

**LIFE AT THE 4th NORTHERN GENERAL HOSPITAL
DURING THE GREAT WAR**

From the Garton Archive at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School

Occasional Paper No 35

compiled by

Peter Harrod

THE MAGAZINE

The Monthly Record of the 4th Northern General Hospital, Lincoln.

Editorial and Publishing Offices: 4th Northern General Hospital, Lincoln.
Advertisement Offices - - - - 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4
Subscription - - Three Shillings per annum; post free Four Shillings.

January 2014



General View of Lincoln Grammar School, taken over by the 4th Northern General Hospital during the Great War

'During the First World War the 4th Northern General Hospital (4th NGH) in Lincoln occupied the old buildings and fields of the former Lincoln Grammar School (later re-named Lincoln School and now Lincoln Christ's Hospital School). It held 41 Officer beds and 1126 Other Ranks beds with over 45,000 men being treated there during the war. The Newport Cemetery in Lincoln, situated less than a mile from the School, contains 139 First World War graves.'

The above extract from Occasional Paper 14 from the Garton Archive, which may be accessed from the LCHS website under LCHS History/School Archive, sets the scene for this additional article. One of the gems that I have recently discovered in the Lincoln City Public Library is a magazine depicting life at the Hospital towards the end of the Great War. Simply called *The Magazine*, it was published monthly, and numbered twelve issues from October 1916 to September 1917. Since the first edition was titled Volume 1 No1, I can only assume that there were no previous editions, and there is no evidence of any further issues after 1917.

The Editor's Notes section from the first edition informed readers that the Magazine was '...run for those interested in the Hospital and its doings, and not as a specimen of literary or artistic greatness.' It is quite a substantial publication, bound as it is into the twelve volumes, and containing more than 140 pages of print, photographs and cartoons. *The Magazine* was subtitled 'The Monthly record of the 4th Northern General Hospital, Lincoln', and in Major FS Lambert's introduction, it was advertised as being sold for 'threepence', described as the 'modest price of our smallest silver currency'. A subscription cost three shillings per annum, or four shillings by post.

The Magazine contained articles, short stories, essays, poems, humorous quips and 'jestlets', 'gossip', jottings, sketches and cartoons. In addition there are regular features such as 'Editor's Notes', the 'Postbag', 'Garden Notes', and humorous accounts of some of the hospital jobs. Sadly there are several obituaries, which

provide evidence, if we needed it, of those dark times. There are also many fascinating photographs capturing scenes at the Hospital, and of its patients and staff. Reading through the pages of this remarkable window into a year in the life of the Hospital one of the most striking elements is the amount of humour displayed in different guises. Here is one example from a 'Quip';

Patient: "Can I have my sleeping draught now?"

Night nurse: "Sister says if you are not asleep in half an hour you shall have it."

Patient: "I can't possibly keep awake all that time."

Perhaps the humour was a way of coping with the horrific injuries, and the relentless pain and suffering of the patients which was there for all to see on a daily basis. Many of the jobs themselves must also have been both mentally and physically demanding, and emotionally draining.

In order to put some form of structure into this article, I will subdivide it into sections, many of which overlap and interrelate. Each section, for example, comes under the general heading of 'Life at the Hospital'.

The Origins of the 4th NGH

In the first edition of *The Magazine*, Lieutenant-Colonel WHB Brook gave an account of the origin of the Hospital. In 1908 Colonel Charles Brook (pictured below), called a meeting of the general practitioners of Lincoln in order that they might become organised for the Medical Service of the Army, knowing that the day would soon come when their services would be required in real earnest. The work of organising the unit was placed in the hands of the Administrator at the time, the Registrar, whilst Mr Dickinson, the Quartermaster, acted as clerk and kept all the correspondence.



Lt.-Col. CHARLES BROOKS, R.A.M.C. (T.F.)

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Brook (not Brooks as indicated above) entered His Majesty's Service in April 1862, as Assistant Surgeon of Royal North Lincoln Militia, later called the 3rd Battalion of the 10th (The Lincoln) Regiment, and retired as Surgeon-Major in 1891 after thirty years of service. In 1908, he undertook the formation of the medical staff of the 4th Northern General Hospital, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

The formation of the nursing staff was carried out by the Organising Matron, Miss Stephenson, who was the Lady Superintendent of the Bromhead Nursing Institution, now the BMI Lincoln Hospital. Initial training was carried out at a military hospital in York in 1909, followed by further training at the Connaught and Cambridge Hospitals in Aldershot, and back in York again in 1913.

On 26th July 1914, the Unit engaged in further training at the Herbert Hospital, Woolwich, returning to Newland Hall, Lincoln, which had been taken as a mobilisation depot. The next morning, on the 6th August 1914, the Unit took over the Lincoln Grammar School premises, and immediately began the task of putting up the temporary huts on the school field. Within a week the first hospital hut was ready to accept patients, and by the 19th August accommodation for 300 patients was available, and a few days later the Hospital was equipped with 520 beds. The first batch of overseas patients arrived on the 13th September, and since then convoys had arrived steadily.

In February 1915, the 4th NGH was enlarged to accommodate 1,040 beds, and in June of the same year the Recreation Hut was erected by the Friends of the Ladies' Committee. November 30th 1915 saw the opening of the Chapel, funded by private subscriptions, and dedicated by the Bishop of the Diocese (see Picture Gallery).

The Lieutenant Colonel went on to outline the many changes that had taken place during the intervening years. Captain Yates, who was in charge of the X-Ray Department, had gone to France in June 1915, and was followed by Captain Lea Wilson and Captain Joste Smith. In April 1916, Captains Alcock and Rainworth had joined the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. Several NCOs had taken up Commissions and were on active service, whilst others had been drafted to hospital ships of the same Force. Other members of the Hospital had transferred to the ASC and RFC regiments, for example, and were serving all over the world.

Jobs at the 4th NGH

The editions of *The Magazine* contain humorous descriptions, with heavy irony, of some of the Hospital jobs.

