

*'The strongest pillar in the house of healing': the title of this publication comes from a comment made by Sir Julius Bruche (RMH Birthday League) at the 16th Annual Meeting of the RMH Auxiliaries, held on Wednesday 8 June 1938. After moving the adoption of the annual report and financial statement for the previous year, Sir Julius told the Auxiliary members and guests assembled in the Hospital's Outpatients' Hall that an appropriate title for the Royal Melbourne Hospital would be 'The house of healing'. And, in that house, he said, the auxiliary movement is one of the strongest pillars, providing the finest service by helping the Hospital to help the poor and the needy.*

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<sup>1</sup> The RMH Kiosk Auxiliary operates the Hospital's Essy Zwar Kiosk and is also known as the RMH (Essy Zwar) Kiosk Auxiliary

<sup>2</sup> Social Service Auxiliary changed its name to the Almoner Auxiliary in 1929

<sup>3</sup> Hawthorn Auxiliary changed its name to Friends of The Royal Melbourne Hospital Auxiliary in 2002

## Foreword

The Royal Melbourne Hospital, like many of the great public Hospitals of the western world, had its genesis in the heart of the community. It owes its existence to those charitably minded citizens of Melbourne, of 1846, who had a strong desire to ensure that the sick and suffering, of the 'less fortunate' among them, had, access to a basic level of care. Their motives were entirely humanitarian.

The 150 years, or so, that have elapsed since that time has seen enormous changes and none more dramatic than the unprecedented growth in medical and scientific knowledge. This factor has required the Hospital to develop from a small 'Charity Hospital' to become the great teaching Hospital it is today. Consequently, responsibility for funding this vital, but costly, progression has long since outstripped the financial resources of charitable endeavour and increasingly became the responsibility of Government.

The transference of responsibility from community to bureaucracy has inevitably brought about a dampening of charitable involvement through the public hospital system, as evidenced by the demise of the honorary Medical Staffing System, in the 1970's and, more recently replacement of honorary boards of management, appointed by the community, with salaried board members appointed by Government.

Remarkably, this major shift in social responsibility has not dampened the spirit, or the determination, of the Hospital's Auxiliaries and that of their members – rather to the contrary. Nor has it diminished the value of their contributions to the life of the institution. They are the embodiment of that continuum of public spirit that founded the Hospital, all those years ago, and which now lives on, through them, regardless of the changes taking place around them.

In the 80 years of its formal existence, the Auxiliaries have been witness to the most dramatic of the events in the evolution of the Hospital and although the nature of their work may have been shaped by the shifting environment of the times, the value of the contribution has remained – steadfast – based, as it always has been, on interest, motivation, intensity, single-mindedness and an ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

In this work, the author has comprehensively and sensitively, recorded the work of the Royal Melbourne Hospital Auxiliaries, revealing their ingenuity, resourcefulness and creative thinking. Also recorded is the breadth and depth of their work from fundraising to volunteer activities for the comfort of patients, to the conduct of canteen and kiosk for the refreshment of visitors and the public. Of special interest is the significant contribution to the pioneering of social work services in Australian hospitals.

Over the 50 years since I first came to the Hospital, I have been privileged

to see, at first hand, the deeds and activities of these voluntary workers. Their significant financial support in the purchase of vital medical equipment has facilitated the quality of patients' care and the interface with the community has helped give a public face to the Hospital. The secret of their success is that each individual member is motivated by a desire to be useful, is possessed of a sense of community and a need to make a contribution to a worthwhile cause, and, above all, to give something of themselves to the task. Individually each has, I am sure, been enriched by their experience, as have those who have benefited from their service. I feel privileged to have been witness to their eventful and rewarding journey.

This History is recommended to all who seek to understand why The Royal Melbourne Hospital has retained a heart, a warmth, and a spirit that is an echo of its charitable beginnings so many years ago.

The President and members of the Central Council of Auxiliaries of The Royal Melbourne Hospital are to be congratulated on the commissioning of this publication and I thank them for allowing me to make this small contribution. To the multitude of individual voluntary workers who make up the Auxiliaries – this is your story – take pride in having been a part of the continuing journey.

Leonard Swinden AM  
Former Chief Executive Officer  
The Royal Melbourne Hospital  
1964 – 1984



**21 November 1921**

Inaugural meeting of the RMH Auxiliary Service held at the home of Lady Grice

**2 December 1921**

*First two Auxiliary branches formed – Toorak Red Cross and South Yarra Red Cross*

**1921**

Annual Egg Appeal inaugurated

**1922**

Kiosk (Melbourne) Branch formed (later known as RMH Kiosk Auxiliary\*)

**1922**

RMH Birthday League established\*

**1 May 1924**

Central / Executive Council of Auxiliaries formed

**1924**

Almoner Auxiliary established

**1930**

RMH Essendon Auxiliary established

**8 September 1933**

RMH Canterbury Auxiliary established\*

**7 June 1937**

First 'Grannies Day' – a Grannies' tea party and concert held in the Hospital's outpatients' hall, and in suburbs across Melbourne

**22 March 1938**

Box Hill Men's Auxiliary established (later known as the RMH Box Hill Auxiliary)

**26 October 1942**

First RMH Hospital Sunday garden party event held

**1955**

RMH Hazeldene Auxiliary established\*

**1963**

RMH Hawthorn Auxiliary established\* (now known as Hawthorn Friends of The Royal Melbourne Hospital Auxiliary)

**1960**

RMH Parents and Friends of Nurses established

**1970**

RMH Pacemaker Patients' Auxiliary established\*

**24 November 1975**

Project Plus, the RMH Volunteer Service, established\* – 27 years on the service is still going strong, with volunteers contributing more than 19,000 hours of their time to support RMH patients in 2002

**1980**

RMH Greek Fund for Arthritis Research Auxiliary established\*

**1996**

RMH Friends of the Melbourne Colorectal Service Auxiliary established\*

**1999**

RMH Neph Friends Auxiliary established\*

**1999**

RMH Essendon & District Opportunity Shop Auxiliary established\*

**2000**

RMH John Cade Support Group established\*

**2000**

RMH Dialysis Fundraising Group established\*

**2000**

Christmas Card Group established\*

**2001**

RMH Diabetes Fundraising Support Group established\*

\* denotes auxiliary or support group that is still operating in 2002

# 1. THE EARLY YEARS (1921-1929)

*21 November 1921: a group of Melbourne women gather at the home of Lady Grice to establish a new organisation to support and raise funds for patients of the city's first Hospital, The Melbourne Hospital<sup>4</sup>. Membership of the group, to be known as The Melbourne Hospital Red Cross Auxiliary (Toorak & South Yarra Branch) also includes membership of the Red Cross Society. Lady Grice is elected president and Mrs J Levi, vice-president.*

These pioneering women were extremely enthusiastic about their new venture and did not waste any time organising themselves into action. Only one week later, on 28 November 1921, a meeting was held at The Melbourne Hospital and an Executive Committee was formed. On 2 December 1921, two subcommittees were established in order to more easily raise funds and collect goods from local residents. Thus, the first RMH Auxiliary branches – **Toorak (Red Cross) Auxiliary** and **South Yarra (Red Cross) Auxiliary** – were born. A third subcommittee, for residents of the inner Melbourne area, the **Melbourne Kiosk Auxiliary** (see also profile, page 10), followed early in the new year, along with a group with a very different approach to supporting Melbourne's major Hospital, the **Birthday League** (see also profile, page 6).

With auxiliaries of several hospitals operating in some suburbs, the

Melbourne Hospital Auxiliaries were unwilling to enter into competition with sister hospitals, and decided instead to focus on districts where no work was being done for any hospital. Regional branches soon sprang up across Melbourne's outer suburbs and even in some country areas. In 1924-1925, residents of the Dandenong Ranges in Melbourne's outer eastern outskirts were particularly active supporters of the Hospital. The **South Sassafras, Sherbrooke & The Patch Auxiliary** enlarged the scope of its activity by establishing a sub-branch at the nearby township of Monbulk, the **Monbulk Auxiliary**. Representatives of The Melbourne Hospital visited the area in February 1925 and noted with gratification that the sympathy of residents in that region was 'so strong that the district may be regarded as one from which substantial returns may be expected'<sup>5</sup>.

By mid 1923, the number of auxiliaries was proving difficult to manage and in October 1923, it was decided that a Central or Executive Council should be formed to advise on and coordinate the various groups. On 7 April 1924, a Central Executive Committee, later known as the **Central Council of Auxiliaries**, was established. This managing body came into effect on 1 May that year, with Mrs SM Bruce as the inaugural elected president and Lady Grice, the inaugural 'patroness' (patron).

In the early years, the Auxiliaries provided a form of much-needed community support by helping reduce

the Hospital's hefty maintenance costs. Fundraising activities mostly took the form of social events or community stalls, with monies raised helping to fund specific projects such as the purchase of radium and the provision of x-ray equipment, as well as contributing towards the general income of the Hospital.

However, times were hard and raising money from the community was not easy. Auxiliary members mostly gave their time and effort to provide comfort to the suffering and aid more impoverished patients. Auxiliary members sewed sheets, pillowslips and other items to help supplement the Hospital's linen chest. Several branches were established specifically to act as 'sewing clubs' to produce items for the Hospital.

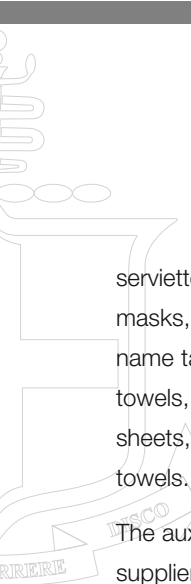
The **Depot Work Party Auxiliary** met regularly at the Red Cross Depot for sewing parties, and made 673 articles for the Hospital in 1928-1929. Another sewing group, the **Time & Talents Work Party Auxiliary** made up 100 garments that year and members of the **Port Melbourne Auxiliary** met for sewing parties each month.

The **Fitzroy Ladies Work Association**, a group from Melbourne's inner northern suburbs who since 1899 had met regularly to sew for three hospitals, began supporting The Melbourne and became one of its most productive sewing groups<sup>6</sup>. Items produced by these groups included dressing towels, pneumonia flannels, surgeons' gowns, hot water tin covers, patients'

<sup>4</sup> Which later became The Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH), the name it is known by today

<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes are taken from the relevant annual reports of the RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries

<sup>6</sup> The Fitzroy Ladies Work Association served as an auxiliary of the 'RMH until it was disbanded in October 1983; at the time it was the oldest serving Hospital auxiliary in the country



serviettes, face washers, shirts, face masks, nightgowns, draw sheets, name tapes, 'huck' towels, 'forfar' towels, binders, pillow cases, bed sheets, doctors' towels and theatre towels.

The auxiliaries also lobbied local food suppliers and delved into their pantries (and those of **neighbours', friends' and family members'**) to donate poultry, ham and tinned and preserved fruits for patients' Christmas dinners.

The early RMH Auxiliary members proved to be enthusiastic, astute businesswomen. In an early form of public relations, the Auxiliaries held public information sessions to 'spread the word' about the work of the Hospital in order to widen the circle of sympathisers and friends of the institution.

In early 1925 a new branch was formed, organised by Mrs Joseph Levi. Known as the **Entertainments Branch**, this Auxiliary organised entertainments (events) for the benefit of the Hospital and encouraged and assisted organisations in the community that were planning to hold functions for the benefit of the Hospital. It was recognised at the outset that this group represented an enormous potential to raise funds to support the Hospital and its patients, and provided an excellent medium for the great needs of the Hospital to receive welcome publicity.

Ever on the lookout for new opportunities, in 1924-1925 it was decided to establish a new Auxiliary

in Caulfield, for the benefit of The Melbourne Hospital's new Convalescent Hospital located in that municipality. Mrs AE Morris, Mayoress of Caulfield convened a meeting at the local town hall. Those in attendance were most enthusiastic about the concept and the **Caulfield Kiosk Auxiliary** was formed along similar lines to the successful **Kiosk Auxiliary** in existence at The Melbourne Hospital. Women from Caulfield and surrounding suburbs operated a kiosk at the Hospital, which provided newspapers, books, magazines, snacks and refreshments for the convenience of patients and their visitors, with proceeds from the kiosk venture contributing funds to that institution.

The following year, in 1925, efforts to form new 'region-based' Auxiliaries were made difficult by similar campaigns being undertaken by several newer hospitals being established in many suburbs. The CCA declared that it would still only establish new auxiliaries in areas where no work was being done for other hospitals. In each targeted area, the relevant local branch of the Victorian Red Cross Society assisted with the establishment of a new Auxiliary. In 1926, two new 'region-based' branches were formed, the **Berwick Auxiliary** and the **Box Hill Auxiliary**.

In 1926-1927, the Auxiliary members enthusiastically set about raising funds and collecting furniture and furnishing to decorate several rooms in the Hospital's new nurses' quarters.

Auxiliary President Lady Miller, OBE, funded the furnishing of one room herself.

From the very beginning of the Auxiliary movement, Melbourne's media organisations got behind their city's major hospital. In the late 1920s, Mrs Dye of *The Argus* newspaper ran an Appeal in her column, asking readers to contribute to the Auxiliaries, which raised £100. She also hosted an annual bridge party, which attracted around £110 per year for several years running during the late 1920s.

At the fifth annual meeting of The Melbourne Hospital Red Cross Auxiliary, held in the Hospital's Outpatients' Hall on 25 May 1927, an amendment was made to the constitution to provide for the President and two representatives of each Auxiliary branch to be appointed to the Central Executive Committee. The Committee met monthly, except in December and January, and meeting reports were copied to the Red Cross Welfare Committee.

In August 1927, Miss Jane Bell (the Hospital's lady superintendent, 1910-1934) was elected as Assistant Honorary Secretary of the committee.

On 6 June 1928, the RMH Auxiliaries mourned the loss of the Hospital's President and their close friend, Sir Aaron Danks. Over the past 80 years, the Danks name has become synonymous with the RMH Auxiliaries, thanks largely to the generosity and dedication of Sir Aaron's daughter and granddaughter-in-law.

*'As President of the Melbourne Hospital, he (Sir Aaron) was one of the best friends of the Auxiliary, devoting much time and thought to its affairs. His keen personal interest and valuable advice were a great encouragement to all, and his unfailing kindness, as well as his consistent generosity, will always be affectionately remembered.'*

#### **Sixth Annual Report of the RMH Auxiliaries (1927-1928)**

By the end of the decade, the RMH Auxiliaries had grown from just three fledgling branches in the summer of 1921-1922 to 16 active Auxiliaries, governed and coordinated by a Central Executive Committee.

Nine of these were 'region-based' Auxiliaries, canvassing support from their local communities across the city (ie. the **Abbotsford, East Kew, Northcote, Toorak** and **South Yarra** Auxiliaries) and Melbourne's outer eastern fringes (ie. the **Berwick & Beaconsfield, Box Hill & Mont Albert, Monbulk** and the **Kallista, Sherbrooke & The Patch** Auxiliaries).

Seven of the Auxiliaries operating at the end of 1939 were 'service-based'. These groups focussed their activities on providing a particular service for the benefit of patients (ie. the **Almoner, Entertainments, Outpatients' Canteen** and Melbourne (Kiosk) Auxiliaries and the Red Cross

**Depot Work Party, Fitzroy Ladies Work Association** and **Time & Talents Sewing Party** Auxiliaries).

And then of course, there was the **Birthday League**, which was in a category of its own and had its unique way of raising funds for RMH

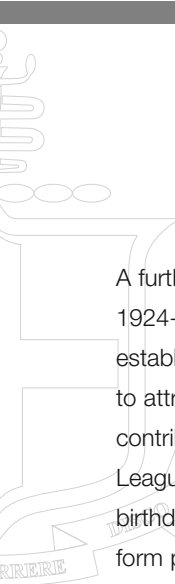
The **Birthday League** and the **RMH Kiosk Auxiliary** are the stalwarts of the RMH Auxiliary movement; both having survived and prospered through eight decades of service to the RMH and are still going strong in the new millennium!

## Birthday League Auxiliary - established 1922

The RMH Birthday League Auxiliary was founded on a novel fundraising idea, which proved tremendously successful and has endured to this day. The idea was inspired by a similar scheme operating in London hospitals. Following the adage that 'it is better to give than to receive', people were invited to give a donation to the Hospital on their birthdays. Mr Arthur Baillieu, a member of the RMH Committee, introduced the idea to the RMH following a visit to the United Kingdom.

The League's '**Birthday Subscription Plan**' not only attracted much-needed funds, but also helped the people of Melbourne to feel more connected with and involved in their Hospital. Over time, the League's activities have attracted significant media interest and developed into an important public relations platform for enhancing the community's awareness of the Hospital and its work.

The idea was simple. By subscribing to the Birthday League, people were able to celebrate their birthdays and help the Hospital at the same time. In the early 1920s, it was estimated that the cost of running the Hospital for one minute was 2/6d. Subscribers simply donated any sum they chose, and were issued with a certificate showing the period of time for which their contribution maintained the Hospital.



A further innovation was adopted in 1924-1925, when it was decided to establish a special **Endowment Fund** to attract larger contributions. Donors contributing £25 or more to the League were able to endow their birthdays. This money was used to form permanent capital, with interest from that investment contributing to the ongoing income of the League.

Many prominent community leaders and state and national identities supported the League scheme, resulting in much newspaper coverage, including Archbishop Harrington Lees (who signed up in 1922), the Prime Minister Mr William Hughes (1923). Journalist Mr Keith Murdoch, who was to found the Murdoch media empire, became an active member of the Birthday League Committee. Sir Robert Menzies also supported the League.

It was not only people whose birthdays were endowed under this scheme. Over the years, many horses' birthdays were endowed, including several Melbourne and Caulfield Cup winners. The owner of 'Peter Pan' not only had the horse's birthday endowed, he also donated £50 to the League after winning the Melbourne Cup for the second time in 1934.

Subscriptions to the Birthday League increased rapidly in 1927-1928, and the group was able to donate the large sum of £2575 to the Hospital that year. In 1928-1929, there were 22,577 subscribers and £2325 was donated; £350 for the endowment fund and the balance for Hospital maintenance.

Throughout the 1920s, and for many decades after, the Birthday League was the largest contributor to the Hospital's Auxiliary movement and continually raised more than half of the total funds contributed by all Auxiliaries. In its first decade of operation, the League raised the impressive sum of more than £10,000.

The Auxiliary's novel approach soon attracted the interest of Melbourne's media and celebrities alike. During the 1920s, Melbourne radio station 3LO (now **774 ABC Melbourne**) broadcast speeches by Melbourne's Lord Mayor and Mr RWE Wilmot (a well known journalist and sporting personality) appealing for community support for the **Birthday League**. This resulted in a further 375 subscribers. In 1927, in recognition of the generous support given by Radio 3LO, it was decided to elect Major Conder, General Manager of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, as an Honorary Life Governor of the Birthday League.

In February 1932, a **Birthday League** Office was established at the Hospital. This development significantly boosted the Auxiliary's recruitment efforts, with Auxiliary members able to invite patients being discharged to enrol in the League and encourage passers by to drop into the office. Within only two months, nearly 5000 new subscribers had been enrolled.

Visitors to the office could view a wall chart that depicted the growth of the League week-by-week and compared returns for the week with the corresponding period for the previous

year. Birthday League Auxiliary members continually strived to break there records, and continually managed to achieve the goals they set.

The following year, in 1933, three signs advertising the League's subscription scheme (a gift from a member of the Birthday League Council) were affixed to the Hospital fence, creating much interest amongst passers-by and resulting in enrolments of another 20 subscribers after only a few days.

In 1934, advertisements for the RMH Birthday League appeared on trams across Melbourne, with artwork, production and space all donated free of charge.

People across Melbourne were signing up to join the RMH Birthday League in droves. 'Broadcast Talks' in the *Children's Hour* program on Radio 3LO helped to generate additional interest. Thanks to the generosity of the radio station, children's parties were held in the studios every three months for those subscribers whose birthday had fallen in the previous quarter. The first party was held in the 3LO studios on 4 June 1932.

In late 1932, the League formed an associate committee, comprising representatives from various community and business organisations and other RMH Auxiliaries, who took on the task of enrolling new members from their constituencies. This proved to be another clever initiative, establishing



an extensive network of support bases, known as '**Birthday League branches**', in schools across Melbourne, including St Catherine's and Camberwell Girls' Grammar schools, as well as major employer organisations such as the Bank of Australasia and Lincoln Knitting & Spinning Mills.

By April 1933, more than 40 branches had been established. The Myer Emporium staff held the record, having donated enough funds to maintain The Royal Melbourne Hospital for 4797 minutes! In the 1940s, the branch network further expanded and also included Holeproof Limited, The Age, Alberta Club, ICI (Yarraville), Radio 3DB, Radio 3UZ, Mack Furnishing Co. Pty Ltd, Prince's Hill State School and Brunswick Technical School.

In 1935-1936, the Birthday League suffered 'the severest blow of its existence in the loss of the support of the Australian Broadcasting Commission', which had decided to 'abandon birthday greetings as part of its programs, (resulting in) a loss of £600 a year'. Over the years, 3LO's generous support had added more than £7000 to the League's funds.

Recognising the need to continue with what had been a very effective form of publicity and a popular added benefit for subscribers, the League sought a substitute radio 'sponsor'. The *Herald*-owned station, 3DB, 'stepped into the breach and began broadcasting greetings three nights a week'.

In 1938, in a goodwill gesture that proved another publicity success, the Birthday League members decided to set aside £25 each half-year to honour a distinguished member of the community in perpetuity by **endowing their birthday**. This first recipient of this scheme was Lord Huntingfield.

Towards the end of 1945, members of the RMH Birthday League decided to devote their energies to maintaining the **Occupational Therapy Department**, while continuing to support the RMH generally.

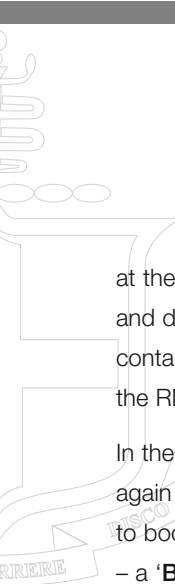
From the early days a major activity for the League has been the production and distribution of beautiful **birthday cards**, which are sent to all subscribers. In 1938, acclaimed Australian artist Sir Arthur Streeton provided the blocks of one of his well-known paintings to the League to produce a birthday card. Printing costs were offset by a donation of £10/10/- from the Melbourne Cooperative Brewing Company Pty Ltd. In 1939-40, the card was produced by the Myer Advertising Department free of charge using an image of a painting by artist Mr SE Wade.

Over the years, many well-known artists and celebrities have donated their work to the League for use on the birthday cards, and the tradition continues to this day. The Birthday League card for 2000 featured an oil painting 'Backyard, Carlton' by Dawson McDonald from Mrs Margaret Knox's private collection. In 2000-2001, photographer William Spry gave

consent for an image from his 'Fireworks Series' to be used. In 1985, Australian television personality Mr Peter Russell Clarke donated a sketch for the birthday card. That year the League also conducted a birthday card competition amongst Melbourne schools. The winning entry, by Anna Hoyle of Camberwell Church of England Girls' Grammar School, was judged by renowned Australian artist Sir William Dargie and appeared on the League's card the following year.

In late 1939, with war unfolding in Europe, it was decided that the Birthday League would support the RMH's Building Appeal by providing for an entire ward in the new Hospital. To achieve this ambitious goal, the Auxiliary members decided to strive to firstly raise £700 in 1940 to equip a four-bed ward, with the ultimate aim of increasing that to a 16-bed ward by raising £2800 over three years.

By March 1940, only a few months later, the first objective was already in sight. However, the pressing needs of war presented a challenge to the Ward Appeal. In the early 1940s, subscription numbers were reduced for the first time since the League's inception and limits on horse racing imposed during the war years curtailed endowments of horses' birthdays, which had become increasingly popular. Rather than abandoning its aim of equipping a new ward, the Birthday League marked its 'coming of age' (21st birthday) on 21 March 1943 by announcing plans to equip an eight-bed '**Birthday League Ward**'



at the new Hospital site in Parkville and donating a 'splendid chest containing household linen' to the RMH.

In the early 1940s, the Auxiliary once again adopted a novel approach to boost their fundraising effort – a '**Birthday Book**', containing signatures of all subscribers who donated 1/- upwards to the new ward. This would be kept on the ward at all times and, it was hoped, would continue to be a source of revenue in the future. By mid-1944, the Birthday Book was housed in a handsome glass case on the Birthday League Ward, and opened to that day's page by the senior ward sister each morning.

The book and handsome glass case were donated by the Myer Emporium and presented to the ward by Mrs Sidney Myer. The book still takes pride of place in the Hospital's main entry foyer today, and each morning a hospital volunteer continues the tradition of turning the pages to show those donors who celebrate their birthdays on that day.

The **Myer family** and Myer Stores have been long-time supporters of the RMH Birthday League Auxiliary. A collection box for the League has been a feature of the 'Ladies' Powder Room' at Myer's Lonsdale Street Store for many years and still takes pride of place outside the Women's Cloak Room on the second floor. In June 1984, Myer Melbourne donated space in its popular Bourke Street Store windows to promote the League.

The Birthday League officially became an Auxiliary of The Royal Melbourne Hospital on 22 March 1983. Previously the group had been administered by the Hospital's Public Relations Department and worked as a separate fundraising entity.

By the mid 1980s, the Birthday League scheme had been simplified, so that in return for a donation, a birthday card was sent to a designated person on their birthday (people nominated themselves, their children, grandchildren, friends and even many pets). In this way birthdays could be remembered and the Hospital still continued to be helped by people's thoughtfulness for others. This proved very popular and the scheme has continued in this form until the present day.

Through the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Birthday League gradually became inactive. It was reinvigorated in 1986 with the appointment of a new president, Mrs Elizabeth Royston, who enthusiastically rallied together a small committee of dedicated supporters. In 1986-1987, the Birthday League began expanding once again and had more than 2000 members. The rejuvenation of the League paid off and in 1990-1991, the League's various activities generated \$21,000.

In 1997, the Birthday League hosted a card day at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The MCG allowed the League to use the John Landy and Betty Cuthbert rooms. The day of card games was a success and raised more than \$3700. In 1999-2000, the

members gathered again at the function rooms at the Melbourne Cricket Ground for what had become an **Annual Card Day**. This fun day had become another League tradition and more than \$4000 was raised from the event that year.

On 2 September 2000, the League and the Hospital lost one of its most fervent supporters with the sudden death of **Mrs Elizabeth Royston**, who had been president of the RMH Birthday League Auxiliary since 1986. Mrs Royston was also Vice-President of the RMH Auxiliary Executive, of which she had been a member for 26 years.

A plaque honouring Mrs Royston's contribution to the Hospital has been placed above the 'Birthday Book', which still takes pride of place in the Hospital entrance foyer.

