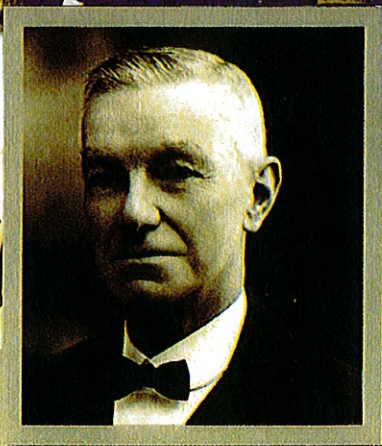




Roslyn Hall Babies Home, circa 1940s



Founder, George Edward Ardill

COMMENCEMENT

As a result of an encounter with a woman in need who gave her address as the graveyard in Devonshire Street, George Edward Ardill, who was a printer and gospel preacher, opened a Women's Refuge in Sussex Street Sydney in 1882 known as the Home of Hope. From this simple event the activities of the Sydney Rescue Work (Integricare) was born.

In successive years, Ardill commenced the Blue Ribbon Gospel Army, a discharged Prisoners Mission, an Open All Night Refuge (mainly for women and children), A Society for Providing Homes for Neglected and Needy Children, Our Children's Home at Liverpool, the South Sydney Women's Hospital with a training school for Nurses and the Bethesda Home for Waiting Mothers.

In 1890, an unincorporated association called the Sydney Rescue Work Society was formed to "take over, continue and strengthen the Rescue Work for seven years usefully and beneficially carried on by Mr G.E. Ardill and his philanthropic co-workers."

The first President of the Society was the Chief Justice of New South Wales, Sir Frederick Darley. Others associated with the commencement of the Society were the Honorable Ebenezer Vickerey MLC, and Alderman John Harris who were Vice Presidents, Rev A.J. Clarke and Joseph Palmer.

It was agreed that the Society should "be undenominational but distinctly Christian in character, founded upon the principles and teachings of the New Testament."

serving Sydney's families for 125 years



First offices of the Society, Commonwealth Street, Darlinghurst

By 1911 the following agencies were actively serving the community under the Society's control:

- South Sydney Women's Hospital.
- Bethesda Home for Waiting Mothers.
- Training School for Midwifery Nurses.
- Adoption Agency.
- A Day Nursery and Creche in the City.
- Open All Night Refuge for Women.
- Jubilee Home for working and unemployed women and for young women coming to the city from the country.
- Roslyn Hall Babies Home – Rockdale.
- Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children with homes at Camden and Liverpool.
- A general relief agency that dispensed money and clothes as urgent help to the needy.

By 1930 the fiftieth Annual Report (1932) indicates that in addition to the above activities, the South Sydney Womens Hospital had expanded its services to provide a District Nursing Service. Several Mission Halls had been opened and a Christian Workers Literature Depot had been



Meals for homeless persons

added. George Ardill was active in social advocacy and his voice was often raised on behalf of the poor, needy and outcast of the city but he had no time for philanderers or miscreants.

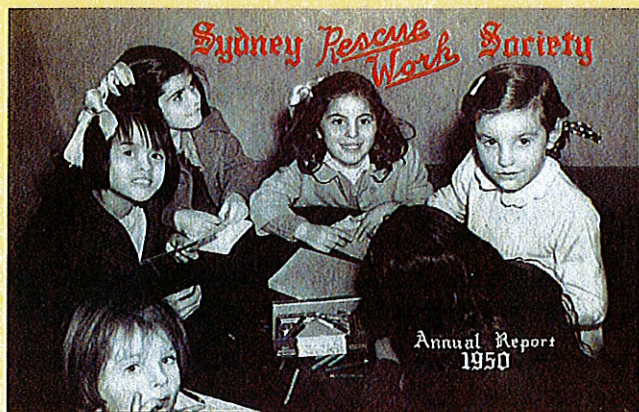
The Society's activities continued through periods of war, depression and prosperity with little or no financial assistance from State or Federal Governments.

In 1934 Ardill was awarded the M.B.E. for services to the community. He retired as Director of the Society in 1943 at the age of 86 years having served as Director for a period of sixty-one years. He died in 1945.

He was succeeded as Superintendent by Rev. Dr Harold Whitmore Dart, B.A. a Baptist Minister then serving the North Sydney (now Northside) Church. The Society was incorporated under the Companies Act in 1948 and the South Sydney Women's Hospital became a Third Schedule Hospital under the Hospitals Commission. This relieved the Society of the immense financial burden of hospital activities. Dr Dart commenced the rebuilding of the entire 145 Commonwealth Street premises and he also endeavoured to remunerate staff more adequately than in the past. Dr Dart concluded his service in 1956 and was subsequently awarded an OBE for Service to the Community. It was during this time that a Missioner was employed to head up the evangelistic side of the work.

Activities of the Society continued under Mr Thomas Muirhead who had served the Society for six years previous as Bookkeeper. Renovations to the Commonwealth Street Building were completed providing more adequate facilities for the Mission to homeless men and women and a Hostel for Business girls. Mr Muirhead retired in 1966 having served the Society for a total of fifteen years.

