



150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875  2025

Healthcare in Stroud before the Hospital

1823 Dispensary construction begins

IT IS DIFFICULT today to imagine what sort of health provision could be expected in the 18th Century and before, even if you were well-to-do. Putting broken bones in splints was straightforward, but without antiseptic and antibiotics aftercare was a lottery.

An apothecary (chemist) could sell you herbal treatments and nostrums, but many of those were toxic. Often the best policy was just to grin and bear it. Life expectancy in those days was not great.

However, things were changing. Philanthropic individuals started to

establish dedicated dispensaries and hospitals. Stroud appears to have been an early beneficiary in this process. There is evidence of a dispensary in existence some time before 1755.

Mr. Samuel Jones MD is recorded as the promoter of a subscription scheme in 1771 *'To provide gratuitous medical advice, and medicine, for the poor of the town and neighbourhood'*.

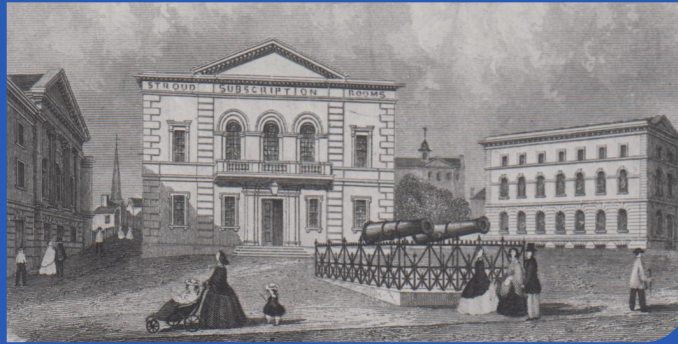
At a meeting in 1783 held in the Old George Inn, an annual subscription of £1/1s was set to give access to nomination, but the scheme continually fell short of

funds. Treatments were given in private rooms in houses, and the back rooms of at least two pubs!

A fund was established to provide a permanent home. By 1823 it had reached £786/12s/6d. A plot of land was acquired in Kendrick's Orchard. This allowed the building of a dispensary, large enough to provide accommodation for the physician, surgeon, and patients.

It cost £741/11s/10d to build. Its value would be realised as part of the cost of building the current hospital. It no longer exists, the site having been redeveloped.

THE DISPENSARY is to the left of the Subscription Rooms on what is now Bedford Street. In 1835 it was still called Union Street.



The building was extended in 1835 by the addition of a specific Casualty Hospital and in 1859 the whole construction was renamed to be **THE STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL.**



STROUD 1835

From a map drawn by John Wood and redrawn by John Hearfield

Excessive death rates lead to change

1857 Local Board of Health established



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THE RAILWAY arrived in Stroud in 1845, but the canal had already given the area access to a wider community and significant new markets for trade. The population was expanding fast, despite employment concerns in the cloth industry (especially about modernisation of machinery). The mills were diversifying into newer industries.

In 1843 the Stroud Dispensary had been of critical importance when several injuries occurred during the building of the railway, especially while carving out the Sappeerton Tunnel.

It was clear that the Union Street Dispensary was not keeping up with demand, and many of Stroud's principal citizens were thinking about alternatives. A principal player in that must be William Cowle, a prosperous local businessman of Stroud by 1854 (see below for bio).



WILLIAM COWLE
(1819-1899)

WILLIAM COWLE arrived in the town aged 14 seeking work, became a grocer and achieved great prosperity before joining the Stroud Board of Health in 1864.

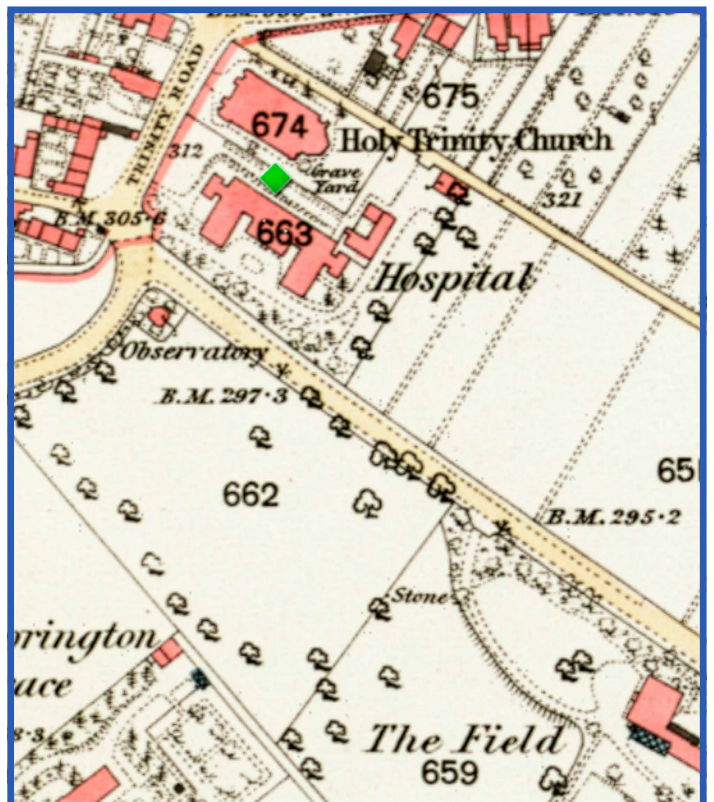
With ambitions to enter property development and utilising his Freemasonry connections, he made clear his goal to acquire and provide land on which to build a new hospital.

The year 1854 was critical, for it saw an official visit by the Superintending Inspector to the government's General Board of Health to find out why Stroud had excessive death rates, (primarily from cholera and typhoid) which exceeded the national average. The subsequent report stated the obvious; the water supply was drawn from wells, streams and springs and the drainage of waste into cesspits scattered throughout the area was delivering disease directly into these sources.

A solution had to be found and the practical recommendation was the establishment of a local Board of Health. It first met in 1857, with Cowle joining it in 1864. The Board had considerable powers, not least to levy rates to fund essential work. Those powers and responsibilities were enacted under the Stroud Improvement Act of 1825, originally intended to provide street lighting but now repurposed.

After Cowle was elected to the Board of Health in 1864 (annual elections were required for the Board and voted for by taxpayers), work set about improving the Town's water supply. A reservoir had been built in 1863, fed from Gainey's Well, but was too small from the outset. It was replaced in 1884 and the drainage system was improved.

Some of the principal (male) citizens of the Town were involved in Freemasonry, Sherborne Lodge having been established in the town in 1857. Conversations over a convivial dinner would have included thoughts about improving the Stroud Dispensary. William Cowle's plans to find land for a better hospital would have been front and centre.





150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875  2025

Land, plans, finance & construction

1874 The new Hospital's foundation stone is laid

WILLIAM COWLE managed, with significant financial help, to secure ownership of Stroud's Field Estate from the Hawkins family, and made good on his promise to allocate a parcel of land for the building of a new hospital.

The site Cowle offered was in Field Road, alongside Trinity Church. In 1872, the fund received a generous gift of £1000 from a Mrs. Franklyn in memory of her late husband, Joseph. Together with numerous smaller donations, the Committee felt they were able to move forward to create a new facility.

COMPETITION ADVERTISEMENTS were placed in the local and national papers, and twenty detailed responses were received, with three shortlisted. Things now moved apace: Cowle offered his land in January 1873; The meeting in the Subscription Rooms to select a final scheme occurred in March; then Gloucester architects Medland and Sons were appointed and the hospital plans were drawn up.

