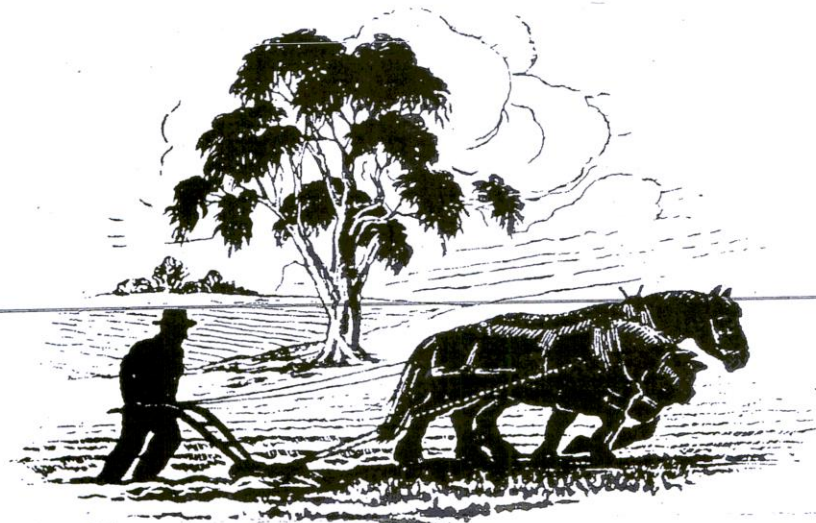

FOLLOW FAIRBRIDGE THE FOUNDER



MAY 2016

THE OLD FAIRBRIDGIANS' ASSOCIATION – MOLONG

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

It was really good to see everyone again at the reunion in March. A big thank you to the organisers. Congratulations Derek on receiving your well-deserved Life Membership. Dennis and I had great fun as usual. It seems to be very therapeutic for Old Fairbridgians to have a laugh and reminisce about the funny things that happened even on those days that weren't so good. There's now a new column in your newsletter called "Recollections" and many of the funny stories that were told at this reunion and previous ones, would make great reading and are sure to bring back happy memories for other Old Fairbridgians. I look forward to hearing from you. Closing date for the next newsletter is the 16th October. When e-mailing, would you please put 'Fairbridge' in the subject line. If you're not confident about e-mailing, please call me and I'll be happy to type it for you.

Ed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi once again to all Old Fairbridgians, Associate Members and families. Wow! To say I was humbled and surprised to be granted Life Membership at the 78th AGM on March 13 is an understatement to say the least. As I said at the meeting, I am honoured to be thought of as worthy of the award by you the Members and can assure you I shall continue to do whatever I can for our Association for as long as is possible. That is not to say that I have not fallen short occasionally in the past, but to err is to be human. Thank you all again. It would be remiss of me not to thank the outgoing Committee for their support over the past two year term and additionally to welcome new Committee Members Paul Ellis and James Burns, along of course with the remaining previously elected members. The full Committee including Area Reps is included in this Newsletter. I should also mention that our interstate Committee members Dennis Piercy (Qld) and David Kinsella (Vic), along with our Kiwi friend Keith Field, did not seek re-election. They all felt it was not really practical owing to the great distances involved.

Secretary Brian and myself, along with Roy Ryan, met with Angus McDonald from the Molong Town Beautification Committee on Saturday March 12th in Molong. (See Secretary Brian's report.) While the Golden Elm trees are looking good, unfortunately the same cannot be said of the Prunus genus and it would appear many of them will have to be replaced in the not too distant future.

On the subject of the Remembrance Drive I will include the full list of tree owners in the November newsletter. From time to time people ask me, "where is my tree?" If you have a tree be sure to keep the list for future reference.

Please be sure to take note of the important message from the Family Restoration Fund and The Child Migrants Trust in this newsletter, regarding the trips you're entitled to.

Again I would like to add my voice to that of Editor June and Webmaster/Secretary Brian in requesting that you, the members, keep the information coming for the Newsletters and the OFA website respectively. Items to consider could include memories of incidents you recall during your time at Fairbridge, maybe holidays at Gerroa or Lake Canobolas, or if you were one of the lucky ones (as were my brother Paul and myself) to have been invited for holidays with a private family. Jokes (clean of course), poems, trips to the country shows with the Junior Farmers to put up the exhibits, scout camps and maybe even some motivational one-liners, Rugby League and hockey (boys and girls) in Orange on Saturdays, Forbes Knockout Carnival (Rugby League) and trips to the baths in Molong. Funny they are not called that today, it's swimming pools! I'm sure there are many others when we think about it. We have around 210 on our mailing list. Imagine if everyone sent in just one article! Was just a thought.

Don't forget, for Newsletter information, please forward to:

June Piercy

Newsletter Editor

32 Symphony Avenue

STRATHPINE QLD 4500

Ph: 0409 619493

E-mail: junepiercy@netscape.net

June has requested that the heading

Fairbridge be inserted in the title section

of any e-mails sent to her for the

Newsletter. **Closing date is the 16th**

November, please.

