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On Foxborough Hill

Calvary Hospital, Wagga Wagga Its Beginning and Development

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Based on a paper read to the Society
on 19 November 1984

Within my span of memory the story of Calvary Hospital, Wagga Wagga has unfolded. It is a story of self-sacrifice, dedication, prayer and love.

Its beginning lies in the spirit of a young woman in Hyson Green, Nottingham, England in 1877 who, through her own experience of illness and great suffering, resolved to devote her life to the care of the sick and the dying. Her name was Mary Potter — the Little Company of Mary was born. A few years later (in 1884) Mary Potter founded the Mother House in Rome. She became the first Superior-General of the Order.

At first the Hospital was named Lewisham as it was a Branch of the Provincial House, Lewisham Hospital in Sydney, which, in turn, had taken its name from the suburb in which it was located. The name change took place early in 1954 when word was received that the Superior-General wished to have all the hospitals of the Little Company of Mary in Australia, named uniformly. The name was then changed to that of the Mother House in Rome, 'Calvary'. Serving a variety of needs there are branches in England, Ireland, Scotland, North and South America, Milan, Florence, Fiesole, Malta, Korea, Southern Rhodesia, New Zealand as well as in Australia.

COMING OF THE SISTERS

It was the wish and hope of Dr. Joseph Wilfrid Dwyer, First Bishop of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, that a branch of Lewisham Hospital be established in Wagga Wagga. During periods of ill health he had been a patient in Lewisham Hospital, Sydney and hoped that the people of Wagga Wagga and District would one day share the benefit of the physical and spiritual comfort and nursing

skills offered by that Order of Nursing Sisters. To that end he presided at a meeting in Saint Joseph's Hall, Johnston Street on 26 February 1925.

As the Sisters had accepted the invitation to establish a branch, catholic laymen from Wagga Wagga and other parts of the Diocese, encouraged by Bishop Dwyer, purchased a two-storey home, 'Foxborough Hall' and twenty acres of land, situated on a rise approximately one mile distant from the centre of the town, close to the Wagga Wagga District Hospital. The purchase price was £8,000 (\$16,000). This building was to serve as a temporary hospital. Financial arrangements were such, that on the discharge of the mortgage at the end of six years, the deeds would be transferred to the Order. Thus began a new era in nursing history in Wagga Wagga.

The Mother Provincial, Mother Xavier visited on 16 March 1925, met the committee and inspected 'Foxborough' and the proposed site of the new hospital. Further discussions took place in Sydney between Mother Xavier and the Bishop in December of that year on the latter's return from the first Australian Catholic Pilgrimage to Europe.

'Foxborough Hall' was the former home of James Gormly, a well-known and respected townsman. He took up residence there in the late 1870s. A man of many interests, he was a former Mayor of Wagga Wagga and its parliamentary representative for ten years.

Eight months elapsed before the Sisters were in residence. The attractive gabled-building had been renovated. Additions were made, including an up-to-date operating theatre. The architect was Mr. W.J. Monks.

Two members of the Order came on 30 August 1926 to prepare the home for its role of a temporary hospital. Mother Xavier and Mother Kieran arrived nine days later to finalise arrangements for the opening. Nine Sisters, all in their early twenties, formed the nucleus of the original staff, the Superior being Mother Elizabeth Duffy. Accommodation would be available for twelve to fourteen patients, male and female, although that number was often exceeded. This writer remembers accompanying her mother on a visit to a patient in 1928. On that occasion there were patients in beds in the hallway.

In the few months prior to the Opening the Sisters had become known in the town as they visited the sick and the house-bound just as they do at the present time, the only difference being that, in 1926 their only means of transport for their mission were a pair of (often

weary) feet. Later on there was transport of a different type which they used, going to and from the Railway Station to collect medical and other supplies which were sent regularly from their hospital in Sydney. Looking back now one could say it was novel (especially for nuns), slow and certainly uncomfortable, particularly in some weather conditions. It was a cart drawn by an aged horse which had been given to them by a grateful supporter. The horse knew only one speed — SLOW — which perhaps was just as well for he had but one eye.

