



Newsletter December 2024

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



In the Last newsletter in October, I wrote about a request we had for items to be considered for a book publication. To bring the year to a close this month I will write about what we chose and why they were chosen.

1. The MUSEUM BUILDING ITSELF. The "Hill Branch" of Gladesville Hospital for the Insane, previously Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum. Tarban Creek Lunatic asylum was Australia's first purpose built Lunatic Asylum opened in 1838.

SPASM Museum is housed in two of the 1875 buildings of the "Hillbranch" of the Old Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum designed by architect James Barnett. As well as artifacts from the asylum, we have: information about the cause of admission to and discharge from the asylum in 1848; Information about the early superintendents: Mr. Thomas Digby, 1838-1848 Dr. Francis Campbell 1848-1867 and Dr. Frederick Norton Manning 1868-1879; information about the early Matrons, Mrs Susannah Digby 1838-1847, Mrs Jane Manson 1848-1873 & Mrs Bessie Simpson 1881-1907. Bessie was one of the first nurses sent by Florence Nightingale to the colony of NSW with Lucy Osburn (SPASM Muse Nov 2018)

2. A ROOM DEDICATED TO WW1. WW1 had a profound effect on Medicine and Nursing throughout Australia and the World.

An enlarged photograph of Australian surgeon, anaesthetist, nurse, and attendant in the operating theatre of the **First Australian Casualty Clearing Station** on 23/11/1913 at Nord Pas de Calais, Outtersteene in France in WW1 Anaesthetist Major Featonby, surgeon, Lt Col F McClure, Sister Murphy and Sergeant Haswell.

A lightweight portable operating table and replicas of WW1 nurses outfits (donated from the set of the Movie "The Anzac girls") also evoke the time period in this small room.

3. A ROOM DEDICATED TO GP PRACTICE. : A Doctors white Coat and bag.

In our "GP room" we seek to celebrate and **preserve the history of the General Practitioner of medicine in Australia in the 1900's.** One of the collections in our "GP room" belonged to Dr. Bruce Menzies who graduated from Sydney University in 1944 After 2 years at RNSH he commenced work as a GP in Drummoyne in 1946 following his fathers' career as a GP in the Area. He served others, saved lives and delivered more than 2000 babies into the world during his time as GP. For about 40 years Dr. Menzies was responsible for the immunization program for all children in Drummoyne. For this the City of Canada bay honoured him. He retired on 30th June 2003. A white coat, as well as the Anaesthetic, ENT & Gynaecological instruments donated by his practice manager give testimony to the wide breadth of work done by GPs in this era. (SPASM Muse Feb 2023) One of several doctors bags as well as instruments often preserved in biscuit or chocolate tins are also on display in this room.

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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.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy New Year for 2025.



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 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, Kerry

Moroney, John Murphy & Peter Hartigan

Fire Warden: Kerry Maroney.

Email : info@spasmmuseum.org.au

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:

4. A SMALL INSTRUMENT WATER STERILISER.

The Water Steriliser was used by Dr. Sydney Evan Jones one of the two medical officers who went to the Antarctic with the Mawson exhibition in 1911. Burroughs Wellcome Medical Chests, Allen and Hanbury surgical instruments and the **water bath steriliser** (pictured) were **part of fifty-five boxes of medical supplies** that were provided for the **1911 Mawson's Australian Antarctic expedition**
Ref <http://www.antarctica.gov.au/magazine/2011-2015/issue-22-2012/Antarctic-medicine/in-the-footsteps-of-McLean,-Jones-and-Whetter-100-years-of-Australian-Antarctic-medical-practice>.
Dr. Sydney Evan Jones one of "Mawson's Men" on the Antarctic Expedition c1911 Source National Library of Australia (SPASM Muse Sept 2018)

5. AN UNASSUMING COLLECTION OF INTEGRATED

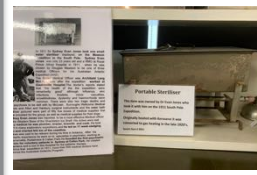
ELECTRICAL PUMPS AND MOTORS : **The Sigmamotor Pump** Donated to SPASM in 2024 by the Chau Chak Wing Museum Sydney University. **Used in conjunction with the early bubble oxygenator system, the de Wall-Lillehei heart-lung machine, was the first clinically successful bubble oxygenator and remained the 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.
Dr. Jeanne Collison built Australia's first heart lung machine at Melbourne's Alfred Hospital in 1957. She built a workable unit in 10 days Collison returned to Sydney in 1957 when she set up a cardiopulmonary bypass department at RPA working there for 20 years. She organised another at Westmead in 1978. (SPASM Muse Feb 2024) Note: Prince Henry Hospital Museum has a very good display of bubble oxygenators

