



If only these walls could talk!

Swan Hill Nurses' s Home
1979-1982

Margaret (Meg) Irvin

1979-1982 If only these walls could talk!

SCHOOL 94 COMMENCES REGISTERED NURSE TRAINING

In July 1979, six nervous seventeen- and eighteen-year old's, joined fifty-three others as *School 94*, who commenced their three-year Registered Nursing training at the Northern District School of Nursing in Bendigo.

The six Swan Hill District Hospital students were *Kevin Archard* from Murrabit; *Meg Irvin* from Swan Hill; *Judy Parker* from Kerang; *Robyn Payne* from Robinvale; *Leanne Robert* from Swan Hill and *Angela Walsh* from Culgoa.

Robyn Payne left after first year to be married and *Sally Kemp*, from Goodnight, NSW, originally commenced in *School 93* but finished her training with *School 94*.

The Swan Hill students were taught in Bendigo at *Lister House* but also weekly at Swan Hill Hospital by Nurse Tutors, *Joan Wilkins*, *Christine Taylor*, and *Margaret Holland*.



1982 School 94 Registered Nursing Graduates - (Back) Meg Irvin, Sally Kemp, Kevin Archard, & Angela Walsh (Front) Leanne Robert, Joan Wilkins (Nurse Tutor), & Judy Parker.

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The Swan Hill Hospital Nursing Home became our intermittent home for the next three years. We shared living in the three nursing homes. When we were in our study blocks in Bendigo, we lived at Lister House at 37 Rowan St., Bendigo. And when we were training in Mildura, we lived at the Mildura Hospital Nursing Home.

We all had our own individual room which had a single bed, a wardrobe, and a study desk and chair.

Lister House had ladies who were rostered on to take care of the House and help us if we required it.

The Swan Hill Nursing Home had no direct people in charge of the building.

There were the rules – no male guests. This became more difficult when males were becoming Nursing students. At first, they didn't know where to house them and then males students were allowed to stay in the Nurses Home.

Curfew was an issue. You had to be in the building before the curfew or you were locked out. It was difficult to get back in time when the Drive In didn't finish the movie until after curfew or you wanted to stay and dance at Count down at the Oasis. This was when our friend, Brad Matthews, the Night Porter, would unlock the building to let us in. Or you were climbing up the building to get into open windows that was prearranged, or you stayed at someone else's place for the night.

We had a lovely lady who was a cleaner in the Nurses Home, named Ellen. She was called "Blue" and was always very kind to us. Nursing students had our bed & board in the Nurses Home, which included meals. We remembered the lovely Angela Conway, who would serve up our meals in the dining room, which was situated next to the Nurses Home.



Lister House, Bendigo showing its luxurious rooms with Kevin Archard, Judy Parker, Angela Walsh & Leanne Robert.

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SWAN HILL DISTRICT HOSPITAL



(Above Left) Swan Hill District Hospital 1930's (Above Right) Swan Hill Nurses' Home 1939



