

***President's Report***

Another busy year has passed us by and our committee members and volunteers have been working hard on keeping the collection in good order. Members of the Tuesday volunteer group have continued to work through the nursing files preparing them to be entered on the data base while others work on keeping the other areas in the museum collection in order, ensuring everything is well maintained. The men have been busy putting photos and plaques up in the relevant areas.

The Tuesday morning group has a very pleasant time working on their various tasks with time for chat, friendship and great company. If anyone would like to join this Tuesday group to assist with the various tasks in the museum you are very welcome.

We have continued to have a number of schools visiting the museum. Recently we have had groups of students from Gladstone and Springsure as well as Rockhampton along with their teachers and some parents. The volunteers conduct the tours and provide information about the various pieces of equipment and how they were used in days gone by. It is good when the students have a challenge to complete on their visit to the Village as this allows the volunteer to focus on what the school wants the student to achieve from their visit.

Our display coordinator Ashley has continued to have a very interesting static display in the foyer. This is a topical display which is changed every 8 weeks and is relevant to current events and anniversaries of past events.

Currently the display depicts nurses in WW1 and Christmas at the hospital. You will see in this edition of the Newsletter that we have also focused on the way hospitals celebrated Christmas in days gone by. Ashley has continued the "tradition" of fun by having Santa in one of the beds in our ward with a broken leg after falling down a chimney. She was kept busy during the Christmas Markets assuring the young ones that we will have him up and about by Christmas Eve.

The research library is progressing with the documentation of all books and an identification system. This will allow for ease of access when future research is requested. This task is being undertaken by Errol, Chris Putman and Janet Iffinger.

Our new computer system is up and running. Our Mosaic museum software program allows us to document people, places, photos and events along with any other items of interest which need to be maintained for future generations. The database of nurses who have trained at the Rockhampton Hospital commences in 1874. Entering our data into the program is an ongoing project. We have people requesting information about family members who have worked at the hospital in the past and through this database we are able to locate the nurse and the dates of their training. This project is organised by Del with a number of volunteers.

Our Archivist Yvonne continues to oversee the collection. She has a vast knowledge of the museum collection which was commenced at the Rockhampton Hospital before it was moved to the Heritage Village.

The volunteers attend the museum every Market Day at the Village to answer any questions the visitors may have. There is always a lot of interest in the collection.

With this newsletter you will find all of the reports given to the members at the Annual General Meeting. While there is a lot to read, these reports will give you an excellent idea of our on-going activities.

My grateful thanks to the committee members for their continued work in maintaining and advancing the work of the museum.

We are looking forward to 2015 and the committee members and volunteers wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Lorraine Antonello
President

Christmas in Hospitals – the way things were

In the late 19th century and for much of the 20th century, patients with ailments which would now be considered relatively minor including bone fractures spent extended periods in hospital. Mothers also spent longer periods in hospital after child-birth and procedures which are now undertaken in day surgery required long hospital stays. As well, nurses were required to live in nurses quarters provided by the hospital. These two facts meant that hospitals were busy places at Christmas with a captive audience. As a result, there were many formalities and celebrations around Christmas in the wards and the newspapers often presented quite detailed reports of the celebrations in all hospitals, orphanages etc. We obviously don't have space to report all of these, so let's choose 1929 as an example.

The Morning Bulletin of 26 December 1929, p. 11, reported:

At the general Hospital all the wards were beautifully decorated. Streamers, flowers and shrubs were used in the decorative scheme. Mr George Simmons, deputy Curator of the Botanic Gardens, who was the judge, was very much impressed with the beauty and good taste of the work. The first prize was awarded to the surgical ward, the second to the medical, and the third to the female ward.

The President of the Board (Mr. Goss) and Mrs. Goss, together with Mr J. J. Cullen, a member of the Board, and the secretary (Mr. W. Thomson) paid a visit to the hospital in the morning. There were also present Dr. D.E.A. Buchanan and Dr. F. C. Wooster. In the children's ward a splendid Christmas tree had been set up and Mr. Cullen was a distinct success in the role of Father Christmas. The number of presents was enormous. The public had been very generous, and there were plenty of eatables and drinkables. Every patient got a present; the men got cigarettes and cigars, and the women got handkerchiefs; there was plenty of confectionary and fruit for everyone."

