Mining and Medicine: The Case of Waratah Hospital, Tasmania, Part 3, 1921-1954

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Abstract:

The third section of 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 the final thirty-three year period in the life of the tin mine.

Secondly the incidence and severity of infectious diseases shortly 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.

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 It is recognised that newspapers are not peer reviewed journals but are the most detailed available source of information.

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 arrival of Europeans. The area was so dense and inaccessible it resisted systematic early European exploration for decades after the establishment of Hobart town.

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.

Prospectors, miners, tradesmen, shopkeepers and all the necessary 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. Currently with its small nearly invisible population of two hundred and forty nine people and its collection of ageing building it appears almost deserted.

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 port of Burnie on a 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.

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.

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. 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.

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!

Clinical details in press releases were unfortunately therefore limited. They lack data on the yearly number of hospital admissions over many periods as is available for other hospitals of that time. 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 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 Hospital

Dr Heyer

The Bischoff and Magnet mines closed down leaving the Waratah Hospital in a most precarious financial position also facing closure, a fact communicated by the board to the Tasmanian government (Burnie Advocate, 1921a).

The State Premier, Sir Walter Lee and Lady Lee were given a tour of the Waratah Hospital by Dr. F. G. Heyer and Sister Rockford. They expressed their keenest appreciation of the way in which the hospital was kept, and of the service rendered to the community. No details of any useful assistance for the hospital were reported beyond those platitudes (Burnie Advocate, 1921b).

Mr. Tom Lusk was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr. Heyer with a serious but unspecified condition. Dr. Stephens, of Burnie was requested to visit and give a second opinion, but Lusk remained in a critical condition (Burnie Advocate, 1921c).

A six year old son of Mrs. C. Ainslie, of Magnet was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Heyer as a result of an accident with an unsecured sharp axe. His nose was cut through but he was progressing well following suturing (Burnie Advocate, 1921d).

Mr. R. Humphries was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr P.G. Heyer with a broken upper arm sustained when he had a fall leaving the osmiridium fields.

A child of Mrs. W Lloyds was admitted to the Waratah Hospital also under Dr P.G. Heyer with a broken arm sustained when falling off a veranda (Burnie Advocate, 1921e).

Dr. F. G. Heyer application for one week’s leave of absences from November 5th was accepted. He was expected to find a locum tenens (Burnie Advocate, 1921f).

Mr Mark Hope, senior shift manager of the Mt Bischoff tin mine was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with a broken leg and severe shock sustained in an earth fall in the apparently still open mine. Nearly a month later he was still in hospital in a critical condition. In October 1923 he was said to be sinking fast, now reported to have a spinal injury, presumably a hemiplegia, possibly a quadriplegia, which must have been caused by the original accident and the reason for his prolonged hospitalisation. Even if he survived much longer, he would never have been able to return to work. Compensation was never mentioned.

Dr Heyer in his final three years at Waratah attended two workplace accidents, one with a
broken arm, one with a broken leg. He also treated one boy with a facial laceration playing unsupervised with a sharp axe (The Mercury, 1922a; Burnie Advocate, 1922c; Burnie Advocate, 1923d).

Matron Cadwallader arrived to take up duties as matron in charge of the Mount Bischoff Provident Hospital, having previously spent about two years in the local hospital.

Mrs. G. Glover of Magnet was admitted to the Waratah hospital with a broken arm, having accidentally slipped and fallen on a foot bridge. Once Dr Harrison had set the bone she was able to be discharged home (Burnie Advocate, 1922b).

A meeting of the subscribers to the Waratah Hospital was held in which those from Magnet complained to the Board about the non-attendance of the medical officer during the two previous Wednesdays (Burnie Advocate, 1922c).

Mr. George Glover was discharged from the Waratah Hospital recovering from an admission for a week with an acute attack of catarrh (Burnie Advocate, 1923a).

Dr. Buchart

John A. Baptista was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr Buchart for nineteen days with injuries sustained in a fight in a boarding house. He and J. C. Connors commenced a dispute in which Connors punched Baptista in the face, then knocked Baptista unconscious with a blow to the head with a vase.

Buchart presented details in court to the Police Magistrate, Mr A. T. Walker who found Connors guilty and issued a fine (Burnie Advocate, 1923b).

The matron reported that there had only been one inpatient the previous month while twenty six outpatients had been treated in the casualty ward (Examiner, 1923).

Dr. Butchart was granted a week's leave of absence providing he could find a suitable locum tenens (Examiner, 1924a).

Mr. Angus McKay was an inpatient in the Waratah Hospital for three months with severe burns sustained when his apron caught fire in his blacksmith's shop. No further press reports detailed his progress.

The Gawler Football Club of which McKay was a member launched a financial appeal as he was unlikely to be able to return to work in the near future (Burnie Advocate, 1924a).

Acting Matron Clarke reported that in the last month six patients were admitted, two were discharged, and four remained as inpatients. Twenty-one patients were treated at the casualty ward (Examiner, 1924d).

Dr. Butchart, Matron Cadwallader, and Nurse Clarke all applied to the Hospital Board for increases in salary. The board deferred consideration of the request until the next meeting (Examiner, 1924e).

The child of Mr. J. M. McCulloch died in the Waratah Hospital. Age and diagnosis were not reported. The father wrote to the hospital thanking the doctor, matron and nurse for their kind attention (Burnie Advocate, 1924c).

A young man, the eldest son of Mr. Charles Jones, died in the Waratah Hospital. His exact age and condition were not specified (Burnie Advocate, 1924b).

The youngest son of Mr. Fred Cleaver was admitted to the Waratah Hospital with facial injuries having been kicked by his pony. While he was endeavouring to catch the pony the animal launched out with both hind feet, striking the young man full in the face (Examiner, 1924c).

Mr. Brookes refused admission to the Waratah Hospital in spite of the doctor considering that he needed treatment as he was severely ill with influenza and in spite of his friends advice (Examiner, 1924b).

Bed occupancy had dropped considerably since the reduction in mining. The Board noted that it was seldom any more than one inpatient was in the hospital at a time (Examiner, 1925).

Mr. Walter Sully, Cameraman and manager of L.L. Productions was admitted to the Waratah Hospital but had recovered sufficiently to be...
discharged after a week (Burnie Advocate, 1925a; Burnie Advocate, 1925c).

Sister B. Higgins was appointed to the position of sister-in-charge at the Board monthly meeting (Burnie Advocate, 1925b).

