

# League of Former Trainees & Associates Inc.



Founded 1921

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne. Submissions to the Editor: PO Box 7163, Hawthorn North, Vic., 3122

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## WW1 nurses

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gallipoli this year is an opportunity to reflect on the contribution nurses have had in all theatres of war and most significantly WW1. In her book *More than Bombs and Bandages, Australian Army nurses at work in World War 1*, Kirsty Harris, noted that in 1914 the Australian government offered medical services including nurses from the Australia Army Nursing Service (AANS) to their British counter parts. These nurses worked in diverse locations in both Australian hospitals as well as British, Canadian, Indian and South African services. Others nurses enlisted with the New Guinea-based Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force and its replacement, the Tropical Force. Kirsty stated that at least 2,286 — and possibly as many as 3000 AANS served overseas and at least 388 nurses were decorated including the Royal Red Cross, military and civil medals and awards from a host of foreign countries. In her book she was able to identify 76 nurses who trained the Children's Hospital. Margaret McInnes has documented in *Caring for Our Children, the History of Nursing, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne*, that an Honour Role at the entrance to the Carlton Nurses home listed 89 nurses who served in the Imperial Forces 1914–1918.

The following are brief histories of a few of those that served.

### Gertrude Muriel Robertson (1883 – 1972)



*Gertrude Muriel Norton Robertson 1907 (private collection)*

Awarded Nursing certificate of the Children's Hospital Melbourne in 1916.

Enlisted June 1917 and was a staff nurse in the Colabar War Hospital, Bombay and undertook regular trips on HS Devanha and HS Sicilia to Mesopotamia to bring back sick and wounded troops for treatment in British hospitals in Bombay. Gertrude was discharged unfit 1917 and admitted to the 11<sup>th</sup> Australian general hospital at Caulfield to recover.

Awarded the British War Medal in India and Victory medal for services to ships.

### Grace Wilson



*Matron Grace Wilson on Lemnos — Image courtesy of 'Who's Who in the World of Women', 1930 (RCH Archives)*

Commenced her training at Brisbane General Hospital in 1908.

Enlisted in 1914, was appointed the Principal Matron of the AIF 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian General Hospital in 1915 on Lemnos and also the clearing stations in Abassia, Egypt and Abbeville, France.

Post war she was appointed Matron and Superintendent of the Melbourne's Children's Hospital in Dec 1920 until Oct 1922. During this time she was supportive of the League of Trainees, advocated for nurses' recreation needs but was openly critical of the Committee of Management.

She was Matron in Chief of the Army Reserve and became Matron at the Alfred Hospital in 1930. She also served in the Middle East in WW2 and married aged 75 in 1954. She died in 1957.

Grace Wilson was also portrayed in the recent ABC TV series ANZAC Girls.

**Beatrice Watson**

Born Elsternwick.

Awarded Nursing certificate of the Children's Hospital Melbourne in 1908.

Enlisted Sept 1915. Served and died in Egypt, June 1916 of sickness aged 34 years. She was buried in Ismailia War Memorial Cemetery Egypt. She was the only children's hospital nurse to die during the war and was remembered with a brass plaque in the nurse's home.

**Annie Laidlaw (1889 – 1978)**



Portrait by Nora Heysen — Image courtesy of Australian War Memorial Canberra

Commenced training at the Children's Hospital in 1913.

Enlisted in 1917 served in Bombay and Poona, India. Returning in 1925 she worked as a ward sister, until 1925 when she undertook her midwifery training. Returning in 1926 she became Assistant Lady Superintendent, then Lady Superintendent of the Frankston Orthopaedic Centre in 1930.

She was appointed Superintendent of the newly formed Australian Naval Nursing Services in 1942 and Matron in 1943.

Post WW2 she returned to Frankston Orthopaedic Centre until 1950.

**Evelyn Conyers (1870 – 1944)**



Evelyn Conyers — Image courtesy of UNA Journal, Jubilee issue, 1951 (RCH Archives)

Commenced training at the Children's Hospital in 1894.

Enlisted October 1914. Embarked Nov 1914 with the first expeditionary force and served in hospitals in Egypt, was appointed Matron in Chief in Cairo and transferred to London in charge of Australian nurses in the UK, France and Egypt.

Mentioned in Despatches.

Awarded Royal Red Cross — 1<sup>st</sup> Class 1916, Bar to Royal Red Cross, Commanders of the Order of the British Empire 1919, and Florence Nightingale Medal.

