



# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Dear Friend and Member,

24 Duff Street,  
Arncliffe. 2205.  
July 1976.

The Annual Meeting of this Society will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, July 16th, 1976.  
Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.  
Business: Opening & Welcome.  
Apologies  
Minutes of Previous Annual Meeting.  
Annual Financial Report.  
Lydham Hall Annual Report.  
President's Annual Report.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1976 - 1977.

Patrons (3)  
President  
Senior Vice President  
Vice Presidents (2)  
Hon. Secretary  
Hon. Asst. Secretary  
Hon. Treasurer  
Hon. Auditors (2)  
Committee of Management: (President, Secretary, Treasurer, &  
7 Members).  
Lydham Hall Committee  
Ladies Social Committee: It has been suggested that all Ladies who  
are able - go on Roster?  
Research Officer  
Publicity Officer  
Social Secretary  
Editor (Bulletin)

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Correspondence:

General Business:

Syllabus Item: Members to show slides of interest.

Supper Roster: Captain Mrs. Gow, & Mrs. Waddington, Misses Callister,  
Row, Russell.

Mr. D. Sinclair,  
President. 587.4555

Mrs. E. Eardley,  
Secretary. 59.8078.

Mrs. E. Wright,  
Treas. & Soc. Sec. 599.4884.

Mrs. B. Perkins,  
Publicity Officer. 587.9164.

Research Officer, Mr. A. Ellis, 587.1159.

A Special Note to our Members.

Annual Subscription - \$2.00 per Member, \$3.00 Family Rate (2 or more Members)  
-(payable now please).

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A limited supply of the following books, written and illustrated by the late Gifford Eardley (re-printed by popular request) are now available, cost \$1.00 each, postage 10¢ extra:

- Book 1. "The Early History of the Wolli Creek Valley"
  - Book 2. "The Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway"
  - Book 3. "Thomas Saywell's Tramway. 1887 - 1914. Rockdale to Lady Robinsons Beach".
  - Book 4. "The Arncliffe to Bexley Steam Tramway"
- Also available are: (By the same Author)
- Book 5. "Heritage in Stone" (Limited Stocks)
  - Book 6. "All Stations to Como" (Limited Stocks)
  - Book 7. "The Early History. Tempe & The Black Creek Valley"

Contact Secretary 'Phone 59.8078.

OR Miss Otton 'Phone 59.4259 (after 8 p.m.)

ALSO Smith's Florist Shop, Tramway Arcade, Rockdale.

Society Badges are available - \$1.00 each.

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Miss Otten, Curator of "Lydham Hall", is in need of Ladies and/or Gentlemen to assist with the weekend roster. Visitors come from far and wide to see this lovely old Home, and your presence would greatly facilitate inspections. Ring Miss Otten, Phone 59.4259, your call will be appreciated.

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DONATIONS TO LYDHAM HALL.

Mrs. J.A. Horrocks, Collection of Books.  
South Hurstville.

Mrs. Dalziel, Willow Pattern Table Cloth.  
Oatley.

The Late Mrs. E. Cheetham, Collection of Furniture.  
Bexley. 2 Pictures.

Miss Thomas, Two Hand Made Jug Covers.  
Bexley.

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NOTE TO MEMBERS

Please advise Secretary (phone 59.8078) of any change of address - this will save disappointment when your Bulletin is posted to you.

THE COLONIAL MEDICAL SERVICE.

1. The General Hospital, Sydney. 1788 - 1848. Part III.

- C.J.Cummins, M.B., B.S., D.P.H.  
Medical Adviser to the Government of N.S.W.

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THE RUM HOSPITAL (contd.)

Development and Decline.

