A Different Kind of Home

The Masterton Methodist Children's Home

Homeleigh

1921-1978

Compiled by Margaret Robins and Brian Shaw

Children's Home

HERBERT STREET, MASTERTON

ERECTED - - 1921

WELLINGTON METHODIST CHARITABLE AND EDUCATION TRUST

Names of the Wellington Trustees, as recited in the Act of Parliament, 1916, are:—

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Names of the Local Committee in Masterton are:—

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HILDREN'S HOME

Herbert Street
MASTERTON

Wellington Methodist Charitable and Education Trust

Erected 1921

A Different Kind of Home

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Homeleigh
1921-1978

Foreword

As the only girl of my age in the country area where we lived, the Masterton Methodist Children's Home seemed a great place — all those other girls, always someone to play with. Although I was only young at the time it seemed to be a different kind of home.

My mother, Louisa, was the older of the two girls of the Churchill family who with their four brothers were the first family of children to enter the Home when it was opened. I grew up understanding that I was a granddaughter of the Home. During the 1940s it was a great delight to me that I was included in different celebrations held at the home – most notably Christmas. What pleasure it was to receive a gift off the tree from Santa Claus – and to enjoy the party provided for the occasion. I thought that the girls were so lucky to have the opportunity of having so many playmates available. Contact also continued through the Methodist Church where the Home children attended Sunday School, as did I. Contact was to continue through college days and to a lesser extent throughout life.

As a child I had little thought as to the conditions that brought these children into the Home situation. It must have been very traumatic for them. Time does indeed allow one to develop a greater wisdom with more knowledge of the truth.

As told in this book, the Churchill children were orphaned with the deaths of both parents within a month of each other. The stories they told in later life of their experiences of being sent to live in the Home were many and varied. Some good and some bad! Being considered old enough to start work, their eldest sister, Eileen, remained in Wellington. She took on the responsibility of caring for her brothers and sisters as best she could, maintaining as close a contact with the younger family members as possible, although they were removed to what must have seemed at the time a great distance.

My mother always felt responsible for her younger brothers and sisters, and they developed extremely strong ties as a family – these were retained throughout their lives. The Home policy of holding a family together as much as possible certainly worked for them. It remained a close family with many great gatherings for special occasions over the years and a continual flow of letters. They all spent their lives in the greater Wellington area with my own family staying in Masterton where my dad, Bill Tulloch, farmed. The Home gave the Churchill family members the education needed to enable them to be useful members of the work force, and instilled in them the Christian values they carried throughout their lives.

I have become aware of the work that has gone into gathering and sorting the material that has been used in the preparation of this book. I congratulate those involved for putting together this information, so that the stories of the Masterton Methodist Children's Home, latterly Homeleigh, can be retained and remembered for the future.

"One half forgotten memory comes back by chance to you
And brings a wistful sadness that could break your heart anew.
Yet would you be without them, friends, those thoughts of yesterday,
That send a sunbeam through the clouds – some gold amidst the grey?"

Heather Lumsden-Ratu
March 2003

Introduction

Children's Homes, once reasonably common in New Zealand communities, have now completely disappeared from the social landscape. Founded mainly by churches in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to provide long term care for 'poor', 'destitute' and 'abandoned' children, residential Homes did not survive changing social and economic times, and were closed one by one in mid to late 20th century.

For much of their history Children's Homes were known simply as "Orphanages", sometimes "Institutions", and their residents as "inmates". These terms suggested unhappy places, filled with deserted children, dependent on community charity for their meagre existence, as indeed many, if not most, were.

When placed in Homes, bewildered children could experience conditions that ranged from regimes of "discipline" they could not have imagined in their worst dreams, to kindness and caring they may not have experienced in their own family homes. While a lucky few would come to thrive in a climate of affection and respect, we now know that many children would experience hardship in Homes, and some would suffer abuse of one kind or another.

The major factor determining whether particular Home children would experience benign or harsh conditions was, without doubt, the personal qualities of the (mostly) untrained staff. Simply, while some staff were kindly, others were the opposite. Further, children in a Home that had frequent staff changes might experience the full range of conditions from "love to lashings" and back again within a few years.

However, as an indication of the resilience of the human spirit, whatever they experienced in orphanages and homes in this country, most former Home children appear to have gone on to lead normal family and working lives. Indeed, some acknowledge that their Home experience has had a positive influence on their adult lives.

Establishing a Children's Home in Masterton turned out to be a long, slow, and complicated process. However, from the very start it carried the high hopes of its founders, for they wanted this to be a different kind of Home.....

We set out to have the story of the Masterton Methodist Children's' Home told by the people who lived there at some time. We found that many former Home children and staff are now deceased, some survivors are quite elderly, many have not been "found", and some did not want to revisit those childhood years. However, we also found many who well remember those days and enjoyed telling their stories.

Most personal accounts we received come from the late-1920s to mid- 1950s period, with a gap in the 'middle years', and only two from the later 'Homeleigh' period. The reasons for this seem to be that children from the early years were from family groups that stayed in the Home for longer periods, formed stronger bonds with staff and other children, have kept loosely in touch with each other, and hence have been more easily located. Most have also now reached the age where reflection and reminiscence is helping them to place their childhoods in perspective.

By contrast, children in the later Homeleigh years stayed for shorter periods. Changes in government childcare policy in the 1960s and '70s focussed more on children being placed with families in the community, with Homeleigh being used more as a transition to foster family care. Children of this latter period were not together long enough to develop the sort of lasting relationships that characterise the earlier years. They have been much harder to trace or contact through electoral rolls, newspapers, magazines and radio. Some people contacted us and said they knew they were former Home children, but were uncertain which Home they had actually been in, as their stays were so short.

Our intention was to record stories from every generation of Home children. However the responses we received are largely an account of life during the Home's first thirty or so years, as recalled many years later. We offer no judgements or comparisons between different eras. What you read here is what has been submitted to us — editing has been applied solely to respect individuals' privacy and to provide continuity of verbatim text.

Periods for which we have not received personal stories have been reconstructed from records held in the Methodist Church Archives in Christchurch, Conference Reports held in Massey University Library, and from interviews with former Committee members.

Direct quotations from Committee records, Church Conference Reports and other sources are contained within quotation marks, but are not footnoted.

We wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Methodist Communications Fund and the Masterton Trust Lands' Trust for the research stages of this project, the steadfast encouragement and financial support of Dr Owen Prior, the invaluable assistance of Marcia and Fred Baker of the Methodist Archives, and the positive support of former Home Committee members who so willingly opened their memories for us. We thank Avril for her assistance in searching the archives and selecting photographs, Nicola for her keyboarding, and Heather for her Foreword. We are especially grateful to Avril and Frank for the forbearance they have shown over the period it has taken to complete this project.

Finally, we express our appreciation to all those former "homies" who have contributed stories about what it was like to be a child in the Masterton Methodist Children's Home from its opening in 1921 to its closing, as Homeleigh, in 1978.

Margaret Robins and Brian Shaw.
March, 2003.

How it all began ...

To the best of our knowledge the Masterton Methodist Children's Home is not mentioned in the Treaty of Waitangi, but its origins can certainly be traced back to soon after the founding of the Colony of New Zealand. It all began with the first Governor of New Zealand, George Grey, and some poor and destitute children.....

Earliest Days:

As early as 1852, a mere dozen years into the Colony of New Zealand's existence, Governor George Grey was so concerned "for the education of children of our subjects of all races and of children of other poor and destitute persons being inhabitants of the Islands in the Pacific Ocean," that he granted land for this purpose to Wellington's churches.

The Wesleyan Mission, while grateful for this beneficent gesture, took twenty-one years before opening the "Wesleyan Day School" in Dixon Street in 1873 – having earlier sold some of the gifted land back to the Wellington Provincial Government (to become the Botanical Gardens).

Then was to follow a quarter-century of struggle between the Church's Annual Conference and the Wellington Wesleyans – while successive Church Conferences wanted a residential facility for orphan children established in the Wellington region, the Wellington Wesleyans preferred day schools. And day schools they would build.

In 1889, sixteen years after the opening of the Wesleyan Day School, Church Conference specifically proposed the option of a residential facility for children in the Wellington region. The proposal was for the Wesleyan Trust to use other gifted land in Foxton for either "an industrial school for orphans or native children", or to lease the vacant land and use the income "for the support and education of orphan children in Wellington City".

Nothing came from either of these options. Accordingly the 1893 Conference was even clearer — the Wellington Trust was directed "to purchase land and establish an orphanage" in the Wellington region. Direct or not, this instruction was again interpreted by the Wellington Trust as a green light, not for an "orphanage", but for a further school — a kindergarten school, which they proceeded to build and operate.

Church Conference was not amused at this further diversion of its wishes, and in 1897 pointedly directed the Trustees "to carry out the objectives of their Trust in a more adequate manner, by the establishment of an educational institution in which orphan and destitute children may be maintained and cared for."

The Wellington Trust however continued resolute, and again nothing was done to establish the "educational institution for orphan and destitute children" in the Wellington region that Conference had set its mind on. This standoff was to continue for several more years yet, despite a significant event affecting Methodism that might have been expected to move things along.

The Century Commemoration Fund.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Methodist Church worldwide set out to celebrate the new century by raising a Century Commemoration Fund for the furtherance of the Church's work — one million guineas in England, similar amounts in Canada, the United States, and the Australian Colonies, with sixty thousand pounds

to be the target for New Zealand. Amongst the philanthropic projects which the Sixty Thousand Pounds was to be devoted to in New Zealand, was a specific grant of 2000 pounds for a "Children's Home and Orphanage."

Even with this generous prod, however, the founding of a "Home and Orphanage" in the Wellington region was still not about to eventuate.

In the new century, successive Annual Conferences of the Methodist Church again took up the struggle of attempting to persuade the Wellington Trust to establish residential childcare in the Wellington region. However, despite pointedly "urging upon the (Wellington) Trustees the necessity for urgent action", the Trust continued to establish day schools rather than "Orphanages" or "Homes".

Even a special committee, set up by the 1906 Conference with the express purpose of establishing a "Home" in the Wellington region, came back to the following Conference with the recommendation that "kindergarten schools" be substituted for a children's home. Whereupon the committee found itself "thanked for its services and discharged."

Apparently tiring of the Wellington impasse, the Church turned its attention to successfully establishing a "Children's Home and Orphanage Branch" at its Three King's Wesley College base in Auckland (1914), and the "Methodist Orphanage and Children's Home" at Papanui in Christchurch (1915).

Perhaps impressed with this evidence of Conference's determination, the Wellington Trust finally came to heel in 1916, divested itself of its kindergarten schools, and began to give consideration to the "orphanage" it had resisted for so many years. Displaying newfound zeal, the Trust quickly purchased land in Masterton for the purpose, though it noted that "building would have to be delayed until the war is over" (ie World War 1, 1914-18).

Hence in 1917 the Masterton Children's Home was at last in gestation. Sixty-five years had passed since Governor Grey gifted the land, and twenty-eight years since Conference first proposed an "orphanage" for the Wellington Region.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was still to be some time however before the first "destitute and needy" children of the Wellington region would be settled in a Methodist Home.

The Masterton Children's Home.

From the start the term "Orphanage" was resisted in both Wellington and Masterton — while officially part of the title of the Auckland and Christchurch Homes, this term was never used officially with the Masterton Home. First photographs of the construction site (circa 1920) show signs stating simply " Children's Home", and in 1922 the Church Conference officially resolved that the building be titled "The Masterton Children's Home".

There was good reason for insisting on the term "Home" rather than "Orphanage" in the Wellington region – in effect it was a public statement of the childcare philosophy long held by the much maligned Wellington Trust. Its stubborn preference over the years for establishing schools (rather than a single residential Home), demonstrated for all to see that the Trust believed that more poor children could be helped by schooling than by the fulltime care of a small number of children requiring expensive buildings, resident staff, and continuous provisioning.

When it finally accepted the inevitability of a residential facility, the Trust was still able to express its inclusive childcare policy by aiming to keep *families of children together* in as near to a real "home" as possible. And as not all children needing care were orphans, (and perhaps recognising that some social stigma attached to the term "Orphanage" even then), the Methodists of Masterton and Wellington opted for "Home" — in both word and deed.

The Masterton Committee also battled for years against the terms "institution" and "inmates" when applied to the Home and its children. Indeed, battle was joined immediately at the Official Opening of the Home when, in front of a large gathering of church, government, and local dignitaries, the Chairman of the Masterton Committee publicly chided the guest speaker, Minister of Education the Honourable CJ Parr, for having just used these terms in his opening address. This was to be a home for children, he said plainly, not an institution for inmates.

This first Committee, and all subsequent Committees, are to be admired for their adherence to this "the Home is a home" policy, and their willingness to stand up for and restate this principle over the nearly 60 years of the Home's existence.

37 Herbert Street, Masterton.

Mr C.E.Daniell, prominent Methodist and owner of CE Daniell Ltd— the biggest construction firm in the district — is recorded as first having met with local and Wellington committee members in his home in 1919, and then in 1920 being awarded the contract for the building of the Children's Home at 37 Herbert Street.

The start to building was not auspicious. First the Committee debated the type of building most suited for providing a "home" for families of children. Mr JR Mannell, Wool Merchant, proposed low unobtrusive buildings akin to normal family houses, whereas CE Daniell wanted to use new ferro-concrete technology to build a massive

3 storey structure similar to the new building his firm had just completed for Solway College. Concrete carried the day, even extending to the roof tiles.

Then there were building and costing problems. Conference of 1920 was told that "…..work (has) commenced at last…after negotiations with CE Daniell, scarcities in the supply of cement, and shortage of labour. Mr Daniell cannot say definitely what the building will cost…". And in 1921…"there is disappointment at the continuing delays in building…it is impossible to give an opening date….". Not all of the delay could be laid at Mr Daniell's door however – during the course of construction it was decided to extend the capacity of the building from 30 children to 40, a not insignificant enlargement.

Meanwhile the Committee, having sternly disapproved of a suggestion "that the Home be for boys only", appointed Sister May Moriarty as Matron from 1 November 1920. While the local church newsletter commented that "Sister May will shortly be busy with her 40 bairns", the Committee decided to take only a few children at the onset, "so as to gain the necessary experience". It also ruled that two years of age be the minimum age for admission. A family of six children was accepted immediately, while others were being considered for admission.

Opened on 29 October 1921 by the aforementioned CJ Parr, Minister of Education, (a last minute replacement for Governor-General Lord Jellicoe who had not replied to his invitation), Conference in early 1922 was informed of the "deep thankfulness at the completion of the Children's Home in Masterton. All present agreed that the Home was one of which the whole Dominion might be proud, it being an ornament not only to the town of Masterton and our members there, but to the Methodist Church of New Zealand…."

The Committee agreed to pay to CE Daniell the exquisitely precise final cost of 9,751pounds 2shillings and 11pence, which included "fitting of cupboards, lockers and wardrobes".

Sister May's salary was to be 2pounds per week, live-in, and that of Mr Lee, the groundsman, 3pounds per week with Sundays off. Sister Annie Thornton was appointed Assistant Matron.

Beds were to be donated by Sunday Schools in the region, the name of the Sunday School to be placed at the head of the bed.

Mr S Newcombe of Kilbirnie donated 50pounds, "to be invested for all time, annual interest to be given to children for prizes in Scripture."

The Masterton Methodist Children's Home was in business.

The Early Years

The Churchills: the First Family.

Minute Book entry 29 September 1921: "Sister Florence wrote from Wellington on behalf of the Churchill family. The children, six in all, had lost both their father and their mother in the space of one month. The Committee expressed their sympathy for the children and it was generally considered that this was a case for the Home."

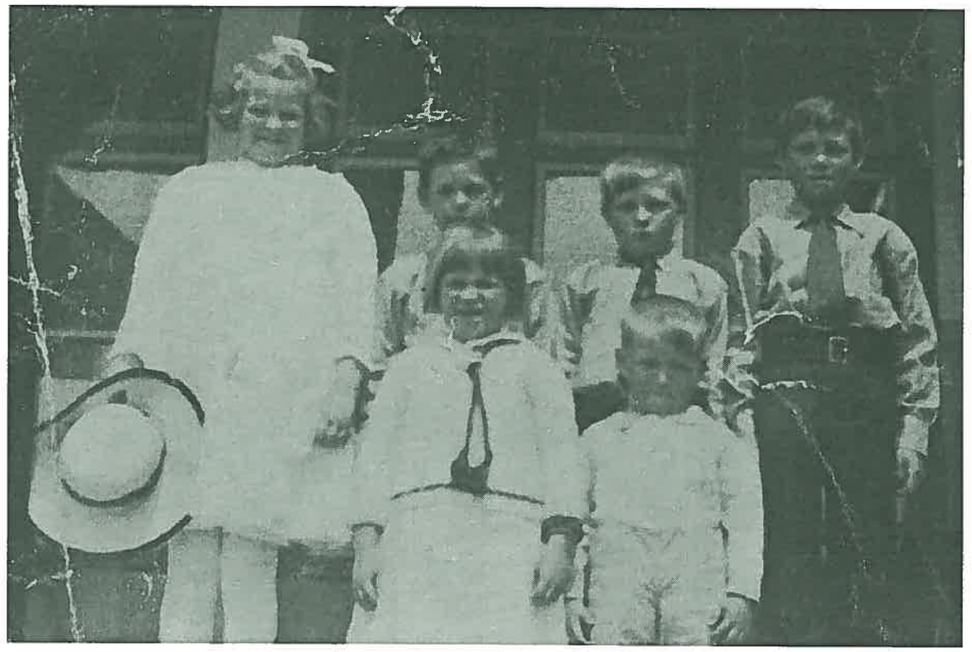
The family was to be admitted on 24 October 1921, five days before the Official Opening.

24 October 1921.		
Admission No 1:		Winston Randolph Churchill (14 years).
	No 2:	Louisa Churchill (12 years)
	No 3:	Walter Churchill (11 years)
	No 4:	Raymond Churchill (9 years)
	No 5:	Thelma Churchill (6 years).
	No 6:	Claude Churchill (3 years)

The Matron reported that the Churchill family had arrived at the Home. "The children were apparently very well behaved and healthy. Clothing was required, this to be left in the hands of the Ladies Committee."

So, the first family of children to enter the Masterton Home were in fact genuine orphans, their parents victims of the calamitous influenza epidemic that arrived in New Zealand after sweeping the world at the end of the First World War. The very first child admitted, Winston Randolph Churchill, was the bearer of dignified names relatively unknown at the time in this part of the world, but destined to become the most famous of the 20th century.

The Churchill children must have been bemused by their reception – having just been uprooted from their home, they were treated to an arduous train trip over the Rimutakas, a Mayoral Welcome at the Masterton Railway Station, and were then driven in the Mayoral Gig through the streets of the town to the imposing and pristine Home in Herbert Street, and into the tender care of Sister May and Sister Annie.



(Louisa Churchill, recorded November1978) We were admitted because our parents both died within a month. There were six of us - there were seven but my oldest sister was able to go to work, so she stayed in Wellington and the rest of us came up. That was on Labour Weekend in October 1921,when we arrived. The Mayor in town met us and brought us out to the Home and I think we were the only 6 children here for that Christmas. I was 11, my brother Winston was older than me, and then we tapered right down to my youngest brother Claude (who was called Mickey) - he was our baby. He was only a little wee thing — when we came to the Home he was 3. When we came the place wasn't furnished very much but there were enough beds for us, and as each lot came in they got more beds — oh, we all learned to help, we had set jobs, do the cooking – from a little girl I always loved cooking. I always could be in the kitchen quite happily.

From the very start the Churchills found that life in the Home was based on all children sharing with staff the essential tasks of cooking, cleaning, gardening, and caring for "the little ones". Though they wouldn't have given it a thought, their early experience was to be the pattern for all following generations of Home children, and those who were in the Home when it closed nearly 60 years later were still sharing an unbroken line of household duties with the very first family.

The First Staff.

Sister May Moriarty, First Matron of the Home, Deaconess of both Australian and New Zealand Methodist Churches, had a fine record of service in her native Victoria, and in New Zealand as Superintendent /General Secretary at the Dunedin YWCA, and Sister in Charge of the inner-city Aro Street Mission in Wellington for 11 years. Sister May was held in high regard, and indeed affection, by all who knew her.

Sister May was already known to the Churchill children through her Aro St work with the poor, and their adjustment to life in the large Home must have been smoothed by her familiarity, her kindly nature, and her enlightened philosophy of child care. As soon noted by the Masterton Methodist newsletter….."Sister May is proving to be a real mother in the Home (with) her qualities of head and heart,….. with untiring diligence (she) ensures that the best possible influences are brought to bear on the life of her family."

So attached did she become to the Churchill children placed in her care, especially Louisa, (better known as "Louie"), that long after she retired back to Australia Sister May kept touch with the adult and married Louise, and continued to visit her in the Wairarapa throughout the rest of her lifetime.

(Louie).....Sister May had christened all of our family when our parents both died because she was a Deaconess, so she knew us all and wrote and said to bring us all up to the Home, and we did. She was like a mother to us, and when she went to Australia she came back and had several holidays with us.

The other half of the "Sisterhood", Sister Annie Thornton, had a similar record of selfless service to the poor and unfortunate in New Zealand, including several years as Sister in Charge of Wellington's Tory Street Mission, then Assistant Matron to Sister May for six years before becoming Matron of the Presbyterian Orphanage in Timaru.

This particular combination of the parentless family of six children and the two experienced and devoted Deaconesses as the first residents of the Masterton Children's Home, could not have been a more auspicious start for the Committee's long-held policy of keeping needy families of children together.

Many generous gifts of cash, food, and bequests were received soon after the Opening, and the Churchills faced their first Christmas in the Home.....

(Winston) I remember the first Christmas we were here and there were only the six of us, and we hung up a pillowcase each and found it absolutely chock-a-block full of muscatels and tin toy soldiers and all sorts of things that we had never seen or heard of before. It was a wonderful experience and that particular Christmas was really heavenly.

New Families.

The Churchills had the Home and the staff to themselves for 10 weeks before the next children were admitted, a 3 year old girl and her 2 year old brother, followed steadily by other pairs of children, singletons, and by mid-year another family of four, one of whom recalls.....

I think I came to the home in 1922, or 1923, I remember when we got there from Wellington on the train and the horse and coach took us to the home. I was 6 and my sister was 5 and May must have been about 3 and Frank was a year old. I remember he didn't come straight away because he was too young. They generally wanted them to be 2, but I remember we took a special little Chinese baby whose mother died and I used to have him in the clothes basket because he was so little, so tiny.....

At this time a family of 3 was declined admission "as both parents are alive" — after the publicity of the Opening there was a steady flow of requests to accept children, some as young as 7 months, from families with both parents living but separated, or for reason of husbands' "ruinous drinking", or where the family had no housing, or where both parents needed to work to survive. Where both parents were living, most of these applications were declined.

Struggling to establish clearcut priorities for admission without breaking up families, the Committee first decided to give favourable consideration to families where there had been deaths from the influenza epidemic, and then resolved " that each case be decided on its merits, always recognising that actual orphans shall have preference".

Within eight months of the Opening there were 16 children in the Home, with 7 more approved for admission, and already there were problems getting parents to pay adequate allowances for the care of their children. The Committee decided that one parent "was to be asked to increase the payment for his children as 2 shillings and sixpence per month is too little and we are of the opinion that he can be asked to pay more."

This early problem with payments was an inevitable consequence of the humane but, as it eventuated, uneconomic policy of giving admission to families of children – if a parent was having difficulty maintaining a family of children, then that difficulty was simply transferred to the Home when it came to the rescue. Already in mid 1922 the Home was looking to the Government for assistance. This issue was to trouble the Home's operation for all of its years, and was to be one of the reasons for its eventual demise.

In December 1922, just a year after the Opening, there was ample evidence of the community's support for the Children's Home now in their midst. The Masterton Commercial Travellers Association initiated what they called "Orphans' Carnival Week" which consisted of:

Monday – Buy a Badge. Tuesday: Flower For Sale Day. Tuesday Evening: Monster Combined Children's Concert in the Opera House (including the District High School Glee Club, Solway Girls College Choir, Caledonian Dancers, YMCA Gymnastic Drill, Miss Beere's Dancing Pupils etc etc). Wednesday: Jumble Sale, Cake Stall in the YMCA. Thursday: Balloon Day for "Every Kiddie Large and Small". Friday: Paddy's Market. Saturday: Wellington Commercial Travellers' 50 Voice Male Choir under the leadership of H Temple-White.

The Children's Concert was enthusiastically reviewed in the local newspaper...."a large audience attended despite the inclement weather....first class programme....magnificent efforts of the performers....such splendid talent in Masterton.... performers far above average.....", and raised the substantial sum of 616pds and 9pence for the Home.

Within 18 months there were 24 children in the Home, aged from 3 to 16 — 13 boys and 11 girls, average age 7. "Each boy and girl is dressed as any other child, they do not wear any uniform by which they may be recognised as different from other children when they attend the public school during the week or the Methodist Sunday School. Every effort is made to make the children feel they are in a home....."

The children may have loved Sister May, but they also had great affection for Sister Annie...

..... one of the new little boys was Sister Annie's pet....she loved him... .... I remember Guy Fawke's night with Sister Annie. I was very small then and she brought us some animal cracker biscuits and I will always associate Guy Fawkes night with Sister Annie and animal cracker biscuits. It is a happy memory.....

The open spaces of the Home's grounds struck an immediate chord with those children whose lives had been spent to date in urban areas .....

.... and of course, all this was farmland, a lovely farm. It was a very happy life, the only sadness was I lost both my parents in a month and I took years to get over the shock. The farm wasn't going properly yet. All the paddocks meant to us was the distance to the creek for our picnics, taking our baskets and our bread. We used our clothes baskets and cut our bread and butter and had very plain food but it always tasted better down there with the sandflies sitting on the butter box. That was our swimming hole down there and we used to get our chestnuts and come home and roast them in the Common Room fire — we used to get into trouble 'cos sometimes we'd dam up the creek. It was a days work to get there and a days work to get back, but that was our picnic..... Another of our treats was when we used to take a treacle tin down, or a large golden syrup tin, and catch the crabs in the tins and we'd light a fire and cook them, then eat them. And eels, also.

Photographs surviving from these first few years invariably show a smiling Sister May and Sister Annie, surrounded by cheerful young children, some of the youngest perched on their knees, and on the knees of older children.

Of course, not all was sunshine and light – from time to time children would misbehave, and punishment appropriate to the times would be applied...

When I was here in Sister May's time we were allowed to go out and earn money by cutting lawns and doing the gardening. If we were naughty we'd have this money taken away from us. But we usually got it back later. If something special came on, then we'd be given it back.

When the boys needed chastisement and Mr Bate was sent for, they would put on an extra pair of pants and go in to the shed there and he'd wallop them all right, but they had thick pants on.

Another great punishment was the one where if you had been naughty you would have to go without a meal for the night or morning. We used to play cricket out on the lawn and when we didn't come in time, we used to go to bed without meals.

Death in the Family.

The early death of a young Home child in 1924 was an occasion of great distress. Already this had been experienced in the South Island Home — in 1919 one of what was reported as a young "inmate" had been taken in the worldwide influenza epidemic. There was great anguish over responsibility in both cases. The Papanui Home was assured "that no blame attached to the Institution re hygiene and care of the children", and in Masterton the child's mother "had been at the hospital for some days during her child's sickness and had expressed her satisfaction that everything possible had been done at the Home and the Hospital (for her daughter)...."

Sisters May and Annie were commended for their efforts with the child....."here again we find the untiring and noble devotion of good women. Sister May nursed and cared for the little one week after week, and received her reward in the gratitude of a bereaved mother."

Famous Visitors.

On 21 October 1925 the Home was finally visited by the Governor-General of New Zealand, now His Excellency Sir Charles Fergusson, and Lady Fergusson. "During the visit His Excellency, on behalf of the Committee, presented each boy and girl who took part (in Scripture Union Examinations) with a copy of the Scriptures, and during his address impressed upon the children that they should prepare themselves for a life of useful service."

The children remember this grand occasion, naturally, and though in later life none recall the inspirational words of the G-G, they do recall the effort they were involved in to have them looking their very best....

In those days you used to wear your Navy blue war uniforms and white blouses. In winter time, we wore navy blue uniforms with a red tie on a Sunday morning. I have a photo at home somewhere of the Governor General awarding me the prize for the biblical exam. There we are in our starched uniforms outside the Home — I used to have to iron and wash all those starched aprons with bibs. I was the one that could do them the best and it was my allotted job and I hated it....

The Churchills Face Life.

1924 and 1925 marked further steps for the First Family – on the 12 February 1924 Winston Churchill was "called before the Board and words of kindly advice were given to him on his leaving the Home". Young Winston, the first child admitted and now aged 16 years, became the first "boy to leave the Home and earn his living", apprenticed to Rigg Bros as a carpenter.

Winston Randolph Churchill, apprentice carpenter, may be famous for being the first child admitted to the Masterton Methodist Children's Home, but the story is told by his family that at a later time when his namesake was internationally famous, our Winston was knocked out in a rugby game, and upon stirring was asked by the nurse how many fingers she was holding in front of his eyes – an informal test for concussion. "Three" he responded, to the nurse's satisfaction. When then asked to give his full name he naturally answered "Winston Randolph Churchill", whereupon the nurse turned to the attending doctor and said "I think we'll have to keep this one in for a night or two — he has delusions of grandeur."

Later the lucid Winston had only good things to say about his time in the Home....

Winston: We were allowed to go on a holiday once, that was way out to Wardell's bridge, climb the mountain, take the whole day away from the Home, and we'd go birdnesting and do all sorts of things and we really enjoyed it. We also used to be able to go to all sorts of functions, it was marvelous. I can hardly say a thing in criticism about the Home in the time I was there. We had our punishments when we were naughty, but they were always justified.

The following year Louise, first girl to enter the Home and now 16 years of age, made the transition from Home child to junior member of staff.....

... When I was about 16, I was given Frankie and 10 others - 11 children - under 3 years old for my special care. I pottied them and bedded them and bathed them and fed them, got all their meals, got them up and put them down each day. There were 43 children and staff in the home by that time and I did the cooking with help — the children had to peel the vegetables and the Matron and I would oversee them. I learnt to cook and do everything from then on.....

Part of her first duties was to do what she could with the other staff, under the direction of the Home's first Honorary Physician, Dr NH Prior, to protect the full Home of 42 children from the "infantile paralysis" (poliomyelitis) epidemic sweeping the country – fortunately no children were affected on this occasion. She was also one of the carers for Admission #45, "Peter, a motherless Chinese little boy not yet two years old" during his short stay in the Home.

In 1926 Louie experienced the departure of Sisters May and Annie and the installation of Miss M.I. Allan as Matron. A year later, in early 1927, after six years association with the Home, Louise Churchill left to take up a position in the town.....

.... I left the Home and went to work for some town people and kept house for a big homestead, cooked beautiful dinners and served to a large household. Then I went to work for Dr. Prior, who's always been the Home Doctor, and I brought up Owen from when he was a baby two weeks old until he went to school.....and his brothers and sisters....and I kept their big house for four years until I was 21....

At 21 Louie married and settled into farming life near Masterton and then Carterton. Her younger brother Walter had left the Home the previous year, to work on a farm at Pahiatua, and within a year Raymond was also to leave the Home to begin work learning the bootmaking trade.

Changing Times.

The years 1926 and 1927 brought the first big changes for the Home in the areas of admissions and departures, staff, technology, equipment, and litigation.

Whereas the first five years of the Home's existence had been marked almost entirely by children entering the Home, there was now the first major movement out of the Home – some who were now old enough were leaving for work, some were found homes with relatives and others with good Methodist foster families, and there was the occasional adoption. In all ten were found work or homes in a three month period in 1926, and seven new children were admitted in the same period. Thus was completed the first cycle of children into Home care and back out into the community.

It was not just the children who were leaving the Home — the benign stewardship of Sister May Moriarty and Sister Annie Thornton came to an end in late 1926, and the children had to begin again in their relationships with new staff. The children, of course, knew nothing of the reasons why their beloved Sisters would suddenly leave them, and similarly knew nothing of the new Matron. Indeed there is little record of Miss Allan's origins, though documents of the time note that "she has had considerable experience in children's homes"...."has St John Ambulance Training and Home Nursing Certificate", and one of the Home children of the time believes that she came to the Home from "working in an old folks' home in Dunedin."

The building was changing with the times too — conversion from gas lighting to electricity was completed at a cost of 30 pounds. (This "light at the flick of a switch" would have been an amazing novelty to children and staff, who, for all of their lifetime to date would have had to tend gas mantels manually to get light, and then later extinguish them carefully.)

Before long the purchase of an "electric washing machine" and the donation of a "wireless set" were also notable enough to be recorded in the Minutes – these were great advances in modern technology, and the electric washing machine particularly a tremendous step in convenience. The effort and time hitherto required for getting the fires going under the "coppers", bringing the water to the boil, stirring the washing, then transferring the hot clothes to a sink for rinsing is unimaginable today, and had required up to this time the employment of a mature woman in the laundry. As recounted below, bigger children were now able to take over the chore of washing the Home's laundry — although not recorded, the advent of this "electric washing machine" meant that this woman probably lost her job, an early victim of the march of technology in the 20th century.

A piano was gifted to the Home by the Masterton Club, and the departing Sister May presented an organ.

The "Giant Stride" (ie Maypole) and see-saws were installed and were immediately "well patronised". The "Stride" was touted as "a great muscle developer", though its less well known capacity for keeping the neighbours awake with its constant tinkling was not recorded until many years later.

The first parent was taken to court to recover non-payment of maintenance.

Demon Drink and Delinquent Fathers.

Throughout the 1920s and 30s fathers' drunkenness and desertion was regularly referred to as a major cause of family breakdown and the neglect of children. The Reverend J Cocker reported to the Methodist community that drink had led to several children needing the care of the Home ..."the father (of this boy) is a drunken wreck, unable to work and a burden....the mother (of this girl) is dead and her father is in a government institution for inebriates....but for liquor (these children) might have been in their own happy homes. I thank God that the big heart of Methodism makes it possible for such children to be placed in Homes where they are treated in the best possible atmosphere."

This deep concern with liquor was evident on the first official Admission Form. Parents completing the form were required to state whether they were "teetotal" or not — no other options given. It is noteworthy that despite regular public broadsides at the prevalence of fathers' drunkenness, the surviving Admission Forms show that not one parent in the history of the Home, male or female, had ever let a sip of wine, a nip of spirits, or a glass of beer pass their lips.

Conference got the whiff of liquor too from the grants of 150 to 200 pounds the Home had received annually since 1923 from the TG McCarthy Charitable Trust, and directed in 1927 that the grant was "not to be received, because it is partly derived from the liquor trade." (The direct consequence of this for the Masterton Home was a deficit that year of 451 pounds.)

There was also, many years later, a spectacular occasion when all of the children were gathered on the back porch to witness the ritual smashing of full beer bottles which some of the boys had found in bushes – Masterton was a 'dry' area in those days and liquor purchases were often 'delivered' to concealed spots for later pickup. The beer was poured down the drain to the joint accompaniment of anti-liquor ranting by the Master of the Home (who had been a bit of a drinker himself in an earlier life) and plaintive bids for the beer by several workmen busy painting the Home. (It is also notable that many Home children were persuaded to 'Sign The Pledge' at a very tender age.)

The Church Conference of 1928 also took the opportunity to lambast fathers' dereliction of duty to their families..... "We have been deeply and painfully impressed by the number of applications on behalf of families deserted by their fathers. Last year there was an increase of several hundred of such cases dealt with in the Magistrates Court of the Dominion. We are of the opinion that fathers should be compelled to work either for the State or under supervision and their wages used for the support of their families." And in the following year ...." Of the 34 children in the Home, 30 have lost one or both parents.....Some applicants for admission have been declined during the year and we suggest a law change should be made which would place upon the State the responsibility of bringing back absconding fathers."

It has already been noted that difficulty in extracting regular maintenance payments from parents began the day the Home opened, and was to continue until the day it closed. Whilst it was more usual to pursue non-paying fathers for being 'derelict in their duties towards their children', mothers were not immune from pressure for payment of maintenance. As one long serving Committee member commented, this pursuit of parents was an ever-present and highly unpleasant task of Committees down through the years. Records show that the Committee tended to leniency whenever possible, and it is often recorded in Committee Minutes, (and sometimes there between the lines), that the Committee recognised the despair parents felt about unemployment and their inability to support their families. Many parents promised to pay "on the first of next month", but for many, next month never came. So the pursuit continued through the years, and could well have inhibited the frequency of parent visits.

It is to the credit of successive Committees that children in the Home were never ever made aware that their parents could not or would not pay for their care.

The Allan Era Begins.

The new Matron, Miss Allan, had the same first name as the beloved Sister May, but was known universally and forever as simply "Miss Allan." Photographs show a solid and serious woman, even forbidding in later photographs, and it can be safely assumed that none of the children (or Committee members for that matter) ever addressed her as "May" — she was not in any way to be confused with her predecessor. Her age at appointment is indeterminate, and nothing is recorded of her family background or education. Her 17 years of stewardship was to be far and away the longest of any Matron (or Master/Manager), and during that time she was to experience six changes in First Assistant, most serving with her for two years or less.

Miss Allan inherited the Matronship at a time when the Home was experiencing the first of its transitions, and when the country was heading for the hard times that were to culminate in the Great Depression of the 1930s and then the Second World War. It was not long before many New Zealand households were going hungry, fathers were unemployed or in distant work camps, children often went barefooted and wore third- and fourth-hand clothes, discipline in schools and families was often harsh, and many children left school as soon as possible.

According to accounts from Home children of that time — not realizing that many other children in the community were also experiencing hardship and deprivation — Miss Allan's management was well suited to these harder times. From the children's point of view, the Home was plunged from the benevolence of Sister May's matronship into a long depression to match that of the world economy.

With the benefit of hindsight and an adult understanding of the social history of the period, former children of the time do now acknowledge that during Miss Allan's years they were all fed regularly, had their own beds to sleep in, were adequately clothed, and many were able to go on to high school educations – circumstances they came to realize were not always available to all children in the wider community during that period in New Zealand's history.

It must be said, however, that the all-pervasive memory that most children retain of the Allan era is that, despite having their physical and health needs met, and despite all the mischief and games they engineered for themselves, it was a time when the barren emotional climate and the severity of daily discipline left many of them with long-term feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness.

The Allan Years

In late 1978, many former child residents were invited to the closing of Homeleigh, (as the Home had been renamed). Some of those present could trace their time in the Home back to the very earliest years. An extensive and unstructured discussion with these earliest residents of the Home was recorded on tape by a Radio NZ interviewer, and later made available to former residents through Dr Owen Prior. Extracts from that recording have already been used to illuminate the Churchills' earliest years in the Home. The following is an account of the period overseen by the second Matron, Miss MI Allan, with all verbatim comments drawn directly from the 1978 taped interview.

One of the first signs of the new regime was a decision, soon after Miss Allan's installation as Matron, that children now be "properly marched" to Church on Sunday mornings. It was common in Masterton to see "crocodiles" of uniformed children from the several private schools, but the Home children seem to have had a particular objection to marching in line – not even Sister May escaped criticism …

…. We had very few things to rebel against in the Deaconess's days, but one thing we did used to rebel against and that was having to march down to Church with a pretty drab sort of a uniform on. We would hear all the kids on the roadside saying….."here's the Home kids coming." And we used to try and hide our heads under our shirts…..

A year or two later, by then firmly into the Allan years, both marching to Church and Sunday School lessons continue to irk.....

…. I remember marching to Church in the summertime, and those hard seats, and I'd have one long sleep and march home again. Matron Miss Allan went crook at me because I didn't do my Sunday school lesson so she made me go right back and do the whole lot and as a surprise to me I came Dux of Sunday school, and she blew me up for that too!

The routines of daily life in the Home were well established after ten years of operation, and most of the experiences of the earliest members of the Home community were to be much the same for the many generations

of following children. Tales of both formal and informal life in the Home recounted here by the first generation are repeated by subsequent generations as if they were freshly invented, as indeed they were – such is the way of childhood.

