

# NEWSLETTER 2007

THE ST GEORGE HOSPITAL GRADUATE NURSES' ASSOCIATION

## President's Report

Welcome to the 61st reunion of The St George Hospital Graduate Nurses Association. It seems like yesterday we were preparing for the 60th. How time flies when you get to your senior years!

It also made me contemplate the disadvantages of aging. As you are all aware, as graduates of St George, we are a dying breed so it is important to preserve our history.

With that in mind, I have spent considerable time preparing our slide presentation in an attempt to preserve some of our illustrious history. I also hope that our members have given some thought and time to put pen to paper and write down those fabulously funny and sometimes daunting memories of our training.

For those of you who haven't yet given it a thought, please do it. Not only is it important to our history, it should make for some good reading. I look forward to the task of compiling it for a book. Not only will it be a good read for nurses, but also for those who like to hear a good yarn! Having listened to some of the "remember when...." conversations at the previous reunions, I look forward to reading your memories. I do ask however that the writing be clearly legible. Like most of us, my eyesight isn't what it used to be!

The sad news is to report the passing of one of oldest and well known members. I'm sure we all remember Elaine Maguire who died after a short illness. Elaine had a very productive nursing career, one that any of us would have been proud of. We will certainly miss her presence at our reunions.

Although not a member of our group, I also heard of the passing of Harry Sutherland. Harry was a "surgical dresser/orderly" at Saints for many years and several of us will remember him with fond memories!

It has been a very busy year for our committee members. We listened to your comments at previous reunions and decided to change our caterers -hopefully you will find the change pleasing. All committee positions will be vacant this year so please give some thought to putting your hand up and offering to help. Its good fun and doesn't take up too much time.

Happy Reunion  
Di Mannion (Ryan)

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# Reunion

# 61

# Treasurer's Report

Well, I've done it again – missed the deadline with the auditor's report. You would think I could get it right after 5 years in the job!

Like last year, I have included the most recent bank statement to show the activity of our bank account and hope this will prove sufficient. Please forgive me for my tardiness but I am a procrastinator (how did I ever make it to the wards by 0700 – showered, dressed and fed? I am sure I was never awake until morning teatime). I promise sincerely that the books will be in tip top order for the next treasurer. Could it be you?

*Bev Carruthers*

# Reunion Secretary's Report

Last year's 60th reunion was an enjoyable event. The meeting was well attended and we tried to add to the occasion by decorating the dining area.

The responses to this year's AGM began arriving quite soon after the invitations were posted, but they were

few in number. By the due date, fewer than half the 250 graduates invited had replied.

There has already been a positive response to the request for oral histories. So far they have all been typed or hand-written, not an "oral" one amongst them. Some older graduates have telephoned and told me of the fun they have had as they wandered down memory lane seeking details of their time at St George. I sincerely hope everyone will make an effort to record something personal for the archives. We will cherish all the memories and appreciate the time and effort put into their making.

This is my 4th year as reunion secretary. Whilst it has been a very worthwhile experience, I will be pleased to hand it over to the next willing worker. Hopefully someone will volunteer at the AGM. It is not too hard a job. Only 4 or 5 meetings to attend throughout a whole year. It might suit someone who is retired. Will it be you?

*Bev Carruthers*

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# News and Greetings

## **CORNELL Judith (nee Roberts) 1957**

I am sorry not to be attending this year's reunion particularly since it was 50 years ago in April of this year that our group commenced training at St George. The April '57 group also included several girls who transferred to The Sutherland Hospital when it opened. The four years of "living in" and sharing every aspect of our lives forged many lifelong friendships that survive to this day.

It was great to see the announcement of the oral history project and I do hope that you are able to gather many of the precious memories and stories that are so much a part of those years we spent at the hospital. I am more than happy to assist anybody who needs help with this project and I will certainly gather some histories myself. I have been gathering oral history this year in connection with the writing of the history of the NSW Bush Nurses Association that a colleague and I hope to have ready for publication by the end of the year.

I was privileged to be asked to prepare an entry for the Australian Dictionary of Biography for the late Betty Lyons who was the tutor sister at the hospital until about 1958 and who went on to have a very distinguished nursing career. Many around my vintage will remember Betty from their training days and there will also be many who remember her son Robert, a St George trainee during the seventies. The entry will appear in the forthcoming edition of the ADB both online and in hard copy.

