

## DR WILLIAM CLEAVER WOODS

Dr William Cleaver Woods was a medical practitioner in Albury for many years in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In January 1889, he married Margaret Grieve – the *Australian Town and Country Journal* reported

On January 16 the marriage of Miss Grieve (third daughter of Mr. John Grieve, of Bungowannah Park) and Dr. Woods, of Albury, was celebrated in the residence of the bride's parents. A trip to Europe in the R.M.S. Oceana is the programme for the honeymoon.

Also prominent in local affairs, he was an alderman from 1891 to 1897, and again from 1908 to 1925 – he was Mayor in 1895 and again in 1917-18. Dr Woods was a pioneer in the use of X-rays (also known as Roentgen rays). It was reported in the *Albury Banner* of September 4, 1896, that at the Albury Industrial Exhibition:

A considerable number of gentlemen assembled by invitation on Tuesday afternoon to witness a practical demonstration of the new Roentgen photography by Dr. W. C. Woods. Dr. Woods commenced by describing in simple terms the elements necessary to produce the phenomena, and the various improvements that have been introduced since first discovery of the principle. He then proceeded to show the working of the new photography. Coins were enclosed in thick volumes, and the opaque form was easily recognisable projected on the disc of the fluorescent screen. Keys, scissors, and other metallic substances covered in a multitude of wrappers and boxes, revealed themselves in a similar way, and in like fashion metallic devices were read through a pine board an inch thick.

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Dr Woods opened the first *Burnley Private Hospital* in about 1888 and a new building in Swift Street in 1903. The new hospital was described in the *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* of Friday May 29, 1903:

The new private hospital — “Burnley” — just erected for Dr. W. C. Woods near to the site of the old building which has done duty so long, is a very handsome and commodious structure, all details being considered with a view to secure the greatest convenience and comfort to the patients .... The furnishings include an automatic operating table, a complete set of the latest instruments in handsome glass case made to order by Arnold, of London, and the latest patent hot air apparatus with thermometer attached, for treating joint affections. There is also an X-Ray apparatus complete, and a special appliance for sterilising instruments ....

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The hospital opened with a matron (Miss Mathers) and three nurses and was immediately adjacent to Dr Woods home, *Valetta*, in Swift Street. This grand family home (Dr Woods and his wife had eleven children) was built in 1898 and mentioned in the A&DHS Bulletin of May, 1973 (Bulletin 124):

“*Valetta*” — This old house was demolished when the full scheme for Albury's Civic Centre was at last completed. It had been the home of the late Dr. Woods and was built by French-born Mr. E. A. Schuller, father of Albury Technical College Principal, Mr. C.



**CLEAVER WOODS**



**Valetta, Swift St Albury**

Schuller. He was born in Lyons, France, his people later settling in Paris. He came to Albury at the turn of the century at the request of an architect, another Frenchman named Ussher, to do some work which included building *Valetta*.

Both *Burnley Private Hospital* and *Valetta* were demolished to make way for the Civic Centre.

Dr Woods was the subject of Dr Allan Hogan's address at the October 1986 meeting of the A&DHS, reported in Bulletin 244:

Dr Woods, who was born in 1852, spent his early years in Ballarat and in 1876 enrolled of Edinburgh University School of Medicine, there being no Australian School then. His medical career was outstanding and he graduated in 1882. In 1886 he obtained a doctorate for his thesis on the association between dogs, sheep and hydatids, although it was not until 1930 that the nature of the cycle became known. In 1901 he received a doctorate from the University of Melbourne for another thesis on hydatids.

In 1896 he was a pioneer of diagnostic X-rays and the first in the world to use X-ray therapy for cancer. However, the Albury Hospital board was not impressed and asked him to remove his infernal machine. The Ballarat School of Mines produced the first X-rays in Australia and possibly Cleaver Woods was aware of these.

After graduating Cleaver Woods returned to Australia practising for a time at Beechworth. He married Margaret Grieve of Bungowannah in 1889 and four of their children were to practice medicine.

He built *Valetta* in Swift Street in 1898, was twice mayor of Albury, an organist at St Matthews Church and foundation member of the Masonic Lodge, was probably responsible for the popularity of the first name Cleaver in Albury. As a doctor, grateful patients may have wished to name their sons in his honour.

Cleaver Woods died on Friday April 9, 1943 and his obituary appeared in several newspapers including the *Goulburn Evening Post* of Monday April 12, 1943:

The death occurred on Friday of Dr. William Cleaver Woods, aged 90 years of Albury, one of the best known medical men in the southern portion of the State, and father of Dr. Woods, of Goulburn. He was born in England and came to Australia with his parents when he was 10 years of age. Spending his boyhood in Melbourne, he matriculated at the Melbourne University and then went to Edinburgh University, where he obtained his degrees of M.B. and Ch.M. and later his M.D. On his return to Australia he began practice in Albury. For 50 years he was honorary medical officer to the Albury District Hospital, and was instrumental in founding the baby health centre at Albury. He was Mayor of Albury on two occasions, in 1895 and 1917. He was president of the Albury Club for 20 years, and was also keenly interested in music. For some years Dr. Woods had retired from practice. He is survived by his widow, five sons, Dr. L. S. Woods (Albury) Dr. J. G. Woods (Broken Hill), better known as the Flying Doctor, Dr. R. G. Woods (Goulburn), Messrs. G. C. Woods (Lockhart) and Norman (Sydney), and two daughters, Mesdames Rice (Melbourne), and Manning (Albury). Four sons predeceased him.

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