HOSPITAL OFFICERS


Hon. Solicitors.—F. Thimbleby, 1913-1924; W. C. Howard, 1924-1942; Raymond E. Frearson, 1943-1948.


Hospital Secretary.—A. Dearden, A.H.A., 1948 to date.

House Committee Chairman.—G. H. Hannam, 1948-1950; C. S. R. Overton, 1950 to date.

LEAGUE OF FRIENDS OF THE SKEGNESS HOSPITALS


SKEGNESS & DISTRICT HOSPITAL

1913 – 1963

GOLDEN JUBILEE

SOUVENIR BROCHURE
AND

Programme of Jubilee Events

Price - ONE SHILLING and SIXPENCE
SKEGNESS and DISTRICT HOSPITAL

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

May 16th to 19th, 1963

* Official Programme of Events *

THURSDAY

16th May, 1963

GARDEN FETE
In the paddock adjacent to the Lincoln Road entrance to the Hospital
To be opened at 3.0 p.m. by
Mrs. M. BACKWELL
Stalls, games, ices (under cover, if wet).
Teas in marquee.
Admission: Adults 1/-; Old Age Pensioners and Schoolchildren 6d.

FRIDAY

17th May, 1963

HOSPITAL OPEN DAY
The Hospital will be open to visitors from 2.0 p.m. onwards. Parties will be conducted round the wards and departments at 2.15, 2.45, 3.15 and 3.45 p.m.

SATURDAY

18th May, 1963

STAFF REUNION and DINNER
At the Imperial Ballroom, Skegness
Reception, 7.15 p.m.
By invitation only.

SUNDAY

19th May, 1963

THANKSGIVING SERVICE
St. Matthew's Church, Skegness, at 3.0 p.m.
The Address will be given by the
Rt. Rev. ANTHONY OTTER,
Lord Bishop Suffragan of Grantham
Service Conducted by the Hospital Chaplains.

COVER PICTURE.—Perspective sketch of the original Cottage Hospital prepared for the committee by the winning architect, Mr. F. J. Parkinson, of Blackburn. This now forms the left-central section of the present Dorothy Avenue frontage—see picture on page 15. Sketch photographed for reproduction by Gilbert Mastin, of Skegness.

Foreword

by Dr. D. Fraser Menzies, M.B.E., M.B., Ch.B.
Chairman of Skegness Hospital Committee, 1943-1948

TO have been asked to write a Foreword to this Souvenir Brochure for the Golden Jubilee of the Skegness and District Hospital is for me a great honour as well as a pleasure.

With his usual enthusiasm and attention to detail, Lieut-Commander F. S. W. Major has produced a brochure which is, and will be, of the greatest interest to all people of Skegness, now and for years to come. The task of studying and investigating all the facts of an Institution's fifty years of life, and being able to condense them into such a readable and interesting brochure, has meant a considerable amount of work for the author.

I have watched with interest for a good many years the growth of the Skegness Hospital, and had the honour of being chairman of the Hospital Committee until the change-over of the National Health Service in 1948. I am naturally very proud that the Hospital has progressed, and has attained its present-day high standard of efficiency.

Today I am given the opportunity of thanking—on behalf of the thousands of Skegness residents and the visitors to Skegness, who have benefited by their efforts—the many unselfish and willing voluntary workers, both men and women, who have worked and persevered through many difficulties, financial and otherwise, for many years, and who always had faith in the future of their own hospital.

As stated in the first chapter of this brochure, there were in 1911 three wise and foreseeing doctors in Skegness who maintained that it was essential, in a growing town like Skegness, with its many visitors, that there should be a hospital in which accidents and other emergencies should be attended to quickly to save suffering. Today it is just as essential, in fact even more essential, that Skegness Hospital should be maintained and increased to a still greater degree of efficiency and usefulness.

Lieu-Commander Major deserves our sincere thanks for producing this magnificent brochure which must do an immense amount of good in interesting everyone and making everyone realise that continual voluntary help is an essential part of life, to maintain this Skegness and District Hospital. That will be the reward he will receive for a work so well done.

D. FRASER MENZIES
17 Drake Road, Skegness.
April, 1963.
The First Steps

1911-13

Just when the idea of providing a separate hospital for Skegness and district first arose is not accurately determined, but it appears that the three local doctors who became the hospital’s first medical officers—Dr. A. Allan, Benjamin Sweeten, and Stanley Wallace—actually held a meeting in 1906 or 1907 to consider such a proposal, but the latter did not materialise owing to lack of support.

The year 1911, of course, witnessed the Coronation of H.M. King George V, and in the early months of that year the three doctors returned to their project. The first mention in print appears to be in a leading article in the “Skegness News” of Wednesday, March 15th, which ran:

The proposal to erect a cottage hospital in Skegness appears to be the most beneficial method the inhabitants can adopt to commemorate the coronation of King George V. At the present time there is a necessity in a growing town like Skegness for an institution where persons who have been injured in an accident can be taken and attended to quickly. Quite a large number of operations of various kinds have been performed upon Skegnessians and visitors during the last few years, and it is in the interests of the patients that such operations should be performed in quietude and in a suitable place where everything is in readiness as the operation progresses and every precaution can be taken to ensure rapid recovery.

“At the present time the patients upon whom operations are to be performed have to travel long distances enduring considerable pain to get to a hospital, or else the operation has to be performed at home where the surroundings are not suitable or conducive to the rapid recovery of the patient. The case of Mr. Charlie Green, who had to be hurriedly rushed away in a motor car to Boston, will be readily recalled and is a symble of what might possibly occur again, and if the sufferings of any unfortunate person who has to undergo an operation can be mitigated, the object of the promoters of a cottage hospital will be fulfilled.”

