

LYDNEY & DISTRICT HOSPITAL

1882 — 1982

by

R. A. J. BELL

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HOSPITAL**

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R. A J. BELL

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*Dedicated to my wife Winifred,
who spent many hours as a patient
at Lydney and District Hospital
and who helped me greatly in
my researches for this book.*

Line drawings by courtesy of Eric J. Rice of Aylburton



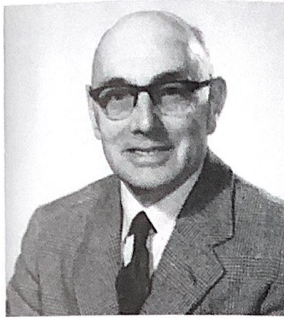
FOREWORD

Mr Jack Bell is well known to the inhabitants of Lydney and the surrounding area as an indefatigable local historian, whose researches have added much to our knowledge of the town's past.

He has now turned his attentions to the hospital, and once again his zeal and energy have unearthed many interesting facts, some of which will no doubt cause considerable surprise to his younger readers, who have grown up since the start of the National Health Scheme.

Our family has always had a close connection with the Hospital, and it therefore gives me great pleasure to recommend this product of Mr Bell's industry to all who are interested in Lydney's past.

Joan, Lady Bledisloe



AUTHOR'S NOTE

The history of Lydney and District Hospital, written for the Centenary Year, will, I hope, be of interest to all In-patients and Out-patients who have received treatment from the Medical and Nursing Staff during their stay at the Hospital.

I also hope it will be a reminder to everyone of the great debt of gratitude owed to the past and present 'Friends of the Hospital' for their never-ending efforts to improve the various departments for the benefit of all.

My personal thanks go to all those kind folks in the area who have helped me during my long association with the hospital.

It has not been possible to mention everyone who has assisted me in connection with the work of the hospital. For any omission I offer sincere apologies.

R.A.J.B.

20 Church Road,
Lydney, Gloucestershire



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EARLY DAYS AT AYLBURTON



Mrs Mary Elizabeth Bathurst

In 1882 Mrs Mary Elizabeth Bathurst of Lydney Park, great grandmother of the present Viscount Bledisloe, a permanent invalid crippled by paralysis, turned her thoughts from her own affliction to the needs of other people. She conceived the idea of securing a modest hospital for Lydney and Aylburton. The result was beyond her fine intention.

Mrs Bathurst called together ladies and gentlemen to discuss with her the formation of a Lydney and Aylburton Cottage Hospital. Her enthusiasm and desire to mitigate the suffering of her neighbours soon inspired those who met her.



OFFICIAL OPENING OF LYDNEY & AYLBURTON COTTAGE HOSPITAL

11th October, 1882

Some of the Committee at the Hospital on the opening day.

Left to Right:

Rev. E. Davies, Messrs. J. R. Smale, G. Lawrence,
G. B. Keeling, A. W. Harrison, J. Taylor, J. Gollop,
Tremayne Keeling, Rev. J. J. Trollope.

Events moved fast; a lease at £30 a year was obtained of a house owned by Mr Joseph Taylor at the far end of Aylburton village. The residence was quickly adapted to the use of a "Cottage Hospital" and was opened in the afternoon of October 11, 1882.

The Rev. J. J. Trollope, vicar of Lydney, officiated at a service. The hospital was then inspected by those present. Besides Mrs Bathurst and the vicar, these included Sir James Campbell, Bt., deputy surveyor of the Forest of Dean, and Lady Campbell, the two Misses Bathurst, Dr. and Mrs Trotter, Dr. and Mrs Currie, Dr. Carlton, Dr. Bond, the Rev. R. H. Proctor, the Rev. Stephens, the Rev. E. Davies, the Rev. Rosse and Miss Rosse, Mr and Mrs A. H. Maule, Mrs Emsley, Mr and Mrs Pugsley, and Messrs Taylor, Harrison and Garland.

Before the opening a luncheon had taken place in the Old Park House. There, Sir James had referred to many kind and sympathetic letters from ladies and gentlemen in the county who had been unable to attend. The Rev. E. Davies, Baptist minister, had welcomed the project for non-conformist churches; Dr. Currie did likewise for the medical profession. These and others spoke highly of the bright prospect of the alleviation of the sick in the district.

To complete the proceedings a Glee party consisting of Messrs J. Wild, F. Price, W. Stephens, D. Gregory, L. Curtis and A. Hughes sang the Glee "Beam of Light" the words of which are from Asiam "The Hunting Song" (Sir Walter Scott), and "Home that I love."

MEMORABLE DAY

It was a memorable day, and the culmination of much effort by Mrs Bathurst. She had raised £90 from a bazaar at her home; subscriptions had brought in £80, and £70 had been promised. Commendable pioneer work had been done by Nurse Dunning who was to continue her invaluable service.

The opening was greatly encouraging. A start had been made; sustained efforts were now needed to ensure success. Much would depend on the committee under the president Mrs Bathurst, and the trustees Mr Charles Bathurst, Sir James Campbell and Mr A. H. Maule.

The general committee comprised: Rev. J. J. Trollope (chairman) the Rev. J. J. James and E. Davies, Colonel Silver and Messrs J. Cloditch, J. C. Griffiths, J. Gollop, A. W. Harrison, G. B. Keeling,

J. R. Thomas, G. Lawrence, J. R. Smale, J. Taylor and R. Thomas. The House Committee was the Chairman with Messrs Keeling, Griffiths, Lawrence, Taylor and Smale. The visiting committee consisted of the following ladies: Bathurst, Currie, Gimlett, Keeling, Matthews, Maule, Rosse, Trollop, Stephens and Turlerton. The honorary secretary was Mr A. H. Maule and the joint honorary treasurers were Mrs Bathurst and Mrs Cloditch.

The medical staff was: Doctors Currie, Lawrence and Trotter, E. P. King and J. S. Carleton. One of the earliest benefactors was the Rev. J. James, of Highfield House, who made a legacy of £50 towards the upkeep of the hospital.

GIFTS

Strenuous efforts were put into the project in the early days. Money raised by many organisations was supplemented by general subscriptions. Many gifts in kind were received, linen and clothes from Mrs Willesford, fruit, meat, clothes and sweets from Mrs Bathurst, magazines and newspapers from Mr Harris, and fuel from Mr Smale; these gifts are only a few of the hundreds recorded in the early annual reports.