For the Website, please e-mail

Webmaster Brian at

kirkby@senet.com.au.

In closing, to any Old Fairbridgians not enjoying the best of good health, we wish you well.

Derek Moriarty
President.

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Hi everyone. This report details the activities that your committee undertook for the 12 month period up to the AGM held in Orange in March 2016.

The Committee had held two meetings in 2015.

The first meeting was held on the 26th July 2015, immediately following the reconvened AGM. The location was the RSL complex in Penrith, NSW. There was an excellent attendance by the committee members to this meeting. One of the outcomes of this meeting was that Dennis and June Piercy offered their services as the Newsletter Editors.

The other matters related to the digitizing of the photos held in the Molong Museum. Caryl Sharp offered to assist here.

Other items included the discontinuing of the Clan Newsletter.

Discussion for the 2016 reunion was also a topic discussed at length. The second committee meeting was held on the 15th November 2015. This meeting was held

at Derek and Sandra Moriarty's residence. Seven committee members were present, together with nine other OF's. A pleasing turnout. Matters discussed were the 2016 reunion, the decision not to proceed with skype as a meeting facility and the need for a strong committee in 2016.

The AGM and reunion held in Orange March 12th and 13th 2016 were a success. 65 OF's attended the reunion dinner and 35 attended the AGM the following day. Quite a pleasing outcome. Office bearers for the following two years are President Derek Moriarty, Vice President Jan Barby, Treasurer Sandra Moriarty and Secretary Brian Kirkby. The committee elected is Caryl Sharp, Peter Bennett, David Hill, Ian Dean, Paul Ellis, James Burn and Gwen Cole. The Area Reps remain the same as in previous years. A committee meeting was held immediately following the AGM. The next committee meeting will be held in October 2016 in Sydney NSW.

At the AGM Derek Moriarty was awarded an Honorary Life Membership. Dennis Silver, in fine form, together with Peter Bennett, outlined the motion which passed unopposed, installing Derek as a Life Member.

The Tree Remembrance Drive in Molong is having some problems, mainly due to the drought and an infestation of the elm leaf beetle. The Prunus trees are the Genus suffering from the drought at present and the Molong Tree Beautification Committee under Angus McDonald is doing a sterling effort to maintaining them. A separate report on the trees' status is in this Newsletter.

Thanks Angus for your dedicated efforts.

Address list as at May 2015:

Financial members	185
Associate members	35
Known deceased	187

Brian Kirkby
Secretary

NOTICE OF MEETING – 79th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

The 79th Annual General Meeting of The Old Fairbridgians' Association – Molong, will be held at 1.30pm on Sunday 12th March 2017.

The venue is the Castlereagh Room at the Penrith RSL Club, 8 Tindale Street, Penrith, 2750. It is suggested that members arrive early and make use of the club's great dining facilities.

This notice will be repeated in the November Newsletter. Members who have forwarded their e-mail address to Secretary Brian will receive an e-mail reminder also.

Cheers,
Derek.

WEBSITE UPDATE: oldfairbridgians.org

We still get enquiries from the general public seeking contact with Old Fairbridgians they knew many years ago. You can be assured that no addresses or contact details are given out to the enquirer without the consent of the OF involved.

Please send me more stories relating to the Farm School and to the time spent there by individuals. This all contributes to the build up of the history of the Farm. We need to be very conscious of this fact, as we all grow older. Please submit to kirkby@senet.com.au or post to my home address as shown on the Newsletter.

Many Thanks.

Brian Kirkby Webmaster.

TREASURER'S REPORT

All OF's and Associate Members received a Statement of Financial Standing with this Newsletter. In the meantime, if you would like to pay your subscriptions further ahead, you can and they would be most welcome.

Annual subscriptions are \$10.00 per year, (including spouse) and covers the year from 1st July to 30th June each year.

You may forward your remittance to me as follows: -

Sandra Moriarty
Treasurer
Old Fairbridgians' Association-Molong
46 Holborn Street
BERKELEY NSW 2506.

Sandra Moriarty
Treasurer

E-MAIL FROM FAMILY RESTORATION FUND AND THE CHILD MIGRANTS TRUST

The UK Government has supported international travel for the past six years. This has been well received as a practical, helpful measure resulting in hundreds of visits for family reunions or special family events or to develop relationships.

Last year, an extension of the Fund to March 2017 was announced by the Health Minister, which enabled CMT to accept requests for 3rd trips.

So far, over 900 visits have been made, including 250 second trips and 60 third trips. Those too ill to travel have also been visited by their relatives under this Fund. If you wish to apply for a trip under the FRF to travel before March 2017, then please send a completed application form to CMT. The peak summer months of July/August can be very busy and expensive in the UK so, if possible, please try to avoid these months. Third trips are still available and 4th trips in emergencies.

