



Presidents Report

The year is certainly moving along quickly as are our band of volunteers at the museum every Tuesday morning working diligently to maintain all areas within the museum and the collection.

It is with sadness we have lost one of our foundation member, Miss Norma West. Norma has been instrumental in the development of our Museum. She has always been very keen to ensure that the need to save and acknowledge the nursing eras of the past is well acknowledged. She was a valued member of ACHHA. Errol has prepared a tribute which will accompany this Newsletter.

Sadly, the death also occurred recently of another nurse, Miss Betty Cagney, who trained and served with distinction at the Rockhampton Hospital for more than 30 years during period 1950 to 1993. While Betty was not a member of our Association, she was known to many of our members.

For those members who had strong ties to the Rockhampton Hospital in Canning Street, it is worth noting that the first patients were transferred there 150 years ago this year, on 15th July 1868.

The Tuesday volunteer group led by Del are nearing the end of cataloguing and documenting the nursing staff from Rockhampton Hospital. When this project is complete we will have an excellent picture of nurses who trained and worked at the hospital from 1885 on. Daphne and Lorraine have quite a job getting all information from this project onto the database for posterity. When this enormous task is completed the group will begin the task of photographing and documenting all objects in the museum.

Errol and Janet are busy sorting the library books and as the library collection is over loaded they will reduce the multiple copies and offer them to other museums.

Ashley has been instrumental in having a Honour board made to commemorate nurses who trained at Rockhampton and then served in the war. This will be put up in the museum shortly. It will be a lasting monument to those nurses.

My thanks to Ashley for maintaining the changing displays with current topics. The latest display features our excellent Pharmacy Room so that more visitors will be encouraged to have a good look at this room which was set up by our retired pharmacists with financial support from the AFS pharmacies.

On market days we hope, but cannot guarantee, that some members of the Museum committee will be present to answer queries and to help locate information visitors may be looking for.

My thanks to Errol our secretary. Errol answers any queries, maintains our web information and is a valued member of our group.

We encourage you, your family and friends to come and visit the museum and enjoy looking at the nursing and medical memorabilia from days gone by.

Lorraine Antonello
President

Dedicated Rockhampton Citizens

Ashley's story in this Newsletter about Robert Reynoldson Dawbarn is unusual compared to our usual topics, since he was not a health professional. Rather, he was a citizen dedicated to the development of the new town, including its hospital system. The early success of Rockhampton can be attributed to a number of such citizens. In the early years they were generally born elsewhere, often overseas, and had obviously set out to make their mark in the world by facing new challenges. As Ashley says, quite a number of these prominent and energetic citizens are honoured in Rockhampton's street names. During her research, Ashley has identified Hartley, Boland, Renshaw, Medcraf, Dibdin, Penlington and Cousins as other examples of Rockhampton Hospital Committee members.

These people gave their own time and often cash to ensure that facilities were improved well before governments took the reins and increased taxes.

We certainly shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that all of these leaders were male. Two of the hospitals which were just as important as the Rockhampton Hospital were the Women's Hospital in West Street and the Children's Hospital over the range from the Girls Grammar School. These hospitals which had their origins with the Benevolent Society were run with equal success by committees of women. Although many of the donations to the hospitals were attributed to men, the fact is that the women were instrumental in most of the fund raising through organising fetes, street stalls, dance balls and other functions.

We honour them all!

Mr. Robert Reynoldson DAWBARN - A life of Community Service by Ashley Reid

Rockhampton, like most regional cities and towns across Australia, has streets named after prominent local residents. Drivers using their own inbuilt sense of direction, or relying on the latest GPS, to navigate around Rockhampton can be forgiven for not consciously being aware of the early history recorded on street signs throughout the city.

The Rockhampton Regional Council's *Naming of Infrastructure Assets Policy (Community Policy)* states: "The naming of infrastructure assets provides an opportunity to honour individuals and groups for contributions and achievements that deserve recognition."

One street in North Rockhampton, named well before this policy was enacted, is DAWBARN Street. Who was the person behind this street name and what contribution or achievement deserved such recognition?



