

Admissions to Gloucestershire Red Cross Hospitals in WW1

Background

When WW1 began various buildings throughout the county were opened as hospitals to accommodate sick and wounded soldiers. Approximately 30 Voluntary Aid Hospitals located in the county would eventually be used.

A report produced after the war by Gloucestershire Branch of the British Red Cross Society recorded that there had been 38,649 admissions to hospitals in the county between 1914-1919.

What records are there and what information will they contain?

Each hospital had an admission and discharge book to record details of every soldier. These books included their name, rank, service number, age, time served and type of illness or wound. Unfortunately, when the war ended, and the hospitals closed and most of these books were lost or destroyed.

However, using alternative sources, three databases have been compiled that contain details of over 21,500 of those 38,649 admissions. 7,200 of which have confirmed service numbers.

Details of the databases can be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/working-with-us/partnership-projects/gloucestershire-remembers-ww1/help-with-your-research-into-ww1/information-sheets-about-gloucestershire-in-ww1-compiled-by-other-researchers/>

The largest of the three databases was mainly compiled from local newspapers and includes all of the hospitals except for Leckhampton Court and Stroud. Lists of arrivals were regularly published in several newspapers that include The Gloucester Journal, The Gloucestershire Echo and The Cheltenham Chronicle.

Leckhampton Court has its own database, the details have come from a "Roll Call" list that was published in a souvenir booklet (Gloucestershire Archives ref. D8831/4/6).

The Stroud Voluntary Aid Hospital also has its own database. The admission & discharge book has survived and is in private hands, photocopies of the pages have been fully transcribed.

Several other sources have been used to compile the data, these include: small autograph albums that local nurses would bring into the hospital and encourage the wounded soldiers to write poems or draw cartoons in. Some of these albums are in private hands, others are held by Gloucestershire Archives (ref D15682/1-4), The Wilson Art Gallery Museum, Cheltenham and Winchcombe Museum.

Another notable source was The National Archives, it holds several hospital records under the reference MH 106. Brief details that have been transcribed by them are included in a notes column. Any archive catalogue references have also been included here.

Amendments and additions by the transcriber: -

Whilst compiling the data it became clear that the details published in the newspapers were not always complete or accurate. Where it has been possible to confirm an error or add information

such as service numbers and full names the details have been added or amended these databases.

Compiled by David Drinkwater between 2014-2024

Further Reading

For more information about the Red Cross VAD hospitals: <https://vad.redcross.org.uk/medical-care-during-ww1/auxiliary-hospitals-during-the-first-world-war>

The National Archives:

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/C10949> - *Information about record series MH106 held by TNA*