

CONFIDENTIALFAMILY WELFARE DIVISIONBox Hill Boys' Home

A visit was paid by Mr. Joyce and myself on 8.5.69.

Numbers: stand at 70 boys, ages ranging from 5-15 years.

Accommodation: Is unaltered except that the No. 4 section has been painted and the general standard of house-keeping is higher than it was under Major Sumsions's predecessors.

I think this place could be the last bastion in Victoria of the bedwetters' dormitory, a smelly sanctuary attached to the No. 1 section.

Staff: Are said to be far more of a headache than the boys and this one can well believe. According to Major Sumsion they tend, apart from the redoubtable Brig. Van Kralingen, his care-staff daughter and her husband and the cook to be both inept and transitory. The wife is one of the current married couples is an overt epileptic which hardly helps matters.

The School: Has this year a new Headmaster plus a numerically strong staff. The Head, although a rather unctuous little man, has the advantage of Special School training, a good many years of experience and considerable interest in the youngsters' progress. His name is McKenzie.

Activities: A number of organised sporting activities go on, including lacrosse, in which the Home fields teams in a local league. On the whole however, boys are either puttering about with a good deal of freedom or doing things en masse. There is little chance for boys doing anything of a hobby nature. A number of older lads go out to local Youth & Sporting Groups and they are being taken in groups to local Salvation Army Halls for Sunday services in an attempt to dissipate the ghomy boredom of in situ Sunday worship. On the whole, reasonably sensible older lads get out and about to a reasonable extent; little lads much less. Service clubs and similar groups lay on a number of mass outings through the year.

Leave to relations or hosts is allowed monthly.

Although the physical conditions are crude and rough the atmosphere here has greatly improved under Major Sumsion, who unlike his predecessor understands and likes boys but is not afraid to make his authority felt.

Substandard as this place remains, I was interested to find that Mr. Joyce thought it a less unwholesome place than Nazareth House, Camberwell, where spotless conditions are more than offset by the rigidity and nervous piety of the staff. My own thoughts are entirely similar.

Major Sumsion is finding the wear and tear of this place pretty trying - one wonders if he will last too much longer.

*D. Jaggs*  
D. JAGGS

Supervisor of Approved Children's Homes  
15.5.69.

*Director F.W.D.  
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*B.P. Hughes  
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