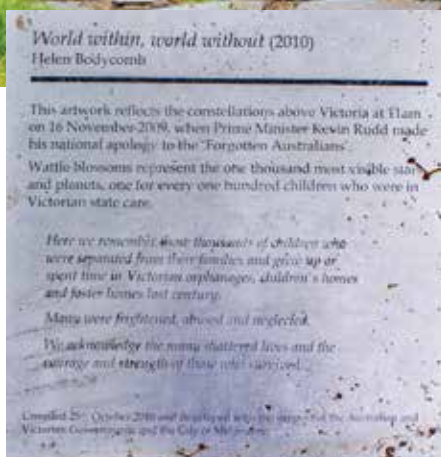




We Remember You...

OPEN PLACE

Support Service for Forgotten Australians



WORLD WITHIN, WORLD WITHOUT (2010)

Helen Bodycomb

This artwork reflects the constellations above Victoria at 11am on 16 November 2009, when Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made his national apology to the 'Forgotten Australians'.

Wattle blossoms represent the one thousand most visible stars and planets, one for every hundred children who were in Victorian state care.

Here we remember those thousands of children who were separated from their families and grew up or spent time in Victorian orphanages, children's homes and foster homes last century.

Many were frightened, abused and neglected.

We acknowledge the many shattered lives and the courage and strength of those who survived.

Unveiled 25th October 2010 and developed with the support of the Australian and Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne.

We Remember You...

On 25 October 2010, a permanent memorial to Victorian Forgotten Australians was unveiled at Southbank Melbourne by the Honorable Lisa Neville, Minister for Community Services.

The memorial recognizes all Victorian Forgotten Australians who, as children, spent time in Victorian institutions, orphanages, children's homes or foster care during the last century.

It is a lasting recognition of the experience of Forgotten Australians. It provides an opportunity for the wider community to reflect on the experience of Victorians who grew up or spent time in institutions or out of home care.

There are over 100,000 Forgotten Australians in Victoria today. All have their own experience of their childhood. All carry these experiences with them today.

The stories contained in this little volume are a part of the history of Forgotten Australians; a history that must never be forgotten.

These are stories that tell of family breakdown and separation, of the loneliness of children and their sufferings while in the "care" of those who should have known better.

These stories tell us about endurance and resilience. Despite many struggling with their past, each, in their own way, has made a life with meaning and purpose.

As a community we must remember these stories.

**SIMON GARDINER, MANAGER OPEN PLACE
25 OCTOBER 2015**



Photos are of boys and the grounds of Box Hill Boys Home courtesy of Ray and Joe Turner and Alf Moseley.

school days

BILL BELBIN



PREAMBLE

From a distance of nearly seventy years, one reflects on events of childhood, a childhood spent mostly in the care of the Salvation Army in the Box Hill Boys' Home.

It is commonly thought that any kind of family upbringing has to be better than being raised in an institution. Such a belief does not necessarily correlate with life's realities as I found in conversation with non-home kids, now adults, who experienced a brutal upbringing by a violent parent or parents and who were not always able to provide three meals a day.

the norm so we siblings did not see each other for several years. Departmental records show I was an "at risk" child, at risk of serious injury, or worse, from my mother. Like many children wrenched from the family environment, separation formed a legacy that I will take to the grave. But I know too, that this negative experience also had far reaching positive outcomes in my subsequent life, thanks to the Home and the Salvation Army.

As contributors to this small book have focussed on their life experiences in the Boys Home, I have chosen instead to visit standouts from my educational experiences at the Boys' Home State School, (? No. 4151) and afterwards. All the boys attended the school from the ages of 6-14.

In the immediate post-war period in Australia's history, many families, like mine, functioned in austere post-war economic circumstances, rationing of food staples, and returnees from the war-front who deserted their wives and children to chase new dreams. Welfare support by the respective governments was at that time of little material assistance. The extent of the associated psychological trauma visited upon abandoned wives and children may never be fully known. What is known is that in these hard times, various arms of the church, Catholic, Anglican, Methodists, Salvation Army, Presbyterian, etc. stepped into the breach to house the children. The mothers were largely left to their own devices.

Such were the circumstances of my mother. And as the youngest of her three children, I was apparently sufficiently precocious as to make management of her affairs extremely difficult, even nigh on impossible, resulting in my being the first of her children "admitted to care" followed by my older brother and sister, the latter to the Salvation Army Home for Girls in Camberwell. Separation was apparently

IN THE BEGINNING.

Departmental records have my admission to the Box Hill Boys' Home listed at age 3yrs and 10months, i.e. nearly 4yrs old in 1946. I left the Home late in 1957 after an unbroken period of 12yrs. The school was based entirely within the Home grounds. My earliest recollection of school days is in "the bubs" grade under Miss McAlister, (apologies for any misspelling of names), a saintly woman of whom I still have fond memories. Miss McAlister was not a young woman as I recall, and had to deal with a diverse range of boys variously deficient in social, psychological, physical and toilet training needs. Miss McAlister was a positive first contributor to my subsequent thirst for knowledge.

If, as I think, "bubs" was grades one and two, then grades 3 and 4, (always two classes to a room), were a period of rapid learning in more ways than one. The teacher was Mr Power, who doubled as school sports master. Mr Power was a dead-eye-dick with a tennis ball thrown at inattentive students, of which I was sometimes guilty.

He must have been at the school for some time, for in later grades he noticed in me an ability in athletics, (running and jumping), and encouraged me in this. Our school competed annually against other local suburban State schools, Chatham, Surrey Hills, and Canterbury etc. Event winners later participated in a schools Inter-Regional competition held in Carlton. To win at Carlton, (twice), setting a couple of triple jump records in the process, was a peculiar experience for this home kid. Mr Power's support and encouragement did wonders for the ego.

The fifties were a time of corporal punishment in schools, and though very fearful of "getting the strap", my attention seeking behaviour sometimes resulted in me copping "the cuts". Some kids got the strap more than others, and, amazingly to me, did not flinch when receiving it, even when they got "six of the best". One can only speculate on how they developed the capacity to absorb pain.

In grades 5-6, Mr Provan, an elderly, good and gentle man abhorred corporal punishment, so copped some flak from us kids. To my shame, my mind is drawn to one hot day when we prevailed upon him to take us swimming in the Home pool. For reasons I cannot recall, during the swim session somebody started to boo Mr Provan. Others of us joined in "the fun" and the swimming session was concluded. I can hear his words now so very clearly, "I take you swimming and all I get is boos". Mr Provan deceased within days of this event.



The fifties were a time of corporal punishment in schools



Another stand-out teacher was Mr "Beaky" Trimble, in charge of grades 7-8, and whose manner was "straight down the line". He took no nonsense from the likes of me and dealt me "the cuts" more than once for my misbehaviour. During Mr Trimble's farewell speech to grades 7-8 and after he announced he would not be returning to the school the next term, I clapped my hands in joy, only to receive glares from all the "big kids", fourteen years old or thereabouts. Most of these boys (including my older brother Ned) would soon "move on" from the home to Lyndon Lodge, a Salvation Army transitory hostel in Auburn. The "big kids" in the classroom obviously knew more of "Beaky's" good personal qualities than I did, or perhaps I was a too self-absorbed eleven year old to see them. Immaturity and insecurity was then, as it is now, a personality trait that has forever dogged me.

The school ran carpentry classes for grades 7-8 and possibly for some others. These were headed by Mr McInerny. Mr McInerny conducted weekly "sloyd" classes in rudimentary woodwork, use of the plane, file, saw, etc. He was an older man with facial twitch, (which I would sometimes mock behind his back). He was a returned serviceman who always wore his RSL badge and doubled as the school headmaster. As one who was not then, nor since been any sort of handyman, I could still admire his skill and dedication to the task. The "sloyd" room was, at any rate, an interesting place to be in, filled as it was by many scale models, made, presumably, by previous kids and teachers.

SECONDARY SCHOOL.

These days, I tell the story of how much I must have loved school, especially year eight, because I spent three years there. Several of us boys completed grades 7-8, and then repeated grade 8 because, at thirteen years of age, we were still too young to be sent to the hostel, and not old enough to leave school. It seems this information may have been communicated by the Home to persons in the wider community, resulting in the Blackburn Dry Cleaning Co agreement to sponsor these boys to attend "Outside School". This was an experiment, without precedence, at the Home. A sort of trial, however had been conducted the previous year with two "legacy kids" who resided at the Home so maybe management figured the project was worth the risk.

So, there we were, about 10 of us, trialling our new reconditioned bikes round and round the Home quadrangle. Lots of practice was necessary because most of us had never owned or ridden a bike before. Here we were, newly kitted out in uniforms, set squares, triangles, protractors and kitbags, being given license to ride on the roads to secondary schools several miles distant. As luck would have it, I and a couple of others, drew Burwood Technical School to be taught alien subjects like pottery, solid geometry, technical drawing, woodwork and sheet metal etc. alongside algebra, English, general maths and Social Studies. True to form, I did not do too well in the trade subjects.

Mr Du Vergier was my Tech school English and Social Studies teacher and Form Master when I somehow graduated to Year Nine. His very patient, kind and gentle traits left him vulnerable to the likes of me. It was not long before I was giving him a hard time in the classroom, showing off and mouthing “clever” comments. At the end of one day when I thought I had particularly excelled at making his life difficult, we home kids were all back at the Home doing our evening thing. With several others of my peers we were practising for our Home showpiece “Pyramids”, during which, after each drill, we would all return to make a line ready for our training officer’s whistle to signify moving into position for the next drill. The (lay) training officer interrupted proceedings for an announcement. “Belbin” he said, “Today I received a phone call from your school.” I think my heart missed a beat, and, muttering a quiet “uh oh”, I waited for him to physically deal with me, something he had done once before. He however continued speaking, “Yes Belbin, the school rang to say how well you are doing there”.

