



**HORIZON NHS TRUST**  
For people with learning disabilities

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**LEAVESDEN HOSPITAL**

**1870 - 1995**

**A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING FOR  
THE WORK OF THE HOSPITAL FOR  
125 YEARS**

**TUESDAY 31 OCTOBER 1995**

**14.00 IN LANGLEY SUITE**

**LEAVESDEN HOSPITAL**

**1870 - 1995**

## ORDER OF SERVICE

*The Band of the Coldstream Guards will play during which the procession of robed Clergy will come from the Chapel to the Langley Suite.*

*Please stand and remain standing as we sing our first hymn*

**PRAISE, MY SOUL, THE KING OF HEAVEN**

*Introduction:*

**THE BEGINNING**

*Please stand as we sing the hymn*

**ALL THINGS BRIGHT & BEAUTIFUL**

*Please remain standing for A Prayer of Thanksgiving by*

*The Venerable Philip B Davies  
Archdeacon of St. Albans*

*followed by The Lord's Prayer*

*Introduction:*

**THE EARLY YEARS**

*Please stand as we sing the hymn*

**GOD IS WORKING HIS PURPOSE OUT**

*Please remain standing for A Prayer of Dedication by*

*The Right Reverend James O'Brien  
Bishop in Hertfordshire*

*Introduction:*

**MODERN TIMES**

*Please stand as we sing the hymn*

**NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD**

*Please remain standing for The Grace*

## PRAISE, MY SOUL, THE KING OF HEAVEN

1

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,  
to his feet thy tribute bring;  
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
who like me his praise should sing?  
    praise him, praise him, (2)  
praise the everlasting King.

2

Praise him for his grace and favour  
to our fathers in distress;  
praise him still the same as ever,  
slow to chide, and swift to bless:  
    praise him, praise him, (2)  
glorious in his faithfulness.

3

Father-like, he tends and spares us,  
well our feeble frame he knows;  
in his hands he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes:  
    praise him, praise him, (2)  
widely as his mercy flows.

4

Angels, help us to adore him;  
ye behold him face to face;  
sun and moon, bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space:  
    praise him, praise him, (2)  
praise with us the God of grace.

## THE BEGINNING OF LEAVESDEN 1868 - 1995

In 1867 the problem of dealing with imbecile paupers rested with the poor Law Board and in the short space of 16 months two sites were identified and acquired for imbecile asylums. One of the sites was Leavesden which had 72 acres and cost £5,756.00. The buildings were designed by Giles and Biven, Architects and were to be erected on a pavilion system - 6 blocks on one side accommodating 860 women and 5 blocks on the other for 700 men. The cost of Leavesden buildings was £83,900 which was raised by loans on the guarantee of the rates repayable with interest over some 20 years.

On Saturday 31 October 1868 the first stone was laid by William Brewer Esq. MD, Chairman of the Board. The stone was a block of Portland, with a tablet of Sicilian marble let into it, bearing the names of the committee of the board. With the stone there was enclosed a sealed bottle with coins bearing the head of Queen Victoria, the reigning monarch, a list of the managers, a copy of the Act of Parliament and the Times Newspaper. (We are now trying to locate the stone as its whereabouts is unknown at present). Whilst the stone was being laid the band of the Coldstream Guards, conducted by Mr Frederick Godfrey, played the wonderful contralto aria 'Rest in the Lord' from Handel's Oratorio, 'Elijah'. Mr Reynolds, was the solo cornetist. This service marked the beginning of Leavesden and the erection of those buildings and today we are gathered together to close them as they have now served their usefulness in the care and treatment of people who have a learning disability.

## ALL THINGS BRIGHT & BEAUTIFUL

1

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,  
all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all:

2

Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,  
he made their glowing colours, he made their tiny wings:

3

The purple-headed mountain, the river running by,  
the sunset, and the morning that brightens up the sky:

4

The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,  
the ripe fruits in the garden, he made them every one:

5

The tall trees in the greenwood, the meadows where we play,  
the rushes by the water we gather every day:

6

He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell  
how great is God almighty, who has made all things well:

7

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,  
all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.

