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WOMEN IN ANAESTHESIA IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

It was during his visit to Australia in 1969 that Professor E.M. Papper commented on what he regards as the equality of status which women anaesthetists appear to enjoy in Australia and New Zealand - a comment no doubt provoked by the fact that the first 19 anaesthetists he met in Brisbane were women! Anaesthetists in neither country would regard this concept of equality of status as worthy of comment.

Numerically the number of women anaesthetists is

	Australia		New Zealand	
	Society	Faculty	Society	Faculty
Total	927	497	216	90
Percentage Women	12.5%	14%	12.5%	18%

By comparison in Britain 16% of the Fellows of the Faculty are women, intermediate between Australia and New Zealand.

In Australia the distribution of women anaesthetists on a State basis is shown in the following table:

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS : REGISTERED SPECIALIST ANAESTHETISTS

National Health Act March 1972

<u>State</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% Women</u>
N.S.W.	204	30	234	12.8
Victoria	137	32	169	18.9
Queensland	58	26	84	30.0
S.A. & N.T.	51	7	58	12.1
W.A.	37	6	43	14.0
Tasmania	9	2	11	18.2

That the entry of women into the specialty continues at a constant rate is shown by the appointments posts approved for training for F.F.A.R.A.C.S. :

Number of approved Posts

	<u>Australia</u>	<u>New Zealand</u>
Number of Posts	221	41
Women Appointed	30 (13%)	6 (14%)

Let us first take our minds back to 1934.

None of the founders of the Australian Society of Anaesthetists in that year were women - the foundation of the Society was the concept of Dr. Gilbert Brown of Adelaide and Dr. Geoffrey Kaye of Melbourne following great encouragement by Dr. Frank McMeehan of the U.S.A.

It is significant that Dr. Brown's wife was a doctor and that Dr. Kaye had tremendous admiration and respect for Mrs. Laurette McMeehan who was literally Frank McMeehan's right hand.

Dr. Brown and Dr. Kaye were joined in these pioneering efforts by our much loved Dr. Harry Daly - his wife's executive abilities were recognized by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1967.

So the personalities and attitudes of these three founders of the Society ensured that women doctors were accepted into the established order.

Their continued acceptance was ensured by the high standard set by the earlier entrants to our specialty - or as one of my less reverent colleagues expresses it - "the early birds" and I can but pay humble tribute to Dr. Mary Burnell and Dr. Gretta McClelland whose foresight and endeavour, as well as their high standards of practice, ensured the progress of both Australian Society and Faculty and set the precedent for appointment of women anaesthetists to teaching hospitals.

Dr. McClelland's department at the Royal Children's soon achieved international recognition when she became the first full time Director - though her international fame had begun with her work on the dangers of trichlorethylene in closed circuit anaesthesia.

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(old theatres)

SLIDE

(new theatres)

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SLIDE Dr. Mary Burnell developed the Department of Anaesthetics at the Adelaide Children's Hospital where she became its Senior Honorary Anaesthetist.

SLIDE In each State in Australia women anaesthetists have played a major role in the development of paediatric anaesthesia.

SLIDE In New South Wales Dr. Verlie Lines, staff anaesthetist

SLIDE at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children has given superb clinical care and served the Faculty as an Examiner.

In Western Australia Dr. Nerida Dilworth is Director at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children in Perth - all the Registrars in the Western Australian training scheme spend some time in Dr. Dilworth's department. It is typical of her natural reticence that she had no photograph available.

SLIDE In my own State, Queensland, Dr. Ray Robinson was the first paediatric anaesthetist and I can well remember her careful attention to detail and superb clinical judgement in the management of babies with tracheo-oesophageal fistulae in 1953.

Executive participation by Dr. Burnell and Dr. McClelland is known to all Australians and New Zealanders. Both were Presidents of the Australian Society of Anaesthetists, both have been elected to life membership, both were examiners to the Final Fellowship of the Faculty.