Mr. Holloway was admitted to the Waratah Hospital after falling off a narrow footpath down an embankment onto a steel rail line of the Magnet Company's tramline, his head crashing into one of the steel rails, rendering him unconscious (Burnie Advocate, 1926b).

Mr. George Stevens, a plateman employed at the Magnet Mine, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital for medical attention with a broken leg sustained when he fell while unloading timber. He died the following year having been ‘unwell for some time’ though it is not reported if this was related to his accident (The Mercury, 1926; Daily Telegraph, 1927).

William Hamilton, a single engine driver aged about sixty, employed at the Magnet Mine was admitted to the Waratah Hospital and died that night with a gunshot wound in the head. He had been found unconscious in a suspected accidental shooting. He had previously worked at Boag’s Brewery, Launceston where he was said to be very popular (Sunday Evening Express, 1926).

Mrs W. Godwin was admitted to the Waratah Hospital. Her age and diagnosis were not reported (Daily Telegraph, 1926).

Dr. Butchart obtained the services of Dr. Grant, of Melbourne, as his locum tenens while he was absent on annual leave (Burnie Advocate, 1926a).

Full operations at the Magnet Mine were curtailed due to a shortage of water and a number of employees were temporarily dismissed pending a good rainfall.

Mr. Vernon Ryan following a prolonged admission to the Waratah Hospital with severe injuries to his head and arms sustained in an accident at the Magnet Mine, was able to be discharged. He expressed himself as deeply grateful to the medical officer and nurses for their many kindnesses during his stay. He had recovered sufficiently to return to his usual occupation (Burnie Advocate, 1928g; Burnie Advocate, 1928h).

Mr J. H. Oakley, one of the sons of Mr and Mrs B. Oakley of Waratah, was admitted to the Waratah Hospital seriously ill with bilateral pneumonia (Daily Telegraph, 1928).

Dr John Elder Butchart, the popular medical superintendent of the Waratah Hospital for the last four years, collapsed and died suddenly at his clinic in Magnet while writing a patient’s prescription. He was aged fifty nine and had appeared in good health that morning. It was to have been his last clinic before relocating his practice to Melbourne.

Butchart left a widow and two children, a daughter and a son, also a doctor.

Butchart attended four workplace accident, burns from a blacksmith’s fire, two head injuries and a broken leg.

A Dr Stephens of Kinnie, was contacted and he kindly proceeded to Waratah to assume hospital duties until the arrival of a newly appointed regular doctor (Burnie Advocate, 1928i).

Dr F. Houston

Dr. F. Houston was appointed the new medical superintendent of the Waratah Hospital (Burnie Advocate, 1928b).

Several local subscribers to the Waratah Hospital, recent in-patients with severe illnesses, spoke very appreciatively of the special attention and skilful treatment rendered to them by the medical officer, Dr. Houston (Burnie Advocate, 1928d).

Unfortunately these commendations eluded the boards’ understanding and Dr. Houston’s services were dispensed with, and he received three months’ notice as he did not have all the necessary medical equipment for the position (Burnie Advocate, 1928d).

Mr. William Bonney, an elderly resident died in the Waratah Hospital. His age and condition were not specified (Burnie Advocate, 1928).

Arthur Murray was admitted to the Waratah Hospital suffering from two deep scalp
lacerations sustained then a tree limb fell on his head briefly knocking him unconscious.

He had been chopping the tree with an axe. The matron dressed his head in the absence of the doctor, the recent incumbent having been sacked by the board for not having sufficient instruments and a replacement not yet being found (Burnie Advocate, 1928f).

A new Waratah Hospital doctor applied for leave of absence for a week or ten days in the beginning of January. It was unanimously agreed to grant the request on the standard condition that the doctor obtain a suitable locum tenens. The board failed to name this new doctor (Burnie Advocate, 1928a).

A Mr W. A. Shady wrote to the Waratah Hospital board complaining that the doctor had not visited him as requested. The doctor, still not named by the board or paper, replied that Shady was perfectly capable of visiting the hospital consulting room, the preferred venue for mobile patients (Burnie Advocate, 1928e).

Dr E. E. Grounds

Dr E. E. Grounds, current medical superintendent at the Waratah Hospital, and previously house surgeon at the Devon Hospital, married Miss Lucy Dodson in St. Lillee’s Church of England (Burnie Advocate, 1929c).

Sister Donovan reported that two patients were admitted, two discharged and one transferred to the Devon Hospital at Latrobe, south of Devonport, leaving the ward empty. Twenty-three patients visited the casualty ward during the month (Burnie Advocate, 1929g).

Mr. C. V. Seen visited the Waratah Hospital for treatment to a poisoned hand. Mr. J. Muir also attended the Waratah Hospital for treatment to a crushed hand. The aetiology of this injury was not specified (Burnie Advocate, 1929f).

Mr. C. Maloney was admitted to the Waratah Hospital also for treatment to a poisoned hand (Burnie Advocate, 1929b).

Messrs. H. Page and G. Sheehan were treated at the Waratah Hospital with poisoned hands and had returned to work again. Alf. Pennington, son of Mr. A. Pennington was treated at the Waratah Hospital for a ‘bad hand’. Mr. H Godwin was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr. Grounds with an injury to his left hand caused by a falling stone. The middle finger of his left hand was practically severed and had to be amputated. No further clinical details or causes were given for this sequence of hand problems (Burnie Advocate, 1929c).

Sister Donovan reported that three males and one female were admitted to the Waratah Hospital during the month, one male and the female were discharged leaving two male inpatients. Ninety-three consultations were made in the casualty ward (Burnie Advocate, 1929a).

Matron Picken reported that in the previous month five patients had been admitted and five discharged leaving two remaining inpatients. Eighteen patients had been treated in the casualty ward (Burnie Advocate, 1929d).

Mr. D. Fagan was admitted to the Waratah Hospital under Dr. Grounds having damaged his fingers in an accident when a charge of explosive detonated in his hand (Burnie Advocate, 1929d).

Sister Picken reported that three patients had been admitted and five discharged while thirty-four out-patients had been treated (Burnie Advocate, 1930c).

Dr. Grounds resigned his position as Medical Officer to the Waratah Hospital and thanked the Board for their assistance during his tenure. The Board in return expressed their appreciation of his professional expertise and wished Dr. and Mrs. Grounds every success in their new sphere.

Four workplace injuries were reported during Ground’s time in Waratah, one a head injury from tree lopping, and three hand injuries, two crush injuries from falling stones, one required a finger amputated and one without injury details caused by an explosion (Burnie Advocate, 1930b).

