

***President's Report***

The first thing to bring to Members attention is the notice appearing elsewhere in this Newsletter of the forthcoming Annual General Meeting set for September 16th. All positions are declared vacant, and I encourage members to consider nominating for their area of interest using the enclosed nomination form.

The threat of changes in the future of the Heritage Village, while still there, has not as yet impacted on the Hospital Museum and it is business as usual. However it would appear that the Village itself is very much in need of more volunteers, and of course ACHHA would welcome more ACHHA Members in assisting in the Museum itself. With the threat, it is timely to remind Members that the Hospital Collection always remains the property of the ACHHA.

The working bee highlighted in my last report has happened, and I, on behalf of the Committee, express our appreciation to the non member volunteers who made themselves available for this mammoth task, following Nancy's appeal to U3A Members. The Operating Theatre in particular was a major undertaking, and thanks to Nancy's organisation is now ready for any major surgery required. Chevron Steam Laundry very kindly washed and ironed all the linen at no cost to our organisation, and we are indebted to them for their generosity. My thanks also to ACHHA Members who were involved in the spring clean of the Museum and I submit my apology for not being available.

International Nurses Day was again a successful celebration of our wonderful profession. The highlight of the celebrations was the launch of the book "Shades of Nursing" at a function appropriately held at the Library and launched by Jacquie Mackay. The Professional Development Day was also well attended. The aim of the IND Committee each year is to celebrate by having a professional component such as the Professional Development Day, but also to just celebrate Nurses and Nursing in a more informal social setting. The planning for

2014 will start in October. The book is available through City Printing Works, the Hospital Museum on Market days, the Hillcrest Hospital, the Rockhampton Hospital Education & Research Unit or myself. (\$15 or \$20 if postage is required).

The current display put together by Ashley is a pictorial of the early Hospitals in Rockhampton region. Such aesthetically pleasing buildings to look at in contrast to the practicality of today's new buildings. The next display will feature St Andrews Hillcrest Hospital as it was. Lorraine Antonello who worked at Hillcrest will assist with this display.

2014 marks 100 years since the start of World War I and the display for Anzac Day will feature the roles of Rockhampton Region's Nurses and Doctors in that war. The ACHHA collection does not have a lot of material from that period. We would welcome copies of photos or memorabilia that members may have that may relate to health care.

Members of ACHHA have welcomed tours of Seniors, as well as school students and special interest groups such as nursing students from CQU and of course all who visit on Market days. The astute observations of the school students regarding the imperfections of our mannequins keeps us well aware of the need to seek replacements when funds allow. With the train now operating the focus of the Heritage Village Markets is now close to the Hospital Museum and Market days are bringing more and more people to the Hospital. The guest book entries assure Members that the management committee on your behalf is doing well.

I continue to be appreciative of the on-going commitment of the ACHHA Committee, particularly those who regularly attend the Hospital on Tuesdays and under Yvonne's direction steadily work through and organise the archival section, an ongoing mammoth task.

Be sure to mark Monday 16th September on your calendars and plan to attend the AGM meeting.

Norma West
President

At the Museum

In her President’s Report, Norma mentioned a number of activities which our members and volunteers are undertaking at the museum under Yvonne’s overall guidance. Tuesday morning is the usual time for these sessions. You may recall that Yvonne made an appeal in our April Newsletter for more assistance at the Museum and we have been pleased with the response. We will expand on Norma’s comments here to give you a better idea of what we are working on.

One of the factors which gives the Heritage Village its authenticity is its dirt roads. As always this means that there is plenty of dust blowing into the buildings so it was time for a major spring clean. As mentioned by Norma, the Chevron Steam Laundry in Denison Street kindly offered to launder the linen at no cost so Carol and Bill McIver set out to spruce up the two-bed ward. You don’t realise how dusty things have become until you see them all fresh again.



Carol and Bill McIver make the “patient” comfortable as they complete the ward clean-up.

The operating theatre not only had the linen to clean but the large number of operating instruments needed to be polished as well. We are pleased that Nancy was able to get the volunteer assistance of four ladies from U3A to assist with this large task. Again, we didn’t realise how dusty things were until everything was clean once again.



Nancy Crapp completes the cleaning of the theatre by putting away the last of the newly polished instruments.

