

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0579

Osborne, Ethel Elizabeth

(1882 - 1968)

Born	18820130, Armley, Leeds Yorkshire England
-------------	---

Died	19681203, East Melbourne Victoria Australia
-------------	---

Occupation	Medical practitioner
-------------------	----------------------

Summary

Ethel Osborne and her husband William, who had been appointed professor of physiology and histology at the University of Melbourne, migrated to Australia in 1904. Osborne, a foundation member of The Catalysts, visited the Lyceum Club while travelling through London. At the inaugural meeting of the Lyceum Club in Melbourne she was elected vice-president. Back in England during World War I Osborne worked with the British Ministry of Munitions of War. Here she conducted investigations for the Health of Munition Workers' Committee and the Industrial Fatigue Research Board. Upon her return to Melbourne she was invited to report to the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration on the conditions of employment of women workers in the clothing industry, for a case which won some workers a 44 hour week. Osborne then studied medicine at the University of Melbourne, practising at the Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Children, the (Royal) Melbourne Hospital and privately. Osborne became a foundation member of the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy council, serving as treasurer, vice-president and president. When the college's new premises were opened in 1927, its hall was named after her. Before retiring, in 1938, Osborne represented Australia at the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference (Honolulu 1928 and 1930), attended the Congress on Industrial Accidents and Diseases (Geneva) the International Congress of Industrial Relations (Amsterdam), the Disarmament Conference (Paris) and investigated employment problems in Yorkshire.

Events

1931 - 1931

Appointed substitute delegate to the League of Nations assembly

1937 - 1937

Attended four public health congresses in England and an international congress on cancer research in Brussels

1912 - 1912

Attended inaugural meeting and elected vice-president of the Lyceum Club, Melbourne

1931 - 1931

Attended the Congress on Industrial Accidents and Diseases (Geneva), the International Congress on Industrial Relations (Amsterdam), the Disarmament Conference (Paris), and investigated employment problems in Yorkshire

1925 - 1925

Commonwealth delegate to the international congress on industrial accidents and diseases, Amsterdam

1928 - 1928

Commonwealth delegate to the international congress on industrial accidents and diseases, Budapest

1910 - 1910

Foundation member of The Catalysts

1912 - 1937

Foundation member of the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy Council

1923 - 1923

Graduated MB BS from the University of Melbourne

1931 - 1931

Graduated with a Diploma of Public Health from the University of Melbourne

2008 - 2008

Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

1919 - 1919

Invited to report to the Australian Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration on the conditions of employment of women workers in the clothing industry

1903 - 1903

Married William Osborne at Armley Church of England and they were to have four children

1932 - 1932

Medical locum in England and substitute delegate to the League of Nations assembly

1901 - 1901

Obtained BSc. from Leeds University

1915 - 1917

President of the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy Council

1919 - 1929

President of the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy Council

1930 - 1930

Programme secretary and liaison officer for the League of Nations and the International Labour Office at the second Pan-Pacific Women's Conference, Honolulu

1924 - 1924

Published her report on the health of female workers in the printing and allied trades, commissioned by the union

1928 - 1928

Represented Australia at the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference in Honolulu

1938 - 1938

Retired with her husband to their property at Kangaroo Ground

1904 - 1904

Settled in Australia

1910 - 1910

Visited the Lyceum Club, London and reported back to the Catalysts group

1921 - 1921

Visited the United States of America and investigated industrial hygiene and medicine, women's unionism and home economics

1927 - 1927

When the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy new premises were opened, its hall was named after her

1928 - 1929

While overseas she investigated dietary departments and schools for St Vincent's Hospital

Published resources

Book

Degrees of liberation : a short history of women in the University of Melbourne, Kelly, Farley, 1985

A History of the Lyceum Club Melbourne, Gillison, Joan M, 1975

The Emily Mac : the story of the Emily McPherson College, 1906-1979, Docherty, James, 1981

Jessie Webb, a memoir, Ridley, Ronald T, 1994

Book Section

Ethel Elizabeth Osborne, Langmore, Diane, 1988

Resource Section

Osborne, Ethel Elizabeth (1882 - 1968), Langmore, Diane, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110111b.htm>

Edited Book

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

The University of Melbourne Archives

Osborne, William Alexander (1873-1967)

State Library of Victoria

Records, 1912-ca. 1970. [manuscript].

Records, 1910-2013. [manuscript].

Author Details

Anne Heywood

Created 2 October 2003

Last modified 27 January 2025