

# Century

NURSING & OUR PATIENTS | Issue 02 | June 2020

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*Celebrating 100 years of nursing*

*“Nursing is  
a profession.*

*Therefore those who  
take it up need to be  
refined women with  
a sound general  
education. Nurses  
need tact, patience,  
common sense and  
a humane spirit,  
for every patient  
is an individual.”*

(THE SPECTATOR NEWSPAPER,  
AUGUST 1949)

## Thank you – a reflection of care

**An ‘above and beyond’ medal takes pride of place in Epworth Freemasons’ oncology and haematology ward. It was presented by a long term patient as a thank you.**

The ward’s passionate leader, Nurse Unit Manager Leslie Bell, says the medal is a symbol of how we treat all our patients and for our compassion and care.

“It’s not just for our ward, as we don’t work alone; we work with diagnostic services, food services, environmental services – we’re one total package.”

Caring for patients with cancer can be emotional, Leslie says.

“We really get to know our patients and have that personal touch. We have debriefings for our nurses when we have long term patients move into palliative care or when we lose them; some weeks are tough.”



(continued page 2)

Paula Stephenson,  
Chief Nursing Officer



## Proud to be a nurse

I have been a nurse for 31 years now, I have enjoyed every minute of it and run with the opportunities this career has provided.

While it sounds trite, it's true that I wanted to help people and make a difference. Coronary care nursing was my specialty; I like the technical experience and critical care nature of it. I also like the management side of nursing and helping people grow their leadership skills. I'm on the Victorian Board of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia where my role is to uphold the professional standards for nurses and midwives.

Today, our nurses and midwives are university educated professionals. Nursing has matured over the decades and now it's really valued as a profession, with enormous opportunities.

It's amazing the work nurses do; the roles they play are very inspiring. Good nurses are interested in other people – they want to see the best outcomes for patients, are curious and want to solve problems.

We're in such a privileged position to represent our patients, advocate for them, really contribute to care and know what patients need across a 24/7 period. Nurses need to work in partnership with our medical colleagues and Allied Health to assess patient conditions. That care is critical to patients' health, wellbeing and improvement.

The World Health Organisation has gazetted 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, as it is the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. It is also Epworth's centenary. I am looking forward to celebrating our nurses and midwives and their contributions all year long.

## Thank you – a reflection of care

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Leslie and his team pride themselves on their rapport with patients.

"I tell everyone to use our core values when they come to work; to think about how you would want to be treated. We also have to build our patients' confidence so they are able to do things for themselves again when they move into the rehabilitation phase.

"We treat each person as a guest in our facility and that changes your focus."

Leslie has spent 30 years in healthcare, in a variety of roles. His entry into nursing isn't a

romanticised one. Back in those days, living in the country in economically tough times, being a nurse was a great way to earn a livelihood, while also being given accommodation.

"I started nursing due to economics and it's been a rich and rewarding career, in a variety of roles and settings around the world," Leslie said.

"It's about listening to what patients really want."



Nurse Unit Manager Leslie Bell with Ward 2E nurses Jade Westendorf, Grace Mugavin and Sarah Heraud.

## On the frontline

Leadership skills are honed – they don't just appear. And so Epworth runs a Frontline leaders program, where participants receive a Certificate IV or Diploma of Leadership and Management from Swinburne University.

A recent graduate is Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) Sheila Salonga, who faced the biggest challenge in her career in August 2017. She was tasked with managing a 26 bed ICU with 130 direct reports.

"As soon as my NUM finished the last sentence of her handover and said goodbye to embark on the next chapter of her life as a mum, I froze." Sheila remembered.

"I knew that I had some good leadership qualities and that I had a knack for engaging a group of people, but I had no formal leadership training."

Sheila undertook Epworth's Operational Leaders Program and Future NUM Talent Program and it all paid off.

In 2019, Sheila became NUM of the Epworth Richmond Emergency Department (ED). She has applied everything she learnt in class at work.

"I am proud of what we have achieved in ED since I joined the department. I am incredibly proud of my talented, skilled and hard-working team," Sheila said.

## Nursing artefacts

Epworth nurses, distinguishable in their red cloaks and white caps, built a reputation as caring, professional and compassionate from the very beginning.

Back in the 1920s, it was the job of the night nurse to stoke the boiler (called White Rose) and before expansion, the Matron arranged for nurses to have a weekly bath in a nearby cottage the hospital rented.

Nurses lived at the hospital until the 1980s and abided by a strict curfew. Male nurses were accepted into nursing schools in the 1970s and the high calibre of Epworth nursing graduates continued.



