

December 2000

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 4
NEWSLETTER

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS EX-RESIDENTS AND STUDENTS SERVICES



*To all Ex-Residents and Students
of Christian Brothers'
Child Care Institutions and Schools*

***May this time of year, especially,
bring much joy, happiness,
and abundant opportunities
to celebrate with all those who are
important to you in your life***

*From the Management
and Staff of C-BERS Services*

The Ties That Bind Us

A Christmas 2000 Message from the Chairperson of C-BERS Services Maria Harries

Christmas is a time in which we traditionally seek out the people who are important in our lives.

In the vast majority of cases, these "most important" people are other family members — an extended network of people with whom we share a long history of common experiences. These are the people who, not only know us (and hopefully love us), but who have also contributed significantly to who we are at this point of time in our own personal histories.

As part of the festivities associated with Christmas, we acknowledge and celebrate "the ties that bind us" to each other.

Sadly, as many of our readers will be only too well aware, those bonds of a shared history were interrupted for thousands of former child migrants

who were sent to a country half way across the other side of the world leaving their families and the continuity of their heritage behind.

One of the main reasons C-BERS Services was set up in 1995 was an attempt to heal the wounds inevitably caused by such premature upheaval.

Six years later, it is encouraging to observe the extent to which former child migrants are, on their own behalf, seeking out each other to build upon the bonds that derive from a shared history of experiences.

In our last newsletter, we reported on the huge success of the reunion luncheon organised by the Child Migrant Friendship Society in June.

The Society is already planning a "Christmas in July" function for next year which features amongst the notice board listings in this edition.

Old Boys Associations have also been set up for each of the major institutions at which former child migrants spent their formative years.

Again, a reunion weekend for the Tardun Old Boys and their families is planned for early February at Tuppin House in Guilderton (Moore River).

This newsletter has also provided a means, not only for establishing a connection between people who share a common story, but also for people to share their story. Our three contributors in this edition, all speak of the opportunity provided by the Christmas season to get together with those they care about, and who similarly care about them.

We hope that all our readers are afforded similar opportunities, both for Christmas 2000 and in the year that follows.

WE'RE OPEN
FOR BUSINESS

between 8.30 a.m.
and 4.30 p.m.
Monday to Friday.

ON STAFF

Administration

Manager—Mary Kearns
(Tuesday to Friday)

Clinical Psychologist

Patrick Howard
(Tuesday and
Wednesday)

Counsellors

Michael Anderson
(Tuesday, Wednesday
and Friday)

Sjoukje Tarbox
(Monday, half day
Wednesday, half day
Thursday)

Administration

Lorraine Hipkins
(Monday, Tuesday)
Sue Fullerton
(Wednesday, Thursday,
Friday)

MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE

Maria Harries
(Chairperson)

Dr Debra Rosser
George Horton

C-BERS
SERVICES
EX-PRESS

If you would like
your name
to be added to
(or deleted from)
our newsletter
mailing list,
please let us know

C-BERS Submission to Senate Enquiry

On behalf of former child migrants who are clients of GBERS Services, a submission has been lodged with the Parliamentary Senate Inquiry into Child Migration.

Details of the Inquiry, which has been set up under the auspices of the Senate's Community Affairs Committee to investigate the role and responsibility of Australian Governments in relation to child migration schemes practised during the 20th Century, were announced in our September newsletter. As well as inquiring into the way in which former child migrants were treated by government and private institutions, the Committee is also considering whether a formal apology and compensation may be called for.

At the time this newsletter was going to press, the deadline for making submissions to the Inquiry had just passed.

In preparing the C-BERS submission, we took account of the views of you, our clients, many of whom have indicated that you want support to "get on with your lives". We have asked the Government for services such as family tracing, assistance with reunification travel and counselling to enable you to do so.

Assistance with Family Tracing

British Child Migrant
Central Information Index (CMCII)

A centralised information service has recently been set up in England to help former British child migrants find the name of their Sending Agency as a means of obtaining further details on their family background.

