

Medical History

Newsletter

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE INC

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Fourth Series

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

We have learned recently of the intention of the University of Sydney to convert the Medical School library to a bookless electronic portal from which staff and students can access up-to-date digital forms of the world's medical journals, texts and scholarship. This is no doubt laudable for a modern prestigious medical school but it is done at a cost. Gone are the volumes of early editions and local scholarship, gone are the corners and alcoves where quiet discussions can be held, gone is the advice and help that experienced librarians can provide and probably gone as well will be the portraits of significant medical school figures of the past. Students will graduate with a sound understanding of best practice but little of the stories, successes and failures that led up to it. Students and staff will empathise with the program rather than the institution. Lost will be the character of the school and its place in the story of the university and the city.

Another example of this trend to an amorphous international character has happened closer to my home in Darwin. Our local university, Charles Darwin University, has recently closed its publishing house. It is now very difficult to have local scholarship published and distributed. National publishing houses expect works of a much wider appeal. The Northern Territory Historical Society has a local publishing programme that aims to elevate worthy local works into the historical literature. Is this another example of the shifting governance of town and country whereby the maintenance of character more and more falls to voluntary organizations and philanthropy?

At the 44th Congress of the International Society of the History of Medicine to be held in Tbilisi, Georgia, in September this year, an annual meeting of national ISHM delegates will also be held. One of the items on the agenda of that meeting is the location of the 2015 delegates meeting. We have put in a strong bid for that meeting to be held in Sydney in conjunction with our own Biennial Conference. I will be there to give what support I can to our offer and hope other members of our Society will be there as well.



A decision on Sydney will provide a very good opportunity to increase the ISHM profile in Australia and New Zealand and at the same time add an international flavor to our conference.

Whilst the Executive has been much preoccupied with such matters as the 2015 Conference, a redesign for our journal and a reworking of our website, our recent planned meeting frustratingly had to be postponed because of issues with Skype and the new electronic world in general. It has been rescheduled for later in August. News of that meeting will now await the next Newsletter.

Brian Reid
bandreid@bigpond.com

Postscript:

Your loyal Executive Committee finally managed to get together again on 1 September. More on that in my next. Meanwhile, please write next year's Biennial Conference dates into your 2015 year planner, and post the enclosed conference flyer on your noticeboard, fridge door or other suitable surface. Clearly, we can look forward to a very stimulating and enjoyable meeting!



AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY
OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

Missions, Methods and Management 14th Biennial Conference

Australian Catholic University, North Sydney

Tuesday 30 June - Friday 3 July 2015

Saturday 4 July - optional Quarantine Station excursion

Keynote Speakers:

Dr Simon Chaplin - Head of the Wellcome Library, London, formerly curator of the Hunterian Collection at the Royal College of Surgeons

Prof Linda Bryder - Professor of History, School of Humanities at The university of Auckland

Prof Stephen Garton - Professor of History and Provost, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Sydney

Programme features

- Ample opportunities to present and attend medical history talks
- Workshops on writing history, book writing and editing, and oral history
- Ben Haneman Memorial Lecture at State Library of NSW
- Witness seminar - management of health services 1970-2015
- Medical history walk
- Quarantine Station excursion
- Gala dinner by Sydney Harbour

Key dates

Call for papers opens
Monday 3 November 2014

Call for papers deadline
Monday 9 February 2015

Registration opens
Wednesday 1 April 2015

Early bird deadline
Tuesday 19 May 2015

For further information and to complete an expression of interest

Email hom2015@dcconferences.com.au or visit www.dcconferences.com.au/hom2015
or contact conference managers DC Conferences on 61 2 9954 4400

MEMBERS' NEWS

WELCOME!

