Mining and Medicine in 1872-1954: The Doctors of Waratah Hospital, Tasmania, Part 2

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Abstract:
The published clinical case load of the doctors of the Waratah Hospital, Tasmania between 1901 and 1920 is described with emphasis firstly on the accidents occurring in the mines, and the subsequent support of the victims over a twenty year period, then secondly on the infectious diseases in the community in the era before antibiotics and vaccines.

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. Local doctors of the period required the skills of an orthopaedic surgeon and also some general surgical ability.

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 It is recognised that newspapers are not peer reviewed journals but are the most detailed source of information.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.
The Peerapper Indigenous people first colonised the area around Waratah for tens of thousands of years prior to the second wave of colonisation at 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 (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1901a).

In 1908 the Court House became the local Council Chambers and Court House. The underground mine closed in 1914, but surface mining continued until the price of tin slumped in 1929. The mine finally closed in 1947 having produced 81,000 tonnes of tin, today worth about two billion $US, 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. The Magnet mine site today, however, is a few deserted mine site ruins.

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 1. Waratah Town and Waterfall

Figure 2. Bischoff Hotel Waratah Hospital

Mining towns always need a hospital nearby as severe and fatal accidents were and remain common. 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 clinical details of the inpatients and 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 Faulkner 1897 1907

Dr. Faulkner’s attended Bernard Cooney a seven year old boy who fell off a gate and broke his arm. He was reported to be recovering well (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1901a).

Dr Faulkner's informed the board that there had been no indoor patients for the month (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1901).

William Pollard was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Faulkner following a painful accident. While felling a tree at the Magnet survey camp six kilometres west of Waratah, it lodged in another tree. When Pollard endeavoured to get it to the ground it suddenly slipped and knocked him down the side of a hill. His injury was not detailed but he was reported to be progressing favourably (The Mercury, 1901a).

M K Allen of Guildford Junction was attended by Dr Faulkner with a severe laceration of his leg suffered while practising for the Axemen's carnival. Four colleagues conveyed him ten miles in a trolly to Waratah. Allen was expected to be incapacitated for a month (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1901b).

Mr Charles Poole died under the care of Dr Faulkner with cardiac failure. Poole was well known and respected as a consistent Christian, a man of large sympathy, a kind husband and father, and a true friend to many. Dr Faulkner was reported to be kindness itself in his attention to the deceased during his illness, including calling Dr McCall, of Ulverstone, for a second opinion confirming the diagnosis and that little else could be done.
Treatment for heart failure in 1900 included digoxin, the oldest drug still in use for heart disease, arsenic, strychnine and the insertion of Southey’s tubes into the leg to drain fluid, therapy of little use compared with betablockers, ACE inhibitors, diuretics, coronary angioplasties, valve replacement and transplants of today (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1901c; Daily Telegraph, 1901b).

Mr John Thome was treated in the surgery by Dr Williams, locum tenens for Dr. Faulkner, for a snake bite on his hand. Mrs Faulkner had very promptly tied a strong ligature around his wrist, the favoured treatment in preference to compression at the time. Thorne was said to be quite out of danger. Thorne had previously appeared in this narrative in 1887 following an injury at the skating rink (Daily Telegraph, 1902a).

Dr Faulkner and Mrs Faulkner returned from their short holiday in Victoria. The Times hoped earnestly ‘this painstaking and attentive medico will not have his energies taxed to the degree of last years’ experience.’ (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1902a).

Alfred Watson was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr Faulkner following an accident at the Magnet mine. When passing down a ladder, Watson missed his footing, and fell a distance of eight or nine feet onto a log hurting his back. Fortunately, no bones were broken, and Dr. Faulkner hoped for an early discharge (Daily Telegraph, 1902c; The Mercury, 1902c).

Lindy Howard suffered a fractured arm and bruised shoulder following an accident at the Magnet Mine in which he slipped down an ore slide. Following treatment from Dr Faulkner he was reported to be progressing favourably (Daily Telegraph, 1902d; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1902).

Mr Butchers a young man employed on the Emu Bay railway, suffered a broken leg when he fell in front of a railway lorry going down a steep grade. He was attended in the Waratah Hospital by Dr. Faulkner and the matron where Butchers was reported to be doing as well as can be expected (Daily Telegraph, 1902b; The Mercury, 1902b).

Dr Faulkner attended Jas. Scheers with a severe laceration of his arm. He was employed in the dressing sheds at the Bischoff mine and when descending a flight of steps with a shovel in his hand, his foot slipped. He fell on the shovel and ripped his arm requiring seven or eight stitches in the lesion. Though progressing as well as can be expected, it was anticipated that three or four weeks would elapse before he could resume work (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1902b).

Dr. Faulkner was extremely busy with a Scarlatina epidemic affecting school children and several adults. Closing the State School seemed only to have the effect of spreading the disease as the children were mixing more with their playfellows outside the school! The Mercury considered that institution could no longer be blamed for spreading the infection (The Mercury, 1902a).

Frank Goldsmith, aged about 40 years, died in the Bischoff dam. Initially thought to have drowned, Goldsmith collapsed when only about knee deep in the water when he was seen to fall forward, and scarcely thirty seconds elapsed before he was carried out, but life was even then almost extinct, and Goldsmith expired almost immediately. Dr Faulkner knew Goldsmith was suffering from heart failure and was able to certify death such that an inquest was deemed unnecessary.

Mrs John Rowe was attended by Dr Faulkner having been bitten by a small brown snake on the little finger of the left hand when picking up firewood near her house. A piece of string was immediately tied round the finger to prevent circulation. Faulkner attended quickly and applied the usual unspecified remedies with satisfactory results as far, though one report stated she was still extremely ill, suffering severely from shock to the nervous system (The Mercury, 1903; Launceston Examiner, 1903b; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1903h).

Dr. Faulkner attended Cyril Thorne, little son of Mr J. H. Thome, who fell when running along the street fracturing his clavicle (Daily Telegraph, 1903b).

Mr James Quinton, the assistant manager of the Mount Bischoff Company, was suddenly seized with a severe illness to-day, and paralysis was feared. A stroke seems a likely diagnosis. Dr. Langinson, locum tenens for Dr. Faulkner, attended Quinton (Daily Telegraph, 1903a).

Dr Faulkner departed for a short holiday and the Times on behalf of the Waratah people wished him an enjoyable time during his well-earned holiday after a long remarkably busy period with a large number of sick cases on hand. Mr James Clark was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the locum doctor severely shaken with a dislocated shoulder. He had been driving a dray loaded with wood out of the bush on a track in an extremely poor condition when the dray capsized with the load of wood being thrown on
top of him (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1903a).

Three accidents in a few days all required Dr. Faulkner’s attention. Sykes a young lad slipped from a log and broke his arm.

Mr. Arthur Littler, the overseer at the Bischoff sheds, slipped off a plank whilst doing his rounds and sustained a severe fracture of his arm in the same place as a fracture several years previously.

A young man at the Magnet mine, whilst crossing a bridge with an axe in his hand, fell and severely cut his arm. All three were reported to be progressing favourably (Launceston Examiner, 1903a).

Dr Faulkner was reported to be having a busy time during the cold weather with frequent colds and an outbreak of mumps (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1903g).

The nine year old daughter of Mr Little was admitted to the Waratah Hospital. She found a dynamite cap that had not been securely put away and she was playing when it exploded. Her left eye was injured and was feared she would lose it. She also shattered two of her fingers and the top of her thumb so badly that they had to be amputated. Sadly, injuries from explosives were not limited to miners in Australia’s past history but also have caused severe injuries to children (Stride, 2022; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1903b).

Mr C. Sheedy was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with several superficial lacerations caused by a fall from his bicycle during a bicycle race. He covered the course in twenty-four minutes giving an average speed of just under thirty kph, a speed at which significant traumatic lesions could be expected. Three days after the fall he was up and about but not expected to return to work for a few days (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1903c; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1903d).

William Williams (locally known as ‘Young Bill’) was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Faulkner with a superficial head injury. He was driving a team of horses in the bush when a spar caught in the box of the cart wheel and hit him on the head, making a laceration three or four inches long requiring nine stitches. He was discharged after three days. Today he may only have been admitted for a head injury assessment (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1903e; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1903f).

A resident of Magnet suffering from delirium tremens had been parading the streets in a silk hat and dress coat. He was taken admitted to the Waratah Hospital but escaped from there. He was soon apprehended and detained in the lockup for safe custody (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1904f).

Dr. Faulkner reported that thirty-nine ‘indoor’ patients, and six hundred and thirty six ‘outdoor’ patients had been treated for the year 1903. The Mercury considered the medical officer has been most attentive to his duties (The Mercury, 1904d).

The Herald reported what it considered a remarkable case. Fortunately, the press for once gave the detailed clinical features reported by the sufferer which enable us to make a retrospective diagnosis.

