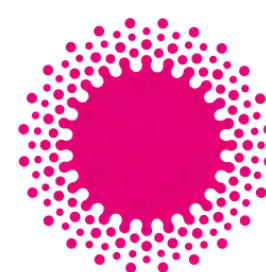


# The Royal Women's Hospital

## Biographical Compendium



Committee of Management and Secretary



the women's  
the royal women's hospital

# Biographical Compendium

## A

Adam, George Rothwell Wilson (1853 - 1925), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician  
Allan, Robert Marshall (1886 - 1946), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Allen, Sydney Herbert (1876 - ), Surgeon  
Anderson, Bruce Hunter (1912 - 1972), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Anderson, Eugene Wilton (1859 - 1934), Medical Practitioner  
Auxiliaries

## B

Balls-Headley, Walter (1842 - 1918), Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician  
Barrie, Jean Unita (1923 - ), Blood Serologist and Medical Scientist  
Bettinger, Hans Frederick (1897 - 1975), Pathologist  
Black, Joseph ( - 1879), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician  
Board of Management (1856 - 1995)  
Brett, Percy Gore (1879 - 1968), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Burke, Stephen Joseph (1835 - 1898), Medical practitioner, Obstetrician and Gynaecologist  
Butler, Hildred Mary ( - 1975), Bacteriologist  
Butler, Hildred Mary (1906 - 1975), Bacteriologist and Medical Scientist

## C

Chambers, Roy William (1890 - 1944), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Cherry, Margaretta (Meta) (1822 - 1907), Nurse  
Crameri, Jean Frances ("Cram") (1909 - ), Midwife  
Cunningham, Charles (1890 - 1953), Anaesthetist and Medical Practitioner  
Cuscaden, George (1858 - 1933), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician  
Cuscaden, William George Henry (1887 - 1956), Chairman, Honorary Medical Staff, Gynaecologist and Medical practitioner

## D

D'Ebro, Blanche Mary (nee Tracy) (1859 - 1943), Board of Management member  
Dewar, Jessie Hill (1827 - 1878), Head Nurse Midwifery Department  
Downie, Thomas Taylor (1861 - 1939), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Drevermann, Ernest Barclay (1913 - ), Medical Practitioner and Resuscitator

## F

Fetherston, Gerald Henry (c. 1829 - 1901), Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician  
Fetherston, Richard Herbert (1864 - 1943), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Forster, Frank Menzies Cameron (1923 - 1995), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner, Obstetrician and Professorial Staff  
Fowler, Robert (1888 - 1965), Gynaecologist and Medical Practitioner

## G

Gentlemen's Committee (1856 - )  
Gilbee, Esther Elizabeth (c. 1805 - 1875), Matron  
Gillbee, Sarah Ann (1803 - 1882), Midwife  
Godfrey, Graham George (c. 1905 - 1960), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Gourlay, Victoria Amelia (1863-1915), Head Nurse Midwifery Department  
Green, Hubert Sydney (1892 - 1950), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## H

Harley, Alfred William ( - 1966), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Hayes, William Ivon (1893 - ), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Hill, Arthur Machen "Bung" (1903 - 1979)  
Honorary Anaesthetist  
Honorary Physicians  
Hooper, John William Dunbar (1860 - 1934), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician  
Horne, George (1860 - 1927), Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician  
Howlett, Mary Livingstone (1841- 1922), Pupil Nurse, Qualified Nurse/Ladies Monthly Nurse/Sick Nurse

## J

Jona, Judah Leon (1886 - 1964), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## L

Lawson, Betty Constance (1915 - 2006), Matron and Midwife  
Lemmon, William Morton (1899 - 1961), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

Ley, Gordon David (1914 - c. 1970), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Lloyd, Henry Cairns (1865 - 1943), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## M

Macdonald, Colin Ferguson (1895 - 1969), Medical Practitioner and Radiologist  
Mackay, Edward Alan (1863 - 1944), Medical Practitioner and Paediatric Surgeon  
Martin, Lawrence Joseph (1826 - 1879), Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician  
Matson, Thelma Jean (1928 - 1990)  
Maund, John (1823 - 1858), Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician  
McArthur, Arthur Norman (1869 - 1950), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician  
Meyer, Felix Henry (1858 - 1937), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician  
Midwifery Pupil Nurses (1859-1880)  
Mollison, Crawford Henry (1863 - 1949), Medical practitioner and Pathologist  
Moore, William Harold James (1893 - 1975), Medical Practitioner and Urologist  
Morrison, Reginald Herbert ( - 1941), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Morton, Francis William Watson (1857 - 1930), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## N

Natrass, John Hodgson (1870 - 1943), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician  
Nyulasy, Francis Armand (1862 - 1934), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## O

O'Sullivan, Michael Ulick ( - c. 1917), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician  
Officer, David Mc Master (1868 - 1916), Medical practitioner and Paediatric Surgeon  
Oliver, Catherine Mary (c. 1829 - 1875), Matron

## P

Perry, Frances ("Fanny") (1814 - 1892), Board of Management member  
Peters, Margaret (1936 - ), Pupil Midwife, Staff Midwife, Supervisor, Deputy Director of Nursing  
Place, Jessica (1909 - 1994), Nurse and Nurse Educator  
Prendergast, James Joseph (1858 - 1917), Medical Practitioner  
Professorial Unit

## R

Rawlings, William Joseph (1903 - ), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Rawson, Marianne (1855 - 1934), Nurse  
Robertson, Allen William David (c. 1866 - 1954), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner, Obstetrician, Pharmacist and Surgeon  
Rowan, Thomas (1852 - 1935), Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician  
The Royal Women's Hospital, founders

## S

Saltau, William Dixon (1894 - 1970), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Sarah Barfoot  
- see Gillbee, Sarah Ann (1803 - 1882), Midwife  
Sarah Griffiths  
- see Gillbee, Sarah Ann (1803 - 1882), Midwife  
Servants  
Sexton, Hannah Mary Helen (1861 - 1950), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician  
Sherwin, John Arthur Hopkins (1881 - 1961), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Simpson, George (1899 - 1960), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Spiers, Norman Lennox (1886 - 1960), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Sutherland, Bertram Milne (1877 - 1951), Anaesthetist, Board of Management member, Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner, Obstetrician and Surgeon  
Sutherland, Roderick Tate (1866 - 1945), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician  
Sutton, Charles Stanford (1863 - 1950), Medical practitioner

## T

Tracy, Richard Thomas (1826 - 1874), Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician  
True, Frank Elliot Trenoweth (1892 - 1965), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Turnbull, William Mackie (c. 1855 - 1867), Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## W

Wawn, Royle Newton (1880 - 1966), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
White, Edward Rowden (c. 1884 - 1958), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Wilson, Arthur Mitchell (1888 - 1947), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician  
Worcester, Reginald George (1903 - 1972), Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

# Adam, George Rothwell Wilson (1853 - 1925)



M.D. (Melb.), C.M. (Edin.)  
*Born* 1853  
Leeds, Yorkshire, England  
*Died* 1925  
*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

**ROTHWELL ADAM**  
(1888 - 1913)

George Rothwell Wilson Adam, who succeeded Balls Headley as lecturer in obstetrics and diseases of women, held this important academic post for 14 years, being followed by Felix Meyer. Adam was born in Leeds, Yorkshire in 1853, the son of Rev. George Wilson Adam. The family migrated to New South Wales when Rothwell was very young, and after a period of ten years, moved to Victoria. Educated at the Scotch College, Melbourne, where Dr. Alexander Morrison - one of the famous Aberdonian family of Schoolmasters - was the principal, Rothwell, on leaving Scotch, took up farming. But the life on the land did not prove attractive, and before reaching the age of twenty, he left Australia to study medicine at Edinburgh. Here he graduated in 1877 and his first resident appointment was that of house physician at the Edinburgh Maternity Hospital under Sir Halliday Croom and Milne Murray. In 1878 and 1879 he was house physician and surgeon at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. In 1880 he returned to Melbourne and commenced practice in East Melbourne, being appointed assistant surgeon at the Alfred Hospital shortly after his arrival. In the early days of his practice, full use was made of the experience gained in Scotland and Adam sought every opportunity to render himself especially proficient in obstetrics and gynaecology. In 1888 he was elected an honorary obstetrician to the Women's Hospital and worked assiduously and with characteristic energy in the obstetric department until appointed honorary gynaecological surgeon in 1895. His influence on the hospital was profound, and during the 36 years until his retirement from the staff in 1913, he was responsible for much of its progress. As a teacher his success was noteworthy. He was held in affection by students, patients and colleagues, and his lectures have been described as patterns of excellence, logical, well-elaborated and admirably delivered. The manner in which he applied the principles of correct ethical behaviour, both in his professional and private life, had a considerable influence on all those, undergraduates and graduates alike, with whom he came in contact.

In the days before the Victorian Branch of the British Medical Association was merged with the Medical Society of Victoria, Adam was President of the latter body. He was chosen as President of the section of obstetrics and gynaecology at the Australasian Medical Congress in Sydney in 1911 and was the first President of the Melbourne Gynaecological and Obstetrical Society, a body which dissolved on the formation of the Royal College. In 1922 he was invited to deliver the Listerian Oration of the South Australian Branch of the B.M.A. and chose as his subject the influence of Listerism on obstetrics. The oration was a masterly contribution to the obstetrical teaching of the day and bears the stamp of a skilled and convincing writer; it concludes with a Wordsworth couplet -  
"Come forth into the light of things  
Let Nature be your teacher".

Adam was one of the first of the honorary staff of the Women's to emphasise the "aseptic conscience". The Listerian orators are presented with a medal, and Rothwell Adam valued his very highly.

Adam was a notable instance of a man who, having embarked on an occupation which proves uncongenial, has the energy and determination to follow out a new course of a totally different kind, eventually to attain a well earned position of eminence.

As Chairman of the Hospital staff he made effective use of his term of office; his task was not at all times easy, but his unflinching courtesy, his desire to be fair to all, his patience and understanding won from the staff unqualified respect and regard. He was not given to demonstration; he kept his feelings well in hand and was never known to have lost his temper or to have made an ungenerous criticism of a member of his profession.

He had a dry humour of his own and could both tell and enjoy a good story. As an examiner he tempered justice with mercy and being a shrewd appraiser of values, was quick to sum up a candidate's knowledge.

Rothwell Adam, who died in 1925, was for many years one of Australia's leading obstetricians and gynaecologists and he had as a rich reward the confidence and esteem of all who knew him.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives



# Allan, Robert Marshall (1886 - 1946)



M.D., F.R.C.S. (Edin.), F.R.A.C.S., F.A.C.S. (Hon.), F.R.C.O.G.

*Born* 1886  
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

*Died* 29 July 1946

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

ROBERT MARSHALL ALLAN  
(1928 - 1946)

Robert Marshall Allan, son of James Allan from Stirling, Scotland, was born in 1886 at Brisbane. He received his early education at the Brisbane Grammar School and the Scots College, Sydney, later proceeding to Scotland to study medicine, and graduating M.B., Ch.B., with honours, in 1910 at the University of Edinburgh.

An interest in obstetrics and gynaecology was already aroused and, following graduation, he worked for six months at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, obtaining the Licentiate in Midwifery. He had previously been awarded the McCosh Travelling Bursary of the University of Edinburgh, and now spent one year on the Continent at the leading obstetrical and gynaecological clinics of Paris, Berlin, Munich and Vienna. He returned to the Rotunda and, in November, 1911, became Assistant Master (under Dr. Henry Jellett); holding this position for three years until the outbreak of the first world war. In 1914, he was awarded the M.D., Edinburgh, for a thesis on the action of pituitary extract in labour.

From 1914 until 1919 Allan was on active service with the Royal Army Medical Corps, and later with the Australian Imperial Force. He served in France, Mesopotamia and in the successful campaign led by Lieutenant-General Sir Stanley Maude for the relief of Kut-el-Amara, on the Tigris. He was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Military Cross.

After the Armistice he obtained study leave and passed the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, taking gynaecology as a special subject.

In 1919, Marshall Allan returned to Australia to commence private practice as a specialist in obstetrics and gynaecology at Brisbane, being appointed Honorary Obstetrician to the Lady Bowen Maternity Hospital and Honorary assistant Gynaecologist to the Brisbane Hospital. He was Honorary Secretary of the Queensland Branch of the British Medical Association and Secretary of the Medical Defence Society of Queensland from 1920 until 1925. An organising ability was displayed when he was Assistant General Secretary of the Australasian Medical Congress held at Brisbane in 1920.

A few years later, in 1925, Allan was appointed, from, a large number of candidates, Director of Obstetrical Research in Victoria. The Edward Wilson Trust was responsible for this valuable project in which Dr. Dunbar Hooper, formerly on the staff of the Women's Hospital, was the moving spirit. Under the terms of his appointment, Marshall Allan traversed the whole State of Victoria, consulting with almost every medical practitioner and reviewing their obstetrical work. After two strenuous years was presented his notable report on Victorian maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality; this was published in "The Medical Journal of Australia" of 1st January 1927, and attracted wide attention. His keen observations and practical recommendations made a great impression on obstetricians throughout the Commonwealth, and there appears little doubt that the implementing of his advice was primarily responsible for that marked improvement in the Victorian practice of obstetrics which developed in the two decades from 1925 onwards.

Allan, now aged forty-five was the logical choice for the first occupant of the Chair of Obstetrics when this was created in 1929. He became a member of the Honorary Staff of the Women's Hospital and quickly settled down to thorough undergraduate and post graduate teaching.

Keenly interested in research and development of obstetrics outside Australia, during his 17 years a Professor he undertook two trips abroad to Britain, the Continent and the United States. He was elected an Honorary Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and later a Foundation Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Of which, in recognition of his splendid work and leadership, he was made, just 4 months before his death, a vice-president elect – an honour for the first time conferred on a resident outside Great Britain.

He strongly supported the setting up of a Regional Council in this country and he planned the holding of the first examination in Australia for membership of that College. He was also a Foundation Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

Marshall Allan was particularly interested in the British Medical Association and in 1937 filled with dignity the position of President of the Victorian Branch. Soon after arrival in Melbourne he became actively associated with the Victorian Bush Nursing Association and served both as a Council Member and later as Honorary Secretary.

Professor Marshall Allan was a handsome man, of well proportioned build and twinkling eyes that would attract attention in any company. His background in the main was composed of colonial Scottish Presbyterianism, a full undergraduate life in the heyday of the Edinburgh Medical School, and a long and varied service in the first world war in which he was initially attached to the famous King's Royal Rifles, oldest of the rifle regiments. He dearly loved the people of the United Kingdom and their institutions, and was never happier than when cementing professional and personal ties with the Homeland and with New Zealand; thus the furtherance in Australia of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists was very dear to his heart and its firm establishment here afforded him the greatest satisfaction.

The Professor was an excellent teacher - taking the utmost pains in the preparation of his lectures and the comprehensive notes thereon - and was a careful, though not a brilliant operator. He held strong unequivocal views on those controversial non-medical subjects of politics, religion and international affairs, sometimes forcibly expressing them in unexpected places; but this apparent rigidity of opinion was really only a very translucent facade for his true qualities of sincerity, constancy, helpfulness and kindness, which many a student - post graduate as well as undergraduate - had occasion to confirm joyfully when the examination results were posted. In his desk at the Women's Hospital was found the counsel -

"Let me not live...  
After my flame lacks oil to be the snuff of younger spirits".

An omnivorous reader, with a splendid memory, he must surely have been one of the most knowledgeable men of his time in this country, though his wide acquirements were veiled by modesty and often shyness.

Not an eloquent speaker, his exposition of a subject contained all relevant facts, presented in a proper perspective. Pretension and snobbery - intellectual or social - in whatever guise, he was quick to denounce at any time or place. He was steeped in the history and tradition of amateur Rugby football, which as a school boy he had played well. It can be remembered how, (during the last month of his life), being subjected at luncheon to gentle badinage when it was reported that an Australian Rugby player had an ear bitten off, with what gleeful zest - sick man though he was - he countered by saying that the malfeasance had occurred under the League, and not his beloved Union, code of rules.

In 1944 he suffered a severe coronary thrombosis and was compelled to rest for 18 months, the professional duties being carried on by his colleague, Dr. W. Ivon Hayes. The Professor eventually resumed full activities, though knowing well that the end might come at any time.

Aged sixty years, he died on 29th July 1946 as he would have wished, at work till the last, leaving a widow (nee Miss M.E. Dines), a daughter Nancy, and a son James.

Marshall Allan will always be fondly remembered by those privileged to be counted among his friends, for much of his life was spent in those oft-forgotten acts of kindness and goodwill which so generously temper life's asperities.

But "real work requires no interpreter; the everyday deeds form its blazonry".

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Allen, Sydney Herbert (1876 - )

F.R.C.S. (Edin.)

*Born*

13 October 1876

Carlton, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation*

Surgeon

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

SYDNEY HERBERT ALLEN

(1914 - 1937)

The death on September 9th of Sydney Herbert Allen, in his eighty-third year, severs one of the last remaining links with the Melbourne Medical School of the last century, in the closing years of which Harry Brookes Allen was the Professor of Anatomy. Allen's professorship spanned 42 years, and he exerted an influence on Victorian medicine akin to that of Anderson Stuart in Sydney.

Students then, as now, made their introduction to Anatomy and Physiology in the second year of the course, and with Allen examining it proved too stiff a hurdle for many of the first attempt; a number of these with sufficient financial backing wasted no time in departing for Edinburgh where, it was contended, teaching was better. Clinical material was relatively limited in the Scottish capital, and as the competition for students was very keen amongst the many teachers (most of who lived mainly thereby) the standard of instruction had to be high. There, too, was the added attraction of a medical qualification - in the conjoint licentiate of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons - easier to obtain than the M.B. (Melbourne). Many such Australian expatriates did not rest content with the Licentiate but, remaining in Britain for a further 2 or 3 years, obtained the higher diplomas of M.R.C.P.E. or F.R.C.S.E. Almost without exception these young men did very well on returning to Australia, bringing with them a mystique of having been trained in Edinburgh, than which, it was averred by their relatives and friends and patients, there was no better medical school in all Christendom. They had lived and worked in the storied homeland, across twelve thousand miles of ocean, and had acquired a poise and polish and confidence often envied by local graduates. Such a one of these Edinburgh diplomats was Sydney Herbert Allen, F.R.C.S.E.

For hundreds of years the mind of the English speaking populace has associated characteristics and temperaments of individuals with the nation to which they and their forbears belonged. Everybody knows the Scots have been linked with financial meanness and love of scholarship, the English with a reserved and phlegmatic temperament allied with a caste consciousness, the Irish with the heavy touch of the blarney, and the Jews with flamboyance and aggressiveness. Sydney Allen belonged to the last racial group, but as if to illustrate how erroneous are these time hallowed misconceptions, nowhere in the world could be found a more modest and self-effacing spirit.

In the eighties and nineties of last century three brothers were very reputable Melbourne bookmakers - Barney, (a legendary figure on the Victorian turf), Sam, and Benjamin Allen. Benjamin Allen married Julia Goldsmith, and the subject of this memoir, the eldest of their family of four, was born on 13th October, 1876, in Drummond Street, Carlton, one of Melbourne's northern suburbs. His matriculation was obtained from the Carlton Grammar School, where the Headmaster was Robert Jones. This was one of the private schools - all long since out of existence - which provided secondary education to follow up the primary instructions made free, secular, and compulsory, by the Victorian Education Act of 1872. Many of those small schools were admirable, inculcating high ethical and spiritual values, and preparing young people for effective future citizenship and the realities of community life; but they were doomed with the growth of the large and powerful Church and High Schools, and today they and their work are remembered by only a few elderly antiquarians.

Allen had spent two years in the medical course at Melbourne later becoming L.R.C.S., Edinburgh in 1900; after some years as a houseman in British hospitals, he gained the F.R.C.S.E. in 1902; twenty-six years later he was elected a foundation F.R.A.C.S.

In Edinburgh, the two men who most influenced Allen were Alexis Thomson and Halliday Croom. Thomson had a decisive and epigrammatic style, found very stimulating by his students. At a later period (in 1904) he became Professor of Surgery, and in collaboration with Alexander Miles published "A Manual of Surgery" and "A Manual of Operative Surgery", which established themselves as standard text books in Britain and abroad. For almost fifty years Halliday Croom was celebrated as a lecturer, taking infinite trouble to prepare every lecture he delivered, and during his time as an extramural lecturer at Edinburgh, no student's course was considered complete unless he had attended Croom, appointed University Professor of Midwifery in 1905.

On returning to Melbourne, Allen succeeded to the general practice of John Gordon, when the latter was appointed In-Patient Surgeon to the Melbourne Hospital. During this period he worked hard at Public Charities, for he held the positions of the first Medical Superintendent at the Infectious Disease Hospital at Fairfield (to which he drove daily in his shining black jinker), Surgeon to Out-Patients at the Children's Hospital and Anaesthetist at St. Vincent's. The Matron at Fairfield in Allen's day was Miss Evelyn Conyers, later Matron in Chief of the Australian Nursing Services in the 1914-1918 war. Allen was appointed Out-Patients Surgeon at the Women's Hospital in 1914, in the same year as his friends, Edward White, Arthur Sherwin, William Cuscaden, Lennox Speirs and Milne Sutherland; the leaders at the Hospital then were Felix Meyer, Reginald Morrison and F.W.W. Morton. This was the year of the outbreak of the first World War, and twelve months later Allen sailed with the 2nd A.G.H. in the "Orontes" for Egypt, later to proceed to France; my late partner, Sir Stanley Argyle, often told me how happy a band of medical officers were those in the "Orontes". Later he practiced at St. Kilda, where he was City Health Officer for a period of seventeen years that terminated only a few weeks before his death.

Residents at the Women's were always pleased when allotted to Allen's beds, for if they won his approval, by keeping good histories and treating patients with humanity and kindness, he was very generous with operations performed under his guidance; this obtained particularly in his latter years, when he suffered from frequent bouts of crippling lumbago; he would sit beside the operating table quietly giving instructions and encouragement.

Allen did very little systematic teaching, either at the bedside or in the lecture room; nor did I recall any contribution by him to medical literature. I had an occasion many years ago to discuss with Syd. his teaching inactivity. "I realize my apparent shortcoming in this regard" he, in his slow, husky voice, reflected, "but I believe that unless those asked to teach have a gift of exposition, it is better for the students to do most of their work themselves. There are now excellent textbooks available, and I have the feeling they are being subjected to a hyperalimentation in lectures and demonstrations, which occupy practically every hour of their day; many gave no time to stand and stare, to play a game of football or even billiards. I feel that I can fulfill my best function by helping and encouraging my stream of residents to perform, skilfully and with confidence, those gynaecological operations they may be called upon to undertake in general practice, perhaps many miles from a surgical centre.

I believe it is because of this surgical opportunity – limited though it may be – that in the past, at least, our Australian general practitioners have acquired a world wide reputation for all-round competence superior to those of many other countries".

Allen was of average height and build, always immaculately dressed, bowler hat, gloves and cane matching, with the features of his forbears and his dark eyes always twinkling with kindness; he had no enemies and he spoke no ill of anyone. Allen loved sociable company, and was a devoted member of the University Club, being its President for no fewer than thirty-three years. Here he could always be certain of a keen hand of bridge or poker or billiards; here, too, he would be kept up to date on the acceptance of starting prices for Flemington, Caulfield, Moonee Valley or even the Ballarat Miners. The University Club of Melbourne, first founded in 1903, has never enjoyed the strong support of its counterpart in Sydney, but Allen was very proud, that amongst his predecessors as its President, were men of the eminence of Sir John Madden, Sir Leo Cussen, and Sir John Monash. Allen was a lifelong devotee of horse racing and was honorary surgeon to the Moonee Valley Racing Club for thirty-five years; in spite of reputedly the best of information, combined with an unquenchable optimism, he won no fortune from the turf.

He married Miss Ellen O'Connell of Melbourne, who predeceased him by some years; a son, Mr. Sydney Hilary Allen, the only child, survives.

There appears to be little place today for Syd. Allen's methods of passing on the surgical torch. They are as dead as the dodo; yet there are some who believe that our profession is the poorer. Allen was a kind and generous spirit, whose name the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, is proud to have included in its Book of Remembrance.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives



# Anderson, Bruce Hunter (1912 - 1972)

<i>Born</i>	25 March 1912 Orbost, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	23 January 1972
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of obituary believed to have been written by Dr. Colin Macdonald. Published in Medical Journal of Australia, 1 July 1972 and the "Book of Remembrance", Royal Women's Hospital, 1972.

BRUCE ANDERSON  
(1948 - 1968)

Just as his boyhood environment was varied by the demands of his father's profession, so was the later personal medical destiny of Bruce Anderson foreshadowed by his family's history of terminal coronary occlusion in great-grandfather, grandfather and father.

Bruce Hunter Anderson was born on 25th March 1912 at Orbost on the Snowy River, the second child and only son of William Routledge Anderson, a civil engineer, and Marion Sophia Hunter Anderson. When Bruce was two, the family moved to Colac in south-western Victoria where he later attended the local state school. At the age of 10 he was taken to Brisbane to live, his father having been appointed as the City Engineer. Here for one year he attended the Eagle Junction state school and then entered the Brisbane Boys' College which was at that time in the neighbouring suburb of Clayfield.

During his school years he often spent holidays with friends at Cluden, a property some miles from Gladstone, where he strengthened his appreciation of the country and its outdoor life by learning to ride, to fish and to shoot. Philately provided a contrast, while piano lessons were appropriate in a family where father sang, mother was an amateur pianist and elder sister was to combine the Associateship of Trinity College of Music, London in piano with qualification as a pharmacist - and initiated what was to be a life-long interest in music, though as a listener and not a performer.

In 1929, the year he matriculated, he became Captain of the School and a member of the first IV in tennis, the first XV in Rugby and the first XI in cricket. During a holiday he also explored the Lamington Plateau on the McPherson Range running between Queensland and New South Wales.

His first academic year was spent in the Science faculty of the University of Queensland and during it his father died of cardiac disease.

Queensland at that stage having no medical faculty it was necessary for those wishing to proceed beyond first year to go to either Sydney or Melbourne; Bruce came to Melbourne and his mother and sister moved down with him, to live first in East St. Kilda and then at "Kotupna" in Swanston Street across from the old Anatomy School of the University of Melbourne.

The Anderson household became a "home from home" for numerous students and here too lived Bruce's dissecting-room partner and fellow Queenslander, Sydney Sunderland, later to be Professor of Anatomy, Professor of Experimental Neurology, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and a knight. After a couple of years in Carlton the family moved to Royal Parade, Parkville.

While at the University his recreations included more tennis and Rugby and often holidays that took the form of visits to the country, several times in the Lakes Entrance region and once in Tasmania, with Sydney Sunderland.

The Tasmanian trip occurred at the end of the 4th year, when the friends walked more or less across Tasmania from south to north-east. Sir Sydney recollects their exploration beginning in the now popular "tourist" region of the south-west, spreading into the National Park by Mount Field West and the Florentine Valley, and on to the Great West Road whence their eyes turned towards Mount Olympus and the ultimate objective of Cradle Mountain. They approached these latter destinations knowing that no walkers had preceded them in the previous six or seven years, but found after a couple of days on the final leg that the pegs were down and that it was more prudent to deviate to Derwent Bridge, thence returning to civilization at Queenstown on the west coast. Arriving here late at night they slept in the sports pavilion and then returned to Launceston and Melbourne.

Bruce became a Rugby blue, playing as full-back in the University team. In the 1935 Inter-University match in Adelaide he suffered a scalp laceration that necessitated a number of sutures at the (Royal) Adelaide Hospital, after which he accompanied his teammates to a dance. It is recalled that during this evening Bruce at one stage gave a spirited performance on the drums, an unusual occupation for a diffident man. Present as a reserve on this trip was another friend, now Sir Lance Townsend, later to be the first Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in the University of Melbourne, another Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and the best man at Bruce's wedding.

In early 1936 Bruce graduated as Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery to become a resident medical officer on the staff of the Brisbane General Hospital.

At this stage the ultimate direction of his medical career was considerably influenced by Sydney Sunderland who had already become engaged in academic pursuits at the Melbourne University department of Anatomy, both in the research field and as Senior Lecturer. The anatomist worked late into the night and often sought coffee and conversation with the obstetrical and

gynaecological resident staff across the road at the (Royal) Women's Hospital. In those years "the Women's" found it preferable not to replace its resident staff en bloc, but rather to take on a new resident (and lose an old one) every seven or eight weeks, so that each raw recruit joined a staff that was otherwise competent and experienced; this policy occasionally made for difficulty in finding available applicants in the middle of the year.

On one such occasion, learning of a vacancy to occur in August 1936, Sydney Sunderland suggested to the medical superintendent (D.F. Lawson) that Bruce might be interested; by trunk line it was promptly arranged that he cut short his work in Brisbane and commence training at the Melbourne Women's Hospital forthwith.

During this year as a resident Bruce worked with B. Milne Sutherland and Edward R. White, the latter also to become a military associate in Malaya many years later. Under the leadership of D.F. Lawson the team comprised R.M. Rome, Charles Hopkins, James Smibert, Alex Sinclair, Mary J. Heseltine, William Hawksworth, J.C. Laver and Lance Townsend.

Some years ago he recalled his resident year as characterized by 36 eclampsics of whom nine died, a 42% perinatal mortality, pre-eclampsics only admitted if proteinuria exceeded one-fifth, the ceaseless struggle against infection both puerperal and post-abortion, a ward full of advanced tuberculosis patients awaiting confinement. He spoke of the manipulative skill of Ivon Hayes and John Green for whom the forceps seemed an extension of the hands, of Arthur Wilson who performed a difficult breech extraction with mathematical precision. Those days saw the commencing application of blood transfusion to obstetric practice, ranging from heroic contributions of their own blood by resident medical officers to the first continuous drip transfusion, given by J.C. Laver, with the help of most of the remaining staff "bleeding" eight members of the Firsts, Seconds and Thirds of the Fitzroy Football Club.

Then followed a year of general practice in Moonee Ponds with M.O. Kent-Hughes, after which Bruce went to the United Kingdom in search of further post-graduate experience in obstetrics and gynaecology. As a start he served as locum tenens in the London area and then joined the resident staff of St. Giles' Hospital in early 1939, to work for the examination for Membership of the (Royal) College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, which he secured in July 1939.

He acted as best man at Sydney Sunderland's wedding in Oxford, and he enjoyed the beauty of the English spring, especially as seen at Minster Lovell in the Cotswolds. He used to go to concerts with Lance Townsend; together they heard Paul Robeson sing. Other contemporaries from Melbourne also in London included James Smibert and D.F. Lawson; Mrs. Lawson often prepared meals for them all. With the outbreak of war Bruce brought himself back to Australia and enlisted in the Army in 1940, being posted overseas in January 1941. He was promoted to Major, becoming Deputy Assistant Director of Medical Services of the 8th Australian Division in Malaya, replacing Glyn White who had also been promoted. With the fall of Singapore he was taken prisoner by the Japanese (1942-45), at first in Changi camp and later in charge of the medical party working on the Burma-Thailand railway.

In the camp his association with Glyn White remained close; four of them shared accommodation and books. Bruce sometimes played the piano and often enjoyed his "Byron's Poems" or Glyn's C.J. Dennis. While a guest of the emperor Bruce in his own words "learnt the heights to which men may rise and the depths to which they may fall...". All of them "learnt humility - an appreciation of the simple things in life". His friends feel that he learnt imperturbability.

Returning to Australia in 1945, just skin and bone, Bruce set about his own rehabilitation in gynaecology under the masterful tutelage of L.W. Gleadell at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, where he gained greatly in clinical confidence and operating dexterity. At the same time he resumed his membership of what was to become the Margaret Street Clinic in Moonee Ponds under the leadership of M.D. Kent-Hughes, and association he was to maintain for the remainder of his life.

In 1948 he was appointed to the Honorary Medical Staff of the (Royal) Women's Hospital and gained the Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. In 1950 he was appointed Honorary Assistant Gynaecologist in Mr. Gleadell's department as successor to (Dame) Ella Macknight, but surrendered this post in 1951 to Lance Townsend. He was elected to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1959.

For the rest of his life his work at the Women's came to assume ever greater importance, at first as out-patient surgeon in the gynaecological unit of D.F. Lawson and then from 1963 as leader of his own unit, his juniors being Vernon Hollyock until 1966 and Ian Johnston until Bruce felt compelled to resign in 1968.

His contribution to the staff was to exemplify the worth of a thoughtful and optimistic attitude, whereby with the cancer patient one must be constantly trying to help – believing that for each patient there was something that could be done and that it must be done well. At his death his colleagues recorded that "it was in this branch of gynaecology that his vast experience was regularly called upon by all members of this staff. His exceptional mental ability to quote literature percentages and journal references never ceased to impress the listener with its accuracy and relevance".

In 1965 Bruce received a travel grant from the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria to enable him to observe the diagnostic and therapeutic methods used in female genital cancer in general, with particular regard to psychological screening, the place of chemotherapy and hormone treatment and the treatment of late stage carcinoma of the cervix. Leaving on his birthday the 14-week trip embraced Canada and the United States, Ireland, England, the continent of Europe and the Far East. He also found time to hire a car to revisit favourite beauty spots in the United Kingdom.

At the end of 1967 the expected coronary occlusion occurred during a busy night. Though it was not a severe one Bruce was advised to limit his professional duties and consequently resigned from his post at the Royal Women's Hospital on 29th April 1968, his unit being taken over by Barry Kneale, Peter Glenning being appointed to fill the staff vacancy. Bruce was however invited to continue to attend the meetings of the Executive Medical Staff, having been appointed Assistant Gynaecologist to the Radio-Surgical Unit, a position he held until his death.

Through the years of his association with our Hospital Bruce had the contentment and stability that are derived from a happy home with an ideally suitable partner. He had met Margaret Emily Colliver, a double certificated nurse born in Adelaide, they had become engaged and were married at The Scots' Church, Melbourne on 17th June 1950. At their Essendon home there are two sons and two daughters.

It is natural that a quiet, friendly counsellor of embryo specialists should act as adviser in other spheres. He was a member of the medical and scientific committee of the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria until 1964 and from 1970 served on the Board of Management of the Essendon and District Hospital. In 1961 he had become the first chairman of the post-graduate Subcommittee of the Executive Medical Staff of the Royal Women's Hospital, and with Frank Forster initiated the programme of educative medical lectures which now each year follows the more philosophical Tracy-Maund Memorial Lecture.

Bruce really had that often-claimed attribute, a sense of humour. He was a voracious reader, especially of Australians, often reading far into the night. Music, usually from recordings, was a constant enjoyment in his home. He loved camellias and had a collection of books about them. He did not find time to be a gardener but sometimes startled his family by speculating whether, if he could have had the opportunity to live his life again, he might not have enjoyed being a nurseryman or even a dress designer.

Although his father had been a Master, Bruce evinced no desire to become a freemason, nor was he a member of any clubs.

Being of a happy nature, living a happy life, tempered by the looming prospect of heart disease, made philosophical in the inclemency of prison camp, it is not surprising that Bruce was a sentimentalist. At the time of his marriage he felt that he could expect 15 or 16 years; as this estimated span was drawing to its end he made his first sentimental journey, to recapture the enjoyment of remembered scenic beauty in England. Once the first heart lesion had occurred, he knew that he was living on borrowed time. It was to be his triumph that the earlier estimate proved wrong, there being not 16 but 21 years that he had to live. It is sad that a second sentimental journey, this time to Cluden in Queensland where so much boyhood had been enjoyed, was to have begun on the day of this second and much more severe coronary occlusion, in early January this year. After tantalizing hints that health might ultimately be regained there came embolic complications, the second of them proving fatal on 23rd January 1972.

His funeral service in St. John's Presbyterian Church, Essendon, was heard by a packed congregation of many creeds, friends, family, colleagues, patients, among whom there were few dry eyes. The grandeur of Bach and Handel was fittingly punctuated by occasional cries of babies in arms brought to bid him farewell. His family need never doubt the esteem and affection in which he was held.

Dr. J. Glyn White writes: With the death of Bruce Hunter Anderson the medical profession lost one of its most highly respected and competent members and I lost one of the greatest friends I have ever had. My association with Bruce commenced in our student days and we remained constant companions to the time of his death.

It was our wartime association which really cemented our friendship when we both worked under the command and guidance of a great Australian, the late Alfred Plumley Derham. What Bruce's help and his loyalty and comradeship meant to me in those trying and difficult Prisoner of War days could not be expressed in words; it helped to turn what could have been a totally tragic experience into something which in many ways was grand. As a soldier Bruce possessed a keen tactical brain and this was clearly demonstrated by the report he submitted after making an extensive reconnaissance in December 1941 of a number of areas of importance in the evacuation of wounded in the State of Johore. "His report was timely, as it also shed light on general problems of defence and supply..." (Walker, 1953). There is no doubt that had he not been a medical officer he would have made an outstanding commander of combatant troops.

His private and professional life consisted of daily actions of devotion, unselfishness, kindnesses, sympathies, helpful advice to and sacrifices for the good of others, attributes which made a splendid character which Bruce Anderson certainly was. He commanded not only the respect and admiration of all he came in contact with, but at the same time earned their love and affection.

(This account appeared in the Medical Journal of Australia on 1st July 1972,)

Walker, Allan S (1953), "Australia in the War of 1939-45", Series 5, Vol. II, Australian War Memorial, Canberra: 501.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Anderson, Eugene Wilton (1859 - 1934)



M.A. , M.D. (Camb.), F.R.C.P. (Lond.)

M.B. (Melb.), M.D. (Melb.)

*Born* 4 May 1859 Castlemaine, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 1934 Hawksburn, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Medical Practitioner

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

EUGENE WILTON ANDERSON  
(1892 - 1902)

Eugene Anderson, son of George Anderson and Lucy Goddard, was born at Castlemaine, Victoria, on 4th May 1859, and educated at Scotch College, Melbourne, where he was a good athlete, cricketer, and footballer. He graduated M.B. (Melbourne) in 1881, and after experience in Britain, returned to Australia, taking the M.D. (Melb.) in 1888. Four years later, now aged 33 years, he was appointed to the Women's staff.

Eugene Anderson practised for some years at Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, and later at Finch Street, Malvern. His Hawthorn practice was purchased by Dr. Lewis J. Balfour, and his Malvern practice by Dr. King Scott, two highly respected general practitioners of suburban Melbourne. Anderson was an able man who did not achieve professional distinction largely because of ill health.

Dr. Anderson, who married Miss May Dowdell, died at Hawksburn Melbourne, in 1934. His son, Eugene Headley, was named after Dr. Balls-Headley, then a colleague of the father at the Women's Hospital.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Auxiliaries

## *Summary*

Groups of benevolent people formed to raise money or provide goods for the Royal Womens's Hospital (or its presecissors). They flourished during the 1920s and 30s in particular, but in the later 20th century declined to the point that in 2006 there are only a handful left.

Prepared by: Robyn Waymouth

Created: 14 November 2006, Last modified: 27 November 2006



# Balls-Headley, Walter (1842 - 1918)



M.A., M.D. (Camb.), F.R.C.P. (Lond.)  
*Born* 1842 Shelford, Cambridgeshire, England  
*Died* 7 March, 1918  
Mira Michi, Proctor, British Columbia, Canada  
*Occupation* Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

WALTER BALLS-HEADLEY  
(1878 - 1900)

Walter Balls-Headley, a tall distinguished-looking and scholarly Englishman, played an important part in the Women's Hospital for twenty-two years at the close of the nineteenth century. During this time he possessed the distinction of being the only member of the Women's staff to be elected F.R.C.P. London.

Studying medicine at Addenbrooke's and St. Bartholomew's Hospitals, he subsequently took the M.D. (Cantab.) in 1868, the M.R.C.P. (Lond.) 1866, being elected F.R.C.P. 1888.

Born Walter Balls at Shelford, Cambridgeshire in 1842, he entered Peterhouse, University of Cambridge, as a pensioner in June 1858. He held resident appointments both at St. Bartholomew's and Great Ormond Street, before coming to Australia. He was at first in Warwick, Queensland but moved to Melbourne in the seventies, and was elected physician to the Alfred Hospital in 1876. In 1878 he was appointed to the Women's, eight years later assuming the additional surname of Headley, and as Balls-Headley he was always known.

He returned quietly to England in 1900 and for some years practiced in Tavistock Square, London. He retired in 1908, and after two years at Bideford in Devon, finally settled at Mira Michi, Proctor, British Columbia, where he died 7th March, 1918, aged 76 years.

During the nineties Balls-Headley was probably the leading gynaecologist in Melbourne, and occupied an important position in Australian medicine. He was President of the Medical Society of Victoria, President of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Intercolonial Medical Congress in 1892, a one-time Member of the Councils of the British Gynaecological Society and the Obstetrical Society of London, and Lecturer in Diseases of Women at the University of Melbourne. He was author of "The Evolution of the Diseases of Women" in Allbutt and Playfair's "System of Gynaecology".

Balls-Headley had the reputation of a very neat operator. He performed the first Caesarean section in Victoria at the Women's Hospital; the operation (on a single woman) was a great success, and the baby was christened at the Hospital receiving the names of Balls Headley, after approval by the Ladies' Committee.

A long continued search made in 1953-55 throughout Australia, Britain and Canada in an endeavour to trace any family or relatives of Balls-Headley was fruitless.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Barrie, Jean Unita (1923 - )

Dip Applied Chem BSc PhD

Born 25 March 1923  
Windsor, Victoria, Australia

Occupation Blood Serologist and Medical Scientist

## Summary

Prepared by Ann Westmore PhD, 2006

Jean Unita Barrie spent most of her working life at the Royal Women's Hospital, contributing to the well-being of countless mothers and babies.

She started as a laboratory assistant in the Biochemistry Section of the hospital's Pathology Department in the early 1940s, and retired in 1988 as the medical scientist in charge of the Serology Department, which covered all aspects of blood grouping and associated immunology.

## Details

Born on 25 March 1923 at Windsor, Victoria, Jean Barrie was the younger of two daughters of bank officer, John Alexander Barrie, and his wife, Elizabeth Bertha, née Wright, an Alfred Hospital-trained nursing sister. She attended the Gardiner Central School, Malvern, followed by the MacRobertson Girls High School, 1936 to 1939. Given the difficult (post-Depression) economic circumstances, she appreciated her secondary education which made her hungry for learning and was a guiding influence throughout her career.

On leaving school, she attended a business college, one of the few avenues then open to young women contemplating a career in the paid workforce. Six months later, her career options broadened unexpectedly when an opportunity arose to join the Women's Hospital as a laboratory assistant in the Pathology Department under the Biochemist in Charge, Dr Vera Krieger.

### Learning the trade

Under Krieger, one of the first women to receive a Doctor of Science degree from the University of Melbourne, young Jean gained invaluable training in basic clinical biochemistry tests and techniques in the emerging field of serology, the study of blood and its component fractions. A little later, in 1942, she was exposed to a research perspective when the Women's started the first comprehensive testing of mothers and babies in Victoria for Rh blood group incompatibility, and embarked on studies of eclampsia, a serious and long-recognised complication of pregnancy marked by high blood pressure.

While these state-of-the-art scientific investigations went on around her, she was engaged in many mundane tasks such as hand washing equipment and preparing large volumes of solutions using beam balances. She also maintained ward stocks of sterile glucose saline for infusion; waxed and polished wooden workbenches; cleaned sinks; polished taps; and dusted shelves of chemicals.

It was wartime, and everyone pulled together. Krieger trained numerous Army personnel to conduct biochemical tests needed in field hospitals. There were also khaki socks, mittens and balaclavas to knit during lunch hour, and regular Air Raid practices that the hospital conducted without warning. When the alarm sounded, staff promptly set about doing their allocated tasks which, in Jean's case, included turning off and securing the distilled water apparatus and proceeding to a midwifery ward to help carry babies down the fire escape to the safety of the basement in large laundry baskets.

### Intermission and further education

Having decided to gain a further qualification, Jean Barrie left the hospital in 1944 to work at CSIR (later CSIRO) Division of Forest Products. She found herself preventing mould growth on planes flying in New Guinea as well as working on wood chemistry, plywood and adhesives. Each evening or, in the few hours of study leave allowed each week, she attended the Melbourne Technical College (later RMIT University), from which she graduated with a Diploma in Applied Chemistry in 1951.

Equipped with this graduate qualification, she returned to the Women's Hospital which five years earlier had established its own Blood Transfusion Service (1946). Coincidental with her return, the hospital embarked on exchange transfusions, the only hope of recovery for a significant number of babies who developed haemolytic disease of the newborn as a result of Rh incompatibility. She became a mainstay of this work, attending when emergencies or cross-matching problems occurred during and after working hours.

Devoted to understanding the principles underlying her work, she undertook further part-time studies in microbiology, virology and genetics at the University of Melbourne. By the late 1950s, she was Senior Graduate and Deputy (to Krieger) in Serology, newly formed as a department in its own right. In 1961 she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree assisted by the hospital Board which offered her financial assistance and study leave in her final year on condition that she returned to the Serology Section of the Pathology Department after graduation. She did so without hesitation and was buoyed by the hospital's support.

When an opportunity arose to undertake PhD studies in immunology in the University of Melbourne's Microbiology Department in 1962, the Director of Pathology at the hospital, Dr Hans Bettinger, gave his full support along with leave of absence for three years. At the time, Serology was collaborating closely with the hospital's Professorial Unit on Rhesus (Rh) immunisation projects and, recognising the potential value of her studies, Professor Lance Townsend provided a grant to cover her doctoral expenses. Colleagues say that Barrie flowered at this time, revealing a "wonderful, wicked sense of fun" which was contagious.

During the final years of her PhD studies, she was a Senior Demonstrator in the University's Microbiology Department and in 1966 she completed her doctoral thesis, titled 'The Adjuvant Activity of Simple Lipids'. When Krieger retired around that time, she was appointed Scientist in Charge of Serology until her own retirement in 1988.

#### An emerging field

Over the 22 year period as chief serologist, the core work of serology centred on Rhesus and many rarer red cell blood group investigations, related to incompatibility in pregnancy or transfusion. The work was both a routine part of patient care and a source of many research questions. Tests for white cell antibodies, infertility and venereal disease were also performed in Serology until their transfer to the core work of other sections of the hospital. Thus for example, infertility studies moved to the new Andrology Laboratory during the 1960s.

In the early 1970s, the hospital introduced a 24 hour blood transfusion service, a major expansion that Serology supervised conscientiously. With the introduction of this service trained staff members were on hand overnight should emergencies occur with consequent savings in time and money and a more timely emergency response, compared with the former on-call system. The establishment of the service also meant that facilities for local volunteers to donate blood existed on the hospital site. "On average we were able to recruit enough new local donors to cover the demand for blood within the hospital and sometimes even swell supplies for the Red Cross Blood Bank," she recalled.

In 1976, at the 5th International Convocation on Immunology in the US, she heard presentations by pioneers of blood group serology. It was one of many highlights in a long and illustrious career that saw serology develop into a vibrant field of study, with major improvements to the safety and effectiveness of transfused blood and blood fractions, as well as in the care of transfusion recipients.

#### Sources:

Personal communication, Jean Barrie, Denys Fortune and Elaine Batchelder to Ann Westmore;  
RWH Bulletin, 2, 1, Feb 1968.

## Published Resources

### Journal Articles

- vol. 2, no. 1, Royal Women's Hospital, Carlton, February 1968.
- Anon, 'Doctorate Conferred', *Bulletin*, vol. 2, no. 1, Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1968, p. 3. [ [Details...](#) ]

# Bettinger, Hans Frederick (1897 - 1975)

<i>Born</i>	14 June 1897 Breslau (now Wrocław), Lower Silesia, Germany (now Poland)
<i>Died</i>	20 September 1975 Melbourne, Tasmania, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Pathologist

## Details

Transcription of item written by John Nattrass, Honorary Historian of the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, and Harold Attwood, Professor of Pathology in the University of Melbourne at the Austin Hospital and published in the "Book of Remembrance", Royal Women's Hospital, 1975.

### HANS FREDERICK BETTINGER

(1939 - 1975)

Hans Frederick Bettinger was born on 14th June 1897 in Breslau, his father a businessman. In the Napoleonic wars the family had moved from Alsace-Lorraine; a recent relation was Archbishop of Munich.

Schooling began in 1903 at the Real Gymnasium am Zwinger, with a science emphasis; at the end of 1914 he began his medical course. Late in 1917 he was called up for garrison duty, serving as Surgeon Sub-Lieutenant until he could resume his studies after the war. In 1920 he qualified with honours and joined the University of Halle Pathology Department under the Professor Beneke who devised the modern baby-necropsy technique of skull opening. Professor of Medicine was Volhard, with Fahr to pioneer kidney pathology, whose patients underwent single nephrectomy immediately post-mortem, usually in a ward bathroom. Experience with such material was to prove useful in Melbourne in fatal cases of abortal clostridium Welchii infection.

His MD thesis written he returned to Breslau in 1921, his father having died, and commenced 14 years on the University of Breslau pathology staff, his chief the likeable Henke co-author with Lubarsch (Berlin) of the first of the special pathology handbooks still bearing their names, the atmosphere extremely pleasant. Here he gained his first experience of Department administration, building and re-building. In 1930 he married Vera Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. Justice Fuchs. Later he remembered these early years as very happy, with facility in learning and many friends, all interested in philosophy, the arts music and theatre. By the time their daughter was born the clouds of Nazism already loomed; soon it was obvious that they must leave the country, so in 1935 he became Professor of Pathology at the new Military Medical Academy in Canton. Here, out in the country, was a 1200 bed military hospital, with adjacent medical school buildings under construction. Arriving before their completion he could advise on laboratory lay-out and equipment. Soon, the department was stocking its museum and establishing slide collections. Lectures were given in German, a Chinese interpreter intervening after each sentence. With the start of the Sino-Japanese war a nearby railway was bombed increasingly by carrier-based planes. In October 1938 Japanese invasion directed towards Canton caused the medical school to disband and the Bettingers to embark for Hong Kong.

While in Hong Kong he was appointed senior lecturer in pathology by the University of Sydney, to begin in February 1939. In the meantime he enjoyed work in the Hong Kong University Pathology Department where, he wrote, "I taught the students some pathology and they in turn taught me to teach in English".

Entry to Australia was smoothed by Professor Inglis who also saw him comfortably installed in a Harbour-side flat. With the start of the academic year he was surprised to receive a belated summons to the Women's Hospital, Melbourne, the upshot of which, in a master-stroke of Sydney-Melbourne co-operation, was release by Sydney and commencement as first Director of Pathology in April 1939 in a new Department already containing Vera Kreiger (DSc) as biochemist and Hildred Butler (DSc) as bacteriologist. Previously morbid anatomy work had been in the hands of the legendary CH Mollison, Government pathologist, using his unique freezing microtome. Later the new Department added Haematology and Clinical Photography, became one of the first in the world to begin routine testing of the Rh factor (not long after its discovery in 1941), separated serology from biochemistry and added a cytology section, so that by February 1964 an enlarged remodelled building had had to be opened, doubling the space.

As Director of Pathology at the Royal Women's Hospital he became Senior Associate in Pathology at the University of Melbourne and was in charge of the practical classes in histopathology for many years. He continued to teach medical students until some four months before he died and it was only illness that made him give up his regular tutorial class.

After earlier forced wandering the Bettingers found peace and self-respect in Australia. Professionally Hans Bettinger was held in high regard. In 1951 the Federal German Government conferred upon him the title of Professor of Pathology, in recognition of his former status. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians in 1955, a Member of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia (of which he was one of the Founders) in 1956, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Melbourne in 1963, was elected a Fellow (ad eundem) of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists, England, both in 1964 and became an Honorary Fellow of the International Academy of Cytology in 1966. He was President of the Victorian Society of Pathology and Experimental Medicine in 1945 and 1960 and President of the Section of Clinical Pathology of the British Medical Association in Victoria in 1950.

After 26 years, having had great impact on teaching and practice of pathology in Victoria and indeed Australia, he retired in 1965 and his successor as Director was Harold Attwood, who had been his assistant for 4 years.

After attending the Second World Congress of the International Academy of Cytology in Paris, a journey marred by respiratory illness and a car accident, he became Consultant Pathologist and Curator of the Museum, posts he held until ill-health supervened, only a few months before his death.

Unlike many pathologists his interests extended beyond the confines of the laboratory and he made valuable contributions to the humane management of sexual anomalies. Through him, the Pathology Department of the Women's became a place frequented by clinicians who wanted to discuss real problems in living patients.

As a man he remained quite untouched by past misfortunes even though he did not escape human prejudice on coming to Melbourne - it was not easy to be a German in Melbourne in the early 1940s. Widely read in more than one language his English vocabulary was unusually large and his understanding of English grammar shamed many of us when he reviewed our papers. Despite these accomplishments he retained a heavy German accent which blunted communication in lectures to undergraduates. His technological colleagues were made fully aware of the pallor of the haematoxylin and eosin sections when the Director asked them "Vy is this so Vishy-Vashy?" He also not infrequently would assign something or somebody to "Voop-Voop".

Gifted with absolute pitch his joy in music was deep and his criticism often penetrating. He and his wife frequently attended concerts in Melbourne; it could be a revelation for the uninitiated to accompany them. In his early years he played the organ and told how he once did so after having performed a post-mortem on a member of the minor royalty of Germany. He had an eye for beauty wherever it was to be found and the discrimination of a gourmet. No-one else could develop a violent urticaria on eating fish but yet relish, without a rash, oysters and crayfish.

Most people who got to know him will remember him not merely as an excellent pathologist, but also as a very good friend always ready to help no matter whether the problem was trivial or serious. Mischievously he had often said when surprise was expressed at the rapidity with which he solved a problem "It's not what you know, it's who you know that counts".

Hans Bettinger died of prostatic carcinomatosis on 20th September 1975, in his 79th year. He is survived by his wife, his daughter Renate, his son-in-law Chris and two grandsons. At the funeral service in Toorak Presbyterian Church Professor Attwood spoke movingly and the cortege moved off to Bach's "Great" Prelude in C, a choice he would have approved.

In his presidential address to the Australian Society of Cytology, Robert Barter recently wrote "He was a man of great intellectual attainment with a highly developed appreciation of music, and unexpected fondness for ... the Australian bush and an unflagging respect for accuracy in the use of the spoken and written word. Indeed, he spoke only when he had something worthwhile to say and always gave careful consideration as to how he would say it. He was in all of his ways and appearance a very distinguished man".

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives



# Black, Joseph ( - 1879)

M.D. (Melb.) <i>Born</i>	Antigua, British West Indies
<i>Died</i>	7 March 1879 St. Kilda, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

DR. JOSEPH BLACK  
(1874 - 1876)

When Dr. Tracy died in 1874, his successor on the Honorary Medical Staff of the Lying-In Hospital was Dr. Joseph Black, born in Antigua, British West Indies and coming to Australia in 1853, at the height of the gold fever. On appointment, Black was already 63 years of age, and his association with the Hospital lasted only two years.

From contemporary records it is learnt that Black was not an ambitious man; he did not claim to be brilliant; he was content with the unexciting routine of professional life, and was steadily successful. Liked by his professional brethren, his patients thoroughly confiding in him, he had few interests outside of medicine. He helped to found the Medical Society, of which, in 1862, he was President and was one of the editorial committee of the "Australian Medical Journal". He was an honorary surgeon to the Benevolent Asylum, and honorary physician to the Melbourne Hospital. His force of character may be deduced from the fact of his having passed, in 1864, the examination under the then special regulations at the University of Melbourne, for the degree of M.D., twenty years after becoming a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. He was by nature a gentleman, by conviction and habit an honourable man, and by sympathy a good fellow. He had a certain sense of quaint humour, which made him an excellent companion; he enjoyed the joke of frequently making him, at the medical dinners, respond to the toast of the Navy, though he had never been on board a war-ship in his life.

In his 68th year Dr. Black died at St. Kilda on March 7th 1879, but had been so long lingering with a painful illness that death came as a relief, both to himself and the many sincere friends he left behind.

Dr. Black was unmarried, and had no relatives in Australia. He was Surgeon-Major of the Prince of Wales Light Horse Cavalry, and has therefore a military funeral, with a firing party of forty men.

The affliction from which he suffered - it dated from a spinal injury in 1875 - was regarded at the time as very unusual, and Mr. Rudall, F.R.C.S. Eng., surgeon to the Melbourne Hospital, who attended him, furnished to the Australian Medical Journal an account of the illness and the appearances presented after death:

"From the history it appears the case was one of chronic spinal meningitis, resulting from injury, and giving rise to changes in the cord itself, or possible of meningo-myelitis in the first place. The old pericardial adhesions seemed to have had no important effect on the heart's function and the renal concretions resulted in all probability from deficient innervation and lying so long on the back. It seems also scarcely doubtful from the clinical and pathological facts, that at the end of June and the beginning of July 1876, his head symptoms were due to arachnitis traveling up the cord and reaching the cerebral arachnoid, and that this exacerbation of the disease was caused by the concussions of the already inflamed spinal cord and membranes, which were to a great extent unavoidable in a journey of several miles. It may be mentioned that for a very long period it had been necessary to inject between five and six grains of morphia in the 24 hours, and even with this large quantity his sufferings were very great. Galvanism and induction current were both tried, but without very marked effects."

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Board of Management (1856 - 1995)



From August 1856

To July 1995

## Details

This provenance note does not include the Board of Directors of the Women's and Children's Health Care Network, Women's and Children's Health or the Royal Women's Hospital recreated in 2004.

The Board of Management was the group responsible for the overall management of the hospital from its creation in 1856 until its demise in July 1995. At that time the hospital was compulsorily merged with the Royal Children's Hospital and a Board of Directors was appointed by the state government to manage the new entity.

The Board was known by several names and was variously constituted during its 139 year existence.

Committee/Board members were elected by Subscribers to the hospital at the Annual General Meeting until circa 1980.

### VISITING COMMITTEE

A committee of this name was reported in "The Argus" newspaper on 12 August 1856 where it is described as "a group of ladies (who) have consented to become visitors of this institution". These sixteen ladies all went on to be foundation members of the Ladies' Committee (Committee of Management) of the Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for the Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children.

Mrs Robert Barlow  
Mrs Barry  
Mrs Cassell  
Mrs Draper  
Mrs Griffith  
Mrs Guinness  
Mrs Handfield  
Mrs Heatherington  
Mrs Jennings (Alicia)  
Mrs Odell  
Mrs Macartney  
Mrs Charles Perry (Fanny)  
Mrs Seddon  
Mrs Simpson  
Mrs Stubbs

The Prospectus issued in August 1856 prior to the public meeting that formally established the institution also includes the names of Mrs Puckle, Mrs J T Smith and Mrs Tripp. The only lady omitted from these lists who subsequently was on the inaugural Ladies' Committee was Mrs McCombe.

### COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT (Ladies' Committee)

This group founded the Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases of Women and Children in August 1856 together with Drs Richard Tracy and John Maund. The first President, Frances (Fanny) Perry was the wife of Melbourne's first Anglican Bishop and many of the other ladies had strong protestant, particularly evangelical, church connections. They were assisted by a Gentlemen's Committee "for reference and counsel in time of need". The Honorary Secretary, Mrs Elizabeth Tripp was an active and competent manager whose correspondence from the first two years forms part of Series D0014.

The ladies were hands-on managers, meeting weekly and assuming responsibility for admission of patients, staff appointments and negotiating contracts with builders and suppliers.

### COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT (Ladies' Committee and Gentlemen's Committee)

In 1870 the Gentlemen's and Ladies' Committees merged, although the Annual Reports continue to list the two groups separately until 1972. Changes in legislation saw the numbers and responsibilities change from time to time.

This committee was also referred to as the General Committee until about 1954.

# Brett, Percy Gore (1879 - 1968)

M.B. (Melb.), F.R.A.C.S.

*Born* 20 September 1879  
Beechworth, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 5 December 1968  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Ivon Hayes and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1969.

### PERCY GORE BRETT

Percy Gore Brett, who had reached his ninetieth year, died at Melbourne after a long and distressing illness on December 5, 1968.

His father, William Gore Brett, was Sheriff at Beechworth during the gold-rush days of the 1850's, and was well acquainted with Robert O'Hara Burke, sergeant of police at Beechworth, and later, the leader of the badly-managed and ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition of 1861. Brett was also intimately concerned with the activities of the Kelly gang, for he was close to the centre of the area in which they operated. He was later appointed Governor of Pentridge Gaol, and subsequently Inspector-General of Penal Establishments in Victoria, a position he held until his retirement.

Percy Brett was born at Beechworth on September 20, 1879, one of a large family, of whom 10 boys survived. He was adopted by an aunt who lived near Port Fairy, and at the age of 10 he moved to Portarlington, where he attended the local State school. Four years later he was enrolled at the Geelong College, whose founder and principal was the erudite Dr. George Morrison. Here he showed the aptitude for sport, and during his last two years was a member of both the football and the tennis teams; he also won the quarter mile and the pole vault at the college sports in his final year. He was popular at school and for a time many years later was president of the Old Geelong Collegians. He matriculated at the age of 19, and went to Melbourne to begin his medical course.

His university years were not marked with any distinction, but in the final honours list he was placed ninth. He continued his sport, and played tennis and lacrosse, but his best effort was to become vice-captain of the University B lacrosse team. He appears to have suffered some financial stringency, for during the long vacations he worked as a jackaroo on a station near Stawell to help pay his university fees; his wages, 17s. 6d. per week and keep, were increased to 30s. during harvesting season. He completed his medical course without interruption, and gained the degrees of M.B. in 1903 and B.S. in 1904.

At that time, only the first eight on the honours list were appointed residents at the Melbourne Hospital, so Brett had to seek elsewhere. He found a position at the Warrnambool Hospital, which had taken its first resident only the year before. After nine months, he obtained the post of resident surgeon to out-patients at the Children's Hospital, Melbourne, where he remained for two years and nine months. There were four resident surgeons, two out-patient and two in-patient - the latter being the senior - and the senior in-patients surgeon acted as superintendent; Percy held the post during his last nine months. In those days, during the summer months many wards were filled with patients suffering from typhoid fever, and at all times diphtheria and infantile diarrhoea were prevalent. The members of the honorary staff, all men of great repute, were Jeffrey Wood, Richard Stawell, Charles Ryan, Peter Bennie and Hobill Cole; and the residents, who in their turn were to attain to a similar high standing, were Frank Andrew, Stewart Ferguson, Harvey Sutton, Arthur Morris and Hume Turnbull.

After leaving the Children's Hospital, Percy acted as locum tenens for a period of six months and Albury and Wangaratta, and experienced the hardships and inconveniences of country medical practice in the horse-and-buggy age; long journeys at night to outlying farms were common, but they did not absolve him from his daily stint of duties.

In 1909 he began practice in Power Street, Hawthorn, and was appointed assistant out-patient surgeon at the Children's Hospital. In 1914 he bought Dr R.H. Morrison's practice in Toorak, where he practised for nearly 40 years. He left Toorak in 1952, to carry on practice in Collins Street.

Owing to absences at the war, the honorary staff at the Women's Hospital, Melbourne, was considerably reduced, and Percy acted for a time as locum tenens; but in 1917 he was appointed honorary surgeon, and he resigned from the position he held at the Children's Hospital. He spent seven years as an obstetric surgeon, and then moved to the gynaecological department, where he remained for 15 long years before his promotion to the in-patient gynaecological staff; his enjoyment of this senior office lasted one year only before his retirement at the age of 60 in 1939. This misfortune arose principally from the increase in the number of the honorary staff from 12 to 16 in 1914. In 1917 the senior surgeons were Felix Meyer, George Horne, Reggie (R.H.) Morrison and Cairns Lloyd, and the next honorary to be appointed after Percy was Arthur Wilson in 1920.

During World War 1, Percy served part-time at the Base Hospital, Melbourne; in both World Wars he acted as Area Medical Officer.

He was admitted to the fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in 1929.

Percy Brett was of average height, but of solid build. His disposition appeared sober and serious, and although not pessimistic, he was continually beset by worries and anxieties. The cause of this temperamental peculiarity was obscure; perhaps it originated in his childhood, for after his graduation his career was highly successful and fortunate and he enjoyed good health until his last decade. Among his intimate friends he lost his reticence and became warm and friendly with an impish sense of humour; in this mood he loved to relate anecdotes of the early social and medical life of well-known personalities and their activities. All who knew Percy liked him, for he was agreeable, kept his own counsel and spoke ill of none. He lacked brilliance, but he more than compensated for this by his diligence, his reliability and his integrity. His qualities were recognised by his patients, for he had a large practice. As an honorary he was loyal to his colleagues, helpful to his residents and courteous to the nursing staff. Tennis was his life-long recreation, and with a small coterie of similarly-minded friends, some of whom, like Brett himself, were of first-class standard, he continued to play at an age when most others have relinquished all sporting activities.

Percy Brett married Amy Isabel Young, of Horsham, in 1911, and they had three children, a daughter, Elise, and two sons, Stewart and Maxwell, both of whom graduated, the former in law, the latter in medicine.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Burke, Stephen Joseph (1835 - 1898)



M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.K.Q.C.P. (Ireland)

*Born* 1835 County Roscommon, Ireland

*Died* 24 November 1898 Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Medical practitioner, Obstetrician and Gynaecologist

## Details

Written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

STEPHEN JOSEPH BURKE  
(1879 - 1892)

Stephen Joseph Burke, born in County Roscommon, Ireland, in 1835 (the year Melbourne was founded) studied medicine in Dublin and became a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 1856, and Licentiate of the King and Queen's Colleges of Physicians, Ireland in 1862. He joined the Royal Navy and as surgeon on H.M.S. "Cordelia" saw active service in the Crimean War (1853–55). Resigning from the Navy, he arrived in Australia in 1864 and practiced in Toowoomba and Gympie, Queensland, during the gold rush days.

In 1865 he married Miss Marion Allen (of Cornwall) and left for Melbourne where he was registered by the Medical Board on November 22nd 1870, and secured a residence in Victoria Street, North Melbourne. He quickly became established as a fashionable Obstetrician with a further reputation for breast surgery. He did not confine his attention to wealthy patients and had many in the poorer classes, amongst whom his private acts of charity made his name a household word in the North Melbourne district.

His practice was soon largely obstetrical and it is stated that he could account for an average of one confinement for every day of the year. The wives of many of the doctors of Melbourne at that time were amongst his maternity patients.

Soon becoming interested in the Women's Hospital (or Lying-In Hospital as it was then called) in 1877 he was one of those who supported the appeal to finance a new building on its present site. Burke was present when the buildings were opened in January 1878. In this year he was appointed by the Committee of the Lying-In Hospital as locum tenens for Dr. Martin who had obtained leave to visit Europe, and when Dr. Martin died in 1879 Burke obtained a permanent appointment; there was considerable interest in this position which was filled (as was then the rule) by vote of hospital subscribers on 22nd April 1879. The three applicants were Dr. Burke, Dr. James Jamieson and Dr. Fulton. Dr. Jamieson had recently been appointed Lecturer in Obstetrics in the University and required the Physicianship of the Lying-In Hospital to complete his status. But Dr. Burke was in possession as locum and was personally held in well deserved respect. The contest was between Burke and Jamieson, and on the vote, popularity and possession won the day by 272 to 119.

In 1880 an interesting case in one of his hospital patients was reported in the "Australian Medical Journal". The patient came into hospital in obstructed labour, the obstruction being found to be due to a hydatid cyst in the vagina. The cyst was tapped, forceps applied, and delivery accomplished. The mother and child left the hospital well.

In 1887 Dr. Burke was involved in the distressing Beedham case in which he was submitted to severe censure by the then Coroner, Dr. Youl. Mrs Jane Beedham, a widow, was licensee of the Waterloo Hotel in Little Collins Street West. She had an abortion procured illegally and when on account of haemorrhage, was unable longer to serve in her bar, she announced that "one life was worth more than sixty tankers", closed the bar, and retired to bed. Dr. Burke was called in against the wishes of the patient and without a true knowledge of the attendant circumstances, sent to a nearby chemist for ergot of rye which was administered in two doses, a painter who was working in the hotel measuring the amount. Burke called next morning and found the patient's condition unaltered. He then informed her that operation was necessary to prevent the onset of blood poisoning. The operation, presumably curettage, was performed forthwith in the bedroom without any assistant. Bleeding was brought under control, and recovery from the anaesthetic was rapid. Before leaving to obtain the services of a visiting nurse, Dr. Burke gave strict and definite instructions that on no account must his patient get out of bed. Dr. Burke subsequently gave a death certificate recording death from haemorrhage. His friends claimed that his kindness of heart, good natured disposition and faculty for the believing the best in all circumstances led him to the decision that an enquiry would only do harm. Other men thought differently, and an inquest was ordered forthwith. A post-mortem examination was subsequently made by Professor H.B. Allen and Dr. William Moore, in the presence of Dr. Burke, Dr. Lloyd, Dr. Meyer and Dr. Cutts, Jnr. Though the uterus was the organ in which interest centered, it was examined by Professor Allen alone at the Melbourne Hospital, and death was recorded as due to haemorrhage from a laceration made during the illegal operation which had taken place a few days before. At the inquest, the implication put before the jury was that Dr. Burke himself had caused the woman's death by the abortion, and had issued a false and misleading death certificate. The case was adjourned for two weeks, and during that time evidence was forthcoming of the time and place where the abortion had been induced, and Dr. Burke was completely exonerated.



