

The St George Hospital Graduate Nurses' Association

REUNION 2015



ST GEORGE HOSPITAL GRADUATE NURSES ASSOCIATION
www.stgeorgegrads.com



(L-R): Jan Robson, Emeritus Professor R. Lynette Russell (who launched the book), Margaret Binder, Tony Cornell and Joan Wagstaff.

Book launch

Without Nurses a Hospital is Just Bricks and Mortar: The St George Hospital Nurses

The history of the nurses of St George Hospital is part of the history, not only of nursing in Australia, but of Australia itself. Registered as a nurse training hospital only ten years after its establishment, St George Hospital did more than provide healthcare – it produced nurses who have become legendary in their field and who contributed to some of the most significant changes to nursing in Australia since the arrival of Lucy Osburn in 1868.

St George graduate nurses have made their mark in a wide range of settings, including clinical practice and hospital and educational reform, service in wartime, and in missionary endeavours. This book remembers not only the nurses of St George but also celebrates the St George Hospital Graduate Nurses Association who have kept the spirit alive. It serves also as a tribute to its author, Judith Cornell AM, whose efforts to record the history of nursing, and her colleagues and peers have contributed greatly to the social history of Australia.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2014/2015

Joan Wagstaff OAM (Davidson)
President

Dorothy Coker (Phillips)
Vice-President

Jan Robson (Overall)
Hon. Secretary and Reunion Secretary
PO Box 70, Penshurst NSW 2222
Phone 0412 903 574

Margaret Binder (Nable)
Hon. Treasurer

Committee Members
Estelle Green (Farrell)
Kathryn Litchfield (West)
Susan Leahy
Yvonne Troy (Cayford)

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

To register for an electronic version of the newsletter email: jmrobson@tpg.com.au

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

To borrow the CDs or access the audio online, contact Joan Wagstaff OAM, President on 02 9771 2508 or email: joanlwagstaff@gmail.com

2015 REUNION

Next year's reunion will be held on Saturday 22 October 2016.

NEWSLETTER 2015

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www.jtp.net.au

BANNER PHOTO

(L-R): Von Hogan, Betty Campbell and Jean Beatty, taken in the 1970s.

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Graduate Nurses' Association

President's Report

Joan Wagstaff OAM (Davidson 1957)

Welcome to the 2015 reunion and it is hoped that everyone enjoys a happy time of fellowship with much reminiscing. Unfortunately numbers are dwindling and the committee would welcome associate members from those that have worked at St George for some time. Please welcome any such person to become a member of our Association.

At our last reunion the book "Without Nurses a Hospital is just Bricks and Mortar: The St George Hospital Nurses" written by the late Judith Cornell AM was launched by Emeritus Professor R. Lynette Russell AO. The committee has had reasonable success selling the book with editorials in the local newspapers and promotion through the NSW College of Nursing and the Lamp. The committee also had a "pop-up-stand" at the 120 year celebration of the St George Hospital and sold a few books. The St George Hospital graduate Nurse's Association was also represented at the dinner held for the 120 Year Celebration.

If you are visiting "the hospital" take a look at our display cabinet near the Kiosk which also had a "make over" with some additional items from the Nurses' Museum.

This year we commemorate 100 years of the Anzacs and those who fought in the first and second world wars. Quote from Judith's book "There is no known listing of the St George Hospital nurses who saw military service" but you will see from the information that is on the tables that a shortage of staff was due to those who had enlisted and the hospital at the time relied on volunteer staff.

Thank you to Margaret Binder for decorating our tables to commemorate the Anzacs and once again to Susan Leahy for the beautiful flower arrangements.

This year the committee has nominated that the Joanne McKay Foundation be the beneficiary of our donation. The Joanne McKay Foundation works with the families as well as those with breast cancer.

Vicki Manning, Director of Nursing at St George Hospital, has been contacted regarding a donation from the committee of a \$500 scholarship for postgraduate studies for a registered nurse working at St George Hospital. Ms Manning thanked us for the offer and it will be discussed at one of their executive meetings. She also sends her thanks and greetings to the Association.

Lastly, I wish to thank the committee for their support and to Jan Robson who has taken on the role of Reunion Secretary as well as Hon. Secretary. New members to the committee are very welcome. I also wish to thank the members for their ongoing support of the Association and a special thank you to those who have been able to attend the 2015 reunion.

Oral History Project

During 1991–1993 the St George Hospital Graduate Nurses' Association embarked on a Oral History Project under the supervision of Margaret Walton (Pierson). In 2011 the original audio cassette tapes were converted to audio CDs.

You can borrow the audio CDs or you can request login details to listen to the interviews on the Association's website.

To borrow the CDs or access the audio on the website, contact Joan Wagstaff OAM, President on 02 9771 2508 or email: joanlwagstaff@gmail.com

There is a \$15.00 refundable deposit when borrowing CDs.