**Emma Argyle Cuthbert (1878 – 1963)**



Emma Argyle Cuthbert — Image courtesy of Australian Nurses of World War 1, ww1anzac.com

AANS 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian General Hospital. Head Sister. Awarded Nursing certificate of the Children's Hospital Melbourne in 1903. Enlisted no 1914. Embarked Dec 1914 and was terminated July 1919. Served in Egypt, England and France. Awarded Royal Red Cross 2<sup>nd</sup> class for valuable service France and Flanders.

**Nellie McKenna (1892)**

Awarded Nursing certificate of the Children's Hospital Melbourne in 1912.

Enlisted 1915. Embarked 1915. Served in convalescent depot Harefield Park, England and special re enforcements in England and France. Terminated Nov 1918.

**Nellie Mc Ilwraith Reid**

Born Geelong.

Staff nurse. Awarded Nursing certificate of the Children's Hospital Melbourne in 1916. Enlisted Nov 1915. Embarked Dec 1915. Served in France and on the field. Contracted Influenza 1918. Returned 1919.

**Lalah Mary Burke (Sally) (1887 – 1956)**



Lalah Mary Burke — Image courtesy of Australian Nurses of World War 1, ww1anzac.com

Born 1887 at St Kilda.

Awarded Nursing certificate of the Children's Hospital Melbourne in 1913. Enlisted in 20 May 1915. Embarked 17 June 1915. Terminated 11 July 1919. Married in 1928.

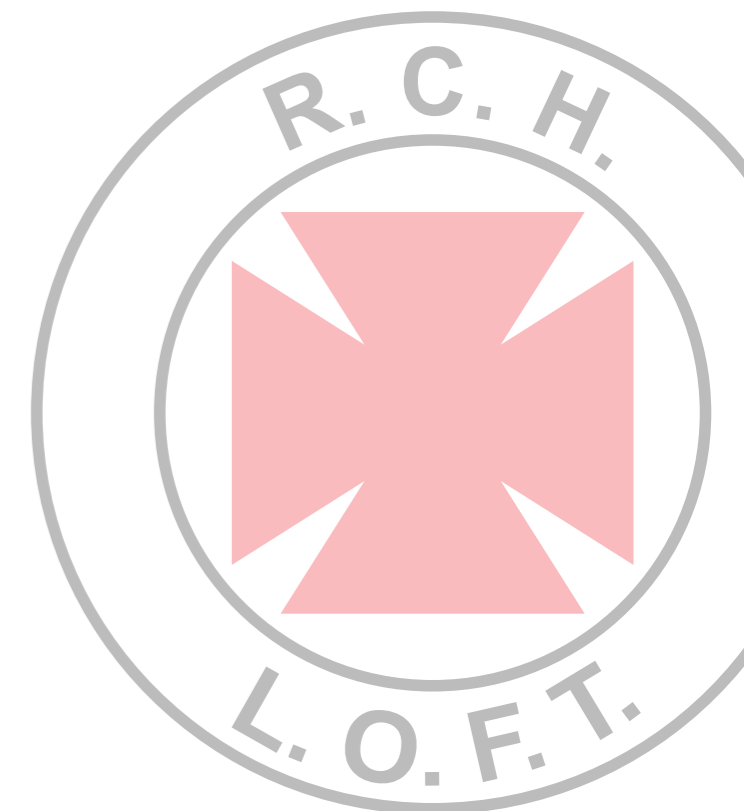
Youngest member of the AANS, embarked on the hospital ship HS Kyarra in 1915. On staff of First Australian General Hospital in Egypt and later at the First Australian Casualty Clearing Station in France.

**Further information and stories about our brave nurses can be found in these resources**

Margaret McInnes. "Caring for Our children, the History of Nursing, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne". Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2006.

Kirsty Harris. "More than Bombs and Bandages, Australian Army nurses at work in World War 1". Big Sky Publishing, 2011

Australian Nurses in World War 1  
<http://nurses.ww1anzac.com/>



## Dear members...

How quickly each year passes. It seems only yesterday that I accepted the role of President at the Annual General Meeting in 2014. During the year, the committee has been planning and working towards the 94<sup>th</sup> AGM on Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup> at the RACV Club in the city.

The 2014 AGM was successful both socially and financially. It was wonderful to have so many there, renewing acquaintances and catching up with friends. Participation in the various fund raising activities on the day raised \$1,522 towards the Elizabeth Fearon Scholarship Fund.

At this year's AGM, our guest speakers will be Professor Fiona Newall, together with Sally Lima and Sharon Kinney from Nursing Research at RCH. The recipient of the 2014 Elizabeth Fearon scholarship, Amy Johansen will give an overview of her research project and her progress to date.

