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MOSMAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER - April 2017

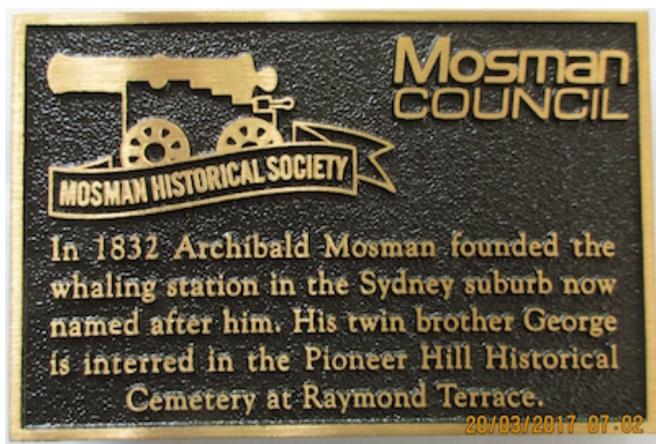
On 8th March, Mike Dorahy from the Melbourne based Burke and Wills Historical Society, presented ***Epic Journeys: Cross-Continental Expeditions in Australia and the USA***. His anecdotes reflected the amazing courage of the explorers involved and, in the Australian case, sheer bad luck in the face of minor miscalculations. Mike helped produce a history cum do-it-yourself book for intrepid readers, *Following Burke and Wills around Australia*.

NEXT SPEAKER MEETING
Wednesday 12th May at 7pm
Downstairs at Mosman Library

Paul Brunton OAM, FAHA is Emeritus Curator at the State Library of New South Wales. He was Senior Curator, Mitchell Library, from 2002 to 2012 and Curator of Manuscripts from 1986 to 2000. His topic for us will be ***The Portraits of James Cook***.

There are only six authentic extant portraits of Captain James Cook (1728-1779), three of which were unknown until after 1960 including both the portraits held in Australia. The stories of these contemporary portraits and those made after his death give an insight into a great British explorer and hero, one of science not war, who forfeited his own life to save others.
See attached flyer.

UNVEILING CEREMONY at Archibald Mosman grave
STJUDES Anglican Church Cemetary,
106 Avoca St, Randwick (parking off Frances St)
Sunday 23rd April, 11am



All warmly invited. We will be welcomed by the Mayor of Randwick, Ted Seng. David Carment will give a brief history before the unveiling by Ald. Simon Menzies representing Mosman Council. Several descendants of George Mosman hope to attend. Afterwards, tea will be provided by St Judes, with cake by MHS. Rev Andrew Schmidt of St Judes invites us all to attend the church service beforehand at 9.30am and in turn his congregation will be invited to the unveiling.

JUPITER MOSMAN – an accidental sleuthing

When John Dansie located the grave of George, Archibald Mosman's twin brother, in the Raymond Terrace Pioneers' Cemetery, it triggered a curiosity about the life of other members of the Mosman family. Noela Gill stumbled across this interesting item about Hugh, Archibald's son, in a tourist brochure from Charters Towers cemetery left at her home by a friend:

Section 45

Erected by the Citizens of Charters towers to the memory of JUPITER MOSMAN, who discovered the first gold in Charters Towers on 24th 1871. He died on 5th December 1945, aged 85 years. "R.I.P"

'Jupiter Mosman was the nine year old Aboriginal boy who first found gold at Charters Towers on 24th December 1871.

Jupiter was born about 1861. He came to Kynuna Station in the North West as a young child. Hugh Mosman first met the seven year old when he visited the station in the late 1860's. Jupiter was dubbed with his name because of his luminous eyes and took his surname from Hugh Mosman.

Hugh Mosman, George Clark, James Fraser and Jupiter set-off from Ravenswood for the Seventy Mile and the Merrie Monarch diggings. A cluster of hills five miles north attracted the party's attention. It was Towers Hill. It was Jupiter's sharp eyes that picked out the first gold on the field. Mosman, Clark and Fraser pegged out the North Australian claim immediately. More than 6,000 pounds of gold came from the stone picked up on the surface of that claim.