Tony Cornell (NSW)

Elizabeth Roberts-Pedersen (NSW)

Richard White (NSW)

VALE

Geoffrey Charles Miller JP FPS (11 September 1937 - 7 May 2014)

Geoffrey Charles Miller (Geoff) graduated from Perth Technical College School of Pharmacy in 1958, winning the Mayhew Dispensing Prize and co-winning the Parke Davis Prize. In 1961 Geoff became a partner in Jacobsons Pharmacy, Claremont, and sole proprietor from 1965-88. From 1983-5 Geoff was president of the Pharmaceutical Council, and was very proud to be elected a Life Member of the Pharmaceutical Society in its centenary year, 1992.

Following his retirement in August 1988 Geoff pursued his passion of actively promoting recognition of the history of the profession of Pharmacy to current and future practitioners, as Chairman of the Pharmacy Historians Committee. He became an educator in Pharmacy History at the University of Western Australia and Curtin University, was a regular writer on history for *The Australian Pharmacist*, published *The Apothecary Shop* in 1992, and spoke regularly at major history conferences.

Geoff was instrumental in establishing a National Pharmacy history body and his efforts came to fruition in September 1996 when the Australian Academy of the History of Pharmacy held its inaugural meeting in Melbourne. Geoff was editor and publisher of the Academy's newsletter and was a council member and sometime executive treasurer of the Australian Society of the History of Medicine.

Another of his key interests was sailing, as a member of the Royal Perth Yacht. Geoff was a loving and beloved husband, father and grandfather. He is survived by his wife Mary, five children and five grandchildren.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome. The next deadline for copy is 15 November 2014. Copy should be sent to the editor, Derek A Dow at d.dow@auckland.ac.nz or, if you prefer snail mail, 62 Koraha St, Auckland 1050, NZ.

BLAST FROM THE PAST *Medical History Australia 25 years ago*

The August 1989 Newsletter opened with an account of the annual museum display arranged by the Melbourne Medical History Unit to coincide with the first meeting of the Medical Faculty. It is interesting to note that five individuals featured in the 1989 display also appear amongst the 50 individuals from Australia and New Zealand who were selected for entry in the 2007 5-volume *Dictionary of Medical Biography*, edited by William and Helen Bynum. As sub-editor of that section I can assure readers that this was coincidence rather than design!

The Newsletter also advertised the inaugural meeting of the NSW Society of the History of Medicine, to be addressed by Dr Gwen Wilson on 'A meeting of medical and maritime history'. Many of you will be familiar with Wilson's monumental 3-volume work, *One grand chain: a history of anaesthesia in Australia 1846-1962* (1996).

A final point of interest was a notice for forthcoming meetings of the Auckland Medical Historical Society. Amongst the papers on offer was one by surgeon Peter Charlesworth on Dr Robert Telfer Corbett, one of the members of a Glasgow medical family who practised in New Zealand from 1865 until his death in 1876. In my role as archivist to the Greater Glasgow Health Board I had corresponded with Charlesworth in 1988 and had even made a special trip to the market town in Crieff to visit yet another of the medical Corbett's in search of family information. It is indeed a small world.

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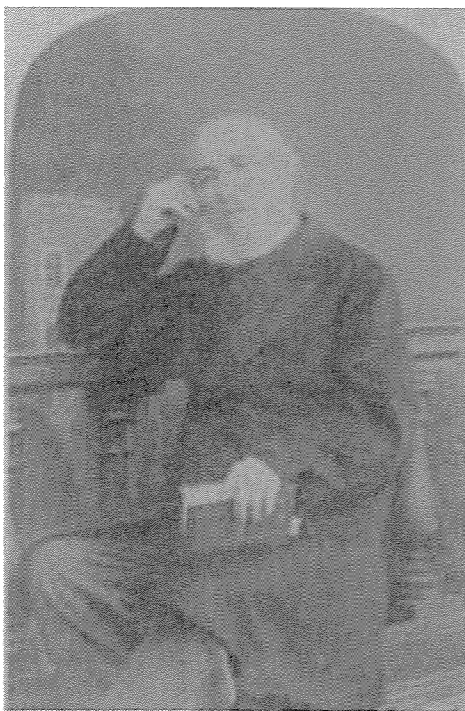
AMPI NEWS

Three eminent Victorians: the colonial doctor as inventor

The nineteenth century was the heyday of amateur scientists and inventors. Among their many contributions to the welfare of humanity was the electric telegraph, developed simultaneously in America and England in the late 1830s. Telegraph stations soon became notable features of the Australian landscape, particularly the one at Darwin, where the international cable arrived in 1872.

