



MEMORIES BOOK



THE RMH KIOSK
AUXILIARY VOLUNTEERS

...

PETRINA DAKIN

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Author Petrina Dakin is a member of the Melbourne Health Public Affairs team and has a keen interest in the history of The Royal Melbourne Hospital.

2008 Committee

Mrs Lesley Stevenson –
President

Miss Pat McMillan –
Vice President

Mrs Shirley Bruhn –
Hon. Secretary

Mrs Leone Evans

Mrs Margaret Stevens

Mrs Helen Tassell

Mrs Lurleene Robinson

2008 Volunteers

Mrs Rina Amalfi

Mr Patrick Beard

Miss Maureen Boyle

Mrs Shirley Bruhn

Miss Nancy Clark

Mrs Val Conroy

Mrs Leone Evans

Mrs Peggy Gordon

Mrs Elsie Gray

Mrs Belle Gribben

Mrs Val Gulliver

Mrs Margaret Heath

Mrs Shirley Henry

Mrs Dorothy Holah

Mrs Roma Jorgenson

Mrs Edna Leppitt

Mrs Vera Lewis

Mrs Yvonne McMahon

Miss Pat McMillan

Mrs Janet Mogridge

Mrs Antigoni Napolitano

Mrs Elisabeth Neales

Mrs Freda Nicolis

Miss Nonie Oppy

Mrs Ada Priestley

Mrs Lurleene Robinson

Mrs Joyce Rose

Mrs Milda Sarzetakis

Mrs Gwenda Shaw

Mrs Gayel Smith

Mrs Estell Smith

Mrs Belita Smith

Miss Noreen Stack

Mrs Margaret Stevens

Mrs Lesley Stevenson

Mrs Nan Sudlow

Mrs Helen Tassell

Mrs Marie Williams

Mrs Lucy Zappula

Kiosk manager

Maureen McLean – 19 years

INTRODUCTION

The RMH Kiosk Auxiliary closed on 15 June 2008, after 86 years of continuous service to the patients, visitors and staff of The Royal Melbourne Hospital, with a proud record of raising more than \$3 million dollars for life-saving medical equipment, and being open continuously from the day it opened.

This book celebrates the RMH Kiosk Auxiliary's history and achievements, and its place in the hearts of everyone who valued the volunteers' friendship, kindness and support. The final group of volunteers who attended the farewell lunch in July 2008 were invited to share their memories of the kiosk, and their thoughts and feelings are part of this book.



THE RMH KIOSK AUXILIARY WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1922



Top right – Presiding at the “Bun House”, is Mrs. M. Cribbes, of the Canteen Auxiliary. A cup of tea with a bun at a nominal cost is relished by patients. About 2,000 cups of tea and coffee are served each week by voluntary workers (1952/53). Bottom right – Excerpt from 1922 Melbourne Hospital Annual Report.



A BRIEF HISTORY

The RMH Kiosk Auxiliary had its beginnings at The Melbourne Hospital in Lonsdale Street, operating a lunch and tearoom service for hospital staff and medical students.

The facilities were set up in a disused operating theatre which was transformed into a comfortable and attractive area, known as ‘Ye Bunne House’. The room was officially opened by the Countess of Stradbroke on 8 June 1922.

The aim was to “provide an annual income for the Hospital, and a much-needed convenience for the Clinical School, and to create newer interest in the welfare of Victoria’s largest charitable institute”.

The area was soon converted into a kiosk for patients and visitors as well as staff, run by volunteers.

In its early days, ‘Old Fintonians’ from Fintona Girls’ School in Balwyn were active in the auxiliary. They ran the kiosk each morning and visited wards in the afternoon, with a tray of goods for sale and also to spend time with the patients.

In 1927, the kiosk started a trolley service which visited the wards twice a week.

With the move of The Royal Melbourne Hospital from Lonsdale Street to Grattan Street, Parkville, in December 1944, the kiosk set up shop in the new building. The volunteers’ service to the hospital community continued, as did their fundraising for medical equipment.

In 1959, the kiosk was renamed the Essy Zwar RMH Kiosk in honour of Mrs Essy Zwar, one of the founders of the Kiosk Auxiliary, and its President for 29 years.

In 1963, *The Age* described the kiosk as a “smart, efficient and well-stocked kiosk, carrying everything from toothpaste to fresh fruit and

magazines”. Besides doing generous charity work, the volunteers gained experience in the retailing trade, including buying, stockroom work and selling. They continued to staff the trolley “with most of the small articles a patient needs”, which went around the wards several times a week.

The Kiosk Auxiliary operated the trolley service until 1994, when the RMH Volunteers Service took over. The goods continued to be supplied by the kiosk. The trolley service later evolved into a newspaper and magazine delivery to the wards, used by patients and staff. Mr Laurie Davis ran the service on weekdays for 13 years before stepping down in early 2010.

The kiosk had a paid employee, Maureen McLean, who worked at the hospital for 19 years. Maureen’s last day was just prior to the kiosk closing its doors for the last time.

In 1994, a special meeting was held to discuss the kiosk’s future following the announcement of plans to change the hospital’s entrance. An atrium with shops, including a mini-mart was envisaged. However, the proposal did not go ahead.

By the new millennium, the winds of change began to be felt, and the kiosk’s future was up in the air. Major redevelopment plans were approved and in June 2008, the hospital opened a new front entrance and a major retail precinct.

With this new commercial setting, and changes in the approach to fundraising, the kiosk was sadly farewelled on 15 June 2008. It had maintained its record of being continuously open every day – including Christmas Day – for 86 years.

1922
...
2008

“smart, efficient
and well-
stocked kiosk,
carrying
everything from
toothpaste to
fresh fruit and
magazines”

RMH Kiosk Auxiliary - Farewell Luncheon, Monday, 7 July 2008		
Name	Years at RMH	Signature
ANNE DAVIS	33 years	<i>A. Davis</i>
MARION DUFF	33 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
LESLIE HANSEN	27 years	<i>L. Hansen</i>
ANNE EVANS	25 years	<i>A. Evans</i>
NEVE COPE	24 years	<i>N. Cope</i>
MARION DUFF	21 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	21 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	13 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	32 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	3 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	16 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	21 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	21 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	8 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	17 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	19 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	5 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	8 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	17 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	31 years	<i>M. Duff</i>
MARION DUFF	14 years	<i>M. Duff</i>



Above: Sister Mildred Waite worked at the hospital for 46 years and was a much loved and respected nurse tutor. After she retired in 1968, Miss Waite and her twin sister Grace (Mrs Hales) - also an RMH nurse - became volunteers in the kiosk for many years.
Left: In her 90s, Miss Waite was the oldest living former staff member involved in the RMH 150th anniversary celebrations in 1998. She is pictured with RMH nurses in uniforms from different eras.

