

# HISTORY & HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

May 2024

## YOUR HISTORY, OUR RESPONSIBILITY

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The reunion already seems like such a long time ago, but nonetheless it was, as always, a great opportunity to catch up with everyone and reflect on the events of the past year.

We have already started planning for next years event and our attention is also turning to the 2026 reunion which will mark Cafs 160th Anniversary. If you have any ideas about the way that we should mark the 160th Anniversary Reunion then we would welcome your input. Please see page 3 for more information on how you can be involved.

Until next time,

Wendy Sturgess

# HISTORY & HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

### Reunion

The 2024 Annual Former Residents reunion was again held on the last Friday of February at the Russell Square Clubrooms. The event was an intimate gathering of 25 or so, who enjoyed the afternoon which included a 2-course carvery meal with tea, coffee, soft drinks and a small gift box from local business The Ballarat Chocolate Shoppe.

**SAVE THE DATE:** Friday, February 21, 2025 - Russell Square



### State Apology and Redress

On 8 February 2024, the Premier of Victoria, Jacinta Allan MP gave a formal apology on the behalf of the State, to all Victorians who suffered historical abuse or neglect as children in institutional care. Several of our past residents gathered at the Mercure in Ballarat to watch the proceedings live. The words of the apology, and a recording can be found on the State Government's [website](#).

The Premier's apology went hand-in-hand with an announcement about the continued work and commitment to the co-design of a State redress scheme. Currently, advance redress payments are available only for eligible Victorians who are critically or terminally ill. [Victorian advance redress payments](#).

### InVISIBLE We Were Here - We Are Here exhibition

The Creative Responses to Childhood Records project run by Ashtree Projects and Cafs last year resulted in the creation and exhibition of several new artworks in collaboration with former residents and artists, Deb Gardiner, Deb Findlay, Frank Golding, Kerri Wilson McConchie, and Rebecca Russell. Over 200 visitors attended the exhibition at Ballarat Art Space on Lydiard Street. Many visitors stayed a long time and discussed their own memories or connections with the Ballarat Orphanage or Ballarat Children's Home.

As a part of the Creative Responses project, Shu Brown, an Aboriginal artist also worked with Aboriginal former-residents through the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC) to hear stories and create a powerful artwork in response. This artwork is going to be installed at Cafs in May and can be viewed at the Cafs History and Memory Centre.



# HISTORY & HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### Planning for Cafs 160th Anniversary - 2026

160  
YEARS

In 2026 Cafs is looking forward to acknowledging the 160 years since the first families were brought into the Ballarat Orphan Asylum. The first 9 children arrived on voluntary placements from the Challen, Bisgrove, King, Watson and Phillips families in 1866. Cafs has meeting rooms dedicated to each of these families at our HQ in Lydiard Street.

Between the arrival of these first families in 1866 and the closure of the Ballarat Children's Home in 1983, Cafs' predecessors managed over 4,000 children in institutional care. At Cafs, we are keen to hear from past residents who might be interested in helping to plan events, or activities to commemorate the forthcoming 160th anniversary. If you would like to be involved or share your ideas, please get in touch.

### Book Launch 'Rescue and Reform': Stories of women and children at Ballarat's institutions

Join former resident of Ballarat Orphanage and historian, Dr Frank Golding OAM, and Griffith University Research Fellow, Dr Dorothy Wickham, for the official launch of their new book, which traces stories of women and children in the lesser-known institutions in and around Ballarat. The event will include a formal launch of the book by the Hon. Catherine King MP, followed by a talk from the authors. Light refreshments and a welcome drink provided.

Ballarat Trades Hall, 24 Camp Street, Ballarat Central , Friday 24 May 2024, 6.30-8.00pm.

### History and Memory Centre - Open Afternoon

Cafs exhibition space will have an open afternoon. Photographs, records, art pieces and memorabilia will be available to view.

**Drop in any time between 3pm-5pm on Friday 28 June 2024.**

The space showcases original paintings from the toddler's Block, artefacts from the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home, artworks by former residents, and lots of stories about life in the institutions.





