

Annual report 1954-1955 : Exminster Hospital, Digby Hospital, Wonford House Hospital / Devon Mental Hospital Management Committee.

Contributors

Devon Mental Hospital Management Committee.
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DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

1954-1955



EXMINSTER HOSPITAL
DIGBY HOSPITAL
WONFORD HOUSE HOSPITAL

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DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

for the period

from 1st April 1954,

to 31st March 1955

DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

for the period

from 1st April 1924

to 1st March 1925

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**DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

1954-55

CHAIRMAN :

THE REVEREND SUB DEAN T. G. SHELMEKDINE,
9, Livery Dole, Exeter.

VICE-CHAIRMAN :

A. J. WITHYCOMBE, Esq., Redcot, Streatham Drive, Exeter

MEMBERS :

R. H. BAKER, Esq., J.P., Millbrook, Braunton, N. Devon

W. H. GODDARD, Esq., 4, The Crescent, Exeter

W. B. HALLETT, Esq., J.P., Fontygary, 38, Belle Vue Road, Exeter

DR. E. D. IRVINE, 5, Southernhay West, Exeter

G. W. A. JACKSON, Esq., 44, Queen Street, Exeter

C. A. JACKSON, Esq., Moortang, Two Mile Oak, Newton Abbot

ALDERMAN MRS. J. M. PHILLIPS, O.B.E., J.P., Awliscombe House,
Honiton

DR. H. SCOTT-FORBES, 8, Baring Crescent, Exeter

MRS. M. L. SYMONS, J.P., Petersfield House, Fortescue Road,
Paignton

Miss A. E. TUCKER, Primrose Cottage, King's Nympton, N. Devon

J. G. WARNE, Esq., 97, Bonhay Road, Exeter

GROUP OFFICIALS :

Group Secretary : D. W. Miller, F.H.A.,
Deputy Group Secretary : S. W. Keyte, A.H.A. } Exminster Hospital,
Exminster, Exeter

Finance Officer : R. E. Wilman, A.C.A., F.H.A.,
Deputy Finance Officer : C. H. Heath, A.I.M.T.A.,
F.H.A., } 26, Queen St.,
Exeter

SUB-COMMITTEES

Finance :

All the Members of the Management Committee

House :

EXMINSTER HOSPITAL :
SIR JOHN E. DAW
(CHAIRMAN)
SIR ARTHUR C. REED
(VICE-CHAIRMAN)
R. H. BAKER, Esq., J.P.
W. T. HARVEY, Esq.
MRS. R. M. A. HODGE
C. A. JACKSON, Esq.
MRS. C. A. JACKSON
MRS. E. KELLY
E. T. LINSOTT, Esq.
(Resigned, March, 1955)
MISS B. PARKER
THE REVEREND SUB DEAN
T. G. SHELMERDINE
DR. H. SCOTT-FORBES
MRS. M. L. SYMONS, J.P.
MISS A. E. TUCKER
J. G. WARNE, Esq.
A. J. WITHEYCOMBE, Esq.

DIGBY AND WONFORD HOUSE
HOSPITALS :
J. G. WARNE, Esq.
(CHAIRMAN)
A. J. WITHEYCOMBE, Esq.
(VICE-CHAIRMAN)
W. H. GODDARD, Esq.
MRS. R. M. A. HODGE
DR. E. D. IRVINE
G. W. A. JACKSON, Esq.
ALD. H. C. PEDRICK
ALD. MRS. J. M. PHILLIPS,
O.B.E., J.P.
THE REVEREND E. ROYLE
DR. H. SCOTT-FORBES
THE REVEREND SUB DEAN
T. G. SHELMERDINE
MRS. E. E. TINKHAM
COL. C. P. TREMLETT
MISS A. E. TUCKER

Farm :

W. B. HALLETT, Esq., J.P., (CHAIRMAN)
J. CROOKE, Esq., (VICE-CHAIRMAN)

G. W. A. JACKSON, Esq.
J. B. MARTIN, Esq.
J. G. PAUL, Esq.
P. D. ROWSELL, Esq.

THE REVEREND SUB DEAN
T. G. SHELMERDINE
J. J. WALE, Esq.
J. G. WARNE, Esq.
A. J. WITHEYCOMBE, Esq.

