

# SPASM MUSE

## Newsletter February 2021

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



Our Covid Safe plan has been launched with NSW Government and we have the tick of approval. We will open the museum in February with Covid precautions in place, ie Hand Wash at the front door, recording of names on the NSW app - we have our unique code to scan, social distancing has been marked out on the floor, our Covid plan is approved and available at the door to the museum. The layout at the museum has been changed to facilitate one-way traffic in cottage 6. We have printed information posters to highlight the contents of each room. And provided easily cleaned laminated handouts in each room to make viewing the exhibits more informed. For now the museum is formally closed to larger groups, but members and guests may ring for an appointment to visit in small groups. We ask that masks be worn inside the museum when guests are present, do not visit if unwell and only 2 persons to visit in each room - unless from the same household of course.

In January we gained our first New Member for 2021. We would like to introduce **Dawn Stead** to the group. Dawn is a retired Psychiatric trained/ General Surgical Nurse - now from Forster NSW. She was visiting Gladesville in January and we were pleased to be able to meet her and her husband to show them around the museum before they returned home. Dawn commenced her training at Gladesville / Callan Park before travelling to Adelaide eventually going on to complete her General Nursing. She has a wealth of stories to share and promises to send on a photograph of her group who commenced training at Gladesville in 1959.

In the interest of health for all, the committee has decided that we postpone the proposed "get together" In the meantime committee members will be attending the museum on normal days commencing in February. Members and friends are of course always welcome to attend subject to Covid restrictions.

Page 2 This month contains information re new display of old instruments in the St Thomas room, and a little personal surprise found tucked inside a book. ----- PTO →

## February 2021

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.



Meet our latest member - Dawn Stead, admiring the Gladesville Bundy clock & comparing the Patients' menu to what she remembers nurses were given for breakfast in 1959 - steak eggs & chips.

## 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, Kerry Moroney & Peter Hartigan

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Email : [spasm@netspace.net.au](mailto:spasm@netspace.net.au)

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

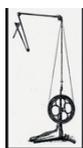
**Room 1** takes us to a 1911 Consulting room: "**The consulting room of Dr. John Sand Smyth**" who practiced in Warwick Queensland. Also The Five Dock GP "**Dr. Menzie's collection**" is in the large display case at the back of the room.

**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.



## New exhibit arrangement for older Instruments.

In order to better display the 19th Century instruments with ebony handles, they have been moved to the St Thomas' Room. These beautiful crafted instruments were used prior to the introduction of sterilization by heat.

The delicate bone saw at the back of the display in the second picture would have been used in amputations below the elbow.

The third photo shows the Catlin Amputation knife. "The overriding consideration in pre-anaesthetic surgery was speed. An instrument designed with this in mind was the Catlin with its sharp point and lengthy blade. The surgeon inserted this knife from one side of the thigh aiming to just miss the front of the bone and emerge on the opposite side with the blade facing forwards the whole of the front of the thigh was then severed with a single sweep of the knife. While his assistant controlled bleeding the surgeon repeated the process with the muscles at the back of the thigh. The bone was rapidly sawn through, ligatures placed around the three major vessels, and the two flaps brought together for stitching. The whole process could take less than a minute in skilled hands".



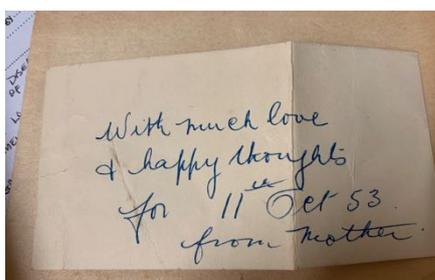
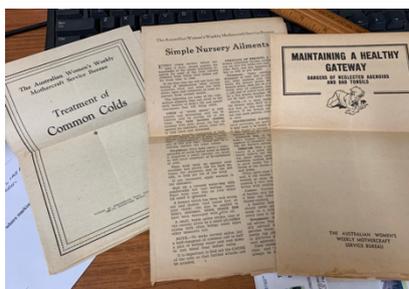
**On a different note:** When cataloging the many and varied books we have in the nurses cabinet - within a book relating to diets we came across some interesting leaflets published by the Australian Women's Weekly.

The subjects were "Treatment of the Common cold", "Simple nursery ailments" and "Maintaining a healthy Gateway - (the dangers of neglected adenoids and bad tonsils)".



What caught our attention was the hand written note that came with those little leaflets. A mother obviously sent on these tracts to a daughter. The note she wrote "**with much love and happy thoughts for 11th Oct 53 from Mother.**" It is little finds like this that make exploring the treasures at the museum so very interesting and personal.

We wonder what was happening on 11/10/53?



SPASM Founded by Professor Ross Holland AM 1928 - 2017