

# *The History of the Rotunda Hospital*



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## **I N T R O D U C T I O N**

In 1745 Bartholomew Mosse, surgeon and man-midwife, founded the original Dublin Lying-In Hospital as a maternity training hospital, the first of its kind.

In 1757 the institution moved to a different location where it became “The New Lying-In Hospital”. This is the hospital complex that is referred to today as simply “The Rotunda”.

The Rotunda Hospital is therefore unique as an institution in that it has continued to provide an unbroken record of service to women and babies since its foundation in 1745 and has occupied its present premises since 1757.

Should you wish to learn more about The Rotunda Hospital’s history, the book **Masters, Midwives, and Ladies-in-Waiting** (edited by Alan Browne, a former Master of the Rotunda, published by A&A Farmar, Dublin, 1995) gives a detailed account of developments in the Rotunda over the period 1945-95, which was the fifty year period of greatest change in the history of obstetrical care.

## **B A R T H O L O M E W M O S S E**

### **1712**

Bartholomew Mosse was born the fifth child of Rev Thomas Mosse, Rector of Maryborough, now Portlaoise, and his wife Martha.

### **1728**

Mosse, who had been privately educated by a tutor at home, was sent to serve as apprentice to a Barber Surgeon, Mr John Stone, in Dublin.



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## **1733**

Mosse was examined and qualified to practise as a surgeon by Mr John Nichols, joint Surgeon-General to the army in Ireland. Mosse obtained glowing testimonials from his master and his examiner. It is probable that he was surgical assistant to these men (themselves surgeons to Mercer's and Dr Steevens's Hospitals respectively) within a short time of his qualification. Mercer's and Dr Steevens's were amongst the first of the 'Voluntary Hospitals' (a type of institution which originated in Dublin) to open.

## **1733 - 38**

Mosse practised as surgeon and man-midwife in Dublin.

## **1738**

Mosse commissioned by the government to escort a draft of troops being transferred from the Royal Barracks to augment the British garrison at Mahon in Minorca during the War of the Spanish Succession, at a time when Minorca was regarded as being the key to naval power in the Mediterranean. Mosse was highly commended by the generals at St Felipe in Minorca who recorded that the troops in his charge had been 'greatly improved' by his professional services.

## **1738 -1740**

Mosse returned to Ireland late in 1738, possibly by way of Paris where he might have seen 'La Charite', a ward of the Hotel-Dieu, devoted to the care of irregular maternity cases. Back in Dublin, Mosse continued to practise medicine, and decided to specialise in Midwifery.

In those times traditional midwives were untrained. When difficulties arose they called on surgeons for help, but the surgeons in most cases were equally untrained, because the nearest place they could have obtained training would have been Paris. Midwives did not call on physicians as consultants, because physicians despised Midwifery, to the extent that Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland were penalised if they practised Midwifery.

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In spite of its distaste for Midwifery, the College was empowered under its Charter to control Midwifery practice in Dublin, and to award the Licentiate in Midwifery of the College to those whom they considered competent to receive it. Mosse decided to specialise in Midwifery, and travelled to Europe sometime in 1739 or 1740 to gain Knowledge of the subject with a view to taking the Licentiate of Midwifery. This he obtained in 1740, and thus became not only a licensed surgeon, but also a licensed man-midwife.

## **F A C T O R S   L E A D I N G   T O   T H E F O U N D A T I O N**

### **1740**

Ireland was hit by a very severe potato famine caused by an intense and prolonged cold spell which lasted from 27 December 1739 to late February 1740, and during which the ground froze solid. In those times potatoes were generally stored in underground clamps, and they all froze and then rotted. The only potatoes above ground were the seed potatoes for the next season, and they were soon eaten, and then there was nothing left.

Impoverished peasants were often evicted from their cabins round big estates for non-payment of rents. Homeless and destitute they took to the roads leading to the cities in search of employment, and fed off berries in hedges, and blood taken from cows. The cities were overwhelmed with the emigrants from the country who also brought famine-related epidemics with them. Between 16% and 20% of the population of Ireland were estimated to have perished as the result of this famine which was far worse than the one that occurred over a century later in the 1840s.

