

WRITTEN BY

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# *Summers* by the *Seaside*



A HISTORY OF THE CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S  
SEASIDE HOME SOCIETY









# Foreword

The Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society has a long history of community service and an impressive array of personalities who have served as its leaders, members and volunteers. Many of its members were active in the society for not years but decades, and with the passing of each one of them was lost another library of knowledge regarding the organisation's story. It is not surprising, therefore, that with such a rich story waiting to be told the society was keen for it to be recorded.

This project commenced in 2005 at the request of the society and was researched, compiled and written by Robert Andrews and Dr Deborah Gare from the University of Notre Dame Australia. There are many people to whom the authors owe their thanks, including the current committee members (and in particular Eve Morris), and Pam Seeber and Cliff Seeber for the questions and queries they were regularly willing to answer, a number of former members who have spent time discussing their experiences with the organisation such as Robert Kronberger and Frank Carville and friends of the organisation such as Gordon Hines, Bill Mather-Brown and Beverley MacDonnell.

Significant challenges face the society in the twenty-first century: the encroaching sprawl of metropolitan developers is squeezing the Alfred Hines Seaside Home in Rockingham and, as social values and modern Australian lifestyles change the pool of volunteers to contribute to the society's activities are declining. But there is little doubt that the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society has proven by its history that it is a unique provider of special services to Western Australians and to children in particular, and that its sixty years of service will be preserved in the memories of thousands.

This history is dedicated to the many who have served the society since the first camp was run in 1941, but particularly to Pam and Cliff Seeber who have recently retired after nearly forty years as members of the organisation.

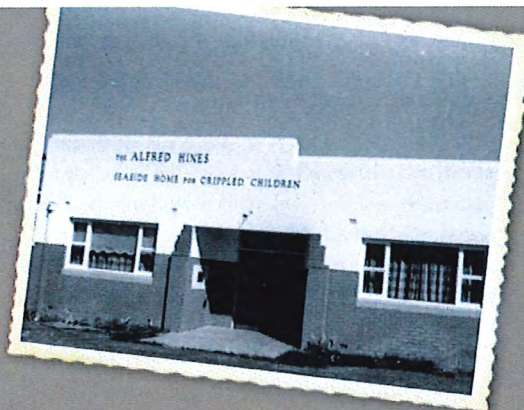


On camp with friends: children at the Seaside camps were kept busy with such activities as woodwork, metalwork, sewing and painting. Many made toys, like wooden trains and model airplanes. This little girl hugs the doll she made on camp in the mid-1940's.





# Introduction



The care of the physically and mentally disabled, particularly of children with such disabilities, is now considered by most to be a moral responsibility of government. Yet the involvement of government in such health care and social services is a relatively recent phenomenon, particularly in Western Australia. For much of the twentieth century there was no direct or sustained contribution of state or federal governments in the care of young people with disabilities. Nor do the records of the state government suggest that they felt in any way responsible to do so.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the care of crippled children fell very firmly on the shoulders of their families and the few volunteer societies which existed to help them.

Certainly there was then no expectation of respite – either for the sick or for their carers. While life for such families may have been difficult, though living in the city, it was even more so for those who lived in regional areas of the state. It was this void in social services which prompted Alfred Hines, a Fremantle businessman and councillor, to first offer a seaside camp for rural children with disabilities in the difficult years of World War Two. His intention was to offer a wonderful summertime beach holiday for children who, in many cases, might never have seen the ocean and who certainly had few opportunities for recreation. Of equal importance was his wish to offer their families a short respite from caring. Though he was the driving force behind the event in its earliest years, it was not something that Hines was able to accomplish on his own. He was assisted by a small army of volunteers who ran the activities of the camp, as well as by a matron and carers who were employed to supervise the health requirements of each child. It was an extraordinary venture for its time. So great was the demand for the first camp that Hines' seaside holidays became an annual summer event. It was from this beginning that the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society emerged.

In the first half of the twentieth century child healthcare had a number of primary goals. These centred around the premise that, as Mary Anne O'Hara put it, the progress of Western Australia depended on 'the existence of a large, robust and virile population'.<sup>2</sup> The breeding of strong and healthy children was considered of central importance to this goal. Much of the focus was placed on the education of mothers, largely through the development of new community-based infant health clinics and the midwifery services of such organisations as Silver Chain. As the decades progressed child health became an issue of interest in schools and soon medical officers and dental nurses were placed into the education system. E.M. Stang, the state's Medical Officer for Schools in the 1930s and 1940s argued that:

Children of school age, i.e., 6-14 years inclusive, make up approximately 15 per cent of the population. Therefore, the care and control of their health is and should be a very vital part of a State's activity, because neglect in these early years may have serious consequences in later life. Therefore, the providing of essential, protective and preventative health services for them is a vital part of any national or State health programme.<sup>3</sup>

The goal to improve child health services in the 1930s was stymied in part by the financial and social effects of a severe economic depression which prevented the state from spending as it wished to in all areas of health care and social services. It was further impeded by the outbreak of war in 1939. It was not just health care which suffered in the face of such social and economic upheavals. During the same years the Western Australian government was severely hampered in meeting the general needs of the state, including those of education, health and such infrastructure as communications, roads and railways.<sup>4</sup> Not that this garnered much sympathy from the Senior Medical Officer for Schools who complained continuously in the 1930s of funding cuts to his budget and forced staff retrenchments.<sup>5</sup>

Despite such financial woes it was agreed that children represented the best future of the state. Or, to be more correct, that *healthy* children were the future of the state. This principal might have suited most people well, for it encouraged infant and child health supervision in the schools and communities, and better family education in such issues as nursing, disease control and diet. But it brought little comfort to those families and their children who suffered from severe physical or mental disabilities. While government practice might have been improving in the prevention of childhood diseases, there was little attention paid to those who had already fallen victim of it. Indeed, few considered the role of government in children's healthcare to be much more than 'protective and preventative'. This is illustrated by C.D.J. Holman and H.M. Corster's survey of the state's



official documents in 1991 in which they concluded that in the early twentieth century there was little attention paid by the West Australian Public Health Department to child health that was not a matter of prevention or protection. The one exception was an isolated reference by the Commissioner for Public Health to 'street kids'.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it is unlikely that for much of the early twentieth century the government would have considered itself responsible for improved social services to children with disabilities, even should they have had sufficient funds to do so.

Exactly why the Western Australian government had such a non-interventionist attitude to these aspects of child healthcare is not precisely known. It was partly influenced by policy and partly by the effects of economic depression and war. But it is also true that care of disabled children was believed by many to be the role of private or voluntary philanthropy. It is important to remember that the modern welfare state as we know it is a thoroughly modern phenomenon that emerged only over the course of the last century. In this light we should not be surprised that there were few available government services to aid crippled children.

It is difficult to gauge how far this non-interventionist approach to child care permeated the broader community, though we know for certain that there had been a long practice of philanthropy and volunteerism in Western Australia. Many of the institutions which are considered today to be pivotal in our public health scheme find their origins in the community activism of the early twentieth century. The Sisters of St John of God and the St John of God Hospitals, the Brightwater Care Group (formerly the Homes of Peace), the Wesley Mission, the Silver Chain Nursing Association and the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children all have their roots in the community work of an exploding population in the years of the gold rushes. By the outbreak of World War Two there were also growing

numbers of Western Australians who took an interest in the welfare of children with disabilities. As Penelope Hetherington has noted, when the Second World War began there was a

growing anxiety and impatience in the community about the levels of State spending on services that catered for families and children, who were the community's most valuable resource.<sup>7</sup>

It was clear, however, that the state government was not going to address this gap in funding and that others would have to step in.

In the late 1930s Western Australia was hit with an epidemic of polio. Though the cases were sporadic in nature, they were normally severe and it was the first time that the state was forced to deal with multiple cases of poliomyelitis in children at any one time.<sup>8</sup> Children are particularly vulnerable to poliomyelitis due to the fact that their young and undeveloped bodies lack the natural resistance capable of fighting the disease well.<sup>9</sup> It was for this reason that poliomyelitis was for a long time given the name 'infantile paralysis'. Though adults, too, became victims of the disease in the epidemic of the 1930s and 1940s, its victims were overwhelmingly children. This forced significant amendments to the existing health system, it being the first time that a significant number of children required specialised medical treatment.<sup>10</sup> It also greatly affected those families who had to care for the victims of the disease.

