mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem"*

In 1897, at a meeting at Buckhurst, was founded the North Sussex Diamond Jubilee Nursing Association, subsequently called the Crowborough District Nursing Association, and out of this organisation the Crowborough Hospital sprang and developed.

The area covered by the Nursing Association was fairly extensive, including the parishes of Crowborough, Hartfield, St. Johns, Eridge, Frant, Rotherfield, Withyham and Maresfield. In the Report for 1898-99, the first available, it was stated that the work had so greatly increased that it was proposed to establish a home in Crowborough to house the staff employed in connection with the Association. This was to be a Cottage Home for nurses in charge of a Matron, the primary object of which was to provide accommodation for the staff of nurses, though a subsidiary purpose was the provision of a Nursing Home for patients who could not properly be nursed in their own homes. This latter object was apparently quite secondary and most of the nursing was

done outside the "Home". Funds were collected and a house was obtained on lease in Lordswell Lane and the Hospital started its career in a very modest way as a Nursing Home. The nursing staff was fairly large consisting of 16 in 1903, i.e., a Matron, District Nurse (also Assistant Matron), 13 nurses and one probationer. These were accommodated in the "Home" and meanwhile seven other probationers were being trained for the Association in other hospitals.

The accommodation provided for patients was five public ward beds, the fees for these being 6s. per week for Crowborough patients and 15s. per week for patients from the District and for domestic servants in regular employment. There were also private wards (number not specified; probably it depended on the number of rooms required for the nursing staff which must have varied considerably); for these the fees varied from one guinea to five per week according to room and requirements.

In these early years the number of patients admitted was small; annual admissions varied between 25 and 52 which was the largest number admitted until 1912. The outside nursing formed by far the most important activity of the Association and the number of cases so nursed was always more than double that of cases admitted to the "Home"; for example, there were 25 admissions in 1909 compared with 148 "residential cases" (i.e. Crowborough cases nursed in their own homes) and 64 in the District. 2,336 visits were made in the same year.

Miss Spedding of Sweet Haws Grange was practically the founder of the Nursing Association and she devoted most of her life and a good deal of money to the service of the Nursing Association and Home, acting as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer from the beginning until Miss Helen Mason succeeded her as Honorary Secretary and Mr.Maude as Honorary Treasurer in 1911.

Preston Lodge

In 1903 it was decided that the Home had become inadequate to accommodate the increased staff and it was arranged to move and take over Preston Lodge in South View Road, Crowborough on lease. The move was no doubt most desirable as it would seem that in some other respects, apart from insufficiency of accommodation, the original house was not entirely suitable. For example, the Home, we are informed, depended for telephone communication on the good offices of Mr.Deeprose! The new house became the central building of the present Hospital and the freehold was eventually acquired and various internal modifications were made and additional buildings constructed. But progress in this direction was slow and more than 20 years were to elapse before this became possible.

First Public Meeting - 1911

In 1911 the first public meeting of subscribers and friends of the Association was held and the meeting appointed a Committee to manage the Hospital and from this time the Reports were entitled, "Report of the Crowborough Cottage Hospital and Nursing Association" instead of "Report of the Crowborough Nursing Association". It is true that there had been a Committee of which the Vicar of All Saints' Church was President but now, for the first time, the public meeting was responsible for the Committee's selection. The early reports give no information as to the method by which the Committee had hitherto been appointed. The new Committee consisted of 24 members, including the Rev.S.F.Akroyd as Chairman (not as formerly, President), a Vice-Chairman, Mr.E.Maude (Treasurer) and Miss Helen Mason (Secretary). The size of the Committee made it somewhat unwieldy and a "working Committee" of 11 acted as an Executive Committee. Later, as the number of the General Committee was reduced to about ten, the working Committee was dropped. This Committee continued to manage the Hospital until 1925, when Mr.Maude succeeded the Rev.S.F.Akroyd as Chairman.

Financial Difficulties

The financial position of the Cottage Hospital and Nursing Association was extremely unsatisfactory; for several years there had been a deficit and this was not being reduced but increased and, at the Meeting referred to above, it was decided to make an appeal for funds to wipe out the debt and relieve the financial situation. This was put into effect and a sum of £369 was subscribed, the Fund being called the "King Edward VII Memorial Fund". It was agreed that the sum should be divided and 40% allocated to the guarantor of the debt of the Association and 60% should go to the Hospital. The Hospital received £221. Financial difficulties were over for the moment and in 1912, the accounts were audited for the first time; income exceeded expenditure by £94 and there was a balance to the credit of the Association of £154. With the funds thus raised, the financial position had so changed for the better that it was possible to make improvements: a new kitchen range and water supply improvement and other internal and external repairs.

