



Why were the Scottish Women's Hospitals set up?

By 1914, women were raising their standards of education and campaigning for the right to vote. Women at the University of Glasgow were no exception. The first female medical graduate was in 1894 and the Queen Margaret Suffrage Society debated women's voting rights.

Dr Elsie Inglis, a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, saw the war as an opportunity to showcase the ability of medical women as a way to campaign for voting rights. She organised the all-female Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service, funded by the Scottish Federation of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and the American Red Cross. When she approached the British Government offering the services of her hospital unit, Dr Inglis was told by the War Office to 'go home and sit still'. She then contacted the French and Serbian Governments, both of which accepted her offer.

Within four weeks of the start of the war, Scottish Women's Hospital staff left to set up a hospital in France. Fourteen units were dispatched to locations in Serbia, France and Corsica to assist the wounded.





Scottish Women's Hospital: Dr Elizabeth Ross

Dr Elizabeth Ross was amongst the first women to go overseas and treat the wounded.

Elizabeth Ross studied medicine at University of Glasgow from 1896 to 1901 when she graduated MB ChB.

At the invitation of the Russian Government, Dr Ross went to Serbia, where there were several Scottish Women's Hospital units. Dr Ross worked at Kragujevac Military Hospital alongside Katherine Macphail, a fellow doctor and University of Glasgow alumna.

It was here that Dr Ross took charge of fever patients. Tragically after her first week, she caught typhus and died on her 37th birthday, 14 February 1915.

She is the only women to be commemorated on the University of Glasgow's First World War Roll of Honour.



“I have seen her several times since she took ill & the day before yesterday when I saw her last, she seemed a little better.”