The **Wardmaster**, for example, was 'fortunate enough to work in close proximity with the nurses'! His 'demanding' job was apparently to count the grains of sugar in each cup of tea, and how many jam scones there were on each plate! He had the onerous task of handing out registered letters to wounded soldiers, and informing them to which convalescent home they had been allocated! The Wardmaster would have suffered from writer's cramp in signing so many letters, and would have risked injury or illness in looking for dirt in the corners of the ward! It was recommended that, as a

reward for his onerous duties, the Wardmaster should be fumigated daily and excused from all parades. A public school education was apparently an essential prerequisite for the post!

As far as the **Clerk** was concerned, some were males and some were females! The Clerks had to have expertise in chemistry, with experience in X-Ray work, ward work, 'heaps of other things', and be a good 'jaw'! They needed to be able to push pens, and sometimes brushes, with skill, and had to attend all parades for the physical drill necessary for the strength in the arms essential for manipulating a pen! They were required to rise early, but never before 9 am, and needed the requisite qualifications essential for pleasant conversations with the Sisters! They needed to know how to speak to a lady and to have the skills needed to fill the ink wells and to empty the waste paper baskets! A further 'punishment' for their hard labours was to go on 'escort' days to Scotland or Ireland. The job description ended with the announcement that lady clerks were a 'new innovation', but the writer did not have the courage offer criticism!

The **Ward Orderly** was described as having 'arduous duties'. As he was 'just ordered about' by the Sisters, the author wrote in parenthesis, 'No petticoat government for me'! It was at the time the height of the Women's Suffragette Movement, of course! Where disagreements occurred between of the orderly and the 'orderers', the Hospital Sergeant Major had to intervene! The orderlies had to take their fair share of work with soap and brush, despite the introduction of women 'scrubbers'! Clearly, political correctness was many years away! According to the writer, thousands of sick and wounded owed a great debt of gratitude to orderlies, but rarely was it given! There were 'heaps of masters', but most were at a loss to know who the real chief was!

One of the many poetic offerings to *The Magazine* was an Ode to an Orderly:

It's orderly here, orderly there,
And where is that orderly? Well, I declare!
It's orderly this and it's orderly that,
And orderly, will you please shake the mat?

The floor of the kitchen has got to be scrubbed
(I'm sorry your uniform's new),
There's a basket of rubbish I want to have tubbed,
And a few other things you can do.

Orderly, please light the duty room fire,
And I want a few pairs of boots brushed,
Orderly, please get the temperature higher,
And the bathroom's in need of a dust.

We don't mind the work; it's all in our lives,
But please kindly nurses, oh don't tell our wives,
How we dusted and scrubbed, our stiffness concealing,
Or they'll want us to do it at every spring cleaning!

The Hospital Police apparently used to frequent a 'little police station' at the Hospital gate, with a peep-hole which allowed them to scrutinise all individuals entering or leaving the portals of the Institution. Visitors were confronted by a burly individual in khaki, wearing a white band on the arm with the three letters HMP. It was also a requirement to wear at least a size eleven in shoes! They had to be trained in how to turn a deaf ear to visitors from the town wishing to visit their 'third cousin by marriage'! They also needed the willpower to decline bribes such as the offer of 'fags'! They needed to be expert in examining passes (not clear which type!), and to have a good temper. It was described as a good job in summer, but being stuck on Wragby Road 'shivering, shaking and saluting' in winter made it a laborious job not to be envied. The main perk was apparently saying "Good morning" to a few hundred nurses and, if they were lucky, receiving 'passes' from them!

The Steward's Store

The final job to be described was the Steward's Store, also referred to as the Hospital Supply Depot. The work was apparently arduous, and not to be laughed at. The poor harassed staff had heaps of enquiries to answer from the Sisters and nurses. The temptation to purloin was naturally great, and it was rumoured that the Steward never went hungry! Meat had to be accounted for to the smallest morsel, and milk to the last drop! The correct numbers of currants and sultanas had to be carefully counted and issued, and it was a real challenge to cut up a side of beef, a sausage or a chicken for a dozen famished soldiers! They also had to count eggs, and if they broke one they were accountable to the lady cooks! Apparently working in the Store was a great attraction for the 'underground species', and applicants had to be accomplished catchers and trap-baiters!

The VADs

Not included in the humorous, ironical series, but mentioned many times elsewhere in *The Magazine* were the VADs, or Voluntary Aid Detachments. This was a voluntary organisation providing field nursing services, mainly in hospitals. Founded in 1909, there were 2,500 such detachments by the summer of 1914, making up a supply of some 74,000 volunteers, two-thirds of whom were women and girls. At the outbreak of the Great War, VADs eagerly offered their services to the war effort, and after an uneasy beginning, established themselves and worked alongside the qualified nursing staff. During the four years of war, 3,000 VADS worked in hospitals, and served as ambulance drivers or cooks. They provided a valuable source of bedside aid and comfort, and many were decorated for distinguished service.

One of the most interesting articles in *The Magazine* is one by E Bethune, from St John's, Newfoundland, entitled 'First Impressions of a VAD'. In it she describes the delightful location of the Hospital, situated amidst green fields, trees and open spaces, giving a sense of rest and freedom bound to react beneficially on the patients received there. Wragby Road would of course have been a leafy lane in those days, and Lincoln Grammar School was on the outskirts of the city. The huts and tents were a surprise to one so accustomed to the usual type of city hospital,

and the order to work in the tents, with its challenge to cleanliness, was unnerving. However after a few hours of work in that environment, all fears were apparently dispelled, and the charm of tent hospital life 'grips one with an increasing fascination'. The fine small gardens scattered about in all directions added much to the appearance and pleasure of the tent life, and gave a pleasant home-like look everywhere.

Miss Bethune described the good fellowship, unity and helpfulness existing between the nurses and Sisters, making each day's work a pleasure, and helping to spare her the dreadful feeling of being a stranger in a foreign land. She went on to marvel at the spirit of the men who had been at the Front. Folks were expected to be able to endure necessary pain, but it was a revelation to her that the men exuded such marvellous cheerfulness and readiness to help despite severe pain and enforced idleness. As a Canadian, she described the combination of cheerfulness, patience and 'grit' as a 'fair sample of the British spirit!' The 'stiff upper lip'! In a scarcely veiled criticism of the 'idlers' who were calling for an end to the war and peace at any price, she concluded by suggesting that they might see and appreciate the spirit of those who were paying the price, and doing their bit to hasten the coming of victory, and honourable peace for humanity.

