AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE INC

**Number Forty-one** 

#### THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

**Fourth Series** 

Australia recently witnessed bi-partisan support in Federal Parliament for legislation to set up the National Disability Insurance Scheme. In honour of this event I will address my final presidential column to a field of study that I feel remains full of rich promise for the history of medicine and history in general, namely the history of disability.

Since the middle of the twentieth century the study of history has undergone some profound shifts and challenges. While change and continuity remain pivotal issues, our sources of historical evidence and approaches to analysing and interpreting them have metamorphosed. Where dominant perspectives were once content to privilege the transformative power of a few outstanding individuals, new-found interest in societies, communities, ideas and discourses led to new ways of thinking about historical changes.

While the notion of `identity politics', like the study of gender, ethnicity, class and so on, was derided by some in the 1960s and 1970s, its significance cannot now be denied. Gender has been mainstreamed as a fundamental way to understand how our world operates, in medicine as much as in history. Social status is now widely recognised as a useful means to examine historical developments, and the `social determinants of health' are now a major resource in the health professional's intellectual toolbox.

Disability is increasingly recognised as a problematic category. Where its use in the past



was generally assumed to have a common sense definition, this is no longer the case. Rather than simply seeing disability as an individual deficit, we can now appreciate the significant contributions made by the social structures and policies that help

to *create* disabilities, and equally the values and beliefs that affect the personal, day-to-day experiences of those who live with a disability.

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Locating the history of disability within a history of medicine framework might therefore be seen as equivalently problematic. When disability was conceptualised as a deficit, as a physical or intellectual problem in search of a cure, its location in medical history seemed natural. If we acknowledge disability as something that's more than deficit, however – if we see the term as one laden with social and cultural meanings –its place in the history of medicine becomes less secure.

Historians of medicine still have important roles to play in furthering our understanding of the history of disability, and particularly the lived experience of disability. The medical profession often plays a pivotal role in the lives of people with a disability. In the past people with a disability often interacted with the medical profession on a daily basis, especially when their lives were circumscribed by institutional walls.

Writing about these entwined lives, catching glimpses of the impact of how values and beliefs affected the past lives of people with a disability, can give us an even better appreciation of why the National Disability Insurance Scheme is so important. This work can in the wider sense give us a far deeper appreciation of the diversity of human conditions, and help us to develop a greater acceptance of `difference'.

It has been a great privilege and pleasure to be President of the ANZSHM for the past two years. I have greatly appreciated hearing from you in response to issues I have addressed on this page and your general ideas and opinions. I wish the Society continued success in furthering the study of the history of medicine for the future. And I hope to see you in Darwin in July!

All good wishes.

Louella McCarthy L.Mccarthy@uws.edu.au

## Australian Medical Pioneers Index

#### **AMPI NEWS**

#### Doctor at sea: the casual oceanographer

The colonial doctor was sometimes also an amateur scientist, for whom the long voyage to a distant land provided welcome opportunities for the study of marine life. On arrival, the unfamiliar flora and fauna inspired the serious collector and the casual observer alike. Thus the physician and naturalist George Bennett, in the 1830s, studied flying fish en route and the platypus on arrival.

Yet it seems that few doctors took advantage of their time at sea to study the sea itself. In those days, a knowledge of ocean depths, winds and currents was more the province of the mariner than the scientist. A century had passed since the voyages of Captain Cook before the British Admiralty commissioned the first scientific expedition to study the oceans on a global scale.

The oceanographic survey ship HMS *Challenger* set out from England in 1872, and was to be away four years. It was possibly this expedition that inspired a Liverpool doctor in 1876 to conduct the experiment described below. At the time he was working as a surgeon on emigrant ships, but his experiment ran on until 1879, and by then he had given up seafaring and settled in New Zealand.

In September 1879 the *Otago Daily Times* reported that a bottle containing a message written by an Otago doctor had been washed up on a beach near Portland in Victoria. The message was dated 13 October 1876, and read as follows:

'In the interest of science. Track-bottle to indicate the direction of ocean currents. Latitude 58 deg 20 min S. Longitude 87 deg 15 min W. The finder is requested to mark on this paper (1) the latitude and longitude where the bottle is found (2) the date and (3) then make a copy of this paper and (4) return it into the bottle and the bottle into the sea and (5) send the copy to the Hydrographer, Admiralty, London, England...signed Isaiah de Zouche MD, 32 Clarence Street, Liverpool.'