A small fundraising committee was set up under the direction of its president,

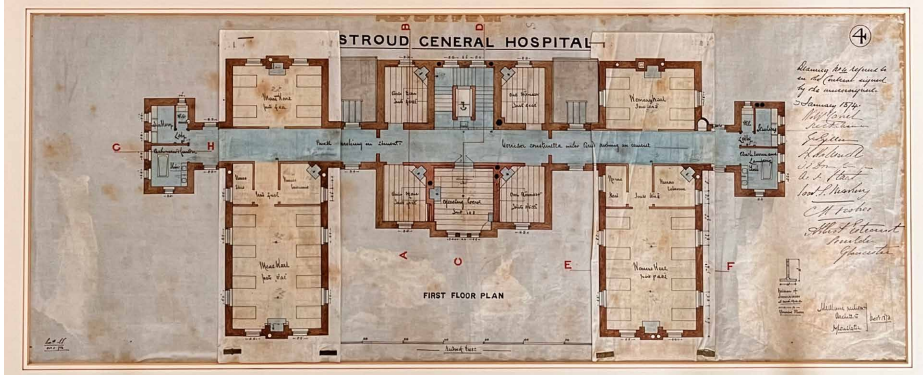
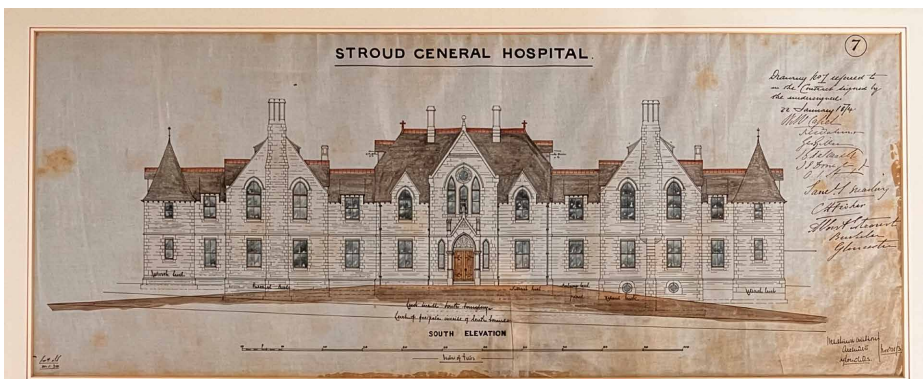


William Capel. He was assisted by John Dorington (later to become MP for Tewkesbury), S.S.Marling, and A.J.Stanton (MP for Stroud in 1874). By 16th April the promised sums had reached over £4,500. Tenders were invited, and Estcourt, a Gloucester builder, won the contract.

On 28th May 1874 Stroud General Hospital's foundation stone was laid with great pomp and ceremony. Many of the fundraisers were Freemasons and Provincial Grand

Master Lord Sherborne did the honours. A service in St. Lawrence Church with a grand assembly of dignitaries including the Bishop of Gloucester, was followed by an elaborate parade through the town to the Hospital site, then to the Subscription Rooms for dinner. Stroud General Hospital was formally opened by the Lord Bishop on December 30th 1875. The finished building came in at £8,743/8s/0d but included furnishings. Estcourt's winning tender had been for £4,700, but his final account was £6,057/16s/3d. Some extras like fancy boundary walls were cut out to keep costs down. The subscription list rose steadily throughout the construction period, and the final cost was met through a helpful donation of £500.

The Committee continued to build up the endowment fund with legacies and donations. When the Hospital opened it was at about £2000, but quickly grew to over £8000 by 1888. An additional piece of ground adjoining the hospital was added shortly afterwards, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Charles Stanton.



STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL.
PLANS and ELEVATIONS are invited for the proposed NEW BUILDING at Stroud, capable of accommodating 14 male and 10 female Patients, with various Out-Patient's Surgery, and Consulting Rooms, having accommodation for Resident Surgeon and Staff Establishment requisite for such an Institution, and estimated cost to cost more than £1000.
The Committee do not bind themselves to accept any Plan or to employ the Architect, but will give a sum of £100 to the Architect whose Plan is considered the best, or if the Architects be employed to erect the Building, to the next best.
Plan and Section of the Site can be had on application to A. S. Clarke, Esq., Bowdler, Stroud, to whom all Plans are to be sent on or before TUESDAY, 15th March, 1873.
Stroud, 4th February, 1873.



150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

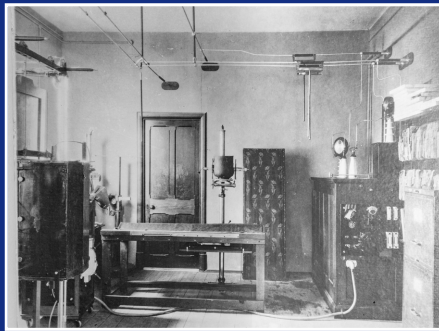
1875  2025

Post-Victorian developments

1910s Stroud Hospital in the Edwardian era

THE Theatre was originally above the main entrance to the hospital. The stairwell to male and female wards upstairs has not changed although the lift has moved.

Outpatient clinics, including dentistry, and the dispensary were on the ground floor. Raising funds remained vital and Chubby played an important role in encouraging donations



DURING WW1 Stroud managed wounded soldiers through Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Hospitals due to high casualties. The primary facility was the Stroud Red Cross Hospital, opening on October 28th 1914 in the Trinity Rooms, with additional beds at Roxburgh House and the General Hospital. The VAD hospitals were staffed by volunteer nurses.

There were 30 beds at the Trinity Rooms and the Stroud General Hospital provided an additional 15 beds specifically for wounded soldiers alongside its normal civilian duties. Local support was given by residents providing motor cars and carriages to transport soldiers, often meeting them at the railway station.

A new wing for Stroud General Hospital

1922 Opening of the Peace Memorial Wing

Opening the Peace Memorial Wing at Stroud General Hospital
as described in the Gloucester Journal, 7 July 1922

"The present hospital was erected in 1875 and has been enlarged since, and an enormous number of out and in-patients have been treated at the institution."

"When the war was over the Hospital Governors and Committee naturally desired to do something to commemorate Peace, and they very wisely decided to erect not a "War Memorial but something in remembrance of Peace."

"They sought the advice of Mr W B Wood, architect, of Gloucester, and as a result a very fine new wing has been erected which, on the stone frontage, bears an inscription stating the purpose for which the new building was conceived."

PEACE MEMORIAL WING

photograph (L) June 1921, and (R) June 1922 by Raymer Merrett. The stone lettering is more legible than last time!

The improvements consist of a complete new out-patient department, with central hall, consulting rooms, surgery, dispensary, recovery rooms, and a special room for eye cases, a large X-ray room with developing room adjoining, three new wards, the largest of which is for children, and a large balcony where beds and invalid chairs can be placed in the open air. Improved accommodation has also been provided for the nursing staff, and the heating arrangements for the whole Hospital have been entirely remodelled."

Meison Hearfield, 2022 The quotations here are taken from the Gloucester Journal's description of the day's events 1

Opening the Peace Memorial Wing at Stroud General Hospital reported by the Gloucester Journal, 7 July 1922

"This new wing was opened on Thursday by H R H Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, who arrived at Stroud G W R Station in a special saloon at 11.45. Great preparations had been made for the event, and despite the threatening weather the streets were crowded with people, and there was much display of flags and bunting, the G W R Station especially looking very gay. The schoolchildren were given a holiday and under the care of their teachers lined the streets carrying flags, etc."

"The children from the Cripples' Home connected with St Rose's Convent were kindly accommodated on the balcony of the Subscription Rooms, and a banner of welcome worked by their hands was displayed over the balcony."