With such diseases as polio still rampant in the small Western Australian community of the mid-twentieth century the impact of debilitation and disability was felt keenly by a great many local families. It can be of no surprise that non-government community organizations remained very important in the provision of many crucial healthcare services that the state's crippled children desperately needed.<sup>11</sup> Some of these organizations, like Silver Chain, remain Western





Australian household names; others, like the Ugly Men's Association, have since faded into obscurity. Yet all such organisations were crucial in providing the early impetus that was needed to spur on greater healthcare services for crippled children. Among the most significant of these organisations was the pioneering Western Australian Society for Crippled Children (now known as Rocky Bay) which, in many ways, paved the way for the work that Alfred Hines and the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society would soon achieve.

The Western Australian Society for Crippled Children began in 1937, about five years before the camp that Alfred Hines first organised. With the inheritance of a generous grant from Lucy Creeth, herself severely affected by arthritis, the organisation established a centre at Mosman Park to treat children with physical disabilities.<sup>12</sup> It coincided with a sharp rise in the late 1930s of children who fell victim to poliomyelitis. The new organisation was the first of its type in Western Australia and proved incredibly helpful to the many families who suddenly found themselves loaded with the extra work of caring for disabled children.<sup>13</sup> Alfred Hines followed the work of the new organisation closely, and soon devised a scheme that would add to the services offered to crippled children and their families, particularly to those of regional areas: the annual summertime seaside holiday. In the early 1940s he founded the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society as a measure to combat some of the social problems generated in the community by poliomyelitis.

Bill Mather-Brown was a childhood victim of polio and attended the early crippled children's camps. He later recalled the grim situation faced by many Western Australian families in such predicaments during the 1930s and 1940s, and the care which Hines offered them:

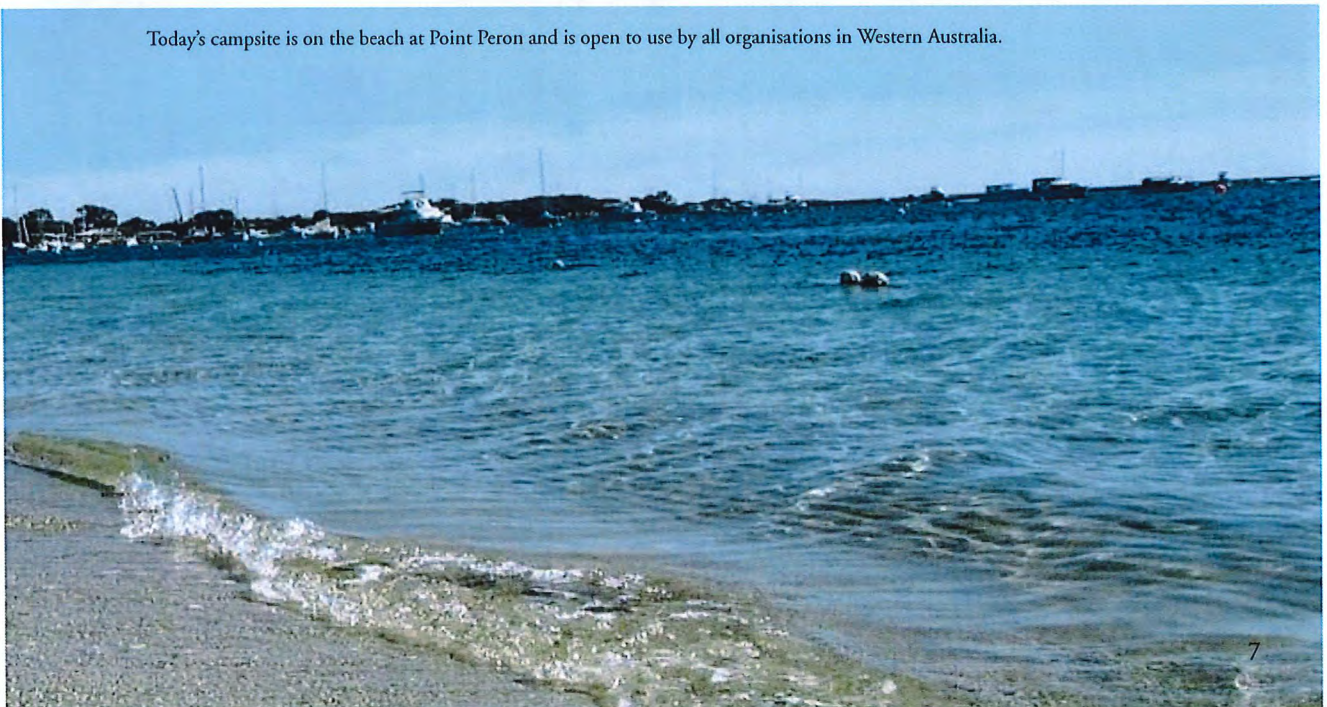
At a time when many handicapped children were not having the best of things, Councillor Hines became alert to the problem and with a single-minded dedication did something about it. ... I count him as one of the great human beings with whom I have had personal contact....

Alfred Hines, as I remember him, was not an overly big man in stature, but he was a very kind and gentle person with an almost introverted disposition. He was genuinely fond of children and always alert to the problems that confronted people from day to day.<sup>14</sup>

It was in response to the unusually high number of children in 1937 who contracted poliomyelitis, and the care which they subsequently needed, that Alfred Hines called for an increase in the community services available to children with disabilities.

Polio and other childhood diseases affected all areas of the state, both urban and regional. Those families who lived close to Perth had, at least, ready access to general practitioners and hospitals, particularly the Children's Hospital, in times of crisis. But such basic services were not always readily available to regional and rural families. In all cases, however, the long term care of disabled children was left entirely to their families. Both, in turn, became victims of polio: the child born healthy whose body was suddenly crippled by the disease; and the families who were left to care for them. The lot of regional families was made more difficult by not having access to the kinds of amenities which city families normally had.<sup>15</sup> It was with these two burdens in mind that Alfred Hines and the Crippled Children's Seaside Home stepped in, providing annual holidays for crippled young children and respite for their parents. What follows is the story of Hines, his new organisation and the camps which they ran.

Today's campsite is on the beach at Point Peron and is open to use by all organisations in Western Australia.





Keeping busy at Naval Base, on  
camp in the 1940's

# ELECTRICAL SPECIALIST FREMANTLE





# Chapter One

## ALFRED HINES AND THE FIRST CAMPS

*Alfred Hines, as I remember him, was not an overly big man in stature, but he was a very kind and gentle person with an almost introverted disposition. He was genuinely fond of children and always alert to the problems that confronted people from day to day.<sup>16</sup>*

Alfred Hines was born in Fremantle's Russell Street on 11 December 1882. His father, Ephraim, had migrated from Cambridge in England during the mid-nineteenth century, though his mother, Sarah, was native to Western Australia. She had grown up in the small farming town, York, just east of Perth.<sup>17</sup> Hines grew up in a family of three brothers and two sisters.

Little is known about the early years of Alfred Hines in Fremantle, though it is certain that he was as busy then as he was over the rest of his life. One of his earliest occupations was as a barber, but he seems not to have stuck with any one profession for any great length of time. Yet he was always active in either paid or voluntary work, and normally in both. He married Kathleen Maud Oliver in the early years of the twentieth century. With no children of their own, they adopted a young girl called Gloria who, in the years following the Second World War, married an American serviceman and returned with him to the United States where she has lived ever since.

