Abstract:
The published case load of the doctors of the Waratah Hospital, Tasmania is described with emphasis firstly on the accidents occurring in the mines, and the subsequent business and community support of the victims over a twenty eight year period. Secondly the incidence and severity of infectious diseases before antibiotics and vaccine prevention is portrayed with lessons for today where infectious diseases have become the optional choice of the anti-vaccination advocates. Thirdly the problems of clinical medicine in an isolated community with an enormous workload, and of staffing the hospital run throughout the paper.

Keywords: Mining, Accidents, Compensation, Infectious diseases, Isolation.

Introduction
The small town of Waratah, located 205 km due west from Launceston and 377 km north west of Hobart in North Western Tasmania, was initially constructed to provide the supporting infrastructure for a tin mine at Mount Bischoff 1.7 km away. Mining towns inevitably require resident medical officers with a hospital nearby, particularly because severe and fatal accidents were and remain unfortunately common, but also for the general health requirements of miners and other workers plus their families.

Currently with its small nearly invisible population of two hundred and forty nine people and its collection of ageing building it appears almost deserted.

Information is obtained predominantly from Tasmanian newspapers on the Trove website, www.trove.nla.gov.au. with the search terms of ‘Waratah Hospital’ and named doctors. It is recognised that newspapers are not peer reviewed journals but are the most detailed source of information. The article focuses on the outcome of workplace accidents, and the ability of workers to return to their industry plus the support available to survive financially.

The History of Waratah
The small town of Waratah is located 205 km due west from Launceston and 377 km north west of Hobart in North Western Tasmania.

Waratah has a cold oceanic climate, unusually cool by Australian standards and bordering on a subpolar oceanic climate. It is one of the wettest and coldest locations in Tasmania. The town has a high frequency of cloudy days and maximum temperatures often fail to get above 10 °C, even in summer. Winter snowfall is common, and heavy rainstorms can be experienced throughout the year with annual rainfall of 2500mls. Temperature extremes have ranged from 38.1°C
to -5.5 °C. Waratah's wettest month on record was May 1923 with 644.8 mm of rain recorded.

The Peerapper Indigenous people first colonised the area around Waratah for tens of thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans. The area was so dense and inaccessible it resisted systematic early European exploration for decades after the establishment of Hobart town (Godfrey, 1984).

James "Philosopher" Smith first discovered tin at Mount Bischoff in 1871, and the first mining leases on Mount Bischoff were taken out in 1872. Smith is regarded as one of Tasmania’s great benefactors. The Mount Bischoff Mine at about 675m above sea level, is one of the higher altitude mines in Tasmania, and it is also one of the westernmost mines in Tasmania. It became the richest tin mine in the world and raised the island from the economic doldrums to spectacular prosperity (Godfrey, 1984).

The possibility of annexation of the state by Victoria in the 1870s was forgotten to the benefit of Taswegians and the visitors of today who enjoy Tasmania’s rich history, culture, natural beauty and culinary excellence.

Prospectors, miners, tradesmen, shopkeepers and all the infrastructure poured into Waratah. By 1882, there were three hotels, bakers, blacksmiths, butchers, storekeepers, tailors, a bank, a chemist, a constable, a postmistress and a school teacher. Its population peaked around five thousand in the early 1900s.

Nevertheless, Waratah remained a remote town with difficult access. As Geoffrey Blainey wrote,

‘commercial travellers who rode up on the jolting horse-tram sensed the loneliness and desolation of the new town of Waratah,….. it seemed to lie on the rim of civilisation.’ (Godfrey, 1984; Blainey, 1963)

It was however in 1886 the first town in Australia to have electric street lights, four hundred incandescent streetlights powered by the mine. Mount Bischoff Post Office opened on 1st September 1874 and the town was renamed Waratah after the wild flower in 1882. In 1879 the town acquired a police station and court house. In 1908 the Court House became the local Council Chambers and Court House.

![Figure 1. Waratah Town and Waterfall](image_url)

The superficial ore was successfully extracted initially by sluicing. The Waratah River which flows through the town, down a waterfall to fill the Waratah Lake, was diverted from the stream to provide water for mine sluicing and processing. In 1877 tin from the mine was being carried to the town by horse drawn wooden tramway, a journey taking thirteen hours. By the 1880s the Mt Bischoff mine was thought to be the richest tin mine in the world and in 1884 the Van Diemen's Land Company built a railway from Emu Bay to Waratah, the journey now taking 3 1/2 hours.

Then in 1893 opencut mining continued on the face of the mountain, and also underground. The underground mine closed in 1914, but surface mining continued until the price of tin slumped in 1929. The mine was reopened by the Commonwealth Government in 1942 to support the war effort, following the loss of the Malayan tin fields to the Japanese in 1941. But it finally closed in 1947 having produced 81,000 tonnes of tin and provided a dividend which was equal to £200 for every £1 initially invested. At its peak, the town had a population of over 5,000.

Historical attractions currently in Waratah include the Philosopher's Hut, the Waratah Museum, the Athenaeum Hall, the fascinating and recommended Mount Bischoff Hotel and the Kenworthy Stamper Mill. Lake Waratah with
its unique iron bridge and the Waratah Waterfall adorn the town centre.

**Figure 2. Bischoff Hotel**

In the 1920s the town held an infamous Shotgun Carnival which was actually the Muddy Creek Picnic and Sports Day. It was dubbed the Shotgun Carnival because it was reputedly the day when shotgun weddings took place. By 1924 the town had a reputation for wildness. A letter to the *Advocate*, in 1924 read as follows:

“Sir – Waratah is certainly gaining some notoriety as a town of larrikinism. The half-drunk and fully-drunk mob wander around the town, pulling down fences, and otherwise annoying law-abiding townsfolk with their variegated language. Then the incendiary lunatic prowls around with his matchbox, burning down unoccupied cottages with impunity, followed by the low-down sneak thief, whose highest ambition in this world is to get away with other people’s fowls … yours, etc LAW AND ORDER.”

**Waratah Hospital**

Mining towns always need a hospital nearby as severe and fatal accidents were and remain common. By 1881 Bischoff Mine had purchased a cottage to use as a health care centre, supported by subscriptions from mine workers, voluntary contributions and an annual government grant (Godfrey, 1984). Built either in 1878 or 1881, it was constructed on Little Ritchie St, facing Little Quiggin Street, as a school house. At a board meeting it was named Waratah Provincial Hospital though it was recognised that the rooms were empty and required adequate furnishing before it was suitable to admit patients.

The reports from the board reveal that the hospital medical officer rarely attended meetings, therefore they lacked expert advice on the principal purpose of the hospital. They lack data on the yearly number of hospital admissions over the relevant period as is available for other hospitals of that period. On some occasions the Matron or charge sister reported patient numbers, though the board and press often appeared unaware of her name, just stating such as bush nurse!

The board was predominantly comprised of males lacking tertiary education and running small businesses in a small town, hence the press reports concentrated on their limited area of knowledge, finance. The board even continued to meet monthly when they were unable to obtain the services of either a doctor or a nurse and the essential business of a hospital ground to a halt. Board meetings however were able to make appointments, pass motions and approve finances!

The tin mine working men had for a long time had a small weekly subscription deducted from their wages, which went towards the medical account, and enabled a guarantee to be given which ensured a doctor being kept at the in Mount Bischoff. It is not clear if subscriptions were collected in the absence of health care!

**The Doctors of Waratah**

**Dr John Pring 1876 – the alcoholic**

Dr John Pring, LSA, London, practiced medicine briefly in Waratah before the hospital opened. Henry Walker, a storekeeper has a serious accident on a Mount Bischoff Co.’s lorry falling out crossing a bridge and suffering a head injury. He died shortly after being seen by Dr
Pring. Unfortunately, the doctor’s ‘intemperate habits’ led to patients deserting his care and Pring’s sudden death (Launceston Examiner, 1876).

Dr. Ray 1880-1881 – the initial hospital doctor

Dr Ray commenced practice in Waratah Hospital before the hospital opened. Dr Ray attended Frederick Lakers and William Coventry when they were severely injured in an explosion. A fire broke out at the Mount Bischoff Company’s store about half-past six o’clock in the morning detonating a box of lithofracteur caps which blew the building apart. The fire was considered the act of an incendiary. Dr. Ray did not consider either of the men seriously injured or in danger after the explosion. This was another mining company event for which compensation was not considered, a common precedent recurring in this article (Launceston Examiner, 1880a).

Dr Ray was complemented by his Lodge for his most generous donation of his first three months fees to the credit of the Lodge Management Fund (Launceston Examiner, 1880b). The Mercury noted it was an exceedingly rare occurrence to chronicle a death at Mount Bischoff which it attributed either to the salubrity of the local atmosphere, or the kindness, attention, and skill of Dr. Ray keeping the "grim tyrant" at bay (The Mercury, 1880).

Dr. Ray attended Mr. A. Littler constantly with very severe though unspecified injuries sustained when a truck ran over him. Dr. Smart, most kindly assisted in dressing the patient's wounds immediately after the accident. Littler was reported to be improving rapidly (The Mercury, 1881a). Dr. Ray resigned through ill-health and Dr. Poland was appointed as medical officer by the medical committee. A farewell dinner was held in Dr Ray’s honour. The three patients that he attended following accidents in the mines fortunately did not have serious injuries and recovered without being left incapacitated and impoverished (The Tasmanian, 1881a).

