

## Newsletter December 2020

Spasm HealthCare Museum Building 6 Victoria Rd Gladesville  
Situating at the Crown Street bus stop on Victoria Road Gladesville



It will soon be a New Year for SPASM and we hope that the Christmas holiday season will be a wonderful one for all our members & friends. Exciting news - we have been asked to open the museum to a small group of Enrolled Nursing students and AIN's from TAFE Ultimo in the New Year, so we are planning for this to occur in February.

We have changed some of the layout at the museum to facilitate one-way traffic in cottage 6. We are developing large-scale information posters to highlight the contents of each room. We have increased the information provided in easily cleaned laminated handouts, giving information that was previously provided during tours. These ideas were developed due to the advice from museum societies to limit the exposure of our volunteers to the public, and to limit the number of people in each area at one time. Last month we reconfigured the workspace into a Library and Reading room to make a more inviting area for members and volunteers to congregate. There are more photos on page 2.

In November we were pleased to show "our new look" museum to our latest member Dr Gayle Burr, who visited last month with 2 friends. Of course the Birds and the Bennett machines in the anaesthetic room resonated with Gayle as an ICU sister. Many thanks to Gayle, for agreeing to share the fascinating story of her experiences - working as an AIN in Warren Hospital to become a University Professor of Nursing in Norway. We spent some time looking at the various nursing textbooks we hold at the museum. We also recorded part of our conversations and reminiscences and hope to include a transcript of that in our recollections folder which has been added to the nurses library area.

One of the text books many nurses may remember was "Modern Practical Nursing Procedures" by Doherty, Sirl & Ring. Murial Knox Doherty was Senior Tutor Sister RPA & Prince Henry Hospital and Principal Matron RAAF Nursing Service; Marjorie Bernice Sirl was Senior Tutor Sister 1935-1947, then Deputy Matron 1951-1961 at Royal North Shore Hospital & Sister RAAF Nursing Service. She was reported to be a remarkable woman with a talent for "bringing alive the concept of nursing"; Olive I. Ring was Senior Tutor sister Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children Sydney.

### December 2020

Attendance at a Health Care Museum such as SPASM allows visitors to reflect on the past, to contrast with the present and contemplate the future.



The new Library and reading room we configured will make the volunteer meetings so much more comfortable.



We now have a flat space to congregate, take tea/coffee and lunch not to mention the cataloging and writing up stories about the many artifacts that have been collected over the years.



A SPECIAL thanks to the small team of volunteers who set about to make this happen, and the two men from "2 men and a truck" who did all the heavy lifting.

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

Opening hours for the Museum is 11 am – 3pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month - February to November. Prior arrangements for small Group visits may also be arranged on these days, or other days - depending on volunteer availability.

#### Executive Members :

President: Sandra Solarz

Curator : Gary Klopfer

Secretary Treasurer: Ros Berryman

**Volunteer Guides:** Val Corcoran, Kate Paton, Margaret Warby, Kerry Moroney & Peter Hartigan

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

[www.discover huntershill.com.au/whats-on](http://www.discover huntershill.com.au/whats-on)

Like us on Facebook: [Society for the Preservation of Artefacts of surgery and medicine SPASM](https://www.facebook.com/SocietyforthePreservationofArtefactsOfSurgeryandMedicineSPASM)

# 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. Also The Five Dock GP "**Dr. Menzie's collection**" is in the large display case at the back of the room.

Room 2. The surgical "pick room" contains instrument cupboards with a large display of surgical instruments, blood collecting apparatus and interesting items. There is a new orthopaedic display cupboard.

Room 3 The **St Thomas Hospital Operating Theatre Room** hosts an evolutional display of receptacles used in the operating theatres. An early operating table, early surgical & anaesthetic apparatus as well as a new display of ENT instrumentation kindly donated by Dr. Jonathan Livesey is now presented in this room

Room 4 The **haemostasis room** is also home to: an impressive display of diathermy units as well as other methods used to prevent bleeding during operations. Tourniquets, clamps, suturing material, bone wax, and more. Then there is the operating table, which was loaned for the filming of "**Wolverine**"

The corridor to the exit takes you past a display of hearing trumpets, tracheostomy tubes and other historical equipment. There are small formaldehyde sterilising cupboards, sterilizing drums, as well as small water bath sterilizers used at the South pole and during war time. The dental section shows 4 types of dental drills, including a very old treadle drill, used between 1890s and 1930's.



