

FIFTY YEARS OF CARING SERVICE

A synopsis and history of the first 50 years of the Mansfield and Sutton League of Hospital Friends, researched and written by Committee Member, Peter M. Green, in the Golden Jubilee year 1998.

This summary of our activities over the past 50 years is dedicated to the unselfish work and commitment of our Committees, staffs and "Daffodil" volunteers, past and present, without whom none of our contribution to the care and wellbeing of patients would have been possible.

Now on to the next 50 years

LEAGUE OF HOSPITAL FRIENDS

(Mansfield and Sutton)

To many local residents, September 23rd 1948 may have little or no importance; perhaps just another day in those post-war years of reconstruction - and rationing.

However, for local hospitals and those communities they served it marked the beginning of an organisation which, over the following 50 years, was to make its indelible mark on the welfare and care of the patients.

It was the beginning of an organisation that was to become a forerunner in voluntary care and its development and friendly services were to be copied in many other hospitals and medical units.

A few weeks after the formation of the National Health Service, a group of local citizens formed the League of Friends to serve the Mansfield and District General Hospital; Debdale Hall Recovery Hospital, the Victoria Hospital and the Forest Infectious Diseases Hospital; all part of the Mansfield Hospital Group and under the management of the Mansfield Hospital Management Committee.

Five years earlier, at the opening of an extension at Mansfield General Hospital which was first opened in 1867, Sir Frederick Sykes MP, the Chairman of the Miners' Welfare Commission commented: "I believe the voluntary work done in this country is one of its greatest assets. In all walks of life you will find people carrying out labour of all sorts for the help of their brother citizens without any thought of reward or recognition I think it is in accordance with the spirit of independence which is so characteristic of this country"

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This was at a time when local industry and particularly the mining communities provide so much money for the local hospitals. Senior members of industrial concerns were Hospital trustees with other leading citizens and industrialists on the Board of Management. In fact, 17 collieries and seven Colliery companies were represented in hospital management.

But it was not only management that was in their hands; much of the finance came from donations from colliery companies, Mansfield Brewery; Barringer, Wallis and Manners (later Metal Box) and other local concerns. The Hospitals also had thousands of local contributors to the Hospital Penny-a-Week scheme; 3d for those in work, and 1d for juveniles and the unemployed.

Annual Church services were held with collections going to hospital funds. In those days it cost £1,000 to endow a hospital bed and £500 to endow a cot. Other support came from the RoseDay collections; the Linen Guild and private benefactors.

It was into these immediate post-war days that the local hospitals became part of the National Health Service and its arrival brought with it new thinking in the role of the communities and industry in the work of the hospitals.

The main changes involved bring together all the fund-raising elements and put them under one leading organisation. Leagues of Friends had been operating in other parts of the country for some years and so the early NHS years saw a growth in such Leagues.

Mansfield was part of that development and with the Duchess of Portland as President and Mr John Harrop White as Chairman, the local League of Friends was formed in September 1948. Subscriptions were fixed at 2s 6d and income for the first year was £656.

Income in the first year came from the local Colliery Sick and Accident Clubs, Church services, the Ladies' Darts League, the Linen Guild, the Nursing Associations, ~~and~~ the Colliery Hospital Fund and collecting boxes

Expenditure in the same period totalled £363 including £29 for an outing for two coach loads of patients from Victoria Hospital to Chatsworth Park and Matlock - with a tea. Christmas presents cost £245 and periodicals and magazines £11.

So outings and Christmas gifts for patients have been a feature of League activities for all our 50 years, outings not only for Victoria and the chronic sick at Forest Hospital but in more recent years for those at Millbrook Mental Health Unit.

Year Two had a slightly increased income to £761 which included the League's first legacy of £25. A Christmas Stocking Appeal was launched and in the same year the first piece of equipment for the benefit of patients was purchased. It was an automatic page turning machine for bed ridden patients and also in 1949 the League purchased a rocking horse, toys and games for the Robin Hood children's ward at Mansfield General.

The transfer and development of King's Mill to the Mansfield Hospital Group in 1950 opened up many other opportunities for League support. With income of £814 for the year, a loud speaker radio system was provided for King's Mill wards and departments. The cost - £250. A further £100 was spent on the patients' reception room and furnishings at King's Mill and library service was introduced at Forest Hospital.

