



President's Report

Here we are at the end of another year and looking forward to our Christmas break. Thanks to our members and supporters for keeping us committed and focused on our core business which, as our statement at the bottom of each page of this newsletter says, is to be "dedicated to preserving the health service history of Central Queensland".

Critical to the success of our Museum is our so-called "Tuesday Group" - typically 5 to 7 people who attend the museum each Tuesday outside of school holiday time. These people have the job of making sure that the Museum and its displays are clean and tidy, as befitting a hospital environment. Del Kajewski, Diann Brooks and myself have been particularly active in this area this year.

However that's only part of the job since there are also other special projects to be done. This year, we have returned to cataloguing the objects in the museum. The present group of nurses have actually worked with many of the equipment items, whereas members of the volunteer groups which follow us will have little knowledge of them. Daphne and Dot have led the project this year and are pleased to report that cataloguing the Obstetrics and Midwifery room is complete.

A second big job is sorting through the books in our library collection which is obviously too big to fit in the space available. We have to identify books which have special meaning because they have been donated by present and previous members and supporters of our Association from those which have found their way into the collection almost by chance which will need to be archived or discarded. Janet has carried the load on this project this year.

Nancy also attends as required, usually with the help of a group of U3A volunteers, to give the operating theatre equipment and displays a major clean.

Errol is constantly in demand being asked to assist us with tasks such as label making and picture

hanging and researching items such as cleaning products plus giving general assistance wherever the computing is required.

We must not pretend that the Tuesday group is all about work however. We all enjoy coming together sharing a coffee, cake and a chat before commencing work on the various projects.

The other major project taking place away from the museum is the recording of oral histories which is mainly a job for Chris Putman although Joe Putman is also assisted with doctor interviews.

Of course our Treasurer, Kay, also completes the bookwork and reporting on our finances from home.

We finished the year by applying for funding to improve the museum. Del Kajewski and I have made progress with replacing the display mannikins. We have obtained quotes and have now applied for a grant from the Frenchville Sports Club Community Partnership Program. Errol has applied to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund grant to ask for help to replace our 2014 laptop which is now very old and slow.

With much sadness we farewelled Carol's beautiful daughter Ann. Our members were privileged to be part of the guard of honour outside the Cathedral. Our thoughts and prayers are with Carol and her family.

We have just signed a new three-year lease agreement with the Queensland Government through the Rockhampton Regional Council. We continue to enjoy a close working relationship with the staff and volunteers at the Village.

Have a wonderful holiday and a safe and Merry Christmas.

Del Leitgeb
President

THAT JOURNEY - A Story by Nancy Crapp

Nancy wrote this story for presentation to the University of the Third Age (U3A) in January 2003. As well as sharing the challenges she faced on this particular trip between Woorabinda and Rockhampton, we are reminded of a very different time when cars and trucks were less reliable than they are today and there was no instant communication via mobile phones. Enjoy the trip!

The road from Duaranga to Woorabinda wasn't always as it is now.

In the late 1950s, I spent six months working at Woorabinda Hospital whilst waiting for my friends to finish their training so we could go and do Midwifery. Woorabinda, at that time, had a population of 900 Aborigines and several white administrative staff. A nearby property, 'Foleyvale', was also farmed. Woorabinda was an inpatient hospital with a staff of three registered nurses and several Aboriginal girls who acted as nurses.

I was assigned to the Outpatient Department and was kept very busy the first few days as most of the population came to 'see' the new Sister. They had to decide on the reason for their visit after they arrived. I tried putting bandages on open wounds at first, but gave up when I discovered a trail of bandages leading to the front gate.

Two sick babies had to be transported by Baralaba Ambulance to Rockhampton and I was to accompany them. The receiving Sister in Outpatients was a little harassed on my arrival so I was asked to wait in the waiting room. The Ambulance man, a nice red haired young man, offered to stay with me and nurse one of the babies.

We created some interest among the other waiting public and it became too much for one elderly lady who leant over and said, "Aren't they beautiful! Are they yours?" How does she think you and I could produce these?" muttered my companion.

