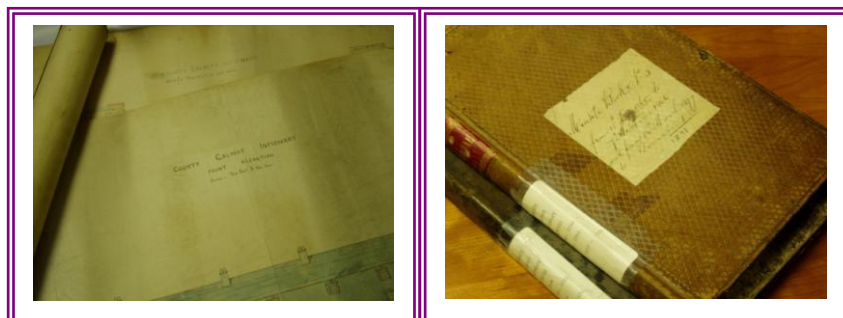


COUNTY GALWAY INFIRMARY
FRONT ELEVATION
SCALE - Ten Feet To One Inch

Galway Infirmary, 1802-1892

Archive Collection

GH2/







GH2/

GALWAY INFIRMARY, 1802-1892

ARCHIVE COLLECTION

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Proceedings of the Govern
County of Galway Infirmary

At a General Meeting held Pursuant to
ment at Ballinasloe, On Wednesday

Present

Viscount Duno

Robert Gregory-



Introduction

This collection of archives consists of two volumes of minutes of proceedings of the Governors of the County of Galway Infirmary (1802-1892), marked No.1 and No. 3. In Volume 'No. 1' (GH2/1) the minutes between 1864 and 1876 simply records the amount that bills were presented for. However, volume 'No.3' has slightly more complete minutes for the period 1865-1866. This volume (GH2/3) also includes details of tenders received, 1866-1870. The collection also includes plans and drawings of the Infirmary 1858 and 1862. It was microfilmed in 2009.

Summary History of the Hospital, 1802-1892

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HOSPITAL AS EXTRACTED FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETINGS OF GOVERNORS OF THE COUNTY GALWAY INFIRMARY, 1802-1892.

James Hardiman in *The History of the Town and County of the Town of Galway from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, 1820, writes that in 1638 Wentworth, the Lord Deputy, directed that a public infirmary be erected in and for the county of Galway. However, it was more than 50 years later before a small building in Woodquay was provided for that purpose. This infirmary was later moved to a house in Abbeygate Street¹.

Prior to that Mayor Stephen Lynch had founded a hospital in High Street, Galway, for the relief of the poor in 1505. Another hospital, St Brigid, was founded in 1542, and may have been at the initiative of an individual citizen, Thomas Lynch Fitzstephen.²

An Act of the Irish Parliament in 1765 called for 'erecting and establishing public infirmaries and hospitals in this kingdom'³, after which a meeting of the Galway Corporation was convened on 17th April 1766 which ordered *'that a committee consisting of the principal gentlemen of the town be, and are, accordingly appointed, to inquire and find out a proper place within the county of the town of Galway for erecting a public infirmary or hospital for the reception of poor, sick and*

¹ Hardiman, James (reprint 1958) *The History of the Town and County of the Town of Galway from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, 1820, Reprint 1958, Connacht Tribune Printing and Publishing Company, Galway, p315

² Lennon, Colm, "Dives and Lazarus in sixteenth-century Ireland", in *Luxury & Austerity, Historical Studies XXI, Papers read before the 23rd Irish Conference of Historians held at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 16-18 May 1997*, eds. Hill, Jacqueline & Lennon, Colm, University College Dublin Press, Dublin, (1999), pp46-65.

³Hardiman, James (reprint 1958) *The History of the Town and County of the Town of Galway from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, 1820, Reprint 1958, Connacht Tribune Printing and Publishing Company, Galway, p315



*disabled persons*⁴. The Governors of the Erasmus Smith School shortly afterwards donated a two acre site at Prospect Hill for the Infirmary⁵. However, it was many years later before building was actually constructed and completed. In 1802 the Infirmary at Abbeygate Street was finally moved to the new accommodation in Prospect Hill.

The maintenance of the new Infirmary was primarily supported by the Grand Jury presentments from the County cess and partly by Parliamentary grants⁶.

Membership to the Board of Governors was simply attained by payment of a subscription. A Life Governor, for instance, paid a subscription of £20, while the subscription of annual membership was, in 1880, £3.3.0 (GH2/3, p46). There was also a small body of Official Governors, which included the Archbishop of Armagh, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the bishop of the diocese and the rector or vicar of the parish in which the infirmary was situated⁷. In 1889 there was 64 Governors. The Governors' attendance at meetings was constantly low, with generally no more than ten Governors attending.

The Infirmary treated many thousands of patients between 1802 and 1892. Admission to the hospital was permitted upon presentation of a letter from a Governor, and was available primarily for the inhabitants of the county of Galway, rather than the town of Galway. In 1844 the Governors, *'with a view of making the present county Infirmary available to the poor sick inhabitants of the county of the Town of Galway'* resolved to send a deputation to the Grand Jury to ascertain what assistance it would offer to *'accomplish this desirable object'* (GH2/1, p61). However, nothing appeared to come of this deputation.

The finances and administration of the hospital was the responsibility of the Treasury, a Governor elected to the position, and the Surgeon. The management of the hospital appeared for the most part, particularly up until the 1880s, to be very satisfactory. A Report in 1821 by a Committee approved by the Grand Jury to examine and report on the County Infirmary accounts found *'them very regular and perfectly correct'* (GH2/1).