Dr. L. Ormand Smith

Dr. L. Ormand Smith commenced duties as the new Medical Officer on 28/4/1930 (Examiner, 1930d).
Dr. L. Ormond-Smith, who had been acting as locum tenens medical superintendent, for the past five or six weeks, was unanimously appointed to the position with effect from June 1st (Burnie Advocate, 1930e).

The sister in charge of the hospital reported three admissions and four discharges for the month while sixty-one patients were treated at the casualty ward (Examiner, 1930c).

The sister in charge of the hospital reported four patients had been admitted and three discharged during the month. Twenty patients had received treatment at the casualty ward (Examiner, 1930b).

Sister Wicken reported that since the last meeting two patients had been admitted and two had been discharged while one had been transferred to the Devon Hospital. Thirty-eight outpatients had been treated at the casualty ward (Burnie Advocate, 1930a).

The sister in charge reported that two inpatients were admitted during the month, two were discharged, and one transferred to Devon Hospital with scarlet fever. A total of thirty eight patients were treated at the casualty ward (Examiner, 1930a).

Sister Wicken reported that three inpatients had been admitted to the hospital and four discharged. Fifty-three cases were treated at the casualty ward (Burnie Advocate, 1930f).

Sister Wicken reported that since the last meeting two patients had been admitted and three discharged. GI had been treated in the casualty ward (Burnie Advocate, 1930d).

Sister Adams (bush nurse) reported that during the month there had been nine visits to the casualty ward. One patient had been admitted to hospital and one had died (Burnie Advocate, 1931c).

The bush nurse’s report stated that there had been six visits to the casualty ward, and three obstetric cases had been treated (Burnie Advocate, 1931b).

The Department of Public Health notified that from 1st June the salary of the bush nurse would be reduced twenty per cent (Burnie Advocate, 1931a).

Following the reduction of her salary as an apparent cost cutting measure, the now undervalued Sister Adams resigned her position as bush nurse from 13th July! Her final report stated that twenty-seven visits had been paid to the casualty ward. Three patients had been admitted to the hospital and two discharged. There were five obstetric cases. (Burnie Advocate, 1931h).

Next the board decided unanimously that the doctor’s salary be reduced by ten per cent, as from 1st September. The basis for reducing health care workers pay was not explained. There is no mention of administrators taking a pay cut (Burnie Advocate, 1931d).

Tho Department of Public Health notified that, owing to lack of funds, the salary of the bush nurse had been reduced by presumably a further fifteen per cent., and would now be £170 instead of £200. Sister Bramich, presumably the new charge sister, reported that during the month there had been sixty eight home visits, fifteen child welfare visits, a new concept, and twelve visits to casualty (Burnie Advocate, 1931g).

Sister Bramich reported that during the month thirty three visits had been paid to the casualty ward, twenty seven home visits had been paid and there were seventeen child welfare visits (Burnie Advocate, 1931g).

Sister Bramich reported that during the month there had been thirty visits to the casualty ward, forty one home visits to patients and seven child welfare visits (Burnie Advocate, 1931e).

Sister Bramich reported that during the month forty two patients visited the casualty ward, there were sixty five home visits to patients and five child welfare visits (Burnie Advocate, 1932c).

Sister Bramich reported that during the month sixteen visits had been paid to the casualty ward, thirty two home visits had been made to patients and seven child welfare visits. There had been six inpatient days and two maternity cases (Burnie Advocate, 1932b).
The bush nursing report stated that there were twenty-nine visits to casualty, eighteen home visits to patients, eighteen continuous nursing days of inpatients and two child welfare visits (Burnie Advocate, 1932a).

Sister Hill, perhaps a locum tenens sister, reported that during the month eleven visits had been paid to the casualty ward, there were twenty four home visits to patients, twenty nine child welfare visits and two maternity cases treated (Burnie Advocate, 1932g).

The unnamed bush nurse reported that during the month there were eleven visits by patients to the casualty ward, twenty one house calls to patients, and twenty nine child welfare visits (Examiner, 1932b).

Sister Bramich reported that during the month twenty visits had been paid to the casualty ward, sixty one home visits to patients, and three to maternity cases (Burnie Advocate, 1932f).

Dr. O'Connor wished to be relieved of his duties by 19th December 1932. He thanked the board members for their help and loyalty during his term (Burnie Advocate, 1932d).

Mr. N. Crawn was an inpatient of the Waratah Hospital. His age and condition were unstated. The next mention of the hospital states it is closed though when this occurred is uncertain. This may explain the large number of home visits who would have been able to visit a hospital and perhaps the desire to reduce the experts salaries (Burnie Advocate, 1932e).

**Dr J. Duck**

Dr. J. Duck was appointed medical superintendent, in place of Dr. N. J. O'Connor (Examiner, 1932a).

Sister Bramich reported that fourteen home visits were made to patients and five patients had visited the casualty ward (Burnie Advocate, 1933f).

Dr. A. O. Barkley commence duties as medical superintendent in place of Dr Duck. He was welcomed by the chairman who hoped that the doctor's term at Waratah would be a lengthy and pleasant one (Burnie Advocate, 1933d).

Sister Woolnough, the new bush nurse reported two visits to the casualty ward, twenty four visits to the nurse, and twenty four home visits to patients. Dr Barkley attended the board meeting. He appears not to have been asked again (Burnie Advocate, 1933g).

Sister Woolnough, the bush nurse reported that during the month five visits had been made to the casualty, twenty nine house calls to patient were made and forty seven patients visited the nurse (Burnie Advocate, 1933c).

Sister Woolnough reported there had been seventeen visits to the nurse, five house calls and five patients had visited the casualty (Burnie Advocate, 1933b).

The bush nurse, unnamed this month reported there had been twenty eight visits to the nurse, sixty patients had been visited on house calls, two had visited casualty and four maternity patients had been assessed (Burnie Advocate, 1933a).

Sister Woolnough reported there had been nineteen visits to the nurse, fifty three house calls to patients were made and two maternity cases were supervised (Burnie Advocate, 1933j).

Sister Woolnough reported there had been thirty visits to the nurse, forty two three house calls to patients were made and three maternity cases were supervised (Burnie Advocate, 1933i).

The unnamed bush nurse reported there had been thirty visits to the nurse, twenty nine house calls to patients and two maternity cases were reviewed (Burnie Advocate, 1933e).

Sister W. Woolnough stated that there had been thirty visits to the nurse, twenty six house calls to patients and three maternity cases supervised (Burnie Advocate, 1933g).