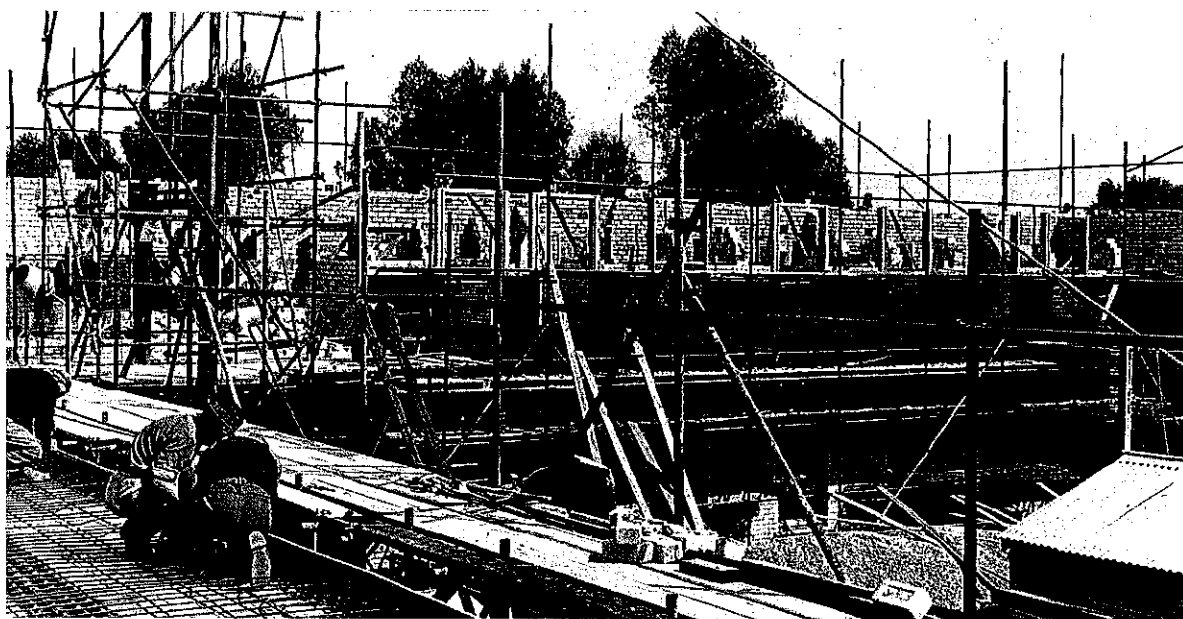
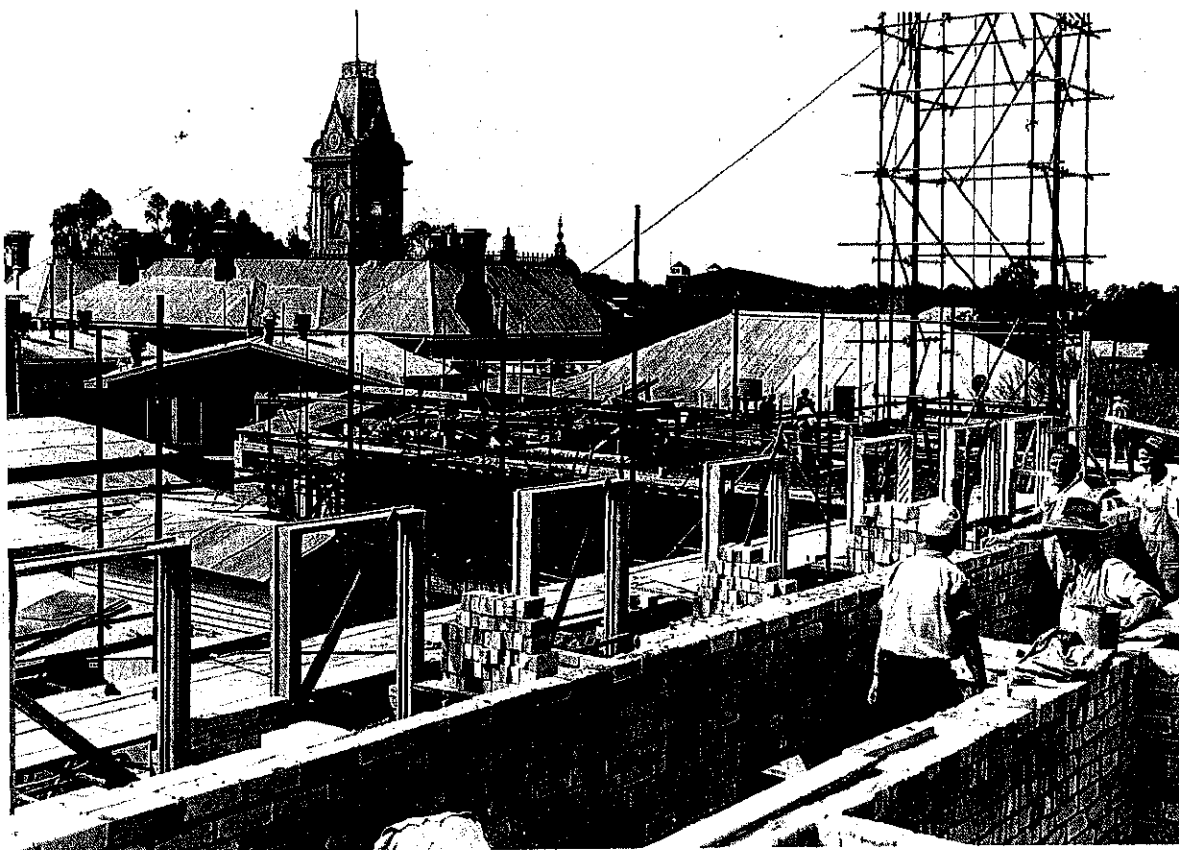
The old Swan Hill hospital building was demolished in 1981



Swan Hill District Hospital 1980s

1979-1982 If only these walls could talk!

CONSTRUCTION OF THE SWAN HILL NURSES'S HOME MID 1956



1979-1982 If only these walls could talk!

Mainly for Women

By "Melita"

Women's Club inspect new nurses' home

Through the courtesy of the secretary of the Swan Hill Hospital, Mr. N. B. Perrin, and the Matron, 60 ladies from the 3SH Women's Club availed themselves last Wednesday afternoon of the opportunity to see the attractive appointments in the newly completed section of the nurses' home, still in the course of construction.

Melita, from our staff, was invited to join the party being escorted through, and was impressed with the general effect of coolness displayed everywhere with pale greys and blues intermingled with white.

It is evident that a lot of thought has gone into the furnishings, which will undoubtedly create a most relaxing atmosphere for the nurses, being easy for the eyes, and pleasant to look at.

Each single bedroom contains a single bed with bookshelves at the head, pale grey rubber floor coverings and attractive mats. The curtains are of heavy pale cinnamon linen, figured with white contemporary design, with draw strings for easy adjustment.

Blondwood fashions the furniture, which comprises a built-in wardrobe, dressing table, arm chair, and dressing table stool. Cream leather covers the chairs and stools.

The walls in the bedrooms are of multi pastels, and some of them have one wall of a deeper contrasting color.

Bedlamps are set on a swivel at the head of each bed, and a long mirror in each dressing table completes the setting, in these attractive rooms, which are all approximately 12ft by 10 ft in size. Most windows throughout

the building command a splendid landscape view of many miles to the north, overlooking the Woorinen area.

Balconies are covered with the same grey and white rubber tile, with long louvre windows along the full extent. Eventually, heavy draw curtains will be fitted to these windows to give shade.

Each floor has a tiny kitchenette for the nurses use, and these are finished in a pale duck-egg blue, with stainless steel sinks.

Washrooms, and shower recesses are also most attractive, in white and a deeper shade of blue, the walls being highly glossed.