In 1885 27 in-patients were treated; their ages ranged from five to sixty. All cases but four were cured. The number of out-patients is not recorded. At this time the hon. treasurer was Mr J. Wheatley. Dr. Currie held the title of medical director. All was going well with the hospital but on January 28, 1885, it lost its beloved founder Mrs Bathurst. Only for a few years had she seen the fruits of her labours, her far-sighted policy and her thoughts for others. She left as a memorial a valued institution which was to the utmost benefit of the neighbourhood. She passed away with the knowledge that her intense efforts had not been in vain.

Successive reports pay tribute to the unstinted support given by the Bathurst family, and the invaluable services of the medical staff, the subscribers and those who continued to make gifts in kind. The number of out-patients rose rapidly. In 1886 there were about 70. Nurse Barker, who had been in charge since about 1885 was being kept extremely busy; Dr. Currie reported that he "had assisted at several important operations, had administered chloroform, inserted setons, given injections, and performed various minor offices." He went on to say: "It is impossible to over-estimate the usefulness of the hospital in regard to its outdoor work."

By 1889 over £1,200 had been raised and expended in the work of the hospital, besides £179 spent on fitting out and furnishing the premises. Dr. Currie left the district in that year; his services had been characterised by "great ability, uniform kindness to the patient, and courtesy to all associated with him." He was succeeded by Dr. T. P. Carter. Subscriptions remained at around £80 a year, and the gifts in kind continued varied and numerous.

In 1892, Nurse Barker after almost six years' invaluable service was succeeded by Nurse Hannah Taylor, but illness soon forced her to resign. The new nurse appointed was Miss Garwood, and the following year the Rev. Trollop, vicar of Lydney 1871-93 and chairman of the hospital since its opening passed away. He had given splendid and enthusiastic encouragement, and he was succeeded as chairman by the Rev. J. C. E. Besant.

Mr Charles Bathurst (junior), came of age during the year (1893); £10 given to the hospital was one of the many ways in which his father marked the event. By this time subscriptions were almost £100 a year. Gifts in kind had also increased. Collections or proceeds of harvest festivals were given by St. Mary's Church, the chapels at Lydney of the Wesleyans, the Baptists, and the Primitive Methodist, and the churches of Alvington, Aylburton, Parkend, Tutshill and Yorkley Wood. The annual tea in the Lydney Park brought in about £40. Concert at Woolaston and Bream soirées for the public, the Liberals and the Tinplate Works augmented the funds. Contributions came from Lydney Benefit Club, and from Mrs Russell Kerr's sale of work.

In 10 years the number of in-patients had risen to 264; a thousand or more out-patients had also been treated. The hospital truly lived up to its aim to serve Lydney, Aylburton and the neighbourhood, for its patients came from both towns and from as far afield as Alvington, Woolaston, Tidenham, Hewelsfield, St. Briavels, Bream, Parkend, Yorkley, Pillowell, Whitecroft, Coleford and Sharpness. The hospital must have been a gleaming light among the needy of those bygone days.

In February 1894, Miss Nina Ive of the London Hospital became nurse. The medical staff included Doctors Carter, Buchanan, Carlton, Halpin, Kennedy, King, Lawrence, Lunn and Trotter, besides Doctors Batten, Bower, Clark and Waddy as consulting physicians. The president was still Mr Charles Bathurst, senior, and the vice-president Capt. W. B. Marling. The hon treasurer was Mr E. C.

Gallichan and the hon. secretary Mr Tremayne Keeling. Mr G. B. Keeling died during the year, and since the foundation he had taken great interest in the hospital. That year a generous legacy of £500 was received from Mr W. Rogers, of Lydney; of this £50 was used for general expenses and £450 laid out on mortgage, half at 4½ per cent and half at 5 per cent.

In 1894 Nurse Rivers succeeded Nurse Ive, and she was followed by Nurse Venning whose post after one year was occupied by Miss L. King from Derby Infirmary. All these nurses gave invaluable service.

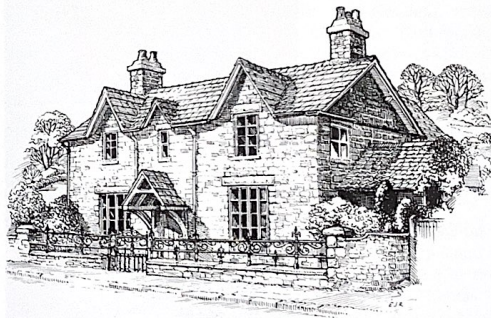
Financial support continued to be given by the chapels and churches in the district. Hospital boxes brought in small but welcome sums. The contents of a box at Severn Bridge station was stolen in 1894. A band contest benefited the hospital by two guineas. Contributions were varied and came from many quarters; children at Bream in 1896 gave five shillings, two guineas came from the Commissioners of Woods through Mr Phillip Bayliss deputy surveyor, four guineas from Chepstow Guardians, one pound and thirteen shillings from the Capital and Counties Bank, one pound from Sir Charles Dilke, one guinea from Mr James Lauder the agent to Lydney Park Estate, and one guinea from the Misses Keeling. The work-people of Messrs R. Thomas and Company gave £9 19s 3d., and donations also came from many local families.

The year 1897 saw the departure of Dr. Carter; his skill and efficiency were noteworthy. He was followed as medical director by Dr. W. P. Kennedy, and in the same year, Miss Helen Pullinger was appointed nurse to the hospital. She rendered unremitting, skilful and efficient service until her resignation in 1900, when Nurse Wrenn took over her duties to be followed by Nurse Turner.

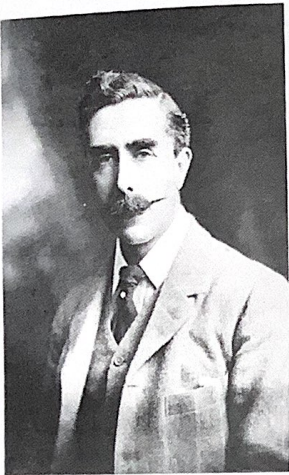
The title of matron was now in use. Mr Peplow after many years of good work as treasurer was succeeded in 1901 by Mr C. S. Freeman. The income around this time was augmented by the Park Tea, by a theatrical entertainment organised by the Misses Cook of Priors Mesne, and by a gift of 10 guineas from Dr. Kennedy. Subscriptions in 1900 totalled £88 19s 4d. Many gifts in kind continued to be received. There were 26 in-patients making 460 since the foundation of the hospital, and the out-patients were increasing. Mr T. A. H. Smith became secretary in 1902.