The majority of the medical profession felt strongly for Burke, and at the conclusion of the case presented him with an address expressing sympathy “on account of the trouble and anxiety which that enquiry must have caused you”; concluding “we feel the more called upon to give this expression of opinion since it may happen to any medical man involved in similar circumstances and with as little real cause for blame as there was in your case”. The document was signed by G.H. Fetherston and 50 other well known doctors, amongst them members of the Women’s Hospital staff. This document is now in the possession of the Medical Society of Victoria, having been presented by Dr. Godfrey Baldwin, (grandson of Dr. Burke) of Sale, Victoria.

During a serious illness in 1897, Dr. Burke took as his partner, Dr. Gerald Baldwin, F.R.C.S. (Eng.) who later married his daughter, Ida, and Baldwin continued practicing at Victoria Street, North Melbourne on Burke’s death. His widow for a number of years was in charge of the outpatient department of the Children’s Hospital, Melbourne.

Dr. Burke remained an active member of the Women’s staff for twenty years. He died on 24th November 1898 aged 63 years, and was buried from St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church, West Melbourne.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women’s Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women’s Hospital Archives

# Butler, Hildred Mary ( - 1975)

D. Sc.

*Died*

8 April 1975

*Occupation*

Bacteriologist

## Details

The articles transcribed below were written by Arthur M Hill and David Leslie and were published in the Medical Journal of Australia, 29 November 1975.

HILDRED MARY BUTLER (1931- 1971)

Dr. Hildred Butler, D. Sc., who died on April 8, 1975, was one of the great and gifted medical bacteriologists this country has produced. In an outstanding career she devoted 40 years to the investigation and control of infections in women. She worked in the dual roles of clinical and research bacteriologist and in each won international renown for herself and her hospital.

During the 10 years from 1928 to 1938, as Bacteriologist to the Baker Institute of Medical Research, Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, under Directorship of the famous Dr. W.J. Penfold, she showed talent and creative ability, publishing eight significant papers and a book, "Blood Cultures and Their Significance", which is a classic.

In 1931, when severe and fatal infections after abortion and childbirth in Victoria were appallingly frequent, The Women's Hospital, Melbourne, with Dr. Penfold's co-operation, enlisted Miss Butler's services for the investigation of serious and puzzling infections. She soon discovered in these the predominant role of anaerobic streptococci and by 1937 had established that serious puerperal and abortifol infections at The Women's Hospital were largely due to four bacterial causes; anaerobic streptococci, haemolytic streptococci, Staphylococcus pyogenes and Clostridium welchii.

In 1938 Miss Butler was appointed first Bacteriologist to The Women's Hospital. She at once introduced a continuous 24-hour bacteriological service and soon established definitively the bacterial pattern of obstetric infections with their predominance of anaerobic bacteria. She demonstrated that the dangers of infectiousness were confined to infections with group A haemolytic streptococci and Staphylococcus pyogenes and had the Victorian Midwives regulations modified in 1941. She intensified research into virulent infections of Cl. welchii and group A haemolytic streptococci, the lightning progress of which nullified the diagnostic value of cultures; she overcame this challenge with a brilliant original contribution: development of a direct smear test whereby the nature and virulence of an infection could be determined within an hour. As a member of the Hospital's first Infection Control Subcommittee in 1957, she was jointly responsible for solving the problem of staphylococcal antibiotic resistance within two years.

In summary, during 33 years at The Royal Women's Hospital, Hildred Butler investigated exhaustively the infective problems of 236,000 women who were confined and 64,000 who aborted. Much of this is recorded in 21 papers and contributions (13 of joint authorship) published here and abroad. Her papers on the major bacterial infections are classical, being original, first in the field, bacteriologically exact and covering material of statistical magnitude.

Dr. Butler was a fine teacher and lecturer to medical students for 25 years. Although not a medical graduate she became an excellent clinician, for collaboration to her meant consultations between clinician and bacteriologist at any hour of the day or night, at the bedside, in the theatre or laboratory. Particular strengths were her determination, apparent tirelessness and meticulous attention to detail in routine work, and originality, imaginative brilliance and tenacity in research. These won her an unassailable place in the elucidation of the infections which complicate childbirth and abortion in Australia. She had a wide circle of friends who enjoyed her distinctive personality, her humour and her warmth. My personal debt to her is incalculable for we shared an unbroken scientific collaboration for over 40 years.

(Arthur M. Hill)

It is rare to have the privilege of meeting a person who, though near retirement, combines the experience of a lifetime with enthusiasm and soaring imagination. Dr. Hildred Butler was such a person.

Her work was her life and it was a life that was filled with experience of a type which none of us can expect to gain. With her death an era of unprecedented change in bacteriology draws to a close. It spans a period from pre-to-postantibiotic therapy, and her work played a pivotal role. By painstaking observation Hildred Butler was able to shed light on the interpretation of bacteriological findings in female genital tract infection and this was of inestimable value when antibiotics and chemotherapy became available. Her understanding of the clinical aspects of maternal infections was exceptionally broad, and it is the perspective provided by this understanding that is often sadly lacking in the scientist of today.

After retirement from her position as Bacteriologist at The Royal Women's Hospital in 1971 she continued to demonstrate her unquenchable spirit in spite of great physical discomfort and was actively engaged in unraveling the complex interplay between strange bacterial forms and the kidney at the time of her death. With her passing, Australia has lost a farsighted and unwaveringly scientific mind driven by a degree of dedication to which we can all aspire. We at The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, miss a respected colleague and a loyal friend.

(David Leslie)

# Butler, Hildred Mary (1906 - 1975)

DSc ARACI

*Born* 9 October 1906  
Elsternwick, Victoria, Australia

*Died* April 1975  
Carlton, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Bacteriologist and Medical Scientist

## Summary

Prepared by Ann Westmore PhD, 2006

Hildred Mary Butler was pivotal to studies during the 1930s of infectious agents killing one woman in every 360 at the Women's Hospital after childbirth or abortion. For over four decades she collaborated with, or was a member of, the hospital's staff, establishing an outstanding Bacteriology Department. Her knowledge of micro-organisms and their effects on human health was exceptional, her career spanning the time before, as well as after, the introduction of antibiotics.

She and Dr Arthur Machen "Bung" Hill undertook detailed studies of infective organisms, growing them in the laboratory to determine what they were and what treatment might curb their spread. Their seminal paper on the diagnosis and management of "clostridium Welchii" infections (now known as "clostridium perfringens") was of international significance. They combined innovative and astute bacteriology with expert clinical judgment to revolutionise the care of women with these dangerous infections, saving many lives and much illness in the process.

Butler's breadth of understanding of maternal infections was invaluable in developing better treatments, in teaching and supervising countless doctors, nurses and bacteriologists in a range of beneficial practices, and in advocacy to an international audience over a period of some 25 years.

## Details

Hildred Butler was born on 9 October 1906 at Elsternwick in Melbourne, the daughter of a Victorian wheat farmer, Archie Butler, and his wife, Rose Josephine, née Hancock.

A gifted student, she achieved either first or second place in class throughout her secondary schooling at Lauriston Girls School (1918-23). She was equal dux in her final year, studying algebra and geometry, history and English. A fictionalised account of her relationship with the other dux portrayed Butler as a "nerd" (in modern terminology) with her head in a book and a preference for her own company.

### A career in science

Butler gained entry to the University of Melbourne where she enrolled in Science. Like many women of her era who pursued successful careers in science and medicine, she never married in contrast to her co-dux whose post-school path, according to Lauriston archivist Jenny Bars, "was typical of upper-middle class girls of her era: a year in Europe, then back to the family home in Toorak to await marriage and family".

Her university Science results improved after a solid but unspectacular start. She passed all subjects in her first year, and then gained first class honours in chemistry and physiology in both 2nd and 3rd years. On graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1928, she immediately gained employment at the newly-established Baker Institute for Medical Research attached to the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne.

While working at the Baker Institute during the following decade she was strongly influenced by the Director, Dr William Penfold, an English-born (1875), University of Edinburgh trained doctor. Having joined the Baker after a stint as foundation Director of the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories, 1916-26, he teamed an international reputation in preventive medicine, blood analysis and anti-toxin work with wide-ranging experience as a clinician, researcher, teacher and practical bacteriologist.

### Cultures and Collaboration

Butler learned exceedingly well from Penfold, mastering the techniques and skills he taught her in blood-culture work and characterisation of anaerobic bacteria (that is, bacteria that do not require oxygen to survive). By the early 1930s, she was applying these skills to study infective material provided by a number of hospitals, including the Women's. According to the hospital's "Book of Remembrance", she was enlisted to help study a spate of "appallingly frequent severe and fatal infections" among patients in 1931. Comments made subsequently by Dr A. M. "Bung" Hill, then a junior member of the hospital's staff, indicate that his long-standing collaboration with Butler started at this time.

Max Swan, who joined the Baker Institute in 1934 as a teenager, recalled Butler as "an exacting, awe-inspiring lady whose penetrating blue stare, focused through large-frame spectacles earned her the nickname 'the Praying Mantis'". Swan, who went on to study medicine, said that he and the other "juniors also held that she conducted human sacrifice at the full moon". Notwithstanding these colourful descriptions which suggest something of Butler's serious and at times autocratic demeanour, Swan acknowledged her as "an outstanding bacteriologist and serologist".

In 1937 Butler dedicated her book, "Blood Cultures and their Significance", to the inspiring Penfold whose "steadfast devotion to scientific truth and his never-failing help and encouragement" deeply impressed her. In the Preface, Penfold returned the compliment, saying the book gave him "peculiar pleasure". Butler's was the third monograph from the Baker in a series of publications, but the others had "been written by people who were experienced in their subjects when they associated themselves

with the Institute". Butler, on the other hand;

... has spent the whole of her bacterial life in the services of the Institute, so that in a very real and complete sense, this is a Baker Institute monograph.

Penfold also voiced his pride in the high standard of Butler's work. When she joined the Baker Institute, only about 10% of all attempts to isolate bacteria from the bloodstream using culture techniques were positive. Over the years she had made a major difference, doing all the blood cultures the Alfred Hospital required and lifting the percentage of positive results to 25-30%. Because of "her devotion and success in this work", Penfold had suggested she write the book.

In his view, the average clinician underused blood cultures for diagnosis, prognosis or to help in deciding the best course of treatment because they doubted their accuracy, blaming technical defects for this situation. If the methods described in Butler's book were used, fewer false negative results would occur, he said. A second reason he proffered for why blood cultures were under-used was the absence of a succinct, yet reasonably complete book on the subject, a problem Butler's book overcame both for bacteriologists doing technical work, and clinicians who interpreted the results.

#### Triumphs and tributes

In 1938 Butler was appointed the first bacteriologist at the Women's Hospital where she remained for the next 33 years. As detailed in the "Book of Remembrance", she and Hill continued to work together for decades, developing an international reputation for their insights into infections that complicate childbirth and abortion. Their major contributions were to increase understanding of, and rapid diagnosis and treatment of, anaerobic infections; and to prevent staphylococcal cross infection. They collaborated on numerous articles in the medical literature and Butler herself wrote others on bacteriological and haematological topics which formed the basis of her successful application for a Doctor of Science (DSc) degree from the University of Melbourne in 1946.

Dr Gytha Betheras, a member of the hospital's medical staff for many years from 1957, found Butler a very committed and competent colleague who was easy to work with, thoughtful and perceptive. She recalled that when suspicions about a possible infection with the dangerous "clostridium Welchii" bacteria arose after hours, Butler would be informed immediately whereupon she would promptly drive into the hospital from her home at distant Ferny Creek and remain until she'd performed the relevant tests on the patient concerned, advised on the most appropriate treatment, and checked on the patient's progress.

World-renowned research biochemist, Professor James B. Brown, who joined the hospital in 1963 regarded Butler as "quite a force around the hospital". He recalled her taking stands on infection control despite meeting "some resistance" from a sub-section of the medical staff who considered they should have more involvement in the matter. Other sources confirm that she put some noses out of joint by her reluctance to provide details of the organisms involved in particular cases of infections, providing only her recommendations for treatment.

In 1971 she retired from the Royal Women's Hospital having reached age 65 and having established a Bacteriology Department with a staff of 15. Indefatigable to the end, she promptly announced she had no intention of quitting research, as she had become extremely interested in chronic kidney infections and hoped to work part-time in that field. "So I'm probably giving up work to cart bricks," she told the Melbourne "Herald".

She was soon listed as a Senior Associate in Medicine at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, conducting research into kidney infections in the renal unit with leading kidney physician, Dr Ken Fairley. Dr Fairley's wife, nephrologist, Professor Priscilla Kincaid-Smith, described Butler as "very definite in her opinions, very intelligent ... and very impressive as a research worker". She continued with the research until close to her death from cancer in April 1975 despite great physical discomfort.

A few months later Hill used a retirement function for another staff member to reminisce about Butler, "a very wonderful bacteriologist who died recently...I would think that in her class she had no equal in the world. She is among the immortals. She came here in 1938 and found out for Australia what the conditions are...that complicate childbirth and abortion. They are quite different from the conditions that have this effect in other countries. In 1941 she developed a wonderful [smear] test. It used to take in those days with good bacteriology and a first class unit two or more days to culture a germ that was killing a woman. She couldn't pick these damn things quick enough. These women were dying in a few hours. She sat down and, with a stroke of genius, and with special staining methods...she could decide in 30 minutes what this particular infection was. That's been the basis of all our success in infection since that day."

Matron Betty Lawson used the occasion of her retirement function in 1976 to praise Butler and Hill, together with Dr Jack Laver, a former Medical Superintendent of the Hospital;

I'd like to pay a tribute to Dr Arthur Hill, Dr Hildred Butler and Dr Laver the members of the hospital's first Infection Control Committee [in 1957] for their excellent contribution to this hospital and to the world in the control of obstetric infection from 1931 to 1960. In 1936 a management basis was laid down for "clostridium Welchii" infections and now the incidence is very limited. Dr Butler developed a quick smear test which enabled us to diagnose the ladies with this infection very quickly, and so they were well looked after. The active interest of this trio in infection control had a tremendous influence on the practice [of midwifery] in this hospital.

Hildred Butler made a major contribution to the health of countless women. As a tribute to her memory, Hill commissioned a portrait of her by artist Alan Martin in 1967 which he donated to the hospital some years later. In 2003 the hospital recognised her legacy in a formal way by establishing the Hildred Butler Fellowship in Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases worth \$40,000.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Betty Lawson's farewell function,, 1975, A1993/3/76; Royal Women's Hospital Archives
- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives
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**Royal Women's Hospital Archives** Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archi



# Chambers, Roy William (1890 - 1944)

D.S.O., M.D. (Melb.), F.R.A.C.S., D.G.O. (Dub.)

*Born* January 1890  
Sandringham, Victoria, Australia

*Died* January 1944  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

ROY WILLIAM CHAMBERS  
(1920 - 1924)

Roy Chambers was for 20 years one of the leading Gynaecologists in Australia. Though his association was longer with the Royal Melbourne - of which his is one of the great names - yet it was at the Women's that he laid the foundations of success, both as a resident and an honorary.

Born in January 1890, the son of William Chambers of Sandringham, he was first educated at the Brighton Grammar School, whose Head Master then was Dr. George Crowther. Roy qualified M.B. (Melb.) in 1911. Sickness interfering with his results in the final examination, he was not included in the annual list of resident medical officers at the Melbourne Hospital, but a vacancy occurring after a few months gave him his chance and from then on, except for his war service, he had a constant association with this hospital for over 30 years.

In 1913 he became a resident at the Women's Hospital with his lifelong friend Arthur Wilson; one of his honoraries then on the Women's staff was R.H. Fetherston, who always called Chambers and Wilson his two boys, and to whose kindly help and encouragement both owed a great deal.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Cherry, Margaretta (Meta) (1822 - 1907)

*Born* 1822  
Lockington, Yorkshire, England

*Died* 1907  
Elsternwick, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Nurse

## Summary

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English born Margaretta (Meta) Cherry spent twenty two years on the nursing staff of the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children, where she was affectionately described as 'the baby nurse' and was sufficiently respected to 'have the care of the keys' in the Matron's absence.

## Details

Margaretta Cherry worked as member of the nursing staff at the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children from 1867 until 1889.

Called 'Meta' by her family, Margaretta was born in Lockington, County of Yorkshire, England, to Francis Cherry and Frances Robinson. Margaretta arrived in the Colony of Victoria in June 1856, having sailed with one of her brothers and a sister aboard "Arthur the Great". These siblings joined other Cherry family members, including a married sister, Ada Waldron (née Cherry), who settled in Melbourne in 1849.

Few details of Margaretta Cherry's service at the Lying-in Hospital exist, as the records from this era are sparse, but copies of family correspondence written by Ada Waldron to her parents in Yorkshire shed some light on Nurse Cherry's role. An extract from one letter, dated April 1878, reads:

"Meta [Margaretta] has been at the Lying-in Hospital for eleven years now. I think her office there is more humble than that of Matron who is the daughter of a Doctor and was a governess; in her absence Meta has the care of the keys etc & and is looked up to. I am sorry to say that her health is not satisfactory. She suffers from palpitation and the Dr says there is valvular disease - but she has not had an attack lately, but she has aged very much the last 2 or 3 years." [1]

At the time that this letter was written, the Lying-in Hospital's Matron was Miss Emily Harvey who occupied the position of Matron from the early 1860s until mid-1882.[2] Nurse Cherry served under two other matrons during her employment: Mrs J D Cossins (1882-1885), formerly employed at "The Retreat" in Adelaide,[3] and Miss Charlotte Elizabeth Findlay from 1885.[4] The Matron's position was one of considerable responsibility and status. She was in charge of all of the Hospital's employees and was required to live at the Hospital with only a few hours away from the Hospital permitted each week.[5] Nurse Cherry must have been a trusted employee to be charged with the matron's duties.

Nurse Cherry was affectionately described as 'the baby nurse'. This nomenclature is recorded in correspondence written by Miss Margaret Howlett. Margaret Howlett's mother, Mary, undertook pupil nurse training at the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital in the year 1887, and after training, Mary worked around Wycliffe and Lake Bolac in Central Victoria. She was a respected midwife and nurse.

In the mid-1960s Margaret Howlett corresponded about her mother's work with Dr Frank Forster, a Melbourne obstetrician who had an interest in medical history. Subsequently, some of Mary Howlett's belongings: her certificate of training, white linen apron, and a family medicine chest, came to be housed in the collection of the Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Included in the collection are Margaret Howlett's letters to Frank Forster.

In a 1965 letter to Dr Forster, Margaret Howlett recalled how, as a little girl, she visited the Lying-in Hospital where her mother was a pupil nurse. Of her visit, Margaret Howlett wrote:

"In mother's time there was a nurse Cherry at the hospital who was the "baby nurse", she used to take me round the ward and show me all the babies whose mothers were in good order for visitors. Of course I was not allowed to touch any but I liked to see them." [6]

The precise nature of Nurse Cherry's day-to-day work with the babies in the years 1867-1889 is not known because few Hospital records from this era have survived. In most cases, mothers who were well and healthy breast-fed, keeping their infant in bed with them. But if mothers were too ill to care for their infants, it was the work of the midwifery nurses to attend to them. These babies were fed by hand with a spoon or eye dropper, or sometimes a "wet nurse" was engaged to breast-feed them.[7] Consequently feeding was time-consuming work. Midwifery nurses sewed clothing for the infants under their care too.[8]

Babies whose mothers died during, or after, the birth were cared for at the Lying-in Hospital by the midwifery nurses until a suitable home could be found for them. When no-one in the family was available to take them, these infants were sent to the city's Industrial Schools and orphanages or, in some cases, private citizens made applications to the Hospital to adopt a baby.[9]

Nurse Cherry, the baby nurse, had served at the Lying-in Hospital for 20 years when, in early 1888, she was recommended to receive £5 per annum in addition to her existing salary.[10] Nurses and other staff were permitted to apply for an increase of salary at the end of each year's service, according to hospital regulations, but a raise was contingent on the Ladies Committee of Management (LCOM) approval. The nurses at that time received a salary between that of the Hospital Cook (£60) and a House Maid (£45).[11] Nurse Cherry's application for an increase of salary at the end of 1888 was not granted.[12] Despite this rebuff, Margaretta remained at The Women's for another year until late November 1889 when it appears she resigned and was 'allowed a testimonial' by the LCOM,[13] by which time she was aged 67.

Nurse Cherry maintained an association with The Women's Hospital. In 1893 the Hospital's Honorary Treasurer, Mrs Don, acknowledged Nurse Cherry's donation of 10 shillings to the charity.[14] Until she died in 1907, Margaretta Cherry lived with her extended family, at Elsternwick in Melbourne's south-east.

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- 5 See
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# Crameri, Jean Frances ("Cram") (1909 - )

RN RM Cert. R. San 1

*Born* 28 March 1909  
Albury, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Midwife

## *Summary*

Prepared by Ann Westmore PhD, 2006

Jean Frances ("Cram") Crameri RN RM Cert. R. San 1 (1909-2005) spent 41 years of her working life on the staff of the Royal Women's Hospital, starting as a pupil midwife in 1934 and retiring as Deputy Matron in 1975. In between she saw the hospital re-built and helped in its re-birth; applied the teaching and organisational skills she developed in the Australian Army Nursing Service to her many and varied hospital responsibilities; earned qualifications to work in infant welfare and as a health inspector; and amassed an extraordinary knowledge of the hospital and its history.

## Details

Born at Albury Hospital on 28 March 1909 of Swiss, Irish, Cornish and French ancestry, "Cram" (as she was known throughout the hospital) was raised on a farm at Allans Flat, near Yackandandah in north-eastern Victoria. She was the oldest of three siblings, two girls and a boy. Her parents, Martin and Lilian Crameri, rewarded initiative and disciplined their children in a kindly way and by example taught them to do "their best, and then a little more".

Her first association with the Women's Hospital occurred through her mother who, at one stage, was cared for by Sr Dempsey, head midwife 1890-1896. Her earliest memories were of wanting to be a nurse. "Everything I did throughout my early years was with nursing in view," she wrote.

She attended Yackandandah State and High Schools to merit certificate level before moving to Melbourne at age sixteen. After completing typing and shorthand instruction at Caulfield Technical School she gained employment at the Myer Emporium as an Accounting Machine Operator. When she left Myer in March, 1930, her reference stated that she had "proved a very reliable and efficient member of staff" and had given "entire satisfaction with her work".

### Nurse training

In 1930 on her 21st birthday and just days after finishing at the Myer Emporium, she started three years' nurse training at the Colac & District Hospital. "You had to want to be a nurse very much to be one in those days", she said when reflecting on the poor pay and waiting period involved in gaining entry to a course of training.

In 1934, after working for a time at the Daylesford District Hospital she began her nine months midwifery training at the Women's Hospital on a salary of 5 shillings a week. Being Depression years, this amount was eroded by the "temporary" weekly unemployment relief tax of fourpence.

Colleagues with whom she developed close friendships while training in midwifery included Jessica Place, who started nurse training at the hospital a year earlier and who went on to become a much loved nurse teacher at the hospital. She also valued the support of Bob Greenaway, who joined the staff in 1925 and who was staff foreman from 1935. He frequently put her through her paces as to her "milk mixtures" and so helped her gain access to "the wonderful world of the midwife", a profession she later described as unique in terms of its "responsibility, trust and rewards".

The hospital was a dangerous place for patients, with one in 340 women dying from puerperal infection after childbirth, a rate about a hundred times higher than in 1970. Young nurses could also find some situations in the hospital environs perilous, and Cram was no exception. Delivering the bed cards for newly admitted patients to the Grattan St flat of the new superintendent, Dr Arthur "Bung" Hill, was a "bit frightening . . . because you had a pretty good reputation", she reminded Hill at her retirement function. For his part, Hill remembered her as a "very attractive, dark-eyed and vivacious young nurse".

In 1935 she was appointed to the permanent staff of the hospital in the midwifery section under Matron Margaret McDonald. Short stints in Out-patients and Emergency Departments followed, after which she joined the Labour Ward as a staff nurse. By 1938, the Medical Superintendent, Dr Ronald Rome, had formed a high opinion of her. "She has acquired a wide knowledge of the management of obstetrical cases and their aftercare," he said. "She is conscientious, thorough and reliable and possesses both enthusiasm and administrative ability. An excellent worker, she has a cheerful personality and is considerate in her dealings with patients."

Matron McDonald was also fulsome in her praise, commending Cram's efficiency as a sister, her competence as a teacher, together with her "talent for preparing rosters and administration generally". She attributed her competence in administration to her "business training" and to her "cheerful and happy disposition". When the Sister in Charge of the Labour Ward resigned at the beginning of 1938, Cram was appointed to take her place, filling it "most capably" until January 1941 when she was granted leave to join the Australian Army Nursing Service.

## War years

On the day World War II started, Cram was on leave in Sydney undertaking Infant Welfare training. She enlisted in mid-1940 and was called up in December that year. The hospital granted her leave to join the Australian Army Nursing Services in January 1941 and, before departing Australian shores, she put her savings toward the purchase of a home in Adelaide St. Armadale where her parents and sister came to live. Professor R. Marshall Allan, University of Melbourne Professor of Obstetrics at the Women's Hospital, wrote a reference "testifying to her ability not only as a nurse but more specially in an administrative capacity [and] in teaching students".

She faced the unknowns of wartime service optimistically. "I don't think anyone ever thought of being killed," she wrote later. "I never did even the odd time we were involved in bombing raids." Initially she saw service with the 2/9th Australian General Hospital, working in the Middle East at a remote railway siding near Tobruk "where sand storms lashed the tents and bombs dropped around her". She tended soldiers in slit trenches near Alexandria as well as in Nazareth during the Syrian campaign. As a Sister-in-Charge of wards, she oversaw the care of many patients including the Earl of MacDuff, Queen Elizabeth's cousin.

After returning home for six months' leave, she was sent to Port Moresby in 1942, where she served for 18 months. There, she taught Nursing Orderlies for medical units and later assisted the Matron. She worked in a forward nursing hospital of 600 beds which overnight became a 1200 bed hospital. She nursed survivors from the Kokoda Trail, and walked a section of it! Part of her work involved caring for soldiers suffering from lethal scrub typhus infection using the new "wonder drug", M&B 693. It was supposed to be a quick fix but, according to Matron Betty Lawson, "It (the drug) didn't fix them. They died until the nurses looked after them." Cram's distinguished contribution in this setting was recognised by a mention in dispatches.

From 1945 to 1946 Cram served on the island of Morotai, and was one of the first to hear the declaration of peace in the South West Pacific by Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Army, Field Marshal Thomas Blamey. While on Morotai she was appointed to the rank of Captain.

Mavis Prytz – the first Army nurse called up in the war and, later, a Board Member (1952-80) and President of the Royal Women's Hospital (1963-65) – had known Cram as her tutor when she was a midwife trainee at the hospital. Over the war years when both served in the AANS she said that as well as caring for the sick and wounded, Cram served as a liaison officer to many soldiers who had concerns about promotions or postings to other units. If anyone had a problem, they were told to "spend an evening with Sr Cram in the nurses' mess and critical situations will disappear".

Later, Cram wrote that to listen and give advice was a large part of a nurse's role. "This became more so in the Services, as the boys needed to talk to someone neutral." As a result, "the Sisters' Mess of an evening would be full of visitors and would include perhaps a General, Officers and other ranks".

During the war, Cram received six awards including the Defence Medal, the Australian Service Medal, the Pacific Star and the Africa Star. In her wartime activities, she was ably abetted by "her cobbler", Sr Marjorie Holding from 2/5th AGH. [Holding (1908-1986) became Matron at Epworth Hospital.] They always travelled in the same cabin, with Holding on the bottom bunk and Cram on the top. "If anything happened when we were unescorted, I'd have been the last out," Cram said.

## Post-war activities

After demobilisation, Cram undertook refresher courses in obstetrical nursing, rejoining the Women's Hospital in mid-1946, at which time it was grossly overcrowded with extremely limited facilities. It was said that some patients never made it into a bed. They came in on a stretcher, were delivered in the emergency department, and left. It was then that she really appreciated her years in the AANS, describing them as providing "a wonderful training ground" in human understanding, particularly in difficult times. "This training has been to me the greatest boon, because one becomes tolerant," she observed.

The Matron-in-Chief of the AANS, Sister Annie ('Sammie') Sage, commended Cram's conscientious, reliable and painstaking service, personally recommending her "to any branch of nursing requiring efficiency and intelligent application". When Sage was appointed Matron of the Women's Hospital in 1948, Cram flourished under her leadership. She was promoted to Senior Sister in the Labour Ward, gaining a reputation for "sympathy and consideration to those in her care". She was then appointed Supervisory Sister of the Midwife Section of the hospital, having demonstrated "her ability as a teacher" and her "thorough knowledge of nursing procedure".

During the late 1940s, she developed a close friendship with Mavis Braid (née Gunn). According to Braid, Cram's warm personality helped diffuse the resentment that was felt in some quarters when nurses who had served overseas were appointed to senior positions, displacing those who had played important roles in running the hospital in wartime.

In 1950 and 1951, Cram's thirst for new experiences saw her apply for leave to undertake further studies. In a letter supporting her application, Dr J.W. ("Hoppy") Johnstone said he had worked with her for thirteen years and appreciated her ability, personality and moral integrity. He said, furthermore, that "Her character is such that the Hospital expects her to take a leading part in its future destiny".

She undertook studies in sanitary inspection at London's Royal Sanitary Institute, having been granted leave on full pay, a contract binding her to the hospital for three years, and a grant of £750 to cover the cost of the trip. Soon after her return in 1952 she was appointed Deputy to Matron Sage, about whom she "thought the world". When Sage left soon after, Cram became Deputy to Matron Ruth Meaney who had been one of her pupils. From 1955 to 1975 she was Deputy to Matron Betty Lawson, another of her (1938) pupils.

As Deputy Matron, Cram took part in meetings of the Hospital Board and its sub-committees. Having previously had little personal contact with Board members except for a cheery greeting as they passed from the hospital to the Boardroom, it was a new and

agreeable experience. She later applauded the placement of the Boardroom in the midst of the hospital as a way of improving hospital relationships.

She worked closely with James Gillespie ("dear J.G." to her), Chairman of the Building Sub-Committee, and admired his wise counsel over the many years he oversaw the building of the new nurses' home and hospital. "One had to be present, and luckily I was, during the detailed planning of the hospital to realise how he so cleverly wove together all the wants and views of the three sections of the hospital – administration, nursing and medical," she said. "Nursing-wise, his monuments are a well-planned and functioning nurses home and hospital."

She also collaborated with A.J. ("Jim") Cunningham, who started working at the hospital the year after she arrived, and who had the onerous job of overseeing its extensive rebuilding. She felt privileged to work with him and with other talented staff members such as Arthur Wilson, John Green, Ivon Hayes, William Lemmon, "dear Prof Marshall Alan", and Dr George Bearham who mainly practised in the gynaecological section and who was the oldest honorary she knew at the time of her retirement in 1975. When the hospital farewelled her, Hill showered her with praise, speaking of her ability to meet every situation, improvise and cope, earning the admiration of all who came into contact with her.

She took a special interest in recording the history of nursing and midwifery at the Women's and, in 1987, the fruits of her labours appeared under the title, "One Hundred Years On 1856-1956: The Nurses and Midwives of the Royal Women's Hospital". It contained extracts from the minutes of meetings of the Committee of Management and from the hospital's "Annual Reports" that concerned nursing matters, together with some reflections on the hospital's Matrons up to 1956.

#### A lifetime's lessons

Cram learned much from the Matrons she worked under, "asking no favours nor receiving any". To be a Deputy, one had to learn "to say nothing at times but listen, and even look stupid". The Deputy acted as "the safety valve to enable the Matron to keep her sanity". She was "the buffer" who shielded the Matron as much as possible, particularly as relations between nurses, doctors and patients were becoming "increasingly difficult" in the 1970s.

It was "no good a Deputy having any ideas about herself as she must be prepared to be anyone from the junior clerk to the Matron and almost think as one with her". After twenty years working with Matron Betty Lawson she could invariably guess her thoughts because the pair shared great confidence in each other.

While Cram was regarded as enormously loyal to the hospital she was, at the same time, described as having "been a personality". "If Cram tells you she's a vegetarian, don't believe it," Dr "Bung" Hill joked. "Her favourite diet is male doctors."

Feigning agreement or being diplomatic was not in her nature. Board member Gordon Leckie, recounted her forthrightness and the tenacity with which she held views she believed were "right, and right for the hospital". Those who dared to differ could find they had a formidable adversary. For example, he once told Cram he thought the hospital could save money if the establishment of labour ward nurses was reduced. "I never repeated that silly remark," he said. "The establishment wasn't reduced. I was."

After retiring in 1975, Cram devoted herself to renovating her Armidale home, supporting her beloved St Kilda football team, and expanding her vegetable patch, which she relied on extensively, as a result of lifelong protein intolerance. The first paediatrician appointed to the Women's, Dame Kate Campbell, often told Cram that she was her greatest asset because, when caring for a baby who couldn't digest protein, she'd think of Cram as having, "lived [as a vegetarian] and you're all right".

#### Still feisty in retirement

Cram enjoyed a long and active retirement, which included hosting numerous gatherings at her home in the company of friends who delighted in her excellent cooking, her home-brewed beer, and wines from her excellent cellar. Two former Women's Hospital medical superintendents, Hill and Don Lawson, were among those to enjoy her hospitality on an informal basis as well, dropping in on her home from time to time when walking in her neighbourhood.

A series of falls in her final few years threatened her independence. After one such fall, which resulted in the insertion of a pin in her hip, her close friend and advisor, Mr Peter Dewan, thought she would not be going home. But as a result of "the tough nut she was, she came bouncing back" and lived at home until 2005 when she had another fall. She was taken to Cabrini Hospital where the Ward Sister was none other than Meg Ryan who had trained under her. "It will be my pleasure to look after her while she is at Cabrini," Ryan told Dewan. Cram never left the hospital, dying two months later, on 27 May 2005, aged ninety-six.

Neither of Cram's siblings, both of whom pre-deceased her, had children, making her the last of the line. She left an enduring legacy, however, which Hill remarked upon. During the time "the merry midwife" was at the hospital, a quarter of a million children were born, supervised by Cram or nurses she taught.

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# Cunningham, Charles (1890 - 1953)

M.B., B.S. (Melb.), D.A. (R.C.P. et S. Eng.)

*Born* 1890  
Talbot, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 5 May 1953

*Occupation* Anaesthetist and Medical Practitioner

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

CHARLES CUNNINGHAM  
(1924 - 1953)

Charles Cunningham, the son of Dr Peter Cunningham, was born in 1890 about 100 miles north of Melbourne at Talbot, at that time, as now, a small agricultural township, but at the height of the gold rush in 1858 this district harboured no fewer than 60,000 diggers encamped upon the Daisy Flat Lead.

Peter Cunningham was a Glasgow graduate, a relative of Professor D.J. Cunningham the famous anatomist and his even more famous son, Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Cunningham of Hyndhope, a relationship of which Charles Cunningham was very proud.

After attending a private school in the nearby larger centre of Maryborough, Charles was sent as a boarder to Scotch College, that at Eastern Hill on the site now occupied by St. Andrew's Hospital; not till 1924 did Scotch College move to the lovely Hawthorn grounds of 60 acres at the eastern side of the confluence of the River Yarra and Gardiner's Creek. In Charles Cunningham's day the Principal of Scotch was W.S. Littlejohn, an Aberdonian who had come to Melbourne via Nelson College, New Zealand, where he had directed the young Ernest Rutherford to those mathematical and physical studies which later won him a barony, the Order of Merit and a Nobel Prize because of his eminence in the field of radioactivity. Old Scotch Collegians over the years have been well represented on the staff of the Women's Hospital, among them being Rothwell Adam, W.G. Cuscaden, A.M. Wilson, J.S. Green, W.D. Salt, George Simpson, W.M. Lemmon, R.M. Rome and Colin Macdonald.

Charles Cunningham graduated M.B. (Melb.) in 1918 and in 1939 his work in anaesthesia was recognised by the D.A. of the English Royal Colleges. After a term as Resident Medical Officer at the Melbourne Hospital, he bought the general practice of Dr. Charles Marsden in Victoria Street, North Melbourne, but in later years devoted himself to anaesthesia only, being at one time or another Honorary Anaesthetist to the Women's Hospital, Melbourne Hospital, Prince Henry's and Eye and Ear Hospital.

Always interested in country pursuits he was surgeon to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and to the Findon and Oakland Hunt Clubs. For a period during the end of his life he sat on the Standing Committee of Convocation of the University and greatly enjoyed the academic association.

These varied interests brought him into contact with a wide circle of men and women and he possessed an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of people in the medical, legal and political spheres. He had acquired a wealth of forensic lore and there were few criminal trials - particularly those of medical interest - conducted in the first half of the twentieth century about which he could not recount every detail of importance. He loved the poetry and prose of our language and enjoyed nothing better than the happy and nostalgic discussions across the Hospital luncheon table with this lifelong friend Colin Macdonald.

He remained a bachelor, of few wants and simple tastes, for long periods living alone and cooking his own frugal meals. When not attending professional meetings he would generally be listening intently to symphonic music, none of the nuances of which he was not thoroughly familiar. Curiously enough he never travelled overseas in spite of his great interest in the British scene, and for many years his holidays were spent riding and walking in the Mount Buffalo area, the Government Chalet there being to him almost a home, and about which he suffered much gentle badinage because of skill in avoiding female entanglements.

Though Cunningham practised anaesthesia before it acquired its latter day excellence, he gave many years of reliable service in the speciality, and his short plump figure, round bald head, with very kindly eyes twinkling through heavy spectacles was well and most favourable known in Melbourne for almost half a century. Throughout his life exceedingly thrifty, as befitted his Scottish ancestry, he was in addition a very shrewd investor. Rather to the surprise of those who saw only his simple tastes and unextravagant living, when Cunningham died in 1953 at the age of 63, he proved to be a wealthy man.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Cuscaden, George (1858 - 1933)



Kt. Bach., V.D., L.R.C.P. et C. (Irel.), F.R.A.C.S.

*Born* 1858  
Wexford, Ireland

*Died* 1933

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

SIR GEORGE CUSCADEN  
(1896 \_ 1917)

George Cuscaden, appointed to the staff the same year as F.W.W. Morton and Taylor Downie, was born in Ireland in 1858, the son of Henry Cuscaden of Alexandra House, Wexford. Though his early medical education was at Mercer's Hospital, Dublin, he finally qualified at Edinburgh in 1880. After a period spent as an assistant in London, he went to Dominica, the largest of the Windward Islands, British West Indies, as a colonial surgeon, but developing a tropical abscess of the liver, he was invalided home. For some years he sailed as ship's surgeon, first to the West Coast of Africa and later across the Atlantic. In 1882 as a transport surgeon he was present at the bombardment of Alexandria by the fleet after Arabi Pasha had incurred British displeasure by his treatment of Europeans. A chance remark about prospects in Australia caused him to come to this country on the "Port Darwin". After a short period of practice at Port Wakefield he commenced at Urana, New South Wales and some years later settled at Port Melbourne, in the early nineties - at the time of the great financial depression - and developed a large general practice, to be relinquished in his later years for consultant work in Collins Street. Appointed to the outpatient staff of the Women's in 1896, he subsequently advanced to senior surgeon, consulting surgeon and a member of the Board of Management.

Cuscaden was a man of wide interests. When in practice in Port Melbourne, he became a Councillor and Mayor of that municipality and in 1912 he was elected to the Melbourne City Council as representative of the Latrobe Ward, becoming an Alderman in 1929. With a short intermission, he was a Commissioner of the Metropolitan Board of Works from 1914 to 1932. During this time he represented these bodies on various organisations and was a member of many sub committees ranging from the Spencer Street Bridge to the Melbourne Centenary Committee. He was in the forefront of any health movement of importance, having been Chairman of the Heatherton Sanatorium and of the Queen's Memorial Infectious Diseases Hospital at Fairfield. He stood high in the opinion of his medical colleagues, being a member of the Council of the Victorian Branch of the B.M.A. and a past President. He was a Foundation Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

Cuscaden was very interested in military affairs and on the outbreak of war in 1914 was made Principal Medical Officer of the 3rd Military District, being promoted Colonel. In February 1917 he was D.G.M.S. with the temporary rank of Brigadier-General and later Major-General; he continued in this position until 1921. As an indication of his responsibilities at the time of the Armistice in November 1918, there were 12 Australian General Hospitals, 34 Auxiliary Hospitals and Convalescent Homes, 3 Mental Hospitals, and many smaller institutions including 4 artificial limb factories. Though the work of these institutions, particularly during the period of demobilisation was extremely heavy, their efficiency was commended by a Committee of Investigation appointed by the Minister of Defence to advise on the state of Australian military camps.

George Cuscaden was hardworking, conscientious and dependable - a man who over many years gave worthy service to the people of Melbourne, Victoria, and Australia and well deserved his Knight Bachelor awarded in 1923.

He died in 1933 aged 75 years. He had married in 1886, Alice, daughter of William King of Adelaide and his son, W.G. Cuscaden was a member of the Women's Honorary Staff from 1914 to 1947. So the family association with the hospital continued over 51 years. A similarly noteworthy father-son association with the Hospital was given by the Fetherstons, who served on the staff for 45 years, from 1869 to 1914, to which must be added the five years 1860-65 when Gerald Fetherston - the father - was the Resident Surgeon.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Cuscaden, William George Henry (1887 - 1956)

M.D. (Melb.), F.R.C.S. (Edin.), F.R.A.C.S.

*Born* 1887

*Died* 1 July 1956

*Occupation* Chairman, Honorary Medical Staff, Gynaecologist and Medical practitioner

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

**WILLIAM GEORGE HENRY CUSDADEN**  
(1914 - 1947)

Dr. William George Henry Cuscaden, M.D. (Melb.), F.R.C.S. (Edin.), F.R.A.C.S., whose sudden death occurred on July 1, 1956, was appointed to the honorary medical staff in 1914. This coincided with the retirement of his father, Sir George Cuscaden. Between them, the Cuscadens served the Hospital for fifty-one years, breaking by two years a parallel record of service to the same institution given by Dr. G.H. Fetherston and his son, Dr. R.H. Fetherston.

Born in 1887, the only son of Major-General Sir George and Lady Cuscaden, Dr. W.G.H. Cuscaden was educated at Scotch College, Melbourne, and graduated in medicine with final honours in 1908 at the University of Melbourne. From 1911, he carried on a general practice at Preston and later in South Melbourne. In 1923-1924 he did post-graduate work in Vienna and Edinburgh, and, on his return to Melbourne practised solely as a specialist in gynaecology.

In an era when gynaecology had not gained the repute in which it is held today, Dr. Cuscaden was noted as a teacher of conservatism and avoidance of "meddlesome gynaecology". But when the indication for surgery existed, he was noted for his dexterity and speed of operating. However, it was his pioneering and vast experience of radium therapy at the Royal Women's Hospital that brought him reputation. He originated many techniques in the management of genital cancer, including several ingenious vaginal and uterine applicators, and developed a method of direct cervical inspection very useful in early diagnosis. He was the first to use radon at this hospital in the treatment of cancer and other gynaecological conditions. Before this Dr. Charles Dennis had been administering radium for several years.

He was chairman of the Women's Hospital honorary medical staff during the difficult war years (1939-45), when the essential functions of the hospital had to be carried on with a depleted staff.

On his retirement in 1947, he still maintained a lively interest in the Women's Hospital, and it is sad to reflect that he died on the eve of the centenary celebrations, which he would have enjoyed so much, and which his presence would have enlivened.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

**Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

# D'Ebro, Blanche Mary (nee Tracy) (1859 - 1943)

*Born* 24 September 1859  
Collingwood, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 8 January 1943  
Toorak, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Board of Management member

## *Summary*

Prepared by Ann Westmore PhD, 2006

Blanche Mary D'Ebro (née Tracy) (1859-1943) served as Honorary Secretary and Committee Member of the Women's Hospital, 1902-1910, and the Committee's representative on the hospital's Advisory Board for a further two years. Her husband, Charles D'Ebro, served as a Trustee of the hospital site from 1903 until his death in 1920.

The fifth of seven daughters of Dr Richard Tracy, one of the founders of the Melbourne Lying-In Hospital, and his wife Fanny Louisa Sibthorpe, Blanche's outstanding contribution was continued by later generations.

## Details

When Blanche Tracy was born at Collingwood in 1859, the reputation of her father, Dr Richard Tracy, was second to none in Melbourne medical circles. His practice at Brunswick St Fitzroy was thriving, added to which he was Honorary Physician to the Melbourne Lying-In Hospital which had moved to new and bigger premises in Carlton a year earlier. The practice, and the family, occupied the two-storey building Dr Tracy had built in Fitzroy in the early 1850s, the practice occupying the bottom level, while the living quarters for Fanny and Richard Tracy, Blanche and her four older sisters, were above.

At age five, her father was appointed the first Lecturer in Obstetric Medicine and Diseases of Women and Children at the University of Melbourne. The following year, 1864, the family moved to 190 Collins St east where he established new consulting rooms.

### From childhood to womanhood

Blanche became involved in voluntary work while still at school, teaching in the Scots Church Sunday school and assisting the Melbourne Flower Mission to Hospitals. During her teenage years, her father's health declined and he died from a debilitating cancer when she was just fifteen. He left his wife, three unmarried daughters including Blanche, three married daughters, and three grandchildren. A seventh daughter had died during childhood.

A capable student, she won first prize in writing at the Brighton Boarding and Day School in 1876. There is no record of her subsequently undertaking formal tertiary studies, but she was active in a range of artistic pursuits, particularly music.

In January 1891, she married London born civil engineer and architect, Charles Abraham D'Ebro (1850-1920) and, the following year, celebrated the birth of a daughter, Ethel (known as "Essa"). At the time, D'Ebro was rapidly making a name for himself for his residential constructions having designed Stonnington, the Italian Renaissance style residence in Glenferrie Rd Malvern (1890) which was later home to several Victorian Governors.

According to the D'Ebros' granddaughter, Mrs April Harding (née Barraclough), Blanche enjoyed a host of activities at "Prado", the large home her husband designed and built in 1889 at the corner of St Georges and Lansell Roads, Toorak. Her leisure interests included gardening, piano playing and sewing and, in addition, she maintained a strong involvement in philanthropic works

### Hospital service

Blanche served as Honorary Secretary of the Committee of Management of the Women's Hospital (originally known as the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital), 1902-1910. She was also the Committee's representative on the hospital's Advisory Board for a further few years.

Her tenure as Secretary came at a delicate time in relations between the Committee and the honorary medical staff, a dispute having arisen shortly before her appointment which centred on the Committee's decision to close the hospital following several cases of septicaemia infection. Blanche led the "new blood" on the Committee, according to historian of the hospital, Janet McCalman, and she seems to have exerted a pacifying influence on the different factions.

Once relations settled down she, like other Committee members, continue to play a hands-on role in managing and running the hospital, routinely interviewing women seeking treatment at the hospital, discharging others, and hiring and firing prospective staff members. She also "straightaway set about transferring power over medical appointments and medical matters to the medical staff".

She was embroiled in another delicate matter when controversy erupted over whether patients' bed cards should indicate marital status, through the presence or absence of "Mrs" on them. Following complaints from feminist groups and local councils about discrimination, Blanche headed a small committee of investigation which decided to abolish the cards, with patient's personal details kept in the nurses' pantry. Within a few years, use of the cards resumed to prevent confusion about which patient was getting which medicine, but all patients were treated as married and the single among them were given cheap wedding rings to protect them from taunts.

In addition to her work as Secretary, she was appointed to the Building and Finance Committee which was very active during her time in office. In 1903, the hospital had 49 midwifery beds and delivered over 1200 women annually, and had a further 38 Infirmary

(gynaecological) beds. Aside from the problem of infection, common complaints from patients and staff at the time included overcrowding and poor lighting.

Major building works completed during her time in office included a midwifery theatre (1904) and a pathology department and eclamptic ward (for women with high blood pressure related to pregnancy, 1908). In addition, a very substantial outpatients and nurses' home building was completed (1909) which later accommodated the resident doctors, medical students, medical records, the superintendent's office and the pharmacy; as was the Druids' wing (1912) on the corner of Swanston and Grattan Streets.

#### A second pair of hands

The year after Blanche joined the Hospital, her husband, Charles, became a "Trustee of the hospital site", filling that role for the next 17 years. He was particularly well suited to a position that required an understanding of complex operations, having developed considerable expertise in large-scale building works after demand for residential architecture declined during the 1890s. [His particular area of expertise was constructing freezing and cold storage plants, then in their infancy.] From 1905 to 1906 he was President of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects and, in 1907, the organisation appointed him (at the request of the hospital) to adjudicate on the winner of an architectural competition for the new hospital buildings.

He died while on a trip to Perth in June 1920, leaving a sum of £2000 to the hospital which was used to endow a bed in perpetuity, known as the Blanche Tracy D'Ebro bed.

#### An on-going legacy

Blanche D'Ebro was a founding member of the Australian Women's National League, established in 1904 to educate women in politics, support the monarchy and empire, and combat socialism. She worked strenuously for the organisation which by 1914 had 52,000 members in three states.

With Mrs Darnley Nailor she founded the Time and Talent Society and was active in the Council and on the Executive of the English Speaking Union. She died of the blood disorder, pernicious anaemia, early in 1943 at "Prado".

The Tracy and D'Ebro families' involvement in the affairs of the hospital continued through the generous interest of Ethel Barraclough (née D'Ebro); Mrs Barraclough's daughter, April D'Ebro Harding, a member of the Toorak Junior Hospital Auxiliary for 25 years and a Life Governor of the hospital; and Mrs Harding's son, Richard Walpole, chairman of the History Archives and Alumni Committee at the time of the hospital's 150th anniversary.

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### Books

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### Online Resources

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# Dempsey, Annie Elizabeth

<i>Born</i>	858, Yambuk Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	1948, East Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Midwifery Pupil Nurse, Head Midwife

## Summary

Annie Dempsey was a midwifery pupil nurse at The Women's Hospital from October 1889 to May 1890. Immediately after finishing her training, she was appointed Head Midwife and a month later was appointed to the role. She held the position for five years. Dempsey owned and operated a private hospital, 'Rokeyby', in Albury, for twenty years.

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This biography was prepared with assistance from Patrick Winnen.

## Details

Annie Elizabeth Dempsey was born in 1858 at Yambuk in western Victoria to Timothy Dempsey and Catherine Slattery, assisted migrants from County Galway in Ireland. They arrived in early 1857. Of their five children, Annie was the first born in Australia, followed by a younger brother. The family farmed in the Yambuk region until 1885 when they moved to Port Fairy, by which time Annie was 27 years of age.(1)

From October 1887 to October 1889 Dempsey worked at the Melbourne Hospital and she later claimed the certificate of that hospital. As historian Susan Sherson reports, on-the-job training was in place at the Melbourne then, although a structured scheme did not begin until 1890 and the first certificates associated with the scheme not issued until 1893.(2) The fact that Dempsey was not part of this structured scheme explains why her name is not in the list of "certificated" trainees of the Melbourne Hospital.

In May 1889, Dempsey applied to The Women's Hospital for a training place in midwifery nursing.(3) She was accepted but before a pupil could start, the hospital's resident medical officer assessed the pupil's health. Dr Praegest judged Dempsey to be physically unfit and the Ladies Committee of Management advised her to reapply in a few months. It is likely that Dempsey was thin and perhaps looked tired. At the time of her application, she was working at the Melbourne Hospital. Nurses there worked long hours with only one day off a week. Nurses were not entitled to paid holidays or even to have weeks away from work. If they did apply for time off, there was no guarantee a position would be kept for them. As a result, many nurses worked for years at a time without a break.

Dempsey regained her health and began training in October 1889. She was considered already trained in general nursing so the fee for six months tuition and board was reduced to 21 shillings.(4) She remained on staff after training, appointed Head Midwife temporarily and reporting to the Midwifery Department's Head Nurse. The position of Head Midwife was relatively new, introduced in July 1888, at a salary of £50 per annum.(5) The Head Midwife was based in labour ward where she worked with the Resident Medical Officer, teaching and supervising medical students and midwifery pupils who were allocated to be the accoucheur at alternating births. A total of four medical students and/or midwifery pupils were permitted to observe a birth.(6) The inaugural Head Midwife, Nurse H Lorenzen, stayed for twelve months. In September 1889, she was replaced by Isabella Bolton,(7) a graduate of the Alfred Hospital and a Women's Hospital midwifery pupil in 1888.

In March 1890, Bolton was promoted to Head Nurse of the Midwifery Department in place of Jane Edmunds who resigned. Bolton's promotion left vacant the position of Head Midwife.(8) Dempsey had almost completed her training term and applied for the job. The Ladies Committee of Management clearly preferred someone more experienced and advertised the position several times but they could not fill it.(9) The Committee directed Matron Elizabeth Findlay to appoint 'one of the most experienced Pupil Nurses to act as Head Midwife' temporarily,(10) and Dempsey got the job. After four weeks acting in the role, her position as Head Midwife was confirmed in June 1890.(11) That same month, Dempsey received her certificate of training along with fellow midwifery pupil nurses Anne Rentle (a graduate of the Alfred) and C A Fyvie.(12)

Dempsey worked at The Women's Midwifery Department for six years in total. During that time, she served under five Head Nurses in midwifery, beginning with Isabella Bolton. Ellen E Auchinleck was appointed in June 1891.(13) A graduate of St John's House and King's College Hospital in London where she worked from 1884 to 1890, Auchinleck held the Diploma of the London Obstetrical Society and had worked at the Trained Nurses Home at St Kilda.(14) Eileen Josephine Johnston(e) replaced Auchinleck in early 1893.(15) Marianne Rawson was next, appointed in June 1894.(16)

In 1893, the hospital's Finance Committee recommended cuts to wages and staff across the board, including reducing the Head Midwife's salary from £55 to £40. The Ladies Committee of Management felt the reduction to be excessive, given that Sister Annie Dempsey had given loyal and lengthy service. Dempsey was likely to take on extra responsibilities because of cuts to other positions and her salary was reduced by £5 only.(17) The role of Head Midwife was a life commitment with little time off. Dempsey had a month's holiday in March 1891,(18) and three weeks off in 1893.(19) In early 1895, the Ladies Committee declined Dempsey's request for a month's leave to attend Mrs Pinniger, wife of the Resident Medical Officer, at her confinement.(20)

Dempsey resigned in mid-1895 on the grounds of ill-health. It was 'accepted with regret' although the Ladies Committee asked if her health would be restored by a holiday.(21) A week later Dempsey wrote to the Committee, saying:

"I beg to inform you that since my last interview with the Committee I have consulted my medical adviser and he tells me that nothing less than six months leave of absence will to me any good: if you see fit to allow me this six months leave of absence I should be glad to continue my connection with the Hospital. Thanking you again for past kindness to me".(22)

The Ladies Committee of Management decided that six months was too long to keep a position open and advertised the position. Dempsey left the hospital in November 1895. Her replacement was Florence Desbrowe Annear, a recently-completed midwifery pupil who passed her examination with credit.(23)

Dempsey nursed privately throughout 1896 and in 1897 moved to Albury where she was matron at 'Burnley', Dr Cleaver Woods' private hospital. Later that year, Dempsey advertised that she had moved her hospital and her entire staff to 'Rokeby' at David Street, corner of Hume Street a facility where patients could choose their own doctor. Dr Cleaver Woods meanwhile advised that his Swift Street hospital had been refurbished and his patients were benefitting from 'thoroughly competent nurses'.(24) His nurse-in-charge was Elizabeth Jane Swinton who completed general training at the Melbourne Hospital in 1893 and then midwifery at The Women's in November 1895.(25) Swinton supplied testimonials from Dr Fitzgerald of the Melbourne Hospital and Dr Michael O'Sullivan of The Women's.(26)

After opening 'Rokeby' in her own right, Dempsey engaged Sister E J Smith who trained in general nursing at the Melbourne Hospital, in midwifery at The Women's and had experience and possibly a certificate in gynaecology nursing at The Women's. In April 1894, Smith was appointed a Special Infirmary Nurse at The Women's, indicating that she was highly skilled in the care of women. She came to 'Rokeby' with recommendations from several of The Women's doctors: Walter Balls-Headley, Thomas Rowan, Michael O'Sullivan, Felix Meyer, John Dunbar Hooper, 'as well as by the Matrons of the Women's and Melbourne Hospitals'.(27) The latter were Elizabeth Findlay and Martha Farquharson respectively.

Dempsey clearly saw herself as a trained "professional" nurse and hospital proprietor. In August 1901, she joined the newly-established Victorian Trained Nurses Association (VTNA), an organisation promoting voluntary self-regulation of the profession.(28) With the introduction of the Midwives Act 1915 (Vic) registration for women practising midwifery became compulsory. Dempsey registered early as number 185 on 11 August 1916, under category 14(a) which recognised her training at The Women's.(29)

For years Dempsey tried to have 'Rokeby' recognised as a training school for midwifery nurses, a way to attract pupils. From 1901, the VTNA and its sister organisation, the Australasian Trained Nurses Association (ATNA) based in New South Wales, determined which hospitals were approved as nurse training centres. Being a training centre attracted pupils who wanted to gain skills and they were cheaper to employ than trained staff. The problem was that Dempsey's hospital was in Albury NSW and she was registered as a nurse in Victoria. After the VTNA rejected her appeals, she applied for NSW recognition of Rokeby in December 1902. The ATNA contacted the VTNA for information about her 'character and that of her hospital'.(30) She applied again to the VTNA in 1905 unsuccessfully.(31)

Throughout her life, Dempsey remained connected to her family at Port Fairy. In 1899, her younger brother John died aged 36, leaving his wife Mary Anne with five children. Their eldest daughter, Mary Margaret Dempsey (called Mollie) moved to Albury to live with Dempsey at 'Rokeby'. Mollie later trained as a nurse and assisted her aunt in running the hospital. In 1919 Dempsey leased the hospital to May Frances Whitehead, a longstanding employee who had also worked with the Victorian Bush Nursing Association.(32) Aged 61, Dempsey returned to Port Fairy where she purchased two properties. She then moved to Melbourne, initially to Bell Street Coburg before renting a house at 109 Hotham Street East Melbourne with Molly. According to family history Dempsey and her niece worked at St Vincent's Private Hospital in Fitzroy.(33)

In 1923, Dempsey sold her hospital. The land consisted of three allotments all fronting David Street Albury. Lot 1, near Soden's Hotel, was 50x165 feet with a small brick and weatherboard cottage on it. Adjoining the cottage was Lot 2, a 95x165 feet block and two brick houses making up the hospital. Lot 3 was a 'Magnificent Building allotment' of 56x165 feet adjoining the hospital block.(34) At auction, Dr Gordon Paton and Sister M Whitehead bought Lots 1 and 2 as a going concern.(35)

Dempsey bought a house at 34 Hotham Street East Melbourne and lived there until her death. She died aged 90, on 27 December 1948 and was buried with Catholic rites, at Port Fairy cemetery.



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- 5) Ladies Committee Minutes. 28 September 1888, RWHA A1991\_6\_11.
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- 7) Ladies Committee Minutes. 13 September 1889, RWHA A1991\_6\_12.
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- 9) Ladies Committee Minutes. 25 April 1890, RWHA A1991\_6\_12.
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- 11) Ladies Committee Minutes. 10 June 1890, RWHA A1991\_6\_12.
- 12) Ladies Committee Minutes. 27 June 1890, RWHA A1991\_6\_13\_1.
- 13) Ladies Committee Minutes. 5 June 1891, RWHA A1991\_6\_13\_1.
- 14) "The Royal British Nurses Association Register of Trained Nurses for 1891", Royal British Nurses Association: London, 1892, p.8.
- 15) Ladies Committee Minutes. 10 February 1893, RWHA A1991\_6\_14.
- 16) Ladies Committee Minutes. 29 June 1894, RWHA A1991\_6\_15.
- 17) Ladies Committee Minutes. 14 April 1893, RWHA A1991\_6\_14.
- 18) Ladies Committee Minutes. 13 March 1891, RWHA A1991\_6\_13\_1.
- 19) Ladies Committee Minutes. 20 October 1893, RWHA A1991\_6\_15.
- 20) Ladies Committee Minutes. 15 February 1895, RWHA A1991\_6\_16.
- 21) Ladies Committee Minutes. 20 September 1895, RWHA A1991\_6\_16.
- 22) Ladies Committee Minutes. 27 September 1895, RWHA A1991\_6\_16.
- 23) Ladies Committee Minutes. 1 November 1895, RWHA A1991\_6\_16.
- 24) "Albury Banner and Wodonga Express". 5 November 1897, p.24.
- 25) "Victorian Trained Nurses Association Register Report and Balance Sheet 1901-1902". Melbourne University Archives (MUA), Australian Nursing Federation Victorian Branch (ANF VB), 1991\_28\_1\_1, p.25, 69.
- 26) "Albury Border Post". 23 November 1897, p.2.
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- 33) Patrick Winnen. Dempsey family history file.
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# Dewar, Jessie Hill, Head Nurse Midwifery Dep. (1859-1878)

*Born* 1827 Caithness, Scotland

*Died* 2 August 1878, Carlton,  
Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Head Nurse Midwifery  
Department 1859-1878

*Alternate Names* Jessie Hill

## *Summary*

Jessie Hill Dewar was employed as Head Nurse of the Midwifery Department at the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children from mid-1859, for almost twenty years. She worked during a period of enormous development at the MLIH and under three matrons: Mrs Catherine Oliver, Mrs Sarah Fetherston and Miss Emily Harvey. Dewar assumed the Matron's duties when Mrs Oliver was holidays in March 1860,<sup>(1)</sup> and may have even served as Matron for a short time before Mrs Oliver was appointed in 1859. Dewar died while still an employee of the Hospital.

## Details

Jessie Hill was born in Caithness, north-east Scotland around 1827, one of three daughters to James Hill, farmer, and Jane McKinlay. She married Daniel Dewar in Edinburgh around 1852 and emigrated to Australia. They had a daughter, Jessie Jane in 1856 but the marriage was not happy. Jessie Dewar's will states that since 1859 she 'lived apart from him [her husband] under a protection order'.<sup>(2)</sup> The protection order indicates the likelihood that her husband was violent towards her or unwilling to support the family by earning a living. Protection orders enabled women to keep what money they earned themselves and to secure what property they owned, at a time when married women and their belongings were the property of their husbands by law.

The fact that Mrs Dewar was separated from her husband may explain how she came to be employed at the MLIH at the age of thirty-two. She simply needed a job. The hospital advertised for nurses in January and in May 1859 sought an experienced nurse immediately.<sup>(3)</sup> Few of the hospital's records have survived from the period when Mrs Dewar was working, although minutes from December 1859 note that doctors felt it necessary to find extra help as "Mrs Dewar Head Nurse had gone away ill". The hospital's finances were stretched so thinly that the Ladies Committee of Management asked a recently-recovered patient, Mrs Fordham, to stay at the hospital for a fortnight to assist the nurse on duty.<sup>(4)</sup> Mrs Dewar returned to work in the Midwifery Department within some weeks, but it seems she had not recovered sufficiently from her illness.

The reason for Mrs Dewar's recurring ill-health is unclear. Nursing was hard work and the physical labour may have exacerbated an existing ailment such as an injured back, chest complaint or perhaps anaemia. For instance, in 1859 all water used in the wards had to be carried from outside by the nurses because there was not yet a piped water supply at the Madeline Street site.<sup>(5)</sup> Not only that, the Head Nurse cared for patients day and night until they were discharged. At night, the nurse slept in a curtained-off space at the end of the ward, able to attend patients at a moment's notice. This meant that the nurse was on duty for long periods.

In January 1860, the hospital's doctors advised the Ladies Committee that Mrs Dewar's health was failing again and requested that a night nurse be hired.<sup>(6)</sup> This position was hard to fill and in February, the Committee increased the wage to £40 per annum as incentive.<sup>(7)</sup> Mrs Dewar's wage was £75 annually,<sup>(8)</sup> and was sometimes supplemented by a gratuity, a payment provided after a year of continued and satisfactory employment. Mrs Dewar received a £5 gratuity in August 1860, acknowledgement of her 'devotion to service'.<sup>(9)</sup>

Mrs Dewar's commitment to the hospital seems all the more surprising because she had a young daughter although Jessie Jane Dewar lived with Elizabeth Hill, her spinster aunt, at 219 Lygon Street just two streets from the MLIH. This was a four-roomed brick dwelling on a 16 x 56 feet block, and co-owned by Mrs Dewar and her sister. It had been held in trust by Alexander Cameron since 11 October 1859, likely owing to the protection order Mrs Dewar held against her rogue husband. Dewar and her sister signed a will in October 1872 in the presence of the hospital's Honorary Solicitor, Henry Jennings, and his clerk. They each bequeathed their assets to the other and granted the other the right to live in the Lygon Street house and to collect earnings from it until death, after which the property was to pass to Mrs Dewar's daughter.<sup>(10)</sup>

Jessie Hill Dewar died at Lygon Street on 2 August 1878, aged 51, 'after a long and painful illness'.<sup>(11)</sup> The Women's Hospital noted her death in the 1878 Annual Report for the Year ending 31 December. It reads: "the death of Mrs Dewar (a faithful and valued nurse) has necessitated five minor changes in her Department".<sup>(12)</sup> In the care of Henry Allison, a local undertaker, her funeral procession left Lygon Street cottage on Sunday afternoon 3 August 1878 for internment at the Melbourne General Cemetery. For probate, the Lygon Street property was valued at £400 with her other assets being a watch worth £5, clothing (£5), and bank savings of £55/2/6.<sup>(13)</sup> According to Mrs Dewar's death certificate, her occupation was "Midwife Lying-in Hospital".

## References

- 1) Women's Hospital Ladies Committee (hereafter Ladies Committee) Minutes. 16 February 1860, RWHA A1993\_8\_2.
- 2) Will of Jessie Hill Dewar. 2 October 1872, Public Record Office of Victoria, VPRS\_7591\_P0002\_Unit\_42.
- 3) "Argus". 7 January 1859, p.1; 13 May 1859, p.1.
- 4) Ladies Committee Minutes. 8 December 1859, RWHA A1993\_8\_2.
- 5) "Argus". 13 May 1859, p.5.
- 6) Ladies Committee Minutes. 26 January 1860, RWHA A1993\_8\_2.
- 7) Ladies Committee Minutes. 2 February 1860, RWHA A1993\_8\_2.
- 8) Women's Hospital Supply Book 1856-1865. RWHA A1991\_5\_6.
- 9) Ladies Committee Minutes. 23 August 1860. RWHA A1993\_8\_2.
- 10) Will of Jessie Hill Dewar. 2 October 1872, Public Record Office of Victoria, VPRS\_7591\_P0002\_Unit\_42.
- 11) 'Family Notices', "Age", 3 August 1878, p.4.
- 12) "Women's Hospital 1878 Annual Report for the Year ending 31 December". RWHA1996\_10\_8.
- 13) Estate of Jessie Hill Dewar, Inventory and Statement of Assets and Liabilities. Public Record Office of Victoria, VPRS\_28\_P0002\_Unit\_81.

# Downie, Thomas Taylor (1861 - 1939)

M.B., Ch.M. (Glas.)

*Born* 6 June 1861  
Glasgow, Scotland

*Died* 24 September 1939

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

DR. THOMAS TAYLOR DOWNIE  
(1896 - 1910)

Dr. Downie was a Scot, born in Glasgow on June 6th, 1861. On completing his schooling, he joined his father's dyeing business in Glasgow before commencing a medical course at Glasgow University, from which he graduated M.B., Ch.M., in 1887.

In the following year he came over to Australia on a visit to a brother, and deciding to settle here, he set up practice in Queen's Parade, Clifton Hill, in 1888.

In 1894 he married Miss Katie Smith, of Murphy Street, South Yarra, and there were two children, Janet Katherine Maude and Ewen Thomas Taylor.

He joined the Honorary Staff of the Women's Hospital in 1896 and continued his work there until 1910. He earned a reputation as a conscientious and enthusiastic worker, always helpful and readily available for consultation.

He was appointed Honorary Consulting Physician after 15 years as Honorary Midwifery Surgeon.

Noteworthy was his design of a modification of the obstetric forceps (The Medical Annual 1908. P. 641), the characteristic of which was a handle placed at right angles to the shanks to provide easier traction.

In 1918 he retired from active practice and resided at 26 Queens Road, Melbourne.

Dr. Downie had an interest in military affairs; in 1900 he was appointed Lieutenant, Medical Staff, Victorian Scottish Regiment, 3rd Military District, and was promoted Captain in 1903, Hon. Major in 1910, and Substantive Major in 1912. He was transferred to the 54th Battalion in 1912, and appointed Area Medical Officer. On March 30th, 1921, he retired to unattached list with the rank of Hon. Lieutenant Colonel, V.D.

Scottish societies naturally had a strong appeal to Downie and he was one of the original eight founders of the Melbourne Scots in 1919. At the first meeting in 1920 he was elected one of the first three Vice Presidents, and held this office until 1925; elected President for the year 1925-26, and remained on the council until 1935. He was then again elected Vice President and retained this office until his death. He became a member of the Council of the Caledonian Society of Melbourne in 1903, was Vice President from 1909 until 1911 and President from 1911 to 1913.

Dr. Downie died on September 24th, 1939. His only son is Dr. Ewen Downie, M.D., F.R.C.P., Physician to the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Drevermann, Ernest Barclay (1913 - )

*Born* 1913 Bairnsdale, Victoria, Australia  
*Occupation* Medical Practitioner and Resuscitator

## Details

The items transcribed below were written by Dr Grayton Brown, Dame Ella Macknight, Dr. John L. Frew and Prof Sir Lance Townsend and were published in the Medical Journal of Australia, 24 September 1974 and 23 September 1974.