Jupiter worked as a stockman on cattle stations and lived out his days at Eventide Home in Charters Towers.'

Local Studies at BARRY O'KEEFE LIBRARY

Free events for Australian Heritage Festival

1. Tuesday 9th May 2017 at 6pm.
Now and Forever: Preserving Personal Memorabilia. Kay Söderlund, Director, Preservation Australia will look at ways of caring, storing and displaying your photographs, art and documents.
Bookings essential www.mosman.nsw.gov.au/events
2. 17th May 2017 at 7pm.
The Best School of All: the story of Cremorne Girls High from 1926 to 1987. Author, Margaret Gowanlock and collaborator Verena Bacchini, will present an entertaining talk featuring stories from those who knew it best. *Bookings essential*
3. 27th April to 21st May 2017.
Going the Distance at the Spit - Celebrating 100 years of the Spit Amateur Swimming Club.
An exhibition of personal memories and memorabilia.

THE SPASTIC CENTRE OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The Mosman Years, 1945 – 1987

BEGINNINGS

In 1943 Neil and Audrie McLeod left Perth for Sydney with their two daughters, one of whom, Jennifer, had cerebral palsy. At the time there was no treatment at all for such children, but the McLeods knew Jennifer had a bright mind inside her twisted body. Mr McLeod read as widely as possible on the subject, concluding that, with the right treatment, her life could be improved. They decided to establish a treatment centre in Sydney for a small group of children with whose parents they were acquainted through the Crippled Children's Society.

Based on his reading Mr McLeod had clear ideas of what was required for his projected school and medical unit, where education was as important as therapy. Treatment would be free but parents would work on a voluntary basis to raise funds, then build and run the facility themselves. Only then would they look to the Government and community for support.

By chance, Mr McLeod had met Arthur Sullivan, a wealthy merchant, and told him of his daughter and plans for the treatment centre. Owner of several properties, Sullivan immediately offered the loan of half his large house in Mosman, rent free, in order to establish the school. The McLeods readily accepted the offer. With only £32, teaching and medical staff had to be employed, furniture and equipment obtained, and transport to get the children and parents to the centre, organised. Amazingly this was done, the Spastic Centre opening with 14 children on 30th January 1945 at Sullivan's home at **6 Queen Street, Mosman**. It was the first such organisation in the world, but soon to be emulated in Japan, the USA, and other Australian states.



McLeods – Neil, Audrie and daughter Jennifer (Flickr)

THERAPY

The Spastic Centre was initially formed with the support and assistance of the Crippled Children's Association. Shortly after opening, they and the Australian Physiotherapy Association advertised for a physiotherapist and occupational therapist – "must be capable of co-ordinating mothers and work with other technicians, teachers and kindergarteners". Their aim was to help children learn to utilise affected muscles, use walking aids, and also educate their mothers in how best to assist the children at home. It was hard work and

relied on the willingness of the child, so all training had to be fun, using carefully selected games in order to engage the child. Mothers accompanied their children to the Centre, and in return for the treatment and schooling they performed voluntary work, providing meals, toileting the children and doing the domestic work. Fathers assisted with maintenance.

Within months, nine specialists were providing services at the Centre – physio and occupational therapists, paediatrician, orthopaedic surgeon, psychiatrists and speech therapists, under the direction of a full time Medical Director Dr Claudia Burton-Bradley. All treatment was free, and was initially carried out in the bedrooms of the Sullivan house until the completion of the medical treatment block in 1946. Services grew to include visiting social workers, orthodontists, audiologists, radiologists and more, as it was deemed better to treat the children on site in familiar surroundings than to transport them to these services. This also enabled medical education and research into cerebral palsy to be carried out at Mosman.

