

RCH Alumni

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Aluminations

FROM THE RCH ALUMNI

November 2024



Photo: Spirit Island in Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada. (Gigi Williams)



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Cover: Spirit Island in Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada. (Gigi Williams)

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The 2024 RCH Alumni Executive

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From the President

Garry Warne

With an Annual General Meeting approaching, this is a time for us to be thinking about what kind of organisation we want the RCH Alumni to be. Our constitution was last revised in 2016, when some changes were made to reflect our more diverse and inclusive membership. Your Committee now thinks it is time to revise the constitution again, to bring it right up to date. You will have read in material that was sent out to everyone with the draft constitution that the number of non-medical members has now increased to 20%. This is a good thing. In our working lives, we were in multi-disciplinary teams and we all made friends outside our own disciplines. It stands to reason that in the Alumni, we should continue to socialise with the same mix of people. We all benefit from the diverse talents and interests that each member brings.

Since Covid, our direct links with the hospital have become more tenuous and while we are all proud of having worked at RCH and interested in what is going on for current hospital staff, we no longer influence hospital affairs. We benefit from our relationship with the hospital through being part of the RCH website and through access to hospital staff and facilities when we need them. What we provide in return is loyalty, mentoring, and reminders that there is a historical dimension to all current practice.

During this year, we have tried to provide some outreach to Alumni members who are shut in for whatever reason. By visiting, sending cards and making phone calls our aim is to let members who are unable to meet former colleagues in person know that we care about them and would like to know how we can best support them. The concept is summed up as "Are you OK?".

Numbers attending our lunchtime face-to-face meetings have been slow to recover since Covid and we would very much like to find ways of attracting more members and guests to these meetings, which provide social connections as well as interesting guest speakers. The Committee would be grateful for your suggestions about what we can do better to make these meetings more inviting. We welcome any ideas about how we can stay connected.

This year, I have been ably supported by an excellent Vice-President (Caroline Clarke), Secretary (Christine Rodda), Treasurer (George Werther) and committee (Jim Wilkinson, Bronwyn Hewitt, Ruth Wraith, Jill Sewell, Gigi Williams and Kevin Collins) and I sincerely thank them all.

I look to seeing as many of you as possible at our AGM and Gala Lunch on November 14th. Registrations close on October 31st.



On our last day of paid employment, we all left behind the relationships and pressures that may have been irritants when we were part of a hierarchical structure. Kindness towards our old friends and former colleagues is what makes being a member of the Alumni such a joy. Being kind to one another means that we respect and appreciate the talents that each member brings. We come to events organised by the Alumni to enjoy fellowship, be informed, entertained, and contribute to activities.

We have a new Executive, and we will do our very best to meet the needs and interests of our members in the coming year. We welcome ideas and requests for activities, guest speakers and social events. Please send them to Christine Rodda (rch.alumni@rch.org.au). Perhaps you would like two Gala lunches or dinners each year? Would you be interested in excursions?

At the AGM, Frank Oberklaid astutely observed that all four office-bearers are endocrinologists. He suggested that the collective noun might be a 'cartel of endocrinologists' which seems less apt than examples found in Google: a scale of dermatologists, a hum of audiologists, an odour of podiatrists, a slumber of anaesthetists, a lump of general surgeons, a clot of cardiologists, an orbit of ophthalmologists and a joint of orthopaedic surgeons. A 'feedback loop' of endocrinologists, perhaps? I'm confident that someone out there will come up with the right collective noun. We invite your suggestions.

You are reading this in our newsletter, Aluminations. This is the place where you can share your writing talents, artistic prowess, and photographic expertise. We encourage members to also make use of the Alumni website <https://www.rch.org.au/alumni/> and read the personal profiles that have been posted there.

Let's make 2025 the best year ever for the Alumni!

In the meantime, happy holidays and a joyous New Year!

A leader in social medicine

Dr John Newman-Morris (1879-1957) and later Sir John Newman-Morris (1948)



Jane Miller

The entry on Sir John Newman-Morris in the Australian Dictionary of Biography describes him as a 'medical practitioner and humanitarian'. Despite four paragraphs enumerating his committee memberships and achievement this is a very dry account in which his role as a doctor concerned about the broader social context is rather

lost. Some of achievements that stand out to me are: as an influential member of the Australian Red Cross Society he played a key role in trying to ensure that Japanese Prisoners of War actually received their Red Cross parcels; he is also particularly remembered for establishing a national blood transfusion service for Australia while he was Chairman (1938-44). However, in this "Aluminations" article I want to focus on Newman-Morris's leadership in establishing medical social work (then called 'almoner' training) in Victoria. He committed himself to this endeavour for over 20 years despite a very demanding career.

Australian social work education started more than 30 years later than in many other parts of the world including Britain, Europe, Asia and the USA. Formal social work education began in Melbourne in 1930 following the appointment at the Melbourne (not yet Royal) Hospital of an English Almoner, Miss Agnes Macintyre from St Thomas' Hospital London (inset, right).

It was not until three years later that the general social work training which evolved into to-day's University of Melbourne social work course commenced with the appointment of Jocelyn Hyslop, an outstanding graduate of the London School of Economics



and Politics (LSE). (In 1948 these 2 courses were amalgamated.)

While it was not he who initiated the Almoner course Dr John Newman-Morris chaired its management committee for 19 of its 21 years. He quickly informed himself about this young profession by visiting the USA, where he met with the founder of American medical social work at Massachusetts General Hospital, Dr Richard Cabot. He went to New York where he sat in on a Saturday tutorial at the New York School of Philanthropy (now Columbia University School of Social Work) and saw Antoinette Cannon discussing the casework her students were carrying out in New York agencies. On his return he circulated a paper on what he had learnt. He was the only Australian to attend the international conference of social work in Hamburg in 1932.

He had a vision for social work in Australia after the war. In 1944 the Australian Red Cross Society (ARCS) sent three young Melbourne social workers (Margaret Grutzner, Mernie Yeomans and Helen Clarke) (2 pics) to the LSE to study psychiatric social work to enable them to play an active role in supporting returning service men and women, particularly the POWs.

We now know a great deal about the torture these people endured, yet at the time many felt a sense of shame that they had been captured. These young women then worked for ARCS and supervised and trained other Australian social workers nationally.

The supply of this mainly female profession could not keep up with demand. The situation was exacerbated by regular attrition to overseas travel and marriage. There was virtually no organized child care and there was strong social pressure on women to cease work following marriage. The ARCS stepped up once more and undertook an aggressive recruitment campaign in Britain and the USA. In all they were able to attract ten social workers from the UK and just two from the USA by 1946.