For more details, please telephone CMT at: 1800 04 05 09

Or visit CMT's website:

<http://www.childmigrantstrust.com/services/family-restoration-fund/>

Beverley Sass
Business Manager
Child Migrants Trust | 124 Musters Road |
West Bridgford | Nottingham | NG2
7PW Tel: 0115 982 2811
Fax: 0115 981 7168

www.childmigrantstrust.com

E-mail from Angus McDonald, Molong Tree Beautification Committee

Dear Brian,

I trust that your Reunion in Orange went very well and was a happy and memorable time for all attending. I know in due course you will let me know if there is anything further I need to be aware of in terms of feedback for my Beautification Committee.

You will recall I mentioned some leaf pitting or holing of elms being a problem in Molong with there being some evidence of that in the elms at the town end of the Fairbridge Remembrance Drive.

One of our local Council Groundsmen is quite aware of the problem creeping over the town and seemingly affecting all elms and some other large leafed tree species though it seems that elms are the prime target. Yesterday I received advice from a local couple who have researched this quite considerably and will send me websites to read and consider any action we may need to take.

In calling the problem elm beetles, I am well aware that this is probably far from the correct name but at least it is descriptive. It seems that affected trees need to be treated though immediate treatment is not required. If left untreated and if the infection is bad then after two years the trees will have become very unhealthy and will ultimately die. Clearly this cannot be allowed to occur. It seems that the Central West of New South Wales is experiencing this problem and recently I heard a mention of it from someone connected with Cowra Council. From what I have been told the product which is being used for it as a treatment is called Coforta or a name like that which can be either soil injected or injected through holes through the bark into the sap wood around the circumference of the tree. In terms of the Remembrance Drive we could be a little lucky as evidence of this seems to have only been at the Molong town end and in any case the leaves are falling due to the slightly cooler nights and oncoming approach of autumn. Fortunately also we have very recently

had 51mls of rain which will at least help the trees to be more vigorous within themselves.

As you know I am leaving for to visit my brother in Darwin and I bus from Molong to Sydney tomorrow. Nevertheless I will read all relevant websites to keep myself informed and be ready to take whatever action may or may not be required on my return by the end of April. I just wanted to run this past you to let you know that I had become very aware of the potential big problem and of course my Committee will not be taking it lightly.

Thanks once again Brian, it was great to see you again and to meet Derek and the other chap whose name unfortunately I now can't recall. We will keep in touch and I will be letting you know in any case of future developments about the Elm issue.

With all best wishes, Angus

E-mail from Chris Roughley

(croughley1@optusnet.com.au)

I know this is a very long, long shot and a heartfelt request that probably can't be fulfilled, but would anyone have a photo of my late father John William Roughley known as Jack, who came to Fairbridge in 1940 and probably left about 1947? I would love to have a photo of him as a child but I know it is a big ask, but as he used to say, 'If you don't ask, you will never know'.

With thanks, Chris Roughley (Son)

E-mail from Geraldine Giles

(geraldinegiles47@gmail.com)

Hi, it was great to catch up at the latest hearing. If any Molong Fairbridgians would like to stay at my place for a break, they are most welcome. Regards Gerry.

E-mail from Jane Miller

(smithyj75@hotmail.com)

My mother has asked me to contact you. Her first husband, John Barker, appears on your Vale list, having passed away in 1967. John's brother, Thomas was also a Fairbridgian and your Vale list has him passing away in 1987. She has searched for years now for information about

Thomas, do you know any other details other than his date of death. She recalls that he became a minister (either Methodist or Baptist) in Queensland but she knows nothing else. Basically, she is interested if he had a family of his own, anyone who she might be able to contact about him. Any assistance is greatly appreciated. My mother's name is Patricia Elsie Norton, born in Orange in 1937. Many thanks, Jane Miller.

E-mail from Michael Pass

"I am now safely back in my flat, well rested. On Monday I travelled to Nottingham, this in itself was a huge adventure. For 4 years I had been housebound, travelling only to visit GP, light shopping infrequently in Enfield (cab each way) and trips to the hospital (by Ambulance), but never extended walking. I travelled by cab from home to St Pancras. There began my first marathon, getting from the street to the train. I estimate that was about 880 yards at least. When I arrived at the platform I found the carriage I wanted was at the far end of the train. This meant walking past 7 carriages and one engine. I fell into a seat (not the one reserved for me, that was the inside seat at a table for four, luckily there was a single seat opposite so I took that. The journey was pleasant, the weather detracted from the Scenery. After about 100 minutes we arrived in Nottingham. Here I was again faced with the long walk to the ticket barrier. CMT sent along the delightful Lindsey Hughes to meet me. She hauled the luggage, I propelled the resisting body as quickly as I could. We agreed to travel to the CMT Office before going to the hotel. At CMT I met some more truly wonderful people. The immediate impression was one of Welcome. We sat down and over cups of tea discussed the things that would happen prior to and during the Commissioner's interview. Then off to the hotel. Tuesday, early I travelled back to CMT, there I met Margaret. I had seen the film Oranges and Sunshine, I had formed a image of what to expect, I was delighted to be proven wrong. The Warmth generating from this Lady is amazing. I felt instant at

ease and unafraid. I also met Ian Thwaites (again I had formed an image from our exchange of letters) I again was totally wrong in my preconception. Lindsey I have already mentioned, she is a true Joy. I am so lucky to have her as my friend (more so as she is also my Social Worker), I also met Pauline (a voice on the telephone) and Stewart and the office manager whose name I cannot recall.

