

HISTORICAL FACTSHEET No 21

The Hospital School

Towards the end of the First World War, Agnes Hunt decided to set up a school at the Baschurch Home to cater for the needs of long-stay child patients, so that they would eventually be able to return to school without prejudice to their education. The school was approved by the Board of Education, and the first qualified teacher was appointed in 1918. The school gradually grew in size after the hospital moved to Oswestry, so that by the time Miss Shipley was appointed Head Mistress in 1927, she had a staff of six other teachers. At that time, 115 children were receiving instruction. Many were suffering from diseases such as tuberculosis and poliomyelitis, which meant that they could be hospitalised for months or even years, and the routine provided by the school played an important part in promoting the children's emotional well-being. When Miss Shipley wished to get married the following year, she had to ask leave of the school managers to do so! This was granted, and she continued in employment as Mrs Keleghan until her retirement in 1952.

When the wards were open-sided, as many lessons as possible were held outdoors, with beds lined up to form an impromptu classroom. Different age-groups of children were taught in separate ward classes. In 1961, the local education authority provided funding for a new school building at the rear of the hospital, overlooking the sports field. Groups of children were brought daily to the classroom for subjects such as drama, singing, cookery, and pottery. At that time, there were still around 100 children on the school register. The Special School building was used for over 20 years, until it was refurbished in 1987 as the Peter Pan Nursery for children of hospital staff.

Thanks to developments in the treatment of childhood diseases, the majority of children are now unlikely to stay in hospital more than a few weeks or even days. The average number of students on the school register is now ten. To reflect this progress, the hospital school was re-designated as a Teaching Unit in 1992, and today has only one full-time teacher. This in no way demeans the value of the teaching given, but provides new challenges for the teacher and play leaders.

Head Teachers 1918 - 1992

Miss Cordelia Lloyd	1918-1923
Miss Joyce Davis	1923-1927
Miss I Shipley/ Mrs I. Keleghan	1927-1952
Miss Linda Evans	1952-1957
Miss Olwen Evans	1958-1977
Mrs Christine Peacock	1977-1992

Sources

1. *School Managers/ Governors Committee Minutes 1918-1977*
2. *Hospital Annual Report 1927*
3. *The Orthopod No 2 1956, p 3-4; No 6 1957, p 12-13; No 7 1958, p 9*
4. *Orthopaedic Illustrated No 2 1962, p 6-7; No 17 1978, p 7, 10; No 23 1991, p 7*
5. *Talkback No 26 1993, p 3*
6. *Carter, Marie. Healing & hope: 100 years of 'The Orthopaedic'. Oswestry: The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital NHS Trust, 2000, p 22*