

June 2003

NEWSLETTER

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS EX-RESIDENTS AND STUDENTS SERVICES

What Happened to "the Aussie Kids"?

Former child migrants who spent their formative years living in Christian Brothers Childcare Institutions will be aware that many Australian born children were also raised in the same institutions with similar experiences to those who came from overseas. Yet, it seems that very few of the Aussie kids either know about or have taken up the support services that C-BERS offers to ALL ex-residents of Christian Brothers institutions. In asking the question "what happened to the Aussie Kids", this edition of C-BERS Express features several items of interest to this group of men.

Castledare Old Boy Honoured in Centenary Awards



John Jamieson received his centenary medal from the Hon. Simon O'Brien MLC on 19 May 2003

Australian-born John Jamieson (Castledare 1962) was recently awarded the Centenary Medal in recognition of his work at the **New Hope** support centre in Medina. The **New Hope** centre was founded by John about seven years ago and he continues as its Coordinator. John's citation reads: *For service assisting victims of abuse with volunteer counselling.* John is one of the *Combined Abuse Support Team (CAST)* offering a service out of *Isabella House*, Pace Road, Medina. The initiative is supported by the local community and the Town of Kwinana. The support team works with other groups and agencies within the wider community. Further information can be obtained by phoning the centre on 9419 2576.

While ex-residents who were born in Australia were spared some of the special challenges faced by former child migrants, many had also experienced trauma in their early lives. As C-BERS Chairperson, Dr Maria Harries writes — "Many of these residents were wards of the State, which means that life had already dealt them some major blows. We know that institutional life itself is often very hard on children and, like the former child migrants, many of the Australian born children embarked on a life outside with insufficient preparation and no family support".

Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

Dr Harries has welcomed the current Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care in Australia which will focus specifically on the experiences and longer term implications for children growing up in an institutional setting. Two related inquiries have previously reported on the removal of Aboriginal Children and the experiences of British and Maltese Child Migrants.

"This final part of the trilogy will not only provide an opportunity to investigate the events of the past and their present day consequences in the lives of former residents, but it will also enable us to learn from past mistakes in planning for the care needs of children in the future.

"There are many thousands of children in Australia who, for any of a number of reasons such as abuse, death, substance abuse, illness, forced migration, are unable to live in their own family home. These children are already vulnerable due to the upheaval and trauma that such events can cause in their lives. The enormous challenge in providing care for children in such circumstances is to ensure that, in doing so, we help to heal their anguish rather than exacerbate it. Current policies of placing refugee children in detention centres only serve to demonstrate how much there is still to learn from the lessons of the past."

Making a Submission to the Senate Inquiry

If you wish to make a submission, C-BERS can provide a copy of the Inquiry Terms of Reference or they can be downloaded from the Senate Committee website at:

<http://www.apf.gov.au/senate/committee/inquiries/index.htm>

Submissions close on 31 July 2003 with the Inquiry Report due by 3 December 2003.



**WE'RE OPEN
FOR BUSINESS**

**between 8.30 a.m.
and 4.30 p.m.
Monday to Friday**

ON STAFF

**Administration
Manager— Mary Kearns**
(Monday to Thursday)

**Clinical Supervisor
Dr Mark Sachmann**
Wednesday)

**Counsellors
Dr Michael Anderson**
(Tuesday, Wednesday,
Friday)

Sjoukje Tarbox
(Mondays and Thursdays)

**Administration
Lorraine Hipkins**
(Monday, Tuesday)

Sue Fullerton
(Wednesday, Thursday,
Friday)

**MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

Dr Maria Harries
(Chairperson)
Dr Debra Rosser
George Horton

CONTACT

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E-Mail:
welcome@cberss.org
Web-site:
www.cberss.org

Calling "the Aussie Kids"

Are you an Australian-born
Ex-Resident of Castledare, Clontarf,
Bindoon or Tardun?

If so, you could benefit from the free
services we offer to Christian Brothers
ex-residents, including:

- ◆ Professional Counselling
- ◆ Interest Free Loans
- ◆ Advocacy – where we can speak, act
or write on your behalf with other
persons, companies or agencies.

We encourage you to contact C-BERS to
find out more about how we can help
you. We also welcome your suggestions
as to how we could best meet your
needs. Contact C-BERS at Freecall 1800
621 805.

Do you Need Help with Reading and Writing?

Susan, a voluntary adult tutor, has indicated
her willingness to provide help to adults
who wish to learn to read and write. From
her extensive experience Susan knows how
awkward it feels to be coming back to learn
as an adult after negative childhood experi-
ences of learning. Susan comes recom-
mended by one of our clients who, to his
delight, is now comfortably able to read
novels and newspaper articles.

Susan is available to teach in your home
(Vic Park locality preferred) and she is also
willing to provide group teaching at C-
BERS during the day if enough people are
interested. Please contact C-BERS to find
out more.