Participants in the project were all volunteers, and include the following:

- Lois Webb (1960)
- Judith Cornell (Roberts 1961)
- Eileen Wilkinson (Nugent 1931)
- Laura Epstein (West 1940)
- Elaine McGuire (1942)
- Pat Young (Trahair 1944)
- Mercia Dellow (1951)
- Pam Mattocks (Reynolds 1953)

Gold Medal recipients

It is noted that in the preface of "Without Nurses a Hospital is just Bricks and Mortar" Judith Cornell wrote "that there was a regrettable lack of available primary material".

Consequently some names listed for the Gold Medal award were omitted. The Gold Medalist for 1957–58 was Margaret Barker.

Unknown recipients are now for the years 1945–48, 1952–1955, 1971, 1981 and 1986. Please let us know if you can identify any of the missing recipients.

Jan Robson, Hon. Secretary

Reunion 2014

Jan Robson, Reunion Secretary and Hon. Secretary

Another successful reunion was held although tinged with sadness because Judith was not with us. It was decided by the Committee to change the venue for 2015. Gardens on Forest at Pankhurst was the chosen venue.

One hundred and eighty invitations were sent with 146 replies. Again, to contain costs, the mailing list was updated and will be reviewed again next year. Just a reminder that if we do not hear from you for three years your name will be removed from the mailing list. Congratulations to those celebrating 50 years since graduation.



Celebrating 50 years since graduation

Congratulations to the Graduates of 1965

The photo on the left was taken at the Graduation Ball held at the Hilton Hotel, Sydney in October 1965.

Back Row (L-R):

Julie Hillier, Helen Thurgood, Kay Morgan, Jan Willard (deceased) and Jan Overall.

Front Row (L-R):

Jenny Rumsey (deceased), Nola Holmes, Carol Steel and Nan Curry.



St George Hospital's 120th birthday

Margaret Binder, Joan Wagstaff and Kay Eccleston (left) have fond memories of their time at St George Hospital and attended the 120th Birthday celebrations representing the St George Hospital Graduate Nurses' Association.

The celebrations began with a historical photographic display in the Gray Street foyer, a staff barbecue, birthday cake, and doctors and nurses dressed in traditional uniforms.

Source: St George & Sutherland Shire Leader: www.theleader.com.au/story/2691867/st-george-hospitals-120th-birthday-stirs-memories

Apologies, news and greetings

Margaret Binder (Nable 1967)

Despite repeated invitations my group have not attended the Association's Annual Reunions but members of my group are having our own reunions. They have been a joyous time of catching up with friends and their spouses and I feel very blessed with their continuing friendship.

Anne Lightfoot (Glover 1965)

Dear fellow Graduates. I wish you all a wonderful afternoon together catching up and give my best wishes to those unable to attend. It is 50 years since January 1961 when the October 1961 PTS graduated.

Mary Telford (Billing 1954)

(Writes from the USA)
I will not be attending the 69th Reunion. I wish a happy day of memories for all our graduates and to my special friends, the 1954 Graduates.

Joy Kirkby (Mitchell)

Looking forward to seeing you all at the reunion. This year we celebrate our 50th Wedding anniversary. Also this year we celebrate 45 years in Narromine. Robert is still practising two days a week. It is very hard for him to give up the love of practising medicine in a rural area.

Beryl Judd (Mackenzie)

Greetings to all. I am not able to attend this years reunion. Best wishes for a good time together over lunch ... catching up with friends ... exchanging news and achievements.

In May this year many of our PTS group (Graduation 1967) were able to have an enjoyable get together at Sawtell.

Life in Mullumbimby and Byron Shire is still good. No shortage of things to do or festivals to attend.

The community "Food Corridor" that we are involved with (over our back fence) is going well. We are involved with the Byron Hinterland Seed Savers and this keeps us busy and life interesting.

Gwen Stokeld (1961)

Gwen sends her best wishes to the Graduates for an enjoyable time sharing together and fond memories.

Noeline Wilkinson (Toohey)

Greetings to all. I visited Bev Duffel (Perth) and she sends her best wishes for a happy reunion. Off to Venice and staying in Rome for a few extra days. Arrive home 17 October.

Betty Hadfield

Thank you to all the committee members for all your work. It is much appreciated. Betty would like to report that Mrs Beryl Watson (Schubert) who graduated 1952 is now a resident at the Hammondville Nursing Home Miranda.

Her daughter Dianne's mobile is 0419 208 549 if anyone would like further news.

Joan Staples (1958)

I am sorry to miss the reunion this year. My sister has planned for us to take a nine day cruise from 24 October and I will miss meeting with my graduate friends. I send my best wishes to all St George Graduates and I am sure you will have a wonderful day.