All Home children from the first to the last remember the "jobs" they had to do every day, jobs that were essential to keep the large household ticking over smoothly. Some seemed to develop a residual sense of injustice about this, almost as if they believed such chores were a hardship especially created for Home children alone. Others considered that the performance of such duties could be worn like a badge of hardship overcome, and still take a sort of stoic pride in the achievement it represents.

…. I remember my little brother Claude when he was only about 7 standing at the tub scrubbing up to 40 pairs of black socks that the boys wore to school and that was his job. He would also have to bring in the kindling wood to light all the ranges…..We had to work in the vegetable garden. The farm wasn't going yet. ….The girls had the flower garden to look after, it was part of our training. We had so much each to weed and look after….

Some even enjoyed the acquisition of domestic and outdoor skills that made them competent in the outside world, and despite universal complaints about the repetitive nature of most tasks and the strict oversight of staff and older children, many also looked for whatever fun that could be got from even the most menial task …..

We used to get up at 6am and it took us about 20 minutes to have a wash and then we had a job to do till 7am. Well, for about three years, I had to do the 3rd Floor and that was polishing the boards, no mats or anything. One board was loose, and I used to get comics from school, bring them home and hide them under that board and instead of polishing and dusting, used to spend about 10 minutes doing the work and the rest of the time reading comics. Every now and then Matron decided she would inspect the third floor, you'd hear her coming and have to rush and put the comics away, put the board down, get busy dusting. Also I used to scrub the stairs on Saturday mornings and she'd say "You haven't done much", and I'd say "Oh it's very dirty Matron, it takes a long time, Matron". Also, I had to clean out the staff sitting room where the piano was kept and Miss Donald used to teach 2 or 3 girls music. Sometimes when I was supposed to be cleaning out the fireplace and May or Shirley was supposed to be practising the piano, well she'd get a bit tired occasionally and we'd swap!

This capacity for keeping an eye on Matron, and always being found to be busy whenever and wherever Matron appeared, was a well developed skill……

We had a very good intelligence system. Saturday mornings we all had to work. Well, Matron was very fond of gardening and she'd be out in the garden and she'd suddenly want to go to the toilet, but the staff toilet was upstairs. There'd be someone in the toolshed and they'd give the knock to the ones in the coalshed, and they'd give the knock to the laundry, and they'd let those know in the kitchen, the kitchen would let the dining room know, then it would be passed out to the downstairs passage, up the stairs, and by the time the Matron got in everything was in order!

Unfortunately the system was not perfect….

The older boys at this time were sleeping on the third floor and most of the time the children in general were aware of the presence of the Matron or knew her whereabouts, but this particular day she caught us out. One of the boys had found a pair of great big grey bloomers and he'd prance around in these things, and he was coming down around the corner from the third floor to the second floor when Matron caught him in the act.

….and could have both expected and unexpected results….

He got the biggest hiding he'd had, I think. But he wasn't going to be beaten, so the next day when we got up in the morning we saw the bloomers up on top of the flagpole. There was a southerly wind too!

Some children attempted to get their retaliation in first, with the usual outcome…..

Sometimes some of the children got some of their own back — those days there was such a thing as itching powder, and the boys put some down her neck, and the next thing they put it in her bed, and boy, they were in REAL trouble.

Every generation of boys up to the late 1960s tell the story about the mischief to be had with the stiffly frozen sheets early of a winter's morning in Masterton – also about the trouble it brought down on their heads, or in most cases, their bottoms.....

....The sheets and pillowcases were washed early in the morning and everything was dried generally by daylight, we used to always rise at 6 am. The washing was hung out on 6 long lines out the back. The ground underneath was all shingle, so one morning when all the sheets had frozen stiff, we were picking up stones and throwing them straight through the sheets. We got in quite a bit of trouble.....

The building of a rockery became a ritual for generations of boys, starting under Miss Allan's supervision in the late 1920s ....

....Matron Allan had us running up and down rockeries carting all the big stones, it was an absolute picture and I think it's stayed with most of us since.... We used to hop over into the next garden and catch a bit of blue-eyed grass for some variety to add. Every day the garden was worked on ....

It seems that one generation would build a rockery, the next would take it down, and the next would build another somewhere else in the Home grounds. With its neatly arranged steps the rockery soon became the obvious site for photographs of the children and staff over the years, and of course memories of the hard labour involved in building it remained a source of pride to its constructors for many a year.

Admission #100 was recorded in 1929, and it was also recorded that "of these 61 have gone forth to play their part as citizens in the outside world." In this year two more senior girls followed the footsteps of Louise Churchill for brief stints as junior staff. Within a year there were 40 children in the Home.

At the end of the first decade of the Home's existence the Home was full to capacity, Matron Allan was well settled, and the country was deep in economic depression. A tally of the children showed that the term "orphanage" would indeed have been misplaced....."25 are motherless, 9 fatherless, 3 are orphans, and 4 have both parents living." There was pride in the fact that 32 of 35 children passed their school examinations – in an earlier year it had been noted that "some of the children when received into the Home are very backward in their education" — and there was particular pride when one of the senior girls topped her class.

School achievement could be a source of pride to the Committee and staff, but being amongst a large number of other pupils often left the Home children feeling shame at being identified as different...

...We were always called "homies" at school. The boys used to wear pink singlets (result of a washing day mix-up) and it was called the MMCHB - the Masterton Methodist Children's Home Badge.....

Later generations of Home children, long after Home uniforms and pink singlets had been abandoned, continued to feel this stigma of being called a "homie", particularly the boys — apparently the girls did not often have to suffer this particular insult, though it appears that they were frequently subjected to other more subtle forms of public embarrassment at school (such as having snide comments made in their hearing about their clothes and haircuts).

Right from the start the Home children objected to having to hurry to and from school for the midday meal, an objection voiced here in the Allan years, and echoed by all subsequent generations. ('Lunch' was really a full dinner — a traditional hot meal of meat and vegetables, followed by pudding.)

..... We ran from here to Central School and came home for lunch every day. When we got to go to Technical School we still had to walk home all that way for lunch....the meals, we got vegies and if we didn't like them we'd put them in our bloomers and went down the toilet later, or down the gutter on the way to school. We had to eat everything off our plate and everybody got the same size serving and if you weren't very big you still had to eat it all and I can recall having to go to Tech which is about 2 miles away. We had an hour to get home, have our dinner and get back to school again, and I found that I couldn't eat all my dinner and when it came to plum pudding, rather than getting into trouble for being late back to school I just used to put my pudding in my bloomers and take it out and drop it in the gutter on the way to school.

Again this story of jettisoning unwanted food is repeated down the years.

These children of the 1920s and 30s soon found ways to satisfy their need for both food and adventure, and these are stories that are repeated over the years, almost identically, by every generation of Home children...

We used to do sneaky things, we sneaked food. I remember when Miss Mead was here, and the boys used to go through the common room at night and kiss Matron goodnight so she knew you'd all gone — one, two, three, one, two, three, all off to bed. One night Miss Mead went round the other way and came out of her room and met two of the boys and they had their shirts bulging. "What have you got under your shirts?" "Tennis balls Miss Mead" "Let me have a look" and out came all the apples!

One time, they brought in a 40 pound box of raisins and each of the children in turn were pinching a few raisins without the others knowing, I was one of the culprits. One day the Matron went to get some raisins to make a cake and of course the whole 40 pound box had gone! We had to write out 4000 times I must not steal raisins. One of the boys mentioned to me that the Matron used to count these lines and she discovered that Jim Davis had put his number in and was about 150 short and he still had to go and write those 150 lines.

The staff used to have their food cooked differently and it smelled so much better. They used to have bacon - we never knew what bacon was. So, we took the bacon rind off the staff plate and they were found under our pillows, so we had to write 1000 times 'I am a rat, I eat scraps off the staff plate'. When we were at secondary school we had a rather crusty old bookkeeping teacher called Frosty McNaught and he was a dear old soul. Well. we'd been misbehaving and he says to us "Right - 10 lines" and we nearly collapsed because we were used to writing 1000's!

An official report on the Home by a Child Welfare Inspecting Officer in 1929 supports the fact that the Home provided children with good solid fare – under the item "What provision is made to ensure well-balanced diet" the report states...

" 3 meals daily. Breakfast: porridge and milk, brown and white bread and butter, jam or marmalade. Sunday mornings fried sausages and stewed fruit, cocoa or milk after meal. Dinner: meat, 2 vegetables and pudding, these are varied as in an ordinary home. Tea: soup or bread and butter, dripping occasionally, cheese, lettuce and salads, brown bread, scones and cakes when available." This menu would certainly have matched that to be had in average New Zealand homes of the time.

Even former children were later to recognize that they were indeed well enough fed...

I think we really did have plenty to eat at the time, we had to remember now looking back that the Depression was on, but children being what they are, they would get into pantries if they could at any time.

Many memories of mischief seem to be connected one way or another to food.....

We used to go to Mrs Elliot's to pick raspberries and were able to earn a few shillings and keep it, and I remember we used to eat more raspberries than we picked, but the funny thing was, when we went up for morning tea there was always a plate of raspberries and cream for morning tea. I don't know whether they did that so we wouldn't eat them when we were picking them, but it was a hard job to get the raspberries and cream down.

It is noteworthy that no mention is ever made of the religious background of children being admitted. Most references for admission to the Home came from the Methodist communities of the lower North Island, and these references were all determined by need and not by religious affiliation. Children from Anglican or Brethren families who needed care and help were given it as freely as were children from down-on-their-luck Methodist families. (The only remaining report (1929) showing religious affiliation on entry indicates that 19 parents had stated Anglican, 12 Methodist, 6 Lutheran, 2 Brethren, 2 Presbyterian, and 1 Baptist.)

However, whatever their religion on entry, all Home children were then enveloped in a rich Methodist environment, and much of their daily and weekly lives observed the appropriate rituals – grace before meals, prayer sessions, Bible stories, hymn singing, Sunday School and Bible Class, Church choir etc. Despite being given a 'hard time' by Matron Allan, one boy found the Bible readings sustaining his spirituality in later life.....

When I had children of my own, we tried to give them what I was robbed of and cheated of as a child. The other thing that I have carried from the Home all through my days and still treasure it even today, is that compulsory reading of the scriptures. We were made to read them, we were made to memorise them —they didn't mean a hang of a lot to us at the time, but as we got older they began to make sense, and even now I can remember a lot of those scriptures, and they are so meaningful to me now. The great ray of hope that came out of the Home for me was the scriptures that were drummed into us whether we liked it or not, and they have been so valuable and so worthwhile and they really are what life is all about. And that's what I've built my foundations on - that background of spirituality that we received at the hands of the self same Matron.

For most children, however, the adventures to be had on the way to and from Sunday School seem to have remained in the memory more than the earnest lessons to be learned at Sunday School. Here children of the first generation spell out their attempts to find ways to divert to their own ends (ie buy sweets at the Corner Shop) the pennies meant for Sunday School and Church Collection..... Again, this story is repeated by successive generations, right down to their indignation at being 'shopped' by the shopkeeper...

We never got any money whatsoever - a penny to us was worth a fortune, we never got any pocket money. But on Sunday we got a windfall, we had to march crocodile fashion to church and before we went we were handed a penny each. Now, if we could avoid putting that into the church plate, on Monday we would go down to the Corner Store by the school. I wasn't a sensible kid, but I was sensitive, and I believed what they had taught me here from the scriptures that the Lord owned the cattle on a thousand hills, and I thought He wouldn't miss a penny, no way. I thought as my Heavenly Father He would completely and utterly understand, so I went into the Corner Store with this penny, and instead of the capitalistic storekeeper wanting that penny, she would go to the phone and ring the Matron and tell her what I'd done. "We've got one of the Home kids here".... we were always known as that, it was a sort of derogatory remark... "he's got a penny" (meaning it must have been stolen). The constant reading of scripture and learning it off parrot fashion did embed itself in your heart, but I say in all reverence that I couldn't see how the Lord would miss that penny, which was like a million dollars in my hand.

The girls were not immune to the temptation of withholding the Sunday School pennies, and neither were they immune to Matron's terrible wrath on being 'shopped', this time by an older girl...

I remember two little girls who nicked their Sunday School pennies — we used to have what we called Sunday clothes, and these pennies were found in their Sunday Coats, and these little girls were questioned about it and denied it flatly. They were put through the third degree and finally to get the truth out of them they were promised by one of the older girls that if they told the truth, it wouldn't be reported to Matron. So they promptly told the truth and they were promptly reported to the matron. As a result of that, these 2 little girls got a good thrashing, they got their mouths washed out with soap and water for telling lies, and they were forbidden to speak to any of the other children for a whole week and the other children were forbidden to speak to them. Then at the end of the week when the time was up, the Matron was so furious at the thought of these girls' crime that she gave them another hiding at the end of the week.

Whatever good works this Matron did during her time at the Home went largely unnoticed, or have been largely forgotten by the children she cared for, for Miss Allan is largely remembered by children of the time as treating them very harshly, and almost all have similar tales of severe punishment—some bordering on the cruel....

I had a nervous complaint when I was young, always laughing, and I was punished for it quite often. There was no way you could stop me laughing. And I'd smile sweetly at the Matron and it was hurting like mad. But another problem that grew from all that was that I was a bed wetter, I couldn't overcome it and I was about 10 before that stopped. But a terrible punishment that I received one day was when the Matron made me wear baby's napkins and I was about 9 years old. Now, I had to go to primary school, and we were going swimming that day and I had these nappies on underneath my shorts and I had to change at school in front of all the boys there, in desperate humiliation, and I would rather take a hiding after hiding than ever take that humiliation or see a child take that humiliation again. I'll never forget the shame. That was a sort of psychological punishment that I received.

Inevitably, these severe punishments confused the children about how to react when 'caught out' even in minor misdemeanors....

We were taught from the scriptures and they did have an impression on our minds and our hearts, but because of fear, loyalty to brothers and sisters didn't mean a thing. If I had done something wrong, I would pin it on my sister and look Matron in the eyes and say very sweetly "It wasn't me, it was May". (Or my brother, anybody but me.) The sister/brother relationship didn't come into it, but one day I thought to myself, this is wrong — I was only about 8 years old and I thought I must start telling the truth. Matron had always said "You must tell the truth at all costs". So I decided on this one occasion that I would that I'd tell the truth at all costs. Well because I told the truth I was sent straight up to bed in the boys dormitory on the second floor and I got no food after that. But by 2 and a half days I was very very hungry and the only way to get a drink was to go out to the bathroom and help myself out of the tap. In the end, I just broke down and cried to the Matron and told her a blatant lie which she accepted as the truth. So we were bred to lie, so as to avoid punishment. The price of telling the truth was too high.

The girls were also in confusion over the demand for total honesty placed upon them, and the unfair punishment meted out by the Matron, who was sometimes caught out herself ...

There was one girl who was knitting a cardigan for herself that her brother had bought the wool for, she was Alice and her brother had left the home beforehand. Anyway, the Matron said "Oh I would like to get some of that wool for myself", so Alice said "O.K., you get it and I'll give you a race to knit it". Alice would sit and knit like mad, whenever you saw her she was knitting and she was a sleeve ahead of Matron. Then Alice's knitting went missing. I used to clean the Matron's room and up on her bookshelf was rolled Alice's knitting, and Matron had said she hadn't seen it! Later when I was accused of being a liar and a thief because I knew who had raided the cake cupboard and I wouldn't pimp, I said "You've got Alice's knitting up in your bedroom" and she dragged me out of the room by the hair and thrashed me for calling her a thief and liar. But she was.

The logical outcome of these different standards was that some of the children learned lifelong lessons in how to cope...

I think now that we can wriggle out of situations in life that other people can't because we were brought up that way when we were younger.....

However the legacy went deeper and lasted longer for some....

When we left the Home it was very hard. I had an inferiority complex, which took years to get over. It all depends who you came in contact with, but we were usually thrown out into farm or domestic situations. If you came into contact with someone who was really interested in you it helped, and if you didn't it was sadness. Some got really sour and others have come through it all — some have still kept their sense of humour.

A dearly held objective of the founders of the Masterton Methodist Children's Home was, where possible, to keep all of the children of a family together. Placing a family of children in the same Home was one thing, but children of this period more often found themselves grouped by age and gender rather than family.....

There were about 40 children here at that time. The children here were your group and they were your family, and we never had outside children here. You stayed with those in your age group and you weren't allowed to go over the mark into the next age group. You went to bed at the same time, you did things at the same time. There was no such thing as sharing a book. You read that book and nobody else interfered with it and if you put it down in the wrong place, then lookout. There was a rule that boys and girls weren't allowed to play together, ever. We'd get into trouble if we did. The boys had the play shed and we had the common room.

With such a large number of children, and given the playful nature of childhood, ample opportunities for breaking rules and asserting individuality presented themselves in the use of the wide open spaces behind the Home building, and away from Matron's eyes....

We sometimes sneaked out. In 1928 there was a wooden fence extending from the back of the grounds right to the top end of Herbert Street with a row of Pine trees in behind and we were forbidden to go over this fence into Memorial Park but we used to climb through the loose boards and we found quite a quantity of money on the top end of the trees underneath the pine needles. Of course, to spend money safely was a problem, but we'd buy a certain amount of stuff at the Corner Shop, and sometimes on a Saturday we'd walk straight down through the back paddocks to the town park and have a row around on the boats — Matron couldn't work out where we'd gone or where we were getting all these sweets from. But it was quite a lot of cash. We had a money box which we kept in the trees and at times we had as much as 12 pounds. It was all in silver coins – half-crown pieces mostly. We were told once that there used to be a house there that had burnt down and all the money was left there.

And when Matron was away, the children came out to play, even though their idea of mischief was fairly harmless in comparison to later generations.....

Miss Allan used to go out to tea about once a month and she used to leave Miss Mead in charge. Once the boys were having a competition to see who could eat the most bread and jam and she wanted to know what was going on — they were going back for more and more bread until she said they couldn't have any more. Well, it turned out one boy confessed to having eaten 23 slice of bread. Another time it was apples. And I remember one night when the Matron went out to a meeting we had high jinx up in the big girls' dormitory and we threw slippers out the window and we had to get them retrieved somehow before Matron came back.

Children in the Home, being children, concentrated almost entirely on coping with their daily lives, and could hardly be expected to understand how their parent(s) were also trying to cope with the breakup of their families and the consequent loss of their children to the Home. Some parents visited regularly, while others made little or no effort to contact their children. When a parent did make a visit, however, it tended to be treated by the children as a major social event in which they all could share, even if Matron had a way of turning it all to custard....

We only saw Dad about 3 times while we were in the Home, because he was a seaman based in Wellington going on the ships overseas. So to see Dad was just the greatest thrill of our lives. As a matter of fact, all the kids thought he was Father. I was just that thrilled to see him and Dad was that thrilled to see us. He was very poor and I can remember the day Dad brought me an orange. Now to me this orange was a priceless possession, a gift from a father to a son. I treasured this orange so much, it would have been sacrilegious even to take the peeling off it and I was going to keep that orange till it went rotten. I wouldn't have ever broken into it. At the end of the day, Dad went and we were terribly sad to see him go, and as I was putting this treasured orange aside, Matron caught up with me and said "What happened to that orange? We have taught you to share everything that we have here, now where is the orange?" I could see what was coming and I broke down and said "Matron, I haven't touched it, it's unbroken". She said "Well, you are supposed to share that orange". So Matron took the orange, peeled it and took the first quarter before I even touched the darned thing and I had to share this orange with the other children. To me it was a grievous wrong to share this gift that was all that Dad could afford to give me, but I ended up getting the quarter that was left. It wasn't funny and it really left an ache in my heart.

Absorbed as they were in their daily lives in the Home, there were still exciting happenings in the Wairarapa (and close to Home) to attract their attention .....

They had just put a new dryer in the drying room and we went to bed one night and the smell of the fumes coming up the fire escape woke us and the whole laundry was alight. Earthquakes, too – I remember sitting downstairs night after night, too frightened to go upstairs again. We do remember the 1932/33 hurricane, too. The top blew the roof off the nearby Grandstand and we didn't have to go to school that day.

and as the Churchill family had discovered soon after entering the Home, there were pleasures to be had from not having anywhere to be sent at Christmas time...

Every year the children that were left behind at Christmas and had nowhere to go were generously supplied with toys and nice things. Christmas was made worthwhile and most enjoyable for those children. I know that our pillowcases were filled with discarded toys from the families of the Methodist Church, but to us they were like brand new out of the shop. It was fantastic.

This group of former Home children have little to say that puts Matron Allan in a good light — even fifty years later .....

In a way I felt sorry for Matron because compared with today, she knew nothing of the likes of Weight Watchers. So to reduce her weight she used to exercise on us!

Miss Allan had a pet name for all of us though - "you scum of the earth".

Bryden (Dinny)

This is not a story in the same vein as Angela's Ashes – just a collection of memories which relate to the 5th member of a family of 6 children.

I introduce myself as "Dinny"—that is how Bryden developed when my older brother Clive pronounced the name in my first years of life. To be born in Eketahuna on July 6th 1924 is fortunate – that town's claim to fame appears in the modern media as a "Where's That?" sort of place.

The street in which our house had frontage no longer exists. It ran from Newmans Road to a gate at the railway line and gave access to Ollsen's, a farm house on the hill. A collection of large macrocarpa trees (very large in a 3 year old's view) housed the outdoor "conveniences" – one large seat with kerosene tin under, and a smaller one for little people.

The wooden house, destroyed by fire 10 years later, was entered by the back door. Opposite was the shed in which was kept the kerosene supply for the lighting system – no such thing as electric power! I remember a black wood stove set into a brick chimney with a small bricksized window to light the cooking action. A well scrubbed kitchen table with a wooden stool behind, and a kerosene light shining as the sound of Dad arriving home in the dark from a bridge building job.

One of my earliest memories is playing with toys on the clay bank by the railway line in 1927. The Duke and Duchess of York waved to us from the rear platform of the Royal Train as it travelled northwards. Another significant memory is of the adult discussion of the Murchison earthquake –this really impressed a 3 year old! I recall my eldest brother, Wilfred, announcing one day when an aeroplane flew past Eketahuna in 1927 that he would fly aeroplanes. Later he was to become a pilot in 73 Squadron Royal Air Force, of Battle of Britain fame, flying Spitfires and Hurricanes. Later, he flew Tiger Moth topdressing planes, and eventually had his own Aerial Topdressing company, flying Fletcher aircraft specially designed for the purpose.

My recollection of my mother's death is unclear. The house was overflowing with people and I was led in to see my mother. I think at that stage she was alive, but died shortly after. She was aged 32. Her funeral left from our home and the last car in the line belonged to Uncle Alf Morgan and Aunty Doris. Their car was a royal blue two seater with a red hollow triangle, a red tail light and dickey seat. These are impressions – important to a 3 year old in 1927/28.

I remember at age 4 travelling from Eketahuna to the Methodist Home in Masterton in an old style car with canvas hood and side curtains (probably an early 20s Chrysler.) The road was gravel the whole distance. Herbert Street, where the Home was situated, was also gravel. Tarsealing took place in the mid 30s, after houses were built on the eastern side backing on to Memorial Park.

I was a chubby 4 year old according to photographs taken by Miss Allan the Matron, using her Kodak folding camera. Most photographs were of groups of children. As young children we were occasionally bathed in the staff bathroom and dried by the open fire in the sewing room next door – this was next to Matron's bedroom. I remember shivering while being dried.

Matron had been a nurse at Ross Home for the elderly in Dunedin before accepting the position at the Methodist Home in Masterton. Children who were in the Home prior to her arrival spoke wistfully of the previous Matron, Sister May. It seems there was a less severe atmosphere during Sister May's reign. I do recall being strapped on the hand with a two inch strap of heavy leather more often than was earned or warranted. I suppose it was necessary to prove who was "Boss". The reference by Matron's reference to "scum of the earth" was never directed toward me, but it was part of the punishment handed out to some of the naughtier children – together with her gritted teeth and liberally displayed annoyance and exasperation.

The weather in the Wairarapa was fairly much as it is now, but there were two exceptions – on October 1st 1934 hurricane force winds destroyed the grandstand at Memorial Park, situated at the rear of the Homes property. Then there was a snowstorm late in 1938 when 8 inches (200mm) of snow fell during the night—there had been a 4 inch fall in an earlier year. The 1934 hurricane also blew down a bluegum tree (diameter 5 feet) on the property opposite, owned by the Steer family.

I remember having bare feet for much of the year, and boots and socks on winter. Also wearing dyed ex-cadet uniform trousers while attending Central School —the coarse fibre caused chafing of the upper legs. We had nothing like underpants – I never owned underpants in my time in the Home. It seemed strange when I left the Home and boarded with Mr and Mrs George Creed that I figured out the purpose of underpants. (Perhaps few families had such luxuries during the 1930s.)

In the Home all children 6, 7 or older had duties. One of mine was to scrub out the boys' four toilets on the ground floor, before breakfast after making my bed. After breakfast I peeled half a kerosene tin of potatoes, then would dig and wash carrots, parsnips or leeks, as may be required. Miss Henderson was the cook, and she arrived by bicycle each morning at 8.30. She would prepare rice, tapioca or sago milk pudding and begin cooking by 8.45 when we left for school. Rice pudding raised Miss Henderson's popularity with us.

I recall Mrs Boyland came to do the laundry, done in a copper and a pair of kauri tubs. A major change came with the arrival of a Maytag washing machine. Later a drying rack was installed in the laundry, with a gas fired heating system. This proved to be unsatisfactory – it caught fire one evening and had to be completely rebuilt with a better and safer heat exchange system. Masterton Fire Brigade did a great job! Washing was usually hung on clotheslines extending over an area of about _ acre, comprising the main part of the back yard. Five year old children were given the chore of picking up clothes pegs. Later they graduated to advanced duties such as sweeping the stairs or mopping the hall linoleum.

One of the nicer memories was to hear Matron singing as she came up the stairs when we were in bed. Her songs ranged from hymns, opera, and classical tunes learned during her time in Dunedin as a choir member and other musical groups. This made a lasting impression on me.

Each Sunday we would dress in Sunday best, and walk about a mile to the Methodist Church at the corner of Lincoln Road and Chapel Street (McDonalds Restaurant is there now.) Boys were supplied with NEW grey suits (jacket and shorts), white shirts and ties with black and red horizontal bars. We all wore boots. We attended Sunday School and afterwards the Church Service with Rev E.O. Blamires, the Rev Stockwell, and others. Rev Cocker had retired and was on the Home Management Committee. He arranged for the older boys to go to his place during weekends to mow lawns or do small chores. In return we would be put on a fuss and provided with afternoon tea – something we were not used to having!

Rev Cocker came to evening meals at the Home and would address us on various religious, or other topics. After each evening meal we would learn excerpts from the Bible and various Psalms. These are still remembered, some fragmented, and are compared with the same passages from the New English Bible.

Others who came in the same way were Mr CE Daniell whose words I will always remember – "If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well". Little did I know that I would in later years work for his firm as a timber worker and apprentice joiner. His son, AH Daniell attended on a few occasions. Each of the visitors imparted their wisdom, which was I believe, absorbed by most of the children.

Mr EM Hodder, who married a Daniell daughter, also came to entertain at end of year functions, held in the "Playshed" – an ex Army building of about 100 sq mtrs. Another regular visitor was Arthur E Bate of the YMCA. His visits were usually on a Saturday, and he would spend the evening with Matron in the Sitting Room undoubtedly discussing the progress of each boy – and enjoying supper!

In the "hall" was a wind-up gramophone with HMV records. Most often played was a beautiful rendition of well known Maori songs with female voice and choirs. A major development was the arrival of an Electrolux vacuum cleaner, used by Miss Marjory Malcolm. She had a kind disposition and was a favourite with the children. Another modern arrival was a Stewart Warner valve radio installed by Mr Little. The aerial was erected with two twenty foot 1.5 inch diameter galvanised pipes screwed together and supported by nine No 8 wire guy wires. The programme on the radio was always station 2YA, although when no one was looking we would listen to 2ZB – only for limited times.

The classical music from 2YA was an introduction to the music I still love. Joan Stanley, who was the only one whose parent arranged to have Miss Ivy Donald teach piano, was also a pleasure to listen to. I don't think Joan ever realised the impression she made on me in respect of music.

One of the senior boys' tasks was to walk to Miss Elliot's home in Colombo Road to pick up windfall apples and bring them home in 4 gallon kerosene tins (cut to half size), with No 8 wire handles. On occasions I was given the task of weeding Elliot's raspberry garden. Mrs Elliot was at one time on the Management Committee – her daughter married John H Conly, a teacher at Masterton High School/Wairarapa College.

In mid 1930s there were two periods when we were kept from school. One was the epidemic of infantile paralysis as we knew it (poliomyelitis), and the other was diphtheria. A number of children at the Home were

affected, and together with those whose throat swabs showed positive were kept in hospital in an isolation ward for several weeks. My brother Clive was one of those without obvious illness but positive swabs – he was a real favourite with the hospital nurses.

During the time we were unable to attend school we spent climbing macrocarpa trees at the edge of Booth's Bush, which adjoined the eastern/southern corner of Cameron and Soldiers Memorial Park. Trees on the southern boundary of the park were also very climbable. With the macrocarpa trees we found we could slide down the outer branches and land safely on the ground from a height of probably 40 feet. This was fun, but I did miss out on the school arithmetic involving square root – I was disappointed as I never had the opportunity to catch up.

In the fine warm summer afternoons Matron and the older girls would prepare sandwiches and drinks for picnics and swimming in the stream which ran through Booth's Bush and flowed eastwards through farm land. We swam in the deep part as the stream emerged from the bush. We caught fresh water crayfish occasionally and cooked them. The bigger boys carried the cane clothes baskets with food for the evening meal.

Miss Allan bought a 1937 Vauxhall car and learned to drive it. When arriving home one day she collected the doorpost of the garage. She called on me to rectify the damage. A few hits with a mallet pushed the post back into place. Later it was my job to clean the car, and I learned to drive it without taking it too far from the garage.

I was a First Day pupil at Wairarapa College, when it changed from Masterton High School, in February 1938. I studied trade drawing and drew plans for Miss Allan's new house to be built at Rosetta Road Raumati. It was among the few new places being built on the Eatwell Subdivision. The house still stands, although altered, with a garage at road level. The name of the house, in cement across the doorway was "Mandalay". There were few houses in Rosetta Road. The whole area of sandhills, covered in lupins, we cleared in preparation for the building site. The builder was a recent arrival from Scotland. Matron took various children to the Raumati house during weekends. On one occasion she accidentally ran the car off the road into a ditch – luckily no one was hurt, just shaken, and the car was undamaged.

During January 1940 I worked for Mr Woollams the chemist. Money earned enabled me to purchase a second hand bicycle – I had saved four pounds, seventeen shillings and sixpence. Clive, who was working for Cecil Torr as an electrical apprentice, loaned me two pounds to complete the purchase. The bicycle was to provide my sole form of transport until I interrupted my joinery apprenticeship to join the RNZAF as a rigger, later a fitter 2A. Service was in the Pacific – Green Island, Jacquinot Bay, Guadalcanal, and Espiritu Santo – servicing Hudson, Ventura and C47 aircraft. Later in Lauthala Bay Fiji, servicing Catalina flying boats.

In conclusion, I feel that my stay in the Methodist Home was a privilege denied in other Homes in Masterton – I believe we were better cared for than the children in those other Homes. Our preparation for life was good.

Edith

In January 1928 our mother died leaving Dad with six children. My youngest brother was two and a half years of age and I was eleven. It was decided, after an application was accepted, to send us to the Home in Masterton for children who had lost one or both parents. The Home was financed by the Wellington Charitable Board, legacies, grants and donations. This was during the Great Depression, and before Social Welfare and Family Benefits.

In June 1928 we arrived at Dr Prior's for a medical examination. We were all fit and well and were taken to the Home the same day. Everyone stared at us, and everything seemed so big, and there were so many people.

Miss Allan was Matron, she always wore a white uniform. Miss Webb was First Assistant, and Miss Houghton was Seamstress. There was also a lady who came each day to do the cooking.

Now we were no longer a family of six. Our 'family' was now 36 children of mixed ages. We slept in dormitories, the little girls in one and the big girls in another. The little boys slept in the boys' dormitory and the big boys on the open-air balcony. There were no favourites. We kept more or less to age groups, girls at separate tables to girls, we played separately and the girls never walked to school with the boys. Some children only stayed in the Home for a short term until their parent remarried, but most children were longterm residents.

The big girls looked after the small children so I was no longer responsible for my young brothers. This made Gordon very unhappy for quite a while and we all missed our mother and father and looked forward to visits from Dad and holidays with our grandparents in Pahiatua. We would travel by train to their farm in Pahiatua and there were always interesting things to do.

There were 'home' clothes, school clothes and uniforms for Sunday. At home the girls always wore an apron. In the winter we wore black woollen stockings and everyone was taught to mend their own. We made woollen slippers with felt soles and even some of the boys learned to knit their own.

There was always good food served by Matron in the kitchen and taken to allotted places at one of the tables in the dining room. Matron usually dished out the meal and everyone was given enough to eat and extra bread and jam for those who wanted more. On Sunday night there was always a piece of fruitcake for tea. There were clean white tablecloths and everyone had their own serviette. After the morning and evening meals there was Prayers and we recited the Beatitudes, the 23rd Psalm, the Ten Commandments, and different parts of the Bible so we would be ready for the Scripture exams at the end of the year.

On Sundays we marched to Wesley Church about one mile away. On the way we could see the girls dressed in green from Solway College and the girls from St Matthew's in grey. The small boys from Hadlow Preparatory School were in blue as well as the children from Whatman Salvation Army Children's Home. We attended Sunday School and Church and belonged to the Junior Choir.

The day started early. Everyone rose when the Morning Bell rang at 6am. The big children helped the little ones make their beds. The boys cut the woo, got the coal in for the incinerator and did the vegetables for the midday meal while the girls made the porridge, set the table and did cleaning jobs. Breakfast was at 7 o'clock.

We attended Central School, a five minute walk, coming home at midday for a hot meal. After school the girls all did half an hour of ironing. Sheets and pillowcases were put through the mangle by some of the older boys. Homework was done in the Common Room before and after the evening meal.

Bedtime for the little children was 6 o'clock, middle group 7 o'clock, and the older children 8 o'clock or 8.30. No talking was allowed after 'lights out'. Punishment was often lines...." I must not talk.....", to be handed in later in the week.

There were happy times like Guy Fawkes' Night when the Committee would bring fireworks and the boys would make a 'guy', and after dark light a huge bonfire. We would have hot cocoa to drink and Parkin biscuits to eat – these were made of oatmeal and were quite hard to chew. There were picnics at Paton's Bush, trips to the daffodils in the spring, Christmas parties, and complimentary tickets to concerts in Masterton. Sometimes we took tea in clothes baskets to the creek where there was an old water wheel. In hot weather we could swim in a small pool in the creek. Other times we would search for chestnuts in Booth's Bush to be roasted on the fire after the evening meal in the winter.

Matron was a keen gardener and taught us to cultivate flowers and vegetables. We were all allowed a small plot and the grounds were kept neat and tidy. The vegetable garden was the pride of the older boys.

Rules were made to be obeyed. Boots or shoes were never worn indoors, upstairs was out of bounds in the daytime without a good reason. All incoming and outgoing mail was left on the Hall table to be read by Matron.

If anyone became ill Matron was always there and Dr Prior was on call anytime. There were outbreaks of diphtheria, mumps, measles and scarlet fever – some children went to hospital but all survived. The rest of us would usually be put into quarantine for ten or more days – there were no injections then and penicillin hadn't yet been discovered. A plate of bread and milk was taken to anyone who was confined to bed recovering from illness.

At age 13 or 14 the boys were usually found employment on a farm, and the girls as home help where there was accommodation. By the time my young brothers were old enough they were found apprenticeships and board with local families.

When I left school I joined the Home staff as a Junior, for 5 shillings a week. My three younger brothers were still going to school. My job was to supervise the children's jobs before school. During the day I did mending, sewing boys' pyjamas and trousers for the small boys. There was no seamstress there at this time. Miss Cameron had taken the job of First Assistant after Miss Mead returned to England. I was responsible for seeing that the younger boys and girls were dressed properly in their school clothes, their hair was tidy, and they had a clean handkerchief each day.

After school I took the clean clothes upstairs to the linen cupboard. Next it would be time to bath the small girls and boys. There were two baths in the upstairs bathroom and lots of towels and facecloths. Everyone cleaned their teeth with salt. I cut their hair when it was needed and also trimmed their finger and toe nails.

On Sundays I took the small children to Kuripuni Church which was not so far away from the Home as Wesley. I taught Sunday School there for several years – I had a class of very lively 6 and 7 year olds.

Once a month the Home Committee met in the Front Lounge, and it was my job to make milk coffee for their supper.

Tuesday was my 'day off' from one o'clock — not a good day as everyone else was at work, so it was a lonely life. Occasionally I was allowed a whole day off and I would take the train to Wellington for the day. The trip excursion fare cost five shillings return – a whole week's wages. I would spend the day in the shops and have lunch at James Smith's. I remember the day I bought my first makeup – it was Max Factor. Then, I wore lipstick. Another time I bought a lovely winter coat with a fur collar, it cost 3 pounds and 15 shillings.

Years went by and I was promoted to Assistant Matron when Miss Cameron left. Miss Allan was still the Matron. Meantime I took a Diploma in Design and Dressmaking, left my job at the Home, and went to Pahiatua to board with Grandmother and Grandfather, and it was there that I started my dressmaking business at the rear of Annie Neilson's Babywear Shop.

I have also written a little about two of our family who are no longer with us, but are part of the Home story:

Wilfred (1917-1995)

Was in the Masterton Methodist Children's Home from age ten until he left school to work on a farm. When World War 2 started in 1939 he enlisted in the RNZAF. He trained first in New Zealand and then in Canada before joining the RAF in Britain with No 73 Squadron as a Spitfire pilot. As Flight Lieutenant he served in East Africa, Tunisia, Malta and Bristol. Later he received the Malta Medal. Wilfred was well known in the Wairarapa as a pioneer of topdressing by air, starting with three Tiger Moths and progressing to larger planes.

Clive (1922-1994)

Was in the Home from the age of five. He left to do an apprenticeship in electrical engineering and when the war broke out he enlisted in the RNZAF. After the initial training in New Zealand he went to Winnipeg in Canada, and then to Britain to join the RAF. As a flight Lieutenant he captained Liberators with No 547 Squadron, spotting German submarines over the Atlantic. He served in England, Scotland, Ireland and the Bahamas. After the war Clive became a Pilot with National Airways and later Air new Zealand. He was Captain of the crews that brought the first Friendship plane from Holland, and the first Boeing from Seattle.

Leslie

The reason why I went to an Orphanage was because my parents came out from England and my mother died in 1929, when I was one year old. I was sent to the Karitane home in Wellington when I was a baby and from there I went to the Home in Masterton in 1930. I went in when I was two and was there for 12 years. All my aunts and uncles also came from England, and I had no idea who my grandparents were. During my stay in the Home my father was killed in a motorbike accident, and on the same day my brother was accidentally shot and died. When I left the Home I was placed on a farm, and from there I had to find my own way.

We treated the Home as a sort of prison — it was like a borstal institution to us. The Matron was a very hard woman and I don't think she knew how to handle children and we had a very tough time. Her name was Miss Allan, and we had to do everything to the bell. We got up with the bell, we had to be at breakfast to the bell, we weren't allowed to go to school until the bell rang. We were all allotted certain jobs like you'd find in a prison and it was no life to us in my time. After I left the Home Mr and Mrs Bateup took over the Home and I only wished that my time had somebody like that.

I was schooled at the Central School (about 1/2 a mile away) from Primer One up to Standard 5 — Mr Coddington was the Headmaster. I found it a very good place - there were strict rules and if we disobeyed we were punished with the leather strap or a cane. They really made us sit up and take notice. Otherwise the school itself was a blessing at times to get away from the harshness of the Home.

I can recall times when I was very athletic. I liked running. I have got my name on the Honours Board at the school and I was also in the Rugby 1st XV. We had to almost bribe the Matron if we wanted to stay behind at school for practice and it annoyed the school. Unless I did something exceptionally good at home, the Matron would not allow me to go to school for practice, and she just seemed to delight in saying "Yes you can go" and then at the last minute changing her mind.