In another humorous piece on 'Hints to VADs', the following advice, summarised from a much longer list, is offered:

Hints to VADs – selective items from two humorous lists

- They must try to become one outward shape or appearance.
- The human breath, followed by a smart whisk with a clothes brush, is a quick and passably brilliant means of cleaning shoulder brasses.
- To lessen, and at the same time heighten, the necks of low-necked blouses, soak the collar and neckband in tepid water for one hour, wring out slightly, and allow to dry gradually. Repeat until shrunk to the required height.
- Remember that silence is golden. Larger size than usual bedroom slippers should be worn over ordinary shoes to muffle one's feet.
- It is advisable not to do more than half a dozen things at the same time. Two one-armed patients may be washed simultaneously whilst taking the temperature of two other patients and stripping the clothes from a bed opposite.
- Think creatively about how to provide a convoy of eight new patients with a clean towel when there are only three available.
- Don't have a single opinion of your own.
- Don't take an officer around a ward by yourself.
- In fact don't go near an officer unless you have to.
- Don't speak to a senior until you're spoken to.
- Don't arrive at the Hospital with three or four dress baskets, a guitar and a tennis racquet
- Don't be surprised if, having polished brasses until you have nearly skinned your fingers, the Sister say, "There are still those brasses to clean".

The Chaplain(s)

One of the most emotionally challenging jobs at the Hospital must have been that of Chaplain. Not only was he responsible for ministering to the sick and wounded soldiers and all ranks of the staff, but also to the visiting relatives and friends of the dead and dying. The Chaplain's quarters were housed in a hut, originally known as 'The Vicarage'. It was never locked, as a sign that the Chaplain was always ready to see any of the men for a chat, or to help them in any way. Although the Hut was the property of the Church of England Chaplains, it was also available to their brother chaplains from other denominations, and it was a source of great happiness that they worked together in such pleasant accord. Visitors to the Hut were immediately aware of a subtle aroma suggesting that the conversations were at times seasoned by tobacco, 'one of man's best friends'.

The Hut was simply but suitably furnished with a table, a desk, a stove, a mat and a few chairs, one of which was 'collapsible at sight'! Apparently the view from the window was 'not calculated to enthrall the seeker after Nature's beauty', but that was compensated for by the 'melodious sounds of coal shovellers and the distant murmur of overworked gramophones'.

The purpose of the short article was to make the Hut better known so that patients and members of the Unit would be encouraged to visit. Although there is no reference to the Hospital Chapel in The Magazine, there is evidence elsewhere that the grammar school cricket pavilion was taken over as a temporary place of worship.

In Hospital (By a Fairly Patient Patient)

An extremely witty article almost worthy of PG Wodehouse tells the sad tale of an inmate in the 4th NGH who, in his own words, was not a wounded hero, but had the misfortune to fall into a 'nice round shell hole', kindly designed by the Central Powers for his personal discomfort. His sudden descent into this abyss caused him to contract a severe attack of 'comic knee', and he was transferred, via stretcher, hospital train, coffin ship, and motor ambulance (commonly known as 'the flying mortuary') to the Hospital.

Whilst in the Hospital he found that his time was spent employed in sucking a thermometer, eating chicken, sleeping, and having his pulse felt by a pretty VAD. He claimed to be clever at all these things! His food, consisting of chicken, fish, soup and eggs, was apparently fit for the Gods, those ethereal creatures not much in need of solid sustenance.

As regards eggs, he regarded it as a safe rule never to touch one unless it was accompanied by a sworn statement certifying its length of service, and previous convictions! Apparently the inmates were allowed to gorge on three ants' eggs per day until they began to develop cannibalistic tendencies, which made their companions nervous! In this respect, he told the story of a Lance-corporal in the ward who became so hungry that he got up one night and devoured an Orderly! The card over his bed occasioned a good deal of comment until he took it down and found that a fellow-sufferer had filled it in thus:

Name: Von Hindenburg
Rank: Acting Lance-corporal
Service: Seventy-seven years
Religion: Mormon
Disease: Tertiary chicken-pox, whizzbangitis, and earwig on the spinal column.

The fellow-sufferer turned out to be a DCM and had to be woken each night to receive his sleeping-draught! He would be strafed later!

Comic knee was described as an exhilarating and exciting complaint. At times it felt as though the plumber who had made the knee-joint had finished his work off badly, and left a lot of loose screws, bolts and washers floating about inside.

One of the highlights of the patient's day was to have half-an-hour of massage during which he was alternatively pinched and slapped and tickled by a solemn-looking individual who told him tales of how his female relatives had died of 'lingering internal complaints'! He had just reached the last painful moments of a favourite aunt when the patient suddenly burst out laughing uproariously. He couldn't stop himself, whilst listening to that tale of deep sorrow whilst being tickled to death! Needless to say, the patient was afraid that he would never speak to him again!

Life on Board a Hospital Ship

One of the most interesting entries in *The Magazine* is an article, written by Sister Zillah Jones, about life on board a hospital ship, which gives a fascinating insight into one aspect of the war. During the First and Second World Wars hospital ships served the British Army in evacuating the wounded and injured back to Britain. The following is an edited and selective summary of the entry.



Photo by] SISTER ZILLAH JONES [Harris

The article began with a paragraph which showed how rumours abounded in the 'fog of war'. The author had received a telephone call summoning him immediately to the 1st London Hospital as a convoy of five hundred was expected that night. In the event it turned out to be a hoax, and it was never known why everyone was assembled in such haste. There were rumours that the Expeditionary Force was crossing that night, and another that the War Office was simply checking on the powers of rapid mobilisation. However, there was 'not even the shadow of a Tommy'. The next 'startling' command received was an order to proceed to Waterloo en route for Southampton within three-quarters of an hour to embark on HMHS *Carisbrooke Castle*. The next day the ship embarked for St Nazaire following a delay because there was a German submarine in the Channel. Whilst crossing the Bay, a blank shot was fired across their bows by a French cruiser on the lookout for a German hospital ship that was believed to be laying mines. After ascertaining the identity of the ship, they were allowed to proceed.