6 LOVELLS SUTURES 1945

During the Second World War Medical equipment, which was often imported from Scotland and England became difficult to obtain. Australia needed to become more self-sufficient. Sutures were difficult to procure. Edward Lovell was an Australian manufacturer of surgical sutures, based in Dandenong Victoria. He was an English emigrant, one of his friends, a professor at the Alfred hospital, in Melbourne told him how to make catgut medical sutures. After experimenting with sheep intestines and kangaroo tail tendons, Lovell was soon **supplying medical sutures to the Australian army.** Following on from this success, his son Victor joined forces with the owner of a Dandenong cobalt plant to manufacture **the world's first gamma sterilised pre-packaged suture.** Unfortunately Victor failed to take out a patent on the packaging, which was consequently patented by an American company

7. BRUCK'S SNAKE BITE ANTIDOTE CASE.

A snakebite Kit containing a silver tourniquet toggle, lancet, glass vial of potassium permanganate, syringes, needles and suction apparatus, **manufactured by L Bruck in Sydney.** The formal Australian first aide treatment of snake and spider bite in this era may be summarized as: 1886 Ligature, incision, suction, rubbing gunpowder into the wound and firing it, washing the mouth out with brandy.
1905 Ligature, suction, and introduce caustic potash or pure carbolic acid into the bitten area with a pointed piece of wood. Other early treatment involved ammonia, whisky, mercury or strychnine. (SPASM Muse August 2017.)



8. DR. CHARLES NATHAN'S LANCET CASE.

This small pocket sized Lancet case dates 1838-early 1840's This item was given by Venour Nathan the great grandson of Charles Nathan to Dr. Don Wurth (Surgeon) who later in 1987 donated the item to the SPASM Museum. **Dr. Charles Nathan was the first honorary surgeon to the Sydney Hospital. Nathan arrived in Sydney in 1841 and in 1845 was one of the original four doctors appointed to the new Sydney Infirmary and Dispensary.** In 1847 he and Doctor Belisario were the first to administer anaesthetic during surgery and he attended to the Duke of Edinburgh after the assassination attempt in Sydney in 1868. Nathan died in 1872. Engraved on the case: C NATHAN Esq.

9. A RITTER X-RAY MACHINE. The Ritter X-Ray machine

Circa 1920's donated to SPASM by its owner Electrical Engineer Miles van Dorsson in August 2023. Manufactured by Ritter - Biber A-G in Karlsruhe (Baden) Germany it must have been a challenging task to import to Australia. Design Patent 1921 Serial Number 656. Inside the cabinet is a massive transformer required to generate a huge differential voltage between the cathode and anode in the unit's head. The wooden struts, over the multi-directional arm support the high voltage wire The instructions with this machine warn the operator to stand more than two feet from this wire! **From 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.** Joseph Slattery, (Bathurst) Thomas Lyle (Melbourne) & Walter Filmer (Newcastle) were early X Ray Pioneers in Australia. * in 1896. Frank Smidlin, an electrician, at Sydney Hospital, took the first X Ray in Sydney On 14th August 1896 Dr. Bowker removed a bullet, located by X-rays. Chloroform was used as the anaesthetic. Drs. McCormick, Goode, Chisholm, Binnie and others witnessed the surgery. 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.

*Ref: Smith T. A short history of the origins of radiography in Australia Radiographer Dec 2009 SPASM Muse August 2023

10 **CLEMENT'S VAPOURISER.** In 1917 IN conjunction with **Dr. Mark Lidwill, Hubert Ingham Clements first designed and manufactured an ether mechanical vapouriser in Sydney Australia.** A decade later the design was altered and improved by Clements in collaboration with **Drs. Smith and Holmes a Court.** The devices were lightweight, reliable, low maintenance and high performers. Purchased and used until 1967 when the introduction of Halothane in 1958 meant the end of their production. Clements also developed suction pumps and Breast pumps. Each vapouriser was given a serial number and **this particular one No 510 was sold to Dr. Morey of Macquarie St Parramatta on 22nd January 1947.** Other Clements Vaporisers are held by the Harry Daly Museum of the Society of Anaesthetists Naremburn, Sydney. Ref. Holland R Hubert Ingham Clements : a Pioneer of Australian Anaesthesia. Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Vol. 33 Supplement 1 June 2005

11. **STEVENS UNIVERSAL VAPOURISER.** C1963 **Dr. Frederick Stephens** designed a small portable machine, weighing just 15kg, it is capable of delivering various anaesthetics and has a flurothane and a **universal vaporizer.** Designed perhaps to fit into a car to transport from hospital to hospital. This unit was manufactured by The Anaesthetic Equipment Company Pty Ltd, Herbert St. Artarmon NSW.

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