James Bowman succeeded D'Arcy Wentworth in 1819. Under his positive administration the General Hospital reached its maturity as a convict hospital although short-lived. Bowman entered the Naval Service as Assistant Surgeon in 1806, was promoted to Surgeon in 1807 & served until 1814 when he was retired on half-pay. He visited N.S.W. in 1816 as Surgeon on the transport *Mary Anne*. During his visit he sought appointment as Assistant Surgeon at Hobart, but was refused by Macquarie who had no notification of his appointment. He returned to England where he made representations to Earl Bathurst resulting in his appointment as Principal Surgeon replacing Wentworth.<sup>44</sup> This appointment was directed against Macquarie's recommendation of Redfern, & was a mark of disapproval of Macquarie's administration, & particularly his emancipist policy. It was a deliberate denial of established policy that the senior position should belong to the Assistant Surgeons by rotation in order of their seniority.

Bowman was an able clinician & an assiduous & efficient administrator. His efforts were praised by both Commissioner Bigge & Earl Bathurst... 'to whose zealous exertions in the discharge of duty I have much satisfaction in receiving the testimony of the Commissioner as here recorded.'<sup>45</sup> He was a man of some wealth (modestly he states he brought with him a small fortune), whose material possessions & social status were increased by his marriage to Mearthur's daughter. He was Magistrate, pastoralist & for a short period a member of the Legislative Council. He contemplated retirement to continue his pastoral activities in 1827. By a strange quirk of fate it was his own forecast of his retirement after his land grant which led Governor Darling to suggest that the civil & military hospitals should be placed under a unified control.<sup>46</sup> This proposal was ultimately accepted, & Bowman was supplanted abruptly from office when the Civil & Military Medical Services were amalgamated in 1836.

During the first half of the tenure of his office Bowman was involved in clinical duties & administrative superintendence of the General Hospital. As clinician he supervised inpatient therapy. He was assisted at the hospital by one other surgeon who was concerned with the outdoor department & the duties of medical storekeeper & apothecary. Although an Assistant Surgeon was also shown on the hospital establishment this was more a matter of convenience as his duties were exterior, comprising medical supervision of the Hyde Park Barracks, the Gaol, Goat Island,

the Hulk, the ironed gangs at Carter's Barracks & Woolloomooloo & attendance at corporal punishments.<sup>47</sup> The Colonial Surgeons associated with Bowman at the General Hospital were Christopher Tattersall (1819-1820), T.B.Allen (1820-25), & James Mitchell (Assistant Surgeon 1823-27 thereafter Surgeon); the Assistant Surgeons were George Brooks (1820), Francis Moran (1823), M. Anderson (1825-27), J.McIntyre (1827), Andrew Gibson (1828-29), John Mair (1830) & George Moncrief (1831-1835).

In 1827 the office of Principal Surgeon was abolished & that of Inspector of Colonial Hospitals established in its place. For a few years prior to this date, Bowman had become more & more involved in inspectorial duties of the Colonial Hospitals & control of the medical stores of the Colony. Superintendence of the General Hospital was assumed by James Mitchell with the tacit consent of Bowman. It was never recognised officially even when Mitchell was promoted to Surgeon in 1827. The Assistant Surgeon was still responsible for exterior duties, but was expected to assist Mitchell when available, in the duties of the hospital.

Bowman succeeded in augmenting the staff of the hospital to include an overseer, clerk & assistant clerk, cook & assistant cook, messenger, two gatekeepers, a dispenser & assistant dispenser. In addition, nurses & wardsmen were employed in the ratio of approximately 1 to 7 patients. The staff was carefully selected from the convicts & were paid gratuities ranging from 4/- per day to the overseer to 6d. - 8d. per day to the cook, messenger & wardsmen.<sup>48</sup> One wardsmen & nurse were made senior, the senior nurse being referred to often as the matron.

