



NEWSLETTER

MAY 2019

President's Report

Welcome to our May Newsletter. I hope your year has been good to you so far.

A group of our Museum volunteers has set out on the next major project to document the physical objects in our collection. Each object has to be identified, photographed, catalogued and described, including information about its origin and use. This information which is then recorded on our database will be extremely valuable as the years go by and younger volunteers and visitors need to understand what happened in the past and how particular objects were used for hospital treatments. This is a very big task as there are hundreds of objects to cover. However, the volunteers are very pleased that the first room, the mother and child room, has been completed and they have now moved on to the doctor's office.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers for their dedication and enthusiasm in the maintenance and upkeep of our collection. As well as the task of photographing and cataloguing all objects, the major project of cataloguing the large library collection is continuing.

On the 2nd of June, the Village Festival will be held. The Queensland Arts Group will be conducting a "Living History" project and they will present plays in a number of locations throughout the Village. One play with a medical and health theme will be presented in the Country Hospital Museum. I would encourage you to come along to the Village and watch the performance.

The International Nurses Day function which was held on the 10th May at the Rocky Sports Club is an opportunity for all nurses to enjoy the company of their nursing friends and catch up on old times. The theme this year was "Celebrating Nursing", with the guest speaker, James Jenkins, who is the Nursing Director for the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service.

Our committee has been working to renew our lease on our Country Hospital Museum building at the Heritage Village. To bring newer members of the association up-to-date, the collection was initiated in the mid-1970s by Yvonne Kelley who was a Nurse Educator at the Rockhampton Hospital. The first home for the developing collection was the Base Hospital Museum which was opened within the grounds of the Rockhampton Hospital in 1988. In 1998, the committee was advised that the building was required for redevelopment. By then, the Rockhampton Heritage Village had just opened and the Committee negotiated use of the Lakes Creek

Cottage which is where the collection was housed until 2009. Our new building was opened in November of that year and our first 10-year lease has expired. Council has agreed to sign a new 5-year agreement.

Norma West played a central role in the development of the museum and we have organised a plaque to commemorate her service both to the nursing profession and to our museum. We will have the new display in place in time to include a photograph in the next Newsletter.

We do our best to have volunteers present at the Museum on market days. If you have queries or would just like to chat about the displays, please visit us.

Lorraine Antonello
President

World War One Nurses Plaque in Places of Pride

In our December 2018 Newsletter, we displayed a photograph of a plaque which Ashley Reid has prepared as the culmination of her project to research and honour World War One nurses who trained in Rockhampton Hospitals. Ashley has identified another way in which these nurses can be commemorated in a very significant way. As part of a major renewal of the Australian War Memorial, there will be a special wall and large screen display featuring commemorative memorials from all over Australia. There is an accompanying Places of Pride website to collect the information about the memorials. Once our memorial plaque was in place, Ashley was keen to take the commemoration of these Rockhampton-trained nurses to this higher level by having their plaque featured in the Places of Pride display. We have made the move to ensure that our plaque is part of the display when it is set up. We have loaded three photographs to show the plaque in the Museum and Ashley has prepared text to accompany the display. We hope that you will go to the website below to see our entry in the Places of Pride. Once you are on the page, scroll down past the basic information describing the type of memorial and its location so that you will see the three photographs. On a computer, click your mouse over each of the three photos to expand it, and click on the "Read Story" button. On a smartphone or iPad, just tap each photo to see it at a larger size and then close it before moving to the next one.

<https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au/memorials/198401>

**Dr Doris Una Skyring
(Errol Payne)**

In our previous newsletter, I briefly wrote about two women doctors who served our communities during the earlier part of the 20th Century. This story is about the career of Dr Doris Una Skyring, a woman doctor who dedicated her life to the service of the local Central Queensland community. The story is based on information publicly available through sources such as Trove. The research has not delved into Dr Skyring’s private or family life. When a family doctor is providing excellent treatment to their patients, you don’t read about it in the newspapers, so there is not much to write about. However, as a long-time resident of Rockhampton, I have heard elderly relatives speak in glowing terms about Dr Skyring’s treatment of them, and she is occasionally mentioned with great respect on a Facebook site dedicated to the story of Rockhampton. Recent examples are: “My mother found her to be a wonderful, caring doctor”, “My mother did too” and “I remember going to Dr Skyring – always so kind”.

