

Hospitals

St George's Hospital

St George's Hospital was formed following an argument over new premises for the Westminster Infirmary. When a decision was made to move the infirmary to Castle Lane in Pimlico, a group of subscribers and all the physicians set up an alternative institution which would occupy Lanesbrough House at Hyde Park Corner, seen as the superior building and location, particularly for its good air. The building was converted and the hospital was opened to patients on 1 January 1733/4, soon supplying 60 beds. Its first president was Richard Willis, Bishop of Winchester, but he died less than a year later and was replaced by Frederick, Prince of Wales, beginning a tradition of royal patronage. Six physicians and three surgeons were elected medical officers without pay. Bye-laws for the management of the hospital were largely based on those for St Thomas's Hospital. Governors had to contribute at least £5.¹

In 1735 the decision was made to expand the hospital and so the freehold, along with adjoining buildings, was purchased from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster for £500. The hospital was enlarged to house 200 beds. Negotiations with Sir Richard Grosvenor were less successful and it took until 1767 for further land to be secured from his son, Lord Richard Grosvenor.² The surgeons and physicians of St George's were allowed a limited number of pupils from its inception, but efforts to establish a medical school during the 18th century, particularly championed by the famed surgeon John Hunter, proved abortive. Lectures delivered by Sir Everard Home, around the turn of the 19th century, appear to be the first at the hospital.³

A need for greater capacity and to improve the layout and functionality of the hospital led the governors to plan a complete rebuilding. The new building was designed by William Wilkins, later architect of the National Gallery, and was begun in 1825 on a site behind the old hospital, which continued to operate during construction. The new hospital was completed in 1834, with 325 in-patient beds, a lecture theatre and a museum.⁴ A medical and surgical school was finally established in 1831, initially using a variety of venues, but eventually holding all lectures and demonstrations in the new hospital facilities or at premises in Kinnerton Street.⁵

¹ W. E. Page, *Some Account of St George's Hospital and School* (1866), 3–5; *An account of the occasion and manner of erecting the hospital at Lanesborough House, near Hyde-Park-Corner* (1734); *A list of the governors and contributors to the hospital, near Hyde-Park-Corner, the Third of April, 1734* (1734).

² W. E. Page, *Some Account of St George's Hospital and School* (1866), 5–7.

³ W. E. Page, *Some Account of St George's Hospital and School* (1866), 11–2.

⁴ W. E. Page, *Some Account of St George's Hospital and School* (1866), 7–8.

⁵ W. E. Page, *Some Account of St George's Hospital and School* (1866), 13–4.

The south wing was extended westward in 1851, adding 25 beds. Another storey was added in 1851, providing improved doctor's and nurse's accommodation, two day-wards and a reading room for medical students. Atkinson Morley, proprietor of the Burlington Hotel, bequeathed the hospital a sum amounting to £150,000 by the time it was received in 1865, to build a convalescent hospital. A 28 a. site was purchased at the south west corner of Wimbledon Common and the Atkinson Morley Convalescent Hospital was opened in 1869.⁶ A new wing was erected to the south-west of the hospital in Grosvenor Crescent, completed around 1868.⁷

Royal Orthopaedic Hospital

The establishment of an orthopaedic hospital was proposed in 1838 and it opened in Bloomsbury Square in 1840. The lease on the building was entering its final years and larger premises were required, so the hospital moved to a site between Oxford Street and Hanover Square in 1856. Finances were on a good footing in the 1880s, but by the next decade expenditure had outpaced income. Outbreaks of various infectious diseases also contributed to a rift amongst the governors and the replacement of several committee members in 1899. Infections in the hospital culminated in cases of scarlet fever necessitating its closure to new patients. The local medical officer of health found the Georgian residential building unfit for use as a hospital, with problems ranging from leaky soil pipes to decorative plaster and wood-panelled walls that could not be cleaned properly. Renovations were carried out and the hospital was fully reopened the same year, but the Hanover Square site was disposed of in 1907 and it was later amalgamated with the National Orthopaedic Hospital.⁸

Lock Hospital

The Lock Hospital was founded in 1746 by William Bromfeild, a surgeon to St George's Hospital and the Prince of Wales. The hospital was opened in January 1746/7 with 30 beds, funded mainly by subscribers, but with additional income from sources including benefit plays. It was situated halfway down Grosvenor Place, across from where the road met with the garden of Buckingham House. It was specifically for the cure of venereal disease, and especially for those victims of the popular belief

⁶ W. E. Page, *Some Account of St George's Hospital and School* (1866), 8–9; G. Clinch, *Mayfair and Belgravia: being an Historical Account of the Parish of St George, Hanover Square* (1892), 159.

