

Library Services

Anne Doyle

One of the earliest known library services to the community of Taroom was a small private library conducted by a former resident of the district, Miss Glossop, in the late 1950s. It was situated in the old shopping centre on the Channel Highway. Here one was able to borrow a book for the princely sum of three pence.

The other option available was the State Library, which posed problems in relation to distance and transport.

In July, 1948 the Lady Clark Memorial Children's Library¹, in association with the Kingborough Council, commenced a service to school children. It is noted that Taroom State School paid a fee of ten shillings as its contribution for the year.

A memorandum from the State Librarian to the Crown Solicitor's Department, dated the 9th February 1959, noted²:

Despite many opportunities, the Kingborough Municipality has not adopted the State Libraries Act, in making provision for the Services to the community in association with the State Library of Tasmania.

In spite of this fact, over one thousand persons were using the Hobart Lending Library and the Board felt some charges would have to be implemented if this trend was to continue.

This placed the Kingborough Council in a position where some action was required and mid 1960 saw the implementation of the Bookmobile Service³, which visited Taroom each Tuesday, stopping at the old shopping centre, Stewart Crescent and Oakleigh Avenue.

Library records of the 15th July 1963⁴ show correspondence to the State Librarian from the Country Women's Association expressing concern at the problems arising with the Bookmobile Service. These problems were: the bookmobile's late arrival, traffic congestions in relation to the shopping area, queues of mothers and children, and only two assistants to cope with the influx of people.

The State Librarian in reply to the Country Women's Association⁵, stated that he was well aware of the encompassing difficulties. The Bookmobile was seen only as an interim

measure, pending the Kingborough Commission's decision to provide a permanent facility on a site reserved in Nubeena Crescent. He suggested a strong representation of residents in regard to this situation.

Ten years were to pass with the continuation of the Bookmobile, and by 1973 local businessmen were urging that the rapidly expanding community warranted the establishment of permanent library facilities⁶. It was proposed that a shop in the new Village Shopping Centre be leased for this purpose.

Negotiations were successful and the new Library was officially opened by the Chairman of the Tasmanian Library Board, Sir Peter Crisp, at 6.15 p.m. on the 30th May 1974⁷. The official opening came two months after the building was opened to the public. The library was staffed by Mrs Jill Eyles and Mrs J. Hope. The State Librarian at that time, Mr W. Brown, and the Warden of Kingborough, Cr W. Hodgman, M.L.C., were among those attending the ceremony. A function to commemorate the opening was held afterwards at the Taroom Hotel.

Mrs N. Bayles was the first enrolment and is still a regular borrower.

During the early period of the library's existence it was used for community services. Mrs Poulson and a group of volunteers conducted remedial classes for children during non opening hours.

In 1974 a Regional Headquarters was established at Kingston, with Mrs Beverly Ewins appointed as Regional Librarian. Taroom became one of the seven branch libraries to come under the administrative auspices of the Channel Regional Library.

Mrs Eyles retired in March 1984, after ten years of service, as did her assistant, Miss D. Nairn. They were replaced by Mrs Anne Doyle and Mrs Carolynne Williams.

There has been a continuing need for expansion. Library records of October 1984⁸ indicated once again a number of inadequacies in relation to the area available and the amount of business transacted.

Following many months of negotiation between the Regional Librarian, Mr Warwick Lee, the State Librarian, Mr Warwick Dunstan, and appropriate authorities, funding approval was granted by the then Minister for Education, the Hon. J. Beswick, M.H.A., to enable the transfer of the existing library to

architect, Mr Max Vincent, and the first stage of the new building was opened on the 23rd December 1969. The official opening of the completed Home was on the 22nd November 1970.

Mary's Grange has three wards, a hospital ward and two residential wings. It can accommodate ninety residents, seventy four of whom are classified as needing nursing care.

The accommodation is mainly in single rooms with attached amenities.

On the 13th July 1986 the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart left Mary's Grange as they no longer had the Sisters needed to meet their Order's commitments and had to rationalise their involvement. The Little Company of Mary assumed the responsibility for the nursing care and welfare of the residents on the 1st August 1986.



