

HISTORY OF THE *Queensland Ambulance*

Laidley

Towards the close of 1909 the Ipswich QATB Committee established an honorary Centre in Laidley. The Officer-in-Charge was the local Station-master Mr A.E.W. Maxwell. The plant consisted of a litter.

In the first year of operations, the longest trip with the hand-pushed litter was 25.7 kilometres to Lochrose and return. Honorary Bearer Maxwell had left at 5 a.m. and returned to Laidley at 10.30 a.m. Mr Maxwell served on the honorary staff for a period of ten years.

On 5 July 1916, this Honorary Centre was converted to a Sub-Centre to Ipswich and Bearer G.W. Scriven was appointed Officer-in-Charge with the rank of Deputy Superintendent. In his first year of service Mr Scriven was assisted by Honorary Bearers A.E.W. Maxwell and C.F. Wyatt.

The plant sent up from Ipswich consisted of one horse and sulky, with attachment for towing the litter, spring-clipped harness, etc., one litter with hood complete, and one collapsible stretcher. The plant was housed in a building in Orton Street erected in 1917 next to the officer's residence.

The first motor ambulance vehicle in Laidley was put into service in 1919.

During the financial year 1920-21 a local ambulance committee was formed in an endeavour to make the Laidley service self-supporting.

Laidley became an independent Centre in July 1921 and Deputy Superintendent Scriven was appointed Superintendent and Secretary. The Committee consisted of R. Dunn (Chairperson), D. McPherson (Hon Treasurer), T. McGrath, A.H. Wright, A. Schlect, A. McAllister and T.L. Moon. Mr A.H. Wright became the Centre's first representative on the State Executive Committee.

Collapsible stretchers for public use were placed at the Forest Hill and Gatton Railway Stations. Ladies Committees were formed at Laidley and Forest Hill and their members were very active in organising fundraising functions.

In 1935 the institution suffered a great loss in the unfortunate death of Mr R. Dunn who was not only a foundation member of the Committee, but also the foundation Chairperson. Mr A.H. Wright was then appointed to the office of Chairperson.

Superintendent Scriven's service terminated in May 1939 and he was succeeded by Superintendent J.A. (Jim) Powell of the Charters Towers Centre.

On 8 June 1942, a Sub-Centre was opened at Gatton with Ambulance Officer F. Gillam in charge. This Sub-Centre was closed in October 1943, when the Minister for Health and Home Affairs sanctioned the opening of a self-governing Centre at Gatton.

A Building Fund was opened in August 1943 for the purpose of erecting more suitable and up-to-date premises.

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In 1945 the Committee decided to purchase the J.C. Nielsen building at the corner of Railway and Patrick Streets and convert it into a Centre building and Superintendent's residence.



Centre building 1945

Superintendent Powell tendered his resignation on 31 July 1945, to commence duty as a bearer attached to the Brisbane Centre. Senior Bearer Dave Tucker, Officer in-Charge of Sarina Sub-Centre, was appointed to fill the vacancy and commenced duty at Laidley on 14 August 1945.

Superintendent Tucker tendered his resignation in May 1952 and was succeeded by Senior Bearer Peter Denton of the Dalby Centre. Peter Denton occupied the position of Superintendent until 1976, when a former bearer Mr Chas. Fixter was appointed in his stead.

Whilst it was imposing, the building had a lot of disadvantages. It did not have much garage space and the residential quarters were very inadequate. The Committee commenced raising funds for new premises resulting in the present building and Superintendent's residence being erected on the site of the former building. The new Centre building was officially opened on 3 March 1979.

Superintendent Fixter resigned in 1984 and was followed by Superintendent Len Price. Len Price retired in October 1990 and the present Superintendent Mr Trevor Skinner was appointed to the vacant position.

Since the establishment of the self-governing Centre at Laidley the following people have filled the position of Chairperson of the Committee:

1921 – 1935	R. Dunn
1935 – 1944	A.H. Wright
1944 – 1948	T. McGrath
1948 – 1950	E.H. Reilly
1950 – 1957	W.T. Adams
1957 – 1958	W.J. Elliott
1958 – 1967	Dr P. Hutton
1967 – 1970	M.K. Hooper
Present occupant Chairperson	Mr V.F. Scheiwe