The AMPI record shows that Isaiah de Zouche had emigrated from Liverpool to Dunedin via Brisbane in 1877. Before that he visited Brisbane twice as surgeon superintendent on emigrant ships — once in September 1875 and once in August 1876. In October 1876 he would have been on his way home to England. The co-ordinates he gave are consistent with a vessel approaching Cape Horn from the west, on the route taken by clipper ships returning to England from Australia and New Zealand.

How could a floating object find its way from the vicinity of Cape Horn to a beach in Victoria? Modern maps show a circumpolar current travelling from west to east that might have taken the bottle past Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope to a landfall in southern Australia. The Admiralty hydrographer noted the time elapsed (1028



Dr Isaiah de Zouche

days) and the distance travelled (9,500 miles) giving an average speed of 9 miles per day. Floating bottles had been used to study ocean currents since at least the 1830s and continued to be used for this purpose through to the 1950s.

#### Stephen Due Geelong Hospital Library stephencdue@gmail.com

Stephen's AMPI columns constantly offer new insights into New Zealand's nineteenth century doctors, reinforcing the crossover between the two colonial environments. Prior to this latest offering I knew little of Isaiah de Zouche other than his role as the first lecturer in diseases of children at the University of Otago from 1888-93.

Prompted by Stephen's revelation of his involvement with tracking the ocean's currents, I navigated the internet in search of more.

Isaiah was born in Dublin in the late 1830s, one of thirteen children of Louis Henry de Zouche who emigrated to America in the late 1850s and died there in 1870. It seems Isaiah initially went with his family then returned to Ireland and London for his medical education. When he qualified MRCS in 1864 he gave his address as Pennsylvania but practised for a time in Liverpool before undertaking a number of voyages to Australia as a ship's surgeon.

De Zouche's interest in science was recognised when he was elected president of the Otago Institute (now part of the Royal Society of New Zealand) in November 1888.

Derek Dow d.dow@auckland.ac.nz

#### **MEMBERS' NEWS**

#### Welcome!

James Best (VIC) Yvonne Cossart (NSW) Veronika Neuzilova (QLD) Jackie Shaw (VIC)

#### **VALE**

Dr Marita Bardenhagen, of Launceston, TAS, d. 19 November 2012

Dr Desmond Gurry, of Floreat, WA, d. 4 May 2013 Dr Judith Macdonald AM, of Claremont, WA, d. October 2012

Dr Anna Ziegler, of Ryde NSW, d. 22 February 2013

#### Marita Bardenhagen (1961-2012)

Dr Marita Bardenhagen died on 19 November 2012 aged 51, after a long battle with cancer, just three weeks after receiving a Special Service Award honouring her outstanding contribution to the history profession in Tasmania. Her passion for the discipline shone through in her efforts on behalf of Heritage Tasmania and the Launceston Historical Society. She was a regular attendee at ANZSHM conferences and many members will be familiar with her work on bush nursing in Tasmania, the subject of her 2003 PhD thesis. She will be missed.



Des Gurry



Marita Bardenhagen

#### Desmond Leo Gurry (1933-2013)

Des Gurry passed away peacefully in his 79<sup>th</sup> year, doing in what he enjoyed most, enjoying a cultural performance at the West Australian School of Performing Arts.

Born into a Melburnian medical family, Des came west as a handsome young medical practitioner in 1956, where he was introduced to the two passions of his life, his wife Patricia and paediatrics.

From 1969-98 Des was a senior lecturer in the Department of Paediatrics at the University of Western Australia. The prevention, detection and treat-

ment of cystic fibrosis and phenylketonuria became a life-long interest. He was also a pioneer in recognising Battered Baby Syndrome and a leader in the medical management of child abuse.