The staff of the ship consisted of a major in command, two Regular Army Sisters, four Territorials and four Civil Reserves. The Commanding Officer had received the DSO early in the war, much to the delight of the crew, as it reflected on the whole of the ship's company, not least because he was the first CO on a hospital ship to be decorated. The orderlies were particularly proud, as there was something of a competitive nature among orderlies of the various ships, and christened it 'The DSO ship'.

The official number on the ship was some 400, but on occasions twice that number were carried. They were particular busy at the time when the Prussian Guards made their bid for Calais, and it was imperative that the wounded were transported home as quickly as possible. What was impressive was the way in which the operation was managed in a quiet, orderly manner. A Red Cross train would arrive at the station in Boulogne or Calais, where the stretcher-bearers would be ready to receive the wounded, and would lift them carefully off the stretchers. No orders were needed or given; everyone knew his job. At the gangway, a Medical Officer and the Sergeant-Major would be stationed to take down particulars. Each patient was provided with a piece of cardboard with the name of the ward. Other orderlies would direct them to their wards and beds by means of a lifting apparatus. The Sister would take the name, number, regiment and other particulars on dressings, etc., make a note on a label, and tie it to the 'cot'. The Medical Officer would assess the patients, tying red labels on the serious cases. The changing of 'fomentations' (poultices) had to be undertaken successively in the cabins on the main deck, saloon and promenade deck. A bad case of tetanus isolated in the poop deck required special attention. It was quite a challenge to climb to the top berth to change 'fomentations' with the ship tossing pitching and tossing. Many Germans were taken home to England. They either required a lot of attention or none at all. Apparently they always wanted Sister ("Sester, Sester"), and never an orderly. It was recalled that one requested the boat to stop as he was feeling 'far from happy in his inside', but was told that everyone was!

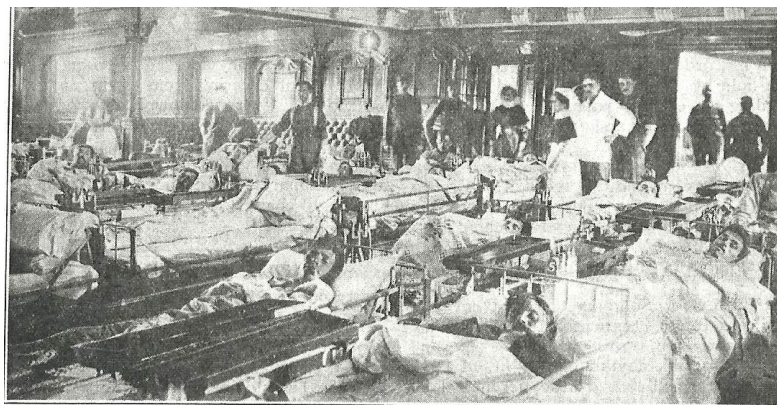
During the early days of their travels they had a case of a young German officer, 'a mere lad', who had evidently been photographed somewhere down the line. On his arrival on board, he found to his amazement a portrait of himself on the front page of the *Daily Mirror* underneath which was written 'Furious Barbarian who killed women

and children in Belgium'. He became known as 'the furious barber', but always denied his crimes. On the following trip, they brought home many of the men who had been exchanging souvenirs with the Germans at Christmas time. They had swapped Woodbines for rank cigars, shaken hands, wished each other a Merry Christmas, returned to their trenches, and shot at each other.

Another trip involved proceeding to Dublin and gathering all the Irish they could find! As luck would have it, there were fewer Irish on board that trip than on any other. However there were many celebrities on board including VCs, DCMs, and the Japanese Red Cross. There followed a rough crossing to Southampton on the day the Germans were starting their blockade and threatening to sink any ship in sight. A few of the Sisters slept with their lifebelts under their pillows, but the only member of the ship to get into a panic was the Italian cook. He was missing next trip! They were told that he had gone home to join the army! Those were the times when all the wounded were landed at Southampton, and there were occasions when twelve ships would arrive in one day, each carrying 250 to 1,000. The stretcher bearers were 'worked like galley-slaves', but were always good-tempered and invariably had a cheery word for the wounded.

Appropriately enough, the *Carisbrooke Castle* sailed out of Southampton the next morning and anchored off Cowes to await instructions. It was a most reliable ship and was kept very busy. On the journey down Southampton Water and across the Solent there were scenes of troops embarking, Colonials arriving, dozens of yachts taking the wounded from Netley, ship loads of interned Germans, seaplanes practising flying on board the mother ship, submarine diving, and mine-sweepers by the dozen doing their jobs. It was most weird seeing the troops passing at night escorted by destroyers, and looking like phantom ships. Not a sound or a speck of light to be heard or seen as they glided past like dream ships, in contrast to the *Carisbrooke Castle* which was one blaze of lights.

During the daytime the ship came in for a good deal of cheering from the troops. They used to yell, "Are we downhearted?", and one wounded soldier called back, "No, but you bally soon will be!" The author concluded the article by proclaiming that they were a very happy family on board that ship, and in spite of storms, fogs, submarines and mines, they were not at all anxious to change their lot with anyone on shore. It was yet another example of the stoicism that permeated almost every page in the remarkable Magazine, and every aspect of life at the 4th NGH.



ALL ABOARD FOR "BLIGHTY."

Hospital Humour

Who wrote in the Night Report Book, 'Two toes amputated from a foot'?

Sergeant-Major to new recruit: 'What's your religion?'

Recruit (hard of hearing): "Worthington's, Sir."

"No, silly, where do you go on Sundays?"

"Pictures, Sir"

Recruit to NCO: "Can you tell me when the eye specialist will be here – I've waited for him over two hours?"

NCO: "Don't worry, lad, he's waited for you for over two years."

