

# FAIRBRIDGE GAZETTE



## The Dinner ‘Gong’

*What ever happened to the Canadian Railway Engine Bell used for the Fairbridge Dining Hall Dinner Gong?*

*These 2 photos (left and below) were found in the Middlemore Emigration Homes 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Report for 1937.*



## Plan to Attend the 2014 Reunion



2013 Reunion

**FCA Membership Fees are due in January of each year — \$30.00 year**

Membership forms can be found on the FCA website at: <http://fairbridgecanada.com>

2013 Reunion Tea



## 2014 Fairbridge Canada Association Reunion

**WHEN: Friday & Saturday - September 19-20**

**WHERE: Oceanfront Suites at Cowichan Bay**

1681 Cowichan Bay Road, Cowichan Bay, BC, Canada V0R 1N0

<http://www.oceanfrontcowichanbay.com/>

See page 7-8 for more information and the 2014 Reunion Registration Form.

Check the FCA Website for Reunion 2014 updates <http://www.fairbridgecanada.com>

**Fairbridge Canada Association** Reunion Registration Forms and Membership Fees should be sent to: Ron Smith, FCA Treasurer, 4718 Fairbridge Drive, Duncan, BC, V9L 6N8 [rgwsmiths@hotmail.com](mailto:rgwsmiths@hotmail.com)

## Roddy Mackay: President's Message



Greetings to all, hope you are all enjoying the summer and looking forward to our *September 18-19, 2014 Fairbridge Reunion*.

In May, I took a flight up to Victoria then proceeded up Island to Cowichan Bay for our F.C.A. Board meeting. John and Mary Hardy generously hosted the meeting, and it was great to see members of the board, especially our new board members, Roy Myhill and Ray Field. The most important item on our agenda was the organization of the upcoming F.C.A. Reunion to be held at the Ocean-Front Hotel in Cowichan Bay. At our age, most of us realise that each reunion, we schedule becomes priceless. Now is the time to make plans to visit with old and some new friends of the Fairbridge Family Reunion. So please make every effort to attend the 2014 Fairbridge Reunion. Possibly, due to Health circumstances some might be concerned about making a commitment to attend and booking a room. I can assure you we will take care of any cancellations, and the hotel only requires 48-hour notice of cancellation on rooms.

Finally, I want to commend the following members of the F.C.A. Board, John Hardy and Pat Skidmore for their dedication time and efforts in transferring the Fairbridge Bursary Awards to the local high school and the Vancouver Foundation. The name Fairbridge Farm School will continue to live on into the future helping young men and women pursue their educational endeavor's thanks to the generous support of our members.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend our new F.C.A. Treasurer Ron Smith. Following a two-year period without a treasurer on the F.C.A. board, Ron has devoted hours to bringing our financial affairs up to date. Ron informs me that our paid up membership is now at a very healthy number of 54 members. Ron and his son Touy are also working on a major face-lift for the Fairbridge web site. For more information on our new and exciting upgrade please see page 5. The revised web site should be up and running in a couple of weeks, please check it out. <http://www.fairbridgecanada.com/>

I look forward to seeing all your smiling faces in September.

Late-breaking news: this year Roy Myhill (at age 80) was reunited with a family he didn't realise existed. On June 28th, Roy, thanks to the Child Migrant Trust, will be flying over to the U.K. to meet several members of his new family. Assisting Roy on the first leg of the journey, John Hardy will pick Roy up at his home and drive him to and over on the ferry, then to the Vancouver airport. Now that is a classic example of brotherhood for all of us who belong to this Fairbridge Family.

*Take care, kindest regards to all* *Roddy*

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### Fairbridge Canada Association Directors

**President:** Roddy Mackay: [roddymc@comcast.net](mailto:roddymc@comcast.net)

**Vice President:** Jean Conlon: [jkconlon@shaw.ca](mailto:jkconlon@shaw.ca)

**Past President:** John Hardy: [jkhardy@shaw.ca](mailto:jkhardy@shaw.ca)

**Treasurer:** Ron Smith: [rgwsmiths@hotmail.com](mailto:rgwsmiths@hotmail.com)

**Secretary & Gazette Editor:** Pat Skidmore: [pjs@telus.net](mailto:pjs@telus.net)

#### FCA Directors:

Chris Brookshaw

Ray Field

Roy Myhill

Pete Timbrell



**Correspondence News Highlights:** so far it has been a quiet 2014 for correspondence.

Spring 2014:

- Maureen Speed commented on the Commemorative Plates that were purchased for Molly Harris and made a suggestion that we have a sample available to view at the September Reunion, so orders could be taken.
- The Molong Fairbridge Newsletter – talks about their 76<sup>th</sup> Reunion held in March. It includes updates on the Class Action against the Commonwealth and State Governments and the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse. Their newsletter is on-line at Old Fairbridgians Association: Molong NSW <http://oldfairbridgians.org/>
- The Rhodesian Fairbridgians sent an email regarding their very successful Fairbridge Reunion held this spring in Christchurch, New Zealand.



