FAMILY RESTORATION FUND FOR UK CHILD MIGRANTS

Former child migrants from the UK can now access funds to help them reunite with their families following the launch of the Family Restoration Fund in July this year.

The fund was announced in February as part of the British Government’s national apology to all former child migrants from the UK.

The £6m (approx $10m) fund will cover the practical costs of travel, and is available to former child migrants who were sent from Great Britain and Northern Ireland before 1970 to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Zimbabwe (the former Rhodesia).

In launching the fund, UK Health Secretary Andrew Lansley said: “For far too long, the trauma and suffering experienced by former child migrants were ignored. We know that that pain cannot be erased, but I hope that the funds now available will make a real and positive difference to their lives, and those of their relatives, in making reunions possible.”

In Australia, the Fund will be administered by the Child Migrants Trust. Further information and application forms are available from the CMT website www.childmigrantstrust.com or by phoning (08) 9472 7582 (Perth) or (03) 9815 2022 (Melbourne).

RECORD CROWD AT END-OF-YEAR PICNIC

Over a hundred people joined in this year’s annual gathering at Trinity Playing fields, and enjoyed the sunshine, good company, and complementary sausage sizzle.

Thanks to Dennis McNerney for organising the portable barbecue and the venue; to Normie Scott for the great music; to Tony Ryan and Dennis McNerney for the great photos; to the Christian Brothers for funding the sausage sizzle; to Mike Hogan, Paul Irvine, Paul Bradshaw, Yvonne Radzevicius and MiMi Johnson for their assistance on the day; and to all those who came along and helped make this year’s event so enjoyable.
End-of-year gathering  Continued from page 1

In the warm spring sun, a very relaxed and pleasant day was enjoyed by all at the annual End of Year Barbecue which was held at Trinity Fields on 14th November. With an abundance of excellent food (from CBERS) and great music (from Norm Scott), the day was spent catching up with old friends.

Thanks to Pippa for donating the extra food which was sold with the proceeds going to the Clontarf Heritage Trail. Thanks must also go to Paul Bradshaw and Michael Hogan for their very efficient role.

Looking forward to seeing everyone in 2011. Have a Wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yvonne

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Welcome to the tenth edition of CBERS Newsletter, a newsletter produced by CBERS and ex-residents of Castledare, Clontarf, Tardun, Bindoon, St Joseph’s and Nazareth House.

This issue is accompanied by a News Update, which is posted to a wider group of care leavers and ex-residents on the CBERS Redress Service mailing list.

FACT (Forgotten Australians: Coming Together Inc.) has been very busy in recent times and is actively working towards the goal of securing funding for a resource centre in WA.

This is an important development for CBERS, as our agency is anticipating being able to integrate many of its responsibilities and activities into the operation of FACT. It is hoped that the new resource centre will pick up much of what CBERS has been working at for many years now. FACT will also provide services to the wider population of care leavers in WA.

I recently visited two Melbourne agencies providing services to Forgotten Australians. The first was Open Place, a newly-established support service funded by the Victorian Government that offers counseling to care leavers and their families, social support groups, assistance with family tracing, access to records, and life skills programs. The second, MacKillop Heritage and Information Services, was established in 1997 and is a specialist service for ex-residents of homes formerly run by the Christian Brothers, Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St. Joseph.

I learned a lot from the management and staff of both these agencies, who were very generous in sharing their wisdom gained from experience in this area. A similar resource centre is much needed by West Australian care leavers, and we wish FACT all the best in this important venture. If you would like to join FACT or lend your support in other ways, please contact the Chairperson Laurie Humphreys on (08) 9337-8430, or email FACT at fact@cbers.org

In this issue you will read about some recent events, including the first anniversary of the National apology to Forgotten Australians, the CBERS end-of-year picnic, and a story about the new mural fund for UK child migrants. In the next edition we’ll report on the unveiling of the Forgotten Australians memorial in Perth and the opening of On their own – Britain’s Child Migrants, a new exhibition at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Network, and best wishes for a safe and happy festive season.

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NAZARETH NEWS

We are all happy and well in Geraldton at present.

Bernadette and Les were in England for seven weeks. Les’ Mum passed away on 12th August, and it was good that we managed to say our goodbyes twice.

Jacqui and Ron Honner visited Albert in the UK. Albert will be in Australia for Christmas.

Pat and Ted had family recently to visit them from England, and Bridget Willers is off to Ireland to visit a sick Aunt. We wish you well, and hope you have a nice White Christmas, you will need to rug up. Also visiting England was Eileen Evert, who caught up with her family there.

It was nice to catch up with Brian and Maureen Hurdle recently, also in the UK was Kath and Col Bennett who have a big family between them. They had a great time.

Margaret Thompson is on the mend after her recent operation. Shirley Moore has had a bad patch of not being well. Hope you will be back to your old self soon.

Peggy Johnston is still bowling and winning prizes, and Jane Beaver is still sending those bowls down the green. They both enjoy the sport. Bernadette is still playing badminton (social of course).