Orderly Officer: "Any complaints?"

Tommy: "Just you taste the stuff in this Dixie." (a large cauldron-type pan)

Orderly Officer: "What's the matter with it? It's really good soup."

Tommy: "Soup! The cook called it tea!"

RAMC Orderly (taking dinner to unpopular patient): "I say, old man, your chicken isn't fish today; it's rabbit!"

GSS (to Lady Scrubber): "Why were you absent from work yesterday?"

Lady Scrubber: "Them machines dropping insanitary bombs round about upset my insides and made me all of a tremble."



Sergeant (RAMC): Now Pat, supposing a man were to fall down in a drunken fit, how would you treat him?"

Recruit: "Faith, Sergeant, oi wouldn't treat him at all, oi'd consider he'd 'ad enough!"

Christmas at the 4th Northern

An article by VAD EM Hall on Christmas at the Hospital, described it as 'that Festival of all Festivals, and the best loved by everyone'. Apparently it was kept in 'princely style', and one of the principal officers was heard to remark, "Well, if the Kaiser saw all this, he would not think England was short of anything'.

The celebrations began for the inmates of the wards as soon as they roused from their morning slumbers. The night nurses had played the part of Santa Claus, and had placed a treasure bag on everyone's bed. These contained gifts, useful and ornamental, serious and comic, the latter adding greatly to the vivacity and noise of the day's proceedings.

Thanks to the kindness and generosity of the lady visitors and officers, as well as to the subscribers to the Hospital, and the devoted and untiring efforts of the Matrons, Sisters and nurses, everyone enjoyed the day to the full. At noon, the men feasted on the roast beef of Old England and Christmas plum pudding, and once the meal was over, and the staff had partaken of their own seasonal repast, the entertainments began. Tea formed a pleasant interlude, but supper was a more formal occasion, and was honoured by the presence of the Matron and some of the Medical Officers.

A reflection of these 'gaieties' could be seen again on Boxing Day and New Year's Day, when heartfelt good wishes were exchanged. The short article ended with very best wishes for happiness in 1917, and the hope that the year might be made 'glorious and memorable by the signature of a victorious and lasting Peace'.

Poems in *The Magazine*

The following is a selection of the many poems that pervade the 140 or so pages of *The Magazine*. They are chosen more for the insight into life at the Hospital than for their literary or artistic merit.

The first two are tributes to the care received at the 4th Northern General.

'An Appreciation', by Private Jones, 16 Ward

Far away from Flanders,
Far from the hail of lead,
In a corner of 16 Ward
I have a cosy bed.
We're treated here with kindness,
And, between you and me,
It's a little piece of heaven'
After what we've just gone through.

Our Nurse

Who comes along with gentle tread,
And tries to get us out of bed,
And cries, "Get up, you lazy head"?
Our nurse.

Who comes in uniform so neat,
And breaks upon our slumbers sweet,
When morning light our ward doth greet?
Our nurse.

Who is it that disturbs our dreams,
Quite ruthless – so to us it seems;
Who comes with face that always beams?
Our nurse.

Who says at night, "Now go to bed",
When we would all stay up instead,
Though we've all had our supper bread?
Our nurse.

Who tries to quieten all our fun,
Tho' it is time at set of sun,
And all our sport should then be done?
Our nurse.

Who watches softly though the night,
Our guardian angel – till the light
Shall break once more upon our sight?
Our nurse.

My Dinner Party

I had prepared a sumptuous feast
For *dear* (?) old Kaiser Bill
As no-one interfered with me
I'd worked my own sweet will.

I raided a dispensary
Before I went to cook;
If you wish to know what's missing,
I took – well, more than my hook.

To start the feed I made some soup
With lime and Lassar's Paste,
Then fish fried in carbolic oil,
He gobbled that in haste.

A chicken stuffed with Pulo. Glyc. Co.
Was next to grace the board,
But cutlets fried in Castor oil,
Made me think I had scored.

A pudding made of No. 9s,
And stewed in turps for hours,
Then a source of Ac; Nitric,
Mixed with Sulphur flowers.

Alas! When he began to writhe,
With many shrieks and screams,
I disappointed woke to find,
'Twas nothing more than dreams.

My final selection, which is an anonymous poem, pulls at the heartstrings, and evokes a picture of how homesick many of the patients must have been, and how difficult it must have been for their wives and other relatives not only to have to cope with their own feelings, but also to have the skill to find the right words to console and comfort their children.

When Daddy Comes Home Again

How long do you say it is now, Mother,
Since Daddy first went away?
It seems such an age to me, dear,
For I'm missing him every day.
When the bugles and drums that beat,
And the soldiers come marching by, I think of him and try to cheer,
Yet somehow I want to cry.

Where do you say he is now, Mother?
It's out at the Front, I know,
For his King and his Country called him, So Daddy just had to go.
He's gone where battles are lost and won,
To fight on a foreign shore,
Though you and I may see him back, they are wanting him there much more.

How long do you think it will be Mother?
Shall we have long to wait,
Till the enemy's learned his lesson,
And we hear Dad's step at the gate?
All the bells will ring, the people will shout
Hooray! And the streets will be gay,
And you and I will go wild with joy,
When Daddy comes home that day.

In Memoriam

There are, of course, several 'In Memoriam' tributes to soldiers in *The Magazine*. The one I have selected is particularly poignant, because the officer, Lieut. WA Taylor, was a former pupil of the Lincoln Grammar School.

To all his friends his death has come as a loss – a personal loss- for Lieut. Taylor, known to all as Tony, was a good fellow, a staunch comrade, a happy warrior. Educated t the Lincoln Grammar School, he passed on, after a brilliant scholastic career, to the Royal Insurance Company's office at Lincoln. It was, however, with the outbreak of war that his circle of friends grew to such a large extent; then, to all and sundry was extended the same genial friendship and spirit of camaraderie. The times of strain and rumour found him unruffled, and in his confined little quarters where he was wont to unravel the intricacies of the X-ray, laughter reigned. He obtained a commission in the Lincolns, and was subsequently transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. He was almost like Peter Pan in his freshness and his refusal to grow old. Those of us who remember the 4th Northern two years ago can appreciate to the full the friend we have lost, and all will join in respectfully offering to Mrs Taylor (who has so tragically been bereaved of husband) and her son their heartfelt condolences.



photo by Aut
LIEUT. W. A. TAYLOR.

