

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

Inquiry into Child Migration

Evidence from Nottinghamshire County Council

Introduction

1. Nottinghamshire County Council welcomes the Senate Community Affairs References Committee's Inquiry into child migration as offering an opportunity for the Australian Government to recognise the way child migrants were treated and take steps to address the harm caused to former child migrants and their families.
2. The story of child migration is one that many people exposed to it for the first time find incomprehensible. Few can understand now how so many children could be forcibly taken from the UK to settle in the Commonwealth. It is only through reading the testimony of individual former migrants that one can appreciate the circumstances of the time and begin to grasp the enormity of the impact of this on both the migrants and their parents. Similarly, their stories reveal the brutality to which many were subject in their new countries. Undoubtedly, the Committee will hear first hand about these experiences and the effect of child migration.
3. Since the issue first resurfaced in the mid 1980s, Nottinghamshire County Council has been a strong supporter of the Child Migrants Trust. Core funding from the County Council has enabled the Trust to provide services for parents elsewhere in the UK and for former child migrants in Australia. This history gives Nottinghamshire County Council standing in presenting evidence to the Inquiry.
4. However, now is not the time for recrimination but for redress. The greatest service that the Committee's Inquiry could render would be to ensure that the reality of child migration is recognised and that urgent measures are put in place to ease the burden on former migrants and their parents before it is too late. The Senate Community Affairs References Committee's Inquiry offers an opportunity for the Australian Government to recognise the way child migrants were treated and take steps to address the harm caused to its citizens.

Nottinghamshire County Council

5. Nottinghamshire County Council is one of the largest local authorities in the UK serving a large county in the East Midlands. Prior to recent local government reorganisation it served a population of some 1 million covering an area of 216,000 hectares. With the transfer of some services to the Nottingham City Council, in 1998, it currently serves some 745,000 people.
6. It was co-incidental that Margaret Humphreys was working for Nottinghamshire when she was first approached by a former migrant for assistance in finding their family. This initiated a period of research which uncovered this shameful period in our social history.

7. Margaret Humphreys reported on her findings to the Council's Social Services Committee. Two of these are appended. These reports had a profound impact on elected members on the Committee who were distressed and appalled at what had been uncovered. It is shocking that the British Government and voluntary agencies connived with a policy of forced migration with the attendant deceit. Equally scandalous is the brutal reception and treatment meted out to many of the child migrants on arrival in their new countries.
8. The Social Services Committee felt that it could not stand by and ignore the plight of former child migrants and their families, even though the people of Nottinghamshire were only peripherally involved. Members anticipated that others in the UK and the receiving countries would recognise the issue and make an appropriate response. The County Council remains astonished that, fifteen years on, governments still cannot or will not recognise the abuses of human rights which were part and parcel of the child migration scheme.
9. For some fourteen years Nottinghamshire County Council has provided core financial, practical, political and moral support to the Child Migrants Trust. For much of this time the County Council has seemed to be the Trust's only constant friend and supporter. It is estimated that the people in Nottinghamshire have provided over £560,000 (approximately £1.5m AUD) as core funding for the Trust over this time.
10. Many migrants visiting the UK make a point of visiting both the Child Migrants Trust and Nottinghamshire County Council. A recent letter from the International Association of Former Child Migrants and their Families described Nottinghamshire County Council as "the conscience of Britain" on this issue.

Background

11. Until as recently as 1967, child welfare charities in the UK sent large numbers of children to the Old Commonwealth countries, especially Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Rhodesia. It is estimated that nearly 3,500 children were emigrated in the post-war period, the majority destined for Australia. The history is given in Margaret Humphrey's book "Empty Cradles" as well as in the evidence published by the UK House of Commons Health Committee in 1998.
12. The reality of this policy is summarised below.
 - Children as young as three were separated from their families and brought up in institutions thousands of miles from home.
 - They were removed from Britain often without the knowledge and consent of their parents.
 - Most were told that their parents were dead, although this was often untrue. Their names were changed and they were often separated from their brothers and sisters.
 - They were often placed in large institutions, isolated from the wider community, where many experienced severe deprivation and near slave labour conditions.

