



# FIND & CONNECT WEB RESOURCE NEWSLETTER

Issue 3: August 2012

A web resource for Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants

## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the August edition of the *Find & Connect Web Resource Newsletter*. Over the last month there have been a few stories in the media covering Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants. Notably, *The Monthly* August edition features an essay by Christine Kenneally - *The Forgotten Ones: Half a million lost childhoods*. This essay highlights the experiences of those who grew up in institutional care and the difficult search for records and identity that they experience. In July *The Good Weekend* featured an article on forced adoptions - *Missing Years* by Fiona Harari. Both articles are well worth a read.

Over the last two weeks we have conducted Find & Connect Records Access Documentation Training workshops for the funding recipients in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia. The sessions went really well with some interesting discussions on archival practice. The final session, for Queensland recipients, is being held on Monday 13 August.

In this issue of the newsletter Cate O'Neill has contributed an article on Family History and there is the regular round up from our historians around the country. I hope you have a good read and a good month.

Sal Orpin

Communications & Liaison Officer

## FAMILY HISTORY WEEK - 27 JULY TO 5 AUGUST 2012



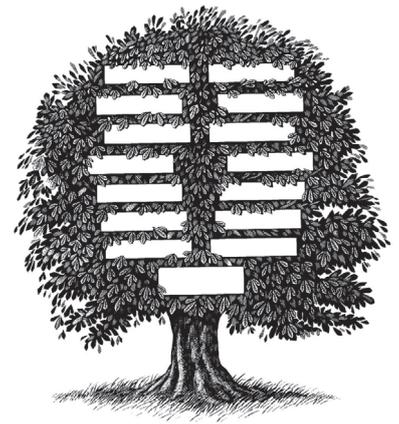
Members of the Find & Connect web resource team have been venturing out into the world of genealogy in recent months, to spread the word about the site. We have been involved in the 'Shake your family tree' events organised by the National Archives of Australia, the Unlock Your Past expo in Queensland, and National Family History week events in Tasmania. Family history is a popular pastime in Australia, and our web resource has lots of information for people whose family history has been touched by the history institutional "care". It is also important for us to raise awareness that, for Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants, family history research is more than just a hobby.

Family relationships were thrown into upheaval when a child went into a Home - many times, siblings became separated when sisters were placed in one Home and brothers in another, or toddlers living in a different institution to their older siblings. Often, institutions actively discouraged

contact between a child and their family members 'outside'. Some staff members believed that family visits and letters had an inconveniently unsettling effect on the child. The Forgotten Australians report has heartbreaking stories of letters never delivered, children being lied to - told that their parents didn't love them, or even that they had died. The surviving records sometimes contain the vital missing pieces needed for a person to construct their family tree.

Institutional care often has an intergenerational impact on families. Finding information about an ancestor who was in an orphanage, industrial school or rescue home can be more than just an interesting titbit - for some people, it can explain a lot about their family and their relationships, particularly in light of the shame and stigma that was attached to these institutions for so long.

We are receiving more and more 'Ask us a question' emails at Find & Connect that fall into the 'genealogy/family history' basket. But that doesn't mean that we don't see them as important. While we prioritise emails from Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants (and their immediate family members), the team recognises the importance of genealogy in making sense of the past. Recently, we put some information on the site that can help people who want



to try and do their own research into past family members. The 'Family Tracing' ([www.findandconnect.gov.au/family-tracing.html](http://www.findandconnect.gov.au/family-tracing.html)) page has information about where to start, and links to resources and organisations that can help.

Cate O'Neill

National Editor



This newsletter is published by the Find & Connect Web Resource Project Team. For enquiries please email the editor: [sorpin@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:sorpin@unimelb.edu.au)

# STATE SNAPSHOTS

News from our Historians around the country.