Works :

THE REVEREND SUB DEAN T. G. SHELMERDINE (CHAIRMAN)
SIR JOHN E. DAW
C. A. JACKSON, Esq.
G. W. A. JACKSON, Esq.
SIR ARTHUR C. REED

MRS. M. L. SYMONS, J.P.
J. G. WARNE, Esq.
A. J. WITHEYCOMBE, Esq.

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Management Committee has pleasure in presenting its report for the year ending 31st March, 1955.

The constitution of the Committee remained unchanged during the year covered by this report, but we were glad to welcome Mrs. Nichols, with her valuable experience as Chairman of the Health Services Committee of the Exeter City Council, as an additional member.

We regret to record the deaths of two members of Sub-Committees — Major H. C. Gould and Mr. Robert Lawrence. Major Gould, who had been a member of the Exminster Committee and of the Works Sub-Committee in the days before the National Health Service Act continued as a member of the House Committee, where his specialised knowledge was always gladly made available. Mr. Lawrence served on the Farms Committee and eventually succeeded Mr. Maddicott as Chairman.

Mr. E. T. Linscott, another member of the old Exminster Committee, felt compelled to resign his membership of the House Committee. We are grateful to him for his long service (he had been a member since 1922) and wish him many more years to enjoy his retirement.

From April 1st, 1955, Mrs. Goodman, a City Councillor, has become a member of the Digby-Wonford House Committee. We extend her a hearty welcome.

The various Committees have met regularly during the year and there have been meetings of the Joint Staff Consultative Committees when appropriate matters were referred to them.

In July, 1954, we received a report compiled by the Regional Hospital Board's Medical Officers on the development of the Psychiatric Services in the Exeter Clinical Area. In October, 1954, we met the Medical Officers of the Board and recommended that, on the retirement of Dr. Mullin from Wonford House, the Digby and Wonford House Hospitals should be combined under the Medical Superintendence of Dr. J. Russell. This was approved by the Regional Board and we are glad to have the services of Dr. B. V. Earle as Consultant Psychiatrist. New facilities for out-patient treatment are being provided at Wonford House Hospital and we hope that the clinic will soon be in operation.

Shortage of accommodation and lack of Nursing Staff are still the chief anxieties of the Committee.

We have inspected various properties with a view to their adaptation as long-stay annexes for senile patients, but in no case was the Regional Board prepared to purchase the property.

In spite of the recruitment campaign in May, the shortage of qualified nurses and the insufficient intake of students for training persists and the situation is little better than it was a year ago. We obtained approval for a cadet nurses' scheme and have recruited five cadets. It is hoped that they will, at the age of eighteen, enter into full student status.

Details of new buildings and installations provided by the Regional Hospital Board's capital allocation appear in an appendix to this report. At Exminster we now have a really fine Tuberculosis Sanatorium. This was officially opened by the Chairman of the Board, Alderman Sir Havergal Downes-Shaw, in January, 1955.

Financially we found, like all the Management Committees, that our allocation for maintenance was woefully inadequate, but the Treasurer of the Board was most sympathetic and the Board made a supplementary grant when the estimates were revised. Nevertheless, we suffered drastic cuts in the amount available for the maintenance of our buildings and plant; the sum we were able to devote to this was less than in each of the two previous years. Meanwhile, the long-neglected buildings further deteriorated. A special grant to enable a start to be made in overtaking these arrears of maintenance has been given in the present year. The Finance Officer's report, and a summary of the accounts, appear as an appendix to this report.

The Committee deplors the restrictive effects of the present budgetary system which "pegs" expenditure in one year to an inadequate amount allotted in the previous year. This makes progress impossible. We need more capital if we are to expand and more money for maintenance if our present buildings are to be kept from decay. We hope that in our next report we shall see the result of a more generous attitude in the Treasury. Engineering services have been surveyed with a view to extension and modernisation. We anticipate eagerly our share of this special grant.

Further progress has been made in centralizing administration, wherever this was likely to effect economy and increase efficiency. In March, 1955, a Group Invoice Office was set up at Exminster Hospital, staffed from existing resources. The construction of the new x-ray department permitted accommodation to be made available for a modest group office.

We are very happy that for Digby Hospital a major development scheme is included in the Minister's Hospital Building Programme. We earnestly hope that in the second edition of this programme we shall read that Exminster Hospital is chosen for special attention.

