

## Red Cross Society

Lenora Knight

The inaugural meeting of the Taroona Branch of the Australian Red Cross Society was held on the 12th April 1961 at the St. Luke's Church Hall at 8p.m. Sixteen ladies and one gentleman were present and apologies were received from ten other interested people. The meeting was addressed by the State Secretary of the Tasmanian Division who spoke of the work and objectives of Red Cross and explained that the main aim of Branches was to raise money to enable the achievement of the objectives.

The Branch elected its officers and commenced operations on a donation of £3.

The executive officers elected were:

- President: Mrs W. Edwards
- Vice-President: Mrs G. Green
- Secretary: Mrs G.J. Woods
- Treasurer: Mrs N. Foster.

At the second meeting it was decided to seek an alternative venue in order to conserve funds, and Mrs Eric Thompson's offer of the use of her rumpus room was gladly accepted. Meetings continued to be held in the evenings, followed by supper, with each member contributing sixpence to cover the cost.

The Branch was soon engaged in Red Cross activities and during the first year members staffed the Hobart Opportunity Shop three times, took part in the Floral exhibition at the Hobart Town Hall, and at the same function were also very generous in providing fourteen dozen scones and ten dozen cakes to assist with morning tea. They also conducted two very successful stalls, staffed street corners for the Annual Button Day and sold tickets for the Art Union Raffle. During the second year of its service the Branch raised £440 for Red Cross. These efforts continued, setting a pattern for the next quarter of a century.

In the tragic 1967 bushfires Taroona members contributed considerably to relief work by visiting and transporting burnt out families, and sorting and distributing general requirements and clothing at Princes Wharf, Dunlop House and Elwick Showgrounds.

From the small beginnings in 1961 the records show that, by 1968, the Branch had a regular membership of twenty two and

during that year had organised a "Cocktail Party, Dinner Party, Coffee Morning, Stalls, Raffles, Catering for "Red Cross Calling" at Headquarters, Catering for a Citizens' Appeal Cocktail Party, participating in Red Cross Market Day and Button Day and Collecting Clothing for Vietnamese refugees"<sup>1</sup>. These were in addition to manning the Opportunity Shop regularly one day each month.

Red Cross services vary a little from State to State and from country to country, but all are dedicated to the principles of the Red Cross: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality. The services in Tasmania are many and varied. Most of the duties in the Southern Region are carried out by members of the two Service Branches, but many branch members choose also to assist, in addition to working with their local branches. In addition to supporting local services, a portion of the funds raised is allocated to assist the International Committee of Red Cross in its relief work overseas.

The Taroona Branch also has an interest in the Red Cross Youth Group which has been active at the Taroona State Primary School for many years. The children are most enthusiastic in their support of the Society and its aims. There are Red Cross Youth Officers based in each of the three regions of the State. Schools are visited regularly and First Aid Courses are given in primary and secondary schools throughout Tasmania. It is always hoped that the youthful support for Red Cross will continue into later life.

Taroona membership has always consisted primarily of women, although there are now several men who are "paid up" members. The men do not attend meetings on a regular basis, but can always be relied upon for support, particularly at functions when "muscle" is required for moving tables, etc. For this the ladies are extremely grateful. There is now a working membership of twenty five, which includes some original members. Activities continue along the same lines as formerly, with much of the time being spent arranging functions to raise money. Taroona now mans the Hobart Opportunity Shop on two days each month, on a roster basis. Members also staff the Hobart Arts and Craft Shop on one day monthly. This shop was opened some years ago and is an outlet for any member's



knitting, sewing and handicrafts, which are sold on a commission basis. Volunteers also run a thriving secondhand bookshop at Red Cross House.

In addition to its purely Branch activities Taroona has always contributed actively to the running of the Region. Members serve on the committees of the Opportunity and Arts and Crafts Shops. Since the formation of the branch members have served, and in many instances are still serving, on the Regional, State and National Committees.

In 1986 the Taroona Branch celebrated its twenty fifth Anniversary. This was a time for reflection on achievements and the way ahead. An outstanding feature has been that the Branch's membership has varied little since its inception, remaining at an average of about twenty five members. This would seem surprising in the light of the growth of the Taroona district. However, the population growth has probably been offset by the modern phenomenon of more women, who are the obvious reservoir for new members, returning to the workforce. Nevertheless, the dedicated volunteer group continues to work and raise money each year, thus making a substantial contribution to the financing of the Society's service within the community.