The Infirmary suffered constantly from lack of funds, particularly from the 1880s onward, and as a result it was closed on a number of occasions. Also during this period, following the death of the Hospital's long serving Surgeon-in-Charge, Dr Browne, a protracted dispute arose relating to the election of a new Surgeon (see below), which also disrupted its management

⁴ *Ibid.*, p315

⁵ A note on a front page of the first volume of minutes (GH2/1) of proceedings of the Governor's meetings records that in Hardiman's History of Galway, it is written that '1765 Board of Erasmus Smith granted 2 acres of ground forever' on which to build a County Infirmary' (GH2/1, p2).

⁶ Murray, Dr James P, *Galway: A Medico-Social History*, Kenny's Bookshop & Art Galleries Ltd, Galway, (n.d. c 1994)

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp60-61



Due to the ongoing financial and managerial difficulties the Governors petitioned government to introduce a Bill into Parliament which would re-constitute the hospital as a General Hospital for both the county and town of Galway.

In 1892 the Galway Hospital's Act was introduced into legislation, under which the administration and management of the Infirmary was more formally established. Between 1892 and 1922 it was managed by a Board of Management, comprised of 52 members elected from the representatives for the Poor Law Unions of county Galway. The Board reported to the Local Government Board, and required its sanction before the implementation of many decisions.

From 1st January 1922 the Hospital was taken over by the Hospital, Homes and Homes Assistance Committee⁸. The Galway Hospital, formerly known as the Infirmary, was phased out from 1922 and closed in December 1924. The building on Prospect Hill was later enlarged and refurbished and used as office accommodation by Galway County Council⁹. The Workhouse was developed as a Central Hospital to serve both the City and the County¹⁰.

The minutes of proceedings of the Governors' meetings indicate that no meetings were held between the Spring Assizes of 1805 and the Lent Assizes of 1807. There is also a gap in the minutes between 1807 and April 1816, though it was ordered then that quarterly meetings be held in the months of October, January, April, and July (GH2/1, p18). However, the meetings continued to be held on an irregular basis for some years. The minutes for 1837 include the signature of attendees. In 1843 the Governors resolved that they should meet on the first Wednesday of each month (GH2/1, p53). However, often as only one, two or three Governors attended on the appointed date no meetings were held. In 1888 the Governors decided to hold a meeting on the first Thursday of each month and for their quarterly meetings to continue (GH2/3, p108).

There is another substantial gap in the minutes between January 1848 (when the Institution was in debt to the amount of £133.11.2) and April 1859. Furthermore, in the volume referred to as 'No. 1' (GH2/1) the minutes between 1864 and 1876 simply record the total amount of bills that were presented for payment. However, the volume referred to as 'No.3' has slightly more complete minutes for the 1865-1866 period, but then has a gap until March 1877. The

⁸ Galway Hospital, 1892-1922 archive collection GH1/2, 21 December 1921

⁹ The building, originally constructed in 1802 and subsequently enlarged, was demolished in circa 1996, and replaced by Galway County Council in 1998 with a newly constructed modern building.

¹⁰ The Workhouse complex of buildings was demolished in the 1950s, with a new Regional Hospital constructed close by. The Regional Hospital changed its title in the early 21st to University College Hospital Galway (UCHG).



Galway Weekly Advertiser and Galway Vindicator newspapers however do carry reports of weekly admissions, discharges, death and beds occupied.

At its meeting of new Governors held in Ballinasloe on 6th October 1802 it was resolved that Lord Luke Clonbrock be President of the Infirmary. A Vice-President was also decided upon. In addition the Governors resolved that five *'Governors shall be necessary to draw any bill upon the Treasurer of whom the President or Vice President as the case may be, to be one'* (GH2/1, p4). It was also decided to appoint a Clerk to take the minutes of proceedings of the Governors' meetings, keep accounts and preserve the books and *'do such other acts as he shall be required to do by the Governors at meetings, or in the interval of Meetings...'* (GH2/1, p4).

The Governors also ordered at this meeting to have a drawing made of the plan of the different stories of the present shell of the building and a report be made on the current status of it. This was then to be forward to London for the attention of Mr Hardwicke, who would then be required to give his opinion on the *'...best means of completing the shell so as to make an Hospital hereof as healthy and convenient as the nature of the thing will admit'* (GH2/1, p5).

At the meeting of 8 April 1803 it was noted that a Mr Roger O'Connor gave up possession of the Infirmary to the Governors, who then ordered its repair (GH2/1, p6).

In July 1803 the Governors approved the plans proposed by Mr Richard Fahy, architect, for raising the heights of the windows on the first and second floors and also in the attic of the Infirmary (GH2/1, p7).

In 1805 it was noted that *'...one half of the Infirmary is capable of containing thirty beds independent of an Operation room, a surgery, Committee room and all proper offices for attendance. Ordered that the remaining half be given up for the resident of accommodation of Doctor Veitch Surgeon to the Institution ...'* subject to various conditions (GH2/1, pp11-12).

It was also ordered that the number of beds be increased from eleven to eighteen, *'it appearing that the funds of the Institution will admit thereof and that an additional nurse be employed'* (GH2/1, p12).

We have also examined the Rooms and found them perfectly clean and in excellent order and having examined the patients in the Institution find them perfectly satisfied with their food and general treatment having exactly conformable to the Printed Regulations, on the whole we have to express our highest satisfaction with the General conduct of the Institution by Doctor Veitch' (GH2/1, p22).



