



Malmsbury Historical Society Inc.

We Serve to Preserve

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Fiona Lang

Governance Officer

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

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Dear Fiona,

Thank you for MRSC's consideration of our proposal of "McCreery Street" as an appropriate name for the unnamed extension of Wills Street, Malmsbury.

As shown in the recent exhibition in the Kyneton Museum, the McCreery woman played a significant part in the healthcare of the Malmsbury Community for three generations. This includes:

Nurse Bessie McCreery (1887-1977) daughter of local quarryman David McCreery and his wife Johanna (nee Rose). Bessie trained as a nurse at the Kyneton Hospital ca 1908 and after enlisting in World War One commence service in the Hislop Hospital in Secunderbad, India where she nursed British troops evacuated from Mesopotamia. She married while in India and returned to Malmsbury in 1919 to work with her mother as Mrs Bessie Coleman, before moving to Ballarat.

Mrs Johanna McCreery (nee Rose) (1866-1955), eldest daughter of William and Betsy Rose. Born in Malmsbury, Johanna Rose married Scottish-born Malmsbury quarryman David McCreery in 1884. In addition to being the mother of nine children, Johanna is recorded as being a nurse in 1917 when she was registered as a midwife in Victoria. Her husband David died shortly afterwards in 1919.

Between 1918 and 1933, Johanna's professional address is given as Ross Street (North), where her home was. Between 1927 and 1933 Johanna was operating a private hospital in "Melrose", the bluestone house on the south-west corner of Clowes and Barker Street in Malmsbury. This house was leased by Johanna, and for a while her married daughter Bessie was living with her. Several births at McCreery's hospital at Melrose were recorded in the Melbourne newspapers between 1926 and 1931. In 1933 Johanna moved from "Melrose" into "Hillside" the former bluestone residence and dispensary of Dr Edward Davy in Mollison Street East, Malmsbury. This property was also leased by Johanna and between 1933 and 1938 at least six births which took place at Hillside, were announced in the Melbourne newspapers. Both these historic bluestone buildings survive and are prominent features of Malmsbury's heritage landscape.

Nurse Johanna McCreery died in 1955 in Malmsbury, aged 88, having survived her husband by 36 years. They are both buried at Malmsbury cemetery.

Mrs Betsy Rose (nee Marshall) (ca 1841-1923), wife of, William Rose. William and Betsy arrived in Victoria from Scotland in 1864 with their eldest daughter. There is a family tradition of medical care, with Betsy's brother, Dr William Marshall, being appointed household physician to Queen Victoria for seven years (at Braemar and Crathie, Scotland) and physician to the court, including being personal attendant to the Queen's haemophilic son, Prince Leopold.

By 1866 the Rose family were living in Malmsbury. William and Betsy had nine children between 1866 and 1882, the family home being in Ross Street North and William working in one of the town's bluestone quarries. As far as is currently known, as a midwife Betsy Rose was the witness to local births between 1887 and 1907. Tragically, William Rose was killed in a quarrying accident in 1890 aged 51, leaving Betsy with several children, the youngest being only seven when his father died. Following William's death Betsy supposedly "worked hard to obtain an honest living" as a skilled nurse, her skills were already in good use prior to her becoming a widow.

The electoral rolls for Malmsbury from 1908 record that Betsy was a nurse (as opposed to the typical "home duties" recorded for most women of the era). She would have been aged 66 when she attended the birth of her grandson, William Henry McCreery in Ross Street in 1907. The electoral roll entries recording Betsy as a nurse continue until her death in Malmsbury in 1923 aged 82. Betsy had fallen and broken her hip in late 1922, and never recovered from the injury, despite the care and attention of her daughter Johanna McCreery.

The McCreery family played multiple roles in supporting and developing the Malmsbury community. In addition to the women acting as vital caregivers, David McCreery, his brother Thomas, and his father-in-law William Rose, worked in the Malmsbury bluestone quarries. With this stone now recognised as Australia's only successfully designated Global Heritage Stone Resource through UNESCO's Heritage Stone Subcommission, there is plenty of justification to acknowledge their contribution via a local street name.

Kind regards,



Dr. Susan Walter
President – Malmsbury Historical Society.