Did you know?

So far in 2013, 2,195 people have made 2,550 visits to our website www.achha.org.au (an average of 11 visitors per day). The visitors have made 6,981 page views.

Most visits are from Australia (1683), followed by the United States (450), the United Kingdom (141) and Canada (33).

Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Association’s Annual General Meeting for 2013 will be held on 16th September at 1:30 pm at the meeting room at the School of Arts building in Bolsover Street Rockhampton. All members are encouraged to attend.

Forthcoming 2013 Rockhampton Heritage Village Events

Sunday 08 September 2013

Markets

Sunday 24 November 2013

Christmas Markets

Please take the opportunity to visit the Country Hospital Museum during these events. While the Museum is open daily, it is on Market Days that members of the Association will be on hand to help you with any enquiries and discuss the displays in more detail.

Association Membership

The Association welcomes your support for our activities. The Association operates on a normal financial year (July—June). Subscriptions are now due for the 2013/2014 Financial Year.

If you wish to join the Association, please contact the secretary, Errol Payne, by phone on 4922 3314, by email at:

secretary@achha.org.au

or post payments to ACHHA Inc, Box 4035, Rockhampton Qld 4700. Of course any member of our management committee who’s names are listed on the final page will be pleased to assist you to join.

Membership Fees

Annual		
	Individual	\$20.00
	Couple	\$30.00
Life		
	Individual	\$200.00
	Couple	\$300.00

Please make cheques payable to: Australian Country Hospital Heritage Association Inc.

Those of you who have visited will have seen the many plaques which are on the walkway pending final placement. We have decided that some of these should be placed in suitable locations within the building. Cleaning these is one of the jobs taken on by Ashley Reid. Of course Ashley's major on-going task is organising the changing displays on the veranda which give repeat visitors something new to look at on each visit. Norma has already commented on the current displays.



Ashley Reid sizes up a suitable location to display the "Wooster Ward" plaque.

Much of the work to be done is in the work area which is not open to the public. The collection includes many early hospital record books which need to be cleaned and documented prior to safe storage. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, important records were handwritten in large bound books. Among those in our collection are several which detail all of the nurses who trained at the Rockhampton Hospital from the commencement of training in 1885 up until 1939. Others are minute books of Hospital Committee meetings such as the Rockhampton Children's Hospital from 1890 – 1925 when it was integrated into the overall Rockhampton Hospital structure under a single Board. Still others are correspondence books into which copies of important correspondence have been pasted eg a Hospital Secretary's Correspondence Book 1907 - 1919.



Yvonne Kelley (left rear) discusses one of the record books with Joan Miller while Rita George (front left) and Pam Kubler get on with the job of cleaning them and documenting their contents.

The collection also includes hundreds of records of nurses who trained at the Rockhampton Hospital up until 1995 when the first University-educated graduates entered the workforce. Del Leitgeb has been leading the small team who are working through these, tidying, and documenting them. We are fortunate that we were able to purchase new filing cabinets through a grant from the Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund which makes it possible to store these records safely.



Del Leitgeb leads the project to sort and document hundreds of Rockhampton Hospital nursing records. Here Del explains the files to fellow volunteers (L to R) Lyn Lowrey, Pam Kubler, and Chris Putman.

There are hundreds of photographs and audio and video tapes to be converted to digital formats and documented. This has been a focus for Errol Payne who has scanned over 450 photographs. He will continue this work as Yvonne sorts and labels more photos which will be documented in the Microsoft Access database. Selected examples will be uploaded to the web site for all to see. We have an amazing collection of oral history tapes from interviews of doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health workers which are absolutely invaluable. Sixty-six of these have been digitized as well as other audio tapes and video tapes of material used for training, in public presentations such as TV broadcasts and so on.



Errol Payne converts audio tapes to digital format on a USB memory stick ready for transfer to a computer. The copier was purchased with a grant from the Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund.

We are also recommending the preparation of labels for more items on public display. Ashley has provided additional information for the Nurses' Quarters Wake display in the Gallery. We are working on signs to explain the significance of the original Rockhampton Hospital Foundation Stone from 1876 and the Sandrock Gates from the 1930s which are displayed in the front garden of the Museum building. Yvonne is also preparing labels for each storage area to make it easier to find stored objects.

