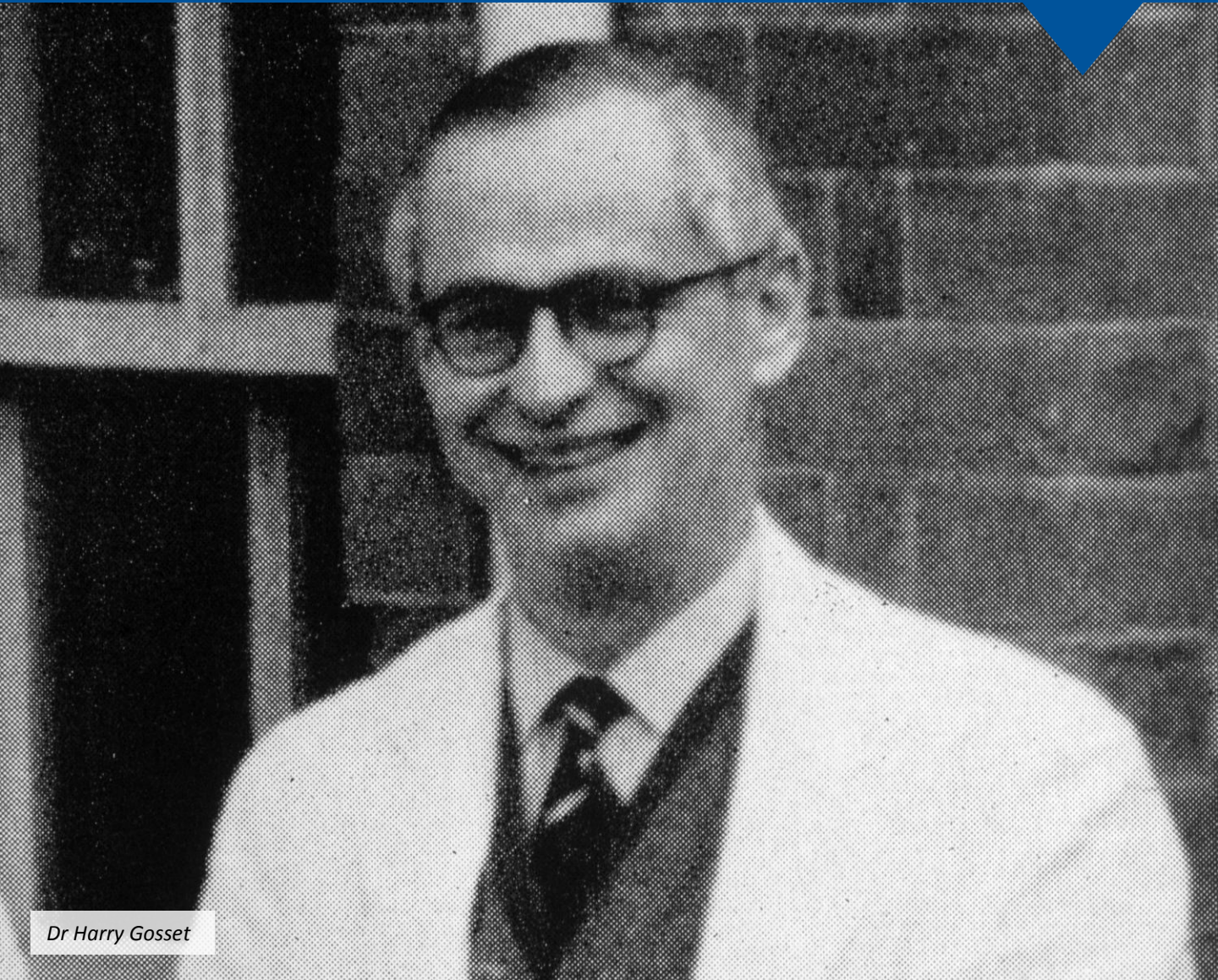


Fifty years of Gosset care



Dr Harry Gosset

This year we are celebrating 50 years since Gosset Ward, our neonatal intensive care unit, opened in Spring 1965.