The CMCII links information on British child migrants who were sent to Australia, Canada and New Zealand on Government assisted schemes (in this first instance between 1920 and the late 1960s) to the agency that sent them. It is expected that records retained by Sending Agencies may assist in family tracing.

Child migrants, parents and siblings of child migrants and any nominated representative are eligible to use the Index which was set up and is independently managed on behalf of the British government by the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NVCCO).

For Further Information Contact:
CMCII & NCVCCO, Unit 4, Pride Court, 80-82 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF, England
Tel/Fax: Project Administrator on 0011 44 20 7713 5937
e-mail: migrant@voluntarychild.org
Web Site: www.ncvcco.org

Original Birth Certificates
WA Dept of Family & Children's Services

C-BERS Services has just been advised that the WA Department of Family and Children's Services has put together a list of original birth certificates for more than 700 former Child Migrants from the UK and Malta. The certificates cover former child migrants who were born between 1930 and 1958.

For Further Information Contact:
C-BERS Services or John Priestley at Family and Children's Services on 9222 2662

Assistance with Reunification Travel

Former child migrants may qualify for funding assistance to reunite with their family of origin.

Funding for Reunification Travel may be available through International Social Services (ISS) which is provided by the British Government or from GBERS Services provided through the Christian Brothers.

Staff at C-BERS Services are available to assist former child migrants in determining their eligibility for funding from the different available sources and in completing the necessary documentation. We can also provide assistance in organising the trip for former child migrants being funded through ISS or funded through us.

MEMORIES *of Christmas ...*

At a time of year when most of us are extending wishes for happiness and joy to those who hold a special place in our hearts, many ex-residents can remember a time in their lives when Christmas was a far less festive occasion. At least that was the case for ex-residents Mal Fortin, Alf Spiteri and Jack Carvill who agreed to share their Christmas memories (via Counsellor Sjoukje Tarbox) with readers of C-BERS Express. As their stories reveal, more recent experiences have provided happier memories of the shared celebration of Christmas. We hope the same is also true for other ex-residents.

Mal's Story



Mal Fortin is a former child migrant from the UK. He came to Australia in 1953 where he lived first at Castledare (for four years) before moving to Clontarf for another four years. Mal is pictured left with his sister-in-law Mary Anne.

“There is nothing memorable for me about Christmas at Clontarf.”

“But I did go to a family in Kalgoorlie on several occasions to celebrate Christmas with them — I don’t remember how it all started. The children of this family welcomed me with open arms. We had a good time. The parents were a little more cautious about me, however.”

“From a religious point of view, Christmas itself means nothing to me. It’s just a wind up of another year!”

“But, for me, Christmas is an excuse to have the family around. We all get together. This is a family tradition. Our home is our castle.”

“Christmas with all our children, grandchildren and my extended family from Mary Anne’s side, with a Christmas tree and all the trimmings is what Christmas means to me now.”

Mal's Family Christmas Tree

Alf's Story



Alf Spiteri is a former child migrant from Malta. He came to Australia in 1950 and was placed in Tardun. On leaving Tardun he married Nell with whom he had twins Sandra and Michael. He also has a stepson Ian from Nell’s previous marriage. Sadly Nell died some years ago.

Alf doesn’t remember much about Christmas at Tardun. Nor does he remember anything special about Christmas in Malta. He says his family in Malta was too poor to celebrate. His only recollection is that they all had to attend Church several times on Christmas day.

These days, Alf cannot remember one Christmas when he and his now grown-up family and grandchildren have not all been together as a family.

“To have a family Christmas is the most important event of my life. Christmas and Boxing Days are always spent together, giving and receiving gifts, sharing food, wine, plenty of fun and lots of love!”

“My Christmas wish this year is to reunite with my own family of origin, both in Malta and in the UK.”

Jack's Story



Jack Carvill is a former child migrant from Scotland. He arrived in Australia in 1950 and was placed at Bindoon where he spent the next seven years of his life. Jack now lives on his own in Australia. He is pictured left with his niece, Samantha, in Scotland.