The Committee hopes that the urgently needed sanitary annexes for wards 22 and 23 at Exminster Hospital will also be commenced in 1955, and followed by those planned for wards 20, 21 and 12. There is still much modernisation needed, particularly at Exminster Hospital where many of the wards are far below modern standards and lacking in proper sanitary facilities. The replanning of the kitchen and stores, first proposed in 1950, is also long overdue.

We regret that we failed in our appeal to the Minister for the retention of Exminster farmland sufficient for the continuance of profitable mixed farming. The farm at Digby is reprieved, but Exminster is to lose 157 acres, which will mean the sale of our fine dairy herd.

The Commissioners of the Board of Control visited Wonford House Hospital in July, 1954, and in February, 1955, and Digby Hospital in January, 1955. The reports of their visits have been studied by the Committee. Officers of the Regional Hospital Board have made frequent visits to the Group hospitals in connection with the development of the services and planning for capital improvements.

At all our hospitals we have had the usual round of social activities—the annual pantomime at Exminster and sports, fêtes and dances. A League of Hospital Friends for the Digby and Wonford House Hospitals has been formed. We are very grateful to Alderman Charles Hill, the ex-Mayor of Exeter, for his influential help in the formation of the League.

In conclusion, the Committee would express its admiration and gratitude for the loyalty and devotion to duty of the entire staff of all three hospitals. The work of all—Doctors, Nurses, Administrative, Technical and Ancillary staffs—is beyond all praise. In the Royal Navy we should call ourselves a “happy ship”. May we continue to remain a “happy group”.

T. G. SHELMERDINE,

Chairman.

APPENDIX I

DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS

During the year ended 31st March, 1955, the following new buildings and installations, provided from the Regional Hospital Board's capital allocation, were brought into use :—

Exminster Hospital	Sanitary Annexe Ward 17	May, 1954
" "	New x-Ray Dept. (Group)	September, 1954
Digby Hospital	New Boiler Installation...	October, 1954
Exminster Hospital	Lift	October, 1954
" "	Generation of electricity	December, 1954
" "	Sanatorium (for mental patients suffering from tuberculosis in the southern half of the South Western Region)	December, 1954
Exminster Hospital	Sanitary Annexe Ward 18	February, 1955

Towards the end of the financial year, the Regional Hospital Board granted further sums of money from its capital fund for work which could be completed before the end of the year. Although time was short, the following work was completed in the time allotted :—

Exminster Hospital	New electrical switchboard.
Exminster and Digby Hospitals	Revision of boiler houses.
Wonford House Hospital	Improvements to sanitary facilities and clinical rooms.
Exminster Hospital	Conversion of "Spurfield", formerly a male nurses' hostel, to accommodation for patients.
Digby Hospital	Adaptation of nurses' accommodation as an additional ward.

The last two works were decided upon as a small measure of alleviation of the overcrowding in the Group hospitals. These units now have beds for 24 and 19 patients, respectively.

The following new building has been approved for inclusion in the 1955/56 capital programme :—

Exminster Hospital : Occupational Therapy Building for female patients.

Projects awaiting inclusion in future programmes include :—

Exminster Hospital	Occupational Therapy Building for male patients.
" "	New Workshops.
" "	Sanitary Annexes Wards 22, 23, 20, 21 and 12.
" "	General modernisation.
" "	Installation of third boiler.
" "	Houses for Medical Staff.
Digby Hospital	Re-organisation of heating and hot water services (Stage II).
" "	Nurse Training Building.
Wonford House Hospital	Improvements in Engineering Services. Lift.

APPENDIX II

FINANCIAL REPORT

For the Year Ended 31st March, 1955

Expenditure for the year amounted to £533,681, which was £42,607 greater than the previous year, but only £3,010 more than the estimate approved by the Minister of Health. Income was £12,595, which was £245 less than estimated, and £235 less than the previous year.

The increased expenditure compared with last year is almost entirely added costs of salaries and wages and reflects not only the somewhat easier staffing position, but also various increases in rates of pay which have been approved by the Minister on a national basis. Payment of staff is by far the heaviest single item of expense, about 61% of all the Committee's resources being used for this purpose.