ERNEST BARCLAY DREVERMANN  
(1949 - 1974)

Barclay Drevermann was born in the East Gippsland Town of Bairnsdale in 1913. My acquaintance with him began on our first day as pupils at the Melbourne Church of England Grammar School. As is so often the case when two new boys arrive at a school together, an immediate sympathetic relationship began. This relationship persisted until the day of his death.

Barclay Drevermann was an aesthete, a magnificent pianist, had no interest in games, and regarded all scientific experiments in laboratories with distaste. It was therefore strange that I, who was so committed to sports of all descriptions and was fascinated by laboratory work, should strike up such an intimate friendship with him, or perhaps this was one of the reasons why. We paired off for all laboratory work at school and throughout our medical student days. It was with good humoured annoyance I found at the end of our first university year that Barclay Drevermann obtained the exhibition in Natural Philosophy whereas I, who had done all the practical work, was only the runner-up. During our two years of anatomy dissection sessions, Barclay was content to turn over the pages of Cunningham's textbooks and smoked furiously and constantly whilst I wielded the scalpel. It became apparent during the three clinical tuition years that Barclay's extreme compassion for sick people led him to believe that he could never undertake active procedural treatment of patients which may involve them in pain. After graduation his fears were somewhat ameliorated by his association with that great teacher, Dr. W.D. (later Sir William) Upjohn, who was subsequently to become a guide, philosopher and friend to Barclay for the rest of his life. It was, therefore, fortunate that Barclay Drevermann was able to become involved in the second year after his graduation with the then embryonic discipline of resuscitation, which appealed to his compassionate nature.

There was a gap of six years in our friendship when I served in the European and Pacific theatres of war, whilst he spent his time as the guest of the Japanese on the Burma railroad, but there will be others who can speak of his devotion to his fellow men during this period.

From the end of the war until his death, Barclay Drevermann became a unique and almost saintly servant of mankind, particularly those who were fortunate enough to have his services when desperately ill. No less fortunate were surgeons, obstetricians and even physicians, many of whom felt they could not practice in safety without his presence. The patients who were fortunate enough to be under his care worshipped him. Their only complaint was that he embarrassed them by undercharging for his services. In conveying their complaints to him in this regard, his answer was simple and I quote, "the more they require of my services the less able, as a rule, are they to afford to pay for it".

His services to the Red Cross Transfusion Unit will, I am sure, be better described by those who worked with him there.

Barclay Drevermann was a giant in the history of the medical profession in Melbourne since Batman founded it and it is my belief that he will remain so, long beyond the memory of those of us who were fortunate enough to work with him. His wife Betty was a source of constant strength to a man who devoted his whole existence to the service of his fellow man and without her he would not have been able to accomplish this. My wife and I regard it an honour for having been responsible for bringing Betty and Barclay together in the delightful setting of Healesville during one of our university vacations. Medicine in Melbourne owed a deep gratitude to Betty and her daughter Anne, for being able to support Drev during the period of his full flight as a resuscitator, both physically and mentally, of his patients. Our deepest sympathy goes out to them. Barclay Drevermann will linger on in the memories of his colleagues and his patients for the rest of their lives.

(Dr. Grayton Brown)

It is a privilege to pay tribute to Barclay Drevermann's work in the field of blood transfusion and resuscitation. My first contact with "Drev" was early in 1939 when he was working in the Hall Institute and was concerned with the development of storage methods for blood in connection with the first blood bank in Australia. The Red Cross Society was associated with this development through its blood donor service.

After war broke out, Drev was involved in the blood grouping of members of the armed services and in the development of the Emergency Red Cross Blood Donor Service. He was a member of the Red Cross Transfusion Committee which was set up in the early days of the war. He succeeded Stanley Williams in charge of the army serum unit which bled donors to produce serum for use in the armed forces. However, he was not satisfied to remain at home and soon got himself released from this work for active service abroad. Even at this date, at a meeting of the Blood Transfusion Committee, it was recorded that a very great deal of the development of the Blood Transfusion Service should be attributed to the courteous and efficient treatment donors had always received from Dr Drevermann. I remember that the donors with difficult veins were specially kept for him.

After demobilization, he entered the clinical field of blood transfusion and resuscitation, making a unique name for himself as a consultant. His clinical judgement was superb and he always was available when colleagues asked for his help with their patients.

He developed a very large private practice, being called to hospitals all over the greater Melbourne area, as well as devoting a lot of time to the Royal Melbourne Hospital at first as research resuscitation officer and later as honorary resuscitationist. He habitually worked longer and more irregular hours than any doctor I have known. Nursing and medical staff had absolute confidence in his judgement and ability. They also had a great respect for his orders. Woe betide any who disobeyed Drev's specific instructions about patients, for he would tell them his opinion in no uncertain terms. To patients he was always sympathetic and kind. Barclay Drevermann played a large part in the postwar development of the Victorian Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service. In 1946, he was appointed Assistant Director and later Honorary Deputy Director. Dr. Lucy Bryce, who was instrumental in founding the Service in 1929, was then the Honorary Director of the Service. On the appointment of a full-time Director in 1954, Drev became honorary consultant to the Service. The years from 1946 on saw the Blood Transfusion Service expand from the annual provision of 13,000 pints of blood to 150,000 in 1973. Drev's knowledge and experience in the field of resuscitation made his advice invaluable to the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Committee which he rejoined in 1946. He was Chairman of the Committee from 1970 onwards and was a member of the Executive of the Council of the Victorian Division of the Australian Red Cross Society. He was also a member of National Red Cross Blood Transfusion Committee.

A bald recital of his work does not give a true picture of the man himself - a man of integrity and of high ideals with infinite kindness to the suffering.

(Dame Ella Macknight)

Under John Bolton's stimulus, his investigative work as a resident at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in protein absorption, extra-renal uraemia and ascorbic acid, led to his advice being sought on nutritional requirements for the Services as well as resuscitative methods in the early stages of the war.

He joined 13 A.G.H. as a physician with Bruce Hunt and Bill Bye, combining general duties with advice on fluid and electrolyte replacement. On being taken prisoner-of-war, he advised on possible sources of essentials, particularly vitamin B and vitamin A to be used not only prophylactically but also therapeutically. He joined a special medical force recruited to combat a cholera epidemic on the Thai-Burma railway and served along most of the length of that railway line. At one time he was the only white man looking after a 3,000-bed coolie hospital. His only books at this time were the Bible and Levine's "Cardiology", with the result that on returning to the main prisoner-of-war group late in 1944 he presented a teasing problem to the padres because of his verbatim knowledge of the former. This trait continued after his return to practice, particularly in church hospitals. This period by himself must have presented enormous strain, but it is a measure of his quality of selfless service that the reception by his Japanese group on his return to the main p.o.w. camp was a impressive as that given to a visiting Nippon general.

His lean frame suggested frailty but it was indeed like tensile steel or whipcord. The name of "Drev" or "Shadow", as he was called, was loved and respected by his patients, whether coolie, Nippon or prisoner-of-war, and he was remembered particularly by his own men with admiration for his personality and his capacity for selfless untiring service.

(Dr. John L. Frew)

I first met Barclay Drevermann in February, 1917, when we began school at the Bairnsdale State School; he was just four years old. We sat at the same desk throughout our primary school education and again at the Bairnsdale High School until we both obtained our Leaving Certificates and matriculated in 1927. He was then 15½ and left Bairnsdale to do Leaving Honours at Melbourne Grammar. He rejoined me at the Medical School in 1931; I had begun the course a year earlier and we qualified a year apart. However, we were both residents at Trinity College, so that our friendship had spanned 20 years before we parted for the first time. During this time, although we were rivals at school, we were inseparables both at work and during the weekends and were closer friends than brothers could ever be.

During the war we did not see each other, for, while he was a guest of the Emperor, I was fortunately serving in His Majesty's Navy. When I returned to Australia in 1948, Barclay - I was the only one who called him by his first name - was already established as a resuscitationist, and private obstetricians were using him extensively. He saved many lives from both ante-partum and post-partum haemorrhage. It was his availability day and night and in weekends that made consultants bless him, because the problems of accidental haemorrhage and collapse from hypofibrinogenaemia could occur at any time, and it was an exceptional patient that he was unable to save from death (either immediate or from kidney failure). The problem of post-partum haemorrhage was satisfactorily dealt with by quickly cross-matching blood to replace loss. At the same time, as resuscitation officer at The Royal Women's Hospital, he provided the same service for public patients.

I consider his contribution to obstetrics a major one; he was always on call and always seemed understanding of the obstetrician's difficulties when he arrived in the labour ward. Quickly, with his unique clinical judgement, he would assess the situation and commence treatment, which to my recollection seems often to have been outstandingly successful.

He was a giant in the history of the medical profession in Victoria, and it is not to the credit of my specialty that we failed to honour him in his lifetime as many other Colleges and Associations did.

Our friendship lasted until his death.

(Professor Sir Lance Townsend)

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Fetherston, Gerald Henry (c. 1829 - 1901)



M.D. (Melb.), L.R.C.P. (Edin.), L.A.H. (Dub.)

*Born* c. 1829 Roscommen, Ireland

*Died* 10 September 1901 Prahran, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

GERALD HENRY FETHERSTON  
(1899 - 1891)

GERALD Henry Fetherston was actively associated with the Women's Hospital for more than forty years, as Resident Medical Officer and Honorary Surgeon. An Irishman from Roscommon, he was educated at a local school, and as a youth acted as assistant to his father, a doctor, to whom he was apprenticed. He studied at Mercers Hospital and Ledwich Medical School, Dublin, supporting himself by working in chemists' shops. Before being qualified he went to sea as an assistant medical officer, sailing with emigrants to America and Australia. In 1856, then twenty seven, he qualified as L.A.H. Dublin.

In the next four years Fetherston made nine voyages to Australia as Ship's surgeon in those famous ships of the Black Ball Line, "James Baines", "Marco Polo" and "Lightning". He was in "James Baines" when she sailed from Liverpool to Melbourne in 64 days, making the return voyage in 63 days.

Fetherston passed the examination for Licentiate of the Colleges of Surgeons and Physicians of Edinburgh in 1860, in which year he settled in Melbourne. Soon after his arrival he was appointed Resident Surgeon to the Lying-In Hospital. Marrying, he lived there for five years, for part of which his wife acted as Matron. His son, Richard Herbert, later Major General Fetherston was born there in 1864.

Gerald Fetherston in 1865 passed a modified examination for M.D., University of Melbourne, then allowed for men holding Licentiate Diplomas. In March of that year, he bought the practice of Dr. Job Phillips in Prahran, and was prominent in the professional and public life of that city until his death at his home "Kiaora", 152 High St., Prahran on 10th September, 1901, aged 72.

The Prahran practice which extended as far as Oakleigh and Mordialloc, was worked with horses, and Fetherston had five buggy horses and one saddle hack. At night the hack was kept saddled and rugged, so that the doctor could get quickly away when a call was received.

Fetherston was first elected to the Honorary staff of the Women's (then the Lying-In Hospital) in 1869, and he continued as an Honorary Medical Officer until 1891. He was also Honorary M.O. to the Benevolent Asylum (then in North Melbourne), to the Blind Asylum, and to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum. He was amongst the first to suggest the founding of the Alfred Hospital on its present site, and worked for the reservation of the land, but being appointed to the Lying-In Hospital, did not become a member of the Alfred medical staff.

Amongst Dr. Fetherston's public offices were Health Officer of the City of Prahran, member of the Council of the University of Melbourne, member of the Medical Board of Victoria, official visitor to the Mental Asylums of Melbourne, Justice of the Peace and for a long period Chairman of the Prahran Bench.

Fetherston had a life-long interest in Military affairs. He joined the Victorian Volunteers in 1871, being attached to the Torpedo Corps, now Submarine Engineers. He transferred to the Militia when it was formed in 1884, and in 1890 was appointed Principal Medical Officer, Victoria. He held this appointment until just before his death eleven years later. During the South African war he was responsible for the medical despatch of all Victorian contingents, and on their return dealt with the wounded and sick.

Gerald Fetherston was one of the early members of the Medical Society of Victoria, and of the B.M.A. He was for some years Honorary Treasurer of the Medical Society and its President in 1873. He was one of the founders of the Medical Benevolent Association of Victoria, and took an active part in building the original Medical Society Hall in Albert Street, subsequently demolished to make way for the present B.M.A. Building.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives



# Fetherston, Richard Herbert (1864 - 1943)



M.D., Ch.M. (Edin.), F.R.A.C.S.

*Born* 1864 Carlton, Victoria, Australia

*Died* June 1943 Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

**RICHARD HERBERT FETHERSTON**  
(1892 - 1914)

Richard Herbert Fetherston was one of the brilliant men who have served the Women's Hospital both as Resident and Honorary. It was almost inevitable that he should give years of devoted service to the Hospital, for he was born inside its walls in 1864, and always before him was the example of his distinguished father, Dr. Gerald Fetherston.

They were dissimilar physically, the father tall and broad, the son slightly built. Their interests were akin, both inside and outside the medical profession. The Honorary service of father and son to the Women's Hospital was continuous for 45 years; the son was appointed in 1892, the year the father retired - a unique record of service to the one institution. Both notably contributed to its progress and status. Dr. Gerald Fetherston was the first Resident Surgeon (1860-65) to the Lying-In Hospital. Richard Fetherston was brilliant as at student. Educated at Miss Templeton's, The Grange, Toorak Road (a now forgotten school), Alma Road Grammar School and Wesley College, he went to Dublin as a youth of seventeen to study medicine. In October 1881 he began the winter season at the School of The Royal College of Surgeons, two years later proceeding to the Medical School, Trinity College, Dublin. He passed the final L.R.C.S.I. in June 1884, two years and eight months after starting medicine. He was then twenty years and one month old. During the course he had won special prizes in anatomy, surgery, dissecting and "all subjects" in both years. After qualifying he was appointed demonstrator of anatomy and also did some coaching.

In April 1885 he was at Edinburgh University. He passed the first professional examination in October 1885, the second professional examination in April 1886. In May 1886 he sat for the final examination (M.B.C.M.) and passed it in June. Thus he was able to traverse the whole degree course in one year.

The young graduate then sought permission to sit for the Irish Surgical Fellowship. This was refused, as the minimum age was 26 and he was not yet 23.

The winter of 1886-1887 was spent at hospital work in London and in February 1887 he returned to Melbourne, practising for a time with his father at Prahran, but soon accepting a position as Resident at the Women's Hospital. Four years later, 1892, he was elected to the Honorary staff in the Midwifery Department, subsequently becoming Indoor Infirmary Surgeon. He resigned to accept the position of Honorary Gynaecologist newly created at the Melbourne Hospital. When he retired from there in 1924, he had been a member of the Honorary Staff of one or other hospital for more than 37 years.

Dr. Fetherston was a successful and popular clinical teacher and lecturer at both the Women's and the Melbourne Hospital. He was an examiner for both M.B. and M.D. for several years, and was a lecturer and examiner to nurses at both the Women's and the Melbourne. As Medical Officer at Wesley College he pioneered the medical examination of schoolboys and he was a pioneer lecturer in that school on sex physiology, during the Headmastership of Mr. Harold Stewart.

A highly trusted member for many years of the Council of the Victorian Branch of the B.M.A., he was President in 1911 and later a Trustee of the Medical Society of Victoria, of which his father had been President in 1873. He took an active part in forming the Medical Publishing Company and was an original Director; he also helped in the formation of the Medical Agency and the Medical Insurance Company.

Dr. Fetherston was identified with the civil life of Prahran for many years; for five years from 1895 as a member of the Prahran City Council, and for 42 years from 1901 as Health Officer of that City. He also had one term in the State Legislative Assembly as M.L.A. for Prahran in the mid 1920's. He possessed no adroitness as a politician, but made many friends amongst members. This to him was the only pleasant part of a parliamentarian's life, which otherwise he considered was little worth the trouble, worry, expense and abuse.

A lifelong interest in military affairs culminated in active service in the 1914-18 war. He volunteered for the A.I.F. on 5th August 1914, was promoted full Colonel in 1915, and early in 1916 was made D.G.M.S. with the rank of Major General after return to Australia from reorganising the A.A.M.C., A.I.F., abroad.

He died at "Derwent", St. Kilda Road, Melbourne where he had lived in retirement for some time, in June 1943, in his seventy-ninth year, greatly respected by all who knew him. His son, Dr. Gerald Russell Fetherston, qualified in Ireland in 1927.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Forster, Frank Menzies Cameron (1923 - 1995)

MB BS FRCOG FRACOG

<i>Born</i>	21 September 1923 Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
<i>Died</i>	18 March 1995 East Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner, Obstetrician and Professorial Staff

## Summary

Compiled by Ann Westmore PhD

Frank Menzies Cameron Forster was expert in managing pregnancy complicated by conditions such as severe liver disease, post-polio syndrome and cervical incompetence. He was also much sought-after for his knowledge and experience in the management of labour and forceps delivery. He was a senior member of the University of Melbourne Professorial Unit at the Royal Women's Hospital 1953-59 where he taught medical students, postgraduate trainees and young specialists in his field. He served as an honorary obstetrician to the hospital 1959-65, after which he continued an informal association with it through his medical colleagues. A passionate collector and writer, he was a founding father of medical history societies in Victoria and Australia, and was one of the first to document the history of obstetrics and gynaecology in the Antipodes.

## Details

Frank Forster, born 21 September 1923 in Sydney, was the middle child and second son of Cameron McDougall Forster, a medical practitioner, and of Jean Catherine Officer, a remedial teacher.

His parents met at the University of Melbourne while both were students. They married in Melbourne in 1919 before moving to Sydney where his father resumed his medical studies at the University of Sydney, graduating in 1926. Showing the resourcefulness that characterised her later life, Forster's mother supported the couple in various ways including needlepoint work while her husband pursued his studies.

### Childhood and adolescence

Forster's early education was at Ashfield Grammar School, his father having been appointed Medical Superintendent of the Renwick Infants Hospital at Summer Hill. At age eleven, his parents separated and his mother returned to Melbourne accompanied by Forster and his siblings so that they could be close to her family. Forster felt the emotional dislocation keenly even though his father also returned to Melbourne (after travelling to the UK) where he worked as a general practitioner.

Times were not easy for the family from a financial viewpoint, necessitating Mrs Forster's return to work. She already had a Bachelor of Arts degree having graduated from the University of Melbourne in 1918, majoring in psychology. She gained employment at the ground-breaking remedial clinic established by psychiatrist, Dr John Williams, at the Children's Hospital. Her ability to teach handicapped and backward children and the moral support she provided to families through her home visits was recognised by paediatricians such as Dr Elizabeth Turner of the Queen Victoria Hospital who referred patients to her.

Just as his mother faced major challenges in getting her life back on track, so did Forster. In his first year after returning to Melbourne, he attended the Princes Hill State School, near to where the family lived. An incident in which another pupil injured Forster's eye with a stick suggested a tough environment and no doubt contributed to his mother's belief that a move to a less confronting setting was desirable. She impressed on him the need to gain a scholarship, which he did, thereby enabling him to complete his education at Melbourne Grammar School (1934-39).

He performed well in classics and history and seemed set to follow in the footsteps of his mother's older brother, Sir Keith Officer, a pioneer Australian diplomat. His mother supported his studiousness and competitive urge, expressing satisfaction with any efforts that placed him in one of the top two positions in a subject or class. For reasons that may have included advice from family members, he did not pursue tertiary training in Arts subjects, as anticipated, but instead embarked on medical training at the University of Melbourne.

A colleague at both school and university, Dr Bryan Gandevia, captured something of Forster's mercurial and theatrical temperament when he described him as "a very complex individual ... capable of being a brilliant actor ... he could be reserved and remote ... [or] great company and had a rather wicked sense of humour". Although Forster never took part in formal theatrical performances, in the years to come he made the most of his sense of theatre and timing.

### Unavoidable challenges

In 1940 he entered University but found the intricacies of physics and chemistry difficult to master. After failing first year medicine, his life was thrown into turmoil by the discovery of a tumour on his spine. It was benign, but doctors initially thought it inoperable. With Forster facing paraplegia, Royal Melbourne Hospital orthopaedic surgeon Dr Eric Price declared his willingness to perform surgery. The operation was a success, although the spine was forever weakened. Price told Forster he had given him back his life until he was 70, but beyond that he could make no predictions. Gandevia, who visited Forster during the long months of recuperation, recalled that his friend did a lot of thinking and reading as he lay on his back.

Having pulled through the surgery, Forster withdrew from his medical course and found a job with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR – predecessor of the CSIRO). According to Professor Roger Pepperell from the Royal Women's Hospital, Forster may have been lost to medicine but for the persuasive powers of the Dean of Medicine, Professor Roy Wright, who recognised the young man's potential and persuaded him to resume his studies. Forster rewarded Wright's belief in him, graduating with honours in surgery, as well as obstetrics and gynaecology, in 1948.

While working as a resident medical officer and registrar at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1949 and 1950, Forster started his surgical training. He also met his future wife, trainee nurse Prue Edgar, at the hospital ball. He then spent a year as a resident at the Women's Hospital, where he gained considerable experience working with senior obstetrician, Dr Margaret Alison Mackie. Later that year (1951) an interest in pathology led to his appointment as Assistant to the Head of the hospital's Pathology Department, Dr Hans Bettinger.

In 1952 he married Prue, and they had three sons and a daughter. Over the years, she concluded that the challenges he faced as a young man, and particularly his spinal problems, caused him to become more driven:

He'd always been a "happy Jack" until then, but those experiences led to him becoming more single-minded and determined to make the most of every opportunity. He often said to me that it was never the brilliant person who came out on top, but the hard worker. He was impeccable at dotting the "i's" and crossing the "t's" and he made sure that everything was done to a high standard. As a young man he was also very competitive. Because of that, he did not make a great many friends at school though, later, he greatly enjoyed the company of his medical colleagues.

His attention to detail suited the specialty of pathology, and found favour with Bettinger, a man of broad interests, including a love of good music "with the gift of pitch memory". It was he who introduced Forster to classical music, which became one of his passions.

Forster extended his training in 1953 by travelling overseas to the Hospital for Women in Soho Square, London. While working in this capacity he successfully studied for his Membership of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (MRCOG, which he later converted into a FRCOG).

#### Cementing a reputation

Returning to the Women's Hospital from London, Forster had to choose between pathology and clinical obstetrics. He chose the latter but retained his interest in pathology throughout his clinical career. According to Prue Forster, he was quite sceptical about pathology results and, while working in private practice, sometimes had two pathologists examine tissue from the same patient as a safeguard.

In 1954 he was appointed Second Assistant in the Professorial Unit of the Women's Hospital under Professor Lance Townsend and, in 1957, First Assistant. When Townsend went overseas on a fellowship in 1955, Forster took charge of the teaching of resident staff and medical students, a role he enjoyed immensely and for which he gained an enviable reputation. According to Prue Forster, lecturing was an outlet for his sense of the dramatic, his training in classics and for his sense of humour. "He went to a lot of trouble to make his lectures memorable and, on one occasion, persuaded me to dress in costume during a medical history lecture at Werribee Park," she recalled.

He worked long hours and experienced intermittent back pain. When not teaching, he could be seen striding slowly but determinedly through the wards of the Women's Hospital or to the operating theatre, thereby making a virtue of necessity. He was heard to comment that it was better if "obstetricians don't run; by the time you get there, things have quite often sorted themselves out".

In the meantime, starting in 1956, he became an honorary Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital at the urging of his close friend, Dr John Forbes, another 1948 graduate and best man at his wedding. Forbes, who was Medical Superintendent at Fairfield 1961-78, wanted the position filled by someone expert in overseeing the complications that could occur when women with polio and other infectious diseases such as hepatitis, became pregnant and gave birth.

Forster was just the man for the job, and continued in the position until he retired from medical practice in 1984. His successor, Professor Pepperell, said Forster was well liked and respected at Fairfield and his experience was second to none. "He was probably the world expert on liver disease in pregnancy during the 1960s and had certainly managed more patients with this condition than anyone else in this country." Forster was also honorary obstetrician and gynaecologist at Fairlea Women's Prison for some years and taught nursing staff at the Presbyterian Babies Home in Canterbury.

His relations with the University Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology went through difficult times in 1958 when he fell out with Professor Townsend. Although he left the University Department at this time with regret, he continued working at the Royal Women's Hospital as an Associate Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. The following year he was appointed Honorary Obstetrician to Outpatients at the hospital, continuing in the position until 1965. He refined a procedure originally developed to overcome cervical incompetence which involved designing a special instrument for inserting a suture into the cervix. Known as the 'Frank Forster needle', it gained widespread acclaim for extending pregnancies at risk of coming to a premature conclusion. At a time when many of the life-saving techniques to assist premature babies now taken for granted were unknown, his instrument helped save the lives of many infants.

Dr Colin Officer, a cousin who trained in medicine at the University of Melbourne, starting in 1954, said that Townsend gave the lectures but Forster taught at the bedsides;

He taught meticulous care of the pregnant woman . . . Don't assume anything; exclude the life-threatening conditions . . . He taught me the art of forceps application. Gentleness, regional anaesthesia, 'pull as the pain would push'. Similarly, Forster gave instruction about the art of assisted breech delivery; 'Deliver too fast and a cerebral haemorrhage was the risk; deliver too slowly and respiratory complications occurred.'

According to Officer, Forster taught so well that when appointed Honorary Obstetrician in 1959, these same students referred him huge numbers of private patients. The enormous workload forced him to give up his honorary work during 1965 for the sake of his family.

#### New fields and broader horizons

His departure from the University Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology seemed to trigger the pursuit of other interests. He briefly established private consulting rooms in Collins St. next to Gandevia, who was by then specialising in respiratory medicine. The pair started to systematically collect historical books, instruments and ephemera in their respective fields and, according to Gandevia, 'unlike a lot of collectors of books and other items, our collaboration was amicable and we enjoyed it greatly'. He also commented that Forster was 'thorough and meticulous' in his collecting. The pair instituted the archives of the Australian Medical Association, working closely with archivist, Ann Tovell.

When Gandevia moved to Sydney in the late 1960s, Forster relocated to Victoria Pde, East Melbourne, next to another good friend, neonatal paediatrician, Dr Glyn White. The arrangement was personally and professionally rewarding; Forster saw many of White's patients who had Rhesus incompatibility problems complicating their pregnancies and White followed the progress of children whose mothers Forster attended. A nephew, Hugh Forster, was impressed by the strength of his uncle's relationship with his patients, many of whom later remarked on "their admiration for the man and their unquestioned trust in his medical acumen".

In subsequent years, Forster and White jointly purchased the former British Medical Association building in nearby Lansdowne St., occupying rooms on opposite sides of a corridor on the ground floor. They used the top floor to run antenatal and postnatal classes and encouraged physiotherapists to develop exercise programs for pregnant women. The top floor also housed Forster's formidable medical library, with works covering obstetrics and gynaecology, sexology, birth control, infertility, eugenics, mothercraft, the nursing profession, and the social problems of women. Prue Forster recalled that on one occasion, customs officials threatened to charge her husband with the import of obscene material until they were persuaded that it was legitimate, having a bearing on developments in obstetrics, birth control and natural childbirth.

One of many areas of medical history in which Forster showed great interest, was the history of the Royal Women's Hospital. He is credited with jointly establishing with Dr J. W. ("Hoppy") Johnstone the Tracy Memorial Lecture series (later the Tracy Maund Memorial Lectures, so named to honour the hospitals' co-founders Drs Richard Tracy and John Maund). The lectures were timed to coincide with the annual course of postgraduate lectures arranged by a postgraduate sub-committee of the hospital staff.

In giving the inaugural lecture on 10 March 1964, Forster chose the subject, 'Richard Thomas Tracy and His Part in the History of Ovariectomy'. His treatment of the subject was lively and entertaining while reflecting a high level of scholarship. It brought to mind Gandevia's comment that Forster was a man who "understood the art and the science of history, of historical research, historiography and bibliography". Forster's approach to medical history was influenced by Dr Edward Ford, a leading figure in the field and head of the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at the University of Sydney from the late 1930s, whom Gandevia had introduced to him.

Forster mentored some leading obstetricians, including Geoffrey Bishop, later Senior Vice-President of the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RACOG), President of the Asia-Oceania Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (AOFOG) and the Honorary Curator of the Historical Collection of RACOG and RANZCOG immediately after Forster. Bishop found him to be "honest, intelligent and forthright", with a wry sense of humour and emphatic in his views. He had exacting standards, about which Bishop was left in no doubt after arriving late due to a misunderstanding to assist him in surgery for the first time. Forster did not speak to him until the procedure was over at which time he said sternly, "Never do that again!" The unbending side of Forster's character was not reserved for junior colleagues: Friends and family also found him unforgiving if they did not meet his uncompromising standards.

His interest in medicine and its history led him on some interesting journeys.

For example, he took time out from his clinical work in 1978 and 1979 when, as Norman Haire Fellow at the University of Sydney, he researched the life and work of Haire, a controversial Australian gynaecologist who wrote extensively on birth control, sex education and sexual reform. Sadly, Forster's plan to write a book on the history of birth control in Australia was thwarted by ill-health later in life.

Notwithstanding his health problems, he made major contributions to the history of Australian medicine, lecturing, writing numerous papers and as author or co-author of a number of books including "Progress in obstetrics and gynaecology in Australia" (1967) and "Super ardua: The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in Australia 1929-1979" (1981).

He was also involved in the formation and/or leadership of a number of medical history interest groups, serving as President of the AMA (Victorian Branch) section of medical history 1966-67 and founding member of the Medical History Society of Victoria and of the Australian Society for the History of Medicine, of which he was Victorian president 1966-68 and 1980-82. He was also honorary curator of the RACOG historical collection for many years from 1982. The breadth of his interests was evident from his membership of the Medico-Legal Society of Victoria (President in 1982), and of the Book Collectors Society of Victoria (President, 1983-85).

In 1989, the year of his retirement, he seemed set to enter a new phase of achievement when he helped establish the Glyn White Research Fellowship of the RACOG to promote research in perinatal medicine. In 1990, the RACOG recognised his contributions to the art and science of obstetrics and gynaecology by presenting him with its highest award, The President's Medal.

#### The final curtain

Around 1993, soon after reaching 70, Forster's back gave way as his backbone collapsed. His state of health was further compromised by a heart condition which had previously contributed to two strokes. Some years previously, he and Prue had moved to East Melbourne, where many of his colleagues and friends visited him on their way to or from the College. Their continuing contact provided him with much pleasure during a difficult period.

He gave his medical library to the College and was delighted when it decided to name its new library after him. Tragically, but also perhaps in keeping with the theatrical aspects of his life, he sustained a fatal heart attack on the stairs to the library on 18 March 1995, less than an hour before it was due to be named in his honour and surrounded by family and friends.

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# Fowler, Robert (1888 - 1965)

O.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.S. (Eng), F.A.C.S., F.R.A.C.S.

<i>Born</i>	March 5 1888 London, England
<i>Died</i>	May 12 1965 South Yarra, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist and Medical Practitioner

## Details

Transcription of items written by Dr W Ivon Hayes, Dr E.V. Keogh, Dr Carl Wood, Col Rex Hall, Dr H.G. Furnell, Dr. J.N. Buchanan and Air Vice-Marshal E.A. Daley and published in the "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1965.

ROBERT FOWLER  
(1920 – 1924)

The autumnal sunlight of Wednesday afternoon, May 12, 1965, was streaming through the western window of the dignified chapel of Trinity College, University of Melbourne, at the funeral service of one of Trinity's distinguished sons, Dr Robert Fowler, O.B.E., who had died on May 8. The memorial oration was given by Dr. Colin Macdonald, a close colleague in University affairs for over 30 years, and what follows is an expansion of that memorable address.

Robert Fowler was born an Englishman in the city of London, off Bishopsgate and within a stone's throw of the Bank of England, in the year 1888. His father, Dr. Walter Fowler, a graduate of Caius College, Cambridge, and a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, came to Australia in 1891 to practice at the riverside town of Echuca, and 10 years later was the medical superintendent of Bendigo Hospital. His grandfather, Dr. Robert Fowler, was a graduate of King's College, London, and a contemporary of the great Lister.

In 1900, Robert was sent to be a boarder at Caulfield Grammar School under Dr. W.M. Buntine, and at the age of 17 years he entered Trinity College with a resident scholarship, when Dr. W.E. Leeper was the Warden and the other College Heads of the time were John MacFarland of Ormond and Ernest Sugden of Queen's. Contemporaries with Robert in Trinity were Sir Reginald Leeper, Lord Casey, Sir William Johnston, Dr. Sidney Fancourt McDonald, Lord Baillieu, and Dr. Edward White (Sir Rowden White's brother), and fellow students in the medical course were Sir William Upjohn, Sir Victor Hurley, Sir Alan Newton and Dr. Richard O'Sullivan, to name only a few in a famous year – 1909 – which has justly been described as an "annus mirabilis".

After graduation, Robert Fowler spend one year as resident medical officer at the Melbourne Hospital and the next year as Beaney Scholar and Demonstrator in Pathology, and in 1912 he was Assistant Lecturer in Pathology under Professor Harry Allen and gained the degree of M.D. Then, as a well-earned respite from many years of arduous endeavour, he went to England with two objects in view: to visit his relatives and to see medical and surgical work in the important European centres. He returned to Australia in time to become involved at the beginning of the first World War, during which he gave unstinted service and earned well-merited advancement. He rose to be A.D.M.S. of the Australian Mounted Division, and at Damascus in 1918 he had a direct connection with the enigmatic figure of Lawrence of Arabia. Before returning home in 1920, he gained by examination the coveted F.R.C.S. (England); in 1924 he was invited to become a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons; in 1927 he was a Foundation Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. This triple fellowship set the seal on his status in the art and practice of surgery.

He was determined to specialize in surgery, but although he was appointed in 1921 as honorary obstetric surgeon at the Women's Hospital, where he performed the first Kronig's lower-segment caesarean section seen at that hospital, he found the acquisition of a surgical clientele so tardy and difficult that he considered moving to Sydney. Fortunately, however, the Alfred Hospital in 1923 decided to appoint their first honorary gynaecologist, and Robert Fowler, though very reluctant to relinquish his appointment at the Women's Hospital, obtained this position. His financial worries soon ceased, and at the Alfred Hospital, with his team of enthusiastic assistants, he built up a department of international reputation. He retired from the Alfred Hospital in 1948 after 25 years of dedicated service. He was also honorary gynaecologist to the Austin Hospital from 1927 to 1935.

His connection with the Standing Committee of Convocation of the University of Melbourne commenced in 1930 as a representative of the graduates in medicine, and he devoted 35 years to University affairs. He succeeded Dr. S.G. Coppel as Warden of Convocation, and in this office was an outstanding success as a leader and the wisest of counsellors. He succeeded Sir William Johnston on the University Council. Since schooldays Bob had always been greatly interested in English expression, and his clarity of exposition on difficult matters of the University legislation, which each month presents itself to Standing Committee, was a delight to listen to. He dearly loved the music of our language and "the magical spices of words", and no one better than he could employ the nuances and subtle shades of expression. He was an artist in the "curiosa felicitas" of which the Roman poet Horace wrote. His submissions were invariably carefully prepared, their reliability and accuracy never in question, and as a persuasive speaker with a charming voice he had few peers.

There was a unique atmosphere of personal and professional quality about Robert Fowler – some inbuilt elegance of the later Victorian era, inherited, so it seems, from his father and grandfather, both of whom must have been men of wide scholarship and high ideals. He was indeed a man who brought great lustre to the profession of medicine and to our University of Melbourne.



Scholar, soldier and surgeon, Robert Fowler has a place in our hearts, and by no one who knew him will he be forgotten.  
(Dr W Ivon Hayes)

When the Anti Cancer Council of Victoria was established in 1936, Robert Fowler was appointed to both the Council and the Medical and Scientific Committee; but his most valuable and notable achievement, and one that will never be forgotten, was the design, direction and development of the Central Cancer Registry. He initiated this in 1939 and was its indefatigable honorary chief registrar until he retired in 1956. Later he was editor of the Registry's quarterly bulletin.

It would be impossible to assess just how much the Council owes to Bob. He was always regular in his attendance at committee meetings and took a leading part in discussions. He was always forthright in argument and ready to express his view. When he left the Executive Committee, much of the sparkle went from the meetings. As often as not, his views and mine did not coincide; but however forcibly we differed, we always remained the best of friends.

One of these examples of disagreement was the establishment of an annual travelling fellowship. Bob opposed this tooth and nail, but in the final committee meeting was the sole dissident. As soon as the motion was carried, I suggested that it be called "the Robert Fowler Travelling Scholarship" because of his great service to the Council. I shall never forget the expression on Bob's face of mingled surprise and pleasure. He always took a great interest in the choice of the Fellows, and was particularly pleased when they called to see him, as most of them did.

His greatest service, not only to the Anti-Cancer Council but to medicine, was the creation of the Central Cancer Registry. This stemmed from his conviction that no hospital could function properly unless good histories were taken and there was a good record system. Since he found the existing practices inadequate for his own need, particularly in the final assessment of results of treatment of cancer in women, he wanted to create a follow-up centre with statistical facilities. To fit himself for this, he took a course in statistics at the University. It required endless effort on his part to get cooperation in this field from all the teaching hospitals. The Central Cancer Registry now has records, with practically complete follow-up, of some 70,000 cancer patients. There is no similar institution in the southern hemisphere. In this work Bob was far in advance of his time. The collection of full and accurate data concerning the end-results of treatment and the use of adequate statistical methods for the analyses are now not uncommon in Australia, but Bob was the lone pioneer.

One of his most important papers in this field was "Some Observations on the epidemiology of Lung Cancer", published in 1955, which reviewed the history of lung cancer in Australia and its association with smoking habits. This remains the most important Australian contribution in this field, and should be compulsory reading for anyone proposing to make public statements on the subject.

He inspired a number of contributions from the Registry but did not wish his name to appear as author or co-author, although his characteristic style made his authorship clear to all who knew him. He was working on a report on endometrial cancer at the time of his death.

Robert Fowler was endowed with great gifts and high ideals, and these he gave freely in service to the Anti-Cancer Council and, through it, to the general community. By his death we have all suffered an irreparable loss.  
(Dr E.V. Keogh)

The Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, some forty years ago, decided to develop a gynaecological unit, and Robert Fowler was the first "honorary" appointment. Under his guidance, out-patient and in-patient departments were organized, which soon attracted many patients, and a faithful bank of assistants came forward, who all became devoted to their chief. He had the happy knack of inspiring his assistants and, best of all, encouraged and developed their talents; and were made to feel important members of a flourishing and dynamic unit. The hospital pathologist team met once a week, when macroscopic and microscopic specimens were examined, procedures criticized and helpful suggestions made. These meetings proved of inestimable benefit to all participants. Robert Fowler, a good anatomist, was a superb operator and a model for all to follow.

His outstanding contribution to gynaecology was, I believe, his pioneering work in the treatment of uterine cancer. Radiotherapy was then in its infancy, but its usefulness was eagerly recognized and exploited. Wertheim operations were undertaken, but often proved perilous to the patient, since intravenous therapy (with fluid or blood) was not yet available, nor were antibiotics as yet discovered. With the advent of intravenous therapy and the use of antibiotics, operative and therapeutic treatments fell into their respective spheres, and both methods were utilized. Fowler early insisted on a thorough follow-up of all cancer patients, records being kept to ten-year periods. To assist him in this work, a University examination in statistical method was attempted and passed. His work with the Central Cancer Registry is well known.

In helping pioneer the Wertheim operation in Australia, in the use of radio-therapy, and in the insistence of rigid control in follow-up of all cancer patients lies his very great contribution to gynaecology. In addition, he quickly approved and used the Fothergill-Donald technique for correction of uterine prolapse and recognized the frequency of associated pouch of Douglas hernia. Robert Fowler was a great inspiration to all who worked with him, and we deeply feel our loss.  
(Dr. Carl Wood)

As a young captain in the Australian Army Medical Corps, Robert Fowler served in the Citizen Military Forces from 1910, and at the outbreak of war in August, 1914, he joined the First Light Horse Field Ambulance. He left Melbourne in October of that year with the first Expeditionary Force, and after several months' training in Egypt, he sailed for Gallipoli early in May, 1915. However, with other medical personnel, his services were sorely needed, and he was retained in transporting wounded from the Peninsula to Alexandria. One of his assistants on the transport cum hospital-ship "Scottian" taking 850 wounded on the three-day nightmare

journey quotes from his diary: "Captain Fowler, one of six doctors, was tireless in his work, often doing the trip without any sleep whatever."

After August 6, landing at Suvla, Captain Fowler spent many nights in a forward receiving post just behind "Table Top", when he would frequently remain awake throughout the night, standing in the "sap" attending to the constant trickle of wounded, both ours and the enemy's. He would resist his assistant's effort to make him take a little sleep until sheer exhaustion overcame him. On returning to Egypt after the evacuation, he served throughout the Palestine campaign, when he commanded the Fourth Light Horse Field Ambulance.

Towards the end of the campaign in Palestine, he was A.D.M.S. of the Australian Mounted Division, and had the arduous task of organizing the medical establishments in Damascus after the Turks capitulated. He was, in fact, the senior medical officer who figures in the film "Lawrence of Arabia". Speaking on the subject recently, Colonel Fowler referred to the "shambles of Damascus", and said: "It was in these circumstances that I met the enigmatic and fame-enduring T.E. Lawrence." He made light of his part as portrayed in the film, and added: "Nor did I strike Lawrence in the face [as shown in the film] for his indifference to the misery and suffering of Turkish prisoners in Baramkie Barracks."

Amongst the honours accorded him, Colonel Fowler was appointed Honorary Surgeon to the Governor-General, and was made an officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. At the beginning of World War 11, he was senior medical officer to the R.A.A.F. On rejoining the A.A.M.C., he commanded the 117th General Hospital, and later became D.D.M.S. Southern Command.

He will always be remembered by his Service associates for his unfailing and tireless devotion, imperturbable nature and meticulous attention to detail.  
(Col Rex Hall)

Robert Fowler was lithe and rangy in build with a lean, aquiline face, fit frame for his keen and active brain. He always gave the impression that he was going somewhere and knew where he was going; but nevertheless he had time to listen to any problem, give it its full consideration and help in any way he could. I am deeply in his debt for help and encouragement in difficult times; I know I had expressed by gratitude to some degree, but I am sure not adequately.

My first contact with him was in 1929, when I had just returned from abroad and joined his clinic at the Alfred Hospital. The most noteworthy feature of his department was that it was alive; it was busy and growing, and "the boss" was never satisfied – he was always eager to improve. Any new idea that seemed worthwhile was given a fair trial – a very stimulating atmosphere for a young man. Many assistants worked in the clinic throughout the years – Doug Aitchison, Carl Wood, Jim Buchanan (who succeeded him), Alf Oldham, John Bennett, Henry Seeley, Vernon Breaton, Leslie Hirshner. We worked hard for him and for him and all remained his loyal friends and admirers.

Robert Fowler played a very important part in improving the standards of gynaecology in Melbourne, and in no aspect was this more marked than in the treatment of gynaecological cancer. His interest in this subject continued, and later in his life he entered the more staid realm of statistics. With typical energy and enthusiasm he became an expert in this field, and rendered great service to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and later to the Anti-Cancer Council. I will make no attempt to particularize about his gynaecological work; I hope this will be dealt with in more detail elsewhere.

Robert Fowler served in two wars. In the 1914-1918 War he was in the Middle East and, as would be expected, he served with distinction, being decorated with the O.B.E., and finishing as Colonel A.D.M.S. Australian Mounted Division. In the second World War he commanded the 117th Australian General Hospital and later was D.D.M.S. Southern Command, an appointment he had held from 1933 to 1936.

I was fortunate to be associated with him in another of his activities in which he reached the peak. For many years he served on the Standing Committee of Convocation of the University of Melbourne, becoming Warden in 1959, and relinquishing that dignity on being appointed to the University Council in 1962. I think he greatly enjoyed being Warden, and from his throne-like chair his rolling Burkeian sentences delighted alike audience and author.

Robert Fowler has left a widow, two married daughters and a son, Robert junior, who has already won distinction in surgical research at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. To them we offer sincere sympathy, and hope that pride in his achievements will be some solace in their loss.  
(Dr H.G. Furnell)

In 1923 the Board of Management of the Alfred Hospital decided to create a special clinic for gynaecological patients. Until that time, the general surgeons of the hospital had attended these women in the course of their duties. The Board were extremely fortunate in obtaining the services of Mr. Robert Fowler as the first chief of the clinic. To a first-class general surgical training, he added a flair for administration and organization which was invaluable in the early days of the clinic.

From small beginnings in annexes of the general wards the efficiency of the clinic rapidly expanded – so much so that in 1939 an entire floor of the "new building" was allotted to the gynaecological clinic. From the beginning, Fowler was ably assisted by Carl Sanford Wood (the father of the present professor at Monash University) in both his planning and his operative work.

Fowler was a magnificent operative technician, his work being marked by meticulous attention to detail. His modification of the Alexander-Adams procedure, using the delivered portion of the round ligament as a living suture, was a classical example of applied technique. Wertheim hysterectomy for carcinoma of the cervix presented no problems to him; but at that period he was distressed by the morbidity which was associated with this procedure in the absence of anti-infective agents and adequate supplies

of blood for transfusion. He turned his attention to the radiotherapy of these lesions, and was instrumental in obtaining supplies of radium element on loan from the Commonwealth Government. He practiced the Paris technique of radium application from the outset with highly satisfactory results, so much so that the "Wertheim" was not performed as a routine in the clinic for the next ten years up to the War.

The development of the follow-up system for these cases was a local administrative action, and it was a tribute to his activity with electoral rolls, parish priests and friends or relations that 99% of the patients treated were followed for five years or over. Some of the early patients were seen annually for over 20 years. Quite early, he appreciated the importance of endocrinology, and although this phase of gynaecology was in its infancy, he established a sub-clinic under Carl Wood to explore the possibilities of such preparations as were available at the time. In fact, quite a number of rather crude preparations were developed in conjunction with the Baker Institute.

After the War, his beautiful operative methods blossomed afresh, and those who had the privilege of being associated with him saw gynaecological operations performed by a master.

After 25 years as chief of the clinic, he retired from the hospital in 1948, leaving a record of service and administration greatly appreciated by his admiring colleagues. He continued his activities in the Anti-Cancer Council, and developed a highly successful bureau there for the collation and follow-up of cancer patients from the metropolitan hospitals  
(Dr J.N. Buchanan)

Dr Robert Fowler's immediate professional colleagues and contemporaries can best speak of his personal qualities, medical achievements and war services. But it seems appropriate to refer to a little-known phase of his contribution to Australia's defence medical services.

At Caulfield Grammar School his name was not infrequently mentioned by masters as an outstanding former pupil there, and one had the privilege later of attending his tutorials in gynaecology during the early 1902's; but it was in the 1930's that one saw him firmly demonstrate a keen foresight into military medical problems applicable to Australia in the future, which outstripped the thinking of most of his Citizen and Regular Force medical colleagues. Further, he possessed the enthusiasm and energy to follow up his ideas keenly, and endeavoured to bring them before those who should be interested – and this, in spite of being an extremely busy specialist at a teaching hospital.

At the time when he was D.D.M.S. in Victoria, he began to stress the great potential of "air" as a logical means of transporting casualties and the sick. He gave several illustrated lectures on the subject, and taking the matter into its appropriate "camp" at a combined gathering of A.M.M.C. and R.A.A.F. held at Point Cook, he addressed them with impressive effect on the subject.

In 1935, the R.A.A.F. began to consolidate its Medical Branch policy by exchanges with the R.A.F. service, and the post of D.D.M.S. (Air) became temporarily vacant. Fowler volunteered his services for the period involved. The Air Board accepted, and for some months he made an exceptionally constructive and refreshing contribution to the R.A.A.F. generally. It included improving the range and standard of medical work carried out at bases like Point Cook. Surgeons and other specialists in the C.A.F. were appointed to visit units, with a corresponding increase in the status of medical work done. For personal reasons he found it impossible to complete the two year term, and his secondment with the temporary rank of group captain ceased.

During this period and the ensuing years before World War II, he also repeatedly sounded a note of warning, not only in the medical services, but in the medical profession generally, of the great importance of tropical medicine in any war involving Australia. He encouraged medical officers to think seriously of these problems, and in his article "Arms and Anophelines or the Military Significance of Malaria", published in the Journal on November 21, 1942, showed how far ahead was his thinking in these various medical service matters. His outlook was to be further highlighted, when war came to Australia, by the sad lack in these very same fields, which for ten years he had stressed.

Thus before the war, along with his professional achievements generally, Robert Fowler made time to contribute in thought and administration to at least two of Australia's medical services. Alan Walker's last volume perhaps gives to scant reference to the true significance of his work.  
(Air Vice-Marshal E.A. Daley)

# Gentlemen's Committee (1856 - )

*From*  
1856  
Carlton, Victoria, Australia

## Details

At the first public meeting of the subscribers to the Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children two committees were established. The Ladies' Committee, which was the Committee of Management (sometimes referred to as the General Committee) and the Gentlemen's Committee which was established "for reference and counsel in time of need".

In 1870 the Gentlemen's and Ladies' Committees formally merged, although the Annual Reports continue to list the two groups separately until 1972, and Minutes of the Gentlemen's Committee exist from the 1880s.

### Members

1858-1862 Mr Thomas Dickson, probably started 1856.  
1858-1867 Mr Richard Grice Esq, probably started 1856.  
1858-1869 Mr Henry Jennings Esq, probably started 1856 and continued after 1869.  
1858-1869 Mr W Macredie Esq, probably started 1856 and continued after 1869.  
1858-1862 Mr H M Murphy, probably started 1856.  
1858-1862 Mr T H Power, probably started 1856.  
1858-1870 Mr T J Sumner Esq, probably started 1856.  
1862-1869 Mr James T Harcourt Esq, probably started 1856 and continued after 1869.  
1862-1867 Mr J McBean Esq.  
1862-1869 Mr P O'Brien Esq, continued after 1869.  
1866-1869 Mr Henri J Hart Esq, continued after 1869.  
1867-1869 Hon A Fraser, continued after 1869.  
1867-1867 Mr Robert Sellar Esq. continued after 1869.

# Gilbee, Esther Elizabeth (c. 1805 - 1875)

<i>Born</i>	c. 1805 London, England
<i>Died</i>	2 January 1875 Brunswick, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Matron

## Summary

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Esther Elizabeth Gilbee was the inaugural matron of the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital. It is likely that she worked at the premises in Albert Street for 18 months, resigning when the Hospital moved to Madeline Street in Carlton.

## Details

Of the first matron we know very little apart from the fact that she was engaged in August 1856. Newspaper accounts and archival records of the Hospital's founding simply say, 'a matron was appointed'. This position was filled before the first formal meeting of the Hospital's entire organising committee took place.(1)

Until recently, Mrs Sarah Ann Gillbee (Gillbee spelt with 2 Ls) was thought to have been the first matron. Her incumbency was purported by Gillbee descendants in the 1960s.(2) But while Sarah Gillbee was indeed a midwife in Melbourne, her training and practice was undertaken with the surname of her second husband, Barfoot. She did not use the name "Gillbee" after her second marriage which took place in September 1833.(3)

Recent research has revealed that the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital's inaugural matron was in fact Mrs Esther Elizabeth Gilbee (Gilbee spelt with one L). This information comes from Esther Gilbee's testimony given in February 1858 to a Parliamentary Inquiry into Melbourne's Yarra Bend Asylum at which Esther Gilbee reported that she had been the 'matron at the Lying-in Hospital' for a period of eighteen months in the previous two years.(4) Esther Gilbee's station as formerly Matron of the Lying-in Hospital is also recorded on her death certificate.

The position of matron in the mid-1800s generally called for no specific skills other than a capacity to manage a large household. Gaols, immigrant ships and hostels are examples of establishments that appointed matrons to superintend the activities of others. Yet Esther Gilbee had very specific skills, which may explain why she was appointed to the position of matron at Melbourne's Lying-in Hospital. Esther Gilbee told the 1858 Parliamentary Inquiry that she was experienced with managing lunatics. She had served a Dr Sutherland and his son for nineteen years at a large private asylum for ladies in London. Esther Gilbee reported that she had also attended women privately.

"Lunacy" associated with childbirth may have been what we now call mental illness or even post-natal depression. But the effect of a specific postnatal infection could give the impression that women, having given birth, had lost their minds in the process. Known as "puerperal psychosis", this condition was untreatable until the introduction of sulphonamides in the 1930s and other antibiotics in the 1950s. In the nineteenth century, puerperal psychosis was sometimes so severe, that women were admitted to asylums where skilled attendants like Esther Gilbee would nurse them to health.

In the complex environment of a new mid-nineteenth century hospital for indigent women, the matron had to ensure that the Hospital's work was carried out efficiently and effectively. Few records have survived to describe in detail what Esther Gilbee may have done from day to day in her work as matron, but we do know that when it opened in Albert Street, East Melbourne, the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital could cater for up to seventeen childbearing women at one time. Two "servants" named Phoebe Dunston and Sarah [surname illegible] were part of the staff, paid at £30 and £25 per annum respectively; Mrs Gilbee's annual salary was a handsome £100.(5)

As well as caring for women and their babies, there was linen to wash, rooms and mattresses to clean. The matron did the shopping for meat and bread and other purchases, as well as supervising servants including the cook, laundry woman and perhaps a man-servant.(6) Esther Gilbee's evidence to the Parliamentary Inquiry, given in February 1858, indicates that she had relinquished the position of matron before the Hospital moved from East Melbourne to Carlton.

Esther Gilbee died 2 January 1875, at her residence in Edward Street in the inner city Melbourne suburb of Brunswick, having been ill for two weeks with acute dysentery. Dr L J Martin, an Honorary Surgeon to the Lying-in Hospital, had attended in the week before her death. Esther Gilbee's death certificate notes that she was London-born, unmarried without children, and formerly 'Matron of the Lying-in Hospital Melbourne'. She had been in Australia for 27 years.(7) Her estate was valued at £253, comprising an allotment of land in the Parish of Lauriston of 19 acres, 2 roods, fenced but without a dwelling upon it, and rent owing to her. Her estate was left to Miss Alice Ann Gregory,\*\* also of Edward Street, Brunswick.(8)

\*Esther Gilbee's name is spelt on will and probate documents as "Ester", but on her death certificate as "Esther".

\*\*This title is later written in the same will as Mrs.

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  2. O'Sullivan, David M. (1966) 'William Gillbee 1825-1885 and the introduction of antiseptic surgery to Australia'. The Medical Journal of Australia, no. 2:871-77.
  3. Grehan, Madonna (2006) "'Incompetent Women" and "Medical Gentlemen": Maternity Turf Wars in Van Diemen's Land circa 1841', Proceedings of the Australian and New Zealand Society of the History of Medicine, Medical History Symposium, Medicine and Society: Past Present & Future, Launceston, Tasmania, 6-9 July 2006.
  4. Report from the Select Committee upon the Lunatic Asylum; together with Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendices, Parliament of Victoria Legislative Assembly. 20 April 1858, p.64. The author is indebted to Dr Lee-Ann Monk for communicating these data about Esther Gilbee.
  5. Melbourne Lying Hospital and Infirmary, Statement of Liabilities for 1856, Treasury Department, [photocopy], Nattrass Papers, RWH Archives, Unaccessioned.
  6. Royal Women's Hospital Archives, Lying-in Hospital Honorary Secretary's Correspondence File, Series 0434, A 1992\_17\_29; Statement of Weekly Expenses, 21 November 1956.
  7. Extract of Death Registrations in the Borough of Brunswick, No 1324, 2 January 1875, Esther Elizabeth Gilbee.
  8. Public Record Office Victoria Series VPRS 7591, 12-634 Wills, Probate and Administration Records 1841-1925, Ester (sic) Elizabeth Gilbee, 1875.
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## Gillbee, Sarah Ann (1803 - 1882)



*Born* 18 September 1803, Parish of St John, Hackney, London, Middlesex, England

*Died* 24 February 1882 Stawell, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Midwife

*Alternative Names*

- Sarah Barfoot
- Sarah Griffiths

### *Summary*

It has been believed since at least the 1960s that Sarah Ann Gillbee (two Ls), an Edinburgh trained midwife and mother of the eminent Melbourne surgeon William Gillbee was the first Matron of the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for the Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children. However, research carried out by Dr Lee-Ann Monk and Dr Madonna Grehan, has conclusively shown that although she did practice midwifery in Melbourne, she was not Matron of the Lying-in Hospital. That honour belongs to Esther Elizabeth Gilbee (one L).

# Godfrey, Graham George (c. 1905 - 1960)

M.S. (Melb.), F.R.A.C.S., D.G.O. (Melb.)

*Born* c. 1905

*Died* 10 January 1960  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1960.

GRAHAM GEORGE GODFREY  
(1946 - 1960)

Probably few men have done as much to advance in Australia, in so short a time, the surgical treatment of uterine cancer as Graham George Godfrey, who died at the age of 55, in Melbourne, on January 10, 1960. Though at the time of his death he possessed a local rather than an international reputation, there are those who believe that, had he been spared for a few more years, his fame would have spread afar.

Graham's roots lay deep in the professional and legislative life of Victoria. His maternal grandfather was Sir Graham Berry, at one time Premier of Victoria, and its Agent-General in London. His paternal grandfather was the Honourable George Godfrey, treasurer of the Melbourne Hospital and a well known solicitor. His mother and his aunt were the first women to qualify as dentists in Victoria. Two uncles practised law, and another uncle medicine, as did his father, Dr. Clarence Godfrey, onetime lecturer in psychiatry at the University of Melbourne, who first introduced to Australia treatment of psychoneurotica by hypnotism, who was one of the first in this country to recognise the significance of Freudian psychology. So it is not surprising that Graham inherited from both mother and father an intellectuality much above the average.

Graham Godfrey, born in 1904, gained an open scholarship at Melbourne Grammar School in 1919, and later won an open University Exhibition with first class honours in Latin and Greek. Graduating in medicine in 1928, he held resident positions at the Alfred Hospital and the Women's Hospital, after which he practised in the small Gippsland town of Pakenham and the Melbourne suburb of Elwood. In 1936 he took the D.G.O. and three years later, still in general practice, he gained the coveted M.S. (Melbourne) degree. Around this period he was a university demonstrator in anatomy and in pathology, as well as holding tutorships at Trinity College, one of the residential colleges of the University of Melbourne. After four years in the Army - he saw service in the Wewak area - he gained the F.R.A.C.S. at the age of 44. He had been appointed to the staff of the Women's Hospital in 1946, and in 1951 was selected by Professor Lance Townsend as first assistant in gynaecology. In 1950 the Radio-Surgical Unit at the Women's Hospital was established with Arthur Hill in charge and Godfrey as his colleague. Hill and Godfrey were an ideal working pair, whose clear purpose appeared to further inspire their group of able colleagues; a uniquely effective team quickly developed.

Thus began the real work of his life - the fight to subdue gynaecological cancer and relieve its pain and suffering. Malignancy had certainly met an able and resolute opponent, one who scorned discouragement and who eventually gave his life to the winning of many rounds. He had the advantage of working "geographically fulltime" at the hospital, and an important feature of Godfrey's work was the meticulous keeping of all records. No one better understood the imperfections of medical statistics, but it afforded him great encouragement that in a recent paper G.R. Kurrie showed that the Radio-Surgical Unit's results in cervical carcinoma compared with the best in other parts of the world in Stage I cases and probably stood alone in Stage II cases.

At the outset the Unit found the intravenous pyelogram of great value in the management and prognosis of its patients. Godfrey stressed that it was important to know through the intravenous pyelogram and condition of the urinary tract both before and after treatment, whether radiation or surgery or both, were employed. Intravenous pyelograms were made as a routine measure at intervals of three to six months, to determine renal function and to demonstrate the presence or absence of ureteric obstruction. It was learnt that hydronephrosis developing in those cases was almost invariably silent and classical loin pain being absent and the patient frequently looking and feeling well. Godfrey's surgery was radical, more extensive than the Wertheim operation or the later developments of Victor Bonney, so it was inevitable that in a percentage of cases a ureter would be traumatized, with possibly a vascular necrosis and fistula formation; when a fistula developed, intravenous pyelography formed an essential investigation in determining its site and size. Godfrey taught that the so-called spontaneous closing of these fistulae usually indicated that the kidney on that side had ceased to function. The intravenous pyelographic evidence gave him an opportunity to present - by ureteral anastomosis - the autonephrectomy. With the ever-present possibility of recurrent growth and the uncertain late effects of post-operative and post-irradiational scarring of the opposite ureter, it was Godfrey's contention that "every effort should be made to preserve salvageable tissue, because the poorer kidney of today may be the better - indeed the only - kidney of tomorrow". So his aim was to avoid nephrectomy wherever possible, in cases of progressing ureteral obstruction or ureteric fistula. As the management of Godfrey's cases was largely governed by the intravenous pyelographic appearances, his association with the hospital X-ray department became very close; it was found that the essential post-operative information could usually be obtained by a single film taken 20 minutes after injection and without any abdominal compression, which is frequently distressing.

Godfrey possessed a unique combination of personal qualities. Few men were more exempt from the taints of vanity, malevolence or falsehood; he was generous to a fault, with little sense of money values. Evincing almost a blind faith in his friends and great loyalty to his colleagues, if on occasions their reports or opinions were at variance with the clinical or pathological probabilities, he



required much weighty evidence before acknowledging that they were temporarily "off the beam". His appointment on the professorial unit carried the right of private practice, but of this he availed himself little.

He spoke and wrote very well, an elegant handwriting reflecting the clarity of his thought, and was acknowledged a good surgical teacher; younger men always were anxious to assist Godfrey, a first-class demonstrator of anatomy and pathology. He exemplified the advantages of a classical training, which made him appreciative of that *curiosa felicitas* of which Horace wrote; he also admired the terse imagery of language of the top-line American sporting journalists, and could accurately recount incisive phrases and sentences read many years before. And almost invariably he chose at the first attempt the right word to express the exact shade of intended meaning.

In physical appearance Godfrey was of average height and strongly built, with a characteristically brisk walk, an almost hairless head, and twinkling eyes in a round face constantly lit by a happy smile. No company was dull which included him as a member; he dearly loved the thrust and parry of conversation at the Women's Hospital luncheon table, where over twelve months surely every subject under the sun comes under friendly and spirited discussion.

Associated with his love of thoroughbreds was an enthusiasm for the re-establishment of the School of Veterinary Science at the University of Melbourne, which was created in 1908, but lapsed in 1928. Owing to the efforts of Godfrey and others, the omens for the reopening shortly of the Melbourne Veterinary School are distinctly encouraging.

Godfrey appeared in good health when the coronary occlusion first struck; recovery looked probable, but seven days later the quick end came. He was survived by a widow (formerly Miss Jean Campbell), and son Michael, and a daughter Mrs. John Walker.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Gourlay, Victoria Amelia (1863 - 1915)

<i>Born</i>	1863 Hobart, Tasmania, Australia
<i>Died</i>	10 August 1915, Pahran, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Special Infirmary Nurse
<i>Alternative Names</i>	Victoria Fetherston
<i>Summary</i>	Victoria Gourlay was the first Special Infirmary Nurse appointed permanently to the Gynaecology/Infirmary Department at The Women's Hospital. She married a former Resident Medical Officer, Richard Herbert (Bertie) Fetherston who later was an Honorary Surgeon to the Hospital.

## Details

Victoria Amelia Gourlay was one of eight children born to Captain John Russell Gourlay and his wife Hannah Mitchell Armstrong of Runnymede Street Hobart. Captain Gourlay was a mariner and native of Fifeshire, Scotland.

Victoria Gourlay may have trained in Sydney with her elder sister Margaret McLean Gourlay.(1) In 1886 and 1887, the siblings worked at Hobart General Hospital, nursing typhoid patients during an epidemic which depleted the local workforce. The Gourlay sisters responded to an urgent call for nurses to come from the Australian mainland. The sisters eventually became ill themselves and resigned. A grateful public raised almost £120 to thank all of the hospital's nurses who then asked that the money be put to commemorative gold medals in the shape of a Maltese cross. Victoria and Margaret Gourlay were among twenty-two nurses whose 'meritorious service in nursing' during the typhoid epidemic was recognised with the 1887 Typhoid Medal, believed to be the first award of its type in Australia.(2)

After recovering her health in 1887, Victoria Gourlay was appointed Second Infirmary Nurse in the Infirmary Department at The Women's where she attended gynaecological cases. In November 1887, Gourlay was granted 'a gratuity of £2/2/0 in addition to her salary ... for acting as Special Nurse'.(3) "Special" cases were becoming more common in the Infirmary where the nursing was cutting edge. It needed to be, because operative interventions for gynaecological complaints were constantly evolving. Gynaecological nursing was hard work. The nurses were allocated a case and attended that patient until she was well enough to be discharged or died. It could mean that the nurse was on duty for six weeks with little time off.

Gourlay had been at The Women's for less than a year when she resigned suddenly in April 1888, as did Night Nurse Edith Holden and Head Nurse Caroline Atkins. Multiple resignations at the same time from within the same department were unusual. The Ladies Committee of Management investigated and found that disagreements prevailed between the three women.(4) Gourlay and Holden left the hospital, but Atkins asked to withdraw her resignation which was permitted.(5) These personnel problems led to a wider inquiry by resident surgeon Dr Herbert Richard (Bertie) Fetherston into the Infirmary's system of nursing.

Fetherston found the Infirmary nurses to be attentive and working well but observed that the turnover of staff was high. This had wider implications. Without experienced nurses who understood the work, pupils could not learn the care of complex cases and gain the necessary experience in the breadth of cases treated by the hospital.(6) Fetherston concluded that some of the gynaecology patients undergoing surgery needed "special" nursing care, meaning one nurse caring for one patient. As it was, when a patient needed special nursing and the hospital could not supply one, a nurse was engaged temporarily via a nursing bureau. This came at a cost that the hospital could ill-afford. The Ladies Committee decided it would be cheaper to have a special infirmary nurse, in-house.

In August 1889, Matron Elizabeth Findlay nominated Victoria Gourlay as 'Special Infirmary Nurse'.(7) It was the first specialist nursing role of its kind at The Women's. Gourlay occupied it for two years. In February 1891, she was granted the customary increase in salary of '£5 per annum, in accordance with rule No 11 for Nurses'.(8) Her father John Gourlay was a donor to the hospital.(9) Another nurse, Patricia Ellen Walter, ran the Infirmary's operating theatre. Appointed in June 1889, Walter was better known as "Sister Pat", (10) and she worked at The Women's for seven years. Along with Sisters Walter and Gourlay, Agnes Mona Ker was the new Head Nurse.(11) Ker had trained in Hobart in the 1870s and then worked in Sydney at the Children's Hospital and the Prince Alfred. She was in charge of the Infirmary Department for sixteen months and resigned when she was appointed Night Superintendent of the Melbourne Hospital.(12)

From November 1887, all the hospital's nurses had to wear a distinguishing "badge".(13) The form of that badge was not recorded but in June 1890 a cross was approved as the badge.(14) Generally, a cross was sewn onto a band of coloured material and worn on the left upper sleeve. In May 1891, the Infirmary Department's nurses were granted permission to have a badge that was different from the Midwifery Department. Seen in photographs, this new badge was a band of cloth stitched with "W.H.I." an acronym for Women's Hospital Infirmary.(15)

After two years of service, Victoria Gourlay resigned as Special Infirmary Nurse in August 1891 and was granted a favourable testimonial by the Ladies Committee of Management.(16) In the Infirmary Department, she had worked closely with a father and son duo, Doctors Gerald and Bertie Fetherston. Bertie was Resident Medical Officer at The Women's for more than four years. He resigned in September 1891, a month after Gourlay.(17)

This doctor and nurse couple married in July 1894 at the Presbyterian Church, Punt Road, South Yarra. They had three children: Maud Ellen in 1899, Gerald Walter Russell in 1901 and Herbert in 1904. Victoria Gourlay developed a form of progressive muscular atrophy. She died at home in Pahran aged 52 and was buried at St Kilda General Cemetery.

## References

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- 2) Madonna Grehan, 'Typhoid Fever Epidemic 1885 to 1887, Tasmania, Australia', in Arlene W Keeling and Barbra Mann Wall, "Nurses and Disasters: Global Historical Case Studies", Springer Publishing: New York, 2015, p.26.
- 3) Women's Hospital Ladies Committee (hereafter Ladies Committee) Minutes. 25 November 1887, RWHA A1991\_6\_11.
- 4) Ladies Committee Minutes. 6 April 1888, RWHA A1991\_6\_11.
- 5) Ladies Committee Minutes. 27 April 1888, RWHA A1991\_6\_11.
- 6) Ladies Committee Minutes. 28 June 1889, RWHA A1991\_6\_12.
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- 9) Ladies Committee Minutes. 21 November 1890, RWHA A1991\_6\_13\_1.
- 10) Ladies Committee Minutes. 7 June 1889, RWHA A1991\_6\_12.
- 11) Ladies Committee Minutes. 26 July 1889, RWHA A1991\_6\_12.
- 12) "Victorian Trained Nurses Association Register, Report and Balance Sheet 1901-02", p.36.
- 13) Ladies Committee Minutes. 11 November 1887, RWHA A1991\_6\_11.
- 14) Ladies Committee Minutes. 10 June 1890, RWHA A1991\_6\_12.
- 15) Ladies Committee Minutes. 1 May 1891, RWHA A1991\_6\_13\_1.
- 16) Ladies Committee Minutes. 28 August 1891 RWHA A1991\_6\_13\_1.
- 17) Ladies Committee Minutes. 18 September 1891, RWHA A1991\_6\_13\_1.