In addition to his role with almoner training Newman-Morris was a member of the Board of Social Studies which oversaw the general social work training. On more than one occasion the minutes note that he provided a personal guarantee for \$200 for the struggling course.

When the Victorian Institute of Hospital Almoners closed in 1950 it had been responsible for the training of 100 almoners.

The Children's Hospital appointed one of the first three graduates of the Almoner training, Miss Isobel Hodge who founded the hospital's social work department (pictured below).

This brief article outlines just one aspect of the visionary contribution of Newman-Morris who is one of my heroes and certainly deserves a full biography.

Other Reading

1. Verso, M.L. Newman-Morris, Sir John (1879-1957) Australian Dictionary of Biography <https://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/biography/newmanmorris-sir-john-7832>
2. O'Brien, Laurie and Turner, Cynthia Establishing Medical Social Work in Victoria University of Melbourne, Parkville, 1979
3. Miller, Jane, For Social Betterment, Social Work Education in Australia, Monash University Publishing, Clayton, Victoria 2024

Jane Miller is a former Head of Social Work at RCH. Since retirement she has completed a PhD at the University of Melbourne.



Top left: The Children's Hospital's first medical social worker, Isobel Hodge pictured home visiting in her car. She regularly visited families in the late afternoon and early evening to monitor the progress of discharged patients.

Top right: Young Red Cross social workers on leave, Jo Demaine, Mernie Yeomans (trained at the LSE 1944), Margaret Grutzner (trained at the LSE 1944) and Jessie Scovel.

Bottom left: Chairman of the Australian Red Cross, Sir John Newman Morris (centre), was met at the aerodrome by

service heads and Red Cross authorities. Iwakuni, Japan. 1951.

Bottom centre: Mernie Yeomans, one of three Victorians sent to Britain in 1944 to study psychiatric social work at the London School of Economics and Politics. On return she worked as a psychiatric social worker in the Red Cross convalescent home in Kew

Bottom right: Red Cross social worker Betty Dow with an 8 year old Chinese refugee from Batavia, Lae 1944 (Australian War Memorial)

Who do we think we are?

Jim Wilkinson

The pursuit of family history is a hobby that quite frequently becomes an interest in later adult life and in retirement.

The internet provides numerous options for searching for ancestors allowing one to access family trees and records of births, marriages and deaths over many generations. For many people it is relatively easy to find the details of grandparents, their parents and grandparents, spouses and their families, etc.

The saying about "Six degrees of separation" which suggests that a chain of "friend of a friend" statements can be made to connect any two people in a maximum of six steps is not about family relationships / links, but certainly applies to them too.

Thus, one's search of family links will produce many inter-connections with notable people including political figures, royalty, film stars, scientists, etc. The extent to which such connections to any family can be discovered depends entirely on the extent of the search through sundry sources of records.

My interest in exploring family stories and connections led, when I was in my fifties, to my contacting several distant cousins scattered around the world. Most were of a similar vintage to me which suggested that such genealogical fervour was a feature of advanced middle age or later. Their knowledge of family added much to mine.

Details of our family history / ancestry are scanty before modern times (the last two hundred years). This relates to the fact that registration of births / marriages and deaths only started around the middle of the nineteenth century (in England and Wales records became compulsory in 1837).

Prior to that time churches kept records of christenings, marriages and funerals. These were maintained systematically from the mid sixteenth century. Parish records became mandatory in England and Wales in 1538 when an injunction was issued requiring every church to keep a book or register to record the date and details of each wedding, baptism and burial.

They were vulnerable to damage and loss due to fire, floods, etc. Prior to that time few families kept records of their ancestors – those who did being largely limited to the nobility or those linked to the royal family (even these were not always accurate!).

The censuses which record the occupants of houses in England, Wales and Scotland each decade from 1841 are useful funds of information. Records of wills and legal proceedings (the "Old Bailey" records) contain several entries that involved our forebears in one way or another. Bankruptcy records may also help in some (less fortunate) cases. There are many other sources if the researcher has time to find them.

Our own families (mine and my wife's) have recorded histories going back over several generations – to the sixteenth century in several cases. An interesting data source that has only recently come to notice is the Heraldic Visitation Documents from the 16th – 18th centuries. During the reign of King Henry VIII there started a series of Visitations by Heralds to various parts of the Kingdom. They were attempting to explore the claims to "Arms" of individuals and families and to fine those who made false claims, whilst recognising families who had a legitimate claim. Part of the process was to document pedigrees of families who had a recognised claim to Arms. These are amongst the earliest records of family pedigrees, and most were constructed by people living at the time of the Visitations.

It had not occurred to me that the familiar family crest that had apparently come down through several generations of Wilkinsons might provide a link to ancestors from the distant past. Late in 2012 I was contacted by a lady in England who was researching the family tree of a cousin. She asked for additional information about the sources of some data and about the crest. Once I had supplied the available information, as requested, she rapidly responded providing a reference to the Heralds Visitation to Yorkshire in 1584/5. This documented the fact that a new crest was given to William Wilkinson of Bolton upon Dearne in 1564. The description of the crest matched that which we had inherited and thus opened a new line for research on generations of family in the sixteenth century.

The family evidently had 'Arms' which appeared to have been given at an earlier, unspecified date. The Arms were sufficiently well described, albeit without any illustration, that it was possible to construct an image of the shield.



Arms



Crest

An internet search for Arms carrying the same description as those carried by William Wilkinson and his family came up with several families – albeit there were minor variations in the details of the Arms. Most of the families also had a Crest which also resembled our own Crest. Reassuringly all these families were Wilkinsons and most lived in west Yorkshire, or adjacent parts of south Yorkshire, in an area close to Leeds where our earliest known Wilkinson ancestor (Joseph Wilkinson) had apparently lived.



Arms of Wilkinsons
of Hilcote Hall
Derbyshire



Arms of Wilkinsons
of Pontefract
Yorkshire



Arms of Wilkinsons
of Bolton upon Dearne
Yorkshire, 1564

The various pedigrees provided several generations of these various Wilkinson families – though they did not obviously link together. The dates of the individuals mentioned ranged from the mid fifteenth century through to the late eighteenth century, with at least five different families during that period. The earliest individual – the grandfather of William Wilkinson, was Roger Wilkinson (or Wylkynson), c1455 – 1526, of Barnsley, in south Yorkshire.