Professor Charles Garton's invaluable card index system reveals that William Anthony Taylor was born in 1893, admitted to Lincoln Grammar School in 1905, and left in July 1911, gaining the London Matriculation in 1912. *The Lincolnian* magazine recorded that he was killed by a sniper on 31st July 1917. His name, of course, is on the War Memorial on the cloisters of LCHS.

Sport and Other Pastimes

Even during the ravages of war, sport played a part in the life of the 4th NGH. *The Magazine* reported that the RAMC Sports took place on Wednesday 25th July 1917, and were 'most successful'. The author wrote that a lady visitor exclaimed to him in innocent surprise that she thought that it was a 'unit of CIII crocks'! He agreed but diplomatically turned the conversation into less dangerous channels. Certainly there were no signs of the halt or the maimed in the hotly-contested games of that enjoyable afternoon. The weather did its share; the band of the Lincolnshire Regiment did its part; the visitors did theirs by adding over £11 to Lady Monson's fund; the blue-and-yellow rosette stewards did theirs; Mrs Tinley did hers by distributing the prizes; and Major Tinley most certainly did his by arranging, smoothing, and organising. Hearty thanks were due to all who contributed to that 'pleasant diversion from the humdrum routine'. I wonder where the sports were held bearing in mind that the field behind the Grammar School was occupied by some 20 huts? Perhaps there was sufficient space behind the huts, possibly the second field was in operation at that time, or could it have been held on The Lindum, I wonder? There is also an interesting account on the Nurses' Hockey Club, arranged courtesy of the kindness of Colonel Ruston in making a field available. Again I am wondering if it was the field to the west of Lincoln Prison, which later became the Ruston's Cricket Club field before it moved to Newark Road. The first practice was held on 1st December (1917), when twenty 'weary yet enthusiastic night nurses' turned up. The felt they were:

*Growing older and older,
Shorter in wind as in memory long,
Feeble of foot, and rheumatic of shoulder.*

However they ended their short, hard practice rejuvenated, and at half-time a general meeting took place to elect the following officers; Nurse Scorer (an appropriate and well-known Lincoln name!), Captain; Nurse Roy, Treasurer; Nurse Macvie, Secretary. Practices were to be held on Tuesday and Fridays at 9.30 am, and a subscription of sixpence each was to be paid to meet s current expenses. A match had been arranged with the Lindum Ladies for Boxing Day, with the promise of more fixtures being arranged in the future. An appeal was made for regular practice so that the strongest team might be selected. Any new members, whether beginners or 'old players' would be welcomed.

Following a request from the Editor, a column entitled 'Garden Notes' occurred regularly in the pages of *The Magazine*. As the sketch below reveals, the 'gardens' were situated among the huts that served as temporary wards on the School playing field.

(See also Appendix Three below).



THE GARDENING SEASON IS IN FULL SWING

Colonel Charles Brook had kindly given prizes for the best-kept gardens in the traditions of the railway stations of the era. The official gardeners were often assisted by one-legged or one-armed men, whose perseverance in those trying circumstances was quite astonishing. The Lincoln Friends of the Gardeners' Association offered their help and support in laying out and keeping in order the charming little garden in front of the Recreation Hut, for the benefit of the wounded heroes. Each hut was supposed to have at least four tools; a spade, a fork, a trowel and a small Dutch hoe, all carefully cleaned and looked after. The previous year many hut gardens had been planted with summer bedding plants and herbaceous plants. Examples of plants grown in the gardens included sweet peas, mignonettes, wallflowers, Canterbury bells, peonies and chrysanthemums; a good mixture of annuals, biennials and perennials. 'Nigella' (love in a mist) was a further variety! Vegetables were also grown, of course, as part of the War Effort. Potatoes, aided by a top-dressing of nitrate of soda or some potash manure, were one of the main crops. A section from the Editor's Notes below indicates how seriously the Hospital gardens were taken despite the challenges and vicissitudes of the English weather!

From 'Editor's Notes'

1. We have discovered that one way of keeping cheerful is in trying to makes others happy.
2. Once again, as last year, an interesting competition for Vegetable and Flower growing was held in the Hospital grounds. Unfortunately, owing to our ever-changing climate, many of the gardens which might have taken first prize were a week short in arriving at their full state of perfection.

Another notable event in the Hospital was an evening of entertainment in the Recreation Hut on 7th August 1917, when 'The Mock Trial was performed by the Crippled Soldiers' Amateur Dramatic Society, eliciting roars of laughter from the over-packed house of Medical Officers, Sisters, Nurses and VADs. The Cast was given a much-merited and highly positive review, the Judge in particular being

praised for his performance, and presented with a bunch of carrots! A 'very interesting evening' was brought to a close by the singing of the National Anthem.

The New Year was also celebrated in customary style as an article under the title 'High Jinks' testified. A 'gay scene' was witnessed at the Nurses' Home in Greetwell Road on the evening of January 5th, when the Assistant Matron (Miss Ward) gave a dance and whist drive to the members of the Territorial Force Nursing Service, and invited her guests to appear in fancy dress, and to wear masks which would hide their features to such an extent that amusement would be afforded by fellow guests trying to identify them. The invitation was widely accepted, and prizes were awarded to the least easily identifiable.

Nurse Raithby, attired in black bathing garb, won the first prize, whilst Nurse Bradley, as a Dutch girl, was a popular second prize-winner. Nurse Shannon, who gained third prize, was a most amusing figure dressed in tail-coat, tiny bowler hat and large ungainly boots, in which she shuffled about in a manner truly worthy of her prototype (Have you guessed it?), Charlie Chaplin.

The evening's festivities, which included a lavish supper, were brought to a reluctant close when a bouquet was presented to the hostess by the 'Plantagenet Queen' and 'Madame de Pompadour', followed by much cheering and the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* and the National Anthem.