Miss Bertha Columbine, aged fifteen, became unwell with an attack of scarlatina followed by erysipelas which seemed to ruin her whole health. A few months previously, following that Streptococcal infection, she was a nervous wreck with apparently no chance of recovery. Often she was so violent that she had to be tied hand and foot. The worst feature was that at one time she lost all power of speech.

Her legs, arms and fingers started to twitch and jerk, and she could not keep them still. She could not hold anything in her hand and had to be fed like a baby. She could not walk and sharp pains shot through her legs. Often she cried with the pain though she could not speak a word. Sometimes she would lie like dead, and other times it would take two strong men to hold her or tie her down. Dr. W. Faulkner considered she was the worst case of the kind that he had ever seen.

After some weeks she took some of Dr. Williams’ Pink Pills from Mr McCreery, the Chemist. Shortly her speech returned, her twitching ceased and her nerves recovered. Bertha was convinced the pills had cured her. Miss Columbine said, ‘Now you would not find a healthier or happier girl than I am.’

Perhaps she was just making the normal slow recovery from Sydenham’s chorea. A condition, first described by the English physician Thomas Sydenham in 1686, like her initial scarlet fever, caused by Group A Streptococcus (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1904b; Sydenham, 1686).

Dr. W. Faulkner complains of the appearance of his name in a letter in connection with a patent medicine advertisement. Faulkner strongly denied responsibility for certain ridiculous garbled and inaccurate statements and felt compelled to respond
for his own protection. Perhaps this related to Miss Columbine above and the probability of Sydenham's had occurred to Faulkner (Daily Telegraph, 1904e).

A Quintet of Accidents Occurred in the Area

Another accident occurred in the Athenaum Hall, another fall from a ladder as occurred a few years ago. Mr Clarke was pulling down the decorations of the social held the night before. Mr. J. Hanlon was holding the ladder at the foot, but it was long and the floor was slippery, and when 'Charlie' got up to the top the ladder was more than his helper could hold. 'Charlie' held on to the ladder as it tumbled, but a nail tore his leg just below the knee requiring the insertion of two stitches by Dr Faulkner.

Mrs C. Chapman's son James broke his left arm while jumping in front of his parents' residence. Dr Faulkner put the arm in splints and James was expected to make a full recovery in time.

Mr W.B. Andersen's son dislocated his arm when he fell off a merry go-round.

Mr W. Daly sprained his ankle out near the Whyte River when he had got out of his cart and tripped over when walking over some rough ground. His party had to abandon their trip and return home and Daly was obliged to rest for a few days before mobilizing.

Mr J. Archer's son Frank while riding on a trolley on the West Bischoff Company's tramway in company with another boy was thrown off and his leg cut badly. Fortunately, Messrs J. Sutton and C. Knighton were coming home from a trip to the Magnet at the time, and after roughly bandaging the limb they carried the lad home.

The requirement for Dr Faulkner for the last three cases was not stated (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1904d).

Dr Faulkner returned to Waratah from Victoria following his annual holiday (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1904e).

Frank Thow, a fifty-five year old bushman, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital having been lost in the bush for three days between Guilford and Loven on Tuesday. He was suffering from exposure having been soaked in pouring rain for most of the time and presumably hypothermic as the average night temperature in the area ranges between 12° - 5°C. His food supply was soaked or consumed. He could not see the sun to find his bearing but ultimately found the Guildford railway line and the way back to habitation.

He improved rapidly once warm, dry and fed (Examiner, 1904; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1904g).

Mr and Mrs John Cunningham's infant child died though the condition and location in hospital or not are not specified.

At the first meeting for the year the Waratah Hospital Board decided to obtain an X ray apparatus and to light the premises with acetylene gas. During the month three patients had been admitted and one discharged. The presence of the hospital doctor is not recorded (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1904b).

Mr Harold Illingworth was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with an unspecified illness (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1904c).

William Kenworthy attended Dr. Faulkner following a painful accident which occurred at the Bischoff workshop. He received a splash of molten iron in his eyes partially blinding him.

The injuries were subsequently reported to be not quite as severe as initially suspected and there is every probability of his sight being preserved. There is no mention of protective goggles being worn or considered to avoid similar accidents (Launceston Examiner, 1904e).

The wife of Rev. Clement Allen was suddenly taken ill with an unspecified illness. Dr Faulkner was called in, and after a day or two's observation he decided that she should be transferred to Launceston for further treatment. Whatever her diagnosis, Allen resigned his position a year later because of her ongoing chronic ill health (Daily Telegraph, 1904d; Launceston Examiner, 1904d).

Dr. Faulkner performed an appendicectomy on a young lad about fifteen years old, named Cooper with the assistance of Dr. Watson, of Burnie. The operation was successfully performed and the patient on enquiry was doing well (Launceston Examiner, 1904d).

Mr. Oliver Lindley Adams, underground manager at the Magnet tin mine, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital suffering from a severe bout of pneumonia. Initial reports said he was progressing favourably under Dr. Faulkner's treatment and another, probably erroneous, that he had been transferred to Zeehan Hospital.

Three days later it was reported that Drs. Faulkner and Watson were in attendance, but they did not hold out much hope of his recovery. Somewhat
surprisingly the next mention of Oliver Adams was three months later when he took over management of the Magnet mine while Mr de Latour convalesced in Burnie (Daily Telegraph, 1904a; The Mercury, 1904a; Daily Telegraph, 1904b; Mercury, 1904b; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1905a).

Mr. John Cooney was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Faulkner following a serious accident. While endeavouring to prevent a horse from bolting near the Whyte River, he got jammed between the cart wheel and a stump of a tree. His scapula, clavicle and three of his ribs were broken. He was taken to the Whyte River Hotel and Faulkner summoned to provide relief. He was transferred to Waratah where he doing well. His splendid physique was thought to be helping him through.

A little lad from Magnet named Chandler was also admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Faulkner. He fell over a bridge and according to the press, cut an artery in his hand. Faulkner dressed the wound, stopped the bleeding and the boy was reported to be doing well (Daily Telegraph, 1904c; Launceston Examiner, 1904a; The Mercury, 1904b; Launceston Examiner, 1904c).

Charles Webster attended Dr Faulkner with a dislocated elbow caused by a fall from his bicycle when crossing the Whyte River. The young man was reported to be progressing well following skilful treatment (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1904a).

Miss May Lynex performed a solo at a Waratah concert having recovered from a prolonged but unspecified severe illness under the skilful attention of Dr. Faulkner according to the Mercury (The Mercury, 1904c).

W. Osborne was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with an unspecified injury from an accident at the Magnet mine (Mercury, 1904).

Mr Patience was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr Faulkner with a severe laceration of his foot sustained while cutting wood in the bush (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1905a).

Mr De Lautour, manager of the Magnet Proprietary Company’s mine, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Faulkner with an illness said by one paper to be possible typhoid fever (Daily Telegraph, 1905c; Mercury, 1905a; Launceston Examiner, 1905c; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1905).

The Mount Bischoff Provident Hospital twenty-fourth annual report was presented. There was a slight increase in the number of patients treated, many resided at a considerable distance from Waratah. A substantial proportion of cases admitted being accidents and injuries brought in from the outlying mining fields. A sporadic case of typhoid was received from the Magnet, the first for many years.

The past year had been a healthy one, according to the report, no epidemic having visited the district, with the exception of influenza, which has been mild and widespread, its incidence at the close of winter synchronising with epidemics of former years, and its mildness probably due to a protective influence engendered by previous attacks.

No deaths having occurred during the year speaks volumes for the care, attention, and skilful treatment of the medical superintendent, Dr. Faulkner. The matron also deserved the thanks of the committee for the very able manner in which she has performed her arduous duties. An X-Ray apparatus, costing over £100, had been procured from Messrs. H. W. Cox and Co., London, and its usefulness has already been fully demonstrated (Mercury, 1905b).

Eva Chandler, a girl from the Magnet, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital severely ill with pneumonia. There were no further press reports on her progress (Launceston Examiner, 1905c).

John Fagan’s eldest son was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr Faulkner with a severe laceration of his foot. He was cutting a piece of wood with an axe when by some means the axe slipped and, as the press like to report, he severed an artery in his leg near the ankle, losing a great deal of blood. Faulkner stopped the bleeding and inserted four stitches. Fagan was progressing well after this attention (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1905c; Launceston Examiner, 1905g).

Dr. Faulkner presented evidence at an inquest held before Mr. C. H. Hall, of Burnie, coroner concerning the death of an elderly woman named Jane Hoskins who was found dead at her house. A verdict was returned according to the medical evidence that the cause of death was coma, probably occasioned by excessive consumption of alcohol (Launceston Examiner, 1905d).

Mr Matthews was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Faulkner with severe scalp wounds, caused by a tree falling on him. He was fortunate to escape
severe injury and was progressing favourably (Daily Telegraph 10/10/1905a).

Mr Thomas Hill, employed at Magnet mine, smashed his first finger of the right hand when shunting trucks. He put his right hand on the bumper to jump down when the engine jammed his first finger and reduced it to pulp as well as breaking his thumb. Dr Faulkner amputated the finger (Launceston Examiner, 1905a).

