

Pratique

Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp
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<http://www.woodmanpointquarantinationstation.com>



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WINTER 2023

SOME CHANGES AROUND THE STATION

Several projects have been recently undertaken in our effort to continually improving the former Quarantine Station site.

In March, the last remaining of the original fumigation baggage trolleys was repositioned into what we hope will be a more relevant location in terms of its past history.

In their original “life”, these trolleys ran on the small gauge tram tracks, moving passenger luggage and other potentially infectious articles through the fumigation process. They were loaded with up to 37 cases and pieces of luggage in the Dirty Luggage Shed, then making their way into the actual fumigation chamber where they were sealed in during the disinfection process. When this process was complete, the trollies were rolled out into the Clean Luggage Shed, where they were unloaded and the luggage removed,

aired and made ready for collection by passengers at the completion of their period of quarantine.

For many years, the sole surviving trolley had been positioned on the upper concrete deck of the fumigation room, very near the actual fumigation chamber. It was determined that it would be better located if actually placed inside the fumigation chamber itself, so, with thanks to the huge muscle



power of members of the Camp staff, it was moved, during March, into its new position. Soon a few authentic pieces of luggage will be placed on the trolley racks and tour visitors will be more clearly able to visualise how this process worked and the

important role that the baggage trolleys played in it.

Many thanks to the Camp staff who helped moved this seriously heavy piece of historic equipment into place.

Friends are often overwhelmed by the generous support we receive from local companies and this has again been the case with recent improvements around the Isolation Hospital.

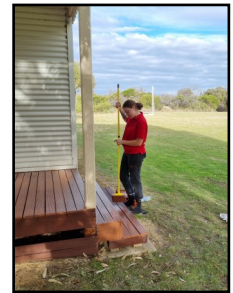
Some significant changes have been made to the commemorative area near the flag pole. A beautiful laser-cut metal wreath slightly raised to cast a most exquisite shadow on the limestone beneath, has recently been installed at the base of the memorial obelisk, replacing the plastic wreath of flowers which has been there for some time. We are most grateful to new member, Ryan Dunne, and his company, the IFM Group of Wattleup, who generously cut and installed this superb addition to our commemorative area.



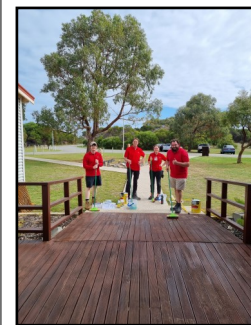
We are also grateful to the IFM Group for the installation of a new tap on the north-eastern wall of the Isolation Hospital. This tap now provides easy access to water when we are cleaning and maintaining the walls and verandahs of this part of our building.

Thanks to the “eagle eye” of historian and member Gail Dodd, some corrections and omissions to the list of soldiers lost during the Boonah tragedy were identified. A new plaque commemorating this incident has now been cut with these corrections and placed on the memorial obelisk in front of the flag pole.

Bunnings in Spearwood have always been a huge supporter of Friends and once again, they have offered their assistance with the maintenance of the wooden decking that surrounds the Isolation Hospital. In May, a team of Bunnings employees lead by Spearwood’s Activity Coordinator Layce arrived to clean, rub down and repaint the decking.



It was a big job that extended over a couple of days and we are very grateful for their efforts and their donation to Friends of all paint for the project, and donation of their working brushes, buckets, mops and excess paint to Friends



at the conclusion of their work. The Isolation Hospital is looking pretty smart these days, as result of their efforts. Thanks Layce, Brad, Matthew and Hamish for all your efforts.

The contributions of local companies such as the IFM Group and Bunnings

Spearwood, together with the past support from Cockburn Cement, Mercer and Co, Perth Scaffolding, Refractory Management Services, Veolia and Walker Contracting make such a difference to small volunteer groups such as ours. Whenever possible, we ask all members to acknowledge this involvement and show their support to these companies that are so generous in their support of our work.

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

Continuing a series of articles recalling some of the patients who were nursed and cared for at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station.

Sr Barbara 1907 — 1930

Born at Midland WA in 1907, Mary Gertrude Smith was the daughter of William Smith and his wife Mary nee Connelly. In 1927, Mary had joined the Order of the Sisters of St John of God and in 1929, had made her temporary Profession of Vows, taking the religious name of Sr. Barbara. Sr. Barbara began work soon after as a nursing assistant in the Order's hospital in Subiaco undertaking such tasks as providing water and meals to patients as well as a range of other chores around the hospital.