First Public Meeting

Two days later, on Friday, March 17th, the proposal was placed before a public meeting held in the Pavilion in the Pleasure (now Tower) Gardens, when the large attendance included a very considerable proportion of ladies, and Coun. Samuel Moody, chairman of the Skegness U.D. Council, presided.

The case for building the hospital was convincingly urged by Drs. Wallace, Allan and Sweeten, the last-named indicating that it was proposed to include wards for male and female patients, that about £1,000 would be required to carry out the scheme, and that the anticipated excess of income over expenditure would be about £100 a year. The newspaper report of the meeting concluded:


M.P.’s Support

The committee was not slow in moving, and on the following day a deputation consisting of Drs. Sweeten, Wallace and Allan waited at the Lion Hotel on the newly-elected M.P. for the Horncastle Division, Capt. A. G. Weigall (later Lt.-Col. Sir Archibald Weigall, K.C.M.G.).

Captain Weigall went into the matter most carefully and examined the plans of the proposed hospital with evident interest. He promised to give £250 towards the funds, providing an additional £250 was raised by Coronation Day, June 22nd.

The result of this interview were reported to another public meeting held on March 31st, to which the first list of donations was submitted, and it was announced that the Earl of Scarborough had agreed to give, as a site, 1,700 square yards of approved land at a value of £350.

At the close of the meeting, the Funds, Ladies’ Hospital, General and Executive Committee were appointed, and it was stated that the Executive Committee was to consist of Messrs. C. F. Grantham, G. Dunkley, senr., C. H. J. Dutton, T. Marshall, S. Moody, G. J. Crofts, G. Watson, junr., and Drs. Allan, Wallace and Sweeten. Mr. R. Batley was appointed acting secretary, Mr. S. C. Jones, chairman, Mr. W. Robinson as corresponding secretary and treasurer, and M. W. Burrows as auditor.

Site Finally Chosen

Without coming to any decision, the meeting considered sites on Drummond Road, at the end of Coronation Walk, and in the plantation on the south side of Cecil Avenue.

Both of these sites, however, were rejected when the committee held its next meeting on July 14th, with Mr. Coetmore Jones presiding, and members were informed that the site chosen was on Wainfleet Road—indeed, that occupied by the east front of the present hospital. It was stated that the site would be the gift of the Earl of Scarborough, but that the Hospital Committee would have to bear the cost of making up the road in front of it (the south end of the present Dorothy Avenue).

The committee was also told that H.H. Princess Marie Louise of Schleswig-Holstein had expressed her willingness to assist the object and had promised to lay the foundation stone.
On September 29th, 1911, little more than six months after the first meeting to launch the Skegness Cottage Hospital scheme, the foundation stone was laid by H.H. Princess Marie Louise of Schleswig-Holstein. It was a great day in the history of the resort, and all Skegness turned out for the occasion.

The ceremony took place in a field on the north side of Wainfleet-road, a field which was then surrounded by trees, but which has since become part of the site of the present hospital.

It was agreed that the hospital should be considered as a permanent memorial of the Coronation of H.M. King George V, and the public procession to and from the hospital site was to rival in size and colour the Coronation Procession which had taken place on June 22nd.

"Long before the stated time crowds began to congregate at the Clock Tower to watch the various organisations assembling to take part in the procession," runs a contemporary newspaper account. "The place was an animated spot during the time the detachments were falling into line, and it presented quite a kaleidoscopic (picture) with the uniforms of the Boys' Brigades, the Lifeboat crew and the shining helmets of the Firemen."

The brass band of Nos. 2 and 3 Skegness Companies, the Boys' Brigade, were at the head of the procession which was led by one of the company officers on horseback. Then followed the Skegness Fire Brigade and the Skegness Lifeboat crew, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd B.B. Companies with two bugle bands, and the 1st and 2nd Skegness Troops of Boy Scouts.

One recalls that the day was fine and sunny, but that a cold wind had begun to make itself felt before the proceedings were over. A large number of people had already assembled at the site, and the Scout Troops and B.B. Companies provided the guard of honour. The High Sheriff of Lincolnshire (Capt. J. Reeve), in full Guards uniform, was received by Mrs. S. Coetmore Jones, chairman of the Hospital Committee.

Her Highness, who was accompanied by a lady-in-waiting, by Capt. A. G. Weigall, M.P., and Mrs. Weigall, the Earl of Scarbrough and the Baroness K. von Eckhardtin, drove to the site from the Member's Skegness house at Delamere, Seacroft, and was received by the High Sheriff.

Illuminated Address

An illuminated album containing an address of welcome was presented to Her Highness by Coun. J. H. Shelley, chairman of the Skegness U.D.C. A note of the period states that the illuminative decorations were in the style of the French mediaeval manuscripts of the fifteenth century, and were executed by Mr. A. M. Porter, son of a Skegness Headmaster; the photographs in the album were taken by Mr. A. Wrate, of Skegness; and the binding was done by Miss J. E. Pagan, of Edinburgh.

Survivors of those present may still recall the tremendous surge forward of the assembled public as Her Highness applied the inscribed silver trowel to the foundation stone—a surge which was checked by the drawn-up lines of the Boy Scout and B.B. units, which gave but never broke.

The stone was fashioned hollow, and immediately after it had been laid the princess placed in its cavity an airtight leaden casket containing a copy of the programme signed by Her Highness, current issues of "The Times" and the two local newspapers, the "Skegness News" and the "Skegness Herald," together with some coins of the year.