Dr J. Stewart, the popular talented novice. 1881 - 1882

The town and board hoped to obtain the services of a Dr Poland, but Dr. Poland, who had been appointed had not arrived in accordance with the terms of his agreement. However Dr. Poland wrote

"Sir, I must apologise for not having been able to inform you earlier, that; having an offer elsewhere, which I am bound in honour to accept, I must decline, even should I be successful, any appointment here."

A considerable number were of opinion that the best alternative applicant, Dr. Douglas Stewart, was too young to suit the place, one citizen claiming he could not possibly have the experience necessary for such an important, but isolated district as Bischoff. Dr Stewart however had been previously appointed to the prestigious Alfred Hospital, Melbourne in recognition of his competence, and was duly appointed to Waratah (The Tasmanian, 1881b; The Mercury, 1881b). Dr. Stewart was also appointed public vaccinator at Waratah (Launceston Examiner, 1881a).

A man, perhaps either Mr Ling or Mr Hancock, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the attentive care of Dr. Stewart having had his leg broken on last Monday and was reported to be progressing remarkably well. It was not reported if the injury was work related (The Mercury, 1881c).

His youthful competence was soon apparent. A correspondent wrote,

"I cannot, 'however, pass over the eminently successful treatment of some very severe accidents and dangerous cases by our respected and popular medical officer, Dr. Stewart, who was deemed too young for the place. We have had a chapter of accidents since his arrival, but two or three I may mention. Mr. J. Hancock had his leg broken, and Dr. Stewart had him as staunch as a brick in a very few weeks, Mr. Ling, who severely fractured his thigh by falling from the new bridge is walking about, precisely six weeks since from the date of fracture. A respected member of the Loyal Bischoff Lodge, who was taken so suddenly and dangerously ill with rheumatic fever was given over..."
by nearly all visitors but Dr. Stewart has been as lively as a bee to-day. Even when nature thinks fit to add to the population—often in this prolific district—Dr. Stewart has proved himself a very lucky and successful assistant to the worthy dame.” (The Mercury, 1881d).

John Russell was the first case to be sent to the newly established Provident Hospital, following a serious accident at the Mount Bischoff Company’s mine. He was working in the rock face, and a stone rolled upon him, smashing his leg so severely that Dr. Stewart had to amputate it above the ankle. Russell’s capacity to return to manual labour would have been limited.

The subsequent inquest identified that Russell’s leg was crushed at Brown Face when a boulder he and others were trying to move with crowbars fell on his leg causing a severe crush injury necessitating the amputation. No blame was attached to any of the workers or management and compensation was not considered, as was usual in mining accidents of that and subsequent eras. The directors thought that they might recommend £100 in the coming year, to purchase furniture and equipment to put the hospital rooms in order, and thus assist in furthering the comfort of the men (The Mercury, 1881a; Launceston Examiner, 1881b).

Dr. Stewart departed to Victoria for a holiday for eight weeks, and Dr. Dingan, from Melbourne, arrived to function as locum tenens during his absence (Launceston Examiner, 1881c; Launceston Examiner, 1881d).

During Stewart’s absence, Jon Gill was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Dingan following an accident. Gill was ramming home a charge of dynamite with an iron bar at the Stanhope Tin Mining Company’s claim when the charge exploded. Gill had a severely burnt face and eye damage such that he completely lost the sight of one of his eyes, and the injured organ was later removed by Dr. Stewart on his return. It was feared he may not have much vision in the other eye. Explosions of dynamite were another common mining injury, but always accidental and non-compensable.

Gill’s capacity to return to work would have been greatly restricted.

John Smith was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with severe head and facial burns caused by falling into a fire while in a fit before he was extricated. By 1884, Dingan had relocated to Richmond in Melbourne (Launceston Examiner, 1881e; Launceston Examiner, 1881f). The Colonial Secretary Mr. A. H. Boyd gave notice that Dr. Stewart had resigned from the Waratah Hospital with effect from 19th January (The Mercury, 1881f).

John Blair was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with a dislocated shoulder sustained when he slipped at work on the Whyte River Company Claim, Corinna. Presumably, this would have been relocated with no residual incapacity (The Tasmanian, 1882a).

Dr. Stewart performed a post mortem examination upon the remains of John Bourke, who died suddenly finding that death had ensued from rupture of the heart, caused by excessive drinking. Stewart presented his findings at the inquest held in Waratah by Mr. A. H. Boyd, Esq., S.M., accompanied by Mr. L. Berresford, Superintendent of Police. After hearing the evidence the twelve members jury returned a verdict that death had ensued from rupture of the heart, caused by excessive drinking as discovered at autopsy (Launceston Examiner, 1882a).

Charles Anderson, a young man working with another man, Samuel Allen, in a drive at the East Bischoff Extended Co.’s claim, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr. Stewart following an accident. A quantity of dynamite exploded and Anderson was struck by pieces of stone and also by portions of a tin billy which was hanging up. He sustained multiple severe lacerations in the lower portion of his body which might easily have been fatal. He was said to be progressing favourably. Allen was unhurt. Private advices say that the men were heating the dynamite in water contained in the billy, surely a highly improbable explanation (Launceston Examiner, 1882b)!
Dr. Stewart appeared as an expert witness at an inquest investigating the death of Albert John Kinnella, aged four months before A. H. Boyd, Esq., Coroner, and a jury of seven. Margaret Kinnella, mother of deceased, stated that Albert had had a cold for some time and on Sunday morning he was worse. In the afternoon she called for the doctor who could not attend but wrote out a prescription which she got from Mr. Ash and administered it, but the child did not appear to be relieved. Dr. Stewart came the following morning, but the child died about five minutes before his arrival.

Dr. D. Stewart stated that Mrs. Kinnella had called at his house on Sunday evening last for advice about her child, she said he was coughing a good deal. She asked if it would be convenient for him to see the child but he told her he could not go then. She then asked for some medicine which he prescribed and gave her directions as to the feeding of the child. He went over next morning and found the child had just died. That afternoon he made an examination of the body and was of the opinion the cause of death was wasting away due to improper feeding. The little boy had been wasting away for some time. He had been taken to doctor's house several times for treatment. The deceased's brother died from the same cause.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony (The Tasmanian, 1882b).

If Stewart was well aware of the previous child suffering malnutrition, it would seem logical that the mother should have received regular calls from the 'bush nurse' to provide nutritional guidance and that a call should have been made when initially requested.

Dr. Stewart sent in his resignation as medical officer and Dr. Marr, of Victoria, arrived in Waratah on the 9th February as locum tenens (The Mercury, 1882a).

Dr. Douglas Stewart was the guest of about twenty gentlemen at a sumptuous banquet at Pearce's Hotel, for the purpose of bidding farewell to Stewart who had been a much esteemed doctor and a delightful friend and citizen. A toast to "Our Guest," proposed by Mr. Willicombe in a speech of some length, in which he alluded to the many friends Dr. Stewart had made, and many pleasant gatherings in which he had been one of the foremost moving spirits during his stay here, ending by wishing Dr. and Mrs. Stewart health, prosperity, and all other good things wherever they may settle. Dr. Marr the successor to Dr. Stewart, was also welcomed.

Dr. Stewart amongst other patients treated four mining accidents, none being compensable, two leg fractures, an acute rheumatic fever and a burns case. He performed a leg amputation and enucleated an eye following mining accidents, and an autopsy on an alcoholic. Two mine workers would have been at least partially incapacitated (The Mercury, 1882b).

**Drs McCall and Kennedy, two unpopular litigious doctors. 1882 - 1888**

McCall and Kennedy both ultimately fell out with the Waratah Hospital board, leaving in acrimonious circumstances. Kennedy after many years excellent work. McCall is an Anglicized form of Mac Cathail 'son of Cathal', a personal name meaning 'powerful in battle'. The Irish Kennedies are a royal dynasty stemming from the father of the high king of Ireland Brian Boru. Perhaps they both 'got their Irish up'!

Dr. J. McCall was appointed medical officer at Waratah Hospital to commence on 6th April, 1882, when Dr. Stewart's term expired (Devon Herald, 1882).

James Hall was admitted to the Waratah Hospital having fractured a leg. A few weeks later a friend visited, reporting that Hall was progressing well thanks to the able treatment provided by Drs McCall and Kennedy, and suggesting any citizen with a spare pound or crown should donate it to the hospital (The Tasmanian, 1882c).

Frank Stubbings was admitted to the Waratah Hospital requiring amputation of four toes following a severe injury to his foot from an axe, another common workplace injury in rural areas (The Mercury, 1882c).

Dr John McCall, MB, medical practitioner in Waratah, sued William George Spall for non-
payment of accounts for treatment of deafness before Mr. A. H. Boyd, Commissioner at the Court of Requests. Spall expected to pay only for successful treatment. The Commissioner briefly summed up and gave judgment for plaintiff for £3 3s. and costs.