The average number of patients resident, already very high, has increased, particularly at Wonford House Hospital, and at this hospital costs have again been slightly reduced. The average cost per patient per week at each of the Group's hospitals, together with comparative figures for last year is shown in the following table :—

COST PER PATIENT PER WEEK									
	EXMINSTER			DIGBY			WONFORD HOUSE		
1954/55	£4	1	4	£6	2	10	£8	15	7
1953/54	3	18	2	6	1	11	9	0	2

Three thousand, three hundred and seventy pounds was spent during the year from the Committee's endowment funds on items for which exchequer grants would have been inappropriate. In this way the Committee were able to provide a number of amenities and comforts for both patients and staff which otherwise would not have been practicable.

An abstract of the Exchequer account for the year, and also of the Endowment Funds at the disposal of the Committee is given overleaf.

R. E. WILMAN,

Finance Officer.

DEVON MENTAL HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Summary of Accounts—Year to 31st March, 1955

	£	£
HOSPITAL EXPENDITURE (Exchequer Funds)		
Gross salaries and wages (Including National Insurance and Superannuation)	325,760	
Provisions	116,134	
Uniforms and Clothing	12,894	
Drugs, dressings, medical and surgical equipment	7,805	
Fuel, light, power, water and laundry ...	42,573	
Maintenance of buildings, plant and grounds ...	16,390	
Domestic repairs, renewals and replacements ...	19,305	
All other expenses	80,878	
	621,739	
LESS : Direct Credits (Staff board and lodging, Canteens, Farms and Gardens, etc.) ...		90,375
		531,364
ADD : Group Administration		2,317
		533,681
		533,681
INCOME		
Accommodation and treatment of patients in single rooms and small wards		12,092
Rents and other miscellaneous income ...		503
		12,595
		12,595

ENDOWMENT AND OTHER FUNDS

	CAPITAL	REVENUE
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
From Minister of Health under Section 7		1,655
From other sources under Section 59		1,936
Cash in hand at 1st April, 1954		4,874
		8,465
		8,465
PAYMENTS		
For purposes relating to hospital services and research		1,204
Other payments : Amenities for patients		1,842
Amenities for staff		324
Administrative expenses		2
Cash in hand, etc., at 31st March, 1955		5,093
		8,465
		8,465

GROUP STATISTICS

Patients

The following figures summarise the admission and discharge of patients in the Group hospitals during the year 1954 :—

	<i>Voluntary, Temporary and Certified Patients</i>		<i>Patients admitted under sec. 20/21, Lunacy Act, 1890</i>	
NUMBER OF PATIENTS ON THE REGISTERS, 1st JANUARY, 1954	2186		<u>9</u>	
Admissions during 1954 ...	* 868	3054	† 66	66
Discharges during 1954 ...	664		39	
Died during 1954 ...	207	871	21	60
NUMBER OF PATIENTS ON THE REGISTERS, 31st DECEMBER, 1954 ...		<u>2183</u>		<u>6</u>
* Includes those patients first admitted under Sec. 20/21 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, and subsequently dealt with as Voluntary, Temporary or Certified Patients.		† Excludes those subsequently dealt with.		

	1954	1953
Total Admissions ...	934	857
Total Discharges ...	703	627

	1954	1953
*Emergency admissions under Sec. 20/21, Lunacy Act (included in total admissions, above). ...	300	291

	1954	1953
Number of patients actually resident on 31st December ...	2173	2182
Of those resident, aged 65 and over ...	775	767

Nursing Staff

The following figures illustrate the deficiency of nurses, referred to in the Chairman's Report :—

	1954	1953
Total number of nurses employed, including part-time nurses, largely unqualified, expressed in full-time units, as at 31st December	424	398
Actual number of part-time nurses, included above	144	155

Revised establishment of nursing staff, together with the number of nurses employed and the deficiency, is as follows :—

	Male nurses	Female nurses
Establishment	236	297
Number employed, including part-time nurses expressed as full-time units, as at 31st December, 1954	188	236
Deficiency	48	61

Student nurse establishment (included in the total establishment)	64	88
Students as at 31st December, 1954	38	46
Deficiency of students	26	42

EXMINSTER HOSPITAL

Medical Staff

Medical Superintendent :

S. M. ALLAN, M.D., Ch.B. (Glas.) D.P.M. (Lond.)

Senior Hospital Medical Officer and Deputy Medical Superintendent :

J. W. FISHER, M.R.C.S. (Eng.) L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H., D.P.M.

Senior Hospital Medical Officers :

T. J. K. BROWNLEES, M.R.C.S. (Eng.) L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.M.

A. JACK, M.B., Ch.B. (Glas.)

Junior Hospital Medical Officers :

J. R. ROCYN-JONES, L.M.S.S.A. (Lond.)

C. P. BURGESS, M.B., Ch.B. (Edin.)

R. W. THOMSON, M.B., Ch.B. (Edin.)

Officers

Secretary : S. W. KEYTE, A.H.A.