The new library work area is now a pleasant place to sit relax take tea, and work on cataloging them many artifacts we have that have not been entered into the computer.

## Building 1

The Anaesthetic Room. Showcases the changes in anaesthetic apparatus used by surgeons, dentists and anaesthetists over the years. Look for: the ventilator, which has bicycle gears as part of its internal mechanism..

The pharmacy room shows beautiful jars, household remedies and also some early dispensing records. A new optical collection has been added recently.

The Corridor and Gladesville Room gives a time line of the Tarban Creek Asylum- Gladesville Hospital. There are ECT machines, straight jackets and mittens, photographs and stories from patients and attendants, as well as religious artifacts used at Gladesville during services held at the hospital.



The "one way" corridor



The "Dental Corner"



Soak trays & drums



Military equipment .



The Nurses' Bookcase.

The Nurses bookcase in the new library work area now holds a number of new (old) textbooks.

Many of the older Nursing texts begin their narrative with the History of Nursing. Such is the case for 1940s 12<sup>th</sup> Edition of "**PRACTICAL NURSING including Hygiene and Dietetics**" by W.T.Gordon Pugh MD assisted by Alice M Pugh SRN. This book was owned by "Miss A O'Brien 120 Old South Head Rd Bellevue Hill." Reading this text we learn: **Sisters of Charity** of the Order of St Vincent de Paul was founded in 1633. It was the largest nursing organisation in the world, however **modern nursing** was developed due to "**Religion, War and Science**". In 1836, inspired by the work of Elizabeth Fry in English goals & Amalie Sieveking in Hamburg Hospitals, Paster Flidner and his wife established **Kaiserswerth Deaconesses Institution** at Dusseldorf as a Hospital of the sick poor and as a training school for Protestant nurses. "**Charles Dickens in "Martin Chuzzlewit" (1844) aided the cause of reform by creating Sairy Gamp and Betsey Prig**" Florence Nightingale visited Kaiserswerth and later nursed in the Crimean war in 1854 making many improvements for the care of soldiers in the war. In London, 'St John's House Sisterhood' took over the training of nurses at **Kings College Hospital**. In 1860 The Nightingale Fund training School for Nurses was founded in connection with **St Thomas's Hospital**. Between 1870 and 1880 all leading hospitals began similar training schools. The revolutions of Scientific developments were introduced by Pasteur (1822-1895) & Lister (1827-1912) A movement to develop **State Nurses Registration** was begun in 1887 and the English Nurses Registration Act was passed in 1919 in England.

"**Instruments, Appliances and Theatre Technique**" by Evelyn Pearce. Would have been an excellent reference text for student nurses during their operating room experiences. Instruments for each procedure were clearly set out in pictorial display and text.

"**Aids to Tray and Trolley setting A complete text book for the nurse**" by Bailliere, Tindall & Cox. Is a little book only about 6"x4" but packed with photos and lists of every procedure likely to be undertaken complete with a photograph of numbered instruments, bowls, medications & appliances likely to be needed. As a general rule it seems that the older the text book the smaller the size!

A proudly Australian text book "**Modern Practical Nursing Procedures**" by M.K. Doherty, M.B. Sirl & O.I. Ring. Page 396 discusses various sutures available Absorbable being: plain gut; chromic gut and Kangaroo tail, to be wound onto hollow glass spools. (Examples of which are in the museum.) Non-absorbable sutures: Horsehair; Silkworm gut; Nylon & Pearsall's silk white or Black. We turned to the page 455 which depicted the skin preparations used prior to surgery. Then page 490 discussed some dietetic notes – how to make Pasteurised Milk, Peptonised Milk, Junket, Milk Jelly, Thick and Thin Barley water and Gruel to name a few! Such tasks show the variation in nurses' duties at that time.

Should you wish to learn a little more about the immediate post-war experiences faced by of one of these authors - Letters written home while Matron Doherty was at Belsen Camp in Germany are available on line at: "**Letters by Murial Knox Doherty August –October 1945**" is found at :

[http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/\\_transcript/2014/D20915/a8166.html](http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/_transcript/2014/D20915/a8166.html)

Special Care Museum  
**SPASM**

SPASM Founded by Professor Ross Holland AM 1928 - 2017