A brief history of The James Tudor Foundation

To discover the origins of The James Tudor Foundation we need to travel back in time almost 100 years.

During the 1920s the voluntary hospitals in the UK were in crisis due to an acute lack of funding. In Bristol, James Tudor had been deeply concerned about the parlous financial state of the voluntary hospitals and the consequent lack of access of the population to medical treatment.

In 1926 at a meeting between representatives of the Bristol Royal Infirmary, Bristol General Hospital and various works committees the Bristol Medical Institutions Contributory Scheme (BMICS) was conceived and James Tudor was appointed as its Honorary Secretary. The principal aim of the scheme was “to raise funds for the upkeep of all institutions on the list and on behalf of those entitled to benefit making provision for the whole or part payment of the charges for maintenance of the same”.

Regular contributions from workpeople and citizens generally would provide an assured income for the hospitals and in return, contributors and their families would receive hospital treatment without charge. A contribution of one penny a week entitled the contributor, his wife and children to hospital treatment.

In 1935 the committee of BMICS launched an Extended Benefit Scheme, later renamed Bristol Contributory Welfare Association (BCWA) which provided contributors, for an extra penny a week, a cash payment of one guinea a week whilst in hospital.

With the advent of the National Health Service in 1948, BCWA continued as a non-profit making Provident Association providing benefits for both NHS and private patients and in the ensuing decades achieved phenomenal growth, becoming the fourth largest Provident Association providing medical insurance in the UK.

Fast forward now to the new millennium. Following some indifferent underwriting results experienced by BCWA, the Board concluded that the future interests of its members would be best served if the Association was sold. In 2004 The Hospital Savings Association, later known as Simply Health acquired the membership rights and the consideration for the purchase, some £26 million, was transferred to a new charity christened The James Tudor Foundation.

The principal object of the Foundation, namely the relief of sickness, is in symmetrical alignment with BCWA and BMICS before it so that from 1926 to the present day there is an extraordinary continuity of voluntary service rendered by three separate but closely linked not-for-profit organisations dedicated to the relief of sickness in all its many forms.
**Family Connections**

James Tudor retired in 1948 and was succeeded by his son-in-law Geoffrey Wren who had worked for BMICS since 1936. On his retirement in 1976 he in turn was succeeded by his elder son, Martin Wren, the grandson of James Tudor, and who had joined BCWA in 1971.

The sale of BCWA and the formation of The James Tudor Foundation coincided with Martin Wren’s retirement from BCWA and he became our first Chairman from inauguration. He remained in this role until his death in 2016. Over three generations this remarkable family has collectively devoted 90 years of service to the relief of sickness.

James Tudor died in 1952. He was not only Chairman but the founder of BCWA and the creator of a concept which was adopted by contributory schemes throughout the country. His name was inextricably linked with hospitals and he dedicated his life to selfless voluntary service. He would surely have been proud to see a charity bearing his name and committed to the relief of sickness.