

# THE HORTON CHAPEL PROJECT

Research presented by John Mumford

## Leisure and Entertainment

### **Early Days**

Leisure and entertainment had always been an essential element of daily life for patients of the hospital cluster. The extensive grounds were landscaped. Enclosed 'airing courts', where patients would exercise or sit outdoors, were shared by several wards, and octagonal pavilions enabled patients to enjoy the outdoors in bad weather or be shaded from the sun. Walking within the grounds and woodlands was the most widely available activity for patients. Originally the walks were heavily supervised but as time passed, it was realised that other activities such as art, music and dancing were also beneficial, as well as attending concerts and theatrical performances in the main hall.



Long Grove Mental Hospital: view of the summer garden 1910

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The Manor Hospital Staff in pantomime 1928/29 from Bourne Hall Museum Ref OP4333

*“Behind their erstwhile locked doors the patients... spent their whole time as an isolated community mixing little with other wards except on High Days and Holidays; for example, the weekly dance, the annual fete, and attendances at Church. The decorative schemes, if they could be graced with such a term, were drab in the extreme; chocolate brown and olive green predominated. The furniture was massive and designed much more with an eye to durability than comfort. The clothes in which the patient was dressed were miserable in the extreme-badly designed, of the coarsest, cheapest materials and, in all, calculated to degrade the unfortunate being who was made compulsorily to don them. The atmosphere, therefore, was compounded of partly that of a workhouse, partly of a prison and with only a faint trace of anything which could be deemed to improve morale... Treatment other than custodial care was virtually non-existent, and what cures or improvements took place were the result largely of spontaneous remissions in the mental illness from which the patient suffered.”*

(ROLLIN, HENRY R., Physician Deputy Superintendent, Horton Hospital, Epsom, Surrey - Paper to National Association of Music Therapy 1959)<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Music Therapy 1959. Ninth Book of Proceedings of the National Association for Music Therapy. Page 26 of Paper by Henry R Rollin, Physician Deputy Superintendent, Horton Hospital.  
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