In 1837 the Governors noted the passing in the House of Commons of legislation for the regulation of the Medical Charities of Ireland. The Governors resolved that they did not object to the legislation '*providing for the adequate support of such medical charities, and to secure the proper and judicious application of funds thereof. ...*' (GH2/1, p36). They welcomed the establishment of an independent Board of Inspectors of Medical Charities, while at the same time expressing concern about its own status, considering that the hospital was legally vested in them and by their subscriptions supported it for many years previous. In addition, it recommended that provision be made by the Board for the adequate payment of salaries for the Infirmary's Medical Officers (GH2/1, pp36-37). The Governors also placed on record the fact that it had for many years inspected the institution and always found it be managed, by the Medical Attendants, in accordance with the rules and regulations established for its governance. It finally resolved that it trusted the government would not '*interfere with our vested rights of managing our own property and that of the county institution to us, without dissent for near a century, that on the contrary same will be recognised as well as own rights of the recommendation of patients*' (GH2/1, p37).

In February 1845 the Governors felt that they did not have sufficient funds to support a greater number of patients than 45 daily (GH2/1, p66).

In November 1845 over £500 was '*expended in the Infirmary up to the 5th of October, and that the balance in the Treasurers hands would not be sufficient to maintain the Institution to the 5 of January next. Resolved that the number of patients in the Infirmary be reduced to an average of twenty per day and that no more than three nurses be kept in the Hospital*' (GH2/1, p68). At the commencement of 1847 the Infirmary was in debt to the amount of £133.11.2, with the expenditure for the year ending 5th January 1848 was £757.8.7. (GH2/1, p79).

In 1889 the minutes record that a sum of £866.7.7 was standing to the credit of the Governors (GH2/3, p129). The Infirmary suffered severely from lack of fund on many occasions, particularly between the 1880s and 1892, closing on several occasions as a result.

General repairs, including the painting, white washing and glazing of the entire hospital, were carried out in 1846. In addition, tenders were requested for the construction of three water closets (GH2/1, p70).

In 1859 it was estimated it would cost £555 to put the Infirmary in a proper state of order (GH2/1, p86). In October 1859 the tender of John Semple and Patrick Nugent for £574 sterling was accepted by the Governors for the repairs to the Institution (GH2/1, p92).



In October 1859 Dr Veitch, Surgeon submitted a report to the Governors regarding the better management of the Infirmary and recommended '*that there be two nurses able to read and write at fair wages say ten pounds per year with rations coal and candle. That there should be two ward maids to do the washing and cleaning of the House and assist in sitting up at night when required...that there should be a Laundry maidand that there should be a proper laundry erected with airing presses etc; that there should be a good cook say at six pounds per annum with rations; ...*'. Following which the Governors decided to appoint, for the present, a Nurse and Cook only (GH2/1, pp94-95). In December 1859 the Governors were advised that no application '*was received for the situation of a nurse who could read and write*' (GH2/1, p97).

In 1865 the Governors ordered that a Laundry was necessary and ordered that one be '*fitted up according to plans and specifications to be prepared...*' (GH2/3, p1).

From 1877 it was directed that the accounts of the hospital be laid before the Local Government Board's auditor on an annual basis. From this point forward the minutes also record that various books, such as the Infirmary Ledger and Bank Pass Book were examined and compared at each meeting.

In 1879 an estimate in the amount of £14.10.0 from Michael Burke was accepted for the painting the internal wood work of the Infirmary, with the oils and colours to be supplied by the Governors (GH2/3, p34).

In 1877 the Governors resolved that the Local Government Board '*have the Infirmary's account annually audited by Government auditor*' (GH2/3, p7). It also directed that a Gentleman in each Barony, who is not a Governor, be appointed to grant admission to the Infirmary subject to the condition that each '*patient recommended by such Gentleman shall pay a sum of one shilling per day to be guaranteed by the Gentleman...*' (GH2/3, p10). Mr Robert Bodkin of Annagh, Ballygluinin, who was appointed to act for the Barony of Clare, declined the position stating, '*I am unable to avail myself of this as it is encumbered with conditions to which I should object as being at variance with every principle on which a charitable Institution is founded, more especially one largely subsidised by County rates to which every cess payer contributes*' (GH3/2, p12). In April 1878 the Governors recommended to the Grand Jury that this arrangement be amended, and to '*notify that patients will in future be admitted without this charge on a letter of recommendation from a Magistrate of the County, subject to the opinion of the Surgeon that the case is suitable and that the Governors consent*' (GH2/3, p24).



Following the death of Dr Browne, who had been Surgeon in the Hospital for over 40 years, notices were posted in the local and national newspapers of the election of a new resident surgeon to be held by the Governors on 10th December 1887. Life Governors had the right to vote in the election. On 10th December prior to the commencement of the election, nine additional gentlemen presented themselves at the meeting together with a cheque of £21 each payable to the Governors, *'thus constituting themselves Life Governors'* of the Institution (GH2/3, pp90-91). There then appears to have followed a protracted meeting, with some members objecting to the newly paid up Governors being entitled to a vote, and also an objection on the basis that some other members were not fully paid up members. However, an election of the applicants followed resulting in the election of Dr Nicholas Colahan (GH2/3, pp90-95).

Following this meeting, and several objections regarding the status of Life membership, and the voting entitlement of the newly paid up and other Governors, it appears that a legal case ensued between Dr. Kinkead and Governors of the Infirmary, challenging the legality of the election. As a result the Registrar, Mr James Loftus, was served with a notice from the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice to appear before it with all Books and Papers in connection with the case (GH2/3, p97). A lengthy meeting was held in July 1888 where a solicitor for Dr Kinkead presented several documents to the Governors which stated that *'Dr Colahan was not legally elected, and that Dr Kinkead had filed a Petition showing cause that his election was valid, and claiming a right to be recognised as Surgeon of the Infirmary'* (GH2/3, p111). It was decided at a vote of 36 to 23 that pending receipt of the Court decision on the legality of the election of the Surgeon, that Dr Colahan be left in charge of the Infirmary.

In November 1888 the Governors received the Court's opinion where the Institution was ordered to *'admit to the place and office of Surgeon to said Infirmary'* Dr Richard Kinkead (GH2/3, p123). However, the Governors decided to defend the action.