# Green, Hubert Sydney (1892 - 1950)

M.D. (Melb.), F.R.C.S. (Edin.), F.R.A.C.S., F.R.C.O.G.

*Born* 29 October 1892

*Died* 31 July 1950  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

HUBERT SYDNEY JACOBS  
(1924 - 1928)

Glancing through the records of the Honorary Staff of the Women's Hospital, Melbourne, one learns with pride of the many who volunteered to serve their country in time of war with the Army Medical Corps. There are others also, notably the two Fetherstons, George Horne, Arthur Sherwin and Robert Fowler, who were actively interested in military affairs during times of peace; to some this was apparently a hobby, to others it may have appealed as a public duty, to one at least, Richard Fetherston, it was a preparation for the inevitable war that he forecast. It is not known which of these actuated Hubert Jacobs, but his career was unique; he served as a combatant officer with the renowned 7th Battalion, 1st A.I.F. and was present with that unit on Gallipoli in 1915.

In 1910, while still a schoolboy of 18, Hubert was appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the 6th Australia Infantry Regiment; three years later he transferred to the 56th Battalion, Citizen Forces, A.M.F. with promotion to Captain, and he was also appointed Honorary Aide-de-camp to the Lieutenant Governor of Victoria, then Sir John Madden. Soon after the outbreak of the 1914 war he enlisted and served with the rank of Captain in the 7th Battalion in Egypt and Gallipoli, but was returned to Australia in 1915 to resume his medical studies. These he completed in 1917, and after a short stint as House Surgeon at St. Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, he re-enlisted, this time in the A.A.M.C., and served in France with the 2nd Field Ambulance. He also saw service in the 2nd World War being O.C. Medical Board, Royal Park, in 1940, and in 1942-43 he was D.A.D.M.S. Lines of Communication, Northern Territory. In 1930 he was awarded the V.D. on completion of 20 years commissioned service.

Hubert Jacobs received his early education at Wesley College during the Headmastership of L.A. Adamson, and apart from a little junior cricket he was not active in sport. He began his medical course at the University of Melbourne in 1912, which after interruption by his war-time service, he completed successfully at the special early examinations held in 1917. While awaiting repatriation in 1919 he was House Physician at the Seamen's Hospital, Greenwich, and on his return home he was appointed R.M.O. at the Women's Hospital and the following year, 1920-21, Medical Superintendent. At this time and due to his recommendation an Obstetric Demonstration Theatre was build and used for this purpose for many years - it was in this theatre, the present (1960) Labour Ward Annex, that Victor Bonney, the eminent London surgeon, assisted by Lennox Spiers demonstrated his Wertheim operation in 1928. By this time Hubert had decided to concentrate on Obstetrics and Gynaecology and to further this he was granted in 1921 the Melbourne University Exhibition to Trinity College, Dublin, to follow in the steps of Roy Chambers, John Green and Ivon Hayes. The year spent at the Rotunda Hospital and Trinity College qualified him for the D.G.O. Dublin, in 1922 and the following year he obtained the F.R.C.S., Edinburgh. He then returned to Australia, and in 1924 he was appointed Honorary Obstetric Surgeon at the Women's Hospital where his colleagues were Wilson, Green and Hayes. For the first time, owing to the influence of Arthur Wilson, the four obstetric surgeons met regularly, exchanged problems, discussed failures, and standardized methods and teaching. When differences of opinion arose, for example, the use of massive doses of morphia in eclampsia - up to two grains or until the respirations fell to six per minute - or the best method of inducing premature labour, either Tweedy's original, Irish, sudden method or Watson's prolonged and canny, Edinburgh "technique", then two would adopt one procedure and two the alternative in order to discover the better treatment.

But Jacobs was still studying hard and this resulted in his gaining the M.D. Melb., in 1925 by a thesis on "The causes and prevention of maternal morbidity and mortality". In 1928 he resigned from the Women's Hospital on being appointed Honorary Gynaecological Surgeon to Outpatients at St. Vincent's Hospital; in 1944 he was promoted to the Inpatient Department, and he became the Senior Gynaecological Surgeon in 1937. During those years he won further medical qualifications: F.R.A.C.S. (1928), M.R.C.O.G. (1935), F.R.C.O.G. (1947). He retired from all medical practice through ill-health in 1948 and died two years later at the comparatively early age of 58 years.

Hubert Jacobs was of over average height and weight and his facial features were strongly Semitic. He was serious-minded, hard-working, conscientious, loyal, and patriotic, though unfortunately, he was sensitive and introspective and this he sometimes tried to hide by an assumed aggressiveness, which did not enhance his personal popularity. But his record is a convincing one; he was an efficient combatant soldier, he served his country in the Army Medical Corps during two world wars, he was a capable doctor with high medical qualifications, he was punctilious in his attendance and duties as an Honorary at two great hospitals, and apart from his professional activities he gave generous service to Legacy and was prominent in Freemasonry.

Hubert Sydney Jacobs, the son of Sydney Montague and Alia Susan Jacobs, was born on 29th October, 1892, and died at Melbourne on 31st July, 1950. He married Leah Solomon, and there were no children.

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1. "The causes and prevention of maternal morbidity and mortality", M.J.A., May 29 and June 5, 1926.
2. "A contribution to the problem of masculinization" (with H.F. Bettinger), M.J.A. Jan 5, 1946.
3. "The investigation and treatment of vaginal discharges". M.J.A., July 27, 1935.
4. "A very large ovarian cyst successfully removed in a woman of 71 years", St. Vincent's Hospital medical reports, 1944.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Harley, Alfred William ( - 1966)

M.B. (Melb.), F.R.C.S. (Edin.), M.R.C.O.G.

*Born* Richmond Plains, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 31 May 1966

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne.

### ALFRED WILLIAM HARLEY

Alfred William Harley was born at Richmond Plains, a small remote, but fertile district near Wedderburn, in Northern Victoria; his father was a schoolmaster, his mother the daughter of a local farmer. From state school he was sent to Wesley College, Melbourne, where L.A. Adamson - a famous name in Victorian education, then at the height of his influence - was the Headmaster.

Harley matriculated in 1913, and entered the Medical Course, graduating M.B., B.S. (Melb.) in 1918 with final honours and the Jamieson Prize in Clinical Medicine. After periods as Resident at the Melbourne Hospital, and the Children's Hospital, Brisbane, he sailed in 1921 as ship's surgeon to England, later becoming House Surgeon in Manchester, firstly at its Royal Infirmary, and later at St. Mary's Hospital for Women. He retained his high opinion of the sturdy qualities of North Country English people. 'Lancashire for shrewdness. Yorkshire for pluck', he would maintain.

In 1923 he qualified F.R.C.S. (Edin.) with Gynaecology as his special subject and returned to Melbourne to commence general practice in the northern suburb of Thornbury, and here he stayed 22 years.

In 1939, three months before the onset of the second World War, he developed headaches with loss of consciousness, and X-ray showed a marked ballooning of the sella turcica. This was at first thought to be a basophile pituitary adenoma, but operation by Mr. Hugh Trumble, gave the diagnosis as cystic craniopharyngioma. The surgery - of two operations - was followed by an increase in hypopituitary weakness and diabetes insipidus. Harley showed great fortitude and resolution in resuming practice two years later, for at that time little was known about effective replacement therapy for pituitary deficiency. After being an anaesthetist and clinical assistant at the Women's Hospital for some years, he was appointed a Junior Infirmary Surgeon in 1931, and in 1946 - because of his diminished health - was made an Honorary Consulting Surgeon. It was a particularly sad, even a bitter day when he had to leave the Women's staff after 22 years' service. But he lived for 20 further years because of the development of endocrinology, and throughout this time his keen intellect happily remained quite unimpaired.

In 1927 Alfred Harley married Miss Gladys Omesher, from Lancashire, who proved a tower of strength during his long and debilitating illness, and from this most happy marriage were two sons - one a Melbourne oculist, and the younger a London psychiatrist - and one daughter, a physiotherapist.

Harley was made M.R.C.O.G. in 1935 and later advanced to the Fellowship. He died on 31st May, 1966, of a massive haematemesis, on the eve of embarking with his wife for England.

Alf Harley (his pseudonym affectionately bestowed at Wesley was "Monk") was in build short and slight, mildly stooped, with keenly observant eyes set in a sharply featured face.

His voice and its intonation were of unusual quality - to a background of basic Australian were frequently added contrasting components of the North Country, and even of Mayfair; and his comments, always to the point, were sharpened by the idiosyncratic voice.

He was a man of marked ability and courage. To the end of his life - in which he had suffered great disability and frustration bravely borne - he retained a deep attachment to the Royal Women's Hospital.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Hayes, William Ivon (1893 - )

*Born* 29 July 1893  
Hamilton, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne.

WILLIAM IVON HAYES  
(1925 – 1953)

William Ivon Hayes was born to James Bennett and Isabelle Hayes, both from County Cork, Ireland, on July 29, 1893, at Hamilton, Victoria. Seven years after graduation in Edinburgh, his father had commenced practice in 1887 at Smythesdale, a little gold-mining town south of Ballarat, but in 1890 he moved to Hamilton where his interests were directed towards midwifery, and by the time he retired, in 1925, he was recognized as the leading obstetrician in the Western District.

From 1899 Ivon Hayes attended the local State school and then for one year the Hamilton Gentlemen's College. On April 20, 1908, he was brought to Melbourne by his mother for admission to Wesley College, and rather than wait at Ararat for the recommended fast train, they took the slow one and consequently escaped involvement in the dreadful railway disaster at Sunshine. His new headmaster, the portly and redoubtable L. A. Adamson, was then in his heyday and had a profound influence on all whom he ruled. It was a happy time, but it would have been intolerable to the modern youth. The majority remained at school until the age of 19 or 20, but all were treated as boys; no boarder was allowed to leave the grounds without permission from a master, the regulation pocket-money was one shilling per week, and the most heinous crime was to be caught speaking to a member of the opposite sex. During those long dreary weekends the boarders had to create their own entertainment and Hayes, who had no dexterity in ball games, turned to rowing and rifle shooting. He attained a seat in the school crew, rowing bow in the winning boat at the Head of the River races in 1911 and 1912, and he became captain of the college shooting team. He had intended to become an engineer, but turning to medicine he discovered he needed another language. He was advised to do Greek, which he passed after one year's study; years later he learnt that it was his calligraphy and not his knowledge that had impressed the examiner.

In 1913 he entered Queen's College and rowed in the college crew, and in 1914 he also rowed as bow in the university boat, which was successful in the intervarsity race on the Port River at Adelaide and later in the Henley Grand Challenge Race. Then, owing to the First World War, all official university contests ceased. The war initially brought excitement, but later its problems and worries. Those who did not enlist felt a little ashamed and self-conscious, but were reassured when medical students who had rushed off were sent back when it was seen that the war would not be "all over in six months". The Gallipoli casualty lists, though doled out over many weeks to avoid panic, taught Australia that war was no longer a wonderful and thrilling adventure, and sobriety followed. Now the aim of all medical students was to pass without delay and go and help.

Looking back on these years, Hayes himself much later wrote:

"The war of 1914 brought an end to an era, an era when life was gracious. The hotels closed at 11.30p.m., the Bijou Theatre and bars thrived; opposite, the Royal Theatre had lately put on 'The Chocolate Soldier'. Further up Bourke Street was the Waxworks and Ned Kelly's armour, while the eastern market was busy, especially on the late-closing Friday night. The 'Savoy' in Little Collins Street was the premier café but Bohemians preferred 'Fasoli's' in King Street. Triaca and Massoni had started the Café Denat in Exhibition Street – they later separated, one to the Latin Café, the other to found the Florentino. 'Doing the Block' on Saturday mornings slowly died out and motor cars were a luxury for the well-to-do. Early in 1908 Jack London on his cruise round the world in the SNARK had arrived at St. Kilda; later that year the 'Great White Fleet' of U.S.A. paid us a visit and caused a rise in the birth rate the following year and on Boxing Day, 1908, Jack Johnson had eventually caught up with Tommy Burns at Rushcutters Bay, Sydney. In 1909, Bleriot had made the first cross-Channel flight. In 1908, the staff of the Melbourne Hospital had advised rebuilding the hospital on the same site because anywhere else was too far from Collins Street. Yes, an era, with Premier Irvine smashing the railway strikes of 1903, Chung Ling Soo and Houdini and Annette Kellerman at the Tivoli, Grace Palotta, Blanche Brown, Ralph Lynn at the Royal and His Majesty's, the English Cricket Teams and the celebrated Wallace Divorce Case."

Because of the war an abbreviated medical course had been adopted by the University of Melbourne, and so in September, 1917, Hayes graduated as Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery and at once enlisted.

His military career was brief, but not without incident. At Heytesbury, on the Salisbury Plains, he was regimental medical officer to more than 3,000 artillerymen, and influenza was raging. He was told to inoculate them with serum, but he decided to test it properly and only every second man was injected. All results were tabulated, the number of influenza patients, those with pneumonia, those who died, etc., and a careful report was forwarded which indicated that the serum had had no beneficial effect. Within a few hours a red-faced major screamed to a halt outside the regimental aid post, entered, exploded, and threatened to return Hayes to Australia for disobeying orders. It may have been coincidence, but soon after he was sent to France to No. 1 Australian General Hospital, at Rouen, where Earle Page was on the medical staff. At every meal politics was his constant theme, how the country and farming population should be represented in Parliament, and how a small third part could hold the balance of power. Most of his hearers were completely bored, and did not realize they were present at the quickening in the womb that preceded the later birth of the Country Party. After a short stay in Rouen, Hayes was passed on to the 3rd Field Ambulance, and during the advance to the Hindenburg Line, when casualties were being cleared from the regimental aid posts, it was reported that a shell crater had made the road impassible. Hayes was told to inspect the scene and overcome the difficulty, so he conferred with a sergeant, obtained a

cart and horse, and with a party of men filled the hold with bricks taken from a nearby ruined farmhouse. Soon the ambulances were again at work; but when he returned, he found his commanding officer waiting, eyes bulging, face plethoric, apparently on the verge of apoplexy. Hayes was again threatened with disgrace; he had committed an unforgivable crime, that of exposing a horse to possible injury or death by enemy action. He was informed that the loss of men was to be expected, but the death of a horse was a serious matter; a thorough and searching inquiry must be undertaken and a complete report forwarded to corps headquarters. This further confirmed his belief in his incompetence as a soldier. His Armistice night was icy cold and spent in a roofless ruin; although rumours had been circulating for some time, the ambulance, which was on the move, was not informed that war was over until the following day.

On his return to England non-military employment was in full swing. Shipping was scarce and it was considered dangerous to keep so many idle soldiers in military camps while awaiting repatriation. Non-military employment permitted anyone who wished it to obtain a civilian job, learn a trade, do post-graduate work, or merely tour around, to be granted leave with pay until a ship was available. Hayes had seen parts of England and Scotland and would have been ashamed to face his parents without visiting Ireland; he therefore arranged to do three month's postgraduate work at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin. The great Henry Jellett was then master, and Hayes enjoyed the lectures and seeing the work in the hospital, and there was enough spare time to tour the city and its environs. Some of the postgraduates attended the Anatomy School at Trinity College, Dublin, to dissect the female pelvis, and Hayes followed, but when he told Professor A.F. Dixon that his interest was not confined to the female pelvis, he was offered the position of Chief Demonstrator in Anatomy at Trinity College, Dublin. After consideration and a visit to London to be demobilized, he began these duties and held this post (1919-1920) while boarding at Kingstown.

Harry Brookes Allen, Professor of Pathology and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Melbourne, had visited Dublin before the war and arranged for five Melbourne graduates to study successively for six months at Trinity College, Dublin, the latter being occupied with anatomy, embryology, pathology and bacteriology; after all this, if a graduate passed an examination, a diploma – a degree could be given to a Trinity College, Dublin, graduate – of obstetrics and gynaecology would be conferred. However at the last moment gynaecology was given precedence to avoid the initials D.O.G.. Roy Chambers and John Green had been the first two scholars and Hayes, being on the spot and warmly recommended by Professor Dixon, was appointed as the third. His two predecessors had held junior positions on the Rotunda staff of five, and Hayes in his turn was an External Maternity Assistant. (The remaining two Rotunda scholars were Hubert Jacobs and G. E. Mackay, who died before he could return home, but they were not appointed to the Rotunda staff.)

Of Dublin at this time Hayes later wrote:

"My duties consisted of the usual RMO work in the hospital and in addition being the consultant and operator to the external department – over 3,000 cases a year attended by students. No patient whatever, except those suffering from eclampsia in which the Master, Gibbon Fitzgibbon, was interested, was admitted to hospital, so the External Maternity Assistant gained an extensive experience – forceps, craniotomy, version, decapitation, etc. etc. Throughout my stay in Dublin there was "The Trouble". The police were augmented with the disreputable "Black and Tans", the dregs of the army who volunteered for one pound per day to keep order in Ireland. The shortage of dark blue police uniforms resulted in the recruits wearing part khaki and part dark blue pieces of uniform, hence the name. There was curfew most of the time, the Black and Tans patrolled the streets in armoured cars and on foot. On calls at night one was challenged and interrogated by these armed ruffians as one walked down the centre of the street, laden with two heavy obstetric bags on the way to help a student in difficulties. When they made raids in certain areas a shower of abortions followed. Michael Collins, the "General" commanding the IRA (Irish Republican Army), was for some time hiding on the roof at the Rotunda and being fed by the nursing sisters; he met his colleagues in one of the Assistant Master's rooms in the hospital. After these six months at the Rotunda, there was a short break of three months as RMO Canterbury Hospital, Kent, and then back to Trinity College, Dublin to do anatomy, embryology and pathology. After completing the course and receiving the D.G.O., at the end of 1921, I returned to Melbourne."

Through the efforts of a friendly politician Hayes was the first Australian soldier demobilized in Britain to receive an assisted passage home. He began general practice at Heidelberg, and moved to Ivanhoe five years later. He was interested in and quite content to do general work, but Roy Chambers asked him to help in the gynaecological clinic at the Melbourne Hospital, and a similar invitation came from Arthur Wilson at the Women's Hospital. Soon he was appointed clinical assistant at both institutions, holding the former – with John Green – for 12 years. At the Women's Hospital he was appointed "locum tenens" on two occasions when members of the honorary staff were abroad (Cusaden and White) and in 1925 he was appointed honorary obstetric surgeon (replacing Cairns Lloyd). At this time new appointments were made to the obstetric staff, one then graduating to the junior gynaecological (outpatients) staff and eventually to the senior gynaecological (inpatients) staff. Soon after 1926 efforts by Arthur Wilson altered this, so that the most junior appointments were made to the outpatient staff who moved to the obstetric staff, while the senior obstetrician in turn became the junior inpatient surgeon. This raised the age, maturity, experience, status, and relative permanence of the obstetric staff above anything it had previously enjoyed (Edward White had spent only six weeks as an obstetrician), and over a long period Wilson, Green, Hayes and Saltau brought recognition and renown to Melbourne obstetrics. At the beginning Arthur Wilson was Lecturer in Obstetrics at Melbourne University, and under his guidance the teaching and practice of obstetrics in the hospital were standardized and the staff was welded into a friendly team by regular meetings and discussions. This era lasted nearly twenty years. In 1945 Professor Marshall Allan fell sick and asked Hayes to do his work; after a year he resumed his duties, but soon afterwards (1946) he died. Hayes was then appointed on a three-monthly basis as Acting Professor of Obstetrics, a post he held till 1948, when he relinquished it to J.W. Johnstone. In 1945 Hays suggested that the honorary staff be rearranged, so that the junior staff (half the staff) perform both obstetrical and gynaecological duties, and when a vacancy occurred on either of the two senior staffs, the position would be filled by that junior who was most senior and preferred that particular work. After argument that lasted for years a change was made, in 1949, which split the whole staff into obstetrical and gynaecological departments. Hayes never ceased to regret that he was indirectly the cause of what he considered a catastrophe; the indivisibility of the two sister specialities had been shattered. This would greatly matter within the hospital, but it was of prime importance in private practice, where the public assumed an obstetrician to be a capable gynaecologist, and vice versa. At this rearrangement Hayes was appointed to the obstetrical department, where he remained until his retirement, in 1953.



Hayes gave up general practice in 1940, and all medical practice in 1959, Alwyn Long taking over his patients in Collins Street. Beginning in 1949, he had made six round-the-world trips, the early ones for medical and educational reasons, the later for pleasure. He was deeply impressed by the friendship, help and hospitality of many American surgeons who previously had been only names internationally known and respected. He travelled through all the continents, but preferred the by-ways to the well-beaten tourist tracks.

He had strong convictions about many things and was sufficiently introspective to recognize their origins. His father who never openly gave him advice and only once wrote him a letter – to deter him from “the dog’s life of an obstetrician” – helped to shape his character. As a young child he remembered being taken by his father on his morning round in a buggy, when they passed a man sweeping the street gutter. After his father and the man had exchanged cheery good-mornings, Hayes asked his father why he spoke to such a man. The reply was “I was fortunate that I was able to become a doctor. If that man sweeps that gutter better than I do my doctoring, then he is a better man and worthy of more respect”. That remark was never forgotten and, in consequence, Hayes never considered he was better than anyone who conscientiously did his best, and he quickly repelled any suggestion from his patients that he had any special gift. “I was trained to do what I did”, he would say, “just as a plumber or electrician was”. On another occasion he was allowed to affix the stamps on his father’s accounts, but was made to remove those that were not set squarely in the corner. “What difference does it make?” he demanded. “My patients will think I put on those stamps and will judge that I am careless, not only in this but in my work. A man’s character influences all his actions”, he replied. Hayes’ experience in the slums of Dublin and nearly twenty years of general practice were the most valuable part of his medical education, since it taught him that patients were people and not just medical problems; in fact, helping patients he found more satisfying than performing what later became almost routine procedures. Another potent influence was the saying “Enjoy yourself, it is later than you think”, which caused him at the age of 66 to give up medical practice.

Of Huguenot descent through his mother’s family, Hayes had three sisters. His university education was under the guidance of such figures as Lyall (natural philosophy), Masson (chemistry), Berry (anatomy), Osborne (physiology), H.B. Allen (pathology) and Felix Meyer (obstetrics). Immediately on graduation he served as medical officer at the Caulfield Military Hospital until embarkation on February 18, 1918. In the 3rd Field Ambulance his commanding officer was David Duncan Cade, later to achieve distinction at Mont Park Mental Hospital.

Hayes became a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in 1932, a Member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1935 and was elected Fellow in 1946.

He married twice: in 1925, Gertrude Lythgo who died in 1936; in 1950, Dorothy Harrison. He is survived by his widow and by Patricia, his daughter by the first marriage.

His last years remained characterized by energy, both mental and physical. Earlier this year he produced some recent writings – brief rather autobiographical vignettes – to add to our collection, His death from pulmonary carcinoma occurred on July 8, 1973, just a few days before his eightieth birthday.

[This account, largely compiled from autobiographical writings of Dr. Hayes himself, appeared in the Medical Journal of Australia, 24th November, 1973.]

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Hill, Arthur Machen “Bung” (1903 - 1979)

OBE, MD BS DGO FRCS FRCOG FAustCOG FTCS

*Born* 22 October 1903  
Castlemaine, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 20 January 1979  
Mt Eliza, Victoria, Australia

## Summary

Prepared by Ann Westmore PhD

Arthur Machen (“Bung”) Hill helped to substantially improve the survival rates of women in Victoria following childbirth and complications associated with miscarriage and abortion. Through collaborative research undertaken in the 1930s with Hildred Butler, a bacteriologist then working at the Baker Medical Research Institute, he helped identify the infectious agents capable of killing women of childbearing age within a couple of hours of causing symptoms of illness.

The collaboration produced findings of international significance and was the springboard for Butler’s transfer from the Baker Institute to the Women’s Hospital in 1938 and her subsequent development of a smear test to identify life-threatening infectious agents within 30 minutes, followed by the introduction of targeted, specific treatment.

After serving as the hospital’s Medical Superintendent, 1933-35, Hill was appointed a member of the honorary gynaecological staff, 1938-63. During this time, he taught medical and nursing staff and students, and contributed to clinical practice through infection control, family planning, artificial insemination, and an influential appraisal of cervical cancer treatment. After retiring in 1965, he was appointed an honorary consulting surgeon, and continued in private practice.

## Details

“Bung” Hill was born on 22 October 1903 at Castlemaine, central Victoria, the son of Dr Arthur Machen Hill, at one time a Resident Medical Officer at the Women’s Hospital and, later, Resident Surgeon at the Castlemaine Hospital, and his wife, Emily Maude née Johnson. He was the third of four siblings, and the second of three boys. He was educated at the Castlemaine South State School and Castlemaine High School until 1918 when he was admitted to Wesley College as a day student on a scholarship. From there, he gained admission to the University of Melbourne and studied medicine (graduating 1927).

The origin of the nickname, “Bung”, is uncertain. RWH Honorary Historian, Dr John Natrass, was told it stemmed from sounds Hill made as a child when playing with a pop-gun in the front garden. A friend for many years (thought to be Dr Bill Cook) suggested it pertained to backyard cricket when a kerosene tin was used as a wicket. (“Bung good at it so tin-ar-se, bung-ar-se, and then bung.”) Whatever its origins, the nickname stuck and became so strongly associated with him that it created difficulties for people trying to locate him via the telephone book.

### Harvesting riches

Dr Donald Lawson, a contemporary from Castlemaine who, like Hill, became Medical Superintendent at the Women’s Hospital, remembered their childhood amid “the rough, austere terrain of Castlemaine” as one of “rich veins . . . for those who would seek them”. Lawson said that; “One rich vein Bung struck was a spinster schoolteacher - Jessie Robertson – a great lover of, and exponent of the English language, both written and spoken. Bung’s father wrote a book of verse, so there was something in the genes, but Jessie Robertson began a cultivation of it that Bung has carried on to the present day.”

It seems that Robertson contributed to him becoming one of the hospital’s “few superlative speakers” with a style Natrass characterised as milking the outrageous word, image or action and delivering sentences in a clipped, rapid-fire intonation: “Bung as a lecturer, had the flow that a lecturer must have and the brain to use it and to keep feeding it material. He employed words like vivid, dramatic, colourful and exotic which, if you stop to think about it, applied to what he said, the way he said it, and indeed to him who said it. As well as bravuras [sic], he was capable of meticulous, terse wording [and] economy of expression, which he often rehearsed carefully.” Hill’s ability with words also made an impression on Dr Harold Attwood, who was interviewed by him for the position of RWH Assistant Pathologist in London in 1960. Attwood described Hill as having; “a great personality, widely read and with an ability to write well...He had an enormous vocabulary, but a curious penchant for swear words. To his friends these words added pungency to his talk, but could distress others.”

He was “a character” around the hospital, notorious for his unpunctuality as well as for his quick wittedness and for the value he placed on the same qualities in others. Attwood, having turned up late for his interview in London, subsequently attributed his success in gaining the RWH position to his lack of punctuality. While often running late himself, Hill rarely failed to keep a commitment once made. On one memorable occasion when he missed giving an 11am lecture at the hospital to medical students, he arrived instead at 1am the day after the day after he was supposed to give it. According to Natrass, “We were hauled down to the labour ward in our pyjamas to be lectured,” the labour ward being the warmest place in the hospital on a cold winter’s night.

### The quest of a lifetime

After graduating in medicine, Hill completed a comprehensive resident medical officer training at the Alfred, Children’s and Women’s Hospitals. His successful completion of a Melbourne MD (Doctor of Medicine degree in 1931) suggests a strong interest in clinical research and a desire to gain solid foundations for what became a life-long quest to identify the causes of obstetric infections and to develop ways of controlling them.

In 1933, his first year as Medical Superintendent of the Women's Hospital and the year in which he obtained his Diploma in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, 15 women died due to infections after giving birth, and 25 after miscarriages or abortions. The following year, the combined death toll was even higher, totalling nearly 50.

Obstetric mortality rates in Victoria were at alarming levels (being 61 per 10,000 deliveries in 1934, 30 times higher than in 1971) and it was a common occurrence in wards to see women having; "sweats and rigors, high fever and tachycardia, pallor and collapse, jaundice and cyanosis, distension and dyspnoea, foul and purulent discharges, anuria, incontinence, delirium, and the muffled movements of the mortuary trolley." The burdens of nursing and medical care, often without hope, were appalling, he said years later.

Between 1931 and 1937, Hill and Hildred Butler, a young bacteriologist working at the Baker Medical Research Institute, identified four bacteria that were responsible for most of the serious infection complicating childbirth, miscarriage and abortion among women admitted to the hospital. They described the agents – "clostridium Welchii" (now known as "clostridium perfringens", "haemolytic streptococci", "anaerobic streptococci" and "staphylococcus pyogenes" - as "the most colourful and dramatic infections in obstetrics".

The speed with which "clostridium Welchii" could kill (a couple of hours) made swift diagnosis and specific treatment imperative. Between 1931 and 1960, the hospital cared for some 200,000 women who gave birth or who were treated following miscarriage or abortion. A total of 429 died from the four infectious agents with "clostridium Welchii" the most dangerous (accounting for 147 deaths), followed by "haemolytic streptococci" (101 deaths), "anaerobic streptococci" (59) and "staphylococcus pyogenes" (22).

In 1935, addressing the Royal Society of Medicine in London on "Post-abortal and Puerperal Gas Gangrene", Hill reported on 30 cases diagnosed and treated at the Women's Hospital during the two years that he was Medical Superintendent. It was the largest personal series published to that time and, in the pre-antibiotic era, it was regarded as a major advance.

In his lecture he described, for the first time, the six chief clinical varieties of "clostridium Welchii" infection in women "each as distinctive as a primary colour in the solar spectrum". Four of these six types were responsible for deaths in women, which occurred after progressive haemolytic jaundice degenerated into profound collapse, and uterine gangrene accompanied by excruciating pain in the uterus or muscles. The report of his address, published in the "Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the British Empire" in 1936, won him the British Medical Association's biennial award, the Katherine Bishop Harman Prize in Obstetrics. While he was overseas he also secured the degrees M(R)COG in 1935 and FRCS(Edinburgh) in 1936.

During the 1940s and 1950s much of the infection control work that Hill and Butler pioneered came to fruition at the Women's and at other hospitals throughout Australia. Bruce Mayes, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Sydney, said that while Sydney had its famous bridge and beautiful harbour, Melbourne had Hill and Butler. Together with Dr Jack Laver, they formed the hospital's first Infection Control Committee (established 1957) which challenged numerous long-held practices and was a model for similar committees in other hospitals.

Dr Gytha Betheras, a member of the hospital's medical staff for many years from 1957, said that Hill and Butler formed a remarkable team, combining clinical judgment and expertise with innovative and astute bacteriology. They were totally available to staff whenever a case of "clostridium Welchii" was suspected or diagnosed and, due to their combined efforts, management of the infection was revolutionised. She said they saved many lives and much morbidity firstly by developing faster diagnosis and better treatments, secondly by teaching and supervising countless doctors, nurses and bacteriologists in improved practices, and thirdly by their international advocacy of new approaches to controlling obstetric infection.

#### Later interests

Apart from obstetric infection, Hill's other major clinical interests were contraception using the intrauterine device known as the Gräfenberg ring; artificial insemination to treat infertility; and cancer surgery. In work with close friends, Drs Graham Godfrey (cancer surgeon), and Kevin McCaul (anaesthetist) he reappraised the treatment of uterine cancer and, in particular, the acceptability of the Wertheim operation.

In 1966, the year after his retirement from the hospital, he was awarded the degree of Master of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (MGO) and, for many years, he was the senior Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in Victoria.

He was short, slim and bald-headed with long sideburns, and was known for his natty dress and unfailingly alert and twinkling eye. His sense of perpetual youthfulness was perpetuated by having a family (a son and a daughter) in his fifties, after marrying Czechoslovakian former ballerina, Mrs Ilona Semark.

As time went on his gregariousness became legendary, with Natrass praising him for helping develop the dining-together habits of the hospital's staff. Fittingly, when he retired in 1965, he shared a "wake" with Drs Colin McDonald and Bill (J. R.) Rawlings, during which Lawson gave a memorable homily.

#### Final years and a lasting legacy

He enjoyed an active retirement, continuing in private practice and dining regularly with colleagues such as Drs Frank Forster and Bryan Gandevia. A regular attendee at hospital functions, he was renowned for removing his hearing aid when bored with a speaker.

He experienced several health crises in the last two decades of his life, and died in his sleep on 20 January 1979 at his Mt Eliza holiday home. Afterwards, his friends gathered annually for the "Bung Hill luncheon" at which some of his provocatively ribald phrases and challenging assessments of colleagues were aired.

As well as a very substantial clinical legacy, his contribution was lasting in other ways as well. Natrass considered that if the function of a doctor was to cure sometimes, relieve often and comfort always, Bung Hill did this more than most, and not just to his patients but to his friends and colleagues, both figuratively and actually.

Many suggestions were made about how to honour him after his death, and at least one was acted on. In 1980 a plaque was unveiled in Ward 53 which bore the following inscription;

"To commemorate the services to the Royal Women's Hospital of Arthur Machen Hill (affectionately known as 'Bung') c 1903-1979, Member of Honorary Medical Staff 1938-63.

From 1936 a world authority on puerperal and abortal infections, especially those due to clostridium Welchii. He also re-appraised the place of radical surgery in the treatment of carcinoma of the cervix."

His family also donated to the hospital a portrait of him by artist, Alan Martin.

#### Sources;

H D Attwood, 'Recollections of Arthur Machen Hill' delivered at his funeral on 26 January 1979 (typewritten); RWH archives;

Dr John Natrass; 'Dr Arthur Machen Hill – Obituary', "RWH Bulletin", 12, 1, 1979, p. 1;

Arthur M. Hill, 'The R.D. Fetherston Memorial Lecture; Why Be Morbid? Paths of Progress in the Control of Obstetric Infection, 1931 to 1960', "Medical Journal of Australia", 1964, I, pp. 101-111;

Drs Donald Lawson and John Natrass, 'Reflections on Arthur Machen Hill on the occasion of a meeting held on 31 January 1979 at the College of O&G following his death on 20 January 1979' (typewritten); Notes from a 'Bung' Hill luncheon, archived at the RANZCOG;

Donald Lawson, Speech in 1965 held at a function to honour three retiring doctors, Colin McDonald, Arthur "Bung" Hill, and Bill Rawlings (typewritten); RWH archives

Freda Irving, 'They planned to be wed secretly', "The Argus", 24 October 1951;

Karen Kissane, 'Top doctor and a top character', "The Age", 25 January, 1979;

Death notices, "The Age", 25 January 1979;

'Obituary Arthur Machen Hill', "Medical Journal of Australia", 1979, II, p. 33;

Anon, 'Gynaecologist of world repute dies', "The Age", 23 January, 1979;

"Victorian Year Book", 1973, p. 541;

Personal communication, Gytha Betheras, Bryan Gandevia and Prue Forster to Ann Westmore.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG)

- Notes from a 'Bung' Hill luncheon, 31 January 1979; Drs Donald Lawson and John Natrass; Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG)

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Recollections of Arthur Machen Hill, 26 January 1979, A1990/05/24 part; H D Attwood; Royal Women's Hospital Archives
- Speech in 1965 held at a function to honour three retiring doctors, Colin McDonald, Arthur "Bung" Hill, and Bill Rawlings, 1 January 1979, A1990/05/24 part; Lawson, Donald; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

## Published Resources

### Edited Books

- *Victorian Year Book*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1973.

### Journal Articles

- Anon, 'Obituary Arthur Machen Hill', *Medical Journal of Australia*, II, 1979, p. 33.

- Hill, Arthur M., 'The R.D. Fetherston Memorial Lecture; Why Be Morbid? Paths of Progress in the Control of Obstetric Infection, 1931 to 1960', *Medical Journal of Australia*, I, 1964, pp. pp. 101-111.

#### **Newspaper Articles**

- Anon, 'Gynaecologist of world repute dies', *The Age*(Melbourne), 23 January, 1979.
- Anon, 'Death notices - Arthur Machen Hill', *The Age*(Melbourne), 25 January 1979.
- Irving, Freda, 'They planned to be wed secretly', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 24 October 1951, p. 8.
- Kissane, Karen, 'Top doctor and a top character', *The Age* (Melbourne), 25 January, 1979.

# Honorary Anaesthetist

## Details

Honorary (unpaid) appointments to the position of anaesthetist at the Women's Hospital, Melbourne, from 1895-1951.

1895-1898 Dr P Ward Farmer M.B.,CH.B.Melb.  
1900-1907 Dr R Tate Sutherland M.B.,Ch.B.,Glas.  
1900-1916 Dr Janet L Greig M.B.,Ch.B.,Melb.  
1905-1912 Dr C S Sutton M.B.Ch.B.Melb  
1909-1937 Dr R W Hornabrook M.B.,Ch.B..Adel.,M.R.C.S.and L.R.C.P.Lond.  
1909-1913 Dr B Milne Sutherland M.B.,Ch.B. Melb  
1914-1916 Dr Margaret Mc Lorinan M.B.,B.S.  
1914-1914 Dr Mary Anketel Henderson M.B.,B.S.  
1916-1918 Dr Margaret Robertson M.B.,Ch.B.  
1916-1916 Dr P A Parer M.B.,Ch.B.  
1917-1925 Dr C W Dyring M.B.,Ch.B.  
1917-1919 Dr B G Callander M.B.,Ch.B.  
1917-1925 Dr Ada Griffiths M.B.,Ch.B.  
1919-1919 Dr R M Wilson M.D.,Ch.B.  
1920-1923 Dr Vera Scantlebury M.B.,Ch.B.  
1920-1924 Dr F Meagher M.B.,Ch.B.  
1921-1922 Dr H Mendelsohn M.B.,Ch.B.  
1923-1952 Dr C Cunningham M.B.,B.S., D.A.(R.C.P.&S.) Eng  
1925-1925 Dr Kate Campbell M.D..  
1926-1926 Dr H Shannon M.B.,B.S.  
1927-1927 Dr A W Cust M.B.,B.S.  
1927-1930 Dr Aren Stephens M.B.,B.S.  
1927-1946 Dr H Friedman M.B.,B.S.  
1928-1951 Dr W L Colquhoun M.B.,B.S.,D.A. On Service 1942-1944  
1928-1929 Dr J Mitchell M.B.,B.S.  
1929-1935 Dr E H Gandevia M.B.,B.S.  
1934-1946 Dr W A Kemp M.B.B.S.  
1936-1936 Dr F Green M.D.  
1937-1946 Dr K Ratten M.B.,B.S.  
1937-1951 Dr T J B Allen M.B.,B.S.  
1947-1951 Dr Winifred E Champion M.B.,B.S.  
1947-1951 Dr A S Ferguson M.B.,B.S.  
1947-1947 Dr Dorothy McMichael M.B.,B.S.  
1947-1947 Dr W R Rigg M.B.,B.S.  
1947-1948 Dr Ethel L P Robinson M.B.,B.S.  
1947-1947 Dr Brenda Spinks M.B.,B.S.  
1948-1950 Dr J A P Buchanan M.B.,B.S. On leave 1950  
1950-1951 Dr R F L V Harvey M.B.,B.S.

# Honorary Physicians

(no content)

# Hooper, John William Dunbar (1860 - 1934)

M.D. (Durh.)

*Born* 1860  
Dinapore, India

*Died* 23 November 1934

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

JOHN WILLIAM DUNBAR HOOPER  
(1888 - 1898)

John William Dunbar Hooper, born in Dinapore, India in 1860, the eldest son of Sir William Roe Hooper, sometime Surgeon-General to the Indian Medical Service, was educated at Epsom England and studied medicine at Edinburgh, qualifying in 1883 as Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons. After brief practice in Scotland he spent a year in India, then came to Australia, landing in 1886 with only £40 in his purse, a gift from his father.

First acting as a locum for Dr. Hayden at Harrow in the Western District of Victoria, after a term as Resident Medical Officer at the Women's, Hooper set up practice in Collins Street where he remained until failing health compelled retirement in 1932, about two years before his death on 23rd November 1934, aged 74. While Resident at the Women's Hooper, a bachelor, charming personality and a great diplomat, is said to have captured the Ladies Committee.

During this time too a new gynaecological era developed for the Hospital, with the appearance of Howard Kelly's classic Volume "Diseases of Women". The Baltimore surgeon from John Hopkins Hospital set a new standard in surgical literature particularly with the beautiful illustrations.

The Victorian medical profession owed Dunbar Hooper much for his zealous efforts in their behalf. This was especially so in the four years (1917-1920) that he was Honorary Secretary of B.M.A. (Victorian Branch), a period of anxiety and contention, chiefly because of a dispute with the lodges.

He was a kindly considerate doctor of the "family" type and it was for these traits, as much as for professional skill, that he became well-known and liked. Hooper had many interests, all of them directly concerned with medicine. The most spectacular was his enthusiastic advocacy of the Australian Aerial Medical Services (the flying doctor service). He was an original member of the Aerial Medical Services Advisory Committee of the Australian Inland Mission, formed in 1927 whose leading spirit was Rev. John Flynn. In this capacity Hooper was largely responsible for convincing the B.M.A. of the value of the flying doctor proposals, and for seeing that the organisation set up was founded on principles conforming to the highest ideals of the profession. The progress and development of this wonderful service to the people of the remote outback was the great passion of Dunbar Hooper in his last years and recognition of his work was the naming after him of two flying doctor planes. Hooper was one of a band of enthusiasts who launched the Melbourne Post-graduate Committee in 1920, designed through intensive and practical courses of instruction to bring medical men who had served in the 1914-18 war abreast of up-to-date developments. He was also a member of the Committee appointed by the Council of the University of Melbourne to advise on the best methods of carrying out the wishes of the Edward Wilson Trust when it gave £10,000 to the University to endow research into the science of obstetrics, and he was amongst those who strongly advocated the appointment of a whole time professor in obstetrics in the University, the chair first filled with distinction by Dr. R. Marshall Allan.

Dunbar Hooper was long associated with the work on the Women's Hospital, and he was for a period of 10 years a member of the Honorary staff. His work for the hospital merits remembrance chiefly for the great benefits conferred by the setting up of the Chair of Obstetrics, in the fruition of which it was generally agreed he had played the greatest part. A characteristic of the man was a passion for punctuality. In the early years of the motor car (he owned one of the first in Melbourne) Hooper carried this passion to the length of allowing twenty minutes on to a journey, in case of a puncture; a necessary precaution at the time.

It was while Hooper was medical adviser to the staff at Government House Melbourne that he met his future wife, a Swiss lady who had come with Sir Henry and Lady Loch as governess to their daughters. The wedding reception in 1888 was celebrated at Government House with Sir Henry Lock giving the bride away at Christ Church, South Yarra. Amongst the distinguished guests was the Grand Duke Alexander of Russia.

But it must not be thought that uppercrust social activities played any part of importance in Hooper's long life. He was wrapped up in the profession, and by his colleagues was held in high respect and affection. In 1924 he was President of the Victorian Branch of the B.M.A. and in 1927 President of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Australasian Medical Congress in Dunedin. He was physician to the Presbyterian Ladies College for 25 years, and medical adviser to the E.S.A. Bank and Bank of Australasia.

In an obituary memoir in the "Medical Journal of Australia", Dunbar Hooper was described as a loyal, upright and unselfish friend; there can surely be no finer tribute to one who, for all his 49 years in Australia, was proud to call himself at heart an Englishman.



## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Horne, George (1860 - 1927)



<i>Born</i>	16 August 1860 Brunswick, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	August 1927 Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

GEORGE HORNE  
(1895 - 1920)

George Horne, born on 16th August, 1860, was a son of a banker in the Melbourne suburb of Brunswick. His two brothers were also doctors, Alec who practised at Broken Hill, NSW, and Herbert at Rosedale, Victoria. A sister, Amy, became the wife of the late Dr. Arthur Syme of Lilydale, Victoria. He was educated at the Carlton College and Hawthorn Grammar School, being Dux of both. Graduating with honours in the University of Melbourne in 1884, he began practice in partnership with Dr. C.J. Daniel at Clifton Hill; some years later he practised there on his own account. During his school and University days, he was a noted athlete, excelling in running.

Elected Honorary O.P. Infirmary Surgeon at the Women's Hospital in 1895, he nine years later became Inpatients' Infirmary Surgeon. His membership of the Honorary staff of the Women's Hospital extended over 25 years, with a break of three years during the first world war, when he served in France as second in charge, with the rank of Lt. Colonel, of the Australian Voluntary Hospital which he had joined when on a visit to England in 1914.

Horne returned to Melbourne in 1916, and thereafter specialized in obstetrics and gynaecology. He was Lecturer in this specialty at the University of Melbourne until 1921, when he retired from the Women's Hospital. He was the author of a prescribed text book "Practical Gynaecology", the first class illustrations of which were drawn by Dr. Norman Albiston, then a student.

Horne should also be remembered for his association with the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, of which he was the founder in Victoria. For this work he was in 1924 invested by Lord Stradbroke (then Governor of Victoria) with the insignia of the Knight of Grace of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

Dr. Horne's greatest interest outside medicine was ethnology, for which he was world renowned. In 1923 he made an expedition into Central Australia to study the life and habits of the aborigines. The results were recorded in a book, published with the title "Savage Life in Central Australia". Over the years he made a large collection of aboriginal stone implements which was presented to the Australian Museum of Natural History in 1926. He was also well known as an ornithologist.

He died in August 1927, aged 67 in his flat in Collins Street. Though married twice, he left no family. His second wife was Helen Bowie, daughter of Dr. Bowie, a Scot who arrived in Melbourne in 1854 in an immigrant ship, started the Lunacy Asylum at Yarra Bend, and later practised at Clifton Hill.

Horne was one of the eight doctors who built Lister House at the S.E. corner of Collins and Exhibition Streets; among the others were J.H. Nattrass, Hobill Cole, Allen Robertson, Ramsay Webb and J.M. Baxter.

George Horne was a man of first class quality and ability, who made a distinct contribution to the teaching of Gynaecology in Melbourne.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Howlett, Mary Livingstone (1841- 1922)

<i>Born</i>	1841 Isle Martin, County Ross-shire, Scotland
<i>Died</i>	1922 Wickliffe, Lake Bolac, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Pupil Nurse, Qualified Nurse/Ladies Monthly Nurse/Sick Nurse
<i>Alternate Names</i>	Mary Livingstone Stewart

## Summary

Mary Livingstone Howlett, a mother of six children, undertook six months training in the care of women at The Women's Hospital in 1887. She was awarded her certificate as a 'Qualified Nurse' on 13 December 1887 after completing the course and passing an examination. This education entitled to claim the title of Ladies Monthly Nurse and Sick Nurse. Mary returned to her local community and worked around the Wickliffe-Lake Bolac area in western Victoria. In 1894 Mary was awarded Life Governorship of the hospital.

## Details

Mary Livingstone Stewart, daughter of Donald and Catherine Stewart, was born in Scotland at Isle Martin, a herring curing station and crofting community near Ullapool. Mary arrived in Victoria with her parents around 1852, settling in the rural hamlet of Shelford where they took up the licence of the Settlers' Arms Hotel at Shelford. This roadside inn by the River Leigh was on the main road between Hamilton and Ballarat.

In 1859, Mary married Horace Walker Howlett, manager of Greenwich Station, a 50,000 acres pastoral run near Heywood in south western Victoria, around 50kms miles from Mount Gambier. Horace was the son of a vicar in Norfolk England. Mary and Horace worked with the Stewart family in the Settlers' Arms. By January 1877, they had purchased the Lake Bolac Hotel north of Shelford.<sup>(1)</sup> This location was a main traffic route to the northern and western parts of Victoria and promised good trade from 'families and Commercial gentlemen'.<sup>(2)</sup> In July 1878, Horace Howlett died, unexpectedly at the age of forty-five, intestate and owing £400 to creditors. Mary's brother Alexander Stewart lived nearby at Woorndoo and paid for a lease on the hotel. In the case of Moffat v Howlett, Mary was taken to court by one creditor for recovery of debts.<sup>(3)</sup>

Mary had six children to support. William Alexander Stewart was fifteen, Horace Henry (known as Tuck) was eleven, Donald Stewart McKenzie was eight, Alexander Armstrong Stewart was six, Margaret Catherine Stewart was four, and Frances Ethel Taylor was two. According to family history, earlier in her married life Mary worked with a doctor from the town of Hamilton, William Jenkins, attending to his maternity cases and it was he who encouraged Mary to take up formal education in maternity care. Aged forty-six, Mary began training at The Women's Hospital.<sup>(4)</sup> Pupils enrolled at the same time included: Sarah Kennedy, Miss Marshall, Nurse Sadler and Mrs Folinier. Another pupil, Sarah A Gates, discontinued when she did not pass probation.

In the late 1880s, pupil nurses received instruction from a range of staff: the resident surgeon, honorary surgeons, as well as the nursing staff of the Midwifery and Infirmary Departments. According to Howlett family correspondence, Mary particularly like one of the doctors whose father was also a medical practitioner and honorary surgeon at the hospital.<sup>(5)</sup> The only father and son duo associated with the hospital at this time was Dr Bertie (Herbert) Fetherston and his father Gerald who had formulated the pupil nurse training scheme in 1860.

During Mary's training term, Jane Edmunds was Head Midwifery Nurse. Another valued teacher was Nurse Margaretta Cherry, described in Howlett family records as 'the baby nurse'. According to one family story, Mary's young daughter Margaret, then aged around thirteen, visited the hospital to see her mother. Nurse Cherry took Margaret around, showing her the mothers and their newborn babies Margaret was not permitted to touch.<sup>(6)</sup> Mary Howlett valued her training and after finishing 'offered her services for a short time as a thanks offering' to the hospital, a gesture which the Ladies Committee gladly accepted.<sup>(7)</sup>

Returning to her community as a qualified Ladies Nurse, Mary attended midwifery cases in the Lake Bolac and Wickliffe area for many years and was highly regarded. Her daughter Margaret recalled a memorable night when Mary answered the call to attend:

"One of mother's midnight excursions was entirely unprepared for and took place in the midst of violent thunderstorm. The patient Mrs Loader of Derrinallum had come to the home of her parents [the Rowleys at Lake Bolac, three miles from the Howlett's home] thinking she had plenty of time for the visit but she had not ... Once Mother grasped the fact that she was needed, it didn't take her long to get ready and away those two valiant women [Mrs Howlett and Miss Lizzie Rowley] went through the storm and downpour [by horse] ... all went well with the mother and babe ... [Afterwards] the Aunts brought her to show Mother the baby she had brought them through the storm".<sup>(8)</sup>

Mary supported The Women's throughout her life, raising funds for its work. She organised a fancywork class for girls in Lake Bolac and in 1894 the items produced were sold at a local bazaar, delivering £35 for the hospital. Mary was awarded Life Governorship of The Women's Hospital, in recognition of her support for the institution.(9)

Some artefacts of Mary's practice have survived, rare and important evidence of midwifery practice in late nineteenth century Victoria. Her 1887 certificate of training is the oldest-known extant example of its type issued by The Women's. Her linen apron, a family medicine chest issued by Robert McDonald, druggist and chemist of Great Ryrie Street Geelong, and her certificate of Life Governorship of The Women's are held by the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in Melbourne.(10)

Mary Livingstone Howlett died 26 March 1922 at her home 'Wynawang' at Wickliffe, Lake Bolac aged 81. She was buried with Presbyterian rites. Her husband and two of her sons predeceased her.

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- 3) Grehan, Howlett Family History File.
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- 5) Correspondence from Margaret Howlett to Dr Frank Forster. 4 January 1965, Collection of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Melbourne.
- 6) Correspondence from Margaret Howlett to Dr Frank Forster. 4 January 1965, Collection of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Melbourne.
- 7) Women's Hospital Ladies Committee Minutes. 7 September 1888, RWHA A1991\_6\_11.
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# Jona, Judah Leon (1886 - 1964)

M.D. (Melb.), D.Sc. (Adelaide), FRACS, M.R.C.O.G.

<i>Born</i>	21 November 1886 Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
<i>Died</i>	19 April 1964 Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, c.1964.

JUDAH LEON JONA  
(1924 - 1946)

Judah Leon Jona was born in Adelaide on November 21st, 1886, to Walter and Eva Jona. With the aid of scholarships, which he won each year, he entered Way College in 1900, Prince Alfred College in 1903, and the University of Adelaide in 1904; at the latter he began both the Science and the Medical course. His scholastic career continued to be studded with awards; the Elder Prize in 2nd year Medicine, 1905; Honours B.Sc. Degree with Honours in Physiology, 1906; Bursary at Trinity College, Melbourne, and Exhibition in Physiology, 3rd Year Medicine, Melbourne, 1907. Owing to financial troubles in 1909 he was compelled to give up his medical course in the middle of his fifth year, and he was given a University Scholarship in Physiology and appointed a Demonstrator in Physiology in the University of Melbourne. In 1910 he was awarded D.Sc., Adelaide, and the David Murray Research Prize in Science, University of Adelaide; he was also appointed Lecturer in Physiology, University of Melbourne. In 1911 he qualified M.B., B.S., Melbourne, received the Beit Memorial Fellowship for Medical research, London (one of ten awarded annually throughout the British Empire, with a total value of £750 over three years), and was a member of the Faculties of Science and Veterinary Science in the University of Melbourne.

The period 1912-13 was spent in research at the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine, London, under the former Melbourne Professor, C.J. Martin F.R.S. In addition, Leon did post-graduate work at the Hospital for Women, Chelsea, the Hospital for Women, Soho, and the West London Post graduate School and Hospital, visited the large provincial hospitals and the Rotunda and Stevens Hospitals in Dublin, attended and took post-graduate courses at the Charite, the largest hospital in Berlin, and saw the work in the Schauta and Wertheim Clinics in Vienna. Returning home late in 1913 he gained his M.D. Melb. Degree, and he obtained minor appointments in medical and gynaecological clinics at the Melbourne Hospital. In 1917 he won the Rogers Prize, University of London, for a thesis on fever and in 1919 he was awarded M.S. Adelaide. In 1917 he was appointed Locum tenens, Honorary Obstetric Surgeon, Women's Hospital, which he held almost continuously until he gained his definite appointment in 1924. In 1925 he was made Honorary Assistant Gynaecological Surgeon, a position he held till he retired from the Women's Hospital in 1946. He became F.R.A.C.S. in 1929 and M.R.C.O.G. in 1935.

His military service though not outstanding covered a long period. He enlisted as Captain, A.A.M.C. in 1911, attended a course at the R.A.M.C. College, Millbank, London, in 1912-13, and served with a medical unit in Roumania and Bulgaria during the 2nd Balkan War of 1913. He volunteered for active service in 1914, but he was retained in Australia to become S.M.O. in various camps and C.O. of 45th, 16th and 20th Field Ambulances for varying periods. In 1939 he was not accepted for active service abroad, but served overseas as a surgeon in the British Merchant Service. He was a member of the Australian council for U.N.R.R.A. and in this capacity visited London and the middle East.

He spent 1926 and 1927 in Europe and the United Kingdom seeing the leading men, attending congresses, and undertaking various studies. Again, in 1935-37 he made another extended trip and among other activities attended medical and scientific meetings in Hungary, Russia, Palestine and Egypt; he also spent some time in U.S.A.

Leon Jona was a prolific writer and contributed to various journals at least 38 original articles; these ranged over a wide field from "Refractive Indices of the Eye Media of Some Australian Animals" through "Segmental Distribution of Blood Vessels in Upper Limb" to obstetrical and gynaecological subjects. But the work that gained him his international reputation was that dealing with the physiology of the kidney pelvis, which was reported in eight papers over the years 1928-36. As a result of his work he became a Member of the Physiological Society, England, a Fellow of the Pathological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine London. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Victoria, a Fellow of the Australian Chemical Institute, a Member of the Palestine Medical Association, and a Member of the International Association of Surgeons.

Leon was versatile, very much alive in spite of his bulk, and he loved living. In 1927 he learnt to fly and was a member of the Royal Aero Club of Victoria. He enjoyed walking, overseas travel, meeting and conversing with people, and he was fluent, both reading and speaking, in French, German and Yiddish. He also took a leading part in Jewish Communal matters, Zionist Organisations, and various branches of Freemasonry. He was a brilliant scholar, an unusually well qualified medical man, and yet an unaffectedly modest and sincere individual whose erudition and culture enhanced a jovial personality.

Leon Jona married Elsie Kozminsky in 1913, and there were three children, girls, all of whom married. He died at Melbourne on 19th April, 1964.

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3. Salivary Adaptation. Proceedings Physiol. Society - (Journal of Physiology, 1910).
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## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Lawson, Betty Constance (1915 - 2006)



MBE FNM FRCNA MID

*Born* 9 August 1915, Epping, New South Wales, Australia

*Died* 15 February 2006 Donvale, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Matron and Midwife

Image 1: Betty Constance Lawson

Image 2: The Florence Nightingale Medal

## Details

Prepared by Susan Hudson, 2006

### TAKING TEA WITH THE GENERAL

Former Royal Women's Hospital matron, Betty Lawson (1955-1977), was frail and living in a retirement village when she decided to invite the then chief of the Australian Defence Forces, Lieutenant -General Peter Cosgrove, to afternoon tea. It was 2001, the Australian Army's Centenary year, and the invitation for the 21 November was gallantly accepted, "as a way of paying tribute to the role of nurses in the armed services," General Cosgrove said.

At the time Miss Lawson was Australia's most highly decorated nurse (still surviving), and the action clearly demonstrated that anything was achievable with clear intent – a maxim she had probably lived by for most of her life. About 40 of her friends and the press came to the party too, and a photo of an ebullient Lawson with the smiling general enjoying a 'cuppa' appeared in the Melbourne Age newspaper the next day.

After the declaration of war in 1939, Miss Lawson had enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Corps and sailed for the Middle East with the 2/2 Australian General Hospital (AGH). Initially she served with the 2/1st Casualty Clearing Station, but by 1943 was on the Australian hospital ship 'Wanganella' - a vessel that travelled more than 10 times around the world during WWII to bring home our wounded soldiers. Later she served with the 2/8th AGH at Lae in New Guinea and Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital. In all she spent five years at war and by discharge had attained the rank of Captain and been mentioned in dispatches (MID).

Miss Lawson's professional activities post-war were similarly remarkable. She held many senior nursing positions, the culmination of which was 22 years at the helm of Victoria's major maternity hospital. During her term of office at the Royal Women's, a new 600-bed hospital was built and vast changes to nursing education and working practices, as well as patient care, took place.

Her significant contribution to nursing was marked when the International Red Cross awarded her the prestigious **Florence Nightingale Medal** in Geneva 1967, and later when Queen Elizabeth II presented her with an MBE at Buckingham Palace in 1978.

### THE BEGINNING

Betty Lawson was the eldest of three daughters born on 9 August, 1915 to tea blending specialist Albert Charles Lawson and governess Florence Octavia Agutter in Epping, NSW. Betty was only 12 when her father died suddenly, and she was devastated, so much so that she hated going to funerals for the remainder of her life. Left alone to raise her children, Florence eventually moved her small family closer to relatives in Victoria. They settled in Ivanhoe, then a community of dairy farms and market gardens. Tall, fit and healthy, the young Betty swam regularly in the nearby Yarra River.

Educated at Ivanhoe State School and then University High School, she completed a commercial course and worked for solicitors Dooley & Breen while waiting to start nurse training in 1934. (According to her sister Patricia, she was "going to be a nurse from the day she was born").

### NURSE TRAINING

After commencing at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1934, she went on to become an outstanding nurse, and was awarded the Maudsley Prize in her second year of training. Upon graduating in 1937 she completed her staff nurse year and then studied midwifery at the Royal Women's Hospital, before returning to the Melbourne to be appointed by then Matron, Miss Jane Bell, to head up her own ward - the youngest charge nurse ever at the hospital.

After the war Miss Lawson returned to the Royal Melbourne to work while waiting to begin her third certificate – infant welfare at Karitane in NSW (1947).

This completed, she applied for and received a Centaur Scholarship that allowed her to study nursing administration at the Royal College of Nursing in London in 1949, where she graduated with distinctions in psychology and ethics. (These Scholarships had been established in memory of nurses who had died when the hospital ship Centaur was torpedoed off Brisbane in 1943.)

Back in Melbourne Miss Lawson became a fellow of the then fledgling College of Nursing, Australia and joined the then Hospitals and Charities Commission as deputy to executive officer Gwenyth Williams. Miss Williams became a close friend and the two lobbied hard to set up nursing bursaries and to help launch a nurse aide training school in Victoria.

In 1952 she became deputy matron of the Geelong Base Hospital and then matron of the Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (1953-55).

#### MATRON OF THE ROYAL WOMENS HOSPITAL

When Miss Ruth Meaney retired as matron of the Royal Women's in 1955, Miss Lawson succeeded her.

Although the Women's was seen principally as a maternity hospital, Miss Lawson pushed to see that gynaecological nursing was given greater emphasis and in 1956 had the post-basic gynaecological nursing course reconstructed. This stemmed from her conviction of the importance of the health of women generally, not only as mothers. She also employed the first qualified midwifery tutor at the Women's and lobbied hard to see the Australian College of Midwives established. She was also the first to introduce refresher courses for nurses returning to the profession after long absences.

The 1950s was also a time of chronic shortage of nurses and dissatisfied with the status of nurses and nursing during those years, Miss Lawson worked hard for improvements to the profession and to see it given greater approbation.

#### INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Miss Lawson stayed abreast of overseas developments by attending international congresses and in 1965, 1969 1973 and 1977 she attended the International Council of Nurses (ICN) meetings in Canada, Germany, Mexico and Japan as well as conducting study tours of hospitals throughout the world. Few perhaps knew that the matrons of the various Melbourne hospitals met each other on a regular basis, and Lawson often traveled with Miss Lynly Aitken (Matron, Royal Melbourne) and Miss Lydia Shaw (Matron, Alfred). On these trips there was extensive sharing of information about nursing and health in general, to the benefit of Victoria's public health system.

#### COMMITTEES & ASSOCIATIONS

Throughout her career Miss Lawson served on many significant nursing and health committees:

- \* Past president of the Florence Nightingale Committee of Australia (VIC) (1950 – 1985);
- \* Council Member & Executive Committee Member Royal College of Nursing (1953 – 1977);
- \* Member & former President, Hospital Matrons' Association of Victoria (1953 – 1977);
- \* Nursing Representative, Advisory Committee to Mental Health Authority (1953 – 1977);
- \* Midwifery Member on Executive, Victorian Nursing Council (1955 – 1978);
- \* Trustee, Centaur Trust (1963 – 1996);
- \* Chair, Committee of Management, Melbourne Nursing Aide School; Council, Royal Victorian College of Nursing (1976 – 1984);
- \* Member & life member, Nurses' Memorial Centre Committee (1978 – 1995);
- \* Committee Member, Carlton Community Health Centre (1978 – 1985);
- \* Committee Member and past president Returned & Services Nurses' Club (1978 – 1991);
- \* Life Member Australian College of Midwives (1953 – 2003).

Her retirement from the Royal Women's in 1977 left more time for meeting people, gardening (especially growing orchids), the theatre, books and traveling and seeing close friends.

Miss Lawson's death, aged 90, on 15 February 2006, signified the loss of another great Australian nurse who ran our public hospitals like a tight ship under old the Florence Nightingale system of training, brought to Australia in 1868. She was in part responsible for the high calibre and standing of Australian nurses throughout this country, and the world.



# Lemmon, William Morton (1899 - 1961)

M.D., D.G.O., F.R.C.O.G.

<i>Born</i>	6 September 1899 Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	1961
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1961.

**WILLIAM MORTON LEMMON**  
(1946 - 1959)

William Morton Lemmon, M.D., D.G.O., F.R.C.O.G., was born on September 6th, 1899 at Hawthorn, Melbourne, the son of a Scot, Robert Bennett Lemmon by his wife nee Laura Morton.

He was educated at Trinity Grammar School, Scotch College and the University of Melbourne, graduating M.B., B.S. in 1922. He was a resident medical officer at Geelong Hospital 1922-23 and at the Women's Hospital, Melbourne in 1924.

He then entered general practice in Vincent Place, Albert Park, and whilst there married Miss Sheila Tompkins, daughter of a well known Melbourne Architect. He decided to specialise in obstetrics and gynaecology, gaining the D.G.O. (Melb.) in 1934, subsequently going to England to gain the membership of the College of Obstetricians (which later became the Royal College).

In 1937, he became M.D. (Melb.) for a thesis on endometriosis. In 1957 he joined the Faculty of Medicine in Melbourne, representing the Royal Women's Hospital Clinical School. He was Honorary Obstetrical Surgeon to Outpatients at the Royal Women's 1939-46 and from 1946-49 Honorary Outpatient Gynaecological Surgeon. In 1946 he became Obstetrical Surgeon to Inpatients, retiring in 1959.

On the outbreak of war in 1939 he joined the R.A.A.F. but returned in 1943 to the Royal Women's Hospital retaining his connection with the R.A.A.F. on a part-time basis.

Lemmon was greatly interested in the standards of obstetrical and gynaecological training and served on the Victorian Regional council of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist, and in 1947, when he became a member of the Victorian Committee of the R.C.O.G. the first examinations in Australia by the College were held in Melbourne; he was most generous with his time in helping to prepare the 6 Australians who sat for the examination.

He became State Chairman of the College, having been elevated to Fellowship in 1953.

Lemmon, though conservative in his medical attitude of mind, was a man who enjoyed the respect and affection of his patients and his colleagues. A good conversationalist - to whom disputation at times was not unwelcome - he was efficient and kindly and was always willing to help others.

He was interested in tennis and golf, and in the history of Melbourne and of its people. Dr. and Mrs. Lemmon were a devoted couple; he survived his wife by scarcely a year when he died in 1961, at the age of 62 leaving an only daughter Alison (Mrs. Alan Jarman).

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Ley, Gordon David (1914 - c. 1970)

<i>Born</i>	9 September 1914 Moonee Ponds
<i>Died</i>	c. 28 May 1970
	Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Author unknown. Published in the "Medical Journal of Australia", 24th October 1970 and the "Book of Remembrance", Royal Women's Hospital, 1070.

GORDON DAVID LEY  
(1953 1970)

Gordon David Ley was born at Moonee Ponds on 9th September, 1914, the third Child of Thomas David and Marion Grace Ley, the second of his sisters having died at the age of two before he was born. His early education was received at State Schools, first at Ascot Vale for two or three years, then at Acheron and finally at Murrumbeena for three or four years. The twelve months he spend at Acheron seemed to have made a great impression on him because of the pleasantness of its undulating surroundings, as he lived with his uncle Hector on a property between the Maroondah Highway and the Acheron River, always within sight of the dramatic outline of the Cathedral Range to the east.

After these schools Gordon was enabled by scholarships to have four years at Scotch College in Hawthorn, where he both matriculated and studied for Leaving Honours.

As his family continued to live in Murrumbeena after his schooldays it proved convenient to him to seek employment at the Alfred Hospital in Prahran. Here he spent four years at the Baker Medical Research Institute, working as laboratory assistant in the media room. It was during this time that there dawned upon him the realization that to embark upon a medical career was a practicability. As a consequence he enrolled as a medical student at the University of Melbourne in 1934 and graduated as Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery in December, 1939, gaining the Douglas Stephens Prize in Diseases of Children and sharing with Dr. John Bryant Curtis the Nyulasy Prize in Gynaecology.\*

After this he returned to the Alfred Hospital as resident medical officer, where he met the girl whose future was to be linked with his, a science graduate in the Bacteriology department. Mary Weir Phillips originally came from New South Wales and at the end of his twelve months' appointment, in January, 1941, Gordon drove up to Sydney for his marriage with her at Darlinghurst, his best man and traveling companion being a colleague from the Alfred Hospital, Richard Fitzwalter ("Dicky") Read, now a surgeon living abroad in Wimbledon.

He next worked for a year on the resident staff of the (Royal) Women's Hospital, Melbourne, where Alison Mackie was Medical Superintendent and his fellows were Cyrus Jones, Winston Smith, Vernon Hollyock, Russell Sherwin and Graeme Salter. It was here that he received his first training in the obstetrics and gynaecology that was so to fill his later life.

In June, 1942 Gordon received his call-up as Surgeon-Lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy and in late August his first ship, Warrego, an elderly mine-sweeper, just a few weeks after that birth of his first son. Subsequent naval postings included establishments at Garden Island and in Brisbane, after which he joined Bataan, a new destroyer, to see service in Tokyo Bay during the surrender formalities conducted aboard the U.S.S. Missouri in August, 1945.

Upon demobilization in February, 1946, he resumed his connection with the (Royal) Women's Hospital, at first as a Registrar in the team led by Kelvin Churches, then during 1947 being himself the Medical Superintendent. Gordon was thus the holder of the last of the Women's Hospital's "clinical" superintendent posts - a source of spectacular experience which trained such obstetrical leaders as John Green, Dixon Saltau, Authur Hill, J.W. Johnstone, Donald Lawson, Ronald Rome, Allison Mackie and Kelvin Churches - because soon afterwards the position became an almost wholly administrative one, at first in the hands of W.D. (now Sir William) Refshauge and then, for 19 years ending in February, 1970, in those of J.C. Laver.

During these years he moved his home from war-time Sydney to the Melbourne suburb of Essendon where he was to remain, surrounded by his well-tended garden.

In 1948 Gordon commenced obstetrical practice, at first entirely in the rooms of J.W. Johnstone (Acting Professor of Obstetrics in the University of Melbourne for three years in succession to W. Ivon Hayes after the death of the first Professor, Robert Marshall Allan in 1946), although later he also helped with the midwifery work of the late D.M. Embelton of Essendon. Gordon retained his association and then from 1951 as a Senior Clinical Assistant. Also in 1951, as successor to its founder J.W. Johnstone, he was appointed Honorary Surgeon-in-Charge of the Sterility Clinic. He held this office with enthusiasm for ten years until Alwyn Long took his place, whereupon he was promoted to become its consultant surgeon.

