

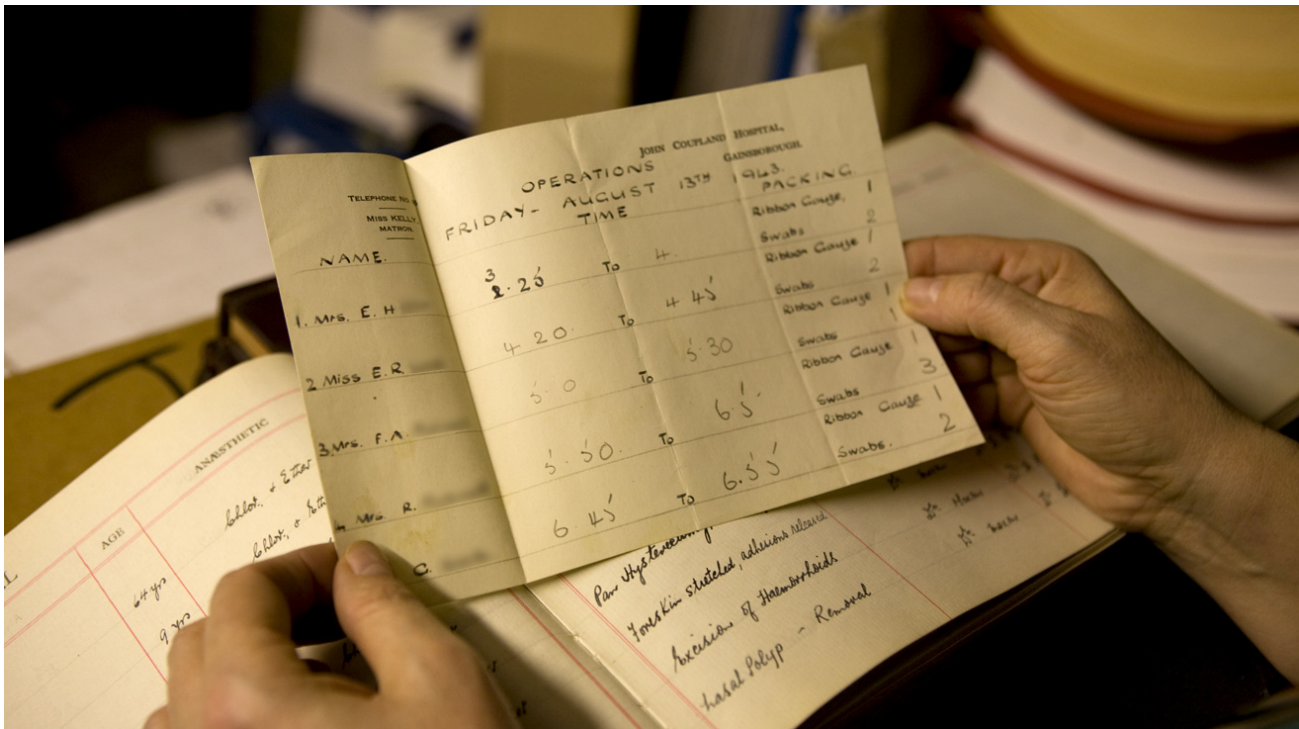


BACKGROUND

The Couplands, a local family of prosperous farmers left a complicated will stating that if the widow of the remaining son were to re-marry then a large amount of money from her deceased husbands estate would be used to build a new hospital in Gainsborough, to be called The John Coupland Hospital. The cottage hospital was opened in 1913 with a formal presentation attended by thousands of people. It was built as a magnificent piece of Georgian style architecture, with interior walls beautifully panelled in polished oak.



The original grand oak staircase that now leads to the administration part of the hospital



FINDING THE MATERIAL

In June 2009 we were contacted by Matron Jill Anderson at the John Coupland Hospital in Gainsborough, requesting details on the heritage displays we create specifically for hospitals. Having provided Jill with case studies and planning guidelines we heard nothing more until the following January. In the meantime Jill had set up a history group made up of past and present staff and other interested parties. They researched the history and with the help of the Gainsborough District and Heritage Association, and the local library and newspapers, obtained news cuttings and photos covering the opening and development of the hospital.

We were then invited to review the information, and following this put a detailed proposal together. It was decided to create two distinctly different heritage displays. The first, to portray the history from the planning and official opening of the hospital in the early 1900's to the birth of the NHS in 1948. The second display will follow work being undertaken to develop the site, and will bring the story right up to date.

Once the mural's overall design was approved, a meeting was arranged in the main boardroom at the John Coupland Hospital. Here we set up our portable photography studio to photograph and scan all the information that had been collected. This ranged from beautifully scripted handwritten pages from Annual Meetings books; to original photographs taken temporarily from walls around the hospital; to old-fashioned medical instruments, and the original ceremonial stone masons hammer and trowel.

THE NEXT STAGE

Jill, with the aid of the history group, supplied us with a timeline suggesting possible images and reference information. Along with the wide range of artefacts gathered this was all we needed to take over the job of writing up the history of the hospital. Eventually after careful checking by staff at the hospital, we finalised the design and incorporated the text into the high resolution artwork.



Matron Jill Anderson researching information in the hospital archives



INSTALLING THE MURAL

The mural was created in three sections with a solid oak frame. The impressive hospital entrance features centrally, given a reflective finish, cut to shape and over-mounted so that it extends in front of the left and right sections and above the hand made oak frame. Selected images were also given this treatment to contrast with the matt finish of the main panels and add to the visual impact of mural as a whole. After the mural was installed it was wrapped in brown paper with a red bow ready for the official unveiling.

GRAND OPEN DAY

The next day was the annual John Coupland Hospital Open Day. It turned out to be beautiful hot sunny weather, with stalls selling items or giving information, gathered together on the large lawn at the front of the hospital's entrance. People were given guided tours around special areas of the hospital before gathering in the main corridor. After short speeches from Matron Jill Anderson, the two specially invited guests, Bob Rainsford and Ian Loxley, cut the ribbon and tore off the brown paper to unveil the mural.





FEEDBACK

John Coupland is a community hospital with a strong sense of ownership by both staff, patients and the local community. Our project, influenced by the King's Fund, Enhancing the Healing Environment, has allowed us to record and preserve the history of the hospital's origins, its staff, and how it has developed over the years and share this with others.

It is a tribute to the enthusiasm and commitment of the small team and the hard work of Karen and Tony (Woodgate Design) in supporting us and undertaking much of the background work. It was also fantastic to be able to involve members of the community, who shared their photos with us and allowed us to feature their relatives and record their histories as part of the display.

There is a great sense of achievement and the positive effect of the mural in an otherwise drab corridor is demonstrated daily by the number of people I pass, standing, looking and reading.

Jill Anderson
Matron, John Coupland Hospital

