

# Uniting Heritage

For past residents  
and their families

**Uniting**

## Founding agencies

The founding agencies of Uniting provided out-of-home care in Victoria. Below under each agency are the names of orphanages, children's homes, family group homes and foster care providers that were run by the former denominations of the Uniting Church – Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational. Uniting Vic.Tas continues to provide some of these services today.

**Connections:** Methodist Babies Home (1929-1974), Presbyterian Babies Home (1928-1977), Canterbury Family Centre (1977-2000).

**UnitingCare Gippsland:** Kilmany Park Farm Home for Boys, Sale (1923-1978), Kilmany Family Care (family group homes), East Gippsland (1978-2002), Kilmany UnitingCare (2001-2010).

**UnitingCare Harrison:** Arthur Harrison Boy's Home, Hawthorn (1960-1977), Harrison House Youth Services (also known as Harrison Youth Hostel), Melbourne eastern suburbs (1982-1994).

**UnitingCare Kildonan:** Kildonan, North Melbourne (1890-1937), Kildonan, Elgar Road, Burwood (1937-1961), Kildonan Homes for Children, Melbourne's eastern and inner suburbs (1961-1993), Kildonan Child and Family Services, office in Whittlesea/Epping (1993-2007).

**UnitingCare Lentara:** Methodist Homes for Children, Cheltenham (1891-1953), Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children, Burwood (1953-1988).

**Wesley Mission Victoria:** South Yarra Home (1900-1936), Tally Ho Boys Training Farm, Burwood (1903-1986), Tally Ho Youth Services, Melbourne eastern suburbs (1986-until 1990s), Memorial Girls Home, Fairfield (1922-1984), Moreland Hall, Brunswick (1936-1969), Lincoln House, Central Mission Hostel for Boys, King Street, Melbourne (c1939-1950), Wesley Youth Services, Melbourne eastern suburbs (1986-current).

**UnitingCare Wimmera:** Wimmera Family Homes/Wimmera Community Care, Horsham/Stawell (1979-2000), Wimmera UnitingCare (2000-current).

**UnitingCare Wyndham:** Werribee Support and Housing (also known as Bridges Foster Care Inner West), Werribee and Melbourne (1982-current).

**UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania:** Dhurringile Rural Training Farm, Tatura (1951-1964), Regent House Hostel for Girls, Elsternwick (1966-1977).

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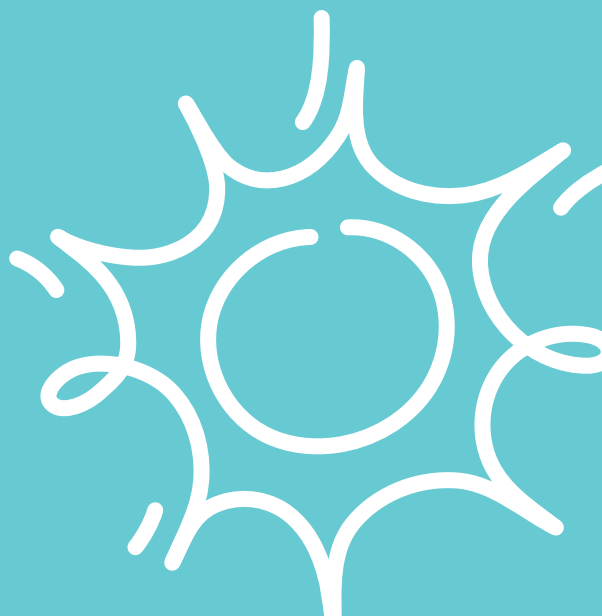
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# Welcome to the first edition of Uniting Heritage

One of our first acts as Uniting was the creation of the Heritage Service. **For the first time we could offer a dedicated service working with past residents and their families.**

In July 2017, 24 entities merged to become one – Uniting Vic.Tas. Some of those agencies were directly or historically linked to out-of-home care services set up by the Presbyterian, Methodist and Uniting Churches.