In 1951 the University of Melbourne appointed Lance Townsend to be the first definitive occupant of the newly-styled chair of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (the change in its title having been affected in 1950 during the acting-tenure of J.W. Johnstone), and

the Professorial Unit at the Women's Hospital, which originally consisted of one secretary and the present writer, came into being. Gordon was invited to become its part-time First Assistant in Obstetrics upon the resignation of Vernon Hollyock and this he was for about a year from February, 1952. At the same time he was conducting throughout the Hospital a careful investigation into the question of "post-maturity" in the light of knowledge at that time. His report on Prolonged Gestation [Medical Journal of Australia, 14th November, 1953] did much to liberalize the rigid views then widely held.

In 1953 he was appointed to the (Royal) Women's Hospital's medical staff as Honorary Obstetrical Surgeon to Outpatients, a post he held in the same unit for the remaining 17 years of his life, at first under W.J. Rawlings and from 1963 under James Smibert. Progressively during this time he gained enormously in stature - as a man, as a member of a team, as a clinician, as a consultant. With the passing years he came to be more and more highly regarded as a conservative obstetrician and gynaecologist and became a sound operator. Through him an unusually rich harvest of good to the patient has been reaped. He was always particularly successful at avoiding that impersonality which mars too many aspects of public hospital work. Many women, at all levels within the community, have cause to remember gratefully his care for them. At staff meetings we had all been long aware of his tempering function, his lucid moderation, his ability often to suggest to opposing factions a very acceptable compromise that dissolved their differences while astounding all with its obviousness. His was always a constructive voice. It is ironical that his death should have occurred just a few hours before his promotion to the rank of Honorary Obstetrical Surgeon to In-patients was to have been announced.

Gordon became a member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1947 and was elected to the fellowship in 1964.\* He served as the Royal Women's Hospital representative on the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Melbourne, on the Senior Medical Staff Inter-Hospital Committee and, most recently, on the Australian Medical Association's committee in Victoria examining the question of payment for visiting staff of teaching hospitals. He was chairman of the editorial panel which in 1965 revised the Hospital's printed notes in obstetrics for its pupil midwives and served on a small committee examining the applicability of computerisation to our work. For his last two years he led the affairs of the Marshall Allan Library during its settling into a permanent home and laid the foundations of a growing collection of historical works.

Having joined the Essendon and District Hospital Society in May, 1963 he remained a member of that hospital's Committee of Management from 1964 until his death, had served on both its House Committee and its Medical Advisory Board and was President of its Clinical Society for 1969-70. At the Sacred Heart Hospital, Moreland, he and Hugh Tighe shared duty as Honorary Medical Officers in the obstetrical department from its inception in December, 1963 until February, 1966.

Though always busy with his work, he yet took time to live the full life. He was much concerned with the conservation of Australia's best natural features; he had considerable interest in flora and fauna, particularly bird-life; he greatly enjoyed bush-walking and country travel. He was a member of the Council of The Victorian National Parks Association and had been prominent in examining the possibility of declaring the Otway Ranges a national park. He derived pleasure from the lyre-birds in Sherbrooke Forest, the scenery in the Wittenoom Range, the view of Mr. Stirling or the countryside of Portuguese Timor. He was interested in Australian history, both general and medical, and frequently attended meetings and displays.

A placid pipe-smoker, he seldom became ruffled. Each task had to be undertaken in its due order and properly completed. He knew how to be cheerful when weary, patient when exasperated, interested in the tedious and wisely unhurried by urgency. He exuded calm and competence. He had to a remarkable degree the capacity to husband his energies by taking frequent cat-naps – for short moments but repeatedly. After each he would be instantly alert and orientated. He often remarked that he could drift into momentary sleep when sitting anywhere at all.

With his slow, loose-limbed walk, his twinkling eyes, a suspicion of a mischievous smile, his laterally-moving lower jaw, his demeanour always seemed to indicate, as an example to us all, a most balanced perspective upon life. It remains difficult to realize that now we will see him no more.

The end came unexpectedly during sleep on the night of 27/28th May, 1970, in a busy week, after a tiring day which led to an evening of vague ill-health. The cause was massive coronary occlusion and cardiac infarction and signs were found that there had been minor previous attacks, of which characteristically he had made no mention.

He is survived by his wife Mary, two sons Gordon and Andrew and his daughter Mary-Anne. To them appreciation is expressed for a staunch friend and a loyal colleague. They know that they have our sympathy in their loss which is ours too.

Gordon was proud to have seen his sons married, both in 1969. It is saddening that he was not able to welcome his first grand-child, David Charles Gordon, who was born on 6th August, 1970 to Pauline, the wife of his elder son.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Lloyd, Henry Cairns (1865 - 1943)

M.D., F.R.C.S. (Edin.)

<i>Born</i>	18 August 1865 Caulfield, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	1 August 1943 Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

HENRY CAIRNS LLOYD  
(1903 - 1943)

Henry Cairns Lloyd was born at Alma Road, Caulfield, Victoria, on the eighteenth of August 1865, the younger son of John Charles Lloyd, insurance broker, and Margaret Ballingall, his wife, who was a daughter of the well known Presbyterian minister, Dr. Adam Cairns. He was educated at the Toorak College, Melbourne, and then undertook the long journey to Scotland to study medicine at the Edinburgh University, where he graduated in 1893. Shortly after this he returned to Victoria, and was in general practice for a brief period.

Cairns Lloyd now decided upon a career of specialisation in obstetrics and gynaecology, and to gain the necessary training he returned to the British Isles. For some year he was an assistant master, under Dr. Purefoy, at the Rotunda Hospital Dublin, where he gained the Licentiate of Midwifery. Following this he studied under the leaders of the Vienna School, then returned to Edinburgh where he obtained the higher qualifications of M.D. and F.R.C.S. in 1902.

He then returned and settled in Melbourne, and in 1903, with his appointment as Honorary Midwifery Surgeon, he began the long period of his service to the Women's Hospital. In 1910, he was Chairman of the Honorary Midwifery Staff, and in 1913, Honorary Outdoor Surgeon. In 1914, with the expansion of the hospital staff, he became Honorary Infirmary Surgeon, which post he held until 1925, when he was appointed Honorary Consultant Surgeon. He became a life governor of this hospital in 1910.

Cairns Lloyd had a deep and lasting interest in his specialty. In 1905, he was one of the Sub-Committee of the Medical Society of Victoria on "Puerperal Sepsis in Private Practice". The report of this Sub-Committee, as one of the preventive measures urged, strongly recommended proper training, examination and registration of midwives. It is of interest to note that Cairns Lloyd was a pioneer of bacteriological investigation of cases of puerperal infection in this State. He was a member of the Committee of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the Australasian Medical Congress of 1908, and was also a member of the Special Obstetrics Committee appointed by the British Medical Association, in 1924, to enquire into the condition of midwifery work in Victoria - this eventually led to the establishment of a Professional Chair in this State in obstetrics. He took a keen and active interest in the training of midwives and in the improvement of their working conditions. He was a member of the British Medical Association.

In 1904, Cairns Lloyd married, at Scots Church, Anne King Scott. They had two children, Leline Cairns Lloyd of Marne Street, South Yarra and John Charles Cairns Lloyd, grazier, of Narre Warren, Victoria. His wife died in 1918, and in 1925 he married secondly Frances Dudgeon. For the greater part of his life he lived at 431 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne, in a home now the Nurse's Memorial Centre. Cairns Lloyd, was, for many years, a very keen tennis player and also an enthusiastic holiday golfer. He was a member of the Australian Club and of the Royal Melbourne Golf Club.

After a prolonged illness, Henry Cairns Lloyd died at this home on the first of August, 1943.

## PUBLICATIONS :

1. Two Cases of Spontaneous Rupture in the Parturient Canal During Labour, Australian Medical Gazette, 1899, p. 385.
2. Puerperal Eclampsia, Intercolonial Medical Journal of Australasia, 1904, Vol. IX, p. 282.
3. Some Notes of the Bacteriology of Puerperal Infection, Intercolonial Medical Journal of Australasia, 1905, Vol. X, p. 474.
4. The Use and Abuse of Pessaries, Intercolonial Medical Journal of Australasia, 1906, Vol. XII, p. 538.
5. Report of Two Cases of Puerperal Sepsis treated by Vaccines, Intercolonial Medical Journal of Australasia, 1907, Vol. XII, p. 498.
6. Artificial Dilatation of the Cervix in Pregnancy, Intercolonial Medical Journal of Australasia, 1908, Vol. XIII, p. 349.
7. Recent Work in the Treatment of Puerperal Sepsis, Medical Journal of Australia, 1910, Vol. XV, p. 353.
8. A case of Tubo-Ovarian Pregnancy going on to Viability (with Robert Fowler, M.D. (Melb.)), Medical Journal of Australia, 1912, Vol. I, part II, p. 687.
9. Caesarean Section, Medical Journal of Australia, 1922, Vol. I, p. 231.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Macdonald, Colin Ferguson (1895 - 1969)

<i>Born</i>	20 May 1895 Toorak, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	10 January 1969 Box Hill, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Medical Practitioner and Radiologist

## Details

Transcription of an obituary by Mr Robert S. Lawson, and memoirs by Dr Keith Hallam and Dr J W Johnstone appeared in the "Medical Journal of Australia", 19th April 1969 and in the Book of Remembrance, Royal Women's Hospital, 1969.

COLIN FERGUSON MACDONALD  
(1927 - 1963)

Dr. Colin Macdonald died in the Box Hill Hospital, Melbourne, on Friday, January 10th, 1969. He had just completed an afternoon's work of reviewing X-ray films at this hospital, and was found slumped over the wheel of his car as he was about to drive home. It was in character that he should die on the job, "with his boots on", rebelling against more prudent advice. He knew well enough what a slender thread preserved him over his last months, but determined to put it to the test. He had always had a flair for the dramatic; he had always worn his panache; and so he played the last scene defiantly.

Colin Ferguson Macdonald was born at Toorak on May 20, 1895. This was just after the land boom had broken, and his thrifty Scottish parents (of whom he was very proud) sent him to the Camberwell state School No. 888. However, a Junior Government Scholarship - one of only 20 for the whole State of Victoria in those days - enabled him to attend Scotch College. By dint of hard work and natural ability, he acquired in turn Senior Government and University Scholarships, which allowed him to go up to Ormond College at the University of Melbourne. He became chairman of the Students' Club of Ormond; and his loyal devotion to his old school and to his old University College coloured the rest of his life. He became a member of the council of each of these Colleges and president of their old boys' associations. In the same way he became greatly attached to his own University. He was president of the Union, and for 23 years a member of the Standing Committee of Convocation, representing the graduates in medicine. The tribute paid to him by this body on his retirement in 1966 bears quoting. In part it reads: "His contributions to work of the Committee have never been merely confined to medical items." After referring to the "forthright truth so often enumerated, and the kindly wisdom so highly exemplified ..." It concludes that: "He has been a true University man with a multitude of intellectual and human interests." Dr Macdonald had graduated M.B., B.S. in 1918. As a medical student he was debarred from joining the A.I.F. until after graduation, so that he missed the experience of serving in war - a matter to him of life-long regret.

There followed a period of three years as resident medical officer at the Melbourne Hospital, the Children's Hospital, and the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital (where he became a great friend and admirer of Dr. Frank Scholes, then Medical Superintendent). Thereafter he entered private practice in Warracknabeal, an important town in the Wimmera district of Victoria. However, the lack of X-ray and pathological services at that time frustrated him, and he determined to master more precise methods of diagnosis. He proceeded to England and acquired in 1925 the Cambridge Diploma of Medical Radiology and Electrolgy, the only post-graduate diploma in radiology then current. This led to a position at King's College Hospital, where he was assistant radiologist to Dr Robert Knox, one of the early British pioneers in this specialty. Here he also encountered Dr Frederick Still and Dr Thomas Barlow, though only briefly. Nevertheless, they made a profound impression, which he recalled in a memorable Röntgen Oration in Melbourne (1958).

After completing his assignment at King's College Hospital, Dr Macdonald returned to Melbourne, where he became assistant in turn to Sir Stanley Argyle and Dr Herbert Hewlett, each of whom had been among the pioneers of radiology in this city. Later he became a member of the newly-formed Melbourne Radiological Clinic, with which group he served for the rest of his working life, becoming senior member and principal before his retirement.

At this time, also, he became Honorary Radiologist at the Children's Hospital, which position he held for 20 years. This allegiance led on to his becoming President of the Melbourne Paediatric Society (later the Paediatric Society of Victoria). In 1938 he became a foundation Fellow of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, and also a Fellow of the Faculty of Radiologists of London.

He became the first radiologist at the Women's Hospital in 1927, and this also began a life-long attachment, in which he became Director of Radiology (1955-1963). His devotion and loyalty to the (now) Royal Women's Hospital were so less than to his old school and college.

Among a group of students in residence in 1930, he was identified as the "man with the voice". Although attendance in the X-ray department was at that time no part of the obstetrics students' training, we spent many sessions there, fascinated not so much by the X-rays as by the mellifluous speaker, with a range and resonance of voice we had not heard before. Indeed, we were rather proud of having "discovered" him, but doubtless many others claimed this also that is, before he became a celebrated speaker needing no discovery. In after years many audiences, often of many hundreds of people, were equally fascinated by his magnificent speaking voice and by his enthusiasm, his passion for detail, his gusto and his superb aplomb.

His published contributions on radiology alone would have established him as an important figure in his own specialty. But he was to the medical profession and the public at large even more renowned as an historian, an orator and an after-dinner speaker. To hosts of friends in clubs, schools, colleges and hospitals he was known as an enthusiast on innumerable topics - scholastic and

sporting, literary and intellectual, agrarian and biographical, especially as an authority on the early settlers of Victoria. Above all, they knew him as a "social, friendly, honest man", who endeavoured to live his life in accordance with the Christian ethic.

To his wife, Margaret, and to his two sons, Colin and Kenneth, we extend our deepest sympathy.

DR KEITH HALLAM wrote: Half a century ago, Colin Macdonald was the outstanding senior student in Ormond College, University of Melbourne. He was unique; he did not imitate or simulate any other man; he was inimitable. He had great innate gifts, which he polished and perfected so that he became an eminent teacher, lecturer and orator. In the 1920's he was one of three Cambridge Diplomates in Medical Radiology and Electrolgy. This trio, of Dr. Barbara Wood, Dr Colin Macdonald and Dr John O'Sullivan, advanced radiology in Victoria in the ensuing years.

Colin Macdonald was deeply interested in education. He was a prominent member of the body of extramural counsellors who, through their wide experience, and their wise advice and decisions, aid the progress of secondary and tertiary education. As a teacher and lecturer in medical profession, he endeared himself to younger practitioners, because he instructed them and befriended them in personal discourse. A young radiologist, sitting next to me at a lecture which Dr Macdonald delivered at the Australasian Medical congress (B.M.A.) in Perth in 1948, said at the end of the session; "I dearly wish that I could come to Melbourne and sit at the feet of that man for two or three months." Recently a leading member of that band of brilliant young radiologists who adorn the profession in Melbourne said after the first lecture by Dr Macdonald that he had attended, that he had found a man to admire and respect for his teaching ability and his willingness to discuss pertinent aspects of the subject of the evening. This urge to become an acolyte of Colin Macdonald was prevalent.

At the meetings of the Melbourne Paediatric Society at the old Children's Hospital in Carlton he was probably at this best. When I say that he was idolized there, I believe I am not exaggerating. He felt perfectly at home in the cosy, intimate atmosphere, where his audience was "with him" both physically because of the cramped quarters (where the speaker was almost among the audience), and because they were in intellectual accord. He did not resent this adulation; and it was Bernard Shaw who replied, when asked his reaction to favourable reviews of his work: "Like any other lion, I purr when I am stroked." Colin brought at times a light touch to the meetings when he applied amusing and detrimental fictional anecdotes to his dearest friends, who joined in the hilarious reception of the baiting.

As an orator he was superb. His oratory was tintured with rhetoric, but not too much; just enough to add a flavour. Always his papers and his orations were prepared with a meticulous care that paid a tribute to his audiences, who returned homage to him. Memorable ones were his Röntgen Oration in Melbourne in 1958, which he gave at very short notice, and his "Röntgen's Discovery and the Pioneer Melbourne Radiologists" at the Monash Theatre of the Alfred Hospital in 1966. The former detailed the lives and work of Sir Thomas Barlow and Sir Frederick Still. Others included memorial orations commemorating Dr. Arthur Wilson (obstetrician), Dr Henry Douglas Stephens (paediatrician) and Dame Nellie Melba.

Medical publications came at relatively frequent intervals after his return from Cambridge. The first of these papers was in 1926. The subject was "Osteochondritis". He held that its aetiology was obscure and its manifestations and sites were protean. Amongst its vaunted causes were non-specific infections, bone dystrophies, rickets and congenital abnormalities, tuberculosis, syphilis and vitamin deficiencies. Trauma was postulated, and the similarity of the X-ray appearances of Perthes' disease to those subsequent to the forceful reduction of congenital dislocation of the hip joint was noted. In those days the concept that osteochondritis followed trauma was new and a real breakthrough. Colin's wide reading kept him well informed, so that he was in the van to endow his lectures with important news for his audiences.

In 1927 he published a paper on "Principles Underlying Treatment by Radium" (in gynaecological practice). Because of the varying techniques used, Dr Macdonald stated that "the last word has not been said on this interesting subject". In the same year, a paper on "The X-ray Diagnosis of Foreign Bodies in the Air Passages and the Oesophagus" was an epitome of the classic work of Chevalier Jackson of Philadelphia, "the doyen of endoscopists". Colin Macdonald had, in addition to his own inventive and original mind, a remarkable flair for presenting the results of the work of his teachers in an interesting and didactic manner, so that one gained an education through this efficient channel. This is a rare gift. Pastiche can be so tasteless unless dished up by a real master!

In 1932, his introductory remarks to a paper on "Some Aspects of Obstetrical Radiography" were a paradigm of Colin Macdonald's superb adeptness in presenting, in a fluent and witty manner, a very well known and hackneyed early aspect of X-rays. They are worth quoting now:

Extraordinary, sinister qualities were immediately credited to the X-rays, and the belief that evilly disposed persons could carry X-rays about with them and betray in broad daylight the secrets underlying lingerie gave grave concern to the sterner-minded members of the civilized communities. In February, 1896, Congressman Read introduced a bill into the New Jersey Legislature, prohibiting the use of X-ray opera glasses, and this bill provided for substantial penalties for those who, all unsuspected by the ladies of the chorus, would penetrate the thin veils of theatrical modesty. An echo of such feelings was heard on the other side of the Atlantic when a London firm preyed on a gullible public by advertising 'X-ray proof under-clothing'. But it was not long before the fond hopes of the Don Juans of 1896 were cruelly dashed to the ground and they, like many good men after them, were brought to realize the limitations of X-rays."

He read a paper on X-ray interpretation of pulmonary tuberculosis in children at the Sixth Session of the Australasian Medical Congress, wherein he emphasized the lack of characteristic X-ray signs in this disease. He said that radiologists must give opinions only. How true this was! We were prone to make diagnosis of pulmonary lesions.

Pelvimetry was his subject at the Eighth Session of Congress. Here is an example of his felicity of expression: "They (obstetricians) contend that they do not want their fingers or their obstetrical judgement confused by unnecessary mathematics."

One of his most memorable lectures was on fibrocystic disease in children, about 20 years ago, in which he brought fresh news of the radiological features of this involved disease. He seemed in many ways to be a radiological obstetrician by bringing to light many new concepts.

As an historian of the Australian scene and development, he was famous and sought after as a lecturer. The Wye River Settlement, Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, and Sir Francis Ormond, Sir John MacFarland of Ormond College fame, the Doctors Fetherston and many other Women's Hospital personalities featured in his addresses.

The death of Princess Charlotte and the mistaken diagnosis of pregnancy concerning Lady Flora Hastings were dealt with in papers published in the Journal in 1935 and 1941. He doted on the Georgian and Victorian eras, and I remember his almost ecstatic appreciation of Lytton Strachey's and Phillip Guedalla's original presentations of the lives of the eminent and not so eminent, in the reigns of the sovereigns of the nineteenth century. His importance as an historian led to him being made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Victoria in 1960.

His interest in people he met under many different circumstances imbued him with a sense of current social history, for he was fascinated by how people lived and their environment. One young receptionist in a hospital X-ray department told me: "He made me feel important when he asked me about myself, but in no way did he give the impression of prying." In social gatherings he was always the centre of happy, laughing and talking groups. He was a catalyst who generated gregariousness and jollity.

Colin Macdonald has passed on, but much remains to commemorate a splendid mind and intellect, and to demonstrate his abiding interest in man and women. A lasting memorial will be the motto of the College of Radiologists of Australasia, which he devised in 1964: "Lumen afferimus morbis (hominum).

DR. J.W. JOHNSTONE wrote: The passing of Dr Colin Macdonald is a loss to all, and particularly to his many friends at the Royal Women's Hospital. His service to the hospital covered a period of 37 years, from the time when he was appointed first Radiologist in 1927, which then included radiotherapy and radium therapy, until he retired as Director in 1963. From humble beginnings he developed an extensive department, and his advice was taken in design of the new unit in the recently completed hospital, although he did not quite live to see it in operation. His experience in paediatric radiology at the Children's Hospital, and the wealth of cases at the Women's Hospital, put him in the foremost rank. He made valuable contributions to obstetric radiology, particularly in disproportion and pelvimetry, of which he reported 1,000 cases with follow-up analysis, and with the help of B. Milne Sutherland on the clinical side he pioneered the procedure of the hystero-salpingogram. He delighted to put up the films and enter into animated discussion with those interested. Realizing that his work was with shadows, he liked to hang the flesh on them.

Early practice at Warracknabeal, which he jokingly referred to as his experiences on the banks of the Yarriambiack Creek, gave him an abiding interest in and understanding of the problems of the general practitioner. He was gifted with an outstanding, almost encyclopaedic memory, particularly for persons and pedigrees, and he took care in the accuracy of historical detail and in the use of the written and spoken word. Because of these attributes, and his long association with the development and personalities of the Hospital over one-third of its history, he was invited by the members of the honorary medical staff, with the support of the Board of Management, to make a documentary in the form of "A Book of Remembrance". This was compiled for the celebration in 1956 of the hospital Centenary. The book is kept in Archives, with a duplicate available by request in the Marshall Allan Library. It is a biography of all the deceased members of the honorary medical staff up to that time, each with a photograph.

An obituary, "as through a glass darkly", reveals facets of the writer himself; so this book is a remarkable tribute to the qualities of Colin Ferguson Macdonald. Not engraved in stone, but inscribed in written English, it is an enduring monument in the Hospital to the man. After completion of the volume covering the first century, he undertook to continue the work, and so incite succeeding generations to expand the volume. On his retirement from the active staff, the special position of Honorary Historian was created for him, now carried on by his successors. In the Centenary Year 1956, he delivered the Fetherston Memorial Lecture in Wilson Hall on "The Early History of the Royal Women's Hospital", and spoke also to the Section of Medical History of the Victorian Branch of the B.M.A. on the medical founders of the Hospital, Dr John Maund and Dr Richard Tracy. He gave the Seventh Arthur Wilson Memorial Oration in 1961, and the last oration of his life was the Fourth Tracy and Maund Memorial Lecture delivered in 1967.

Colin had a love for ceremonial, tradition, ancestral achievements and all things which had continuance. His praise of and admiration for the British people and their achievements was unbounded, particularly for the Scots - a facet of character which he "wore on his sleeve". Amongst the many fields in which he achieved distinction, we always felt that his relationship with the Royal Women's Hospital occupied a special place near his heart. Perhaps it was this fact which led his son Colin, after following his father in the tradition of medicine, to develop his special interest in obstetrics and gynaecology. The Hospital was close to his university, and although he later chose to live in Hawthorn near Scotch College, I have heard him say that a desirable place to live was across the campus on Royal Parade, Parkville, within sight of the tower of Ormond College.

Being a centre for training of all graduates in medicine in Victoria, and for those aspiring to postgraduate degrees in the specialty, the Hospital was the cross-roads of personalities. The compact dining-room was the focal point, and gave that intimacy which revealed the conversationalist at his best. Many will remember Colin as he entered, neatly but loosely attired in conservative grey, tall, later with the slight student stoop, angular, with loose limbs which he coordinate to the spoken word. On first impression, his prominent facial features might make him appear a little dour to strangers; but then his eyes could twinkle and his face light up with a ready smile as he recognized, perhaps, a new resident, or extended his hand to some visitor. A flow of greetings and hearty laughter would follow, and we would be astounded as he inquired about the health and doings of the family and the ancestral connections.

Conversation passed, not only across the board, but around the room - the revolution of surgery and conquest of sepsis, anaesthesia and transfusion, literature and art, release of atomic energy, the fall of megalomaniacs and doings of tyrants, Britain at war and the rise of statesmen, the conquest of space, the pill, and the theological revolution. No wonder conversation was lively, and on occasion crutches were shouldered to show how fields were won; indeed stirring times, and we have all felt the better for



having lived through them with Colin. After such sharpening of the wit, it was customary to walk down the covered ways to the door, the progress being punctuated by sudden halts, as Colin drew himself up to make a point, or, as we knew in later years, to avert the pangs of his impending disability.

It was likewise a pleasant experience to drive with him in the countryside, along the spread of the great pastoral properties down the Princes Highway from Footscray to Warrnambool, where he might revive boyhood memories of days spent with his friend, Dr Dick Saltau. Sometimes it might be to a medical meeting, or to an historical meeting at Echuca, or again to follow the byway tracks of McMillian, McDonald or Strzelecki through the green hills of Gippsland.

Colin was not by physique or inclination a practical farmer with any desire for dirt on the hands, but he had a love of nature, and that feel of the soil which has been inherent in us since Adam became a husbandman and planted the vineyard. Through his wife, Margaret, he had family roots in the soil, and he gave full credit to her for her wide knowledge of agriculture and husbandry. As his son Colin Ferguson followed his father's footsteps, so his older son Kenneth followed his mother's tradition and became a successful farmer at Whittlesea. Latterly outings were mainly restricted to visiting Kenneth and the grandchildren at this delightful family property. There he could sit on the northern terrace and view the expanse of the holding through the spaced red gums under rolling Australian skies.

It is a pleasure to have shared life to the full with a man of integrity, kindness and distinguished learning; one who could uphold the Christian morality in a changing world. As Thucydides recorded of Pericles in the funeral oration at the height of a former culture: "The whole earth is the tomb of heroic men, and their story is not only engraved in stone over their graves, but abides everywhere without visible symbol woven into the stuff of other men's lives."

#### Bibliography

The following papers and articles by the late Dr Colin Macdonald were published in THE MEDICAL JOURNAL OF AUSTRALIA:

"The Radiological Aspects of Certain Forms of Osteochondritis", 1926, 1: 423.

"Principles Underlying Treatment by Radium", 1927, 1: 398.

"The X-ray Diagnosis of Foreign Bodies in the Air Passages and the Oesophagus", 1927, 2: 319.

"Some Aspects of Obstetrical Radiography", 1932, 1: 398.

"The Case of Lady Flora Hastings", 1935, 1: 241.

"The Case of Princess Charlotte", 1941, 1: 38.

"Hysterosalpingography in Sterility", 1945, 1: 142.

"X-ray Interpretation of Pulmonary Tuberculosis in Children", 1949, 1: 200.

"One Thousand Complete Pelvimetries: A Radiological and Obstetrical Analysis", 1953, 1: 357.

"The Fetherstons and Their Colleagues: Early History of the Royal Women's Hospital Melbourne" (the R.H. Fetherston Memorial Lecture), 1957, 1: 25.

"The Intravenous Pyelogram after Radical Hysterectomy and Radiotherapy", 1958, 1: 894.

"The Life of Sir Thomas Fitzgerald", 1966, 2: 95.

Dr Macdonald also contributed a large number of obituary notices which were published in THE MEDICAL JOURNAL OF AUSTRALIA over the last 20 years. Other contributions on radiology comprised:

"A Rare Cause of Intracranial Calcification: Tuberous Sclerosis", Brit. J. Radiol., 1935, 8: 697.

"Some reminiscences of Thomas Barlow and Frederick Still", J. Coll. Radiol. Aust., 1961, 5: 88.

The chapter on "Radiology in Obstetrics" in Professor Lance Townsend's Text Book of Obstetrics", 1st Edition, 1964, Melbourne Univ. Press.

Dr Macdonald published a number of papers in the Victorian historical magazine, Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, many of which had a medical interest. The following is the complete list of these contributions:

"The History of the Wye River Settlement", 1935, Vol. 15, December.

"Francis Ormond: University Benefactor", 1941, Vol. 19, December.

"Early Letters of Sir John MacFarland - One Time Chancellor of the University of Melbourne", 1954, Vol. 25, June.

"The Residential Component of University Education" (Seventh Arthur Wilson Memorial Oration delivered at the University of Melbourne to the Congress of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists), 1961, Vol. 31, February.

"Dame Nellie Melba Centenary Oration", 1961, Vol. 31, February.

"Henry Douglas Stephens Memorial Oration", 1962, Vol. 33, August.

"Memories of Coranderrk Aboriginal Mission Station", 1964, Vol. 35, August.

"Röntgen's Discovery and the Pioneer Melbourne Radiologists", 1965, Vol. 36, November.

"The Late Emeritus Professor William Alexander Osborne - An appreciation", 1967, Vol. 38, December.

The Tracy Memorial Lecture at the Royal Women's Hospital on "The Development of Obstetrical and Gynaecological Radiology", is as yet unpublished.

Contributions to the "Australian Dictionary of Biography" on Thomas Fitzgerald, Walter Balls Headley and Alexander Cameron MacDonald are awaiting publication.

Finally, Dr Macdonald compiled biographies of the medical staff of the Royal Woman's Hospital, Melbourne, and its predecessors, under the title of "A Book of Remembrance". The first volume appeared in 1956 at the time of the Hospital Centenary, and subsequent entries have kept it up to date as a continuing record since that time. [Subsequent entries appear in Volume II]

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Mackay, Edward Alan (1863 - 1944)

M.B., Ch.B. (Melb)

<i>Born</i>	1863 Edward Alan, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	1944
<i>Occupation</i>	Medical Practitioner and Paediatric Surgeon

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

**EDWARD ALAN MACKAY**  
(1895 - 1898)

Edward Alan Mackay, born in 1863, was a son of Dr. George Mackay, a pioneer pastoralist, who had settled as early as 1838 in the north-east of Victoria at The Grange, Tarrawingie. Alan Mackay, for as such he was known, was educated at the Melbourne Grammar School, of which Edward Morris was then the headmaster. Mackay always retained a great interest in and affection for his old school and, in 1923, in succession to Stanley M. Bruce, was elected President of the Old Melburnians. During his medical course, at the University of Melbourne, he was in residence at Trinity College, then under Dr. Leeper, and there, in 1884, he won the Warden's Scholarship. He graduated M.B. in 1888 and Ch.B. in 1889.

Alan Mackay was for only a brief period, 1895 to 1898, a member of the honorary staff of the Women's Hospital. His association with the Children's Hospital, however, extended over many years and culminated in his appointment as honorary consultant surgeon to that hospital. He practised medicine with devotion and distinction, and because of his kindliness and shrewdness of judgement, he was greatly sought after and beloved by his patients.

The early history of this State was in his blood, and he and his brothers, in memory of their father and other overlanding pioneers, established a lecture which is given annually at Wangaratta. He was a keen supporter of the Historical Society of Victoria and, in 1934, to the Section of Medical History of the Victorian branch of the British Medical Association, he delivered its inaugural address on "Medical Pastoralists of Victoria".

He never forgot the Scotland of his forebears and was always a welcome visitor at Scottish gatherings in Melbourne. He then sometimes wore a dark green Mackay kilt, which looked surprisingly well on his tall, slight and spectacled figure. He invariably fostered what was best in Scottish culture and tradition.

Alan Mackay was a gifted raconteur and there were few subjects he could not discuss, and in doing so, illuminate. He was held in great esteem by his contemporaries and his juniors. He died in 1944.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Martin, Lawrence Joseph (1826 - 1879)

M.D.(Melb), L.R.C.S. (Edin.), L.A.H.

<i>Born</i>	1826 Dundalk, Ireland
<i>Died</i>	19 January 1879 Cannes, France
<i>Occupation</i>	Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

LAWRENCE JOSEPH MARTIN  
(1867 - 1878)

Lawrence Joseph Martin was an Honorary Physician to the Lying-In Hospital for eleven years, and was one of the most respected and popular doctors of the day.

Born at Dundalk, Ireland, in 1826, he began the study of medicine by being apprenticed as an apothecary in Drogheda. From 1848 he attended lectures and gained hospital experience in Dublin. This qualified him for examination at the Dublin Apothecaries' Hall, whose licence he obtained in 1851 and two years later that of the Edinburgh College of Surgeons. He attended the lectures and completed the hospital practice in what spare time he could find while earning his living.

The young Irishman, like many of his colleagues, found little chance of practising his profession in the British Isles, so he came to Australia as Surgeon in an immigrant ship, making the round trip. On return to England, he married and, with his bride, made a second voyage as ship's surgeon in 1854.

He nailed his shingle to the door of a small cottage in Russell Street, near Bourke Street, and there, after a long struggle, eventually built a steady practice. Success came to him in middle life. Few begrudged him this, for he was a big man in every sense of the word, above personal jealousies and petty disagreements.

Martin obtained the M.D. degree of the University of Melbourne in 1862, and in the next year became honorary physician to the Melbourne Benevolent Society, his first public appointment. He was elected President of the Medical Society of Victoria in 1865, in which year he became one of the Honorary Physicians to the Melbourne Hospital.

Election as one of the Honorary Physicians to the Lying-In Hospital in 1867 gave Dr. Martin valuable experience in obstetrics for which he had discovered a particular aptitude and interest. In the years that followed both at the hospital and in private practice, his skill in this field brought him reputation and success. In 1870 he visited Europe and in twelve months' tour inspected every institution that could widen his special knowledge. In England he read a paper on behalf of Dr. Tracy to the Obstetrical Society in London.

When Tracy died in 1874, Martin bought his Collins Street house and practice. Thereafter he was looked upon as Melbourne's leading obstetrician, worthily so in the estimation of the profession. He had a pleasant manner with his patients; was always cheerful, loved the social life, and was a popular figure in the life of the town. He was a fluent speaker at medical gatherings and a competent contributor to medical journals. Brain disease clouded his last years. Hoping to find a cure, he left Melbourne for England in 1878. He died at Cannes in the French Riviera on 19th January 1879, in his fifty-third year.

His place on the Lying-In Hospital was taken by Dr. Stephen Burke.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Matson, Thelma Jean (1928 - 1990)

OAM, DME RN RM

*Born* 6 July 1928  
Victoria, Australia

*Died* 15 April 1990  
Victoria, Australia

## Summary

PREPARED BY: Ann Westmore PhD

Thelma Jean Matson worked at the Royal Women's Hospital for much of the period, 1951-87. Early in her career she helped introduce the first organised education and relaxation classes for expectant mothers in Australia. She later taught, or oversaw the teaching of, midwifery to nearly 4000 students from 1960 to 1987, and had a profound influence on midwifery practice in Victoria. Described as a peace-maker among the nursing staff and a diplomat in relations with the medical staff, she gained the respect and co-operation of both groups in developing a workable program of midwifery training.

## Details

Thelma Matson was born on 6 July 1928 and grew up in Swan Hill, northern Victoria. After General Nurse training at the Swan Hill District Hospital she completed midwifery training at the Women's Hospital in 1951.

Her nursing records described her as "a splendid nurse", "capable of a high standard of nursing care without supervision", "thoughtful of her patients' welfare at all times", "most efficient" and possessed of "a very pleasant manner". She was also said to be "neat and tidy" and to have "above average" initiative.

She worked at the hospital as the Anaesthetic and Relaxation Sister with Dr Kevin McCaul from 1951 until mid-1953 and then spent six months in the Delivery Suite. With McCaul she established education and relaxation classes for expectant mothers, based on the premise that mothers who were less fearful and anxious would feel less pain during childbirth. It was a radical innovation at the time, as antenatal education was not well developed in Victoria.

From the beginning of 1954 until March 1956 she worked at the Swan Hill Hospital and at the Footscray and District Hospital, gaining practical experience as a theatre sister. She returned to the Women's Hospital in April 1956 where she was appointed Charge Nurse in one of the Delivery Suites. Two years later she gained a Hospital and Charities Commission Scholarship to undertake a Diploma in Midwifery Education.

In 1960, with the diploma completed, she was appointed RWH Midwifery Tutor. It was a job with the potential to have a far-reaching impact given that the hospital was responsible for training approximately 40% of all nurses presenting for the state midwifery examinations.

### An inspiring teacher

Jean Zemel, a colleague who was a midwifery teacher during much of the 1970s, described Matson as the embodiment of the professional nurse, clearly-spoken and measured, regardless of who she was addressing. She also found her to be approachable and supportive to student midwives, and a good leader and role model, sharing her midwifery knowledge with other teachers and blending clinical information and theory masterfully. "She communicated with compact, precise and relevant information, designed to have the maximum practical application," Zemel said.

Another nursing colleague, Margaret Corkill, noted Matson's accessibility to students as a result of living in the Brookes-Gillespie Nurses Home throughout the week. Student midwives and colleagues often sought her out and she gave of her expertise and time generously, happy to chat or to organise loans of books and magazines from the nurses' library.

Mrs Netta McArthur, Director of Nursing from 1982 to 1997, sat in on some of her lectures and found them "inspirational". "She transmitted the essence of midwifery," McArthur said. "She made it real for the students, understandable but not complicated. And she did it in a humane way that put the woman having the baby first and communicated the philosophy of midwife care and the place of technology to students."

### Mediator, diplomat, advisor

Another role that Matson often played, according to Corkill, was as peace-maker between the Director of Nursing, Betty Lawson, and the Principal Nurse Educator, Erna Begg. They clashed when "the staffing needs of the hospital and the learning needs of the student midwife created different priorities for each," Corkill said. "She [Matson] always had the welfare of the student and patient in mind and refrained from any power play."

Matson's tact and diplomacy not only helped smooth troubled waters within the nursing body, they were also important in keeping relations between midwives and medical staff on an even keel. Dr (later Professor) Norman Beischer, who knew Matson for decades from 1957 when he joined the Professorial Unit as a resident medical officer, described her as "broad-minded, smart and a team player". Obstetrics was unique in medicine in requiring the utmost cooperation between nurses and doctors, he said. "At the same time, there is always an inevitable conflict between midwives and doctors because both want to deliver the baby. Thelma Matson understood the relative roles of doctors and nurses and ensured that deliveries were a co-operative, team activity."

A practical person, she also gave thoughtful advice which was highly valued. In the mid-1970s when the hospital acquired new premises for teaching nurses, there was a need for extensive remodeling. According to the hospital's Administrator, A.J. ("Jim") Cunningham, the design, equipment and furniture were "primarily ideas put forward by Thelma Matson", and the Board of Management acknowledged her contribution to the very successful unit that resulted.

#### Updating nurse education

Matson represented the hospital at the 15th Quadrennial Congress of the International Council of Nurses in Mexico in 1973, after which she traveled to England, Scotland, Norway and Denmark investigating educational programs for general student nurses, and new teaching methods such as audiovisual aids and teaching program planning. A midwifery nursing colleague who made the same trip, Helen Ferguson, said they were both pleasantly surprised by how well the standards of the Royal Women's Hospital compared with the hospitals they visited.

In August 1975, soon after returning to Melbourne, she was appointed Senior Nurse Teacher. Around the same time Begg fell ill, and Matson took on the responsibility and stress of Principal Nurse Educator, without the actual authority. This situation was short-lived, however, as she was appointed Principal Nurse Educator and Deputy Director of Nursing (Education) in February 1976, a post she held until her retirement in July, 1987.

For much of the same period (1976-85) she was the elected member representing midwives on the Victorian Nursing Council, the body chiefly responsible for maintaining nursing standards in the state. She made the most of this opportunity to oversee changes to the approved midwifery curriculum for the four midwifery student groups around Victoria, contributing to improved care for women during their reproductive years.

In her retirement year she was a member of the Taskforce on Midwifery for the Western Metropolitan Region of Victoria. One of its main recommendations - that midwifery education be conducted in a tertiary institution - came into effect at La Trobe University in 1992.

#### A difficult finale

During the last decade of her career, she was burdened with serious health problems but only her closest colleagues were aware of them. Throughout her adult life she had enjoyed the company of family members and friends at her Mornington home and took a great interest in the Collingwood Football Club, of which she was a member and avid supporter. She maintained these interests in her final years, to the extent that her health allowed.

Some found her a private and stoical person, such as her deputy for many years, Diane Mason who, with her colleagues, admired her dedication to nursing education despite suffering from cancer and its recurrence. Others remembered her as being lots of fun, having "a lovely wit and a penchant for a good joke over a beer", generous with her time and support, and very helpful when asked for insights into the culture and politics of the hospital. McArthur described her as "one of the most dramatic and charismatic teachers" she had had the pleasure to watch and said she would miss her counsel and wisdom as "it was always based on good common sense and sound knowledge of life and people".

In 1989 she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of her services to midwifery education. She died on 15 April 1990, the year in which discussions with La Trobe University started about transferring midwifery education to the tertiary sector.

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Anon, 'On Overseas Study Tour', "RWH Bulletin", vol. 6, no. 3, 1973, p. 2;  
Margaret Mabbitt, 'Article prepared for Thelma Matson's memorial service', 1990;  
Anon, 'Death of Thelma Matson', "The Royal Examiner", vol. 8, no. 7, (April, 1990) p. 1 (A1993/13/07);  
Personal communication, Margaret Mabbitt, Netta McArthur, Jean Zemel, Margaret Corkill, Diane Mason and Norman Beischer to Ann Westmore;  
Health Department Victoria Western Metropolitan Region, "Post Registration Nursing Education; Report of the Taskforce on Midwifery", July 1988;  
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## Archival/Heritage Resources

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- One Hundred Years of Nurse Training at The Royal Women's Hospital, 1862-1962, 10 May 1963, A1996/25/171; Lawson, Betty; Royal Women's Hospital Archives
- Text of presentation at memorial service for Thelma Matson., 1990, A2000/46/08 part; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

## Published Resources

### Journal Articles

- Anon, 'On Overseas Study Tour', *Bulletin*, vol. 6, no. 3, Royal Women's Hospital, 1973, p. 2.
- Anon, 'Death of Thelma Matson', *The Royal Examiner*, vol. 8, no. 7, Royal Women's Hospital, Carlton, April 1990, p. 1.

## Reports

- *Post Registration Nursing Education; Report of the Taskforce on Midwifery*, Health Department Victoria Western Metropolitan Region, Melbourne, July 1988.

# Maund, John (1823 - 1858)



M.D.

*Born* 12 March 1823  
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, England

*Died* 3 April 1858  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

JOHN MAUND  
(1856 - 1858)

John Maund, a native of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, was born on 12th March 1823, 12 years before Melbourne was founded. At Bromsgrove, a small market town 13 miles N.E. of the county city of Worcester, is a well known Public School dating from 1527, which Maund's brothers attended, but he himself received tuition in the nearby larger town of Kidderminster, with his early education receiving many interruptions because of - in the medical idiom of the day - a delicate constitution.

John was the eldest of the three sons of Benjamin and Sarah Maund. His father, a remarkable man and a world famous botanist - a Fellow of the Linnaean Society - is described thus on a memorial tablet in the Bromsgrove Parish Church - "In memory of Benjamin Maund F.L.S. 1790-1864, Author, Printer and Producer of 'Maund's Botanic Garden' and other world famed works, distinguished by comprehensive knowledge, artistic skill and exalted genius; he lived and laboured in Bromsgrove for nearly 50 years, and rendered lasting honour to the town of his adoption".

So John Maund inherited a love of learning and accurate scholarship.

On choosing medicine as a career, John was apprenticed to a surgeon named Welsby at Prescott, the watch-making town in Lancashire, and later studied medicine at the University of Glasgow, where he won numerous prizes. In his twenty-first year he became an assistant surgeon at St. Pancras (London) Infirmary, at the same time studying for the Diploma of the Royal College of Surgeons, which he received on 7th August 1845. He then spent a year attending hospitals and lectures in Paris.

In June 1847, he received the Diploma of the Apothecaries' Society, London, and soon afterwards started private practice at Harlow, Essex, having just taken the Degree of Doctor of Medicine, University of St. Andrews.

Never robust, ill health caused the sale of this East Anglian practice, and in 1851, the first year of Victoria's gold rush, Dr. Maund, then aged 28, decided to emigrate to Victoria. Before doing so, he was awarded the certificates of the Royal College of Chemistry, London, as well as that of the Polytechnic Chemical School. At this time his inclination was to follow the practice of analytical chemistry in Victoria, feeling this would be more suited to his health than the rigours of colonial medical practice.

So Dr. Maund and one of his three sisters arrived at Melbourne in the ship "Janet Mitchell" on 3rd January 1853, the passengers presenting him with a silver tankard in appreciation of his professional services on the voyage. Some of these passengers continued to visit him in Melbourne, and he eventually decided to resume medical practice, and forego the analytical chemistry. His first rooms were in a small house in 189 Lonsdale Street East. He practiced there until May 1857, when he removed to a house built for him in Latrobe Street East.

In April 1857, he was admitted to the ad eundem degree of Doctor of Medicine, University of Melbourne. He was Victoria's first Government Analyst, and in that position made many official investigations, in particular into Melbourne's water supply, recently established at the Yan Yean Reservoir.

Dr. Maund developed a large private practice, especially in the newer suburbs rapidly growing around Melbourne. Cases that came to his notice aroused an ambition to establish an institution where the poorer women of the community could be confined in hygienic conditions, and in this aspiration he found a ready supporter and an enthusiastic sympathiser in Dr. Richard Thomas Tracy, practicing not far away in Brunswick St., Fitzroy. Maund was 33 at the time, Tracy 29. The first hospital was known as "The Lying-In Hospital" in leased premises at 41 Albert St. East Melbourne, prior to the opening of the permanent hospital in Carlton in 1858. The situation of this 41 Albert St. lies a little to the right of the Baptist Church House and about opposite the rear of St. Peter's Church of England.

The sound establishment of this Lying-In Hospital was greatly furthered by the interest and collaboration of the then Anglican Dean of Melbourne - Dr. Macartney. In August 1856, the attention of Dr. Macartney was drawn by a group of ladies to the necessity of



establishing a Lying-In Hospital in this city. He accordingly convened a meeting at the Deanery for the purpose of considering the best steps to be taken to secure the establishment of such an Institution. At this meeting a Ladies' Committee was formed, and the Dean undertook to apply to the Committee of the Melbourne Hospital to enquire if they were willing to establish such an Institution in connection with that Hospital. The next meeting of the Ladies' committee was fixed to 8th August, to be held at the Deanery, when it was hoped a reply from the Melbourne Hospital would have been received.

During the interval between the first and second meetings, it became known to some of the ladies that Dr. Maund and Dr. Tracy, having also felt the great need for a Lying-In Hospital, were then in treaty for a what was described as a commodious and well-situated house in Albert Street, East Melbourne, and these gentlemen were determined on their own responsibility to set such an Institution on foot, trusting to the support of the public to maintain so necessary a project when its benefits became apparent. Maund and Tracy were accordingly invited to attend the second meeting at the Deanery. They did so, and the Dean reporting that the Melbourne Hospital was not at present able to help, it was agreed that the object in view would best be achieved by co-operating with Maund and Tracy.

So a third meeting was held at the Deanery on 11th August and another on 14th August at the house which had then been hired by Maund and Tracy, to judge the suitability of this building, and to further consider the undertaking. A new Committee of 20 ladies was then formed, a President was chosen, and an Honorary Treasurer and an Honorary Secretary appointed. Mrs. Perry, wife of the Bishop of Melbourne, was the first President, Mrs. Jennings, of Alma Road, St. Kilda, the first Honorary Treasurer, and Mrs. Tripp, of Gertrude Street Collingwood, the first Honorary Secretary.

The first patients were admitted on 19th August 1856 and in December of that year, when the first report was presented to subscribers - (92 in number), the Hospital had 20 inpatients and 101 outpatients.

A subscriber of one guinea annually received tickets admitting 12 outpatients to the benefits of the Hospital; a subscriber of two guineas, 12 outpatients and one inpatient; while a subscriber of five guineas, 24 outpatients and three inpatients.

Dean Macartney's name should therefore be honourable remembered in connection with the Hospital establishment. Son of an Irish Baronet, a graduate of Arts and Doctor of Divinity of Trinity College Dublin, he accompanied Bishop Perry to Melbourne in 1847, and died here in 1894, at the ripe old age of 95, greatly respected by clergy and laity alike. Even at the age of 90, he could still preach a vigorous sermon. When St. Paul's Cathedral was opened in 1891, its acoustics were very poor, defeating all preachers except the aged Irish Dean, for only his resonant voice could be heard at the far end of the huge bluestone edifice.

Another non-medical man whose name should be remembered was Mr. Richard Grice - a Melbourne merchant, a fellow churchman and personal friend of Tracy. Grice was foremost in procuring funds sufficient to entitle the young Hospital to Government support, and to the grant of two acres of land in Madeline Street, Carlton, on which it now stands. That portion of Swanston Street which flanks the Hospital on the west was then known as Madeline Street.

Maund and Tracy were thus the medical founders of our Women's Hospital and were its first honorary Medical officers - the Hospital Committee granting the appointments for the lifetimes of these two gentlemen. Not until 1884 was the title changed from Lying-In Hospital to Women's Hospital, and to Royal Women's Hospital 70 years later.

John Maund lived only two years after the Lying-In Hospital was established, but this was long enough for him to see it well founded, and the usefulness he had dreamed for it, acknowledged. In point of fact, Maund died on 3rd April 1858, just before the Carlton building was completed, at his home in Latrobe Street East, at the early age of 35, after a residence in the Colony of only five years. He lies buried in the Melbourne General cemetery. The description of his illness suggests it may have been typhoid fever, common enough at that time in Melbourne.

Maund seemingly was a simple man, unobtrusive, gentle in manner - one who had quickly gained the confidence and esteem both of his patients and the general public. He was an original member of, and amongst the most enthusiastic workers for, the Medical Society, and was the originator and first editor of its Journal called "The Australian Medical Journal". His friend Tracy was the first Treasurer. Several articles appear under Maund's name in this Journal, one being an analysis of the statistics of the Lying-In Hospital for the first twelve months of its existence.

On his death - it will be remembered he was only 35 - it was written "that the Colony of Victoria had never before been called to mourn the loss of one who had so much distinguished himself by his attainments in every branch of medicine, and who was not more distinguished for his abilities than for his kind and amiable disposition, which had endeared him to all who knew him".

He died unmarried. His sister returned to England, and the family had no further connection with Australia.

His portrait in oils, painted posthumously in Melbourne by Nicholas Chevalier, hangs in the Medical Society's Hall in East Melbourne. His sister gave it to the National Gallery of Victoria, whose Trustees have lent it in perpetuity, to the Victoria Branch of the British Medical Association.\* After his death the Committee of the Lying-In Hospital set aside a sum of money for the painting of this portrait, and for a mural tablet. This tablet lay for many years in an obscure corner of the Hospital until unearthed by Mr. James Cunningham, the Manager and Secretary, in 1955.

A stained glass window, representing St. Paul and St. Luke, is a memorial to Maund in the chancel of the Parish Church at Bromsgrove, Worcestershire and on the window is the inscription "In memory of John Maund M.D. who died at Melbourne, Victoria, 1857, and was interred there in the General Cemetery". This date we know should be 1858.

There is ample evidence that Maund was a man of the first quality, one of the many educated Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotsmen of the early Victorian era who brought to the Antipodes qualities of honesty, sincerity and Christian faith which provided a splendid heritage on which the future Commonwealth of Australia could be soundly built.

\*The painting is now on loan to the Royal Women's Hospital where it was hung for many years in the Board Room and more recently in the Tracy Maund Museum.  
Archivist's note, 2006.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# McArthur, Arthur Norman (1869 - 1950)

M.B. (Melb), M.R.C.S. (Eng.), F.A.C.S. (Hon.), F.R.A.C.S.

<i>Born</i>	12 July 1869	Camperdown, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	11 December 1950	Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician	

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

ARTHUR NORMAN McARTHUR  
(1903 - 1909)

There have been few more colourful persons in the medical world of Australia than Arthur Norman McArthur, affectionately called "Potts" by his many friends. He lived to the eightieth year of a very full life in his profession of medicine, in lusty sports, such as boxing, polo and foxhounds, and in public and philanthropic interests. Into whatever he pursued, McArthur threw his whole heart and great physical and mental powers.

McArthur was the fifth son of Peter McArthur, pioneer pastoralist of the Western District of Victoria. Born at "Meningoort", his father's station, near Camperdown, on July 12 1869, educated at Geelong College, and studying medicine at the University of Melbourne, where he was a resident in Ormond, he finished his course in London, becoming M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. in 1895. Three years later he was appointed House Surgeon in the Launceston General Hospital. Returning to England to marry Mellicent, daughter of Wickham Noakes of Selsdon Park, Surrey. McArthur subsequently commenced practice as an obstetrician and gynaecologist in Collins Street, Melbourne.

In 1903 he took the degrees of Bachelor of Surgery and Bachelor of Medicine of the University of Melbourne, and was appointed Honorary Obstetric and Outpatient Surgeon to the Women's Hospital.

In 1905 he began a long period of association with St. Vincent's Hospital, eventually becoming its Senior Honorary Gynaecologist. He resigned his Women's Hospital appointment in 1909 and ceased to practice obstetrics.

McArthur's interests in the field of medicine were varied, his achievements many and he evolved some special operative techniques. One of them was demonstrated to Dr. William Mayo (of Rochester U.S.A.) when the latter visited Australia in 1924; this resulted in McArthur being elected a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. He organized a fund which raised £6,000 to buy radium for St. Vincent's Hospital, and was prominent in a campaign, under the Chairmanship of Mr. B.T. Zwar, to organize cancer clinics.

He was a foundation Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, and a member of Council of the Victorian Branch of the British Medical Association (being first elected thereto in 1916). McArthur was a regular contributor to "The Medical Journal of Australia" on the subjects in which he specialized.

Outside medicine, McArthur's great loves were sport and country life. He was a University blue in both cricket and football and was an amateur boxer of the top grade, in London in student days being runner-up in the inter-hospital heavyweight championship. He was for many years Chairman of the Victorian Amateur Boxing and Wrestling Championships. He played polo from early youth, was captain of the Melbourne Polo Club for four years, and with his three elder brothers had formed a famous polo team of his early years in the Western District.

Field shooting was possibly his favourite pastime and the openings of the quail and duck seasons were sacred - no professional work then. Accompanying this was active interest in game and native flora and fauna preservation. He was for many years Chairman of the Game Preservation Society of Victoria, and of the Advisory Council of Fauna and Flora of Victoria.

In his latter years, McArthur became more and more crippled with osteoarthritis of the hips, but his lively sense of humour never deserted him and right to the end he was ready to tell a good story from an unending fund of reminiscences.

He died on December 11th 1950 and his final jest was to leave a sum of money in order that his friends could hold a "wake". So, after the funeral these friends foregathered and drank a toast to "good shooting in the next world". Norman McArthur was a fine and generous personality, one of the best sons of Victoria's squatting era, and a man of exceptionally wide accomplishments.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archive

# Meyer, Felix Henry (1858 - 1937)



M.D. (Melb.)

*Born* 19 June 1858 St. Kilda, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 1937

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

FELIX HENRY MEYER  
(1888 - 1918)

Felix Henry Meyer was a member of the Honorary staff of the Women's Hospital for 30 years - a man of great learning, and of many interests, both inside and outside the profession of medicine. He had charm, and ready wit, was an excellent public speaker and conversationalist, a first class scholar and exponent of the classics, musician, historian and prolific writer both for professional and lay journals, being a frequent contributor to the literary columns of "The Argus", then one of the world's leading newspapers.

Born at St. Kilda, Victoria, on 19th June 1858, the son of Mark Meyer and Rebecca Fink, an intensely active and widely varied life ended in 1937, in his 79th year. Few professional activities, teaching or organizational, failed to excite his interest, wide sympathy and untiring zest. In 1881 - a year after graduating - he was sole R.M.O. at the Lying-In Hospital, remaining there until 1885; in that post he watched keenly the interests of students, residents and nurses. During his course he founded (with T.R.H. Willis) the Medical Students Society. In one year alone, 1885, he established courses in the hospital for training nurses, founded the Victorian Nurses Association, and initiated much appreciated classes for medical students. In that year, too, he commenced practice in Carlton. Two years later he was elected Honorary obstetrical surgeon, and from 1891 to 1918 was Honorary gynaecological surgeon. He was 14 years in Carlton before removing to Collins Street,

A digest of Meyer's interests and achievements, extracted from the Medical Directory for Australia 1936-37, shows the catholicity of his activity and wide range of his sympathy:

Meyer, Felix Henry: M.D., Melb. 1902, (M.B. 1880, Ch.B. 1881 F.R.A.C.S.: formerly Resident Med. Supt. Women's Hosp. 1881-1885, Hon. Obstetrical Surgeon 1887-91, Hon. Gynaecological Surgeon 1891-1918; now Hon. Consulting Gynaecologist: Lecturer on Obstetrics and Diseases of women, Univ. Melb. 1914-18; member Board of Examiners for State Midwifery Certificate; Member B.M.A., President Vic. Branch 1894, member Historical Section Vic. Branch; Jackson History Lecturer, Brisbane, 1932; member Medico-legal Socy., Melb.; a Founder R.A.C.S.; member Faculty of Music Univ. Melb.; member Orchestra Advisory Committee; member Lady Northcote Permanent Orchestra Trust Fund; member Univ. Advisory Musical Trust; Major A.A.M.C., retired; publications, Presidential Addresses and other papers on obstetrical and gynaecological subjects to medical journals.

Among his general publications were History of Wesley College, edited in 1919, and "Adamson of Wesley", 1933, Wesley being one of several schools he attended. He was Dux in 1873 and in 1897-8 President of the Wesley Old Collegians. At the Matriculation Examination of 1875 he won the Exhibitions in Classics, French, English, History and Geography - a remarkable performance.

Meyer was a most successful club man. Coteries which knew and enjoyed his personality and wit were that famous walking club, the Wallaby; the convivial Yorick, and the literary Boobooks and Beefsteak. His wife was Mary Nanson, second daughter of Professor E.J. Nanson who held Chair of Mathematics at the University of Melbourne for 47 years.

Felix Meyer who left no family, was one of the most scholarly men in the history of the Australian Medical profession, and possessed an unexcelled elegance in both the written and the spoken word.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Midwifery Pupil Nurses (1859-1880)

## Summary

From at least 1859 the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children (MLIH) offered nurse training in the care of women. In the nineteenth century, those training at this institution were referred to as “midwifery pupil nurses” or “midwifery pupils”.(1) The MLIH saw the provision of training to would-be nurses as fulfilling a community need. It emulated a convention operating in Scotland, England and Europe in which like schemes combined theory and practical experience and examined the pupils to ensure a competent practitioner was the product of training, fit to serve their local communities.(2) From 1861 to 1880, around eighty pupils completed training at the MLIH. These pupils were awarded a proforma certificate, bearing an image of the hospital and signatures of the examining doctors.(3)

## Details

When training was first offered at the MLIH and what it consisted of is unclear. The earliest reference to training in midwifery nursing dates from September 1859. A Mrs Carter employed as housekeeper to the Reverend Tanner at Winchelsea, inquired about learning ‘the duties of nurse’. The Ladies Committee consulted with the resident medical officer and advised Carter that pupillage would be under the ‘usual terms’ of £3/3/0 for tuition and an additional £3/3/0 for the month’s board.(4) Declaring the ‘usual terms’ indicates that training was already in place.

Carter began the four weeks’ training in November 1859, during which time she lived on site. She paid £5 to the Hospital for the privilege,(5) of which £1/11/6 went to Doctor Barrett, the House Surgeon for his teaching,(6) while the rest covered board and lodging. At the end of the training term, Carter presented to the Ladies Committee, paid the remainder of her fees and requested a testimonial which she was instructed to obtain from the House Surgeon.(7) Testimonials were individualised documents, affirming that the holder was qualified to care for women during birth, on the basis that she had attended lectures, passed an examination, and/or had been employed at a particular place.

After training, Carter advertised her newly-acquired skills in the “Argus” newspaper in July and August 1860. The advertisements read: “Mrs Carter, LADIES’ NURSE, pupil from the Lying-in Hospital”.(8) Over the next couple of months, her advertisement varied, being “LADIES’ NURSE DISENGAGED” in September,(9) and “MONTHLY NURSE, qualified at Lying-in Hospital ... Ladies in country attended” in October and November 1860.(10) When a nurse like Carter attended in the city and the country for weeks at a time, it may have been difficult to arrange stable accommodation. Carter’s advertisement in September 1860 declared her address as 197 Victoria Parade Collingwood, while in August, October and November the same year, her address was 7 Apsley-place, Eastern Hill.

After Carter, the MLIH’s next pupil was Mrs Curran, a recent widow. Her case illustrates why this training was attractive, at a time when employment opportunities for women were limited.(11) Curran was accepted for a training place in October 1860, by which time the tuition fee was £3/3/0 and £3/3/0 for a month’s board. Any service to the hospital after that was accepted, in lieu of the cost of board. Only six weeks’ earlier, in August 1860, Mrs Curran was an inpatient and gave birth to her eighth baby at the hospital. She had received an admission ticket because she had been widowed for four months and had six children. Two of them were with her when she applied to be a pupil. Curran supposed that she would be able to keep her six-week-old baby with her at the hospital but the House Surgeon felt that this arrangement ‘might interfere with her duties’. The hospital’s secretary undertook to investigate if Mr Harcourt could take it ‘into the Home’, (12) which may have been the Melbourne Orphan Asylum. Within the week, the baby was placed at an Infants’ Home at a cost of six shillings per week, and Curran presented to the Hospital to begin her training term.(13)

A week after Curran began, a Mrs Jordan applied for a position as pupil. She was told to reapply in three months, when the current pupil’s term had finished.(14) Plans were afoot to offer more places. The pupils’ accommodation was modified, evidenced by an order in May 1861 for furnishings in the pupil nurses’ rooms, being four yards of carpets and two yards of table cloths from the supplier Buckley & Nunn.(15) In August 1861, the Resident Surgeon, Gerald Fetherston introduced a twelve-week training “scheme” as was the practice in Scotland where Fetherston had recently worked. At a cost of six guineas, the course combined theory with practical work at the end of which pupils had to submit to an examination. Certificates of training were introduced as a proforma document with a handsome wood-block image of the hospital at the top. Certificates were a standardised tool which, once signed by teachers and examiners, attested to the holder’s qualifications. The MLIH certificate proclaimed the named individual to be a “Qualified Nurse” equipped with skills as a “Ladies Monthly Nurse and Sick Nurse”.(16)

In late 1861, fifty certificates were ordered from a local stationer in Melbourne, indicating that the pupil nurse numbers were expected to grow.(17) At least eighty pupils are known to have completed training in the twenty years to 1881, although few records have survived to name them all. Some names can be found in the hospital’s Midwifery Book One, a ledger in which inpatient cases were recorded. On the rear inside cover of the case book are listed the names of thirty-four pupils who trained at the hospital in the years 1861 to 1872. This system of administration kept track of those who legitimately held the hospital certificate and provided a register of nurses who could be recommended to doctors or patients needing a nurse.(18)

Mrs Jane Parker received her certificate on 12 August 1861. She later advertised in the "Argus" newspaper as possessing the "Midwife Diploma by examination from Melbourne Lying-in Hospital" and living at "Blenheim Street near Balaclava Railway Station".<sup>(19)</sup> Mrs Cornelia Pearce and Mrs Annie Wheatley were the two other pupils who trained in 1861 and were awarded their certificates in December that year. Mrs Catherine Parry, Elizabeth Curran and Catherine Shoebred received their certificates on 12 May 1862, although Shoebred had to submit to a second examination. Consequently, her fee for pupillage was higher, at £8/2/6. Margaret McIntosh is listed as the sole pupil awarded a certificate in 1863. Certificates were issued in 1864 to six pupils: Ellen Pattison, Annie Ratigan, Jane Hand, Jannet Chirney, Louisa Myons, and Ellen Sophia Parker.<sup>(20)</sup> In October 1869, a Mrs Parker was advertising as "MIDWIFE, with Diploma from the Lying-in Hospital, No 4 Pattison Terrace Leicester Street Carlton".<sup>(21)</sup> This may have been Jane Parker (1861) or Ellen Sophia Parker (1864).

The MLIH's training of nurses was a real innovation in Australia. The program itself and awarding of standardised certificates was introduced in Victoria well before any other institution and certainly was the first structured course at an Australian Lying-in Hospital. Not only that, the MLIH scheme began before the Nightingale Fund's midwifery training model at the famed King's College Hospital in London, a venture which folded after only five years, owing to recurring cases of sepsis.<sup>(22)</sup> The problem for the MLIH was that its scheme was modest in numbers and it lacked a public profile, demonstrated in 1869, when Victoria's perceived absence of midwifery training was aired in newspapers. This critique followed an inquest into a maternal death at Richmond, an inner suburb.

A Resident Surgeon at the MLIH, Nicholas Avent, responded to the "Argus" newspaper's censure of female midwives, extolling the virtues of the hospital's scheme. He defended the skills of nurses certificated by the hospital, arguing that they were qualified to practise "the general duties of a nurse in ordinary sickness and the management of patients during and after [gynaecological] operations". The practice at the Hospital was that each pupil conducted "(under supervision) accouchments[sic] for herself" after observing 100 labour and after-care cases. Further, Avent declared that:

"Every care is taken to teach these women when they may safely rely on their own skill and when they ought at once summon a medical man. I do not believe that anyone has left here with a certificate who is not well able to diagnose anything that may be amiss ... I would state here that I have seen brought into this Hospital some lamentable instances of malpractice on the part of midwives chiefly attributable to their bland confidence in their own powers".<sup>(23)</sup>

As the century wore on, critique of women as childbirth attendants increased while the MLIH continued to lead the colony in teaching midwifery and gynaecological care to nurses.

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- 5) Ladies Committee Minutes. 10 November 1859, RWHA A1993\_8\_2.
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- 15) Women's Hospital Material Receipt & Conversion Accounts Ledger 1858-1907. 12 May 1861, RWHA A1991\_5\_18.
- 16) Grehan. "Professional Aspirations", p.143.
- 17) Women's Hospital Supply Book 1859-1865. 24 December 1861, RWHA A1991\_5\_6.
- 18) Madonna Grehan. 'Safely delivered? Insights into late nineteenth-century Australian maternity care from coronial investigations into maternal deaths' in Linda Bryder and Janet Greenlees, "Western Medicine and Maternity 1880-1990", Pickering & Chatto: Oxford, 2013, p.169.
- 19) "Argus". 18 September 1861, p.3.
- 20) Grehan. "Professional Aspirations", p.397.
- 21) "Argus". 4, 6, 7, October 1869, p.1. This building still exists and is heritage listed.
- 22) Grehan. "Professional Aspirations", p.144.
- 23) Grehan. "Professional Aspirations", p.148.

# Mollison, Crawford Henry (1863 - 1949)

M.B., Ch.B. (Melb.) M.R.C.S. (Eng)

*Born* August 1863  
Bendigo, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 6 April 1949

*Occupation* Medical practitioner and Pathologist

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

CRAWFORD HENRY MOLLISON  
(1892 - 1947)

Crawford Henry Mollison was born in August 1863 at Bendigo, where his father, also Crawford Mollison (an Englishman from Hastings, Kent, who had come to Australia in 1838), was Assistant Commissioner of Goldfields. At the age of eight, young Crawford was sent on a "windjammer" to relatives in England, and there attended a school in Tunbridge Wells. On returning to Victoria he entered Kew High School, long since defunct but then well known educationally and socially; it stood on the site of the present Trinity Grammar School in Charles Street, Kew, and its Headmaster was J. Henning Thompson. Later Mollison went to the Geelong Grammar School, at that time a small academy of fewer than 100 boys on the Barrabool Street Hill overlooking the Barwon River; but it was at Melbourne Church of England Grammar School he finally matriculated, to graduate M.B. (Melb.) in 1884. After two years as a resident medical officer at the Melbourne Hospital, he was in England taking the M.R.C.S. He also spent some months in Vienna studying dermatology at the Polyclinic under Hebra, for at this time he intended to become a dermatologist. However on returning to Melbourne he joined, for a year or two, Dr. Campbell White of Balaclava, in general practice. But from 1891 he devoted himself to the fields of pathology and forensic medicine in which he was to hold a supreme position in Victoria for fifty-five years.

In 1893 appointed as coroner's surgeon, two years later lecturer in forensic medicine at the University of Melbourne, he was associated with the coroner's office from 1891 until 1947 - forty-six years. In that long period he performed countless autopsies for a succession of coroners and was a highly important witness in numerous murders and other trials, including the Deeming case of 1895 and the "Pyjama Girl" case of 1944.

Mollison was generally regarded as a model witness, for he gave evidence clearly and concisely and at all times was scrupulously fair, remaining calm and unhurried. All the facts, as he knew them, whether favourable or otherwise, were placed before the court. He emphasized that he was an independent examiner, not acting in the interest of any party, but was there at the instance of the coroner to find all the relevant facts, to set them out fully, and as an expert, to give an opinion when asked; no advocate was ever successful in diverting Mollison from the factual evidence.