Australian Child Migrant Project - Assistance with Family Tracing

Joan Kerry, Australian Child Migrant Project Manager will once again be with us for a month in August — September to continue her work in helping former child migrants trace their families.

Joan will be working from both C-BERS and Catholic Migrant Centre offices from the 25th of August until the 21st of September. She will also spend some time in Geraldton, Bunbury, Melbourne and Newcastle.

If you wish to see Joan when she visits Australia, please contact C-BERS so that we can make an appointment for you. Her contact number in the UK is 01675 434002.

(See back page for details of a get-together that Joan is organising in the UK for families of Former Child Migrants in July).

In this special edition on "the Aussie Kids" who grew up in institutional care, we are delighted to feature information on the Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN). CLAN has played a significant part in influencing government and in enlisting support from interested parties to finally bring about the current Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care in Australia. WA Democrat Senator Andrew Murray took up the CLAN cause and successfully proposed the Inquiry to Parliament.



Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN) is a national self-help support and lobby group for older people who grew up in "care" away from their families in orphanages and other institutions - as home children, state wards, or as foster children. Although there are hundreds of thousands of people across Australia who shared this traumatic experience, there are no publicly funded support services for them, as there are for the Aboriginal "stolen generation" and for former child migrants, and as there are for adoptees.

CLAN was founded in July 2000 by Leonie Sheedy (who grew up as a state ward in a Catholic Home in Victoria) and Joanna Penglase (who lived in a Home in Sydney) to try to fill this gap.

Now with close to 400 members in all states of Australia, **CLAN** provides an opportunity for

people from similar backgrounds to communicate with each other and share their experiences.

CLAN services include

- ◆ helping members to obtain their state ward files or institutional records
- ◆ lobbying for greater public awareness and government recognition of Care Leaver issues (which resulted in the current Senate Inquiry)
- ◆ a specialist library to help members understand and deal with issues affecting them
- ◆ A bi-monthly newsletter in which members can tell their personal story and advertise to locate lost family members or former "care" residents.

Contact CLAN at

P.O. Box 164 Georges Hall NSW 2198

Tel: 02 9724 1826

email: careleavers@hotmail.com

web: www.angelfire.com/folk/clan-aust/



Writing your own story...

Many C-BERS clients have expressed an interest in writing their life story. In this issue, instead of featuring our regular personal story, we include guidelines to help those of you who may want to put your own life experiences down on paper!

The steps are easy to follow and reproduced, in a slightly amended form, with thanks to Frank Golding whose helpful article in CLAN's December 2002 Newsletter inspired us to provide them here for you.

When you write your life story, you need to answer the questions your reader would ask.

Every well-told story has a clear structure. You build your story like you would a house, start with a strong foundation of the facts, and then maintain them with a solid framework and sturdy roof. In the interior you explain and evaluate the facts of your story. Readers want to know not only what happened but also why and how that affected your life or others connected to you then and now.

Below is one simple structure – start at the beginning and move through time to the end and then summarise your thoughts on what it meant to you. There are other structures you could choose – for example moving back and forward in time (flashbacks like a movie) or parallel narratives (your life on the inside/your parents' or someone else's life on the outside).

A. Start

- ◆ When and how did you come to be placed in an orphanage or child care institution? Why were you there?
- ◆ Did you know then or do you know now what happened to your parents?
- ◆ Who put you in an orphanage? Why? Did either of your parents have any say in the matter? Why not? Were any of your brothers/sisters placed there too?
- ◆ How did you find out about all this? When? What was your reaction when you found out?

B. The Middle *(probably more than one chapter depending on how much you remember or want to include)*

- ◆ Did you stay in one orphanage or did you get moved around? (e.g. as you got older, got migrated, sent to foster parents etc). Why?
- ◆ Who were your carers? Who stands out? What did they do for you (or to you)?
- ◆ What events do you recall most vividly?

- ◆ What kept you going in the orphanage/institution emotionally?
- ◆ What happened to your brothers/sisters? Were they in the institutions or at home? Why?
- ◆ Which children stand out from your childhood in the institution? Why?
- ◆ What were the highlights of life in the orphanage/institution? (e.g. meals, clothes, sleeping arrangements, games, sports, jobs, toys, books, visitors, drama/singing, outings, holidays, church, school etc).
- ◆ What were the low points of life in the orphanage/institution (similar to list above plus discipline, how you were treated, abuse, emotional stress, etc.)
- ◆ Did you see or hear from any of your family? How often? What was that like?
- ◆ What was your schooling like? What benefits did it bring you? What should have been better?
- ◆ How did you spend an average day? What were the weekends like? What were holidays like? What happened? Why?