Marg McPherson, two senior hospital nurses and I, had the honour of forming the interview panel for this year's Elizabeth Fearon scholarship. The quality of the nurse applicants, the passion and commitment to their specialty area and the preparation of their papers was inspiring. It was very difficult to choose just one of the four outstanding applicants.

Sadly, I report that Ann Robinson, a dear friend of Rae Anstee and the late Elizabeth Fearon, passed away at the great age of 96 in January. Ann donated years of her time and professional secretarial skills to the League as honorary secretary.

On a lighter note, another winery tour is being planned for Friday October 9th. Please consider bringing one or more friends. This is a great way to involve the wider community in our fundraising. Make a note in your diary now and get a seat by confirming early at the AGM.

This year has been a steep learning curve for me and I thank Chris for her quiet support and her daughter Kim for assisting in preparing for a new honorary treasurer/accountant. Thank you to Sally Mizrahi for her secretarial work and keeping me on the straight and narrow. To all the other committee members, established and new, thank you for all your hard work.

On behalf of the committee, I wish you all health and happiness for the remainder of the year and we look forward to seeing you at the AGM on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Regards,  
Di Paul



## Notices

- 1 LOFT 94<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and luncheon Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 11am at the RACV Club Melbourne.
- 2 **Winery bus tour** Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October. More information to come.
- 3 **An afternoon at the movies** watch the website for this one!
- 4 **Caring for Our Children: the History of Paediatric Nursing at The Royal Children's Hospital** is available for \$20.00 plus \$12.00 p&h. Email Sally Mizrahi (sally0307@hotmail.com) for further information.
- 5 LOFT membership badges are available at the AGM for \$5.00 each or mailed out for an extra \$3.00. Contact Chris Fautley on (03) 9347 3546.
- 6 **5 and 10 cents campaign** has raised over \$400 towards the Elizabeth Fearon Scholarship over the last year. Cut out the label, put on a jam jar, fill it up and bring along to the AGM.

## LOFT — RCH nurses association website

The LOFT website is now functional and waiting for your contributions. We would especially like your photos, memorabilia and stories of your time at RCH and careers. Please send to LOFT (originals will be returned).

<http://www.rch.org.au/loft/>

Look for the 'Rules for Nurses — 1940' from estate of Beryl Sparks.

We have started our collection of graduation photos for display on the website and have commenced with class photos beginning with the Graduate Nurses Program from 1988.



August 1958 Graduation, taken in front of the new nurses home Flemington Road Parkville. Photo donated by Eileen Morton, (6<sup>th</sup> from the left). Sister Hooke, (9<sup>th</sup> from the left) was the "Tutor Sister"

## Elizabeth Fearon Scholarship

The 2014 scholarship was awarded to Amy Johansen, Extracorporeal Life support (ECLS) Clinical Nurse Consultant; based in Rosella, Intensive Care Unit, to undertake an "Evaluation of a nurse-led anticoagulation protocol for paediatric ECLS patients; a before and after study." An ECLS anticoagulation and blood administration protocol was developed and introduced in 2011 and updated in 2014.

This study will evaluate the influence these changes have made to clinical management and patient outcomes including unfractionated Heparin administration, chest drain losses, blood product administration, duration of ECLS and survival outcomes and will form part of a minor thesis in her Master of Advanced Nursing Practice.



## Collecting 5c and 10c coins for the Elizabeth Fearon Nursing Scholarship Fund

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The Royal Children's Hospital

## RCH news

### Scholarships 2014

#### Dame Elizabeth Murdoch Scholarship — Catherine Fox

After working in Butterfly (neonatal unit) for the 3 ½ years, Catherine became the first Australian Neonatal Nurse Practitioner (NNP) in the Paediatric, Infant, Perinatal Emergency Retrieval Service (PIPER) in February 2014.

Catherine has said that the generous funding from the scholarship funds will provide her with the opportunity to carry out a role review, strengthen and grow the NNP model of care in neonatal retrieval medicine.

#### RCH travelling Scholarship — Allison Lamb

Allison who is currently the Clinical Trials Manager, Clinical Nurse Consultant, in the Children's Cancer Centre, will use this award to investigate how leading the Children's Oncology Groups (US-based cooperative group that supports clinical trials in paediatric oncology) enhance the clinical skills of the bedside nurses to include clinical trials and to discover innovative ways to deliver information about clinical trials and treatments.

She will also investigate the role of electronic systems including electronic medical records in clinical trials education/training.