### **What was your Fairbridge Experience and *what did you do* after leaving the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School?**

Here is a little about the Speed Brothers, Tom (born March 7, 1923) and Dick (born September 2, 1924.) (See page 4) As children, the brothers lived in the Wimbledon area southwest of London, England.

After the death of their mother in 1932, Tom and Dick were placed in a county workhouse, then into a county orphanage, the Surrey County Council Central Children's Home, in New Maiden, Surrey.

They arrived at the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School with the first group of 41 children on September 25, 1935. At the Farm School, Tom recalled helping clear the fields, and burning the tree stumps after they were blasted from their holes. They wore no shoes in the summer, and the stubble in the fields was hard on their feet. He lived in a cottage with 14 boys. The boys had breakfast and lunch in the main dining hall and took leftovers to their cottage for dinner. Before the school was built, classes were held in the laundry. Tom was first brother to leave the Fairbridge Farm School in the spring of 1938. When he turned 15, he went to work on a farm in the Alberni Valley. After just a few days, the owners left on holidays, leaving Tom to manage on his own. At 19, Tom enlisted in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps. He was trained as a Nursing Orderly, then a Hospital Ward-master with the rank of Sergeant. Tom had always found great comfort in his church. He entered UBC in 1948 and attained a BA in 1952 and then his Licentiate of Theology in 1953. Tom was ordained by the bishop of New Westminster on May 26, 1953. As a theological student, Tom became involved in scouting, his diocesan church-camp, the militia and became an assistant to the priest in charge of the local Chinese Mission. He was in the Ministry for over 55 years.

Tom's first appointment was at the Parish of Fort Langley, which he held for 6 years. Next he was appointed to the Provincial Board of Missions and placed in charge of the Chinese Mission in Vancouver. In May 1966, Tom was invited to become the Protestant Chaplain at the BC Penitentiary in New Westminster.

Tom and Maureen married in 1961 – he said that his personal life was enhanced in 1960 when he met Maureen. They had three children.

In 1971 Tom was with the Army reserve and had become District Chaplain with the rank of Major.

Tom was active in the Fairbridge Canada Association throughout his entire adult life.

Thomas Edward Speed passed away in December 2009.



Maureen & Tom Speed FCA Reunion 2007

## The Road To Cowichan Station

Father – blind and injured from World War 1. Lost!  
 Mother a seamstress at a large house by the common  
 Tom and I sent somewhere for food  
 We ate all the biscuits before we got home.

The fever ambulance came in the night:  
 Miss James, Tom and me, and mother inside;  
 “Be good boys,” she painfully whispered;  
 I was seven and my mother was gone.

The dark stone workhouse had iron cots and ghosts –  
 Night-shirted, bare footed men who got up to pee –  
 Next morning we went to the county Children’s Home –  
 Placed in separate houses, I cried for three days.

The early thirties was life as a ‘home boy.’  
 Shelter, yes. Cruelty some. Kindness never.  
 There were house cleanings, parish day school, cubs and crocodile walks.  
 One day the superintendent visited our silent tea.

“Who would like to go to Canada?”  
 What! A glance to Tom and up went our hands.  
 From London, to Liverpool, to Quebec City, to Vancouver Island.  
 Unreal! Travel-sick at every stage then finally settled at Fairbridge Farm.

*by Dick Speed*

The forests, the farm, the sunshine and rain;  
 Haying, threshing, weeding, tending horses, cows and pigs;  
 Roaming the land, going to school, swimming the river;  
 Other children, teachers, staff, made it my Canadian home.

Farm-worker, mill-worker, Air Force mechanic;  
 Adult school, university, a career England would not have given;  
 Position and pleasures – yet loneliness endured;  
 With marriage and family came love and peace.

I am retired now. My children are grown.  
 My wife and I return to visit England.  
 Her family and friends, their homes, the villages, the countryside:  
 I fly back over the world to my Canadian home.

Some aching, longings stir – my Wiltshire birthplace, my Wimbledon Street.  
 Gap Road Cemetery with my mother’s grave.  
 The green rolling fields, the hedgerows, the lanes;  
 London: the shows, the pubs and the trains.

