



# Chelsea Pensioners

1808-1828

Melksham



Until the 17th century the state made no specific provision for old and injured soldiers.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I it was recognised that provision needed to be made for poor, sick and disabled soldiers. This led to an Act of Parliament, passed in 1593, that levied a weekly tax on parishes for the relief of soldiers and sailors.

By 1673 it was becoming increasingly apparent that some soldiers were no longer fit for service. In 1681, King Charles issued a Royal Warrant authorising the building of the Royal Hospital Chelsea to care for those 'broken by age or war'.

Sir Christopher Wren was commissioned to design and erect the building. Sir Stephen Fox was commissioned to secure the funds necessary to progress the build.

The chosen site, set adjacent to the River Thames in the countryside of Chelsea contained the uncompleted building of the former 'Chelsey College'.

During the reign of King William III and Queen Mary II, the Royal Hospital was still under construction, so they introduced a system for distribution of army pensions in 1689. The pension was to be made available to all former soldiers who had been injured in service, or who had served for more than 20 years.

In 1692 work was finally completed and the first Chelsea Pensioners were admitted in February 1692 and by the end of March the full complement of 476 were in residence. However there were more pensioners than places available in the Hospital. Eligible ex-soldiers who could not be housed in the Hospital were termed out-pensioners, receiving their pension from the Royal Hospital but living outside it. In-pensioners, by contrast, surrendered their army pension and lived within the Royal Hospital.

In 1703, there were only 51 out-pensioners. By 1815 this figure had risen to 36,757. This was due to Napoleonic War Service

The Royal Hospital remained responsible for distributing army pensions until 1955, following which the phrase "out-pensioner" became less common, and "Chelsea pensioner" was used largely to refer to "in-pensioners".

To qualify for a Pension or a place within the hospital you had to satisfy one of two criteria. 1. Be injured whilst on active service. 2. To have served more than 20 years in the service of the country.

In 2009 the first women were admitted to the hospital following a decision in 2007 to modernise the facilities for both men and women use.

For More information about the Chelsea Hospital please visit – [Origins and History](#)

<b>Surname</b>	Box
<b>Given Name</b>	Kinsman
<b>Year of Admission</b>	1818
<b>Date of Admission</b>	23rd September
<b>Age</b>	40
<b>Years of Service</b>	13yrs 5mths in the 66th Regt. Of Foot
<b>Occupation</b>	Weaver
<b>Reason for Pension</b>	Venereal of long standing
<b>Description</b>	Height - 5' 4¼" Hair - brown Eyes - brown Complexion - fair

<b>Surname</b>	Burnes
<b>Given Name</b>	Edward
<b>Year of Admission</b>	1822
<b>Date of Admission</b>	7th February
<b>Age</b>	35
<b>Years of Service</b>	26yrs 9mths in the 66th Regt. Of Foot; Includes 1 yr under age
<b>Occupation</b>	Weaver
<b>Reason for Pension</b>	Opaque cornea from Ophthalmia
<b>Description</b>	Height - 5' 4½" Hair - brown Eyes - grey Complexion - sallow

<b>Surname</b>	Chivers
<b>Given Name</b>	Samuel
<b>Year of Admission</b>	1822
<b>Date of Admission</b>	25th September
<b>Age</b>	32

<b>Years of Service</b>	13yrs 4mths in the 41st Regt. Of Foot
<b>Occupation</b>	Weaver
<b>Reason for Pension</b>	Hydrocele from a hurt at Fort George working on King's Stores
<b>Description</b>	Height - 5' 7" Hair - dark brown Eyes - hazel Complexion - dark

<b>Surname</b>	Hems
<b>Given Name</b>	William
<b>Year of Admission</b>	1819
<b>Date of Admission</b>	26th August
<b>Age</b>	43
<b>Years of Service</b>	33yrs 4mths in the 66th Regt. Of Foot; Includes 4 years in the 129th & 7th Foot
<b>Occupation</b>	Weaver
<b>Reason for Pension</b>	Reduction
<b>Description</b>	Height - 5' 6" Hair - black Eyes - hazel Complexion - dark

<b>Surname</b>	Howell
<b>Given Name</b>	John
<b>Year of Admission</b>	1816
<b>Date of Admission</b>	
<b>Age</b>	43
<b>Years of Service</b>	Sergeant 23yrs 11mths in the Wiltshire Regt.; Received a pension of 1s per day; Died in Melksham in 1848
<b>Occupation</b>	Shearman
<b>Reason for Pension</b>	Ruptured
<b>Description</b>	Height - 5' 6" Hair - light Eyes - grey Complexion - fair

<b>Surname</b>	Hulbert
<b>Given Name</b>	Thomas
<b>Year of Admission</b>	1816
<b>Date of Admission</b>	19th December
<b>Age</b>	45
<b>Years of Service</b>	8ys 5mths in the 41st Regt. Of Foot
<b>Occupation</b>	Cotton spinner
<b>Reason for Pension</b>	Wounded in America and worn out
<b>Description</b>	Height - 5' 5" Hair - dark brown Eyes - grey Complexion - dark

<b>Surname</b>	Taylor
<b>Given Name</b>	Thomas
<b>Year of Admission</b>	1819
<b>Date of Admission</b>	26th August
<b>Age</b>	34
<b>Years of Service</b>	22yrs 5mths in the 66th Regt. Of Foot
<b>Occupation</b>	Sheerman
<b>Reason for Pension</b>	Reduction
<b>Description</b>	Height - 5' 5" Hair - brown Eyes - grey Complexion - fair