

The Font



ST VINCENT'S
HOSPITAL
MELBOURNE



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One night in
December

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Welcome the
class of 2016

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Go the extra mile at
the Scrubs Run and
Family Day



Message from the CEO

Welcome to the first edition of The Font for 2016, and my first since joining the St Vincent's community at the beginning of February.

St Vincent's Melbourne is one of the most respected health services in Victoria and Australia, with a reputation for compassion and excellence that sets it apart. Becoming part of this great institution is an honour, to be given the opportunity to lead it is a real privilege.

St Vincent's Melbourne is one of the most respected health services in Victoria and Australia, with a reputation for compassion and excellence that sets it apart.

I started my career as a nurse, and I can still vividly remember my first days on the ward, so it's a particular thrill to arrive at St Vincent's just as our new medical interns, graduate nurses, and allied health graduates start their careers with us. It's a heady time, filled with new names and faces and a seemingly endless amount of information to absorb.

It is also a tremendously exciting time, one where we get the chance to draw on the rich experience of people who have been shaping St Vincent's for decades, but we also have the opportunity to contribute our unique talents and make our own mark.

In The Font we share stories of the staff and volunteers making their mark, but we also introduce you to the patients who motivate us, and the donors who make it possible for us to do more and aim higher every day. In this issue, I hope you will be moved by the story of Cameron and Nikki and the dinner of a lifetime, inspired to follow in the footsteps of Ern Brough, comforted by the dedication of our intensive care and cardiology teams, and excited by the investment St Vincent's Health Australia is making in new ways to serve people in need.

St Vincent's has a remarkable heritage and extraordinary potential. I look forward to working hand in hand with our teams to ensure that St Vincent's future is bright, and to sharing the stories of what we achieve together in The Font.

Susan O'Neill
Chief Executive Officer
St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne

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Cover: St Vincent's welcomes its class of 2016 medical interns, including Dr Anne Stewart, pictured. Read the story on page 4.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne is proud to be part of the St Vincent's Health Australia group, which is the second largest health and aged care provider in the country. SVHA's mission is to bring God's love to those in need through the healing ministry of Jesus. We are guided by the values of compassion, justice, integrity, and excellence.

enVision2025 is the roadmap for how SVHA will deliver on its mission over the coming decade, identifying priorities for the Group and its divisions. Our ambitions and our commitment to the people we serve is embodied in enVision2025's three themes:

- Serving something greater
- Seeing something greater
- Striving for something greater

In each issue of The Font we will bring you stories of the ways St Vincent's Melbourne is serving, seeing and striving for something greater as we work towards the shared goals of enVision2025.

One night in December

One night in December, while many Melburnians were beginning their pre-Christmas festivities, a chef cooked a romantic dinner for two of antipasto, Coq au Vin and lemon meringue pie. This dinner would be one he will remember for the rest of his life – as will all of those involved.

The dinner was for a charming young couple, Cameron, 36, and his wife Nikki, who met in their first week at Melbourne University in 1999.

The romantic dinner was Cameron's idea, and it's what he asked for when two of his best mates came to visit him in hospital, wanting to know what they could do for him. 'I want to do something for Nikki,' he said.

Cameron is dying, and his first thought was to create one more happy memory for the love of his life, Nikki, who has barely left his side as his health has deteriorated. His friends swung into action – they were determined not only to do this, but to make sure it was a surprise for Nikki.

They enlisted the help of the nurses on the 6th floor, who booked the Quiet Room, arranged decorations and even asked Nikki's Mum to smuggle some dressy clothes in for her. Cam's mates brought in clothes for him.

The Chef came, set up, and began preparations, with Nikki completely oblivious until one of the nurses handed her a bag with her outfit in, and said 'Don't ask questions,' and sent her off to get dressed.

'When I came out, they took me to the room, it was beautifully decorated with tea lights! And Cam was in a shirt and tie,' Nikki smiles.

With years of study, work and travel behind them, Cam and Nikki should be anticipating a fulfilling, joyous future together. Instead Nikki is living in the hospital with Cam, doing what she can for him, as they await the inevitable.



