

## Newsletter April 2026

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



It will be a quiet time at the Museum this April as our Monday meeting is cancelled due to it being a long weekend. What with double demerits for driving and the cost of petrol these days it was decided that we should definitely be closed on Monday 27 April. However, as scheduled, we will be open again on the next Second Saturday in May 9 with our new coffee machine in action.

Following a request for a particular photograph from our archives I was looking at all of the newsletters produced and what a nostalgic tour that was! We began this newsletter format on February 2016 – just on 10 years ago! If you are interested to look back all those newsletters they are published on our web page.

In the December 2017 newsletter we published some photos from our pharmacy collection. What wasn't recorded was that Graeme Montgomery of Mosman donated the majority of our pharmacy collection. Graeme, who passed away in 2014, was a compounding pharmacist in the Mosman area for a number of years.

April 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.



Original exhibits and additional offers below.



## 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 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](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:

<https://mgns.w.org.au/organisations/spasm/>

# 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.

When he made his decision to retire Graeme kindly offered the bulk of his equipment, no longer required, to the museum. The beautiful jars and bottles that you see on page 1 are just part of that collection.

The other day Marie, his wife, found two boxes of other items in her garage. Her first thought was to throw them away – but realizing that Graeme had kept them for a reason she rang us at the museum and offered them to us. Many of our artefacts come to us through this route. We ask that a photograph of the donated items be sent so that our curator (Gary) can consider and consult to make an exec decision to collect or to reject.

Looking at the collection - and who can resist a beautiful blue jar - it was decided if they could be collected and cleaned up we could use some of these items to demonstrate the sort of products that a pharmacy might offer in the past. For example:

[J.R. Watkins Petro-Carbo First Aid Salve](#) is a long-standing (since 1868) medicated ointment designed to relieve minor skin irritations, burns, sunburn, cuts, scrapes, and insect bites. It features 1.5% phenol as an active ingredient, combined with botanical oils like cajeput, camphor, and spruce in a petrolatum base. [Lillikin Pins](#) – a special size of pin the name for which became common in New England about 1775 they were made in England and are guaranteed all brass they were often used to pin veils or clothes as they were worn. [Ayrton's Antiseptic Healing Cream](#) (often called "Pink Ointment") is a traditional antiseptic cream used for treating minor skin injuries, such as cuts, scratches, and abrasions. Originally made in England, it was renowned for its soothing and healing properties. The product has historically been marketed for preventing infections, abrasions, sun burns and nappy rash, [Nixoderm](#) is a topical ointment used to treat skin problems like acne, pimples, rashes, ringworm, and eczema. Its formula contains benzoic acid (6%), salicylic acid (2.5%), and sulfur (4.6%), which act as antifungal and keratolytic agents. It is generally applied to affected areas, often at night, for faster, effective results. [North State Cigarettes](#) were produced in Finland, Denmark, Holland and US. [Camphor Ice](#) is a traditional, medicated balm primarily used to soothe, moisturize, and heal dry, cracked, or irritated skin, including lips, hands, and feet. It typically contains camphor, paraffin, white wax, and essential oils to treat bug bites, minor burns, and sunburns.

Now to clean up the tins and make a display board for all these little blasts from the past. What fun .....

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Health Care Museum  
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