⁷ WAGE 1049/9/29, Grosvenor Crescent Improvements; E. Walford, *Old and New London V* (1878), 4.

⁸ Clinch, *Mayfair and Belgravia*, 160; J. A. Cholmeley, *History of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital* (1985), 4–5, 16–8, 32–3, 36–40, 49.

that the disease could be cured by passing it to someone else, which led to some infants being raped and infected.⁹

A chapel was added to the hospital in 1862, in part because it offered an opportunity to generate revenue. The preacher Martin Madan made it a great success until 1780, when he was forced to resign over his views on polygamy. A meeting of subscribers in 1787 decided to establish an asylum in a nearby house on Osnaurgh Row to receive, feed and clothe 'penitent' women who had been cured in the hospital. The asylum moved to new premises in Knightsbridge around 1811.¹⁰ A new building for the hospital was erected in the Harrow Road in 1842 and Wilton House built on the Grosvenor Place site for the earl of Wilton, second son of the marquis of Westminster.¹¹

Dukes Hospital

The Dukes Hospital is shown on Rocque's map of 1746 at the south end of Grosvenor Place in what was then Pimlico, named after the duke of Cumberland. It was a hospital for invalid soldiers, still standing in 1764.¹²

General Lying-in Hospital, Duke Street

Instituted in 1752 and funded by subscribers, with the earl of Hertford as president, this early lying-in hospital moved from Jermyn Street to Duke Street in 1754, having also possibly relocated to St George's Row between the two. Its description as 'facing Mary-la-Bonne-Fields' suggested it was at the northern end of Duke Street. Mr Macdough was the house surgeon and man-midwife, but no other men were admitted.¹³ It seems to have moved on again to Quebec Street, just north of Oxford Street, in 1762.¹⁴

Dispensaries

During the 19th century a number of medical dispensaries, both charitable and provident, were established around the parish, although the first to serve it was just outside. The St George's and St James's general dispensary was established in 1817 in King Street, St James's, to serve the poor of

⁹ *General Advertiser*, 21 Mar. 1752; *An account of the nature and intention of the Lock Hospital, near Hyde Park Corner* (1811); J.J.J., 'The London Lock Hospital and its Founder', *British Medical Journal*, 4461:2 (6 July 1946), 16.

¹⁰ J. Bettley, "Post voluptatem misericordia: the rise and fall of the London lock hospitals", *London Journal* 10.2 (1984), 167–175; *An account of the institution of the Lock Asylum, for the reception of penitent female patients, when discharged cured from the Lock Hospital* (1796).

¹¹ *The Era*, 5 Jun. 1842.

¹² H. B. Wheatley, *London Past and Present: its History, Associations, and Traditions* vol. II (1891), 235.

¹³ *An account of the rise, progress, and state of the general lying-in hospital, in Duke's-Street, Grosvenor-Square* (1754).

¹⁴ C. Hibbert et al, *The London Encyclopaedia* (3rd edn., 2008), 671.

both parishes.¹⁵ There followed the Royal Pimlico, on Upper Belgrave Place in 1832, St Paul's and St Barnabas, on Upper Ebury Street in 1849, the St George's, on Little Grosvenor Street in 1868, the Pimlico Free, on Pimlico Road in 1869 and the Pimlico, on Lupus Street in 1882.¹⁶

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¹⁵ *Eighteenth Annual Report, Prepared by the Monthly Committee of St George's & St James's Dispensary* (1835).

¹⁶ R. Bogle, 'From Charity to Providence: Influences on the Organization of Dispensaries in the Early 19th Century', unpublished thesis for diploma in the history of medicine, Worshipful Society of Apothecaries (2012), 30–1.