

FAIRBRIDGE GAZETTE



Spring 2016



September 2016 Reunion News

See page 3 for details and look for the Reunion Registration Form included with this Spring 2016 Gazette.



Hello Fairbridgians, I am Glen Dobson a 2nd generation Fairbridgian and Vice President of the Fairbridge Canada Association Board of Directors. My father Danny along with his brother, my Uncle Bob Dobson, came to Fairbridge from 1947-1951. Both my Uncle and Father have since past away.

I came to Fairbridge looking for answers to try and piece together my family's past and try to understand why my father was who he was. In that quest I was able to connect for the first time with my Cousin Roberta after 44 years of separation. This connection to the past and missing family was my sole purpose for coming to the Fairbridge reunion.

Now as Vice President, it is my goal to reach out and connect and welcome in more 2nd, 3rd or even 4th generation children of Fairbridgians. To do this I am taking an active role with the blessing of President Roddy Mackay along with the rest of the board members to create a website and social media links to make it easier for other descendants of Fairbridgians to find their way home. I believe together we can connect our past, fill in the holes on our family trees and maybe even find lost family members. At the very least we can keep the story of Fairbridge and the 326 children who attended it alive! Together we can share our stories and theirs, to have a better understanding of where we came from.

Please join me in this quest and pass this message on to the children or grandchildren of Fairbridge and have them reach out to us on Facebook, website or better yet in person at the reunion this fall.

Thank you, Glen Dobson

Christina Dobson: Corresponding Secretary

Hi Fairbridgians, my name is Christina Dobson and I sit on the Board of Directors as the corresponding secretary. As noted in my brother Glen's introduction, I am a second generation Fairbridgian, daughter of Danny Dobson. Together with our older brother Dan, and now our long lost cousin Roberta, we are thrilled to be part of the Fairbridge family again. As corresponding secretary one of my tasks is to track and promote correspondence within our society, and between our society and outside entities. As Glen noted we are now using social media to widen our scope. I encourage all of you to access our social media sites. I also encourage you to contact me personally for any information you would like to provide or receive. I can be reached through Facebook or by phone at 250-612-8698. I hope to see you all at this year's reunion!

Photos from front cover: 1) Likely a Nicholas Morant photo – given by Chinami Hancock. Roddy Mackay believes the boys to be left to right: Phillip Field, in the driver's seat I think Leon Mendoza, then John Roberts and John Cowans, kneeling checking out the tire? and the last one looks like the curly hair of Ron Hancock.

2) This washbasin can still be seen in a former Fairbridge cottage.

Photo by Pat Skidmore at the FCA Reunion 2015

3) Photographer unknown – photo given by Chinami Hancock

Does anyone recognize any of the girls?



Back: Ron Smith, Pat Skidmore, Glen Dobson, Christina Brazzoni.

Front: Roy Myhill, Roddy Mackay, John Hardy.

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

Membership forms can be found on the
FCA website at:

<http://fairbridgecanada.com/>

Or you can contact Ron Smith

FCA Treasurer, 4718 Fairbridge Drive,

Duncan, BC V9L 6N8

or email Pat Skidmore for a form. pjs@telus.net

Fairbridge Canada Association Board

President: Roddy Mackay: roddymc@comcast.net

Vice President: Glen Dobson: kingdobber@me.com

Past President: John Hardy: jkhardy@shaw.ca

Treasurer: Ron Smith: rgwsmiths@hotmail.com

Secretary: Christina Dobson: cbrazzoni@telus.net

Gazette Editor: Pat Skidmore: pjs@telus.net

International Liaison Officer: Christine Brookshaw:

kitti1062@googlemail.com

Roy Myhill: royhill2016@outlook.com

When: September 9-10, 2016

Where: Ocean Front Suites at Cowichan Bay

The FCA September 9-10 registration form is included with this Gazette.

The Registration Form can also be found on the Fairbridge Canada Association website at:

<http://fairbridgecanada.com/>

Please register early!

Contact the Ocean Front Suites at Cowichan Bay to make your room reservations.

OceanFront Suites at Cowichan Bay
1681 Cowichan Bay Road
Cowichan Bay, B.C.
V0R 1N0

Toll Free 1.800.663.7898

Local 250.715.1000

info@oceanfrontcowichanbay.com



Photos from the FCA 2015 Reunion

Here is a story about one of the Fairbridge Farm School Maple Trees:

Live Edge Designs

John Lore: Founder and front man of Live Edge Design. 10 March 2016

<https://www.liveledgedesign.com/treestory/Silver-Maple>

The Fairbridge Society was one of many British sending agencies set up to immigrate British children to their Commonwealth countries. Between the 1830s and 1948, over 120,000 children were sent to Canada. The Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School, in operation between 1935 and the early 1950s, near Cowichan Station on Vancouver Island, was one the last locations for British Child Migrants to be sent to in Canada. A total of 329 children were sent here. 95% were not orphans.