I was a winger in the rugby team because I had quite a bit of speed, and in Standard Four I won quite a few races representing the Central School at the interschool games with Lansdowne, Solway, and one or two other schools. They were held at the Memorial Park where the Home backed on to — Memorial Park used to be a farm.

I remember when I was at the Home in the war and the Home grounds were taken over by the government and made into a military camp with all the tents and armoury. Later it became a big camp for the US Marines when they arrived in New Zealand.

I also remember when we had the big earthquake in 1942 — the Wellington/Wairarapa earthquake. It was a most nerve wracking and disastrous thing that I would hate to ever go through again. The military were camped there at the time and they came into the Home and took all our bedding down to what we called a playroom, which was a big shed where we used to have our Christmas parties, and they put all the bedding down and one of the chaps just slept right through it! We had a fire escape which went down to the back yard, but the girls who were over the far side went down the stairs and out onto the front lawn. The troops were marvelous.

The Home was actually damaged quite severely in some places, and you could put your hand through cracks in the wall. It was a big 3 story roughcast home really, and I was sleeping next to the chimney which went from the top of the roof, right down through the boys dormitory and down into the kitchen. The part of the chimney in the dormitory had a monstrous big crack right around it and it was actually balancing precariously, and another shake would have collapsed the whole lot.

It was recommended to be condemned but C.E Daniell who did most of the repairs said no, so they had to remove the chimney from the top of the roof and down through the dormitory, but they managed to put in a big pipe as a makeshift chimney. They managed to fill up all the cracks, which were mostly on the 3rd storey, but we weren't allowed back into the Home for about 3 weeks because it had to be inspected and repaired.

So we actually lived out in this big shed, which was quite an ordeal. It was very devastating. I remember Masterton was just rubble. The WFCA Water Tower had crashed down onto the road.

I only went to Standard 5, and at that time I was 14 going on 15. But I had just had a real gutsful of the Home and the way I was treated, and I sneaked a letter out to my Aunty in Hawera, threatening that if I wasn't taken out I would run away.

At the end of that year the Matron was asked to resign as the children had threatened to riot if she didn't leave, because of the way she treated the children.

Anyway, that year my Aunty took me out.

Ivy

We went to the Orphanage because I lost both of my parents. My mother died when I was three and my dad tried to bring us up but found it too much because there were 6 of us in the family, so put us in the Home. We hadn't been there very long, I think I was about 5 or six, when my father was killed in a motorbike accident and a brother died in a hunting accident. I stayed there until I was 14 and a half years old.

I can't remember arriving at the Home. There we were— 3 sisters, myself, and my little brother. My elder brother went to the Sedgley Home in Masterton because he was too old to come to the Home with us. And my little brother, who was only two went to the Barnado's until he was three, when he came to the Home. I was four so I don't remember it.

There was the Matron, Miss Allan, and the sub-Matron. Church members I remember best were the Donald sisters — Ivy , Elsie and Constance. I have wonderful memories of Ivy because she was the one that took us for Choir practice and I belonged to the Choir at the time. She said I had a wonderful voice and wanted to train it, but the Matron wouldn't give her permission, so that was that. That was one of the saddest memories I can think of, because I loved singing. The only other Committee member that I can remember was Dr Prior.

We had no love, no affection, nothing. I can't say that I recall many happy days there — I had more unhappy days than happy days.

The only happy days I can recall was Christmas when we got presents from the Committee members, and I had a doll given to me. I really loved that doll, it was beautiful in pink. I had that doll until I left the home when Matron took it off me and said I wasn't allowed to take it and she said it was to be given to someone else.

We got put into other peoples' homes for holidays, and I went to this lady's home called Miss Cross, and she was wonderful. She was an invalid and had a table across her bed and she'd cut out material and make handkerchiefs and sachets out of them. She painted different designs on top of the material, and all of them were Chinese designs. She had a live-in nurse, and between her and the nurse's room was a big window with a shutter type of thing, and you pushed it up and you could look into her room, and she would read me stories.

I was about 10 then. She was the dearest person I came close to. I didn't learn until some time later that she wanted to adopt me, but the Matron wouldn't allow it. After she had wanted to adopt me and it was turned down, I was never allowed to go back to her house. I never saw her again.

The jobs I had to do until I was 8 were pick up the pegs and fold the laundry and hang it out, and anything that was we had to be put in the laundry. I've got no early memories except for that. Then I had to learn to do the ironing and peel the vegies. On Saturdays I had to clean the toilets and the downstairs bathrooms and wash the floors on my knees.

We had to come straight home from school and peel vegetables and potatoes and wash all the dishes that the cook had used, then we had to bring the washing in and fold up the clothes, then we had to sit down in the common room and do our homework. By the time we'd got our homework done it was teatime, and then after tea we had to clear the tables and wash the dishes and put them all away. Then were allowed to come into the Common Room and read books at the long tables till it was time to go to bed at 7pm. The older kids were allowed to go to bed about 8pm.

We girls weren't allowed to play games unless it was kicking balls around the grounds. No board games or anything. Right at the back of the home was a double paddock and the boys were allowed to go back there and kick a ball around, and I can remember doing that with the boys once. I got caught and got brought straight back inside. I got put in front of the Committee and got told off a number of times for kicking balls with the boys. The Minister did the telling off — the Donald girls used to try and stick up for me though. I remember the Matron saying that she'd like to see me get slapped with 6 of the best in front of the Committee, but they said it wasn't necessary and a telling off was sufficient. I was only 9 or 10, and it felt very degrading at the time. I think it had a lot to do with me being very insecure in my life and afraid of things.

One time they recommended that I be separated from the rest of the children. Matron made up a bed in the sewing room and I had to sleep down there on my own. I sneaked upstairs and sat at the top of the stairs by the girls' dormitory because I was too scared to be on my own downstairs. It didn't sink in about why I was getting punished, though. They separated me again and put me in a room on the third floor, and my brother came up and slept on my bed so I wouldn't be scared, and then snuck out before anyone else woke up in the mornings.

Rona and I were in the first dormitory, and it had a balcony with shutters. When Rona came to the Home we became good friends. She used to wet the bed, and the sub-Matron would come in after the bell rang in the morning to check to see which girls had wet the bed. Always Rona's bed was wet. One day I thought "I'll fix you" and I swapped Rona's bedsheets with mine — the sub-Matron never checked my bed anyway. Well, she checked Rona's bed and it wasn't wet — I sneaked the sheets down the back way through the boys' dormitories and over the balcony to the laundry. One time, I was caught and that was why I was isolated to the 3rd floor.

We had to march to school but were allowed to come home individually. If we didn't get home in time, then we didn't get lunch. We used to eat stuff like tripe, onions, sausages, cheese, white sauce, cabbage, potatoes, carrots and pudding, usually steamed. None of us were that fussed about pudding. I remember one day we came home from school and it was tripe and onions for lunch. My brother and I hated this. When Matron wasn't looking we would scrape the food off our plates, but when she was looking we had to eat every last thing on our plates, it didn't matter that we were late back to school or not. A couple of times I used to fill my mouth up with food and ask to be excused to go to the toilet and it would end up down the toilet. I got a hiding for that.

Another unhappy memory for me was when Matron insisted that all those that were frightened of the dark had to go outside the front door, run right around the house on our own, no lights, and back through the front door. I was terrified of the dark, so my brother Les would go to the toilet when it was my turn and open the window and yell out "It's OK sis, I'm here" and then he'd run to the laundry and yell the same. That was the only way I managed to get around the house in the dark.

At school we had a teacher called Jack Kennedy and he used to take us out to the assembly hall and give us PT. The girls had black bloomers and white blouses — I refused to wear this stuff and I'd hide my bloomers in the long grass on the way to school. And after assembly Mr Kennedy would say "Miss Saunders, where are your bloomers and blouse? If you don't bring them to school, I will bring them for you". And he did. (I think the fact I didn't wear this stuff was another of the reasons for some of the telling offs and the separations I had back at the Home.)

When I was in the Choir and the plate came around, we were given sixpence to put in it and we'd all be singing away and I never put my sixpence in, and when we marched home we had one person at the back nip into the shop and buy broken biscuits and smuggle them back into the Home, and had secret feasts. We never got caught.

I can't say that any members of the staff were good to us. The only prize I ever got was from school and didn't get any praise from the Home. It was at the end of the year when we went to Solway Park to race against other schools, and I held the cup for running for Central school and had so for 4 years. The Headmaster at school was praising of me.

Holden, Charlie, and Rona were my only friends I remember. We weren't allowed to bring other kids from school home or go to other peoples' houses to play. When I was at school I always played with other kids from the Home because we got teased so much we used to stick together. We were called "Homies". On the way to Church we would be on one side of the street and the Salvation Army kids on the other and we would yell at and taunt each other.

At school the kids who had parents didn't understand us, and I think that's why Matron picked on us because she knew we didn't have a mother or father to tell. Most of the other kids went to one parent for holidays or something. We were sent to whoever would take us. Also, Matron had a house that she built in Raumati and she always took me, Charlie, Holden and Les with her so we did all the gardening and cooking and cleaning. I reckon that's the only reason.

One day when I was at school, I fainted, and the teacher Miss Collins took me to the nurses station and asked me how old I was. I told her I was 13 and she called Matron from the home to come and get me as she thought I was about to start menstruating. Matron Allen took me to the Home and said "Get in there to bed" so I got into bed and she came back and said "Here, put this on" and away she went. I stood there wondering what to do with this rag and she came back. She said "What are you doing just standing there?" and I said "I don't know what to do with it" and she said "Put it between your legs you fool!" When I got up in the morning and went back to school Miss Collins asked me how I was. She said to me "You know you're developing into a woman now" and I said "No". She said "Matron didn't tell you about the bleeding?" So she explained it to me. She said I shouldn't play with boys any more.

I went into Hospital with Diphtheria and wasn't allowed any visitors. I also got my tonsils out and nobody came to see me – I remember lying there watching all the other mothers and fathers come to see their children.

I get hurt very easily and I think it stems from those days. I have a daughter who will ring her mother-in-law before she rings me and that hurts. My husband snaps at me and I think I'm very sensitive. I don't cope with criticism. I got a lot out of religion for a while though.

When I was 14 and a half I left the home. The Matron gave me new clothes and a new coat, which was wonderful, and she took me down to the station and put me on the train to Patea. I was to work on a farm at Manapai. My sisters Joyce and Grace were already working there. The Matron said to the guard "This girl is going to Patea. She is not to get off the train at all. She has her lunch. Please keep an eye on her". I was so scared and I didn't dare move. I was scared to look out the window or look at other people. I had never been on a train before. I'd never been away before on my own.

It got darker and darker and the guard came and said "Get your things, you're off at the next station". He got the suitcase down and said he'd come and get me when we got to the station. When we arrived there was nobody there to meet me, so the Guard said just wait. I sat there and sat there and sat there and started crying and still nobody came. The Stationmaster eventually came out from his office, helped me into his office to get warm and made me a hot drink. He went away into another room and rang the Methodist Minister at Patea who came and sorted things out.

I met my first husband through my girlfriend. On my days off my girlfriend and I would catch the train from Manopai station into Hawera. She was seeing him, and on one of the days off she asked me to tell him that she couldn't make it and would see him another day. I told him and he said "Well, what are you doing today?" And that was it! He bought me presents and came to visit me and take me out, and I loved the attention that I had never got at the Home.

I got married at about 16, after working for about 18 months on the farm looking after 2 kids. I came down to Hawera to be closer to him and I worked for people called the Suttons who had a big hardware shop. They had children. At that time I became very religious and I started taking Sunday School at the Methodist church in Hawera and I thought I was made - I had a husband and I was religious. My nickname was "Presber".

After we got married and I had two boys, he went into the army because the war was on. When I had Jerry I had a hard time with him, and the doctors were able to get my husband out of the army on compassionate leave. I think he began to hate me then and he started drinking a lot and then started to knock me around.

We shifted from Hawera to New Plymouth. I had six kiddies to him but in between times I used to get belted about regularly. In the end he was belting me up so badly and he was having affairs with other women, and I only stuck with him because I was religious and I took my marriage vows seriously, and I thought he was God's gift to

women and I loved him. I soon woke up to things then that he wasn't the man that I thought he was and that he didn't love me and I was living in a dream world, and it ended when he beat me up so badly that my lawyer took him to court and he went to jail for 3 months. The Judge ordered a separation.

Well, I had my kids and I loved my children and then some "nice" lady went to the Welfare Department to say that she couldn't possibly see how I was looking after 6 children without a husband. So, they came around "to talk" to me — I had just finished baking some scones when two ladies from Welfare and a cop arrived. They sat in the kitchen and I offered them some scones and they talked to me about the children and said to me "how do you manage without a husband?'. They left, and I prayed that they wouldn't come back, but they did, and took all of my children away. So I don't pray any more and I don't believe in God.

I went to work in the Hotel as a waitress and though I was supposedly allowed to see the children whenever I wanted to, they put them away out on a farm in Stratford. Every time I wanted to see them they made up excuses that there were things on the farm that needed doing etc.

The last time I saw the kids when they were little was when I had them out for the day. When I was about to return them to the Welfare Department (because I wasn't allowed to see the foster parents), I got real angry and thought "they're my kids — why do I have to drop them at the Office, why can't I see them off to their other parents?". So this particular day, I stood there at the bottom of the stairs and I saw these people go in, and the next minute they came out to get into the car and Jerry started screaming and yelling and ran to me, clung to me and wouldn't get in the car. All of us were crying and they were yelling at me that I shouldn't be there because it was only upsetting the children, so in the finish I had to put them in the car myself. I quickly walked away and that was it for me. I swore I would never let my kids go through that again. So I never saw them until they were teenagers because I thought 'will I upset them or should I let them get some schooling?'.

I didn't keep in contact with anyone from the Home. I just lived as a domestic and I've been a domestic all my life. I wasn't happy about it though, because I wanted to be a Karitane nurse. My children knew that I grew up in the Home, but I don't think any of them understand what I went through as a child, because they've had me and a father and foster parents. They had a family life. I deprived myself of my family because I wanted them to have what I didn't have as a child.

I honestly feel that right through from childhood till now in my 70s my life was filled with unlove, and that God's punished me, and I am still lacking something. Everything that has happened throughout my adult life till now — I feel that I am being punished still. Maybe it's something in my childhood days, being brought up with no love or affection - maybe I don't know what love is. And every time I think I've got love, it gets taken away.

What is love? I don't think I know, still. I only have mother's love for my daughter.

Colin and Gordon

My brother Gordon and I went to the Masterton Methodist Children's Home in 1932 — we had the misfortune to lose our mother in 1931 and our father in 1932 of pneumonia. We had 3 older brothers and an older sister, our brothers were working so they found private board, our sister Joyce who would have been 12 in1932 was taken in by Mr and Mrs Clark who attended the Methodist Church in Masterton.

Our 3 brothers paid 10 shillings each towards our keep each week, and when our sister was married during the 1939-45 War, Mr and Mrs Clark gave her the money that was paid for her keep over the years.

My time in the Home leaves me with mixed feelings – I try to put it behind me now. We were well clothed and fed, remembering that during the early 1930s New Zealand was in dire straits with a lot of unemployment – these were the Depression years – but we didn't know any difference as long as we had food on the table and clothes on our body.

The Home day started at 6am with "feet in socks and socks on the floor," made our own bed and went downstairs for a wash, until 7am we had chores to do, on wash day we had clothes to hang on the line and I remember on frosty mornings the sheets would go stiff on the line. Breakfast was at 7am in the dining room – I think we had porridge winter and summer, and bread and butter, or bread and jam, but not bread butter and jam!

About 8.30 we ran off to Central School which was a 5 minute run, back home for dinner at midday, have dinner and help with the washing up, it was alright if there was plenty of hot water but I remember some days when we had curried chops and the water was only warm – I don't remember being late back for school so someone must have helped out.

After school at 3pm the older boys had lawns to mow and the veggie garden to tend. The veggie garden was about a quarter acre, laid out in beds about 12 feet long and 6 feet wide, and each had a different veggie in it. The paths had to be free of weeds and the edges kept neatly cut and straight – all during my married life I have always had a good vegetable garden, so the training did some good. When I went into the Home I had my own BSA

bicycle which my father gave to me the Christmas before he died, so the Matron Miss Allen found me useful going to the Library to change her books and to do odd messages.

About 1935 I went to Wairarapa High School. During my time there the Masterton Technical School was flattened in an earthquake so they built on to the High School and renamed it Wairarapa College. I did a commercial course there for three years and then got a job at NZ Loan and Mercantile Agency Co Ltd in Chapel Street – I was paid 1 pound ($2) a week , 4 pds 6 shgs and 8pence ($9) once a month, I paid 15 shgs a week board, so only had 5 shgs (fifty cents) to myself for clothes – I don't know how I managed. After 18 months I wrote to my eldest brother, who was assistant County Clerk for the Manawatu County Council in Sanson, to see if he could get me a job on a farm, which he did – I thought at least I would be better off, and I was.

Gordon

Notes from brother Colin:

Gordon arrived at Central School mid-way in 1932 aged 6 and a half and joined the Primer 4 class. He enjoyed his years at Central, including the free milk which was introduced late in the 1930s. Gordon recalls the problem of standing barefooted on hot paving during assemblies in the summer. He also remembers his two years in Standards 5 and 6 with Miss Cocker. While she was a very good teacher her technique of strapping for spelling mistakes in her weekly spelling tests was a trial. However, it seemed to work, as Gordon claims he became a very good speller.

On leaving Wairarapa College, Gordon went to Wellington and worked in a law office while he completed BA and LLM degrees as a part-time teacher at Victoria College. After some years as a partner in one of the leading Wellington law firms he became a Crown counsel in the Crown Law Office. During that time he was awarded a Harkness Fellowship and spent an academic year at Harvard University Law School in 1962-63, accompanied by his wife Elizabeth and two young daughters.

In 1970 Gordon decided on a change from law practice and moved into government administration at a senior level in the State Services Commission, and later became the permanent head (Secretary for Justice) of the Department of Justice. This was followed by some eight years as a law professor at Victoria University including a term as Dean of Law.

In 1986 he was appointed to the Waitangi Tribunal. When he completed his work with the Tribunal he will finally take up retirement with his wife Elizabeth in their country house at Te Horo.

Extracts from the Committee Minute Books 1933—43.

(Miss Allan is Matron, the last Churchill leaves, the Christmas Party, gas to electricity, low numbers of children, epidemics and isolation, gambling and brewing grants declined, effects of World War 2 and earthquake, free medical benefits for children, Miss Allan retires.)

7.2.1933 Thelma Churchill received 60 pounds for compensation for the loss of a finger. The money will be held in Public Trust until she is 21 years old.

16.3.33 Home children free to local baths.

13.6.33 Appreciation expressed to the Misses Donald for their untiring work with the children — Miss Ivy Donald, choir, and Miss Elsie Donald with Miss Constance Donald at the piano.
The Wairarapa Association Football Committee invited the boys of the Home to form a Soccer Club, thanked for its kind offer and advised "that the boys at the present time were too small to form a club".
The Secretary to write to the Minister of Education "stating that in the opinion of this meeting it is a mistake to keep children away from school until they are 6 years of age".

12.9.33 The Secretary-Manager had taken the opinion of Mr Millar, SM, who advised that if the Committee were to (officially) adopt all children on admittance to the Home, then at the discretion of the Committee any child could (then) be legally adopted out without obtaining the parents' consent.

29.11.33 Last of the Churchill family (Claude) left after 12 years in the Home, for employment with Wairarapa Farmers Cooperative Association .

Chief object in Home training— "
We seek to write upon the hearts of boys and girls the sure and abiding principles of Christianity, and such writing is more lasting than carving in marble or engraving in brass, for it forms character and so reaches into eternity."

20.12.33. "CHRISTMAS GATHERING. A GAY SCENE"..(newspaper report).
"There was a gay scene at the Methodist Childrens Home in Herbert Street last night, on the occasion of the annual children's tea and Christmas function. A large number of children and adults sat down together to a sumptuous tea, the tables literally groaning with good things."....speeches and musical items follow, music certificates presented, then.... "Just as the concert came to a close, a loud knocking on the door caused a stir among the children....Father Christmas was waiting there, laden with parcels and balloons....Father Christmas handed out a gift parcel and balloon to each child.... and adult." (Gifts were provided by "a well-wisher of the Home who did not desire his name to be divulged" and balloons were provided by two ladies present that night.)

12.6.33 Matron reports troubles with changes from gas to electric dryers.
A request was received from Mr M of Wellington "for a girl about 14 years of age to assist in the housework." Mr M had been thanked and informed that "no such girl was available."

25.10.34 While many properties suffered during the terrific 100 mph hurricane that swept through the district, the Home was only very slightly damaged – the flagpole was broken, a fence came down, and some roof tiles slightly damaged.

8.2.37 There is concern at the low numbers of children in the Home (15) "It was decided to relax a little on the age and other respects in regard to admission..." A March report from Auckland Conference suggests that "there was a general falling off in numbers in other similar institutions. Undoubtedly increased pensions and higher wages have prevented homes breaking up when one of the homemakers has passed on".

13.7.37 The Masterton Committee resigns en masse over the failure of the Wellington Board to respond at all to correspondence, presenting cheques late and unacknowledged etc. The motion of resignation was withdrawn at the next meeting, after representations from the Wellington Board.

19.10.37 An Electrolux Vacuum Cleaner is to be purchased for 19pds19shillings.

12.11.37 Future Policy: The Chairman reported that the Wellington Board had enquired whether in view of low numbers (33) , the Home should be converted into a Maori Girls' School. "The suggestion was not treated as very serious."

March 1938 The Home in isolation, 6 with diphtheria, then 2 more, and 2 "carriers" in hospital

11. 4. 38 Matron reported that several former residents had returned for holidays.

June 1938 The Home back in isolation. Car shed to be built for Matron.

8.10.39 Government subsidy from Art Union Lottery Funds declined. The Home also declined a grant from a large philanthropic trust with interests in brewing.
Matron reports that "Recent opportunities to visit other Institutions had satisfied her that the Masterton Home was as well equipped and as fine a Home as any she had seen." 37 children now in Home.

12.6.39 Requests received for 3 and 4 year old boys, wanted for adoption. Requests declined.

30.6.39 A Property Visitor to the Home reports "It is like living in a park".

10.7.39 Committee disapproved of a South Island Methodist Orphanage Board proposal for training Staff Assistants.

11.9.39 Centennial Exhibition, Wellington — "The Secretary Manager to write to the Church Exhibition Committee, intimating that we disapprove of the charge for admission (to the Methodist Church display) and do not intend to collect such during the period the Hall is in the charge of the Masterton committee". Centennial Exhibition Committee later "decided that no charge be made for admission and a collection be taken up in lieu."

Annual Report 1939:
"We have a group of children in the Home which we consider to be next to none in the Dominion. Happy, and normally wonderfully healthy, they are an inspiration to the Committee and to the congregation of the Masterton Church. The conduct of the children is of the highest order. Special efforts are made to keep contact with the girls and boys leaving the Home for work, and every care is taken to safeguard their welfare. Quite a number have returned to the Home for holidays, and they are always sure of a warm welcome."

9.10.39 "A donation of 11shillings was received, being the amount left to the Home by a small Maori boy who recently died in the Masterton Hospital."

13.5.40 Mr J Clift of Havelock North sends 6 cases of apples and will send more when these have been consumed. (Later a further 12 cases received).
Matron's salary increased from 3pds to 3pds/10/- per week.

World War 2 Begins September 1939

8.7.40 Offer made to the Immigration Office "that we would be prepared to take 15 child evacuees temporarily."
Mr Shoosmith made application "to be privileged" to take the older boys for walks on Sunday afternoons. Approved.

21.10.40 Fountain pen presented to Jim Davis on behalf of the Home to acknowledge his army service with the 3rd Echelon. (Thereafter this presentation was made to all ex-Home servicemen).

31.10.40 "A request was made by the Local Emergency Precaution Scheme Committee asking us to place the Home at their convenience, principally for use as a soup kitchen in the event of an extreme emergency." The Committee "would be prepared to fall into line and help in such an event..."
Showers - Matron requested that a cold shower be installed in the girls bathroom, and a cold and hot shower in the staff bathroom.
Gifts of 5 pounds from Anonymous of Wellington and from "Digger" of England acknowledged.

23.12.40 "At the Christmas Party no fewer than 10 young men and young maidens who had all gone through our hands, took part in the gathering – surely a true indication of their recognition of the Home as a true home".

8.9.41 Wilf Mygind reported to be with the Air Force in Canada.

10.12.41 Honorary Physician Dr N H Prior referred to in the Minutes as "... truly the Beloved Physician — the staff and children love him as their friend and helper".
Free medical benefits for children introduced under the Social Security Act.

9.2.42 The Home and the War. Gramophone records no longer used by the Home were forwarded to the Army authorities for use of the troops in the district. Letters received from Jim Davis, on active service, from Libya. Playshed loaned to local troops as Army YMCA. The Clothes Dryer made available to troops. Home prepared to act as soup kitchen in event of emergency. Home blacked out.

9.3.42 Request to admit 2 children whose father died of wounds while serving with NZEF overseas.

June 1942 The building was damaged by earthquake, no one injured. The armed forces occupied part of the Home property.

13.7.42 Matron reported that the children had conducted themselves in a commendable manner at the time of the recent earthquake. Letters received from Clive Mygind, Airforce, in England.

12.10.42 Miss Donald offered to give free music lessons to Bill Winter, "who showed an unusual bent towards music." Approval given for Phyllis Mygind's wedding "centred on the Home."

8.2.43 Miss Allan retires after 17 years.

Vivienne

My mother passed away early in 1937, I had then just turned eight, the third child of five. My father was unable to mind five children on his own, and the Social Welfare system not being what it is today sent my older brother to live with grandparents, and my younger sister Yvonne and I went to the Methodist Children's Home in Masterton.

Before the year was out my father had also passed away from a serious heart attack, so Hazel my older sister, and Geoffrey the youngest of the family, also came to the Home. My two sisters and my brother had all left the Home by 1940, having been adopted out. Although the Home was often called an 'orphanage', we were in fact the only orphans there at the time – everyone else had at least one parent or were from broken homes.

I have many happy memories of my years spent there in the Home as well as some sad ones. Life was very strict and regimented under the Matron of that time. It was the beginning of 1943 as I recall, that our spinster matron was replaced by a married couple who had 3 children of their own. Their children were integrated with the rest of us, being treated exactly the same. Mr and Mrs Bateup, or "Mum" and "Dad" as they were called by the younger children, were wonderful caring 'parents' to us. We were treated as individuals, not "en masse' – time was taken to talk, listen and to understand and help with any problems that arose in our lives.

When I was around 18 or 19 I had been working for a little while and then left the Home and boarded with an elderly couple who were kindness itself. At age 20 I fell in love with a very nice young man who asked Mr Bateup's permission to marry me. Mr Bateup was very impressed with my choice and gave his blessing to our engagement on condition that Gordon (my fiancée) shouted the children fish and chips for their supper. Wow! What a treat for them.

I was very fortunate as far as my wedding expenses were concerned, because as an orphan and having been in the Home for many years, the Committee members, in conjunction with the Bateups, decided to put on the wedding reception. It was wonderful. All the children attended, one of the dining rooms being set a side for them, they thought it was pretty good and I was deeply moved by the generosity of the Committee. As far as I was aware this was the first and only occasion that this happened.

The high regard held for Mr and Mrs Bateup by ex-'homies' was shown by the fact that when they retired some years later to Opononi in the far north, those who had left the Home, many married with children of their own, travelled up to Opononi to either visit or stay with them. I think this speaks for itself. Our own children always referred to them as Grandad and Granny Bateup.

Soon after I married we moved away from Masterton, the first of many moves, my husband being employed by the Post Office. We had five children and when they were older I went back to my original job as an operator in the toll department of the Post Office. We are both retired now.

Some of our children still come and ask me about little things about the Home that I had told them about when they were younger, and which obviously fascinated them — such as the time I broke a plate over the head of one of the boys who was teasing me, Just a bit of horseplay. We didn't have a lot of toys like children these days have, but enjoyed making our own fun – such as sliding down the banisters, or walking along the 4 inch wide parapet of the balcony on the third floor and looking down to the floor below. I'd have a heart attack if I was to see someone doing that these days. We also spent many a summer evening down by the creek, which was 2 or 3 paddocks away, each child helping to carry our tea down there. Such simple things gave us a lot of pleasure and also many nostalgic memories.

I have never regretted my years in the Home and I know that others that were there at the same time that I was feel the same way.

Hazel

I was in the hospital for a period of 12-15 weeks (it's hard to remember exactly how long) with diphtheria and later with a tonsillectomy. So I was 10 years 4 months when I joined my sisters Vivienne and Yvonne in the Home – they had been there since the death of our mother on 22 April 1937. My younger brother Geoffrey came with me in early 1938, as our father had died on 18 December 1938.

I do not have a lot of memories, but one was marching up to Church every Sunday and sitting on a stage affair facing the congregation and being punished if we should talk, or laugh at any funny hats in the congregation (all the women wore hats in those days). Also I remember Friday's lunch was always rabbit pie, and because I had a fear of swallowing small bones I would sit there not eating, and was always late back at school on Friday afternoons. One of the older boys used to tease me by saying he had seen a dead cat on the road and that was what we were eating.

One of my jobs was to sweep the back porch when the wisteria was in bloom and dropping its flowers. I loved doing that and still have a huge love of wisteria and fond memories of doing that chore. I also had to help dress the pre-school kids and clean their teeth and wash their faces before breakfast. Another job I liked doing was weeding the garden of thrift plants which grew around our circular drive.

During the time I was there we had a diphtheria epidemic and we had to gargle morning and night with Condies Crystals. There was an incubation period of 3 weeks when no one was allowed to go to school after a new case was found. But it always seemed somebody else would go down with it just as our 3 weeks was up, so I had little schooling that year.

I can also remember that after Dad died, one of our neighbours in Lower Hutt gave me her precious China doll – I took this precious doll with me to the Home. One of the other girls there, because I would not let her play with it, threw it into my box in the Common Room and of course it smashed into many pieces. After that I had no doll to love.

We did have some fun, but I do not recall any organised games. On several occasions we went to the woods at the end of our grounds to have a cookout and barbeque of sorts — corn cooked in kerosene tins and sausages etc – it was lovely, and we were allowed to collect nuts on the ground and eat them there.

One older person there – I'm not sure if she was a schoolgirl or on the staff – Joan Stanley was her name, was lovely and very kind to me. I think she learned music, and I'm not sure if it was her practising, but she used to play the piano in the foyer after we were in bed, and it was lovely.

I also remember that the girls had lovely uniforms when out at weekends etc. They had a small pale blue and white dress with white collars and sleeve bands in the summer. The winter outfit was a navy gym frock with white blouse and little red bow at the neck. Also a very warm velour coat with buttons and a belt, and a navy hat with a brim. (I have a photo of my two sisters and I in the gym and blouse – very smart we were.) The boys, as I recall, had grey shirts and shorts, black shoes and grey socks.

These are the strongest memories I have of my time there, before I went to live with a family who later adopted me at the age of 12.

June

Our family came to the Masterton Methodist Children's Home in June 1937.

I am the oldest of five children. I have a sister just over a year younger than I, and three younger brothers. I don't recall very much detail of our family life prior to going to the Home. We lived in Patea and my father was a truck driver. I remember that he put up posters advertising the movies that were on, and we got in free. My mother sewed for us, and I have a photo of four of us, all well kitted out.

Things happen in families, and our mother left us. She was pregnant at the time with my youngest brother and he was born later that year, 1937. After she left, my father couldn't manage four children on his own, so it was then that we were sent to the Home. It was a policy that the Home didn't take babies, so my youngest brother didn't join us until 1939.

I vividly recall the first night on arrival at the Home. My second youngest brother was only a little chap, hardly more than a babe, and up until then I had mothered him a lot. I remember that I could hear him crying, but I didn't know where he was.

The Home seemed a very big place to a not-yet seven year old. The Matron was very strict. These were harsh times – no Social Security and the Home was run on charity and grants and whatever the parents could contribute. The children did all the chores, but there was a cook and a seamstress. I remember that the cook baked biscuits and goodies for the staff only, and it was kept in a locked cupboard. However, most 'homies' seemed to get in there at times and have a sample!

We were always up early each morning and we would have to put the sheets out on the line. In the winter the sheets would freeze on the line, and some of the boys would then throw stones at the sheets and they would go straight through. Matron could never understand how the holes happened!

Life revolved around School, Sunday School, and Junior Choir. We would be in the Choir on Sunday morning at church, and when the sermon was on we would retire to the Sunday School Hall to practise our Choir songs. I loved the Choir, but wasn't too keen on the sermons!

At Sunday night tea there was always a piece of fruit cake each, and my younger brother would have several pieces – they were owed to him from other kids, as he would go around saying " I'll bet you your Sunday cake..." Now he owns several properties, his fortunes have changed since then.

The earthquake in 1942 was a terrifying experience for us all, and we had to live on the ground floor of the building for quite some time, as there were aftershocks for several weeks.

Christmas of 1942 was a turning point in all of our lives, as that was when Mr and Mrs Bateup and their family arrived to take over the Home. Life now became more of a family under their devotion and care. We also had a new cook, 'Aunty Mavis' (Potter) we called her, and Mrs Bateup's sister 'Aunty Con' (Fell) was the new seamstress. I remember being allowed to bake a birthday cake for one of the girls, — we had never been able to do this sort of thing before.

It was a ritual in those days for some of the younger boys to take the staff an early morning cuppa. They had to take this up the stairs – at one of the reunions we wanted to know how they managed to get Aunty Con's tea to the third floor without spilling it. "Oh" said young Raymond, "I just used to wipe the saucer on me bum!"

My father remarried, I think I was about eleven at the time, but we stayed on at the Home. We all progressed from primary school to college and then one by one we left to go to work out in the big wide world. I have remained in Masterton – I married a Masterton born and bred chap, and now have my own family of one son, two daughters, and grandchildren.

Over the years we have had a couple of Home Reunions. At one we had a standing ovation for Aunty Con and Aunty Mavis, however by this time the Bateups had both passed away. The Home kept running until the late 1970s and then closed, and the building is now a Christian school. At our last reunion I organised an afternoon tea, and this was held in the original Dining Room, now a classroom.

My sister and brother are now scattered throughout New Zealand, from Auckland to Nelson, and I see them from time to time, or chat with them on the phone, and catch up with all their news.

Yes, it is a long time ago now since those days in the Home. Those times are not forgotten, and the memories still surface occasionally.

Ted

My earliest memories of the Masterton Methodist Children's Home is in late 1941 as a five year old, sitting on the paddock gate with other boys near the car shed looking across the paddock towards the creek, over the other side of which two or three older boys were being chased home by the Chinese man who had his market garden there. Matron Miss Allen, who was about to go out in her Vauxhall car, was confronted by this man and he said that these boys had been seen stealing his carrots. After having his say in his own language and clutching the carrots the boys had left behind, Miss Allan's reply was that these boys would never do anything like that!

Also around that time was when New Zealand soldiers were camped in the Home paddocks at the time of the big earthquake, which we were woken up by to see the beds moving up and down, then being shaken by the soldiers to get to the playshed to sleep the rest of the night there for safety reasons.

In late 1942 when the Bateups came with Aunty Con and Aunty Mavis there was quite a change. They did take a real interest in each boy and girl, Aunty Mavis taking me for Christmas holidays down to her home in Picton. I was only 7 or 8 and had a great time! Also, I remember going to Mr and Mrs Goudge's for a holiday, and going to Dr Prior's for tea – he was a man who had a genuine interest in our wellbeing.

In 1944 the American soldiers came and set up camp in our paddock and in Memorial Park. They took an interest in the kids and we were able to relieve them of some of their supplies of American candy, chocolate and ice cream. When they left to go to the war we went on a treasure hunt and got a lot of souvenirs as a result!

About this time I was twice in hospital for about 10 weeks for a skin graft on my leg, and to have a plaster cast on to try to straighten it. I was there when the war ended, which made for celebrations, so I wasn't all that keen to leave and go back to the Home.

I remember that at Easter 1946 the boys all went and camped out at a place out of Greytown which boundaries onto some bush, with a Scoutmaster. And that was the year that one of the boys, Scott, was accidentally run over by Mr Bateup's car, a Morris 8, as he was backing out of the little garage near the playshed. Scott's brother Bryan and another boy actually lifted the car off him so he could be pulled out, thus ending up in hospital, though I don't think he was badly hurt.

In New Year 1947 we went to the YMCA camp at Riversdale near Castlepoint, which was very good. The first term of the school year we had to set up a schoolroom in the dining room, owing to the polio epidemic – at the time we thought it was great, as schoolwork was all finished by lunchtime and we then had some of the afternoon free. Swimming at the river was for short periods that year because of the polio epidemic.

Mr Bateup bought our first cow, Butterfly, early that summer. Hugh Robertson got the job of milking her in the paddock three times a day for the New Zealand Derby, in which Butterfly won a certificate for top producing cow, but didn't receive Top Prize, as her calving date was not within the bounds of the competition. During the year we bought a second cow, which meant building a cowshed. At Christmas and New Year nearly all the children were away for the holidays, which meant a surplus of milk from Butterfly, so we would take it up Herbert Street before the milkman arrived to give it to selected houses who we thought would give us something in exchange.

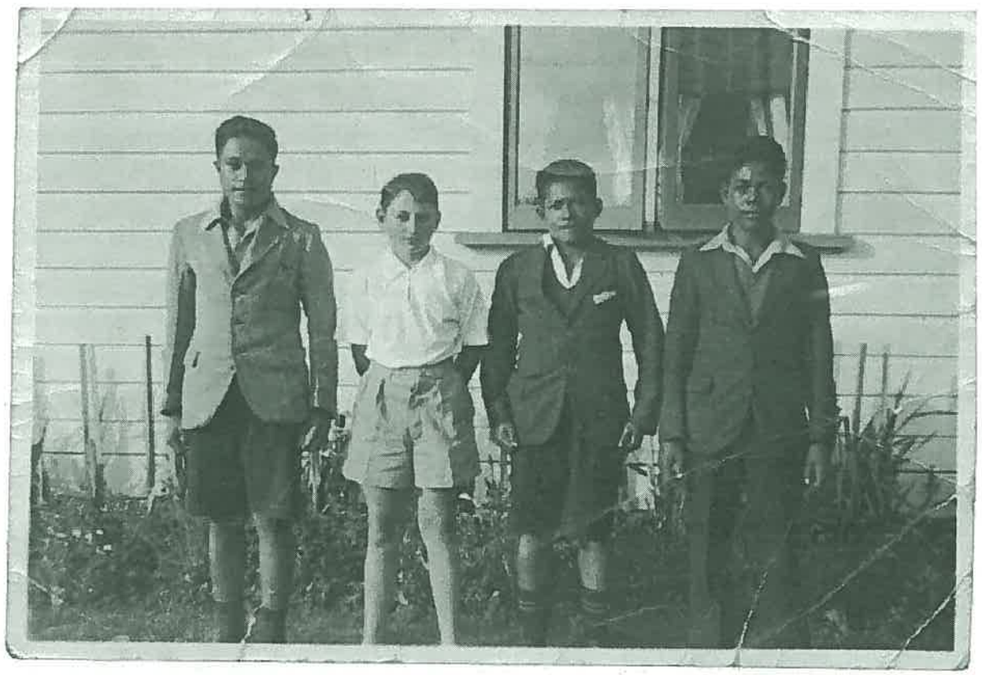
Later in the year was a sad occasion for Mr and Mrs Bateup and family, and us all, when Haddon Bateup passed away.

By 1949 it was Peter Shaw and I who had the job of milking the cows morning and night, which meant "perks" of the job! Cup of tea and snack in the morning and at night coming in late, which meant no rationing of butter and having tea in style on our own! On occasions milking would take a little bit longer at night while everyone else was having tea – this was the IDEAL time to have driving practice in THE BOSS'S CAR !