- Many experienced degrading physical, sexual, and emotional abuse throughout their childhood.
 - Their discharge from institutional care, around 16 years of age, was often without adequate preparation.
 - Few were given details of their history and family background. As adults seeking family information their enquiries were frequently met with bureaucratic indifference and, at times, calculated deception.
13. Through the work of the Child Migrants Trust, and more recently through the International Association of Former Child Migrants and their Families, the depth of bitterness and hurt which is felt by former migrants and their families has been documented. For many parents being reunited lifts a burden of guilt. It is only through the experiences of the former migrants who were denied knowledge of their background that one appreciates the importance of identity and family histories.
14. As time passes and parents age the need for urgent action to reunite them with their children becomes more pressing to both parties.
15. Although no reparations can adequately compensate for the experience and suffering of child migrants and their parents, the Committee is asked to give careful thought to practical measures.

The Child Migrants Trust

16. The Child Migrants Trust was established in 1987 to:
- reunite child migrants with their families
 - provide social work support to the migrants to help them come to terms with their past
 - provide social work support to parents.
17. Again, the evidence of former child migrants will be testimony to the value of the work of the Trust. The recognition which is now being given to the reality of the Child Migration Scheme and the experience of former migrants should not disguise the struggle of the Trust and former migrants against responses ranging from official indifference to active opposition.
18. Some may argue that the migrating agencies have easier access to records and should undertake this work. However, the Trust has developed a great deal of expertise in tracking down families which other agencies would find difficult to replicate. But more significantly, the other players in this sorry story are tainted with the past - neither governments nor the migrating agencies would have the credibility with the former migrants that the Child Migrants Trust has. It is widely acknowledged as a highly professional, neutral, and respected social work agency.

19. Similarly, mainstream services are not geared up to the specialist and international nature of the work. The Child Migrants Trust is a financially and managerially robust organisation which provides a service which is both effective and value for money.
20. Although the work of the Child Migrants Trust is national and international, the County Council has since the outset been one of its chief supporters in both financial and other ways. The core work of the Trust is primarily funded by grants from the Department of Health, Nottinghamshire County Council, other authorities, and sundry donations and income. None of this funding is particularly secure.
21. With continuing financial restraint and rising expectations on local authorities it becomes increasingly harder to justify spending which does not directly benefit the community of Nottinghamshire. Increases in funding from the British Government since 1999 to help with family finding and supporting parents have been welcome but do not fully address the issue.
22. Funding from the Australian Federal Government for the Child Migrants Trust's work in Australia to date has totalled some 640,000 AUD (approximately £250,000). This limited funding has supported social work in Australia which would not have been possible without the core activities of the Child Migrants Trust which has been funded in the UK.
23. It is important that both sides of the Trust's work, on both sides of the world, are adequately resourced. Former migrants in Australia need to be assisted and supported while their families are being found and prepared. An imbalance in funding leads to bottlenecks, delays, and inefficiencies.
24. The task of reuniting former migrants and their parents is a finite one, and one which in view of the ageing nature of parents is becoming increasingly pressing. A serious commitment from the Australian Government to adopt realistic measures and put the Trust's resources on a firm and adequate footing for, say, five years would make a significant impact on resolving the unresolved episodes in many people's lives and erase the stain on the social history of both our countries.

Child Migrants

25. The establishment of the International Association is demonstration of both the scale of the issue and the intention to focus collective action on seeking redress. The Committee will no doubt hear the voices of former child migrants at first hand.
26. An effective and appropriate response needs to be part of a comprehensive package to address this issue. The components of this package are:
 - a recognition and acknowledgement of the reality of the child migrants experiences in Australia;
 - support and counselling for former child migrants across Australia;
 - speedy family finding in the UK, and support to families once found;

- financial assistance to help child migrants reunite with their families.
27. A fund was established by the British Government to provide practical assistance for migrants needing to research their backgrounds or wishing to see their parents, home country etc. It is understood that the scheme is oversubscribed and will not have met all the former migrants' needs by the time it ends in 2002.