## Kiosk Auxiliary – established 1922

The RMH Kiosk Auxiliary was established in 1922 at The Melbourne Hospital in Lonsdale Street. It was originally known as the Melbourne (Kiosk) Auxiliary – and was one of the first three branches of the Melbourne Hospital Red Cross Auxiliary. It is one of the survivors of the RMH Auxiliary movement and is still operating the Hospital's busy Essy Zwar Kiosk to this day.

As its name suggests, the Kiosk Auxiliary operated the Hospital's kiosk, originally known as 'The Bunne House', providing a food service for patients, as well as for staff and visitors, and thus, through the sale of these items, collected funds for the benefit of the Hospital.

Members of the Auxiliary staffed and managed the kiosk and were in effect the Hospital's very **first organised volunteer** work force. They also joined in activities of the combined Auxiliaries, such as selling raffle tickets or baking for stalls, from time to time.

In the early days, the Auxiliary comprised many former students of Fintona Girls' School in Balwyn (the '**Old Fintonians**'), who staffed the kiosk every morning and visited wards throughout the Hospital with trays of goods for sale and to spend some time visiting patients.

One of the Auxiliary's founders, Mrs Sylvia Letcher BEM, served the Hospital for over 70 years. In 1970, in appreciation of Mrs Letcher's

considerable length of service to the RMH Kiosk Auxiliary, a \$50 prize was awarded to fourth year medical students in her honour. An anonymous donor funded this prize for five years.

In 1992, Mrs Letcher received a special gift in recognition of her 70 years of service to the Hospital! She resigned the following year due to ill health, but continued her interest in the Hospital and support for the Auxiliary as its Patron until her death in 1995. A service was held in the Hospital chapel to celebrate her memory.

*'Mrs Letcher loved to talk about the old Melbourne Hospital in Lonsdale Street and the Bunne Shop. She was very proud to have been associated with the place. From the very beginning she had been an integral part of the Kiosk Auxiliary, filling so many different roles, working on the Executive and eventually as its Patron.'*

### **Mrs Frances Rigby, President RMH Auxiliaries, 1989-1998**

The Auxiliary's kiosk was popular with staff, patients and visitors alike. In 1926-1927 it was rebuilt and enlarged to accommodate the increasing store 'traffic'. Throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, despite the economic depression gripping the city, the number of people offering to work

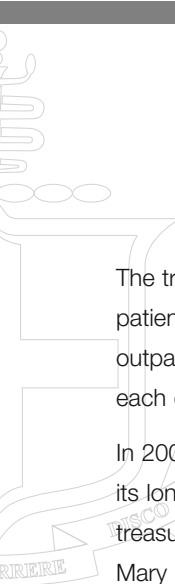
as voluntary helpers for the afternoon shift far exceeded the number required. This changed somewhat in the early 1940s, as many younger women found themselves occupied with 'war duties'.

Money raised through the kiosk venture has mostly been used to purchase **medical equipment** for the Hospital. In the early 1930s, the Kiosk Auxiliary funded the purchase of a diathermy machine and an electric pump for the operating theatres. But it was not only patients who benefited from the work of this group. That year it also provided funds to furnish the Women Residents' Sitting Room.

In 1958-1959, the kiosk officially adopted the name 'Essy Zwar Kiosk' in memory of the Auxiliary's founder and first President, **Mrs BT (Essy) Zwar**. Mrs Zwar attended the inaugural meeting of the RMH Auxiliaries, which took place in Lady Grice's home in 1921. She was President of the Kiosk Auxiliary for 29 years, until she resigned in 1951, and her interest continued until her death on 15 December 1961.

In the 1960s, the Kiosk Auxiliary was the largest contributor to overall Auxiliary income, and its members were successful in raising around £5000 per year for most of that decade (which was around one third of all income per year). It has consistently been a main fundraiser for the Central Council of Auxiliaries.

In 1995, the kiosk went mobile with the instigation of a new venture – the kiosk trolley, staffed by volunteers.



The trolley delivers kiosk goods to patients on wards and those in outpatient waiting rooms two times each day, Monday to Friday.

In 2000, the auxiliary lost one of its longest serving members, its treasurer and former president Mrs Mary Robson OAM. Mrs Robson had served as a member of the Kiosk Auxiliary for 32 years. A plaque acknowledging her work takes pride of place in the kiosk.

Today, the Essy Zwar Kiosk still greets all people entering the Hospital's busy entrance foyer off Grattan Street in Parkville. Members of the RMH Kiosk Auxiliary continue to uphold Mrs Zwar's inspired work to this day, staffing the busy kiosk throughout the year, selling drinks, snacks, newspapers, magazines and small gifts to raise funds for medical equipment.

## Almoner Auxiliary – established 1924

The Auxiliaries' commitment to the patients of the Royal Melbourne Hospital is exemplified in the work of the **Almoner (Social Service) Auxiliary**, founded in 1924 by the first honorary organising secretary of the Auxiliaries, Mrs Constance Hughes.

Mrs Hughes had been involved in efforts to found the RMH Auxiliaries in 1921. She had an intimate knowledge of the needs of the Hospital, and soon formed a Social Service Bureau, which eventually gave rise to the Almoner (Social Service) Auxiliary. This in turn led to the formation of the Almoner Institute of Victoria of which Mrs Hughes was a founding member.

The Auxiliary was established in recognition of the need for some organisation to care for patients treated in the Hospital – many of them for long periods of time and at great expense to the institution, and who, when discharged, would find themselves without money, unfit for work or with no work to return to, and often with large families depending on them.

To this end, the Auxiliary operated an ambulance car for several years until September 1925, when it was put out of commission due to rising running costs. During its use the ambulance car delivered 50 patients to their homes. The auxiliary continued the patient transport service using a standard motorcar.

The secretary of the Almoner Auxiliary operated as the Hospital social worker, long before this was a standard role within a Hospital. In 1924-1925, the secretary Miss L Davis arranged after care treatment for 65 patients.

By 1926-1927, the Auxiliary assisted 150 cases per year; mostly providing support to families and finding temporary care for children in suitable homes, and distributing clothing and surgical appliances, spectacles and artificial limbs as required.

Due to costs it was decided that the social service car should only be used in very urgent cases – patients whose chance of treatment is entirely dependent on some means of transport being provided were brought to the Hospital in this ambulance car. In 1926-1927, the Invalid Aid Fund of the Felton Bequest provided for £100 per year to support the Auxiliary's work.

The Social Service Auxiliary changed its name to the 'Hospital Almoner Department' (also known as the 'Almoner Auxiliary') in 1929, and was by then dealing with an average of 35 new cases per month.

Towards the end of 1928, as a result of negotiations between the RMH Board of Management and the Auxiliary, it was decided to appoint a fully qualified almoner from England to the Hospital for 12 months to instruct local candidates about the work and to reorganise the department. This was made possible by a gift from the Orient Company of a free first class

passage. Various donations and proceeds from entertainments organised by the branch provided or the salary of the almoner. The Hospital's first paid almoner, Miss Angela (Agnes) MacIntyre, arrived in 1929, replacing Miss Davis who had been secretary of the Auxiliary for more than four years.

In 1937, the Almoner Auxiliary purchased a new ambulance for the sum of £527. The old one was traded in for £127 and the remaining £300 was paid in full the following year. Melbourne City Council contributed £100 for car maintenance each year (1938-1940). The ambulance car was a tremendous asset to the department and in 1938 it travelled 11,833 miles and provided transport for 694 patients.

The RMH Almoner Auxiliary's pioneering work in inaugurating the Hospital Almoner Movement in Australia was officially recognised at the Auxiliary's Annual Meeting in August 1938 where Miss Jocelyn Hyslop, Directress of Social Training at the Board of Studies presided and representatives of the Victorian Institute of Hospital Almoners and the RMH's Honorary Medical Staff paid tribute.

The Almoner Auxiliary operated the Ambulance Service throughout the Second World War. It travelled 0,877 miles in 1941-1942; 11,000 in 1942-1943. In 1943-1944, the Auxiliary decided to raise money for a new ambulance. In September 1946, a new £745 ambulance was presented to the Hospital.

The Auxiliary maintained the vehicle at a cost of £30 per month. It travelled 17,490 miles and transported 2098 patients in 1947-1948. Patients were encouraged to make a small donation, if they were able, to help support the service (£91/11/- was contributed by patients in 1947-1948).

In 1946-1947, the ambulance travelled 20,657 miles and transported 915 patients to and from the Hospital, which comprised 3830 trips.

The Almoner Auxiliary disbanded in December 1977 after more than 50 years service to the patients of the Royal Melbourne Hospital. The fine profession of Hospital social work that now exists in this state along with the RMH's highly regarded Social Work Department remain as its legacy

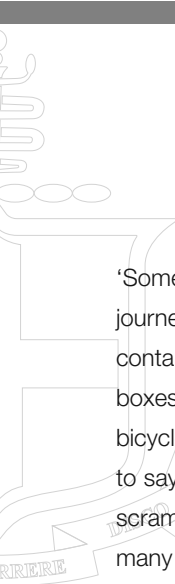
## Annual Egg Appeal

The Annual Egg Appeal, inaugurated in October 1924, was a highlight of The Royal Melbourne Hospital's activities for six decades. This Appeal for eggs to stock the Hospital kitchen was enthusiastically embraced by communities across the City of Melbourne, the State of Victoria and beyond and remains a fond childhood memory for many older Melbournians.

In the early 1920s, the cost of purchasing more than 100,000 eggs required for the Hospital kitchen each year was placing a considerable burden on the finances of the Melbourne Hospital. This was further exacerbated by the volatility of egg prices, which were subject to increase significantly when supplies were low.

To combat this, in 1924, kitchen staff decided to store reserve stocks to be used when supplies were short, and called on the Auxiliaries to help gather eggs from the community. Once collected, the eggs were sorted and higher quality intact ones were put aside for immediate use. The yolks and whites were removed from those with cracked shells, frozen in tins and stored for a later date. Most years, the eggs donated provided enough supplies for the entire 12 months until the next Appeal, and often well into the following year.

From the outset, it was the school children of Melbourne's suburbs who most strongly supported this Appeal. Each year, on one day in October, school children across the state would bring eggs to school for the RMH.



'Some eggs (had) a most hazardous journey, arriving in all kind of containers, paper bags, cardboard boxes, schoolbags, in pockets on bicycles and ponies, but needless to say for the few which may be scrambled on the way to school, many find their way eventually into the Hospital kitchen.'

In the 1930s, local councils joined the effort to collect eggs for the RMH and Melbourne's factories followed suit in October 1940, when Pelaco Ltd opened the Appeal with a gift of 3240 eggs.

Pupils from Presbyterian Ladies College joined the Egg Appeal for the first time in 1940 and donated 1600 eggs and £6 cash; that year the Junior Working Men's College in Latrobe Street sent in the most eggs (7656), followed by Moonee Ponds West State School (2640 eggs).

However, the most tireless supporter of the RMH Annual Egg Appeal was a hall keeper at the Essendon Town Hall, Mr James Roberts, who consistently collected the most eggs and increased his donation year after year. From 1934 to 1963, Mr Roberts personally visited every school across Essendon and surrounding districts – even as far afield as Werribee, Lancefield, Kilmore and Melton. He worked hard to achieve a goal he set himself - 100,000 eggs - which he reached in 1950.

In the early 1960s, when the Appeal branched out to include other Hospitals, Mr Roberts continued his work and apportioned a considerable amount of eggs each year to the

RMH. In 1954, he collected 94,973 eggs, which were divided between six metropolitan hospitals. He collected his millionth egg for Melbourne's Hospitals in 1953!

In 1950, Mr Roberts was special guest at a monthly meeting of the RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries. In appreciation of his outstanding work, RMH Auxiliaries President Mrs R L Chambers presented him with an etching of the Hospital, and Miss HD Grey, the lady superintendent, thanked him on behalf of the Auxiliaries and the Hospital for all he had done over the years.

Thanking the Auxiliaries for their gift, Mr Roberts summed up the spirit of support given to Auxiliaries by the community with the words: 'If there s any small thing I can do for anyone, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again'.

Mr Roberts passed his target of two million eggs collected over 29 years and retired from the Essendon Council in December 1963.

In 1927, the Egg Appeal was fully funded by the RMH Auxiliaries for the first time since its inception. This meant the Auxiliary was able to fully cover the costs of drivers' time, petrol and packaging incurred in collecting and transporting the eggs, which had previously been funded by the Hospital.

In 1930, all expenses in connection with the Egg Appeal were met by a donation from Radio 3LO made through the Lord Mayor's Fund. The radio station contributed proceeds

from a 'community singing session'. That year, the Egg Appeal received additional help from 3LO, by delivering a public broadcast of the Appeal.

In 1936, the result was not as great as in former years as the municipality of Moorabbin, which was then in the centre of a poultry farming district, decided to support another Hospital. And, the following year, in October 1937, the Egg Appeal was 'severely handicapped on account of the (outbreak of) infantile paralysis, as many schools were closed during the months of September, October and November'.

In 1948, eggs were more expensive and, owing to heavy rain during the Appeal period, many children were unable to travel far afield to farms and country areas to collect eggs.

By the late 1940s, more than 600 egg cases were stored away each year to be filled with protective containers to ensure the eggs travelled safely. The cases were labelled and dispatched by truck direct to schools and to railway stations for those in country districts all over Victoria.

The Annual RMH Egg Appeal held on Tuesday 3 October 1950 was a greater success than ever before. School children were again the biggest supporters and in recognition of their efforts, each school that supported the Appeal was presented with a certificate, as were the boy and girl in each school who had collected the greatest number of eggs.

In the early 1950s, the high cost of eggs (4/10d per dozen) affected egg

donations. In 1954, the RMH was using 10,080 eggs per week. Yet, in 1955 and 1956 the community still collected enough eggs to supply the Hospital for general cooking purposes for the whole year.

From 1953-1956, Colonel George Sutton of Radio 3UZ's 'Tailwaggers' program interviewed the Hospital's organising secretary to ask for support in the lead up to the Appeal. For some years, the Appeal had been publicised by HC Sleigh Limited who made public announcements in their 7 o'clock news session on Radio 3DB, and over the years Melbourne's newspapers had always been most helpful in asking readers for support.

In 1956, boys from Caulfield Technical School collected 16,000 eggs in five days. Over the past six years that school had donated more than 100,000 eggs to the Appeal.

In 1958, the price of eggs dropped to 1/- per dozen, and sales increased by 30%, which contributed to the success of the Appeal that year. Mr Roberts again collected the most eggs (111,261) and many smaller state schools in 'country' areas helped boost numbers: Mount Evelyn (1476), Emerald (1500), The Basin (1130) and Olinda (1000) in 1958; and Whittlesea (860), Rosebud High School (1872), Dandenong High School (2560), Pakenham High School (2500) and Tooradin North (840) in 1957.

From the end of WWII through to the early 1960s, the Egg Appeal went from strength to strength. The 239,632 eggs collected in 1960

resulted in 664 tins of pulp being put in cold storage. School children across Victoria continued their support, with Caulfield Technical School presenting a cheque for £350 and Rosebud High School collecting 4800 eggs. Small schools in 'country' areas also did very well. In 1960, Whittlesea State School collected 3458 eggs, Mt Evelyn State School, 206; Kilsyth State School, 1080, and children at Olinda State School sent in 2160 eggs.

In 1961, the first interstate school supported the Appeal – Osborne Well School at Berrigan, New South Wales, and the Appeal was well publicised on Victoria's television and radio stations and various newspapers.

Each year, prior to the Appeal, the Auxiliary Organiser Miss Kay Laurence and auxiliary members would visit 30-50 schools across the city to explain how the eggs were used and to thank children for their support. Aside from the efforts involved in collecting eggs and visiting schools to thank students and teachers, the Appeal now involved a seven-week planning period with extra help needed in the transport office to handle telephone messages and keep an account of eggs as they were collected.

In 1962, the Appeal was still going strong, but the following year it suffered a severe blow from which it was never really able to recover. In 1963, the Metropolitan Hospitals' Association took over the Appeal and broadened it to include several major Melbourne Hospitals. The RMH

Auxiliaries were able to collect on behalf of their hospital, but were not permitted to make personal representations to schools as in the past. This was a major obstacle, in a year that they also felt the loss of the Appeal's strongest support Mr Roberts of Essendon, who retired the same year.

The MHA Egg Appeal received only 35,084 eggs. Many schools still contributed to the RMH and were encouraged to make cash donations to reduce transport costs. While monetary donations did nearly double in 1964, eggs donations fell 60 per cent and were never to rise to the levels of the early 1960s again. Egg donations fell significantly and, from that time on the RMH Auxiliaries were unable to justify the costs incurred in employing a driver to collect eggs.

By 1965, several Hospitals were collecting in the same areas as the RMH, and the Hospital was becoming increasingly dependent on help from outer suburban areas. Eggs were becoming more expensive (53 cents a dozen in 1965) and this, combined with the higher cost of living, adversely affected donations from the community.

In 1966, many schoolteachers reported that they were finding it difficult to obtain support for the Appeal as schools were being approached by so many different organisations. The Royal Melbourne Hospital was disadvantaged by not having a strong local community base, as did outer suburban Hospitals like the Austin (in Heidelberg) and Box Hill Hospitals.

The Egg Appeal had resurgence in 1970, when cash donations increased substantially. Transport costs were escalating and the effort involved in collecting eggs was becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. The Auxiliaries were not so concerned about falling donations of eggs. Eighty-one schools supported the Appeal (10 more than the previous year). However, it was something of a last hoorah.

The penultimate Annual RMH Egg Appeal, held in October 1974, was not so successful. The number of eggs donated had been steadily declining since 1963, and the Appeal was unable to recover from the 60 per cent fall that year. Added to this was the recent loss of Mr Ruffles, RMH Chief Transport Officer, who had arranged the transportation of eggs for every Egg Appeal since its inception 50 years earlier and was the face of the Appeal for many school principals and school children across Melbourne. Another challenge was the increased competition for people's attention which came from well-organised major fundraising events, such as 'Mediwalk', which occurred at around the same time.

In 1975, 15 schools collected 2376 eggs and \$1895.14 cash on behalf of the RMH. That was the last time the Appeal was mentioned in Annual Reports of the RMH Auxiliaries since its inception in 1924 – during which time the people of Victoria helped feed patients at Melbourne's oldest Hospital by collecting more than seven million eggs and several hundreds of thousands of dollars!

## Egg Tally: 1924-1975

The Annual RMH Egg Appeal is a constant thread that winds through the first six decades of the Auxiliaries. Given the problems of comparing annual financial contributions over this time, it stands as an interesting 'litmus test' of the support garnered from the community over all those years. (It is reasonable after all to compare an egg with an egg, regardless of the year, in a way that the same cannot be done with a dollar or a pound.)

year	eggs	cash donations
1924	80,000	
1925	80,000	
1926	105,000	
1927	82,792	
1928	97,000	
1929	96,000	£33
1930	89,589	£22/15/6
1931	87,501	£27/10/-
1932	109,122	£20
1933	96,820	£17/12/-
1934	104,184	£16/16/9
1936	98,000	£33/9/-
1937	69,202	£26/12/-
1938	83,332	£23/17/-
1939	93,950	£28
1940	93,196	£31/6/-
1941	122,000	£65/12/3
1942	135,000	£53/4/3
1943	123,000	£111/12/6
1944	163,535	£109/16/-
1945	190,000	£93/15/6
1946	270,707	£113/10/7
1947	281,000	£152/0/4
1948	261,000	£125/12/5
1949	276,000	£134
1950	300,000	£193/13/1
1951	255,000	£363/6/10
1952	240,062	£225/17/2
1953**	250,000	
1954	275,000	£913
1955	280,275	£862
1956	252,000	£70/10/-
1957	233,270	£693
1958	260,680	£630
1959	265,187	£515/13/3
1960	239,632	£747/10/6
1961	222,786	£635/12/8
1962	220,754	£389/9/2
1963	67,260	£600
1964	60,840	£811



## 2. RESTRUCTURING AND REGROUPING (1930-1938)

On 4 June 1930, at their eighth Annual Meeting, the RMH Auxiliaries expressed much regret over the resignation of Lady Miller OBE from the office of President, which she had held since 1926. Lady Miller was elected Vice-President of the original Central body, the Melbourne Hospital Red Cross Auxiliary, at its inception in 1921.

Later that year, on 8 September 1930, a special general meeting was called at which the Constitution was altered to increase the number of vice-presidents from three to five. The first five were: Mrs Harold Luxton (Lady Mayoress), Lady Allen, Lady Stawell, Mrs B Thompson and Mrs Russell Clarke.

Throughout the 1930s, annual meetings of the RMH Auxiliaries were held in the Hospital's Outpatients' Hall, with proceedings followed by a musical program and formal afternoon tea provided by the RMH Committee of Management. These were very well attended, with around 250 Auxiliary members at each gathering.

On 5 March 1931, the Auxiliaries lost one of their pioneers, with the death of Lady Grice. The inaugural meeting of the RMH Auxiliaries had been held in her home in 1921 and, as President for the first four years and later Patron, Lady Grice took a keen interest in the development of the Hospital's auxiliary movement.

Towards the middle of the 1930s, while most Auxiliaries continued to do very well, several began to report difficulties maintaining memberships due to the worsening economic climate and the competing demands of work being placed on some of their female members. In 1933, the **Abbotsford Auxiliary** discontinued its meetings and effectively disbanded. After several very successful years, the **Birthday League** was forced to concede it would be unable to meet targets set the previous year as it was becoming increasingly difficult to enrol new members. **Essendon Younger Set Auxiliary** reported a 'rather difficult' year, with a 'membership of only 14 active members, who are mostly business girls'.


Branches in the Dandenong Ranges also felt the pinch. **Kallista, Sherbrooke & The Patch Auxiliary** amalgamated with the local branch of the Country Women's Association in the hope that it might increase interest and help for the Hospital. **Monbulk Auxiliary** had a tough year due to the resignation of its president, Mrs Swale, owing to pressure of work. That Auxiliary disbanded in late 1933.

While it was increasingly difficult to attract and retain members, the support given to the Hospital and its patients by the Auxiliaries was more important than ever in those harder times. The economic hardships of the era are probably best summed up by the report from the **Outpatients' Canteen Auxiliary** for 1932-1933, which stated that: 'Owing to continued poverty amongst the

1965	58,716	\$1272.75
1966	43,356	\$1373.78
1967	34,650	\$1538.48
1968*	30,519	\$1706.72
1969	26,388	\$1874.95
1970	20,778	\$2358.59
1971	26,811	\$4218.95
1972	21,912	\$3604.62
1973	21,192	\$3895.06
1974	7200	\$2919.16
1975	2376	\$1895.14
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7,004,574</b>

\* no record for 1968 – have averaged previous and following year

\*\* figure for this year believed to be eggs donated plus those bought with cash donations



outpatients, the receipts have not been so large this year. Five hundred and fifty free meals have been distributed on the recommendation of the almoner, and we have also provided medicine bottles free of charge'.

Still, there was much to be hopeful about. On 24 March 1933, a new Auxiliary – the **RMH Kew Auxiliary** – was formed at a meeting convened by the Mayoress of Kew, Mrs Frank White. One month later, the Auxiliary had 38 members and arrangements had been made for meetings to be held on the second Wednesday in each month at the Kew Town Hall.

On 7 June 1933, Mrs Joseph Levi, who had presided over the RMH Auxiliaries since Lady Miller's resignation in June 1930, resigned due to ill health. Mrs Levi was another of the pioneers of the RMH Auxiliaries, having been Vice-President since its formation in 1921, and President for the past three years.

At a general meeting of Auxiliaries, held at Melbourne Hospital on 20 July 1933, Secretary of the Hospital, Colonel Rupert Fanning, had some news for the 50 auxiliary members in attendance. He told them that, following a meeting about Hospital finances between the Hospital's economy committee and auxiliary office-bearers, the Hospital's Committee of Management had appointed a subcommittee to assist in extending the work of the Auxiliaries. The Hospital planned to launch a Special Appeal for £75,000 and needed the support of its Auxiliaries.

The subcommittee recommended that, owing to the large amount of extra work proposed a paid organising secretary should be appointed. This would not interfere in any way with branches working as Red Cross auxiliaries; they would continue as usual and report in the same way as other Red Cross branches located throughout Australia working for similar institutions.

The subcommittee also recommended that, as the Melbourne Hospital was now making an individual Appeal to the general public, it would be advisable to change the title of the Auxiliaries from 'Melbourne Hospital Red Cross Auxiliary' to 'Melbourne Hospital Auxiliary'. These recommendations were all adopted and the constitution was amended accordingly. A further amendment allowed for there to be more than one patron(ess) and Mrs Joseph Levi joined Lady Miller as Patrons of the newly named Melbourne Hospital Auxiliary.

The first salaried organising secretary, Mrs IA Green, who had been organiser of the **Birthday League**, was appointed in July 1933. In September 1933, the Hospital committee allocated a room next to the **Birthday League** office for the use of Auxiliaries. Having an office located in the Hospital proved a great boon. It enabled Mrs Green to engage a typist and gave Auxiliary members a central meeting place. Within 10 months, six new Auxiliaries had been formed, including two 'younger sets', and several existing branches had

been reorganised and attracted new members. Several branches used the facilities to produce monthly 'news sheets' to update members on Auxiliary activities.

The Auxiliary room was furnished and equipped through the generosity of Mr Sidney Myer. Mr Myer also provided a Renault car for the use of Mrs Green, and met all expenses in connection with its operation for the first year. In 1936-1937, the car was replaced when Mr CB Hearn, General Manager of Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society generously loaned a car to the organising secretary. The Renault was returned with gratitude to the Myer family, which continued to supply petrol and oil for the new vehicle.

The Hospital launched its Special Appeal for £75,000 in February 1934. The Auxiliaries enthusiastically supported the campaign, arranging 'entertainments', fetes, dances and bridge parties; selling badges and bumper stickers and **rattling collection** tins to fill with coins. By April 1934, they had raised £1882/6/9 on top of their regular ongoing contribution to the Royal Melbourne Hospital of cash and kind.

At the general meeting in July 1933, Mrs Harold Clapp was elected as the new President. She was forced to resign on doctor's advice on 26 April 1934. During her short term of office, Mrs Clapp lobbied for closer cooperation between the Hospital's Committee of Management and its Auxiliary members. Largely due to her representations, the Hospital decided

to appoint its first female committee member. Miss Jessie Bage, honorary secretary of the RMH Auxiliaries, was elected to fill the position.

