



# Fairbridge Gazette

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PRINCE OF WALES FAIRBRIDGE FARM SCHOOL

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Some of the "Originals" at B.C. House, London, September, 1935

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion next August in Duncan

### A KINDNESS HE HAD NEVER KNOWN

"On Friday, September 13, 1935, with forty other boys and girls, I sailed from Liverpool aboard the Duchess of Atholl. We were all seasick and homesick."

Twelve days later, writes John Hunter, the first party to Canada came through the gate of Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School where the entire staff waited to greet them. "It was a strange and scary moment."

But the children in that first party soon got past their strangeness and they never had reason to be scared in the daily life of the group related by John Hunter who has a good memory for detail and good memories of Fairbridge.

"Within a day or so of arriving, our first chore was to gather stones scattered on our future front lawns and deposit them into a stone boat. I told my cottage mother it was slave labor and I wouldn't do it. Then I waited for her to belt me. She did not. She sent a younger child for a chair. "John is tired," she explained. For a week whenever I appeared in her presence a small boy was sent for a chair. I was baffled. A clout over the ear, a kick, I understood, but this? At the end of the week I went to Mum and said "Give me a tin of wax and the bumper and I'll polish the dining room floor." She won me with a kindness I had never known. We had no further trouble."

His first wonderful discovery, he says, was a bed of his own with flannelette sheets and an Indian design top cover in a "beautiful, airy dormitory with window views of Mt. Prevost, Mt. Baldy, and trees--not a sooty brick railway wall."

Perhaps you remembered the top cover with the Indian design, but do you recall the peanut butter delivered to cottages in 30 lb pails? Or the taste of rich, creamy milk? It's all there in an article titled "Fairbridge: the Farm School I loved so well" by John Hunter that we will be printing in a future gazette.

In the meantime, make your plans to come to Duncan next August to celebrate our 50th anniversary. A 50th anniversary is an important milestone. The Directors of the Alumni are planning for this important event to take place August 23, 24, 25, 1985. Plan to be there.

## SOME NEWS ON YOUR PERSONAL FILES

We can report some progress on the search for personal files.

You may recall that the files were a concern of OFs at the last reunion. Since then, the Directors have pursued the matter with officials in England with Don Morton visiting Bush House and meeting for two hours with officials of the Fairbridge Society. He found out that the files had been stored at Liverpool University.

John Cowans wrote a letter to Caroline McGregor, who replied: "Those old Fairbridgians wishing to obtain personal information contained in our files held at Liverpool University should contact me, as Director, specifying the details he or she wishes to know. We in turn would find out if the information is on file and reply to the OF accordingly."

The Alumni Association urges you to write to Caroline McGregor, if you want your file, at this address: Fairbridge Society, 119 N.E. Wing, Bush House, Aldwych, London, England WC2B 4PY.

The records and files of all former children that were kept in the school in Duncan seem to be in two places, according to McGregor. She suggests some will be with the Ministry of Human Resources from when the School was closed and the remaining children were taken into foster care. Other files are with George Berkefeld of Burford Management Services in Vancouver. The Directors were in touch with Mr. Berkefeld to ask him to our meeting last June in Duncan, but he was unable to attend. He will be at our next meeting. One suggestion he has made for the files is to turn them over to the provincial archives in Victoria with the understanding that the individual OF would have access to his or her file for photocopying. We will report to you after the next Director's meeting on this matter.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE IN DECEMBER

A reminder that your membership fees are due in December.

We have 92 paid up members as of May 31, with a balance of \$2,674.46 in our account. Send your fees to Molly Harris, 2143 William Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2S2. Molly is the corresponding secretary for the Association and she would appreciate hearing from OFs with any news.

## WE WILL MISS THEM

It is with regret that we learned of the passing of Mr. Ron Auton and Mr. Alf Lincoln. Our sympathies go out to their families.

## TOM SPEED RESIGNS FROM THE EXECUTIVE.

Tom Speed has had to bow out of the Director's duties because of pressures with his work. We will miss him on the Executive and we want to say thankyou to Tom for the many years of work he has put in on behalf of the Fairbridge Association.

## FAIRBRIDGE MEMORABILIA LOOKING FOR A HOME

Finding a home for all the Fairbridge memorabilia has become an urgent matter. Your Directors have been conducting a search and would appreciate hearing from you with any ideas.

There are numerous pictures, albums, articles and the like that need to be lodged in one place where OFs can visit and view them. One suggestion is the chapel which has been restored and would need some heat on a permanent basis. Another is the provincial archives where some Fairbridge material is already filed. People who have memorabilia and who were talking about donating it to a central location at our last reunion should wait until we give the details of the site in a future Gazette.