"Leaving the Station the Princess, accompanied by the leading guests, journeyed through crowded streets to the residence of Mr A W Stanton at Field Place, Paganhill, where they were entertained to luncheon and subsequently by another route taking in the chief streets of the town, they arrived at the Hospital, where a huge crowd had assembled, and a covered and gaily-bedecked platform having been erected for the opening ceremony."

Field Place engraving from Digital Stroud, courtesy of Glos Architects

Guard of Honour photograph by Raymer Merrett, from Howard Beers's Collection

The Princess arrived at the GWR station in the company of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese (Dr Gibson), Earl Beauchamp, Lord Lieutenant of the County, and Sir Sidney Grevel. On the platform were a further 22 men from the Urban Council or town officials, including the Secretary of the Hospital Committee, F W B Warman (this was before the days of the NHS and the hospital was still being run by a charitable trust). The newspaper did not report how many of them were crowded for lunch at Field Place.

Meison Hearfield, 2022 The quotations here are taken from the Gloucester Journal's description of the day's events 2

Opening the Peace Memorial Wing at Stroud General Hospital reported by the Gloucester Journal, 7 July 1922

In the meantime, great activity around the Hospital ensured that everything would be in place when the Princess arrived – these amateur photographs from Howard Beers's collection were taken by Raymer Merrett. The wind disturbed the decorative canopy quite a lot. The Union Flag and the flag of Wales flapped wildly – but what was the flag of Japan's army doing there?

"A guard of honour attended from the 5th Gloucesters A Company, and the Marlborough School Cadets, the whole being under the capable direction of Major Little."

"There was a large attendance of the local Ambulance Corps under Commander Watson B Evans, and the ex-Service men (British Legion) under Col Morton Ball and Girl Guides. The Stroud Military Band (under Bandmaster Knight) played patriotic airs"

The Guard of Honour arriving and lining up. The wind is still lifting all the flags, and dispersing the smoke from the officer's quick final cigarette!

All is ready.

Photographs by Raymer Merrett, from Howard Beers's Collection

Meison Hearfield, 2022 The words here are taken from the Gloucester Journal's description of the day's events 3

Opening the Peace Memorial Wing at Stroud General Hospital

The photographs, taken by Raymer Merrett on the day, suggest that after driving through the town (we hope past the Subscription Rooms, where all those children had waited so patiently) her car came along Whitehall before turning down Trinity Road.

Staff and a crowd of local residents gathered at the junction of Hollow Lane and Bisleys Road to get a good view. Was that her?

Meison Hearfield, 2022 Photographs by Raymer Merrett, from Howard Beers's Collection 4

Opening the Peace Memorial Wing at Stroud General Hospital reported by the Gloucester Journal, 7 July 1922

"When the Princess ascended the platform she was heartily cheered"

To Her Royal Highness Princess Alice
Countess of Athlone

May it please Your Royal Highness:

We, the Chairman and members of the Urban District Council of Stroud, on behalf of the inhabitants of our town and district, cordially welcome your attendance here today. We particularly desire to recognise your gracious act in coming to open the Peace Memorial Wing of the Stroud General Hospital, and we feel sure that the interest you have so kindly shown by your presence will be of lasting service to the Institution. We assure you of our loyalty and gratitude to you for the honour which you have paid our town in coming here, and we trust you will have a happy memory of your visit.

Vice-Chairman: Harry E Thinder
Clerk: E Northam Witchell

The Common Seal of the Urban District Council was hereto affixed this 5th day of July 1922.

The Princess replied "Thank you all very much" and she was then presented with a choice bouquet of flowers by little Vera Saxsonoff, a pupil at the Stratford Abbey College.

This child was chosen to make the presentation because of her natural ability, as an elocutionist and as a dainty dancer she had raised a great deal of money for charitable purposes in the Stroud district.

Meison Hearfield, 2022 The quotations here are taken from the Gloucester Journal's description of the day's events 5

Opening the Peace Memorial Wing at Stroud General Hospital reported by the Gloucester Journal, 7 July 1922

"The large assembly, having sung "Oh God, our help in ages past," the architect handed the Princess a gold key bearing the inscription "Stroud General Hospital, Peace Memorial Wing, opened July 6th, 1922." Having placed the key in the lock, her Royal Highness said "It is with much pleasure I open the door of this memorial wing, built in memory of our brothers in Stroud who laid down their lives in the Great War."

The Gloucester Journal reporter makes no mention of the inside of the new wing, so presumably their reporter was not invited to accompany the party.

"Arrived inside the hospital, her Royal Highness was introduced to six little girls from the Kindergarten department of the Stroud High School for Girls, who were dressed as Red Cross nurses. Two of their number (Barbara Shalloway and Joan Foxworthy) handed a nice bouquet to the Princess who graciously acknowledge the gift and subsequently called the children to stand with her in a photographic group."

Top row from left: Mr Paul Jolly, Rev R Nott, Sir Ashton Lister MP, Earl Beauchamp (Lord Lieutenant of the County), Dr Gibson Bishop of Gloucester, Mr A W Stanton, Mr W B Wood, Major W J Paley Marling (Hospital President), Dr Coode, Mr F W H Warman, and Sir Sidney Greville (from the Royal Household).

Second Row from left: Lady-in-Waiting, Mrs Stanton, Sir Percival S Marling VC, Princess Alice, Miss Holmes (Matron), Lady Marling, Mrs W J P Marling, and Dr Davies Children, from left: Joan Foxworthy, Peggy Organ, Barbara Shalloway, Joan Smith, Thelma Tapper, Kathleen North.

Meison Hearfield, 2022 The quotations here are taken from the Gloucester Journal's description of the day's events 6

Opening the Peace Memorial Wing at Stroud General Hospital

Which Princess Alice, and why?

Princess Alice (Victoria's grandchild) had married Prince Alexander of Teck in 1904. The royal couple was immediately drawn into royal service. When the Royal Family changed its name to Windsor their titles were changed to the Earl and Countess of Athlone.

The Earl, schooled at Eton and Sandhurst and later an officer in the 21st Lie Guards, was made Chairman of the Middlesex Hospital in 1907. The Stroud General Hospital, the Middlesex had opened as an infirmary in the 1750s, funded by subscriptions. It was the first in the country to provide a maternity ward.

After service in France during WW1 the Earl retired from the army. He returned to the Middlesex and was asked to chair a committee whose report resulted in the creation of post-graduate medical schools and the School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He later chaired an inquiry into the recruitment and training of nurses.

Meanwhile, Princess Alice involved herself with wartime nursing, and the provision of facilities for wounded ex-servicemen.

In 1920, the King sent the Earl to the Union of South Africa as Governor-General, where he diplomatically managed political unrest. During WW2, whilst her husband was Governor General of Canada, Princess Alice became president of the nursing division of the St John's Ambulance Brigade and was a Lieutenant in the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY, photographed, left, in their uniform). She was later a Commandant in Chief, also President of the Queen's Nursing Institute.

Her lifelong interest in nursing, and the care of ex-servicemen, are good reasons why, in particular Princess Alice was asked to open Stroud Hospital's Peace Memorial Wing.

Meison Hearfield, 2022 The quotations here are taken from the Gloucester Journal's description of the day's events 8



150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875  2025

Stroud General Hospital before the Second World War

1920s Financing the hospital before the NHS

STROUD General Hospital was supported by subscription, donations, legacies and gifts from by the business people and residents of the Stroud Valleys over many years.

In the 1920's a scheme for voluntary contributions was set up by Mr Fred Wake, known locally as the 'Uncrowned Mayor of Lightpill' due to his numerous good works as magistrate and Alderman on the County Council.

