

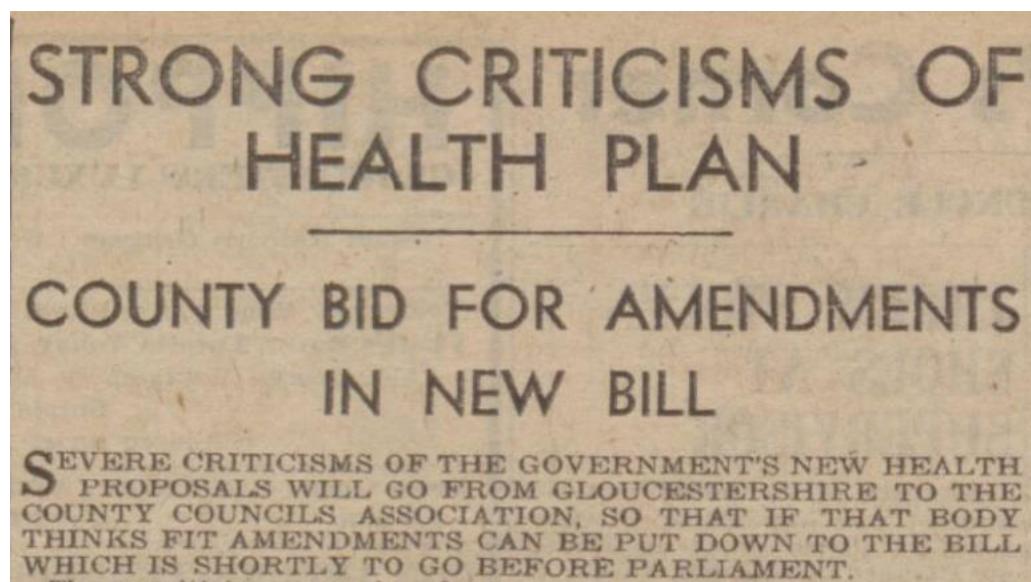
NHS – in the beginning

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As with all major change, there were serious concerns about the proposed National Health Service in the 1940s prior to its establishment in July 1947.

A) The following are extracts from the Gloucester Journal:



These criticisms are based on a report made to the County Health Committee by the County Medical Officer of Health (Dr. H. K. Cowan), who amplified his comments in a statement to Wednesday's meeting of the County Council.

They were confined to the administration of the new plan, one of the main proposals of which is to set up joint health authorities to plan the health services for a wide area, which would also have executive functions for the necessary administrative work.

"In actual fact," said Dr. Cowan, "if these proposals go through this local authority will have no say whatever in the administration of its hospitals. That will all be done by a joint authority, which will take away from this authority its own hospitals and run them."

"Unsound"

"The Cheltenham Emergency Hospital, the medical side of the Public Assistance Institutions, and the City General Hospital in Gloucester will all be owned by the Joint Health Authority. All that will be left to this Council to administer will be the out-patients services and maternity and child welfare.

"I can imagine no proposals calculated to create a greater cleavage," he said. "So far from simplifying administration it will make it more difficult than ever."

"I as County Medical Officer of Health will deal with the day-to-day work of the out-patient services. Over the road in another office will probably be the Joint Authority Medical Officer's assistant dealing with the hospitals, and the district councils will be left with the work of dealing with smells and nuisances."

The Health Committee, he added, thought such arrangements were unsound and were anxious that strong representations about the unsound division of authority should be made to the County Councils' Association.

Power "Stripped Away"

They had taken this view particularly in view of the fact that the new plan was to cost £10,000,000 a year, while the Health Services at present cost the country only £55,000,000, and even then the Joint Health Authorities would be only temporary pending the re-organisation of local government.

The point was whether the Council agreed that all the important public health power should be stripped away from the County and County Borough Councils leaving them with the residue of the district councils with a few odds and ends. The County Councils Association's immediate reaction had been that if the Government said so it had better be tried.

Dr. Cowan also pointed out that the Joint Health Authority would have power to precept on the County and the County Council would not be able to see that the money was spent wisely.

Lord Bledisloe who remarked that practically no mention was made on the County Council's reactions in the House of Lords debates, hoped that Members of the House of Commons would be properly briefed with the County Councils' views when the Bill came forward.

The Council agreed that the County Councils Association should be told that it was imperative that the executive and administrative work should remain the function of the major local authorities.

Duplication

Other comments agreed to were that it was not in the public interest that a centralised authority not directly representative should attempt to carry out detailed work over a wide area, nor that planning, administrative and executive powers should be vested in one central authority for so wide an area, as a temporary expedient pending the reorganisation of local government. The Joint Authority would be compelled to set up local units parallel with and duplicating the existing machinery of the major local authorities.