In February 1889 the Governors were advised by their Solicitor, Mr John Kilkelly, that the Court gave a *'unanimous decision in favour of the Governors of the Co. Galway Infirmary – and that each party should bear their own costs'* (GH2/3, p133). Nevertheless, some of the Governors wanted another election, in particular Colonel James O'Hara who brought a case against the Governors. In June 1889 an Order from the High Court was read at a meeting which effectively ordered *'that they the Said Governors...forthwith proceed to the Election of and to elect a Surgeon to, and of, and for the said Infirmary ...'* (GH2/3, p151), which the Governors then decided to appeal.



Upon receipt, in September 1890, of a 'Mandamus' from the Court to proceed to hold an election for a Surgeon a date of 12th October was set for the election (GH2/3, 16 September 1890). A quorum of Governors did not attend and so no election took place on that date.

Meanwhile, Dr Colahan remained in the post until the Galway Hospitals Act of 1892, which assigned the appointment of permanent medical staff in Galway Hospital to the Local Government Board in Dublin¹¹.

In 1889 a public meeting was to be called *'for the purpose of considering the necessity and importance of maintaining and developing the County Galway Infirmary which is so very valuable a public institution'* (GH2/3, p144). At the meeting on 17th June 1889 a resolution adopted at Baronial Session in Athenry was read which stated *'We the Magistrates and Cess Payers of the Athenry Barony assembled here to-day at Baronial Sessions have learned with regret that some of the Grand Jurors at the last Assizes voted the closing of the County Infirmary was closed the driving into the Workhouse Hospital all the cess-payers who would require Hospital Treatment. We need hardly say this would be repulsive to the feelings of the cess-payers at large, and we on their behalf ask the Grand Jurors as a body, not to be a party to a course which would in the end give dissatisfaction to all, and be detrimental to the interests of the poor'* (GH2/3, p146). Similar resolutions were also passed at other Baronial sessions.

At a meeting on 18 July 1889 the Governors resolved that the Infirmary be closed *'for the present as there was no money to carry on the Institution'*. The Registrar was ordered to issue circulars to all Governors advising that no further patients could be admitted until further notice (GH2/3, pp156-157). It was decided in August that the Governor's Law Adviser be asked to correspond with the Chief Secretary with *'the view of urging on a Bill in Parliament expected to be introduced regarding the Infirmary and of drafting details if necessary'* (GH2/3, p158). A month's notice was ordered to be issued on all Officers of the Infirmary advising that their services cease.

At a Special meeting held on 22 August 1889 the Chairman Mr Henry S. Persse requested the resolution closing the Infirmary be rescinded on the basis that he would fund the Hospital: *'...he would take upon himself the responsibility of arranging for any funds required for the maintenance expenses, until other funds are obtained – probably next March'*. The Governors accepted this offer thanking the Chairman for *'the liberal manner in which he had come forward to relieve the Infirmary from the difficulty under which it was placed – and that his*

¹¹ *ibid.* p6.



action in this instance as in many others, was noble and generous....Mr Persse was always foremost in every action that was calculated to benefit the people of Galway' (GH2/3, p162-163).

In November 1889 an application was made for a Presentment of £700 to maintain the institution for the half year from 5 July 1890 to 5 January 1891 (GH2/3, p170)

A Commission of Inquiry into the management and maintenance of the Infirmary was held in 1889 which reported to the Lord Lieutenant in February 1890. The Governors considered the report at a Special Meeting held on 20th September 1890, where it resolved that they desire the funding of the Hospital to continue to be paid by Baronial rate, rather than poor rate. The issue was further discussed at a meeting on 10th March, when this decision was reversed and it was decided *'that the funds for maintenance of the Institution be derived from the Poor Rates, instead of the Baronial rating'* (GH2/3, p184).

At the same meeting the Governors also resolved *'That we the Governors here assembled regret extremely that the Governors who are entitled by Act of Parliament to issue advertisement for the election of a Medical Officer have never attended since the death of Dr Brown in sufficient numbers to form a quorum, to issue said Notice, and that we consider the deadlock in the finances of the Infirmary entirely due to their want of action in this regard'* (GH2/3, p185).

At a Special Meeting held on 11 July 1890 the Governors resolved, once again, to close the Hospital due to lack of funds and resolved that the property of the hospital be placed in the hands of a Committee. One month's notice was again to be served on the staff (GH2/3, 11 July 1890).

During October 1890 and for several months afterwards there was negotiation between the Governors and the Queen's College¹² Council on the re-opening of the Hospital of the Infirmary and the use of it for clinical teaching. The College Council proposed giving funds to facilitate the re-opening of the institution, *'The Council in the interest of the College and of the public at large propose to supply funds – not exceeding £500 – for keeping the County Infirmary open during the ensuing Winter and Spring, and they beg to invite the Governors to appoint a Committee of four of their Members to meet a Committee of the Council to make arrangements for carrying out the above proposal'*, (GH2/3, p25 October 1890), several other conditions were also imposed (6 November 1890). The matter was subsequently debated and

¹² Subsequently re-established as the part of the National University of Ireland, and titled University College Galway and later National University College, Galway.



though the Governors were prepared to accept the funding they were not prepared to have Dr Colahan relinquish control over the hospital or its patients in favour of the College's five medical professors. They resolved *'That Dr Colahan, who has been Surgeon in charge for 3 years will arrange for the opening of the Hospital providing nurses etc and will be responsible to the Governors, for the proper management and admission of patients and report on all matters regarding diet of patients, medicine etc. He will communicate with the College Council as to the appointing of a staff of Clinical teachers, and report same to the Governors'* (GH2/3, 6 November 1890).