Auxiliary Helps to Save Lives

THROUGH its forty-one-year-old Kiosk Auxiliary the Royal Melbourne Hospital medical staff is saving the life of at least one more patient each week.

ENGAGEMENTS
Mrs. Victor Letcher, High School



THE SCALPEL

BULLETIN OF THE ROYAL MELBOURNE HOSPITAL

MEDICINE AND PHILOSOPHY

RMH Kiosk Auxiliary - continuing a tradition of hard work, service

Update

This is a tremendous achievement and one which the auxiliary's immediate past-President, Mrs. Mary Robinson, said makes her very proud.

Mrs. Robinson has been a Kiosk Auxiliary member for nearly 44 years. She recently resigned as Auxiliary President - a position which has been filled by Mrs. Lesley Stevenson.

Mrs. Robinson was elected to be President for the next 12 months, but stepped up in the position for 17 years, 25 years, Mayor, and worked in the Gift Shop for nearly 12 years before.

viva voce

A DEDICATED TEAM

In 1922, an establishment was set up to serve lunch and afternoon tea to the Hospital staff. The hospital, then in Lansdale St., provided these ladies with a kitchen, a dining room, and a lounge. It was known as "the Home House".

In December 1944, the Kiosk Auxiliary set up its operations at the new Royal Melbourne Hospital and has not moved since. It has been instrumental in the founding of the Burnside Institute (now the Burnside Institute of Health) and with this year's donation of \$75,000 to the Burnside Institute, the Kiosk Auxiliary will be celebrating its 75th anniversary.



Herald 14 May 1940

Sylvia Letcher

Hospital loses a loyal servant after 70 years

Charity worker
Born: January 22, 1899
Died: September 24, 1994

Sylvia Letcher and a group of her friends began serving tea and lunch to the nurses and medical students at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1921.

Their mission, begun as a small deed for charity, fostered the development of the hospital's charity kiosk.

Mrs. Letcher maintained the link with the Royal Melbourne for more than 70 years, earning a BEM from the Queen.

She was a member of the hospital's council of auxiliaries until her health began to fail 18 months ago, at the age of 94.

From the age of 21, this selfless, reserved and private woman travelled across the city each week to serve others and raise funds for charity.

The kiosk organisation began when the hospital was in Lansdale St. Mrs. Letcher's first job was as a team leader.

From there she became treasurer, president and chief buyer. She was made a patron of the hospital and later a life governor.

In a 1992 interview, she said: "When I started it was a once-a-week job. But I became more and more involved until I was working four or five days a week."

Her other duties included driving around the city picking up goods sought by patients.

Shortly before her retirement the Kiosk Auxiliary service celebrated its 70th anniversary by presenting a \$100,000 cardiac monitor to the hospital. This took to almost \$2 million the value of medical equipment donated by the kiosk group.

To mark that occasion, the hospital's council of auxiliaries held a dinner at the Ritz Hotel.

Mrs. Letcher was given a silver and pearl brooch. Mrs. Letcher's husband, Victor, died before her. She is survived by two nieces and a nephew. Family members passed away quietly at home.

THE PRESIDENTS

The RMH Kiosk Auxiliary had just five, long-serving Presidents in its 86-year history.

The inaugural President was Lady Allen, who first suggested providing a lunch and tearoom for the use of hospital staff and medical students in 1922. Lady Allen (nee Ada Rosalie Elizabeth Mason) was very active on Red Cross committees during World War I and organised the Army Nurses' Club. After the war, the Red Cross auxiliaries used their organising and fundraising skills to support the Melbourne and other hospitals. Lady Allen died in England in 1933.

After the war, the Red Cross auxiliaries used their organising and fundraising skills to support the Melbourne and other hospitals



1918

Essy Zwar

Mrs Essy Zwar was one of the founding members in 1922, and was involved with the kiosk for 40 years.

Mrs Zwar attended the inaugural meetings of the hospital auxiliaries, which took place in Lady Grice's home at the end of World War I. Mrs Zwar was elected the Kiosk Auxiliary's inaugural Honorary Secretary and later became President for 29 years, until she resigned in 1959 due to ill health. Her interest continued until her death on 15 December 1961. Mrs Sylvia Letcher, her successor as president, said: "We shall miss her more than words can say."

Mrs Zwar had a long association with the hospital. Before her marriage, the young Essy Craig trained as a nurse at the Melbourne Hospital in 1904/07 and was a member of the nursing contingent which went abroad during World War I. On her return, she retained an active interest in the Returned Nurses' Club. She married surgeon Bernard Zwar (later Board President) in 1916. Their son John later also worked as a doctor at the hospital.

Sylvia Letcher

Founding member Mrs Sylvia Letcher was a member of the Kiosk Auxiliary for more than 70 years. She received a BEM (British Empire Medal) in 1976 for services to The Royal Melbourne Hospital, and the Kiosk Auxiliary made her their patron.

"At the age of 21, this selfless, reserved and private woman travelled across the city each week to serve others and raise funds for charity," wrote the *Herald Sun* in an obituary published in 1994.

Making her start serving tea and buns at the old Lonsdale Street site, she went on to become Treasurer, President and Chief Buyer.

Mrs Letcher said in 1992: "When I started it was a once-a-week job. But I became more involved until I was working four or five days a week."

Mrs Letcher was presented with a silver and pearl brooch on the 70th anniversary of the Kiosk Auxiliary's opening. She continued as a volunteer until the age of 94. She died in September 1994, aged 95, and a memorial service was held for her in the hospital chapel.



1994

"When I started it was a once-a-week job. But I became more involved until I was working four or five days a week"



1994

“I’m very proud that over the years we’ve helped purchase some very important, life-saving equipment”

Mrs Robson & Mrs Letcher, 1988



Mary Robson

Mrs Mary Robson was another long-serving volunteer - 46 years from 1964 to 2000 – and leader of the Kiosk Auxiliary for many years. She initially planned to be President for just 12 months, but ended up in the position for 17 years.

“I started out on the trolleys, visiting wards, and was Treasurer for nearly 25 years. (I was a) buyer, and worked in the Gift Shop for nearly 12 years before becoming President in 1978,” Mrs Robson told the *Update* (RMH staff newsletter) in July 1995, on her retirement as President.