OPENING OF TEMPORARY HOSPITAL

Inclement weather did not mar the proceedings or dampen the enthusiasm of those assembled to welcome the Sisters and witness the blessing and opening ceremony of Saint Joseph's Hospital which was performed by Bishop Dwyer on Wednesday afternoon 17 November 1926. (*Wagga Wagga Advertiser, Thursday 18 November, 1926*). During that period it was customary for business houses in Wagga Wagga and some other country towns to close their doors on Wednesday afternoons. All sections of the community showed great interest in the undertaking. The Mayor, Alderman E.E. Collins, in welcoming the Sisters, spoke glowingly of their splendid work. "He believed," he said, "in Wagga's potential greatness and considered the Institution another mark of progress and an asset to the town". Other speakers were the Deputy Mayor, Alderman D.T. Byrnes, the Honourable F. M. Forde, M.H.R. and Dr. Urben Ley.

On behalf of the Mother Provincial and Community, Mr. W.M.J. Walsh thanked all who had assisted in the opening ceremony. The historic function concluded with afternoon tea served to the strains of music by the Wagga Wagga City Band.

The Sisters did not have to wait long for the first theatre patient. On the morning of the opening the first surgical operation was performed by Dr. Neil Benjamin, the patient being Miss Margaret Lockwood, a member of a local family. She later entered the Order in 1932 as Sister Mary Joseph.

FOUNDATION STONE

Less than six months after the opening in 'Foxborough' the foundation stone of the new Hospital was blessed and laid by Bishop Dwyer on 1 May 1927 in the presence of the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr. Daniel Mannix, many other clergy and guests. Dr. Mannix, one of the most distinguished and controversial figures of his time, said that Bishop Dwyer had invited him to lay the foundation stone but he thought it was right for Bishop Dwyer to do so. He had accepted the invitation to come to the ceremony and

regarded it an honour to have his name associated with his (Bishop Dwyer's) on the foundation stone. He said he was deeply indebted to Bishop Dwyer and believed every Bishop in Australia was, also. He was sure Bishop Dwyer could look back on this day as one of the greatest ones of his episcopate.

It was estimated that five thousand people were present on the summit of Foxborough Hall to witness the ceremony. They came in cars and all types of horse-drawn vehicles, parking in the surrounding open spaces. A subscription list opened on the day, contained names representative of all denominations and sections of the community. Among them were J.J. McGrath, Stephen Sullivan, H. McDonough, W.M.J. Walsh, J.K. O'Reilly, Charles Hardy senior, J. Brunskill, McIntosh Bros., Dr. S.H. Weedon and many more. The amount collected was £2,300 (\$4,600).

SALE OF LAND

To help alleviate the burden of debt, surplus land surrounding the temporary Hospital was sub-divided into residential blocks and sold at auction in the Oxford Theatre, Fitzmaurice Street on 3 October 1928, at which Bishop Dwyer represented the vendors. The auctioneer, Mr. J.L. Watts stated that water, gas and electricity were available and a fast bus passed the area.

Thirty two blocks were sold at an average price of £3/3/0 (\$6.60) per foot, the first purchaser being Mr. W.M.J. Walsh who paid £3/11/0 per foot for four blocks facing Albury Road, or as it is now known, Docker Street. Other purchasers were H. McDonough, O. Saunders, P.J. Mahon, R. Pitman, Dunn, Dodwell, J. Nugent and Mrs. Weston. Eleven blocks were passed in for private treaty. Street names which emerged following the sub-division were: Lewisham Avenue, Dwyer Avenue, Gormly Avenue and Hardy Avenue. The reason is self-explanatory. Further sub-division took place at a later date. In 1954 seventeen blocks facing Lewisham and Meurant Avenues were sub-divided.

NEW HOSPITAL: DESCRIPTION AND OPENING

The new Hospital as per the original plan, estimated to cost two hundred thousand pounds (\$400,000) was described as being a magnificent piece of architecture in Romanesque style, a most modern Institution. The plan showed the entrance as being the central section of the building, the south-eastern section was to be added at a later date, the ultimate aim being to establish a Public Section as well as a Private One; this plan however, due to many factors, did not come to fruition. The architects who designed the Hospital and supervised building operations were Messrs. Monks, Kerr and Jeffs. They also donated the marble foundation stone.

The tender of Charles Hardy and Co. was accepted for the first section of the building at a cost of thirty five thousand pounds (\$70,000). As mentioned previously, the other section as planned was not to become a reality, nevertheless the Hospital continued to develop with major and minor alterations and additions being made over the years. Although workmen had begun levelling the site in January 1928, owing to complicated legal delays and other matters, it was not possible to commence building until a year later. During the entire period of the building work, the workmen were supplied with tea which the Sisters sent over from 'Foxborough'.