Living through the depression years affected the attitude of Hines to work and philanthropy, as it did for many thousands of Australians. It made a particular impact on his desire to participate in social work. In the 1930s he was active with the Reverend Eric Nye in establishing the Fremantle Benevolent Fund and with the Salvation Army in establishing a local soup kitchen. He remained active in his local community after the outbreak of war in 1939. In that year he was elected a councillor to the City of Fremantle and was appointed a justice of the peace. While on council he worked with the city's mayor, Sir Frank Gibson, and was considered to be highly influential and a significant contributor.<sup>18</sup>



The Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society was by far the most influential and notable achievement of Alfred Hines, though it was not his only major philanthropic contribution to Western Australia. Most of these developed during the war years or in the years which followed until his death in 1963. In fact, so active was Hines in his community that he practically developed a career in social work. During the war he assisted Sir Frank Gibson in establishing the Mayor's Patriotic Fund, an organisation which provided assistance to allied servicemen who found themselves in Fremantle. The fund organised accommodation and activities for visitors and supplied fresh fruit and vegetables to visiting naval vessels—a gesture for which they were particularly grateful as many ships enduring shortages of fresh food during the war. In the mayor's report of 1943 Gibson wrote of the work which Hines contributed to the fund: 'Day and night, seven days a week, for over four years, he has devoted himself unreservedly to the raising of money and dispensing hospitality without regard to his own health or comfort'.<sup>19</sup> Sentiments such as these earned him admittance into the Order of the British Empire after the termination of hostilities.<sup>20</sup> When he died on 25 September 1963 Fremantle lost one of its greatest servants. 'Alf', as most knew him, would be sorely missed. Rosemary Young penned the following poem after his death:

Without a word he left us,  
Without a smile he withdrew,  
But not without our love he left us,  
And the memories that are not few.  
To know him was to love him,  
And to love him was so grand,  
For he warmed the heart of all,  
When he shook them by the hand.  
He founded his Crippled Children's Home,  
On tears of hope and joy,  
And all the rewards he wanted,  
Came back from happy girls and boys.  
The feet that never faltered,  
The eyes that never dimmed,  
Till the Saviour saw it fit,  
To call His servant back to Him.





Carers at the new Point Peron camp, possibly 1957.

Alf Hines was one in a million—  
 The kind of man you'd meet,  
 And stop to have a cheery word with,  
 As you passed him in the street.  
 He lived his life to the fullest—  
 From an old pioneer of the West,  
 Till at last on September 25<sup>th</sup>,  
 He was called to rest.  
 So pull out your box of treasures,  
 And why not count the hues,  
 Of the rainbow of memories,  
 Alf left to each and every one of you.  
 Yes, there'll be others like him,  
 But no-one quite the same,  
 For this old Fremantle Councillor,  
 There is no other name  
 Than – Our Alf.<sup>21</sup>

Children always remained of special interest to Hines, and in particular those children with disabilities. With the same creativity and enthusiasm which he applied to all his projects, Hines began planning camps for crippled children in 1941, establishing then the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society which he then served as chairman and honorary organiser until his death in 1963. Hines' first camp was held in January 1942. It was during a period in which children's camps were increasingly regarded by public health officials as important in the development and health of young people. From the late 1930s, in fact, the state's public health department actively encouraged children's holiday camps. It was believed that a short but substantial period of time away from home would be good for physical development and education, during which children would participate in exercise and fun activities. Certainly the idea of a restorative camp or convalescent home in 'healthy' locations had long been promoted in the state for both children and adults in recovery from illness.

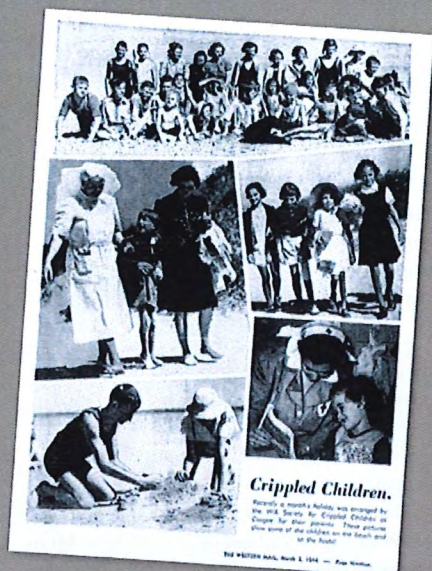
The Ministering Children's League (MCL) convalescent home in Cottesloe was already good example of this, as was the Wooroolo Sanatorium (erected in the 1930s) to a lesser degree. But children's camps also suited government policy in child healthcare at the time—that being a sustained program of protection and prevention of school-aged children. The public health department spoke frequently of the benefits of children's camps from the late 1930s, and in 1944 complained that

There are still certain aspects of school work which are completely ignored in this State. We have no Educational Camps or Health Camps for children. This is a much needed activity. It is true that some organisations do endeavour to give some children holidays by the seaside, but this is just a 'drop in the ocean,' and by no means takes the place of proper health or recuperative camps where delicate children can be sent.<sup>22</sup>

As the benefits of children's holiday camps were already clear to public health officials and Western Australian families alike, it didn't require much further analysis to see how similar benefits could be brought to young children with crippling disabilities. Yet few government agencies or other organisations were in a position to offer such services. The contribution of Alfred Hines and his volunteers in such activities, therefore, soon proved invaluable.

The idea of an annual holiday camp for crippled children seems to have originated sometime in 1940 and an informal committee was soon established to make this happen.<sup>23</sup> The first camp was held in January 1942 at Coogee Beach, just south of Fremantle.<sup>24</sup> Few records have survived the first camps, and our reconstruction of the events there are now left to the memories of those who still survive. Of all records, the stories told recently by Bill Mather-Brown are perhaps the most evocative





and charming. In 2002 Mather-Brown published his life memoirs, *The Fight in the Dog*, and in 2006 he was interviewed for this project. On both occasions he spoke warmly of this encounters with Alfred Hines, and of the camps which the new society offered to young Western Australians:

Councillor Hines realized that handicapped children, loved not less than other children, could be a very taxing emotional and physical drain on parents unable to sustain short breaks from their offspring because of specialised requirements of the children, particularly those with severe disabilities. Further than that, he believed that the children also suffered in as much as they never got away from home on camping holidays like some of the able bodied kids. He decided that he would establish a holiday camp for crippled children that would achieve desired ends for both parents and their youngsters. They could have a break from each other that would be beneficial to both....Alfred Hines was also aware, I believe, that there were young people in institutions that, even if well meaning, were pretty dreary places.<sup>25</sup>

When Mather-Brown was diagnosed with polio it was during the 1937 outbreak while his parents were living in the outback town of Agnew. He was first taken to Kalgoorlie Hospital, and from there was rushed for treatment to Fremantle. Bill was diagnosed with polio during the 1937 epidemic whilst living with his parents in the outback town of Agnew. He was rushed first to Kalgoorlie Hospital for treatment and taken later to Fremantle for rehabilitation work. It was while in Fremantle Hospital that his mother first heard of the camp which Hines hoped to offer for children, such as himself, with disabilities. 'I was accepted' he recalled, 'and on the given day I joined a group of disabled children at the offices of the Fremantle City Council, where we boarded a bus which took us south of the

harbour city to Coogee, about eight kilometres away'.<sup>26</sup> His description of the first camp remains the best we have and speaks both to the impact it had on the lives of those children who attended and the enduring friendships which they forged:

Since leaving Kalgoorlie hospital and the physiotherapy at Fremantle I had had very little contact with other handicapped children. It was quite an experience to discover that there were a lot of other kids in the same boat as myself. It was also the environment in which, as a nine year old, I started to feel sorry for the underdog or the kid that none of the others wanted.

A boy named Eddy had developed a habit of rocking back and forth, particularly from the shoulders up. The rest of us little so-and-sos discovered this particularity almost immediately and we took great delight in stirring him up. Our favourite pastime was to bray like donkeys until we got Ed' well and truly going. "Eddy Neddy the donkey," we would tease.



Children at Naval Base, including Jim Scully, in the mid-1940s.



"I'm not. I'm not," he would yell back.

"Hee haw, hee haw, hee haw," we would continue.

It was funny at first, but then I noticed that Ed was all on his own. Once the realization hit me I didn't feel very clever at all. I changed sides, but not before I could have been labelled a ring leader and one of the main culprits. From the camp I also appreciated that I was very well off in terms of physical disability. There were kids who were confined to chairs and beds permanently. There were others facing the prospect of an early death through the vicious quirks of muscular dystrophy. My polio paled significantly in my own mind and even as a child I realized that I was pretty lucky.

I met and made friends who have remained cobbers to this day. Hughie MacKay, who came to the camp from the county town of Margaret River, is one who comes to mind. Johnny Fitzpatrick is another. He was one of the more seriously disabled who spent his days at the camp in his chair. The bond that helped to bind us over a long period was our loyal following of the same Australian Rules football team, East Fremantle—the almighty blue and whites. Johnny Powelly was, like Hughie and myself, among the more mobile campers, and because of our ability to get around I thought that we probably had a better time at the camp than the kids who were immobile.