“The most rewarding aspect of our work is seeing what is achieved. I’m very proud that over the years we’ve helped purchase some very important, life-saving equipment.”

As President, she was proud to see the kiosk reach the milestone of \$2 million in donations to the hospital. In 1994, she received the Medal of Order of Australia (OAM) for services to the hospital. The RMH Board held an afternoon tea party in the boardroom to congratulate her.

Mrs Robson was not slowing down when she stepped down as President. She continued as Vice President, Treasurer and buyer until retiring from the auxiliary in 2000. She died on 12 February 2001. A plaque honouring her contribution was erected in the kiosk.

Lesley Stevenson

Mrs Lesley Stevenson took over as President in 1995, and was at the helm for 13 years; she was an enthusiastic kiosk volunteer for 35 years.

Mrs Stevenson helped Mrs Robson as a buyer, and also maintained the rosters prior to becoming President, and kept these roles until the kiosk closed in 2008.

“When I started, there was no cash register – it was only after GST came in (2000) that we had one,” she said.

“At its peak, the kiosk had 100 volunteers; at the end, there was 47 (including four aged over 90). They have done a fantastic job, every day of the year, Christmas, public holidays, doing double shifts to fill in for those who were away. People appreciated that the kiosk was always open every day.”

As well as selling magazines, toiletries, confectionery and flowers, and handling film processing and dry cleaning orders, the volunteers often gave cups of tea and comfort to people distressed about their loved one’s diagnosis or condition.

Mrs Stevenson said: “Every day was rewarding; to be there to help someone or just to have a chat”.

“Without a doubt meeting people was the most rewarding part of being a kiosk volunteer – be it patients, staff or visitors. All of the volunteers have been absolutely fantastic, and it was just magnificent to work with them. We had lots of goodwill with people and still hear from a lady whose husband was a patient 10 years ago.”

The mother of Dutch backpacker Paul De Waard, who was shot in Melbourne in 2007 and given life-saving treatment at RMH, also keeps in contact with Mrs Stevenson.

Mrs Stevenson’s hard work in many roles - and dedication during a difficult time when the kiosk’s future was unclear - was acknowledged at the Kiosk Auxiliary’s farewell luncheon in July 2008.



2008

“Without a doubt meeting people was the most rewarding part of being a kiosk volunteer”



THE RMH KIOSK
AUXILIARY HAD THE
PROUD RECORD OF
BEING OPEN EVERY
DAY, INCLUDING
CHRISTMAS DAY,
FOR 86 YEARS

*Sweets, writing paper, toilet requisites - the hundred and one odds and ends that a patient requires
- are taken to his bedside on a trolley from the Kiosk conducted by the Kiosk Auxiliary (1952/53).*

DONATIONS

Money raised through the kiosk has helped raise funds to purchase medical equipment for a myriad of departments at The Royal Melbourne Hospital, which otherwise would not have been possible.

Mrs Essy Zwar, writing a brief history of the kiosk in the 1950s, recorded some of the equipment purchased with kiosk donations:

“Blankets quilts, Forfar and Huckaback for doctors’ towels, painting, telephone account, electric mixing machine, electric mincing machine, cystoscopic table, diathermy machine for Gynaecological Department, special heat wave apparatus for Theatre, improving electric service in X-Ray Department, a vertical Bucky diaphragm for X-Ray Department, £1000 to equip and build two wards of four and two beds, sick nurses’ clinic and sick nurses’ day room in the new wing of the hospital, electric pumping machine for the theatre, building and equipment for the Bio-Chemistry Laboratory, £2000 to sponsor Radiography Room containing valuable X-Ray equipment, £3000 for linen for one year, and last but not least we have paid £4000 towards a mobile X-Ray machine.”

The staff newsletter of July 1995 recorded: “Funds provided by the hard work of kiosk volunteers had helped establish the Intensive Care Unit in 1971, Burns Unit in 1976 and Open Heart Surgery Unit in 1981 – the auxiliary celebrated its 60th anniversary by presenting a \$100,000 cardiac monitor to the hospital.”

In the 70th anniversary year (1992), the kiosk donated \$128,000 for a cardiac monitoring system for an operating theatre.

Just some of the donations made by the kiosk in its final years included:

- Equipment for Radiology and Intensive Care - \$109,500

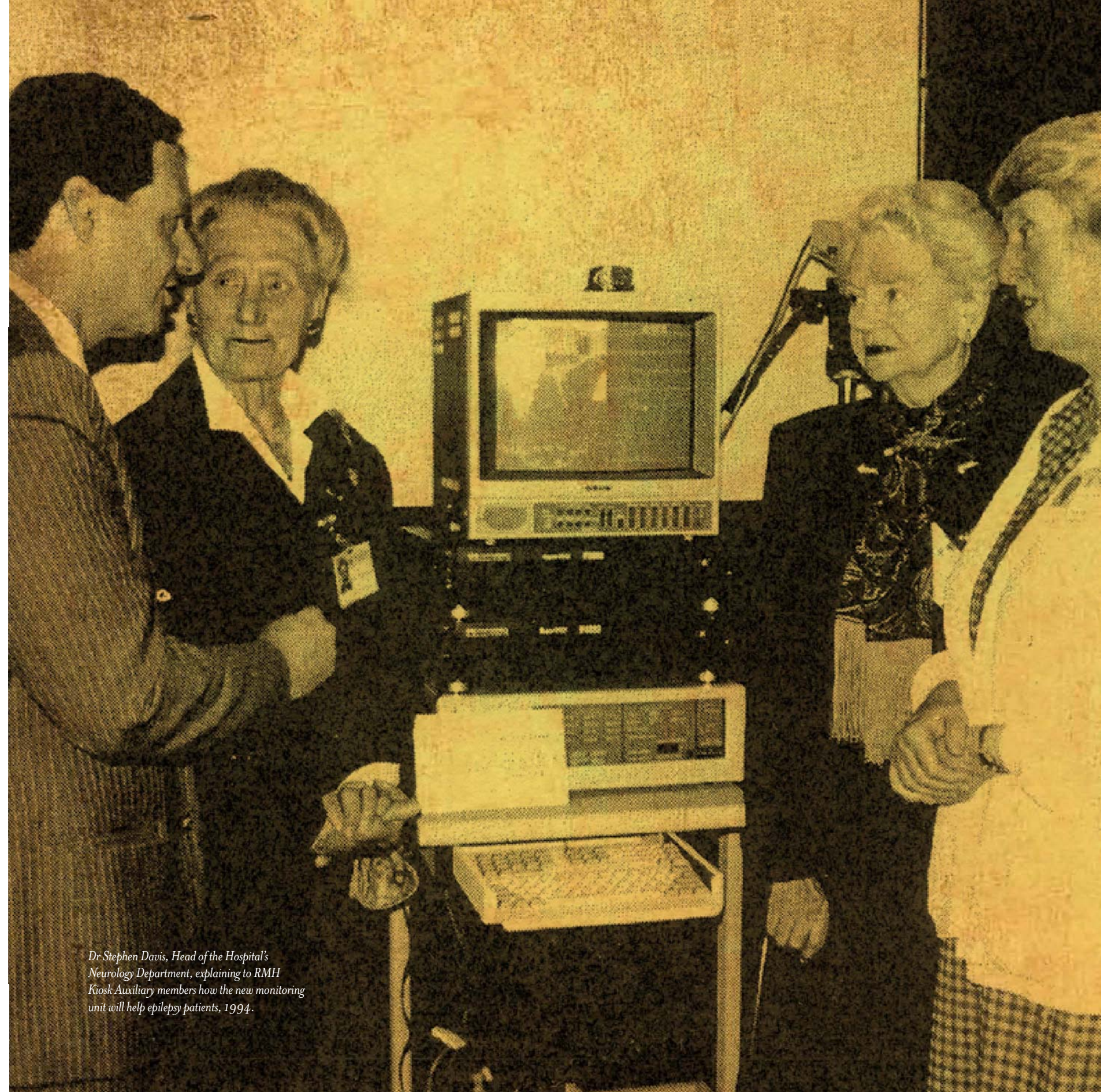
- Puritan-Bennett 7200ae Ventilator for Intensive Care – \$35,000
- Four defibrillator monitors for use in cardiac arrest for the Coronary Care Unit - \$32,000
- Purchase of 16 beds – \$48,000
- New laboratory equipment to test for malignant hyperthermia, a rare, potentially fatal reaction to anaesthesia - \$43,000
- Ultra-sound equipment for the assessment of rectal cancer and associated liver disease for the Colorectal Unit and Department of Surgery - \$70,000