A John Wilkinson, who was a draper in London, had been an Alderman and Sheriff in the early sixteenth century and carried very similar Arms. Details about his cousin Thomas Wilkinson recorded that he came from Elland in Yorkshire – providing another probable link to the same area. The various family trees recorded in “The Heraldic Visitations” do not connect to allow a credible family tree going back this far, but certainly suggest that the families were probably linked?

1837 was a notable year in several respects. Queen Victoria succeeded her uncle (William IV) on the throne in Britain. The settlement on the banks of the Yarra River in “The Port Phillip District of New South Wales”, which had previously had the unlikely name of “Bearbrass” (supposedly based on an aboriginal name such as “Bararing”) was officially named “Melbourne” by Governor Bourke. The layout of that town was being planned by surveyor Robert Hoddle.

Registration of births, marriages and deaths became compulsory in England and Wales and amongst the births that happened during 1837 was George Ayscough Wilkinson (Uncle George), born at Stoke Newington on the northern outskirts of London – fifth child but first son of William Ayscough Wilkinson (house broker and

auctioneer) and his wife Emma (nee Meacock, who was also his first cousin). At least seven more children were to follow over the next 15 years – the last being my grandfather Harry Collard Wilkinson, born in December 1851.

Family records included a large and well-preserved family tree of the Wilkinsons which had been prepared in 1879 and was signed off with “Jan 1st, 1879. JW Fecit”. On the back was the handwritten name of my grandfather, with the annotation “4 generations of Wilkinsons”.

My knowledge of the family and its origins was very sketchy, though the tree allowed some detail to be recorded. The more recent generations of our immediate family were easier to fill in and other material emerged through contact with some cousins, one of whom – Dorothy Wilkinson, to us ‘Aunt Dorothy’ (a second cousin of my father, who turned out to be the daughter of the elusive “JW” (Josiah Wilkinson – a London Solicitor, who my father knew as “cousin Dossie”), who drew the original tree. To him (Josiah Wilkinson) much credit is due for his efforts and foresight in compiling the family tree and making multiple copies thereof which were passed to many members of the family. Several of these copies are still in existence more than a century later. My father had written an account of his memories of various members of the family (including cousin Dossie) and this contributed to much of what I gleaned about the family.

The tree had been added to in pen and pencil on many occasions and various extra individuals and dates were there, including at least one earlier generation and sundry additions to the lower generations. Most of the names were unfamiliar to me, though here and there were individuals to whom I could relate through stories passed down, mainly by word of mouth, through the family. What the earlier generations had done and where they had lived, I knew not – though small snippets of detail from handwritten notes elsewhere helped me to piece together a few details.

One cousin, a grandson of Uncle George, was a British Spy and a member of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), who served in Greece during World War 2. I enjoyed telling my grandchildren that he (George Curwen Wilkinson) was the original for the character of “James Bond” (not true!!).

My mother’s family were documented incompletely with a family bible that included a limited “family register” of a small number of her mother’s ancestors, who had, in earlier times, been tin and copper miners in Cornwall. Both her grandfathers had been non-conformist ministers, and her maternal grandfather had spent many years as a missionary in Africa working for The London Missionary Society. A biography of him was entitled “Little Giant of Bechuanaland” and documented his major contributions in preventing Cecil Rhodes from absorbing the “Bechuanaland Protectorate” into South Africa. He

later worked as School Principal of a newly created school for Bantu children, called Tiger Kloof, which educated the children of many Bechuana Elite families including the first and second presidents of independent Botswana when it was established. The first cabinet of that nation, under its founding president Sir Seretse Khama, was made up almost entirely of former students of the school.

Her father's ancestry was even less extensive being limited to her father and his three brothers and their parents, who had been born and grew up in coal mining villages in the northeast of England. An extensive search of records of births, deaths and baptisms and of family trees through many websites allowed the construction of substantial trees over many generations going back to the sixteenth century.

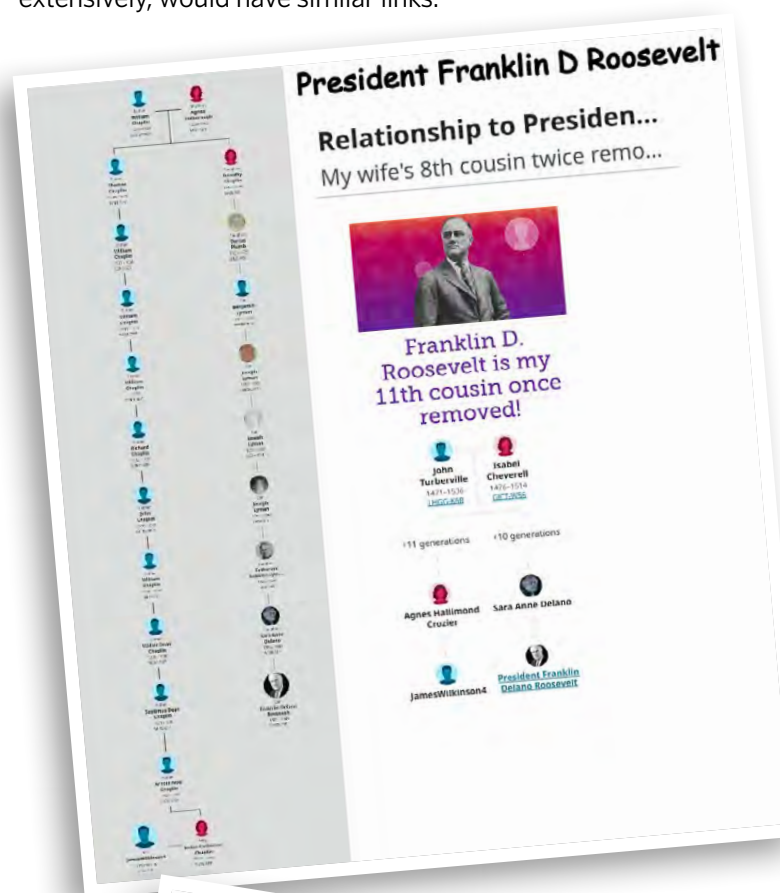
My wife's family, on her father's (Chaplin) side, was well documented and had been put together by a cousin of her father from records of "Suffolk Manorial Families" going back to the early sixteenth century. Her mother's family were largely of Irish origin but included many members of the Stanley family who had migrated to Australia in the 1840s and 50s during the potato famine era. Her great grandfather Patrick Stanley, who had come from Trim in County Meath arriving in Sydney in 1849, becoming Mayor of Redfern for four terms in the 1870s and 80s. Another politician in New South Wales was a 2g Uncle, John Thomas Playfair (known as Thomas) who was Mayor of Sydney in 1885.