McCall also sued James Martin for non-payment of an account for treatment of a hand injury sustained at Emu Bay. Martin was not a subscriber to the Waratah Hospital where his treatment commenced not because it was severe, but to reduce his costs. Though some of his treatment was provided subsequently as an outpatient, Martin was deemed to be a ‘hospital patient’ entitled to treatment for free as a subscriber. He was deemed not liable for further charge and awarded costs (The Mercury, 1882d).

Dr McCall wrote a letter to the Tasmanian rejecting an allegation which he clearly found offensive, that he had not accounted for fifty-six tickets in a hospital lottery and that he was working against the Waratah Hospital (The Tasmanian, 1883a).

An anonymous citizen’s letter to the Mercury commented on the benefit of the Waratah Hospital to the community but its lack of adequate funding, a situation unimproved the world over today when businessmen of questionable ethics and real estate agents are valued more than Nobel Prize winners in medicine.

SIR-The twentieth general meeting of the Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company will be held on Tuesday next, the 31st inst., and I beg you will allow me space in your valuable journal to appeal to the shareholders for a little pecuniary assistance for the Waratah Hospital.

Over two-thirds of the working men of this district are in the employ of the Bischoff company, consequently they are the principal supporters of the above institution, and what with the high price of provisions, clothing, rent, etc., the burden is very heavy.

The hospital so far has proved a great boon to those who have had to succumb to the severity of a Bischoff climate, or have met with accidents, and I have no hesitation in saying that it has been the means of saving more than one life. Unfortunately, it is gradually drifting into debt, despite the strenuous efforts of the committee to collect money, and many necessary improvements to the wards cannot be effected for want of funds (The Mercury, 1883a).

There were three patients in the Waratah Hospital. The matron, Mrs. Whitehouse, is said by Dr. Kennedy, the resident surgeon, to be very attentive to the sick and suffering (Launceston Examiner, 1883a).

Communication to the Tasmanian noted that Dr McCall was leaving for another district and that problems arose with the board over his tenure because of McCall’s tendency to ‘kick against the pricks.’

The writer noted that Dr Kennedy during his stay, has affected several almost miraculous cures. One lady informed him that she had been under other medical men in Victoria and Tasmania, for corneoiritis, for many months, and had spent a great deal of money, and endured much agony. Dr. Kennedy has, however, in a very short time, entirely cured her, and. She does not hesitate to express her gratitude to strangers thereafter. The writer was worried that Dr Kennedy might also leave (The Tasmanian, 1883b).

Dr. Kennedy was subject to a letter of complaint from Mr W. Barry, for alleged unskilful medical treatment of the late John Leary. The complaint of Mr. Barry against Dr. Kennedy was then considered by the board and after careful investigation, it was resolved that the secretary write to Mr. Barry, informing him that after careful consideration of his complaint and report thron by Dr. Kennedy, they were of opinion that he had failed to advance sufficient grounds for complaint, and therefore declined to take further action in the matter (The Mercury, 1883b).

An inquest was held before W. H. Glover Esq, coroner, and a jury of seven into the sudden death of an old man named James Moore. Dr Kennedy performed a post mortem examination upon the body finding that death had resulted from fatty degeneration of the heart. He
presented his opinion that death resulted from natural causes and the jury accepted this opinion.

It was noted that he was interred in a burial ground but without funeral rites and indignation was caused by this, a curious turn of events (Daily Telegraph, 1883; The Tasmanian, 1883c).

Dr. Kennedy attended Alfred Lucas, a young man working at the Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company. His right hand was crushed by being caught between two cog wheels and Kennedy found it necessary to amputate portions of the thumb and third and fourth fingers. His capacity to perform manual labour subsequently with such an injury to his dominant hand would be impaired but as usual, the term compensation was unmentioned (The Tasmanian, 1883d).

Dr. Kennedy attended Mr Webster, a young man who dislocated his left arm at the elbow while wrestling at a hotel. Subsequently Webster was reported to be doing well (Launceston Examiner, 1883b).

Dr McCall treated two sailors from the barque Santon who were injured by the hawser towing the ship into Port Frederick. One being badly crushed and injured internally, whilst the other had his arm broken. However this is in Devonport and presumably after McCall left Waratah. They were reported to be progressing as well as could be expected as are most patients according to the press.

McCall appears to have worked a maximum of eighteen months. His documented patients were William George Spall for treatment of deafness, James Martin with a hand injury, possibly occurring in the workplace, and he and Kennedy shared care of James Hall with a fractured leg (Devon Herald, 1884).

Dr. Kennedy attended Mr Jas Grady following an unfortunate accident in which he stepped over a log and trod on a twig which bounced up and penetrated his face just under his eye. Kennedy extracted the twig but at that stage it was difficult to determine from the nature of the injury whether his sight would be impaired or not (Daily Telegraph, 1884a).

A new code of hospital subscriptions required the new appointment of a doctor at a salary of £400 per year and Dr John Kennedy was the unanimous choice to retain the position from several applicants.

The past year has proved to have been the heaviest year for sickness on Waratah, no less than thirty three cases being admitted into the hospital, and five out of that number died. No clinical details were given. One thousand seven hundred and twenty-three cases were also treated by the medical officer as outpatients, either by visits or consultations (The Mercury, 1884a).

Dr. Kennedy presented evidence from a post mortem on baby Etchell at a coroner’s inquest before Mr. A. H. Boyd. Kennedy’s evidence showed that the baby had been born alive but did not live more than four days. He was unable to state the cause of death, as the body was so much decomposed.

A verdict was given in accordance, with the medical testimony. Sarah Etchell, the mother the child, was afterwards charged at the police court with concealing the birth of her illegitimate child, for which she was committed for trial at the Criminal Sessions at Launceston (The Mercury, 1884b).

Henry Williams, a married man, was attended by Dr. Kennedy with a fractured thigh sustained in a serious accident at the Mount Bischoff Co.'s sheds when a bag of tin fell forty feet from a lift onto Williams leg. The bag was dislodged by a plank placed crossways for the purpose of oiling machinery. A system error inevitably leading to disaster! Williams was said to be doing as well as can be expected like all published press reports following accidents (Daily Telegraph, 1884b).

David Schofield was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Kennedy following an accident at work. He was knocked down and jammed under an unsecured runaway truck. While his injury was caused by carelessness and could have been fatal, Dr Kennedy stated that fortunately he was not seriously injured (Tasmanian News, 1884).

Dr. Kennedy performed a post mortem examination on the body of Louis Combes following his death in Waratah Hospital.
Kennedy stated at the inquest before A. H. Boyd, Esq., Coroner at the Police Court, that the cause of death to be typhoid fever. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with medical testimony (Daily Telegraph, 1884b).

Dr. Kennedy, Medical Officer, reported that during the year he held one thousand three hundred and thirty consultations and made eight hundred and twenty home visits. Twenty seven patients admitted into the institution, only one of whom died, presumably Louis Combes above with typhoid fever.

At the expiration of the engagement of Dr. Kennedy, which was for a period of twelve months, an application was received from him for increased remuneration, and the board, in consideration of his professional abilities, and a promise held out at the commencement of his engagement, resolved to increase his salary by £100 (The Mercury, 1885a).

Miss Lawson, a little girl two years old, was attended by Dr. Kennedy having swallowed a small quantity of liniment, partly composed of croton oil. The Telegraph considered that proper remedies were quickly applied, and but for Kennedy’s prompt attendance she would, in all probability, have been fatally poisoned, but the ‘little sufferer’ was now out of danger.

A dose of only one or two millilitres can be fatal causing burning sensation of the mouth, gastric irritation, dizziness, vomiting and watery diarrhoea with abdominal pain and tenesmus. Haematuria, dysuria, anuria, proteinuria, low blood pressure, cyanosis, respiratory depression, rapid heart activity with a slow pulse, and shock may also ensue.

The standard management is to induce vomiting or a stomach wash, administration of demulcent drinks, like milk, or egg white, morphine with atropine to allay pain and reduce intestinal secretions, glucose and saline intravenously to prevent collapse and dehydration. Borax is an antidote of croton seed poisoning. When such a small dose may be fatal, Dr Kennedy clearly managed the problem very competently and the journalistic hyperbole is correct (Daily Telegraph, 1885a).

Thomas Mitchell, a miner employed at the Stanhope tin mine, was admitted to hospital suffering from an injury sustained when a quantity of stone fell on him in one of the drives. Dr. Kennedy was unfortunately out of the district, therefore the extent of the injuries were not known, but was thought they were not of a serious nature. Kennedy returned the following day to resume care when his condition was reported as unchanged (Daily Telegraph, 1885b; Daily Telegraph, 1885c).

An inquest was held before Mr A. H. Boyd, coroner, following the sudden death of an infant child of Mr W. Chapman, aged eleven months. Dr. Kennedy's evidence according to one paper showed death to have resulted from convulsions whilst teething and another revealed some maldevelopment of the lungs. Either way the jury returned a verdict of death from natural causes (Daily Telegraph, 1885d; The Tasmanian, 1885).

The Mercury noted that the severe winter's weather in Waratah was associated with sickness being prevalent in the town midst at that time. The medical officer, Dr. Kennedy, had some sixty cases under his treatment, such that he was constantly busy day and night, and had been fortunate in having few deaths. The children were the greatest sufferers and there were different complaints raging, but most originated from severe head colds, the forerunner of many chest diseases (The Mercury, 1885b).

