

Newsletter January 2026

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



Last year in December we had a delightful group of nurses from North Shore Private hospital visit us at SPASM. Our (soon to be) latest member Tina Faulk also visited, and spoke of her research on early superintendents Joseph Thomas Digby and Dr. Frances Campbell - subjects of a book she is currently writing.

We are starting the New Year with a Probus tour in February on Monday 23rd would you be available to help us show this group around our fantastic museum, or help serve them morning tea prior to the tour? (No experience necessary and its generally fun!)

Our marketing plan is up for review again; if you would like to assist please contact Ros.



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/>

January 2026

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.



An example of a Wolfe Graft.....
more info on page 2

SPASM Christmas lunch tour for NSH nurses. A great group thank you for visiting us !

December 2025 at Gladesville

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 Ross Holland Anaesthetic Room. Showcases the changes in anaesthetic apparatus used by surgeons, dentists and anaesthetists over the years.

2. The Anne Jaumees 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 New 2025 Display area has the large EEG machine and multiple ECT machines on display along with historical ECG equipment. Also a Special tribute to the SA Both Bros who invented early ECG equipment.

Building 6

Room 1 is set up as 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 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 are 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 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, Including the Ryde Historical book about the burial site at the museum.



An example of a Wolfe Graft

A Wolfe graft or Full thickness skin graft is probably something most of us have seen before.

But did you know it was first presented in 1875 by John Reissberg Wolfe?

I didn’t - nor did I know that the graft is generally harvested from behind the ear and must be carefully “defatted” before being sutured into the recipient site.

Apparently they are “commonly used for repairing skin cancer excision defects on the face. Compared to thin split thickness grafts Wolfe grafts offer better texture less shrinkage and improved cosmetic outcomes making them ideal for facial reconstructions.”

In this case a surgical colleague advised me that I had performed my very first Wolfe graft on myself!

This is a photo of my right thumb, which I sliced a piece of skin off when I was using a mandolin without the appropriate guard! It was just the last little bit of cabbage that I was cutting up for our Christmas lunch!

I sorted through the cabbage – do you know how much a slice of tissue looks like cabbage? and applied it to the raw area secured it with steri strips.

Weeks later here it is.... all healed and looking great !!! and that is my excuse for not typing the newsletter for December

Hope I am forgiven

Corporate Members of SPASM

NSW OTA.

NSW Nurses Association

Health Care Museum
SPASM