



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2018

President's Report

We wish our volunteers and members a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year and hope you have wonderful time with family and friends.

Our village display has a Christmas theme at this time of the year and the young ones will thoroughly enjoy it. It is Christmas in the hospital in days gone by when patients spent much more time in hospital and were often in-patients over Christmas. The staff competed with one another to produce the best decorated ward. Santa usually visited the Children's wards during the day.

I would like to pass on my thanks to all of our volunteers for their untiring work and enthusiasm throughout the year. You have done a brilliant job and this all helps in keeping our museum and the collection in good order.

This year our volunteer group has been busy. They meet every Tuesday morning and have just completed a mammoth task of documenting and cataloguing staff who trained at the Rockhampton Hospital from 1884. Currently these nurses are not all on the data base but all files are completed, so the challenge continues.

The Tuesday group will now begin another big challenge, cataloguing significant objects in the museum. This will be done room by room and then the data will be entered on the museum software program. The task will be very time consuming and will keep the volunteers busy in 2019. If this process is not done thoroughly now, many objects in the collection will be a complete mystery to future generations. Without volunteers we could not undertake such big projects.

Our Country Hospital Museum is run by the Committee with support from our Members. We are a separate entity from the Heritage Village and therefore pay our own insurance and upkeep and maintain the collection. The village does building repairs, vacuums the floor and looks after the lawn and garden and provides power, for which we are grateful. Our money is raised from membership fees and donations and we look forward to your continued support.

With this newsletter, we are including all of the reports presented at our August Annual General Meeting. The reports paint a clear picture of our work on the collection during the past year and our financial status.

Thank you all and once again, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Lorraine Antonello
President

New World War 1 Commemorative Plaque

With admirable timing, Ashley's plaque which commemorates Rockhampton-trained nurses who served in World War 1 was mounted in the Gallery just before the centenary of Armistice Day. The plaque is a highlight of Ashley's efforts over four years to identify and document nurses who either trained in local hospitals or had other post- or pre-war links to the region.

Ashley's work on this projects has earned significant recognition for our Museum, especially within the State Library of Queensland. We will also be able to add a photograph of this plaque to the Australian War Memorial's new "Places of Pride" project. When fully set up in the much expanded Australian War Memorial, there will be a giant screen on which photos and stories of these memorials will scroll continuously.

Don't forget that you can read Ashley's World War 1 nurses stories at any time on our website at:

<http://www.achha.org.au/WW1-AANS-ver-3.php>



Women Doctors in country hospitals in the early 20th Century - Errol Payne

On a visit to the Australian Workers Heritage Centre in Barcaldine in September this year, I was struck by one of the displays which briefly told the story of Dr Mary de Garis who had worked at Muttaborra in the early 1900s and had an outstanding record of service to the medical profession over many years. This made me think that it was time to include a selection of brief stories about women doctors in these Newsletters, starting with brief stories about Dr Mary DeGaris and Dr Ruby Beveridge. Sources available on the web are key to these stories.

Mary Clementina de Garis (1881 – 1963)

Mary Clementina de Garis was born in Victoria on 16 December 1881. She completed her secondary education at Methodist Ladies College in Melbourne, where she was Dux in 1898. In 1900, she was just the 31st woman to enter the medicine degree at the University of Melbourne where she graduated with high honours. In 1907, she was only the second woman to be awarded the higher qualification of Doctor of Medicine.



The reason that we have this photograph is that doctors registered in New South Wales had to provide a photograph to the registration authorities. These are now available on the web.

However, as was common at the time, Mary encountered hostility and resentment from the male medical establishment. After completing her residency at the Melbourne Hospital, the only paid position she could find was as the Medical Officer at the Muttaborra

Merry Christmas

*The President and members
of the ACHHA*

Management Committee

*wish our members and volunteers a
very Happy Christmas and good
health and prosperity in 2019.*

*We look forward to your visits
to our Museum and your on-going
support with the task of further
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 our Association, application forms are available from Committee members, from the Contact us page of our website www.achha.org.au or by emailing 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 membership is \$20.00 for an individual and \$30.00 for a family. Life membership is \$200.00 for an individual and \$300.00 for a family.

