The Emigration of British Children to the Colonies

Unspeakable Blessings!

John McPhee, John Duncan Mitchell, and Robert Dickson circa May 1913, at the Whinwell Orphanage, shortly before sailing from Liverpool to Fremantle. Photograph Courtesy of Stirling Council Archives, Stirling, Scotland.

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Abstract

An estimated 150,000 children were shipped out of Great Britain to the colonies (mainly Canada, Australia, and South Africa) over a period of 350 years. The first child migrants left Britain for the Virginia Colony in 1618 but it was later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that these schemes began to gain momentum, only ending in the late 1960’s. It is estimated that between 1618 and the late 1960s that as many as 150,000 unaccompanied children were sent overseas by poor law guardians or philanthropic organizations to start new lives in Britain’s colonies. It may seem somewhat surprising that this kind of forced migration of children was allowed to go on for so long, and this paper attempts to discover what factors influenced the success of so many child migration schemes. It also examines the real-life stories of three Scottish orphans, and whether the factors under discussion played a part in their eventual emigration to the Fairbridge Farm School, at Pinjarra, Western Australia. We will also discover what happened to the three boys upon leaving Fairbridge Farm School to determine if their lives turned out the way their benefactors originally hoped they would. Finally, some analysis of data on some other 32 boys who made up the first two parties to emigrate to the Fairbridge Farm School in 1913 attempts to determine if the life experiences of the Scottish three after emigration were unique or typical. The author has researched the lives of all 35 boys but for the purposes and scope of this paper has decided to focus on just three in depth, but has provided a brief synopsis of the lives of the remaining 32.
Introduction

On July 3, 1913, a British ship of the White Star Line docked in Fremantle, Western Australia. Among the 1,441 passengers of the SS Belgic was a group of children destined for the Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra. 2013 will mark the 100-year anniversary of the event that would change their lives forever. The Belgic had been anchored just outside the harbor at Gage Roads from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. to enable immigrations officers to check and identify the people onboard, and to allow medical inspections to take place (The West Australian, 1913). The newspaper reports that a huge welcome was given to the new arrivals by approximately four to five thousand people who were standing on the quayside cheering and waving their handkerchiefs. Three of the reported twenty two orphan boys to step ashore on July 13, 1913 were from the same orphanage in Scotland, Miss Croall’s Home for Neglected and Destitute Children in Bridge Street, Stirling. Robert Dickson, John McPhee and John Duncan Mitchell were all selected as suitable candidates for emigration. The factors that influenced their destiny and eventual emigration to Australia were the same factors that had played a part in the emigration of so many others, and would continue to do so for many years to come.

Shifting Demographics

The last two centuries have witnessed many changes in the way society views children, and they are afforded much more protection regarding all aspects of their rights than ever before. In the past, they were regarded as little adults and expected to assume adult responsibilities at a very tender age, especially lower class children who were put out to work to supplement the family income. This was also true during the reign of Queen Victoria, when Britain transitioned from a predominantly rural society to an industrialized one, which meant an accompanying population shift as many relocated to cities. The reason for this was mainly economic and the
prospect of more jobs and better wages in more urban areas. Ravenstein (as cited in Grigg, 1977) argued that as well as the “pull” factor of higher wages, there was an accompanying “push” factor where much poverty was being experienced in rural areas due to the drop in jobs available in agriculture thus contributing to depopulation. The resultant overcrowding led to intolerable conditions including a lack of decent sanitation, a lack of nourishment, with many resorting to crime in an effort to survive.

Table 1

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rural-urban migration (in thousands)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>2,856</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>2,540</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>1,257</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>1,039</td>
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Source: Friedlander (as cited in Grigg, 1977)

If parents were unable to feed their children, their only recourse was usually the Workhouse under the jurisdiction of the Poor Law Commissioners. For most, the Workhouse was akin to prison with its bare stone walls. It was a cold and inhospitable place where men, women, and children were separated, and it was the absolute last resort for many families. Poor Law authorities carried out their statutory duty to the poor and the homeless (including orphaned children) but it was a miserable existence nonetheless. It was therefore inevitable that alternative forms of care would begin to emerge, spearheaded by humanitarians and philanthropists and when child emigration activities were at their peak, it is estimated that over 50 charitable organizations were actively sending children abroad (Constantine, 2011).
Subsequent mass unemployment and economic depression in the cities created the fear that social upheaval was imminent, and emigration was seen as a way to avoid it. Individuals were encouraged to leave for the colonies and make new lives for themselves, to countries like Canada and Australia who were desperate for labor. This would obviously alleviate the unemployment situation in British cities, and various funds were established to help facilitate emigration of the unemployed. Emigration was therefore beginning to emerge as a favorable solution to Britain’s economic problems. So how did children fit into the picture? According to Parker (2010), approximately 4000,000 children were in receipt of poor relief by 1871, and this number did not include those who were living on the streets and who had evaded the Poor Law authorities. The burning question of the time was how to deal with the increasing numbers of pauper children and give them the best possible opportunities in life while solving some of Britain’s economic problems at the same time.

**The Evangelicals**

It is doubtful that child emigration would have been so successful had it not been for the evangelical revival that occurred in approximately 1859. There were numerous individuals whose religious beliefs meant that they believed they had a duty to rescue children from the streets for reasons of both moral and physical wellbeing. This, together with growing public approval for emigration schemes for pauper children, provided them with the platform they needed to start emigrating children in large numbers to the colonies.

Child saving became an honorable occupation for Victorian women of a particular social class for whom finances were a problem, were single in the most part, and needed an occupation. These women included Maria Rye (1829-1903) who was considered to be one of the pioneers of child emigration. She was instrumental in sending large numbers of children across
the Atlantic to Canada where they would provide much-needed labor, having procured them from various Poor Law Unions. Annie McPherson was another philanthropist who became interested in the evangelical movement and subsequently took up charity work. She was anguished by what she saw in the London streets where children were forced to act like adults way before their time, and that was if they were lucky enough to be alive because four out of five infants died before reaching their fifth birthday due to the impoverished conditions they are their families found themselves (Kohli, 2003).

Annie Knight Croall (1854–1927) was an evangelical philanthropist who decided to help those in need after finding an abandoned baby in the City of Stirling, Scotland. After first setting up an institution to care for homeless women, she later focused on the care of children and became the founder of Miss Croall’s Home for Neglected and Destitute Children which would later come to be known as the Whinwell Children’s Home, situated at the end of Whinwell Road in Stirling. It was to this institution that the three boys McPhee, Dickson, and Mitchell would eventually find themselves admitted. Children admitted to Whinwell came from different areas of Scotland and were usually recommended by a church minister or medical officer. Some were recommended by the Scottish National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
(SNSPCC). Sometimes, the parents of these children were just not able to cope and handed over their children to the care of Annie Croall until they could get back on their feet again. She received no official funding and had to rely on parents or the sending local authorities to make contributions for the upkeep of the children. In addition, local fund raising supplemented the voluntary contributions. The SNSPCC were responsible for allowing large numbers of Scottish children to be sent to the colonies and were of the opinion that the children would be given the best possible chance upon their arrival. Annie Croall herself said that “Emigration confers upon the children themselves unspeakable blessings,” regarding it as “Such a splendid chance for these wee mites” (www.oldtowncemetery.co.uk).

Annie Croall was reported to have died in June of 1927 (Stirling Observer, 1927). The lengthy obituary tells of her work establishing a Young Women’s Evangelistic Mission and her eventual “calling” to the care of young children. Early meetings to discuss the establishment of a children’s home were held in a former hay loft which sat atop the home of various farm animals. The newspaper quotes an unknown person who said:

“And while we preached, prayed, and sang above, the cows and horses fed in the flat below: even the pigs would sometimes join in the chorus, and grunt their praises. In that hay loft seed was sown on good ground, which has sprung up and brought forth much fruit. Today we see a great tree spreading forth its branches all over the world, dipping its boughs in Australia, South Africa, America, Canada, and other countries, testifying of the good work done in Stirling.”

These meetings were apparently held every week until the formal opening of the children’s home which opened with just three inmates in May of 1880. McPhee, Dickson, and Mitchell would have come to know Miss Croall very well for a number of years before their
emigration to Australia because she was their main caregiver. Miss Croall believed that emigration of children to the colonies should take place during a child’s formative years when a child’s character could be easily be formed to one that would produce a useful citizen. She believed that such prospects were unimaginable if they were to stay in Scotland and that their emigration would elevate them to “a higher plane.” During Miss Croall’s tenure at Whinwell Children’s Home, 1 boy was sent to New Zealand in 1907, 3 boys were sent to Australia in 1913 (McPhee, Dickson, and Mitchell), and 1 girl was sent to Australia in 1916. Most of the children were, however, sent to Canada, although the exact number is not known (P. McNicol of Stirling Archives, personal communication, February 25, 2013).

One of the differences between the Poor Law authorities and Evangelical Philanthropists was the fact that the latter actively sought out children in need whereas the Poor Law authorities did not. There were many evangelical and philanthropic individuals and organizations who would come to the conclusion that emigration was a preferable option for British children inasmuch as it would provide them with better opportunities than if they were to remain in the home country. The Poor Law authorities also saw emigration as providing opportunities for their “inmates” that would not have been available to them in Britain, and also saw emigration schemes as a chance to alleviate the overcrowding in Workhouses. They supplied the various evangelical and philanthropic organizations with children deemed suitable for the purpose, using the charities as agents or intermediaries. Some of the bigger organizations like Barnardo’s (founded by Thomas John Barnardo) lauded child emigration as a huge success claiming that 98% of the young colonists turned out well. They based their estimates on the numbers of children earning a respectable living, living a life free of criminal activity, immorality, and not a burden on the local community. The wellbeing of the children was largely attributed to Canada
being an essentially healthy country both morally and physically, thus the temptation to live the kind of immoral life they might otherwise have pursued in large cities had been removed. By the time child emigration was reaching the peak of its popularity, nearly all religious denominational groups were involved, not just the evangelicals. This, coupled with a kind of imperial rhetoric used as a way to solicit funds like Barnardo’s appeal “To turn Nobody’s children into Empire Builders” (Constantine, 2011) became a very powerful force indeed. Many saw emigration schemes as a kind of threefold imperial investment where the children would enjoy the kind of life they might not expect to have in Great Britain, the colonies would get the kind of white settlers they desired, and Britain’s social problems would be lessened by shipping out the slum children who were expected to come to a bad end. The British Empire was to become part of a giant marketing exercise; a kind of social and economic engineering experiment.

