

The Storrington Ambulance Trust

Back in 1940 with the country at War and no National Health Service a local businessman, a Mr D H Rapley, suggested the purchase of an ambulance. So, with the support of six other local businessmen, including Mr Fleming the chemist and Dr Harrison, the Ambulance Association was formed.

W J Harwood (now Harwoods Garage) of Pulborough was able to supply a green Dodge ambulance for £185 (which in today's money would be £7240). With donations collected the Association was able to put down a deposit of £50 for the vehicle. It was stored and maintained in a local garage in Storrington and usage was split between the Storrington ARP (Air Raid Precautions) the Ambulance Association, with each arranging their own insurance. It was insured for £9.9s.0d. plus £2.8s.0d to carry eight passengers and a driver. And run by volunteers under the control of the ARP.

Mr Fleming the chemist donated dressings and others gave a first aid haversack, blankets and Red Cross various items.

Following house to house collections the Association raised just over £160 from 129 subscribers who paid 2/- (10p in today's money) which entitled a family to one stretcher case to hospital per year within a 20 mile radius. In addition a small mileage rate was levied. If you lived outside the area 4s.2d covered a man, wife and children for a year.

With petrol rationed the ambulance was filled from ARP allocation.

A Mrs Barnard, who ran a hand laundry business in the village, did the Ambulance Association laundry.

The old ARP calling-out centre in Storrington was telephone number 319. When this closed down it moved around and ended up with Mr Hues at Saggars Garage, who serviced the ambulance.

During the first year the two women ambulance drivers were called out 28 times.

With a healthy financial position it was decided to purchase £200 of Defence Bonds. A further £50 being added during "Warship Week".

Later in 1942 due to a good financial position journeys became free to subscribers The Ambulance Association bought 250 National Savings Certificates.

The garaging and maintenance costs of 15/- (75p) per week was considered expensive so in 1943 the Association decided to purchase a shed and adjoining property in Mill Lane, Storrington for £500.

After four years of War with great demands put on people's time and efforts, and staffing had become difficult, it was decided that the ambulance should be more professionally run so by the end of 1945 The Association was paying for journeys with trained assistants.

The old Dodge ambulance continued in use until 1947 when a new Wayfarer ambulance was offered to the Association by a Mrs Saggars. The old Dodge was sold to the St Johns Ambulance with the equipment being given to the District Nurses

With the introduction of the NHS the newer ambulance was offered to W.S.C.C. They initially paid a mileage allowance for usage but later bought it, and the funds were invested.

With the accounts made up to date The Charity Commissioners approved the reconstitution of the Association and The Storrington Ambulance Trust was formed for the benefit of the sick and poor persons in Storrington and the adjoining parishes of Sullington, Washington, Ashington, West Chiltington, Pulborough and Parham.

Anne Rapley, a well-known Storrington lady and daughter of the founding member, actively administered the Trust until her death in 2010.

Now with new Trustees, we hope to continue Anne Rapley's good work. Although the Trust does not hold a large sum of invested capital there is enough to allow it to function and bestow small one-off grants normally in the region of £50 or sometimes £100 to those in need in the surrounding parishes.

We get a number of cases referred to us via a local Family Support worker and contacts we have made over time. In addition, from time to time, we print and ask local businesses to put one of our fliers in their shop or office window.



Dodge WC-54 / WC-64