The ward was named after Dr Harry Gosset, the hospital's first consultant paediatrician, who worked hard to plan for the much-needed facility and who sadly, died just three weeks before it opened.

When the Barratt Maternity Home opened in 1935 there was a small premature baby unit on the ground floor. Over the years it moved location as more space was required for extra incubators. In the early 1960s it was decided that a new unit should be built above the gynaecological ward and theatre. The planning team of Dr Gosset, Sir Anthony Alment, Matron Hague, Sister

Henbest and the architect, Mr Goodlad travelled around the country visiting other premature baby units, seeking help and advice.

The unit was ready to be opened in the Spring of 1965 but sadly, three weeks before, Dr Gosset died suddenly. It was then decided that the unit should be named after him. Later in 1989, the ward was relocated to its present position between the two children's wards.

(More overleaf)

Fifty years of Gosset care

Dr Isaac Henry 'Harry' Gosset (*right*) was appointed in 1947 as the hospital's first consultant paediatrician. After qualifying in 1933 his first venture was travelling around the Antipodes in a van! In 1935 he returned for post-graduate study at St Thomas's Hospital and for two years was a GP in Liphook, Surrey. He returned to hospital paediatrics in 1938 until war broke out, when he joined the RAF, rising to the rank of Wing-Commander, medical specialist.

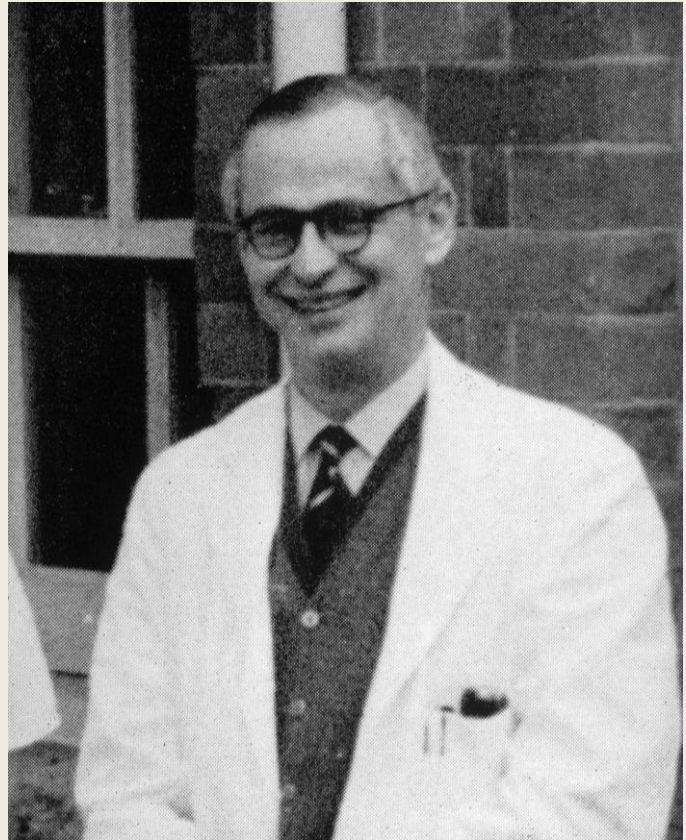
He was described by his colleagues as a gentle, kind and highly intelligent man, who worked tirelessly, to the detriment of his own health. The family home was Vigo House, on the Bedford Road and off-duty he was very much the family man, with his wife, two sons and two daughters. Dr Gosset died on 4th March 1965 at the age of 58.

Sister Phyllis Henbest was first shown around the Barratt Maternity Home in 1953, by her friend Ruth Wagstaff (nee Palmer) and soon began to work there. In 1957 a vacancy in the premature baby unit became the opportunity Phyllis had been waiting for to work in her favourite area of midwifery. Over the years she then became the department's sister, then in 1972 her title changed to nursing officer, and she finally retired in 1980.

