



# HUMANS OF THE ROYAL

## Effie Jane Bourne (1883-1965)

Effie Jane Bourne trained at Brisbane Hospital, gaining her Certificate in 1910. She subsequently served as hospital Matron for fourteen years.

Shortly after Grace Wilson became Matron in 1914 she left on war service, and the hospital committee appointed Effie Bourne as Matron.

Described as "a petite woman, very shy and retiring" Bourne was known as a rigid disciplinarian and an excellent administrator.

During World War I, doctors and nurses were expected to enlist, and many felt compelled by patriotic duty or moral obligation.

Nursing staff at Brisbane Hospital was described as "bottom-heavy" during the war years, with most senior nurses deployed overseas. In fact many nurses left for war service on completing training.

As hospital Matron, Bourne wrote to the Nurses Registration Board in 1915 to request that some of her recent graduates could be examined early so they could join the Australian Army Nursing Service.

When the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918 and 1919 reached Brisbane, there was huge demand for hospital beds and Matron Bourne was appointed to manage extra resources.

Brisbane Hospital facilities were so stretched that patients were accommodated in tents on the hospital grounds and at the nearby Exhibition grounds, and Matron Bourne requested that all hospitals dedicate a quarter of their nursing staff to the care of influenza patients.

John Barr McLean praised the hard work and devotion of the nurses at Brisbane Hospital where he was Medical Superintendent between 1904 and 1931. McLean admired the excellence of the Matrons with whom he served during those years, including Effie Bourne. It is understood that ward rounds with McLean involved feeding the hospital gold fish before visiting up to 20 wards.

Effie Jane Bourne served Brisbane Hospital until 1928, and was succeeded by Christense Sorensen.

In 2017, as we celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Effie Jane Bourne's image is proudly displayed around the hospital campus, where she is fondly remembered as one of its true pioneers.