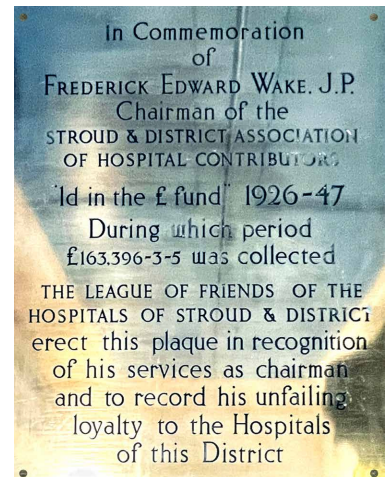
This scheme was known as the 'Penny in the Pound' To put this in context, there were 240 old pennies in each pound until decimalisation. The minimal contribution

was set at 1d per week out of each complete pound earned.

Those whose wages included board and lodging were expected to pay more, and shopkeepers and business owners a greater amount which could be paid quarterly.

This entitled the individual to free health care when required at Stroud General Hospital, and ensured the running of the hospital for all.

Between 1926 and 1947, £163,396/3s/5d was donated.



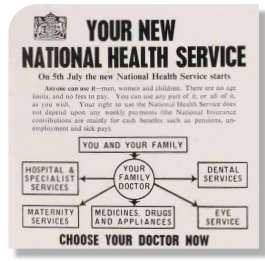
1948 The birth of the NHS

IN 1942, Sir William Beveridge published a report for the government that outlined a plan for a comprehensive welfare state to combat 'Want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness' after the war. The general public wanted a more egalitarian society after enduring the hardship of war.

'Free healthcare for all' was one of the key recommendations, with the creation of a National Health Service which would be free at the point of delivery. This idea was extremely popular with the public.

Under Aneurin Bevan as Minister for Health, the National Health Service was established on 5th July 1948 in the United Kingdom.

Britain was the first western country to offer free at the point of use medical care to the whole population. Stroud General Hospital duly became part of the NHS in 1948.



Aneurin Bevan visiting a patient on the first day of the new NHS in 1948

Stroud General Hospital was run by visiting consultants, and initially two Resident Medical Officers (RMOs), one covering surgical beds and one covering medical patients. Local General Practitioners were involved in the management of the hospital, having been private family doctors until 1948.



150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875 - 2025

Post-War changes at Stroud General Hospital

1948 Stroud Hospitals League of Friends

IN SEPTEMBER 1948, at the usual meeting of the former Subscribers and Contributors to and Supporters of the Stroud General Hospital, it was suggested by the Chairman Mr. S.Marling, to form a society called the Friends of the Hospitals of the Stroud District.

A discussion ensued and it was unanimously resolved:-

1. That a Society to be known as "The Friends of the Hospitals of the Stroud District" (hereinafter described as the Society) be formed and that for the time being the Hospitals to be served by the Society be the Stroud General Hospital, the Stroud Maternity Home (when built) the Gashes Green Isolation Hospital and the Eastington Institution.
2. That the objects of the Society be:-
 - a. To foster and encourage the interest of the public in the welfare of the patients and staff and the work of the Hospitals in the Stroud District.
 - b. To provide funds for the purpose either of supplementing in such manner as the Society thinks fit, the resources of the Hospital service or of putting such funds, or any part thereof, at the disposal of the appropriate Committee, to be applied at the discretion of that Committee in supplementing such resources.
 - c. To provide funds, if thought fit, for the maintenance of a Samaritan Fund for the benefit of patients.
 - d. To provide a link between the Hospitals and the public they serve.
 - e. To co-operate with other bodies for the benefit of the Hospital Service.

It was further unanimously resolved that this meeting hereby resolves itself into the first general meeting of the Friends of the Hospitals of the Stroud District.



The objectives of the League have changed very little over the last 77 years.

Stroud Hospitals League of Friends continues to focus resources, and any influence the League of Friends may have, in a way that enhances and protects services, principally through refurbishment, the provision of state-of-the-art equipment which would not otherwise be provided by the NHS, and several community health projects.

Numerous additional items of equipment have been purchased over the years and increasingly the League of Friends has supported the extensions and refurbishments that have made the hospital that we have today.



1950s Running the hospital - Local GPs

THE HOSPITAL was run with two RMOs but it was not easy to fill these posts. There were no applicants in 1953 for the position of Medical Officer, although this was later filled. The Resident Surgical Officer in 1959 resigned as he had so many complaints against him!

By the late 1950s it was apparent that the RMO standards were too poor and the local GP committee sacked them both. In 1962 local GP Dr Herman Mould was appointed as Senior Medical Officer and thereafter the local GPs ran the hospital without house officers. Heads of the Department of Health approved of the management.

The hospital beds were split into two categories - surgical beds under the consultants control and medical beds supervised by GPs. All local Stroud GPs, and the doctors in Minchinhampton and Nailsworth had admitting rights to the wards. This meant that if one of their patients needed hospital care, then they

were admitted to the male or female wards where their own GP would clerk them in, decide on treatment and the nursing staff then cared for the patient as directed by the GP.

Each day the GP would attend and advise on changes to care until the patient was well enough to be discharged. The doctor would visit the hospital after finishing morning surgery at their own practice, so several GPs would arrive on the wards at the same time.

In addition to having inpatients, many local GPs undertook clinical assistant positions to the consultants who came from Gloucester and Cheltenham, enabling busy outpatient clinics to serve the local population. The casualty department was staffed by local GPs and nursing staff from the hospital. The doctor could be called to attend by the nurse in charge to see their own patients who had arrived at casualty for almost any medical emergency.

All GPs attended the monthly Hospital Staff Committee meetings to manage the hospital and make planning decisions. The meetings were also attended by visiting consultants and the matron in charge of nursing care.

The close contact between doctors on the wards, at the staff committee meetings and in clinics fostered a warm camaraderie with the common bond of caring for their own patients in their own local hospital. This cooperation continued throughout the 1980s and 90s until the hospital management was taken over by the Cotswold and Vale Primary Care Trust. Inpatient care was no longer under local GP care from the early 1990s. Gradually the input and decision making from the Hospital Staff Committee became less valued, and the committee dissolved in the early 1990s.



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1875 - 2025

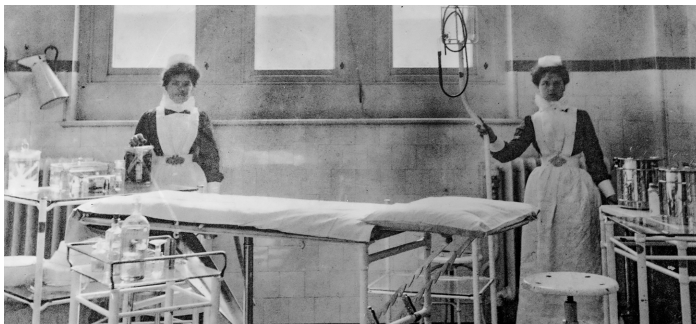
Threat of hospital closure

1960s Save Stroud Hospital!

IN THE mid-1960s's Government policy encouraged the closure of smaller hospitals. Stroud General Hospital was being considered for closure and local people were increasingly concerned about the future of their hospital. Efforts were made to raise awareness of the potential threat.

One local committee was chaired by Lord Robertson of Oakridge, but it was the League of Friends, led by their chairman Netlam Bigg who were at the forefront of a campaign of support for Stroud General Hospital. The main emphasis of 'Save Stroud Hospital' campaign was to upgrade the facilities so that the hospital would continue.