Smart, articulate and ambitious, they were also keen to travel and to progress their careers, and spent five blissful years living, studying and travelling in the UK. 'We just loved it, didn't we Cam?' says Nikki, smiling into Cam's eyes. He smiles back. It's a private moment of shared memories and deep devotion.

But their idyllic lifestyle came to a crushing halt one night in 2014, when Cam had trouble walking, and couldn't raise one arm. Fearing he was having a stroke, they rushed to the nearest London hospital. A scan led to devastating news. Cameron had an aggressive brain tumour. Four days later he was in surgery, the surgeons said they were able to remove 90% of the tumour, then came chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

'Cam did really well,' recalled Nikki. 'He recovered, we were able to travel, he went back to the gym...' Her face clouds, as she recalls 'He did really well until July.'

Another tumour grew on the other side of his brain. More surgery, more chemo, more radiotherapy. Despite the best treatment on offer, the tumour grew back, living up to its confronting nickname. 'In England they call it 'The Terminator', says Nikki. In October, they decided to come home.

Cam's cancer is glioblastoma multiforme (GBM). 'How can it be that after 30 years, the treatment for this aggressive brain cancer hasn't changed at all? It's the biggest cancer killer of people under 40 and we need research to find better ways to deal with it. It's too late for Cam, but it could hopefully help someone else.'



Our staff go above and beyond to support the needs of our patients. Please support their work by making a donation to St Vincent's at: stvfoundation.org.au/donate or call (03) 9231 3365.



Thank you for the wonderful team on the sixth floor for making this happen, but also for taking good care of us with so much compassion.

Cam Brown

I think Robbie Harding needs a special mention here! Well done Robbie for always looking after our palliative care patients so wonderfully! It doesn't go unnoticed!

Emma Bury

I am glad that you have such beautiful staff caring for you. God bless.

Shirley McKinnon

What a beautiful story, an extremely caring staff, loving wife and family. Something she will never forget! Bless you both!

Pamela Iverach

Thank you to the staff, family and friends honouring the love of this couple.

Lesley Pearse

Welcome the class of 2016

As 2016 kicks off, so do the careers of our newest doctors. St Vincent's has just welcomed 61 fresh faced interns to its medical community.

St Vincent's is a highly desirable destination for medical students and this year is no exception, with five of the top 10 students from University of Melbourne Medical School choosing St Vincent's to begin their medical careers, including Dr Alison Boast, who was the number one student amongst 360 in the 2015 graduating class.

The gender ratio has been increasing in favour of women over the past few years, with female interns making up over two thirds of the 2016 intake. Over the coming year, each intern will complete five rotations, with one placement at a regional hospital.

Top 10 students Dr Stephanie Rowe and Dr Anne Stewart both spent the last three years as students at St Vincent's and chose it because of the passion they witnessed for the pursuit of excellent patient care.

'It's just a really supportive place, it's a nice place to come to work each day and I'm excited to get started.'

Both Dr Rowe and Dr Stewart share a family connection with St Vincent's. Dr Stewart's father trained at St Vincent's, while Dr Rowe's parents met at St Vincent's when they were both completing their medical training.

'Having been here as a student I got a good feel for what kind of place St Vincent's is and when I thought about what I wanted to get out of my internship it just ticked all the boxes,' Dr Stewart says. 'The staff is made up of people who are incredibly passionate about what they do.'

'It feels like home for me. I know it has an excellent training program in terms of where I'd like to be in the future,' Dr Rowe adds. 'Having parents that have worked here, my whole life I've heard about St Vincent's and what a great place it is to work, so I'm happy to be here myself.'

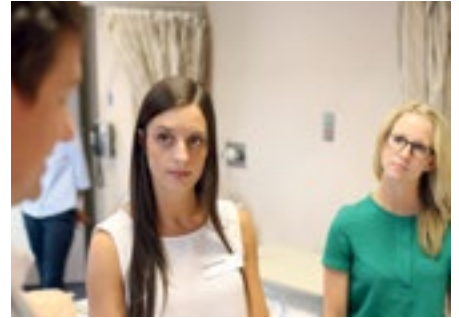


The emphasis that St Vincent's puts on supporting junior staff and in teaching the next generation of doctors also played a role in their decision, as well as its reputation for treating disadvantaged patients.

'I knew that I would get some really good teaching and that there would be people around that would foster my professional development,' Dr Stewart says.