## EARLY YEARS OF LEAVESDEN

The first residents moved into the new buildings on 9 October 1870; one hundred moving in, in the first week. Each block provided beds for 160 patients, the ground floor was used for day room and the upper two floors had sleeping accommodation. By April 1871 there were 739 male and 899 female patients in residence at Leavesden. Heating was by open coal fires. A Turkish bath was installed in 1876 next to the Laundry which was considered useful for patients and staff but was only used on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Mains electricity was not installed until after 1931 but gas was manufactured in East Lane and used for lighting, cooking and also for hot water for the laundry and central bathrooms. The cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of Rochester on the 26 September 1870.

As can be imagined there was little privacy for the patients but conditions were better than those in the workhouses from which they had come.

Women worked in the laundry, needleroom and female staff quarters whilst men worked on the farm and gardens, in the shoemakers', tailors', upholsterers' and paint shops and in the laundry, kitchen and bakehouse. The sexes were strictly segregated and the only times they could meet was at the weekly dances and in the chapel and even then the men had to sit on the right and women on the left. Visitors were allowed on Mondays and Thursdays but the expense of travelling prevented many from making the journey.

The hospital expanded rapidly to 2,118 by 1876; more land was purchased and the use of the buildings changed. By 1898 the spirit of nursing was being fostered within Leavesden and the old asylum rules were swept away. Nurse training started in 1912.

In 1897 Tuberculosis was a serious health problem throughout the country and accounted for 30% of the deaths at Leavesden. Open air was the main treatment and whole blocks were isolated with windows that fully opened and enclosed courtyards for these people. Isolation wards were built and ready for use in 1903. More emphasis was put on open air recreation and the football and cricket fields were developed.

Attempts were made to make the wards more homely and attractive by hanging pictures and providing ornaments and tablecloths. National events such as Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 were special occasions warranting extra fare of beef and mutton, jam roly poly pudding, lemonade,

tobacco and snuff.

In 1914 staff, who were reservists, were called up for active service. Troops were billeted in the recreation hall for a few months. The staff problem was acute, three wards having to be closed. Twenty-two members of staff died on active service. In common with the rest of the country, economies had to be made. The rationing of food for patients and staff, and all non-urgent works, had to be postponed until the end of the war.

In 1926 Occupational Therapy was developed and a gymnasium was built in 1933. Wards were upgraded with central heating and a central telephone system installed in 1926. Wireless sets were purchased for the wards and wireless concerts proved a popular form of entertainment. In 1924 an operating room was built and dental services were developed. By 1933 new sanitary blocks were built in each block and lifts were installed. An electricity supply was also installed to each ward. The annexe, which was originally built as the St. Pancras Orphanage, was taken into use in 1932 and the subway under College Road was built.

Occupational activities were greatly extended and Scout and Girl Guide camps became a regular activity. During the 1930's when unemployment was high it is said that some 200 applications a week were received for employment. Leavesden was one of the main employers in the area, the others being Ovaltine and Dickinsons.

The training of nurses at Leavesden was well recognised and it was a centre for the development of new ideas to benefit the patients. Graduates from the School of Nursing were assured of employment but competition for senior appointment to Deputy Charge Nurse and Ward Sister rank saw six or more applicants for each post.

With the outbreak of World War II all residents were transferred from the annexe to the main site. The Chapel was used as a dormitory for a temporary period and Leavesden took residents from St. Bernard's in 1944 when it was bombed. Many staff volunteered for active service so wards were both grossly overcrowded and also short staffed. The annexe was not handed back until 1950.

The national Health Service Act of 1946 removed the administration of the Hospital from London County Council and it came under the North West Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board and was handed over to the Hospital Management Committee on 5 July 1948.