If the Joint Authority was responsible for hospitals and the

local authorities responsible for out-patient services there would inevitably result an undesirable cleavage between the two services.

Finally the Council agreed that it was desirable that all ministerial functions for public health should be allocated to a single department and not spread over such departments as the Ministry of Pensions and the Home Office.

Lord Bledisloe raised during the debate the subject of voluntary hospitals and their workpeople's contributory schemes. In certain cases he pointed out the bulk of the financial support of voluntary hospitals came from contributory schemes. According to the County Medical Officer of Health there seemed to be a probability that under the National Health plan all the contributory groups would be disbanded. If their contributions were not forthcoming and if the local hospital was not recognised by the State it might cease to exist.

If the financial support of the voluntary hospitals came from the rates and taxes a large amount of the workpeople's interest and enthusiasm and desire to contribute to what was in most cases their most important local charity would disappear.

Free Service

Sir Frederick Cripps (Chairman) said the trouble was that the Government said they would provide a free medical service and no-one would subscribe for what they were going to get free. That was what would stop the contributory schemes.

Ald. Alpass pointed out that provision had been made in the White Paper for the voluntary hospitals to come into the national scheme and they would receive grants from the Exchequer.

While people might not contribute through schemes, they would contribute through rates, taxes and insurance stamps. He welcomed the removal of the maintainence of hospitals out of the realm of flag days and charity, and making it a real national duty.

B) Impending NHS

Unless otherwise stated information is from: Weekly Board meetings held at Gloucestershire Royal Infirmary: Reference number HO19/1/34

Gloucestershire Echo 25.02.1944, Gloucester Journal 26.02.1944

It was reported that at the annual meeting of the Workpeople's Hospital Committee of the GRI, Dr Kenneth Cowan, the Medical Officer of Health for Gloucestershire, discussed plans for the reorganisation of hospitals. This had been discussed at a conference which had formed itself into the County and City Joint Consultative Hospitals Committee. He stated that it was planned that there should be a hospital centre conveniently situated for Gloucester, Cheltenham, Stroud and the Forest of Dean, with a new Central Hospital to be built. At this centre every facility would be available to patients from every part of the county. This would enable complete coordination of all the hospital services in the area and that full time paid consultants should be available who could specialise in one subject. He stated the plan would soon be in the hands of the Minister of Health.

31.08.1944

First copies of the memorandum on the NHS published by the British Hospitals Association are made available to board members.

14.03.1946

Memorandum from the British Hospitals Association on the proposed NHS. Hospitals advised not to take individual or collective action until a further communication has been received from the British Hospitals Association.

Gloucester Citizen 1947

Dr Arnold Alcock, former senior surgeon and chairman of the medical board at GRI addressed the annual meeting of the Workpeople's Hospital Committee of the Infirmary. He stated that the coming National Health Service Bill would result in progress and that it was not 'revolution but evolution'. Everyone would be given every attention from conception to the grave and in his opinion, this would be the only way to tackle disease and after that prevent disease, as cost would not be a factor. Dr Alcock believed that the future of hospital work lay in everyone working together but also retaining individuality.

25.03.1948

Minutes of the Quarterly and Annual General Meeting of Governors.

Mr Washbourn was elected vice-president of the Institution.

It was reported that 2000 copies of the memorandum by the British Hospitals Association entitled 'Personal support for Hospitals under the NHS' had been ordered and would be sent out with the annual report.

01.04.1948

Report of weekly board meeting: the British Hospitals Association scale of salaries compared favourably with the Local Authority rates for admin staff. The Ministry of

Health would be setting up a Whitley Council which may result in new scales of pay coming into force before 5th July.

15.04.1948

Minutes of the weekly board meeting: the Chairman read a letter from the secretary of the South West Regional Hospital Board inviting the governing body to nominate members or other persons associated with the work of the hospital, who are willing to serve, if appointed on the Hospital Management Committee.

The Rushcliffe recommendations for nurses' sick pay were accepted in full – 3 months full pay and 3 months half pay.

Other hospitals have accepted recommendations of the Joint Negotiating Committee on the salaries of lab technicians and the board agreed to do likewise.

24.06.1948

Minutes of the last Quarterly Meeting of Governors under the present constitution held at the Royal Infirmary.

Chairman: Admiral Sir Richard Bevan

Gloucester Hospitals Welfare Fund would be set up to help provide comfort and amenities for patients and staff that the State would not be able to provide.