Conclusion

28. Nottinghamshire County Council is proud of the contribution it has made to revealing the shocking reality of the child migration scheme and to start doing what can be done to put right the wrongs done to former child migrants and their families. The scope and scale of child migration mean that it is not really an issue for local government but one for which national governments should take responsibility.
29. The Committee's Inquiry provides an opportunity for the issue of child migration to be recognised and for action to be taken by the Australian Government to make whatever restitution is still possible. Nottinghamshire County Council would encourage the Committee in its endeavours to ensure that this opportunity is seized.

Submitted by

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DSE/Nottinghamshire evidence to Senate Committee.DOC/23/05/05

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

Appendix to evidence submitted by Nottinghamshire County Council

Early reports from Margaret Humphreys to the Social Services Committee

REPORT FOR SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE PREPARED BY
MRS. MARGARET HUMPHREYS.

CHILD EMIGRATION SCHEMES - CHILD MIGRANTS TRUST

I have at the request of the Chairman of the Social Services Committee prepared a short report setting out the background of my involvement and the current work being undertaken with those people affected by child emigration schemes. I hope to have the opportunity of expanding on the information contained in the report having been invited by the Chairman to speak briefly to the report at the next meeting of the Social Services Committee. I understand that at the request of the Chairman all members of the Social Services Committee have had circulated to them copies of the articles which appeared in The Observer newspaper on the 19th and 26th July 1987.

- (1) During the Course of 1984 having through my work as a Social Worker become increasingly aware of the lack of facilities available to people affected by the process of adoption of children, that is natural families, adoptive parents and children, I established to operate in my personal time a post adoption service to provide counselling and assistance to those requiring such help. I have called that service "Triangle" to reflect the three interests which may give rise to the need for specialist assistance. Because of the lack of availability of such services I very quickly began to receive correspondence and requests for help not only from different parts of the United Kingdom but also from abroad. In 1986 I received such a letter from a lady resident in Australia who though not adopted described how she had at an early age been taken to Australia by boat in the company of many other children in order to live in a children's home with no information whatsoever about her background and natural family.
- (2) Initially, I found this lady's account difficult to accept. After all, the existence of such a scheme does not feature on the traditional courses of education of Social Workers or within the chapters of the accepted literature on social policy. Nevertheless after very little research an astonishing and disturbing picture began to emerge of the implementation of a policy which affected literally thousands of children and adults during the post war period.

- (3) Children have been sent as part of such schemes to Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, for a very long time. What is staggering to most people who learn of this matter is that such a scheme continued during the post war period when some five or six thousand children were sent to Australia and New Zealand, the last boat leaving as late as 1967. These children were sent from children's homes operated by charitable voluntary agencies and to a very much lesser extent from homes operated by statutory bodies.
- (4) Again, after very little research I discovered that substantial numbers of children had been sent with no involvement from their natural families and with scant information concerning their backgrounds. I decided that the position of the people affected both in Australia and within the United Kingdom should be further examined and through arrangements with British Association of Social Workers and The Observer newspaper I was able to travel to Australia for a three week period of annual leave. I had to fund internal travel, accommodation and subsistence from my own resources but nevertheless during that very short time available was able to gain very clear confirmation that very many people had been dramatically and irrevocably affected by the implementation of the emigration schemes. This formed the basis of the information contained within The Observer newspaper articles printed on the 19th and 26th July 1987.
- (5) I found that many of the people transported to Australia under this scheme felt rejected both by family and their Country, having grown up bewildered as to the reasons why they had been so treated. I considered it important that they should not suffer further rejection and that there should be established some mechanism by which both the children sent and the natural families left behind could seek specialist advice and assistance. To provide some vehicle for assistance the Child Migrants Trust was established in Nottingham. It is quite clear that what is required is far more than simply a service to enable people to discover information about their background. There are issues of guilt and emotional and psychological problems which require specialist counselling and advice. This has been evident by examples of people who have on their own initiative sought to seek details and establish contacts with some tragic results.
- (6) During the past seven weeks the information available has caught the public imagination and concern. Despite the relatively small circulation of The Observer newspaper, we have received an overwhelming response from members of the public in this Country and from abroad concerning these issues. Articles have appeared in newspapers in all major Australian cities and in New Zealand and it is now clear that there will be produced a major documentary programme to be broadcast at peak viewing times detailing the history of the schemes, the work of the Trust and the response of the various agencies to the need for work to

be undertaken. The Trust has been in a position to ensure that whatever programme is made will deal with the issues sensitively and in a manner which is consistent with the aims and objectives of the Trust. The Trustees and myself have responded to requests to be interviewed on local radio stations, and on those broadcasting within Australia. The correspondence which we have received has included immediate and urgent interest from South Australian Government Officials. Letters have been received from people who previously worked within the agencies who sent these children expressing concern and guilt at having been involved in such a scheme making quite clear that they considered that they were involved with a process which was providing deprived children with the opportunity of living in foster and adoptive homes. They were staggered to learn that in reality these children resided in institutions.