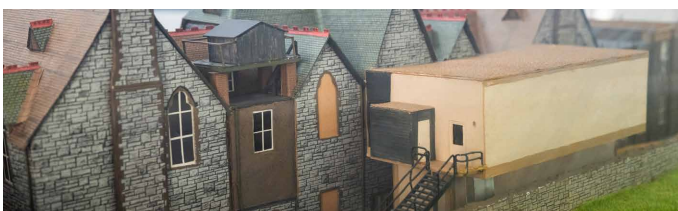
One of most pressing needs was to upgrade the operating theatre and sterilising room; at that time nearly 1,500 operations were performed annually in the operating theatre which was very outdated by then. In 1967 the League of Friends purchased a tilting operating table for the theatre.



This is the operating theatre in about 1910

In May 1969 the Hospital Medical Staff Committee of local GPs led by Dr Roy Lamb, and the League of Friends chaired by Mr Netlam Bigg resolved to save the hospital by raising the resources to build a new theatre. The target was £25,000 and the appeal received huge community support. In just 6 months £11,000 was raised.

Old 1/2d coins were going out of legal tender that year, so collecting tins were placed in shops, offices and businesses around Stroud to save the halfpennies. The treasurer of the League of Friends arranged with the Bank of England to refund the amount in current moneys, and hundreds of pounds were raised.



THIS THEATRE WAS BUILT WITH FUNDS RAISED BY THE FRIENDS OF STROUD HOSPITALS
DECLARED OPEN BY THE DOWAGER VISCOUNTESS MONCKTON OF BRENCHELLEY C.B.E.
CHAIRMAN NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LEAGUES OF HOSPITAL FRIENDS ON THE 6TH JULY 1973



"Halfpenny stone" at Stroud hospital

A STONE set into Stroud General Hospital's new operating theatre yesterday may be a valuable asset in years to come.

The appeal raised £11,000 and the theatre would probably have to put in another £25,000, said Mr. Bigg.

"We still need funds because prices are going up. We will be glad to see donations and live money in the form of donations," he said.

The theatre is expected to open in early July. Space reserved in the old building will be used for a day room.

Laying the foundation stone for the new Stroud Hospital Operating Theatre. Aug. 72

By September 1971 a cheque for the huge sum of £30,000 was presented to the South West Regional Hospital Board to start the new theatre construction.



'PEOPLE OF STROUD LOVE THEIR HOSPITAL'
New operating theatre a 'magnificent gift'

THE Friends of Stroud Hospital have proved beyond all doubt that the people of Stroud love their hospital, said Viscountess Monckton of Brencchley, chairman of the National League of Friends, when she officially opened the new operating theatre suite at Stroud General Hospital on Friday.

She said the new theatre suite was a magnificent gift to the hospital and the community. She said the new theatre suite was a magnificent gift to the hospital and the community.

FROM THEIR PAY PACKETS

Over 350 Banstead employees have agreed to contribute towards the cost of the new operating theatre at Stroud Hospital, said a spokesman for the firm.

The suggestion emanated from the firm's shop steward committee and employees from all departments are contributing.

EXISTING DIFFICULTIES

Dr. R. W. Lamb of Stroud, chairman of the new theatre project, said the new theatre suite was a magnificent gift to the hospital and the community.

Collection Of Halfpennies For The Hospital

Millions of halfpennies are still at large, and a big proportion must be in the hands of people who simply forgot to get rid of them before last Friday.

But although they are no longer legal tender, and therefore no good to be put to good use.

The cry this week is "Halfpennies for the Hospital". The Friends of the Stroud Hospitals are arranging the distribution of collecting tins - at the cinema, the local clearing banks, the Trustee Savings Bank, Stroud News and Journal, and various shops and pubs.

This will enable everyone to get rid of the surplus halfpennies they don't want, and support the work of the Friends at the same time.

The Friends' treasurer, Mr. R. D. Nixon, has made inquiries and says: "Halfpennies collected for this cause will be accepted at their previous face value".

In 1973 the new operating theatre Suite was opened. Situated at the back of the main hospital block, it provided modern facilities for surgical procedures.



150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875 - 2025

Success of the campaign

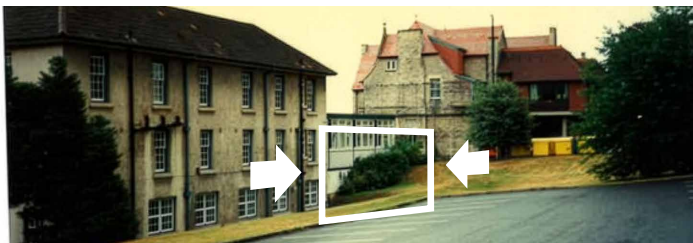
1970s A wave of enthusiasm

THE CAMPAIGN to save the hospital had worked and this inspired a wave of enthusiasm to continue a series of improvements over the next few years. In 1974 work began on re-structuring the casualty department to provide better privacy for patients.

This was followed by a permanent covered connecting bridge between the main hospital building and the nurses home which was no longer required for staff accommodation. This enabled the old nurses block to be converted into administration offices and physiotherapy, thus freeing rooms in the main block for out-patients, the whole outpatient area being refurbished at the same time.



In 1975, Stroud Hospital Celebrated its 100th birthday with a gala day supported by over 50 local organisations.



Mr Mike Gear, one of the surgical consultants specialising in gastroenterology suggested the creation of an endoscopy unit to improve the diagnosis and treatment for local residents. By 1975/76 this service was established at the hospital with the very expensive necessary equipment provided by the League of Friends. The first gastroscope cost £3,600. It is thought that Stroud was the first community hospital to have such a service.

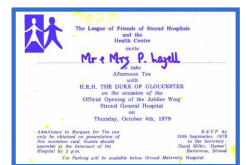
Dr Graham Voss, a local GP, was appointed as the first Clinical Assistant to run the service, and when the Endoscopy Suite was updated in 1997 it was named in his honour. In 2016-2017 new endoscopy equipment was again provided by the League of Friends but now costing £93,219.

1980s Ongoing refurbishment

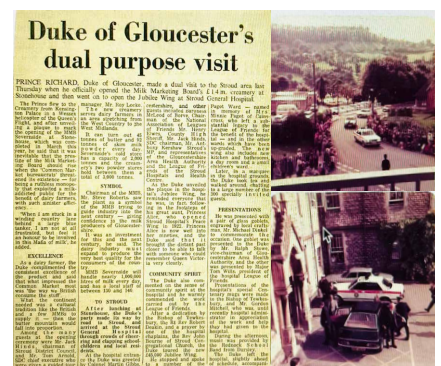
THE HOSPITAL is constantly evolving in response to modern ideas and standards, and the refurbishment of SGH continued through the 1970s and 80s

This involved upgrading The Peace Wing with its female wards, then known as Ward 15, by adding extra rooms thus creating the present day Jubilee ward. The level area between the central main entrance to the hospital and the Peace Wing was filled in to provide a dedicated children's surgical ward.

The new wards were opened in the summer of 1979 and named the Jubilee Wing. The official opening took place on 4th October 1979 by HRH the Duke of Gloucester. Head Porter Paul Lazell was invited to the opening ceremony. He commemorated the hospital with a **SPLENDID MODEL**



Children's surgery moved to Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, in Gloucester, in the late 1980s and the children's ward was incorporated into Jubilee ward.



Upgraded facilities and new equipment

1980s More modernisation

1982

First ultrasound equipment

In 1982, £20,600 of ultrasound equipment was purchased by the League of Friends for the Imaging Department for Stroud Maternity Hospital for use in antenatal clinics.

Whilst this is now a common method of imaging, in the 1980s ultrasound scanning was a very new technique, so Stroud was at the forefront of this technological advance and one of the first community hospitals in the country to have ultrasound facilities available.