Robert Reynoldson Dawbarn's connection to business and sporting groups in the city has been well documented in newspaper articles on TROVE from 1884 onwards. These include *The Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*, *The Queenslander*, *Courier Mail*, *Brisbane Truth*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* and the *Melbourne Leader*.

Researchers attempting to find "the facts" are often left confused when "credible sources" provide conflicting information. Such was the case when writing the story of this remarkable Rockhampton identity.

The "Robert (Reynoldson) Dawbarn (1844 - 1919) Genealogy" family website lists Robert as born in 1844 to British parents, Richard Ellison and Deborah Dawbarn, in New York, USA. The website also informs readers that two of Robert's siblings were born in England, John in 1837 in Liverpool, dying in 1883 in Prahran, Victoria and his sister, Emma Rosa, also born in Liverpool in 1841. A second brother, Richard, was born in New York in 1842, just two years before Robert.

An item in *The Queenslander* newspaper on Saturday 7th June 1919 reporting on Mr. Dawbarn's death stated he was born in Cambridgeshire, England in 1843 and travelled to Melbourne, Australia with his parents that same year. Robert's death certificate confirms that he was actually born in the USA but the rest of the article stating that Robert was educated in Melbourne before

moving to Sydney where he was associated with the Australian Jockey Club (AJC). Another move saw him in Brisbane where he spent several years as the secretary of the Queensland Turf Club (QTC) before travelling north to Rockhampton ca. 1883.



Robert Reynoldson Dawbarn

The above movements are supported by shipping records. Mr Dawbarn is listed as a passenger on the ship *City of Adelaide* travelling from Melbourne to Sydney in December 1869 then in May 1879 he is listed as travelling aboard *S.S. Katoomba*, leaving Sydney for Brisbane.

Robert married Catherine Kate (Kate) Collins in Sydney in 1874. According to his death certificate, there were thirteen children in all, with ten (seven girls and three boys) surviving when he died in 1919. Two of the children were born in Sydney and the remainder in Queensland. Given the timing, it is likely that six were born while they were living in Rockhampton.

According to a report printed in the *Brisbane Truth* newspaper about a court case held in Sydney in 1907, Mrs. Catherine Kate Dawbarn claimed she had been living in Sydney with her daughter and son-in-law since separating from her husband five years previously.

Shortly after arriving in Rockhampton Mr. Dawbarn worked for Walter Reid and Co but was soon in partnership as an accountant in the firm, "Dawbarn & Gavin, public accountants & auditors, stock brokers, auctioneers". His office in East Street was the venue for meetings of the many business and community committees on which he served.



View along East Street, Rockhampton, c. 1887.
Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

One of Mr. Dawbarn's early business interests was the Mount Holly Gold Mining Company. In 1885, as secretary, he called for tenders to cart 10 tons of stone from the mine at Langmorn near Raglan, 48 km west of Gladstone, to the Three Mile Crocodile gold diggings, near what is now known as Bouldercombe, 22 km south of Rockhampton.

Throughout the following thirty four years Mr Dawbarn is known to have served terms as the Secretary of several organisations including the Central Queensland Institute of Accountants, the Rockhampton Hospital Committee, Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce, Rockhampton Property Owners Association, Central Queensland Rifle Association, Queensland Stockowners Association, Rockhampton Agricultural Society, Rockhampton Jockey Club, Rockhampton Rugby Union, Fitzroy Bridge Board, and the Central Queensland Sugar Company.

Today, the Capricorn Coast may not seem the ideal location for growing sugar cane. However an experimental crop was grown by William Broome on his property, "Woodbury", just north of Yeppoon. In 1883 the Yeppoon Sugar Company was formed and a mill built at Farnborough to crush the cane being grown at Yeppoon and several other small farms along the coast. The climate was found to be unsuitable for cane growing and the mill closed in 1901. Some of the mill buildings were moved and were reused in the local area. One of the mill houses became the original Mill Gallery at Yeppoon in 1983.



Source: A project of Capricorn Coast Historical Society and Livingstone Shire Council.