Cottage Hospital - 1914

Up to the outbreak of the First World War, only the nucleus of a Hospital existed and the Association earned more by outside nursing than by taking patients into the Home. This was the case until 1914, but it was gradually to change as the fees earned in the Home or Cottage Hospital (as it was now called) increased with the admission of larger numbers and the amount earned by outside nursing diminished. In 1914 there were 120 admissions (including nine soldiers) and from this time the Cottage Hospital continued to carry on for another ten years with about 100 patients admitted annually, but it could do no more without extension. It is true that a certain advance was made in 1921 when a room was

converted into an operating theatre and £300 expended on improved sanitary arrangements, but what was needed to meet the local requirements was more accommodation and this required the raising of a considerable sum of money.

It seemed desirable to give a somewhat detailed account of the early days of the Nursing Association in order to make clear how the Hospital came into existence and why the central administrative block which is familiar to Crowborough residents differs in style from the subsequent additions which now form the more extensive portion of the Hospital buildings. The year 1911 has been suggested and even mentioned in a public speech as the date for the "foundation" of the Hospital. We have proposed 1925 as a more appropriate date, but, in reality, there is no date which can be fixed for the foundation of the Hospital; no site selected and building planned; no inauguration ceremony. It was the result of steady progress though there are certain dates which may be regarded as landmarks. In 1919, for example, a War Memorial Fund was raised in Crowborough and, at a public meeting, the subscribers decided, after spending a certain proportion of the amount subscribed on the War Memorial, to hand over the balance to the Cottage Hospital. This generous contribution enabled the Committee to purchase the house (now the central building) and land, and the property was vested in Trustees. The Trustees were further able to invest £900 for the Hospital and to pay £300 for the sanitary and other improvements mentioned above. A first step was thus taken to found a Hospital in place of the Nursing Home attached to the Nursing Association. In 1923 it was realised that more accommodation was needed if the Hospital was to develop and an appeal for more funds was launched. The appeal was very successful and amply justified the resolution passed at the Meeting of subscribers to proceed with the construction of new wards in accordance with plans which had already been drawn up by Messrs. Langton, Dennis and Ball in view of future extension. The proposed building consisted of a Maternity Ward, Women's Ward, Men's Ward and Operating Theatre estimated to cost, with central heating for the whole Hospital, £4,150. To meet this it was necessary to realise the invested funds amounting to £3,266 and to trust to donations to the building fund and transfers from the income account to make up the balance. This made it possible for the cost to be met or nearly so, but the debt of the Building Fund to the Bank was not finally extinguished until 1931, largely owing to still further expenditure on improvements. The additions and improvements now planned were completed by 1925 and it is possible to regard this year as the date of the real foundation of the Hospital which had thereby become a small but well-equipped unit with 11 beds and two cots, and it could properly be called a Cottage Hospital. There remained much to be done and the Report for 1925 refers to such necessities as new storage places for wood and coal to replace dilapidated sheds, sun blinds for verandahs, etc., which would be essential in the near future.

Still considerable progress had been made and in many other ways there were indications that the former Home had been replaced by a Hospital. Now, for

instance, all the doctors in Crowborough were on the Hon. Medical Staff in the sense that they all attended patients admitted to the Home. Mr. N. F. Sinclair, F.R.C.S. had volunteered to act as Hon. Consulting Surgeon. The old building had been entirely renovated and, in addition to the new wing, there was an Out-patients' Department used by the East Sussex County Council Medical Officers for dental and eye clinics as well as by the Nursing Association.

X-ray

In 1926 an anonymous donor offered to present an X-ray apparatus if a suitable room was available. There was not and the most suitable site was occupied by one of the old store rooms which was due to be replaced as soon as it could be afforded. In spite of the debt to the Bank, it was thought that the offer was too good to be missed, and it was decided to proceed with the construction of a room on this site and to erect new storerooms and also a much needed Mortuary for post mortem examinations. The total expense was estimated at £425. The same year the Medical Staff was strengthened by the addition of two more Hon. Consultants, ophthalmic and aural surgeons. The Report of this year gives the accommodation for patients as 17 beds and four cots, a very substantial increase. The Crowborough Provident Scheme, which was inaugurated in December 1924, began to function this year with about 400 member families. This system of insurance against the cost of Hospital treatment proved very valuable to families of the lower income grades as, for a contribution of 2d. per week, the Society undertook to pay the Hospital charges and it was also to become a considerable benefit to the Hospital.