Two short superintendencies followed. Mr Jim McCallum came to the Society after fourteen years as Superintendent





Members of the South Sydney Women's Hospital, August 1917

of the Newcastle City Mission. He died in office in May 1968 having developed the outreach aspects of the work. After a brief period as Superintendent, Rev J. Warwick Lindsay returned to church work at the end of 1970.

At the beginning of the 1970's the principal activities of the Society were:

- The Commonwealth Street Mission providing food, shelter and clothing for homeless and destitute men and women.
- Roslyn Hall Children's Home providing residential care for twenty children.
- Bethesda Home for Unmarried Mothers providing accommodation and support for single pregnant girls.
- South Sydney Womens Hospital which whilst providing general hospital facilities placed special emphasis on the care of the unmarried mother.
- An adoption agency.
- Hostel for Business Girls.
- Department of Evangelism.

CHANGE

With the approach of its 90th Anniversary the Board of Management became increasingly aware of the need for change. With changes taking place in society questions were raised about the continuing relevance of its services. Many of the properties were in need of upgrading and the cost of these services was increasing.

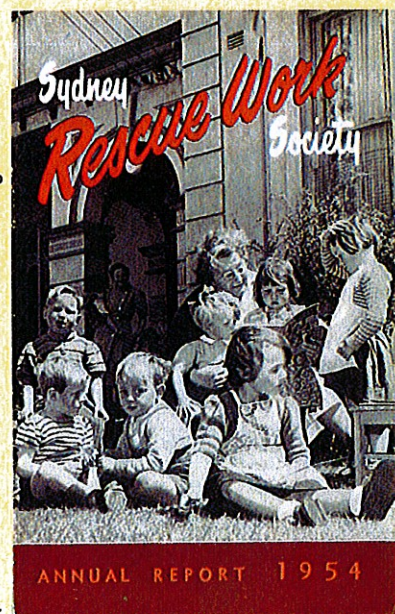
Up to this point the Society had, for the most part, depended for finance on voluntary contributions from interested people but with the expansion of churches and local government into social services finance from traditional avenues of support diminished.

This imposed severe constraints upon the Society for the maintenance and development of its services.

The Rev Bruce Thornton became Superintendent in 1971 and sought to change the direction of the Society. Over the next few years the Society's services were evaluated as to their need, the standard of service provided and their future resourcing. During this period several short term projects were commenced and in 1975 a decision was taken to commence a pilot project in the field of day care for children which was becoming an increasing community need and for which government funding was available.

Opportunities in this area of work expanded so that over the next few years a network of child care services was established. By its Centenary in 1982 the Society had been transformed from a multi-service agency providing a range of activities for a broad cross section of the community to one of specialisation in the child care industry. During this developmental period the Society became an acknowledged leader in this field so that, with the provision of consultancy and other services to Councils and other community groups and inputs into government policy its public profile was enhanced. Several other ancillary projects were commenced during this period but these were of short term duration.

With the disposal and redevelopment of its properties the Society was able to structure an investment portfolio to provide some basic financial support. In 1976 the Society reconnected with





Mission and Relief Work, 1950s



Prison Cell Ministry, circa 1940s

the Society for Providing Services for Neglected and Needy Children founded by George Edward Ardill which had operated independently since 1945. Assistance in the development of their work was provided and a partnership in service has operated over the past thirty years. Rev Bruce Thornton concluded his service in 1989 having served for eighteen years.

CONSOLIDATION

After an interim period of leadership by Rev David Warner, Mr Jim Robinson became Chief Executive Officer in 1990. This was a period when the Child Care industry was growing rapidly and becoming increasingly regulated by Governments. A system of accreditation was introduced by governments and parent subsidies were made available to private operators resulting in a rapid expansion of child care services. Jim Robinson brought to his task the skills and insights of his previous work with the NSW Department of Community Services which he applied to the maintenance and development of the services. During this period property upgrading was continued and the properties were maintained at a high standard.

In addition an All Skills "Work for the Dole" program was initiated which provided employment training for a considerable number of people. Although government funded the Society contributed significantly to this program both in personnel and finance.

During this period also the Society changed its name to Communicare Sydney. Jim Robinson concluded his service in June 2003 and the Rev Bruce Thornton acted as interim Chief Executive Officer until Mr Charles Wilson commenced in this role in February 2005.

Mr Charles Wilson conducted a complete review and updated all policies within the organisation and implemented new

accountability measures across the organization. During this period the St George Early Years program commenced.

THE FUTURE

When the Society was formed it was strongly innovative, guided by a strong faith in God. George Ardill set out about meeting needs as he saw them and speaking up for the poor. Many of the activities the Society was involved in were firsts in the sense that they filled needs in society that others and the Government were not fulfilling. It was also involved in things that the Government wanted done and for which Government support was available.

Recently Integricare has become a quality children's services provider but some of its former voice in speaking up for those more needy in society has been lost.

The Board wants Integricare to return to its roots of meeting the needs of the disadvantaged within the community and has started a strategic planning process to ensure that this occurs in the future.

A lot has been achieved in Integricare's history, simply because a Christian business man believed that he was called by God to help meet the needs of the poor within society. With God's help the vision can be continued into the future. We thank God for the opportunity of serving families.

In late 2010 Communicare Sydney changed its name to Integricare.