Here, in comfort, I watch the giant firs sway:  
 Today there is sunshine not west-coast rain:  
 My wife is shopping. My children may visit. My brother may call.  
 Yet I have the feeling this is not my only home.



*Dick Speed*



**Dick Speed will turn 90 on September 2, 2014.  
 Is he the oldest surviving Canadian Fairbridgian?**

## Enhancing the Fairbridge Canada Website

As many of the Fairbridge Canada Association members who have been accessing our web site <http://www.fairbridgecanada.com> have noticed, certain sections have been missing for quite some time and other information is incomplete. To correct this problem a revision of the site is underway and should be up and operational by the end of July, if not sooner. Once the Board of Directors feel it is ready to 'release' we will put it on our web site—and you will see quite a difference.

Here are a few of the changes

There are a few pictures—about seven—that will scroll by. On the bar above the pictures you will see the following on a green bar:

Fairbridge Canada followed by the school crest, then Home, Farm School, Memories, Gazette, Photo Gallery, Members Site, Bursary, Contacts and finally Links. When you click on any one of these 'links' as I call them, with the exception of Members Site, more information about the Association and the history of the farm school, and how to contact the FCA for example, will appear. Please take some time and bring up each of the 'links' one by one. As for the Members Site, it

can be only accessed by paid up members and will have a number of features we would like to maintain for only members, such as a copy of the FCA constitution and bylaws, messages from the President, and possibly other Board members about the FCA, a members bulletin board and way to exchange information between members, and information programmes that will assist members such as the Child Migrants Trust.

It has taken a considerable amount of thought and time to put it together in a format that will not only be appealing to the general public that want to know more about Fairbridge but also for our members. As you will note there is a way to communicate with the Board through the bulletin board if you have suggestions to further enhance the site. We are certainly open to suggestions as we feel this web site is a work in progress, with new pictures and stories and other notes to be added over the next few years. We really cannot improve the site without having your valued ideas on the design and of course things such as your memories and any photos you may allow us to copy and use.

*Ron Smith*



2003 Reunion



2005 Reunion



2007 Reunion



2009 Reunion



2011 Reunion



2013 Reunion Guests CMT



*Margaret Humphreys & Ian Thwaites*

### Fairbridge Chapel News

For Chapel news and updates, please see the website: <http://www.fairbridgechapel.com>.

New pictures and stories are always being added. More information is also included in the quarterly *Fairbridge Chapel News*.

Send Fairbridge Chapel DONATIONS to:  
Fairbridge Chapel Heritage Society  
4791 Fairbridge Drive, Duncan, BC V9L 6N9  
*Include a return address for your income tax receipt.*

### Looking for Fairbridgians who served in the Canadian Forces after 1945

The FCA Board is working on compiling a list of those Fairbridgians who joined the Canadian Forces from 1945 and on. A plaque with names of those who served during WWII is on display in the Chapel and the Board would like to include a plaque for those who served after 1945. Please send in your names to Ron Smith or Pat Skidmore. We will also have a sign up sheet at the reunion.

## *THOSE WHO PASSED – our condolences go out to Peter's family*



### **Peter W. Mathews (1937 - 2014)**

Peter Whitely Mathews, born in England, passed away at home in Duncan, Friday, March 14th. Peter was a child migrant sent to Canada at age 9, to live at Fairbridge Farm School, later attending Belmont High. He worked over 30 years for the City of Victoria and was active in the union. Peter married Sandra Erickson in 1974. They volunteered together many years for Santa's Anonymous. In 2007 Peter and Sandra moved to Duncan where they enjoyed the wildlife, especially the elk herd strolling past their garden. Peter firmly believed that in spite of being separated from family, he was fortunate to become Canadian. Besides his wife Sandra, he leaves children Gordon and Shirley; life-long friends in Victoria and Duncan; two brothers, Les and Paul, England. Peter was an easy-going man with a great sense of humor; he always pulled his own weight, and stood ready to lend a hand. We will miss him. No service at Peter's request.

## Fairbridge Farm School Bursary News

John Hardy and Pat Skidmore met with the Cowichan Secondary School administrators and with Stacie Graham of the Vancouver Foundation to get the process of having the Vancouver Foundation send the Bursary Funds directly to the Cowichan School for distribution.

The Bursary's name will remain as the *Fairbridge Farm School Bursary*.

Donations to the Fairbridge Bursary Fund can still be made directly to the Vancouver Foundation or they can be sent to Pat Skidmore and she will deposit them in the Fairbridge account at the Vancouver Foundation.

The Cowichan Secondary School administrator received three successful Fairbridge Farm School applications for the 2014/2015-school term.

