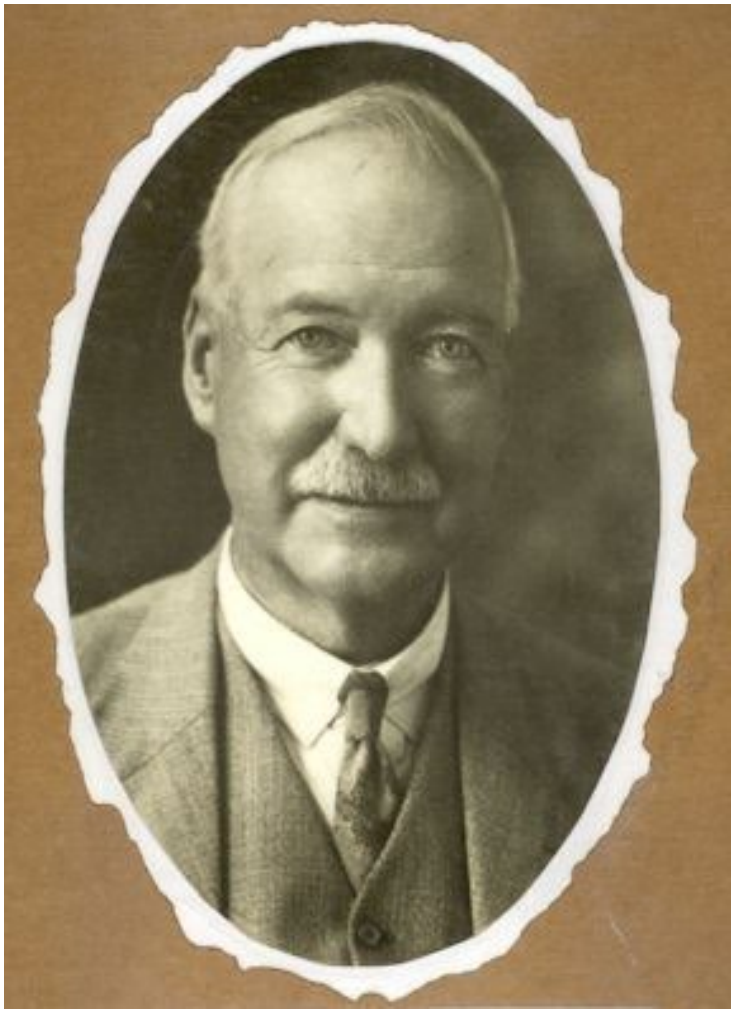
History of GJ Crookes Hospital



During 1936, the late George Joseph Crookes approached the Natal Provincial Council offering to build a hospital at Scottburgh. At that time there was no hospital between Durban and Port Shepstone. The only facilities available were small dressing stations on each sugar estate, and a small hospital run by the Indian Immigration Department at Esperanza.

Mr Crookes' offer was described by Mr. F.C. Hollander, MEC, as the most generous ever made by a single individual for hospital purposes in Natal.

It was therefore in August 1936, that the then Scottburgh Health Committee agreed to grant ten acres of town-lands as a site for the hospital. This was done with the consent of the Provincial Administration.

The site identified was known as Rinderpest Hill, where the hospital stands today.

Mr. G.J. Crookes remained chairman of the hospital board from its opening, until October 1 1946, when the administration of the hospital was taken over by the Province. From that date Mr Crookes became chairman of the Hospital Advisory Board, until his death in 1948.

Mr. G Vernon Crookes, his eldest son, took over the chairmanship from his father, a post he held until his death in 1971. MR. T.C.B (Charles) Crookes, G.J.'s younger son, succeeded his brother Vernon as chairman. When Mr. Charles Crookes vacated the office of chairman in 1988, the position was filled by the grand-nephew of G.J. Crookes, Dudley Crookes.

Laying of the foundation stone by the Administrator of Natal - 1939

All T.B convalescents
1941

In November 1940, a group of sick and dying Imperial servicemen en route from the East Mediterranean war zone to the UK via South Africa, were put ashore at Durban, because their hospital ship was needed urgently elsewhere. Among the group were a number suffering from various stages of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, caused through serving in intolerable active service conditions.

Thirty-six of the of the patients were sent to Renishaw hospital at Scottburgh. The South Africans at Renishaw took a unique enlightened attitude towards the plight of these young TB patients and employed the very latest medical techniques known at that time. Those who had no hope of survival were helped to die with compassion, and with much dignity as the evil disease would allow, and those with a fighting chance were treated, nursed, encouraged and inspired with care, affection, humour and utter dedication.

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From Renishaw to G.J. Crookes - 1949

1939

1989

2000

The first helicopter landing at GJ Crookes hospital – 1980's

The patient was attacked by a shark and brought to the hospital by an army helicopter

G.J. Crookes Hospital – then…

And now…