It was suggested that the History of the Infirmary should be brought up to date and published. Mr W Washbourn was appointed chairman of this Special committee. A History of the Workpeople's Contributory Scheme was now being compiled and this should be incorporated into the History of the Infirmary. £300 should be earmarked for printing costs. Any proceeds from the books should be paid into the GHWF.

Chairman read a letter from the South Western Regional Hospital Board which stated:

'In accordance with the provisions of the NHS Act 1946, the GRI and Eye Institution will pass on July 5th, to the South Western Regional Hospital Board, as agents of the Minister of Health.

A Management Committee has been appointed, who will be responsible for the continuance of the work which has been so well done for so many years by your governing body.

We realise that under the new conditions the Infirmary must inevitably lose the services of many whose devoted work has greatly contributed to the success of the Infirmary and the welfare of the patients.

I shall be obliged if you will convey to all of them the grateful thanks of the Regional Board and at the same time express the hope that many opportunities will still occur for continued interest in and service to the Infirmary.

We are most anxious that the traditions associated with this Infirmary should be fully maintained.'

Colonel H A Guy would become the Chairman of the New Management Committee under the NHS Act.

Citizen, 24.08.1948

Workpeople's Hospital Contributory Scheme ceased on 5 July 1948.

Citizen, 17.09.1948 and 28.09.1948

Posts advertised in 'new NHS' at GRI, Cheltenham General Eye and Children's Hospital, Salterley Grange Sanatorium, St Paul's Hospital, Sunnyside Maternity Hospital and Delancey Hospital.

Citizen, 08.10.1948

Winding up party for helpers of GRI Workpeople's Hospital Committee. Recently inaugurated Gloucester and District Hospitals Welfare Fund (GDHWF) was now in need of volunteers. Chairman of GDHWF was Dr A Alcock and the fund was to provide amenities for patients, staff and domestic staff.

Col. Arthur Guy was Chairman of Gloucester Hospitals Management Committee (GHMC); the hope was to centralise Gloucester hospitals as one hospital service and 'do away with the parochialism' which might surround GRI, or City General Hospital, or Over Hospital.

Citizen, 02.11.1948

Gloucester District Hospitals Welfare Fund, whose chairman was Dr Alcock, is to make clear its position. Its purpose is to benefit parents and staff and not to be insurance for contributors.

05.11.1948 Recently inaugurated GDHWF call for contributors.

Citizen, 20.08.1948

Advertisement for post of supplies officer – to arrange acquisition, maintenance and distribution of equipment and supplies and to assist with the administration of hospitals. Salary £740.00. Gloucester Stroud and Forest management committee.

British Medical Journal, 01.01.1949

Advertisement for House Physician at GRI; salary £200 'with full residential emoluments' Also for Gloucester City General Hospital, a House Surgeon, salary £250

Citizen 21.04.1949

At a public meeting the Gloucester Stroud and Forest Management Committee (chairman Col Arthur Guy) announced that £300,000 had been spent in the first nine months of the NHS.

There had been a higher level of spending than pre-NHS due to several factors; increased range and use of services, increased wage and salary levels and increased cost of medical equipment.

The minister has announced a cut in expenditure to 12 hospitals under their care since the new regime. This had been a period of disappointment mixed with much solid achievement and encouraging progress.

It was explained that administratively they have a free hand albeit subject to financial control. Unfortunately, they had been unable to assess the load that would be placed upon them.

The merger of GRI and the City General Hospital had helped to eliminate duplication resulting in one matron and two training schools had been merged into one.

Various requests had been put to the minister; a new nurses' home with accommodation for 200 nurses, improvement and rebuilding of kitchens and dining rooms at the City General. Enlargement of the pathology unit and a new children's ward unit.

However, the administration required for this amounted to hundreds of letters to the Minister of Health and the Regional Hospital Board. They were facing a plethora of regulations and more staff were needed. In the past much of the work was done voluntarily and by staff of local authorities.

The number of outpatients had increased by 22%. 400 patients were waiting for hearing aids; these had not yet been supplied. This generated more administration in terms of form filling in triplicate and making appointments.

C. St Paul's Hospital House Committee Minutes (reference number HO8/3/1)

Minutes of the meeting of the House Committee of the Cheltenham Public Assistance Institution

9th July 1948

PRESENT: Mr G. G. Gilmour White in the chair

Mrs E Atherton
Councillor A.J Bettridge
Councillor H.T. Bush
Miss F. L. Carter
Councillor Green
Mr G. Hughes
Dr T.B.H. Haslett
Dr J.R. Miles
Mr E. D. Watterson

The Chairman in opening the meeting welcomed those present and thanked them for their willingness to serve on the House Committee and briefly outlined the part which he hoped the Cheltenham Public Assistance Institution would play in the new National Health Service.

