

**RECORDS OF THE SALOP
INFIRMARY, FROM THE
COMMENCEMENT OF THE
CHARITY TO THE PRESENT TIME**

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Records of the Salop infirmary, from the commencement of the charity to the present time by
Henry Bevan

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HENRY BEVAN

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INFIRMARY, FROM THE
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RECORDS

OF THE

SALOP INFIRMARY,

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CHARITY
TO THE PRESENT TIME,

BEING A PERIOD OF

ONE HUNDRED YEARS.

BY HENRY BEVAN, SECRETARY.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

1847.

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TO

THE TRUSTEES OF THE SALOP INFIRMARY,

THE FOLLOWING RECORDS

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THEIR FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

HENRY BEVAN.

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SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
ORIGIN AND PROGRESS
OF
THE SALOP INFIRMARY.

LIKE most other Institutions of a similar kind, the SALOP INFIRMARY had at its commencement to struggle against many difficulties.

The establishment of County Hospitals laboured at that time under all the disadvantages of a new experiment, for although several Institutions of this description were in existence in different parts of the kingdom, by the time the arrangements for this Infirmary were completed, they were all, with the exception of some of the London Hospitals, of recent origin.

In the year 1737 the first attempt was made to establish an Infirmary at Shrewsbury. On that occasion a proposal was printed, and circulated in the County and its neighbourhood, of which the following is a copy :—

“*Salop, July 21, 1737.*”

“*A proposal for erecting an INFIRMARY for the Poor-sick and Lame of this County and Neighbourhood.*”

“The unhappy condition of many people, who labour under the double distress of *Sickness* and *Want*, hath occasioned an enquiry, whether some public provision may not be made for their relief, in imitation of the HOSPITALS and INFIRMARIES in LONDON and WESTMINSTER.”

“The ordinary poor, in every place, are competently provided for by the ordinary parochial Charities; but the *occasional* objects of Charity, such as are disabled from work by sickness, broken limbs, or the like, are by no means so well supplied with the helps and assistances that are wanted in their condition; they are, for the most part, left to languish without attendance or advice, in the hands of ignorant people, and often in such lodgings as contribute to the increase of their distempers: and the little money that is in such cases to be expected from parish officers, is seldom sufficient to provide them with proper diet, much less to pay for their medicines, attendance, &c.”

"It will, therefore, be a well-applied and useful Charity, if any means can be found out, by which the Poor in these circumstances may be timely relieved, supplied with every thing that is proper during their sickness, and helped on, as far as possible, towards a speedy recovery."

"For this purpose, the only method that appears, is to open a PUBLIC INFIRMARY, to be maintained by SUBSCRIPTION, in which all such sick and lame persons as are thought to be curable, and fit objects, and recommended in such manner as the Contributors shall direct, may be received and taken under the care of a Physician or Surgeon, or both, as their case shall require,—DIET, WASHING, and LODGING, to be given to the poorest, as far as the Subscription will reach—MEDICINES to be dispensed *gratis*—NURSES to be provided, and every thing else that is necessary for the service of an Infirmary."

"And whereas many persons are proper objects of this Charity, whose complaints or disorders may not require a close confinement, such persons may be admitted as the Out-patients of this Infirmary, and receive advice and medicines there, when properly recommended."

"The foundations of this kind in London and Westminster—the benefits of which have reached even to our own County, are an unanswerable proof of the usefulness of this design: and the success which a like undertaking hath lately met with at WINCHESTER, is a very encouraging reason for attempting the same in other parts of the Country. There are not wanting a sufficient number of PHYSICIANS and SURGEONS in this place to execute this scheme in the best manner; and they have shewn the most hearty and zealous concurrence in promoting such a work, by undertaking voluntarily to serve the Infirmary without *fee* or *reward*."

"To prevent any misapplication of the Charity, the government of it must be placed in the hands of the *Principal Benefactors* to it, who will of consequence be most interested in its success; and a state of the accounts must be published from time to time, for the satisfaction of all the *Contributors*."

"For the better conducting it, the Rules and Orders drawn up for the government of *Winchester Hospital*, which are published by Dr. Alured Clarke, may be consulted; and what further information can be had from the Hospitals and Infirmaries in London, will be ready to be laid before the Subscribers for their consideration; from which helps it will be easy to draw out such a plan, as (with the blessing of God) will not fail to answer the charitable ends intended."

