



**NEWSLETTER**

**MARCH 2008**

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***From the President***

***Cent Sale to be major 2008 ACHHA fund raiser***

The Management Committee has decided not to participate in the Rocky Swap in 2008. This has been our major fund raising event in recent years and we will book the usual site again for 2009.

Instead, our main fundraiser for this year will be a monster cent sale to be held at Bauhinia House on Saturday July 19th.

To make this event a success, we are seeking donations and volunteers to help on the day. Our advice is that we should aim at having around 200 items for the sale. There are no particular specifications on the prizes but it would be excellent if you could approach the businesses you normally deal with to donate items such as clothing, bedding, electrical goods, or foodstuffs, or for you to donate craft items, plants and such. Note that home made foods are not generally an option these days since they have to be fully labelled with all of the ingredients. Around fifteen items are also needed for the multi-draw raffle and the door prize. Donations can be given to any member of the committee (see the list at the end of the Newsletter).

Very importantly, if you can volunteer some time to assist with preparations for the day or on the day, please contact Yvonne on 4928 5443. See the enclosed flyer for further details.

Norma and I attended the Anglicare cent sale on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March to see how things are done and it is a far cry from the days when cent sales started and our children were in primary school.

There is a large following for cent sales in Rockhampton and it was an eye opener to see how organised families and groups of friends were.

**Come along to our cent sale for a unique experience.**

**Yvonne Kelley  
President**

***Another honour for Association President***

This year's Australia Day Award announcements included the news that ACHHA President, Mrs Yvonne Kelley, has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) "for service to the preservation of health care history in Central Queensland, and to the community of Rockhampton".

The Award recognises a wide range of service, including Yvonne's involvement in a range of healthcare history preservation activities since the 1970's. She has been a committee member of the ACHHA since 1998 and President since 2002. Among the many other activities mentioned in the Award citation are memberships of the Museum Standards Pilot Program for Museum and Gallery Services Queensland and the Gallery and Museum Achievement Award reference groups in 2005-2006 as well as the Community Reference Group for Museums Australia Queensland from 2003 to 2005.

Yvonne was Chair of the Museum Advisory Committee for the Museum Resource Centre of Central Queensland and Founder and Curator for the Rockhampton Base Hospital Museum from 1976 until its closure in 1998 when the building in which it was housed was required for redevelopment of the hospital.

When interviewed by The Morning Bulletin, Yvonne said that she was very surprised and humbled when she found out that she would be a recipient of the Award. She said "My medical and nursing colleagues nominated me because they think what I do is a positive contribution to the community". She said that she counted the opening of the museum at the Base Hospital as one of her most memorable moments.

Yvonne is the fourth member of our Management Committee to hold a prestigious award. Vice-President Norma West was awarded the Order of the British Empire – Officer (Civil) on 25 June 1983 for her services to nursing. Dr John Learmonth was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia on Australia Day 1992 for "services to medicine as a rural practitioner and educator". Dr Tom Dewar was awarded his Order of Australia Medal on Australia Day 2006 for "services to the community of Rockhampton as a medical practitioner in the fields of obstetrics and gynaecology". To cap off this distinguished group, our Patron, Dr Conrad Primmer, was also awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for "service to the community" on 26 January 1994. He was subsequently awarded a Centenary Medal on 01 January 2001 "for distinguished service to the community".

However, the honours do not stop with the Committee. When we look at the Association's membership list, we see at least four other holders of the Medal of the Order of Australia for their service to the community and/or their professional callings. These include Dr Laurie Georgeson (26 January 1999, for service to the community, particularly through the Australian Red Cross), Dr Mervyn Gold (11 June 1996, for service to medicine in the field of dermatology over many years including service as a visiting dermatologist and Superintendent of the Rockhampton Base Hospital), Mr Barry Bryant (09 June 2003, for service as a community and hospital pharmacist and as a contributor to the continuing education of peers, pharmacy students and allied health professionals) and Mr Richard MacNevin (12 June 2006, for service to the community of Rockhampton through a range of organisations, particularly in the fields of tourism and vocational education).

The citations are taken from the official Australian Government Honours website. I sincerely hope that I have not missed any other recipients.

### *Logo and website development*

In the November 2007 issue of the Newsletter, we noted that the Association would work on the development of a website during 2008. This work is now well underway and we expect to have the site available for public release before the middle of the year. We are fortunate to have access to the expertise of Dr Alison Payne, a computing specialist, who has volunteered to do all of the technical work involved in designing and setting up the site which will hold our information. Meanwhile we are writing and checking all of the pages which will appear on the site plus scanning and documenting selected photographs from the Association's very large collection. We will take a great deal of care to ensure the accuracy of the site which will be a resource for people wanting to understand how the health services in the region have developed and changed over the past 150 years.

We will provide further information when the site is ready for release, at which time we will be seeking input and guidance from all members.

In order to provide a more distinctive image for the Association and its website, we have developed a new logo which appears in black and white at the head of the Newsletter. Sadly, we can't afford to print the Newsletter in colour so I have included a draft With Compliments slip in this mailing which will give you a view of the full colour image.