Luke Furse, the overseer at the Stanhope Mine was attended by Dr Kennedy following an accident at the mine. Some men had been engaged blasting ground when one of the dynamited holes missed fire. Furse was endeavouring to pick out the charge when it exploded causing multiple lacerations much to his head and his hands. Kennedy could not say yet what the extent of the injuries were to the eyes of the sufferer. No blame is attached to anyone for the accident according to the mine and press release.

Unexploded dynamite continued to cause death and severe injury throughout Australian mines in the past with no education or safety programs to manage the situation (The Mercury, 1885c).
Dr Kennedy departed for a holiday trip to Victoria and Dr Corder of Melbourne arrived as locum tenens (Daily Telegraph, 1886a).

Dr. Kennedy appeared for the plaintiff before Messrs. R. A. Murray, C. J. McKenzie, and J. Patterson, J.Ps. in an affiliation case, Powell v. King. The plaintiff deposed she was defendant's wife's sister, and was seduced in March last by the defendant, during his wife's absence, at the defendant's house, at Waratah, where she was keeping house for him. The nature of Kennedy's supportive evidence was undisclosed and remains obscure!

After consultation, the Bench dismissed the case. The defendant's departure from the Court was accelerated by the hostile demonstration of two of the complainant's sisters (Launceston Examiner, 1886a).

Joseph Stanley, a labourer at the Bischoff Co.'s mine was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Kennedy following an accident at the mine. Stanley was engaged in trucking stone out to a tip, when the end rail on which the truck was resting broke, causing the truck and stones to fall and roll over onto him. Fortunately, beyond a few severe cuts and bruises, he received no significant injury when much worse injuries were very possible. He was progressing favourably (Daily Telegraph, 1886b).

Francis Clemons was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Kennedy following an accident in which he lost one of his legs. Clemons was employed with a party constructing a dam across the Waratah River for a new tailings dressing plant for the Mount Bischoff Company. A tree was being felled and Clemons failed to get out of the way in time. One of his legs was badly smashed from just below the hip to below the knee. Kennedy aided by Dr Butler performed an amputation at the hip joint after Clemons had been anaesthetised with chloroform. The patient was, however, naturally in a low state, and not possessing a robust constitution his recovery was immediately considered doubtful. He died later that night. An inquest deemed his death was an accident with no one at fault. A public fund raising performance collected £36 to which the Bischoff mine added £25 for his widow and children (Launceston Examiner, 1886b; Daily Telegraph, 1886c; Daily Telegraph, 1886d).

In the context of Clemons dying after surgery, the inquest to exculpate the mining owners, and ensure competent medical management plus the then very high perioperative mortality of hind quarter amputation, it is relevant to consider the contribution of Sir Gordon Gordon-Taylor, MD, FRCS, KBE, perhaps the greatest pioneer of general surgery between the two world wars. Born in 1878, eight years before the above case, he graduated from the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, the authors training hospital, with first class honours in 1904. He served in the British armed forces in both wars and was knighted for his contribution to surgery.

He was appointed surgeon to the illustrious Middlesex Hospital where he established a worldwide reputation as a highly skilled surgeon, and taught the author’s late father, a consultant physician, in his student days at the Middlesex Hospital. Gordon-Taylor visited Australia five times as visiting consultant surgeon and examiner. His extensive highly distinguished curriculum vitae is only briefly outlined, yet in his hands in the 1930s the operative mortality of a hind quarter amputation was 60%. Clemons death in 1886 is therefore not unexpected.

Now with intensive care highly trained staff and units, antibiotic therapy, skilled anaesthesia, ventilators and all the progress of the last ninety years, the immediate mortality rate is but 1-2% (Gordon-Taylor, et al., 1952).

George Whitten, an elderly man died from pneumonia and heart disease having been admitted under Dr Kennedy into the Waratah Hospital some few days previously (Launceston Examiner, 1886b; Daily Telegraph, 1886c; Daily Telegraph, 1886d; Gordon-Taylor, et al., 1952; Launceston Examiner, 1886c).

Dr, Kennedy attended a political rally and asked one candidate if he was in favour of compulsory vaccination. He answered definitely no to some applause. The candidate considered that the smallpox vaccine caused worse diseases than
smallpox itself. Hopefully, he never became Minister of Health (Launceston Examiner, 1886d).

Mr Smith, a young workman, died in hospital after an admission with an unspecified illness. Dr Kennedy had also been unwell and was able to take sick leave once he had obtained the services of Dr. Singleton from Melbourne as locum tenens (The Tasmanian, 1886; The Mercury, 1886).

Dr. Kennedy appeared at an inquest before Mr H. T. Crowther, coroner, into the drowning death of Ernest Penny, a twenty year old young man. He had been with a younger brother to bathe in one of the Bischoff company's dams. After being in a brief time, it is supposed he got out of his depth, and being unable to swim, and no assistance at hand, he was drowned. His little brother ran home to find his parents who summoned Dr Kennedy, but life was clearly extinct when the body was recovered and the doctor arrived. A verdict of death by accidental drowning was returned.

Mrs Mainwaring died probably in the Waratah Hospital after a short illness of a few days, resulting from child birth leaving a family of four small children. The diagnosis is not specified but the usual problems of sepsis, bleeding and thromboembolism would be suspected.

Mrs Ryan, the wife of Mr W. Ryan, formerly landlord of the Waratah Hotel also died after a prolonged illness, leaving a family of five children (Daily Telegraph, 1887a).

Two young men were renovating the Waratah railway bridge when the scaffolding collapsed. They fortunately avoided severe injury and a sprained ankle was the worst damage (Launceston Examiner, 1887a; Tasmanian News, 1887).

Mr Webster a young man was attended to by Dr. Kennedy with facial injuries following an accident. He was travelling along the Pieman track with a pack-horse, en route to Heemskirk, and while proceeding up the Magnet ranges he was walking behind the horse, when a small sapling caught the pack-saddle on the horse as it was passing and flew back hitting Webster a severe blow in the face, splitting his lip and nose, and otherwise disfiguring him (The Mercury, 1887a).

Dr Kennedy laid three charges, neglect of duty, insubordination and untruthfulness against Nurse Whitehouse. The board initially dismissed the first, qualified the second, and considered the third proven. At a subsequent board meeting it was suggested this was a trumped up case by the doctor against the nurse following arguments led to the meeting breaking up in disorder without a conclusion (The Mercury, 1887b).

Most of the subsequent mentions of Dr McCall are as a JP and the as a State Member of Parliament, a career move that may have suited his character and personality better than medicine (North West Post, 1887a; The Mercury, 1889).

James Grady, a miner, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Kennedy suffering from 'acute inflammation of the kidney with dropsy,' presumably a state of oedema with some renal problem, perhaps an acute nephrotic syndrome, Bright's disease or similar.

Grady had been working on a gold claim at the Meredith, over 20 miles from Corinna, and becoming seriously ill. His mates and others started with him by boat down the Paradise and Pieman rivers. At Corinna, a hammock was obtained from the postmaster, in which he was carried by relays the thirty eight miles by track, making a journey of over sixty miles. Too much credit cannot be attached to those warm hearted friends who struggled on that track with their comrade.

Several volunteers started out from the other end last night and this morning to give assistance. Dr Kennedy started out as soon as intelligence was received, and after travelling all night reached met the sufferer last night at the thirteen mile hut. On Saturday night an entertainment. Several months later Grady remained unwell and a well-attended concert given for his benefit raised £40 to assist his wife and family (Daily Telegraph, 1887b; Launceston Examiner, 1887b).
James Stevenson, a carpenter employed by the Mount Bischoff Company was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Kennedy with a compound comminuted fracture of the left tibia immediately below the knee. Stevenson was working on a scaffold about ten feet high when the scaffolding collapsed dropping him on to a sharp corner of a stone wall. Dr. Kennedy seeing the serious nature of the injury, wired for a second opinion from Dr. Armitage, of Emu Bay, as it is feared that an amputation would be necessary. There were no subsequent reports of his health in the press (Daily Telegraph, 1887b).

F. Thorne was attended by Dr. Kennedy following a fall during Saturday’s football match. It unfortunately proved that the large bone of the forearm, whichever that may be, was fractured and Kennedy set the limb (Launceston Examiner, 1887c).

John Thorne was attended by Dr. Kennedy following another accident at the skating rink. Thorne slipped and severely injured the right leg at the ankle, but there was no fracture, only the ligaments being strained (Launceston Examiner, 1887d).

Several accidents occurred in a week. Three skaters, two of them in the Thorne family, suffered broken limbs while skating within one month. George McPherson, a carpenter was attended by Dr. Kennedy with a broken right femur and considerable bruising about the body. McPherson with another man, was watching Mr. C. Thomas, a splitter, felling a tree some distance away from the township, when the tree fell in an unexpected direction, and McPherson failed to get away in time. Thomas had his axe handle smashed in his hand but the others had a very narrow escape (Launceston Examiner, 1887c; The Mercury, 1887c).

Dividends paid out to shareholders since the mine opened totalled £1,608,000 (Godfrey, 1984).