Dr. Faulkner’s presented evidence to a coronial inquest at Magnet before Mr Hall of Burnie concerning the death of Robert Thomas, of Magnet, from heart failure. The jury returned a verdict of heart failure was in accordance with the doctor’s evidence (Daily Telegraph, 1905b).

Mr. C. C. Clarke, who has been admitted to the Waratah Hospital suffering from a broken leg, was now discharged and hoped to mobilise on crutches within a few days. Mr. James McCreedie was also admitted to the Waratah Hospital with an injured knee and was being referred to Melbourne for a second opinion (Launceston Examiner, 1905f).

Dr Muir was recorded as working at the Waratah Hospital (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1905b).

Mrs. Fraser, an inhabitant of Rouse’s Camp, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with an unspecified serious illness from which she was a little improved (Launceston Examiner, 1905b).

Albert Morrow was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Faulkner having fallen off his bicycle. He was cycling down the Main Street when the handle bar came out. It was initially reported that he had broken an arm and a leg as well as suffering facial lacerations, but subsequently stated that no bones were broken (Launceston Examiner, 1905b).

Miss W. Cleaver was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under as reported Dr. W. C. Faulkner’s skilful guidance following an unspecified unfortunate accident but was on a fair way to recovery (Launceston Examiner, 1906a).

Waratah Hospital was reported to be busy with five or six inpatients having been admitted following various accidents under ‘our worthy MD,’ Dr W. C. Faulkner (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1906b).

Dr. Faulkner presented the results of a postmortem examination of the body of Albert Seetrine at a coroner’s inquest before Mr E. D. Atkinson following the discovery of his body in the bush. Faulkner discovered that he died through ingestion of Prussic Acid, either deliberate or accidental and the jury verdict agreed with the autopsy finding (Daily Telegraph, 1906).

Mr C. Gardiner was treated by Dr C. Faulkner with a crushed thumb which had been jammed while unloading timber. Faulkner amputated the thumb above the first joint and Gardiner was said to be is doing as well as can be expected (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1906a).

Dr. W. O. Faulkner attended Mr. Andrew Dennison with a fractured mandible sustained at his sawmill when hit with a crowbar. The bone was skillfully set and the unfortunate man was getting on as well as can be expected (Launceston Examiner, 1906c).

Mr Gillispie was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Faulkner with a fractured leg sustained when a trolley conveying the Magnet footballers from Waratah left the rails (Launceston Examiner, 1906d).

George Terry was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr. Faulkner having cut his ankle and as reported, severing an artery with an axe when he missed his target while chopping a small sprig in the bush (Examiner, 1906).

Pat Farley was admitted to the Waratah Hospital having been considerably knocked about when fighting Joseph O’Brien at the Magnet Hotel. Both men appeared in court subsequently, Farley on crutches, charged with disturbing the peace. Both were found guilty, O’Brien being fined 17s 6d, and Farley 14s 6d (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1907a).

The body of John Curry was taken to the Waratah Hospital morgue for postmortem examination. Curry, a miner aged about forty-five, had arrived at the Whyte River Hotel with his mate, George Broomhall at 4.00pm complaining of a severe headache, weakness and exhaustion. He went to bed and was found deceased at 7.00pm.

At the subsequent coroner’s inquest, Dr Faulkner, who had held a post mortem examination, said he was of opinion that death was due to syncope, resulting from dilatation of the stomach. These findings are somewhat obscure and non-specific. Possibly Curry had pyloric stenosis from peptic ulceration or cancer of the stomach or pancreas. After consultation, the jury returned a verdict of death from natural causes in accordance with the medical testimony (Examiner, 1907a; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1907d).
James Scheers was admitted to the Waratah Hospital, under the care of Dr. Faulkner having sustained severe injuries to one of his legs. Scheers was a lad handling the large pipes being laid from the tank on the Valley Road to convey water to the Power Station. One report suggested a truck passing over his leg, another that his injuries were not severe and he would be mobile shortly (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1907c; Examiner, 1907d).

Mr. Gaffney Green was also admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Faulkner having broken his left arm below the elbow but was progressing well. He was climbing the ladder to the loft in his shop when it slipped and he fell, though he was able to check the fall on a hook (Examiner, 1907e).

Mr Albert Smith, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Faulkner. While working at the Bischoff mine, he was struck on the head with a large stone. Faulkner assisted by Dr Watson from Burnie was obliged to remove a skull fragment, presumably for a depressed skull fracture. Smith was initially kept quiet and away from any visitors but subsequently was said to be progressing favourably. The possibility of compensation was not mentioned (Examiner, 1907h; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1907b).

Michael Maher was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Faulkner having broken a small bone in his leg while employed on the Bischoff Co's mine. He was reported to be doing as well as can be expected. A married man with a large family, the need for compensation or sick pay was not considered (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1907c).

Dr Faulkner resigned from the Waratah Road Trust, the body responsible for the construction and maintenance of the road to Corinna. The significance of that from a medical perspective is not specified (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1907f).

Mr. S. Archer was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with a severely lacerated knee sustained when he slipped on a wet log and fell on his axe. He had been surveying near the Whyte River and had to walk a mile to catch the Whyte River mail cart to Waratah. Dr. Chinery put some stitches in the wound, and he was reported to be progressing well (Examiner, 1907g).

Mrs. Armstrong, of Tullah, was appointed matron of the Waratah Hospital. One may be surprised that there were six applicants for this the position in a small remote town (The Mercury, 1907).

Mrs. Alford, the hospital matron, and her husband, the hospital caretaker, left Waratah after ten years' service. Mrs. Alford had always been exceedingly popular as a nurse and matron, her kindliness and skill endearing her to the many patients who passed through her hands. A farewell party with gifts was held in their honour (Examiner, 1907b).

Mr Fred Pernisky was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with a fractured arm and clavicle plus severe lacerations of his head and shoulders. He was working at his crib in the old blacksmith shop at the North Mount Farrell, when a blast at the open cut mine shot a large stone through his roof landing on his head and arm. He was reported to be progressing slowly but favourably. The concept of responsibility or compensation is not mentioned (Examiner, 1907c; Examiner, 1907f).

Mr. Arthur Penney, a young man, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Faulkner following two head injuries within the space of a few days. A tree branch fell on his head but he was able to return to work when he had a similar but more severe head injury, followed by the development of a brain abscess. Presumably, the infection followed a skull fracture in the pre-antibiotic era.

Faulkner, aided by Dr Watson, according to the times, removed the ‘scalp’ of the injured man’s head, presumably a skull flap to drain the abscess. Penney was reported to be lying in the Waratah Hospital, in a critical condition. Three weeks later he was reported to be in a precarious situation. Penney does not appear subsequently unless he was the A. Penney excelling at athletics (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1908b; Launceston Examiner, 1909b).

A meeting of town citizens considered the present medical officer, Dr Faulkner, had too extensive a practice to cope with the increasing population of Magnet and Whyte River, and that those centres should secure the services of another doctor as soon as possible (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1908a).

Cooper, a young man working at the Magnet Mine was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Faulkner following a serious accident in which his heel was nearly torn off when trapped in a lift cage (Daily Telegraph, 1908b; Mercury, 1908c).

Mr. Walter Bonney, who has been an inmate of the Waratah Hospital since Christmas with an
unspecified condition had recovered sufficiently to be discharged (Mercury, 1908a).

Mrs and Mr Alford returned to Waratah and were reappointed to their positions of matron and wardsman to the delight of the citizens. The fate of the previous matron, Mrs Armstrong was not related. Unfortunately both Alfords suffered severe health problems shortly.

The following month, Mrs Alford was admitted to the Waratah Hospital suffering from a non-specified severe illness. After a further month she was transferred to the Launceston Hospital for further medical treatment, and a week later died in theatre while undergoing a nonidentified operation. She had been extremely popular with all classes of the community, and general regret was expressed when the news was made known. In June, the following month, Mr Henry Alford was conveyed by train to a Burnie Private Hospital to undergo special medical treatment for blood poisoning. After three weeks under the care of Dr. Harricks, he was reported to be progressing well and near discharge (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1908c; Mercury, 1909b; Mercury, 1909a; Mercury, 1909c; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1909b; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1909c).

Mrs. John Eager was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Faulkner. She tripped and fell while walking along the Magnet and broke her leg. Her age is not given but a fracture caused by a fall from normal body height usually indicates post-menopausal osteoporosis (Mercury, 1908a; Daily Telegraph, 1908).

Mr. James Knight, a 63-year-old West Coast identity, died in the Waratah Hospital of an unspecified diagnosis (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1908).

Michael Cahill, an employee at the Waratah Hotel, died unexpectedly. Dr Faulkner, after a post mortem examination, declared that Cahill died of peritonitis, though the primary cause of the peritonitis is unstated (Daily Post, 1908).

A new hospital named the Waratah Hospital was opened in Launceston causing possible confusion as to which was the hospital in Waratah reported in the newspapers (Examiner, 1908).