Among the inventors who contributed to the development of the telegraph was Edward Davy MRCS LSA, a London general practitioner who later emigrated to South Australia. Davy's work as a chemist and inventor is celebrated in the UK *Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. He developed a working telegraph at the same time as Wheatstone and Cooke, whose design eventually won the day. However Davy's electric relay, a vital component in telegraphy, is considered to have been the first such device invented – a remarkable achievement.

Before leaving England in 1839, Davy had also invented and patented a special cement for bonding china and glass, and published a book on ex-



Edward Davy (1806-85).

perimental chemistry. In South Australia, he managed the Yatala copper smelter, and developed a new process for refining copper. In 1852 he moved to Melbourne, where he ran the government assay office. His final move was to Malmsbury, Victoria, where he became a farmer (unsuccessfully) and then (belatedly) a general practitioner.

An almost exact contemporary of Davy was the inventor Charles Phillips MRCS LSA. Like Davy, Phillips was the son of a general practitioner. He took over his father's practice at Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, in about 1830, but by the early 1840s he was working predominantly on mechanical projects. These included inventions to improve equipment for bending and cutting metal, and mechanisms for reaping machines that would help revolutionise agriculture.

Dr Phillips emigrated to New Zealand in 1854, and came over to Victoria in 1857, settling at Dandenong, where he continued in general practice. In the 1860s he invented a new way of preserving fermented liquors, and developed a design for sluices to control sedimentation in waterways. In the early 1870s he proposed the building of a canal from Bunyip to the Yarra for transporting firewood to Melbourne. It is uncertain whether any of these ideas bore fruit.

The inventor Walter Christopher Thurgar MRCS LSA visited Victoria late in 1852 and stayed long enough to register with the Medical Board. He appears to have come out with a relative, probably Augustus H Thurgar, a language teacher, who was also an inventor. Letters addressed to AH and WC Thurgar were listed by the Post Office as unclaimed in May 1854, by which time both men had, presumably, returned to England.

Before and after his time in Australia, Dr Thurgar was in general practice at Lakenham near Norwich, England. His inventions included a method for generating steam and a device to protect gardens from birds. However he was best known for his process for drying eggs by evaporation. Thurgar's Condensed Egg was being advertised in the English and Australian newspapers by 1856.

In about 1867 Dr Thurgar devised a mechanism for turning the gaslights in the streets on and off using clockwork. This invention, which became widely used, was known as a 'gas controller'. In the popular press it was greeted with the headline 'Threatened Extinction of Lamplighters'. However it would be thirty years before gas controllers were mass-produced. Then the familiar lamplighters, once celebrated in a famous poem for children by Robert Louis Stevenson, were seen no more.

Stephen Due
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MORE NZ PARALLELS

Following on from Stephen Due's latest AMPI column, it appears that the nineteenth century New Zealand doctors were just as inventive as their Australian counterparts, to judge by the patents applied for.

Only a minority of these innovations were directly connected to their professional work. In 1885 for instance Francis Monckton, who twenty years earlier had been the first surgeon to establish himself in practice in Southland, invented an accident bedstead which was displayed at the Wellington Exhibition. Fifteen years later Dr William Erson, then mayor of Onehunga near Auckland, patented an improved hernia truss; it is unclear if this helped support his political ambitions.