Within fifteen months of its commencement the Hospital was completed. It was an imposing building, a feature of the entrance foyer being a beautiful, centrally-situated maple stair-case, designed no doubt to serve the Hospital in its original plan. It no longer exists. Plate glass double doors on either side of the staircase gave access to corridors leading to other parts of the building. The ground floor and first floor had accommodation for thirty two patients. On the top floor were the Sisters' living quarters and Chapel. In the first instance a corner of the eastern balcony served as a tiny Chapel. The Chapel was later extended by incorporating other rooms. The electric lift was the first passenger lift to be installed in Wagga Wagga.

On Sunday 30 March 1930 at 3 p.m. the Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Dr. J.W. Dwyer blessed and opened the Hospital in the presence of the Co-adjutor Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. Sheehan, the Co-adjutor Archbishop of Maitland, Dr. Gleeson, the Bishop of Goulburn, Dr. Barry, local Clergy and people from all walks of life, numbering over five thousand. *The 'Wagga Wagga Express'* of Monday 31 March 1930 reported the opening thus: "Bishop Dwyer blessed the building and inserted the key in the bevelled glass doors, declaring the Hospital officially open". In the past, varying reports have stated that Archbishop Sheehan officially opened the Hospital. The Archbishop was present to represent the Sydney Arch-Diocese in which the Provincial House of the Little Company of Mary was located. Bishop Dwyer thanked him for so doing.

Archbishop Sheehan, in his address, referred to the reputation and high standard of Lewisham Hospital, Sydney, saying that Dr. Mayo, (U.S.A. Clinic) when on a visit to Australia, remarked that its lay-out, appointments and management were his ideal of what a hospital should be.

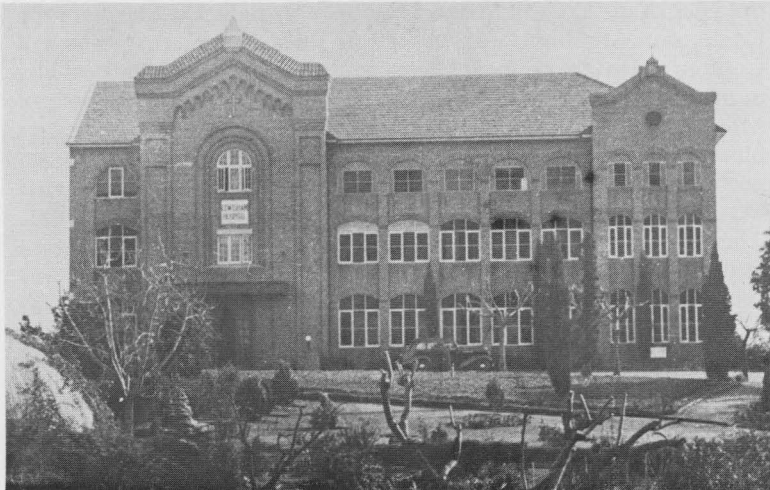
Doctors W.W. Martin, S.H. Weedon, Urban Ley, L.R. Lennon and A.C. Moran are well-remembered as being among the doctors who visited the Hospital in its opening stage, and, as previously mentioned, Dr. Neil Benjamin.

THE DEPRESSION YEARS

Before the building was completed the great Depression was already looming, in fact the plans had been drawn and a tender accepted when the economic climate changed, following on from patterns in the United States of America. There was no turning back, consequently the period of the late 1920s and the 1930s and beyond brought hardship and deprivation but little money to meet every day needs for the Blue Sisters and their Hospital. The percentage of patients able to pay the prescribed fees was small. In 1931 patients' fees were twelve to fifteen shillings per day depending on the type of accommodation provided. Some paid a proportion, some only a few shillings. Those who had farms or market gardens paid with the fruits of their labours, no-one however, was turned away. A report from the Hospital in September 1934 noted that "the drain on resources to meet neccesitous cases has been great this year (1933-34) but while there is accommodation available we continue our policy of not refusing admission to anyone".

The situation regarding payment of fees was:-

- 29% paid regulation fees.
- 34.6% paid half regulation fees and upwards.
- 20.4% paid a nominal fee.
- 15.1% were gratuitously treated.