Steward : W. CONNETT

Matron : MISS I. PRIDHAM, S.R.N., R.M.P.A.

Chief Male Nurse : W. H. NEWNS, S.R.N., R.M.N.

Engineer : J. FAIRCLOUGH

Group Clerk of Works : T. E. REDDAWAY

Farm Manager : G. L. COLLINGS

Pharmacist : B. C. T. SNOW, Ph.C., F.P.S.

Laboratory Technician : M. C. LANGLEY, A.I.M.L.T.

Church of England Chaplain : REV. W. PARRY, B.A.

Roman Catholic Priest : REV. P. J. TOBIN

Free Church Chaplain : REV. M. E. KELLY

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE YEAR 1954

EXMINSTER HOSPITAL,
NEAR EXETER

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Medical Superintendent's Report for the year 1954.

There has been a slight increase of admissions compared with 1953 and this in spite of our overcrowded wards and the necessity to set up a waiting list. Our Outpatient Clinics have helped to reduce the pressure on beds.

On the 1st January 1954, there were 1628 patients on the Register, and 6 Emergency Admissions; 623 males and 1005 females, plus 3 males and 3 females.

Classification of the above :—

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	169	212	381
Temporary	—	1	1
Certified	454	792	1246
	—	—	—
	623	1005	1628
Emergency Admissions			
Sec. 20/21	3	3	6
			—
			1634

Admissions

Including statutory transfers, the admissions were as follows :—

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	210	281	491
Temporary	3	1	4
Certified	39	70	109
	—	—	—
	252	352	604

It will be noted that 81% of all admissions were voluntary, a percentage that is increasing year by year.

We are still much hampered by the large size of wards and the consequent inability to classify patients to the best advantage.

Emergency Admissions

Section 20/21 ; 102 males, 159 females—Total 279. Of the total emergency admissions 225 became Voluntary patients, and 7 Certified patients. (These figures are included in the direct admissions shown above). Twenty-two Emergency Admissions were discharged and 19 died. Six remained on the 31st December, 1954, awaiting classification.

Discharges

	Male	Female	Total
Recovered	112	151	263
Improved	92	107	199
Not Improved	7	9	16
	—	—	—
	211	267	478

Resident

There were on the books at the end of the year 1610 patients and 6 Emergency patients, classified as follows :—

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	166	260	426
Temporary	—	—	—
Certified	437	747	1184
	—	—	—
	603	1007	1610
Emergency Admissions	3	3	6
	—	—	—
	606	1010	1616

Deaths

There were 144 deaths (61 males, 83 females), a decrease of 6 on the previous year. Eighteen patients died while on Emergency Orders. As in former years the great majority of the deaths were of patients over 65 years of age.

General Health

There were no epidemics during the year. A few cases of tuberculosis were notified.

The Sanatorium was in full use by the end of the year. All tubercular cases occurring in mental hospitals in Devon and Cornwall are treated in this Unit. It has been working to capacity ever since it was opened.

Our Geriatric Units are also full and this has thrown a great strain on our slender nursing resources.

Treatment Units

The Insulin Therapy wards have been fully occupied during the year and they have shown excellent results in the earlier cases of schizophrenia.

Electric Convulsive Therapy has been carried out in special units in the best conditions we can possibly provide in our overcrowded hospital. Further efforts are needed especially in the female wards to upgrade our accommodation and to facilitate the work of the nursing staff.

The treatment of chronic patients has always been a great problem, but much success has rewarded our efforts and we are more and more concentrating attention on this aspect of therapy.

The Occupational Therapy departments are enlarging their scope year by year but a bigger staff is required to cope with the work. An additional therapist was appointed on the female side. Part-time workers are employed to help.