Three other doctors were involved in developing products with a hygienic component. The first of these, patented in 1870 by Dr Alfred Barker who had come to Christchurch in 1850 on one of the first four immigrant ships, was decidedly gruesome. Barker had turned adipocere, a by-product of post-mortem body fat, into detergent. His work preceded the exhumation in 1875 in Philadelphia of a corpse encased in adipocere, which was dubbed the 'Soap Lady' and is now on display in the museum of The College of Physicians in Philadelphia. The second product, a sheep-cleansing fluid patented in 1886, also had a Philadelphian connection since its joint inventor, Dr Robert Hoadley of Hawke's Bay, was a graduate of Jefferson Medical College in that city. The last of these three inventions was the work of Dr Benjamin Locking of Napier, who in 1905 was granted an American patent for 'improvements to apparatus for generating vapour to kill weeds and rabbits' – hardly curative but useful nevertheless.

FOR THE RECORD ...

Sometime in the 1980s or early 1990s, two neglected but important early Australian medical journals vanished from local catalogues. Intensive searches have failed to locate anything other than scattered individual copies of the *Medical Record of Australia* (1861-3) or its interrupted successor, the *Melbourne Medical Record* (1875-7). These opinionated, tendentious and sometimes libellous periodicals provide a marked contrast to the personalities and practices championed by the competing *Australian Medical Journal* (series I, 1856-78). The missing journals shared much in common with the more readily located *Australian Medical Gazette* (1869-71), but their absence has left a gap in local sources for colonial medical history.

Happily, the University of Sydney has collaborated

with the US National Library of Medicine to purchase microfilm copies of the two journals. These are now located in the Closed Compactus of the Rare Books section in the basement of the Fisher Library. Topics addressed by these journals include lunacy, surgery, germ theory and antisepsis, snakebite, charlatanism, medical personalities and politics, homeopathy, and the dreaded prospect of female doctors and Chinese practitioners.

It is hoped that in due course these journals can be digitised and uploaded, to join other colonial medical periodicals placed online by the University of Melbourne's Special Collections. These include the *Speculum* (1884-1914) and predecessors of the *Medical Journal of Australia*, including the *Australian Medical Journal* (1856-98, 1910-14), the *Intercolonial Quarterly Journal of Medicine and Surgery* (1895-6) and the *Intercolonial Medical Journal of Australasia* (1896-1909). Other colonial publications with patchy online access include the *Medical and Surgical Review (Australasian)* (1863-5), the *Australian Medical Gazette* and the later *Australasian Medical Gazette* (1882-1914), and the proceedings of the *Intercolonial Medical Congress of Australasia* (1888-1914); many of these can be located via the Medical Heritage Library (<http://www.medicalheritage.org/>) or Google Books.

I would like to thank my research assistant, Samantha Killmore, University of Sydney Liaison Librarians Rena McGrogan and Lorraine Evison, and Stephen Greenburg at the US National Library of Medicine for making this initiative possible.

Peter Hobbins

WELLCOME LIBRARY GOES DIGITAL

In July 2014 the Wellcome Library in London announced the addition of nine UK research library partners to the UK Medical Heritage Library project. This project to digitise historic collections will produce some 15 million pages online, thanks to funding from the Higher Education and Funding Council for England, and from Jisc (formerly the Joint Information Systems Committee). The partners include the university libraries of University College London, King's College London, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Bristol, Glasgow and Leeds, along with the Royal Colleges of Physicians of London and Edinburgh, and the Royal College of Surgeons of England. The Wellcome Library's new scanning centre will be able to accommodate more than 2000 items per month and these will start to come online from October 2014. For additional information see <http://www.medicalheritage.org/>

NSW BRANCH NEWS

Medical libraries: the bad ...

The University of Sydney is threatening to close several specialist libraries, including the Medical and Badham Libraries. This process would entail the irretrievable breaking up of their collections, with some texts being integrated into the drastically culled Fisher Library stacks, most going into offsite storage, and others being disposed of. Emphasis will increasingly be placed upon electronic access to digitised books and journals, with on-demand retrieval from storage (provided that the books can be found, which is never guaranteed). The 'disposal' process would also include the specialist librarians who have worked with these collections for years, severing their links to the Medical and other faculties, losing their expertise in acquisitions and their assistance with research inquiries.

