

# FAIRBRIDGE GAZETTE

## SPRING 2018



**The Fintry Fairbridge Training Farm circa 1939.  
Okanagan Valley, BC.**



12-14 boys would do the farm work and two girls were sent to do the domestic work.



Above - the Packinghouse.  
Left, boys packing apples into the train car.  
Below - the tug towing the barge with the loaded train car to the train-yard, either in Vernon or Kelowna.





## Glen Dobson: President's Message

Happy spring to all!

Your Board of Directors has been busy this past winter exploring a couple of items that came out of last year's AGM; a Canadian government apology and possible class action lawsuit; and a revisit to the way the bursary is being disbursed.

The BOD met with lawyer Adrian Wright, to see if a lawsuit would spur the government into taking responsibility of their part in the child migration movement in Canada. After a lengthy discussion, it was advised by Adrian that a lawsuit would take several years and may not be successful. He recommended instead that if the purpose of the suit was to get recognition in Canada for the existence of the Fairbridge Farm School, then perhaps we should make a documentary. We thought this an excellent idea. At the least, it would capture the memories of Fairbridgians for next generations to see. At best, it would bring more public awareness of Fairbridge and child migration in Canada. Therefore, we are requesting, that if you as Fairbridgians are willing to video tape yourselves talking about your memories at Fairbridge, or next generation to video tape your stories about your parent's/grandparent's experience at Fairbridge,

and/or how this impacted you, please let us know ASAP.

You can contact our corresponding secretary Christina to offer your contributions or to discuss any questions or concerns at 250-612-8698 or [christina@sustainablehealth.com](mailto:christina@sustainablehealth.com)

The bursary has long been a topic of discussion at AGMs. Last year, we said we would explore how to make these funds available to Fairbridge offspring as it was originally intended. Pat Skidmore has been trying to explore this option single handedly. Members of the existing BOD and two general members have agreed to act as BOD members for the bursary society so we can explore this option ASAP. We will keep you posted on developments.

The BOD will have its spring meeting in the next two months. As discussed at last years AGM we will be planning our gathering at Cowichan again this fall. The gathering will be less formal, but we will update you with the details ASAP.

Until then, I wish you all a healthy and happy Spring!

## Family Restoration Fund is still available.

£2 million in extra funding was announced July 7, 2017.

Contact the Child Migrants Trust for the application forms and more information.

<https://www.childmigrantstrust.com/news/2017/7/8/family-restoration-fund-extended>

**FCA Fees of \$30.00 per year**  
**REMINDER: memberships are due in January of each year.**

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

or email Pat Skidmore for a form:  
[patskidmore@shaw.ca](mailto:patskidmore@shaw.ca)

## Fairbridge Canada Association Board 2017

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## **September 28: National British Home Child Day in Canada**

The official text of the approved federal Motion reads as follows: *That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the contributions made by the over 100,000 British Home Children to Canadian Society, their service to our armed forces throughout the twentieth century, the hardships and stigmas that many of them endured, the importance of educating and reflecting upon the story of the British Home Children for future generations by declaring September 28, every year, British Home Child Day in Canada.*

## **1956 Ross Report in Australia Documents show British Government knew Fairbridge farms were unfit for children. Article by Steve Cannane. February 27, 2017.**

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-27/british-government-knew-fairbridge-farms-were-unfit-for-children/8306144>

Documents uncovered by two former Fairbridge 'boys' - Mr David Hill and Ian 'Smiley' Bayliff, show the British Government knew the institutions were unfit for children but sent them there anyway.

In 1956 a fact-finding mission was sent to Australia to evaluate how child migrants were being treated.

Soon afterwards the three inspectors published the Ross Report, which placed both Fairbridge schools on a blacklist, prohibiting children from being sent there.

This outraged the Fairbridge Society's British Secretary WR Vaughan, who used all the establishment clout he could muster to reverse the ban.

He went straight to Australia House in London and told the migration officer there he had 16 children waiting to sail and that he wanted the situation resolved within days.

Then he marched down to the Commonwealth Relations Office where he declared there would be a "first class row" if the blacklist was not lifted.

Senior civil servants knew exactly what this threat meant. The Fairbridge Society's president was the Queen's uncle — the former Governor General of Australia — the Duke of Gloucester.

## AROUND TOWN

Bill Cockburn called to say that he and Florence a great visit with Jack Lowe and his son Grant. Both Bill and Jack came out in 1937. Bill in September and Jack in November.