When Bowman assumed office only the southern end of the central hospital building was available for patients. In 1820 an additional ward was obtained in the upper storey of the northern half, & finally all the northern section when the Supreme Court was removed to the Georgan School in Castlereagh Street in September 1823.<sup>49</sup>

The Northern Wing remained the quarters of the Principal Surgeon until 1829 when it was appropriated to the Executive & Legislative Councils. Within this appropriation the Senior Surgeon at the hospital was permitted to reside in a small sector of the ground floor. The South Wing continued as a section of the hospital. The ground floor was converted to the medical store; the second floor provided quarters for the Assistant Surgeon on exterior duties, & a ward for the accommodation of sick civil servants.<sup>50</sup> Provision was also made in 1823 by Governor Brisbane for sick soldiers of the Buffs Regiment to be accommodated in this ward.<sup>51</sup>

Certain additions were made to the hospital to improve its facilities. In 1820 a separate mortuary was erected on the south-eastern enclosure of the hospital compound, & a few years later this was complemented by a separate postmortem room behind the South Wing, so replacing the old anatomy room in the Surgeon's quarters. In 1828 two small buildings were erected in front of the hospital proper, one at the northern end as an office for Dr. Bowman & the other at the southern end for the treatment of outpatients (the Dispensary).<sup>52</sup>

Bowman re-organised the hospital registers and stores procedures. Stores accounting was emphasised by Bowman as supply had to be ensured from the hospital depot to all colonial hospitals & deficiencies could not easily be made good locally, but only by requisition to the Colonial Office. The difficulty in terms of time in obtaining supplies was in some measure overcome by appropriating unused medical stores from the convict transport ships prior to their return to England.<sup>53</sup> To provide continuity of supply in the Colony Bowman instituted the system of maintaining a two years' supply in stock. Mitchell was charged with supervision of medical supplies to the General Hospital, issuing daily these requirements to the overseer. Medicine & drugs taken by the surgeons for their private practice were charged to them at 50% on London prices.<sup>54</sup>

In his programme of re-organization Bowman instituted hospital and ward routines; reduced the patient content from 22 to 16 per ward; prohibited cooking and washing of linen in the wards; improved ventilation & cleanliness & maintained order at night by resident night nursing staff.

Watson pays tribute to Bowman for his clinical acumen & improvement in therapeutic regimes, including the introduction of classification of diseases; segregation of patients suffering from syphilis; proper dietary regimes replacing issue of rations; development of pathology (morbid anatomy), & extension of surgical techniques. Infections were the commonest cause of admission during this period, & followed cyclic patterns with erysipelas & ophthalmia prevalent in summer & pulmonary infection likewise in winter. Dysentery was endemic throughout the year & the most prevalent disease entity. Rheumatism, venereal disease & dropsy were almost as common. Of the surgical conditions trauma (fractures & dislocations) appear frequently in the returns & were treated by special traction apparatus supplemented by fracture boxes & long splints. Elective operations for lithotomy, fistula-in-ano, phimosis & harelip were performed with specially designed instruments.<sup>55</sup>

When Bowman was active in treatment of the sick he made a daily round with the Surgeon, ordering therapy which was later dispensed by the Surgeon. The latter had to attend to the dispensing of medicines & issue of stores to the overseer during the morning, & in the afternoon treat outpatients & complete another ward round. After Mitchell assumed control of the General Hospital he had to carry out all inpatient & outpatient duties with only occasional assistance from the Assistant Surgeon on exterior duties. In addition, he had to control & supervise all staff activities & duties, determine urgent admissions & perform forensic duties for coronial purposes. Mitchell became identified with the General Hospital & enjoyed a position of prestige & power within the hospital, which was to be abruptly shattered in the incident which led to his dismissal in 1837.

The Bowman period was the golden era of the General Hospital. During its remaining years as a convict hospital it was in a state of transition and decline, as was also the convict system with which it was so closely associated.

In 1836 the Colonial Medical Service was reorganised following a report by Sir James McGrigor in which he proposed separate military medical establishments for Van Dieman's Land & N.S.W, each under the immediate control of 'a Superior Staff Officer for the purposes of Controlling the Medical Department

connected with the Military & Convict Branches of the Services in those Colonies'.<sup>56</sup> Sir James chose John Vaughan Thompson as Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals for N.S.W. Appointed also was a Deputy Purveyor (Stores Officer) to superintend the medical store located at the General Hospital. Thompson arrived in the Colony in June 1836 with orders to take over from Bowman. Surprisingly, Bowman's services were not terminated. He was informed by the Secretary of State that 'he was superseded, & that he remains with the Warrant of Principal Colonial Surgeon ... with which appointment he will continue to receive, until the Pleasure of His Majesty's Government is taken on the subject, the consolidated salary of pounds 850.0.0 per annum' <sup>57</sup> This arrangement continued for two years until Governor Gipps removed his name from the role of the Medical Service. The salary so received was in lieu of any entitlement to a gratuity.