Mosse encountered these appalling conditions in the course of his practice in Dublin, and he became determined to found a Lying-In Training Hospital to provide food, shelter and medical care for destitute mothers, and to train midwives and surgeons, with the hope of having a trained midwife in every county in Ireland.

### **1743**

Mosse started fund-raising His first contributor was Dean Delany, of Down, husband of Mrs Delany, a contemporary diarist of great fame. Mosse was 'well got' with luminaries of both Church and State, many of whom were very uneasy about the situation in the cities, and he was soon successful in raising sufficient private funds to allow him to

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search for a suitable premises for his hospital.

## **1744**

Mosse purchased a premises situated in George's Lane, that had been 'The New Booth', a small theatre owned by a theatrical impresario named Mme Violante. It was famous for the performance of "The Beggar's Opera" by a cast of children, all under the age of ten, whom Mme Violante had trained. This had been a stunning success, and its star was Peg Woffington, who later became a famous actress, and the darling of London society. In 1744 there was some scandal associated with goings on in Mme Violante's theatre, and it was closed by the Lord Mayor of Dublin. Mosse purchased the premises, and promptly directed his exceptional energies to converting it for service as a Lying-In Hospital.

## **1745**

The first Dublin Lying-In Hospital opened on 15 March 1745. Judith Rochford delivered a baby boy there a few days later on 20 March. The hospital was soon recognised as being highly successful in achieving its objectives. It was supervised by Mosse with help from only one or two medical colleagues.

Contemporary and later historians ascribed to this hospital the honour of being the "first of its kind in the two kingdoms, Great Britain and Ireland".

## **E A R L Y F U N D R A I S I N G A C T I V I T I E S**

## **1746**

The first Lying-In Hospital was so successful that it soon proved too small, and Mosse decided to commence fundraising and planning for a larger, purpose-built Maternity Training Hospital.





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Two plays performed in 1746, and performances of Handel Oratorios in 1746, 1747 and 1748 together raised IRP330

(today's equivalent IRP23,430). Similar concerts were to feature as a major source of Mosse's fund-raising efforts over the next twelve years during which the erection of the new hospital was completed, and its wards were progressively equipped and opened.

Mosse also ran lotteries on five occasions between 1746 and 1753, which raised over IRP11,000 (today's equivalent IRP781,000).

In connection with difficulties over the last of the lotteries Mosse himself had had to travel to London. He was arrested on the way home, at Holyhead, and was remanded on a charge of fraud in Beaumaris. He managed to escape by boat to the mainland of Wales where he laid low for three months. He then made his way back to Dublin and published the accounts of his lotteries, thereby totally exonerating himself from blame.

## **1748**

As the next step towards opening his new hospital, Mosse personally leased four acres of land on the north side of the Liffey, adjoining Great Britain Street, now Parnell Street. This is the site on which the Rotunda now stands. He immediately engaged a professional gardener, at his own expense, to plan and plant out much of the site as a Pleasure Garden, but also reserved the portion beside the street as the site for the new hospital.

## **1749**

The first event in the new Gardens, which were temporarily opened for the purpose, was a series of concerts held in June 1749.

## **1750**

Mosse consulted with Richard Cassells one of the most famous architects of the time about the design of the hospital. Leinster House, which Cassells had recently completed, was chosen as the best model for a building containing

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the small-sized wards that Mosse wanted. This was quite unlike many contemporary hospital premises, which were

provided with vast wards. The wisdom of Mosse's choice was to be seen subsequently when the Rotunda was relatively free of, although by no means immune from, the worst outbreaks of hospital epidemics such as puerperal sepsis which were experienced elsewhere.

Mosse was also determined to add an architectural feature to the main structure of the hospital. This took the form of the unusual tower that makes the architectural profile both unique and known the world over.