The kiosk also supported the Delta Society’s Pet Partners visiting program, in which owners and their specially trained dogs visited wards once a week, bringing a smile to everyone’s face. Stalwarts of the RMH program, Jenny and John Wilson, and their golden retrievers Lily and Frosty (in the adjoining courtyard), attended the RMH Kiosk Auxiliary farewell luncheon on 7 July 2008.

The Kiosk Auxiliary’s final donation – \$68,500 – was made to the Respiratory and Sleep Disorders Medicine Department to purchase diagnostic equipment for its sleep and respiratory laboratories and a ventilator for the Respiratory Care Unit on Ward 5 South West. To show their appreciation, the department presented a special poster to the Kiosk Auxiliary, which in part said: “We will miss their good nature, their smiles and above all, their example.”

“We will miss their good nature, their smiles and above all, their example”

Below: RMH’s Respiratory and Sleep Disorders Medicine Director Prof Lou Irving and Deputy Director A/Prof Abe Rubinfeld with volunteers, 2009



Dr Stephen Davis, Head of the Hospital’s Neurology Department, explaining to RMH Kiosk Auxiliary members how the new monitoring unit will help epilepsy patients, 1994.

FAREWELL, GOODBYE AND WE'LL MISS YOU...



THE END OF AN ERA

The RMH Kiosk closed for business on 18 June 2008, after 86 years of continuous service to The Royal Melbourne Hospital.

The kiosk was staffed by volunteers who gave their time and energy, to serve patients, visitors and staff of the hospital and to raise funds for medical equipment. Through the kiosk, and various Easter and Christmas raffles, second-hand book sales and stalls of handmade goods and other items, they raised a total of \$3 million.

A farewell luncheon was held on 7 July 2008 in the RMH Function and Convention Centre.

The Royal Melbourne Hospital in 2009 nominated the RMH Kiosk Auxiliary for the inaugural Minister for Health's Volunteer Awards, in the team category. A copy of the nomination certificate was presented to members of the auxiliary at a reunion gathering on 2 December 2009. The event also included a historical photo presentation and a special 80th birthday wish to Mrs Lesley Stevenson.

The end of an era has not meant the end of the volunteers' association with the hospital. Many have continued to be familiar faces around the organisation, taking up new volunteer activities within Melbourne Health.



Bottom left: Kiosk manager Maureen McLean's last day of work - Maureen (centre) is pictured with volunteers, from left, Jan Mogridge, Gwenda Shaw, Margaret Stevens and Roma Jorgenson.

Top left: Shirley Bruhn, Jan Mogridge, Roma Jorgenson, Gwenda Shaw and Margaret Stevens.

RMH KIOSK AUXILIARY FAREWELL LUNCHEON

7 July 2008 - The Speakers

Trudy Habner, Executive Director Communications and Community Engagement, Melbourne Health:

Today is a gathering of very special friends, and I'd like to share in that with you, and recognise the friendships that you have with The Royal Melbourne Hospital, and hope that those friendships will endure.

It's a sad day when we say goodbye to a part of The Royal Melbourne Hospital that has been so important, not only to all of you but to our staff, our patients and the families who have come in and visited over all the years.

And while it is a day tinged with sadness, I do hope we can make it a day of celebration as well, so that we can celebrate the friendships that we have, and we at The Royal Melbourne can celebrate your friendship with us. It's been a very important relationship and I do hope we can find ways to continue, whether that's through events we are holding or whether through continuing volunteer work, we really would like to work with you to keep this relationship going.

Mr David Zerman, Director of Fundraising and Philanthropy:

Since the kiosk opened in 1922, more than \$3 million has been raised. It's a vast amount of money; many pieces of equipment; many special services are available because you and people who have come before you have been instrumental in raising funds.

The television show Dragnet used to say there are 8 million stories in the naked city, and this is one

of them. We've heard a couple of stories; we will hear some more stories in just a moment. One fact to bear in mind, since the day the hospital opened on 15th March 1848, more than 17,360,180 patients have received service of some kind from the doctors, nurses and allied health staff from RMH.

Mrs Judy Adam, AM, former President of the RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries (which closed after 75 years of service in 2007):

For 86 years, The Royal Melbourne Hospital Kiosk has enriched immeasurably the life of this place, and all of you who are current members of the Kiosk Auxiliary have carried on that tradition with the utmost loyalty, efficiency and with so much care. It's a record of which everyone should be very proud.