Each morning after breakfast we were loaded into a horse and cart and taken over to the beach for a swim. The fellow who drove the horse was a Mr. O'Leary and the horse's name was Ginger. Of the willing workers at the camp I guess these two rate among the top bracket. O'Leary loved that horse and it might be that it loved him in return because they were a good team.

The approach to the beach was over a track that ran down through the sand hills. I suppose it was not a great distance, but the going was heavy for the horse. The cart

had car wheels and although the tyres were wide they still sank into white sand. O'Leary would walk alongside and give encouragement to the horse and sometimes he not only held the reins but would push on the cart as well. If things got too hard, the driver would call the horse to stop and Ginger would stand there with his sides going in and out like bellows and the sweat dripping off him. Once on the shore we would have a swim or a ride in the boat that was kept handy for our use.

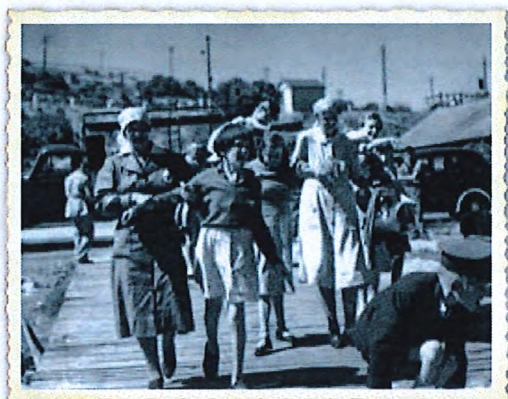
Sometimes we would go on trips and one of the favourites was to an amusement park at South Beach with its merry-go-rounds, chair-o-planes and octopus rides. The whole place was available to us free of charge and we made every second count. My thing was the octopus. Sitting in the little boxes on the ends of those mechanical arms that lifted you up into the air and then swept down low to the ground while going round and round was just out of this world. I felt like a fighter pilot. It is a wonder we were not sick.

A quieter alternative was the plain merry-go-rounds. A cowboy at heart, I liked to gather up the reins and ride away on a daydream.

The only part of my stay at Coogee that I didn't like was when the dentist came. I decided at a very early age that I was a coward when it came to the medical profession. I had no intention of sitting in that chair. I took off and hid. The nurse found me with no trouble and I was dragged, screaming like a stupid clot, into a dentist's chair. We hit it off right from the start. I hit him and he hit me. A couple of nurses and a few other aides dropped in to lend a hand and I was finally pinned down.







Many of the children started their holiday by the seaside by taking a ferry ride from Fremantle to the camp site at Naval Base, 1944.

"See you later," said the dentist as he handed me my crutches. I latched onto them as quickly as I could and flew down the passage.

"How'd you go?" said MacKay.

"Aw, it was a breeze," says I, turning a tear-stained blotchy red face to the floor. "Nothin' to it."

Generally the camps achieved what they were meant to. The atmosphere was relaxed and the morale of the holiday-makers was high. I imagine that the parents at home enjoyed their break as well. I attended the first three camps and enjoyed myself immensely. "We had some good fun in those days Hugh," I reminisced many years later.

"We called it fun," he answered with that hint of laughter in his voice. "Everyone else called it making a bloody nuisance of ourselves."<sup>27</sup>

There is no doubt that the camp was a complete success. It was the first of its kind in the state. Mather-Brown, active and enthusiastic as a child despite his illness, went on to become a leading Western Australian sportsman and basketballer. In 1957 he was in the first Australian team of disabled athletes which competed that year at the Stoke Mandeville Games in England. He also rose to prominence locally as a poet. His life may have been unusual, but the experiences which he spoke of at the seaside camp were far from it: there is no doubt that most of the children who attended had the time of their lives.

The success of Hines' first camp at Coogee provoked a new idea: the creation of a permanent seaside home for crippled children which would cater for their medical needs while at the same time offering a marvellous, much deserved beach holiday.

## CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S BEACH IDYLL ENDS

Today the crippled children's holiday camp at Naval Base broke up, and many children, denied the delights of active recreation, have carried home within their imperfect little bodies hearts that are brimful of happiness.

Back to their homes deep in the country and in the city areas they have gone, voicing on the way only one complaint, "Why couldn't it go on forever?"

One little girl lumped up to the matron in charge, Sister Collins. Her sensitive dark eyes shone wistfully beneath eyelashes still glistening whitely with the sea salt that had dried on them after her very last bath.

"Sister, is it really today we go home? Oh, I do wish we could stay here always," she said.

Sister Collins said that the youngsters had pockets full of shells, collections of gaily coloured seaweed, and some, she suspected, had secreted among their belongings rock-crabs as special souvenirs to be produced for inspection by other far-away children.

She said that there had been surprisingly few accidents, most of the casualties being cut knees when uncertain legs had stumbled, and the youngsters had fallen.

Last night the children gave a concert, dressed up. Their choir gave several items. There was a display of arts and crafts. It was a long time before all the children, with browned faces and sunburned noses, were fast asleep.

Chairman Councillor A. Hines of the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society organised the camp, and was assisted by a band of voluntary helpers.

## LONELY CRIPPLE SAYS 'THANKS FOR HOLIDAY'

MOVING expression of thanks for the kindness shown at the Crippled Children's Seaside Home recently has been written to organiser Councillor A. Hines by 15-year-old cripple Arthur Johnson.

Writing from Sunset, Bickelton, Arthur says: "Dear Mr. Hines, thanks ever so much for such a lovely holiday. I really did enjoy every minute of it as everybody was so kind and helpful."

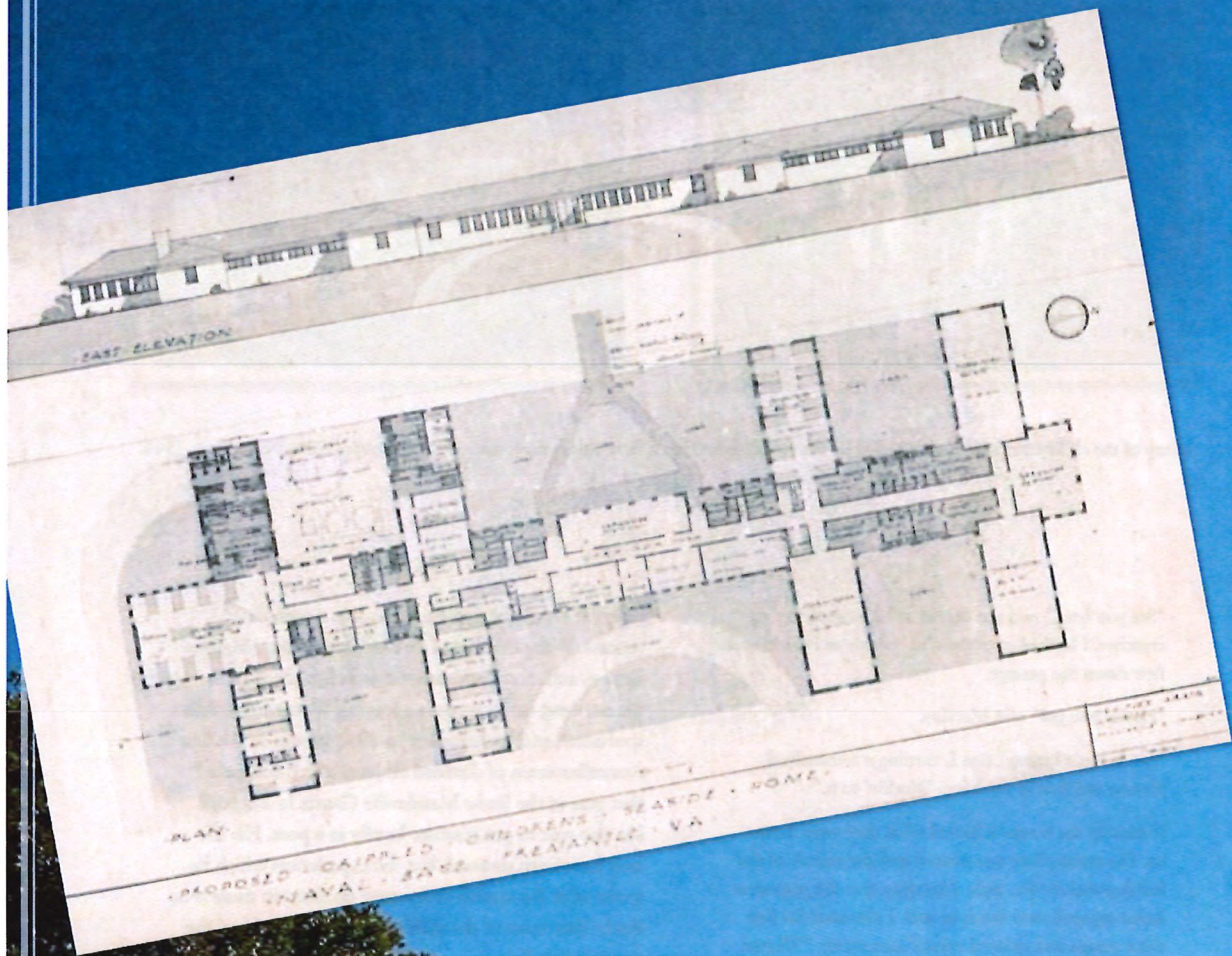
"I feel rather lonely and miserable having to come back here and I am hoping that it will soon be possible for you to commence building our new home."