The bush nurse’s reported forty visits to patients and forty one visits to the nurse. The board decided that the ten percent cut on themedical officer’s salaries be restored (Burnie Advocate, 1934k).

Sister W. Woolnough reported there had been thirty one visits to the nurse and forty six visitsto patients (Examiner, 1934b).
Sister Woolnough tendered her resignation, to take effect as from 16th March. She was granted four weeks' pay in lieu of holidays. She reported sixty nine visits to the nurse and forty five to patients (Burnie Advocate, 1934i).

The Magnet Prospecting Syndicate had a meeting at which the matter of re-opening the Waratah Hospital was discussed with requests to be made to the Waratah Hospital Board (Burnie Advocate, 1934g).

Sister Whale resigned as sister tutor due to ill health on 23rd February, but a month later having made an excellent recovery, she was one of the several applicants for the position. As one of the most successful sister tutors of the probationers, she was reappointed initially for three months to assess her fitness.

Sister Booth was appointed sub-matron at a salary of £130 per year. There appear a lot of nurses for a closed down hospital (Burnie Advocate, 1934d).

Sister Gartside, the bush nurse replacing Sister Woolnough, reported there had been seven home visits to patients and fourteen visits to nurses (Burnie Advocate, 1934j).

Sister Gartside reported there had been fourteen visits to the nurse and sixty seven home visits to patients (Examiner, 1934a).

The unnamed medical superintendent reported that three cases had been despatched to the Devon Hospital for treatment. The bush nurse reported there had been thirty three visits to the nurse, forty home visits to patients, and one maternity case supervised (Burnie Advocate, 1934h).

The bush nurse reported that there had been forty three visits to the nurse, thirty eight home visits to patients, one maternity observed (Burnie Advocate, 1934e).

The medical officer's report stated that three patients had been despatched to the Devon Hospital for treatment. The bush nurse's reported there had been thirty one visits to the nurse and eight home visits to patients. Three maternity cases were under observation (Burnie Advocate, 1934b).

The bush nurse reported seventy three visits to the nurse and seventy two home visits to patients (Burnie Advocate, 1934a).

Sister Gartside reported that during the month twenty five home visits had been made to patients, one hundred and eighteen patients had visited the nurse and two maternity cases were under observation (Burnie Advocate, 1934f).

Dr A. O. Barkley

Dr. Barkley was granted the use of the unoccupied old hospital building as his residence (Burnie Advocate, 1934c).

Sister Gartside reported that sixty nine visits had been paid to patients, thirty eight patients had visited the nurse and one maternity was supervised. Board meetings continued to manage finances, reappoint board members and pass motions but the hospital remained closed (Burnie Advocate, 1934i).

The bush nurse's monthly report stated one hundred and four home visits to patients and sixty one visits to the nurse had occurred (Burnie Advocate, 1935d).

Sister Gartside reported that eighty six home visits to patients and forty three visits to The nurse (Burnie Advocate, 1935d).

The Minister for Works and Mines, Major T. H. Davies, the Chief Secretary, Mr. T. D'Alton, and the Secretary for Mines, Mr. J. B. Scott, visited Waratah. Councillor Cure informed them of the state of the Waratah Hospital roof which was in urgent need of repairs before the winter set in. Financial assistance was promised (Burnie Advocate, 1935d).

Dr. A. O. Barkley, the medical officer was granted one month's leave of absence on condition that a suitable locum tenens could be secured (Burnie Advocate, 1935g).

Dr Hewins

Dr. A. O. Barkley tendered his resignation as medical superintendent, and asked if he might be released from his duties as from 21st April 21. He thanked the board members for their cooperation during his term as medical superintendent. Dr. Barkley's resignation was
accepted with regret, and a record of appreciation of his services was placed on the minute book. It was decided to invite applications for the position at a salary of £500 p.a., the closing date being 30th April. Dr. Hewins was to occupy the position until a permanent appointment could be made (Burnie Advocate, 1935j).

The bush nurse reported thirty visits to the nurse, thirty three home visits to patients and fifteen child welfare visits.

There were four applications including one from the recently resigned Dr. A. O. Barkley, who was re-appointed to the position at a salary of £500 per annum with the right of private practice (Examiner, 1935k).

Sister Gartside reported thirty three visits to the nurse and ninety four home visits to patients for the month. The Advocate reported that three patients were admitted to the emergency ward, a newly opened but unannounced concept (Burnie Advocate, 1935c).

The bush nurse reported seventy visits to the nurse, fifty four home visits to patients and one patient admitted to Emergency Ward (Burnie Advocate, 1935b).

Sister Gartside reported there had been nine visits to the nurse, one hundred and sixty two home visits to patients and there were two admissions to the emergency ward (Examiner, 1935a).

Dr. A. O. Barkley applied for a car allowance as a conservative estimate of his expenses would be £104 per annum. The board deferred a decision until the next meeting.

Sister Gartside reported there had been seventy four visits to the nurse, ninety nine home visits to patients and there were two admissions to the emergency ward (Burnie Advocate, 1935b).

Dr. Barkley resigned again hence his application for car allowance was allowed to lapse. Sister Gartside reported there had been twenty nine visits to the nurse, twenty nine home visits to patients, and there was one admission to the casualty ward (Burnie Advocate, 1935j).

The board decided to hold an extra meeting to appoint a medical superintendent to succeed Dr. Barkley, and to consider the estimate for repairing the old hospital building.

The bush nurse's monthly report stated there had been twenty nine visits, sixty visits to the nurse and there was one inpatients in the emergency ward (Examiner, 1935i).

Six patients were admitted as emergencies to the Waratah Hospital following an accident, though it was possible to discharge five of them following treatment. A rail motor, driven by Mr. Stein, and belonging to the Emu Bay Railway Co., ran off the line and capsized in a cutting near Magnet Junction on the way to Magnet.

Mr. P. Thomas was unable to walk after the crash, so he was pushed approximately five miles on a trolley to the crossroads, and then convoyed to the hospital with a small fracture of clavicle and abrasions to hip and remained an inpatient.

The other five injuries were less serious, Mr. Stein with a cut wrist, Mr. C. Johnson had a severely gashed forehead, Mr. J. Dunn had a small wound in the knee, Mr. E. Thomas, jun. had an injury to knee and Mr. S. Smith suffered an abrasion to the face (Burnie Advocate, 1935a).

Dr. A. O. Barkley was presented with a fountain pen as a token of appreciation of his services and Dr. Paterson was welcomed as his replacement. The bush nurse reported there had been ninety one visits to the nurse and forty five house calls to patients (Burnie Advocate, 1935e).