Lord Scarbrough himself proposed the vote of thanks, which was seconded by the Member for the Division, and Her Highness, in her reply, said how touched she was by the beautiful way in which the townspeople had decorated the streets in her honour.

Forty-three children presented to Her Highness purses containing sums of money for the Hospital Fund, the total being £56. The names of the children are given in a contemporary report. Some have passed on, some have left the town, others are still with us.

The names recorded are: - Olive Abson, Peggy Allan, George Ball, Greta Batley, Gloria Barlow, Olaf Bracy, Lilian Bradford, Dorothy Brittain, Malcolm Connings, Maurice Chester, Hettie Clift, Wm. Hy. Cresswell, Dolly Crofts, Isabel Crowson.

Doris Dexter, Adelaide Eastwood, Lawrence Enderby, Norman Freethay, Lucy Frow, Josephine Graantham, Dorothy Hipkin, Ivy Jefferies, Sheila Jones, Chas. R. Lane, Evelyn Lill, Rose Mawhood, Waldo Mawhood, Doris Mead, Doris Moody, Patrick Morrell.

Olive Parker, Geo. Cyril Randall, Marjorie Robinson, Kathleen Rowe, Helen Lucy Scott, Phyllis Shawo, Hilda Smith, Dorothy Sweten, Constance Thorntom, Dorothy Walker, Etta Willis, Willie Wiltshire and Gladys Wood.

After tea, taken in marquees on the ground, the princess inspected the Fire Brigade, the Lifeboat crew and the Boy Scout Troops and B.B. Companies, and later the units paraded back to the Clock Tower, being dismissed after the playing of the National Anthem.
The Three-days' Bazaar

SPECIAL EVENT IN 1912 RAISED £553

Principal event in connection with the hospital proposals between the stone-laying and the official opening was the memorable three-days' bazaar which was held in the Pleasure (now Tower) Gardens, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, August 14th, 15th and 16th, 1912, and raised the very considerable sum for those days of £553.

Prime mover in this monumental effort was Miss Emmeline Grantham, who was later to become the hospital's first honorary secretary.

There were separate opening ceremonies on each day. On the Wednesday the bazaar was opened by the Earl of Scarbrough; on the Thursday, the Baroness von Eckhardtstein (daughter of Mrs. Weigall, wife of the Member for the Division); and on the Friday by Mrs. Warren, of Willoughby Rectory.

The chairman (Mr. S. Coetmore Jones) told the assembly that they had to embark on a building expenditure of £1,000 (the site having been kindly given by Lord Scarbrough), of which they had already raised £900. An additional £300 was required for equipment; the bazaar was being held to provide that, and any balance would be given to the building fund.

Ornamental Arch

Supporters of the hospital scheme, from a wide area, assisted with the event, and there were many stalls and attractions. Some of the latter were placed in the existing rustic summer-houses, and marquees housed the others. There was a lavish display of flags and bunting, and an ornamental arch at the Lumley Road entrance to the gardens bore the words "Success to the Cottage Hospital Bazaar.

On the Wednesday evening, a ball was held at the Central Hall, Roman Bank (now the Central Cinema), under the patronage of Col. Chadbourn and officers of the West Riding Divisional Engineers. There was a large attendance, and the stewards included Drs. Allan, Sweeten and Wallace, and Messrs. S. Coetmore Jones, C. F. Grantham and Robinson.

Presentation to Lord Scarbrough

It is of interest to note that, at the conclusion of Wednesday's opening ceremony, Lord Scarbrough was presented with a framed reproduction of an artist's perspective drawing of the projected hospital by the bazaar organiser's nephew—a young man named Guy Grantham who was soon to embark on a notable career in the Royal Navy, to serve with distinction as a Naval Captain in the Mediterranean actions of World War II, and to become Vice-Chief of Naval Staff, a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, a Commander-in-Chief (Portsmouth), and, more recently, Governor of Malta.

The Opening Ceremony

Designed and completed in just over two years from the date of the inaugural meeting, Skegness Cottage Hospital was formally opened by the Countess of Scarbrough on the afternoon of Monday, May 19th, 1913.

The day chosen for the opening was not, at first, promising. A very brief spell of sunshine in the early morning had given place to overcast skies, and dark clouds carried a threat of rain. But just before the opening ceremony was due to begin, the sun burst through and shone brilliantly for the remainder of the afternoon, the ideal weather being tempered by what was described as a traditional "Skegness breeze."

Units which had been on parade at the stone-laying were there again, but with a difference. The 1st Skegness B.B. Company had now become the 1st Company of the 3rd Lincoln Cadet Battalion. The senior Boy Scout Troop had transformed itself into a Sea Scout unit, and they and their Scoutmaster had gone into navalized uniform. Other units were unchanged, and representatives of the Territorial Army and the Lincolnshire Yeomanry also attended in uniform.

Named Dorothy Avenue

The access road to the site had now become the first stretch of Dorothy Avenue, on the west side of which the diminutive hospital was set like a jewel. It was gay with bunting and multi-coloured flags, and, says a contemporary report, "the Hospital itself looked particularly clean and inviting in its 'newness' and the well-groomed lawns and flower beds bore ample evidence of special and careful preparation."

There was a distinguished gathering which included, in addition to the many visitors, members of Skegness U.D.C., and of the Executive and Working Men's committees of the hospital, with the matron and staff. Mr. S. Coetmore Jones again presided and referred to the stone-laying nearly two years earlier, and also revealed that the three-days' bazaar in 1912 had raised a sum of over £350.

Of that sum (£350) had been used for the provision of equipment, and the balance of £200 had been applied to the building fund. This had left £250 owing out of the total building cost of £1,450, a total of £1,000 having already been received through subscriptions and donations.

