

FAIRBRIDGE GAZETTE

SUMMER 2019



Above: photo courtesy from a family who lived in the cottage after the farm school closed down.



Right: Photo of the Cottage Mother Blanshard and some Fairbridge boys, photo courtesy of Roy Myhill.

See page 3 for the boy's names.

EX-GRATIA PAYMENT SCHEME FOR FORMER BRITISH CHILD MIGRANTS

**Each eligible former child migrant will receive a payment of GBP £20,000.
Details included.**



Glen Dobson: President's Message

Hello. I hope you are all enjoying the warmer weather.

I have two primary things to share with you this July.

First, I have been informed by the FABS Board that we have 7 applicants for bursaries. I am pleased to inform you that all of the applicants are Fairbridge offspring. We will inform you of the success of the applicants in the next gazette.

Secondly, at the gathering last September, we said that due to dwindling numbers, the board will not be organizing any more formal gatherings. We do encourage all members to continue to get together in Cowichan if you are able to. Although it is the intent of the board to continue to gather each year and inform the membership of these dates, the majority of the current board is unable to make it to Cowichan this September. We hope you will still get together. We are still here as a group and encourage all of you to connect on Facebook, the website, email, and the good old-fashioned telephone!

EX-GRATIA PAYMENT SCHEME FOR FORMER BRITISH CHILD MIGRANTS Each eligible former child migrant will receive a payment of GBP £20,000.

FIRST: register with the Child Migrants Trust.

Ensure that the Child Migrants Trust has your up to date contact information.

*Have you ever been in touch with the Child Migrants Trust? Have you received a letter from the Child Migrants Trust recently about this payment? If not, the first thing to do - is **register** - go to the Child Migrants Trust's website and at the bottom line on this web page: <https://www.childmigrantstrust.com/> - it says click **HERE** - and it opens up a page where you can give your information - in the bottom box - **OTHER** - include your address - for Fairbridgians sent to BC - put that you were sent to the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School on Vancouver Island (or if you were sent by another sending agency - include which one) and the date - that you want to apply for the UK Payment Scheme Application Forms. They should respond pretty quickly - saying they will mail out the forms. Or you can write to the CMT at one of the following addresses:*

CMT - UK

Child Migrants Trust
124 Musters Road, West Bridgford
Nottingham, U.K. NG2 7PW
Tel: (0115) 982 2811
International: +44 115 9822811

CMT - Australia

Child Migrants Trust Inc.
169 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn
Melbourne, Victoria 3122
Free phone: 1800 04 05 09
Tel: (03) 9815 2022
International: +613 9815 2022

CMT - Australia

Child Migrants Trust Inc.
8 Sunbury Road
Victoria Park, Perth, WA 6100
Free phone: 1800 04 05 09
Tel: (08) 9472 7582
International: +618 9472 7582

There may be some former Fairbridgians who have not heard about this payment. Please share this information to ensure all eligible former Fairbridgians have a chance to apply.

See page 5 information on the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary

Family Restoration Fund is still available.

Contact the Child Migrants Trust for 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 FCA Treasurer Tony Carty
Email: tony@invicta.ca Ph: 604-762-2192
20900 45A Avenue, Langley BC V3A 3G5

or email Pat Skidmore for a form:
patskidmore@shaw.ca

Fairbridge Canada Association Board 2019

President: Glen Dobson: kingdobber@me.com

Vice President: Dan Dobson: danieldobson@telus.net

Past President: Roddy Mackay: roddymc@comcast.net

Treasurer: Tony Cartey: tony@invicta.ca

Secretary: Christina Dobson: Christina@sustainmentalhealth.com

Gazette Editor: Pat Skidmore: patskidmore@shaw.ca

International Liaison Officer: Christine McIver: kitt1062@googlemail.com

Director: Roy Myhill: royhill2016@outlook.com

Two Fairbridgians Meet

Two former Fairbridgians met in an unlikely place this week. The children of Evelyn Donnelly (now Toms) and Rudolph (Rudy) Smith, have been acquaintances for a few years. Meeting at volunteering opportunities in the small town of Goderich, Ontario, and having police backgrounds found them socializing in the same circles. It wasn't until Pat Skidmore connected the two, that they learned of their rare common bond.

