

Newsletter February 2024

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



Happy New year to all our members. We have taken a little Christmas break and are now ready to begin another year at SPASM.

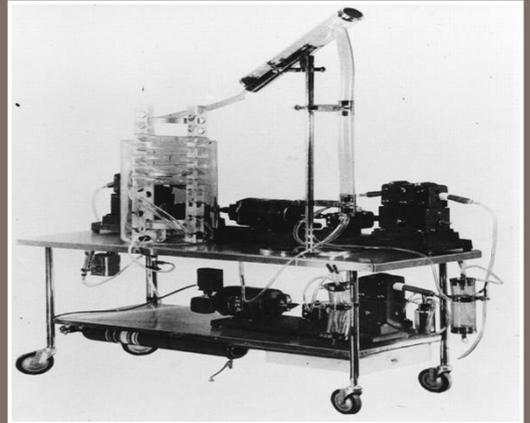
We have started off with the kind donation of a new acquisition from Chau Chak Wing Museum, thanks to Chris Jones and staff at Sydney University Medical museum.

We are now the proud owners of a very curious looking medical machine. You could call it the “**beating heart**” of one of the first oxygenators used in open heart surgery. It is the Sigmamotor pump used in conjunction with the early bubble oxygenator system. **Heart-Lung Machine, E & M Enterprises, mid-20th century (SC1972.25)** The de Wall-Lillehei heart-lung machine, known as a bubble oxygenator, was used for cardiopulmonary bypass procedures (where a machine takes over the function of the heart and lungs during surgery). It was the first clinically successful bubble oxygenator and remained the preferred cardiopulmonary bypass device for about 25 years after its invention in 1955. Relatively simple and inexpensive, its manufacture allowed many hospitals to begin a cardiac surgery program. Heart-lung machines, like de Wall and Lillehei’s bubble oxygenator, are considered one of the most important surgical developments of the second half of the 20th century. You can read more about it here:

<https://doi.org/doi:10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.108.830174>
and https://sigmamotorinc.com/history_sigma_motor.html

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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.



This the early system in the 1950’s we don’t have the bubble tubing etc. but we do have the motor that drove the system clearly shown in this photograph.



The early Sigmamotor heart lung machine now on display in the diathermy room at SPASM.

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 those days or other days – depending on volunteer availability.

Executive Members :

President: Sandra Solarz

Co Curators : Gary Klopfer & Peter Hartigan

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.spasmuseum.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:

Entry to the Museum takes you to another era:

Building 1

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

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

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

3. The Pharmacy room shows beautiful jars, and bottles, household remedies and also some early dispensing records, There is also an optical collection and some straight jackets to view.

4. The small room outback has the large EEG machine and ECT machines on display along with 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 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, a large print photo of RNSH Thoracic Theatre Nurses C1954. **Plus our 2024 acquisition the Sigmamotor heart lung pump machine.**

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 2023 exhibit the C1920's Ritter-Biber X-ray 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 for group 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 literature about the past history of the asylum.

During January, when the museum was closed to the public, we have also spent time at the Museum with our two curators Peter and Gary collecting instruments and equipment for a new film set in the 1990s which includes an operating theatre set up.

In preparation for the loan of equipment which included 2 green sterilizing trays and plastic kidney trays I was reminded of a document I rembered finding at the museum which stated that the perforated sterilising trays were developed by Douglas Bean in conjunction with Judith Cornell to address the constant problem of wet loads in the sterilisers at Westmead Hospital. To verify this I contacted Douglas Bean company and was pleased to hear from Doug's son Nick Bean. He has asked his staff to verify the story of the perforated trays, but told me he rembered his dad telling him of the origin of the colour green for the original green flat (unperforated) trays.

His father was developing those first trays in conjunction with Vivian Bullwinkel AO MBE ARRC who was working at that time at Fairfield Hospital in Melbourne. When he asked Vivian what colour tray she wanted she looked at the walls of the area, which were green tiles, and said "the same colour as these tiles". And that my friends is the reason why all those little dishes and equipment we have are that delightful green Who knew!!!



Vivian Bullwinkel was working as a staff nurse in the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) in 1941. (Supplied: Australian War Memorial)

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South Coast Museum
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