As we have come to know many of you over the last few years, we've realised that there is a need to keep this community connected. That's why we've developed Uniting Heritage. It will feature information and stories from the Heritage Service and updates that will be of interest to you.

You've received this newsletter because you have at some point contacted the Heritage Service or worked with one of the founding agencies. If you know of someone else who should receive it, please pass them our contact details (on last page).

Some highlights of this first edition:

- Memories from a past resident of Tally Ho
- Matthew, our records officer, explains how he goes about finding records
- Photos from recent reunions for Kilmany Park, Orana and Kildonan.

We hope you find this newsletter informative and we'd love to hear your feedback, including ideas for future articles.

Paul Linossier  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## National Apology

**On 22 October 2018, the Prime Minister apologised to those affected by institutional child sexual abuse.**

Employees and volunteers at Uniting locations around Victoria and Tasmania stopped to watch the Prime Minister's address. As the successor organisation to institutions where abuse took place, people wanted to show their support to survivors and their commitment to making Uniting an organisation where this cannot happen again.

## National Redress Scheme

**As we go to print, I am pleased to be able to advise that the Uniting Church has been admitted to the National Redress Scheme.**

Uniting Church participation in the National Redress Scheme covers all of the agencies and homes listed on page 2.

To find out more visit:  
**[ucaredress.org.au](http://ucaredress.org.au)**  
**[nationalredress.gov.au](http://nationalredress.gov.au)**

# Photographs through time

Catriona Milne

When people contact the Heritage Service about their childhood records, **they often ask if there are any baby photographs.**

## **The Methodist Babies Home was located in South Yarra and operated from 1929 until 1973.**

Young women, often aged 17 or 18 lived and worked there to learn the role of a mothercraft nurse. Many have stayed connected to each other and meet annually each November.

After speaking with some of the nurses, we discovered many had kept photographs of babies and toddlers and had recorded their names.

I took seven of these names to the 2017 reunion to see if any of the nurses remembered these children. It was wonderful that five of these children were remembered by the nurses who attended. You can read more about our Mothercraft Photographic Project on page 7.

Many former mothercraft nurses are happy to meet with people they cared for – we were able to facilitate such a meeting between Gwen and Richard, the man she called Ricky, when he was a toddler.

## **Richard's reflections on meeting Gwen, after 50 years.**

“As soon as I walked in the room, I felt a connection with her, like I've known her all my life, even though it's been 50 years and I still can't remember anything from the Babies Home.

We were there for a couple of hours looking at photos and Gwen was explaining what it was like at the Home. She had a few photos of me in her album and explained that the nurses weren't allowed to take photos, but she did, which I am so grateful for.

I used to play a lot with a boy named Darren, and Gwen used to take us out to the shops sometimes.

She explained how they used to clean our teeth with salt, as they didn't have toothpaste at the home. They also used to cut up rags 4 inches by 3 inches, so we could use them as hankies.

**“ As soon as I walked in the room, I felt a connection with her, like I've known her all my life. ”**



Richard and Gwen, with a photograph of Richard taken by Gwen

She also explained how they had set dinners every night. One night was spaghetti, one night was roast, one night was liver and another night was brains. She couldn't recall what was on the menu for the remaining nights.

Gwen gave me copies of the photos she had copied. I could tell this meeting meant a lot to Gwen.

I had a pretty rough childhood and a lot of the friends I made in my teenage years are in jail or have passed away due to drug use. I have always had common sense, looked after the underdog, and tried to be a caring person. This is something I have passed on to my children. These are attributes I owe to Gwen and the nurses from my early childhood.”