At the end of January 1949 the three Samoan boys —Welese, Pusi and Perefoti — came to stay for a year, which we thought was great though we didn't understand the culture shock for them, and the many adjustments they had to make. They also had to acclimatise to the Masterton winter and for a while they would wear all their clothes to bed with their pyjamas over the top. We all got on really well together. On Thursday nights the Methodist minister and his wife would come for tea, and on occasions the Samoan boys would be asked to sing –which they did, and did well.

I remember that at bedtimes Colin Henwood would tell us stories. I also remember being allowed to go to the circus when it came to town, and then our re-enacting of all the acts, which we would put on for the staff..

Christmas Breakup Party was always fun – preparing for it, setting it all up, and then the BIG FEED! Then Christmas holidays with only a few of us at the Home – it was more relaxed then, which was good.



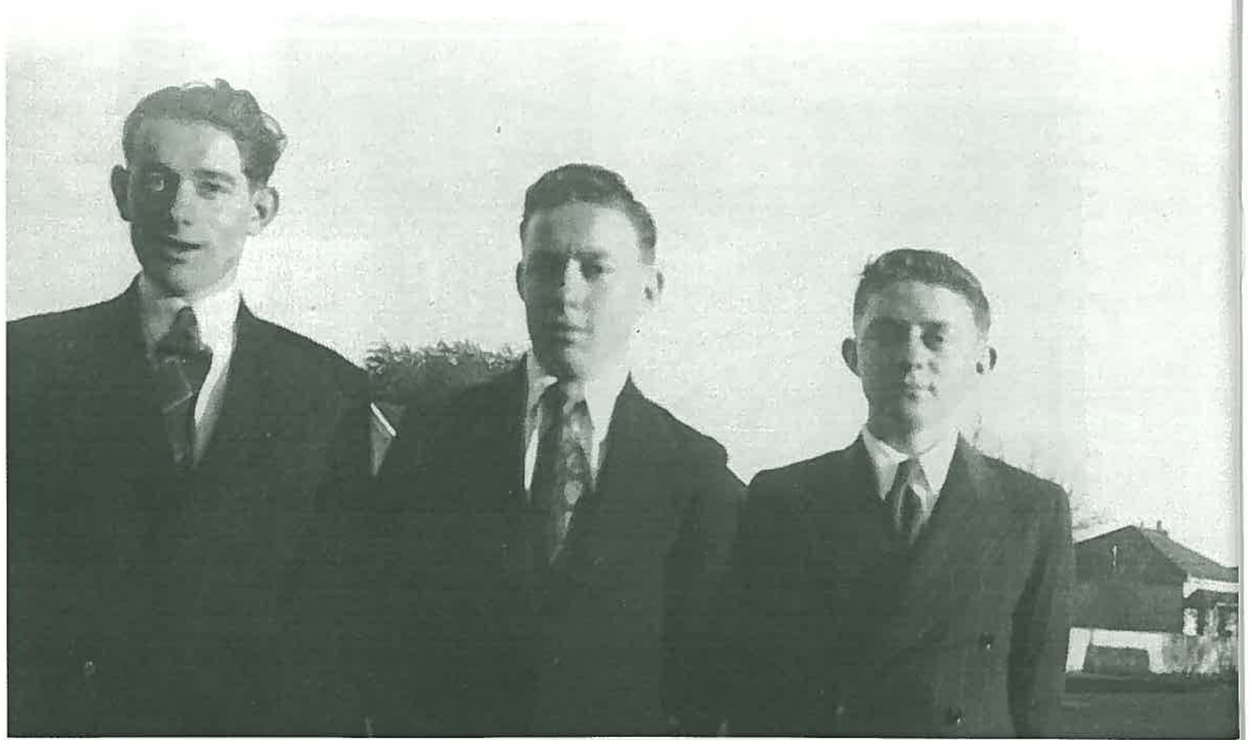
In the summer months we often had competitive activities such as running racing laps around the lawn, rolling on 44 gallon drums, and playing 'All Over' on the Giant Stride. In winter we would play touch rugby in the boys' dressing room with a pair of socks rolled into a ball – it was a tough game and anyone blubbing had to leave.

We were pretty fit, and in 1950 the Home 7 a-side team, picked from only 8 boys, won all their games until the final, where we held St Joseph's ("Doolies") to a draw in a hard game, (and I think the referee was a Catholic.) We had plenty of practice on our own footie field in the paddock. The First Country Club golf course was established using all the paddocks, with jam tins for putting holes, and using old clubs and golf balls given to us by Dr Prior.

We always tried to arrive early to school to play cricket in the summer and rugby in the winter. Lunchtime would see us running home to a hot lunch and pudding, and to have a second helping of vegies so we could also have a second helping of pudding. Then we would do the dishes and race back to school to play sport before the bell rang for class. When the bell rang to go home we always took longer – we never ran home after school to the work that had to be done every day.

The Good Things

- playing draughts with Mr Bateup – he liked to play, and playing well put him in a good mood, and then we would finish the game in time to be able to ask him one by one if we could go to the pictures that Friday or Saturday night;
- taking over one of the older boys' mowing or caddying job for the pocket money;
- when parents and family of the other children visited and they took a genuine interest in the other ones in the Home;
- the Shaws, the Winters, the Toomies with whom I had 4 or 5 great holidays, and after I left the Home continued this interest;
- the camaraderie of those around your age group inside and outside the Home;
- never a dull moment, never heard anyone say "I'm bored", with those games we all played outside and in the dressing room;
- organising our own competitive sports on the side lawn, with the Bateups and Aunties Con and Mavis taking an interest, the rugby and golf in the paddock, and harriers on our training ground around the paddock, around the block, up to Colombo Street, down to Kurepuni and back down Herbert Street;
- buying 15 shillings worth of fish and chips for supper, and making toast by the fire;
- the preparation work involved for Peter Shaw and myself in order to show our prize bull and heifer calf at the Masterton A & P Show — receiving ribbons for First and Second prizes ahead of the big gun Friesian Pedigree breeders (the Parkers and the McAnultys) was icing on the cake. Then to sit alongside them at the Show enjoying a free meal!



The not so good things

- having cold baths in the middle of winter as punishment for wetting the bed etc; (then when the shower was installed it was cold, which wasn't so bad because at least you could move around);
- group punishment – for example once my brother Kevin, Peter, Norman, "Julius" and I were caught beating down the bush to catch rabbits. (The bush was out of bounds and we weren't allowed to catch rabbits either). We had to go into the dressing room and stand in a circle, bend over, and take turns at hitting one another with our belts. If you didn't do it hard enough Mr Bateup would step in and give one of us a harder whack, and you had to pass it on; another form of punishment was having to put the boxing gloves on with an older boy;
- having to chew soap for telling lies etc – especially when your tongue and mouth got swollen and sore and you couldn't eat for 2 or 3 days;
- all the boys having to stay in the dressing room for 1 or 2 hours until someone owned up to doing something wrong.

The pranks

- helping Aunty Mavis getting the supper ready for the monthly Committee supper and making sure that we sampled the supper goodies – after all we were looking after the interests of the Committee!
- the "thinning out" or "pruning" of supplies in the pantry, such as cakes and biscuits and apples etc;
- the brainwave of having a cardboard box let down by string from the 2nd floor boys' bedroom above the pantry window, having somebody in the pantry to put the goods in the box, and having it pulled up so the person in the pantry could walk out squeaky clean! (Until one day, unbeknown to us, Mr Bateup was in the pantry when the box came dangling in front of the window. Then there was a big pull on the string, and we were to find out that we were not such bright cookies after all!)
- the taking of an apple, or a couple of biscuits, which you thought would not be noticed missing from the pantry, never thinking that others were doing and thinking the same, which meant that the quantity soon went down and no one could understand why!

FINALLY, although it could be said that at times things weren't easy, our life in the Home has to be seen in the light of the era of that time – other people were having it hard too. Some of the things we learned was respect for others, especially those older than yourself, and to stand on our own two feet.

I have a high respect and regard for Mr and Mrs Bateup, Aunty Con and Aunty Mavis, who gave me more than 100% under trying circumstances at times, appreciated even more looking back after having brought up children of your own. To them it must have been more than just a "job"— the sacrifices they would have made with their own family. There was for me a sense of belonging, of being part of a big family, as I didn't know anything else. There was also a sense of pride as we felt very different from other "Homes".

I have never given a thought to "if only…", but seeing your father once in a blue moon (about 4 times in 15 years), or being told that he was coming and didn't turn up, or at best staying only one night, may have helped turn it around for me later having children of my own, and to be providing for them in every way, and in always being there for them. Perhaps you don't realize fully that this was using your upbringing in a positive way when you left the Home.

But then looking back on your strict and restricted upbringing and not knowing any other way, and believing that was the only way, which in turn was the way I quite often dealt with some of the day to day issues that had to be handled in the upbringing of our own children, and now I would have to say that in some areas of this that there was a better way of dealing with it.

As a proud father of 7 children, 23 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren, all of whom I love dearly, you can imagine some of the stories I have been able to tell them over the years!

Charlie, Eric, and Robin

I am the eldest of three brothers, I was born on the 5th December 1925, Eric was born on 14 April 1927, and youngest brother Robin on 10 June 1928. Our sister Catherine was born in 1935, but was brought up in a different home.

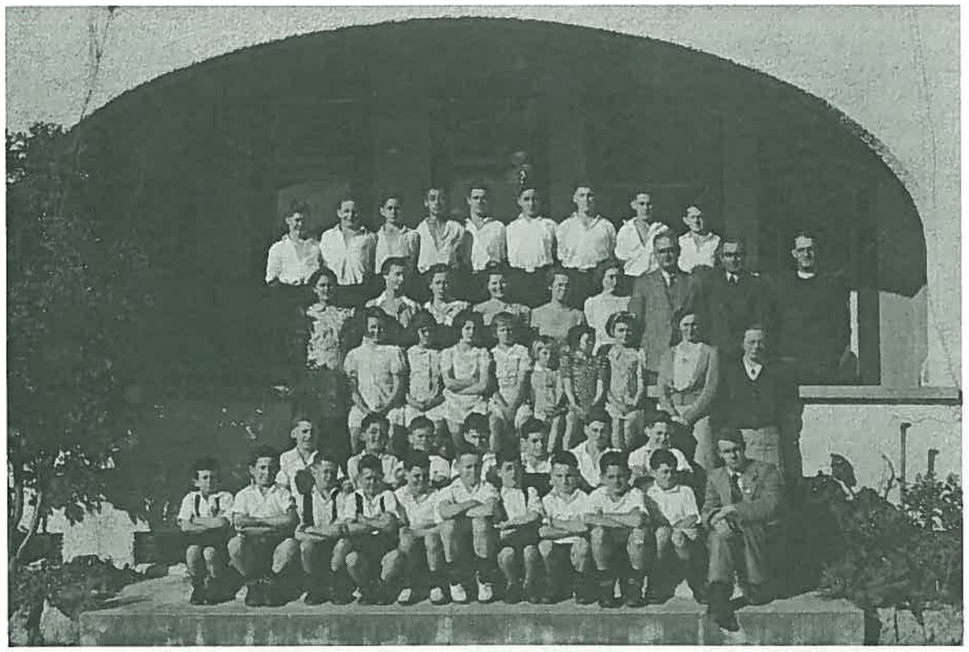
Both of our parents emigrated from Darlington in the north of England, father arriving in 1923 and our mother in 1925. They were married in Feilding the same month she arrived after the six-week boat voyage to New Zealand. Their first home was a farm cottage in Rewa, north of Feilding, where our father worked as a farm labourer. The cottage was opposite the Rewa General Store, which was owned and operated by a Scotsman with a marvelous sense of humour. The Store serviced the country community with its weekly provisions, and on delivery, would accept an order for delivery the following week.

The early years: The late 1920s and early 1930s were hard times for our parents. As farm workers they received a subsistence wage, working seven days a week. There was no 40 hour week in those times and no holidays. It was a case of living off the land to survive. To supplement the meat supply, which was a very expensive commodity, it became commonplace to resort to eating 'underground mutton' (rabbit). No doubt the expression would leave many of this generation wondering what such a delicacy of that name could be.

Although times were hard there were some compensating good events. Like spending Christmas with an uncle and aunt and their family, the only other family members in New Zealand. I recall the many musical evenings spent with a Scottish couple, who were close friends of our parents and lived on a farm about three miles nearer the village of Waituna West. Both our parents and their friends were very musical, the men playing the violin and the women, five of them, (the couple had three daughters) all played the piano and were competent vocalists. Sometimes these evenings, to us boys, never seemed to end, as at the conclusion it was still a three mile walk home.

Everybody had to make their own entertainment, as there were few telephones or radios in the area. We worked on the farm helping our parents with all sorts of work and the neighbours from time to time milking 26 cows by hand. This was the only way farm workers could get a break from the daily essential farm work. Notwithstanding the difficult times, a real community spirit prevailed, with people maintaining a positive look to the future rather than dwell on the depressed economic state of the nation.

Change of direction: However the subsistence living, plus three growing boys to look after, eventually took its toll on our mother's health after our wee sister was born. Her health deteriorated over the next two years and four months, with long periods being spent in hospital. There was no free health care at the time, our father having to pay for the care our mother received, out of his meagre farm wages, as well as keep his family of four. We soon became known as 'the sugar-bag kids' because we wore short pants made from sugar bags and lined with flour bags.



By June, Mother's health became so bad that an operation was necessary. Fortunately the Labour Government of the day had recently passed legislation that ensured free medical care for all, so in the last week of June 1937 she was taken from home in an ambulance. As the vehicle drove slowly past our school we all stood and waved, not knowing then it would be the last time we would see her. No doubt that mother never suspected it would be the final goodbye to her children.

The 2nd July 1937 is a day that is clearly etched in our memories forever. We left home for approximately six months while our mother was to have a major operation in the Dunedin hospital. Unfortunately Mother did not survive long enough to have surgery and passed away seven weeks later, having suffered for far too long.

We had left behind the free and easy country life for a future life in a Children's Home in Masterton, never again to return to the farm cottage where we had struggled to survive in the harsh days of the Depression.

The day we left for the Home started out as any other, up early in the morning to get all the chores done before boarding the mail car at 8.10am. With our father accompanying us we travelled to Feilding in the mail car, on to Palmerston North by bus, then transferred to the steam train that would take us to Masterton. The short break in Palmerston North enabled us to visit our sister who was being cared for by two elderly ladies, as she was too young to join us at the Children's home.

When we arrived at Masterton our first engagement was a medical check by the Home's Medical officer, a Doctor Prior, the present Dr. Owen Prior's father. He looked in our eyes, ears, down our throats, took our pulse and blood pressures, checked that we had all our appendages and generally confirmed that everything was there and in working order. We were then taken to our final destination, the Methodist Children's Home.

On arrival in the large dining room for our first meal there, all eyes were turned to see who the new boys were, a daunting experience for three country lads who had only been to town on rare occasions before. (Those visits were usually to the dental clinic, an equally harrowing event.)

Saying goodbye to our father added to the trauma of the day, and I recall feeling very alone and somewhat frightened by the events of the day and wondered what the future held for the three of us.

The "Home" away from home: The Matron of the Home (She Who Must Be Obeyed), asked a member of the staff (who coincidentally later became related by marriage on my wife's side), to escort us to our respective sleeping quarters and show us our allocated beds. Suddenly, a tinge of excitement welled up at the sight of sheets on our beds, something that we were totally unaccustomed to, not having lived in such luxury before. With all the excitement of the travelling and becoming acquainted with a new environment, when night came we were all totally exhausted.

Next morning we were up at six, which was the usual "Get Up" time, dressed and then down stairs to wash (including behind the ears), back upstairs to make the bed, hospital-style, with all the corners correctly folded in. We very quickly learned that any variation in format was not acceptable and only resulted in the bed having to made all over again.

Rising at this time was not too strange to the three of us, as we had been used to early start to the day. Before coming to the Home, it had been the norm to help milk the fourteen cows (by hand), have breakfast, cut lunches, and get ready to catch the mail car for school, due at 8.10am. It was four miles to the school, but as we were the first ones there, it was into mowing lawns, cutting hedges and generally tidying up around the sealed courtyard. At the end of the school day we had the four-mile walk home, then the daily work to be done at home.

Fortunately, our experience at working in and around the house conditioned us for the lifestyle to which we were now subjected. Daily chores such as cleaning toilets, dormitories, dayrooms etc. and washing and hanging the clothes on the line, were allocated to the children according to their size and capabilities. Other jobs being undertaken at the same time were setting the meal tables, preparing vegetables and peeling potatoes ready for the evening meal. Because of the very severe frosts sometimes recorded at Masterton, it became a diversion for some children to use the frozen sheets on the line for stone-throwing targets, frequently leaving the sheet with an aerated appearance.

After breakfast it was time to prepare for school, leaving about 8.30am. The large Central school we found rather daunting, after the forty odd pupils at the country school we had previously attended. It seemed strange at midday rushing off home for lunch, doing the dishes and then dashing back to be in school by 1 pm.

After school we were required to return home immediately unless, of course, you had been selected to play in the school football or cricket teams. On arrival home we changed from school clothes into work clothes and the never-ending process continued in the way of cleaning up around the establishment or going into the garden to weed, transplant new vegetables or tend the flower beds and trim the edges of the lawns and garden plots. Each and everyone had their specific work to do each day. Naturally there were good jobs and not so good jobs, but all were inspected and if not reaching the required standard, had to be done again.

One example of the "not so good" is one boy having to sweep up the leaves and flowers that fell from the wisteria vine onto the concrete veranda every spring. Morning and night it had to be swept, and every leaf had to be cleared. As fast as they were swept up a new lot descended, a sorry state of affairs especially when there was no

breakfast until the work was done to the matron's satisfaction. This sequence of events created a source of amusement to a lot of the kids. They would wait in close proximity just to hear the Matron bellow "...you haven't swept the verandah properly, come and do it again".

Mealtime was anything but exciting, the menu could be forecast not just a week but more like a month in advance. Sunday was somewhat special, as all the children received a piece of cake. The daily ration of butter per child was sufficient for one slice of bread, the meagre allocation had nothing to do with avoiding high cholesterol levels.

We certainly had no inkling of what the following month had in store for us. I was in hospital after having my tonsils removed. One day the ward Sister and a nurse came and placed screens around the bed and informed me that I had a visitor. The visitor turned out to be my father who brought the news that Mother had passed away. This came as such a shock to me that I was unable to speak for three days, thus necessitating extra time in the hospital.

Discipline: As was the case in private homes in the 1920's and 30's, discipline was far more severe than can be seen today. The Home was of course run on institutional lines. The children came from broken homes or single parent homes where the one partner was unable to cope with a family as well as working. As there was no Government assistance available at that time, the churches provided a much-needed answer to the problem, in the building and running of various orphanages. The sheer numbers of children living under the one roof, in itself, necessitated a strict rule of conduct, which the children accepted as normal, because that was how society functioned in that era.

The children became known as 'Homies' (as distinct from immigrants from the UK) and were generally considered to be of a lower class than outsiders. Unfortunately, this attitude did at times have an adverse effect later, some children developing an inferiority complex, but there were also many who rose above the stigma and went on to acquit themselves in a commendable fashion in their chosen field of endeavour.

Although I still had my own allocated chores to do, I was one of the few chosen to do work for an elderly lady who attended the same church. She was a supporter of the Home and contributed fruit in season. For the maintenance of her very large section and orchard, I received the sum of one shilling (ten cents) per hour. On Saturdays I could earn a pound (two dollars) and some weeks a total of two pounds. This money had to be handed to the matron on my return and then went into home funds.

New Management: It was in 1943 that the Home Committee had the extreme good fortune to engage the services of a husband and wife team with three children of their own, two girls and a boy who later tragically died from a serious illness. This couple, Mr Herbert and Mrs Winifred Bateup, immediately set about creating an extended family atmosphere after first gaining the confidence of the children, family being the underlying theme. As an ex-homie who had the very good fortune to know them and to experience their hospitality, I can vouch for the very fine work they and the staff were able to achieve.

I have been and will be forever grateful for the hospitality and kindness I received from them and their extended family when I had extended leave in town from the farm work (70 to 80 hours per week) once every three months. It was an honour to be invited to their home for the weekend and to share with them some of my thoughts and experiences during the four and a half years I was domiciled there.

Later I was to be indebted to them and a member of their family for their assistance and kindness when I had the misfortune to have an accident on the farm, being gored by a bull. On one leg and with nowhere to go, they looked after me until the doctor had finished his round of golf, as I could not be admitted to hospital without his approval. Even in those days it could be difficult getting into hospital.(Has much changed?) It was my pleasure to spend many enjoyable weekends with the Home's extended family and it was those times that I feel helped me during my life to appreciate the dedication of such folk, who gave their working lives helping those less fortunate than themselves.

Looking Back: Hindsight is a marvelous thing. At the time we thought we were very hard done by, but all that happened during our four-year term in the Home, did, in some way, help to mould us into the people we are today. Naturally it had more influence and impact on some than others. The people in authority govern the difference between a house or an institution and a home. When we entered the Masterton Methodist Children's Home it was more like a large family home of mixed gender. The children's faces showing appreciation of the affection staff had shown them, highlighted the difference between both care methods for me.

Life after the Home: After a stint in the Services overseas, I returned to my family and took on a carpentry course through the Rehabilitation Department in Masterton, building houses for the State. Later, I joined the Housing Corporation, and after several promotions I attained the position of District Building Supervisor, from which I retired in 1985. Notwithstanding some hard times, we were able to provide for our family too, with a good education. Our son graduated from Massey University with a PhD while working for the Dairy Institute of Research. Then he and his wife, who is also Massey University educated, spent twelve months in Paris while on sabbatical leave and working at a similar Research Institute. They have two daughters, the eldest at Victoria University studying Architecture, and the youngest at High School.

Our daughter works with the elderly, after having trained as a caregiver. She and her husband have three children. The eldest completed her education in Oxford, England, where she now works for the Oxford Press. Her sister, a radiologist at the Auckland Hospital is married with one small son, and their brother is studying for a PhD at Otago University.

My brother Eric left the orphanage in September 1942 and took up farming as a career. The usual practice in those days was for older boys from a farming background, including myself, to work during the school holidays. In 1942 Eric spent the August school holidays on a farm. As Eric had never really settled to life in the Home, he promptly returned to the farm and so continued in what was to be a lifetime career on the land.

Having worked on different farms, Eric came to the conclusion in 1954 that he would not achieve much in life without further education. So, with the full encouragement of his wife, he undertook a four and a half-year correspondence course in Agriculture. This has stood him in good stead to this day.

For a further seventeen years, Eric was to manage two large sheep stations in the Wairarapa, then in 1977, after much frustration he obtained the lease of a farm not far from Masterton. Now in his seventies, Eric and his wife of 49 years are still active on the farm. They have three daughters and one grandson, each daughter attaining high positions after their education.

The youngest brother, Robin has had a varied career and after serving several years in the Navy, he and his wife returned to farming, but his naval interests were perpetuated with his involvement as a leader in the Sea Scouts. He was also working for a time at the Scout Training Centre, to the south of Levin. They have six of a family, four daughters and two sons, the eldest son following his father as a navy cadet and has spent twenty-four years in the Senior Service. Robin and his wife are now Great Grandparents.

Retirement: The fourteen years of retirement have been wonderful. We have spent much time with our mobile families, grandchildren and great grandchild and doing a lot of the things we had been trying to do while still working. All the home maintenance and gardening got done around the home as well as being available to respond to the SOS. calls when needed to help out with family. My favourite sport in retirement has been out-door bowls, but when the knowledge that one is a tradesman leaks out, and you join the Committee, I find after eleven years I am still on it. They do say keeping busy keeps you fit and alive, I can vouch for the latter!

When we occasionally get together as a family and look back on our lives in the Home we sometimes reminisce about what might have been had we been able to have a 'normal' family upbringing. However, we are all grateful for an institution such as the Masterton Methodist Children's Home that was able to prepare us for what lay ahead.

A final thought: In today's world we could do with more love, affection and caring for those around us, not only as families, but also in relationships within the community, so as to provide a better place for future generations. When people begin to think of others as well as themselves, we will accomplish a better society and thereafter a lot better country.

Lesley

Three of the four children in our family arrived at the Masterton Methodist Children's home in June 1938. There was older brother Bill, older sister Marianne, and me –I was nearly two and a half years old. The fourth member of our family, my little sister Margaret, joined us when she was three.

The Matron, Miss Allan, had a forbidding countenance and I was scared of her – not that I remember any unkindnesses to me, but it was the way she used to speak to the older children, and some of them getting the strap. She used to sit in her chair in the Common Room and get some of the children to sing songs to her – I can still remember some of the songs that were sung, and also the children who sang them.

After lunch while the big kids did the dishes two of us preschoolers used to go into the Common Room with Matron while she listened to the BBC news about the war. One time we had an apple but we were too scared to chew it as every time we took a bite she would tell us to be quiet.

Until we were old enough to have tea with the big children we had our tea of bread and butter at 4 30pm and then went to bed. One of the little boys my age was tied with his feet in a pillow to stop him from climbing out of his cot.

When the 1942 earthquake struck soldiers who were camped in the Home paddocks came and carried mattresses and helped everyone move to the playshed for the night. When we shifted back into the Home we slept downstairs for a few nights – my bed was by the fireplace, which made me afraid as the chimneys had toppled.

I remember that one day we tried to sneak a book upstairs to bed. To do this we had to pass the Matron where she sat in the Common Room. There was another door into the Hall that led to the stairs, but this was always kept locked. Our plan was that one of us would go past Matron and round to the locked door while the other one would wait on the other side and pass the book under the door. Unfortunately our scheme was never achieved as the linoleum in the hall blocked the gap under the door.

In those early days while Matron Allan was in charge I never spoke to her, but waited to be spoken to. I learned to be quiet and not draw attention to myself. When I started school I was given a new pair of shoes, and I remember being very worried about Matron finding out when they became scuffed.

At Christmas 1942 we went to stay with our grandmother, and when we got back to the Home in January there had been a change – Matron Allan had left and the Bateups had arrived. One of the first things my brother Bill told Mr Bateup was "we're just the scum of the earth".

Mr and Mrs Bateup made big changes, and we found we were being regarded as human beings! Mrs Bateup used to come to the little girls dormitory girls' and say goodnight to us. She used to sit in the dark and tell us a story and we would sing songs that she taught us.

Before we were old enough to go to the main church we went to Kuripuni Sunday School. On the way we would sometimes come across the boys from a private school all dressed up in their Sunday best, and our boys sometimes jostled them. One day one of the kids found a thrippany bit (three pence), and I went into the shop and spent it. Someone told on me and as punishment I had to go to bed on Sunday afternoon and missed out on the party that my grandmother was giving for my brother's birthday.

We had many happy times playing together. At one time we had some 44 gallon drums and we had great fun standing up on these drums and rolling them with our feet and racing each other. Another time we had old car tyres and we used to have races pushing them along. And then there was the Giant Stride – this was a pole with about 8 metal handles suspended by chains. We had great fun – best were the 'high jumps' over a rope. Then we had 'pull ups' where one person would take their chain right back one lap over the top of everyone else's chain before we started, then the rest of us would run around pulling hard, and this person would fly out above the rest of us catching up the extra lap! You had to really hang on when it was your 'pull up' turn – if you didn't you would be flung right out onto the lawn, and no one showed you much sympathy!

We showed great interest in the 1948 Olympic Games and the 1950 Empire games. Mr Bateup had speakers put in some of the downstairs rooms and we would listen avidly to the commentaries. Then we would try to copy them doing the high jump, pole vault, and the long jump.

In the early days we had milk delivered first thing in the morning, but Mr Bateup got a prize cow called Butterfly which supplied our needs. The cream used to be nearly an inch thick on the top of the bucket. The boys used to milk the cow and some of us would sit beside the cow and use a stick to keep the flies off her.

Being in the Methodist Home meant we were all heavily involved in church activities.

After Mr and Mrs Bateup arrived to take charge of the Home the girls were enrolled in the Girls' Life Brigade (GLB). The younger girls started off in the Cadet Section, which at one stage was held on Saturday afternoons in the Church Hall in Lincoln Road. When we were 10 years old we graduated to the proper Girls' Life Brigade. There were some good times, depending on the skill of the Captain. One Captain that I remember and whom I had a lot of respect for was a Mrs Tasker. She was well organised, very strict, but we were able to enjoy ourselves as well.

The one thing that stands out for me from GLB was the Maypole Dance that Mrs Tasker taught us. We made very intricate patterns with the pink and blue ribbons with curtain rings at one end and hooks at the other, and these were attached to the top of a tall central pole. We skipped around the pole weaving the ribbons singly or in twos and fours. Jeanine Wellington played the piano for it.

Some of us rose through the ranks of the GLB to become sergeants, then warrant officers. We were always working for badges to sew onto the sleeve of our uniform. These badges were awarded for achieving a level of skill in a variety of activities such as cooking, swimming, scripture, drama, and others. We also worked for a Good Service Medal which related to attendance and behaviour, and for Bars to the medals in successive years.

GLB was held on Friday night and when the evening finished we used to love walking home through the main street, because Friday night in the town was the place to be. All the shops were open. It was really the only time we got to see the town. Sometimes one of the girls, not in the Home, would shout us an icecream soda at Page's corner milkbar.

Another activity that played a big part in our lives was singing. Sometimes we would gather around the piano and Aunty Con would play and we would sing hymns and songs from Alexander's Hymns, Songbook No 2. Miss Donald and Mrs Parker used to train us and we all sang in harmony.

Each year we celebrated a Sunday School Anniversary consisting of varying religious songs, and many children would sing a part solo, or there would be duets as well as the whole choir. We practised for weeks before this event. The Anniversary entailed three services on a Sunday and one on the following Monday evening. The church had a specially constructed tiered platform for the occasion. The top tier was especially high and everyone wanted to be on it, however as we were arranged by size and voice group some people never got up there. Later we had two different Mr Davies to train us. Our singing was very popular and we used to sing occasionally in Greytown and Carterton and Featherston on a Sunday afternoon. Members of the Church who had cars would transport us.

Every Thursday night the Minister would come to the Home for tea, and he would give us a speech and then we would sing. Over the years we experienced several Ministers with different style, some of the content of their speeches went way over our heads.

Mr Bateup was a local preacher and used to preach at very small country churches every so often on a Sunday afternoon. He would take some of the children with him and we often outnumbered the congregation. My sister was taken to play the organ, and when she left the Home I was often the organist.

We all had to enter the Scripture exams held annually at Kurupuni Methodist Church. These exams usually involved rote learning of a passage of scripture which we had to recite, and as we got older we had to answer written questions, with varying results. We used to get certificates and if we did well, prizes (usually books) were presented to us at a ceremony at the end of the year. Mr Bateup always encouraged us to do well, but this was difficult for some of the children.

Another activity that we engaged in at Kurupuni was acting in biblical dramas. The Sunday School classes put on different plays, and used to compete with each other for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place.

Harvest festival was always a special occasion, and the church would be decorated out with all manner of produce from the church members, either au naturel or made into pickles and jams etc. most of this produce ended up at the Home.

Margaret

I was admitted into the Home in May 1940, aged 2 years and 9 months, joining three older siblings who had been admitted in 1938, the youngest of whom, a sister was only 2 at that time. In later years friends have commented about how lucky we were to be together as a family. However, I never 'knew' my brother, who was 7 years my elder until after I left the Home, and I had very little to do with my eldest sister because generally speaking we mixed with our own age group.

I never really felt that I belonged because I was a year younger than some girls and a year older than another group, this being exacerbated by the fact that I was considerably larger than my age group, in fact at 11/12 years I was taller than my sister who was 18 months my elder. (This sister was very important to me as we did support each other.) My size spilled over into the classroom situation until Standard 4 when I was joined by two girls, sisters, who were of similar size. We became firm friends and remain so to this day. In later years the eldest of these sisters occasionally visited me in the Home.

There were two girls' dormitories, one for the big girls, one for the little girls, and we went to bed at different times. It was really something when you graduated to the Big Girls' Dormitory, which was usually associated with age, though sometimes girls would have to wait until someone left. It was almost a 'rite de passage'. Big girls were responsible for little girls, making sure they were up, washed and dressed ready for breakfast and school.

We had different clothes for home, school, and Sundays, and when we got back from school we had to change out of our school clothes into 'home clothes'. I had some difficulty with shoes, they never seemed to fit my large feet. Whilst we did not wear a uniform in the Bateup years, as sisters we had similar clothes.

I was a physically active kid, perhaps just as well, as we were always being told to play outside. We used to practise the high jump and the long jump and spent much time on the 'Giant Stride'. We played cricket, and hopscotch, and marbles. I learned to swim and was a keen swimmer doing reasonably well at primary school, but secondary school was interrupted for me when I contracted poliomyelitis. I still swim in an endeavour to keep fit, but I certainly wouldn't break any records!

When we were young we used to walk in 'crocodile' to Kurupuni Sunday School for the morning service, and at a certain age we transferred to the main church in town, and went to both morning and evening services. I felt that we 'homies' were the church, and added a great deal of depth to the singing. We used to take part in plays and sit scripture examinations. I learned that the way to get recognition was to do well in the scripture examinations and as a result I became an excellent rote learner. I still have the certificates

that I received, and one of the books that I received as a prize for my efforts. I confess that I can no longer recite large tracts of the Bible.

One thing I really enjoyed was the singing. We used to sing hymns regularly and the 'homies' formed the basis of the church singing. We were taught to sing in tune and to understand the varying parts, ie bass, tenor, alto, soprano and descant, by the choirmaster and organist. At Mr Bateup's funeral many years later , attended by many ex-homies, we sang lustily, singing our appropriate parts, nearly raising the roof of the small Pukerua Bay church. I can't say that I have much of a voice, unlike my two sisters, both of whom read music.

Masterton was a 'dry' area, and I remember signing "The Pledge" of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which meant that nary a sip of alcoholic liquor would ever pass my lips. I would have been about 8 at the time. Needless to say I am not a teetotaller, though I have never over imbibed.

The boys were allowed more license than the girls in relation to 'going out'. The girls were rarely allowed to do anything unless the boys were the chaperones. I was always the one prevailed upon to ask Mr Bateup whether some of the girls could go to the pictures (movies). I never liked the pictures, I couldn't bear to see anything sad and never went to se them myself, and even to this day I rarely go to the movies. The homies did not get to the pictures very often.

At about age 8/9 I had a dark brown doll made of paper-mache, about 20cm tall with mobile arms and legs, and I remember some of the boys taking it off me. They left it in a tree overnight and the head ended up broken. I was heartbroken but my mother, who visited when she could, got it mended, though it was subsequently broken again.

I remember receiving a book at Christmas time, and an orange, but I don't remember anything much in the way of toys, except my doll. I vaguely recall lolly scrambles at or near Christmas. Birthdays were acknowledged during the Bateup years and Happy Birthday was sung. Unfortunately, the one day of the year which could be special for me I shared with Mrs Bateup and one other girl whose birthdays were on the same day, so it was a bit of a letdown for me.

Places were found with churchgoers in the lower North Island for most children for short holidays over the Christmas period. There were always two or three children left in the Home. I hated going to strangers, and remember being sent back one Christmas because I was so unhappy. I must have felt very insecure. It was fortunate for me that our family had a couple of aunts and uncles who used to have us at some holiday times, and our grandmother used to have us for Sunday lunch, which gave us quite a bit of freedom.

We all had 'jobs' to do, which we did for a period of time before being rotated onto another job. My favourites were the bathroom and the stairs and polishing the front hallway on a Saturday, with dusters on our feet, skidding up and down. The banister of the stairway also provided a slide as it had a polished wooden ledge that we could slide down. Both my sister and I were nominated 'best girl in the Home' on two or three occasions — I am not sure our peers agreed, but I guess that we knew what to do and did it thoroughly.

Another of the jobs we had to do was set the tables, with Aunty Mavis supervising. We used to give her a hard time running through the kitchen, frightening her (she was of a nervous disposition), and she would try to catch us around the big oblong bench, with cupboards underneath, in the middle of the kitchen, saying that she 'would talk to us with the stick', which she never ever did. We also used to rush through the scullery, dipping our fingers into the cream settled on the top of the buckets of milk from the Home's cows. (It was the boys' job to milk the cows, but I did learn how to milk when I was there.)

I remember the big 1942 earthquake. I was 5 years of age and the NZ soldiers who were camped in the Home's back paddocks, came and evacuated us to the big shed, and I was put with a big girl and we slept on straw palliasses. When it was all over, the storeroom where the preserves were kept was a mountain of glass, fruit, eggs etc.

In 1943 the American Army came and occupied the Home's paddocks. We were not allowed anywhere near them, but we contrived ways of getting there and we used to get candy and gum off them. I suspect that the older girls got cigarettes.

One of the things I had trouble with were my teeth, which were extremely crooked and large. After age 9 I was never sent to the school dental clinic, but always to the dentist in town, and was treated, as it turns out, by the 'father of orthodontics' in New Zealand. I think his name was Donaldson. I had to wear a plate that had to be re-adjusted every week for the next three or four years. The dentist would do this, and I was seen by the specialist only once a month. I did not wear the plate all the time as I was supposed to, and lost two or three of them, but the teeth finished up pretty straight. Going to the dentist was a real highlight for me, and when I was older I was allowed to go on my own, and got to peruse the town on the way.

Childhood diseases swept the Home annually, mainly measles, mumps, chicken pox, whooping cough, with some diphtheria in the earlier period of my stay. The Home was quarantined on several occasions and we had lessons by correspondence, which meant the afternoons free. The only disease I ever contracted was measles, both kinds in successive years, and on my birthday, mostly, I trudged up and downstairs with food for the sick. However, in 1952 I contracted polio, the only child in the Home at that time to do so, plunging the Home into quarantine again. My previous swimming stood me in good stead as I spent considerable treatment time in the water and was left with no ill effects.

The main meal was in the middle of the day. We had an hour for lunch but it took 20 minutes to walk to and from college, (less if you ran), so not much time was left to eat your meal and do the dishes if you were on kitchen fatigues. While I wasn't particularly enamoured of the food at the time, the menu being fairly repetitive, we were fed adequately, and Aunty Mavis did a good job with what she had. The food was supplemented at varying times by produce and leftovers from functions being given to the Home. I have to say that I will never eat mutton stew, pumpkin, rhubarb, or green tomato jam ever again. We used to get a cake or biscuit on a Sunday night, which had usually been traded as a bribe for some transaction during the week. Thus Sunday tea meant a lot of jiggery pokery to ensure that you got what you were owed.

I enjoyed primary school and did quite well, but I was like a fish out of water at secondary school. I felt very inferior, lacked confidence, and this was made worse by missing a lot of the 4th Form year through illness. It was also not helped by the reading out of our school reports in the Home dining room in front of all the children, done with the best of intentions, but humiliating for those who had not done so well. I left school at the end of the 5th Form with no qualifications in spite of being encouraged by the Bateups' belief that I could do well.

It was 20 years before I perceived that I had a brain, and that, in spite of having been one of only eight out of 800 nursing students in New Zealand to gain honours in the Junior State examination in 1957. I guess it says something about the very early years of one's socialisation.

I was very interested in sewing, and Aunty Con, who was in charge of clothing and varying other chores, spent a lot of time and patience showing and encouraging me. She was also able to appease feelings of being hard done by, never critical, but teaching how to cope and understand the situation. She was always available. In fact the staff seemed to have very little time off to themselves.

When I was in the Home it seemed enormous, but one of my lasting memories of the place was the intense cold. I never seemed to be warm. There was a small fireplace in the girls' Sitting Room, which when lit gave out a pitiful amount of heat. I can hear Mr Bateup even now as I stoke my fire up, 'to help my goodness' – an expression he frequently used, then telling us to get moving. Mind you, the staff were no better off than us as they had to join us in the Sitting Room and the Common Room.

My mother used to visit when she was able, which was not all that often, but her departure always caused us pain, particularly for my eldest sister who was inconsolable for hours afterwards. My Mother had a very hard life. She was pressurised to contribute to our upkeep, and while the four of us were in the Home she paid the enormous sum of nearly eight pounds a month. She must have thought she was made when first my brother left in 1948, followed by the eldest of my sisters less than two years later. Mother worked in hotels for a while as this gave her accommodation, and later she moved into houses or flats where she cared for an elderly person, making meals, doing the washing and cleaning in exchange for lodgings, while at the same time cleaning government offices from 4am, and being a postie after that.