Sister Gartside reported there had been seventy one home visits to patients, eighty four visits to the nurse and the emergency ward had one admission and one discharge (Burnie Advocate, 1935h).

Sister Gartside reported there had been fifty one home visits to patients, thirty two visits to the nurse and two patients admitted to Emergency Ward (Burnie Advocate, 1935b).

Sister Gartside reported there had been fifty five visits to nurses and forty six house calls to patients (Examiner, 1936a).

Sister Gartside reported eighty six visits to the nurse, one hundred and twenty two visits to
patients and three patients admitted to the emergency ward (Burnie Advocate, 1936f).

Mrs. R. Bakes was discharged from the Waratah Hospital, where she had treated for a scalded foot (Burnie Advocate, 1936d).

Sister Gartside requested four weeks' recreation leave and a further four months' special leave to undergo a course of special training in child welfare. She reported sixty five visits to the nurse, sixty seven home visits to patients and two admissions to the emergency ward (Examiner, 1936b).

Dr. N. R. Paterson

The new medical officer, Dr. N. R. Paterson also applied for a car allowance. The decisive board decided to defer a decision for three months! They did decide to re-gravel the path to his house.

Dr. Patterson reported that: two patients had been sent to the Devon Hospital for treatment.

The new bush nurse, Sister Wood reported forty five visits to the nurse and sixty six home visits to patients (Burnie Advocate, 1936b).

Sister Wood reported fifty four visits to the nurse and fifty six home visits to patients while Dr. Paterson, the medical officer reported having sent three patients to the Devon Hospital for treatment (Burnie Advocate, 1936a).

Dr. N. R. Paterson reported three patients transferred to the Devon Hospital and the bush nurse reported eighty five visits to the nurse, fifty one home visits to patients, and two maternity cases supervised (Burnie Advocate, 1936k).

Mr. E. Luttrell, a resident of Magnet for over twenty years, was an inpatient of the Waratah Hospital. and a week later was reported to have died. The hospital clearly was open for limited inpatients. Presumably Lutrell had some terminal condition for which transfer to the Devon Hospital was not indicated (Burnie Advocate, 1936i; Burnie Advocate, 1936j).

Dr. N. E. Paterson's application for a car allowance was refused. The committee decided to move the morgue nearer to the hospital. The building committee reported that the well at the old hospital was unsafe and the sides were beginning to break away. Sister Wood, the bush nurse reported twenty one visits to the nurse and eighty three home visits to patients (Burnie Advocate, 1936j).

Sister Wood reported seventeen visits to patients and seventy seven visits to the nurse (Burnie Advocate, 1936g).

Sister Wood reported ninety eight visits to patients and one hundred and nine visits to the nurse (Burnie Advocate, 1936h).

Dr. N. R. Patterson was granted one month's leave of absence from the end of October, on condition that a suitable locum tenens is provided. Sister H. O. Wood reported one hundred and sixteen visits to the nurse and five nursing days of presumed inpatients (Examiner, 1936d).

The bush nurse reported thirty eight visits to patients, one hundred and sixteen visits to the nurse and five nursing days of presumed inpatients (Examiner, 1936c).

The bush nurse reported for the past month there had been one hundred and sixteen visits to the nurse and four home visits to patients.

Mr. B. M. Collins' application to rent the old hospital as a residence was granted. However the following month he no longer desired to reside there (Burnie Advocate, 1936e; Burnie Advocate, 1937b).

The unnamed medical officer reported that he had sent two patients to the Devon Hospital for treatment. Dr. Paterson who had apparently tendered his resignation though this was not reported, wrote intimating his desire to withdraw his resignation as medical officer to the board. The Board decided that since his resignation had been accepted and minuted it could not be withdrawn.

Dr. Smellie, an ophthalmologist of Wynyard was to be asked to consider treating ophthalmic problems locally that could not be treated at the Devon Hospital.

The bush nurse reported that during the past month one hundred and three patients had been
treated at the surgery and twenty one patients had been visited at home.

Members expressed appreciation of Sister Wood's action in renovating the casualty ward (Burnie Advocate, 1937c).

**Dr. J. L. Kerr**

Dr. J. L. Kerr, M.B., CM., M.D. (University of Aberdeen), F.R.S.E. was appointed to succeed.

Dr N. L. Paterson who had resigned. Dr. Kerr who was currently residing at Stratford, Victoria, formerly practised at Strahan and Sheffield.

Joshua Law Kerr was the best qualified physician to work in the Waratah Hospital. A graduate of Aberdeen University, he proceeded to MD also at Aberdeen, becoming an examiner there in Chemistry and Medical Jurisprudence. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, a recognition of academic excellence, before he emigrated to Australia (Burnie Advocate, 1937d).

Sister Wood resigned as from the end of February, and Sister Joan N. Clark succeeded her as bush nurse. Tenders were sought for the erection of a garage at Dr. Kerr's residence.

Sister H. O. Wood's final report was that there were thirty visits to the nurse, forty three home visits to patients and sixteen nursing days (Examiner, 1937a).

Sister J. D. Clark, the new bush nurse, reported that thirty eight patients had been visited and that eighty five had been attended to at the surgery (Burnie Advocate, 1937i).

Dr. J. L. Kerr, the Medical Superintendent, reported that during June he had made eighty three visits to patients, there had been one hundred and ninety four consultations at the surgery and he had dispensed two hundred and thirty one prescriptions.

Sister J. D. Clark, the Bush Nurse reported there had been fifty four visits to patients, XX visits to the nurse and three nursing days in the emergency ward (Burnie Advocate, 1937h).

Dr. J. L. Kerr reported that during the past month there had been three hundred and fifty two Consultations in the surgery, one hundred and thirty patients had been visited, and that two hundred and fifty two dispensings had been done.

Sister J. D. Clark, the bush nurse, reported forty three visits to patients and eighty two visits to the nurse (Burnie Advocate, 1937g).

Dr. J. L. Kerr, the medical officer, reported that during August he had one hundred and twenty nine consultations at the hospital, visited sixty eight patients, and dispensed one hundred and thirty two prescriptions. The bush nurse's reported for the month thirty two visits to the nurse, forty eight visits to patients and twenty six nursing days in hospital (Burnie Advocate, 1937a).

Sister J. D. Clark was granted a fortnight's sick leave and Sister M. R. Lancaster acted as bush nurse. She reported forty eight visits to the nurse, twenty two visits to patients and twenty six nursing days.