- (7) The most important correspondence that has been received has come of course from those sent to Australia and New Zealand and from the natural families within the United Kingdom. The policy appears to have affected all parts of the United Kingdom and certainly children were sent from Nottinghamshire. I shall, subject to the usual considerations as to confidentiality have some examples of the letters available at the Committee meeting. These make clear that there is a great deal of work to be undertaken to assist these people. The letters make distressing and disturbing reading cataloguing instances in which children have grown up believing themselves to be orphans when in fact they have brothers and sisters and parents and further extended family in the United Kingdom. Many parents were persuaded to agree to their children being sent on such a scheme with the promise that they would be adopted. Still more knew nothing of the proposal that their children should be sent abroad and on making enquiry of the children's homes were told that the children had indeed been adopted when in fact they had been sent to institutions in Australia. Many of the people sent to Australia have struggled for several decades to have some information concerning their backgrounds and the reasons why they were sent across the World.
- (8) We already have instances of cases in which on the death of natural parents inheritances have passed to members of the extended family rather than the child in Australia, the family having been told that he had been adopted. It is very likely that there will be instances of cases in which due to lack of medical records people have failed to have access to adequate genetic counselling. Some children avoided being sent to Australia at the eleventh hour by running from the station platform. Others failed the necessary medical examinations. That the physical and medical condition of the children was important is demonstrated by the contents of a formal report prepared at the time on behalf of one of the major agencies and which criticised the squint eyed and malnourished condition of a recent batch of children received in

Australia and called for more stringent selection to ensure the receipt of "good British stock".

- (9) The letters reflect both a desperation and a resigned despondency - "I wonder why they didn't put a dog tag on us and not bother with the paperwork". Overwhelmingly they express thanks at the establishment of some means by which some assistance might be available. Tragically in some cases the paucity of the records may mean that little or no practical assistance will be available. In most cases, however, the task of establishing the information required will not prove difficult. Resolving the conflicts and emotional problems so exposed will require more delicate, sensitive and specialist attention.
- (10) The Trust has written to those agencies who were involved with these schemes seeking their assistance and it is to be hoped that there will be some acknowledgement of a continuing responsibility towards the people affected by the schemes. A willingness to help has been apparent from members of the public who have sent small personal donations to the Trust, sometimes as little as £1. The relevant Government agency is also being approached for assistance. The major limitations on work being done are of course limitations of funds and time. The work is not unending - the schemes have ceased and the numbers are finite, but it is urgent and very considerable. We have been reluctant to press forward with further publicity which we know will secure many, many more requests for help on the basis that it would be cruel not to be in a position to respond adequately. At present the response which is able to be given to these people is that which I am able to achieve during my personal time and I am worried that I am not able to give to the people affected the attention they deserve and many might say are entitled to demand.
- (11) The work undertaken has provided a great deal of useful information and insight into the impact of separation on individuals and their families and will, I am certain, contain many important lessons for current social work practice in the placement of children and the separation from their natural families. It has become clear in the contacts which we are having with people and agencies in this Country and abroad that the establishment of the Trust in Nottingham and the work being undertaken from Nottinghamshire has assisted in promoting a very positive image. Further opportunities in this regard will be available if the requests to the Trust to take some part in the Australian Bicentennial celebrations during 1988 can be fulfilled.