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

The ACT site has made some important progress in relation to tracing the movements of children across the border into NSW children's homes and training schools. I have listed the major NSW homes identified in annual reports on the ACT site as they are clearly a key aspect of the ACT's history of out-of-home 'care.' I feel that this information has added greatly to my personal understanding of the kind of experiences ACT children may have had as a result of being sent to some of New South Wales most notorious institutions. It has further reinforced the sense that the histories are inextricably linked.

Lydia Connell

## NEW SOUTH WALES

At the moment we are preparing for the first Records Access Documentation Project workshop on 6 August 2012. In all, eleven projects were funded for not-for-profit agencies in New South Wales and the workshops will be a great opportunity to talk over the projects and offer a hand. These workshops will also help us update the web resource for Find & Connect.

A key task for coming months will be identifying government homes that were run by the forerunners of the Department of Community Services and the Department of Juvenile Justice, including Children's Court shelters and depots, and improving the entries.

Naomi Parry

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

As I write this snapshot Karen is on her way to Darwin to spend a week digging for more records to enrich the Northern Territory site. We are grateful to the archivists at the NT Archives Service, National Archives (Darwin) and the Health Department, for their continued assistance in finding and making accessible files and other records related to child welfare in the Northern Territory. We have also been granted access to files created by the Uniting Church and Church Missionary Society, so after the trip we should be able to provide more

detail in those record listings. We are continuing to work systematically through each entry on the NT website, adding pictures, links to newspaper articles and new information wherever we can.

Karen & Gary George

## QUEENSLAND

Four new out-of-home residential care facilities were added to the Queensland database during July. Sandeman Nursery, run by the managing committee of St Mary's Home, was opened at Wynnum in 1897. Babies born at St Mary's, who were given up for adoption, were cared for at Sandeman Nursery. The Church of England established St Christopher's Boys Lodge at Brookfield in 1934. Reverend F. Bates was its patron and founder. Two holiday homes operated at Sandgate to provide a seaside holiday for children from poor homes, and children from western Queensland. The Catholic Daughters Holiday Home operated from 1933 and the Sandgate Holiday Home opened in 1940. I would love to hear from anyone who can contribute more information about these homes.

Lee Butterworth

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

This month SA hosted a workshop for the Find & Connect Web Resource team where we discussed ways to improve and further develop the website. We had a positive meeting with archivists from the Professional Standards Office of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Archdiocesan Archives and the Sisters of St Josephs Archives about updating and expanding information about records of Catholic Homes. We attended a farewell morning tea for SA Post Care Services and met with some of the new Find & Connect Support Services staff at Relationships Australia SA. Also attending were several Care Leavers who have generously shared their stories with us and offered information and photographs that will help to add richness to the entries for several homes.

Karen & Gary George

## TASMANIA

Significant changes to the website this month include information about the punishment room at Wybra Hall, known as 'the Boob' and a new entry about the records of the Industrial School for Girls held by the Rare and Special Collections, University of Tasmania. I have taken photos of the former state-run homes, Laroona, Rochebank, Kanangra, and the Aboriginal Family Group Home which will soon appear on the web. Courtesy of the Rare and Special Collections and Heritage Tasmania, there will also be new photos of the Industrial School for Girls, later the Salvation Army Home of Girls, and Barrington Home for Boys. My thanks go to both these organisations for their continuing support and to the home owners who so generously allowed me to photograph their houses.

Caroline Evans

## VICTORIA

At the Australian Historical Association conference in Adelaide this month the Victorian State based Historians spoke about the challenges and rewards of writing collaborative history. Throughout this month we have continued to expand and update the Victorian web resource in response to the many questions and comments which we receive through the 'Ask Us A Question' link. Thanks to everyone who has contributed. We look forward to continuing the collaborative journey.

Nell Musgrove

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A couple of rich veins of information about childhood experiences in out of home care can be found in the National Library's oral histories and submissions to the national inquiries into out of home care. I've been attaching those oral histories and submissions to the WA institutional, event and glossary entries. They won't be live on the site for a while, but the groundwork is done. Including these voices helps balance the official histories, and gives us some insight into the 'after years'.

Deb Rosser