Owing to the increasing mining activities at Magnet, Dr. Kerr agreed to visit that centre weekly as from 8th September. He reported that during August he had one hundred and twenty nine consultations at the hospital, had visited sixty eight patients, and dispensed one hundred and twenty eight prescriptions (Examiner, 1937d).

Dr. J. L. Kerr, the medical officer, reported that during the month he had one hundred and forty eight consultations, had visited forty one patients, and dispensed one hundred and thirty two mixtures. He had made two trips to Magnet.

Sister J. D. Clark, the bush nurse, reported sixty eight visits to patients, sixty five visits to the nurse and fifteen nursing days (Burnie Advocate, 1937f).

The medical officer was still not visiting Magnet weekly because of transport difficulties. Dr. J. L. Kerr, the medical officer reported that during the month he had visited seventy patients, made one hundred and seventy consultations at the hospital, and dispensed one hundred and fifty one prescriptions.

Sister J. D. Clark, the bush nurse reported fifty five visits to patients, ninety three visits to the nurse
Dr. J. L. Kerr reported that during the month he had one hundred and twenty five consultations at the surgery, had made sixty four home visits to patients, and dispensed one hundred and twenty two prescriptions. Sister J.S. Clark reported seventy two visits to patients and eighty seven visits to the nurse (Examiner, 1937c).

Dr. J. L. Kerr reported ninety six home visits to patients, one hundred and fifty nine consultations, presumably in the hospital, dispensing one hundred and sixty eight drugs and three X-Rays for the month. Presumably a new and most important addition to the clinical armamentarium not deemed worthy of mention by the administrators.

Sister J. D. Clark reported sixty nine visits to the nurse and eighty six visits to patients. Her application for leave as from 1st February was approved (Examiner, 1937b).

It was reported that the medical officer had not visited Magnet during the past four weeks because arrangements for rail transport could not be made.

Dr. J. L. Kerr, the medical officer reported one hundred and thirty five consultations at the surgery, fifty one visits to patients, ninety four dispensations and two X-rays.

Sister J. D. Clark, bush nurse, reported for the month eighty visits to the nurse and seventy two visits to patients (Examiner, 1938d).

Dissatisfaction was expressed as the town had been almost a fortnight without the services of a doctor as difficulty had been experienced in securing a locum tenens.

The medical officer reported thirteen visits to patients, three consultations at the surgery, and dispensing of fifty one medications. The bush nurse reported fifty six visits to patients, one hundred and twenty one to the nurse and eleven nursing days (Examiner, 1938a).

Sister N. B. Hingston was welcomed as bush nurse in place of Sister Clark. She reported for the month eighty seven visits to the nurse, twelve visits to patients and fifteen nursing days (Examiner, 1938f).

Dr. Kerr wrote intimating that he desired to be relieved of his duties as early as possible. The chairman stated that every endeavour was being made to expedite the appointment of a medical officer with the aid of the Public Health Department. Kerr died in February 1940, so this may have been a health problem.

Dr. A. O. Barkley, a previous doctor in Waratah, was appointed medical officer to the Mount Bischoff Hospital and would commence duties again towards the end of next month. Barkley was residing in West Australia having been
house surgeon at the Devon Hospital, Latrobe until a few months previously.

Dr. Kennedy, of Melbourne, arrived to carry out the duties until Dr. Barkley's arrival to allow Dr J. L. Kerr the present medical officer to depart immediately (Burnie Advocate, 1938b).

Sister N. Hingston, the bush nurse reported for the month thirty visits to patients, and ninety three visits to the nurse (Examiner, 1938e).

The Director of Public Health and the hospital board agreed that the medical officer's salary would be increased to £650 per annum, plus £50 per year car allowance from 1st January.

Sister M. Hingston, the bush nurse, reported eighty seven visits to the nurse, forty home visits to patients, and seventeen nursing days (Examiner, 1939b).

After discussion with Dr. A. O. Barkley, the medical officer, it was agreed that certain, though unspecified practice as listed by Dr. Barkley be retained by him as private practice. Sister N. Hingston, the bush nurse reported one hundred and twenty four visits to the nurse, Seventy nine home visits to patients, and twenty six nursing days (Burnie Advocate, 1939b).

Dr. A. O. Barkley the medical officer's monthly report read stated that he had consulted one hundred and thirty six patients at the surgery, visited one hundred and twenty seven patients at home, prescribed one hundred and sixty medications and transferred eight patients to the Devon. The Bush nurse reported fifty six home visits to patients, ninety visits to the nurse and fourteen nursing days (Examiner, 1939a).

Mr. W. Maxwell was an inpatient in the Waratah Hospital, undergoing treatment and was making good progress, though his age and condition are unspecified (Burnie Advocate, 1939c).

Dr. B. M. Carruthers, the Director of Public Health wrote asking to be supplied with information required by the Medical Co-ordination Committee of the 6th Military District regarding the number of beds available at the hospital in case of extreme emergency. Presumably the possibility of impending conflict in Europe initiated the query.

The answer would have been interesting as the apparently closed hospital appeared to have many nursing days of presumed inpatients.

Changes to the rail service between Waratah and Burnie now made road transport the preferable mode of transport of patients to the Devon Hospital.

Dr A. O. Barkley, the medical officer reported one hundred consultations at the surgery, eighty five home visits to patients and one hundred and thirty prescriptions dispensed. The bush nurse reported fifty six visits to the nurse, thirty nine home visits to patients and eleven nursing days.

Sister L. E. Tollnor, who commenced duties as bush nurse last week, was introduced to board members and welcomed by the chairman (Burnie Advocate, 1939a).

Dr. A. O. Barkley, the medical officer reported that during the month he had made one hundred and thirty consultations at the surgery, paid one hundred and twenty seven home visits to patients, dispensed one hundred and sixty mixtures and transferred three patients to the Devon Hospital for further treatment.

Sister E. Tollner, the bush nurse reported sixty two visits to the nurse, forty home visits to Patients and two nursing days (Burnie Advocate, 1939d).

Mr. W. Maxwell was an inpatient in the Waratah Hospital, undergoing treatment and was making good progress, though his age and condition are unspecified (Burnie Advocate, 1939c).

Dr. A. O. Barkley, the medical officer reported for the month that he had consulted seventy eight patients at the surgery, made ninety nine home visits to patients, dispensed one hundred and twenty six prescriptions and performed ten minor operations. This is the first report of surgery implying a functioning operating theatre.

Sister E. Tollner, the bush nurse, reported one hundred consultations at the surgery, made ninety nine home visits to patients, dispensed one hundred and twenty six prescriptions and performed ten minor operations. This is the first report of surgery implying a functioning operating theatre.