Lewisham Hospital (Calvary), Wagga Wagga opened by the first Bishop of Wagga Wagga Dr J. W. Dwyer, on 30 March 1930, the name 'Lewisham' is visible on the facade

— Courtesy of Archives of Calvary Hospital Wagga Wagga

Many people assisted in various ways during the early years. Mr. R. Butt senior spent many years helping the Sisters with their vegetable garden, a very necessary source of supply. Mr. P.E. Power senior, wool and skin merchant, organised wood drives on a large scale. The wood was cut at Tumberumba. Mr. Power then arranged for trucks to bring it to the Hospital. From there it was sold for thirty shillings (\$3.00) per cord.

Note: A cord is a measure used especially for wood cut for fuel, a pile 8 feet long, 4 feet high and 4 feet wide (128 cubic feet).

Following the completion of the Convent, Mr. Butt's son donated a swimming pool for the Sisters' use.

Physical resources were strained as the number of patients increased, particularly during the never-to-be-forgotten summer of 1938-39 when the temperature soared to extreme heights.

These conditions took a toll on many, particularly infants and the elderly. The Depression continued its hold on the country when the Second World War began and indeed for a few years later. Many people were still on the roads walking aimlessly from place to place seeking food and shelter and that elusive commodity - work. Throughout the trying years the Sisters did not use the lift nor were the heaters turned on. The Sisters were without transport. The writer's brother-in-law, Reginald Purtell regularly took them by car to Mass at Saint Michael's Cathedral.

Somewhere, sometimes there seems to be a lighter side to most situations. Mr. Sep. Muir joined the staff two weeks before the opening day in March 1930, as the Hospital's electrician and remained in that position for fifteen years. He tells a story of a man who, during the depression years, came to Foxborough seeking a hand-out. His name was Michael Ryan and his brother was the Reverend Father Patrick Ryan of St. Kilda, or so he told the Sister.

He was given some food and went on his way. Half an hour later along came another man who said 'My name is Michael Ryan, I'm a brother of Father Patrick Ryan of St. Kilda' The Sister said: 'well that's a coincidence, another man was here a short time ago, his name was Michael Ryan and he was a brother of Father Patrick Ryan of St. Kilda'. The astonished caller paused and then said hurriedly; 'Oh that silly fool was supposed to call at the Convent' (meaning Mount Erin).

DEATH OF BISHOP J.W. DWYER

Bishop Dwyer had watched his dream become a reality. He spent a lot of time at the Hospital where he had planted all the trees on the boundary and many others as well. He was a noted botanist who

loved native plants, hence the eucalypts in the front garden. Due to intermittent ill-health. He became a semi-permanent resident at the Hospital late in 1931, sleeping there at night and going to the Bishop's House in Church Street, by day to attend to Diocesan affairs. He suffered with angina and arthritis and needed constant care. The bells which tolled the outbreak of war were scarcely silent when Bishop Dwyer passed away on 11 October 1939 in the Hospital which he had helped to establish.

WOMEN'S AUXILIARY - MEN'S COMMITTEE

The outbreak of hostilities restricted the financial help available to any institution or cause other than the war effort. The *"Daily Advertiser"* of 1 October 1941 reported that "the well-springs of charity have been heavily drawn upon by the war". The assistance given by the Women's Auxiliary during that period was invaluable and continues to be so. From the time of the establishment of the temporary Hospital in 1926, ladies of the town were on hand to assist with catering and fund-raising activities.

Although an Auxiliary was already in existence it assumed official status in December 1940 when a number of ladies met at the Hospital at the invitation of Mother Elizabeth. Bishop F.A. Henschke, successor to Bishop Dwyer, occupied the chair. Twenty one ladies were present and twenty apologies accepted. Mrs. Isidore (Ellen J.) Rudd was elected President; Miss Margaret O'Donnell, Honorary Secretary and Miss Kitty Crossey, Honorary Treasurer. Membership was two shillings (20 cents). The Auxiliary was then to be conducted along the lines of the United Hospitals Auxiliaries of New South Wales of which it became a member. Mrs. Rudd met with the Secretary of the U.H.A., Miss Grant, in Sydney to discuss the formation of the Auxiliary and the Constitution. The Honorary Auditor, Mr. John V. Doyle, who is now in his ninety fourth year, remained in that position until 1960 when he retired.

In June 1942 a Men's Committee of ten, with power to add, was formed. It consisted of Mr. L. O'Reilly as President, Messrs. W. Riordan, H. Berrigan, H. Leaver, V. O'Donoghue, E. Glazier, G. Tooze, J. Kennedy, C. Sheeky and C. Cooper. They assisted at fetes, and instigated the formation of the Lewisham Race Club which, for many years, had as its Secretary, Mr. W. (Bill) Whiting. The men organised the race-meetings and the ladies carried out the catering as they did at many other functions. The latter conducted stalls at many events in the town such as the Butchers, Bakers and Fruiterers Carnival and the Football Club Carnival. Their efforts in the early days helped to meet the fees of patients who were unable to pay.