Thompson was given detailed instructions by McGrigor as to his duties. Among these instructions were 'to revise immediately all existing medical establishments connect with the Military & Convict Departments so as to be placed under the Hospital Regulations of the Army.'<sup>58</sup> He set about his duties on strict military lines, meeting resistance with truculence & display of authority. He was impervious to criticism & reprimand & thoughtless of the feelings & status of his fellow Colonial Surgeons.

It was inevitable that he & Mitchell would clash over the exercise of authority within the General Hospital. Mitchell was resentful of change, particularly when it involved his status & responsibility in the management of the Hospital. Likewise, Thompson demonstrated clearly that he did not intend to place Mitchell in any special category among the Colonial Surgeons. Early skirmishes took place over alterations to the hospital routines & the allocation of quarters to Deputy Purveyor at the expense of the Assistant Surgeon.

Mitchell's position became intolerable when Thompson in 1836 issued a series of petty orders through the Deputy Purveyor, who was instructed to ensure that they were obeyed throughout the hospital. This manoeuvre gave to the junior officer the power to supervise an officer of superior rank. Mitchell complained about Thompson's personal & professional capacity to his Commanding Officer as a counter-measure to Thompson's charges of disobedience. Colonel Snodgrass supported Thompson as the senior officer exercising lawful authority & suspended Mitchell from duty. After a Court of Inquiry, Governor Bourke reinstated Mitchell but reprimanded him for making such charges against Thompson. The feud moved rapidly to its climax. On the 9th August, 1837 Thompson issued an order directing Mitchell to undertake exterior duties in addition to his other work. Mitchell's protests were vigorous but unheeded. He was unwise but no doubt desperate when he committed a direct act of disobedience in refusing to attend a flogging at the Hyde Park Barracks in September of that year. Again he was tried by a Court of Inquiry, found guilty & dismissed by Governor Bourke.<sup>59</sup>

Mitchell appealed, to no avail, to Governor Bourke & Lord Glenelg to have the stigma of dismissal erased. He published a pamphlet setting out his case which evoked a reply from Thompson in a letter to the Colonist. Mitchell sued for libel & was awarded damages of pounds 100.0.0 with costs. So encouraged, he continued his fight for vindication for three years.

Finally, in 1841 Governor Gipps proposed a compromise that Mitchell be re-instated for one day and allowed to resign.<sup>60</sup> This was acceptable to the Colonial Office and to Mitchell, who by then was a large landowner and successful businessman. He did not again practise medicine.

Mitchell was replaced as Surgeon to the General Hospital by Kinnear Robertson, who in turn was succeeded by P.Harnett (1840-1844) and William Richardson (1844-1848). Neither Robertson nor his successors enjoyed the authority within the hospital which had been assumed by Mitchell. Thompson and his successor William Dawson were effectively in administrative control although neither intruded into clinical duties, these remaining with the Surgeon. The Assistant Surgeons during this period were J.Stuart and J Reid (1837); D.K.Ballow (1838); P.Harnett (1839-immediately prior to his promotion to Surgeon); Mollison (1840); J.Stuart (1841); J.Lee (1842-1843); Alexander Garnack (1844); and John Silver (1845-1848). The Surgeons & Assistant Surgeons after Mitchell had little or no experience of the old system, & submitted to the regime of military control wherein the General Hospital was not distinguished in any particular way from the other Colonial Hospitals.