Margaret Humphreys

Margaret Humphreys

9th September 1987

REPORT TO THE SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE PREPARED BY
MRS. MARGARET HUMPHREYS

Background

On the 16th September 1987, the Social Services Committee considered a report prepared by me concerning the work which I had undertaken in my personal time with those people and families affected by the Child Migration Schemes. On 28th October 1987 the Social Services Committee resolved that I be seconded to work for the Child Migrants Trust for a period of three years. That Trust was declared in July 1987 in order to provide a social work service for those people and families affected by the Schemes and through research to learn more about their operation and administration for the benefit of current child care practice, in particular the effect of separation of children from families and origins. The Trust has two Trustees, Mr. David Spicer, Barrister and Dr. Philip Bean of Nottingham University. The Trustees appointed me to act as the Social Work Director of the Trust.

The Committee asked that I report annually and the purpose of this report is to set out briefly the work undertaken during the first year of my secondment. In addition to the work of the Trust, I have continued to operate the post-adoption service, Triangle, established in 1984.

Child Migration Schemes

Schemes by which children from the United Kingdom in the care of charitable and statutory agencies have been compulsorily migrated to parts of the British Empire and its dominions operated periodically from the 17th Century. Towards the end of the 19th Century these Schemes became particularly popular for the dual purpose of rescuing children from a perceived deprived home background and populating the British Empire with a source of labour and colonisation. All the major charitable and church organisations and some statutory agencies concerned with the welfare of children have had involvement in the Schemes. Between 1900 and the outbreak of the Second World War some 150,000 children were compulsorily migrated to Canada and on the conclusion of the Second World War those agencies involved began to concentrate on Australia and to a very much lesser extent Africa and New Zealand. They were joined by a large number of small agencies formed for the purpose of promoting Child Migration. So far as Australia was concerned, the Schemes continued to operate until at least 1967. Many of those sent now speak of being transported on boats containing up to 1000 children. Others formed parts of smaller and more carefully selected groups. The purpose of the Scheme was not to provide the children with family homes by way of fostering or adoption but to ensure their upbringing took place within institutions. One agency operated institutions in which up to 200 children were resident.

In the postwar period many of those children sent were as young as 4 or 5 years of age and were universally described as and brought as orphans. In fact, the research undertaken has shown that such a description was a calculated deception and was a feature of a determined policy to sever any links which the Child Migrants might otherwise have either with family or country. Of the hundreds of cases so far researched, the Trust has to date only worked with one former Child Migrant who could properly have been described as an orphan.

By 1952, forty-nine institutions throughout Australia were receiving Child Migrants.

Advertisements in the press sought public support for these Schemes and an example of such an advertisement is set out at the conclusion of this report.

Many of those sent as part of the operation of the Schemes have attempted for decades to discover information concerning their background and the reasons why they were selected for migration. The agencies concerned have during that period, either because of a total lack of availability of such information or by reason of a deliberate policy, failed to make available any or any relevant accurate information concerning their background.

Children were sent from all parts of the United Kingdom, including Nottinghamshire.

The Work of the Child Migrants Trust

As a result of the limited publicity which took place in 1987, the Trust received letters principally from Australia but also from Africa and Canada from people desperately seeking information concerning their background and families. In addition, the Trust was inundated by requests from various aspects of the media seeking cooperation in the production of programmes to be made concerning the operation of the Schemes. A decision was early made that any involvement with the media should be limited to those circumstances in which it was clear that there were positive benefits for the Trust which would include some form of assistance with funding. As a result, the Trust has been cooperating with the production of a major documentary to be broadcast probably during April of 1989. This has enabled the work of the Trust to be undertaken while providing consultancy to the programme makers. In particular, it has enabled visits to be made on behalf of the Trust to all the major countries affected by Child Migration Schemes in order that work might be undertaken directly with those affected by those Schemes. A brief outline of the visits undertaken.

During the period of my year of secondment I have worked from my home address. This has inevitably meant that my family life has been totally immersed in the work of the Trust. Much of the necessary contact with Australia must take place when those in Australia are working and awake and similarly those seeking assistance of the Trust from Australia frequently telephone during the night period. The numbers of those contacting me for assistance grew to the point at which people wishing to contact me for personal, social or domestic reasons were unable to do so and the Trust was compelled to provide me with an additional telephone line specifically for the work of the Trust. One room of my house is now made over totally to the work of the Trust.