A thoughtful asset is the installation of phone recesses on each floor, made from perforated aluminium, and soundproof to obviate the disturbing of sleeping nurses.

The sitting rooms are not completed yet, but when they are they will be particularly comfortable, and will have attractive parquet floors and brightly-colored furniture.

The president and secretary

of the 3SH Women's Club, Mrs. Berry and Mrs. Cooke respectively, thanked Mr. Perrin and the matron for inviting them to see through the completed wing of the home, and paid tributes to those who were responsible for the furnishings.

1979-1982 If only these walls could talk!



OUT OF THE OLD

Top (l to r): Nurses Val Peace, Mavis Rae, Valerie Keighran and Joan Stutley carry their personal belongings from the old nurses' home at the Swan Hill District Hospital for Mr. Ron Small to transport to the new home. Bottom: Nurse Mavis Rae is all smiles as she makes the bed in her delightful room at the new home, a section of which was recently completed and many nurses have transferred to it.

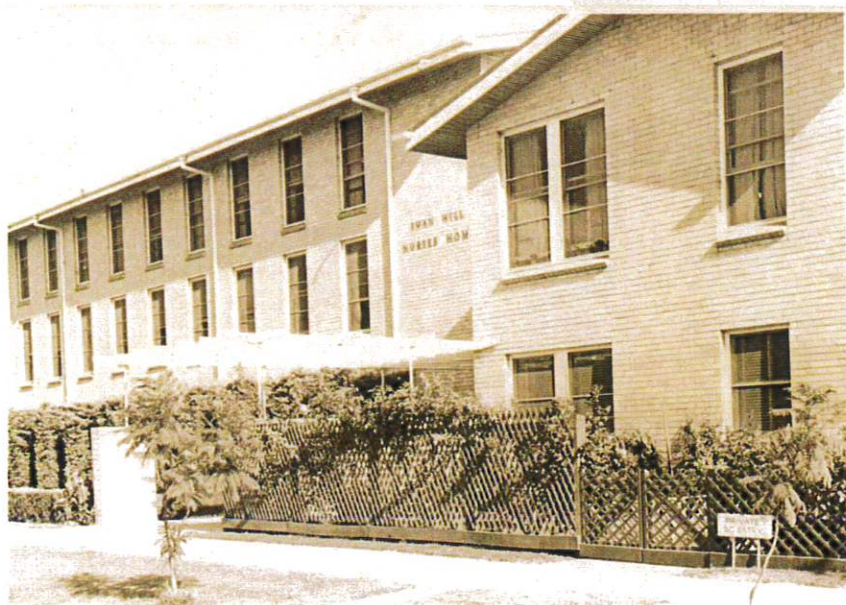
... INTO THE
NEW 

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1979-1982 If only these walls could talk!

SWAN HILL NURSES'S HOME



Swan Hill Nurses' Home 1960s

1979-1982 If only these walls could talk!

INSIDE THE NURSES' HOME

Each of our rooms soon became individualised in the short time we were in them before we had to head off to Mildura or Bendigo.



Swan Hill Nursing Home rooms of Angela Walsh, Judelle Smith and Judy Parker



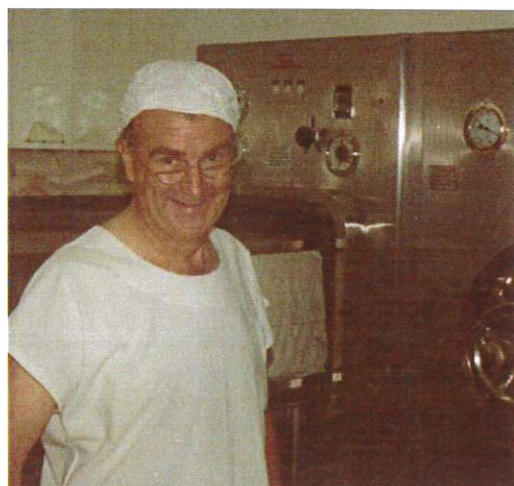
The Nurse's home was a transient home for training nurses, both Registered and State Enrolled Nurses, over their training. There were three floors. Most of the time the training nurses were on the top floor. There were also qualified staff who stayed in the Home as well.

There were two wings. One wing with a basic room with a communal bathroom, kitchen, and lounge room and the other wing, which we accessed though a window, was the "Sister's" wing, which had their own sink in it.

1979-1982 If only these walls could talk!



(Left) Meg Irvin in her room on the top floor of the Nurse's Home (Right) Robyn Payne and Leanne Robert



(Left) Kevin Archard at the Swan Hill Nurse's Home stairs. (Right) Mr Hayden Martin, Surgeon, in the Swan Hill Hospital Theatre.



(Above) Wayne Hue in the lounge room, top floor of the Swan Hill Nurse's Home, looking into the kitchen.

Most of the training nurses were on the top floor. Deputy Matron, Sadie Bailey, lived on the second floor. We attempted to do the right thing and not have Sadie tell us off. I remember one story, where Sadie chased some intruder out of the Nurse's Home with a broom.

The Nurse's Home was also subject to some interesting characters who wanted to hook up with a nurse for the evening. We would get pranksters ringing up to ask Nurses out. I remember an occasion when a School 93 Nurse answered the phone and replied, "Sorry, this is dial-a-prayer, you have the wrong number."

1979-1982 If only these walls could talk!



