

## HISTORICAL FACTSHEET No 14

### Hospital Matrons 1900-2011

#### 1900 - 1917

The Baschurch Home, forerunner of the present hospital, opened in Oct 1900 with **Agnes Hunt** and **Emily Goodford** in charge. Although they jointly fulfilled the role of Matron, they are listed in the annual reports as Honorary Nursing Superintendents. As the hospital took on increasing numbers of military patients during the war years 1914-1918, need arose for a further senior nurse in charge, especially as Agnes Hunt was frequently absent on advisory visits to orthopaedic hospitals elsewhere in the country.

#### 1917 - 1922

**Miss M. Beesley** was appointed as first Matron in November 1917, at a salary of £100 per year. She had worked with Agnes Hunt and Emily Goodford from the opening of the Baschurch Home. Miss Beesley helped to supervise the hospital's move to Oswestry in 1920-1921. She resigned in 1922. Sadly, Emily Goodford died after a short illness on 21 February 1920, just before the move.

#### 1922 - 1925

For the next three years, **Agnes Hunt** is listed in the annual reports as Matron. From 1925 to 1928, she is named as Honorary Superintendent. After retiring officially in 1928, and until her death in 1948, she appears as Founder. However, to members of staff and patients she was always known as 'Sister'.

#### 1925 - 1945

**Miss E.L. Murray** was appointed Matron in June 1925. She remained in post throughout the Second World War, resigning in October 1945. **Miss Jean Walker**, formerly Assistant Matron, took over as Matron for the next six months.

#### 1946 - 1961

**Miss Ellen Bell**, who had taken over as Assistant Matron from Miss Walker, was appointed Matron in April 1946. In 1961, she took leave to visit hospitals and clinics overseas, and subsequently retired on grounds of ill health. Miss Bell had previously been awarded the MBE in recognition of her skills in assisting patients and staff to overcome the effects of the hospital fire and typhoid outbreak of 1948. After her departure, there were two Acting Matrons before a new permanent appointment was made: **Mr Leonard Hodgkinson** (Principal Nursing Tutor) for 12 months, and **Miss Mary Rowlands** (Senior Home Sister) for six months.

#### 1962 - 1974

With the appointment of **Miss Mary Powell** as Matron in 1962, the hospital welcomed the return of a former member of staff. A native of Pulverbatch, south of Shrewsbury, Miss Powell came to the hospital as a staff nurse in 1936 to do both orthopaedic nursing and physiotherapy training. She then spent two years in Glasgow, returning to Oswestry in the war years, when she had charge of both Gredington and Aston Hall, two of the hospital's wartime annexes. In 1952, Miss Powell was appointed Matron of the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Oxford, where she remained until her move back to Oswestry in 1962. Miss Powell was the author of a standard textbook entitled 'Orthopaedic nursing', which ran for nine editions from 1951 to 1986. She undertook much outside work, serving on numerous

advisory committees, and working with the World Health Organisation, taking the principles of orthopaedic nursing to many parts of the world, including Hong Kong, India, Burma and the Philippines. She was awarded the OBE in recognition of her services.

In 1971, the title of Matron was changed to Principal Nursing Officer. This post was held by Miss Powell until her retirement in 1974.

#### 2003 – 2011

In 2001, the Department of Health re-introduced the role and title of Matron to the National Health Service as part of a new NHS Plan. The first 'Modern Matron' at Oswestry was appointed in 2003, when **Christine Morris**, was seconded from her post as ward manager on Clwyd Ward to become the first Matron since 1971.

In 2004, the Matron's function was split into two, reflecting an increasing workload, with former ward managers **Judy Lloyd** and **Susan Pugh** as the first post holders. **Anne Worrall** later took over as Matron from Judy Lloyd.

By 2011 the title of Matron had been extended to three posts, with **Anne Worrall**, **Karen Macleod**, and **Julie Roberts** holding the title.

N.B. Information on post holders is correct as at 31 August 2011.

#### Sources

1. *Hospital Annual Reports*
2. *Orthopaedic Illustrated No 1 1961, p 2*
3. *Orthopaedic Illustrated No 2 1962, p 2*
4. *Orthopaedic Illustrated No 14 1974, p 13*
5. *The Heritage of Oswestry: the origin and development of the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Oswestry 1900-1975. 3rd ed. Oswestry: The Hospital, 1975. p 140-1*
6. *Joint Issues No 1 2003, p 3*
7. *Joint Issues No 4 2004/5, p 2*