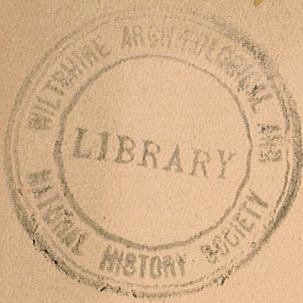


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## "THE CATERING DEPARTMENT"

Next to the salaries and wages of the staff, the Catering Department absorbs the largest share of the Roundway Hospital budget. The Department is concerned mainly with the feeding arrangements for about 1350 patients and a fluctuating number of staff. It also 'lays on' the refreshments on special occasions in the Hospital: Committee meetings, Old Tyme and Modern staff dances, badminton, football, cricket, hockey and tennis games.

The Department spends £4,500 a month on provisions. Its weekly meat bill amounts to £150, exclusive of the cost of 4½ cwts of bacon. ("All meat was imported in the old days," according to Mr. R. W. Bishop, the butcher, who joined the Department in 1929, "Now we get English lamb, mutton, pork, beef, etc. There is more of a variety and the meat is 50% better than it was years ago".)

Mr. W. G. Keepence, the Catering Officer, came to Roundway in 1945 after 11½ years in what eventually became the Army Catering Service. He has a staff of 32 employees, in addition to a number of patients who help with the work of the Department.

Following considerable structural improvements in recent years, the walls of the main kitchen are now gleaming in white and the floor in red tiles. A Cold Room for the storage of meat, milk and fruit has been a valuable addition to the premises and the installation of electric fans for the expulsion of steam and vapours has done much to improve the conditions of service of the staff. Modern equipment has also been installed, including three Hobart mixers (equipped with adjustable parts for cutting vegetables and mincing meat) and a Berkerr machine for slicing cooked meats and bacon for the patients' breakfasts. The distribution of food to the wards has also been improved of late and insulated boxes are now used in place of open containers.

Back in October Mr. Keepence had told me:—"We hope to make another special effort regarding the patients' and staff cakes this coming Christmas. We do on an average about 300 cakes at Christmas, weighing about 6 lbs each". ("If you could buy one for a £1", one of Mr. Keepence's colleagues had added, "you would have a cheap cake"). I even had the privilege of seeing some of the ingredients for these cakes: 270 lbs of



sugar, 180 lbs of sultanas, 180 lbs of currants, 135 lbs of lard, 135 lbs of margarine, 32 lbs of dried egg powder (at a cost of 7/6 a lb), 14 lbs of marmalade and 22 lbs of mixed peel, nutmegs, spices and essences.

Early in November I had a glimpse of the finished product: rows upon rows of "dark rich fruit cakes" waiting to be iced. These are the cakes which, along with other seasonal fare, have done so much in the past to make the Hospital a 'home from home' for so many on Christmas Day.

The Bake House where they were made (and where bread is made not only for Roundway and Old Park House but for other hospitals in the Devizes area: St. James' Hospital, the Maternity Hospital, the Devizes and District Hospital) is one of the show pieces of the Catering Department.

It is equipped with a double-decker steam oven, each draw plate of which takes eighty 4-lb loaves of bread. Everything with yeast in it is tested in a "prover" before going into the oven. A Talbot Moulding Machine does away with the old-fashioned method of kneading dough. The Dumbrill Model "A" dough mixer is capable of dealing with a 280-lb sack of flour at a time. There is also a machine --- a dough and bun-divider --- which divides a pan of dough into 36 bun-sized portions of  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb each.

To satisfy the needs of the Hospital four hundred and fifty 4-lb loaves of bread are baked every day. (One of Mr. Keepence's installations in the Bake House is a machine for slicing and buttering bread in one operation). For this purpose 20 sacks of flour are used, 90 loaves to a sack. In addition three thousand buns, forty eight 8-lb 'lardy' cakes and ninety five 4-lb patients' powder cakes are baked weekly.

Mr. W. L. Golding, the foreman, has been with the Hospital for 31 years and Mr. W. H. C. Avery, his 'first hand', 24 years. Jack Leech, a patient, has even a longer record of service. For forty years he has been helping with the work in the Bake House on a full-time basis.

E. W.