

EPSOM AND EWELL COTTAGE HOSPITAL



Epsom and Ewell Cottage Hospital has been a central and highly valued institution in the area since it was founded in April 1873. It was entirely supported by voluntary donations until its management and funding were taken over by the National Health Service at its inception in 1948. For the first four years the hospital occupied a pair of cottages in Pikes Hill, and then a pair of cottages in Hawthorn Place. In July 1889 the hospital moved to its final purpose-built premises in Alexandra Road, which were erected to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. It finally closed on that site in 1987, when its functions were transferred to the newly built Community Hospital in the grounds of West Park. The Old Cottage Hospital is now occupied by a large medical group practice.

In many ways the history of the Cottage Hospital provides a picture of the social history of Epsom and Ewell over the past one hundred and twenty years. Its annual reports, preserved in an almost continuous series from its foundation to 1923, include the names of many well-known local inhabitants amongst its supporters and, increasingly, also those of local businesses and clubs. These reports and associated letters, accounts and newspaper articles provide a valuable insight into the management and operation of a small local hospital at a time when many like it were established all over the country. Because the reports are detailed, the information they give is very personal and provides a view of late nineteenth and early twentieth century small town life which it is impossible to obtain from a mere description.

Some of the material used in compiling this account is preserved in the Surrey Record Office at Kingston, and in Bourne Hall Museum in Ewell, and some records were transferred from the Cottage Hospital to the new Community Hospital. I am grateful to all these institutions for their help in writing it.

The Hospital at Pikes Hill

The foundation of the Cottage Hospital was very largely due to the personal efforts and financial support of John Eldad Walters, a solicitor who practised in Lincoln's Inn and lived at Purberry Shot in Ewell. In March 1873 a four-sided pamphlet was published, printed by L.W. Andrews and Sons of Epsom, and giving the address as the Cottage Hospital, Pembroke Cottages, Pikes Hill (near the L.B. & S.C. Railway Station) Epsom. It reads as follows:

'A Gentleman has taken these two Cottages, and proposes to put them in order and adapt them for a COTTAGE HOSPITAL, and to give them free of Rent and Taxes, for two years for the purpose. There is accommodation for six or eight patients. The necessary repairs and alterations will be commenced, as soon as a fund has been raised for the purchase of Furniture, (estimated at about £80) and also for the purchase of some Surgical Instruments, and for current expenses.'

March 1873

**PEMBROKE COTTAGES, PIKES HILL,
EPSOM,**
(NEAR THE L. B. & S. C. RAILWAY STATION.)

A Gentleman has taken these two Cottages, and proposes to put them in order and adapt them for a COTTAGE HOSPITAL, and to give them free of Rent and Taxes, for two years for the purpose. There is accommodation for six or eight patients.

The necessary repairs and alterations will be commenced, as soon as a Fund has been raised for the purchase of Furniture, (estimated at about £80), and also for the purchase of some Surgical Instruments, and for current expenses.

Donations and Subscriptions will be received by

J. E. WALTERS, Esq., Ewell, the Treasurer.	
DR. DANIEL,	Epsom.
Mr HARSANT,	"
MISS ALEXANDER,	"
Miss Lock,	"
Mrs SCOTT,	"
Mrs STILWELL,	"
Mrs J. E. WALTERS, Ewell.	
Mrs W. M. WALTERS, Ewell.	

or they may be paid to the account of the Treasurer with the London and County Bank, Epsom.

Dr. Daniel has kindly consented to be the Medical Officer, and the above Ladies to act as Visitors, and to superintend the general arrangements.

March 1873

TURN OVER

There then follows a list of those who would receive subscriptions and donations. Mr. J.E. Walters of Ewell was the Treasurer, and money could also be paid to the account he had opened at the London and County Bank in Epsom. Dr. Daniel had consented to be the Medical Officer, and Mr. Harsant's name is also included in the list. He was a prominent chemist in Epsom at the time. The other names are all ladies, including Mrs. J.E. Walters and Mrs. W.M. Walters, the daughter-in-law of the founder, Miss Alexander, Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Stillwell. The ladies would act as visitors and superintend the general arrangements.