1984

Education Room Refurbishment

In 1984 the League of Friends financed the refurbishment of the old dining room in the old Nurses Home as a dedicated Postgraduate Education Room and a suitable place for the regular Medical Staff Committee meetings. There were often 20 doctors, consultants and nursing staff at each meeting. There was also a library to help doctors to keep up to date and a small



The refurbished Postgraduate Room is still used for training today

1983

Male ward upgraded



Plan of proposed changes from Stroud League of Friends minutes

Following the successful upgrade of the female wards and completion of the Jubilee Wing it was the turn of the male ward in 1983. The upgrading would improve facilities for a greater number of patients, with the completion of the theatre suite including an anaesthetic room, and provision of an occupational therapy department. The League of Friends contributed 50% of the build costs. This upgrade resulted in the present day Princess Anne ward which is used for surgical day cases now.



The old Paine Memorial ward 1910



The new Princess Anne ward 1986

1986

Princess Anne Ward Opens

The alterations to the Princess Anne Ward took two years to complete with theatres and Occupational Therapy operational by the end of November 1985 and the ward was declared to be fully functional by Christmas Eve.

Princess Anne came to open the new theatre and the ward, which was named in her honour, in June 1986





150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875 - 2025

Save Our Hospitals Taskforce

2000s Campaigns and improvements

DESPITE THE massive investment in new outpatients and theatres, Stroud General Hospital was threatened with closure in the early 2000's in a bid to reduce spending on the NHS. In 2006 it was proposed to move all surgery to Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, thus reducing the number of inpatient beds required and saving on staff costs.

The Stroud Maternity Hospital, operated by Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust had been under threat of closure in 1998. 30,000 signatures were collected by petition, and with hundreds of letters of support sent to

the Department of Health, thus saving Stroud Maternity Unit. Eight years later Stroud Maternity was also included in the proposed closures along with Weavers Croft Unit for Elderly Mental Illness.

The League of Friends set up the Save Our Hospitals Taskforce in January 2006. Throughout 2006 and 2007 numerous meetings were held and discussions with the new Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust to find a way to sustain services in Stroud. Letters were sent to the Secretary of State for Health, and he met with David Drew MP for Stroud to discuss further.

A possible Social Enterprise scheme was suggested to take control of the hospital but this did not gain enough support due to the complexity of combining care services with health at that time.

By the end of 2006, the decision to close the General Hospital had been reversed by Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust.

The inpatient beds at Weavers Croft were permanently moved to Cheltenham at this time.

The Stroud Maternity Unit once again escaped closure and attracted further investment in the main entrance and the birthing rooms.

2000

THE SURGICAL WARD & CASUALTY DEPARTMENT required improvement, with HRH Princess Anne again visiting the ward named after her. This time the project cost £5 million, with half of the costs supported by the League of Friends.



Left: Children from Stroud Valley School wave to the Princess on her arrival, where she met Stroud Hospital matron Barbara Rutley, right.

Royal opening for revamped hospital

Princess security concern

PATIENTS in Stroud were yesterday helped on their way to recovery by royalty when Princess Anne officially opened the town's newly revamped £5 million hospital.

The Princess Anne, who lives in Gosport, Hampshire, visited the new Stroud General Hospital, which is located in the town's main street, to mark the opening of the new surgical ward and casualty department. She was accompanied by her husband, Captain Mark Phillips, and their three children, Lady Louise Windsor, Prince Louis of Wales and Prince Llewish Windsor.

The Princess Anne, who is the patron of the League of Friends, visited the hospital to mark the opening of the new surgical ward and casualty department. She was accompanied by her husband, Captain Mark Phillips, and their three children, Lady Louise Windsor, Prince Louis of Wales and Prince Llewish Windsor.

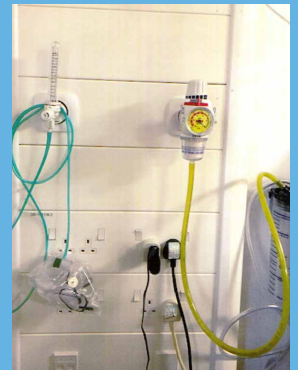
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Katherine Nutland and Gemma O'Halloran present flowers to the Princess during her visit.

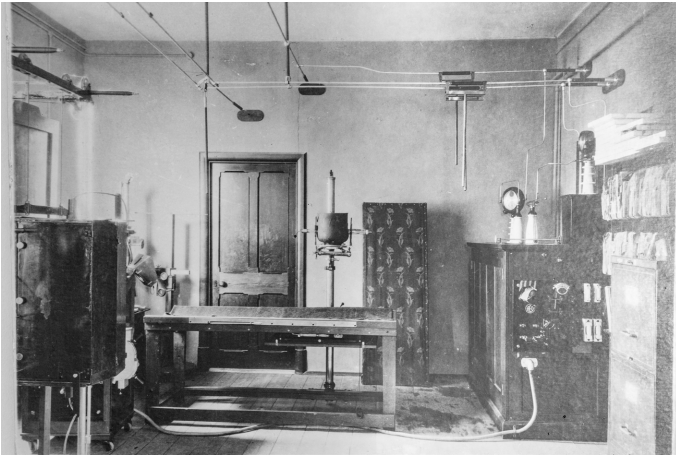
2008

THE THEATRE AND THE ENDOSCOPY SUITE was now due to have an upgrade. As there was so much alteration taking place it was appropriate to install piped oxygen to each bedside; prior to that up to 30 cylinders of oxygen were used per week, requiring heavy cylinders to be wheeled around the wards as required. The refurbished Theatre Suite opened in January 2009. Stroud Theatre continues to be one of the best equipped and managed in the community.



X-Ray Department upgrade

2010s Further improvements



This is the X-Ray department from 1926



This is the X-Ray department from 1980s



THE X-RAY DEPARTMENT received new equipment with a generous donation from the League Of Friends, enhancing services at Stroud with state-of-the-art machines. Matron Juliette Richardson and Head Radiographer Sue Ward received the new X-ray equipment from Dr Roy Lamb, President, along with Mr David Millar, Chairman of the League of Friends, and several committee members.

There was considerable change in NHS management structure and the way in which the hospital was run

2012

NHS Gloucestershire proposed to transfer the running of the hospitals to a social enterprise company. This was strongly opposed by the people of Stroud and the town council helped to fight this decision, ensuring that Stroud General Hospital and Stroud Maternity Hospital remained within the NHS.



Keep Wallbridge for walkers and cyclists

Keep Wallbridge closed to through traffic – that's the message from Stroud Town Council.

Last year the council campaigned for further public consultation about the bridge and traffic system at Chacepuse to include an option to improve the area for the public.

In February this year, residents had the opportunity to vote for the option that they would prefer. More than 80 people turned out in a show of support for leaving Wallbridge closed to through traffic with the chance of further improving the area in the future.

Gloucestershire Highways, which is responsible for the traffic system, stopped the exhibition and consultation. It included two options: to make Wallbridge one way for Dr Newton's Way for vehicles and to create a separate cycle footway on the south side of Lepp Wallbridge closed to through traffic but open for access to Travis Park.

The town council believes the best option is to keep Wallbridge closed.

Battle carries on to save hospital

Stroud Town Council continues to support the campaign to ensure Stroud Hospital stays within NHS control.

In the council's recent survey of residents, 94% of those who responded supported the council's stance, making it the most popular activity of the council.

At the council meeting on February 20, members heard that, following a legal challenge in the High Court, NHS Gloucestershire agreed to reconsider its decision to transfer Stroud Hospital to a social enterprise company.

The action was brought by Michael Lloyd and backed by the campaign group Stroud Against the Cuts. Town councillors had objected to the original proposal for the town hospital to be run by a social enterprise company, if organised a public meeting which more than 300 people attended.

