

Fever Hospital, Cavan



I was sick and you visited me

When the nurse in the Fever Hospital, Cavan resigned in 1885, the Board of Guardians placed an advertisement in the daily and local newspapers inviting applications for the post. There were no applications and repetitions of the advertisement yielded no contender. A probable reason for the lack of interest was the mayhem, which reigned, in the Cavan workhouse at that time. Neglect and abuse of the inmates was rampant, and the staff – who were themselves destitute, were appropriating provisions intended for the needy.

At the request of the Bishop of Kilmore, the Sisters of Mercy stepped in. An application for the post of nurse was submitted in the name of Sr. Margaret Mary Geraghty. Her application was successful and three Sisters subsequently took up residence in accommodation provided by the Board of Guardians.

Mr Timothy Boland, a Belturbet businessman, who proposed Sr. Margaret Mary for the post, told the Board *“the superiority of the Sisters of Mercy is well known - the result of their labour can be clearly seen by applying to the War Office, where their quality as nurses is well known”*.

Workhouse Infirmary



St. Felim's Hospital

Prior to 1890 horrendous conditions prevailed in the Workhouse Infirmary. There were no trained nurses and the patients were in the care of inmates who were liable to give incorrect medicines. After a decision had been made to employ two nurses, Sr. M. Teresa Ryan and Sr. M. Joseph Maguire went

to work there. They were accommodated in part of the Infirmary. The Sisters maintained a presence in the Infirmary (which later became known as St. Felim's) until its closure in 2003, when the last serving Sister moved with some of the patients to a new nursing unit in Virginia, Co Cavan.

Surgical Hospital, Cavan Town

County Cavan Infirmary was situated on Church Street. It was an old building housing an infirmary when the Sisters took charge in 1913 and records refer back to 1806. The Matron set about replacing antiquated equipment and successive matrons upgraded this very small hospital so that it became a very effective surgical unit with living accommodation for three Sisters and included an oratory. Lack of resources was always a problem; nevertheless the Surgical Hospital served County Cavan well and many an acutely ill patient has lived to tell the tale. It closed in 1989 and Dunnes Stores now trades on the site.

Saint Patrick's College, Cavan

In the mid-sixties, the President of St. Pat's called for a Mercy to take care of the college infirmary made a request. Two Sisters with nursing backgrounds were sent from Belturbet in the late autumn of 1967. They looked after the sick students and staff, and with a woman's touch improved facilities in the infirmary. The chapel and altar also came into their job description. Most of all they were seen as a Mercy presence, dispensing TLC (tender loving care). Later, around 1973 they were joined by a teaching Sister on the staff. This latter Sister later chose to live in Swellan and drive the mile to work. In the early nineties, the last Matron finally retired and soon after she was followed by the teaching Sister, leaving a Mercy void behind.

Lisdarn

In 1962, the jurisdiction of the Matron of the Surgical Hospital was extended to Lisdarn, a TB hospital that was closed in 1960 and now re-opened as an acute medical and maternity hospital. Lisdarn, in turn, was incorporated into the new Cavan General Hospital, which was officially opened in 1989. Two Sisters – one a Matron - worked on staff until 1994 and 2003 respectively.



Lisdarn Hospital

Swellan Court



Convent of Mercy, Swellan Court

Although there had been a Mercy presence in Cavan town since 1885 when Sr. Margaret Mary Geraghty was appointed as a nurse to the Fever Hospital, it was not until 1986 that the Sisters acquired a property. Three adjoining houses in Swellan Court were purchased as a home for Sisters nursing in the hospital. This was the first Convent of Mercy in Cavan town. Swellan Court closed in 2004 when the last Sister moved to Ballinamore. The Sisters now reside in Castlemanor.



Sisters now live in Castlemanor Village, Co. Cavan