A distant ancestor, on her father's side, was Thomas Chaplin (9th great grandfather) who was the member of parliament, in the English Parliament, for Bury St Edmonds in the period that followed the English Civil War. Thomas's daughter, Martha Chaplin (9th great aunt to Helen), had married her first cousin Sir Robert Parke (Baronet) with whom she and several of their children emigrated on the ship Arabella to Massachusetts in 1630. Their descendants in America included film stars Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn and pioneer aviators Wilbur and Orville Wright along with many other notables including a Vice President (Nelson Rockefeller) and two "first ladies". Another descendant, but not in America, was Lady Diana Spencer (Princess Diana).

An internet site – "Familysearch.com" came good with several family trees which found more "famous cousins". In the case of President FD Roosevelt there was a link with both my wife's and my family!

Other relationships included Elvis Presley (11th cousin three times removed), Jaquie Kennedy-Onassis (13 cousin once removed), Winston Churchill (14th cousin) and her majesty Queen Elizabeth II (14th cousin). Perhaps more surprising was the suggested relationship with Cassius Marcellus Clay (AKA Muhammad Ali) who was also a 14th cousin (he evidently had some white ancestors!).

All these supposed relationships tend to bear out the "6 degrees of separation" theory and one must assume that most families, if they are able to trace their family trees extensively, would have similar links.



A new direction

Bronwyn Parry-Fielder

I'm new to the world of art, having worked as a speech pathologist and Speech Pathology Department manager throughout my professional life, mostly at Royal Children's Hospital. In addition to my enjoyment of paediatric speech pathology and the work of the RCH Speech Pathology Department, I have always had a fascination with colour, shape and patterns which was previously expressed in a love of architecture, interior and garden design.

In 2020, my life changed with the arrival of the pandemic, when my husband, Kevin Collins, and I retreated from our suburban apartment to our family beach house in the small South Gippsland community of Sandy Point. I was initially involved in rescuing the beach house and garden from years of neglect and investigating what activities (other than surfing and fishing) were available in the local community.



Serendipitously, I saw an advertisement for lessons in watercolour painting, which led to me beginning to learn watercolour painting in October 2022, with no previous experience in the study of art theory or techniques.



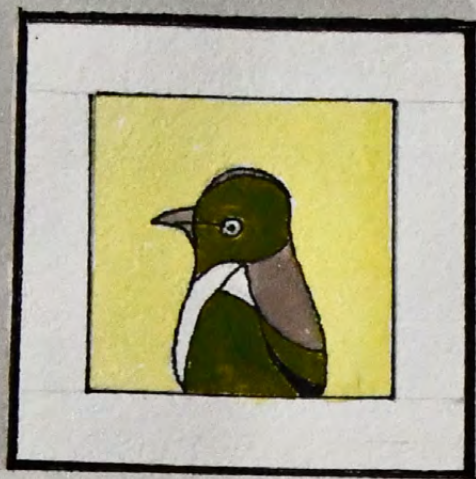
I now study with award winning watercolour artists Florence Crighton and Mary Shaw, in South Gippsland. I am inspired by artists such as Margaret Preston and Cressida Campbell.

I now use watercolour to experiment with ideas to do with everyday life in the domestic space of my real or imagined home. I hope that in the future, as my skills develop, I may be able to move towards more abstract art.

Bronwyn Parry-Fielder is a former Head of Speech Pathology at RCH, a position she held for 22 years.







My walnut harvesting hobby

Jill Sewell

In April each year, on the banks of the Wonnangatta River in the high country in Gippsland, the walnuts start dropping. The walnut trees are planted in straight rows on the river flats, the canopy shading the ground, branches weighed down with nuts fast ripening.

Birds and possums compete for the spoils, sulphur-crested cockatoos shrieking their dominance. Walnuts drop as the green husks split, allowing the nut to fall. They are gathered using a rolling picker on a stick (aka ratcatcher - pictured right), which is emptied into a bucket and again into rows of baskets.

We pick in groups of 4-5, progressing in parallel from tree to tree, although I often find myself gleaning behind the group, walking back and forth to make sure nothing is missed. We roll our feet over odd-looking nuts, feeling for the hardness of a solid nut, flicking away husks which are clinging on, and squashing damaged nuts underfoot. Over several weeks each river flat is picked 4-5 times, as nuts drop naturally - workers travel many kilometres. One of my jobs is mowing along and round the line of trees after each traverse, with the blades close to the ground to clean up for the next one. 'Red Bob' is a modern ride-on mower with exceptional turning flexibility, and I've become a dab hand at circling around the trunk of each tree as well as whizzing between trees.



Along comes the truck and trailer so baskets can be stacked and driven to the washing area. The walnuts are washed in a ceramic bathtub mounted on a waist high wooden framework (pictured above). The bath is filled with cold water, the gloves go on, three or four us thrash and wash the nuts, discarding dried out (they float),



cracked (they sink) or fungus infested nuts (black spot) (Insert Washing walnuts here). Heavy baskets of wet walnuts are tipped onto the drying racks and spread to dry under the wind and sun (pictured previous page, bottom right). Next the racks are tipped into the trailer, taken to the shed and shovelled on to a rolling belt lifting the nuts into big drying tanks each holding 2.5 tonnes of walnuts. After a few days of drying with heated air, the final selection process occurs.

The nuts are dragged/ shovelled from a small opening at the base of the tank into baskets, each tipped onto a holding tray, with preferably two pairs of hands rolling the nuts over and over and two pairs of eyes carefully looking for cracked, speckled, damaged or fungal nuts. Hands fly about, tipping damaged nuts into a discard basket, speckled or muddy nuts into the basket for the elephants at the zoo, and shoving the clean walnuts into the grading machine. This rolling metal cylinder sorts the nuts into four sizes from giant to small, dropping them into bags filling to 10+ kg. These bags are loaded onto pallets for eventual transport to the distribution centre two hours distant. Repeat and repeat again until the nuts are done or the workers are done.

This harvesting is hard, relentless work, done under all varieties of weather conditions by groups of family and friends who typically come and go at weekly intervals. We are well looked after with comfortable beds, delicious meals, impressively large G&Ts or beers at 5 pm knock off time followed by wine of choice with dinner, a roaring fire and much friendly banter. We are all aware of the gathering years.