Research into family backgrounds and in particular the records kept at St. Catherine's House concerning births, deaths and marriages has only been possible to be carried out effectively because of the generous work undertaken under my supervision by a volunteer with particular interest in the Trust who has spent two days of each week in London with the Trust funds being responsible only for her travelling costs. Additionally the very considerable typing tasks have also been undertaken on a voluntary basis by persons interested and involved with the work of the Trust. On

a number of specific cases I have received support in social work tasks from a retired social worker.

I now have as a result of the various aspects of publicity and visits, over 1000 requests for assistance on which work is currently being undertaken.

Visits to the Receiving Countries

1. **Australia - March 1988**

From the 10th March 1988 until the 1st April 1988 I was able to visit Australia together with a Trustee, Mr. Spicer, who was fortunately able to allocate the time from his annual leave entitlement. The purpose of the visit was to publicise the Trust, carry out negotiations with State and voluntary agencies and to work directly with those affected by the Schemes. Initially, it had been intended to visit Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. In the event, because of the volume of work undertaken and the numbers of persons making contact with requests for assistance, it was not possible to visit Victoria and an undertaking was given to those people requesting assistance in that State, that a further visit would be arranged as soon as the resources of the Trust made this possible.

Immediately upon our arrival in Perth, Western Australia, we were inundated with requests for assistance. This continued throughout our visit to that State and the remaining States and ensured that we were working continually from 8.00 am until after Midnight on each day. Mr. Spicer undertook eighteen radio broadcasts and we both took part in three nationwide television broadcasts. Articles also appeared in newspapers and two nationwide magazines with circulations of 3 million copies. That the work being undertaken was only possible because of my secondment by Nottinghamshire County Council was stressed continually and universally acknowledged.

The effect of that publicity was that during the period of time we were in Australia, I took over 200 case histories. The people requesting assistance often travelled for more than four hours in order to ensure that they were able to speak to me before I left.

The negotiations which took place with representatives of the State Governments in each of those States visited led to ministerial approval for the Community Service and Welfare Departments to meet the costs of internal flights and accommodation.

2. **Zimbabwe - May 1988**

From the 25th May 1988 until the 2nd June 1988 I was able to visit Zimbabwe in order to undertake work with those persons who had written seeking the assistance of the Trust. During the course of this visit, I received and accepted an invitation to have discussions with Sir Humphrey Gibb, previously the Governor General of Southern Rhodesia.

3. **Canada - June 1988**

From 17th June, 1988 until 29th June, 1988, I was able to visit Canada and a Trustee, Dr. Bean was able to join me for part of that visit. During this period I undertook seven internal flights in order to undertake work with those who had sought assistance from the Trust and publicity was undertaken again by way of radio broadcasts.

Most of those Child Migrants sent to Canada were transported prior to the Second World War and many during the 1920's. A significant number of those who had requested the assistance of the Trust were in their 80's, still desperately trying to discover information concerning their backgrounds and of any family who may still be alive. That desperation was increased by their own knowledge that their life was now obviously of a limited duration. Some of those whom I have been able to assist have in fact been celebrating birthdays throughout their lives on incorrect days and dates and have not been in possession of their correct names.

4. **Australia - October 1988**

From the 28th September 1988 until the 15th October 1988, through the generosity of a person who had been a beneficiary of the services of the Trust, a representative of the Trust was able, during a period of annual leave, to spend 14 days in Melbourne, Victoria, so fulfilling the undertaking which had previously been given to those people who had sought the assistance of the Trust in March 1988. The volume of people coming forward again ensured that that representative work working continuously from early in the morning until late at night. By successful negotiation, the accommodation costs were once again met by the Community Services Department of the State of Victoria and office facilities were provided by that Department during week days and by a former Child Migrant over the weekend period.

5. **Australia - December 1988.**

My second visit to Australia was financed by the makers of the documentary programme and was undertaken from the 25th November 1988 until 16th December 1988. It included periods of work at four of the State Capitals, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, where a large proportion of the Trust's clients are to be found. Because most of my time was already fully committed, no advance publicity had been issued in connection with my visit. However, in each city the fact that I was there became known and I received many additional requests for assistance from former Child Migrants who were eager to have the benefit of personal interviews. I also had many requests which had to be refused from the media concerning the work which was being undertaken.