The Hospital Board dispensed with Dr Kennedy’s services for alleged but unspecified disregard of his duties. That appears an atypical concept. Dr Kennedy’s contract was terminated in 1888. However Kennedy had a finger in many pies in Waratah and appeared to continue his private practice. He was an eminent, opinionated, virtuous committee member of many social, church, business and sporting societies (Launceston Examiner, 1888a).

Dr Kennedy, medical officer to the Waratah Hospital, was pressing charges again less than a year after the previous claims. He sued the hospital board for unfair dismissial and inadequate severance pay. The jury of the Court of Requests before the Commissioner returned a verdict mostly in favour of the doctor recommending payment of two thirds of Kennedy’s claim. However an appeal court reversed that verdict and deemed that Kennedy did not have a legal contract for which payment would be expected (North West Chronicle, 1888a; The Tasmanian, 1888).

Dr. Kennedy attended Christopher Randall, an employee of Mr. Roberts, the telegraph contractor, in Corinna. Randall suffered very seriously chest injuries under a falling tree. Kennedy left Waratah at noon riding night and day arriving at Corinna at 4 p.m. the next day! Dr. Kennedy was stuck upon the night of the 15th July on Long Plains, having lost the track in the dark, and because the road through to the Pieman was in an almost impassable state (The Mercury, 1888a).

Dr. Kennedy reported that a Mr. John Munro, his wife, and child, were suffering from typhoid fever. It was supposed to be from defective drainage, the surroundings were certainly very insanitary. The Local Board of Health were powerless to assist the doctor with the matter, as, the Government had not appointed a health officer.

Dr. Crowther, the chairman of the Board of Health apparently applied for information to both Dr. Hill, the medical attendant, and Dr. Kennedy. Dr. Hill did not think it was typhoid, while Dr. Kennedy has reported it as such to the board but had not yet attended the case as requested! There appeared room for doubt in the whole shambolic clinical and administrative scenario! Dr. Hill now declines to further attend. The board had isolated the house (Daily Telegraph, 1888; Launceston Examiner, 1888b).
Dr. J. Kennedy took offence at a telegram in the Launceston examiner suggesting he was neglecting a patient with typhoid. He replied, "In answer to your correspondent, I wish to inform the public that I am at present, and have been, attending the case of typhoid since I reported it to the local Board of Health, and never refused to attend." (Launceston Examiner, 1888c).

Dr. Kennedy appeared as an expert witness at the inquest into the death of a man named John Brown, aged about seventy five before Mr. A. K. Cinan, Coroner, and a jury of seven. Brown had had been working on the Waratah to Wynyard road and died suddenly in his hut. His body had been brought in from the Hellyer River. After hearing the evidence of his hut mate and Kennedy implying heart disease was the cause, a verdict of death from natural causes was returned (Launceston Examiner, 1889a).

Dr. Kennedy reported another case of typhoid fever. As the patient had been removed to a house some distance away it did not appear to be a risk to the community (Daily Telegraph, 1889b).

Dr. Kennedy stitched up a deep laceration cut on T. Lynch's head after the boy was thrown from a horse (Launceston Examiner, 1889a).

Dr. Kennedy relocated to Zeehan succeeding to Dr. Harrison's practice and his many subsequent appearances in the print media relate to his practice in Zeehan (The Tasmanian, 1890a; Stride, 2021).

Kennedy treated eleven published cases of workplace accidents. One died following a tree fall fracturing the upper femur necessitating a hind quarter amputation. There were two other femoral fractures and one comminuted tibial fracture for which an amputation may have been required. There was one crushed dominant hand requiring amputation of the thumb and third and fourth fingers. There was one detonation with facial damage where visual outcome was uncertain. The remaining five had lesser injuries. Other trauma patients suffered from one each of possible rape or seduction, one drowning death, one football arm fracture and one dislocated elbow from wrestling, one fall from a horse, facial and eye injuries, accidental amputation of four toes with an axe, one fractured leg from a fall and minor injuries under a felled tree.

Medical conditions included a neonatal death from neglect, a death in childbirth, cases of typhoid, two deaths from cardiac disease one with concurrent pneumonia, one sudden death requiring an autopsy for a coronial inquest. An eight year term of varied and competent service. The hospital had regular small number of inpatients with rare deaths of unspecified problems.

Dr McCall took up politics, though it is not clear if this was an addition to his clinical practice or a change of career. Having been member for West Devon, he proposed to stand for Waratah. This was much to displeasure of an anonymous correspondent who noted McCall had been a bitter opponent of Mount Bischoff Mine and its management with little interest in the electorate (Launceston Examiner, 1896).

Dr Percival 1887 - 1889
The directors of the Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company appointed Dr. Percival, of Victoria as medical officer to the company at Waratah (Launceston Examiner, 1887f).

Edward Gribble, a young man died at the Provident Hospital, Waratah from congestion of the lungs having been an inmate of the hospital, for nearly nine months. No diagnosis is given but heart failure from congenital cardiac disease is possible. A state government report for the Waratah Hospital during 1887 noted that during the year the Medical Officer has treated three hundred and eighty eight cases as outpatients, and eighteen as inpatients with two deaths occurring in the hospital (The North West Post, 1887b).

Patrick Ryan was attended by Dr. Percival with a fracture of 'both' bones of his right arm when some reckless skating at the rink resulted in a fall. Which of the arm bones are covered by 'both' is not clear (Launceston Examiner, 1887g).

Patrick Fogarty was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr Percival with a broken leg sustained in an earthfall in the Blount Bischoff Company's mine. Initially he
progressed but a month later he died suddenly while being examined at the hospital by Dr. Percival.

Dr. Armitage from Emu Bay presented the results of his post-mortem examination at an inquest before Mr. H. L. Crowther, coroner, and a jury of seven. Fogarty died from ‘the formation of a clot of blood reaching the heart’ causing a terminal epileptic fit. Having been presumably bedbound for a month this is almost certainly describing a fatal pulmonary embolus.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with that testimony, adding the following rider that the jury were of opinion that Dr. Percival did all that human skill could do to save the life of the deceased. The paper considered that this should silence various unkind and malicious rumours which have been circulated (The Mercury, 1887c; Launceston Examiner, 1887h; Launceston Examiner, 1887i).

The Hospital Board confirmed that they had dispensed with Dr Kennedy’s services for alleged disregard of his duties and announced Dr. Percival had been appointed medical officer temporarily (Launceston Examiner, 1888d).

Dr. Percival’s sister, Mrs. Grey, died in Waratah (The Mercury, 1888b).

Dr. Percival was re-appointed medical officer at the Waratah Hospital (Launceston Examiner, 1888c).

Over the next decade or two, nearly all communication between the press and the hospital related to funding. Clinical information dwindled progressively. The press appeared not to seek clinical information and the administrators on the board did not provide it regretfully from the medical researcher’s viewpoint (North West Chronicle, 1888b; The Tasmanian, 1889a).

Edward Sincock, a young trucker, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr. Percival. While turning his truck at the Mount Bischoff Company’s mine, he wrenched himself. The injury was suspected to be the twisting of an intestine for which an operation will be necessary. The injury and diagnosis are hard to correlate (Launceston Examiner, 1888f).

Dr. Percival proceeded against E. N. Matthews, manager for E. Ash and Son, chemists at the Police Court before Mr. H. L. Crowther, S.M., for having vended a drug while not being a duly qualified chemist. The case was held to be not proven, three guineas costs being allowed the defendant (Launceston Examiner, 1888g).

William Batten, a carpenter was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Percival following an accident. While working at a house intended for himself at the Hazelwood silver and lead field, the scaffolding gave way, and he fell a distance of ten feet. Thinking some bones were fractured, a party of twelve started next morning and carried Batten by relays on a stretcher the weary sixteen miles to Waratah. However Dr Percival considered the damage to consist only of contusions (Launceston Examiner, 1888h).

Walter Winter, driver of the Mount Bischoff Company’s locomotive, aged about forty, had committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. Dr. Percival was summoned and pronounced life was extinct.

Winter had resided at Railton with his wife and family, but for some time had been living with a young man named John Bingham. After having tea during the temporary absence of his hut mate, it appears the unfortunate man loaded a double barrelled gun and placing the butt on the floor against a box, and the muzzle to his head, just above the left ear, and with a piece of iron pulled one trigger. Death must have been instantaneous, the charge of shot passing through the head and out at the right ear. When Bingham re-entered the hut he was horrified at the spectacle, and at once informed the police.

An inquest was held before Mr. H. S. Crowther, coroner, and a jury of seven. The verdict returned was "Died from a gun-shot wound self-inflicted while suffering from temporary insanity." The deceased, who was quiet, inoffensive, and very generally respected, had been observed for some time past to be in a very depressed state of mind.

He had insured his life for £100 in the Australian Widows Fund and executed a will a couple of
months previously (Launceston Examiner, 1888i).

Dr. Percival attended Patrick Fagan at home following an accident at the Mount Bischoff Mine. Fagan was working in the Red Face when he slipped and fell some distance. Percival found that a couple of ribs were broken, but altogether the injury was not too serious (Launceston Examiner, 1888j).