The Honourable E.H. Graham, M.L.A., who was, for sixteen years, Wagga Wagga's parliamentary representative and who later became Minister for Agriculture, regularly attended annual meetings of the Auxiliary. Stringent controls of essential commodities were imposed during the war years but Mr. Graham was happy to announce at the annual general meeting of 21 December 1942, that he was able to obtain supplies of potatoes for the Hospital and promised to see what he could do about obtaining eggs from the Egg Board. In 1944 he was instrumental in obtaining a grant of £1,000 (\$2,000) for the Hospital.

Many will remember those days of food, clothing and petrol shortages. As a reminder of what the situation was for the Hospital, it is interesting to note that the ladies, at a meeting in December 1943 decided, that if sufficient coupons could be collected from friends and well-wishers, a bag of sugar would be purchased. A bag of sugar at that time contained 70 pounds (31.8 Kilograms).

An important arm of the Auxiliary was the sewing group, members of which met weekly and made pillow cases, sheets, doctors' operating gowns, mended bed-linen which was in short supply during and immediately after the war. At one stage as the local supply of white sewing cotton had been exhausted the snow-white linen was mended with coloured thread. Members also bottled fruit. In one season 600 jars were placed on the Hospital's cupboard shelves.

As a convenience for patients and visitors alike, members have for many years, voluntarily staffed a Kiosk within the Hospital. The Auxiliary has raised many thousands of dollars over the years, the annual fete being one of the highlights.

Ever mindful of the needs of the Sisters the Auxiliary provided money to build a rest home for them at Tumbarumba,. Several gentlemen purchased a block of land, and the Women's Auxiliary met the cost of building which was £3,000 (\$6,000). Named Mary's Mount, it was handed over to the Little Company of Mary, free of debt on 13 December 1953. In recent years it was sold and replaced by one at Bright in Victoria.

POST-WAR YEARS 1945-1974

In the immediate post-war years development was slow but by the 1950s it began to escalate. Staff quarters, laundry and a boiler room were built in 1945. Bishop Henschke had opened the Lourdes Grotto which is situated in the lower front garden, in December 1944. He blessed the sick and all who were gathered there.

DR. N. F. BENJAMIN
 —
 TELEPHONE 2568 WAGGA
 P.O. BOX 44, STH. WAGGA
 —

"Khandala"
 69 Baylis Street
 Wagga

15th April 1946

The Rev. Mother
 Lewisham Hosp.
 Wagga,

Dear Mother,
 as you know I will
 be leaving Wagga about 1st May
 which will end a long happy
 association with your Hospital.

You can be justifiably
 proud of the excellent name your
 hospital enjoys, and for my
 part, I am only too sorry to
 give up practice with your
 excellent staff.

I hope you can give
 me a letter of introduction to
 the Mother Superior of Lewisham
 in Sydney. yours truly
 N Benjamin

Copy of a letter sent by Dr. Neil Benjamin on his departure from Wagga
 Wagga. Dr. Benjamin performed the first operation in the temporary
 Hospital on its opening day, Wednesday, 17 November 1926

— Courtesy Archives Calvary Hospital Wagga Wagga

The Sisters who, for twenty years had their quarters and Chapel on the top floor of the Hospital, were delighted to have the foundation stone of their Chapel and Convent laid by Bishop Henschke on 30 March 1952. The building was opened and blessed by him on 27 September 1953. Following the transfer of the Sisters to their Convent, renovations to the Hospital were carried out, thus bringing bed-capacity to seventy two. The architect was Mr. Stephen O'Halloran, the builder — Mr. W.J. McDonald. Building of the Convent and Chapel was made possible by the generosity of Mr. John Roach of 'Moorong', a property close to Wagga Wagga, part of which forms the San Isidore settlement. Other benefactors also contributed. The Chapel, dedicated to Bishop Dwyer, was up-dated in 1968 to bring it in line with recommendations of the second Vatican Council.

As Bishop Dwyer's dream of the Hospital had been realised so too was his successor's Bishop Henschke's who hoped to see a Maternity section provided. He laid the foundation stone on 7 December 1958 and, on Sunday 4 October 1959 opened and blessed the new £100,000 (\$200,000) Maternity Wing. Bed capacity then reached one hundred. The architect was Mr. Stephen O'Halloran and the builders were Buckmans.