#### Mary Patten Award — Adrian Hutchinson

Adrian commenced at RCH in 1990, undertaking the post basic PICU nursing course. He has held Nurse Unit Manager positions in PICU and the Emergency Department. During this time Adrian participated in The Royal Children's Hospital International projects in Vietnam and India and as well as training in the International Advanced Paediatric Life Support program. Adrian is currently utilising his IT expertise as the Nurse Unit Manager for the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) project.



Colleagues describe him as an outstanding and compassionate leader, committed to improving patient care through innovation. He is valued as a mentor and advocate — supportive of his colleagues, encouraging and working with them to set and achieve their professional goals.

### Quality of care report 2013–14

The annual Quality of Care report which gives a broad overview of the recent activities at RCH can be found at:

[http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/rchpa/publications/140717\\_QoC%202014\\_11.pdf](http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/rchpa/publications/140717_QoC%202014_11.pdf)

### Stage 2 redevelopment

The redevelopment of the Front Entry Building was completed in late 2014 and is now referred to 48 Flemington Road.

It houses Larwill Studio Hotel, Melbourne Paediatric Specialists at the children's, the RCH Foundation, a crèche, gym, hairdresser, beauty salon, massage centre, café and additional underground parking.

### Return to Royal Park

The City of Melbourne and Department of Health have worked together on the "Return to Royal Park" project, to reinstate parkland on the site of the old RCH. The design of the new park has been informed by the local community who contributed through an extensive community engagement process. It features open grassy lawns, nature-based play spaces, seating, BBQ facilities, picnic tables and a network of paths to explore the park — a haven for RCH patients, families and staff. The design of the park also represents the seven Wurundjeri seasons as a way to encourage discovery and understanding of Indigenous Melbourne.

Opened to the public in March by the Lord Mayor and the Premier you can now enjoy the park and the children's play areas where the nurses home and car park once stood.



### Nursing symposium 2014

The RCH held their inaugural Nursing Research and Clinical Innovations Symposium on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2014. The event was organised by Prof Fiona Newall, Dr Sharon Kinney and Sally Lima, with the support of the Melbourne Children's Nursing Research Group, and was a collaboration between The University of Melbourne, The Royal Children's Hospital and Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

Across the day, 22 oral presentations and 44 posters demonstrated the great work of nurses and their contributions to the care of infants, children and young people through initiatives in research, education, management and clinical practice. Over 150 attendees from across our campus partners attended the day.

#### Prize winners

##### Oral presentations

- **1<sup>st</sup> prize: Michelle McCarthy and S Hopper.** Topical lignocaine to improve oral intake in children with painful infectious mouth ulcers: a blinded, randomised placebo controlled trial.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Jenny O'Neill, S Lima, K Thomson Bowe, F Newall.** A qualitative analysis of the experiences and needs of parents supporting young adolescents with intellectual disability through puberty and emerging sexuality.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Rachael McGuire, L Herd, K Beyerle, T Nguyen, G Alex, W Hardikar, N Crawford.** Immunisation of pre and post liver transplant recipients at RCH Melbourne.

##### Poster presentations

- **1<sup>st</sup> prize: Amy Johansen, F Newall, S Jones.** Evaluation of an ECLS nurse-led anticoagulation protocol: a before and after study.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Zerina Lokmic, K Shurmann, T Beggs, N Freeman, Y Jones, S Trevorrow, B Saunders, R Phillips, T Pennington.** Do nurses vary in their approach to wound management of ulcerated infantile haemangioma?
- **3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Liz Leins, M Scullin, G Varigos, J Smart.** Bleach baths for eczema.

Information regarding the date of next year's Symposium will be available early in 2015. Details can be found online here: [http://www.rch.org.au/nursing\\_research/Nursing\\_Research\\_and\\_Clinical\\_Innovations\\_Symposium/](http://www.rch.org.au/nursing_research/Nursing_Research_and_Clinical_Innovations_Symposium/)



### Electronic medical record

The implementation of an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) to replace the paper based patient records will be the biggest transformational project since the move to the new facility in 2011.

With a total budget of \$48 million, \$23 million of which is pledged by government and the remaining committed by the hospital and RCH Foundation, this project will revolutionize RCH clinical systems and ensure our great hospital leads the way in EMR technology within Australia.

Partnering with EPIC, a US based firm broadly regarded as the world-leaders in EMR systems, the RCH will be the first hospital to bring this technology to Australia.

The EMR team which includes 12 nurses, 12 doctors, 5 allied health professionals, 6 pharmacists as well as the information managers and technical experts are currently in the 2<sup>nd</sup> of a six phase project, 'systems designs'.