This architectural folly was wittily described by Maurice Craig:

*'... Externally it (the Rotunda) is stodgy enough, a huge block of a building which looks not unlike Leinster House with a three-storey tower and a cupola perched on top of it, not very convincingly integrated with the sub-structure... This is only a minor instance of the lavishness with which Mosse set about his project. But it was not, as it might seem to be, a misapplication of charitable funds. For the core of the project was to harness social ambition and aristocratic gaiety to his humane purpose.'*

(Maurice Craig, Dublin 1660-1860, Allen Figgis and Co, Dublin, 1969, p 143.)

## 1751

The foundation stone for the New Lying-In Hospital was laid by the Lord Mayor of Dublin on 4 June 1751.

## THE ROYAL CHARTER & THE M A S T E R S H I P S Y S T E M

## 1756

Mosse was advised to petition for a Royal Charter on the grounds that the new Lying-In Hospital would then



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become a national institution, and thus be in a position to qualify for government funding in a manner that would not have been possible for a private charitable institution.

## 1756

The Charter provided for the establishment of a Board of Governors. It also instituted the Mastership system whereby a Master was appointed for a period of seven years only, and was then precluded from subsequent re-appointment. This proved to be very effective not alone as a method of hospital management, but also as the means by which the Rotunda remains up to date as regards medical management. It will be of interest and importance to quote from words written by Dr Michael Darling, following the completion of the thirty-fifth Mastership:

*“Combining all the roles of management ultimately in one person, the Master, has the great advantage of centralising and co-ordinating information, facilitating negotiations with the Department of Health and other bodies in securing the objectives of the hospital.”*

Thus, despite a changing medical and legal environment, changing hospital practices, and the growth of medical staff and consultant numbers, the concept of having one Master in charge of the whole maternity hospital, as originally proposed by Bartholomew Mosse in the eighteenth century, remains a valid and efficient model for maternity hospital management in the mid-1990s, two and a half centuries later’ (Alan Browne, Editor, Masters, Midwives, and Ladies-in-Waiting, A&A Farmar, Dublin, 1995, p 57).

## 1757

The New Lying-In Hospital was opened by the Lord Lieutenant on 8 December 1757. It cost over £20,000 (today’s equivalent €1,777,633).

## THE ILLNESS & DEATH OF MOSSE

## 1758

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Mosse fell ill in the final months of 1758, and made his Will.

## **1759**

Mosse died on 16 February 1759 at the Cullenswood home of his friend Alderman Barre (now Scoil Bhride in Oakley Road). He died in his forty-seventh year, worn out by the work required to achieve his ends. He started out penniless, and finished the same way. It seems that his religious convictions, so obviously embodied in the Rotunda Chapel, motivated all that he did.

His death was recorded in Board Minutes, but without any reference to his remarkable achievements. The reasons for this are not clear.

After his death his family found themselves hard up, and a government grant was eventually made available to his widow and two children, Charles and Jane. Mosse was buried in Donnybrook Cemetery in an unmarked grave. His friend Benjamin Higgins who was the Registrar of the hospital outlived him by many years. The Board subscribed to the carving of a large memorial gravestone in his memory.

This gravestone eventually sank out of sight, and in spite of searches by Sir William Wilde in the 19th century, and by Professor JB Fleming and Mr Cecil King in the 20th century it was only revealed again in 1988 after the graveyard had been taken over by Dublin Corporation and converted from a near-wilderness into a small public park.

As it happened, Higgins had requested burial beside Mosse's grave. So once his memorial stone had been located, the site of Mosse's grave could be identified. A beautiful memorial stone carved by his descendant Tania was subsequently erected to the memory of Bartholomew Mosse by the Board of Governors. This was most appropriately erected near the site of Mosse's grave by Dublin Corporation. It was unveiled by Sean DBR Loftus, Lord Mayor of Dublin, and dedicated by Dr Donald Caird, Archbishop of Dublin, on 20 September 1995, the 250th Anniversary year of the foundation of Mosse's first Lying-In Hospital.