Further Extension of Buildings - 1927

In 1927 the proposals of the previous year for new construction were revised and combined with the building of a Nurses' Home. The cost of the revised plan would be over £2,000 but a large part of the total cost would be met by certain generous promises and the Bazaar organised by Lady Swift and others had realised about £350. It was expected that, when completed, there would be a debt to the Bank of about £1,000. This project would not only greatly improve the accommodation available for the nursing staff, but free another room to be used as a private ward. Each nurse would have a room to herself.

The debt incurred by this spate of building naturally caused a halt to be called for the next few years. Repairs and renewals were also cut to a minimum and only the most urgent and essential repairs were carried out. It was explained in the Report for 1928 that transfers from the income and expenditure account would not suffice to pay off the debt for several years and donations for the Building Fund were the object of appeals for special donations. The reduction of the bank overdraft was, however, accomplished at a quicker rate than was expected. In 1929 the Committee was able to devote £300 towards this object and, with a legacy of £50, the amount of the debt was reduced to about £650.

Fortunately, 1930 was a year of windfalls and the debt was practically wiped out, being reduced from £650 to £41. This was done by a transfer from income of £325, nearly £200 in thank offerings for the King's recovery, a legacy of £50 and other donations. Further, a donation of £500 from the Trustees of Sir John Howard was made for surgical equipment and this was specially valuable in providing all that was necessary to bring the theatre up to date at a time when the number of operations was rapidly increasing.

Debt incurred on Extension Liquidated - 1931

In 1931, the debt having been completely extinguished, it was found possible to construct a porch to the Hospital, an improvement which had long been considered necessary; the proceeds of an entertainment amounting to about £60 were devoted to this purpose. An effort was also made to make good some of the leeway in repairs and renewals. The Committee considered urgent the outlay of more capital to provide a "Labour Ward" as a complement to the Maternity section.

The Medical Report for the year referred to the increase in major operations of which there were 52 as compared with five in 1925 when the first Hon. Consulting Surgeon was appointed. In addition, there were 83 minor operations, rather less than in the previous three years but quite a substantial number compared with 1925 (32).

Accounts presented in Revised Form - 1932

In 1932 the accounts were presented in a new form following as closely as possible that recommended by King Edward's Hospital Fund, now generally adopted by hospitals. The Balance Sheet gives a general idea of the value of the land, buildings and equipment - there was little else. The re-arrangement of the income and expenditure account giving comparative figures for the previous year was a great improvement and enabled those interested in the Hospital to follow easily the sources of income and the objects of expenditure. Services rendered were earning an increasing proportion of the revenue.

Purchase of Land for Further Extension Planned

The proposal made the previous year for the construction of a "Labour Ward" was reconsidered by the Committee which now came to the conclusion that no satisfactory decision could be made without provision of more accommodation for women patients and this would be impracticable without the acquisition of more land. It was, therefore, arranged as a first step to purchase a part of the field on the east side of the Hospital. In 1932 and 1933 an important extension was planned for this site and it was far more ambitious. The new building was to consist of a new wing on the east side of the main building. The fall of the ground made the construction of

two floors feasible. The ground floor was to be occupied by a complete Out-patients' Department, sterilising room, three domestic store rooms, a drug store and a boiler house for central heating (carried also to the main building) and for domestic hot water supply. Above, there was to be a Maternity Unit consisting of a Public Ward of five beds, Labour Ward, sanitary wing, duty room and one private maternity ward.

Further Extension Commenced - 1933

The estimated cost of the revised plan was £4,630 and it was decided not to embark on the projected building programme until at least £2,500 had been raised. However, in 1933, in consequence of the grave unemployment situation in the country generally, it was considered desirable to stimulate employment in the neighbourhood and it was eventually decided to commence work at once.

