September 2015 marks the 80th Anniversary of the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School. Plan to come to the FCA Reunion this September.


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Summer's greetings to all. It was with much enthusiasm that your FCA Reunion Committee has proceeded with the planning and organizing for the very special 80th anniversary celebration. Yes, folks, it has been 80 years - beginning with the arrival of the first party of kids in 1935 up to our September FCA Reunion this year: 2015; Fairbridge Canada is still more than just a memory. For me personally as the President of our FCA, much of my enthusiasm has been generated by the fact that we now have four members on the Board, who are second generation Fairbrigians. And believe me, they are all active ready to volunteer their time and efforts to keep our organization alive and well. So please if you have not booked your lodgings with the Oceanfront Suites in Cowichan Bay, please do so ASAP.1

Our last two reunions have drawn over 50 members and guests to the banquet, and I can assure you we all had a wonderful evening. The kickoff event our Friday night Meet & Greet was well attended, a true fun Fairbridge family gathering.2 We also encourage you to invite a family member or a friend to join us in this special occasion, the more the merrier. If you need assistance with your travel plans, please let us know we will do our best to help.

Finally we encourage all members to attend our AGM on Saturday morning. We really need your input to assist us in making decisions on the future of our FCA.

Kindest regards to all look forward to seeing you in September Roddy

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1 See lodging reservations, reunion fee on page 6-7. 2 See reunion schedule on page 7.
These are two of the Fairbridge Farm School Fintry Apple Box labels.

PHOTOS NEEDED! CAN YOU HELP?

The 2015 Reunion Committee is attempting to put together a photo record of each of the 17 groups of children that arrived at the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School between 1935 and 1948.

We are missing photos for the following 4 groups:

1. November 6, 1936
2. September 25, 1941
3. November 29, 1946
4. December 9, 1946

If you are able to help with copies of the travel and or arrival photos for any of these groups, please contact Pat Skidmore – email: pjs@telus.net; phone: 778-888-6614.

Can anyone put any names to any of the Fairbridge children in these 4 photos?

I am attempting to put dates to them.
Even though Col. Harry Logan, the former Principal of the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School, told the Duncan Rotary Club on January 5th, 1948 that the Fairbridge Society had “plans for expansion, and all the farm schools of the organization will be filled up as soon as staff and transportation are available,” things were about to change.

Before the end of the month rumors that the school may close had Principal W.J. Garnett trying to counter the press reports saying they were “without foundation.” At that time there were 91 children residing at the farm school with plans for another 200 to come from Britain so stated an editorial in the Cowichan Leader on February 5th. No one knew that the May 25, 1948 party of just six children would be the last to arrive at Fairbridge.

In August 1949, after a number of the key staff had resigned, including W.J. Garnett, it was announced by Logan Mayhew, chairman of the Canadian board that no more children would be brought to the farm school and further that it would be ‘temporarily’ closed. In the meantime the Fairbridge Society sent the General Secretary Gordon Green to Montreal to start discussions with the Canadian Pacific Railway’s Department of Immigration and Colonization and seek their assistance. By the end of October plans were developed and approved by the president of the railway to bring “suitable British farm families—preferably from Scotland—to Canada under the supervision of the Canada Colonization Association (CCA) (a subsidiary of the CPR) and have them reside up to three years at the Fairbridge ‘school site’ and assist them in finding work in the local area. By this time there were eight vacant residences. At the same time the ‘farm site’ would be leased to a tenant. The remaining children at the school would be under the care of Principal A.H. Plows who would be seeking foster homes for each child as soon as possible.

More farm staff were let go, including John Brown the farm manager who had been at the farm since 1919 well before the farm school was founded in 1935. By early November it was announced that there would be an auction held in December to sell all livestock and machinery. This included “the 65 head of registered Ayrshire cattle as well as nine Clydesdale horses, a larger number of Yorkshire pigs 450 hens and 12 hives of bees.” The sale was held on Tuesday, December 6th with the Vancouver Island Ayrshire Club assisting the auctioneers. The sale raised $22,000 but it wasn’t without controversy as the nine Clydesdales fetched on average less than $40 apiece which many called pathetic.

In February 1950 Principal Plows wrote The Old Fairbridgians Association outlining the plans to place all the girls and some of the boys in foster homes but have the older boys—those between thirteen and sixteen years “pass through the usual processes” with a small staff doing After Care work until all Fairbridgians reach the age of 21. He also mentioned that the proceeds from the sale of the stock and equipment would be “set aside and be used as capital to restock and re-equip the farm when Fairbridge decided to resume farm operations.”

