

## Glimpses of Collingwood during the Pandemic of 1919 The 'Spanish' Flu

Exploring Trove in May 2020

The first cases – are they serious? Too early to say

Saturday 25 January 1919 *the Weekly Times*

not known.

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### ILLNESS INVESTIGATED

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#### PATIENTS IN HOSPITALS

An outbreak of **influenza** in Melbourne is engaging the attention of the medical authorities. Several patients have been admitted to the Melbourne Hospital, and three have died. Consequently, precautions have been taken by inoculating the staff at the hospital. Whether these illnesses are likely to prove serious is now the subject of investigation by doctors, and until this point is settled there appears to be no ground for grave fears. Dr. R. P. M'Meekin, superintendent of the Melbourne Hospital, states:—

At present in hospital we have four patients belonging to one family in North Melbourne, two belonging to a family resident in Carlton, two belonging to a family resident in **Collingwood**. In addition, there is a family in Brunswick, seven of which are at present ill with symptoms identical with those presented by our cases. A good many cases of similar character have during the past few days been admitted to the Alfred Hospital. The usual history has been one of ordinary cold with cough associated with severe headache, backache, and pains in the limbs, culminating in the collapse of the patient between four and ten days after the onset. It is too early to say that there will be a widespread epidemic or that the cases are identical with those occurring in New Zealand and at the quarantine station in Sydney.

#### THREAT FROM SYDNEY

It is stated in Sydney that if the Commonwealth does not act promptly in quarantining Victoria, New South Wales will take further steps to effect its purpose.

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Monday 27 January 1919 *The Herald*

the illustration.

**27 APPLICATIONS FOR BEDS**

Twenty-seven applications for beds for persons regarded as having influenza seriously enough to warrant their being sent to hospitals were received by the Health Department up to 1 p.m. today. Included among them were 10 from the Melbourne Hospital, three from North Fitzroy, two each from Richmond, City, and St. Kilda, and one each from Brunswick, **Collingwood**, Fitzroy, Burnley, Carlton, North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Essendon. On account of the holiday today, the Health Department had received no notifications from the councils of the various suburbs regarding mild cases.

Already the need for extra beds – what about a school?

Friday 31 January 1919 *The Age*

similar character in all affected ports.

**IN THE SUBURBS.**

Collingwood.—It was reported to Collingwood town hall authorities yesterday that 21 fresh cases of **influenza** had developed, the majority being of a mild type. The Military department has consented to the drill hall in Marine-parade, Abbotsford, being made use of for the accommodation of patients whenever necessary, and permission of the Education department has been granted for Victoria Park State school to be used for a similar purpose.

Saturday 1 February *The Herald*

**COLLINGWOOD OPTIMISTIC**

Owing to the more favorable outlook regarding **influenza** in **Collingwood**, the municipal authorities have informed the Education Department that the use of the Victoria Park State school will probably not be required. The school was applied for as a precautionary measure earlier this week.

Saturday 1 February *The Herald*

have been inoculated.

**POSITION IN COLLINGWOOD**

Mr W. J. S. Graham, Collingwood sanitary inspector, stated today that very few cases had been reported overnight, and in each instance the doctors were not definite as to the exact nature of the illness.

Inspector Graham pointed out that he was informed by a doctor that there were seven cases of **influenza** in one house, and was advised to have all those patients removed for treatment to a hospital. After having been attended to at the hospital all but one patient were allowed to return home.

"I think," said Inspector Graham, "it is most alarming and unfair to report all cases of cold in the head as the epidemic."

In the past few days Dr. A. H. Maxwell, health officer, assisted by many fifth year medical students and professional nurses, has been inoculating, on an average, 200 daily, 1400 of this number being the employees of Messrs Foy and Gibson Pty. Ltd.

**HOSPITAL FOR MILD CASES**

Numbers increasing rapidly - 270 fresh cases in 16 days

Tuesday 11 February *The Age*

**IN THE SUBURBS.**

Collingwood.—Fresh cases to the number of 30 were reported yesterday, making a total of 270 within sixteen days.

Focus on restrictions and statistics. What about masks?

Wednesday 5 February *The Age*

**INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.**

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**NO MATERIAL CHANGE.**

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**Race Meetings Stopped.**

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**Restrictions on Railway Travelling.**

The position with regard to the influenza epidemic was summed up last night by Dr. Robertson, chairman of the Board of Health, in the words, "No material change."

Yesterday 211 fresh cases were notified to the Board of Health, including 155 from the cities, 17 from the towns, 7 from the boroughs and 32 from the various shires. To date, 1452 cases, all kinds, from ordinary influenza to pneumonic, have been notified to the board. Of these, cities have sent 1160 cases, towns 85, boroughs 32, shires 175.

To date Melbourne city has contributed 204 cases; Prahran, 160; Richmond, 115; St. Kilda, 79; South Melbourne, 70; Northcote, 58; Brunswick, 85; Collingwood, 71; Fitzroy, 60; Footscray, 60; Hawthorn, 44; Essendon, 31; Bendigo, 24; Caulfield, 34; Port Melbourne, 18; Ballarat East, 14; Kyneton, 13; Lillydale, 13; Heidelberg, 19; Dandenong, 10; Sandringham, 10.