For medical students, clinicians and historians, this development significantly diminishes our ability to browse, compare, and systematically work through both historical primary sources and the historiography of health. Many individual members have expressed their concern – or outrage – over these proposed changes, as have numerous organisations including the Royal Australian Historical Society and the Professional Historians Association. On behalf of our members, ANZSHM-NSW is also formally protesting these proposed Medical Library changes, while a rally arranged by the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) on 13 August attracted over 300 people to join authors, scholars, students and politicians in opposing this move. For those wishing to do more, please consider mobilising your contacts within and beyond the University, sign the petition run by the NTEU at <http://www.nteu.org.au/sydney/librarianservices>, or voice your concern directly to the University's Head of Library Services, Anne Bell, at anne.bell@sydney.edu.au. As action against the changes threatening the Mitchell Library earlier in the year demonstrated, speaking up can make a difference.

... and the good

Work has now commenced on planning and displaying medical heritage collections in the former Burkitt-Ford library in the Edward Ford building at the University of Sydney. Monthly meetings are being held to establish the best way to represent the history of the Medical School and the School of Public Health in the room's cabinets and spaces. A session was held in the former library on Tuesday 2 September, at 5.30 pm, with foundation ANZSHM member Milton Lewis speaking about the history – and recent closure – of the Burkitt-Ford Library. To attend or assist with this project, please contact Cate Storey on cathe.rine.storey@sydney.edu.au.

2015 Biennial Conference in Sydney

The planning committee for the 2015 conference continues to meet and map out this major meeting, so please make sure that you have blocked out 30 June – 4 July 2015 in your diaries! Our witness seminar on 'Changes in the administration of hospital services, 1970–2015' continues to attract significant participants, and we are delighted to announce that Sydney University's Professor Stephen Garton will deliver one of the keynote lectures at the conference. Our website is now live at www.dconferences.com.au/hom2015, allowing people to register an expression of interest and to download a sponsorship prospectus. If you have contacts in relevant fields including health administration, publishing, medicolegal practice or other professional bodies interested in the history of health, please provide contact details to our sponsorship coordinator, Charmaine Robson, charmaine@robson.tel or 0412 721 222.

ANZSHM-NSW AGM – February 2015

As our Annual General Meeting now takes place each February in company with a lively social dinner and speaker, ideas for venues are always welcome. Ideally, the space would offer us a room to hold the meeting before dinner, would be air-conditioned, seat approximately 40 people, allow for the screening of a data projector, and offer a meal package at approximately \$50 per head. Please forward any suggestions or offers to Peter Hobbins.

peter_hobbins@bigpond.com or 0418 277 827.

VICTORIA BRANCH NEWS

The Society's June meeting was held at the Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club, where we were entertained by longstanding member, Dr James Keipert. Jim spoke on 'The relationship of mental illness to superior leadership skills in times of crisis'. His thesis was that in settled times, we are best served by mentally healthy leaders, but in times of crisis we often benefit by being led by mentally ill leaders who have enhanced degrees of creativity, realism, empathy and resilience. He illustrated his theory by referring to the actions of General Sherman, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi and John F Kennedy.

The next meeting of the Society is the biennial country meeting. This year it is being held on 4 October in Hamilton, the premier city in the Western District of Victoria. A full day's lecture program has been planned, to be followed by dinner at the Hamilton Club, where local historian and identity, Bernard Wallace will speak on the Western Victorian Separatist movement of the 1860s.