C. Life Outside the Institution

- ◆ When did you leave the institution? How did that come about?
- ◆ What was life like for you when you left? Did you feel prepared for what you encountered in the outside world? Why/Why not?
- ◆ What were the main challenges that you faced? Why?
- ◆ How did you cope? Who/what helped? (e.g. friends, family, church, employer, guardian, landlord, workmates, etc.)
- ◆ What were the things that brought you the most joy? Why?
- ◆ Describe the first few weeks/months followed by a briefer account of the next period in your life, linking it back to your childhood experiences.
- ◆ Were there any crises? How did you pull through them? What helped?

- ◆ Did you meet someone special? Explain how that was. Did you marry? Have a family of your own? How was that?
- ◆ What sort of person have you become? (or would like to become?) What makes you happy, angry, sad, frustrated, envious etc?

D. Afterwards and Now

The last few questions above make a good link to the final section.

- ◆ Add a short section to describe your life right now – your greatest achievements or problems and hopes for the future and then go to your childhood again.
- ◆ Reflect on your experiences of childhood. What strengths did it give you? Why? What do you wish had been different? Why?
- ◆ What do you think of the way children in institutional care are treated these days? Why? What would you want to happen to them that didn't happen to you? What would you not want to happen to them that happened to you? Why?

A final brief section might draw a conclusion about how your childhood lingers on in your adult life or leave the reader with some thought-provoking question about how society deals with an issue in child-adult relationships. Not all books end with finality. There is nothing wrong in leaving readers with a sense of unfinished business when they turn the last page. There's always the sequel!

C-BERS publishes personal stories (of no more than 800 words) in each edition of C-BERS Ex-Press. You might like to submit your own story for consideration.

The above format may also be useful if you wish to make a submission to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care in Australia. Closing date for receipt of submissions to the Inquiry is 31 July 2003.

Frank's guidelines are helpful too for a short or long story or you could even write a book!



REUNION

TARDUN OLD BOYS 75th Anniversary Reunion 27-29 September 2003

The Tardun Old Boys Association will be holding a special reunion at the school this year to commemorate its 75th year. Everybody is welcome to attend and help celebrate this significant milestone. Further details will be posted to members over the next couple of months.

For more information, (or if you have ideas, or can offer assistance to help organise the reunion)

Contact Keith Spencer (President)
H: 08-9276 7073, W: 08-9330 9121,
Mobile: 0439 030 913
Or Nick Lynch (Tardun Principal)
On 08-9961 5212

SOCIAL

Former Maltese Child Migrants **Dinner/Dance**

Saturday 26 July 2003 (7.00pm to midnight)
(Former British Child Migrants are also welcome)

Where: Jim Satchell Community Recreation Centre,
Light Street, Dianella (Alexander Drive end)
Cost: \$23 adult, \$10 children under 14

Reservations (by 12 July)

Contact:
Joe Saliba H: 08-9357 3721 B: 9356 2524
Alf Wettinger 08-9276 9552
Alf Zammit H: 08 9494 1301 B: 9430 5359
Monica, Vicki & Anton Guillaumier 08-9246 4385.

Please see enclosed flier for full details of this function.

WANTING CONTACT

Clontarf: Joseph Enriquez of Trayning would very much like to renew acquaintance with **Norman Keyes** who was at Clontarf. Please phone C-BERS for Joseph's contact details.

Seeking Relatives: Relatives of the late Richard Kenny, who died July 2000, are seeking to contact his children. Any assistance from those who knew Richard and may have any details or information would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Chrissie Witherdin (ISS) on 02-9517 4977 or at 69-71 Parramatta Road, Camperdown NSW 2050 with any details.

UK Get-Together for Families of Former Child Migrants July 2003

Australian Child Migrant Project Manager Joan Kerry has been asked by several brothers and sisters of Former Child Migrants to organise a get together for them in the UK. She plans to hold a function on an afternoon during the week of 21st July.

If you have relatives in the UK who you think would like to take part, they can contact Joan in the UK on 01675 434002.

"ON AIR"

BBC Radio 4 Broadcasts: The Child Migrants

Last year BBC Radio 4 conducted a series of interviews in Australia (and elsewhere) on Child Migrants. Remember to tune in to a series of four interviews to be broadcast at 9.am GMT (and 9.30 pm the same evening) on July 14, 21, 28 and August 4 2003. Alternatively the interviews can be heard after the broadcast on the BBC Radio 4 website: www.bbc.co.uk/radio4 BBC Radio 4 broadcasts on 92-95fm and 198lw.

FAREWELL

Recent Obituaries



COVELL Patrick Michael
28 March 1931 - 11 May 2003
Patrick was a former Child Migrant, Tardun Old Boy and friend of C-BERS. Patrick arrived in Australia in August 1938. He was united with his brother Frank in England in 1998

following a separation of 64 years. Patrick's story featured in our April 1998 newsletter. We recall Patrick's joy at this time and his willingness to share his experience with others contemplating family tracing. We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow Joyce and daughter Taryn.