The Ladies' Darts League continued to be a main contributor and a new Mansfield Hospital Cricket Knock-out League was formed and ^{still} raises funds for the League.

To stimulate community support a special Appeal Week was held in November 1951 but in the same year the annual Hospital Ball made its first loss of £6.

At a cost of £500 the King's Mill loudspeakers were replaced by individual earphones and five television sets were brought into the various hospitals in time for the Coronation. The Coronation Appeal raised £1155 and in the same year the League had its first prize draw. The prizes were a handmade rug with a pattern of Windsor Castle; a tea cosy and three embroidered tablecloths. The "draw" raised £25

More televisions were presented in 1953 together with Communion sets for three local hospitals. The League also gave an award for the nurse's prizegiving in memory of Mr J.P. Bosworth, a Committee Member and hospital officer killed in a road accident.

Garden parties were held in 1954 raising £168 and in order to share ideas a joint meeting was held with the Chesterfield and Worksop hospital Leagues.

This was followed by a very busy year in 1955 with Langwith Lodge Diabetic Hospital being added to the Hospital Group. Christmas trees and decorations were provided for all hospitals and from a £3000 legacy the first cubicle tiling and curtains were installed on wards at Mansfield General. The first day room was planned for King's Mill (completed in 1956) and the first part of the Maltby Hall for patients and staffs at Victoria was commenced in partnership with the Hospital Management Committee.

The League's first instalment was £2273 and the Hall was extended in later years providing a multi-purpose recreational and meeting facility, the only such building in the Group at that time. The Hall was demolished in the early 90s and not replaced.

Radio commentaries on Field Mill matches proved very successful and the first concert by artists from the Council for Music in Hospitals was given to TB patients at King's Mill. This was relayed through the hospital radio. Tobacco and sweets were also provided for the older patients at Victoria.

The ladies were not forgotten and hairdressing services proved very popular. Flower boxes brought colour to the hospital corridors and more day rooms were built onto wards allowing patients to move from their bed areas.

The League had its first flag day in 1956 and provisions over the next few years included sound projection equipment and fortnightly film shows; more cubicle tiling and curtaining, a refurbishment of the General Hospital X-Ray area; a tennis court at Langwith Lodge and garden seats at Victoria

An electrically operated bus was purchased for £800 to convey patients and visitors around the sprawling King's Mill grounds and a telephone trolley was run by volunteers. All children had Easter eggs each year.

Garden parties became a major income raising and public relations activity the largest-ever being in July 1965 when Len Fairclough (Peter Adamson) of Coronation Street opened a mammoth event in the grounds of King's Mill. All sections - the League, volunteers, staff, patients and management - took part and Peter's fee for opening the event was £50. Accompanied by his wife Jean he toured the wards and signed many photographs and stayed hours longer than planned with the estimated crowd of 10,000. He gave back the money donations for his photographs which almost covered his fee.

Small garden parties at the hospitals and in private gardens continued for many years but in 1970 another major garden party was again held at King's Mill raising about the same amount (£1200) as the one five years earlier. This was opened by three beauty queens - Miss Great Britain (Jackie Molloy) the Notts Coal Queen (Jenny Wilson of Bilsthorpe) and Miss Mansfield (Theresa Coleman of Ollerton).

The arrival of the 70s saw an increase in the day room provisions and the League entered the decade with a new, personalised logo ("To comfort the sick") and crest drawn by Committee member Bill Martin.

There was also the provision of a relatives' room attached to the Intensive Care Unit at Mansfield General and at £1500 was a small price to pay for such a special need.

Smaller items such as skittles, electric razors, hair dryers, sewing machines and large print books were requested and personal requests were often met. A long-term patient at King's Mill was disappointed at missing a special film at a local cinema. The League hired a taxi to take her to and from the showing and another long-term patient was provided with a special home visit at Christmas-time to be with her children and family.

A "first" in 1972 was the Holiday Club for children of volunteers working during the school holidays, and the first colour television sets were installed on wards in the same year.

Not so glamorous was a 1973 provision of an enema room for Victoria Hospital patients costing £325. The League was told that "for patients this is very necessary but the Health Service cannot provide it for some time".

Talking books for blind Langwith Lodge patients and visits and outings were arranged in 1974, the year the Mansfield Hospital Management Committee became the District Management Team. The Welbeck Abbey Hospital Ball made £660 and more dayrooms were built and furnished costing around £3000 each.

