THE FOUNDATION OF THE ST. JOHN EYE HOSPITAL

JERUSALEM

Based on an original presentation by John F. Talbot,
Chairman and Order Hospitaller 2008 - 2011
First Hospice

C. 1099

“an enormous multitude of sick people, both men and women, who are attended and restored to health daily at very great expense…the number of these sick people amounted to two thousand, of whom sometimes in the course of one day more than fifty are carried out dead while many fresh ones keep continually arriving.” (John of Wurzberg 1160)
Refoundation of English Order

Grand Priory of England refounded 1831

St. John Ambulance Association founded 1877 for treatment of accidents in civilian life
Sir Edmund Lechmere

Secretary to the Order

3rd Baronet

MP for Tewkesbury 1866-68, Worcester West 1876-92

Cofounder of National Society for the Sick and Wounded in War (later British Red Cross)

Bought back St. John’s Gate for the Order in 1874
First proposal for a hospital in Jerusalem

“…a memorandum (was) presented by Sir Edmund Lechmere Bart., MP, in December 1876…respecting the acquisition of a site for an English Hospital in the City of Jerusalem, (which) was communicated to the Porte…”

(Records of the Order 1879)
Sir Edmund Lechmhere’s visit to Jerusalem 1880:

“…came to the conclusion that, looking to the extensive prevalence of affections of the eye amongst the working population of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, it would be impossible to find an object the value of which would be more immediately felt and appreciated than a dispensary for ophthalmic cases.”

No site was found.
The Prince of Wales “…undertook to convey to the Sultan through the Turkish Ambassador in England, Musurus Pacha, his own personal request that a suitable site might be granted for the purposes…”

The Prince of Wales, son of the Queen of England, manifested the wish that my Imperial Government should be pleased to concede as a gift, a piece of ground of ten thousand square ‘Ziras’ approximatively for the establishment by the English Members of the Society of St. John at Jerusalem a Hospital and a place for tending gratuitously poor invalids.

Such an establishment being one of public utility, it was decided in my council of Ministers that a piece of ground of the extent required should be granted in the same manner and under the same conditions as the one which was previously granted there to the Prince of Prussia for the foundation of a similar establishment by the German Branch of the said Society, and at a place free of all local objections, upon this, my Imperial sanction having been besought, I was pleased to grant it and to convey it through this my noble Firman emanating from my Imperial Divan, and delivered to whom it may concern.
“Nowhere are there are such beautiful eyes, and nowhere so eaten up with dirt and disease, without hope or remedy, as in Syria. A good English Oculist would be God’s own blessing out there, the whole country would swarm to him.”

“The disease begins from birth, with dirt, neglect, flies and sun. You will find old peoples’ eyes, say at fifty, gone incurably. Youths and girls may still be saved, and parents trained to wash the babies’ eyes, and keep flies off which settle on offal, and then on the eyes, and nobody drives them away.”

Isabel Burton, author of “The Inner Life of Syria, Palestine and the Holy Land” (1875) 1881
“…there being no doubt whatever that untold misery results from the inherent and well nigh ineradicable filth, squalor, indolence and ignorance of sanitary laws, pervading the whole population of the Levantine countries…”

William Bowman FRS 1882
Foundation of English eye hospitals

Moorfields Eye Hospital 1805
West of England Eye Infirmary Exeter 1808
Bristol Eye Hospital 1810
Manchester Royal Eye Hospital 1814
Royal Westminster Ophthalmic Hospital 1816
Central London Ophthalmic Hospital 1843
Western Ophthalmic Hospital 1856
Royal Eye Hospital 1857
Public meeting in Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey, chaired by the Earl of Shaftesbury: “…throughout the meeting very hearty sympathy was evinced.”

Estimated capital cost of £2,500 with £400 pa running costs.

Lady Lechmere donated £100
Temporary accommodation

Dr. J.C. Waddell appointed

“Commenced the beneficent work of the Order on 4th December 1882”

Temporary premises next to Thos. Cook depot outside the city near Jaffa Gate
Temporary accommodation

“…the poor of all nationalities and religions flock without any scruple to the English Surgeon, many of the patients coming from places far distant from Jerusalem…The Governor of Jerusalem, Raouf Pacha…pronounces it to be the most practically useful of all the Institutions founded by Europeans at Jerusalem”

(1st Annual Report 1882)
Temporary accommodation

First 6 months:

6318 patients attended
Average 80/day
Up to 140/day
“At least 1,000 cures effected”
Lechmeres revisited Jerusalem in February 1883 determined to find a site for the new hospital

Local Committee + Samuel Wiseman, Dr. Chaplin’s assistant
“The property is situated about eight minutes’ walk from the Jaffa Gate, on the Bethlehem Road, and consists of a piece of ground amounting to more than six acres; on it there is a large house, extremely well built of the best materials, containing eighteen chambers, with an abundant water supply. On one side it is bounded by the Valley of Hinnom, on the other by the Bethlehem Road.”
BRITISH HOSPICE AND OPHTHALMIC DISPENSARY AT JERUSALEM.
“Now that the purchase is known every one is greatly astonished at the bargain we have made. The price is certainly remarkably low, and I had no idea we should have got it for the money.”