In neighbouring Vancouver, patients from the mental hospital Essondale, nurtured tree seedlings. They sent a gift of diverse tree species to the children

so that they could beautify their home. Over the years the trees grew up alongside the children at Fairbridge. One of them was a beautiful Silver maple.

In 2013 its branch cracked away in the night, narrowly missing the house. It has become LED365, a graceful wonder with a shimmery magic in its wood. We salvaged it, all of it, even the branches. The sawdust has gone to farmers for their chickens and crops. The tree was massive, twice as tall as the house and so wide that 5 people could hold hands around it. Unusual trees call for unusual measures so it took 2 of our woodworkers to mill it. Many months of air and kiln-drying later, it was ready.

We let nature determine the design. Naturally curving, this maple called out to become a curvy gapped table. A buffet, mirror, and chairs followed soon after.

This Silver Maple suite is special to the Live Edge Design team. We tried to keep as much of the wood together as we could in one suite, and like all of our wood, we have tried to use all of what we salvaged. A few pieces are still waiting for the perfect design idea. Then John Lore, Live Edge's owner, made a list of all the things we had made out of it and calculated that if all of wood harvested in BC were processed into as much value as we got from the silver Maple, we could create 2 million new jobs. The silver maple has proven that Local Art and Craft can be a powerful force for a healthy economy while saving some trees at the same time. Live Edge has, in fact proven this again and again, salvaging about 100 trees a year and creating more than 20 full time jobs.

In 2014, we took the dining suite, including table, chairs, buffet, chandelier and mirror, all made from the silver maple to the Interior Design Show in Vancouver. We used a graphic depicting all of the

other things that had been made from the same tree and how many jobs it had created. The graphic captured the imagination of many at the show, including David Leverton with the Robert Bateman Foundation. He was excited by how it fit with Robert's message and suggested we have a oneTree exhibit in Victoria at the Bateman Centre. We co-sponsored an exhibit that combined the work of artists, all making something from a single salvaged tree that would celebrate the past, present and future of the tree as well as demonstrating the breadth and value of items that could be created. Thus the oneTree Exhibit was born!

We put the word out and got about 70 applications, 42 of whom were chosen for the show. The exhibit opened in November 2015 and ran until January 2016. The next one is slated for November 2017. We have salvaged a giant walnut tree that needed to come down in Victoria, its era is that of its neighbour Craigdarroch Castle.

John had had his vision for many years, but the Silver Maple at Fairbridge Farm School was the tree that made it a reality.



Photos above sent in by Live Edge Design



Photos above sent in by Georgina Montgomery who lived in one of the Fairbridge cottages at the time. Georgina said: that silver maple was next door to us (at Richard's Cottage). One of its big trunks came down in a wind storm (2013? 2012?) and took out our back stairs and wood shed at the end of the carport. Miraculously, it missed our roof by a mere centimetres--crushed a corner of eaves trough, it came that close.

Chapel News

Spring has arrived to Fairbridge right on time and with it lots of tidying up around the chapel. At the moment we are cleaning the interior as well as various garden areas. In addition we started cleaning the many eve trough runs. The high ones are especially in need of cleaning and we are getting a long extension ladder for these. Later in the spring we will be hiring a tree service firm to do the gutters around the bell tower, which are about 26 metres above the ground—much too high to climb a ladder.

Early in march the Chapel sign blew over as the two posts were rotted out and needed replacement for the past few years. Ron Price, one of our Board Directors who has lived in Fairbridge since the early 1980's and a super carpenter, replaced the posts and also sanded the sign. We are going to put three coats of Cetol on the sign (front and back) once the weather warms up.

On Saturday, April 16th there was a memorial for **Brian Strawbridge** at the Chapel. Brian passed away on December 30th, 2015 and came here in 1938. After his long service with the RCAF he resided in Victoria and requested his ashes remain at Fairbridge. Of course all Fairbridgians and his friends are most welcome to attend his memorial.

This summer more work will be carried out around the heritage site. This will include getting the moss from the building roofs, installing some new runs of eve troughs, repairing the basement wood shut door and possibly refinish the other chapel doors (3 of them), lots of painting and if time permits thatching the lawn areas.