Kevin Archard's room always had a large number of plants



(Left) Kevin Archard in his room (Right) Kevin Archard and Leanne Robert in the lounge room, top floor of the Swan Hill Nurse's Home

There was no air conditioning in our rooms. In the summer, it was very hot. Some of us would drag our mattresses down to the lounge room as it was the only room with an air conditioner. I remembered one year, the heat got to me, and I kept getting blood noses. In the end, I bought a fan to try to keep cool.

On one occasion, it was so hot that it instigated a water fight. There were buckets of water aimed at anyone silly enough to get too close. There was about 2 cm of water all down the corridor. In the end we mopped it up, hoping Sadie Bailey, the Deputy Matron, who lived on the middle floor of the Nurses Home, would not come upstairs to the top floor, to investigate the commotion.

On another occasion, Kevin Archard started another water fight, after tipping a bucket of cold water on someone in the shower.

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UNIFORMS OVER THE YEARS



As training nurses with the Northern District School of Nursing, we all wore yellow dresses with caps. When you lived in the Nurse's Home, you could also have your laundry done. It was lovely getting our yellow dresses back all cleaned and ironed and our caps properly starched. Our yellow coats were made of nylon and were not warm at all. The boys had navy woollen coats, so I know which I preferred to keep warm.

We enjoyed going out. "*Count Down*" at the Oasis Hotel, was a favourite as well as other pubs, going to the Pictures, and the Drive In. The Curfew to get back into the Nurse's Home, could be an issue at times and many of us devised ways around it. The Night Porter, Brad Matthews, was very kind to us and would let us into the Nurses' Home after curfew.

Partying hard could also have consequences for being at the "*Morning or Early Shift*", commencing at 7.00am for quite a few Nurses. There were times when Nurses had had no sleep at all or were feeling a bit unwell.

Some Nurses found it very hard to get up for an Early Shift. One nurse had set three alarm clocks, to try to get them up and at work on time. My room was a few doors down from them and I remember waking up to the deafening din of the alarms going off. I had to go and bang on their door to get them up and turn off the alarm clocks. They had slept through the three of them!



Leanne Robert, Robyn Payne, and Judy Parker, First year Registered Nurses, 1979

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SHDH HISTORY (paperzz.com/doc/8873473/swan-hill-district-health-history)

- 1940 SHDH gained authorisation to conduct a three-year general training school for nurses.
- 1949 Northern District School of Nursing was established at Bendigo.
- 1958 Victorian Governor, Sir Dallas Brooks, opened the new Nurses' Home (191,000 pounds)