A number of articles written throughout his life in Australia point toward Mr. Dawbarn having an ongoing interest in horse racing. In July 1877, three items appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald calling for nominations in upcoming races to be lodged with Robert R. Dawbarn, Secretary of the Sydney Amateur Turf Club. Further newspaper articles indicate he was Secretary of the Queensland Jockey Club in 1878.

The *Qld Parliament (Hansard) Legislative Assembly* on Thursday 2nd September 1880 records how, as Secretary of the Queensland Turf Club, he witnessed, as a scrutineer, the drawing of a five hundred pound sweep conducted on the upcoming Metropolitan Stakes to be run at the Randwick Racecourse in Sydney.

Continuing his interest in horse racing Mr. Dawbarn held the position of Secretary to the Rockhampton Jockey

Club from 30th November 1898 until 1914, serving along side Dr William Callaghan who was elected President of the Committee when it was formed in 1868. Dr. Callaghan arrived in Rockhampton in July 1861 and was appointed District Coroner and Government Medical Officer and House Surgeon at the hospital.

In 1900, celebrations were conducted throughout Britain and the British Colonies following the successful end of the "Siege of Mafeking". In Rockhampton Mr. Dawbarn joined the local committee formed to arrange the Rockhampton celebrations.

The Siege of Mafeking was a 217-day battle during the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa conducted from October 1899 to May 1900 by the British Army for the town of Mafeking. Robert Baden-Powell was a Colonel in the British Army who used small group of boys as "Scouts" to take messages around the town during the conflict. This later became the model he used to found the Scout Movement.



Colonel Robert Baden-Powell, commandant of the Mafeking garrison. Source: *The British Battles*

The story of Robert Dawbarn as Secretary of the Rockhampton Hospitals Board began on 1st April 1899 and continued until his death on 30th May 1919, aged 74.



Rockhampton Hospital 1895. This was the year the name of the hospital changed from the Port Curtis and Leichhardt District Hospital. Source: ACHHA Collection

A small document stored in the archives of the Country Hospital Museum sets out in detail, eighty-four "Rules and Regulations governing the management of the Rockhampton Hospital in 1906". Included were eight

rules which applied specifically to the Hospital Committee Secretary.

“Rule 28. *The Secretary shall attend all Special, General, and Committee meetings, and take minutes of the proceedings, which he shall transcribe into books kept for the purpose. He shall carry out the directions of Special, General and Committee meetings as required.*

Rule 29. *He shall conduct the correspondence, and do such clerical work and keep such books as the Committee may require. He shall also prepare, sign, and issue all circulars and advertisements, and shall countersign all official documents, cheques, etc., under the supervision and direction of the Committee.*

Rule 30. *He shall examine all accounts against the Hospital, and schedule them on a pay-sheet, which pay-sheet shall be laid the Finance Committee together with the invoices.*

Rule 31. *He shall issue tickets to patients as provided by General Rules Nos. 21 and 25, keep a correct list thereof, and shall see that moneys coming into his hands from all sources are punctually deposited to the credit of the Hospital’s bank account.*

Rule 32. *As and when the periodical pay-sheets are passed for payment, he shall, subject to the direction of the Committee, visit the Hospital and pay to each member of the staff his or her salary or wages and receive acquittance therefor, and shall see that payments for supplies are duly made and the Hospital discharged.*

Rule 33. *He shall visit the Hospital at least twice a week.*

Rule 34. *He shall have access to all books and records kept there and see that they are correct. He shall assist the Visiting and all other Committees in the execution of their duties.*

Rule 35. *He shall upon receipt from the Medical Superintendent of particulars of the death of a patient, and the particulars of any property of deceased patient which he has in his possession, inform the Local Deputy Curator of Intestate Estates of such death, and of such property, and shall, subject to the provisions of Rule 15, dispose of the property as the Local Deputy Curator shall direct. In the event of the Local Deputy Curator renouncing ownership of the property, it shall pass into the order and disposition of the Committee. He shall keep a register of all operations under this Rule, and shall place it upon the table at all Committee meetings.”*

An extensive Position Description by any standard!

