

## Newsletter May 2024

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



### May seems to be the month for reflections and reunions.

Email conversations between our two curators has produced reflections this month. **Peter wrote:**

*“Two new exhibits have arrived following a lengthy rebuild to original specifications. During the late 1960s and 1970s clinical requirement demand far exceeded the manufactured packaged ventilators. Most ICUs had BIRD MK 7,8,10,14 ventilators or similar pressure cycled ventilators fitted with a heated humidifier. The need for accurate oxygen % delivery, controlled inspiratory volume cycling, PEEP, IMV, and CPAP functions were not all available even in the most expensive devices available at the time. They were needed.*

*This exhibit was 1 of 9 used at Prince Henry Hospital and started life as a basic Bird/ humidifier setup in 1969 and used past the end of the 70s after many mode upgrades to the final device as seen at SPASM now. In the 60s 70s and 80s most ICU ventilators or their breathing circuits had changes made to their original manufactures accessories.”*

### Gary replied :

*“You've brought back memories of Tom Torda (Director) and John Lawrence (anaes) and others in the back room of Prince Henry's respiratory unit (ICU) tinkering with (they called it modifying) all anaesthetic equipment in the early 70's. All the Birds were converted to volume cycling by the addition of bellows in a bottle before that was standard. I remember making electronic ventilator alarms before they were commercially available. I'll enjoy the trip down memory lane”*

**Ros organised a reunion** of a small group of her 1966 – 1970 RNSH nursing group to be held at the museum. The girls were excited to see the many exhibits we have accumulated. They were amazed at the work of collecting, labelling and cataloguing all the instruments that were on display.

May 24

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 two items recently rebuilt and donated by our talented & industrious co-curator Peter Hartigan .



A recent reunion of part of a small group of nurses who commenced nursing at RNSH in 1966 was held at the museum. A great time was had by all.

Contact us if you would like to hold a reunion at the museum. Catering can be provided.

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

Opening hours for the Museum are 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 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

Email : [info@spasmmuseum.org.au](mailto:info@spasmmuseum.org.au)

Contact SPASM by phone 0414993138

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



# 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.

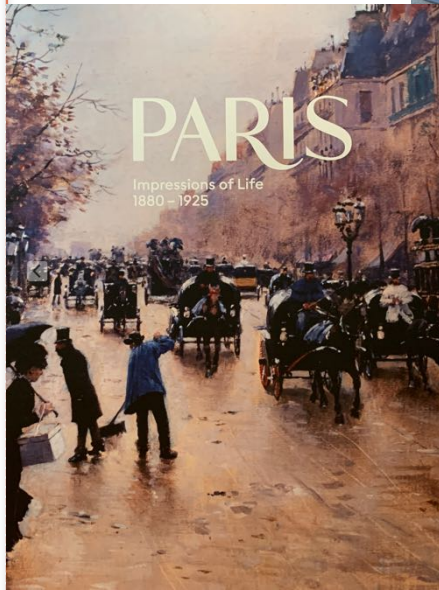
Thank you Peter for doing all that work to make up those ventilators, as discussed on the first page.

If those reading this newsletter wonder why the May newsletter is late .... It is probably due to the fact we were waiting to have the reunion earlier this month.

Then an unexpected road trip, for two of us, to Bendigo to see the exhibition "Paris Impressions of life 1880 – 1925" was organised. We will let the images show how impressed we were.



Seen on the way to Bendigo ... to keep to a slightly medical theme .... A Statue commemorating the work of Sir Edward Dunlop at the Benalla Gardens near the Benalla Art Gallery



Some of the wonderful art works and displays seen at the Bendigo Art Exhibition this month. Ohhh to have the space to show exhibits like this would be amazing. Full length photographs one could stand in front of and be part of the scene.

EXCELLENT

Corporate Members of SPASM

NSW OTA.

NSW Nurses Association

South Coast Museum  
SPASM