The actual interview with the Commissioner Andrew Murray was not the Questions and Answers session I had prepared myself for. The questions were not about the physical and sexual abuse I suffered, those had been covered in my written evidence, but along the lines of how did I become Fairbridge Fodder. It made me think more deeply that I had ever done before about my parents and early upbringing.

We then went into things which happened to me, again looking into the underlying reasons, this again forced me to delve deep, deep into those unwanted thought files.

This I found exceptionally difficult, but I kept a close check on my emotions, at least I tried. But by the time the subject got to Capt. Newbury, cracks were occurring. I am ashamed to admit, I lost it, I cracked, I was able to gain small control but the damage had been done.

One question that Commissioner Murray asked was about Capt Newbury's motives in some of the allegations he had made against myself, though Derek Moriarty had told me that I had been mistakenly associated with Michael Gollege. But that did not explain the continued Hate Campaign against my Wife and Children. I HAD NO INKLING OF HIS MOTIVES MALICIOUS OR OTHERWISE. Is anyone out there that could offer some thoughts on this?

The hour passed in a trice and it closed the session, others were waiting to be spoken to.

Commissioner Murray was nothing like I thought a Politician would be, he was gentle, understanding, very, very much like my friend Malcolm Frazer. When I asked his honest opinion as to whether the Royal Commission would ever do any good, he did not revert to Party Speak. He

did his best to explain that which had been accomplished and that which was being done now, and all of this bodes well for the future. But the actual outcome will still depend on the ostrich like people who will be in Power when the report is tabled. Will the report be swept under the carpet or will it become the carpet.

Tuesday afternoon I foolishly elected to return to the hotel to rest. There I had the reaction that had been threatening. Waves of intense shame, disgust and revulsion swept over me. I was helpless. I did not leave the room, there was not room service, no phone service, if I wanted reception I to use my mobile to ring an external number to get reception. I could not think of ringing CMT, it was a case of tough it out. I slept very badly, I was not well enough to go down to eat, and eventually came check out time.

By the time I arrived CMT, I was bordering on a Hypotension attack brought about by not eating and a degree of dehydration.

The hotel tea making facilities were enough for two cups of tea and two cups of coffee, no mini bar.

Margaret immediately organised food and drink for me and this got me back into the land of the living. Ian and Lindsey then went through what they had found out about my parents. I was amazed. They had discovered that Mother went to Australia twice, on 1949 and again in the early 1950's. They found her marriage certificate, both the birth certificate for Mother and myself. She was almost 4 months pregnant when they married. Ian told me they had found my father had lived into his 80's and died in Dudley. They are going to look into how he died. I Hope It Was Painfully and Badly.

All too soon it was time to return to London. Deep down I would have liked to stay, there is nothing really to come back to here. But I need time to digest what has happened and what of the future.

The journey back was quite an ordeal. It was fortunate that the carriage I wanted was nearest the ticket barrier. But in London I got lost and took the wrong exit from St Pancras, after the long walk from the train to entrance I was shattered and found I was in the wrong street so had a couple of hundred yards to walk to get to

my cab. Nowhere to sit for a few minutes rest, I again fell into the cab, the 75 minutes ride home refreshed me enough to get safely indoors.

All in All, it was a moving experience, indeed I did relate it was a great adventure. I am so pleased it occurred. I am a little bone weary this morning, I would have liked go to town but will wait till tomorrow.

Thank you all, for giving me the courage to speak out, the understanding, the very friendship.

I am truly

Honoured. Respectfully Michael."

AREA REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Western Australia – Mike Walker

First I must thank the committee who did such a great job organising the Reunion in March. While numbers were down it was still a great gathering. In fact with fewer numbers it was easier to meet and greet almost everybody.

The AGM too went off well. Good numbers attended and the official business was completed efficiently and everything went smoothly.

Not a lot of news from the West but at least some.

I have been busy doing some house renovation after our septic tank replacement. One of those small jobs that sets off a domino effect of other allied jobs that all have to be done before you can do the original one! But I have just about got it licked. Our family is well and we continue to enjoy good health.

BRIAN and CYNTHIA SCOTT are still doing well on their rural holding keeping things running. They had an insurance claim recently for fencing damaged by a bushfire that got too close. Other than that they say they just keep keeping on.

ALAN and LORRAINE SCOTTI say they are just chipping away at the time but kept busy with grandchildren and jobs around the place and Alan still does many km's a day on his bike to stay fit. They are off on

a cruise for 15 nights taking in Komodo Island – home to the Komodo Dragon in Asia.