At a Special Meeting of 22 November Dr Allman, of the College Council, advised the Governors that they had no authority over the Medical Professors, who attended at the Infirmary on a voluntary basis and further stated that *'The [College] Council applied for liberty to the Government to expend a sum of £500 and having got that privilege, the Council now merely ask that Dr Colahan and the Medical Professors of the College should be on equal terms – and if this were not done he feared the other Professors would not act...'* (GH2/3, 22 November 1890). By December arrangements were agreed upon which appeared to suit both parties. It was agreed that three of the Medical professors would carry out clinical teaching in the Hospital, with each having their own duties and being responsible for their own work but being responsible to the Governors of the Infirmary. In addition, it was agreed that two unpaid resident pupils would be *'received'* to assist Dr Colahan (GH2/3, 27 December 1890).

In 1890 the Governors then set a new scale of charges for patients, with Admiralty Patients to be charged 2 shilling per day, and Constabulary patients 1 shilling per day. All other classes of patients were to be charged at a rate not exceeding 7 shilling or less than 3 shillings a week, with payments to be made in advance.

In Spring 1891 the Governors then set about approaching the Chief Secretary again, to request that a Bill be brought before Parliament which would re-organise and better establish the Infirmary (see GH2/3, 6 February, and 2nd April 1891, for instance), as had been recommended by the Commission of Inquiry into the Institution in 1889. A Petition was collected which included the signatures of *'one Archbishop, and three Bishops'* (GH2/3, 2 April 1891). The petition was passed to the Lord Lieutenant during a visit to Galway the May 1891.

Also in May 1891 the Governors resolved that *'As on and after 1st July next, there shall be no Funds available for the maintenance of the County Galway Infirmary, the Governors, unwilling to close the Institution without trying every expedient, unanimously resolved to appeal to the charity of the County and County of the Town of Galway, and the public generally, for*



Subscriptions to enable them to keep the Infirmary open, pending legislation for its Permanent Re-construction, as a General Hospital for the West of Ireland, which legislation the Governor have reason to hope will be carried into effect within the present year' (GH2/3, 29 May 1891).

Following receipt of subscriptions from the public the Hospital then remained opened until December 1891, though clinical teaching continued at the institution funded by the College. Thereafter the hospital remained opened for paying patients.

At the final meeting for which minutes exist, held on 6th January 1892, the Governors resolved *'That the Infirmary be kept open for paying patients, but the Governors are not prepared to admit students of the Queen's College for Clinical teaching unless on the same terms as already acted upon in December 1890 and decline accepting the terms of the Resolution of the College Council of the 19th December 1891'*. The Council's resolution proposed that the College would financial support the Hospital by means of a grant, on the condition that its five Professors of the Faculty of Medicine were placed in charge of the Patients, as had been recommended in the Commission of Inquiry's Report (1889).

The Galway Hospital Act was shortly afterwards brought into effect, which established a new Board of Management for the Hospital. The Board held its first meeting on 16th August 1892. The Board reported to the Local Government Board and required its sanction before the implementation of many decisions. Mr Henry S. Persse, former Chairman of the Governors of the Infirmary, was elected Chairman for one year, and Mr James Loftus who had acted as Hospital Registrar for the Infirmary since 1877, was appointed Registrar to the Board at a salary of £30 per annum. Dr Colahan remained on the medical staff supported by several other doctors. The minutes of this Board between 1892 and 1922 form the archive collection GH1/.

Arrangement

This collection consists of two main categories of records, minutes of the Governors of the County Infirmary, and plans and drawings of the building. At the back of one volume of minutes (GH2/3) details of some tenders received are given.

The item reference number (e.g. GH2/1) should be used in full when citing documents or records, and each reference cited should be preceded by the initial GCCA (Galway County Council Archives, e.g. GCCA GH2/1).



Overall this collection illustrates aspects of the early administration of the County Infirmary. It should be of interest to administrative, social, medical, and local historians. The minutes are rather sparse, giving very little detail on the working or living conditions of the time.

The extracts from the various Minute books listed herewith are intended as a representation of the proceedings. The purpose of their inclusion is to give the reader an indication of the Governors' areas of concern and responsibility. It is hoped that the extracts will clearly and fairly reflect their work and involvement with the administration of the Hospital.

Readers are advised if interested in the subsequent management and administration of the Hospital to also consult the archive collections for Galway Hospital, 1892-1922 (GH1/), and the County Galway Board of Health & Public Assistance, 1922-1941, (GC5/). These collections are held by Galway County Council Archives.

In addition, readers are asked not to view as definitive the appended list of Hospital staff or list of Governors.

Overall the collection is in relatively good condition. The minutes are recorded in bound volumes, on good quality paper which carry a water mark bearing the dates 1798 (GH2/1) and 1862 (GH2/3).

Patria McWalter
Archivist



Related Collections

Records held by Galway County Council Archives:

- Galway Hospital, 1892-1922, (GH1/)
- County Galway Board of Health & Public Assistance, 1922-1941, (GC5/)
- Hospital & Dispensary Committee Minutes, 1922-1942, (GC6/) (much of the material is closed due to its sensitive content)
- Hardiman, James, volume of drawings, GS01/1

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*Proceedings of the Government
County of Galway Infirmary*

*At a General Meeting held Pursuant to
Act at Ballinasloe, On Wednesday*

Present

Viscount Duno



Appendices

Appendices



1. LIST OF SOME OF THE HOSPITAL STAFF

Hospital Registrar

Reed, Thomas	1843 – 1877
Loftus, James	1877 – 1892

Doctor /Surgeon

Veitch, James	1802 – 1833 a native of Scotland and was the first Catholic appointed to such a position in Ireland.
Veitch, Andrew	1833 – 1862
Brown, James V.	1862 – + 2 November 1887 (GH2/3, p83)
Colahan, Nicholas	1887 – 1892

Apothecary

Broughalle, P.J.	1843 - +?1863
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House Keeper / Matron

Mooney, Mrs	1840 - 1881 (submitted resignation due to ill health, GH2/3, p51, & GH2/3, p114)
Read - Acting Matron	1881 - 1888
Stafford	1888 – ?

