

NEWS

SUMMER 2000



LETTER

THE KALIMPONG ASSOCIATION (UK)

1900 - 2000

Michael Robertson, President and Chairman of the Board of Management, message to the Association.

Many thanks for sending the Kalimpong Association Newsletter, and thank you for the activities in detail. I thought I should write to you and give a brief account of the wonderful Japanese Project which we have started so that OGB's throughout the Association can appreciate the future course of certain forward approaches which we are attempting at the Homes.

In 1994, I met - for the first time **Mrs. Sakuyo Sugimoto**, who had expressed an interest in doing something for the Homes in Japan. After arranging a visit to Kalimpong, she returned to Calcutta and we discussed two possibilities apart from the fact that they would sponsor children at Kalimpong. The first was using the strength of using the medium of English / Japanese to widen the base for the children. It was decided that a Japanese Committee would send out a Japanese teacher, and classes began initially, with much enthusiasm at the Birkmyre. The Japanese teacher's stay in India was for almost three years and he integrated well with the students at the Birkmyre Hostel.

Yi Mori became a part of the way of life of the young people of the Birkmyre. He finally was able to develop three or four students before he returned to Japan. These students went on to do examinations in Japanese and learn about the Japanese culture. Expectations continued to be high, and there was hope that students would be sent to Japan. The dream became a reality and **Shyam Jordan** was the first to spend a long stint at the **Miyazaki Prefecture** as a student from India.

Whilst Japanese was being studied a second project which we developed was the Greenhouse. Built in record time to exacting Japanese specifications this is now becoming a showcase in Kalimpong. **Shyam Jordan** was selected after a long search to study floriculture in Japan, and he did us proud. Today exotic Japanese plants bloom in Kalimpong. More and more students are enthusiastic with the results and there is much interest on the campus. The results will be evident when visitors come for the Centenary Celebrations. Today, if there are technical problems, they are photographed with digital cameras and e-

mailed to Japan and responses e-mailed back. This is true technology transfer of the highest order made possible by our Japanese committee. In fact this example is now being discussed in corporate circles in Calcutta. After **Shyam Jordan** returned it was the turn of young **Michael De Rozario** to be sent to study advanced Japanese in Japan. He has now returned and we are approaching various organisations to assist Michael in becoming a Translator for delegations of Japanese coming to do business in Calcutta. Further, Michael is about to begin Japanese language classes in the Birkmyre. There is going to be a huge Japanese business interest in Eastern India and the potential for people who speak Japanese is going to be tremendous. We are among the earliest in recognising this as an opportunity for our children to find avenues of employment. They return from Japan with a high degree of computer knowledge, and the exposure has been tremendous.

I am pleased to announce that a third student, **Prabir Rajwar** is now preparing to leave for Japan in July, to study Floriculture. It must be stressed that all these students have to undergo rigorous screening and examinations in India, before they are selected by the Japanese Government. This involves a lot of preparatory hard work in terms of selection and preparation. The entire process is not easy.

The future indeed looks heartening, and we must find proper avenues of employment to meet the fast changing scenario in India. For too long Dr. Graham's Homes has pitched their expectations low, and it is time our children reached for the stars.

Freddie Strong, as you know is doing exceedingly well in England at University. Again, Freddie is a shining Ambassador of DGH, and we have great hope in the future of these children. I believe this is an ideal opportunity to understand that there is indeed hope and that Dr. Graham's Homes is entering the new century with a great future.

Our happy reunion and treasured memories- by Nesta Farrow nee Lloyd

We had a wonderful holiday in Kalimpong and all my foreboding about going back after so long were quite misplaced. There were ten of us altogether - brother **John**, my sister **Anne** and her husband, two of her daughters and their husbands, my cousin **Myfanwy (Chota Lloyd's)** daughter whose mother also taught at the Homes), and my younger son, **David**. We flew to Delhi overnight and had an afternoon visiting the Red Fort and parts of New Delhi before flying to Bagdogra early the next morning. It was a bit of an eye opener, and a far cry from our memories of arriving at Siliguri station and starting our trip to Kalimpong on the old DH Railway. The amount of traffic and noise of hooting was unbelievable compared with the almost petrol-less days that we remembered! I must admit we found the journey along the **Teesta** with all those landslides quite terrifying! I don't think our nerves have improved with age!