Sister L. E. Tollnor, the bush nurse, reported eighty two visits to patients and forty visits to the nurse (Burnie Advocate, 1940b).
Dr. A. O. Barkley's resignation as medical officer was accepted at the monthly board meeting (Examiner, 1940).

The still present medical officer, Dr. A. O. Barkley reported ninety one consultations at the surgery, one hundred and twenty five home visits to patients and one hundred and forty prescriptions dispensed for the month of June, 1940.

As follows Sister L. E. Tollner reported forty nine visits to the nurse, eighty six home visits to patients and four school visits (Burnie Advocate, 1940c).

Dr. A.O. Barkley reported eighty eight consultations at the surgery, one hundred and twenty two visits to patients and one hundred and fifty-one prescriptions dispensed for the month.

Sister L. E. Tollner reported forty five visits to the nurse, ninety four home visits to patients and eight school visits (Burnie Advocate, 1940d).

Dr. A. O. Barkley reported sixty eight consultations at the surgery, eighty visits to patients and one hundred and sixteen prescriptions dispensed for the month.

Sister L. E. Tollner reported forty seven visits to the nurse, ninety five home visits to patients and eight school visits (Burnie Advocate, 1940a).

Dr. A. O. Barkley reported ninety three consultations at the surgery, seventy seven visits to patients and eighty two prescriptions dispensed for the month.

Sister L. E. Tollner reported fifty five visits to the nurse, seventy five home visits to patients and six nursing days in hospital (Burnie Advocate, 1941b).

The Public Health Department advised that there was little prospect of procuring the services of a locum tenens to allow Dr. Barkley to take his annual leave. Inquiries on the mainland had so far been futile. Sister Tollner planned six weeks' leave from June 1st.

Dr. A. O. Barkley reported eighty seven consultations at the surgery, eighty four visits to patients and one hundred and six prescriptions dispensed for the month.

Sister L. E. Tollner reported sixty visits to the nurse and sixty eight home visits to patients. (Burnie Advocate, 1941a).

**Dr. A. B. Stewart**

Contrary to the Public Health Department opinion, the services of Dr. A. B. Stewart of Melbourne were obtained as locum tenens while Dr. Barkley was on leave. During Sister Tollner's annual leave, Sister J. D. Clark relieved for a fortnight and was called up for military duties. Sister L. M. Walker then acted as bush nurse for the remainder of Sister Tollner's leave period (Burnie Advocate, 1941e).

Dr. A. O. Barkley, was appointed house surgeon at the Devon Hospital, Latrobe and was expected to take up duties on October 1st (Examiner, 1941).

The board of management of the Mount Bischoff Provident Hospital at Waratah expressed concern at the possibility of the district being without the services of a doctor after the end of this month. The vacancy, caused by Dr. A. O. Barkley's resignation, was advertised in the press of four mainland States and over the air in Victoria, but not one application was received.

Board members emphasised the necessity for a resident doctor because of the remoteness of the district and the nature of the work carried out by most of the residents. It was pointed out that there were no medical men nearer than Burnie and Wynyard, fifty miles away and that many of the subscribers were engaged in mining and bush and milling work, all hazardous occupations for which immediate medical attention may be required (Burnie Advocate, 1941d).

The Secretary for Public Health advised that some roofing iron are now being coated with lead, instead of zinc, and that water obtained by catchment from such roofs should not be used for cooking or drinking purposes. Lead pollution was already a common problem in the area (Burnie Advocate, 1941c).
Sister L. E. Tollner reported eighty-two visits to the nurse, eighty-nine home visits by the nurse and one hospital nursing day (Burnie Advocate, 1942e).

Owing to the shortage of nurses, the Devon Hospital Board decided to fall into line with the suggestion of the Secretary for Public Health that the salaries of nurses be substantially raised. It was notified that the course for trainees would be reduced from four to three years.

The Secretary for Public Health had written suggesting that the board increase the salaries of the nursing staff. First-year trainees should get £52 a year and fourth-year nurses £91.

Sister I. M. Leo was granted three months' sick leave and the resignation of Nurse R. Thomas was received.

The chairman said that Dr. Barkley had been asked by the Waratah District Hospital if he could visit there once a week to attend to patients until they were able to secure a resident doctor. The Devon Hospital Medical superintendent approved provided Dr. Barkley took the day off in his spare time, which Dr. Barkley was willing to do. Doctors in 1942 did not have much spare time (Burnie Advocate, 1942h).

This was the last report of a doctor attending the Waratah Hospital. Highly competent nurses continued to manage a heavy workload unassisted for the last twelve years of the hospital's existence.

The data for 1943-1952 is tabulated below. The figures are far from complete as some years there was no published data, other years there are only figures for a few months. Nevertheless it gives an idea of the workload and responsibility of Waratah nurses lacking medical support (Burnie Advocate, 1942a).

Sister L. E. Tollner reported ninety visits to the nurse, sixty-four home visits by the nurse and one nursing day for the month (Burnie Advocate, 1942b).

Sister L. E. Tollner reported ninety-five visits to the nurse, fifty-two home visits by the nurse, one maternity case and three nursing days for the month (Burnie Advocate, 1942f).

It was decided to give Sister L. E. Tollner a testimonial for three years' service in the Waratah district and that the relieving sister would take up duty on May 14th.

Tollner reported sixty-six visits to the nurse and one hundred and twenty-two home visits by the nurse (Burnie Advocate, 1942).

Sister I. Crook reported one hundred and forty visits had been made to her and she had made one hundred and fifty-five home visits. She had given three C.D.L. (perhaps child development or chronic disease) lectures and a school lecture on top of ten daily consultations (Burnie Advocate, 1942a).

Sister Cook was called to Hobart for examination for military service. The monthly report stated that there was one patient in hospital, one hundred and seventy-one visits had been made to the nurse and she made two hundred and fifteen home visits (Burnie Advocate, 1942i).

The absence of a resident doctor was discussed at the monthly meeting of the Bischoff Hospital Board and the hope expressed that one would soon be available.

Sister I. Cook reported that during the month she had received two hundred and seventy-two hospital visits and made one hundred and thirty-one visits including a school visit a very busy thirteen daily consultations daily in the absence of a doctor. She also had three patients in hospital (Burnie Advocate, 1942g).

Mr. James Wylie Allan, a miner and a gold and osmiridium prospector in the Waratah district died in the Waratah Hospital. His age and diagnosis were not specified (Burnie Advocate, 1942c).