COLIN and GAIL HARRIS are doing OK and had a recent visit from Colin's half-brother Trevor and half-sister Margaret from Birmingham in the UK. They spent 3 days showing them as many Perth highlights as they could. Elder brother John and wife Deral were here too.

CAROL and BRIAN OSBORNE (Wilcox) sent this note to me. Hi to everyone from Western Australia. It's been years since I updated you on the Wilcox clan. It's been a depressing five years. There were originally eight Wilcox siblings. Now there are two. Barry, Max, Pat and Janet all passed away with smoking related issues. I had cancer last year but because I've never smoked I'm in remission. We all know Roger and Stephen took their own lives. There's now just Peter and myself left.

For me 70 seems to be coming up fast so it will be great to receive some compensation from the Class Action when we actually get it. From January to now seems ages. Sorry I could not attend the March Reunion as my husband Brian had open heart surgery but is doing well and will be 75 at the end of the year. I am looking forward to the May Newsletter and hope for happier news for the November issue. Cheers Carol.

STEPHEN and KAY BLUNDELL. Here a couple of things that happened to Stephen when he was a trainee at Fairbridge all those years ago.

Jimmy Young and I were on Bakery and this day was really rough. We were up at 4am and getting all the tasks done preparing for the day's bake. We had got all the ingredients, mixed them in the trough, weighed out the loaves and put them in the tins but we lit the fire later than we should have. Well we thought the oven was hot enough so in goes the bread. When it looked brown on top we took it out and got ready to do the rounds delivering all this fresh bread. But the first loaf we

split in half was all doughy inside. Not a good day and not well received by Mr Woods.

Once when I was on Piggery I had fed all the penned up pigs and was out in the paddock completing a few jobs when I looked up to see a very angry and tusky boar bearing down on me so I took off and had to charge through a barbed-wire fence to escape the creature and cut my leg for my troubles. Even today I can feel that old scar when the weather changes.

Another time he was preparing to go into Molong in the horse and sulky to collect supplies and had to catch and harness the horse. It was his first day and was up at 6 and went to catch the horse but it wanted to stay home. After much frustration he managed to tempt it with some oats and got the harnessing done and the sulky attached. One of the boys had given him a chook in a hessian bag to sell in town. So he put the bag in the bottom of the sulky tied the horse up and went to the office to get the list of places he had to visit to pick up the goods. The chook, sick of being cooped up tried to escape and squawked and flapped around in the bag spooking the horse which broke free and took off. Stephen came out of the office to see the horse had taken off and by the time he caught it he was very late doing the run. (I don't know the fate of the chook.)

OLD FAIRBRIDGIANS' NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL POLICY

The Old Fairbridgians' newsletter is for OF's to share their news and views even where we do not necessarily agree with some of the views expressed in the articles we publish.

We recognise some of the views expressed can be quite confronting but ask that when submitting articles you avoid offensive and insulting allegations and personal attacks.

We reserve the right not to publish any material we believe is inappropriate or that may risk legal action being taken against us.

June Piercy – Editor
Derek Moriarty - President

“RECOLLECTIONS”

IAN ‘SMILEY’ BAYLIFF

One of my fond Memories of Fairbridge was going camping every Queen's Birthday long weekend in June with the boy scouts to the old goldfields at Ophir.

Ophir is about 25 miles north east of Orange and is said to be the place where Edward Hargraves claimed to have found the first specs of gold in 1851 that sparked the great Australian gold rush that lasted almost 50 years. The original rush to the Lewis Ponds and Summer Hill Creeks attracted about 40,000 hopeful diggers. Nowadays, as when I was at Fairbridge, Ophir is a wilderness of old gold diggings and bush.

The Fairbridge scout troop had four patrols each of about eight kids. They were named the Kangaroo, which were coloured red, the Buffalos (green) Owls (blue) and Koalas (yellow). On the Friday afternoon before the long weekend and after school we would pack up the old Fairbridge bus with the tents, tent poles, cooking gear, gold pans and any other equipment that we would need over the three days while camped at Ophir. We

would leave Fairbridge after breakfast on the Saturday and drive via Mullion Creek, arriving at Ophir before lunch time to start setting up camp which included erecting tents and setting up the camp kitchen.

Once set up we were pretty much left to do as we wished within reason. We had more freedom at Ophir than under the control of the cottage mothers back at Fairbridge. We could go swimming (even though it was bloody cold in June), pan for gold, or just explore the old diggings that were close to where we would camp. Mr Woods would always take us all on a different history walk every time that we went to Ophir.

Saturday night was always a camp fire. We would spend some of the afternoon of Saturday collecting wood for the fire. On one occasion when we were at Ophir throwing fire wood over the cliff that overlooked the camp site, Tom (Snowy) Henderson fell over the cliff down to the camp site. After looking at the spot just a few years ago where Snowy fell, I will never understand how he survived without any broken bones. Mrs Woods came in the Style Master to take Snowy to hospital for a check-up.

