

# 50 YEARS OF DISCOVERY

CHILDREN'S MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

During the earlier part of the twentieth century some two children in every 100 died from diseases that are now extremely rare. In 1958 the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children (RAHC) set up a committee to establish a Children's Medical Research Foundation (CMRF). This was supported on 19 June 1958 at a citizens' meeting held at the Sydney Town Hall and present were the Governor of NSW and the Lord Mayor of Sydney.

That year a major appeal was launched, supported by the *Sydney Morning Herald* and Channel 7 via a 27-hour telethon, which raised significant funds and publicised the aims and ambitions of the Foundation.

The National Museum of Australia (NMA) will host a small exhibition, *50 Years of Discovery*, to celebrate the achievements of the CMRF, which was renamed the Children's Medical Research Institute (CMRI) in 1992. *50 Years of Discovery* opens in the Museum's Hall on 12 March 2008.

The development of fundraising branches in suburban and country areas has been one of the great strengths of the CMRI and is still very much part of the success story.

In Canberra, a group of enthusiastic young mothers first met in 1959, and in 1960 the Canberra Auxiliary was formed in an endeavour to raise £10,000 in a one year 'all-out' drive. Their efforts yielded £14,000 and culminated in the first 'door knock' Canberra had experienced. The population of Canberra at that time was 48,000.<sup>1</sup>

Proceeds from Canberra and its other thirty-two sister Committees contribute to the exceptional work by the scientists of this independent Institution, committed to unlocking the mysteries of disease. One in twenty children born in Australia suffers from some kind of chronic disease or congenital abnormality like cleft palate, muscular dystrophy, epilepsy and cancer.

CMRI has benefited from its choice of directors; Sir Lorimer Dods, Dr John Harley, Dr Wallace Grigor (Acting), Professor Peter Rowe and Professor Roger Reddel, who have all ensured the Institute has moved from strength to strength.

The CMRI engenders long-term ongoing support from many, but this is perhaps best evidenced by the considerable contribution of James Fairfax who served on the very first 1959 general committee. He has been a splendid benefactor and is still vitally interested in the further success of the Institute.

The Institute has a charming link to the National Museum of Australia.

In her Last Will and Testament the philanthropic Clarice Vivien Faithfull Anderson made the generous provision of \$837,736 to the CMRI, a large amount in 1979. She also willed a bronze sculpture of her mother Lillian Frances Faithfull Anderson by Lyndon Dadswell; 'with the hope that the Foundation may find an appropriate place for it, as the work of a leading sculptor and as a true and faithful portrayal of 'Loving Motherhood' and,



Vivien Faithfull Anderson.

where it could be seen by children passing by.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps Clarice Vivien's gesture was prompted by the work of her uncle, William Percy Faithfull, who gave generously to the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children. From 1907 to 1919 he was Vice President of the Board and the Faithfull Ward was named in his honour.

Clarice Vivien Faithfull Anderson, her mother Lillian Frances Faithfull Anderson, and uncle William Percy Faithfull are the forebears of the Maple-Brown family from *Springfield* near Goulburn.

Philanthropy must be part of this family's values as the National Museum has been the grateful recipient of the *Springfield* Collection, donated by the Maple-Brown family.

This Faithfull Anderson sculpture is part of the *50 Years of Discovery* exhibition. As a large proportion of visitors to the Museum are children, Clarice's wish that 'it could be seen by children passing by' will be further fulfilled. Hopefully you, the reader of this article, will also be able to visit the Museum, learn of the wonderful work of the CMRI and enjoy Lyndon Dadswell's portrayal of 'loving motherhood'.

The CMRI is very grateful to the Director and the staff of the National Museum for all their support and for staging the exhibition.

**Carolyn Forster OAM**  
Vice President  
Children's Medical Research  
Institute



Some members of the Canberra Committee of CMRI. Photo: Hilary Wardhaugh

- 1 *A History of the Early Years of the Children's Medical Research Foundation* by Barbara McPhillamy
- 2 Last Will and Testament of Clarice Vivien Faithfull Anderson.