A novel and interesting method of avoiding considerable interest charges on the loan which it was necessary to obtain from the Bank was arranged. The Westminster Bank very generously offered to advance the funds required without interest on the following terms. The Bank was to receive deposits from those interested in the scheme to be credited to a special deposit account. The amount of this deposit account would be set off against the amount of the loan account and interest would only be charged if the former was allowed to fall below the latter. If a number of sympathisers were willing to deposit spare cash and bank balances to a sufficient amount, no interest would be payable on the loan to the Hospital. Deposits would earn no interest but would be repayable on demand. The scheme worked so well that no interest was paid for the first year and only a small sum the following year. The work was completed in December and the new Maternity wing and Ward were named the "Maude" Wing and "Mason" Ward after the Chairman and Hon. Secretary of the time.

During the period covered by the Report for 1933-34, the Hospital was occupied with the building operations which were completed in December 1933. The normal work of the Hospital was carried on under great difficulty but, in spite of the inconvenience, there was an increase in the amount of revenue derived from services rendered.

The debt incurred by the extension was considerably reduced thanks to several generous donations and a windfall of £648 from the executors of Mr. Barnet Lewis, leaving a total debt of just over £2,000.

Wireless

Wireless was first introduced in 1925-26 with a gift of a set to the Hospital: other sets, no longer wanted, were subsequently presented but they were unsuitable for so large a building and an Appeal was launched to provide a more suitable

apparatus, including the wiring of the wards and loud speakers. The wiring was completed but wireless was not available to every bed until a year later when a gift of a radio receiving set was made by Mr. and Mrs. Shairp.

Garden

The garden was very much improved thanks to a good deal of voluntary work and to the Unemployment Relief Fund which contributed £50 which paid for extra labour. Shrubs and plants were given by various friends and firms and the Hospital had the advantage of the advice of Mr. John Charlton as to layout and his firm presented trees and shrubs.

The next year (Report for 1934-35) saw the completion of payments for the extension, leaving a debt of £1,470.

Modernisation of Central Building - 1934

During the year, Mrs. A. Geddes made an offer to recondition the corridors of the Hospital and replace the old wooden stairs with a steel staircase. This was completed in 1934. Further, Mrs. and Miss Clegg made a most valuable contribution by modernising the kitchen, replacing the old worn-out range with a more modern type cooking stove and adding a refrigerator.

Patients admitted were 326 (including 48 maternity), major operations - 120, minor operations - 119 (all record figures up to this time). Services rendered earned £1,705 and over £100 was transferred to the Extension Fund for the reduction of the debt.

In the following year, the debt was further reduced by over £300 to £1,155 and an appeal was issued to raise this amount in commemoration of King George V's Silver Jubilee. Aldwick Grange School decided to adopt a cot and the Aldwick Grange Cot became the first named bed in the Hospital.

The next year, 1936-37, saw the Hospital clear of debt once more. This was due to the response to the appeal made the previous year, and the proceeds of a Fete and a Bazaar. The total raised was £1,178.

Special bequests were £500 from the executors of Caleb Diplock, £50 from Smith's Charity and £25 from the Trustees of the Bernhard Baron Trust.

In 1935 the Nurses' quarters were extended and remodelled and provided, when the alterations were completed, all the accommodation required at that time. A loan of £1,000 made this possible. Previously, some nurses had to be lodged outside the Hospital and Mr. (later Sir Harry) and Mrs. H.F. Brand kindly came to the rescue by offering their lodge furnished, for their accommodation.

From this time admissions were annually over 300 and major operations over 100.

New Statutes

In 1938 Mr. E. Maude retired from the Chairmanship of the Committee as, owing to increasing deafness, he found he could not easily follow the discussion of members. He had been Chairman for 13 years and before that he had, for a long time, served on the Committee and been Hon. Treasurer. He still remained a member though he felt he could no longer control its debates. He was succeeded by Mr. W.H. Hill, the Vice-Chairman. In the same year, a Sub-Committee composed of the Chairman, Mr. G. Watson (Hon. Secretary) and Sir Humphrey Bell, prepared a draft of statutes for the Hospital in order to define the powers and duties of Committees and Officers, etc. conforming closely to the administrative procedure followed in the past. Certain amendments were proposed in this draft, principally consisting of the provision for a general Committee and an Executive Committee, for the election of a President and Vice-Presidents and for the creation of an Endowment Fund. These Statutes came into force when they were approved at the Annual General Meeting of subscribers on the 22nd March 1939.

By the Statutes, the new name "Crowborough War Memorial Hospital" was officially recognised. This style had been adopted in the Report for 1934 after the use of "Crowborough War Memorial Cottage Hospital" for several years previously. The title commemorated the fact that the land and building were purchased out of the fund raised by public subscription to secure a permanent memorial of the 1914-18 war.

