

SPASM MUSEUM

Newsletter July 2022



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



Our **2022 AGM** will be held in the Building 5 tea room on **Saturday 20th August**. Celebrating 26 years at the gladesville site. So if you missed out on lunch last month perhaps you might like to come in August and visit our new WW display room?

A special welcome to our **New Life Members: Dr Peter Hales and Dr Ian Edmiston**. This year has been an excellent year for members deciding to become Life Members. **Gordon Stenning & Marg Troy** became life members earlier this financial year and now Peter and Ian have joined the group.

A heartfelt thank you to all those who paid their membership prior to June 30 so that our "final yearly bottom line" could be slightly pink, instead of the fire engine red it would have been, had members not renewed on time. We do walk a fine line between income and expenditure each year, especially as our investment funds now bring in so little interest. So thank you again to all those who so beautifully repented to your Treasurer's entreaty!

On 24th June we took delivery of a lovely little tray of gynaecological microsurgical instruments, and an ENT head mirror, donated by the Mater Hospital Sydney via Mary Anne Renshaw. We were able to contact the original owner of these MARTIN instruments (Dr John Schmidt) and he was delighted that they have found a new home with us at the museum.

On **Saturday 30th July** we will be taking part again in the Medical Festival opening with a guided tour of the museum. On **Monday 29th August** we are doing a group tour for the Baulkham Hills Bus group. Your help, as always, would be appreciated.

We have also lent instruments to the Sydney Mitchell Library for their exhibition "**Kill or Cure**" until the end of January 2023 so if you are visiting that be sure to look out for our ebony handled instruments and cupping sets.

Part 2/2 of our story about the photograph in our new WW exhibit room is on page 2.

Visiting the HealthCare Museum in real time or online.

Opening hours for the Museum are 11 am – 3pm on the 2nd Saturday and 4th 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: Menna Davies, Kate Paton, Kerry Moroney, Marion O'Farrell, & Peter Hartigan

Contact SPASM by- Phone 0414 993 138

Email : info@spasmmuseum.org.au

SPASM web sites at www.spasmmuseum.org.au

Like us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/SPASM1>

We also feature on the Hunters hill web page:

<https://www.facebook.com/discoverhh>

And the Museum and galleries of NSW website:

<https://mgnsww.org.au/organisations/spasm/>

July 2022

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.



Instruments are being borrowed from SPASM for an upcoming display by the NSW State Mitchell Library



The gynaecological micro instrument set and ENT head mirror recently donated by the Mater Hospital Sydney.

Entry to the Museum takes you to another era: The Quest for Nurse Murphy Part 2 of 2



The story of the Australian Army Medical Corps in France is well told on the website *"Following the Twenty- Second an Australian Infantry Battalion"* (1)

From this website we are informed that The Australian Army Medical Corps were distributed in three Casualty Clearing Stations, and 3 Australian General Hospitals:

The 1st AGH departed *Alexandria* on 29th March and disembarked at *Marseille* on 5th April then headed to *Rouen*, and worked within the structure of the British RAMC until the end of the war. Sister Murphy worked there in March 1916

No 2 AGH arrived at *Marseille* from Egypt on the "*Braemar Castle*" on 1st April 1916 with a nursing staff of 115 they took over the local hospital at *Moussot* and treated soldiers with infectious diseases. On 29th June most of medical staff went to *Wimereux* near *Boulogne* arriving on 1/7/1916 the first day of the Somme offensive. The severe winter of 1916-1917 caused many hardships, water would freeze in pipes and there was a shortage of coal. The hospital was frequently bombed, the hospital closed on 7/2/1919 and staff returned to Australia in March.

No 1 CCS opened in May 1916 at *Estaires* with a nursing staff of 7 drawn from the staff of No 1 AGH. In May 1917 it moved further north to *Bailleul*, (it was a busy time during the battle for Messines Ridge) in July 1917 it moved to *Outtersteene* (dealing with Mustard gas attacks in Armentieres) It was shelled itself on 26th September, patients were evacuated and nurses sent to No 2 CCS for the afternoon, but returned later. A concrete dug out was built in the nurse's compound. On 18th March 1918 No 1 CCS came under fire, and it was heavy work until 28th March, when they were repositioned at *Hondeghem*. 17th April they opened up again at *Blendeques* with the nurses billeted in nearby houses. In June July 1918 they and the 2nd CCS dealt with 8,000 casualties. In September they moved back to *Hondeghem*, then South to *St Omer* at the *St Venant Lunatic Asylum*, in October they moved again to *Fretin* to *Tumai* then to *Hal* until March 1919.

No 2 CCS worked closely with 1 CCS located at railhead at *Trois Arbres*, in the town of *Steenwerck* in French Flanders, from 29th June 1916 until March 1918.