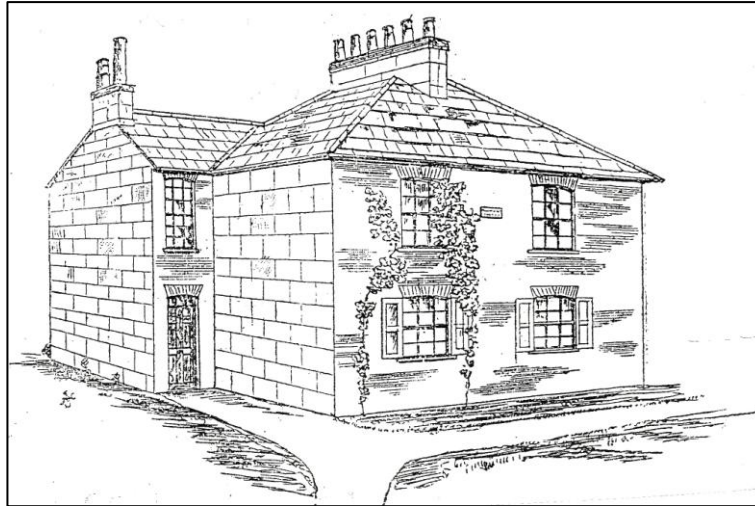
The inspiration for the foundation of a hospital in the town where he lived no doubt came to Mr. Walters from the work of his son, Dr. John Walters, who was a general practitioner in Reigate. He had been born in Bayswater in 1836 and studied medicine at King's College, London, where he was a Scholar and Gold Medallist. He served for four years in the Army Medical Service in Canada and on his return joined a practice in Reigate. He was a skilled ophthalmic and joint surgeon and with Dr. Constantine Holman, his senior partner, and the Rev. L.H.P. Maurice, set up a six-bedded Cottage Hospital in a pair of cottages in Albert Road North, which opened in October 1866. This was the second cottage hospital to be established in Surrey, the first, and also the first in the country, having opened in Cranleigh in 1859. In June 1871 a purpose-built hospital with twelve beds was opened in Reigate, where Mrs. John Walters carried out the housekeeping and the supervision of the one nurse and the domestic staff.

Miss Annie Isabella Alexander was a source of encouragement and advice to Mr. Walters. She was the second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Alexander of Hylands House, Dorking Road, Epsom, and had been born in India. She remained unmarried and appears to have devoted her life to charitable works in Epsom. She founded a Mission Room in the High Street, and an Invalid Kitchen to dispense delicacies to the sick as prescribed by their doctors which they could not afford. When she died in 1908 she left £300 to the hospital. There were facilities for nursing the poor in the Union Workhouse in Epsom, which stood on the site of the present General Hospital, and the upper middle classes could afford to hire a private nurse in their own homes. However, there were no hospital facilities for the working classes, or the emerging lower middle classes, who were increasingly coming to live in the area as rail transport to other larger surrounding towns and to London improved.

The third page of the first handbill contains a list of rules governing admission to the hospital which makes its purpose clear. Annual subscribers of 10/- or more, and donors of £5 or more, would be entitled to recommend patients for admission by means of a printed form, applying at the hospital or to the Treasurer or Medical Officer. A sudden emergency could be received immediately if there was room. All patients must be sane, free from fits or an incurable malady, and from association with infection. The maximum length of stay, except under exceptional circumstances, was eight weeks. Any legally qualified medical practitioner could attend his own patients in the hospital in conjunction with the medical officers. No liquors or provisions were to be brought into the hospital without permission. The form of application for admission gave the name of the patient and the subscriber or donor recommending him or her. It had to be signed by a respectable housekeeper who would guarantee that the weekly fees would be paid in advance, and that in the event of a cure not occurring, the cost of removal or burial would be paid. The medical part of the certificate had to be signed by the patient's own doctor. The fees ranged from 5/- to 10/6 per week.

The hospital first opened on 24 April 1873, and a pamphlet was published in May with the address as before and stating 'One of these Cottages has been repaired and furnished, and is

now open for the reception of patients.... The other Cottage will be adapted and furnished if sufficient funds are raised for the purpose.’ A further handbill dated 24 October 1873 notes that the hospital has been open for six months but ‘the balance of £65.2.0. in hand is not sufficient to meet the expenses of the next six months. A full report will be submitted at the end of the twelvemonth.’ Twenty-two cases had been admitted in the first six months. The minutes of the Epsom Board of Health of 25 August 1873 record that Mr. Walters wrote asking for the remission of the rates on the Cottage Hospital, Pikes Hill. However, the Board resolved that ‘the establishment was of a kind which would not warrant them in excusing it from payment’.



