

Dr Victoria Mary Crosse

Since joining the Mosley Society Local History Group I've been doing research into an often overlooked section of Moseley personalities; the remarkable women who've made a contribution to this community or even the nation as a whole; one of these women was Dr Victoria Mary Crosse.

Dr Crosse was born near Oxford in 1900 and attended Royal Free Medical School in London. After completing her training she moved to Birmingham in 1929 and was appointed obstetrician to the Sorrento Maternity Home in 1931. Dr Crosse was the Senior Medical Officer for the new Premature Baby Unit and her hard work and dedication to reducing the deaths of premature babies was remarkable. This was all done by using simple equipment, like baby beds with pockets for hot water bottles and ensuring that the babies received the best nursing care and nutrition (Dunn 2007).

Her work was hugely successful, and in 1945 she was persuaded to write a book so that others could learn from her methods. The book was called *The Premature Baby*, it became a best seller internationally and was the basis for care in many other premature baby units around Britain and further afield. Other projects begun by Crosse included a breast milk bank and an outreach team of health visitors for follow-up care (Dunn 2007).



Dr Crosse 1900-1972 (Dunn 2007)

She also pioneered the use of incubators. Sorrento's first incubators were American imports, and Crosse was one of the first practitioners to realise the connection between the high level of oxygen they used and blindness in some of her tiny patients. She reduced the incidence of eye damage by regulating oxygen levels (Dunn 2007). The condition was first described as *retrolental fibroplasia* in 1942 by T.L Terry, Dr Crosse published *Prevention of Retrolental Fibroplasia* in 1946.

Bibliography

Dunn, P. M. 2007, 'Dr Mary Crosse, OBE, MD (1900–1972) and the premature baby', *Archives of Disease in Childhood: Fetal and Neonatal*, vol 92 (2), pp. 151-153.