We arrived up in Kalimpong after nightfall, and though we kept looking out for remembered landmarks, we were quite lost. We understood why when we went for a walk round the Bazaar the next morning. We were amazed at how much it had grown, and how so many new buildings now obscured the things we were looking for. Finding the **Scottish Mission Church** looking quite neglected and no Arts & Crafts was disappointing, and we began to think it was a bad idea to come, but the welcome we received from **Mr. Michael Calvert** and other members of staff soon changed all that. They were so kind, and the younger members of our group were so impressed with the obvious dedication and total commitment to the children they all portrayed.

We all got up early next morning and watched the sun rise over the snows, and again saw that wonderful scenery. We decided yet again how lucky we had been to grow up in such a wonderful place. How many schools in the whole world have such a setting? We wondered over the school and found it remarkably unchanged. The clock tower of course is not there, but there are plans to repair it and the **Jarvie Hall**. I suppose one thing that did strike us was that the Church no longer dominates the compound as all the trees around it have grown so much. However we did go to the morning service on Sunday and we were delighted with the restoration to the building. The children from **Thorburn** took the service and did it very well.

We visited **Wales Lodge**, our old home, and **Mr. & Mrs. Daniels** took us all over it. The room looked smaller than I remembered them, but we had forgotten the lovely wooden ceilings and floors that we used to polish with our own feet, and the big built in linen

cupboard that we used to play hide and seek in (to my mother's horror), was so much less vast! The little boys in Wales Lodge were super - so quietly doing their homework when we arrived and so polite as they greeted us, but very soon laughing little imps as we disturbed them and took their photos! I rather fear we were not too popular with their supervisors that evening.

A visit to **Lucia King** was also memorable though there was no **Dulcie Penney** there. Again The children were great and the total devotion of staff most touching. We just wondered round it at will. It was amazing that we found our way with no problems, finding all the little paths and short cuts. Of course we missed the ropeway which is no longer there, and it was disappointing to find that the workshops were no longer in use. We walked to the farm, as the Piggery for some strange reason used to be one of our favourite places, and were very interested in the new greenhouses and their plans for horticulture. The new **Centenary Cottage** and the staff houses and flats were new, but have all fitted in well.

We were very interested in hearing from **Michael Calvert** about the school curriculum, and the long day the children put in, but they all looked very happy and so neat and tidy compared with the untidy mobs we see here at home. We spent an afternoon with them for the **Harriers Race** and wished we could still run up and down those hills as they did, and found it very touching to see how the older children looked after some of the younger ones as they over-took them at the end of the race.

Lance and Perrin Fuller entertained us in Jubilee House and we were delighted to hear the plans for further restoration work. **Maj. Pawan Seth** also was enthusiastic and full of ideas and hope. We came away realising what a remarkable man **Dr. Graham** was. Walking round the Homes and looking at all the dedication plaques on the buildings brought home to us all what a lot he did in a relatively short time in expanding the Homes from the first few children to the hundreds they soon were. I can remember Daddy Graham as a white haired old man who used to walk around the compound. He had piercing blue eyes and always a wonderful smile on his face, and I will never forget the day of his funeral in, I think 1942, when all the roads were full from the Church and down the Murray Road as all came from far and near to pay their respects to Graham of Kalimpong. I remember we sang the hymn "The King of love my Shepherd is" among others, and I can still see the mounds of flowers there were everywhere. Someone used to say that he was the biggest beggar in India and he must have been, but with what results and put to such a good purpose. I wonder what he would think of it now? I am sure he would be

proud to see his Homes still serving the poor children and to know that the spirit of faith and kindness and thought for those less well off than ourselves that he engineered is still very much in evidence and carried on by dedicated staff. The one thing we wondered about was the central kitchen and dining room, and whether this had affected the family feelings of the cottages, though we were assured that it had not.