In 1903 Miss M. Walter became nurse. Thirty-eight more patients had been admitted. The joint medical directors were Doctors C. P. Ball and C. N. Thomas. The following year, 1904 the income was augmented by £32 2s 0d. raised at a concert by the Vassar-Smith Masonic Lodge number 2994, £10 from a concert organised by Miss F. Howells, £11 3s 4d. from Mr J. L. Davies through a hospital dance and £17 from an entertainment through Mr H. W. Berthon. This generous help enabled a balance of £71 10s 6d. to be carried forward.

Support continued to come from the Bathurst family, and from the workmen of Richard Thomas and Company. The regular subscribers and those who made gifts continued their good work. The medical staff also faithfully discharged their duties.



The former hospital in High Street, Aylburton, as it is today



*The first
Viscount Bledisloe*



*The Hon.
Mrs Charles Bathurst*

THE NEW HOSPITAL

For several years consideration had been given to the erection of a new hospital, and by 1906 plans were under consideration. Mr F. S. Hockaday had offered to give a suitable site in Bream Road, Lydney, and £1,000 had been promised by Mr Richard Thomas of the Tinplate Works. Plans for the building were put out to open competition £5, being offered for the best one.

The building committee eventually scrutinised 86 entries, and the plan produced by Messrs H. H. Dyer and Winterburn was judged the best. The first Viscount Bledisloe and his father offered an even more suitable site in Bream Road. Their offer was accepted, and the contract for building the hospital was entrusted to Messrs Byard and Son of Gloucester. The foundation stone was laid on November 2, 1907, by Mrs R. Beaumont Thomas. The Rev. J. C. E. Bessant solemnized the ceremony with prayer, and gave an address. Mr Charles Bathurst, junior, spoke of the 25 years' excellent work of the old hospital founded by his mother and of the prospect of yet further service.

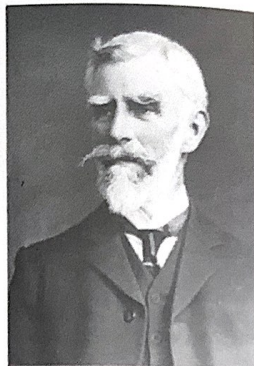
In the year of the opening of the new "Lydney and District Cottage Hospital" the chief officers were Dr. R. L. Bowles, president; Mr Charles Bathurst junior, vice-president; trustees: Messrs Charles Bathurst junior, R. Beaumont Thomas, F. S. Hockaday and Capt. W. B. Marling. The secretary was Mr T. A. H. Smith, treasurer, Mr C. S. Freeman; Miss M. Walter; and nurse Miss E. Sanderland.

A general committee of 25 men and women was appointed. The Hon. Mrs Charles Bathurst and Miss B. Bowles were empowered to purchase furniture and other requirements. Dr. Bowles made arrangements for the equipment for the operating theatre.

A sum of £1,400 in the endowment Fund of the hospital was invested. The capital had been given by about 40 people and organisations, and included £100 from Mr Charles Bathurst by then a Member of Parliament, £150 from Richard Thomas and Company, and £100 each from Mr T. Hughes Pearce, Miss A. Smith, Capt. W. B. Marling, Mr R. Beaumont Thomas, and the employees of Richard Thomas and Company.



Capt. W. B. Marling



Mr William Jones J.P.



Mr R. Beaumont Thomas J.P., C.C.



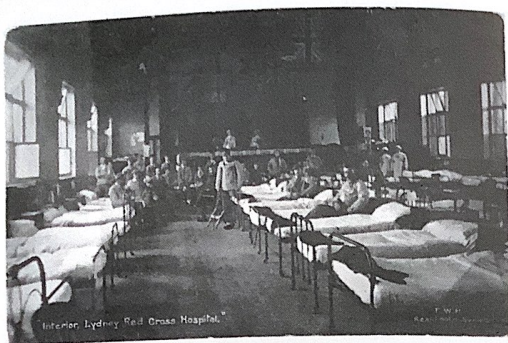
Mr R. R. Bowles J.P.



The new hospital, under rules drawn up in 1909, was enthusiastically supported. Dances were held, collections made, subscriptions renewed, carnivals run by the Ancient Order of Foresters, and parades by the Oddfellows. Financial help, moderate but welcome, came from most of the collieries of the district through the miners' agent Mr G. H. Rowlinson. The employees of the Tinplate works also continued their regular invaluable support; so did the churches and chapels. The annual tea in Lydney Park benefited the hospital by £80 to £100 annually

In 1911 Dr. R. L. Bowles retired as president, and Mr R. Beaumont Thomas took his place. Nurse Sandland was succeeded by Nurse M. F. Woolford, Miss Walter was still matron, and the number of in-patients was 69. The following year Mr Richard Thomas kindly bore the cost, £67, of re-flooring the wards.

Regular concerts in the Town Hall were organised by Miss E. Hathaway for hospital funds, until the start of the 1914—18 war.



LYDNEY TOWN HALL CONVERTED TO A HOSPITAL



LYDNEY HOSPITAL RED CROSS NURSES WHO VOLUNTEERED
DURING THE 1914-18 WAR

Back Row: Miss K. Hastie, Miss Denby, Mrs W. Mutton, Mrs Dixon,
Miss W. Watts, Mrs F. G. Williams, Mrs G. Seaborne
Seated: Miss H. Pritchard, Miss E. Hockaday, Miss M. Walter (Matron)
Miss V. Carter, Miss H. Hockaday, Miss N. Jones.

THE 1914-18 WAR

Following the outbreak of the First World War the local Red Cross Society, with the Hon. Charles Bathurst as its president, took over the hospital. A few beds were reserved for local patients. By November, 1914, 26 wounded British and Belgian soldiers had arrived.

During the four years of war many hundreds of allied troops were treated. Local admissions, including those to the Lydney Town Hall, totalled 315 up to October 1915, and by the end of 1916 the beds had increased to 200, those at the hospital and Town Hall having been added to by 36 in Redhill House, 40 in the new Craft School and others in the Art School.

Almost 120 helpers, mostly local ladies, gave invaluable service; some full-time and some part-time. Lydney and district can be proud of their efforts in this severe national trial.



OUTSIDE THE LYDNEY INSTITUTE DURING THE 1914-18 WAR

Lydney and District Hospital CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME

READ THIS

? HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE ADVANTAGES OFFERED
YOU, IN CASE OF ILLNESS, BY JOINING THIS SCHEME ?

THE HOSPITAL NEEDS YOUR HELP—YOU MAY NEED THE HELP OF THE HOSPITAL AT ANY
TIME!