That night seemed a very long one. In the morning I rode quickly to school and approached Mr Du Vergier with tear filled eyes to tell him how sorry I was for my behaviour toward him. From that time on, that man had the most attentive student. At the end of year school “Speech Night” I was awarded the school prize for English and Social Studies, and gained my Junior Technical Certificate, (having managed) having managed somehow to gain a pass in all subjects.


Having now achieved a formal qualification for employment, the Home now had the problem of what to do with me, The Welfare Dept. people wanted me to remain at the Home and continue at school, while the Home management argued I was now “too big for the other boys”. The outcome was a device, (read “arrangement”) that achieved my removal from the Home into the big wide world. Therein lies another story.

OTHER RECOLLECTIONS.

Besides those mentioned above, there were many others in the course of my school and Home life to whom I am indebted, including short-term teachers, lowly Lieutenants, Captains and the exalted Majors. To each and every one goes my gratitude for leading this immature, frustrating, annoying and self-centred boy towards achieving, in later years, a Higher School Certificate, Certificate in Youth Work and a degree in Social Work, (B.S.W). Despite my many idiosyncratic shortcomings, life has indeed blessed me with the best possible wife, three lovely daughters, five grandchildren and a safe home in which the children grew up and still visit. For me there will always be ‘what if’ questions but no one to blame for my life’s early events. It seems, upon reflection, many of the players were victims.

To my many long standing Home peers I say thanks for tolerating me as much as you did, especially in sports contests, our “hut” building, our secret clubs (until they were banned), our “flick” nights, shared holidays at Parkdale and Mildura and nights of entertainment by groups such as the Victorian Banjo Club.

The Salvos, being a Christian centred organisation, inculcated within the boys to a greater or lesser degree, their church’s doctrines. Although they and I now walk separate paths, there is comfort for me in one of the biblical Psalms. (139: 15-16).



“My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths
of the earth; your eyes saw my unformed
body. All the days ordained for me were
written in your book before one of them
came to be.”

(NIV)



My Life as a Child in State Care:

BOX HILL BOYS HOME

ALFRED MOSELEY



I was born at Eltham in Victoria on the fourteenth December 1942, the fourteenth child in a family of fifteen children. At the age of four I was transferred from the Kardinia Children's Home in Geelong to the Box Hill Boys Home run by the Salvation Army. My first memory of life was in the toddlers section at Box Hill, formally known as Section Three or Number Three. This number three at the time of 1946 housed about fifty boys between the ages of four to eight.

We were cared for by a couple, Captain and Mrs. Steer. They were excellent carers. They lived in a cottage facing Canterbury Road, and attached to the cottage were dormitories. Behind the cottage was a large play area and around this were various buildings: bath and showers, laundry, woodshed, lavatory, press room and dining room. The whole area was kept clean and was a compact space with access to all facilities. These are my first memories.

The uniformed Salvo carers were graduates from the Salvation Army College in Melbourne. They mostly came from working class families with no experience in raising children. Thankfully the State laws requiring that everyone attend school from age six to 14 years and that schools be financed by the Education Department. In our case at Box Hill, there existed three large school buildings on site (probably constructed early 1900s) to accommodate 150 boys aged between five and fourteen. So the Salvos had no control of our education; in fact, the school buildings and playgrounds were out of bounds in every way to all Salvo staff.

As proxy parents the Salvation Army provided 150 boys with food, clothing and shelter. The whole estate was divided into four sections catering to four different age groups. The four groups regularly came together for meals in the big dining room. At mealtimes grace (a short prayer) was sung before and after each meal. The dining room was also used as a meeting room every Sunday for religious instructions with songs of praise to the Hebrew Sky God (Jesus' father).

Living in a Salvation Army institution gave us an excessive exposure to religiosity. The persistent talk of a God in the sky constantly observing our every action and reading our every thought was oppressive to a young mind. Not only did we sing grace six times a day all year round, we were required to hear a 15 minute Bible reading every day before school. Then on Sunday mornings we spent an hour or so hearing some of the senior officers ranting on about God's love. What's more, after Sunday lunch we would be marched down to the City of Box Hill to a so-called citadel for two hours of more religiosity. On looking back at it now, I can see that the early Salvos were religious fanatics.



When I turned 8 in December 1950, I was moved from the toddlers section (No. 3) to the number four section. This section catered for 8, 9 and 10 year-olds. Again, number four was managed by a married couple, Mr and Mrs Bryant who had two daughters in their early teens. Mr and Mrs Bryant were, oddly, non-religious and had no Salvation Army affiliations. They didn't even attend any religious meetings or prayers. They were excellent carers and treated their charges very well. They did not use any corporal punishment or demeaning language. Number four accommodated about 40 boys. The building was constructed in 1927 and officially opened in 1928. It was known as a model orphanage, purpose-built for the Salvos who probably raised the funds with the State government on a 50/50 basis.

The left wing was a two bedroom flat for the Bryant family. Further down the left wing was one of the boys' dorms. In the right wing was another dorm for more boys. Also in the right wing was a play room and washroom. There was plenty of surrounding ground at number four, and some boys had their own garden growing flowers.

I must say something here about the meals served to us three times a day. These followed the same pattern; every day was the same.

8am Breakfast: hot porridge and two slices of white bread with margarine and syrup followed by white tea.

Noon Lunch: hot meal of meat and veggies, then dessert and white tea.

5pm Evening: hot soup and two slices of white bread with margarine and jam and white tea.

There was no morning tea, afternoon tea or supper. The evening meal ended at 5:30 and no more food was had till 8am next morning, about 15 hours later. It was like a starvation diet throughout childhood.

Food was constantly on the boys' mind because of the scarcity of food. The officers and staff had their own separate dining room and we often heard of the nice meals they were getting. The boys never got cereals, eggs, toast, sausages or bacon. Some of the boys, the long-termers, didn't know what toast or sausages and gravy were like. Even now the old boys still comment on the poor feeding routine.

The activities and entertainments at Box Hill Boys' Home during my time in the 40's and 50's was quite extensive. Once a month, on a Saturday night, movies were shown in the dining hall on a 16mm projector by the Home's manager, Major Stephenson. All the boys and staff would see some cartoons, a documentary and a feature film.

In hot weather the on-site swimming pool was opened to the boys – though excluding toddlers. The pool was also available after school hours and on Saturday afternoons during summer months. Cubs and scouts were conducted twice a month in the evenings under the direction of qualified outsiders. There was also a gym and a sports ground.

All the cubs and scouts uniforms, athletic whites, school uniforms, marching attire, swim togs and brass band paraphernalia was supplied by the Salvation Army. Every child wore leather ankle boots and the 'Sunday best' clothes were a tweed suit, shirt and tie. Even on summer holidays and other outings the boys were dressed in their khakis and sun hat. Appropriate clothing and footwear was always provided. From all this we can see now that the Salvation Army Organisation of Victoria (Southern Command) exercised their duty of care to the best of their ability in the Spirit of Christian Charity.

However not all was good at the Box Hill Boys Home. When we reached the age of ten we were transferred from the comforts of the Bryant's at number four to section number one. I was very apprehensive about this. Number one section was the last stage of the progression from age four to age fourteen. At fourteen or so each inmate was mature enough to relocate to a private family, to a hostel or to work on a farm.

There were two dormitories; bed wetters and non-bed wetters. Attached to the non-wetters dorm was a private bedroom with its own back door and outside steps. This private room was the adult carers' over-night room to safeguard the sleeping boys. There was a second door leading into the main dorms proper. There were about 30 or 40 beds in this number one complex.

It was here that I encountered my first paedophile. He was a non-Salvationist of about 40. His name was Mr. Sangster. We didn't know his first name. In those days adults were addressed as Mr or Mrs. Even Salvos and other staff addressed him as Mr. Sangster. We did not know if he was hired by the Salvos or the State Government. He wielded a leather whip, more or less for show, because I can't recall seeing him applying it to any one as punishment. The man, it seemed, was a life-long bachelor. He was probably non-religious even though he attended some of our religious meetings.

His paedophilic routine begun after lights out. He would slip through his bedroom door in the dark and come to my bedside. Sitting on my bed he would kiss me on the lips as I lay on my back. He was wearing his day clothes. Sometimes he had bad breath and the stubble on his face was like sandpaper. This kissing usually lasted no more than five minutes. Then, in the night-light coming from the toilet area, I would see him move to other boys in the dark further along the dorm. I didn't know which other boys he was molesting. I was molested in this way by Sangster most nights for a year or more. None of the boys spoke about his visits to their bedsides. Though I felt imposed upon by Sangster's molestations, I managed to survive the perversions without much ill effects.


What troubled me most about Box Hill Boys' Home was the brutality sometimes inflicted on the boys. Some of the Salvo officers carried leather straps to discipline offenders. These straps were mostly used across the hand six times per punishment; other times across the back, buttocks and legs. This punishment was meted out in the presence of other boys as a warning to impending wrong-doers. There were threats of strappings even for minor offences. Standards of corporal punishment may have been different in those days; however some Salvo officers lashed the boys without any restraint whatsoever. This brutality was inflicted only on boys of 12, 13 and 14 year-olds. Toddlers and post toddlers were not brutalised in any way.

I struggled to understand the stark contrast between the incessant preaching about God's love and the underlying brutality dispensed by some of the sadistic officers. It seemed that as the boys were moving into their adolescence the discipline of the place became stricter. A Captain Berry and Captain Thomas, both married men living on site with their wives, meted out brutal punishment with straps. The worst of all was the general manager who oversaw the entire operation of the Home, a Major Stephenson who used his fists to punish offending boys. Some boys were rowdy extroverts who flouted authority, especially the fourteen-year-olds. Major Stephenson would send these boys to the shower block, but only one at a time, where he would use his fists against defiant boys punching them in the face and slapping about the head while shouting verbal abuse at them. I once saw this Major Stephenson pick up a boy by the lapels and slam him at a brick wall. The boy, on the ground, screamed in terror as Stephenson kicked him repeatedly. The boy's wrongdoing was to have torn the cover of his Salvo songbook torn.


This brutality carried out by adult "God-lovers" turned me off the Christian religion. When I was growing up at Box Hill I always had a sense that living there was an unnatural setting for children to be raised in even though the first six or seven years I was well looked after.