New Co-Ro beds at £1160; a staff recreational centre at King's Mill plus two more dayrooms; portable televisions on smaller wards with extra ward cubicle curtaining were ordered in 1975 and 1976, partly paid for by four garden parties that summer.

Special human needs were not forgotten and a blind boy patient was given a taperecorder and headphones to help in his studies, and a language master machine was provided for group speech therapy needs.

Entertainment of patients featured in expenditure in 1978 with the purchase of 15 colour television sets plus additional radio, tape and record equipment, costing £4000. In the same year the Hospital Cricket League topped the £4000 mark raised ^{over} ³⁰ years ^{and} other provisions included a patio and garden for King's Mill Curie Ward; a covered way between buildings at Langwith Lodge and a powered walking aid for King's Mill physiotherapy department

At this time around 1979, more requests were being made to the League for medical and surgical equipment in addition to more televisions costing £1245. A special Argo bath for Curie Ward cost over £4000 whilst other medical needs included a cardiac sonar scanner at King's Mill to which the League donated £1500. Another donation of £3000 went towards a mini-bus for long stay patients at Victoria, Newstead and Forest hospitals.

Christmas bazaars and garden parties in 1980 helped to pay for a rhythm traction couch (sounds good!) at Crow Hill, a water bed for Newstead (£500) and a resuscitation trolley at Victoria (£541).

Professional tutors for recreational classes were funded by the League for Victoria and Forest patients, and so popular was the Maltby Hall that a further extension costing £15000-plus was provided in 1981. Other schemes included a overhead heater for five infant resuscitators at King's Mill and a 'steel nurse' lifting device at Victoria.

Newstead staff and volunteers organised a garden party which raised £3228 towards a sitting area in their new garden scheme. Bayliss Ward Victoria also received a boost in 1982 with the provision of a £15,000 day room and flag days were held during the year to pay for more resuscitators, ultra sonic therapy apparatus and cardiac monitors.

The year 1983 saw the League reach its first £277,349 with more calls for ECG machines, resuscitators, emergency trolleys and monitoring equipment and later to

The League also made donations towards the King's Mill scanner appeal, the Hospice and Welcome Appeals in addition to an activity room for Curie Ward and eight large television sets.

The Central Notts Health Authority was formed in 1986 and liaison groups formed to enhance the close working between the League, the management and staffs. These Liaison Committees were extended to all hospitals and many departments in the early 1990s and form a vital link in our partnership and working together.

The year 1986 also marked another milestone of achievement with the shops and tea bar operations of the "Daffodil" volunteers reaching a total of £181,744 nett profit since 1963. The fund-raising Ladies' Committee had a champagne evening raising £2577 and equipment supplied included a ~~co~~ alarm system, more ECG equipment and Ambulifts at the General Hospital.

New beds and other furniture for the ten-bedded surgical unit on Blandy Ward cost £10,580 and nebulisers were provided for the first time in 1987. The same year marked the raising of over £500,000 by the League since 1948 and it shared a further £5000 for the Hospice Appeal for the in-patient sitting room and nearly £4000 for sound treating and insulation of two rooms and special equipment for testing children with hearing difficulties, being treated at King's Mill.

Other items requested from the League included ^{five} digital baby scales, a micro processor for controlled upper limb exercises; a Birthright bed, a microscan magnification system for dermatology, PCAS pumps for pain relief, more TVs for Curie Ward, air conditioning at Dukeries (£1710), tone musical chimes for music therapy, 64 bedside chairs, 20 "Across Counter" communication aids for partially deaf patients in King's Mill reception and Pegasus mattresses to help in controlling and preventing bed sores

Sad news was received in 1992 with the closure of Mansfield General Hospital with patients being transferred to other local hospitals, whilst with the Newstead closure patients were transferred to the new Ashfield Community Hospital at Kirkby.

Volunteers also transferred and the League presented the new Ashfield Hospital with a £3000 Pegasus airwave bed ; one of five provided for pressure relief for elderly patients.

Many beds and mattresses were also being provided around that time including our most expensive fluidised therapy bed for Portland Ward at Mansfield General just before its closure. Portland Ward staff had started to raise money for this £15,000 specialised bed, but the League stepped in with a £12000-plus gift to enable the bed to be purchased immediately. The subsequent closure of the General Hospital saw the bed moved with King's Mill where it is still in constant priority use.