The Strata Corporation is also looking into removing the large Douglas fir trees behind the chapel. Two years ago one came down and the top almost hit the chapel and again this past December another one along the bank came down but fortunately fell into the ravine. At the same time there are two other trees on the chapel property that should be removed. One is a Douglas fir, about 70 years old, and a Big Leaf Maple. Both are behind the schoolhouse. This area could be cleaned up and a nice garden area created.

The Strata is working with the Society and we will know how the community plans to advance in the next month or two. The Strata is most concerned that a strong west wind will either drop the trees on the chapel or the water reservoir and pump house. As you will read elsewhere in the Gazette, many of the trees in Fairbridge are getting very large and can be a dangerous to many buildings. However, when possible many land owners including the Strata Corporation reuse the wood for furniture or other purposes, not just to cut it up for firewood. Likely the larger Douglas fir will be sold as saw logs but the maple could become furniture or musical instruments.

The Chapel Society really wants to thank everyone who has provided us with some financial gifts over the past year. We couldn't carry on with the upkeep and maintain the heritage site without your help.

Ron Smith

Fairbridge Farm School Bursary News

Donations to the Fairbridge Farm School Bursary can 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:

*Kerri Waite, Manager, Donor Services
Re: The Fairbridge Farm School Bursary
Suite 200 - 475 West Georgia Street, Vancouver,
BC Canada V6B 4M9*

Fairbridge Chapel

For more Chapel news and updates, please see the website: <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

Those Who Passed. Our sympathy goes out to their family and friends.

Brian Strawbridge: We sadly announce that Brian passed away peacefully on 30 December 2015. Brian was born in Newcastle on Tyne on 14 March 1929. He was sent to The Fairbridge Farm School on Vancouver Island in 1938 where he received his early education. He joined the RCAF in April 1951 and was trained as a pilot. His initial posting was a flying instructor at RCAF Station Claresholm AB. He later flew the CF100 All weather Fighter with 445 Squadron in Marville France and the Falcon Fanjet and Convair 540 with 412 Squadron, Ottawa. He served two tours with NATO in Europe on Bases in France, Germany and England. He also served with the United Nations in Kashmir, flying along the border between India and Pakistan. He retired in Victoria and will be fondly remembered by his comrades from the RCAF, Fairbridge Farm Alumni, the residents on lower Cook Street and the staff at Sunrise Senior Living, Victoria. A celebration of life will be held at the Esquimalt Navy Wardroom, 1586 Esquimalt Road from 2:00 - 4:00 PM, Sunday 7 February.



Gordon Hedley Dewhirst passed away on May 7, 2016. He died peacefully with his family by his side. Gordon arrived at the Prince of Wales Fairbridge farm School on May 31, 1947.

WANTED:

Please send in the names of any Fairbridgians who served in the Canadian Armed Forces after WWII. A new plaque will be installed in the Fairbridge Chapel.

Contact Ron Smith rgwsmiths@hotmail.com

A moment in Fairbridge Farm School history: Roy Myhill rang the bell when Prince Charles was born on November 14, 1948.



*Middle: Audrey Richards and Hazel Hughes
Right – Philip Tipler*



WANTED: To know the whereabouts of the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School BELL.

Does anyone know?

Contact Ron Smith rgwsmiths@hotmail.com

Britain's Family Restoration Fund has been extended to 2017.

For more information see the

Child Migrant's Trust Website: <http://www.childmigrantstrust.com/services/family-restoration-fund>



Fairbridge Canada Association 2016 Reunion September 9– 10 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 2015 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. And in spite of 2016 price increases of the menu by the hotel, we were able to negotiate same cost for this year as we did for last year.*

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: 831-899-3864 or email: roddymc@comcast.net

Vice President: Glen Dobson: 604-464-5060 or email: kingdobber@me.com

Treasurer: Ron Smith: 250-746-7519 or email: rgwsmiths@hotmail.com

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



Fairbridge Canada Association September 2016 Reunion

WHEN: Friday and Saturday - September 9 – 10, 2016.

WHERE: Oceanfront Suites at Cowichan Bay

1681 Cowichan Bay Road, Cowichan Bay, BC V0R 1N0, Canada
<http://www.oceanfrontcowichanbay.com/>



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

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 9 – 10, 2016.

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 –

Economy Room @ \$159.00/night plus taxes

Double Queen Rooms @ \$183.00/night plus taxes

Ocean King Rooms @ \$183.00/night plus taxes

Patio Rooms @ \$207.00/night plus taxes

Executive Rooms @ \$247.00/night plus taxes

