



Museum Matters

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IPSWICH HOSPITAL MUSEUM Inc.



Chairman's Chattering

As you read through this edition of Museum Matters you can feel the palpable sense of love and commitment that staff have had in the past for Ipswich Hospital. Today we would reflect that the past activities of staff socialising together created huge amounts of social capital. Workplace social capital provides much needed mutual support and gives meaning to workplace life. The social history of retelling these positive stories from our past is a wonderful opportunity to refresh our hope in community and recharge our passion for caring for others. I wonder as our community continues to grow exponentially and with it, the pressure for everyone to do more, are these the factors that dampen our enthusiasm for fun and friendship in the workplace? It is a puzzling question. Looking at the physical nature of hospital work in the past, mixed with the lack of advanced technology that we enjoy today it does make one reflect on how our working culture has changed.

It is my sincere hope that we can dampen the transactional nature of an increasingly busy work community and reinvigorate a sense of belonging. I am hopeful that by retelling stories of our past that this creates space for staff to look back at the sense of community that Ipswich Hospital was built on. Let's do all we can to ensure that once again Ipswich Hospital can be a highly connected workplace that supports community to thrive.

Melinda Parcell

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Staff at Play

In the decades before the new century Ipswich Hospital staff, despite their dedication and hard work in their serious work environment, enjoyed a fun, family atmosphere inside and outside the hospital.

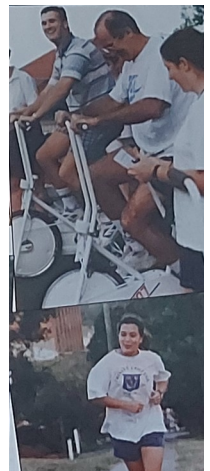
These included swimming carnivals, triathlons, conferences, fetes, balls, team sports, hangis and barbecues to name a few.

Central to many events and leisure activities was the swimming pool, located adjacent to Trumpy Home. The hospital 1981 Year Book reported that after about 30 years of fund raising by the nursing staff the pool was almost a reality. Matron Wilcox opened a savings account for the nurses Swimming Pool Fund using money accumulated in the student nurses' fund. Some of the money was used to provide night lights for the tennis court, now no longer in existence due to progress and building projects. After a contingent of nurses attended the inter hospital swimming carnival at Princess Alexandra Hospital in 1973, it was again decided to strive to have a pool built. A

committee was formed and fundraising, initially enthusiastic and then intermittent, continued for the next six years. The Hospital Board agreed to subsidise \$1 for \$1 if money was available. But, when notified in 1979 that the money had been raised, the board was unable to help at this time. In 1981 a big push was made to raise more funds from functions and staff donations. \$36,917 was raised. Dr Llew Edwards, at the time QLD Health Minister, offered a subsidy of \$25,000 from the QLD government.

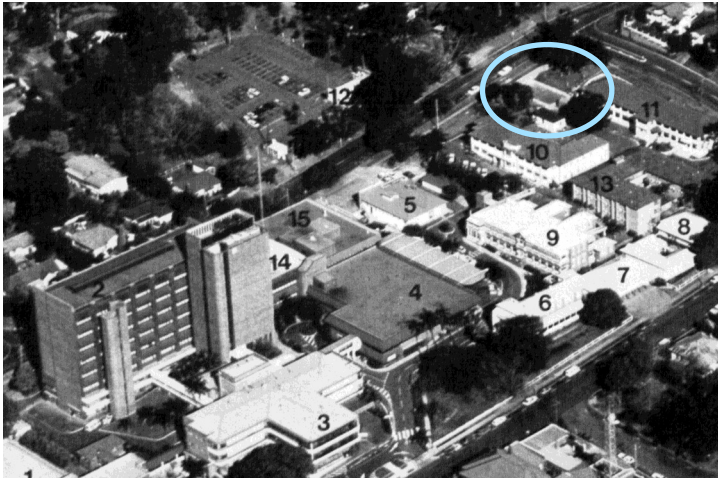
The pool was built around 1981 but regrettably was removed in the late 1990s to make way for hospital redevelopment including the new ward block.

The hospital triathlons, held in the pool vicinity, was a highlight on the hospital calendar—bringing many staff members together. In departmental teams they battled out laps of the swimming pool, kilometres on the physiotherapy department's exercise bikes and three laps around the hospital block cheered on by many supporters and family members.



Staff competing in the hospital triathlon centred around the pool, above, and including the "bicycle leg" and three laps around the hospital block. Photos were recorded from this event in the 1998 hospital year book.

The photo on the left was taken in the early 1990s and shows where the swimming pool was located (circled in blue) between Chelmsford House (10) and Trumpy House (11). On the right this photo was taken after the redevelopment in the late 1990s with the new ward block. Trumpy House still remains but Chelmsford House and the swimming pool were demolished.