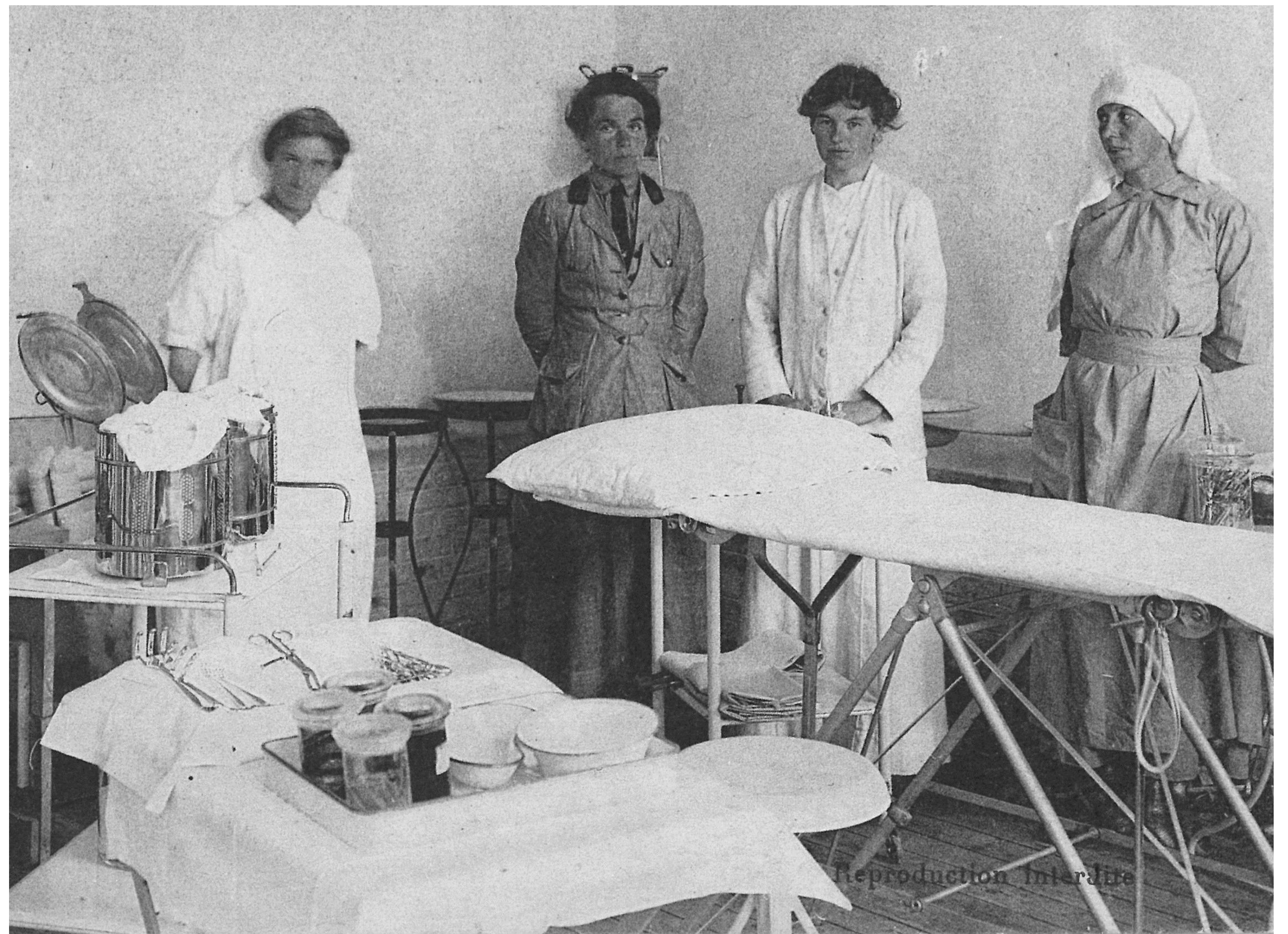


University
of Glasgow

Scottish Womens Hospital: Dr Honoria Somerville Keer

Honoria Somerville Keer, a University of Glasgow MB ChB graduate of 1910, served in France and Serbia with the Scottish Women's Hospital.

Dr Keer served with the Girton and Newnham Unit, which first went to Troyes, France. Based within the grounds of a castle, the hospital's 250 beds were assembled under tents. The orangery was used as an operating theatre and the stable as an X-ray.



Dr Keer followed the Girton and Newnham Unit to Serbia, where the unit stayed for the rest of the war. Dr Keer then went to Corsica to help Serbian refugees.

Her extraordinary service was acknowledged by France and Serbia when Dr Keer was awarded the French Croix de Guerre and Médaille des Epidemies, and Serbian Order of St Sava.





Scottish Women's Hospital: Dr Anne Louise McIlroy

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(Voir au verso les observations importantes)

M. *D^r Louise McIlroy, Chirurgienne*
(Nom et situation militaire de l'isolé.)

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Service expéditeur. *Comité de Londres*
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10 Octobre 1911
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PARTIE À DÉTACHER POUR ÊTRE MISE À L'APPUI DES FEUILLES DE JOURNÉES OU DES REVUES D'OFFICIERS SANS TROUPE.

M. _____ partant de _____
(Nom et situation militaire de l'isolé.)

le _____ pour se rendre à _____
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Allocations de toute nature perçues au départ

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“ Much is due to the nursing staff for their skill and care in looking after the sick and wounded ”

Having studied medicine at the University of Glasgow, Anne Louise McIlroy graduated MB in 1898. Then in 1900, she became the first woman to earn a MD. Dr McIlroy returned to Glasgow and graduated as a DSc in 1910.

Dr McIlroy commanded the Girton and Newnham Unit of the Scottish Women's Hospital. Conditions in the Serbian hospitals were challenging and they struggled to maintain cleanliness. A handful of women in Dr McIlroy's unit died of diseases such as dysentery, which affected the unit's morale.

Dr McIlroy's war service was greatly appreciated and she was awarded the French Croix de Guerre, Médaille des Epidemies, Serbian Red Cross and the Serbian Order of St Sava.