With over 20 years of harvesting under my belt, after my retirement we stayed on this year after others left, to help our friends with packing up the harvest equipment. The picking racks to clean and stack. The buckets and baskets to clean, mend (duct tape) and store. Twelve drying racks to dismantle and store. The bathtub and



frame to haul and store at the shed. The drying tanks, 2 metres tall and 1 metre in diameter to clean and sweep inside (up a ladder and down in on another ladder), and the underspace to be swept out by crawling inside a small door. The tanks to be covered with tarpaulins and tied down. The grading cylinder to be cleaned and swept and covered with tarps. The shed to be tidied, equipment into its proper storage area, rubbish removed, floors swept. The mowers to be rescued from their baked on dry grass and mud and hosed down. The fuel tanks to be filled. The river pump to be set to work to fill the water tank on the hill. The house to be tidied and cleaned (again) after hosting 40 to 50 people over 6 weeks.

Then our trip home, down from the beautiful blue high country, onto the flat dairy country, through small towns stopping at the best coffee shop, each time meeting the interminable suburbs a bit further out from Melbourne, flowing or trying to flow along the freeway into the city.

A good job well done. The big growers may be more efficient, but our small operation (actually a record

9 tonnes this year) produces the best walnuts, according to the distributors and greengrocers.

We'll be back next year.

After 40 odd years as a developmental behavioural paediatrician in the Centre for Community child Health, Jill is approaching retirement as an opportunity to use her brain and body in different ways - hard physical labour as a harvester, writing and drawing, and relishing spending more time with family and friends.

My hobby: woodworking

Nick Thies

Woodworking has been a hobby of mine since my teenage years. I was taught basic skills by my father who made all the furniture in our house, having learned his skills at night school at Caulfield technical College in the 1950s. He taught me how to make joints, mortise and tenon, dovetail joints, and even secret dovetails which are especially more complicated, but where the end result is not obvious on the outside of the furniture. We had only hand tools in those days, in stark contrast to my current workshop which includes a large table saw, bandsaw, router table, thicknesser, and wood lathe. I have made quite a bit of furniture in our house, but also get requests from my kids, having made them all beds, coffee tables, dining tables, bookshelves and baby change tables. My cousin, who runs a business making architrave, sent me a lot of mahogany timber (boards 10 x 5 m long, 450 mm wide and 21 mm thick) which had been cluttering up his workshop, and I used them to make elaborate cupboards for my tools in my workshop. I also managed to give some away to local woodworkers.

I recently built a visually beautiful European style workbench, with mahogany inlay, which is very functional with a U shaped vice down one end and a tail vice at the other, based on a plan from Rob Cosman, a Canadian woodworker.



I had never made a chair up until the last year, and set myself a goal to do so, and found a Sam Malouf style dining chair design from Canadian Woodworks, which required me to delve into power carving which I hadn't done before. Making this chair also involved making



several jigs, as well as making curved straps for the backrests, which are each created out of four thin slats of mahogany pressed into a mould after being glued. As well as being extremely comfortable with lumbar support, there is a sensual feel running your hands over the smooth curves of the arms and where the legs join the seat. Having completed one, and having made all the jigs to make it, I decided to go ahead and make a further set of four chairs without arms. I'm quite pleased and proud of the outcome, and Canadian Woodworks have requested to put the photos of the chairs I sent them on their website (see next page).

Woodworking is a very satisfying hobby, especially when you see your finished piece and there is not the pressure of time as there would be if this was an occupation.

Dr Nick Thies is a regional paediatrician working in Warrnambool



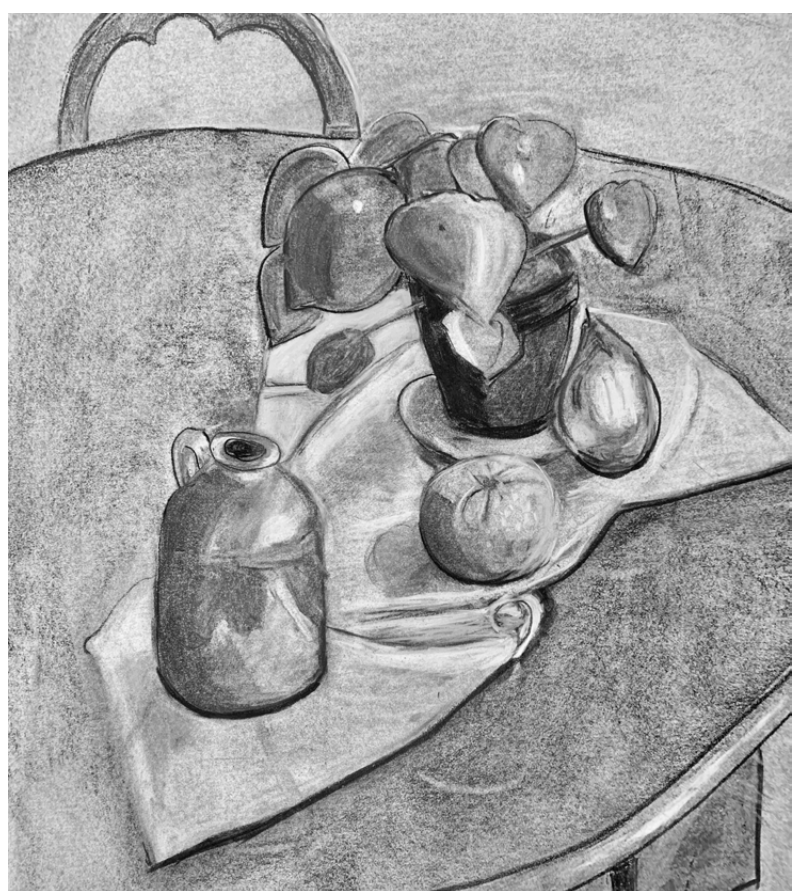


Drawing for pleasure

Garry Warne

In 2022 I started having informal drawing lessons from my partner, Linda Kent, who received her MFA from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. I had never done any drawing before, apart from idle doodling during tedious meetings. Linda is a wonderful teacher and she showed me techniques I had never thought of before, but which opened up exciting ways of seeing things more closely and of depicting light and shade.

I found it absorbing and very enjoyable and was soon doing a drawing a day. Mostly I used grey lead (graphite) pencils, but also experimented with the minimal addition of colour (as in the drawing of quinces) and later with charcoal. I took a 6-week course of fundamental drawing with well-known artist Juan Ford at Linden New Art in St Kilda and am currently enrolled in a twice-monthly class taught by Petre Santry at U3A Hawthorn.