Mr Bricknell, a miner, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital, suffering from non-specified injuries received whilst working underground at the Magnet Proprietary mine. An Inspector Harrison investigated, but no details of liability or compensation were mentioned (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1909c).

Mr Edward Goldsmith was about to be discharged from the Waratah Hospital having been an inpatient for some considerable time, suffering from a severe attack of the gout (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1909d).

Mrs. E. Cairke was appointed matron, and Miss Field, of Devonport, was appointed as a nurse at a board meeting (Examiner, 1909b).

An overly critical yet anonymous letter about the Waratah Hospital appeared in the Examiner. Firstly the letter accused the management committee, a collection of local small business owners of lining their own pockets by supplying goods to the hospital and earning money from the hospital funds. Secondly it accuses them of building a new ward when there was ample accommodation for the inpatient load. A ward constructed without medical input and advice since condemned by the Chief Health Officer and useless unless expensive alterations were made to it.

Thirdly it claims the existing wards were in urgent need of renovations and sanitary improvements. Fourthly, it claims that a charge is levied for sick patients requiring a night nurse The author hopes the Mount Bischoff mine will take over control and run it with greater integrity and input from expert medical sources (Examiner, 1909a).

Mr H. Yardley who was admitted to the Waratah Hospital suffering from severe pneumonia three days previously, died leaving a widow and a large family (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1909b).

Dr. Faulkner announced his impending departure from Waratah and Mount Bischoff, to commence a practice in Victoria. The Hospital Board realised they would need two doctors to replace Faulkner. They offered the superintendent a salary of £600 per annum and his assistant £200.

Between 1901 and 1907, Dr Faulkner attended twenty eight workplace accidents. Four were left with permanent disablement, two lost digits from their hands, one lost his heel and one probably lost an eye. Ten experienced fractures breaking collectively two legs, three arms, two skulls, two feet, one mandible, one clavicle and three ribs, but appeared to recover with time.

Three experienced lacerations from axes, two from carrying uncovered sharp blades. There were many others injured by tree falls and falls in the mines, but
with no serious injuries. Duration of sick leave, safety issues and compensation was never mentioned by the press.

In the community there were eight documented deaths, two from heart failure, one suicide, one drowning, one alcoholism, one dilated stomach, one peritonitis and one infant. Many children had falls, seven experienced fractures. There were outbreaks of mumps, scarlet fever and typhoid.

Operations were performed for appendicitis and a cerebral abscess. Two suffered snake bites. One child found some dynamite carelessly left unsecured at home and caused an explosion losing three digits (Launceston Examiner, 1909b; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1909a).

Sadly, tragically, ironically Dr Faulkner was killed in an accident after treating so many accident victims in his career. When about to embark on a steamer for a holiday in Italy having retired two years previously, he was run over by a train in Adelaide. Now aged sixty and hearing impaired, he did not hear it coming and was almost cut in half.

Faulkner was eulogised as charming high-principled, sincere Christian gentleman, and admired as a scholar and a popular man with high attainments in clinical medicine (The Sunbury News, 1922).

Dr P. Higgins 1909 - 1910

Dr P. Higgins, of the Devon Hospital was appointed locum tenens to replace Dr. Faulkner after his many years' service to the Waratah Hospital. Over the Christmas period Higgins resided in a hotel in Devonport (North West Post, 1909; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1909a; North West Post, 1910).

Mr J. D. Millen, the mailing manager of the Mount Bischoff Company, contracted influenza complicated by severe pneumonia. Dr Higgins visited him at home and requested a second opinion from Dr. Thompson, of Launceston. Thompson arrived a day later accompanied by Millen’s family members but fortunately Millen appeared to be improving. Curiously, it appears he was not admitted to hospital (Daily Telegraph, 1909; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1909c).

Mrs McHercher, twenty-nine year old wife of Mr Charles McHercher, died in the Waratah Hospital four weeks after the birth of her second child. No diagnosis was given but some post-natal issue seems probable (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1910a).

Mr. J. Stevenson, a miner, died in the Waratah Hospital from pneumonia after a few days hospitalization. His age was not reported but he left a widow and three children.

No accidents were reported during Higgins locum, he had two patients with pneumonia, one of whom died and a post-natal death. The two young people dying left two spouses and four young children (Mercury, 1910).

Dr Montgomery 1910 - 1913

Dr. John Montgomery, the newly appointed medical officer for the Bischoff Provident Hospital, arrived at Waratah. He was also appointed local health officer, at an additional £10 10s a year (Daily Post, 1910; Daily Telegraph, 1910a).

The Telegraph reported that Dr. Montgomery, has had his hands fairly full since his arrival as Faulkner’s the successor. Quite a number of patients had passed through the hospital, the demise of Mrs M Kercher leaving four inpatients. The nurse, with the caretaker and his wife, had also been fully employed, and additional outside help was being considered.

Mr Stevenson died in the Waratah Hospital from an acute severe pneumonia, the second death for the month. His age was not stated.

The discharge of a patient from Magnet reduced the number of inpatients to two, Mr Parker with a ‘double fracture’ of the leg, cause unstated, perhaps tibia and fibula, and Mr McDonald with no stated diagnosis (Daily Telegraph, 1910f; The Mercury, 1910a).

Dr. Montgomery continued to be remarkably busy with many afflictions including some cases of blood poisoning. Assuming this refers to septicaemia, available treatment in the pre-antibiotic era would have been minimal beyond drainage of infected sites and most challenging (Daily Telegraph, 1910).

Dr. Montgomery, who succeeded Dr. Faulkner as medical officer to the Waratah Hospital, departed to Melbourne on a fortnight’s leave after only six weeks. Dr. Smith of Launceston acted as locum tenens during Montgomery's absence (Daily Telegraph, 1910h).

Dr. Smith, of Launceston, gained the esteem of his patients while acting as locum tenens for Dr. Montgomery. There were now three inpatients in the Waratah Hospital.
Mr. Clarence Moss died from pneumonia in the Waratah Hospital. His age was not stated but he left a widow and three children (Examiner, 1910b).

A well-attended meeting of subscribers to the Bischoff Hospital at the Oddfellows' Hall decided to appoint an assistant medical officer to assist Dr. Montgomery. It was also proposed to construct a maternity ward (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1910d).

Nurse Thompson, of Ulverstone, was appointed matron of the Waratah Hospital (The Mercury, 1910b).

Herbert East was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Montgomery following a severe accident sustained while felling a spar at the Bischoff Extended mine. His axe slipped, inflicting a deep laceration in the side of his face necessitating the insertion of a number of stitches and dressing following which he was doing as well as could be expected.

Subsequently Mr. Herbert East returned thanks to all friends who assisted following his accident, also to Dr. J. Montgomery, the matron and the nursing staff of the Mount Bischoff Provident Hospital (Launceston Examiner, 1910b; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1910f; Daily Telegraph, 1910c).

An unnamed miner was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Montgomery following a severe accident sustained during another fall of earth at the Magnet mine. He was found to have lacerations of both legs and the scalp. Although the accident was reported in three newspapers, his name and outcome were not reported. He was of course progressing favourably (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1910).

Dr. E. Sydney Morris, the Chief Health Officer of Tasmania visited Waratah to discuss funding of the hospital with the town council. It was standard at that time in Tasmania for local councils to contribute to the cost of inpatients with infectious diseases, but a suitable agreement between the hospital board and council had not been accomplished in Waratah.

This was purely a simple administrative and financial issue not requiring expert clinical advice, however Dr. Morris did point out that Waratah Hospital had facilities that few hospitals offered with a special isolation ward for patients with infections (Burnie Advocate, 1910).

A meeting of administrators from friendly societies based in Launceston discussed the possibility of creating a sanatorium for patients suffering from tuberculosis as there was only one in Tasmania and that had prohibitively high fees. It was stated that Tasmania had a high death rate from tuberculosis. There appeared to be no expert opinion from the medical profession at this meeting (Daily Telegraph, 1910g).

Mrs. Montgomery, wife of Dr. Montgomery, having been unwell for some time, had travelled with him to the mainland for an operation which had successfully improved her state of health (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1910b).

Dr. Montgomery attended to Mr. J. Connelly who had severed the big toe of his right foot while working in the scrub, presumably with an axe, about eighteen miles from Currie. His mates carried him the entire distance for treatment to the injured foot (Launceston Examiner, 1910c).
A meeting of subscribers to the Bischoff Hospital realised that second doctor was essential for Waratah owing to the considerable number of men now employed in the district. Subscriptions were increased to cover this expense (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1910c).

**Dr Best 1911**

Dr Allen Best, L.R.C.P., a Victorian who took his diploma at Edinburgh, and then worked for two years in UK in the public and private sectors, has been appointed assistant to Dr Montgomery in Waratah (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1911a).

Dr. John Montgomery advised the town council of the necessity of the double-pan system, and also reported the drain in Smith Street to be in a bad state increasing the risk of an outbreak of typhoid fever. A double pan system as its name implies is one in which a used toilet pan is taken to a sewage disposal site and the other is in use domestically. The lids can be sealed before collection (Launceston Examiner, 1911b).