Name of the Institution: The Chairman stated that he was most anxious at an early stage to break down the idea that anyone entering the County Institution was being

admitted to the workhouse and suggested that both the title of the Institution be altered and also that of the Master.

Minutes of the meeting of the House Committee of the Cheltenham Public Assistance Institution

29th July 1948

Name of the Institution Resolved:-That the Group Management Committee be recommended to re-name the Institution "The St Paul's Hospital"

Title of Master: Resolved:- That the question of altering the title of the Master be deferred pending unified action on a National scale.

Maternity Accommodation: The Secretary reported that a Joint Committee had been set up to control the Sunnyside and Victoria Maternity Homes, and it had been suggested that the Maternity beds in the Institution should be included in order to have unified Maternity arrangements in the Group.

JP, Deceased. The circumstances leading to the death of this patient were reported, and the verdict of the Coroner that death was due to natural causes was noted.

Visiting Committee. Resolved:-

- (a) That a rota of visitors be prepared for two members to visit the Institution each month.
- (b) That Councillor H .T. Bush and Miss V Tinson be appointed to visit during August.

Report of The Master:

- (a) Application for increase in wages. Resolved:- That the applications by Miss L, Assistant Laundry Superintendent, and Mr WD, Laundry worker, be referred to the Group Establishment Committee.
- (d) Resolved:- That the question of whether or not pigs should continue to be kept at the Institution be deferred to the next meeting, and the master be instructed to submit a report as to the approximate cost.
- (e) Old Age Pensioners. The Master reported that a good many of the patients had requested him to act as agent for the purpose of collecting their Old Age Pensions, and whilst he was pleased to do this work for the benefit of the patients, it took up a good deal of his time. It was Resolved:- That the matter be referred to the Group Management Committee with a suggestion that this work might well be undertaken on a voluntary basis.

Minutes of meeting of the House Committee of the St Paul's Hospital.

13th September 1948

Increases in wages – Miss L, Assistant Laundry Superintendent. An increase of seven shillings per week authorised.

Mr WD, Laundry Worker. In the absence of sufficient evidence to warrant claim, that increase not be granted.

Transferred Employees. The Secretary reported that subject to the approval of the Committee he had agreed with the County Welfare Officer that the under-mentioned staff employed to look after the welfare of the non-sick be classified as servants of the County Council and that the remainder be classified as officers and servants of the Regional Hospital Board.

Engineer (part time), Seamstress, Bootmaker, Tailor, Female Attendants 3, Cleaners employed in the residential portion of the Hospital and the whole of the Nursery Staff.

Old Age Pensioners. It was resolved: That approval be given to members of the Rotary Club being asked to act as agents to collect old-age pensions of the patients in the hospital wards.

Minutes of meeting of the House Committee of the St Paul's Hospital.

11th November 1948

Report of the Matron. The Matron stated that the only designation available at present for women with nursing experience with no qualifications and able to work full time, is that of Ward Orderly, with a payment of 1/6 3/4d per hour, and suggested that women with nursing experience should be graded Nursing Attendants and paid the same rate as the part-time Nursing staff, viz:- 1/9d per hour. The members being in full agreement with the Matron's suggestion it was Resolved: That it be referred to the Group Management Committee for approval.

Report of the Master. That approval be given to the substitution of "St Paul's Hospital" in place of "1, The Elms, Swindon Road", for the registration of births and deaths.

Minutes of meeting of the House Committee of the St Paul's Hospital.

13th January 1949

Bakery. A report submitted by the Secretary, Finance Officer and Superintendent regarding the cost of running the bakery was considered. Resolved: That the Chairman and the Secretary investigate the matter further and report at the next meeting.

Report of the Matron. The Matron stated that the staff situation had become very difficult and recommended that the question of employment of male orderlies be considered. She also reported that the midwifery situation was somewhat critical owing to the lack of midwives. The Committee recommend:-

- (a) That the Secretary advertise for further ward orderlies in order to relieve the nursing situation.
- (b) That in view of the waiting list of patients needing treatment at the Hospitals in the Group and the lack of trained midwives that the present maternity ward revert to its previous use, i.e. the treatment of chronic patients.

Minutes of meeting of the House Committee of the St Paul's Hospital.

14th April 1949

S.P. 3 (a) Report of the Matron. Arising from the report there was discussion upon the acute shortage of staff following which was agreed that the Management Committee be asked to consider whether Nurses could be loaned to the Hospital from other Hospitals in the Group to help at holiday times, and it was also agreed that the St John Ambulance and British Red Cross Nurses be approached with a view to possible assistance.