In 1963 Dr. McClelland delivered the Embury Lecture. In 1969 she was awarded the Orton Medal for distinguished service to anaesthesia.

In 1966 Dr. Burnell became the first woman Dean of a Faculty of Anaesthetists in the world - and it was my privilege as a newly elected member of the Board to see her conduct a meeting and to benefit from her tolerance and wise counsel.

Dr. Burnell was honoured by our sister Faculty in 1968 by her election to Fellowship of the Faculty of Anaesthetists, Royal College of Surgeons. Her citation for this honour included her work in suggesting and promoting the plan of an overseas visitor to Australia - which led directly to acceptance of Australian anaesthetists for training posts in other countries.

At the Faculty's 21st anniversary celebrations in June, 1973 Dr. Burnell received our highest honour - admission to Honorary Fellowship of the Faculty of Anaesthetists, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

In New Zealand Dr. Marion Whyte was one of four original movers to form the New Zealand Society with Dr. Dora Young a Foundation Member. Dr. Whyte graduated in 1918, obtained the D.A. in 1939 and was elected F.F.A.R.A.C.S. in 1954 - and to

quote the New Zealand Faculty Historian "She was the mainstay at Dunedin Hospital, appointed to teach anaesthesia to medical students in 1928 and was Senior Anaesthetist from 1939 till her retirement from the public hospital in 1947".

Dr. Alexandra Warnock is the Auckland equivalent of Dr. Marion Whyte and the only woman to be made a Life Member of the New Zealand Society. She was assistant director of anaesthesia in Auckland for many years and played her part in the development of cardiothoracic anaesthesia before Dr. Eve Seelye and Dr. Marie Simpson, whose superb standards have been of such importance in developing world famous Sir Bryan Barrett Boye's Cardio Thoracic Unit at Green Lane Hospital.

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In Christchurch, Dr. Margaret Smith has been Chairman of the local branch of the New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists and has always attended scientific meetings and presented papers. She was one of the six Foundation Fellows of the Faculty in New Zealand and it was a great pleasure to see her at Faculty Anniversary Celebrations in Christchurch. For 26 years she has been on the staff of the Christchurch Hospital and as well as conducting a busy private practice she has found time to be President of the National Council of Women, President of the Canterbury Branch of the Medical Women's Society.

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Margaret Smith's hospitality and charm as a hostess have given many Australians a very warm welcome to Christchurch where she lives with her husband Carl and their three sons.

SLIDE No account of women in anaesthesia in New Zealand would be complete without reference to Gwenda Lewis - a woman of charm, courage and ability. After anaesthetic training in Britain 1945-46 she went to the Christian Medical College at Vellore where she provided clinical anaesthetic service as well as training for medical students and house men. In 1954 she was stricken with poliomyelitis but after five months in hospital she undertook rehabilitation in Perth - including giving anaesthetics at Royal Perth Hospital. I quote Dr. Lewis herself - "I shall always be grateful to the theatre sisters, surgeons and anaesthetists, especially the late Gilbert Troup and Kay Blott" (now in Bristol, U.K.) After further rehabilitation in England from 1958 to 1965 she was in full time practice in anaesthetics at Vellore and from 1965 has been a specialist anaesthetist in Christchurch working and living happily. As well as coping with her responsibilities from a wheelchair she has been secretary of the Christchurch Branch of the New Zealand Society.

SLIDE Dr. Judy Nicholas was the Secretary General for III A.A.C.A. in Canberra in 1970 and her hours of work in meticulous planning and efficient organisation were recognized when she was awarded the Gilbert Brown Medal.

It was with interest that we noted that there were no women anaesthetists on the organising committee for the World Congress in London in 1968.

In Great Britain Dr. Aileen Adams was the first and only woman to hold office in A.A.G.B.I. first as assistant Honorary Secretary and later as Honorary Secretary and Dr. Eileen Beard has been Secretary of the Junior Anaesthetists' Association.