This is a classic example of the staff and league working together and hundreds of patients have since had the benefit of this extra special bed for the seriously ill.

Whilst most of the League provisions have been for patients and staffs, the visitors have not been forgotten and in 1992 the first of a number of bus shelters were provided at King's Mill and near Millbrook. Many on the site are in exposed areas and the shelters have been most welcome as have the shelters provided for the car park attendants.

To enable patients to leave their ward environments at the Community Hospital's Holbeck Ward, a patio with garden furniture was added to their day room. The same hospital had 17 new wheelchairs costing £2750 whilst at King's Mill requests were received for an ultra soundmachine for the urology department and two infusion pumps costing £5772 and £5258 respectively.

The last five years have seen more and more spent of equipment and facilities. The Curie Ward had a neurology plinth and a low bed for dealing with severe burns and urology had a further gift of urethroscope for use with laser surgery.

Clinics were not forgotten and two lightwriter kits were provided with other equipment for Occupational Therapy and other provisions have included a computer for clinical records; the upgrading of the Community Day Hospital, new paintings and wall decorations, another trolley 'buggy' and communication system; three hydraulic manipulation plinths for physiotherapy and children's play equipment in different departments at King's Mill.

Recent years have seen the League go into immediate action with over £7000 funding for a baby tagging system at the Dukeries Centre after the baby abduction from the Nottingham Queen's Medical Centre. A year later a baby footprinting system was added and the renovation and redecoration of the parents room at the Special Baby Care Unit.

The same unit received funding towards the establishing of the Pregnancy Day Care Centre and easy chairs and individual televisions have improved life for those receiving treatment in the renal dialysis unit.

Up-grading of cubicle curtaining and new divets have also been provided and more special mattresses and beds have been made available, some with money transferred to the League from the closed League of Friends at Harlow Wood. Some of these special beds enable the patients to move themselves into different positions without staff help.

Specialised monitoring equipment like oximeters and the Dynamap machines provided by the League have helped to make life easier for the staffs and more so for the patients whose condition can be checked without disturbing the patients, especially those who are seriously ill or injured.

Bath hoists and new shower facilities also help patients to cope in difficult times whilst to meet modern trends and thinking, baby changing facilities have, and are being, provided in male and female toilets. To give visitors chance of a rest on the long King's Mill corridors, 'bus stop' type tipping seats have been installed at regular intervals

A rest garden with facilities for wheelchair patients has been established at the Community Hospital with a £4000 grant and another garden area is now attached to Bayliss Ward day room provided by the League and individual gifts.

Special "Nancy Nail" equipment costing nearly £2000 has been donated for orthopaedic surgery making it less intrusive, especially for younger patients, and helps speed up recovery and mobility times.

Millside Radio, which was earlier provided with recording equipment, has been given a £1000 to upgrade and refurbish its studios.

One of our last projects for 1997 and scheduled for completion in 1998 has been £60,000 for the renovation and up-grading of the King's Mill op-out-patients tea bar and shop area. This not only brings the unit up to standard to meet Health and Safety, Fire and Hygiene regulations but has improved the environment and service for customers.

All these provisions have only been made possible by the generosity of the communities of Mansfield, Ashfield and the surrounding districts; the imaginative ideas and efforts of our Ladies' Fund -raising Committee; and the dedication and constant support of the staffs and volunteers. This is a record of which we are justly proud.

Nearly £1.3 million has been raised in our 50 years enabling our past to make our present possible. Our future will depend on continuing support to help us in providing a caring service and helping hand to all in our local hospital care.

OUR OBJECTS AND AIMS

Over the years our objects and aims have remained the same. They are:

* TO ENCOURAGE AND FOSTER INTEREST IN THE WORK OF THE HOSPITALS BY MEANS OF VOLUNTARY SERVICE AND SUPPORT

*TO MAINTAIN THE ASSOCIATION WHICH EXISTED FOR MANY YEARS PRIOR TO JULY 1948, BETWEEN VOLUNTARY BODIES AND THE HOSPITAL SERVICE, AND TO GIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR THESE BODIES TO CONTINUE THEIR ACTIVITIES.