CANADIAN TEACHING OF MEDICAL HISTORY

The *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, no.2, 2013, 199-209 contains a thought-provoking article by Jonathan Fuller and Margaret M Olszewski from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, entitled 'Medical history in Canadian undergraduate medical education, 1939-2012'. The authors summarise previous surveys conducted in 1939, 1968, and 1999 before turning to their own investigation carried out in 2012. They report that of the 17 medical faculties in Canada, nine include medical history in the core curriculum (for times varying from 1-20 hours). They note there have been fluctuations over time, and even within schools, and conclude that 'the task for proponents of history is not "break into the curriculum" but to ensure that its value is always considered during frequent episodes of curriculum restructuring.'

HISTORY OF DENTISTRY IN AUSTRALIA

Professor Peter Barnard, an ANZSHM member, has been gathering information on dentistry in Australia for more than six decades. For the last ten years or so Peter has been working in tandem with the Australian Dental Association Inc to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive history of dentistry. The project will record archival material and changes which have had direct and indirect influences on Australian Dentistry; develop profiles of Australian dentistry and Australian dentists at various times in our Australian History; document a time-line of trends in the profession and Dentistry in Australia. This information will be disseminated in due course by means of a freely-accessible ADA website. Anyone who wishes to contribute to this project can make contact by email to history@ada.org.au.

MJA: CENTENARY SUPPLEMENT

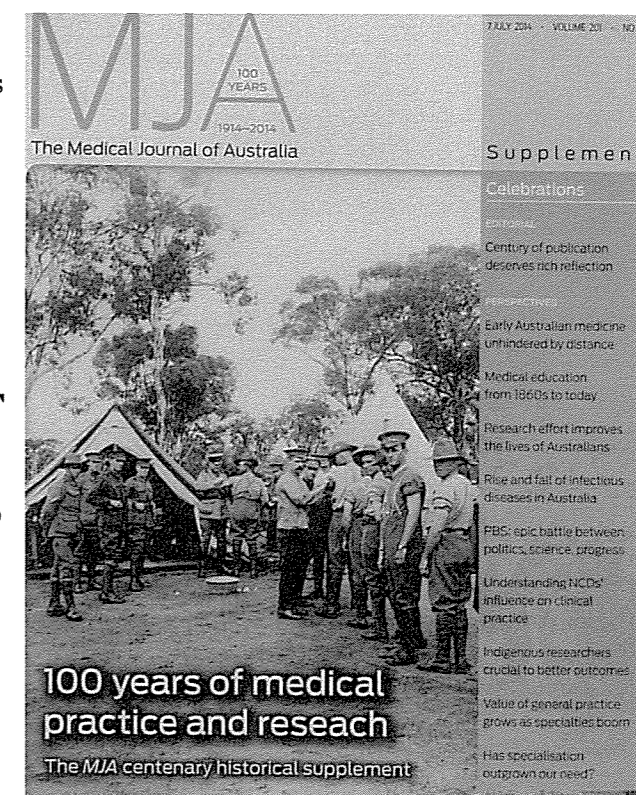
Longstanding ANZSHM member, Milton Lewis, was coordinating editor of this special issue on 100 years of medical practice and research, published on 7 July 2014. The ten articles included contributions from two other members, Yvonne Cossart and Cate Storey. The topics comprised infectious diseases, colonial medicine, indigenous health research, medical education, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, specialisation, non-communicable diseases, medical research, and general practice.

JOURNAL WATCH

ANZSHM member and former Bundaberg dentist Harry Akers is joint author of a recent article on the history of dentistry in Queensland, including a section on the fluoridation of local water supplies: Harry Akers, Michael Foley and Pauline Ford, 'Twentieth Century Influences on Queensland Dental Practice: A Tangential View', *Journal of the History of Dentistry*, Vol. 61, No. 3 Winter 2013, pp. 149-160.

Warwick Anderson is again in print in a major medical history journal, with his Second Opinion contribution 'Making global health history: the postcolonial worldliness of biomedicine', in *Social History of Medicine* (2014), 27(2), 372-84.