"This is really all I have to look forward to and the knowledge that I shall once again be among those of my own age will certainly make life more endurable for me."

"I wish I could tell you how much I appreciate what you are doing for us, but words fall me. Please thank all these good people who looked after us and tell them I am looking forward to seeing them again."

"Thanks a lot—From your crippled friend."





PLAN  
PROPOSED - CARPENTER - CHILDREN - SEASIDE - HOME -  
NAVAL - BASE - FARMVILLE - VA

ALFRED HINES  
SEASIDE HOME





# Chapter Two

## FINDING A HOME, 1945–1948

Our Home, we hope, will be a meeting ground for those who need help and those who are ready and willing to give it. Our wish is to provide a place where the little band of doctors and kindly helpers can carry out their work of alleviation and healing.<sup>28</sup>

The Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society was incorporated formally on 15 November 1945. Its early months must have seemed full of promise. The committee was well supported by honorary and active members, all of whom were prominent local citizens and most of whom had strong connections with the Fremantle community. Indeed, in 1946 there were over sixty people elected as office bearers and committee members of the society at its annual meeting in September. Many of them were prominent in state or local government. Sir Frank Gibson, mayor of Fremantle and a member of the state's Legislative Council, remained in his position as the society's president (and did so for many years yet); G. Fraser, John Tonkin, J.B. Sleeman and T. Fox were all vice-presidents of the society and were also serving members of state parliament. Frank Wise was the state's premier when he was elected as another of the society's vice-presidents, while William Wauhop was the mayor of East Fremantle. Others represented important local businesses, agencies and companies. Mr S. Mills, from the famous baking company Mills & Ware; two representatives of Plaistowes; M.M. Nathan from Atkins; J.W. Vivian from the Boans department store; M. Growden from the Rockingham Roads Board and F.J. Hammond from the Fremantle Roads Board all numbered among the 23 vice-presidents elected in 1946. Harold Watson, from the iconic Fremantle Watson family behind the popular Watsonia butchery and smallgoods shop, was the organisation's first patron. The executive committee, containing the society's most active members, was made up of 19 people. These included Sister Kate Ballantyne, the organisation's first matron; Alfred Hines, who operated as the executive's chairman and honorary organiser; Messrs E.J. Tomlin, C. Bennett; L.F. Whithers, M.J. Scanlan and F. Davey; and eight women including Mesdames Sadie Stone, E.M. Wauhop, E.M. Carr, E.E. Pass and E. Stobbs. A holiday committee was elected with nearly twenty members, responsible for planning the annual camp in the summer, while there were also two honorary auditors elected and three trustees.<sup>29</sup>

The society's ambition to establish a permanent seaside home at which young disabled children could seek respite and holidays also looked promising. In late 1945 or early 1946 the premier, Frank Wise, promised that land would be made available on which the society could

build such a facility. The Rockingham Roads Board, they were told, had reserved several pieces of land at Kwinana which they hoped would be considered suitable for the proposed seaside home. Inspections of the sites were organised quickly. Less than a month later the minister for lands, Alexander Panton, personally approved the grant of land and the plans to construct the new home. The executive committee, in response, established a building subcommittee to oversee the building project. It was comprised of five executive committee members, including Alfred Hines.<sup>30</sup> The site selected for the new home sat alongside land which was earmarked for a proposed children's orthopaedic hospital allocated to the Children's Hospital Board. At a conference attended by Panton, the society's executive members and the Children's Hospital Board it soon became clear that should the society still require its requested six acres that insufficient space would be left for the proposed new hospital. In such circumstances the society agreed to take only three acres for its proposed seaside home, agreeing that it would be sufficient space for their project.<sup>31</sup>

With the land made available and building approval conceded, the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society wasted little time in pushing ahead with its first major building project. Donations of cash or in-kind support from the community were generous and enabled the speedy commencement. When an architectural and building firm offered their services to construct the home at a highly reduced rate the committee was quick to accept their offer. Claude Nicholas, the city of Fremantle's own architect and close colleague of Gibson and Hines, was elected the society's honorary architect—an appointment which saw the beginning of his many years of service to the society.<sup>32</sup>

It was not long, however, before plans for the society's new home were interrupted. In the first place, management of the building project soon caused serious rifts within the society's executive committee. The process by which Nicholas was appointed caused particular tension, provoking the resignation of N.J.E. McCombie from the executive over what he considered inconsistencies in the committee's decision-making processes. McCombie had already been frustrated with the manner in which the society established such committees as the building subcommittee. The executive was quick to address the issues which he raised, agreeing





to reform its procedures. Furthermore, all previous resolutions regarding the building project were rescinded and re-examined. A new building subcommittee was elected, though Nicholas remained as the organisation's honorary architect then and in the future. Nonetheless, such reforms were not sufficient to convince McCombie to stay.<sup>33</sup>

Fundraising continued in aid of the new home. While donations were received from around the community, the society also had to assess more creative methods by which money could be raised. Even the most creative schemes, though, demonstrated the care of the committee for the state's disabled children. An anonymous member from Cottesloe wrote to the committee with the following idea:

Dear Sir, I venture to suggest that individual beds in the new home for crippled children be distinguished by fixing a Chromium plated memorial tablet over the head of the bed to commemorate the memory of some beloved Relative, Friend, or Animal Friend of the Subscriber of a suitable donation to be declared upon by the Committee.

In support of the motion, I suggest it will fulfil the following useful and worthy purposes. —

Provide a useful amount of capital towards the erection and furnishing of the Home.

Enable Subscribers to perpetuate the memory of a beloved one...

Provide means whereby one may find an outlet for the accumulated and suppressed love which came into being through the wonderful companionship of one who loved and was dearly loved.

Focus that love on the occupants of that bed, which will inevitably be of great psychological benefit to them.

Provide a living Shrine which one may visit with gifts and love.<sup>34</sup>

The use of such memorial plaques were already common in many churches and hospitals. Many a park bench or church pew had been labelled by this time in Western Australia with quiet words of commemoration for loved ones. Institutions such as the Home of Peace in Subiaco had experimented with such schemes much earlier in the twentieth century, though with no really significant financial benefit.

Meanwhile, architectural plans drawn up by Claude Nicholas were approved by the committee and attention was again turned to the plans for the Kwinana site. Invitations to VIPs were posted and details published in the daily press, radio and cinema of the planned ceremony at which the foundation stone would be laid on 16 February 1947. The day itself suggested real promise and it seemed that the society was well on its way to completing the planned seaside home.<sup>35</sup>

Sadly, any such hope for success was short lived. Not only did the building project thereafter progress slowly—indeed, it earned almost no mention in the executive's minutes over the coming months<sup>36</sup>—but the committee remained divided by internal dispute. So difficult had relations between some committee members become that on 9 June 1947 Alfred Hines tendered his resignation from the society.<sup>37</sup> At first he claimed it was ill-health which prevented him from adequately fulfilling his role as chairman. But subsequent minutes of the organisation's executive meetings show that, in fact, it was the provocative behaviour of some members which Hines blamed for the aggravation of his poor health. In one instance, complaints were raised with the charging of petrol to the society's accounts, at which point various committee members requested the issue of petrol be more tightly controlled. In another, questions were raised over the location of some of the society's equipment after a stock take was conducted at its Naval Base storage hut.<sup>38</sup>



## What we are planning to do -

We all sympathise with a poor disabled child, with the mental and physical suffering engendered by its abnormal or sub-normal condition. These sufferings are peculiar to children who are not quite as their playmates are, and it is not easy to find ways of giving them pleasure that are not tinged in some measure by the healthy normality of their associates. Our plan to establish a Seaside Holiday Home for such children has many aspects to commend it. Foremost, of course, is the desire to do them permanent benefit by bringing them under the observation of skilled medical men, which can more easily be done during a holiday of some length than by periodic visits. In some cases, in fact, it may be medical knowledge unavailable to the general practitioner in their home town, however worthy the doctor may be.

