



**PARKHURST
MILITARY
HOSPITAL**

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Date Built and Current Status:

1778 – Still standing

History:

*Military Hospital
Children's Asylum*

Dates as Hospital:

August 1914 – 30 June 1919

Address:

HM Prison Isle of Wight, Parkhurst, Newport



Parkhurst Military Hospital. Picclick.co.uk

Despite an earlier mention that Parkhurst was a military hospital and children's asylum in 1778 it generally appears that Parkhurst prison began life in about 1840. At this time it was a training institution for boys sentenced and waiting for transportation to Australia or New Zealand and it is believed that around 4000 boys passed through Parkhurst. After transportation stopped between 1863 and 1869 it briefly became a Women's prison before transferring into being a male prison in 1869.

On 14 April 1903 an inspection was carried out and was reported as having 75 beds with an additional four for infectious cases and it had around 20 patients at the time of the inspection. The Hospital had 4 non-commissioned officers and 6 orderlies of the Royal Army Medical Corps and 1 Medical Officer. Two sisters were attached to the hospital.

"The hospital occupies what once was a large private house. The building is of brick and tile, is of three storeys and is in good condition. It is isolated, is surrounded by a well-kept garden, and is very well placed. It is some little way from the barracks. The wards are good and are clean and tidy. The bathrooms and lavatories are good and are clean. The staircases are of wood. The equipment in the wards is obsolete. The dressings are kept in drawers. There are no boxes for dressings. The basement is light and clean. There is a very good kitchen in the basement, but it is some little way from the wards. There is ample store accommodation and the various store rooms are clean and well kept. The washing is well done and the shirts and other linen are above the average. In some outbuildings, evidently old stables, there is a foul linen room, a pack store, a prisoners' ward, an infectious ward and a linen store. All are clean and well kept. The wards named are not first rate.

The mortuary is well found and was in excellent condition. At some distance from the hospital is a new building fitted with an admirable disinfecter for clothes, bedding, etc. No use appears to be made of the civil hospital. There is a very old and quite useless operating table in the hospital, but no operating room. Women and children are attended in quarters. The most serious cases would go to the civil hospital.

There are no quarters in the hospital for either the Medical Officer or the sisters. There is no surgeon quartered in the barracks. The Medical Officer lives in the town at a distance of 1½ miles from the hospital. There is no telephonic communication."

Comment- With somewhat extensive alterations this hospital could be made efficient.

Before the days of the Health Service, the Medical Officers at the prison provided medical care for the prison staff and their families, visiting them at home if needed, and serving in fact as their General Practitioners; and a part of the hospital was set aside for the staff and their families who might need hospital care. In the early days, as mentioned, surgeons came from the adjacent Albany Hospital when needed, to operate upon the inmates of the Prison Hospital; this presumably came to an end when the barracks were closed or empty, and later local consultants were called in as required; Mr. Wilson Harlow during his years at Ryde Hospital undertook most of the surgery and was officially appointed as Surgeon to the Hospital, and was followed in this appointment by Mr. Gordon Walker; but other consultants, also visited especially Mr. Philip Grimaldi and Mr. Heckford who did ear, nose and throat work and ophthalmology there. When the other prisons in the neighbourhood, Camphill and Albany came into being, the Parkhurst Hospital served both these as well, so that it dealt with a total population of as many as 2,000; but in addition to its local function it served and continues to serve as a centre within the National Prison Service for psychiatry; prison inmates from all over the country have been brought to Parkhurst for psychiatric treatment and for some time regular sessions for electro-convulsion treatment was held, first at Whitecroft and later within the hospital itself until this form of treatment dropped out of favour. For a short time, about the turn of the century and because of overcrowding in Broadmoor Hospital, while Rampton was being built, a part of Parkhurst Prison was designated as an asylum for the criminally insane; but this was not considered a successful arrangement, in part because of lack of trained staff, and it was soon discontinued.

Another speciality of the Prison Hospital within the Prison Service was the treatment of respiratory disease and especially of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and considerable numbers of patients from other prisons were moved there for such treatment in the 10 to 15 years after the introduction of the Health Service and before the need for treatment for Tuberculosis became less demanding.

During these years a solarium was constructed in order to provide the patients with abundant sunlight and daylight and when the flow of tuberculous patients ceased it was converted into the physiotherapy department.

Five Medical Officers were employed at the hospital; three attached especially to Parkhurst Prison itself and one each for Albany and Camphill, but all co-operating in the work of the hospital; also a number of local General Practitioners used to do some work there on a sessional basis. At all times patients sufficiently seriously ill to require it could be, and were moved to hospitals within the region, mostly to the local hospitals on the Island.

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As well as a Military Hospital, Parkhurst was the headquarters for the military units on the island and also the hub for the searchers, clerical staff and searched records for missing soldiers.

Albany closed as a barracks in 1960 and by the very nature of the location of the hospital within the prison walls there is very little information on its later history.

A purpose built hospital for inpatients was built at HMP Albany in 2007/8 which contains 18 beds. The old building in Parkhurst continues to be used as a healthcare unit and prisoners are transferred to the hospital when necessary. From 1 April 2009 all three prisons; Albany, Camp Hill and Parkhurst combined into the single establishment HMP Isle of Wight. In January 2013 it was decided that Camp Hill would close and did so in March 2013. Care UK took over the running of healthcare services for the prisoner on 1 June 2013.

List of Volunteers at Parkhurst Military Hospital

Name	Duties
Aimes, Maude Elizabeth	Nursing, Orderly & Cooking
Allen, Kathleen Frederica	Nurse
Argue , Kathleen Frederica	Probationer Nurse
Barney, Florence	Ward Maid & Probationer Nurse
Bewsher, Phyllis	Nurse
Bouttell, Lucy	Nurse
Castle, Edith B	Nurse
Haggie, Margaret Helen	General Service
Hall, Grace	Probationer Nurse
Harris, Eveleen	Quartermaster
Headland, Gertrude	Clerical
Hickens, Betty	Cook
Lindsay, Hilda Lucas	Clerical
Peters, Maud Mary	Probationer in Surgical Ward & Nurse
Rance, Mildred Fanny	Nurse
Robertson, Naomi Beatrice	Nurse
Smith, Elsie Mabel	Nurse
Tower, Sylvia Sophia	Nurse
Vivian, Maria	Assistant Cook
Watson, Lilian	Nurse
Wenham, Rose Emma	Dispenser
Wetherall, Annie McNeill	Nurse
Wilkinson, Frances Jean St Lo	Nurse