Dr Skyring was born in Gladstone on 20th March 1898. Her father, Mr T. D. Skyring, was the manager of a family-owned sawmill at Toolooa.¹ Eventually, the Gladstone sawmill was dismantled and re-erected near Rockhampton where the family then lived at 9 Corberry Street. Many Rockhampton residents will know 9 Corberry Street from its later incarnation as a major centre for various community health functions. While the family appeared to be fairly well-off financially, their lives were touched by sad events. Doris had a slightly older sister, Mildred, who died on 5th May 1915. Her only brother, Lowes, enlisted in World War One but was taken prisoner in Turkey and died from illness on 9th August 1918. She was effectively an only child for most of her life.

Doris Skyring completed her early education in Gladstone before attending the Rockhampton Girls Grammar School. She then studied for a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Queensland which she completed in 1928. She lived in the University’s Women’s College. We are fortunate to have this photograph of her with her Principal and fellow students in 1927. She is at the far left of the front row. The photograph is from the Fryer Collection at the University of Queensland.



Board of St John’s Hospital 1993



Board of Saint John’s Hospital, Rockhampton, 1993

Back: Dr Les Wright, Dr Geoff Fletcher, Dr Malcolm Whaites, Dr Owen Webster, Dr Hilary Mercer, Dr John De Vries, Dr Harley Wilson; Seated: Dr Jim Forbes, Ms Karen Roach, Dr Tom Dewar, Mr Peter Freeleagus, Dr Chris Johnson-Nurse

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. Payments made now will be credited against 2019-2020 membership.

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.

Following her science degree, she went to Sydney University in 1930 where she undertook four years of study to complete her medicine degree. Medicine courses were not yet available at The University of Queensland. While studying medicine between 1930 and 1934, Doris Skyring lived in The Women's College at the University of Sydney.² There are regular newspaper reports of her returning to Rockhampton to visit her parents during the University vacations.

A Morning Bulletin article on Trove reports that she gained a credit pass in the final year of her medicine degree, and graduated in January 1935, one of five women doctors graduating together.³ All five were appointed as junior medical officers at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney.

After completing the requirements for registration, Dr Skyring returned to Rockhampton where she commenced a long and distinguished career. However, it was several years before she settled in private practice.

Probably her first Rockhampton appointment was as Resident Medical Officer at the Rockhampton Hospital following the resignation of another woman doctor, Dr Ruth Corin. This was reported in the Hospital Committee minutes on 27th February 1936.⁴ Her resignation from this position was reported 23rd April 1936.⁵ The next news we have is that she was appointed Acting Medical Officer at Yeppoon Hospital while the Medical Officer, Dr Beaman, took annual leave. This was reported on 7th October 1936. On 7th January 1937, Doris and her parents left by train for Sydney where they planned to spend about two months.⁶

In early 1938, Doris was standing in for Dr T. W. Miles of the Mount Morgan Hospital while he took leave to attend to the death of his mother in Sydney.⁷ On 1st April 1938, the Morning Bulletin reported that Doris had left for Sydney where she was planning to take a postgraduate course at Sydney University, after which she would take up an appointment at the Randwick Hospital for Infants on 1st May.⁸ On 4th October, it was reported that she had returned to Rockhampton after six months at the Randwick Hospital.⁹

She may have returned to Rockhampton Hospital because court records show that she signed a death certificate for a young girl who had died from burns in the Hospital on 22nd October 1938.¹⁰

During September and the first half of October 1938, Dr Ruby Beveridge, a doctor discussed in the previous newsletter, suffered from an extended illness. While she was recuperating for a period of several weeks, Dr Skyring stood in for her at the Rockhampton Hospital until she returned to work on 18th October 1938.¹¹

Doris obviously enjoyed playing golf. Dr Ruby Beveridge also played, as did other Rockhampton Hospital doctors such as the Medical Superintendent, Dr Leeds. In keeping with a pattern that developed throughout her time in Rockhampton, Dr Skyring had donated a trophy for a golf competition. Another pattern that

developed early in her career was that of being a judge at all sorts of events. In 1936, she joined with Dr Beveridge and Sr G. Green and Nurse G. Martin of the Yeppoon Hospital to judge the Yeppoon Baby Show. Emu Park seemed to be the preferred location for weekends away in the 1930s.

