

SPASM MUSEUM

Newsletter August 2023

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



We are getting ready for the AGM later this month and a very exciting event we hope it will be. For those of our members who have not been at the museum since last year we will have a number of new exhibits for you to inspect.

We have a whole new area to showcase in Building 5 next to our tea room. That will eventually house the Gladesville exhibits. But we are waiting for a key to the door lock so that the contents of the room will be more secure.

The latest addition to the museum is not the lovely relatively modern electric table donated by Canterbury Hospital through the efforts of our member Jenny Cubitt. We have set this table up in building 1 and repositioned the electric anaesthetic machine, the laparoscopic tower and the mayo table - all donations from Canterbury hospital so it is fitting that they are all now together in one exhibit area.

Our latest addition came only this weekend and is possibly over 100 years old. We have now our very first Dental X ray machine! Manufactured by Ritter – Biber A – G in Karlsruhe (Baden) Germany Design Patent 1921 Serial number 656.

This amazing machine was very kindly donated and delivered to us by its owner for the last 20 years Electrical engineer Miles van Dorssen. Miles and his son visited the museum for the first time today and were very pleased that their x ray unit has now found a new home.

August 2023

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.



Unloading the X Ray unit from their trailer Miles and his son with a little help from our curator Gary



Miles setting up the X Ray unit in its new place at the Museum.

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: Val Corcoran, Kate Sauer, Carol Logie, Kerry Moroney, John Murphy & Peter Hartigan

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Contact SPASM by phone 0414993138

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://mgns.org.au/organisations/spasm/>

Entry to the Museum takes you to another era:

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, and bottles, household remedies and also some early dispensing records, There is also an optical collection.

The Operating Theatre circa 2000 has a “new” op table, mayo stand, anaesthetic machine and endoscopic tower. All items were donated by Canterbury Hospital.

The Corridor gives a time line of the Tarban Creek Asylum - Gladesville Hospital.,

The small room outback has the large EEG machine and ECT machines on display along with straight jackets and additional anaesthetic instruments and equipment.

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. Menzies collection**” is in the large display case at back. **The 1936-2006 instruments of GP Dr. Leslie Bruce Johnson are also now in this room.**

Room 2. The surgical “pick room” contains instrument cupboards with a display of surgical instruments, sutures and blood collecting apparatus.

Room 3 The St Thomas Hospital Operating Theatre Room has a display of receptacles used in the operating theatres as well as an early operating table, early surgical instruments as well as ENT, obstetric, and general instruments. A timeline is provided for innovations. The early challenges of pain, sepsis & blood loss is explained.

Room 4 The haemostasis room 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 1930's operating table, a swab rack, and a large print photo of RNSH Thoracic Theatre Nurses C1954.

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! The dental section shows 4 types of dental drills, including a **very old treadle drill**, used between 1890s and 1930's. **Our latest exhibit the C1920's Ritter-Biber Xray machine takes pride of place at the end of the Corridor.**

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

The World War I & II area is now complete with its large photograph of Casualty Clearing Station Operating Theatre in France and various instrument sets used during both wars.

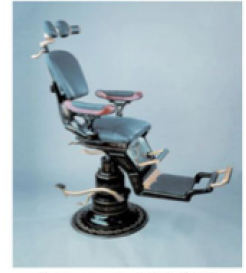
Building 5

The Tea Room where you can have a cup of tea or coffee

The Gladesville room

The staff bundy clock, and religious artifacts used at Gladesville during services: a very old bible; church organ & pew. There are photographs and some stories about past patients and attendants, as well as various literature about the past history of the asylum.

In 1887 Frank Ritter in Germany pioneered one of the world's first treatment chairs for dentists and established a legacy of developing products that changed the face of dentistry.



The Ritter treatment chair of 1887

In 1895 German physicist Wilhelm Röntgen accidentally discovered the power of x-rays while observing fluorescent light emanations coming from a cathode-ray tube. Röntgen saw that even when the tube was shielded by heavy black paper, green-coloured light appeared on nearby materials. Other materials used to shield the tube produced similar results and the physicist realized that he had discovered a light energy that was able to pass through many substances, though not metal and bones. By focusing the rays onto a photographic plate backstop, Röntgen was able to produce shadowy images of materials—metal and bones—that the rays were not able to pass through. In fact, one of his first experiments with his new-found rays produced a photograph of the bones of his wife's hand.

Röntgen's discovery became an overnight scientific sensation that captured the attention of scientists around the world and **within six months the technology was being used to locate bullets of soldiers wounded in battle.** Röntgen initially called the mysterious light rays “x-rays” because scientists used “X” to denote things yet to be fully identified and understood. Röntgen earned the Nobel Prize in Physics for his discovery.

Joseph Slattery, (Bathurst) Thomas Lyle (Melbourne) & Walter Filmer (Newcastle) were early X Ray Pioneers in Australia.* Frank Smidlin, an electrician, at Sydney Hospital, took the first X Ray in Sydney in 1896. On 14th August 1896 a bullet, located by X-rays, was removed by Dr Bowker. Chloroform was used as the anaesthetic. Drs McCormick, Goode Chisholm, Binnie and others witnessed the surgery.

In 1896 dentists took dental X-rays of patients, and independently developed equipment to ease the process, dental x-ray technology was not widely used until the 1950s. Commercial dental x-ray equipment was available for sale as early as 1923.

Impediments to early adoption of the technology included concerns about radiation exposure and electrocution, as well as the high cost of the technology. Between the 1920s and 1950s, x-ray innovators and dental practitioners made numerous improvements to oral x-ray equipment.

Circa 1920's A Ritter X-ray machine.

Features a Mahogany cabinet that holds all the components, mounted with a large swing arm that allowed the dentist to get the tube into the right placement for examination.



The Ritter Dental X Ray machine now at SPASM in its polished mahogany cabinet.

*Ref: Smith T. A short history of the origins of radiography in Australia Radiographer Dec 2009

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