From the outset of the Auxiliary movement, the Hospital's Committee of Management had appointed representatives to the Auxiliary Committee to keep the Hospital in touch with the work being done, and to advise and assist the Auxiliaries where necessary. With the appointment of the auxiliary organiser and provision of an office at the Hospital the scope and volume of the work of Auxiliaries greatly increased. In September 1934, with the warm approval of the Auxiliary Council, the Hospital management appointed an Auxiliary Services Committee (comprising members of the Hospital Board and the Auxiliaries) to direct and organise the Auxiliaries' work. This operated as a special department of the Hospital, and was the predecessor to the model that exists today, where the auxiliaries are organised and supported by the Hospital's Community Relations Department staff.

Following the reorganisation of the Auxiliary service, all proceeds from events organised specifically for the benefit of the Hospital were paid through the Auxiliary room. Prior to this, Auxiliaries managed their accounts separately. The auxiliary organiser coordinated all functions associated with the Hospital, including those run by Auxiliaries and those run by many outside organisations for the benefit of the RMH and its patients.

This coordinated approach proved most successful. Functions held in 1934-1935 raised £1710/11/9, and included: Myer Shoe Store Dance, Foy & Gibson's Dance (both for the Birthday League), Rockman's Staff Ball, Essendon Operatic Society performance, a dance at Bribon's, two dances at the Merri Palais, Caulfield Debutantes Ball, 25 Hosts' Ball, Cafe Chantant, a Chinese play by the Chung Wah Dramatic Society, a fete organised by students of St Catherine's School and a race meeting at Caulfield, a golf gymkhana at the Eastern Golf Course, and, of course, the Mooltan Ball.


The Mooltan Ball was the social highlight of 1934-1935, not only for the RMH and its supporters but also for many Melbournians. On 22 October 1934, under the patronage of special guests His Excellency the Governor of Victoria and Lady Huntingfield, a 'very enjoyable' ball was held aboard the *RMS Mooltan*, with proceeds of £539/3/6 shared between the Hospital and the Seaman's Mission.

The concept of holding a Gala Ball onboard a ship proved very popular, and many ships docking in Melbourne ports over the coming years were the scenes of festive events on behalf of the RMH. On 6 June 1935, **Toorak (Red Cross) Auxiliary** and **South Yarra (Red Cross) Auxiliary** arranged a ball aboard the *TSMV Manoora*. The Adelaide Steamship Company generously provided the ship, supper and much else. The event raised £520/17/9.

On Cup Eve 1935, a 'brilliant' ball was held on board the *RMH Orion*. His Excellency the Governor of Victoria and Lady Huntingfield once again attended as special guests, and proceeds were divided between the RMH and the Royal District Nursing Society. £989/10/- was raised. The Orient Steam Navigation Company provided the ship, officers and staff for the night.

The Hospital's first 'All Auxiliaries' event was the Combined Auxiliary Fete held at 'Grong Grong' in Toorak Road, Toorak, home of Mr and Mrs Thomas Smith, on 14 March 1936. As this was the first time all Auxiliaries had worked together, it was felt that the fete, whilst raising money would also help bring about a team spirit and give Auxiliary members the opportunity to meet each other. 'Grong Grong' was an ideal setting and all auxiliaries worked splendidly to make the function a success. The event included a linen raffle, which raised £133/15/-, and many stalls, with each Auxiliary retaining the money they raised for their own use. Overall, the event raised £903/4/7.

Things were definitely looking up. In 1935-1936, membership of the **RMH Brighton Auxiliary** had steadily increased to around 260 and their fundraising efforts contributed £229/19/9 to Hospital funds. The Auxiliary's major money-raising effort for that year was a theatrical performance by Old Fintonians and Old Scotch Collegians, 'A Flat to Let', held at the Garrick Theatre in November 1935, which was very



successful and raised a net profit of £100/9/9. At the same theatre 17 months later, on 21 April 1937, a performance of 'Distinguished Gathering' by the Old Lauristonian's Dramatic Society resulted in a profit of £170 for Auxiliary funds.

The 120-member-strong Canterbury **Auxiliary** also had a very successful 12 months in 1935-1936. Through various events staged throughout the year, including a bridge party, flower day (complete with stalls selling cakes, tea, embroidered towels and poppies and a flower arranging competition), and a fete at the home of Mr and Mrs JS Balderstone, the Auxiliary contributed £200/11/8 to the Hospital.

*I remember when...  
Miss Danks formed the  
Canterbury Auxiliary in 1933  
with 140 ladies attending  
the inaugural meeting. The  
founding members felt quite  
special and our first President  
was Mrs R G Menzies, later  
to become Dame Pattie  
Menzies and later still to be  
our Patroness for many years.  
The members held many  
social functions as fundraisers  
but the nimble-fingered also  
did sewing for the Hospital  
and handwork to sell while  
the accomplished cooks  
among them made  
marvellous cakes to sell  
at their fetes and stalls.  
They were proud to be the  
Canterbury Auxiliary.*

**Mrs Frances Rigby OAM, CCA  
President 1989-1998**

On 28 February 1936, a meeting was held in the Footscray Scout Hall to form a new group, to be known as the **RMH Footscray & Yarraville Auxiliary**. Eleven members joined immediately and eight weeks later membership increased to 16.

At the 13th Annual Meeting of the RMH Auxiliaries, held on 12 June 1935, it was decided to alter the title of the managing body from 'Central Executive Committee' to 'Central Council', the name by which it is still known to this day.

In 1935-1936, the organising secretary suggested to the Auxiliary Service Committee that a room be set aside for the use of relatives and friends of patients, 'so their waiting time might be more comfortable'. The idea was accepted and the Hospital's Committee of Management allocated a room for this purpose. Auxiliary members Mrs Bloomfield, Mrs MacGlashan, Mrs Myer and Mrs Steele contributed to the furnishings, which enabled the room to be established free of cost.

On 5 August 1936, a dinner was held in the Grill Room at Myer, with the Hon. RG Menzies KC PC (who would later become Prime Minister of Australia) as special guest speaker. £63 was raised as a result of this effort.

During that year, also at Myer, the RMH Auxiliaries participated in a novel table setting display and competition between representatives of various Melbourne Hospitals. Lady Stawell chose a modern dessert design and Mrs John Stawell arranged a Georgian dinner table for the two RMH tables. Shoppers paid a small sum for voting slips and the profits were apportioned according to the voting tally, resulting in proceeds of £197/12/5 for the RMH.

At the 17th Annual Meeting of the RMH Auxiliaries held on Wednesday 14 June 1939, Dr Stewart Cowen spoke about the Hospital's role as a training school. For many years, the RMH was the only training Hospital for medical students, and since 1909 no less than 70 per cent of medical

students selected The Royal Melbourne Hospital as their training school. He appealed to the Auxiliaries to help furnish the medical students' quarters at the Hospital, and assist in making the student's life happier and more comfortable.

In 1937, instead of the usual jumble sale, the organising secretary Mrs Constance Hughes arranged for old clothes 'objets d'art' and such goods to be made available for sale within the Hospital. The second-hand shop was in its infancy.

By the end of the decade, Hospital executives were beginning to talk of the need to move the RMH from its Lonsdale Street location to a new site in Parkville on the city's northern edge. Auxiliaries were initially asked to support a special Building Appeal for the new Hospital to take place in March, April and May 1939, but this was later postponed until early 1940 due to the devastating bushfires of 1939.

With the election of Cr AW Coles as Lord Mayor of Melbourne in 1938-1939, Mrs Coles was invited to become Patron and generously consented to do so. Thus began the tradition of city Lord Mayors, and later state Governors' wives graciously accepting the invitation to give their patronage to the RMH. From 1938 through until 1985 the wives of each successive Lord Mayor of Melbourne were Patrons of the RMH Auxiliaries. Since 1985, the wife of each Governor of the State of Victoria has been a patron.

In 1938-1939, Central Council meetings were being held on the fourth Tuesday of every month, with the exception of December and January. At these meetings, branch reports were received and work for the ensuing month outlined. The Auxiliary operations were very well organised. Reports of all the RMH Red Cross branches were also sent to the Hospital Auxiliaries Committee of the Red Cross.

In October 1938, it was decided that routine business should be entrusted to the Auxiliary Room Committee, henceforth to be known as the 'Central Council of Auxiliaries Executive Committee'. Two members of the Hospital's Board of Management were appointed to this committee, Mrs Sidney Myer and Miss Jessie Bage. Both devoted many years of service to the RMH Auxiliaries.

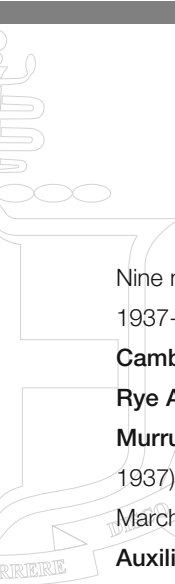
On Tuesday 21 March 1939, Auxiliary representatives gathered in the Auxiliary Room to hear Mrs TW White of the Australian Red Cross Society speak about the revival in Red Cross activities in times of national stress. This was a timely address – only five months later Australia was at war.

Following the address, members of the **Kiosk, Kiosk Junior and Canterbury Junior** Auxiliaries formed a Red Cross company under the leadership of Mrs JP Major, and members of **Toorak** and **South Yarra** Auxiliaries did the same under the leadership of Mrs Konrad Hiller. The companies promptly organised themselves. The Hospital's Lady

Superintendent, Miss HD Grey, prepared a syllabus for a five-week course of instruction in home nursing and 'gas precaution'. Only five weeks after that initial meeting, classes were under way.

A major effort for the end of the decade was the RMH Ball of Flowers held at the *Palais de Danse*, St Kilda, on Oak's Night, 3 November 1938. Under the patronage of their Excellencies the Governor General and Lady Gowrie and His Excellency the Governor and Lady Huntingfield, the event was a tremendous success. 'This was one of the most brilliant functions held in race week, and resulted in a net profit of £644/5/4, which was equally divided between The Royal Melbourne Hospital and Melbourne District Nursing Service.'

Despite such festivities, times were lean and the Auxiliaries had to draw on their ingenuity and creativity to acquire scarce resources needed to continue their patient support activities. In 1938, they received a gift of large quantity of calico, a waste product used in the manufacture of car tyres. Auxiliary members set about testing methods to clean sample strips of the glazed fabric, provided by General Tyre & Motor Company. It was found that once washed it was suitable for making up into 'T' bandages. Various auxiliary members made up over 600 of these that year, worth a total value of £111/15/-, which was a significant saving to the Hospital.



Nine new Auxiliaries were formed in 1937-1938, including **RMH East Camberwell Auxiliary** (July 1937), **Rye Auxiliary** (August 1937), **Murrumbeena Auxiliary** (November 1937), **Sandringham Auxiliary** (21 March 1938), and the **Sewing Circle Auxiliary** (formed at Moreland Church of Christ School Hall in late 1937), which met weekly to make up garments to supply the Hospital's linen cupboard.

Prior to 1937 Auxiliaries had been set up according to either the areas where members lived (location-based, eg. Canterbury, Toorak or South Yarra Auxiliaries) or the particular service they provided to the Hospital (service-based, eg. the kiosk, almoner service or sewing group). This changed in 1937-1938, with the establishment of three rather unique groups.

For some years patients attending Dr Howden's clinic had raised money amongst themselves and their friends to help pay for their injections. They decided to link up with the Hospital's Auxiliary movement to boost their efforts and, in 1937, the **Lillian & Elizabeth (Dr Howden's Clinic) Auxiliary** was born. This was quite possibly the first patient-focussed auxiliary group formed at any hospital in Australia.

The following year, on 22 March 1938, the Mayor of Box Hill, Cr Archer, presided over a meeting in the local town hall where another new Auxiliary was formed. The Box Hill Men's Auxiliary was the first men's Auxiliary

connected with the Royal Melbourne Hospital and had 50 members enlisted within a month.

Then, in December 1937 members of the Jungle Club, a group of young people from the Box Hill and Surrey Hills areas, formed an Auxiliary aimed at raising funds for the RMH through social functions for people of their age groups. This was known as the **Box Hill Junior Auxiliary**.

Despite setbacks caused by unprecedented economic conditions, the depression, drought and bush fires, the RMH Auxiliaries raised £5071/18/8 in 1938-1939 and branches showed steady increases in membership. The healthy state of membership is reflected in **Northcote Red Cross Auxiliary** reports, which state that in April 1939 it had received 16 new members over the past 12 months and had a total of 87 members and 11 associate members.

The **Time & Talents Auxiliary** also reported a 'marked increase in membership' as a 'pleasing feature' of that year's work.

A cine-sound film depicting various phases of Hospital activity was shot during 1937 and shown for the first time at the Athenaeum Theatre in August 1937, where Mr Sidney Myer hosted a cinema and supper party for the **Birthday League Auxiliary**. About 200 RMH Auxiliary members attended and were so impressed with the film that they decided to obtain a portable cinema outfit so they could take it with them when talking to community groups.

The management of Kodak Pty Ltd generously donated a portable screen and 100 feet of film. Mrs Norman MacGlashan and her son, Hugh, raised additional funds to purchase a projector and additional film and photographic equipment. The film was adjusted to fit the projector and more images added and it was 'now possible to show these excellent films at Auxiliary meetings in the suburbs, and to use them for publicity and propaganda purposes'. In 1938-1939 the Auxiliaries arranged two special screenings of the Hospital film for staff of the *Herald* newspaper.

In December 1938, the annual Christmas party was held in the Outpatients' Hall for about 300 patients. The festivities included a program of singing, with assistance from Radio 3XY and afternoon tea provided by the **Outpatients Canteen Auxiliary**.

The **Sandringham Auxiliary** disbanded in 1938-1939, mostly due to illness of its driving force and founder Mrs AJ Hammond. The Auxiliary's last event was a ball held in the Sandringham Memorial Hall on 12 June 1938, which raised £40/18/-. Many members of this Auxiliary then joined the **Brighton Auxiliary**.

**Mr Percy Shingles**, of *The Argus* newspaper worked as a 'one man band auxiliary' for many years over the late 1930s and well into the 1940s, collecting many thousands of bottles for use in the dispensary and magazines for patient waiting areas. He also helped sell raffle tickets, collected funds for special equipment

for the Pathology Department and worked as gatekeeper at various functions. By 1943-1944, Mr Shingles had collected more than 100,000 bottles and had a bed in a medical ward named in his honour.

In 1939, Miss Jane Bell, former lady superintendent of The Royal Melbourne Hospital, was elected Vice-President of the Central Council of Auxiliaries.

From November 1939 to April 1940, the Auxiliaries coordinated their biggest raffle ticket drive to date, with the first prize a registered 1939 'Buick 40' Special Sedan motorcar. The raffle was drawn on 3 July 1940 at a Bazaar in the Outpatients' Hall, and ended up raising £1416.

Despite the outbreak of war in Europe, 1939 ended on a festive note for patients at the RMH. Auxiliary members made jam as a special Christmas gift for patients, and **Canterbury Auxiliary** donated 130 pounds of French beans to the annual Christmas Cheer celebrations.

Mrs Howard Praagst was mainly responsible for this generous gift and also collected funds for a juice extractor for the kitchen. As usual, Auxiliary members brought in flowers to decorate wards. Mr Percy Shingles and staff of *The Argus* and 'Australasian' newspapers organised a collection, which raised £3 towards the decoration of ward 19, which was transformed into a miniature garden complete with watering can, trowels, flower beds, butterflies, grass pots and a wishing well.

Nurses too benefited from the Auxiliaries' support. In 1939-1940, the nurses' sitting room was completely redecorated and refurnished with funds provided by the **Outpatients' Canteen Auxiliary** and **Northcote Auxiliary**. Sir Aaron Danks generously donated a grand piano to complete the room.

The decade ended with the outbreak of war in Europe. RMH Auxiliary members were anxious to do work of a patriotic nature. To enable them to accomplish this most branches formed into two groups – one to continue work for the Hospital and the other to work for the Red Cross and Comforts Fund activities.

In spite of, or perhaps even as a result of, the outbreak of war and the economic hardship of previous years, the RMH Auxiliaries closed the decade on a strong note, with a strong feeling of unity and a sense of purpose to their work.

*'On looking back over the year's work, one cannot help being impressed by the fact that the auxiliary movement is stronger today than it has ever been before. Branch membership is extending in all directions, and members are both keenly interested and enthusiastic in their work. This is a most inspiring feature, and one that calls for the warmest praise.'*

### **Royal Melbourne Hospital Auxiliary Central Council 18th annual report for year ending 30 April 1940**


## Essendon Auxiliary Founded 1930 Later Known as the RMH Essendon Auxiliary

"It was reported that a new branch had been formed at Essendon on October 4th 1930. With the Mayoress, Mrs Arthur Fenton as the President and Mrs Knight acting Honorary Secretary." (from minutes of the Central Council Executive meeting the Melbourne Hospital on Thursday October 23rd 1930 at 2:00pm)

In the following year Mrs A A Thomas was installed as President and Mrs W T Buddon, Secretary and so was begun a long list of dedicated Executive Officers.

It was, in fact, one of the longest-lived auxiliaries of the Hospital, closed only in 1999 with the retirement of Mrs Florence Crook who had been an Executive Member for many years, beginning in 1962. The Auxiliary received considerable help from Essendon Council, particularly in providing a meeting room and supporting their fundraising activities.

The group organised a wide variety of projects including raffles, card afternoons, picture nights and musical programmes. A Younger Set was also formed and their members (reported to be mostly 'business girls') arranged a Cabaret Ball in 1931. They were also keen participants in the Annual Egg



Appeal with the help of Mr Roberts (mentioned elsewhere in the section on the Egg Appeal) often claiming record contributions. Donations were received from the local Community Singing sessions and there was even a Ladies Bowling Tournament in 1934.

The Essendon Auxiliary chose not to do sewing for the Hospital but concentrated on raising money for the endowment of a number of beds and other purchases. At the 50th Anniversary Meeting held in 1980 it was announced that the Auxiliary had donated to the Hospital to that date the sum of \$72,760.

In 1982, when The Royal Melbourne Hospital and the Essendon and District Memorial Hospital were amalgamated, the original Essendon Auxiliary took the prefix of RMH to identify it alongside the two Auxiliaries, which had been supporting the Essendon Hospital. And so it remained the RMH Essendon Auxiliary until its books were closed on 69 years of caring and support for the sick.

## 'Grannies Day' – inaugurated 7 July 1937

Grannies Day, held on a special day at the beginning of spring each year, is the longest running activity for The Royal Melbourne Hospital Auxiliaries. Mrs Edith Anderson, of Rye, a former patient of the RMH, thought up the idea of having a special day for the Hospital's grandmother patients after noticing that many older patients,

especially those from country areas, often seemed lonely and had few visitors.

The first RMH Grannies' Day, held on 7 July 1937, took the shape of an Appeal, with a tea party and concert in the outpatients' hall for grandmother patients. With cooperation from the Melbourne Ladies Flower Mission, and many florists across the city, all 'granny' inpatients were presented with a bunch of violets and a sprig of rosemary for remembrance. In several suburbs across Melbourne, Mayoresses and other ladies organised grannies' tea parties in support of the Hospital – at Sandringham, South Melbourne, Richmond, Prahran and Rye. The Royal Melbourne Hospital Grandmother's Day Appeal raised £85 towards a Granny's Bed Endowment scheme and the report for that year expressed the desire that: 'it is hoped to make Grandmother's Day an annual event'.

That hope has been realised every year since. While the day has been celebrated in many different ways since then, the essence of the tradition has remained strong for the past 66 years.

From the very beginning, members of the **Caulfield & Murrumbeena Auxiliary** were the force behind Grannies' Day, collecting flowers, making up posies and visiting all grandmother patients on wards.

On RMH Grannies' Day 1938, 7 September, each granny inpatient

was again presented with bunch of violets and sprig of rosemary for remembrance. A 'Crazy Word Competition', supported by Macks Furnishing Company and conducted through 'Macks Home Journal', attracted over 1000 entries. First prize was a Malvern Star bicycle, and Mr 'Ossie' Nicholson, the champion cyclist, presented prizes to the winners. This raised £25/5/2 for the 'Granny's Cot' Endowment Fund.

On Grannies Day 1941, Wednesday 3 September, the RMH was inundated with blooms from all over Victoria, 'from the most northern settlement on the South Australian border to the southernmost corner of Gippsland - following a mention in the 'Sun News Pictorial'. One little boy from a remote township in the Wimmera District wrote stating that as his grandmother lived in Sweden, and he did not know when he would see her again, (so) he was sending a box of violets from his own garden plot to a sick granny in the Hospital.

The **Granny's Cot Endowment Fund** achieved its objective of £500 in 1942. On Grannies' Day that year, on Wednesday 7 September, members of the Rye and Caulfield & Murrumbeena Auxiliaries gathered in Ward 6, where Mrs Edith Anderson, originator of the day and a regular Grannies' Day ward visitor, officially presented the Granny's Cot to RMH President Mr BT Zwar. On Grannies' Day 1943, Auxiliary members decorated the cot with garlands of flowers and paid a special visit to the patient occupying the bed.



In 1944, the seed was planted for Grannies' Day to become non-gender specific when it was suggested that grandfather patients be included in the celebrations. 'As we have a Granny's Cot and Grannies' Day, the grandfathers are feeling a little overlooked, so it now remains for some generous person or auxiliary to endow a Grandfather's Cot and then both grandmothers and grandfathers can enjoy a joint celebration.'

Grannies' Day attracted much interest from the press in its early days and has been well covered in radio and television over more recent years. In reports of Grannies' Day 1945, the presence of media visiting the Hospital to interview patients is first mentioned. 'Penelope' of Radio 3UZ visited the Hospital bringing with her bunches of violets for each granny. She was enthusiastic about the suggestion of endowing a grandfather's cot and immediately set about Appealing over the air for donations. Within a few weeks, £60 was received from her sympathetic listeners. Penelope helped out again the following year and raised a further £375 towards the endowment of the grandfather's cot.

On 7 August 1947, RMH Grannies' Day included grandfather patients for the first time and was 'quite an eventful day in the Hospital'. The Grandfather's Cot was endowed, and 45 grandfather and 35 grandmother patients received flowers and visits from Auxiliary members (several remarked that they had never heard of such an occasion before and were very touched by the flowers and attention they received).

Members of the Melbourne Ladies' Flower Mission supported every Grannies' Day up until the late 1940s. They also visited the Hospital every Wednesday throughout the year to distribute flowers to patients and wards. They did this for over 60 years.

Aside from the regular support from florists and the Flower Mission, Grannies' Day was also well supported by the community of the City of Melbourne. For many years, pupils of Canterbury State School sent posies of flowers to the Hospital and many Melbourne grannies also joined the call for flowers, sending in flowers by post to those sick in Hospital.

On 11 August 1948, the RMH Auxiliaries held their first Grandmothers' and Grandfathers' Day. Members of Caulfield & Murrumbeena Auxiliary visited grandmother (60) and grandfather (64) patients. The usual posies were accompanied by gifts of cigarettes and sweets, and it was decided to acknowledge the oldest granny, the one with the most descendants and those resting in the endowed cots with a special gift and visit. Bed 7 in Ward 5 East had been endowed for grandmothers and bed 10 in Ward 5 West was for grandfathers.

For more than 20 years, Mrs J Ryan of Merlynston, joined in the festivities by bringing in posies and visiting patients on wards. Her last visit was in 1949, at the age of 89. She passed away not long after that, but for several years after her death, her daughter continued the 'family

tradition', bringing in flowers and visiting patients on that special day each October.

In 1954, Grannies' Day gifts included toiletries donated by Potter & Moore, who continued to provide gifts for many years.

In the mid to late 1950s, Mr JN Hancock sent daffodils from his bulb farm in Ferntree Gully each year. Regular Grannies' Day visitors included Mrs Marion Creelman and Mrs Geddes of Ascot Vale who brought in flowers for the grandparent patients in appreciation of the care they had received as patients of the Hospital themselves.

In 1960, the annual Grannies' Day lost many of its most fervent supporters when the **Caulfield & Murrumbeena Auxiliary** disbanded. Its members had been instrumental in organising the event since its commencement. However, many remained friends of the RMH and continued the tradition, organising the event each year through to 1971, and visiting elderly patients and giving gifts of violets and rosemary to grandmothers and sweets to grandfathers. In 1969, these friends raised funds to endow another bed for grannies and one for grandfathers.

In 1972, the Executive Committee of the Central Council of Auxiliaries took over the annual event. Since then, the RMH Auxiliary President and members of the Executive Committee have visited all grannies and grandfathers in the Hospital and presented them with gifts. Grannies Day has evolved

observed by members of the Executive and other helpers by presenting every patient in the Hospital with a posy.

In 1976, the auxiliary members and volunteers were joined by well-known television personality Mr (later Sir) Eric Pearce. Rosemary was difficult to obtain and the Botanic Gardens staff came to the rescue. The involvement of a celebrity visitor boosted the day's festivities and its public relations efforts.

In 1986, the Royal Melbourne amalgamated with the Essendon & District Memorial Hospital and the Grannies' Day tradition immediately spread to that campus, with the local Essendon Football Club its strongest supporter.

*We've had many happy days at the Hospital thanks to Grannies Day. Staff, patients and visitors all became involved because we used to search for the Granny and the Grandfather with the greatest number of grandchildren and the competition was keen. I remember one year when the chosen grandmother was booked to return to Albury but the ward staff cancelled the ambulance until the afternoon so their patient could have her celebration. We always had a special*

*guest and I remember another year when the cast of the musical "Beauty and the Beast" discovered it was my birthday and sang Happy Birthday as we went from ward to ward. The guests were always very generous in the time they spent with the staff and patients.*

**Mrs Frances Rigby, RMH  
Auxiliaries President 1989-1998  
(interviewed at the RMH  
September 2002)**

The presence of celebrities such as those listed below has ensured that the title of Grandmother and Grandfather of the Year were always hotly contested, and attracted much excitement amongst, staff, patients and family and friends on the 'winning' wards.

Some special RMH Grannies' Day guests of honour:

- Sir Eric Pearce – 1976
- Bob Rogers, Radio 3UZ personality – 1978
- Mal Walden, television personality – 1981
- Tony Barber, host of 'Sale of the Century' (granny and grandfather of the year appeared on Channel Nine News that Night with Tony) – 1982
- Somers, host of 'Hey Hey it's Saturday' – 1983

- Cliff and Mary Young, long distance walkers (Cliff did his famous 'gumboot shuffle' walk around the wards) – 1984
- Kevin Arnett, television personality – 1985
- Lou Richards, football and television personality – 1986 and 1989 (RMH)
- Mark Harvey, young Essendon Footballer – 1986 (EDMH)
- Mark Wallace and Dean Thompson, Essendon Football Club 1989 (EDMH)
- Mark Bayliss, Collingwood Football Club – 1990 (Parkville)
- Greg Anderson and Mark Harvey, Essendon Football Club – 1990 (Essendon)
- Jo Pearson, television personality – 1991 (Parkville)
- Jennifer Keyte, television personality – 1991 (Essendon)
- Max Walker, sportsman and television personality – 1992 (Parkville)
- Gavin Wanganeen, Essendon Football Club – 1992 (Essendon)
- Mark Mitchell, television personality and comedian – 1993 (Parkville)
- Kieran Murphy, Daniel Winkel, David Calthorpe and Tony Delaney, Essendon Football Club – 1993 (Essendon)
- Lou Richards, football personality – 1994 (Parkville)
- Steve Alessio, Essendon Football Club – 1994 (Essendon)

- Cast of the stage play *Beauty and the Beast* – 1995 (Parkville)
- Danny Morgan, Essendon Football Club – 1995 (Essendon)
- Tony Barber, television personality – 1996 (Parkville)
- Rick Olarenschaw, Essendon Football Club – 1996 (Essendon)
- Denise Drysdale, television personality – 1997 (Parkville)
- Darryl Somers, television personality – 1999

In 2000, it was decided to revamp the 63-year-old annual springtime tradition to include all patients. Like Grannies' Day, the RMH Spring Celebration is held in the first week of September, marking the beginning of spring. The day continues to include the handing out of posies of flowers to patients, only now it includes all patients.