*TO PROVIDE AMENITIES AND COMFORTS FOR PATIENTS AND STAFF NOT OTHERWISE AVAILABLE FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES

*TO PROVIDE A READY LINK BETWEEN THE COMMUNITIES SERVED AND THE HOSPITALS

*TO SUPPORT, CO-OPERATE WITH, AND RENDER AID TO THE MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE FOR THE BENEFIT OF PATIENTS IN THE MANSFIELD AND SUTTON HOSPITALS

THE EXECUTIVE

Throughout its fifty years the League has only had three Presidents. At its inception the Portland family's links with the work of local hospitals was continued with the election of the Duchess of Portland as the first President.

Her Grace served from 1948 to 1976 when her daughter, Lady Anne Bentinck succeeded her adding another 10 years to the Portland link. This connection was to be broken in 1976 when Lady Anne resigned and Sir Norman Siddall, our present President, was unanimously elected.

We have also only had three Vice-Presidents, the first being the late Mr Bert Ashworth. This recognised the long service and support given to the League; the same factors considered when Mr Philip Needham and Mr Len Sedgwick were elected Vice-Presidents some years ago.

The League has also had only three Treasurers. The first was the Rev Ernest F. Drew who served until his death in June 1953 when Mr J. B. Gregory, a Committee Member, took over until 1959. He resigned in that year and our present Treasurer, Mr Arthur Sparham took over the financial challenge.

Mr Sparham had been a co-opted member on the Committee representing the Mansfield Rotary Club since 1995 and since his appointment he had handled over £1.2 million of League funds which he had recorded with great care and detail over the years. He is one of three Executive Committee members with links with the League stretching back over 40 years; Miss Dorothy Alberry first joining in 1956 as a co-opted member of the newly formed Ladies Committee; and Mr Peter M. Green, who after three years acting as deputy to the Local Press representative, was co-opted to the Committee at the end of 1956.

There have only been five Chairmen in our 50 years, the first being a local leading citizen and solicitor, Mr John Harrop White. He held the post for six years when Mr Cecil Eglston began 13 years in the post until 1967. In that year, another local businessman, Mr L.R. "Bob" Moss was elected and he had 12 years service before retiring and being succeeded by businessman Mr R.S. "Bob" Copestake.

In 1990, he retired from the position and our present Chairman, Mrs Barbara Joule, a former Chairman of the Ladies' Committee, was elected.

During our 50 years we have had seven honorary or part-time secretaries. To help in the formation and strengthening the links with the local hospitals, one of the Hospital officials Mr Sidney W. Smith became the first secretary in 1948, serving up to 1961. A few months later, another Hospital officer, Mr Fred S. Mills began four years service until 1966, when Mr A. Hall served for two years. In 1968, Mrs Margaret Young was appointed as the first Group Voluntary Services officer and combined that with the work as League Secretary, a post she held until 1979 when Mrs Dorothy Shillito started five years of service.

In 1984 Mrs Chris Illingworth took over the secretarial duties until the Autumn of 1993 and in November of the same year Mrs Ros Dyce, our current secretary was appointed.

Over many years, the League has had the valuable support of the various chairmen or representatives of the Mansfield and Ashfield District Councils and the management of the hospitals and the two local Trusts, the Central Notts Healthcare (NHS) Trust and the King's Mill Centre for Health Care Services.

Current Trustees are Mrs B. Joule (Chairman) Mr A. Sparham (Treasurer); Miss D Alberry, Miss P. Bailey, Mr P. Camp, Mr R. Chamberlain, Mrs B. Glass, Mr P.M. Green, Mrs F. Humphries, Dr J. Knight, Mrs J Strutt, ~~Mr~~ B. Tomlinson, Mr G. Tomlinson, Mr K. Vernon and the Rev J. Wood

OUR VOLUNTARY SERVICES

Voluntary Services ^{within} ~~with~~ hour hospitals is now part of the everyday scene with hundreds of dedicated volunteers giving a seven-day service in many areas of the hospitals.

Caring and sharing by volunteers has been evident in hospitals for centuries and is not a product of the NHS or by Leagues of Friends. However, these two elements of our Health Service have provided those opportunities to expand and grow in a way that it would be difficult today to imagine how many hospitals and units, large and small, could operate so effectively without the input of voluntary effort.

In fact, there are certainly many hospitals serving the community today which would not have still been in existence had it not been for the dogged and persevering spirit of Leagues of Friends and volunteers.