# A living piece of history

Victoria Lavery

I am privileged to meet some fascinating people in my role with the Heritage Service. **I recently met a man named Clifford and his wife Betty who came in to look over some photos.**

## Cliff represents one of the many people who lived in several Methodist Homes.

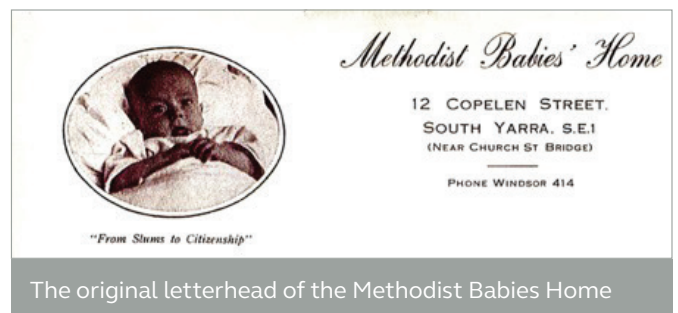
Cliff, now 88, is sharp-minded and has a cheeky and cheerful personality. Betty aptly calls him “a living piece of history.”

According to the register, Cliff was the third baby admitted to the Methodist Babies Home at Copelen Street in South Yarra in 1929. Cliff says his picture is featured on the original letterhead of the home.

From the Babies Home, Cliff went to the Methodist Home for Children in Cheltenham. Cliff described himself and two other boys using a wooden hand cart to pick up parcels and donations of clothing and food from Cheltenham Station. “We had to do this before the races in Mentone started - otherwise you’d be stuck there.”

Cliff was moved to Tally Ho Farm Home for Boys when he was 9 years old in May 1939, just before World War 2.

Cliff says “one of the ways we knew there was a war on was because we knitted scarves for the troops”. There was no access to TV or radio.



The original letterhead of the Methodist Babies Home

Between school and chores, the boys entertained themselves by playing “Cherry Bobs”, a game using cherry pips.

Cliff was one of the first boys to stay in the newly adopted cottage-style accommodation at Tally Ho. This was quite a revolutionary concept at the time.

Edgar Derrick or “One Lung” to the boys, was Superintendent at Tally Ho between 1930 and 1957.

Cliff described him as “very strict and fair,” and recalls looking after Edgar’s young children and getting into trouble for climbing on top of a cupboard to get lollies for one of them.

Cliff has kept some documents that were given to him in the past, such as the diary of a staff member and an original Tally Ho banking book, which we have copied and added to our collection.

**“ Between school and chores, the boys entertained themselves by playing ‘Cherry Bobs’, a game using cherry pips. ”**

## CHERRY BOBS GAME

On the ground outside draw a line, and along one side place six cherry stones to each person. About 4ft. from the line draw a circle large enough for the players, one at a time, to stand in.

Ask father if he will lend you an iron or metal disc. Then one by one the players stand in the circle and throw the disc and try and hit out the cherry stones to the other side of the line.

When you hit a cherry bob or cherry bobs you pick them up and keep them in your hand. At the end of the game the person with the most cherry bobs wins.

Star to JOY WATT, 136 Canterbury road, Canterbury.

# The invaluable records of history

Matthew Smith

**Searching and curating records of people who spent time in children's homes in Victoria is more than just work.**

Every time I'm in our records room looking for a particular admissions ledger or photo album, I'm reminded of the sheer amount of knowledge that is held on the shelves. There are diary entries and committee minutes describing the day to day management of the homes, while also providing glimpses of Australian society over the last hundred years.

**Photographs that capture the changing faces of the children, staff and buildings over the decades also sit upon the shelves. These documents and photos provide an invaluable record of an institutional care system that, for better or worse, has left an indelible mark on the history of Victoria.**

Of course, the most important records in our collection are those of the people who spent part or all of their childhood in homes. One of the primary functions of the Heritage Service is providing these to past residents in a sensitive and supported way.

We appreciate the significance these records have for people who only have their memories to recall this period of their lives. A parent's signature on a



Matthew copying entries from Ward Registers at the Public Records Office

line in an old visitors' book can hold just as much value as a page-long report, written by a social worker or doctor. Keeping this in mind drives us to ensure all the searches we undertake are as comprehensive as possible.

The Heritage Service's collection is not a static one; we are committed to locating further records and thinking of ways to enrich those that we have.

For example, a number of records held at the Public Records Office of Victoria have recently been located and digitally copied, including several Ward Registers containing information about State wards that date back to the early twentieth century. Also copied were a series of attendance registers from Burwood Primary School, which was attended by children from Kildonan and Orana.

