The Australian
Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00116

Bowen, Diamantina Roma

(1833 - 1893)

Born	18330101, Zante (Zakinthos) Greece
Died	18931117, London Middlesex England
Occupation	Charity worker, Governor's spouse, Public health advocate

Summary

Belonging to the small aristocracy of the Ionian Islands, Lady Diamantina Bowen married Sir George Fergerson Bowen on 28th April 1856, who later went on to become the first governor of Queensland, Australia in 1859. An advocate for the underprivileged, injured and infirm, Lady Bowen founded many benevolent and charitable organisations, particularly in the field of public health, and was instrumental in the development of health care services in Queensland.

Details

Career Highlights:

During her life, Lady Bowen established the following organisations:

The Lady Bowen Hospital (now the Royal Women's Hospital), established in 1863. This was one of the first hospitals to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates.
Brisbane Servants Home, also established in 1863 to train young female servants.
Diamantina Home for Incurables, focused on the care of terminal ill patients.
Princess Alexandra Hospital, beginning as the Diamantina Orphanage in 1864. This later became the Diamantina Hospital for Chronic Diseases in 1901 before finally changing names to the Princess Alexandra Hospital in 1956.

Since her death in 1893, Lady Bowen has been, and continues to be commemorated. Among the many place names commemorating her are:

the Diamantina River and shire in outback Queensland,
Roma Street in Brisbane, Queensland
the Lady Bowen Park in Brisbane, Queensland,
Diamantina Falls in Victoria,
the towns of Roma in Queensland and Western Australia,
The Greek Club of Brisbane erected a bronze statue of Lady Bowen in recognition of her work in Brisbane's Greek community.
In 2004, The Princess Alexandra Hospital opened the Diamantina Health Care Museum in her honour. The museum tracks the genesis of modern health and nursing care by conserving evidence of past hospital practices.
The Lady Bowen Trust, was established by the Queensland Government in 2006, with the aim of reducing homelessness.
The Diamantina Institute opened at the University of Queensland in 2007, focusing on research into cancer biology, immunology and metabolic medicine.

Published resources

Resource

Lady Bowen, Cazalar, L., 2006,
http://eresearch.griffith.edu.au/brisbanememories/index.php/Lady_Bowen

Bowen, Diamantina (1833 - 1893), Gilchrist, Hugh, 2006,
http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10053b.htm

Lady Bowen Trust,
http://www.ladybowentrust.org.au

History of the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harris, O.,
http://www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/history/contessa_roma.asp

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book

Diamantina, Lady Bowen: Queensland's First Lady, Prentice, U., 1984

Author Details

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