



Museum Matters

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IPSWICH HOSPITAL MUSEUM Inc.

Committee :

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Secretary: J. Kingston
Treasurer: C. Marre

Chairman's Chatterings

One of the main aims of the Ipswich Hospital Museum is to document and highlight the deep connection between the people of Ipswich and the Ipswich Hospital. I cannot think of a better example of this connection than the year 2000 quilting project that was undertaken by Midwifery staff at Ipswich Hospital on the first year of the new millennia.

The maternity staff were so thrilled to be part of welcoming new babies in the year 2000 that they worked together in their own time to create a beautiful memorial and recognition of each precious life that they were privileged to welcome in the year 2000. This is true caring, commitment and community spirit in action.

I happened to be working as the Assistant Director of Nursing for the Child and Family Health Service and I can remember the careful organisation of ideas and crafty staff it took to bring these beautiful quilts to life. I would encourage you to take some time to seek out view the quilts and admire the uniqueness of each square that was individually made to recognise every baby born that year.

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Happy 21st Birthday Millennium Quilts

Young people celebrating their 21st birthday this year were born in 2000. Those born at Ipswich Hospital had their birth details recorded in a special way. Their name, weight, date and time of birth were hand embroidered on pieces of fabric which were then sewn together into a quilt at the end of each month. They were also embellished with crosstitch, applique and sometimes photos of staff.

Consent for the recording of baby details had to be obtained from the parents/guardians.

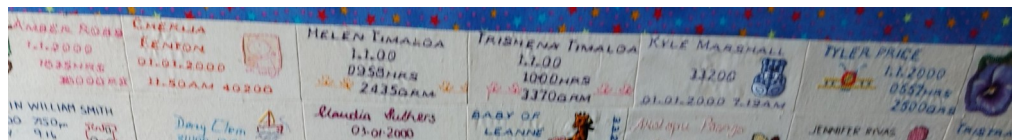
The 14 quilts – two of the months (May and August) needed two quilts created – were framed and for a number of years hung along the corridors of the birth suite.

The Ipswich Hospital Museum now has custody of the quilts.

To commemorate the milestone of the 21st birthdays of these millennium babies, it is planned to hang the quilts

at the East Street Entrance on Level 2 along the corridor towards the lifts. Later in the year it is expected they will be displayed as part of an Ipswich festival event.

In the meantime the quilts have been photographed in detail by the hospital's media department photographer and will feature on the Friends of Ipswich Hospital Museum Facebook page and the Museum's web page.



A section of the January quilt showing the babies born at Ipswich Hospital on 1 January 2000—Amber Robb (1635), Cherija Fenton (11.50am), twins Helen (9.58am) and Trishena Timaloa (10am), Kyle Marshall (7.19am), Tyler Price (5.57am) and Courtney Simpson (12.55am).



Another set of twins were also born in January—Bradley and Ross Gordon appeared on January 25.



The January Quilt above and some sections left. Note the embellishments which include cross stitch and applique.



Hospital Laundry

Contributed by Ross Blinco

An old nursery rhyme instructs:
 Wash on Monday
 Iron on Tuesday
 Bake on Wednesday
 Brew on Thursday
 Churn on Friday
 Mend on Saturday
 Meeting on Sunday.

Adding the everyday tasks of cooking and cleaning, the running of Ipswich Hospital required many more services than the provision of medical treatments and procedures.

The “keeping” of the hospital including the staff who lived on the premises and the patients, was the responsibility of the Matron. From 1850 until the 1890s the matrons had no formal training in nursing. The core requirement was effective housekeeping.

In 1875 the costs of Housekeeping for an average of 37 patients and 10 live in employees were:

- Supply of food - 11½ pence (<10cents) per head per day
- Supply of sundries, including medicines, coal, firewood, candles, kerosene, soap, soda, linen, bedding, and funerals - 5⅔ pence (<5cents) per head per day.
- Female Servants (which included nurses) were paid £30 (\$60) per year plus board and lodging was provided.
- The gardener was paid 15 shillings (\$1.50) per week with board or 25 shillings (\$2.50) living out.

Washing for almost 50 people was a big job. When the hospital first opened in 1860, the laundry facilities were basic.