Des was present at the formation of the ANZSHM in Melbourne in 1984. He presented papers tirelessly at all the conferences of the society. He was always in the audience either awake or asleep, but whatever his state of consciousness never failed to ask a relevant question or make a comment at the conclusion of a presentation.

Des loved fine wine, good smelly cheese, great music and good company. His sartorial concoctions were legendary; Coptic crosses, American Indian head dress or a naval uniform were all in Des's repertoire.

His son Ian gave a heartfelt eulogy at his farewell, fitting of the fine man that Des was, and concluded, as would I have: `Des was a good man.'

#### **Peter M Winterton**

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Carol Helmstadter and Judith Godden 2011, *Nursing Before Nightingale 1815-1890*, Farnham (*UK*) Ashgate has been selected a 2012 Outstanding Academic Title by *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*. The journal is the premier source for reviews of academic books, electronic media, and Internet resources of interest to those in higher education. The citation reads: Comprising just over 9 percent of the more than 25,000 titles submitted to *Choice* in 2012, Outstanding Academic Titles are the `best of the best'.

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#### **EDITOR'S COLUMN**

Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome. The next deadline for copy is 15 May. 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

#### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

President's page	]
AMPI News	2
Blast From the Past	4
Research Queries	4
News from the Northern Territory	4
Branch News (NSW)	6
Branch News (Victoria)	7

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

The announcement in the May 1988 newsletter of the publication of John Pearn's *In the Capacity of a Surgeon*, a biography of Walter Scott, one of Queensland's earliest doctors, brought back memories of a previous existence. As archivist to the Greater Glasgow Health Board, in March 1987 I had answered a query from John about Scott's possible connections with Glasgow University, proof of his thoroughness when in pursuit of the myriad of historical topics which have sparked his muse over the years.

John's book, published by his own Amphion Press, was reviewed in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Surgery* in December 1988. The review noted Scott's triple role as surgeon, storekeeper and pastoralist – a relatively common career path for mid-nineteenth century doctors on both sides of the Tasman, at a time when it was difficult to sustain a lifestyle from medicine alone.

Even a perfunctory glance at the National Library of Australia catalogue will show just how many other books and articles have emerged from John Pearn's pen in the quarter century which has elapsed since the Walter Scott book notice appeared.

**Derek Dow** 

## **RESEARCH QUERIES**

(1) Medical historians seem surprisingly reluctant to utilise pharmacy materials in their research, yet by 1904 there were four journals serving pharmacists, druggists and chemists in Australasia. Least often cited is Australasian Pharmaceutical Notes and News, published monthly by chemical manufacturing firm Elliot Bros from 1904-54 and also distributed to doctors and hospital administrators. The journal also acknowledged nurses, both as individual healthcare providers and via organisations such as the bush nursing service. Historians might find APNN particularly useful in studying hospitals and other health institutions in the early twentieth century. The contents also cover a wealth of information on the booming industry for pharmaceutical and medical supplies prior to the dramatic changes following the outbreak of war albeit with a bias towards Elliot Bros. The journal was highly illustrated, including a great deal of the mundane material of healthcare practice, from hospital trolleys to autoclaves. The only repository I know which holds a substantive run of APNN is

the State Library of NSW, although this collection is incomplete, especially for the period 1914-21. I would be very keen to hear of other holdings of this valuable and interesting source.

## Peter Hobbins peter\_hobbins@bigpond.com

(2) Hello! I am doing some background research for a novel and would be most grateful for any information regarding ships' doctors who travelled on cargo ships in the 1920s and 1930s (I believe this was a cheap way to get to London for recent medical graduates.) Advertisements in student journals, diaries, ships' logs, etc – any information is welcome. I am also looking for information about eugenic thought, theory and practice in medical circles in the 1920s and 1930s (particularly in Australia). Thank you in advance for your help!

Annabel Stafford astafford@iinet.net.au

### NEWS FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

An NT saltie



The 13<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference is fast approaching in July in Darwin. For those considering papers but alarmed at the time passing, we have extended the deadline for abstracts to 15 June. So still time to write that paper that will astonish us all.