Other buildings demolished to allow for redevelopment as shown in the above left photo included Barnett Home (13), Active Geriatric Rehabilitation Unit, originally Sunshine Ward (9), Passionfruit Villa (Allied Health 7), Living Out quarters (8) and Administration and Medical Block (3)

Ipswich Hospital Conferences

Museum volunteer and former hospital staff member, Dr Stewart Parkinson, has fond memories of these conferences.

“Back in the 1990s a group consisting of fulltime doctors, visiting medical officers, local GPs, nurses and allied health professionals got together and decided to organise regular Ipswich Hospital conferences with the aim of improving collegiality, providing education programs and inviting families to join in the activities.

Various locations were chosen that provided family friendly and/or golf friendly activities. SeaWorld Nara Resort was a popular venue for those that enjoyed a game of golf—it was also very family friendly with its water-based activities. Other locations included Anchorage Village on North

Stradbroke Island (this involved a particularly adventurous journey home on the car ferry one year when Moreton Bay decided to blow up, Cherrabah Resort near Killarney, the Hyatt Coolum (before Clive Palmer got his hands on it) and Kooralbyn Resort with its challenging golf course.

The program usually involved arrival on Friday evening (for those who could get away) with drinks and casual snacks, followed by a diverse academic program on the Saturday morning. Dr David Walters often delivered a popular slide presentation of his holiday adventures around Australia (no PowerPoint in those days). Occasionally an invited speaker would attend—Professor John Pearn attended one SeaWorld event and a conference at O’Reilly’s Resort.

Often Saturday nights involved a

conference dinner and I have clear memories of some of the older teenage children volunteering to “babysit” the younger generation.

Sunday usually involved breakfast and enjoyment of the resort’s various activities before preparing for the journey home.

On a personal note, I have fond memories of attending these conferences with the likes of Ranald Pascoe, Unis and Stella Suliman, Wally and Marg Bodetti, Tricia Tierney, and Peter (my golfing partner) and Ann Brazel.”

Below: Enjoying one of the hospital conferences are (Standing L to R) Dr Hugh Bartholomeusz, Dr Stewart Parkinson, Dr Rob Jeffries, Dr John Pearn, Dr Mervyn Cobcroft. In the centre is Dr Ranald Pascoe and on the floor in front is Dr Terry Mulhearn.



Left: A large contingent attending one of the hospital conferences including museum volunteers Elizabeth McNalty (left front), Dr Stewart Parkinson seated behind her and Judy Blinco seated right.



Hospital Fetes

Many fetes were run by the Ladies’ Auxilliary. In 1981 \$5,077 was raised for the Nurses’ Swimming Pool Fund. This year’s event included stalls, a moon walk, slippery slide, soft toys wheel, arts and crafts display and pony rides.



Sporting Challenges

For many years the interhospital swimming carnivals provided a chance for Ipswich Hospital staff to strive in the pool, shine in the poolside musical routines and shout out in the cheer squads, often bringing home trophies and cups for their endeavours.

Initially held at the Princess Alexandra Hospital pool the event was later transferred to the Chandler pool.

The 1998 hospital year book portrayed the involvement and success of Ipswich Hospital teams at this event.

In the late 1990s other sporting teams included Dribblers' Anonymous (basketball), the Bone Heads (touch football), TURPS (mixed netball).

The origin of the name TURPS is unknown but one can surmise. Their first season saw them winning only one game but they took out the grand final the following year and semi-final the next in the supposedly non-contact sport of netball. Their aim was to enjoy rather than be competitive and were recognised for their sportsmanship. They also realised belatedly they did not need alcohol to play a good game.

Maybe it was a lesson needed to be learned by the Boneheads (mainly orthopaedic surgeons) competing in the annual touch football competition. They did win the trophy one year for the best team spirit—the prize a bottle of rum.

Dribblers' Anonymous appeared to have been started to provide a gathering for "letting off steam" and engaging in exchanging life experiences accompanied by simple warm up exercises and followed by breaking into groups for a more competitive edge. They met fortnightly at the the Ipswich Girls' Grammar Stadium.

The Ipswich Hospital Allsports Association was formed in 1980 and highlighted in the hospital's yearbook the following year. It was initiated with the main aim of promoting friendship and goodwill between all members of the hospital staff and included cricket and touch football matches and pool nights amongst members and with other hospitals. A vigoro team was also formed and the 'Bluejays' competed in the local competition.

It is probable that many other sporting activities were enjoyed by staff and stories to be told. We would love to hear those tales (accompanied by photos if available).



