

Lady resurrected in author's novel

History of the Cambridge Military Hospital

ACCORDING to the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps (QARANC) website, the CMH was built by Martin Wells and Co of Aldershot at a cost of approximately £45,758.

The first patients were admitted on Friday July 18 1879. They either walked or were transported by cart ambulance from the Connaught Hospital.

The military hospital was named after His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge, who was the commander-in-chief of the Army at the time, and who opened the building.

It was built on a hill because clinical thinking at the time said the wind would sweep away any infection and clean the air.

The CMH was famed for its supposedly mile-long corridor. The original plan was to have a series of self-contained wards for

regiments all joined on to the corridor, as it was hoped this would also reduce cross infection. But by the time the hospital opened it had been decided to run it as areas of treatment rather than type of cap badge.

It soon became a fully-functioning hospital and was the first in the UK to receive battle casualties directly from the front of the First World War.

It was also the first British military hospital to open a plastic surgery unit.

Over the decades it grew and treated not only soldiers and their families, but also the local population.

Departments expanded and included an accident and emergency unit, children's, medical, plastic surgery, general surgery, burns, gynaecological, intensive care and orthopaedic wards.

There were also several theatres, an X-ray unit, an

outpatients department and a large laboratory at the rear of the site.

The Louise Margaret Hospital (LMH) was annexed to the CMH and integrated with it in 1984.

It cared for both pre- and postnatal women and their babies, and there was also a special care baby unit (SCBU).

Opened in 1898 and named after Princess Louise Margaret, the function of this unit was initially to care for the wives and children of servicemen.

The LMH continued to care for the spouses and children of the Army until 1958, when its function changed to a maternity hospital. It closed on January 18 1995.

The CMH closed on February 2 1996.

Reasons for its closure included the fact it was an historic building that cost

too much to maintain and repair.

The Army Medical Services exercised its Freedom of the Borough of Rushmoor and marched through Aldershot on January 11 1996.

The Band of the Parachute Regiment, who served with members of 33 Field Hospital, which largely comprised staff of the CMH during the First Gulf War, led the march.

The saluting dais was located outside The Princes Hall and the salute was taken by the Director General of the Army Medical Services, Major General F B Mayes, and the then-Mayor of Rushmoor Cllr Mrs Pat Devereux.

Many CMH staff were posted to the newly opened Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit at Frimley Park when the old military hospital finally closed for good.



The view from the top of the former hospital.



An eerily long corridor with plenty of dark shadows in which ghostly apparitions can lurk.

On this day ...

10 years ago
February 10 2006
Aldershot News
Aldershot losing out to Farnborough

ALDERSHOT appears to be losing out to Farnborough over the distribution of funds for community projects.

Councillors can apply to the borough council for a share of a pot of money for projects within their ward.

But six of the seven projects to receive funding since 2004 have been for schemes in Farnborough.

Farnborough has received

a total of £114,000 compared to just £19,000 in Aldershot.

The News can also reveal that seven of the councillors whose bids were successful are from Farnborough — and all except one are Tory.

Councillors from all parties at Rushmoor Borough Council agreed the decision-making process over the distribution of community funds needed to be tightened and made more transparent.

The Farnborough schemes include £50,000 to fund a community building at Pine-wood Infant School; £25,000 for closed-circuit television

cameras at Cove Green; and £23,000 for the Wavell Cody Community Campus in North Camp.

The only scheme in Aldershot to achieve funding was for the installation of CCTV in St George's Road, which received £19,000.

50 years ago
February 11 1966
Aldershot News
Lonely wives complain of being left behind: Distress at start of third tour in two years

NEXT week men of the 2nd

Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, leave Aldershot for a 12-month tour of Bahrain, their third trip overseas since 1963.

And wives, who are being left behind, complained yesterday that they would have to go out looking for company while they were away.

A letter to this newspaper, signed 'Wives and Sweet-hearts, 2nd Battalion Para Regiment' questions the need of the Bahrain tour.

"This will be the third time we've been left to face a year of loneliness. War of crises we understand, but this

seems to be just a waste of time and money.

"The men do nothing they could not do here at home, they are bored, look forward to demob and pray that they can get transferred to other regiments."

The letter adds that wives go out in Aldershot looking for company while their husbands are away, and this leads either to the divorce court or continuous quarrels on their return.

The Army said arrangements were being made to help the lonely wives. During the 12 months families would

either have a trip to Bahrain to see their husbands or the husbands would be allowed a special leave in Aldershot.

100 years ago
February 11 1916
Aldershot News
The rent raisers: How to tackle grasping landlords

A SUBJECT of much interest was discussed at the meeting of the Farnborough District Council on Tuesday evening, one that concerns the position of tenants with regard to landlords who have put on their shoulders the

increased taxation which it should be theirs to pay cheerfully as part of their contribution to the war.

The subject discussed was the recently passed Rents Act. In opening, Mr G W Collins said he did not know of any place where rents had been heaped up on poor people than they had in Farnborough. There were cases where landlords had, through shortage of houses, raised rents wickedly high.

Occupiers should now know that they had redress, and that the landlords could not raise their rent.