In 1966 a new kitchen block and cafeteria were built and, in 1969 a car park for 100 cars was provided.

A handsome bequest of \$150,000 from the estate of the late Thomas Ingram of 'Glenburn', Tarcutta allowed of further development in 1972 when two floors were added above the kitchen block and cafeteria. Mr. Peter O'Halloran was the architect and the builders were Siebel Bros. The cost of the new section, named the 'Ingram Wing' was \$400,000. As well as providing further bed accommodation including some private rooms with bathrooms, the Wing contained an operating suite consisting of two fully air-conditioned theatres, a surgical ward and a recovery room, also offices.

Vacated area was then made available for an electro-cardiogram department, a clinic, pathology and meeting room. Bed capacity then reached one hundred and twenty one. A second passenger lift to serve the Wing and other parts of the Hospital, went into use in April 1971.

The Ingram Wing was blessed by the third Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Dr. F.P. Carroll and opened by the Honourable Wal. Fife, M.P., Minister for Mines and Conservation, Member for Wagga Wagga on Sunday, 5 March 1972. Mr. Fife was the first parliamentarian to open a construction at Calvary. Contributions of new

equipment were made by professional groups, dentists, ophthalmologists and several local doctors who donated surgical instruments. A government grant of \$40,000 was obtained. Other donations totalled \$26,000 from: Rotary Club, Leagues Club, Quota Club, Downside Rural Youth, and Lions Club, the latter giving a cardiac monitor valued in excess of \$1,000. The Women's Auxiliary contributed \$6,254 towards theatre equipment.

A new three-storey wing was added to the north-eastern section of the Hospital in 1974. It was designed to augment services and to up-date facilities rather than substantially increase bed capacity. The first and second floors provided twelve private rooms with bathrooms for adult patients and, on the ground floor, a children's Wing accommodating fifteen children. This replaced the former children's ward which was also located on the ground floor. The area also provided a recreation and television room, plus a self-contained unit for country mothers. The cost of the building was \$200,000, the architect being Mr. Peter O'Halloran, the builders - the Buckman Building Group.



'Foxborough' in later years

On Sunday 21 July 1974 the Wing was blessed by Reverend Father P.M. Roach, in the absence of Bishop Carroll. It was opened by the Honourable Wal. Fife, M.P. Bed capacity reached one hundred and twenty five. The children's Ward closed in July 1981 as there did not appear to be any further call for child nursing at the Hospital. It is now used as a patients' medical library and a functions room. In that year the nursing staff numbered seventy six which included 32 trained sisters and 20 Sisters of the Order who were also trained. Nursing aides made up the remainder. So, from a twelve-bed Hospital with nine trained Sisters in 1926, the capacity rose to a 125 bed Hospital with a nursing staff of seventy six in 1974.

EXTENSION OF SERVICES, 1975-1984

The first lay Chief-Executive Officer was appointed in 1975 in the person of Mr. Bruce Humphreys. He died in 1981. The position is now held by Mrs. Anne Witherden. By 1977 the Hospital was completely air-conditioned throughout.

Because of changes in Society it became apparent that care in yet another area of nursing was needed. Of growing concern was the increasing problem of alcohol and drug dependence in the district. This led to the establishment of 'O'Connor House', named after Mother Boniface O'Connor, former Provincial Superior of the Order in the Australian Province. The ten bed unit for treatment of alcohol and drug dependent people, was blessed by Bishop Carroll and opened by the Honourable Wal. Fife on 3 September 1978. Registered as a Nursing Home it was funded by the Drug and Alcohol Authority of New South Wales. The first Co-ordinator was Mr. Colin Chestnut. A new wing was added. It opened on 30 October 1982. The role of the Centre was to change in 1983. Alcohol dependents were admitted for treatment and drug dependent people were referred to the appropriate Centres. In 1984 funding responsibility was assumed by the New South Wales Department of Health through its Albury Office. In this last year (1984) use of the Centre has increased. Sisters of the Little Company of Mary have worked part-time and full-time at the Centre.