On another occasion, and one of the most exciting I can recall, it rained so heavily that the entire camp site was pretty well washed away. There was so much rain that the creeks rose and left us stranded on the other side of the creeks from where the bus was parked. Mr Woods decided that we would have to put into place what he called “Operation Ford” and explained to us that when the Allies invaded Normandy in 1944, it was called “Operation Overlord”, so ours would be called “Operation Ford”. The river was in full flood so a rope was tied to Peter Bannerman (as he was the strongest swimmer) and he had to swim across to the other side of what had become a raging torrent. Peter then pulled a raft that had been made by the older boys loaded with gear and those that Mr Woods felt were not good swimmers. The raft was pulled back and forth which took a number of hours to move all the gear and Scouts

to the other side and not one thing was left behind. Mr Woods was the last to cross the river and of course he swam too.

DEREK MORIARTY

“Remembering” (Part 1)

Well may you wonder what this article has got to do with growing up at Fairbridge and why did I write it for our Newsletter? Simple really. It is a classic example of some of “the good times” we experienced as Fairbridge kids and how it affected us in later years. I believe most, if not all the kids, would admit there were good times and bad. Personally, I prefer to remember the good ones, and writing this “short” article has been very therapeutical for me. I hope you enjoy reading it.

While details of many events back in 1951 are a little vague, having only arrived at Fairbridge on September 30 as a skinny little eight year old, along with my 6 year old brother Richard Paul, others are really quite vivid.

The Boss’s instructions each morning before breakfast in the Nuffield Hall, including a reminder for everyone to make sure you check the notice boards on the verandah daily, is one such detail it paid not to forget. Said notices comprised of daily events such as after school activities, including “muster”, Junior Farmer projects, Football and Hockey teams, either for training or for Saturday games in Orange. Special events such as teams for the Forbes Knockout Carnival, Junior Farmers Exhibitions at the Annual Country Shows, scouting activities such as camps and competitions, trainees’ rosters for each month are but a few.

From time to time there would also be lists of children who may have been guilty of “illegal” activities, as defined by “Woods’ law” and whose privileges may have been severely restricted, if not cancelled altogether. I vividly recall falling into this category with regular monotony as the years rolled on.

Now all of these notices and others I have either forgotten to mention or preferred not to, were of the utmost importance in the general day to day running of Fairbridge and my recollections are that it was critical to make sure you checked on a daily basis, where and when you should be at any given time. Frequent reminders with the hockey stick for failing to do so, plus, as mentioned previously, the loss of some or all of one’s privileges, was in most cases, enough persuasion to make it a habit not often overlooked. The younger kids had to seek help when it came to this part of the daily routine and so it was for Paul and I, as Christmas 1951 was fast approaching, with a six weeks break from school to look forward to.

As we climbed the steps on the way into breakfast one sunny morning in late December, there appeared to be much more excitement around the notice boards than usual and much whispering even once inside the Hall, although most Cottage mothers frowned on that and quickly clamped down on the offenders.

Words like Gerroa, Lake Canobolas and private holidays really meant nothing to us until some of the older boys and to a lesser degree, the cottage mother, in our case a Miss Jenny Barr, began to explain what this all important notice was all about.

We were informed that each year around Christmas all the kids would go for a two week holiday at either Gerroa, a little town basically on the beach and a full days travelling away in the old Fairbridge bus, or alternatively to a camp at Lake Canobolas, some twenty-five miles away. If my memory serves me correctly, if you went to Gerroa one year you would go to Lake Canobolas the next. For reasons unknown, that was apparently not always the case.

The third option, and one that many kids, including Paul and myself were fortunate enough to be a part of, was called “Private Holidays” with families in many different parts of New South Wales. To my

knowledge I don't think any kids went to private holidays in another state.

Most of the kids who went to these private holidays were chosen at random, either by the cottage mother, by the Boss himself, or perhaps both, and in most instances it was just a case of a family corresponding with Fairbridge and offering to take one or two kids for a fortnight's holiday.

During my time at Fairbridge many of the kids went with families around Manildra, Cumnock, Yeovil, Dubbo, Peak Hill, Parkes, Cowra and so on. I recall over the years discussing their holidays with some of these kids and while they virtually, without exception, believed the families had gone out of their way to make their holidays enjoyable, most said the loneliness of being separated from their friends and/or siblings in some cases, was very hard, particularly for some of the younger kids and they could not wait to get "home", ie Fairbridge!

Paul and I, having been in an orphanage in a lovely little seaside town called Hunstanton, on England's East coast, prior to coming out to Fairbridge, were very fortunate that the mother and father of two little boys we went to school with in Hunstanton, Anthony and Christopher Watkins, just happened to have an Uncle and Auntie living in Australia.

The Uncle and Auntie I refer to were Godfrey and Frances Savage, although Paul and I always addressed them as Mr and Mrs Savage, even many years after leaving Fairbridge when I visited them.