I find it amazing that you have maintained the roster with under half the number of volunteers that you had before, seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year. We'd all have found the closure of the kiosk easier to accept, I think, if it had been a case of you finding it all too much, and this is happening a lot with volunteer work. But it wasn't like that. You were all willing and indeed anxious to carry on the work that you were doing, and what has emerged is a very sad situation. When I walked into the foyer this morning and there was no kiosk, I did feel that something very special and precious has gone from the life of this hospital.

The kiosk members have given immeasurable comfort and friendship to everybody here and they will be very much missed. It was reflected very

“I just feel that what I have to say this afternoon reflects the views of all the people who care for the community life of this hospital”

keenly in the appreciation of the Dutch tourist's mother who said how much that comfort had meant to her.

As well of course, you've raised millions – just on \$3 million – over the years and that has facilitated the purchase of many pieces of equipment so much needed and which otherwise would not have been available to the staff.

I feel that what I have to say this afternoon reflects the views of all the people who care for the community life of this hospital. I want to speak particularly about the contribution of Lesley Stevenson. She has been the President, the Treasurer and the Roster Secretary; the record really speaks for itself. As a member of the (RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries) Executive, Lesley has reported first hand what you have had to put up with: the uncertainty of not knowing what was going to happen about the kiosk. In latter times, she has kept you all together when it would have been very easy to understand if everybody had said: “Well, we've had enough of that”. But no. The friendships in this group have been so strong; the friendships for one another, the friendships for the hospital, and the friendships shown to everybody who passed through the kiosk doors. I have always enjoyed coming over to see the kiosk ladies and having a word. But through it all, Lesley has been absolutely constant, in her dedication to this hospital and her dedication to her role.

We are here this afternoon to acknowledge the contribution of the Kiosk Auxiliary to this place, with the greatest gratitude and admiration. Thank you all very much.

*Pictured at the RMH Kiosk Auxiliary farewell luncheon:
Right – Guest speaker Dr Daryl Williams with President Mrs Lesley Stevenson and Mrs Wilma Maurant; Bottom Right – Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, Dr Peter Greenberg and Mrs Judy Adam; Far Left – Maureen McLean with her grandchildren.*

Mrs Frances Rigby, OAM, former President of the RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries, and former kiosk volunteer for more than 20 years:

One of the things that struck me as one of the services that the kiosk provided is, if you were working in the evening, as I did, and people who had been upstairs where the operating suites are or where really sick people are, and they had been sitting waiting all day for something to happen, or good news, and they would come and tell you about it. It helped them to unload the tension that they were having. And even if we didn't sell them something, we sometimes made them a cup of tea. It was a service that you have all given to so many grieving and worrying families, and we should really thank you all for that.

Mrs Norma Danks, OAM, former hospital Board member, and former President of the RMH Central Council of Auxiliaries:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak and just say thank you for what you've done. I think it's very important on an occasion like this, not to look back on the past other than to say thank you, but to look in the future and think what a great hospital this is going to be, with not the grey haired biddies like me perhaps, but with the young who are here today. Thank you all for making that effort to come. What has gone before is in the past but we must look to the future, and the future of the hospital is in your hands.

“Without that valuable work by so many volunteers, we would not be able to cope at the level we do”



RMH KIOSK AUXILIARY FAREWELL LUNCHEON

7 July 2008 - The Speakers

Petrina Dakin, Public Affairs, Melbourne Health:

I would like to announce that we will be creating a book of memories of being a volunteer at the kiosk – I will hand around a questionnaire and would love to hear from you with your special memories. Everyone here today is also invited to sign the RMH 160th anniversary commemorative book. This will be a very special record for us, and help us remember the wonderful generosity and spirit of the people who have been kiosk volunteers.

Dr Daryl Williams, Director of Anaesthesia and Pain Management:

I am very honoured to be here for the very last meeting of the RMH Kiosk Auxiliary, which is a sad moment but it is really a celebration, a celebration from 1922 to 2008 – 86 years – a wonderful legacy of the fantastic work people have put in.

We as medical staff and nursing staff and clinicians are absolutely reliant on fundraising activities of volunteers to purchase some important medical equipment. Without that valuable work by so many volunteers, we would not be able to cope at the level we do.

The Kiosk Auxiliary has certainly been very generous to the Operating Suite and Perioperative Services. A couple of pieces of equipment which we've been able to purchase through their support in recent years includes:

- A portable ventilator, worth \$25,000 – a little orange box which goes “twing” and “bang” – but is absolutely vital for transport of critical care patients around the hospital, between the Emergency Department, Operating Suite, Intensive Care and Radiology;
- A portable ultrasound machine which has enabled us to image the neck of cardiac surgery patients and put lines in much more safely. It has also enabled us to do regional block, that is, to inject local anaesthesia into nerve bundles, and provide pain relief more safely; and

- A testing framework to look at how muscles perform in the laboratory, relating to malignant hyperthermia. It's a life-threatening condition in which patients can react to some anaesthetic agents. We are a national testing centre and with the new equipment purchased, we have gained international certification, one of only five sites around the world.

On behalf of the staff and so many patients who have been touched by your generosity, I would like to thank you all very much for your hard work. I would especially like to thank the office bearers; those are people who put in a bit more time than the average volunteer – Lesley Stevenson, Shirley Bruhn and Judy Adam, who I have had a wonderful relationship with over the past eight years.

*10 year service
badges and posies
were presented to:*

- *Maureen Boyle*
- *Belle Gribbin*
- *Milda Sarketakis*
- *Margaret Stevens*
- *Estelle Smith*
(not present)





SHARING OUR PRECIOUS MEMORIES...

Kiosk President Mrs Mary Robson (left) and Mrs T McKellar serving in the Kiosk (1981/82).

WHY DID YOU BECOME AN RMH KIOSK VOLUNTEER?

I HAD RETIRED FROM SCHOOL TEACHING AND WAS READY TO DO SOME VOLUNTEER WORK. A FRIEND SUGGESTED WORKING AT THE KIOSK.

Elizabeth Neales, 79, volunteer 17 years

A friend (Pat McMillan), a former nurse at RMH, thought it time I started work as a volunteer in the kiosk. Pat started before me and when I had more spare time that was it.

Lesley Stevenson, 78, volunteer 35 years

A friend suggested it when I retired.

Shirley Henry, 72, volunteer 15 years

I love to be with the people, especially with the language. I can speak Greek and Italian.

Antigoni (Anna) Napolitano, 77, volunteer 20 years

Satisfaction in helping those who need it.

Leone Evans, 68, volunteer 28 years

I originally trained as a nurse with Melbourne School of Nursing with the vast majority of that time spent at RMH and also one year as Staff Sister at RMH. I wanted to keep contact with the hospital and the changes made so was interested to hear that volunteers were needed and applied for a position and was successful in 1995.