Head Nurse

Lambert	18?? – 1888
Mooney, B.	1888 - 1889

Porter / Gate Keeper

Pierce, Robert	1807 – +1823
Walsh, Pat	? – 1888
Kennedy, Joseph	1889 – 1891 (acting Head Bailiff to Mr Redington's estate, GH2/3, 2 April 1891)
Kenney, Mrs	1891 – 1892

Hospital Sergeant

Glynn, Michael	?1858 – 1892
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Chaplains (1862)

<i>Established Church,</i>	Rev. John Treanor.
<i>Roman Catholic</i>	Rev. Patrick Kearney



Appendix 2

2. LIST OF SOME OF THE GOVERNORS

Ashborn, Lord – Lord Chancellor of Ireland	Kirwan, Denis
Athy, James	Lambert, Walter, Cregclare
Bernard, Percy B., Castlehacket	Lambert, Thomas Dillon, Cregg Clan
Blake, John of Windfield	Lambert, James Staunton, Cugg Clan
Blake, Valentine, Baronet	Lynch, Patrick M.
Blake, Francis, Bayview	Lynch, Philip, Athy Renvyle
Blake, Errol J. (+1890) Creg Castle	Lynch, Wilson Major (resigned as Governor on the grounds that his right to vote at an election is questioned and that his claim as Life Governor was not established (GH2/3, 29 May 191)
Clarke, Richard	Madden, J.J.
Clarke, R. A.	Mahon, Ross
Enright, N.	Martin, Edward, Tullnya
Lynch, Marcus	Martyn, Robert, Ross
Cullinane, P.	McCormack, Rev. Dr
Blake, Richard	McNamara, John
Blakeney, John	O'Hara, Robert
Bodkin, John, of Annagh	O'Hara, Captain James
Brown, John of Moyne	O'Flaherty, C.P.
Burke, John	O'Sullivan, Very Revd. Provost of Tuam
Clonbrock. Lord Luke (President 1802 – 1807)	Persse, Henry. S. Glenarde
Comerford, Isaac	Persse, Thomas
Cuff. G	Power, B O.
D'arcy, Rev. John	Redington, J.
D'arcy, Richard	Roche, J. R.
Delahunt, M.J.	Ryan, James
Laine, J.J.	Ryan, Malachy Joseph
Grant, J	Robinson, George ¹³
Dillon Bellow, Christopher	St. George, Christopher, Tyrone
Dunlo, Viscount	Taylor, Col.
Ffrench St George, Arthur, of Tyrone +1844) of the Old Governors	Wallscount, Lord (Ardfry)
Ffrench, Honourable Richard, of the New Governors	
Ffrench, Robert, Monivea (President 1807 – 1816)	
Gregroy, Robert	
Griffith, W.D.	
Hynes, B.	
Joyce, Pierce (+1883)	
Joyce, Walter	
Joyce, John	
Kelly, James, Newtown	
Kirwan, Andrew	

¹³ Also member of Clifden's Board of Guardians & its Chairman for many years



Proceedings of the Govern
County of Galway Infirmary
A General Meeting held Pursuant to
ment at Ballinasloe, On Wednesday
Present
Viscount Duno



3. ABBREVIATIONS

Co.Co.	County Council
C.D.B.	Congested Districts Board
D.C.	District Councillor
G.J.	Grand Jury
J.P.	Justice of Peace
L.G.B.	Local Government Board
M.P.	Member of Parliament

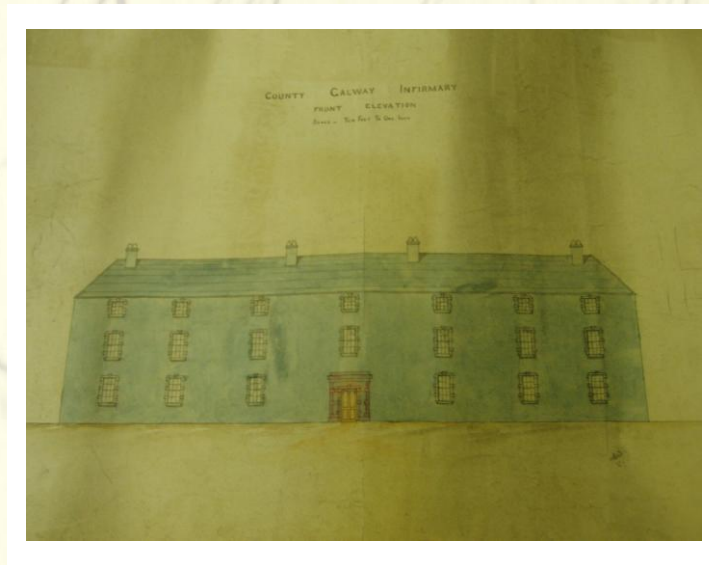


COUNTY OF GALWAY INFIRMARY,

1802-1892

ARCHIVE COLLECTION

GH2/





A. Minutes of Governors of the County of Galway Infirmary, 1802-1892

Bound volumes of manuscript minutes recording details of attendance and proceedings of meetings, held on an irregular basis, but generally quarterly, of the Governors of the County of Galway Hospital relating to the management, maintenance and repair, administration and financing of the hospital. The minutes record the appointment of its President, Treasurer and various other officers and staff.

The minutes include details of tenders for repair works to the Institution and supply of goods such as bread, soap, candles, tea and sugar (GH2/1, p93), occasional reports from the Surgeon and Registrar.