When Mr and Mrs Savage received word that we had migrated to Australia and were given the details of where we had gone by the Watkins' family, they immediately contacted Fairbridge with a view to see if it was possible to have us for a couple of weeks during the school holidays. Permission was granted and remembering that we had only been at Fairbridge for three months, knew very little about Australia outside the Fairbridge gates, had basically no social skills, had never been on a train on our own, and as

if that wasn't enough to cope with, we were two very frightened little boys who, in reality were still very homesick! Home of course, being the orphanage at Hunstanton, UK! I might add that this orphanage was called St Christopher's Church of England Boys' Home, with around fifteen or sixteen kids in it at any given time. I was actually placed there by myself for about two years, with Paul joining me only a little over a year before we left for Knockholt. He had been in an orphanage for younger kids in Lowestoft which was about 25 miles away. I must add that I recall being very happy there and very unhappy when they put me on a train to London with some old geezer we didn't know, but who was apparently something to do with Fairbridge. We were politely informed that we would not be coming back to Hunstanton but would be going to Australia to live. I believed this to be another orphanage somewhere in Britain.

The trip to London where we were taken to Australia House, had the mandatory "inoculations", received our clothing issue and were examined both medically, physically and intellectually before the going to John Howard Mitchell House at Knockholt in Kent. We were to spend six weeks here as the rest of our party was assembled from all over the UK. I have documents to say we were actually the first party in Knockholt, after this magnificent "mansion" had been donated to the Fairbridge Society. Altogether, we had sixteen in our party, however eight went to Pinjarra and eight to Molong. I have more information on John Howard Mitchell House if anyone is interested, but I have digressed so back to the holidays.

The details of our first holiday with Mr and Mrs Savage are as vivid as my last which, incidentally was seven years later. The only year we did not go there was actually 1958, my last Christmas at Fairbridge. This was because they had travelled back to the UK to visit family. While we really missed not having the holiday with them that year it meant I was to experience the holiday at Gerroa for the first and only time. That is definitely a story for another

day and one which may require a fair amount of editing!

After being placed on the train late at night in Orange just a week before Christmas, with strict instructions to be good little boys and do not get off until you get to Central Station where you will be met by Mr Savage. Of course we were placed next to the guard's van so he could keep an eye on us, and anyone who has travelled on the Forbes Mail can verify it is awesome being at the rear of the train and being able to see the Locomotives, (two off) as the train snakes its way across the Blue Mountains, with the glow from the fire at night and big black smoke bellowing from the locomotives in daylight. Of course steam trains were the order of the day back then.

At Central the guard came and told us this was where to get off and just as we were instructed, we were met by a lovely "elderly" gentleman, none other than Mr Savage.

We then proceeded to a different platform and caught a train out to Cheltenham, a suburb about a half hour train ride from City Central, during which time we talked about the boys back in Hunstanton, our trip out on the SS New Australia and how we were settling in at Fairbridge. A five minute walk from Cheltenham Station and we were warmly welcomed by Mrs Savage and their daughter Robyn in the beautifully manicured garden at "Gurrugundi", 11 Cheltenham Road. Robyn, their only child, was 18 years old and along with her Mum and Dad, immediately made us feel like we were part of the family.

So a wonderful adventure had begun and one which as I mentioned earlier, we were fortunate to experience for seven consecutive years.

While Cheltenham is a suburb of Sydney, most of the houses there, certainly in Cheltenham Road, had two or three acres of bushland attached at the rear of their properties. Over the years, Mr Savage had installed several walking tracks through his property and had placed numerous fish

ponds throughout. Many of the ponds were from natural rock foundations. One of the chores Paul and I enjoyed immensely was doing the rounds and feeding the fish.

Each day of the holidays we were taken somewhere different, with visits to various beaches such as Bondi, Manly, Cronulla, Palm Beach, Avoca, Coogee and so on, always with a fully laden picnic basket, beach umbrellas, chairs and copious quantities of slip slop and slap, which with my fair skin was an absolute must, although Paul fortunately did not have the same problem. Whenever our outing for the day could not be reached by public transport Mr Savage would load us up in his Austin A40 and we would marvel at how this mighty little 4 speed manual beast could get from go to whoa and not miss a beat. Of course I knew nothing about cars but even back then the Austin did resemble something out of the Ark!

A trip to Taronga Park Zoo occurred every year, along with Luna Park and a daily excursion to Church Point up at Pittwater. Fort Denison, Lane Cove and Cockatoo Island also provided plenty of excitement for two very adventurous lads. So adventurous in fact, that from memory, during our third trip to Cheltenham, to climb a huge gum tree in the back yard was a challenge too good to let go. Up we went, higher and higher until we could go no further. At this point, being the elder, I decided it was time to descend and commenced to do so. Can you believe my horror when I looked up to see Paul had not moved and refused to do so no matter how much I coaxed him? To say he was petrified is an understatement.

To cut the story short, Mr Savage decided the only alternative was to send me back up and make sure he did not fall. In the meantime, he called the fire brigade and a rescue crew were quickly on the scene. As they could not get close enough with the fire engine, one of the firemen climbed the tree and virtually carried Paul back to terra firmer. Needless to say I don't ever remember seeing Paul climb another tree.