Dot Broad is another volunteer who unfortunately missed out on the photos. Be assured that there is still plenty to do, and we would welcome more volunteers.



Shades of Nursing

We were pleased to be involved in the launch of a new book, "Shades of Nursing – Sixty Years of Anecdotes and Memories" on 10th May as part of this year's celebrations for International Nurses Day. The preparation of the book was an Initiative of the Rockhampton International Nurses Day Organising Committee.

During 2012, nurses were invited to write short articles about their careers. Forty-one working or retired nurses, or their families, provided 76 separate stories for inclusion in the book. I was invited to edit the material into a coherent book and add material as necessary to provide continuity and background. I was able to add a number of photographs from the County Hospital Museum Collection to illustrate some of the stories. Many members will already have seen or read the book. This short article is for the benefit of those who have not, especially out of town members.

The stories in the book cover the period from about 1930 to about 1990. They are presented as first-hand accounts by nurses who were fully involved in a culture which has now long gone, just as society in general has undergone massive change. The pictures painted are of a deep commitment and a strong culture. Nurses speak of arriving early for their long shifts to make sure that all of the required work could be fitted in, and of not leaving until all team members had their work allocation under control.

Nurses lived in at the hospital quarters so it was difficult to escape entirely from the ward environment. They could be called back if a supervisor on a subsequent shift was not satisfied with the way something had been left. This involved getting out of bed if necessary and dressing once again in full uniform. There were strict rules about behaviour in the presence of doctors and more senior nurses. But above all, the tone which emerges is one of strong collegiality and lifelong friendships forged in the quarters. There were no formal debriefings after a tough shift.

This was done informally in the collegial environment of the Common Room.

Without the constant exposure to TV and social media, many of the 17 year-old student nurses were quite naïve. Del Leitgeb relates the story of a new student who was out purchasing the items she would need before starting training. She saw nursing bras in the shop window, and went in to buy some!

Several of the authors write about the importance of their uniforms. Dr Lynn Jamieson speaks of them as "symbols of achievement" as nurses gain strips which signify their progress through the hospital hierarchy as they successfully complete exams with the ultimate goal of wearing the "Sisters veil" after their four years of successful examinations and practical experience.

Junior student nurses on night shift were required both to cook the meals and to do the enemas which were routinely required prior to most operations. Ethel Williams tells the story of the night during World War 2 when she was required to do the cooking and the black-outs were in force. She mistook the Plaster of Paris container for the flour container so "*many a nurse had 'plaster' gravy over her meat for midnight dinner*".

Reading the book also reminds us of the days before there were so many disposable items, making the sterilisers and the laundries a fundamental part of the safe operation of the hospitals. We are reminded that items like hypodermic syringes were reuse items, and nurses even had to file the burrs off the needles to avoid too much discomfort for the patients. The book also reminds us of the different relationship between nurse and patient when hospital stays for what are now considered simple operations such as cataract removal or simple fractures kept patients in hospital for a week or more.

Ashley Reid tells the story of her trip from Rockhampton to Brisbane with psychiatric patients who were being transferred to Wolston Park in a railway prison carriage. These barred carriages were widely used for many years. Among her many comments on the trip, Ashley notes "*Whenever the train stopped at a major town the local police officers would unlock the carriage and come in to say hello. What a feast in Bundaberg at midnight when we were supplied with luscious strawberries!*"

"Shades of Nursing" has a serious side but there are also many amusing anecdotes. Some nurses resorted to poetry to express their feelings with some quite touching verses. Cost of the book is \$15.00 (plus \$5.00 for packing and postage if required). All proceeds go to the Rockhampton International Nurses Day Organising Committee. The book is not only an excellent source of reminiscences for those who were members of the profession in the 20th Century, but also an excellent source for those whose mothers or grandmothers were nurses and who would like to gain a better appreciation of the environment in which they lived and worked.

Errol Payne, Editor

More Country Hospitals

While we are an Australian Country Hospital Heritage Association, most of our collection relates to Rockhampton and nearby areas. However, for this article we will step out of our immediate surrounds. Another Country Hospital which was still not too far from Rockhampton was the Ogmore Emergency Hospital.

