



## NEWSLETTER

JULY 2014

### *President's Report*

Half of the year has passed us by, and our busy band of workers continues to do the many tasks needing attention at the Museum. Every Tuesday morning a number of volunteers including up to six of our management committee members and seven other volunteers enjoy the morning undertaking their various jobs while enjoying the company.

The Museum participated in the International Nurses Day celebrations once again with a great display. This was managed by Lorraine and Ashley and a number of attendees were interested in the display and what we do at the Museum. We placed a flyer in each package for the participants in the hope of encouraging some new members or someone who may like to join the working group. Flyers are currently being placed in hospitals and Health Services in the CQ area to get the message out.

We have been encouraged to have school tours resuming after the uncertainty of the Village operations. Recently there were tours by three groups of students from each of St Anthony's and Heights College. We have members attend to show the students around and to explain the pieces of equipment which were used many years ago as well as the changes in uniforms and social conditions.

The Village Festival was a success with the largest number of visitors at the hospital museum. The members were dressed in their uniforms, just like old times. The children were amazed to see the nursing outfits. I think they thought we were just at a fancy dress while the older visitors said how good it was to see the nursing group in their uniforms. It was very pleasant morning and I believe the village was extremely happy with the outcome of the day's events.

I have mentioned the group of volunteers working at the Museum on Tuesday mornings. One group is working in the library section and members have been very busy cataloguing and describing the many old books in the collection. These will then be labelled and displayed in order for easy retrieval for research in the future.

Ashley has had a static display set up depicting nursing in World War 1 with a doll dressed in the uniform appropriate for that era. This very interesting display was well worth having a look at. Ashley changes the display approximately every two months and she does a lot of research on every topic to set up the displays. The current display in early July highlights and draws attention to the permanent Woorabinda hospital display to coincide with NAIDOC week.

The group of volunteers working on the very large number of nursing files is moving along. This is a mammoth job. The plan is for details of all nurses who trained in Rockhampton to be placed on the Museum Computer Program with their date of training and their status. This could be useful for people looking for Family History in the future. This is an ongoing project and will continue for a long time.

Yvonne Kelley continues to oversee many of the projects as the Museum's Archivist with her prior and detailed knowledge of all procedures to be undertaken in the Museum. She is working with the volunteers to improve the sorting and labelling of much of the material such as the linen and the uniforms which are very important but which are not all on display at any one time. As well, the filing cabinets and the store room are being sorted and labelled and the old hand-written hospital record books are being safely wrapped for storage after being cleaned and documented earlier on.

We were fortunate to have been granted of \$2,770 from the Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund this year. This has enabled us to bring our computing facilities right up to date. We have been able to purchase a laptop computer, printer, monitor and backup disc as well as the latest software. This will help us greatly in cataloguing our collection and setting up our displays.

Be sure to ask you friends and visitors to come to the Museum and enjoy the history.

**Lorraine Antonello**  
**President**

***The Country Hospital Museum needs your help.***

**Q ANZAC 100: Memories for a New Generation**, is a five-year Queensland program of legacy initiatives that commemorates 100 years of World War One and Anzac history from 2014 to 2018.

The Country Hospital Museum is contributing to this program and hopes to add to its current collection of photographs and information that honours the memory and service of the many locally trained Central Queensland nurses who served in World War One.

As the focus of our museum is a Country Hospital Museum we have chosen to trace the Australian Hospitals overseas during WW1 and the stories of the local nurses who enlisted and served in these hospitals. During April, May and June we held a display at the museum showing some of the material in our collection and contributed a display to the Rockhampton International Nurses Day, Professional Day held at the CQ University in May.

***How can you help?***

Do you have family photographs or stories that could enhance our collection? Do you have letters written home to families by the nurses? Do you know where the nurses worked after returning from the war? Do you have a relative who returned to work within the Central Queensland area after returning from the war?

Let us help you tell your family story and contribute to the **Q ANZAC 100: Memories for a New Generation program**.

Contact members of the Country Hospital Committee or by emailing [secretary@achha.org.au](mailto:secretary@achha.org.au).