Present day complex of Calvary Hospital Wagga Wagga (Chapel, Convent Maternity Wing not pictured)

— Courtesy *Riverina Leader*

The Little Company of Mary continued to increase and extend its provision of services to meet changing needs. Following the alteration in the system of nursing education, Calvary was invited in 1981, by the Riverina College of Advanced Education to participate in clinical training of students who were undertaking approved courses. It was necessary to employ a full-time Nurse Educator to supervise students during their training at Calvary and to provide orientation programmes for new staff members as well as inservice training for nursing staff. In August of the same year a separation of the roles of Sister Superior and Sister Administrator was introduced. Sister Marianna is Sister Superior, and Sister Brigid is Sister Administrator.

In 1982 a fire protection service was introduced. The main entrance foyer was re-modelled and a Fire Isolation Stair installed. This section was blessed by Bishop F. Carroll and opened by the Honourable Wal. Fife on 13 August 1982.

Within the Ingram Wing a three-bed Close Observation Ward was established in June 1983 at a cost of \$10,000. It is not an intensive care unit but a ward where patients are able to be closely observed following surgery. It has a monitor and hi-lo beds costing \$1,000 each.

RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTRE

Following the death in the 1950s of Mr. Frank J. Leahy, the Little Company of Mary received a bequest of one of his properties, called 'Overdale'. Although 'Overdale' is in no way connected with Calvary Hospital it is mentioned here because it is owned by the Little Company of Mary. It is conducted however by a separate group of Sisters of the Order. Situated in the hills of Harefield, twenty two kilometres from Wagga Wagga, it covers an area of approximately 740 acres or, to the metric minded, 299.1 hectares. After delivery was taken on 26 January 1960, two Sisters of the Order took up residence. They milked cows and kept sheep and pigs. Built in 1938 the commodious eight-bedroom home is of brick construction as are all the buildings - cow-sheds, barns and even the dog kennels.

Typifying the ecumenical spirit which is increasing within the community 'Overdale' has become an interdenominational Retreat and Conference Centre. Ministers of Religion and their wives from the Anglican, Presbyterian and Uniting Churches visit there for retreats. The Bishop of Riverina, the Reverend B. Hunter arranges the retreats and conferences in which the Anglican Church is involved. The Centre is used for week-end seminars of christian

youth and for other spiritual and educational purposes. Just recently Sisters of the Little Company of Mary gathered there for the first international meeting of the Sisters in Initial Formation. They came from Korea, England, America, Italy, Ireland, New Zealand and Tonga.

Since the home was enlarged by closing in verandahs and converting out-buildings into dormitory-type accommodation, the Centre is now able to cater for fifty people. Six Sisters control the Centre, as well, they supervise on-farm activities. It is a busy place all year round. Its facilities are widely used and appreciated. 'Overdale' provides a quiet and peaceful atmosphere ideally suited to the role it plays in the christian community.

ETHEL FORREST CENTRE

Although it is completely separate from Calvary Hospital mention should be made here of the Ethel Forrest Centre as the Little Company of Mary is involved in its establishment.

The Ethel Forrest Assessment, Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre is a unique project undertaken by the Anglican and Catholic Churches. It is controlled by a joint Company of the Anglican Church and the Little Company of Mary, and is supported by Federal and State Health Departments. The chairman of the Board of Directors is the Reverend Archdeacon Tony Ireland, Rector of Saint John's Anglican Church, Wagga Wagga. Sister Noreen McMahon of the Little Company of Mary is the Project Planning Co-ordinator. Archdeacon Ireland has described the Centre as the greatest liason between the two Churches since the visit of Pope John Paul II to Cantebury Cathedral in 1982.

The Centre was established to help service the needs of the elderly and infirm in the community who require various levels of care. Care and rehabilitation will be provided for ninety people on a day to day basis. As well the Centre incorporates the sixty-bed Mary Potter Nursing Home.

The project was made possible by a bequest to the Anglican Church of one million dollars from the estate of the late Miss Ethel Forrest, a long-time resident of Wagga Wagga. The Little Company of Mary provided land adjacent to Calvary Hospital, valued at two hundred and seventy five thousand dollars, as well as monies originally destined to contribute to the cost of a Nursing Home. Contract price was 3.3 million dollars.

On Sunday evening 27 February 1983 an historic ecumenical dedication service was held on the site, led by the Anglican Bishop of

Canberra-Goulburn, Bishop Warren and the then Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Dr. F.P. Carroll who is now Archbishop of the Canberra-Goulburn Catholic Diocese. As daylight faded 600 people watched the impressive ceremony.