The *Rockhampton Hospital Register of Nurses 1885-1939*, also in the archives of the Country Hospital Museum, shows that Mr. Dawbarn’s fifth daughter, Ethel, commenced her General Nurse Training at the Rockhampton Hospital in December 1908 and completed her studies in December 1911. Ethel was appointed Head Nurse at the Rockhampton Hospital in January 1912.

Ethel married Henry Forbes Wright on 24th October 1915 at the Baptist Tabernacle in Denison Street. *The*

Queenslander newspaper reported that the wedding breakfast was served on the spacious veranda at the residence of the bride’s father in Separation Street Rockhampton.



Rockhampton Hospital, 25 December 1910. Nurse Ethel Dawbarn standing first (L-R) on second row.



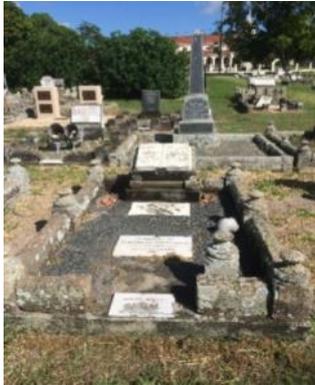
Nurse Ethel Dawbarn and her husband Henry Forbes Wright on their wedding day in 1915.

Rockhampton did not escape the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 which had been brought home by soldiers returning from fighting abroad in World War One. So great was the impact of this epidemic that volunteers were employed to care for the increasing number of patients admitted to the hospital. Dr. David Carment, Senior Lecturer in History at the University College of the Northern Territory writes, in a document titled *“Rockhampton Hospital 1885-1945”*, of 498 patients requiring in-patient treatment at the hospital with 44 patients dying from the disease.

One victim was Mr. Dawbarn who died at the age of seventy-four years in the Rockhampton Hospital on 30th May 1919. He was still secretary at the time. Twenty motor cars and sixty carriages were reported in the cortege as it moved to the South Rockhampton Cemetery. Flags were flown at half-mast at the Rockhampton Hospital, School of Arts and other buildings in the city. Matron Christmas, Dr. S. Stuart, members of the Hospital Committee and eight nurses in uniform were among those who attended the funeral.

Mr. Dawbarn is buried in the Baptist Section of the South Rockhampton Cemetery. Marble plaques on the grave indicate the resting place of his sons, Seacombe

Ellison (born 1889) and William Bertie (born ca. 1887) and son-in-law, Hubert George M. Scott who had married his sixth daughter Marion in 1913. Mr Scott died on 5th June 1919 aged 41, so his death was almost certainly at the hands of the flu as well.



Photographed 15/04/2017

Perhaps a life of community service was a tradition in the Dawbarn family. Richard Dawbarn is recorded in, *“The Ninety Ninth Annual Report of the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society for the year ending MDCCCXCI – 1891, District and Corresponding Secretaries of the Society,”* as Secretary to the church Minister in Cambridgeshire, England,

Following his Father’s death William Bertie Dawbarn continued this tradition when appointed Secretary of the Rockhampton Jockey Club, a position he held for fifteen years until he resigned in 1933 due to ill health. Robert Reynoldson’s youngest son, Reginald, was appointed to the position in 1934.

Who was the man behind the street name? Perhaps the answer can be found in an article printed in the *Brisbane Truth* Newspaper on Sunday 21st March 1915.

Reporting on the cancellation of the Rockhampton Agricultural Society Carnival that year due to the cost of the Carnival held the previous year, Mr. Dawbarn was described as:

“One of those highly esteemed citizens who always take a keen interest in matters affecting the welfare of the city.” Going on to say *“The peppery little Robert R. Dawbarn. At first sight R.R. strikes the observer as a mild eyed, affable, little cove who wouldn’t disturb even a*

street cat that was enjoying the sun on his doorstep on a cold and frosty morning. But he is as full of fight as a butcher’s terrier.”