The board noted Sister Cook without the assistance of a resident doctor, has done a particularly good job in the district, and was held in high esteem. As always, hard-working professional experts receive thanks and praise, not a bonus as in business!
Table 1. Published Nursing Workload 1943-1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Clinic Visits</th>
<th>Home Visits</th>
<th>Ante-natal visits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>288</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>331</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sister Crook was expected to be called up for military service soon (Burnie Advocate, 1943d). The bush nurse reported one recorded death for which no details were given (Burnie Advocate, 1943c).

Mr. E. J. Tudor, the Secretary of Public Health advised the Waratah Hospital Board that a resident doctor is to be appointed to Waratah as soon as one is available (Examiner, 1944; Burnie Advocate, 1944h).

Sister L. C. King, the bush nurse reported one hundred and fifty seven visits to the centre, twelve home visits and twelve child welfare visits, ten in the centre and two at home (Burnie Advocate, 1944a).

The Secretary for Public Health wrote again five months after the previous promise that Waratah was well in the foreground in consideration of the allocation of resident doctors. The board was pleased to note that the department would place a resident doctor in Waratah when one was available (Burnie Advocate, 1944c).

Sister Cook left the hospital sometime in the following eight months and the hospital was still unable to procure the services of a bush nurse. The board continued to meet monthly to pass motions, reappoint members and manage finances, though the function of a hospital in providing health care had ceased. It is not stated whether workers still paid subscriptions to business (Burnie Advocate, 1945a).

Parents of children of pre-school age were requested to note that the first vaccinations will be given at the Waratah Hospital at 2 p.m. on September 1st next, though who would do this remains a mystery (Burnie Advocate, 1945b).

Dr. Piscitelli, of the Waratah District Hospital was reported to have left to spend two months' leave with his wife and family in Queensland! His arrival had not been reported previously, though in April he was locum tenens in Zeehan Hospital and in August he commenced a position as Government Medical Officer at New Norfolk (Burnie Advocate, 1946b; Burnie Advocate, 1946a; Mercury, 1946).

Elvin John Whyman, aged twenty died in the Waratah Hospital two hours after admittance with a gun shot wound. His rifle had accidentally discharged and the bullet entered his left arm two inches below the shoulder. He then walked three miles through the bush before he was picked up by a lorry driven by J. Thorne and taken to the Waratah Hospital.

Sister Kelly administered first aid but he succumbed. A doctor's aid was not available and the tragedy brought Waratah's isolation into sharp relief. It is not stated whether this was due to blood loss or the bullet penetrating the chest. Death would not usually be caused by a bullet in the arm, perhaps the brachial artery was severed.

Dr. Colin Alexander Campbell, Penguin, Government medical officer, conducted a postmortem examination as to the nature of deceased's wound and gave evidence at a coroner's inquest before Mr. A. T. Langmaid.

Sister R. M. Kelly's resignation was received with regret, and appreciation of her services were recorded. The board secretary was instructed to write the Public Health Department, and request that a successor be appointed immediately. She also stated that monthly immunisations against whooping cough had been conducted (Burnie Advocate, 1948g).
The newly arrived Sister B. I. Pryde tendered her resignation as from June 19th (Burnie Advocate, 1948f).

Mr. A. Blake, the president of the Waratah Hospital Board communicated with Mr. White, the Minister for Health for the provision of a nursing sister at Waratah (Burnie Advocate, 1948b).

Owing to the difficulty in obtaining the services of a nurse, Sister B. I. Pryde wrote that she was prepared to remain until July 19th, but no longer. She reported one hundred and twenty three visits to the nurse, forty two home visits by the nurse and twenty one child welfare cases (Burnie Advocate, 1948e; Burnie Advocate, 1948f).

Sister Davies asked that the evening surgery hours be changed to 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. or 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., which would be more suitable than the present 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sister Davies also reported five ante-natal visits, thirty four child welfare visits and twenty nine children had been immunised against diphtheria (Burnie Advocate, 1948a; Burnie Advocate, 1948b; Burnie Advocate, 1949a).

Sister H. Davies reported fifty eight visits to the nurse, eighty three home visits to patients, six ante-natal visits and thirty seven child welfare visits (Burnie Advocate, 1949d).

Sister H. E. Davies requested a transfer to another centre and Dr. Carruthers, the Director of Hospital and Medical Services advised that Sister A. J. Laird had been appointed to Waratah centre to relieve in a temporary capacity (Burnie Advocate, 1949c).

In August 1951 lacked both a doctor and a nurse. The board asked Dr. Turnbull, the Minister for Health what arrangements had been made to provide a sister at the Waratah Hospital. He was aware that a grave danger existed in the event of sickness and accident when no trained person was available to attend and advise (Burnie Advocate, 1951b).

Mr. P. A. Driscoll, the Secretary for Public Health advised belatedly that a bonus would be paid to qualified sisters attached to specified isolated centres including Waratah, after a period of service (Burnie Advocate, 1951a).

The final mention of the Waratah Hospital in the press was in 1954. The departments of Health and Public Works were discussing whether funds should be found for extensive repairs or spent on a new building with a decision made shortly. It is not specified if the hospital is still functioning and nothing appears to have been done subsequently.

Otherwise the press released numbers of patients seen by the doctors and nurses both in the clinics and at home with almost no clinical details, a change in reporting habits compared with 1878 to 1920. The mine would have only been open between 1942 and 1947 (Burnie Advocate, 1954c).

**Summary 1921 - 1954**

There were sixteen men suffering work place accidents published between 1921 and 1954. There were no deaths. There was one loss of body parts, one man lost a finger to a crush injury. There were four fractures, two legs, one arm and one clavicle. All appear to have recovered.

**1878 - 1954**

In total from the early days of the Mt Bischoff mine in 1878 up to 1954 there were one hundred and one published work place accidents with eleven deaths. Nineteen were left with permanent loss of body parts, perhaps four lost an eye, four lost a leg, one lost a heel and two a whole hand. Eight lost one or more digits.

The inquest into the two deaths by electrocutions advised greater care of exposed electric cable, but otherwise there were no recommendations of greater safety over seventy six years.

Three victims received compensation. One sued the mine and had to win a court case and subsequent appeal for benefits. Two received public donations, one supplemented with £25 from the mine, another’s donations were
reduced by business extracting their expenses! A contrast with the $US two billion earned by the mine.

Unfortunately, the situation is not a lot better seventy years later. The last death in an Australian mine was only two months ago in a mine collapse at Mount Clear, near Ballarat, in March 2024, the tenth confirmed workplace fatality for the year to date.

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