The first hospital building, in Pikes Hill

The first report of the hospital is signed by J.E. Walters, Treasurer, and dated 13th April 1874. It begins:

‘There are, perhaps, few neighbourhoods in which a Cottage Hospital would be more likely to be useful than the neighbourhood of Epsom. Not only is the population of Epsom and the surrounding villages numerous, but there is the fact, peculiar to the locality, that accidents frequently happen to the Grooms and Horse keepers employed in the large racing establishments in and near Epsom’. 36 cases had been treated in the year, of which seven were accidents. One patient had died. On two occasions all eight beds in the two cottages were fully occupied. The two medical officers, Dr. Daniel and Dr. Coltart, gave their services free, and Mr. Harsant supplied medicines on generous terms. The committee administering the hospital consisted of those named in the first handbill and the Reverend Dr. and Mrs. Leary, and George Stillwell Esq., as well as the medical officers and the treasurer. Many friends had given donations in kind such as books, periodicals, fruit, eggs, dressing gowns and old carpet. A list of donors and subscribers, who raised over £206, is appended to the report. Donations varied from £10, of which there were five, down to 2/6. Funds were also raised by a church collection in Ewell, an amateur concert in Epsom organised by Mr. and Mrs. Stillwell and a Penny Reading in Ewell. This was a widespread form of public entertainment for the working classes, to which the admission charge was one penny. The Shakespearian Reading planned by Mr. Brandram of Ewell had to be cancelled because of his illness, but not everyone claimed back the price of their tickets. Altogether £30 was raised by these means, and £60 from patients’ payments. However, the remaining shortfall in the receipts to cover the expenses of just over £408 in the first year, a sum of £111, was donated

by Mr. Walters himself. Rent of the cottages was £28, and housekeeping cost nearly £133, though wages were only £32 and medicines about £15.

By the time of the publication of the second annual report, for 1874/5, the hospital had acquired three patrons: the Right Hon. the Earl of Egmont, who lived at Nork Place, Banstead, the Hon. Mrs. Greville Howard, and the Rev. Sir George Glyn, Bart., who was the Vicar of Ewell. Perhaps he suggested the introduction to the annual report. 'The Committee of the Epsom and Ewell Cottage Hospital desire, in commencing their second Annual Report, to acknowledge with gratitude and thankfulness the goodness of God in hitherto mercifully blessing their humble efforts for the welfare of their poorer neighbours'. The report lists the special advantages afforded by this and similar institutions, amongst which are 'avoiding the wide separation of patients from their friends, often occasioned by a removal to a distant Hospital, and the expense of visiting them when there' and 'the home-like and family character of the Institutions, which is more congenial with the habits of the poor than larger establishments'. It was thought that many of the patients admitted would have been out-door patients in London. The 48 patients listed (unnamed) with their conditions were all attended by the nurse and her daughter who was her assistant. Two had met with accidents at the races, and two patients died. The Treasurer, Mr. Walters, was already expressing his worries about the financial security of the hospital. 'It is not desirable that a Charitable Institution, involving an annual expenditure of about £300, should be dependent to so large an extent upon funds to be derived from uncertain sources, and they sincerely hope that they may be enabled in their next Report to show a considerable increase in the amount of the annual subscriptions'. A plea was also made for donations of old linen which 'are much needed'.

In the third year of the hospital's operation 60 cases were treated, of which 30 were from Epsom and 11 from Ewell. 8 cases came from the surrounding area and 11 cases were admitted from London. The average length of stay was just over three weeks. Since the receipts had decreased by £50 compared with the previous year, collecting cards were sent out with the annual report and the committee planned to assign separate districts to ladies and gentlemen who would undertake to try to collect funds in them. It was also proposed to admit convalescent cases from London in the summer when there were vacant beds, on the recommendation of subscribers, at a charge of 7/6 per week. Mr. Bradnam's Shakespearian Reading had finally been held and raised over £8, and a concert and an amateur theatrical performance had also added to the funds. The jurymen had contributed their fees at the inquest on John Wass. As well as donations in kind, supporters were thanked for taking convalescent patients for country drives. The housekeeping bill was ten times greater than that for medicines, and specifically included wines and brandy. The report also pointed out that the spiritual wants of the patients were not neglected since a Scripture Reader had visited the hospital regularly since its foundation.

