

# Pratique



Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp

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**WINTER 2022**

## THE WORK OF DR JOHN G MCGLASHAN

This interesting article provided hope for the sufferers of leprosy. Whilst it post-dates the existence of sufferers of leprosy at Woodman Point, it focuses on the work of one of the doctors later employed as a medical officer at Woodman Point in the 1950s and 1960s.

Dr John Gardner McGlashan (1912 -

1980) was a familiar face at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station. He graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and a Bachelor of Surgery from the University of Adelaide in 1938, served as a Captain



in the Australian Army Medical Corps during World War II and as Chief of the Northern Territory Medical Services in the late 1940s. In 1949, John (not to be confused with his father, Dr John Eric McGlashan) was appointed 'Quarantine

Officer' in Western Australia. While serving in the State, he was sent to Jakarta for infectious disease training. There were 120 cases of bubonic plague in Jakarta at that time.

Records show that John already had experience with amputations and treating infectious diseases including typhoid, cholera and leprosy in the Northern Territory. He regularly treated patients at Channel Island near Darwin (a leper colony from 1931 to 1955). Leprosy was introduced into the Territory through colonisation in the late 1880s and was left untreated in indigenous people for decades.

To follow is an interesting newspaper report extracted from Trove online titled '*NT Lepers New Hope*' (Adelaide SA, Monday 21 June 1948). A warning to readers: this article contains culturally insensitive language.

DARWIN, Sunday.-A white card that arrived in the post at Darwin Hospital the other day, showing results of recent clinical tests at Port Pirie, gave what Dr.

John McGlashan, chief of the N.T. Medical Service, described as "The most hopeful indications we've ever had regarding leprosy." That card allowed real hope to take up residence for the first time with the 94 lepers on Channel Island, in Darwin Harbor.

Four months ago Dr. McGlashan told the N.T. Legislative Council that complete control of leprosy was beyond the scope of medical treatment in the territory. The number of aboriginal lepers scattered across 530,000 square miles could not be estimated, nor could a policy for wiping out the disease in the territory be formulated. Such a policy, he warned, might not come for years. However, he kept up his research, and investigated all claims to cures. And 3,000 miles away, in Port Pirie, batches of test specimens taken from lepers undergoing new treatment on the island were passing from time to time under microscopes in the Commonwealth laboratories. Recently, in the sixth successive test taken after nine months of the new treatment, seven of the 17 patients for the sixth consecutive time had none of the mysterious mycobacterium leprae on their specimen slides.

It remains for future tests to show whether the bacillus has been permanently destroyed, or only temporarily arrested. The treatment which has given the "negative" to the seven cases is a combination of an old oil treatment and a new drug.

For many years chaulmoogra oil, from Burma, injected into the leprous patches on the leper's skin, was recognised treatment. In the last war, a new synthetic drug, Dapsone, was produced in the USA. Chaulmoogra and dapsone have together produced the negatives. Dr McGlashan

hesitates to be optimistic. He is hopeful but he wants still more tests.

It is not known how the lepers on Channel Island have reacted to the new hope. Their three square miles of island, tucked away in a corner of Darwin's vast harbor, can be seen as a hazy grey lump during the day, and at night a blackness against the glare of bushfires across the harbour. Newspapermen are not allowed to visit the island. It is known that two white lepers, one a graduate of Cambridge University, are among the 94 on the island. The remainder are half caste and aborigines.

Research on the island has indicated that treatment of leprosy in its early stages has given the best chance of defeating the bacillus. Unfortunately, it appears that leprosy may incubate for years in the body before it reveals effects on the peripheral nerves in the elbow, knee, or neck. This "nerve" leprosy can be a killer. Another form of leprosy attacks the skin and raises hard plaques on it. The fingers or toes shorten, and joints vanish. This "skin" type is a crippler, but not a killer. Both types may be present in the same individual.

It appears that the disease most commonly attacks young male aborigines. They awake one morning to find a rat has gnawed their toes while they slept, and they felt no pain. Or perhaps a hand flops into a campfire as they sleep, and no pain comes. Then they know they have "koesta" (the Malayan name for leprosy used by the blacks), and they hide in fear. They go deeper into the bush, and the tribe helps them vanish from the reach of white-man medicine. A droning plane high above an aboriginal reserve sends hundreds limping to escarpments

unknown to white men, to avoid "that fella doctor alonga air-plane."

They fear Channel Island as they fear any hospital. The gins know their piccanninies are taken from them there (to avoid contagion, and that they never see them again. In the bush camp the gin can nurse her child, and pass on the leprosy. So the disease smoulders. Although most authorities agree it is only slightly contagious, it creeps, after a prolonged association with a leper, on to the young ones of the tribe. And the old ones, now horribly crippled and dying, are carried from camp to camp on the backs of youngsters.

Five of the seven "negatives" have been discharged from Channel Island. They will have to report back every third month for tests to see whether the leprosy is still absent. These five may well become ambassadors to break down the fear which keeps the black lepers in hiding.

