

ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

P.O. BOX 284 ORBOST VIC 3888



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Vice President: Marilyn Morgan
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Newsletter Editor: Di Miller

NEWSLETTER

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RED CROSS CENTENARY (1914 - 2014)

- by Di Miller

A centenary is always a notable milestone. It is no coincidence that 1914, which was such an important date being the outbreak of the First World War, also marks the birth of Red Cross in Australia.

It came into being as a branch of the British Red Cross Society on August 13th 1914 to succour the wounded in the First World War.

Some years ago, Head Office contacted all regional branches asking them to forward their records, including photographs. These were duly sent, resulting in a huge gap in the historical record of the Orbost Branch.

ORBOST BRANCH formed 1940

The Orbost Branch was first formed in July 1940 with Mrs F D Richardson as president and Mrs Delfendahl secretary, Mrs W Lowe treasurer. Other officials following were – Presidents: Mrs K Lynn and Mrs Dominey; Secretaries – Mesdames J Tracey and L Herbert; Treasurer Mrs C Palmer. Sub branches were formed by the out-lying districts. All moneys were paid into the main branch. From 1940 to 1946 the sum of £8990/19/2 was raised, after which the branch became dormant. A meeting was called to reform the Orbost branch in 1953.

Mrs Dreverman was a pivotal figure the Red Cross organisation in Orbost and later in Marlo. She joined in 1940 in direct response to a request to the local community to assist the war effort and remained an active member for 58 years.

It appears that the Orbost Branch of the Red Cross was very active in the period 1940 – 1946 but no records have been found to establish what happened or did not happen until 1984.

MARLO BRANCH formed 1984

At this time Mrs Dreverman initiated a meeting at her



ABOVE: Margaret Adams, Gertrude Drevermann and Lu Trewin at a Marlo Red Cross Luncheon in 1995.

home in Marlo and reformed a branch of the Red Cross, which has remained an active and highly effective fundraiser for the organisation. She also started a hospital library for patients and managed the weekly Library Trolley for many years.

Mrs Dreverman was President of the Marlo Branch from 1984 to February 1999.

SNOWY RIVER MAIL July 1, 1953

ORBOST RED CROSS TO REFORM

Orbost branch of the Red Cross which raised the magnificent sum of £8990/19/2 in the six years of its existence is to be reformed. A public meeting is called for Monday evening next, July 6th, in the Shire Chambers, when a speaker from headquarters will address the meeting.

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INTERVIEW WITH MARGARET ADAMS

Margaret recalled that an initial meeting to discuss forming a Marlo Branch of RC after the demise of the Orbost Branch years before was held at the home of Mrs Gertrude Dreverman.

The annual Garden Party luncheon was held at her home each year from 1984 – 1989, then at Mrs Joyce Cumming's in 1990 resuming at the Adam's the next year. She recalled the hard work she and her husband put into making sure the garden was at its best for the event.

Most years the weather was favourable but one year it rained heavily all the night before and the next morning. So a band of willing helpers were seconded to move boats out of the boat shed at Marlo, then take the luncheon tables to the shed and set them up. The heavy rains had resulted in lots of mud so a temporary walk way was put down to make access easier but this did not help Mr David Baird the Shire President from slipping off the walkway and into the mud – unfortunately he was dressed in white for the occasion!

Many ladies suffered the ignominy of having their high heels sink into the mud and some had to be rescued and carried to the boat house; cars were bogged and had to be towed free. However, Margaret said that these hurdles were overcome and in true country tradition everyone enjoyed the day.

In 2001 Mr John Mundy who ran the Red Cross Emergency Services in Orbost approached the Marlo Branch with a proposal to amalgamate and form Catering Teams with Marlo members. (This service is completely separate from a Branch and is responsible for responding to emergency events to provide registration/catering. This separation still exists today.)

The Orbost group were finding it difficult to attract new members and hoped amalgamation would solve this problem. The Marlo Branch was more interested in maintaining their fundraising activities and the Catering Teams were not activated very often but did assist with the fires in 1982 and provided help to a family who were burned out and needed all essential items like food, clothing and bedding.

Margaret was the coordinator for the annual Red Cross Calling event held every March but said that they did not collect in Orbost in 1991 due to the devastation on the Orbost community caused by the hailstorm. They did staff a collection table in Nicholson Street but did not doorknock.