I experienced three different management styles during my stay in the Home. I have little recollection of the Miss Allan years, but I have visions of this large severe looking woman who was very gruff and of whom I was afraid. I was five and a half when the Bateups took over and by all accounts I was quite bolshy and sullen. The Bateups worked hard to bring laughter and love into the Home, but I believe they must have had to work hard, for many of the older children who had experienced an authoritarian situation for too long were suspicious and distrustful.

Unfortunately, in the middle of my last year in the Home the Bateups left, along with a large number of children. Suddenly I was the oldest girl by about 5 years, with the oldest boy in the same situation. Before the Bateups left I was given a room to myself on the third floor, with Aunty Con. So at 16 I was confronted with a new manager who was a strict Baptist, and the management style became regimented and army-like. I was only there for a further six months, and could not get out of the place fast enough.

I left the Home with a work ethic etched into my being, socially inept, unwilling to trust, with clear ideas of equity, and virtually with just the clothes I stood up in. One of the issues for me revolved around touch, and I have not been particularly keen about people touching me with any implication of intimacy, and certainly do not feel comfortable with overt displays of affection in public. One of the things I worked hard at was to ensure that our daughter was comfortable with touch. It would seem that some of us, in our very young years, missed out on affection.

I moved to Wellington and lived with Mother and two sisters, in the attic of a house on Tinakori Road. My mother cared for the elderly lady who owned the house, and worked full time as well. I could only stand up in the middle of the room. I had a position in a bank to go to and stayed there nearly three years before training as a nurse. Six months after arriving in Wellington my sister, 18 months older than me, and I rented a house with 4 other young women.

Compared with my peer group I married late, have one child, and one grandchild. My husband, born in the UK, experienced deprivation during the major depression in the 1930s and commenced work before he was 15 years old. If anything, his child rearing patterns were more authoritarian than mine, but I had done some study on child development, which tempered my authoritarian streak.

Bill

My introduction to the Home in 1939 was not pleasant. It was run by a Matron who was a brutal bully with the younger boys, but allowed the older boys to run the Home and subject it to what could only be described as a reign of terror. When I arrived clutching my toys they were smashed in front of me by older boys saying "This is what we do with these". On one occasion I was helping Matron in the laundry and something went wrong, and with one blow she knocked me unconscious. I will not dwell on these truly terrible days but will move on to the good times.

Mr and Mrs Bateup, with their own young family, arrived to take over and everything changed. Unlike many Homes of the day we catered for both boys and girls, thus resulting in many families, and we became many small families within one large extended family. The Home became what is now called a "lifestyle block", with cows, poultry, rabbits, and an enormous garden which was looked after entirely by the boys. We were encouraged to play sport, and at one stage we even had our own choir.

The 1942 Earthquake: The first shock came when we were already in bed, and we were all awakened and taken into the big shed – except for one little boy who must have gone back to sleep and was left behind, and found himself alone and terrified. My own terror came the next day, having been told at school that an earthquake had once swallowed a horse and cart and they were never seen again. As often happened, I was kept in after school that day and was walking down the road on my own when a small shock came and the road started to move. I was always quick on my feet but excelled myself that day!

Solway Fair: One of the boys was rather large and couldn't run very fast, with the result that even smaller boys could "give him cheek" knowing they were safe from retribution. To counter this Ron became a very accurate thrower. A small group of us at the Fair hadn't won anything and then came up with the idea of pooling our remaining pennies and getting Ron to throw balls at the target—which meant we ended up with quite few prizes.

Chinese Market Garden: What worse location could there be for a market garden than next door to a Children's Home? The older kids often sent the younger ones who could crawl under the barbed-wire fence on foraging expeditions, which were usually very successful. However, on one occasion the Chinese owner was in hot pursuit waving a hoe in a ferocious manner and gaining fast on us....we certainly left a lot of skin behind on the fence that day.

Infantile Paralysis: During the epidemic of the mid 1940s we were kept home from school, and in an endeavour to ensure that we did our correspondence lessons Mr Bateup said there would be a prize. My academic motivation and achievements could only be described as dismal – I was frequently away from school due to illness, had a perforated eardrum, and always sat at the back. For some reason I became determined to win the prize, and for the first and last time I put all my efforts into something other than sport, and with the assistance of June Grieves I tied for first place with Holden Reynolds. He and I eagerly awaited the prize – which turned out to be a threepenny ice cream each, which we were then allowed to lick in front of all the others.

Cats and Cabbages: Where there's rabbits there are cats, and one year there were even more cats than usual, so we boys decided to declare war on cats. Unknown to Mr Bateup we trapped and killed every cat that ventured near the rabbit hutches. However, it is one thing to kill cats undetected but quite another to dispose of the bodies. So we buried them in the cabbage patch. That year we had a record crop and won first prize for the Best Cabbage Patch competition. It was many years before Mr Bateup learned the secret of our success.

Haircuts: Mr Bateup selected me to be responsible for cutting the boys' hair. Money was always short and it would have been completely out of the question to pay for professional haircuts. Haircutting day was Saturday and it was short-back-and-sides for everyone or a crewcut. Headlice were not a problem in those days – we just cut the hair off and dipped the head in kerosene. One treatment did the trick. Mohawk haircuts were becoming popular amongst a certain type of young adult and I was keen to try my hand at one. All the boys refused my offer except for one little fellow who didn't know what a Mohawk haircut was – Mr B certainly made his displeasure felt.

Pigeons: We wanted to keep pigeons and Mr Bateup had a relative who was a pigeon fancier. I built the cages and we duly got our birds, and soon won prizes at the Show. Eventually we ended up with more birds than we could house or feed. Ross Hayward and myself, with Mr B's approval, sold the spare birds to the local gun club for target practice. The birds were homing pigeons and some Gun Club members were not very good shots, and we were able to sell some birds back to them several times. How things have changed in 50 years! Imagine the furore today if gun club members used live pigeons sold to them by children.

As my 70th year draws ever closer, I am deeply grateful to the Bateups, for inasmuch as it is possible with an institution they turned the Home into a family home. I would like to be able to say that I have put the bad times behind me, but this is not so – they have remained with me throughout my life.

Extracts from the Committee Minutes 1943-53.

(the Bateups begin; first wedding from the Home; boxing classes for boys; Home out of bounds to US Marines; another epidemic; Tararua Star Domino arrives; gifts and bequests; wireless and speakers purchased; another wedding; tensions with the Committee; Butterfly dies; the Bateups, Miss Potter, and 4 Committee retire.)

8.2.43 Mr Herbert and Mrs Winifred Bateup begin duties as Master and Matron, accompanied by their 3 children. On the recommendation of Mr Bateup a Methodist Church hymn book to be purchased for each child to assist with the childrens' singing, and a Bible for each child on leaving the Home.

9.3.43 Mrs C Irvine (nee Phyllis Mygind) thanked the Committee for the use of the Home for her wedding reception. Mr and Mrs Bateup reported that "several boys and girls were showing an interest in hobbies". Materials to be sought to foster these hobbies.

10.5.43 Most of the boys had camped for Easter on Mr Morrison's property, Morrison's Bush.
"Old boys visited Home this month - Gordon Mygind, Gordon Orr, Eric and Charles Richardson."

10.7.43 Officer Commanding the adjacent US Marine Corps Camp requested to declare the Home and its grounds "out of bounds" to the troops stationed there.

13.9.43 Children from Ratana would be welcomed into the Home family. Boys join the Church Boys Brigade.

11.10.43 Commencement of boxing classes for boys. Dr Prior donated 11 pounds 5shillings to each child. Children to be given 5shillings, balance at the disposal of the Matron.

14.2.44 It was reported to the Committee that the children "had enjoyed their holidays away from the Home, but were generally happy to be back in their normal surroundings."
Donations received from "Lady Client", England, 5 Pounds: "Helper" Hastings, 2 pounds; (and the Minutes report regular generous donations from small groups (Bible classes etc), individuals, service groups, YMCA, Rotary, Marching Association, Wellington Pipe Band and some anonymous).

10.7.44 The boys had played enjoyable games of football against Whatman and Sedgley Homes.

18.8.45 Mr Roy Holdaway of Blenheim had made a gift of one ton of potatoes.

30.9.45 The Committee notes that considerable attention has been given to the careful selection of suitable occupations for our senior children, and in each case educational courses most suited to individual needs are pursued.

14.5.46 Chairman reported that the two sons of the late Rev and Mrs DC Alley are now in the Home. Rev Alley lost his life when being transferred from the Solomon Islands to Japan as a prisoner of war.

12. 8.46 Letter from Rangawahia District Residence, asking if there are any senior children who could be discharged to homes in that district with a view to attending school. Reply "that there are none suitable for the purpose."

10.6.47 Mr Bateup and Mr Hodder visited Eketahuna and one cow had been purchased for 18 pounds.

8.7.47 The Home was gifted the sum of 1000 pounds by Mrs Grace Heighway of Hastings.
A mother was informed to refrain from writing letters to her boys, designed to make them unsettled.

11.9.47. The Committee stood for a moment in sympathy with Mr and Mrs Bateup on the loss of their son Haddon.

30.9.47 Masters Report: the cow was now supplying all the milk needed by the Home.

20.12.47 Christmas Party cancelled because of the infantile paralysis epidemic.

1947 Annual Report

"35 children in the Home — 2 are working, 8 at College, 24 at primary school and 1 under school age. At school, and on the field of sport they acquit themselves well, and altogether it can be said that they are highly regarded in the community life of the town. Each year those who are ready are received into Church Membership, a real tribute to the spiritual influence of the Home.
Welcome Gift: As a result of a visit by the Wellington Police Pipe Band, arranged by the staff of the Masterton Police, the three Homes in Masterton each received 70 pds to be used for the benefit of the children. In our case it has been decided to install a new wireless set with extension speakers in some of the main rooms, so that the children can have a wisely guided benefit of this aid to their social, cultural and spiritual development."

"A New Venture: Since the release of the main portion of our land from military occupation, a cow has been purchased and another valuable pedigree cow has been given to the Home through the generosity of the Master, Mr H Bateup. In addition to the considerable saving in the purchase of milk, this new venture will provide another means of giving the boys a practical training in the care of livestock. The livestock now comprises 3 cows, a heifer, a calf, and two lambs. Tararua Star Domino, our pedigree Freisian, was heading the production list for NZ 2yr olds."

12.11.48 Letter from Mrs L, Lower Hutt, seeking the admission of a girl aged 8, apparently under the impression that the Home was a private boarding school.

8.3.49 3 Samoan boys have arrived to attend school in NZ.
The name of Celdan N F Butterqueen had been applied for the pedigree heifer calf.

10.5.49 The Master to be paid a car allowance of 2pounds a month.

30 June 1949 Annual Report: swimming pool fund has been set aside 84 pds.

17.9.49 Central School Committee Headmaster commended the splendid conduct and demeanour of the Home children and their good contribution to the life of the school.
Mr HJ Topp of Mauriceville donated 12 tons of lime. This has all been spread by hand.

14.2.50 Vivienne Day to be married in April, the wedding to take place from the Home and the wedding breakfast to be provided at the Home.
Ross Hayward has won the Tom Oakley cup in cycle racing

9.5.50 After a general discussion it was affirmed that the Committee wished the children to take part in community life in the same way as children coming from normal homes.

30.6.50 In the year legacies brought in 1344pounds. (almost identical to the parents maintenance payments 1364pds.) Also donations from Police, Cocker Trust, Trust Lands Trust .

1950 Annual Report. The Wairarapa Times Age has published annual reports and accounts of concerts etc, and provided a free daily copy of the paper since the Home began in 1921.

15.11.50 12 children had recently been accepted into full Church membership.
A Home child who has spent a number of years in the Masterton Hospital, was presented with the Girls Life Brigade Endurance Award at Dominion HQ.

13.2.51 Mr Clift, Hastings, thanked for the gift of substantial quantities of fruit over many years.

10.7.51 Regular annual grant from Masterton Trust Lands Trust 20pds, for schoolbooks etc.

9.10.51 A statement of costs from the 3 Methodist Homes (Mstn, Chch, Auck) showed that the Masterton Home compared very favourably with the other two.

8.3.52 A mechanized potato digger has been purchased.

20.5.52 Special Meeting: The Committee agreed that the conduct or welfare of children would not be discussed without the Master and Matron being present. The Master replied that he and the Matron were prepared to continue in the service of the Home.

1.9.52 Special Meeting: re the children selling Police Charity Day tickets, organised by Jaycees. It was discovered that the tickets involved a raffle. The Committee agreed that in view of the Church's attitude to gambling and raffles, the children could not be asked to sell the tickets, and the Committee did not wish to participate in their distribution.

12.8.52 A total of 252 children had been admitted to the Home to date.

13.3.53 The death of Butterfly was reported to the Committee.

12.5.53 It was resolved that the matter of heaters for the Home be investigated.

14.7.53 Mr and Mrs Bateup resign, after 10 years service. Other resignations — Miss Potter (staff); Mr AH Daniell and Miss M Burton, Foundation Committee members (1920-1953), also long serving Committee members Mr W R Nicol and Mrs J Conly.

Kaye

I am surprised that people still contact me through my connection with the Masterton Methodist Children's Home. My time there was only a couple of months in 1943 and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I suppose the freedom was a great contrast to being at home where your parents were able to monitor your every move and make most of your decisions for you — choice of clothes to wear each day and so on. My brother Ross did not enjoy it as much, and we often went running down the road to bring him back. As soon as our mother came out of hospital he went home. I stayed on.

When I read what happened in other children's homes and orphanages, particularly those over here in Queensland where I now live, I realize how great the Masterton Home was. Never a hint of scandal, beatings, paedophilia or the likes. Most of this I have little doubt was owing to the wonderful patient natures of the Bateups, Master and Matron of the Home in my time there.

Another reason for my enjoyment was that I felt I was being treated as a special person — probably the Bateups gave that impression to all the "boarders". Firstly, I was a Presbyterian and went to the Presbyterian Sunday School while the rest went Methodist. But I often attended the evening service at the Kuripuni Church in South Road, especially as they needed the 'homies' to make up the congregation! If Mr Bateup was conducting the service he always got a good roll up. Incidentally there was no pressure whatsoever on us to attend — we were asked to go, not threatened.

Secondly, on Wednesday evenings I was allowed out to attend meetings at the St John's Ambulance Brigade in Church Street, where I was in the SJAB Cadets. Often of an evening Mr B would invite me to give health talks to the Home kids, with First Aid lessons as well. (There was no radio or television.) That was how he came to call me "Doctor". I may even have had aims in that field at the time.

On a couple of occasions I was called on to render first aid at the Home. Once, a young lad who had a bad burn to his leg from a fire accident some years previously was walking into the dining room when someone came out of the kitchen with a hot plate of porridge. Unfortunately he copped the lot down the back of his neck. Even Mr B asked my advice and I told him cold tea, which he immediately applied.

There was another occasion when he took us on a holiday to a country area near Greytown I think. One of the kids fell under his Morris 8 car, he was doubled up underneath. We took him to the hospital and he was pronounced unharmed and sent back to us the next day. Mr B reported himself to the police but they weren't interested as it was on private property. This brings two things to mind — the absolute honesty of the man, plus the thought that he really cared for the kids in order to arrange a holiday away for them.

During my time there we were not "worked" the way some of the foster children in private homes were. (We had a family over the back of us in Michael Street who fostered children as cheap labour, milking the cows day and night!) I believe there may have been a cow or two attached to the Home before I got there, but because the Yank Marines were camped next door by then the farmland was used by them.

Our greatest trick was to hang over the fence looking wistful at the Yanks. When they came to talk to us we would explain that it was an Orphanage, not revealing that there was only one real orphan in the place (an 18 month old whom Mr Bateup used to carry about). Later in the day the Yanks would arrive at the door with boxes of "candy". It seldom failed to work. As Gilbert and Sullivan say.... "It is...It is... a glorious thing to be an orphan boy!" However many of these servicemen did not just return with the candy — quite often they would arrive at evening when we were in the common room singing hymns! Invariably Mr B would ask them what their favourite hymn was, by way of a request. I don't know if he realized — he must have, as we all did — that these blokes never knew any hymns, let alone have a favourite! The only one they knew and most could name was "Rock of Ages". (Although I do remember one fellow making a bit of a hit one night, and Mr B actually roped him into give the sermon at South Road the following Sunday!)

There must have been a ban on the Yanks parking cars in Herbert Street. Quite a few of them bought cars while they were there. We had trouble with them parking down the back gate near the large shed. One night we heard a thump outside and went to investigate. Someone had left a wheelbarrow wheel in the driveway, and it had pierced the sump of this car as it drove in!! Mr B in his usual way went out to help. They told him they had come in to turn around (outside the kitchen window?). He accepted their story and went in to phone for help, leaving the Yanks to whisper amongst themselves.

On Saturdays 6 or 8 of us used to walk to Dr Prior's Surgery, and he would drive us up to the Golf Course where we would earn a couple of bob caddying for some of his fellow golfers. On one occasion one of the caddies lit up a cigarette in his Waiting Room — there were always plenty of fags about when the Yanks were in town— and I got the blame.

I have dug out the "Appeal" (see below) which was sent to my parents when it came time for me to go home. Apart from the reference to my first aid talks it mentions my skill as a potato peeler, but gives the signatures or names of most of the others who were there at the time. Most of them would have been younger than I. I was in my last year at primary (12yrs old), and I don't think there were any at high school then. I think Bill Winter had left by then. Miss Potter was the cook at that time.

When I look back at the state some of the boys from Sedgley Home arrived at school in, I was more than grateful for my experience at the Methodist Home. I can still remember a teacher commenting on the welts on a student's legs one day. He said it was from straps. I must say I never saw anyone beaten or harmed in any way during my stay in the Methodist Home. Being a mixed gender home made it more like a family, and there seemed no "order of peck" to be established, as I guessed was the case with the Sedgely boys.

The only time I was "threatened" at the Home was when 6 or 8 of us were either taking a bath or supposed to be cleaning it, but we had filled it with water and then all jumped in. Of course there was more water on the floor than in the tub when Mr B walked in. He pretended to be angry and went off to find a stick! We all shuddered and shook, but by the time he got back, minus any stick, we had most of it cleaned up.

At a recent Golden Wedding function in Wellington I noted that age is a funny thing — you can't remember where you put the car keys 20 minutes ago, but you can remember in detail minor unimportant incidents from over 60 years back.

The Appeal (handwritten)

The appeal to be lodged with Mr F.H. Cunningham, against conscripting Dr Cunningham KC back to his home at Walton Avenue. We, the undersigned, appeal on the following grounds:-

As a physician he is invaluable...
As an eye specialist he would be hard to replace for he peels the potatoes...
His health talks are helpful and much appreciated....
His genial manner and smiling countenance and constant good humour do much to create and maintain a cheerful atmosphere in the Home...
Altogether we consider him to be indispensible to the wellbeing of the Methodist Children's Home.

So we beg of you to give this Appeal the due consideration that the case deserves.

(Signed) H. Bateup (Master of the Home), Mrs W Bateup (Matron), Miss C Fell (Assistant), Miss Mavis Potter (Cook), every child in the Home (26), and IA Hassell (Home Carpenter)..

Naomi

I was six years old when in 1943 I entered the Home with my two brothers, aged four and five. The reason, I learned many years later, was because of the death of my father. A younger brother remained with my mother who was pregnant and unwell, not that I knew that at the time either. An older brother also came to the Home but was fostered out soon after — I do not know why he was fostered and we were not. We, as kids, were never involved in any discussion about us going to the Home, we just arrived after a bus trip to the Wairarapa.

It was a most distressing time, the place was so huge and cold with rooms our whole house would have fitted into. I remember my brothers and me hiding in the broom cupboard under the stair crying our eyes out. Eventually one learns that you cannot change things, so you cope. Because the boys and girls areas were mainly segregated, I do not recall having much to do with my brothers (sadly, still applies today), and since we were so close in age, I missed them a lot. The early years of being there really are a blur, I think the mind can shut out things we do not want to remember.

The Home: I believe we were lucky that Mr and Mrs Bateup were in charge while we were there, with the help of the cook Mavis Potter (Aunty Mavis) and Constance Fell (Aunty Con) who did all the mending and helped to keep the place running smoothly. We got on well with the staff, although we were at times pretty tough on Aunty Mavis — one of her favourite sayings being "I will talk to you with the broom!", upon which we would scatter really quick.

Mr and Mrs Bateup ('Mum and Dad Bateup' as we soon called them) had three children of their own and to my knowledge did not treat them any differently from the rest of us. One of their children, Haddon died when I was about ten and that was a sad time for everyone. Committee members that I remember were Dr Prior, Mr Shoosmith, Mr Cody, and Rev Goodman. We had a Mr and Mrs Tasker and their four children who stayed at the home for a few months,(why I had no idea), they had a son, a daughter and twin daughters Norma and Ruth — they were only babies and I have a photo of myself taken with them in 1949.

Good times I remember were the Christmas Parties in the play shed, the excitement of practising for items like 'We are Happy Little Cooks' when we were dressed in white aprons and caps which Aunty Con had made. There was a bookcase at the top of the stairs where Aunty Con used to get the books to read to us, like "Wavy', "Ginger", "Rossiters Farm" and my favourite "Mary Slessor" about a missionary in South Africa— in those days I could not wait for the next chapter.

Girls Life Brigade (GLB) was great — we were taught lots of useful things such as wallpapering, which has stood me in good stead in later years, working for badges in sewing, cooking, knot tying etc. Bible Class camp was another time to look forward to, even sleeping on palliasses stuffed with straw and all lumpy was an adventurous break from the norm.

It was great fun being taken to school on very wet days in Mr Bateup's little car, children packed in like sardines, not allowed today ! A Mr and Mrs Fowler who lived in Dixon St and visited the Home used to take us out at times in their car.

I recall the American Marines who were camped at Memorial Park, handing candy over the fence. Another big event was moving up to the BIG GIRLS DORMITORY at about thirteen or fourteen years, a move that we looked forward to but was also scary. It was a different world up there, nobody read you stories any more. One thing that stands out at this time was a book one of the bigger girls acquired on sex, each of us read it, passing one page around at a time, then burning it — most of it was well over my head but it was the excitement of something we were not supposed to have, we thought we were very clever.

We did get up to a bit of harmless mischief — I recall getting apples from the pantry at night, one of the boys would put them in a pillow case that we let down from the dormitory window, we eventually got caught of course but I don't remember our punishment. At church we used to tap the bottom of the collection plate and instead of putting our pennies in would keep them and buy broken biscuits from No 1 and No 2 shop on the way home — this was real hair raising stuff!

We also used to have this little game of knocking on the Catholic Father's door over the road then running back and hiding behind the fence, of course eventually we got caught and were duly punished, having to stand in line in the hall and hold out our hand - Wham!! I supposed we deserved it.

The annual photo sessions used to see us all dressed up while the powers that be thought up different ways to arrange us, not an easy task with thirty or forty children milling about. I still have these photos from 1943 to 1951, a bit worse for wear I'm afraid.

Once or twice at Christmas we were sent away on holiday to different peoples' homes. I went to a Mrs McGhie, a florist in Petone. I went there two years in a row and was allowed to help in the back of the shop, it was wonderful with the perfume of the flowers, it was so quiet and peaceful. I don't remember there being any other person in the house. Mrs McGhie was fairly old, well, she was to a ten year old, but I liked her very much and she was always patient teaching me to make wreaths with spagnum moss — not that I think I was very successful.

There were some downs to living in the Home — mashed potatoes with the skins on. Tripe! I managed to swiftly get rid of this onto my brother's plate while I was passing his table. Licorice powder, castor oil, Saturday line up for our weekly dose. Tidying our heaps where our clothes were kept instead of drawers, just got them looking good and they would all fall on the floor. Cold bathrooms, chilblains and earache. Not too serious a list? I did not like school – I remember wagging maths classes at college and I didn't like sport either, but as there was no way of getting away from them I had to make the best of it.

I had two main friends at the home, the first left some years before me and I only found out where she was about three years ago, we attempted letter writing but I guess fifty years is a long time to try and recapture the past, we do send Christmas cards. My other friend and I had lots of good times being interested in the same sorts of things like knitting and writing. When we were at college we advertised in the farming magazine "Straight Furrow" for baby knitting for busy farmers wives, and received a lot of orders, which we filled. I think my friend's mother helped with the advertising. My friend and I kept in touch for many years when our children were small. I had a special boyfriend while in my early teens and in my naiveté believed we'd grow up, get married and live happily ever after, but the dreams of the young are elusive as fairy dust.

There was the time when we were in quarantine while the Polio Epidemic was on, and I can recall being taught school subjects in the dining room by the Shaw boys, and perhaps one of the Marryatt boys. I recall being put in charge of a new little girl of about three or four, I thought she was so cute and enjoyed looking after her, I could pretend that she was my sister and someone of my own.

Very occasionally I received a phone call from my mother, who always promised to visit but seldom did — I remember waiting and waiting but she never turned up, it was very upsetting. (When I had my own children I never promised we'd go or do anything special until the day arrived, I knew how disappointing it could be if circumstances changed and you can't deliver the promise.) In 1948 my mother remarried and had other children. I could not understand at the time why she did that yet left my brothers and me in the Home — of course now when we have learnt how complicated life can be, it probably wasn't easy for her either. I still have contact with two of the four girls from that marriage. Contact with my brothers is haphazard, funerals, weddings etc – we just grew away from each other as they moved away to other parts of the country.

As far as I am concerned we were well cared for and not ill treated while we were in the Home, and when I left Mr and Mrs Bateup were still Mum and Dad to my family for many years and we visited often.

After the Home: I left the Home in 1952 after having started work at the Post Office Telephone Exchange. As I worked shift work Mr Bateup had bought me a second hand bike for twelve pounds which I repaid out of my wages. Because of this job I was able to transfer to Foxton where my mother lived. While in the Home my dream was still to be part of a real family so I was excited about leaving, but looking back I'm not sure it was the best move. I arrived home to a mother who was a stranger, a stepfather and another family, I had left all the people I knew to go to this house of strangers. It was awful and if anybody had said I could return to the Home in those first few moths, I'd have been there in a flash.

Consequences: After being cared for in the Home for ten years I found that making decisions and having to take the consequences without any back up were tasks I wasn't used to. Work outside the home was just so different that at times it was difficult to cope. Also mixing with people has always been a big stumbling block —even time with a young family in Plunket, play centres and schools never got me over that and I had to force myself to take part.

I married when I was sixteen, just months after leaving the Home. We moved into the countryside where I didn't make the decisions, and there were no people near to help me cope with all the responsibility as the children came along. No matter what, I had to face up to some of the fears for the sake of the children. It wasn't till the eldest child reached school age that we had to move so she could attend school. We went to a small village, but even then I would not go to the corner store by myself. I have always lacked self-confidence and a feeling of self-worth. I think maybe it was not helped when at school we were always referred to as 'the Home kids' or just the 'homies'. Our personal identities became immersed into the 'group' and it gave us the feeling that we were not as good as other individuals.

However, time has moved on and I have brought up five of my own children and many foster children, one for thirteen years, one for two years — one boy from birth to his present age of thirty three, he is the baby of the family. Another eleven children were with us for varying lengths of time over the years, all pre-schoolers - most were returned to their parents after they had sorted themselves out, two were adopted. I did not worry about having lots of children about— I guess this came about from being in the Home, though it was also a means of staying home in a 'safe' environment.

After the youngest child started school I went to work for a manufacturer of women's and children's clothing— it was scary to start with but with a friend pushing from behind I managed to settle down, that was in 1972. For the next eighteen years I continued in this work, becoming a partner in a smaller manufacturing work place and later a retail shop. During this time I did various correspondence courses etc. but would not sit the exams (still that lack of confidence). Never mind, I have done some computer work and managed to keep up with the play. In later years I have been helping out with the elderly in their own homes and they are great people, some I have been with for ten years.

My family have all grown up, married and gone their separate ways, I have twelve grandchildren and three great grand children. My eldest daughter lives in Wellinton, one in Napier, one in Masterton and one in Peka Peka, they are all working in jobs from Bank Manager to Manufacturing. My son is in Australia and my foster son is still in Palmerston North. I believe I have a good relationship with my family.

On reflection I think some of the more complicated issues of life in general were not explained to us in the Home, and we were not well enough prepared to tackle the outside world. I have never felt comfortable fending for myself, and the fear of some sort of rejection has kept me even today from attempting new avenues of learning and leisure.

I returned to visit the Home with a friend in 1996 - of course it had changed quite a lot seeing it is now a church school. The man in charge of the building invited us in and showed us around, and was very interested in how I felt about it after all these years. However it was very hard for me to define my feelings - sadness? fear perhaps? – fear of what I don't know. I think perhaps I just didn't want to see the place changed as if the past had disappeared. One cannot know how different life would have been if we had not been put in the Masterton Methodist Children's Home. Perhaps it may have been worse.

It was only about three years ago that I started to find out about my father, all previous requests having been denied by my mother. I've learnt a lot but some questions will never be answered, perhaps even for the best. Who knows? I did find his grave in the soldiers' cemetery in Featherston, also the unmarked grave of a brother I never knew about who died the same year as my father. We cleaned up the site and gave him back his name. My mother died three years ago aged eighty after outliving three husbands.

So looking back over the years and all things considered I would have to say… "Well done Mr and Mrs Bateup, Aunty Con and Aunty Mavis, all of you would have had pressure on you that I would not be aware of, I am sure you did your very best for us all. Thank you. Naomi. "

Bygone Days

Back to the past I went
a journey to my childhood days
to the Home where we were sent
when my father passed away

It was a large and rambling home
concrete, cold and bare
with wooden floors that shone
and children everywhere

The friendships formed have lasted
throughout the passing years
we had lots of fun and laughter
and our fair share of tears

We waited each visiting day
for our mother to arrive
to show that we were not forgotten
to know we would survive

She very rarely made it
her reasons we didn't know
it was just the way that life was
and our pain we didn't show

The scars that were left may never leave
but life must carry on
and we must not sit and grieve
for something that is gone

The people that looked after us
through all our early years
were good and kind and made no fuss
joined in our fun and calmed our fears

But no one can take away the longing
to have a Mum and Dad
brothers and sisters belonging
to the family we never had

But now we've gone our separate ways
with families of our own
we know that life can't always be
the storybook tales
of our childhood dreams…… *N.A.B.*

Brian

"Ya-ya, ya-ya....you're goin' into the kids' home next week! Serves ya right! Ha-ha,..... ya gunna be Homies!'

My oldest brother and I were on our bikes as usual after school, going nowhere in particular except up and down the gutters looking for something to happen in early 1940's Masterton. Hurtling around the bend on their bikes and jeering for all their worth were Bill Pike and Ted Thornton — occasional comrades in neighbourhood mischief, and occasional foes in the "gang" skirmishes down on the muddy shortcut track to school. We were like blood brothers.

"Ya-ya Homies!" "No we're not!" hotly. "Y'ar so! Homies, homies! ...have to wear a un-i-form! ....have to go to chur-urch!" "Will not!" even more hotly. "Will not!" "Will so, ya-ya Home—eees!" as they swooped past and headed triumphantly for the corner.

We could always expect an insulting barrage from Bill Pike and Ted Thornton, (as they could from us if we saw them first), in the endless series of boyhood skirmishes that were part of growing up in the back yards, streets, and river tracks of that sleepy town . When we weren't being best friends and sometimes when we were we traded cheek, cursewords, stones, flax darts, acorns and all manner of other small projectiles from our shanghais. On our bikes we regularly exchanged cleverly coordinated "swerve-offs" into the gutter that if successful left the foe with buckled spokes and sometimes burst tyres.

But never this before.

Chinese burns, yes; Lofty Blomfield's octopus clamp, yes; a sudden crippling knee into the thigh muscle, yes; even a stinging pellet or stone from afar, yes; but never psychological warfare before. From their vast repertoire of curses and boyhood insults they'd never blurted out anything like this before — anything so unerringly crushing.

The Home! It couldn't be true!

"Don't be barmy, Thornton!". "Not, it's true!" "Ya liar Pike — and anyway who says?" "Arn't a liar, it's true — everyone knows!"... as they disappeared round the bend....."Ya-ya Homies! The Shaws are gunna be Home—eees!".

The Home? The Shaws are going to be Homies? Everyone knows?

"The Home" was somewhere on the other side of town - a huge concrete place where children that no one wanted were sent. We used to see the "Homies" on Sundays in their grey uniforms and unhappy faces, being made to march to Sunday school as a lesson to us ordinary Masterton children that whatever else happened we mustn't be unwanted.

Not another word during the weekend and we knew we were right — it couldn't be true.

Then it was Monday and suddenly, with a small packed bag each, we were bustled into a strange car and off to the other side of town. As it turned out Ted Thornton and Bill Pike were only half right (not that it was any consolation to us), as five of us were put into the Home that day and the other five of us weren't — and we never did find out how they could have known about it and we didn't.

Both of my older sisters had already had to leave school early and go to work in Wellington, and my older brother by two years was taken from school and also sent out to work. The brother older than me by one year was sent to the Sanatorium at Waipukurau and a younger brother put into Masterton Hospital to recover from the tuberculosis that had killed our young mother two years previously, after she had ailed for two earlier years in the open air wards of Masterton Hospital. I and four of my younger brothers and sisters were duly delivered up the gravel driveway and into the huge Home that was indeed to become our home, along with the 40 or so other children who now silently watched our arrival, and of whom we knew not one.

For four years we had been virtually motherless - two years of visiting but not touching while she languished in hospital, and two further numbing years in the care of 'housekeepers'. Now it seemed that no one wanted us.

Except the Home - the Masterton Methodist Children's Home, 37 Herbert Street, Masterton.

Although in the same town, the Home might have been from another planet. An imposing three-storey structure of slab concrete and roughcast, set in vast grounds behind a solidly gated fence and a crunchy curved gravel driveway, the Home dominated its surrounds (still does) like a medieval cathedral — massive and mysterious.

As its front door closed behind us and total strangers faced us in the cavernous hallway, I know that I felt small and lost in a way only children can know. Even as a virtual waif of the streets you knew that you were superior to a

"homie" — with the closing of the Home door behind us the sinking feeling in stomach and heart was the realisation that we were now also Homies, for better or worse. And we had no reason to expect anything other than 'worse'.

Every minute of that first day reminded us that our former life on the other side of town — wild and carefree in the way of feral families — was gone forever. Now it was having to sleep alone in iron-framed beds in long, bare, open-air dormitories where children (including us) cried under the blankets and had the shame of wet beds in the morning; keeping your few nametagged clothes and even fewer personal things in open lockers; bathing while strange children watched and even shared your bathwater or towel; lining up for food and sitting silently at table with strangers who would cheat or bully you out of your portion of butter; walking down strange streets to new schools and new teachers and no friends; no bikes and no dawdling back from school for the change into work clothes and the couple of hours daily labour in the gardens, laundries and sculleries of the Home; not even a penny of pocket money unless you were a "big kid" with a caddying or lawnmowing job on Saturdays; and of course no Mum or Dad.

Well, that was Monday. Somehow things began to look better on Tuesday.

When you are a vigorous boy wouldn't you like more than forty other high-spirited kids to play with and get into mischief with at all hours of the day and night, with spacious paddocks to roam over, and just over the back fence the forbidden and now deserted US Marine camp? Wouldn't you like a predictable pattern of wholesome meals — cheese on toast every morning, sausages every Tuesday, and fruitcake on Sundays — that could be exchanged for more favoured dishes later in the week or bartered for toothpaste or lollies ? Huckleberry Finn couldn't have had it better with every bathnight as boisterous as a visit to the town swimming pool with all the splashing and soap squirting and towel-flicking that you could get away with? Wouldn't you soon enjoy the advantages of complete freedom from parental surveillance — and only four adults (all kindly as it turned out) to keep track of you all?... And who wouldn't enjoy a vigorous and orderly daily routine that kept you healthy and jumping out of your skin with energy ?...

Perhaps life as a 'homie' wasn't going to be so bad after all ?

And that, as they say, is another story.

Don

Why has it taken me so long to write this record of my life the Home? I can think of no good reason as my recollections of my years there are of happy days and no bad times - a couple of strappings from Mr Bateup don't count as I guess I deserved them!

I first became aware of the Home during the later stages of my period in Masterton Hospital. I was admitted to Ward 7 mid-year 1943 from 12 Wrigley Street where I left behind this huge family of brothers and sisters (where was Dad at this time?), which I had been part of for three years at most – or maybe it was only two – and now became part of another 'family'. This hospital family was predominantly Maori (although brother Bob was there for a while) and it was in constant change due to new patients being admitted and many deaths.

It wasn't until after my younger brothers and sisters had been accepted into the Home in early 1944 that I began to get occasional visits including "Homies" – curiosity or on instruction? Soon after this I disappeared again, being sent to the Pukeora Sanatorium at Waipukarau for six months convalescence.

When it was time for me to be discharged from the Sanatorium in mid-1944, I assumed I would be going to live in the same place as my brothers and sisters and told that to the authorities when they asked me. So in early February 1945 I was put on a train with a borrowed suitcase containing all my belongings (not very much more that the clothes I was wearing) and finished up on the Masterton Railway Station late in the afternoon. There was no one there to meet me and the stationmaster was getting ready to close the station. By a most remarkable coincidence, (was this the influence of the Home's Christian ethos?) my Aunty Mabel, who lived in Palmerston North, got off the same train with brother Bob who had been staying with her for the school holidays. How did she recognise me, as she hadn't seen me for years?

The next thing I can remember is staying with Mr and Mrs Shoosmith until all the formalities were completed and I was accepted into the Home.

I have no recollection that my brothers and sisters were at all excited about this brother turning up again out of the blue – perhaps they still hadn't got used to the way I appeared and disappeared in their lives. From that time on I had a happy five years with this new extended family under the parental guidance of Mr and Mrs Bateup and Aunties Con and Mavis. I have no doubt that, had we not come under the influence of the Home, the future lives of the Shaw family would have been vastly different.

What do I recall of the good times – not in any special order: -

- the holiday in Opononi with Gordon and Nan Bateup on the Fell family farm. It took me nearly thirty-six hours to get there! Hot scones, homemade butter and fresh honey straight out of the hive. Flounder fishing at night (successful) and line fishing by day on the Hokianga Harbour (absolutely useless – I have hardly ever been fishing again, even with my own children!) For some reason I cannot recall the thirty-six hour train trip back to Masterton.
- haymaking on Mr Hodder's farm and out the back of the Home – even missed a performance of "The Messiah" to get the job completed.
- catching rabbits out at Opaki – we walked all the way there and back – must have been many miles.
- getting our own lockers in the dressing room, and the showers instead of all having to share one bath.
- -getting my own bedroom up on the third floor in 1949. I still have the picture I had pinned to the wall – the start of the men's 100m final at the 1948 Olympic games in London.
- playing games on the side lawn – how was it that nobody got hurt on the Giant Stride?
- Sunday School Anniversaries and the Home Christmas Pageants. Did we all get 2 shillings and sixpence or was it 10 shillings to buy ourselves a Christmas present, or was it just the older children?
- trying to walk as far as possible along Herbert Street from Bouzaid's without touching the ground – it helped if all the gates were shut!
- in later years, going to Wellington with the Taskers in that magnificent open tourer to stay with sister Mickey and her husband Les so that we could go to the Plunket Shield cricket match at the Basin Reserve.

However, I think No.1 good time must have been when it was decided that all the boys were to be issued with underpants. Suddenly we became just like all the other boys we went to school with.

Bad times? I guess there were some but I can't recall them.

Sad times? It was an unhappy period leading up to Haddon Bateup's death and, on reflection, it was a pity that we were not allowed to go and see him to say goodbye. Probably for most of the children it was their first experience of a death in the family.

Ordinary times? Doing the dishes, doing our own ironing, working in the garden (especially if it got in the way of rugby practice), keeping that front drive weeded (why wasn't it laid in concrete?), cleaning the windows and polishing the floors of the hall, the dining room and the common rooms.