By paying 4d. a week (17/4 a year) a man and his wife and dependent children under 16 will be
received FREE in any Hospital.

The same applies to a widow or widower with children under 16, and to a single man or woman with
an aged parent dependent upon them and residing in the same house.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY IS NOW! Take it, and so provide yourself and family with a first-class Hospital
Service when needed.

Non-Contributors pay £3 3s. 0d.
weekly for maintenance

CONTRIBUTIONS TAKEN HERE

Further information may be received from:—

G. HALE, Hon. Sec.,

22, Springfield Road, Lydney. Telephone 222.

A HANDBILL FROM THE 1920's

THE YEARS OF EXPANSION

Following the armistice the hospital was once more run by the General House Committee. Lord Bledisloe K.B.E. was president and Mr William Jones J.P. vice-president. Mr C. S. Freeman was treasurer, Mr T. Irvine Coomber secretary, and Miss J. P. Osbourne matron. By December 31st, 1919, there was a credit balance of £1,869, due in great measure to £750 from Mr T. H. Pearce of Aylburton Lodge.

During the next few years the hospital much improved its services. It was ably assisted by the employees of the tin-plate works and by local collieries and societies. Other financial help came from many sources, including £47 from the police football match in 1922, £11 from St. Briavels Daffodil Society, and a £50 legacy from Mr Robert Courteen.

The Bathurst family continued to give the hospital money and valued services, and no one was more enthusiastic than Bertha, Lady Bledisloe; it was a great loss to the district when she died in 1926. Her name was later to be commemorated in connection with the hospital. The Hon. Ursula Bathurst took her place on the committee.

From December 1, 1925, one of the most valuable sources of income was the Lydney and District Hospital contributory scheme. The employees of the tin-plate works were among the first to join the scheme, which gradually spread throughout the district. The contributions in 1926 were £228; by 1947 they were £2,877.

In 1927 when Mr F. W. Wild was secretary, Mr C. W. Longley the treasurer and Miss D. J. Gould matron, the number of in-patients was 269. Separate accommodation had been provided for the clinic, which dealt with 285 cases. In that year the annual tea organised by the Hon. Ursula Bathurst raised £155, and a children's party given by Lady Gwynne-Evans at Oaklands Park realised £28. The entertainments committee with Mr H. W. Berthon as their secretary raised large sums, and the bazaar committee £102.

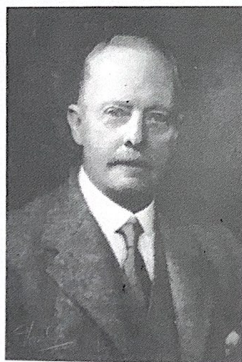
The medical staff, Dr. F. W. Monsell and Dr. C. O. Carson, were doing highly valuable work. A violet-ray apparatus was installed in 1928, chiefly through the generosity of Mrs Percival of



Dr C. N. Thomas, B.A., M.B.



Mr John H. Watts



Brigadier General
A. M. Tyler, C.M.G., D.S.O.,



Dr C. O. Carson L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.

Priors Lodge. The following year Mr C. F. Thomas became treasurer.

A wireless apparatus was installed, the funds being chiefly collected by the matron. In 1930 the hospital benefited by x-ray equipment from Sir Evan Gwynne-Evans, and an operating table from Major Van Rosenberg. Many other gifts deserve mention, such as a quart of milk daily by Mr Biddle, eggs and silver paper collected by volunteers, numerous gifts in money and in kind. The Bertha Bledisloe Relief Fund brought in £50 to £60 annually.

In 1932 out of a Jubilee Extension Fund building was begun by Mr F. N. Wright of a new kitchen and offices, a dining room with nurses' quarters above, and a new ward for children. The plans were drawn up by the honorary architect, Mr P. S. Bennett. A new electricity circuit was installed by Mr N. Phillips.

These improvements were made possible by a grant of £80 from the Miners' Welfare Fund, £500 from Sir Evan Gwynne-Evans, and £100 from Major Van Rosenberg. Mrs Benjamin Bathurst and Mr F. M. Bathurst* paid for the installation of radiant heat. Mrs Irwin generously presented the 'Joseph Gardiner Cot,' and the Colliery Owners' Association gave £62 10s 0d.

The Hon. Mrs Parshall§ was at this time doing a lot of work for the hospital while Viscount and Viscountess Bledisloe were in New Zealand. Mr H. W. Berthon, who had served as the entertainments committee for many years, resigned in 1934; another loss was the passing of Mr F. M. Bathurst. Fortunately the committee was strengthened by a new chairman, Mr J. H. Watts, whose advent to the important sphere of hospital work was to bring much help.

In the first year of Mr Watts' chairmanship £322 was raised. In the same year the Charity Commissioners approved a new scheme for the hospital introducing variations into that of January 7, 1930.

The following year, 1935, saw the beginning, and 1937 the completion of the Maternity Wing and Out-Patient Department. Named The Bertha Bledisloe Maternity Home, it was opened in June by Lady Firth. Here indeed was a fitting memorial to the late Lady Bledisloe to whom the hospital had been one of her first considerations. Subscriptions for the home totalled £1,843. One of its

*Mr Frederick Marlay Bathurst, of The Warren, Aylburton, had no connection with the Bathurst family of Lydney.

§Formerly the Hon. Ursula Bathurst.

wards was named after Major Arthur Bathurst and equipped by his widow and friends.

The hospital went from strength to strength, Dr. J. C. M. Brambell joined the medical staff, and Mr A. T. Padfield became its treasurer. The entertainments committee, with Mr Ivor Griffiths as chairman, T. Seymour as secretary and Mr J. H. Watts as president, raised over £600 in 1939. The contributory scheme brought in over £1,000 and other subscriptions about £400. During the year 605 in-patients were admitted, and 2,005 out-patients treated.



LYDNEY COTTAGE HOSPITAL
with the
BERTHA BLEDISLOE MATERNITY HOME
Aerial photo from the South-West



MEDICAL STAFF ATTENDING LYDNEY & DISTRICT HOSPITAL
Year 1935

Standing: W. H. Tandy, D. B. Mumby, J. C. Brambell,
J. P. O'Driscoll, J. H. Ashton.

Seated: F. W. Monsell, Miss D. J. Gould (Matron), C. O. Carson.



Year 1938/9

Back Row: Dr J. C. M. Brambell, Nurse ?, Nurse Bates, Nurse ?, Nurse Morse,
Dr Dowzer.