**Kingsley Ogilvie Fairbridge**

Among those who marketed his vision to the world was the founder of the Child Emigration Society which would later be known as the Fairbridge organization and the organization that arranged for John McPhee, Robert Dickson, and John Duncan Mitchell to leave Miss Croall’s Home for Neglected and Destitute Children in Bridge Street, Stirling. Kingsley Ogilvie Fairbridge convinced a group of high profile sponsors that emigration to Australia would provide young people with a fresh start and an appropriate level of education and training suited to their social class. The sponsors that Fairbridge recruited tended to be individuals with an avid interest in all things connected with the British Empire and imperial unity, believing that the British Empire was a force for world justice and progress. They believed in independence for the dominions but also maintaining trade and kinship ties to Britain, the mother country, with common pride in the idea of Empire.
The child migrants would live and work at a farm school until they attained the age of 16, after which they would be free to leave and find employment. Vocational training would be supplemented with moral guidance in the hope that the children would leave the school and become the kind of upright, useful citizens that Kingsley Fairbridge envisioned.

In 1911, prior to the first party of child migrants arriving in Australia, the Western Australian government signed an agreement with the Child Emigration Society in which they stated their willingness to allow the children free land and sea passages. The Western Australian authorities offered Fairbridge a farm consisting of 1,000 acres of land which could be secured for a nominal rental fee, just as long as it was used for the purposes of building an agricultural school and farm. The first Fairbridge farm was located between the townships of Pinjarra and Coolup in Western Australia, the nearest major city being Perth. Kingsley and Ruby Fairbridge set sail for Western Australia in April of 1912 to prepare the Pinjarra location before the first group of children arrived from Britain. They worked tirelessly with limited funds and labor, but managed to get the farm in working order and prepare primitive living accommodation for the boys who were to sleep in open air tents. The first group of children arrived onboard the S.S. Australind at Victoria Quay, Port of Fremantle, on January 21, 1913. Of the 492 new settlers that travelled on this ship, 13 of them were bound for the Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra, being aged between eight and thirteen years (The Western
Mail, 1913).

The second party of twenty two young men which included McPhee, Dickson, and Mitchell spent the weekend in Perth before making the journey to the Farm School on Monday, July 7, 1913. They were entertained as the guests of Messrs. Boan Brothers on the roof of their premises at approximately 3:10 p.m. and afterwards there was to be a drive around King’s Park during which the boys would be accompanied by members of the Child Immigration Advisory Board. The Boan Brothers (Harry and Benjamin) ran a department store in Perth that they had founded in 1895 (www.wikipedia.org). After arriving at Pinjarra, one of the local newspapers reports that the boys “Would start their training to be farmers with a view to being placed with established and reputable farmers throughout Western Australia as soon as they were old enough” (The Western Mail, 1913).

**The Three Scottish Emigrants**

Scotland was no different to England in terms of industrialization and a shift of labor from rural areas to its cities where employment in the coal, iron, engineering, and shipbuilding industries was likely to be found. The cities were not prepared for this unplanned population surge and quickly became overcrowded, causing squalor and poverty in a society which provided no kind of welfare assistance. In addition, wages were comparatively lower than the rest of the United Kingdom (www.educationscotland.gov.uk). Domestic service was the most common form of employment for single women who found it difficult enough to maintain themselves, let alone a child should they become pregnant out of wedlock.

**Robert Dickson’s Story**

**Pre-Emigration**

Robert Dickson was born in March of 1903 in Wilkieston, Kirknewton, Scotland, the
illegitimate son of Mary Dickson (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk), a woman who was described on Robert’s birth certificate as an outdoor worker. The 1901 census for Scotland is revealing as it tells us that nineteen year old Mary was living in Wilkieston with a widowed aunt and several cousins employed as a farm worker. Living nearby is a fifty four year old widower by the name of James Baxter who is described as a general laborer (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk). Robert’s granddaughter (C. Bernardi, personal communication, September 18, 2012) said that she believes her great-grandfather was an individual by the name of James Baxter.

By October of 1908, Mary Dickson appeared to be in dire straits. A woman by the name of Elizabeth Rose recommended to the Whinwell Home for Destitute and Orphan Children on behalf of Mary Dickson (Application Form for Admission, October 14, 1908) that Robert be admitted. Mary signed the form and gave her address as the Dalziel Poorhouse, Motherwell, Scotland which is about 32 miles in distance from Stirling, the location of the orphanage. The form states that Mary was no longer able to support her child and had no-one who could help her. By this time, Robert was 5½ years old. The application was supported by a letter dated October 10, 1908 from an Elizabeth Rose who was the single daughter of a seemingly wealthy building contractor who lived in the Dalziel area.

“Dear Miss Croall,

I have laid your conditions before the mother of the boy and she is willing to hand him over to you. I shall be pleased to have the papers to fill and will forward them as soon as possible.

With kindest regards and yours sincerely,

E. Rose”

As well as sending a letter of support, Elizabeth Rose witnessed Mary Dickson’s
signature on the application form, as did a Mr. Frank Robbie. By signing the Admission Form, Mary Dickson gave up all rights to her child and allowed Miss Croall to assume full guardianship.

The 1911 census for Scotland (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) confirms that Robert Dickson was a resident of Miss Croall’s Home for Neglected and Destitute Children in Stirling. On March 27, of 1913, just a few short months before her son Robert sailed to Western Australia, Mary Dickson married John William Moore in Glasgow (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk). Both parties gave their address as 5 Croftbank Place, Uddingston which is a suburb of Glasgow. He was a Coachman/Gardener and she was a Domestic Servant. We can only assume that by giving up her son, Mary was able to leave the Dalziel Poorhouse and find suitable employment, and she may well have met her future husband at her place of employment. Even though she had legally given up all rights to her son, it is possible that Robert may have been returned to his mother if she had desired it. However, it seems likely that John William Moore may not have wanted the responsibility of another man’s illegitimate child. This was certainly true in the case of John McPhee who accompanied Robert to Australia.

Mary’s extreme poverty and lack of a familial support system ultimately left her no choice other than to place her son in the care of someone else who would provide him with the food, shelter, and nurturing that he undoubtedly would have needed. It is not known if Mary and Robert had contact with one another after his emigration to Australia, but it is highly likely that they never met again in person.

Post-Emigration

In 1937, Kingsley Fairbridge’s wife, Ruby, wrote a book about the early days on the farm
and gives us an insight into the young Robert Dickson and how unaccustomed he and most of the other boys were to rural, Australian life (Fairbridge, R, 1937). She tells a story about another boy who had been eating caterpillars and how Robert Dickson related the incident.

“Oh, sir, that’s Truslove”, replied Dickson. “After what you told us about caterpillars, he’s been eating them. He had two smooth ones, but the hairy one made him sick.”

Ruby Fairbridge also mentions the fact that her husband has received correspondence from the Child Emigration Society in England regarding several urgent letters they had received from Miss Croall. She appeared to be very distressed about the three boys she had sent out to Fairbridge Farm School due to what she refers to as the simply disgraceful letters being sent back to the orphanage. She is under the impression that the boys are running wild and blames their lack of letter writing skills on “great negligence, want of discipline and proper management.”

The Old Fairbridgians’ Association of Western Australia is an organization that was established in the 1930s to provide assistance to former residents of Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra. They have recently come into possession of an old register that has become the only record of the fate of the first 35 boys to arrive at the Farm School in 1913. The entry for Robert Dickson recalls that although he was a sturdy type, it became apparent very early on that he had absolutely no interest in farm work. Nevertheless, the Farm School sent him out to work on a neighbouring farm as soon as he was old enough in October of 1917. As soon as he was able, he left and found alternative work at the Port of Fremantle (Old Fairbridgians Association, Western Australia).

The Australian Electoral Rolls reveal that Robert Dickson did indeed work as a farmhand at Kamo near Pinjarra, and this information is consistent with what was recorded in the OFA Register (www.Ancestry.com). According to his granddaughter (C. Bernardi, personal
communication, September 18, 2012) Robert decided very early on in his working life that he should study civil engineering and he was actively engaged in this process when he met his future wife, Myrtle Elvien Kutzer. Robert and Myrtle would be blessed with two sons, one of whom was also called Robert (known as Keith) who worked on various projects with his father. Robert Dickson senior was working on Broome Pier in 1966 when he fell fifteen feet on to the hard mud below which ultimately caused his death. He was sixty three years of age when he died on July 20, 1966. Broome is a tourist town in the Kimberley region of Western Australia and approximately 2,200 kilometres north of Perth. He was buried in Fremantle Cemetery and his wife, Myrtle, was buried alongside him after she passed away on May 15, 1989 (www2.mcb.wa.gov.au).

Figure 3: Final Resting place of Robert Dickson and his wife, Myrtle
(October 10, 2012).

Photograph courtesy of Lillian Maher.
John McPhee’s Story

Pre-Emigration

John McPhee was born on September 19, 1903 at Sunnybrae, Camelon, Falkirk, the illegitimate child of Christina McCallum, a housekeeper, and James McPhee, an iron moulder (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk). Approximately three years later, Christina would give birth to a little girl who was also fathered by James who the couple named Isabella. On April 29, 1908, James died at Stirling Royal Infirmary of pneumonia and cardiac failure, leaving Christina with her two illegitimate children. She registered James’ death as Christina McPhee, probably claiming to be married for appearances sake (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk).

Correspondence between Miss Croall of the Home for Neglected and Destitute Children and Christina McCallum on 1911 (Stirling Council Archives, letter from Christina Stewart to Miss Croall dated July 30, 1911) reveals that subsequent to the death of James McPhee, Christina had married William Stewart, a school janitor, on October 5, 1909 (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk). She describes how she is the mother of two illegitimate children, a boy aged seven years, and a girl aged four years, who were residing at that time with another party. She says she had become respectably married to William Stewart and had given birth to another two children by him. William Stewart was not prepared to shelter John and Isabella for financial reasons and their mother was finding the financial burden of paying a third party to look after them to be somewhat prohibitive and so she therefore requested that Miss Croall accept the children. Christina completed an Application for Admission Form dated August 4, 1911. In a letter to Miss Croall dated August 22, 1911, Christina Stewart informed Miss Croall that she would pick up the children from their place of residence at Dunblane on Saturday, August 26, 1911 and deposit them at the orphanage in Stirling. On that very day,
Christina McCallum Stewart of 136 Liff Road, Lochee handed over her two children John and Isabella McPhee to the care of Miss Croall, agreeing that she would cease to be responsible for them with no claim on either of them after that date (Consent Form dated August 26, 2011).

