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ROYAL BRISBANE HOSPITALS NURSES' ASSOCIATION INC.

P.O. Box 63
Royal Brisbane Hospital
Brisbane 4029

Newsletter August 2022



Patron

We feel very privileged that Adjunct Professor Alanna Geary has accepted our invitation to be Patron of the Royal Brisbane Hospitals Nurses' Association. Alanna is the Executive Director of Nursing & Midwifery Services for Metro North Hospital & Health Service. Alanna has supported both our Association and Museum for many years for which we are sincerely grateful.



Cluny's President Note

A very warm welcome to you and hope you enjoy reading the progress of your new Royal Brisbane Hospitals Nurses' Association committee.

The demise of the Nurses Association was a very real prospect at the AGM on May 28th. Membership was dropping, severe flood damage to archives of our museum collection stored in Butterfield street was depressing and covid restrictions had closed our access to the Hospital for a considerable time. It would have been easier to close our Museum of Nursing History – however to lose

Sr Cecilia Brazil's 40 years of gathering our nursing history would have been criminal.

Fortunately, a new committee rallied and in a short time have injected exciting enthusiasm to the Association. I am thrilled to have been elected President, and am energised by the talent of each and every member of the committee.

My time at the Royal Brisbane Hospital was February 1964 to February 1968. Advances in medicine since then have been unbelievable. I remember our tutor St Carew Reid's mantra- "light doesn't travel round corners" (remember the rigid sigmoidoscope? Horror of all horrors!!). My tick for the most beneficial development in those 50 years, would have to be fibre optics – I wonder if Sr Reid is still around to see that we can bend light!! What innovation have you seen that has amazed you? We would love to hear from you.

We are a very privileged group to have been part of the Royal Brisbane family – our connection is lifelong. Enjoy this newsletter, keep in contact and if ever we can join you for conversation and a cuppa, please give us a call. Cluny Seager (0412711148)

Honorary Curator Museum Report



A Museum Sub-Committee has met to discuss.

Recent flooding and retrieval of the collection, storage, costs and progress of treatment by conservators.

Grant application for the Gambling Community Benefit Fund was lodged on 15th July. Sincere Thanks to Dr Cathy See, Lorraine Birtwell and Joy Wilson.

Volunteer recruitment, orientation, training and rosters. Thank you to Tina Thomas for offering to support the museum with this important task.

Updates to 'The Museum of Nursing History' website [The Museum of Nursing History - Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital](#).

Members Reflections

In our last newsletter we asked for our members to send their recollections of the time they spent at the Royal and we have received this one from **Laurelle Williams**.

My lasting memory is of a meeting in the Rec Hall of a 'revamped' Past Nurses' Association. The idea was to see if there was enough interest. The room was jam-packed and without direction, seemed to break up into groups of similar years.

My mother and I went (and really enjoyed it). She remained a member until her death; I am still a member.

The funniest thing that happened was I overheard somebody say, "there's Barker. Remember that optometrist that was chasing her when she was Charge Nurse of OPD. She even asked for a ward move to get away." I leaned over and said, "I am her daughter and yes, he got her too!"

Vale Beth Dawson



It is with profound sadness we report the passing of one of our remarkable members. Beth was born in 1930. She attended Brisbane Girls Grammar School and trained at the Brisbane General Hospital graduating in 1957. Beth went on to do her Midwifery and Child Health training. Although Beth never married or had children of her own, her love of children was obvious to those of us privileged to have worked with her. After doing post-graduate studies, Beth worked with Professor Rendle Short -another lover of children- in the Professorial ward – Fraser, which opened at the Children's Hospital in 1963. Beth passion for paediatrics led her to start a Paediatric Course for Nurses which ran from 1974-1993. Beth retired aged 63.

Beth also had a deep respect for St Johns Ambulance, reaching the rank of Major General. Beth received an AM in 2000 in recognition of her years of service. RIP Beth. We will all miss you immensely.

These memories of our dear colleague and friend belong to Lenore Savill
My memories of Beth, when I went to the RCH (1969) it seemed like almost a third world hospital, the old McConnel ward, which you can identify with, yet the Professorial unit was so new and clean. Beth was a Senior Sister at that time, I recall she gave a lecture on how to make babies feeds, although the hospital had a milk kitchen, Beth always ensured all nurses were competent. The hospital routine at the time was for 2 Registered Nurses to come on duty at 6am, to take over from the night staff. At 8am the remaining day shift Nurses came on duty, in turn we had to hand over to them.

Beth oozed with knowledge as you handed over patients, guess my knowledge was limited at that time. When she became nurse educator, Beth did the annual credentialling of Resuscitation and Medication Assessment. I think her favourite education topic globally was how to set up a croupette. The key points being to analyse the oxygen at regular intervals and keep the ice supply up to the back of the croupette. Not to mention careful observation of the child's respiratory effort: my how things have changed.

While not in use the croupette sat on the back of a cot. We had a Camphor Laurel tree outside the ward, where we put the children in their cots. One day at a Matron's meeting, it was stated that one ward had leaves in the back of the croupette, that was us for which I said "yes, it's McConnel and they are Camphor Laurel leaves and camphor for the chest!"

I spoke with Beth last September, one story she told me of her experiences of living in the nurses' home, but she was fearful that there may be retribution for having a doona in the nurses' home or it may get stolen. So, at the end of a shift at RBH, they would gather all the patient's newspaper from the previous day, then take them to the nurses' home to put on their beds to keep them warm.

Communications

The Royal Brisbane Hospitals Nurses Association has a website developed by our committee, with support of Alanna Geary and the Communications and Engagement staff at the RBWH.

Welcome new members

Kerry Biggs (treasurer), Bernadette Smith (membership secretary), Tina Thomas (volunteer coordinator), Dr Catherine See (Grants Coordinator), Ann Marie Milvik, David Geoghegan, Karen Mills, Ann Aitken, Leigh Sadler, Jane Czokalski, Nicole Farnsworth

Date Claimers

Fashion Parade Saturday 17th September – Kitty Hawke Room 930am to 330pm \$45pp – Lunch and Tea/Coffee included. Social opportunity to get a group together and enjoy a meal, some fashions and fabulous company. Alcoholic beverages available for purchase. Contact Jeanette Wiley 32784140. See attached Flyer.

Christmas Party Saturday 26th November –10am – 3pm. \$45pp – Lunch and Tea/ Coffee included. This is a day for nurses to celebrate their graduations, so please contact your friends and try to get a table together. Further details will be in the next newsletter so watch this space.