The price was £1,050 but they received a promise of £T900 (Turkish lire) from the Sultan, equivalent at that time to £813. “The internal repairs, alterations and fittings will cost about £300, … the whole of which will be covered by the result of the recent successful concert, and the handsome donation of the Duke of Westminster, and further benefactions in aid of providing a ward of some four to six beds for in-patients, have been offered by Lady Lechmere and Mr. MacLean. It now remains for the Order of St. John, with the assistance of the public, to provide the necessary income for the maintenance of this truly hospitaller work.”
Dr. Waddell

Attendances in 1st year: 11,343

Salary £100 pa

“...these poor people freely and thankfully avail themselves of the means offered for escape from that gloom and physical suffering which has hitherto marred their lives...”
1883

Diagnostic list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctivitis</td>
<td>634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corneal scar</td>
<td>993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corneal ulcer</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trichiasis</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blepharitis</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cataract</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr. John Hovelle Ogilvie

Appointed on 22nd May 1884

On condition that “he expressed his willingness to practically study Ophthalmia in London for the next three months…subject to his producing a certificate that he has attended the practice of a Metropolitan Eye Hospital.”
## Hospital activity under Mr. Ogilvie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of consultations</th>
<th>Admissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>11,343</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1,174*</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>13,462</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>17,052</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Hospital closed for most of 1884*
Religious mix of patients

1885:

Protestants 26
Greek, Armenian Christians 1114
Latin Christian 384
Jews 989
Mohammedans 725
Orders have been received from the Ministry of the Interior to enforce the regulation which requires that all persons exercising the profession of Medicine, Surgery, Pharmacy, and Midwifery, and every other branch of the Medical Profession, should be prohibited from doing so unless they be provided with a Diploma or Certificate from the Medical Council; consequently Physicians, Surgeons, Apothecaries and Midwives residing at Jerusalem must proceed to Constantinople and procure for themselves such Diploma or Certificate. For this purpose a period of three months to commence from September 30th is assigned, such as do not do so proceed to Constantinople within the period above mentioned will not be allowed to exercise their profession.

Mohammed Raouf. Governor of Jerusalem and its Dependencies
# Workload under Dr. Cant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1888*</th>
<th>1889</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1892</th>
<th>1893</th>
<th>1895</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outpatients</td>
<td>4916</td>
<td>7383</td>
<td>9187</td>
<td>9447</td>
<td>12216</td>
<td>12614</td>
<td>13625</td>
<td>69379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>1212</td>
<td>4823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>2379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*8½ months from date of arrival

(From 1896 Hospital report)
## Distance travelled by patients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>Admitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Jerusalem</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 6 miles of Jerusalem including Bethlehem</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18 miles</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 18 miles</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1415</strong></td>
<td><strong>510</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1894)
“Dr. Cant’s name is one of note here.”

“He performed an operation for cataract on me last year, quite painlessly and quite successfully.”

“I only got the same attention that he gave an old bedridden woman who was his patient before me.”

“He is in every way a good man, but very retiring” (Blyth 1901)
“The Hospital of the Order was destroyed by the Turks in December 1917 prior to the entry into Jerusalem of the victorious British Troops under the command of General Sir E.H.H. ALLENBY, G.C.B, G.C.M.G.

“The Hospital was rebuilt by the Order of St. John and was re-opened on February 26th 1919 by General Sir E.H.H. ALLENBY, G.C.B, G.C.M.G., Knight of Grace, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Egypt, Palestine and Syria.”
David Bomberg 1927
Hospital closed in 1948 at the end of the British mandate in Palestine

Now a hotel
Hospital reopened in the Muristan in 1949 close to the site of the original hospice
Sir Stewart Duke-Elder (1898 to 1978), surgeon-oculist to the Royal Family over a period of 29 years and chief architect of the Eye Hospital’s move to its present building on the slopes of Mount Scopus in East Jerusalem in 1960.