Seated: Sister Plummer, Dr F. W. Monsell, Miss D. J. Gould (Matron),
Dr C. O. Carson, Nurse Davies, Nurse ?

THE 1939-45 WAR

During the difficult times of the second world war the hospital diligently pursued its task. The entertainments committee still functioned raising over £1,000 in 1942. X-ray equipment was installed; its cost of £600 was borne chiefly by Viscountess Bledisloe, Sir Evan Gwynne-Evans and Mr J. H. Watts. The Needlework Guild contributed much appreciated help. In 1943 a new contributory scheme was inaugurated with the group representatives and collectors ensuring its success. In the same year £2,300 was handed in by the entertainments committee.



Lydney Nursing Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade
Lydney Park, Saturday, 7th October, 1939

Standing:

Mrs R. Stock, Mrs A. T. Padfield, Mrs W. H. Parry, Miss E. Thomas.

Top Row in Uniform:

Mrs B. J. Emery, Mrs V. Miles, Miss M. Dewdney, Mrs V. Hawkins, Mrs W. Thorne, Miss N. Lauder, Miss R. L. M. Cleaver.

2nd Row in Uniform:

Mrs Christopherson, Mrs Hall, Miss M. Allsopp, Mrs K. Markey, Mrs T. Thorne, Mrs P. Perrett, Mrs Beverstock, (*not in uniform*) Miss G. Berthon, Miss W. Thomas, Mrs F. Gale.

Seated:

Miss K. Hastie, Mrs D. Percival, Mrs C. O. Carson, Viscountess E. Bledisloe, Miss D. J. Gould (Matron), Mrs G. Wolridge, Mrs S. Jarrett.

THE YEARS OF CHANGE



Miss A. M. Bawden, Matron 1945—1948
and Matron under State Management until her death on 29th February, 1964

At the end of January 1945 the hospital lost the services of Miss D. J. Gould, matron, who had given 23 years of very competent service. Her successor in February of that year was Miss A. M. Bawden. The hospital lost in the same year Mr William Jones, who had for many years been chairman of the committee. His office was filled by Mr W. H. Parry. The following year Mr Ralph Williams gave £100 to the Nurses' Hostel Fund.

The year 1947 was the last in which the hospital was run as a voluntary institution. The 19th annual meeting of the governors and the 67th annual meeting of the hospital were held in June 1948. One of the last acts of the old committee was the purchase of "Oakfield" in Hill Street, for use as a nurses' home.

In its final year, 1947, the contributory scheme brought in £2,877, Lydney Hospital Football Cup competition £100, the Bertha Bledisloe Relief Fund £120 and subscriptions and donations £754. Now after more than 60 years the result of both Mrs Charles Bathurst's foresight and the work of stalwarts like Mr F. W. Wild, the energetic secretary for over a quarter of a century, had become the charge of the State. But much voluntary work would still be needed.

On July 5th, 1948, the Lydney and District Hospital passed to the South West Regional Hospital Board as agents of the Ministry of Health. A management committee was appointed with Mr H. G. Tanner as its chairman.

Under its matron, Miss A. M. Bawden, and with several of the earlier staff, the hospital continued to do work of immeasurable value, and to become of increasing importance to the district.

The matron's death on February 29th, 1964, was a sad blow to all who knew her; but her invaluable services will long be remembered.

MEMBERS OF THE LYDNEY & DISTRICT HOSPITAL COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTORY GOVERNORS

First meeting held at the Town Hall on 4th September 1935.

Last meeting held on 26th April 1948.

Mr H. J. Morgan submitted to serve on the
Hospital Management Committee

J. Beddis
F. O. Gale
P. A. Sansom
G. Hale
S. Rees
W. Bullock
W. Deeves
W. J. English
C. Kelsy
A. Baghurst

L. Rees
T. C. Nemes
W. Culton
A. Hyett
M. G. James
F. Cowles
C. Saunders
H. Seabright
M. Bracy

THE PHYSIOTHERAPY CENTRE

By 1958 many people in Lydney and district felt that an appropriate memorial to the late Viscount Bledisloe should be erected. He deserved the most fitting memorial that could be envisaged. Messrs J. H. Watts, C. E. Phelps, G. Ivor Griffiths and other gentlemen ascertained that most people favoured its being a building to house a physiotherapy department. This would be in accordance with the late Lord Bledisloe's wishes as something that would benefit the greatest number of people.

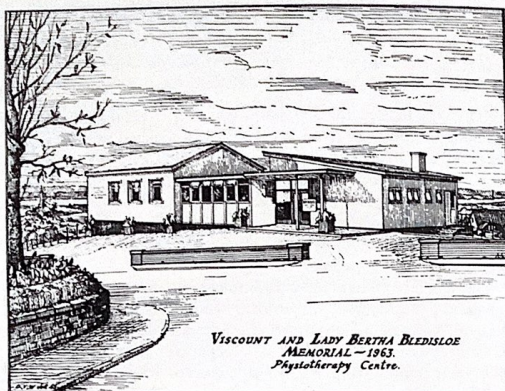
The second Viscount gave his wholehearted approval. The need for such a department was evident from statistics which showed that out-patients for physiotherapy treatment had increased from 6,097 in 1947 to 9,022 in 1957. The figures for x-ray treatment had likewise increased from 984 to 1,285, and for other treatment from 1,693 to 5,195.

In December 1958, the Parish Council gave the project its blessing, and promised to support it wherever possible. A committee was formed, of which Mr C. E. Phelps was chairman. A meeting was held on December 4th, 1958 attended by representatives of all organisations in the district, at which the green light was given to go ahead, and Mr Watts promptly gave £200 as an encouragement to others.

Following a preliminary meeting of interested people, a steering committee was formed. Mr Phelps acted as chairman, and Mr W. J. Townsend as secretary, they were ably supported by Messrs G. I. Griffiths, A. M. R. Watts, K. J. Mullan, G. N. Moore, K. Andrews, J. H. Watts, J. C. Hughes, W. E. Sherston, J. Davis, H. S. Spratt, D. V. Woodhead, E. J. Rice and L. R. Hughes.

The appeal was launched in August 1959, signed by Mr Phelps, Mr Townsend and Mr L. F. Swaite as treasurer. Mr Phelps visited the Acting High Commissioner for New Zealand with a view to the appeal being known in the Dominion. Mr and Mrs J. H. Watts donated £1,000. Gradually throughout 1960, 1961 and 1962 donations to the fund came in.