The article went on to discuss other hospitals. Accounts similar to this abound. Members of the nursing staff were engaged in competitions for the best decorated wards. Judging was often by external parties and the newspaper often gave the names of the nurses who had contributed to each of the winning displays. The Board Chair and other board members always visited and dignitaries such as the Mayor might visit as well. As we approach Christmas 2015, we have decided to use this issue of our Newsletter to show some Christmas photos from our Country Hospital Museum collection. The earliest one in our collection is this one which almost certainly takes us back over 100 years, possibly as early as 1890. Notice the long uniforms of the day which must have made for uncomfortable work attire.



The President and members of the ACHHA Management Committee wish all of our members and volunteers a very Happy Christmas and good health and prosperity throughout 2015. We look forward to your visits to our Museum and your on-going support with the continuing task of developing what is already an excellent resource both for our region and the wider Australian and International Communities.

Association Membership

The Association welcomes your support for our activities. If you wish to join, 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. Any member of our management committee listed on p. 4 will be pleased to assist you to join.

Alternatively you may download a membership application from our website at: <http://www.achha.org.au/Membership%20Application.pdf>. You may also pay your subscription by direct deposit to the Association's Membership account at the Westpac Bank, details of which are: BSB 034-210 Account No. 23-3836 Please identify yourself with your Surname plus Mem.

Membership Fees

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



On 26th December 1939, The Morning Bulletin reported that “Red, white and blue were the colours chosen for the Children’s Ward. The Australian and British flags were in prominent positions as was a Christmas tree from which Father Christmas (Mr W. R. Thomson) handed presents to the children. Sister K. Jeffries was assisted by Nurses Jones, Rose, McKenzie, Cheeseman and Reid.”

In this photograph taken in the Rockhampton Hospital Children’s Ward Santa has joined the party. Sr Jeffries is the nurse on the left.



Meanwhile, the nurses who were not on duty on Christmas Day 1937 were able to have a little celebration back at the Quarters with ice-cream.



A typed label accompanying this photograph identifies the nurses but does not make it entirely clear how they are arranged. However, the most likely arrangement is:

Front row (L to R) Grace Morton; Doris Baker; Hilda Van Bael; Back row: Helen Richardson; Bonnie Smith; Marge Shelton; Pat Galletly; Eileen McGuane.

In 1940, the nurses who prepared the winning display were shown in this published photograph with their Sister-in-Charge Margret Graham. The page in the Central Queensland Herald on January 2 1941 was headed ‘Christmas at the Rockhampton General Hospital’ with the photograph caption ‘The Men’s Medical Ward was awarded first prize in the Christmas decorations. Here are the nurses on duty in the Ward’.



Of course the nurses were happy to give one-on-one support where necessary, as shown in this photograph of Nurse Elizabeth (Betty) Francis - now Elizabeth West, a current member of our Association. She was helping Lawrence Newman to forget his broken arm on Christmas morning 1948 at the Rockhampton General Hospital. It was Lawrence’s second day in hospital.



Some of the displays set up were very elaborate, as seen in this photograph from 1950 which shows Sister Southgate with colleagues and children in the Children’s Ward. The photograph was published in The Morning

Bulletin with the caption "PRIZEWINNING WARD AT GENERAL HOSPITAL - There was an old woman who lived in a shoe was the nursery rhyme which inspired the decoration of the children's ward, which won the Christmas decorations competition at the Rockhampton General Hospital yesterday. Nurse C. Weiting was the 'old woman', and standing behind her are some of the nursing staff responsible for the decorations."



Nurse Joan Klows really entered the spirit of things when she donned her pyjamas to wait for Santa to free himself from the chimney on Christmas Day 1963.



The reindeer helped out with this display from the 1960s which shows Sister Kit Walters (née Deane) with patients examining the Christmas decorations in one of the wards at the Rockhampton Hospital.



Carol singing also played a role in the celebrations as shown by this group of nurses on the steps of the hospital in the 1960s.



Our Association is very pleased that we have been able to collect copies of photographs such as these, and that the National Library has made it so much easier to find the stories behind them through their collection of digitised newspapers (Trove). Happy Christmas to all.

Association contact details:

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 Website: www.achha.org.au
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Patron: Dr Con Primmer OAM

Elected Office Bearers

President: Lorraine Antonello
Vice-president: Ashley Reid
Secretary: Errol Payne
Treasurer: Kay Smith

Committee Members

Nancy Crapp	Bill McIver
Tom Dewar	Jocelyn Philp
Del Leitgeb	Chris Putman
Carol McIver	