The rest of the girls in Geraldton are all going fine. The Nazareth House Fete was a great success in November this year. We wish all Child Migrants and Nazareth Girls a safe and happy Christmas and good health in the New Year.

Signing off from Geraldton.

Bernadette Bowey Hills

BINDOON CORNER

Bindoon has recently undergone some significant improvements, and the well-remembered corrugated main drive into the property is now fully bituminised. New guttering and some roofing replacements have also been completed.

$1.5 Million in funding has been received from the Australian Government to upgrade what we knew as the Technical College, and which now has a new name: The Brother Norman Tuppin Trade Training Centre.

Those of us who lost our first drop of sweat digging the foundations and overcome our fear of heights whilst building the top floor of this building might be interested to know that 62 years later it now has a new lease of life.

In the New Year I will be writing to all the Bindoon Old Boys on my mailing list to organise a get-together so if you don't get a letter feel free to ring me on 9337-4850.

Laurie Humphreys

Happy Birthday Lil!

Congratulations to Lilly (Elizabeth) O’Rourke, who celebrated her 70th birthday in fine style with family and friends on 13th August this year.
The Struggles and Achievements of Tardun Farm School

As a follow-up to a previous article, which reported the closure of the Tardun Farm School, located 540 kilometres northeast of Perth in Western Australia, we continue to share with you the highlights of its history, hardships, and achievements.

Part 2 – 1930’s

The First Graduate

A memorable event in 1935 was the placing of the first successful trainee, Harry Dean, on his own farm. He was one of seven boys who came in 1928 as a 14-year-old, and by the time he was 21 he had judged to be among the very best of the young men. The Tardun Scheme was designed by Dean to administer children over a wide area, and to develop a community of boys, as well as the staff, from a developmental point of view.

Drought

1936 recorded the worst drought on record in the district. Practically no rain fell from May to July, and the total rainfall for the year was 160 mm. The drought continued through 1937 until 1938. Sheep were taken to Bindoon during these years. The alternative would have been starvation. Liabilities increased further under these conditions. By the end of 1936, debts stood at $69,500, despite grants and government remissions amounting to roughly $34,000.

The closure of the school in 1938 was managed with great care. Harry Dean was appointed headmaster, and he continued to live on the farm until 1940. The boy who was the last to be taken in was later returned to the school. The people of Mullawa were very generous when they heard of our plight and we were returned with more than we had before the fire.

Survival

By 1938 Brother Conlon had been successful on a number of fronts. He had gained significant publicity for the scheme, an agricultural school with 52 students, was operating on sound lines; an impressive array of buildings had been constructed or were in the process of construction; the first farmer graduates had been settled on their own land; child migration was an accomplished fact; the community had been built up and a community of nuns had been added; the government had remitted debts from the first 5 years of operation; the Lottery Commission and Child Welfare were strong supporters; and much of the farming infrastructure had been put in place.

To be continued.........

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to the authors of the publications used as a reference to compile this article about the school and its struggle to survive.

Tardun: Golden Jubilee 1928-1978, Brother M H Crouch

The Scheme: The Catholic Brothers and Childcare in Western Australia, Barry M Coulson

Our Home in the Bush: Tales of Tardun, David H Plowman

ENDURING STRUGGLE: St Mary’s Tardun Farm School, David H Plowman
Hello to all the Old Boys

Another year has gone and I’m still catching up with some Old Boys.

Do you remember Phillip Charlton? Phil is retired and lives in North Queensland. If anyone wishes to send a Christmas card to him let me know, I have his address. Phil arrived with me from Nazareth House Bristol aboard the Asturias in 1947.

Aboard the same ship was Peter B. Kelly, who went to Castledare, then Bindoon. Peter now lives in Darwin. If anyone wants to get in contact, Peter’s address is PO Box 2011 Palmerston, N.T. 0831.

Another you may remember is George Walsh, he lives in

The pride and joy of many Clontarf Old Boys is now just another memory and lives on only in pictures. I speak of the swimming pool that took countless hours of back-breaking work by large numbers of boys to build and was a quality source of enjoyment for many. These photos depict the construction; the finished pool; and our enjoyment that the boys shared the pool with each other.

Time does not allow for sentimentality and after the pool had been empty for years it was finally removed. In its place there is now a very modern sporting complex that will bring delight to a new generation of youngsters.

Below are some photos showing the work and progress of the Clontarf Heritage Trail, a venture set up by the former residents of Castledare, then Bindoon. It is becoming more popular with the public. This means the raffle tickets are increasing and we are closer to our goal of setting up the Clontarf Heritage Trail. A fundraising barbecue on 10th July was also very successful, and a number of Old Boys came along who hadn’t been back to Clontarf since childhood days.

The New Year we hope will see a great deal of progress with the project. We hope that the trail will be something that all former residents can be proud of. It would be nice to see some more of the Clontarf Old Boys call in on a Saturday to catch up and have a chat with their old schoolmates and show some support for the project. You would really enjoy the day. There is a special day on the 4th December to celebrate the first birthday.