I was to return to Woorabinda by rail the following day and the powers that be decided I should not go empty handed. At 6 am, armed with a bag of nappies, four bottles of formula and two well babies from the children's ward, I headed for the '10 Up' to Duaranga.

The idea was that the truck from Foleyvale would call at Duaranga Station for me. Two Aboriginal girls were happy to nurse the babies on the journey and we arrived at 10 am. The station soon became deserted and I deposited myself and my belongings in the waiting room to await the arrival of the truck.

By midday, the milk supply dwindling and the soiled nappy pile increasing, I gathered up the babies, left everything else at the station and walked to the shop. The shopkeeper promised to get a message to me if one arrived and to keep an eye out for the truck in case they had forgotten me. Armed with a packet of milk arrowroot biscuits, I headed back to the station. I can't remember what I used for a bowl and spoon, but I mixed some biscuits with the remaining milk and fed it to the babies.

A very apologetic driver rolled into the station around 3 pm. He had been having trouble with the truck!! There were two other Aboriginal passengers and several tons of cement on board the truck. The two men gave up the cabin seat to me and the babies and they joined the cement at the back.

All went well until we were halfway up the range – there the truck refused to go any further. Around 10 pm, having shared the remaining biscuits with my companions, the babies were thankfully asleep, and we were delighted to see car lights approaching from Duaranga. The occupants of the car promised John they would get a message to Woorabinda as soon as we reached their property so we resigned ourselves to a much longer wait. Telephone communication was not always reliable but Woorabinda never did hear from those people.

Some short time later, car lights were approaching from the direction of Woorabinda. The Land Rover halted and it was the Deputy Superintendent from Woorabinda. He was on his way to Rockhampton but stopped when he recognised the truck. He bundled me and the babies into the Land Rover and drove us to the top of the range and walked back to assist the boys with the truck. I was exhausted and, with a baby on each arm, fell fast asleep.

I awoke suddenly with someone screaming at me. "This is what did it!" John was waving a large rock in my face, having used it to chock the wheels to get the truck to the top. I completed my journey in the Land Rover and, after handing over two sleeping babies, went thankfully to bed. Some years later, I met a former nursing colleague in Rockhampton. She had not completed her training, having married and gone to live on a property. "I thought it was you in the truck that night on the range," she said with a smile.

Nancy Crapp

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A special photograph to illustrate

We are very fortunate that a photograph in our Collection shows our present Management Committee member and convenor of our Operating Theatre Display, Sister Nancy Crapp at Woorabinda Hospital in 1957 actually nursing two Aboriginal Children.



More stories about Dr Norman Charles Talbot By Errol Payne

An earlier story about Dr Norman Charles Talbot in this Newsletter and on our website at <https://achha.org.au/Norman-Charles-Talbot-web.php> provided quite a lot of information about Dr Talbot's life and achievements. In particular, he was the Rockhampton doctor who opened Tannachy Hospital in 1922 and, with Dr Frank Couper Wooster, ran it as a great service to the people of Rockhampton and the region until Dr Wooster's death in 1950.

In the main story, I told how, in 1915, he enlisted as a lieutenant to serve in World War 1 in the Royal Army Medical Corps because the Australian Military told him that they already had enough medical practitioners. He served in France and was promoted to Captain during the war. He was awarded the Military Cross for Gallantry which was presented to him on 24th November 1919 by the Governor-General in the grounds of the Federal Government House.

Because he was serving for a British unit, I did not have any more war service information than this. However, I have recently found out a little more courtesy of this series of events.

Another Australian doctor who commenced service in England at the same time as Dr Talbot was Dr Archibald Simpson Anderson.

Dr Anderson's grandson is currently researching his British war diaries and found quite a few references to Dr Talbot. He emailed asking permission to use the photograph on our website. We subsequently shared other information. At the same time, I was having an email conversation with Dr Talbot's granddaughter.

While researching Dr Talbot again, I found this website which I hadn't known about previously: <https://www.scotch.vic.edu.au/ww1/honour/talbotNC.htm>. We already knew that Dr Talbot completed his secondary schooling at Scotch College in Melbourne. Since he was still too young to start his medicine degree at the University of Melbourne, he also taught at the College for a while. The website above is the one on which Scotch College recognises the achievements of its outstanding graduates.