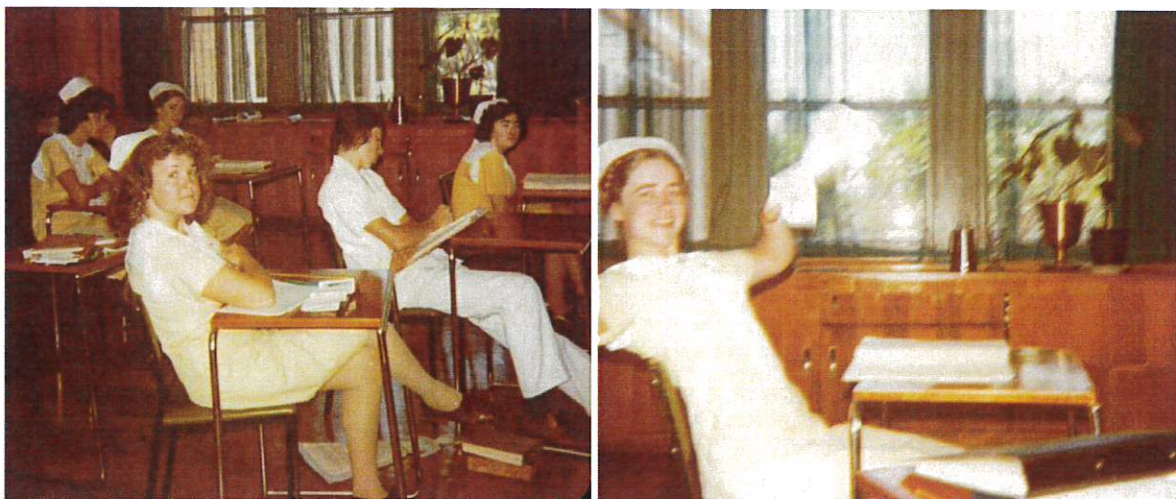
- 1926 SHDH accepted the town's first ambulance as a gift from the Victorian Ambulance Service. The charges were one shilling a mile, with the minimum fee 10 shillings (\$1) a journey.
- 1931 The seven-bed maternity wing, built at a cost of 3750 pounds, was officially opened by Country Progressive Party women's committee President, Mrs T. Connellan who was one of the instigators of the project.
- 1935 The hospital was connected to the town's new sewerage scheme at a cost of 700 pounds.
- 1936 SHDH Women's Auxiliary opened a shop to enable it to raise funds for the hospital.
- 1937 Sir John and Lady Harris officially opened the new infectious diseases ward and the "temporary" tents were dismantled.
3SH Women's Club was formed, an organisation that brought many items of equipment for the hospital.
- 1938 Victorian Premier Mr Dunstan opened the new kitchen block, operating theatre, dispensary and children's ward which were completed for about 20,000 pounds.
The hospital for the first time accepted intermediate patients.
- 1940 SHDH gained authorisation to conduct a three-year general training school for nurses.
- 1946 Plans were afoot to build a new hospital on a new site with the current building to be used as a community centre.
Plans of the proposed new 400,000 pound hospital were released.
- 1947 Health Minister Sir Albert Dunstan said Swan Hill was not to be misled. "To promise materials for such a project (as a new hospital) would only delude the people".
- 1948 Swan Hill's new hospital was listed among the first 15 to be built in Victoria. Commenting on SHDH's monthly wage of 600 pounds. The committee of management decided to go ahead with the conversion of an army hut into a pathological laboratory. Northern District School of Nursing was established at Bendigo.
- 1950 An egg appeal gathered 800 dozen eggs for the hospital.
- 1951 Apex conducted a jam drive. Hospital beds were reduced by 25 percent due to staff shortage. Nurses' quarters were evacuated because of maternity ward overcrowding.
- 1953 Victorian Premier Mr John Cain dashed Swan Hill's hopes for a new hospital when he said: "We will go on with the buildings (hospitals) already begun but will not start any new work".
The hospital relinquished control of the ambulance service when Mid Murray District Ambulance Service was established.
- 1958 Victoria Governor Sir Dallas Brooks opened the new nurses' home (191,000 pounds).
- 1959 The maternity wing was completed at a cost of 50,000 pounds
- 1960 Mrs M.C. Mabbitt and Mrs Marjorie. Miles were the first women appointed to the committee of management.
- 1962 Theatre block extensions were completed for 72,293 pounds.
- 1965 The children's ward was extended to accommodate 13 and Stage 1 of the ward block was complete for total cost of 100,000 pounds.
Stage 2 of the ward block finished (208,000 pounds).
- 1970 The former public ward was converted to a temporary day hospital
- 1974 Senator Guilfoyle, the Federal Minister for Health, opened the \$228,000 day hospital.
- 1976 Alan Wood, MLS (Swan Hill), officially opened the two-storey service complex which included a centralised store, linen exchange, ground floor mortuary and first floor staff amenities. The dental clinic in McCallum Street was opened.
- 1977 This two-story 52-bed geriatric ward (\$1 million) was opened by Mr. Fisher, MHR (Mallee). A new staff cafeteria was built at a cost of \$135,390.
- 1981 Swan Hill Fete Society sold Woanna Park for \$112,500. The money was to be invested in perpetuity with the interest to be used for hospital projects. The first phase of Stage 4 was completed. This comprised administration offices, reception area and a physiotherapy department. This phase cost about \$2 million. The old hospital building was demolished.
- 1982 X-ray equipment costing \$184,000 was installed in the new radiology department. Stage 4 was completed incorporating radiology, pathology and pharmacy departments and the new complex was linked to the existing main corridor.
- 1985 Completion of Stage 5 which included a new casualty department into an outpatients clinic.
- 1989 Minister for Health Ms Hogg dedicated the Bruce Fraser Memorial Children's Ward and opened the kitchen extensions. Costing \$1.14 million. The renovations and extensions represented the completion of the hospital's seven-stage building program.
- 1991 Mr. Barry Ryan, Chief Executive Officer for 18 years retires. Mr Ryan oversaw almost the total rebuilding of the Hospital and was instrumental in the establishment of considerable new and innovative services
- 1995 Swan Hill and District Community Health Service was intergrated into services, a division of Primary Care was established.
- 1996 Hospital in the Home was introduced
- 1997 Nyah District Bush Nursing Hospital transferred into the 'Swan Hill District Hospital's operation.
The Susan and Rely Hayward Trust was established from a bequest. Funds to be used to benefit the Extended Care Unit.
- 1999 Building works to relocate the termite damaged Midwifery were completed. Included in the project was a renovated Emergency Department.
- 2000 Significant preparation was undertaken for Y2K. The year 2000 came without any issues.
Hospital Charity Day raised \$79,400 for the purchase of medical equipment.

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SWAN HILL DISTRICT HOSPITAL STUDY DAYS



(Above) Swan Hill District Hospital Lecture Room 1960s and below in 1979

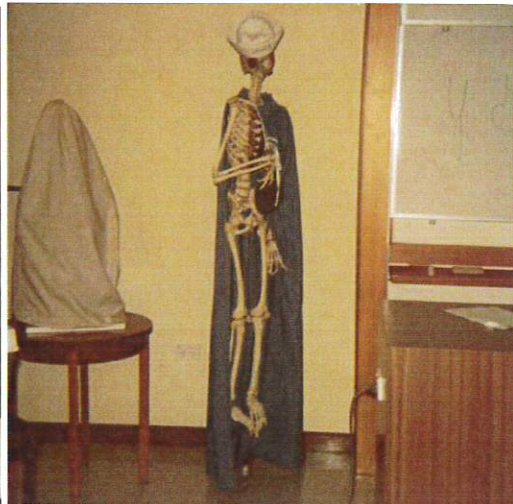


(Left) Angela Walsh, Robyn Payne, Judy Parker, Kevin Archard & Leanne Robert (Right) Robyn Payne

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(Right) Leanne Robert, Joan Wilkins & Christine Taylor (Tutors) (Right) Joan Wilkins, Leanne Robert & Kevin Archard



Meg Irvin & friend 1979



Nurse tutors - Joan Wilkins and Christine Taylor

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Matron V.J. Steggall. 1966.