Mr. Robert Reynoldson Dawbarn certainly earned his place in Rockhampton’s history. His contribution to the city’s growth would surely meet the criteria required today to qualify under The Rockhampton Regional Council Policy Statement: Naming of Infrastructure Assets Policy (Community Policy): *“The naming of infrastructure assets provides an opportunity to honour individuals and groups for contributions and achievements that deserve recognition.”*

Sources:

Rockhampton Regional Council

[Naming of infrastructure assets](#)

TROVE Newspaper archives

[The Queenslander \(Brisbane, Qld. : 1866 - 1939\) Sat 7 Jun 1919 Page 13](#)

Qld Parliament (Hansard) Legislative Assembly
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<http://www.britishbattles.com/great-boer-war/mafeking.htm>

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Robert (Reynoldson) Dawbarn Family History

[Robert \(Reynoldson\) Dawbarn \(1844 - 1919\) - Genealogy](#)

Dr. David Carment “Rockhampton Hospital, 1858-1945,
<https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:205737>

South Rockhampton Cemetery Burial Index.

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Information from the Australian Country Hospital Heritage Association Inc. Archives

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A Patient’s Story—Edwin L Smith

Most of the stories in these newsletters are about doctors, nurses and buildings. However, this story from our Museum archives was written by a patient, Mr Edwin L. Smith. Mr Smith wrote his story after spending 95 days in the Geriatric Rehabilitation Ward in the old building at the Rockhampton Base Hospital in 1985. These are his words.

“This is the way I saw Ward 3 of the Rockhampton Base Hospital, during my 95 days sojourn there.

My hands, arms, legs and feet are badly affected by Arthritis, both Osteo and Rheumatoid.

I was self admitted on the 7th May, 1985, on the understanding that there would be far greater advantages than I could get at home to further my chances of becoming able to walk. I was admitted to Ward 3, which is a rehabilitation unit.

I found the nurses and staff most hospitable, as in the other hospitals that I have been in previously. I was

most astounded by the patience shown by the nurses to a few very cranky types, which would have sorely tried the patience of St Peter himself. The nurses are nicely spoken and most encouraging to one and all, and many are splendid types of young women. Also the orderlies and domestic staff, like the sisters and nurses will always have a favourable place in my memory.

I look upon this ward as a most depressing place, when I observe the number of poor old spent and suffering folk. Many a time I have sat and reflected upon those poor wrinkled and many of them drawn and haggard old faces. Some of the women must have been pretty or nice looking in their younger days. And as mothers many had comforted and cared for children in need. And amongst the men, there must have been many that had ability and were very active in their time. But just look at them now, beaten by old age.

The food is of good quality and creditably cooked and served. I was very much appalled at the waste of this good food caused by lack of appetite and sickness.

A fair effort has been made in the entertainment line, such as a B.B.Q. down on the grounds in the sun or in the shade of trees as preferred. Other times, mostly on weekends, patients who wish are taken for a sunning across the street to the Rose Garden, a very pretty setting. Also after dinner some days, all who wish, gather for a sing song with accompaniment from a very good piano. Also in the rehabilitation unit itself, there is a large range of amusement items along with numerous gadgets for helping to overcome the patients' disabilities.

There only seemed to be one Physiotherapist, and she, to my mind, always had too much to do.

The hospital building is very old and has uncomfortable, cold and draughty verandahs. A new modern building is being built and is nearing completion. When Ward 3 becomes installed in this modern building, patients, staff and everybody concerned, should have far better living and working conditions and comforts.

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Nurses at the Rockhampton Hospital—1950s

A Collection of Photographs

The success of our Country Hospital Museum is based on the willingness of many people to share their photographs and other memorabilia with us. On these page we will share a small selection of photographs of nurses who trained at the Rockhampton Hospital in the first half of the 1950s. The photographs have been supplied by Mrs Maureen Joan (Joan) Miller née Ockenden, one of our band of Museum volunteers.



Gwen Gorman (Left), Barbara Lees (Right) and Margaret (Meg) Leslie at the Rockhampton Hospital ca. 1953. They are seen here on the steps of a nurses quarters building which was in use from late 1945 when the previous Nurses Quarters burned down until the opening of a new nurses quarters building on 11 July 1954.