Congratulations to everyone for their hard work and many thanks to all the stall holders who not only donate produce toward the raffle such week but buy tickets as well.

A Special Visit to Clontarf

Tracey Duncan is the daughter of John ‘Eggy’ Hall, a former resident of Castledare and Clontarf. John was tragically killed in a car accident in 1970, and Tracey grew up with only some very early memories of her father and his childhood days.

Thanks to a group of Clontarf Old Boys, Tracey now knows a bit more about her father and his childhood days.

John was sent to Australia from Father Hudson’s House in Coleshill England aboard the Strathaird as a nine-year-old child migrant in 1955. He was firstly placed at Castledare and was transferred to Clontarf two years later.

After Tracey made initial contact with Dennis McNerney at the Clontarf Management Office a few years ago, she visited Father Hudson’s House earlier this year, and then Clontarf to meet some of his dad’s old school friends. Tracey’s visit to Clontarf was a great success, and after returning home she emailed her thanks to Dennis McNerney, who had also sent Tracey photos taken on the day.

Tracey wrote: “Thank you so much for the photos – I love them, they are great. It was a lovely day at Clontarf with all you ‘Old Boys’, and I so enjoyed meeting my father’s old mates from both his days in England and here in Australia.”

While she was in Perth Tracey also visited the Welcome Walls at Fremantle Wharf, and put a plaque there in her father’s name.

To the right and left are two of the photos Dennis sent to Tracey. They show her father John Hall with lads from Castledare in 1956, and some slightly older ‘lads’ with Tracey during her visit to Clontarf in 2010.
Travelling Exhibition on British Child Migration

A new exhibition focusing on child migration from Britain opened at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney on 10th November 2010.

On their Own - Britain's child migrants was developed in collaboration with National Museums in Liverpool, UK, and starts an Australian national tour in May 2011.

Former child migrants and their descendants are invited to visit an internet message board at www.britainschildmigrants.com to share their memories and photos and connect with other former child migrants and their families.

Several former child migrants from Western Australia made substantial contributions to the exhibition, and had ongoing contact with Museum Curator Kim Toh over the last two years.

In the next edition of CBERS Network we will bring you some of their personal reflections on attending the exhibition opening last month.

On their Own - Britain’s child migrants will remain open at the National Maritime Museum in Sydney until 15th May 2011, before starting a national tour of Australia.

The tour will include the following venues:
- Migration Museum, South Australia
- Western Australian Museum, Perth
- Immigration Museum, Victoria

Can you help?

Seeking former residents of St Mary’s, Gravesend

When Mick and Edna Monaghan visited Perth last year they called into CBERS with these two photos of St Mary’s Orphanage at Gravesend, Kent, in England.

Mick lived at St Mary’s from the age of seven to 11 years old. He was sent to Australia under the Child Migration Scheme in 1953, and was placed at Tardun.

Mick would like to make contact with other ex-residents of St Mary’s Gravesend who came to Australia under the scheme.

Shortly after Mick’s visit to CBERS, we received an email from John Flynn, another ex-resident of St Mary’s, who had stayed in England, but had always wondered what happened to the “bunch of lads who were shipped to Australia in 1953”.

John wrote: “I suppose we were like brothers who were separated never to meet again. It is a mystery to me what criteria was used as to who would go”.

Mick and John have now made contact and have lots of memories to share.

Please call CBERS if you were at St Mary’s Gravesend and would like to contact Mick Monaghan, who now lives in Tasmania. John Flynn lives in England and can be contacted on delvin4flins@gmail.com

Do you remember Rod or Derek Bartlett?

Rod and Derek Bartlett were sent from Nazareth House Romsey to Australia aboard the Strathnaver in 1939. Derek was initially placed at Castledare, and Rod at Clontarf, before they both went to Tardun in 1942.


Derek’s son Tom Bartlett lives in the USA and is trying to learn more about his father and family. Tom and his family are hoping to visit WA, and would love to speak with or meet anyone who might be able to provide insight on his father and uncle’s lives.

If you think you can help, please email Tom Bartlett at jzarnick@jzinvestigations.com or send a message via CBERS.
CLONTARF MARKETS: FIRST ANNIVERSARY

The Farmer's Market at Clontarf celebrated its first anniversary on Saturday 4th December, with a combination of official ceremony and great fun.

Markets proprietor David Vincent greeted the crowd dressed as a giant dog; while COBHC Secretary Yvonne Radzevicius accompanied him dressed as a scarecrow (the Clontarf Markets emblem).

Sonshine FM set up a live broadcast from the Markets and held interviews with stallholders and visiting dignitaries.

A commemorative tree was planted by the Mayor of South Perth, James Best, with John McGrath MP, and Steve Irons MP, who is Patron of FACT and a former care leaver.

The Markets are open every Saturday morning on the grassed area at the front of the Clontarf campus. Why not come along and check it out?