Dr. Montgomery attended the three year old son of Mr T. Prouse with a very painful broken leg just above the ankle. While playing at Whyte River under a tent frame the structure fell on his leg, but following treatment in Waratah he was doing as well as could be expected (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1911c).

Owen Jones was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Drs. Montgomery and Best following a severe accident at the Bischoff mine. He was assisting in shunting some trucks loaded with ore when he fell and the truck wheel passed over one of his legs, breaking it in two places and almost severing the leg. Montgomery and Best found it necessary to amputate the injured limb below the knee. Though recovering well, his ability to work subsequently would be severely limited and the Times expressed sympathy, but as usual there was no mention of compensation or review of safety systems (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1911p; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1911h).

The Mercury reported that both Dr. Montgomery and Dr Best had been very busy during the last month owing to the amount of sickness that is prevalent throughout the district. No specific details were given (The Mercury, 1911).

T. Larry was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr. Montgomery following an electric shock and was recovering well. Waratah was hit by a severe thunderstorm and a tree in close proximity to the mine manager’s house was struck and shattered into thousands of pieces. Larry, working on the erection of the cable for an aerial ropeway, received a severe shock, the electric current passing through the cable he was handling (Launceston Examiner, 1911a).

The Waratah Hospital Thirtieth Annual Report together with the Financial Statement were published in the local paper. An Assistant Medical Officer commenced in January and the Board expressed their appreciation of the conscientious and skilful manner in which both Medical Officers had carried out their duties. The Board also expressed their appreciation of the Matron’s ability, and devotion to her duties, and to the other nurses and officials, whose zeal had been highly commendable, and has thus brought the efficiency up to its present high standard.

Nurse Thomson had been appointed to replace Nurse Field and owing to the increased number of patients admitted, a probationer, Miss Matthews was also appointed.

Many small improvements in the building and grounds had been effected, and a maternity ward has been arranged to accommodate cases. Seventy-eight patients were admitted during the year, a substantial increase over preceding years, raising the question of enlarging the present building, or erecting a new up-to-date Hospital.

£1313/16/10 was raised from subscriptions and £834/18/8 was paid out in salaries (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1911k).

Dr. Allan Best, then working with Dr. Montgomery, was appointed to the position of additional medical officer for Zeehan (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1911n).

Harry Palmer, a Captain, in the Manawatu (New Zealand) Mounted Rifles, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with probable typhoid fever (Daily Telegraph, 1911a).

Dr. Montgomery presented evidence at the coronial inquiry in Waratah before Mr. David Jones, coroner, into the death of an infant, Phyllis Julin Cobbing. The evidence and jury’s verdict indicated that the little girl died from asphyxia probably caused by maternal overlying.

Dr. Montgomery asked the press representatives to note this public protest against humans sleeping with their offspring. He said that in Germany it was a penal offence for parents to have their children in bed with them. He hoped his protest would have the effect of discouraging such a dangerous practice here (Launceston Examiner, 1911a).
The Waratah Hospital medical officer informed the board that during the month he had been called upon to make nine hundred and twenty-four home visits and had held one thousand, one hundred and thirty-two clinic consultations. Nine patients had been admitted to the hospital, and ten discharged leaving four inpatients (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1911).

A board member enquired at the monthly meeting if it was true that a man with diphtheria had been refused hospital admission and was obliged to return to his lodgings. The woman owning the boarding house was then obliged to eject the other inmates at significant monetary loss.

Dr. Montgomery informed them that admission of this gentleman would have risked spreading diphtheria to the other inpatients and that there was no isolation ward. It was proposed to seek government financial assistance to construct a new isolation ward (Daily Post, 1911).

The delegates from Whyte River asked The Waratah Hospital board for more medical attendance than the current situation as the residents of Whyte River were paying £120 annually as hospital subscribers and were entitled to a better service than they were receiving. They requested that the medical officer should visit that centre one day a week and that the radius for visiting without extra fee, above £3 3s a visit, be increased from seven miles and a half to twelve miles. They appreciated that when there was only one medical officer it was impossible for him to be away from Waratah for any length of time but now there were two they thought the Whyte River deserved more attention.

Dr. Montgomery pointed out that visiting the Whyte River was vastly different from visiting Magnet. He also stated that since he was engaged the number of subscribers had greatly increased and asked subscribers to consider the doctors’ point of views as well (Daily Telegraph, 1911b).

Dr. H. A. Connolly, of Victoria was appointed assistant medical officer to the Waratah Hospital. He had excellent credentials and had experience in Canada and Victoria (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1911g).

Dr. Ponsford acted as locum tenens while Dr. J. Montgomery took his annual holiday on the mainland.

Mrs. Bricknell of Magnet died in the Waratah Hospital. Her condition and age were not specified, but she had been unwell for some time, and her doctor advised admission when she deteriorated. Her husband was left with three children, the youngest being about nine months of age (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1911o).

The problem of contagious diseases in Waratah was discussed by the board following a letter from the Chief Health Officer. The town councillors and hospital subscribers both considered the committee should build a contagious diseases ward, but to date the board had done nothing (Examiner, 1911a).

Captain A. J. Emslie, who has been admitted to the Waratah Hospital with complications of a viral upper respiratory infection had improved sufficiently to be discharged and proceed to Melbourne (Examiner, 1911b).

Alfred Henry Bricknell, aged 35, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with multiple severe injuries following an accident at the Magnet Mine and died the following day from shock. Following a fall he had compound fracture of both bones of the right leg, dislocation of the elbow and fracture of the bone of the right arm, injuries to the side of his skull and rupture of abdominal organs. Such a catalogue would have a significant mortality today over a century later.

Sadly, it seems probable that this is the husband of Ms Bricknell who died in the hospital only a month previously thus leaving three young orphans.

A Coronial Enquiry was held at the Waratah Court House with Mr. D. Jones (Coroner) presiding. After hearing details of the environment in the mine, the jury returned a verdict of accidental death from falling down the shaft in unexplained circumstances. There was no mention of any compensation or dependents though Bricknell’s brother from Burnie was present at the inquest (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1911m; Daily Telegraph, 1911c).

Chris Briscoe, a miner, was seriously injured in an accident at Magnet. He was engaged in blasting operations on the surface, however when firing a hole the charge exploded before he could get clear, resulting in the unfortunate man receiving facial and other very painful injuries. Apart from being severely bruised and knocked about, Briscoe may lose the sight of one eye.

The full extent of the injuries was not clearly understood but Dr. Deane attended immediately to assess the injuries and provide analgesia.

Dr. Montgomery interviewed the board with regard to the recent re-arrangement of the medical services, and pointed out that the assistant doctor being
stationed at Magnet placed all the Waratah work on to his shoulders, and he contended that it was impossible to do justice to the subscribers, while the work had to be performed on foot. Ho therefore requested the board to consider the advisability of granting him an allowance in order to keep a horse and buggy (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1911i).

Dr. Montgomery applied for an allowance £13 a year for the upkeep of a horse and trap. The subscribers voted against this appeal by three hundred and seventy-six votes to seventy four. The paper noted the weather was still unusually cold and the colds and influenza were still prevalent.

Dr Montgomery, was on the mainland, probably Victoria, to attend the funeral of his mother-in-law and was also concerned about his young son who had also been seriously ill but was recovering (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1911j; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1911b).

Three cases of diphtheria, two in one household, were reported by Dr. Montgomery as the medical officer at Waratah. Stringent measures were adopted to suppress the disease, but as a great many people had been away during the holidays, the Mercury considered there may be more cases reported before long (Mercury, 1912b).

M. Reid was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Montgomery following an accident near the Whyte River. He was dynamiting when there was a premature explosion, probably from too short a fuse and his left hand was blown off (Examiner, 1912c).

Mr Stewart, a railway guard on the Emu Bay Railway was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Montgomery. He had been crushed between the buffers of railway trucks at Guildford Junction and was initially thought to be in a critical condition with a crushed pelvis. However following surgery he was much improved and reported to be progressing well toward recovery (Mercury, 1912c; Examiner, 1912d; Examiner, 1912b).

Dr Prendergast 1912 - 1913

Dr. James Joseph Prendergast, the newly appointed assistant medical officer replacing Dr Dean departed from Melbourne to commence residence in Magnet according to the agreed contract between the board and Prendergast. He was a graduate of Melbourne University, obtained further qualifications in London and worked in Guy's Hospital for five years (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1912c; Examiner, 1912a).

Mr. Jno. Wenn was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr. Montgomery following an accident at the Mount Bischoff mine. His hand was trapped by a wire rope working a winch resulting in one of his fingers being completely severed and another one badly crushed (Mercury, 1912a).

Dr Montgomery as chief Medical Officer reported that for the month ending June 30, two males and three females were admitted to the Hospital, and that two males and two females were discharged. He had made one thousand one hundred and twenty three consultations and seven hundred and three visits on outpatients, a very busy average of sixty per day.