## **D E V E L O P M E N T S   ( 1 7 5 9 - 8 4 )**





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## 1759

Sir Fielding Ould elected second Master. In 1733, he had published what is regarded as the first original English

language textbook on Midwifery, and was famous as a midwifery practitioner. It was said of him:

*“Sir Fielding Ould is made a knight; He should have been a Lord by right. For then the ladies’ cry would be O Lord, good Lord deliver me.”*

Ould carried out Mosse’s wishes in providing a large auditorium beside the hospital, called ‘The Rotundo’, to provide for year-round, fund-raising entertainments which included concerts, organ recitals, and what became famous as the ‘Sunday Promenades’. The Gardens, which were improved by the addition of a bowling green, became the ‘vortex of fashion’ in Dublin during the rest of the 18th century until the Act of Union, after which they gradually declined.

## 1762

The Chapel was opened at a cost of IRP6,000 (today’s equivalent IRP426,000) for public worship. It is famous for the quality of the florid Baroque stucco work by Barthelemij Cramillion which adorns the ceiling and for the Venetian window over the sanctuary. It proved a popular place of worship, and by 1765 was providing an annual income of about IRP8,000 per annum (today’s equivalent IRP568,000).

In the early 1790s, when overcrowding was a serious problem, consideration was given to utilising the chapel as a ward, and to replacing it with a new chapel to be erected on a vacant plot on the southwest corner of the campus, but this plan was never carried out. Originally intended exclusively for Protestant worship, it is now happily an ecumenical place of worship.

## 1774

Formal courses of lectures on Midwifery by Dr MacBride commenced.



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**1783**

Joseph Clarke appointed Assistant Master. Concerned about the high infant mortality rate in the hospital, he linked this to defective ventilation. Results for both mothers and babies had turned out to be worse in the New Lying-In

Hospital as compared with the first Lying-In Hospital. Clarke advised boring holes in the top panels of the doors of the wards to improve the ventilation. This was done in 1784. Some of these early doors can still be seen at the Rotunda.

**1784**

Royal College of Surgeons granted their Royal Charter. Council meetings were held in the Board Room of the Rotunda at the request of Samuel Croker-King who was President of the new College and consultant surgeon to the Rotunda. Meetings of the College were continued in the Rotunda for three years until the institution acquired its own premises.

## **P U E R P E R A L F E V E R**

**1820**

Hospital epidemics of Puerperal fever were continuing problems in the Rotunda as in all maternity hospitals of the time.

Labatt (Master 1814-1821) reported on the problem and the possibility of closing the hospital was seriously considered.

**1826 - 1833**



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Collins, as Master, enforced hygienic measures to control epidemics of puerperal fever with great success. His measures are described in his book *A practical treatise on midwifery*, London, 1835.

This brought favourable attention to the Rotunda from continental authorities, including Ignaz Semmelweis who would eventually establish the real mode of infection of puerperal fever, and who was then working in Vienna. Semmelweis began to learn English with the intention of visiting the Rotunda, but never got there because he had to return from Vienna to Budapest instead.

## **D E V E L O P M E N T   O F   G Y N A E C O L O G Y**

### ***1835***

First Gynaecological Unit opened in Rotunda by Evory Kennedy (Master 1833-40).

### ***1848***

Chloroform first used in the Rotunda for a forceps delivery by Shekelton (Master 1847-54) on 18 February 1848 on Eliza Hughes. This anaesthetic was administered just two months after its first use in Edinburgh by James Simpson, and is recorded in the relevant Master's Book. This opened the way for increased use of intrapartum operative interventions.

### ***1866***

Several serious epidemics of puerperal fever occurred during Denham's Mastership. He had cast-iron gratings (still to be seen in the Rotunda) installed in the main corridors to improve ventilation, but with little success.

### ***1869***

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First Rotunda clinical report issued in the Mastership of George Johnston (Master 1868-75).

Evory Kennedy debated the problems of puerperal fever on two evenings before the Dublin Obstetrical Society in April 1869. He advocated closure of the Rotunda as a maternity hospital and its use as a paediatric and gynaecological institution, with maternity cases being delivered in wooden isolation chalets in the gardens. His recommendations were not carried out.

## **1876**

MAO degree instituted in University of Dublin, Trinity College.

## **1877**

Lombe Atthill (Master 1875-82) organised domiciliary delivery service (The District Service) supervised by Clinical clerk.

Blood transfusions used for postpartum haemorrhage.

Training of midwives improved.

## **1882**

Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland founded.

## **1884**

Macan (Master 1882-89) instituted routine temperature and pulse recordings for all patients.

Incubator used for nursing premature babies.

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## **1888**

First gynaecological report by A Smith.

## **1889**

Macan described the first Caesarean section performed at the Rotunda.

## **1893**

Snelly (Master 1889-96) reported on 112 abdominal 'sections' including three Caesarean sections.

## **1895**

Thomas Plunkett Cairns Wing opened. This contained an operating theatre, gynaecological wards and new accommodation for nurses.

## **1896**

Dancer Purefoy (Master 1896-1903) opened the first Pathological Laboratory in the Rotunda.

There were 12,811 deliveries on the Rotunda District Service during this Mastership. A second Clinical clerk was appointed to assist with the District work.

Extensive use of gynaecological surgery reported in this Mastership.

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## **1905**

Tweedy (Master 1903-10) wrote extensively about eclampsia.

Patients were kept in hospital longer as result of critical observations made about early discharge by Lady Dudley, reporting at the request of Queen Alexandra. As a result more nurses' accommodation was required, and a new Nurses' Home, the curving wing at the southwest front of the hospital, was planned.

## **1907**

New Nurses' Home opened. Years later, after the building of a replacement Nurses' Home in 1936, the old Nurses' Home became the location of the premature baby nursery, and later again, in 1979, as the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. It also provided accommodation for resident postgraduate students.

## **1912**

New Central Labour Ward opened in the Mastership of Henry Jellett (1910-14 and 1917-19). This was used with little alteration until 1993.

## **A N T E N A T A L   C A R E   A N D   N E O N A T A L P A E D I A T R I C S**

## **1922**

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Antenatal care first introduced by Gibbon Fitzgibbon (Master 1919-1925).

## **1927**

Radiology Department opened with Dr Charles McDonagh in charge.

## **1930**

New Operating Theatre opened by Bethel Solomons (Master 1926-33) who developed special interest in management of infertility.

## **1933**

Bethel Solomons appointed Dr Brian Crichton as first paediatrician to the Rotunda. He was succeeded in 1932 by Dr WRF (Bob) Collis, and the first Neonatal Nursery was opened, with Sister Maudie Moran in charge.

## **1935**

AH Davidson (Master 1933-40) wrote a detailed report of what was to be the last epidemic of puerperal fever.

## **1936**

Introduction of sulphonamide with subsequent virtual disappearance of puerperal fever.

Antenatal Clinic opened and Students' Residence enlarged.

Nurses' Home opened on site of original bandstand in Mosse's gardens. The buildings were funded by the Hospital Sweepstake Trust, and designed by Fred Hicks, hospital architect, with art nouveau features.



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## 1940

Increasingly liberal use of Caesarean section in severe cases of pre-eclampsia by Falkiner (Master 1940-47). Difficulties running hospital during the 'Emergency'.

Extensive use of District to avoid overcrowding in the hospital itself. District considered safe provided that good antenatal care was used to select cases for home delivery.

## 1947

The 200th Anniversary of the Rotunda was celebrated two years after the event due to World War II. The British Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology was held in the Rotunda and the Royal College of Surgeons and Physicians, and was the first major post-war international conference. Dr Ninian Falkiner, as Master of the Rotunda, was President of the Congress.

## 1948

Appointment as Records Officer of Mildred Aherne, who was to serve for 40 years, by O'Donel Browne (Master 1940-1952. Died in office). The Rotunda has a unique collection of clinical records dating back to the foundation of the first hospital. These have been exploited in recent times by Professor Cormac O Grada (*See Masters, Midwives, and Ladies-in-Waiting, Op. cit., Chapter 9*).

## 1951

Collaboration between the Master, Dr WRF Collis, neonatologist, and the Minister for Health, Dr Noel Browne, resulted in extensive development of paediatric facilities with opening of a paediatric OPD, and a temporary paediatric In-Patient Unit. Dr Noel Browne was notable for his Mother and Child welfare scheme, which curiously was opposed by senior medical and clerical personages, leading to his eventual resignation as Minister for Health.

New low cost penthouse additions to enlarge Nurses' Home and to provide extra antenatal accommodation on top of



TPC Wing.

## **1953**

Implementation of the 1953 Health Act by EWL Thompson (Master 1952-59). This introduced Consultants and Registrars into the Rotunda staffing structure for the first time.

## Perinatal Mortality

## **1954**

Thompson mobilised records to identify potentially avoidable areas of fetal loss. Intensive care in the second stage of labour successfully reduced intrapartum perinatal mortality.

## **1958**

Physiotherapists introduced to provide antenatal training and postnatal restorative exercises.

## **1959**

Enlarged and permanent Neonatal Paediatric In-Patient Unit opened.

## **1960**



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Alan Browne (Master 1960-66) appointed. The Board decided to utilise the old Master's Quarters in the main hospital for patient and administrative accommodation, and to build a new Master's House in the gardens. This subsequently became the HARI (Human Assisted Reproduction Institute) Unit in 1989, the Master being no longer resident from 1988 onwards.

## **1961**

Colposcopy introduced to gynaecological clinics.

## **1963**

Introduction of a uniform method of reporting of perinatal loss. This was continued without change through four succeeding Masterships (until 1987) making for uniform comparisons in analysing results.

Introduction of amnioscopy and other new methods of intra-uterine diagnosis of fetal welfare.

Perinatal mortality declined by about 30% in each of three succeeding Masterships.

## **1967**

Increasing problems caused by gross overcrowding. Plans drawn up by EW Lillie (Master 1967-73) for a five story extension. These were not followed up until 1992 when the foundation stone for a new extension was laid by Dr John O'Connell, Minister for Health.

Clinical interest in the use of Vacuum extraction featured in the Mastership of Dr Lillie.

## **1971**

The hospital roof had to be replaced, a process which caused enormous disruption to the workings of the institution. The brunt of the burden fell on the shoulders of the Master, Dr EW Lillie, and Ms Maude Gray, the Matron of that

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time. It must have been one of the most difficult periods in the history of the Rotunda.

Friends of the Rotunda formed. This voluntary body has made enormous contributions to promote research, and to provide various facilities for the comfort of patients. The hospital remains deeply indebted to many volunteers who have given so much of their time and talents to further the welfare of patients attending the Rotunda, either through endowing research, or by helping in practical ways suggested by the Master, Matron and social workers. Their fund-raising and voluntary work is very much in the tradition of Mosse.

## **1973**

Consultant teams established with responsibility for obstetrical care. Professorial Teaching/Research Units established at Rotunda for University of Dublin, Trinity College, and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

## **1974**

Gross overcrowding resulted in the opening of a temporary annexe for mothers delivered in the Rotunda in what was formerly Drumcondra District Hospital.

## **1975**

The District finally suspended by IJ Dalrymple (Master 1974-80) as it had declined progressively, and was no longer considered safe.

## **1976**

A 'temporary' operating theatre opened in preparation for the building of the projected five story extension. It remained in use until 1993.

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## **1977**

Ultra-Sound Diagnosis introduced to the Rotunda.

Genetic Counselling introduced under supervision of Dr Susan MacManus.

## **N E O N A T A L I N T E N S I V E C A R E**

## **1979**

The opening of the first Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Rotunda under the supervision of Dr (Later Professor) Thomas Matthews. Neonatal intensive care was late in developing at the Rotunda. Its arrival transformed the outcome for premature babies, and began to radically alter obstetrical practice.

Expansion and renovation of the Medical-Social Work Department under Ms Eleanor Holmes who retired in 1987. The history of this department may be read in *Masters, Midwives and Ladies-in-Waiting*, (Op. cit., pp 199-240). It gives unique insights into the social problems of Dublin from the 1950s to the 1980s. The same reference relates how the Medical-Social Work Department has continued to expand under Ms Imelda Keogh since 1987.

## **1980**

Appointment of Ms Mary Kelly as Matron. Immense developments have taken place under her leadership, and information about these may be found in chapter 4 of the book *Masters, Midwives, and Ladies-in-Waiting*, Op. cit., which was written by Ms Kelly. This chapter includes the authoritative account of the historical development of Midwifery at the Rotunda, and also details changes that have taken place in recent times, as Midwifery has evolved in response to the evolution of perinatal management.

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## **1983**

Installation of Electron microscope.

Appointment of Dr John Gillan as Director of Pathology in succession to Dr Douglas Mellon. This marked the beginning of weekly Clinical-pathological meetings which increasingly stimulated the launching of research projects, in which Dr Gillan and Professor Brian Sheppard figured prominently.

## **1985**

Renovated Out-Patient Department facilities planned by GR Henry (Master 1981-87) opened by Barry Desmond TD, Minister for Health.

Sexual Assault Centre opened in Rotunda by Department of Health in collaboration with the Master to operate under the supervision of Dr Moira Woods.

## **F E T A L   A S S E S S M E N T   U N I T**

## **1985**

Fetal Assessment Unit introduced.

This, in combination with the successes of NICU treatment, increasingly indicated premature delivery by elective Caesarean section of babies detected as showing evidence of intra-uterine compromise of one sort or another.

## **1987**

Dr Henry as Master had organised a fund-raising drive early in his Mastership to create a new Conference and Teaching Centre in the renovated Pillar Room at an estimated cost of IRP180,000 and the restored Pillar Room was re-opened, two centuries after it had been first opened in 1787, by President Hillery.

Within three years, however, unforeseen deterioration of the ceiling timbers led to further temporary closure of the Pillar Room. After further heavy expenditure, it was re-opened again in 1992. However its internal decoration had been much improved in the successive restorations, and it is now one of the finest rooms for medical conferences and other functions in Dublin. The Oval Room and smaller tutorial rooms are used for the on-going teaching activities that are, and have been from its foundation, an integral activity of the Rotunda.

## **1989**

Opening of HARI (Human Assisted Reproduction Institute) Unit under the supervision of Professor Robert Harrison of the RCSI.

Introduction of micro-surgery for correction of Fallopian tube pathology by MRN Darling (Master 1988-94).

## **1990**

The Master, Dr Michael Darling, co-ordinated intensive planning for a three story extension which had been sanctioned by Dr John O'Connell TD, Minister for Health. Dr O'Connell laid the foundation stone in 1992.

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## **R E C E N T   D E V E L O P M E N T S**

### ***1993***

New three-story extension opened on 6 December 1993 by Mr Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Health, in the presence of Dr Darling, Master, Mr RP Willis, Chairman of Board, and the Governors and staff. This momentous and urgently needed expansion provided a new delivery suite, twin operating theatres, and a new reception area and admission unit.

### ***1993-95***

Female sterilisations performed in increased numbers for social as well as medical indications.

Record low levels of perinatal mortality achieved in Darling's Mastership.

Vigorous renewal of clinical research activity, much of it assisted by funding raised by the Friends of the Rotunda, included work by Dr Aidan Halligan in Obstetrics, Professors Tom Matthews and Tom Clarke in Neonatology, Professor Harrison in the area of Human Assisted Reproduction, and Dr John Gillan and Professor Brian Sheppard in Placental Pathology.

### ***1995***

Commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Rotunda commenced on 12 March 1995, at an Ecumenical Service presided over by the Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland Archbishops of Dublin. This was followed on 15 March 1995, two hundred and fifty years after the date on which the first Lying-In Hospital opened in 1745, by a series of short talks in the Pillar Room about research currently in progress at the Rotunda. This was followed by the launch of the book *Masters, Midwives, and Ladies-in-Waiting*.

The triennial British Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology was held in Dublin in July 1995 in honour of the Rotunda's 250th anniversary. The Irish organising committee was headed by Dr GR Henry. The congress attracted a

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record number of about 1700 delegates from all over the world, including many who had attended the Rotunda as students or postgraduates, as well as many ex-staff members.

## **2 5 0 T H   A N N I V E R S A R Y C O M M E M O R A T I O N S**

An account of many activities held during 1995, the 250th anniversary year of the Rotunda may be found in the Rotunda Clinical Report of 1995 written by Dr Peter McKenna (Master, 1995-2001).

There were also many cultural events, including the John Field Piano Competition for young pianists, commemorating performances by John Field as an infant prodigy in the Pillar Room in the 1790s.

An anniversary book (Alan Browne, Editor, Masters, Midwives, and Ladies-in-Waiting, A&A Farmar, Dublin, 1995) gives a detailed account of developments in the Rotunda over the period 1945-95, which was the fifty year period of greatest change in the history of obstetrical care.

An exhibition of historical documents, books, and instruments was sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Royal College of Surgeons, the Rotunda and others. It was mounted in the front hall of the Rotunda by Ms Mary O'Doherty, Archivist of the Mercer Library of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

The catalogue of the exhibition entitled 'Accouching the Rotundaties', a phrase from the pen of James Joyce, was prepared by Professor JB Lyons, Professor of the History of Medicine of the RCSI, and by Ms O'Doherty.

This exhibition, located in the front hall of the Rotunda, attracted much public interest, with over 1500 names entered in the attendance book.

### ***1995***

Hospital celebrates 250th birthday.

British Congress of Obstetrics & Gynaecology held in Dublin and the hospital hosts a Garden Party.



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## **1996**

Planning begins for new Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.  
The cost of Medical Insurance begins to become an important issue.

## **1997**

Extension to the Human Assisted Reproduction Ireland (HARI) Unit opens.  
The first of a new phenomenon, non-national patients, arrives.

## **1998**

The hospital gets the green light from the Dept. of Health to begin detailed planning of paediatric facilities and top floor extension.  
Shortage of midwives contribute to practical difficulties.

## **1999**

Threatened industrial action by the nurses' union comes to pass and nurses continue to leave nursing.

## **2000**

Increasing number of non-nationals put a strain on hospital services.  
Hospital bill for Medical Insurance now reaches 20% of allocation!

## **2001**

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Builders eventually arrive on site for Paediatric Unit and Top Floor Extension to everyone's relief.  
Dr. Michael Geary elected as next Master.

## **2002**

First Phase of Paediatric Unit & Top Floor completed and available for use

New Early Pregnancy Suite Opens.

Introducing of a Miscarriage Clinic.

3D/4D Ultrasound introduced to the Hospital.

## **2003**

New Paediatric & Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

New postnatal Lillie Suite opened by an Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern.

Extension to the HARI Unit which included new facilities for semen cryopreservation for cancer patients opened by the Minister for Health, Micheal Martin.

New Laboratory Facilities in Microbiology and Cytology developed.

## **2004**

Ultrasound and Fetal Assessment Unit extended and redeveloped.

New Colposcopy Unit opened with rationalisation of colposcopy services from Mater, Beaumont and Rotunda Hospitals on to a single Rotunda site.

Centenary celebrations of the Rotunda Laboratory.

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## **2005**

New Sexual Assault Treatment Unit opened by Ms. World, Rosanna Davison.

DOMINO/Early Transfer Home Scheme to be introduced Spring 2005.





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DUBLIN

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