The press reiterated that Dr. Kennedy’s services as medical officer have been dispensed with and Dr Percival appointed in his stead (Launceston Examiner, 1889b).

Dr. Percival, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Hughes, started off at 11 o’clock for Heazlewood twenty-five kms distant, having a dreadful trip in the dark after a messenger arrived post haste from Heazlewood with word that William Batten, a carpenter, was dying. On arrival they but found the case not at all serious. Dr. Kennedy was absent (Launceston Examiner, 1889c).

A great deal of regret was expressed by a number of residents at the departure of Dr. Percival. He had held the position of medical officer to the Bischoff Company and the Mount Bischoff Provident Hospital for two years or more, fulfilling the duties devolving upon him in a satisfactory manner (Launceston Examiner, 1889d).

Dr Percival attended four mine workers. One fractured ribs in a fall, another broke a leg in an earth fall and died suddenly in hospital a month later with a ‘clot in the heart’ presumably a pulmonary embolus in the time before early mobilisation and anticoagulation. One gentleman committed suicide, though any relationship of the cause and site of the suicide is not stated. The last was though to have torsion of his intestines from driving a truck!

Other cases included a fractured arm while skating, minor injuries when a home scaffold collapsed, the death of a young man with chronic pulmonary congestion, perhaps congenital cardiac disease, and a night trip some twenty five kilometres to Heazlewood down a poorly formed track in a cool May night to find the reported ‘dying man’ was not too bad!

**Dr. Brevis 1889 - 1897**

Dr. Beavis, the newly appointed medical officer to the Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company, in succession to Dr. Percival arrived from Melbourne accompanied by Mrs. Brevis. The doctor, who had only recently arrived from Edinburgh, would enter upon his duties at Waratah early in September (Launceston Examiner, 1889e).

Dr. Brevis the newly appointed doctor for the Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company, following the resignation of Dr. Percival, had arrived and commenced his duties. Brevis was also offered the position of Hospital Surgeon in place of Dr. Percival (The Tasmanian, 1889b).

The ninth annual report of the Mount Bischoff Provident Hospital for the year ending December 21, 1889 noted that Dr. Percival had resigned and Drs. A. Brevis had been appointed in his stead. During the year, the medical officers had treated one hundred and forty three cases as ‘outside’ patients, and five as ‘indoor patients’ in the institution. Two deaths had occurred during the year, though no clinical details were given (The Mercury, 1890).

Dr. R. A. Brevis attended Mrs Sydney Wragge following a fall in which the broke her knee cap. Five weeks after the accident she was able to get about as well as ever when many people thought she would be a cripple for life (The Tasmanian, 1890b).

James Blaney, a young man about twenty years of age, was charged at the Police Court before Messrs A. K. Chapman, S.M., and John Kennedy, J.P., with criminally assaulting a fifteen year old girl named Mary Jane Heald. Presumably ‘criminal assault’ is the ‘inoffensive euphemism’ of polite society in the late nineteenth century for rape.

Mary Jane Heald deposed the accused put his hand across my mouth, dragged me across the road, threw me down, pulled my shawl over my mouth, and committed a criminal offence. Dr. A. Brevis gave evidence which was deemed unfit for publication. After hearing all the evidence,
extensive circumstantial evidence, the Bench after a few minutes' deliberation decided that the evidence was not sufficient to commit the accused and discharged him.

Over a century later rape remains difficult to prove with conflicting 'he says, she says evidence, but the 'unpublishable evidence' from Dr Brewis, proving he saw Mary Heald soon after the event, should have been presented explicitly and decisive in reaching the verdict (Launceston Examiner, 1890a).

Dr Brewis opened the batting for the married men's team against the single men's team at Waratah. In his two innings Brewis scored two and then one. The single men won by forty three (Wellinton Times and Agricultural and Mining Gazette, 1891a).

Samuel Newell, a new arrival from Deloraine, while working at the Bischoff mine broke his leg just below the knee, owing to a slip of earth jamming him against a rock. The sufferer was carried by his mates to the hospital and was under the care of Dr. Brewis (Wellinton Times and Agricultural and Mining Gazette, 1891b).

Dr. Brewis attended Mr Blaney, a Bischoff mine employee with a dislocated hip sustained in an accident at the mine. The truck on which he was riding capsizing while running down a slight incline, with the result that he was thrown and the truck fell upon him. Mr Clarke, a worker at Cook's survey camp had an accident when while riding a pack horse cut his knee with an axe. His wound was dressed, and he was progressing favourably (Launceston Examiner, 1892).

Dr. Brewis attended Mr Albert Thorne, the son of a local storekeepers. He cut his foot in two places when jumping into one of the dams whither he and others had gone for a bathe requiring several stitches to close the wound (Launceston Examiner, 1892b).

Miss Revt, youngest child of Mr Thornton Revt, sub-overseer at the Mount Bischoff Mine died at Waratah from ‘brain fever’, after a short but painful illness. The deceased was attended by Dr. Brewis, assisted by Dr. Smith, who did all that earthly aid could do. Bacterial meningitis appears the likely diagnosis (Launceston Examiner, 1892c).

Dr. Brewis attended John Housego, a carter employed by the Mount Bischoff Co, with a serious head injury. He was driving a team of three horses attached to a dray down the North Valley-road, and at a bend in the road known as the Zig Zag, the horses became restless and overturned the cart down an embankment. It is supposed that one of the horses kicked Housego in the head. Brewis found it necessary to put eleven stitches in the man's head. He clearly recovered well as in 1885 he won a running race and a woodchopping event (The Mercury, 1894; The Tasmanian, 1894).

Dr. Brewis attended Mr. Hugh Lynch, Traffic Manager of the Waratah Railway. In spite of his position, Lynch believed in patent medicines that ‘cure all the ills that the flesh is heir to’! He carried a phial containing this patent cure all with him. He also carries a larger phial containing water. Soon after the train left Waratah, Mr. Lynch in taking his usual dose took it from the wrong phial and became exceedingly ill. He had consumed Fowler's Solution of Arsenic! Brewis applied the stomach pump and usual medical remedies such that Lynch was soon out of danger. By the following day he was unaffected by the mishap, but perhaps better informed (The Mercury, 1895).

Dr. K A. Brewis, the medical officer, treated one hundred males and one hundred and fifty seven females as outpatients during the year. No deaths occurred (The Mercury, 1897).

The annual report of the Tasmanian Central Board of Health presented to Parliament described epidemic visitations of typhoid fever, diphtheria, and scarlatina in the state. The all-causes death-rate was very slightly lower at 11.53 to the thousand living in 1897, as compared with 11.63 in 1896. There were four hundred and ninety two cases of typhoid fever notified, with forty seven deaths registered during the year, as compared with two hundred and seventy six cases with forty five deaths in 1896. The number of cases was greater than in any year since 1889. The disease was, generally speaking, of a mild type, for the case-rate of mortality was only 9.6
per cent., as compared with 15.8 per cent in 1896 and 18.7 per cent. in 1891. This diminution was considered to be due to the more frequent treatment of patients in hospitals though there were no antibiotics or intravenous fluid replacement available in the twentieth century. There were eight hundred and fifty one cases of infectious diseases notified and treated with during the year.

The Central Board of Health believed that the only efficient preventive measure against smallpox is universal vaccination but were aware of the anti-vaxxers in 1897 and modified the compulsory clauses. There were one hundred and fifty cases of diphtheria notified, and twelve deaths registered attributed to it, as compared with one hundred and fourteen cases with thirteen deaths in 1896. It will be noticed that notwithstanding the greatly increased number of cases the number of deaths is smaller. During the past four years the death-rate from diphtheria has continuously and rapidly decreased from 19.8 per cent of cases in 1894, through 16.8 per cent in 1895, and 11.9 per cent. in 1896, to 8.0 per cent. in 1897. As this decrease in mortality is coincident with the increase in use of antitoxin serum, the board could not but regard this as the cause and effect (Parliament of Tasmania, 1897).

Dr. R. Adams Brewis was the guest of honour at a farewell banquet to express appreciation for his seven and a half years’ service to Waratah and wish him well for the future. He considered it his duty that lie should go to England-for a time at least-so as to come more in touch with later advances of science in his profession and fit himself more freely for that higher success at which every medical man aimed.

Dr. Brewis proposed the health of Dr. Faulkner, who had been appointed to the position of company’s doctor. He was a fellow student of Dr. Faulkner's at Edinburgh and Brewis felt sure that he would be very much liked by everyone in the district following his lengthy experience in the Rockhampton Hospital (Launceston Examiner, 1897a; Wellington Times and Agricultural and Mining Gazette, 1897a).

Amongst the several hundred patients seen by Dr Brewis, there were three workplace injuries, a dislocated hip, a head injury and a lacerated knee, none serious. Other patients included two intra hospital deaths of unknown cause, a fractured patella, the death of a young girl from painful brain fever, a lacerated foot and he appeared as an expert witness in a rape case.

His other documented achievement was to open the batting for his cricket team scoring three runs in both innings combined, following which he appears to have ‘stuck to his day job’!