'St Vincent's stems from the Sisters of Charity, so they treat marginalised groups of people, which is something I am specifically interested in,' Dr Rowe says.

The prospect of starting any job is daunting, but it seems both are ready for the numerous challenges that will be thrown at them as interns.



'It's just a really supportive place, it's a nice place to come to work each day and I'm excited to get started,' Dr Stewart says.

'I think the only way to learn, at this point, is to just jump in and do your best,' Dr Rowe says.

Above: St Vincent's interns Dr Stephanie Rowe and Dr Anne Stewart.

Congratulations Dr Matta

Congratulations to Psychiatry Registrar Dr Gabrielle Matta who was awarded The University of Melbourne's inaugural Bruce Singh Award for 2015 for being the highest achieving student across three years of the Master of Psychiatry.





ECMO bypasses heart stopping infection

When Brett Purcell was transferred to St Vincent's Intensive Care Unit in 2011, his body was close to total shutdown.

Returning four years later, Brett believes he is here today thanks to the heart-lung bypass machine (ECMO) that saved his life.

'I went to bed one night thinking I had a bad flu virus. I went downhill fast, and spent 12 days in a suburban hospital without a diagnosis, until a scan showed I was suffering from a massive heart infection,' Brett says.

Once at St Vincent's, Brett spent seven hours in surgery. However, further multiple complications sent his body into severe acute failure.

'The hospital called my family as they feared I only had one hour to live. The medical team decided to perform an emergency ECMO procedure. I was too ill to move to theatre so the ECMO was performed at my bedside in ICU.'

'I regained consciousness ten days after the surgery, with no memory of the events which saved my life. I think it is fair to say that I was one of the sickest people in Melbourne the night of my surgery and I count myself so incredibly lucky to be alive now.'

'Within a few months I was able to return to part-time work and five months later had made a complete recovery and was back at work full-time.'

Intensive Care Specialist Dr Barry Dixon says the team is extremely grateful to have a new ECMO machine, which has already helped save many lives.

'An ECMO machine plays a life-saving role, oxygenating patients' vital organs, buying us time and giving patients' organs a chance to recover. There is growing evidence to show that providing early ECMO treatment significantly increases survival rates,' Dr Dixon says.

To contribute to more life-saving medical equipment, contact St Vincent's Foundation online at stvfoundation.org.au/donate or on (03) 9231 3365.

Above: Brett Purcell with intensive Care Specialist Dr Barry Dixon, Department of Critical Care Nurse Unit Manager Catherine Carbery and the new ECMO which has been purchased by the kindness and generosity of our donors.

Graduate nurse Natasha Tabone

Graduate Nurse Natasha Tabone has been awarded the 2015 Ida O'Dwyer Prize for her exceptional commitment to nursing at St Vincent's.

Natasha was presented the award by President of the Graduate Nurses Association Maureen Milton and last year's winner Brianna O'Donnell at a ceremony held on 15 January.

Ida O'Dwyer left her home in Bendigo to commence her nursing training at St Vincent's Hospital and graduated in 1902.

Ida nursed in the First World War as part of the AIF delivering care in Egypt, England and France, achieving a Royal Red Cross for her devotion to duty. She was the inaugural President of the St Vincent's Hospital Graduate Nurses Association.

The prize, proudly sponsored by our Graduate Nurses Association is awarded to a Graduate Nurse who encompasses:

- knowledge and thorough nursing skills
- commitment to the nursing profession at St Vincent's
- behaviour reflective of our values
- confidence to think ahead and act accordingly, and
- willingness to work effectively within a team and support colleagues





Go the extra mile at **The Scrubs Run and Family Day**



Enjoy an active day out and support St Vincent's in the lovely surrounds of Princes Park at the Scrubs Run and Family Day.

Scrubs Run is a fantastic morning full of activities to entertain the whole family, while participants run or walk to raise money to support a specific hospital department.

Choose where the money you raise is spent, and if you raise more than \$200 you will be entered into the draw to win some fantastic prizes.

It's not just a fun run!

From 9.30am to 1pm you can enjoy music, roaming entertainment, our yummy BBQ and food vans, jumping castle, magician, face painting, kids crafts, novelty races and cheer on participants! For the full program visit www.scrubsrun.com.au.