SEPT., 1982 - Sr. Angela Walsh, Mr. D. Shaw (H.B.A. Manager), Sr. J. Wilkins (Nurse Educator), and Mr. John Guidice, S.R.N. at Nurses' Graduation.

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FINAL STUDY DAY AT SWAN HILL DISTRICT HOSPITAL



Final Study Day at Swan Hill Hospital before the final exams. Meg Irvin, Judy Parker, Sally Kemp, Leanne Robert, Angela Walsh & Kevin Archard.



July 1982 Swan Hill District Hospital graduating nurses-Margaret (Meg) Irvin, Sally Kemp, Kevin Archard, Angela Walsh, Leanne Robert and Judy Parker with SHDH Head Tutor, Joan Wilkins. (Photo The Guardian)

1979-1982 If only these walls could talk!



— THE GUARDIAN — FRIDAY, JULY 30, 1982

Smiles from new Sisters

IT was smiles all round for this group at the Swan Hill District Hospital last week when results were announced for State nursing examinations.

The hospital's director of nursing, Miss Melva Schneider (pictured centre front), was on hand to offer her congratulations to the hospital's newest graduates.

They are — back row (from left) Meg Irvin, Sally Kemp, Kevin Archard, and Angela Walsh, and in the front row Leanne Robert (left) and Judy Parker.

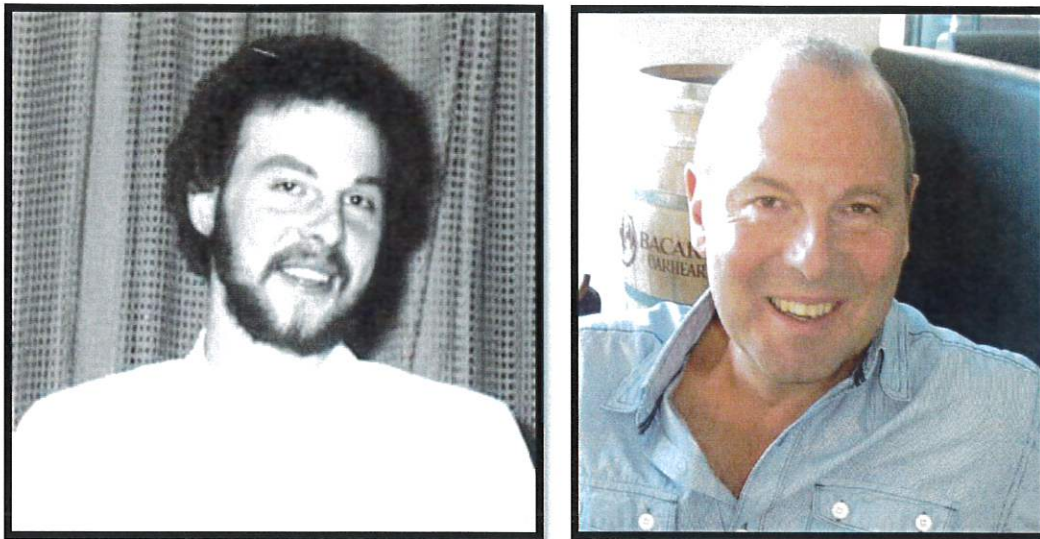
The hospital has two intakes of six student nurses each year.

July 30, 1982, Swan Hill District Hospital graduating nurses in The Guardian. (Back) Meg Irvin, Sally Kemp, Kevin Archard, Angela Walsh, (Front) Leanne Robert, Director of Nursing, Melva Schneider, and Judy Parker.

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SCHOOL 94 – SWAN HILL NURSING STUDENTS – WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

KEVIN ARCHARD



Kevin Archard 1982 & 2022

Kevin (Arch) Archard – Currently lives at Mt Martha with his wife Sonia, and two children Poppy and Levi. After completing his training in 1982, Arch worked at PANCH in the surgical, medical and Orthopaedic wards. Arch then worked in the Emergency Department for twelve years.

Archie did further training, completing his Grad Dip Emergency PANCH in 1985, the Grad Cert Midwifery Mercy Maternity in 1986 and Grad Dip Healthcare Management at Latrobe Uni.

He then became the NUM of PANCH Emergency Department in 1993 and was Commissioned and Nurse Unit Manager of John Fawcner Hospital Emergency Department in 1994.

Archie was then made Assistant Director of Nursing of John Fawcner Hospital in 1995 and Director of Nursing of Waverley Private Hospital in 1996.

In 1999, Archie then became Director of Nursing of Coonara Hospital and Nurse Unit Manager of Williamstown Emergency Department in 2002. Archie was then Commissioned and Nurse Unit Manager of Cabrini Emergency Department in 2004 and for eleven years in FT Agency Critical Care.

Over the COVID 19 period, Kevin ran quarantine hotels overseeing the Crown, Pan Pacific, Novotel and Rydges Groups as Infection Prevention Executive. Kevin was seconded to run Aged Care Infection Protection when several Aged Care Groups had serious outbreaks in Victoria.

Currently, in 2022, Kevin has reduced his hours to MT TF and enjoying family time. Kevin stated he *“loved our hospital training and the culture of nurturing and support that hospital training provided. So much laugh out loud fun, it doesn't feel like that anymore.”*

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MARGARET (MEG) IRVIN



Margaret (Meg) Irvin 1982 & 2022

Margaret (Meg) Irvin – Currently lives in Swan Hill. After completing her training in 1982, Meg married and had three children, Kerry, Sharon, and Michael.