Clinics

The Outpatient Clinics continue to expand. At Bideford Hospital there were 730 attendances including 184 new patients. At the Eye Infirmary, Exeter, and at the hospital here, outpatients are also examined and treated, the combined attendances at these clinics number 555.

Entertainments

In addition to the usual weekly entertainments of cinema, dances, etc., the Staff Dramatic Club produced the pantomime "Aladdin", an ambitious production that earned great praise. Plays such as "Little Lambs Eat Ivy" and "Will any Gentleman" were also produced.

The staff who take part in these efforts devote a great deal of time to them and the thanks of the whole hospital is due to them.

Nursing Staff

The Preliminary Training School is still functioning but the number of students is so small that one wonders often if this school is justified. Year by year it seems student nurses become fewer.

I wish here to record my great appreciation of the work of the nursing staff under the most difficult conditions.

Laboratory Report

Bacteriological	1115
Hæmatological	807
Biochemical	369
Histological	20

Fifty post-mortems were carried out during the year.

Farm Report

Unfortunately, the Management Committee have been notified that the farm, as we have known it, will soon cease to exist. The dairy herd built up wisely and skilfully will be dispersed, and the hospital will lose its supply of fresh milk.

It will, of course, be possible to make use of the land still remaining to us with the emphasis on the rearing of pigs and poultry. Our expert farm manager will no doubt be able to tackle the problem with enthusiasm.

Clerk of Works' Department

New work carried out included improvements to the x-ray department which was moved to a different site, and the equipping of a Physiotherapy Unit. Much new work was done to upgrade the Laundry, various wards, the Administrative offices and the Operating Theatre.

As in former years the greatest amount of work was done in decorating the wards, in external painting and in the repair of woodwork. A great deal still remains to be done, but the steady work accomplished is there for all to see.

Our Clerk of Works' department is hampered because many of the buildings are so old that emergency repairs take up far too much time and labour. In spite of this their record is very good, and the quality of their work deserves the highest praise.

Engineer's Department

The new boiler and generating plant was at long last completed. Unfortunately, the boiler plant has not been as efficient as planned, but it is hoped that the installation of a third boiler will cure the trouble. A continuous dryer was installed in the Laundry, and this has greatly helped the service there.

As with the Clerk of Works, the attention of the Engineer is almost entirely taken up with repair and the attempt to keep old plant working.

However, there has been time to upgrade the services in many of the wards where heating, lighting and hot water services have been improved.

The work of this department is excellent and carries on the tradition of former years.

General

Charge Nurse A. W. Bean retired after 31 years' service ;
Male Nurse A. H. Wheatcroft retired after 40 years' service ;
Telephone Operator R. G. Anning retired after 32 years' service ;

Mr. S. W. Harvey, Stores Clerk, retired after 31 years' service ;
Ward Sister A. Duncan retired after 30 years' service.

The staff of the hospital would like to wish all these members of
the staff long-life and happiness in their well-earned retirement.

I wish to thank my medical colleagues, all officers and staff, for
their loyalty and hard work during the year.

In conclusion, may I also thank all members of the Committee for
their understanding and encouragement.

I have the honour to be,
Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

S. M. ALLAN,

Medical Superintendent.

DIGBY & WONFORD HOUSE HOSPITALS

Medical Staff

Medical Superintendent :

J. RUSSELL, M.B., Ch.B., (Glas.) D.P.M.

Consultant Psychiatrist :

B. V. EARLE, M.D., (Dub.), B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.M.

Hospital Secretary : J. GAPPER, A.H.A.

Pharmacist : E. HODGE, M.P.S.

Chief Engineer : D. GIBSON

DIGBY HOSPITAL

Medical Staff

Senior Hospital Medical Officer & Deputy Medical Superintendent :

J. SCOTT, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., (N.U.I.) D.P.M., L.M., (Coombe)

Junior Hospital Medical Officer : R. J. MULES, M.B., B.S., (Lond.)

Officers

Matron : Miss A. O'BRIEN, S.R.N., R.F.N., R.M.N., R.M.P.A.

Chief Male Nurse : L. R. HARWOOD, S.R.N., R.M.N.

