

## Newsletter November 2020

Spasm HealthCare Museum Building 6 Victoria Rd Gladesville  
No 1 gate house at the Crown Street bus stop on Victoria Road Gladesville



Committee members continue to visit the museum on a weekly basis to ensure the collection is safe and to continue the important job of cataloging donated items. You would be most welcome if you would like to assist in this vital task.

Sadly we are running out of room so have had to turn away many offers of donations of artifacts. However our two latest, while not medical, related to the Gladesville site. They are the church organ that was used at Gladesville, and a hymn book with "Father Toohey Gladesville" written inside. These now add to our previously collected religious artifacts formally used at Gladesville.

This month we highlight some of the books we have in the library. First "**The Gundagai Album**". Those of you who have visited the museum may recognize the photograph of the two nurses and the old operating theatre table. A copy of it has been displayed in our "St Thomas Theatre room" at the museum. It was only recently, while doing an audit on the books we have in the library, that we realised it was one of many photographs presented in this book, also available from the Mitchell Library. They were taken from a 900 glass photo plate collection that belonged to Dr. C.L. Gabriel who practiced in Gundagai in NSW from 1887 until his death in 1927. The book also contains photos of operating theatres, the first captioned "operating theatre 1898". Our computer data base informs us that the second photo of the operating theatre is in the "new" hospital. Gundagai hospital had gas lighting some years before the town itself. Severe burns from Kerosene lamps were still a common emergency in those days. It is books such as this which bring alive the history of our hospitals.

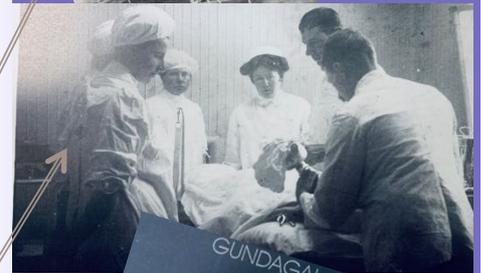
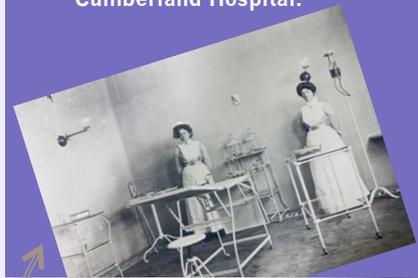
More fascinating information about Gundagai and Dr. C L Gabriel can be found on the first floor at the Antique shop in Gundagai. There are some original glass slides, and other historical & medical artifacts on display. Well worth a look if you are travelling that way.

See over page for more books we hold in our collection.....

November 2020



The Gladesville Organ and the hymn book recently donated by Cumberland Hospital.



## Visiting the HealthCare Museum in real time or online.

Opening hours for the Museum is normally 11 am – 3pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month - February to November. **The museum will be closed to the public until further notice. Members are welcome to attend on specific days as organised with individual volunteer Guides.**

**Executive Members :** **President** Sandra Solarz  
**Curator** Gary Klopfer  
**Secretary /Treasurer** Ros Berryman  
**Volunteer Guides:** Val Corcoran, Kate Paton, Margaret Warby & Peter Hartigan

Contact SPASM by Phone 0414 993 138

Email : [info@spasmmuseum.org.au](mailto:info@spasmmuseum.org.au)

SPASM web sites at [www.spasmmuseum.org.au](http://www.spasmmuseum.org.au)

Facebook page "Discover HuntersHill"

Like us on Facebook: [Society for the Preservation of Artefacts of surgery and medicine SPASM](#)

[Monthly Zoom Meetings 1pm the fourth Monday of each month](#)

# Entry to the Museum takes you to another era:

## **BUILDING 6**

**Room 1** takes us to a 1911 Consulting room: **"The consulting room of Dr. John Sand Smyth"** who practiced in Warwick Queensland. Items from the Five Dock GP Dr. Menzies collection are also in the large display case.

**Room 2. The surgical "pick room"** contains instrument cupboards with a large display of surgical instruments, blood collecting apparatus and interesting items. We have added a selection of orthopaedic instruments and prostheses.

**Room 3. The St Thomas Hospital Operating Theatre Room** In Feb 2020 had a new ceiling installed, and a new display is being set up in this area. The early operating table, as well as early anaesthetic equipment will be on show again we plan to add more early surgical equipment to this display.

**Room 4. The haemostasis room** is home to: an impressive collection of diathermy machines as well as other methods used to provide haemostasis, such as tourniquets, clamps, suturing, bone wax and other medical means.