Question times? What went on at those Committee meetings when Mr Nicol, Mr Conly, Mr Cody, Dr Pryor and those other mysterious people appeared from time to time? What did the big girls talk about in their dormitory? (And did they wonder what the big boys talked about?)

The biggest question of all – why did we all think no one was aware we used to get up early and raid the cake cupboards? Did Mr Bateup really not know that his car was "borrowed" from time to time? The brashness of youth and the tolerance of the grownups!

Just as I cannot recall my first day in the Home, neither can I recall my last day there before leaving for Wellington with brother Brian to live with Mrs Rait in Kilbirnie for two years. However I remember buying a suitcase (which I still have), buying clothes from Mr Shoosmith's, and most exciting of all, my first brand new bike! (Why did I need a bike in Wellington?)

I have nothing but grateful thanks and utmost appreciation for anyone connected with the Home during my five years there. The staff – no, they were not the staff, they were our loco parentis (and who could have asked for better); the Committee and the Church, but most especially, all those wonderful children who I still think of as being part of my extended family. God bless you all.

Bob

I entered the Home late in the afternoon of 23 March 1945, and the very first memory I have is of trying to get to my place at the dinner table, protesting loudly at having to squeeze along a seating bench behind someone who was not being very helpful. When I did reach my place I was horrified to see that everyone in the dining room was staring at me as though I had committed a terrible crime! I soon found out of course, that the meal table was a place of silence and that noisy outbursts of anger were certainly not acceptable, especially from newcomers.

I really did not know anything about the Home except that my sisters Norma and Timmy and my brothers Don, Brian, Peter and David were already there. I had spent almost the whole of the previous two years in the Masterton Hospital recovering from a bout of TB and knew that our family no longer lived in Wrigley Street. All I knew was that when I left hospital I would join my brothers and sisters in a place called the Masterton Methodist Children's Home. My entry to the Home had been delayed somewhat because the Home Committee wanted an assurance from the Hospital that I was totally cured of TB and would not pose a health risk to the other children in the Home.

My initial memories of life in the Home are dominated by the fact that in order to make a full recovery I was not allowed to exert myself in any way, or let myself get cold, and I had to have plenty of rest. Consequently, here I was surrounded by a group of boys (and girls) who were always involved in some physical activity, and I was not allowed to join in! No swimming, no rugby or cricket, no chasing, no bulrush, no interball national, no playing on the Giant Stride, always being told to keep warm (which often meant having to wear extra clothes even in summer), and always being sent to bed at the same time as the 'little kids'. I did manage to get involved in a few activities when 'the Boss' wasn't about, but it wasn't a very happy time for me, although it did mean I was excused some strenuous activities in the garden, and I never had to go out in the cold to get firewood or hang out the washing etc. I am not sure how long this went on but I know I was so pleased and excited when I was given the all-clear and was able to be a real boy again.

Looking back on those days now I can appreciate that, although many would think we were to be pitied in having had to spend our childhood years in a children's Home, we were fortunate children in many ways. While I wouldn't wish the circumstances which led to us being in the Home onto any family I don't think, if I had my time over again I would want it any different. We were surrounded by adults who were Christian in every way and who gave their all to the welfare of the children, often placing the 'homies' before their own families. Mr and Mrs Bateup and Aunties Con and Mavis were truly exceptional and wonderful people who shared their love with us all, acting as parents to 30–40 children at any one time, giving advice, support, encouragement and when deserved, administering discipline, often in a most creative but always fair manner.

All through my life I have met people who, when learning of my Home experience have expressed pity for me, and have often refused to believe that it was in any way a positive experience. When I tell them of the achievements of so many of the 'homies' they cannot believe that a children's home of that era could possibly have produced such successful, well rounded, well adjusted children. When I tell them of the calibre of people like the Bateups, Aunty Con and Aunty Mavis they shake their heads in disbelief. In my years as a teacher I have often spoken to children about my childhood and they often ask what bad thing I did to be placed in a Home. I would suggest that our country could do with a few places like the Masterton Methodist Children's Home at present, but first we would need to find people like the Bateups and the Two Aunties.

I have often been asked if, in light of the many horror stories we hear about boarding schools, children's institutions etc, if there was any abuse, either physical, sexual or emotional in the Home. I always reply by firstly explaining that the Home was a home, not an institution, secondly that we were members of a family, not inmates, and thirdly that to my knowledge, no, there was no child abuse in the Home. This does not mean that abuse may not have occurred however, by older children or by adults, but because of the number of children and staff always about I doubt that incidents of abuse could have gone unnoticed by someone.

I left the Home in January 1953 and went on to Wellington Teachers' College. I was the last of my family to leave the Home – seven of us had spent time there and to say that the Masterton Methodist Children's Home had

a profound influence on our family would be stating the obvious. When I left the Home I believe that in most facets I was just as ready as any other student to handle life as a Teachers' College student. Perhaps the one area in which I struggled was coping with the total independence I now had. It was some years before I had shaken off the feeling that I should be asking permission to buy things, go places, stay out late, take food from the fridge, give church a miss etc. In other areas of my life I had few problems – I had lots of domestic, gardening and personal skills which stood me in good stead in boarding situations and flats, I was used to mixed company (unlike many of the TC students who had been at single-sex schools and sharing with other people, I had developed regular study habits in the Home, and I had the confidence to seek out part-time jobs on the Wellington wharves, in the Post Office Mailroom, and in any the big woolstores.

I have no doubt whatever that eight years in the Masterton Methodist Children's Home under that tutelage of Mr and Mrs Bateup and their devoted staff gave me a wonderful preparation for a life in teaching, and for a life as husband and father. Not every day in the Home was fun, of course, and I had my share of unhappy experiences and disappointments, but these negative moments were totally offset by the good times and the privilege of sharing most of my childhood with adults who were generous with their time support and love, and who set me an example of Christian living which still influences me to this day. For that I am eternally grateful and my only regret is that I did not tell Mr and Mrs Bateup, Aunty Con and Aunty Mavis this long, long ago.

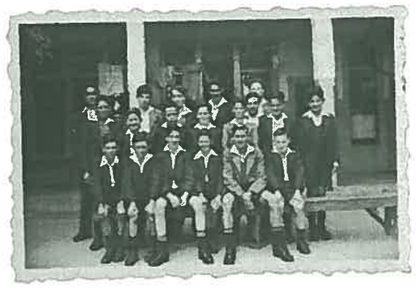
School: One of the most valuable things the Home Committee did for the children in their care was to insist that as far as possible we be treated just like children living in a nuclear family unit. Of course, given the exceptional circumstances of life in the Home this was not always possible, but as far as school went we were given every encouragement to play a full part in the life of the school and do the very best we could in every area. The fact that we went to a State school and mixed with "ordinary" children was a key factor in equipping us 'homies' for life after school. We may have been regarded as a bit different by many of our peers but most of us showed by our achievements in the classroom, on the playing fields, and in cultural and social activities, that we were just ordinary children who because of family circumstances lived in a Children's Home. The other side of the coin was that we discovered that even though we lived in a Home with forty other children we were really no different to our classmates.

We were encouraged to join in as many school activities as possible and every Saturday there would be a wholesale exodus of homies off to play netball, hockey, rugby and cricket (these being the only sports on offer those days) for either Central School or Wairarapa College teams. Homies could be found in the school choirs, the orchestra and the College Pipe Band and in school musical productions. Homies became school prefects, members of various school interest groups and office-bearers in many clubs and organisations. It can be said with confidence that both of the schools attended by homies were better places for having them on the school roll.

Mr and Mrs Bateup would carefully peruse every child's school report, paying particular attention to conduct and attendance, and if they felt any child was not performing to the best of their ability we would certainly be told about it. I can clearly remember being reminded frequently that if I wanted to become a school teacher I would have to do my best all the time. I have no doubt whatever that without the constant support of the Home staff I would not have made it successfully through school and on to Teachers College.

Sundays and Religion: I suppose it was inevitable that because we lived in a Methodist Home we were involved a lot with the Methodist Church. I don't know if religious affiliation had anything to do with acceptance into the Home but we all became Methodists while we were there. As children we all accepted that church attendance each Sunday was part of our routine and we went along without question. I don't remember feeling greatly affected personally by all this church going and about the only time I felt any enthusiasm for religion was when we went to Easter Camp at the Solway Showgrounds. I suspect however that this enthusiasm had more to do with pleasures of the flesh than nourishment of the soul.

We all started off at Sunday School and graduated at about age 12 to Bible Class. Both these groups met at the Methodist Church on Chapel St. and getting there called for a brisk walk along Queen Street with the possibility that we might meet the girls from Purnell, or more exciting still, the girls from St. Matthew's College, also walking to church. But most wonderful of all was to see the girls from Solway College! How impressed they must have all been by the boys from the Methodist Home in their short pants and short back-and-sides!



Bible class was a democratic group with elected office-bearers and the responsibility of the Treasurer of course was to look after the collection money each Sunday. It was a real temptation to walk past the various dairies on the way home after Bible Class with four or five shillings of Bible Class money in one's pocket. And it was a temptation to make oneself popular with one's friends by spending a few pence on sweets

and sharing these around. Of course the friends were well out of sight when the Annual Meeting came around and the books had to be balanced. I was so grateful to Mr Frank Cody when he made up the deficit in the Bible Class funds himself and after giving me a little lecture about being responsible for other people's money, said he would not tell Mr Bateup.

Being one of the "big kids" entitled us to go to Church on Sunday evening and I always felt the opportunity to walk through the town, especially when it was dark, was more to look forward to than the church service. What I did enjoy about going to church was the grand old Methodist tradition of singing one's heart out and the words of some of those hymns have stayed with me ever since. I recall Teachers' College friends being very impressed when I knew all the words of Amazing Grace, Abide with Me, Onward Christian Soldiers etc. Sunday School Anniversary was an exciting time and would involve lots of practising of songs for presentation to the church congregation. Those who could sing in tune would be chosen for duets, quartets, larger groups or even solos while the rest of us would endure hours of sitting on the wooden planks providing the backing. At Christmas time there would be the Nativity Pageant and if one was lucky enough to be chosen to play the part of Mary, Joseph or maybe the Three Wise Men, one's Christmas was complete, but the tail end of the donkey was not such a sought after part - not even the front end!

We learnt lots about Christian values, beliefs and practices during our time at the Home and I am sure these attitudes have influenced most of us throughout our lives. I personally am grateful to all those good people who influenced me in such ways at the Home. Whether it was because we felt we had too much church going, too much bible study, too much hymn singing etc. put upon us I don't know, but I do know that when I left the Home I did not feel any great need to go to church and I regarded it as another area of life where I could now please myself - sleeping in on a Sunday morning was much more enjoyable than going to church! Some years later I did feel the need for a more spiritual dimension in my life and I became a member of the Roman Catholic Church - this probably was a disappointment to Mr and Mrs Bateup but they would be pleased to know that my knowledge of hymns was a surprise to another group of people.

Holidays: School holidays, especially at Christmas, were an exciting time. All over the southern part of the North Island, members of the Methodist community would invite Home children to spend all or part of their Xmas holidays in a "real" home, with a "real" family. For most of us, these experiences were positive and fulfilling and often children would go back to the same family year after year, but for some it was an unhappy time. I do know that when the children began returning from their holidays it was good to see friends again, and I suspect that the Home staff were quietly relieved when everyone got back home safe and well.

I spent one wonderful holiday with a Levin family who took me travelling around the North Island - we went to Rotorua, to Lake Taupo and to Auckland. What an eye-opener that was to a boy who never saw the sea until he was 12 years old. That family never asked me back again, probably because I was car sick about three times every day! A holiday with a family in Karori, Wellington was another great experience enlivened by the fact that I fell in love with the daughter of the house - they never asked me back either! One family who did ask me back three or four times lived in a little farm cottage at Mangatainoka and my days were spent helping on the farm and doing the things boys do when they live in the country. I still think about that holiday when I travel through the Wairarapa and see that little cottage still standing there.

If you didn't spend your holiday with a Methodist family or relatives, you would stay at the Home. Those who stayed behind were generally older children holding down a holiday job or were those who had already left school and were in employment. There was something special about being in the Home at this time. It would empty out and become quite a different place with so few children about — only a few people at the meal table, sometimes a bedroom to oneself, no waiting at the bathroom etc. I seem to remember having a few more privileges at these times and feeling one was a member of a "real" family.

Jobs: We all had to do our share of jobs to keep the Home running smoothly. Some jobs were done in the morning before breakfast, some before going to school, some at lunchtime and some after school, with the last jobs being done in the evening. Some jobs were sought after and others were to be avoided at all costs, and as you worked your way up the "hierarchy" (usually based on age) the best jobs became available. After years of doing dishes, washing pots, setting tables, sweeping the dormitories, cleaning baths and showers, peeling spuds, hanging out the

washing, weeding the vegie garden, cleaning windows, polishing floors and numerous other domestic and outdoor chores I graduated to the best job I ever had at the Home - I was put in charge of the laundry! This meant organising the washing of all the clothes, bedlinen, towels etc. used in the Home. Because of the amount of washing involved and the fact that we had just two domestic sized agitator washing machines, washing was done almost every day, often after school as well as in the morning. Why was this a sought after job? The person in charge of washing did not hang out the clothes but stayed in the laundry at all times and in a Wairarapa winter with frost thick on the ground or a cold southerly blowing this was a real bonus! The laundry was always warm especially when the gas dryer was in use and there was a sense of power in deciding who would be allowed to come in and put their hands into the hot water for a few seconds. To stand at the laundry door and bellow out "Hanging Out!" and see the less fortunate ones come and pick up the washing baskets, was another experience to be enjoyed.

In addition to the internal tasks we all had there was a constant demand for boys to do 'jobs' for neighbours, church members, people in the community, shopkeepers etc. We mowed lawns, did gardening jobs, cleaned up workplaces, caddied at the Lansdowne Golf Club, washed windows and cars, picked fruit etc. We were paid for these efforts and saved our money for going to the pictures or buying some little treasure. This was another example of the efforts of the Home staff to encourage us to help ourselves and develop some independence in our lives. As we got older Mr Bateup would arrange jobs for those of us who were going on to further education and needed some extra money to get started in our careers, and many were the homies who worked at the Waingawa Freezing Works during our last school holidays.

There must have been times when we resented having to come home from school and having to get straight on with our set jobs, and spending Saturday mornings doing domestic chores, but I am sure we became better people and made better husbands, wives and parents because of this training. I am very grateful to the Home staff who taught me so many skills that have helped me to be the person I am today.

Mischief: One of the forbidden areas of the Home was the pantry where Aunty Mavis ruled supreme. It was very difficult to get into the pantry unless your official duties (preparing or cleaning up after meals) required that you do so. If you were lucky enough to be on pantry duty you would find a veritable Aladdin's Cave of boxes, bags, sacks and cans of all the various sorts of food needed to feed 40 hungry children. But most exciting of all were the cake tins! Aunty Mavis spent hours each week cooking cakes and biscuits ready for Sunday's tea and these were kept in tins, in the cake cupboard, in the pantry. If you could only smuggle out a few goodies they would never be missed and how popular you would be with your friends, or better still, what a lovely little feast you could have under the blankets that night! The best chance for success in this escapade was to launch a combined operation with other boys from the end balcony on the first floor directly above the pantry. We took a Queen Anne chocolate box, attached some string to it and lowered it out of the end balcony window so it reached the pantry window. All that was required then was for someone to sneak down into the pantry, unscrew the hinges on the padlocked cake cupboard, nick some cakes, open the pantry window and place the goodies in the box. Not forgetting to rescrew the hinges carefully, of course. All this would take place under cover of darkness, and there was always the possibility that you might meet someone from another dormitory on a similar raid. This was a big worry because if too many cakes were removed at one time, or the screws were loose from repeated raids, Aunty Mavis was sure to notice next day and an investigation would take place. I can't recall how we decided whose turn it was to be the "thief" or how many times our little scheme worked, but I do remember that sometimes it did end in disaster!

Discipline: Mr Bateup was way ahead of his time in administering discipline, and whenever possible made the punishment fit the crime. Mostly this did not involve Mr Bateup himself in directly punishing the miscreant, but we were always left in no doubt that he meant business and that "crime did not pay".

One incident that stands out in my memory was when three of us were caught raiding a neighbour's orchard. We were each given a piece of bamboo and instructed to whack each other in turn ie Kevin whacked Ken, Ken whacked me, I whacked Kevin and so on around again. This was all a bit of a giggle until, to warm things up a bit, Mr Bateup stepped in and gave us all a good whack. With our bottoms stinging somewhat we put a bit more effort into the task, and when we were told to reverse the order we were thus given the chance to get at the one who had been causing us pain, and we went at it with much greater enthusiasm! I don't think the performance lasted long, but it made a great impression on us, and provided great entertainment to the rest of the boys watching the show.

There was also the time when some boys who were caught smoking were given a pack of cigarettes each and made to smoke the whole pack in one session. They went at it happily but it was not long before they began to look green, and then came the rush to the toilet. Mr Bateup used the same technique, with the same result, with boys who had stolen some sweets. (Years later I used the 'cigarette method' with some boys at a school in Fiji, and it worked a treat!)

"Put on the gloves" was sometimes the call from Mr Bateup when two boys of similar size got into a fight. After flailing angrily at each other for a time the end result was usually the two falling exhausted into each other's arms. Not much physical harm was done as the boxing gloves were usually too big and heavy for the combatants, but two tired and tearful boys would vow not to get into another fight.

Games: One of the wonderful things about being part of such a large family was that there was never a shortage of kids to play games and that finding enough players to make two teams was never a problem. I recall a friend at school expressing his envy that we "homies" always had someone to play with when he didn't even have a brother. We would play games anywhere, anytime, inside or out, and that we often didn't have a ball or proper equipment didn't matter. A piece of orange peel, rolled up sock or a football case stuffed with straw would do for rugby, any old bit of wood would do for a cricket bat and a kerosene tin made a great set of wickets. Cricket in the playshed or rugby in the dressing room was a wet day option and the wonderful thing was that as long as property was not damage and people were not hurt (well, not too seriously) we were seldom stopped from playing these games.

Some titanic struggles took place in the boys' dressing room and bloody noses, grazed knees and elbows, and body bruises were accepted as part of the deal. Crying was not, however, and if any boy felt the need to shed a few tears he would make a discreet withdrawal to "have a drink" or "go to the toilet".

The playshed was a wonderful place and played a big part in the life of the Home. I t was at various times a storeshed for hay or vegetables, a gymnasium, a concert hall, a playing field, a cycle track or a place to hide when one wanted a bit of privacy. It was ideal for games and many variations of rugby, soccer, hockey and cricket were played there, as well as table tennis. A favourite game when the spuds had been stored in the playshed was for the "big" boys to set up a barricade of some sort midway between the bottom door and the stage where the spuds were stored. They would then 'invite' the "little" boys to come through the door, run across the open space and get behind the barricade as quickly as they could. As the "little" boys ran for cover they would be pelted with spuds — many direct hits were made, and after the spuds were picked up (by the "little" boys of course) the next lot would be 'invited' in. It was more fun for the "big" boys of course, but we knew we would all be "big" boys eventually.

Interball National will not be found in any sports list but it was very popular with the Home boys. There were no teams, no points, no time limit, and everybody played everybody else. It was an all-in game with the aim being to get hold of the football and run with it while all the other players tried to get it off you in any way they could. The ball could be passes or kicked at any time and it was wise to get rid of it before you were crunched by another

player. The injury rate was high but never very serious with the worst I injury being grazing if you fell on the drive alongside the lawn.

We were always pleased when the paddock was mowed for hay because then we had a place to play cricket. It was never any trouble getting a group of boys together for a "test" match although the state of the wicket was not the best. Most games were played with a tennis ball and anything would do for a bat or for stumps. Our heroes were Bert Sutcliffe, John Reid and Jack Cowie or if we were playing for Australia we would be Ray Lindwall, Keith Miller or Don Bradman. Many great matches were played on that paddock!

Another 'game' was seeing who could get down the fire escape in the least number of "steps". This competition involved reaching down the banister as far a possible, gripping the rail and then swinging your legs through without touching any part of the fire escape. If you were fortunate you managed to land on a step but often you would end up in a heap at the bottom. A variation on this game was descending the interior stairs in as few steps as possible — this game could only be played when there were no staff about and required a much different technique than the fire escape descent.

The girls in the Home must have played games too, but the boys seemed to dominate the playing areas and I don't have many memories or mixed games or of girls playing outside much at all. Nearly all the boys' games were of an aggressive nature with great store being placed on being tough, not crying, not letting on that you were hurt in any way - real macho stuff! It must have been horrible for any boy who was not into these sorts of activities. For all this, however, games played a big part in our lives in the Home and certainly gave us lots of opportunities to let off steam and go to bed at the end of the day absolutely exhausted. Maybe that was why Mr Bateup encouraged us to play games at every opportunity!

Nicknames: In any large group of people the same names will crop up, and nicknames are inevitable. I don't know how most of the homies got their nicknames, but some that I remember are Tank, Chick, Nig, Chonk, Shortie, Bottle, Big Mac, Baby Mac, Julius Caesar, Barney, Cocky, Chow, Fatty, Mouse, Bumpy, Dolly, Tuki. Perhaps you can add a few to this list?

Do You Remember?

- dividing up the butter at the table and everyone checking that this was done fairly?
- trading Sunday cakes (probably with Ted Hayward) for all sorts of reasons?
- rushing home from school, gobbling up your lunch and rushing back to school again?
- throwing stones through the frozen sheets hanging on the line?
- calling at Roache's fish shop to ask for the scraps from the cooking vat?
- learning all the Books of the Bible and passages of scripture for the Competitions?
- Scott Marryatt playing Sabre Dance Boogie at 6.00 am?
- corned beef and carrots with white sauce for Tuesday dinner?
- throwing stones at the St. Joseph boys as we passes them on the way to school?
- when the cry "Homies out!" went up at the Dixon Street swimming baths and we had just 5 minutes to get out of the water, grab our clothes and get to the Home gate before zero hour?
- sneaking a look into St. Patrick's Catholic Church on the way home on Sunday night?
- slicing and salting beans in the summer and rinsing and eating them in the winter?
- helping Mr Bateup design and build another rockery?
- going to the Rotary Club dinner and sitting alongside all those important old men?
- doing the haka for all the important visitors and how noisy it sounded in the foyer?
- the "Drawer's open!" cry and rushing into the hall to either get or put away money?
- Butterfly, the best loved and world champion cow?
- the big boys making the little boys crawl through Butterfly's legs and then smacking her before you got through?
- the big boys standing in front of the fire and blocking the heat off from everyone else with the pronouncement "I'm just going to milk the cow"?
- the "gymnasium" the big boys made - the horizontal bars, the parallel bars, the weights made from pipe and blocks of wood?
- the Samoan boys - Pusi, Perefoti and Uulese - and what a culture shock that was for us? Imagine what a shock it was for them!
- when we almost hung Julius Caesar (Ron Kennedy) on the clothesline?
- the excitement when Wynneth got married and the sadness when Haddon died?
- going to Queen Elizabeth Park to watch the Hayward boys ride in the Oakley Cup?
- walking all the way to the Lansdowne Golf Course on a Saturday to caddy - 18 holes carrying a set of clubs - then walking home again. All for 2/6d!
- going to the Hidden Lakes on a Boy's Brigade outing with Mr Leighton?
- preparing the bread and cheese for breakfast and trying to cut the cheese so it covered the bread perfectly?

Life after the Home: I left the Home in January 1953, went down to Wellington Teachers College, and began my teaching career at Worser Bay School, Wellington in 1955. Over the next 43 years I taught at 13 different schools in the Wairarapa, Taranaki, Fiji, England and Taranaki again and I retired from teaching in 1998. In January 1960 I married Liz and we recently celebrated our 40th Wedding anniversary. We have three daughters and one son; Barbara (Brisbane), Bridget (Havelock North), Jane (London) and Richard (Palmerston North). Barbara and Richard have two children each. We have lived in New Plymouth since our return from England in 1976 and have no intention of leaving here.

I did not keep in close contact with many homies when I left Masterton and I do regret not making a greater effort to stay in touch with more of these people I spent so many years of my life with. I'm not sure why I failed to keep in touch, as it is always a great pleasure to meet up and we always have heaps to talk about when we do meet. Perhaps it was because I left the Wellington/Wairarapa area soon after graduating from Teachers' College, and our heading off to Fiji and England for the best part of ten years did not help much either. I wish I had made more of an effort to stay in touch with people who were virtually my brothers and sisters. I hope that as a result of this publication I will get to meet a lot of homies again.

However, there were two homies I did have lots to do with after leaving the Home. All through Central School and Wairarapa College Lesley Winter and I were in the same classes and when we got to Teachers' College we were placed in the same Section. Of course we stayed pretty close to each other in the new environment and many a time we were taken for brother and sister. I was at Lesley's wedding in 1956, and still remember she had got married on the day of an All Black-Springbok rugby test! No delayed TV coverage in those days! Two other weddings I attended were Ken Robertson and Maurice McCarthy but I lost contact with both of these fellows soon after. I caught up with Kevin Hayward when I did some relief teaching at Bideford School, near Masterton in 1958 - we played rugby for the Masterton Rugby Club and I spent many a Friday night at Kevin's house after going to the movies, doing the milk run to Eketahuna and back, then catching a bit of sleep before heading off to rugby. Kevin was a groomsman at my wedding.

I did visit the Home from time to time, but once Mr and Mrs Bateup left, the feeling of "returning home" was no longer there. I took my wife Liz to visit the Home soon after we were married as I wanted her to see the place that had been my home for most of my childhood. Over the years I took my family to visit the Home as they became more and more interested in my life there and they in turn have occasionally taken their spouses and children to visit 37 Herbert St. One particularly memorable visit took place in 1998 when we hired a mini-bus from PN and took three of our children and their families to Masterton on a nostalgia trip. This included visiting many of the old haunts which featured largely in our lives at the Home, and of course we spent a long time at the Home checking out all the places which I had talked about in the stories I had told our children over the years. There have been many structural changes at the Home of course and it was difficult to remember everything as it was, but it was quite an emotional experience reliving all those experiences, hearing all those voices, recalling all those names and conjuring up all those memories from nearly fifty years ago.

Whenever the opportunity arose I would call on the Bateups at their Pukerua Bay home and as our family grew I was always proud to take the children to meet Mr and Mrs Bateup. I don't suppose they understood at the time what an important part the Bateups had played in my life but they certainly have come to realise this over the years. Many a time I have told my children stories about the Home and "tell us a story about the Home Dad" was often the request, especially on long car journeys. They loved to hear about the games we played, the mischief we got up to, the jobs we did, the food we ate, the friends we had, in fact anything about life in the Home. That they have all wanted to visit the Home indicates they appreciate that what I am now was determined to a great extent by my years in the Home and by the influence on me of all the people, both adults and children whom I shared those years with.

I deeply regret that because of my mother's death at an early age and the difficulty my father had in coping with a family of 10 children it was necessary for seven of us to be placed in the Home. The subsequent break-up of our family unit through separation and adoption was a tragic event and had it not been for the efforts of our older sisters and brothers and the support and love given by the Home staff and children I doubt if we would still be a family today. For this I will be forever grateful.

I don't have and never have had any qualms about telling the world I spent eight years of my life in the Masterton Methodist Children's Home. I will always be proud to be known as a Homie.

Gwen

I have such big, fond, wonderful memories of my 11 years in the Home that it's an effort to think of anything negative.....

Prior to coming to the Home in 1943 my parents had a small farm near Nelson, and then Dad worked as a blacksmith in Spring Creek near Blenheim. When approached about taking on the position of Master and Matron of 40 children, my father was quietly confident and excited about the change, but my mother was totally overawed at the prospect. Mum had been a Registered Nurse before they were married, and this background was to become very useful.

One of my parents' friends, Mavis Potter from Picton, very courageously accepted the challenge to go with them and be cook, while Mum's sister Constance Fell, with a background in teaching, ably filled the role of seamstress and general assistant with the smaller children. The children all called them simply "Aunty Mavis" and "Aunty Con" (still do). Aunty Con stayed on for several years after my parents and Aunty Mavis left.

Wynneth, Haddon and I were not aware of being treated any differently being the "Boss's" children – 'one big family' was the operative phrase. Mum and Dad were dedicated to seeing that what was then often called 'the orphanage' truly becoming a home for all of the children, and they always insisted that it be called 'the Home.' It seems good that they made it possible for parents and relatives of children to often stay a night or two at the Home when coming for a visit.

My parents insisted on having just one room, their bedroom, in amongst the children's dormitories, not a separate flat. They always kept their bedroom door open, making themselves available to the children 24 hours a day, as any parent would. Some of the smaller children adopted them as parents and to this day they're remembered as 'Mum and Dad Bateup' – one little boy, Percy, (or 'Bill' as he was called as he became more 'manly'), went up to live with them for some time in Opononi when my parents retired.

Very first memories are rather vague, though I do recall our first sighting of the Wairarapa Plain as we travelled in our little Austin 7 from Blenheim. Wynneth and Haddon had to travel up by train as there wasn't room in the little car for all of us, and I remember being rather overawed being on view to all the children when we arrived at the Home. No doubt they were just as apprehensive as I was.

To begin with I seemed to be constantly plagued by stomach disorders – due I understand to nerves – I had lots of days off school that first year, which didn't help the adjusting. (After having numerous doses of aspirin crushed into spoonfuls of jam it was some years later before certain jams became palatable again.)

I recall being very sensitive and protective of my parents' and Aunty Con's and Aunty Mavis's feelings and reputations. All of the staff were very aware of their own human frailty. They all felt their need to rely heavily for wisdom, patience, and strength from 'on high' — their lives were motivated by their love for God and their fellow humans. From my child's point of view I very quickly picked up on their joys, frustrations, weariness, and was sensitive to any criticisms of them.

Mum and Dad had to work at their marriage just like everyone else. Some years after we came to the Home Aunty Con assisted me in organising a special surprise celebration for Mum and Dad's 25th wedding anniversary (Wynneth was living away with relatives in Nelson at that time.) Doris Smith kindly wrote a poem for the occasion.

The staff touched many lives in Masterton, both inside and outside the Home. They all made lasting friendships. For my parents the Goudge home was a place for them to 'let their hair down',

as was the Archer home where Friday night was sometimes 'fish and chip' night. Some of the Committee also became close friends, though I gather that some on the Committee had distinct differences of opinion with Dad as to how things should be done – he never seemed happy on Committee night.

Still very clear in my memory is my brother Haddon's illness and death at 16, and the lasting effect this had on my young mind, and the effect on Mum and Dad and Wynneth. I also remember the Goudges losing Edna at a similar age just a year prior. I guess one regrettable aspect of the times we lived was the reluctance to open up and discuss certain things, especially the death of young people.

Both 'Aunties' were faithful and diligent in their field, with the necessary sense of humour — though before and after every meal Aunty Mavis was often taxed with having to work with and try to manage a group of very high spirited girls and boys as we helped prepare the vegies, set the tables, clean up the dining room after the meal, and then do all the dishes and pots. (The tea towel twist-and-flick at somebody's legs was a daily trial and torment for the unsuspecting.) Aunty Mavis kept pretty much to herself when she had finished her daily duties, while Aunty Con seemed to be on hand all the time. Whenever they went anywhere in Masterton, both aunties used to bike in a dignified manner.

I do believe my parents came to love all of the children as their own. Right up until they died the lives and welfare of all the 'homies' and their burgeoning offspring was their constant interest. Mum kept in touch with any and all who were happy to correspond, knowing the names of all their children and even some of their birthdays. I know that Mum and Dad really appreciated all the letters and cards they received from so many 'homies' over the years, and particularly the many visits up in Opononi and at Pukerua Bay with their families. Like most parents they would never have professed to having done everything right—quite the contrary – but their love for us all and their devotion to the task of giving us a godly home and upbringing, and producing useful and responsible citizens was very evident. The results are proof that they were successful. For Wynneth and myself the presence of so many at their funerals was overwhelming.

An ex-homie visited Mum soon after Dad died. He was now married with 4 teenage sons. Talking with them of his life in the Home and their own full life on the farm, he said he had to explain to them that he couldn't give them half the life he'd had in the Home. At one of the later reunions we were all very moved when, with his arms around Aunty Con and Aunty Mavis, he helped us honour the memory of my parents and the love and care given freely by the two 'Aunties'. He spoke for all of us.

Not long before Aunty Con died, when her memory was fading, I asked if she ever thought about our days in the Home. Her strong and instant reply was.. "Of course. It was my life." I had also seen Aunty Mavis at her flat in Blenheim on several occasions over the years, and she loved to reminisce and hear news of everyone. So it was a sad but privileged moment when, visiting her in the rest home just two days before she died, and feeling with her the knowledge that her life was ebbing, on behalf of us all at the Home I was able to thank her again for all she did and meant to us. Just a few days later another ex-homie, who had also kept touch, travelled to Blenheim and on behalf of us all was able to share the eulogy at Aunty Mavis's funeral, an act that was greatly appreciated by the family.

I wasn't only a daughter of the Master and Matron of the Home, I was also a 'homie', and memories of my childhood in the Home remain strong. I especially remember the good people who supported my parents in running the Home, and who were so generous to us children there.

I have very fond memories of Rev George Goodman, we as a family kept in touch with always. He was a great help when Haddon was ill and died. Apparently in every home he had after Masterton he always put a big photo of us all at the Home in his workshop, as a constant reminder of us all. He has since died, he was at least 90. His Thursday after-dinner talks were always so bright – one in particular I shall never forget. He had the famous Holman Hunt picture of Jesus outside a door knocking, and Mr Goodman pointed out that there was no latch on the outside – it had to be opened from the inside. I also remember Mr Clement, the rugby referee – he was big, smiley, and every....word...deliberate...calculated, and Dr and Mrs Slade who were very memorable, and different! And Mr and Mrs Willing...Mr Willing's laugh could be heard a block away!

Frank and Ruth Cody were Committee members for a long time– to me as a child Frank was up there with Clark Gable. Mr Hodder was also a long-serving member. Mr Nicol was the secretary for some time, and I recall

how sad we all were when his Air Force son Ian drowned at Castlepoint. I recall that sometimes Committee members would come all the way up from Wellington for the evening meetings. The Committee was responsible for the general administration of the Home, for decisions regarding the welfare of the children, and supporting the Master and Matron in the daily running of the Home. I remember at least three children being 'adopted out' to relatives and church families, as well as several Samoan boys spending up to a year with us while waiting places in Wairarapa College's boarding hostel for boys, College House.

I remember lots of Church members: the Davies (with Valma (Newman) as church organist) running the music department for years and also the shoe department in town. Mr Mannell hit a note with me when he was Sunday School Superintendent. I always associate the hymn "There's a Light Upon the Mountain" with him. Miss Jackson was another character who stands out in my memory — strikes me there were a lot of quality people in Masterton at that time. I recall a group of us in Miss Jackson's Sunday School class playing up one day, and somehow this fact became known to Mr Bateup by the time we arrived home. So straight after lunch we had to march straight back to Miss Jackson's home and apologise. This was accepted and we were rewarded with a chocolate biscuit each.

The Shoosmiths were another great couple. Mrs Shoosmith did a massive job with the younger ones at Sunday School, and Mr Shoosmith will always be remembered for kindly coming to run games evenings for us in the winter months when the dining room was emptied out for the purpose. I recall games on other occasions in the boys' Common Room, and also in the girls' room around the fire. Doreen Jamieson I especially remember as being involved in singing in the hospital wards on Sunday afternoons. The Church Senior Choir, which I joined when starting work, used to go up to the hospital once a month. I shall always remember Doreen's rendition of "The Stranger from Galilee".

Of course the Taskers will go down in MCH history –I believe they as a family stayed at the Home while waiting for a suitable house. They had the most beautiful children, including twins, and Mr Tasker drove one of those long-engined open-top cars that you don't see anymore. Mrs Tasker also had an input into our lives as Leader of Girls' Life Brigade for a while. Because of the extra strict discipline at GLB some of us were inclined to want to stretch the limits, often resulting in hysterics. I recall on one such occasion a puddle on the floor! And on another, a dead budgie in one of the girls shoe — real hysterics! However, GLB was fun and we did appreciate the effort and commitment leaders made to campfire evenings and camps at Foxton Beach.

I recall hearing that one or two of the Sunday congregation were keen to point out niggly things wrong with the homies' behaviour in Church, only to be met by Mr B's defence of us! However I recall also that there were many Church folk and others in the local community who were interested in us and keen to help in the MCH cause. And overall I felt we had favour in the community, even though at times we excelled in craziness! Friday night en route from Girls' Brigade was one such occasion, when as a group we would relax in a certain milkbar (Page's), downing icecream sodas and milkshakes, competing with each other to see who could make the most noise with the last slurp. We were ultimately banned.

How patient and forgiving the neighbours were – I think of the Bouzaids particularly. They put up with all our noise and nonsense and still offered us the use of their tennis court while they were away. The oldest daughter Pat became a 'forever' friend. Then there was the nearby household who regularly had their apple supply reduced.

While thinking of Herbert Street I recall we seemed to have fun times en route to and from school (as well as Church) without getting into too much trouble. I also recall Sunday mornings en route to Kuripuni Sunday School, carrying our tuppence for the offering, and having turns buying a toffee bar on the way – I can't think how we managed to share the chewy things. I also remember that we would shut our eyes as we passed a pet magpie, believing that it would pick your eyes out. I recall vividly that whenever the group of us was coming home from an event and all requiring to empty the bladder .... " I bags the bathroom first!" would be the cry, with that person physically heading the queue, " I bags it second!" and so on, as we proceeded down the street towards the Home gates.

We – staff and children—seemed to flow well with the various people in the street and surrounding area. I can think of a number of such families and latterly the Catholic institutions across the road. I recall going errands for one lady in the street who was temporarily incapacitated. First time I collected her bread and she gave me a shilling, which I was advised to return to her. I eventually accepted the wisdom of such a decision.

I have always been grateful for the friends I made both inside and outside the Home. At each stage of life there have always been close friends, both male and female. Come college days when I had a bike to use, it was sometimes nice to meet on street corners with the current boyfriend. I had one close male friend through college and on, and we still keep in touch now and then. Sport and friendships were always encouraged, and sporting events were always a big feature of Saturdays. Many homies reached the top teams in rugby, rugby 7s, hockey, cricket and cycling. I loved the times when we all played softball and cricket in the paddock on Sunday afternoons. Other enjoyable pastimes were on the Giant Stride, the merry-go-round, trips to the river in groups, and swimming at the local baths with school friends, especially during summer holidays. We also seemed to visit and enjoy a few circuses

which put up their tents on the empty section by Central School. I also recall a few of us biking for miles all around the countryside on Saturdays.

During the war the windows had been blacked out at night and no lights allowed. Mrs B used to come in to the little girls' dorm and read to us by candlelight – one book we enjoyed was called "Hira's Quest". When the war ended there were fireworks in the park, and on VE Day. We younger ones didn't go down town to all the festivities, but we could hear it all from where we were a mile away in Herbert Street.

I used to really enjoy the annual Sunday School Anniversaries – all the practices, the hype, and of course the new summer dress for the occasion, as that was the day we changed into summer clothes. Lesley and I seemed most often to be called upon to do an item, either singing or poetry. Another fond memory is waking to the melodious sounds of piano music floating up to the dormitories from the ground floor dining room where piano practice used to start early in the morning – first from Bill Winter, then Scott Marryatt, Marianne Winter and Margaret Hayward, all gifted musicians.

The annual photo was also quite an event, with a good deal of planning and placing of people to get the desired result — which was always good. It's certainly good to have them now. I also loved the Christmas Party and Concert evenings. There was a lot of work and some frustrations in the build up, but to me they were special. On two occasions Mr Leighton, (Bible Class leader), came with his father's Merry-Go-Round etc for the night.

There was a day at school when a bothersome sore throat became too bothersome and Miss Kitchener (Standard 2 teacher) sent me home. It was scarlet fever. By evening I was in hospital and a couple of days later several more homies arrived. I think the Home was quarantined for a while. As of course we were in the big polio epidemic – I recall a boy from Central School dying from it. When we were quarantined they brought our schoolwork home to us.