Employees at the Gippsland office of Uniting have spent time visiting the Sale Secondary College library to make copies of the school magazine from Sale Technical School, which was attended by many boys from Kilmany Park.

Recognition of the value of records is a major part of the ethos of the Heritage Service. It directs how we manage our current collection and how new ones are created as we move forward. Helping people access such important parts of their personal stories is a real privilege of working at the Heritage Service.



# The Heritage Service update

Catch up on the latest projects and news from the Heritage Service

## Mothercraft Nurses Photographic Project

Photographs are of great significance to the people who contact our service.

To increase our photo collection, we have been meeting with former mothercraft nurses from the Methodist Babies Home (MBH) to collect photographs of children in their care.

Back in October 2018, we organised our first gathering of 10 former mothercraft nurses, who brought along photographs of babies they looked after during their time at the MBH. The MBH in South Yarra was established in 1929 and operated until 1974, when it became the Copelen Street Family Centre.

The MBH accommodated babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers, many of whom were adopted. Others returned to their families or went to other homes, such as The Methodist Homes for Children or Orana.

The MBH was also a training school that provided mothercraft nurses with training to care for children. Many of the nurses remember the babies they looked after and have kept photos and other memorabilia from this time.

Babies admitted to the MBH were given an allocated name upon arrival to protect their identity, and their family's identity.

The nurses usually remember the allocated names of the babies in the photographs and from this name, a match can be made against the corresponding medical card to determine a child's birth name. Toddlers and young children also lived at the MBH, though their names were not changed.



Mothercraft Photographic Project, 2019

We are grateful to Anne, who organises the annual mothercraft nurse reunions each November. She has helped us connect with former nurses.

We aim to have at least nine mothercraft nurses' gatherings over the next three years, which we hope will add several hundred photographs to our collection and give people who contact us the opportunity to have a baby photo of themselves.

## Planning for the future

At the start of 2018, the Heritage Service undertook work to develop a plan for the future.

This involved developing a robust Continuous Improvement Plan to ensure that what the Heritage Service delivers is planned, well documented, accountable and in line with our objective to providing a respectful and just service. It also ensures the work delivered by the Heritage Service reflects the Uniting values of being compassionate, respectful, imaginative, and bold.

## Records Project

The historic records we work with come from nine founding entities of Uniting, with different record-keeping systems. The team is about to embark on a Records Project, to determine what records we have, where they are located and what format they are in.

This project will help improve our search system and make locating and accessing records a lot more efficient.

## Advisory Group

Another part of our plans for the future is to establish an Advisory Group, to include people who have lived in the homes and other residential services for children ran by the former Presbyterian, Methodist and Uniting Churches.

The group will offer advice on issues that concern past residents, (for example, the National Apology) and ideas for improvements to the Heritage Service.

The group will also consider and advise on ways Uniting Vic.Tas can improve its relationship with people who have been in out-of-home care.

**If you are interested in joining the Advisory Group, please contact Catriona Milne before 27 May 2019 on (03) 8644 1531.**

# Reunions and gatherings

## The Kilmany Park gathering at the Old Boys Home Residence

A reunion for people connected with Kilmany Park near Sale was held in September 2017. Kilmany Park operated from 1923 until 1977.

The gathering was held at the former home, which now operates as a bed and breakfast. Guests travelled all over Australia to be part of the event. And whilst many attended, having the reunion at the home was difficult for some, so we will look at alternative venues for future gatherings.



Kilmany Park reunion, 2017

## A note from Albert Middleton (9th September 2017):

“I personally would like to thank the efforts of certain people in arranging the get together at our Old Boys Home Residence.

It was good to meet up with other boys who spent time at this Church Boys Home.

I had completely forgotten about the nickname I had until one of the boys in attendance brought it up.

Everyone in attendance enjoyed the gathering, with some travelling from as far as Western Australia and Queensland.

Firstly, I wish to thank Catriona Milne, who contacted all of us, so that we were aware of the gathering. Her attendance was greatly appreciated.