Members of the NGH Archive have been privileged recently to meet up again with Miss Henbest, and talk with her about her work, Dr Gosset, and the excitement, tinged with sadness, of the new unit opening in 1965.

(More overleaf)

Sister Phyllis Henbest (below, in ambulance, and right)



Barratt new premature baby unit WILL BE ONE OF BEST IN THE COUNTRY

ABOUT 10 per cent of the 3,000 births every year at the Barratt Maternity Home, Northampton, are premature—that is babies weighing 5½lb. or less. Such tiny babies need highly specialised care during the first weeks of their lives which they may have to spend in incubators or at least in a regulated atmosphere.

Now the Barratt can boast one of the largest and best equipped premature baby units in the country. Just completed at a cost of £40,000—including £5,000 spent on new equipment—the new unit is due to go into use next month.

It provides 36 special care baby cots in place of the 24 in the old unit and is about four times as big. It has been built on top of the gynaecological department, next to the labour ward and using some space originally taken up by a sun lounge.

Architect, Mr. P. K. Goodland, for the Oxford Regional Hospital Board, visited many other modern units all over the country before designing this unit in which the latest equipment and an ingenious layout provide every facility for the care of its small patients.

In the main part of the unit there are six single cubicles for babies requiring extra-special care, three double cubicles, three for four babies, one for five and two for six. The cubicles have been built around a central glass-sided office from which the sister in charge—Sister Phyllis Henbest—can keep an eye on all the 36 babies.

AUTOMATIC SUNBLINDS

Each cubicle contains a sink, cupboards and a heater which acts as a boost to the system of ceiling central heating. Outside each cubicle is a control panel which regulates the heat and humidity of the air inside. Air and oxygen are on tap in each.

From her office Sister Henbest can control automatic electrically

operated sunblinds which come down all round the three glass sides of the unit. "The blinds are essential in a building with so much glass, she told the Chronicle and Echo.

As well as the main unit there is another "ward" containing seven incubators and a treatment room where transfusion etc. will be given to babies affected by the Rhesus factor.

"We are very thrilled with the new unit," she said, "and very pleased indeed with the new milk kitchen. It is divided into two—one half for the sterilisation of dirty bottles and one for filling clean ones. Between the two there is a deep sink in which bottles soak in disinfectant.

NO INFECTION RISK

"Nothing is ever passed between the two rooms by hand so that there is no risk of infection. We can make up the feeds for 24 hours ahead as we will have two large domestic refrigerators in which to store them. Another good thing about the unit generally is that we have ample storage space.

"We also have accommodation for two mothers. This will be very useful for mothers who perhaps live quite a way from the hospital."

The bedroom for the two mothers is pleasantly furnished and boasts its own bathroom and lavatory. There is also a kitchen for their use and a comfortable



THE INCUBATOR ROOM which forms part of the new premature baby unit at the Barratt Maternity Home, Northampton.

day/dining room with French doors on to a roof balcony.

The choosing of the furnishings—and indeed the colour schemes throughout the unit—has been left to the nursing staff. And the results have proved very successful. The unit itself is white with some yellow walls, rose pink doors, and grey panelling.

The risk of fire has been reduced to a minimum by the installation of smoke and fire detector systems.

First patients in the new unit will be about 20 babies from the present unit. "We rarely have fewer than 20 or 30 babies in at once," said Sister Henbest.



SISTER PHYLLIS HENBEST, sister in charge of the new premature baby unit at the Barratt Maternity Home, Northampton.

An article from the Northampton Chronicle & Echo in February 1986 about plans to relocate Gosset ward to its present position adjacent to the children's wards



CPE
18.2.86
Premature babies need meticulous care and attention around the clock. Left: Staff midwife Gwyneth Wilson tends to tiny Luke Tyrell. Right: Luke asleep in his incubator.



IT IS a hazardous journey for sick and premature babies between the delivery ward and current special care unit at Northampton General Hospital.