In September 2000, Auxiliary members and friends made up 400 posies for patients. Melbourne florists got behind the event, as they had done for so many years with Grannies' Day, by donating floral arrangements to decorate the Hospital. The festivities extended to a weeklong celebration. That inaugural Spring Celebration, held only three months before Australia's Centenary of Federation year, culminated in a special Federation Lunch, with guest speaker the Lieutenant Governor Lady Southey on Friday 7 September 2000

## Canterbury Auxiliary - established 8 September 1933

During the depression of the late 1800s, the area of Melbourne north of the railway line between Canterbury Road and Whitehorse Road was subdivided into large allotments, creating the new suburb of Canterbury. Many prominent businessmen took up these allotments, including the Danks, Balderstone and Syme families whose parents had arrived in Melbourne during the 1850s gold rush era. These families appreciated the lifestyle that prosperity had given them and believed they in turn should help those less fortunate.

Sir Aaron Danks was associated with the management of the Melbourne Hospital during the first quarter of the 20th century. His daughter, Miss Annie Danks, would have been well aware of the Hospital's financial problems and the plans to build a new Hospital on the Parkville site. Miss Danks was a member of the Hospital's Central Council of Auxiliaries from the early days of the 1920s.

In 1933, Miss Danks invited a number of her friends in the district to form the Canterbury Auxiliary, whose aim was to raise funds for The Royal Melbourne Hospital. Miss Danks was a popular and influential young woman. There were 130 women at the first meeting, held in Canterbury Memorial Hall. Mrs Harry Rigby and Dame Patti Menzies (wife of Australian Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies) were active founding members.

The Hospital's first almoner (social worker) was guest speaker at this first meeting.

The women had strong connections with the local Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches.

When a new member was appointed (by invitation), Miss Danks would conduct a formal interview and explain the responsibilities attached with membership.

*I remember when...*

*"It was around 1938 and I was home from school, confined to my bed with illness. I could hear a very important meeting in progress downstairs and couldn't contain my curiosity. I hid on the stairs and watched and listened. There was a luscious afternoon tea, cream cakes, and the room was filled with ladies in hats, gloves and dark clothes, referring to each other very formally: "Mrs Walklate", "Mrs Balderstone". The guest speaker was Alison Player, Chief Almoner at the RMH. Her description of her work so excited me that I decided then and there that I would become an almoner or medical social worker. A decade later I realised that*

*ambition, graduating from Melbourne University and working as a social worker at the RMH."*

**Mrs Margery Wilson, Canterbury Auxiliary, whose mother**

**Mrs Myra Walklate was an active member of the Auxiliary and hosted many monthly meetings at her home at 7 Barnsbury Road, Balwyn**

Miss Danks began a tradition that continues today, of setting aside one meeting day a year as Direct Giving Day, where young musicians, singers or other performers from the local community (mostly Presbyterian Ladies' College) entertain members and their guests. Those in attendance are invited to give anonymous donations. In the 21st century, Direct Giving Day continues to be a hugely successful and enjoyable venture, contributing around \$2000 a year to the Hospital.

The Auxiliary was a major supporter of the RMH's Annual Egg Appeal (see profile, page 12). Once members had gathered the eggs, Miss Danks' driver would visit their homes to collect the eggs and deliver these to the Hospital. Members also sewed and mended for the Hospital.

The early monthly meetings, held at Miss Danks' gracious home, Hazeldene, could be described as 'soirees'. They were grand afternoon teas, with an abundance of splendid food, interesting guest speakers and even musicians and elocutionists providing entertainment.

In the 1940s, the prestige of belonging to a ladies auxiliary was waning and women were no longer queuing up to join. The Canterbury Auxiliary embarked on a recruitment drive, casting aside the 'invitation only' approach and encouraging friends and acquaintances to 'come along and help the cause'. The wives of several ICI-ANZ executives joined, including Lady Glenn, Mrs Joy Bridgland, Mrs Florence Weickhart and Mrs Lillian Sangster. These newcomers reinvigorated fundraising efforts, with much money raised through the selling of their fine culinary and handcraft work. Mrs Lillian Sangster's delicious jam tarts and apple pies were a favourite.

At this time, it was decided to hold meetings at the homes of other members, and Mrs Jean Rigby, Mrs Lesley Balderstone, Lady Glenn and Mrs Lillian Sangster opened their homes for this purpose.

On 26 November 1954, the Canterbury Auxiliary celebrated its 21st birthday at a function at 'Hazeldene', which was attended by many founding members including the group's first President Dame Pattie Menzies.

The Auxiliary hosted spectacular floral arrangement displays, spring festivals (three years running in Lillian and Ralph Sangster's beautiful garden) and visits to Lady McNeill's farm at Yea. There was also a lunch at the Rhododendron Garden in Olinda and a gala occasion at St Mark's Church where Sir William Dargie entertained a packed church by painting his portrait of Sir Robert Menzies

In the 1970s, Mrs Harry Rigby's daughter in law, Frances, began hosting meetings in her home. (Mrs Frances Rigby would later go on to become President of the RMH Auxiliaries, from 1989-1998.) Around 40 people would attend and, Miss Danks would send her driver around with extra chairs and a large wicker laundry basket containing cups and saucers and two enormous enamel teapots, she recalled.

The RMH Canterbury Auxiliary marked 60 years of service to the Hospital at an event at the Mayoral Suite at the Camberwell Council Chambers in 1993. Mrs John Danks gave an interesting account of the Auxiliary's activities over the past six decades and congratulations were received from Patron Dame Pattie Menzies and many other long time supporters. The Auxiliary donated \$30,990 in its 60th year, which funded the purchase of a Bird volume cycle ventilator for cardiothoracic surgery.

(See also profile on the Hazeldene Auxiliary, page 38)

### 3. THE WAR YEARS (1939-45)

In late 1939, with the outbreak of war in Europe and the rolling out of Australia's involvement in the allied campaign, members of the RMH Auxiliaries quickly rallied together to support the war effort. They did this while also continuing their support for the Hospital with much gusto – all at a time when many food products and other basic resources were extremely scarce – and demonstrated their dedication and ingenuity in rising to the challenges presented by the times.

In 1939, the **RMH Penny Drive** was inaugurated and £25 was raised through community contributions to this Appeal. In 1941, the funds collected from the penny drive were converted into war savings certificates and held in trust for the Hospital.

In 1940-1941, the Auxiliaries donated 4000 pots of jam to add a special touch to patient meal trays. At around the same time, members of the **RMH Christadelphian Service League Auxiliary** spent every Wednesday in the Hospital, mending and doing any sewing that was required.

Early on, there was a shortage of paper pulp as a result of the war, and the Australian Government orchestrated a publicity campaign asking households to save waste paper for recycling. The RMH Auxiliaries soon received many enquiries from people wishing to donate paper. Auxiliary branches promptly arranged for waste paper

depots to be set up in their local areas. The Hospital car visited these depots to collect paper once a month.

By 1941, the government had taken control of coordination of waste paper collection and the Auxiliaries acted as official collection agents. The RMH received approximately £56 per month from this scheme. In 1942, the increasing demand for space by the military authorities saw many unoccupied rooms in business premises cleared of their contents and the waste paper deposits were boosted as many old ledgers, journals records and the like found their way to the RMH waste depot.

The RMH New Building Appeal, which had been postponed in 1939 due to Melbourne's devastating bush fires, took place from April to May 1940. The Auxiliaries responded to the Hospital's request for support for this major fundraising Appeal with enthusiasm.

An Entertainments Committee was formed in connection with the Appeal on 28 February 1940. Donations totalling £556 were received prior to the first meeting and a comprehensive program of events was drawn up, including a café chantant, cabaret ball, ballet matinee (shared with the Children's Hospital), monster bridge drive, wool parade and cocktail party, young people's dance, horse gymkhana and party at the Glaciarium Ice-skating Rink.


The RMH Auxiliaries started the 1940s on a strong note. The 32 Auxiliaries operating in 1940-1941 raised a

record contribution of £8016/1/6 in cash and goods. This tremendous result was largely due to the remarkable success of the **Birthday League Ward Appeal**, which was that Auxiliary's main effort towards the Hospital's rebuilding fund, along with increases in the collection and disposal of waste products.

In lean times, the people of Melbourne banded together. Despite their own hardships people were keen to lend a helping hand to those in need. In the depression years, and again in the war years, auxiliary memberships increased significantly. In the 1940s, numbers were strengthened by the existence of the Red Cross and Comforts Fund groups, which had been established to help Auxiliary members support the war effort.

In 1942 the Auxiliaries made an Appeal to the community for the donation of sewing machines in the daily press and several were donated. These were kept in constant use producing emergency linen to stock the Hospital's linen cupboard. The sewing groups also added camouflage netting and clothing for evacuees to their repertoire of items sewn, and prepared large quantities of linen, bandages and splint covers for use in case of air raid casualties.

At the end of the final monthly Auxiliary meeting for 1940, held in November, members of the Auxiliary Council were taken by 'char-a-banc' to visit the new Hospital in Parkville. President of the Hospital, Mr BT Zwar, and Chairman of the Rebuilding



Committee, Mr CB Hearn, conducted a tour of the new Hospital.

In February 1941, Lady Mayoress, Lady Beaurepaire consented to be Patron (ess) of the Auxiliaries and paid an official visit to the new Hospital.

At the April 1941 monthly meeting, Australian author Mary Grant Bruce gave an inspiring address entitled 'The Power of Thought'.

Two new Auxiliaries were formed in 1940-1941: **Biochemical & Clinical Pathological Department Auxiliary** (which disbanded in 1943-1944 due to 'war time conditions and pressure of work') and a 'younger set' Auxiliary called the **Seekers' Club**. In 1941-1942, the **Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Auxiliary** was established, and its first aim was to raise money towards a new single-bed ward.

The government introduced petrol rationing in October 1940. This affected the use of the Auxiliary car, which was now shared between the Auxiliaries and the Hospital. The management of Myer Emporium generously continued to supply free oil and water.

Fabric was hard to come by during these years, making the work of the various sewing groups difficult. However, the Auxiliaries were a dedicated and ingenious bunch and in 1943-1944, once again, a firm of tyre importers donated the fabric (this time thousands of yards of fine cotton). The material was laundered and made into bandages valued at £391/16/10. In 1944-1945, towelling fabric was unprocurable, and auxiliary members

and friends diligently knitted cotton face washers for patients. Mrs ETJ Clark of Canterbury Auxiliary, an expert knitter, sent in attractive face washers with a coloured border by the dozen, which were in great demand.

During the typhoid epidemic of the early 1940s, members of the **Outpatients' Canteen Auxiliary** responded to the call for additional linen, spending many hours at sewing machines in the linen room making bed gowns and other urgently needed garments.

On 9 May 1940, Lord Lurgan gave a concert in memory of his friend the late Dame Nellie Melba GBE, at the home of Mrs Sidney Myer. This raised £203/6/6, which was used to fund the construction of a single-bed female ward, adjoining the ear, nose and throat clinic in the new Hospital. Lord Lurgan personally added £60 to cover the costs of furnishing and equipping the ward. In July 1940, Lord Lurgan and other friends of the late Dame Nellie inspected the building site of the Hospital and viewed plans of the new ward.

Many organisations in the community continued to host large functions in support of The Royal Melbourne Hospital during the war years. On Friday 1 August 1941, the Swiss Club of Victoria commemorated the 650th anniversary of the Confederation of Switzerland at its annual ball at Earl's Court in St Kilda and donated all proceeds from the night to the RMH.

A major social event for Melbourne during the war years was the **Radiausterity Party Drive** in aid of

the Royal Australian Nurses' Relief Fund and The Royal Melbourne Hospital War Emergency Equipment Fund, held on Thursday 19 December 1942 at the Melbourne Town Hall. The event was a huge success, largely due to sponsorship by the Victorian Federation of Commercial Broadcasting Stations, and raised £6059/3/8.

In 1943-1944 the RMH Auxiliaries helped out with the Navy Day Appeal, following a request from the RAN Relief Fund through Lady Royle (who was a member of both organisations and had been influential in organising the successful Radiausterity Party Drive the year before). In deep appreciation of the support given to the RMH by members of the RAN Relief Fund, the Auxiliaries were delighted to help and arranged a bridge party at George's on 17 June 1943. This gesture of goodwill raised £115/8/- for the RAN.

The annual Christmas Cheer tradition continued throughout the war years, with Mr Shingles and staff of *The Argus* newspaper helping to decorate Ward 19, and Auxiliaries donating funds to purchase food for Christmas meals and gifts, including cigarettes, to make the day memorable for those patients unable to be home with their families.

The main auxiliary event for 1940-1941 was a golf gymkhana held at Riversdale Golf Club on Saturday 28 September 1940, which raised £235 for the RMH. Unfortunately play had to be abandoned due to heavy rain, but Club President, Mr Teiresias

Doughton, kindly set aside President's Day a fortnight later to enable matches to be played off. A lucky dip organised by the Auxiliaries raised £80. The 'happy manner in which the members of the (golf) club joined forces with the Auxiliary in working for the success of the gymkhana was one of the most delightful features of the year's work'.

Auxiliary President Lady Stawell summed up the mood of the times in the 19th Annual Report of the RMH Auxiliaries for the financial year 1940-1941:

*'...it is quite impossible to assess in terms of money the value of the work done by the Auxiliaries. It was Leigh Hunt who said that "There are two worlds, the world that we can measure with line and rule, and the world that we feel with our hearts and imaginations," and it is in this latter world that the true spirit of the auxiliary movement is to be found.*

*'One has only to wander about the wards and corridors to realise how much the Auxiliaries have done and are doing to help the Hospital. In the kiosk and canteen are helpers who have given years of voluntary*

*service. The Auxiliary room is often filled to overflowing with parcels of sewing, cases of bottles, bundles of old linen, trays of jam and other valuable gifts and a large trolley has to be employed to take the goods to the store and other departments of the Hospital. In addition, workers are asking for more sewing, and it is sometimes difficult to supply the demand for materials to be made into garments by voluntary helpers.*

*'It is when one is privileged to come into contact with women such as these – so many of whom are mothers and wives of men in the AIF – that one realises where the staying power, the optimism and dauntless courage of our fighting men comes from. Above all, one feels that the Hospital is indeed fortunate in having such wonderful friends.'*

In 1941-1942, the RMH Auxiliaries sustained a great loss with the death of one of their much-loved patrons. Lady Miller OBE had been closely identified with the auxiliary movement since its inception, and for nearly six

years from February 1925 to November 1930 had served as President.


The following year the Auxiliaries mourned the loss of another patron, Mrs Joseph Levi, who passed away on 12 June 1943. Mrs Levi had been instrumental in the early growth of the RMH Auxiliaries. She was a member since its inception, Vice-President for many years and President from 1931-1933. Her husband, Mr Joseph Levi, was a member of the RMH Committee of Management at the time of her death.

By now the movement was two decades old and its older originators were becoming increasingly frail. Death took its toll on many branches in 1941-1942, not only with many of those original members passing away, but in the husbands, brothers and sons of members lost in the war.

In 1940-1941, it was unanimously decided to offer honorary memberships of the RMH Auxiliaries to women evacuated to Victoria. Those who took up the invitation included women from Hong Kong, Malaya, Netherlands East Indies and New Guinea.

In 1941-1942, due to a serious shortage of vegetables, the RMH Auxiliaries donated seed and fertilisers for use in a vegetable plot in the Hospital grounds, and several Auxiliaries held 'vegetable days' to collect from their local areas.

In 1942-1945 there was an acute shortage of domestic help, especially in the fruit season, and the Hospital



kitchen appealed for help from the Auxiliaries. Members of East Kew, Northcote,, Essendon, Brunswick, Preston and Caulfield & Murrumbeena Auxiliaries volunteered to help out in the Hospital kitchen. This was especially appreciated at Christmas time and New Year, when many pounds of peas and almonds were shelled by auxiliary members, and during the Rose Hip Appeal, when things became quite hectic in the RMH kitchen.

In 1942-1943, a shortage of citrus fruit, rich in vitamin C, was a great concern for the Hospital's Dieticians. The RMH's Head Dietician, sent out an urgent appeal to the community for donations of rose hips, to be converted into rose hip syrup, noted for its vitamin C content. She was inundated. Many hundreds of pounds of rose hips were gathered by school children and others across Melbourne's outer suburban and country districts. With oranges unavailable in 1943-1944, the appeal went out again and there was a similar response. The following year, in February 1945, there was a wonderful response with 2500 pounds of rose hips received! The students of Daylesford Technical School contributed 1138 pounds, and the remaining berries came mainly from school children and Girl Guides. There was no Appeal for rose hips in 1945-1946, as there was adequate supply of tinned tomato juice and citrus fruit to provide the patients with vitamin C.

While there was much enthusiasm for charity work during the war years,

the hardships caused by rationing took their toll on many Auxiliaries, particularly those in outer areas where members relied on their own transport to attend meetings. In 1941-1942, **Berwick Auxiliary** reported that: 'due to petrol rationing, attendance at monthly meetings has fallen off'. In 1942-1943, **Berwick & Beaconsfield Auxiliary** reported that 'owing to transport difficulties it has been impossible to hold regular meetings'.

The rationing of butter and eggs affected cake baking, with members of the **Christadelphian Service League** unable to continue their popular stall on Wednesdays in the Visitors Hall throughout 1944 and 1945. Aside from a short break during the move to the new Hospital at Parkville, the Christadelphians met every Wednesday for sewing and mending for the Hospital and were allocated a room for this purpose in the new Hospital.

Still, some inner city Auxiliaries prospered. **Canterbury Auxiliary** experienced record attendances at monthly meetings in 1943-1944. Its plans to raise funds for a single bed ward were shelved when it was realised that there was every prospect the members would be able to raise enough funds to fund a double bed ward with furnishings. By April 1944, the Auxiliary had raised £400 of the £450 required.

Junior Auxiliaries felt the pinch of the added pressures for members' time due to their involvement in supporting the war effort. In a sense, this

heralded things to come, as younger women involved in professional work found it increasingly difficult to devote time to charitable pursuits.

In 1942-1943 another year of war had made further claims upon the resources of all members and full-time war work had depleted the ranks of Junior Auxiliaries in particular. Yet, the Auxiliaries still managed an all time record, contributing £11,083/6/- in cash and goods to their Hospital.

In 1943-1944, most members of **Canterbury Junior Auxiliary** were in full time war jobs or doing voluntary war work, and the Auxiliary was unable to hold regular meetings. Many junior members of the **Kiosk Red Cross Auxiliary** had resigned to take up full time war employment.

Malvern Red Cross Auxiliary ceased its sewing activities in 1943-1944 due to a shortage of materials and lack of members as so many were doing war jobs.

On 10 December 1944, The Royal Melbourne Hospital moved to its new home in Parkville. A few weeks earlier, the Committee of Management invited all Auxiliary members to inspect the new buildings, including the large, very conveniently situated auxiliary room, which had 'most comfortable furnishings and (was) a joy to those who use it'. On 15 November nearly 800 members accepted the invitation. This large number was divided into groups of 15 and a timetable drawn up so each party set off at appointed intervals. Special guests of the Auxiliaries included the Lady Mayoress Mrs Edward Campbell and Municipal



Mayoresses and wives of the town clerks, who were all entertained at afternoon tea afterwards. Many Auxiliary members offered their service to be trained as guides for inspection days and assist with serving of afternoon tea when special guests were being shown the Hospital.

## Hospital Sunday

Throughout the 1940s and into the mid 1950s, one delightful tradition of the RMH Auxiliaries was the hosting of afternoon teas in beautiful private Melbourne gardens on 'Hospital Sunday' in October each year.

This began in 1942 as an activity to offset costs incurred in arranging the huge Radiasterity event, held at the Melbourne Town Hall in December that year. Lady Fraser opened her lovely garden at 'Whernside' in Toorak to the public on Hospital Sunday, 26 October 1942. Thousands of people visited. A string orchestra played on the lawns and afternoon tea was served in the garden, raising £515. Due to the success of the day, on Hospital Sunday 1943 Lady Fraser again opened her garden to the community and £750 was raised for the RMH Auxiliaries.

In 1944 £551/1/- was raised, and on 28 October 1945, Lady Fraser again opened 'Whernside' to the public for the benefit of the RMH; £447/8/2 was raised. In October 1946, despite a tram strike, more than 900 people visited Whernside on Hospital Sunday, and £607 was raised. In 1947, there were more than 1000 visitors and the day raised £655/13/0.

On Hospital Sunday 24 October 1948, the event moved to the gardens at 'Ripponlea'. It was a pleasant sunny day and more than 5000 people attended. There was afternoon tea and entertainment provided by an Hawaiian Orchestra. Aside from income from various stalls and refreshment sales, Auxiliary members collected 2/- entry fee from the thousands of people that poured through the gates. At the end of the day, a police escort was needed to take the £1049 raised to the bank!

The next year, the weather wasn't so kind and the garden inspection planned for 'Devon', in Whernside Avenue, Toorak, on Sunday 23 October had to be cancelled due to very wet weather. However, the Auxiliaries had planned ahead and the day was insured against rain (for the sum of £100) and some donations were still received, adding up to a total of £130 from the aborted event.

The Hospital Sunday idea continued into the 1950s, with various renowned Melbourne gardens opening for the benefit of the RMH. Their grounds were covered in stalls and afternoon tea was served on that one Sunday each October. In 1950, Mr and Mrs TG Jones very kindly opened their lovely garden 'Ripponlea' again for the benefit of the RMH and £794/10/6 was raised. Despite a train strike, a few thousand people attended and 717 afternoon teas were served. Hospital Sunday moved to 'Warawee', the home of Cr and Mrs Bernard Evans, at 205 Orrong Road, Toorak on Sunday 28 October 1951.

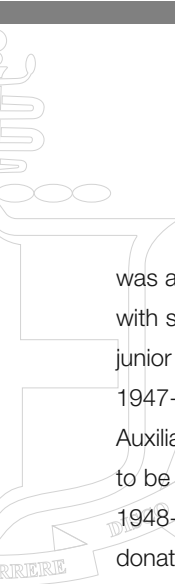
On Hospital Sunday, 25 October 1952, Mr and Mrs Jones again opened up 'Ripponlea'. Heavy rain fell at 1:30pm, damaging stock, including sandwiches and cakes. Although the event was heavily insured against 10 points of rain, the nearest official rain gauge at Prahran showed only 8.5 points. Mrs Jones kindly opened her ballroom so business could carry on as usual; with the Royal Melbourne Regimental Band playing inside the house, and £1437 was raised.

On 28 March 1954, a fine sunny afternoon, Hospital Sunday returned to 'Ripponlea'. The event attracted 3000 visitors and raised £394/8/6. Auxiliary members served afternoon tea under the elm trees to more than 1000 people.

## 4. A New Hospital (1946-59)

In the years immediately following the end of the Second World War, the RMH Auxiliaries were particularly active. According to the 24th Annual Report of the RMH Auxiliaries, for the financial year 1945-1946: all members *'continued to give most loyal and generous support to the work for the Hospital and most branches ... increased their donations and report(ed) the enrolment of new members. The total value of goods and cash raised during the year amount(ed) to £12,773/-/4; a splendid total never before achieved'*.

That set the scene for many years to come, with record donations and membership reported year after year. The following year the amount raised



was a new record of £15,232/4/11, with several new Auxiliaries including junior groups having been formed. In 1947-1948, that record fell when the Auxiliaries raised £19,277/18/9, only to be topped the following year in 1948-1949, when £19,427/4/1 was donated to the Hospital. In 1949-1950, £19,790/14/4 was donated.

In 1948-1949, it was decided to adjust the Auxiliaries' financial year to end on 31 March in line with the RMH's new financial year (the auxiliaries' financial year had previously ended in April and the new move was an effort to avoid confusion).

For many years, the Annual Meetings of RMH Auxiliaries were held in the Melba Hall at the Conservatorium of Music in Carlton, with many notable speakers addressing the members. At the 24th Annual Meeting held on Wednesday 12 June 1946, Mr (later Sir) Edward E ('Weary') Dunlop gave a moving account of his three and a half years as a prisoner in Java and Siam (Thailand).

Speakers at monthly meetings of the Central Council were also diverse and enlightening. In 1945-1946, Mr Alan Dawes of the *Herald* newspaper spoke about his experiences as a war correspondent on the Kakoda Trail in New Guinea, and Mr HF Holden of the Walter & Eliza Hall Institute told the 'fascinating story of the discovery of penicillin and the various ways it had been used to save thousands of soldiers lives during the war'.

Also that year, RMH President Mr Norman Mackintosh explained the new *Hospital Benefits Act* to members. He said fundraising was vital to boost Hospital finances, requested continued support of the Auxiliaries, and expressed appreciation for the splendid work done in the past. At the following meeting, the RMH Auxiliaries President, Lady Stawell, received an assurance from all branches that they would continue to give their wholehearted support to the Hospital and this decision was conveyed to the Committee of Management.

Increasingly, the speakers also included many professional women with interesting stories to tell. In 1946-1947, Dr Margaret Gilchrist, told of her recent experiences as medical officer in charge of a transit camp in Lubeck, Germany, which had housed 200,000 people, many from concentration camps. Of the eight speakers listed that year, five are women. The war had given these women, and many like them, the opportunity to contribute, to learn, and they had risen to the challenge. The world was changing and Melbourne was changing right along with it.

In 1946-1947, speakers included the chief policewoman Miss McKay, who spoke of her work in criminal investigation and Mrs ARM Bridge, who gave a grim account of the hard times faced by housewives in England on account of food rationing and food shortages. In 1949, Mrs RG Menzies (wife of Australia's Prime Minister)

'gave a delightful account of her experiences visiting England in 1948 with her husband and daughter'.

That year there was only one male speaker; all others were women who spoke about their careers, medical science, travel and life abroad.