The nurse-patient ratio was reduced to 1 in 10, otherwise the staffing establishment remained stable. In 1843 the staff comprised: 1 surgeon & 1 assistant surgeon; the deputy purveyor, one overseer, 1 medical clerk; 1 dispenser & 1 assistant; 1 cook; 1 messenger; 2 gatekeepers; 23 male & 5 female nurses. The non-medical staff, with the exception of the Deputy Purveyor, was selected still from the convict population, with gratuities similar to those paid in Bowman's regime.

The assimilation of the General Hospital into the Army did not alter its function. In many ways it was an advantage, as ancillary support & services could be obtained from Army sources. With the cessation of transportation in 1841 & its diminution for some years prior, the General Hospital was receiving a substantial proportion of civilians as pauper patients, whose care was a charge against the Civil Purse. The financial management of the Hospital is set out in detail in Part II on Administration of Convict Hospitals.\*

Alternative accommodation for civilian patients to the General Hospital was already accepted in principle as the responsibility of the Sydney Dispensary. When the Board of the Sydney Dispensary was denied a separate civilian hospital the only alternative was to occupy progressively the General Hospital as the need for convict accommodation diminished. Briefly, the entire South Wing was vacated & handed over in 1843. The medical stores depot was removed from the South Wing to the ground floor of the adjacent hospital building proper in 1842, & was further transferred to the Inspector's Office on the northern boundary of the Hospital in 1843. In the same year the Legislative Council occupied the whole of the Northern Wing, the Senior Surgeon being provided elsewhere.<sup>61</sup>

In 1847 the British Government decided to transfer the remnants of the convict establishment to Van Dieman's Land. Governor Fitz Roy approached the Directors of the Sydney Infirmary & Dispensary to receive the paupers still

remaining in the General Hospital (at this stage numbering some 25). The Dispensary could not meet this request due to the limited accommodation in the South Wing, & a counter offer by the Directors to take over the main building of the General Hospital was accepted on 13th March, 1848, subject to the Dispensary surrendering the South Wing in exchange. This condition, among others, was met, & the Directors of the Sydney Infirmary & Dispensary entered into possession of the General Hospital in September, 1848.

*So concluded the first episode in the saga of the General Hospital which was to proceed through more tranquil years, & under different management & with different function, to the establishment of the Sydney Hospital.*

\* *Modern Medicine*, January 21, 1974.

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REFERENCES. (Covering Parts I, II & III)

1. JOHN WHITE, Journal of a Voyage to N.S.W. Angus & Robertson. 1962:112
2. The number of deaths which occurred between embarkation & arrival varies depending on the source of the return. White quotes the figure of 48, comprising 36 male convicts, 4 female convicts, 5 convict's children, 1 marine, 1 marine's wife & 1 marine's child. The mortality rate of the convicts was 1 in 17 compared with the Second Fleet of 1 in 4.
3. Journal of Assistant Surgeon Arthur Barnes (held in the Mitchell Library):59.
4. H.R.N.S.W., Vol.1, Pt.2:333, Chief Surgeon White to Mr Skill.
5. Ibid.37
6. H.R.A. Series 1, Vol.1:288; Phillip to Lord Grenville 5-11-1791.  
"The first convict who was emancipated has been bred to surgery, & merited from his exemplary conduct what has been done for him. He acts also as an assistant to the Surgeons, who find him a very useful man".  
Irving died on the 5th September, 1795.
7. JOHN WHITE, Journal of a Voyage to N.S.W. Angus & Robertson 1962:113.
8. H.R.N.S.W. Vol.1, Pt.2:142; Surgeon White to Governor Phillip.
9. H.R.A. Series 1, Vol.1:48; Phillip to Sydney
10. Ibid 1:53
11. JOHN WHITE, Journal of a Voyage to N.S.W., Angus & Robertson 1962:133.
12. J.F.WATSON, The History of the Sydney Hospital 1811-1911. Govt. Printer 1911:4
13. HERMAN MORTON, The Early Australian Architects & their Work.  
Angus & Robertson 1954:8.
14. H.R.A. Series 1, Vol.1:188.
15. J.F.WATSON, The History of the Sydney Hospital 1811-1911, Govt. Printer 1911:4
16. H.R.A. Series 1, Vol.1:204.