Minutes from *circa* 1839 are slightly more structured and regular than the earlier minutes, though there is a gap between 1848 and 1859, and rather incomplete minutes for the period 1864-1877.

From about 1877 the minutes also include confirmation that various books, such as the Bank Pass Book and Infirmary Ledger, were examined, together with details of orders and letters received from or written to the Local Government Board and others, such as the Queen's College Council, and details of subsequent resolutions passed and instructions issued authorising required action.

The minutes from the mid 1840's are generally dated, and signed by the Chairman of the Board, and the Hospital Registrar or Clerk.

Average size approximately 180pp

1. 6 October 1802 – Includes:- On several pages an annotation noting that reference was made
5 April 1807; to a particular resolution in an Affidavit of James Loftus (Hospital
3 April 1816 – 29 Registrar) in 1888 (see (GH2/3, p97). Also includes:-
January 1848; - 'Resolved That the Present do forthwith give directions for the repairs
9 April 1859 – of the roof of the Building so that the same be made immediately
14 October 1876 watertight' (p5).
- 'Resolved That Doctor Veitch be directed to receive No Patients except such as come properly
recommended by the Governors, a list of whom the Clerk is hereby directed to send him' (p5).
- 'Mr Roger O'Connor attended the Board and having declared that he was then ready to give up
to the Governors the possession of the Infirmary' (p6).



- 'That the sum of one hundred pounds sterling be placed in the hands of Doctor Veitch to provide bedding etc for the Infirmary, and to answer for such repairs' (p6).
- 'Mr French of Monivea pays in his subscription of Twenty-two pounds fifteen shillings sterling into the hands of the President' (p9).
- 'Ordered that Robert Perriss be appointed Porter to the Infirmary and that his former salary of three Guineas be raised to ten pounds yearly' (p14).
- On resigning from the Board of Governors, Lord Clonbrock was honoured thus, 'That the grateful thanks of the Governors of this Institution be returned to Lord Clonbrock for the repeated instances of his kindness, attention, and humanity during the course of his long and troublesome attendance upon the formation of this Institution...the [inestimable] blessings of life and health have been restored and prolonged to so many hundred of our fellow creatures whose prayers and blessings will never fail to accompany him in public or in private life (pp15-16).
- 'Resolved that in future no person except an inhabitant of the County be admitted into the hospital except upon cases of the most urgent necessity from accident and at the discretion of the Surgeon' (p21).
- 'Resolved That the stable and Coach House lately occupied by Dr Veitch and which was built at his own expense be turned into a Turf and Wash House for the use of the Infirmary ... (p23)
- 'Doctor James Veitch having resigned the situation of Surgeon to the Institution and it having been proposed by Lord Wallscourt and seconded by Walter Joyce Esq. ... that Doctor Andrew J Veitch should fill the situation of Surgeon of the Infirmary established at Galway for the County of Galway...' (p33).
- Resolved. That we do hereby give directions to the Architects Messrs Cusack and Brady to furnish us with plans and estimates ...of a house etc for our Surgeon which they will undertake to execute at an expense not exceeding eight hundred pounds to be built on the site of the North Garden near the present Porter's lodge...' (pp38-39).
- 'Resolved that a synopsis of the relief afforded by this Institution and the expenses incurred be made out quarterly by the Register and submitted to the Governors' (p60).
- 'Resolved that the Registrar be directed to procure an order Book in which whatever may be required by either the Physician, Apothecary or Housekeeper must be entered with a requisition signed by them respectively for the supply and also an order signed by one or more of the Governors for obtaining them...' (p63).



- 'Resolved that in future a Journal be kept similar to that kept in the County Prison in which each Officer shall enter his name each day he attends and make any remarks that he may deem necessary and that all persons visiting the Institution be requested to enter their names etc in same' (p66).
- '...it was ordered that Mrs Mooney's (Matron) salary be increased to twenty give pounds a year with usual rations' (p107).

(2.)

3. 18 May 1865 – 27 September 1866; Includes:-
- 16 March 1877 – 6 January 1892
- 'Resolved that we adopt the suggestion of the Committee in reference to admissions, and will at the earliest possible date appoint Gentlemen in each Barony who are not Governors to grant admission subject to the conditions suggested by the Grand Jury Committee....' (p7)
 - 'The Registrar submitted a cheque for £489 Grand Jury Presentment, for endorsement by the Governors, and which was accordingly lodged in Bank of Ireland to their credit' (p22).
 - 'Letters were read from Mr Maxwell of St. Clerans (Craughwell) and Mr B. Bernard, Tuam declining to continue in future their annual subscription to the Infirmary' (p27).
 - 'Tenders for the usual annual supplies in accordance with advertisement were read and considered, and the following were accepted...' (p29).
 - 'The Surgeon handed in a cheque for £3 from the Dowager Countess Clancarty, towards her Annual Subscription to the Infirmary' (p36).
 - 'That the salaries of the Under Nurses now only £5 per annum, be raised to £6, being an increase of £1 and that the Cook's wages be also advanced from £6 to £7 per annum' (p41).
 - 'A letter was read from P.B. Bernard Esq., Castlehacket, requesting to be permitted to become a Governor of the Infirmary.
The Registrar was directed to inform him that the Board of Governors shall be happy to comply with his request, and that the subscription payable by a Life Governor is £20 and that of an annual Governor £3.3.0' (p46).
 - '...approved, that no Books or papers be removed in future from the Board room without the permission of the Governors and that the Registrar be responsible for the safe-keeping of all Books and Documents belonging to the Institution now in his charge' (p96) .



