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YOUR MEMORIES! GLASGOW ROYAL IS A CENTRE OF INNOVATION

New museum to celebrate GRI's legacy

BY ANN FOTHERINGHAM

THE world's first X-ray department, pioneering brain surgery and the first patient to have his wound washed out with carbolic acid – Glasgow Royal Infirmary has a rich history.

A new museum, full of equipment, photographs, letters and more, has been created at the Castle Street institution to celebrate its impres-

sive heritage.

The project was led by Friends of Glasgow Royal Infirmary, a charity dedicated to preserving and celebrating the hospital's legacy, with support from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and the board's Endowment Fund.

Fundraising included 'sponsor-a-bee' schemes and the sale of Royal Honey from the charity's on-site beehives.

John Stuart, former Chief Nurse at the GRI, and one of the charity's trustees, said: "Some of the most senior players in the history of healthcare have come through this institution and I think it's important that we recognise them and preserve the great history associated with the GRI.

"The Royal Infirmary is a legendary institution in Glasgow and has a special place in the hearts of

many a Glaswegian. It's been at the centre of innovation and clinical practice over the years."

The Royal opened in 1794 and has changed the course of medicine and looked after generations of Glaswegians ever since.

The first exhibition at the new museum, which opens on May 31, will feature several medical pioneers, including Joseph Lister, who revolutionised modern medicine with the introduction of antiseptic surgery in 1865.

He treated a 12-year-old boy, James Greenlees, when his leg was badly broken after being run over by a cart. James became the first patient to have his surgical wound washed and dressed with carbolic acid, allowing an infection-free recovery.

Other key figures who will feature in the exhibition include William Macewen, a pioneer of brain surgery; Rebecca Strong, the hospital's first matron; and John Macintyre, the electrician-turned-physician who set up the world's first radiology unit at the Royal in 1896.

Macintyre produced images (initially known as skiagraphs) only a matter of weeks after Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen discovered X-rays in late 1895.

He published 18 groundbreaking papers on the use of X-rays in 1896 alone, including the first image of a kidney stone in a patient.

Macintyre subsequently pioneered soft tissue radiographs including the world's first chest X-ray images and, in 1897, the world's first cinematic radiograph depicting the movements of a frog's leg.

The displays in the new museum include photographs of GRI buildings, a portrait of Joseph Lister, correspondence from the nurses and X-ray tubes associated with the development of the ground-

breaking radiography department.

The space will also be used for staff gatherings, such as retirements and celebrations linked to annual International Nurses' Day events.

Professor Tom Steele, director of estates and facilities at NHSGGC, said the charity's efforts had helped bring the museum to life and fund future projects within the museum and surrounding areas of GRI.

He added: "We're thrilled to be able to provide the space and support to preserve and celebrate the incredible history of Glasgow's Royal Infirmary.

"Our hospitals are more just places where people come in their time of need, they are a pillar of our communities and, as Glasgow's oldest hospital, the Royal's connection with the city and its place as a pioneer in medical history, is unparalleled.

"I can't wait to see the finished museum."

John added: "There's a great sense of community spirit and camaraderie at the GRI and people really do feel part of a family, from the porters on the ground right through to the consultants.

"People feel part of the history when they come here and work hard to care for the people of Glasgow."



Students are given radiography training in 1974, and below, John Stuart and items at the museum

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