Farm Manager : H. J. HOOPER

Church of England Chaplain : REVD. G. E. DEANE

(Resigned, August, 1955)

Free Church Chaplain : REVD. H. W. HUGHES

Roman Catholic Priest : REVD. T. O'LEARY

WONFORD HOUSE HOSPITAL

Medical Staff

Junior Hospital Medical Officer :

C. P. O'TOOLE, L.R.C.P. & S. (I.)

Officers

Matron : Miss E. A. LENTON, S.R.N., R.M.N., S.C.M.

Chief Male Nurse : T. T. HAY, S.R.N., R.M.N.

Administrative Assistant : J. N. A. CALLINGHAM

Chaplain : REVD. W. A. P. GLENN

(Resigned, September, 1955)

Free Church Chaplain : REVD. P. L. JONES

Roman Catholic Priest : REVD. W. CARTER

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE YEAR 1954

DIGBY/WONFORD HOSPITAL.

To : The Devon Mental Hospital Management Committee.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In submitting this Report opportunity will be taken of the recent merging of Digby and Wonford Hospitals, to note the trends since 1951.

Accommodation for Female Patients

The main emphasis must be on the lack of accommodation. The announcement that the Unit is to have new buildings at Digby which may be completed in 1958/59 or later does not allay present anxieties. Figures for beds occupied by women patients are :—

	DEC. 1951	1952	1953	1954	Now
Digby	181	196	207	215	231
Wonford	95	104	111	118	122
	—	—	—	—	—
	276	300	318	333	353

There are 25 occupied beds in excess of those which your Committee decided this year would be the limits. In these conditions there are never any beds immediately available to deal with internal emergencies, *e.g.*, sudden illness of an ambulant resident patient. Having in mind that any admission to our hospital reflects a domestic emergency or a crisis in the affairs of a patient demanding that treatment must be immediate to be effective, crises are not solved by putting a name on a mental hospital waiting list and solutions must be practical.

Admission of elderly Female Patients

It has been asserted that old people are certified and sent to mental hospitals unnecessarily. In no instance has this occurred in the period under review. Review of admissions over this five year period shows that in each successive year more old folks are admitted. Cavell Ward, a ward for nineteen patients opened at Digby this year to alleviate overcrowding and for use as a ward for convalescing patients, has now nearly all its beds occupied by elderly patients and cannot be used for convalescents. Dr. Mullin commented last year

“that it was impossible to accommodate the number of elderly patients seeking admission . . . and few vacancies occur”. The actual number of vacancies in the Wonford wards for elderly women averages 5 per year, these vacancies being occasioned by deaths. There are, however, some elderly people who can be admitted to the general reception wards with reasonable prospect of alleviation of symptoms by modern treatments—particularly does this apply to the melancholia of old age. I think it is important that these people should be investigated to determine suitability for urgent admission. It is equally important that these beds which are being used all the time for patients in the younger age groups should not be “blocked” by the admission to them of elderly patients who will not respond to treatment.

I regard Wonford as most unsuitable for the reception of old people. The accommodation is on three floors, the wards are too small and have no dayrooms or conveniently situated toilet annexes. The lay out is wasteful of staff and unduly burdensome on the nurses. Since there is no money for improvements I am as yet unable to suggest how the available accommodation could best be used.

The “Borderline” Case

The Health Service provides no solution to the recurring problem of the “borderline” elderly patient so frequently seen in consultation with the General Practitioner. The patient just fails to qualify for admission to a mental hospital or to a long stay hospital. Such patients are a cause of great concern both to practitioners and to relatives.

Staff

While it is becoming impossible to recruit student nurses it is very satisfactory to record the following successes in recent examinations :—

Certificate in Mental Nursing

DIGBY

Miss Barbara Davies
Mr. C. de Labertauche

WONFORD

Miss B. E. Brady
Mr. D. I. Howell
Mr. R. A. Knowles
Mrs. A. A. Martin
Mr. L. F. Sercombe
Mrs. W. M. Snell
Miss F. G. Stone

Certificate in General Nursing

Mr. J. Foster
Mr. S. Newcombe

*State Preliminary
Examination*

DIGBY

WONFORD

Mr. Frank Brown
Miss Ann Carver
Mr. Geoffrey Friend
Mr. Samuel Gale
Mr. John Green
Mrs. D. Hunter
Mr. Brian Lemin
Miss Mary McMulkin
Mr. Ivor Rowe

Mr. R. E. Harmsworth
Mr. D. G. Hutchings

Recently many who have served Digby and Wonford with the devotion of years, have left. I mention Dr. B. J. Mullin whose kindly and genial personality has left its stamp on Wonford—in fact for a very long time the names Mullin and Wonford have been interchangeable.

