



The St George
Graduate Nurses Association

**Annual Reunion Luncheon
and
Celebration of the History of Nurse Education**

1892 – 2008

St George Leagues Club
18 October 2008

A Brief History

St George Hospital began operation in November 1894. From its humble beginnings as a "cottage hospital" more than 100 years ago, the Hospital progressed well beyond its original function of providing a basic level of care for the ill and injured within its community. By 1934, St George had become the equal of any district hospital in metropolitan Sydney.



In 1964, St George became a teaching hospital with specialised departments. In the late 1980s, following a NSW Government grant for more than \$200 million, St George began its transformation into a world class tertiary teaching hospital.

Welcome

On behalf of the committee of the Graduate Nurses' Association I welcome you all today and in particular I welcome those attending for the first time and I thank you all for your efforts in contacting so many 'grads' who had been missing from our mailing list. The association is only as strong as its members and whilst many of us keep in touch with those in our own group it is always so good to catch up with others of the same era.

This special celebration of nurse education at St George is being held this year because 2009 marks the commencement of the 4 year training program at the then St George Cottage Hospital. Training Hospital status had been conferred in 1905, however it was not until 1909 that the 4 year program was able to commence.

The history of the hospital has been well documented in *The Healing Saint: 1892–1992* written by the late Lindsay Ritchie and much of the material included has been sourced from this official 100 Year History.

I would commend the historical collection housed in the hospital library as a further source of nursing history, containing as it does many photographs, records, annual reports, procedure manuals and teaching material which further records the work of nurses and nursing at St George.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible and I encourage you to consider volunteering to serve on the committee.

Sheila Carter (nee Thompson 1953)

Timeline

1892	Public Meeting called for fundraising and fundraising began
1894	Foundation stone laid, and the first Matron, Miss McLean appointed 4th November and 2 days later the first nurse probationer was appointed
1894	November 16th the official opening took place with all beds occupied.
1895	Records show Matron and 2 probationers “performed their duties appertaining to their positions in a satisfactory manner “Their duties included milking the cow, churning the butter and sorting the donated eggs. (p9)
1895	The annual report records the name of the hospital as The St George Cottage Hospital
1897	Matron McLeod resigned and returned to Glasgow and Miss Marsden appointed
1900	Australasian Trained Nurses Association was formed to control nurse training, however registration was not mandatory
1902	Miss Marsden resigned and replaced by Miss Elsie U Cameron who was destined to revolutionise nursing at The St George. Until this time the training system consisted of 2 years probationary course after which the trainee could enrol at a recognised hospital where they received a 1 year remission on the five year course. She successfully argued for a change

1905	Training hospital status was conferred, becoming the 7th hospital in metropolitan Sydney
1909	The hospital was able to offer a 4 year nurse training course having achieved an ADA of 21.8 patients
1912	A home visiting program was offered after Nurse Morris was appointed and the hospital developed a policy of “promoting St George trained nurses and giving priority to local girls wishing to become nurses.” (p28)
1915	Many St George nurses responded to the call for volunteers WW1 leaving the hospital very short staffed
1918	Name change to St George District Hospital
1919	The pneumonic Influenza epidemic killed many nurses, again exacerbating the shortages
1921	Matron Cameron retired and was replaced by Alice Pritchard RRC who had served in France
1924	Mandatory nurse registration was introduced and controlled by the NSW NRB
1925	Appointment of the 1st Deputy Matron, Sister M.B. Hughes
1934	Nurses salary levels were as follows: 1st year £18/10d fortnight, 2nd Year £21/1½d, 3rd year £23/6d, 4th year £28/1d and Matron £6/14/7½d (p54)
1939	WW2 declared and Sister Janet Kerr enlisted and was killed on Banka Island

1947	Name change yet again to The St George Hospital
1950	Matron Pritchard retired and was awarded an MBE in 1951, she was replaced by Deputy Matron M.B. “Biddy” Hughes
1952	Matron Hughes resigned due to ill health and Matron Edna Harper was appointed.
1960	Hospital motto adopted
1963	Teaching hospital status was conferred and the first medical students were accepted from the University of Sydney although in 1967 the affiliation changed to the University of New South Wales
1964	Matron Alice Pritchard died
1969	Interim general nursing syllabus was introduced and training period reduced to 3 years
1970	Matron Harper retired and Matron Elaine McGuire was appointed
1974	Matron McGuire retired and Miss Norma Shore was appointed Director of Nursing
1977	NSW NRB 1000 hour syllabus introduced
1984	Rosemary Snodgrass appointed DON
1985	Transfer of Nurse Education
1987	Area Health Board established and the final graduation of enrolled and midwifery nurses
1990	Resignation of Rosemary Snodgrass, the last Director of nursing. All incumbents since that time have had various and assorted titles.

Autographs



The Logo

The St George Hospital and Community Health Service logo includes the words: “Tu souffres cela suffit”. These are the words of Louis Pasteur, the great French scientist and humanitarian, who laboured for neither reward nor honour, but for the sole satisfaction of helping humanity. In troubled times in France, when his work was being publicly criticised, he stated: “One does not ask a sick person from what country or of what religion are you. You are sick, that is enough. Put yourself in my care and I will treat you.” Thus came the motto of St George Hospital and Community Health Service: “Tu souffres – cela suffit”, which translates to “You are suffering – that is enough”.