This week, Evelyn Donnelly Toms and Rudy Smith enjoyed coffee and cake together discussing their years at Fairbridge. Rudy left Fairbridge in 1945 just as Evelyn was arriving from England. Although they had never actually met, Rudy had apparently knocked on Evelyn's door several years ago when he discovered she lived only a few kilometres away from him in Burlington, Ontario. She wasn't home at the time, and he never attempted contacting her again.

Not until now, when Evelyn's and Rudy's children arranged a get together in the home of Rudy's son, Rudy Jr., in Goderich, Ontario.

Rudy's sunny, positive outlook was obvious as he spoke fondly of his time at Fairbridge. Evelyn's memories didn't quite match his, but they enjoyed talking about their experiences. Both families have spent numerous hours researching family trees and taking advantage of assistance from The Child Migrants Trust to reconnect with family in England. In 2015, Evelyn and her daughter Kathryn travelled back to South Shields, England to see Evelyn's birthplace, connect with family and see graves. Rudy has been back to England a few times, but not for three decades. He is planning to visit his hometown of Brighton, England with his son this spring to attend a family reunion of his mother's relatives.

You never know where you will find an old Fairbridgian, it is often in the unlikeliest places.



Above: Rudy Smith and Evelyn Donnelly (Toms)
Left – Rudy holding a picture of the group he travelled with to the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School in 1940.

Other news...



This photo was posted on Facebook and a couple of Fairbridgians found themselves. Can anyone name the rest? Evelyn Donnelly is in the back row far right. Andrew Hewitt is in the middle row, second from the left.

Below left: Evelyn Donnelly (Toms) daughter, Katherine Adams met up with Andrew Hewitt and his son.



Above right: Austin and Pam on their wedding day.

CONGRATULATIONS

...goes out to Pam (aka Olive/Pam Morrison) and Austin Brown, they celebrated their 70th Anniversary. Pam came over with the very first party in September 1935, with her sister Mary Jane Morrison (aka Jeannie)



I met up with Barry Whiting – Barry arrived at the Fairbridge Farm School in May of 1947. I have contact information for Barry if anyone would like to get in touch with him. Barry is quite the artist... here is a blue heron he drew. (Pat Skidmore)



Names from the photo on the front cover.

The Butter Church in Cowichan

Pat Skidmore



A Fairbridgian sitting in the window of the Butter Church aka the Old Stone Church circa 1940.

Who recalls the Butter (Stone) Church in Cowichan?

Some of the girls told me that they walked to the Butter Church from the Fairbridge Farm School and picked blackberries on the way. I thought I would share that when the Butter Church was abandoned, the stained glass windows were re-installed in St. Paul's Church, Fulford Harbour, on Salt Spring Island

On May 10, 1880, a congregation of Kanakas, Indians and European settlers attended the consecration of St. Paul's Catholic Church. Land for the church was donated by Horace Shepherd, a settler whose two sons, Bill and George married Kanaka women. The windows, door, altar and lumber were brought from the stone Church at Cowichan Bay by natives in three canoes lashed together.

Ted Akerman used a "stoneboat" and oxen to transport the load from Burgoyne Bay to Fulford where it stands today.



Above The Butter Church: with windows and doors removed – left – St. Paul's Church, Fulford Harbour on Salt Spring Island. Below – the Butter Church today and the bell on St. Paul's Church



Front, back and side of the Butter Church

Fairbridge Files housed at the BC Archives

The Prince's Trust has lifted the 100-year restriction on the Fairbridge Farm School files housed at the University of Liverpool. **BUT** not at the BC Archives.

However, the BC Archives has lifted the restrictions a little. If a Fairbridgian has been gone for 20 years or more, the family can request to view their file. You will need proof of your identity and proof that the Fairbridgian is deceased, such as a copy of the death certificate.