Then it provides a pleasant, healthy holiday for a large number of children who, having received a poor deal from life, can take all the kindnesses and friendliness that we can offer them. The little we can do is but small compensation for what they miss in everyday life. Thirdly, there is the atmosphere where other children are also infirm and the crippled child is thrown into company that is not all hale and

One of the successful Annual  
Camps conducted by the Society.



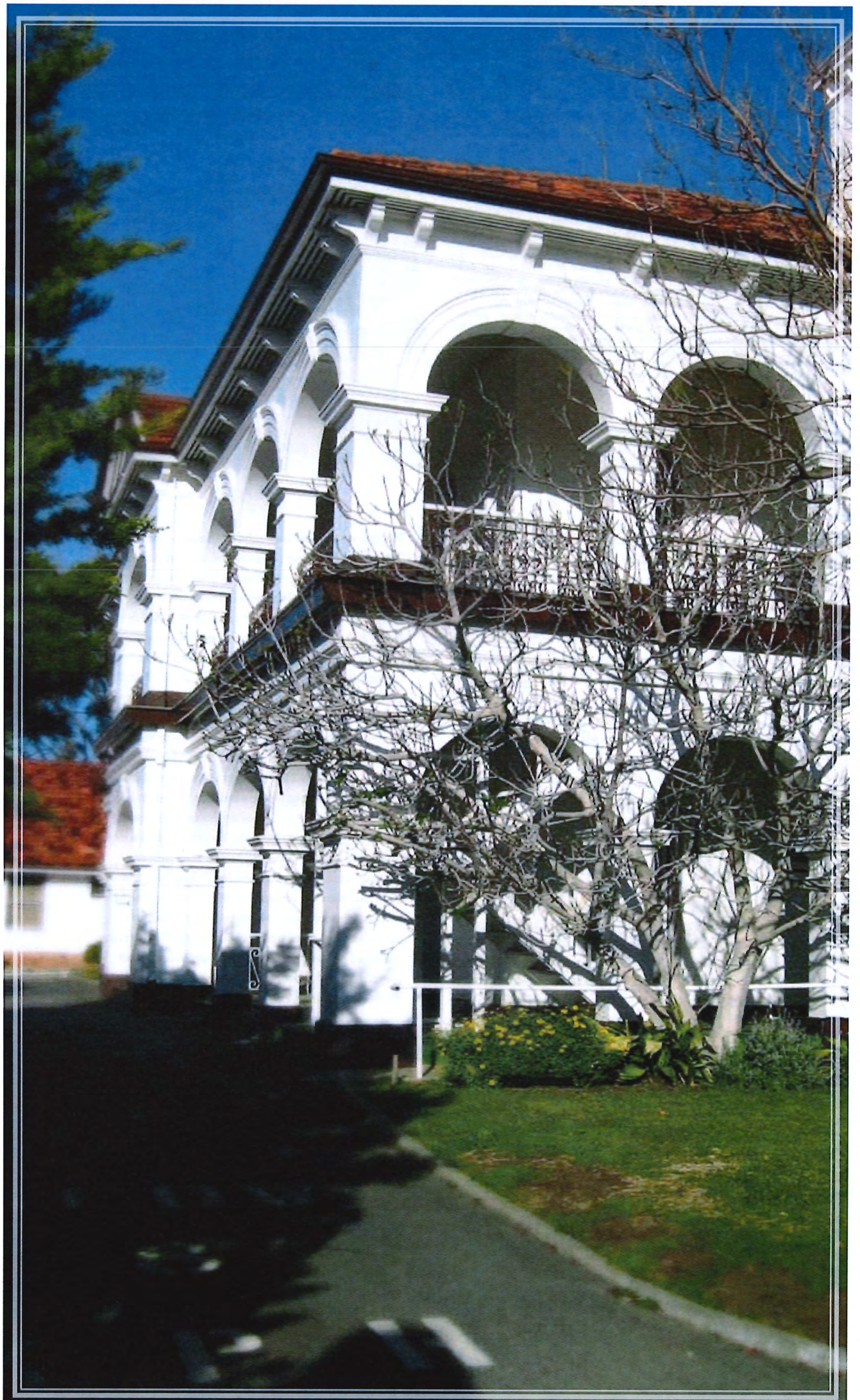
Hines appeared to take these criticisms as a personal attack against himself or his management of the society, complaining that 'numerous pin-pricks' by other members 'had helped to undermine his health'.<sup>39</sup> While the executive was quick to assure him of their support and gratitude for his years of service and, indeed, managed to convince him to withdraw his resignation, a few still complained at his style of operating. Such complaints revealed very personal differences that still existed within the committee. Mr Scanlan assured the committee that he did not wish to see Hines end his association with the society, but at the same time 'did not want to see any action of the Committee to appear as though it was "crawling down" to him'. Mr Heron, meanwhile, complained that:

On previous occasions the Committee had suggested to Councillor Hines that some of the work which he considered was his duty to perform should be taken over by other Members of the Executive, but he (Mr Heron) had always found Cr. Hines was very unwilling to pass any of the work on to other Members, and [was] a most difficult person to assist, as he was included to carry on alone [to] get the job done, and then report that it had been done.<sup>40</sup>

Despite such incidents, that year's annual general meeting confirmed the society's sincere appreciation of Hines and his efforts. As the minutes record: 'Several members spoke on the splendid work which had been done during the year by the Hon. Organiser Cr. A. Hines O.B.E. J.P., and by his band of honorary workers in organizing and conducting Appeals and Holiday Camps.'<sup>41</sup>

Progress on the Kwinana build continued to be stalled. Though land had been granted and a foundation stone laid in 1947, it was clear by 1948 that no further progress had been made. Indeed, in August it was conceded that not only was the build not currently proceeding, but that there seemed no real prospect of resuming the project for some years yet.<sup>42</sup> Post-war building shortages, restrictions on materials and skilled labour shortages were at the root of the delay in constructing the new seaside home. So acute were the shortages, and so important was the post-war rationing which remained in place of materials and labour, that by the end of 1949 Hines confessed the committee had not even been able to secure a building permit to at least commence its construction of the home in Kwinana.<sup>43</sup> The 1949-50 annual report also confirmed the society's inability to obtain a building permit as a result of the then present 'housing situation'.<sup>44</sup> It followed in 1954 that the state resumed ownership of the land in Kwinana, intending the site to be used instead for a proposed large oil refinery and steel works.<sup>45</sup> The reality was clear: building on the Kwinana site would never commence, and the society would have to look elsewhere for its seaside home.







# Chapter Three

All up it had been a frustrating period for the society. Though seaside camps continued to be run each summer for crowd accommodation, the organisation's first ten years had failed to make any real success of building a permanent campsite or home. By 1949 it was clear that a new policy would have to be considered. In his annual report to members that year, Hines announced that:

The Committee after due consideration by various Sub Committees considered that it had a duty not only to the crippled children of the State, but to all those generous persons who had over the years contributed funds. The ever increasing need for the Society to provide a home and the continuing frustration of its efforts to this end made necessary a temporary change in policy. The construction of the Kwinana project was by resolution of the Committee temporarily abandoned and efforts were made to secure a suitable property in or about Fremantle which would serve the Society's purpose until such time as it was possible for the Kwinana project to be achieved, and in the hope that the building could be raised more economically than at present.<sup>41</sup>

The need to quickly resolve the location of the camp and to improve the organisation's service to young disabled children in Western Australia was compelled by another outbreak in polio in 1948. Indeed, the situation in the state for care of polio victims had become urgent. In the 1948-49 annual report to members, Hines agreed that it

is a well known fact that this society and others whose aim is to assist crippled children are now faced with a much greater work than has hitherto been necessary, due mainly to the large increase in Poliomyelitis victims requiring after-care treatment...<sup>42</sup>