The Successful Architect

Lady Scarbrough was presented with the key to the hospital by Mr. F. J. Parkinson, of Blackburn, the successful architect in a competition for which no fewer than 56 firms entered. Before unlocking the main door, the Countess was presented with a bouquet by Miss Mollie Sweeten.

Capt. Weigall proposed the vote of thanks and the Rev.
G. H. Harries seconded. Her ladyship, in replying, expressed regret at the Earl's absence through a pressing engagement at York, and drew much laughter and applause on reading a letter from his lordship in which he said that although he was unable to be in two places at once, yet he was able to divide himself and they had his "better half."

The majority of those present then viewed the hospital.

**A Miniature Hospital**

Just how small was this first Skegness Cottage Hospital, particularly in comparison with the present-day establishment, may be judged from the accommodation, which comprised three single-bedded wards, bathroom, etc., a small operating theatre, annex and sterilizing room, also a store-room, matron's room, kitchens and out-offices on the ground floor. On the first floor were three bedrooms—for the matron, nurses and servant—and bathroom, etc., and store-room. It was noted, however, that "enlargement can be made without disturbance to the original building."

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**The Period of The Extensions**

1914-39

The annual reports of Skegness hospital as a voluntary undertaking extend from 1913 to 1947, and from the very beginning the word "extensions" figures largely in their pages. It was, indeed, inherent in the original plans, and year by year, throughout the 35 years, the hospital committee had to consider how each succeeding scheme of extensions could be financed and carried out.

The original cottage hospital—designed by F. J. Parkinson of Blackburn, and built by Messrs. J. G. Holmes and Sons, of Skegness, for £640—provided for four beds and one cot when it was opened in 1913. The accommodation has been noted on an earlier page.

**The First New Wing**

Within a year the necessity for a larger operating theatre had become apparent and a fund was launched for this purpose, but in the meantime the hospital had received a windfall as a result of a bequest of £516 in the will of the late Mr. Fred Ingle, and the committee decided to use it to provide a new wing, and ward.

Messrs. Geo Dunkley and Son, of Skegness, secured the contract at £445, and its completion brought the accommodation up to eight beds, one cot and a private ward. The extension was opened by Mrs. Frank Pegler, of Retford and Seacroft, on July 1st, 1915.

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The mortuary was built in the same year at a cost of £45, and a revolving roof shelter was kindly presented to the committee by the Earl of Scarbrough.

By 1917 the committee had realised that another large ward was becoming a necessity, particularly with a view to providing separate wards for men and women. An appeal for funds was launched, with the suggestion that the new ward might take the form of a Peace Memorial, and nearly £200 was raised in the first year. In 1919, when the total in this fund had grown to £300, the Red Cross Society generously offered to contribute a sum of £400 on condition that a similar sum was raised locally, and by the end of 1920 the amount in the building fund account had grown to £818. In view of the rise in the cost of building, however, the committee felt that three-quarters of the estimated cost should be in hand before the work was commenced.

**The 1922 Extensions**

In 1921, when the fund had grown to nearly £1,000, plans were prepared and a contract signed with Messrs. J. G. Holmes and Sons, of Skegness, who had been responsible for the original building. The extensions comprised an additional ward, a ward kitchen, and two nurses' rooms, and provided for six extra beds and two more private wards.

Total cost of the extensions, including an installation of hot water pipes and radiators in the public wards, was £1,688, of which £1,480 had already been raised. These additions brought the capacity up to eleven beds, a cot and three private wards—or 15 beds and a cot in all—at which figure it remained until the big extensions of 1938-39.

The Hospital's President, the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Scarbrough, K.C.B., who was accompanied by his only daughter, Lady Serena Lumley, opened the new ward on Sept. 22nd, 1922. On the same occasion, Lady Serena unveiled the tablet in the Memorial Ward to the memory of the Skegness men who fell in World War I.

**Porter's Lodge**

Next addition to the hospital was the porter's lodge, which was completed in 1925. Including the land, which was generously sold by the Earl of Scarbrough at a nominal figure, the cost was £801, towards which a subsidy of £100 was granted by Skegness Urban District Council.

Plans for additional sanitary accommodation were prepared during the same year and tenders secured, but despite the urgent need the committee were unable to proceed owing to the current financial position. Nevertheless, in 1926, the much-needed hot and cold water supply was installed in the operating theatre, the cost of £24 being set against the theatre extension fund which by this time had risen to £276.

**The X-Ray Installation**

The growing needs of the hospital, including those for a larger operating theatre and an X-ray installation, became more and more pressing during the next three years. To serve the male ward, an urgently-needed sanitary wing was begun in 1928.
and completed in the following year, and this included a new boiler house and heating apparatus. The cost was £1,000, and a special £2,000 appeal was launched in 1929 for the operating theatre and X-ray equipment.

In 1930, with £1,422 in the building extensions fund and £748 in the X-ray apparatus fund, the committee decided to go ahead. The tender of Mr. Henry Lill was accepted in October, and within twelve months, on Sept. 22nd, 1931, the new operating theatre, X-ray department and additional staff accommodation were formerly declared open by Mrs. V. P. Druce, of Seacroft.

A note in the annual report stated that afternoon tea was served in the grounds on this day, catering being done by the ladies’ committee, and that arrangements included a carnival procession kindly organised by Messrs. W. Butlin and C. H. Major.

“Opportunity was afforded the public of viewing the new buildings, especial interest being evinced in the new and beautifully-equipped operating theatre.”