There was an increase in expenditure in 1938 largely due to increase in salaries of the nursing staff and the greater number of nurses required to reduce working hours to 96 a fortnight, both recommendations of the Rushcliffe Report. The private wards were reconditioned and refurnished (where this had not been done before) and hot and cold running water provided for all private wards. The entrance drive was widened and a car park provided. Special donations were over £300, including £139, thank offerings for peace. The donors of these offerings were, like so many others, too optimistic; the avoidance of war by the Munich surrender was short-lived and, in the following year, conditions in the Hospital, as elsewhere, were radically altered.

The Hospital during the War

On the outbreak of war the Hospital was scheduled in the Emergency Hospital Scheme. This entailed emergency measures, e.g., laying in extra supplies of drugs and dressings, tinned provisions, blackout arrangements, defence against blast and splinters from bombs, etc. This last was directed by Mr. R.C. Ball, the

Hon. Architect, and voluntary workers supplied the labour for filling sandbags. Admissions were affected as a result of the war as wards in the Hospital had to be cleared and ten beds reserved for the Emergency Hospital Scheme in September and October. This did not, however, affect the Maternity Section where the number admitted exceeded that recorded in any previous year. There was a credit balance of £113 and the Endowment Fund was increased by £1,292 made up of £1,102 from the Trustees of the Crowborough Fire Brigade, £140 from the Provident Scheme (on winding up) and a legacy of £50.

In 1940 it was again reported that there was a satisfactory increase in income earned by services rendered and income exceeded expenditure by £166. There was, naturally enough, a decrease in the amount received from entertainments, caused by the war. This year more adjoining land was acquired, partly for protection against future building and partly in view of future possible extensions. A donation was received to cover the purchase price. £75 was added to the Endowment Fund. Admissions increased to 395, of which 122 were Maternity cases.

The next year admissions for the first time reached over 400 (429 of which 169 Maternity). There was a favourable balance, £140, of income over expenditure.

Separation of Nursing Association and Hospital

A proposal was made by the County Nursing Association that Crowborough, Jarvis Brook and Rotherfield Nursing Associations should be amalgamated and controlled by its own Committee with which the Hospital should be no longer connected either financially or otherwise. The Hospital Committee felt that they could not do otherwise than comply with this suggestion, sponsored by the County. So ended the long connection between the Hospital and the Nursing Association and it was with some regret that we parted, realising that, but for the Nursing Association, there might never have been a Crowborough Hospital.

Further Emergency Measures

Further emergency measures were taken in 1942. Provision was made for an emergency water supply in case of damage to the main, anti-blast walls were constructed for protection of windows as the sand bags were falling to pieces and a decontamination unit was added. Two additional private wards were made available (each with two beds) which was made possible by the kind offer of Dowager Lady Castle Stewart who undertook to house two nurses for the duration of the war.

Nursery for Maternity Block - 1943

An appeal for further funds was made shortly after the close of the year. The object was the completion of the Maternity Block by the addition of a nursery for

infants born in the Hospital. The result of the appeal was most satisfactory and £1,742 was raised in a brief space of time. This included £431, proceeds of a gift sale, £155 from dances, whist drives £66, collections, competitions and entertainments £175. The number of admissions again exceeded 400. The babies' nursery was completed in 1943.

The Hospital received severe blows through resignations in this year. First Mr.G.Watson, who had been Hon.Secretary since the resignation of Miss Helen Mason and a member of the Committee for a good many more years, found that he could not continue to cope with the heavy work owing to continued ill health. His knowledge of the working of the Hospital was greater than that of anyone who had been connected with it and it was difficult to replace him. Lt.Col.D.L.Graham agreed to undertake the duties for the time being in spite of other work which he could not relinquish. Mr.J.F.Sibbald, C.A., the Hon.Treasurer since 1937, was also obliged to give up and was replaced by Mr.D.H.James, A.C.A. Finally, at the end of the year, Miss E.M.Finch, Matron since 1937, left to be married.