William Stewart appears to have passed away some time between 1911 and August of 1918 because on August 13, 1918, she married Duncan Ross in Methil, Fife (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk), declaring herself a widow at the time of the marriage. This marriage appears to have lasted because Christina’s son, R. Stewart, registered the deaths of both Duncan Ross and Christina herself. She passed away on January 10, 1953 in Buckhaven, Nr. Methil, Fife, Scotland (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) at the age of seventy one years. In one of her letters, Christina refers to giving birth to two children by William Stewart, and we know she had two children by James McPhee. John’s half-brother, Robert Stewart, was alive and living in the Buckhaven area of Scotland in 1953, and subsequent inquiries have revealed that Isabella McPhee was adopted by a Mr. and Mrs. James Hunter and remained in Scotland (J. Webster, personal communication, November 6, 2012).

At first and on the surface of things, the thought of a woman marrying a man and leaving her two children with someone else because he would not take care of them, appears to be extreme, selfish, and an extremely cold and uncaring act. However, William Stewart would appear to be far from blameless here because he was allowing his wife to pay someone else to take care of John and Isabella. Why couldn’t that money have been used for their upkeep in the Stewart household where the two children could have lived alongside their two half-siblings, the children of William Stewart? It is possible that William Stewart ultimately put pressure on Christina to absolve herself of all responsibility for her two firstborn children by James McPhee which included all financial responsibility. As far as Christina herself was concerned, it would
have been very difficult for her to provide for John and Isabella after the death of James McPhee as well as provide for herself, and it was approximately eighteen months after James McPhee’s death that she married William Stewart who gave her a roof over her head and financial stability. It may well have broken her heart to part with John and Isabella, but unfortunately we shall never know.

Post Emigration

An entry in the register in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians’ Association, Western Australia (Old Fairbridgians Association, Western Australia) describes John as a very useful member of the farm in the early days and the most popular boy among his contemporaries. His first job after leaving the Farm School in August of 1919 was reported to be on a farm in Albany, Western Australia, where his employer was reported to be very pleased with him indeed.

In a letter that John wrote to Miss Croall from a location called Gunwarne, Cranbrook, that was actually a one hour drive north of Albany (Stirling Council Archives, letter from John McPhee to Miss Croall dated December 12, 1919), John appears quite despondent and lonely because he had hoped to hear from his sister and he is concerned about whether he would hear from her before too many more years went by. He wanted to know where she was living and how old she was because she was the only relative that he had to call his own. He said that he was always thinking about her and “if she was to die, I would go too, although I have seen her for many a long year. The photo you sent me of her, I’ve got it framed.”

Kingsley Fairbridge wrote a letter to Miss Croall on behalf of John McPhee on February 3, 1920 asking if Miss Croall would forward the address of John McPhee’s sister to him, and if John could get some news about his mother. He is said to have been very anxious to hear something about them and Kingsley Fairbridge was keen to help him in view of the fact that
“John is a very fine type of boy in many ways, so I would like to be of assistance to him if possible,” Mrs. James Hunter, Isabella’s adoptive mother, wrote to Miss Croall on March 2, 1920 and confirmed that she and her husband were very happy for John and Isabella to correspond. However, she suggested that John write to her (Mrs. Hunter) first and the information would then be passed on to Isabella. They seemed to want to take things slowly in view of the fact that Isabella was doing so well and they did not want her to be upset with the renewed contact. Isabella would have been about thirteen years of age at this time. However, it is unclear whether or not John’s letters were passed to Isabella because her granddaughter, Joyce, recently told the author (J. Webster, personal communication, November 6, 2012) that her grandmother always believed she had a brother because she remembered holding his hand in the orphanage. Isabella had also told her that her great-grandparents would also have taken John had they know that Isabella had a brother. Of course, the correspondence proves that they did know about Isabella’s brother and maybe even tried to keep them apart for reasons unbeknown to the rest of us. Joyce Webster says that Isabella had a good life having married a lovely man and had two children with her husband, both of whom have now sadly passed away. Isabella herself passed away in Helensburgh, Scotland in November of 1977.

In 1921, a new farm school was built at a different location in Pinjarra to replace the one that had been in existence since 1913. The register in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians’ Association tells us that John returned to Pinjarra and helped to establish a new vegetable garden. After that, he lost touch with the school after supposedly travelling to Queensland which is one of the eastern states of Australia.

By 1935, John had married a woman by the name of Mary I. Beattie in West Maitland, New South Wales (www.bdm.nsw.gov.au), but the circumstances leading to him being in New
South Wales are unclear. Sadly, the couple were to lose their firstborn child in 1937 when she was just eleven months. An inquest into the death of the child was held on May 17, 1937 with a verdict of death by natural causes (www.Ancestry.com).

John McPhee enlisted in the Australian Army in June of 1940 (www.naa.gov.au) with a service number of NX 45514 and served as a Sapper with the 2/12 Field Company, Royal Australian Engineers. At the time of enlistment he was reportedly working as a labourer. Sadly, John’s service record reveals that he died while on active service on August 29, 1943 at the age of forty years and is memorialized at Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery, Myanmar. He was a prisoner of the Japanese authorities during World War II being imprisoned first at Changi Prison in Singapore and then transported to Thailand on a three day train trip in steel cars with about twenty eight men in each car. There was not enough room for everyone to sit down, only two plain rice meals were provided on a journey that lasted four days and four nights, and it was impossible to urinate during that whole time. Other motions had to be completed by sticking one’s backside out of the window while two other individuals held on to you. It is not difficult to imagine what happened next (D. Gray, personal communication, October 26, 2012). The men were to be put to work on the Burma/Thailand Railway or The Death Railway as it came to be known (www.awm.gov.au) which was a construction project initiated to ensure the supply of materials to Japanese troops in Burma for the planned invasion of India. It stretched about 421 kilometres from Ban Pong in Thailand to Thanbyuzayat in Burma. It is estimated that about 12,000 allied prisoners of war died while working on the railway, a number which included 2,646 Australians. As we know, John McPhee was one of the unlucky ones.

Deborah Gray’s father, Ken Gray, provided the author with his personal testimony on October 25, 2012, as he recalled the time he was called upon to help a fellow comrade, a fellow
by the name of Jock McPhee. Gray recalled that McPhee was “a good bloke” who was small in stature and shunned the limelight. The two men had worked together in a jungle camp in a village called Tanbaya and shared a shelter. When Jock McPhee became sick, Gray said that he was diagnosed with cholera and one day he just disappeared, never to be seen again. Gray repeatedly asked where his friend had gone, but no answers were forthcoming but he thinks he was probably buried in the jungle. Sadly, Deborah Gray said that her father passed away on December 30, 2012 after enjoying a wonderful Christmas with friends and family (D. Gray, personal communication, January 5, 2013).

Figure 4: Memorial to John McPhee in Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery, Myanmar (nd).

Courtesy of the War Graves Photographic Project.
John Duncan Mitchell’s Story

Pre-Emigration

John Duncan Mitchell was born on January 9, 1905, at 23 Dickson’s Close, Edinburgh, Scotland, the son of Andrew Mitchell and his wife, Christina, formerly McIntosh (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk). The couple were married on December 11, 1896 at Kingussie, Inverness (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk). The 1901 census for Scotland (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) provides information regarding both the Mitchell family and the McIntosh family. At that time, Andrew, Christina, Mary Ann (aged 2), and Christina (aged 1) are living with Christina’s father and older brother at 3 Windmill Lane, Edinburgh. Also resident in the house is a Lizzie McIntosh who is seven years old and described as the granddaughter of John McIntosh, head of household.

Andrew Mitchell (John’s father) was born in Tain which is in the Scottish highlands and quite some distance from Edinburgh. Similarly, Christina McIntosh (John’s mother) was born in Grantown, Invernessshire and the McIntosh family had also relocated to Edinburgh at some point, presumably to find employment. Interestingly, John McIntosh is described as a retired butcher, a trade that his grandson was to take up later in Australia.

John is listed with his parents and siblings on the 1911 census for Scotland (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) and shows the family living at 10 Old Fisherman Kit Close, Edinburgh St. Giles. This information is conflicting because John is also shown as a resident of an orphanage at the same time, but correspondence deposited with the Stirling Archives, Stirling, Scotland, indicates that John’s mother was in an asylum (Application Form for Admission, February 18, 1908). However, it is possible that she may have been discharged at the time the census was taken, but that does not explain why John Duncan is shown on two census returns.
This form shows that John was admitted to the Whinwell Home for Destitute and Orphan Children, Whinwell, Stirling, on March 7, 1908.

John’s father, Andrew Mitchell, passed away at the age of sixty five on May 2, 1918 at 8:45 p.m. in the Poorhouse at Craiglockheart (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk). It is unclear whether he was actually resident in the Poorhouse or whether he had been admitted due to illness. The death record indicates that his usual residence was 2 College Wynd, Edinburgh, a central Edinburgh location and an area well-known for its slums. The death was registered by a daughter, Lizzie. Further investigation revealed that John’s mother, Christina, gave birth to an illegitimate child born November 20, 1893 in Kingussie, Inverness (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk), where she was working as a domestic servant. The child was registered with the name Elizabeth Fraser McIntosh and it transpires that she is probably the Lizzie McIntosh listed on the 1901 census as the granddaughter of the head of household, John McIntosh. It is not known what became of John’s mother, Christina, or his siblings.

As we now know, John Duncan Mitchell sailed with twenty one other boys on the Belgic at the end of May, 1913. The Belgic was destined for Fremantle, Western Australia, en route to the Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra, and would never see his parents or siblings again, despite his attempts to find out more about his family.

Post-Emigration

Newly discovered registers are in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians Association of Western Australia, and they confirm that John Mitchell was formerly a resident of Miss Croall’s Home for Boys, Stirling, Scotland, being one of the youngest children to set sail with the rest of the party from Liverpool in May of 1913. He was described as a very quiet little boy of average intelligence who suffered with short-sightedness. After leaving the school, probably in about
1920, nothing was heard from John until he suddenly reappeared in approximately 1929 “just to see how the place was getting on.”