**Ashley Reid**

***Future of the Village***

Recent news from the Friends of the Village appears to be more positive than what we were hearing a few months ago. Apparently at least for now Council will keep control of the Village, though staff numbers have been reduced. The Friends collected over 6000 signatures in three weeks to support the Village at the height of the crisis. Reduced staffing means that it is more difficult for Village management to offer school tours, though as reported by Lorraine we had some towards the end of last term.

We hear that while there was concern about volunteers walking away due to all of the uncertainty, there are a number of new volunteers coming on board. That is excellent and parallels our recent happy experience at the Hospital Museum.

***Heritage Day at the Village***

As mentioned in the President’s Report, the Village held a very successful Heritage Day in May. Our contribution included several of our members dressing up in uniforms of past times.



In this photograph provided by the Village, Ashley Reid, Del Leitgeb, Lorraine Antonello and Carol McIver pose with a number of young Village volunteers and the long-suffering patient in our two-bed Ward.

***International Nurses Day Display***

Our Association always plays an integral role in celebrating International Nurses Day. This is a photograph of the World War 1 display mounted by Lorraine and Ashley this year.



***Notice of Annual General Meeting***

Mailed with this Newsletter you will find a Notice of our Annual General Meeting which this year will be held at 1:30 pm on Monday 24th November at the School of Arts Building in Bolsover St. We would love to see you there. We will share light refreshments and relaxing discussion after the meeting.

**Dr Frank Couper Wooster****By Errol Payne**

Frank Couper Wooster was one of Rockhampton's prominent doctors in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In this brief Newsletter account (abridged from a more complete fully documented story) we seek to recognise his outstanding contributions in many spheres using publically available sources, mainly The Morning Bulletin archives. If you would like a copy of the full story, please contact us.

Frank Wooster was born in Parramatta on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1884, first of twelve children born to Jonathan Wooster and Elizabeth Maria Couper. We are fortunate that Dr Wooster's own account of his early career was included in his application for the position of Medical Superintendent at the Rockhampton Hospital published in the Morning Bulletin on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1914. Prior to commencing his degree in medicine, Frank Wooster worked for three years as a teacher in the New South Wales Department of Education and for four years as a clerk in the Master in Lunacy's Office in Sydney. He completed a one year arts course at Sydney University as an evening student while doing clerical work, and gained honours in mathematics.

He graduated from Sydney University in medicine with honours in December 1910. He immediately commenced work as Resident Medical Officer (RMO) at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital where he was house surgeon and house physician for the whole of 1911. He was also in charge of the lock depot for venereal diseases.

In 1912, he joined the staff of the hospital for the insane at Parramatta as RMO for 6 months studying mental diseases. This was followed by 6 months as RMO at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children then 6 months as RMO in charge at the Women's Hospital, Crown Street. This senior role provided an introduction to administrative work as well as clinical experience. Following a period doing vaccinations for the Government he was appointed as medical officer to the Hospital Committee at Mt Chalmers on the Capricorn Coast.

Dr Wooster started work at Mt Chalmers on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1913. However, the Rockhampton General Hospital Committee soon decided to appoint him to the position of Medical Superintendent on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1914. They were choosing from a field of 14. He was 30 years of age. His referees spoke not only of his excellent knowledge and competence in his discipline but also described a sympathetic, courteous man with notable tact both with his colleagues and patients. In fact one of his referees described him as being "unusually tactful with patients".

In the report of the Livingstone Shire Council meeting published in The Morning Bulletin on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1914, it was noted that Dr Wooster asked to be relieved of his position as Medical Officer to the Council at Mount Chalmers and returned £2 12s. 6d. being half of his retaining fee since he had only occupied the position for

7 months. Council offered the Mt Chalmers position to Dr J. V. Church who served briefly as interim Medical Superintendent of the Rockhampton Hospital prior to Dr Wooster taking up the position. The Hospital Committee wasted no time in putting Dr Wooster's talents to work. On 10<sup>th</sup> March 1914, The Morning Bulletin reported that the Committee held a special meeting to "consider the best way of improving the management of the organisation". It was agreed "that the Medical Superintendent, Dr F. C. Wooster, should have authority to generally supervise all branches of the Hospital's business. Dr Wooster was specifically requested to see that the rules relating to payment by patients were carefully observed and to insist that all patients other than emergency patients presented tickets of admission from the Secretary, the desire being to prevent imposition and continue free admission to patients who could not afford to pay. Authority was given to the Medical Superintendent to employ additional assistance to get the grounds put in order."