Helen Tassell, 72, volunteer 13½ years

I met Lesley at a party and she asked me to come into the kiosk which I did, for the next nineteen years.

Gwenda Shaw, 72, volunteer 19 years

I WAS A VOLUNTEER AT NOOSA SO WHEN I CAME DOWN HERE I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING, AS I WAS ON MY OWN. AND IT WAS A GOOD WAY TO HELP PEOPLE AND ALSO THEY WERE HELPING ME, AS I HAD LOST MY HUSBAND AT NOOSA AND I WAS ON MY OWN.

Isabella (Belle) Gribben, volunteer 12 years (two years at Essendon and District Memorial Hospital)

I RETIRED FROM WORK AT 75 YEARS AND I HAD TIME ON MY HANDS, AND THE KIOSK SEEMED A PLEASANT PLACE TO VOLUNTEER.

Ada Priestley, 86, volunteer 11 years

I met my friend Gwenda Shaw in Mt Waverley Shopping Centre. She asked me what I was doing in my spare time!! “This and that,” I said, so it came to pass that I rang Lesley and started at RMH Kiosk.

Gail Stevens, volunteer 18 months

WHAT WAS A TYPICAL DAY LIKE FOR YOU IN THE KIOSK?

I worked on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1 to 7pm and enjoyed every bit of it. I realise I was a small cog in a big wheel.

Leone Evans, 68, volunteer 28 years

Typical day — friendly, happy — most ladies were friendly and nice. Most days were fulfilling.

Shirley Henry, 72, volunteer 15 years

“MONDAY AFTERNOONS WERE MY TIMES I BECAME FRIENDLY WITH ALL THE MON MY TIME ON THE REGISTER, GETTING TO

Elizabeth Neales, 79, volunteer 17 years

Serving customers with a friendly smile, always being helpful, stocking up shelves, keeping the kiosk neat and tidy, taking flower orders, delivering flowers to the ward, helping at bookstall.

Anne-Marie Szmorag, 79, volunteer 18 years (including six years with Pacemaker Auxiliary) and former employee

EARLY MORNING START 8.30-9.00AM, WITH STAFF, PATIENTS AND VISITORS ALL COMING IN TO PURCHASE THE MORNING PAPERS. I WORKED AT THE CASH REGISTER WITH ONE BREAK AND FINISHING AT IPM. TWO OTHER VOLUNTEERS WERE ALSO HELPING AND SERVING CUSTOMERS. IT ALWAYS HAD A CHEERFUL ATMOSPHERE, WHICH CUSTOMERS AND STAFF ENJOYED.

Helen Tassell, 72, volunteer 13½ years

I just loved to come in each Wednesday and help Roma and Marg with the stock, etc, with Maureen's wonderful welcome to look forward to each time. The company and friendship was and still is very special.

Gail Stevens, volunteer 18 months

I loved it all, meeting new friends and helping people, Before that I had worked at the Essendon and District Memorial Hospital and it was closed down. I was given the orientation to work at the RMH and loved every moment of it.

Isabelle (Belle) Gribbin, volunteer 12 years (two years at Essendon and District Memorial Hospital)

AT THE KIOSK, SO OVER THE YEARS DAY VOLUNTEERS. I SPENT MOST OF KNOW ALL THE REGULAR CUSTOMERS.”

Receiving and stacking stock (Coca Cola, etc), refilling fridges, attending to clients and helping other volunteers.

Patrick Beard, 65, volunteer three years

Very rewarding and meeting people who had problems and I was a good listener. Also meeting our own ladies who volunteer. Our staff are a great lot of ladies.

Ada Priestley, 86, volunteer 11 years

WHAT WERE THE MOST POPULAR ITEMS AMONG PATIENTS, VISITORS AND STAFF?

Newspapers, chewing gum, chocolates, cards.

Patrick Beard, 65, volunteer three years

Drinks, lollies, papers and books, flowers, soft toys, novelties, batteries, boxes of chocolates.

Ada Priestley, 86, volunteer 11 years

Weekday – newspapers (especially with construction workers on site), magazines, confectionery for hospital staff and patients. Weekends – as above, plus toiletries (for emergency inpatients), flowers and balloons for visitors, and chocs and sweets.

Nonie Oppy, 78, volunteer 18 years
(including 8 years at Essendon and District Memorial Hospital)

Chocolates and water.

Leone Evans, 68, volunteer 28 years

DRINKS, CHOCOLATES, FLOWERS, CARDS AND GIFTS.

Isabella (Belle) Gribben, volunteer 12 years
(two years at Essendon and District Memorial Hospital)

Almost everything we stocked was popular. We tried to cater for basics (toiletries, etc) for patients – confectionery, drinks also, toys very popular.

Lesley Stevenson, 78, volunteer 35 years

A MEMORABLE MOMENT OR INCIDENT?

One very well dressed gentleman came in to buy something and when he walked out he had his suit jacket tucked into his pants and I had to go and tap him on the back to tell him. The ladies couldn't get over it. You got to know the regulars like one gentleman who used to bring his six shirts in every week to be dry cleaned, and having to put tags on all of them.

Isabella (Belle) Gribben, volunteer 12 years (two years at Essendon and District Memorial Hospital)

ASSISTING ALL PEOPLE WHO CAME TO THE KIOSK BUT ESPECIALLY THE SICK PATIENTS WHO NEEDED THAT BIT OF EXTRA CARE. THE MONDAY AFTERNOON GROUP WAS A VERY CLOSE KNIT GROUP, SO WE FOUND ANY EXCUSE WE COULD FOR A LITTLE CELEBRATION – CHRISTMAS, NEW YEAR, EASTER, BIRTHDAYS, ETC; ONE OF US BROUGHT SOME NIBBLES, ONE BROUGHT SOME GLASSES, AND THE THIRD SURREPTITIOUSLY BROUGHT IN A BOTTLE OF WINE – WE ALL ENJOYED THOSE OCCASIONS AND THE EVENING SHIFT FINISHED OFF ANYTHING THAT WAS LEFT OVER!

Elizabeth Neales, 79, volunteer 17 years

When the new foyer and kiosk was being built, Pat McMillan and I went to have a look around one Sunday after work. There was a door, which we opened and went through only to find it was locked when closed – we managed to get out through the back of the kiosk and had to climb a ladder up the wall to get out. We made it safely.

Lesley Stevenson, 78, volunteer 35 years

A MEMORABLE MOMENT OR INCIDENT?

