

Sent: Saturday, 21 August 2004 9:53 AM
To: Leonie
Subject: Re: Mittagong Boys Home!!

Dear Leonie

I'd be interested in contacting some of the men who were boys at Mittagong - specially at "Hassall" during our time there - from about 1953 - late 60's. Mum and Dad worked at Mittagong from 1949 - 1970 something. Or contacting some of the kids whose parents, like mine, were houseparents - we also had a different upbringing. We spent our lives growing up with 'the boys' as our companions. I know of four men in Wolston Correctional Centre who grew up in Mittagong. There are probably more. None are from our particular home but there were twelve homes in Mittagong, including a hospital and three State Ward homes. One of the State ward home (in those days #5) was for boys and girls under 5 and most of them pretty severely handicapped - physically and mentally. I remember my parents were friends with the houseparents there and we used often go to play. Most of our guys were from the Children's Courts so were 'juvenile delinquents' not State Wards, though Mum and Dad lived and worked in State ward homes for a time. I was a baby when we lived there but grew up in Hassall - one of the larger delinquent homes. I have a couple of pictures and the home and of some of the boys - I'd have to dig them out - but my bother has the original slides Dad took. Often the boys would come back and visit - some with their families to show the kids where Dad 'lived for a while'. Our home was one of the three Catholic homes and we had a lot to do with the Marist Brothers up the road. We used to go there for Mass on Sunday and the Brothers used visit the boys for Religious Studies on a Sunday morning. The homes were run on a pretty strict boardng school style - I guess how strict depended on the houseparents. I know dad seemed to be harder on me than he was on the boys. He used to say he had to be because he couldn't let me get away with things he wouldn't let the boys get up to. I didn't appreciate it at all! It has been a surprise to meet up with ex Mittagong men at work. As I said they weren't with us but we share memories of the different characters around at the time and of the whole setup. I know quite a few 'graduated' to prison since as my brother used to play the organ at Long bay sometimes and would met a few he knew. Three I know of at Wolston CC were in the delinquent homes, one (since left) was at Turner Cottage - one of the state ward homes. Wolston Correctional Centre is a protection prison.

How did you find my story? I know I have a couple there but what did you look up? I love my work now as chaplain and find it very easy approach any of the men - I ofen wonder if my early training with them was gettng me ready for this. I played with them as boys, now I am supporting them as men.

I will give your letter to the Dept here - I have a friend in town who may be able to do something - also the Qld State Chaplaincy Board - the guys at the prison I know of too would be interested.

Could you please send me a copy of the report when it comes out.

Liz