

'A LABOUR OF LOVE'

First World War hospitals in East Dorset

By Janette Marsh



- ❖ Red Cross Society formed in 1905 'to furnish aid to soldiers and sailors in time of war abroad and in event of invasion'. They called upon all that have the welfare of their country and its defenders at heart, to give help in money or personal service or both.
- ❖ Membership fees: Member £1-1s per annum; Associate 5s per annum; Adherent 2s 6d or 1s.
- ❖ Personal Service: Join a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment). VADs were a body of men and women who would be asked to take charge of the sick and wounded in a District.
- ❖ Dorset Red Cross Society started 1910. Divided into 12 Divisions which corresponded to the Poor Law Unions. August 1914 preparing to receive and care for the wounded and sick brought back from the front. An urgent request was made to the public for single bedsteads, bedding, old linen, various garments, and other necessities. By 2nd September 1914, 1200 beds were ready in Dorset.

PRE WAR TRAINING

- ❖ In May 1914 the Wimborne Division of the Red Cross provided a field hospital for the training camp of the Hants and Dorset Yeomanry at Wimborne St Giles House.
- ❖ Five of the local VAD detachments attended.



Photo by Pottle, Wimborne]

Wards.

Stores. Mess Tent.

Sleeping Tents.

The Red Cross Field Hospital.



Dorset/6

Dorset/12 Sister in charge. Dorset/48
Commandant in charge, Lieut. Marshall, M.O.

Dorset/52

WIMBORNE GROUP OF HOSPITALS (RED CROSS)