The Menzies School of Health Research (MSHR) is the topic of our Witness Seminar and they have kindly put together a very interesting programme. Some of the principal players will be there to tell the stories of some of the School's significant achievements.

Darwin is now entering the dry season and has one of the loveliest climates in the country; clear sunny days and cool fresh mornings. Not to be missed.

See the conference details on the website www.anzshm2013darwin.org.

Brian Reid bandlreid@bigpond.com





**Antipodean** Health People Places **Perceptions** 

THE 13th BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

#### WITNESS SEMINAR—FRIDAY 5 JULY 2013



#### **Menzies School of Health Research**

Founded 25 years ago the School, now a part of Charles Darwin University, has an excellent record of successful research projects, many, but not all, relating to Aboriginal health.

#### 1.15 pm to 2.15 pm: Professor John Mathews AM

The History of Menzies: NT and national perspectives

Epidemiologist and public health specialist, John Mathews was the founding Director of the MSHR, His career has also included being Head of the National Centre for Disease Control and Deputy Chief Medical Officer of the Australian Government.

#### 2.15 to 3.00 pm: Professor Alan Cass

Renal disease in Indigenous Australians: The history and the research

Fourth and current Director of the MSHR, Alan Cass is a renal specialist and Indigenous health epidemiologist.

#### 3.00 pm Afternoon tea

3.30 on to 4.15 pm: **Dr Sue Sayers** The Aboriginal Birth Cohort Study: The story

As a paediatrician at Royal Darwin Hospital Sue Sayers began the indigenous cohort study in 1987 to examine the outcomes of foetal growth restriction in Aboriginal babies.

#### 4.15 to 5.00 pm: **Professor Bart Currie**

*Melioidosis: A global and Northern Territory perspective* 

Bart Currie is Head of Infectious Disease, Royal Darwin Hospital and Professor in Medicine, Medical Program, Flinders and Charles Darwin Universities.

#### NSW BRANCH NEWS

#### Early modern medicine

Coinciding with the Rock & Roll Markets at Sydney University, our 7 April session stepped back much further in time, to the era of Shakespeare. Kindly hosted by the Fisher Library in their new seminar room adjacent the exhibition space, the focus of our talks was on early modern illnesses.

Literary scholar Dr Ursula Potter invoked Romeo and Juliet to illustrate her paper on green sickness. Appearing from the mid-sixteenth century, this condition coincided with religious reform in the wake of Henry VIII's break with the Roman Catholic Church. Considered for several centuries a genuine disorder of virgins, green sickness was a languishing condition characterised by melancholy. The malady, believed by some medical authorities to entail 'consumptions', was quite discrete from tuberculosis, although the social pathos associated with the young victims was not dissimilar. As illustrated by Juliet, green sickness was considered to manifest especially in women within the upper tiers of society, especially those younger than 20 - the average age of marriage.

Tied to emerging Protestant doctrine, which intensified the moral quandaries facing women progressing through puberty, green sickness can in many ways be seen as analogous to anorexia nervosa in the late twentieth century. Although young brides such as Juliet were believed to be at risk both from early pregnancies and later 'promiscuity', green sickness in virgins was attributed to putrid menstrual blood. Diagnosis was commonly via taking the pulse, testing the urine and observing the patient's pallor. Medical remedies included bloodletting, rectal or vaginal purges, and suffumigation with items such as burnt feathers or string as a form of aromatherapy. The cure, however, was conception. Following Shakespeare, noted Dr Potter, green sickness became a common element in plays, either as a means to lampoon doctors or to dramatise fatherdaughter conflicts.

Shifting to supernatural illnesses in the same milieu, historian Dr Judith Bonzol noted that the boundaries of 'natural' diseases in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were quite distinct from modern conceptions. Amidst a focus on humoural imbalances and noxious vapours, malevolent spirits and demonic possessions formed a routine consideration in medical diagnoses. Despite a new 'plague' of demonic possessions in the early modern era, by 1600 coalescing Protestant orthodoxy tended to diminish direct attributions to satanic causes. Nevertheless, supernatural ill-

nesses would be suspected when a patient presented with perplexing symptoms, failed to respond to orthodox treatment, or displayed unanticipated side effects.