The person who wrote the notes (who is thought to be a long-time employee, Miss Dennehy) relates John’s story as told to Ruby Fairbridge (wife of Kingsley Fairbridge) when she visited Adelaide, South Australia. This would probably have been in the mid to late 1940’s. John tells a harrowing story regarding his first employment after leaving the farm school in the wheat belt of Western Australia when he was just fourteen years of age. He told Ruby Fairbridge that he worked extremely hard, usually all alone, and handled a team of six horses which would carry wheat to a siding where he had to unload it, a job which was made all the more difficult due to him being small for his age. John complained that he was treated no better than “a working dog” who was never allowed into the house, given scraps to eat and made to sleep in an outhouse without any kind of a bed to sleep on. If John dared to complain to the farmer or expressed a desire to return to the farm school, he was frightened into submission with threats of being branded a troublemaker and the possibility of being sent back to the farmer at which time he would be tied up. The offending farmer is identified only as “Mr. X” in the register notes.

Needless to say, John Mitchell was extremely scared of any repercussions should he dare to put a foot wrong, and so he saved up his half wages until he had enough money to make his escape to Melbourne. At the first opportunity, he ran the sixteen miles to the train station with ten shillings in his pocket and caught a train to Melbourne. His first job there was to work for a motor car upholsterer for twelve shillings a week, but unfortunately this did not even cover his board and lodging. He landed on his feet some two weeks later when he was taken on by a butcher who not only gave him a job but also board and lodging in his house. John said that he
lived with this man for many years and was taught the trade of master butcher.

According to the newly-discovered register held by the Old Fairbridgians’ Association of Western Australia, John Mitchell subsequently married an Adelaide girl and moved to Adelaide where he found work with another firm of butchers but had to give it up when he developed back problems because of working in the freezers. Another opportunity presented itself with Burfords the soap manufacturers who saw his potential and gave him a position of trust. He was employed to drive to different branches and distribute the wages to the workers. He also collected the takings and deposited them in the bank in Adelaide. John was pleased to be able to tell Ruby Fairbridge that he owned his own house and ran his own car. His main regret in life was that he and his wife had been unable to have any children.

John married Esther Annie Edith Senn (formerly Fuller) in South Australia on August 24, 1935 (www.Ancestry.com). She was approximately eight years older than him having been born on March 28, 1897. Esther had previously been married to and divorced from Arthur Treselian Senn on account of the latter’s adultery with a woman called Grace Ferguson Allen (South Australian Advertiser, 1934). At the time of the undefended divorce action, Esther was living in Maud Street, Unley, South Australia, and John Duncan Mitchell (butcher) and Esther Annie E. Mitchell (home duties) can be found in the electoral roll of 1939 living at 24 Maud Street, New Parkside (Unley District) at this date (AskUs, State Library of South Australia, personal communication, October 24, 2012).

According to a former neighbor of the couple, Angelo Donnamurra, who still lives in Magill, South Australia, John had a catering business in Henley Beach Road in Magill and drove a station wagon with the words “Mitchell’s Catering Service” written across the side. Angelo recalls that John and Esther lived in an old timber frame house that John maintained himself at
23 Bricknell Street, Magill which is no longer there. John’s handyman skills were apparently not the best, however, and he struggled to maintain it to the standard he would have liked but enjoyed doing it nonetheless. Angelo’s back gate backed on to John’s house but 23 Bricknell Street is unfortunately no more having been pulled down some time ago due to its age (A. Donnarumma, personal communication, February 13, 2013). In addition, Angelo has been to the Henley Beach Road location to look for the delicatessen, but that is sadly no longer in existence either having been replaced by an office furniture business.

Angelo relates a story that John had told him many years ago about a fishing trip during which time John did not catch a single fish. He did not want to go home empty-handed and so he made a detour to a local fish market and purchased a few nice specimens. His mother-in-law was not fooled by the substitute fish and was adamant that they had been caught via a net as opposed to a hook. She told her daughter, John’s wife, that John had not been fishing at all and must have been up to no good! Apparently, it took John quite a while to convince the women in his life otherwise (A. Donnarumma, personal communication, February 13, 2013).

Angelo would visit John almost every day but became concerned when he did not find John at home on two consecutive days. He called the Royal Adelaide Hospital only to find out that John had been admitted having suffered a stroke and he was unable to speak. John was never to return to his home on Bricknell Street again. Angelo visited him in the hospital every night and read from a book of poems that John had given to him a few years previously entitled “Friendship.” He was present when John passed away and was kind enough to take care of John’s beloved dog, Bullet, until it was Bullet’s turn to join his master once again.

The online records of the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority show that Esther Annie Edith Mitchell died on March 20, 1975 aged 77 years and that she was cremated. John Duncan
Mitchell died on October 5, 1984 aged 89 years (age not recorded correctly because we know he was actually 79 years old when he passed away) and the online records of the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority show that he too was cremated ([www.aca.sa.gov.au](http://www.aca.sa.gov.au)). Angelo further confirms that husband and wife were both cremated at Enfield Memorial Park and Crematorium, Browning Street, Clearview, South Australia. Their ashes were scattered in one of the rose gardens at that location. Only three people were present at John’s funeral service, one of them being Angelo Donnarumma. John ended his life as it had started which meant that he was very much alone, and if it had not been for the kindness of Mr. Donnarumma, John would not have had anyone to look out for him during his final days.

**Success or Failure?**

Measuring the success or failure of the child emigration project as it relates to the thirty five boys who made up the first two parties in 1913 is not an easy task. The majority of the boys had been placed in the workhouse or in an orphanage and most, but not all, left behind relatives in the United Kingdom who they would never see again (see Appendix for a short biography of each boy). Twenty nine out of the thirty five were chosen for emigration because they were in institutional care across England, Scotland, and Wales, and were destined to remain there until they were old enough to support themselves. There were six sets of brothers among the thirty five who were lucky enough to have each other at least, but most had siblings they left behind.

Of the remaining six boys, one of them was recommended for emigration because his uncle felt that he was unable to take care of his nephew any more. Another was the oldest of numerous children born to his parents, and they saw emigration as the opportunity of a lifetime for their son to make something of himself. The four Wickham boys were accompanied by their mother who acted as matron on the first voyage, and she probably saw the opportunity for a fresh
start in the colonies. It is highly probable that the photograph in Figure 5 was taken immediately before departure in early December and that the lady standing in the back is Matron Emma Wickham, mother of the four Wickham boys destined for Pinjarra. The boy standing second from the right in the front row has been identified as William Blackburn (Blackbourne) Wilkinson by two of his children. In addition, the four Wickham children are also identified.

*Sadly, some of the children had been abandoned by their parents and the likelihood of them making contact again was remote. It could be argued that a fresh start in another country that promised new opportunities was exactly what most of these boys needed. The alternative could be a life of poverty, lack of moral education, and loneliness, with the majority turning to*

**Figure 5:** Departure photograph of the first thirteen boys to leave from Tilbury Docks, London, England, destined for Fremantle, Western Australia (December 5, 1912). Photograph courtesy of the Old Fairbridgians’ Association, Western Australia.
crime as the only way to survive. While some of the boys appear to have led a relatively good life in Australia, the majority were not so lucky.

According to Jeffery and Sherington (1998), we know that the vision of Kingsley Fairbridge was for the children to find employment as farmers, working in wide open spaces in contrast to the bleak and poverty-stricken conditions that they would likely endure in Britain. He hoped to train them in the skills they would need to flourish in sparsely populated areas of Western Australia, and he hoped that the children would leave his school and become useful citizens, the kind of good British stock that Australia needed in pursuit of economic expansion. In reality, Kingsley Fairbridge’s vision was not realized, well-intentioned as it may have been.

Research into the lives of the thirty five boys who were in the first two parties of boys to emigrate to Australia and the Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra in 1913 reveals that only one of them became a successful farmer in his own right but even that venture was doomed to failure. Most of the young men relocated to the Eastern Australian states very early on in their working lives, although one of them did work as a farm hand until 1968.

The depression of the 1930’s had a severe impact on the Western Australian economy just as it did the rest of the world. There was mass unemployment which reached a staggering 30% in the state, the likes of which it had never seen before. Families suffered great hardship during this period and even those with a family member still in employment saw their standard of living drop due to reduced hours and wages (www.slwa.wa.gov.au). Large capital projects were brought to a halt and the price of commodities tumbled. Western Australia had experienced a significant period of agricultural expansion between 1903 and 1914, but several factors affected the export of wheat thereafter which included a severe drought in 1914 and, of course, a major world war which took place 1914-1918. The 1920’s were more prosperous years for the
inhabitants of Western Australia due to the construction of major railways throughout the state, and the replacement of the traditional horse and cart by more mechanized forms of farming and road transport (Government of Western Australia, 2004). However, the depression in the 1930’s signaled the collapse of wheat prices in the state and the agricultural industry collapsed as a result. Very few farmers were able to survive during this period and many of them had no option but to desert the land they had worked so hard to cultivate. It is estimated that the depression wiped out approximately 75% of the state’s farmers and because Australia had no kind of federal assistance program in those days, the unemployed were dependent on charity for survival. The wheat belt region partially surrounds Perth with an area of approximately 59,793 square miles (www.wikipedia.org).

Many small wheat belt towns had originated as railway sidings at the end of the nineteenth century on the main eastern railway and repatriated World War I servicemen had been encouraged to take up the land and settle these small towns. Unfortunately, the depression and numerous droughts led to the abandonment of these townships, many of which ceased to exist.

At least seven of the thirty five boys suffered with emotional problems which may undoubtedly have been compounded by the harsh economic conditions they were forced to endure during the depression. However, there are other factors which may have contributed to their problems. Firstly, there was no support system or proper after-care for these boys after they left the Farm School and secured employment. Apart from the Fairbridge family which had become a family unit in of itself, in most cases these boys had no-one in Australia to call their own. John (Jock) McPhee poignantly wrote in a letter dated December 12, 1919 to Miss Croall, the principal of the orphanage in Stirling, Scotland that had sent him to Australia, that his sister back in Scotland was the only relative he had of his very own. “If she was to die, I would go too,
although I have not seen her for many a long year. The photo you sent me of her I’ve got it framed.” In addition, it was more difficult for young men to create family units of their own due to the ratio of men to women at that time in rural areas. When the Census of the Commonwealth of Australia was taken on June 30, 1933, the population in the rural divisions of Western Australia numbered 108,732 men as opposed to 74,677 females, the latter group unable or unwilling to endure the harsh conditions to be found in the wheat fields and other remote locations. Unfortunately, it was not deemed necessary to include the aboriginal population in the census count in those days, and so the figure is not entirely accurate. It is, however, therefore not surprising that some of the boys did not marry until they reached their late thirties or early forties because there was simply not a plentiful pool of women of marrying age.

