



Museum Matters

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IPSWICH HOSPITAL MUSEUM Inc.



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Chairman's Chatterings

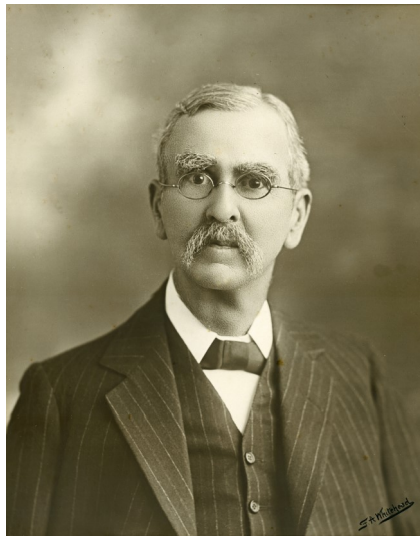
Often when we think of people throughout history we think of the heroes or the great and powerful people such as kings, queens, prime ministers and dictators. But they make up only a very small portion of history. On the contrary it is average everyday people doing very ordinary things that adds to the large mosaic of social life that becomes history. For example, we learn much about the city of Pompeii that was buried in ash in 79AD not by the leaders of Pompeii but by the everyday people and their activities of daily life. In this edition of Museum Matters we read about Dr Thornton who for many years went about doing 'his' daily life of caring for the sick. We learn of his selfless work in caring for the sick throughout the influenza pandemic of the early 1900's, when all of his colleagues had succumbed to the illness. I am sure Dr Thornton did not think that he did anything heroic or great but that he simply was fulfilling his commitment to the people of the West Moreton district. It will be interesting to see how history records the efforts of everyday people who continued to work tirelessly throughout the recent Covid 19 pandemic.



Editors Note: As our chairman has noted above, heroes come from all walks of life. IHM acknowledges the 'heroism' of all West Moreton Health staff during the recent Covid-19 pandemic. Thank you.

(Photograph from West Moreton Health Facebook page shows staff at the Court St Fever Clinic)

Dr Phillip Thornton



Dr Thornton was the first Medical Superintendent at Ipswich Hospital.

He was the only child of Philip Thornton Snr and Elizabeth Hambly Thornton (nee Waterman), and born in his mother's village of Maker, Cornwall.

Both his paternal grandfather, Thomas Thornton, and his father, Philip Thornton Snr, were Superannuated Shipwrights. They were employed by the Royal Navy at a H.M. Dockyard. Philip's father had been a draughtsman in the Royal Navy, working at H.M. Dockyards and retired as Superannuated Master Shipwright, responsible for the building and repair of ships and payment of the staff in conjunction with H.M. Dockyard's Accountant. These men were well educated and, in Philip Thornton Snr's case well paid. In 1860 Philip Snr was receiving £400, which would probably have increased to £650, per annum and free housing

This allowed for savings to help his son study medicine - a worthwhile

investment as his long and respected career showed.

Dr Thornton began his medical training in 1866 aged 20, at Guy's Hospital, Southwark, London. He studied under Dr Fred C. Cory MD and passed the examination of the Royal College of Surgeons in April 1868. He was appointed as House Surgeon in 1871. In 1870 he had gained his Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries.

In 1873, while a General Practitioner at the Greenwich Union Infirmary he became a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh.

On 4 August 1874 he applied for a passport and later that month married Emily Mary Baker in Brockley, England. Emily died in August the following year from phthisis (pulmonary tuberculosis or a similar progressive wasting disease).

Dr Thornton's other work history included: Surgeon Royal Kent Dispensary; Resident Surgeon Poplar Hospital; Assistant Medical Officer Poplar and Stepney Sick Asylum, Bromley East; Medical Officer Poplar Smallpox Hospital; House Surgeon and Assistant Medical Officer London Hospital; Medical Superintendent Greenwich Union Infirmary; and Assistant House Surgeon Bristol General Hospital.

In 1881, Philip was 34, a widowed General Practitioner and living with his parents in Greenwich.

He married his second wife, Jane Bustin (an attendant at the Metropolitan Imbecile Asylum, Darenth near Dartford), in November 1882 in Hackney, England.

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Dr Philip Thornton *continued*

There are no records for Dr Philip and Jane Thornton emigrating to Australia but in 1883 the Victorian Government Gazette showed Dr Thornton as registering with the Medical Board of Victoria in March 1883. The Thornton's two eldest daughters, Florence (1883) and Constance (1885) were born in Creswick, Victoria.

After Constance was born the Thorntons moved to Wentworth, NSW where he worked at the Wentworth Hospital until October 1887.

