

INTRODUCTION

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT, JULY 4, 1931.

On 16th August, 1930, a meeting was convened by Mrs D.J. Spillman, a Vice President of the Central Executive of the C.W.A. with the object of forming a branch of the Association in Kellierbrin.

Twenty three members were duly enrolled and that number increased through the year to fifty nine.

Efforts had been made to secure a block of land on which to build a social centre, but, so far, these efforts have been of no avail.

In response to the annual appeal by Head Office for eggs 65 dozen have been sent down to the C.W.A. Seaside Hostel at Cottlesloe Beach.

Our branch has purchased its own C.W.A. cups and saucers, the cost of which was largely defrayed by conducting a Card Evening.

An attempt was made to hold our meetings twice a month on a Saturday and Wednesday alternately but this did not prove successful and a meeting on the first Saturday of the month was established. Two of the meetings took the form of grocery gift afternoons for the benefit of the local Hospital.

At the request of the local branch of the R.S.L., members of the C.W.A. took charge of the Poppy Day Appeal and succeeded in raising £21. from the sale of poppies.

Dressmaking instructions, talks on Home Nursing and cake and trifle decorating have been given by qualified members. Interesting debates on current topics have been held and the social side of meetings has been specially pleasing owing to the willingness of members to take part. A suggestion to form a library has not yet been implemented owing to the lack of suitable storage. Magazines have been collected and given to the Hospital.

A special afternoon was held on 8th March, and visitors from neighbouring Branches were present and all agreed it was a very happy gathering and should be repeated annually.

Owing to many cases of distress through unemployment, appeals were made for used clothing and the result was most gratifying.

In response to the "Use More Wool" campaign, a parcel of woollen hand-made garments were forwarded from the Branch and formed a notable part of an exhibition at the Royal Show.

A drive for home-made sweets was made and these were sent down to the Garden Fete at the C.W.A. Seaside Home at Cottlesloe Beach.

An enthusiastic meeting of our young girls was held in November and the Kellierbrin Younger Set was formed under the sponsorship of the local branch. The Younger Set holds its meetings fortnightly and has done excellent work for various charities. There are organised sporting activities for the girls and their social evenings, chiefly small dances and socials, have benefited the unemployed Relief Fund (£7.16.0) and the Hospital (£17.17.0).

enjoy a game after their meetings.

Officers elected for 1930-31.

Parent Branch:

Mrs R.Caddy	President
Mrs R.Silsbury) Vice Presidents
Mrs Elford	
Mrs Mcgregor	Treasurer
Mrs N.Rouvray	Secretary

Younger Set:

Miss N.Beckett	President
Miss M.Tolerton) Vice Presidents
Miss J.Graham	
Miss N.Stewart	Treasurer
Miss McGrath	Secretary.

KELTERRIN BRANCH NO.61.

This story of the Kelterrin Branch of the C.W.A. covers a period of forty-two years (1930-1972). After a time of struggle and anxiety the Branch has now attained comparative stability and is recognised locally as a tower of strength upon which to depend in times of stress. Thus maintaining in the fullest sense the aim of service to the country.

Although situated near the earlier formed Branches at Nungarin and Banded, Kelterrin was rather slow to join the Countrywomen's Association which fostered a Women's section that catered socially for the needs of rural women. Although a Branch of the C.W.A. was formed in 1930, it did not reach great strength until the Primary Producer's Association amalgamated with the Wheatgrower's Union which did not include a Women's section. As a result, many of the members joined the C.W.A. to it's great advantage, both numerically and socially.

It is not proposed to give a detailed account of each year's activities, but the younger members of today should find interest in the history of the early years and the older members will look back and recall how it all began. Sufficient it is to say that the C.W.A. in those days provided social intercourse and comradeship for lonely women who saw their neighbours possibly only once a week. Farm folk drove to town in buggies and sukkies, leaving home at a very early hour, with their young children often rolled up in rugs under the seats of their vehicles. Hence, the pressing need for Rest Rooms. Today they are really Club Rooms, but in most cases the old name still survives.

The Kelterrin Rest Room has had a chequered history. Meeting halls are scarce in the town and the Rest Room has been a mecca for all sections of the Community. All charitable bodies are granted free use of the room for their meetings and the Adult Education groups are always sure of a venue when culture exponents visit the country areas. It has been used continuously by the Junior Farmers, Red Cross, Church Groups, visiting Optometrists, officers of the S.E.C. and as a Polling Booth. Quite apart from these visitors, the Rest Room acts for the members as a meeting house, social centre, and crafts class room. In winter, evening card parties are a source of profit as well as entertainment.

That there was a need for a Rest Room was indisputable and when the Branch was formed in 1930, one of the first decisions made was for the acquisition of a suitable block of land.

success and a request to the local Roads Board for permission to build in Hanley Park near the school was refused. By sheer chance it was heard that an application for a site might be favourably considered by the Commissioner of Railways, so the Branch lost no time in making the request and a site was allotted near the Railway Station. There were many disadvantages, but the rental was to be only 5/- annually and the block was extremely centrally situated.