The committee continued with enthusiasm, with Mr A. M. Rogers now the treasurer, and with kindly guidance and support



from Mr Watts. Mr L. W. Carpenter offered to act as architect without charge and so did Mr H. I. Spratt. The trustees of the Bertha Bledisloe Relief Fund with the approval of the Charity Commissioners handed over £1,974, Mr Watts supplemented this with another gift of £1,000. Covenants worth £1,332 were given, and the hospital authorities added £355. About £700 was received from the "War Charity of Captain Charles Bathurst, M.P.," known as "The Lydney and Aylburton Surgical Aid Fund."

Many local organisations, industries and people too numerous to mention gave generously according to their ability. Included were many employees acting in certain cases through their canteen committees and other departments. Among them were: employees at Allied Ironfounders Ltd., Factories Direction Ltd., J. Allen Rubber Co. Ltd., Watts Metal Industries Ltd., Watts Tyre and Rubber Co. Ltd., Duramin Engineering Co. Ltd., and Watts Factors Social Club.

Mr Carpenter drew up excellent plans which gave great satisfaction. On September 19, 1962, tenders were received and that of Messrs W. G. Powell and Sons, Cinderford, of about £11,000 was accepted. Mr Brian Field, of Newport, gave his services as quantity surveyor.

The centre was completed in August 1963, and it was called "The Viscount and Bertha Lady Bledisloe Memorial" as suggested by the second Viscount. On September 1, Mr S. Stinson, a blind gentleman was appointed as physiotherapist. His department came into immediate use, and soon proved its worth.



New equipment, costing £6,000, was presented to the Department on June 2, 1987, by The Friends of Lydney Hospital. Mr Melville Watts (chairman) with Mrs Marjorie Benford, Mrs Helen Scheepers, Mrs Jenny Williams, Mrs Janet Frost and Mrs Clare Bloomfield.

PRESIDENTS OF THE HOSPITAL

CHARLES BATHURST, Senior	1882—1907
DR. R. L. BOWLES	1907—1912
R. BEAUMONT THOMAS	1912—1917
VISCOUNT BLEDISLOE	1917—1948

HONORARY SECRETARIES

MR. A. H. MAULE	1882—1887
MR. G. LAWRENCE	1887—1891
MR. G. T. V. KEELING	1891—1902
MR. T. A. H. SMITH	1902—1920
MR. T. I. COOMBER	1920—1923
MR. F. W. WILD	1923—1948

MATRONS

MISS E. TURNER	1901—1903
MISS M. WALTER	1903—1914
MISS J. P. OSBORNE	1919—1920
MISS H. IDDON	1921—1922
MISS J. KARSTED	1923
MISS E. RICHARDSON	1923—1924
MISS D. J. GOULD	1924—1945
MISS A. M. BAWDEN	1945—1964
MRS A. N. CRADDOCK	1964—1981
MRS J. M. SKANE	1981

Lydney and District Contributory Groups: Chairman Mr H. J. Morgan; Hon. Secretary Mr George Hale.

Lydney and District Hospital Entertainments Committee; President, Mr John H. Watts; Chairman, Mr G. Ivor Griffiths.

CHAPLAINS SINCE 1948

CHURCH OF ENGLAND	Canon L. P. Jones Rev. R. I. Blakeway Phillips (Temp.) Rev. D. H. Hallett Rev. W. S. Llewellyn Mr E. A. Perry (Temp.) Rev. Goswell (Temp.) Rev. W. H. Leach Rev. M. J. Leefield Rev. David Evans
ROMAN CATHOLIC	Rev. Father J. Latiff Rev. Father Morrison Rev. Father Maher Rev. John Ryan

NON CONFORMIST CHURCH

Rev. J. Emlyn-Jones
Rev. Hall
Rev. A. J. Simpkins
Rev. J. Trussler
Rev. Harold Bolt
Rev. E. Chilvers
Rev. M. R. Johnson
Rev. Percy Allen
Rev. George Blake

ADMINISTRATORS

G. N. MOORE, Secretary Forest Hospitals	(1949—1976)
G. MEREDITH, Secretary Forest Hospitals	(1976—1983)
A. DOBBS, Unit Administrator	(1983—1987)

Mr GEORGE HALE



A prominent voluntary worker of past years in Lydney Hospital's fund-raising was the late Mr George Hale of Springfield Road, Lydney.

Mr Hale's service to the Hospital House Committee covered the period 1930—73. It began in 1930 when he was appointed as a representative of the railwaymen on the General and House Committees of the hospital and when in 1935 the working of the hospital contributory scheme was transferred to the individual members of that scheme Mr Hale and the late Sir John English (Aylburton) became joint secretaries, with Mr Hale taking over all the secretarial duties in 1938 when Sir John left the district.

The chairman of that scheme was the late Mr F. H. Yeatman, and the vice-chairman the late Mr Harry J. Morgan, who later became chairman.

Through the efforts of the chairman and a hard working committee and collectors the annual income from the contributory scheme rose from £554 in 1935 to £2,959 in 1947.

In raising funds for the hospital Mr Hale was responsible for obtaining stewards for the annual eisteddfod at Lydney Park and other occasions, also for Band Sunday collections, and in this connection special mention was made of the hospital's annual report of the railwaymen who made a record house to house collect in 1942.

In memory of House Committee member Mr Hale the hospital was presented with a chair. The money for the chair was raised by the George Hale Memorial Fund, and the chair was presented by his three sons—George, John and Stanley.

Contributed by: MR GEORGE HALE, Junior

A SAGA OF SELLING



Mr Ivor Griffiths

This story will pass into the pages of local history as a saga of selling, a record of a magnificent concentrated over the counter offensive to swell the funds of a proud Gloucestershire centre of healing—the Lydney and District Hospital.

It began in the early days of the war in a disused shop kindly loaned by Messrs Burton Stores of Lydney.

Inside volunteer workers dusted and swept, prepared shelves and made ready their part in fostering the growth of a novel plan conceived by Mr Ivor Griffiths and Mr John Watts (at that time chairman of the Hospital Entertainments Committee), all time champions of deserving causes.

They and Mr Lionel Hughes saw the scope for a mart organised to sell articles and goods of a diverse character on a percentage basis for the benefit of the hospital. They dreamed of a busy centre with a thriving trade. They visualised a steady but growing stream of revenue flowing from the shop to the hospital and quickly realised that such an establishment would fill a public need. In those days one will remember, shopping had become difficult, and it was not always practicable to acquire what one wanted.

Thus on November 30th, 1942, a dream was realised. Cleared of its cobwebs its shelves filled with a variety of useful articles, the Hospital Mart opened for business.