At a result of the court challenge NHS Gloucestershire has agreed to reconsider the most appropriate way for NHS services to be run in Stroud. It also agreed to start a new process to explore the best option for providing community services and to 'take responsible steps to ensure a proper level of staff and public engagement' concerning the process.

Among the options, the services could be integrated with other NHS bodies.

Another option could be to create a new standalone community health trust for Gloucestershire.

There remain concerns that the NHS services will still be transferred to a social enterprise company.

The town council has been involved with this campaign from the start and will continue to take an active role to ensure our hospital and local health care staff remain in the NHS.

town mayor, Jim Worstan.

"We must now ensure that our health services and all the associated staff stay within the NHS."



150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875 - 2025

Millennial improvements

2000s Inspections and restorations

2013

THE BOWBRIDGE OUTPATIENTS DEPARTMENT enjoyed further refurbishment with new fire doors installed throughout the ground floor and new flooring in the X-ray and Ultrasound Departments.



CQC INSPECTION

The Care Quality Commission made an unannounced inspection visit in November 2013 and found that Stroud General Hospital met all the standards required.



2015

THE PEACE MEMORIAL WING was looking decidedly shabby and needed cleaning, having been first built 96 years previously. The League of Friends offered to restore the stone work and clean the frontage, which was undertaken in 2015. The engraving can still be seen above the new Minor Illness and Injuries Unit.



Before cleaning

After restoration

2015

ON JUBILEE WARD

The League of Friends funded the creation of a Vintage Room.

This was set out as a comfortable living room with photographs and memorabilia to aid patients with dementia to feel calm and at ease whilst an inpatient.



Dr. Roy Lamb, President of the Stroud Hospitals League of Friends with a member of staff.

Vintage prints of the hospital from 1910 were framed and hung around the hospital.

2016

THE ENDOSCOPY UNIT was inspected in 2016 and awarded the Joint Advisory Group for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Accreditation.



Endoscopy staff celebrating the accreditation!

The first community hospital in the county and one of only 12 in the whole country to achieve this prestigious award. This is a credit to the medical staff and the support given by the League of Friends towards state-of-the-art camera equipment.



150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875 - 2025

A special year for Stroud General Hospital

2018 NHS 70th Anniversary

2018 WAS a special year for Stroud General Hospital as it celebrated seventy years since the beginning of the NHS. Festivities took place throughout Stroud with a party in the park, a discussion panel on the future of the NHS and a presentation on the history of the NHS given by Dr Roy Lamb, President of the Stroud Hospital League of Friends.



Displays showing how the hospital has changed over the years were set up in the main reception area and a tea party was held there on 5th July. Plenty of cakes were donated and it was very well attended!

2018 Major refurbishment of Cashes Green Ward

AFTER NEARLY 20 years of constant use, the facilities of Cashes Green Ward were in need of modernisation. The Trust funded the project, and Stroud Hospital League of Friends contributed a substantial £351,923 towards the major refurbishment. This donation was for en-suite bedrooms, bays, and specialist bathrooms for immobile patients requiring bath hoists. The design and layout allowed for greater flexibility to accommodate both male and female patients.



The Ward is dementia friendly, with colour-coordinated decor to help patients find their way around the ward and identify their room or bay, and where the bathrooms and facilities are. A dedicated office was built for ward staff, plus a patient day room.

During 2018, the League of Friends contributed £42,697 to enhancing standard NHS provision by funding specialist beds and superior mattresses and cushions throughout the hospital, thus helping with the upgrading of the wards.

THE NEW Cashes Green ward was officially opened in April 2019. The Princess Royal returned to open the new facilities and was shown around the whole hospital, meeting numerous staff in each department.



The ceremony ended with a drinks reception in the Princess Anne Ward. HRH Princess Anne agreed to become Patron of the Stroud Hospital League of Friends, a great honour and fitting given her long association with the hospital and the League of Friends.





150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875 - 2025

Raising money for Stroud General Hospital

1970s-present Fundraising

STROUD TOWNSFOLK have always valued their own hospital. From the early days when care was paid for by subscription, supplemented by donations from wealthier business folk, to more recent fundraising events and legacies, the people of Stroud have been keen to support the hospital and its staff.

When the League of Friends was first formed 77 years ago, musical evenings and quiz events were the main ways of fundraising, often aimed at specific items or building alterations.

1970s fundraising events included a Donkey Derby at the Stroud Show.



The League of Friends has held a tombola stall most years at Randwick Wap or the Stroud Show.



www. - www.glosoucester.com.uk

WEEKEND CITIZEN, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2006

What's up, docs?

We're all running in a marathon!

AS THE DOCTORS of Stroud GP, led by Dr. Ewart Lewis, have taken part in the Stroud Half Marathon on Saturday, October 14, to raise money for the hospital.

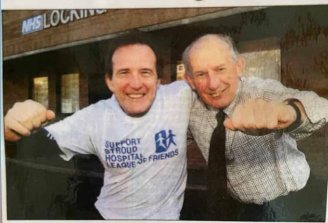
THE DOCTORS in the best medicine for a run. Dr. Ewart Lewis, Dr. Ewan Francis, Dr. Ewan Francis, Dr. Ewan Francis, Dr. Ewan Francis, Dr. Ewan Francis, Dr. Ewan Francis, Dr. Ewan Francis, Dr. Ewan Francis, Dr. Ewan Francis.

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Running in the Stroud Half Marathon has been a popular event, raising money for SGH, with nine local GPs running this in 2003.

Roman run challenge for doctor



Dr Ewart Lewis of Locking Hill Surgery (left) pictured with David Miller, chairman of Stroud Hospitals League of Friends. Dr Lewis is running the Roman Marathon later this month to raise money for the hospital.

In 2011 Dr Ewart Lewis of Stroud's Locking Hill Surgery, repeated the fundraising he had previously brought in from the 2003 Stroud Half Marathon, but this time completed an even more challenging full marathon in Rome! Dr Lewis donated all of his sponsorship to the Stroud Hospitals League of Friends.

Great Christmas present!

'Calendar Girls' Calendar 2013

As performed at Cotswold Playhouse, Stroud.

Available now from the Refreshment Kiosk at Stroud General Hospital by main Reception or phone 01453 764926, email: info@stroudleagueoffriends.org

All proceeds to Stroud Hospitals League of Friends

£10.00 only

In 2013 The Cotswold Players donated all of the proceeds from the sale of their calendar from the show 'Calendar Girls', to the Stroud Hospitals League of Friends.



GOLF TOURNAMENTS at Minchinhampton Golf Club, musical evenings held by the Stuart Singers and the Stroud Symphony Orchestra, to mention just a few of the wonderful ways that Stroud has been involved in helping the hospital. Quiz evenings and social events remain very popular.

Many individuals have donated legacies and bequests both large and small. All the money has been used to enhance the provision of care and to support the staff in their valuable work.

STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL IS TRULY A LOCAL HOSPITAL SERVING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, OF WHICH WE CAN BE JUSTIFIABLY PROUD.



150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875  2025

Stroud General Hospital during Covid-19

2020-2022 Funding community projects

THE LEAGUE of Friends has always supported other health care facilities in Stroud which includes Stroud Maternity Hospital, Weavers Croft Elderly Care Unit, Beeches Green Health Centre and Park House (which existed for mental health outpatients).

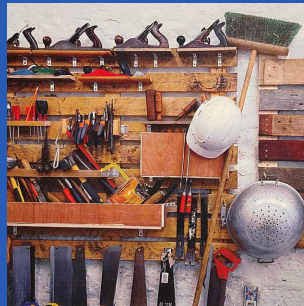
Funding these community-based projects was to become of even greater importance during the Covid-19 pandemic when hospital services became constrained by national lockdown.