### Archives

A grant from the RCH Foundation has supported the development of a RCH Heritage Plan leading to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020. This outlines the strategic options for consideration by RCH which include; collections management, visual history bank, history portal, display walls, story booth, exhibition pods, community exhibition making, history in place and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition and festival.

Information will be shared with LOFT as these measures are implemented.

### Do you know any details about this photo?

This panoramic photo taken in 1932, was donated to the Archives Department recently by Robin Kibble. The inscription on the back states "N.F. Nicholson of Cobram, nee Anstee. The man in the middle is the secretary/manager, Howard Barrett and Hilda Walsh was the Matron".

Bronwyn Hewitt, RCH Archivist would love to hear from anyone who can identify any of the staff. [bronwyn.hewitt@rch.org.au](mailto:bronwyn.hewitt@rch.org.au)

# Where are they now?

We are interested in knowing what you have been doing?  
Email your contribution for the next newsletter

## Lyn Kennedy-Bush (nee Kennedy) Jan/1970

After completed her general training, Lyn undertook her midwifery training at the Mercy Maternity Hospital, East Melbourne. After working in Intensive Care at Guys Hospital London, she completed a post graduate course in Intensive Care Nursing at Prince Henrys Hospital and continued there becoming the unit manager. After marriage and three daughters, Lyn changed careers to suppling educational play equipment for schools and preschools. From 2007 Lyn has be involved in the design of commercial and domestic floor plans.

## Monika Birthisel (nee Waldschmidt ) Oct/1973

After leaving RCH in 1977, Monika completed her Midwifery at Dandenong and District Hospital and continued to worked there in Special Care, post natal and children's wards. Between 1987–2001 she worked at Joseph Banks Medical Centre as a Practice Nurse and now continues as the Practice Nurse Supervisor Casey Medical Centre .

## Gillian Land Jan/1981

Gillian has undertaken post graduate study completing, an Emergency Nursing certificate (Alfred and RCH combined course), Midwifery certificate at RWH and the Infection Control and Sterilization certificate at Mayfield Training Center. She has worked in a variety of roles at the Alfred and John Fawkner Hospitals as well as spending two years in London. These have included working in Medical Centre for the inaugural Grand Prix Albert Park, the new Trauma Centre at Alfred Health, and has received scholarships to the UK to look at strategies to reduce MRSA infections at The Alfred and to Hong Kong Queen Mary Hospital to review their Pandemic and Influenza planning. Gillian has been working as a Clinical Nurse Consultant in the Infection Prevention Unit at The Alfred since 2001.

## Vale

### Marjorie Wilkin d 2014

Completed training in 1963.

### Lucy Lane (nee Mackenzie) 1918 – 2014

Completed her training in 1940 and undertook her midwifery at the Queen Victoria Hospital. In 1943 she joined the Royal Australia Air Force nursing services and volunteered for the Medical Evacuation Transport Unit. This involved transporting wounded soldiers to the causality clearing stations in PNG and later evacuating POW's from Malaysia, Burma and Singapore. A portrait of Lucy by Nora Heysen is in the War Memorial in Canberra.

After marriage and children Lucy worked in a general practice. Her daughter Margaret completed her training at RCH in 1973.

### Sheila Krysz (nee Mackenzie) 1922 – 2014

Sister of Lucy Lane, Sheila completed training in 1944. She nursed all her life, working with international refugee organizations in Europe, escorting the children of migrants off the boats from Station Pier to Bonegilla, as an evening nurse at Box Hill Medical Clinic, in the children's ward at St Georges, and in her 60s as the weekend matron of the boarding house Scotch College.

### Beryl Spark (nee Jago) 1922 – 2015

Beryl completed her training in 1947 and worked for some time at Frankston Orthopaedic Hospital. She spent time working in operating suites in both the Children's and Royal Melbourne Hospitals and enjoyed working in the United Kingdom in 1953 inspiring a love of travel. This included working for QANTAS to accompany "minors" travelling interstate and overseas. Beryl worked for many year as a volunteer at RCH where she meet Mary McGowan in 6 East in the early 1980's. Volunteer skills were transfered to St Georges Hospitals in the mid 90's. Beryl remained interested in RCH and was a regular attendee at the LOFT lunches accompanied by Mary.

### Ann Robinson 1918 – 2015

Honorary Secretary to LOFT.

## Retirements from RCH

- Sandy Buckley — 2014
- Janette McEwen — 2014
- Marg Hazelton — 2015
- Anne Bryant — 2015