Show your support for St Vincent's by wearing the Scrubs Run t-shirt which you receive when you register (subject to availability). There will also be prizes for the best dressed!

The impact of your giving

Thanks to the support of Scrubs Run participants, the Foundation has been able to support a number of worthwhile projects over the past 12 months.

Fundraise for St Vincent's

Money you raise will go to the hospital ward or department of your choice.

Register before 29 February 2016 and enter the Early Bird Draw to win a Maha Restaurant voucher for two valued at \$130! Register at: www.scrubsrun.com.au



Sign up for St Vincent's Scrubs Run today!

Date

Sunday 17 April 2016

Time

From 9.30am

Venue

Princes Park, Carlton North

Distance

3km Run or Walk;
6km Run or Walk;
10km Run;
Run a Mile for St Vincent's

Register

www.scrubsrun.com.au

Create or join a team and choose which ward or department you want your fundraising to go to.

Team name

6th Floor Cancer Crusaders

Level 6 Haematology, Oncology and Palliative Care

Amount raised

\$11,105.95

"The Scrubs Run was a great opportunity to team up with our patients and participate in fundraising. We raised an amazing \$11,000 which helped improve our patient care by purchasing additional vital sign machines. These machines monitor the health of haematology and oncology patients at high risk of infection due to lowered immune systems. Thank you for your support and for helping us deliver the best possible care to our patients."

Team name

Innately Curious Immunology

The St Vincent's Immunology Research Centre

Amount raised

\$6,438.50

"The Immunology Research Centre had a very successful Scrubs Run 2015. In addition to having the fastest female runner in the mile event (Veena Roberts), we raised almost \$1,500 above our target of \$5,000, and one of our team (Evelyn Salvaris) was the second highest individual fundraiser for the whole event. We used these funds to purchase a much-needed thermal cycler, a piece of laboratory equipment that is essential for many aspects of our research. It will allow us to continue our work on understanding the role of the innate immune system in transplant rejection and infectious diseases, and improving transplant outcomes."



On behalf of our dedicated and passionate staff working tirelessly at St Vincent's, thank you so much for your support and see you on 17 April!

Everyone loves a Night HUG

Dr Aaron Bloch and Dr Ben Smith vividly remember how daunting it was being an intern during night shift. With staffing levels lower overnight, there are many sick patients and it's not always clear who is on hand for support if required.

'It can be an intimidating and lonely time. You can go through a week of nights and barely even see another person,' Dr Smith says.

During their time in the Junior Doctors in Redesign program, the two thought there had to be a logical solution to this problem so at a coffee shop at 5:30am feverishly tapped out an email to senior staff.

'You can be run off your feet, while one of the other interns may have nothing to do. They might be sleeping while you're having the absolute worst night of your life. We thought why not get everyone together at the start of the night, so that junior doctors can feel supported,' Dr Bloch says. What started from such small beginnings has now become a routine part of staff support, and thereby patient care.

Each night for the past two years, all rostered medical staff meet for the Night HUG (Handover Update Group).

This meeting is a chance for junior doctors working in the wee small hours to meet the most experienced doctors working that night – the ones they'll need to call on if there's a problem.

Junior doctor Louise Kostos has been on night shift for three of the past six weeks and benefits from the Night HUG each night.

'It's an opportunity to flag unwell patients and discuss their cases with the registrars, so that if something does go wrong and there is a MET call, the registrars are already familiar with the patient and they are able to target and initiate management, rather than waste time looking through the patient file,' Dr Kostos says.

'As a junior doctor, particularly for the new interns, it can be intimidating to call a registrar you don't know to ask for help, so being able to put a face to the name and know who is available to call each night is a huge benefit.'

The initiative has had great support from senior medical staff, including A/Prof Wilma Beswick and A/Prof Andrew Maclsaac.

'When we took it to A/Prof Maclsaac he said 'that's a great idea, the important thing is that it has a catchy name. Let's call it the Night Hug!' We then spent most of our meeting with A/Prof Beswick deciding what HUG would be an acronym for, and the Night Handover Update Group was born,' Dr Bloch says.

