

From
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“MILTON HILL SECTION HOSPITAL

For the first time since its opening on August 27 1914, Milton Hospital is to be closed for substantial repairs. If, after they are completed, there is a military necessity for the continuance of the work, it will be carried on as usual; if not, Mr. And Mrs. Singer hope to inhabit it, which they have never been able to do. Three records may be claimed for Milton Hill Hospital; (1) That it was the first private hospital for N.C.O.'s and men opened for a hundred patients; (2) that Milton Hill Hospital has always been the largest private hospital in existence in this war, having 220 beds; (3) that until the influenza epidemic, over 4,300 patients had been treated with only one death. Milton Hill has not been an ordinary auxiliary hospital or convalescent home, but has been practically a primary hospital, where over 220 major operations under anaesthesia have been performed, besides a great many minor ones, all by Dr. William Turner, M.V.O., our resident P.M.O. The hospital has all along been staffed by two residential medical officers, a staff of from ten to fourteen fully-trained nurses, and a full compliment of orderlies, chefs, kitchen woman, etc., making forty staff in all. The total number of patients admitted has been 4,560. The amount of money expended on the hospital, including installation and equipment and the now necessary renovation, will be, roughly, £80,000. The work which Mr. And Mrs. Singer practically inaugurated and have since been instrumental in carrying out will rank among the chief of the many generous and patriotic actions to which the necessities of the war have given an incentive. After acquiring the Milton Hill property Mr. Singer set about building the present mansion and laying out the estate, giving special attention to the breeding of bloodstock for racing. But before Mr. And Mrs. Singer were able to move into their beautiful home the war broke out, and they handed over the house for the requirements of a military hospital, at the same time taking up their abode in a small house close by on Steventon Hill. It was developed into the largest private hospital for N.C.O.'s and men in England or France, and the expense has been shared by Mr. Mortimer Singer and his brother, Mr. Washington Singer. The following chronological notes on this important Hospital will be of general interest.

1914

- Aug. 6.- (Two days after war was declared) Mr. Mortimer Singer, on the introduction of Sir David Ferrier, called upon Sir Frederick Treves and took his advice that a hospital for “Tommys” would be of more use than one for officers, and that day commenced the equipment and conversion of his newly completed residence at Milton Hill into a hospital.
- Aug. 10. – Sir Cooper Perry, Superintendent of Guy’s Hospital, inspected Milton Hill as to its adaptability for a hospital, and reported on it in terms of very high praise.
- Aug. 11. – Mr. Singer immediately planned and undertook the conversion of his residence into a hospital, with expert advice in every department of ventilation, lighting, heating, sanitation, and hospital construction, and with his clerk of works, Mr. F. Walden, carried this out without an architect.
- Aug. 12. – Formally enrolled under the auspices of B.R.C.S.
- Aug 22. – Crew of Mr. Singer’s yacht Modwena arrived to staff the hospital as orderlies.
- Aug 27. – (Three weeks after commencement of installation) Hospital completed, staffed, and in entire readiness for the reception of 100 patients.
- Sept. 7. - Accommodation formally accepted by the War Office.
- Sept. 28. – First patients received, by which date accommodation had been increase to 162 beds.
- Oct. 13. – Mr. Washington Singer, on his release from Carlsbad, arranged to share equally with his brother, Mr. Mortimer Singer, the cost of equipment and the expenses of running Milton Hill Hospital.

1915

- July 29. – Gen. Sir William Pitcairn Campbell, the C.O. OF THE southern Command, paid a visit of inspection, and was so satisfied with the hospital that he presented Mrs. Mortimer Singer, as Matron-

in-Chief and Lady Superintendent, with the badges of a Lieutenant Colonel, to wear upon the shoulder-straps of her uniform.

1916

Feb., end. – Lt. Col. George Ranking, Administrator of the Base Hospital at Oxford, requested Mr. Mortimer Singer to increase the then accommodation of 162 beds to 200, and by means of additional adaption and building the accommodation was increased to 220 beds.

1917

Sept. 28. – On this date, the third anniversary of the reception of the first patients, the 3,000th patient was booked for admittance.

From the arrival of the first patients on Sept. 28, 1914 to Jan. 28 1919: Number of patients received, 4,560; number of patients treated at one time, 213; number of operations performed (all successfully), 220; number of deaths, 5.

This record has been achieved by Dr. William Turner, M.V.O., of Gibraltar, who has been Medical Officer-in-Charge of the hospital since August, 1914, with the assistance of two other medical officers and a highly-skilled and splendidly-organised staff.

Accommodation comprises in summer 220 beds, in winter 204 beds, divided between the main building and riding school block, isolation hospital, operating theatre, X Ray room, sterilising room, dining and recreation and smoking rooms, 18 baths, 34 w.c.'s, 73 fitted lavatory basins, own electricity supply, water supply, station, and own drainage, private automatic telephone to all departments, trained fire brigade, herd of cows that have passed tuberculosis test.

Staff consists of two resident medical officers, one visiting resident masseur, chaplain, and 35 fully-trained nurses, orderlies, etc.; entire staff is paid.

Among those who have personally visited the work are Field-Marshal Lord Grenfell, Sir Rowland Bailey, Sir William Osler, Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane, Sir David Ferrier, Vice-Admiral H. L. Fleet, Lt.-Col. A. W. Mayo-Robson, Col. R. J. Geddes: Gen. Sir William Pitcairn Campbell, then C.O. of the Southern Command; Gen. Sir Henry C. Sclater, now C.O. of the Southern Command; Lt. –Col. George Ranking, Administrator of the 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford; also the Hon. Sir Arthur Stanley, G.B.E., M.V.O., C.B. M.P., Chairman of the British Red Cross Society; and Sir Robert Fox-Symons, K.B.E., in charge of the records of the Auxiliary Hospitals, B.R.C.S.

The duties of the matron-in-chief and lady superintendent are undertaken by Mrs. Mortimer Singer, whose 15 years professional experience of nursing, electrical and massage work is of the greatest practical use in her hospital work, to which she devotes her entire time and interest, taking complete control of the catering management of domestic staff, etc., and giving personal assistance in the nursing of the patients. Mrs. Mortimer Singer also for the first eight months undertook the whole of the massage and electrical treatment, in which she has afterwards assisted Mr. Wyndham Evans, the resident masseur.

The administrator of the hospital is Mr. Mortimer Singer, who, with the exception of recruiting work, has, since the commencement of its equipment, devoted practically his entire time and energies to the organisation, improvement and running of this hospital.”

Acronyms

N.C.O.	Non commissioned Officer
M.V.O.	Member of the Victorian Order
P.M.O.	Principal Medical Officer
B.R.C.S.	British Red Cross Society
G.B.E.	Grand Cross of the British Empire
C.B.	Chief Baron or Companion Commander of Bath
K.B.E.	Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire
B.R.C.S.	British Red Cross Society