To commemorate the end of the first year of work in the new Hospital, a suggestion was made to the CCA that it would be fitting if all Auxiliaries combined and had a fete. There was enthusiastic response to the idea, and the Victory Fete was held on Saturday 24 November 1945 on the northern lawns of the Hospital. Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Cr FR Connelly, opened the event. Total profit for the day was £1086/16/-. A merry-go-round was a big hit with the children. The Northcote City Band performed and 'specially selected' films were shown in the Hospital Lecture Theatre. Members of the **Northcote Auxiliary** prepared and served a delicious lunch and afternoon tea in the Hospital cafeteria.

On Thursday 18 April 1946, Lady Edwina Mountbatten visited the RMH. On behalf of President of the RMH Auxiliaries Lady Stawell and auxiliary members, the organising secretary presented Lady Mountbatten with an attractive cellophane box filled with flowers and autumn leaves. To mark its appreciation of Lady Mountbatten's service to the forces and commemorate her visit she was asked to accept endowment of her birthday by the **Birthday League**. She accepted with delight and was presented with an endowment certificate.

In 1949, the RMH Auxiliaries were asked by the Lord Mayor's Fund to cooperate in the Miss Australia Quest. It was thought that the substantial contributions raised from quest events would benefit metropolitan Hospitals. Miss Deirdre Frith, Secretary to the Psychiatric Unit, agreed to be the candidate sponsored by the RMH. While Miss Frith did not win the quest, her candidature raised £2828/8/5; £1716/4/6 from the Auxiliaries and £1112/3/11 from Hospital departments.

With the end of war rationing, the sewing machines at the Royal Melbourne were humming once more. Many Auxiliary branches were actively making pillowslips, face washers, nightgowns and other items to stock the linen cupboards. Several sewing groups met at the Hospital on a weekly basis, and were named according to the days of the week that they gathered. The **Friday Sewers** comprised 14 women from the now defunct 'bed makers' group from Air Force House. These women worked in shifts in the sewing room, and completed 835 articles from November 1945 to April 1946. The **Thursday Sewing Party** made 968 articles in 1946-1947.

Members of the **Christadelphian Service League** came in to the Hospital on Wednesdays during 1947 and made 2337 articles. However, in mid-1947, sewing had to cease, as there was no spare room in the Hospital. Some weekday sewers joined Auxiliary sewing groups. In 1948-1950, Auxiliary members

made up 4754 articles for the RMH. In 1949-1950, the Hospital's acting lady superintendent, Sister C Lelean, asked members if they would help by making up linen for the new North Wing. The members promptly responded and 2500 pillowslips, along with huge quantities of huckaback towels, T bandages and binders were promptly donated.

A Christmas Fair held in the Melbourne Town Hall on Friday 5 November 1946 was very successful and raised £1728/19/-. **Northcote Auxiliary** arranged refreshments; a salad lunch and afternoon tea. Nurses helped by selling raffle tickets. There was an oyster bar with 100 oysters donated by Melbourne Oyster Supply. The fair was held again at the Melbourne Town Hall on Thursday 16 October 1947; this time as a Spring Fair. This too was very successful and raised £1706/10/4, which included £342/18/6 from the raffle of a Royal Doulton china utility service generously donated by Mrs Sidney Bailleau Myer.

The major prize for the RMH raffle held in 1948 was a dining room suite of furniture, colonial design, finished in honey coloured myrtle wood, valued at £133. this was donated by Myer for the RMH Centenary Appeal. The raffle was well supported by Melbourne businesses, with other prizes including an Axminster carpet, vacuum cleaner, china tea set, watercolour painting and wedding cake.

The Christmas Cheer tradition continued through these years. In 1948, the Auxiliaries once again provided gifts of fruits and flowers

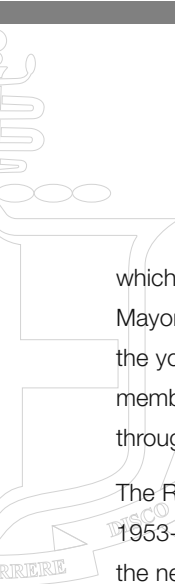
to every patient and visited those in endowed beds. In 1949, each female patient received a gift of a bottle of lavender oil or a tin of talc, and males received cigarettes, tobacco or a handkerchief for non-smokers.

Prior to Christmas 1950, an Appeal for herbs for the RMH kitchen was made by Elizabeth of Radio 3DB and within a few days listeners had sent in enough herbs to supply the kitchen for several months. Many Auxiliary members regularly donated herbs from their gardens for this purpose.

Towards the end of the 1950s, a 16mm colour film was taken, depicting various departments of the Hospital. The Auxiliary had a projector and screen and, as their predecessors had done with the film shot in 1937, members used footage to interest new helpers and show to members in country areas who did not have the opportunity to see the Hospital for themselves. The film was a gift donated by Cine Service.

Auxiliary members were invited by the medical superintendent to conduct monthly 'visit inspections' of the Hospital departments throughout 1949 and 1950, which helped them feel connected to the Hospital and enhanced their understanding of its needs and operation.

With memories of the war years still strong in people's minds, members of RMH Auxiliaries, like most Melbournians at the time, felt a strong connection to 'King and country'. In 1947-1948, a 'whip around' amongst Auxiliary members raised £15/2/6,



which was promptly sent to the Lord Mayor's Office for a wedding gift for the young Princess Elizabeth. Many members had also sent donations through other organisations.

The RMH Auxiliary's annual report for 1953-1954 featured photographs of the newly crowned Queen of the Commonwealth of Australia, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and her husband His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. Several monthly Central Council meetings held that year included guest speakers who reflected on their experiences attending the coronation ceremony in London.

The Royal couple visited the State of Victoria in March 1954, and the RMH was invited to send five representatives to the Royal Tour Women's Luncheon on Tuesday 22 March 1954. RMH Auxiliaries President Mrs RW Chambers extended the invitation to those members who had been present at the first auxiliary meeting at the home of Lady Grice in 1921. Mrs BT Zwar, Mrs Konrad Hiller, Miss Annie Danks, Miss Jessie Bage and Mrs JW Heggie (who had actively supported the Hospital since that time) attended the event as representatives of the RMH, along with RMH Auxiliary members Mrs Chambers (representing the Returned Nurses' Club), Mrs FR Quinton (former President, representing the Mothers' Clubs) and Mrs WK Burnside (who represented Prince Henry's Hospital Auxiliaries).

Lady Stawell retired from the position of President of the RMH Auxiliaries on 27 February 1947, after 13 years in

the role. Miss Annie Danks served as acting president until the Annual Meeting held on 12 June 1947, when Mrs RW Chambers was officially elected as new president. Mrs Chambers had been actively associated with the RMH auxiliaries since their inception in 1921, and had worked with Lady Allen when the kiosk was started at the old Hospital in Elizabeth Street. She had been president of the **Toorak Auxiliary** since 1934.

In 1948, the Royal Melbourne Hospital celebrated its centenary and its Auxiliaries rallied around to help ensure the centenary of Victoria's first Hospital was recognised with a fitting celebration.

Throughout 1948, the auxiliaries held several functions and arranged other special activities to support the Hospital's ambitious **Centenary Appeal**. The calendar of events was launched with a glamorous social function, the Centenary Ball, on Friday 5 March at the St Kilda Town Hall. More than 1000 people attended, including His Excellency the Governor and Lady Duggan, the Lieutenant-Governor Sir Edmund Herring and Lady Herring (who was president of the ball committee). Special guests included RMH President Mr Victor Hurley and Mrs Hurley, Dr and Mrs Douglas Thomas and Dr Williams, a visiting lecturer from England.

The Annual Report for that year describes the event in much detail, painting a vivid picture of the spectacle that greeted guests as they entered the hall:

*'St Kilda Town Hall was transformed into a lovely garden with flowers, tree ferns, maples, shrubs and conifers brought in from gardens at Mount Macedon and the Dandenong's. There were mixed bowls of bright blue hydrangeas, coloured foliage, and red and white gladioli were massed in huge urns in the foyer and baskets surrounding the orchestra.*

*'Red crosses of flowers decorated the tables, each made of three dozen red flowers. The elegant vice-regal table was the piece de resistance. It was covered in silver lame, and crystal candelabra and candlesticks shimmered under the lights. Blooms of water lilies and frangipanis were placed on the tables and baskets of cyclamen and cream gladioli and silvery honesty were arranged on either side of the tables.'*

Guests were entertained with a colourful floorshow – an exhibition of modern ballroom dancing. During the evening, 2050 tickets were sold for a 'monster raffle' of 52 prizes, which raised £711/6/4 and was

drawn by theatre personality Miss Evie Hayes, star of 'Annie Get Your Gun'. Overall, the ball raised £2000 towards the Centenary Appeal and was one of the most spectacular events held in Melbourne for many years.

The challenge of attracting and retaining younger members continued as more and more women were taking up full-time employment. The **Preston Junior Auxiliary** disbanded in 1949-1950 as several of the 'girls' had married and moved to other suburbs. In 1951, **East Kew Junior Auxiliary** disbanded owing to lack of numbers. And, in 1953, **Canterbury Junior Auxiliary** folded for much the same reasons. Over its 18 years of service to the RMH, the young members of this Auxiliary had raised more than £1000 for the Hospital, mostly through social functions in their local community, which had the added benefit of spreading the word about the Hospital and its work.

*I remember when...*

*"What was my impetus to join Whernside? Aside from looking after children, I didn't really have a lot to do. The Auxiliary gave me a sense of purpose, of contributing and making a difference in some small way." Mrs Rosemary Campbell OAM, president, Whernside Auxiliary (1951-1972)*

However, the demise of one Auxiliary was promptly followed by the creation

of a new one to take its place, and throughout the 1950s, the number of Auxiliaries working for the RMH remained constant at around 30 each year.

By mid-1951, despite many 'difficult days of train and tram strikes', the Royal Melbourne Hospital's Auxiliary branches were able to raise the combined total of £17,002/1/3. The Auxiliaries' two business ventures, operating within the Hospital, namely the kiosk and the outpatients' canteen, were by now thriving businesses. The Essy Zwar Kiosk had an annual turnover of £17,182/6/4, and its annual profits were sufficient to fund the replacement of all linen in the RMH for a year, with remaining funds allocated to the purchase of 'some special article of equipment needed by the Hospital'.

This trend continued throughout the 1950s, with both Auxiliaries recording increasing profits each year.

In 1952-1953, the **RMH Kiosk Auxiliary** reported an annual turnover of £27,726, and had a record month in March 1953, with takings of £2,458/3/7. That year, the **RMH Outpatients' Canteen Auxiliary** also had record takings of £2981.

In 1952-1953, several new Auxiliaries were formed. These were quite different to the location-based groups that had previously dominated the Auxiliary movement. Members of many of the groups formed in the early to mid 1950s came from locations scattered far and wide and were joined instead by a

common desire to support a particular service of the Hospital, such as the **RMH Dental Auxiliary**, formed on 17 April 1953.

Others were bound by a desire to support the Hospital through fun social activities, such as the **Myer Get-Together Club**, formed on 16 December 1952, comprising 250 enthusiastic members of the Myer catering staff. The club continued for 22 years, disbanding in September 1974 as most members had left the store. It raised \$24,000 for the RMH during that time.

A more short-lived social group was the **RMH Square Dance Club**, which was formed on 9 April 1953 and folded four months later as numbers had declined.

On Wednesday 8 November 1953, the RMH Auxiliaries banded together and had a very successful fete in the Hospital grounds, which raised £1399/4/1. Mrs Evie Hayes, star of 'Call Me Madam', awarded a prize of £10/10 to the **Belgrave Heights Auxiliary** in a competition for the most attractive stall. One of the members, Miss Betty Woods had made dozens of paper roses and fixed them into wire netting to decorate the stall. **Toorak Auxiliary** had a second hand bookstall, the **Outpatients Canteen Auxiliary** organised a 'lucky envelope' draw and the **Kiosk Auxiliary** had a cake stall. Lady Hurley and members of the **Toorak Auxiliary** staffed a flower stall. There were numerous raffles with a vast array of prizes: **East Camberwell Auxiliary** raffled a huge Christmas stocking;

**East Kew Auxiliary**, a hamper of groceries; **Brunswick Auxiliary**, a Christmas cake; **Footscray & Yarraville Auxiliary**, two Christmas cakes; **Almoner Auxiliary**, a handbag; and **Caulfield & Murrumbeena Auxiliary** raffled blankets. Members of **Canterbury Auxiliary** prepared and served food to the hordes of visitors. The **Birthday League** had a successful spinning wheel. **Whernside Auxiliary** organised a cake stall; Whernside Juniors, a 'gingham' stall; **Brighton Auxiliary** had a 'mixed' stall and the **Dental Auxiliary** sold 'fancy goods' and raffled a Christmas cake and ham. **Essendon Auxiliary's** lucky fishpond was a big hit and could have easily sold twice the number of tickets.

While the calendar of community events continued to grow, the Auxiliaries still maintained their sewing activities. In 1953-1954, 1380 pillowslips, 623 face washers, 428 surgeons' gauze masks were handed over to the RMH, along with 544 crocheted bags for transfusion bottles.

On 24 August 1953, the Auxiliaries lost a long time supporter and one of the few surviving pioneers, with the death of Lady Stawell. She had been actively working for the RMH for 26 years, had been president of the RMH Auxiliaries since 1935, and president of the **Outpatients' Canteen Auxiliary** since 1928. During all those years Lady Stawell had worked behind the counter serving tea to outpatients.

At the 32nd Annual Meeting of the Central Council of the RMH Auxiliaries, held in the Hospital's lecture theatre on Wednesday 9 June 1954, the special guest speaker was Lieutenant-General W Bridgeford CB CBE MC, who gave a most inspiring address about preparations for the forthcoming 16th Olympic Games, held in Melbourne in 1956. Lieutenant-General Bridgeford urged the cooperation of the entire community to make the games a success, and spoke of the role the RMH Auxiliaries could play in supporting this major community effort for the city.

Mrs John Cain, wife of the premier of Victoria (and mother of the state's future premier) was special guest speaker at one of the monthly meetings in 1954-1955. And, at the 34th Annual Meeting, held on Thursday 14 June 1956 in the Hospital's lecture theatre, the special guest speaker was acclaimed Australian medical researcher and scientist Sir Macfarlane Burnet FRS, of the Walter & Eliza Hall for Medical Research, who spoke about a study of twins and clinical research.

By the end of the decade, prominent television and theatre personalities joined the list of scientists, politicians and diplomats that accepted the invitation to speak at monthly CCA meetings. In 1958-1959, actor Miss Evie Hayes, a frequent RMH supporter, addressed a monthly gathering, and the following year, in 1959-1960, actor Miss Googie Withers spoke about her experiences working in live theatre.

Fashion shows have long been a popular annual event for the RMH Auxiliaries. One of the earliest of these was a gala evening held at the Myer Emporium on Saturday 25 September 1954, which was deemed 'most successful and enjoyable' and raised £1000. The event comprised a fashion show organised in conjunction with *The Women's Weekly*, with models wearing clothing designed by well-known Irish fashion designer, Sybil Connelly.

As the decade drew to a close, the Auxiliary movement was flourishing. Even those in outer 'country' areas were doing well. In 1956-1957 **Belgrave Heights Auxiliary** contributed £400 for the purchase of a new iron lung machine.

In October 1955, the RMH Auxiliaries again participated in the Myer Emporium's table setting competition. Mrs David Elder and Mrs Ronald Marriott set attractive and much admired tables, with votes recorded raising £260. RMH Auxiliary member Mrs WK Burnside (representing Prince Henry's Hospital) was the winning hostess.

In 1956-1957, the new Dame Nellie Melba Ward (Ward 420 in 4 East) was officially opened. The ward was equipped and furnished with proceeds from a song recital held at 'Cranlana', home of Mrs Sidney Ballieu Myer, by Lord Lurgan in May 1940. The event was a tribute and remembrance of his dear friend Dame Nellie Melba DBE. Each year on Dame Nellie's birthday, 19 May, flowers were given to all patients on the ward in remembrance of a great Australian.

On Saturday 23 February 1957, the RMH Auxiliaries' Garden Fair was held at home of Dr and Mrs WE Swaney, 429 Glenferrie Road, Malvern. This included an art show arranged by the **Birthday League**. Stalls were set up under the trees. There was a puppet pantomime, which was very popular with the children. Denis Farrington and his orchestra provided music. It was a lovely warm day, which attracted a large crowd and raised £1802. A similar event, the RMH Auxiliaries' Christmas Fair, was held later that year, on Saturday 7 December 1957 at 11 Albany Road, Toorak, home of Mr and Mrs IA Macdougall, and raised £1630.

In 1957-1958, **RMH Croydon Auxiliary** took the novel approach of devoting all its efforts to supporting just one area of the Hospital, the clinical research unit. At the time it was believed to be the only auxiliary in Victoria raising funds entirely for medical research.

By the end of the 1950s, the RMH Auxiliaries were providing funds for an art therapist to work with patients in the psychiatric ward. A new Auxiliary was founded in Templestowe, known as the **RMH Yarragunyah Auxiliary**, and the **RMH Kiosk Auxiliary** had a new president, Mrs Victor Letcher (who would later become the longest serving member of any RMH auxiliary, receiving her 70 year service badge in 1992!).

The RMH Auxiliaries ended the decade in a strong position. The **Kiosk Auxiliary** reported a very successful year of trading with annual

turnover in excess of £35,500. The **Canteen Auxiliary** also had a very good year and had provided free meals to more than 1000 patients. And, in the eastern suburbs, the new **Eastwood Auxiliary** (established on 22 October 1958) and the **Croydon Auxiliary** were both performing well, with Croydon donating £600 to the RMH's Clinical Research Unit in 1959-1960.

## Hazeldene Auxiliary - established June 1955

In June 1955, a new Auxiliary group was formed in the Canterbury area to attract younger women to the Hospital's cause. The RMH Canterbury Auxiliary was well established in the area and that group's founder, Miss Annie Danks kindly had the inaugural meeting of the younger group at her home, 'Hazeldene'. The younger group became known as the RMH Hazeldene Auxiliary and, with Miss Danks as its first patron, was able to attract 94 members by March 1956.

Among the founding members of the Hazeldene Auxiliary were three sets of sisters: Mrs Norma Danks and Mrs Ruth Mann; Miss Jan Knuckey and Mrs Bette Muir; and Mrs Barbara Thompson and Miss Betty Henty-Wilson. All remain involved in the Auxiliary in 2002.

The Hazeldene Auxiliary met in the evenings to accommodate members' work commitments and took a more social approach to fundraising. The group soon achieved its first goal of raising £275 to fund the purchase an electrocardiograph machine for the operating theatres.

*I remember when...*

*"Hazeldene was started by some of the young daughters of the Canterbury Auxiliary members and their friends. In those days, women didn't work. I was very aware of my husband's family's charity work. I had married into the Danks family and was very conscious of what that meant. In those days, if you were in position that you were able to give something it was expected of you as a young married woman. My aunt in law and mother in law were strong supporters of Canterbury Auxiliary, but they didn't really want us young marrieds. They went to garden parties and wore silk dresses, suits, gloves, stockings, and hats to meetings. It was all 'seams straight' and 'Norma, present yourself!', and I'd be eyed up and down by aunt. It was a bit stuffy for us anyway. We did things that younger people enjoyed."*

**Mrs Norma Danks, CCA  
President 1972-1979 5.**

## **The golden years (1960-1969)**

*I remember when...*

*"In the 1960s, auxiliary work was very popular. People queued to be allowed in. It was a privilege to be invited to join. North Balwyn was one of the most popular, thanks largely to Mrs Barbara Lofts. The Lady Mayoress and Beth Thwaites of The Truth newspaper would turn up at Annual Meetings and the proceedings were written up in The Women's Weekly."*

**Mrs Norma Danks  
CCA President 1972-1979**

On 31 March 1961, Mrs RW Chambers resigned from the RMH Auxiliary Central Council due to ill health. Her husband, Dr RW Chambers, was honorary surgeon and gynaecologist at the Hospital and had equipped Theatre C on the ninth floor when the RMH was built.

Mrs Chambers had been in office as President for 14 years. Her association with the RMH dated back to the Bunne House, with Lady Allen as president. After the First World War, Mrs Chambers presided over **Toorak Auxiliary** for many years. In 1956, she was honoured with a decoration of OBE for her work for the Hospital and the Returned Nurses' Club.

Mrs Chambers' resignation was marked with an afternoon tea party at the April 1961 council meeting and the committee of the CCA appointed her Patron (then 'Patroness') and endowed a bed in her name.

*Tranby,  
Moonga Road,  
Toorak, S.E.2*

*8th May, 1961.*

*Dear Miss Laurence*

*First of all I wish the new President, Mrs. Howard Buchanan, a very happy and successful term of office.*

*I am happy--I know you are all going to be a "wonderful team" and do a great deal for the welfare of the Hospital we all love so dearly.*

*To Miss Annie Danks my most grateful and heartfelt thanks for her loyalty, help, and assistance over many years. I feel I can never thank her sufficiently for all that she has done for me. A special thanks for Miss Jessie Bage for her help at all times.*

*To the Executive Committee, my most sincere thanks for their help and loyalty on all occasions.*

*I was very sorry that I was not well enough to go to the luncheon arranged in my honour.*

*The Afternoon Tea Party given by the Central Council was truly wonderful. I will never forget the kindness and love bestowed upon me that afternoon.*

*To the Executive Committee all I can say is "thank you all" for the honour of making me a Patroness of the Auxiliary, endowing a bed in my name,*



*and for the beautiful rug. May I be worthy of it all. You have made me a very proud, but also a most humble woman.*

*Bless you all,  
Yours most sincerely,  
(Signed) Maud Chambers*

Mrs Chambers' passed away on 28 August 1961. The annual report of that year records her death, with the following tribute:

*'(Mrs Chambers was) a true and valued friend of The Royal Melbourne Hospital (who) devoted 30 years of service ... Although in ill health, Mrs Chambers' interest in the Hospital and Auxiliary members was evergreen, and she never failed to attend meetings and functions until a few days before her death ... (she was) admired and esteemed by all and was an inspired and tireless worker for The Royal Melbourne Hospital'.*

*Mrs Chambers's daughter, Mrs Helen Cooke, assisted her mother in her role and has continued to serve the Hospital as a member of the Birthday League Committee. It was her suggestion that prompted the writing of this history.*

As an example of the activities of the Central Council in the 1960's the following list illustrates the speakers who addressed the meetings:

Mrs CW Haworth, wife of the member for Isaacs, who gave a vivid description of a visit to Warsaw and Prague (1960)

- Miss Patricia Weetman, a Melbourne journalist on the staff of New Idea, who spoke about her sojourn in England (1960)
- Mrs EL Phillips, member of **East Kew Auxiliary**, who gave a 'delightful talk' about her visit to Japan (1960)
- Mr Proctor of Qantas Airways whose talk was entitled 'Around the world in half an hour' (1961)
- Miss WD Parkinson, Consul for Peru, who gave an interesting address on her homeland (1964).

On Wednesday 26 October 1960, Dame Merlyn Myer opened her beautiful garden, 'Cranlana', in Clendon Road, Toorak, to benefit the Hospital. £1000 was raised.

*'Dame Merlyn was most generous in every way and the party was the greatest success. Members felt privileged to see the garden in the springtime when it was looking its best, and enjoyed tea in the shade of the lovely trees.'*


On Sunday 29 October 1967, 'Cranlana' was once again made available to the RMH Auxiliaries. Music was supplied by the Hawthorn City Band and, despite water restrictions and hot winds, the garden afternoon was huge success.

By now the Committee of the RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries was rather well resourced, and provided a car for its organising secretary. In May 1960, the Auxiliaries' car, a Baby Austin was sold by tender and a new Ford Anglia was purchased to take its place.

*I remember when...  
"In the days when Kay Laurence was auxiliary organiser (1960-1975) it became more and more important to coordinate our work. There was so much going on and we needed to be as efficient as possible. We couldn't all be asking Herbert Adams for cakes after all. We knew that we needed to coordinate our contact with the general public."*

#### **Mrs Norma Danks CCA President 1972-1979**

In 1960, the **Caulfield & Murrumbeena Branch** disbanded after 25 years of service. It had provided a considerable amount of valuable medical equipment during this time. Prior to folding its members



achieved their final objective: to provide air-conditioning for an operating theatre. This Auxiliary had been instrumental in organising the annual 'Grannies' Day tradition, and several members continued to visit the Hospital on the first Tuesday in September each year, to hand out flowers to patients, for many years to come. In 1969, these 'friends' raised funds to endow a bed for grandmother and a bed for grandfather patients. (See also 'Grannie's Day' profile, page. 23)

The Christmas Cheer tradition continued throughout the decade, with donations of around \$130 per year being used to purchase poultry and little extras for patients' trays. Each tray carried a card worded 'Christmas Cheer from the Royal Melbourne Hospital Auxiliaries'. Members visited endowed beds and delivered flowers to the wards. In 1965, the usual posies of lavender were accompanied by talcum powder donated by Potter & Moore.

In the 1960s, the support of Melbourne's business community was reflected in the growing list of organisations taking up a new fundraising initiative – the selling of advertising space in Auxiliary publications. Those placing full-page advertisements in annual reports included: TAA airlines; Australian Paper Manufacturers (APM); English, Scottish & Australian Bank Ltd; Norman Bros Pty Ltd stationers and printers; ANZ Bank; The Herald & Weekly Times; National Bank; Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society

Limited; Bank of New South Wales; Golden Fleece petroleum products; Royal Automobile Club of Victoria; Commonwealth Bank and Optical Prescription Spectacle Makers (OPSM) Pty Ltd.

In April 1961, Mrs Howard (Maud) Buchanan was elected CCA President, in place of Mrs RW Chambers OBE who resigned in March 1961 due to ill health. Mrs Buchanan had served the Hospital for 20 years prior to her Presidency. She first joined the **Sewing Group** and in 1939 joined the **Outpatients' Canteen Auxiliary** and was that Auxiliary's President from 1958 to 1962. In 1963, Mrs Buchanan was instrumental in starting the **RMH Bargain/Thrift Shop** and worked very hard as President to ensure its success.

The **Thrift Shop** at 97 Bridge Road, Richmond opened at the beginning of June 1961. Auxiliary members worked as volunteers in the shop and supplied stock (home crafts, bric-a-brac, ornaments, china, small articles of furniture, clothing costume jewellery, books and children's toys). By March 1962, only nine months since opening, the shop recorded average weekly sales of £39/18/-.

It quickly covered all its 'heavy establishment expenses' and showed a profit of £450/1/8 by 31 March 1962 (the end of the Auxiliaries' financial year). A feature window was dressed by members of **Whernside Auxiliary**, and the displays were 'very original and eye catching', particularly Mrs Gerstman's Christmas decorations which were 'outstanding'.