When I was 11 ½ I was introduced to a couple, Mr and Mrs Mayall and their twelve-year-old son, Jerry. The introduction was organised by the Child Welfare Department and the Salvation Army. This was a preliminary to the view of adoption. Over some months I spent weekends with the Mayall's getting to know them. For me, this was a wonderful experience of seeing the outside world, travelling in trains, eating new foods, going to movies and meeting large numbers of new people.

On 20 December 1954 the deal was finalised. That day I left Box Hill Boys Home for good. Mother-to-be, Mrs. Mayall (Elsie), came to take me to my new home in Footscray. Months later the Child Welfare Department proceeded with the legal requirements to effect a legal adoption. Soon after, my surname was changed through deed poll. The 20 December 1954 was 6 days after my 12th birthday and five days before Christmas. This was the start of my new life.



It was known as a model orphanage, purpose-built for the Salvos who probably raised the funds with the State government on a 50/50 basis.





my life

JOE TURNER

I was removed from my parents care at six months of age. I therefore have very few memories of my family. The only information I have has been passed down from my elder brothers and sisters and the newspaper reports of the court proceedings (see Ray Turner's story)

Being young and undernourished, I was placed into a facility specifically for infants. I was then transferred to the Box Hill Boys Home, run by the Salvation Army. Upon my arrival I was placed into Number 3. Despite now being at the same "Home" as my two brothers, my brothers and I were never informed of this by the carers. We discovered the truth from my mother, on one of her rare visits). We were never allowed to have contact with each other at any other time.

Matron Fleming and Captain Bull were in charge of Number 3. Captain Bull was an angry and violent man. I remember spending most of my time in Number 3 being very scared.

Upon turning 8, I was moved to the Number 4. I remained there until the age of 12. Captain and Mrs Steer were in charge of Number 4 and were very good people. During these years I was placed in the "Opportunity Grade" at school, which was for the slower learners. All of our schooling took place on the premises. The students in the "Opportunity Grade" were kept back at each grade level for two years, so that when I eventually ceased my education at the age of 14, I had only reached Grade 5. When I left Box Hill at 15 I was still unable to read.

My most intense recollections of physical and sexual abuse at the Home occurred while I was in Number 1, under the supervision of a man named Mr Sangster. I was in Number 1, from the age of 12, until I left Box Hill Boys Home at the age of 15. Mr Sangster was not a member of the Salvation Army. I was sexually abused by him on a number of occasions, but perhaps the most vivid memory was at the Christmas Party. The party was organised by Peters Ice-creams. Mr Sangster gave me my present then assaulted me.

Mr Sangster was well known for abusing boys in his "care". He always had two or three favourites, who were called his "bed warmers". These boys were sent to his bedroom, to "warm" his bed each night, and everyone knew that he would sexually abuse them.

Number 7 & 8 Dormitory were where the bed wetters were housed. They were forced to stand in front of their beds from 6:00 – 9:00pm, like statues, no moving or speaking. If anyone wet their bed, he would send them to have a cold shower, even on the coldest of winter nights. He would force other boys to watch them and ensure they didn't leave the freezing water. This resulted in one boy being sent to hospital with hypothermia.

Mr Sangster was a violent man, a paedophile and a sadist. He enjoyed handing out beatings, and he also enjoyed watching the boys beat each other.

There was no communication allowed between dormitories, however Ray and Robert (my brothers) and I would try at any opportunity to have contact. Our mother on her rare visits always turned up with a new man and told us that this man was our father. I didn't meet my real father until many years later.

Perhaps the most savage man at the Boys Home was Major Stevenson, the head of the "Home". I remember sweeping the yard on one occasion, as doing yard duties was one of my chores, the broom handle came off the base so I was told to take it to Major Stevenson. Major Stevenson, grabbed the handle out of my hands and started to beat me with it. He beat me across my back, legs and buttocks. I was 12 or 13 years old. This was not an isolated incident.

Shortly after I turned 15, I was ordered to go to the office. Without warning or any sort of preparations, I was told that I would be leaving that day. I was sent to Royal Park, where I was given some clothes and a suitcase and then moved on to a hostel called Lynden Lodge. As I was illiterate and had a stutter I couldn't hold down a job so I was asked to leave.

I was homeless and broke. I slept on the streets. I stole milk and bread money, left out by home owners in order to survive. I hitchhiked around Victoria looking for work and accommodation. I was charged with vagrancy and jailed in Pentridge for 21 days. I moved into a boarding house in Surrey Hills and began doing odd jobs. After eight months of working for the same man, he employed another labourer, who would become my good friend. We drove together around Australia looking for work. We had various jobs including pea and strawberry picking and working on boats.

Finally we obtained full time work at the Port Kembla steelworks.

Subsequent years were particularly difficult; I sustained a serious head injury and by misadventure spent some time in Goulbourn jail.

I returned to Melbourne and moved in with my eldest sister Maisie in Camberwell. Maisie had been adopted when we were first put into state care. Maisie now had five children and an alcoholic, abusive husband. After several further moves I eventually moved in with my brother Ray. We both enjoyed playing football and I had a permanent position in the Sunbury team. Ray always took care of me; however he always acted as my "boss" as he was older. Eventually I moved out and got a job working at a foundry in Footscray.

After these turbulent years, I eventually found myself in Sunshine, where I met my future wife, Mary. Mary came from a strict Maltese upbringing. Her parents wanted her to marry a Maltese man, however we did everything we could to find time to spend together. Mary helped find me a place to live and visited me often. One day Mary's mother came to see me; she was distressed saying that Mary was very ill. I replied that I didn't care about her illness, that I loved her and would stick by her. Realising the sincerity of my love for Mary, her mother began taking in my washing and bringing me meals. Mary was much better at finances than I was and managed my money for me. I was also lucky enough to secure a long term job with the Melbourne City Council (with Ray's help) and remained there until its privatisation.

In the nineteen eighties I began a career that has lasted more than thirty years. I am Magoo the clown. Clowns were something that I loved as a child. I was taken on an outing to the circus during my time at Box Hill. It now gives me a great pleasure to be able to make the children laugh and wonder at my magic tricks. I worked in the Moomba Parade over the years and I'm still going strong and loving every minute of my time as "Magoo the Clown".

By the time I was fifty five, Mary's illness was significantly affecting our daily lives. I left work to care for her, surviving on the carer's pension. We have two wonderful daughters who have grown up in a loving home. We are proud to say that they have moved forward with their lives and now have their own homes.

Mary and I support each other wonderfully and we now have a regular routine of activities. I did meet my father in later years with the help of Maisie. Over the years I have also had contact with my four siblings Maisie, Bob, Ray and Joy. My life has been shaped by what happened to me as a child; but I am happy that I survived and grew stronger in spite of everything.

KENNETH JOHN CARTER

my story

FEBRUARY 2004

My name is Kenneth John Carter. I was the youngest of five children (Franks, Rex, Marlene, Ralph & myself) I was born on the 29th April 1945 in the Melbourne suburb of Carlton, Victoria, Australia

I have discovered from Departmental files that my father had my mother admitted to Royal Park on numerous occasions and was paying 10 pounds a week for her and also two of my brothers and my sister even before I was born. My brother, Rex, stayed with Dad some of the time, but was later placed in the orphanage also. My father took me at two months to the City Mission; he started paying for me as well as the others. He could not maintain payments for all of us and, as happened in those days, we were made wards of the State. I believe my eldest brother Frank (who I only found out existed when I got my birth certificate), was not made a ward of the state. My father eventually went to work in Darwin to make more money so he could get his family back. He came back to Melbourne after two years and I believe, he tried to get to see my sister, I don't know if he ever tried to see me.

I found out when I was a teenager that I had a sister called Marlene, who was in another home somewhere, a brother Rex, (who committed suicide at 18 years of age after he left the institution) and another brother, Ralph. I have since been told that, for a time, when I was at Box Hill my brother Ralph was sleeping in the bed next to me. I do not recall this.

My earliest memory of my life at Turana was a place called "The Gables". It was the babies & toddlers section. I was just starting to walk; I was in a cot in a large room with many other cots.. I must have slept in that cot until, at 6 years of age, I was sent to the "Box Hill Salvation Army Boys' Home". I started in section 4, for toddlers (aged 4-8). It took me quite a while to settle in. Later I went to Section 3 and that is where the "horrors" began.

The man in charge was Mr. Bull, nicknamed by the boys "Bulldog". Many of us in Section 3 would wet our beds at night. Mr. Bull would make us all stand in the corner for around 8 hours. If we moved our head in any way, we were flogged with a strap in a whipping motion until we dropped to the floor, or until Mr. Bull got tired of flogging us. Mr. Bull would belittle us, by standing us on a table and putting nappies on us. We were sent to school in only the nappies, this continued for many months. We were between 8 and 9 years old at the time. Other methods Mr. Bull used were to say "you all keep wetting the beds, so I am not putting any food or drinks into you for a couple of days". We were also bashed frequently throughout the time I was in Section 3.

I was transferred to Section 1. It got worse. The officer in charge of this section was Mr. Sangster. He never wore a Salvo's Uniform, but casual clothes and suits, so obviously he wasn't a member of the Salvation Army.

I remember, within the first week of being transferred to Section 1, Mr. Sangster came down to my bed in the dormitory at about 9.30PM. He pulled my sheets back, removed my pyjamas and said that I was going to be one of his "pets". Then a few weeks later he tried to penetrate me, but when I yelled because he was hurting me, he realised I wasn't going to be of any value to him. So he threatened that if I said anything, he would flog me until I could not walk again.

As we were still wetting the bed, he (Mr. Sangster) used to pull us out of bed and rub our faces in the sheets. Then stood us at the end of the bed and made us strip, and then we would get six of the best on the hand. Another of Sangster's punishments for wetting the bed was to be made to run across the assembly yard to the shower block and made to take a cold shower any time of the year. If we refused to do this, he would put the fire hose on us until we turned "blue". One time after this treatment I collapsed, so he "ran" me around the assembly yard to get my circulation back. I now think of this man as a cruel, sadistic paedophile. I also received many floggings from Sangster, because he said I was uncontrollable.

