

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0078

Bush, Muriel Evelyn (Merle E)

(1897 - 1981)

Born 9 March, 1897, Bairnsdale Victoria Australia

Died 1 January, 1981

Occupation Community worker

Summary

Merle Bush devoted over 50 years of her life to the Victoria Guide Movement. During that time she developed training programs for leaders in Victoria and interstate. In the New Year's Honours List for 1956, Bush was appointed an Officer of the British Empire (Civil) for her services to the Girl Guide Movement.

Details

Always known as Merle E Bush, she was named on her birth certificate as Muriel Evelyn Bush.

Merle grew up with very good memories of life in the early days of Victoria, as both her grandfathers had 'Produce Stores' which supplied vast areas in the state of Victoria. Her paternal grandfather's store was in Bendigo and from there he supplied goods from Northern Victoria and Southern Riverina, using Paddle Steamers along the Murray from Echuca. On the other hand her maternal grandfather's store was situated in Bairnsdale and with the aid of a steam ship, which he built himself, called the J. C. D. he traded through the Gippsland Lakes and coastal ports to Melbourne.

Bush was educated at Girton, a Church of England Grammar School, where in 1915 she became the school's Head Prefect.

Her involvement with the Girl Guide movement lasted nearly 60 years. She helped establish and was the first Guide Leader of the 1st Bendigo Guide Company. Later Bush organized Guide rallies to see Lord and Lady Baden Powell during their visits to the State of Victoria, as well as developing Camping and Training programmes.

Acting State Secretary for eight years, Bush was awarded the Chief Guide's Diploma for Training (the only one to be awarded in Australia) as well as becoming a life member of the State Council of the Victorian Girl Guide Association during the 1940s.

Following her death in 1981 a new Trefoil Guild was formed in Bendigo and called the Merle Bush T.G. It was registered on June 18, 1981.

(Source: information supplied by Guides Victoria archives)

Events

1923 - 1923

Gained the Campers Licence

1923 - 1923

Honorary Secretary for Bendigo Local Association

1925 - 1925

Attended the first All Australian Camp for Leaders

1925 - 1925

Appointed the Head of Brownies in Victoria

1926 - 1926

Appointed the first Camping Advisor for Victoria

1926 - 1926

Appointed the first Training Advisor for Victoria

1926 - 1926

Instituted training by correspondence for country Leaders

1927 - 1927

First Ranger Captain of 1st Bendigo Ranger Company

1927 - 1927

Visited Queensland as an experienced Trainer and gained further training qualification (Red Cord) for service beyond her own State

1930 - 1930

Organized a Rally for guides to get together and meet the Chief's – Lord and Lady Baden Powell during this visit to Australia

1930 - 1930

Awarded the Medal of Merit – presented by the world Chief Guide, Lady Baden Powell

1935 - 1935

Organized a rally for the Guides of the time to see Lord and Lady Baden Powell during their visit to the State of Victoria

1939 - 1946

Accepted position of Acting State Secretary for 3 months (lasted for 8 years)

1940 - 1940

Worked with the other States particularly South Australia and Queensland to develop Camping and Training programmes

1940 - 1940

Life Member of the State Council of the Victorian Girl Guide Association

1956 - 1956

Honoured by Her Majesty the Queen with the Order of the British Empire. Presented with her award at Buckingham Palace.

1915 - 1915

Head Prefect, Church of England Grammar School, Girton

1970 - 1970

Born: daughter of Samuel Albert and Nina Marie (nee Dahlsen) Bush

1981 - 1981

Died

1945 - 1945

Visited South Australia to help reorganise that State's Training Department

1945 - 1945

An organiser and assessor of the first Guide International Service (Australian) Test prior to the women being selected to work with the displaced people in Europe and Malaysia

1947 - 1947

Awarded Chief Guide's Diploma for Training (the first to ever be awarded in Australia)

1948 - 1948

Honorary Secretary at the first Federal Trainers Conference

1922 - 1922

Founded Guiding in Bendigo

1922 - 1922

First Guide Leader of 1st Bendigo Guide Company

1923 - 1923

Nominated for special leadership training at the First Victorian Training Week

1924 - 1924

First Brownie Leader of 1st Bendigo Brownie Pack

1924 - 1924

Gained first Training Diploma (Blue Cord)

2001 - 2001

Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

1923 - 1923

District Secretary

Published resources**Resource**

Victorian Women's Roll of Honour: Women Shaping the Nation, 2001,
<https://herplacemuseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2001-Honour-Roll-Booklet.pdf>

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition

Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html>

Author Details

Anne Heywood

Created 16 August 2002

Last modified 12 September 2017

Digital resources



Title: Merle Bush

Type: Image

Date: 3 May, 2023