#### Reference

Minutes of the Taroona Branch, 1968.



## St. John Ambulance

Ernest Bond

In 1974 the Taroona Fire Brigade appointed a local resident as its First Aid Officer. This officer was qualified in First Aid, with both St. John and Red Cross, and his duty was to attend all fires where the Taroona Brigade was involved.

When the present Fire Station was built the First Aid Officer, who had qualified as an Instructor with Red Cross, conducted First Aid courses at the Station for Red Cross and St. John, for Fire Brigade members and members of the public.

The value of the First Aid team at Taroona was recognised with a great deal of approval and resulted in a meeting at St. John Headquarters, where it was decided to expand and form what became known as the Fire and Emergency Support Units. These Units were made up of qualified First Aid people from both St. John and Red Cross. The Taroona Brigade First Aid Officer was appointed Senior Training and Field Officer for the units, under the rules of St. John, with District Superintendent Mr N. Dine as the Commanding Officer.

The Taroona Fire Station became the Headquarters of the Fire, Emergency Support Units of St. John. Members of the Taroona team assisted the Senior Officer with the formation and training of the units. This resulted in units being formed at Sorell, Nubeena, Dover and the Central Highlands.

The Taroona Training and Field Officer was appointed Training Officer in First Aid to the Hobart Urban Fire Brigade. With the assistance of Mrs Fē Marsland, Mrs Coral Hardman and the late Mr Ken Sharman, Brigade members and Unit members conducted First Aid courses at the Hobart Fire Station and other urban stations.

As time went on changes occurred and a number of the Unit members became Instructors in First Aid with St. John, Volunteer Ambulance Officers with the Tasmanian Ambulance Service and Members of St. John Ambulance Divisions. Some of the original Fire and Emergency Support Unit's members now man the Volunteer Ambulance at Nubeena and Dover, while others man the

Emergency Units at Dodges Ferry and Kingston.

The Senior Training Officer left Taroona and subsequently became Superintendent of a large St. John Division in the south, also Training Officer for Volunteer Ambulance Officers for the Tasmanian Ambulance Service and Officer-in Charge of the State Ambulance in the far south.

Taroona was the start of a very valuable service which spread and advanced. From a very small beginning it grew and involved many community minded people in many areas. Sadly with the advent of time, the drift was away from Taroona.



## St. Joseph's Family Support Centre

Monica Darmody

On the 9th May 1969 the Sisters of Charity purchased Dr. J. A. Boot's property at 26 Channel Highway, Taroona.

The Sisters had chosen this site as an appropriate setting to continue their child care work in Tasmania. Since 1879 the Sisters of Charity had conducted St. Joseph's Orphanage, which was situated in Harrington Street, Hobart. Later known as Aikenhead House, the large institution, which had been the home of many children, did not lend itself readily to the modifications required to create a homely atmosphere. Although many extensions and alterations had been undertaken during the period of 81 years, a move away from the City of Hobart was then imperative. The building was sold to the Commonwealth Government and the money used to purchase the Taroona property. The Orphanage was demolished to make way for the Commonwealth Government Building.

The house at 26 Channel Highway, Taroona was reasonably modern and of pleasing design. An architect, Mr R. Vincent, was engaged to design extensions to this house and to design three family group homes to be situated in the grounds. The extensions to the house and three cottages were designed on similar architectural lines. The administrative centre included the Convent, kitchen, Chapel and Chaplains Quarters.

Accommodation for the children was in three separate cottages, each housing ten children, one Sister and a House Mother. There were fifty two children in care, with ages ranging from five to seventeen years.

On the 1st May 1970 the new complex, St. Joseph's Child Centre, was officially opened by the then Governor of Tasmania, Sir Edric Bastyan, and blessed by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, the Most Reverend Sir Guilford C. Young, D.D. K.B.E. More than 500 people attended the opening.

The Centre continued to be the home of many boys and girls until 1977, when negotiations took place with Centacare (Catholic Family Welfare) to offer short term accommodation for families in crisis and to enable children to remain with their parents during times of family crises. The centre can accommodate several families with their children over a short period of time.





*Number 26 Channel Highway as St. Joseph's Child Centre, showing front of Convent and Chaplain's Quarters, 1970.*

PHOTO DON STEPHENS.