Disciplinary measures used at the Home stick in my memory, eg the boys having to sort out disagreements with boxing gloves on. These were also the days when boys had the strap for correction, both at home and school. Those were the days when a look or a word was often enough to reveal I had stepped over the line in some way — well it seemed that way for me anyway. Punishment such as not going to the pictures when others were, or some similar deprivation, was sometimes used. I believe one such occasion was the basis to my never-since-ever-knowingly telling a lie. It was Saturday, bath day, and Lesley and I were in the big baths upstairs, and there were soapsuds in abundance on the concrete floor. We were sliding around the top of the baths, then flopping into the baths with great gusto, sending buckets of water and soapsuds onto the floor. Great fun for a Saturday morning, we thought. Mrs B came in suggesting it was time to get out – a suggestion which I totally disregarded at this point (though I think Lesley was obedient and got out.) I continued on, until Mrs B made a further visit asking if I had actually had a wash yet. My reply "Yes". "Well, where's the flannel?" Reply, pointing to the sink "Over there." No flannel to be found…..no lunch, and banished to bed for the lovely afternoon while all the others went to the pictures. Lesson learnt!

We all remember the jobs we had to do. The one that comes to my mind first is the Saturday morning chore – polishing the Hall floor. This became a time of great hilarity, with one person sitting on the big mop and being swung all over the place—sometimes into the wall, all in the cause of polishing the floor. It got great results! We all had chores before and after school, and at one stage Aunty Con was having a struggle with us smaller girls doing ours cheerfully! So we developed a system to encourage attitudes, with two groups, the 'Grumble Bugs' and the 'Cheer Germs' with graphs and stickers recording events and attitudes.

Scrubbing the stairs was always a challenge. Some parts had a lovely white marble effect, and it was always rewarding to return them to their rightful colour, especially with people walking up and down on them in the process. I don't think polishing the banisters by sliding down them was actually considered a chore – but it was definitely fun!

I'm sure the boys will remember it being their chore to hang out the washing – quite challenging on the freezing winter mornings. The girls would have to bring the washing in and fold it after school. Mr B was always heavily involved with doing the washing, and then ironing the sheets etc with a big roller iron set up in the Common Room. Cleaning the windows with newspaper and water (and meths?) was another Saturday chore.

Because of Mr and Mrs B's involvement with people in the community I was sometimes given little jobs to help people. One was to help a policeman's wife who was under pressure and I went to help with their children. As teenagers some of us had a bit of fun working next door picking black currants for Father Moore – there seemed to be a mile of them. Remuneration for our hard labour was so minimal, we thought, that we didn't stay too long.

Who could forget the 'sulphur and treacle' treatment at the start of winter? and gargling Condies Crystals over the outdoor drain? or boiling hot poultices? also Bruce Strawbridge's head under a towel breathing the fumes of Fryer's Balsam for his asthma? and Lanes Emulsion as a tonic for 'growing pains'? I recall a Miss Abraham, a dietician, being brought in to assist in healthy meal planning. She stayed for tea one day. From then on potatoes in their jackets were encouraged, and it may have been then when the MCH Special of toasted bread and cheese was

introduced. (I have never since been able to perfect it the way we had it then!) I believe it was also from Miss Abraham came the after school carrot to assist our immune systems. Something must have worked – I don't recall much in the way of winter ills bothering us. Of course my era in primary school included the days of the free bottle of milk (having been standing in the sun for hours) and the free apple a day 'keeps the doctor away'. Thinking of food reminds me of the love we developed during the war for green tomato jam, and carrot jam on the base of dripping. I find it interesting to think now that we always came home for the lunch hour, main meal of the day really, and did the dishes before rushing back to school by 1pm.

I enjoyed all stages of our church life – the singing, concerts, and plays of the Sunday School days, and especially the Anniversary performances. Progressing to Bible Class was a fun step, with lots of good clean fun and group outings from the Home. Owen Wellington had a covered truck, so we would all pile in the back and go and have a sausage sizzle at the river. Bible Class Camps, usually held at Solway Show Grounds were special times, with lots of fun and fellowship (and romance!). During this time the revolutionary idea of dances came in – quite a moment in time. On at least two occasions we had picnics with the children from the Salvation Army Whatman Home.

The religious part of the Home life had a big impact on my life. For one thing I loved the hymns, and still do. However, I found the Methodist Church ultimately wasn't able to give me the answers which other churches have.

Much planning was involved to give all children a holiday at Christmas time. In some cases people from other towns keen to assist in this way, and sometimes long lasting friendships were formed. On finishing college and leaving the Home, much thought was given and effort made to establish the young person in suitable employment, and where possible back with or near a parent or relative.

I have not one regret about spending my childhood in the Masterton Methodist Children's Home. I am proud and privileged to have been a 'homie' (still am.) It was such a full, rich, balanced wonderful life. I feel that every effort was made to cater for all aspects of our lives to the best of the ability of all concerned, in accordance with the times we lived in. I talk to many people of our lives there, and I greatly enjoy meeting up with the Home family members, and indeed anyone from those days in Masterton. There is such a wonderful bond that nothing, not even time, will sever.

I have on display at my home a photo of us all taken outside the front of the Home at one of the reunions. A friend once asked me about the group in it, and then observed "There seems to be a gentleness about them all".

An interesting observation, don't you think?

Aunty Con

Transcript of an interview by Gwen Bateman, October 1999. Aunty Con was 93 years of age.

Aunty Con, did you have any information about the Home before you came down to be with us?
Yes, because my sister and her husband (Mrs and Mr Bateup) were in charge of the Home before I went. I'd seen photographs of it with the children playing around.

Can you remember your feelings about coming to the Home and the job you would be doing?
I knew I'd be caring for the little ones up to about 10 years old. There could have been about 15 of them, both boys and girls. We had 2 main dormitories and the younger ones up to 10 or 11 slept in one dormitory and the older ones in a separate one. I slept up on the third floor after seeing the little ones to bed. The big boys slept on a sort of open balcony along one side of the home for their dormitory.

Can you remember what the children were like?
The children seemed quite happy. It was happy right from the start, with its ups and downs of course, but a comfortable place to be part of. Special events and memories stuck in my mind. It was just like a big family.

What sort of things did the children do in their spare time?
They had quite a big outdoor area to play around in. There were swings and a maypole (Giant Stride). The older ones played rounders and cricket. Some belonged to a Church organised social group that met at the Church, weekly I think. The Church was nearly a mile away. I remember Mr Shoosmith, from the Church used to come on Saturday nights and we'd empty out the dining room of tables and play games for hours on end. The boys used to do quite a bit of boxing, too. If the boys were having a bit of a problem, they would get rid of their anger in this way. Ian Shoosmith used to come regularly and have happy times with the boys. One or two people used their spare time to exercise their special musical skills and one boy, Scott Marryatt, used to get up every morning and play the piano before breakfast. Kevin and Ross Hayward were involved in cycling and raced their bikes when they could. The older children would also be involved in school sports.

Can you tell us what happened to the children if they were sick?
If they were sick enough, the children would stay in bed while the others went to school. Mr and Mrs Bateup and Aunty Mavis and I would be at home looking after them. Quite often one or two would stay at home in bed. There were two occasions we had scarlet fever and a polio occasion when we were shut in and not allowed out for maybe two or three weeks at a time.

What happened when you were sick?
I had appendicitis once, but can't remember any details. I had another operation while I was in the Home went to recuperate at a friend's house.

Can you tell me about any particularly memorable occasions that stick in your mind?
Birthdays were always remembered. Often a couple every week. There would be a birthday cake of some kind and we would always sing "Happy Birthday" and give some kind of token gift, also. The Christmas parties were very special. There were always people acting in a little play out in the big shed and then Father Christmas came and rattled on the tin wall which would frighten the little ones because of the noise. A lot of people came from the Church and helped to make it a happy occasion by transforming the shed with decorations.

It was quite a big shed, it was the playground for wet weather and also a gathering place for anniversaries and other special occasions. I remember Mr Leighton used to bring little merry-go-rounds which would add to the occasion. There could be about 10 children swing on it at the same time.

How were the children disciplined?
For serious naughtiness, there was strapping for a boy or sent to bed, privileges taken away for girls. Mr and Mrs Bateup dealt with the serious matters and I dealt with the not-so serious matters. Some were more easily disciplined than others. Because it was hard to get everyone motivated to do the jobs, we formed a competitive thing called the Grumblebugs and Teargerms and we had prizes at the end of the week and there were teams with team leaders.

How were the school holidays managed?
A great many of the children would be invited to go to some of the Methodist families and spent the whole of the holidays there. Up to 3 children for each family sometimes. Some had relations that were able to have them. Sometimes there would be children staying back at the Home and they were very happy to do that because we took them out for picnics and they had special freedoms in the holidays.

We used to go down River Road for picnics and there were two or three other areas about that were favourites for picnics.

How did you see the Church role in the Home?
It was very much just a part of life. Social gatherings were often run by the Church. There was the Girls Brigade, Boys Brigade, Sunday School, Choir, Bible class and other activities for the children. I think it was a happy part of their lives. Somebody would chaperone them to these functions. The current Minister used to come and teach once a week around the tea table. We had singing and prayers in the morning and in the evening we often used to get the Hymn book out to do some singing.

Can you tell me about being in charge of the clothing and mending?
I was the mender! Some of the mending was nearly impossible. I enjoyed coping with putting things right when possible. I made a good many of the little ones' clothes.

What time did you have off for yourself?
One full day a week, and I usually went from the Home to the home of friends I met through the church. Sometimes I would stay overnight. I would have liked more free time occasionally, but not much, because the children were my family and the Home was my home.

There was Home reunion in Palmerston North a few years ago and Raymond Crombie (remember Dombie?) wanted to make a statement, because some of the people that had been at the Home before us had had a rough time, and were talking about their unhappy memories. Well, Dombie couldn't handle this, so he got up and spoke very wonderfully and we were all in tears. He said that the Home was so wonderful for him and that he had said to his four sons "I can't give you anything like I had as a child at the Home". And he called Aunty Con and Aunty Mavis up to the stage and he hugged you both and said "You were my mother". Everyone stood up and it was very emotional.

Yes, that was very moving for both Mavis and me.

How many years were you at the home?
It must have been about 16 or 17 years. The Bateups, Lloyds and Thomases were there in my time

Constance (Fell) Sage died in October 2002.

At her funeral in Auckland several homies of the time contributed to the eulogy. One spoke of the then young Miss Fell making an immediate impression when she arrived at the Home in 1943 in a very old Baby Austin 7 with perspex windows. Others spoke of Aunty Con's quiet and gentle nature, and the inner strength that enabled her to be an advocate for all children in her care. She was always there – sewing, mending, making clothes, keeping the children respectably dressed, helping with homework, and delighting in leading singsongs around the piano. In times of crisis she was always available with a calm listening ear, sensible counseling, and practical assistance. Aunty Con was a true Christian.

Beth

When I reflect on six and a half decades of living, there are three people who stand out above all others in their contribution towards shaping me toward the person I am.

Herbert Bateup was one of these and by far the most influential. He was so far ahead of his time that were he alive today he could teach most of the current psychologists a thing or two. His expertise came from his high intellect and his experience—not from books or university lecturers. He had a great love of people and especially those children who came into his care. His love was unconditional and consistent.

My life experience over my first12 years was quite a turbulent one. My father had left the family when I was 6 and with my two younger siblings we had lived for short periods with different relatives while our mother struggled to earn sufficient to support us. We had even spent 18 months in the Whatman Salvation Army Home in Masterton, which to this day is a dreaded nightmare in my mind. How I loathed every minute of that period!

On the occasions we were with our mother it was a completely female environment, as her three sisters had a great deal of input. Unfortunately this was largely of a negative nature, which did little for my mothers self image, and resulted in sapping what little strength she had. She was completely dominated by her sisters, who constantly insisted that we 'were never going to amount to anything' etc. I am convinced that they were more responsible than we three youngsters were for her eventual breakdown.

So I was a fairly disturbed adolescent when I joined that family at the Masterton Methodist Home. I was insecure, bewildered, and very unhappy so was presenting something of a challenge. I cannot recall my initial feelings on arrival, but there must have been an overriding sense of acceptance as within days I felt comfortable, and it was to be the happiest and most stable period of my growing up years. Of course all of the difficulties were not resolved instantly! I was inevitably quite a handful – withdrawn, stubborn, and wilful, and no doubt I must have stretched Mr Bateup's compassion at times.

One of his early lessons has remained very vividly in my mind – I call it "The Parable of the Gooseberry Bush". I had apparently been in a particularly withdrawn state for several days, and when I arrived home from school one afternoon Mr Bateup told me that he wanted me to prune the gooseberry bushes in the extensive garden.

"You get the secateurs and a bag for the rubbish ready and I will be along shortly to show you how to do it" he said. "I know how to prune them." "Nevertheless" said Mr Bateup, " I'll be coming to show you."

I was waiting with a sullen attitude when he joined me in the garden a few minutes later. He took the secateurs and instructed me to watch and listen carefully. He grasped a large overgrown branch and as he cut it he said "We'll call this one 'self-pity' and we don't need any of that so we'll cut it off right at the base. This next one we'll call 'pride' – a certain amount of that is acceptable so we'll cut this one off about halfway along. Now this one we'll

call 'bitterness' and we have no need for any of that, so this one gets cut right back at the base. The next one we'll call 'anger'. A little of that is acceptable but it needs to be controlled, so we'll cut it back about 50%". He stood up and handed the secateurs to me with the question "Learned anything?" " I think so" I mumbled. "Well, my girl, you proceed with pruning the rest of the bushes and be thinking mighty hard while you are doing it!"

I learned quickly, and have been forever grateful for that lesson.

I remember with much warmth the occasions, usually in the laundry when he was doing the washing, that he and I would exchange philosophies and discuss them, and how wonderfully tolerant he was of my very immature ideas on how to make the world a better place. He actually listened, and advised, which was a situation I had not experienced before.

Mr Bateup had a way of dealing with children on a completely individual basis – not an easy task when one has the care of 40+ children of all ages and diverse backgrounds. He could get angry at times, yet in my experience he was always fair and willing to listen to 'the other side of the story'. Everyday life at the Home was pleasant, and the camaraderie exceptional. I cannot recall any great disputes and I remember my peers with warm affection.

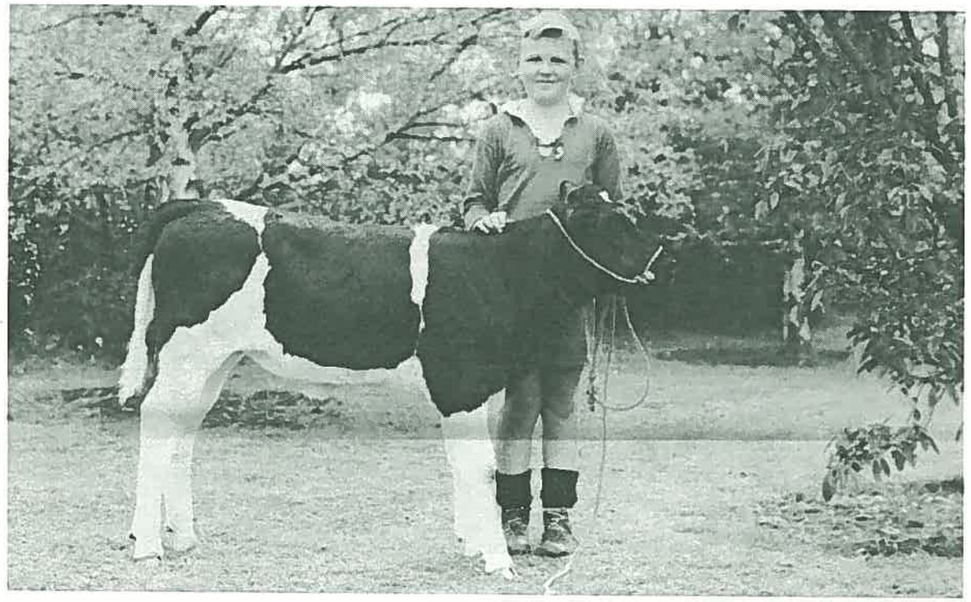
In later years, like many of the other homies of my time, I visited the Bateups on a couple of occasions and spent time with them at their home in Opononi, and later still at Pukerua Bay. They were all special people at the Masterton Methodist Children's Home – Mrs Bateup, Auntie Con, and Aunty Mavis too, but to me Mr Bateup was and always will be outstandingly special, and he hold a unique place in my heart and mind. Certainly the most powerful male figure in my life.

I am forever thankful that he came into my life when he did – how different it may have been had our paths not crossed. He directed my particular attributes and talents along positive tracks, and with humility, I believe I have become the person he shaped in those formative years.

David

Me and my brother and sister got taken away from our dad, and that's how we got to be in the Children's Home. I was about 10 or 11, and I used to take fits and blackouts in those days — it was mild epilepsy. I was put in the Home by the Child Welfare in early 1952.

At the time we were living with Dad out at the Waingawa Freezing Works, we had the house in the middle of the freezing works, a big red house, and you couldn't get into the house for the chooks – Dad had over 200 chooks there. Mum died when we were young, so we were taken away and I went into the Home with one of my sisters – the other went overseas when she was young. My sister was older, and she has passed away now. She had 3 daughters and a son, and adopted a Maori girl into the family.



I knew nothing about the Home before I went in — they just told me I'd be going into this Home. Then, one day when Dad was working, shovelling coal at the Works, Child Welfare just came in and took us away, and left a note for Dad. Someone went and told him – you know, they told him that he was working and leaving us at home on our own, and Child Welfare didn't like it. So I was put into the Home in town, my sister was put in there for a while, then they found a place for her to go to, and I stayed in the Home.

I went back home with Dad for a while, he was sick, so I went home to look after him, then I went back to the Home – because I liked it there. Then I ran away from the Home for a while, I hid in a bus depot, but they found me and took me back again. I only ran away once, I wanted to see Dad. It wasn't easy for Dad – both he and my aunty were going into hospital with sugar diabetes, it runs in my family. I used to have weekends at home with Dad.

It was pretty lonely in the Home for a start because I didn't know any of the kids. I had to go to school then too – I didn't go to school when we were out at Waingawa. Then I had to leave Central School. The teachers didn't help me.... only one lady teacher was on my side....they said I had to go because of my fits and blackouts. When the fits came it was alright, but later when the blackouts started to come they said that when I was going into them it was scaring all the other kids, so they asked me to go.

When I had fits and blackouts in the Home they made sure my tongue wasn't choking me – they did a really good job of looking after me when I had my fits. That was the nurse they had there, I can't remember her name now, and Dr Prior put me on some tablets for my fits and blackouts. I did hurt myself sometimes — in those days we didn't have hats to wear to protect ourselves, and they say I used to shout out and hurt myself if a fit came on. They stopped when I was about 24.

It was quite good in the Home, getting looked after by people. I got on with them all right. They treated me well there. I only had one argument, with one of the staff – they used to pull my hair to see if I was alright after a fit, and I said you're not supposed to pull people's hair, you're supposed to wait until they come out.

I can remember getting up in the morning milking the cows and all that. I liked doing the farm work at the Home. My uncle had brought me up to be a farmer, he taught me how to milk cows – when I was about five I used to get in the milking shed and pull the cups off the cows. Then he taught me how to milk by hand. When he first got the machine it was quite hard to get the cows used to starting on the machine, 150 of them, so we used to get them started, then when the machine had finished we would

strip-milk and wash them. There were only 3 or 4 cows at the Home, so they were always milked by hand. They used to take the cream off the top of the milk — if I had stayed I was going to get them to get a separator, to make butter, you know. They also had chooks and ducks and other animals on the farm. There were pigeons too. And rabbits.

I remember Mr and Mrs Bateup, and Aunty Con and Aunty Mavis. I remember Aunty Mavis in the kitchen, because I took a piece of her pie once. I'd just come back from milking the cows and she had a pie there ready for lunch, and I stole a piece. And she smacked my hand – she smacked me alright! Then I got to work in the kitchen

and she taught me how to cook. We all got taught to cook, for when we went to live on our own. That was the main thing I think, learning how to look after ourselves. But I liked the farming part, and that was good for me because I could go out and pick up farming jobs you see. There were about 6 of us kids doing the farm work, but I can't remember their names – the fits and blackouts have stopped me from remembering names. Three of those kids who were working with me went out to farms when I was there.

We did get up to a bit of mischief there – raiding orchards and things, got a whacking when we were caught. I did get other whackings too, but that was for answering back – they gave me a hard time because I knew more about farming than the staff did, and they didn't like that.

You did have to go to Church and Sunday School in the weekends. You had to put on the colours – ties and uniform to go out in. The girls had their outfit too. You'd do a bit of Bible study and things. (I still go to church a bit – Baptist. They helped me get a job on their farm.)

I did get hurt one day in the Home – it was when I was out on the farm and had a fit. I got rushed to Masterton Hospital, and I was there for a few days. Dad came because he wanted to know what had happened, and he didn't want me to stay there any longer, and I said I wanted to stay because they've got a farm there. I think he thought they weren't looking after me but I told him they were. So I stayed.

So it worked out well for me— they asked me what I wanted to do and I said farming, and they let me get on with it. I was keen to get out to work. I knew I didn't have any schooling to help me to get jobs on farms. I went to a farm up in Taranaki, then my first real job was out at Bunnythorpe. I think I was about 16 then. In those days you didn't have to have school qualifications like School C or anything to get farm jobs.

I went to a place down south for a while. I was supposed to be on the Wahine that sank in Wellington Harbour, with four of my friends, but our train was late and we didn't get to sail on it. So we were lucky. I worked for a while on a farm on Great Barrier Island, and at St Dominic's School for the Deaf near Feilding.

I started stocking their farm with black-faced sheep and bobby calves. The sheep were carrying all black lambs and I built up their flock – Dad said that they used to kill black lambs at birth because you couldn't have even a scrap of black wool in a bale of wool. So I kept the black wool separate from the white wool. I used to clip the fleeces off the sheep with hand clippers, always did the black sheep first – I sold the black wool to the ladies at Bunnythorpe for spinning, and the white wool went to the wool pack in Feilding.

Then I went out on my own to do farmwork all over, then back to my father at the Feilding Works. While I was working down at Kimberly in Levin I taught the farmhands how to bring heifers into milk without tying up their legs, which I thought was cruel, and when they are young you can train them to be gentle. I put some of my own money into the IHC farm in Wanganui, and didn't take it out when I left. I also went onto a shearing gang near Feilding.

I had a sheep dog when I was in Tokanui, and they wanted me to get rid of it, but I had trained it to both work and be good with children. When the dog was put in the kennel the kids would cry, and I pointed out how the dog helped the children be happy. So the dog was allowed to work on the farm and still be petted by the kids. When working with cows and bobby calves I never put the dogs in – I taught the animals to come to my call or to me just being at the gate. I taught other farm hands how to do this.

My uncle on the farm in Taranaki would bale hay using the old horse drawn machinery. Later when I went to move one of those heavy modern round bales at St Dominic's I had a small stroke that paralysed one side of my body for a while – it got better after I just lay in the field for a while. I got engaged to a girl from the Palmerston North IHC, but IHC stepped in and would not let us get married, so I have no children of my own. I make little reading books for children, using photos from the farms I worked on.

When I left the Home I never talked about it at all — not even my Dad wanted to talk about it. He wanted to just leave the past. I only ever talked about the farm part, never about actually living in the Home. I did go back to the Home once but it was all changed. I just had a look, I didn't go in at all. I just walked along the fence line to look at the farm part.

The best part about being in the Home was the way they treated you, and the food. I just put aside any bad things — I like to think only of the good side. I was sorry to hear that it had closed – if I had known I would have given them some money to help keep it open.

I have never regretted being in the Children's Home. I was happy there.

Extracts From The Minutes 1953—67

(the Thomases, Lloyds, Bateups, Jollys manage; children's holidays and visiting are regulated; the Home becomes "Homeleigh"; facilities and equipment are modernized; the cows make way for horses; government grants and control appear; Dr N Prior resigns; there is first mention of closing down; and the Committee reaffirms its family-based childcare policy.)

10.11.1953 Parents Visiting hours—The Manager, reported that some parents were upsetting the children and the running of the Home through frequent visits and requests to take their children out It was resolved that visiting be restricted to Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4pm; children to be removed from the Home only with the permission of the Manager; and children not be permitted to stay away from the Home except during school holidays.

13.4. 54 A paddling pool to be proceeded with.

13.5.54 Electrolux cleaner, pressure cooker, Electrolux hair cutting machine purchased.

9.8.54 A letter was received from the Youth Department advising that Miss Thelma Churchill will be appointed to the Christchurch Home.

12.10.54 Manager and Matrons Report—all children in good health. The tractor is again out of order .

8.3.55 It was agreed that the cows be TB tested. Screens in the senior Girls Dormitory to be explored.

12.4.55 An invitation was received concerning the sponsoring of immigrant children from Britain. The Committee agreed with the scheme in principle, but had insufficient accommodation available to offer to participate.

19.5.55 Plans were accepted for sealing the back area of the Home, removing the present clothes-lines, the hedge, and some shrubs and fruit trees, and installing 3 revolving clotheslines.
Statement of Policy— It was agreed that it is desireable that children spend all holidays in private homes, and that for all holidays the children be sent to people connected to the church.

14.6.55. The resignation of Mr and Mrs GW Thomas, Manager and Matron, was received, Mr Thomas accepting a call to become Pastor of Spreydon Baptist Church.

12.7.55. Dr Owen F Prior joins the Committee with his father, Dr NH Prior.

19.9.55. Holiday homes—Measures to be taken to ensure that homes to which children were sent were suitable.
Manager and Matron— Mr and Mrs N Lloyd appointed to these positions. As the Manager did not have a car, the Committee was to buy a car for the Home, and Mr Layton was to be refunded the petrol involved in teaching the Manager to drive.

11.10.55 Visiting Committee- Mr Leighton reported on his visit to the Home and drew attention to several matters, viz the sealing of the back area not yet done, thickness of bread served and absence of such items as marmite and peanut butter. Secretary reported that the breadcutter had been taken in for overhaul and removal of rust. The Matron was requested to attend to provision of required foodstuffs.
Subdivision of Property.: proposed first stage of subdivision cutting up of sections fronting Herbert Street for building sections.

8.11.55 State aid to Childrens Homes was being investigated. Mr Hodder was asked to replace the cow which was proving difficult for the children to handle.

14.2.56 It was reported that one of the staff had severely injured her arm in the wringer of one of the washing machines and had been admitted to hospital. No permanent disability was likely to result, the wringer was examined and found to be without fault. The staffmember had tendered her resignation..

8.5.56 Mr CD Shoosmith appointed as gardener for an 18 hour week.

30 June 1956 Annual Report
5 of the 26 children in the Home are children of staff members.

11.9.56 The Government announces that a subsidy of ten shillings per week would be paid for each child's maintenance in Childrens Homes, and a subsidy of up to 50% would be paid on approved capital expenditure or alterations.

16.10.56 No child to be admitted after his or her 11th birthday, unless included in the application for the admission of younger children of the same family.

18.11.56 A Child Welfare officer had offered to reside in the Home and render assistance outside her normal working hours. The offer was gladly accepted.

30 June 57 Annual Report
27 children in Home, major work is necessary after 35 yrs continual use, including replacement of the entire roof, plans for the replacement of the recreation shed (which was originally a shed removed from the Featherston Camp after the Ist World War.)

13.8.57 Guests of the staff may be accommodated in the Home provided suitable arrangements made with the Matron.

8.9.57 Agreed that the Home could be used by ex-Home children during Anniversary Weekend.

18.2.58 Mr D to be removed from the list of suitable holiday homes for the children.

20.5.58 Special Meeting. Lloyds on leave for 2 months, Bateups asked to take control for 2 months.

10.6.58 The amount collected per child in Masterton per week is less than half the cost per child.

24.6.58 Mr and Mrs Lloyd return as fulltime Manager and Matron.

12.9.58 Legacy of 2500 pounds from an estate finalised. A further legacy of 100 pound received, the Committee does not favour using the money for a radiogram, but may spend money on some suitable article for the Recreation Room. The vegetable plot to be fenced with an electric fence.

10.2.59 Goods from the Harvest Thanksgiving Festival at Hawera accepted.

9.6.59 Arrangements in hand for the official opening of the Recreation Room.
Specifications for tenders for fire escapes drawn up.

14.7.59 Discussion of a suitable name for the Home deferred to next meeting.

8.9.59 The name 'Tamariki" considered, deferred.

9.2.60 It was agreed that "Homeleigh" be the name by which the Home will be known.
A separate flat for the Master and Matron to be considered.

11.10.60 Request for boy or girl for adoption. None available.

29.11.60 Interim Report of the Commission on Childrens Homes discussed — the Committee against "institutional life", and against a fixed age for leaving homes, preferring that individual needs be met. The Home is being used for various leadership schools, Deaconess schools etc

9.5.61 The Committee approves of the arrangement for the G children to have 2 meals per day at the Home and that Mrs G be given the old washing machine.

11.4.61 Fire extinguishers placed on the 3rd floor and in the kitchen, and a bell alarm system proposed.

30 June 1961 Annual Report

The Committee is experimenting with some short term admissions, and also with boarding children in private homes when practicable.

12.8.61 Mr and Mrs Lloyd resign

1 Jan 62 Mr and Mrs AN Jolly start as Manager and Matron.

13.2.62 Report received of the death of former Matron, Miss Allan.

13.2.62 Suitable bread slicer to be purchased, Mr Jolly to look for suitable motor mower, Building Committee to attend to glassing in the boys balcony.

June 1962 Annual Report

Mr Jolly has attended a Social Welfare officers course in Lower Hutt, and another staff member an "institutional" course in PN.

10.7.62 Dr NH Prior intimated that he did not wish to act again on the Committee. Tributes to his long service (42yrs) expressed sincere and deep appreciation of the long and faithful service he gave to the Home. His unfailing professional attention and wise counsel was of particular value to the children and the Committee.
Mr Jolly reported on transport arrangements to Wesley Church on Sunday mornings.

11.8.62 Request from Department of Education for 2 Tokelau Island boys to stay at the Home until 1963. Accepted.

!2.2.63 As no boys are available for milking, the cows are to be "disposed of".

9.4.63 Trampoline and box horse to be purchased for the children.

11.6.63 (First mention in the Minutes of the possible closing of the Home.) Child numbers are low, and there is concern over staff contract. The major concern about closing would be the impact on the children.

9.7.63 More discussion about possibly closing the Home at the end of 1964.

19.9.63 Two more Tokelau Island boys accommodated.

8.10.63. Care of Dependent Children. Lengthy discussion about placing of children in foster homes —the Committee affirms very strongly that wherever possible the family unit should be preserved.

10.3.64 Action being taken to recover arrears from parents.
Moves to modernise the girls bathroom discussed.

9.6.64 Committee agreed to take over the television set from the Manager.
The Committee reaffirmed its policy of preserving the family unit wherever possible.

30 June 1964 Annual Report

"While continuing to support the appointment of a "case worker" for this area, the Committee has become cautious about the rapid implementation of aspects of the new policy (arising from the Church's report on " The Care of Dependent Children".). In particular it is felt that in any service provided by the Church, we should seek to avoid separating from one another, children of one family. Foster home placement is at a disadvantage in this respect, and while a case worker may find other forms of assistance which may help to keep a family together, the Committee feels that there is a definite area of need which is at present being well filled by Homeleigh. Although the provision of family homes is contemplated it appears that no such steps should be taken in this area without a close examination of the results of such enterprises in other areas, particularly in view of the fact that we are already operating a relatively small unit."

11.8.64 Tender accepted for the resealing of the drive and yard.

10.11.64 Grant from the JR McKenzie Trust Board acknowledged.

13.4.65 The Secretary, Mr F Cody reported that there was now no desire to close the Home.
The question of appointing a case worker was still being considered.
Fire proof and smoke doors had been fitted

13.7.65 2 more suitable ponies to be purchased

14.9.65 Instead of the usual Christmas party the children would be taken to Castlepoint on an outing.

30 June 1966 Annual Report

"The number of children being cared for in the Home has varied between 23 and 30, with children coming from as far afield as Hawera and Wellington. Two children have been placed in foster homes under our care, with arrangements for the adoption of one of these being made.
In addition to the sheep being run on the property and managed by Mr Doug Springer, we now have 6 horses and ponies of good quality and the standard of the children's riding is such that they are able to take part in local events with some success.
23 "old children" have revisited us over the year and some of these have returned for a number of visits. It is interesting to hear that on the whole children who have passed through Homeleigh have made successful and in some cases outstanding places for themselves in life, and to hear too of their appreciation for the start given to them here".

13.9.66 Letter received from asking if any children were available for placement in foster homes or for adoption. Resolved to reply that at present no children were available.

14.2.67. Rev Russell Marshall was welcomed to his first Home Committee meeting.
Mr Springer reported that sides of hogget would be available next week at 32/6 each.

14.3.67 Admission of 5 children from one family was approved on the understanding that the Welfare Division endeavour to obtain the mother's consent to the children being brought up in the Methodist Faith.
Authority given for the purchase of an old car, not to exceed 25pounds, for the boys' hobbies.

Extracts From The Minutes 1967 to 1974

(Jollys continue; Christian guidance in a changing world; Child Welfare increasingly involved—State Wards, foster homes etc; budget problems; renovations; land subdivided and sold; transport to school; insurance for burglary but not theft; Jollys resign, Harrises appointed and resign; silverfish and carpet beetle infestations; staff house built; Dubbeldams appointed.)

14.3.67 Admission of 5 children from one family was approved on the understanding that the Welfare Division obtain the mother's consent to the children being brought up in the Methodist Faith. Authority given for the purchase of an old car, not to exceed 25pounds, for the boys' hobbies.

30 June 67 Annual Report. "In presenting this annual report we do so with the knowledge of our responsibility to the children committed to our care. The unsettled state and tension in the world today creates a growing need for Christian guidance of the young. The example and devotion of our Manager and Matron should be a wonderful influence on the children. The work of the Home continues in the specialised field of keeping the children from larger families intact, and in the past two or three years in this sphere we have accepted families from as far afield as Taranaki, Auckland and Nelson. It is an unfortunate fact that the parent of the larger family is not able to provide reasonable financial support per child, but the benefits of keeping the children together are very great in terms of emotional development. For the information of those not familiar with the Home it is run as one large family with the same freedoms, nothing is locked up, no use is made of the strap, school reports are good both from the academic and the whole school activity point of view. This is significant when it is realized that many of our children are the difficult ones."
(Also, first reference is made to 5 or 6 State Wards being placed in the Home, which until this time was against government policy, as State Wards were to be placed in foster homes.)

14 Nov 67 Miss Sandra Meacham be thanked for the donation of her horse and bridle.

12 March 68 Mr SJ Falloon be thanked for the gift of two rams.

9 April 68 Mr Jolly reported that Hilda Theedom, a former Home child, was joining the staff of the Home.

30 June 68 Annual Report The Home reported full with 30 children, 21 being aged 10 years and under. Leaving during the year were 4 Tokelau Islanders who went on to boarding school.
Reference is made to severely reduced budget from the Wellington Connexional Committee

9 July 68 Report regarding fire and earthquake drills approved.
Rev Russell Marshall raised the idea of getting Committee members from other denominations.

11 Feb 69 Renovation work had not been completed by 31 Jan and it had been necessary to make temporary arrangements for accommodating the children.

18 June 69 The Manager was given permission to purchase watches for the secondary school children, and to decide each child's contribution to the purchase.

16 July 69 28 children in the Home. There have been 19 applications for admission, including a family of 8.

20 Aug 69 The Manager reported that a staff member's watch had gone missing from the bathroom. The watch was 4yrs old and had cost $20.50.

17 Sept 69 Family Home: Rev Marshall suggested consideration be given to relinquishing some of the land, and establishing one family home unit.

15 Oct 69 Manawatu Womens' Fellowship had made a donation towards the cost of a deepfreeze.

19 Nov 69 Cubicles and wardrobes approved for the girls dormitories. Measles prevalent.

18 Feb 70 Child Welfare department criticisms of cubicles for girls rejected.
District Child Welfare Officer invited the Home to nominate orphans for selection for a trip to Expo 70. Committee replied that there are no fully orphaned children in the Home.

Arrears of Maintenance – a father had been convicted and sentenced to 42 days imprisonment , suspended on condition that he pay the Home $10 per week maintenance plus $5 per week arrears.
New Members— it was suggested that nominations be sought for one or two Presbyterians for the Management Committee.

15 Apr 70 Loss of cash —insurers advised that there was no cover for loss of cash by staff. Agreed that in view of the good services of staffmember LK that her loss of $20 be made good.
Resolved that staffmembers be provided with one locking drawer and comprehensive insurance cover.

Request that the Home meet the ski trip expenses for a child when accompanying the family she had been on holiday with. It was agreed that this not be encouraged, as it involved a standard of recreation that would not normally be available.

30 June 1970 Annual Report Five children placed in foster homes. 14 new "cases" were admitted, including a family of five, and two families of three. The Minutes note that.... " larger family groups dealt with often bring difficulty in paying maintenance, the position has been worse this year than for some years".

15 July 70 Central School transport— now that Central School had moved location and small children cannot walk satisfactorily, the Manager to obtain quotes for a bus service in the mornings and return at lunchtime.

19 Aug 70 Decided to buy a stationwagon to transport the children to school and for general use.
The Secretary was asked to convey the greetings of the members of the Management Committee at the wedding of Sister Connie Fell and the Rev Sage.

18 Nov 70 Manager reports that the horse Ballerina had been sold to Dawn Coley for $100.

50th Anniversary of the founding of the Home to be celebrated with a reunion at Labour Weekend 1971.

17 Feb 71 The Admission Committee had declined an application for the admission of a child, to be removed from his own family for a short period owing to behavioural problems. It had not been considered the role of this Home to deal with such a case.
It was agreed to discontinue stocking the property with sheep.

17 March 71 The Wellington Board approved the subdivision of 7 sections on the Herbert Street frontage, to be put up for sale by public tender.

30 June 1971 Annual Report "We face a serious reduction of income for the coming year. The Connexional grant was reduced, and there is a constant struggle with parents with payments."

30 Nov 71 Placement of Children: the Manager suggested that consideration be given to adopting a general policy of placing out of children at about college age (13yrs) if suitable circumstances existed. The Committee agreed to consider it, but that each case would be kept under review, without the adoption of any hard and fast rule.

23 Feb 72 Several parents were in arrears with maintenance.

30 June 72 Annual Report. 13 children admitted, 7 of whom were applications by the Dept of Social Welfare. There were 17 departures, and 29 children were declined admittance due to lack of room.

20 July 72 Insurers have now agreed to extend the cover to loss through burglary, but not theft. Manager reported that a dishwashing machine was needed now that there were fewer teenage children in residence.

17 Oct 72 Mr and Mrs Jolly tendered their resignations, to be effective from the end of the school year.

25 Oct 72 All 7 sections had been sold for a total of $12,500.

1 Nov 72 Letter from DSW, consideration to be given to the appointment of an additional person to be available when the Manager and Matron are off duty. Also the possibility of building a flat or house adjacent to Homeleigh for the accommodation of additional senior staffing.

29 Nov 72 Mr and Mrs K Harris appointed Master and Matron.

22 Feb 73 Agreed to dispose of the horse before winter. Agreed that if the present measures for the eradication of silverfish are unsuccessful, that a tradesman be employed to address the problem.

29 March 73 The Manager requested that an electric hedgetrimmer be purchased.

19 April 73 Agreed that the Manager and Matron prepare a statement on ethics to be observed by staff.

31 May 73 Insurance - agreed that enquiries be made as to whether acts of vandalism are covered under our insurance policies. The Manager reported the fitting of locks to staff bedrooms.

28 June 73 The building of a staff house was approved in principle, plans submitted for approval.

30 June 73 Annual Report. Department of Social Welfare has recommended that the staffing ratio at senior level be strengthened, and that provision be made for staff relief.
On a longer term basis it was suggested that another house unit be considered for a pilot project on family rehabilitation.

6 Sep 73 Reference was made to the recent death of Herbert Bateup, who had given outstanding service as Manager of Homeleigh.

11 Oct 73 A small fire in one of the sheds was reported. It was agreed to ask the Manager to see to the locking of petrol.