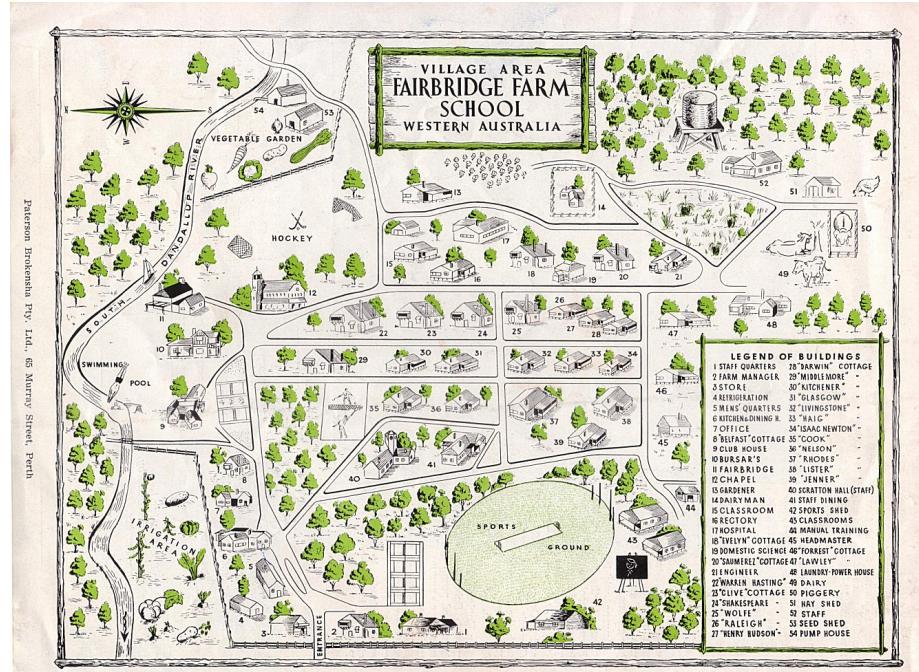
A departmental memo warned the Duke's "intervention would be sought" if the standstill continued.

Within days the blacklist was lifted and the British Government allowed children to be sent to the Fairbridge farms in NSW and WA. They even helped subsidise the journeys.

"The documents show how politically powerful the Fairbridge society was. It was the plaything of the aristocracy," Mr Hill said.

*Ed's note: Children were sent to the two Australian Fairbridge Farm Schools until the 1970s and the farm schools remained opened into the 1980s. In 2015 former Fairbridgians at the Molong Fairbridge Farm School sued for the abuses they faced at this Fairbridge Farm school and former child migrants were paid \$24 million for compensation fund over abuse.*

(<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-29/fairbridge-farm-school-child-migrants-paid-24-million/6580104>)



## Did you spend time at the Middlemore Emigration Home? Do you want to share your story? See below:

### Birmingham's Child Emigrants Revisited

People's Heritage Co-operative: <http://peoplesheritagecoop.blogspot.ca/>

The Balsall Heath Local History Society has received £32,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an exciting project concerning the Children's Emigration Homes. These were founded by John Middlemore in Highgate in 1873 and are an important aspect of Birmingham's heritage.

Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, the project aims to make contact with living relatives of people who were in the Homes and to raise awareness through displays, talks, work with schools and an exhibition. The local History Society will be looking for volunteers to help us in a variety of roles which will offer an opportunity to enhance skills.

Literally thousands of destitute children spent up to a year at these homes before being sent off to be settled with farmers in the backwoods of Canada. They were part of a much larger picture of child emigration, but this project is to concentrate just on the Middlemore Homes.

Tuesday, 3 April 2018

There is huge interest in Canada, where it is estimated that over 10% of the current population are descendants of Home Children. However, there is relatively little awareness in Birmingham of the work of the Children's Emigration Homes and the impact they have had on the lives of people today.

Val Hart from the Local History Society said:

"We are delighted to have received support, thanks to National Lottery players, and are looking forward to Interpreting the work of the Homes to the people of Birmingham."

Vanessa Harbar, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands said:

"We are delighted to support this project, which, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, will mean that more people will be able to get involved with, protect, and learn about the exciting heritage right on their doorstep."

Please contact Val to find out more:  
[valhart1@googlemail.com](mailto:valhart1@googlemail.com) 0121 689 2584



*The Girl's Dormitory -*



THE NEW MIDDLEMORE EMIGRATION HOMES IN WEOLEY PARK ROAD, SELLY OAK.



*the "Splash House"*



*The first Middlemore Emigration Home for boys was opened in 1872 at 157 St. Luke's Road. It stands today, but is also in danger of being demolished.*



*Centre: The Arnison Sisters, Joyce, Marjorie and Bunny, in front of the Middlemore Emigration Home in Birmingham. 2001. The building was demolished circa 2005*

*Some went to the Illmington School (demolished) while at the Middlemore Emigration Home and others went to Princethorpe.*



## THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The Independent Inquiry published its Child Migration Programmes Report on March 1, 2018. The following are excerpts from the report in regard to The Fairbridge Society, pages 77-82.

Chair of the Inquiry, Professor Alexis Jay, said: “Child migration was a deeply flawed government policy that was badly implemented by numerous organisations which sent children as young as five years old abroad. [Editor’s note: children sent to the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School were as young as 4.]

We heard evidence that Fairbridge UK knew of the alleged sexual abuse of child migrants in both Canada and Australia from as early as the late 1930s.

**The Bishop of Victoria wrote to Gordon Green (Fairbridge UK’s Secretary) suggesting that CM-F219 should have been sent to prison, and that Mr. Logan should be replaced, but neither of these events occurred.**

A series of issues concerning alleged sexual abuse had arisen at Fairbridge BC in its period of operation up to 1951.