Another issue that compounded the problems encountered by the boys who were by now, young men, was the lack of rehabilitation or psychiatric care that most of us have access to in this day and age. According to Dr. Philippa Martyr (Clinical and Adjunct Staff, Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences) at Western Australia University (P. Martyr, personal communication, October 14, 2012) there was no form of treatment being carried out at Claremont Asylum in the 1930s except on an experimental basis, and this was probably true of other care facilities throughout the state. Claremont was merely a place to lock people up and place them out of harm’s way, and if they were deemed to be relatively healthy, they would be given some work to do on the premises. Dr. Martyr further explained that admittance to facilities like Claremont were almost always facilitated by a physical breakdown or an illness of some kind and the type of young, single men like those in our two groups totaling thirty five were vulnerable because they were mostly single with no family to speak of in Australia to care for them. Granted, there were six sets of brothers within the thirty five (including one set of four brothers), but it would
have been difficult for a brother to take care of his sibling(s) because the one brother would find it difficult enough to take care of himself. The large migrant population in Western Australia was predominantly male, susceptible to sunstroke (as in the case of Thomas Percy Quartermaine), poor nutrition, sexually transmitted diseases, and over-indulgence in alcoholic beverages, presumably due to the boredom. Any of these factors could lead to an individual being institutionalized, which appears to have been the answer to everything.

We need to ask ourselves if things might have turned out differently for these boys had they remained in Great Britain where at least some of them had living relatives. Frederick and Percy Quartermaine, for example, had two sisters who lived through the 1930’s and one of them survived until 1984. The fact that they were subjected to extremely poverty in the home country is not at question, but Frederick and Percy would have enjoyed the benefit of family support had they become ill and remained in Great Britain. The same is true of Harry Britton. This young man was sent away to a strange country where he knew not a single person and it is no wonder that he floundered under pressure, given his nervous disposition. How much better he might have fared had he been allowed to stay in London with people that he knew, not just those related to him, but school chums and the individuals he knew through his church. Harry’s adopted father who was actually an uncle related by blood was alive until 1931. However, some of the children had no contact with family members and had been devoid of familial contact for a number of years, and so it is entirely possible that they had a better life in Australia than they might have enjoyed in Britain as far as family was concerned.

Clearly, the three young boys from the Whinwell Home in Stirling were all the victims of extreme poverty and in the case of John McPhee, a stepfather who was unwilling to take on the financial responsibility of another man’s children. He would probably have frowned on their
illegitimacy and his wife, John’s mother, was now married to Mr. Stewart and had given birth to a further two legitimate children. Of the three, only John Mitchell was born to a married couple, but the death of his mother and the resultant poverty and alcoholism of his father meant that he was neglected and had to be institutionalized for his own safety. The woman of an evangelical persuasion who founded the orphanage, Annie Croall, was convinced that emigration would afford the children “unspeakable blessings” and give them the best possible chance to make something of themselves. These factors were all typical of the kinds of events occurring in the lives of hundreds of children at that time and we should not be surprised that Robert Dickson, John McPhee, and John Duncan Mitchell found themselves on a ship to Australia.

Not one of the three would make farming their career or make an effort to start their own farming enterprises. John Duncan Mitchell made his way to the eastern states as soon as he could and became a butcher, John McPhee also went to the eastern states and appears to have gone into manufacturing. Only Robert Dickson stayed in Western Australia, but he too decided that farming was not for him and decided to become an engineer as soon as possible. Sadly, John McPhee’s life would be cut short during World War II, and Robert Dickson passed away as the result of an accident at work at the relatively young age of sixty three years. Only John Duncan Mitchell lived to an old age of seventy nine years. None of the three seem to have had any contact with family back in Scotland and must have felt very lonely and isolated in Australia, although all three of them married. The case files indicate that both John McPhee and John Duncan Mitchell had attempted to maintain ties with family members in Scotland, but without any success. It is not known whether Robert Dickson kept in touch with his mother, but at least he was living as part of a traditional family unit when he passed away. One of John Duncan Mitchell’s biggest regrets according to his neighbor, Angelo, was the fact that he did not
have any children. His wife predeceased him and he was very lonely at the end of his life, save for the companionship of his dog, Bullet.

2013 marks the one-hundred year anniversary of the emigration of the first two parties of 13 and 22 boys respectively, making a total of thirty five boys to the Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra, Western Australia. They are remembered with affection by all that knew them, and others that did not.

“Be kind to an orphan child, and always be his friend,
You know not how he suffers, or how he’ll meet his end.
He’s all alone, no family, that he can call his own.
There is very little prospect, that he’ll ever get back home.
You and I got lucky, we knew our Mum and Dad.
It could have been so different, had we been a Fairbridge lad.”

(Angela Sherry, 2012)
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Marriages


Deaths


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Census Records


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Old Fairbridgians’ Association, Western Australia, Register of Children.


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Application and Consent Form for Admission to the Home for Destitute and Orphan Children, Whinwell, Stirling for Robert Dickson dated October 14, 1908.

Application Form for Admission to the Home for Destitute and Orphan Children, Whinwell, Stirling for John McPhee dated August 4, 1911.

Consent Form signed by Christina McCallum Stewart agreeing to cease being responsible for John McPhee and Isabella McPhee on August 26, 1911, handing over their care to Miss Croall of the Home for Destitute and Orphan Children, Whinwell, Stirling.

Letter from Elizabeth Rose of Cameron Street, Motherwell, to Miss Croall (Miss Croall’s Home...
for Destitute and Orphan Children in Bridge Street, Stirling) dated October 10, 1908.

Letter from Christina Stewart to Miss Croall (Miss Croall’s Home for Destitute and Orphan Children in Bridge Street, Stirling) dated July 30, 1911.

Letter from Christina Stewart to Miss Croall (Miss Croall’s Home for Destitute and Orphan Children in Bridge Street, Stirling) dated August 22, 1911.

Letter from John McPhee (C/O Mr. S G Phillips of Gunwarne, Cranbrook) to Miss Croall (Miss Croall’s Home for Destitute and Orphan Children in Bridge Street, Stirling) dated December 12, 1919.

Letter from Kingsley Fairbridge (Care of the Child Emigration Society, Oxford) to Miss Croall (Miss Croall’s Home for Destitute and Orphan Children in Bridge Street, Stirling) dated February 3, 1920.

Letter from Mrs. James Hunter to Miss Croall (Miss Croall’s Home for Destitute and Orphan Children in Bridge Street, Stirling) dated February 3, 1920.

Podcasts


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www.wikipedia.org
www2.mcb.wa.gov.au
### Appendix

| **ALLEN, Walter Bevis (2nd Party)** | Illegitimate child whose mother died when he was a baby. Placed in the care of the Board of Guardians in Kingston-upon-Thames, London. Farm worker after leaving the farm school who was able to start his own farm in the late 1920s. Unfortunately, he was unable to maintain it financially and was declared bankrupt. Joined the Australian Military Forces in 1940 and ultimately became a railway employee. First wife committed to asylum and he subsequently divorced her. Remarried and second wife deserted him. Service record indicates that there were several children. Date of death unknown. |

<p>| <strong>BLOOMFIELD, Herbert (2nd Party)</strong> | Herbert’s mother died when he was just 7 years old and father unable to care for his children. Herbert placed in Workhouse in Bromsgrove along with a brother. Both would find themselves in Australia. A sister, Gertrude, was sent to Canada, courtesy of the Waifs and Strays Society, a Church of England organization. Farm worker who spent most of his time working in the wheat belt with a good working record as a superior farm hand until he joined the army in July of 1940 to fight in World War II. After leaving the army at the end of the war, he became a factory worker in Perth. Died in November of 1956 at the age of 53 years. |
| Private Herbert Bloomfield, Australian Imperial Forces, Service Number WX6922 (circa 1940). National Archives of Australia. | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>BRITTON, Horace (2nd Party)</th>
<th>Farm worker and saw mill worker during the early days (circa 1920-1924) but was not suited to working in the mill and had a mini breakdown. Of a very nervous disposition, and underwent a period of medical assessment in Perth Hospital for another suspected nervous breakdown circa 1925-1926. Maintained contact with the uncle who had consented to his emigration to Fairbridge Farm School until the uncle passed away in 1931. Subsequently had a variety of jobs including hospital orderly and laborer. Horace was scornful of his treatment at the hands of the Fairbridge organization and also lamented the fact that the Australian government did not have the necessary funds to feed the people of Australia in the 1930’s during the years of the depression, yet they were able to find enough money to fund the war effort and defend the country’s vested interests in 1939. He was disappointed with the way things turned out in Australia and was known to have remarked that the only ground the working man would own unless he was lucky was his block of land 6 x 4 in Karrakatta Cemetery. Horace died in 1954 at the age of 49 years.</th>
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<tr>
<td>DARNELL, John (2nd Party)</td>
<td>Likely an orphan because he was in the care of the Kingston-up-Thames Board of Guardians at the time of emigration. Died in 1929. Farm worker until he was admitted to Claremont Mental Asylum where he died of pneumonia. He was only 25 years old. He was buried in a public grave under government contract.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DICKSON, Robert (2nd Party)</td>
<td>Studied to become a Civil Engineer very early in his career and worked as an Engineer for most of his life. Full story told on pages 11-15 of this paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DOIDGE, Albert (1st Party)</strong></td>
<td>Albert was the son of Thomas Charles Doidge, a Fitter’s Labourer and Philippina Bicking, who was German by birth. Reference to the Islington Poor Law Records shows multiple Workhouse entry records from 1903 to 1910 (London, England, Poor Law Records, 1517-1973) for the Doidge family, including Albert’s mother and father. Indeed Albert’s baby sister died while institutionalized. It is thought that Philippina abandoned her family and left them all in the workhouse. Worked as a farm hand until at least 1968 after which time he took a job as a street sweeper for the Shire of Corrigin, Western Australia. A long-term resident of Corrigin (Mrs. Rae Flower) remembers Albert and describes him (known as Bertie) as a very quiet and shy old gentleman who spent his time working for the Shire by sweeping the streets with a hand broom. In addition, she stated that a friend of hers is often heard to comment that “the streets have never been as clean since Bertie retired.</td>
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from his duties.” During his later years, Albert was resident in the Corrigin Hospital Old People’s Residence until his death on June 28, 1992 at the age of 90. Mrs. Flower remembers that his caregivers at the hospital were very fond of Bertie and also the individuals responsible for payment of his funeral.