Scotch College makes use of the information on our website and reproduces three of our photographs, with appropriate acknowledgements. However, they have undertaken more research on

his military record which I will now share.

After graduation, Dr Talbot worked at the Bairnsdale and Broken Hill Hospitals. After enlisting, he sailed for England in April 1915. He was one of a group of 100 Australian doctors, all single and under 40, who went to England to support the New Armies being raised by Lord Kitchener, England's Secretary for War. The group of doctors became known as "Kitchener's Hundred". Dr Talbot was initially posted to Winchester Hospital in England and then as Regimental Medical Officer to the 7th Battalion of the Border Regiment in France.

In March 1916, Dr Talbot was transferred to the 78th Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery, as a medical officer, and in April was promoted Captain. He served in France from June 1916 on the Somme and in Flanders until the end of the war.

In October 1917, he was gassed. He also earned a Military Cross, a British Award which recognises an act of exemplary gallantry in wartime. The citation for his Medal said that when his artillery brigade came under fire, he rushed forward to them and dressed and collected more than 20 wounded men. His British service ended in December 1918. He returned to Rockhampton soon after and set about the establishment of Tannachy Hospital which opened in 1922.

One of the photographs which was used to illustrate the earlier Dr Talbot story is this one, showing him wearing his British uniform. This one of the photos which is now shared on the Scotch College website.



Early matrons of Rockhampton Hospital

We are aware that the first trained nurse in Queensland, Miss Mary Jane Hood, graduated from the Rockhampton Hospital in 1886 and was appointed as Matron at a Hospital Committee meeting on 16 October 1886. However, the hospital on the Canning Street site had opened in mid-1868. Did the hospital have Matrons during the period 1868 – 1886?

According to the newspapers of the day, the answer is "yes". Initially, the Hospital Committee appeared to favour the appointment of a married couple to manage the hospital, with the wife as the Matron and the husband acting in roles such as wardsman or general handyman. At a meeting of the Hospital (management) Committee reported in the Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser in January 1867, the Mayor spoke in highly complimentary terms about the manner in which the Matron, Mrs Holland, and the Wardsman, Mr Holland, had performed their duties during the previous year. He noted that their duties had increased due to increased patient numbers in the hospital. He moved that their salaries be increased to £3 per week and this was carried. Of course, the real responsibility for the running of the hospital and the care of the patients fell to the Surgeon, Dr William Callaghan.

Unfortunately, there was a down hill path from there to another Hospital Committee meeting on 20 November 1869. The services of Mrs Holland had been lost due to severe ill health and Mr Holland had taken to drinking heavily. Apparently, he had progressed from occasional bouts of drinking to being heavily intoxicated and disruptive on frequent occasions. It was clear that he must go, but the Committee offered him the kinder option to resigning, rather than being dismissed.

The hospital did not have a dispenser (pharmacist) and Mr Holland had been making up some of the mixtures, but a very heavy time burden was now being placed on Dr Callaghan who had to do all of the dispensing as well as his normal duties.

The Committee agreed to advertise for a married couple to take up the roles of Matron and under-wardsman. There was already a more senior wardsman. On 04 December 1869, following interview, the Committee agreed to appoint Mr Richard McMulkin as under-wardsman and Mrs McCulkin as

Matron. The position of Dispenser was also advertised.

In the hospital reports over the next few years, both Mr and Mrs McMulkin were praised for their work. They retired in 1873 and the minutes of the AGM for that year "Noted with regret the retirement of the wardsman and the Matron and takes this opportunity to record approval for the satisfactory manner in which their duties have been discharged, and the order and cleanliness maintained by them".

In 1873, the McMulkins were replaced by Mr and Mrs Cliff. However, it is unknown how long this couple held the position because the next reference to the position of Matron was at the September 1883 meeting of the Hospital Committee when a communication was received from the then Matron, Mrs Fuller, resigning her position.