Thursday 13 February *The Yackandandah Times* (!)

Dr Maxwell, Collingwood health officer, stated at the meeting of the Collingwood council that in his opinion all the evidence available went to show that 'influenza masks' were absolutely useless, except when worn by nurses in sick rooms. The value of inoculation, on the other hand, has been proved, and in his opinion it was undoubtedly beneficial. Dr Maxwell added that he believed that Collingwood was the only suburban centre in which an inoculation depot was kept open all day long. The crowding which occurred at other depots was thus avoided at Collingwood.

## Closing the technical school

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 1919 *The Herald*

ne to the country will be facilitated.

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**TRAINING OF RETURNED MEN STOPPED AT COLLINGWOOD**

At a meeting of the Council of the Collingwood Technical Schools last evening, complaints were made that many returned soldiers were prevented from continuing their vocational training owing to the buildings having been closed through the influenza epidemic.

These returned soldiers, who are being trained in carpentry, joinery, and other branches of wood work, use a large and well ventilated factory where the conditions are all that they desire. They have complained to the Council of the Technical School that the factory should not be closed when so many other places in the district, crowded with workmen are allowed to remain open. Even though these returned soldiers are in receipt of sustenance from the Government they desire to continue their vocational training instead of remaining idle.

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Friday 7 March 1919 *The Herald*

r- ready for taking up their work again.

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**CASES IN COLLINGWOOD**

Mr W. J. S. Graham, health inspector, has reported to the Collingwood Council that in the past fortnight 163 cases of influenza have been reported in the district.

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## INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

### THE RECRUDESCENCE.

Yesterday 237 cases of influenza were notified in Victoria, all but eight being in the metropolitan area. Melbourne (47), South Melbourne (37), Footscray (20), Northcote (15), Richmond (26), St. Kilda (21) and Collingwood (10) contributed the majority of the cases. There were 15 deaths, 8 at the Exhibition Building hospital, 2 at Fairfield, and 1 each at Essendon, Kyneton, Brunswick and Research (near Eltham). There were 102 admissions to and 56 discharges from the hospitals, leaving 906 patients in hospital last evening, 566 of whom were accommodated in the Exhibition Building.

All the available hospital beds in Melbourne are now in use. The Melbourne Hospital authorities will not take in any more cases until the committee has been consulted. Alfred Hospital will provide 50 more beds when the necessary staff arrangements are complete. Provision for 300 more beds can be made at "the great barn," but this is dependent upon additional provision being made for nurses' accommodation. The Defence department, with the slow-thinking action of the military mind, is still thinking over the Base Hospital proposition. It will be necessary in a day or two for the municipalities to reopen their hospitals, and to this end the local authorities are requested to take action at once. The health authorities anticipate a recrudescence during the coming few weeks.

School could re-open – for patients

Tuesday 8 April *The Herald*

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THE PLAN WAS ABANDONED.

### COLLINGWOOD ACTS

Arrangements have been made by the Collingwood Council to re-open the School of Domestic Arts, Vere street, for the reception of influenza patients, should the necessity arise. Inoculation of residents will be resumed at the Town Hall tomorrow, the hours being from 10 a.m. to 12 a.m., 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., and 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

NO PATIENTS RECEIVED

Daily numbers greater than in February

Monday 14 April the Age

## INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

COMPARATIVELY LOW DEATH RATE.

Although the daily average of notifications of persons having contracted influenza during last week has nearly doubled that of the worst period in February, the daily average death rate from influenza is less than was the case then. There were 356 new sufferers notified throughout the State on Saturday, of whom 327 were in the metropolis and 29 in the country, the cases being distributed as follows:—Camberwell, 12; Caulfield, 14; Collingwood, 22; Essendon, 17; Fitzroy, 50; Malvern, 13; Melbourne, 100; Northcote, 6; Prahran, 35; Brighton, 15; Coburg, 9; Port Melbourne, 24; Oakleigh, 5; Sandringham, 4; East Burwood, 1; Landsborough, 1; Ballarat East, 1; Bendigo, 16; Oakleigh, 2; Barongarook, 1; Geelong, 2; Mordialloc, 3; Numurkah, 2; and Box Hill, 1. There were 2 deaths in the country on Saturday, namely, one at Seymour and one at Wycheproof, also 6 deaths in the metropolitan hospitals and one at Collingwood. Thus Saturday's total deaths from influenza in Victoria were 9.

Friday 25 April *The Herald*

traffic.

**POLICEMEN AFFECTED**

Constable Antonio Cusini, of Collingwood, died from **influenza** today in the Police Hospital. He was 27 years of age, and had been at Collingwood for six years. Eighteen members of the police force are in the hospital, where the accommodation is so heavily taxed that additional patients cannot be admitted.