The original laundry was a timber and shingle outbuilding beside the kitchen,

separated from, and to the west of the main hospital building. It had an earthen floor. Water was drawn from an in-ground brick tank beside the kitchen, or purchased for 1shilling (10cents) per cask (drawn from the river) when water was scarce. The fireplace and chimney smoked excessively. Wastewater drained via an open brick drain to the end of the hospital building and then via an earth drain which overflowed into Court Street, to the displeasure of the neighbours.

What was washed?

The laundry washed and dried all of the hospital’s clothing and bedding. Most dressings and bandages were washed and reused time and again.

Clothing was made of flannelette, twill, linen, cottons, and wool. The gatekeeper was the only staff member who wore a uniform. Silk may have been worn by the wealthier patients and professional staff. Dress clothes would be ironed and some items starched.

Bedding was woollen blankets, cotton counterpanes, calico sheets, pillows and palliases, (a large bag stuffed with straw used as a mattress). Huckabuck linen, towelling and Donnaburg were also used.

These materials were washed by hand in water with soap. Washing soda (sodium carbonate), bleach, vinegar or hydrocarbons such as methylated spirits, kerosene or white spirits may have been used for particular applications. Washing was air dried. A mangle was turned to squeeze as much water as possible from the laundry before it was hung out so it could dry more quickly.

The washing would be dirty. Clothing was not washed as often as it is nowadays and usually ingrained with mud or dust (roads were unsealed and drainage rudimentary); sweat (people

worked hard, often manual labour and frequently with animals); and ash and smoke from fires, lamps and candles. Brushes, brooms, buckets, mops and rags were the available technology for keeping the household clean.

In 1866 a laundrywoman was employed at the hospital. The boiler shed was replaced by a 5.4m x 3.6m brick building, and a brick floor was installed.

By the mid-1870s the kitchen /laundry held three boilers. A 7ft (2.1metre) mangle specially made by a Mr Shillington had been purchased for £20 (\$40). The leaky shingle roof had been repaired, and, after several attempts to fix the smoky fires, the chimneys were finally pulled down and rebuilt. Iron tanks had been installed to supplement the water supply, and a spigot had been piped into the laundry. After representations from the Council, drainage was improved.

In 1875 the kitchen was converted to a double story building with the dining room upstairs. A remodelled laundry occupied part of the ground floor.

By 1922 gas was being used on the site but this was replaced by a new steam and hot water system (believed to be coal fired) in 1931.

The final innovation was the new laundry and boiler house erected in 1945. The brick chimney being a landmark on Denmark Hill until it was demolished.

In 1989 arrangements were made for most of the hospital laundry to be sent first to Boggo Road Jail and then to David Longland Correctional Centre.



The building containing the last laundry (above). To the left of the building is the wall of the current Emergency Department.

All of the buildings in the photo on the left were demolished in the early 1990s except Trumpy House, which is still standing and currently being used as staff accommodation when needed.

Sunshine Building was opened in 1935 and was used over the years as the Children’s Ward, Women’s Medical Ward and Rehabilitation Unit.

Chelmsford and Barnett Houses were nursing quarters for many years.





Held by the Ipswich Hospital Museum, these two photographs depict choirs performing on separate occasions. However no details are available regarding the choir members or the events. Do you know who the nurses are, where they are performing and perhaps what year these were taken?



Hospital Choir

For many years in the latter part of last century a highlight of Ipswich Hospital nursing graduation ceremonies was the choir singing.

These choirs were formed from the graduates themselves bolstered by extra staff.

It is believed that the first nursing graduation ceremony at the hospital was in 1953. They were first held in the 'Recreation Hut' then in the Town Hall and later at the Ipswich Girls' Grammar School. The last time the choir was formed was in 1992 for the

final graduation ceremony for hospital-based nursing training.

But choirs were also formed to entertain at farewell occasions for senior staff, openings of new hospital buildings or departments and other special occasions.

When the chaplain service was introduced they urged staff to form annual choirs to entertain staff in the dining room and patients in the wards at Christmas. A core of senior staff including Barbara Stevens, Marjory Elvery, Annette Kirwood and Helga McCutcheon were joined by other staff

each year. Some years included a theme – one of which was an international flavour. Staff who played instruments also joined the group.