The report for the year 1876/7 gives the information on the cover that 'The Committee meet at the hospital at 3 p.m. on Tuesdays'. Details of the cases treated were no longer included in the report. The ladies on the committee who were also visitors now numbered ten, and were drawn from Epsom, Ewell and Ashted. The expenses during the year had been heavier than usual, partly due to a rise of one third in the cost of provisions, and most importantly because of staff illness. The Matron's daughter who was also her assistant was ill for a long period, and then both the Matron and her temporary replacement were seriously ill with blood poisoning 'contracted in the discharge of their duty'. The Matron was convalescent but her replacement had had her hand amputated after a consultation with a surgeon from the London Hospital, and was still a patient in the hospital. Perhaps the operation had been performed by Dr. John Walters, since he was an expert joint surgeon. It was proposed to hold a bazaar to

raise funds in the grounds of Garbrand Hall, Ewell (now Bourne Hall) by kind permission of Mrs. Torr. This was organised by Mrs. General McCrea, a committee member from Ewell, and an advertisement hand-bill for the event survives. It was held on Wednesday and Thursday 11 and 12 July 1877, from two until eight o'clock. Admission was one shilling with children half-price, so from this information it appears that the supporters of the event were the upper classes and not those who would benefit from the use of the hospital. Friends were asked to contribute articles for sale including 'plain and fancy work, books, toys, old china or other saleable items' and to publicise the event among their acquaintances. Entertainment included bands, for which the expenses were paid by Mr. J.H. Tritton of Ewell House. As a result of the increase in the price of provisions the weekly fees for beds were raised for men to 7/6 (that for women remaining at 5/-) and for convalescent and distant cases from 7/6 to 10/-. Finally the committee asked for ladies to spare time to visit the patients, to read to them from 'interesting and instructive books' or to 'relieve the tedium of the sick bed in any other way that may suggest itself'. This is also the first time in which a list of individual donations in kind forms part of the report, and includes rabbits, several parcels of linen, 16 bottles of champagne and a meat hastener. This was a screen which directed the heat from the stove on to a joint so that it might cook more quickly, and would no doubt have been welcomed as a means of reducing the costs in the kitchen. Both Ashted and Ewell churches had had special collections for the hospital during the year, but interestingly, no church in Epsom had done so.

With Mrs Robertson Rogers's kind regards.

THE
LAST VOYAGE
 OF
THE SUNBEAM,
 With MAGIC LANTERN Illustrations
by slides prepared from original Photographs.

A non-political !!

LECTURE
 ON THE ABOVE SUBJECT
WILL BE GIVEN BY THE

HON. T. A. BRASSEY,
IN THE
PUBLIC HALL,
EPSOM,
 On Thursday Evening, Jan. 15th,
IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF THE
EPSOM & EWELL COTTAGE HOSPITAL
and under the Patronage of the Executive Committee of same.

TO COMMENCE AT 8.15

TICKETS, price 3s., 2s., 1s., and 6d., to be obtained at Andrews' Library,
 High Street, Epsom.

ANDREWS, PRINTER, EPSOM]

Hawthorn Place 1877 to 1889

In 1877 the committee in their annual report were able to announce that 'the cloud has passed away'. £350 had been placed in a special Bazaar Fund from which £60 had already been withdrawn. It was hoped that the £330 which the committee considered was necessary to be raised each year apart from patients' payments might be achieved, thus leaving the Fund untouched. The mood must have been optimistic since a twenty-one year lease had been taken on a pair of semi-detached cottages in Hawthorn Place, on the northern side of the London, Brighton and South Coast railway line. The rent was £52 per year for twelve rooms and outbuildings. The cost of restoring the Pikes Hill cottages to their former condition and of fitting out the new hospital was £73. Admissions were suspended while the work was carried out so that the total for the year 1877/8 was only 41. The new hospital opened in October and a circular announcing this, presumably sent to all subscribers, was published in November, also stating that the matron was Mrs. Dale, the nurse who had had her hand amputated as a result of blood poisoning. The curate of Epsom now served as Honorary Chaplain and an Assistant Secretary, John Maingay, who lived at Chessington Lodge in Spring Street, Ewell, had been appointed to help Mr. Walters who was both Honorary Secretary and Treasurer.

Despite the additional expenses at the new premises, the subscriptions and donations were less than in the previous year. However, the Earl and Countess of Rosebery, who had purchased the Durdans in Epsom in 1874, were now the third subscribers to contribute £10 per annum and became patrons. Mr. and Mrs. Braithwaite of Hookfield, Epsom, and Mr. and Mrs. Walters, were the others who gave this amount annually. Epsom Grand Stand Association contributed £2.2.0. per year for the first time, an acknowledgement of the treatment the hospital provided for the victims of accidents at race meetings. For the first time Epsom College gave the proceeds of a Chapel Collection. Businesses in Epsom also began to feature among the subscribers, for instance Messrs. G. and J. Furniss, and Messrs. Williams and Blomfield (drapers), and so would have been able to call on a bed in the hospital for a sick employee. The hospital was also a beneficiary from the Hospital Sunday collections in London churches, receiving £8 from part of the collection at the Belgrave Chapel and £22.6.8. as its share of the Metropolitan Hospital Sunday Fund which was administered from the Mansion House. The latter fund continued to support the hospital generously for a number of years, and because it required regular statistical returns on the activities of the hospital, provides valuable historical information. Donations in kind continued, many of them of linen, but including surgical instruments and a bed and bedding for an accident ward. Mrs. Westwick donated ingredients for a pudding at Christmas and Mrs. Rokeby Price a dinner bell.