EDUCATION

Children at the Spastic Centre spent half of each day in therapy, and the other in the classroom. Previously deprived of education due to their inability to speak or hold a pencil, and thus attend normal schools, other solutions were needed. Within months of the Centre opening in 1945, two teachers, on loan from the Education Department and who had experience with disabled children, took on the slow, painstaking task of teaching these students.

Using the Correspondence School curriculum so they could work at their own speed, the children, aged from 10 months to 17 years, used educational toys and teaching aids specially adapted to replace traditional teaching methods. Magnetised metal desks and magnetic letters and numbers enabled the children to move them around without scattering them with their uncontrollable movements. Switch operated devices and electric typewriters were later used.

Classes were initially held in 2 large rooms of Mr Sullivan's house, which was taken over entirely for teaching when the new medical treatment block was completed in 1946, with additions made in 1948. By 1978 there were 4 head and 13 assistant teachers and a full range of support staff. Adapted versions of cricket and soccer were played at Mosman Oval.

In 1984 reciprocal visits with Beauty Point Public School were initiated, students trained in peer tutoring visiting the Centre to help the children with research and communication skills while teaching them nature study. The Spastic Centre children also paid visits to Beauty Point School. Some of the children went on to higher education and found fulfilling outside occupations, while others were employed at the Centre Industries workshop at Allambie Heights.

TRANSPORT

The children and their mothers were given free transport to and from Mosman each day from their homes all over Sydney. Volunteer drivers initially used two cars, owned by the Centre, then an additional 3 were loaned for their use. All were old and required constant maintenance. Though petrol was still rationed, extra allowances were made available to the Centre though they had to bear the cost. By 1946 six converted army ambulances were in use, travelling 1200 miles a week, and costing the Centre £1 per week for each child.

A complaint in 1949 from a local resident about the Spastic Centre vehicles prompted action by Mosman Council. Until then, maintenance was done on the footpath in Queen Street, causing noise and obstruction to pedestrians, and their cars, parked in the street overnight, left little space for resident parking. As a result Mosman Council loaned land at Rawson Park for their use for a garage, maintenance shed, and splint workshop.

By 1960 the Centre had a fleet of 21 buses, a familiar sight around Mosman, but all were old and in need of repair. Apart from picking up passengers from across Sydney, they also brought the children from the Allambie hostel to and from Mosman for treatment. Breakdowns were common, leaving the children stranded by the roadside. As a result of pleas for help, Ford presented 2 new Thames Express buses to the Mosman Centre, each capable of carrying 9 children. By 1978 this transport service was costing the Centre \$2.5 million per annum.

When Mosman closed, headmistress Mrs Woosman thanked the drivers in particular, without whom they could not have coped. They each built a bond with "their kids", giving them Easter eggs and Christmas gifts, and they were loved by the children in return.

EXPANSION

The Centre had begun in January 1945 in half of Mr Sullivan's large house, starting with just 14 children, but by the end of that year it had reached full capacity of 40, with a long waiting list. The whole house was taken over for a peppercorn rent, (and eventually purchased) but they still needed more room.

The property, on a 1.53 acre block, provided plenty of space for another building but, being already in debt, no funds were available for expansion. Neil McLeod however was not fazed. An architect drew up plans, gratis, for what was to be a treatment facility. Fathers of the children, their friends and other volunteers were mobilised to do the clearing, excavation and building on a steep, difficult block. Most of the building materials were donated, and tools purchased in bulk from war surplus auctions. Press advertisements for assistance drew a great response and, as well as members of the community, groups from service clubs, trades unions and whole football teams came to work for free at weekends. Many were unskilled, but enough tradesmen were available to ensure a professional job, and the 2-storey medical treatment building, begun in December 1945, was ready for use at the start of 1947.

Though not fully equipped, the publicity brought donations of some of the necessities. It contained rooms

for all the medical and therapy treatments, and offices for staff and the medical director. The Spastic Centre was now able to cater for 100 children. The original house was then used solely as the school, with additions made in 1948. Demand, however, continued to outstrip capacity, and in 1950 it became necessary to again extend the medical facilities. Once more, volunteers made up the workforce, these extensions doubling the treatment space, after which the Centre could cater for up to 200 children plus many more outpatients.

