

Glengarry Cottage Hospital, Invergarry



Glengarry Cottage Hospital (left) was built as a house in 1866 the architect being John Rhind of Inverness. In 1872, Edward Ellice of Invergarryⁱ set aside an annual sum of £200 to 'benefit the people of the parish of Invergarry' and, in 1880, his wife used this allowance to have the house extended and converted to 'a building intended as a sick

or fever hospital' with two two-bed wards.¹

In 1883, Mrs Ellice formed a hospital trust which then received the £200 p.a. noted above.ⁱⁱ In 1885, she stipulated at least three trustees and, in 1901, specified that they must maintain and insure the hospital, pay any staff up to £40 p.a. and maintain a stock of medicines. The medicines were administered by a nurse and were for those poor who 'could not or would not leave their home to seek treatment'. This level of intervention by Mrs Ellice suggests that the trustees did not have a hands-on approach and, certainly by 1914, the administration was done by the Glengarry Estate factor. Mrs Ellice wanted surplus trust funds to be allocated, as small annuities, to local poor families and she had a list prepared including, in 1901, £5 to the 'late (former) nurse at the hospital here'.² Such payments continued at least into the 1920s.

From the outset, the trust funded a community nurse who received £30 p.a. and lived at the hospital. She made home visits but was not qualified for sick nursing and, in 1912, was said to work in the community mainly as a midwife.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ His father, also Edward Ellice, made his fortune in the Hudson Bay Company Canada and purchased Glengarry in the early 1800s. In the 1860s, the Ellice family built much of Invergarry village and Invergarry House and lived there until 1926.

ⁱⁱ In her will of 1902, she bequeathed £500 to the trust.

ⁱⁱⁱ Initially this was confined to those living on the Glengarry Estate (1917 survey).

Cottage hospitals relied on the local doctor but, in 1911, Major Ellice noted that no doctor was associated with the hospital. The following year, this was confirmed by the local (Fort Augustus) doctor and, indeed, the parish was served by a Fort William doctor 26 miles distant.³ Given that the intention was to form a hospital, this whole situation is puzzling and the building seems to have been a hospital in name alone. Although it is listed as a hospital in several surveys, including the Dewar Report of 1912, it does not appear to have been listed as such in the county valuation roll.

There was no doctor involvement because there were no patients and, in 1911, this was confirmed by Major Ellice. In 1912, it was said to be used only by casual labourers or tramps and that it was 'never fully intended to be a hospital... rather a station where patients from a distance might meet the doctor privately, where vaccinations can be done and for first aid in case of accidents to wayfarers' although this description does not fit with the original intention.⁴ A 1917 survey stated that the hospital had been used only as a nurse's residence and later evidence confirms that this remained its only function. In 1915, Glengarry Nursing Association was formed and employed a fully qualified nurse who lived in the hospital. The Trust provided £40 p.a. towards her salary and there was local fund raising. By the end of World War 2, the Ellice family (or the Trust) had at one point funded a car for the nurse.⁵

In 1948, the NHS did not take over Glengarry Hospital and it closed around 1950 possibly when Glengarry Nursing Association ceased.⁶ The building was sold to the Hydro-Electric Board which was building dams at Glengarry and Glenquoich. A condition of their contract was to supply a hatchery to maintain fish stocks in the river and the house, now renamed Tigh Mhonaidh, was occupied from 1960-70 by an employee of Ness Fisheries.⁷ It remains a residential property.

References

- ¹ Glengarry Heritage Centre: www.scottisharchitects.org.uk : Glengarry Hospital Trust - Position in the National Health Service National Records of Scotland
- ² Glengarry Heritage Centre
- ³ Report of Highland & Islands Medical Services Committee 1913 (Dewar Report) p73, p75
- ⁴ Dewar Report *op. cit.* p73, p443, p 450, p 456
- ⁵ Hospital Services of Scotland 1920 National Insurance Health Commission p6: Glengarry Hospital Trust Department of Health Papers 1948-49 National Records of Scotland: Glengarry Heritage Centre
- ⁶ Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments www.rcahms.gov.uk
- ⁷ Glengarry Heritage Centre