He became the Resident Surgeon at Ipswich Hospital that same year—a position which later became titled Medical Superintendent and which he held until September 1915—a period of 28 years. During this time he was also a Justice of the Peace from 1896 until 1904 and served as a surgeon on the Medical Staff of the Queensland Defence Force (Land) until 1892.

Dr Thornton's appointment to Ipswich Hospital followed glowing testimonials from his previous positions he had held. Eleven months after his resignation as superintendent he was appointed in charge of the epidemic hospital in August 1916 on the recommendation of the finance committee. He and Jane had two more daughters, Edith (1888) and Violet (1890). Jane died in 1903.

Dr Thornton married for the third time, to Kate Macfarlane, a nurse at Ipswich Hospital, in 1903.

He died in 1920 aged 74.

His obituary in the Queensland Times on Thursday 24 June, 1920 paints a picture of a much respected and admired man:

“There were few more widely known persons in the West Moreton district than the deceased. During the many years he served as medical superintendent of the Ipswich General Hospital he came in contact with hundreds of residents of various parts of the West Moreton district. The many hundreds of persons who received medical treatment at the hands of the deceased doctor had invariably testified to the kindly interest he always manifested in their welfare. No hour was too late, and no task too great for the doctor to undertake, if, by so doing, he was able to relieve pain and suffering. Many there are who have had occasion to feel deeply grateful for his skilful treatment. He was essentially a worker: a man who did not allow unfavourable circumstances to embarrass him, and in the midst of the busy and trying times which medical men—and especially those in charge of large hospitals—so often experience, he maintained that courteous and kindly consideration for others which does so much to relieve the burden of suffering humanity. A typical instance of his tenacity when duty called was afforded last year when the influenza epidemic was causing such widespread anxiety. Dr Thornton loyally stuck at his post during a period when assistance to the sick was so urgently

needed and having the good fortune to escape an attack of the malady, he was able to render signal service to the community at that trying period.

With but one exception Dr Thornton was the only medical man in Ipswich who was not stricken with influenza, and it will thus be seen that the duties which were imposed upon him during that anxious time were exceeding onerous.

Up till about a week ago he was attending to his duties as assistant-medical officer at the General Hospital, when he contracted a severe cold, an attack of influenza following, necessitating confinement to his room. He received most careful attention from the members of the medical profession in the city, but he passed away peacefully away at his home.”

During his time as Medical Superintendent, Dr Thornton instigated formal training for nurses at Ipswich Hospital. The first nursing training in Queensland began in 1886 at Brisbane Hospital and Dr Thornton started lectures for senior nurses in Ipswich in 1889 in the subjects of elementary anatomy and physiology, practical nursing and the application of surgical appliances. In January 1890 he reported to the Acting Hospital Committee that four senior nurses had passed these examinations. Initially written examinations were held in Brisbane but after complaints by Dr Thornton that this was disruptive to nurses and the running of the hospital, Ipswich became an approved examination centre in 1907.



The photo above shows an early staff photo with Dr Thornton on the left. His future (third) wife, Kate Macfarlane, is in the middle of the back row. She is an ancestor of the late Margaret Macfarlane, Director of Nursing at Ipswich Hospital from 1967-1993.

Recipes for Sick People

Discovered in a 1951 copy of *The Nurses Dictionary* (originally compiled by Honor Morten and revised by Florence Taylor, published by Faber and Faber Ltd, London).

Calf's Foot Jelly and Champagne: Dissolve a little jelly carefully, then add a little champagne. Beat both together until very light and frothy, and pour into a champagne glass.

Arrowroot and Black Currant Drink: Boil 2 tablespoonfuls of black currant jam in a quart of water, cover it and stew gently for half an hour, then strain and put on the fire again. Mix in a tablespoonful of arrowroot in a paste, and boil for a few minutes. Stir till cold, then strain.

Bran Tea: Add a quart of boiling water to 1 pint of wheat bran; let it stand where it will keep hot, without boiling, for an hour. Strain and serve with sugar and cream.

Oyster Broth: Cut 1 pint of oysters into small pieces, and place in a saucepan containing 1 ½ pints of cold water; let them simmer gently for ten minutes over the fire, then skim, strain gently for ten minutes over the fire, hen skim, strain, thicken with a tablespoonful of creta, season and serve with toast.

White Wine Whey: Boil up ½ pint new milk, add 2 tablespoonfuls of sherry and let it stand until curdles. Sweeten with very little sugar, then strain and serve.

Ipswich Hospital Nurses' Association

Thirty years since the last hospital trained nurse graduated, the Ipswich Hospital Nurses' Association (formerly the Ipswich Hospital Trained Nurses' Association) has wound up, 72 years since its beginning in July 1950.

