

THE PITMINSTER NURSING ASSOCIATION

The Association began in 1897 with a bequest of £100 from Dr. Kinglake and continued with a larger bequest of £1000 from Theophilus Tripe Marke in 1901. We do not know the name of the first nurse appointed. She is always anonymous 'Nurse' when mentioned in the early Parish Magazines, but we do read that nurse moved from lodgings at Pitminster Farm in 1903 to live in one of the cottages near the entrance to Poundisford Lodge. An actual name - that of 'Nurse Dore' is mentioned in 1909.

From the Minute Books still existing, we <sup>start</sup> ~~came~~ in during 1920, when Rev. Alfred Hawken, Vicar of Pitminster, was the President and the Committee Meeting of 16th January was held at Poundisford Lodge at 12 o'clock. Miss Sale (Bishop Moorhouse niece, of Poundisford Park) acted as Secretary, since Miss Lawson, the former Secretary/Treasurer, had sent in her resignation "because of her prolonged absence from England".

There were 15 districts in the parish, listed with the names of those lady collectors who brought in the money from subscribers to the Association. They are Eastbrook, Amberd, Poundisford, Pitminster, Sellicks Green, Blagdon Village, Blagdon Hill, Howleigh, Leigh Hill, Angersleigh, Lowton, Fulwood, Canonsgrove, Staplehay, Duddlestone and Haygrass. Some names in the list of collectors are well-known and still well-remembered - Durston, Helyar, Marke, Mattock, Newton, Orr-Ewing and Waddy. Soon Miss Sale was tendering her own resignation, so Mrs. Hawken, the Vicar's wife, became Secretary and Mr. Berger Treasurer.

A matter which was to recur over the years, not always happily, was then discussed. Apparently our Association's fees were not in line with those of the County Association and were therefore officially disapproved.

At the February Committee Mr. Berger reported on a meeting with Miss Gane, the County Nursing Officer, who said that our application for membership of the County Association had been made, but the rules not carried out, so the County Grant must be refused, until the salary and the scale of fees were up to County standard. This was eventually agreed, so it would be necessary to increase the salary of our nurse to £104 a year, from 1st March. (This was at a time when the wages of farm labourers were in the region of 30 shillings - £1.50 - a week). She would be entitled to half a day off each week and to two fortnights holiday a year, in spring and summer, "to be fixed as far as possible to avoid any maternity cases."

The Secretary was also to ask County about the grant advertised for 'Tubercular Cases' and to find out just what a 'Tubercular Case' meant. Changing the area covered also came up frequently and at that meeting it was proposed that Blagdon and Leigh Hills should be given up and Corfe included inst. We now discover that the subscribers were to pay 4 shillings a year in future, but collectors should aim at getting only one shilling each quarter, as it would be easier for most people to find.

Meetings were usually at the Vicarage at this time, with 8 or 9 Committee members present. Our district nurse was required by the County to make regular visits to the chronically sick and Old Age Pensioners who came under their Grant Scheme, "bedridden cases to be bathed once a week". Miss Gane's dicta are recorded in the Minutes as "impartially understood, but not enthusiastically received."

Collectors reported in July that "the people complained a great deal of the increase in fees", now raised to 10 shillings a year for some, and refusals near that the Association risked working at a loss. One expense would be Nurse's cottage, as the furniture there was "very out of repair", so £20 must be taken "for more necessary things".

It was agreed that non-subscribers sending for Nurse would be charged two shillings a visit and not allowed, as formerly, to join the Association at the minute. Nurse had not yet had her 'Spring Holiday', owing to maternity cases so numerous. She also had to attend at both schools for medical examinations; should receive a grant for this and for any dental work. New ~~...~~ were promised for the 'Baby Bag'.