



# Museum Matters

December 2018

Volume 2, Issue 4.

IPSWICH HOSPITAL MUSEUM Inc.

## Committee :

Chairman: M Parcell

Secretary: J Kingston

Treasurer: C. Marre

## Chairman's Chatterings

Ipswich Hospital Museum has topped off a very busy 2018 and we have finished on a high with Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) presenting Ipswich Hospital Museum with a Certificate of Recognition for completing an intensive year-long program that assessed our practice against The National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries.

Our new display that was opened in October 2018 continues to draw significant interest and has been enjoyed by a number of community groups. It is a very impressive display and I would encourage you to take some to time to visit the museum in the new year.

As this is the final newsletter for the year I would like to thank the members of the Ipswich Hospital Museum and we would welcome any new members who can come and assist us in any small way even if it is just one morning a month. We love to welcome new volunteers. I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year and I will leave you with a short excerpt from the Australian War Memorial website which is an excerpt from a nurses diary who was working in a field hospital during World War 1

*In a letter home in early January 1916, Sister Letitia Moreton of the Australian Army Nursing Service described the efforts that had been made for wounded men recovering at the 2nd Australian General Hospital in Egypt.*

*"We gave our patients out at Ma'adi Hospital a very nice little Xmas. A very nice dinner, roast turkey, chicken, ham, plenty vegetables, plum pudding, claret cup, beer, soft drinks, sweets, etc. They did enjoy it, poor things. The Drs helped us with it too, one carved the turkey and ham while the other gave out the drinks. The place was rather nicely decorated and everyone enjoyed the day."*

*Sadly, that was Sister Moreton's last Christmas: the following year she was posted to India for service, and died there of enteric fever in November.*

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/at-war-for-christmas>

## Children's Ward Christmas Joy

### Christmas in the 1950s

Memories of Steph Shannon (OAM) - Charge Sister of the Sunshine Ward for 30 years.

During the 1950s children were often hospitalised for months at a time so Christmas was an important and joyful celebration in the Sunshine Ward, focusing on a traditional Nativity theme and a nursery scene on the 'marble top'.

Children's lengthy stays were due to diseases such as rheumatic fever, nephritis and nephrotic syndrome, Perthe's disease, congenital heart diseases, burns and scalds, fractured femurs, road trauma, pneumonia, staph skin infections and congenital hip deformities and endocrine diseases. Infectious diseases such as measles, mumps, scarletina and varicella with associated complications were also common.



Sr Edith Graham

sheets on the hot water sterilisers – the steam expanded the wool -layered on top of the marble top, crepe paper streamers, dolls dressed as nursery characters (usually sewn by Susie Shannon), shelves draped with white and red sheeting or crepe relating to the 'theme'.

Children's beds and cots were wheeled onto the balconies and other patients came to join in singing Christmas carols played by the Salvation Army band outside between the Children's and Male Medical wards. Various church groups visited with small wrapped gifts of soaps and washers, boiled lollies and Christian based pamphlets.

'Santa' appeared on Christmas morning with bells ringing to herald his arrival. The same 'Santa' remained loyal to the young patients for many years. The children were thrilled to receive their gifts from Santa. These were donated by community groups who unhesitatingly supported and responded to the needs of sick children.

Visiting hours were relaxed so families could join in. Special meals and drinks were served and families, of course, brought in 'goodies'.

*"I recall these Christmas celebrations with the fondest of memories and with great admiration for Sister Graham who maintained the tradition which lasted decades after her retirement."*



Sister Edith Graham, affectionately known as 'Granny Graham' (which she disliked), planned and created all year, with the help of other staff and families, to decorate both Peter's Ward and Babies' Ward delighting everyone.

Decorations included stars and moon cut from cardboard and painted silver and gold, handcrafted paper mache decorations hanging from the ceilings or on the Christmas tree, little handmade houses, sheets of wool teased by placing the

## A Welcome Christmas

The committee of the Ipswich General Hospital has received a welcome Christmas box, in the shape of £1299/15/9, being their share of the second division of the proceeds of the Golden Casket Art Union. This will enable the committee to meet their financial obligations for the current year, and will help a little towards payment for the installation of the hot water service. This work is now progressing very satisfactorily and when the installation is completed it will not only be a valuable asset to the institution, but a great factor in enabling the staff to carry out their duties with efficiency and economy.