The report for the following year shows that not all patients were asked to leave after eight weeks, since a nurse to a Norwood family who was dying of consumption was cared for in the hospital for thirteen months as she had no family. Once again the accounts showed a deficit requiring £40 to be withdrawn from the Bazaar Fund. However, at this time the Epsom Foresters' Society and other local Benefit Societies began to contribute to the hospital funds giving over £30 collected at a Sunday afternoon service held at Ewell parish church in September 1878. The report notes 'This popular and spontaneous movement on the part of the labouring class, for whose benefit the hospital was principally instituted, bears strong testimony to the utility of the Institution, and is an encouragement to the Medical Officers who render their services gratuitously, and to those who manage its affairs, besides setting a noble example to some of their richer neighbours, and more especially to those residing in

Epsom (from which Parish, as will be seen by this and previous Reports, at least one half of the patients have come), to contribute to its support'. The receipts from patients increased and once again Mr. Brandram gave a Shakesperian (*sic*) Recitation, raising over £15. Among the donations were five nightingales from Mrs. Lempriere. These were a kind of flannel wrap to cover the shoulders and arms of a patient while confined to bed, and had presumably been made by the donor. They feature a number of times among the donations for the next few years.

The Benefit Societies continued to support the hospital, though the collection after their annual service in September 1879 was only £17. However, plans were made to institute a collection among local firms' employees in 1880, and this raised over £24 on 10 July of that year, the beginning of an annual event which played an increasingly large part in the support for the hospital. Contributions came from workmen, domestic servants, shop and factory assistants, and a Working Men's Committee was organised. An annual subscription of £5 from the Guardians of the Epsom Union Workhouse acknowledged the assistance of the hospital in caring for the poor of the parishes. The report for 1879 notes that a starving child of five was nursed free for four months at the request of Dr. Coltart, who was also the medical officer to the workhouse, where she was sent healthy at the end of that time. A donation of six guineas was made in 1880 by the Army Service Corps in thanks for the care of a soldier for twenty-four hours before his death from sunstroke, suffered on a route march in the area. Money was also raised in collecting boxes in public houses. However, the average deficiency each year was about £34 at this time. A new matron was appointed on the retirement of Mrs. Dale, who received a gratuity of £5. From 1880 the annual report included 'rules to be observed by the patients and their friends' which stated 'Female patients when well enough are expected to help in making their beds and dusting their rooms, &c'. Visiting times were Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays from 2.30 to 4 p.m.

When the former matron, Mrs. Dale, died in 1881 she directed that the few articles of furniture she possessed should be sold and the proceeds donated to the hospital. This is the first time that the hospital features in the will of a supporter. However, the annual report notes that since the articles would have realised only a small sum, they were retained as they were useful. Miss Mary Allen, who had lived in Ewell when the hospital was founded, also left a legacy to it that year of £10. The Working Men's Sunday Collection raised only a little over £10, so once again expenditure exceeded income and the Bazaar Fund was drawn on and reduced to £150. However, the report notes that 'The Committee have lately passed a resolution that any respectable person may, on the production of a recommendation from his or her medical attendant, hire the Water Bed at 2s. 6d. per week, upon giving an undertaking to return the same free from damage'. No-one appears to have taken up the offer until 1886, when £1 13s. was raised by this means.

The death of the hospital's founder, Mr. J.E. Walters, is recorded in the report for 1882/3. Just before his death he made a donation of £100. The committee resolved in March 1883 that 'the time is arrived that a new and more convenient building should be erected in the place of the present Cottage Hospital, and a ward named in memory of the late J.E. Walters, Esq., Founder of the original Institution'. The report continued 'the Rev. E.W. Northey then kindly offered an eligible site.' However, this was not the one on which the hospital was finally erected in Alexandra Road. John F. Maingay of Ewell, the former assistant secretary, became the Honorary Secretary, while the Rev. Edw. W. Northey took on the now separate post of Honorary Treasurer, which he held for thirty three years. The death of the founder's wife was recorded three years later. In the same year the matron, Miss Baker, left for

America and was replaced by Miss Broadbridge, whose mother lived with her at the hospital for a number of years. Her contributions for board are shown in the accounts.