She recalled the following people who were actively involved over the years:

Mrs Gertrude Dreverman
Pen Richardson
Mary Gilbert
Molly Tracey
Joan Fisher
Bon Barker
George Preston
Gladys Matthew
Lu Trewin



Red cross badge, 1918.
Orbost & District
Historical Society.

Margaret continues to be an active participant and supporter of the Marlo Unit activities. Margaret said that the Marlo Branch was always one of the highest fund raisers for Red Cross, this still applies today in the current East Gippsland region (Zone 7).

pleated skirt and her pearls but she did not wear a hat or gloves. Her daughters also dressed for the occasion. The event was very well attended and afternoon tea was provided and guests were given access to the ballroom.



This was a significant event for the organisation and was attended by 3000 people who paid \$10 a head. However it was to be the last time that Government House would be made available to the Red Cross as a new policy stated the grounds would only be available four times a year to a wide section of community groups so there was no guarantee Red Cross would be selected in the future.

Lu's diligence in collecting newspaper clippings, photos and other memorabilia from 1984 to 2001 have been of great assistance in compiling this newsletter.

INTERVIEW WITH BERYL MACALISTER

Beryl joined the Marlo Branch of RC soon after it reformed in 1984 following the closure of the Orbost Branch some years earlier.

The main purpose of the Marlo Branch was to fundraise and to that end annual luncheons, regular morning teas and doorknocking in March for Red Cross Calling were some of the activities conducted.

INTERVIEW WITH LU TREWIN

Lu's involvement with the Red Cross goes back a long way. Her mother, Mrs Keith Lynn nee Rodwell was an active member of the organisation and the family lived on a farm at Jarrahmond.

There was a very active Red Cross social club at Jarrahmond in the 1940s. Lu remembers while at high school knitting balaclavas on behalf of the Red Cross which were designated for troops overseas. However, she did not become a member until 1984 when she joined the newly formed Marlo Branch.

She said the Branch was an active one and had fond memories of the annual Garden Party held at the home of Margaret Adams for many years. She recalled the year when the rain forced the event to be moved to the Boat Club and how all the ladies had to walk through the mud wearing their good shoes.

In 1987 Lu, along with her daughters Marylou and Jacqueline, and the Marlo Branch President Mrs Gertrude Dreverman, attended the Red Cross 25th Twilight Garden Party at Government House in Melbourne. Lu recalled wearing a pink suit with a

Beryl was the Branch President from 2003 to 2012 taking over from Mary Robinson. She said she thoroughly enjoyed her time with the organisation the highlight being the willingness of members to help with whatever was required, eg, catering at the high school following the fires which occurred some years back.



Red Cross Box (1939-43), donated to the Orbost Historical Society by Mary Gilbert. Contains training cards, forms & badges

SNOWY RIVER MAIL March 10, 1954

FORTY YEARS OF SERVICE

Red Cross in Australia is forty years old this year – forty years of service to Australia and the world.

It came into being as a branch of the British Society on August 13th, 1914, to succour the wounded in the First World War. It now has a membership of more than 100,000 seniors and 250,000 active Junior Red Cross members.

During World War II more than 800 Australian Red Cross field personnel were involved and £10,000,000 was spent in services to the wounded and prisoners of war.

In peace time, its service is no less vital. Six convalescent homes for ex-service personnel are maintained, while Red Cross workers are on hand in every Australian Repatriation hospital assisting with social work, hospital visiting, library and transport services and diversional therapy.

Blood transfusion services first established in 1929, with a small panel of donors available for direct transfusion has

now grown to a donor roll of 160,152 and use of whole blood and serum has reached more than 58,000 litres.

With the beginning of fractionation of serum for further blood derivatives the use of blood is expected to expand much further this year.

Red Cross has also expanded into other fields in medicine where facilities have been lacking. In every State voluntary Red Cross workers help local immunisation and anti-TB mass Xray campaigns.

What makes all these activities possible within the limits of a budget of one million pounds a year? It is the work of tens of thousands of branch and company members, who year after year, raise funds for Red Cross and give thousands of hours of voluntary service.

You can help Red Cross keep its many services active by supporting the appeal for £150,000 during the month of March.



ABOVE: A well-stocked stall at the Garden Party in 1989. From left are M Robinson, D Collins, N Ward, G Grundy, L Trewin, E Masters and M Adams. The top photo is of the same event.