Sidcup’s Military Hospital

In 1915 plans were made to build a hospital in the grounds of the Marsham Townshends’ Frognal Estate in Sidcup. The government purchased the land and the public contributed funds following an appeal in the “Evening Standard”. The cause was greatly helped by the personal interest of Queen Mary herself, who commanded that, on completion the hospital should be named the Queen’s Hospital, Sidcup.

Building commenced in February 1917 and the first patient was admitted on the 16th July 1917. Later that year it was decided that the Queen’s Hospital should be the central military hospital for facial and jaw injuries, not only for the United Kingdom, but for all the Imperial Expeditionary Forces.

During the period 1917-1920 the hospital acquired considerable historical importance, particularly in the field of plastic surgery, under the direction of the noted military surgeon Major Harold Gillies.

Treating the wounded

Over 11,000 major operations were carried out between 1917-1921, and of the 18,135 military patients treated during the period 1917-1929, over 8000 of these were suffering from severe facial injuries.