Witches were commonly believed responsible, effecting illness by directing malicious airs and internal distempers at their victims. Whilst their touch was not considered contagious, witches could produce symptoms merely by their presence. This was not merely a psychological response: contemporary healers might test the association by bringing the suspected witch into proximity of the patient without the latter's knowledge. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that a heightened emotional state, especially fear and anxiety, could produce or intensify symptoms. As Dr Bonzol noted, this acknowledgement produced a diagnostic quandary. With certain types of people – especially young women and those with a phlegmatic disposition - prone to fear of witches, the same vulnerabilities also rendered them susceptible to genuine bewitchment.

Following the formal presentations and discussion, members and visitors were treated to a guided tour of the adjacent history of anaesthesia exhibition. Emeritus Professor Yvonne Cossart explained not merely the choice of texts and artefacts for the display, but elaborated the many strands of medical, dental and herbal practice that coalesced in the provision of reliable anaesthesia from the late nineteenth century.

#### 2015 ANZSHM Biennial Conference

The planning committee for the conference continues to meet regularly, with our witness seminar plans taking very firm shape and our next focus is on selecting major international speakers and sponsorship.

#### Forthcoming events

Hosted in conjunction with the State Library of New South Wales, and in association with the International Society of the History of Neuroscience, we encourage all members to attend the 2013 Ben Haneman Memorial Lecture. Featuring the dynamic and engaging Emeritus Professor Stanley Finger, this paper on 'Benjamin Franklin and the birth of medical electricity' will be a lively event.

- 19 June 6th Ben Haneman Memorial Lecture
- 14 September Visit to SPASM Museum, Gladesville Hospital
- 1 December Peter Tyler Memorial Witness Seminar

Enquiries/RSVP for all events to Peter Hobbins, peter\_hobbins@bigpond.com or 02 9569 5561.

# MEDICAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

The first meeting of 2013 was enthusiastically attended by over 50 members and guests. The speaker was Dr Ryan Jeffries, the curator of the Harry Brookes Allen Museum of Anatomy and Pathology at the University of Melbourne. Following the Annual General Meeting, at which the president Tony Buzzard presented his report, Ryan presented a fascinating and frequently amusing lecture, entitled `Body invaders: parasites and medical history'. Ryan completed a PhD in molecular parasitology before conducting more than four years of biomedical postdoctoral research at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in Western Australia and The University of Bristol in the UK. He has also studied multimedia design and science communication and subsequently worked on the Sciences Collection Online project at Museum Victoria.

The Harry Brookes Allen Museum is the centre for anatomical study at Melbourne University, and Ryan has been instrumental in the introduction of new preparation techniques and educational tools.

Following his lecture on gut parasites, members and guests enjoyed an excellent dinner!

#### **BOOK NOTICE**

Charles Martin: His Life and Letters

Those with an interest in Australian medical science, or the teaching of medicine, may be familiar with the name of CJ Martin. Working in Australia through the difficult but crucial period spanning the 1890s depression and Australian Federation, Martin's legacy persisted long after his return to



England to become Director of the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine. His exhaustive research into Australian snake venoms and the nature of antitoxins garnered him both CJ Martin

local and international kudos. His impact on the medical curriculum, especially in Melbourne, was also profound, especially as his tenure overlapped the twilight years of the revered but exhausted George Halford. But what proved most enduring about Martin was commitment to original investigation, which he urged upon Australians wherever he met them; many spoke of this with genuine affection.

In 2011 a biography of Martin was published by his grandson, Martin Gibbs. Entirely self-funded and self-published, *Charles Martin: His Life and Letters* (pp.256 + xv) is an enjoyable, thoughtful and human portrait of its subject, based largely upon primary sources.

As *Charles Martin* was printed on a very short run and distributed only in small numbers, just two copies initially made their way to Australia. Gibbs, now in retirement, is pleased to provide copies of his biography *gratis* to Australian readers, provided they meet the cost of postage (\$28 airmail or \$16 surface mail). For further details contact Peter Hobbins, email peter\_hobbins@bigpond.com or telephone 02 9569 5561.