With the advent of what promises to be an extended fascination with the events of the Great War of 1914-18, the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* has added a new feature to its home page, entitled 'Read medical care during the First World War: a virtual issue from *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* with an excerpt from *Wounded* (<http://jhmas.oxfordjournals.org/content/66/2/216.full.pdf+html>). One of the six articles, previously published between 2011 and 2013, is 'The chief seat of mischief: soldier's heart in the First World War' by Sean Dyde from the University of Sydney History and Philosophy of Science.



CALLS FOR PAPERS

The second issue of *Health and History* in 2015 will be a special issue devoted to 'Medicine, Health, and the Great War'. Please contact the editors if you are interested to contribute. Submissions should be received by 1 February 2105.

Hans Pols (hans.pols@sydney.edu.au)
Cathy Coleborne (cathyc@waikato.ac.nz)

The Sydney-based editors of the *History of Education Review* are currently planning a special issue focusing on 'the historical involvement of schools in the production, management and bureaucratization of public health'. Suggested topics include: colonialisation, race, assimilation and eugenics; hygiene, vaccination and civic morality; nutrition, food provision, obesity and healthy eating; communicable diseases and ideas about illness and wellness; class, social control and the economics of public health. Detailed paper proposals (up to 1000 words) should be submitted to Dr Helen Proctor, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney:
Helen.proctor@sydney.edu.au, by 31 January, 2015.

FOR YOUR DIARY

The 10th Cowlshaw Symposium will be held in Melbourne on Saturday 4 October at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, beginning at 10am. This year's speakers include Wyn Beasley on the Monro dynasty; Donald Simpson on Percival Pott; Philip Sharp on maxillofacial surgery; Alan Thurston on Robert Liston and amputations. For details contact Geoff Down, Curator, RACS, phone: +61 3 9276 7447
email: geoff.down@surgeons.org .

Australians Studying Abroad invite you to join the tour 'Europe: A History of Medicine and Pharmacy' which will run from 11 September to 3

October, 2015. This tour has developed over the last 10 years, and seeks out many unusual and often hard-to-access places, libraries, physic gardens, and museums which trace the evolution of ideas that reflect the development of medicine and pharmacy over 500 years from renaissance to modern times. We follow the course of the Black Death that appeared in the city states of Italy from the Silk Road in 1347, from Venice to London. Details of the Tour can be found on the Web: www.asatours.com.au. The tour is over 23 days, through Italy, France, and England. It is led by Prof Robert Clancy AM and his wife Christine, who is a pharmacist/art historian, and David Henderson, an Australian artist/art historian, based in Venice.
CONTACT: ASA Cultural Tours on 0398226899 or info@asatours.com.au, or Robert Clancy <clancy_robort@hotmail.com>

Follow the ANZAC nursing sisters across the Aegean in 2015. Bookings are now available for a voyage to commemorate the Anzac nurses who were in the Aegean in 1915, take a new look at the work of trained nurses in the First World War, and draw attention to the importance of Lemnos in the Gallipoli Campaign. The main speaker on this seven-day voyage from Athens to Istanbul via at Thessaloniki, Lemnos, and Canekalle is Christine Hallett, Professor of Nursing History at Manchester University.
Highlights will include laying a wreath over the wreck of the troopship Marquette on which 10 New Zealand nurses died when it was torpedoed in October 1915, and a visit to Mudros Harbour, home of the No 3 Australian General Hospital at Turks Head, staffed by Australian Army nurses in 1915-16.
For a flyer about the voyage, contact Clare Ashton, Hon Research Associate, Nursing History Research Unit, Sydney Nursing School, University of Sydney clare.ashton@bigpond.com, and for bookings see <http://www.wildearth-travel.com/trip/aegean-anzac-nursing-sisters-gallipoli/>

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For the latest information, visit the ANZSHM Internet Website: www.anzshm.org.au

LETTERS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND ARTICLES ARE WELCOME, PREFERABLY IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE WILL BE 15 NOVEMBER 2009.