Miss F. N. Henry, who had been nursing since the age of 16, was forced by ill-health into a premature retirement after 20 years as Matron of Digby Hospital—some 38 years in nursing—a notable record. Just before her illness Miss Henry had set up the Art Therapy Department which now, under the able guidance of Mrs. Milton, is proving a most valuable asset at Digby and from modest beginnings in the Committee Room, now spills over into wards and recreation rooms, so great is the interest aroused.

Other inevitable changes have been :—

Retirements

DIGBY

John German, Kitchen Superintendent (33 years) ;
Frederick Bright, Carpenter (20 years) ;
Lily Creedy, Housemaid (54 years) ;
Albert Smallridge, Charge Nurse (33 years) ;
John H. Redstone, Nursing Assistant (35 years).

WONFORD

W. J. Aggett, Gardner (43 years) ;
A. Gliddon, Head Gardner (34 years) ;
J. Aggett, Stoker (25 years) ;
J. Yeo, Laundryman (10 years)
Sister H. Allan (22 years) ;
Sister M. Smith (27 years) ;
Rev. W. Glenn, Chaplain (17 years).

Died

Sidney Smith, Storesman, after 25 years' service at Digby.

Left

The following officers left to take up work elsewhere :—

Sister Lily Jennings (18 years at Digby) ;
Rev. G. E. Deane, Chaplain (8 years at Digby).

Promotions

The Deputy Matron, Miss A. O'Brien, S.R.N., R.M.N., who had very ably looked after the interests of Digby for a year received your recognition in promotion to Matron.

Mr. J.A.N. Callingham was appointed Administrative Assistant at Wonford Hospital.

I thank my colleague, Dr. B. V. Earle for promoting many schemes for the benefit of the patients in the Unit and I record the support of Dr. J. Scott, Dr. C. P. O'Toole and Dr. R. J. Mules.

In all hospital activities I acknowledge unfailing co-operation in all departments and from the Group Officers.

JOHN RUSSELL,
Medical Superintendent.

DIGBY HOSPITAL

On Registers, 1st January, 1954

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	35	40	75
Temporary	—	1	1
Certified	147	165	312
	—	—	—
	182	206	388
Sec. 20/21	2	1	3
	—	—	—
	184	207	391

Admissions

(Including statutory transfers)

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	67	65	132
Temporary	—	2	2
Certified	14	27	41
	—	—	—
	81	94	175

Discharges

	Male	Female	Total
Recovered	24	22	46
Relieved	18	32	50
Not Improved	16	11	27
	—	—	—
	58	65	123

Deaths

	24	20	44
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Remaining on Registers, 31st December, 1954

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	43	41	84
Temporary	—	—	—
Certified	138	174	312
	—	—	—
	181	215	396

Emergency

(Sec. 20/21 Admissions) :

	Male	Female	Total
Number admitted during the year	33	48	81
*Of these, (plus 3 brought forward from 1953) subsequently treated as :—			
Voluntary	20	24	44
Temporary	-	2	2
Certified	3	14	17
Died	1	2	3
Left Hospital	11	7	18
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	35	49	84
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Remaining on 31st Dec., 1954	-	-	-

* Those subsequently treated as Voluntary, etc. patients are included in the admissions above.

APPENDIX ' B '

WONFORD HOUSE HOSPITAL

On Registers, 1st January, 1954

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	32	45	77
Temporary	—	2	2
Certified	27	64	91
	—	—	—
	59	111	170

Admissions

(including Statutory Transfers)

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	32	43	75
Temporary	1	—	1
Certified	8	5	13
	—	—	—
	41	48	89

Discharges

	Male	Female	Total
Recovered	12	13	25
Relieved	13	20	33
Not Improved	4	1	5
	—	—	—
	29	34	63

Deaths

	12	7	19
--	----	---	----

Remaining on Registers, 31st December, 1954

	Male	Female	Total
Voluntary	26	54	80
Temporary	—	—	—
Certified	33	64	97
	—	—	—
	59	118	177

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