In February 1930, James Sharp and his wife, returning to their home in Victoria

after a visit to India, became unwell whilst visiting friends in Perth and were admitted to the hospital on the belief that they were suffering typhoid. Sr. Barbara was one of several nuns charged with providing care to the Sharps. Within days it became evident that the Sharps were not suffering from typhoid, but from smallpox, and the hospital's isolation and vaccination protocols were immediately implemented.

The other nuns, all of Irish descent, had been vaccinated in their homeland, but Sr. Barbara had not, as Australia, at this point in history, did not have a preventative vaccination policy. So she was hurriedly vaccinated along with the Sharps, their Perth friends, other contacts from their ship, R.M.S. *Naldera*, and the doctors who had been treating them. The Sharps, their Perth friends, other passengers and the nuns who had been their care-givers were then taken to Woodman Point Quarantine Station on 18 February 1930 to wait out a mandatory 18-day quarantine period for the disease.

The first week of quarantine for the nuns passed well with no apparent signs of illness. Sadly it appears that Sr Barbara's vaccination was made after she had contracted the smallpox disease and it therefore did not provide her with the immunity to fight the disease over the coming weeks. Around 25 February, she began to show symptoms of the disease and was placed in an observation ward, where she was nursed and cared for by the other four nuns, overseen by doctors and experienced Station nurse, Bertie Poore. Fr. Thomas Haugh from the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Fremantle provided Sr. Barbara with

religious support and comfort. In a hospital ward nearby, James Sharp's condition had deteriorated and he passed away on 29 February 1930. Sr. Barbara's ordeal was to last a further 18 days.

During this time, she suffering immensely as the rash spread over her body, and the sore throat and pain increased. There were constant excretions in the eyes, nose, ears and finally exhaustion and delirium. Throughout this time, Sr. Barbara was dutifully nursed by her fellow Sisters under the direction of Bertie Poore. She remained calm, praying constantly, even when delirious.

When it became evident that Sr. Barbara would not recover, Fr. Haugh was authorised to receive her final commitment as a Sister of the Order of St John of God. The profession took place on what was to become Sr. Barbara's death bed.

At 4.30am on 17 March 1930, Sr. Barbara passed away at Woodman Point. Her body was cremated that day, borne to the nearby crematorium by Fr. Haugh and Bertie Poore to the prayers offered by her fellow Sisters.

Sr. Barbara's remains were interred at the Sisters of St John of God burial ground at Karrakatta Cemetery on 5 April 1930, after all requirements of smallpox quarantine had been fulfilled.



The preceding article has been adapted from a March 2020 paper by Sr. Eugenia Brennan titled:

Events of Thirty Days in Western Australia during summer 1930

or

The 1930 episode of a communicable disease in SJGH Subiaco

REMEMBERING OUR HISTORY

A second article in an occasional series remembering moments in time that are close to the heart and soul of Woodman Point's long history.

1923 marks the centenary of the opening of what was then known as B and C Blocks at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station. Today we know these blocks as the Spinifex and Grevillea accommodation quarters.



Tenders were called for their construction and it was announced in early June 1923 that a tender from the company Todd Bros for £8781 had been accepted by the Public Works Department.

Built on wooden stumps, the buildings were clad externally in weatherboard with a tin roof, later replaced with asbestos. Internally floor to ceiling wooden paneling prevailed, just as it does today.

The blocks were designed to house first-class and second-class passengers who had had no known contact with infected

persons whilst onboard ships. These passengers were, nevertheless, required to remain isolated for the mandatory quarantine period as a precaution to prevent any possible spread of infection.

Comprising 2 four-bed family rooms and 12 two-bed rooms for couples in each dormitory block, every room had its own internal sink, hanging space and storage space and access to internal washing and toilet facilities. All rooms opened onto a terrace and, at the end of the internal corridor, a comfortable sitting room with internal fireplace and large sofas for relaxation and reading was located. Meals were taken in the nearby Station Dining Hall.

Described in the day as being extremely comfortable – much “like a Butlin holiday camp”, the accommodation was reviewed by *The West Australian* journalist Athol Thomas in 1969. He awarded the living quarters a two-star hotel rating saying the “accommodation was commodious, the linen crisp and there was hot water in every room”.

A century on, this camp accommodation still delights young West Australians as they enjoy the facilities at WA’s most highly utilised public recreation camp.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The winter months have slowed tours down a little, but Friends have remained active in pursuing their many projects over this time.

A recent major achievement was the completion of the tek screw replacement project at the Isolation Hospital. This was a massive job and I extend my sincerest thanks to those who spent so much of

their time assisting with this project.