I was put into an opportunity class, but all they did was work us LIKE SLAVES with very little schooling and this is why I believe now I never had a proper education.

The welfare department sent some people out to the home. Before we were interviewed Sangster said "Any of you blokes talk about how I run this outfit 'ere, you'll get more of the same". I told everything to the welfare officer, it was all written down, but nothing was ever done.

I ran away from the boy's home when I was about 12 years old. I was brought back to the home. Major Stevenson, who was in charge of the home, took me down to the shower block. He grabbed a huge hunk of wood and used that hunk of wood to strike me across my back several times.. He then grabbed me by the back of my pants and the scruff of my shirt, held me above his head and threw me against the brick wall of the shower block. He noticed that I wasn't moving, so he carried me to his own home, which was on the premises. He kept me in his home for a week until I recovered. He fed me, gave me ice cream (which I had never had before). He told me to kneel down next to him and we would pray to be forgiven, for we had both sinned. He said to me "DO NOT TALK ABOUT THIS TO ANYONE" which I didn't. The other boys in section 1 knew about my horrendous bashing.

Sangster was the cruellest. Sangster, along with Stevenson and Bull, abused me the most. They were cunning; these sadists and paedophiles. They went for those who they knew never got visitors. They knew these boys had no one to talk to and to tell. They knew what they did and they knew it was wrong.

A Mr. Flower came out from the Children's Welfare Department. He interviewed the whole school and collected information. I thought, "Right, we've got this bastard". But nothing happened.

It was around about this time that I really began to wonder who I was, where did I come from and what family did I have? Lots of other boys had parents and family who would visit and bring them lemonade and lollies. NO ONE EVER DID COME TO VISIT ME IN ALL THE 18 YEARS I WAS LIVING AT THE HOME. NOBODY CAME, NOT ONCE.

I knew I must have family somewhere. Whenever I asked about this, I was told I was nothing that is why you are in the home. I also asked how old I was about this time, and was later given a card, which said "To Ken, Happy 12th Birthday on the 29th of April". I then asked if this was my birthday? I had never been told when my birthday was. I did not know how old I was and could not read the card. They rudely replied, "Yes dickhead, it is". (I think Stevenson may have sent the card).



{ Looking back I realized It took me ten years to sort my life out. I also realized that it was me that did the sorting.

At around 14 years of age, I was sent back to Turana where I had spent the first six years of my life. By now I was labelled “an uncontrollable child”.

For the next four years I was treated as the “uncontrollable child”. I spent time in Turana, time in hostels, more time in Turana. I asked questions about the continuing brutal treatment I received. I asked questions about my family. There were no answers. Nobody listened. As I got older I was given dead end jobs. When I was finally told at 18 that I had to leave Turana as I was too old I said: “But this is my home!” I didn’t know how to cope with life outside the institution

They took me up to the country to work on a farm; too far away to go back to Turana. The boy on the farm next door was Robert Guy. His father Frank Guy offered me a job, to which I accepted. Frank became the father I never had and his wife, son and daughter treated me like family (although the girls of the family took a long time to accept my so-called manners and behaviour).

Looking back I realized It took me ten years to sort my life out. I also realized that it was me that did the sorting.

I started to shear. It gave me a skill that took me all over Australia. I became a gun shearer and sheared at the Royal Melbourne Show. With a shearing mate Ted Hicks I moved back to Melbourne to work with Wridgways removalist. This was a good move. I met my wonderful wife Dianne and was smart enough to buy a removalist ruck.

We have two boys now aged 25 and 27 and they work in our business. I have a three month old Grandson and to see him and know I was just a few weeks younger than him when I went into – so-called care-it really makes you think how anybody could do this.

My wife Dianne found a course to work on at home, to try to help me to learn to read and write. We did this every few days for about three months but it became too hard. I had trouble with my eyes etc. and realised it was really too late for me to learn.

I purchased another truck and, with sheer determination, made a go of it as well. I never had anything when I was young and I wanted to better myself and be able to give my boys what I had missed out on.

I worked with Wridgways for quite a while. But my back which had caused me great grief when I was shearing finally gave way.

My Specialist, Mr. Bromburger, looked at the X Rays of my back. He wanted to know what had happened to me when I was a child, what injury I had suffered. I couldn’t tell him. But I knew the injury obviously related to the flogging etc. with Stevenson, when he laid into me behind the shower block.

During the period of my recovery from the back operation, my mother-in-law saw an article in the daily newspaper about a woman with the same name as my sister Marlene. After investigations we found it was not my sister, so the newspaper ran a story about my search for my sister and family. Marlene saw the newspaper story and after ringing the paper for my number, Marlene phoned me, she had contact with my brother Frank and also my Mother who had gone to Sydney not long after I was born. I also had a lot of phone calls from people who knew my Father when he worked with them also some knew my Mother when she was at school. Unhappily my mother, father and Frank have since died.

While I was recovering from my back operations I looked after our two small sons (18 months and 3). My wife Dianne managed our Milk bar / Mixed business we had purchased in Mooroolbark and I helped where I could for 16 months. (We rented out our house in Vermont South so that we could still earn a living). When we took over the business it had been run down, we increased the turnover and when I was able to go back to work we then sold it, buying the business I have today.

I bought my existing business when it traded as Ringwood Septics and I employed two workers and manufactured two septic tanks a day. The company now has approximately forty employees with around one hundred and twenty employed in associated businesses around Victoria. Today our products are sold in many countries, which has given me the opportunity to travel to many countries.

I have always fought hard for everything in my life. I am still fighting for information on my brother and my family. The Welfare put us all in this situation. I never asked to be put in those hellholes and it is up to them to see what they can do. All I ask is for the Welfare to find Ralph for me and give me any information that is available. My sister-in-law Carol has started to help Marlene and I look for Ralph.

They deprived me of my family, they deprived me of my parents and they deprived me of my dignity and of everything. They kept me like a number and just kept telling me that I was scum and a nothing and that is what I was there for. After a while you started to believe it all, but I am a person who defied them and I can now stand tall with pride, because I AM SOMEONE. I DID IT MY WAY.



The front steps at Bidura Home in NSW

JOY LEE

sister of Ray & Joe Turner

I was born on the 2nd of April 1944 and was the 5th child in the family.


In November 1944 the Turner family fell apart. The children, two girls and three boys aged from 7 years to 6 months were taken away by the authorities, due to parental neglect.

My eldest sister, aged 7 at the time, took on the responsibility of looking after us. She had to beg for food at the local corner shop. Often all we had to eat was broken biscuits.


Our parents were both jailed for 3 months in November 1944. The court case was reported in the Herald newspaper. My sister and I were taken to the Royal Park depot. Two of the boys were placed into the Salvation Army Box Hill Boys Home. The other brother Joey was put straight into the Royal Children's Hospital as he had TB. He stayed in the hospital for approx 18 months and on release from hospital was also placed into the Box Hill Home.

What I have found to be a most disturbing fact is that the 3 boys did not know that each of them were in the same home as they were placed in separate sections of the home. The authorities at the home did not have the decency to bring them together. Approximately 3 years went by before they were told. This was only due to the mother coming to the home to make a rare visit.

At 14 months old I was fostered out to a lady, a war widow, who had a 9 year old son. I called her Mum. I was not aware of my background until I was told that I was fostered and the person that I had always called Mum was not really my mother. Although my foster mother was good to me and provided me with a home, she was very strict. I was always reminded that my parents were no good and that I should be very grateful that she got me from the home. Everybody knew that I was a Ward of the State so I was stuck with that stigma. I don't think that there was a person around who did not know my background. My real name was Jean Turner but my foster mother called me Joy Buckton. I did not know this until the time had come for me to start school.



Searching and perseverance over a huge amount of time has given me the greatest gift of all: “finding my own family”.



Once a year a lady from the Welfare Department come to our home to my foster mother and myself. Going back all those years ago I can still remember her name, Mrs Palmer. I would pass her house on my way to school.

School was really never a really happy time for me as every teacher knew my background. Being a ward of state carried such a stigma. I had to go to the Headmasters office every time I needed a new book or pencil. I always felt very anxious asking for anything as I had to identify myself as Jean Turner, even though I knew myself as Joy Buckton.

My foster family were members of the Fairfield Salvation Army so from the time I was fostered, I too attended. I remember one day at an early age we were at the Salvation Army Congress Concert on a Saturday night at the Exhibition Building. One of the acts was the boys from the Box Hill home doing their gymnastics. My foster mother said to me: that “Your brothers are probably up there”. This was the first time I knew that I had any other family. When I asked later about it I was told that children are seen and not heard. No more was spoken about the matter and I was not permitted to ask any more questions.

I became very friendly at Sunday school with a girl called Janice Theaker. Her parents were posted at the Box Hill Boys home. Every Sunday they came to The Fairfield Salvation Army Corp services bringing Janice and her sisters to Sunday school. I very often was invited to have lunch at their place, which, of course was the Box Hill Boys Home. It was never mentioned to me by my foster mother that this is where my three brothers lived. To this day I will always remember how close I was to them. Nobody said anything but they all knew.

When I married in 1961, I needed a full birth certificate to claim the Government new home grant. When I received it I was provided with the details of my parents and siblings. As I was the youngest it had the names and ages of all my sister and brothers. I did not act on finding my family until the passing of my foster mother in 1974.

I rang the Welfare Department and asked about my parents. I was then told about the jailing of them in November 1944. I went to the archives and found the information that was published in the Herald. It certainly gives you a chilling feeling reading about yourself and coming to the fact that you were that 6 month old baby mentioned in the newspaper report.