Bursaries were awarded to:

1. Riley Long-Alexander
2. Erika Sheepwash
3. Sara Ferguson

As part of the application package, each successful applicant wrote a one-page essay on the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School.

This is an attempt to ensure the students know a little of the history of the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary that they are applying for.

*Donations to the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary can be made directly to the Vancouver Foundation:*

Stacie Graham, Coordinator, Development & Donor Services

Re: The Fairbridge Farm School Bursary  
Suite 200 - 475 West Georgia Street,  
Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 4M9  
[stacie.graham@vancouverfoundation.ca](mailto:stacie.graham@vancouverfoundation.ca)  
T. 604.688.2204 D. 604.629.2725 |  
<http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca>

Or send donations to:

Pat Skidmore  
174 April Road, Port Moody  
BC, V3H 3M7

*FABS would like to extend a special thanks to Madeleine Nelson for her donation to the Bursary Fund in honour of Pam (Morrison) Brown's 65<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary June 2014*

**Ray Phillips and his band will play at the September 2014 FCA Reunion.**



### **Britain's Family Restoration Fund**

For information see the CMT Website:

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

### **Wanted Column**

Bill Stoker ([wstoker@cogeco.ca](mailto:wstoker@cogeco.ca)) requests post 14 April 1945 information on Lawrence V DRAPE, ex- Seaforth Highlanders of Canada. He wishes to contact Laurie's son Rob Brown who in an earlier Gazette had requested info on his Dad.



## Fairbridge Canada Association 2014 Reunion September 19-20 Registration Form

**PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.** This will help the Reunion Committee in organizing and ordering the food for the reunion events.

*The costs have stayed the same as the 2013 Reunion.*

Cost for the Reunion: \$60 per person.

*\*Please note—The Reunion fee of \$60 includes costs of the banquet, meet & greet, plus other typical fees charged by hotels for group gatherings, i.e. meeting room, refreshments, gratuities, taxes, etc. Our attendance will help keep our Fairbridge Canada Association alive and well*

Number of people \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my payment of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name (s) (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and /or nickname(s) for name tag(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Make cheques payable to: **FAIRBRIDGE CANADA ASSOCIATION (FCA)**

FCA Reunion Registration Forms and cheques should be sent to:

Ron Smith, FCA Treasurer, 4718 Fairbridge Drive, Duncan, BC V9L 6N8

Receipts will be handed out at the reunion. Ron Smith will send out confirmation notices via email to those who include an email address.

**Meet & Greet:** Friday evening 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**Banquet:** Saturday evening, start with cocktails at 5:30, with dinner served at 6:30.

After dinner—please join us and visit with your old (young at heart) school chums. We will have a programme and music for your listening or dancing pleasure.

For more information, contact your Reunion Committee:

President: Roddy Mackay: [roddymc@comcast.net](mailto:roddymc@comcast.net)

Past President: John Hardy: [jkhardy@shaw.ca](mailto:jkhardy@shaw.ca)

Treasurer: Ron Smith: [rgwsmiths@hotmail.com](mailto:rgwsmiths@hotmail.com)

Check the FCA Website for updates: <http://www.fairbridgecanada.com>



## Fairbridge Canada Association September 2014 Reunion

**WHEN: Friday and Saturday - September 19 – 20, 2014.**

**WHERE: Oceanfront Suites at Cowichan Bay**

1681 Cowichan Bay Road, Cowichan Bay, BC V0R 1N0, Canada

<http://www.oceanfrontcowichanbay.com/>

**CONTACT:**

**Telephone:** Toll Free, Within North America: 1-800-663-7898

Local or From Outside North America: 1-250-715-1000

**Fax:** 1-250-715-1001

**Email:** [info@oceanfrontcowichanbay.com](mailto:info@oceanfrontcowichanbay.com)



*Come and sit by the shore and watch the sun set over beautiful Cowichan Bay*

**NOTE:** When contacting the Oceanfront Suites at Cowichan Bay please identify yourselves as attending the **Fairbridge Reunion** for September 19 – 20, 2014.

To ensure you can get a room for the weekend - you need to book ASAP.

The Oceanfront Suites at Cowichan Bay have a refund cancellation policy of 48 hours, so if you are not certain whether you can make it, you can book now and have time to cancel as September approaches, if you find that you are unable to attend.

**Room Rates** – for those wishing to arrive early and/or stay longer – the hotel will give this special rate for up to two days prior to the reunion and two days after:

1 bedroom suite @ \$120.00/night plus taxes

2 bedroom suite @ \$160.00/night plus taxes



*Photos provided by Oceanfront Suites*



*Victoria:  
53 km to the south along Highway 1*