On Anzac Day, Jenni Carder and I laid a wreath on the Boonah Memorial at the Isolation Hospital, and also placed flowers on the graves of Nurses Rosa O’Kane and Hilda Williams in the Woodman Point Regional Park. Friends continues to remain passionate in remembering their sacrifice.

National Volunteer Week began on 15 May 2023 and, in recognition their support, I would like to thank all Friends active volunteers for the tremendous effort they, both out front and behind the scenes, to ensure our group functions successfully to preserve the heritage and history of the former Woodman Point Quarantine Station. We are only a small group, but we are truly making a significant impact on history preservation in the local area.

Currently I am enjoying the warmth of Exmouth for a couple of months and extend my thanks to those covering for me in my absence.

Gary Marsh
President

UPDATE FROM THE CAMP

Coming into the last month of the financial year, Woodman Point Recreation Camp is tracking to achieve over 27,000 bed-nights and 57,000 participations on programs. Typically Term 2, rounding out our financial year, is a quieter term compared to our peak periods (Term 1 and Term 4), but the site is continuing with high volumes of bookings to the end of the year.

The following projects are scheduled for

completion before the end of the financial year:

- H&H Architects are finalising the draft of the Woodman Point 2023 Conservation Plan;
- the Friends of Woodman Point lease renewal agreement for the Isolation Hospital, is currently with the State Solicitor's Office;
- the restoration works to begin late June to replace the vinyl flooring in the Dining Block; and
- a report regarding the ACM testing and inspection of the shower block.

Quotations have been gathered for the removal of the sacrificial render on the Doctors' Precinct and the Bertie Poore Room as well as the removal of the cement render inside the Bertie Poore Room. All companies that have quoted are heritage specialists and all are very keen to be rewarded the works. Quotes have also been gathered to replace the metal cladding at the Recreation Hall (the old Linen Store) with Fyrechek Gyprock that will add insulation and provide better acoustics when groups utilise the space.

There have also been some site upgrades around the Camp. These include the restoration of the 21 street lights across the-site, the replacement of the hot water system units at Jervoise dormitory, and the replacement of approximately 50 meters of guttering. The LED light replacement program also continues around the site.

I would also like to welcome Christine Harwood to the team at the Woodman Point Recreation Camp.

Ben Walton
Camp Manager

LATEST NEWS FROM FRIENDS

- ❖ Many thanks to Heather Joyce from Aquinas College who has kindly donated two period hospital beds for display at the Isolation Hospital.
- ❖ A new **Give Way** sign has recently been installed at the intersection of O'Kane Court and Jervoise Bay Cove, instigated by Friends through Main Roads Department, the City of Cockburn and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. While this is a positive step to improve traffic conditions at this hazardous intersection, members are urged to continue to exercise caution when approaching and passing through this t-junction.
- ❖ Check out our new-look morning tea room. The old table clothes which have served us for far too many years have been discarded and replaced with new ones, that look clean and smart.
- ❖ The next meeting of Friends will be held at the Isolation Hospital on Wednesday 12 July 2023 commencing at 6.30pm. All members are welcome to attend.



NEW MEMBERS

Friends welcome the following people who have recently joined our group.

- Suzanne Barley from Beeliar
- Maeve Harvey from Coogee

HERITAGE TOURS

Friends of Woodman Point Recreational Camp operate regular heritage tours of the former Quarantine Station and the Isolation Hospital Museum for community groups.

Morning tea is included in all tours, and if required, lunch can be provided at an additional cost.

Periodic open weekends provide tours for members of the public to visit the site and to learn about this important Western Australian heritage site.

We acknowledge the contribution of our valued volunteer tour guides who lead heritage tours of the former Quarantine Station.



Jenni



Kay



Chris



Bernadette



Suzie



Gary



Neil

UPCOMING HERITAGE TOURS

June 2023

18 June Monthly public tour

July/August 2023

2 July Society for Microbiology
 9 July Monthly public tour
 23 July Kalamunda History Society
 20 Aug Monthly public tour

COMMITTEE 2022 – 2023

PRESIDENT
Gary Marsh



TREASURER
Greg Ireland



PAST PRESIDENT
Jenni Carder



**SECRETARY/
MEMBERSHIP**
Ainslie Poore



VICE PRESIDENT
Neil Wilson



EX-OFFICIO COMMITTEE MEMBER
Ben Walton



MEMBER SERVICES

HERITAGE TOUR BOOKINGS
Jenni Carder



PRATIQUE
Neil Wilson



WEBSITE MAINTENANCE AND DESIGN