After leaving Kalimpong we spent a few days in Sikkim where we spent some holidays in the past, but the three of us who grew up there wish we had spent longer at the Homes. However we came away feeling that the Homes we knew are still going strong and that the spirit of the place is unchanged and will endure and is in good hands.

The late **Mr. J T Lloyd MBE**, the father of Nesta, Anne and John was the Headmaster at DGH (1913-1951). Former pupils who were at the school during his term knew him as a strict disciplinarian, very fierce, but very fair. He used to encourage pupils who struggled with class work to '**stick to it like a postage stamp**'.

Mrs. Mary Lloyd also taught at the school from 1926-1947. During the war years when things were difficult she had to turn her hand to teaching whenever and whatever was needed, from her own subject English to Domestic Science and anything in between!

Flora London Marathon 2000 **- an account by Nick Sankey**

The Homes had a phenomenal impact on me - It's hard to understand how the place can grab you unless you have experienced it yourself. I was only there for 4 months but I'm well and truly hooked! I had just finished my 'A' Levels and couldn't face going straight to University so I decided to have a Gap year, I wasn't really sure what I would do with myself until Mum spotted the Telegraph appeal and I couldn't resist it.

At the point we saw the article I had just returned from my first trip to India where I had spent a month trekking in and around the Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh. That experience of India, including spending the evening of the 50th anniversary of independence on Raj Path in New Delhi, receiving nothing but warmth and with no animosity towards our ancestors or us.

When I arrived in Kalimpong there was a lot of disruption connected to the local elections but once that had settled down I became smitten. The children showed a will to learn that I had not seen before, and a real interest in who we were and what we did. They clung to you and showed a warmth that was almost humbling. They were not ashamed to love you or love

one another, something that one would be less likely to get from children of that age in England. A child who has nothing would put you in a sticky situation offering to share what ever they had, and you felt sad taking it, but to refuse would have been worse.

To say it is perfect would be wrong and no one would believe me, but if you look at what it gives to those who have so little you see it's strengths. One can distinguish the haves and the have nots, those who are private students and those who are sponsored but at the same time there is no animosity between the groups and no obvious divisions with plenty of sharing going back and forth. At the Homes I had the opportunity to teach a class of 35 eleven-year-olds, amongst them I had Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims - Tibetans, Nepalese, Bhutanese and of course Indians - girls and boys, what a rich diversity!

One of the most enjoyable things was that I had not been 'trained to teach' - the only restriction was the syllabus. I forgot some things - it took me 3 weeks to think of giving them a test! But at the same time they were learning and interacting, not just looking at me and listening to me. There were rogues, there were those who struggled, but there were few who didn't learn and more importantly few who didn't enjoy themselves. I did and was mortified when my visa ran out, I left the classroom in tears and couldn't wait to go back!

I can't remember where the idea of running the Marathon came from, I think I thought I was fairly safe - I heard that only 1 in 4 applicants got in. Somehow the truth dawned, it was nearer 1 in 3 and I was that 1 in 3! The first few miles were fun until one of my hip's started to grind on 6 miles - only 20 to go! - I pushed on through and started to enjoy myself again. I went through half way in 1 hour 50 minutes - well on target for a sub 4 hour Marathon, Then I was passed by a Womble on 16 miles!