Dr Faulkner 1897-1900

Dr Faulkner attended a meeting of the Waratah Football club at which he was elected president. It was suggested he ‘should don the socks’ like his predecessor whose sturdy form was greatly missed by his team mates. The code of football is unspecified but as a graduate of Edinburgh University Medical School, rugby union would probably be his game, though Scotsmen were also passionate about football as the round ball game is known worldwide (Wellington Times and Agricultural and Mining Gazette, 1897b).

Dr Faulkner’s son fell over while running round a table at home and broke his leg above the ankle. Dr Faulkner set the injured leg and the young patient was as usual reported to be doing as well as can reasonably be expected (Wellington Times and Agricultural and Mining Gazette, 1897c).

Dr. Faulkner attended John Boy when he was badly crushed by a fall of earth in the White Face on the Bischoff Companies mine. Clinical details of his injury and possible subsequent incapacity are omitted but he was reported to be doing as well as expected (Daily Telegraph, 1997).

Several cases of typhoid were reported to have recovered under the skilful treatment of Dr. Faulkner and the careful care of Nurse Alford at the Waaratah Hospital (Launceston Examiner, 1898a).

Published State Health report for 1887 revealed two hundred and three cases of Scarlatina with five deaths; three cases of measles; twenty eight deaths from influenza; one hundred and thirty five deaths from phthisis (tuberculosis); eighty one deaths from cancer, as compared with ninety...
five in 1896. Medical progress in the last century ensured that diseases such as measles and diphtheria are now optional conditions found almost exclusively amongst the anti-vaxxers. There appears little improvement in common sense and informed opinion in over a century!

A rather vague statement which appeared in the same edition reported a man suffering an accident going to work was initially referred to Waratah Hospital, but at Emu Bay was advised that hospital was full and he should proceed to Launceston Hospital generating discussion that part of the Waratah subscription payment should go to Launceston. The finance being newsworthy but the details of his injury were not (Launceston Examiner, 1898b).

Heinrich Von See attended one patient in the Waratah Hospital having been registered as a medical practitioner in Emu Bay, now known as Burnie (Launceston Examiner, 1898c).

Dr. Heinrich Von See attended Mr Mullins when he was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with a severe facial injury sustained while laying explosives. He was ‘bulling’ in a mining hole at Boko Creek, on the Pieman River just north of Roseberry on the Emu Bay railway line. An explosion caused severe head injuries and destroyed one eye. Von See came urgently and arranged transfer to hospital, presumably Burnie or Launceston (Launceston Examiner, 1898d; Daily Telegraph, 1898).

Two men were admitted to the Waratah Hospital following another accident with dynamite. An explosion on the Emu Bay line a few miles from the Pieman River injured a group of men standing some fifty metres away. A quantity of stone thrown into the air hit several men, two seriously. Shanahan was severely injured and there was initially doubt that he would survive, while Blackburn’s injuries were less severe. However five days later they were both reported to be progressing satisfactorily. The attending doctor is not mentioned (Launceston Examiner, 1898e; Launceston Examiner, 1898f).

Lawrence Cranston, a thirty-nine year-old railway ganger was the subject of a coronial inquiry in Burnie before Mr. B. Rouse (Coroner) and a jury.

Cranston had been advised by the railway doctor to go to Waratah Hospital with a private serious cardiac complaint but owing to the nature of his complaint he intended to seek admission to the Launceston Hospital. He was on his way there from Guildford Junction when he died suddenly. Three men who were in the carriage with him, Messrs Cassidy, L. Hardwicke and W. Duffy, stated to the police that he deteriorated, becoming very breathless and died suddenly.

Dr Charles Rook, duly qualified medical practitioner at Burnie, presented evidence at a Coroner’s inquiry. He saw no trace of any intoxicating liquor on deceased. He made a post mortem examination of the body of deceased, Lawrence Cranston, finding the body fairly well nourished, with no external marks of violence. The brain was highly congested.

The right lung adhered to the ribs. Both lungs were congested and the heart was enlarged and dilated, with an intramural thrombus which might have been caused by a variety of diseases. The internal organs were congested and on the right side, in the small intestine, there was about 2ft in a highly inflamed state. The immediate cause of death was considered to be the clot found in the heart causing congestion.

The jury, without retiring, returned a verdict to the effect that deceased died from natural causes, the immediate cause being a clot of blood in the heart.

Today, in the absence of clear valvular disease or coronary arterial disease at autopsy a dilated cardiomyopathy of probably viral aetiology seems probable, though iron overload or thiamine deficiency are possible (Launceston Examiner, 1898f; The Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1899a).

Dr. Faulkner reported that he had treated twenty three inpatients, one ‘special’ outside case, and two hundred and sixty three, one hundred and twenty six male and one hundred and thirty seven female, ordinary outpatients during the year. No deaths have occurred.
The board considered Dr. Faulkner gave satisfaction and had been most attentive to his duties. Indeed a zero death rate in a remote town during the last year of the nineteenth century where the workplace lacks safety is impressive (Launceston Examiner, 1899a).

Dr. Faulkner attended Fred Sparks, a well-known prospector, suffering from severe burns following a fire at the Magnet mine in which several huts were destroyed (Launceston Examiner, 1899b).

Dr. Faulkner, left for a well-earned holiday after nearly two years working in Waratah, to be replaced by Dr. Bennett, of Melbourne as locum tenens. The press reported that during his stay at Waratah Dr. Faulkner had acquitted himself with credit both as surgeon and physician. The many dangerous and trying cases which had been successfully treated at our local hospital reflect credit on all connected there (Launceston Examiner, 1899c).

The Launceston Examiner, reporting an accident, noted that mining fields generally are renowned for the number of accidents which occur and that the West Coast had already been responsible for the loss of a large number of human lives.

Mr. C. Anderson was admitted to the Waratah Hospital critically ill as the sole survivor of an accident which claimed three lives in a bridge collapse.

The construction of a temporary bridge over the Pieman River had been completed. To evaluate it thirty tons of iron rails were placed on it and the bridge appeared to have stood the test. However when four men were shifting some of the iron, the structure collapsed. The suspended centre portion of the bridge was supported by eight cables four on each side, round bolsters behind steel rails, which were cemented into the rock on the banks of the river. The cables were fastened by clips, four to each cable, but owing to the extra strain the cables slipped through the clips, letting four men, Robert Wighton, William R. O’Rooke, John Larssen, and C. Anderson fall into the Pieman River sixty feet below, with the bridge. The first two died soon after being taken out of the water, and Larsen at 12 o’clock, killed by falling material. Anderson was more fortunate. He struggled clear of the material in the river, and after floating some distance downstream on a plank was saved from immediate death, though was very gravely injured about the body. However, he made a slow recovery being able to get out of bed by May 8th. Two of the unfortunate men were married. The cause of the accident, so far, was almost unaccountable. A coroner’s inquiry under Coroner Mr. A. K. Chapman was held at Mitchell's Pieman River Hotel for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of the accident at the Pieman railway bridge on the preceding day. Superintendent W. Ruddock appeared on behalf of the police, and Mr. T. J. Crisp, solicitor, represented the Emu Bay Co. No legal representative appeared present for the victims. Jas. Stirling, engineer in charge of the Emu Bay Co's railway works, Edward Ernest Osborne, foreman carpenter, engaged at bridge at time of accident, and Wm. Christensen, labourer, also working at the bridge, were all examined at length, detailing with great accuracy the construction of works in connection with the temporary structure, which was almost completed for the purpose of carrying over the permanent bridge.

Prior to commencing the permanent bridge thirty tons of railway iron were placed on each side of the suspended line on Wednesday evening and left for fourteen hours. The strength was reckoned as two to one of what was required. Witnesses detailed work being commenced on Thursday morning; the three deceased and Charles Anderson going to the centre to remove the rails, but not until foreman Osborne had gone over the line himself and ran back with a trolley of more than the men's combined weight.

The whole fabrication, without hardly a moment's warning, was precipitated into the river when the cable clips slipped, carrying the men with it. The terrible injuries they received were detailed at length, and all the witnesses testified to the care and precaution taken to ensure safety.
The jury, after two hours' deliberation, returned the following verdict:—"That Robert Wighton, William O'Rooke, and John Larrsen met their death through the collapsing of the temporary bridge over the Pieman River, but there was no blame attachable to any persons connected with its construction, for every precaution had been taken known to those in charge of the work to prevent accident." Five of the jury wished to add a rider to the effect that the smooth surface of the cable had, perhaps, a tendency to assist the slipping.

As in Zeehan and for an interstate comparative example, in Cracow, Queensland, management is never found to be responsible and the term compensation, even for widows and families is never mentioned. Although the bridge was clearly constructed with a great deal of thought, care and expertise, the suspension cables were not adequately fastened (Launceston Examiner, 1899d; The Mount Lyell Standard and Strahan Gazette, 1899; The Mercury, 1899a; The Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1899b; Zeehan and Dundas Times, 1899a).

Public donations for the Pieman Bridge Accident Fund were reported to total £32 7s 2d, clear of deducted business expenses. Expenses! It appears management had its thirty pieces of silver at the expense of the families of the deceased! It was probable that the residual money would be equally divided between Mr Anderson, who was still an inmate of the Waratah Hospital and the family of the late Mr Larrsen, who died in the bridge collapse (Zeehan and Dundas Times, 1899b).