The photograph shows this Hospital with the Matron, Miss Agnes Fechnay, standing on the front steps.



The Ogmore Emergency Hospital was opened by the Minister for Lands, Hon T. A. Foley on Sunday, 15th May 1949. The purpose of the emergency hospital was to treat the victims of accidents at the nearby Styx Coal Mine and other emergency cases arising in Ogmore and nearby townships such as St Lawrence plus the numerous properties in the region. Serious cases were then transferred to Rockhampton. The Hospital also served as a base for regular clinics conducted by visiting medical officers, nurses and dentists. Cost of the wooden building and equipment was £4,235. The hospital had accommodation for 4 general patients or two general patients plus one maternity patient. In an emergency, up to 10 in-patients could be accommodated. The hospital served as an outpatient’s clinic and clinic for visiting health professionals for many years.

Around the time that the Rockhampton Hospital was having new nurses quarters built, the Charters Towers Hospital was also undergoing a major upgrade. This impressive block was opened by the Minister for Labour and Industry, Hon. Arthur Jones, on 1st November 1952. Cost of this part of the hospital was £200,000.



A 1952 building at the Charters Towers Hospital, photographed in May 2009.

However, this is not the only building surviving 60 years of service. When the new hospital building opened, the building below, then a baby clinic, now an allied health centre also featured in the photograph.



The real gem, however, is these nurses quarters which were opened Hon Arthur Jones on 17th March 1951. The event was reported in The Northern Miner on 19th March 1951 under the headline “Palatial Nurses’ Quarters opened by Mr Jones”.



The £60,000 building was designed to provide quarters for the matron, nine sisters and 23 nurses. According to the newspaper report, the matron had separate quarters with bedroom and tiled bathroom, lounge, verandah and servery facilities. The sisters section had lounges, verandahs and a servery for the preparation of suppers etc. and had separate lavatories and bathroom. The nurses also had their own lounges with serveries and studies, lavatories, bathrooms and laundry with washing and ironing facilities on each floor.

Bathrooms and showers had hot and cold water and the lounges had slow combustion heaters for winter comfort.

The Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr A. G. Berry, began the opening ceremony. He stated that he had recently overheard a comment that the building was a very good one and could have been used for some other purpose. He took strong exception to this attitude since the building would be the home of girls who entered “the greatest profession in the world—that of tending to the sick”.

Nursing in Queensland – the Most Honourable Profession

In late July, the Queensland State Archives mounted a foyer display with the above title to celebrate the nursing profession. The display is accompanied by a website at <http://archives.qld.gov.au/Researchers/Exhibitions/Pages/Nursing-in-Queensland.aspx>.

This site includes a 30 minute video of oral history interviews with retired nurses from South-East Queensland, a brief guide to all of the State Archive records relating to nursing, an on-line index of nurses' examination results and registrations from 1915 to 1925 plus an on-line exhibition of photographs. The site also contains a reference to a March 1944 issue of the Queensland Government Gazette which lists all Queensland nurses registered under the "The Nurses and Masseurs

Registration Act , 1928 – 1940". Unfortunately this Gazette is not yet available online.

However, our immediate interest was drawn by the above front page photograph of the Matron, Sisters and Nurses at the Monto Hospital on 7th June 1961. While there are no names with the photograph, it is immediately obvious that Norma West is second from the right.

Norma has identified the nurses (from left) as Assistant Nurse Belle Mowat, Sister Patricia Cooper (née Owens), Sister Florence Cooke (generally known as Cookie), Norma and Sister Beryl Pickering (née Hunter). The occasion was the opening of a new Administration Block at the Monto Hospital. Norma had been appointed to the position of Matron earlier that year.

Association contact details:

Australian Country Hospital Heritage Association Inc.

PO Box 4035 Rockhampton Qld 4700

[Incorporation Number: IA20217]

Website: www.achha.org.au

Email: enquiries@achha.org.au

Patron: Dr Con Primmer OAM

Elected Office Bearers

President: Norma West

Secretary: Errol Payne

Treasurer: Kay Smith

Archivist: Yvonne Kelley

Committee Members

Lorraine Antonello

Nancy Crapp

Tom Dewar

Del Leitgeb

Carol Mclver

Bill Mclver

Jocelyn Philp

Ashley Reid