Our thanks to Pam Hilliard and Gail Dodd for providing this article. Dr John McGlashan was Pam's uncle.

#### FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

*Continuing the series of articles of sites at Woodman Point that may no longer exist or may have faded from our memory.*

#### The Asiatic Quarters

To the north of the Woodman Point military cemetery and to the west of the former home of the Station's officer in charge lie the remnants of an interesting arrangement of buildings, largely undocumented and now with only their

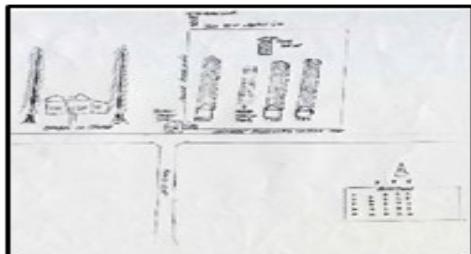
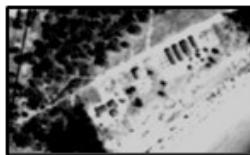
foundations remaining. These foundations are all that remain of a camp used initially to house quarantined nationals from Asia and later 'enemy aliens' during WWII.

The Quarantine Station's Asiatic Quarters had initially been used as a military hospital during World War I and later to house Asian passengers and crew from quarantined ships. There, passengers and crew saw out their period of quarantine, away from paying passengers and ship's officers. In 1923, tenders were called for the expansion of these facilities, the successful contractor being Mr R McMullen of Inglewood with a tender price of £2.497.

A government decision in the early 1940s however resulted in a change of focus for the Woodman Point Asiatic Quarters. An urgent telegram exchange between State and Commonwealth Health Departments in December 1941 confirmed these buildings would become one of a series of camps around Western Australia to house internees, aliens, and prisoners of war, for a period of up to three months. Other camps were to be located at Rottnest Island, Harvey, Fremantle Prison, and Northam, and throughout the Western Australian wheatbelt.

Fences were erected and approximately 300 Japanese civilians were interned from December 1941 until February 1942 at Woodman Point as part of mass round-ups of 'enemy aliens', naturalised, and Australian-born persons of enemy alien descent, residing in Australia at the outbreak of the war. Machine gun towers were also mounted on the beach to deter any potential attempts at escape.

Perhaps because of war-time censorship, there is no photographic evidence of the camp. A grainy aerial photo shows the overall layout and we are fortunate to have sketches from the late Jim Poore to provide further details of



the camp's layout during World War II. In the late 1940s, John Tapper (1882 – 1954), the Station's unofficial security watch, lived at the Asiatic Quarters.

The Asiatic Quarters were dismantled and sold by public auction in January 1954. *The West Australian* reported the sale of buildings for a total of £3,115, describing them as having been originally erected to accommodate quarantined Asians, used as a military hospital in World War I and to quarter enemy aliens in the last war. Most of the buildings were sold to a Mr. L. Gill who said that he intended erecting them at tourist resorts at Penguin Island and Hamelin Bay. The Methodist Church paid £425 for another building that was to be erected as a church hall in Safety Bay.

Today the area is overgrown and only the solid concrete foundations on which the buildings once stood remain.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

As usual at this time of the year, I am reporting from my winter retreat in Exmouth.

The last 3 months have been busy with many tours and projects. The main project was the painting of the Isolation Hospital exterior windows which needed to be undertaken before winter set in. Thanks to Calibre Coatings for the professional job. This expense has put a big hole in our bank account, but with increasing of tours we are rebuilding the monies quickly.

Tree maintenance was conducted by Parks and Wildlife around the Crematorium. Thank you to Lyall Woods for organising this.

The project of replacing the rusting tech screws on the outside cladding of the IH will commence in spring. We will advise members who can help when this project commences. A list of maintenance issues at the IH is also being compiled for submission to Camp Management.

Volunteer Week was recently commemorated, and I would like to acknowledge all Friends' dedicated volunteers for their great work.

Our thanks also goes to the City of Armadale for the donation of two old hospital beds. These were placed in the military room. Thanks to Jenni and Greg for setting up the beds.

For those interested, Arthur Dumble's tree is finally doing well and the protective wind covering has been removed.

Gary Marsh  
President

## UPDATE FROM THE CAMP

Thank you all for your welcome when I attended your recent meeting.

Much activity has been happening around the Camp. With COVID restrictions now been lifted allowing overnight camps for school students, there has been an influx in new bookings for Terms 3 and 4. The site will be full steam ahead during this period with very few areas left available.

The Doctor's Precinct was officially handed back to Camp management on 3 May 2022 after the completion of remedial works by CLPM. This was a great milestone for the site. Dedication plaques will soon be displayed in four rooms in honour of former caretakers/ officers in charge with the naming of each specific room to be confirmed. It is intended that the Doctor's Precinct will sleep up to 10 people and serve as a hub for teachers, leaders and supervisors.