Meg has worked continually in various hospitals, Swan Hill, Mildura, and Shepparton; in various wards and in various roles such as an Associate Charge Nurse and Clinical Nurse Specialist in various areas - Critical Care, High Dependency, Medical, Surgical, Emergency and Gerontology Nursing.

Meg completed her Critical Care Certificate Non-Metropolitan at the Goulburn Base Hospital in 1992 and her Bachelor of Nursing at Deakin University in 1997.

Meg was also Cardiac Rehab Coordinator at Swan Hill Hospital for four years.

Meg has worked as a Secondary School Nurse since 2004 with Department of Education & Training in the North Western Victorian Region. Meg currently lives in Swan Hill and has kept her nursing skills by working casually for On Time Nursing Agency until 2021 and remains on the Casual Nurse Bank for Kerang District Health.

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JUDY PARKER REINHARDT (Nee PARKER)



Judy (Parker) Reinhardt 1982 & 2022

Judy Reinhardt (nee Parker) – After training, Judy completed her Graduate year at St Vincent's Hospital. In late 1983, Judy worked in the Gynae oncology at the Mercy Maternity Hospital (as it was called then).

Judy completed her Midwifery training in 1984-1985. From 1985, Judy worked at the Mercy's Delivery Suite and Tertiary high-risk obstetrics. At the time, the Mercy was delivering 5,000 deliveries per year.

From late 1987 to mid-1990s, Judy worked at the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS). This taught me valuable lessons. As a guest in a patient's home, there was a power shift, and learned to really understand that other people choose their own lifestyle choices.

From 1990-1992, Judy was ANUM at the Mercy in the Delivery Suite. Con. 1993-1997, as ANUM at North Park Private Antenatal/Postnatal/Special Care Nursery/Delivery Suite.

From 1997-2003, Judy worked at Sunbury Private as the NUM Grade 5 role for the Medical/Surgical/Delivery Suite with hands on Clinical. From 2003-2009, Judy worked at the Baronor Private Hospital in a Grade 4 position in the Medical/Surgical/Psychiatric Ward. From 2009-2010, Judy worked at the Latrobe Private in the Surgical Ward. From 2010-2013, Judy worked in the Melbourne Health Transition Unit. From 2013-2021, Judy worked in Northern Health Geriatric Medicine. And over the course of my career, Judy also did a lot of Agency work all over Melbourne. When Judy retired in 2021, she had only ever had a 9-month maternity absence to have her twin boys in 1994. Judy Currently lives in Bendigo with her husband, and twins, James and Christian.

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ROBYN HOLDSWORTH (Nee PAYNE)



Robyn Payne 1980 and 2022

Robyn Holdsworth (nee Payne) – Currently lives in Euston with her husband John and her two children, Levi, and Xana. Robyn left Registered Nurse /Division 1 nursing training in second year to be married and became an Enrolled Nurse (Division 2).

Robyn let her registration lapse due to limited work opportunities and currently works as a PCA at the Robinvale District Health Services at the Riverside Hostel for the Aged. In 2022, Robyn has now retired and lives with her husband in Robinvale/Euston.

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LEANNE ROBERT



Leanne Robert 1982 & 2022

Leanne Robert – Currently lives in Perth, Western Australia. After completing her training in 1982, Leanne completed a Post Grad Certificate in Critical Care Nursing at the Austin Hospital in Heidelberg from 1983-1984 and then worked ICU/CCU.

In 1993-1994, Leanne worked in Saudi Arabia and moved to Perth, WA, after this to work in a Day Surgery and Pre-Admissions Units.

In 2008, Leanne began working in Occupational Health Nursing in the Construction and Mining Industry and is currently contracted for Fly in/Fly out (FIFO) on remote mine sites.

Leanne has said that her *“nursing career has enabled her to work and travel to some amazing places and to share some special adventures, like working in refugee camps.”*

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ANGELA WALSH EDGAR



Angela Walsh Edgar 1982 & 2022

Angela Walsh-Edgar – After completing her training in 1982, Angela worked at the Swan Hill District Hospital from 1982 -1997 in a range of roles. She was married in 1984 and had three children, Rebecca, Alexander, and Samuel. Ange worked with the Royal Institute for the Blind as the Regional Rehabilitation Officer for Loddon Mallee 1997 -2001 and then moved to the newly developed Secondary School Nurse (SSN) role in Swan Hill College and Kerang Technical High School.

Ange later moved to Bendigo schools and was a Secondary School Nurse for a decade. She continued to work for State Government in a variety of roles such as overseeing Maternal and Child Health. For the past decade now, Ange has worked alongside Child Protection, coordinating health and education assessments. For the past 5 years to 2022, Ange has been based in North Metro office of DHHS in Melbourne.

Northern District School of Nursing (NDSN) was a great base to start – the mix of theory and practical training and learning has served me well and exposed me to a range of people and experience in Bendigo, Swan Hill and in during our 2nd year in Mildura.

Having great lecturers such as Fran Sheehan in Bendigo and Joan Wilkins and all our clinical educators in Swan Hill, guided us to become skilled in our craft. It seems a lifetime ago since we started working with the likes of Mr Hayden Martin, the surgeon, Dr Magri delivering babies and doing rounds with Dr Geoff Briggs or Dr Godfrey Williamson with their contrasting in their styles. As junior nurses, once we were told or chastised, those lessons were never lost.