In May 1948 the committee had already noted that there were a number of urgent cases in Perth which need 'temporary relief'.<sup>43</sup> The epidemic raised another problem for the society, for the public health department soon warned that the camps may need to be suspended on the grounds that they may prove too great a risk in the further transmission of disease.<sup>44</sup>

The epidemic of polio which hit the state in 1948 was the most severe that Western Australia had yet encountered. Not even the 1937 outbreak produced as many victims as that which followed the war.<sup>45</sup> Though the origins of the 1948 outbreak are unclear, it is likely that it was linked to epidemics experienced in Britain and New Zealand in the preceding year. When it arrived in Perth, in particular, it hit the population of children and teenagers with especial violence.<sup>46</sup>

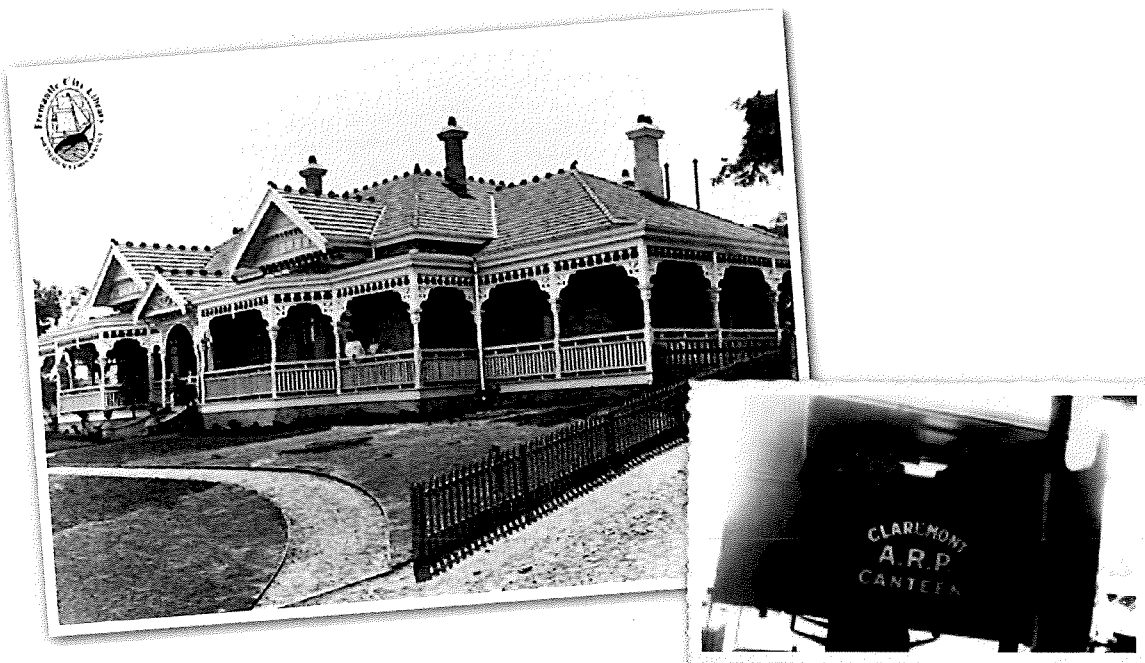
The impact of the 1948 outbreak in Western Australia is clear from statistical reporting. In the 311 cases reported that year, 165 of them were of children up to the age of nine. Children between the ages of 10 and 19 accounted

for a further 86 cases. In all, children and teenagers made up nearly 75 percent of the recorded polio cases and there were 24 deaths.<sup>47</sup> For the most part the epidemic was limited to Perth's metropolitan area, probably due to the higher risk of contracting infection in an area of high population density.<sup>48</sup> By 1949 the reported cases of polio had dropped significantly in number, but the aftermath of the epidemic was still very real. Late in that year the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society made it very clear that an increase in 'after-care treatment' for such young people was urgently required.<sup>49</sup>

There is little doubt that the 1948 epidemic had a major impact on the society. In the first place, the camp scheduled for early 1949 was cancelled, though it is unclear whether this was at the request of the public health department or because the society could not find appropriate accommodation.<sup>50</sup> In the wake of the epidemic, though, the society renewed its attempts to find a viable, alternative long-term facility which it could use as both a seaside home for respite of disabled children, but also for regular rehabilitative treatment of recent polio victims. Sister Kate Ballantyne, the society's first camp matron and continuing executive member, even suggested the organisation establish a 'C class' hospital which would receive government funding.<sup>51</sup>

The executive took Sister Ballantyne's suggestion seriously and explored a number of prospects it hoped might be suitable for such a purpose. The first of these was Ferns House in Rockingham. This was quickly dismissed, though, as its tenure was insecure, came at a high price and was situated on water that was considered too polluted—swimming, after all, remained an important part of the camp activities. The second option was to purchase more of the rooms from the society was already using near Naval Base, though building restrictions also made that a difficult prospect. Thirdly, the famous home of the Biddeley family, known as Iambas, beneath the Fremantle Monument on Ord Street was considered favourably by the committee.<sup>52</sup> The stately old home, later demolished to make way for the mighty Iambas flats which, too, are now demolished, would have been a perfect venue for the kind of respite or rehabilitation hospital of young people that Sister Ballantyne had suggested. But the society lost the sale due to complex internal tensions which continued to dog its executive committee. In





November 1948 the property's estate agent advised the society that he had received an anonymous call hoping that the organisation would not be successful in its attempt to purchase the property. Despite attempts by the society to persuade Ivanhoe's owners to follow through with the sale they were unsuccessful. It is clear from the executive's minutes that a large segment of the committee were unhappy at the loss of the property, and highly indignant at the sabotage made by the 'anonymous caller'.<sup>58</sup>

For years the committee worked, frustrated, at securing a suitable location for the seaside home. When first it was clear that Kwinana was going to be indefinitely delayed and then one after another prospective property proved unsuitable or unavailable, that disappointment grew. In 1950 Alfred Hines confessed that:

We feel frustrated in having in our hands sufficient funds to make our dream a reality but owing to the state of the housing situation we cannot get a permit to build. Our Honorary Architect, Mr. C.H. Nicholas, is leaving no stone unturned in his efforts to get a permit but in the meantime valuable time is being lost, with the result that a few of the children are losing hope in a bright dream they have cherished and at the same time costs in building continue to soar so that every day we are faced with the task of providing more and more resources to make sure that our plans do not fail.<sup>59</sup>

Yet it was clear that if the building project had to be deferred that alternative accommodation must be resolved. In the end, the society turned its attention to the landmark East Fremantle mansion, Woodside, built with the wealth of the gold rushes by William Dalgety Moore at the turn of the century.

Moore had been one of the state's most prominent businessmen and politicians. Born in the young Swan River Colony in 1835, Moore's family had been among the earliest colonial pioneers. George Fletcher Moore arrived in the colony in 1830 to take the position as Advocate General, though is perhaps best remembered in

history as a diarist of the colonial frontier. His brother, Samuel, arrived in 1934 and soon fathered William and four other children. When W.D. Moore was just 13 years old he entered the John Septimus Roe's Surveyor General's department. He later spent five years working on a cattle station of the Irwin River district before entering business with his brother-in-law, John Monger, in Fremantle in 1862. What followed was the rise of one of the state's most prominent and enduring businesses: W.D. Moore and Co. The company specialised in shipping, flour milling and, in the 1890s, windmills. The merchant business was based in Fremantle's Henry Street and it was there that Moore ran both his company and based his family home. After his second marriage to Annie Gallop and with 15 surviving children from both marriages, Moore built the stately family mansion, Woodside, in East Fremantle. He moved his family to the property in 1902 and stayed there until his death in 1910. Sixteen years later the house was sold to Dr East, who had earlier built the landmark home next door at 16 Dalgety Street from where he practiced. Dr East used Woodside as a private maternity hospital, though by the time it became of interest to the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society in 1948 the property was being used as accommodation by a number of families.<sup>60</sup>

With the loss of Ivanhoe in Ord Street the society's executive was quick to ensure that, after a suitable inspection of Woodside had been made, there was nothing to interrupt their acquisition of this alternative site. Its sale appears to have been a straightforward process with a purchase price of £5000 paid at some point between December 1948 and February 1949.<sup>61</sup> Yet, as with all the society's other ventures to that time, the Woodside project was doomed to fail. What followed was bitter dispute amongst the executive, attempts to transform the home into suitable accommodation for the extended care of young disabled children and for recreational camps, difficulty in evicting the property's tenants, the final abandonment of the Kwinana site and, ultimately, the sale soon after of Woodside.