The lease for the Bridge Road Thrift Shop expired in May 1964 and the enterprise moved to 178 Church Street, Richmond. This new shop opened on 6 July 1964 and was called the 'Royal Melbourne Auxiliaries Bargain Shop'.

*I remember when...*

*"We moved to Melbourne in 1938, and my mother (Mrs Buchanan) met Mrs Chambers soon after. She asked mother if she would help out in the canteen at the Melbourne. Next thing you know she joined the Executive Committee and then became President of the Central Council of Auxiliaries ... Things were very different in those days. The meetings were quite a formal affair, with all the ladies in their hats and gloves. They dressed up like they were going to the Melbourne Cup. I remember my first meeting, I had to buy hat and gloves, and it was terrifying. The life of a President was very busy. It was like a career, I guess. It was my mother's life and she involved herself in that completely; along with the work for the Red Cross during the war of course.*

*I learnt from an early age to look after myself when I came home from school, to get my dinner, as the house was often empty, not unlike having a working mother these days."*

Mrs RL (Elizabeth Kellar), who founded the **Hawthorn Auxiliary** and was CCA President from 1982-1986; her mother Mrs Howard (Maud) Buchanan was president from 1961-1965, and both mother and daughter were founding members of the **Bargain Shop Auxiliary**.

Mrs Buchanan announced her retirement from the position of President due to ill health at the 43rd Annual Meeting of the CCA, held in the Merlyn Myer Hall on 16 June 1965. Her retirement came into effect on 16 December 1965. In 1966, the RMH Auxiliaries created an annual prize for nurses, the Maud Buchanan Prize, in honour of their much-loved immediate Past-President. This award is still given each year to recognise the dedication and professionalism of young nurses at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Following Mrs Buchanan's retirement Mrs Norman Tanner was made President-Elect, but she too was forced to resign due to ill health one year later in December 1966. At the Annual Meeting on 14 June 1967, Mrs AE (Helen) Pizzey was announced as incoming Auxiliary President, having served as a member of **Whernside Auxiliary** for 20 years.

On 1 December 1961, Lady Brooks officially opened the RMH's new Merlyn Myer Hall. The construction of the beautiful hall was made possible through a generous donation from Dame Merlyn Myer in 1939. This was followed by further donations towards its completion. The hall proved to be of great value in arranging functions at the Hospital and Annual Meetings of the CCA were held there for many years from then on. The hall was demolished in 1998 to make way for Hospital extensions, with consent from the Myer family, in order to make way for the new John Cade (Department of Psychiatry) Building. (Dame Merlyn Myer died at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, which she had loved and generously supported for so long, in September 1982, aged 82.)

On 21 March 1962, a luncheon and fashion parade was held in the Merlyn Myer Hall. The event included a 'Fashions for Important Occasions' display courtesy of Myer Emporium. The RMH Auxiliaries' fashion parades continued through the 1960s. In 1963, Victorian fashions, some more than 100 years old, were displayed at St John's Hall in Toorak. And, on 10 February 1965, Myer Melbourne held a parade of Autumn-Winter fashions at 'Cranlana' in aid of the RMH Auxiliaries. Dame Merlyn Myer graciously loaned her lovely home for the event, which raised £1000. A boutique set up in the garden was an added attraction, with sales making a valuable contribution to funds. In 1965, another fashion

parade at 'Cranlana' raised \$2000, which endowed two beds in Ward 5 East (named 'Cranlana Beds').

Ever on the lookout for a promotional and fundraising opportunity, the RMH Auxiliaries joined in celebrations to mark the first birthday of Chadstone Shopping Centre in October 1961. Auxiliary members Mrs Pizzey and Mrs Gerstman represented the auxiliaries in a table setting display competition held in the centre's auditorium (their's was a barbeque setting).

On 23 October 1961, the Auxiliaries shared proceeds from a performance of 'The Sound of Music', featuring famous Australian actor and singer June Bronhill, at the Princess Theatre, with St Vincent's Hospital Auxiliary.

The RMH Auxiliaries also benefited from a television quiz show in March 1962 and April 1963. An episode of the ABC TV program 'Any Questions?', hosted by Mr Tapley Timms, was devoted to the Auxiliaries. The show took the form of an information evening at the ABC's Channel Two television studios in Elsternwick. A panel of 'experts' and various personalities answered questions sent in by the RMH Auxiliary Office and presented by volunteers in the audience. The panellists included: Professor Zelman Cowan, Professor Brian Lewis, Mr Oscar Mendelson, Miss Peggy Tellick, Mr Maurice Brown and Miss Nan Saunders.



*I remember when...  
"In the mid-1960s, our daughter, Felicity (later wife of Mr Jeff Kennett, Premier of Victoria), became the babysitter for the new Swedish Consul. The consul suggested we have a Swedish dinner and they would help out. We had the dinner at my home. You couldn't do that today. The Swedish dinner was a grand occasion. The consulate arranged all the printing, helped out with the recipes and supplied the vodka. They did a tremendous lot for us. We charged £2/5/0 and had about 150 guests. You could do that in those days. We had bigger houses, with big rooms that opened onto each other and were good for entertaining. Many people could open their homes for a function and comfortably fit in 150 or more people."*

Mrs RL (Elizabeth Kellar), CCA  
President 1982-1986

In September 1966, the Victorian Racing Club allowed the Auxiliaries to collect donations at the entrance gate to the members' pavilion and to sell light refreshments at the Two Year Old Trials at Flemington Racecourse. This

raised \$4000 for the purchase of special resuscitation equipment.

1966 was a particularly difficult year for the **Kiosk Auxiliary**, thanks to the nation's change to decimal currency coinciding with the Hospital's changes to visiting hours. This Auxiliary not only provided much valuable equipment required by the Royal Melbourne Hospital, but also contributed to equipment purchases for the Walter & Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research.

As always, the Auxiliary members' support for their Hospital extended far beyond fundraising, with many members sewing items for sale in the Thrift Shop, mending masks for operating theatres, and making covers for 'soluvac' bottles used for blood transfusions in 1963. That year, **Whernside Auxiliary** provided a special touch in funding the purchase of flowers for the main entrance of the Hospital to give a 'feeling of warmth and welcome to those who pass by'. Then there were the patient care activities that were at the core of the work of the **Outpatients' Canteen Auxiliary**, which provided free refreshments to patients in the follow-up clinic. By the mid-1960s, patients in the psychiatric ward had access to the services of a part-time art therapist funded by the RMH Auxiliaries.

In October 1969, an unnamed member of the Executive Committee gave a generous donation of shrubs and flowering plants as a contribution towards plans to make the balcony on Ward 1 North more attractive and enjoyable for patients.

Those auxiliaries formed in the 1960s reflected the changing nature of supporters. Many included younger women and men, and looked to social functions to gather support and raise funds for the Hospital. However, several were short lived due to competing pressures for these members' time. **Galaxy Group**, formed in Beaumaris in mid-1966 consisted of young men and women interested in working for the RMH, but disbanded in July 1969 due to dwindling membership. **Eadburgh (Brighton) Auxiliary**, established in September 1962, disbanded in 1965 owing to the marriage of several younger members.

In 1968, Miss Annie Danks MBE resigned from the Central Council after more than 45 years of service, and accepted the invitation to become a Patron.

On Sunday 30 November 1969, RMH President Mr WEA Hughes-Jones and members of the Hospital's committee of management entertained 1000 Auxiliary members and other friends of the Royal Melbourne Hospital at a garden party to mark the 25th anniversary of the move from the old Hospital site in Lonsdale Street. Dignitaries in attendance included the Governor of Victoria Major-General Sir Rohan Delacombe and Lady Delacombe, the Ambassador of the United States of America Mr Walter L Rice and Mrs Rice and the American Consul for Victoria Mr R Service and Mrs Service. The event brought a festive atmosphere to the Hospital grounds with music provided by the

Southern Command Band, exhibitions of medical equipment in the Merlyn Myer Hall and displays of nursing activities in the Nurses' Home.

From the very early days, one of the most consistent supporters of the RMH Auxiliaries has been Melbourne's Chinese community, with leaders of the Chinese business community hosting functions for the benefit of the Hospital. On 13 May 1969, the Chinese Masonic Society arranged a film night in aid of the RMH Auxiliaries and raised \$434.72.

On Melbourne Cup Day 1969, Miss V Donaldson generously opened her lovely garden 'Moulton' at Sassafra in aid of the RMH. 'Visitors enjoyed the glorious weather and the opportunity to wander through this charming garden. Devonshire tea was served under the trees and two stalls added to the interest.' This activity raised \$200.

## Parents and Friends Of Nurses Auxiliary

The Auxiliary known as the Parents and Friends of Nurses was founded in 1963 as a support base for trainee nurses and their families and to supply teaching aids to the School of Nursing. The members also provided care for nurses from the country if it was needed.

The members paid an annual subscription and received 4 newsletters a year, which brought news of members and the Hospital activities. The Auxiliary members put a posy of flowers in the room of each new girl and a mug for each boy. They

invited the parents of the trainees to a Morning Tea to familiarise them with the Hospital and also to recruit new members. Further to these activities were the tours of the Hospital, arranged with the aid of the Public Relations Department for any interested families.

The Auxiliary always had a very close working relationship with the Directors of Nursing, Sister Aitken, Graeme Joyson and Sister Campbell who all attended meetings of the group and gave guidance on where money could best be spent. Among purchases for the Nurses Home were electric irons, jugs and toasters and lounges for the sitting room and the swimming pool.

For the School they provided computers, electric white board, video recorders and teaching videos and dummies for practice nursing lessons. They also bought a complete set of reference books for the emergency Department. For four years the Auxiliary paid the airfare for one of the trainee nurses to attend a conference overseas.

The funds for these purchases came from 3 stalls a year, film luncheons, raffles and the End of Year Lunch, always with an entertaining speaker.


When the final graduation of RMH trained nurses and it appeared the need for the group was no longer there; but many real friendships had been formed over the years and it seemed sad to disband. The suggestion was made that perhaps the group could take over responsibility for the Christmas Cards.

'The Card Group' was formed and now takes care of the selection, counting, packing and distribution of the cards. A happy ending for a group of caring people still, supporting the Hospital as they have for 40 years (See also profile on the Canterbury Auxiliary, page 26.)

## 6. The end of an era (1970-1999)

The late 1900s presented many challenges to members of the RMH Auxiliaries. Many original and long-time members had dedicated more than 50, 60 and even 70 years of service to the Hospital and were becoming quite elderly. Attracting new members was difficult, with an increasing number of young women taking up full-time employment. Added to this was the increased emphasis on attracting financial support from the community, brought about by numerous changes to the way governments funded public health care and competition for the fundraising dollar from other organisations in the community.

Still, the Auxiliaries never failed to lose sight of their purpose – the support of the patients of the Royal Melbourne Hospital. In order to specifically target their attentions and define their purpose, each Auxiliary began to align themselves to a particular division of the Hospital. Members of the **RMH Croydon Auxiliary** supported the Clinical Research Unit; the **Parents & Friends of Nurses Auxiliary**, trainee nurses; and the **RMH Mellor Auxiliary**, worked for the Hospital's



Mellor Convalescent Ward at Royal Talbot Hospital. Then there was the very special **Pacemaker Patients' Auxiliary**, formed on 2 September 1970 by a group of pacemaker patients to raise funds to purchase equipment for the cardiology department. This group had the added benefit of involving patients in auxiliary work and helped build stronger connections with the Hospital. It was founded by a grateful patient Mrs Ella Paterson.

*I remember when...*  
*"I had a pacemaker implanted at the Hospital and I felt so grateful for the good health I was receiving that I decided that I should do something in return. I was the RMH's 50th pacemaker patient. I couldn't live without the device. It made all the difference in my life. I asked if I could form or join an Auxiliary. They called a meeting of all pacemaker patients, and that's how the Auxiliary commenced. At the time, most auxiliaries were in wealthy suburbs like Hawthorn or Toorak. This was the only patient Auxiliary, I think it was the only one in Australia back then. It was unusual for patients to form an Auxiliary, but it has been very successful, not only in*

*raising funds for the cardiology department, but also helping give patients confidence in the process. We talk to people, describe how well we feel. I have made many friendships as a result; there is a great bond between us."*

**Mrs Ella Paterson, RMH Pacemaker Patients' Auxiliary**

Before Mrs Paterson died in 1992 she asked her daughter Mrs Barbara Rusmir to continue her work, which she has done most conscientiously.

The **RMH Pacemaker Patients Auxiliary** comprises men and women, many from country Victoria and interstate. It is still going strong today and, aside from raising funds, acts as a support group for prospective and recent pacemaker patients and their families and the current president Mrs Dora Shirt keeps in regular contact with members through a newsletter and the sending of a Christmas Card. In the year 2000 they had a very special party to celebrate the 100th birthday of a patient who had had a pacemaker installed 18 years before.

At the Annual Meeting held on 17 June 1970 in the Meryl Myer Hall, the Auxiliaries announced that a record \$56,746.55 had been raised over the past 12 months.

That year, the RMH Auxiliaries became book publishers, launching the first edition of a cookbook containing their favourite recipes.

This was very popular. Production costs were funded by a generous gift from an anonymous donor, enabling all proceeds to go directly to the Hospital.

In 1972, the RMH Auxiliaries celebrated their golden anniversary. Mrs Helen Pizzezy announced her retirement from the position of President after a five-year term. The new President, Mrs John (Norma) Danks, was well known to all Auxiliary members and bore a name that had been synonymous with the Hospital for more than half a century. Mrs Danks was a foundation member of Hazeldene Auxiliary and had been a member of the CCA since 1964. Sir Aaron Danks was President of the Hospital from 1918 to 1928, and his daughter Miss Annie Danks MBE had given a lifetime of service to Auxiliary work.

To mark the golden anniversary a very enjoyable function was held in the Meryl Myer Hall on 16 December 1971, with 160 members present (many more had been prevented from attending due to a tram strike). The festivities included presentations from RMH President Mr WEA Hughes-Jones and Mrs Helen Pizzezy and 'a delightful programme arranged by the Irish tenor Mr George Hegan and his accompanist Mr B Duggan ... followed by afternoon tea by courtesy of the Committee of Management'.

*'From a very small beginning 50 years ago, the Auxiliaries have grown to a very large network of groups. The original four, the Bunne Shop, now the Kiosk (Auxiliary), the Outpatients' Canteen (Auxiliary), the Toorak (Auxiliary) and South Yarra (Auxiliary), are still working hard, and two of the foundation members, Mrs Victor Letcher and Miss Jessie Bage, are both very active. During these 50 years, over \$878,012 has been donated to the Hospital, in money and equipment.'*

**Mrs Helen Pizzey, President, Central Council of Auxiliaries, RMH Auxiliaries 50th annual report for 12 months ended 31 March 1972**

In 1971, with attendances at monthly meetings falling, it was decided to hold Central Council meetings quarterly. This proved very successful, with members making a special effort to attend.

While Christmas Cheer continued in the 1970s, it was not mentioned in the highlights section of any annual reports after Christmas 1966 (when the Auxiliaries gave the Hospital \$271.53 for patient gifts). Every patient in the Hospital receives gift on Christmas Day donated by Auxiliary members and the Central Council.

The ingenuity of Auxiliary members was demonstrated at a potentially dismal event hosted by the 'Kiwanis'; a fundraising organisation that invited various charitable bodies to join them in an annual event. The auxiliaries had an ice-cream stand at the Kiwanis Market Day at the City Square on what turned out to be one of the coldest September days in many, many years. With rain pouring down and people leaving in droves, the Auxiliary members decided to spruik an offer of a free gas-filled balloon with each ice-cream sold. Shortly, all over the square could be seen children sheltering from the rain holding balloons, with parents asking where they could get one for their child.

In 1972, donations from the **RMH Kiosk Auxiliary** fully equipped the new Intensive Care Ward.

In 1973, the RMH announced a special Appeal and looked to the Auxiliaries for support.

*'Appeals are infrequent events in the history of the Royal Melbourne Hospital, the last having been in support of the building of the North Wing in 1947. The 1974 Appeal is an approach to the whole community asking for whole-hearted support in our objective: to maintain the Royal Melbourne Hospital in the forefront of medical*

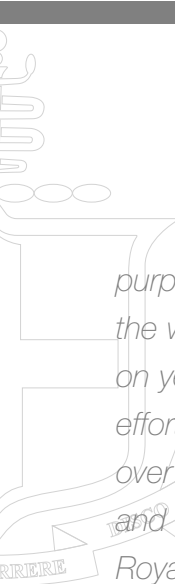
*science, as an institution available to the whole community',*

said RMH President Mr WEA Hughes-Jones in his message to the Auxiliaries in the 51st RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries Annual Report.

The auxiliaries contributed \$22,038 to the Appeal, over and above their usual annual donation. This was mostly raised through a series of social events, including a trip to Mitchelton Vineyard and cellars on 23 March 1974, and a visit to the Rhododendron Gardens in Olinda organised by members of the **Outpatients' Canteen Auxiliary** on 26 March 1974.

The RMH's 1974 Appeal coincided with a period of economic squeeze and uncertainty.

*'Nevertheless, the general public responded most generously and made up for much of the financial support (the Hospital) would normally have expected from commerce and industry, so that an excellent result (of \$850,000) was obtained. On this background, it was most gratifying to have such a positive and effective response from the Auxiliaries in their contribution of \$22,038 for Appeal*



*purposes. We all realise that the work of the auxiliary goes on year by year, and the extra effort in raising this amount over and beyond their normal and continued support for the Royal Melbourne Hospital was most appreciated,'*

**said Sir Benjamin Rank CMG, RMH 1974 Appeal Chairman.**

In 1976, RMH Auxiliary President Mrs Danks was appointed to the RMH Board.

Dame Merlyn Myer continued to open up her home for the benefit of the RMH. On Friday 26 and Saturday 27 October 1973, 2000 people attended an exhibition by the Embroiderers' Guild of Victoria at 'Cranlana'. Staff of Myer's Display Department arranged the craftwork. In 1976, Dame Merlyn Myer retired from the RMH Board of Management and from the Auxiliary Executive Committee.

The Auxiliaries continued to lose some longest serving members. Mrs RL Kellar resigned in June 1973 (daughter of the late Mrs Howard (Maud) Buchanan. Mrs Kellar was moving to Sydney with her family. She had been a willing and active foundation member of the **Hawthorn Auxiliary** and the **Bargain Shop Auxiliary**, which she founded along with her mother.

On 6 July 1978, more than 200 members and friends enjoyed a nostalgia luncheon at the Hotel Australia. Entertainers Dennis

Farrington, Mick Lewis and Max Hardy played many old favourites and had no trouble encouraging guests to sing along. Mr Frank Thorne toured the tables serenading the guests with well-remembered tunes.

The first Easter raffle was held in 1978 and raised hundred of dollars. Red Tulip donated the prizes and continued to do so for 16 years up until 1994. The annual Easter and Christmas raffles have become a regular money raising activity for the RMH Auxiliaries and continue to this day.

After 40 years of loyal support to the Hospital, **Brighton Auxiliary** disbanded on 30 April 1973. Declining membership and the problem of trying to raise funds for the Royal Melbourne Hospital in an area where support was mainly directed to the Brighton Community Hospital, Southern Memorial Hospital and the Alfred Hospital affected their decision. Its members had raised more than \$21,000 in 40 years. A similar fate had befallen the **Northcote Auxiliary**, which after a terrific record of 47 years service to the RMH, disbanded in April 1970 as support in that locale had drifted to Preston & Northcote Community Hospital.

The 15-year-old **Alexandra's Auxiliary** disbanded in 1978 after struggling for several years against the competition of paid employment for its members. Changing economic and social conditions meant that fewer people had time to spare for auxiliary work.

*I remember when...*

*"In the 1980s it started to get harder as so many members were busy with grandchildren. It is so hard now to get even little things organised. There's so many organisations seeking help and it's more difficult to get people to donate products or their services. People today want to be paid to speak."*

**Mrs RL (Elizabeth) Kellar, CCA President 1982-1986**

Miss JE Bage resigned as Vice-President of the RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries and as representative of the Hospital's Board of Management on the Executive Committee in 1975. Miss Bage's service dated back to the inaugural meeting to form a Royal Melbourne Hospital Auxiliary in 1921. She had been a member of **Toorak Auxiliary** since 1921 and was the CCA's first Honorary Secretary and had held office in many capacities during the 54 years she was associated with the RMH Auxiliaries. She was a member of the Board of Management for 40 years until her retirement in 1974. Miss Bage had 'a store of memories and experiences spanning a lifetime of devotion to the Royal Melbourne Hospital'. The members of the Executive Committee honoured Miss Bage by electing her as an Honorary Life Member.

The Hospital bade farewell to its long-serving **Outpatients' Canteen**



**Auxiliary** on 23 April 1975. The RMH Board of Management hosted a gathering for the Auxiliary in the Merlyn Myer Hall, attended by 100 members. The canteen ceased operation after 53 years of service due to the introduction of vending machines, implemented in order to provide 24-hour, seven-days-a-week service to patients and staff. The Auxiliaries planned to establish a new volunteer service of helpers, which it was hoped would continue the Auxiliary's service to frail and disabled patients. (See also 'Volunteer Service' profile, page 56.)

At the end of November 1975, the **Bargain Shop** at 178 Church Street, Richmond, closed. The new owner, Mr Edwards, offered to make an annual donation to the Hospital in return for goods donated for him to sell. Miss V Donaldson had been the mainstay of the Bargain Shop for more than 12 years, and had driven from Sassafras three times each week to open the shop.

In 1976 a new Auxiliary was formed to coordinate goods donated for sale. This was a rather unusual Auxiliary in that it did not have office bearers or members, but consisted entirely of generous people who gave freely of their time and effort in making goods to sell through the Auxiliary Office. One such person was Mrs Bardwell, who sewed dolls' clothes and donated children's books and the lavender used for patients' trays at Christmas time, and travelled from Eltham in all weather to bring her work to the Hospital. Another,

Miss V Hunter, an RMH patient, made stocking bags, aprons, padded hangers, cot quilts, tea cosies and many other items, which she brought in wrapped in parcels and in boxes whenever she visited the Hospital. This new Auxiliary provided a central point for coordinating the many items being donated by the community for use in Auxiliary stalls; from jams and marmalades to patchwork bags, rugs, knitted and crocheted babies' and children's clothes, toys, books and household items, and even bulbs and plants.

On 1 June 1976, the Auxiliaries hosted a 'most enjoyable' luncheon at the Windsor Hotel, attended by nearly 200 guests. Mr and Mrs Hector Crawford, of the Crawford Television Production Company, gave a stimulating talk on television and its effects on family life, which was followed by an avalanche of questions and comments, 'some of them very penetrating'.

Mrs Norma Danks resigned after seven years as Auxiliary President in 1979. The new president Mrs JW Abbott had served the RMH as a member of the **Parents & Friends of Nurses** Auxiliary and as a volunteer for many years.

The **Almoner Auxiliary**, which had pioneered the Hospital social work movement in Australia, disbanded in December 1977 after more than 50 years service to the Hospital (see profile, page 11.)

1980-1981 was a year of many anniversary celebrations. **RMH Essendon Auxiliary** celebrated


its 50th anniversary; **Hazeldene Auxiliary**, its 25th; and the **Pacemaker Patients' Auxiliary**, its 10th. The Auxiliaries raised more than \$101,000 in total that year. The **Kiosk Auxiliary** contributed \$67,000 towards this amount and faced the challenge of finding a way to replenish sales figures in the year ahead as the RMH Board of Management had requested that the kiosk no longer sell cigarettes.

On 8 April 1981, the Merlyn Myer Hall was the venue for a concert by renowned organist and RMH staff member Mr Tony Fenelon and his talented saxophonist friend Mr Kel McMillan. The performance received an enthusiastic ovation from the audience and was followed by supper.

In 1981, a most successful 'Fabulous Fair' was held at the Hospital. Mr G Weideman, Deputy Health Minister and Minister for Tourism, opened the fair and the Victorian Pipe Band played throughout the day. Clowns ran a lucky dip and Auxiliary members served open roast beef sandwiches and delicious Greek food made by the Hospital's newest auxiliary, the **Greek Fund for Arthritis Research**, which soon became known for having the best raffle ticket sellers on record.

The Fabulous Fair was held again on Friday 25 November 1983. Despite inclement weather, which affected attendances, the event still raised \$5000.

In 1982, the RMH Auxiliaries marked 60 years of service with a record donation to the Royal Melbourne



Hospital of 'the magnificent sum of \$124,350'. Of course, this meant its original and longest serving branches were also 60 years old. The **Kiosk Auxiliary** celebrated its 60th anniversary by contributing the record sum of \$79,935 to the RMH; \$51,000 of which helped establish a new Open Heart Surgery Unit. The **RMH Toorak Auxiliary** marked its 60th birthday at a luncheon party, but reported that its efforts were rather restricted due to the age of its membership and lack of new members.

In the early 1980s, the Auxiliaries installed a collection barrel in the outpatients' foyer, where it remains to this day. Known as Operation Small Change, this initiative was started by Mr Les McNamara, 'The Barrel Man', who reasoned that most people could spare some small change without hardship and when combined these coins could provide a substantial sum of money to help Hospitals purchase equipment. The small red barrels could soon be found in many doctors' surgeries, community health centres and Hospitals around Melbourne. The scheme was sponsored by National Mutual Life Association and Rotary Clubs, which donated the wooden barrels. Mr McNamara took on the job of convincing Hospital managements, many of whom were doubtful of the merits of this anonymous donation scheme.

However, results soon spoke for themselves. In just 22 months, \$1594.50 was deposited in the barrel at the RMH, including many notes and even four crisp new \$50 notes

enclosed in an envelope. In 1983, proceeds of \$1500 from the barrel funded the purchase of two beds, two lockers and two bed charts for the RMH's Open Heart Intensive Care Unit.

The **RMH Auxiliary Gift Shop** opened in the ground floor lift lobby, near the visitors' entrance, on Wednesday 3 November 1982, the day after Melbourne Cup Day. The first customers received a flower, which could be seen adorning many a buttonhole throughout the Hospital for the entire day.

At the 60th Annual Meeting of the RMH Auxiliaries Central Council, held in the Merlyn Myer Hall on Thursday 17 June 1982, the President Mrs JW Abbot introduced her successor, Mrs RL Kellar. Mrs Kellar was the daughter of Mrs Howard Buchanan, who had been president of the CCA from 1961-1966. Mrs Kellar had visited the Hospital as a young child and helped her mother in the **Outpatients' Canteen**. In 1963, she helped form the **Hawthorn Auxiliary**, before moving to Sydney and on her return rejoined the Auxiliary and the CCA Executive Committee.