EPSOM & EWELL COTTAGE HOSPITAL.

To Commemorate the Sixty Years of Her Majesty's Reign.

THE Committee of the Cottage Hospital desire to appeal to the Inhabitants of Epsom, Ewell, and the neighbourhood to commemorate the approaching celebration of the completion of the sixtieth year of Her Majesty's reign by forming a fund to enable them to carry out some much needed alterations and improvements in the building of the Hospital, also to increase the present "Reserve Fund" to meet contingencies, and if possible to create an Endowment Fund.

The present building is a "Jubilee Hospital," having been erected out of funds contributed on the occasion of Her Majesty's Jubilee in 1887, and it is considered that no more appropriate celebration of this year can be devised. That such a celebration would be most in accordance with the Queen's views is shown by the fact that H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, speaking in her name, has appealed to the Nation for support to the Hospitals of London as the best form of celebration for the Metropolis.

It is estimated that a sum of at least £600 will be required for the necessary alterations in the present building. In addition to this it is most desirable that the present "Reserve Fund" should be largely increased, and be placed under the control of the Committee, in order to meet urgent requirements, such as a sudden falling off in any year of the casual Donations, which alone have enabled the Committee to carry on the Hospital without ever running into debt.

Contributions may be sent either to the REV. E. W. NORTHEY, Hon. Treasurer, Woodcote House, Epsom, or to JOHN F. MAINGAY, Esq., Hon. Secretary, Ewell, or to the account of the Treasurer with the London and County Banking Company, Epsom.

Donors are requested to state whether their contributions are to be devoted to "The Building and Endowment Fund, or to "The Reserve Fund," or to both.

The following Contributions have already been promised:

<i>To the "Building and Endowment Fund."</i>	<i>To the "Reserve Fund."</i>																																								
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By order of the Committee.

J. F. MAINGAY, Hon. Sec.

The decision to erect a new Cottage Hospital to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign was taken as the result of a democratic vote in the town. The Chairman of the Epsom Local Board of Health (the forerunner of the local council), Mr. J. Andrews, called an open meeting on February 18th 1887 at which several projects were proposed, among them a new cottage hospital, a free library and a recreation ground. A Jubilee Memorial Committee was set up with Mr. T. Davies as Honorary Secretary, who sent out 1200 circulars asking which project the inhabitants wished to support. Of 592 returned papers, 390 were in favour

of the cottage hospital. A few days later another open meeting was held at which the proposal was formally adopted and a subscription list opened which very soon collected £2000, £100 being donated by Lord Rosebery and by several other wealthy residents. Mr. and the Misses Butcher gave the site in Alexandra Road which was worth £150. The hospital committee in their report of that year pointed out that in the last ten years the expenditure had exceeded income by approximately £60 p.a., and since the Reserve Fund of £600 from the Bazaar and £100 for Mr. J.E. Walters now stood at only £200, they hoped that the money collected would be sufficient to endow the new hospital as well as to build it. The staff now consisted of a matron, nurse and cook, and eighty patients had been admitted. The average cost per week of each was £1 13s. 9d. The fees for poor men and women remained at 7/6 and 5/-, but servants from the area were now required to pay 2/6 more in each case since no doubt their employers were paying the fees. For convalescent cases from a distance, these were 12/6 for men and 10/- for women. Every report at this time stresses the need for new subscribers, that is for the promise of an assured annual donation. However, the donation of £20 from the Cambridge Footlights Club entertainment in 1887 helped, no doubt initiated by the son of one of the hospital supporters who was up at Cambridge then. At this time T.A. Alexander MD began his long association with the hospital, at first as a Medical Officer and, after his retirement, as a member of the committee.

The Cottage Hospital at Alexandra Road



A full description of the new Cottage Hospital and the opening ceremony on Thursday 11th July 1889 is given in the *Epsom Herald* of that week, a framed copy of which hung for many years in the out-patients department of the Community Hospital. The Building Committee was chaired by Mr. T.T. Bucknill, QC, of Hylands House, Epsom, with Mr. H. Newham as the Honorary Secretary. The Rev. E.W. Northey served as Treasurer as he did on the Hospital Committee, and many members of the latter also served on the Building Committee. One of the members was Mr. W.E. Bagshaw of Pitt Place, an accountant who acted as Honorary Auditor, whose entire set of papers relating to the workings of the committee are preserved in the Surrey Record Office and provide a fascinating insight into the difficulties that occurred in seeing the project through to its completion. The Building Committee submitted their