(i) *Duties Masters CM-F219 [Name withheld] and Rogers (1938-1943):* In March 1938, Duties Master CM-F219 left the school after he had admitted “serious and gross misconduct with...boys” there. After the incident, Harry Logan (Fairbridge BC Principal) was clearly concerned to “avoid talk of scandal as much as possible” and to protect the “good name of Fairbridge from being besmirched by the failure of one of her servants”.

In July 1943, Duties Master Rogers was convicted of “immoral relations” with Fairbridge boys and imprisoned. He was also suspected of “alarming behaviour towards older girls”. During a previous period of employment, he had been dismissed because of concerns of other staff members about sexual misconduct, and Mr. Logan’s decision to re-appoint him had been controversial among the staff and the Canadian Welfare Council. Mr. Logan again hoped to avoid a scandal and that the affair would “be viewed in its true light as

*something which may occur in work of the kind which we are doing at Fairbridge*”. The evidence shows that:

a) Mr. Logan later explained his decision to re-appoint Mr. Rogers by referring to the difficulties in obtaining trained staff (which we see to be a recurring theme in the child migration programmes); and

b) he had obtained several references for Mr. Rogers on his re-appointment.

***This demonstrates there was some awareness from as far back as the 1940’s of the importance of assessing the quality of staff when recruiting.***

***We cannot sacrifice the children to some adult who creates suspicion of injurious behaviour...***

Fairbridge UK said in February 1943 that Mr. Rogers’ reappointment was unwise, but that it could not be involved because Duties Master appointments were a matter for the Principal and local Committee. This is another example of the inherent difficulties in an organisation in one country obtaining reassurance that the children in another country were being properly cared for, when the sending institution did not have authority to change the practice of the receiving institution.

In January 1944, Sir Charles Hambro (Fairbridge UK’s Chairman) wrote to Mr. Logan, stressing that “*We cannot sacrifice the children to some adult who creates suspicion of injurious behaviour*”, and asking for the implementation of “*staff conferences*”, which he described as a general custom and something which could be useful for the “*dispelling of unfounded suspicion and dissatisfaction*”. Mr. Green was sent to Canada following the “*crisis*” to conduct a thorough investigation and to make changes in personnel as necessary. HMG [Her Majesty’s Government] was aware of the Rogers issue, as we explained in Part C.1. [on page 49]

## Fairbridge Chapel News: Spring 2018 By Ron Smith

The good weather in early April seems to have gone somewhere else, rather than Vancouver Island, but we are hopeful warmer days will arrive by the middle of the month and the rain will stop.

There are a number of jobs planned for the year around the heritage site. As mentioned in the fall, we had one large Douglas fir taken down and the maple behind the schoolhouse was trimmed a little rather than being removed. The fir was sold to a local mill while the larger branches of the maple cut and stored in the furnace room/basement of the chapel. Long time Fairbridge resident, Fred Swan, kindly cut the maple wood for us and also has offered to cut the grass area when necessary this summer.

Once everything is cleaned up this spring we are hoping to work with the Strata Corporation to improve the landscaping both within the heritage site as well as the area flat area behind the chapel where the strata removed all the large firs, many with Laminated Root Rot.

Over the next six months, or so, we are hoping to do the following work:

- improve all bathrooms in the chapel, including one that has been out of commission for over 30 years.
- de-thatch the grass areas throughout the heritage site including around the kiosk and to the rear of the school house.
- improve the garden areas throughout the heritage site and possibly add new ones behind the school house.
- put a new shake roof on the kiosk and fix the frames around the three kiosk sign boards.
- clean all interior windows, including the high ones in the chapel.

-construct a new cement sidewalk to both buildings.

-do other minor repairs inside and outside both buildings.

-remove non historic things that have accumulated in the chapel basement over the years.

There are four weddings planned this year with the first taking place on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. So far two others are booked for 2019.

The Fairbridge Chapel Heritage Society is required to undertake a number of things by November 28<sup>th</sup> to meet the new Societies Act. At the 2017 Annual General Meeting the members passed a number of resolutions to update the bylaws, thus we have done all the necessary in house work required and hope to have the rest of the requirements met prior to the 2018 AGM which will be held later in the spring.

The Society is also looking for any artefacts related to the Fairbridge Farm School and another project that we would like to start is have a permanent display or museum area within the school house. This will be discussed at the upcoming AGM. Should you have anything you may wish to donate, such as photos (which we could duplicate and return), written stories or early Gazettes or other artefacts, please contact us.

Finally, the Society wants to thank everyone who has kindly sent us donations over the past year. It is only through your generosity that we can do many of the projects. Last year we were able to do many projects that we had to put off for a number of years thanks to your many donations.

### FABS: Fairbridge Alumni Bursary Society and the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary

#### 2018 FABS BOARD

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A donation to the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary can now be made directly from the *Fairbridge Bursary Page* on the Vancouver Foundation Website: [www.vancouverfoundation.ca/fairbridge](http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/fairbridge)

Or you can make a donation to the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary by contacting: Kerri Waite, Manager, Donor Services

Suite 200 - 475 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 4M9  
D. 604.638.8738, C. 604.657.2729. Website:

<http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca>

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