In the 1980s, fundraising had become the major emphasis of the Auxiliaries' work. In his statement appearing in the 61st Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 1983, the then RMH President Mr Peter C Trumble reported that:

*'The financial climate in which Hospitals must now operate is bleak to say the least, and it is clear that governments, both Commonwealth and State, are facing massive monetary problems, not the least of which is the mounting cost of health and hospital services... Substantial donations received through Auxiliary sources enable the Hospital to purchase a wide range of necessary equipment and other services that would otherwise be denied to our patients'.*

The Auxiliaries responded to this Appeal with energy and raised another record amount of \$132,834.68 the following year.

After 38 years of fundraising for the RMH Clinical Research Unit, the **Croydon Auxiliary** folded in March 1985. Many members had served the Auxiliary since its inception. Since then it had donated more than \$77,000 towards medical research activities.

In late March 1986, the RMH amalgamated with the Essendon & District Memorial Hospital. On 18 March 1986, the CCA of the RMH and the Senior and Junior Auxiliaries of EDMH also became officially amalgamated. With the opening of the new rehabilitation wards at the Essendon campus, the RMH lost its

rehabilitation ward at Royal Talbot Hospital, which had been part of the RMH for 16 years, and the **LA Mellor Ward Auxiliary** with it.

The amalgamation particularly impacted on the RMH Auxiliaries that had been operating in the Essendon area for many years. On 23 February 1987, the **RMH Essendon Junior Auxiliary** took the important step of changing its name and transferring its funds to become the **EDMH Kiosk Auxiliary**.

This was a time of significant structural change for the Auxiliaries, yet as with all the challenges they had faced beforehand they adjusted well, rolled up their sleeves and got on with the job of supporting their Hospital and its patients. In 1986-1987, another record fell by the wayside when the Auxiliaries raised more than \$149,335 for the two Hospitals.

In the late 1980s, some smaller Auxiliaries were experiencing problems raising money and attracting members. To help these groups, the larger and more established **RMH Canterbury Auxiliary** (which had increased its membership yet again), decided to collect money towards a more expensive piece of equipment and leave smaller, more attainable purchases to the smaller Auxiliaries.

Each December, Auxiliary funds were augmented by the sale of Christmas cards and diaries, particularly at the Combined Charities Gift Shop where sales exceeded \$3000 in 1986-1987.

And, in 1986, a Christmas raffle was held for the first time, along same lines as the successful Easter raffle, with large baskets of groceries and Christmas goodies as prizes. The Auxiliaries held these two raffles each year until 1999-2000, when due to the high level of interest in the RMH raffles, a third annual raffle was commenced (the three raffles raised a total of \$20,000 that year).

By the close of the decade, there were 14 Auxiliaries operating on behalf of the Royal Melbourne Hospital (incorporating the Essendon & District Memorial Hospital), with a new 'support group' Auxiliary soon to be established. This represented a loss of five Auxiliaries overall in that decade, yet those that survived along with the newly formed auxiliaries were coordinating their efforts and operating extremely efficiently. And, in 1989-1990, they were able to raise a quarter of a million dollars for the two RMH campuses at Parkville and Essendon!

Still, some traditions remained. **Canterbury Auxiliary** supplied 'patient care packs' for those in need, as it had done for so many years. These were distributed via nursing administration staff and were mostly handed out to patients admitted through the emergency department without time or money to gather toiletries for their comfort during their stay in Hospital. Another tradition was the collection of small Christmas gifts for patients in wards adopted by particular Auxiliaries.

More than 200 guests attended the official opening of the new kiosk at EDMH on 27 June 1989. The kiosk was located in the central foyer area, and included a coffee shop area and space for a window display. This was managed by the **Essendon Kiosk Auxiliary** and staffed by volunteers, along the same lines as the very successful **RMH Kiosk Auxiliary**, and immediately proved very popular with patients, staff and visitors alike, promising to be as financially successful as its sister Auxiliary over at Parkville.

Twice each year, members of the **Whernside Auxiliary** raided their wardrobes, and those of friends and family members, and held a huge jumble sale. The sales had been a regular activity for this Auxiliary for many years and were very popular amongst bargain hunters and well known in the community, with people almost knocking down the doors at the opening. In 1989-1990, almost \$2000 was raised from the Whernside jumble sale. Any goods leftover were taken to the **EDMH Opportunity Shop**.

*I remember when...*

*"The Whernside jumble sales had quite a following. We had so much lovely clothing for sale. The first day was like the rush you get at department store stocktaking sales. In the beginning, people said we couldn't have that kind of thing in Toorak so we had the jumble sales in Collingwood. Sometime later, we did have them at St John's in Toorak, and that continued for a few years, although we did have a bit of trouble with the clergy about people parking in the driveway. During the war, we had to remove the buttons and linings to sell. The sales were such a good source of money, but there were so many people. We had to work out ways so they couldn't steal from us and even had a policeman there a few times."*

**Rosemary Campbell OAM,  
President,  
Whernside Auxiliary (1951-1972)**

By the end of the 1980s, there were 14 auxiliaries, and in 1989-1990, the last financial year for the decade, the auxiliary members raised \$251,000 – another record achievement.

As if heralding the end of an era, two prominent members of the Auxiliaries' Executive Committee retired in 1989. Both were former Presidents. Mrs Glad Abbott, president from 1979 to 1982, retired after 26 years service. Mrs Abbott had been a founding member of the **Parents & Friends of Nurses Auxiliary**, and member of the **Kiosk Auxiliary** and the **Volunteer Service**. Mrs Elizabeth Kellar retired after nearly 40 years involvement with **Hawthorn Auxiliary** and the CCA. As Auxiliary President from 1982 to 1986, Mrs Kellar had followed a family tradition; her mother, Mrs Howard (Maud) Buchanan, was Auxiliary President from 1961 to 1967.

*I remember when...*

*"Members of Hawthorn started to question why the Melbourne (Hospital) didn't get money from the Hawthorn Community Chest. So we took a section every year and we door knocked. We dragged our husbands around with us and we dragged our children around with us. My grandchildren do it now."*

**Mrs Elizabeth Kellar,  
CCA President 1982-1986**

Mrs J Millar (Heather) Lowe became President of the RMH Auxiliaries in 1986 and served until 1989. She was a founding member of the Volunteer Service and also a member of the Hazeldene Auxiliary.

The Annual Meeting held on Thursday 15 June 1989 was Mrs Heather Lowe's final meeting as President. Her final official duty was to welcome the incoming President, Mrs RA (Frances) Rigby, a long-time member of the **Canterbury Auxiliary** and the Executive Committee.

Despite what Dr Tom Hurley, President of the RMH Board of Management, described as 'troubled financial times and increased difficulty in fundraising', the Auxiliaries again contributed a record-breaking amount to the RMH in 1990-1991, of more than \$275,000!

By this time, most of buildings at the Hospital's Parkville site were 50 years old and starting to show their age. The RMH embarked on a redevelopment program and identified areas in most urgent need of attention: operating theatres and the emergency, cardiology, radiology and intensive care departments.

On Wednesday 21 November 1990, one of the oldest branches, **Box Hill Auxiliary** disbanded. A final card afternoon and Annual General Meeting was held at Box Hill Town Hall, where it had all begun in 1938 with the establishment of the **Box Hill Men's Auxiliary**. Over 52 years, the Auxiliary had supplied equipment to almost every area of the Hospital; everything from a bandage roller to a teletronic recorder for the intensive care unit.

The **RMH Medical Wives Group** also disbanded that year. It was founded in 1984, as a revival of a previous group that abandoned its activities.

From 1984 to 1988, the group organised some very successful social activities including a family day at Emu Bottom and several 'basket luncheons' in the Merlyn Myer Hall. As a final gesture, the Auxiliary donated the balance of its funds, \$410.75, to the RMH Medical Library, which it had supported for many years.

**RMH Essendon Auxiliary** celebrated its 60th anniversary in July 1990 with a basket luncheon at the home of its President Mrs Florence Crook. More than 30 members attended and this hardworking group presented another cheque to the Hospital, this time to purchase wheelchairs for the emergency department.

While the money raised was of great benefit to the Hospital, as always it was the special extra 'things' that Auxiliary members did to help out that made a difference to individual patients and their families. In her report for the 1989-1990, RMH Auxiliaries President Mrs Frances Rigby urged readers to think of the many hours of baking, stitching and sewing that occurred in order to reach the record total funds raised.

*'I think of a lady of over 90 years who is renowned for the pies that she makes to be sold by her Auxiliary ... of the letter received from a mother of a patient who told how the cups of tea served from the trolley made a dreadful day almost bearable as they waited with their critically ill son. The facts and figures are all very well, but it's the people who count in voluntary work,'*


**wrote Mrs Rigby.**

In 1992, the Royal Melbourne Hospital marked the 70th anniversary of its dedicated and hardworking auxiliary force with an afternoon tea for its longest serving Auxiliary, the **RMH Kiosk Auxiliary**. Seventy years on, the Auxiliary was still going strong and over the years had raised a total of nearly \$2 million for the benefit of the Hospital and its patients! At the event, RMH President Dr Tom Hurley presented the Auxiliary's Patron and a founding member, Mrs Sylvia Letcher BEM, with a special gift in recognition of her 70 years service to the Hospital. Mrs Letcher resigned the following year due to ill health, but continued her interest in the Hospital right up until her death in 1995. (See also 'RMH Kiosk Auxiliary' profile, page 10.)

Ever on the lookout for a good fundraising idea, the Auxiliaries began collecting corks in 1990. Mrs Norma Danks had spotted an article about the cork collection scheme in a newspaper. The idea initially caused some amusement, but soon developed into an excellent exercise in recycling and fundraising. The 'band' of cork collectors contributed \$1302 in their first year, with several Auxiliary members collecting corks from busy Melbourne restaurants.

In 1996-1997 the cork collectors raised \$2200, which helped purchase a cardiac defibrillator. Mrs Rosemary Brigden and Mrs Barbara Rusmir have been particularly active in collecting corks. This activity continues today, with the cork collectors contributing \$1500 to the Hospital in 1999-2000, which was used to purchase medical equipment for the benefit of patients.

*The collecting and sale of corks has proved to be a great public relations exercise as well as a money raiser. So many restaurants and clubs are involved now and they are proud to display certificates they have received from the Hospital. The time consuming and painstaking task handling every cork to make sure no metal or plastic is included in the bags. They are delivered to ACL Comcork where they are*



*ground up to be used again for such things as industrial and domestic flooring and more recently the centers of cricket balls. Cork takes a long time to break down naturally when it is discarded, so this project helps keep it out of the environment.*

**– Mrs Frances Rigby, RMH Auxiliaries President 1989-1998 (interviewed at the RMH September 2002)**

In February 1993, a new form of Auxiliary was created. As its name suggests, the **RMH Staff Auxiliary** comprised staff of the Hospital and was presided over by RMH Public Relations Officer Roslyn Handley. This operated as a staff social club and was initially very successful. A mini lotto scheme, where staff donated \$2 per month from their pay to enter a monthly draw to win \$500 was an instant hit. The group changed its name to the **RMH Social Club** in 1993, and its staff activities that year contributed \$3090 to the cardiothoracic surgery ward for a special intensive care bed.

At the end of 1993, many Hospital departments were restructured and responsibility for coordinating the work of the Auxiliaries and Volunteers fell to the new Division of Corporate Affairs, which comprised the media and public affairs, the fundraising and the community relations departments.

A new location for the Auxiliary office was announced along with the restructure. Emphasis was placed on the need for more support groups in specific areas of the Hospital, and a branch of Heartbeat Victoria, the state wide cardiac patients' support group, was established in mid-1994.

At the AGM on 15 June 1994, 50-year service badges awarded to Mrs Florence Crook of **RMH Essendon Auxiliary**, and Mrs Ida Hollister, **EDMH Senior Auxiliary**.

With the new organisational structure came an increased emphasis on the public relations nature of community events. 1993-1994 was a big year for such activities. Many hundreds of people visited the Hospital on its first Open Day held that year. The Auxiliaries and Volunteers helped make the day a success, by holding stalls, guiding tours of wards and selling tickets for the Hospital's first car raffle since the Buick raffle of 1940. The car raffle was drawn by Glenn Ridge, host of Channel Nine's 'Sale of the Century' program. Overall, the Auxiliaries raised \$377,040 for the Hospital that year.

A fashion parade held at Moonee Valley Racing Club in 1993-1994 proved to be successful not only as a fundraiser, but as an opportunity for Auxiliary members to get together with other members and their friends. This became a regular event for several years.

In 1995-1996 the fashion parade moved to Kooyong Tennis Club, with some 200 women taking up the

invitation to view the latest range of clothes from Panada Boutique. The event raised over \$7000 and used volunteer models, including several nursing staff. In 1996-1997, more than 260 women gathered to view the Liz Davenport Winter collection at the auxiliary's fashion parade at Kooyong Tennis Club, which raised more than \$6000.

On 10 January 1995, the auxiliaries joined defence force personnel, members of Rotoract and Rotary and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade to 'rattle tins' at a one day cricket match, held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground between Australia and England. The event was a designated fundraiser for the RMH. Soon afterwards, members of the **Essendon Senior Auxiliary** and the volunteer service picked up their tins and accepted an invitation from the MET (Melbourne's public transport provider) to collect funds from travellers at Kensington, Moonee Ponds and Essendon train stations.

In 1994-1995, RMH President Mrs Frances Rigby began to investigate ways to attract younger members. She canvassed other Hospital Auxiliary presidents across the state and reported that all were facing a similar dilemma.

*'As I contacted Hospitals for figures on fundraising, nearly all complained of the difficulty in finding new auxiliary members. We agreed that we must formulate plans for different ways in which younger people will be comfortable to support the Hospitals which serve our community.'*

**Mrs Frances Rigby, CCA  
President 1989-1998**

The RMH Auxiliaries are connected with a movement of Hospital Auxiliary members across the state, which in 1994-1995 contributed the combined total of more than \$2.5 million to Victoria's health service. 'Is it not exciting to be part of such a movement whose aim is to help others?' asked Mrs Rigby, announcing the result in her report of that year.

Despite they're being fewer members in most auxiliaries, the groups still managed to raise \$256,781 for the Hospital and its patients in 1995-1996.

In 1995 four Auxiliaries marked major milestones. RMH Essendon celebrated 65 years of service; EDMH Seniors, 50 years; Hazeldene, 40 years; and the Pacemaker Patients Auxiliary, 25 years. The RMH Volunteer Service also had cause for celebration, with the year marking 20 years of service to the Hospital.

In October 1995 a craft morning was held at Moonee Valley Racing Club. Those in attendance watched demonstrations by craftspeople at work and viewed exhibits of finished items. This was so successful that it has become an annual event for the RMH Auxiliaries, held on the last Monday in September. In 1996, the event was given the catchy name 'Pot Pourri' and included a display of 14 different crafts, including patchwork quilting, cushion making, gift wrapping and drying and preserving of fruit.

Mrs Felicity Kennett, wife of the then Victorian Premier, Mr Jeff Kennett opened 'Pot Pourri II' in September 1996. Mrs Kennett's family had a long association with the RMH Auxiliaries. Her grandmother, Mrs Maud Buchanan, had been CCA President from 1961-1965 and her mother, Mrs Elizabeth Kellar, was President from 1982-1986. Mrs Kennett amused participants with her memories as a youngster helping in the RMH Kiosk and with other Auxiliary activities.

On 28 September 1997, the craft day at Moonee Valley was renamed 'Garden Delights' and featured a morning tea with discussion and idea sharing with a panel of prominent horticulturalists and gardening specialists – Sylvia Churchill, Gwen Elliott, Anne Latreille and Penny Woodward.

The Auxiliaries continued to provide a vital link between the Hospital and its community. During 1996, the Auxiliary service coordinated two special

projects instigated by young Melbournians in an effort to help out patients at the RMH.

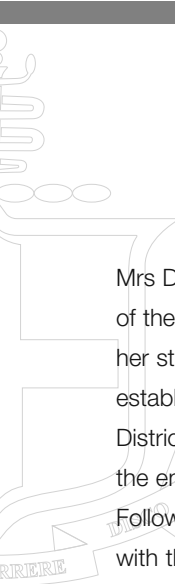
Students from the Melbourne Institute of Textiles designed and made turbans for patients undergoing chemotherapy at the RMH's Melbourne Cancer Centre.

On 6 December 1996, students visited the centre to present 47 turbans to patients and to receive special certificates of appreciation from the Hospital for their efforts.

On a visit to her grandfather at the RMH in 1996, Katherine O'Keeffe noticed a shortage of vases for flowers given to patients and decided to do something about it. She gathered together her school friends, from Our Lady of Mercy College in Heidelberg, and raised funds to purchase vases for the Hospital wards. Katherine and her friends donated 27 vases to the RMH during the year.

The following year the Auxiliary service facilitated another innovative community service program involving staff of The Body Shop. Two staff from its Bourke Street and Galleria stores were released from their duties for two hours a week to volunteer in the Hospital. The Body Shop volunteers focussed their attention on the eating disorders unit, where they gave relaxing hand massages and other positive cosmetic treatments to patients.

In 1996 the Auxiliaries lost one of their dearest members with the death of Mrs Connie Dolphin, OAM.



Mrs Dolphin was long time President of the EDMH Senior Auxiliary, and her strong team had worked for the establishment of the Essendon & District Memorial Hospital following the end of the Second World War.

Following EDMH's amalgamation with the RMH, Mrs Dolphin and many of her Auxiliary members continued to support that campus through its opportunity shop and many other activities.

On 20 March 1996, Auxiliary Patron Mrs L McGarvie hosted a very successful reception at Government House to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Hospital. Mrs McGarvie met all the guests and spoke briefly of their contribution to the Hospital, this was followed by afternoon tea and tours of the public rooms.

In 1997 the RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries celebrated its 75th anniversary – as did the RMH Kiosk Auxiliary and the Birthday League. Whernside Auxiliary celebrated its 50th anniversary. Another major milestone was not too far away. Planning had commenced for the Hospital's sesquicentenary (150th anniversary) celebrations in 1998.

That year, Mr Richard McGarvie retired as Governor of Victoria and consequently Mrs McGarvie relinquished her role as Patron of the RMH Auxiliaries. With the appointment of Sir James Gobbo as Governor of Victoria, Lady Gobbo was invited to become the new Patron and graciously accepted.

In 1996-1997, the Auxiliaries raised \$295,880, and two new support groups joined the RMH auxiliaries. As its name suggests, the RMH Friends of the Melbourne Colorectal Service Auxiliary, founded by Mrs Beverley Hargreaves, raises funds to support colorectal research at the Hospital. This Auxiliary was formed by Mrs Beverley Hargreaves, the daughter of Mrs Connie Dolphin. The other group, Heartbeat Royal Melbourne, was established as a support group for cardiac patients.

1997-1998 was a momentous year for the Hospital, marking its 150th year of service to the people of Victoria. It also saw the implementation of some major organisational change as a result of the RMH's incorporation into a new entity, the Western Health Care Network and the subsequent closure of the Hospital's Royal Park and Essendon campuses.

In the financial year to June 1998, the Royal Melbourne Hospital treated some 60,000 inpatients and 330,000 outpatients in what Dr David Campbell, then RMH General Manager, described as 'a continually evolving public health environment'.

The closure of the Essendon Campus hit the original EDMH Auxiliaries particularly hard. After many years of tireless work for a fine Hospital that was never allowed to realise the dreams of its founders, many members of EDMH Auxiliaries were disappointed to lose the Hospital they had worked so hard to support. They resigned themselves to the news and

some chose to continue supporting their Hospital's former patients at their new home at Parkville, by taking up the invitation to join other Auxiliaries. The Parkville campus' Orthopaedic Ward was named in their honour and the Opportunity Shop continues to support that ward. It is staffed by a loyal band of Essendon volunteers

In 1998, RMH Auxiliaries President Mrs Frances Rigby received the Order of Australia Medal in the Australia Day honours.

The RMH Auxiliaries enthusiastically supported the Hospital's weeklong sesquicentenary celebrations in March 1998. The week commenced with the launch of *The Ever Open Door*, a history of the RMH written by Dr Alan Gregory, at the Melbourne Town Hall. This was followed by a Gala Ball at the Carlton Crest Hotel, attended by more than 500 people and, the grand finale, an Open Day at the Hospital on the Sunday followed by a service of commemoration at St Paul's Cathedral, where Dr Davis McCaughey addressed the congregation.

Auxiliary members received a sneak preview of Dr Gregory's book, when he gave a special presentation at the RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries Annual General Meeting on 15 June 1997.

In 1997, the Auxiliaries ran a novel raffle, which tapped into the enthusiasm of Melbourne's football finals fever. The Auxiliaries approached individual football clubs to request players' signatures on team footballs.



Auxiliary members sold tickets throughout the Hospital, in suburbs across Melbourne and at Optus Oval and the Camberwell Market. This innovative idea proved very successful and raised \$7000. Balwyn Rotary agreed to match funds raised, which combined to fund the purchase of a metabolic monitor for the intensive care unit.

For many years, the Australian Red Cross had provided volunteers to operate a library service at the Parkville and Essendon campuses. In 1997, the organisation decided to cease its involvement in acute Hospitals. The incumbent Red Cross volunteers decided to take on the task of continuing the service independently, and renamed themselves the RMH Volunteer Library Service. Through their efforts and the generous donations of books and magazines, the library continued to deliver an extremely efficient and necessary service to the patients of the Hospital.

As the decade came to a close, community events became an increasingly important avenue to garner support from the community and to publicise the Hospital's work. In 1999-2000, the auxiliaries held a morning tea at The Windsor Hotel, where renowned television celebrity chef Gabriel Gaté demonstrated his culinary skills in front of a capacity crowd.

In 1988 Mrs Frances Rigby OAM resigned as President and was succeeded by Mrs Judy Adam AM, Mrs Adam had been a member of

Canterbury Auxiliary and a past Board Member of The Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Despite the ongoing concern of attracting new, younger members the RMH Auxiliaries continued to contribute record donations to the Hospital through their tireless efforts, and, in 1998-1999, they were able to attract the massive sum of \$404,942 from the community!

In late 1999, two new support group Auxiliaries were founded. The **RMH John Cade Support Group**, named after the internationally famous Melbourne psychiatrist, aimed to support psychiatric patients in the northwest metropolitan region of Melbourne. The other, **RMH Neph Friends**, comprised patients and supporters of the renal (kidney) transplant department.

## Project Plus: The RMH Volunteer Service – established 1975

From its earliest days as a humble Hospital serving Melbourne's destitute and poor, the (Royal) Melbourne has received enthusiastic and dedicated support from people willing to lend a hand to help out its patients. From collecting eggs for the annual Egg Appeal, visiting patients on Grannies' Day or helping to sell raffle tickets and organise events, volunteers have been a constant aspect of Hospital life.

Indeed, the 'helpers' who regularly assisted the **RMH Kiosk Auxiliary** by staffing the kiosk and taking the trolley

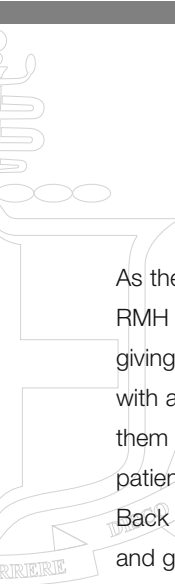
to bed-ridden patients on the wards were one of the RMH's earliest organised volunteer forces.

One of the original volunteers, Mrs Heather Lowe went on to become President of the RMH Auxiliaries in 1986. (As a President is required to be an Auxiliary member, Mrs Lowe was promptly invited to join Hazeldene Auxiliary and accepted.)

Originally, people interested in volunteering to work at the Hospital were directed to, and organised by, the Auxiliary office. The auxiliary coordinating secretary managed volunteer activity. Miss Christine Oliphant (later Paton) was the first such volunteer organiser. She operated a volunteer service based on the 'pink ladies' at the Royal Children's Hospital.

In the mid 1970s it became apparent that the volunteer service needed to be formalised; in order to better recruit, train and roster volunteer workers in the Hospital. On Monday 24 November 1975, a new coordinated RMH Volunteer Service, Project Plus, was established. This formalised many volunteer work arrangements that were currently in place throughout the Hospital and provided a coordinated approach to the provision of Hospital volunteers.

Mrs Christine Paton accepted the new position as secretary to the volunteer service. Mrs Paton (nee Oliphant) had been the auxiliary secretary, assistant to Miss Kaye Laurence the auxiliaries' organiser.



As they continue to do today, the RMH volunteers worked in the wards giving personal service such as talking with and reading to patients, assisting them with their meals, taking mobile patients for walks and playing cards. Back then they also made beds and gave shampoos and manicures, duties now performed by patient service assistants.

Other volunteers worked in specific areas of the Hospital, such as occupational therapy, where they assisted patients with craftwork, or the outpatients' hall where they directed patients to and from clinics, arranged transport and acquired the services of translators if necessary. Others obtained refreshments for patients and collected pharmacy items if required.

In the public relations department, volunteers helped arrange appeals and one volunteer taught drama to psychiatric patients, others spent time in clerical work assisting various departments of the Hospital.

Before volunteers were permitted to begin their work they were given a general briefing and taken on a short tour of the Hospital. They then received a specific briefing according to where they were to be placed and received instructions on the correct handling of patients from the physiotherapy department. The service was very well received and was seen to provide a great help to many patients, by assisting them in keeping their spirits up and providing comfort.

In 1976, the Volunteer Service instigated a free tea service for the outpatients. A trolley was used to convey tea, coffee and cordial to waiting areas on the 3rd and 4th floors of the outpatients' department. Volunteers were also trained to become tour guides. By March 1977, there were 85 volunteers in the service, which supplied 10 wards with volunteer labour. Volunteers worked in the outpatients' hall from 9am to 6pm each day.

By 1979, the pink aprons of the volunteer workers were a familiar sight in the Hospital as they travelled from place to place in the performance of their duties. Although volunteers were by this stage not allowed to do work that should be done by paid employees, they continued to perform many tasks for the benefit of patients, such as talking to patients, reading to them, writing letters, making phone calls, collecting goods from the kiosk or taking mail to the post office. The trolley service for patients in the outpatients' clinics was very popular and the service was extended to the renal clinic in 1978-1979. Volunteers also wound bandages and collated the popular 'Reduction Recipe Books'.

With the amalgamation of the Essendon & District Memorial Hospital with the RMH in 1986, the volunteer service soon expanded to include that campus. The volunteers at Essendon filled a new need, to watch over children in the busy children's playroom in the new maternity ward, whilst mothers attended antenatal clinics.

In the early 1990s, the RMH Volunteer Service expanded in numbers and was able to more actively support the Auxiliaries' fundraising efforts. Volunteers first began working to generate funds for the Hospital in 1992, as well as continuing their patient support work. They sold raffle tickets, handcrafts and other goods in the Hospital, and began holding a weekly bread stall each Friday morning in the Hospital foyer, which quickly became a hit with visitors and staff alike.