Beaucroft Hospital, Colehill

Newton Hospital, Sturminster Marshall

The Hut Ferndown

South Lytchett Manor

St Giles House

Fifehead Magdalen

OTHER HOSPITALS

The Infirmary

Wimborne Cottage Hospital



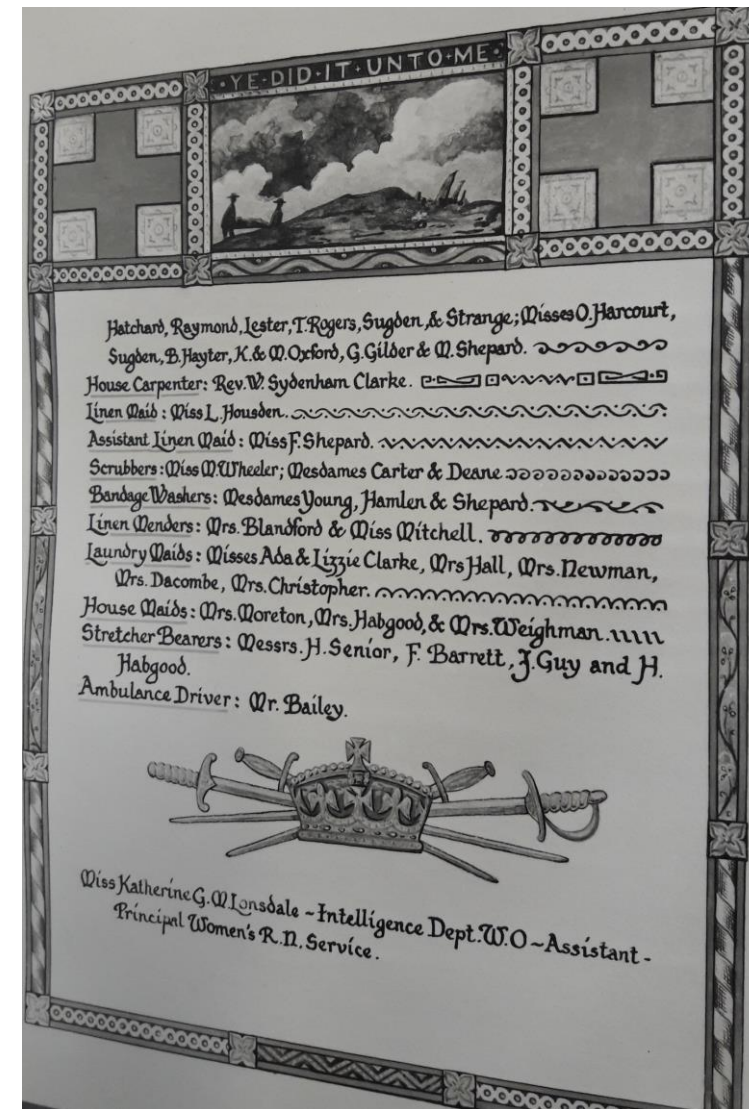
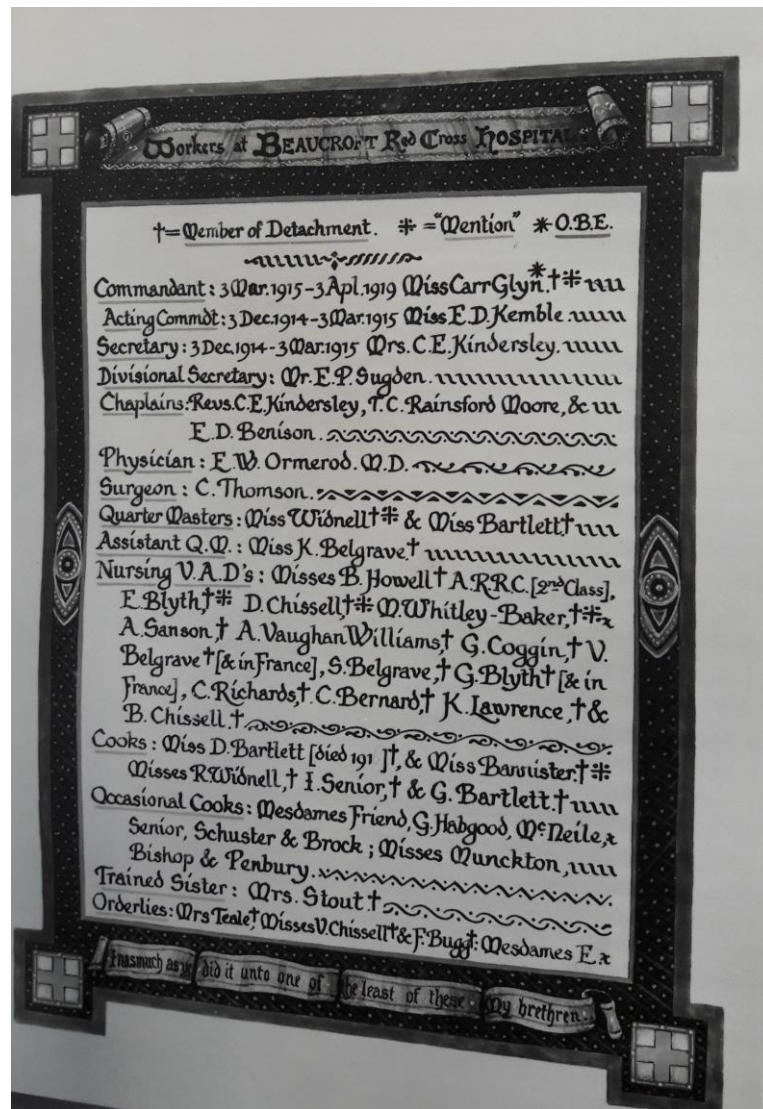
BEAUCROFT HOUSE, COLEHILL

BEAUCROFT HOSPITAL

- ❖ Opened 3 December 1914, Miss E D Kemble, Commandant
- ❖ 6 April 1915 closed as the base hospital for 52nd Brigade
- ❖ 30 April 1915 reopened to receive 26 wounded soldiers
- ❖ Spring 1915 Miss Carr Glyn, Commandant until the hospital closed
- ❖ August 1916 temporary marquee erected and in 1917 a permanent marquee was erected
- ❖ 8 March 1919 hospital closed
- ❖ 21 March 1919 instructions given to auction contents of house
- ❖ Treated 1244 patients
- ❖ Maximum beds - 56
- ❖ 6 deaths