A family member can view their Fairbridgian's file if they have written permission. It is my suggestion, that wherever possible, write a letter of permission now and get your Fairbridge person to sign it – for future use. For instance, my mother passed away 2 years ago. I had a letter of permission from her to view her Fairbridge files, so I could access them last month. Without that letter I would have to wait another 18 years.

You can take in a camera and take photographs of the papers.

You can also request to have the papers photocopied by the BC Archive's staff. The cost is minimal, but there is no guarantee that they can copy them right away.

You can also give permission to a third party to view the file. For instance, I recently was given permission to view and copy a Fairbridgian's file. I then emailed them the images. The Fairbridgian lives in Ontario and was not able to get to Victoria. This is useful if you cannot get to Victoria to do view the file yourself.

Staff at the BC Archives will also copy and send your file once permission is granted and the correct documentation is in place.

It takes a week or two for permission to come through, so don't arrive at the BC Archives expecting to see things straight away.

To get permission in place, email:

privacy@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

Pat Skidmore patskidmore@shaw.ca

In recognition of the British Child Migrants/ Canada's Home Children on September 28th, 2019, special lighting will be displayed at a number of locations across Canada. Some confirmed locations: Niagara Falls, Kingston City Hall, Edmonton's High Level Bridge, Calgary's Reconciliation Bridge, and on September 25, at BC Place, Vancouver - The Northern Lights Display.

Chapel News Summer 2019

Ron Smith, Secretary/Treasurer

Being away during the winter months I was unable to get a report to everyone for the spring edition of the Gazette so there are a number of topics to cover.

To begin with there was a very successful Fairbridge Carols event on December 15th, 2018. Dr. Harwood Reimer once again organized the afternoon, featuring the Freedom Gospel Choir, the New Life Church band as well as the Fairbridge Children's Choir. In addition, our chapel society President, Erik Henriksen got the furnace stoked so the entire chapel was nice and warm during the concert.

On December 10th there was a very bad windstorm in the Cowichan Valley and throughout the Gulf Islands. With many downed trees both along Koksilah Road as well as some properties within the Fairbridge community power was out for almost five days and only coming on just before the afternoon event. Thankfully the very large trees behind the chapel were removed two years ago, so there was no damage to the heritage site.

I would also want to thank Lori Lachance (Lori's Landscaping) for cleaning up the site after the storm as well as continuing to cut the lawn for us. This spring Colleen MacGregor also spent a number of hours getting the front gardens in fine shape.

There is more work needed with the other gardens this summer, however we are once again in a drought on southern Vancouver Island and thus are unable to use the irrigation system at the chapel, so the lawns are turning brown. Fortunately, we had two good downpours at the beginning of July.

Weddings

Three weddings were booked for this year with the first on taking place on April 6th while the other two will be held in August and September.

Annual General Meeting

The Fairbridge Chapel Heritage Society held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on June 15th and the minutes will be posted on our web site—fairbridgecanada.ca—shortly.

All members of the board agreed to serve another year. In addition, there was a long list of projects presented that the society wish to accomplish this year. The largest one will be to have a concrete sidewalk poured to both the chapel and schoolhouse. In addition, we will be considering having another sidewalk to the other rear double door to accommodate a handicapped entrance.

The next big project will be to improve the washrooms, including getting the third washroom, that has been closed since the 1970's, operating. There are a number of other things needing our attention such as getting the wasps sprayed, opening all windows (some had been accidentally painted over), cleaning the carpets and re-arranging the supplies stored in the basement.

There was a request from the Cowichan Valley School's Heritage Society to allow them to have a small gold school-bell shaped sign either put on the school house (near the door) or on a stand-alone post. As some of you will know this building was occupied by the herdsman and his family when the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School was operating and before that, the farm manager.