# HISTORY & HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

## A FEW MEMORIES FROM A LONG-STANDING 'GUEST OF THE ORPHO'

Some reflections from Eric Jackson

Wednesday! A couple of old blokes used to drive down the avenue with a horse and sulky. On the back were 20 pair of rabbits, suitably screened with hessian to keep the flies away. They headed for the kitchen. That night we had rabbit stew. How good does it get. If you were lucky you might get a bit of a leg or back. It was the best meal of the week. Oliver Twist never had it that good.

After school at 4. PM we all had jobs to go to. Some went to the garden, the farm kids got ready for milking. Some of us went to the log stack to saw wood for the boiler and kitchen. The five foot logs were cut in half for the boiler and in 4 for the kitchen. One day we had trouble starting the saw. To start it you had to spin a big iron fly wheel. It made a spark from a magnet to ignite the fuel which was kero, couldn't waste petrol then. Bastard wouldn't start. A car came in from Stawell St. Pulled over and said having trouble? He said it might be the spark. We told him it was sparking like a blue tongued lizard so it had to be fuel. I will have a look he said. What would he know. I learned later that his name was Herb Tibbet from the maker of the saw factory who donated it to the orpho. You can't win them all. Twelve year old kids telling him his job.

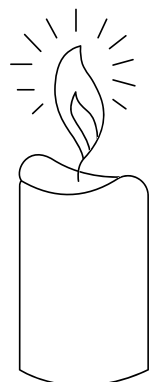
One Sunday arvo my mate and I sat on the wall in the school ground, watching the passing parade going up to the Stockade. My mate slipped and fell on the road. A Yank soldier and girl friend ran across and dusted him down, gave him a handful of coins and helped him on the wall again. Well now, here is a good little earner. We took it in turn to "fall" off the wall every 20 mins when a new tram load went past. Our entry into the world of commerce.

In the 7th & 8th grade our teacher was a Mr Bull. To teach geography he coupled it up with war news. On a big map of Europe he would point out where the Allys were half way through France and heading for Belgium and Holland. Further west the Russians were across Ukraine heading for Poland. We learned more about Europe than most kids today.

## IN MEMORIAM

We would like to take a moment to recognise our Former Residents who have passed away since our last newsletter. We send our condolences to family and friends of:

- Ms Elva O'Leary
- Mr Joe Sloper
- Mr Kenneth Mason



# HISTORY & HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Bird Drawings from F.M. Gowan collection at Sovereign Hill



Drawing of a Butcher Bird by Teddy Roberts 97.0276 - Courtesy of Sovereign Hill



Drawing of an Oriole by Graeme Leask 97.0276 - Courtesy of Sovereign Hill

### Do you know the faces in these photos?



b05 pg02 e - Wartime group in front of orphanage



b08 pg07 a



# HISTORY & HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

## KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH CAFS

### Future newsletters

A friendly reminder that we have now moved to a preferred method of email communications, and future newsletters will be sent by this method. If you have not already provided us with an email address and wish to continue receiving newsletters, please drop us a line so that we can update our mailing list accordingly. If you no longer wish to receive History & Heritage newsletters please unsubscribe by sending an email to [records@cafs.org.au](mailto:records@cafs.org.au)

### Accessing your records

If you wish to access your records, please send an email with information including the years that you were in Care, date of birth, names of parents and any siblings. Please also include photo ID such as an image of your license.

### Calling for contributions

Have you got a story or memory you'd like to share in the next newsletter? You may like to share a poem that you've written, some artwork you've created, share a photo you're your experiences about accessing your records from your time in Care. It's really up to you! If you'd like to contribute, please get in touch.



### Cafs Heritage and History Records Service

Ph: 03 5337 3333

Email: [records@cafs.org.au](mailto:records@cafs.org.au)

Hours of operation:

Monday 9am – 5pm

Friday 9am – 5pm

A newspaper clipping from an open day at the Ballarat Children's Home  
August 1971



Cafs acknowledges Traditional Custodians and Elders past, present and emerging. Always Was, Always Will Be.