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<th>FAIRHALL-CURD, Richard</th>
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<td>(1st Party)</td>
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Private Richard Fairhall-Curd, Australian Imperial Forces, Service Number WX4675 (circa 1940). National Archives of Australia.

Richard and his brother were admitted to the Rye, Sussex Union Workhouse after their mother died in 1906 and their elderly father struggled to keep the family together. There were five Fairhall-Curd children in total. The birth, marriage, and death indexes indicate that William Webb Fairhall, their father, died in 1918. The register in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians’ Association, Western Australia, confirms that Richard Curd was in the care of the Rye, Sussex, Board of Guardians before emigration to Australia. The author says that he was “a sturdy, healthy type, of not very high order of intelligence.” He is complimented, however, on his ability to clean to a very high standard.

Richard left Fairbridge in August of 1919 and the OFA register tells us that Richard had taken a variety of jobs in the wheat belt and at some point took up his own block of land. Unfortunately, this was not to be a successful venture for Richard because he did not have the necessary capital to make a success of it. According to the Australian electoral rolls he subsequently worked as both a laborer and a truck driver. He is reported to have married an elderly woman and this probably refers to his wife-to-be, Norah. He appears to have remained in Western Australia (in various Perth suburbs), and marries a lady called Norah in 1939 right before World War II. The Australian National Archives have an army service record on file for him, which indicates he served between 1939 and
| **FAIRHEAD (McGRATH), Percy (1st Party)** | 1947 with a service number of WX4675.

He married for a second time after the death of his first wife in 1960. Richard was to pass away at the age of fifty five on March 7, 1971. His ashes were dispersed at Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth. |
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<td><strong>Percy Fairhead</strong> was born on December 26, 1902, in London, England, the son of John Fairhead and Selina McGrath. He had an older brother, William, and two younger sisters, Ellen and Rose. He arrived in Australia courtesy of the Islington Board of Guardians and must have been admitted to their care sometime between April of 1911 when the census was taken and December of 1912 when he left England. Percy told a very sad story about the day his parents gave him and his brother, William, some pieces of bread, telling them to go out for a while. When Percy and William returned, their parents had gone and never returned. The two boys were taken to the Islington Workhouse by an unnamed individual.</td>
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<td>He appears to have lived and worked as a farmhand in Western Australia, in and around the city of Perth. In 1943, he can be found at Newdegate, working as a farm laborer. It is here that he appears to have enlisted in the 10th Battalion Volunteer Defence Corps on 31 March 1942.</td>
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<td>Sometime between April of 1947 and July of 1951, Percy married a divorcée by the name of Amy Hilda Brown South but the marriage did not last. He died on December 9, 1979 and was buried in an unmarked grave in Wongan Hills, Western Australia. There is no mention in the township records of any family members. It would seem that Percy died as he had seemed to live most of his life, and that was alone.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOLT, Frederick Howard (2nd Party)</strong></td>
<td>Fred Holt was born January 29, 1906, in Barry, Wales, the fourth son of William Holt, a dock labourer, and Lavinia Maud M Holt (formerly Hancock). Frederick had five siblings. William</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Frederick Howard Holt, Australian Imperial Forces. Service Number WX2207 (circa 1940) National Archives of Australia.</td>
<td>was drowned at the end of 1907 leaving a pregnant Lavinia and her children to fend for themselves. She remarried but new husband not prepared to look after another man’s children. Farm worker and then a miner until he joined the Australian Imperial Forces in June of 1940. Was taken prisoner of war by the Germans in 1941 and spent time in both German and Polish prisoner of war camps. Returned to mining after the war, married and had 8 children. His mother, Lavina, was informed of his capture as his next of kin, but it is not thought they had much in the way of contact. Lost his life at the relatively young age of 59 years, passing away on October 16, 1965 in Hollywood Hospital, Perth, Western Australia.</td>
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<td>JACOBS, Edward (1st Party) Private Edward Jacobs, Australian Imperial Forces. Service Number WX2207 (circa 1940). National Archives of Australia.</td>
<td>Admitted to the Islington (London) Workhouse in early 1910 with his widowed father, Edward, and his sister, Nellie. The 1911 census for England which was enumerated on Sunday, April 2, 1911, shows an Edward and Nellie Jacobs still resident in the Workhouse, but there is no sign of their father at this time. Said to be quite weakly to start with, but soon developed into a strong, young lad. When he was sent out to work in 1917, he really never took to the life of a farmer and decided that he was better suited to a building career. By 1936 he was working as a laborer in Victoria, one of the eastern states. His death certificate indicates he had only lived in Western Australia for six years, so he could have moved to the Eastern states as early as 1919. Married Catherine Mary Curley about 1940/1941 in Fitzroy, Victoria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| JENKINS, Frederick Edward (1st Party) | Frederick Edward Jenkins was born in Islington, London, on April 7, 1903, the son of William Edward and Clara Jenkins, formerly Williams. Frederick was just over a year old when his mother died at the age of 38.  

Started his working life as a farm hand, but can be found in 1937 working as a miner. The Old Fairbridgian Association register notes confirm that Frederick was not considered to be a very satisfactory worker at his early jobs, but appeared to be doing quite well by the time he was working as a miner in Collie.  

Married twice, first to Ivy who passed away in 1960, and then to Anne Gwendoline. Frederick himself passed away on July 8, 1974 aged 71 in Fremantle, Western Australia. His death entry in the Australia Death Index (www.ancestry.com) clearly records his parents as William E and Clara Jenkins. He appears to have been cremated and is memorialized at Fremantle Cemetery. His second wife, Anne Gwendoline was aged 90 years when she passed away on November 14, 2000. She is also memorialized at Fremantle Cemetery. |


The register in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians’ Association, Western Australia, |
Grave Marker for Arthur Joseph Keane, interred at Pinjarra Cemetery, Western Australia.
Photograph courtesy of Old Fairbridgians’ Association, Western Australia.

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<th>LAURENCE, Henry (Harry) (2\textsuperscript{nd} Party) Brother of Edwin Lawrence</th>
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Harry Lawrence died on September 3, 1982 at the age of 78 years and is buried in the Roman Catholic Section of Karrakatta Cemetery next to his brother, Edwin. Harry’s wife, Kathleen, is still alive at the time of writing (March 2013) but is reluctant to talk about the experiences of her husband and brother-in-law during those early days.

Edwin Lawrence was born on October 25, 1902 in Plaistow, Sussex, England. See above (Henry Lawrence) for details of Edwin’s family.

Worked under close supervision in a variety of menial jobs due to his fragile mental state. Edwin was not as capable as some of the other boys when it came to work duties because of his size and he found it difficult to communicate with his peers on a social level, but he always tried to keep up with the rest of them as much as he was able.

Placed with kindly people throughout his working life including working for a market gardener in Holyoake, Western Australia where he remained for a number of years until his employer sadly passed away. This was a very traumatic event in Edwin’s life which led to a breakdown and his subsequent placement in the Claremont Mental Asylum from which he was eventually released.

Edwin’s niece, Tricia, remembers her Uncle Edwin as “a rather sad, lonely man who never married and worked on a poultry farm.” He apparently visited Henry (Harry) and his family in Perth on a regular basis.

Edwin Lawrence died on March 25, 1972 at the age of 71 years and is buried in the Roman Catholic Section of Karrakatta Cemetery next to his brother, Edwin Lawrence.
LODGE, Arthur Richard (1st Party)

Arthur was born on October 20, 1899, in Stoke Newington, Middlesex, London. Although the name of his mother is unknown, his father was called John Lodge and he appears to have had a sister named Lizzie. The 1911 census for England and Wales (www.ancestry.com) shows Arthur and his sister, Lizzie (born about 1905) living 9 Mildmay Avenue, Islington, London, together with their father, John Lodge, described as a widower.

Arthur joined the Australian Imperial Force on September 21, 1916 and fought in World War I. His service record also indicated that he considered himself to be a British subject, and he was working as an Orchard Hand in Harrakin, Quairading, for an individual called J. Barker. At the time of enlistment, Arthur was 5 ft 5 ins tall, weighed 130 lbs, had dark brown hair and grey eyes. His father was living in Olinda Road, Stamford Hill, London.

Private Lodge seems to have had a chequered service career, having been punished for petty dismeanours throughout. These were mainly being absent from place of duty. It is unclear what Arthur did after being discharged from the Army in March of 1919 and the year 1931 when he shows up on the Australian electoral rolls in Bunbury, Western Australia. However, a photograph obtained from the Battye Library in Western Australia, depicts a group of four boys on the farm with a former child migrant who was knocked out at the breaking of the Hindenburg line in 1918. All the dates tie in with events in the life of Arthur Richard Lodge, and it seems likely that the young man in the photograph is Arthur Lodge.

In 1941, Arthur married a divorcee, Dorothy Edith Rose HODGE, and they appear on various electoral rolls notably in Perth in 1958 when Arthur was employed as a tramway worker. Arthur passed away in Perth on May 9, 1966 aged 67. He is

Arthur Lodge is likely to be the young man in the middle of the group in army uniform.

It is possible that the two young men to the right of Arthur are the Quartermaine brothers, Thomas Percy and Frederick.

Photograph courtesy of the State Library of Western Australia (circa 1919).
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>McPhee, John (2nd Party)</strong></td>
<td>Buried in Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth, Western Australia with his wife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worked as a labourer before dying as a prisoner of war at the hands of the Japanese Army in 1943 aged 40.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Full story told on pages 16-21 of this paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For photograph of John McPhee see section that refers to Mitchell, John Duncan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grave of John McPhee in Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery, Myanmar (nd).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Courtesy of the War Graves Photographic Project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mitchell, John Duncan (2nd Party)</strong></td>
<td>Became a butcher in the Eastern States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full story told on pages 22-27 of this paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John McPhee, John Duncan Mitchell, and Robert Dickson prior to leaving Miss Croall's Orphanage, Stirling, Scotland for Pinjarra, Australia (circa May 1913). Photograph courtesy of the Stirling Council Archives, Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearce, George 2nd Party</strong></td>
<td>The exact dates of birth for the Pearce brothers are unknown, but the registers in the possession of the</td>
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George Pearce mug shot (prisoner number 11467) taken at Fremantle Gaol (circa April-May, 1922). Photograph courtesy of State Records Office, Western Australia.