Mrs Robson got an OBE the same day my father did.

Joy Hayden, 48, volunteer 18 years

None stand out but many fun times were had between customers and staff.

Helen Tassell, 72 years, volunteer 13½ years

When the new foyer and kiosk was being built, Pat McMillan and I went to have a look around one Sunday after work. There was a door, which we opened and went through only to find it was locked when closed — we managed to get out through the back of the kiosk and had to climb a ladder up the wall to get out. We made it safely.

Lesley Stevenson, 78, volunteer 35 years

Too numerous to even mention. I would not know where to start or finish. Every day had some ingredient that brought a laugh and a tear.

Shirley Bruhn, 74, volunteer 17 years

MAUREEN MCLEAN WOULD SEE THE LARGE NUMBER OF ORDERS FOR VALENTINE’S DAY FLOWERS EACH FEBRUARY AND COMPLAIN TONGUE-IN-CHEEK “NO ONE SENDS ME A VALENTINE.” SO ONE YEAR MY HUSBAND SENT HER A CARD FROM A “SECRET ADMIRER”. HE KEPT DOING IT FOR FIVE YEARS, AND MAUREEN WAS COMPLETELY STUMPED AS TO WHO WAS SENDING THEM. BUT WHEN MAUREEN WAS RECUPERATING AT RMH AFTER HAVING A HEART ATTACK IN THE KIOSK, MY HUSBAND FELT BAD AND THOUGHT SHE SHOULD KNOW WHO HAD BEEN SENDING THE CARDS. SO HE CONFESSED.

Gwenda Shaw, 72, volunteer 19 years

The day a man asked for cigarettes saying he had purchased some the day before from an old fat lady. Luckily I am not fat. He was hard to convince (that the kiosk did not sell cigarettes).

Ada Priestley, 86, volunteer 11 years

Lots of fun times with co-workers including Maureen (Kiosk Manager) and at times with customers — a great place to work!

Nonie Oppy, 78, volunteer 18 years (including 8 years at Essendon and District Memorial Hospital)

YOUR MOST REWARDING MOMENT?

I felt happy when I help people. If one of the other ladies can't understand, they ask for my help – I do good. You feel something inside; always help with people since I was born.

Antigoni (Anna) Napolitano, 77, volunteer 20 years

The kiosk was a lovely place to work in. Serving customers, helping people to find what they wanted, the friendship each of us formed, all the ladies and men we meet over the years, it was like a family – all were friendly and helpful. On the way home, I always felt it was a wonderful day and I did a good deed, and I honestly advise everyone to take up volunteer work. You get so much pleasure out of it, maybe one day I will be there again, that is my wish. My sincere thanks to all the nice people I worked with over the years and the staff from the Foundation. Best wishes to all of you.

Anne-Marie Szmorag, 79, volunteer 18 years (including six years with Pacemaker Auxiliary) and former employee

MEETING PEOPLE AND BEING INVOLVED AND WORKING WITH KIND AND CARING PEOPLE. ALSO, MAKING NICE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LADIES THAT YOU WORKED WITH AND YOU FELT THAT YOU WERE HELPING PEOPLE AS WELL AS BEING HELPED YOURSELF. I AM SO GLAD THAT I GAVE MY TIME BECAUSE I ENJOYED EVERY DAY THAT I WORKED THERE.

Isabella (Belle) Gribben, volunteer 12 years (two years at Essendon and District Memorial Hospital)

We had many country people who did not know their way around Melbourne who would come and ask for advice – where to find cheap accommodation, where to find a pharmacy, etc. It was a pleasure to be able to help people who were often bewildered or saddened by their hospital experiences. Another rewarding experience was getting to know Maureen McLean. Maureen has a gift that every one of us envies – the gift of getting on with people of all sorts. She was always ready to share a joke and coped marvellously with us all – and a large group of elderly ladies is not always easy to deal with!

Elizabeth Neales, 79, volunteer 17 years

FEELING YOU WERE
CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIETY
AND ALSO HELPING PEOPLE
WHO WERE STRESSED AND
UNHAPPY.

Shirley Henry, 72, volunteer 15 years

I have met so many nice ladies and so many people needing help from the kiosk ladies. It has been a pleasure.

Gwenda Shaw, 72, volunteer 19 years

YOUR MOST REWARDING MOMENT?

I’M GOING TO MISS THE CAMARADERIE BETWEEN THE GIRLS, AND TALKING TOGETHER. IT’S LOVELY BEING INVOLVED WITH THE PUBLIC. WE ALL LOOK AFTER ONE ANOTHER, IF ONE IS SICK THE OTHERS RING TO SEE HOW THEY ARE, OR FILL IN FOR YOU IF YOU ARE AWAY.”

Frances Willis, aged 92, volunteer 30 years

Assisting all people who came to the kiosk but especially the sick patients who needed that bit of extra care.

Patrick Beard, 65, volunteer three years

The laughs and the friendship in such a wonderful spot.

Gail Stevens, volunteer 18 months

The feeling you were helping the hospital raise money for vital equipment and the happy atmosphere created with staff to make a great working environment.

Helen Tassell, 72 years, volunteer 13½ years

Being able to give pleasure to the people who came to the kiosk. The gratitude of these people when we or myself took it upon one’s self to look a little deeper at people and knowing that a few extra minutes’ attention meant a great deal to them.

Shirley Bruhn, 74, volunteer 17 years

MEETING PEOPLE AND BEING INVOLVED AND WORKING WITH KIND AND CARING PEOPLE. ALSO, MAKING NICE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LADIES THAT YOU WORKED WITH AND YOU FELT THAT YOU WERE HELPING PEOPLE AS WELL AS BEING HELPED YOURSELF. I AM SO GLAD THAT I GAVE MY TIME BECAUSE I ENJOYED EVERY DAY THAT I WORKED THERE.