The purpose of this visit was concerned with providing the results of the research which had been made into the family histories of the former Child Migrants who had written to and contacted the Trust or had been interviewed during previous visits. Much of this work was extremely sensitive. For example, in the case of a lady in her early 50's who had believed that she was an orphan, I spent the whole of one afternoon explaining that she had in fact been adopted in Britain but sent to Australia following the breakdown of her adoptive placement. She had not realised that she had been adopted and was

clearly unaware that her natural mother had been neither consulted nor informed about her migration. This lady has, in fact, several brothers and sisters in the United Kingdom all of whom of course she was totally unaware. Others learnt of parents and other family members who were anxious to establish contact and did so while I was there to assist.

The Social Work of the Trust

For the vast majority of those served by the Trust, the research required to establish their family connections in Britain can be a difficult and time consuming task, since many lack even basic details about their names and dates and places of birth. However, given sufficient time, perseverance and experience it has been possible to obtain a full Birth Certificate and to make contact with some relative. However, the task of finding relatives, though complex and prolonged in certain cases, is often less demanding than the skills and time required to provide an appropriate counselling and social work service to both the former Child Migrants and the members of their families.

In many instances, the confusion and insecurity associated with the lack of knowledge about personal family identity is reinforced by feelings of guilt and a poor self-image.

There are significant problems in dealing with large groups of people who have been brought up being told that they are orphans and have no family when in truth they may have large extended families who, following work undertaken in the United Kingdom, are known to be alive and looking forward to meeting the estranged members of the family. The experiences which the former Child Migrants have had do not provide firm psychological foundations for this type of work. Careful and sensitive preparation and skilled counselling are essential if we are to repair some of the damage caused by past practices and policies.

Some of the most difficult cases encountered are those in which I have been reuniting former Child Migrants with parents who at a difficult stage in their lives made decisions which they felt were for the best in relation to their children. Many have lived their lives believing the children had been adopted and were living lives within families. They have had no idea that they were sent to Australia and many had subsequently raised very successfully subsequent children having got over a temporary difficulty. All those cases with which I have dealt have turned out extremely well. This is to be contrasted with those cases in which the former Child Migrants themselves have undertaken research into their backgrounds sometimes with the assistance of private investigators. The subsequent contacts with natural family have taken place without professional help, either for themselves or with the family affected. There have been some tragic results because of that lack of skilled professional involvement.

My own work has progressed extremely satisfactorily and to date over 40 families have been reunited as a direct result of the Trust's work. Many of those cases with which I am working have reached a stage at which that contact is imminent. This is new ground in which to work and I have no models on which to rely. Families which have been split for forty years are being reunited. People are being introduced into families whose members have either been ignorant of or have denied their existence. There are many issues of guilt which have to be resolved and the work does involve risk.

Educational Activities

As well as providing direct services to former Child Migrants and their families, the Trust is keen to promote greater public awareness of the nature of the Schemes and their impact on those concerned. Invitations to give talks and lectures to interested groups have been responded to and there has been cooperation with various elements of the media. The Trust has been pleased to cooperate with the Roundabout Theatre Company whose production of "The Lost Children" has been shown in many schools in Nottinghamshire. This work will also be produced at the Nottingham Playhouse from the 17th January until the 21st January, 1989.

Financing a Social Work Service

In addition to monies available to the Trust for cooperating with the production of the documentary programme, a proportion of the royalties payable in respect of a book published to accompany the documentary are to be paid to the Trust. The work of the Trust has to date been possible because of the public donations received following various broadcasts and coverage within the media. In addition, clearly work could not have been undertaken on any significant basis without the benefit of my secondment. This has been recognised throughout the United Kingdom by those persons whom the Trust serves and perhaps more significantly particularly throughout Australia where the former Child Migrants express gratitude not only that their position has eventually been recognised but that someone was prepared to take steps to ensure that some appropriate work might be undertaken. Those views are supported by the professional contacts which we have made both within the State and voluntary agencies.

Within the United Kingdom, Mr. Spicer and myself have had negotiations with the Directors of all the major voluntary agencies concerned with Child Migration which have shown an interest in working with the Trust. Proposals for the establishment of an adequate social work service within the United Kingdom and details of the costing have been forwarded to those interested agencies seeking a contribution towards those costs. Additionally, application has been made to the Department of Health for a grant to provide an adequate service.