Donations

Our Association (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, pay as above or by direct deposit to our Museum Account BSB 034-210 Account No. 23-3844. Identify yourself by your family name plus Don (for donation) and make sure we have an address for your receipt.

Hospital in Western Queensland. Clearly, this is why she is featured in the Barcaldine Workers Heritage Centre.

Mary arrived in Keppel Bay by ship on about May 31st 1907 and commenced work as Surgeon at the Muttaborra Hospital in early June, replacing the previous medical officer, Dr Adela Williams. She tendered her resignation with two month's notice on 1st June 1908. The Hospital Committee accepted her resignation with regret. She returned to Melbourne by ship in August 1908.

Later in 1908 and in 1909, she travelled to England and the United States for 14 months to enhance her professional development. On her return, she worked at the Queen Victoria Hospital and conducted private practice in central Melbourne. Her next move was to take up a resident surgeon position at the Tibooburra Hospital in the far north-west of New South Wales in 1911. Here Mary met a farmer named Colin Thompson to whom she became engaged in July 1914, two weeks before the outbreak of World War 1. When Colin volunteered and was sent overseas, Mary decided to offer her services too but was rejected since neither the Australian nor the British armies would accept female doctors – nurses were the only women allowed. One report states that the doctors were told to “go home and sit still”.

Undeterred, Mary and 13 other women doctors paid their own fares to Europe to volunteer for service. Sadly, Colin was killed at Pozieres on 4th August 1916. Mary then decided to join the Scottish Women's Hospitals organisation, and was assigned to the “America” unit operating in Ostrovo, Northern Macedonia. It was a 200-bed tent hospital, run on military lines with discipline, curfews and mail censoring, but operated entirely by women.

According to accounts of her life in the Queen's College (University of Melbourne) archives:

“Mary started work as Assistant Surgeon and then Chief Surgeon, but took over as Chief Medical Officer and Officer Commanding when fellow Australian Dr Agnes Bennet was struck down by malaria. Life in the hospital was harsh: winters were bitterly cold, and malaria and dysentery were endemic during the summer. The unit's surgical workload was immense: 1084 operations involving amputations, compound fractures, bullet and bomb wounds were performed between 1916 and 1919”.

The Serbian Government awarded her the medal of the Order of St Sava, 3rd class in September 1918. The British Government also awarded her two service medals. Her work went unrecognised by the Australian Government.

In September 1918, on her mother's death, Mary resigned and returned to Melbourne, arriving in February 1919. Three months later she was in Geelong as the town's first female medical practitioner. Here she pushed for women to be members of the hospital committee (achieved in 1925) and for the inclusion of a ma-

ternity ward in the hospital (achieved 1924). She was also responsible for antenatal and postnatal care being implemented at the hospital. When the new maternity ward was commissioned in 1931, Mary was appointed Head of the unit, a position which she held until 1941. At this time, she became an Honorary Consultant to the Maternity Ward until 1959. She conducted research into the causes of pain in labour and other obstetric matters and published 48 articles and letters in the British/Australian Medical Association journals as well as 5 books. It is reported that, at a time of high maternal and infant death rates, she had a record of 1000 deliveries by 1938 without the loss of a mother. She developed revolutionary treatment methods for toxæmia in pregnancy and was a strong advocate of better diets to improve the health of mothers and children.

Mary De Garis practised until 1960 and died in Geelong on 18th November 1963, aged 82.



Dr Mary de Garis in the Scottish Women's Hospital uniform, Ostrovo Camp ca.1917.

Sources

De Garis, Mary Clementina (1881–1963) by [Janet McCalman](http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/de-garis-mary-clementina-6340) Australian Dictionary of Biography <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/de-garis-mary-clementina-6340>

From the Archives of Queen's College, University of Melbourne <https://www.queens.unimelb.edu.au/archives-mary-clementina-de-garis-medical-trailblazer/>

Mary de Garis in Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_De_Garis

Ruth Lee, Australian Catholic University, “De Garis, Mary Clemenina, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/bioqs/WLE0014b.htm>

Ruby Scoular Beveridge (1896 – 1977)

Ruby Scoular Beveridge was born at Wickham, now part of Newcastle, in New South Wales in 1896. We do not know the story of her early life until we find her name in the 1914 Calendar of the University of Sydney. The record shows that she commenced studying for a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1913. She completed the Arts degree in 1916. From subsequent University of Sydney Calendars, we are able to track her progress over the following years as she completed her studies to qualify as a medical doctor. She graduated in about 1922. From the Sands Directories for Sydney, we know that she was a Resident Medical Officer at the Renwick Hospital for Infants, Summer Hill, Sydney in 1926. On 15th July 1930, she was appointed Junior Resident Medical Officer at Newcastle Hospital.