17. H.R.N.S.W. Vol.1,Pt.2:538; Phillip to Lord Grenville.
18. H.R.A. Series 1, Vol.1:337.
19. Ibid:442. Dundas to Grose .. (Arndell was granted permission to retire in June 1793, to become a settler, with a pension of pounds 50.0.0 pa. In 1804 he received a grant of 600 acres at Mulgrave Place. He was also Magistrate for Hawkesbury.)
20. H.R.N.S.W. Series 1,Vol.III:63.
21. H.R.A.Series 1,Vol.II:86. Balmain to Hunter.
22. Ibid: 562 Hunter to King, Return of Public Buildings in N.S.W.
23. H.R.N.S.W., Series 1, Vol.VI:138; Governor King, Present state of His Majesty's Settlements on the East Coast of New Holland - The Principal Surgeon and his Assistants.
24. H.R.A. Series 1, Vol.1:539.
25. Ibid, Vol.III:628, Camden to King.
26. Ibid:328, King to Portland.
27. Ibid,Vol.IV:115, Bligh to Windham.
28. Ibid, Vol.IX:786, Macquarie to Earl Bathurst.
29. Ibid, Vol.VI:647, Foveaux to Castlereagh.
30. Sydney Gazette, Sept.6,1826.
31. J.F.WATSON, The History of the Sydney Hospital from 1811 to 1911, Govt.Printer 1911:14.
32. H.R.A.Series I, Vol.VII:401, Contract for erection of hospital at Sydney.
33. Ibid.
34. Mitchell Library Archives 3821.3 Col.Sec.Corr 1811 G & G Orders 29.10.1811.
35. H.R.A.Series 1, Vol..VIII:136.
36. Ibid, Vol.VII:301 and Note 59.
37. CURRY,C.H. The Brothers Bent, Sydney University Press, 1968:150.
38. G & G. Order, Sydney Gazette, April 6th, 1816.
39. J.F. WATSON, The History of the Sydney Hospital,1811-1911,Govt.Printer 1911:20-32.
40. Ibid:39 et seq.
41. H.R.A. Series 1, Vol.VII:641.
42. Ibid; Vol.IX:259.
43. J.F.WATSON, The History of the Sydney Hospital,1811-1911.Govt.Printer 1911:42,43.
44. H.R.A.Series 1,Vol.XI:458, Testimonial to Earl Bathurst.
45. Ibid: 102.
46. Ibid, Vol.XIII:84, Governor Darling to Under Secretary Hay.
47. WATSON J.F. The History of the Sydney Hospital,1811-1911,Govt.Printer 1911:49

48. M.L.D. Returns of the Department of Colonial Hospitals.
49. WATSON J.F. The History of the Sydney Hospital,1811-1911. Government  
Printer: 1911:51.
50. Ibid.
51. H.R.A.Series 1, Vol.XI:78.
52. WATSON J.F. The History of the Sydney Hospital.1811-1911. Government  
Printer. 1911:52.
53. H.R.A. Series 1, Vol.XII:605.
54. Ibid, Vol.X:78.
55. WATSON J.F. The History of the Sydney Hospital.1811-1911. Government  
Printer. 1911:62 et.seq.
56. H.R.A.Series 1, Vol. XVIII:29 and 618 et.seq.
57. Ibid, Vol.XXIII:620. Memorandum Lord Glenelg to Sir Richard Bourke.
58. Ibid, Vol.XIX:165.
59. Ibid. Vol.XIX:117,Sir Richard Bourke to Lord Glenelg.
60. Ibid, Vol.XXI:526, Lord Stanley to Sir George Gipps.
61. WATSON J.F. The History of the Sydney Hospital,1811-1911. Government  
Printer. 1911:77.

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*Ibid. (ibidem) In the same book, chapter, passage etc. (Concise Oxford).*  
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