Photos from the Ipswich Hospital 1998 Yearbook show (clockwise from above): the hospital swim team; the cheer squad; senior staff Dr Stephen Brierley, DON Pam Lane, Rosie Laidlaw; theatre staff with trophies won at the carnival



Letting Their Hair Down

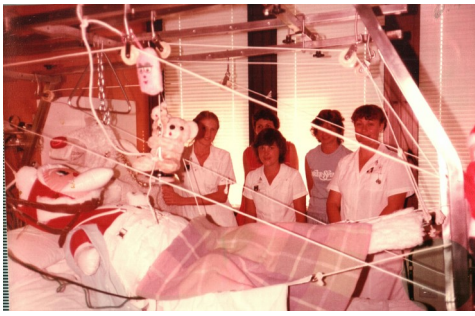
Fancy dress balls, graduation balls, hospital fetes and open days were all regular features of the Ipswich Hospital staff social calendar during the latter part of the last century.

One fancy dress ball was highlighted in the hospital's 1981 Year Book. Held in the Ipswich Showgrounds function room and attended by about 60 staff and friends displaying their imaginative leanings—the party was judged a success after finally winding up at about 2am.



Christmas in Hospital

With Christmas nearly upon us we must remember that many people are not able to spend this festive season with their families. They may be patients unable to be home for Christmas or the many staff who work to ensure the patients are cared for.



The above patient, Mr Clause, an elderly gentleman of indeterminate age, was admitted one December after falling from a roof. After intensive treatment by junior medical officers and the gentle care of student nurses, Mr Claus discharged himself on December 23 citing urgent work commitments. Mr Claus was a regular patient annually in the 1980s and as materials and equipment were reusable this was a low cost procedure.

Museum volunteer and long serving sister-in-charge of the operating theatre, Libby McNalty recalls how Christmas was celebrated in this department many years ago.

"The theatre foyer and staff room were decorated and Christmas time was an eating extravaganza. Prior to the big day the anaesthetic department would organise a big breakfast for all the theatre staff. The doctors were certainly excellent cooks and Sue Brunke always outdid everyone in the culinary stakes. After an enormous breakfast the theatre tea room was set up for the rest of the day with tables overloaded with food for what was called "the grazing day". Staff grazed all day in between surgical cases. There was always so much left over for the night staff. As our staff was multicultural some amazing dishes adorned the groaning tables in the staff room.

Memories of Christmas in the theatre were all about food and those great cooks."

Dr Stewart Parkinson, another museum volunteer, remembers that, in the late 80's/90's, medical staff working or on call within the hospital campus were able to partake of a roast Xmas lunch (turkey or chicken) in the Medical/Nursing Dining Room (segregated as I recall) and were not required to present a "meal ticket".

The Queensland Times on 26 December 1950 reported that the Christmas spirit was evident at Ipswich Hospital displaying the many hours that staff had spent in trying to give their patients a bright and happy Christmas Day.

"The laughter and chatter in the children's ward must have been sufficient reward for all who played a part in bringing the children a Merry Christmas."

In the centre of the ward stood a giant Christmas tree, gay with balloons and other novelties and carrying presents for each small patient. In two corners were scenes depicting well-known nursery rhymes. Toys were distributed to the children by Father Christmas. Members of the Central Congregational Youth Fellowship visited all wards singing carols and giving each patient a bag of sweets and each child a toy. The children enjoyed a morning tea of drinks, nuts, sweets and other dainties.

The floral decorations in all wards added considerably to the festive atmosphere. The flowers were donated to the hospital by local gardeners and collected by members of the nursing staff with transport provided by RACQ officials. Other generous donations included ice cream from Messrs Peters Ltd and the Courier Mail's toy fund.

The staircase leading to the women's medical ward was colourfully decorated with bright streamers and ferns and crepe paper climbing roses. At the top of the staircase stood a attractive wishing well covered with variegated climbing roses and very detailed including a small black 'snake' lurking in the foreground. Two trees in the ward were hung with small gifts which Santa handed out to patients. In the women's surgical ward, staff had arranged a tableau depicting the Nativity scene. A huge tree was decked out with balloons and streamers and flickering coloured lights. The scene in the male surgical ward portrayed a lake with a miniature house on the shore and bird life and flowers on the surface of the 'water'. The centre of attraction in the male medical ward was the fireplace with its 'glowing' coals, a comfortable old rocking chair and stockings hanging on the mantelpiece. The 'family dog' slept peacefully on the hearth.




The museum's large collection of images includes these photos from albums of operating theatre photos taken at different Christmas times during the 1980s and 90s.



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Christmas Wishes

Ipswich Hospital Museum volunteers wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you all again in 2024.

The museum will be closed from Wednesday 13 December until Wednesday 10 January.