I then went to the electoral roll to find anything on my parents, as I had their names, birth dates and place of birth from my birth certificate. After much searching I found my father’s name and address in Geelong. I wanted to find someone who give me some information about him. So I searched the Geelong telephone book looking for a neighbour who lived closed by. I found a name and I rang and spoke to a lovely man. I explained what it was all about. He said he did not know my father but always saw him walking past and his observations were that he was a respectable chap. I decided to make the phone call which would have been a great shock to him and arranged to meet him down in Geelong for lunch. To me he was a stranger and it was quite apparent to me that he was not really interested and had not seen any of his children for years, although he did have more contact with Maizie over the years.

It was now time for me to continue to find my siblings, so I again took to the phone book and rang every Robert Turner there was in it and asked if they were ever in the Salvation Army Box Hill Boys Home. Coming to nearly the end I finally struck the jackpot, the answer to my question was yes. I finally spoke to one of my brothers, his reply to me was “our sister always told us we had another sister but we did not know”. A week later Robert and his wife Margaret organised a meeting at their home in Doveton so that we could all have a reunion (unfortunately my sister was estranged and my brothers had not heard from Maizie for years, her life had taken a different path).

I did have the privilege of meeting my sister on a few occasions. She still had the vivid memories of our very early childhood and told me of how she looked after me when I was a baby. She was only 7 when I was born and she could still remember the corner shop where she would beg for food to feed my brothers. Life took its toll on Maizie who is now at peace in heaven; I only wish circumstances could have been better for her.

It has been approximately 35 years since our first meeting as one family. We have found Aunts, Uncles, cousins etc who were able to fill in some of the early parts of the family history.

The satisfaction you feel is that you now have a sense of belonging, especially when your new found family says “she certainly does look like our family”.

Searching and perseverance over a huge amount of time has given me the greatest gift of all: “finding my own family”.

Joy Lee
Formally Jean Turner

It was the year 1960.

THERESA TURNER

ST JOSEPH'S HOME KENMORE, GOULBOURN

It was the year 1960.

Theresa Turner: St Joseph's Home, Kenmore, Goulbourn

It was the year 1960. We were four, five and six years old when our mother abandoned us! She said she dressed us up all nice the day she left us. It was just before Xmas. It was because our father walked out on Mum and left her with four children under the age of six. Dad told me he said to Mum: "Joanie I'm leaving you." Mum was crying her eyes out but there was no stopping him. He kissed the youngest one, Carmel, on the forehead as he walked out the door and took off down the street with a car load of mates. Mum was running after him yelling, "Kevin, please don't leave me!" That was it.

Mum got in touch with an old work mate of Dad's. He was keen on starting a relationship with Mum but he said I can't take your kids. Mum went to the church for help. I could understand all what Mum went through but there was no excuse to abandon us. She walked away never to be seen again. There was not even a visit or a letter; nothing.

We were left on the front door steps of the orphanage with the nuns in black standing there to greet us! My first impression was that they were witches! Turned out that they were to become the witches from hell! The nuns of mercy who had no mercy! There was no escaping from that place which was to be my prison till I reached the age of seventeen. When we were taken inside we were all separated from each other. We were never to see our brother Kevin again until years later.

Somehow I knew that things weren't right. All I could do was to sob my eyes out. I was left at the bottom of the stair case until I could cry no more. I got no attention. Finally after what seemed hours I was taken to the dormitory where I was shown my bed. There were so many beds; all lined up in neat long lines. I had an eyrie feeling; one of isolation.

It wasn't long before my sister was taken away and sent to a strangers place! I was placed in a foster home but was to return to the orphanage after two years. They no longer wanted me because of conflict with their biological daughter. She was jealous of me and a lot of fighting took place so the parents decided to send me back to the house of horrors.

I started to become afraid of the nuns as I soon learnt about the floggings that would often take place. Sometimes you would be flogged over the most minor of things. The nuns would wear the black leather strap tucked under their belt, alongside a string of large black rosary beads.

I remember I would sob for my mother and I would cry out that I want my mummy. After awhile the sobbing for her stopped and in my mind I imagined that my mother must have died. So I just lived with an emptiness and longing inside of me to belong to someone. I wanted to have someone to visit me and would often sit on the veranda when other children were being visited. I would wait for hours in the hope that someone might visit me. Nobody ever came.

It would have been nicer if the nuns had come up to me and explained to me why it was that my parents could not visit. But there was no explanation and I was left to my own thoughts. I can remember from an early age trying to fit in but often being rejected or even bullied by some of the older girls. I'd find myself crying a lot and getting picked on by the others. Until one day I decided to fight back and then it seemed that I didn't stop fighting. I became a very angry and sad child.

I was placed in a foster home but was to return to the orphanage after two years.



It was the only way to survive in there or you would be picked on and you would end up a victim. I do believe that I became quite a bully as they would call it today. No one was game to come near me. But if you didn't fight and stand up for yourself you would be bullied too so it became my way of coping.

When our mother left us there I found out years later that she was again pregnant. She kept the youngest child Carmel. Our mother went on to have two more children to another man and she had even given one up for adoption somewhere between myself and the youngest one Carmel. She never sent a letter or a card. There was never a visit. She just got on with her life! I believed for a very long time that she had died.

I didn't ever think of my father. One day the nuns told me I had a visitor. I was about eight years old by then; I remember the day as it was snowing. I was told to clean myself up and then I was to meet my father in the nuns' parlour. I was so excited and I thought he had come to take me away from this horrid place. I remember running to him and he swung me around in his arms. I was so happy. Then he left and I was never to receive another visit.

He did write for a while but the letters soon stopped. I kept any letters I received, in a plastic bag which I carried with me. Eventually the bag of letters disappeared and I believe they were taken from me. The nuns would read all our letters before they were given to us. I wasn't to see my father again until the age of twenty one.

Kathy, my eldest sister, was separated from me and we weren't allowed to mix with the older girls. It seemed that we became strangers to each other even though we were both in the same place. We weren't very close at all in the orphanage and even though I looked up to her it seemed that she had a dislike towards me. Often when she'd see me she'd punch me, a knuckle punch, she didn't like me at all and would get a wet tea towel and flick my legs with it until they would bleed. I couldn't understand why but it must have been jealousy or something. We think now that it may have been all the sexual abuse that she endured during her young life. She was always getting into trouble.

Kathy was placed in the kitchen a lot as she was a good worker but I often saw her getting into trouble and being flogged. There was one time I remember she had stolen a cake and she shared it amongst the girls. She was found out and flogged in front of all of us. I felt helpless as I watched her being strapped and I felt weak with fear. There were to be many more floggings not only of others but myself too. I hated the floggings as they were harsh. I felt like a very bad child and I hated myself and hated those nuns. I often had nightmares and in my dreams the nuns were chasing me trying to kill me. In my dreams the nuns were flying on their broomsticks always just behind me. A lot of my dreams were of trying to escape. There was no escaping though and I was to live there for the next thirteen years until I left at the age of seventeen.

I can remember that we all had our own numbers to identify our belongings. My number was 24. We all had seven hankies each and I can remember one day I lost one of my hankies. I knew I'd be in trouble as we had to line up at the end of each week and count our hankies into a bucket. I searched for hours but couldn't find it. I found a piece of rag which I tore up and I was able to count seven "hankies" into the bucket. The nun would watch the bucket in front of her whilst we counted our hankies into it. I was found out when the hankies came back from wash day. I was in trouble again. I was taken out the back and laid over the table to be flogged yet again. I never cried as I thought if I cried I'd get into more trouble for crying. Afterwards I'd show the other girls the welt marks and bruises I had endured.

It seemed there was no end to the floggings so I was constantly worrying about the nuns. I found myself hiding from them if I saw them and I could never look into their ugly faces as they scared me so much. I often used to wonder if the nuns were human like us because they were so covered up in those black habits. They never showed their hair in those days and can remember being a bit shocked when I first saw that nuns had hair!

We used to have to wear our clothes for a week and when it was time to change them we all lined up in front of these big cupboards and our clothes would be thrown at us. I hated the clothes that she picked out for us but we had no choice. Sometimes she'd fling the clothes right at our faces! Our bras were always too big on us and quite ugly.

We often passed the time playing jacks. We'd collect a few stones, five stones in all, and use them to play the game. I was always the best player as I had the biggest hands and often caught all five on the back of my hand. We seemed to play that game forever! We played a game called elastics, jumping and twisting into the elastic. It was one of my favourite games along with hop scotch and marbles!


We never had any privacy as the nuns would often stand there whilst we had our showers. One nun used to yell at us: "Wash between those legs". She would time us and watch our every move. One girl decided to wash her hair in the shower and we were told not to on that particular day. The nun pulled her out of the shower and started punching into her. We were in our teens when this happened so a bit of privacy would have been nice.

Rhonda was my only true friend in the orphanage. There was nun who didn't like me too much and she would go out of her way to separate us. It was like she didn't want me to have anyone as a friend. The one thing we did need in that place was friendship. She did the same with another friend June. I still don't understand why she picked on June so much; she would never hurt anybody. She helped more than anything and yet sister Dom would always manage to pull June aside and make her cry! It was years later after I left the orphanage sister Dom rang and she told me that June McKenzie had died. I felt a great sadness and I realised that it was Sister Dom's way of acknowledging our friendship. She knew that I had cared about June.


We never went to hospital or to a doctor for anything. If we were ever sick we were treated inside the orphanage. I can remember when I got sick with the mumps I was isolated from all the others and put in this unused dormitory. I must have been in that dormitory for a few months and the only person I saw was this nun who would bring me up a homemade egg flip drink.

It was just a mixture of raw eggs. I couldn't drink it and would wait till the nun left and tip it down the toilet. I ended up losing so much weight that I became very weak and the nuns thought they had best try to fatten me up. They mixed me up a milk drink with some delicious powder I think it was a malt powder it was the best thing I'd ever tasted and I soon fattened up.

When I was younger, I must have been about ten, myself and two other girls decided to run away. I really didn't have anyone to run to but the other girls knew where they were going. I just followed them. We packed up one of those little suitcases with a few apples and a bottle of drink then off we went down the long driveway then onto the highway. We got a few kilometres from the orphanage and the nuns were coming back along the bridge after taking the older girls to basketball. They spotted us on the bridge and we were made to get in the car. We were asked a few questions then escorted up the stairways to the dormitory where we were flogged over the bed. As I was being flogged I wet myself with fear and thought I'd be in more trouble; but nothing was said.