And what of the role of women in the Faculty?

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<u>FACULTY</u>			
<u>EXAMINERS</u>	FINAL F.F.A.	9	1 from N.Z.
<u>BOARD</u>	ELECTED	2	
	OBSERVERS	2	
<u>OFFICIAL HISTORIAN</u>		1	
<u>HONORARY FELLOWSHIP</u>	AUST. & N.Z.	1	3 Awards
<u>ORTON MEDAL</u>		1	6 Awards

There have been women examiners from all the Australian States and from New Zealand in contrast to the U.K. where one woman physician examines for Part II in Medicine but there have been no women examiners for D.A. or F.F.A.

Two women have been elected to the Board of Faculty and two women have been appointed as observers from States without elected representation - Dr. Jean Oakes from Tasmania and Dr. Nerida Dilworth from Western Australia.

In Britain Dr. Catherine Lloyd Williams was a Foundation Member of the Board of Faculty but Dr. Aileen Adams was the first woman elected to the Board of Faculty and there has been no woman candidate since.

Dr. Gwenifer Wilson fills the role of Faculty Historian and her success in this field has achieved for her international recognition in the field of medical history.

Women have achieved election to all the Regional Committees in Australia and to office of Secretary or Chairman in most.

SLIDE The four women who have won Prizes in examinations for the Australasian Faculty could equally well have been Miss (or Mrs.) Australia).

FACULTY PRIZES

RENTON	3
GRAY	1
GILBERT BROWN	1
NUFFIELD	2

Dr. Vera Gallagher won the first Renton Prize, a distinction subsequently won by Barbara Burrows and Isabel Perry Keane.

Ruth Hipsley (now McGuinness) won the Gray Prize.

Two of six Australians to win the Nuffield Prize in the English Primary were women.

In my own State, Queensland, during the years 1939 to 1947, anaesthetic services were provided successively by Dr. Vera Watson, Dr. Agnes Coates Earl and Dr. Ray Robinson. They had a position of registrar status at Brisbane Hospital and were responsible for all the anaesthetics in the main Hospital, The Children's, The Women's, the E.N.T. and Eye Departments. They ran the Blood Bank in Brisbane as the Red Cross Blood Bank at that time functioned only for the services.

In 1947 the second registrar was appointed - Dr. Joan Dunn - and in 1949 a third - Dr. Ruth Molphy. Ray obtained the Sydney D.A. and Joan and Ruth the 2-part D.A. in England and thus were the first three anaesthetists to obtain post-graduate qualifications by examination.

SLIDE Dr. Joan Dunn was Supervisor of the Department in 1951-53 and was succeeded by Dr. Ruth Molphy, who was to become first Director at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. She is now Director at the Cardio-Thoracic Unit at Chermside Hospital.

As the story unfolds of what women have achieved in anaesthesia in Australia it is very apparent that this would never have been possible without the support and encouragement of our male colleagues, both surgeons and anaesthetists.

There has been no discrimination in registrar appointments, so the women have been given the same training opportunities as men.

SLIDE That they have completed their training and succeeded in their examinations is apparent from staff appointments in teaching hospitals.

TRAINING POSTS

	<u>% Women</u>
Australia	13%
New Zealand	14%

I gladly acknowledge the assistance I have received in the preparation of this paper from the Faculty's official historian, Dr. Gwenifer Wilson, and from the New Zealand historian, Dr. Basil Hutcheson. Dr. Aileen Adams provided the information regarding women anaesthetists in Association and Faculty in Britain and to all of these I am most grateful. My colleagues Dr. Kester Brown and Dr. Ian Stevens provided the slides of Dr. McClelland and Dr. Burnell and of the Royal Children's Melbourne and of Adelaide Children's Hospital Dr. Verlie Lines and Dr. Nerida Dilworth. Dr. Gwenda Lewis and Dr. Margaret Smith also gave invaluable assistance.