Olive and Florence Harcourt



List of workers at Beaucroft Red Cross Hospital



NEWTON HOSPITAL, STURMINSTER MARSHALL

NEWTON HOSPITAL, STURMINSTER MARSHALL

- ❖ Promises had been made for equipment in 1912 so relatively easy to get ready in 1914
- ❖ 2 December 1914 first cases arrive from Southampton (15 beds), Violet Cross, Commandant
- ❖ 30 March 1917 beds increased by 10
- ❖ Summer 1917 fire swept through marquee in garden
- ❖ 22 June 1917 hospital closed for 6 weeks as Commandant and most of the Detachment had volunteered for foreign service
- ❖ 3 August 1917 hospital re-opened
- ❖ 31 December 1918 hospital closed
- ❖ Patients treated - 627
- ❖ Maximum beds - 40
- ❖ Deaths - 3



Back row l-r: Elsie Shepherd, Molly & Nancy Wavell, Rosamond Cross, Phyllis Blandford, unidentified
Front row l-r: Violet Cross (Commandant), Dr Rattenbury, Martha Kent (Matron), Ellen Cross





SOUTH LYTCHETT MANOR

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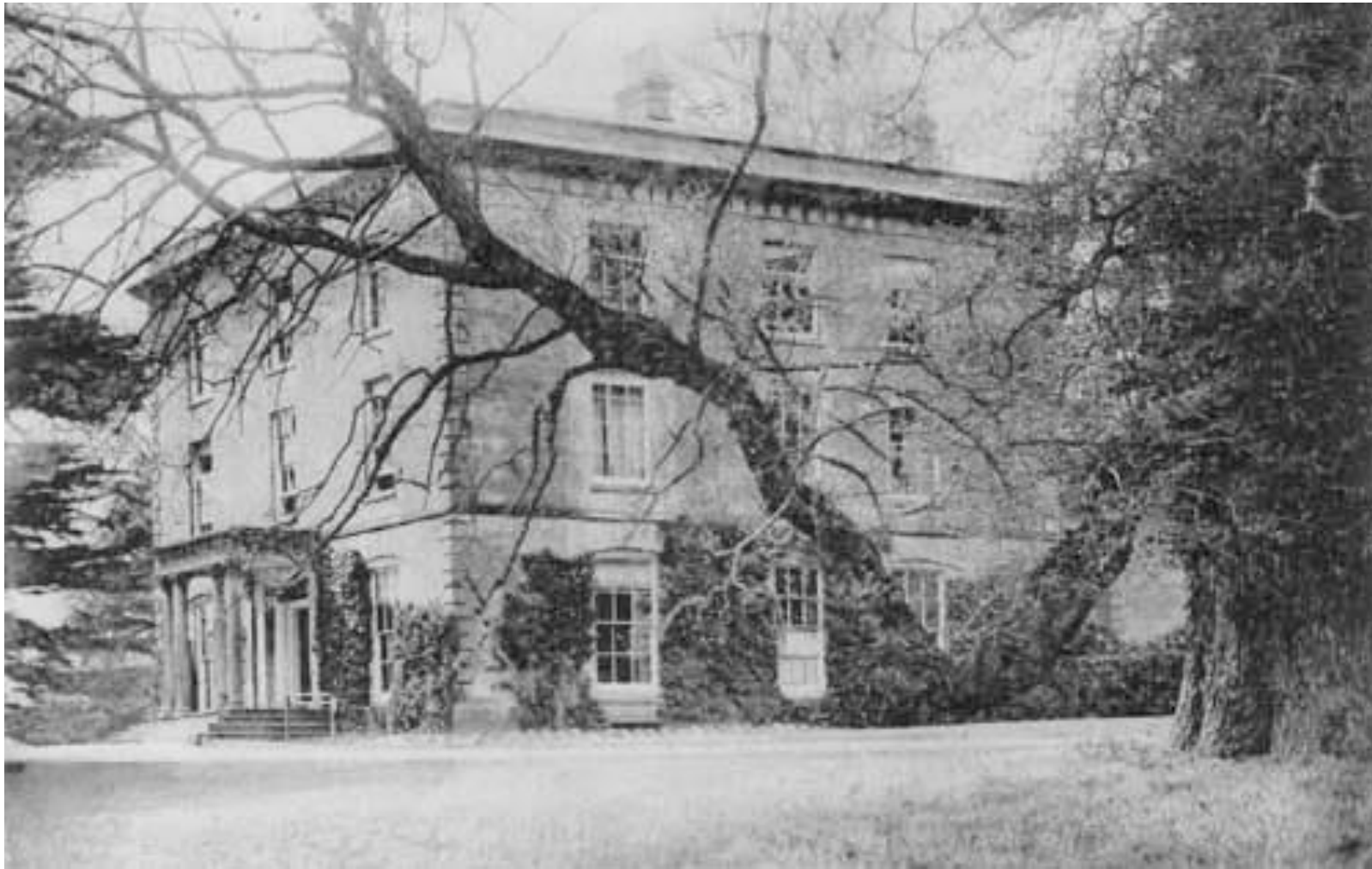
- ❖ 2 November 1914 hospital started work (32 beds)
- ❖ 7 August 1915 hospital closed
- ❖ 136 men treated (121 recovered and returned to the front 15 sent to other hospitals for further treatment)
- ❖ No deaths



