

## HISTORICAL FACTSHEET No 5

### The Naming of the Wards

When the hospital opened at its present site in 1921, the wards were numbered from 1 to 11. **Goodford Ward** was one of the first to be given a name, in commemoration of Emily Goodford, Agnes Hunt's great friend and nursing colleague, who was co-superintendent of the Baschurch Home. Sadly, she died after a short illness on 21 February 1920, just before the hospital's move to Oswestry. Goodford Ward subsequently became the first Day Surgery Unit.

Before the inception of the National Health Service in 1948, hospitals throughout Great Britain were financed and supported by voluntary donations and contributions. When in 1932 Dame Agnes launched an appeal to reconstruct some of the existing wards, she called for help and support from a wide geographical area, as the hospital treated patients from many counties, both in England and Wales. In Wales, Dame Agnes had formed Orthopaedic Voluntary Associations for each county which sent patients to be treated. In Shropshire she created After Care Committees based on individual towns and villages. These Associations and Committees were fund raising bodies who supplied voluntary helpers to the many peripheral After-Care Clinics for discharged patients. The basis of the ward names stems from the adoption of individual wards by these bodies, the majority of which are therefore named after either counties or towns.

**Ludlow Ward** was financed and named for the Ludlow After-Care Committee. It was originally built for children, but when the existing private ward, known as 'Harley Street', was condemned, Ludlow Ward became the private patients' wing, and remains so today.

**Wheatley Ward** became the babies ward (for children under five years of age) and was named after Dr Wheatley, Medical Officer of Health for Shropshire who worked with Dame Agnes for many years.

**Crewe Ward** was adopted and named for the Crewe After-Care Committee. It was used as the children's ward until the Alice Pym Children's Unit was built.

Crewe and Wheatley both closed in the 1990s, when child in-patient facilities were moved to the eastern end of the hospital corridor to form the Alice Pym Children's Unit, centred on **Alice Ward**. Alice Pym was a founder member of the League of Friends and its Chairman from 1963 to 1975. She was also a member of the Hospital Management Committee from 1948 to 1971.

**Denbigh Ward, Merioneth Ward and Montgomery Ward** were adopted and named after the Voluntary Orthopaedic Associations in those respective counties. All three wards no longer exist. Denbigh was demolished to make way for a new staff and patient restaurant called Denbigh's, which opened in 1999. Montgomery subsequently became the Maternity Unit, a General Practitioner-led service set up in 1990 to replace facilities previously provided at Oswestry and District Hospital, which closed in 1988. This unit has now moved to the eastern end of the hospital. Merioneth was de-commissioned as ward accommodation, and eventually demolished.

**Wrekin Ward** was built in 1939 from funds raised by the Wellington After-Care Committee at a cost of £3,000. Colonel Baldwin-Webb, at that time Member of Parliament for the Wrekin, made a radio appeal to help boost the fund.

**Ercall Ward** was also to be a fund-raising venture for the Wellington After-Care Committee (Wrekin and Ercall being the two hills overlooking the town of Wellington). Before the money could be raised, the National Health Service came into being, and this ward was ultimately built by the Ministry of Health, which allowed the name Ercall to be adopted following a special request from the hospital.

**Gladstone Ward** was named after Henry Neville Gladstone, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Gladstone of Hawarden (1852-1935), son of the one-time Prime Minister, and was originally built with money donated by his widow.

**Kenyon Ward** was named after the Kenyon family who were related to the Hunt family. The name is particularly associated with Miss Eliza Kenyon who was a friend of Agnes Hunt, and acted as treasurer to the hospital from Baschurch days until her retirement in 1946 at the age of 95.

In 1948, the hospital was ravaged by fire, and Wrekin, Gladstone, Kenyon and Goodford Wards were badly damaged. These were later rebuilt and opened by Princess Marina, Patron to the hospital, in 1952. Wrekin and Gladstone have for many years formed the Midlands Centre for Spinal Injuries as separate wards for acute care and rehabilitation respectively. Following a £3 million appeal, the Centre was rebuilt on its existing site, and new wards bearing the same names were officially opened in 2001.

At the outbreak of the Second World War four Emergency Medical Service wards were built and opened for the care of war wounded. One subsequently became a research block for the Charles Salt Research Centre. The other three, situated away from the main hospital corridor, were Commonwealth, Baschurch and Menzies Wards.

**Commonwealth Ward** was named by the Board of Management to commemorate the service given over the years by resident medical staff from all parts of the Commonwealth who came to train in orthopaedics at Oswestry. It was opened in about 1939 by Mr Laury MacDonald, an Australian who was a Resident Surgical Officer before the war.

**Baschurch Ward** was named after the Shropshire village where the hospital was founded in 1900. In 1975 this ward was converted into the Orthotic Research and Locomotor Assessment Unit.

**Menzies Ward** was named after Mr John Menzies, OBE, who was Secretary/ Superintendent (Chief Administrator) of the hospital from 1928 to 1956. In 1977 it was converted into the Staff Sports and Social Club, which finally closed in 2009, after which the building was demolished.

In 1967, a purpose-built two-ward unit for the elderly was opened, under the care of a consultant geriatrician, the two wards being Oswald and Sheldon. Originally the wards were situated beyond the eastern end of the main hospital corridor, but were integrated into the new Rehabilitation Unit in the 1970s. Due to structural faults, the unit was rebuilt in 1986, which gave the opportunity for a complete redesign and refurbishment. **Sheldon Ward** was named after Dr Sheldon, a pioneer geriatric physician from Wolverhampton, and is still in use as a medical unit. **Oswald Ward** was named after the town of Oswestry. It was refurbished as Alice Ward in the 1990s.

**Powys Ward** and **Clwyd Ward** form part of the operating theatres and ward block built at the front of the hospital, on the site of the old administration offices. They were opened in

1992, as part of a £7 million development, and are named after the neighbouring Welsh counties.

**'Harley Street'** was the original ward for private patients, and consisted of open-sided horse boxes brought from Baschurch. It was located beyond the eastern end of the corridor, where the Rehabilitation Unit now stands. It eventually gave way to the elements and fell down! Ludlow Ward is now the private wing.

Sources

1. *Orthopaedic Illustrated No 18 1979, p 4*
2. *Carter, Marie. Healing & hope: 100 years of 'The Orthopaedic'. Oswestry: The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital NHS Trust, 2000*