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Autor: Emmott, H.J.
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SWISS APPARATUS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

A remarkable private effort in Surrey

We would like you to know of a very remarkable achievement by people living in the South of England. You are aware that medical treatment is free to anyone in the U.K., but what happens when the doctors are not satisfied with the equipment they have available and wish to procure a large and costly piece of apparatus like a Brown Boveri Betatron?

One of the well-known hospitals for the treatment of cancer in U.K. is St. Luke's Hospital at Guildford, in the county of Surrey, some 30 miles S.W. from London. About 17,000 patients are treated every year and the number unfortunately is tending to increase. About six years ago, the doctors and scientists at this centre were impressed with the benefits to be obtained from the Gamma and Beta rays emitted from the Brown Boveri Betatrons that were installed in Switzerland, Belgium, Germany and U.S.A. After investigating these machines very closely they were most anxious that one should be set up at St. Luke's. The money available from the Ministry of Health for cancer research and treatment was already fully expended, and the Ministry were unable to purchase a Betatron at that time. The possibility of raising the money by voluntary contributions was considered, and the "Betatron Cancer Appeal Trust" was formed to purchase a Betatron, and the special building required to house it. Voluntary supporters of the hospital took up the appeal, and eminent people were approached and readily gave contributions and offered their services. By means of personal approach, leaflets, posters, flag days, garden parties, entertainments and other means, the target of £150,000 quickly came nearer and nearer. In 1963, the order was placed and architects appointed to design the new building with the 8-foot thick concrete walls of the radiation room, to give protection to people outside during the periods the

Betatron is irradiating. At that time, the delivery period for a Betatron was three years, but a machine had been reserved by British Brown Boveri and was due for delivery early in 1965. Progress on the building did not keep up with the anticipated schedule, and the parts of the Betatron were only delivered at the end of 1965. The first stages of erection are now in progress. It is expected that the Betatron will be ready to accept its first patient in January next year. During this period the appeal continued and passed even a revised target of £185,000 by several thousands of pounds. Any surplus will be used to add further ammunition to the Campaign against Cancer. The staffing and maintenance of the Betatron will be carried out by the Ministry of Health to whom it will be handed over on completion.

The appeal was sponsored by the Mayors of Guildford, Reigate, Aldershot and Godalming together with titled people and business people living in the vicinity. The post of President was filled by Miss Florence Desmond, the well-known theatrical personality, and the Hon. Angus Ogilvy accepted the position of Patron. Together with a committee, secretary and treasurer they kept the appeal going with the most satisfactory results. On 28th April, an anonymous donor presented the appeal Trust with a reception and dance at the Civic Hall, Guildford, to which contributors and helpers were invited to meet the Patron. The guests were received by Mr. Ogilvy, the Mayor and Mayoress of Guildford, Miss Florence Desmond and Mr. W. J. Wilkin, chairman of the Trust Committee. The writer was privileged to attend, and a most enjoyable evening passed all too quickly. Needless to say, by various means another £200 was collected to add to the fund. In the course of the speeches Miss Desmond paraphrased some famous words: Never was so much contributed by so few for something, she hoped, they would never need.

H. J. Emmott
(British Brown Boveri Ltd.)

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