report to the first meeting of the subscribers held on 30th May 1890 in which the auditor, W.E. Bagshaw, points out that the list of subscriptions and the money received do not tally, a fact which caused great difficulties among the committee members according to his correspondence. It also seems that it had been assumed that the contract for the design of the hospital would be awarded to the surveyor to the Epsom Board of Health, J.R. Harding, C.E., M.S.A. However, from information from the *Epsom Advertiser* it appears that the Chairman, Mr. Bucknill QC, insisted that designs for the fifteen-bedded hospital should first be requested from a number of architects. Eventually Mr. Harding's design was approved, and the building contract was awarded to Mrs. S. Hards of Ewell, with Mr. Best acting as her manager. The Committee kept a tight control on the costs of the materials insisting, for instance, that the cost of the tiles be reduced and new tenders for their supply being obtained.



Epsom's Hospital Carnival, 1933: the Carnival King and Queen

The description of the hospital in the *Epsom Herald* reads as follows:

'The site, by reason of its inequalities, presented some difficulties in the arrangement, but these have been admirably overcome by the Architect, and the building presents a very picturesque appearance. No money whatever has been devoted to mere ornament. Economy and utility have been principally studied throughout, and great care and attention have been bestowed on the production of a thoroughly compact building, well suited to its work. The style is one which affords ample scope for simple means by which effect is sought to be obtained, viz. by a rich and harmonious scheme of colour, the building being red brick with bands of stocks, and stone mullions to the windows, and the roof covering of slate. Advantage has been taken of the inequalities of the site, and the administration department has been placed in the basement. Entrance to this floor is obtained at the north-west side of the building, where a tradesman's entrance is found, at the entrance to which a hatch window is arranged for the delivery of goods, without interfering with the hospital proper. On passing the inner doors we find a wide passage communicating with a large and capacious store

room, larder, coal and wood cellars, with various cupboards and sanitary arrangements. There is also a large and well-lighted kitchen, with scullery; also two large sitting-rooms, one being for males and the other for females, and rooms for heating apparatus, tools and mortuary.

Conveniently placed near the office is a staircase leading to the hospital, which has been arranged on the pavilion principle, the males and females each occupying opposite pavilion ends, and all the wards and offices connected therewith are on the one floor

The principal entrance is placed in the centre of the building, facing the Alexandra-road. It is protected by an ornamental timber porch communicating with a vestibule, and through the double doors to the corridor.



George, the future Duke of Kent, at the opening of the new X-ray department in the 1920s.

On each side of the principal entrance are placed the matron's rooms (one of which is now being used as a Committee room), a wide corridor runs from end to end of the building, thoroughly lighted and ventilated, from the corridor access is gained to the baths, water closets, and nurse's sculleries, also to all the wards, of which there are six.

There are likewise two bed rooms for the nurses, also a large convalescent room, which it is expected may be used as an accident ward. This room, together with two large wards, are fitted with French casements, opening out on to a wide verandah, where patients can, at their ease, enjoy the view and inhale the breezes from the open Downs. During the winter months this can be glazed, and thus converted into a winter garden to gladden and cheer the hearts of the sufferers.

All the wards are heated by open fire-places and hot water apparatus, and special attention has been given to the ventilation of the building. This is secured by means of double-hung windows in the outer walls, and, in addition, special air shafts, gratings, and ventilators in the ceiling, so that the air may be continually changed even when the windows are closed.

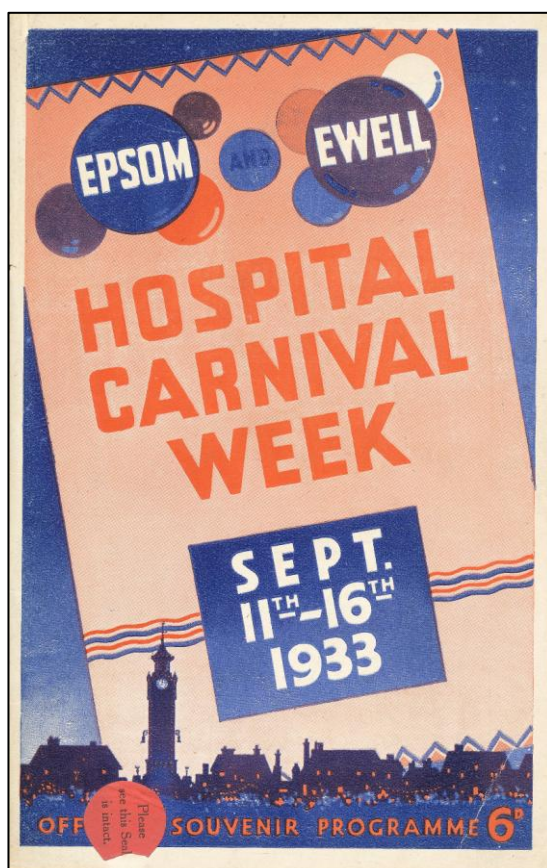
All the floors of the hospital are of deal, having a patent tongue, together with a good air space beneath, and the earth is covered with a layer of Portland cement, to prevent dampness from rising. The walls are of cement and plaster, and tinted various pleasing colours, with dados. All the joiner's work is of yellow deal varnished.