One of the hidden agendas of the article is the way in which stylistic conventions, language usage and social attitudes have changed during the past one hundred years. The term 'gay' has a very meaning in today's lexicon of course, and the conventional method of writing the date has also changed. More controversially, one of the guests dressed up as a doll which used to appear on the label of the jars of a well-known marmalade supplier. Even though the name was firmly fixed in the context of the social attitudes of the time, I am reluctant to print it as it has such racist overtones. The producers of the remake of the film 'The Dam Busters', are faced with a similar dilemma in deciding what to call Wing Commander Guy Gibson's dog.

Mary

Strict discipline was of course essential in a military hospital, and rules and orders; manners and customs; etiquette and deferential decorum were to be obeyed without question at all times within its hierarchical governance. However Mary was apparently an exception to that rule. Described as smart and trim in appearance, clad in a becoming little grey suit, sleek and soft, graceful and distinguished, she knew that in her unique position in the Territorial Force Nursing Service that she was above the rules and customs. Her main service to the Hospital, apart from providing friendship and affection to staff and inmates alike, was in her capacity as skilful huntress, and dauntless warrior in defence of her hearth and home.

She was, of course, Mary the Hospital Pussy Cat!

Lincoln

As one might expect, the Hospital provided a sanctuary to patients from all over the UK, and indeed from further afield. Some wrote in appreciation of the City of Lincoln, and its charm and attractions. A visitor from Canada, Private WE Cutler of the 10th Canadians, 1st Division British Expeditionary Force, for example, gave his own 'Appreciation of Lincoln', which he described as 'absorbing to anyone interested in places of an ancient and varied history and with scenery of fair diversity'. The Cathedral was a most 'beautiful and stately pile, built of limestone rock from the neighbourhood, and dating back to the 10th century 'at least'. He must have been something of a geologist, or had taken out a textbook from a library, as he went on to describe the county as supporting many clay brick industries, which utilised the thick seams of blue shale from the Liassic clays. Those strata, he informed his readers, were 'very fossiliferous' and on examination yielded rich returns in quantities of fossil, cuttlefish, mussels, oysters, clams, etc., being past inhabitants of a prehistoric ocean bed, of which the County of Lincoln was a part some ten or twelve million years ago. Not bad for a Canadian visitor!

Interestingly, Private Cutler commented that to anyone expecting to see the flat fenlands and marshes of Lincolnshire, the surrounding countryside would come as a surprise, owing to the Wolds and the high ridges on either side of the City. That attitude persists today, as a bus driver in Cornwall has testified. On inspecting our bus passes, he jested, "Ah! The flatlanders are here again!"

Also commenting on the beauty of the Arboretum, the splendid little museum, the good library, and the value of the Castle and Cathedral to an antiquarian or archaeologist, Private Cutler concluded by saying how refreshing it was to come from the Flanders Front, the Ypres 'salient' to see the quaint town and peaceful country after the shell-torn trees and flatness of Flanders.

'One might travel farther and fare worse, much worse, than to recuperate in Lincoln at the 4th Northern Hospital.'

Another contributor to *The Magazine*, with the initials EMS, felt it necessary to write something about Lincoln for most of its readers who were strangers to the City. It reads rather like one of the many books and gazetteers about Lincoln, and offers a thumbnail sketch of its history and geography; of its many attractions; and of its unique qualities. What caught my attention was the reference to the City and County Museum, housed in the old Greyfriars building, and containing Roman antiquities found in or around Lincoln, such as a Roman milestone, inscribed tombstones, alters, coins and tessellated pavements, etc. The Greyfriars Building was of course the home of Lincoln Grammar School for some three hundred years until the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The Almeric Paget Massage Corps (AMPC)

Named after Mr and Mrs Almeric Paget, the AMPC was formed on the outbreak of war to supply and run a corps of fully-trained masseuses. By 1916 some 400

patients had received electrical treatment of various kinds, administered by a staff of 120 masseuses. The author of the article about the APMC placed on record her appreciation of the electrical staff to the willing and efficient services of one Private Bell, who was sent for when anything went wrong with the electrical apparatus. Another invaluable member of the hospital was a gentleman called Faulkner. Known affectionately as 'The Pivot', he was the man to whom all members of the Hospital turned when any mechanical device was in need of reparation.



PRIVATE BELL



THE "PIVOT"

The locations are clearly behind the School, but their precise positions are elusive owing to alterations to the buildings.

Conclusion

This brief glimpse into the life and work of a military hospital offers a fascinating insight into the unique social history of the Lincoln Grammar School site, which cannot be found in any textbook. I discovered it with great excitement and anticipation, and I read it with a mixture of laughter and tears; hope and despair. The picture that came over most strongly to me was how the staff at the Hospital were able to cope with the desperate years of war, and the horrific injuries they encountered, by their humour, resilience, fortitude and camaraderie. The 4th Northern General Hospital, Lincoln, described in *The Magazine* by 'Thinker' as 'this great kaleidoscope of ever-changing humanity', was an extended family giving each other support, comfort and hope for the future.

Perhaps the spirit of the Hospital was summed up in the words of the Hospital Administrator, Lieutenant-Colonel FS Lambert, in a rallying cry to the staff in his New Year's message in 1917:

“Let us make up our minds that this Hospital shall be the best run and the most successful of any. Here are some maxims to work by:

1. Difficulties are made to be overcome.
2. The best of all hospitals can be better.
3. There is always room at the top.
4. Everything is important.”

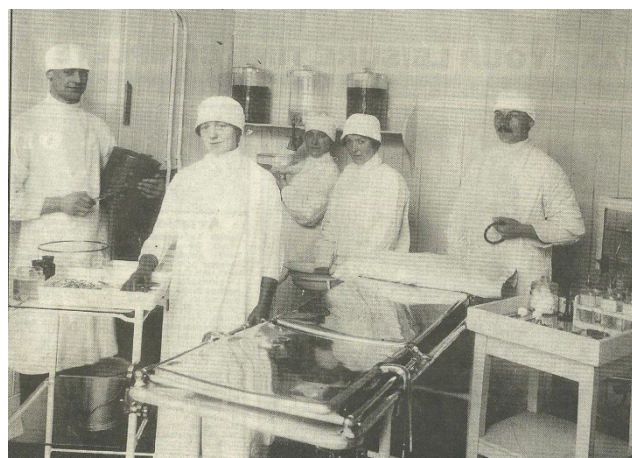
The Lieutenant-Colonel was at pains to point out that the work of the ‘rank and file’ was considered to be just as valuable as more glamorous jobs. ‘There is grit in the man who puts his heart into scrubbing a floor or carrying a stretcher’.