There was
never a visit.
She just got
on with her
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had died.





Every school holidays we were sent to strangers' places. I hated it. I'd be put on the train and then on arrival I'd meet up with these people who I didn't know. I was so shy I couldn't talk to them. Some of these people sexually abused my sister. I was there when it happened! We were on the couch with this man who was looking after us and he started to play the typewriter game where he'd touch our chest with his fingers like a typewriter. When he was doing it to me I didn't like it as it was hurting me so he sent me off to bed but told my sister to stay with him. That's when he did things to her and I knew there was something wrong but couldn't do anything about it. It was only years later that my sister Kathy told me what had happened. He had fondled her and molested her. I was very lucky not to have been sexually abused. I had one incident with the priest but I was never abused by any of the older girls or at any of the places I went to for holidays. My sister though seemed to cop it where ever she went.

One of the nuns would often roam the dormitory at night like a shadow. She would creep about watching out for any misconduct, such as placing your hands between your legs. This was forbidden. The blankets would suddenly be swept off us in the middle of the night and we would be dragged out of bed. We were told that we were filthy children then given a whack over the legs. Our arms would be placed in a cross over our chest. For quite a number of years I often crossed my arms over my chest when I went off to sleep.

Sometimes we would have to go to confession. Most of the time I was used to the confessional box at the orphanage with the priest separated in another space. This time though it was held in a room. In a corner of the room Father McMahon was kneeling behind the large wooden genuflect. I felt uneasy about being so close up to the priest but I knelt down and said the usual prayer! Most of the time I would make up some of my sins but some were true such as telling lies. I told Father that I had been having rude thoughts. He said: "Tell me about these rude thoughts my child". I said that I'd forgotten. I was worried he might tell the nuns about what I had thought and I'd be in trouble. He was our parish priest who often said mass at the orphanage. Anyway after I said to him about the rude thoughts he suddenly got up and asked me to come over and to tell him more about these rude thoughts I was having. He took me over to the far corner of the room where there was a big old wooden chair. He sat down and pulled me towards him. As he was talking he suddenly placed his hand up my dress and was fondling my breasts! I didn't move as I was in a bit of shock as we were always told that a priest was as close to God as you could ever get! I knew it wasn't right but I just went into a trance like state trying to pretend this wasn't happening. He said: "You are well developed for your age my child". I was 15. Then he blessed me and forgave me my sins.

Later on, when I was back at the orphanage, the nun who was in charge showed up, with Father McMahon at her side. We were all in the basin room, as we called it, having showers and cleaning our teeth getting ready for bed. She escorted that priest through the shower rooms whilst we were getting dressed and washing. I was horrified as I knew he shouldn't be there. I knew he'd be perverting on us! I wanted to run up and yell at him: "Why did you do that to me?" But I thought better of it as I knew I'd be in big trouble and would have been flogged. So I kept quiet. That little incident was to change my whole view of the Catholic Church and of God. I wondered what God would make of this. I didn't trust men after that. It wasn't till years later, after leaving the orphanage that I told people.

When the orphanage was closing down and we were all being sent to different places I couldn't believe I was leaving. In my mind I thought I was to be there forever. When we left there were no good byes, no hugs or wishes of good luck. We were just told we were leaving and that was that. I was lucky enough that a lady named Mrs Smeaton said that she would take me. She used to take me for Xmas holidays. She welcomed me into her home even though she had 12 children herself. I didn't fit in. I was so shy I just felt like I didn't belong anywhere. I left Mrs Smeaton's in search of my own family I wanted to find my sister so headed off to Geelong.

The years after I left the orphanage were very hard. I was a bit of a lost soul not knowing where I was going I knew no one. I soon learnt that a lot of my relatives lived in Geelong. I ended up finding my Auntie Theresa who was dad's sister. I was to learn that we had a rather large family. My father had twelve brothers and sisters but none of them ever came to visit us whilst we were in the orphanage.

I got married at the age of 23 and had two children Jeremiah and Billy. My boys were the best thing that ever happened to me. I tried hard to be a good mother but the marriage wasn't a good one and there was a lot of fighting throughout the marriage.

I stayed in the marriage for nearly twenty years but finely divorced at the age of 38.

For many years after I left the orphanage I found it very difficult to socialise, to the point that I'd have panic attacks if I knew I had to go out somewhere. I have recently found out that it is an illness called social phobia. It effects your everyday life to the point where keeping a job is difficult and any type of socialising is very difficult. I feel that the 14 years that were spent at the orphanage contributed to my social fears.

It was not long after the divorce that I lost my son Jeremiah. He died of a heroin overdose. On the night he died I wrote a letter to God asking him to show me a sign. It was a letter I wrote from my heart. I believe that God answered my letter that very night after the funeral. I had gone to bed early tired and exhausted from the day's events. I had just dozed off to sleep when in a dream like state half awake and half asleep, I heard a loud knock at the door. It was similar to the knock Jez would make. I felt a whooshing feeling coming towards me, as if whoever it was in a hurry. Then he touched me on my head and an electric feeling went through my arm. I was fully awake by this time. I knew straight away that it was Jez.

I went into a world of my own after I lost my son and found that I spiralled into a deep depression. I felt I was in between heaven and earth! My son Billy was struggling too. We were all suffering our own battle with grief! My husband Andy helped me through it and I got help with an antidepressant which saved my life. I will always remember my son. We all loved him through all the good times and the bad times.

I made a movie of my family and sent it to my mum. My Mum loved it and for a while it helped us all to connect. Dolly, one of my sisters who was only 10 years old at the time, wrote a beautiful poem, the rainbow poem. I hoped the rainbow with its colours would bring us all together. But it didn't work like that. I tried so hard for six years to get the family together but there was too much conflict. Dolly's rainbow just faded away. Sadly Dolly later took her own life. The poem is now lost.

The only colour of Dolly's rainbow that is left is Carmel, my youngest sister. She is still in touch with me today. I was so sad that my mother couldn't see the beautiful colours. She abandoned us yet again

I continue to keep in touch with Carmel and she has been a true friend.

I got to know my father just before he died. On and off over the years he would ring us, just out of the blue. I never truly got to know him but the impression I had of him was that he was a bit of a character. He was sorry for what had happened to us and he was riddled with guilt. He said it was like a cancer eating away at him. We spent a couple of weeks with him just before he passed away and we got to know him. I liked him as a person.

I met a wonderful man after my divorce. His name is Andy. He has been my saviour. I met him two years before my son Jeremiah died of a heroin overdose. We were meant to be together. It has been thirteen years now and he is the most wonderful man, strong patient and supportive.

My son is at the Eastern cemetery in Geelong and I always make sure that his flowers are high above all the rest of them! These days I live a peaceful life, in a little place called Lal Lal, half way between Geelong and Ballarat in Victoria. I have the best of both worlds; the choice to go into the city or stay here in the bush. I have two dogs and a cat. My dogs are the ones who keep me sane. They always insist on going for walks so they get me out and about. I am happy in my life and have a good man who loves me and I have my son Billy who loves me too. What more can I ask for? I'm happy in la la land!

**THERE WAS A SONG THAT ALL OF US GIRLS USED TO SING.
WE'D SING THE SONG ON THE SCHOOL BUS AS WE HEADED OFF
TO SCHOOL AND IT GOES LIKE THIS....**

Oh the Kenmore girls are happy and so we ought to be,
We never fight or quarrel, we never disagree!
One day when I was walking a lady said to me,
If you belong to the Kenmore girls you'd better come with me.
So she took me by the hand and tried to drag me in
But I got my fist and knocked her stiff
Oh the Kenmore girls are happy and so we ought to be!

KEVIN RICHARDS

I was born in Mildura on the 18th March 1935; the fifth of six children. The other members of my family were my father Albert, my mother Edith and my brothers and sisters; Evelyn, Bill, Dawn, George & Alan. Our mother died in 1940, just 2 months after our father joined the army.

We moved to Maryborough soon after to live with our grandmother. Evelyn went to work at the Maryborough Knitting Mill and the rest of us went to school except Alan, as he was only three. We lived in Maryborough for about 4 years in two different houses and going to two different schools. Our father would come to visit now and then, when he was on leave. The story goes that he came home while Evelyn was in hospital and split us all up.

Bill went to work on a farm, Dawn was placed in a home called Moreland Hall in Coburg I think. Alan & I were sent to Northcote Children's Home, near Bacchus Marsh. It was built to house English migrant children in 1937. Lady Northcote the wife of Lord Northcote, the governor general of Australia left a grant in her will to have this property built. The land was donated by William Angliss.

This home was built on the cottage system. With 10 cottages built in a semi-circle, with a kitchen, dining room and recreation room in the centre. We would go there for breakfast. I forget what we did for lunch, as the school was almost next door we possibly went there for lunch too. Out cottage mothers would cook the evening meal. The cottages were pretty basic. With 1 dormitory with 10 or 12 beds, a room for the cottage mother, kitchen, dining area a lounge, bathroom and a small alcove to keep our clothes in.

One thing we did have was plenty of room to run around. There were plenty of rabbits, so the older boys would set traps and snares to catch them. We were only there for 8 or 9 months as it closed down at the end of 1944 as there were no more children coming to Australia because of the war. George, Alan & I were sent to St. Johns Home for Boys in Canterbury. Two other Australian brothers went with us. The rest of the children were sent to Molong in NSW. Northcote reopened in 1948 when migrant children were once more sent to Australia after the war. I only remember one boy from there. He was Charles Dickens. He gave me an old bible which I still have.

Before we left Northcote we planted a lot of gum trees. When I went back there in 2004 the place still looked the same, except the trees are now big.