Also, I wish to thank Bronwyn Moore from Kilmany Park B&B for allowing us to look around the residence, and for supplying drinks and food on the day, which was enjoyed by all. Some of the attendees were able to stay at the B&B.

Catriona has followed up on my time at Kilmany and has documented the history, which I am thankful for.”



Albert Middleton, 2017

**“ Everyone in attendance enjoyed the gathering, with some travelling from as far as Western Australia and Queensland. ”**



## The Kildonan Elgar Road reunion



Kildonan reunion, 2018

A reunion for those connected to the Kildonan Elgar Road site was held on Sunday 21 October 2018. When Kildonan left the site in the 1960s, it was purchased by the Victorian State Government and became Allambie.

Deakin University now occupies the site, and we are grateful for their support in assisting with the reunion, particularly Deakin archivist Antony, for his hard work.

## The Methodist Babies Home mothercraft nurses gathering

In January 2019, the second nurses gathering to collect and record photos for the Mothercraft Nurses Photographic Project was held at Uniting Connections in Blackburn.

We thank all those who attended for their valuable contributions in bringing together photographic records from the past, so that they can be shared with those who contact us about their childhood at the Methodist Babies Home (1929-1974) and Copelen Street Family Centre (1974-1991).



Mothercraft nurses photographic gathering, January 2019

## The Methodist Homes for Children and Orana reunion



Methodist Homes for Children and Orana reunion, 2018

Since 2016, two reunions have been held for those connected with the Methodist Homes for Children and Orana. The first was in October 2017 and the second on Anzac Day 2018.

The reunions were held in the Rentoul Hall in Burwood, which was built by Orana and is now owned by the Whitehorse City Council.

Thank you to Eric, who took the photograph.





**“ Those who contact us for assistance often seek a sense of who they were and what they looked like, to better understand their past. ”**



# Upcoming events

## Orana reunion

**Date:** 25 April 2019

**Time:** 11.30am until 3pm

**Location:** Rentoul Hall,  
16 Livingstone Close, Burwood Vic

If you are on our Orana former residents list, you will receive an invitation closer to the date. If you wish to be added to the invitation list, please contact us.



## Tributes

Since the Heritage Service started in September 2016, we have been notified of the deaths of the following people:

**Margaret Scott, John Burns, Peter Gillman, Wayne Street, Michael Ramage, Lyn Hansch, Ronald Underwood, Betty Lankester.**

# Support outside of Uniting


## The Care Leavers Australasia Network

The Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN) is a support and advocacy group for people brought up in care away from their family as state wards or children raised in children's homes, orphanages, other institutions, or in foster care. CLAN also assists family members of people who were placed in care. The founding members of CLAN are both care leavers who have been involved in awareness-raising about the issues facing people who experienced out-of-home care as children.

 For further information, contact **1800 008 774** or email **support@clan.org.au**

## Open Place

Open Place is a support and advocacy service that provides direct assistance for people who grew up in Victorian orphanages and homes. This service helps people who identify as Forgotten Australians to deal with the legacy of their childhood experiences and provides support to improve their health and well-being.

 For further information, contact **1800 779 379** or email **info@openplace.org.au**



## About Uniting

Uniting Vic.Tas is a not-for-profit organisation working alongside local communities delivering a range of services for over 100 years. We believe people are important and all deserve the right to thrive.

The Heritage Service has been established for past residents and their families who received out-of-home care provided by the Presbyterian, Methodist and Uniting Churches.

We help people access information about themselves or their family member's time in care and support them in their journey to better understand their past.

As an organisation, we celebrate our diversity and welcome all people regardless of ethnicity, faith, age, disability, language, gender identity or sexual orientation.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as Australia's First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we work. We welcome lesbian, gay, trans, gender diverse and intersex (LGBTIQ) people at our services. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

## Learn more

[vt.uniting.org](http://vt.uniting.org)

## Get in touch

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If you would like to receive event updates and future editions of Uniting Heritage by email, please forward your details to [catriona.milne@vt.uniting.org](mailto:catriona.milne@vt.uniting.org)

# Uniting

Uniting is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.