On March 2nd, 1950 a formal agreement was being readied for signing by the Fairbridge Society, the CPR and CCA. At the same time the farm site was leased to Messrs. McBryde and Stephenson, the greenhouse and adjacent three acres to T.A. Biltoft. Mr. and Mrs. J. Bulcock and their family resided in the former hospital rent free for maintenance services provided at the school site. The McBryde and Stephenson lease was due to expire on October 31, 1956 but was extended.

The first three immigrant families arrived from Scotland in April 1950 with another five ‘on their way’. By January 1956 a lengthy report prepared by the CPR stated “42 families comprising 167 souls (83 children) have been brought to Fairbridge. At the present time there are seven immigrant families living on the property and further families are being selected for movement this year. In the meantime the cottages, when available, are kept occupied by local short-term tenants.” (Canadian Pacific Archives R.G. 23 file 135) The report from H.C.P. Cresswell, Chief Commissioner for the Department of Immigration and Colonization to the Fairbridge Society went on to say, “We have been fortunate in being able to maintain the heads of families in steady employment, mainly in the local sawmills as it has been found that when farm employment is offering in the area the employers quite naturally wish their help to live on the farm rather than to commute from a distance.”

This is just a part of the story about Fairbridge from the end of the farm school until January 1956. The eight page report from Mr. Cresswell to the Fairbridge Society goes into greater detail about repairs, leases and extensive damage caused by a 1954 windstorm. As many of you are aware the large day
school continued to be used by School District 65 (Cowichan) until 1962 while the homes at the school site, as it was called, continued to be rented to families up to and including 1975, or when Bellamy Properties Ltd of Victoria acquired the area of the former school on the east side of Koksilah Road. It is now a residential ‘bare land’ strata with 39 homes and the Fairbridge Chapel heritage site.

Sources: C P R Archives
The Cowichan Leader—various editions
Fairbridge Gazette 1950 #1

Researched by Ron Smith

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**The Writing on the Wall**

The final 22 or so minor children, still at the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School in the early 1950s, were placed in foster homes. Names written here include John Scarlett was the lucky one who left today… and Last Kids at Fairbridge, December 7, 1951: Tom Lisle, Keith Hamblett, Eric Foster, Henry Popplewell, John James, Ian Hanson, Michael Petitt, Pete Timbrell, Tony Cousins and Ronald Price.

Some of the last children at the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School wrote their names in chalk on the walls in the basement of the Fairbridge Chapel, which is still visible today, and now sections have been preserved under Plexiglas. Some of the names still visible today are: Robert Gillies, Keith Hamblett, Tom Lisle, one of the Field brothers, Stanley Spence and Sydney Gillies. A couple of the dates mentioned are September 19, 1949 and February 24, 1949.

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**Fairbridge Farm School Bursary News**

Donations to the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary can now be made directly to the Vancouver Foundation. Make cheques out to the Vancouver Foundation and include the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary in the memo line. Send to:

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
T. 604.688.2204  D. 604.629.2725
http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca

Or you can still send donations c/o:
Pat Skidmore, 175 April Road, Port Moody, BC, V3H 3M7
Make cheques out to the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary

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**Fairbridge Chapel**

For more Chapel news and updates, please see the website: [http://www.fairbridgechapel.com](http://www.fairbridgechapel.com). New pictures and stories are always being added. 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

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**Britain’s Family Restoration Fund**

has been extended to 2017.

For more information see the
Child Migrant’s Trust Website:
Fairbridge Canada Association
September 2015 Reunion

WHEN: Friday and Saturday - September 18 – 19, 2015.

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

NOTE: When contacting the Oceanfront Suites at Cowichan Bay please identify yourselves as attending the Fairbridge Reunion for September 18 – 19, 2015.

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

Please check with the Oceanfront Suites at Cowichan Bay for the terms of their full refund cancellation policy, 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:
1 bedroom suite @ $144.00/night plus taxes
1 bedroom ocean patio suite: $167.25 plus taxes
1 bedroom economy suite (no kitchenette) $127.25plus taxes
2 bedroom suite @ $188.00/night plus taxes

Come and sit by the shore and watch the sun set over beautiful Cowichan Bay!
Fairbridge Canada Association 2015 Reunion
September 18 – 19
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 in line with the 2014 Reunion’s costs.

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.

**Friday September 18: Meet & Greet:** 6:30 p.m. in the Hotel Cocktail Lounge

**Saturday September 19:**
* FCA AGM Meeting: 9:00 am to noon. Hotel Room TBA
* Fairbridge Farm School: 1:30 pm - Site Visit & Chapel: Commemoration of Members who have passed.
* Banquet: Saturday evening: cocktails at 6:00 pm and dinner served at 7:00 pm.

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
Treasurer: Ron Smith: rgwsmiths@hotmail.com
Pat Skidmore: pjs@telus.net