The one-room schoolhouse was originally called the Cowichan Public School and built for \$475 in 1885. It is considered the oldest framed building north of the Malahat on Vancouver Island. Mr. E.J. Campbell was the first teacher and earned all of \$60 for his years' work. By 1896 the school closed and a larger school opened at Cowichan Station accommodating around fifty children.

The Board agreed to allow the School's Heritage Society to install the bell plaque and this could take place sometime in the fall. In addition, the same society will be speaking with the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) to have another bell plaque put on a post to designate the location of the much larger Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School's Day School. The site of this former school is now parkland owned by the CVRD.

Unfortunately, I have had to turn off the bell at the chapel. For some reason, likely due to the inappropriate oiling of the mechanism, a couple of years ago, the strike often does not properly occur or is out of sync with the hour. Thus, sometimes the midnight (12 strikes) occurs hours later and not appreciated by the residents especially if it occurs around 4am!!

Chapel News con't bottom page 6.

2019 Fairbridge Alumni Bursary Society Board

Patricia Skidmore: patskidmore@shaw.ca

Christina Dobson: christina@sustainablehealth.com

Tony Cartey: tony@invicta.ca

Melody Dobson: melody_d@telus.net

Dan Dobson:

Roberta Baril: baril@ualberta.ca

*FABS is once again accepting bursary applications from the offspring of **Former Fairbridgians**, who were sent to the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School. **Seven applications** from grandchildren of former Fairbridgians were received for consideration for the 2019 FABS Bursaries. Students will be notified in July or early August.*

Three Fairbridge Farm School Bursaries were given out to students at the Cowichan High School in Duncan.

FABS: Fairbridge Farm School Bursary

Donations to the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary can be sent to:

- 1) FABS Treasurer: Tony Cartey: tony@invicta.ca, 20900 45A Avenue, Langley BC V3A 3G5 604-762-2192
- 2) Or from the *Fairbridge Bursary Page* on the Vancouver Foundation Website: www.vancouverfoundation.ca/fairbridge
- 3) Or by contacting Claire Vivier, Manager, Donor Services, Suite 200 - 475 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 4M9. D. 604-530-5026, C. 604-5050-8556. Website: <http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca>

For more information, contact one of the FABS Directors.

Those Who Passed



SPEED, Richard Henry (Dick) September 2, 1924 - April 22, 2019.

Survived by his devoted wife of 51 years, Berenice. Loving father of Caroline (Todd) Pope and Chris (Rachel) Speed. Beloved grandfather (“Baba”) of Hannah and Jeremy Pope. Predeceased by his brother, Tom (2009). Richard was born in Wilton, Wiltshire, UK. In 1935 (age 11) he left Wimbledon, London and came to the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School located in Duncan on Vancouver Island as part of the first group of British Child Migrants to this area. RCAF 1943-1946. M.A. Clinical Psychology, UBC (1952). Majority of his career was spent at VCC Langara as a Vocational Counsellor (1963 -1990).

Richard was a long time resident of Lynn Valley and loved the BC West Coast with many happy times spent at Jericho Tennis Club, Yellowpoint Lodge, Gambier and Mayne Islands.

A Celebration of Life was held at 2 pm on Sunday May 26, 2019. In lieu of flowers, the family requested that donations be given to the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary via the Vancouver Foundation Website:

www.vancouverfoundation.ca/fairbridge

The Road to Cowichan Station *By Dick Speed*

Father blind and injured from World War I. 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.



Caroline with her father and mother, Dick and Berenice Speed,
2014 FCA Reunion.
Photo by Pat Skidmore

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-workers, mill-worker, Air Force mechanic
Adult school, university, a career England would not have
given

Positions and pleasure – 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:

And 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.

Chapel News, continued from page 5:

We will first try and wipe the oil from the going trains and do some trial runs through the summer. Hopefully it will be fixed in short order.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone that has renewed their membership with the society as well as provided us with donations to maintain the historic site. We also very much appreciate any donations of historic artifacts including copies of photographs that were taken when the farm school operated as well as between the 1950’ and mid 1970’s.