When Dr Wooster applied for the position at Rockhampton, he said that he was unmarried but that his elder sister would housekeep for him. This appears to have happened because several newspaper reports during 1914 show that Miss Wooster was playing an important role in the hospital community such as involvement planning for the annual fund-raising fete.

Apparently amidst all of this activity he continued his studies and was awarded a Master of Surgery (MCh) degree from Sydney University in 1915.

In July 1914, there was an announcement in the Australian Government Gazette that Dr Wooster had been appointed Captain provisionally in the Australian Army Medical Corps, 1<sup>st</sup> Military District. The next step in his career was as a member of Australia's armed services. When he decided to enlist, the hospital committee in recognising his outstanding service in such a short time, agreed to give him extended leave without salary and to hold his Superintendent's position open for him should he wish to return to it after the war (Morning Bulletin 4th August 1915).

A function was held to farewell him from the Rockhampton Hospital on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1915 and on 10<sup>th</sup> August he was formally appointed as a Captain in the 8<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance. He enlisted in Rockhampton on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1915. According to his service records, he departed from Sydney for Europe on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1915 and was soon serving with the field ambulance in France. On 30<sup>th</sup> October 1916 he was appointed Temporary Major and as a Major on 14 November 1916. After about 26 months service he was transferred to 1st AGH (Australian General Hospital) in France on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1917 where he remained until 5<sup>th</sup> June 1918. After a brief appointment to the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance he was promoted to Temporary Lieutenant Colonel in charge of the 13<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1918. His appointment to full Lieutenant Colonel came on 11 November 1918.

During this posting he married Catherine Margaret Moir, a Rockhampton girl, in England. Catherine had studied at the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School, matriculating in 1909. She was a distinguished scholar who gained a BA degree with Honours at Sydney University in 1912 and an MA degree with Honours in 1915. She won a number of prizes including a travel scholarship in 1916 which enabled her to travel abroad and to undertake research work at Cambridge University.

Dr Wooster embarked on his return trip to Australia on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1919 arriving on 01 June 1919.

Meanwhile, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1919 the London Gazette published the award of a Distinguished Service Order (DSO) in the King's Birthday Honours List. As well he was mentioned in General Haig's despatches on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1919. This was formally recorded in the London Gazette on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1919.

He was welcomed back to the Rockhampton Hospital on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1919 with quite a function in which many laudatory speeches were made, not only about Dr Wooster but also about the doctors who had acted in his place. There was also high praise for the hospital's nurses, recognising in particular their service in dealing with the very serious influenza epidemic of 1918/19.

Quoting a small part of the newspaper report about this function (MB 9th Aug 1919) gives us something of an insight into conditions and attitudes just after World War 1.

*"Dr. F. C. Wooster, Resident Surgeon of the Rockhampton General Hospital, who has only recently returned from war service, was, with his wife, née Miss Kitty Moir, welcomed home by the Hospital Committee and staff on Thursday week. The function was held in one of the large unused influenza huts, which, with its pretty decorations, made an ideal reception hall. A patriotic colour was lent by the national flags which adorned the building. The Mayor, Alderman T. W. Kingel presided. Seated near him were the guests of the evening, the Mayoress, the President of the Hospital Committee (Mr. T. B. Renshaw), and Mrs. Renshaw and Drs. S. Stuart and R. W. Richards. Other members of the Hospital Committee and nursing staff occupied seats at a long table running at right angles to the Chairman's table."*

Mr Renshaw expressed regret that Matron Rose Christmas was not present because her mother had taken ill. In proposing a toast, Mr Renshaw said *"Dr. Wooster, like many young men, had felt the call of Empire and left for the seat of war. They knew of the work of the medical profession in connection with the war, which fortunately, had ended in a victory for the Allies. In welcoming back Dr. Wooster they were welcoming back a man who had not hesitated to do his part in bringing to their knees those people who had done so much to smash the nations of Europe."*

### Forthcoming 2014 Rockhampton Heritage Village Events

#### Sunday 13 July 2014

Market Day

#### Sunday 14th September 2014

Market Day

#### Sunday 30th November 2014

Christmas Markets

Please take the opportunity to visit our 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. We operate on a normal financial year (July—June) and new memberships paid now will be credited to the 2014-2015 financial year.