I remember the first day we arrived at St. John's. The three of us were sitting on an old couch outside the Wardens office crying, because we thought we had been sent to Bayswater. The main building at St. John's was an old mansion, donated to the church to be used as a children's home in 1924. Upstairs were dormitories, where the younger boys slept. There were also rooms for the female staff, along with a bathroom and first aid room. On the ground floor was the Warden's Office, a meeting room, kitchen & dining room. The older boys slept in a sleep out. The sleep out had about 40 beds, all positioned with the foot of the bed to a quadrangle. The wall at the foot of the beds was about 1.2 metres high with a canvas roll up blind to the ceiling. Old iron beds and not much bedding, we must have been tough to survive. The showers, with their ripple iron walls and 2 baths were situated in the middle of the yard. Above the sleep out on one side were the rooms for the male staff. On another side was a balcony for a few working boys and a room on the end for the cook.

Behind the sleep out we had room to run around, there was enough room for a cricket pitch or for end to end football. We had a visit one time from the Richmond thirds football team and the great John Coleman. He would not kick our ball because it was out of shape. When we first arrived at St. John's, Alan and I slept in the mansion and George went straight to the sleep out. Underneath the mansion was the chapel where we went for prayers every morning and twice on Sunday's. It was a very nice chapel. Some of the boys returned there to get married including my brother George.

We all had our chores to do. We had to make our own beds every morning and then there was the sweeping, dusting, dishes to be washed as well as the toilets and bathrooms. We had teams of children and each team would have a certain amount of jobs to do. Every month we would swap around so the same team would not be doing the same thing all the time. When it came to polishing the dining room floor, there would be about 10 children lined up across the floor, with their tins of Johnson's wax and a rag each. To polish the floor we would have one child sitting on a bag while 2 other children pulled him around.

We went to school, firstly to Balwyn state school and then to Box Hill High or Tech. Some of the boys went to Richmond. We walked to Balwyn, home for lunch and back to school again. To get to Box Hill Tech we would catch a train to Mont Albert and then walk to school. The High School children would go all the way to Box Hill station. I always seemed to be getting the strap at school, either for not doing my homework or some other small thing.

I started in grade six went to Kew primary school for 1 year before going to Box Hill Tech. While I was at Box Hill Tech I was captain of the Waratah 3rds cricket & football teams. I was never a bright student and left at the end of year nine. I failed science and technical drawing in year nine and was supposed to go to night school to gain a pass. Another boy and I would hitch hike to Richmond and go to the pictures. At St. Johns we had a cricket team and we used to play in a junior inter-church competition. When I was 14 I opened the bowling. I would often come home with 4 or 5 wickets. My best day was 9 wickets in two innings. We also played the odd game of football. To get to cricket matches we used to travel in a Ford Prefect Ute. We later had an Austin van, which was a bit better.

{ We were also fostered out at Christmas time for about 1 week.

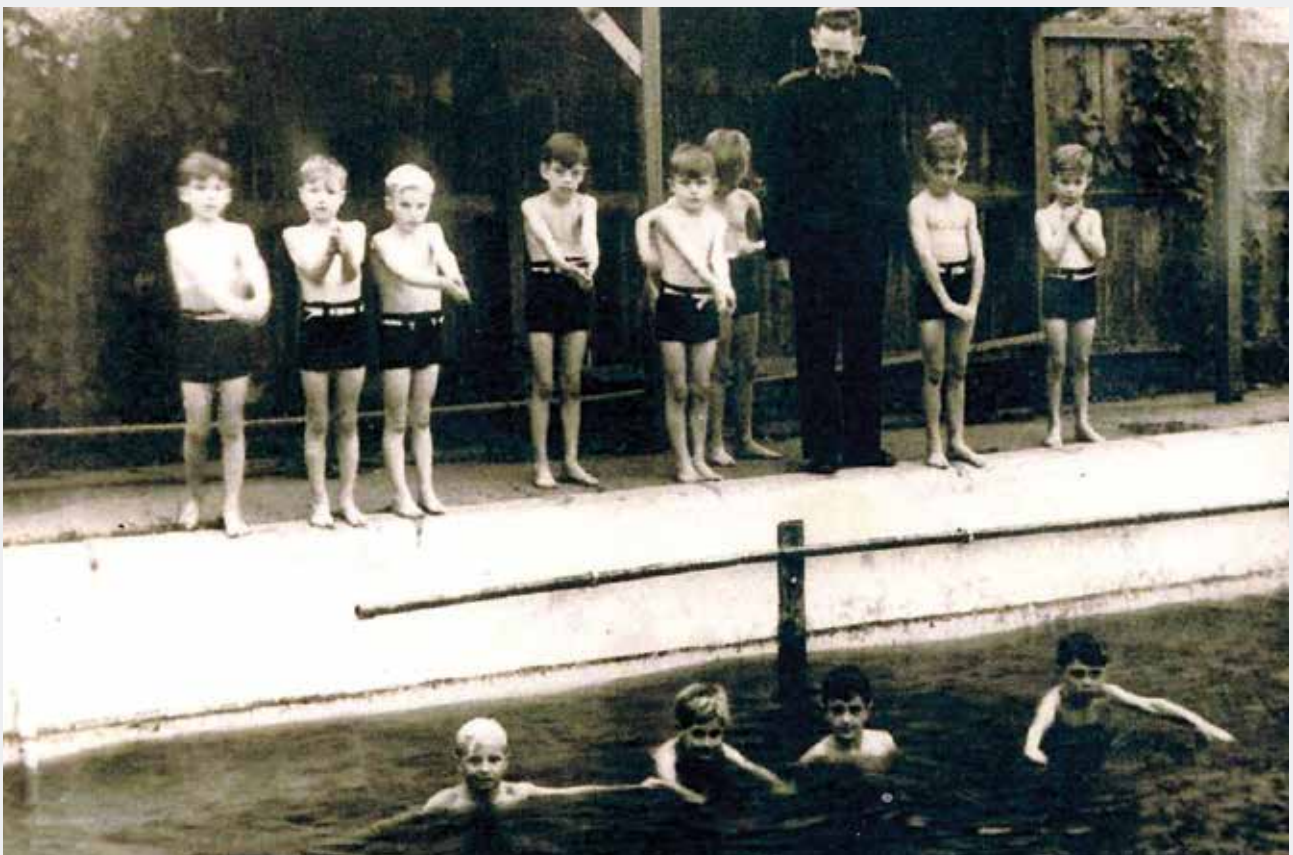
We were allowed visitors on Sundays. My brother Bill and his wife and their daughter Gaye would come to see us now and then. Grandma Maxwell came a few times and our dad maybe three times. The last time we saw our dad was in 1946. We were also fostered out at Christmas time for about 1 week. Alan and I went together to a few families. The last family that we went to was a Mr. and Mrs. Kidd. We got on so well with them that we never went anywhere else. They wanted to adopt us but they could not because we were wards of the state. We stayed friends with them until they died. We also had 4 girls from Box Hill that came to visit us fairly often. Alan and I went to one of their houses and met the parents of 2 of the girls. When they came we would go down to the park and play until it was time for them to catch the train home.

I was never a fighter. I remember one time we were cleaning our shoes and I asked Bill Hawkins to pass the nugget and he attacked me, blackening both of my eyes. After this incident we were the best of friends. One day while Ray Willis "one of our housemasters" was giving me a strapping on my backside, I grabbed the strap out of his hand and ran away with it. He was yelling for other boys to stop me but no one did. I took his strap all the way to Surrey Hills Park and threw it up a tree. I then returned to the home, where I was sent back to retrieve it. So I went back and found it. When I got back I still 6 of the best.

While we were in St. Johns, we used to have a jumble sale once a year. We had an old cart with wheels like gig wheels, which we would pull around the streets of Canterbury and Balwyn, collecting all sorts of things to sell on our stalls. When I was old enough I used to pull it around while the other kids went from house to house to collect. I used to love

racing it down the driveway to Rochester Rd. I would have a couple of children out on the road to watch for traffic. Harold Partridge and I used to do some work on the wardens garden next door. One day I was pulling this cart home with Harold in the back, as I wheeled into the driveway one wheel hit the kerb. The cart landed upside down and Harold crawled out without a scratch.

The worst punishment I received was about 40 whacks on my backside by Neale Malloy "the warden", with a piece of 2X1 for getting a hole in my jumper. When I left school I went to work for an electrical engineer in Melbourne for about two years. I slept up on the balcony for a while, before being transferred to the hostel in Auburn. I did not like living in Melbourne so I asked my brother Bill to get me a job on a farm, which he did. I have never lived in Melbourne since 1952.



My name is Phillip Chalker. I was born in 1954. I had 2 older sisters, Sandra and Judith and one younger brother, Robert. I was 5 years old in 1959. I remember I just started school. I was at school with my two older sisters when a policeman and a lady came and got us. We hadn't done anything wrong. So they put us in the police car and took us to our mum. We thought there was something wrong with mum and dad. The lady took some of our clothes. We gave Mum and Dad a hug and then they took the four of us to Allambie; my two older sisters Sandra 9, Judith 7, Phillip 5 (me) and my little brother Robert 3. I also had three other siblings, Francis, Andrew and Billie. I never saw them again until after I left the home.

I was put in there with my sister and brother from 1959 to 1962 until I was 8. In 1962 I made a complaint about a teacher that sexually assaulted me. My brother and me were transferred from Allambie to Box Hill Boys Home. I was there until 1968. In 1964 and 1965 I was mentally, physically and sexually abused by a Salvation Army officer. The Police have his name.

In 1968 I was transferred to Turana. The excuse that was used to explain why I was taken to Turana was that I had tried to sexually expose myself to a lady when I was coming home from school. This is not true; ask any boy that been in Box Hill Boys Home. We used to go to Burwood Tech that was some kilometres distance. We were driven there in the red Salvation Army truck with the badge on the side door. All the boys who went to the school would go in the truck. No one walked. The truck would bring you back to the home too.

All the boys travelled in the truck. My brother stayed at Box Hill.

At Turana I was put into lock up with another person. He tried to sexually assault me. I had had enough. I nearly killed him before the staff came.