A fund-raising appeal under the chairmanship of Mr. Cecil Toy was launched at a dinner held on 9 April of that year. It was attended by the Anglican Primate of Australia, Sir John Grinrod, and Bishop Patrick Doherty representing Bishop Carroll who was in Rome. Both dignitaries participated in the unveiling of the foundation stone of the Centre. The target of \$800,000:00 was reached in the allotted time of three months. On 27 November 1983, in the presence of 200 people the first sod was turned by Archdeacon Ireland and Sister Noreen McMahon, thus making way for the commencement of the building by Wagga Wagga builders - Clandex Constructions.



'Foxborough' 1984 (now privately owned)

Photo — Courtesy of Dr J. Oliver

In August this year (1984) Dr. Bruce Harding was appointed to the new position of Regional Geriatrician. He will be based at the Centre and will be involved also in acute geriatric care at the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital and in the general development of care for the aged.

It would be appropriate at this point to say something of Miss Ethel Forrest. She was reared in the family home which her father, William Forrest built in Freer Street (No. 24), Wagga Wagga. The latter, a local tobacconist, owned an area of land bounded by Simmons, Freer, Beckwith Streets and Wollundry Lagoon. The home is now that of Mr. George Batten, Editor of the 'Southern Rural'.

For many of her late years Ethel Forrest lived above premises she owned at 9-11 Gurwood Street. In the very early days the shops were known as 'Melbourne House', now they have the more modern title of 'Gurwood Gear'. She was quiet, reserved, tall and slim, with, what one might call, a stately walk.

In her young days, I am told, she was beautiful, but the hand of time had touched her, as it does most of us. While writing last week about the Centre which bears her name and which she so handsomely endowed, I was reminded of a thought-provoking line which I read recently: "The Mirror tells only the facts, never the poetry".

As Calvary is a Private Hospital dependent on patients' fees for its existence, concern was felt that it may be difficult to meet expenses following the introduction of the Medicare Scheme on 1 February this year. However, Calvary was one of the six hospitals in the State (four in Sydney and one in Newcastle) to be included in the prestigious Category One Bracket which, for patients, means a high level of refund from Benefit Funds.

Calvary began with a debt of £8,000 (\$16,000) and a staff of nine. The total number of staff as at 1 November 1984 was 143, of which there are 87 nursing staff and 9 Sisters of the Order. This number includes domestic and out-door staff. With growth comes inevitable change. The ground floor is now used for administrative purposes.

Development of Calvary Hospital has reached such heights not only by bequests and donations but by the dedication of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary and the generosity and assistance of citizens of all denominations and from all walks of life who have given of their time. It is said that 'he who gives time gives twice'. There are many such people associated with Calvary. It would be difficult, indeed unwise, because of unintentional omissions, to attempt to name organisations and individuals who have supported the Hospital. Service Clubs have made and continue to make a grand contribution, materially and in the giving of time.



The Forrest Centre situated in the grounds of Calvary Hospital incorporates the Mary Potter Nursing Home. The Centre was jointly opened on 3 March 1985 by the Right Reverend Owen Dowling, Anglican Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn and the Most Reverend William Brennan, Bishop of Wagga Wagga

— Courtesy of *Riverina Leader*

On Sunday next, 2 November 1984, Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Maternity Wing which opened on 4 October 1959, will be held in Calvary gardens when the fourth Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Dr William Brennan will offer Mass. In the not too distant future the Little Company of Mary will celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the founding of its Branch on 17 November 1926 in Wagga Wagga.

The trials which beset the band of nine Sisters in what was then a country town, are but a memory. They met the challenge of debt, deprivation and the Depression. In more modern times there have been challenges of a different nature. In the light of rapid advances in medical science there will, no doubt, be others in the years ahead which the Little Company of Mary will meet with the same fortitude and courage which they have shown in the past.

As the Mayor of the day, Alderman E. E. Collins foretold in 1926, Calvary Hospital has proved to be “another mark of progress and an asset to the town”.

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- Sister Marianna (L.C.M.), Sister Brigid (L.C.M.)
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Archives of Calvary Hospital, Wagga
Calvary Hospital Women's Auxiliary, Wagga Wagga
Archives of Saint Michael's Cathedral, Wagga Wagga
Archives of Riverina Murray Institute of Higher Education
Mr John Winterbottom
Mr Sep. Muir
Mr Miles Monahan
Mr Michael Pym
Dr John Oliver
Mr George Batten
Mrs Alma Nugent
Mrs Lena Flynn
Mrs Thea Lennon
Mrs Patricia Coogan