The Chairman of the Hospital Committee remarked that the lady had performed her duties very satisfactorily, and he regretted her resignation very much. He hoped, however, that they would get someone in her place that would fill the position as well as she had done. Committee member Mr Pattison thought they would be extremely lucky if they got a lady to fill the position as Mrs. Fuller had done. - The resignation was accepted with regret.

The position was advertised once again and Miss Clara A Berry was appointed from a field of several applicants. However, she held the position for only a few months, resigning her position on 18 April 1884. The Committee advertised once again and this time selected Miss Marjory Cameron from a field of twelve. Miss Cameron had extensive experience in Scotland and at the time of appointment was a nurse at the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. This appointment did not go well either. In early 1884, the Resident Surgeon, Dr Donald Stuart Macdonald dismissed Miss Cameron and her sister for insubordination because they refused to ask him for permission to leave the hospital. The Cameron sisters reacted furiously, submitting letters of appeal to the Hospital Committee.

Miss Marjory Cameron's letter to the Hospital Committee "*laid before the Committee the conduct of Dr. Macdonald in dismissing her without cause, and thus depriving her of a living. She was appointed on the 17th May last, and had always strictly performed her various duties, but having quarrelled with Mrs. Macdonald, who was really ruler of the institu-*

tion, everything possible was done to make things unpleasant for her, and it terminated on Tuesday, 21st March, in the dismissal of herself and her sister.

The only reason given was that letters had been received from members of Committee instructing him to dismiss her. She hoped an inquiry would be made so that justice might be given before her notice expired at the end of the month".

The letter which was discussed by the committee at its meeting on 10 April 1884 triggered a long and somewhat heated discussion, leading finally to a decision to appoint a sub-group of the Committee to hold an enquiry into the circumstances leading to the dismissal. The actual discussion was very interesting because of the insight it provided into the quite rigorous operation of the Hospital Committee in 1884. The discussions were in open session and were fully reported in the newspapers.

The sub-committee duly met and interviewed many witnesses. However, at the time of the first sub-committee meeting, Miss Cameron had not organized any witnesses. At a second meeting, she turned up with one witness who was actually the person who had written the letter of complaint, rather than Miss Cameron. The sub-committee resolving to advise the full Committee to reject the appeal and support the decision made by the Resident Surgeon to dismiss her.

Following the departure of Miss Cameron, the Committee made another attempt to solve the Matron issue by choosing Mrs Eleanor Hughes as the next matron from a field of eight on 25 April 1885. However, this didn't last long either and her resignation was received by the Committee on 16 October 1886. Actually, she had already left the hospital.

Finally, the hospital had reached the stage where Miss Mary Jane Hood had graduated as a hospital trained nurse and was already acting in the role of Matron following the departure of Mrs Hughes. On 16 October, 1886, the Hospital Committee resolved to appoint Mary Jane as Matron, a position which she held with great distinction until 1906. The decision was strongly supported by Dr Macdonald.

This ushered in an era of "proper", fully trained Matrons and the title persisted until 1975 when the description was changed to Nursing Superintendent and later Director of Nursing during Miss Norma West's long period in the role at Rockhampton Hospital.

Happy Christmas to all!

We can't possibly have a newsletter going out just before Christmas without some memorabilia from past Christmas Days at the Rockhampton Hospital. Christmas Day was a very big day in all hospitals at a time when the nurses had to live at the Quarters and patients were kept in hospital for much longer than they are now.

This first picture shows a group of nurses singing carols on Christmas Eve in 1960. In the front row we see Sister Editha Haynes who was a Tutor Sister at the Hospital. Note the size of her veil. Just visible at front left appears to be the Matron, Sister Margaret Graham.



Here is a very elaborate Old Mother Hubbard themed display in the Children's Ward which won the prize for the best display at Christmas 1950.



Fewer nurses ca. 1891 still made a sterling effort to decorate in the same wards.



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.

Association contact details:

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Elected Office Bearers

- President:** Del Leitgeb
- Vice-President:** Dorothy Broad
- Secretary:** Errol Payne
- Treasurer:** Kay Smith

- Archivist:** Yvonne Kelley

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- Janet Iffinger
- Matthew Johnson
- Del Kajewski
- Daphne Murdoch
- Christine Putman