So they put me in a room by myself and in the morning let me out with everybody else. I did two years in there for nothing. I turned 15 in Turana. I was then transferred to Try Boys Hostel in South Yarra. I got a job. Then at 18 I went in the Army Reserves for about 18 months.

In 2005 I was living in Donald, a town in the Wimmera. There I met I met John, Ella and other Forgotten Australians. Caroline came to St. Arnaud and helped us start a support group. Our group is still going. Our group now takes in the areas covered by Donald, St. Arnaud, Horsham and Warracknabeal.

I have been active in trying to get things done for Forgotten Australians. I have spoken to members of parliament and the press. I have been on A Current Affair. I think I have helped to bring about the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. In 2010 I wrote a letter to the Queen about us kids in the home and about the kids the British Government sent out from Britain. I told her about what happened to us in the Home, about how we had been abused and neglected. I asked her to do something about this. She wrote back to me saying it was up to the Australian government to do something about this.

We now have a Royal Commission going on and this might help bring about some justice for Forgotten Australians.

Box Hill
boys home



PHILLIP
CHALKER

RAY TURNER

I am one of a family of five children: Maisie, Bob, Ray, Joey and Joy Turner. In 1944 we were all taken into the care of the Children's Welfare Department.

A report in The Herald states that our parents, Maisie Victoria Turner and Robert Turner, were sentenced to prison for three months, for wilfully neglecting their children.

According to The Herald the magistrate stated that it had been "cruel and heartless neglect with the children left undernourished and in a filthy condition."

Bob, Ray and later Joe (after being discharged from hospital) were taken to the Box Hill Boys Home run by the Salvation Army. We never saw our two sisters again until over 20 years later.

There were 4 different parts of the home divided into numbers 1, 2, 3 & 4. The number 2 section didn't have hot running water and all the clothes had to be washed in a copper with a fire under it. It was closed down not long after I arrived.


My life at Box Hill Boys Home started in number 3 section. There were roughly 50 kids around the ages of 5 to 8, not quite sure of the ages. This section was run by Captain Steer and his wife.

On occasions, Captain Steer would take us down to the school which was in the middle of the home at night time on pretence of looking for possums. He would all of a sudden disappear and we would be scared stiff as we would hear all these strange noises not knowing that Captain Steer was the culprit for these noises. He would then appear out of nowhere having the laugh of his life at our expense. We would look forward to the next night time tour of the school. It was better than our singing and the endless religious talk. That happened before we went to our dormitories. Captain and Mrs Steer were very kind to us. He would make billy carts, and flying foxes. Very rarely did he or his wife scold us. Mrs Steer is now 90 years old and I still keep in touch with her.


Then at a certain age we were transferred to a part of the home that was number 4. We all had our different jobs to do. These included the weeding of the driveway and staining the veranda with some sort of oil. Our meals were always over at the main building at No 1. One of the Officers called Thomas was a sadistic mongrel. He would pull sparrows out of their nests when they were young and throw them on the concrete while we were present. Of the bad Officers, this mongrel was one of the worst. I don't really care if this offends anyone but that's what he was. No. 4 was a beautiful part of the home with the old mansion surrounded by green grass. It had palm trees and a fish pond. On occasions, the Salvos held fetes there. But life there was spoilt again by another sadistic officer. His name was Captain Berry. He loved strapping kids. I copped it off this mongrel a few times. He made me wear shoes which were sizes too small for weeks until he decided to give me proper size. I remember getting the cuts from him with the strap until the fleshy part of my thumbs bled.

The last couple of years in the Home were spent at number 1. Our meals at the home weren't the best except for Wednesdays when we had meat pie and plum pudding. Other meals were sago which we called frogs eggs, revolting stuff, mornings we always had porridge lumpy, weasels, this we had winter and summer, small dob of butter for 2 pieces of bread never toasted pot of watered down jam and cup of tea. Night meals were very basic soup, 3 slices of bread and cup of tea; this had to last us until 7 or 8am next day so we were always hungry.

But life there was spoilt again by another sadistic officer. His name was Captain Berry.



Sundays were probably the
worst day of the week we had
religion jammed down our throats
from early morning to night time.
We weren't allowed to play.



Visiting days were once a month. We all had to get dressed up in our school clothes or Sunday best, whether you were going to get a visit or not. Then we would wait to see if your name was called over the loud speaker to let you know that someone has come to visit you. In my brothers and my case this only happened about 5 or 6 times over a 10 ½ year span. The ones who mainly got visits were the private kids who wouldn't wax with anyone who received no visits. They were selfish kids and used to let us other kids know what they got like lollies, fruit, cakes etc.

Sundays were probably the worst day of the week we had religion jammed down our throats from early morning to night time. We weren't allowed to play. We just had to hang around for the next religious meetings. Sunday night tea we actually had 1 slice of Strasburg and also 1 slice of cake which was a real treat. December, January were good months as we had the Banjo club visit the home to entertain us with their banjos and presents. Also, as soon as we saw decorations in the dining room we knew Christmas wasn't far away which also meant our yearly trip to the beach at Parkdale which we loved. There were huts, half timber and canvas roofs and door, also straw mattresses. At Parkdale for the first time we had toast, eggs and weaties.

I remember, as would other home kids, the washroom at No 1. Many a belting was handed out there for reasons such as talking at the dining table, retrieving a ball off the lawn. On one occasion I remember getting caught talking at the dinner table. This mongrel called Bull, a sick bastard, was on duty. He sent me down to the bathroom. You would wait until the others had finished lunch then he would bend you over his knees, pull up your shorts and whack the crap out of you with his bare hands. This left big red welts on the back of your legs. This happened to a lot of boys

Night time was scary at number 1. We used to listen to the radio on the speakers then when the lights went out a man called Sangster used to molest us. We would put our head under the blankets and hope this molester would go past your bed, he wasn't a Salvo but employed by them, he was hated by the kids they should never have employed this child molester. He also got his kicks out of strapping the kids.

On Wednesdays we played football against other schools. We never had football boots; just ordinary boots without stops. During the game, played in the back paddock, the baker's cart, which was horse driven, would go past. As soon as one of our team heard the horses hooves he would yell out to the other boys and there would be a dash for the fence; bugger the football. The baker would give us fresh bread which was usually half or full loaf of bread. We would share it amongst ourselves. It must have been strange sight for the opposition players to see us eating our bread before getting on with the game.

Then there was gymnastics. This was for show at the Salvos gatherings, Box Hill Town Hall, Exhibition building, we would be hanging off ladders and one kid would do a head stand on top where there was a platform where the two ladders met and others performed on the ground doing hand stands etc. Also we put on a show diving over a wooden horse off a spring board to land on mattresses.

One of the boys, Bill Belbin, was a Victorian state hop, step and jump champion. He was that good he jumped out of the sandpit, so they had to put the landing board where you jump off back a couple of yards so he would land in the sand. Other teachers at the school sports from other schools thought he took two steps so he had to show them with another jump. They had to accept the fact that he was a champion. We won the school sports that year, beating all the other schools.

At school we had fire places in the classroom. After school some of us had to clean the ashes out ready for the next day. At times we tried smoking by rolling bark in blotting paper; most of us only tried once.

Summertime we were given cold lettuce leaves, which was in a galvanised laundry tub filled with iced water. Our toothpaste was a sort of powdery substance- not very nice if it was swallowed. Whilst at No 3 our football oval was being built. We had to pass the oval to get to the school; they had 6 to 8 drought horses pulling the machines making the oval and the bloke in charge of the horses would stop and let us pat these big animals, which was a thrill for us.



We never had pets of our own which would have made life a lot better. Once we looked after a stray dog that wondered into the home without the officers knowing. We would hide him in the gymnasium. We called him Trixie. He was black and we would give him food by putting the food in our pockets and giving it to him before the Officers could catch us. Then one morning, while we were lining up for breakfast, we heard Trixie yelping. We turned around and there was Thomas second in charge of the home throwing stones and yelling at him. He chased him out of the home. We never saw Trixie again. I hated that bastard Thomas.

I left the Boys Home with about 5 other kids. We were taken to a hostel in Auburn called Lynden Lodge. We were decked out with new clothes to start work. This was the first time that I had worn long trousers. We were taken to different work places. Another kid and myself were taken to a factory which made boots and shoes. Dirty joint looked like a two story jail. It had iron bars on every window. Did my time there 6 years 5 as an apprentice then left. Started job as a builder's labourer stayed 2 years moved to Sunbury to play football and stayed for 30 years worked on the Shire of Bulla council for same amount of years. Finally moved to

the country where I still live.

We have a reunion every year on the last Saturday in March at Wattle Park. We have had about 13 reunions. They are organised by us the old boys. Also we are supported by CLAN but more so by Open Place, in Richmond, which really looks after former Wards of the State. .

A few years after leaving the home and hostel then finally moving to Sunbury, I was boarding with a family as there were no flats or houses to rent in those days. Anyhow, I was in my late 20's when a man came to the house and asked if a Ray Turner lived there. The landlady called me to the door and said he was my sister Joy's' (who I had not seen for over 20 years) husband. We finally caught up with each other at Doveton, at my older brother's home. Didn't seem to us as a big deal, as we were total strangers, but after a while we grew closer together and are one happy family.

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BOB REID

BOB'S WIDOW WONDERS

Robert "Bob" Reid was in "care" in the Box Hill and Bayswater Salvation Army Boys Homes – aged 11 to 15 years – from 1941 until 1944.

He never spoke about his life there. After visiting the Bayswater Salvation Army building on Sunday, June 21, 2015, Bob's widow wonders:

What horrendous memories did Bob have of those dormitories that caused him to suffer from acute night restlessness and insomnia, making it impossible for him to sleep with his wife for most of their 47 years of marriage?

What brutal punishments and repercussions were inflicted on Bob each time he was caught and returned after absconding from Bayswater 7 times?

How many times was he locked in those hellhole cells on the east side of the building?

My heart goes out to all Forgotten Australians.

Lois Reid
Bob's widow.

OPEN PLACE

Support Service for Forgotten Australians