Geomagnetic storms produce Aurora Australis and Borealis

Jim Wilkinson

Flares and coronal ejections shooting off from the Sun's surface struck the earth, causing a severe geomagnetic storm

May 11th/12th brought a storm which led to the appearance in Oxford (and elsewhere in England) of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) and in parts of Australia of the Aurora Australis (seen on May 12th in Hobart).

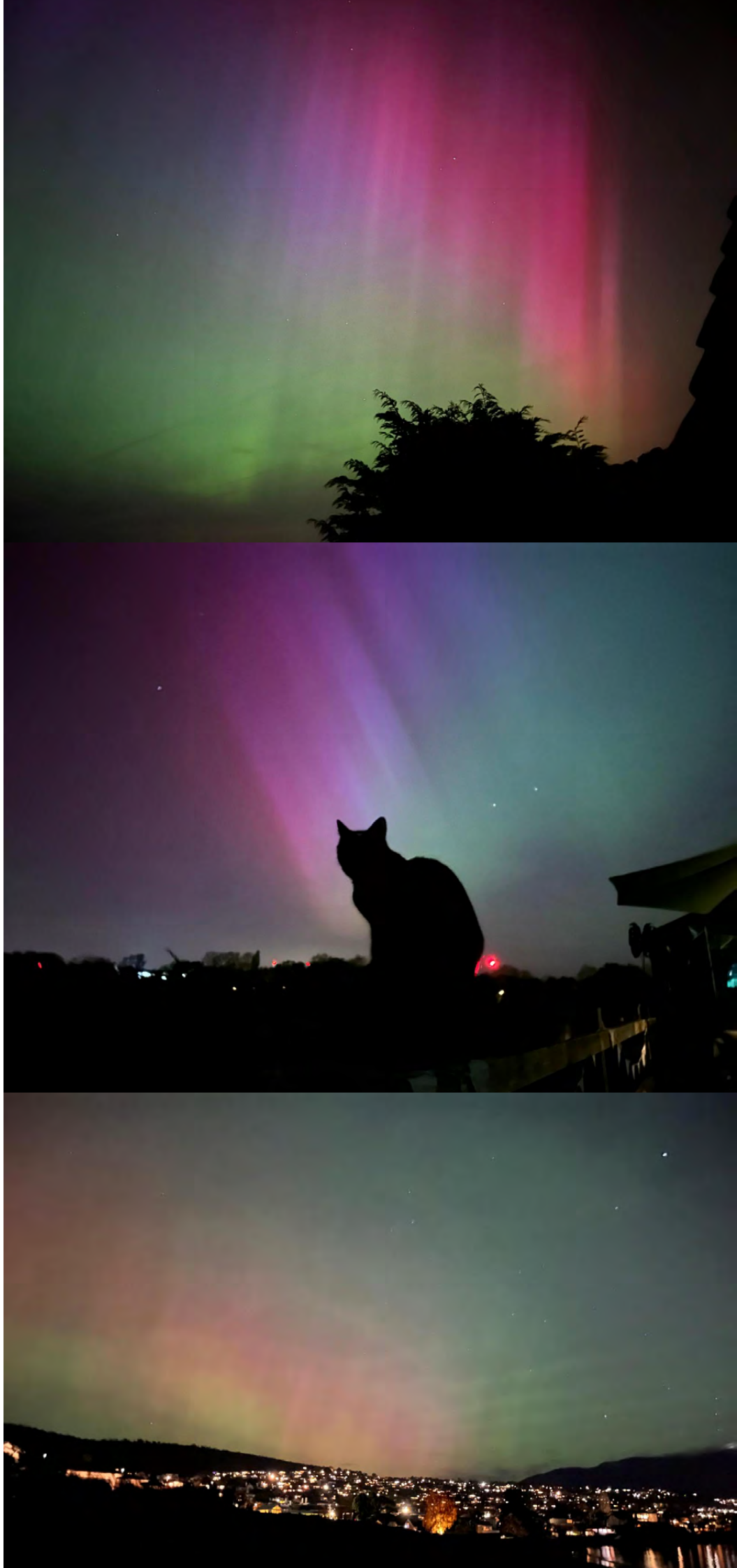
It was the strongest such event in about 20 years, leading to stunning Aurora Australis light displays in skies across southern parts of Australia and the southern hemisphere. People in the northern hemisphere also saw and photographed images of the bright colours brought on by the Aurora Borealis.

Top: Aurora Borealis from Oxford

Middle: Another nice image from Oxford showing a cat enjoying the Northern Lights.

Bottom: Aurora Australis from Hobart

Jim Wilkinson was formerly Director of Cardiology at RCH and is the immediate past-President of the RCH Alumni.



Clerihews

Kevin Collins and Garry Warne

Bev Touzel thought that Alumni might enjoy the challenge of composing clerihews.

According to David Astle, a 'clerihew' is a 4-line poem that encapsulates a person's life, with the following structure:

1. starts with the subject's name.
2. followed by a 3-line summary of their existence
3. must have an AA BB rhyme

Brattish boy Trump
Will never accept the umpires' decision
And like all his mob
Will treat the law with derision

Jim Wilkinson, a great
cardiologist
Is a raconteur and
humorologist.
His use of the query is oft-
times confusing
But also amusing.

Lloyd S, neurological champ
Moved on to the
photography camp
And as a craftsman in wood
He's exceptionally good.

Garry Warne,
As editor is torn,
Having to choose
From our miserable verses
which do not scan but
nonetheless are correctly
formed clerihews.

Kevin C, student of German and
French,
In child neurology circles is a mensch.
But with no need of a poke
He's always ready with a joke.

Geoffrey Tauro, expert on blood and marrow
With diagnostic acumen as sharp as an arrow,
Has leapt into his tenth decade
With nothing to prove - he's made the grade!

Dear Kevin Collins, now you have reached
four score
And because I was distracted, a little bit
more,
But from the Alumni, hearty
congratulations
And from me personally, felicitations.

