



president's report

Beth Quinlivan, editor of Radius, and I have discussed some changes to Case Notes in future issues. We think that many readers are likely to find more interest if these emphasise hobbies and passions outside professional work.

Two recent media stories gave interesting insight into some passions of our alumni. The national Doctors Orchestra was featured in an ABC Radio National program in July. Initially set up by Michael Pohl (1973) in the 1990s, it now has more than 100 members, including medical students. Brian Shearman (1954) is the orchestra's most senior member.

Another story told how Genevieve Cummins (1967), probably our first female paediatric surgeon, has written a book on 'How the watch was worn: a fashion for 500 years' (Sydney Morning Herald, 4 August).

At our reunions (1966) held over a weekend, talks by our colleagues on their passions and hobbies have proved very popular. At our 40th reunion, we were regaled with a video of a still active member of a rock band and tales of a pilot building planes in his backyard, an avid art collector, a keen photographer, and several poets, among many others. One session concluded by us tasting wine provided by a proud vigneron!

So tell us about your own passions and hobbies, either for a full story or for brief notes in Radius, by contacting Beth (b.quinlivan@usyd.edu.au).

I recently enjoyed discussions with two groups of alumni keen to share their experiences with their colleagues. No doubt there are other similar groups that meet informally too. Former senior administrators of Sydney teaching hospitals have been getting together for many years and reflected on issues and controversies occurring during the last four or five decades.

Retired obstetricians and gynaecologists were having their inaugural meeting. Among topics discussed was the importance of obtaining

individual histories of the closed Crown Street Women's Hospital and King George V Hospital, now relocated within Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

At the History of Medicine and Health Symposium at the University on 11-12 September, the Chancellor, Professor Marie Bashir, will give the opening address on Governor Lachlan Macquarie, leading into talks on early colonial doctors and surgery in the 18th and 19th centuries. Several sessions on the plague will bring together speakers from different disciplines within the University, followed on the second day by aspects of hospital and specialty histories in Sydney, future prospects in the history of public health, and biographies of some alumni.

We hope this symposium will be the forerunner of more frequent meetings which aim to:

- build a network of those interested in developing projects related to Sydney Medical School's achievements over more than 120 years of alumni in their professional careers and their other interests
- provide a forum for regular discussion
- enhance interdisciplinary projects within our University
- encourage student projects on these historical themes
- raise the profile of the history of health and medicine within Sydney Medical School.

I am completing these notes in Philadelphia after a conference on the sprawling University of Pennsylvania campus. My visit to Alumni House where alumni can relax in a comfortable setting or appreciate the memorabilia of bygone eras gives fresh ideas of what could be achieved at our University. An evening visit to the historic College of Physicians has one musing again about what is the most engaging way to develop medical museums. There will be more on that theme next time!