Group of trainee nurses with their Tutor Sister taken in front of the new 1954 nurses quarters. Back row (L—R): Judith Wells, Joan Ockenden, Val Brewster; Front row: Barbara Lees, Unidentified, Sr Margaret Graham (Tutor Sister), Beth Tindale, Unidentified.



Nurse Elizabeth Deacon in front an old nurses quarters building at the at the Rockhampton Hospital ca. 1954.

The veil which Elizabeth is wearing was known as a "Butterfly Veil". This organza veil was worn by nurses who had successfully completed all of their examinations and were continuing with their fourth year of practical training prior to graduation and registration as a trained nurse (referred to as Sister) at the completion of the full four-year training program.



Nurses with their Tutor Sister on the day of their final examinations in 1954. Those present were - Back row (L—R) Judith Wells, Mona Jefferis, Louise Deacon, Sister Margaret Graham (Tutor Sister), Gwen Gorman, Joan Ockenden, Val Brewster, Hope Nelson, Alison McKenzie; Front Row: Claire Fittock, Unidentified, Ruth Ireland, Barbara Lees, Joan Winkle, Beth Tindale, Dawn Bryant.

A close examination of this photo shows that some nurses are already wearing the Butterfly Veil, meaning that they had already passed all examinations. They may have been there to provide moral support for those about to face the final hurdle!



Group of eleven nurses who graduated from the Rockhampton Hospital on 6th May 1955. Those present are identified as: Back Row (L to R): Joan Ockenden, Val Brewster, Joan Winkle, Clare Fittock, Grace McPherson, Jessie Moriarty; Front Row: Mona Jefferis, 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.



Formal studio photograph of Joan Ockenden wearing the Sisters veil after graduation on 6th May 1955. She was formally registered as a nurse in November 1955.

After graduation, Joan resigned as to marry and raise a family. Remember that at this time, married nurses were not permitted to work in hospitals because of the requirement to live-in at the quarters. However, by the 1970s this was no longer required and many returned to work. Joan Ockenden, now Joan Miller, worked at Saint Andrew's Hospital (now Hillcrest Rockhampton Private Hospital) in the 1970s and was appointed to the position of Charge Sister at the hospital in 1979.

The other notable change between the 1950s and the 1970s was the phasing out in the late 1960s of the traditional starched organdie veil. These were replaced with simple folded paper caps such as this Baxter-style veil worn by Joan in the 1970s while at Saint Andrews.





This photograph of nurses at the Rockhampton Hospital enjoying afternoon tea ca. 1903 is one of the highlights of our collection. The name of the nurse who is in the centre of the back row is Miss Ealey Westmoreland. The photograph was given to Norma West for our collection more than 20 years ago by one of Ealey’s granddaughters who visited the Museum recently and was pleased to see the photograph on show in one of Ashley’s displays.

According to Ealey’s profile on ancestry.com, she was born in Lincoln, UK, in 1872. The family emigrated to Australia. At least for a time, they lived at Bondoola, near Yeppoon. Ealey commenced work at the Rockhampton Hospital on probation on 24th January 1902 and was accepted onto the staff on 24th February 1902. She completed her nurse training on 23rd February 1905.

It is likely that she continued to work as a nurse. In 1911, she was thanked in a newspaper advertisement for the care she had provided to a patient at the Yeppoon hospital. The family was struck by a tragedy on 3rd April 1904 when her father, Charles, was bitten by a snake on their Bondoola property. Even treatment by the legendary Dr F. H. V. Voss who was in Yeppoon could not save him. The newspaper reported that one of her brothers travelled to Rockhampton in the buggy and picked up Nurse Westmoreland at the Rockhampton Hospital to take her to see her father. The report said that they arrived just in time *“to see their father breathe his last, early on Monday morning”*.

Ealey married Simon Kelley on 31st January 1912 and they had three children. She died at Yeppoon on 25th May 1941 aged 69 and is buried in the Yeppoon Cemetery.

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