

HISTORICAL FACTSHEET No 18

School of Physiotherapy

When the Baschurch Home opened in October 1900, the only trained nurses were superintendents Agnes Hunt and Emily Goodford. However, as the number of child patients increased, so did the need for more nursing staff. Faced with a staffing shortage and a lack of funds to employ trained nurses, the superintendents decided to start a training school. It was intended that after one year the pupils should go on to a 'proper' hospital in order to gain an official nursing qualification. In 1910, the Home became a registered training centre for massage and Swedish remedial exercises, which gave those who took the examination an official diploma in what came later to be known as physiotherapy. In 1920, a fully qualified teacher of massage was appointed.

After the hospital moved to its present site in 1921, this blend of orthopaedic physiotherapy and nursing education continued, and came to be known as the 'Conjoint' course. Eventually, as the two professions became more specialised and training more regulated at national level, the Conjoint course was discontinued and separate schools of nursing and physiotherapy were established within the hospital.

The old massage department and physiotherapy teaching facilities were both destroyed in the fire of 1948, and it was not until 1952 that a new School of Physiotherapy was opened on the floor above the new Physiotherapy Department. It had two lecture rooms, a practical classroom and a clinical laboratory.

By the early 1960s, it had become part of statutory training for students to gain wider experience in the treatment of general medical and surgical conditions. Students therefore spent a period of time at the North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary, and the City General Hospital, Stoke-on-Trent. In 1967 the school was renamed the 'Oswestry and North Staffordshire School of Physiotherapy' to reflect this change. In the early 1980s, male students were admitted for the first time.

From 1980 onwards, physiotherapy education was subject to major reorganisation on a national scale, and was eventually raised to degree level. In 1994, graduate entry to physiotherapy was achieved throughout the United Kingdom. In the same year, the school at Oswestry closed its doors to students, and transferred to Keele University as the 'Department of Physiotherapy Studies'. The link with the hospital is still maintained by Keele physiotherapy students coming to Oswestry for clinical placements during their course of study.

Principals of the School of Physiotherapy 1920 – 1994

Miss Evelyn Pearce	1920-1922 (First Sister Tutor, but not designated Principal)
Miss Mabel Dalton	1923-1945
Miss Dorothy Talbot	1945-1967
Miss Greta Anderson	1967-1974
Miss Wyn Cannell	1974-1981
Mrs Marian Tidswell	1981-1994

Sources

1. *Hunt, Agnes. This is my life. London: Blackie, 1938. Reprinted by the League of Friends to the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital NHS Trust, 2000*
2. *Carter, Marie. Healing & hope: 100 years of 'The Orthopaedic'. Oswestry: The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital NHS Trust, 2000*
3. *Tidswell, Marian. Adversity the spur: the history of physiotherapy education at Oswestry. London: Athena Press, 2009*