The League started to support community projects at Stroud Maternity, which included pre and post-natal yoga sessions and a weekly singing group; these groups now include a regular journal session, support groups and baby massage.



The League also started to support the provision of respite care at Horsfall House in Minchinhampton, for families who need a break from caring. Patients registered with one of the local eleven GP practices are eligible.



At the Weavers Croft elderly mental health unit there is a 'Men's Shed' and gardening project to improve mental health and reduce isolation through working together outdoors. Produce is grown and sold to help running costs.

2020-2022 The hospital during Covid



It was a surreal time, but everyone pulled together and there was great supportive teamwork, so much PPE (personal protective equipment); we would just use tons!

MATRON LIZ Lovett was Senior Sister on Jubilee Ward when the Covid-19 pandemic started. In March 2020, the first lockdown was announced. Overnight the hospital was closed to all visitors, and all outpatient clinics and all theatre lists were cancelled. The wards, MIIU and X-ray continued to function and were busy. Patients transferred from Gloucester were all tested prior to their admission and initially Jubilee Ward was the designated 'Covid Positive' ward, until the numbers of infected patients grew and in effect Cashes Green also became a Covid ward.



Matron described how some staff were quite anxious and fearful for their own families. Indeed several staff members were themselves seriously ill and required nursing on intensive care. The hospital was open again in July, but then a second wave required further closure in September 2020 and again in February 2021. Staff wore facemasks for over a year and said it felt weird when finally masks were no longer required.

It has taken a couple of years for the hospital services to recover as so much work was taken away from Stroud. Operating theatre sessions have only just returned to pre-pandemic levels.



150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875 - 2025

Stroud General Hospital during Covid-19

2022 Jubilee Ward refurbishment

Despite the difficult situation, it was an opportunity for building work to take place, especially as the hospital was shut down to visitors and theatre was closed. In 2022 **JUBILEE WARD** transferred over to Cirencester Hospital for the summer.

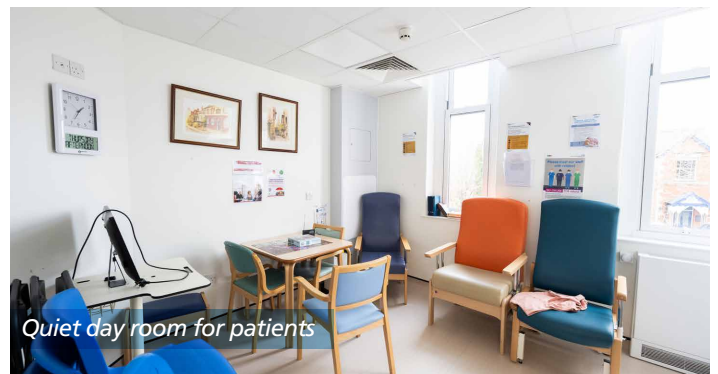
All the bays were remodelled to provide ensuite bathrooms and piped medical gases were installed to each bedside. Redecoration throughout has resulted in cheerful bright bays which are more welcoming.



Purple bay on jubilee ward



Better laid out nurses station



Quiet day room for patients

THE MINOR INJURY AND ILLNESS UNIT was also completely reconfigured to enable better access through the unit and improved privacy for patients when being triaged and examined. Better lighting throughout and wider corridors has enhanced the environment while people are waiting.

The entrance was remodelled to improve access and reduce the wind coming through the doors in winter. All of the extensive refurbishment was made possible with the generous support of the people of Stroud, via the Stroud Hospital League of Friends. In total the cost was £2 million, with £515,000 for the building and £76,000 for equipment from the League Of Friends.



Bright reception in MIU



Separate colourful children's waiting room



Quiet private triage area



Improved entrance



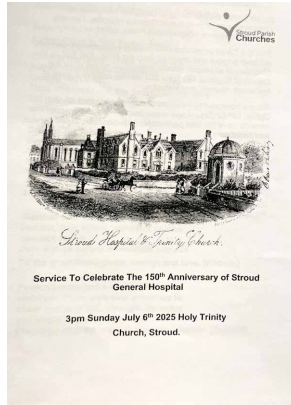
150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

1875-2025

Celebrating 150 years at the present site

1875-2025 A proud history of community

CELEBRATIONS COMMENCED in July with a church service at Holy Trinity Church which has served as the unofficial hospital church since the beginning. Bishop Rachel of Gloucester attended along with the local MP Dr Simon Opher and the Trustees from Stroud Hospital League of Friends. Staff members past and present attended along with the officials, and several speeches recalling the key moments in the development of the hospital were made.



A FEW days later, staff gathered on the car park outside the Maternity Hospital (site of the hospital tennis courts until 1991) for an aerial photograph marking the 150th anniversary.

THANKS TO our GHC Charitable Funds, colleagues across Stroud received a pin badge to mark the 150th anniversary of the General Hospital, alongside a bag of goodies donated by local charity "The Raffle Group"



It was really exciting to mark the 150th anniversary of Stroud General Hospital on this present site and to launch a series of activities to celebrate we held a service at the Holy Trinity Church. Everybody considers the Holy Trinity to be the hospital's church and vice versa, so it was fitting to mark the event there. The League of Friends has been in place since 1948 and we know that the hospital is so much in the hearts of the local community. We were delighted that everybody, regardless of faith or background, joined us in celebrating that the site has been here, supporting the community for 150 years, and we hope to continue to work together to build upon that for 150 more!

Chair of Stroud Hospitals League of Friends
MARGARET GREAVES



150

THE HOSPITAL has been an integral part of the wonderful Stroud community now for over 150 years.

It is thanks to the generosity and supportive spirit of the local population that NHS services have been enhanced and improved to the stunning facilities that we now have in Stroud.

With the challenges and advancements taking place in the NHS, local support will continue to be needed going forward long into the future.



150 YEARS OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

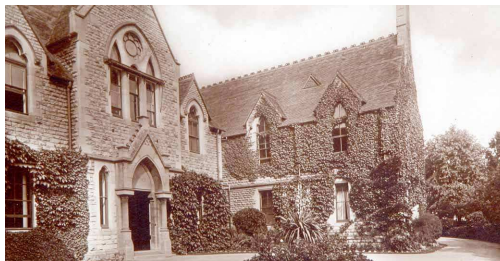
1875  2025

Stroud Theatre, Endoscopy and Princess Anne Ward

2026 Official reopening

THE STROUD Theatre, Endoscopy and Princess Anne Ward team were joined by the Deputy Service Director for Community Hospitals Juliette Richardson and the Stroud League of Friends on 10 March 2026 to formally reopen the refurbished Unit.

These areas have undergone significant upgrades including a full update to the air handling unit, new theatre lighting, new consultant panel in theatres, UPS in endoscopy to prevent interrupted electrical supply during power cuts, a reviewed layout in endoscopy, as well as new washer and dryers and a refreshed, modernised environment thanks to extensive painting and refurbishment.



In the photo above, Deputy Service Director for Community Hospitals Juliette Richardson and Theatre Endoscopy and Day Surgery Manager Sev Vincent cut the ribbon ahead of a speech to mark the occasion, where Juliette took the opportunity to recognise the enormous effort behind the changes.

Celebrating 150 years Of Stroud General Hospital




SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE LONG HISTORY OF STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL

WITH MANY THANKS TO THE STROUD HOSPITALS LEAGUE OF FRIENDS FOR ALL THEIR GENEROUS HELP & SUPPORT

With thanks to Gloucestershire Health and Care Foundation Trust for their support, especially Sarah Brown (Comms team), the team at the Museum in the Park, Trustees of the Stroud Hospitals League of Friends Nick Hurst and Dr Susie Weir, and to Ben Legg at Wheatley Printers