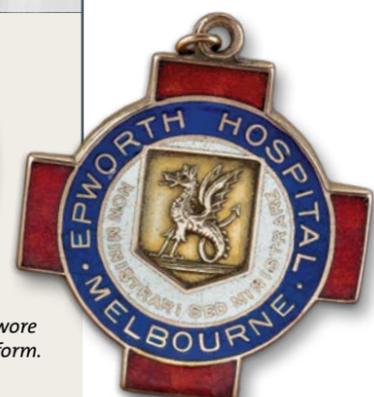
Epworth's first Matron, Ethel Gray, 1920-1939.



State exam time, 1948.



Epworth nurses proudly wore a nurses badge on their uniform.



## Combining hard data with bedside care



**“The heart is a major organ and it’s complex. The heart affects the whole body and medication to protect the heart can affect blood flow, the body and how your brain feels.”**

So says Critical Care nurse Nat Bush, who knows well all the facts and figures around heart health.

Nat works on the Complex Care unit at Epworth Geelong and is also a Cardiac Outcomes Audit Coordinator at Epworth’s corporate office in Richmond. She’s responsible for collating the data for all our cardiac surgeries at Epworth Richmond and Epworth Eastern – that’s around 800 patients annually who come to us for valve replacements, grafts and heart bypass surgery.

Epworth Richmond was the first private hospital in Victoria to establish a cardiothoracic surgical unit and we have maintained our reputation as a world class cardiac facility.

“We contribute our data to the ANZSCTS, a national cardiac surgery database for 37 Australian public and private hospitals. Our data shows we are doing really well, meeting or exceeding most KPIs, including things like mortalities and readmissions. We are a leading centre and with our two campuses, we’re about the third largest contributor Australia-wide, just on volume alone,” Nat said.

Presenting a summary of data is not just about auditing patient histories and crunching numbers. Nat also does 30 days post-operative follow ups on all our cardiac surgical patients.

“I get to see the real outcomes and also have lots of opportunity to educate people on their disease and treatments.”

**“Sometimes it’s about normalising things for people and letting them know that help is out there.”**

Nat spends 1-2 days a week at the bedside.

“I love interacting with patients; I would never give that up.

“I was just speaking to an 80 year old lady about to have a pacemaker inserted. She is also the carer for her husband, who has dementia.

“I spoke to this lady and her daughter about not being able to do everything. By speaking to a social worker, she can start looking into day respite for her husband, which would be beneficial for them both. Sometimes it’s about normalising things for people and letting them know that help is out there.”

Cardiovascular disease remains a major cause of death in Australia.

“We now have added lifestyle risks with higher sugar and energy intake, diabetes, lack of activity and obesity,” Nat said.

“Today’s generations are, in some ways, unhealthy than their parents and grandparents.”

## Making peace with the unknown

**Admitting herself into Epworth Brighton for a two week inpatient stay was a practical, necessary decision for Leanne Boothroyd, who is juggling work, motherhood and the impacts of a chronic disease.**

Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) at 28, Leanne has spent the last 18 years coping with the illness, which presents differently in everyone, with a progression that cannot be predicted.

“My first symptoms were numbness and tingling in my legs,” Leanne remembered.

“I didn’t know what it was. I used to go to the gym four days a week, so didn’t know if it was something to do with that.”

These days Leanne uses a mobility scooter to get around and a walker inside the home. She opted for Epworth Brighton for intensive physiotherapy and rehabilitation when her left leg stopped bending, making walking even more difficult.

“Spasticity is common in MS and the less you use a muscle, it shrinks,” Leanne explained.

“My doctor doctor requested I attend 6-8 sessions, but I didn’t know how I could fit that in amongst school drop-offs, being a mum and working four days a week (two days at home and two in the city).

“So, I came in as an inpatient and did physiotherapy twice a day to strengthen and lengthen my muscles. I also did occupational therapy every second day to help strengthen the muscles of my left hand, doing some fine motor skills tasks like putting pegs into little holes and blocks into a box.

“Apparently you can see the concentration and frustration on my face when I do the peg test. My brain is telling my hand to move, but my left doesn’t want to.

“That’s how MS works – there are lesions on the brain that interrupt the pathway to send the messages. If I want to walk to the door, my right side will move easily but the left won’t cooperate. I often won’t be able to pick up my foot even though I am mentally telling it to move.”

Leanne describes herself as “pretty independent”.

“I’m still driving, still working, still mothering. I still want to be involved as much as I can but you’ve got to make concessions for yourself and know where you can and can’t function.

“You don’t know what is going to happen next with the changing nature of this disease. I try to manage as much as I can day by day, hour by hour. I tend to just get on with it.”

Another reason Leanne undertook this intensive rehabilitation was her family. She knows the impact her disease has on son William, 10 and husband, Dave.

“It’s hard for William not to have a normal mum who can’t walk into the school ground.