The start of World War Two marked a major transition for Dr Skyring, as it no doubt did for many others. Dr Trevor Parry was born in Rockhampton in about 1903. After completing his medical training, he had practiced in Rockhampton for eleven years. Dr Parry was heavily involved in the local 11th Field Ambulance. On 28th August 1936, then Major Parry took over command of the 11th Field Ambulance from Colonel N. C. Talbot, a World War One veteran.¹² On 30th October 1939, it was reported that Dr T. A. Parry had decided to enlist as a Major in the Second Third Field Ambulance in the 2nd A.I.F. and hence leave Rockhampton for war service. Dr Skyring was to take over his practice.¹³

On Wednesday, 1st November 1939, Dr Skyring gave a party for Dr and Mrs Parry who left by car for Brisbane on 2nd November.¹⁴ Dr Skyring's obituary stated that she had later purchased Dr Parry's practice.

It seems that this is the point at which Dr Skyring was able to put a series of short-term appointments behind her and settle down with her own private practice for the next 16 or so years. Of course, her short-term appointments in the hospitals had greatly enhanced her experience since her graduation in 1935. It appears that Dr Skyring, initially as a locum tenens, worked out of Dr Parry's rooms in an impressive two-storey building which he owned (and may have lived in) on the corner of Denison and Fitzroy Street opposite the baby clinic. At some stage, certainly in the 1950s, Dr Kearns, had his dental practice on the top floor of this building. Dr Parry did not return to Rockhampton after the war and sold this building in September 1945. It appears that Dr Skyring then shared East Street rooms with Dr Talbot for a time.

Her father, Mr T. D. Skyring, died in 1940.

By 1939, we see reports of Dr Skyring's involvement with the Red Cross. For example, the Morning Bulletin of 8th November 1939 reported that she would commence lectures in home nursing and practical work in the Red Cross Rooms in William Street at 7:30.¹⁵ The Morning Bulletin also reported on 30th September 1939 that she was secretary of the Red Cross and was involved in organising fund-raising events such as bridge parties.¹⁶ The Skyring's Corberry Street residence and large garden was an ideal venue for fund-raising events such as Red Cross garden parties. One such event in July 1940 attracted 220 attendees.

Dr Skyring also assumed Dr Parry's role as Medical Officer of Health for the Fitzroy Shire. In this role, there are reports of her holding immunisation clinics in rural areas.¹⁷ Medical Officers of Health also had the responsibility of monitoring and reporting cases of

diseases such as diphtheria in their shires.

Dr Skyring was a supporter of the Salvation Army's Bethesda Home, regularly opening their fundraising fetes. By 1943 she was the Honorary Medical Officer.

With her busy schedule, Dr Skyring didn't seem to have many holidays, but when she did, she typically took two weeks off to travel to Lindeman and other island resorts.

As time went on, she seemed to pick up additional community tasks to fit in with her private practice. Examples mentioned in the Morning Bulletin include Patroness of the North Rockhampton Bowls Club (1948), judge at St Lukes Fancy Dress Ball and judge at the Hall State School Fancy Dress Ball, both in 1948. In 1949, she joined the Rockhampton and District Historical Society.

In August 1949, Doris and her mother left their Corberry Street home and moved into their new brick home at 98 Victoria Parade. Their Corberry Street home was purchased by the Department of Health and Home Affairs for the purpose of setting up a hospital for premature and sickly babies as well as providing accommodation for their mothers.¹⁸ The Maternal and Child Welfare Home in Corberry Street opened on 21st September 1952. A sum of £20,000 had been spent to convert the home for its new purpose.

In 1950, Doris was Vice-President of the Rockhampton Girls Grammar School Old Girls Association, although she held this position for only a short time. However, she was acknowledged for donating a collection of important books to the school library.

In keeping with her long-term support, for the Red Cross this Morning Bulletin photograph shows her watching the dancing at a Red Cross Ball held at the Palais Royale on 17th June 1950.



Dr Doris Skyring (Right) watching the dancing at the Red Cross Ball in 1950, accompanied by Mr and Mrs F. A. Horner.

Her mother died on 22nd September 1951. The first half of the 1950s saw her continue her many activities. In 1951, she was President of the Golf Associates, a position which she held until 1953. It must also be said that she was often a donor to these organisations as well as working for them.