In July in a 2 day period 3,984 patients had been processed, from the battle at *Fromelles*, In July/August almost 2,000 operations were performed and they had 3 tables in use during the day and usually 2 at night! In July 2 CCS was bombed and 2 patients and 2 orderlies were killed. On 11th March 1918 all patients were evacuated and nursing staff dispersed on 5th April they set up again at *Hazebrouck* & on the 9th received over 1,000 casualties. On the 17th April they moved to *Blendeques*, then like No 1 CCS followed the advance of the British 5th Army, on the 2nd September to *Hondeghem* then to *St Venant Nouveau-Monde*, *Toumai* and finally *Ath* in Belgium until Feb 1919

This information about the Australian General Hospitals and the Casualty Clearing Stations has allowed the opportunity to understand some of the experiences that Esther may have experienced during her war experience as she moved from 2AGH to No 2 CCS and then No 1 CCS where she was photographed in November 1917. I wanted to know more about her family life and for that I turned to family history records that can be obtained from *Ancestry.com*. which my family has long used in researching our own family history.

By looking at Esther Murphy's records on *Ancestry.com* this also convinced me that we have identified the correct "Sister Murphy". Agnus Mary Murphy (1889 -1961) the records show, was known to the family and friends as "Esther". Her mother was Agnus Maud Clements (1865-1943) born in Wellington NSW and her father, Michael Joseph Murphy (1856-1929) later a police officer, was born in Ireland. Esther was one of nine children, 5 girls and 4 boys.

She and her older brother, Aloysius Kenneth (Kevin) (1887-1952), were born at Barrington NSW. By 1890, when her younger brother John was born, the family had moved back to Wellington NSW where her mother had been born and raised. One of her sisters, Geraldine (1898-1971) married a New Zealand opera singer and lived in The United States for 14 years before moving back to New Zealand. A photo of Geraldine (opposite) shows a striking resemblance to Esther.

Newspapers were also searched using "Trove" which gave the following further information:

Esther Murphy was a trainee of Bathurst Hospital for four years and a member of the ATNA. She was appointed as head nurse in February 1914. She also acted as Acting Matron for two months at a very difficult time at the hospital. The newspaper reported "Many people thought that there was going to be chaos, through the wisdom of Nurse Murphy and the loyalty of the other nurses however, it was possible to carry on." (2)

Confirmation that Nurse Murphy, formally Head Nurse was appointed in December as Matron from 11 other applications was also found. (3) News of Esther's return to Australia was published in a newspaper and more information was gleaned:

"Mrs M. Murphy, of Warne Street, left for Sydney yesterday for the purpose of meeting her daughter, Mrs J. J. Boyer, who was expected to arrive from England this morning. Mrs Boyer was nursing at the First Australian Clearing Station in France from almost the beginning of the war, and just prior to the armistice being signed she was married to Staff-Sergt. J. J. Boyer. Prior to going to France Mrs Boyer was matron of the Bathurst District Hospital. Her husband is expected to arrive home next month. Mrs Murphy has also received word that her son, Private Kenneth Murphy, will arrive in Sydney next week". (4)

Ancestry and Army records show that Esther's soon to be husband John James Boyer was a pharmacist who was also stationed at 1st CCS.

I was sure that there was much more information to be found about Esther Murphy, I am very grateful to Paul and David for their assistance in my quest for information on "Sister Murphy" and I would recommend their Database as an excellent source of information to others on a similar quest.

I have since found more information on the NAA site confirming this is indeed Esther Murphy, and more stories and snippets from newspapers about her and her family were added to her record by "FrevFord" in 2015.

My quest for "Sergeant Haswell's" information has found that 25 year old Private Edward Charles Haswell a "pipe fitter" from Mt Morgan in Queensland, enlisted on November 1914 went to France on 29/3/1916 joining the 1st ACCS from the beginning of this service until his return to Australia on 14/4/1919. Apart from 2 brief hospitalisations due to Influenza in 16/11/16 and measles on 6/4/17 and two period of leave in England -16/7/17 - 28/7/17 and 6/9/18 - 14/9/18 he served at the 1st CCS in France. He was promoted to Lance Corporal 25/4/18 to Temporary Sergeant 14/9/18 and to Sergeant on 14/12/1918.(5)

His occupation in census records is listed as "drill sharpener". Sergeant Edward Charles Haswell returned to Australia in 1919 and Married Agnus Winifred McGrath on 16th August 1922. A photograph of him and his beautiful bride is available on Ancestry.com

1) <https://anzac-22nd-battalion.com/hospitals-france/>

2) *National Advocate Bathurst* 8 May 1914, page 3

3) *The Leader* 5th December 1914, page 5

4) *Wellington Times (NSW: 1899 - 1954)*, 16 January, p. 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article143237061>

5) <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?>



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