In 1996 the Friday cake and bread stall raised over \$16000, which funded the purchase of a patient treatment trolley in the surgery/ oncology and gastroenterology department as well as a Craig bed for the neurotrauma department. In 1997 proceeds from the cake stall were used to purchase four acute pain management pumps for the department of anaesthetics.

By 1997-1998, the Friday morning cake stall was quite an institution. Every Friday morning a small team of volunteers would carry trays of cakes and pastries through the main foyer and almost before they unpacked regular customers would gather to buy their usual favourites. More than \$500 worth of cakes was being sold each week and the profits from this venture continued to be directed to the purchase of medical equipment for the benefit of patients.

On 16 January 1995, the Volunteer Service took on another fundraising venture when it commenced management and operation of the

Flower Shop, located in the busy entrance foyer of the RMH's Parkville campus. Under the leadership of professional florist Julie Mitchell, a team of rostered volunteers staffed the flower shop.

In 1995-96, the flower shop now managed by Di Turner, was very successful and donated \$16000 to the Hospital, which helped purchase equipment for the neurosurgery department.

The next year, the flower shop was taken over by RMH Facilities Management and expanded to include a dry cleaning and photograph developing service. In late 1997, the facilities management department offered to return the flower shop to the Auxiliaries. An arrangement was made with Strathmore Flowers to act as sole supplier. This ensured a professional flower arranging service could be provided and proved most successful. The shop was now open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday, with the kiosk taking over the sale of flowers after 4pm and on weekends. In April 2000 the flower shop formally merged with the kiosk.

The RMH Volunteer Service celebrated its 25th anniversary in November 2000. Mrs Evelyn Dibbs, Mrs Mary Evans, Mrs Leonie Evans and Mrs Nancy James were acknowledged as the longest serving members of the service at a special Volunteers Lunch. Each received a commemorative badge and signed a celebratory poster, which was framed and hung in the Volunteer Centre.

In 2001, the volunteers joined in many celebrations marking the United Nations' International Year of the Volunteer. Debra Adamidis, RMH Community Relations Manager, reflected on this event in the 79th Annual Report of the RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries that:

*'In this international year of the Volunteer, the RMH Volunteer Service is a leading example of the benefits of volunteering to both the individual and the community'.*

In 2002, volunteers continue to provide assistance to 15 departments of the Hospital, and the service now responds to some 60 telephone calls a day from all over the Hospital as well as guiding outpatients and visitors to wards and clinics. Ward visitors also continue to provide vital support to inpatients who at times have no other visitors and the library service coordinates not only the distribution of books to the wards but also collects and delivers magazines to every waiting area within the Hospital. Almost every day of the year, a special volunteer, Laurie Davis, delivers newspapers and magazines to every ward.

Secondary school students from schools across Melbourne have become involved through Community Service Programs, which enable young people to see first hand how a busy Hospital works and most

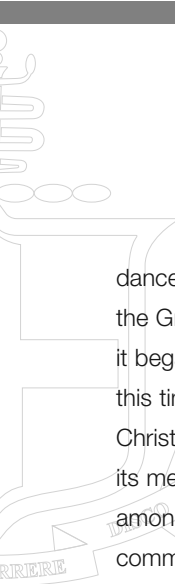
importantly is helping them appreciate the value of being a volunteer and teaching them about not only the personal benefits of volunteering but showing them practically how important volunteering is to the wider community.

Volunteers also pack and distribute more than 1000 patient care packs per year, which provide emergency and disadvantaged patients with products such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs and razors etc.

## Greek Fund for Arthritis Research – established 1980

Mrs Patricia Papadopoulos, a patient of the RMH's rheumatology department, founded The Royal Melbourne Hospital Greek Fund for Arthritis Research in 1980. While it has been very successful in raising funds to support the RMH's arthritis research activities, this Auxiliaries' greatest strength has been its ability to educate and inform the community about this debilitating disease.

For most of the past 22 years, the Greek Fund's efforts have followed much the same annual calendar: starting with selling tickets for the RMH's Easter Raffle and arranging special celebrations for Greek Orthodox patients at Easter, then baking cakes, biscuits and other desserts for sweet stalls. The latter half of the year finds these hardworking Auxiliary members lending a hand to help out with National Arthritis Week activities in September. Then there's a dinner



dance or some other social event for the Greek community and ending as it began with the sale of raffle tickets, this time for the RMH's annual Christmas raffle. The Auxiliary and its members are highly regarded amongst Melbourne's Greek community and, from the outset, were able to attract considerable business and community support for their efforts. This is evidenced not only in the numbers who turned up at events, but also in gifts donated to help make such nights a success.

The highlight of one evening's program at the Wentworth Hotel was the drawing of a raffle to win two return airfares to Greece. This attracted great excitement when it was won by one of the guests at the dance.

To mark the Auxiliary's 10th birthday, a dinner dance was held, with lots of Greek food, music and, of course, dancing.

Thanks largely to the efforts of its energetic president Mrs Patricia Papadopoulos, within 10 years of its establishment, members of this Auxiliary had raised more than \$54,000 from Melbourne's Greek community, and done much to help enhance awareness of this debilitating disease

In 2000-2001, Mrs Papadopoulos received a distinction from the Hellenic Association in recognition of her service to the Greek community. This was the second time she had been awarded this distinction.

Each **Easter**, members of the RMH Greek Fund for Arthritis Research deliver chocolate eggs and best wishes to all Greek Orthodox patients at the Hospital. Over the years, the Easter visits have also included patients in nursing homes and rehabilitation centres and, after 1986, those at the RMH's Essendon Campus (formerly Essendon & District Memorial Hospital). For many years the Essendon Kiosk Auxiliary donated the eggs. This event is a big hit with the elderly patients and those from country areas who do not have so many visitors, who appreciate the friendly smile and chats in Greek that accompany the gifts.

In 1993 The RM Greek Fund for Arthritis Research was greatly assisted by the donation of a computer, printer and software (in both Greek and English languages), by Mr and Mrs John Danks..

The Greek Sweet Stalls held twice a year were a great success, one held on the morning of 9 March 2000 raised a record \$1982. The stalls selling cakes, biscuits pastries and other sweets which members and their friends had baked are no longer viable due to the requirements of new health regulations.

Given its goal of raising awareness of arthritis in the community, it is not surprising that the Greek Fund for Arthritis Research has established strong links with the Arthritis Foundation of Victoria. During **National Arthritis Week**, the Auxiliary has regularly hosted public information forums about arthritis, presented by

prominent medical practitioners and scientists and executives from the foundation. They have distributed information material about the condition, printed in English and Greek, and volunteered to answer telephones in the foundation's busy information centre during the week. Mrs Papadopoulos, in particular, has been a frequent supporter of this activity; answering questions from the public about the realities of living with arthritis.

In May 1993, the fund hosted another successful seminar. More than 500 people attended the event to hear special guest speaker Professor H Moutsopoulos from Ionnina, Greece, speak about Sjogren's Syndrome, rheumatology and immunology. In 2000-2001, the fund's annual public seminar was again attended by hundreds of people, mostly from the Greek community, who gathered to hear the distinguished guest speaker Professor James O'Dell from the University of Nebraska.

## 7. The RMH Auxiliaries Today (2000-2002)

The RMH Auxiliaries started the new millennium on a sad note, with the loss of two of its most fervent supporters. Mrs Elizabeth Royston, President of the **Birthday League Auxiliary** since 1986, passed away on 2 September 2000. Mrs Royston was vice president of the RMH Auxiliary Executive, of which she had been a member for 26 years. Mrs Mary Robson OAM, treasurer

and former President of the **Kiosk Auxiliary** also died in 2000.

Mrs Robson had served as a member of that Auxiliary for 32 years. A plaque acknowledging her work was placed in the kiosk.

In 2000, Mrs Norma Danks received an Order of Australia medal in recognition of her contribution to the Hospital and its patients through her work with the Auxiliaries. Mrs Heather Lowe resigned, and was made an Honorary Member of the Executive of the Central Council.

Mrs Lynne Landy, continued the tradition of the wife of the Governor of Victoria accepting the invitation to support the Royal Melbourne Hospital as Patron.

A very successful embroidery exhibition was presented by members of the John Cade Support Group, as part of the Auxiliaries' inaugural Spring celebrations, which continued the 63-year-old tradition of Grannies' Day (see 'Grannies' Day' profile, page 23).

Regular Auxiliary lunches held at the Hospital provided an opportunity for members to learn of other groups' activities and hear of the latest development at the Hospital. In October 2000, a morning tea was held at The Windsor Hotel. Sarah Guest, author of several books and guest columnist for *The Age* newspaper delighted the audience with her wonderful talk entitled 'Style in the Gardens'.

In 2000-2001, the RMH Auxiliaries raised a total of \$295,696. Three raffles were held that year – a Christmas, Easter and Winter raffle – which raised more than \$37,000 in total. Ticket sales for the newly instigated RMH Winter Raffle were boosted by the donation from Mr Ken Kay of an immaculate doll's house that he had built especially for the raffle.

The production and sale of RMH Christmas cards had grown into quite an enterprise, with an enthusiastic **RMH Christmas Card Group** 'flapping' 60,000 Christmas cards and distributing these in the latter months of 2001, to 12 outlets for sale on behalf of the RMH Auxiliaries. Up to 14 members of the group worked weekly to fill and pack orders and arrange delivery to locations all over Melbourne as well as some country areas. Income from sales of these Christmas cards and from RMH diaries amounted to \$25,036 in 2000 and \$15,833 in 2001.

Despite the closure of the RMH Essendon campus (EDMH), the **Essendon & District Opportunity Shop** continued to do well, raising \$10,000 to support orthopaedic services at the RMH in 2000-2001. The shop, at Holmes Road, Moonee Ponds, was renovated that year, and the Auxiliary's 16 hardworking members now ensure the shop is open five days a week.

Many auxiliaries were still confronting the challenge of sustainability, of retaining older members and attracting new, younger members.

*'We continue to meet every two months with fewer members able to participate in activities. Raising money is difficult for us now, we have an occasional speaker and sell Christmas cards and diaries,'*

**explained Mrs E Kellar, President of the RMH Hawthorn Auxiliary, in her report for that year. Regardless, in 2000-2001, that Auxiliary's members were still well on the way to meeting their goal of raising \$3000 for a lift care bed.**

**RMH Pacemaker Patients Auxiliary** was also raising money for lift care beds that year and for protective eyeglasses worn by doctors when implanting pacemakers. They also regularly provide gifts for every cardiology patient in the Hospital over the Christmas period.

In 2000-2001, Auxiliaries donated \$280,670 to the RMH; and \$291,696 in 2001.

The **RMH Kiosk Auxiliary** was still going strong. In 2000-2001, it donated \$70,000 to the Hospital's Colorectal Unit and the Department of Surgery for the purchase of ultrasound equipment for the assessment of rectal cancer and associated liver disease.

A new Auxiliary, the **RMH Dialysis Fundraising Group**, was founded by Mrs Anita Narduzzo in 2000. In its first 15 months, members raised over



\$65,000! Australian television celebrity and former 'Sale of the Century' game show host, Tony Barber, hosted the group's annual dinner at Monte Carlo Restaurant in Doncaster, which raised over \$16,000. 'Festive Food', a social event held in December 2000, featured renowned cookery writer Beverly Sutherland-Smith as guest presenter and was very successful. This very active support group has continued to arrange these two very successful events per year.

The newly founded **RMH John Cade Support Group** was also very productive. Members held an exhibition and sale of beautiful handwork, 'Creative Colour', in the RMH Boardroom in August 2000. Proceeds provided outdoor furniture for the acute ward of the RMH's John Cade Unit and ensured all needy clients enjoyed Christmas dinner outings and Christmas presents. The following year, a talented group sewed an exquisite embroidered Liberty patchwork quilt for raffling and items for 'Creative Colour II', held in the Hospital's Education Centre from Monday 10 to Wednesday 12 September 2001 and opened by Mrs Lynne Landy, wife of John Landy, the Governor of Victoria.

The other newer support group, **RMH Neph Friends**, was also doing very well. This fledgling group raised \$7042 from fundraising efforts, including two trivia nights, an afternoon tea and involvement in Hospital raffles, and also managed to attract a further \$4456 in direct donations from the community.

*The Canterbury Auxiliary like most others has looked at the future and tried to fit into the changing world of the modern hospital system when the available Auxiliary force is shrinking due to altered lifestyles. The members were generally keen to continue and so we altered our structure slightly and continued our meetings, raffle selling, participation in a local charity card shop, games days and our traditional direct giving day. The desire to support the Hospital is alive and well in Canterbury.*

**Mrs Frances Rigby, RMH  
Auxiliaries President 1989-1998  
(interviewed at the RMH  
September 2002)**

The support groups have reinvigorated the Auxiliary service and their success and enthusiasm assures that the future of the Hospital Auxiliary tradition is in good hands. Yet another support group was formed in 2001 to support those with diabetes, and is known as the **Friends of the RMH Diabetes Service**. Yet again, the Hospital's strongest supporters had adjusted to the movement of the times. While some people were not as willing or able to become involved in social charity work as had been the case in

the early years of the Auxiliaries, the people of Melbourne are still keen to lend a hand to help those in need. It was just that the nature of the work had to change too, and change it had.

As the 2000s roll on, it is apparent that the Auxiliary movement does indeed have a future and will remain viable as long as it continues to expand its role of providing support groups to assist particular groups of patients.

## 8. The road ahead

All who read this wonderful account of the 80 years of the Royal Melbourne Hospital Auxiliaries will be enormously impressed by the story it records.

The willingness of so many people to work extremely hard to help the Hospital and care for its patients and the extent of community support has been extraordinary, as has the resourcefulness of Auxiliary members in devising ways to raise funds.

The very special quality of efforts reflects the esteem in which The Royal Melbourne Hospital has been and is held. In spite of the vast changes which have taken place during the time of this history through all the activities recounted here, runs the common theme of the loyalty and dedication which The Royal Melbourne Hospital has engendered, and continues to engender in those who work to support it.

Voluntary work is such a special and precious part of our society, and the efforts recorded in this story are a significant part of Melbourne's history. We are very grateful to Mrs Andria Hutchins who has compiled this excellent account of The Royal Melbourne Hospital Auxiliaries, and in doing so has set this story against the background of Melbourne during the 80 years she has described.

I do want to thank all who have helped with the project – Mr Len Swinden, a past CEO of The Royal Melbourne Hospital for writing the forward, everyone who has shared their memories and Mrs Frances

Rigby and Mrs Norma Danks for their painstaking editorial work. We acknowledge with grateful the assistance of Mrs Debra Adamidis and Mr David Jones. I am sure that everyone associated with The Royal Melbourne Hospital and all who appreciate the importance of voluntary work, will be very pleased that this history has been written.

Mrs Judy Adam AM  
President,  
Central Council of Auxiliaries  
The Royal Melbourne Hospital  
September 2002

## Appendices

### The presidents

#### The Royal Melbourne Hospital Central Council of Auxiliaries 1921-2002

Lady Grice	1921-1924
Mrs SM Bruce	1924-1925
Lady Miller OBE	1926-1930
Mrs Joseph Levi	1931-1933
Mrs Harold Clapp	1933-1934
Lady Stawell	1934-1947
Miss Annie Danks (acting, February-June)	1947
Mrs RW (Maud) Chambers	1947-1949
Miss Annie Danks (acting) MBE	1949-1950
Mrs RW (Maud) Chambers OBE	1950-1961
Mrs Howard Buchanan	1961-1965
Mrs Norman Tanner	1966
Mrs AE (Helen) Pizzey	1967-1972
Mrs John (Norma M) Danks OAM	1972-1979
Mrs JW (Glad) Abbot	1979-1982
Mrs RL (Elizabeth) Kellar	1982-1986
Mrs J Millar (Heather) Lowe	1986-1989
Mrs RA (Frances) Rigby OAM	1989-1998
Mrs Judy Adam AM	1998 -present day

### The patrons

#### The Royal Melbourne Hospital Central Council of Auxiliaries 1921-2002

Lady Grice	1924-1931
Lady Miller, OBE	1931-1941
Mrs Joseph Levi	1933-1943
Lady Huntingfield	1934-1939
Lady Dugan	1938-1949
Mrs AW Coles (Lady Mayoress)	1938-1941
Mrs Frank Beaurepaire (Lady Mayoress)	1941-1942
Lady Cross (wife of Sir Ronald Cross, Bart., High Commissioner for Great Britain in Australia)	1941-1945
Lady Royle (wife of Vice-Admiral Sir Guy Royle, First Naval member)	1941-1945
Mrs Richard Williams (wife of Air-Marshall Robert Williams)	1941-1942
Mrs Edward Campbell (Lady Mayoress)	1942-1945
Dame Mary Herring, DBE, OStJ	1945-
Mrs Bernard Heinze (Lady Mayoress)	1945-1948
Lady Stawell	1947-1953
Lady Disney (Lady Mayoress)	1948-1951
Lady Brooks	1949-1963

Mrs John Inkster	1951-1952
Mrs WJ Brens (Lady Mayoress)	1952-1953
Mrs RH Solly (Lady Mayoress)	1953-1954
Lady Selleck (Lady Mayoress)	1954-1957
Mrs FW Thomas (Lady Mayoress)	1957-1959
Mrs Bernard Evans (Lady Mayoress)	1959-1961
Mrs RW Chambers	1961
Lady Nathan (Lady Mayoress)	1961-1964
Lady Delacombe	1964-1974
Lady Curtis (Lady Mayoress)	1964-1966
Mrs Ian Beaurepaire (Lady Mayoress)	1966-1967
Mrs R Talbot (Lady Mayoress)	1967-1969
Miss Annie Danks MBE	1967- 1968
Mrs E Best (Lady Mayoress)	1969-1971
Mrs A Rowlands (Lady Mayoress)	1971-1973
Mrs A Whalley (Lady Mayoress)	1973-1974
Lady Winneke	1974-
Mrs R Walker (Lady Mayoress)	1974-1976
Mrs D Osborne (Lady Mayoress)	1976-1978
Mrs N Rockman (Lady Mayoress)	1978-
Lady Murray CStJ	1980-1985



Mrs M Gardner (Lady Mayoress)	1982-1983
Mrs H Chamberlin (Lady Mayoress)	1983-1984
Mrs J Beacham (Lady Mayoress)	1984-1985
Mrs JM McCaughey AO (wife of the Governor of Victoria)	1985-1992
Mrs L McGarvie (wife of the Governor of Victoria)	1992-1997
Lady Gobbo (wife of the Governor of Victoria)	1997-2000
Mrs Lynne Landy (wife of the Governor of Victoria)	2000 -present day

## The Auxiliaries

### The Royal Melbourne Hospital Central Council of Auxiliaries 1921-2002

Abbotsford Auxiliary  
 Alexandra Auxiliary  
 Almoner Ambulance Auxiliary  
 Bargain Shop/Thrift Shop Auxiliary  
 Belgrave Heights Auxiliary  
 Berwick Auxiliary  
 Birthday League Auxiliary  
 Box Hill and Mont Albert Auxiliary  
 Box Hill Mens Auxiliary  
 Brighton Auxiliary  
 Brighton East Good Companions  
 Brunswick Auxiliary  
 Canterbury Auxiliary  
 Canterbury Junior Auxiliary  
 Central Council of Auxiliaries  
 Cheerio Club  
 Christadelphian Service League  
 Clinical Research Unit Auxiliary  
 – Croydon  
 Colonial Mutual Life Auxiliary  
 Dental Auxiliary  
 Eadburgh Auxiliary  
 East Camberwell Auxiliary  
 East Kew Auxiliary  
 Eastwood Auxiliary  
 Entertainments Branch Auxiliary  
 Essendon Kiosk Auxiliary

Essendon Senior Auxiliary  
 Essendon Younger Set  
 Fitzroy Ladies Work Association  
 Flower Mission Auxiliary  
 Footscray and Yarraville Auxiliary  
 Friends of University of Melbourne  
 Colorectal Service  
 Galaxy Auxiliary  
 Greek Fund for Arthritis Research  
 Hawthorn Auxiliary  
 Hazeldene Auxiliary  
 Heartbeat Auxiliary  
 Ivanhoe Auxiliary  
 Kallista Auxiliary  
 Kallista Sherbrook Auxiliary  
 Kew Red Cross & Younger Set  
 L A Mellor Auxiliary  
 Lillian and Elizabeth Auxiliary  
 Malvern Auxiliary  
 Monbulk Auxiliary  
 Murrumbeena Auxiliary  
 Myer Get Together Club  
 North Balwyn Auxiliary  
 Northcote Auxiliary  
 Out Patients Canteen Auxiliary  
 Pacemakers Auxiliary  
 Parents & Friends of Nurses Auxiliary  
 Parkville Younger Set  
 Port Melbourne Auxiliary  
 Powelltown Auxiliary  
 Preston Auxiliary  
 Preston Junior Auxiliary

Red Cross Depot Work Party  
 Red Cross Library Service  
 RMH Essendon Auxiliary  
 RMH Kiosk Auxiliary  
 RMH Medical Staff Auxiliary  
 RMH Medical Wives Auxiliary  
 Rye Auxiliary  
 South Yarra Red Cross Auxiliary  
 Time and Talents Sewing Party  
 Toorak Auxiliary  
 Volunteer Service  
 Whernside Auxiliary  
 Whernside Junior Auxiliary  
 Yarragunyah Auxiliary

## The organisers

### The Royal Melbourne Hospital Central Council of Auxiliaries 1921-2002

*Mrs IA Green*  
*Organising Secretary*  
*July 1933 – August 1936*

Mrs Green was the Royal Melbourne Hospital's first salaried organising secretary. She had been organiser of the Birthday League. In September 1933, she secured a room next to the Birthday League office for the use of Auxiliaries. The Auxiliary room was furnished and equipped through the generosity of Mr Sidney Myer, who also provided a Renault car for the Mrs Green's use and met all expenses in connection with its operation for the first year. Mrs Green left the RMH Auxiliary Office in August 1936 to take up a position on staff at The Argus newspaper.

*Mrs Constance Hughes*  
*Organising Secretary*  
*August 1936 – 1944*

Mrs Hughes had been involved in efforts to found the RMH Auxiliaries in 1921 and was the first honorary organising secretary of the Auxiliaries. Her intimate knowledge of the needs of the Hospital were demonstrated when, in 1924, she formed the social service bureau, which eventually gave rise to the formation of the Almoner Institute of Victoria of which Mrs Hughes was a founding member.

*Mrs CH Mackay*  
*Organising Secretary*  
*1944 – March 1946*

*Mrs Mackay, a resident of Malaya, joined the Auxiliary service while living in exile in Melbourne during the war. She resigned to return to her home in Kedah, after the war had ended.*

*Miss Vivienne B Stephens*  
*Organising Secretary*  
*March 1946 – 1956*

Prior to her appointment as organising secretary, Miss Stephens served for over three years with the Australian Red Cross Field Force in military hospitals in Alice Springs and British North Borneo. Her father, Dr Carl Stephens, was an honorary clinical assistant with the outpatients' surgical team for more than 25 years, and had been acting honorary outpatients' surgeon for four years. Her mother joined the RMH Auxiliaries when it was formed in 1921 and was founder and President of the Central Auxiliary until it disbanded in 1937.

*Mrs GJW Leeson*  
*Organising Secretary*  
*1956-1961*

*Miss Kay M Laurence*  
*Organising Secretary/  
 Auxiliary Organiser*  
*1961 – September 1975*

Miss Laurence was a former matron of Queen's College, Melbourne University. She formed seven new auxiliaries in her 15 years as organising secretary and was particularly successful with those involving young people. She was

instrumental in creating the Parents & Friends of Nurses Auxiliary, and the Bargain Shop was one of her projects.

*Doreen Wilson*

*Auxiliary Services Coordinator*

*September 1975 – 1992*

Doreen Wilson worked as coordinator for the RMH Auxiliaries for more than 16 years. Writing in the Auxiliaries' Annual Report for the year Doreen left the position, Mrs RA (Frances) Rigby, RMH Auxiliaries President wrote: 'Doreen brought with her special skills which enabled the (auxiliary) service to grow and prosper even as the number of Auxiliaries dwindled. She saw the Volunteer Service expand as she watched over it and recruited new members to carry out their invaluable work in the Hospital. These volunteers hold her in high regard. When the RMH amalgamated with Essendon & District Memorial Hospital (EDMH) Doreen played a major role in smoothing the transition period for the Auxiliary services and won many new friends in the process.'

*Ms Zirka Yaskewych*

*Auxiliary Services Coordinator*

*1992-1993*

*Manager, Community Relations*

*1993-1997*

Ms Yaskewych originally joined the RMH in 1980 as an administration officer at the Essendon campus, and worked in various capacities during the 17 years she was with the Hospital. In 1991 she was instrumental in establishing the patient appliance centre, which managed the distribution of outpatient equipment at

the Parkville and Essendon campuses. As manager of the Community Relations department she was responsible for the Hospital's Volunteer Service, managed by a Volunteer Coordinator; its Auxiliaries; and a wide range of community events and programs.

*Ms Debra Adamidis*

*Manager, Community Relations*

*1995-2003*

The role of coordinator of Auxiliary Services and that of manager of the Volunteer Service were merged again in 1997, following the departure of Mrs Yaskewych. Ms Adamidis, who was the RMH's Volunteers Coordinator at the time, took up the newly created role of Manager, Auxiliary & Volunteer Services, the Manager, Community Relations.

## **The Royal Melbourne Hospital Volunteer Service 1975 - 2011**

*Mrs G (Christine) Paton*

*Secretary*

*September 1975 – 1977*

With the establishment of Project Plus, the RMH Volunteer Service, in September 1975, the then auxiliary secretary (Miss Laurence's assistant) Mrs G Paton accepted the new appointment as Secretary to the Volunteer Service.

*Ms Andrea Surace*

*Volunteer Coordinator*

*1992 – 1995*

*Ms Debra Adamidis*

*Volunteer Coordinator*

*1995 – 1997*

*Ms Trish Minihan*

*Volunteer Coordinator*

*1998 - 2011*

### **Postscript**

On 5 September 2007, the 85<sup>th</sup> and final Annual General Meeting of the Central Council of Auxiliaries was held.

After eight decades of volunteer service to the hospital, diminishing numbers of auxiliary members and changing approaches to fundraising saw the closure of the Auxiliary Central Council. 2007 also saw the closure of the Canterbury (75 years) and Hazeldene (52 years) auxiliaries, the Friends of Melbourne Colorectal Services (10 years) and the John Cade Support Group (seven years).

On 15 June 2008, RMH Kiosk Auxiliary, which had been serving and supporting hospital staff, patients and visitors since 1922 closed. The Auxiliary service was replaced by the RMH Friends, support groups and the volunteer service.