With almost an ironic touch an additional note read:

“A suitable X-ray installation has been purchased, and will be in active use as soon as a town supply of electricity is available.”

How many will recall that Skegness was dependent on gas for lighting and power until the coming of the Mid-Lincolnshire Electricity Supply Company in 1932?

Safeguarding the Future

In the meantime, steps had been taken to facilitate future extensions, the committee purchasing 4,000 square yards of land at the rear of the hospital on the very favourable terms of one shilling per square yard from the Earl of Scarbrough, with an option on a further 3,669 square yards at the same price. This was to prove a very wise step indeed.

The public supply of electricity reached the town and the hospital in 1932, and on June 7th of that year the first X-ray photograph was taken. By the end of the year the department had dealt with no fewer than 63 cases. The number was to rise to 95 by the end of World War II.

Electric lighting, of course, had been installed throughout the hospital, and with the provision of a special lamp over the operating table, the scheme of extensions which was first mooted in 1927 was considered complete.

In the 1932 report it was noted that whereas 50 patients had been treated in the hospital in 1922, ten years later the number had risen to 326 in the year, and that without any increase in the hospital’s bed capacity.

The Big Scheme

By 1934 the number of in-patients had reached the then record total of 391 in the year, emphasising the necessity of increasing the hospital’s bed capacity with as little delay as possible. Plans which were considered for two new wards, and the conversion of the existing buildings to administrative and staff purposes were expected to involve a minimum outlay of £7,000.

The next few years were to involve the committee in succeeding changes of plan, the needs of the hospital always outstripping the amount of money available. A more ambitious scheme for new hospital buildings and conversion of existing premises, for which plans were prepared in 1935, was estimated to cost £20,000 including furnishings and equipment, but as there was only £315 in the building fund at the time, the committee had no option but to defer the full scheme, and in 1936 it was decided to concentrate on the £7,000 section, for which the need was most pressing.

However, the amended plans which came before the committee in 1937 were for a £15,600 scheme which included new male and female wards and a separate maternity block, the figure being exclusive of architects’ fees, furnishings and equipment. Towards this figure nearly £4,000 had been raised by the end of the year, with nearly £300 in further promises.

Maternity Ward included

By early in 1938 there had been further modifications to the plans, but the committee had by now decided to go ahead with that part of the larger plan most urgently required. This section included a new ward of 12 public beds, three private wards, an up-to-date maternity block with four public beds and two private wards, and additional staff quarters. This portion of the scheme, which raised the hospital’s capacity to a total of 32 beds, was estimated to cost £12,000, and by the end of the year £5,363 of that sum had been raised.

The contract was secured by Messrs. J. T. Turner and Sons, of Wainfleet, and building operations began in July. On November 3rd, 1938, the foundation stone was laid by the Duchess of Portland.

This largest single scheme of extensions to be undertaken in the history of the hospital was completed in the spring of 1939, and on May 25th the new buildings were opened by H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester, a short description of the great occasion being given elsewhere in this booklet.

The scheme had cost £12,400, and all but £5,150 had been raised. The committee’s hopes of raising that sum at an early date were shattered by the outbreak of war in September, 1939, but the hospital accommodation had been increased to 32 beds.

It is of interest to note that the number of X-ray cases dealt with in 1939 had been 232, as compared with 145 in 1933, the first full year of the department. The latter received a useful addition in the following year in the shape of a portable X-ray unit given by Mrs. R. Tiley, of Seacroft.

This brings to a close the 25 years’ period of major hospital extensions. Post-war progress of the hospital is noted in a later chapter.
Potentate Incognito

SKEGNESS HOSPITAL CHOSEN BY
H.H. THE SULTAN OF MUSCAT AND OMAN

If at the original opening ceremony one had been so bold as to forecast that within fifteen years an Eastern potentate would be prepared to come all the way from the Persian Gulf to undergo an operation in the Skegness Cottage Hospital, one could hardly have expected to be believed, and yet this precisely what happened in the summer of 1928.

The distinguished visitor was the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, and his presence in the hospital was a well-kept secret, the news not being divulged until the day His Highness left Skegness for London. The hospital's annual report for the year 1928 contains the following brief statement:—

"During the summer of 1928, His Highness the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, who was in England as the official guest of the British Government, was operated upon for appendicitis at this Hospital, where he remained a patient for three weeks. During this period and his subsequent convalescence at Skegness, the identity of our distinguished patient was not disclosed, and the Sultan's warm appreciation of the treatment he received while in the Hospital was given wide publicity by him through the medium of the London Press.

Sir Saiyid Taimur bin Feisal bin Turki, Sultan of Muscat and Oman, accepted the hospitality of the British Government in order to come to England specially to be operated upon by Colonel Lessel Stephen, who had served in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the war in Persia and had there come into personal association with him.

Having paid his respects to H.M. King George V on landing in England, the Sultan went into incognito as Al Said, an Arab, and travelled to Grimsby, where Col. Stephen was living in retirement.

But the hospital authorities at Grimsby would not permit the operation to take place there unless it was carried out by one
Another Stone-Laying

START OF THE £12,000 EXTENSIONS

The great period of hospital expansion between the wars culminated within twelve months of the second outbreak of hostilities with the stone-laying and opening ceremonies of the biggest scheme of extensions carried out in the whole history of Skegness hospital.

As noted in an earlier section, building operations for these extensions began in July, 1938, and on Nov. 3rd of that year the foundation stone for the block which now dominates the western side of the hospital was laid by Her Grace the Duchess of Portland.

The Duchess had a particular link with this area. The former Miss Winifred Dallas-Yorke, born at Walmsgate Hall, only 16 miles from Skegness, she had been invited by the Earl of Scarbrough to undertake this ceremony in the year before her golden wedding anniversary.