- 1. We understand that a very general wish exists amongst the Members of the Grand Jury of the County, that the presentment to this County of Galway Infirmary should be discontinued.
 2. Before adopting such a course, we the Governors beg the Grand Jury to consider the great loss that would be sustained by this large county, and the Town of Galway, itself by the closing up of this fine Hospital, with its ample accommodation.
 3. We are of opinion that by changing the preset constitution of the Co. Infirmary Act Geo. 3, Cap. 20 which Act renders the Infirmary practically useless as a public Hospital, and establishing it on a broader bases, extending its advantages to both Town and County alike a great blessing would be conferred upon a large section of the community who are at present excluded from the advantages of Hospital treatment.
 4. We are aware that at present, the only Hospital accommodation for the suffering poor of this large town, and the surrounding Union is the overcrowded sheds or wards of the Galway Workhouse, which have been recently condemned by a Government Commission, and we cannot close our eyes to the fact, that hundreds of respectable people, urgently requiring Hospital treatment, object under any circumstances entering a Workhouse Hospital at all.
 5. We are of opinion therefore that with a continuance of the Grant from the County Grand Jury, and the allocation of a certain fixed sum, from the rates, the County Infirmary in its altered condition as a General Hospital would confer an immense benefit in the town and county of the Town, without increasing by one farthing the present taxation, on the contrary we believe that the workhouse expenditure would be greatly diminished, while the poor infirm inmates, would have more accommodation and more attention.
 6. We find, that Act 25 to 26 Victoria, Chap 83, Sec. 7 authorises Workhouse patients being treated, in any Hospital or Infirmary, the cost of same being borne by the rates.
 7. We also believe that under the new system numerous patients would enter the Infirmary who are willing and able to pay for their support while under treatment, and who are now obliged to pay for their maintenance, while under treatment of the Workhouse Hospital' (pp98-100)
- It was also resolved unanimously, that an application be made at next Presentment Sessions for the Town of Galway, for a sum of £100 towards the maintenance of the Infirmary and that the Town Cess payers be requested to co-operate with the Governor's in maintaining its usefulness' (pp108-109).
- Report from the Surgeon advising 'that since the date of last monthly meeting to the present, 61 Patients were admitted to the Co. Infirmary for treatment during the same period 70 Patients were treated as a extern patients giving a total of 131 for March.
Of the 61 patients admitted to Hospital 12 were from the Town of Galway, the remaining 49 were sent in form almost al parts of the County...



Amongst the Town cases were some sever accidents – a severe case of strangulated hernia sent in by one of the dispensary Medical Officers.

A patient was sent in from Mountbellew to be operated upon for cancer of the hand....' (pp147-148).

- 'The Registrar upon the table the statement of the Liabilities due on the Institution as furnished amounted to £892.0.0 which sum be stated accrued owing to the Presentments for the Infirmary having been stopped amount to £1,300.0.0 (11 July 1890).
- 'Dr Colahan explained that when he had an interview with the Committee of the College Council on the 16th May, he did not then expect the Governors would pass the foregoing Resolution, and now that the Governors are disposed to keep the Institution open, he would suggest that Patients be admitted as usual from the 1st June' (29 May 1891).
- 'The Lord Bishop of Galway remarked that it was proposed to make the Infirmary a general hospital for the West of Ireland, the Governors of the Institution and the public were endeavouring to keep this Hospital open on its present footing out of their own pockets and when the Government see that it will show them that such an Hospital is much required. Other hospitals are getting grants towards their maintenance and the Galway Hospital is just as deserving as any of them' (6 July 1891).



B. Tenders for Supplies, 1866-1870

- (3). 1866-1870 Detailed list of tenders submitted recording the name of the person(s) tendering, items tendered for, such as 'best bread per 4 lb', sugar, and turf per box. Often includes details of the result of the tenders, such as 'tender for all accepted or rejected.

5ff

B. Plans and Drawings of Galway Infirmary 1859

4. August 1859 Colour drawing of the front elevation of the County Infirmary; a three storey building, with three windows either side of the main door. Annotated 'Samuel Roberts Aug. 1859'.
Scale ten feet to one inch.
Size: 45.5 x 63 cm
5. [August 1859] Colour ground plan of County Galway infirmary, showing the hall, with the waiting room, kitchen and scullery to the right, and flanked on the outside by a flagged passage leading to several outbuildings. On the left of the hall is the Board Room, House Keeper's Room, and Nurse's bedroom. On the left side of the building is the plan of several outbuildings.
Size: 45.5 x 63 cm
6. [August 1859] Colour ground plans of County Galway infirmary, showing the hall, with the waiting room, kitchen and scullery to the right, and flanked on the outside by a flagged passage leading to the Dead House, Coal Store, Straw House, Ash-pit and Manure yard to the rear. On the left of the hall is the Board Room, House Keeper's Room, and the Nurse's bedroom. On the left side of the building is the Stable and Coach House, with a section of the Cess pool to the rear of the stables. Includes the position of down pipes, and broken lines showing the direction of the sewers for the drainage of the yard, and sewers from the water closets.
Two items
Scale 10 feet to an inch
Size: 45.5 x 63 cm



7. [August 1859] Colour plan of the first and second floor of the County Infirmary. The first floor includes the two small wards, and two other sleeping wards, one being the Men's and the other the Female ward. It also includes the surgery, nurses' room and sergeant's room.

Scale 10 feet to an inch
Size: 45.5 x 63 cm

8. June 1862 Ground plan of the Doctor's House with annotations '*Referred to in Agreement dated 9th June 1862*' signed by John J Brady (architect) and [J.B] Merrick. The House has a porch, a hall, dinning room with kitchen under and bedroom over, closet which has a spare room under, this is adjacent to the pantry which together with the closet has a bedroom above them, a stair way, drawing room, with the dairy under and bedroom over, a library with a store room under and bedroom over. It also has an outdoor W.C., yard, ash-pit, piggeries, cow house and yard.

Scale 6 feet to an inch
Size: 45.5 x 63 cm