#### **JOURNAL WATCH**

The latest issue of *Medical History* contains an article by Laura Dawes entitled "Just a Quack Who Can Cure Cancer": John Braund, and Regulating Cancer Treatment in New South Wales, Australia'. The article examines the case of a septuagenarian self-styled 'quack' who claimed in the late 1940s to have cured 317 cancer sufferers. It also looks at previous Australian claimants to such success and at the 1956 legislation and other measures to regulate cancer treatment. The author, who hails from Canberra, trained as a mathematician and statistician before turning her attention to economic and social history, and the history of medicine. She is currently events and outreach officer for the Generation to Reproduction project at the University of Cambridge.

Jacqueline Leckie, a social authropologist at the University of Otago, has published a chapter on the social role of asylums in Fiji and Papua New Guinea, which will be of interest to Australian and New Zealand historians of psychiatry. The full reference is `Islands, Communities and Entangled Madness: Transferring Psychiatry to the Colonial Pacific, 1884-1964', in Waltraud Ernst and Thomas Mueller (eds), *Transnational Psychiatries: Social and Cultural Histories of Psychiatry in Comparative Perspective c. 1800–2000*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010.

#### FOR YOUR DIARY

#### **MEDICAL HISTORY TOURS 2013**

30 August-3 September: Venice and Padua, led by Dr Simon Chaplin

3-14 September: A History of Medicine Cruise from Venice to Istanbul, led by Sue Weir 14-17 September: A History of Medicine in Istanbul, led by Dr Alp Kaya

19 September-5 October: A History of Medicine Cruise Along the Nile, with Prof Rosalie David 22-28 October: The Crimea and Kiev, led by Pete Starling

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The History of Medicine in Spain and Morocco: 27 September-11 October 2013, led by Professor John Pearn

Travel from Madrid into the old Moorish lands of Al-Andalus and see the splendid architecture of Seville, Granada and Cordoba. Cross from Gibraltar into North Africa, visit the beautiful fortified cities of Fes and Marrakech, learn about important Islamic contributions to art, medicine and culture and enjoy a wide range of enlightening and thought-provoking visits and specialist talks on the history of medicine. (Five per cent discount to ANZSHM members.)

For further information contact Jon Baines Tours (www.jonbainestours.com.au) on 03 9343 6367, email info@jonbainestours.com.au

#### AUSTRALIAN STUDYING ABROAD 2013

History of Medicine, Pharmacy & Science Tour: Venice to London (In the path of the Black Death), 13 September-5 October 2013, led by Robert and Christine Clancy.

This tour is about change, exploring the evolution of modern medicine and pharmacy from Renaissance times until the early 20th century. The tour follows the course of the Black Death from its arrival in Venice in 1347 to its appearance a year later in London. We visit Venice, Padua, Florence, Sienna

and Pisa and Genoa in Italy, then Avignon, Montpellier, Lyon, Beune, Troy before Paris and London. We follow themes of the concept of health care, the practice of medicine, the teaching of medicine and crises and public health. Perhaps of most interest is the theme of 'evolution of ideas' with visits to the Biblioteca Marciana (Fra Mauro), museo Galileo and the Musee Pasteur, amongst others. David Henderson, artist and art historian, gives a fine balance with review of change in art and architecture. For details contact 1800 645 755 or cmclancy@hotmail.com.

## RETRACE THE STEPS OF THE ANZAC NURSING SISTERS IN THE AEGEAN 2015

Planning has started for a cruise of 5-7 days in September 2015, touring sites where the ANZAC Nursing Sisters were posted in the course of WWI's Gallipoli Campaign. The proposed itinerary includes the Greek island of Lemnos where thousands of wounded and sick Allied soldiers were treated, the site of the wreck of the New Zealand hospital ship the *Marquette* and Mikra British Cemetery at Thessaloniki, and Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula (from the sea). For further information contact Clare Ashton, email clare.ashton@bigpond.com or PO Box 291 Hokitika Westland 7842 New Zealand



Nursing Sisters of No 3 Australian General Hospital on Lemnos August 1915 (Mitchell Library NSW)

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