Sylvia Bennett

(Writes from Winchester, England)
The nurses "grapevine" is working well so I know about the reunion. We are two-thirds through our sojourn here. We managed trips north to Terry's family, a week in Chester and day trips to Liverpool and Llandudno. We also had a few days on Isle of Wight. We return on 6 October.

Bev Stockeld

Bev sends her best wishes to the graduates with fond memories.

Anne Glover

Anne sends her best wishes and love to all those unable to attend.

Elizabeth Williams (Salway 1955)

Greetings and wishing everyone an enjoyable get together.

Maureen Neems (Flemming 1973)

Greetings and best wishes for an enjoyable reunion. I moved to Brisbane 20 months ago and I am enjoying retirement. My email is mneems@aim.com.

Mary Evans

I have recently moved to Queensland and am unable to attend. I have enjoyed my association with St George and catching up with all my old friends. Wishing you all a happy reunion and best wishes to the Committee, you all do a great job.

Eileen Gregin (Dunn 1954)

Some members may be interested to know that Norma Anderson (Bryant 1954) is now a resident in the Banks Lodge Aged Care Facility after having been cared for by her husband Wal for a number of years. Best wishes for a successful reunion.

Looking back



Opening of the TB Ward in 1955.



Nursing education in the 1970s.



Members of the first Preliminary Training Class 1954, Miss Harper (Matron) Sister Poole (Tutor) in centre.

Looking forward



Artist's impression of the seven-storey acute services building.

St George Hospital Update

News from Penny Glezellis,
Community Liaison Officer, St George Hospital

The main news is the redevelopment of St George Hospital. In February 2015 The NSW Government announced \$307 million for the redevelopment of St George Hospital which includes a new seven storey Acute Services Building, to be built above the new emergency department on Gray Street.

The redevelopment will complement and build upon the hospital's excellence in patient care, education, research and innovation. This redevelopment will also support the needs of the community now and into the future.

The new building will include:

- Intensive care
- High dependency
- Cardiac intensive care
- Additional operating theatres
- Additional acute inpatient beds
- A new helipad

Construction on the new Acute Services Building is expected to commence in early 2016.

Visit the St George Hospital Redevelopment website at: www.stgeorgehospitalredev.health.nsw.gov.au

Vale

Margaret (Peggy) Simpson

1925 – 2015

Christine Audit (Fuss) a staff member at St George informs us that one of our oldest nursing staff Peggy Simpson passed away on 8 September 2015 aged 90 years. She was a nursing sister in the Children's Ward and it was Christine's greatest joy to call her a friend. A caring and compassionate nurse with the greatest sense of humour.

Coralie Mignon Buckland (Edwards)

21 September 1932 – 9 June 2015

A tribute from Bush Church Aid magazine: "Coralie, wife of Bishop Bernard Buckland went to be with Jesus 9th June 2015. "She had a calm preparedness for death and was ready to go home. "She was a humble, capable, hardworking and talented lady who was always ready to deflect glory from herself to Jesus."

Hazel Scutts (Rutledge 1957)

Passed away on 22 October 2014.

Anthony Michael Cornell (Tony)

13 November 1937 – 21 July 2015

It is with much regret we note the passing of Tony Cornell, beloved husband of Judith Cornell. Tony was with us at the last reunion to launch Judith's book. Tony did much to assist Judith in her work as Reunion Secretary and he was a friend to many of us. He will be sorely missed.

Historical feature

Sister Janet Kerr

Unit:	113 Australian General Hospital
Service:	Australian Army
Rank:	Sister
Death Date:	16 February 1942
Death Place:	Banka Island, Indonesia
Conflict:	Second World War, 1939-1945
Cause of Death:	Massacred

Sister Janet Kerr was one of sixty five Australian nurses and over 250 civilian men, women and children evacuated on the Vyner Brooke from Singapore, three days before the fall of Malaya. The Vyner Brooke was bombed by Japanese aircraft and sunk in Banka Strait on 14 February 1942.

Of the sixty five nurses on board twelve were lost at sea and thirty two survived the sinking and were captured as Prisoners of War (POWs) of which eight later died during captivity. Sister Kerr aged 31, was one of the remaining twenty two nurses who also survived the sinking and were washed ashore on Radji Beach, Banka Island, where they surrendered to the Japanese, along with twenty five British soldiers.

On 16 February 1942 the group was massacred, the soldiers were bayoneted and the nurses were ordered to march into the sea where they were shot. Only Sister Vivian Bullwinkel and a British soldier survived the massacre. Both were taken POW, but only Sister Bullwinkel survived the war.

Sister Kerr was the daughter of Ida Maud Kerr or Woodstock, NSW.

Acknowledgement

Selected text republished from: Ritchie, L. The Healing Saint: A hundred year history of The St George Hospital 1892–1994. St George Hospital & Community Health Services, 1998.



Group portrait of the nursing staff of 2/13th Australian General hospital, Singapore, September 1941. Sister Janet Kerr is in the back row.