The initial officer bearers were Mrs W. McLean (President); Miss N. Beattie and M. Barnett (Vice-Presidents); Miss C. Evans (Secretary); Mrs E. Mills (Treasurer). Others present at the inaugural meeting were: Mrs McBarron, Mrs White, Mrs Fawdrey (Committee); M.A. Williams, E. Bryce, Mrs Anderson, Mrs Tunstall, Mrs Harris, Mrs McDonnell, Mrs G. Morton, Mrs Windle, Mrs Nichol, Mrs Orr, Mrs Jackson, Misses Barnett, G. Hall, C. Jones, Hartwick, Saunders, Kennedy, Nurses Payne, Phillips, Webber, Heers and Bennett.

The annual subscription was set at 2/6.

The first annual reunion was held on 27 September 1950.

On 14 February 1951, Miss A.E. Wilcox, hospital matron, became the Patroness and held that position until her passing in 1979. Dr D. Trumpy was the Patron until his passing on the eve of the annual meeting in 1971. The deputy premier, Dr Llew Edwards MLA, was then welcomed as the new patron.

The first annual meeting was held in the nurses' recreation hut in the hospital grounds on 11 July 1951.

Following the death of Sister Kitty (Catherine) Evans, the association instituted a public appeal on 18 May 1955 to raise money as a memorial fund. This was in the form of a prize given annually to a graduate nurse completing general training.

In 1967 instead of the annual meeting, a farewell luncheon was held for Miss Wilcox, Matron of IGH for 33 years, and Dr Trumpy, Medical Superintendent for 47 years. Over 200 people attended and the association presented both guests of

honour with flowers and cheques.

On 11 September 1974 the memorial portrait of the late Dr Trumpy was unveiled at the annual meeting by the artist, Miss Lola McCausland.

The following year, a Theatre night was held to raise funds for the commission of a portrait of Miss Wilcox. The theatre evenings continued to be an enjoyable annual social event.

In 1961, a newsletter was commenced which was sent annually to members.

The association was not profit-making and did little fundraising, but did make donations to various organisations – eg Ipswich Hospital School of Nursing Library, Blue Nurses, Bush Nurses and Asthma Foundation.

In 1958 membership rose to 5/- and in 1981 to \$2. In recent years it has been \$4 per year.

Miss Winning was made the first life member in 1960 and then Miss Marjorie Barnett was the second in 1961.

The organisation's name was changed to Ipswich Hospital Nurses' Association in September 1987 and opened to all nurses (registered nurses, assistant nurses and enrolled nurses) who had worked at Ipswich General.

On 23 March 1988 the Patroness, Lady Leone Edwards, passed away and the following year a memorial rose garden was planted in the hospital grounds.

Besides the annual theatre night other annual activities included the annual meeting and luncheon in September, a Christmas meeting in November and a May evening meeting.

The Silver Jubilee was an important milestone in 1975. 115 members and visitors attended including a number of foundation members. The day also marked the 50th anniversary of the day that a number of members had

commenced their training. One of the foundation members related a story about activities in the hospital kitchen the night before the first meeting when they were busy preparing food for the big day. A batch of marshmallows was left in the sink to cool. Patron (and Matron) Miss Wilcox came to help and seeing the cooling marshmallow threw it out, thinking it was dirty water.

Dr Llew Edwards MLA and Minister of Health (later Patron of the Association) spoke of the hospital history and the nursing career of Miss Wilcox. Dr Edwards had a close association with the hospital for many years – he had been a young electrician working at the hospital and then became a doctor. His wife, Leonie, was an Ipswich Hospital trained nurse and a member of the association. The Edwards became Patron and Patroness in later years.

Dr Edwards unveiled the portrait of Miss Wilcox, painted by Miss Lola McCausland. Miss McCausland's mother, also an artist, had presented a portrait of Florence Nightingale, which she painted in 1914. This was accepted by Miss Elvery.

A 50 year anniversary reunion was held on September 9, 2000 with 150 attendees expected.

At the final gathering of the association on July 30, only 20 members attended. The president, Ruby Shillito, spoke about the history of the association; the current status and changes to nursing at IGH and the impact of Covid-19 and population increase; and the achievements of many Ipswich trained nurses. She thanked all committee members over the years with special mention of Shirley Brown for her lengthy time as president, and her colleagues. She said it was sad to farewell the association but because everyone's focus had changed it could not be kept alive.



This photo is believed to be the first annual meeting of the association in 1951.



Nurses who trained in the 1930s-40s attending Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1975.