This is because the two key units are in separate areas of the huge hospital, leaving doctors to run helter skelter between the two.

All this should change once the brand new baby unit has been built, combining all the essential ingredients of child care on one compact site.

An artist's impression of the development shows the new special care baby unit nestling between the hospital's existing Paddington and Disney children's wards.

In addition there will be a new corridor link between Disney ward and Sturtridge where pregnant mothers give birth.

The reasons behind the need for a new neo-natal unit were explained by consultant paediatrician Dr. Nicholas Griffin.

He said: "We need a new neo-natal unit to give us better facilities with a unit sited closer to the delivery stage at Sturtridge. We also want to provide better accommodation for mothers and babies in the unit and also in the children's wards.

"Thirdly, we want to integrate the department into one unit so we can more effectively provide the best degree of medical nursing."

Hospital unveils ambitious plan to boost baby care

The bulk of the cash raised through the public appeal will be spent on this building, but money also has to be found to pay for the upgrading of Paddington and Disney wards.

Cheerful

The children, their nurses and families have done everything possible to make the wards as bright and cheerful as possible, but Dr. Griffin says there are essential improvements he would like to see developed.

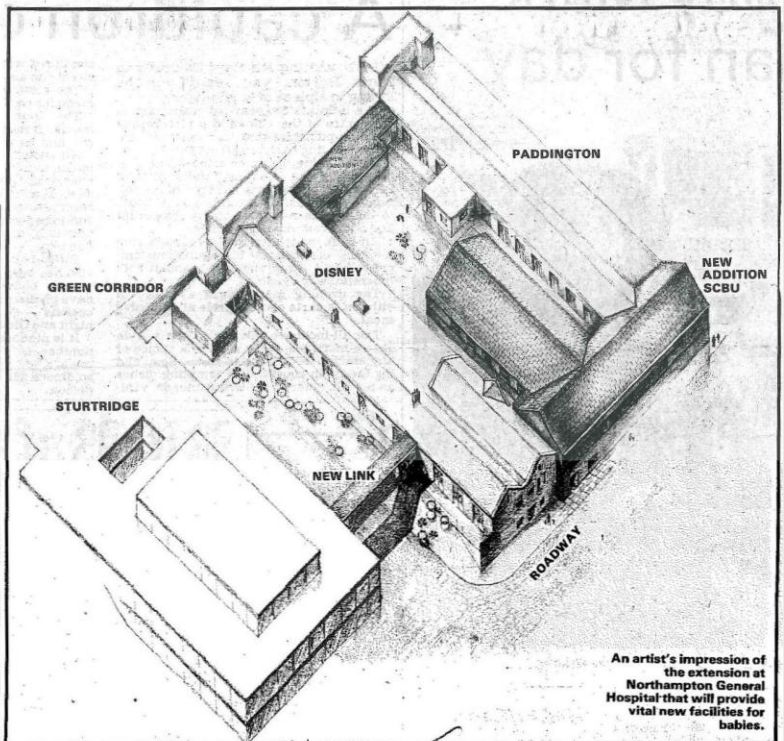
"It's a case of improving services without necessarily making it into a luxurious department," he explained. "We need piped pressurised air into some of the wards and ideally better access to clinical areas within the wards.

"This is just the first stage of a development programme. There will need to be a major rebuild in some parts of the wards in the next 10 or 15 years, but in the meantime there are these smaller projects which could be accomplished."



On Page One, **SUSAN SMITH** reveals the launch of a £100,000 appeal to boost baby care facilities at Northampton General Hospital. Here she explains why the project is so important and talks to a tragic father who has pledged to do everything to help it succeed).

BID FOR BETTER START IN LIFE



An artist's impression of the extension at Northampton General Hospital that will provide vital new facilities for babies.

Come and see us

Learn more about the history of the hospitals in Northamptonshire by visiting the NGH Historical Archive.

Open on Wednesday mornings 8am to 1pm

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