In the Docklands I needed to stop to stretch my legs, someone came to stretch beside me and said "alright mate", I looked up to see the ample frame of Frank Bruno beside me. From then on every time I heard the crowds behind me cheering him on I knew that he'd caught up and I needed to speed up again, unfortunately he hit the wall a couple of miles later and I never found a new system to keep me going. The wall for me was a little later - at about 20 miles where 8-minute miles became 10 then horror of horrors a 13-minute miles and the odd 500-meter walk. This carried on for 3 miles up The Embankment until I reached the final mile and I went for it, making up a lot of places as I went 'flat out' along the Mall. Somehow I was in a fractionally better state than those around me - before grinding to a halt in a heap just over the line. I completed the course in 4

hours 14 minutes and 4 seconds in 13,234th place (out of about 35,000), 127 seconds behind my brother - probably the biggest disappointment of the day! Unsurprisingly I am going back to the Homes - I've booked my ticket and leave on July 8th, the day after Term ends at University - for a couple of months teaching before the Centenary celebrations and then who knows. My experiences at the Homes have taught me a lot, I have changed my course at University to half teaching, something I never considered seriously when I was at school. I never considered the impact that the Homes would have on me, and I doubt that this summer's trip will be my last trip there!

In the mean time I am at Oxford Brookes University, studying Accounting and Educational Studies, I expect that will be followed by a PGCE and teaching. Marathon training was not been spectacular due to the fact that I am a keen rower and we do a huge amount of training for that - That made it quite easy on the lungs - but my legs weren't up to it, a grin and bear it attitude had to suffice! - all in the knowledge that it will benefit the children in Kalimpong.

I owe the Homes a huge debt one that a few blisters will not diminish! - *I expect the blisters will be back, having raised £2800 there is scant chance I won't try the same trick again but I may wait a while! - or maybe not! Thank you so much* for your very kind support. As my sponsorship came from over 100 very generous people and as many of you asked me not to spend money on postage I hope you will accept this as a thank you letter instead of a personal one to each of you. Without those who sponsored me the escapade would not have been worthwhile. I hope it won't be another 94 years before the Jarvie Hall is again refurbished... however the next time I run a marathon I will train for it in an attempt to make sure I complete in less than 4 hours! ... One final thank you...

Nick Sankey

*Thank you for that magnificent effort Nick!
A large sum raised for a great cause! A
huge pat on the back..... Ed.*

Homes Centenary celebration "Down Under"

Betty Ingles (Simpson) has written from Sydney, - **Beth Spalding (Samuels)** has come up with a wonderful idea for a Homes Centenary Celebration service at the Presbyterian Church in Ryde (a suburb of Sydney), and I am assisting her with the plans. Her church are doing much of the work, and **Peter Graham** (the surname is co-incidental), ex Mayor of Ryde, who I knew through my job, is going to lead the service and

his wife **Betsy** will play the organ. Old Homes boy, **Rev. Clifford Weston**, will give the sermon. We hope to have a good turnout of OGB's, former staff and friends of the homes at the service.

Francis Robson died in her 88th year on March 3rd 2000. Francee as she was affectionately known, was in Macgregor Cottage, and later completed her preliminary nurses training in the Steele Memorial Hospital. She was later awarded the Royal Red Cross Medal for her services in Burma. Francee later settled in England where she continued in the nursing profession.

Those of us who grew up in Kalimpong with Francee and people who knew her will regret her passing. She was an example to us all.

Dorothy Palmer sadly passed away on the 11th April 2000. **Barbara Burgess (nee Castley)**, in a tribute to Dorothy says--

On the 11th April 2000 my beautiful friend and cousin **Dorothy Palmer (nee Shelverton)** died in a hospital in Siliguri, India. She was 72 years old and worked as a houseparent in Macgregor Cottage. She had worked there for the last 42 years and had dedicated her life to the Homes. Dr. Graham would have been proud of her.

What tribute can you pay a person whose life has been a tribute? A tribute to goodness, kindness, caring and generosity. There's really no need for words, because Dorothy's life spoke loud and clear enough.

My first memory of Dorothy was when I was aged 6 and she was a nurse in SMH, and my Auntie and Granny had come from the Doors to see us, my sisters **Lizzy and Margaret (Hawkins)**. Dorothy was our cousin and I'll always remember the way they embraced her. I was so delighted to be related to someone so lovely.