The work of volunteers today makes a tremendous and valuable difference to the healthcare available and adds value to the expert skills and commitment of the professional staffs. Volunteers often provided that extended human touch and listening ear which the professional staffs sometimes have little time to spare with their patients due to the pressure of nursing care placed upon them.

In 1746, Bishop Maddox, who is often regarded as the pioneer of present-day work of "Friends" said at Worcester "Few cures are brought about by drugs alone. Proper food, due regimen, necessary attendance and above all ease and tranquility of mind, have a large share in recovery"

The formation of the NHS 50 years ago brought ~~with~~ it new opportunities for voluntary work and not just for fund raising. Those Hospitals and Units which today are leaders in healthcare are those which place a high priority in the role and work of volunteers

Visiting patients has long been a feature of hospital life, not only from relatives but by clergy and 'friends'. However, thankfully we have seen an end to those days when visiting was restricted to two-hours on Wednesdays and Saturdays and one-hour on Sundays

The earlier records of our local League show that it was at the former Victoria Hospital that the first trolley service was introduced in 1956. League of Friends volunteers took their trolley to the mentally handicapped and geriatric patients with a selection of sweets and toiletries. It should be remembered that for many of those patients, the hospital was their home and they had been resident for many years. Outside visits were few or not at all and the hospital was surrounded by a high wall and a controlled entrance.

So the weekly trolley service gave them a little touch of the outside world but whether it was the lack of demand or of volunteers, but records show that the service later became only once every three weeks..

From these small beginnings has grown one of the larger and effective voluntary services in the country and the work of our "Daffodils" has been copied in many hospitals.

Representatives of our League have lectured to other hospitals and leagues both at home and overseas about the service offered by our volunteers.

It was in 1961 that the then Mansfield Hospital Management Committee's Group Secretary, the late Bert Ashworth attended conferences in America and Canada and whilst in Toronto he met a Mrs Ruth Frankel in a breakfast bar.

Mrs Frankel, the head of Volunteer Services in the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto asked Mr Ashworth for the salt. Realising he was English a conversion followed and an invitation was given to him to visit the Princess Margaret Hospital to see the work of volunteers.

He was most impressed to see the benefits of this personal service and a few months later after his return, the Ministry of Health issued guidelines that hospitals should examine ways in which volunteer effort could be included and harnessed into hospital care.

The instant reaction of Mr Ashworth was a far reaching vision for such activities in his local hospitals and he called together a group of League of Friends committee member and hospital officers at his Oak Bank offices . There he enthusiastically shared his vision and saw the value of such a scheme working under the umbrella of the League of Friends.

It was in October 1961 that the Mansfield Hospital Management Committee's Group Secretary, the late Bert Ashworth, was on a study tour of American hospitals, when he walked into a drug store on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City on the coast of New Jersey to enjoy a typical American breakfast.

He made a simple request to "kindly pass the salt"; a request that was to affect the lives of thousands of people of this district and other parts of the country.

Passing the salt were two delegates to the American Hospital Convention from the Canadian Cancer Society at the Princess Margaret Hospital and Lodge in Toronto.

These well-informed ambassadors - Mrs Peggy Moxon and Mrs Adele Deacon - not only passed the salt but also a leaflet on their volunteer work in Toronto.

Ever eager to extend his knowledge on voluntary work, Mr Ashworth got into detailed conversation and promised "to keep in touch". On his return he contacted Mrs Ruth Frankel, Chairman and driving force behind volunteer services at the Princess Margaret Hospital. Mrs Frankel was the widow of a Canadian steel magnate and she took a great interest in the development of our own "Daffodil" Scheme. In later years exchange visits were made.

A few months after his return the Ministry of Health recommended that Management Committee's should expand and develop voluntary efforts in hospitals.

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Talks went on over the next few months during which time an approach was made to the late Mrs Joyce Boneham to head this new Voluntary Services Scheme. It was to be called the "Daffodils" linked with the distinctive yellow overalls of the volunteers bringing colour and brightness into the hospital and wards.

The single level wards and services at King's Mill seemed to be the most sensible hospital for the initial scheme, and the League of Friends, the parent body of the VSS, agreed in April 1963 to officially approve this pilot scheme, based on the Canadian experience. By July 1963 some 230 volunteers had been recruited reaching 320 by the end of the same year.