## GOD IS WORKING HIS PURPOSE OUT

1

God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year;  
God is working his purpose out and the time is drawing near;  
Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,  
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters  
cover the sea

2

From the utmost east to utmost west where'er man's foot hath trod,  
By the mouth of many messengers goes forth the voice of God,  
'Give ear to me, ye continents, ye isles, give ear to me,  
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God as the waters  
cover the sea.'

3

What can we do to work God's work, to prosper and increase  
The brotherhood of all mankind, the reign of the Prince of Peace?  
What can we do to hasten the time, the time that shall surely be,  
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters  
cover the sea?

4

March we forth in the strength of God with the banner of Christ  
unfurled,  
That the light of the glorious gospel of truth may shine throughout  
the world;  
Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin, to set their captives free,  
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God as the waters  
cover the sea.

5

All we can do is nothing worth unless God blesses the deed;  
Vainly we hope for the harvest-tide till God gives life to the seed;  
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,  
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters  
cover the sea.

## MODERN TIMES

Leavesden continued to benefit from changes. Congestion was relieved when the annexe was handed back to Leavesden by the Ministry of Works. The Mental Health Act of 1959 dissolved the Board of Control and re-defined the four classes of Mental Disorder. It required patients to be treated in the community, wherever possible, and gave patients and their relatives the right of appeal to Tribunals to review the need for their continued detention. Following Regional Health Board Recommendations there were no age limits on admission and a nursery unit was established in 1967 as well as the opening of Oak House on the annexe site to accommodate boys. In April 1960 a new school, now known as Springfield College, was opened by H.R.H. Princess Marina.

An Industrial Therapy Unit was opened in 1959 paid for by the Kings Fund. It was intended to train young men in simple industrial tasks to enable them to return to the community. It was so successful that it had to be extended in 1964. A Sheltered Workshop was opened, under Nursing Management, to overcome the problem of number of residents not leaving the wards. This continued to be extended and various day care activities were developed. Many patients were successfully discharged but the beds were immediately filled with new admissions. Nascot Grange was opened in 1969 as a half-way house. About this time the Minister of Health announced that all long stay hospitals should close over a ten year period. However, the difficulty in providing proper replacement services in the community takes time and so the closure of Leavesden has had to be postponed until now.

This did not stop the task of improving the ward environments. Through capital investment from North West Thames Regional Health Authority wards were partitioned to provide more privacy and staff concentrated on preparing residents for future transfer to Community Homes. Rural Crafts were set up in 1981 and the Progressive Development Unit was established in 1988. The unit offered training and day care activities for residents with multiple handicaps for whom resettlement in the community was more difficult.

The closure of the hospital became more likely after 1986 when Leavesden transferred from South West Herts. to North West Herts. Health Authority and became linked with Harperbury and Cell Barnes Hospitals. The pace of resettlement accelerated and the annexe was closed in 1992. Throughout this time of change the emphasis was on improving the quality of care for each individual resident and the development of Individual Care Plans which encompassed short term and long term goals. Great efforts were made to maintain the positive atmosphere, traditionally evident in Leavesden. Standards and morale have been maintained for people with a learning disability by Horizon NHS Trust, who had assumed control of Leavesden from North West Herts. Health Authority.

Many staff have shaped the service received by patients, or residents as they are referred to now. The success of Leavesden in enabling people to return to the community and be valuable citizens has never been under doubt. Past and present staff can be proud of a job well done. We sincerely hope that care in the community will continue to develop in order to meet the needs of every individual.

## NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD

### 1

Now thank we all our God,  
with heart and hands and voices,  
who wondrous things hath done,  
in whom his world rejoices;  
who from our mother's arms  
hath blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love,  
and still is ours to-day.

### 2

O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us;  
and keep us in his grace,  
and guide us when perplexed,  
and free us from all ills  
in this world and the next.

### 3

All praise and thanks to God  
the Father now be given,  
the Son, and him who reigns  
with them in highest heaven,  
the one eternal God,  
whom earth and heaven adore,  
for thus it was, is now,  
and shall be evermore.