Old Fairbridgians Association, Western Australia, suggest that John was born October 10, 1903 and George was born June 21, 1904, both in Kingston, Surrey. It is likely that their parents were William Pearce, born about 1869 in Portsmouth, Hampshire, England and Ellen Game, born about 1870 in Hertfordshire, England. They can be found on the 1901 census for England and Wales living with possible siblings to John and George with the names Mabel, Sidney, and Alice.

The OFA register notes are not very complimentary when it comes to George Pearce and whoever wrote them did not like him very much. He is described as a liar and a thief and prone to every mean and cruel despicable act imaginable. He apparently did not respond to a farm school education and could not be trusted, and seemed to have a permanently sullen expression. Was sent away to spend some time in the Swan Orphanage, presumably because Fairbridge Farm School staff could not handle him.

Died in the Eastern States, date not known but thought to be in the 1940’s. Worked as a grocery assistant prior to leaving Western Australia and spent some time in Fremantle prison for stealing.

PEARCE, John (Jack) (2nd Party)
Brother of George Pearce

See above (George Pearce) for details of John’s parentage.

Jack apparently worked for a baker in the town of Pinjarra for many years and was then employed in the kitchen at the refreshment rooms at Pinjarra railway station. He was said to take great pride in his appearance sporting stiff collars and beautifully laundered clothes. The writer says that he could almost be described as a “dandy.” Went to Eastern States and became a driver. He is also thought to have married.

Jack Alfred Pearce as he was to become known, passed away on November 25, 1980 aged seventy
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Service Number SX11598 (circa 1940). National Archives of Australia.</strong></th>
<th>seven years. He was buried in Templestowe Cemetery, Victoria, Australia, on November 28, 1980. An entry in the Victoria Government Gazette of March 25, 1981 invited creditors, next of kin, and anyone else having claims against his estate to contact the Public Trustee (No. 126, p. 948).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **POTTICARY, Charles (2nd Party)**  
Brother of George Potticary | Charles Potticary was born on July 13, 1904 at The Hill, Great Cheverell in the registration district of Devizes, Wiltshire. His father is recorded as John Potticary, a Farm Labourer and his wife, Ruth Maria late Dare, formerly Burt. Ruth Maria Burt was born in North Curry, Somerset about 1864. She was first married to John Dare towards the end of 1884 in Taunton Somerset. This couple had at least four children who would have been step-sisters to George and Charles Potticary. John Dare appears to have died about 1897 and Ruth Maria Burt then married John Potticary in Taunton towards the end of 1901. John Potticary and Ruth Burt had at least four children. John Potticary died at the end of 1906 in Taunton, leaving his wife, Ruth, with eight children for whom she was responsible. The 1911 census for England and Wales shows that the Potticary children were all inmates of the Taunton Workhouse located at 9 Trinity Terrace. It was not, however, possible to locate the whereabouts of their mother, Ruth M. Potticary at this time. Additional research reveals that she remarried for a third time in 1917 to James Raison. All four Potticary children have emigrated; George and Charles to Australia in May of 1913 and Albert and Gladys to Canada in July of 1913. Farm labourer until 1941 at which time he enlisted with the Australian Imperial Forces. Was a green keeper in Geraldton, Western Australia at the time of his death in 1965 at the age of 61. Charles was buried on November 11, 1965 in the Anglican section of Utakarra Cemetery, Geraldton, in an unmarked grave. |
| Private Charles Potticary, Australian Imperial Forces, Service Number WX14527  
(June 25, 1941) National Archives of Australia. | |
**POTTICARY, George (2nd Party)**  
Brother of Charles Potticary

![Grave of George Henry Potticary, Bunbury Cemetery, Western Australia (October, 2012). Photograph courtesy of Bunbury Cemetery Board.](image)

George Potticary was born on April 27, 1902 in Ablington Figeldean, in the registration district of Amesbury, Wiltshire, England, the son of John Potticary, a Farm Carter and his wife, Ruth Maria Potticary. See above (Charles Potticary) for further family details.

The Old Fairbridgians’ register tells us that George was “overgrown and spindleshanked, extremely stiff and slow of movement, unadaptable but of a good nature and upright disposition and well liked.” He is said to have been teased unmercifully by the other boys, but he took it all in good spirit and was not at all resentful. Farm labourer until 1954. Worked as a hospital orderly until his death in 1978 aged 75.

He passed away on January 24, 1978 and was buried on January 26, 1978.

**QUARTERMAINE, Frederick (2nd Party)**  
Brother of Thomas Percy Quartermaine

According to the register in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians’ Association of Western Australia, Frederick Quartermaine was born on August 23, 1903 in Teddington, Surrey, England.

Frederick and Thomas Percy (known as Fred and Percy) were the sons of Charles Quartermaine and Annie Elizabeth Painter. Fred and Percy had at least two siblings, Hilda Ann Quartermaine born about 1896 and Lilian Janet Quartermaine born towards the end of 1897. At some time after their father, Charles Quartermaine passed away, and before the enumeration of the 1911 census for England and Wales took place, Fred and Percy were admitted to the Kingston Union Workhouse. Their two sisters went to live with their mother’s brother.

The England and Wales death indexes indicate that Hilda Ann Quartermaine would follow her brothers in death in 1948. Lilian Janet Quartermaine survived them all and passed away at the age of eighty seven years in
Windsor, Berkshire, where she had lived practically her entire life. None of the siblings appear to have married during their lifetimes.

Frederick was unable to make a success of farming and experienced hard times during the depression. Had a mental breakdown and died in 1940 at the Claremont Mental Asylum. Frederick was buried in Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth, Western Australia at 10:00 a.m. on November 7, 1940 in an unmarked grave. This land has been reclaimed and is now a Memorial Garden.

**QUARTERMAINE, Thomas Percy**  
(2nd Party)  
Brother of Frederick Quartermaine

According to the register in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians’ Association of Western Australia, Thomas Percy Quartermaine was born in September of 1904, in Teddington, Surrey, England. See above for further family details (Frederick Quartermaine).

Percy left the farm school in May of 1917 and went to work in an orchard where he is thought to have done very well. At a time unknown, he decided to try his luck in the wheat belt but overworked himself to the point where he became ill with rheumatic fever. During the depression years, Percy worked on road contracts and also the east-west railway which runs across Australia from Sydney to Perth. It was during this time that he succumbed to sunstroke, culminating in a mental breakdown. He spent the remainder of his days in the Old Men’s Home (also known as the Sunset Home) in Nedlands, Western Australia, where he is said to have aged very prematurely. He died in 1947 aged 42. Percy is buried at the Fairbridge Farm School Cemetery, Pinjarra. Unfortunately, his grave marker records an incorrect date of death, the correct date being May 24, 1947.

**ROGERS, Frank**  
(2nd Party)  
Brother of Frederick Rogers

According to the register in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians Association, Western Australia, Frank Rogers was born in Wimbledon, Surrey,
Memorials for Frank and Mary Lillian Rogers at Karakkatta Cemetery, Western Australia (October 28, 2012). Photograph courtesy of Twiggy Spriggs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROGERS, Frederick (2nd Party)</th>
<th>According to the register in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians Association, Western Australia, Frederick Rogers was born in Wimbledon, Surrey, England in 1903. It has not been possible to locate a birth for Frederick, and so it is possible that his birth was never registered.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Brother of Frank Rogers</td>
<td>Frederick was in the care of the Kingston Union Board of Guardians at the time of the 1911 census for England and Wales and resided in a scattered home at 4 Adelaide Road, Teddington, in the care of a woman called Mabel Moyes who was described as a foster mother.</td>
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<td>Abandoned idea of farming very early on in his</td>
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</table>
Memorial for Frederick Rogers at Karakkatta Cemetery, Western Australia (October 28, 2012). Photograph courtesy of Twiggy Spriggs.

| THOMAS, John Henry (2nd Party) | John Henry Pretorius THOMAS (also known as Jack) was born on July 10, 1900 in Merton, Surrey, England, the son of John Henry THOMAS and his wife, Emily Harriett Thomas, formerly Wade. This is contrary to the records of the Old Fairbridgians’ Association of Western Australia which give his year of birth as 1903. John had three older sisters, one of whom would later join him in Australia. The death indexes for England and Wales indicate that a John Henry Thomas died shortly after the 1901 census was taken on March 31, 1901. Life must have been hard for Emily after her husband’s death with four young children to bring up. Sadly, she died approximately one year later on April 17, 1902 in Norbiton, Surrey. Emily’s father was Frederick Mayo Wade who himself died in 1904, and Emily’s mother died the same year as her daughter in 1902. Tragically, by 1904, John had lost both his parents and his maternal grandparents. The only option as far as his care was concerned was probably the Workhouse at Kingston-upon-Thames which would subsequently become his |

Frederick Rogers passed away on February 24, 1968 in Bassendean, Perth, aged sixty five years and is memorialised in Karrakatta Cemetery. Ruby May survived him and died at the ripe old age of ninety eight on June 2, 2002 at Bassendean. She is also memorialised at Karrakatta.
home.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to find any more information pertaining to John Henry Thomas except for the information contained in a register in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians’ Association, Western Australia which states that John left the school in 1917 and visited one time in 1920. He was thought to have occasional contract with other boys, but had lost touch with the school itself. The registers states that John (Jack) Henry Thomas passed away in the 1950’s, but it has not been possible to find a record of his death.

**TRUSLOVE, John (Jack) (2nd Party)**

Private Jack Truslove, Australian Imperial Forces, Service Number WX6947 (circa 1940).

National Archives of Australia.

John Truslove’s date of birth and parentage is unclear, although the registers in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians Association, Western Australia, indicate that he was born on November 5, 1903.

An individual called Rose Truslove died at the end of 1908 in Kingston Surrey which could have meant she died giving birth. The birth of a baby called May Ellen Truslove was registered during the first quarter of 1909 which means that she could have been born at the end of 1908. It is possible that these individuals were the mother and sister of John Truslove. An online burial registers search for Hampton Cemetery shows that Rose Truslove was buried on December 12, 1908 in Hampton Cemetery, Middlesex. John and Nellie Truslove can be found on the 1911 census for England and Wales, both in the care of the Kingston Union but at different locations.