All sections of Skegness were represented at the stone-laying ceremony, at which Mr. B. H. Foster, chairman of the Hospital Executive Committee, presided; and Lord Scarbrough, in outlining the proposals, told the assembled company that the committee had very wisely decided to embark on that portion of the full £20,000 scheme which was most urgently needed.

The importance of having included the maternity block in the scheme was stressed by the Duchess after she had laid the foundation stone, and contributions to the various votes of thanks were made by Lord Scarbrough, Dr. B. Sweeten, J.P., Mr. H. C. Haslam, M.P. for the Horncastle Division, and Mr. G. E. Holmes, chairman of the Skegness Urban District Council, which body in the previous year had voted a penny rate—nearly £500—to aid the hospital extensions.

There were several happy little touches, one when the Duchess was presented with a bouquet of deep cerise carnations by the seven-year-old daughter of the hospital’s honorary solicitor.

Her Grace visited the patients in the hospital, and tea was provided by the ladies’ committee in the nearly St. George’s Hall.

The architects were Messrs. Adams, Holden and Pearson, of London, and the contractors were Messrs. J. T. Turner and Sons, of Wainfleet.
Hospital's Greatest Day

H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER OPENS
THE 1939 EXTENSIONS

GREATEST day of all in the history of Skegness Hospital was Thursday, May 25th, 1939, when the £12,000 extensions, including the new maternity ward, were formally opened by H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester.

The day was sunny, through the wind was cool. It had been arranged for Her Royal Highness to fly to R.A.F. Manby; and thence travel by car to Skegness, but closing visibility in the Midland and Eastern Counties compelled the cancellation of the plan, and instead the Duchess, accompanied by a lady-in-waiting, arrived by a special train at Skegness station, where she was greeted by the Earl of Scarbrough, Lady Serena James, and Mr. B. H. Foster, chairman of the Hospital's executive committee.

The Duchess was also accompanied by a Scotland Yard Commissioner in plain clothes, and a commentary upon the times in which these events were taking place is provided by the fact that all level crossings and other points of access to the L.N.E. line were patrolled by special constables as a precautionary measure against activities by the Irish Republican Army!

Skegness once again turned out en masse to give a really warm welcome to a royal visitor. For the Duchess it was an exceptionally busy day, as initially she was driven to the growing Butlin holiday camp at Ingoldmells where, after being received by Mr. W. E. Butlin, she planted a commemorative tree with near-professional skill.

On returning to Skegness, the Duchess was taken on a tour of the seafront area. This included a call at the Sun Castle, where she was received by Skegness’s chief citizen, Coun. Walter Hudson, J.P. Afterwards she lunched at the Hall with Mr. and Mrs. Foster.

Present on this occasion, and at the subsequent opening ceremony, was Sir Archibald Weigall, K.C.M.G., who had served as Governor of South Australia since those early days, 26 years before, when as M.P. for the Horncastle Division he had first thrown his weight on the side of the initial hospital proposals.

The Lincoln Road entrance to the hospital had by this time been opened, and the guard of honour there, which was inspected by the Duchess, included detachments of the Skegness Division, St. John Ambulance Brigade, under Supt. G. G. Dunkley, C.C., Red Cross nurses under Commandant Catherine Mann, representatives of the British Legion, and youth organisation units in which the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides with their senior and junior organisations, Boys' Brigade and Girls' Life Brigade Companies, and Ambulance Cadets were all prominent. The singing was led by the newly-formed Skegness British Legion Band.

Naturally, it fell to Lord Scarbrough to voice the welcome to the royal visitor, and the Duchess, after declaring the extensions open, received her bouquet at the hands of the elder daughter of the town’s Medical Officer of Health.

Mr. B. H. Foster proposed the vote of thanks and Coun. W. Hudson seconded. The Duchess was presented with purses containing a total of £164 4s. by 162 Skegness children, this presentation being organised by Mrs. A. W. Allan, President of the Hospital Ladies' Committee.

On her tour of the hospital, the Duchess found the maternity ward already in use, and that the first baby to be born in it was already two days old.

Her Royal Highness, who with her entourage took tea in a large marquee with 300 members of the public, left the town at 4 p.m. for R.A.F. Manby, the weather having improved sufficiently for her fly back to London in an Airspeed Envoy of the King’s Flight. Skegness’s chief citizen escorted the royal car to the urban district boundary.
The Third Phase

The biggest scheme of extensions to the hospital had come to a close at the outbreak of war in September, 1939, with something over £5,000 of the cost remaining to be raised. By 1942, after three years of war, the debt on the extensions still remained at over £4,000, but help was to come from an unexpected quarter.

On assuming office as chairman of the Skegness U.D. Council, Mr. Geo. H. Hannam launched a fund to liquidate the debt. Within the first year £2,300 was raised, and by 1944 the amount had grown to £3,000. With the additional aid of a grant of £2,000 from the Shuttleworth Bequest, the debt was wiped out, and over £900 left in credit for future extensions.

Mr. Hannam subsequently became one of the hospital’s vice-presidents, and chairman of the House Committee under the new regime which began in 1948. His death in 1950, following a road accident, was a great loss to the town and district.

Some idea of the hospital’s ever-increasing usefulness may be gleaned from the figures for 1945, the year in which World War II ended. In that year 839 in-patients were admitted, 362 operations performed, and 802 X-ray cases dealt with.

A year later the original X-ray unit was renewed, Mrs. W. Greetham giving £300 towards the new installation. In 1947, the last full year of operation as a voluntary hospital, further land was purchased to provide the drive for the Lincoln Road entrance.