Dr Beveridge first appears as a resident of Rockhampton in a Morning Bulletin story in December 1934 when she left by train to spend a short holiday in Murwillumbah. She is listed as a medical practitioner at the Rockhampton Hospital in the electoral rolls of 1934, 1936, 1937 and 1943.

In this short story, we will try to provide a glimpse of her role in Rockhampton over about 12 years.

On a personal note, we are indebted to Yvonne Kelley for her role in instigating the collection of written stories and oral histories about Rockhampton health

professionals over many years. Through these, we have found three first-hand comments from trainee nurses about what it was like to work with Dr Beveridge.

In the story of her training days between 1932 and 1936, Alma Crudgington said *"One Resident Medical Officer was a lady, Dr Beveridge, and she was a real pet, very thin and lots of frizzy hair. We always loved working with her as she had a marvellous sense of humour"*.

Olga Evans (née Glazebrook) trained between 12th November 1940 and 17th January 1944. She had quite a bit to say about Dr Beveridge in her interview with Dr Tom Dewar. Talking to Tom about doctors, Olga said *"And then there was Dr Beveridge, who was a bit of a trick."* Dr Dewar asked "In what way?". Olga then elaborated.

"Well she was a lady doctor and she was short, and she had very fuzzy, wiry hair. She had a uniform like us – a white uniform and there were buttons that you took off shanks. Well she would have safety pins in most of hers, and she had a cigarette hanging out of her mouth and was always followed up by a lovely cocker spaniel dog."

Apparently, she also had a habit of writing amusing comments on the patients' history sheets.

Olga continued *"She was a very good doctor but I had to report once – I had three infected hair follicles in my armpit. She went to the races on Saturday and she said to me, 'Why did you leave it to report now?'. I said 'Well, I've been working all the week'. She said 'Well, I'll have to lance them, but I can't be too long.'*

She gave me an injection but I don't think she waited very long because they hurt when she lanced the three of them and I had to be admitted to the ward. And there was Dr Margolese (sp?) who was a German doctor and she came (on duty), and she said 'I know that Dr Beveridge has ordered this treatment, but I would like to change it. How do you feel about that?'

I said, 'well, you're the doctor taking care of me for this afternoon and the rest of the weekend.'"

Apparently, the alternative treatment was quite painful, but proved successful.

Olga continues *"Then we had Dr Alexander who was a blue-eyed, blonde young man straight from his College. He used to be so slow with his patients. I suppose he used to take really good care of them. We used to feed extra ones into Dr Beveridge and she didn't realise for a while. In the end, she got a bundle of them and said 'Here – take them into bloody luvvy, the answer to a nurse's prayer'"*.

Ethel Williams was a wartime trainee between 1941 and 1945. Ethel said *"Our Medical Superintendent, Dr J. C. Ross, an orthopaedic surgeon, was much in demand, and as he had only our RMO, Dr Ruby Beveridge, they had an extremely busy and tiring schedule. The hospital was used as a stopover for the sick Australian troops flown in from Port Moresby en route to the Army Hospi-*

tal in Brisbane”.

The only readily available information about Dr Beveridge's time in Rockhampton can be found in stories published in the Morning Bulletin. One immediately obvious conclusion is that Dr Beveridge was a very keen golfer. In the most extreme case, she was mentioned in 36 golf reports in 1936! She is also mentioned as a donor of golf trophies.

On the work front, Rockhampton Hospital had a very small medical staff, so Dr Beveridge appeared regularly in various courts to give evidence including treatment undertaken, certification of deaths and assessments of injuries. For example, in 1935, she gave evidence in a murder trial, a bodily harm trial and a claim for damages. In 1940, there was a coronial inquiry into a death under anaesthetic. In 1943, there was a claim for compensation by a widow and an inquest. In 1944, there was a very sad case of two American soldiers being on trial for unlawful killing after their truck collided with a girl on a bike on the corner of Canning and William Street killing her. They did not stop at the scene, which made the matter worse.

