

ADDINGTON PARK WAR HOSPITAL

In 1914 the War Office decided to establish a military hospital in the countryside near London for soldiers suffering from acute infectious diseases.

The Trustees of Addington Park generously placed the house and gardens at the disposal of the War Office for this purpose.

The Addington Park War Hospital opened on 13th December 1914 with 130 beds.



However, shortly before its opening, the Hospital had been asked to provide accommodation for convalescents who had had enteric disease (that is, diseases that enter through the mouth and intestinal tract, such as typhoid, paratyphoid and dysentery), so that a search for carriers could systematically be undertaken.

The Hospital Committee agreed and, while hatted wards for 200 patients were being built, some 150 convalescent patients were accommodated in Addington Palace.

By December 1915 more accommodation was needed and, in 1916, additional huts were erected to house a further 350 patients, 150 of which were set aside for Australian convalescents.

While the patients were convalescing at the Hospital, arrangements were made for recreation and entertainment. The nearby Golf course was available for them to play.

Another branch of activity was the maintenance of a cinema at Addington Park Hospital. It became so popular and was used so incessantly that it wore out and began to affect the eyes of the patients. The patients were delighted when a new machine was ordered (costing nearly £90).



Patients also wrote and performed their own plays and gave concerts to amuse themselves - On December 18th 1917, a performance of 'The Better 'Ole' was put on at the YMCA Hut at Addington Park.

It remained open until 1919.

For more information on the War Hospital, see the film showing in the Tait Gallery.

A TRUE LOVE STORY

Christopher Doran was born in Dublin in 1893 and trained in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, later joining the regular army and transferring to the Royal Garrison Artillery until he went to India in 1913. In July 1916, he sailed from Bombay arriving in Basra on 17th July and served with the Royal Field Artillery on the River Tigris.

After returning to England in February 1919 he is shown as being invalided out of the army and was sent to Addington Park War Hospital as he had been suffering from an enteric disease.

Louie Pearce drove a horse and cart at the war hospital to collect vegetables for the kitchens from local farms. Christopher and Louise married on December 24th 1925. Christopher and Louie were grandparents to Lindsay Ould who has been involved in curating this exhibition.