Health Service Forecast

First hint of the Government’s decision to establish a comprehensive health service came in 1943. At that time it was stated that it was desired for the voluntary hospitals to take an important part in the service without losing either their individuality or their autonomy.

Nobody, however, could then foresee the ultimate trend of events, and by 1945 a very different position was arising. In 1946 the National Health Service Bill passed its third reading, and the 1947 report was the last from Skegness Hospital as a voluntary organisation, it being noted that “after over 800 years of free and unstinted service” all hospitals were to be transferred to the State on the Appointed Day—July 5th, 1948.

New Era Begins

This was the end of thirty-five years’ magnificent service rendered to the community by Skegness Hospital on a voluntary basis. But it was also the beginning of a most important new phase in its history, and those who had laboured so long and devotedly for it from the beginning could take pride in the fact that the new Health Service was taking over an institution that was first class in every way and backed by a fine tradition.

They Helped The Hospital

One of the greatest features of the voluntary hospitals was the power which they possessed to rally nearly all members of the community to their aid. Voluntary activities by members of the public have figured largely in the history of Skegness and District Hospital, and although the need for this aid has been largely removed by the founding of the National Health Service, the spirit still continues unabated in the activities of the organisation known as the League of Friends of the Skegness Hospitals.

In a booklet of this nature, space considerations permit only the briefest mention of some of these features, and there are many which must inevitably be omitted, but among those efforts which continued from the very earliest days were the annual Pound Day and Rose Day collections, the first named being launched by Miss Emeline Grantham and later, organised by the Hospital matrons of the day, and the latter initiated by Mrs. Stanley Wallace and carried on after the first twenty years by Mrs. B. H. Foster.

Operative Society and Hospital Ball

A welcome contribution came annually from the productions of the Skegness Amateur Operatic Society, which started in 1923 with “H.M.S. Pinafore” and concluded in 1939 with “Gipsy Love;” and also from the annual Skegness Hospital Ball, founded in the early twenties by Mrs. H. Miller and continued after her death in 1933 by Mr. W. Edwin Furniss.

A silver cup won by the Croft tug-of-war team at Skegness’s first-ever June Carnival in 1923 was presented to the Hospital, and thus launched the Skegness Hospital Cup, and in due course the Scott Cup and the Thursday Hospital Cup competitions, which continued to bring in revenue until 1939 and in which many local teams competed.

Wireless was installed in the hospital in 1926. This was largely due to the initiative of Mr. Samuel Stennett in launching a fund for the purpose; and similar action was taken by Mrs. V. P. Druce, of Seaforth, when it became necessary to renew the equipment in 1934. A piano was also given to the hospital by the proprietor and guests of the then Belvedere Hotel.

Motor Car Ballots

The fund for the extension of the operating theatre and the provision of the X-ray apparatus received tremendous help from the motor car ballots started in 1927 by Mr. W. O. Knott and Dr. D. F. Menzies. In four years these ballots raised £2,685, the biggest single year being in 1928 when the net total was £817, and they were only discontinued because of the stringent attitude
adopted by the Home Office at that time towards ballots generally. 

Summer carnivals organised by Mr. W. E. Butlin helped greatly in the 'thirties. So did the series of Hospital Rags, for which some of the younger members of Skegness Rotary Club were responsible. Another useful source of income came from the several Midnight Matinees given by Skegness Entertainments Ltd., that organised for 1939 having to be cancelled owing to the outbreak of hostilities.

**Contribution Scheme**

In the early 'thirties was started an Employees' Weekly Contribution Scheme, under which the hospital benefits were available free for a contribution of one penny per week. By 1939 this scheme, which had been run from the beginning by its hon. secretary, Mr. Arthur Degg, was bringing in £520 a year; and in 1944, thanks to the enthusiasm and help of Dr. Menzies, the scheme was extended to include all classes at 3d. per week per head and with a maximum of one shilling per week per family.

This was one of the finest examples of a self-help health service ever realised; in the first three months the membership of the new scheme reached 4,000, and it had passed the 5,000 mark within a year.

**Percy Bailey Memorial**

The new table installed in the operating theatre in 1931 was provided from a fund launched as a memorial to Mr. Percy Bailey, young Skegness railway clerk who in the previous year had given his own life in an attempt to save a drowning bather at Seacroft.

Further help for the hospital came as a result of two broadcast appeals made over the B.B.C.'s national programme, the first by the then chairman, Mr. G. H. J. Dutton, in May, 1931, and the second by Sir Archibald Weigall in May, 1939.

Indeed, aid came from all quarters. There were the offers from the local churches, the contributions from the Sunday cinema performances, the annual dinner table collections in hotels and boarding houses, the support from the surrounding district, the egg collections from schools, the endowment of the Wainfleet bed, the special competitions, and the support of all kinds of local organisations, musical and otherwise, in promoting events from time to time. It would take a far larger work than this small booklet to deal adequately with this 35 years of help for the hospital, in which, in later years, the activities of the Hospital Linen Association played an important part.

**The League of Friends**

When the new National Health Service took over the country's voluntary hospitals in 1948, it was at first thought that all this voluntary work would come automatically to an end. But it was soon shown that considerable spheres of usefulness still existed, and this led to the formation of the organisation known as the League of Friends of the Hospitals, the Skegness branch of which was formed in 1950.

In the past thirteen years the Skegness Hospital has had reason to be grateful for the activities of this band of enthusiastic ladies, which annually has held its "ton of pennies" day and has been behind innumerable schemes of aid.