Helga McCutcheon, an Ipswich Hospital trained graduate and later a Nurse Educator for many years, was a stalwart of the choir. For many years Myfawny Sullivan, a music teacher and member of the Cambrian Choir, conducted the choir. She was followed by Marie Keenan, a teacher and member of the Orpheus Choir.



Entertainment by the hospital choir occasionally involved staff dressing in international costumes as shown on the left with Helga McCutcheon (Austrian) and Vera Padarath (Indian) and on the right, Helga and Alwyn Clark (Scottish). Vera, a Clinical Nurse in Intensive Care, and Alwyn, the hospital gardener, worked at Ipswich Hospital for many years until their retirement.

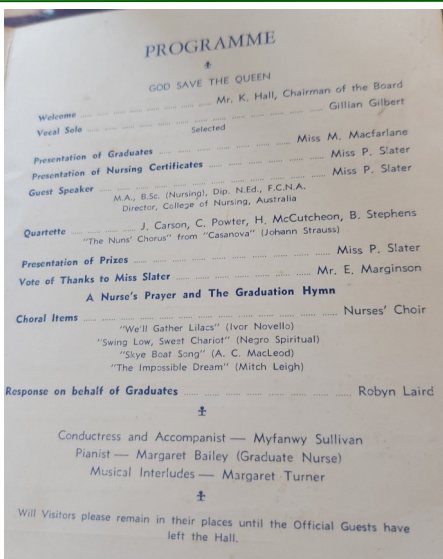
Alwyn was also a bagpiper with the Ipswich Highland Pipe Band.



Right: Helga McCutcheon, Julie Richardson, Bernie Hartfiel, Annette Kirwood & Kim Lewis. The pianist is unknown.

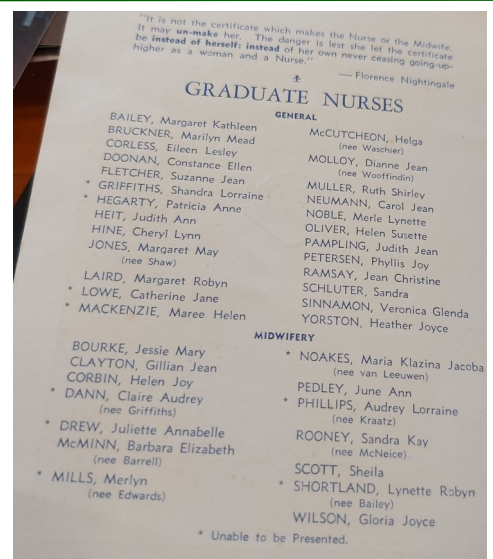


A large choir and an Australian Christmas theme.



Details from the 1968 Ipswich Hospital Nurses' Graduation programme.

Note in the programme the performance by the graduates' choir and a quartette which included Helga McCutcheon, one of the graduates.



TEPI—Steph's Story

Stephanie (Steph) Shannon OAM, born and bred local girl, Ipswich Hospital trained and long serving nurse, including 31 years as Clinical Nurse Consultant/Nurse Unit Manager of the children's ward, receiver of several community awards and passionate advocate for children, has poured her life into a memoir written specifically for her extended family.

It is a warm, funny and honest story of her life, family and work and gives a deep insight into how much they have meant to her.

Steph celebrated her 80th birthday last year but even after she retired from the hospital in 2004 she has volunteered at Hilda's House, Ipswich Hospice Care and augmented a support group for bereaved children and their families and has worked tirelessly for child abuse organisations. This is Steph's story.

"If blessed, then with ageing and longevity comes a time of reflection. Some may ask why write a memoir?"

My answer is multifaceted - namely, that my life's experiences have been coloured and influenced by so many people and events in so many ways. Thus far I have lived an eventful life with both my immediate and extended family and this I value as one of my greatest assets. Choosing not to marry, children have always remained pivotal throughout my life and career.

With retirement comes reflection and time to measure self-actualisation, self-worth and what footprints we leave on people's hearts and our good earth. What better reason for 'writing memoirs!'