[Maybe the sick should stay home](#)

Wednesday 30 April *The Herald*

**LECTURE FOR MOTHERS**

For the purpose of advising mothers in the treatment of influenza cases in their own homes, Cr. J. R. Reid, Mayor of **Collingwood**, has arranged for a lecture to be given by Dr. H. M. Maxwell, in the lecture hall of the **Collingwood** Town Hall, at 8 o'clock this evening.

Thursday 1 May 1919 *The Age*



## HOME TREATMENT OF PATIENTS.

### **Collingwood** Doctor's Advice.

Hospital and nursing accommodation could, it is stated, be more easily obtained if patients, where convenient, remained in their own homes. Suggestions for the home treatment of **influenza** patients were offered to **Collingwood** residents in the local town hall last night by Dr. H. Maxwell, at the invitation of the mayor of **Collingwood** (Cr. J. H. Reid). Dr. Maxwell first emphasised the necessity for common sense in dealing with **influenza**. People should, he said, get rid of all dread of the disease; he had often found a man alone in a house with **influenza**, and the neighbors all too frightened to come near him. If carefully nursed at home patients would, he was sure, seldom develop pneumonic symptoms. On the slightest symptom of **influenza** the patient should be sent to bed. He should be given a light diet, with no red meats, plenty of soda water and similar liquids. Proper attention was a third essential. Mustard poultices could be applied with effect. Stimulants should not be given, as they lowered the vitality. The patient should be put in a plain, bright room, with only essential articles of furniture, as furniture harbored dust. Complications which ensued in **influenza** cases were incessant vomiting and bleeding from the nose. Soda water should be given to stop the vomiting; ice applied to the back of the neck would arrest the bleeding. Above all, the nurse should go absolutely without fear in attending patients.

In answer to a question, Dr. Maxwell expressed the opinion that masks were a matter for choice.

An Interjector: They're rotten.

Dr. Maxwell: That depends who wears them. (Laughter.) They should, however, be changed frequently.

## What is charity?

Tuesday 20 May *The Argus*

... further deaths occurred to-day.

**POOR OF COLLINGWOOD.**

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir,—The influenza epidemic, coupled with the present high cost of living, has left very many of our poor people in sore straits, and on their behalf I desire to make an appeal, through you, to those who may be generously disposed, for either cash or gifts of discarded clothing, which, if sent to the town hall, **Collingwood**, will be thankfully received and faithfully applied.

—Yours, &c., M. REID, Mayoress.  
**Collingwood**, May 17.

Tuesday 27 May 1919 *The Argus*

**COLLINGWOOD DISTRESS.**

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir,—In cases of influenza the blankets are taken to the hospital with the patients, and in many cases we have visited the remaining members of the family are without blankets or any warm covering. We find it very hard to supply them to all who so badly need them. Also clothing and wood are wanted, and we would be very glad to receive donations of these necessities. Anything sent to **Collingwood** Town Hall or my private address will be gratefully acknowledged.—Yours, &c.,

M. REID, Mayoress.  
**Collingwood**, May 26.

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May 1919 *The Socialist*

**OLD CLOTHES FOR WAGE SLAVES.**

**I**N the "Argus" of the 20th inst., Mrs. M. Reid, Mayoress of **Collingwood**, makes an appeal to the "generously disposed" for their discarded clothing on behalf of "our poor people" who are in sore straits owing to the **influenza** epidemic, coupled with the present high cost of living. A few weeks ago the Town Clerk of Port Melbourne made a similar appeal on behalf of "our poor people" at Port Melbourne.

How thoroughly and completely are the workers of Melbourne stripped of their wealth and health by capitalists and capitalism!

The wage slaves, described by Mrs. Reid as "our poor people," have been bled white financially, and left naked by high prices and disease.

Epidemic improving – still 760 in hospital

Wednesday 18 June 1919 *The Age*

... were reported, but there were many "hair-breadth" escapes.

**Influenza Epidemic.**

There was a continued improvement in the influenza epidemic yesterday. Only two deaths occurred, as against six on Monday. The admissions numbered 53, and the discharges were 72. There are still 760 patients in hospital. Owing to the decrease in the number of patients two temporary hospitals, those at Footscray and Flemington, are about to be closed.

Saddlers Bay

Beware the next wave

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> August *The Herald*

**CONVENT ATTACKED**

Mr W. J. S. Graham, sanitary inspector, has reported to the Collingwood Council that influenza has broken out at the Convent, Clark street, Abbotsford. The doctor in attendance at the convent reported that the outbreak was not of a severe form.

During the past fortnight there have been 226 cases reported in the district, or 22 more than in the previous two weeks.

Friday 22 August 1919 *The Herald*

**272 CASES IN CONVENT**

Mr W. J. S. Graham, municipal sanitary inspector, has reported to the Collingwood Council that during the past two weeks 272 cases of influenza were notified in the district, or 126 more than in the previous fortnight. Out of the total number 272 cases came from the Convent, Clarke street, Abbotsford.