The committee is also faced with the necessity for a big outlay in the improvement of the kitchen, as well as the installation of the x-ray apparatus, both urgent needs, which will absorb an amount greater than the sum just to hand from the Golden Casket. It will be seen, therefore, that this timely assistance does not obviate the necessity of relying on the support of the general public. If the institution is to be conducted as efficiently during the coming year as it has been in the past there must be no interruption of the contributions which all sections of the community have provided.

*Queensland Times 20/12/1920*

## The Marble Top

This year Museum volunteers have decorated the "marble top" as it was in the 1950s.

The marble-top cabinet took pride of place in the Children's Ward for many decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The earliest known photo of the cabinet is in 1927.

When the Sunshine Ward opened in 1935, the cabinet was moved to the ground-floor Babies' Ward. The glass-fronted cabinets either side stored lotions, creams, ointments, and nappies, with the centre drawers containing babies' bibs, singlets and small tops. The marble top provided a great servery for meal trays and infant formulas.

With the move to the David Trumpy Paediatric Unit [1979] there was much debate as to what should happen to the infamous 'marble top'. After weeks of persistent arguing it was carted away by 'carriers' for storage and safe keeping. Its weight was phenomenal and a challenge for the removalists!

By 2012, the cabinet was being stored in an outdoor under-cover area in the hospital grounds and was in need of repair.

Members of Ipswich Men's Shed generously offered their time and skills to restore the cabinet. With the assistance of the hospital's building and

maintenance staff and a removalist company, the cabinet was moved to the Men's Shed at Bundamba. Metal sections of the cabinet were sanded back and repainted, and broken glass panels and chrome rails replaced.

This significant part of Ipswich Hospital's history is now fully restored to its former glory and proudly displayed by the Ipswich Hospital Museum in the foyer of the Jubilee Building.

This photo shows Museum volunteer, Christine Marre, at one end and Nurse Goody Two Shoes at the other.



Nurse Goody Two Shoes was the mascot through decades of care to sick children. She is in replica uniform of the 1960s/70s.

## Children's Corner

The Sunshine League was established by the Queensland Times in 1920. "Uncle William" encouraged young readers to "Spread Sunshine into the lives of others".

Below is an excerpt from his letter to the League at the end of 1927.

*My dear Nephews and Nieces,*

*I'm wishing you a happy New Year. It is not always wise to tell you how much I think of you - you might grow conceited. Still, it's not far past Christmas and the holidays are not yet over, so I'll let you know just this much: in the ending of 1927, you have been simply wonderful, other people think so too. At the Hospital on Christmas Day, the President of the Board and Dr Trumpy said such nice things about you all that you might have felt your ears tingling. What the Hospital Board and staff and patients think of your work makes me proud to be your old uncle. The eggs you sent, with the money for the Christmas Dinner Fund and your gifts of all sorts of things to make the day happy, were fine displays of your success in the way of happiness.*

*The year has ended in a burst of sunshine over your happy track, and, at your invitation you had with you, to make your Christmas merrier, a whole hospital full of happy playmates. Young folk and old folk, they were delighted with the pleasant Christmas you helped to make happy for*

*them. By your kindly thoughtfulness in remembering your Uncle William, you have made this Christmas happy.*

*Queensland Times 31/12/1927*



"Sunshine Ward - opening July 28 1935 - hard work and dedication of Uncle William, the Sunshine League members and the citizens of Ipswich and surrounding areas, came to fruition with the opening of the Sunshine Ward by the Home Secretary Mr Hanlon."

## Little Tidbit

*From Hospital Minutes, October 20, 1863*

“The wardsman and his wife were called in and reprimanded for great carelessness exhibited in having set fire to their bed in their attempt to drive away mosquitos.

## Museum AGM

Election of officers at AGM in September:

Melinda Parcell was re-elected Chairman and Jane Kingston as Secretary.

Elizabeth McNalty resigned as Treasurer and Christine Marre was unanimously elected as new Treasurer.