Male Nurses' Salaries. After discussion it was agreed to recommend that Male Enrolled Assistant Nurses be paid at the maximum of the Rushcliffe Scale, i.e. £5:12:00 per week in view of the high rate of pay for Nursing Orderlies.

Minutes of the Meeting of the St Paul's Hospital Committee

14th July 1949

S.P. 32 (b) Families in Part III accommodation. The Committee again discussed the question regarding the families in Part III accommodation, and strongly Recommend that representation be made to the Regional Hospital Board regarding the dirty condition of these families and the lack of care and attention shown by their mothers to their babies.

[Residential accommodation provided by local authorities, under the terms of Part III of the National Assistance Act 1948, for adults who, because of age, disability, illness, or any other reason, are in need of care and support.]

Minutes of the Meeting of the St Paul's Hospital Committee

11th August 1949

S.P.41 Mrs V. The secretary reported the receipt of the resignation of Mrs V and stated that he proposed in her place to appoint a Junior Clerk at about the age of 20 years. This would affect a saving in administration costs. The action of the Secretary was approved.

Minutes of the Meeting of the St Paul's Hospital Committee

8th September 1949

S.P.50 Tobacco for Patients. The Secretary raised the question of the provision of tobacco to those patients who assisted the Superintendent by carrying out various work in the Institution. He added that under the regulations these persons could not be paid and suggested that the Superintendent be empowered to purchase tobacco to the value of Two Shillings and Sixpence weekly for each person rendering reasonable assistance: the distribution to be left in the Superintendent's hands.

Minutes of the Meeting of the St Paul's Hospital Committee

1st March 1951

S.P.172 Matron's Salary. The Deputy Finance Officer attended the meeting and explained that under the new Whitley Council award the Matron's net salary had been reduced through the change in the number of beds at the Hospital reckoned for salary purposes, and to the new position whereby income tax is now paid on gross salary.

He further reported that a case had been stated to the Minister of Health who had confirmed the original provisions of the Rushcliffe Scales whereby a Committee had discretion to permit a Matron with over 25 years nursing service to remain upon her former scale when a permanent reduction of bed state took place.

The Committee recommend that the Matron be paid the salary under the new scale applicable to Hospitals of 300-399 beds, being the basis which previously applied.

[Functional Whitley councils were established in the NHS in 1948 to negotiate pay.]

Minutes of the Meeting of the St Paul's Hospital Committee

7th June 1951

S.P. 196 Medical Report. Dr. T.B.H. Haslett reported upon the work which had been undertaken in the Hospital since the last meeting and stated that "c" Block had been put to use for the nursing of male tuberculosis patients as from 17th May 1951, and that the medical and nursing staff were satisfied with the arrangements.

Dr T.B.H. Haslett also reported that it has been decided not to undertake any operating sessions during the next three months in order to facilitate the arrangements for holidays and to reduce the Chronic Sick waiting list.

Minutes of the Meeting of the St Paul's Hospital Committee

2nd December 1954

S.P.485. Medical Report. Dr Haslett reported that there had been 96 admissions, 85 discharges, and 6 deaths since the last meeting, and 53 operations performed.
[since 4th November 1954]

Final meeting of the St Paul's Hospital Committee

3rd March 1955

Alderman Arthur James Bettridge chaired the meetings from November 1948 until March 1955. Appointed Patron of the St Paul's Hospital in recognition of the long years of service he has rendered to the hospital. (Minutes of the final meeting of the St Paul's House Committee. March 1955)

When Arthur James Bettridge was born on 22 November 1880, in Wellesbourne, Warwickshire, England, United Kingdom, his father, Clement John Bettridge, was 34 and his mother, Hannah Gray, was 33. He married Nora Lydia Webley on 28 December 1905, in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England, United Kingdom. They were the parents of at least 1 daughter. He lived in Wellesbourne Hastings, Warwickshire, England, United Kingdom for about 10 years and Bengeworth, Worcestershire, England, United Kingdom in 1901. He died on 31 May 1979, in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England, United Kingdom, at the age of 98.
<https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/LR8H-PWS/arthur-james-bettridge-1880-1979>

Mayor of Cheltenham 1951/52

Honorary freeman: admitted 24th October 1960

Awarded OBE

During the 1940s and early 1950s, many Cheltenham residents were born in one of Pittville's two maternity homes, Sunnyside in Pittville Circus Road and Pittville Maternity Home (later St Catherine's) in Pittville Lawn.