

Such procedures were itemised to the doctor whose charges were a fairly standard 10/- for curing, bleeding and bonesetting. Was Mrs Taylor the first record of a Gloucester nurse extending her role? She certainly undercut the doctor's fees and as no further reference to either her or the procedures carried out by any other than a doctor can be found, she may have extended her role unwisely! However, those nurses who were also identified as midwives did provide a service to the poor of Gloucester in their own homes into the late 1880s when they were gradually replaced by the trained nurses appointed by the Gloucester District Nurses Association founded by public subscription in 1884.

The Gloucester District Nurses Association rapidly grew from strength to strength, meeting the requirements of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses and later the C.M.B., establishing a highly respected training programme for nurses and midwives on the district. The Midwives Act actually meant a reduction rather than an extension of the role as far as responsibility was concerned. This may be indirectly identified in the Minutes of the Society as members discussed at great length who should meet the cost of the doctor's examination required by the Act.

In the meantime the work of the Gloucester Infirmary, founded by subscription in 1754, developed steadily. This development is recorded in the Minutes of the Weekly Board and Quarterly Governor's meetings. From these it is possible to identify several aspects of the nurse's role that reflect the national picture.

In the Lancet of May 1864 there is a description of a dispute over whose responsibility it was to give an enema. A surgeon argued that it was no more his task "than it was his duty to administer the medicine he sent, or make and apply a mustard plaster or apply leeches and attend to their bites, draw breasts or perform any of the other thousand obvious duties of a nurse". The Minutes of the Infirmary for 1868 describe an occasion when the Weekly Board investigated a complaint in regard to the treatment of a boy with a stone in the bladder:

"Certain treatment had been ordered to be applied internally through the rectum but this treatment was carried out by one or two of the men who were the boy's fellow patients and not by the nurse. One of the men said that they had a very troublesome job with the application and the boy felt it severely".

As a result of the investigation the Board ordered:

"With regard to the administration of suppositories, such duties belong and are understood throughout the Infirmary to belong to the nurses alone and no sanction can be given to the nurse to leave her duty to be performed by the patient".

With but one nurse to each of the four wards of 25 to 30 patients, a great deal was left to them to do. This incident had occurred when the Governors were under considerable pressure from the doctors to increase the number of nurses and establish some form of training programme. Even