DISCOVERY SHEET

# St Bartholomew's Hospital
## Nine centuries of caring for Londoners

**St Bartholomew's Hospital in Smithfield has cared for Londoners for almost 900 years. Today it is usually called 'Bart's'. But who founded the hospital? And how has it changed over nine centuries?**

### FACT!

Bart's has cared for people on the same site for longer than any other hospital in England.

### Back to the beginning

Early hospitals were part of a monastery. They gave food and shelter to travellers and cared for people who were sick, poor or elderly. Bart's was founded in 1123 by a man called Rahere. He became very sick on a journey to Rome and made a promise that he would found a hospital if he got better.



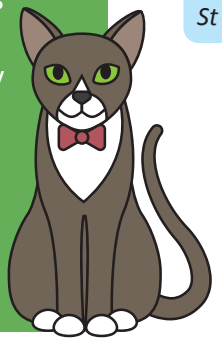
*St Bartholomew & Rahere*

### Who was St Bartholomew?

St Bartholomew was one of the followers of Jesus in the Christian Bible. He appeared to Rahere in a dream and told him to build a church in Smithfield. So Rahere founded a church and a hospital named after the saint.

### DID YOU KNOW?

In the past cats were kept in hospitals to catch rats and mice! Today therapy cats sometimes visit hospital patients to help them feel happier.



### Early days

Bart's relied on donations from Londoners to give free care to the poor. When it was founded the hospital was run by monks, called 'brothers', and nuns, called 'sisters'. We still use the word 'sister' as a title for nurses today.

### DID YOU KNOW?



A medical book written at Bart's in the 1300s suggested treatments included goat's milk, river crab and bathing in water that had been used to boil animals!



### A narrow escape

In Tudor times King Henry VIII closed many of the monasteries and hospitals in London. Fortunately he agreed to transfer Bart's Hospital to the City of London **Corporation**. Henry VIII signed the final documents of the agreement in January 1547, just two weeks before he died.

### Change over! After 1547 new staff worked at the hospital:

**surgeons**
who treated wounds and sores and carried out operations

**physicians**
who identified medical problems and recommended treatment

**apothecaries**
who made up ointments and medicines

**a matron and twelve sisters**
who were responsible for the daily care of patients

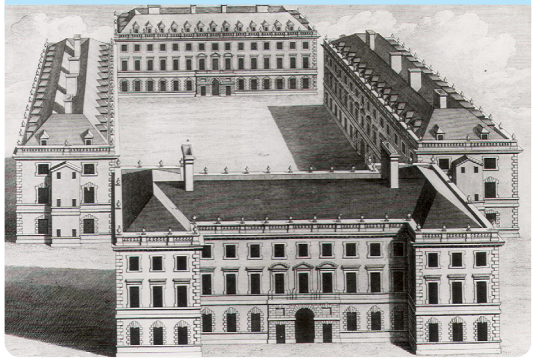
## FACT!

Amputation was a common form of surgery in the past. This was done without any anaesthetic!



## Rebuilding work

By the early 1700s the layout and buildings of Bart's were old and dated. So a new hospital was built on the same site with four separate blocks around a large square courtyard. The first block was completed in 1732 and the last in 1769. This is basically the hospital that survives today.



## Medical advances

In the 1800s lots of advances were made in medical knowledge. Bart's was one of the first hospitals to use anaesthetics in operations. The discovery that diseases were caused by germs led to surgeons operating in much more hygienic conditions.

## Change hands

The way the hospital was run changed when the NHS was founded in 1948. Today Bart's is one of five London hospitals that make up Barts Health NHS Trust. It specialises in the treatment and care of patients with cancer and heart conditions.

NHS Barts Health NHS Trust

## Discoveries and inventions

In the 1600s **William Harvey**, a physician at Bart's, made one of the greatest advances in medical history. He discovered how blood is pumped around the body by the heart. In the 1800s inventions such as the stethoscope helped physicians identify signs of illness.



## Training doctors

In the past physicians were taught at universities and surgeons learned as **apprentices**. In the 1700s some surgeons at Bart's started offering lectures and training courses. This led to the foundation of Bart's Medical College in 1822. Medical students are still taught on the site today.

## ----- Word power! -----

| | |
|---|---|
| **monastery** | a building where a community of monks live |
| **corporation** | the group of people elected to govern a town or city |
| **apprentice** | someone learning a trade by working for a skilled person |
| **germs** | tiny living creatures that can only be seen under a microscope |

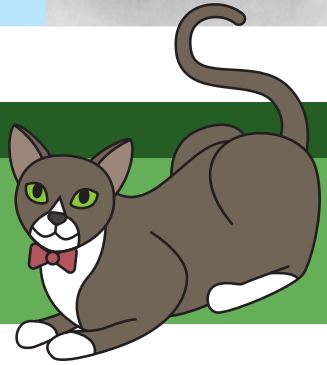
## Training nurses

From the 1600s helpers, called 'nurses', assisted the sisters with tasks such as feeding and bathing patients. From 1877 full-time training was offered for nurses at Bart's. In 1881 **Ethel Gordon Manson** (pictured right) became the matron at Bart's. She helped to change nursing into a professional career for women.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Until the 1970s only women could be nurses at Bart's! Today nursing is a popular career for both men and women.



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