Scottish Women's Hospitals: Dr Winifred Ross

Born in 1885, Winifred Ross began her medical studies at University of Glasgow in 1903. In 1909, Dr Ross graduated MB ChB.

In December 1914, Dr Ross went to France to set up the first Scottish Women's Hospital unit at Royaumont Abbey. It was a difficult and exhausting struggle. The winter weather made it hard to prepare for the first patients. The hospital received thousands of French soldiers and treated them with consistent devotion. In this environment, Dr Ross formed lifelong friendships with her colleagues.



... perfect paradise compared to similar institutions at home





Scottish Women's Hospital: Isabel Macphail



Isabel Macphail, having studied Modern Languages at the University of Glasgow, returned to take a nursing course. Once qualified, she volunteered with the Scottish Women's Hospital.

Macphail worked as an orderly in Troyes, France, supporting medical and nursing staff. There were opportunities within the SWH to train in a particular field or to take charge of a department, such as clothing or linen. While orderlies were generally medically untrained, these women were the backbone of the hospitals.

Macphail joined University of Glasgow alumnae Anne McIlroy and Honoria Keer in Salonica, Greece, in 1915, and was part of the Serbian evacuation in December 1915. Due to the retreating armies they had to move patients and equipment through mountain passes, where the winter weather caused severe frostbite and sometimes death.



University of Glasgow Women during the Great War

Many female medical students were leaving Glasgow to assist the wounded with the Scottish Women's Hospitals. The University began to provide first aid and nursing lectures to those who wished to volunteer with the Scottish Women's Hospital but had no medical knowledge.

Only women over the age of 21 were allowed to go with the SWH but there were several able women under this age. Many requests from Queen Margaret College appealed for the entry qualifications for volunteers to be reduced.

Meanwhile, the University of Glasgow trained women to fill the jobs of men who were away on active service.

“At this juncture it is important that every girl should be prepared to give her services in the world of affairs”

QUEEN MARGARET COLLEGE.

First Aid and Home Nursing Lectures.

A Course of Lectures in FIRST AID, and another course in HOME NURSING will be given during the next few weeks at Queen Margaret College. The courses are open to past and present students of the College. They are recognised by the St. Andrew's Ambulance Association, and will prepare for its Certificates in First Aid and Home Nursing.

The Lectures in FIRST AID, which will be conducted by Miss Jane Robertson, M.A., M.B., Ch.B., will be given on **Mondays** and **Thursdays** at **5 p.m.** The **first** meeting of the class will take place on **Thursday, May 6th**, when intending members should present themselves. Enrolment Fee, 2/6; First Aid Text Book, 1/-

The Lectures in HOME NURSING, which will also be conducted by Miss Jane Robertson, M.B., Ch.B., will be given on **Tuesdays** at **5 p.m.**, and **Saturdays** at **2 p.m.** The **first** meeting of the class will take place on **Saturday, May 8th**, when intending members should present themselves. Enrolment Fee, 2/6; Home Nursing Text Book, 1/-

It is allowable to take both Courses.

F. H. MELVILLE.

May 4, 1915.