Leanne Boothroyd at Epworth Brighton

He doesn’t cope well if mummy has a fall. If I do have a fall, I need to be able to get off the ground.”

While the intensive physiotherapy was exhausting, Leanne gained some good results. She will continue on with her rehabilitation as an outpatient.

Sister Ida Primmer (Epworth nurse 1932-1941) has fond memories of a patient called Beverley. *“She stayed with us off and on for about five years. She was a lovely little girl. She swallowed caustic soda and burnt all her gullet.”* When Sister Primmer had her day off, she would take Beverley with her. Beverley remembers going to the picture theatre. The two kept in touch and exchanged Christmas cards each year.

(EPWORTH A TRADITION OF CARE 1920-2010 BY JANETTE BOMFORD)

# World champ runs on

**In October, elite athlete Wayne Ball conquered the World Championship Ironman race in Hawaii, calling it “the best day ever”.**

This feat sits in stark contrast to a dark day seven years earlier – in April, 2012 – when the then 50 year old Wayne had coronary bypass surgery at Epworth Eastern, following a mild heart attack. During the long operation, he had a stroke.

Even then, Wayne, a policeman, was very fit and seemingly healthy.

“I did my first Ironman back in 2001. I had my heart operation just four weeks out from the Australian Ironman.” Wayne remembered.

“But I had a very poor lifestyle in my youth. I got up to 120kg when I was 22 and I smoked. For the first 25-30 years of my life I was not healthy. But, now, I’ve been a vegan for 22 years and have a real passion for health and fitness.

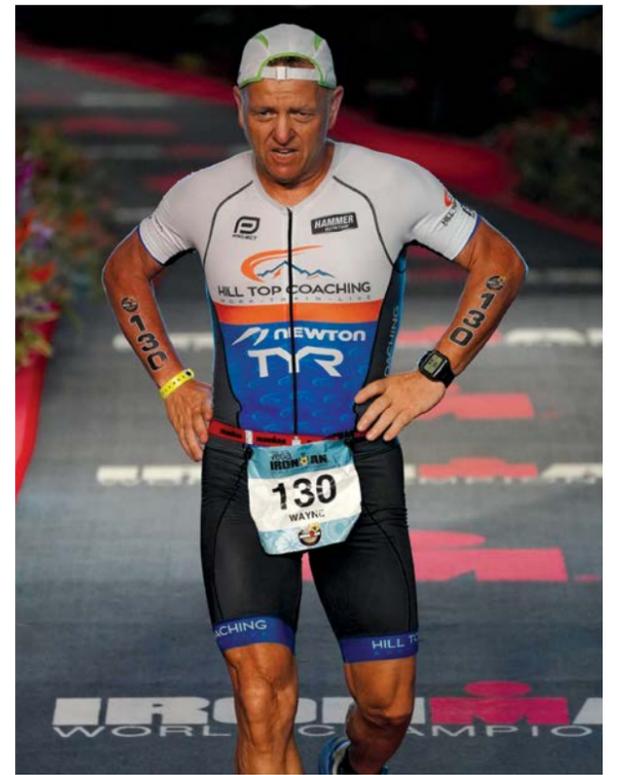
“Back in your 20s, as a male, you think you’re bulletproof and invincible and you do things without any consideration of the impact to your health.”

On the day of his heart attack, Wayne had cycled 180km.

“I had run 30km when I felt chest pain. I continued through it, stupidly. I thought it was a nerve thing. But, a couple of days later, I felt like something was wrong and went to hospital.”

Given an angiogram at Epworth Eastern, he was told he had a bad blockage, aneurysms and was very lucky to be alive.

“When I was laying in hospital, I thought I’d never do sport again. I felt like I’d been hit by a truck,” Wayne said.



Crossing the finishing line in the World Championship Ironman race was a major achievement.

“I could have very easily wrapped myself up in cotton wool and been broken. That’s where rehab was good.”

Twelve weeks after his operation, with his daughter by his side, Wayne ran a half marathon.

“I’m careful what I do now. I take my health even more seriously. It’s about training sensibly, eating well and treating my body with respect.”

Nanci Thurston, HeartSmart Coordinator, Epworth Richmond, is astounded by Wayne’s accomplishment.

“This is an amazing achievement post major cardiac surgery,” Nanci said.

**“I am amazed at all his energy and so proud of him. He’s a great example for all of us – that you can go through a major cardiac event and come out the other side doing great things.”**

“I watched my grandmother die from cancer after smoking, my grandfather die at 55 from heart disease and my father die at 65 of heart disease. I don’t want to pass on that legacy onto my children,” Wayne said.