'The HUG is what it's become, everyone loves the HUG and it is an initiative that costs nothing, is entirely self-sustaining and works.'

Below: Dr Louise Kostos has benefitted from the Night HUG.
Dr Aaron Bloch and Dr Ben Smith, the two junior doctors who started it all.





Big hearted Ern a true life saver

Ernest 'Ern' Brough is a man with a big heart. In his years as a soldier, prisoner of war, butcher and author, Ern has shown strength, resilience, bravery and kindness to everyone he encounters.

As one of St Vincent's most cherished and longstanding donors, Ern's generosity has also had a significant impact on the lives of thousands of people he will never meet.



Ern's life has been one well lived. Like many young Australians growing up during the Great Depression, he left school at the age of 13 to support his family.

In 1940, he enlisted in the Australian Army, seeing brutal fighting in Tobruk and El Alamein. It was here Ern showed both strength and courage when he carried a badly wounded enemy soldier back to his own lines. He was later taken prisoner but made a daring escape against the odds with two comrades.

After the war Ern was awarded medals for Bravery in the Field, the Africa Star, the 1939–1945 Star, the Defence Medal, the Australia Service Medal, and the 1939–1945 Medal.

But he also had to adjust back to civilian life. He worked in an abattoir, was the owner of a successful butcher shop in Lakes Entrance and established a thriving farm in Geelong with his wife Edna.

Throughout the years, thoughts and memories of his wartime experiences were ever present.

To cope, Ern wrote a book about his war service, aptly titled *Dangerous Days – A Digger's Great Escape*.

As a recipient of excellent care from St Vincent's, Ern decided to donate all profits from his book to the hospital to support patient care and research into Alzheimer's.

Ern's generosity knows no bounds and when Edna died in 2004, Ern donated \$300,000 from the sale of their farm to St Vincent's to fund, fittingly, a state-of-the-art echocardiograph machine for the Cardiac Investigation Unit. Each year, this machine monitors the heart rhythm of over 5,000 people with serious heart conditions.

If, like Ern, you would like to support St Vincent's through donations or a bequest, please contact St Vincent's Foundation on 03 9231 3365 or email foundation@svhm.org.au

Below: Ern, second from left, with fellow diggers in Port Melbourne circa 1944.



"I can't thank the staff at St Vinnies enough!! My dad was released from hospital yesterday morning and it was the best Christmas present we could ever wish for. A special mention to the nurses and doctors on Level 4! You are amazing and I have so much respect for what you do.

An even bigger mention to my Dad's surgeon Jim Dimitriou. You gave me my Dad for Christmas. You said my Dad was the amazing one but without your skills, knowledge and care, he could never have recovered this quickly. I can't thank you enough and we will forever be so grateful. An absolute miracle."

Cassie Taylor

A fruitful recovery



43-year-old Don Vo is recovering from a massive stroke that almost claimed his life last July, at a time when he was already battling blood cancer.

He spent weeks in ICU and doctors had to remove part of his skull to alleviate the pressure on his brain.

'If it wasn't for St Vincent's, I wouldn't be alive today,' he says. 'The expectation was that if I were to survive, I wouldn't be able to walk and talk, and probably lose my memory too.'

But Don has defied all the odds and is making a remarkable recovery. He is now able to talk again and his mobility is improving significantly.

The Rehab Unit is managing his recovery with physiotherapists and speech pathologists seeing him regularly. He is also receiving daily treatments at the Cancer Centre for his leukaemia.

Don's wife Phuong and his sister Nhung have been by his side all along, and they too are grateful to the nursing, medical and allied health staff they say are responsible for Don's speedy recovery.

Nhung doesn't visit Don without her elaborate homemade fruit platters which she offers to the staff at the Cancer Centre as a way of expressing her appreciation of the first-rate care given to her brother.

'The staff are the best and we can't thank them enough,' Nhung says. 'Don's recovery has been nothing short of a miracle and we will forever be grateful for the care and absolute compassion St Vincent's showed to us.'

Did you know?

- 48% of our patients come from a culturally and linguistically (CaLD) diverse background
- One in five of our CaLD patients require an interpreter in over 80 different languages
- Over 35 faiths are practiced by our patients

Cultural Diversity Week

12–20 March 2016

Join in the celebrations with a Taste of Harmony Lunch at your workplace.