By the end of 1931 the C.W.A. architect had prepared plans and tenders were called. Feverish fund raising activities began and on December 12th, 1934, Mrs Burt, the State President officially performed the opening ceremony. The Branch usually went into recess during January but with the new Rest Room awaiting occupancy it was not to be considered that the first meeting should not be held immediately, and a joyful gathering assembled on January 5th, 1935 for the first official meeting under the leadership of Mrs Jessie Silsbury.

From 1936 the Branch coasted along quietly fulfilling its obligations to Headquarters and to the many charitable calls made upon it.

Many parents found it impossible to finance holidays at the coast and advantage was taken of the Happy Holiday Scheme to send children down to Rockingham for a short spell. Donations of food usually accompanied them to help towards catering.

Rural communities worked harder than ever with less return for their efforts. Attendance at meetings fell away although members rallied nobly to give their services when required. Catering was the most regular method of raising money and finance was kept in a reasonably healthy state. The Rest Room was paid for and some furniture was installed. Regular Hospital visiting was kept up and the Branch gave its help in furnishing the newly built Maternity wing. The old piano which had faithfully served its turn had deteriorated badly and a fund was started to pay for a replacement.

At this time the Younger Set were also having their troubles and regretfully decided to disband. The outbreak of the Second World War placed a still greater strain upon the Branch as its members became involved with Red Cross, Patriotic Fund, War Savings Groups etc. plus the added restrictions imposed by the rationing system. Troop trains passing through the town meant catering at all hours of the night and day while knitting and making camouflage nets took the place of crafts formerly sponsored by the Association. The Rest Room became the natural venue for these activities and as no rent could be charged finance was rapidly becoming a real problem. Typical of the times was the following notice:-

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 AT THE C.W.A. REST ROOM.
Afternoon Tea - 6d a head.
PROCEEDS FOR THE WAR PATRIOTIC FUND.

For afternoon tea the sum of £3.10.0 was raised while street collections associated with the effort amounted to £5.0.0. The grand total was £8.10.0 - an excellent effort for those days.

As time wore on, it was considered more than ever necessary to keep the Happy Holiday Scheme going and regular parties and sales of work were organised with this aim in view.

weekly cleaning of the Rest Room to save the money usually paid to a cleaner. As time passed, conditions improved somewhat and the Divisional President, Mrs George, who took the chair for the annual election of officers, expressed her pleasure at the large attendance and congratulated the members upon their efforts in "keeping the home fires burning". She announced that a special ration allowance had been allocated for the purchase of tea and sugar for use on social occasions, a gesture from the Rationing Board which was greatly appreciated.

Towards the end of 1944, the Branch was invited to nominate a member to the Hospital Board in recognition of the Sterling service given over many years. The choice fell upon Mrs Morrison Scott, who worthily represented the Branch until she resigned in 1952. She was succeeded by Mrs Harvey who also proved most capable and gave twelve years of service. She resigned in 1964 and was replaced by Mrs Humpleby who still holds the office.

In 1945, a letter from the State President, Mrs Foxton, announced the purchase of a property at South Fremantle as the basis of a Holiday Home for members of the Eastern Division. The conduct of the enterprise fell largely upon Mrs Williams and Mrs Gallagher, and the highly successful "Easternholme" stands as a memorial to these two women. Soon afterwards an appeal was made by Head Office for finance to purchase "Kendunup" to serve as Head Office and Hostel combined. Both appeals were firmly supported by our Branch and we were pleased to do our share in laying the foundations of the present C.W.A. Club.

In September 1948 the A.C.W.W. Secretary, Miss Zimmerman, visited Merredin and aroused our interest in the World Movement. Since then we have been favoured by visits from several officers of the Associated Country Women of the World, including the World Presidents Miss Payne (1948), Dame Alice Berry (1957), Mrs Van Beekhoff (1962) and Mrs Aroti Dutt, Besides these we entertained Lady Binney and Miss Stewart, Area Vice Presidents.

During 1948, a substantial donation to the branch was given by Thomas & Co. of the local Flour Mill, for the purpose of buying more furnishings for the Rest Room and these purchases added considerably to the comfort of the members. The C.W.A. Cook Book had been published and many copies were ordered for the Branch, many of whose members had contributed to the recipes and household hints. The book was the standard gift from the Branch to young brides of the district for many years.

In 1950 there occurred a forecast of the future when the Secretary was instructed to request the Roads Board to refrain whenever possible from destroying native trees when grading the roads. Surely this must be one of the earliest efforts at conservation.

In 1951, Kellierberin celebrated its Jubilee and the C.W.A. decorated a float to take part in the procession through the town. The float depicted the various activities of the C.W.A. in a most effective manner.

The Branch planned to celebrate its 21st Birthday on 31st August, and invited the State President, Mrs Foxton, to be guest of honour. The function was highly successful and the Branch was congratulated upon reaching its majority.

made their stay as enjoyable as possible.

Handicrafts had increased in popularity with the members and several occasions. In 1956, a series of advanced dressmaking lessons were very well attended.