The water supply is from the Local Board's water mains, and a tank is provided for rain water. The drainage is connected with the town sewers, and is laid on the most approved principles. The whole of the building is lighted with gas. The six wards will accommodate twenty beds, and additional beds could be arranged for special cases in the large rooms adjoining the administrative department.

The building is approached by a carriage drive from the main road, and the grounds, in which convalescents may take exercise, are well and tastefully laid out, whilst its products will be found useful in the hospital dietary.

We must congratulate the Committee, one and all, on their efforts, which have resulted in the erection of a building, tastefully designed and arranged, which might serve as a model for other districts.'

Both the *Epsom Herald* and the Building Committee report list the gifts in kind to the hospital with their donors, the latter doing so in full. These include shrubs and fruit trees, 2400 turves and two truck-loads of gravel for the garden and approach. The officials of the two railway companies serving the town gave a case of surgical instruments. Many individuals donated the cost of a bed and others gave chairs, couches and bed-covers and linen. The 'pleasing colours' of the walls would have been adorned with the numerous donated framed pictures and texts, including the photograph of herself and her family from HRH Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, a cousin of Queen Victoria, who opened the building. The bookcase donated by the Ewell Working Men's Club would have been filled by the numerous book gifts listed. The total cash donations amounted to about £2700, while the cost of the building was £2165, including the architect's fee of £95. Fittings cost £300 and the garden £70. The administrative costs up to the opening ceremony, which itself cost £54, were £48, leaving a balance of about £94. This was certainly not the sum which had been hoped for to endow the new building.



A copy of the official programme for the opening ceremony survives and is also given in the *Epsom Herald*. The Duchess and her party took luncheon with Mr. and Mrs. Northey at Woodcote House before arriving at the Hospital at 3.30 where the Archdeacon of Surrey conducted a brief service in the accident ward, followed by a tour and the official opening by the Duchess from the balcony at the rear of the building. She then received purses for the maintenance of the hospital in a large tent erected in the adjacent meadow, followed by tea in a private tent and the departure of the royal party. The *Herald* then gives a very detailed account of the whole day's proceedings in both Epsom and Ewell from which the name of no local worthy is omitted, nor any description of the loyal welcome and tributes afforded to the town's first royal visitor since Prince Albert to the opening of the Medical College. The hospital and grounds remained open until seven o'clock for inspection by the public. Undoubtedly official invitations to the ceremony were eagerly sought and conferred civil status on their recipients. A printed leaflet dated July 1889 invited annual subscribers to the hospital funds and contributors to the building fund to apply for tickets at Andrew's library for admission to the tent in which the purses were presented to the Duchess, and to the hospital and gardens, on payment of sixpence. Since the accounts record that £24.0.6d. was raised by this means, nearly one thousand visitors must have attended the opening ceremony.

Unfortunately no mementoes of the day, such as purses, invitations or photographs, appear to have survived. Since Her Royal Highness travelled by carriage from White Lodge, Richmond, the shops and houses of Ewell, as well as of Epsom, were decorated with flags and bunting, as were the Town Hall buildings and the Clock Tower. Elaborately decorated arches were erected across the High Street in Ewell and Alexandra Road in Epsom, the latter the work of the staff and inmates of the Union Workhouse. Another at the London and Brighton railway station was constructed by the Court Temple Friendship Lodge of Foresters. The morning was occupied with putting up the decorations and the afternoon was a half-holiday, and fortunately the day remained fine throughout. As the *Herald* commented 'The High-Street was never seen to present such a gay appearance on any previous occasion, and the inhabitants generally are deserving of the greatest possible praise for the trouble and expense they have incurred'.

This history was written in the 1990s by Valerie Cox and has been made available through Bourne Hall Museum.



Valerie Cox