The Scheme was officially inaugurated in September 1963 with a new shop and canteen at King's Mill Hospital. It made £177 nett profit in its first six months. Sir Stuart and Lady Goodwin of Hexgreave Park donated £500 to put the Scheme on a financial footing and some £200 was spent on providing volunteers with a new headquarters in the Hospital.

In March 1965 the "Daffodil" Scheme was extended to Mansfield General Hospital and in September the same year to the Langwith Lodge Diabetic Hospital.

Mrs Frankel visited the hospitals in 1965 when, so busy was the King's Mill shop and tea bar that it was extended at a cost of £1566.

June 1967 saw the appointment of the first Voluntary Services Officer. He was Mr A Hall and this opened up yet further opportunities and by the end of September, King's Mill, Mansfield General and Langwith Lodge had a total of 650 volunteers.

By the end of 1967, Mansfield General had a new VSS office costing £1300 and the Scheme was extended to Forest and Victoria Hospitals.

With the departure of Mr Hall for a new hospital post, Mrs Margaret Young was appointed the first Group Voluntary Service Organiser in June 1969. It was not long before the Scheme was extended to Crow Hill Rehabilitation Unit and Debdale Hall Recovery Hospital.

Newstead Hospital was added to the Scheme in 1974, the same year as the Dukeries Shop opened. The League's first 10 year badges were awarded also in 1974 and these service awards are now proudly worn by the volunteers. We now have a small number with over 30 years service and wearers of the special 30 year badge.

Mr Phillip Marsh strengthened the administrative team with his appointment as the Assistant VSO to cope with the ever increasing services. This was in 1974 and it gave him time to concentrate on the development of the work amongst the mentally handicapped and the then geriatric patients at Victoria.

Around the same period a public appeal was made by the Chairman, Mr L.R. Modss which raised over £3000 towards what was then the biggest single project - a £20,000 scheme for the VSS shop and tea bar, foyer, lounge, patio, store and service yard at Victoria. This was officially opened by Baroness MacLeod of Borve, Chairman of the National Association in April 1977, the year the Scheme was extended to Ransom Hospital.

At that point the League's Voluntary Service Scheme was operating with over 900 volunteers in nine hospitals and units - King's Mill, Mansfield General, Langwith Lodge, Debdale Hall, Victoria and Forest Hospitals, Crow Hill Rehabilitation Centre, Newstead and Ransom Hospitals.

The next 10 years saw the consolidation of services provided and also the relocation of the Newstead shop and tea bar costing £2500; the opening of the Baby Boutique at the Dukeries Unit, a feature which was warmly welcomed and whose volunteers have themselves raised many thousands of pound for League funds as well as provided a needful service.

A tea bar and shop at Forest cost £5000 in 1984; whilst a new tea bar for patients attending clinics in the Ashfield area of King's Mill represented a £37,000 League investment.

By the early 1990s, the shops and tea bars were making around £36000 nett profit a year, all the moneys being spent on patient care, amenities and equipment in the various hospitals

Millside Radio, another valuable service, particularly for bed patients, was added to the Scheme in 1995. This operates from studios provided at King's Mill.

In more recent times, the King's Mill out-patients tea bar and shop has needed upgrading to meet new Health and Safety and Food and Hygiene regulations. This was funded by the League's £60,000 donation and it is hoped that the full benefits and improvements in services and facilities will be in place in 1998.

Since it was formed, the volunteers in the Voluntary Service Scheme have raised well over £500,000 to be spent by the League of Friends within our hospitals. This has only been made possible by their loyal and, often sacrificial, service which will never be under-estimated by the League.

However, all the work is not geared to fund raising and today the King's Mill services include the tea bars and shops, the baby boutique, ward trolley and library services, providing a listening and caring ear and advice through the bereavement centre; escort service across the hospitals and clinics, flower arranging, administrative help in co-ordinating volunteer duties; assisting in the ophthalmic and orthopaedic clinics; communication skills in the speech therapy department and certain patient -orientated clerical duties in the X-ray departments, plus Millside Radio.

At the Community Hospital and Millbrook a number of similar services are operated including the tea bar and shop, trolley services, plus helping on wards during meal times, escort duties and fund raising and activity events.

The "Daffodil" Voluntary Service Scheme is a very big business, not only in material terms but also in providing that human touch at times when hospital patients are in need.

One cannot imagine the work in our hospitals, and other hospitals all over the country, being carried on without this warm human and caring element of the countless volunteers.