Repairs to the roof of the C.W.A. Club called for the sale of "tiles" at 5/- each, and our branch contributed £10. to the cause. In October, the newly elected State President, Mrs Maughan, paid a visit to Kellierberrin and outlined the future plans under consideration for "Sunshine Hostel". At the annual meeting in February, 1957, great praise was given to Mesdames Williams and Gallagher for their dedicated work at "Easterholme" In 1958, a holiday for elderly women of the district was held.

In 1959, a "Back to Kellierberrin" celebration was planned by the Shire Council to mark the opening of the new Shire Office, Library and Memorial Hall, and the C.W.A. was invited to take an active part. A most attractive float depicting C.W.A. activities led the procession through the town and later the Rest Room was staffed by voluntary helpers who served morning and afternoon tea to over two hundred women visitors. All agreed that the Rest Room proved a veritable oasis socially.

In July, Mrs Catherine King appealed to us to join the "Save the children" movement, and as a result the Branch adopted a small Korean girl who has been its special charge ever since. She is now a young woman and has entirely justified our faith in her. As she is now beyond the age limit we have now replaced her with a small West Indian boy whom we hope will reward our interest as richly as Pak Chung Sook has done.

In 1960, urgent representations were made on behalf of the World Refugee Appeal and the most rewarding of our efforts for this cause was a Doll Pageant organised by Mrs McGregor. The presence of State President, Mrs Higgins, at the Pageant was an additional pleasure.

In 1961 we were privileged to meet Dame Pattie Menzies at a rally at Northam and we were also honoured by visits from Senators Dorothy Tanguay and Agnes Robertson, who gave us an idea of the work women can do for women at Federal Government level.

Later in 1961 an unexpected demand was made upon us when the disastrous bushfires occurred at Dwellingup and a Relief Fund was set up by the Lord Mayor. Support was also given by the Branch to the Heart and Cancer Appeals, when door to door visits brought home the urgency of the Appeals.

In the meantime, trouble was brewing for the Branch in a most unexpected quarter. Railway officials from Perth paid us a visit with the news that the Rest Room would have to go to make way for the new wider gauge line from Kalgoorlie. From our experience of the early years, we knew no suitable block was available and even if we found one, we doubted if the building would stand removal. The offer of the station master's house was appreciated but the building was most unsuitable as the rooms were small and removal of inner walls would prove very costly. We were desperate. However help came from an unexpected source. The Church of England was situated in very large grounds and we were offered a considerable

part of it, provided all the authorities concerned were agreeable, and provide also that we could move the building to the new site. The Branch meeting on 6th November, 1964, was the last gathering on the old site and our President, Mrs Bradley, announced with feeling "We have come to the end of an era".

For the next couple of months it was all hard work for the members and their menfolk, but it is with gratitude that we found the reward of helping others in the past. In our time of need help was forthcoming from all quarters and our Rest Room now stands on a much better site than formerly. We have repaired the damage occasioned by the removal. The last few years have been devoted to paying expenses entailed in the removal, but we now consider ourselves open for "Business as Usual".

IN 1966 the Branch decided to help the Slow Learners movement to establish a school and Hostel in the town. The first part of this project has been accomplished and the second part is in progress.

In 1968 the Branch was honoured to receive the Clarice Rudduck Award. This was almost entirely due to the dedicated work done by Mrs Mavis Forsyth, who organised sewing classes for the native women of the town. Sewing machines were acquired and materials donated. Volunteers helped to supervise children while their mothers were receiving instruction. Classes for school children were held after school by ex school teachers who helped with homework and study. The older girls made their own basket ball uniforms and the mothers concentrated at first on school uniforms before branching out in other more intricate work.

On the celebration of the birthday of the Sewing classes all personal work is stopped and the women make garments for the "Save the Children" Fund. This brings home to them the realisation that there are others less fortunate than they. So successful has the work proved that Mrs Forsyth has been called upon by branches throughout the country areas to inaugurate similar classes. Such pride in their work has been shown in our district that the native women of the sewing classes intend to nominate a native child in the forthcoming Tiny Tots Quest and the necessary entry fee is being raised by the women themselves.

In making mention of Mrs Forsyth, other names of outstanding workers come to mind - Mrs Berston, one of the early Presidents of the Branch, Mrs George, Divisional Vice President, who missed only one annual meeting between 1937 and 1958, Mrs Williams of Nungarin, early State President, whose interest in us was mainly through our involvement in the Happy Holiday Scheme, and in Easternholm; Mrs Edith Mather, who originally a member of Doodlakine Branch, faithfully served our Branch as Secretary for several years and in 1957 took over the office as Treasurer until the limit of three years in office was instituted. She is still one of the stalwarts of our Branch. Another name on our Honour list is that of a man - Mr Alan Ross - who audited our books for twenty five years. We sincerely regret that he has now passed away leaving us the poorer for the loss of his kindly advice and encouragement.

And so our story of over forty years draws to a close. The interest in handicrafts is again increasing and our entries in the Home-makers Contests have many awards. The Branch has earned an established place in the community and the problems which beset us in the past have been successfully overcome

the past have been so successfully overcome that the future seems to offer no more than the normal difficulties which any Association such as ours must face from time to time. After all, it is the challenges which bring us together as a sisterhood of country women working for countrywomen to fulfill the aims of our Association.