

Chris Stephens, *Bristol's Australian Pioneer: the story of Robert Bush and his Bishop's Knoll WWI Hospital* (Long Ashton, Bristol Books 2017). 319pp., many b/w illustrations. Cardcovers, £12.00 [ISBN: 9781909446069]. **Reviewed 12.2017**

This is a delightful and fascinating book put together from a variety of primary sources by Professor Chris Stephens. It has a short history of Robert Bush and his life in Australia; but mainly concerns Bishops Knoll and its life as a war hospital for Australian soldiers. Drawing from family records and recollections, the war time magazine *Coo-ee* and other records, Professor Stephens has assembled a wide range of material to illustrate this theme: Bush's expedition in Australia before he settled on running a ranch; details of all the staff known to have worked at Bishops Knoll and all the soldiers who passed through; stories from the Magazine including activities, what happened to soldiers after leaving, and what the staff were like. In addition he has added some news of the life of Bishops Knoll before and after the war.

Reading this was entertaining. As a person interested in Bristol at the time of the war I enjoyed the chapter on medical services of the time linking Bishops Knoll into the other war hospitals and notable people of the area.

This book depends on the Bishop's Knoll magazine publication 'Coo-ee' to help bring the place to life, with stories of the patients, and their quirks and skills in such activities as the entertainments, as well as the 'news of former patients'.

This book shines a light on the life of a WWI hospital. The details are relatively unique as the records of almost all WWI hospitals and their patients have been lost. Certainly looking at the records of the Beaufort Hospital that was Glenside hospital, the only records that exist are those of a local newspaper's weekly article; some postcards and some patients' photographs and recollections. What has been assembled on Bishop's Knoll is a treasure house in comparison.

I wish the author had been able to give more on Robert's life in Australia and his links there as well as his links in Bristol, but this is minor compared to the wealth that is here. It is also short on the later story of the house. It also suffers from a lack of a name index.

I would recommend this to anyone interested in any First World War hospital. I would also recommend it to anyone interested in this part of Sneyd Park and in the links between Bristol and Western Australia.

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