Steps have been taken to continue a dialogue with those agencies who have to date shown no interest in supporting the work of the Trust in order to try and persuade them to change their approach.

In Australia, negotiations have been held with the heads of the Community Service agencies within each State and formal reports have been submitted regarding the work of the Trust and seeking financial provision for the establishment of an adequate service within Australia. Those reports have been considered by the Director Generals of the States and referred to Ministers for consideration.

The Trust has had the benefit, on an honorary basis, of professional accountants who have provided a certified set of accounts.

A local Nottingham company has provided audio-typing equipment.

Specific costs arise from the exceptional nature of the work undertaken. For example, the current costs borne by the Trust for postage amounts to £60 per month and for telephone calls £175 per month.

A major difficulty which the Trust faced initially was to estimate the extent to which a service was required and the feasibility of practically carrying out what was necessary without having done sufficient research or practical work. The work that has now been done and the visits made has shown that there is a very large group of individuals and families who require this service. Despite a paucity of information in many cases, careful research and experienced counselling will produce results of unqualified benefit to those affected.

The need for a service is urgent. Already, I am handling cases in which parents have died a matter of months before an approach has been made to the Trust.

The requirements of the service were set out in the reports prepared by Mr. Spicer on behalf of the Trust and sent to the Director Generals of the State Agencies in Australia and were described as follows:-

"From the research which we have undertaken regarding the operation of the Child Migration Schemes and from dealing with the individual circumstances of the people affected by those Schemes, it has become clear that a major deficiency in previous arrangements has been the lack of an agency carrying a responsibility within both the home Country and the receiving Country. In addition, those people coming forward for assistance from the Trust are united in expressing a strong view that they distrust the statutory and voluntary agencies responsible for their migration and also the State Agencies who they feel failed to carry out their responsibilities for providing adequate supervision of their welfare within Australia. They welcome the involvement of an agency independent of those previously involved and which has been specifically established in order to provide them with a service.

We would expect and intend to develop the Child Migrants Trust within Australia. We are anxious that the Trust should have an international persona with representative organisations within the United Kingdom and Australia working under a single direction. We are determined that the fragmentation of the various responsibilities and interests which occurred in the past and led to the welfare of those persons and families affected falling outside the direct responsibility of any of those agencies should not be repeated. The problems are not related to or confined to one country only and cannot be dealt with in isolation either intellectually or practically."

The Trustees are unfamiliar with costs operating within Australia and have sought agreement in principle for funding from the State Agencies so that detailed negotiations can follow. This is on the basis that the minimum service required in Australia over a five year period is for qualified and experienced Social Workers in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria, with appropriate secretarial and office support.

In the United Kingdom, the Trustees are able to be more specific, and have represented to the relevant agencies the service required over a five year period. There is a need for emphasis to be placed on the professional tasks with a minimum of administration. The Social Workers must be experienced and the Agency will have an international perspective. The size of the proposed service is based on analysis of the cases,

particularly their geographical distribution with which I am currently working. It envisages that there will be a social worker present in four Regions reflecting that migration took place from centres in London; the West Country; the Midlands; and the North, Scotland and Ireland.

The work and achievements of the Trust during the short time of its existence when a prominence and credibility has been established on an international basis, have been very considerable. This is particularly so bearing in mind the small number of persons involved. This has been possible because of the terms of my secondment, which meet my salary and travel costs within the United Kingdom, because of the tremendous commitment of those people prepared to spend very substantial personal time either in addition to or instead of other professional commitments, because of the public donations received from the United Kingdom and abroad, and because of arrangements with the media.

Clearly, if this valuable work is to continue and succeed the Trust must acquire proper and sufficient sources of funding. It is hoped that responses from those voluntary and government agencies approached will be available shortly.

I would be very pleased to report further to the Committee in detail concerning the work undertaken and the issues involved when the impact of the proposed documentary can be assessed.

Margaret Humphreys

MARGARET HUMPHREYS
9.1.89

November 13, 1964



Left behind although his need is just as great. Will YOU help him to join them? It costs £30.