In 1889 he was appointed assistant pathologist to the Melbourne Hospital and in 1892 to the Women's Hospital, following Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Syme. He did an immense amount of work in private practice and indeed for many years was the final Court of Appeal in macroscopic and microscopic problems. His gnomonic and categorical reports, always to be relied on, were known throughout Australia.

In 1931 the Medico Legal Society of Victoria was formed, and it was decided that the president should, each alternate year, be a lawyer and a doctor. The first president was Mr. Justice Stewart McArthur, and by unanimous choice, Mollison was his successor.

Mollison's services to the medical profession were outstanding. He became treasurer of the Medical Society of Victoria in 1891, continuing in that office on the amalgamation in 1908 of this Society with the Victorian Branch of the British Medical Association. His length of service constituted a record, for on his retirement in 1947 he had held office for fifty-five years. He resolutely declined the honour of Branch President, but on the occasion of his jubilee as Branch Treasurer, his portrait, painted by W.B. Mc Innes, was presented to him, and it now hangs in the B.M.A. Hall in Albert Street. The Federal Council awarded him the rare distinction of its gold medal.

For the first twenty-two years of the British Medical Insurance Company of Victoria he was Chairman of Directors, and played the major part in establishing this Company on a sound basis. For many years a member of the Medical Board of Victoria, he acted as its President for six years.

Mollison, although of such a quiet, retiring nature, enjoyed a wide circle of friends. He was a regular member of a weekly bridge four, never missed a Melbourne Cup, and loved cricket and the great games on the Melbourne Cricket Ground; he was surgeon to the Victorian Racing Club from 1890 to 1947. He played an excellent game of royal tennis, winning on several occasions the gold racquet and silver racquet of the Royal Melbourne Tennis Club. Whenever possible Sunday afternoon was reserved for lawn tennis.

This most delightful man, until the last of almost cherubic countenance, with rosy cheeks, pleasant smile and soft voice, was held in high regard by all who knew and worked with him over two generations.

Mollison's name should always be remembered with honour at the Royal Women's Hospital where he worked so faithfully for so long, for he was an outstanding figure both in pathological and medicolegal work and in devotion to the profession. Of necessity a public figure, he never sought the limelight. Quietness and simplicity were his dominant personal qualities, and his contributions to the ends of justice and the welfare of his fellows, unique.

He was thrice married, his second wife was the daughter of T.A.Browne ("Rolf Boldrewood") who wrote "Robbery Under Arms", published in 1881, a piece of effective melodrama constructed round the many stories of Australian bushrangers. Mollison died in Melbourne on 6th April 1949 in his eighty-sixth year.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives



# Moore, William Harold James (1893 - 1975)

<i>Born</i>	31 December 1893 Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	22 August 1975
<i>Occupation</i>	Medical Practitioner and Urologist

## Details

This account appeared in the Medical Journal of Australia, 3rd/10th January, 1976 and in "A Book of Remembrance", Royal Women's Hospital, 1976. Author unknown

WILLIAM HAROLD JAMES MOORE  
(1937 - 1953)

Harold Moore died on 22nd August 1975 in his 83rd year.

In 1937 the appointment of Harold Moore as Honorary Urologist to the Women's Hospital constituted a landmark in the evolution of obstetrics and gynaecology in Victoria, because it represented the first clinical splitting-off of a subspecialty within those disciplines, a process begun with the Hospital's appointing Vera Krieger, DSc and the late Hildred Butler, DSc as biochemist and bacteriologist and continued with the engagement of the late Hans Bettinger as pathologist and the establishment of the medical reference clinic of WMCl Rose and MJ Etheridge.

The weekly urological clinic, conducted under the control of the late Colin Macdonald's nurse-radiographer, Miss Mathilde Blythe, was the first systematic use by the Hospital of one of its consultants. With the development of infertility work under JW Johnstone, soon an additional clinic became necessary for testicular biopsy. A soft-voiced diffident man with a pleasant smile and an alert eye, Harold Moore served the Hospital for 16 years. His successor was Douglas B Duffy, himself succeeded in 1966 by David Kennedy.

William Harold James Moore was the only son of Dr. William and Grace Emily Moore; he had four sisters Margaret, Mildred, Enid and Dorothy. He was born on 31st December 1893 at Alcaston House - a substantial predecessor of the present handsome building - on the corner of Collins and Spring Streets, Melbourne, where were his surgeon-father's consulting rooms and where the family was to continue to live until Harold was 20.

After some initial schooling he attended Scotch College between 1905 and 1912, entered the University of Melbourne medical school in 1913 and graduated Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery in 1917. At the (Royal) Melbourne Hospital, where he had been a student, he served first as Resident and Registrar, then as Honorary Surgical Clinical Assistant 1920-28, as Honorary Clinical Assistant to the Urologist (John Thompson Tait) 1928-33, as Honorary (First) Assistant to the Urologist from 1933 and, upon the retirement of Tait, as Honorary Urologist from 1947 to 1953.

Upon his retirement in 1953 the Royal Women's Hospital appointed him as Honorary Consulting Surgeon.

He worked in general practice from 1922 to 1934 at his home in Kew, serving a double term as Beaney Scholar in the University Pathology School (1922-4), gaining the degree of Master of Surgery (Melb.) in 1927 and being elected to the fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in 1930.

After eight months of postgraduate work in the United Kingdom he commenced private consultant practice in Collins Street in 1935 and continued until ill-health compelled his retirement in 1972. He was a member of the Urological Society of Australasia and a late member of the International Society of Urologists.

He had married in 1924 Miss Vera Rosenblum, a tutor in Philosophy at the University of Melbourne, and they had three children, Bill, Anne and Barbara; Dr William Mitchell Moore, FRACP, now practices at Mount Gambier.

Harold Moore had numerous outside interests. As grandson of a Baptist Minister and son of the president of the Baptist Theological College he was a member of the Council of Carey Grammar School from 1929, (its President 1939-52 and an Honorary Member thereafter; his father had been the Foundation President) and a member of the Council of Whitley College in Melbourne University. He was a keen amateur photographer, greatly enjoyed friendship and companionship, played tennis all his life and only gave up membership of the Kew Gold Club at the age of 81 because he could no longer play. His membership of the Melbourne Cricket Club exceeded 50 years and he was Honorary Secretary of the Wallaby Club for 13 years and its President 1957-8.

Harold Moore is survived by his widow, his children and three sisters.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Morrison, Reginald Herbert ( - 1941)

M.D. (Edin.)

*Died* 1941

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

REGINALD HERBERT MORRISON  
(1899 - 1925)

Reginald Herbert Morrison was a son of Dr. George Morrison, who founded Geelong College as a private school in 1861. It was there that "Reggie" Morrison, as he was universally known, was educated. Like many of his contemporaries, he studied medicine at Edinburgh University, graduating M.B. Ch.M. in 1888.

Returning to Melbourne about 1890, "Reggie" Morrison built up a large and successful general practice at Toorak. An interest in obstetrics and gynaecology soon became evident, and he joined the honorary staff of the Women's Hospital in 1899. Over a long span of years he actively served this hospital, first as an obstetrician and later as a gynaecologist. In 1925, he was appointed an Honorary Gynaecological Surgeon.

In 1910 he relinquished general practice and, practising in Collins Street, confined himself solely to obstetrics and gynaecology. As senior surgeon to the Women's Hospital, he succeeded Dr. Felix Meyer as lecturer in obstetrics and gynaecology at the University of Melbourne, retiring from this appointment in 1926. He was recognised as a good lecturer.

Morrison was associated with the formation of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, of which he was a foundation Fellow, and was on the Victorian State Council of that College for several years.

Reginald Morrison was a member of a very distinguished family. His uncle was the famous Dr. Alexander Morrison, of Scotch College, Melbourne, and his brother, Dr. George Ernest, was "Chinese" or "Peking" Morrison, adviser to the Chinese Government at the time of the Boxer Rebellion, and an outstanding authority on that Country.

As a young man, "Reggie" Morrison was a magnificent athlete, excelling at cricket, football, swimming and as a middle-distance runner. He played senior football for the Geelong Club for two years and, whilst at Edinburgh, played international rugby for Scotland during three seasons.

He was an active member of the Melbourne Club, of which at one time he had the distinction of being president, and was also a member of the Rotary Club for a number of years. He was widely recognised as a very skilled exponent of the game of bridge.

Reginald Morrison had three sons of whom he was very proud. Though to be rather severe at times, beneath this exterior was a very kindly nature. He died in 1941

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Morton, Francis William Watson (1857 - 1930)

L.R.C.P. et S. (Edin.)

<i>Born</i>	1857 Auburn, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	26 January 1930
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

FRANCIS WILLIAM WATSON MORTON  
(1896 - 1917)

Francis William Watson Morton, always known as "F.W.W." Morton, was born in 1857 in the suburb of Auburn, the son of William Nassau Morton, a Melbourne merchant. He was educated at the Hawthorn Grammar School, a private school (long since defunct) situated in Power Street, Hawthorn. It is interesting to remember this small school in the last quarter of the 19th Century exerted an educational influence in Melbourne much more important than its size might suggest. During this time its Headmaster was Martin Irving who had arrived in Melbourne in 1856 as the second Professor of Classics in the University of Melbourne, resigning from that position in 1871 to become Headmaster of Wesley College, again resigning to take over the Hawthorn Grammar School. Irving was the son of Edward Irving who founded the Irvingite sect and was the good friend of Thomas Carlyle - that Edward Irving "who seemed superlatively happy on his wedding jaunt, bore with Carlyle's 'gloomy humours' and emitted jovial bursts of laughter at my surly, sarcastic and dyspeptic utterances". Hawthorn Grammar School flourished under Professor Irving and many of its pupils subsequently reached eminence. In the world of politics were Sir George Fairbairn and Sir Stanley Argyle - one of the few medical Premiers of Victoria and one of its pioneer radiologists; perhaps the most distinguished old Hawthorn Grammarian was the eminent Melbourne physician Sir Richard Stawell.

Morton commenced medicine at Melbourne and subsequently proceeded to Edinburgh, obtaining the triple qualification in 1882. He then went to America as surgeon on the steamship "Australia" and practised for two years in Toronto with his uncle Dr. E. Morton. Returning to Melbourne in 1884 he became assistant to Dr. O.V. Lawrence, later starting on his own account in the same suburb and building up a very large general practice; this he carried on unremittingly for 28 years, after which he confined his practice to Collins Street. In 1896 he was elected to the Women's Staff and remained thereon for 21 years. Among his colleagues during this time were Balls Headley, Felix Meyer, M.U. O'Sullivan, Dunbar Hooper, Rothwell Adam and R.H. Fetherston.

For 42 years he held the position of Medical Officer of Health to the City of Fitzroy, gave devoted service to the Melbourne District Nursing Society, and it was through his persuasion and assistance that the Church of England founded St. Ives private hospital, for many years successfully managed by the Sisters of the Community of The Holy Name. He was an ardent churchman, and in 1927 became a Lay Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral. From the commencement of practice in Fitzroy he identified himself with St. Mark's Church and was a member of the vestry of that church until 1893 when he joined St Peter's at Eastern Hill. It may be recalled that R.T. Tracy - one of the medical founders of the Women's Hospital also first practised in Fitzroy, was an active member of St. Mark's Church in that suburb and subsequently, like Morton, joined St. Peter's. In May 1930 the Archbishop of Brisbane dedicated in St. Peter's sanctuary a panel bearing the carved inscription "In affectionate memory of Francis William Watson Morton, a beloved physician, who in Christ found the secret of a wise ministry of healing and who entered into rest Sunday, January 26th 1930, this panelling was set up, R.I.P."

Morton was always a strong force in any movement for advancing and uplifting the profession. He was a member of the Council of the Victorian Branch of the B.M.A. and was its representative at Sheffield in 1908. Up to the time when deafness became a serious handicap, Morton was a regular attendant at scientific meetings and was one of the first advocates in Melbourne of the open administration of ether.

A tall man of splendid and handsome physique, fond of all games, he had been a good footballer and played vigorous tennis until quite late in life. He was more than a sound surgeon and an excellent general practitioner; he was a steadfast friend and spent himself unceasingly on his thousands of patients, some of the poorest in the city, in the long years of his Fitzroy practice.

F.W.W. Morton was a fine type of medical man with a strong sense of service.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Nattrass, John Hodgson (1870 - 1943)

M.D. (Melb.)

<i>Born</i>	24 March 1870 Cambrian Hill, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	4 December 1943
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

### DR. JOHN HODGSON NATTRASS

Dr. Nattrass was born at Cambrian Hill, near Ballarat, on March 24th, 1870.

In early life he worked on his father's farm at Horsham, and during this time had only two years of school life. At the age of twenty he went to Wesley College, Melbourne, where his education progressed rapidly enabling him to matriculate within two years.

Passing on to the University of Melbourne he graduated M.B., B.S. in 1898 and spent the next three years as Resident Medical Officer at the Melbourne Hospital, the Children's Hospital and the Women's Hospital.

He then purchased a practice in Victoria St., North Melbourne and for the next nine and a half years led a very busy life, notwithstanding this, he carried out some valuable research work with Professor W.A. Osborne on "Autoplastic Ovarian Transplantation", for which he gained the M.D. Degree by Thesis.

In 1910 he traveled abroad for post-graduate work and studied under Bland Sutton in London, Professor Alexis Thomson at Edinburgh and stayed and worked with Howard Kelly at Baltimore. He also worked with Kocher in Berne, Tuffier in Paris and Wertheim in Vienna.

On his return to Melbourne in 1911 he practiced as a Gynaecologist in Spring and in Collins Streets. He was then appointed an Outpatient Surgeon to the Women's Hospital and later became Senior Indoor Surgeon until his retirement in 1926, after seventeen years' service.

Dr. Nattrass had many other interests. In 1907 he was President of the Melbourne Medical Association and Worshipful Master of the University Lodge, No. 171, in 1914. In 1916 he was one of a group of medical men who pioneered the building of Lister House in Collins Street for Professional rooms and Residential Flats, and acted as Chairman of Directors from its inception until the time of his death.

His military record was noteworthy. He entered the University Officers' Corps of Instruction in 1897, and later, in the Army Medical Corps, was Captain, Major and Lieutenant-Colonel. In 1914 he was rejected for service abroad but became Senior Medical Officer at Queenscliff Forts, and later Senior Medical Officer at Broadmeadows Camp, Acting Officer Commanding No.5 Australian General Hospital, and Principal Medical Officer, Camp Headquarters' Staff; and finally, Assistant Principal Medical Officer, Third Military District (Victoria). He was mentioned in Orders for "specially meritorious service to Australia" during the war.

He married Miss Annie Barton, younger daughter of the Rev. John Barton and had one child, Dr. John Nattrass, M.R.C.O.G., D.G.O.

Dr. J.H. Nattrass died on December 4th, 1943.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Nyulasy, Francis Armand (1862 - 1934)

M.D., B.S. (Melb.)

<i>Born</i>	1862 Ballarat, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	7 May, 1934
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

FRANCIS ARMAND NYULASY  
(1896 - 1899)

Francis Armand Nyulasy, born at Ballarat in 1862, was the son of Charles Nyulasy who had formerly been an artillery lieutenant in the Hungarian Army, and who, in the words of Louis Ossuth "was among the first of the band of patriots who in 1848 took arms against the house of Hapsburg in the glorious combat for right, liberty and their country, and who sacrificed their property and possessions in this cause". Consequent on the defeat of the Hungarians by the combined arms of Austria and Russia, Lieutenant Charles Nyulasy sought refuge as an exile in England, and came to Victoria in 1853 with a letter of introduction to Governor Latrobe. At the time of Frank (Francis) Nyulasy's birth, the father was a mining engineer. Later the family went to New Zealand for some years, and returning to Melbourne, Frank for a brief period (only a few days states the school record) attended the Melbourne Church of England Grammar School. In 1885 he graduated M.B. at the University of Melbourne, becoming a house surgeon at the Melbourne Hospital under Thomas (later Sir Thomas) Fitzgerald, and for this Irishman's qualities as a surgeon he always maintained a high opinion. In 1910 his thesis on polypoid endometritis was accepted for the degree of Doctor of Medicine and afterwards was published in the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Adelaide on "a rare form of pelvic tumour" attracted the attention of Professor Nekani of Budapest (Secretary of the Hungarian National Medical Association) who invited him to become a regular contributor to the official journal of that body.

In 1896 the Honorary Staff of the Women's Hospital was enlarged from eight to twelve, and there were eight applications for the four positions vacant on the midwifery side; Nyulasy was elected (by the Hospital subscribers) together with E. Alan Mackay, Taylor Downie and George Cuscaden. The staff then comprised four inpatient surgeons, and four outpatients surgeons, on the infirmary side, and four midwifery surgeons. Nyulasy remained on the staff for only three years and then restricted himself to private practice in Collins Street and Williams Road, Hawksburn, building there an imposing residence which he named "Graeme".

In 1905 the Admiralty appointed him surgeon and agent in Melbourne to the Royal Navy. The duties of this office required attendance on sailors discharged from British warships because of sickness, Nyulasy's relationship to these men being not only that of surgeon, but also a trustee for them on behalf of the Admiralty. He enjoyed this work, for he was highly appreciative of the British people, understanding their essential magnanimity and the many difficulties in the maintenance of the far-flung empire.

In 1922 Nyulasy went to London where he was greatly pleased to meet Sir Arthur Keith - the famous comparative anatomist and then President of the Royal Society of Medicine - and was elected a Fellow of this Society to which he read a paper on puerperal sepsis.

Nyulasy was a very well informed, cultured man, of an artistic temperament and greatly interested in good literature, a faithful member of the Shakespearean Society, Dickens Fellowship, and the Royal Society of St. George. A keen Shakespearean scholar and critic, both in the purely literary side, as well as in the theatre, some of his published criticisms received favourable notice from recognised authorities abroad. He proved most acceptable as a lecturer on Tennyson whose poetry he greatly admired. He would wax indignant at suggestions made locally impugning the poetical gift of Adam Lindsay Gordon, and during his last illness was busy preparing a paper on this subject.

For many years on the Council of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, he was President 1914-1918, and was one of the original members of the Big Brother Movement.

He was extremely loyal to the memory of his younger brother, Dr. Arthur John Nyulasy, who for thirteen years was senior gynaecologist to the Perth Hospital. Frank, on repeated occasions in the medical press advocated it was Arthur who first correctly described the cardinal ligaments of the uterus and their attachments had seemingly been overlooked, and Frank enjoyed great satisfaction that Arthur's work was eventually recognised by men of such calibre as Victor Bonney. These ligaments are variously known as the cardinal ligaments of Kocks, the ligamentum transversale colli of Mackenrodt, or the retinaculum uteri of Martin.

In memory of this brother he bequeathed to the University of Melbourne £1,000 for the establishment of the Arthur Nyulasy Prize to be awarded to a graduate of not less than one, nor more than three years, standing who proved himself the most competent (a) in knowledge and skill of operative gynaecology or (b) in research work in gynaecology. Whenever the nett income of the bequest reaches £100, six months notice is given by the University of the intention to award the Prize and applications are called for. Candidates desiring to compete on the grounds of knowledge and skill are required to sit for the examination in the subject of gynaecology in Part II of the D.G.O. examination, or for a special examination of a like standard. Candidates desiring to compete on grounds of research work must submit a thesis.

Frank Nyulasy married late in life and had no children; a man of first class intelligence and high ideals, he died on Monday, 7th May, 1934, aged 72 years.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# O'Sullivan, Michael Ulick ( - c. 1917)



F.R.C.S.I.

*Born* County Kerry, Ireland

*Died* c. 1917 St. Kilda, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

**MICHAEL ULICK O'SULLIVAN**  
1888 - 1914

An outstanding name in the history of the Hospital is Michael Ulick O'Sullivan, a native of County Kerry, who came to Victoria in 1881, three years after had had qualified L.R.C.S. in Edinburgh. There was little indication in those days of the eminence to which he was eventually to rise. He first practiced for three years at Numurkah and then at South Melbourne, but in 1885 moved to Collins Street where in a few years he had raised his reputation from that of a general practitioner to a height in gynaecology that probably had not been reached before in Australia. He was a brilliant, decisive surgeon, had a wide knowledge of women's diseases, and in addition to having great skill in operating possessed an inventive mind.

He had all the qualities of a great surgeon. There was a finish and neatness about his operations which belonged to a master of technique. His eminence is the more notable as in effect he learnt surgery unaided. He introduced to Victoria the then modern method of plastic repair of the perineum and cervix, conservative procedures for the rectification of misplacement of the uterus, and a number of other per vaginal procedures. At the Women's Hospital he banned craniotomy, and in its place introduced Caesarean section. He was the first surgeon at the Women's to change into a white linen suit when operating, and the first to use rubber gloves.

He was elected to the Obstetrical side of the Women's Hospital in 1887, holding this post until 1891 when he was appointed an honorary surgeon of the gynaecological Department. Later he was elected Chairman of the honorary staff which responsible position he held for ten years. He was also for a period gynaecological surgeon at St. Vincent's Hospital, and took a great interest in the design of the Hospital buildings.

In addition to these busy duties, and to the strains of his extensive private practice, O'Sullivan conducted a large private hospital, "Tower House" at the corner of Spring & Flinders Streets, in association with Dr. Charles Ryan and Sister Madge Kelly.

The severe pressure of hospital work and private practice eventually took toll of his health and in 1905 he made a world tour. While visiting Ireland he was elected a Fellow of its Royal College of Surgeons. In Italy the Pope, after an audience, created him a Knight Commander of St. Gregory, for O'Sullivan was a staunch supporter of the Roman Catholic Church.

He retired from the Women's in 1914 and three years later died at his mansion home "Eildon" Grey St., St. Kilda, of angina pectoris. Michael O'Sullivan was at the turn of the century one of the world's great gynaecologists. He was a striking personality inside and outside the profession of medicine, by which he was much honoured and respected. Beneath a serious exterior, at times not far removed from sternness, was concealed a sense of humour and kindness quite unsuspected by those who did not know him well. He married, in 1883, Ellie Feehan, daughter of Richard Feehan who owned the Moonee Valley racecourse. They had three sons. Two were doctors - Richard Francis O'Sullivan F.R.C.S. Eng. onetime Senior Gynaecologist at St. Vincent's Hospital, and Dr. Brendan O'Sullivan, who practiced for many years in Victoria Parade, East Melbourne. The remaining son, Ulysses, was a Melbourne architect.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Officer, David Mc Master (1868 - 1916)

<i>Born</i>	1868
<i>Died</i>	1916 Tasmania, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Medical practitioner and Paediatric Surgeon

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

DAVID Mc MASTER OFFICER  
(1899 - 1903)

David Mc Master Officer was born in 1868, his father being John Officer, a grazier in the Warrnambool district of Victoria.

After attending school at Brighton, Officer worked for some time as assistant to a chemist at Warrnambool and then entered the University of Melbourne, as a resident student at Ormond College.

During a most successful course, Officer won many first class honours and numerous Exhibitions and prizes, holding an open scholarship at Ormond throughout this time.

In his final year he secured Dr. Springthorpe's prize for ward work at Melbourne Hospital, second place for the University Exhibitions in surgery and in diseases of women, and third class honours in medicine; also honourable mention for the Beaney Scholarship in bacteriology. He graduated M.D. in 1893, and thereafter held appointments as Resident Physician and Surgeon at Melbourne Hospital, 1894-1895, Medical Galvanist at the Children's Hospital and Resident Surgeon at the Children's Hospital, 1895-1898.

He gained the M.D. (Melbourne) in 1899. He was appointed to the Honorary Staff of the Women's Hospital in 1899, retiring in 1903. Officer practised in Collins Street, Melbourne until his death aged 48 while on holiday in Tasmania in 1916, from cerebral haemorrhage. He specialised in the surgery of children and was on the staff of the Children's Hospital at the time of his death.

He married Elizabeth Forbes Masterton and had two children, Alison Mary, and Forbes John David, born in 1912, who became a Sydney barrister. Officer is said to have been the first doctor in Melbourne to possess a motor car, and was a prominent member of the Savage Club and of the University Club.

Amongst his brothers were Gus Officer, who early in the century was a leading cricketer and footballer in Melbourne and Warrnambool, George Officer, grazier of Woolsthorpe, and Dr. Edward Officer of Perth, well remembered for his prowess as a footballer with the Essendon team early in the century. His nephew is Robert Officer, F.R.C.S. surgeon to the Alfred Hospital.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives



# Oliver, Catherine Mary (c. 1829 - 1875)

**Born** c. February 1829  
Bridgnorth, Shropshire, England

**Died** 7 January 1875  
Emerald Hill (now South Melbourne), Victoria, Australia

**Occupation** Matron

## Alternative Names

- Barrett, Catherine Mary
- Edkins, Catherine Mary

## Summary

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Catherine Oliver was Matron at the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children (MLIH) from 1859 until early 1861. What we know about Mrs Oliver and about other women at the MLIH during this early era is limited, because many of the hospital records from this period have not survived. While the work that women did as Matron or Head Nurse or Cook was integral to the smooth functioning of the institution, what that work consisted of is almost invisible in the documentary record. These women had very little written about them and their daily activities, unless the individual was the subject of a complaint or, less often, worthy of high praise. The women, themselves, also left few records of their own that might illuminate their working lives. To form a biographical narrative of women from this era it is necessary to draw on a range of sources from family history and hospital records.

## Details

### Family history

Catherine Mary Oliver was one of 12 children born to Thomas Oliver Edkins and Louisa Ann de Winton. Catherine's father, Thomas Edkins,<sup>(1)</sup> was a school master in the village of Bridgnorth from 1820 at least 1834, possibly longer.<sup>(2)</sup> Reportedly, he was thrice the mayor of Bridgnorth.<sup>(3)</sup> By the late 1830s, Edkins had abandoned teaching and was a printer, publisher, bookseller and stationer, operating at 1 High Street, Bridgnorth. He also had a trade as a maltster. Following some months of ill-health, Thomas Edkins died in August 1849. His will details extensive leasehold property and businesses, the proceeds of which were bequeathed to fund the education of his younger children.<sup>(4)</sup> Edkins held six lease hold properties throughout England and copy hold tenure on a 'cottage' in Quendon, Essex. Catherine Mary and her two sisters, Louisa Ann and Mary Sophia, were provided for in their father's will, with each bequeathed the sum of £250 upon their coming of age.

In 1852, aged 22, Catherine Edkins travelled cabin class to Australia with her mother Louisa (then aged 52), and several siblings John (13) and Edward Rowland (11), and her sister Mary Sophia (6). Along with 260 other immigrants on the 107 day voyage from England of the ship, 'Diana', was a 24 year old 'student' from Dumfries in Scotland, named Alexander Calder Halliday Oliver.

Eighteen months after arriving in Australia, Catherine and Alexander Oliver were married. Mr Oliver was employed as a clerk in the office of the Colonial Engineer of Victoria and, later, for the Superintendent of Bridges, Central Roads Board, where he kept accounts and wrote correspondence.<sup>(5)</sup> His salary in 1853 was £350 per year. The Olivers lived initially in St Kilda and then at Upper Hawthorn. Family history records that in 1854 they had a girl named Charlotte who died in 1857, although neither birth nor death of this child is recorded in Victorian Births Register. A son, Calder Edkins Oliver, was born in 1855; a second son Samuel Thomas was born in 1857 but died the same year. On 15 December 1857, Catherine's husband died, having suffered from pulmonary consumption.

In an age when there was no social security, Catherine Oliver had few options for financial support. Family historians report that Catherine appealed in writing to the President of the Central Roads Board, the Honourable Gavan Duffy, for government financial assistance because of her 'very straightened circumstances' and on the basis of her husband's loyal service to the civil administration.<sup>(6)</sup> It seems that the family was well-connected as her application for financial assistance was supported by the Honourable Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, and by the Treasurer. Her appeal, however, was unsuccessful.

### Matron at the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital (MLIH) 1859-1861

The circumstance of widowhood thus led Catherine Oliver, an educated gentlewoman aged 28, to take the position of Matron at the MLIH. Mrs Oliver is first noted in Hospital records in September 1859 when her salary was recorded as £25.<sup>(7)</sup> The position of Matron required the incumbent to live at the Hospital; whether Catherine Oliver's five year old son, Calder Edkins, was permitted to live with her is not known.

The Matron took her instructions from the Hospital's management committees, the Ladies and Gentlemen's Committees, the former meeting at the Hospital once per week. The Hospital's Rules printed in the 1857 Annual Report spelt out exactly what was required of the Matron and employees.

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### Rules for the Officers of the Institution

#### Matron

1. The Hospital shall be under the care of a Resident Matron, who shall not leave it except when obliged. She shall not be absent

for more than 3 hours at any one time, nor after nine o'clock at night, without the leave of the Committee of management, and shall have the assistance of such nurses and servants as the Committee may think proper.

2. That she shall have the immediate superintendence of the nurses and servants of the establishment, and enforce personal cleanliness, neatness, and obedience to orders on their part; and in case of any misbehaviour, disobedience, or neglect of duty on the part of any of them, she shall have the power to discharge the offender, reporting the same to the Committee of management at the next meeting.(8)

\*\*\*\*\*

Essentially, the role of Matron was to manage the entire establishment as one would manage a large household, overseeing every element of its operations from laundry to food preparation, to making bedding, to burials, to the supervision of the staff.

## The Staff

Matron's duties included supervising the nurses and other staff, then called the 'servants', and dispensing their wages. The following extract from the MLIH's Supply Book records that, in November 1860, the servants of the institution were nine in number and were paid (in £/s/d) per week:

Head Nurse .....	6/5/-
Sick Ass. [nurse] .....	3/15/-
2nd Ass. [nurse] .....	3/6/8
General Servant .....	2/10/-
2nd Ass [servant] .....	2/10/-
Housemaid .....	2/10/-
Cook .....	2/18/4
Laundress .....	3/6/8
Porter .....	3/6/8

Mrs Oliver's Head Nurse at that time was Nurse Dewar, a loyal employee going by the records of the MLIH who, in 1860, was awarded the sum of £5 as 'a gratuity for her devotion to service'.(9) As there was no sub-matron, it is likely that Mrs Dewar took on the role Matron when Mrs Oliver took holidays as in March 1860.(10) Staffing a hospital for these exigencies must have been quite a challenge. When Mrs Dewar had previously fallen ill, a recently recovered patient was asked to stay on for a fortnight to help the nurse.(11) In 1860, Mrs Oliver had a hand in engaging a married couple, Mr and Mrs Tyrell, to replace the unmarried porter who had left his position. The Ladies Committee of Management thought that appointment of a married couple, while unconventional, would be advantageous because Mrs Tyrell could be usefully engaged in 'working a sewing machine the whole of the day'.(12) The Tyrell's stayed for around six weeks.

## Pupil nurses

An important milestone which occurred during Mrs Oliver's term at the MLIH was the introduction of training in midwifery nursing. One applicant in 1859 was a Mrs Carter, then housekeeper to the Reverend Mr W Tanner in the Victorian town of Winchelsea. In September 1859, Mrs Carter was accepted as a pupil at the MLIH 'upon the usual terms viz. £3.3.0 Fee and £3.3.0 for the month's board', indicating that other pupils had preceded her. The Ladies Committee agreed that if Mrs Carter stayed longer at the Hospital than one month, the cost of her board was to be 15 shillings per week.(13)

Two other pupils taken on during Mrs Oliver's term were Mrs Curran, accepted for training one month after the birth of her seventh baby,(14) and Mrs Jordan who applied one week after Mrs Curran did. Owing to space restrictions, only one pupil could be accommodated at any one time and Mrs Jordan was 'advised to come again in three months when Mrs Cullen's [sic] term would be expired'.(15) To the year ending 30 June 1861, at least six pupils completed the midwifery nurse training. Arranging accommodation for this expanding programme of nurse training within the Hospital was, in all likelihood, part of the Matron's role.

## Managing mothers and babies

The focus of the MLIH's work was the care of women and their children. In the year to June 1860, 197 women gave birth at the MLIH's Midwifery Department,(16) and approximately 42 women were admitted to the Infirmary/Gynaecology Department.(17) In the same period, the Outpatients Department dispensed gratuitous advice and/or medicines to 480 women and children. An ongoing issue at the MLIH was that inpatients did not always conform to the institutional expectations as set out in the Hospital's Rules. Some patients were thought to be a bad influence on others, while some pregnant women were considered lazy and unwilling to help with the Hospital's work. On one occasion during Mrs Oliver's incumbency, in August 1860, a woman considered to have 'a very bad character' gained admission to the hospital to deliver her baby, but her presence was not approved of by the Ladies Committee. Under instruction from that Committee, Mrs Oliver as Matron had to keep the woman by herself away from the other patients, and to disallow the woman's association 'with other married women'.(18) Mrs Oliver was also given authority 'to send women out of the Hospital if they complained of their food and if they refused to help themselves while they were able to do so'.(19) Dealing with the deaths of mothers and children was another every day issue for the Matron. Burials had to be organised with the assistance of undertakers,(20) of which Mrs Oliver had personal experience, having lost two of her children and her husband by the age of 28. There was also the dilemma of what to do with babies whose mothers died at the MLIH. In one case during Mrs Oliver's term as Matron, a woman was gravely ill following birth and unable to care for her newborn, and so the care of this baby had to be taken on by the nurses.(21) When the infant's mother died at the MLIH some eight weeks after having given birth, the baby was sent home to the care of its father and two young siblings.(22) In another case, a newborn baby was sent to St Paul's orphanage because its mother had died after childbirth and its father was an inpatient at the nearby Melbourne Hospital.(23)

## General duties

Arranging the purchase and distribution of food and supplies for the Hospital was a pivotal part of a Matron's work. For example, early in 1861, the secretary of the MLIH's Ladies Committee gave authority to Mrs Oliver to 'change the Baker if the bread did not improve in quality'.<sup>(24)</sup> The Hospital also had a cow,<sup>(25)</sup> and chickens which had to be fed.<sup>(26)</sup> It is likely that shopping for food and general household items, such as the six yards of mosquito netting, purchased for 'the Nurses Room' in December 1859, was also part of Mrs Oliver's realm.<sup>(27)</sup>

The Hospital's Rules show that the Matron was not permitted to be absent for more than three hours. With the Matron so confined, the standard of her accommodation was important. By 1859 the MLIH had been in its new permanent location at Madeline Street for one year and was becoming busier with a greater patient volume. The purpose-built Hospital had two floors. In mid-1860, the Ladies Committee of Management agreed that 'for many reasons it was inconvenient that the Matron should be so far distant from the lower part of the Hospital' and so Mrs Oliver's sitting room was relocated to the ground floor.<sup>(28)</sup> The general consensus of the Committee was that redecorating (possibly plastering of the walls) of the downstairs room would be necessary, including skirting boards, although the whole renovation was estimated to cost £10 or £11 above the sum originally quoted by Mr Austin, the tradesman. Because painting of the former sitting room upstairs was also needed, the MLIH's Ladies Committee thought Mr Austin's fee was excessive, and decided to obtain more quotations.<sup>(29)</sup> It was also at this time that a water closet [toilet] was installed on the upper storey for convenience.<sup>(30)</sup>

## Life after the MLIH

The last reference in Hospital records to Mrs Oliver as being Matron at the MLIH is in February 1861 when she was allotted the usual weekly sum with which to pay the servants.<sup>(31)</sup> Around March 1861 and after more than two years of service, Catherine Oliver resigned from the MLIH. In May of that year, she married Dr James Barrett, at Benalla in north east Victoria. Catherine knew Barrett well. He had been the resident surgeon at the MLIH during a substantial part of Catherine's term as Matron. By all accounts, Dr Barrett was a well-liked and well-respected doctor.<sup>(32)</sup> Their 1861 marriage certificate notes Catherine Oliver's age to be 32; Barrett was 27.

Catherine and James Barrett settled at Howe Street South Melbourne where James operated a successful medical practice. From the busy world of hospital management, Catherine returned to motherhood, having nine children with James Barrett and raising Calder Edkins Oliver. The Barrett children and their births were: James William (born 1862), Mary Catherine (1863), Alice Elizabeth (1864), John Edward (1866), Rowland Arthur (1868), Edgar Alfred (1869), Charles Edwin (1871), Edith Helen (1873), and Joseph (1874). James, John, and Edith became medical practitioners. Calder Edkins Oliver became a notable civil engineer and was Chief Engineer of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works from 1907 to 1919.<sup>(33)</sup>

It is possible that Catherine Oliver continued her association with the MLIH following her marriage. A 'Mrs Barrett' was a member of the Ladies Committee of Management from 1861 to 1864 and, again, in 1866. Mrs Catherine Barrett died in January 1875, at the age of 45. Her death certificate recorded that she had suffered Scirrhus [sic] (likely, cirrhosis of the liver) for six months. Joseph, the youngest of her 12 children, was then only four months old.

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# Perry, Frances (“Fanny”) (1814 - 1892)



*Born* June 1814 Tranby, Yorkshire, England

*Died* 2 December 1892 Miller Bridge, Loughrigg, Westmorland (Cumbria), England

*Occupation* Board of Management member

## Summary

Prepared by Ann Westmore PhD

Frances (“Fanny”) Perry was President of the Ladies Committee of the Melbourne Lying-In Hospital during its first two decades (1856-1876). The wife of the first Anglican Bishop of Melbourne and a woman of undoubted ability and commitment, she gave the hospital stature and credibility at a time when no similar institution existed anywhere else in Australia. Frances Perry House, opened in 1970 as the private hospital of the Royal Women’s Hospital, was named in her honour.

## Details

“Fanny” Perry, as she was known to family and friends and as she signed her name in adulthood, was born in June 1814 at Tranby, near Hull, Yorkshire, one of several daughters of Samuel Cooper, a merchant, and Dorothy, née Priestley.

She met her husband-to-be Charles Perry (1807-1891) through his friendship with her brother, John, when both men were studying at Cambridge University, 1825-1830. She and Charles shared an interest in Biblical scholarship and missionary activities, including a willingness to break new ground in familiar or foreign lands. They married in 1841, eight years after Charles was made a deacon in the Church of England and five years after his ordination as an Anglican priest.

### Early years in Melbourne

The couple moved to Australia early in 1848, following Charles’ appointment the previous year as Bishop of the newly created diocese of Melbourne. The diocese covered much of the area now known as Victoria and had an Anglican population of approximately 20,000. During the next few years, Fanny and Charles travelled long distances in the colony founded just 14 years before their arrival, visiting Anglican clergy in Gipps Land (sic, 1849), Port Fairy (1851), Kilmore (1851), Portland (1852), and Castlemaine (1853), as well as parishes closer to their Melbourne home, “Bishopscourt”. Fanny’s accounts of these journeys published in “Australian Sketches: The journals and letters of Frances Perry”, reveal a woman who could laugh at herself; “. . . the beds [on a stop-over in the Bendigo area] are remarkably hard this season, or else we grow old and thin! I do assure you we sleep every night upon slabs and weatherboards. I like a tolerably hard bed, but on these my bones all go to sleep independently of myself.”

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the characters of Fanny and Charles were quite dissimilar, and at least one friend thought them poorly matched, Charles being “too grave for one so gay”. Canon S.L. Chase, who served under Charles for many years in Melbourne, described him as unpredictable and demanding, “a man of many paradoxes, in whom an intensely affectionate nature hid itself under a crust of repelling severity and a confiding spirit under a veil of sternness and suspicion”. Another colleague, the Rev. Handfield hinted at a dour literalness, saying that “if there was any defect in him it was in a lack of imagination, and of that intuitive faculty which feels what is true before it is proved”.

In contrast, one of Fanny’s contemporaries during her time in Melbourne highlighted her agreeableness and energy (though in a dismissive way), describing her as “a lively good little woman, nothing very particular as a companion, and has a good deal of English wit or kitten liveliness”. Another contemporary noted her unpretentiousness and preference for a low profile, saying “she did not pose as a theologian or as a logician, nor did she, after the modern fashion, stand up to make a speech”.

When the Perrys arrived in Melbourne, they could have been forgiven for thinking the diocese would develop steadily but unremarkably. No-one could have predicted the dramatic events of 1851, which Fanny summed up in the comment; “Gold! Gold! Gold! My dear Amelia, we are gone mad with gold; and what is to be the end of it no-one knows!”

Melbourne was transformed into a goldfields hub by an extraordinary influx of new settlers who sent the population soaring from 77,000 in 1851 to 410,000 in 1857. The town itself was a staging post for many gold-diggers, leaving it “pretty nearly under petticoat dominion”, in Fanny’s words. In the wake of the moving population, some groups fared particularly badly, including destitute pregnant and ailing women, and sick children.

### Founding and leading the hospital

In 1856, a group comprising the wives and daughters of Melbourne’s leading clergy and businessmen met with Charles and Fanny Perry to discuss the establishment of a lying-in (that is, midwifery) hospital for women who could not afford private medical treatment and care. The hospital was also intended to cater for sick children. The Perrys agreed to join the group which was attempting to interest the Melbourne Hospital in establishing a midwifery section.

When the Melbourne Hospital declined to become involved, the group met with two young doctors, Richard Tracy and John Maund, who had similar aims to their own and who had already leased a large house for use as a midwifery hospital in Albert St, Eastern Hill (later, East Melbourne). A merger resulted, with both groups pooling their ideas and resources to establish the Melbourne

Lying-In Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases of Women and Children. At the same meeting on 14 August 1856 a Ladies Committee was elected (later known as the Managing or Providing Committee and the forerunner to the Board of Management), as well as a smaller Gentlemen's Committee established to provide advice to the Ladies Committee. The meeting also elected Fanny Perry the hospital's inaugural President, a position she was to hold until early 1876.

A religious or secular institution?

Events moved quickly after this vital meeting, with the first patient admitted to the hospital within a week and the first management "Rules" of the hospital devised by the Ladies Committee within a month. This first version of the rules stated an intention to run the hospital according to "the principles of the Christian Religion as these are received by the various Evangelical branches of the Protestant Church".

The process by which the Rules were devised are lost in the mists of time. It would seem, however, that the strong evangelical leanings of at least some of [Ladies and Gentlemen's] Committee members influenced their tone. The Rules included morning and evening prayers to be read by the Matron, which contained appeals to the Creator for mercy, pity and forgiveness for suffering which was viewed as a consequence of sin. Other rules dealt with interviews and assessments of prospective patients by members of the Ladies Committee and a requirement that women seeking admission provide references in support of their good character.

The Ladies Committee approved the Rules on 18 September but withdrew them before a public meeting on 13 December, following warnings that they might prove unacceptable and controversial to the general community. Attorney General William Stawell, who advised the Ladies Committee on this matter, suggested that the public should participate in the formation of the Rules since it was his understanding that the hospital intended to seek financial support from the public purse and from benefactors. To tie it too closely to Protestant precepts would undermine its appeal.

At the public meeting in December, tension flared between those favouring and opposing a strong religious character for the hospital over the issue of which women would be accepted for admission. The Anglican Dean of Melbourne, Dr Macartney, declared that the Ladies Committee should have the right to decide on the particular class of women who received treatment, and there should be separate wards for "virtuous women and for those who had unhappily wandered from the paths of innocence".

Others argued that a woman's need for medical assistance rather than her morality should be the central consideration. Doctors and the Ladies Committee should have the discretion to admit any destitute patient, they suggested, including single women, some of whom may have worked as prostitutes for want of any other source of income.

The compromise reached, subsequently known as Rule 19, stated that patients admitted to the hospital with the support of a Subscriber [regular donor], except "in peculiar cases", required the approval of the Ladies' Committee and of the Medical Officer on duty. In the case of an emergency, the Medical Officer alone could admit a patient.

Notwithstanding Rule 19, debate recurred both within the hospital and within the wider community for years to come over whether the hospital should accept all patients in need or should exclude some, and on what grounds. In 1860, The Argus newspaper criticised the hospital for becoming; "a sexual inquisition, and that which was intended for a charity is turned into a whipping place . . . The Lying-in Hospital was not created for the promotion of female virtue, but for the relief of human suffering. To attempt to go into any question of the morals of the lying-in patients is as absurd as it would be were we to insist upon virtue as a necessary condition previous to reception in the general hospital."

More than a figurehead?

In this and later newspaper reports highlighting heated disagreements over the sorts of women who should and should not be admitted, Fanny Perry's views went unreported. If staying out of the limelight was her preference, she certainly succeeded in doing so during her presidency of the hospital. She also kept a low profile at public events, such as at the gala opening of the hospital's new building in 1858, when she was not among those who showed the Governor around the facility. However on less weighty matters, such as her frequent attendance at evangelical gatherings, she could be quite forthcoming, admitting that she could not "help considering them (tea meetings) useful things, but I get dreadfully tired, and shirk them whenever I can."

An early historian of the hospital, C.E. Sayers described her as a "vigorous, determined charity worker . . . her zeal . . . aroused and shocked into the most determined action by the evidence all about her of the need for such work". Relying on "stories [that] have come down from the early days of the hospital", he noted Fanny's keen-eyed presidency . . . and her strong-minded executive oversight to the institution itself". However, the only evidence he provided for this view was Fanny using ". . . the pointed toe of her buttoned boot probing under beds for what might be there, of mittened fingers sliding along window sills for signs of dust; or parasol-poking behind curtains for evidence of domestic sloth or carelessness."

From other sources it seems that Fanny's duties as the wife of the Anglican Bishop of Melbourne were paramount. She absented herself from many hospital committee meetings and, in one of her few letters in the hospital's possession, excused herself because "the Bishop commands my pen at home". During the twenty-eight years they lived in Australia she was said to be an inseparable companion and helper to Charles and to have barely spent a day apart from him

She was away from Melbourne for months at a time traveling with Charles. As a result, she missed crucial deliberations as was evident from a letter that Charles wrote to the Honorary Secretary of the Ladies Committee, Mrs Elizabeth Tripp, in 1857. He claimed to be "astonished to discover that the committee of the institution proposed an alteration to the constitution" which he doubted it had the power to make. Since his wife was the President of this committee, it seems reasonable to conclude that she had no knowledge of this proposal and, by extension, to other matters that the Ladies Committee discussed alone or in consultation with the Gentlemen's Committee.

Adding to the sense that she did not have enough hours in the day to assist her husband and meet her many commitments, is the long list of charitable institutions with which she was involved. In addition to the Lying-in Hospital, these included the Governesses'

Home (to which she gave the proceeds of the Mrs Perry Memorial Fund when she left Australia), the Carlton Refuge, and the Melbourne Orphan Asylum.

#### Retirement and recognition

Charles resigned from the Melbourne diocese in 1876 at nearly 70 years of age and, at about the same time, Fanny retired as President of the hospital. They returned to England, taking up residence in London.

From all accounts, they were extremely busy, taking part in the activities of the Church Missionary Society, of which Charles became Vice President, and of the Ridley Hall theological college at Cambridge University, which Charles helped found in 1881.

Charles died in 1891 and Fanny followed on the first anniversary of her husband's death, appropriate timing given their symbiotic existence. As a tribute to her contribution as first President of the hospital, the Board of the Royal Women's Hospital decided to call the private hospital, opened in 1970 within its walls, Frances Perry House.

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# Peters, Margaret (1936 - )

*Born* Mirboo North, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Pupil Midwife, Staff Midwife, Supervisor, Deputy Director of Nursing

## Summary

Margaret Peters completed midwifery training at The Royal Women's Hospital in 1958. Subsequently, she spent 33 years of her professional career working there as a staff nurse, supervisor, senior administrator, and Deputy Director of Nursing. She was active in developing international health policy on the care of mothers and babies, and advocated extensively for her profession. She was a founder of the Australian College of Midwives.

## Details

Margaret Helen Peters was born 5 November 1936 in Victoria in Mirboo North, West Gippsland. She trained in general nursing at the West Gippsland Hospital in Warragul, finishing in 1957. During 1958, she was a pupil midwife at The Royal Women's Hospital in Carlton.

The Women's was a hectic place in the late 1950s. The usual length of stay, even for healthy mothers and babies, was at least ten days. A baby boom stretched existing services, intensified by waves of postwar migration. Adding complexity to care, some migrant women were from European countries and had little English language. When communicating, some pupils used sign language and enlisted other mothers to translate clinical terms and explain procedures.

In this demanding environment, pupil midwives gained extensive clinical experience and carried considerable responsibility at times. Trained staff were in such short supply during Margaret's training year that senior pupil midwives were often in charge of wards, particularly at night. Throughout their twelve months, pupils worked in antenatal and postnatal wards, and spent time in the hospital's two labour wards. A six-bed unit on the top floor was dedicated to tuberculosis cases.

Babies stayed with their mothers by the bed-side, a practice called "rooming-in", designed to contain infection. Babies for adoption were cared for in nurseries attached to each postnatal ward. During Margaret's training, these ward nurseries were busy - adoption numbers were high and placements took time. Preterm babies were housed in a separate nursery where early forms of insulated cots were powered by electricity. The nursery had no air-conditioning and with so many cots heating the room, it made working there unpleasant. The staff used the Coolgardie safe method to cool the room to a comfortable temperature. To do this, one of the nurses had to climb outside via a window, holding dripping wet hessian bags which she draped over air-intake pipes that led into the ward. It was an effective way to reduce the air temperature through evaporation.

While Margaret's twelve months training was predominantly hospital-based, she spent some time in the community. Pupil midwives worked with the Domiciliary Midwifery staff on postnatal rounds, visiting mothers and babies at homes. Margaret liked this work and understood it to be a valuable service because women did not have to leave their social context for care. The Women's had had established a postnatal facility offsite at Kew, called the Henry Pride Wing, to relieve unrelenting pressure on beds. Women and babies who were healthy transferred to Henry Pride to complete the required ten-day stay. Pupil midwives lived at a temporary nurses' home nearby, a former stately home called "Tara Hall", on Studley Park Road. It had magnificent grounds and spectacular architectural features including a grand staircase, large public rooms, and a dining room on the ground floor. The pupil midwives, however, lived at close quarters. Margaret shared a bedroom with three other nurses, each occupying a corner.

Some of Margaret's vivid memories of training came from her time in Ward 1, an area in the Gynaecological Department. Most of the inpatients there had septicaemia, a dangerous condition which developed after induced abortion. Abortion was illegal at the time and some women had this procedure done in unhygienic conditions by unskilled hands. As Margaret recalls, Ward 1 was where the "unlucky" women ended up. Ward 1 was characterised by the smell of gangrene, a consequence of infections associated with the bacterium *Clostridium Perfringens*. Many women with sepsis arrived at the hospital almost moribund, too late for life-saving treatment. Admitted to Ward 1, they died a terrible death in great pain and anguish. Not all midwifery pupils were rostered to this area because the work was so harrowing.

Margaret finished her year's midwifery training and in 1959 she and a friend worked at Warragul Hospital in Gippsland to save for travel to the United Kingdom. During 1961 and 1962, Margaret did agency work part-time in London, mostly in general nursing. She also spent time holidaying in Europe. She returned to Australia in 1963, ready to study the infant welfare course at Queen Elizabeth Centre in Melbourne. Infant welfare was the "third" certificate after general and midwifery qualifications. While waiting for a training place to come up, Margaret worked back at the Mirboo North Bush Nursing Hospital, caring for general and maternity cases.

In 1964, Margaret was a triple certificate nurse and unsure what to do career-wise. She joined The Women's in Melbourne as a staff nurse and, for the first six months, was rostered to Ward 34, a postnatal ward where Sister Di Morrison was in charge. Ward 34 was also home to a special research project, examining nursing systems and workflows, because planning for a new Women's Hospital was underway. High on the agenda was replacing the large open "Florence Nightingale" wards which were noisy and offered patients little privacy. Wards in the new hospital were to be divided into bays with four beds. With all services centralised, including the nurses' station and bathrooms, the new design was expected to substantially change how nurses and midwives did their everyday work.

The nursing research project run in Ward 34 aimed to work out the right mix of students and trained staff needed to do the work across 24 hours for all contingencies. Sister Jean Headberry implemented the workflow research with oversight from Matron Betty Lawson and input from the Ward 34 staff, including Margaret Peters. Margaret describes Miss Headberry as a highly respected and intellectually-driven woman who cared deeply about nursing and caregiving. By working with Miss Headberry on this project, Margaret came to understand the value of research in nursing practice. Headberry's workflow study is believed to be the first example of nursing-led research conducted at The Royal Women's Hospital.

After working in the wards as a Staff Nurse, Margaret was promoted to Charge Nurse and swapped her blue staff nurse uniform for a white one. The colloquial term for those wearing white was “whitey”. As charge nurses and tutors, these senior staff enjoyed privileges - their own dining room and an entire floor of the nurses’ home. Margaret’s next move up the ranks was as Relieving Night Supervisor for Midwifery. She had responsibility for the entire hospital and was involved in activities that day staff did not have to worry about. For example, on occasion, Margaret accompanied relatives to the morgue to view a deceased woman or baby. Next, Margaret was appointed Nursing Supervisor (Administration), an Assistant Director of Nursing. In 1978 she became Deputy Director of Nursing, a position she held until her retirement in 1997.

Throughout her working life, Margaret advocated for her profession and for mothers and babies. In the 1960s, she represented the hospital’s Midwives Special Interest Group on the Australian Nursing Federation Employees Section which sought better pay and working conditions. In 1969, with support from Matron Betty Lawson, she was awarded a scholarship by the Hospitals and Charities Commission to enrol in a Diploma in Nursing Administration at the Royal College of Nursing Australia in Melbourne. Through this course, Margaret gained a different perspective of health care and hospitals and it introduced her to new networks in health care.

In 1975, Matron Betty Lawson selected Margaret to undertake a three-month study tour to the USA, the UK and Europe, to examine maternity services and care choices available to women. Co-funded by The Royal Women’s Hospital and the Victorian Hospitals Commission, this experience had a profound impact on Margaret. She visited sites in San Francisco, Ruth Lubic’s Birth Centre in New York, and she participated in a maternity program organised by Dorothea Lang of the American College of [Nurse] Midwives at the John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. She then travelled to Lausanne in Switzerland for the International Congress of Midwives (ICM) where she met up with 50 other Australian midwives, including Pamela Hayes from Sydney. After the conference, Margaret visited maternity units in the UK and the Royal College of Midwives in London. She wound up her study tour examining services in Turkey and Greece. This tour gave Margaret immense insights. She returned to Australia no longer identifying as a nurse – Margaret saw herself as a midwife.

Subsequently, Margaret concentrated on advocacy for the midwifery profession. The Australian group of midwives who met in Lausanne in 1975 continued to connect. In 1978, they formed the National Special Interest Group of Midwives (later the National Midwives Association/NMA) under the umbrella of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation (RANF). Margaret Peters was NMA’s inaugural President, holding that office until 1983. This group later formed the Australian College of Midwives Inc.

In 1978, Margaret and several NMA members attended the ICM’s Congress in Israel. There, they discovered that Australia had official representation at ICM meetings via the RANF, but the representative was not a member of their NMA group. NMA members learned that five years earlier, in 1972, the RANF had joined the ICM after being encouraged to do so by Miss Marjorie Bayes, an English midwife and at that time the ICM’s Secretary. Membership of ICM entitled the RANF to send a representative to ICM Council meetings. The RANF’s inaugural nominee was Miss Lesley Barclay who Margaret and her NMA colleagues had met in Israel. For reasons that remain unclear, and despite the fact that the NMA was acting under the umbrella of the RANF, neither organisation had communicated with the other on international advocacy for midwifery. These two disparate, but representative, pathways explain longstanding confusion about claimed “firsts” and “founders” in the history of midwifery’s professionalising movement in twentieth century Australia.

At the ICM’s Congress held in England in 1981, Margaret Peters with Pamela Hayes and others bid successfully to host the 1984 congress in Sydney. That year, Margaret was appointed President of the ICM. She was also elected to the Victorian Hospitals Superannuation Board, its first female Board Member. She was on this board for 13 years - two terms as an elected representative and three years as a government appointee. These appointments and the successful Sydney Congress in 1984 were further catalysts in Margaret’s career trajectory. After the Congress, she was immediate Past President of ICM. In 1993 and 1996 she was elected to the ICM Board. Throughout these years, Margaret continued to work as a Deputy Director of Nursing at the Women’s Hospital.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Margaret extended her advocacy for mothers’ and babies’ health, and midwifery. She spoke worldwide about the World Health Organisation’s Maternal and Neonatal Health Strategy and its campaign for Safe Motherhood to improve skills of childbirth attendants everywhere. She was a member of Technical Advisory Committee for the International Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health. As President of UNICEF Australia, Margaret shepherded the introduction of the Baby Friendly Hospital initiative. By establishing best practice standards, this program was designed to lift breastfeeding rates around the world. From 1985 to 1990, in Australia, Margaret was a member of the NHMRC’s expert panel on women’s health, formerly the Women’s Health Committee.

Margaret contributed to Victoria’s pivotal Birthing Services Review as a Working Party Member for midwifery education and accreditation, the outcome of which was published in 1990 as *Having a Baby in Victoria*. She was involved in planning health sciences education in the tertiary sector with the Bendigo College of Advanced Education (1985) and later the La Trobe University Postgraduate Course Advisory Committee for Bendigo campus. In 1986 she was a Course Advisory Committee member of several programs at RMIT University: the Master of Public Health, Graduate Diploma in Midwifery, Graduate Diploma in Child Health and Family Nursing, and Graduate Certificate and Diploma in Gerontological Nursing, and with Victoria University of Technology at St Albans on its Programme Advisory Committee.

Margaret was a committee of management member for the Health Issues Centre at La Trobe University, and an Advisory Committee member with the Centre for the Study of Mothers and Children’s Health headed by Professor Judith Lumley, initially at Monash University then La Trobe University. With Professor Lumley, Margaret was in Alice Springs at the first meeting of the Iluka Project which aimed to establish a birthing service for Australian Aboriginal women. Margaret was a specialty editor for midwifery and nursing in the *International Journal of Perinatal and Neonatal Medicine*. In the professional sphere of nursing, Margaret was involved in distributing scholarship funds via the Florence Nightingale Committee Victorian Branch and the Centaur Nurses Memorial Educational Trust Fund. Margaret was awarded an OAM in 1985 for services to midwifery education and practice and in 1996 The Royal Women’s Hospital awarded her a Woodward Family Medal of Excellence. She retired from the Royal Women’s Hospital in 1997.

Margaret Peter’s career and retirement activities are detailed in her Curriculum Vitae which is part of the Royal Women’s Hospital Archives Accession Number A 2022\_13\_004. This biography was prepared following an oral history interview with Margaret Peters in July 2022 by Madonna Grehan.

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## References

Margaret Peters, Curriculum Vitae, Oral History Recording and Transcript of Interview by Madonna Grehan, RWH A 2022\_13\_004.

# Place, Jessica (1909 - 1994)

RN

*Born* 4 January 1909  
Daylesford, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 1994

*Occupation* Nurse and Nurse Educator

## Summary

Compiled by Ann Westmore PhD, August 2006

Jessica McBean Place, RN, nurse educator, helped rejuvenate gynaecological nurse training at the Royal Women's Hospital and introduced a refresher course for nurses that encouraged many former nurses to return to the profession. She was an excellent writer and communicator and composed The Royal Women's Hospital Midwives' Pledge.

## Details

Jessica Place was born on 4 January 1909 at Daylesford and was educated at the local Catholic (Holy Cross) convent, although her family's religious affiliation was the Church of England. From an early age she wanted a career despite her father preferring that 'his daughters remain home, and sew a fine seam, until they were handed over in matrimony'.

She eventually gained her father's approval to study nursing provided she did her training at the local hospital under the guidance and observation of the family doctor who was mentor and friend to the family. Accordingly, she started her nursing career at the Daylesford and District Hospital in the early 1930s and, through its affiliation with the Women's Hospital, came to Melbourne in 1932 to complete her training.

### Training at the Women's

She undertook her midwifery training at the Women's, starting in August 1933, under the motherly eye of Matron Margaret McDonald, whom she found was kind to young and inexperienced pupil nurses. She just missed out on receiving the payment of 5 shillings a week offered to midwifery trainees from April 1934. Although she enjoyed midwifery, she was attracted more to gynaecology and general nursing.

In 1935, she was appointed to the Women's Hospital staff as a junior operating theatre sister, where she learned on the job 'by trial and error'. Reflecting later on this phase of her career she said "It is astounding to look back on now, but it was due to the honoraries who asked that I be appointed to this position and they agreed with Miss McDonald that they would teach me. They were true to their word, and I owe a great debt of gratitude to the honoraries of those days who held true to their word and taught me all that I know in the theatre."

One of the honoraries whose teaching she valued most was Dr Bertram Milne 'Old Bertie' Sutherland (1877-1951), a member of the honorary medical staff from 1914 to 1938 inclusive, and its chairman from 1930-38. He was well regarded for his kindness, wisdom and reliable counsel, and his meticulous attention to ethical standards. For these reasons, he was appointed to the hospital's Committee of Management on his retirement in 1938, remaining in the position until his death in 1951.

With support from "Old Bertie" and other honoraries, Place was soon the Senior Theatre Sister which involved being on call every second night and for 48 hours every second weekend. Though the rate of pay was hardly princely, at £2/7/6 a week, she saved enough for a single fare to England together with spending money of £30. Travelling with a colleague, she left Australia early in 1938 aboard the Jarvis Bay leaving her parents 'appalled and dismayed but, she suspected, secretly delighted'. She nursed for a time at Hartford Hill Chest Hospital, Warwickshire, then at the exclusive St. Thomas' Hospital in London, and at a hospital in South Africa, before returning to Australia via Britain. Her family and colleagues treasured her letters, as she had the knack of describing experiences so vividly that they, too, felt they were on the trip.

### Teaching at the Women's

Her communication skills set her apart and when she returned to Melbourne towards the end of 1940 she was rapidly installed as tutor in the hospital's gynaecological section. The appointment came about after Place visited 'Old Bertie' in his Collins St rooms. No sooner had he greeted her than he whisked her away in his car to the Women's Hospital. He headed straight for McDonald's office and said, 'Good morning Matron, here is your new tutor', a clear indication that some honorary staff had a strong influence on the choice of nurse teachers at the time. Twenty minutes later Place left the office, equipped with a text book and a date on which to start her new duties, 4 January 1941, her 32nd birthday.

Diminutive in stature and always perfectly dressed with small precise writing to match, Place was a much loved teacher of both postgraduate nurses and general nursing students. She virtually never raised her voice, relying on approval and example to get the most out of her students. 'If you'd failed to drape a patient properly for a procedure, you felt so ashamed,' said Billie Lindsay, (née Snowdon) who graduated from the combined training school for nurses at the Women's and Prince Henry's Hospitals in 1953.

Lindsay remembered Place for her warmth, caring and enthusiasm and her expectation of high standards in behaviour, courtesy and dress. 'She also set high standards for knowledge and written work, insisting that no pupil nurses would be allowed to sit for an examination until they reached a higher level in practice tests than would be needed for a pass,' she said.

Lindsay, who became Assistant Director of Nursing at Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, had tremendous admiration and respect for Place, and used her as a model for her own approach to nursing. From Place she picked up the dictum, 'Never ask

someone to do something you won't do yourself' and so pupil nurses knew the expectation was that they would fulfil any and all instructions given. Lindsay also adopted Place's motto to 'Be fair, firm and friendly, but never familiar'.

Lindsay recalled that Place's empathy for patients was conveyed in the instructions she gave about feeding patients with a visual impairment. Place considered it essential that nurses describe to patients how the tray was arranged and to ask if they liked to be fed their meat and vegetables together or separately, she said.

#### Lessons for life

To Place, thoughtfulness for others counted a great deal, and she could be relied upon to remember details of the smallest treats others enjoyed. Lindsay was touched that she remembered her penchant for liquorice straps, for example. She advised pupil nurses to discontinue nursing if they ever found themselves becoming hardened, a state of mind which implied the presence of a barrier between the nurse and her colleagues or patients, whether in terms of acceptance of them or of the patient's illness.

Another nursing colleague, [Deputy Matron] Jean Crameri, said that over the years, Place left her mark on countless nurses who benefited from her dedicated, skilled teaching. Many of these nurses remained her good friends.

The medical staff, too, admired her greatly. Dr Gytha Betheras who started her career in obstetrics and gynaecology in the late 1950s before establishing clinics in family planning and sexual counselling in the 1970s, said that with Betty Lawson as Matron and Place as Tutor Sister, post-gynaecological nurse training at the hospital was rejuvenated from the 1950s onwards.

Place drafted the Royal Women's Hospital Midwives' Pledge at Lawson's request to mark the first Midwifery School graduation in September 1967. It embodies nursing ideals in the style of the Nightingale pledge for nurses, reading as follows;

"Before this assembly, and in the presence of my colleagues, I pledge myself to practise my profession of midwifery with dignity and honour. To the medical profession I offer my allegiance and co-operation, and under their guidance I will exercise with diligence and care my nursing knowledge and accomplishments to ensure the well-being of mother and babe. It is my sincere hope that, both as a woman and as a midwife, I may be granted the grace of compassion, that I may comfort and support my patient in her hour of stress, and care for both mother and babe with kindness and understanding."

Place was the only nurse ever invited to give the Tracy Maund Memorial Lecture (TMML), inaugurated by Drs Frank Forster and J. W. ('Hoppy') Johnstone in 1964. In giving the 7th TMML on 10 March 1970, Place warned that "We have an impressive and beautiful hospital but great hospitals can become dehumanised machines, the individual but a bed number – the sick human being just so much clinical material. It is NOT the splendour of the architecture or the lavishness of the equipment that makes a hospital great – although both augment its efficiency - it is the quality of the medical and nursing services offered to the patient." The risk of mistaking style for substance meant the hospital might be entering its "most dangerous period", she added.

#### Retirement

Place worked part-time from early 1971 and retired in mid-1976 having suffered some ill-health the previous year. At her farewell function, Matron Betty Lawson described her as "a total RWH product" who had taught 343 students, many of whom had themselves joined the hospital's staff. "Sister Place has found the teaching of nursing aides to be very rewarding and our results bear out the effective teaching she has given this important nursing group." Lawson also credited Place with introducing a Refresher Course for nurses in June 1964, "as a result of which 236 nurses have been re-orientated to nursing".

In her farewell speech, Place displayed her typical warmth, musing on the tremendous number of pleasant associations with the hospital she retained, not only with medical and nursing staff members and paramedical units, but also with countless others who worked around the hospital. "I've had marvellous friends in the store, the maintenance department, among porters and maids and I'll remember them all with great affection." On the issue of how she would spend her retirement she said, "No previous experience. Never done it before". In the event, she mastered the required skills, living until 1994, well into her nineties.

#### Sources:

'The Avenue of Years' Tracy Maund Memorial lecture 1970 A91/32/113;  
Personal communication, Billie Lindsay to Ann Westmore;  
Tape of Jean Crameri's farewell function on 4 July 1975 (RWH Archives, not yet accessioned);  
Speech by Gytha Betheras at Betty Lawson memorial service, 12 April, 2006;  
Anon, 'Sr. Place to Retire', RWH Bulletin, 9, 5, 1976, p.1.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Jean Crameri's farewell function, 1975, Unaccessioned; Royal Women's Hospital Archives [ [Details...](#) ].

## Published Resources

### Books

- Place, Jessica, *The Avenue of Years*, Royal Women's Hospital, Carlton, 1972, 18 pp. [ [Details...](#) ]

### Journal Articles

- Anon, 'Sr. Place to Retire', *Bulletin*, vol. 9, no. 5, Royal Women's Hospital, 1976, p. 1.

# Prendergast, James Joseph (1858 - 1917)

M.D.(R.U.I), M.R.C.S. (Eng)

<i>Born</i>	21 April 1858 Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	1917 Moonee Ponds, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Medical Practitioner

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

JAMES JOSEPH PRENDERGAST  
(1892 - 1895)

James Prendergast, son of James Joseph Prendergast and Mary Cogan, was born in Bourke Street, Melbourne, on 21st April 1858, at the Assembly Hotel of which his father was the licensee. He went to Britain for his medical education, being one time a student at Guy's Hospital, and in 1884 gained the M.D. Royal University of Ireland as well as the M.R.C.S. Eng., proceeding M.D. (Melb.) ad eundem Gradum in 1886.

He returned to Melbourne in 1885 and was appointed to the Women's Staff in 1892 when his address was 24 Collins Street. His term at the Hospital lasted only three years and later Prendergast went to Tasmania, there practising on the West Coast, mainly at Tullah - a mining town now extinct - and Strahan, where he was the Port Medical Officer.

Subsequently he was in Western Australia for a short period before returning to Melbourne where he died at Moonee Ponds in 1917, leaving no family.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Professorial Unit

(No content)

# Rawlings, William Joseph (1903 - )

**Born** 22 May 1903  
Carlton, Victoria, Australia

**Occupation** Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne. Author unknown.

WILLIAM JOSEPH RAWLINGS  
(1947 - 1963)

William Joseph Rawlings was born on 22nd May, 1903, the second son of Charles Henry and Margaret Mary Rawlings who lived in Drummond Street, Carlton, in a direct line with the labour ward of the Women's Hospital, Melbourne, in those days in the Genevieve Ward wing, a site now occupied by the Kumm-Stephens wing.

His early education was received at first from the Christian Brothers at St. George's School in Drummond Street, and later he went to St. Augustine's School in Yarraville where the influence and tuition of Sister Benedicta had a far-reaching effect on his future, not least in securing a bursary that led him to further his education. During these years the boy often played in the grounds of Melbourne University, where the fine old buildings, especially those with large windows and arrays of jars and specimen bottles, proved a source of excitement and veneration. The boy remembered his interest also in military funerals passing along Swanston (then Madeline) Street to the Melbourne General Cemetery, the soldiers in their blue trousers and red jackets, with pipe-clayed helmets and belts. During these years too, in 1917, his father was killed in action in France, where his elder brother was still serving.