If you wish to join our Association, application forms are available from Committee members, from the Museum, from the Contact us page of our website

[www.achha.org.au](http://www.achha.org.au)

or by emailing [secretary@achha.org.au](mailto:secretary@achha.org.au)

Please make cheques payable to Australian Country Hospital Heritage Association Inc. and post to ACHHA Inc, Box 4035, Rockhampton Qld 4700 or pay by direct deposit to our Westpac Membership Account BSB 034-210 Account No. 23-3836. To enable us to identify you, please use your family name plus Mem (for membership). Any of the Committee members listed on the final page will be pleased to assist you.

### Membership Fees

#### Annual

Individual \$20.00

Couple \$30.00

#### Life

Individual \$200.00

Couple \$300.00

### Donations

The Australian Country Hospital Heritage Association Inc (ABN: 86 751 554 596) is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. If you wish to make a tax-deductible donation, please pay as above or by direct deposit to our Museum Account BSB-034-210 Account No. 23-3844. Please identify yourself by your family name plus Don (for donation) and make sure that we have your address so we are able to send you a receipt.

As was often the case, the those present were entertained by songs sung by several nurses with accompaniment by the nurses. Mr and Mrs Renshaw sang a duet and the evening ended with the National Anthem.

This 1919 photograph from the ACHHA Collection shows Dr Wooster with staff of the Rockhampton Hospital.



Nurses Spilsbury, Haines and Stevenson were among those providing the entertainment.

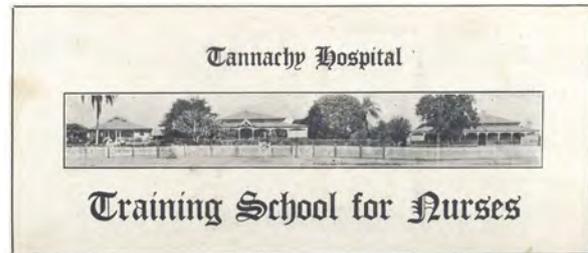
The next significant event in Dr Wooster's career came on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1923 when he submitted his resignation as Medical Superintendent of the Rockhampton Hospital. The Hospital Committee accepted his resignation with deep regret and high praise for his achievements at the Hospital. He entered private practice in Rockhampton and began a long partnership with Dr Norman Talbot at the Tannachy Hospital. Dr Talbot had bought a very large residence on the river bank in 1922 and began the establishment of another private hospital which served Rockhampton and district for many years. Like Dr Wooster, Dr Talbot had served with distinction in the First World War. Dr Wooster was appointed a Life Governor of the Rockhampton Hospital in 1925.

This photograph shows Dr Wooster with staff at Tannachy Hospital.



*Staff at Tannachy Hospital 1939. Standing (L to R): Olga Freestone, Jean Flemming, Betty Stone, Elsie Roden, Margaret McIlwraith, Joyce Craig, Mercie Whellan, Dorothy Bradley, Margaret Axe; Seated: Margaret Hawkins, Sr D. Hill, Dr F. C. Wooster, Matron Sarah Costello, Jill Crossan.*

This 1942 photograph of Tannachy is taken from a nurse's graduation certificate which has been donated to our collection by John Miguel, son of Virginia D'Arcy.



Over many years, newspaper reports about Dr Wooster paint a picture of a person well connected to community organisations, generally as an executive officer, and often in league with his colleague Dr Norman Talbot. The organisations include the Central Queensland Lawn Tennis Association, the Rockhampton Rifle Club, the Rockhampton Cycle Club and the Rockhampton Rugby League. Drs Wooster and Talbot served as Honorary Doctors for the Rockhampton Rugby League. He was Commanding Officer of the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance for a time and in that role was involved in cadet training.