**The corridor to the exit** takes you past a display of hearing trumpets, tracheostomy tubes a display of early syringes and other historical equipment. On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November we will move the work tables out of this space and add the portable operating table, and world war instruments to this area. The small formaldehyde cupboards and dental equipment will be on display as well as the small sterilizing water baths, one of which was used during Mawson's Antarctic Expedition. This will create the "one way flow" for visitors necessary for exhibitions during this Covid period.

**The NEW Library Work area.** Will be created on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November, which is moving day to make a pleasant space, for volunteers to gather, research and collate the many items still to be cataloged. The reference books and curator's files will be all in one space - a flat space so we wont be congregated outside the toilet with our chairs sliding down to the exit door! If you would like to assist us on the day in this move please contact Ros.

## **BUILDING 1**

**The Anaesthetic Room** which showcases the changes in anaesthetic apparatus used by surgeons, dentists and anaesthetists over the years displaying improvements in safety and monitoring of the anaesthetised patients over the years.

**The pharmacy room** shows beautiful jars, household remedies and also have some early dispensing records. A new optical collection will soon be added, as earlier pharmacists sold eye glasses according to our research.

**The Corridor & Gladesville room** gives a time line of the Tarban Creek Asylum - Gladesville Hospital. There are ECT machines, straight jackets, & mittens. There are photographs and stories from patients and attendants. **The latest exhibit is the Gladesville organ and hymn book is now on display.**



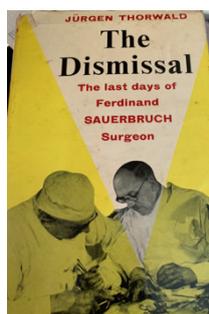
**"Pharmacy through the Ages – A Visual Retrospective"** helping us to understand the development of Pharmacies in Australia. This booklet inspired us to add some optical exhibits in the Pharmacy room. As we were informed early pharmacists in Sydney also sold many other objects, including eye glasses. Pharmacies were also reported to be the forerunner of the milkbars! We learnt about John Tawell, the man who owned the first retail pharmacy in Sydney and were prompted to research more about him. (*Pharmacy through the ages p 22*)

**John Tawell** had the distinction of being sentenced to death twice in England. Once in 1914 for forging a ten pound note. His victims, a Quaker company, were opposed the death penalty and he was instead transported to Australia, arriving in Sydney on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 1815 aboard the "Marquis of Wellington". He worked on coal ships and in the convict hospital. He was pardoned in 1820, married and had two children. He owned a shop selling pharmaceuticals. The family returned to London in 1831 but sadly by 1838 his two children died and then his wife. John began an affair with the young nurse, Sarah Hart, who had looked after his wife. This resulted in two more children. Three years later he met and married a Quaker widow, so he set Sarah and the children up in a cottage, paying her 1 pound a week in child maintenance. By January 1845 Tawell had decided the best way of resolving his financial difficulties was to kill his mistress. He purchased two bottles of Steele's Acid, a preparation used in the treatment of varicose veins, containing the poison prussic acid. He tipped the acid into her beer and left the house. She died. A neighbor saw him leave, alerted the police, who followed him and he was arrested. He was tried and convicted of murder, later he made a full confession to a priest and on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March 1845 he was hanged outside the courthouse. (Ref. <https://convictrecords.com.au/convicts/tawell/john/93051> sighted 18/9/2020)



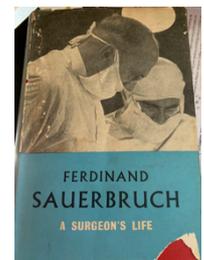
Another section of the museum's books relate to the **development of Hospitals**, so there are books re Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, by Murial Knox Doherty edited by R. Lynette Russell; Royal North Shore by Margaret Rice; St Vincent's by Douglas Miller; as well as the Bowral & District Hospital to name a few. There are also **many other early texts** relating to sterilization, nursing pharmacology, & medicine.

**In the medical section** there is, for example, a copy of the interesting original paper, presented in 1817 by James Parkinson: **"An Essay on the Shaking Palsy"**. Also **"The Dismissal The last days of Ferdinand Sauerbruch Surgeon"** by Jürgen Thorwald is a fascinating book telling the story of the dire consequences of the mental deterioration of one of the worlds greatest surgeons who had pioneered thoracic surgery. Sauerbruch was not aware of his mental deterioration and continued to operate on gullible patients at a private clinic, and even in his home. A tragic but riveting story.



### **"Ferdinand Sauerbruch A Surgeons life"**

recently kindly donated from Dr. Sue Nagy's library to compliment **"The Dismissal"** is advertised as an autobiography by the great man himself. It is also a fascinating read, peppered with the names and deeds of other great medico's who are sadly only known today by the names of their surgical instruments.



SPASM Founded by Professor Ross Holland AM  
1928 -2017



Next Month Nursing texts