Of their many services to the hospital, including the presentations of curtains, easy chairs and similar amenities, two call for very special mention. One is the telephone call trolley, which was presented in 1953 and inspected by the Minister of Health on his visit last year; the other was their action in sponsoring the conversion, at a cost of £377 in 1961, of two existing side wards into an emergency room for casualties and a separate children's ward.

This new organisation has proved itself a worthy successor to the multitude of voluntary efforts which have aided Skegness and District Hospital ever since its inauguration.
Era of The National Health Service

FIFTEEN YEARS OF CONSOLIDATION
AND NEW ACHIEVEMENT

Fifteen years have now passed since the National Health Service assumed responsibility for the country’s hospitals, and though at Skegness Hospital no extensive building has taken place in that period, very many improvements in equipment and facilities have been effected.

The number of consultants attending has increased from four to twelve, and provision of more adequate clinical accommodation became necessary. Further land was purchased to improve the Lincoln Road entrance in 1952, and in 1956 additional accommodation in the form of a waiting room, office and toilets—the whole being the gift of the Skegness District Nurse Association—was added to the X-ray department. New X-ray equipment costing £4,700 was installed in 1959, and the department was supplied with new developing equipment at a cost of £300 in 1961.

Due to improvements in nursing staff conditions, which included shorter working hours, the number of staff employed has increased, and some comparative statistics make interesting reading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1947</th>
<th>1962</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bed complement</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharges, general</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do maternity</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-patient attendants (casualty)</td>
<td>2150</td>
<td>0424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X-ray department patients</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>2915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of provisions per patient-week</td>
<td>8/6</td>
<td>£1/9/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiotherapy patients treated</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>2960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant out-patient attendances</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>5026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average stay of each in-patient</td>
<td>11.3 days</td>
<td>8.8 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations performed</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The work of the hospital increased considerably in the fifteen years since the commencement of the Health Service, especially in the treatment of out-patients. A full-time radiographer was appointed in 1949, and the establishment of the physiotherapy department increased from one to two full-time physiotherapists in 1962.

Many of the major items of equipment were replaced between 1948 and 1963, including autoclaves, sterilizers, theatre operating lamp, anaesthetic machine, operating table, obstetric bed, heating boilers, kitchen ranges, beds, mattresses, lockers and over-bed tables. Many of the floors have been re-laid with modern floor coverings, rails and curtains provided to give patients maximum privacy, and the interior decorations brought up to a modern standard.

A small children’s ward, provided in 1961 with the help
of the League of Friends of the Skegness Hospitals, has proved to be a great boon. An infant resuscitator was also provided this year at a cost of £150.

The Hospital Ten Year Plan suggests that not only should the Skegness Hospital be retained, but that it should continue to be developed and extended, and, in fact, the Regional Hospital Board are planning an additional ward and a new out-patient department which it is hoped will be completed within the next five years.

It is on this note that this record of the past years’ achievements in this sphere, and of the hard work carried out in the interests of the residents of and visitors to Skegness, comes to a close.

MATRONS

Miss COLlier ............ April - June, 1913
Miss Edith CARLTON .......... August 1913 - Jan. 1922
Miss Marion STONELY .......... April 1922 - Jan. 1925
Miss G. H. HEWITT .......... Feb. 1925 - July 1926
Miss Marion STONELY .......... Sept. 1926 - May 1930
Miss TWIDALE ............ 1930 - 1933
Miss Gertrude F. SHARPE .......... 1933
Miss Theresa ANDERSON .......... 1933 - 1934
Miss D. W. HUNTER .......... May 1934 - 1943
Miss E. R. DUNSTER .......... 1943 - June 1946
Miss M. E. BEAN .......... July 1946 - 1948
Miss N. W. BOOTH .......... June 1948 - Dec. 1949
Miss W. BOWYER .......... Jan. 1950 - March 1955
Miss A. M. ELDON .......... May 1955 - July 1960
Mra. J. M. BENNETT .......... October 1960 to date

HOSPITAL MEDICAL STAFF

A. W. ALLAN .......... 1913 - 1938
Benjamin SWEETEN .......... 1913 - 1944
Stanley WALLACE .......... 1913 - 1934
D. F. MENZIES, M.B.E. .......... 1926 to date
J. D. O'NEILL .......... 1930 - 1953
M. BACKWELL .......... 1932 to date
Alex S. PATERSON .......... 1933 - 1944
T. R. WILSON .......... 1933 - 1947
W. BROWNIE .......... 1935 - 1961
J. BAXTER .......... 1941 - 1944
R. N. KINNIS .......... 1941 - 1947
A. JAMIESON .......... 1946 to date
C. A. S. CARMICHAEL .......... 1947 - 1956
K. JACK .......... 1949 - 1956
M. B. FOX .......... 1951 to date
D. C. PENDRIGH .......... 1953 to date
A. J. E. POLLOCK .......... 1956 to date
J. A. ANDERSON .......... 1958 to date

CONSULTANTS


GYNAECOLOGIST.—C. R. MACDONALD, F.R.C.S. (Ed.), F.R.C.OG., 1945 to date.


PATHOLOGIST.—N. E. RANKIN, M.B., B.S., D. Path. (Eng.), 1949 to date.

EAR, NOSE and THROAT SURGEON.—S. W. ALLINSON, F.R.C.S. (Eng.), D.I.O., 1950 to date.

VENEREOLOGIST.—D. O. STEVENSON, M.B., Ch.B., 1950 to date.

CHEST PHYSICIAN.—A. M. FORREST, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., 1951 to date.

PAEDIATRICIAN.—I. CULLUM, M.D., D.P.H., D.C.H., 1951 to date.