Isabella (Belle) Gribben, volunteer 12 years
(two years at Essendon and District Memorial Hospital)

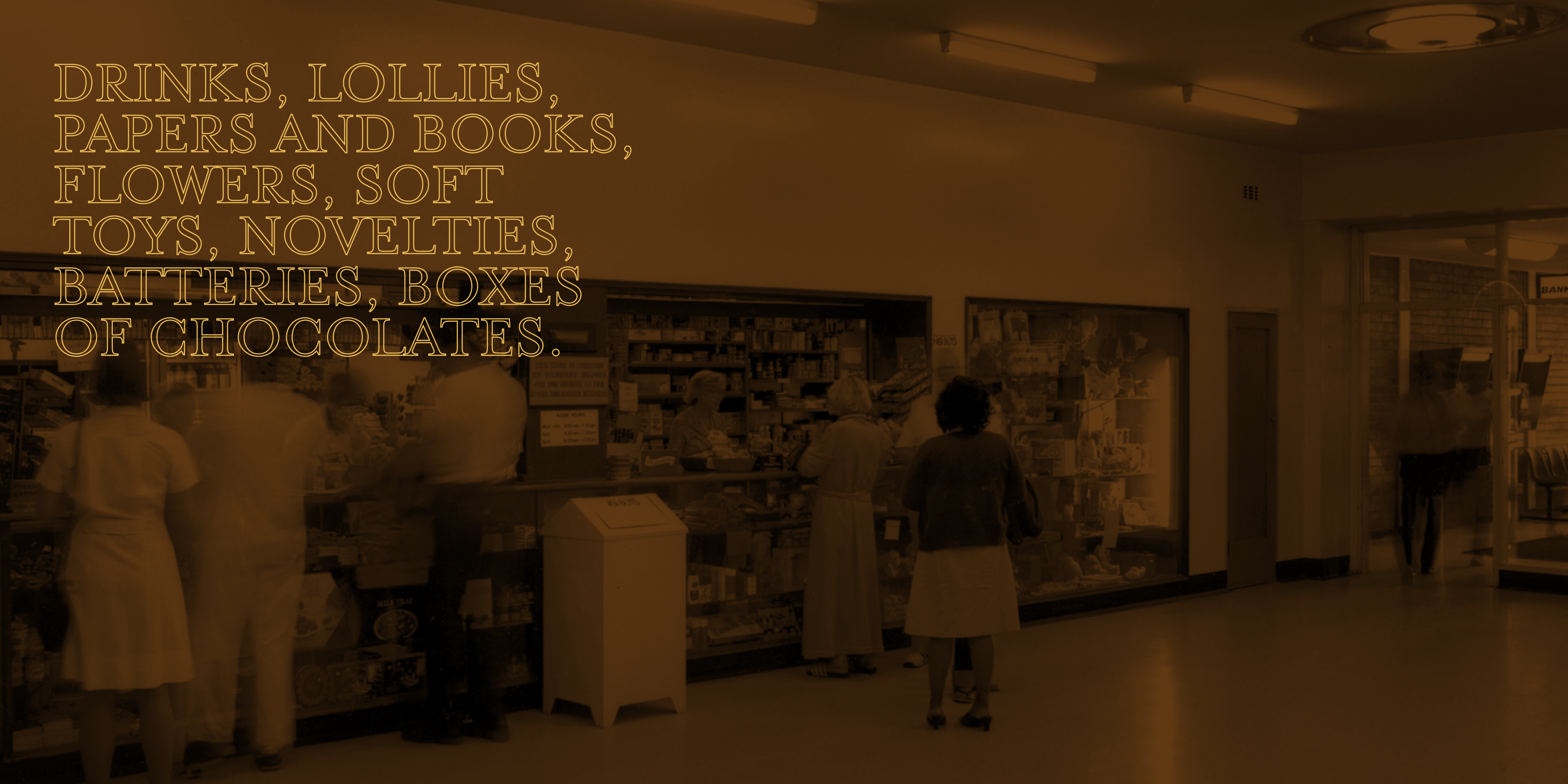
Working with the same rostered team on different days – we became friends and shared confidences and happy events, plus sometimes not-so-happy events. But we were always there for each other. For me – I’ll miss being there with my friends and the commitment which becomes part of your life. And so life will go on – and on a different level with different ambitions – which I’ll embrace. Here’s to the future!!

Nonie Oppy, 78, volunteer 18 years
(including 8 years at Essendon and District Memorial Hospital)

I’ve always thoroughly enjoyed it. I was employed here for 19 years two months, until the kiosk closed. I got on with staff and volunteer ladies all round.

Maureen McLean, kiosk manager

DRINKS, LOLLIES,
PAPERS AND BOOKS,
FLOWERS, SOFT
TOYS, NOVELTIES,
BATTERIES, BOXES
OF CHOCOLATES.






Thank you

to the Volunteers of the Kiosk Auxiliary
of The Royal Melbourne Hospital

We wish to thank the committee of the
RMH Kiosk Auxiliary, who kindly donated
the sum of \$68,500 to purchase Diagnostic
Equipment for our Sleep and Respiratory
Laboratories and a Ventilator for our
Respiratory Care Unit in Ward 5SW.



The RMH Kiosk closed for business in 2008, after 85 years of
continuous service to The Royal Melbourne Hospital. The Kiosk
was staffed by volunteers who gave their time and energy to
serve patients, visitors and staff of the hospital and to raise funds
for medical equipment. The volunteers raised a total of three
million dollars. This was their final donation. We will miss their
good nature, their smiles and above all, their example.

 The Royal
Melbourne Hospital

*RMH's Respiratory and Sleep Disorders Medicine
Department presented a thank you poster to the
RMH Kiosk Auxiliary volunteers, 2009*

Thanks for the chocolate frogs and smiles
Rebecca

THANK YOU LADIES
THAT HAVE DONE SO MUCH FOR ME
YOU HAVE BEEN A GREAT SUPPORT
THANK YOU
GOOD LUCK & THANKS
BENEDICT

To the Volunteers & Staff of the kiosk
THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES
AND GREAT HELP SERVICE & ASSISTANCE
JUDY ICU
good luck
and keep in touch!

Best wishes
Elaine

Thank you for all the time
effort you put in. Much
appreciated, many times
Thanks to everyone
Ranjit Phal

Thank-you for your decades of service to the
Hospital. We will miss coming down for our papers in the mornings
& for the Minties & chocolate frogs that get us through the afternoons.
You will ALL be genuinely missed by all of your friends
in Radiology. With Thanks & love

Thank you for all the hard work
it's all done. Tony E.

A very big thank you from
Patrick in Radiology trolley bay

Thanks for all your
hard work and care
Good luck ladies
Patrick
Who am I going
to by snakes off
now. Mick

Best wishes
Judy Lees

Thank you for
a fantastic service
over all the years!
Dr J. B. Wren (Radiology)

Thank you for all your
hard years of work
Michelle Eudey
Stuart Henry
(Radiology)

Thanks heaps
Pam & Jim

Thank you lots
Sue Adams

Thank you very
much
Steve Burr

Thank you for all
your great work!
Joy Sain

Thank you
for always
being friendly
Rebecca +
Robert
Jacqueline Lim



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