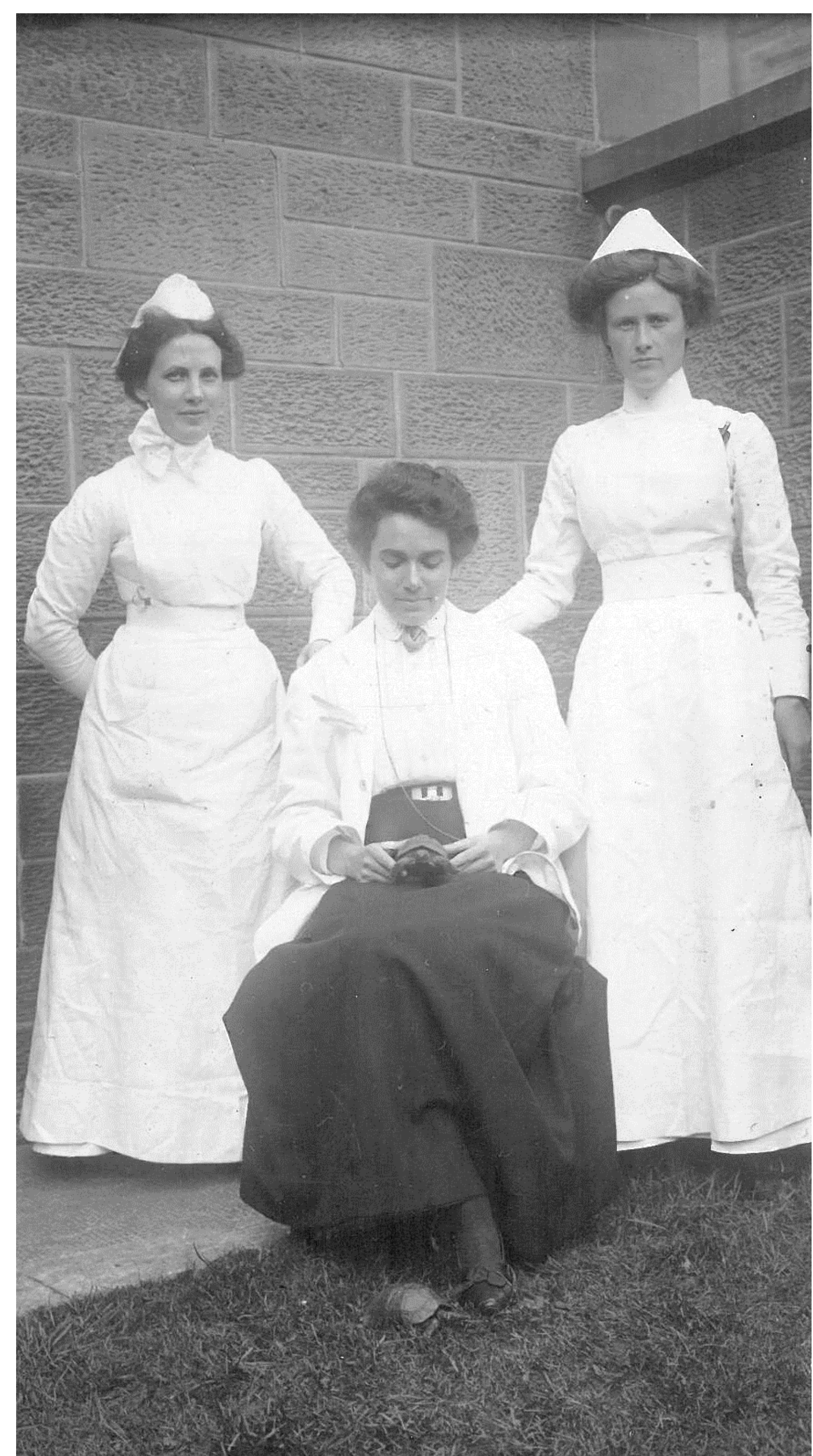
Scottish Women's Hospital: After The Great War

A handful of Scottish Women's Hospital women died during the war, amongst them their founder Dr Elsie Inglis who died in 1917. For those who died in Serbia, annual remembrance services are still held to honour their sacrifice.

After the war the women scattered: some reluctantly returned home to their previous lives; a handful of orderlies went on to study medicine; while other colleagues continued to work for the SWH in the London office, or other hospitals that continued to exist.

Many had distinguished medical careers, like Dr Anne Louise McIlroy, who became the first woman to be appointed a medical professor in the UK.

In 1918, women over the age of 30, who met property qualifications, were given the right to vote, just as Elsie Inglis had hoped when she set up the Scottish Women's Hospitals.



Left: Anne Louise McIlroy. Right: Honoria Somerville Keer (seated).