

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

CHS 104

**MINISTERING CHILDREN'S LEAGUE OF TASMANIA
COLLECTION**

Children's Services, Tasmania

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INTRODUCTION

Lady Alice Braddon, wife of Sir Edward Braddon, Tasmanian Premier 1894-1899, was instrumental in establishing the Tasmanian branch of the Ministering Children's League. The League was founded in England in 1885 and branches were established around the world. The only rule of the League was that every member was asked to try to do at least one kind act every day.

According to an early constitution of the Ministering Children's League (Northern Tasmania) and Ministering League, two of its objects were to help in the formation of an unselfish character and to provide and maintain institutions for charitable purposes.

Established under the auspices of the Ministering Children's League (MCL), a convalescent home at Evandale was opened by the Mayoress of Launceston, Mrs F K Fairthorn on 2 November 1901. Two hundred and forty-eight children were admitted at Evandale before the home moved to "Chegworth", St Leonards, where it opened on 7 September 1906.

Regulations for admitting children to the Convalescent Home at St Leonards stated that children could be sent by any Branch or by an associate of the MCL through a Branch - girls between the ages of four and 15 and boys between four and 10. Not more than two children from a district or town could be received at one time and children could stay a fortnight, but in exceptional cases longer if necessary. Subscribers of one guinea or more annually were entitled to nominate for admission one child for a fortnight.

Walch's *Tasmanian Almanac* for 1906 lists 16 branches of the League in towns and suburbs: Lady Edeline Strickland, wife of Sir Gerald Strickland, Governor of Tasmania 1904-1909, was patroness of the Hobart branch of the League and Lady Braddon was the Launceston president. Although she lived in England for many years, Lady Braddon took a keen interest in the League until her death c 1943.

In 1929 a Northern Country Branch was established and where a centre had 15 members a sub-branch was formed: Dilston became the first sub-branch. The Home also had strong support from auxiliaries in the north-west, north-east and junior auxiliaries were formed in schools, the most active being at Broadland House.

Generations of sick children were restored to health at the home. In addition to convalescent children, the home took children whose parents were sick and had no one to look after them.

Rising costs and lack of funds caused the home to be closed and the two-storey brick building, set on two acres overlooking the North Esk River, was sold in 1953. Conducted by voluntary workers and relying on donations, the home had never received government assistance. Proceeds from the sale of the house were put in trust and League members distributed the funds to organisations that assisted children.

In 1979 the new constitution of the Ministering Children's League of Tasmania with headquarters in Launceston stated that the objects of the League were to help sick and needy children and to assist charitable institutions for children in Tasmania. The

management of the League was vested in a council consisting of not less than nine members and membership was by invitation at the discretion of the council. The council met at least annually to distribute the interest on money invested by the three trustees, who were ex-officio members of the council.

With membership declining, the League decided to wind up in 2005. Remaining funds were donated to the Sunshine Association of Tasmania, which had similar aims. The money from the League was to go towards scholarships for students continuing studies beyond grade 10.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in March 2006.

1. Legal Records

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|-----|--|------------|
| 1/1 | Ministering Children's League, copy of Declaration of Trust of property at St Leonards, with document re trustees dated 1951 | 1907, 1951 |
| 1/2 | Ministering Children's League (Northern Tasmania) and Ministering League, Constitution | nd |
| 1/3 | Ministering Children's League of Tasmania, Constitution (annotated by hand that it was adopted at the annual meeting on 15/3/1979, signed by Trustee P M Hart, President D Hart and Secretary Judith C Hart) | 1979 |
| 1/4 | Ministering Children's League, Northern Tasmania, Regulations | nd |

2. Minutes of Meetings

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| 2/1 | Ministering Children's League, minute book of council and annual meetings (includes annual reports 1934-1952) | 1934-1953 |
| 2/2 | Minute book of committee monthly and quarterly meetings (includes annual report 1953, 1953-55) | 1951-1958 |
| 2/3 | Minute book of committee and annual meetings (includes annual reports 1955/1956-1965, 1989, 1997-2005) | 1955-2005 |

3. Annual Reports

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| 3/1 | Ministering Children's League, annual reports and financial statements, 1962, 1967-1996 See also 2/1-2/3 | 1962-1996 |
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4. Financial Statements

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| 4/1 | Ministering Children's League, financial statements, 1931-1937, 1939-1941, 1943, 1946-1952, 1954-1966, 1997, 1998, 2003-2005 | 1931-2005 |
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5. Correspondence

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| 5/1 | Ministering Children's League, correspondence, 1946, 1951, 1953-1968 | 1946-1968 |
| 5/2 | Correspondence, 1969-1976, 1978-1984 | 1969-1984 |

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| 5/3 | Correspondence | 1985-1994 |
| 5/4 | Correspondence | 1996-2006 |
| 5/5 | Undated correspondence | nd |

6. Newspaper Cuttings

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| 6/1 | Ministering Children's League, newspaper cuttings, chiefly from the <i>Examiner</i> Oversize item | 1930-2005, nd |
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7. Miscellaneous Items

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| 7/1 | Ministering Children's League, England, London booklet, lacking cover, 1915; Mrs V Ransom's associate membership card, 1929; Mary Ransom's membership card for Ministering League; <i>M.C.L. Magazine</i> , Easter 1931; member's certificate; Hymn/Song of the Ministering Children's League, nd; 'For your Information', typescript by Una G Burrows, nd | 1915-1931, nd |
| 7/2 | Christmas cards from Lady Braddon | 1933, 1934 |
| 7/3 | <i>Sea Breezes</i> , the Ministering Children's League Magazine, Victoria, 1948, 1951 | 1948, 1951 |
| 7/4 | Ministering Children's League, certificates of appreciation from Asthma Camps of Tasmania, 1982; CanTeen, 1992; Teenage Adventure Camps-Tasmania, 1993; New Horizons Club, 2000 | 1982-2000 |
| 7/5 | 'A Brief History of the Ministering Children's League, 1901-2001', manuscript | 2001 |
| 7/6 | [Ministering Children's League], The Society's Prayer, typed and handwritten copy | nd |
| 7/7 | Order of funeral service for Barbara Alcock, 2000; Percy (Mac) Hart, 2003 | 2000, 2003 |
| 7/8 | Sunshine Association of Tasmania, Ministering Children's Fund Scholarship certificate presented to Suzanne Brown | nd |

8. Ephemera

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| 8/1 | Ministering Children's League of Tasmania, notice of meeting card | nd |
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| 8/2 | Ministering Children's League of Tasmania, letterhead | nd |
| 8/3 | Ministering Children's League of Tasmania, invitations to luncheons | 1992-2001, nd |

9. Photographs

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| 9/1 | Ministering Children's League of Tasmania, photographs taken at luncheons | 2001-2006 |
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