Enrolment in a writing group with U3A Brisbane and a Creative Writing class led to me writing 'My Dear Old Molly'. This was a story of grief feelings and meaningful relationships written for children. Good friends Hilary Minchin illustrated for me and Judy Blinco supported me throughout with the print layout and technology involved. My gratitude extends to both. This was a resource used when volunteering at Hilda's House and sharing journeys with bereaved children.

There was a feeling of buoyancy when this was completed and when I retired from volunteering I again joined 'the writers,' this time with 'Memoir Writing'. What evolved after two years was 'TEPI - My Story'.

Some may ask why Tepi? When the first born of our next generation, Gerida (Gerdi), was learning language at a rapid rate 'Steph' was

a challenging pronunciation to this toddler

hence the shortcut to 'Tepi'. This remained throughout the generations of nieces and nephews and grandnieces and grandnephews.

In the first session we met our facilitator, who had published writings. He always demanded 'standards' when submitting our weekly allocated assignments. As mentor he always nominated the topic and word submission. He was a sage character. The second time 'the class' of 14 students gathered the homework topic was titled 'My Eulogy'! Silence was rather deafening within the group participants and the following week the attendance had declined to seven students. Confronting subject material!

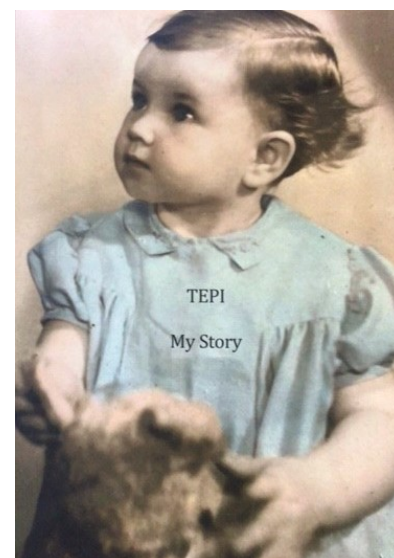
The seven students remained throughout the following two years and became good friends and peer critics.

Referring back to 'My Eulogy' - although confronting this was to prove beneficial in recognising important and meaningful events throughout your life. We had to title our weekly writings and this I called 'Requiescat in Pace' - not included in my memoirs but stored for 'my final chapter'.

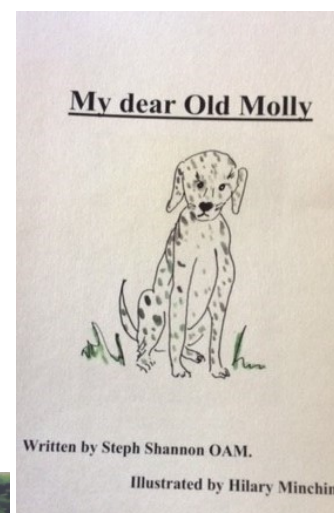
In September 2019 I wrote the final chapter to my memoirs and southeast Queensland was 'on fire'. Although droughts and bushfires are embedded in Australian lifestyles these bushfires were unprecedented in size, devastation, nature and speed. Our beautiful scenic rim country was burning for 57 consecutive days. The rage of these bushfires was intense. They formed their own weather patterns - aptly described as raining - 'not liquid gold' but wild spreading fire embers, the likes of which even the most seasoned fire fighters had not witnessed before.

Little did I realise when signing off my memoirs that what lay ahead in 2020 would be

the pandemic of Covid 19 - another story to be written."




The cover of Steph's memoirs above and below, the cover of My dear old Molly, written as resource for helping bereaved children through a grieving process.



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Museum Closed

The Ipswich Hospital Museum, housed in the Jubilee Building, is still closed to the public as the building is being used as part of the hospital's COVID-19 testing clinic regime. It is hoped that towards the end of the year a mobile testing clinic in a demountable building will be bought into use as the testing clinic, freeing up the Jubilee building. In the meantime museum volunteers are continuing to meet and work when possible and continue cataloguing and researching. The hospital's history is continuing to be depicted through the Friends of Ipswich Hospital Museum facebook page and this newsletter.