Meanwhile, more country children were coming to the Centre, necessitating the establishment, in 1949, of accommodation for them in a cottage at 35 Glover Street, Mosman. This was only a temporary solution. Eventually in 1950, 2 supporters secured a grant of land at Allambie Heights, presenting the opportunity to build a residence where 100 country children, their mothers and staff could live while they received treatment. The foundation stone was eventually laid in November 1953, the volunteer army was again enlisted to do the work, and McLeod House was completed in 1957.

In 1961 Centre Industries was also established on this site, in a large shed built by the volunteers, to provide employment opportunities for cerebral palsied adults – many of the Mosman students went on to work there.

FUNDRAISING

All of these activities and services of course cost money, and on numerous occasions the Spastic Centre was in serious debt, and even in danger of closing. Although some services and subsidies were provided by the Government and other organisations, fundraising became an ongoing essential activity.

Founder Mrs Audrie McLeod proved to be an outstanding success at public relations and a tireless fundraiser for the Centre. The organisation began in 1945 with only £32 but was costing £100 a week to run, so from the beginning support was necessary. Mrs McLeod constantly sought high profile sponsors, donors, support from community groups, donations of goods, assistance from volunteers etc. Mosman Musical Society and Mosman Cricket Club regularly donated a portion of their takings. Mosman Chamber of Commerce encouraged support from local businesses, Mosman Council waived rates and provided free polio vaccination for the children. A group of wives and fiancées of American servicemen "adopted" the Centre, raising funds and assisting with domestic and administrative work.

Other groups assisted in similar ways. The Mosman Daily regularly published news of fetes, dances, film nights and other such functions on their behalf. The first Button Day was held in 1946: selling flowers and later badges, these became one of their largest sources of revenue.

Mrs McLeod used her connections in the cerebral palsy community to establish "country councils" as bases for fundraising in rural districts, and suburban "busy bee" groups sewed articles for sale. Nevertheless things got so bad by 1960 that "Operation Desperation" was held in order to reduce their deficit of £80,000, which threatened the reduction of staff and services. Through much hard work and the support of the community, press, radio and

TV, sponsors and volunteers, £63,000 was raised, keeping them afloat.

In 1945 a Spastic Centre Queen competition was held, contestants holding functions of all kinds to raise money – the winner was Miss June Worrell of Redan Street. Similar competitions followed, culminating in 1955 with the organisation's involvement, lasting until 2000, in the Miss Australia Quest. This became the major fundraiser for all the state Spastic Centre organisations. By 1962 Art Union raffles were being held, sponsors offering attractive prizes such as cars and TVs – these continued for many years.

The Mosman Spastic Centre closed, after 43 years, on 11 December 1987, having been an undeniable success. At peak times it had had up to 200 students enrolled. By this time there were 7 teachers and a number of support staff, plus the invaluable teacher aides who did all the essential lifting and carrying. Headmistress Mrs Woosman felt the students were ready to go their separate ways and try something new. Existing primary schools at Carlingford and North Ryde, and Balmain High School, modified for physical access, would absorb the Spastic Centre students into special units. Some other services were decentralised to be closer to their clients, and the Allambie Heights facility became, and remains, the NSW headquarters for services to Spastic, now better known as Cerebral Palsy, sufferers.

The Queen Street site was purchased by nearby Queenwood School, and is now used as their junior campus.

By P. Morris

*Sources:
McLeod, Neil. Nothing is impossible. Allambie Heights. The Spastic Centre, 2007.
Articles from the Mosman Daily, and other newspapers on Trove 40 years of progress. Spastic Centre annual report, 1985.
Mosman Council meetings – minutes – various years.
Mosman Library vertical file - "Spastic Centre"*



*Spastic Centre Button Day badges
(Powerhouse Museum)*