My best wishes to all for a successful day and I look forward to catching up next year.

## **PETTIT Betty 1951 & WALKER Joan 1951**

We flew into South Africa, landing at Johannesburg, from where we went to Durban on the east coast, then Kenya, Victoria Falls and finally Capetown – a very attractive city with several place of interest. We visited the Kirtstenbosch Gardens, the waterfront complex of shops & boats in port, Table Mountain with

its extensive views of the city and of course the Cape of Good Hope (the most southerly point of Africa). We saw seals and penguins which, unlike our Australian penguins, were scattered on rocks and sand , in the sun.

We had been in Kenya visiting several National Parks to see animals in the wild. We saw the big five – elephants, lions, leopards, rhinos and buffalo as well as various types of antelope, giraffes, baboon, monkeys and numerous other creatures. A monkey invade our room and ran off with a muesli bar. He had opened the plastic container and was about to rifle the suitcase further when he was disturbed.

In Zimbabwe we had a helicopter ride over Victoria Falls as well as walking around the baboon inhabited tracks to view the falls from the ground. This was the last of the safari camps and lodges in which we stayed , each one different from the others but all quite comfortable with very friendly staff.

**LUNNEY Colleen (nee Moore) 1962**

Colleen has had a knee replacement recently and although not able to attend, she hopes everyone will enjoy the reunion.

**STOKELD Gwen 1961**

My best wishes to the Grads for an enjoyable afternoon together

**WOODRIDGE Dorothy (nee McKay) 1964**

Have a great reunion and much fun as you catch up and relive “old times”. Unfortunately I will be there as I have a wedding to attend in Queensland.

## Vale

**FINLAYSON Kathleen (nee Gibson) 1953**

Kath passed away at John Flynn Hospital on the Gold Coast on 13/9/2007. She had suffered painful, chronic illness for some years but was never heard to complain.

As a young woman she decided she wanted to become a nurse, and in 1949 she came to St George from Lismore, together with her school-mate the late Shirley Say. During her training she made many strong, life-time friendships.

After her marriage to Keith in 1955 she lived in Pymble for 10 years, then moved to Rocky Point near Dunoon in the Lismore district, where they farmed cattle for 29 years. When Keith passed away in 1999 she moved into a villa at Goonellabah closer to her son Mark, his wife and grandchildren in Lismore.

Her constant companion was a funny little dog called Morton which died several years ago. On afternoons they would stroll along a nature reserve adjacent to the villa and rest near the platypus pond. They were well-known for this ritual. Kath's ashes have been scattered in this peaceful place, together with Morton's.

Kath we miss you so very much, but you will be in hearts forever, sometimes crying, but more often having a good laugh at the happy times we spent together during our salad and milkshake days at St George.

Goodbye Kath darling. We have sweet memories of the wonderful person you were. *Joan, Jean and Pam. From Pam Mattocks.*

**GALLAGHER Juanita “Jan” (nee Rice) 1961**

Jan and her husband had a sea change and moved to Tweed Heads South a few years ago to enjoy the peace and quiet. Her husband informed us of her passing.

**JACKSON Thelma (nee Ford) 1938/42**

Thelma suffered a stroke a few years ago and spent her last years at the Palm Nursing Home at Kirrawee where she was frequently visited by Beryl Watson nee Schubert and Betty Hadfield nee Thomas a k a Tommy. They enjoyed remembering their time at St George. Thelma was Betty's supervisor on H ward (men's public ward in the Neilson block) when she commenced her training in 1947. Thelma was a strict nurse as far as duties were concerned and she instilled the basis of a good training that carried Betty throughout her training. She was kind and understanding. The patients under her care always had the best. Thanks Thelma! *From Betty Hadfield.*

**SHORT Heather Jane “Jenny” (nee Gordon)**

Jenny was a RNSH trainee who spent the last 50 years serving the patients, staff and especially the orthopaedic department of The St.George Hospital. She passed away in St Vincent Hospice on 17th September,2007. Her eulogy was read by William Cummings.