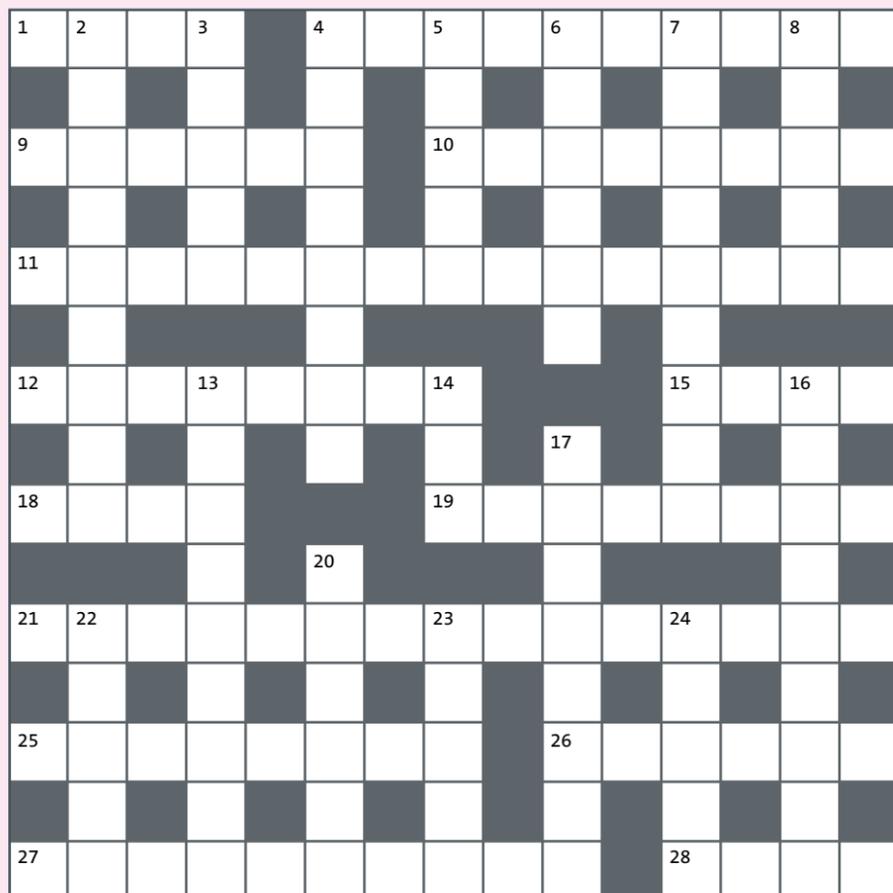
## Crossword challenge

**ACROSS**

1. Pre-loved (4)
4. The mansion that became Epworth Hospital in 1920 (10)
9. Of the body (6)
10. Vocal musical compositions (3,5)
11. Provided by alarms, perhaps (5,2,8)
12. Most modest (8)
15. Long-range weapon (2,1,1)
18. This is terrible! (2,2)
19. Added up the till takings at the end of the day (6,2)
21. Finalist’s psyche disturbed bodily wellbeing (8,7)
25. Operating theatre and rehabilitation ward wing of Epworth Richmond (8)
26. Absentee (2-4)
27. Booldoobah (10)
28. Mild, sweet member of the onion family (4)

**DOWN**

2. Common prickly groundcover plant (9)
3. Epworth’s founding benefactor (5)
4. Became golden (8)
5. Ruffles (5)
6. Light science (6)
7. Remapped mini route, these days (2,3,4)
8. The dark (5)
13. Found one’s metier (9)
14. Home and community based independent living program for acquired brain injury patients (1,1,1)
16. Building material for e.g. Pentridge (9)
17. Allocated Sid and Agnes a confection (8)
20. Candle bracket (6)
22. Huon ---, wine writer and critic (5)
23. Bring a ship into the wind (3,2)
24. Vocally twangy (5)



ACROSS: 1 Used, 4 Yalcowinna, 9 Carnal, 10 Art songs, 11 Sense of security, 12 Humblest, 15 IC B M, 18 Oh no, 19 Cashed up, 21 Physical fitness, 25 Normanby, 26 No-show, 27 Needlewood, 28 Leak.  
 DOWN: 2 Snakebush, 3 Danks, 4 Yellowed, 5 Leafs, 6 Optics, 7 In our time, 8 Night, 13 Blossomed, 14 T L C, 16 Bluestone, 17 Assigned, 20 Scone, 22 Hooke, 23 Lay to, 24 Nasal.



Nurses Lang and Laidlaw with patients, early 1930s

**“I love my patients. They’re beautiful. There’s not too many patients that I don’t connect with or don’t have a story to tell. Life is often so crazy and chaotic, but we make an effort to help patients and their families remember some good times as well. It helps you give them a little bit of hope and reminder to look forward as well.”**

KRISTY-LEE JONES, ONCOLOGY CLINICAL NURSE EDUCATOR, EPWORTH RICHMOND