Jack remembers his family in Scotland as being very poor which meant they couldn’t afford much at Christmas.

Whereas Christmas at Bindoon he describes as “a joke”. “It meant being woken up at midnight for Christmas Mass, then to the dining room for a bit of fruit cake, a cup of cool drink and back to bed! That was it, no “Merry Christmas”, presents, or a card, ever. Nothing to remember. Maybe a handful of lollies on Christmas Day.”

He remembers one year being invited by a family to spend Christmas with them. These days, Jack goes to *Christmas in the Park* organised by the Wesley Church where, as well as a beautiful sit-down Christmas dinner, he also receives a Christmas present.

“For me, Christmas means being with people that you can feel close to and socialise with. This is what is important

Support for Victims of Abuse

The Catholic Church has established a Resource Group in each Australian State to provide support for victims of abuse by church personnel (particularly abuse which is of a sexual nature).

The service is available state wide through a toll-free contact number (listed below). All calls are responded to by a contact person who is responsible for providing support and assistance through the initial complaint process.

In cases where criminal abuse may have occurred, the complainant will be advised of their right to lodge a complaint with the police. Otherwise, they will be advised of the procedures followed by the Resource Group in assessing and responding to complaints. If the person appears to be in need of immediate help, counselling may be offered prior to an assessment.

Once a complaint has been validated, a facilitator is appointed to work with both the victim and the Church authority towards assisting the person who has been abused to deal with the trauma of the past, and to achieve a better future.

Where ongoing counselling is considered necessary, the person may opt for a professional counsellor of their own choice.

The Resource Group appreciates the opportunity to work closely with C-BERS Services in those instances where the person seeks C-BERS support.

Resource Group Toll Free Number: 1800 072 390

Some Useful Contact Numbers for Ex-Residents and Students

Organisation	Contact Name	Phone Contact
Australian Archives	Tony Fewings	(08) 9470 7500
Bindoon Old Boys	Laurie Humphreys*	(08) 9337 4850
British Consulate (Passports & Citizenship Information)		1902 941 555
Castledare/Clontarf Old Boys	No contact number available	
Catholic Migrant Centre	Sister Tanya de Jong	(08) 9221 1727
C-BERS Services	All staff	1800 621 805 (Freecall)
Child Migrant Friendship Society	Maureen Colgan	(08) 9317 2753
Child Migrants Trust (Perth)	Derek Rushbrook	(08) 9386 3605
Child Migrants Trust (Melbourne)	Mark Silver	(03) 9347 7403
Christian Brothers' Archivist	Josette Mathers	(08) 9365 2813
Family & Children's Services	John Priestley	(08) 9222 2555
International Social Service (ISS)	Margaret Gibson	(03) 9614 8755
Maltese Consulate (Perth)		(08) 9378 3777
Resource Group (for Abuse Victims)		1800 072 390 (Freecall)
Tardun Old Boys' Association	Frank Marshall	(08) 9457 7936

*While not an official association, Laurie Humphreys is willing to be contacted by old boys.



Tardun Old Boys' Association Inc

A Reunion Weekend and Annual General Meeting will be held at Tuppin House, Guilderton, (Moore River) for all Tardun Old Boys and their families on 3 and 4 February 2001. Please contact Secretary Judith Marshall on 9457 7936 before 3 January 2001.

Child Migrant Friendship Society

The Annual General Meeting of the Child Migrant Friendship Society will be held at 11 am on 4 February at the Hall, McCauley Centre, Leederville.

The next reunion will be "Christmas in July" (15th July 2001).

Contact: Maureen Colgan -
Telephone: 9317 2753
(after 6 pm)

Do you remember William Pickard? (b.1941)

Nicole Goddard, who only discovered in 1992 that she had a brother, is now seeking information about him. Nicole's brother, William Pickard, was sent from the UK as a Child Migrant in July 1953 on board the Maloja. He was placed at Castledare from 1953 to 1957.

William died as a result of an accident in 1963 and Nicole wants to hear from anyone who knew him. She would particularly welcome any old photographs in which William appears and which we could have copied for her.



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