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words, and the following selection is intended to supplement the imagery that the text conveys.

Picture Gallery



Above: The temporary Chapel in the original cricket pavilion at Lincoln Grammar School 1915
Below: The Operating Theatre





The Nursing Staff of the Hospital



A corner of one of the wards



A general view of the Hospital

Note the vehicles, the field where Egerton Road was subsequently built, the absence of the Geography room which was added later, and the three temporary hut wards cordoned off to house German prisoners of war

The Magazine is available to examine but not to borrow at the Lincoln Central Library. There is also a copy at the Lincolnshire Archives. The full reference is given below.

References:

The Magazine:

The Monthly Record of the 4th Northern General Hospital, Lincoln
 Printed and Published for the Hospital by Sells Ltd, 168 Fleet Street, London EC4
 Ref at the Central Library: L.Linc. 362.1 (124800)

Lincoln School in World War One Occasional Paper 14 From the Garton Archive
 (unpublished)

Acknowledgement

Many thanks to my friend Dusty Miller for his knowledge of matters military, and for his advice in the editing of the article.

Appendix 1

Diary of the 4th NGH (Prior to the Publication of *The Magazine*)

1914

Aug 7	Hospital mobilised
Aug 9	First Parade Service, in School Dining Room
Aug 13	Completion of First Hut of 20 beds
Aug 18	First patient admitted (Orderly with influenza)
Aug 19	First Night Nurse on duty
Aug 21	All Huts (520 beds) completed and ready for use
Sept 4	First operation (appendicitis)
Sept 12	Telegram warning of First Convey
Sept 13	First Convey of 105 at 4.20 pm
Sept 14/15	Arrival of gifts in dozens.
Sept 19	First patient sent to Convalescent Home (Petwood)
Oct 2	Masseuse (Miss Cunningham) appointed
Oct 16	216 wounded Belgians admitted
Oct 25	Hospital full (609 admitted in six days)
Dec 3	Dining Room built for men of the Unit
Dec 15	Hospital enlargement started

1915

Jan 4	First New Hut of 80 beds opened (10A and 10B)
Mar 13	1,004 beds ready; enlargement completed
May 14	Arrival of first members of VAD
April 8	Assistant Matron appointed
June 1	Recreation Hut opened by Lord Brownlow
Aug 20	First Orderlies left for Hospital Ship
Sept 24	Fifty extra beds added to wards
Sept 26	Wounded Expeditionary Officers admitted
Nov 7	Four ladies undertook mending of Hospital clothes
Nov 30	Dedication of Chapel by Bishop of Lincoln

1916

Feb 15	Decoration of Principal Matron with RMC
Mar 17	Sir Frederick Milner addressed the soldiers
Mar 31-	
Apr 5	Zeppelin raids (each night in darkness)
Apr 24	Introduction of women clerks
Apr 28	Two Medical Officers sailed for Egypt
Apr 29	Appointment of women cooks
May 8	Fifty extra beds added to wards (1,104)

May 21 Daylight Saving Bill
 May 31 Great Naval Battle
 June 5 Lord Kitchener's Death
 June 11 Memorial Service to Lord Kitchener
 July 4 Meeting to discuss Magazine
 July 7 Convoy from Great Advance

Appendix Two: The Roll of Honour

Our Roll of Honour.

QUITE a shower of honours have been dropped on various members of the Unit; many of whose photographs we reproduce. We congratulate them most heartily upon the

In the list of those receiving the Second-Class Decoration are the following:

Miss G. Thacker, staff nurse.
 Miss O. Walters, Sister.
 Miss H. Ward, Assistant Matron.



Photo by Harrison
 STAFF NURSE G. THACKER



Photo by Harrison
 LIEUT.-COL. F. S. LAMBERT
 Administrator



Photo by Harrison
 SISTER O. WALTERS

well-merited position they now occupy, every one of which are examples we all should try to emulate. They are as follows:—

Awarded the Royal Red Cross Decoration,

The Secretary of State for War's list for valuable services rendered in connection with the war include the following:

Staff Nurse E. Dakin.



SERGT.-MAJOR J. C. WALKER



Photo by Harrison
 MISS M. BAYLDON, Matron



Photo by Harrison
 MISS H. WARD, Asst. Matron

"in recognition of their valuable services in connection with the war." Amongst the recipient of the First-Class Decoration is the following:

Miss M. Bayldon, Matron.

Sister M. E. Hoyes.
 Sister E. Odling, Lincoln County Hospital.
 V.A.D. Nurse E. Short.
 Sister M. Spinks.
 Staff-Nurse M. Stafford.

Appendix Three: The Temporary Wards on the School Playing Field



Footnote

Where was Lincoln Grammar School housed during the Great War? Professor Charles Garton, in an article in the *Lincolnshire Life* December 1999 edition, wrote that there are 'conflicting traditions' as to exactly where the school was located. Certainly the Headmaster and boarders lived in Coldbath House on Lindum Terrace, which was destroyed by a bomb in the Second World War.

Professor Garton wrote that he believed that the School was housed in hutments on the west side of St Anne's Road, facing part of the County Hospital. However, the tantalising word 'wrong' has been written in pencil alongside the cutting of the article in one of his 'Numbered Folders'. As the last surviving Lincolnian from those days, Air Commodore LG Levis OBE, died in 1995, we will probably never know.

Professor Garton did appeal for information and photographs in the article, but apparently none were forthcoming. Surprisingly the School Magazine, *The Lincolnian*, doesn't make it clear.