7 March 74 Resignations of Mr and Mrs K Harris were accepted with regret.

17 April 74 There had been considerable damage to clothing by carpet beetles, eradication treatment to be carried out in the May holidays.

29 April 74 Interviews of two applicants for Manager and Matron — recommended that they be asked to undertake some courses in residential childcare work, if suitable courses are available, for which they may be released from duty. Mr and Mrs J Dubbeldam appointed.

8 Aug 74 The Manager outlined plans for forming two groups of children for internal organisation. He proposed to give specific responsibilities for each group to assistant staff members.
It was proposed to provide the hot meal in the evenings instead of the middle of the day.

12 Sept 74 20 children in residence.
Items of interest from a symposium in Auckland were reported to the Committee, viz " children under 5yrs of age need smaller groupings than we provide; the maximum number of children in a home should not exceed 15; staff training should include access to suitable journals; the aims of each home should be more clearly defined ie receiving home, family home, group home, special needs home. There could be greater sharing with other homes in the area."

17 Oct 74 The Manager reported the loss of some jewellery from his flat. It was agreed that this loss be made good. Purchase of a new revolving clothesline was approved.

28 Nov 74 Swimming pool concession— children now must enter under a season ticket, and contribute 50% of the cost.

Sarah

I was in Homeleigh for 4 years, (1974 to closure in 1978), and I think there were between 30 and 50 children during that time. In my time in the Home there were two couples as Manager and Matron — Mr and Mrs Dubbeldam were there when I arrived, then Mr and Mrs Jackway were the last, and were there when Homeleigh closed.

The thing about my time in the Home I remember particularly was the jobs, the work...I had probably the hardest job in the Home when it came to work — they seemed to pick me for the toughest jobs. See, the others were smart enough to make sure they didn't do a really good job on their jobs, enough not to get into trouble but enough not to be chosen to do it again — whereas I took pride in what I did, so I'd do a good job, then I ended up being stuck with the bloody things!

I had to do the girls' bathroom every morning — we're talking 3 mirrors and 3 sinks — and the little kids had been cleaning their teeth and there was always toothpaste all over the mirrors and the floor. I had to change the towels, change the bathmats, clean out the shower cubicles, clean the handbasins, and sweep and mop the floor every morning before breakfast, as well as have my room tidy.

And you only had about half an hour, which is why having the later bedtime helped. I used to do a lot after the little kids had gone to bed. I would wait until they had gone to bed before I had my shower, and I'd make sure the older girls knew to have their shower before me — they knew what it was like, because they had had the job before me. They'd do that, and I'd clean out the showers, clean up my room, and I'd do everything except sweep and mop the floor at night before I went to bed. So all I had to do first thing in the morning was get up, get dressed, make my bed— I'd normally wake up 5 or 10 minutes before the bell — and then I'd shoot straight down the stairs, out to the laundry for the broom and the water, change the towels and bathmats at the same time, and I'd be done in time for breakfast.

There wasn't time for homework, and in the weekend if I wasn't going away I had to clean all the louvre windows in the kitchen. There was a whole raft of them — you had to climb up on the benches, and the fumes of the methylated spirits that we used to clean with would make you high, and by the time I'd finished the windows I'd be dizzy as all-getout. I can't climb up on a ladder or chair now without getting dizzy, and I reckon it goes back to that. We all had jobs, even the little kids, all rostered on, and on top of that you had the dishes often, so sometimes I'd do that in the morning and then after breakfast I'd be on the machine or on washing or kitchen duty or on dining room duty or whatever...(my kids don't know how lucky they've got it !)

The other thing that I remember is that two of my two mates, who were just a year or so younger than me, had a sort of rivalry that had been going on for a while. I think George started it — he apple-pied Peter's bed. Peter got him back, double sheeted it, then George came in with this huge water spider and put it in Peter's bed. Well, Peter decided that enough was enough. So he bided his time, then one day he came running into the girls dorm—he knocked first, stuck his head in the door, and Fiona and Brenda and I were sitting there yakking and reading magazines — and he said "Quick ! Come out to the top of the stairwell ! Come on, you won't regret it! All you older girls, come quick — I promise it'll be worth your while!" So we all came out to the top of the stairwell at the corner leading to the boys' dorms. Well, George was having a shower in the boys' bathroom and Peter had nicked all of his clothes and every towel in the room... so George comes out holding this little face-cloth-sort-of-hand-towel in front of him, and he's nipping up the stairs and as he comes to the second flight Peter goes shooting down the stairs, whips the towel away and is gone... and George is stark naked! And he has to run past us girls, bright red in the face, around to the boys' dorms! I've never seen him move so quick!...and we still got a good look!

The best thing about my time in the Home was my trip — my Form 2 trip — and that wasn't really the Home, that was the school. But they did let me go on it, and they paid for half of it, which was good. And the discos on Friday nights, and TV was pretty good back then too. After the little kids had gone to bed and the Manager and Matron had gone home, Barbara and those who were in charge at night were really good. And "Halloween" was the other — they were my two favourites, and they would let me stay up to watch them as long as I snuk upstairs straight afterwards and went straight to sleep. That was something to live for.

When we were troubled we always went to the big kids, who acted like parents to us. The assistant staff were good too, especially Barbara a 20-25 yr old, who lived up on the third floor — she seemed to work 5 days then go home for 2 days. At one point there was some friction between the older boys and the Manager — he was pretty

tough on the boys, and there was relief when he and his family headed off to Holland on holiday. Their stuff was moved out and we never saw them again. The Jackways came soon after that, and were there until the place closed.

My contact with Jesus wasn't really through the Home, it started through my friend who used to go to the Methodist Church on Sunday mornings, and to one of the new pentecostal churches on Sunday nights — I think it was called The Christian Centre. It wasn't the first pentecostal movement that hit NZ, but it was a revival-type thing and the first of the new charismatic churches.

I remember it was this long L-shaped room with the minister in the corner, and when we walked in the door the love hit me in the face.. it was tangible! It was actually tangible —you could feel that love in the air... I've never felt anything like it! And at the end of the service when there were healings happening there was this smell in the air...and I know now what that is, but it really got to me at the time — it's the smell of the Holy Spirit. He has a particular scent about Him that's like nothing else, kind of like a woody smell, and you only smell it when there's a lot of healings going on.

When the Holy Spirit is pouring out a lot of power on people you'll smell that smell, like incense but with woody overtones to it, cedar or something like that, and it's really awesome. It wasn't there when I first arrived, but I got hit by this wave of love from everyone, and then at the end there was this lingering smell, and healings were happening — I had never experienced anything like it before.

It actually came back to me a few months later when I was pretty low. I'll never forget it. I was all by myself in my cubicle feeling sorry for myself, but suddenly there was like a presence in the room ...I knew somebody was there, I could feel it, and it said "You are a good person, and I love you." Then there was a knock at the door, and it was my good friend Peter. So that is something I'll never forget.

But I didn't become a Christian at that point, those first contacts set me on the road looking. Unfortunately for a while I looked in the wrong direction — the kids at the Home started playing a game with a ouija board, and we thought it was just a game. But I took the knowledge of that game with me when Homeleigh closed, and I played it again at home, but the voices were coming through me instead of the board. The last voice I heard was Christ's, and I just gave it all over to Him. But that first contact with Christ, that was through my good friend Peter — I wonder if he knows today?

They had a reunion the last 2 days we were there, and all these people who used to be in the Home came down. I remember one guy because he was about 65 or 70, he had blond hair, and one blue eye and one brown eye, and he was telling us some of the things he got up to with the boys in his time. That was the day we had the group photo taken in the gymnasium, just the current kids. Within a short time we were all sent away –some went back to their parents, and those who didn't have parents went to Whatman Home. Then the place was closed.

I haven't kept contact with any of the children from the Home. Once we left we went our different ways, we didn't know how to keep in contact with each other, and though I knew I was going home to my mum, none of the others knew where they were going. I have been back to Homeleigh and looked at the place from the outside. My husband simply said "Big place", and I thought yes, but it's not as big as I remember it being. All I really told him was "It was the best of times and the worst of times".

I have spoken to only a few people about being in a children's Home since I grew up – more so in the last couple of years, because of my present voluntary work with a parents' group, something that God has led me to. Some of the people I have spoken to about having spent several years in a Children's Home tell worse stories than mine. They've been State wards or in foster care, which is not as 'institutional' as we went through, but some of it is just as bad. With boarding out and fostering there's a lucky few that got good caregivers where it worked out well, but a lot of others I know about are horror stories.

I have nothing to compare life in Homeleigh with, but for me it was both the best of times and the worst of times. When it comes down to it, if I hadn't been in Homeleigh I would have grown up in circumstances that in some ways may have been just as bad. I was an only child, living with my Gran, and I was very very lonely — there was just her and me. I always spent Christmases with Gran even when I was in the Home, and it was the same little plastic Christmas tree I had to put up for the two of us year after year.... I hated it.

Now I have my own family, and a real tree for my kids.

Denise

I was made a state ward in 1977 and was placed in Homeleigh along with my brothers and sisters. Because our parents could not provide a stable environment for us we were left to fend for ourselves. We were left at home alone, and we soon began breaking into homes in the village where we lived. On one occasion we pinched jewellery from a house and then, hoping to prevent discovery, simply threw the items away.

My sisters and I were placed in Homeleigh for about six months before being returned home to our parents, under supervision. We were returned into care again the next year, 1978. We stayed in Homeleigh until the end of that year when it was closed down and we were moved to another Home.

My first impression of Homeleigh was that it was a beautiful place – swimming pool, and lots of children. However I do remember the feeling of loneliness that first night as it was the first time we had slept apart from each other. We had never had separate beds before – at home it wasn't uncommon for us to top and tail in a single bed, or even have three to a bed. At home we hadn't had much bedding, and in fact our blankets were actually coats thrown on the bed for warmth, not to mention extra weight. It was a treat to sleep in the lounge on a cold night with the fire going.

As I was older than my brothers and sisters they were sent off to primary school whilst I was to attend the local intermediate school in Masterton. On my first day I was 'escorted' to school by two boys from Homeleigh who also attended the intermediate. At the end of the day I managed to find my own way home by remembering landmarks we had passed on our way to school. Unfortunately, I wasn't aware that the Manager of the Home had asked these two boys to also escort me home, so there was quite a 'to do' when I arrived home an hour before the boys did.

On our first outing to buy clothes my younger sister and I went to Haywright's and were fitted out for blouses, dresses, nighties etc. It happened to be summer and there was swimwear on display — we knew we'd never be allowed to have bikinis so we smuggled them into the fitting rooms and slipped them on over our knickers. All would have been well if we hadn't decided to slip them back into the shopping bag before we got back to the Home. When the bags were being taken from the back of the car you can guess what was hanging out of the top of one of them —we'd been sprung! Nothing is more embarrassing than being caught out and being made to go back and apologise to the shop owner. Unbelievably we were allowed to keep the items, but I have never forgotten that lesson.

I lived at Homeleigh for nearly two years. I loved living there because the house was beautiful and we had a good view of Memorial Park from our bedroom windows or out on the fire escape. We could also go to the football matches through a hole in the fence – a lot of other kids used that hole too! At the back of the section we had our own clubhouse. It was hardly ever used for meetings so we changed it to our smoking room.

The Manager and Matron during my stay there were fabulous people – Bert and Alva went out of their way to help us fit in when we first arrived there. They knew we were 'country bumpkins' out of our depth. They established a special bond with my younger brothers and sisters, which made it easier for us all. They used to give us treats like lolly scrambles and sleepovers at their place. Bert was what I imagined a real 'grandad' figure would be – I never had aunties, uncles or grandparents of my own. He dispensed advice, cuddles, love, and discipline as and when required.

When I was older I tried to contact Alva and Bert—however it turned out that they had already passed away. Why did I want to find them? Simply to say thanks for looking after us, and to say that I loved them.

My favourite 'house parent' was Sharon – she was only in her early twenties, but she loved us. It was really lucky for me that when we moved from Homeleigh to Whatman Home Sharon also secured employment there, which made it much easier for us to settle in to our new 'home'. She loved music and it just so happened that she liked the same music that we all liked – pop music, and in particular Barry Manilow. It was her idea that we compile personal scrapbooks, and she went out and bought a camera to take photos of us at leisure, study, playing and special occasions. These photos have now become treasured keepsakes. When Sharon left to move back to the Isle of Wight we corresponded for a few years, but then as we moved on in our lives we lost contact.

Naomi was another house parent – she was very special too as she had been to school with my eldest sister. I looked up to her and trusted her – I could tell her anything and she would advise me just like a big sister. We lost contact after we left Homeleigh.

I remember the chores that we all had to do. I was very accomplished at cleaning shoes as I had to pass this task for a Brownie badge before coming in to the Home, and I was pretty used to clearing the tables. We had to get used to the industrial benchtop dishwasher because if you weren't careful when opening it after the wash cycle you could end up with steam burns. Peeling the spuds for dinner was another eye opener for a country girl – we used a machine that had a stone interior which rotated and ground the peel off the potatoes.

I only ever had one real 'engagement' with another Home child – a conflict over territory that eventually came to blows. This other child also had brothers and sisters at the Home and there was a bit of jealousy over the fact that

my sister had been the 'baby' at the Home until this family arrived with a little sister 15 months younger. The older children had gone across the road to Chanel College to have a friendly game of basketball – this turned into a free-for-all between me and the second eldest of the other family. It didn't matter that the other combatant was male. I was fortunate to win this fight, as it earned me the respect of most of the other children afterwards.

We had a lot of community support – the Masterton Lions Club did our fireworks night, though I remember this mostly because one of the Homeleigh children got thrown into the pool to cool down as the fireworks were making her very hyperactive! We attended St Luke's Presbyterian and Methodist Church each Sunday. Two of the older girls would help out in the crèche while the littlies attended Sunday School. Church groups also donated articles they had knitted or crocheted. Each of us had a knitted bed rug, and in our last year we had new patchwork quilts made as well — however, when we all left when Homeleigh closed these quilts didn't go with us and I often wonder what became of them, because I loved my one.

One of the bonuses of being in care was that we went on lots of day trips such as off to Mount Holdsworth or out to the Cliffs for swims and picnics in summer. We also walked down to QE Park or the baths on fine weekend afternoons. We were also allowed to take part in Walk-a-thons and Run-a-thons if it was in aid of the Church. It always amazed me that out of all the participants in these events the Press always seemed to know which kids to target for photos – namely, us Home kids! Still, a lot of us also resented this, as we didn't want people to think that we were any 'different' than they were.

One of the other teenagers in Homeleigh was a real outdoors person. He would regularly go for runs, and at the weekends he'd go hiking or hunting – I thought he was a really neat person. What hurt me about this person though was that when I went into the Third Form at College, he was in the fifth form and really didn't want to know me – even went out of his way to make it plain he had never met me. Still, as I was a junior our paths rarely crossed at College except for assembly and sport.

We were encouraged to bring friends home to play. I had a girlfriend who lived out near Solway. I used to walk her home after she'd been with me at Homeleigh and then I'd walk all the way home again.

One day at school a boy wanted to know why I seemed to be 'teacher's pet' and I can still recall the trepidation and fear of rejection I felt when I had to stand up in front of the class and tell everyone where I lived and why I was there. (I hadn't thought that I was popular, but I must have been, at least with the teacher!) However, I won the respect of the teachers and my classmates when we got a profoundly deaf girl in our class — back then I was a real mother hen, and I volunteered to sit with her and help her. Dahlia was her name, and while she taught us all sign language we taught her confidence.

I was broken hearted when she went off to Makora College and I went to Wairarapa College when we both left Intermediate School. I managed to see her a few times, but by then we'd grown in different directions.

I had only one terrifying time while there, and it really had nothing to do with the Home — that was when I sneaked into an R18 movie, 'The Incredible Melting Man', with two of the older girls when I was only 12. I couldn't sleep at night for at least a week afterwards, but I felt really neat because I had been to see an R18 movie!

And my most 'anxious' time was also not in the Home but at school when I was required to do an oral presentation to a visiting Scotsman and present him with a pendant at assembly in front of the whole school. To this day I can remember being proud to be chosen, but also feeling a bit sick just before going on stage. My teacher just said to be myself and go up there and make her proud. I must have done a good job because all I can remember is people cheering as I left the stage, and the Principal patting me on the back afterwards.

On Wednesday evenings you would find us teenage girls in the Hobby room learning new dance moves and listening to the Top 10 songs on the radio. We also thrashed a *Saturday Night Fever* record as we were too young to see the movie. We would also take turns at raiding the fridge for eggs to put in our hair at night when we had our showers! I also remember going out onto the front lawn to practise my discus throwing using a bread plate as a discus – I'd never seen a discus or a shotput until we came to the Home in Masterton.

My most mischievous moment was when four of us sneaked a tin of freshly baked cookies out of the pantry and shared them with the girls in our dorm. We took the leftovers to school the next day to share them with friends.

The best times I had were when I was allowed to stay over at Bert and Alva's. At the time ABBA was all the rage and their son Neil had a tape that had not been released here yet, and I don't know how many times I thrashed that tape but by the time the tape was released into the shops I knew all the words to all the songs. I was treated like a queen because I already knew all the words!

Over the years I've met up with a few of the other kids who stayed at Homeleigh. My husband came back from work one day with the business card of one of them. It was fantastic catching up with him. He was always such a bullheaded, stubborn, meanie (being one of the older kids) and to find he had grown into such a lovely young man who was doing well for himself was a really nice feeling. One of the younger girls from my time there tracked me down after meeting one of my sisters, and it was a bit of a shock to find that at 25 she already had 5 children and was largely cut off from her family. She confided in me why she had been placed in care, and seemed very insecure and wanting to find out what we'd thought of our stay at Homeleigh. It is sad when you discover that some people

can't let go of the past and move on.

The other person I caught up with was on my honeymoon back in 1986. I made time to catch up with her and it was a lovely time meeting her husband and finding that she had trusted someone enough to marry him. She was the one who tried to tell us how great it was to be kissed by a boy – this was back when we were only 12.

Years later I discovered that the man who lived next door to my parents had also been a child at Homeleigh. He said that back then they had even had chickens to feed – this would have been back in the 1950s I guess. Of course because he was so much older, it didn't really interest me that he'd been there.

When I finished my schooling and polytech, I was offered a position with DSW in Masterton. I turned it down because I'd seen one side of what DSW had to offer, and I wanted to see what I could do on my own. Initially I thought I had nothing to offer anyone, I kept to myself and respected other's privacy as well. I moved into providing a home for my two younger sisters, and helped bring up various young people, such as my stepchildren, nieces and nephews on different occasions. Through later years I even wanted to adopt or foster a child, but I kept getting knocked back because the social workers (who often only had degrees and no kids of their own) felt my husband was too old.

However, through caring for an elderly neighbour, contact with the voluntary counsellors from the local Loss and Grief Group when my Mum died, and then with Victim Support after a friend's suicide, I discovered that I wanted to help others in a more fulltime capacity. I had grown in self confidence and contemplated becoming a Social Worker.

After working for two other public agencies I grew in self confidence and finally joined DSW in Taupo in 1986. Throughout my eight years with DSW Taupo I learned a lot about the different areas this organization offered. It wasn't just child welfare, it was an organisation that tried to make a difference, within the constraints of budget and Government legislation. When I left DSW to be self-employed I left as one of a group of four – there was a social worker, an administration clerk, a divisional officer's wife, and myself who felt strongly enough to get community leaders in behind us as we formed the Taupo Sexual Assault Counselling Services Group. The budget only covered the coordinator's wages so the rest of us worked on a voluntary basis. I was the secretary and thoroughly enjoyed my time with this group, before we shifted town.

What has been the impact on my life of my experiences so far? Well....

- I love big homes with gardens, especially older style bungalows and villas
- I am a very private person
- I find it hard to trust people, and I find it difficult to make friends
- I try to help others who show signs of going down the same path
- I led a nomadic lifestyle for a while, moving every two years

- I am overprotective of my siblings, eg from their partners
- I try to be a good role model for my siblings — setting good examples for them to follow.
- since the death of my parents I have no interest in returning to my birthplace
- when my parents were alive I felt 'on show' every time I went home
- I set high standards for myself so my parents would be proud of me. Also to achieve certain goals in my life so that I could seem to be 'better' than those other children in our hometown
- One dream is to be able to donate a large sum of money to our first primary school –trying to make amends I guess. (I'm sure the people in our hometown still talk about us.)

My goals now are to take life as it comes, not to be too judgemental, to make a difference in someone's life, to be a good friend, and to fill my life with different experiences so that I don't have time to dwell on what I don't have or haven't been able to accomplish.

Friends and Neighbours

Notes from interview with Mrs Bouzaid, 35 Herbert St, Masterton, and daughter Marilyn.

Mrs Bouzaid grew up in Mauriceville West where her mother was the teacher. She married "into" the Bouzaid clan, who at that time ran the picture theatres in Greytown, and had a strong Lebanese family tradition. " I wondered what I had struck with the Bouzaid family, after the quiet upright upbringing I had had." After she and her husband Johnny married, they built a new house at 35 Herbert Street in 1933, right next door to the Home. "We knew that it was a children's home next door, but we had no hesitation at all. The whole section was pine trees and boulders—Johnny cleared and sawed up the trees, and cleared the boulders away and eventually put down a tennis court."

Bouzaid Electrical was responsible for the conversion of the Home from gas to electric lighting in the late 1920s/early 30s. Later when Johnny's electrical business got successful he was keen to build a bigger house in another part of Masterton, but Mrs. Bouzaid has never wanted to leave this first home — she said she had already been moved about enough with her mother's teaching jobs. They had 4 children —Pat, Elaine, Marilyn, and Malcolm, and she has lived beside the Home/Homeleigh continuously since 1933. Miss Allen was the Matron in 1933, and Mrs. Bouzaid was to see all of the subsequent Masters/Matrons/ Managers through to the closure of the Home in 1978, and since then the Homeleigh School up to the present day — ie nearly 70 years. At the time of interview Mrs Bouzaid was 93 years old.

In all this time none of the Bouzaid family (except Johnny on business) entered the Home or its grounds, Marilyn said "We would hear the boys cutting the hedges and singing away, we could sometimes see into some of the rooms from here, we would see the girls hanging out the second floor windows and the lights on in the dormitories. There was always a bit of mystique about it, and for years we wondered what is was like in there, what was going on.....we really wanted to have a look through..... and then after the Home was closed the Homeleigh School held an open day and invited us in, and it was great". (On the other hand the Bouzaid family occasionally invited Home children over the fence to play tennis and have afternoon tea with Pat, the oldest daughter, but Mr Bateup was very cautious about the children getting over-familiar with the neighbours.)

Mrs Bouzaid... " we always knew the wind was up at night when the handles on the Giant Stride would start rattling....we didn't ever get disturbed by having children there all the time... they might have had the odd apple or two but we didn't mind — not like the cheeky kids today..."

Marilyn……."All my childhood I could hear that tinkling of the Giant Stride...."

Mrs Bouzaid ……"In the 1970s the fire alarms would go off from time to time, and then during the empty period, local people would come through our land, and climb the fence as a short cut to Memorial Park Rugby games....that was a bit worrying..."

Letter from Eirwen Tulett (nee Harris)

My parents, Ken and Lillian Harris, moved to New Zealand from Wales in November 1972. I turned four in the December. In early 1973 their first jobs in New Zealand were as Manager and Matron of Homeleigh in Herbert Street Masterton. Mum was an experienced nurse, midwife and community nurse, and Dad had been a prominent and popular scout leader in South Wales. We lived at Homeleigh for about a year, before moving to our own home and new jobs in Masterton.

For many years Mum and Dad spoke very fondly of the 20 or so children in their care. Many of the children came from dysfunctional backgrounds, and their behaviour and problems reflected this. Mum and Dad worked really hard to make them feel secure and wanted. They often spoke with real affection of good times and difficult times that the children went through.

New Zealand was such a strange and wonderful country to Mum and Dad. The first night we slept at Homeleigh there was an earthquake – of course they had never experienced an earthquake and thought it was just the rather large and stroppy cat coming into their bedroom.

I remember my Grandfather visiting from Wales, and the boys went off to hunt rabbits. They caught some and Grandad skinned them and Mum made a rabbit pie. The boys were so proud to be the great hunters. I remember that we took one of the boys with us on holiday because no one wanted him for the holidays because he wet the bed. It can't have been much of a holiday for Mum but she never complained. And I remember that one of the little girls had been so badly beaten by her real father that she was brain damaged . She was so trusting and innocent, and Dad nearly broke his heart over what had happened to her

I also remember the brand new Holden stationwagon that was bought to help drive children to and fro (Dad was so proud.)

We left Masterton for Lower Hutt in 1975, where Mum and Dad lived until their premature deaths in 1994 and 1997. They had both become very well-known in the Hutt, Mum with the Hutt Hospital, and Dad with the Lower Hutt City Council for 22 years.

As a four- and five-year old only child, I loved living in Homeleigh with the other children. My memories of Homeleigh are my first memories of New Zealand – horseriding on Trixie in the paddock next door, Possum the fearsome tabby cat, and friendly people who talked with funny (ie New Zealand) accents.

Extract from letter from Ray Ralph

I talked to Mum about the 'townies' view of the Home kids. She felt that most of the townspeople felt sorrow for the Home children who had lost parents and felt that they were missing a stable home life. But while they felt sympathy for their lot, they knew that the Home did a very good job providing for the children.

Personally I did not think, or find, the youngsters from the Home were any different from the other children at primary school or College. Perhaps they interacted together more than the other children, but not dramatically so, and they seemed to me to be just like all the others.

Committee Insights

The authors were fortunate to be able to gain a Home/Homeleigh Committee perspective from four former Committee members, Mr Frank Cody, Mrs Ruth Cody, Dr Owen Prior, and Mrs Daphne Pratt. These former Committee members' family involvement and personal Committee service covered the entire period of the Home's existence — from the start of its construction in 1919 to its closure and sale in 1978. The following is a summary of discussion:

The Methodist Church had a strong membership during the period of the Home's existence, and Church members were encouraged to consider joining the local Management Committee when vacancies occurred, particularly those with professional skills, eg. legal, financial, medical. Throughout the years numerous husbands and wives were involved with the Committee, numbers of them serving for many years. Meetings were held monthly in the 'Front Room' of the Home.

In the Home's early years the full Wellington Board also held its meetings in Masterton, members travelling up by train, meeting, then staying overnight before returning to Wellington. As the local Committee and the Board became comfortable with their respective roles, representatives of the Wellington Board moved to visiting the Home just once a year, at Christmas Party time, when the local Committee always made a special effort for the children.

In some periods local Committee members, particularly the Chairperson and Secretary, had strong expectations placed upon them to become fully involved in the life of the children in the Home, in line with a vision of an 'extended family'. Committee members took children out and some stayed for holidays with their respective families. There were other periods when staff discouraged Committee from close involvement in the daily running of the Home.

Working in the Home was viewed as a 'calling' by staff and wages were minimal, a fact which retrospectively mortified the former Committee members. A car allowance was not paid until the later years, and former residents remember the engine of the Master's car being switched off going down every hill in the interests of economy.

Finances were problematic most of the time, and chasing parents for maintenance was an especially onerous task for the Secretary/Treasurer. The Committee found itself sandwiched between pursuing maintenance contributions on the one hand, and being accountable to the Wellington Board on the other. One Annual Report indicates that the maintenance collected for that particular year was only equal to half the actual cost of keeping a child. The 1927 Welfare Act gave the Manager of the 'Home' statutory custody, overriding parents' rights, legislation

permitting the Home authorities to settle with parents the amount of maintenance to be paid.

The Secretary/Treasurer kept the Methodist circuits informed throughout the Wairarapa, Manawatu, Taranaki, Hawkes Bay and Wellington, writing an annual Appeal to the people of these circuits to contribute in whatever way they could. This could be in the form of finance or material goods such as food etc, and this often led to gifts of produce for Harvest Festival, and preserving jars being returned from whence they had come, for preserves for the following year.

The Committee's relationship with the Master and Matron underwent a gradual change over the years, from just receiving their report, to involving them fully in Committee proceedings. This became formalised when management practices changed in the wider community.

Overall the children were as healthy as other children in the community. Children's health was checked on admission, the Doctor visited when requested, and children went to the surgery for non-urgent treatment. There was no such thing as a 'sick parade'. The Home was extremely fortunate to be served by only two doctors during the whole 58 years, firstly by Dr. Norman Prior followed by his son, Dr. Owen Prior.

Over the years the Committee spent considerable time and effort endeavouring to heat the large concrete building, with limited success. The building remained standing during the 1942 earthquake, though some cracks appeared in the walls, and like most buildings in Masterton, all chimneys had to be replaced.

Adoption of children was not encouraged by the Committee, and despite receiving many requests very few children were adopted out. From the 1970's adoption was not even considered as an option. Records kept by the Committee (now in the Church Archives) were sometimes very detailed, sometimes sketchy, and some records no longer exist. (The authors undertook to return to the individuals concerned any personal documents discovered, where possible).

Arranging for children to go away on holiday was an issue, and decisions had to be made whether to allow them to go to a relative or to willing church members from the lower North Island. Many children made happy contacts with families in the Methodist community, some maintaining these connections over many years.

The former Committee members present identified some periods in the Home's existence when the relationship between the Master/Manager, Matron and children was strongly family-oriented, and noted that children from these periods have tended to maintain their association with each other, and sometimes the staff, even if somewhat loosely.

In the latter years of Homeleigh's existence, with social norms and patterns changing rapidly, children were coming into care for different reasons from those in earlier years. Childcare philosophies were also under review, and were tending towards fostering children as a prelude to restoring children to their own families. The writing was on the wall for traditional large children's Homes.

At about this time there was also a growing demand for increased home comforts for both staff and children. A detached house was erected for the Manager and Matron and their family, and consideration was being given to a flatting situation in which to assist older children's transition to independence.

Children numbers were declining throughout the 1970s, and the Department of Social Welfare was requesting small family homes for up to 10 children with a Manager and Matron. Referrals slowed right down, and some referrals required complex care that was beyond the scope of Homeleigh.

The ever present financial struggle, combined with a shift away from the Committees' original goal of keeping families together, required the Committee to review its objectives. The Committee's conclusion was that it should close Homeleigh, and make a philosophical shift to supporting families before they disintegrated, rather than picking up the children afterwards.

And so began the Masterton Christian Childcare Programme, currently assisting 30 families today. The Wellington Board supports this programme financially with $20 000 per annum.

The Committee members acknowledged that not all children would have left the Home/Homeleigh with good feelings. ".....it wasn't a glowing success story for every child in there," — just as every child from an intact family may not recall their childhood as totally happy. It was recognised that some former Home children might prefer to leave this chapter of their lives closed. (This might help explain why the researchers experienced such difficulty in tracking down many former Home/Homeleigh residents, particularly those from the latter years.)

Today, any person who meets a former Committee member or who reads the Home Committee minutes could not help but be impressed by how diligent and conscientious the members were about their role, and the compassion that they practised in their endeavours to provide care for successive generations of Home/Homeleigh children.

"We did try to do the best for each child who came into our care....whether we knew what was best was another question."

Extracts from the Minutes 1975 to 1980

(Dubbeldams in charge; family-based childcare policy under strain; Department of Social Welfare more involved; motel-type accommodation for adolescents; pet dogs forbidden; financial crisis looms; staff training obligatory; Jean Shelton, then Crawfords in charge, then Jackways; down to 13 children; decision to close; arrangements made for care of children; Homeleigh closes, mothballed, then sold. Homeleigh Christian School)

10 April 75 After discussion it was agreed to undertake a review of the present policies of the Home, both as regards the support and welfare of children, and the staffing arrangements. The review to cover the current thinking of the DSW and the other welfare organisations on child care.

29 May 75 Continuing monthly discussion on the review of the objects of the Home
Visit from Health Dept dietician, whose visit was generally helpful.

10 July 75 Director of Social Welfare Masterton outlined the Department's position in reviewing the objects of the Home. He indicated that there was much need of a home of the type at present being run, but that the rate of his Department's staff turnover could well mean that his officers could be unaware of the existence of Homeleigh. He encouraged the Committee to continue with the good work they have been doing with family groups and with children in the 5-12 year age bracket, and suggested that as long term objectives the Committee might consider the building of family units and motel-type flats for adolescents. He suggested that the ideal size of the Home would be 24/25 children, with one staff member to each 7 or 8 children. He also suggested the Committee consider mixed sleeping arrangements, particularly children of the same family units, thus helping to utilise the facilities that the Home has available.

11 Sept 75 Approval given to obtain an old car engine for the boys to strip down— approval to purchase an older going car was deferred.

7 Oct 75 Report tabled on the proposal to build motel-type accommodation: the Committee's basic findings state... "there is a primary need for this, particularly to cater for the 16-18 yr age group, possibly senior students at school as well as young people who have gone on to work. Its purpose is to provide a continuing influence and a stable relationship. The accommodation should be physically close to

the Home, and not be too large — suggested two units, each accommodating 4 people. The units could serve an educational use in teaching younger children cooking, washing and ironing, could also be used for weekend accommodation for youngsters who have moved out and who wish to return home to continue their family relationship. Under some circumstances the units could be used for solo parents visiting children, or even residing in the unit for a short time."

13 Nov 75 Agreed that staff members be provided with one uniform per year each.

12 Feb 76 It was decided that in the meantime children would not be permitted to keep pet dogs on the Home premises.
Staff training courses are available thru DSW, NZ Council of Christian Social Services, Massey University, Wairarapa Community Action Programme.

30 June 76 Annual Report Report on the Objects of the Home—"although there are few orphans these days the number of children in need seem to be on the increase. The real concern is to provide suitable accommodation and supervision for 'graduates' of the Home as they take up employment and make their way into the wider world.
The rapidly rising cost of living is reflected in this year's accounts, and expenses are under constant review."

11 Nov 76 All work on the staff house completed.

10 Feb 77 Jean Shenton now Acting Matron. George and Kathryn Crawford also have duties at the Home.

30 June 77 Annual Report 20 children in the Home, "our aim to rehabilitate families continues, and for the first time ever all families were able to care for their children in the May holidays.
The rising cost of care continues to cause great concern, each child costing about $51 per week. In 1976 our deficit totalled nearly $11,000 or about $9 per child per week. With inflation continuing unabated, major fundraising and public support is essential."

9 June 77 Miss Jean Shenton resigns. Mr and Mrs Crawford to continue acting manager and matron.

8 Sept 77 Mr Bert and Mrs Elva Jackways welcomed as Manager and Matron.

13 Oct 77 20 children in residence.

10 Nov 77 Finance Committee recommends that urgent steps be taken to increase the number of children in the Home, and that parents be advised and requested to increase maintenance payments. Also tabled a statement setting out our current financial crisis that was to be sent to the Director DSW Wellington, Members of Parliament, Minister of Social Welfare, Council of Christian Social Services etc etc...

9 Feb 78 13 children in residence. Re financial crisis— Secretary to contact the Management Committees of Whatman Children's Home and Sedgely Boys' Home with a view to presenting joint submissions to the Department of Social Welfare.

11 May 78 Considerable correspondence reported with MPs and various councils re the financial situation. As the Minister is sympathetic to childcare, the Committee decides to take no further steps until the Budget, and if unsatisfactory arrange for a deputation to call on the Director-General of Social Welfare.

30 June 78 Annual Report: "The financial situation is so serious that consideration is being given to closing Homeleigh. The effects of continuing inflation and the low level of occupancy are the major concerns. Whilst there has been an increase in government subsidies the future remains in doubt. The occupancy rate this year has ranged from 13 to 27, averaging 18, while the capacity remains at 29. We are considering extending our traditional role of caring for families, but as these mostly involve relatively short term placements we see the occupancy rate continuing to fluctuate. Regardless of the financial situation we question the relevance of large institutions and the type of care which we offer in the 1980s. Our work seems to be limited by the constraints placed upon our buildings and our organisational structure.... '

10 Aug 78 Future of Homeleigh: The Committee met with the Wellington Methodist Charitable Endowments Board, NZMSSA—all concerned with the changing role of childcare and the present financial difficulties—and the visitors gave their support to closure if this was in the minds of the Committee. After an extensive discussion the following resolution was passed:-

" The Management Committee gives thanks to God for the service to children which Homeleigh has offered since 1921, but with great regret the Committee has decided that Homeleigh will not remain open in its present form beyond the end of 1978."

14 Sept 78 Future of Homeleigh : The Committee indicated that it would not enter into correspondence over letters in the local paper. If considerable correspondence continues the Secretary would issue a press statement advising of this fact, and stating that the Committee is willing to meet any interested persons, including the Wairarapa Headmasters Association.

12 Oct 78 Present:- Daphne Pratt (Chair), Christine McLeod, Isobel Campbell, Helen Prior, Peter Glensor, Frank Clark, Keith Costello and Bruce Smith. Bert and Elva Jackways present by invitation. Future of Homeleigh.....Report from Bruce Smith on arrangements for each of the children presently in the care of Homeleigh.

16 Nov 78 Closing Function to take the form of an Open Day, to be held on 3 December. The Committee was to contact as many former residents and staff as possible. The final Christmas Party to be held on the 6th of December 1978, and a Farewell Luncheon for staff on the 7 December.

14 Dec 78 Final Payments will be made to all current staff on Friday 15 Dec.
An approach had been received from the Board of Chanel College about leasing Homeleigh as a girls' boarding hostel from the start of the 1979 school year.
Security arrangements made with Armoured Freightways Ltd, (2 calls a night, 1 call a day, 7 days a week).
The Open Day on the 3 Dec had been very successful and a tape of early reminiscences recorded.

15 Feb 1979 Disposal of Property ... Departments of Internal Affairs and Education no longer interested in using Homeleigh as a hostel for Tokelau girls.
Chanel College Board is no longer interested in using Homeleigh as a girls hostel, but seek first option to purchase if the property is placed for sale on the market.
An offer received from the Outreach Ministry who originally wanted to lease the Home and purchase the staff house, now advise that they would prefer to purchase both the Home and the house. The Committee agreed to advise the Wellington Board that they could see no present use for the property and unless the wider Church has a real use then further discussions should take place with Chanel College and the Outreach Ministry with a view to selling the property rather than leasing.
The Committee's attention was drawn to the large number of preserving jars in the Home's possession. To be offered to local churches.
Letter of sorrow and support to be sent to the Dubbeldam family on the death of their son Jerome, who had recently died as a result of a fall on ice in Holland..

12 April 79 Meeting in Wesley Room, St Lukes on the community needs for child care
Decided to retain the name Homeleigh for the Committee's continuing child care work in the Wairarapa area.

31 May 79 The Outreach Ministry no longer has an interest in the building, which is currently being used by a travelling theatre, and for occasional courses by Massey University Social Work Department and by Russell Langton (CAP).

30 June 1979 Annual Report. Further to the 1978 report, the Children's Home closed in December 1978, all children were satisfactorily placed, the last passing from our care in January 1979. About half returned to their families, and the balance have been placed in foster homes or other institutions. At present we are actively researching need in other areas of child care in the Wairarapa.

26 Oct 79 After discussion it was resolved that the Homeleigh Committee commends the work of the Child Care Committee, and sees it as a natural progression of the work which has been done in past years.
Request received that Homeleigh be made available as a reception centre for refugees.

7 Feb 1980 All arrangements have been made for the mothballing and care of the building.
Last Entry in Minute Book: 7/2/1980: "The next meeting will be held as and when required."

Homeleigh Today

Homeleigh was sold to The Reformed Church of Masterton in November 1987. The church decided to keep the name 'Homeleigh' for the building, and Homeleigh Christian School was set up, with classrooms in the former dining room on the ground floor and in the upstairs dormitories.

Homeleigh now displays the following signs at the main gate:

Reformed Church of Masterton
Services Sunday 10am and 4pm

Homeleigh Christian School

For Christ and His Kingdom.
Enquiries.

Postscript: After Homeleigh Christian School opened, teachers noticed that cars would often stop outside the gates, silver-headed people would walk slowly along the fenceline looking in, then drive away. Queries revealed that these were former 'homies'. The Christian School now approaches all such visitors and invites them into the building, and welcomes visits from all former Home and Homeleigh children.