A growing awareness of an ancestor, Bartholomew Gosnold (d.1607) - the navigator who discovered Cape Cod and founded Jamestown in Virginia, caused an increasing interest in the sea, taking young Bill first from the boy scouts to the sea scouts, and then to the Merchant Service Cadets with the intention of a life at sea. He even commenced as deck cadet on the S.S. Eumerella and it was intended that this be followed by apprenticeship on a four-masted barque carrying wheat to England in wartime. However, in 1918 came the offer of a much-prized bursary which was to take him to the Marist Brothers's Assumption College at Kilmore for four years, as a member of the first of the annual groups of five to go thence from the Yarraville school. At the same time, a kindly marine superintendent counseled him to accept the further schooling, while concentrating on geometry and trigonometry with an eye to future navigation examinations. With the passage of two years Bill came to realize that the Captain had really been dissuading him from a life on the sea.

Then Repatriation and Newman scholarships made possible the medical course at Melbourne University, where from 1922 the alphabetical order in the desks ran Eric Price, Louis Rabinov, Bill Rawlings and E. Graeme Robertson. His university career was most distinguished by boxing prowess, wherefrom he could retire after four years as undefeated Australian University Lightweight champion. He received the first full Blue ever awarded in boxing.

After graduation in 1927 he joined the staff of the Ballarat Base Hospital, being Medical Superintendent from 1929 to 1931. He pioneered bronchography and intravenous pyelography in this area.

A McCaughey travelling scholarship for sons of deceased first world war servicemen took him to the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, where he obtained the Diploma of Gynaecology and Obstetrics in 1932. This was at the time when Bethel Solomons was Master and A.F. Dixon Professor of Anatomy. From here he crossed to England to secure his M.C.O.G. (the membership of what is now the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists), the conferment of which was delayed to 1933 by the need for suitable case histories to be sent from Ballarat.

During his sojourn among the centres of London he married Miss Mabelle Northey Thomas of Ballarat. In 1933 they went to St. Mary's Hospital, Manchester, where Bill met his lifelong correspondent William Fletcher Shaw and became the first Australian to be Resident Obstetrical Surgeon. In this post he was succeeded by another Australian - Roland Natrass of Perth.

After his return to Australia he held a few posts as locum tenens and then as surgeon and reliever, from 1936 to 1938, joined a group practicing in the Oakleigh, Carnegie and Glen Iris district. From here, to foster his special interest in obstetrics and gynaecology, he commenced practice on his own in Rochester Road, Canterbury and in Collins Street. At this time he was invited to join an Intermediate Legacy group in which he assisted at the boys' camps.

All these interests were interrupted by a term in the Army from 1942 to 1945. After return from New Guinea he resumed practice in both Canterbury and Collins Street and was nominated by Lieutenant-General (later Sir Stanley G.) Savage for senior membership of Legacy.

In 1947 he was appointed an Obstetric Surgeon to Out-patients at The (Royal) Women's Hospital, Melbourne, and soon came to be interested in the problem of the women afflicted with recurrent abortion. He also served as Secretary to the Victorian State Committee during some of the formative years in Australia of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. From 1952 to 1967 he was Federal President of the Australian branch of the Institute of British Surgical Technicians. In 1953 he became an Honorary Obstetric Surgeon to In-patients, a position he held until his retirement in 1963 at which time he was appointed an Honorary Consulting Surgeon to the Hospital. He also ceased practice in obstetrics and gynaecology in this year.

A strong personal characteristic was a clinical curiosity, an apt readiness to embrace and evaluate any new therapeutic method that offered itself. His early papers considered the role of Nembutal in Midwifery and the expectation of relief from the use of Magnesium in Dysmenorrhoea. But the great example of this questing came from his special clinic at The Royal Women's Hospital for the prevention of Habitual Abortion. Here his enthusiasm was considerable, his personal interest in each patient and her problems much appreciated by the individual. He encouraged, cajoled, admonished, sometimes almost compelled them to carry on. There were always new progestational agents appearing for use and each received spirited trial.

From this work there seemed to be considerable success. Enormous effort, prolonged and detailed, was directed to the hormonal side of pregnancy, often in collaboration with Vera Krieger, D.Sc., seeking a pattern among the individual differences of the case histories encountered. The worth of pregnanediol excretion in such patients, the effect on it of the various hormonal preparations on trial, occupied much time and provoked much puzzlement, for nothing definite would emerge.

I always remember summing-up by a distinguished overseas visitor, after hearing one such attempt at explanation of a case series. He said he did not think the undoubtedly beneficial effects on the series had come from anything that had been done by hormone therapy. Rather it was, he felt, a matter of "What woman would dare to miscarry?" in the face of a strong male personality so intensely personally interested in her destiny.

Bill also became enthusiastically interested in the work on sheep reproduction being done by Dr. N.W. Moore at the McCaughey Memorial Institute at Jerilderie. In consequence numerous weekend expeditions were made there, to see if there was anything that could prove applicable to the infertile human.

I like to remember Bill as a slim, alert man, with a brisk walk and a military moustache, ever interested to talk over a problem and to encourage his juniors. He always struck me as a man of many friendships, all of which he kept, as Samuel Johnson stipulated, in "constant repair". It was regrettable that his years of retirement were marred, almost from the beginning, by considerable worsening cardio-vascular dysfunction. The cerebral vascular complications that darkened his last weeks occurred at the end of a particularly bad year of recurrent ill-health.

Dr. Rawlings is survived by his widow and their adopted daughter Barbara Rose Campbell.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives



# Rawson, Marianne (1855 - 1934)

RRC

*Born* 1855  
Avenel, Victoria, Australia

*Died* August 1934  
Caulfield, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Nurse

*Alternative Names*

- O'Ferrall, Mrs John

*Summary*

© Biography by Madonna Grehan PhD 2010.

Marianne Rawson worked as a Head Nurse and Sister at The Women's Hospital in the 1890s. A skilled nurse and administrator, she was highly respected by the Hospital's Ladies Committee of Management and the Medical Staff. Marianne Rawson was one of three Australian nurses awarded the Royal Red Cross (1st Class) for service in South Africa during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). At the onset of the First World War in 1914, Miss Rawson was consulted by the wife of Australia's Governor General on how Australian women could contribute practically to the comfort of troops.

Marianne Rawson was a member of the Leicester [Royal] Infirmary Nurses' League and a Life Member of the Royal British Nurses Association (RBNA). Her career path, recorded in the RBNA registers is as follows:

'Cert Leicester Infirmary 1887-1890; Cert Rotunda Hosp, Dublin Nov 1890-May 1891; Priv Nursing May 1891-Dec 1892; Women's Hospital, Carlton Melbourne Dec 1892-Jun 1895; Private Hosp Kalgoorlie to 1896; Govt Hosp Kalgoorlie (Matron) 1896-1898; White Feather Hosp Kanowna (Matron) 1898-1900. Supt. of Victoria's Nursing Staff, South Africa 1900-1902.'

## Details

Marianne Rawson was born in the Victorian town of Avenel, the first of seven girls, to Solomon Rawson and Hanorah Meskell. Her only brother Thomas died at the age of 18. According to Rawson family descendants, Marianne worked for a local landowner in an administrative capacity and later accompanied this family on a visit to England where she trained as a nurse.

### Training as a nurse

Marianne Rawson's first training stint was one year in infectious diseases nursing at the Coventry Fever Hospital, later called the City Isolation Hospital. Located at Stoney Stanton Road it catered for around sixty-five patients. In August 1887, Marianne entered Leicester's Infirmary for training. The Infirmary operated the Nightingale model,<sup>(1)</sup> which catered for two categories of pupil nurse: Regular Probationers who did not pay for training, and Lady Probationers who paid for training but trained for a much shorter time.<sup>(2)</sup> Lady Probationers were expected to be educated and of impeccable character. In the Hospital, they were to act as role models for the regular probationers. Marianne was accepted as a Lady Probationer (First Class) and was considered to be a 'very reliable' nurse.

During 1888, Marianne took lectures in practical dispensing and pharmacy. She passed her examination, achieving 2nd Prize in the pharmacy class and was awarded her Certificate in Dispensing from Leicester Infirmary on 16 January 1889. After training, Marianne was employed at the Infirmary as a Staff Nurse until September 1890. Marianne also took charge of the hospital at some point, assuming the position of housekeeper. As well as running the day to day functions of the institution, the housekeeper was required to assist in the Hospital's Dispensary. There, Marianne's education in pharmacy was put into practice.<sup>(3)</sup>

From the Leicester Infirmary, Miss Rawson moved to Ireland where she trained in midwifery and the care of women from November 1890 until May 1891 at the renowned Rotunda Lying-in Hospital in Dublin. Her Rotunda certificate awarded after an examination, entitled the holder 'to practise as a Ladies Nursetender (or Midwife)'.

### The Women's Hospital Melbourne

Miss Rawson followed midwifery training with two years in private nursing. In late December 1892, having applied for the position of Infirmary Department Sister at The Women's Hospital, Carlton in Melbourne, she was judged the superior of three candidates.<sup>(4)</sup> At that time, the Women's Hospital's Ladies Committee of Management (Ladies Committee) vetted every applicant for suitability. The Ladies Committee was concerned to engage nurses with good character references.<sup>(5)</sup> In Marianne Rawson's case, her credentials and qualifications were impeccable and throughout her time at The Women's was a highly-regarded member of staff.

For instance, in May 1894 Matron Charlotte Findlay could not 'obtain an experienced nurse in answer to the advertisement for Infirmary night duty'. Findlay directed Miss Rawson to take the position of Infirmary Night Nurse,<sup>(6)</sup> a decision with which the Ladies Committee wholeheartedly agreed. The Ladies Committee noted that 'implicit confidence can be placed' in Nurse Rawson to fulfil the role. Just one month later in June 1894, Miss Rawson was granted 'leave of absence from her duties in the Infirmary Department' to take on the position of Head Midwifery Nurse at a salary of £55 per annum.<sup>(7)</sup> Twelve months on, Miss Rawson resigned from that position, news which was received 'with regret' by the Ladies Committee.<sup>(8)</sup>

Going by RBNA membership records, Marianne Rawson next nursed in Western Australia for five years until 1900. In the second half of 1895, she was one of many women from the eastern colonies who answered a call for nurses to tend typhoid cases on the goldfields.(9) Miss Rawson sailed to Albany, Western Australia, aboard the *Innamincka*, intending to work in Kalgoorlie at a private hospital owned and operated by her friend, Mrs Mecham [also written as Meecham and Meacham] a fellow trained nurse.(10)

Mrs Mecham's hospital was expected to accommodate the season's typhoid patients, work for which Nurse Rawson was said to have been particularly well prepared owing to her experience in fever nursing.(11) Miss Rawson arrived in Kalgoorlie in September 1895, but Mrs Meecham's hospital had not been erected. Marianne Rawson was gainfully employed when she took charge of Kalgoorlie's Government Hospital following the sudden resignation of its untrained matron.

Throughout 1896, Marianne worked at Mrs Mecham's private hospital. For some months in 1897, she again took charge of Kalgoorlie's Government Hospital.(12) In August 1897, the Kalgoorlie Western Argus newspaper announced her imminent departure for Victoria, reporting that grateful ex-patients and their families presented her with a purse of sovereigns as a mark of their deep appreciation.(13) Marianne's sojourn in her home colony was brief.

In 1898, she returned to West Australia as Matron of the hospital at White Feather (Kanowna), a gold mining settlement about 20 kilometres from Kalgoorlie. Just like Kalgoorlie, Kanowna was affected by typhoid and the hospital had its share of mining accident cases.(14) By the end of 1899, when Marianne relinquished that position, the newly-constructed White Feather General Hospital could accommodate 50 patients.(15)

Marianne's next career move was to the Colony of Victoria in February 1900 as Matron of Melbourne's Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Children,(16) but she resigned almost immediately to superintend a contingent of nurses accompanying the Third [Bushmen's] Contingent to the war in South Africa. The nurses were engaged by the Imperial Government under the terms of a cablegram from the High Commissioner of the Cape, dated 3 February 1900.(17) With pay at £40 per annum plus board and lodging, their conditions matched those of the British Army Nursing Service Reserve's nurses.(18)

The nurses were farewelled from Melbourne on Sunday 10 March 1900 by Janet Lady Clarke, Lady Sargood and other members of Melbourne social circles. Miss Rawson and her nine nurses, dressed in their grey and red uniforms, were each presented with a purse containing 17 sovereigns.

The Women's Hospital's Ladies Committee marked the departure of the nurses for South Africa too, noting that 'several members of the contingent have held positions in the service of this hospital'.(19) As well as Sister Rawson, Sister Ellen Walter (Infirmary operating theatre nurse), and Nurse Ethel Mary Bernhard Smith had been employed at The Women's. And so the Ladies Committee sent the nurses a basket of flowers as a gesture of their good wishes. The basket was decorated with a large royal blue ribbon which read: 'To the Victorian Nurses from the Womans [sic] Hospital Committee, March 10th 1900'.

#### Service in South Africa

The contingent sailed to Rhodesia with the Third Bushmen's Contingent, aboard *Euryalus*, disembarking at the port of Beira on 3 April 1900. Over the next eighteen months, the nurses served at varying locations: Bulawayo (where photographs of Marianne and her colleague Ellen Walter were taken), Hillside, Kimberley, Mafeking, and Charter.(20)

In a letter to home in July 1900, Sister Ellen Walter explained the working conditions in Bulawayo where a temporary hospital was established at a recreation ground. Sister Walter wrote: 'Sister Julia Anderson and I are doing all the nursing work at present as it takes Sister Marianne Rawson all her time looking after the housekeeping'.(21) Conditions were difficult and the work was hard. In August 1900, one of Miss Rawson's fellow Victorian nurses, Frances (Fanny) Hines died at Bulawayo Hospital from pneumonia.(22)

After sixteen months of service in South Africa, Marianne Rawson returned to Australia from Cape Town with Sister Julia Anderson on board the Blue Anchor liner "*Warrigal*", arriving on 2 August 1901.(23) Marianne was one of three Australian nurses to be awarded the Royal Red Cross (RRC) for 'good work in the late war' on the recommendation of Lord Kitchener, Commanding Officer of the Imperial Forces.(24) She was presented with her award in September 1903 by His Excellency Frederick Bedford, Governor of Western Australia. A Mayoral 'at home' was held in the Miners Institute of Kalgoorlie in honour of the occasion, for which Marianne was attired in her grey and scarlet uniform.(25)

In 1903 Marianne married John O'Ferrall (also written as O'Farrell, O'Ferrale) of Melbourne.(26) She subsequently retired from nursing following her marriage but stayed engaged with nursing especially in Britain via membership of two organisations: the Leicester [Royal] Infirmary Nurses' League and the Royal British Nurses Association (RBNA). Marianne had joined the RBNA, an embryonic professional association for nurses in July 1893 while at The Women's and held Life Membership of the organisation.(27)

Marianne was active in the Kalgoorlie community via the Church of England parish (28) and the Kalgoorlie Art Society.(29) Newspapers recorded her attendance at numerous social events, including official functions, parties, race meetings and balls. In early 1908, Mrs O'Ferrall decided to leave Kalgoorlie 'for good' and return to Victoria.(30)

In 1914, Sister Rawson was living in Melbourne. When war broke out in Europe in August of that year, she was invited to confer with the Governor General's wife, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, on 'the patriotic movement' which Lady Helen was establishing, an organisation which metamorphosed into the Australian Red Cross. Miss Rawson, who one newspaper described as being a

'DISTINGUISHED NURSE', was offered her first hand experience on what Australian women could do to support the departing troops.(31)

Her advice was practical. On the subject of knitted socks, for example, Sister Rawson explained that

'They are not universally worn and men, especially Australian men, would prefer cashmere socks. A Scotchman who is used to wearing knitted socks from babyhood might look upon them as a useful gift, but not one man out of ten would wear them for choice. I should think cashmere socks would be a better investment. Women who have offered to knit articles might make dozens of washers, done in loose stitch. These are always useful.'

Aside from washers, Sister Rawson recommended: hot water bags, towels, poultice jackets, squares of linen for handkerchiefs, pyjamas and cushions for travelling soldiers. Also useful were 'bales of flannel, flannelette and butter cloth [for poultices], and heaps of safety pins. As she put it 'In an emergency a nurse can do good deal with a roll of flannel and a few safety pins'.(32)

Marianne Rawson worked as a nurse for around 20 years and her name is connected with high praise. In Kalgoorlie in 1897, she was described as showing 'a sympathetic disposition in all cases of distress'(33) and having given 'kind and indefatigable nursing' to all of her patients.(34) Indicative of the esteem held for Marianne Rawson was that newspaper articles referred to her as a nurse, irrespective of the occasion. She was referred to as 'one of Mrs Mecham's nursing staff'.(35) Even after her marriage to John O'Ferrall, newspapers tended to refer to her as 'Sister Rawson'.(36)

Marianne O'Ferrall died in August 1934, aged 79, in Melbourne at 12 Burrindi St Caulfield. "The Argus" newspaper noted that Sister Rawson's passing recalled 'an early and heroic chapter in the annals of the Australian nursing service'.(37)

#### Acknowledgements

This biography has been produced with the assistance of Ellen Hayes, great niece of Marianne Rawson.

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# Robertson, Allen William David (c. 1866 - 1954)

M.D. (Melb.), F.R.A.C.S.

<i>Born</i>	c. 1866 Deniliquin, New South Wales, Australia
<i>Died</i>	8 November 1954
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner, Obstetrician, Pharmacist and Surgeon

## Details

Written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.  
Transcription

ALLEN WILLIAM DAVID ROBERTSON  
(1910 - 1931)

Few Victorian medical men can have had such varied interest over a long life as Allen Robertson, who died on November 9, 1954, in his eighty-eighth year. Press notices following his death recalled Dr. Robertson's effective chairmanship of the Australian Board of Cricket Control during the bitter bodyline controversy, with the hallowed Marylebone Cricket Club's tradition of sportsmanship thrown into critical question by the Australian Board. In other fields, his qualities of tenacity, patience and firmness of will stood him in equally good stead.

Allen William David Robertson had to work hard for everything he achieved. Born in the Riverina town of Deniliquin, where his father was manager of a local general store, he was early left an orphan. An aunt brought him to Melbourne, and until the age of thirteen years he attended King's College, a small private school in the suburb of Fitzroy, long since defunct. For the next seven years he worked in a Flinders Lane warehouse.

Young Robertson had by then determined to become a doctor, but, being without funds, decided that the best route to medicine was by way of pharmacy. To this end becoming apprenticed to H.C. Armstrong, a Melbourne chemist with branches in a number of large New South Wales country towns, Robertson served a term in each of those branches and thus acquired a wide knowledge of the countryside. This peripatetic existence did not affect his studies, for in 1895 he won the pharmacy gold medal, and matriculated in the University of Melbourne for entrance to medicine. He never told the full story of his pecuniary struggles to complete the course, but they must have been great, for towards the end of it finances became so straitened that he was forced to accept, for twelve months, a position as relieving pharmacist in an lonely outback town in Western Australia. Robertson had reached the age of thirty-six years on graduating M.B. in 1903, being placed ninth in a good year which included such well-known names as Douglas Stephens, B.T. Zwar and Harvey Sutton. In the latter part of the course he was resident in Queen's College, for whose distinguished master, Dr. E.H. Sugden, he always retained a high regard. Sugden of Queen's, MacFarland of Ormond, and Leeper of Trinity were the three great men who, in their several ways, brought to Melbourne the best traditions of British university life and laid the foundations of that residential collegiate system of which Melbourne is rightly proud. Sugden, a lovable Yorkshireman of wide humanity and culture, and world famous as a Shakespearean scholar, exercised a profound influence on resident undergraduates at Queen's during his long mastership.

Robertson served terms as resident medical officer at Saint Vincent's and the Women's Hospitals, and then was for two years superintendent of the Austin Hospital at Heidelberg, in those years a semi-rural suburb of much beauty. It was here, on the banks of the Yarra River, that Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and Charles Conder had first painted the real Australian sunlight and shadow. Afterwards, Robertson bought the general practice of Dr. Walter Mc Gibbon, in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, remaining there for fifteen years, when he became a Collins Street consultant in diseases of women. During the Brunswick period he was a demonstrator in anatomy, and held for three years a research scholarship in anthropology, under Richard J.A. Berry, who had come from Edinburgh a few years before to the chair of anatomy. Berry had an especial interest in the skull and brain, and it was he who directed Robertson's attention to the craniometry of Australian, Tasmanian and New Guinea aborigines, for a thesis on which subject he was awarded the M.D. in 1910. He became a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in 1928. Robertson wrote a paper on the anatomy of the sinu-ventricular system of the heart, and made occasional contributions on diseases of women, but claimed little distinction to spoken or written artistry, and developed no outstanding reputation as a clinical teacher. As a gynaecologist he was regarded as sound and sure, and innate caution forswearing risks of any kind. In 1910 Robertson was one of two honorary midwifery surgeons elected to the Women's Hospital; the other was the late J.H. Nattrass. They were the first appointees under the electoral college system generally adopted in Melbourne teaching hospitals today; previously, all appointments had been made on the votes of the hospital subscribers, a system possessing obvious demerit, and the cause of much heart-burning in unsuccessful applicants. At that time the senior surgeons of the Women's Hospital included M.U. O'Sullivan, Rothwell Adam and Felix Meyer, all impressive personalities long to be remembered in Melbourne. Robertson advanced to the chairmanship of the staff in 1928, held until his retirement in 1931. But over the succeeding twenty-three years he remained sincerely attached to the Women's Hospital and was present at its annual meeting only a few weeks before his death, keenly attentive to the proceedings. Friends realized then that his life was drawing to a close, although few understood that he was approaching ninety years of age.

Convinced that a medical man's first loyalty should be in the British Medical Association, Robertson gave devoted service as a councillor of the Victorian Branch, which he had represented at the International Medical Congress in London in 1911. This was the great meeting presided over by Sir Thomas Barlow, and Robertson was profoundly impressed by that Nestor of British medicine who died ten years ago, just a few months before his one hundredth birthday. As a senior vice-president, only ill health prevented Robertson from attaining the highest position in the Victorian Branch, his place as President in 1935 being taken by the late Major-

General Rupert Downes. He was for nearly thirty years a representative of the graduates in medicine on the Standing Committee of Convocation of the University of Melbourne.

Robertson's interests ranged widely beyond the purely professional, not the least being cricket and its administration. An enthusiast for the game from childhood, he became president of the Melbourne University Cricket Club in 1914, and, also in that year, the club's delegate to the Victorian Cricket Association. Five years later he was appointed one of the three Victorian representatives on the Board of Control, taking the place of Dr. Ramsay Mailer; so greatly did he value this association with international cricket, that he remained thereon until three months before his end.

In 1930 Robertson was elected Chairman of the Board, succeeding R.A. Oxlade, little suspecting then that two years later the combined efforts of a young Nottingham miner and an inflexible Wykhamist and Oxonian would light a fiery cross from Leeuwin to Cape York because of their grim determination to wrest the ashes from Australia. Robertson could not bring himself to accept any particular malignity in the fast bowler – of whose accuracy and beautiful rhythm he was an admirer – the dour captain of other members of the M.C.C. team. Many believe that it was in considerable part his wise and tempered counsel which resolved the unhappy conflict of ideas in a way considered the most satisfactory possible.

Possibly it was in the Wallaby Club that Allen Robertson obtained his greatest contentment. Here was a haven free from professional and business stresses, and he knew how very highly he was esteemed by all the members of this famous walking club, which for more than sixty years has included some of the leading doctors of Melbourne. It was, indeed, founded by a doctor, Louis Henry, who was also the founder of the British Medical Association in Victoria. Henry and Robertson shared a friendship broken only by the former's death in 1924. Robertson became secretary of the Wallaby Club in 1909, and his services were so highly regarded that he continued in the office for forty-five years, in that time doing much to build the club's fine tradition of friendliness, and to maintain its happy and simple character. Its very existence is said to be a monument to Allen Robertson.

Allen's early training in warehouse and pharmacy made him a good man of business. He acquired pastoral interests, first in eastern Riverina, then nearer to Melbourne. He was one of the doctors' partnership which built Lister House in Collins Street.

Throughout his long life, Allen Robertson remained a good figure of a man, with keen blue eyes, a fresh complexion and invariably a well-groomed appearance that until just before his death belied his age. During a lifetime varied in experience and interest, he was a well-respected figure in Melbourne.

In 1906 Allen Robertson married Miss Lydia Terry. She survived him for only a few weeks. There were no children.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Rowan, Thomas (1852 - 1935)

M.D. (Syd), F.R.C.S. (Edin.)

<i>Born</i>	1852 Newry, County Down, Ireland
<i>Died</i>	1935 South Yarra, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

DR. THOMAS ROWAN  
(1876 - 1895)

Thomas Rowan, a Protestant Ulsterman, was born in 1852 in County Down, near the clean and well built town of Newry, named from a yew planted by St. Patrick himself; Newry far from merits Swift's ill-natured couplet "High church, low steeple, dirty streets and proud people". During Rowan's long eventful life, few obstetricians can have traversed such a wide gamut of medical experience.

Before the age of 21 he had qualified in medicine at Edinburgh where he had been one of Lister's dressers at the Royal Infirmary. Threatened with T.B. - to use a long discarded clinical phrase - he was successfully urged by his brother Andrew - of St. Hubert's vineyard, Yering, near Lilydale - to come out to the warmer Antipodean climate of Melbourne. So he became a resident at the Bendigo Hospital and later at the Women's Hospital; this latter appointment introduced him as an assistant to Dr. Tracy who had the largest obstetrical practice in the Colony. When Tracy left for England - soon to return to die in Melbourne in 1874 - Rowan was left in charge of this very extensive connection, a heavy responsibility for a young and comparatively inexperienced man of only 22. A dark handsome Irishman, his youth early masked by a thick black beard, he was appointed to the Women's Hospital in 1876 and for 19 years carried on an effective and fashionable practice in Melbourne. At first he lived in Collins Street East, but later moved to a large house at the corner of Exhibition and Flinders Street, where "The Herald" office now stands. Because it was on the route from the Flinders Street station to the Scotch College in Eastern Hill, the writer of this memoir well remembers this residence, with its long high brick wall capped by broken glass, enclosing a large allotment and garden.

In 1879 Dr. Rowan married Eleanor Austin - the eldest daughter of Mr. Joseph Austin of Green Vale, Willaura, belonging to the Austin dynasty of Victorian pastoralists. There were three daughters and two sons, one of whom was killed in the 1914-18 War. A grandson, Kingsley Rowan, married the daughter of Dr. G.A.D. McArthur, whose family are also numbered amongst the landed gentry of the Western District, and whose half brother, Dr. Norman McArthur was a member of the Honorary Staff of the Women's Hospital.

In 1895, when Rowan with all his family returned to Britain, his connection with the Women's Hospital ceased. He remained in England until after the Boer War when Johannesburg in South Africa seemed a good locale for medical practice. But the bustling Transvaal city quickly lost any attraction, and Rowan returned to Australia to Ballarat, where he built a large hospital with an adjoining private hospital at the corner of Lyons and Dana Streets. During this period gold was struck at Mafeking - 14 miles west of Ararat - near Mt. William in the Grampians Mountains, and the adventurous and restless Irishman set out with tent and wheelbarrow for the new goldfield; disappointment at not striking it rich was intensified by a neighbour who practiced on the corner for the greater part of the day and night and Rowan returned to Ballarat after only a few weeks experience as a digger.

During the first World War, Rowan, though a man of well over 60, managed to enlist in the A.I.F. and became a Medical Officer on the troopship "Berrima", spending several hours in the icy midwinter water of the English Channel when this transport was torpedoed off Weymouth in 1916.

At one time he stood unsuccessfully as a Unionist - anti Home Rule - candidate for the House of Commons, and an Ulster constituency. After the War, returning once more to Australia, Rowan settled at Olinda in the Dandenong Hills, but his hopes of a well earned retirement could not be realized, for with no doctors within several miles, he was often forced to answer urgent medical calls.

This notable personality, who had the reputation of being very courteous, though somewhat distant in his manner, to student and resident, died in 1935 at the advanced age of 83 in Sister Macdonald's Hospital "Osmington", Domain Road, South Yarra. Not many men who had been connected with the Women's Hospital spanned a wider medical life.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# The Royal Women's Hospital, founders

## Details

Written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

Essay on founders



# Saltau, William Dixon (1894 - 1970)

<i>Born</i>	16 June 1894 Warrnambool, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	15 May 1970 East Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, c.1970.

This is followed by a memoir by Dr Geoffrey Pennington.

Transcription

WILLIAM DIXON SALTAU  
(1926 - 1951)

William Dixon Saltau was born at Warrnambool in western Victoria on 16th June, 1894. His father was the Hon. Marcus Saltau, M.L.C. and his mother had been Miss Jean Anton of Yackandandah. The Saltau family has always been one prominent in Warrnambool affairs since Henri Saltau, originally a sailor from Schleswig-Holstein in Denmark who arrived in Victoria in the Ship Gypsy Bride in 1860, settled there to found about 1875 the firm that was to bear his name for more than eighty years. Saltau and Son were general carriers, coal, wood and produce merchants and forwarding agents, who, before there was a railway service, operated a horse-drawn tramway between the jetty and the town. Henri's youngest son Marcus, carried on the business energetically, served his town as its mayor and became a generous benefactor of the Warrnambool and District Hospital, of which Marcus Saltau House and Jean Buick Saltau maternity ward are parts. The latter was officially opened with a gold key by the grandson, William Dixon Saltau, on 28th November, 1928, in the presence of his excellency the Governor and of his wife.

Much of Dixon Saltau's education was received at Warrnambool Academy, then a school with 30-40 pupils, under the influence of Richard Lawson, M.A., later Principal of Melbourne Teachers' Training School and to be Professor of education at Otago. From this early association sprang a lifelong correspondence between the two men (Mr Lawson is presently in his 96th year), receiving an annual added stimulus in a shared birth-date.

In 1908 Dixon won the under-14 Championship of Victorian Cadet Shooting (in the Sargood Shield series) and in 1911 moved to Scotch College, Melbourne, where he remained for three years. During this time ill-health caused him to be away from school for 18 months, because the growing boy suffered a pleural effusion with all the doubts and worries that were associated with the condition in those days.

Under the dual influence of his father, earlier noted as a fast bowler, and of his first school head, himself a keen cricketer, it is notable that he overcame this handicap to become a member of not only the rifle-shooting team but the cricket eleven, indeed receiving the Melbourne Cricket Club's Schoolboy Badge for a promising cricketer. In 1913 he was chose to be a prefect

The family connection with Scotch College continues to this day with a Scholarship as a memorial to Stuart Saltau, Dixon's brother who died of pneumonia at the age of sixteen during his schooldays there. This was another of Marcus Saltau's endowments, uniquely providing educational facilities for boys from the Western District, with whom the benefactor liked to remain in touch in the succeeding years.

Dixon Saltau entered Ormond College in the University of Melbourne in 1914 and during his student years played cricket in the Inter-University first eleven. He graduated in November 1918 with final Honours, being placed second in obstetrics and sixth on the finals list. He held a post on the resident staff of the (Royal) Melbourne Hospital through 1919 and part of 1920, then went to the Queen's Memorial Infectious Diseases Hospital, Fairfield, to work for his Doctorate of Medicine, which degree he gained in November, 1920. After this he was for a short while on the staff of the Adelaide Children's Hospital being at one stage house surgeon to the late (Sir) Henry Newland.

He then travelled overseas and for a time was on the staff of the Paddington Green Children's Hospital in London. At St. Mary's Hospitals in Manchester he held resident posts for some months in both obstetrics and gynaecology, following John Sydney Green and Alfred William Harley and coming under the influence of both the redoubtable Fotherhill and (Sir William) Fletcher Shaw. He returned to Australia in 1923 and was appointed Medical Superintendent of the (Royal) Women's Hospital in 1924 in succession to J.S. Green. In 1926 he was appointed to the Honorary Staff as an obstetric surgeon, his private practice then being in Collins Street.

In 1928 he married Miss Kathleen Eagleson, second daughter of Judge Eagleson who in those days lived on Glenferrie Hill, above Scotch College. Also, in the same year, he commenced general practice in Holmes Road, Moonee Ponds, succeeding to the practice of Dr. W.R.G. Frayne who left the area to become a radiologist before returning to Perth late in 1929. Here Dixon Saltau remained until 1945. During the second World War his commitments in this field proved a very heavy burden in addition to this Women's Hospital and Collins Street duties.

In 1935 he received his membership of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and was elected to the Fellowship in 1947, the latter being conferred upon him by Sir William Fletcher Shaw while in Australia.

After spending all but two of his twentyfive years at the Women's Hospital in the obstetrical department he resigned from the staff in 1951 because of ill-health and was thereupon appointed both a Life Governor and an Honorary Consulting Surgeon to the Hospital. He served as a member of the council of the Medical Defence Association of Victoria from 1948 to 1967.

Of him it has been well said that he never made an enemy. He was indeed an equable and kindly man.

After a long illness W.D. Saltau died on Friday 15th May, 1970 in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Hospital, East Melbourne. He is survived by his widow.

Dr. Geoffery Penington wrote: When, as a student, I first met William Dixon Saltau in 1920, he was House Physician to Sir Richard Stawell at the Melbourne Hospital. I well remember his equanimity during high pressure periods of Sir Richard's excellent teaching rounds and the easy manner with which he assisted any harassed undergraduates who had been found wanting. Students felt they had a friend at court and enjoyed working in the ward and assisting with investigation and management of medical problems.

After his initial post-graduate year at the Melbourne Hospital he went to the Queen's Memorial Infectious Diseases Hospital and during this period he obtained his Doctorate of Medicine by examination. At the Women's Hospital, from 1923, his particular life long interests were developed to the full. As a member of the Honorary Staff he inspired students and colleagues, most particularly as an obstetrician. A busy obstetrical practice was centred initially at Moonee Ponds, but his consultant work commended at 61 Collins Street, Melbourne, in Dr. Edward White's suite. From 1928 till about 1947 he shared a suite with Sir Albert Coates and myself excepting for interruption during the war. The suite was too small for us all after 1947 but other accommodation was obtained in the building and the close liaison continued until "Dick" retired because of ill health. Indeed he continued private practice until the late sixties, albeit under great difficulty and in diminishing degree.

As a colleague he was superb and exemplified the careful consideration of the well-being of his patients as the primary concern. He exercised that judgement based on knowledge in breadth and depth, and critical experience, which established him as a first class gynaecologist and an outstanding obstetrician. It was a treat to be able to spend time together, even though of short duration, in the rooms which we shared, and discuss professional problems.

As a sportsman his first love was cricket, his prowess in this sphere being as a sound batsman. His interest in cricket never flagged - as a keen student and critic of the game when he could no longer play, and by frequent attendance at the Melbourne Cricket Club until physical disability prevented the latter. Golf gave him great enjoyment but the challenge of having to hit a stationary instead of a moving ball with accuracy provoked many amusing comments. When no longer able to play golf, he maintained his association with the Royal Melbourne Golf Club by becoming a non-playing member. Lawn bowls was somewhat less provoking and not only was he a top grade pennant bowler but he carried the responsibility of honorary secretary of Glenferrie Hill Recreation Club for many years and was elected a Life Member of the Club in recognition of his services.

As a staunch friend he was unsurpassed and his companionship was given freely. An excellent travelling companion, he enjoyed loyalty to his friends, and his high principles, never faltered. Although his generosity was great very few knew of it. His fortitude during many years of suffering from osteoarthritis, and the self-discipline which enable him to carry on when men of lesser determination and persistence would have succumbed, called forth admiration and affection which could not be expressed in his presence but were deeply felt. He was never effusive but quietly "went about doing good" and supporting others in need of encouragement or an understanding listener. Family ties were sacred to him and his devotion to his wife, who helped him selflessly, was profound. Deep sympathy is extended to her by the many who knew "Dick": We will cherish the memory of him.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Servants

## Occupation

Cook, Gardener, House-maid, Kitchen-maid, Laundress, Porter, Seamstress and Servant.

## Summary

Servants and serving at the Lying-in Hospital 1856-1900

The main object of the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children (hereafter Melbourne Lying-in Hospital, the Hospital) was to offer maternity and gynaecological care to indigent women. Bed-side care, performed by midwives, nurses, and doctors was made possible by a range of people, usually referred to as institutional "servants". These staff included laundresses, porters, housemaids, and gardeners. Just some of the work performed by servants involved maintaining the buildings, grounds and gardens, doing the household cleaning and sewing, cooking food for the patients and staff, carrying messages and caring for the institution's animals.

In the records kept by the Hospital's management, servants tend not to be mentioned in minutes of meetings. Exceptions are when someone resigned a position, when a problem was identified with a servant's engagement or if there was an application for a raise. Often the records mention a position such as "porter", "gardener", "laundress", "cook" or "maid", while the name of the person doing the job is recorded only rarely. Thus only "snapshots" of this group of workers exist. References to female workers and their activities feature far less often than do references to male workers. The disparity underscores that the work of women of this era, although a plinth of the Hospital's functioning and being everyday activities, was unremarkable.

## Details

### Female Servants

As a newly-established hospital, the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital needed only a limited number of servants. For the first eighteen months of its operation, the Hospital was located at Fairmount in Albert Street, East Melbourne, where a matron, Mrs Esther Elizabeth Gilbee, who had years of experience in Ladies' asylums in London, oversaw the work. In 1858, the Hospital employed two female servants, Phoebe Dunston and Sarah (whose surname is illegible), earning £30 and £25 respectively.<sup>(1)</sup> Both servants lived on the premises.

### Laundresses

At different times, married female servants were taken on as employees with their husbands, in the capacity of laundress and porter respectively, seen in the examples of Mr and Mrs D B Watson,<sup>(2)</sup> and George and Jane Gordon.<sup>(3)</sup> Conventionally, these servants lived at the Hospital, with board and lodging being part of their conditions of engagement.

The laundress at the Lying-in Hospital in 1860 earned a monthly wage equal to that of the male Porter, £3/6/8. The not ungenerous wage may have compensated for the fact that washing and drying of the linen was an extremely heavy manual task in the days before washing machines. Yet even by the late nineteenth century, the employment conditions left a lot to be desired. In July 1882, the Matron Miss Emily Harvey reported that the Head Laundress was so ill she was obliged to leave.<sup>(4)</sup> The laundress' sleeping quarters at the Hospital were judged by one of the Ladies Committee in 1891 plainly to be inadequate. A solution to the accommodation problem was to convert a midwifery patient's ward into a servant's room, but the Ladies Committee decided that the laundress should take lodgings outside the hospital for which she was recompensed 5 shillings per week.<sup>(5)</sup>

Processing the laundry must have been a very complicated, particularly once the geographic separation of the Midwifery and Gynaecology Departments was enforced in the 1880s. The Matron was charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the two Department's linen was treated separately,<sup>(6)</sup> on the basis that bed linen arising from the Gynaecology department might be dangerous to the healthier Midwifery patients.

The sheer volume of laundry was huge. In one week of 1891, almost 5,000 items were washed by the Hospital's laundry: 3470 from the Midwifery Department, and another 1,000 from the Infirmary and the House.<sup>(8)</sup> At least by the 1890s, it seems that the Hospital was using machinery in the laundry. Launceston Hospital wrote for advice about purchasing equipment similar to that operating at The Women's.<sup>(9)</sup> A greater number of pupils learning the work of nursing also meant more laundry. Changes to pupil nurses' conditions in the late 1880s allowed nurses to have 'uniform and 12 other pieces' washed in the Hospital laundry per week.<sup>(7)</sup>

### Needlewomen and Seamstresses

Another important category of female servant was the needlewoman. Needlewomen sewed the bed linen and may have made other items such as mattresses and bolsters, pillows and nightgowns; the midwifery nurses sewed items for babies. It appears that the Hospital did not have a permanent position for a seamstress, preferring them to be engaged when the need arose. Mrs Tyrell, a pregnant woman who had applied successfully for admission to the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital, was one such short engagement. In 1860, Mrs Tyrell spent several weeks as a seamstress, prior to the birth of her baby. Her husband had been engaged as Hospital Porter.<sup>(10)</sup>

A permanent, resident needlewoman was employed in 1891, to keep the linen in a proper order after the annual stock-take showed that the linen supply was running perilously low.<sup>(11)</sup> When the Hospital ran into financial difficulty in 1892, this woman lost her position. And while the Ladies Committee thought it prudent to engage another seamstress for three or four days a week, board and lodging at the Hospital, part of previous employment conditions, was not included.<sup>(12)</sup>

This plan may have saved money in the short term but the volume of linen requiring repair grew, and in 1893 Matron Charlotte Findlay suggested that a seamstress could be employed to process the piles of linen needing repair. Always mindful of the cost, the Ladies Committee instead called on women's volunteer sewing circles: the Spinners Society and the Time and Talents Society.(13)

### **Cooks**

Given that the provision of food is a major task of hospitals even today, it does seem surprising that so little is recorded about the cooks at the Lying-in Hospital. As Janet McCalman has shown in her history of *The Women's (Sex and Suffering: Women's Health and a Women's Hospital)* the position of cook was a pivotal one. Some of the women needing gynaecological surgery at the Hospital in the nineteenth century were simply too thin to be subjected to extensive operations. Treatment for these patients necessitated a pre-operative diet of good wholesome food so that they could gain weight. It has to be said that the cook's salary did not necessarily reflect the importance of her role. In 1860, the cook earned £2/18/4 per month, only marginally more than the housemaids. By 1888, the cook was earning £60 per annum.

The state of the food was a source of complaint from patients, forcing the Hospital's Ladies Committee to investigate from time to time. On one occasion, the meat provided was said to be 'sometimes raw, sometimes burnt' and the sago pudding served with tea leaves in it.(14) In 1896, the cook was permitted an assistant, but this servant was required to spend some of her time helping in the Hospital's laundry.(15)

Quite aside from cooking for the patients, the cook had to feed all of those housed at the Hospital: the surgeons, the nurses and pupil nurses, the workmen and female servants. The fact that it was hard work is shown in the resignation of the cook in 1899 on the grounds of ill-health. This notice was received with regret by the Ladies Committee who were moved to ascertain if the woman needed to be admitted to the Hospital as a patient.(16)

### **Maids of all work**

Aside from the cooks and laundresses, there were house-maids and kitchen-maids at the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital. References to these staff usually concern only their wages, for example 'Authority was given to add to the salary of the kitchen maid, 2 shillings per week'.(17) In Hospital records between 1858 and 1900, only once is a house-maid mentioned by name: 'S Warden, House Maid' whose salary was increased to £45.(18)

There is no doubt it was difficult to retain domestic staff. One incentive to prevent servants from leaving was to with-hold references when staff gave notice to leave. References and testimonials were important for an individual's next engagement. In 1889, the Ladies Committee decided that only those servants employed for a minimum of twelve months would receive an official testimonial.(19) The same restriction applied to nurses.

### **Porters**

When the Hospital moved to its new site at Madeline Street in 1858, there was more capacity to take patients and inevitably a demand for more staff. In the early days of the institution, only women were employed but records show that in 1859, a Porter was on the staff. As the title suggests, the Porter "carried" items, such as household provisions and equipment, and messages. From its foundation, the Hospital seems to have been in a constant state of expansion. Items that were purchased from shops had to be unpacked and delivered by the Porter to where they would be used in the Hospital. In the 1860s, just some of the items the Hospital took receipt of included: carpet, tablecloths,(20) pins and tapes for the midwifery nurses,(21) horse hair for mattresses, straw for bolsters and palliasses (thin mattresses), feathers for pillows, linen and ticking,(22) as well as 142½ yards of forfar (linen) to keep in stock for making palliasses.(23) The Porter may also have attended to the Hospital's farm animals: the fowls, (24) and a cow.(25)

In March 1860 the Porter applied for an increase in his salary. This sort of request was permitted under Hospital Rules and following the end of each year's employment. The salary of the Porter at the time was £3.6s.8d, the same as that of the Laundress, but less than the cook.(26) In 1860, the Porter's requested raise was not granted by the Ladies Committee and this servant resigned subsequently.(27)

Mrs Dredge and Mrs Pugh, two members of the Hospital's Ladies Committee, eager to fill the position recommended a Mr Tyrell as ideal. They knew of Tyrell's need for work because his wife had successfully applied for a Lying-in Hospital admission ticket. Mrs Dredge and Mrs Pugh thought that Mrs Tyrell 'could be engaged working a sewing machine the whole of the day', and if so the Ladies Committee might consider letting Mr Tyrell's wife 'sleep at the Hospital'.(28) Mr Tyrell accepted their generous proposal and permission was given to matron Catherine Oliver to give Tyrell a rating of pay that was different from the other servants.

In early April, Mrs Honor Tyrrell (sic), a mother of three children, gave birth to an 8¼ lb baby boy at the Lying-in Hospital after an eight hour labour.(29) When she left the Hospital on 19 April 1860, Mrs Tyrell 'thanked the Committee and expressed her grateful sense of the accommodation and privileges of the Hospital'.(30) Who had charge of her two other children while she lived at the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital is not known. Nor can we say for how long Mr Tyrell stayed on as Hospital Porter.

It was difficult to recruit and retain servants who could sustain the heavy work at the Hospital and do the work to everyone's satisfaction. From 1863 until October 1881, Hector George Gordon was employed as Porter at the Lying-in Hospital, a period of 18 years. Jane Gordon née Rooney, his wife, was employed at the Lying-in Hospital too, working as a laundress.(31) In July 1882, an un-named laundress resigned, owing to illness. The matron Miss Harvey judged that the 'present porter was not steady'. She recommended his dismissal and the appointment of a married couple to undertake the household work and the laundry respectively.(33) Within a week the Ladies Committee had approved the 'New Porter and laundress', Mr D B Watson and his wife.(34) Their appointment lasted only one month when they were dismissed for disobedience.(37)

In the same week that Mr Watson and his wife joined the Hospital as servants, a new Matron, Mrs J D Cossins from Adelaide was engaged.(35) Despite the troubles in keeping staff, Mrs Cossins was prepared to sweep a new broom through the establishment, starting with questioning the regular provision of alcohol. The Melbourne Lying-in Hospital at times allowed the servants to have alcohol with their meals, ironically in a form known as "porter". Porter, also called stout, is a form of alcohol brewed from dark malt and yeast, making it black in colour.

Using the word "porter" for alcohol in the same sentence as "Porter" meaning the manservant certainly has the potential for confusion in Hospital minutes. For example, one entry shows that in early 1882, matron Emily Harvey asked the Ladies Committee for permission to 'supply half a pint of porter at dinner to the Nurses, the Porter and his wife'. Miss Harvey's request was refused.(32) In July 1882, the new matron Mrs Cossins asked the same Ladies Committee if she should continue to 'give the Nurses and servants porter on Sundays as usual'. The Committee responded that it had 'declined to allow porter as a rule some six months ago but left it in the Matron's power to give it, if she thought there was any necessity for it'.(36) So the Porter (Hospital manservant) was permitted to have porter (alcohol) if deemed necessary by the matron.

Exactly who was employed as a manservant at the Hospital during the years 1882 to 1886 and in what capacity may remain a mystery, owing to a combination of sparse records and the rare reference to these workers. Mr David Wylie was employed at the Hospital in 1888, emptying the toilet pans and dust bins.(38) In April 1888 Mr Reed, the 'Resident Porter', resigned. Arrangements again were made to advertise the position.(39) Reed was replaced by Mr W Atkinson, at a salary of £52 per year.(40) By comparison, the Head Midwifery Nurse at that time received a wage of £55 per annum,(41) while the Hospital's cook earned £60 per annum.(42)

Mr James Rebecca was working as Hospital Porter at The Women's Hospital from 1888 until 1898 and possibly longer. Mr Rebecca's request in June 1889 for an increase in his salary, indicates that he had been at the Hospital for at least a year previous to that date. His raise in 1888 was not granted.(43) In 1891 Mr Humphries was required to act as engineer to the Hospital, owing to 'new arrangements' for operating the laundry. To make up for the shortfall, an additional House Porter was to be engaged.(44)

The servants at The Women's Hospital were not guaranteed a high wage, although they may have been paid a little more than their counterparts at similar institutions. When a financial depression fell on the whole of Victoria in 1892, The Women's Hospital too experienced serious financial stress. The Hospital's Finance Committee decided to reduce servants' and officers' pay and align these costs with those borne by other Victorian institutions. Some were to lose jobs. As part of cost-cutting measures, a Laundress earning £52 per annum was to be dismissed and the wage of the Assistant Laundress was to be reduced to 15 shillings per week. The House Porter (un-named) and Gardener Mr Rebecca, each were to be reduced to the rate of 15 shillings per week. The Matron was instructed to ensure that if new servants were required, they were 'are as far as possible, to be engaged at reduced wages'.(45) The Ladies Committee viewed these measures as harsh and only dismissed one laundress, while the pay of the House Porter and gardener was reduced by five shillings per week each.(46)

In 1893, the financial situation was no better. Finding more savings meant further cuts to the wages of servants as well as those of the matron, doctors, nurses, midwives, collector and dispenser.(47) Per annum salaries and wages were to be reduced as follows: Mr J Humphries the Engineer from £156 to £130; both the gardener's and the porter's wages reduced to £36; wards-maids' to £36; the cook's to £52; the kitchen maid's reduced from £36 to £26; the housemaid from £40 to £30, the second laundress from £40 to £36. Several more staff were to be dismissed too: an Infirmary maid, two Midwifery maids, the third laundress, the seamstress, and Mr Dean the general cleaner. All of the staff were to be given one month's notice of the reduction in their wages. A raft of changes to the Hospital's day-to-day operations was also to be instituted by the Matron who was 'to regulate all cleaning inside and outside, the windows to be cleaned inside by the female servants and outside by the Porter'.(48)

There is little doubt that these financial reductions imposed hardship on some of the servants. For instance, Mr Rebecca, 'the Gardener etc', wrote to the Ladies Committee in June 1893 asking 'for reconsideration of the stoppage of the fee granted to him hitherto for extra sanitary work, the fee of five shillings per week having been deducted from him in addition to the reduction in his salary'.(49) The outcome of his request is not known, but tensions at the Hospital were apparent. In October 1893 the matron, Charlotte Findlay gave the Porter and Gardener, Mr Rebecca, 'notice to leave the Hospital service, owing to quarrelling and fighting'.(50) Mr Rebecca however was retained on the servant staff as 'hospital gardener etc' and in 1897 applied for an increase of salary, as did Mr R S Smith, the House Porter.(51) In early 1898 Mr Rebecca was granted permission to have a holiday, to be arranged by the matron.(52)

It seems that the male workers, while notionally engaged as a gardener or a house porter did other work when the need arose, effectively working as wards-men, moving patients alive and deceased. In 1896, the House Porter and gardener were permitted to have 'whitewashing (sic) suits [to wear]...when they are carrying patients to the Operating Theatre'.(53) Moving deceased patients to the Hospital's morgue also became part of the male servant's work. In February 1899, Mr Carl Lamderer, hospital gardener, wrote to the Ladies Committee:

"... in reference to notice to leave recently given to him. He explained his wife was very ill in his circumstances in a poor condition and asked that his dismissal might be deferred. Letter referred to providing Committee and left in the hands of the Matron. As to existing arrangement under which the gardener attended to morgue, instructions given to ascertain improvements for attending to morgue arrangements."(54)

The services of Mr Lamderer were retained until at least 1901, when still being the Hospital's 'present gardener', he was granted a testimonial by the Ladies Committee.(55) By the turn of the century the Hospital had expanded substantially and three House Porters were employed: Mr D Marshall and Mr Rowland in 1901, the latter staying until 1904. Mr Norman McDonald was the Assistant House Porter from 1899 to 1900. Mr George Rowe was Porter-in-charge of the Hospital's morgue from 1900 to 1903. Mr Peter Johnson was brought on as third porter in 1904 and allowed to sleep away from the Hospital. Mr Louis Heyn and Mr Fred Lee were engaged as Porters in 1905 and 1907 respectively.

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References in this article, unless otherwise stated, have been taken from the Minute Books of the Ladies Committee of Management (LCOM Minutes) of the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children, known from 1884 as The Women's Hospital. These records are held in the Royal Women's Hospital Archives.

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32. 3 February 1882, RWH ARCHIVES A1991\_07\_045.
33. 14 July 1882, RWH ARCHIVES A1991\_07\_045.
34. 21 July 1882, RWH ARCHIVES A1991\_07\_045.
35. 21 July 1882, RWH ARCHIVES A1991\_07\_045.
36. 11 August 1882, RWH ARCHIVES A1991\_07\_045. Porter is a form of alcohol brewed from dark malt.
37. 15 September 1882, RWH ARCHIVES A1991\_07\_045.
38. 21 December 1888, RWH ARCHIVES A1991\_06\_012.
39. 13 April 1888, RWH ARCHIVES A1991\_06\_011.
40. 18 May 1888, RWH ARCHIVES A1991\_06\_011.
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Created: 24 April 201

# Sexton, Hannah Mary Helen (1861 - 1950)

M.B., Ch.B. (Melb.)

*Born* 1861  
North Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 10 October 1950  
London, England

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Summary

Dr Helen Sexton was the first woman appointed to the Honorary Staff of the Women's Hospital and was one of the founders of the Queen Victoria Hospital.

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

HANNAH MARY HELEN SEXTON  
(1899 - 1910)

Hannah Mary Helen Sexton, professionally known as Helen Sexton was the first woman appointed to the Honorary Staff of the Women's Hospital. She was born in North Melbourne in 1861, the youngest of the five children of Maria and Daniel Sexton, a builder, who had come to Australia in 1854 from Limerick, Ireland.

On matriculating from the Carlton Ladies' College (long since defunct) where Miss Parnell was the Headmistress, Helen was anxious to become a doctor, but her mother opposing any idea of medical training, she commenced in the early eighties an Arts course at the University of Melbourne. Subsequent to the death of her mother, Helen met Miss Lilian Alexander who was also anxious to study medicine. The two young women decided to approach the University Council for permission to do this but first looked around for reinforcements. To this end, early in 1887, they put a notice in the daily press asking any "young ladies desirous of studying medicine in Melbourne" to get in touch with them. Six responded, and a good deal of publicity was given to their cause. Helen Sexton and Lilian Alexander interviewed each member of the University Council personally, so that when Dr. Alexander Morrison of Scotch College moved that "The Council approve of the admission of ladies to the degrees of medicine, the motion was easily carried. The following year seven ladies, including Helen Sexton, commenced the medical course, and in her own words "They attended all lectures at the University and hospital work with the men students, the only difference being that they dissected in a small room apart from the men".

Helen Sexton graduated M.B.B.S. in 1892, at the age of 31, her entrance to the profession being preceded by that of Clara Stone and Margaret Whyte in 1891. Margaret Whyte went to the Women's Hospital in 1892 as the first resident woman doctor, and Amy Castilla followed.

In 1896 with five other medical women under the leadership of Dr. Clara Stone, Helen Sexton helped to found the Queen Victoria Hospital, which started as an outpatient clinic in a hall in Latrobe Street at the back of the Welsh Church.

In 1899 Helen Sexton was elected to the staff of the Women's Hospital as an honorary gynaecological surgeon, the appointments then being by vote of the subscribers.

Apparently Dr. Sexton had considerable surgical skill, for she developed a large practice, being often called in consultation by her male colleagues. She had a kindly, though somewhat brusque, manner and took a real and affectionate interest in her patients. She had, too, a broad sense of humour which must have helped to carry her through early difficulties in the profession. However, in her work at the Women's Hospital apparently no contretemps developed, as she herself said "the work went on most harmoniously, and I doubt if any of my eleven male colleagues ever thought of the question of sex".

Unfortunately her health was not good, and because of this she retired from the staff of the Women's Hospital in 1910 and in 1912 went to live in Europe.

Soon after the outbreak of the first world war, Dr. Sexton, though by this time over fifty years, took a small field hospital to France, the gift of herself and other women doctors. She served in the French Army with the rank of Majeur, and when this hospital was disbanded, was given a temporary appointment at the Val de Grace in Paris. In 1917 she came back to Australia, returning to England in 1919. She now finally retired from all practice, and afterwards spent many years in satisfying her delight in travel and in European art, making her home in Florence, Italy, for a long period.

During the last decade of her life she was almost totally helpless with arthritis, but it has been written "that her splendid smile still shone, and the few words she could speak were always concerned with somebody's well being".

Helen Sexton, held in high esteem by colleagues both in Australia and England, died in London on October 10th 1950, in her ninetieth year.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives



# Sherwin, John Arthur Hopkins (1881 - 1961)

M.D. (Melb.), F.R.A.C.S., F.R.C.O.G.

<i>Born</i>	14 December 1881 Forbes, New South Wales, Australia
<i>Died</i>	14 August 1961 Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, c.1961.

### JOHN ARTHUR HOPKINS SHERWIN

John Arthur Hopkins Sherwin, whose grandparents on both sides were early settlers in Tasmania, was born near Forbes, New South Wales, on December 14, 1881, the son of John Sherwin, who, a few months later, was thrown from a horse and killed. He first attended Kyneton Grammar School, then passed on the Geelong Grammar School where he played in the first eighteen, was a member of the shooting team, and represented his school in the head of the river race of 1900. After matriculation, Arthur Sherwin entered as a resident student at Trinity College, where, although not conspicuous academically, he took a prominent part in college and university life. He represented his college in rowing, football, and athletics, and he rowed in four intervarsity contests, 1902 to 1905.

Graduating in 1908, he became a resident medical officer at the Alfred Hospital, one of four who constituted the entire resident medical staff. The appointment was for two years, and during this time he joined No. 2 Commonwealth Field Ambulance, which was commanded by Dr. George Horne whose officers included J.H. Nattrass and R. Tate Sutherland. These three were colleagues at the Women's Hospital, and perhaps it was their influence that later induced Sherwin to become interested in obstetrics and gynaecology.

In 1910 he left for London and obtained an appointment as resident medical officer at Queen Charlotte's Hospital. This was followed by visiting the more important obstetrical and gynaecological clinics in Scotland and Europe, and then a short time was spent in work at the Lister Institute in London.

War broke out in the Balkans in 1912 when Turkey attacked Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro, and the British Red Cross organized and dispatched medical field units to all five belligerents. Sherwin joined the Montenegrin contingent whose activities were centred in Northern Albania.

After the Balkan diversion he returned to Melbourne, gained his M.D. degree, and was appointed as an Honorary Surgeon to the Women's Hospital, but on the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914, he enlisted and left Australia with the 3rd Australian General Hospital to serve with that unit at Lemnos and in Egypt. Subsequently, he commanded the 4th Auxiliary Hospital at Abassiah with the rank of Lieutenant-colonel. He returned to Australia in 1917 and commenced practice in Elsternwick as a general practitioner and at Collins Street as a specialist obstetrician and gynaecologist. In 1927 he relinquished his general practice and thereafter confined his work to that of a consultant gynaecologist.

Again war intervened, and in 1940 Sherwin, now Colonel Sherwin, was called upon to establish and command the 15th Australian General Hospital at Heidelberg. This was a tremendous undertaking, since the hospital had to be built, equipped, staffed, organized, and administered. This task he successfully completed, and he returned to private practice in 1944.

Sherwin took a great interest in the St. John's Ambulance Brigade of which he was a member for 25 years and Commissioner of Victoria for five years. He rose through the lesser grades to become Knight of Grace and received its insignia at Buckingham Palace from King George VI after his coronation. He was a member of the Council of St. John's Ambulance Association and of the Victorian Division of the British Red Cross for many years, and he also held the position of Controller and Organiser of Voluntary Aid Detachments. He was a member of the original midwives examining board with Felix Meyer, George Horne, and Miss Anderson, and he sat on the Medical Board of Victoria from 1932 to 1945. He was a Fellow of both the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (1935) and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (1937).

Sherwin was modest in demeanour and was respected for his integrity. In his long association with the Women's Hospital he was popular with his colleagues, punctilious in his duties, and conscientious in his work. He was impelled by a high sense of duty and he cheerfully and freely served the community in many spheres.

His death took place at Melbourne on August 14, 1961, at the age of 80 years.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Simpson, George (1899 - 1960)

O.B.E., M.R.C.P., D.G.O. (Melb.), F.R.C.O.G.

*Born* 14 May 1899  
Hamilton, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 24 November 1960  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1960.

GEORGE SIMPSON (1899 - 1960)  
O.B.E., M.R.C.P., D.G.O. (Melb.), F.R.C.O.G.  
OBITUARY

George Simpson, for many years one of Melbourne's best-loved obstetricians, died suddenly in Melbourne on November 24, 1960, thus bring to an untimely end a lifetime of untiring service to the community in many fields of activity.

His father, Archibald Joseph Simpson, was a grazier in the Hamilton district of Victoria and renowned throughout Australia for his short-horn stud. He had a family of five sons and a daughter, George being born in Hamilton on May 14, 1899. George received his early education at Hamilton College, but in 1915 he went as a boarder to Scotch College and there commenced an association with the Littlejohn family, which continued till his death. At this time Scotch College was under the headmastership of W.S. Littlejohn, and those at school in his headmastership remember his gruff good nature, and his ability to teach and understand boys. All who knew Littlejohn paid tribute to his guidance both at school and later. "Old Bill" was a legend in his lifetime, and was remembered by all with the utmost affection, and with the feeling that he had instilled into them those principles of good conduct which stood them in good stead in later life.

In 1917 George Simpson commenced his medical course at the University of Melbourne, and was resident in Ormond College throughout his course. His sporting interest was rowing, at which he represented his college. Always a good scholar, he shared the exhibition in anatomy in his third year, and in 1922 obtained final honours, being tenth on the list. This was not mean achievement in a year which produced three pathologists of world renown – Sir Macfarlane Burnet, a lifelong friend, Professor Sir Gordon Cameron, of University College, London, and Professor Rupert Willis. He was appointed resident medical officer to the Melbourne Hospital on graduation, and the next year was selected as one of its four registrars.

In 1924 he became resident medical officer to the Children's Hospital and the following year he went to England, in 1926 obtaining the M.R.C.P. (London). At this stage he developed an interest in obstetrics and became a resident surgeon at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, later to pursue his studies at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin.

In 1927 he returned to Melbourne and renewed his association with the Littlejohn family, joining the clinic in Ivanhoe, whose senior partner was Mr C.W.B. Littlejohn, the eldest son of his late headmaster, the second son, Dr. E.I. Littlejohn, being also a member. This association was a very happy one and continued until George's death. After a short period as a clinical assistant at the Women's Hospital, he was appointed to the out-patient gynaecological staff in 1932, thus commencing a period of service which lasted 27 years. This same year the University of Melbourne held its first examination for the diploma of gynaecology and obstetrics, and although already appointed to the hospital, George Simpson felt that he should sit for this diploma, so he settled down to work and obtained it in 1933 while still in active general practice. In 1935 he was elected as a member of the British College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (now the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists), was elevated to Fellowship of this College in 1951, and served on the State Committee of the College from 1955 to 1958.

During his long association with the Royal Women's Hospital, George Simpson served the hospital in both the gynaecological and the obstetrical departments, but obstetrics was always his greater interest, and in 1959 on a rearrangement of the staff, he elected to become an obstetrician to in-patients, and held this position until his retirement in 1959.

During this period he was chairman of the obstetric staff, later chairman of the executive staff from 1954 to 1956 inclusive, during which time he was a member of the board of management of the hospital. His last year as chairman of staff was a very onerous one, as it coincided with the hospital's centenary, when an immense amount of organisation had to be done, and many meetings attended. The calls on his time in this year were legion, but he attended them with a spirit of cheerfulness which was an inspiration to all.

George Simpson was a thoughtful and careful obstetrician with a special interest in the pre-natal care of the patient. This interest extended beyond the confines of the hospital, as from 1930 to 1952 he was honorary obstetrician to the ante-natal department of the Melbourne District Nursing Service. This department was large, and often up to 40 patients had to be dealt with in an afternoon without any other medical help.

In his younger days in Hamilton he came into contact with the Reverend John Flynn, and when Flynn was moved to Central Australia, George became interested in the possibility of establishing an aerial medical service; to the foresight of these two people

is owed the existence and success of the famous Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia. George Simpson held almost every position of the federal council of this body, and was actively associated with it from 1925 until his death. In 1946 he succeeded Sir James Barrett as secretary of the Victorian Bush Nursing Association, maintaining his association with this organization until his death.

During the second World War he joined the Royal Australian Air Force Medical Service in 1942, and was posted to No.1 M.R.S., Darwin; in 1943 to No. 6 R.A.A.F. Hospital, Heidelberg, where he became medical registrar and did such sterling work that he was promoted to the rank of Squadron Leader, and became the first president of the newly formed medical board at the hospital; it was largely owing to his unfailing care and attention to detail that this innovation proved such a success. He was associated with the St. John Ambulance Association from 1927, and was a Serving Brother of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. In 1958 he was appointed to the Victorian Nursing Council, (which replaced the Nurses' Board of Victoria), and with considerable reluctance accepted a position on the executive committee of this Council. His acceptance of this position entailed a lot of work for the regulations and operation of the new Council had to be planned; he remained on the executive until this initial work was completed last year. He was an examiner in obstetrics at the University of Melbourne from 1949 to 1959, and was for some years s member of the examining board for the diploma of gynaecology and obstetrics.

In 1957 his service to the community was officially recognized, and he was created an Officer of the most Excellent Order of the British Empire. In 1931 he had married Nesta, the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Miller, of Kew, who with two daughters survived him.

Throughout his life George Simpson maintained an active interest in the Presbyterian Church, and for some years before his death was a elder of Knox Memorial Church, Ivanhoe. Although attaining great eminence in his chosen profession, he remained modest and unassuming, striving to bring the best of medical service within the reach of all, and always bringing into his work two most endearing characteristics, innate kindness and complete integrity.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Spiers, Norman Lennox (1886 - 1960)

<i>Born</i>	31 May 1886
<i>Died</i>	1 August 1960 Surfer's Paradise, Queensland, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, c.1960.

**NORMAN LENNOX SPEIRS**  
(1914 - 1948)

In the days before Australia had developed her now flourishing textile industry, the Melbourne merchant princes were warehousemen with imposing offices and soft goods stores in Flinders Lane. Amongst these wealthy importers was the well-known firm of Paterson, Laing and Bruce, the third partner being the father of the present Viscount Bruce. To join this firm in "The Lane" in the sixties came James Speirs, a young man from Manchester. He married Miss Eliza Macallister, and the third of their sons was Norman Lennox, always known as Len. He was born on May 31, 1886, and died at Surfer's Paradise on August 1, 1960, aged 74 years.

Lennox's education commenced at the Caulfield Grammar School whence at the age of 15 he won a scholarship to Wesley College. This was one of Melbourne's famous public schools, whose then headmaster was L.A. Adamson who came originally from Rugby and Lincoln College, Oxford, and who did much for Victorian education. While in no way neglecting scholarship, Adamson encouraged athletics at Wesley, and quickly set up an ideal of sportsmanship of which the keynote was that boys should win decently and lose decently. Justice ruled his work, and he became not only efficient as a headmaster, but thoroughly popular with the boys; there was no want of respect in his nickname "Dicky" - rather a real and genuine affection. He never married, the school taking the place of wife and children. In 1903 Speirs, then aged 16, was one of his prefects. At cricket Lennox was the school's best bowler, with a remarkable average of 1.5; in the champion footballer team he showed dash and cool judgment as a halfback; and at athletics he represented Wesley in the distance races. In this same year he won first-class honours in physics and chemistry at matriculation and a major resident scholarship to Queen's College in the University of Melbourne.

All that was best and keenest in the university life then centred on the residential colleges, and in that invigorating atmosphere Speirs gained much. The Master of Queen's was Dr. E.H. Sugden, who in his own life reflected those wide sympathies and interests which a good residential college is most fitted to produce. Many men subsequently eminent were contemporary at Queen's with Speirs; among the number were Sir High Devine, Sir Victor Hurley, Sir William Upjohn, Sir David Rivett, F.R.S. (to whom Lennox became triple blue); he played in the University XI for no fewer than six years, was captain in 1909, and represented Victoria against England and against South Australia. Queen's had some very good cricketers in those days, including P.R. Le Couteur, who later as a Rhodes Scholar, achieved the all-round record in the 1910 Oxford versus Cambridge match, taking 11 wickets for 66 runs and making 160. Speirs was a sound bat, but shone as a medium-fast bowler; his best intercollegiate feats were 7 for 11 against Trinity, and 128 against Ormond on a sticky wicket facing the bowling of G.R.A. Hazlitt, a member of both the Victorian and the Australian elevens. Speirs also played inter-varsity football (Australian rules) and was captain of the university baseball team. After leaving the university he took up golf, and in a short time won three times the championship of the Yarra Yarra Club, later playing successfully at the Victoria and Royal Melbourne Clubs.

In later years he included bowls amongst his recreational accomplishments, was three times champion of Fitzroy and four times of M.C.G., and in 1933 won the coveted "Champion of Champions" of Victoria. An all-round bowler, he was adept at the draw shot and that firm "yard-on" shot which so often can completely change the complexion of a match. It is doubtful if any man from the University of Melbourne had a more varied and successful sporting record.