After one month away, Dr Faulkner returned from his well-earned holiday in Victoria though Dr Bennett, his locum tenens, during his short stay impressed his patients and made numerous friends (The Mercury, 1899b).

Dr Faulkner was obliged to amputate the right hand of Wilfred Camps after his hand was reduced to pulp having had it caught between the cog wheels of a machine in the Mount Bischoff dressing sheds. Camps was a promising young man just starting in life, his capacity to undertake manual labour subsequently was not considered (Daily Telegraph, 1899).

Dr Faulkner attended Mr. Anthony Cooney, son of Mr John Cooney, of Waratah following an accident. About three miles out on the Waratah Corinna road, a horse which Cooney was driving bolted, and when he was thrown out, the dray wheel passed over his shoulder. He was found in an unconscious state and conveyed to his father's house (Launceston Examiner, 1899e).

Dr Faulkner attended Mr Curry, a metallurgist, following an injury to his foot. Cooney had been examining the upper reaches of the Savage river when he cut his foot severely with an axe. He was conveyed to Waratah where Faulkner stitched and dressed the wound following which treatment the sufferer was progressing favourably (North-West Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1900a).

Thomas Withers was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with shock and minimal injuries following a rock fall at the Mount Bischoff mine. Alfred Eades however was killed instantaneously by the brown face slip. The unfortunate man, in running to escape, fell in a cutting used as a tramway and been overwhelmed, together with a horse he had been driving.

Eades had been covered by thousands of tons of earth and when his body was retrieved after digging for either twenty five minutes or two hours according to different reports, there was no sign of life.

Eades was lying on his side with both hands over his face as a protection against suffocation. He appeared to have been crushed about the neck, body and legs. Dr Faulkner was summoned and found the men doing their best to get the Eades out. He then confirmed Eades was deceased. Four other miners who were working at the face ran away and escaped injury, and another horse also bolted and got clear of the falling rock.

The Coroner (Mr. A. K. Chapman) and Superintendent Ruddock left by train for Waratah the morning of the accident planning an inquest on the body of the man killed, Alfred Eades, shortly after their arrival.

The inquest touching the death of Alfred Eades, who had been killed by a massive landslip at the
Mount Bischoff mine therefore was held before Mr A. K. Chapman, the coroner, with information from many witnesses following which the jury considered Alfred Eades met his death by being smothered by a fall of earth at the south west corner of the red face of the Mt Bischoff mine at Waratah and that his death was accidental. However the jury added as a rider that more care should be exercised by overseers in warning or removing men where any slip is likely to occur, as according to the evidence of one witness such was not done when stones and earth had come away previous to the slip. The first comment on inadequate safety systems at Mount Bischoff in twenty eight years (North-West Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1900b; North-West Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1900c; Zeehan and Dundas Times, 1900).

Dr Faulkner attended the two year old son of Mr. Arthur Lacey with severe burns. He had been playing around a small fire the other children had made, when his clothes caught alight, unfortunately he succumbed to his injuries (North-West Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1900a).

James Palmer sued the Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company before Mr. Justice Clark at the civil sittings in Hobart for £2000 damages for injuries received. On January 25th 1900, Palmer charged a hole in the mine with gelignite, lit a fuse and retired. Normally this would detonate in one to two minutes, however, when Palmer returned at an interval of probably forty-five minutes, though twenty minutes is also described, the fuse was still alight. Palmer turned hastily, fell over, dropped his candle and was in darkness when the charge exploded. Palmer was severely injured, he was blinded for twenty-four hours before recovering his sight, had facial injuries, lost three fingers and his left leg was shattered such that an amputation six inches above the knee was required.

He was an inpatient in Waratah Hospital for some eight or nine weeks and was then transferred to Launceston Hospital for a further month. He sued on the basis that he had totally lost his livelihood, the mining company stored fuses in a damp place in the mine, hence the extreme delay in ignition, and that he should have been provided with a better lamp. The company paid Palmer wages up to May 4th and also paid the Waratah Hospital for all expenses, a total of £135 17s. In July 1899, he wrote to the company for assistance, as he had opened a tobacco business, and they gave him £25 and told him he was not to expect any more. On January 24th he wrote for further assistance, and the company sent a cheque for £25 to purchase furniture in his wife’s name. Subsequently he asked for a further £500 and was told that this would be paid in time. The defence suggested that the explosion was probably caused by Palmer interfering with the charges and that he had been well compensated. After two full days hearings the case was adjourned The following week the Supreme Court awarded a verdict for the plaintiff with damages of £900, but the Mount Bischoff Company stated they would challenge the verdict before the full court. Any subsequent outcome did not appear in the press at a later date (The Examiner, 1900a; The Mercury, 1900a; The Mercury, 1900b).

A public meeting was held in Burnie calling for a hospital in Burnie to celebrate the end of the war in South Africa. The connection is not clear but it was considered inconvenient and inappropriate to send sick patients to either Waratah or Launceston Hospitals (Tasmanian News, 1900; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1900b).

Dr Faulkner attended the Rev Dr Craig, the Church of England clergyman at Waratah with a dislocated shoulder and severe facial lacerations. He was shutting a high window in the Athenaeum Hall when the ladder on which he was standing slipped and he fell a distance of some twenty five feet.

He was not found until about an hour after the accident happened but after Faulkner reduced the dislocation and treated the facial injuries, Craig was reported to be progressing as well as can be expected. It is not clear if this is a
workplace injury (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1900c)! Parliamentarians considered that Waratah Hospital was receiving inadequate funding for the work done there. Mr Crowther, a politician, supported the suggestion and said the hospital at Waratah was a capital institution and continued really excellent work. While the mining business sector was wealthy, most residents struggled with the expensive cost of living in the remote town (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1900d; Daily Telegraph, 1900).

Dr. Faulkner gave evidence to an inquest on the body of William Gittens before Mr. A. K. Chapman, the Coroner. Clara Gittens, widow of deceased, stated that her husband had been very ill. He would not go to bed, and his mind seemed to be affected. He suffered from delusions. A stone which struck him on the head while at blasting work eight years ago appeared to have affected him, not at the time, but subsequently.

Dr Faulkner visited the house finding Gittens with a dynamite cap in one hand and a razor in the other. Gittens cut his throat before he could be stopped. The jury found that deceased committed suicide whilst of unsound mind (The Examiner, 1900b; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1900e).

Between 1/4/1897 and 31/12/1900, mostly under the care of Dr Faulkner, there were twelve workplace accidents in which four men died, one lost an eye, one lost his right hand and another had his lower leg amputated and lost three fingers. There was one suicide in which a distant head injury may have caused a post traumatic encephalopathy. Therefore of the eight survivors, three would have been at least partially incapacitated from further work. None received automatic compensation.

There were generous public donations for one survivor from which business deducted their cut as expenses! One victim, the amputee, sued Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company for £2000. The company paid Palmer wages up to May 4th, his expenses in the Waratah Hospital, and £50 for a total of £185 17s. Subsequently the Supreme Court awarded a verdict for the plaintiff with damages of £900 which the mining company planned to protest before another court.

**Summary**

There were forty three reported workplace medical events, one suicide and the rest accidents. There were seven deaths, three in a bridge collapse, one under a tree fall, one in a car crash, one under a rock fall and one delayed death when immobilised with a fractured leg. Seven were injured by explosions, three by delayed and unexpected dynamite detonations with the loss of one, two or three eyes. There appears to have been no policy for failed detonations.

Two men required leg amputations, one dying after a hind quarter removal, an operation with a high mortality even today. Public donations for his widow and family totally £36 to which the mine volunteered another £25, the only recorded voluntary contribution in twenty years to a family following an accident! A third worker probably required a lower leg amputation for a comminuted tibial fracture, then the standard treatment prior to antibiotics and the inevitable life-threatening osteomyelitis. One man with a crushed right hand lost his thumb and the third and fourth fingers, another lost his whole hand.

Those with loss of vision, limb or digits would have greatly reduced work capacity. The only one gaining significant compensation from the mining company had to sue them in court on more than one occasion. One had some financial gain from a public charitable subscription.

**Workers Compensation, Tasmania, 1878 – 2023**

Tasmania first introduced workers’ compensation in 1910. Legislation to protect workers in hazardous positions in Tasmania has been repealed, amended and strengthened many times since.

However, unfortunately, manual labour remains dangerous today, one hundred and sixty nine
Australians died at work in 2021, one hundred and forty three in 2023 up to November 23rd. Almost none would have been suited business people in offices. The presence of workers’ compensation legislation still does not guarantee care for the disabled, support for families of deceased workers.

Even in 2021 miners are killed and maimed in mines with a total failure to hold administration culpable for ensuring safety or to identify any responsible individuals. Graham Dawson was killed in 2021 in a roof fall incident at the Sojitz Gregory Coal Mine when there was some previous evidence of weakness in the roof. Five miners were severely burned at the Grosvenor Mine by a gas explosion when a board of inquiry found that the Anglo-American Company knew of gas accumulation in the mine. To date no charges of culpability or responsibility have been laid against these mine owners in an era in which mining company profits are measured in tens of billions of dollars, and CEOs salaries in tens of millions of dollars (Stride, 2023; Courier Mail, 2023).

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