At ten minutes per patient, that is a ten hour day with the inpatients and operating list still to come, a scenario familiar to those who worked in the British NHS in the 1970s and probably still today!

Dr Prendergast, Assistant Medical Officer, reported that from June 3 to July 19, three hundred and six Consultations and one hundred and twenty visits had been made in Magnet.

Dr Montgomery applied for one month leave of absence from July 31. It was decided to grant the leave provided the doctor obtained suitable locum tenens at his own expense (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1912b).

Dr. Ingram was appointed as locum tenens for Dr. Montgomery during his holiday. Dr Montgomery requested a shed for the storage of his motor car only a year after requesting financial support to keep a horse and trap. Progress! The Board deferred a decision till his return (Examiner, 1912e).

Dr. Prendergast reported three hundred and fifty medical consultations and one hundred and thirty home visits mostly in Magnet during the past month. He had been twice into Waratah consulting and referred one patient with pneumonia into the hospital. There were currently two female inpatients (Launceston Examiner, 1912b).

Dr. Prendergast, of Magnet, reported having had two hundred and seventy five consultations and one hundred and twenty seven home visits, also that he had made three professional visits to Waratah (Launceston Examiner, 1912a).

Dr. J. Montgomery, hospital superintendent, reported that during October ten patients were admitted to Waratah Hospital and seven discharged leaving four inpatients. He had also made one thousand three hundred and twenty nine consultations and eighty hundred and twenty three
home visits. These are the figures given by the Examiner, seventy patients per day, perhaps seven patients per hour for ten hours. Dr Montgomery certainly earned his salary!

Dr. Prendergast reported that between October 11th and November 3rd he had made one hundred and ninety seven consultations and one hundred and twenty five home visits plus five visits to Waratah for consultations with Dr. Montgomery (Launceston Examiner, 1912c).

A deputation representing the residents of Waratah met with the Chief Secretary Dr Butler and the Treasurer Mr Payne today to urge upon them the necessity of providing a new hospital for that town, at an estimated cost of £5000 pounds.

Dr Montgomery provided most of the relevant information. The building, originally built as a school, was forty years old. The nearest large hospital was too far distant for acute cases. An isolation ward and an operating theatre were desperately needed but not as an addition to the current old unsuitable building. Last year during an epidemic of sickness he was obliged to turn the matron's room into a ward, in order to provide accommodation for the excessive number of patients. During the three months he had been in charge of the hospital there had been five cases of minor sickness which had developed into pneumonia in the hospital itself, and one of the patients had died, perhaps for lack of isolation.

He was obliged to perform operations in the middle of the ward with screens around the operating table. On one occasion amputating an injured hand the surrounding patients could hear the sound of the saw going through bone. On another occasion the sound of a chisel going through bone was audible. Hardly a day passed at Waratah without a minor or a major accident taking place. Montgomery considered those recovering from illness would find the noise of surgery extremely stressful.

The petition was supported by Mr Hall, MLC, the Hospital Board and Mr J. D. Millen, Manager of the Mount Bischoff mine. The Government was drawing £9,500 in revenue from that district, yet the Government grant was only £100 a year, and while the annual grants to other hospitals were increased, that for Waratah had not.

The Chief Secretary in reply, said the case put before him by the deputation was one that met with his warm approval and it would be laid before the Cabinet. The Treasurer agreed (Daily Telegraph, 1912).

David Blogg, a twenty-nine year old miner, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital, following serious accident at the Bischoff Mine. He was struck by a falling stone, and knocked some eighty feet down a slope, suffering a fractured ankle and severe scalp wounds.

Inspector James Harrison visited the scene of the accident on Friday concluding the occurrence was purely accidental. Compensation was never mentioned. Blogg was reported to be doing well. Ironically, this was to have been his last shift before returning to his family in the South of the Tasmania (The Mercury, 1912).

James Hill, a miner at Bruce's tribute, Oonah mine, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Terence Butler with lacerations and severe bruising of his upper arm following an earth fall in the mine (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1912a).

Dr. Prendergast of Magnet, obtained leave of absence owing to ill-health. No details were reported. His cases were shared with Montgomery (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1913a).

Six weeks later Dr Prendergast was still absent. Dr. Henty, the locum tenens at Magnet reported that for the fourteen days ended 23rd February fifteen visits had been made to patients in their homes and thirty eight consultations had been held (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1913c).

The Waratah Hospital Board announced that immediately upon a subscriber becoming a patient, his subscriptions shall cease until such time as he receives a discharge from the medical officer (The Mercury, 1913).

Mr. Wm. J. Scully, normally a healthy well-known and respected gentleman, was afflicted with a sudden painful illness and in spite of Dr Montgomery’s care he deteriorated and died some seven hours after the onset of pain. The site of pain is not given, but a myocardial infarct, cerebral haemorrhage or even a gastrointestinal perforation would seem probably diagnoses (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1913b).

The Cabinet Chief Secretary announced that £2,500 had been allocated to the estimates for the proposed new Waratah Hospital (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1913).

Dr. Prendergast returned at some stage to Waratah and was able to attend a Lodge meeting in August (Launceston Examiner, 1913a).
Dr. Montgomery’s residence together with its contents, was completely destroyed by fire overnight. Drs. Montgomery and Prendergast and Miss Lapham, the housekeeper were rescued with some difficulty as the fire was well established before it was noticed. Mrs Montgomery and their children were absent at the time. Only a few items of clothing were saved though the house contents were mainly insured.

The fire was a big loss for the hospital as the building was used as a surgery and contained many uninsured drugs and other medical equipment valued at over £100 (Launceston Examiner, 1913c).

Dr. J. Prendergast, formerly medical officer in Waratah was admitted to Queenstown Hospital suffering from an epileptic seizure and his condition was reported as extremely critical. After three weeks he had recovered sufficiently to be able to return home at Strahan.

However, Prendergast, was obliged to return to the Queenstown Hospital, having requested the committee of the Strahan Hospital to obtain another doctor as he would not continue the practice.

He died on the 11th April the following year aged fifty seven. His eulogy in the paper was full of fulsome praise for his medical competence and diligence, his personal character and skills as a raconteur, particularly about his extensive travels. He clearly had a primary cerebral disease, perhaps a brain tumour.

During Dr Prendergast’s time in Waratah he attended one mining accident victim with a broken leg. Five of his patients died, one by drowning, four of undocumented causes, one of those aged only thirty one, one after an illness for three years (Examiner, 1918c; Examiner, 1918e; Examiner, 1918a; Daily Telegraph, 1918b; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1919a).

Dr. J. Montgomery, after four years as surgeon-superintendent of the Waratah Hospital, and his other positions as JP, and leading member of sporting, church and other social groups, commenced practice in Wellington Street, Launceston.

Dr Montgomery attended thirteen workplace accidents in Waratah. One died with multiple fractures and internal injuries under an earthfall. Amongst the survivors, seven were left with permanent damage, one lost an eye, one a leg below the knee, one a whole hand, and four lost digits. Two of those injuries were from explosions, two from axes. The remaining five were one pelvic fracture and four superficial injuries. At least three men would have experienced severe difficulties returning to work.

Other problems included cases of typhoid, chicken pox and diphtheria, three deaths with pneumonia and one infant from an overlying mother. He worked in an inadequately constructed hospital with no operating theatre and no isolation ward (Launceston Examiner, 1913b).

**Dr. Cameron 1914 - 1915**

The Waratah Hospital Board held an emergency meeting following the threat of the Magnet hospital subscribers to withhold payments following the reallocation of the Magnet doctor to assist Dr Cameron in Waratah every Friday evening. The rationale for this move was because the doctor at Waratah was being overworked to such an extent that people were beginning to say some very harsh things about the board, and not without reason as Dr Cameron had four times the number of patients as Dr. Stead. The numbers had previously been noted and commented upon in July 1912.

Following much discussion no conclusion or agreement was reached and the problem remained (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1914; The Mercury, 1914c).

The medical staff and administrators of Waratah Hospital were shocked and disappointed when the Public Works Department blocked the construction promised by the Treasurer and Chief Secretary on the grounds of cost with a suggestion that a new plan should be produced.

The board agreed that a copy of Dr. Cameron’s and Dr. Stewart’s reports on the unsuitability of the present building should be sent to the local parliamentary members for Darwin and Russell, and that they be urgently requested to visit Waratah at the earliest possible opportunity to investigate the deficiencies of the hospital and urge the Minister to honour his previous pledge to the people of Waratah (Examiner, 1914a).

Dr. Cameron, the surgeon-superintendent, reported that for the month ended March seven male and two female patients had been admitted, and five males and three females discharged, while seven patients, five male and two female remained in the hospital at the end of that month (Mercury, 1914b).

It was agreed that a doctor would visit Whyte River once a week (Mercury, 1914a).
A deputation including Dr. Cameron visited Mr Ogden, the Chief Secretary, to urge upon him the necessity for constructing a new hospital at Waratah (Daily Telegraph, 1914a).