Graduating in 1909 as ninth in the year, Speirs became a resident medical officer, first at St. Vincent's Hospital and then at the Melbourne Hospital; thence he went to the Women's Hospital, where he met Dr George Horne, then the senior honorary surgeon, and a notable university lecturer in obstetrics and gynaecology. Commencing practice in 1911 with Horne at an initial salary of 200 a year and keep. Speirs later became a partner. In 1914 he was appointed to the honorary staff of the Women's Hospital. He was then aged 30 years, and was the youngest man ever to realize his ambition. At that period in the history of the Women's Hospital, young graduates who had been reliable residents and who had attracted the favourable attention of a senior honorary stood a chance of appointment to the honorary staff without those higher surgical degrees that even then were demanded in the general hospitals. Surgical technique was learnt by assisting the seniors in the theatre. It was far from a lengthy or intensive post-graduate training, yet many became good surgeons; this is the more note-worthy when it is realized that they were without the valuable discipline of post-graduate anatomy, physiology and pathology.

Speirs soon became a reliable and deft surgeon within the compass of the restricted gynaecological surgery of that time. He was fortunate that his partner and friend George Horne, whom he had joined in general practice at the nearby suburb of Clifton Hill, only two miles from the Women's Hospital, was one of the foremost gynaecologists in Australia. Horne proceeded overseas in early 1914, and at the outbreak of war was in England, where he was accepted for service with Royal Army Medical Corps. This prevented Speirs from at once joining the Australian Imperial Force, and it was not until Horne's return in 1917 that Speirs finally left Australia with reinforcements for France. After the armistice he was chosen to play with the A.I.F. cricket team, but had to return quickly to Australia to take over the practice because of Horne's failing health.

When the second World War came, Speirs, aged 54 and a colonel in the Australian Army Medical Corps, was asked to form the 2/4 Australian General Hospital; as colleagues he had C.W.B. Littlejohn, O.C. Surgical Division, and Eric Cooper, O.C. Medical Division. Embarking on December 24 in Mauretania, the unit arrived at Colombo where the magnificence of the Cunarder gave way to the austerity of a regular trooper - Nevasa. The convoy formed up outside Colombo, and on arrival at Suez entrained to Abd-el-Kader, a lonely wayside station 20 miles west of Alexandria; there lay Knight of Malta, of 1500 tons, formerly a ferry between Malta and Italian ports, now pressed into transport service, but still "an evil-smelling tub" in Speir's words. There were no messing facilities, each man having to draw rations for 24 hours; 120 men with all gear and personal equipment were installed in the hold measuring 60 by 30 feet, approached by one vertical ladder and dimly lit by one hatchway. A very heavy Mediterranean storm drove the vessel aground between Bardia and Tobruk. All men and equipment were saved, and soon they were operating a hospital of 350 patients at Barce in place of the 2/7 Field Ambulance. Seven days later a sudden evacuation was made back to Tobruk. With Rommel's sharp attack, the rear party at Barce just escaped to participate in the famous Benghazi handicap. Happily the equipment was saved, and this enabled the unit to perform work said to be unprecedented in military history - the carrying on of a general hospital of 1,000 patients within a fortress and without a female nurse. There remained only two male nurses (trained in the unit), 25 nursing orderlies and 20 ward orderlies. Tobruk was to be held at all costs, and as all land outlets were cut, the historic siege commenced. Finally relieved at the now famous Cyrenian port, the unit came home via Ceylon. Back in Australia, Speirs opened his unit again at Redbank in Queensland, where it acted as an overflow hospital to Greenslopes, Brisbane. Later, Speirs was appointed Deputy Director of Medical Services, Victorian Lines of Communication, and he undertook important duties associated with the demobilization of medical personnel, and presided over the Victorian Medical Co-ordination Committee. The war's end found him in the sixtieth year of a life which had ranged through a wide gamut of human activity, and which was fitly honoured by his creation as a Companion of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 1942. His retirement was spent mainly at the Melbourne cricket ground playing bowls and watching cricket and football, at the Royal Melbourne and Barwon Heads golf clubs, and at the Australian Club demonstrating the nuances of those laws which are according to Hoyle.

Speirs was a superb bridge and poker player. The writer still remembers one evening before dinner after an Army Medical Staff ride many years ago at the Macedon Golf Club - most comfortable and pleasant were those rides - being importuned by two bridge sharpers, whose anonymity must still be preserved because of their now exalted rank. All was set to pluck this pigeon whose sporan was shaking at the thought of rapidly losing bawbees. By a stroke of fortune, in sauntered Len Speirs, who was eagerly claimed by the neophyte as a partner. Len's only admonition was not to lead from king to another; mercilessly playing with the right hand and simultaneously smoothly picking up with the left, in the space of 20 minutes he had the two "con men" disorganized. After the first lead, Len had known the position and value of every card in every hand. He eschewed all small talk, he played to win, believing that any game was not worth playing otherwise, though scorning Potter's gamesmanship. He belonged to a generation of all-round men, forthright and trusty, who should not be forgotten in a later age of specialism and sophistication.

In 1916 Lennox Speirs married Miss Marjorie Dunn, who survives him, with a daughter and a son, Dr. Norman L. Speirs, the Melbourne gynaecologist.

Dr. Alex Sinclair writes: Lennox Speirs is best remembered by many ex-servicemen of World War II as the Commanding Officer of the Fourth Australian General Hospital. This unit numbered amongst its original officers men of the caliber of Charles Littlejohn, Eric Cooper, Douglas Thomas, Jock Chambers, "Zack" Schwartz, Marshall Renou, Tom Tyrer, Arthur Amies, Vin Rudd and Bishop Riley. It saw active service for the first time throughout the siege of Tobruk, and later served in Palestine and Australia. In the desert the Fourth Hospital lacked most of the hallmarks of an impersonal regimentally precise military hospital; but there were other qualities which lent their own distinction. The greatest and most useful of these was its record of a busy family unit bent on getting a job done with the maximum of individual effort and the minimum of frustrating regulation. Lennox Speirs set the tone for this attitude of individual responsibility with the ease of an assured playing captain and coach. The unit worked without the benefit of trained nurses with inadequate equipment, under trying living conditions in an area subjected to daily bombing attack. The tide of war was in the wrong direction, most men became anxious, and the ingredients for cracking morale were all there. It was Lennox Speirs who, by personal example, ensured that this never happened, and that the unit continued to function with distinction under these difficult conditions. He did this by personal contact and by an example of stubborn fearlessness. He usually protected his head from falling debris with a faded topee and his directions were nearly always delivered by mouth on the spot in a tone of growling criticism, encouraging banter or incisive chaffing. When other felt inclined to complain of their unhappy personal lot, he reserved his curses for his smoker's cough, his bridge hand or the fluctuating fortunes of the chess game.

The experience of the unit in Tobruk cemented Lennox Speirs inextricably with the men who served him in a bond which was not broken till his death. Right up to this time he remained in contact with most of his old unit, and never quite relinquished the role which he fulfilled so adequately in war time, and which returned him so much personal satisfaction in the years that followed.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Sutherland, Bertram Milne (1877 - 1951)

O.B.E., M.B.(Melb), F.R.A.C.S., F.R.C.O.G.

*Born* 1877  
Dunolly, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 1951

*Occupation* Anaesthetist, Board of Management member, Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner, Obstetrician and Surgeon

## Details

Written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.  
Transcription

BERTRAM MILNE SUTHERLAND  
(1914 - 1938)

Bertram Milne Sutherland, born in 1877 at Dunolly, Victoria, was the only son of Dr. John Sutherland, an Edinburgh graduate who, in 1871, had migrated to Australia and here had married Christine Milne. In 1886 Dr. John Sutherland commenced practice in Moonee Ponds, and Bertram Milne Sutherland continued his education at the South Melbourne College, of which J.B. O'Hara, teacher, mathematician and poet, was the outstanding headmaster. Sutherland studied medicine at the University of Melbourne and graduated M.B.Ch.B. in 1903. He subsequently went to England and was on the eve of sitting for the primary Fellowship examination of the Royal College of Surgeons when his father's fatal illness necessitated return to take over the family medical practice. Many years later he was made a foundation Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and a further honour was his election, a year before his death, as Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

In 1910, Sutherland was appointed as an anaesthetist to the Women's Hospital and four years later became an honorary obstetric surgeon to this hospital. Thus commenced a period of service which only ended with his death. He rose to become chairman of the honorary staff in 1930, which position he held until retirement in 1938. During these years he had been found by the hospital to be such a wise and reliable counsellor, that he was elected to the committee of management, and continued on it until his death in 1951.

Sutherland took an active part in public medical affairs and was most meticulous in promoting the ethical standards of his profession. His many years of service to the Victorian Branch of the British Medical Association culminated, in 1932, in his election as President. For twenty-seven years he sat on the Central Council of the Victorian Bush Nursing Association. He devoted much time to its activities, and from 1946 until his death was its President. He was also a member of the Melbourne Post-Graduate Committee.

In the first world war, he served for five years in Egypt and England and became lieutenant-colonel and commanding officer of Number 3 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford, England. For his services he was awarded the O.B.E.

As a young man, Sutherland was a fine athlete. He was an outstanding lacrosse player in the late nineties of the last century when this game was enjoying a great vogue in Melbourne. At the University, he also gained a cricket blue.

In his latter years, "Old Bertie", as he was affectionately called, was a familiar figure at the Women's Hospital and there was little about the hospital that he did not know. Many generations of residents, students and nurses remember with gratitude the help and instruction given by this kindly surgeon.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Sutherland, Roderick Tate (1866 - 1945)

M.D. (Glas. & Melb. a.e.g.), Ch.M. (Glas.)

*Born* 11 August 1866  
Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 13 November 1945  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

RODERICK TATE SUTHERLAND  
(1909 - 1927)

Roderick Tate Sutherland was born in Hawthorn Victoria on 11th August 1866, the eldest child of Roderick Sutherland, Crown Solicitor of Victoria; his mother's maiden name was Ellen Tate. His first school was one in Oxley Road, Hawthorn, kept by a Mr. Beddoe. Thence he proceeded to the Kew High School (now the Trinity Grammar School). Here he played football with the first twenty (it was twenty a side in those times), and cricket with the 2nd eleven. He also was a capable boxer, and earned considerable notoriety in the neighbourhood for his fistic contests.

At the age of 16 he was taken to Scotland by his father, and on arrival there entered the office of his uncle, a sharebroker in Glasgow. On the death of this uncle a few years later, Sutherland decided to take up medicine as a profession, and after passing the preliminary examination, entered the University of Glasgow. There he graduated and received the M.B. Ch.M. degrees. Obtaining further experience in London, he returned to Victoria in 1892 and bought into a Port Melbourne medical practice. This venture was not a happy one, and at his request the partnership was dissolved long before it had run its course. He then took rooms in Collins Street Melbourne, and practiced there until his death. He earned early prominence as an anaesthetist, and it was for a treatise on anaesthetics that he was awarded the Glasgow M.D. He did much work for Dr. Rothwell Adam, then Melbourne's leading gynaecologist; and it was as a protégé of the latter that he developed his interest for gynaecology. He was appointed an Honorary of the Women's Hospital in 1909 and was associated with this institution as a Gynaecologist until he retired in 1927 on reaching the age of 60 years.

Sutherland liked military affairs and about the beginning of this century joined the Army Medical Corps, eventually rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. On the outbreak of the first world war in 1914 he was one of the first medical men to enlist, and saw active service on Gallipoli. After two years the strenuous military life affected his health, and he was invalided back to Victoria. On recovering his health, he resumed Collins Street practice and association with the Women's Hospital.

Sutherland was a prominent Freemason, and held many Grand Lodge offices, eventually becoming Past Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Victoria. Keenly interested in sport all his life, Dr. Sutherland was a member of various sporting clubs, such as the Melbourne Cricket Club and the Royal Melbourne and Victorian Gold Clubs. He was also a member of the Navy, Army and Air Force Club of Victoria.

In 1897 he married Miss Mary Macleod by whom he had a son and a daughter. He died at his residence St. Kilda Road Melbourne from a heart attack on 13th November 1945.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Sutton, Charles Stanford (1863 - 1950)

M.B., Ch.B. (Melb.)

*Born* 1863  
South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Died* 1950  
Pahran, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Medical practitioner

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

CHARLES STANDFORD SUTTON  
(1913 - 1914)

Charles Stanford Sutton, born at South Melbourne in 1863, graduated M.B.B.S. (Melbourne) in 1887 and married Bessie Bernard Palmer in 1891. He practised at Terang, Victoria for six years, then moved to Melbourne, commencing practice at Rathdowne Street, North Carlton and continued there until 1924. His association with the Women's Hospital was very short, for he was on the staff for only 12 months.

After 1924 he practically retired, and lived in South Camberwell, doing occasional country locum tenens. During the 1939-1945 War, he worked at the Royal Park Recruiting Depot.

Sutton was a member of the Wallaby Club, University Club, a Life Member of the Field Naturalists Club, a Foundation Member of the Forest League, and a member of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

He compiled a book on the Gums of Australia, as yet unpublished. He was a collector of woodcuts and etchings.

A keen cricketer in his youth, throughout his life he followed all sport with great interest.

He had five children, one of whom married G.R.A. Syme, F.R.C.S. Surgeon to the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Dr. Sutton died at Greville Street, Pahran in 1950, aged 87.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives



# Tracy, Richard Thomas (1826 - 1874)



M.D (Glas.) L.R.C.S.I.

*Born* 19 September 1826, Limerick, Ireland

*Died* 7 November 1874 Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Occupation* Medical practitioner, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician

## Summary

Richard Tracy M.D. was one of the founders of the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital and Infirmary for the Diseases of Women in East Melbourne in 1856. He served as one of its Honorary Physicians until shortly before his death in 1874.

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

### RICHARD THOMAS TRACY (1856 - 1874)

Richard Thomas Tracy was born on 19th September 1826, in the old city of Limerick, in the west of Ireland, and with his only brother received an education for entrance to Trinity College, University of Dublin. As several members of his mother's family had been clergymen of the Anglican Church, it was desired that her two sons should qualify themselves for this calling, but at 16 years of age, Richard made up his mind to enter the medical profession, and his love for it never abated.

He did not proceed straight to the University, but worked for a year or so as a wardsman and dresser in the County Limerick Infirmary (a beginning he claimed of much benefit in his after career). In 1845, then aged 19, he went to reside with his brother, who had decided for the law at Trinity College, Dublin, and commenced his medical studies proper. During each of the three succeeding summer vacations, he volunteered for work with the Irish Board of Health. This was the period of the great famine, and typhus was desolating Ireland; at Celbridge, near Dublin, Tracy himself contracted typhus, being very lucky to survive. At this time a medical qualification could be obtained in three years, and in 1848 Tracy gained the Licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, immediately afterwards leaving for Paris, observing much surgical work during that eventful year of revolution, the year of 1848, when Louis Phillipe was overthrown.

In December of this year of 1848 Tracy went to Glasgow, working there in charge of the City Cholera Hospital of 700 beds. In May 1849 he took the Degree of M.D. in the University of Glasgow, and returned to Ireland to take charge of the dispensary in Kings County; but this sphere of action proved much too limited, and he crossed to London to his brother, then residing as a law student in Lincoln's Inn. He worked as a locum for 12 months in a partnership at Reading, Berkshire, and then received a nomination for assistant surgeoncy in the army; but this he decided not to accept, because having become engaged, entering the army would have prevented him getting married. Negotiations for a partnership in London not materialising, Tracy at this stage was a little perplexed as to his future course of action.

Letters had been received from Adelaide, South Australia, from some relatives of his intended wife, telling of an excellent opening for practice there, but there were also communications from relatives of his own, telling of the prospects in Canada. What was it to be, Canada or Australia? His ultimate decision was quickly made one evening in 1851, in his brother's rooms in Lincoln's Inn. A coin was spun, and Australia won the toss. Tracy, always a man for quick decision, almost immediately left for Ireland and married his cousin, Miss Sibthorpe, in Limerick. After a fortnight's honeymoon in London, largely spent in visiting the great National Exhibition in Hyde Park, they left for Australia.

Through a friend of his brother, he had secured the appointment of surgeon to a new ship called the "Ballangeich", then on the berth for Melbourne and Adelaide. So in this ship, Dr. and Mrs Tracy sailed on the 16th May 1851, arriving in Hobson's Bay three months later. After a few days in Melbourne, where the disembarking passengers entertained them at a dinner at the Royal Hotel, the Tracys continued their voyage to Adelaide, meeting with most disastrous weather being actually 26 days before reaching that port from Melbourne. Tracy settled in North Adelaide and met many kind friends, in particular one whom he had previously known well in Dublin, Dr. Eades, who later came to Melbourne, and was always one of Tracy's strongest supporters.

Towards the end of the year 1851, the news of the discovery of gold in Victoria emptied Adelaide of nearly all its male inhabitants, and in the middle of February 1852, a few weeks after his eldest daughter Eva was born, Tracy started, in company with Mr. James Bonwick, later to be the well known geographer and historian, to try his fortune on the goldfields. They prospected without success on the Loddon and in Bendigo, and it was at this town he first commenced medical practice in Victoria. But the goldfield atmosphere did not suit him. And so in June 1852, Tracy returned to Adelaide, soon afterwards coming to Melbourne with this wife and infant daughter. Here he began practice in Brunswick St., Fitzroy on 1st September, 1852. He was a success from the first, soon gaining a reputation both in the profession and with the public. Tracy's first home, long since demolished, in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, consisted of four small rooms, for which he paid the then exorbitant rent of seven guineas a week. Here on occasions he had to entertain the Medical Society, only a small body at the time, in the largest of his rooms, 10 feet by 12, so economy of space

was imperative; with Dr Eades, his close friend, sitting on the piano, two others on the cupboards in the recesses, and some finding a place on the window-sills. In 1854 he built a two-storied house on the west side of Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, then known as Great Brunswick Street and the main arterial outlet to the northern suburbs. In Tracy's time this house was numbered 139, now (1955) it is No. 165 and housing a large Italian family running a sweet shop and milk bar. A contemporary source states that at the time when Tracy left Fitzroy, this unpretentious residence in Brunswick Street was as well known as any public building in Victoria.

Ten years later, that is 1864, Tracy built what was described as a two-storied mansion at 190 Collins Street East. It is believed this stood two allotments from the east side of the present Masonic Hall.

At first Tracy's busy practice was general, but gradually changed to the speciality of diseases of women and that was to bring him high repute. In this, his warm human sympathy was excited by the maternity needs of the poorer people. In John Maund he found a ready collaborator in an idea that became a reality in 1856 with their leasing of 41 Albert Street, East Melbourne, for a private maternity hospital, and its rapid adoption as a public charity, the Lying-In Hospital.

Maund saw little of the hospital beyond its founding, but Tracy laboured ceaselessly and unselfishly for it for eighteen years. He was a most earnest believer in it; its defender against all critics.

Because of his close association with the Hospital, Tracy's practice became directed to diseases of women and children, and his reputation in this speciality soon spread throughout Australia.

After his death it was written: "Dr. Tracy was most ready to acknowledge the valuable advantage he himself obtained through his connection with the Hospital... It will be impossible, when speaking of the Lying-In Hospital, not to associate Dr. Tracy with it, and in remembering him, the institution he was so instrumental in founding will always come into our minds. He and it were mutually indebted, for while he owed to it a great deal of his professional success, he was unwearied in his efforts to advance its usefulness and maintain its prestige".

All accounts indicate Tracy was a man of clear practical mind, commonsense, and strong will. He also had remarkable self reliance, which would have procured for him a leading position in any circumstance or community. Impatient of humbug or pretence, frequently he was impulsive and quick tempered, but always full of kindness and warmheartedness. He was singularly prompt in emergencies, and equally remarkable for patience and endurance, when these were required. A fast and true friend, generous, liberal and open handed in the extreme.

Never a public man in the accepted sense of the word, yet his public service (the Women's Hospital apart) was not without note. He was actively associated with the civic and church work of the Fitzroy district – a founding trustee of St. Mark's Church of England, Fitzroy, the first health officer of that municipality, and a member of the local bench of Honorary Magistrates.

He was also active in the Volunteer Militia movement, and a surgeon of the old East Melbourne Artillery Corps from its foundation to his death. Tracy was a foundation member too of the Victorian Medical Association (founded late 1852), and he joined the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Victoria when it was formed three years later. With other leading doctors, he worked for the union of the two organisations. This was accomplished with the formation of the Medical Society of Victoria, of which Dr. Tracy was President in 1860. By common consent, Tracy was looked on as the representative of Victorian medicine, and in every movement in which the collective interests of the profession were concerned, he was always foremost with his support. His remarks were always listened to with the attention which those thoroughly conversant with the subject and capable of expressing themselves well, invariably command. Dr. Tracy was a frequent contributor to the "Australian Medical Journal". His work and reputation were recognised in 1871 by the Obstetrical Society of London electing him an Honorary Fellow, a rare compliment of which Tracy was exceedingly proud. At the time, the list of Honorary British Fellows amounted to nine only.

A paper written by Tracy was given in 1870 to the Obstetrical Society of London and appeared in its Transactions of 1871. This paper was read by his colleague at the Lying-In Hospital, Dr. L.J. Martin, then visiting London.

Dr. Martin was one of the then three Honorary Physicians to the Hospital. In 1867 Martin had succeeded Dr. Turnbull, who was Maund's successor. At this time the three physicians were Tracy, Martin and G.H. Fetherston, all Anglo Irishmen. Tracy was from Limerick, Martin from Dundalk and Fetherston from Roscommon.

G.H. Fetherston was a Resident Surgeon at the Women's from 1860-65, and there, in 1864, was born his son, later Dr. R.H. Fetherston.

Tracy's paper to the Obstetrical Society of London was entitled "a short history and description of the Lying-In Hospital and Infirmary for diseases of women and children".

To this time, Tracy had performed nine cases of ovariectomy, with six recoveries and three deaths. He had also performed the operation of repair to vesico-vaginal fistula 20 times, with perfect success in every case except one.

Another operation he had performed over 30 times was cure of ruptured perineum, including the modification for permanent cure of prolapsus uteri.

It was in this paper that Tracy described how, when he left England in 1851, he had never seen the operation for cure of vesico-vaginal fistula, ruptured perineum or ovariectomy performed. He mentioned this more particularly as it gave him an opportunity of gratefully acknowledging the kindness of Mr. Spencer Wells, the distinguished London surgeon. Tracy stated his first case of ovariectomy caused him great anxiety, and he could not have entered in the task with anything like confidence but for the minute and elaborate advice most kindly sent from England by Dr. Wells.

When the Medical School of the University was founded in 1862, Tracy was appointed the lecturer in diseases of women and children. This appointment was noted as one for which he was well qualified "not only by reason of his special knowledge, but also on account of his happy manner of conveying information, for he was not only an easy, fluent speaker, but he had the rare faculty of being able to impart what he knew to others, so as to be perfectly understood."

Tracy's health began to fail during 1871, after twenty-three years of incessant labour. A sea trip home was advised, and he left by the mail steamer "Mooltan" in February 1873. Before leaving, he was entertained at dinner by the Medical Society (in which he was greatly esteemed) and a number of his friends and patients gave him £600 to be expended at his discretion in a service of plate or other permanent memorial. It was written at the time that no man ever left the Colony on a visit to the Old Country, accompanied by more sincere wishes for his restoration to health.

On leaving Australia, even then a very sick man, Tracy vowed he would eschew all things medical and surgical while abroad, but he could not shake off easily the habits of 25 years standing and was not many days in England before he was in touch with his surgical hero, Mr Spencer Wells in London, and with Lawson Tait in Birmingham. He was delighted to be received with kindness and hospitality by such leading British surgeons, and he wrote two splendid letters back to the "Australian Medical Journal" vividly describing his experience.

Later in this year Tracy attended the B.M.A. Meeting in London and represented the Australian Medical profession at the Lord Paget Mayor's Banquet; though by now his unsuspected malignancy was manifesting itself only too cruelly in decreasing strength and increasing pain, this brave man contrived to attend every meeting in which he might learn something about the diseases of women. He listened to the silver tongued orator Sir James and the sonorous W.E. Gladstone, and struggled to garden parties and other functions to meet British, American and Continental leaders. After a year abroad he returned to Melbourne, wasted and wretchedly ill, to die seven months later, on 7th November 1874, at his house in Collins Street East.

Tracy must be regarded as the successful pioneer in Australia of ovariectomy, a most formidable undertaking in his pre Listerian era and one regarded with great awe by the general public and the profession alike; ovariectomists had been widely stigmatised as "belly rippers". Tracy's first case was done in Melbourne in March 1864 at the patient's private residence under chloroform anaesthesia. The operation was quite successful. This first of Tracy's cases was actually the third ovariectomy performed in Australia. The operation had been successfully carried out twelve years previously in 1852 by Charles Mayo of Adelaide, and the next case attempted (unsuccessfully) was by Dr. Edward Barker of the Melbourne Hospital in 1859. Tracy operated altogether on 22 such cases in ten years, with four deaths. When one compares this death rate of 18% with that of 25% during the same period of the great Spencer Wells, it can be appreciated what impetus and encouragement Tracy's success must have given to Australian surgeons in undertaking the operation. He never refused to operate in any case he encountered, and so high was his repute that only once was he met with a refusal to submit to operation.

Tracy was the first in Australia to use chloroform in the treatment of eclampsia.

The cause of Tracy's fatal and exceedingly painful illness, which extended over three years, remained obscure until his death. For long it was considered a nervous dyspepsia caused by overwork, but it proved, by autopsy, to be an abdominal malignancy. At his special request, a history of the illness and the subsequent post mortem findings were published in full detail in the Australian Medical Journal of December 1874. No similar request for publication in Australian medical literature can be found. It was certainly most unusual, but it proved an example of Tracy's earnestness in the advancement of medical knowledge.

His obsequies were of the simplest kind, carried out in accordance with his own instructions, and they provide an interesting commentary on the funeral practices of 80 years ago. "I wish", he wrote, "any public notice to contain merely the date, hour and destination. I desire that no refreshments of any kind shall be provided for those who attend my funeral, nor any distribution of scarfs, gloves or other such emblems of mourning. The hearse to be perfectly plain, no plumes or glass sides and drawn by only two horses. No attendants with plumes or feathers. Only as many plain mourning coaches as are necessary to convey the pall bearers and chief mourners and no other carriages are to be allowed to accompany the hearse within the gates of the cemetery. I will give the names of the eight pall bearers, and the chief mourners will be those of my sons-in-law who may be in Melbourne and their immediate relatives".

Nevertheless the procession that followed him to the grave was one of the longest ever seen in Melbourne. Sixty members of the medical profession walked in front of the hearse, and the streets all along the line of the route from his house to the cemetery, were crowded with spectators. His place on the staff of the Hospital was taken by Dr. Joseph Black.

Tracy had no sons, but six daughters have many descendants living in Australia. His eldest daughter, Mrs. Charles D'Ebro, served on the Committee of Management for many years.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives [ [Details...](#) ].

## Published Resources

### Journal Articles

- Forster, Frank M C, 'Richard Thomas Tracy and His part in the History of Ovariotomy', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1964, pp. 128-138.

## Images



Syphon-trocar-03\_5C.JPG



Tracys-oviarotomy-instruments-03\_03A.JPG



Tracys-house-03\_02A.JPG

# True, Frank Elliot Trenoweth (1892 - 1965)

M.B. (Syd.), M.D. (Melb.)

<i>Born</i>	9 November 1892 Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	7 November 1965
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, c.1965.

FRANK ELLIOT TRENOWETH TRUE

(1926 - 1951)

Frank Elliot Trenoweth True was born in Melbourne on November 9th, 1892, the son of Frank William and Susan True. He received his secondary education at Sydney High School, and in 1916 graduated M.B. at the University of Sydney. He enlisted straightaway in the A.I.F. and served with the rank of Captain in the 46/48th Battalion and in the 12th Field Ambulance. He was awarded the Military Cross after Passchendale.

On returning to Australia in 1919 Elliott True became a resident medical officer at the Children's Hospital and later at the Women's Hospital, Melbourne, after which, in 1922, he gained the M.D. (Melbourne).

It was while he was a resident at the Women's he met Miss Molly Humphries a medical student, who graduated in 1922; they were married on June 23rd 1926 and had three daughters, Kathleen (who married Dr. W.H. Kitchen), Josephine and Maureen.

Elliot True was appointed to the Honorary Staff of the Women's Hospital in 1926, and served in both departments of the hospital until his retirement on 28th February 1951; in 1947 he had been appointed an honorary inpatient surgeon.

The minutes of the Hospital Board of Management of 1951 state -

"To the Hospital Dr. True has been a loyal servant whose aims and efforts were devoted to its betterment in the special sphere of its activities".

As well as conducting a large general practice in the eastern suburb of Burwood, he practised as an obstetrician and gynaecologist in Collins Street.

After retirement from the Hospital, Dr. and Mrs. True travelled extensively, much of which was done as a ship's surgeon.

Elliot True retired from medicine in 1964 and died on November 7th, 1965, aged 73 years.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Turnbull, William Mackie (c. 1855 - 1867)



M.D. (Edin)

*Born* c. 1855

*Died* 3 October, 1867

*Occupation* Gynaecologist, Medical practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

WILLIAM MACKIE TURNBULL  
(1858 - 1867)

William Mackie Turnbull, a graduate of Edinburgh, holding the M.D. of that University, served for some time as a medical officer with the British forces in the first Maori war. He came to Melbourne in 1848 and began practising in Russell Street. Specialising in obstetrics he built a large and lucrative practice during a residence of 19 years in the Colony's Capital.

His reputation in this work was enhanced when he was appointed Honorary Physician at the Lying-In Hospital after the death in 1858 of Dr. Maund. With Dr. Tracy as his colleague, Turnbull held the appointment until his death on 3rd October, 1867, from phthisis, at the age of forty-seven, after a long and lingering illness.

Dr. Turnbull was a member of the Medical Society of Victoria, and an examiner in midwifery at the University of Melbourne and was a frequent contributor to the pages of the "Australian Medical Journal".

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Wawn, Royle Newton (1880 - 1966)

M.B. (Melb.), F.R.A.C.S.

<i>Born</i>	20 May 1880 East Brighton, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	14 February 1966 Pahran, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item believed to have been written by Dr Colin Macdonald. Published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, c.1966.

### ROYLE NEWTON WAWN

Royle Newton Wawn was born on May 20, 1880, in a small brick home in the Melbourne outer suburb of East Brighton, now known as Bentleigh. His paternal grandfather was a schoolmaster at Strabane, near Londonderry, Northern Ireland, whose son, Robert Wawn, came to Victoria at the age of 19 with his wife from county Armagh. Robert Wawn worked a market garden and orchard in a district supplying the needs of the city 10 miles away; his circumstances were prosperous and a family of two girls and five boys assisted in the work, Roy playing his part by milking one or two cows morning and night as well as attending to other duties around the property.

Roy Wawn's school life commenced at the East Brighton State School, one mile from home, when he was five years old; but two years later he transferred to the Moorabbin State School, situated two miles in the opposite direction, and since there was no transport, he walked the four miles daily. At the age of 10 years he was successful in obtaining an entrance scholarship to Wesley College, then under the headmastership of A.S. Way, and this led to his matriculation six years later. Way was a distinguished scholar known for his spirited translations of Homer; he was at Wesley for 10 years, promoted the study of science, and provided teaching in business principles for boys not going to the University. During the long vacation after his matriculation, Wawn acquired a knowledge of typing and shorthand that enabled him to earn fees by reporting law court proceedings; then, instead of passing on to the University he accepted a position as secretary to Robert Sticht, manager of the Mount Lyell Mining Company, at Queenstown, near Macquarie Harbour, on the lonely west coast of Tasmania. Sticht was an American metallurgist, of high reputation, a very well educated man, who possessed an extensive library of which Wawn took full advantage. After 12 months at Queenstown, the urge to continue his studies became so strong that Wawn resigned his position and returned to Wesley College at the Beginning of 1899, to remain a further two years.

During this time he studied physics and chemistry in preparation for first year medicine, and he also developed into an outstanding athlete, winning triple colours for representing his school in cricket, football and rowing; in his last year at school he played senior football with the St. Kilda Club.

He entered the University of Melbourne in 1901, and at the end of the year won first class honours in natural philosophy and a scholarship that enabled him to enter Queen's College, where Edward Sugden was Master - one of the famous trio of Leeper, MacFarland and Sugden, who laid the foundation of the Melbourne residential colleges. At Queen's, Wawn was prominent in intercollegiate rowing, cricket and football, intervarsity football, and cricket, and he was a member of the University league football team. Roy was a good fast bowler, and once, when playing in a district competition, he secured the last five wickets of an innings with the first five balls of an over; he was proud of being presented with the ball suitably inscribed.

After his graduation in 1906, Roy served as resident medical officer for six months at the Melbourne Hospital, then for nine months at the Women's Hospital.

In 1907 he married Miss Lucy Syme, daughter of Francis Syme and grand-daughter of David Syme, the influential proprietor of the Melbourne "Age", and later commenced general practice in Cowra, New South Wales, where his first obstetrical experience was the delivery, by candle light, in a little farm house, of quadruplets. After about two years in Cowra he returned to Melbourne, and in February, 1913, he entered into partnership with Richard Fetherston (later Major-General Fetherston, D.G.M.S.) at 152 High Street, Prahran. This was the practice that had been founded by Gerald Fetherston, Richard's father, in 1866, so that these three - the two Fetherstons and Roy Wawn - conducted this practice at the same address for exactly 100 years; this may well be a Victorian record. It was a very busy practice with a great deal of domiciliary midwifery, and when Fetherston left on the outbreak of the First World War, Wawn was inundated by the unceasing demands for his services. Arthur Wilson joined him in partnership in 1918, but left in 1930, and Matthew Patrick was his partner from 1927 to 1940.

Roy Wawn was appointed to the obstetric staff of the Women's Hospital in 1917, and after six years crossed to the gynaecological department. He should normally have retired from the hospital in 1940 on reaching the age of 60 years, but because of the Second World War he remained until 1944.

Roy Wawn was an unusual man in many respects. As a young man he was very fond of sport, in which he was successful; but from the time when he began practice in Prahran he appeared to be entirely engrossed in his work and for more than the last 40 years of practice did not take one holiday. His hospital work was always performed conscientiously and adequately, but once it was completed he seldom delayed his departure from the building; he was a skilful surgeon, but his instruction of the students was infrequent and conversations with his colleagues were brief. Of medium height and well built, he had an attractive personality, a

pleasing voice and a courteous manner; but his natural reserve, amounting almost to shyness, denied his colleagues the pleasure of seeing more of him; the insistent demands of a heavy general practice could not allow him ever to tarry at a public hospital or elsewhere. His two great hobbies were reading and philately; his literary taste was omniverous, and his specialised collection of Victorian stamps, which were sold in London some years ago was world renowned.

Roy had three sons, one of whom, Clive, was a Spitfire pilot in the Battle of Britain, and won the D.F.C. in 1940.

Royle Newton Wawn died at Prahran on February 14, 1966, in his eighty-ninth year, a man who had given long years of devoted service to the profession of medicine.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives



# White, Edward Rowden (c. 1884 - 1958)



<i>Born</i>	c. 1884
<i>Died</i>	3 August 1958
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1958.

EDWARD ROWDEN WHITE  
(1914 - 1946)

Edward Rowden White, who died on August 3, 1958, covered in his seventy-four years a wide and varied gamut of life such as is the lot of very few men. In his later years he experienced disaster and suffering, but not defeat; the Fates had found it impossible to destroy an inherently generous and cheerful spirit. He was known to all as Teddy, and the three strong influences which shaped him, were his elder brother, his school and university college, and his teacher Dr. Rothwell Adam.

His brother, Alfred Edward Rowden White, was from childhood days an exemplar of whom Teddy was always proud, and from whose wise and gentle counsel he had the greatest respect. No two brothers were happier together. A.E. Rowden White, happily still in practice in Melbourne, had been one of the moving spirits in The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, and it was he who strongly encouraged Edward to further, in Australia, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists for the successful development of which Edward, with his friend the late Professor R. Marshall Allan, was largely responsible.

To the example of the Elder Brother, must be added the influence of school and university college. Geelong Grammar School, which Edward entered on February 12, 1894 - the same day as his lifelong friend the late Hume Turnbull - had as its then headmaster a Cambridge graduate, J. Bracebridge Wilson, who was for many years a leader in Victoria of secondary education. Geelong Grammar, the second oldest Victorian public school, at this time was a small academy of no more than 80 or 90 boys, almost all boarders and sons of western district pastoralists; it occupied a two-storied bluestone building on the Moorabool Hill in Geelong, over-looking the river Barwon. In 1875, Bracebridge Wilson had chosen to teach classics at Geelong a young Scot, J.L. Cuthbertson, who before going to Merton College, Oxford, had been a pupil at Trinity College, Glenalmond, Perthshire; this public school - at which the boys wear the Black Watch kilt - is set amongst plantations of spruces and larches along the lovely banks of the Almond, a stream which flows east from the Grampians to join the Tay near Perth.

There was an affinity between Bracebridge Wilson and Cuthbertson; each a lover of natural history; each revelled in the open country in the bush and on the river or the lake. Between them they created at Geelong Grammar School that "light blue" spirit which has been so vivid down the years, and of which Edward White was very proud. Cuthbertson was keenly interested in all sports, only tennis he excepted, and that because he thought it prevented boys from paying proper attention to rowing, cricket and rifle-shooting. He was the coach of the crews which did much to make Geelong known, and which were almost invincible for many years. Steve Fairbairn, the legendary Cambridge oarsman, learnt his watermanship at Geelong Grammar School. The success of Cuthbertson's crews was due, to a great extent, to the long Saturday rows, where boys - Teddy well amongst them - found the longest day too short, and the week-end not long enough, to crowd into it all that could be drawn from the rowing camps. Cuthbertson also was a writer of distinction, and his verse was to Geelong what Henry Newbolt's was to Clifton College, England. Typical of his "School Verses", which are all topical, is that headed "The Cox out of Training". It deals with the increase of weight of the school coxswain, Teddy White, who had weighed four stone two pounds when he steered his first public school race in 1894, at the age of ten:

The cox he eateth of rainbow cake,  
He drinketh the coconut tree,  
The cox he ought to be lean as a rake  
But plump as a partridge is he.  
Oh! The cox he laughs  
As gaily he quaffs  
I am off on a journey to seven stone now,  
I shall be soon fit for a bow, for a bow.

Teddy coxed the Geelong boat in public school races for no fewer than six years; but he was much more than a coxswain. At the early age of fourteen he became a member of the school first eleven as a left-hand spin bowler, and in his last school year was cricket captain and vice-captain of football.

Entering in 1900 the Trinity College, where Dr. Leeper was then warden, he played cricket with the College and the university eleven, both of which he captained in his final year. In one intercollegiate match he made 133 and 49, taking five wickets in the first innings and nine wickets in the second. At tennis he played each year for his College, eventually captaining that team and the

winning intervarsity team. He played first pennant cricket and tennis for the University and gained a double blue. Geelong Grammar and Trinity remained throughout his life two of his great interests. It was a delight when his only son Jim who died, alas, on service - rowed bow in the Geelong Grammar eight of 1939. Teddy did not learn of his son's death until after his return from the hell of the prison camps of Formosa and Manchuria; a cruel homecoming, for great plans had been made for Jim's future. Teddy achieved the distinction of being elected president of the Old Geelong Grammarians - than which nothing gave him more satisfaction - and was a member of the Council of Trinity College for 33 years. He never wavered as a firm believer in the value of the boarding school and the residential university college, and lived to see Trinity, with 162 men in residence, the largest college of its kind in Australia.

Graduating bachelor of medicine with final honours in 1907 (the degree of doctor of medicine he took in 1911), he was a resident at the Melbourne Hospital before proceeding to the Children's Hospital, eventually there to be the medical superintendent. Then followed a term as a resident medical officer at the Women's Hospital, with which he was to be honourably associated for almost 40 years. And there he met Rothwell Adam, to whom - after a year's post-graduate work abroad - he became assistant in Collins Street, and of whom he held the highest opinion. He claimed that Adam's precept and example were the major influences in his professional life. Rothwell Adam was born at Leeds, Yorkshire, the son of the Reverend George Adam, and came to Australia as a child; on the land for several years before going to study medicine at Edinburgh, he returned to Australia and was later appointed to the Women's Hospital. His influence there was profound. The manner in which he applied the principles of correct ethical behaviour, in both his professional and his private life, earned the admiration of Edward White, who throughout his life gratefully acknowledged his debt to Adam, by whom he was directed into his speciality.

White was a foundation Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and an early Australian Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists. He made two post-graduate trips overseas, and it was during the 1928 trip that he had the privilege of being asked to perform the first Manchester operation for uterine prolapse in U.S.A.; this he did at H.S. Crossen's Clinic in St. Louis.

In two World Wars he was amongst the first to enlist, and served with distinction - in 1914-1918 with a field ambulance in the Middle East, and in the second World War as commanding officer of the 10th Australian General Hospital at Singapore. Those who were with him during the fateful days of February 1942, when Singapore was being blasted and ravaged from air and land, say that none of that "naked island" exhibited more courage and cool steadfastness. It was remarkable how, not many months after returning from the prisoner-of-war camps, he had recovered his old joie de vivre. He was constantly to be seen in the members' pavilion of the Melbourne Cricket Club, as keen as ever to savour the bowler's guile or the batsman's grace, and enjoying the greetings of many old friends as the field changed on the summer's afternoon.

Under average height and weight, he possessed a trim, well-knit figure, so often the characteristic of those who excel at games demanding co-ordination of eye and muscle. The happy name of Teddy fitted him like a glove. Invariably well groomed, with pleasant voice, welcoming smile and cheerful greeting, he was indeed a man of elegance and quality.

He had married, after returning from the first World War, Miss Gladys Northcote, daughter of Edward Northcote, for many years general manager of the Adelaide Steamship Company. A wonderfully happy family life was interrupted by the second World War; his only daughter (Mrs. H.A.L. Moran) and three grandchildren survive him, in addition to the well-beloved elder brother.

Forty years ago Edward White was my first clinical teacher at the Women's Hospital, Melbourne, and over the long years there developed for him a warm regard and affection. Teddy was a splendid colleague always kindly, gentlemanly and rich in human understanding. We at the Women's will never forget him, for he was in the line of succession to Richard Tracy and John Maund, who so strongly founded this hospital 102 years ago.

Dr. A.P. Derham writes; Colonel Edward Rowden White finished his tour of duty as Assistant Director of Medical Services of the Fourth Division, Commonwealth Military Forces, and went on to the Unattached List of September 1, 1938. In 1940, however, he returned to active duty and was given command of the 2/10 Australian General Hospital which was included in the Eighth Australian Division shortly before it sailed to Malaya. This hospital, had of necessity, been flung together at great speed, and the commanding officer and the Matron (Dorothy Pashke) met for the first time on the troopship (the Queen Mary) before they sailed.

On its first arrival in Malaya the hospital went to Malacca, where it shared the Civil General Hospital. In addition to the problems associated with the hasty assembly of his unit, Colonel White had to face difficulties inherent in the casual selection of many of his hospital orderlies, with the necessity of licking them into military shape de novo. On the other hand, he had two priceless advantages - his medical officers were of a very high order, and his nurses were magnificent. His experience of military matters and the accumulated wisdom of nearly sixty years made it possible for him to take the early difficulties of his untrained staff without being broken by the task, as might have happened to a man with a younger and more excitable nature, and very soon he had his unit welded into a smooth working machine. He also found time to be host and friend to visiting medical officers, both military and civil, and he laid the foundations of many friendships which stood us in good stead in later years of prisoner-of-war life. His unit was essentially a happy one, and he was intensely loyal to his staff as they were to him. I believe their affection for him continued until the day of his death.

Then came the morning of the attack on Pearl Harbour and the first air attack on Singapore. Malacca missed these attentions at first, but the tide of war flowed so fast that our general hospital there was soon virtually in the front line, and early in January, 1942, the hospital, with patients and staff, was moved to Singapore Island, where it was established at a school called Oldham Hall. The area then became the venue for other medical units as they were finally driven out of their last positions.

At this stage the hospital came under aerial bombing, artillery fire, mortar bombing and machine-gun and rifle fire. Little if any of this was aimed deliberately at the hospital; it was aimed at the guns of artillery units which were sited much too close to the hospital, in spite of protests by its commander and of medical officers selected for the duty of keeping the area clear of combatant units. There were some casualties among patients and staff, but no nurse or medical officer was hit while in the hospital. Throughout this trying time Edward White maintained his steadfast composure and exercised his unhurried control. This had a steadying effect on the

younger members of the staff, and at no time was there any sign of panic, even among patients who were in tented wards with no means of protecting themselves. If there had been, it would have been promptly quelled by the nursing staff, who were going about their usual duties as if nothing were happening out of the ordinary except that they were, by orders, wearing "tin hats".

On February 12, 1942, the 2/10 A.G.H. was moved to the Cathay building in Singapore city, under heavy fire but without casualty or loss of equipment. The upper floors of this heavy concrete building were occupied by an army corps headquarters, who would not or could not move, thus the hospital Red Cross flag could not be displayed, and the building was the target for heavy shelling and bombing, which fortunately did not reach the patients or staff.

After the capitulation of Singapore on February 15, the hospital was left virtually alone for a day or two; but soon, with other units, it had to move to Selarang near Changi, a distance of 16 miles. The 2/13 A.G.H. followed. Then the Japanese decided to concentrate all British and Australian hospital units in Roberts Barracks about a mile away in Changi. Malaya command consented to the Australian Hospitals' remaining under separate administrative arrangements, but agreed that only one Australian hospital commander was necessary. Colonel White was feeling a little weary, and he gladly accepted my offer that he should become director of a post-graduate medical school which we inaugurated in Selarang Barracks and who carried on its functions until Colonel White left for Formosa with the senior officer's party (of colonels and upwards) on August 15, 1942.

The move of Formosa took place under very trying conditions but Colonel White maintained his composure and good humour through it all. Eventually we reached Karenko on the east coast of Formosa and settled into an old disused naval barracks. The Americans were already in occupation, and we were joined by Dutch senior officers.

The Japanese are naturally clean people, and the barrack rooms into which we were ushered were spotlessly clean and contained clean beds with four warm blankets and rough but clean sheets. The Americans had drawn our crockery and had our evening meal cooked and waiting for us as we arrived tired and damp and hungry.

Edward White ensconced himself in the bed next to the door facing the ocean, which we could hear but not see, and there he lived out his peaceful life untroubled by the tramp of passing feet of inspecting Japanese guards and innumerable comrades passing to and fro. We used to sit at long wooden tables in the centre of the room on rough wooden forms, which became very hard as our weight diminished and our bones protruded, and justified the use of a folded blanket as a cushion. It was autumn when we arrived in Karenko, and the park of the old barracks was very beautiful in its russet autumn tints, but we soon became unwilling to sit in the sun. If a Japanese of any rank passed within a quarter of a mile or more, and we failed to leap to our feet and salute, we risked being kicked in the face or body for disrespect to Hirohito. We were reduced to a brisk walk in the open air, but otherwise we stayed in our barrack room, Teddy White, as we called him, was at a cruel disadvantage, because his spectacles became unsuitable, and he was attacked at least twice at night by brutal sentries he had not seen, and knocked down and his glasses sent flying. He put up with this humiliation with the dignity which characterized all his actions. His younger comrades tried without effect to protect him by direct appeal to the Japanese on the grounds of his rank and age. Although he was a very reserved man, he made many friends among the British, American and Dutch officers.

About the middle of 1943 we were moved from Karenko to a camp called Shirakawa, which was in a highly malarious valley. There we incurred 60% of malignant tertian malaria in the first twelve months, among about 500 senior officers and their orderlies. Teddy White had picked up benign tertian malaria while waiting in the dusk and unprotected beside a railway station on the way to Karenko, but had been adequately treated with 'Atebrian' and "Plasmoquine", which were in Australian hands. As far as I know, no Australian in our senior officers party contracted malignant tertian malaria in Formosa. They must have been protected partly by luck, but more by rigid obedience to medical instructions.

We left Shirakawa early in November, 1944. Brigadiers and over were flown direct to Manchuria, but colonels and below went by ship. Because of delays, what should have been a four-day trip became a twenty-eight days' confinement in an overcrowded hold, where there was no room to stand up. Water was strictly rationed. I do not remember a word of complaint or criticism from Edward White, who put up with these discomforts with his usual philosophy. We disembarked at the port of Moji on the Inland Sea and stayed for about a fortnight in a hotel at Beppu, which was clean and provided us with hot communal baths and good but inadequate food. Then we were moved to Pisan and were put on a troop train bound for the North. Our treatment improved for a short time, because it was just after the Potsdam Conference, and the Japanese were still hoping that the Allies might meet their demands on compromise terms.

This period lasted only two or three weeks, and was succeeded by even harsher beastliness than before. After two and a half days in a crowded troop train, in which we took it in turns to sleep sitting up, we arrived at some old Russian-built barracks in northern Manchuria. On the day after arrival it was 35° below zero Centigrade; it was too dry to snow, and a fine dust off the Gobi Desert seeped in even through our double windows, which had been sealed with strips of paper applied with Japanese paste. We used to walk around inside the boundary fence of our compound, always by appointment with a friend, partly for company and partly to have someone to see that our noses did not freeze and become frostbitten. I had many long tramps in the company of Edward White, who was an interesting talker. Our only news came by bribing our Manchurian guards. The news was passed round secretly and read out to squad members when the Japanese were out of the way.

After six months the cold gave way to spring, and we again moved south to Mukden, where we joined a large party of Americans and British. Edward White carried on with his usual composure and quiet determination and had become a universal favourite among all ranks and all nations. When the war ended, the Russians locked up the Japanese and handed over their arms to us at a ceremonial parade. The behaviour of the Japanese in these trying circumstances was almost unbelievably dignified and self-controlled.

Edward White earned our admiration for his own control of his emotions. Some time when we were at Shirakawa it became known to some of us that his only son had died of meningitis when on service in northern Australia. Only about four of us knew; and we decided that, if he knew, he wished to keep it to himself. If he did not know, we feared that the shock might do him serious injury.

So we decided not to mention the sad news to him. After the war we learned that he had known from his own mail at the same time as we did, but had never breathed a word about his loss. Edward White was not only a good commanding officer and a fine comrade, but a great man.

Dr. Robert Fowler writes: The death of Dr. E.R. White brings to a close an eventful and distinguished career. Born into an era of intense scientific, social and political activity, Edward White found much to occupy his time and talents during a span of 74 years. His was a buoyant personality gallantly breasting the full tide of human affairs. As a detailed list of his accomplishments will appear elsewhere, I propose to keep his memory green by recording one or two of his own anecdotes. It was always good entertainment to meet Teddy White at the club and to find him in reminiscent mood. More than once I heard him tell or two episodes which seem to have given him life-long amusement and satisfaction: the first had to do with cricket at Geelong Grammar School; the second was concerned with his part in the evacuation at Gallipoli. Each episode reveals Ted as baffled but unbeaten; each episode leads on to anti-climax.

On one occasion, as captain of the school eleven, Ted was faced with the problem of dislodging an opposing batsman (S.M. Bruce), who looked set for a mammoth score. Putting himself on as a slow bowler, Ted posted his tallest and safest fieldsman at deep long-on. The first ball went for a six, but on attempting to repeat the stroke Bruce was caught at long-on. Although given out, Lord Bruce holds to this day that the fieldsman over-reached the boundary in taking the catch. This difference of opinion was the cause of an extraordinary phenomenon in after years, when, by coincidence, the two protagonists occupied adjacent taxis in a Piccadilly Circus traffic-hold-up. Disregarding the astonished Jehus, each put his head out the window and started yelling "Out" or "Not Out" as individual bias required.

The second episode relates to the military evacuation of Gallipoli in December, 1915. Unknown to either of them, the decision to evacuate had already been taken, when, in November, the commanding officer, Light Horse Field Ambulance, embarked for Egypt, leaving Major Edward White in charge of the Unit. We can best picture the situation that arose by quoting a few sentences from Alan Moorehead's book on Gallipoli:

The plan that was finally adopted ...  
a gradual and secret withdrawal which was to  
take place during successive nights until at  
last only a small garrison was left...  
Clearly everything would depend upon secrecy  
and the weather ... Each evening after  
dusk, flotillas of barges and small boats crept  
into Anzac Cove and there was a fever of  
activity all night as troops, animals and guns  
were got abroad ... Within an hour of  
nightfall, from dozens of little gullies and  
ravines ... Men were moving towards the  
shore. Not smoking or talking, each group  
when it reached the sea, stood quietly  
waiting for its turn to embark.

On the beaches huge piles of clothing, blankets, tinned food, ammunition and other stores were made ready to be destroyed. It was now that Major White found himself in a dilemma, since the Unit was carrying much more than the regulation load. Conspicuous amongst the impedimenta was a mass of personal gear left behind by the commanding officer against the day of his expected return. By dint of tact, determination and diplomacy, Ted managed to wangle the whole "box of dice" onto the last barge before dawn. But now came the anti-climax. Having successfully evaded an exasperated embarkation officer on one side of the Mediterranean, the Major had reason to look forward to meeting a jubilant commanding officer on the opposite shore. Alas, it was not to be! As he figuratively laid the burden at his master's feet, the unemotional response was: "Thanks, Ted, for bringing my things. I'm sorry you forgot my riding boots".

Edward White's ineffable cheerfulness was much more than mere merriment, bringing him countless friends; his was a rich endowment of cheerful optimism that withstood the hardship and heartaches, harrowing some of his later years. Triumphant in adversity, his blithe spirit gently smoothed the way to a peaceful end - he died in his sleep

Sir Albert Coates writes: My first association with Dr. Edward R. White was as a student at the Royal Women's Hospital in the early 1920s. I, like many others was astounded at the skill and deftness with which E.R.W. repaired a cystocele. His operations on the female genitals were masterpieces of careful and neat technique.

In February, 1941, Colonel White was my commanding officer in the 10th Australian General Hospital. We went to Malaya together, and during the next twelve months I, like other officers, orderlies and nursing sisters of the 10th Australian General Hospital, learned to esteem our Colonel. Dr. Cotter Harvey and I were his constant companions, not only in the routine hospital work, but in the various social activities so richly provided by the British residents of Malacca. His expert opinion as an obstetrician was sought by civilian doctors in Malaya.

Largely at his instigation, clinical meetings were arranged at the Malacca Civilian Hospital and, officers of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps participated in the regular weekly discussions. The Colonel was a friendly soul, and it was easy for him to obtain the utmost collaboration from the medical men of the British Colonial Service. He oiled the wheels. We were not surprised when, at the time of our baptism of fire at Oldham Hall, Singapore, the last home of the 10th Australian General Hospital, the Colonel set us an example of serenity and quiet undisturbed behaviour, during the daily and nightly bombings about our quarters.

Wearing his tin hat, he was at his office table on the balcony of the old Chinese school, calmly carrying out his duties as if the enemy were a hundred miles away. His last words to me on "Black Friday" night, February 13, 1942, were instructions to "get out" and his kindly felicitations for a safe voyage home.

We next met in September, 1945, at Labuan in Borneo. We commenced our little talks, never prolonged or bitter, of our experiences of the intervening years. A sad blow at this time was the first news of the death of his only son, Jim, while on active service in the north. Despite the fact that Colonel White was informed of the tragic circumstances he bore this added burden with equanimity. His late wife, Gladys, was to be a friend to my wife and to the wives of the other prisoners of war during the years of waiting.

Never one to dramatize, he passed on his way, serving on committees for the review of the health of ex-prisoners of war, and as a member of assessment tribunals for the Repatriation Department. A heart attack in 1957 slowed down his activities. Tennis, his beloved game, at which he was a master, had to be abandoned. His lovely grass court, of which he was so proud, was the scene of many a friendly but hard-fought game. He passed away in his sleep, unobtrusively, in perfect character with the pattern of his life. A gentleman who served, one of the salt of the earth. Long may his savour remain!

Professor Lance Townsend writes: Soon after the death of Dr. Arthur Wilson in 1948, Dr. Edward White considered that the name of Dr. Wilson should be perpetuated in some form or another. He formed a committee of interested people, and was the driving force behind the Arthur Wilson Appeal. This appeal raised £8,000. Dr. White then established the Arthur Wilson Foundation. This foundation, of which he was the first chairman, had three main objects: first, to establish in Melbourne the home of the Australian Regional council of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; and thirdly, to foster research in obstetrics and gynaecology.

In his lifetime the first two objects were achieved, and he lived to see and chair the first four Arthur Wilson lectures. He was present at the opening of the College House in Melbourne and was able on behalf of the Arthur Wilson Foundation, to hand over the building to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in the person of the then president, Mr. Arthur Gemmell - the total assets handed over being about £30,000.

He was always interested in the Chair of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Melbourne, and was instrumental in having the title of the Chair changed in 1949 from that of Obstetrics to that of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. He took a personal interest in the first Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology when he was appointed in 1951, and soon afterwards interested his brother, Dr. A.E. Rowden White, in setting up the A.E. Rowden White and Edward R. White Foundation for Medical Research at the Royal Women's Hospital, whereby an annual grant of £2,000 is paid to the University of Melbourne for research in the University Department at the Royal Women's Hospital. In the last ten years Dr. Edward White was considered the doyen of the obstetricians and gynaecologists in Melbourne, and was as a father to many of the younger specialists. He helped them with good advice on all occasions. He moulded the members of the Arthur Wilson Foundation so that they became a force in obstetrical and gynaecological circles, and his influence will be felt for many years to come.

I consulted Dr. White on many matters, as I respected his judgement; he was always approachable, he never forced his point of view, and he was willing to help when called upon. With his death those who helped to found the Regional council of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in Victoria have all passed on. I trust that those who carry on their good work will be as worthy as he was.

## **Archival/Heritage Resources**

### **Royal Women's Hospital Archives**

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Wilson, Arthur Mitchell (1888 - 1947)

d.s.o., M.D. (Melb.), F.R.C.O.G.

<i>Born</i>	1888 Albert Park, Victoria, Australia
<i>Died</i>	19 December 1947
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of item written by Dr Colin Macdonald and published in "The Book of Remembrance", The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1956.

### ARTHUR MITCHELL WILSON (1920 - 1947)

Arthur Mitchell Wilson, born at Albert Park, Victoria, in 1888, was the only son of a widowed mother. In 1901, he won a first place in the government scholarship awards enabling him to attend Scotch College. He matriculated there in 1905 and a year later commenced the study medicine at the University of Melbourne. He held both a government Exhibition and a resident scholarship at Ormond College. He graduated in 1911 and was appointed a resident medical officer to the Melbourne Hospital. This was followed by a trip to China as a ship's surgeon. On his return, he joined the resident staff of the Women's Hospital where he came under the particular influence of R.H. Fetherston.

In 1915, Wilson married Miss Rita McLeod, member of a famous Australian cricketing family. Shortly after, with the Australian Imperial Forces, he proceeded overseas with the 3rd Australian General Hospital. At Lemnos, he contracted paratyphoid. Recovering from this illness, he was posted to France, and there was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for meritorious work during the Battle of the Somme. He was promoted to Lieutenant-colonel and commanded the 7th Field Ambulance. During this time he investigated "the factors which determine the arrangements required for the transportation of battle casualties". His report was later published in the "Official History of the Australian Army Services".

Returning to Melbourne in 1919 he joined Dr Roy Wawn in practice in Prahran and the following year was appointed to the honorary staff of the Women's Hospital; from that time his interest was largely directed towards obstetrics. By his quiet influence, he was mainly responsible for the welding of the honorary staff of this hospital into a highly efficient unit.

In 1926, Arthur Wilson succeeded R.H. Morrison as Lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Melbourne. He relinquished this position in 1929, when Robert Marshall Allan, as first Professor of Obstetrics, took over these duties. It was during this period that Arthur Wilson, by his ability to blend the theoretical with the practical, and his clarity of presentation, established himself as a master of the teaching of obstetrics. He was a Foundation Fellow in Australia of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and did much to further its aims and interests in this country.

In 1931, a re-organisation of the honorary staff appointments at the Women's Hospital compelled his transfer to the gynaecological side. His great knowledge of obstetrics, acquired from an immense hospital, private, and consultant practice, was, however, always readily available. One of Arthur Wilson's greatest pleasures was a friendly discussion on a difficult obstetrical problem. These, he invariably enriched with interesting anecdotes and sound advice. He was a superb manipulative obstetrician, and his gentleness and dexterity on such occasions was a joy to witness.

As a young man Arthur Wilson was a keen athlete, and gained blues in athletics and football at the University. He had a great love of family life and was devoted to his wife and four children.

Arthur Wilson truly dedicated his life to obstetrics. He never refused a request for his care or help. He never criticised nor spoke disparagingly of others and was universally respected, admired and held in great affection. He died on December 19th 1947, after a hopeless and painful illness, but will always be remembered as one of the greatest Australian obstetricians.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

# Worcester, Reginald George (1903 - 1972)

<i>Born</i>	September 1903
<i>Died</i>	1 March 1972 Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
<i>Occupation</i>	Gynaecologist, Medical Practitioner and Obstetrician

## Details

Transcription of obituary written by Dr. Arthur Machen Hill and published in Medical Journal of Australia, 14th April, 1973 and the "Book of Remembrance", Royal Women's Hospital, 1973.

### REGINALD GEORGE WORCESTER

(1939 - 1948)

Reginald George Worcester, who died in Melbourne on March 1, 1972, was a highly trained, competent and dedicated specialist in obstetrics and gynaecology. He was also a fine humanitarian. For five years before his death, however, his career was in eclipse as the result of a stroke in January, 1967. Because of this, Melbourne graduates of recent years knew little of his personality or of an imposing record dating back to his school days.

Reg Worcester was born into one of Victoria's earliest pioneering families in September, 1903. He was the eldest of a family of six and spend his childhood in Omeo, Gippsland, where he became a good horseman and fine rifle shot. From the country Reg won a scholarship to Melbourne High School, which at that time stood on the site of the present Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. Here his record was outstanding, as cited in the excellent obituary of him in "The Old Unicornian" (magazine of the Melbourne High School Old Boys' Association) last June: "He was head prefect in 1921 when he was awarded the Rix Prize, the only prize permitted by Joe Hocking at Spring Street and one awarded to the boy who had shown the best character, exerted the strongest influence for good and made the greatest progress in his studies. At Spring Street Reg Worcester was champion shot of the rifle team and best player in lacrosse, and his final year, won a senior scholarship and a university college scholarship."

In 1922, Reg began medicine and it was then that I met him and came to appreciate his ability and personality. At the time of his death we had been friends for 50 years. Throughout his medical course Reg was among the academic leaders and invariably passed with honours. In second year he was one of only five to qualify as both a "prosecutor" in anatomy (in the first 8) and "apostle" in physiology (in the first 12). In sport he was also prominent, being captain of the university lacrosse team and winning both a full blue and a place in the Victorian interstate team; he also won a half blue for rifle shooting. Military life appealed to him and he became a lieutenant and later captain in the Melbourne University Rifles. He graduated in 1927 with first-class honours in obstetrics and gynaecology, second-class honours in medicine and surgery and seventh place in the combined honours list. This was a "vintage" year, for of 81 who graduated, no less than 17 became honoraries in the public teaching hospitals of Melbourne.

After graduating, Reg was appointed resident medical officer to the Melbourne Hospital and in 1929 to the Women's Hospital, Melbourne. In 1930 he was appointed medical superintendent of the Women's Hospital and held this position with distinction for two and a half years.

In those days the position of medical superintendent at a teaching hospital was predominantly clinical, and that at the Women's Hospital was highly regarded. Indeed, of 15 who held the position during the 30 years of its tenure (1919-1948), 11 were later appointed to the Honorary Medical Staff. The key value of the position lay in its unique clinical content and the scope it gave for gaining practical experience in the management of obstetrical and gynaecological emergencies. Reg was an able superintendent, as I can attest, having been an R.M.O. in the hospital at the time. He was an excellent clinician with capable hands; and his friendliness and critical acuity alerted the resident medical staff. The R.M.O.s were appointed consecutively, one every two months, and Reg held a farewell dinner for each senior man when he completed his year. These pleasant functions were forerunners of the social dinners later to be held at regular intervals by the Honorary Medical Staff. In these years Reg obtained his M.D. (1930) and D.C.G. (1932); and after his term at the Women's Hospital ended in 1933, he acted as tutor in anatomy at the Medical School and in obstetrics at Trinity College, University of Melbourne. In 1934 he went overseas for further study.

In England, in 1934, he married Jean Kerville, who was to prove a source of strength, understanding and devotion to him for the rest of his days. Reg next passed his M.(R.)C.O.G. (1935) and worked for two years as resident medical and surgical officer at St. Charles's Hospital, London. He obtained his F.R.C.S. in 1936 and completed his overseas programme with refresher courses at the great London hospitals and Hammersmith Postgraduate Medical School.

On his return to Melbourne in 1937, he was appointed a university tutor in obstetrics and gynaecology, a post he held for 11 years. In 1938 he obtained his F.R.A.C.S. and in 1939 was appointed honorary gynaecologist to outpatients at the Women's Hospital. From 1938 to 1940 he worked as obstetrician in a Toorak general practice and when the "phony war" of 1939-1940 became a reality he enlisted in the A.I.F. and served full-time from 1941 to 1946.

Promoted lieutenant colonel from his earlier rank of captain in the Melbourne University Rifles, Reg began war service as C.O. of the 17th Field Ambulance in Darwin and as A.D.M.S., Northern Territory Force, and the 2nd/9th Australian Army Corps from 1942 to 1943. His major war service, however, was undertaken in Borneo and Morotai, commanding the 2nd/1st Australian C.C.S. and the 2nd/9th Australian General Hospital. Reg was an excellent military man with an ability to organize and lead, and a humane concern for the individual soldier. The comments of Hubert Smith, company commander, typify those of A.W. Burton, Clarence

Leggett and other military associates: "His success as C.O. of a Field Ambulance resulted from a complete understanding of what the unit should be able to do in the transportation of casualties in the field, as well as of the usual medical functions. He organized both with efficiency and at all times difficult decisions were made with humility and good humour. The personal qualities which made him such a calm and considerate consultant never left him, even in the most dangerous and trying circumstances of war."

Unfortunately, Reg Worcester returned from the Army with impaired general health, for he was the victim of established amoebiasis and a number of allergies. But in spite of this he soon succeeded in building up a large and effective private and consultant practice in obstetrics and gynaecology. The story of his next 20 years is one of continuing industry and achievement, hampered towards the last by periods of ill health. He participated in the medical and social activities of his colleagues, his university and his colleges, but never at the cost of the welfare of his patients. He was appointed in turn to the following important posts: Honorary Outpatient Obstetrician and Inpatient Gynaecologist to the Women's Hospital (1946-1948); Honorary Gynaecologist to Prince Henry's Hospital (1946-1963); Guest Examiner in London for the R.C.O.G. (1953); Examiner in Obstetrics and Gynaecology for the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (1957-1964); Visiting Gynaecologist to the Repatriation General Hospital, Heidelberg 1963-1967; and first Victorian Members' Representative (1947-1950) and later Fellows' Representative (1953-1960) on the Australian (Regional) Council of the R.C.O.G. To these posts he brought the benefits of clear thinking and critical awareness. In 1949 he was elected F.R.C.O.G.

During the post-war years I saw Reg less often, for we now worked in different hospitals. But to me his warm friendliness, perception, dedicated service to his patients and final courage in adversity, were hallmarks.

For an account of his post-war image in active practice I am largely indebted to the contributions of his colleagues and friends, in particular those of Theo Frank, E.A.C. Farran, A.G. Bond, Cyrus Jones, Dame Kate Campbell, J. Glyn White, John Gabriel, Victor Brand, Keith Layton and Kenneth Rex.

Reg Worcester had a vital interest in people and this enabled him to help patients as much with their personal problems as with their medical needs. Indeed, a significant proportion of his private practice always came by direct referral from other patients. By this following, he was held not only in esteem as a doctor, but often in deep affection as a personal friend. As a consultant he was always available, efficient and kindly, and he concerned himself with the financial status of the patient. To younger colleagues he was constructively helpful and assisted a number in starting obstetric practice. He was intolerant of inefficiency and could be outspokenly critical, but his displeasure did not linger. He was a good practical teacher in the ward and theatre, but did not enjoy addressing large gatherings, and being basically a man of action, he wrote sparingly. He was finely trained and equipped in the art of manipulative obstetrics. He was technically an excellent surgeon, some of his colleagues with overseas experience regarding him as "the best vaginal surgeon" they had seen. His main recreation was golf, and he enjoyed the amenities of his social clubs.

His reputation was at its peak and his health seemingly sound when he was struck down by a hemiplegia in January, 1967. Reg recovered only partly from this lesion which left him with impaired gait and a paralysed right hand. He could no longer do major surgery, but in September, 1967, he resumed part-time practice. Ill health compelled him to retire in March, 1970, and four months later another stroke left him almost completely bed-ridden and confined to his home. In the last days of February, 1972, he became unconscious with a third stroke and died on March 1.

It was Reg's tragedy that so much ability and human quality were in eclipse during his last five years, for his mental clarity remained to the end. In his last two years when I visited him we talked freely of the present and the past. These were days to remember, for Reg's courage was high and his intelligence clear and Jean nursed him with unceasing efficiency and devotion. He could have no finer epitaph than that expressed by his school fellows: "Looking back on Dr. Worcester's long and outstanding services to the community in peace and war, it is evident that the qualities of leadership and selflessness displayed as Head Prefect remained with him throughout life. Those who awarded him the coveted Rix Prize certainly made a good selection way back in 1921." Reg's was a close-knit family and the sympathy of those who knew his worth will be with Jean, Catherine, David and Marian.

## Archival/Heritage Resources

### Royal Women's Hospital Archives

- Book of Remembrance, 1956 - 1975; Royal Women's Hospital Archives