From several quarters came murmurs of criticism. The hospital in business? Unheard of, maybe, but the Mart opened oblivious to the onslaught of correspondence in the newspaper columns, and what is more, it thrived for the benefit of the hospital.

In those days many stalwarts of the hospital left the firesides of their homes to become volunteer shop assistants; among them were genial Mrs Craddock, energetic Miss Mary Watts, Mrs Faulkes, Mrs F. G. Hughes and many others, encouraged by Mr Lionel Hughes who assisted in launching the project, and who later directed its operations, they added proud pages to the saga of selling.

Anything of a useful nature was accepted for sale. Items ranged from postcards and collar studs to grand pianos and two solid stone built houses, umbrellas, furniture, cameras, clothes, watches, nothing was excluded from the selling list, and for nearly four years the doors remained open.

Then having served its war purpose, the shop finally closed doors in June 1946. "End" was written to its long story but not before £1,355 had found its way to the coffers of the hospital.

This was a practical dream realised. Thus closed a period of concentrated, unselfish endeavour for a good cause, and thus ended this local saga of selling.

FETES AND ENTERTAINMENTS

For a Town the size of Lydney we are fortunate to have had hospital facilities for a very long time, thanks to a great many people looking forward enough to initiate prospects such as this.

Since the first hospital in Aylburton in 1882, and the present one built in 1907 the chief voluntary functions of Lydney & District has been the raising of funds for the hospital. The administration was done by volunteers and the doctors received no payment for looking after the patients in hospital.

As a pharmacist I came to Lydney in 1932, and was immediately enrolled on the Hospital Entertainments Committee, and in the summer "The Hospital Tea" was the type of Fête held in the Bathurst Park, the old pleasure grounds of Lydney Park. This involved organisation as well as individuals on Stalls of all kinds, games of skill such as bowling for a pig, generously donated by a local farmer. Darts, sweets and cake stalls, afternoon tea, raffles for a salmon, and various other items made for the occasion. It was a real gala day, if the sun was shining quite a fashion parade. The money raised was considerable in view of the fact that such small individual amounts were received. Many contributions were received from local shops and works in the way of prizes for



A scene from one of the plays produced at the Town Hall, Lydney.
Dr J. C. M. Brambell, W. Roger Hughes, Mr Greenfield, C. F. Thomas,
J. Clifford Hughes, Gordon Williams, Fred Bevan, Miss Enid Frazer,
Mrs R. L. Willatt, Miss Hockaday, Miss Brookes.

The date is about 1935.

the various events. Another Social Event was the Hospital Ball held annually and extremely well supported, consisting of Old Time and Modern dances. Tickets were quite high in price at the time and were usually sold to the full capacity of the Town Hall. This function was financially a great success.

During the winter Plays were staged at the Town Hall and produced by Mrs Dorothy Percival with about a score of local players. All the work of making the sets and staging was done by local volunteers. The booking of seats and arrangements of the seating was carried out by the chemist and staff at the cross.

The chairman of the Entertainments Committee for some years was Dr. C. Carson, who was a very enthusiastic supporter of the hospital. In 1935 a very special effort was made for the building and equipping of the new maternity Wing and Out-patient Dept. The Hon. Architect was Mr Phillip Bennett.

Under the National Health Service the husband who was working was covered for medicine and medical attention. The families however were not catered for, and for a member of the family going into hospital could be a real hardship, therefore a

Contributory Scheme was set up and families contributed 3d per week, 13/- per annum and was collected at the offices of larger employers, or through the Chemists at either end of the town, who kept a register for the purpose. At the time they were J. C. Hughes and H. P. Turner & Son. This scheme provided a regular income and was checked by the Hon. Secretary of the hospital, Mr Fred W. Wild.

In 1958, the Lydney Parish gave much thought to various items put forward, how best to record the part played by the First Viscount Bledisloe in the life and development of the Town of Lydney. Mr Charles Phelps, Chairman of the Lydney Parish Council agreed that a Committee be formed to include representation of the Parish Councils, businesses, industries and religious bodies.

What form the Memorial should take, was the subject of much discussion. Eventually it was agreed that an extension to the hospital in the form of a Physiotherapy Centre, which was badly needed, which would be the best way to achieve our objective. The Bathurst family had been involved with the hospital since its inception, agreed that an extension to the hospital would be most appropriate.

Various functions were held, and a wider appeal was launched which encouraged many direct donations by covenant, which would have several advantages.

During the First World War a fund was set up to help residents of the area in the purchase of surgical aids and nursing at home. This fund was called the "Lydney & Aylburton Surgical Aid Fund" and was set up by Lord Bledisloe (then Captain Charles Bathurst) who contributed all his pay during the 1914/1918 war to this fund. The balance of about £700 was handed over to this new project.

It was officially opened in May, 1964 by Mr John Watts who had been a very liberal subscriber, before it was handed over to the New Health Authority.

J. C. Hughes.

FRIENDS OF LYDNEY HOSPITAL



TRUSTEES OF THE FRIENDS OF LYDNEY HOSPITAL
From left to right: Mr A. M. R. Watts, Mrs J. R. L. Watts, Mr M. L. Thomas and Mr A. M. Rogers.

Dear Reader,

The interest in my predecessors, who had worked so hard for the local Hospital, many of whom I knew personally — George Hale, Ivor Griffiths, Mrs Ida Mullan and particularly my Uncle, Mr John Watts, to name but a few, always gave me a desire over many years to lend a hand. With others from about 1960 I was a member of the Hospital Welfare Committee and we raised the whole of the monies for the Physiotherapy Unit in 1963/64.

From about 1969 onward we called ourselves the Friends of Lydney Hospital as by this time we felt there was a keen local interest.

Finally in 1979 a Charity was established with founders Mrs Jane Watts, whose father Dr. Charles Carson was so tireless in his efforts, Mr Alex Rogers, who had been Treasurer for so many years, Mr. Lyn Thomas, whom I had known on the early voluntary Forest Hospital Management Committee, and myself acting as the first Trustees and forming a working Committee.

The interest of local folk and organisations has continued ceaselessly, from primary schools to old folks' clubs, from small businesses to factories, from social clubs and sports committees, pub functions and from grateful patients, from relatives in memory of loved ones in lieu of flowers, dances and fashion shows, local bands and regular band concerts at the Scarr Bandstand each summer, sporting events and Young Farmers Clubs — a reminder of the days in the twenties when each bed had been sponsored for its provision.