Mr. Robert Allen, a draughtsman employed by the Mount Bischoff Co suddenly collapsed unconscious while at work in the company's office. Although Doctors Cameron and Goddard were immediately in attendance Mr. Robert Allen never regained consciousness and died within an hour of collapsing, leaving a young widow. Allen's age was not stated but the episode suggests a cerebrovascular accident, perhaps a ruptured aneurysm in a young man (Mercury, 1914c).

Drs Cameron and Goddard conducted the premier, Mr Earle and his wife around the old Bischoff Hospital where they spoke to patients but gave no comment that was noted by the press (Daily Telegraph, 1914b).

Dr Donald Cameron as the medical superintendent reported that during the past month seven patients had been admitted and eight discharged. One death had occurred and six patients remaining in the institution. Fifty eight outpatients had visited the hospital for treatment and two hundred and sixty seven received home visits (The Mercury, 1914d).

Dr. D. Cameron presented Matron Thomson with a silver rose bowl on behalf of the medical, nursing, and house staff of the Mount Bischoff Provident in recognition of her services before her departure from Waratah (Examiner, 1914b).

Dr Cameron reported to the fortnightly meeting of the Waratah Hospital Board that five hundred consultations had been held during the month of October, while two hundred and twenty home visits had been made. Two deaths had occurred in the hospital during the month, while five patients remained in the institution at the end of the month. No diagnoses were reported.

Dr. Cameron paid a tribute to the acting matron Nurse Harvey for the manner in which she had performed her duties during the time she had been in charge. A testimonial, bearing the signatures of the board members was presented to Nurse Harvey in appreciation of her services (The Mercury, 1914b).

Dr. Thomas Herbert Goddard, B.A., M.B., Sydney, the present assistant to Dr. Cameron at the Mount Bischoff Provident Hospital, Waratah, was appointed junior house surgeon at the Hobart General Hospital (The Mercury, 1914a).

The Waratah Hospital board reported that the hospital finances had reached a crisis point and the board were threatening to resign. Funds promised by the ‘Hon.’ J. E. Ogden, Chief Secretary, had not materialised similar to the ‘honourable’ gentleman’s promise of a new hospital (The Mercury, 1915).

Dr. Cameron tendered his resignation as medical superintendent and explained that he was unable to continue owing to the work being too much for one man to perform, and his inability to secure an assistant. His weekly trips to Magnet and the necessity of having to return on foot took up too much time. The Board members had asked Dr. Cameron to reconsider his resignation, and offered a salary increase from £600 to £700 per annum (Daily Post, 1915).

During his tenure there was one death at work, probably from natural causes, and three deaths in the hospital from unspecified causes.

Dr. Donald Cameron was farewelled by the community of Waratah at Illingworth's Hotel following his two years as the chief medical officer at the Mt. Bischoff Provident Hospital, The chairman proposed the health of the guest, stating that in losing Dr. Cameron the whole district was receiving a very hard knock. Not only had Dr. Cameron proved himself a most skilful physician and surgeon, but also a kind and considerate friend.

Dr. Driscoll took over, at least for a while, Dr. Cameron's practice at Waratah (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1915).

Dr. Driscoll was appointed health officer for the Waratah 'municipality, at a salary of £10 per annum (Daily Telegraph, 1916).

Dr. Driscoll on being asked for his views on the need for a full time doctor in Magnet said that to stay at Magnet any longer than had been his custom when making his weekly visits would be a sheer waste of time. He always stayed there long enough to address all serious cases which were brought to his notice (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1916d).

An odd entry in the local paper stated that the Waratah Hospital building committee recommended that the two new rooms which had been added to the old hospital previous to the new building being erected, be removed to the rear of the new hospital for the use of outpatients. There is no other mention in the press of any new constructions to the hospital (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1916a).
An outbreak of diphtheria occurred in the town. The first two cases were reported four weeks ago and it was hoped the occurrence was past, however, last week several more cases were reported. Steps were taken to have the affected families isolated and on the request of Dr Driscoll, the old hospital was converted into an isolation unit. Two wards were equipped and the patients moved into them on the following day (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1916b).

Mr T. G. Pollard, a councillor, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Driscoll having been taken suddenly ill. Initially collapsed with a fever and tachycardia, he improved with rest and nursing care. The Times hoped that the worst was over, and that our esteemed, townsman would soon be able to resume his usual dairy round. Some non-specific mild viraemia seems the likely diagnosis, in the absence of localised disease and his rapid improvement (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1916c).

Mark Fagan, son of Mr. M. Fagan, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Driscoll suffering from concussion. Mark was competing in the high jump event when he slipped on wet ground and fell heavily on the back of his head, rendering him unconscious. The post stated that he was making satisfactory progress (Daily Post, 1917).

Dr. Prendergast treated a little girl named Teen at the Hospital Dispensary with abdominal pain. She was returning home from school when she was punched in the stomach by a boy.

Mr. Packer, the State schoolmaster conveyed her to the clinic.

The doctor could not ascertain immediately the extent or nature of the injury sustained; and as the Queenstown train was on the point of departure he deemed it advisable to send the child on to her home, on the Queenstown line, so that the parents could take the necessary steps for her welfare. Constable Thomson who placed the child in the ambulance section on the train, noted the injured child seemed to be suffering much pain.

It seems a bizarre choice to discharge a child with undiagnosed abdominal pain from the clinic (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1917a).

By July 1917, Dr Prendergast was practising in Strahan. He presented evidence at a coronial inquest into the death by drowning of Beryl Haines whose body was found on West Strahan Beach (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1917b).

The conundrum of two hospitals in Waratah appearing in the press was kindly solved by the knowledgeable historian in the Waratah Museum.

There were two hospitals but they were consecutive not concurrent. Both were built in Waratah between Annie St and William St on the Hospital Reserve of Little Quiggin Street at separate times. The old hospital literally backed onto the new one until it was no longer utilised and then demolished. The changeover was around 1915.

N. Hocking, aged thirty three, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with lacerations to his hand from breaking a window and to his throat following a suicide attempt when under the influence of liquor. His condition was described as both critical and satisfactory. He had a male attendant beside his bed day and night to prevent further attempts (Examiner, 1916; Mercury, 1916).

Mrs Robert Humphries died in the Waratah. Hospital after a brief but unspecified illness. Her age was also unstated (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1917a).

Dr A S Panting, medical officer at the Zeehan Hospital attended the Waratah Hospital to operate on a patient with an appendicular abscess. The article does not make it clear if this was because of his surgical expertise or the absence of a doctor in Waratah.

However his expected payment of thirty guineas for the operation and twenty guineas for being absent for two days from his base hospital was not forthcoming from the Waratah Hospital Board, triggering a case before Commissioner Mr. I N. Stops in the Zeehan Court of Requests. The case was struck out without costs, as the Court had no jurisdiction because the contract had been made at Waratah and not at Zeehan.

Panting was not to be denied his fees. He challenged that decision in the practice Court and had it reversed. The case reverted to the Zeehan Court before Commissioner Mr. I N. Stops. After many witness accounts, points of law yesterday and varying opinions, the verdict was in favour of Panting and the Commissioner decreed that Panting was entitled to payment for services rendered. Stops awarded the full amount claimed of £31.10 for surgery and £21 for travel and loss of time expenses (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1917b; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1918a; Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1918b; Northwest Advocate and...
Mr. John Cunningham, an elderly resident died in the Waratah Hospital. He had been unwell for three years but deteriorated suddenly and died a few days after admission. His age and condition were not specified (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1917c).

John Dennison, a miner, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital, with a broken leg and severe bruises sustained when he fell down a pass in the Magnet mine (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1917d).

Dr. C. Watson, the newly appointed medical officer to Waratah Hospital, arrived by special motor, accompanied by Mrs Watson (Daily Telegraph, 1917).

Mr A. R Ivory died in the Waratah Hospital. His age and condition were not stated (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1917e).

Elson Russell, age thirty-one, eldest son of Mr and Mrs James Russell, died in the Waratah Hospital after a few days' illness having just returned home from Perth for the holiday, apparently well and healthy. He left a wife and three children. No diagnosis was given but an infectious disease appears the most probable (Daily Telegraph, 1918a).

Dr Heyer

Dr. Heyer, the newly appointed medical superintendent of the Bischoff Hospital, was expected at Waratah that day to replace Dr. J. J. Hanly, the locum tenens who was greatly appreciated by the subscribers. Hanly was returning to Melbourne (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1918e).

Only three days after arriving Dr Heyer severely injured his knee and was confined to his residence. Whilst superintending the unloading of his motor car at the railway station, Dr Heyer stepped back wards off the platform, and landed heavily on his knee. He has cabled Melbourne for a medical assistant (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1918f).