Not only were the Savages so good to us, they also had wonderful neighbours on either side who were also very kind and welcomed us into their lives each year. On one side were a Mr and Mrs Walker and their son Robin, who was the same age as me, while on the other side was a widow, Mrs McKenzie, a lovely elderly Scottish lady with the broadest of accents. Both families always gave us something for Christmas and would always make sure we had a good supply of lollies and home-made cookies. The Walkers owned the Chemist shop in Eastwood and I recall after getting badly sunburnt one time Mr Walker brought something home in the middle of the day as I was in a great deal of pain. Whatever it was, it stopped the burning very quickly.

Christmas in Cheltenham was always very special and I would feel guilty knowing that Christmas at Fairbridge could never have compared to what we experienced.

Both Mr and Mrs Savage's mothers were still alive when we first went there and despite being in their late eighties, were as sharp as a tack. Although they lived in Epping and Beecroft, they would always come to Cheltenham and share Christmas with us, spoiling us rotten with little presents and goodies. They also used to save their "threepences" during the year and put them in the Christmas pudding, an old tradition that I don't think people uphold these days.

Sundays were always special and we all would go to the little church in Beecroft for the morning service. While religion was not important to me I used to love singing the Hymns. Even in church at Fairbridge I always tried to sing louder than the other kids. After Church we would go to one of their mother's for lunch. I used to marvel at the meals these wonderful people would provide. Their age did not seem to come into the equation.

Each year when the time came to leave for the train trip back to Fairbridge we would be loaded up with snacks, cordial, jars of lollies and nuts and my favourite, which was Mr Savage's home-made

pikelets smothered in "proper" butter and candied honey. I recall that when it came to boarding time I would have to pretend I was not crying. However, once we left Central the tears would flow freely and the same feeling of home sickness that I experienced when we first arrived at Fairbridge would come over me.

After leaving Fairbridge in late 1959, my first job was as an apprentice baker at Sloane's Bakery at Chatswood. At the time it was one of the largest in Sydney and as I used to start work at ten o'clock at night I had to live somewhere close. A boarding house some five minute walk from the bakery was ideal, although I paid five pounds and ten shillings a week board and the only meal I received was a baked dinner on Sundays. This did not leave a great deal to live on as my wage was just seven pounds and ten shillings a week! I really have no idea what that equates to in dollars and cents, certainly not much!

As I was not far from Cheltenham I managed to visit Mr and Mrs Savage on New Year's Day 1960, being a public holiday and spend a lovely day reminiscing and talking about my plans for the future. At this stage of my life I didn't have any. This was to be the last time I saw Mrs Savage as a week later I moved out to Hay in South West New South Wales to live and work for ten years before moving to Wollongong in 1970, by which time she had sadly passed away.

However, I did get to visit with Mr Savage around 1985 when, along with Sandra and my youngest daughter Lisa, we ventured up to Cheltenham and spent the day with him, still at "Gurrugundi" and living on his own. Although now old and frail, we meandered slowly down through the bush and past the fish ponds, feeding the fish, just as Paul and I had done all those years ago. Sadly Mr Savage passed away in 1987. Wonderful memories of a very special part of my childhood revisited.

(To be continued in November 2016 newsletter.)

JIM NAPPER**A New Beginning**

They told us we were going away
With a chance to start our life anew
To leave this land with its skies of grey
For a world of sun and skies of blue.

We travelled down to board the ship
For the next six weeks to be our home
Excitement was high to begin this trip
As we were allowed to look and roam.

And now we're on the Australian shore
It's hurry now as we catch the waiting train
Laughing and loving with family no more
And those homes we left, never to see again.

We reached the village in the dark and cold
And they split our party up into two
We straggled off to where we were told
Half of us to Orange and the rest to Blue.

Awoken at early dawn by a ringing bell
To tell us it was time to rise
Very soon we would know it well
As we washed the sleep from tired eyes.

The village life was run by the bell
It told us what to do and when
When to work and play as well
And we soon learned to stop and listen.

There were many times of laughter and fun
As we tried to keep our fears at bay
But when we finished and our work done
Now came our chance to run and play.

VALE

It is with deep regret that we record the passing of:

George Harper (unconfirmed) - 2014
 Don Coleshill - November 2015
 Nola Coleshill - November 2015
 Roger Smith - October 2015
 Brian Bodily (unconfirmed) - 2010
 Robert Neron - July 2013
 Maureen Ellen Silver - December 2015
 Douglas Appleyard - May 2014
 Patrick Barge - March 2014
 Eric Baldwin - March 2014
 Margaret Dunn - November 2014
 Graham Maycock - April 2015
 Alfred Bishop - May 2015
 Margaret Piercy - May 2015
 Henry McFarlane - May 2015
 Robert Scoins – January 2016



78th Annual Old Fairbridgians' Reunion Orange RSL 12th March 2016