"It may deserve to be considered, in favour of this design, that the persons here relieved are such only as are in the deepest distress, and have, therefore, the first title to our Charity, and for this reason it is believed, that all persons who give anything to charitable uses will *begin* here;—that the sick-poor cannot be relieved in any other method so effectually as in the way here proposed, since the *Physicians* and *Surgeons* cannot give their attendance, nor medicines be dispensed at more places than one—that it will be one considerable advantage to patients of the poorer sort, to be removed into *clean* apartments, a clear and wholesome air, and kept to a regular diet, which in many cases may be more necessary than physic itself to their cure—that a small sum of money, where the application of it is directed by able Physicians, and where the best medicines are provided at the easiest rate, will be of more benefit to the poor in the time of sickness, than *ten* times the sum left to their own management, or given in any other way;—and lastly, that this sort of Charity is less liable to misapplication, than almost any other, and hath been attended, in every instance where it has been tried, with the most extraordinary success."

"It is therefore, humbly hoped, that all persons will candidly and seriously consider what is here proposed, and give their advice and assistance towards improving and perfecting so useful a design; and then, it is not doubted, that with the encouragement of the charitable and well-inclined of all interests and persuasions, it will be soon brought into effect, and become an extensive BLESSING to our Country."

Had the suggestions contained in the foregoing address been *immediately* carried into effect, the SALOP INFIRMARY, it is believed would have been *in point of time* the *second* Provincial Hospital in England. The design, however, was permitted to slumber for nearly *seven* years, and during that interval Institutions of a like description were established at Exeter, Northampton, and probably at other places.

On the 28th of February, 1744, a second proposal was printed, which although very similar to the first, met with far greater encouragement.

The first meeting of which any notice is preserved in the Minute Books of the Charity, was held in the Grand Jury Room of the Guildhall, on the 24th of March, 1745. It was thereupon agreed that a Public Infirmary should be established at Shrewsbury, to be supported by voluntary Subscriptions and Benefactions; and that a General Meeting of all Subscribers and Benefactors to the Charity should be held at the ensuing Summer Assizes, for the purpose of furthering the objects contemplated. In the mean time a Committee for preliminary purposes was appointed, consisting of the Physicians and Surgeons of the town, and all persons who had already announced themselves as subscribers. One of the first acts of the Committee was to publish a third proposal, in which the nature and design of the Institution were fully explained, and to which were appended the names of *one hundred and seventy-two* contributors, whose united subscriptions amounted to £494. 6s. 0d., besides benefactions amounting to £55. 13s. 0d. The next business was to inspect the Reports, Regulations, &c. of other similar Charities, and to prepare from thence such information as seemed necessary to lay before the ensuing General Board.

The chief subject of deliberation at the General Meeting, which was held on Wednesday, the 17th of July, 1745, was the selection of some suitable building, or site, for the Institution, and a house called Broom Hall which occupied the spot on which the present Infirmary stands was the first which was suggested for that purpose. This structure was both spacious and handsome, and in point of situation possessed peculiar advantages. It had been built by the late Corbet Kynaston, Esq., and was designed for the mansion of a gentleman of fortune, but it had never been tenanted, and was in fact in an unfinished state. Proposals were accordingly made through Sir Rowland Hill, Bart. and Adam Ottley, Esq. to John Corbet, Esq., the Devisee of the late Mr. Kynaston's Real Estates, but the terms were not acceded to.

About the same time, however, the Mayor (Mr. Jenks) and Aldermen of the town very generously offered a portion of the Quarry, as the site of a *new building*, and at the General Meeting, held in August following, this proposal had the advantage of being recommended by the Committee appointed to examine and report upon the most suitable situation, through Sir Richard Corbett, Bart., their Chairman. The General Meeting adopted the opinion of the Committee, and it was determined to *build* an Infirmary, as soon as the subscriptions and benefactions raised and engaged for, should amount to £1000. The terms on which the Corporation offered a portion of the Quarry were these—that it should be a grant to the Trustees of the Infirmary for a *thousand years*, reserving a ground rent of *one shilling* per annum, and a proviso that "if