Dr Heyer attended the vicar of Waratah, Rev. Joseph May, in his terminal illness. Since his appointment to the parish, Mr- May has suffered from ill health. The previous week he attended Magnet and may have caught a respiratory infection. Groans were heard from the vicarage by a passer-by who found May in a bad state and summoned medical assistance. However, Heyer attended all day but was unable to save the vicar. No further medical details or diagnosis were published (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1918a).

Dr. J. Prendergast, formerly medical officer in Waratah was admitted to Queenstown Hospital suffering from an epileptic seizure and his condition was reported as extremely critical. After three weeks he had recovered sufficiently to be able to return home at Strahan.

However Prendergast, was obliged to return to the Queenstown Hospital, having requested the committee of the Strahan Hospital to obtain another doctor as he would not continue the practice.

He died on the 11th April the following year aged fifty seven. His eulogy in the paper was full of fulsome praise for his medical competence and diligence, his personal character and skills as a raconteur, particularly about his extensive travels. He clearly had a primary cerebral disease, perhaps a brain tumour (Examiner, 1918d; Examiner, 1918f; Examiner, 1918b; Daily Telegraph, 1918c; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1919b).

Mr. Charles Johnson, guard on the Magnet tram, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with severe lacerations of the leg sustained while shunting trucks and becoming caught between a truck and a dead-end.

Jean Folder, the little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. Folder, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital suffering from pneumonia and was progressing well (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1918h).

Dr Heyer was absent having a holiday on the mainland while Dr Crooks, his locum tenens was busy with some unspecified sickness being prevalent in Waratah. For Taswegians ‘the mainland’ is enough of a description, one state is much the same as another (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1918g)!

Dr Heyer gave evidence at an inquest in Waratah before the Coroner, Mr. D. Jones, into the death of Benjamin Newett, a miner, who died at Savage River. A verdict was returned by the jury in accordance with the medical testimony that he died of intestinal obstruction and peritonitis (Northwest Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1918e).

Dr Heyer called a meeting to plan measures to combat any outbreak on influenza and pneumonia. Heyer recommended that a second doctor in the district was absolutely essential. He had already had portions of the old hospital cleaned and prepared for
inpatients, as well as retaining the services of an infectious diseases nurse from Launceston. Heyer had also interviewed the Municipal Council and Mr. J. D. Millen the manager of the Bischoff-Tin Mining Company, to ensure adequate funding for these community requirements.

A further supply of free vaccine was expected the following day and Heyer announced that he would be in his surgery to administer this. The vaccine was actually against pneumococcus of some benefit against secondary infection and it would be another twenty five years before an influenza vaccine was developed (Advocate, 1919; Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1919c).

Dr Heyer presented evidence at an inquest held into the deaths of George Thompson and James Walker, who died in a tunnel in Mount Bischoff mine, in the Waratah Court House, before Coroner Jones and a jury.

George Thompson, a nineteen year old single man, had gone to work in good health but was found deceased in the mine at 6.50am. Dr Heyer examined the body and reported that the deceased had been a well-nourished and muscular young man. The only mark or injury was on the palm of the left hand, where there was a narrow wound two-thirds of an inch long which might have been caused by an electrical burn.

Some two hours later, James Walker, shift manager on the Brown Face, proceeded to the site of the accident ostensibly to check the place for safety. He was carrying a lamp which unfortunately touched a live cable giving him a severe shock. He screamed and collapsed still breathing but then had a cardio-respiratory arrest from which he could not be resuscitated neither by his colleagues nor Dr Heyer. Walker left a widow and a large family.

An electrician cut off the electric supply fifteen minutes later. It was subsequently noted that the electric cables suspended from the roof sagged in places down to a height of only five feet about the tunnel floor, and while the voltage was supposed to be a safe 110volts, this was not monitored.

The jury retired, and after one hour and twenty minutes’ deliberation returned with their verdict. They found that George Thompson died of shock, accidentally caused by coming in contact with a live electric wire in the Mount Bischoff’s Co.’s main tunnel and that in the opinion of the jury the wire should be better protected from traffic.

The jury also found that James Walker died of shock accidentally caused by coming in contact with a live electric wire situated in the Mount Bischoff’s main tunnel, and again in the opinion of the jury the wire should be better protected from traffic.

No mention was made at any stage of any consideration of compensation, particularly for Mrs Walker and her family (Burnie Advocate, 1919b).

An anonymous subscriber wrote to the Advocate noting that some five or six years ago the subscribers to the Waratah Hospital were asked to subscribe an extra threepence per week to provide a second doctor. There were two doctors for a while, but for the last four years there was only one, while subscribers were still paying for two.

The board agreed a second doctor should be appointed or the subscription reduced (Burnie Advocate, 1919f).

Dr Heyer was sick with bronchitis and since he was the only doctor in Waratah, a nurse and a doctor were being obtained from Melbourne (World, 1919).

Nurse G F Rochford, who has been acting matron for some time, was appointed permanently at a salary of £123 per annum. The board noted that the institution was being run very efficiently (Daily Telegraph, 1919).

The young son of Mr. Harris was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr. Heyer having broken one of his legs (Burnie Advocate, 1919d).

Influenza had become very prevalent in Waratah, the Spanish ‘Flu had presumably arrived. Dr Heyer was still unwell presumable with the ‘flu and Dr J Collins had arrived from Melbourne as locum tenens to the great relief of the town. A trained nurse had also been stationed at Magnet (Burnie Advocate, 1919a).

The youngest son of Mr. Paddy McNamara was admitted to the Waratah Hospital following an accident with some sharp tool while playing with some other children, which severed one finger completely, and badly gashed another. Sadly, permanent injuries to unsupervised young children with sharp tools not secured out of reach were common (Burnie Advocate, 1919e).

Thomas Leslie Bowman, a pump attendant at the Magnet Mine, was found dead on No. 9 flat. Dr Heyer, of Waratah, after an examination, reported that death was caused by haemorrhage of the lung following asthma. Deceased leaves a wife and four small children. The possibility of industrial lung
disease or a smoking habit is not mentioned (Burnie Advocate, 1919c).

Victor Sturzaker, aged about twelve, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under the care of Dr. Heyer and the nursing staff with multiple injuries sustained falling some forty or fifty feet from a water tower. He had multiple fractures of the jaw, facial bones and skull, his nose was almost torn off and he had extensive scalp lacerations. Dr. Heyer hoped to aid recovery, but considered his condition would be critical for at least a fortnight (Burnie Advocate, 1920b; Burnie Advocate, 1920d).

Mr. L. B. Harris was admitted to the Waratah Hospital following an accident on the road to Waratah. His injuries were not specified but not severe as an early discharge was anticipated (Burnie Advocate, 1920c).

James McGinty, aged about ninety was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with senile decay and heart failure but he discharged himself from there and an old peoples home in Hobart, to return to the bush where he died as he lived in a remote mate’s camp. He had been a prospector in the early days of mining on the Pieman and Long Plain discovering a large nugget of gold. He had lived away in the heart of the bush as the Herald wrote, ‘in the midst of the solitudes and strength of Nature, where men are men, self-dependent, self-reliant, enduring, courageous, and independent’ (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 1920).

Mr. George Tandy, an old osmiridium miner aged 60, died in the Waratah Hospital from an unspecified condition (Examiner, 1920).

Master Ray Fraser was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Heyer with a severely injured leg sustained when he fell over an embankment while riding a bicycle.

Mr. W. Shady was discharged from the Waratah Hospital to recuperate during a holiday in Melbourne, having been an inmate of the hospital for the past month with a serious but unspecified illness (Burnie Advocate, 1920a).

The Waratah Hospital received a grant to construct a residence for the medical officer as he had previously been residing in a Bischoff Mining Company house (Burnie Advocate, 1920e).

Dr. Heyer treated four accident victims, two were electrocuted, one died of a pulmonary haemorrhage, the possibility of industrial lung disease was not clarified and one had a lacerated leg.

Outside of the industrial area, among Dr Heyer’s patients, the local vicar died from pneumonia, another man died of gut obstruction and peritonitis, a condition probably curable today with a laparotomy, and two were injured in road traffic accidents. Amongst childhood injuries, one little boy was left unsupervised with a sharp tool and severed a finger.

Conclusion

In summary, between 1901 and 2020, there were forty three reported workplace medical events, one suicide and the rest accidents. Four died, two being electrocuted, one buried by a rock fall and one died of a pulmonary haemorrhage of questionable cause.

The inquest into the electrocutions advised greater care of exposed electric cable, but otherwise there were no recommendations of greater safety or compensation.

Eleven were left with permanent loss of body parts, two lost an eye, one lost a leg, one lost a heel and one a hand. Six lost one or more digits. Explosions, accidents with an axe and rock falls caused most injuries. Nine suffered fractures.

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.

None of these workplace accident victims, some of whom, with varying degrees of permanent disablement, would not have been able to return to their previous occupations, received any compensation.

There were cases and outbreaks of mumps, scarlet fever, typhoid, chicken pox and diphtheria, optional diseases in the current vaccination age. Many unsupervised children suffered injuries from sharp tool and explosives. Pneumonia remained a severe disease with intermittent deaths.

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