The publication of the White Paper on the proposed National Health Service gave the Committee much material for thought and discussion, especially as to how it would affect the Hospital and its finances. Would it be wise to embark on schemes for extension which the Committee had in view? There were plans for improvements, some of which ought to be put in hand as soon as practicable, e.g., the enlargement of the Nurses' Home. This clearly required attention at the earliest possible opportunity since no less than five of the Staff were housed outside the Hospital in accommodation provided by the kindness of Lady Castle Stewart and Sir Harry and Lady Brand. Other items in view were a passenger lift to the upper floor, more accommodation for administration and a larger and more convenient X-ray room.

This year admissions totalled 523 (Maternity - 206), major operations - 111, minor - 230. Balance to credit on Income and Expenditure Account - £601. Receipts for services rendered, over £4,000. All these figures represent records up to this time (except the number of major operations).

Flying Bomb Damage

Owing to war conditions in the area in 1944, the year was one of considerable difficulty and anxiety due to the air raids and the flying bomb attacks. A good deal of damage was done to the Hospital by two flying bomb incidents in the immediate neighbourhood. The Matron and Staff behaved with admirable calm and helpful confidence, which was praised by the patients subsequently, and fortunately no-one was injured. First aid repairs were made quickly and only one ward was closed for a short time. Although many residents quitted the district for places considered to be safer, the work of the Hospital increased in most

departments and 569 admissions are recorded of which 210 were Maternity cases.

The voluntary Hospitals of Sussex decided to launch an appeal on behalf of these institutions to commemorate the end of the war and Crowborough decided to participate following the example of the majority. Unfortunately, the moment was ill chosen in view of the uncertainty of the future of the Voluntary Hospitals and the appeal had little success. The amount received by Crowborough in the share-out of the proceeds only reached £186 which was paid in 1946. A donation of £100 by Mrs. Hopper in memory of her husband, the Rev. E. B. Hopper, enabled the Hospital to purchase a new Theatre lamp, which was installed the following year.

1945

Interest continued on the part of the public and the help given in subscriptions was well maintained inspite of the menace of state control in the near future. There was a most satisfactory balance to credit of £352. Again admissions for the year were over 500.

Sir Harry Brand's gift of "St. Veronica's"

A most generous offer was made by Sir Harry Brand which was intended to relieve the Hospital's great difficulties in housing the Nursing Staff, as there seemed little prospect of extending the Nurses' Home for some time. He proposed to make a gift to the Hospital of a house, "St. Veronica's", nearly opposite the Hospital. The house had about six bedrooms and three reception rooms, one of which was a large room which could be adapted for the rheumatism and massage clinics. This munificent offer was most gratefully accepted by the Committee, and no gift could have been more timely and helpful. Unfortunately, the house had been let and the tenant took his stand on the Rent Restriction Act and declined to leave. Steps were taken to get legal advice as to the possibility of obtaining possession.

Mr. G. Watson, who had been associated with the Hospital for so many years and who had been obliged by ill health to resign the post of Hon. Secretary, was elected to the less exacting office as President in the place of Sir Alfred Sargeant.

In 1946 there were several changes in the Medical Staff. Dr. J. C. C. Poole and Mrs. Jean Poole resigned on leaving Crowborough, and Dr. A. R. Elliott was obliged by ill health to give up work in April and died the following October. He had been a most valued member of the Medical Staff for over 20 years and he had been extremely valuable as a member of the Building Committee, and for many years had operated the X-ray apparatus. Three newcomers to the district joined the Staff.

The Income and Expenditure Account showed a small deficit which was more than compensated for by legacies and receipts of an exceptional character: legacies amounted to £788, and the payment above referred to as the Hospital's share in the Sussex Thanksgiving Appeal also helped.

The position with regard to accommodation of the Nursing Staff was extremely difficult as the Hospital had been unable to obtain possession of the house given for this purpose by Sir Harry Brand. Lady Castle Stewart and Mrs. Proctor relieved the situation by offering house room.

The work in all departments increased considerably and new records were set up. Admissions for the first time exceeded 600 - 614 of which 256 were Maternity cases; major operations - 173, minor also 173. The General Wards earned £200 more than the previous year and the Private Wards £300 more.

1947

The number of patients admitted was 552, compared with 614 in 1946; Maternity patients numbered 223, 33 fewer than the previous year; major operations were 122 (173 in 1946) and minor operations 183 as against 173 in 1946.

The Hospital was officially informed in October that the Ministry of Health would take over the administration from the 5th July 1948. The Committee had expected this and they were naturally anxious that the Hospital should be in good condition and everything in proper working order.