WIMBORNE ST GILES HOUSE

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- ❖ May 1914 training camp for the Dorset and Hants Yeomanry held at St Giles House; a field hospital was provided by Wimborne Division Red Cross
- ❖ 11 January 1915 first patients received (20 beds in 3 wards, which is increased to 30 in May)
- ❖ 27 July 1915 hospital closed
- ❖ 72 patients treated



FIFEHEAD MAGDALEN HOUSE

FIFEHEAD MAGDALEN

- ❖ 6 March 1916 hospital opened - the house had been fitted out by Mrs Percy Browne as an 8 bed hospital
- ❖ 18 December 1916 hospital closed
- ❖ 37 patients treated



THE INFIRMARY, WIMBORNE

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- ❖ 1915 The Infirmary was taking patients from the Victoria Cottage Hospital
- ❖ February 1916 appeal for funds to equip a military hospital for wounded soldiers
- ❖ April 1916 hospital opened with 50 beds, Mrs Sturt, Commandant
- ❖ 1917 two outdoor shelters erected (capacity 62 patients)
- ❖ January 1918 capacity increased by further 4 beds
- ❖ 31 January 1919 hospital closed
- ❖ February 1919 all contents of the hospital offered for sale at auction



VICTORIA COTTAGE HOSPITAL, WIMBORNE

VICTORIA COTTAGE HOSPITAL

- ❖ 17 June 1915 hospital opened for the treatment of soldiers needing operations; the hospital boardroom was fitted out as a ward
- ❖ 12 July 1915 wounded soldiers treated (civilian patients sent to the Infirmary)
- ❖ October 1915 beds for wounded soldiers reduced to 3 to make room for civilian patients
- ❖ 7 December 1918 hospital closed as a military hospital
- ❖ Treated 55 patients
- ❖ 1 death

THE HUT, FERNDOWN

- ❖ Circa 2 December 1914 opened as a dressing station for the Manchester Regiment
- ❖ 18 December 1914 opened as a hospital for Manchester Regiment senior officers
- ❖ 1 March 1915 hospital closed when Manchester Regiment returned to Bovington en route to the Middle East
- ❖ 24 beds

STRETCHER BEARERS

- ❖ A detachment of stretcher bearers was formed in Wimborne in Autumn 1914; they had weekly drills
- ❖ They were carrying out their normal jobs as well as stretcher duties, e.g veterinary surgeon, police sergeant, gardeners, baker, butcher
- ❖ Often on duty at night and spent much of their time waiting as information on convoys was difficult to obtain
- ❖ Casualties for South Lytchett Manor, St Giles House, Newton Hospital, Beaucroft, Fifehead Magdalen and Victoria Hospital all detrained at Wimborne
- ❖ Total of 52 convoys with 2440 casualties



Stretcher bearers at Newton Hospital, Sturminster Marshall

AMBULANCES

- ❖ An ambulance was purchased by subscriptions collected in Wimborne
- ❖ Dorset Automobile Club provided an ambulance
- ❖ Blandford Camp also provided ambulance assistance
- ❖ A fleet of 53 cars were lent by residents to help convey patients from the station
- ❖ The ambulances attached to Wimborne Division were looked after by Messrs Lester, Beckford and Sibley; a Mr Bailey looked after the ambulance at Beaucroft