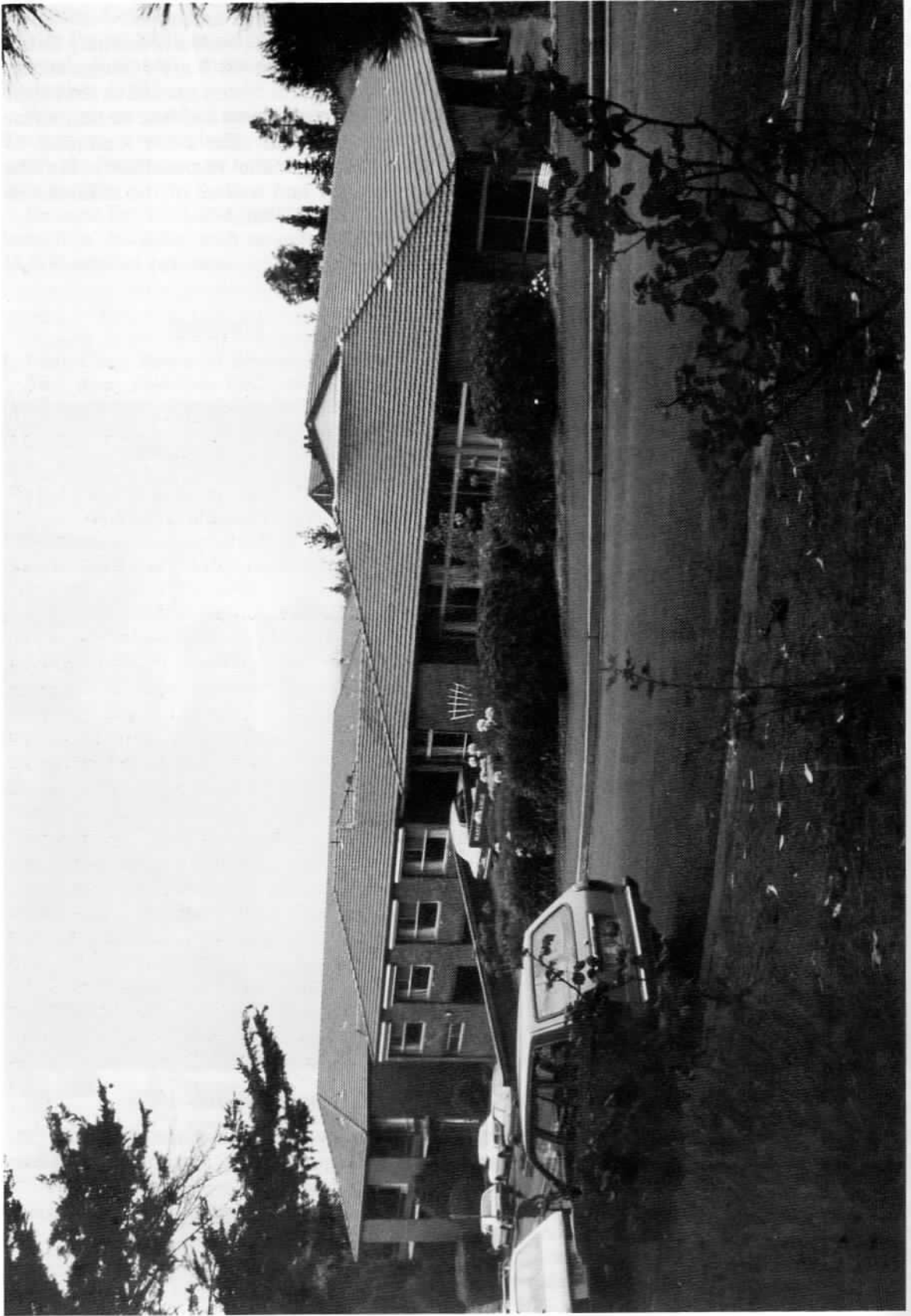
Farewell to the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, 13th July 1986.

Back Row, L to R: Nora Ryan, Val Benjamin, Rod Gowans, Monsignor Green.

Second Row, L to R: Pierre Tapping, Patrick and Jurate Flanagan, Sisters Josephine and Aleta, Nell Pascoe, Sister Brendan, Mary Cumming.

Front Row, L to R: Reg Pascoe, Ruth Campbell, Edith Green.

PHOTO NELL PASCOE.



The Grange Avenue frontage of "Mary's Grange," 1986.

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