During the war it had not been possible to get painting and decorating done, and the Hospital, like other buildings had been neglected in this respect. This year we were fortunate enough to obtain the necessary paint and labour and the Committee decided that it was advisable to paint inside and outside in spite of the increased cost. This work was carried out and the result seems very satisfactory and it should last for several years without anything further of importance being required.

St. Veronica's

The Committee obtained opinion of Counsel on the possibility of obtaining vacant possession of the house which had so generously been made over to the Hospital by deed of gift of Sir Harry Brand. Counsel advised that we had no case to go to Court to obtain an order for the expulsion of the tenant who had declined to leave. Under these circumstances, as there was no immediate prospect of the property being used for the purpose for which it had been given, and as Sir Harry Brand had requested us to consider the return of the property, the Committee empowered the Trustees, in whom the property was vested, to take the necessary steps to comply with Sir Harry's wish. It appeared, however,

that the Trustees are not legally able to give effect to the Committee's resolution. They have no power to execute a deed of gift of property vested in them and the Charity Commissioners refused consent to the proposal. The failure of the object for which the deed of gift was made is of a temporary character which might be determined in several ways - alternative accommodation becoming available: tenant deciding to leave or failing to observe the terms of the lease: repeal of the Rent Restriction Act, etc. So the problem of accommodation for the nursing staff was left unsolved, though the disappointment of the Committee at the failure of this admirable method of meeting the difficulty in no way diminished their gratitude to Sir Harry Brand for his most generous offer.

Memorial to Dr.Elliott

About £60 was subscribed by former patients and friends of Dr.A.R.Elliott, whose death in October 1946 was a great blow to the Hospital. The Committee, after discussing various suggestions for a memorial, eventually decided to spend the amount subscribed on a cubicle arrangement for the beds in the men's ward to take the place of the heavy screens formerly used when privacy was required. The cost of this was just about the sum available and a plaque is to be affixed to the wall to record the fact that the installation was made as a memorial to Dr.Elliott.

Finance

The financial position gave rise to considerable anxiety and, owing to circumstances over which the managing Committee has no control, they were obliged to ask the Bank to allow a temporary overdraft to meet current expenses. This was not due to diminution of receipts but to a large increase in unavoidable expenditure. Some of this was caused by the higher cost of provisions and under the heading of surgery and dispensary, but the largest item was an increase of nearly £800 in salaries and wages. Further, the cost of repairs and renewals and painting after several years of war-time neglect, and the water trouble described below all helped to make the situation more difficult. The Committee have done what they can to relieve the position by making all possible economies and they decided that fees must be raised to meet the cost per in-patient per week. As a result of this increased expenditure the cost of each in-patient per week increased from £5. 5. 0 in 1946 to £6.18. 0. Similar rises have taken place in other Hospitals and this figure is less than that reported elsewhere. The new fees are given in the Report and correspond almost exactly with those charged by the Kent & Sussex Hospital, Tunbridge Wells. As a result of this extra expenditure, there was a deficit of nearly £2,000 at the end of the year. However, there are sufficient funds invested to make good the loss, though the sale of securities is a measure only to be adopted as a last resort.

It was unfortunate that, at a time when worry over rapidly increasing expenditure was so disturbing, the Hospital should be involved in considerable expense owing to drainage rendered necessary by dampness in the store room at the end of the corridor of the main building. When the cause of this was investigated it was discovered that there was a regular stream of water near the foundations of the old building. This spring had caused some trouble in previous years, but the measures to remedy it had not been sufficiently drastic. It seems that subsoil water behaves in unexpected ways after a period of drought and it was clear that a more efficient cure was required. The flow was traced to a point near the disused well at the back of the Hospital and pipes were laid seven to ten feet underground to carry the water into the main drainage system and it is hoped that the cure will be permanent and the heavy expenditure justified.

To sum up, we may perhaps quote the following facts and figures to illustrate the steady development

1. Admission of Patients

In the 1920's the annual intake was	100 - 200
In the 1930's the annual intake was	200 - 300
In the 1940's the annual intake was	400 - 600
In 1946 the number of admissions was	614

2. Maternity cases

Maternity cases admitted (included in the above):

1920's	from 16 - 45
1930's	from 16 - 98
1940's	from 122 - 256

3. Operations were first provided for in a room not originally designed as an operating theatre in 1921 but no figures are given for any operations until 1925, when a proper theatre was constructed and equipped. The number of operations performed after that were:

1925	Major	5	Minor	32
1930	Major	24	Minor	104
1935	Major	120	Minor	119
1946	Major	173	Minor	173

4. Medical staff increased from one to eight or ten; visiting consultants about the same number.

5. **Earnings from services rendered:**

In 1911	Fees in the Home amounted to	£188
	Outside Nursing earned	£360
In 1920	Hospital earnings	£720
	Outside Nursing	£199
In 1930	Hospital earnings over	£1,000
	Outside Nursing	£128
In 1946	Hospital earnings over	£4,000

6. **Number of beds available:**

1911	5	Public Ward	A few Private beds
1925	17	plus 4 cots	
1946	36	of which 3 are cots	

One outstanding feature of the history of the Crowborough Hospital is the very generous way the local residents have supported the institution especially when there was a call for improvements or extension. It is a good example of what can be done by initiative, enterprise and voluntary effort and it reflects great credit on the local population that it has been possible to provide a well equipped small Hospital of 36 beds, sufficient for all ordinary purposes serving a community of about 7,000. Of course, there are cases of a special character or requiring the use of equipment which a small Hospital could not be expected to supply, but the Hospital is adequate and well equipped for all ordinary medical and surgical treatment.

The Hospital has been entirely acquired and built by voluntary contributions and it has been supported in the same way except, of course, for earnings for services rendered. Earnings have increased considerably from a very small annual income to about £4,000 per annum, which is approximately two thirds of the yearly cost of upkeep. In the early days the financial position was frequently almost desperate as the earning power was so small and most of such income was derived from outside nursing. In the original "Home" fees were very low - so low that it is no wonder that the financial position was precarious. Even in those days patients could hardly have paid their cost of maintenance at 6s. to 15s. a week in Public Wards and from one to five guineas in Private Wards. It is true that expenditure was very small compared with the later years, but the early reports show that there was constant financial difficulty and, on at least one occasion, it was seriously suggested that the work should be closed down. Recently expenditure has naturally increased enormously; eleven years ago the statistical cost per In-patient per week was still under £3 and since then it has steadily increased until it was £5. 5. 0 in 1946.

The list of special gifts, legacies and bequests of more than £50, published in the Report for 1946, shows that the majority of such gifts, both in number and in total, came from local residents. In addition, practically all small contributions - small individually but considerable in the aggregate - came from local people. Sums raised by public subscription include the King Edward VII Memorial Fund £369, Memorial for those who fell in the 1914-18 War, £1,600 cost of site and building then existing and £1,221 residue of the fund. Unemployment Relief Fund £400, George V Jubilee £125, Crowborough and District Fire Brigade (an institution dependent on voluntary subscriptions) on winding up, £1,102, Extension Fund 1933-37 £4,932, Babies' Nursery Fund 1942, £1,792. These comparatively large amounts were not collected without a good deal of organisation and the community has reason to be grateful to those who made arrangements for entertainments, bazaars, gift sales and other methods of extracting money from the many who could not easily afford regular subscriptions or were not sufficiently interested to do so. All this organising work was purely voluntary and should be thankfully remembered as well as the contributions in money.

We would like here to acknowledge with gratitude the splendid work done without remuneration by officers of the management, and especially that of the Hon.Secretaries and Hon.Treasurers of the Hospital. It is not always realised what an immense amount of voluntary work is required to keep an institution such as this running smoothly, and the heaviest work falls upon the Hon.Secretary and Hon.Treasurer. In larger Hospitals there is a much bigger paid clerical staff which can relieve them of a good deal of the routine work which these two volunteers now undertake.

Lack of clerical assistance also puts extra burdens on the Matron and Nursing Staff. We are not large enough to afford housekeeper, store keeper, almoner, etc., and these duties have to be performed by someone. The Matron has loyally undertaken the duty of housekeeper and storekeeper and, in emergencies, has taken over duty in the wards and theatre. The almoner's delicate task has to be performed by the Matron in consultation with the Hon.Secretary.

Finally, we must not forget the responsibility shouldered by the Committees, the members of which devote a good deal of time and thought to the affairs of the Hospital.

It is hoped, therefore, that the public will appreciate that, in addition to the help the Hospital has received in actual cash in subscriptions and donations, there have been large contributions of unpaid service which should be added to the account when we speak of the Hospital as "supported by voluntary contributions".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a final voluntary gesture to the Hospital Mrs.Elphick of Crowborough kindly typed up the original record and we would like to record our appreciation.