" Volunteers they are; Amateurs they're not.

Paid they are not, Professionals in care they are"

OUR LADIES' FUND RAISING COMMITTEE

Throughout all our 50 years, lady members of our main Executive Committee have had their eye on fund-raising. Our first lady member was a Mrs M. Ilett of Ollerton as the representative of the Mansfield and District Hospitals Ladies' Darts League

The dart throwing members of this League raised hundreds of pounds over the years and their annual trophy presentations were something to remember.

An annual Hospital Ball was a feature of the fund raising activities as well as garden fetes, coffee mornings and the ever popular bridge drives. Mrs Pease was the first representative on the Committee of the fund-raising ladies in 1956, followed by Mrs Dorothy Alberry shortly afterwards.

The ladies and their friends held a social night at the White Post Inn at Farnsfield but records show that they paid their own expenses.

In 1958 it was agreed to form an official Ladies' Fund-Raising Committee and their first Chairman, Mrs Rachel Bingham and Secretary, Mrs Barbara Ashworth, presented their first annual report in 1959.

Visits to Hospital installations were encouraged by the ladies who throughout the years have raised thousands of pounds by a wide variety of events and projects all designed to extract money from the general public.

Mrs Bingham and Mrs Ashworth retired in 1977 and were followed for a short time by Mrs Jean Curtis and Mrs Audrey Hibbert respectively.

Mrs Rosemary MacGregor followed as Chairman until 1984 being succeeded by Mrs Barbara Joule, who had joined the main executive committee as a Ladies' Committee representative in 1980. After three years, Mrs Sally Compton took over as Chairman until March 1991 when she was followed by the current Chairman, Mrs Barbara Glass.

Mrs Compton continued to serve as Committee Secretary for two years having succeeded Mrs Kath Taylor and Mrs Dorothy Fowler who had held the post in the 1980s.

It is interesting to note that the Ladies' Committee launched a "Cooks in League" recipes and household hints book in 1978. The then President, Lady Anne Bentinck and members and friends of the League contributed items and over 1800 copies were sold for League funds

Over the years all kinds of fund raising efforts have been organised and sponsored by this Committee, not only for the League funds but sometimes in partnership with other Hospital funds

One of the main fund-raisers has been Miss Susan Brailsford, a Committee Member, who, from her wheelchair and with the every present smiling appealing face, has "extracted" tens of thousands of pounds from shoppers in the towns of Mansfield and Sutton and in the local supermarkets.

Everyone in the League was both honoured and delighted when her work was recognised with the award of the MBE in the 1996 New Year Honours.

They say a lady's work is never done. We hope that the work of the Ladies' Fund Raising Committee will certainly be never done and to celebrate our Golden Jubilee this year they are arranging a series of high profile events.

LINKS WITH THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

In March 1949, the Mansfield and Sutton League of Friends was one of 50 leagues from all over the country meeting in London when the National League of Hospital Friends was formed.

A Mansfield Committee Member, Mr W.G Maltby, represented the local League at that meeting and was appointed to the national committee, a position he held for many years.

Membership of the National League and the subsequent renamed National Association of Leagues of Hospital Friends has been maintained ever since; a record of 50 years support held by only a few.

In the local League's second report it was stated that "The help which this National association can be to local leagues is becoming more apparent and through the National League the local leagues have been able to make contact with the Ministry of Health on matters which will virtually result in benefitting the patients. It is also taking steps to publicise more fully the work of local leagues throughout the country"

In 1952 the National Association arranged with Bertram Mills Circus to invite hospital patients to their performances . Over 100 patients of local hospitals attended a local performances at the end of 1952, local arrangements being made by our League.

Our League is also now benefitting from a £30,000 Opportunities for Volunteering grant over three years providing funding for two Volunteer Activities Co-ordinators to work in the Mansfield Community Hospital and the Millbrook Unit. Plans are in hand to endeavour to obtain further grants for local projects.

The "Mansfield link" with the National Association is still maintained today with two local Trustees serving on National Councils. Mrs Faith Humphries is the Nottinghamshire Constituency Member linking all 14 Nottinghamshire Leagues and she also serves on the England Centre Regional Council. Mr Peter Green is Chairman of the Regional Council and is also a National Trustee, serving as a member or chairman of two National Council sub-committees.