Register at
www.tasteofharmony.org.au

Above left: Nhung, Don and his wife Phuong.

New funding invests in compassion

A new fund will help St Vincent's make a difference in the lives of more Victorians living on the margins.

'Reaching out to the poorest and most vulnerable people in our community is the reason the Sisters of Charity founded our hospital more than a century ago,' says St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne's Director of Mission, Lisa McDonald.

'That mission is at the heart of everything we do, and we're always looking for ways to do more. That's where St Vincent's Health Australia's Inclusive Health Innovation Fund comes in.'

The SVHA Inclusive Health Innovation Fund is backing promising ideas to meet the greatest need and have the greatest impact.

St Vincent's Melbourne is a proud member of the SVHA Group. The first local projects to be funded will:

- support a three-year pilot program to help people struggling with methamphetamine use
- evaluate St Vincent's services which specialise in caring for people who are homeless, to increase the body of knowledge about the health needs of this highly marginalised population
- take St Vincent's successful approach to identifying and responding to elder abuse and pilot it at two Victorian hospitals
- provide free pathology and imaging services to asylum seekers who aren't eligible for Medicare, pave the way for joint research with the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre, and develop a volunteer GP clinic model in partnership with Cabrini Health

- explore the potential for a St Vincent's Recovery College, a proven overseas model which provides mental health training and education.

The Inclusive Health Innovation Fund is a new initiative of SVHA's enVision2025 strategy. It's an ambitious but achievable plan to harness the full potential of the Group and take it to even greater heights over the coming decade. enVision2025 invites St Vincent's staff to serve something greater, see something greater, and strive for something greater.

Staff are invited to apply for the Health Innovation Fund by filling in an expression of Interest form. These can be requested from the Mission department by emailing:
svha.mission@svha.org.au

Year in review

In the early days of St Vincent's Hospital, as a small cottage hospital in working class Fitzroy, the Sisters of Charity relied entirely on charitable donations to survive and thrive.

Over 120 years later, St Vincent's Foundation draws on the fantastic support of the community through donations and bequests, businesses and charitable trusts to raise funds that help our staff provide the highest standard of care possible.

Thanks to this support the Foundation is able to fund additional equipment, research and services that our patients would otherwise be unable to access.

The Foundation expresses its sincere appreciation to all who have contributed over the past twelve months. Here are just some of the many achievements we have been able to accomplish thanks to your support.

2015 DONATION AND BEQUESTS

1. Trusts and Foundations

Fantastic support from Charitable Trusts and Foundations has aided ground-breaking research including:

- Furthering the development of artificial skin
- Mismatch repair genes and high risk prostate cancer

- Diabetic kidney disease
- Purchased much needed equipment including:
 - Thermal cyclor
 - Endocrinology plasma freezer

2. Bequests and Estates

Gifts left in a Will as a Bequest have assisted:

- Caritas Christi Hospice
- Oncology research
- Sister Francesca Healy Cottage
- Palliative care
- Other areas of need

6. Support from our Major Donors has aided:

- The Mary Wood Scholarship
- Chair of Medicine
- Mental Health projects
- Respiratory department
- De Gruchy Medal
- Cardiac Department

5. Events and Sponsorship

Corporate Sponsorship and attendees of our events have assisted in a number of projects including:

- Opera in the Market, contributed to progressing Stage 2 of the Cancer Centre redevelopment
- The Scrubs Run, aided a number of areas within the hospital including the provision of vital sign machines for haematology and oncology patients; a thermal cyclor that will allow us to continue our work on the role of the innate immune system.

4. Fundraising Appeals

The support we have received from our Fundraising Appeals has:

- Furthered award winning research into cartilage regeneration
- Purchased much needed equipment for our Central Equipment Library
- Provided additional equipment to aid the recovery of stroke patients.

3. Community Fundraising

Support we have received through third party charity events and community groups has assisted:

- The wellbeing of adult cancer patients in our care
- 8 East family room refurbishment
- Human Genome Project
- Development of a new specific purpose gym at Caritas Christi Hospice
- Improvement of cardiothoracic keyhole surgery
- Research in cartilage regeneration
- The work of Sister Francesca Healy Cottage