Those of you who have been to the Rockhampton Heritage Village will see that we have based the logo on the stylized building which appears at the head of our large sign on the veranda of the Lakes Creek Cottage. This gave us a good starting point while maintaining links to our previous image as seen at the Village. We hope that you find our logo both attractive and distinctive.

## *The Mount Isa Underground Hospital*

One of our Management Committee members, Jocelyn Philp, recently received a copy of the Townsville General Hospital Past Graduates' Association Newsletter (Vol. 12 No. 1 February 2008) which included a short article on the Mt Isa Underground Hospital. We agreed that it would be interesting for our members to read about an example of another hospital museum which is in the establishment phase. The story which follows is based on the article in that Newsletter but has been expanded using information in sources listed at the end of the article.[1,2] Margaret Medley, the contact person for the Museum listed on the Mount Isa Biz website[3] kindly provided the photographs.

The story of the mining development of Mt Isa commenced in 1923 when a lone prospector, John Campbell Miles, travelling on a gold prospecting trip to the Northern Territory, camped by the Leichhardt River. When he sampled a nearby rock outcrop, he realised that it was heavily mineralised. In fact he had stumbled upon one of the world's richest copper, silver, lead and zinc ore bodies. He called his discovery "Mount Isa".

As development of the deposit began, the first hospital established in Mount Isa was two small tents, with Dr Arthur Goode in charge in 1926. It was not until 1929 that a hospital reserve was proclaimed on 10 acres of land in Camooweal St. A small building was completed in 1930. In 1931 a much larger hospital was moved from a closed mining town west of Cloncurry called Kuridala.

The origins of the Mt Isa Underground Hospital date to 19 February 1942 when Darwin was bombed by Japanese aircraft operating from four aircraft carriers in the Timor Sea. Soon after, Timor fell to the Japanese and Broome, Derby and Wyndham in Western Australia and Port Moresby were also bombed. The Mt Isa Copper Mine which was one of the World's major deposits of copper, lead, zinc and silver, was seen as a possible strategic resource of great value to the Japanese. Hence the small community of Mt Isa was very fearful that their town would be the next target.

The Hospital Superintendent, Dr Edward Joseph Ryan, decided to take precautions and set about providing a safe shelter. He designed the hospital, Mount Isa Mines provided equipment and the services of the Underground Foreman, Mr Wally Onton. The miners worked as volunteers after their normal shifts and the Underground Hospital was dug and set up in 15 weeks in March/April 1942. A tunnel approximately 100 m long was excavated first. Three parallel horizontal passages were then driven into the hill to give a large underground shelter with an 'E' shaped plan. The excavation was timbered using the mining techniques of the day, then equipped with furniture and fittings to perform all of the functions of a hospital with male, female and maternity/children's wards, a surgical theatre and a delivery room. The floor was of bare earth. The three entrances were secured with locked timber gates. There was also a vertical shaft which served as both an emergency exit and a ventilation shaft. The hospital had water, electricity and a telephone.

This photograph gives an idea of the nature of the construction with a combination of the natural rock and timber supports.



During the war years, 1942 – 1945, Mount Isa had an air raid siren to alert the community to a possible bombing. As the siren sounded for weekly drills, all nurses who worked at the hospital were required to return to duty and, as part of the drill, immediately evacuate less severely ill patients from the Base Hospital to the Underground.

In the event, Mt Isa was not attacked. The Underground Hospital was used for non-urgent

purposes and over time became more of a store room. In the earlier period nurses who worked night shift took advantage of the fact that the building was cool, dark and quiet to provide them with sleeping quarters.

As a new hospital was being built in 1977, the building contractor took some of the hillside away and damaged the Underground Hospital. The local community protested and the remainder was saved, but left to deteriorate.

On 27 August 1994, vandals started a fire which was eventually extinguished using high expansion foam. However, much of the timber and many of the artifacts were destroyed. The community had to decide what to do with this unusual hospital. A public meeting in 1995 showed strong support for developing the facility as a tourist attraction. In 1996, a Steering Committee representing the owners, heritage conservation organizations and community representatives was formed to manage it. Dr Peter Bell, an historian commissioned to carry out a full study found that The Underground Hospital in Mount Isa was the only structure of this type ever built in Australia during war time for civilians, by civilians. A conservation strategy was prepared with funding support from the Queensland Heritage Grants Program and the Queensland National Trust.

MIM was approached and again supplied a foreman, Palle Rasmussen, and the miners volunteered their labour after working 12-hour shifts. This time there was no fear or emergency and the job took four years to complete. The hospital has since received a prestigious award from the National Trust of Queensland for heritage restoration and appears to have received a further boost in August 2007 when the Queensland Minister for Health, the Honorable Stephen Robertson, announced that additional land would be made available within the present hospital grounds for an expanded museum.[4]

If you are visiting Mt Isa, the Museum is open daily from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> September. Here are two more photos to whet your appetite for a visit!