So we have contributed to a new ward kitchen, consulting rooms, technical equipment, including air conditioning in the operating theatre, sanitary annexe and ward extensions, including a new day room. We look forward to playing our part in contributing to the Health Service with the authorities for the benefit of patients and staff.

We are mindful of the area the Hospital covers and the local people who live there; the expansion of the adjacent villages such as Yorkley, Bream, Sling, Blakeney, Parkend, Woolaston and Alvington, Whitecroft and St. Briavels, Sedbury and, not forgetting the home of it all, Aylburton. So that all can truthfully say it is 'our Hospital' and we appreciate having it in our midst and we are proud of its service to the community.

I am appreciative too of my committee's support for such a long time and the goodwill of the Doctors, Nurses and staff, which we have always received.

A. Melville R. Watts
Chairman, Friends of Lydney Hospital.

THE FUTURE

Plans are well ahead for a new Hospital which should be completed within the next decade.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

A TRIP INTO THE MEDICAL PAST

Visitors to Lydney Hospital took a trip into the past this week, to the days before the National Health Service, when medicine was a more primitive affair.

They had a chance to see some of the gruesome looking implements which doctors used in the earlier part of the century. It was part of a heritage exhibition and slide show, the undoubted hit of the hospital's open day, one of the events celebrating its 100th birthday.

The display of medical memorabilia by Dr John Cardale most fascinated visitors. Donated by himself and others, including former town chemist, Mr J. Clifford Hughes, the exhibition contained an interesting array of early implements used at the hospital, as well as a number of rare medical books and photographs.

There was a copy of the ninth edition of Quain's Anatomy, published in 1882, the year the hospital opened. It belonged to Dr Nelson Thomas, surgeon at the hospital then, and was loaned by Mr Bill Richards, former public health inspector with the now defunct Lydney Rural District Council.

An early tourniquet was on display and visitors read that it was withdrawn from use in the last war because it led to a large number of unnecessary amputations.

A machine for rolling bandages and a tonsil guillotine were two more unusual items. There were instruments for use in post mortem examinations, a reminder that doctors used to do all the work now carried out by the coroner's department at Gloucester.

The slide show included copies of photographs dating back a century to when the invalid Mrs Elizabeth Bathurst — great grandmother of the present Viscount Bledisloe, founded the hospital at Aylburton.

A 1914 picture of red cross workers and VADS caring for the wounded at Lydney Town Hall brought home the sadder side of hospital work, whilst slides of babies only minutes old showed a much happier aspect of health care.

From 'The Citizen' October, 1982



Dr. Curtis instructing nurse in the operating room, 1940.



Student nurses attending to anatomy class.



Mrs. Betty Perry (nursing student) and Nurse Marie French, 1940.

Photographs
by
Dr. Curtis

TOWN HINDERS DOCTORS

From The Capital Times, 1942.



Dr. J. L. Curtis.

Three popular doctors will never be forgotten by Ledyard people, for they have earned a permanent place in the town's history.

A plaque thanking the three for their devoted medical service has been hung in the Town Hall. The honor was the idea of Ledyard Mayor, Councilor J. J. Clifford Hagler. As a doctor in the town he came to know all time very well. He always felt that there should be some reminder of the work they had done in Ledyard.

Dr. Charles Carson, who died in 1915, Dr. James Brantford, who retired in 1912 and is now in Canada, and Dr. John Curtis, who retired recently and still lives in Ledyard, made many friends through the practice they gave at Westfield House.

For 34 years Dr. Carson served Ledyard. An Irish Canadian, he came to this country with his father in the First World War and to Ledyard in 1921. An excellent family physician, he was formerly a school teacher. He is in England for medical at Gay's Hospital to become a doctor.

He was a skilled surgeon in many operations, such as appendectomy and hernia. In fact, he provided complete health care for the town for a number of years, carrying out operations in the cottage hospital.

His son Charles and daughter Jane, who is engaged to be married, still live at Westfield House. A second married daughter, Pam, has retired in Wales.

Dr. Brantford, who retired after 42 years service, helped raise much money for the hospital with his talent as a consultant and singer. Entertainment was in the family. He is the brother of actor Wilfred Brantford, known for his role in Stephen in the long-running musical comedy revue. The doctor emigrated here year to live with his son.

The third doctor—John Curtis—was at the presentation ceremony. He was a respected doctor locally for 23 years.

The Mayor said: "They were three of the best loved personalities in Ledyard during the past two generations."



Sister Pinchin (with baby) and Sister Eyres in the nursery, 1960.



Sister Andrew in the labour ward, 1960.

DATES OF MAJOR ADDITIONS

- 1907 Laying of Foundation Stone.
- 1924 Operating Theatre and Ward 5.
- 1932 Children's Ward 6, Nurses' Dining Room, Kitchen and Nurses' Quarters above.
- 1937 Opening of the Bertha Bledisloe Maternity and Outpatient Department.
- 1947 'Oakfield purchased and converted into a Nurses' Home.
- 1963 Opening of the Physiotherapy Department.

OPERATING THEATRE and WARD 5

Prior to the opening of the present operating theatre complex in 1924, minor surgical operations and the occasional abdominal case were performed in the old theatre which is now the present X-ray Department: These operations were performed by the patients' own doctor, with a colleague giving the anaesthetic. However, with the greatly improved facilities available, major surgery was now possible and consequently the number of operations increased annually.

In the thirties, most of the operating was done by one or two General Practitioners specialising in surgery and occasionally being assisted by visiting Consultants from Gloucester.

Similarly one or two General Practitioners specialised in administering anaesthetics.

After the National Health Service Bill came into operation on July 5th, 1948, all General Practitioner Specialist appointments were made by the South Western Regional Hospital Board.

South Western Regional Hospital Board Appointments

Surgeons

Dr. C. O. Carson	1948—1959
Dr. W. T. Tandy	1948—1971
Dr. J. D. Cardale	1959—1981

Anaesthetists

Dr. J. C. M. Brambell	1948—1972
Dr. R. Ellison	1948—1958
Dr. A. Frodsham	1972—1973

During 1954, thirty years after the opening of the theatre; 289 operations were performed, which included 7 Caesarean Sections, 72 Appendicectomies, 26 Hernia operations and 14 Hysterectomies. In addition 70 operations were carried out for tonsils and adenoids. Also in this year 224 babies were delivered in the Maternity Unit.

During the period 1955—1966 Lydney Hospital combined with Over Hospital to form the Forest of Dean Enrolled Nurse Training School. The two year course consisted of spending several months at each hospital.