My next meeting with Dorothy was when she came back to work as a houseparent in Kalimpong in March 1958. I had just joined as a kindergarten teacher - just 19 years old and I taught this lovely boy with a great sense of humour and sparkling eyes named **Alan Palmer**. What a happy coincidence! Dorothy became like a big sister to me and we had such happy times together. Better still my sister Margaret came to work there along with **Joyce McDermott (Whitley), Peggy Sittig (Miles) and Mary Inglis (Scott)**. We were inseparable and went on walks, picnics etc. The highlight was a visit to the town to do some shopping and we treated ourselves to a meal at Gompus or the Shanghai Restaurant (the name was changed to the Hong Kong Restaurant after the Chinese trouble). We used to count our money after the day out to see if we could afford a Taxi back to the Homes, but inevitably we had to walk back. But we didn't mind, as we were young and carefree. There was so much happiness and laughter around. Then we all went our separate ways, but we've always kept in touch.

I always spent part of my holidays with Dorothy whenever we visited India and so Graham and our sons **Jimmy and John** got to know and love her. Margaret's children **Patrina and Kenneth** too met her and instantly loved her, as did my daughter-in-law **Susan**, who was with me when we got news of Dorothy's death and she comforted me. Words cannot express the sadness I feel since I've heard about her death. The pain at times is unbearable, as she sent me a card and letter for my birthday a few days ago, and she signed it "love you lots Barbara".

My thoughts are with Alan as there was such a strong bond between him and his mother, and they were utterly devoted to each other. There was so much humour and understanding between them and Dorothy was so precious to him. I'm reminded of this saying, as I recall their relationship- *'Most of all the other beautiful things in life come by twos and threes, by dozens and hundreds. Plenty of roses, stars, sunsets, rainbows, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins, but only one mother in the whole world'*

Dorothy was loved and respected by everyone who knew her. **Bernard and Hilda Brooks, Howard and Linda O'Connor and Lance and Perrin Fuller** knew her as a friend, and they all

appreciated her excellent work as a houseparent. She was a close friend of **George and Yoleen Daniels** (Bell House) who treated her as one of the family.

My last meeting with Dorothy was in December 1999. She and Johann met us at Bagdogra Airport, and we drove to see our relatives in the Dooars. Our Aunt Lily is 97 years old, but she is always so happy to see us. They had prepared a feast for us. I'll always be grateful to Dorothy for keeping up the contact with my Indian family.

Christmas was spent on Alan's tea garden and **Norman and Gloria Hutchinson** joined us. **Alan and Zeenath's** children **Johann and Zareen** were there. We had such a wonderful time, and with Norman's sense of humour and gentle teasing of Dorothy which she always took in good spirit, we were always laughing. Dorothy was very fond of Norman and Gloria, and I know they loved her too, and are feeling the loss. We'll miss Dorothy, but will never forget her. She was a true 'Homes' girl and was an inspiration to us all.

My dearest Dorothy, I'll hold fast to my memories of the cherished moments of the past to the blessings and laughter, the joys and celebrations, the sorrow and the tears. They all add up to a treasure of fond yesterdays that we shared and spent together. These special moments will be kept in my heart today and forevermore.

*Now go and be with God and be in peace. -
Love you lots Dorothy ... Barbara*

Betty Benson nee Blake died of a stroke in hospital on the 5th April 2000 at the age of 82 years. She was in Bene Cottage. Our sincere condolences go to her sons **Dr. Kenneth, and Charles and family**.

A full obituary will appear in the next edition of the newsletter

Diary Dates:

AGM and Reunion	Saturday 10th June 2000 Doors open 2:30 PM
Birthday	Saturday 23rd September 2000 Doors open 2:30 PM
Curry Lunch	Wednesday 25th October 2000 London

AGM and Birthday will be held in the Church Hall at the Methodist Church, Hinde Street, London W1. Nearest Tube Station is Bond Street.

Family and friends are cordially invited. Any contributions, in kind, towards the food and raffle will be very welcome.

Admission Charge £ 2-00 Per Adult

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