In 1937, Dr Beveridge spent several weeks at Proserpine recuperating from an illness. Dr Doris Skyring relieved for her during her absence. Doris Skyring is another very important woman doctor in Rockhampton, mainly in private practice, and a little of her story will be told in a later Newsletter.

In 1938 there were several reports that Ruby had resigned after 4.5 years at the hospital and she left for Sydney by train in early November. The Hospital Committee accepted her resignation with regret. There were no reports about her in the 1939 newspapers, but in 1940 the previous pattern of activities returned after a report in May which stated that she was staying at the Criterion.

In July 1941, she went to Sydney for a six-week holiday and her locum tenens was yet another woman doctor, Dr Joan Harris.

During a visit to the Hospital in July 1936 by the Governor-General Lord Gowrie and Lady Gowrie, Ruby was a member of the official party along with the Chairman of the Hospital Committee, Mr L. G. Haigh, the Hospital Secretary, Mr W. Thomson, the Medical Superintendent, Dr J. C. Ross, Dr R. Maltby, Matrons Green and Allan, Sister Wheeler and a group of distinguished citizens. She was also in the official party when the Queensland Governor visited in 1936.

On a lighter note, we know that Dr Beveridge and Dr Doris Skyring were called on in 1936 to judge a baby competition in Yeppoon.

It's apparent that Emu Park was a favoured escape from Rockhampton with the Hotel Riviera being particularly popular. Drs Beveridge and Skyring also spent at least one weekend at the Pine Beach Hotel in May 1940 when Dr Beveridge appears to have made her return to Rockhampton after her 1938 resignation.

Occasionally she travelled to Sydney for holidays.

There is no formal mention of her final departure from Rockhampton. However it is likely to have been in August 1946 when she travelled to Sydney by plane.

I have been unable to trace her career after leaving Rockhampton. However, electoral rolls show that she was living in Newcastle in 1949. In each of the rolls for 1953, 1958, 1963 and 1972 her address was c/o Winn, Figtree Point, Toronto which is on Lake Macquarie north of Newcastle.

Ruby died in New South Wales on 24 January 1977 aged 80.

More about women doctors

Lest there are lingering ideas that women doctors were a rarity in the early 20th Century, while researching the story of Dr de Garis, I came across the story of a funeral of a young woman doctor in Melbourne in 1910. She had been killed in a bicycle accident. The pall-bearers at the funeral were all female doctors: Drs Constance Ellis, Lilian Alexander, Edith Barrett, Janet Grieg, Helen Sexton, Jean Grieg, Mary de Garis and Mary Edelsten.

[1910 'Personal.', *Queensland Times (Ipswich, Qld. : 1909 - 1954)*, 24 December, p. 15. (DAILY), viewed 29 Nov 2018, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article112029841>]

Vale Olga Ethel Evans née Glazebrook

I regret to advise that one of our Life Members, Olga Ethel Evans née Glazebrook, passed away in Brisbane in late November. Olga was a long-time supporter of the development of our museum, having been a member of the Base Hospital Museum Committee prior to joining the ACHHA. Olga was 97.



She trained at the Rockhampton Hospital from 1940 - 1944 and then in midwifery at the Lady Chelmsford Hospital in Bundaberg during 1944-1945. We have an oral history interview between Olga and Dr Tom Dewar and will prepare a more detailed account of her life for a future Newsletter.



Commemoration of Armistice Day 2018

As we marked the commemoration of the end of the First World War on 11th November, I was interested to see the above photograph uploaded onto the Facebook page, "Rockhampton—remember when".

The photograph was published in The Queenslander on 30th November 1918 in a wrap-up of Armistice Day ceremonies around Queensland. The photo is used courtesy of the John Oxley Library. As it happens, Mr Albert Crudgington donated the photograph on the right to our collection. This is the same float getting ready to leave the showgrounds. Notice the boy who keeps his place right at the front just to the left of the driver. Elizabeth Amy Crudgington who trained at Hillcrest Hospital and graduated on 18 September 1922 is



second on the driver's left. There is an amazing crowd in attendance at the post office

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