

We acknowledge the information provided by The Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society in its publication of the *Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham* compiled by James Hodson (revised 2003). This is an invaluable source on the early history of the buildings and streets of The Suffolks.

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SUFFOLK HALL VAD HOSPITAL



Photo by G. H. Martin & Sons, Cheltenham.

SUFFOLK HALL V.A. HOSPITAL, CHELTENHAM.

Burlington House, one of the large houses in Lypiatt Road (formerly Suffolk Lawn) was for the first hundred years of its existence named Suffolk Hall. It came of note in the 1830s as the home of the actress Harriet Mellon (1777-1837).

The daughter of strolling players, she ended up marrying the Duke of St Albans. Suffolk Hall was rented by them, and Harriet and the Duke were renowned for their musical and dinner parties. In the second half of the 19th century it became the Suffolk Hall Preparatory School for boys. It was very much an early school for young boys who were likely to go on to Cheltenham College. Its most prominent pupil was Ivor Brown (1891-1974), a writer best known for his works on literature and the English language. He had a particular interest in Shakespeare, publishing several books about his life and career. From 1942 to 1948 Brown was the editor of *The Observer*, after which he continued as *The Observer's* drama critic until 1954.

At the outset of the First World War, Mr Soames, the owner of Suffolk Hall, loaned the house for use as a hospital. It was staffed by No 26 Gloucestershire Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), and opened on 9th December 1914. The large gymnasium and schoolrooms made excellent wards. A theatre was completely fitted up, and here all the operations were performed until June 1917, after which the more serious cases were removed to the General Hospital owing to the shortage of surgeons, those from Suffolk Hall having left for service. The hospital received cases direct from the front, except during the winters of 1915 and 1916, when it acted as garrison hospital for the troops stationed in Cheltenham. The hospital, owing to the influenza epidemic, was filled to overflowing from January 1919, and the staff went through a very trying time. Of the staff, at the close of the hospital on 29 March 1919, there were seventeen remaining who had worked since the opening in December 1914.

In 1919 it became a school for the blind and by 1926 Suffolk Hall had been renamed Southwood after a former headmaster of Cheltenham College, and for a time it was a boarding house for the college. It retained this name under different ownership until 1960 when it became Burlington House. It now houses a social club.

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THE SUFFOLK KITCHEN & THE SUFFOLK ANTHOLOGY

Two shops in Suffolk Parade that trade under the Suffolk name: