

Leytonstone and Medical Matters (1)



The demand for medical personnel grew massively as the army expanded from its peacetime size of 250,000 to 6,000,000 men and this was met by recruiting directly from the civilian population. By 1918 half of all doctors (13,000) were in the forces and clearly this affected the healthcare needs of those left at home.

The Health System in Leytonstone

Leytonstone people in work had to pay a fixed rate into the Lloyd George National Health Insurance Scheme and this provided them with services from a GP but not hospital treatment. Everyone else had to pay although increasingly Leyton Council provided direct services for the poor and those with specific conditions such as tuberculosis. The Liberal government was particularly keen to extend health and social care provision.

Hospitals relied on payment, voluntary contributions and by running Flag Days and Hospital days which encouraged donations from the public. However hospitals were frequently in debt and this affected the quality of provision. People in most need were often treated for free.

HOSPITALS

A good example of a 'voluntary' hospital locally was the Walthamstow, Leyton and Wanstead Children's General Hospital.

This had 50 beds and treated around 4000 cases a year.

The hospital regularly advertised for donations and subscriptions from local groups and individuals.

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS (RAMC)

The enlisted doctors joined the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) and during the war this unit lost 470 officers and 3669 'other ranks' killed. The 'missing' totalled 3000.

THE RED CROSS

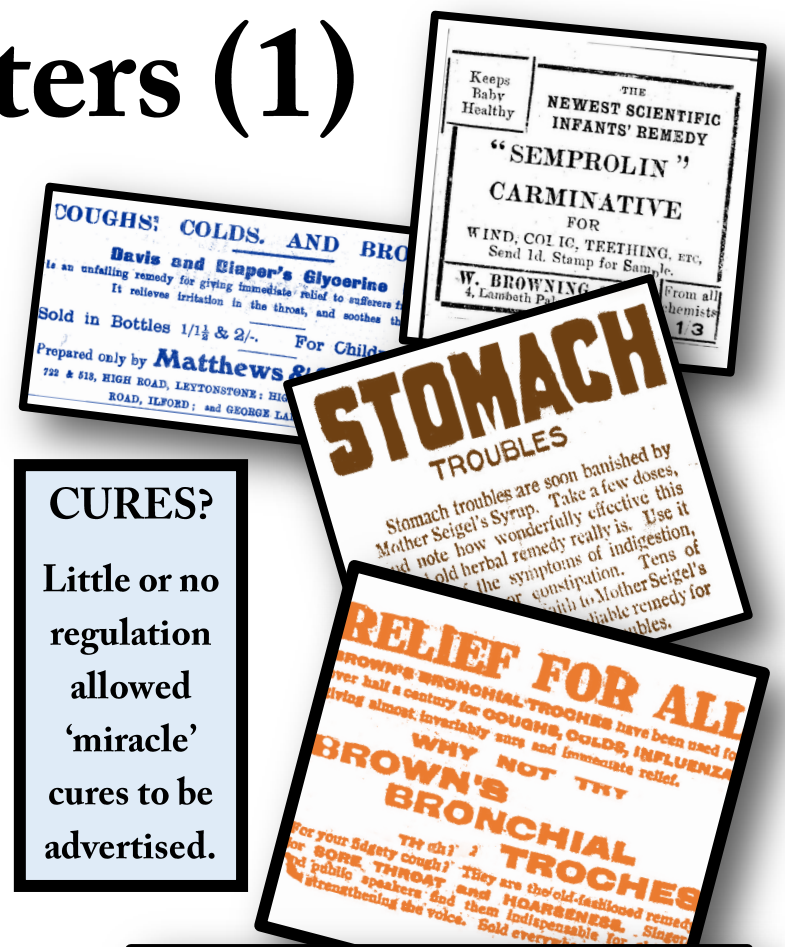
This organisation was very active around Leytonstone and each week published the names of people who had donated. In June 1915 Mrs. Hudson and Miss Mockridge gave £1/16/5d - increasing the fund to £349/8/7d

DOCTORS' GENEROSITY

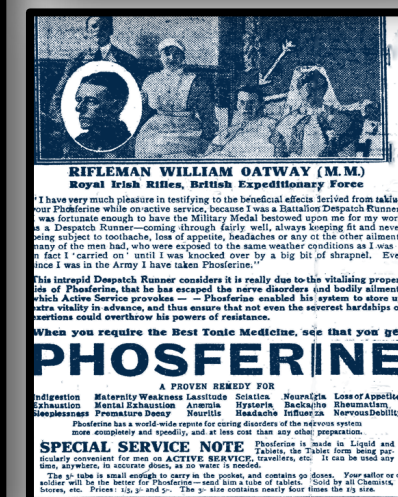
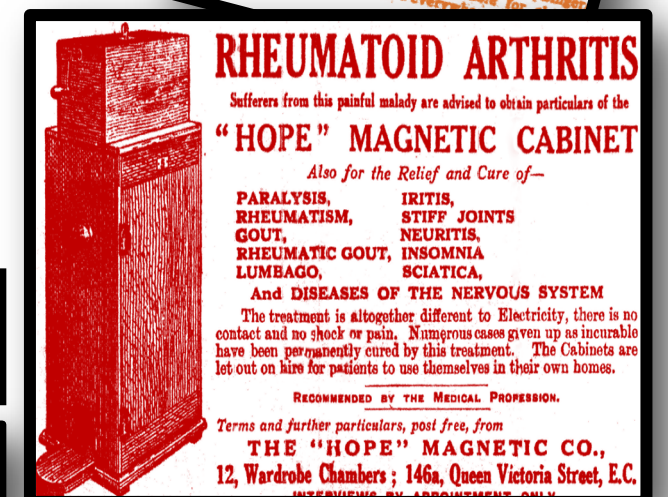
A meeting called by local members of the British Medical Association in Feb. 1916, passed the resolution that members of the profession should attend free of charge the dependents of doctors called up for the army.

A second amendment passed was that all wounded soldiers of any nationality would also be attended to free of charge. Doctors accepting the scheme had to send their names to the War Office.

But some products seem to have given real benefit



CURES? Little or no regulation allowed 'miracle' cures to be advertised.



A serving soldier tells how the product helped him during combat.