There were many advantages to living in the nursing home and one was having colleagues in the nurse's home to debrief and process what we had seen on a shift or if patients had died. The convenience as there was many an early shift at 7am when Marg Arnoldt, the Charge Sister on Ward 2, or our educator, Christine Taylor, had to call the nurses home on the pay phone to see if myself and my mate Archie, were coming to work that day. We may have overindulged at Countdown at the Oasis Hotel the night before. We could throw on a uniform, squirt toothpaste in our mouth and run to be there by 7.10am for the end of handover! The wrath of Sister Arnold was something else.

1979-1982 If only these walls could talk!

On a personal level, I have beautiful memories of nursing care with those fabulous midwives who delivered my babies such as Sue Donnelly, Eileen Morath and Jan and the Mothercraft Nurses who helped me learn to be a new mum are priceless.

The skills developed in my training around observation, assessment and triage have threaded through all of my work and am grateful that I have nursing as my background. It has allowed me to step in and out of the workforce over many decades and has given me financial security and is the basis of my longevity in the public service -21 years this year.

I have two children who have gone into nursing. Sam at the Royal Children's Hospital in the Cardiac Ward. And Beck in Infection Control and Alexander, who did his GAP year at the Medical Centre and pondered doing medicine for a while but has since gone into Law.

It's been lovely to reminisce and see all the photos and I wish could have been there on September 28th, 2022, at the *End of an Era Reunion* and wish everyone all the best. A big shout out to Meg who has been our keeper of history for School 94 and helped us preserve our history.

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NORTHERN DISTRICT SCHOOL OF NURSING (NDSN) SCHOOL 94 REUNION

On Saturday the 12th of October 2013, School 94 Swan Hill District Hospital Nursing Students had their first reunion. We felt that meeting in Bendigo where Angela had settled, was the central place to meet. Robyn came from Robinvale, Archie (Kevin) and Judy came from Melbourne, Meg came from Swan Hill and Leanne flew over from Perth, W.A.

We had always got on well with each other and we had a fantastic day catching up with what we had done over the past thirty years. We are all very proud to have been a part of School 94.



Swan Hill District Hospital students School 94 Reunion 12/10/2013 (Back) Angela Walsh-Edgar, Kevin Archard (Insert) Sally Kemp (Front) Robyn Holdsworth (nee Payne), Margaret (Meg) Irvin, Judy Reinhardt (nee Parker), and Leanne Robert.

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(Back) 12/10/13 Meg Irvin, Kevin Archard, Angela Walsh-Edgar (Front) Leanne Robert, Robyn Holdsworth (nee Payne) and Judy Reinhardt (nee Parker).

Back together again

EMMA MANSER

SPENDING more than 30 years apart was no barrier for a close-knit group of six nursing students who were based at Swan Hill District Hospital in the early 1980s.

In 1979, Kevin Archard of Murrabit, Meg Irvin of Swan Hill, Judy Parker of Kerang, Robyn Payne of Robinvale, Leanne Roberts of Swan Hill and Angela Walsh of Culgoa commenced their three year nursing degree in Bendigo as part of School 94.

Robyn left after a year of study to be married, while Sally Kemp of Goodnight originally began with School 93, however finished with School 94.

"We were a potpourri of nursing students from all around the district," Ms Irvin said.

Studying Registered Nursing at the Northern District School of Nursing, they joined 53 other students in School 94.

The six local students received most of their tutoring in Bendigo at Lister House, but once a week they would travel to the then Swan Hill District Hospital — now Swan Hill District Health — to be taught by Joan Wilkins, Christine Taylor and Margaret Holland.

Graduating in 1982, the local students of



GRADUATION: This photo appeared in *The Guardian* in 1982, it featured the recent graduates (back) Meg Irvin, Sally Kemp, Kevin Archard, and Angela Walsh, (front) Leanne Robert, tutor Joan Wilkins and Judy Parker.



CATCH-UP: The recent reunion saw (back) Angela Walsh-Edgar, Kevin Archard, (front) Robyn Holdsworth (nee Payne), Meg Irvin, Judy Reinhardt (nee Parker), and Leanne Robert meet in Bendigo.

School 94 had not been together since — until now.

The Northern District School of Nursing Graduates Association (NDSNGA) are now writing a history of Lister House and the students who studied there, to be put together in a book. This prompted Ms Irvin to find her

group of friends.

Although she had kept in contact with three of the group, finding others took a little more detective work.

"Angie, Robyn and Leanne were the three I had most contact with, Archie, Sally and Judy I hadn't seen for 31 years," Ms Irvin said.

"You have different

interests and you want to do different things in nursing.

"To get the bigger certificates you have to go away, while some of us got married and stayed in the area — so it is just different interests."

With some help from her daughter and some luck — Ms Irvin bumped into Sally's mother, whom she hadn't seen for years, in Aldi one day — the seven met in Bendigo in early October.

"It was very emotional...but it was like we had never been apart," she said.

Now they have got the ball rolling, they have already organised another meeting next year.

For now, Ms Irvin is focused on putting together the group's story for the book on Lister House.

She plans to write about their exploits and experiences as young nursing students, including information of what they are now doing in their lives.

"It is a great opportunity to get your story on record."

Submissions for the Northern District School of Nursing Graduates Association book need to be in by the end of November.

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