Members attending the final gathering on July 31.

Letters from a Nurse

Continuing our insight into a new nurse's experiences at Ipswich Hospital in her first year. After extensive research of 1890 records, one of our museum volunteers has composed fictional letters from a nurse to a friend relating her view of hospital life at that time. The information is based on historically recorded facts.

1st October 1890

My Dear Friend,

Hello again.

From having the Governor for luncheon to begging in the street! Nursing is hard but there is variety. The Hospital Saturday and Sunday was held since last I wrote. It is the major event for community support of the Hospital.

All sorts of events were held to raise funds for this hospital: A lecture on "A Personal Visit to Rome" delivered by Mr .J. F. Obertbhur, in the Victoria Hall, Laidley; a Grand Concert followed by a dance in the Odd Fellows' Hall, Flinders; three rugby matches at the North Ipswich Cricket Reserve—Moonlights (from Toowoomba) Vs. Young Athenians (from Ipswich), Moonlights vs. Belvederes and Peak Crossing vs. Southern Stars (from Ipswich); plus several other amusements and entertainments

Special collections were taken in churches, Sunday schools, factories, businesses and stations of the district

The ladies of the district, having arranged with

the Hospital Committee to draw lots for the most advantageous positions in the streets, took up their position on Saturday and literally bailed up every person who passed by. They also sold flowers, vegetables, greenstuffs, and anything that could be converted into money.

Mrs Germain¹ with the help of some us nurses drew North Ipswich. We were each excused from our duties and in our uniforms rattled our collection boxes at the passing public for a few hours. I was quite apprehensive at first, but people were so generous, giving what they could, and many said such complimentary things about the hospital and the nurses, that by the end of my shift I felt quite emboldened.

All up, the ladies collected more than £80. Mr. Field², the hospital secretary said, "As a rule the ladies are better than gentlemen in collecting subscriptions".

The total funds collected over the weekend were over £700. When the 2 for 1 subsidy from the government is added, the Hospital funds have improved by more than £2,100. Mr Field and the Committee are very pleased.

The theme for the collections for this year was the new Women's Ward. The building is well advanced, with the outer walls and roof complete.

John Flynn³ leaves today. He has been studying pharmacy here for the past six months and "walking the wards" with Dr Thornton. He spent a year studying Medicine at Melbourne University and now he is going to England to complete his medical degree. He is a local man, His early schooling was at St Mary's and he obtained a State Scholarship under Mr Sydes at Bundamba, remaining six years at Ipswich Grammar School where he did very well. He is very popular and people are very hopeful he will return to Ipswich as a Doctor.

There is a rumour that the nurses' rooms will be relocated to the Cottage when the women's wards are moved to the new building. Being a timber and iron building it may not be as snug as the main building but the separation from the wards may provide a little more independence and privacy.

Your friend, Ella Banks

¹Mrs Germain was the wife of John Germain, a tanner and furrier in Ipswich

²Mr William Field was Secretary to the Ipswich Hospital Board of Management 1856-1902.

³Dr John Flynn did return to Ipswich Hospital as a consulting surgeon after finishing his medical training. He had been given permission as a medical student in 1890 to visit wards and examine patients under the supervision of Dr Thornton, the medical superintendent, and therefore saving one year's study overseas where he qualified in Edinburgh in 1893. He died from influenza in 1919 after 25 years of service on the visiting medical staff.



Vale Patricia Mary Camplin 2.6.1938—3.9.2022

IHM Volunteers are mourning the loss of their much loved and respected colleague, Pat Camplin, who passed away suddenly.

Pat (Tish) was a highly thought of secondary and adult education teacher in Ipswich for many years before her retirement.

She was a museum volunteer for five years and will be deeply missed by her fellow volunteers.

In her older years she strived to maintain her independence and even, until recently, was painting her house.

A generous, kind and peaceful person who was always willing to help where needed, we will also remember her wit and humour—including her hilarious attempts at reading the tea leaves of colleagues.

She would have been disappointed not to have seen her valuable contribution with research of Ipswich Hospital matrons with co-volunteer, Jane Kingston, come to fruition in the publication of a book but her work will live on through it.

Her colleagues offer condolences to her family and friends.

Rest in Peace, Pat. We will miss you.

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Across the Miles

This edition of *Museum Matters* has been compiled and sent from the northern coast in the highlands of Scotland, the first leg of a grand holiday for the editor and her husband. Despite internet connection difficulties recently, the mail must be and has been delivered. She is walking in the footsteps of some of her ancestors and many of Ipswich Hospital's early Matrons and Medical Superintendents and other staff who originated from Scotland and other areas of great Britain.