Christine trained at Royal Perth Hospital and specialised in Community Nursing, working in Perth, Canberra, Townsville, Mt Isa, Brisbane and Ipswich.

We thank Libby for her work as treasurer but she is still involved in many other museum roles.

## Ipswich Hospital Museum Activities

15/9/18 Participation in National Trust Open Houses (55 visitors)

10/10/18 RAAF Health Services Wing (15 visitors)

13/10/18 RAAF Medical Conversion Unit Amberly (15 visitors)

13/10/18 Reunion 1972 Nurses Group (12 attendees)

15/10/18 Conservation Workshop, Railway Museum

19/10/18 Opening new exhibition: Wine & Cheese Evening  
(35 dignitaries & visitors)

30/10/18 Lowood Ladies Group (9 visitors)

30/10/18 Museum & Galleries Workshop

23/11/18 Collection Policy Workshop

## Standards Review Program

The museum's year of review under Museum & Galleries Qld is nearing completion. Members attended a workshop on Disaster Management & Conservation Management at the North Ipswich Railway Workshops Museum recently and our final on-site review was completed with visits from reviewers.

Work has started on a museum collection policy, following a workshop with Josh Tarrant, Museum Development Officer, Southeast Queensland Region.

The year has ended with IMH members presenting at a local museums and galleries event at Studio 88 this month.

## The Black Death Comes to Ipswich

Millions of people around the world had already died when the Black Death arrived at Ipswich.

The first person to be infected in Ipswich was a two year old toddler, Miss Minnett, the child of a painter and his wife who lived near the One Mile Bridge.

On Friday, 18 May 1900, she was taken to the doctors for what the mother thought were the usual effects of teething. But on Sunday morning the mother took her back and this time the doctor noticed swelling of the groin. The doctor punctured the groin and took some serum which was sent on Sunday night's train to Brisbane.

By Monday afternoon they had the results. "Specimens show definite plague bacilli."

There was an arrangement in place at

the time between the Ipswich Council and the Joint Board at the hospital that any patients suffering from plague were to be sent to the hospital at Bulimba.

The family was put into lock-down immediately and their house was under police guard to prevent anyone from leaving or entering. Mr Minnett drove his child and wife to Ipswich station in a spring-cart, escorted by police. The mother and child took a special train carriage, later disinfected and fumigated, to Brisbane. Finally they were transported to the plague hospital by ambulance.

Thankfully, Ipswich's first plague patient survived.

In 1905 another Ipswich family was not so fortunate. Six family members became ill, with five being stable enough to be transported to the Colmslie Plague Hospital in Brisbane. The remaining member, a boy, was too sick to be transferred so a nurse was sent from

Brisbane to care for him. He died in Ipswich.

In the early 1900s. The Ipswich Council implemented measures to control the rat population and at one point offered residents money for every dozen rats delivered to the corporation yards in Gordon Street. The council then employed its own rat catchers.

For many years it was thought that rats spread the plague but we now know it was fleas and human lice that caused the disease being spread so rapidly.

The last case of Plague in Ipswich was reported in 1922. A dozen people contracted disease and five of them died in Ipswich in total.

Today the disease is easily treatable with antibiotics and there is also a vaccine available.

*Taken from an article on [www.ipswichfirst.com.au](http://www.ipswichfirst.com.au)*

**The new exhibition at the museum, "Infections, Epidemics and Fevers of Ipswich: Pestilence, Plagues, poultices, poxes, pustules and pyrexia", includes past and present Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), local stories on various epidemics which swept through Ipswich and some of the equipment and medicines**



**Latest Exhibit:**

***Pestilence, plagues, poultices,  
poxes, pustules and pyrexias —  
The Infections, Epidemics and Fevers of Ipswich***



**Open: Every Wednesday 9 am– 12 noon or  
by appointment for groups**

Location:  
Ground floor, Jubilee Building,  
Ipswich Hospital Campus,  
Adjacent to Court Street  
Ipswich



**Ipswich Hospital Museum  
Inc**

**LOCATION:  
Ipswich Hospital  
East St Entrance**



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Friends of Ipswich Hospital Museum

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