Farm labourer then worked as a wharf labourer. Joined the Australian Imperial Forces during World War II. Returned to laboring after the war. John Truslove died on April 12, 1969 aged 66 and is buried alongside Constance Grace at Karrakatta Cemetery.
Edmund Davis White (Ted) was born on February 25, 1900 in Walthamstow, Essex, England according to a register in the possession of The Old Fairbridgians’ Association, Western Australia, the son of Robert White and Maretta Maria Saywell, his wife. According to the 1891 census for England and Wales, Robert White was a Clerk in Holy Orders who was born in Canterbury about 1845. His wife, Maretta, was born about 1858. Sadly, Robert passed away some time in 1905 leaving his wife and five children to fend for themselves. Maretta Maria White died August 3, 1933 in Ashford, Middlesex, England, and administration was granted to Robert Percy White, a Publisher and presumably her son.

Edmund and Lillian had a total of five children. Edmund is said to have originally come from a country vicarage after his mother stumbled upon hard times due to the death of his father. Maretta had a handicapped daughter and could not maintain the two younger children (both boys), who were Edmund and his brother, Cecil.

His first employment was at Geraldton, Western Australia after which time he attempted to farm his own land. Unfortunately this venture would fail and Edmund worked as a labourer for the Bridgetown Roads Board from the early 1940’s onwards. Edmund married a former Fairbridge girl, Lillian Tames, and the couple had several children. Edmund died on January 12, 1974 and was cremated at Karrakatta Cemetery, Claremont, Western Australia.
### WICKHAM, Ernest Albert (1st Party)
Brother of William, Walter, and John.

Ernest Albert Wickham was born on July 7, 1905, the son of William James and Emma Elizabeth Wickham. He was baptized at the Parish Church of St. Jude, Southwark, London, on July 16, 1905. He emigrated to Australia in 1913 with his three brothers and his mother, Emma, who was employed as the matron escorting the first party of boys to Pinjarra. His father, William James Wickham, passed away on December 26, 1906 and Emma had struggled to keep the family together, obviously seeing this group emigration as a new start.

Became a miner very early on in his career and it was while he was working in the far north of Queensland that Albert met his wife, Alice, who he subsequently married in 1931. The couple had six children.

Albert appears to have died in Bognor Regis, England in 1978 at the age of 73. It is not known why he may have relocated back to England.

Emma Wickham and her four boys (circa 1906 – 1912). Left to right the boys are William, Walter, Ernest (Albert), and John.
Photograph courtesy of J.Wilson.

### WICKHAM, John Birdsey (1st Party)
Brother of William, Walter, and Ernest.

John Birdsey Wickham was born on April 19, 1903, the son of William James and Emma Elizabeth Wickham. He was baptized at the Parish Church of St. Andrew, Lambeth, London, on May 10, 1903. See above (Ernest Albert Wickham) for further family details.

John worked in various orchards after leaving Fairbridge at the age of 12 but quickly turned his attention to mining and wharf laboring. Volunteered for the navy during World War II but found himself in the army due to an anomaly with his medical records. After the war he found work with the Railways Department in Perth and passed away on June 9, 1977 aged 74. Both John Birdsey and his wife, Myrtle Elizabeth Wickham, are memorialized in the Garden of Remembrance at Karakatta Cemetery, Perth. The couple were survived by three children.

A young John Birdsey Wickham (nd). Photograph courtesy of the Mackean family.
WICKHAM, Walter Francis (1st Party)
Brother of William, Ernest, and John.

Walter and Hilda with their three daughters, Marjorie, Shirley, and Joyce (nd but likely to be between 1946 and 1952).
Photograph courtesy of Jackie Wilson.

Walter Francis Wickham was born on April 1, 1901 in London, England, the son of William James Wickham and Emma Elizabeth Harding. He was baptized on May 19, 1901, along with his brother William John Wickham, at the Parish Church of St. Andrew, Lambeth. See above (Ernest Albert Wickham) for further family details.

Between 1925 and 1958, Walter worked as a laborer, first in Perth and later in Fremantle where he lived for many years. He married Hilda Hampton and had three children, but sadly the youngest child, Joyce, leukemia at the age of 8 years. Walter and Hilda would separate shortly afterwards.

Walter passed away on November 26, 1960 after suffering with motor neurone disease for many years and is buried in the Wesleyan section at Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth, Western Australia, alongside his little daughter, Joyce who passed away on June 29, 1952.

WICKHAM, William John (1st Party)
Brother of Walter, Ernest, and John

William John Wickham was born on June 2, 1899 in London, England, the son of William James Wickham and Emma Elizabeth Harding. He was baptized on May 19, 1901, along with his brother Walter Francis Wickham, at the Parish Church of St. Andrew, Lambeth. See above (Ernest Albert Wickham) for further family details.

After the death of his father, William’s mother found herself left to maintain and care for her four sons alone, and she was forced to place William in the Stockwell Orphanage, London.

On February 9, 1915, when he was fifteen years old, William joined the Royal Australian Navy and spent some time on the training ship HMAS Tingira in Sydney until November 19, 1915 as a boy sailor.
The Wickham Boys (nd). Walter is standing at the back, left to right in the front are William (in naval uniform), John, and Albert. Photograph courtesy of Jackie Wilson.

It is likely that William met his future wife, Margaret Edith May McGeorge while serving at a shore establishment in Sydney. They were married in Sydney in 1924. William and Margaret had three children. Sadly, one of their daughters, Mavis, died in infancy on June 29, 1926. Margaret passed away on August 26, 1946, at the age of 46. By this time, William was working for the Department of Health in Fremantle as a Quarantine Officer. He died on January 9, 1954 of third degree burns while fumigating a ship in Fremantle Harbour. William was cremated at Karakatta, and his ashes dispersed at that same location.

**WILKINS, Albert Leonard Lloyd (1st Party)**

Wedding Day, November 23, 1941 in Perth of Albert Wilkins and Dorothy Williams, a former Fairbridge girl. Photograph courtesy of the Wilkins Family.

Albert Wilkins was born on May 13, 1904, at 53 Coleman Road, Belvedere, Erith, Kent, England, the son of Henry Lloyd and Eileen Sinnott Lloyd. The 1911 census for England and Wales shows that Albert was in a Children’s Home in Clifton, Bristol, England at the time it was taken. He was 7 years of age and one of only 15 children in this particular dwelling, which appears to be a small private orphanage.

After having various farm jobs in the wheat belt, gained employment as a Station Hand with a mining operation, a job he worked for many years. After suffering an accident, went to work in a glass bottle factory.

Albert died in Perth in the suburb of Innaloo, Perth, on March 8, 1979 at the age of 74, and his ashes were scattered to the wind. His widow, Dorothy Vera, passed away at the age of ninety two on July 21, 2005 in the suburb of Mt. Lawley, Nr. Perth. She was cremated at Karrakatta Cemetery.
Albert and Dorothy had one son, Murray, who lives and works as a jazz musician in the Perth area.

**WILKINSON, William Blackbourne**  
*(Snowy)*  
*(1st Party)*

Despite numerous records showing William’s second name to be Blackburn, his birth certificate shows that his name was actually Blackbourne. He was born in Islington, London, on December 26, 1901, the son of Walter Wilkinson and Mary Theresa Wilkinson formerly Banyard. The London, England, Poor Law Records, 1517-1973, show that William was frequently admitted to the Workhouse during the period 1903-1910 and subsequently discharged, but to where he was discharged is unclear. Application was made to the Child Emigration Society of Oxford on October 8, 1912, for William to be considered for emigration to Pinjarra.

Siblings listed on the Child Emigration Society application form are Mary M (aged 13), John W (aged 18), George (aged 11), and Albert (aged 8). Further research has shown that at least three of these children were placed with Dr. Barnardo’s Homes in London and were subsequently sent to Australia as part of that organization’s child migrant scheme.

The recently discovered register in the possession of the Old Fairbridgians’ Association, Western Australia, reveals that William was sent to Australia courtesy of the Islington Board of Guardians. He was described as lacking in strength, being physically underdeveloped and very fragile mentally. Despite all of his problems, he is described as a very popular and agreeable young man. He worked on the land for many years before join enlisting in the Australian Army on October 10, 1940 reaching the rank of Corporal and served with 5 Australian Division Workshop AEME. After being discharged from the Army, William worked as a night watchman at an Army Ordnance Depot in Midland Junction.

William was married to Alexandrina Elizabeth Clapp at the Wesley Methodist Church, Perth,
Western Australia on December 14, 1935. The couple were blessed with four children, three of whom are still living in Western Australia.

William Blackbourne Wilkinson passed away on October 18, 1987 in the Tuohy Nursing Home, Midland, Western Australia. He is memorialized at Karrakatta Cemetery.

**WILLIS, Ernest Charles Donald (2nd Party)**

Ernest and Janet Willis celebrating Janet’s 80th birthday (circa 1982). Photograph courtesy of Pat and Graham Jones.

Ernest Charles Donald WILLIS was born on December 18, 1904 in Oxford, England, the son of Donald Ernest Willis and his wife, Harriet Louise. The Willis family can be found on the 1911 census for England and Wales living at 30 Union Street, Cowley, Oxford. Ernest’s story is unique in that his parents thought they were giving him the opportunity to make something of himself by sending him away. Donald Ernest Willis married Harriett Louise Haynes between April and June of 1904 and the couple would eventually become the parents of a total of sixteen children, including Ernest.

Initially a farm labourer but became a road worker and then a line man working with overhead cables.

Ernest married a widow, Janet Frost, on January 22, 1949 in Dallwallinu, Western Australia.

Ernest maintained regular contact with his parents in England and even had a lamb delivered to their address for Christmas! However, he never saw them again after leaving home and even though he could have made the journey, was reluctant to do so because all he could remember about England was how cold it was.

Ernest passed away at the grand old age of ninety years old on April, 5, 1994. He was step-father to Janet’s six children and was clearly loved by his step-children. Husband and wife are buried side by side in Dallwallinu Cemetery.

Donald and Harriet Willis (Ernest’s parents) are pictured here (circa 1964) around the time they celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary. Photograph courtesy of Chris Berry and Gill Steepe.