Roof space cleaning and insulation re-lay in Spinifex and Grevillea was completed on 16 May 2022 through Ascot Group WA Pty Ltd and air quality consultants Aurora Environmental. This significant body of work was delivered on time for clientele to re-use the dormitories on 18 May 2022. The works undertaken was part of an electrical upgrade and compliance and the opportunity was taken also to upgrade most light fixtures to LED during this time.

Other varied works continues around the site with the 22 direct buried street lights being replaced with ground-mounted LED street lights. Burke Electrical has battled the rising water table during the wetter months in pouring concrete



footings. New wooden bunks have also been ordered for Jervoise and Tuart Cottage to replace the metal squeaky beds there, and the Gatehouse connection to sewer has been quoted.

Matthew Hayes has officially accepted a position as the Director: Strategy and Investment – Sport and Recreation, but will continue to support the site as a recent new member of Friends. Graham Sharpe has also accepted a new role as Quality Operations Manager – Sport and Recreation, also based at the Leederville Office.

Ben Walton  
A/Camp Manager

## MATT HAYES LEAVES THE CAMP

As you may be aware, I have recently moved into a new position within the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries after 13 years in the role of Manager of Woodman Point Recreation Camp. Accordingly, my ex-officio role within the FOWPRC group has come to an end.



My first FOWPRC meeting was in late 2008, joining as the agency representative when the late Andrea Lyndon-James was President and I have since worked closely with subsequent Presidents Earle Seubert, Jenni Carder and now Gary Marsh.

It has been a privilege to learn so much from each of the members over this time, who all have different, yet equally special, connections to this unique and treasured part of WA's early colonial history and indigenous heritage.

Some achievements resulting from the

strong connection between the Camp and Friends include:

- Special Commendation at the WA State Heritage Awards for the Heritage Trail Interpretation Project and a Heritage Award nomination for "Outstanding contribution to heritage by a community-based organisation" for FOWPRC in March 2011
- many successful grant applications for equipment, capital works, interpretation plans, archaeological surveys and maintenance
- mapping and conservation plan completed for the heritage bunkers within Woodman Point Regional Park
- the installation of access pathways at the IH and the beach access road
- tours of the Hospital by the various Ministers for Sport and Recreation of the day: and then by the Federal Member for Fremantle, Melissa Park
- the development of the now-famous history tours of the site, commencing in April 2010
- community open days and other special events, including the 100-year anniversary event of the Boonah tragedy and a ceremony to mark the century of the end of the Great War.

What has inspired me over the years is the passion and selfless commitment of all who have helped the FOWPRC group in some way. You don't have to look far past Howard and Betty Shepherd as testimony to this. I am equally inspired by the "next generation" of members, some young, some less-so, who have joined in the past 5 years and brought a newfound energy to the group. The FOWPRC is indeed in safe hands.

And so, as the newest community member of your group, I hope to contribute to the ongoing success of this

exemplary community group for many years to come.

### HERITAGE TOUR UPDATE

The cooler weather has seen more enquiries for our heritage tours and the April and May were particularly busy months. Tours were conducted for a range of community groups, as well as National Archives of Australia archivists.

We already have 4 week-day tours booked for June. Our Sunday public heritage tours continue to be very popular and most tours are booked out weeks in advance.

And we welcome to our ranks a new tour guide Bernadette Jones.

### LATEST NEWS FROM FRIENDS

- ❖ Congratulations to Matt Hayes on his recent promotion to the role of Director: Strategy and Investment at Sport and Recreation. Friends extends their appreciation to Matt for his significant contributions and support in helping us maintain the history and integrity of this important historical site.
- ❖ The next meeting of Friends will be held on Wednesday 20 July 2022 in the Bertie Poore Room in the Doctors' Precinct, commencing at 6.00pm. All members are welcome to attend.

### NEW MEMBERS

Friends welcome the following who have recently joined our organisation.

- Colin Ralston from Success
- Bernadette Jones from Belhus
- Con and Ana Terwindt from Bibra Lake
- Matthew Hayes 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 our heritage tours of the former Quarantine Station.



Jenni



Chris



Suzie



Gary



Neil

We also acknowledge Daniel and the staff of Accolade Catering who provide the delicious lunches enjoyed by our tour participants.

## UPCOMING HERITAGE TOURS

June/July 2022

- 10 June MALA Rockingham
- 17 June Kings Park guides
- 19 June Monthly public tour
- 21 June Whitfords Probus
- 17 July Monthly public tour

August 2022

- 17 Aug Rossmoyne Probus
- 21 Aug Monthly public tour

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COMMITTEE 2021 – 2022

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**PRESIDENT**  
Gary Marsh



**TREASURER**  
Greg Ireland



**PAST PRESIDENT**  
Jenni Carder



**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Neil Wilson



**SECRETARY/  
MEMBERSHIP**  
Ainslie Poore



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**EX-OFFICIO COMMITTEE MEMBER**  
Ben Walton



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**HERITAGE TOUR BOOKINGS**  
Jenni Carder



**PRATIQUE**  
Neil Wilson



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**MEMBER SERVICES**

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**WEBSITE MAINTENANCE AND DESIGN**

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