#### Sources

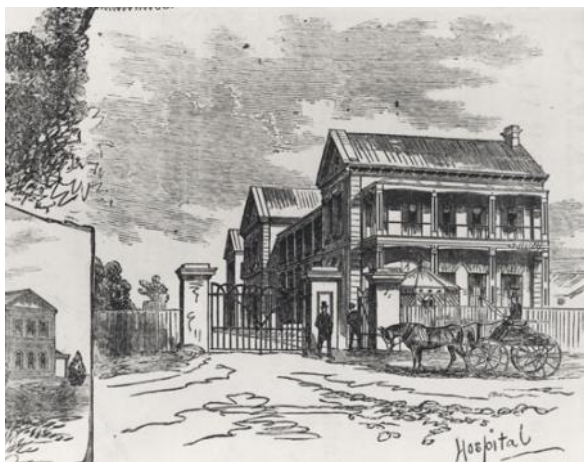
1. Queensland Government Environmental Protection Agency, *Extract from the Queensland Heritage Register*, <http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/chims/placeDetail.html;jsessionid=7f00000130d5469bf3b4128c4d708f58e76fc37051c9.e34NaN8SbNyKci0Lch8Mbx8TchuRe6fznA5Pp7ftolbGmkTy?siteId=15875> accessed 18 February 2008.
2. Queensland Holidays, *Mount Isa Underground Hospital and Museum*, <http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au/things-to-see-and-do/mount-isa-underground-hospital-and-museum/index.cfm> accessed 18 February 2008.
3. Mount Isa Biz, *Museums in the Mount Isa Region*, <http://www.mountisa.biz/tourism/museums.php>, accessed 18 February 2008.
4. Ministerial Media Statement, The Hon Stephen Robertson, Minister for Health <http://www.cabinet.qld.gov.au/MMS/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?td=53640> accessed 25 February 2007.

### *The changing face of Rockhampton Hospital*

While Rockhampton’s first hospital was located on the Fitzroy River adjacent to the rocks, the present site on the corner of Canning and North Streets has a history dating back to 1868 when the Port Curtis and Leichhardt District Hospital was established on the site. While on-going improvements in medical science and treatment regimes are good news, it unfortunately leaves no room for sentiment when it comes to deciding the fate of our hospital buildings.

This small collection of photographs from the ACHHA archives illustrates some of the major changes to the site over the past 140 years.

The first image is a sketch dating to around 1884 which shows the first building on the site with the main gate from Canning Street.



The second image shows a different view of the same building taken from the southern side. The name of the hospital was changed to the Rockhampton Hospital in 1895.



Another very well known building on the site was the Lady Goodwin Maternity Hospital which was on the western end of the main

### **Important notices**

#### **Forthcoming Rockhampton Heritage Village Markets**

- Sunday 11 May  
Mother’s Day Market
- Sunday 13 July
- Sunday 14 September  
Jazz Markets
- Sunday 30 November  
Christmas Markets

Please take the opportunity to visit the Lakes Creek Cottage during these events. You will find our display is open, with members of the Association in attendance.

You will also see the Mt Morgan Nurses’ Quarters building in its final position where it is awaiting full refurbishment.

#### **Association Membership**

The Association welcomes your support for our activities.

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2007-2008, we would be delighted to receive your payment. If you wish to join the Association, please contact the secretary, Errol Payne, by phone on 4922 3314, by email at: [secretary@achha.org.au](mailto:secretary@achha.org.au) or post payments to ACHHA Inc, Box 4035, Rockhampton Qld 4700. Because the end of the financial year is fast approaching, your subscription now will be counted as covering the full financial year 2008-09.

#### **Membership Fees**

Annual	
Individual	\$20.00
Couple	\$30.00
Life	
Individual	\$200.00
Couple	\$300.00

Please make cheques payable to: Australian Country Hospital Heritage Association Inc.

#### **Newsletter**

If you have ideas for the newsletter, please contact me by phone or mail at the address above or by email to [secretary@achha.org.au](mailto:secretary@achha.org.au).

building running parallel to North Street.

This hospital was opened in 1930 to replace the previous Women’s Hospital. Note the tall building in the middle of the photograph which was a lift tower which was part of a link



between the original hospital seen on the right hand side of the photograph and the Lady Goodwin.

One of the features of all early hospitals was the nurses’ quarters since trainees and nurses were required to ‘live-in’. The panoramic photograph below shows the hospital from the Quarry Street side. The buildings in the foreground are mainly nurses’ quarters, some of which were buildings re-located from the former Children’s Hospital. Sadly, these buildings were destroyed by fire on 28 September 1945 when many nurses lost their possessions. The remaining 19th century buildings on the site were demolished in 1986.

The new nurses’ quarters below were opened in July 1954. These now await their inevitable fate as they will be demolished in the coming weeks to make way for further redevelopment



**Association contact details:**  
**Australian Country Hospital Heritage Association Inc.**  
**PO Box 4035 Rockhampton Qld 4700**  
**[Incorporation Number: IA20217]**

**Patron: Dr Con Primmer OAM**

**Elected Office Bearers**  
**President:** Yvonne Kelley  
**Vice-President:** Norma West  
**Secretary:** Errol Payne  
**Treasurer:** Kay Smith

**Committee Members**  
 Lorraine Antonello  
 Tom Dewar  
 John Learmonth  
 Carol McIver  
 Bill McIver  
 Jocelyn Philp