Festschrift for Associate Professor Elisabeth Northam, 19th June 2024

Fergus Cameron

In 1998 I returned from overseas to RCH as that most dangerous of things - a newly minted consultant with a modicum of knowledge and a disproportionate amount of confidence. George Werther sensed correctly that child health in general, and RCH in particular, needed to be protected from my hubris and he cast about for a pond of professional quicksand that I could splash about in without causing too much damage. He didn't have to look too far. The RCH Diabetes service remains the Hotel California of clinical services - the one to which one may sign in but never leave. It has had only 4 inmates lead it over the last 100 years with terms of 10-25 years and no parole. I was glad to have a clinical job but despairing about prospects for research. This was the 1990's. We were all 'gene jockeys'. Research Nirvana was a rare, single gene disorder, an undiscovered, remote extended kindred with an autosomal dominant pattern of inheritance and a Perkin Elmer PCR machine. Diabetes had none of these and to all intents looked like an intellectual cul de sac. I was sitting in my office licking my wounds, when a diminutive figure - mauve suit, mauve shoes, mauve handbag, mauve nails, pink lipstick (some on an upper incisor) appeared. "My name is Elisabeth Northam - we need to talk." Lis thus introduced herself and her (now famous) prospective cohort study. I was rapidly disabused that diabetes research could be anything other than fascinating. From that moment on we have had a lot of productive fun with 25 years of collaborative research. Lis' work was paradigm -shifting, and along with colleagues Chris Ryan from Pittsburgh, Barbara Anderson from the Joslin, Gert Biessels from the Netherlands, Lis put mental health and brain development firmly on the agenda as significant complications of type 1 diabetes in childhood.

Lis professes that she was initially looking for an 'easy' research area for her PhD with a proviso that little had to have been previously published so her review chapter could be slender. However, as per the Bard's observation... "the lady doth protest too much, methinks". As a neuropsychologist it was axiomatic to Lis that one of the most important developmental outcomes of childhood and adolescence was to grow a good brain. A stable supply of glucose is sine qua non for optimal brain development. Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is the exemplar chronic condition of childhood that disrupts



blood and tissue glucose delivery. Thus, the assessment of cognitive, psychological, functional and morphological brain outcomes in T1D was apposite. Up until the early 1990's T1D outcome research had been largely focussed on renal, neurologic and retinal outcomes. The RCH Diabetes Cohort Study commenced in 1990 by Lis was the first prospective and longitudinal study to assess brain development from the time of T1D diagnosis. One hundred and thirty newly diagnosed patients with T1D were sequentially recruited, together with healthy community controls and assessed at baseline, 2 years, 6 years, 12 years and now 30+ years from diagnosis. The RCH Diabetes Cohort Study is ongoing (The NIH-funded Cognition and Longitudinal Assessments of Risk Factors over 30 Years (CLARiFY) Study), but has thus far resulted in 10 seminal publications and in 1999 was editorialised in Diabetes Care as "the seminal, prospective study documenting cognitive skills, mental health, and metabolic control from diagnosis in childhood". In the diabetes world, it is for this study more than any other that RCH/MCRI are recognised.

Lis obtained her BA from the University of Tasmania in 1971, her BA (Hons) from Latrobe University in 1983, her MA from the University of Melbourne in 1990 and her PhD from the University of Melbourne in 1996. Lis is a Senior Research Fellow in the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. She joined the Department of Psychology, RCH as a clinical psychologist/neuropsychologist in 1984, and has held a variety of clinical, research and academic positions from then to

the present. In addition to her clinical work, Lis was convenor of the PhD/Masters, Clinical Psychology (Child Specialisation) programme at the University of Melbourne from 2004-2013 and in that capacity supervised the research of over 20 post graduate students. Not limited to diabetes, her research has also focussed on the neurocognitive and psychological impact of other paediatric illnesses diagnosed in childhood.

Between 1988 and 2024 Lis has been awarded 28 research grants totalling approximately 7 million dollars, published 73 peer-reviewed papers and several textbook chapters, given 14 national and international plenary lectures and 40 papers at international meetings and won the International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes Award for best study 2008 and 2015, and the American Diabetes Association Presidential Award in 2015. Lis has been the convenor of the ISPAD Science School for Allied Health Professionals on several occasions.

Lis opened her Festschrift by presenting Grand Rounds (<https://blogs.rch.org.au/grandrounds/2024/06/19/type-1-diabetes-aristotle-and-the-jesuits-functional-outcomes-in-childhood-predicting-adult-sequelae/>), in which she discussed the novel observational, mechanistic and translational findings of the many papers authored by her from the RCH Diabetes Cohort Study. A more

forensic examination of her contribution to academic life in this campus followed in an afternoon symposium in the Vernon Collins lecture theatre. In this second more intimate forum we learned amongst other things, that she advised her many and various PhD students that a PhD was the “perfect time to have a baby”, any conference in Paris was worth attending and that fashion colour coordination was de rigueur. After a clumsy attempt at inter-specialty humour, this author was also admonished and reminded in no uncertain terms that psychologists are indeed clinicians.

Our farewell wishes are somewhat tempered by what appears to have been a ‘faux-Festschrift’. Thankfully, Lis continues to have involvement in composing the final movement of her magnum opus by way of helping us track down the last members of her famous cohort. It transpires that these obdurate hold-outs will only speak to Lis. We and they are not ready to bid her good-bye just yet!

Professor Fergus Cameron is the Director of the Department of Endocrinology and Diabetes at the Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne. He also heads the Diabetes Research Group at the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute and holds a position in the Department of Paediatrics at the University of Melbourne.

Festschrift for Professor Frank Oberklaid 21 March 2024

Jill Sewell

Festschrift comes from the German, meaning feast of writing, or festival of writing. In earlier times eminent scholars who had retired were honoured with a book of collected papers describing their life work. Nowadays we have shifted to a feast of stories, of tales, of personal recollections to honour such scholars.

In March 2024, Professor Frank Oberklaid was honoured with such a day, with stories and tales from a wide variety of colleagues and admirers from Melbourne, Victoria, Australia and across the world. Not that Frank has really retired – he stepped down as Director of the Centre for Community Child Health in 2019 and finished his clinical work at the Centre in 2023, but continues as Co-Group Leader of Child Health Policy, Equity and Translation at MCRI.



Jill Sewell, a colleague and friend from the early days when Frank returned from Boston USA to take up the new role of Director of the Department of Ambulatory Paediatrics in 1980 (later the Centre CCH), spoke of her admiration for his restless spirit of inquiry, his entrepreneurial enterprise, his leadership qualities and his support for several generations of emerging and talented leaders in paediatrics and child health over 40 years.

Subsequent speakers chronicled Frank's ideas and achievements, starting with Professor Naomi Eisenstadt, the Director of Sure Start in the UK from 1999 who underpinned Frank's contribution to equitable community care for the best start of life for children and families. The heading of the subsequent sections show the breadth of Frank's interests - with speakers highlighting his work in Early childhood development: policy and practice, Mental health and health services, Knowledge translation and policy, and Clinical training and professional development. There were video messages from a wide range of highly respected international colleagues, and a special message from Dr Pia Britto, UNICEF Chief of Early Childhood Development. The day closed with reflections from Professor Jim Watterson, Dean of Education at the

University of Melbourne, outlining Frank's understanding of the powerful and lifelong nexus between health and education for future outcomes for our children.

