

The London Hospital Badge – A History

By 1927 many other prestigious hospitals in London already had both a badge for their nurse training schools, and also a league of nurses. Following many requests for a trained nurses badge from 'Old Londoners' it was decided by The London Hospital's Nursing Sub-Committee to order a 'Badge, but one that would be distinctive and of some value...' and that the badge should be comparable with those of other London Hospitals.¹ A month later the committee selected a design which was green enamel and dull silver.² However, in October 1927 it was decided to postpone production of the badge until the hospital was granted a coat of arms.³ In January 1928 the Committee finally selected a design, and Miss Irene Paulin was deputed to ask Messrs. Pinch and Son to produce it.⁴

The London Hospital coat of arms was designed by Sir Gerald Woods Wollaston, the Garter Principal King of Arms and the Richmond Herald. He reportedly favoured incorporating a type of cross called an Ankh, which is the Egyptian sign of life, into the design. A red and white cross was chosen which are the colours of the City of London Corporation's coat of arms. This visually acknowledged the hospital's links with the corporation, which held a lease on part of the land on which The Royal London Hospital still stands today.⁵ It was also considered that the red-and-white cross eluded to the symbol of the Red Cross organisation. It is understood that the silver wreath of laurel leaves was chosen to represent victory over illness.⁶ The three feathers were selected to represent The Three Feathers Tavern in Cheapside where on 23 September 1740, the surgeon, John Harrison and six other men met for the inaugural meeting of the subscribers of the new London Hospital.⁷ Sir William Blizzard, a surgeon at the hospital chose the motto: 'Homo Sum Nihil A Me Alienum Puto': I

¹ Royal London Hospital Archives, RLHLH/A/9/63, Nursing Committee and Sub-Committee minutes, 3 January 1927 - 10 July 1939,

13 June 1927, 18-19. The distinctive Nightingale badge was first issued in 1921.

² RLHA, RLHLH/A/9/63, Nursing Committee and Sub-Committee minutes, 3 January 1927 - 10 July 1939, 4 July 1927, 25.

³ RLHA, RLHLH/A/9/63, Nursing Committee and Sub-Committee minutes, 3 January 1927 - 10 July 1939, 10 October 1927, 27; Royal London Hospital Archives, RLHLH/NE/10/2, Margaret Job, 'History of the training school badge', 1967, 1.

⁴ Margaret Job states that Miss Paulin, who was a member of The London Hospital's nursing committee, had been co-opted onto the committee by the then matron, Miss Beatrice Monk, who wished to 'have a few ladies' on the committee. Miss Paulin was a daughter of Sir William Paulin the treasurer to the House Committee of The London Hospital.

⁵ Margaret Job reported that the lease expires in 2066.

⁶ RLHA, RLHLH/NE/10/2, Margaret Job, 'History of the training school badge', 1967

⁷ RLHA, RLHLH/NE/10/2, Margaret Job, 'History of the training school badge', 1967, 2; A.E. Clark-Kennedy, *The London: A study in the Voluntary Hospital System, Volume One, 1740-1840* (London, Pitman Medical Publishing Company, 1963), 22.

am human and I think nothing human is alien to me, which was College of Heraldry slightly modified.⁸



The larger, style badge, with 'open' wreath.

In April 1928 Queen Mary was presented with badge number one, which she reportedly wore on every visit to the hospital, and which remains in the Royal Collection.⁹ The new badge cost 27/6 and two hundred and fifty were sold in the first year.¹⁰ Margaret 'Peggy' Job states that it was originally introduced for league members only; however this is not clear from the archived hospital records.¹¹ However, unlike this author, when Peggy wrote her article in 1967, she would have had the benefit of first-hand information. In 1933, the current matron May Littleboy, reported in the *League Review*, that the new badges which measured 45 mm across, ripped aprons, because of their weight and size.¹² Miss Littleboy hoped that by reducing its size to 35mm, and therefore the cost to 16/-, more nurses would be encouraged to buy it. A year later Miss Littleboy announced at the League's annual meeting that the change had been very popular, and since altering the badge, 115 had been ordered; 'The beautiful design remains the same, but the brooch is lighter to wear and of a more convenient size.'¹³

⁸ RLHA, RLHLH/NE/10/2, Margaret Job, 'History of the training school badge', 1967, 1-2

⁹ RLHA, RLHLH/N/9/13, Register of Nurses in receipt of School of Nursing Badges, 1927 – 1929, number 1.

¹⁰ RLHA, RLHLH/N/9/13, Register of Nurses in receipt of School of Nursing Badges, 1927 – 1929

¹¹ RLHA, RLHLH/NE/10/2, Margaret Job, 'History of the training school badge', 1967, 3.

¹² RLHA, RLHLN/A/8/2, *The London Hospital League of Nurses Review*, no. 2, November 1933, 5.

¹³ RLHA, RLHLN/A/8/3, *The London Hospital League of Nurses Review*, no. 3, November 1934, 12.



The smaller, modified design.

When Clare Alexander, later Lady Mann, became Matron of The London Hospital in 1941, she asked the House Committee to present every nurse who qualified as a state registered nurse, with the hospital badge and certificate.¹⁴ From December 1942 a London Hospital badge has been presented to every State Registered Nurse who successfully completed their training at The London; this practice continued until 1990 when the Princess Alexandra College of Nursing was merged with the Newham College of Nursing.¹⁵ A number of manufacturers have produced these badges; Pinches & Co., Franklin Mint, and lastly Fattorini.



Above: The London Hospital badge awarded to State Enrolled Nurses (S.E.N.) who qualified at the Princess Alexandra School of Nursing.

¹⁴ RLHA, RLHLH/A/5/66, The London Hospital House Committee Minutes, January 1941-December 1942, 47 and 49.

¹⁵ RLHA, RLHLH/NE/10/2, Margaret Job, 'History of the training school badge', 1967

Pupil Nurse training was established at The London Hospital in 1967, in the newly reformed Princess Alexandra School of Nursing, and ended in 1989 when the role of S.E.N. was abolished.¹⁶ A specific badge for State Enrolled Nurses was designed and this badge measures 30mm.

The London Hospital badge is still worn with pride by all ‘Londoners’, and is used as the base design of the current league badge. The Royal London Hospital League of Nurses have recently commissioned Fattorini of Birmingham, to produce a limited-edition badge for its members, to celebrate the 2020 International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. The design incorporates both the original 1931 badge design and that of the State Enrolled Nurses badge.



Above: The current league badge © Sarah Rogers, 2020



Left: Image © Fattorini, 2020, and Right: Sarah Rogers, 2020

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¹⁶ Edith R. Parker and Sheila M. Collins, *Learning to Care: A history of nursing and midwifery education at The Royal London Hospital, 1740-1993* (Orpington, The Royal London Hospital Archives and Museum, 1998); Loretta Bellman, Sue Boase, Barbara Stuchfield, Sarah Rogers, *Nursing Through the Years: Care and Compassion at the Royal London Hospital* (Yorkshire, Pen and Sword Books Ltd., 2018)