

History of the Frank Forster Library

The original Library was established in 1954 with a donation of 20 rare antiquarian books from the RCOG in London. This generous donation was made to the Australian Regional Council of the RCOG on the occasion of the Opening of College House at 8 Latrobe Street, Melbourne.

In 1987 Dr Frank Forster offered his extensive medical history collection of books, journals, pamphlets and prints to the RACOG.- The College graciously accepted Dr Forster's proposal and an additional wing was built in 1988 to accommodate the collection at the new College House in Albert Street, East Melbourne. After Dr Forster passed away in March 1995, the library was officially named the Frank Forster Library in his memory.

Forster's collection focuses mainly on the history of medicine, obstetrics and gynaecology and the social and cultural changes relating to women's health as well as related clinical topics. Subjects of interest include sexology, marriage, eugenics, maternal and infant care, 7 infertility, ovariectomy, and the history of obstetric forceps.

An interesting feature is the valuable collection of Australian and New Zealand pamphlets from pharmaceutical companies and other associations relevant to obstetrics and gynaecology. Many of these are unique.

The current collection development aim is to expand, maintain and conserve this valuable collection. Contemporary histories of obstetrics and gynaecology

are acquired and relevant histories of institutions as well as works by Fellows of the College. Rare items are purchased from antiquarian book dealers around the world. In addition the Frank Forster Library is fortunate to receive donations from Fellows, Members and Friends, some of which are rare and unique items.

From the initial impetus of 20 books, there are now 5,248 books in the general collection of the Frank Forster Library, with an additional 1,226 rare books. The pamphlet collection numbers approximately 100 items. The journal collection of 129 titles also contains historic titles on obstetrics and gynaecology. Many of the older journals are not held elsewhere. The Frank Forster Library is ranked as one of the finest obstetrical and gynaecological collections in the world. The collection provides a major resource for research.

Access

Visiting the Library

The Frank Forster Library is open to Fellows, Members, Friends of the College Collection and Researchers. Members of the public are welcome to visit by appointment. The Library is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday. The Librarian is part-time. Rare Books are not available for loan

The holdings of the Frank Forster Library can be searched on the National Library of Australia's TROVE catalogue. www.trove.nla.gov.au

Frank Forster Library

History and New Acquisitions

Highlights of the Collection



Earliest work in the Collection

One of the initial works donated by the RCOG in 1954 is the earliest publication held in the Frank Forster Library. It is: **La dissection des parties du corps, humain diuisee en trois liures faitz by Charles Estienne, published in 1546.** 'This book is the most fully illustrated of the pre-Vesalian anatomies and is a landmark publication as one of the finest anatomical works of the 16th century. The illustrations depict diseased and normal anatomy. The book is bound in fine leather, with hand tooled bindings and tapes to secure the covers' [Reference: ANZJOG 2004; 44: 378-379]

Flap books

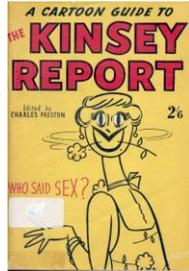
The flap books or 'pop-up books' as they are often referred to are some of the most popular items of interest for visitors.- One of the most fascinating is by George Spratt, titled:—*Obstetric tables : comprising graphic illustrations, with descriptions and practical remarks, exhibiting on dissected plates many important subjects in midwifery* published in London by John Churchill, in -1837. This early obstetric atlas is remarkable in that some of the illustrations incorporate



lift up sections or flaps. Many of the illustrations have been found in earlier obstetric texts, and Spratt used these illustrations with layers of paper to create the 'flap' effect. The Frank Forster Library holds the 2nd edition (1837) and 3rd edition (1841), in two volumes.

Pamphlet Collection

The pamphlets (known as ephemera) collection provides a historic insight into the information supplied by drug companies, and likely prescribing patterns of the time. This type of ephemera is unique and rare, as the circulation life of these pamphlets was short, due to prescribing information being updated regularly. This collection also holds a unique subject area of sex instruction pamphlets of which many were collected by Frank Forster.



Acquisition List – July 2010 to June 2011

Evans, Susan. *Endometriosis and pelvic pain*. 2nd ed. Adelaide : Susan Evans, 2009

(Fellow of the College)

Kitzinger, Sheila. *The Politics of birth*. Edinburgh : Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann, 2005

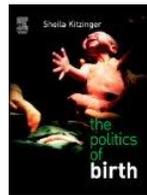
Musacchio, Jacquelin Marie. *The art and ritual of childbirth in Renaissance Italy*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 1999

Nicolson, Benedict. *The Treasures of the Foundling Hospital*. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1972

Ojo, OA and Briggs, Enang Bassey. *A textbook for midwives in the tropics*. London; Arnold, 1982

Peachey, George C. A memoir of William & John Hunter. Plymouth : William Brendon and Son Ltd. 1924

Poynter, F.N.L. (Frederick Noël Lawrence), 1908-1979 (ed) *The Evolution of hospitals in Britain*. London: Pitman Medical Publishing Co. Ltd., 1964



Reiger, Kerreen M. *Our bodies, our babies : the forgotten women's movement*. Melbourne : MUP, 2001

Rousett, Francois. *Caesarean birth: the work of Francois Rousett in Renaissance France : new treatise on hysterotomotokie or caesarien childbirth* / translated by Ronald M Cyr and Thomas F Baskett. London : RCOG, 2010

Thom, Herbert. *Our obstetric heritage: the story of safe childbirth*. Hamden, Connecticut : The Shoestring Press Ltd, 1960

Trolle, Dyre The History of caesarean section. Copenhagen : C.A. Reitzel, 1982

Special Purchases



Books of special interest purchased during the year were:

Buchan, William. *Advice to mothers, on the subject of their own health: and on the means of promoting the health, strength, and beauty, of their offspring*. London, T Cadell and W. Davies, 1803

Marcy, Henry O (Henry Orlando), 1837-1924. *The Perineum : it's anatomy, physiology and methods of restoration after injury*. Philadelphia : WM J Dornan Printer, 1889.

Gifts/Donations

Douche, Jenny. *Baby gone: true New Zealand stories of infertility, miscarriage, stillbirth and infant loss*. New Zealand : Hugs Press Limited, 2011 (Donated by Author)

Oxford, Arnold Whitaker. *The History of the Samaritan Free Hospital*. Cambridge : W. Heffer & Sons Ltd, 1931 (Donated by Dr Peter Crowe)

Classics in Obstetrics and Gynaecology (Complete Set) (Donated by Prof Anne Jequier and Joondalup Health Campus Library)