Frank's CV reflects his academic contributions to paediatrics and child health and commitment to evidence based public policy and service delivery, as well as his swathes of prestigious awards and international consultations.

Only so much can be fitted into a single day. The following day celebrated thirty years for the Centre for Community Child Health, which again highlighted Frank's contributions as Director for most of that time.

Frank has been an inspirational leader in what was an emerging field of developmental, behavioural and community paediatrics and his influence is recognisable in the latest strategic plan of the RCH, with its third goal of 'healthy children and young people in the community'.

We congratulate Frank on his achievements, wish him well in his continuing efforts to improve mental health for children, and acknowledge the respect and esteem in which he is held.

Vale Professor Arthur Colvin Lindesay Clark

AM MD (Melb), FRACP (Hon), FACP (Hon)

18th April 1928 – 30th July 2024

"Champion of children's health"

Tribute by Assoc. Prof. Christine Rodda AM and Dr Caroline Clarke

Professor Arthur Colvin Lindesay Clark leaves an inspiring and enduring legacy to Paediatrics in Melbourne and nationwide, even though his death follows thirty years after his retirement as Foundation Professor of the Monash University Department of Paediatrics, a position he held for nearly three decades. We both had the privilege of working with Arthur for many years during this time and wish to acknowledge his contributions with this personal tribute.

Arthur's time in this role was far from plain sailing, and from the outset he battled the challenges he faced with a quiet confidence using his ability to think strategically and act collaboratively. He also drew on the significant experience he gained during his training in the UK (Newcastle-upon-Tyne initially then Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children in London) and later as clinical research fellow at the Children's Hospital Medical



Centre in Boston, Massachusetts, where he specialised in children's oncology, particularly in leukaemia and paediatric haematology. The need for Monash University to have its own Department of Paediatrics was certainly not universally supported at the time he took up the role, and neither was the notion that it would be established within the general hospital setting of the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital (now affectionately referred to as the "Old Queen Vic"). Throughout his professional career Arthur demonstrated his commitment to holistic paediatric care, supporting families and enriching paediatric practice through collaboration with specialist adult colleagues. The "conception to end of life care" at the Old Queen Vic provided an ideal environment for Arthur to fulfil his vision to establish the style of paediatrics he wanted to offer all newborns and children cared for at that hospital, and to teach this approach to countless medical students and post-graduates, ourselves included, who were privileged to receive his teaching.

Arthur practised as he taught, consequently his ward rounds were a practical application of what he taught his students and trainees in more formal tutorials. In the early days of establishing the Department of Paediatrics at the Old Queen Vic, understandably there were insufficient babies and children managed there to provide for all the Monash University paediatric students. Arthur addressed this by engaging paediatric consultants from the Monash University teaching hospitals the Alfred and

Prince Henry's Hospitals (when they still had paediatric wards), and later, when these units closed, to Western General, Geelong, Box Hill, Dandenong and Frankston Hospitals. This clearly provided a bilateral advantage both in enabling greater clinical paediatric teaching opportunities for the students, but also greater academic engagement with the consultant paediatricians at these hospitals who would regularly attend paediatric grand rounds at the Old Queen Vic, and later at Monash Medical Centre when the Department of Paediatrics moved to Clayton. Those of us who trained under Arthur's watchful eye fondly remember his Saturday morning tutorials for we struggling RACP exam candidates, as well as guiding his registrars through the chemotherapy mazes before the Wednesday morning clinic.

Despite his rather intimidating tall, lean stature, Arthur was characteristically calm, kind and considerate, in both word and in action, working unobtrusively through the fulfilment of his strategic planning and effecting gracious conflict resolution along the way.

Early recruitments and appointments to the Department of Paediatrics were characteristically strategic: a paediatric surgeon (Bob MacMahon), a paediatric pathologist to support the paediatric surgeon (Leo Cussen) and neonatologist and general paediatrician Mick Adamson, soon to be joined by Victor Yu (fresh from the internationally acclaimed neonatal unit at the

Professor and Mrs Clark with Professor Nick Freezer, Medical Director of the Monash Children's Hospital.



John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford). At the time of Arthur's retirement in 1993, he had built up the number of staff within the Department of Paediatrics to 51, including the two Associate Professors Adamson and MacMahon, two Clinical Associate Professors Sam Menahem and Victor Yu and seventeen senior lecturers. Prof Menahem is a member of our RCH alumni group and wrote this reflective piece in 2021 about 3 individuals who had impacted on his development as a paediatrician and on his professional life. <https://www.monash.edu/medicine/news/latest/2021-articles/lessons-around-my-teachers-and-mentors>. Arthur Clark was one of these teachers and mentors, along with the late Prof Vernon Collins and the late Dr Alexander Venables. Quoting from this article: "Professor Clark with his all-embracing, polite and understanding approach, was able to create an inclusive and co-operative environment in which to work. In addition to his area of specialization in paediatric haematology and oncology, he too adopted a holistic approach to patient care. He had a way of getting the most out of those working with him, being generous in his praise of any achievements made".

The opening of the Monash Children's Hospital as a "stand alone" children's hospital in 2017, adjacent to the Monash Medical Centre adult hospital, combined the provision of exclusively paediatric clinical areas, with these able to share resources where necessary with the

adult services, including proximity of adult specialists. At almost 90 years of age, Arthur was able to attend the official opening of the Monash Children's Hospital, which in so many ways stands as a testament to his achievements as Foundation Professor of Paediatrics at Monash University.

Arthur is survived by his wife Elaine who has stood devotedly at his side throughout the 70 years of their marriage, his four children and nine grandchildren. Arthur was well known to be a passionate Collingwood supporter (no one is perfect!) and very proud of the magpie sitting on his desk or on his bookshelf. So he would have been thrilled to see his boys win the flag again in 2023.

We have deliberately written a more personal account of Arthur's contribution to paediatrics and our readers are referred to more detailed tributes on the Monash University website <https://www.monash.edu/vale/home/articles/vale-emeritus-professor-arthur-colvin-lindesay-clark-am>. This tribute concludes with one of Arthur's reflections later in life, particularly pertaining to his role as a paediatric haemato-oncologist, which demonstrates his profound love for and understanding of children, as their "champion" indeed: "If I were to do things differently, I would make greater efforts to respect the autonomy of the child; even quite young children know when they have had enough."