It appears that he also became interested in exploring for gold, and was awarded a gold mining lease in 1934. There are a number of reports related to this activity over subsequent years. In 1948, there are reports of him having interests in prospecting for silver and lead in the Mt Isa region.

His other key role outside the Tannachy Hospital and his private practice was as The Rockhampton City Council's Medical Officer of Health. He was appointed to the role in October 1931 and over the following years he reported regularly to Council on the incidence of infectious diseases such as whooping cough, rubella, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis and diphtheria. As is the case today, he was clearly frustrated by the unwillingness of some parents to have their children immunised and devoted a great deal of effort to ensuring that immunization clinics were readily available to citizens. Remarkably, we find his final report to Council on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1950, just 12 days before his death.

His wife, Catherine Margaret died from pulmonary tuberculosis on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1941. He later married Jean Middleton Sharples on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1946.

Dr Wooster died in Rockhampton on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1950. According to his death certificate, the causes of death were chronic myocarditis and aplastic anaemia (2 years) and thrombo phlebitis in the left leg (3 weeks). He was privately cremated on 06 June 1950. He had no children and was survived by his second wife.

His obituary published in the Morning Bulletin on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1950, began as follows:

*"By the death of Dr Frank Couper Wooster, which occurred yesterday morning, Rockhampton has lost*

*one of its most highly respected citizens. Tributes were paid yesterday by all sections of the community testifying to the esteem in which the doctor was held. He had a quiet manner, which was appreciated, because behind it was sincerity."*

The obituary went on to describe Dr Wooster's career much as described above, with the added information that he had received the honour of Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons when the college was founded.

Dr Wooster's death was a major blow to the Rockhampton community in its own right, but doubly so when Dr Talbot decided that, after almost 30 years sharing the workload, he would be unable to continue to operate Tannachy by himself and announced that he would be closing the hospital. This occurred in October or November of 1950.

However, in the meantime, great concern had been expressed in the city about the major impact of the loss of this hospital with its 40 beds, including maternity beds, operating and X-ray facilities and other invaluable assets. The local branch of the British Medical Association was at the forefront of raising the concerns. Public meetings were soon organised and a number of local businessmen were able to quite quickly establish a new company Tannachy Private Hospital Pty Ltd and negotiate the purchase of the asset. With the support of former hospital staff including many nurses, the company was able to reopen the hospital in mid-January 1951 and gradually bring it back into operation. Several private doctors provided their services to support the continuing operation of the hospital which was later purchased by the Anglican Diocese of Rockhampton in 1961 and renamed St John's Hospital.

**From our Collection**

One of our volunteers, Joan Miller (née Ockenden) has recently provided us with an excellent set of photographs from the 1950s. Many of them show individual nurses in uniform, or small groups of nurses. Here we share just one of them. We will use others in the future.



The photograph shows the group of eleven nurses who graduated from the Rockhampton Hospital on 06 May 1955. The nurses are identified as: Back Row (L to R): Joan Ockenden, Val Brewster, Joan Winkle, Clare Fittock, Grace McPherson, Jessie Moriarty; Front Row: Mona Jeffries, Dawn Bryant, Beth Tindale, Barbara Lees, Elizabeth Nunan. Jessie Moriarty, Grace McPherson and Elizabeth Nunan graduated in midwifery while the others graduated in general nursing.

While we have a very large collection of photographs, we can never have enough, especially if the subjects are named. We are happy to receive quality scans if you are prepared to give us permission to use them. Alternatively, we are happy to scan the photos and return them to you.

**Association contact details:**  
**Australian Country Hospital Heritage Association Inc.**  
**PO Box 4035 Rockhampton Qld 4700**  
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**Website: [www.achha.org.au](http://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

**Archivist:** Yvonne Kelley

**Committee Members**

Nancy Crapp  
 Tom Dewar  
 Del Leitgeb  
 Carol Mclver  
 Bill Mclver  
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 Christine Putman  
 Norma West