In both 1953 and 1954, she wrote articles containing

advice directed at parents during Health Week. In 1953, she contributed two articles to The Morning Bulletin, the first entitled "For children: Seven stages in health and hygiene"²⁰ and "Childhood to adolescence".²¹ In 1954, she wrote about "Home accidents care needed". In 1954 she also contributed an article on "Health in rural areas".²³

Health week appears to have been used as a major educational opportunity. The 1954 theme was "Advancing Australia's Health". In one activity, the three Council Medical Officers of Health (Rockhampton City, Dr Talbot, Livingstone, Dr Leaske, and Fitzroy, Dr Skyring) along with the Mayor, Mr Pilbeam, all made broadcasts over radio 4RK.²⁴

Doris was always heavily involved in Anglican Church fundraising activities. Debutante Balls were fashionable in the 1950s and she provided the garden of her home on the river for a Diocesan Debutante Tea Party in May 1954. This photograph kindly, provided by Mrs Evelyn Payne (née Green), shows the front entrance to No. 98 with the roses in bloom in about 1954. It's a shame there was no colour in the early 1950s. Evelyn was a patient of Dr Skyring for many years. Her mother, also a patient first took her to Dr Skyring when she about 5 years old, and the last visit was when she was about 17.



Miss Evelyn Green (married name Payne) admiring the roses and other flowers in front of Dr Doris Skyring's residence and surgery at 98 Victoria Parade, Rockhampton in about 1954.

The year 1955 provided the first indication of a change of lifestyle when Doris decided to undertake a significant overseas holiday, travelling to the UK and parts of the United States and continental Europe. In August, she wrote a letter to a Rockhampton friend, describing what she had seen and experienced during the holiday. The letter, which is a beautifully written account of her travels, was published in The Morning Bulletin.²⁵

Because Trove only covers The Morning Bulletin up to the end of 1954, we do not have so much detail of Dr Skyring's activities from 1955 to 1957. However, the Central Queensland Herald has been indexed to the end of 1956 and we read that she was taking an active role in raising funds for the Bush Children's Health Scheme and the home which was being built at Yeppoon.²⁶ She also attended the Anglican Debutante Ball in May 1956.

Dr Skyring died in the Mater Misericordiae Hospital in Rockhampton 16th June 1957 at just 59 years of age. Her death was caused by a combination of high blood pressure, congestive cardiac failure and coronary occlusion. Even after her death, she continued her good work. She left a bequest to The University of Queensland Women's College where she resided during her science degree. This was used to establish the Doris Una Skyring Memorial Scholarship to enable and encourage young medical students.

She also made a scholarship bequest to the Women's College at the University of Sydney where she resided while studying medicine from 1930 - 1934. This brings to light another Rockhampton connection. Dorothy Muriel Voss, daughter of Dr Francis Henry Vivian Voss, lived at this college from 1909 until 1914 while studying medicine. Harriette Martha Exton was a fellow medical student at the college from 1908 until 1914. These two shared the position of Senior Student in 1914. Harriette Martha Exton married Paul Ernest Voss, son of Dr Francis Henry Vivian Voss, on 8th July 1919. Scholarship bequests to the University of Sydney Women's College are grouped under the banner of the Voss Bequest Society which honours the legacy of these sisters-in-law who demonstrate once again that quite a number of Australian women were completing medical degrees from the beginning of the 20th Century.²⁷

Sources:

1. Paulette Flint, The Observer, 26 June 2017 <https://www.pressreader.com/>
2. <https://www.thewomenscollege.com.au/giving/bequests/>
3. 1935 'DR. DORIS SKYRING', Morning Bulletin, 12 Mar, p. 5., <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55542477>
4. 1936 'HOSPITAL SUPPLIES', The Central Queensland Herald, 27 Feb, p. 15. , <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70349281>
5. 1936 'HOSPITALS BOARD MEETING', The Central Queensland Herald (Rockhampton, Qld. : 1930 - 1956), 23 April, p. 50. , viewed 13 Nov 2018, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70351016>
6. 1937 'PERSONAL', Morning Bulletin, 8 Jan, p. 11. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55578543>
7. 1938 'PERSONAL', Morning Bulletin, 3 Feb, p. 4. , <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55949746>
8. 1938 ", Morning Bulletin, 1 Apr, p. 11, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55966959>
9. 1938 'PERSONAL', Morning Bulletin, 4 Oct, p. 5. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55994688>
10. 1938 'DEATH OF GIRL FROM BURNS', Morning Bulletin, 9 Nov, p. 5., <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article56000154>
11. 1937 'PERSONAL', Morning Bulletin, 18 Oct, p. 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55005540>
12. 1936 'CHANGE OF COMMAND IN 11TH FIELD AMBULANCE.', Morning Bulletin, 29 Aug, p. 11, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article54972519>
13. 1938 'PERSONAL', Morning Bulletin, 3 Feb, p. 4. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55949746>
14. 954), 12 March, p. 5. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55542477>
15. 1939 'RED CROSS SOCIETY.', Morning Bulletin, 8 Nov, p. 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article56052130>
16. 1939 'RED CROSS BRIDGE PARTY.', Morning Bulletin, 13 Sep, p. 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article56045152>
17. 1954 'KALAPA', Morning Bulletin, 9 Nov, p. 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article57344589>
18. 1949 'Social Chat', Morning Bulletin, 6 Aug, p. 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article56913095>
19. 1950 'WATCHING THE DANCERS', Morning Bulletin, 19 Jun, p. 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article56947162>
20. 1953 'FOR CHILDREN: "SEVEN STAGES" IN HEALTH AND HYGIENE', Morning Bulletin, 24 Oct, p. 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article57279230>
21. 1953 'CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE', Morning Bulletin, 28 Oct p. 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article57279703>
22. 1954 'HOME ACCIDENTS CARE NEEDED', Morning Bulletin, 28 Oct, p. 11, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article57330520>
23. 1954 'HOME ACCIDENTS CARE NEEDED', Morning Bulletin, 28 Oct, p. 11, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article57330520>
24. 1954 'HEALTH AND RURAL AREAS', Morning Bulletin, 23 Oct, p. 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article57330082>
25. 1955 'Dr Skyring's Impressions Of Overseas Holiday', The Central Queensland Herald, 25 Aug, p. 29, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article79253584>
26. 1956 'SOON LAUNCH BUSH CHILDREN'S HOME APPEAL', The Central Queensland Herald, 2 Aug, p. 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article79267010>
27. Women's College within the University of Sydney Bequests <https://www.thewomenscollege.com.au/giving/bequests/>



This image shows the Rockhampton Hospital Staff in 1951. There are two versions of the photograph, both with names, but with some slight differences. The names below are based on these two sets combined with other information about hospital staff in 1951. Front Row: Drs Anthony Loscher, Vic McGregor-Lowndes, Frank Bowley, John Meares, John Fullagar (Med. Super.), Matron Margret Fraser, Srs M. Collins (Dep. Matron), Margaret Graham (Tutor Sister), Mr Cecil Pritchard (Hospital Board Secretary); 2nd Row: Mr A. Robertson (Radiographer), Miss F. Vines (Housekeeper), Miss L. Gilmour (Physiotherapist), Srs Ivy Baker, M. Knowles, C. Jefferies, M. Southgate, G. James, L. Ramsay, Grace Elliott, M. Cheetham, Mr North Dean (Pharmacist); 3rd Row: Srs Peg Stevenson, Ivy Atherton, Billie Wells, Nurses I. Curran, L. Lovaas, Dorothy Ross, Sr L. Gwynne, Nurses K. Griffin, A. Golik, Srs A. Smith, E. Haynes; 4th Row: Mary Dearness, Barbara Lees, Peggy Hounsham, Clarice Templeton, Pam Johnson, Margot Shepherd, Rae Farmer, Joan Toft, May Britt, N. Bolton, Dorothy George, Molly McGrath, Joyce Dean, Betty Cagney; 5th Row: Noreen O'Flynn, Beth Sander, Clarice Wieting, Ruth Ireland, Gwenda Torenbeck, Daphne Torenbeck, Joy Robins, Jill Grayson, May Anderson, Hetty Hudson, Clare Morrison, Gladys Herbert, Margaret Geary; 6th Row: Clarice Denny, D. Hill, Margaret Leslie, M. Brown, Joan Moriarty, Marion Coombes, Margaret Neale, Hope Nelson, Dawn Hewitt, Audrey O'Shea, Elaine Higgs; Seventh Row: Edgar Hallett, Arthur Evans, Fred Hender, J. Page, G. Gorman, Fay Foote, M. Griffith, Eileen Seeney, Mary Thomasson, Maureen Curtis, Alma Wooler, Colleen Smith.

Association contact details:
Australian Country Hospital Heritage Association Inc.
PO Box 4035 Rockhampton Qld 4700
[Incorporation Number: IA20217]

Elected Office Bearers
President: Lorraine Antonello
Vice-President: Christine Putman
Secretary: Errol Payne
Treasurer: Kay Smith

Archivist: Yvonne Kelley

Committee Members
 Dorothy Broad
 Nancy Crapp
 Matthew Johnson
 Del Leitgeb
 Daphne Murdoch