Hines, Matron Ballantyne and other helpers celebrating at a 1940s camp.

Woodside had previously been in use as a private maternity hospital but when it came into the possession of the society it was being used also by several families for housing. This caused the first significant problem for its new owners who, keen to transform the building into a care facility for recent young victims of the polio outbreak, needed to have the tenants removed as quickly as possible. But post-war housing shortages made this a difficult process and the society found itself in the unenviable position of playing the role of landlord and struggling to collect rent. They had to tread carefully in the process. As a charitable organisation the society was careful to approach the evictions with compassion and worked to secure alternative accommodation for the affected families. Indeed, a special committee was established for this very purpose.<sup>62</sup> In March 1949 they contacted the State Housing Commission with the following request:

Our appeal to you is to assist us in finding alternative accommodation for the families using "Woodside". We promise to do all in our power to find other accommodation for the families. Please understand that we do not wish to put these people out but our need is very desperate as there are many cripples in W.A. requiring corrective treatment and occupational therapy, all of which we hope to incorporate in our scheme.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile, the future of the Kwinana project continued to cause concern. For a time the state government flirted with the society over the likelihood of granting building approval. Some committee members remained very keen to pursue the dream of a seaside home and hoped to continue the build on the original site. Others more cynically regarded the government's promises as nothing less than a 'Government Red Herring'. Indeed, it seemed they were right. Though the society agreed to continue negotiations in April 1949 with the government over building approval, such discussions were again fruitless and the matter dropped again from the society's records within months.<sup>64</sup>

Such failures were becoming predictable and, with ill-health pressing on him, the misfortune of Kwinana, the loss of Ivanhoe and the redirection of the society's mission with the purchase of Woodside, Alfred Hines grew disillusioned with the early promise of the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society. In June it was clear that decisive action was required to remove the Woodside tenants and commence necessary renovation to the site if it was to be used as had been first hoped. But to do so would require serious consideration of the short and long term future of the society. Though the organisation had been formed on the basis that it would build a seaside holiday home for young disabled children, Woodside—situated away from both the river and the beach—was not going to best fulfill that goal. The polio epidemic of the year before had produced more young children with disabilities and made the society's decision all the more urgent. When it was agreed to abandon Kwinana, evict the tenants and adopt Woodside as the society's real home, most hoped that the future of the society would at least be settled.<sup>65</sup> Hines, though, regretted the apparent death of his dream to build a home by the sea and in September 1949 tendered his resignation to the society on the basis that their decision to develop Woodside was neither 'legal nor moral'.<sup>66</sup>

It is easy to sympathise with Hines' concerns regarding the Woodside project. In reality the shift was a very significant change to the society's policy and mission, and Hines in particular had long been an advocate of the seaside holidays and home. All camps which had been run to that date were spent by the ocean and daily excursions to the beach had played an important part in the camp routine. Undoubtedly Hines' resignation caused some disruption to the September meeting, and executive members were quick to offer their thanks and appreciation for his long service to the society. It was noted that his health had been poor for some time and members hastily requested him to withdraw his resignation with a promise that others would take a greater share of his workload. F.R. Heron, though,



maintained his protest that Hines was often difficult to work with and rarely allowed others to participate in the organisation of the society's affairs.<sup>67</sup> Other long-serving members of the executive, T. Fox and Sir Frank Gibson, both personally appealed to Hines to reconsider his decision to leave. Though nothing further was officially noted about subsequent discussions, it is clear that Hines must have reconsidered for three months later he reappears in the minutes of executive meetings.<sup>68</sup>

With the continuing involvement of Hines assured the society now had to prepare Woodside for its new future. Yet success continued to elude them and 1949 soon passed by without any further advances made in the society's ambition to offer real services to such disabled young children as the victims of the 1948 polio epidemic. Since the purchase of Woodside two camps had been held by the society in accommodation leased elsewhere, while plans to renovate the building remained stalled. By the early months of 1950 it was clear that the building was little more than a nuisance. The biggest problem seems to have been the issue of the home's tenants, all of whom required alternative accommodation elsewhere. A year after the building's purchase the tenants were still living within the building and, worse still, the society had been unable to collect

their rent. Hence in February 1950 Hines proposed that the property be returned to sale.

The motion as it was voted on by the society's executive committee was deadlocked: seven were in favour of selling the property, while seven opposed it. It was clear that the future of Woodside lay poised on a knife-edge; either legal means must be used to force the eviction of the tenants or the building must be sold. The society could not indefinitely retain a building that was essentially useless to their mission.<sup>69</sup>

In the meantime there were other issues to do with the future of the society that had to be considered. The Western Australian Crippled Children's Society, now known as Rocky Bay, had been founded in 1937. Their work had always complemented the activities of Hines' Seaside Home Society and, thus, the proposal of the WA Crippled Children's Society in 1950 to merge with the CCSHS was taken very seriously.

The two societies met on 13 March. Heading the delegation from the WA Crippled Children's Society was Dr MacKellar-Hall, a physician who had frequently worked with the Seaside Home Society and been active in the medical care of children attending the summer camps. MacKellar-Hall and his colleagues were optimistic regarding the benefits of a merger between

A camp in the Naval Base, late in the 1940s.





the two societies and suggested that if 'personalities' could be put aside the amalgamation would be to the benefit of the state's crippled children.<sup>70</sup> Both societies formed special subcommittees to further assess the proposed merger.<sup>71</sup> John Tonkin was among those who were part of the Seaside Home Society team. Reporting back to the executive in June 1950, Tonkin questioned the organisational control of the WA Crippled Children's Society, particularly in relation to expenditure, and raised concern at how the funds of the Seaside Home Society would be managed should the merger develop. He also argued that the mission of his society to build a permanent home distinguished themselves sufficiently from the other society to warrant their continued separation. He had the full agreement, apparently, of the subcommittee. With such damning conclusions discussions of a merger ceased and the society continued in its operations as before.<sup>72</sup> This may have been the first consideration of a merger between the two societies, but it was not the last.

The future of Woodside was also soon resolved. In August 1950 the state government announced its ambition to acquire the property in order to use it as a maternity hospital. It soon made an offer of £6000 as a purchase price.<sup>73</sup> An independent valuation commissioned by the society believed the property to be worth £11,779, and

the society instead requested this sale price plus 10 percent for the inconvenience of moving. When, finally, a price of £8500 was agreed on by both parties the executive voted to hand ownership of Woodside to the government.<sup>74</sup> It was not without some relief to a number of the members. E.H. Grey, for example, argued that the project had always been a mistake.<sup>75</sup> No doubt he was correct. But the sale of Woodside also left the society facing its next major dilemma: it was nearly a decade since Alfred Hines had run the first camp for crippled children and yet the society which had since developed to continue the camps was no closer to finding a permanent home than they had been in the beginning.

Jim Scully and Neil Newton, setting sail for the Naval Base camp with Hines, February 1946





In 1957 the first camp was run at the society's new home in Point Peron.  
It was still a largely isolated stretch of coastline, in a sheltered area of  
Cockburn Sound. Today it is surrounded by urban development.





# Chapter Four

## POINT PERON

The year was 1952. It had been a year since Woodside had been sold to the government, almost four years since building had stopped at Kwinana property and a decade since the society had been founded. We know from the records that the society was frustrated in its failure to secure a permanent home. But despite the agony of repeated attempts and repeated failure and conducting business, its members never failed and never faltered in providing the yearly camps so valued by disabled Western Australian children. In addition to this the society remained active in fundraising ventures and worked often with similar organisations. Alfred Hines remained a prominent member of the society and, as he was well known for, often coordinated and carried out the society's work himself. The society may have still been without a permanent home, but it was in no way inactive.

The property at Kwinana, with its deepwater foundation stone and a few scattered buildings, lay dormant but remained in the society's name during this period. Though the society had previously abandoned hope that the project there would be resurrected, they did briefly flirt with the possibility a year after the sale of Woodside. Astonishingly, despite the history of the previous years, the organisation appeared poised in March 1952 to recommence work at the Kwinana site. But the state government, by that time, was using the terms of the *Land Resumption Act* to secure ownership of vast tracts of land in the Kwinana region in order to build a proposed oil and coal works. The society's holdings, they soon discovered, would be swallowed up in that project.<sup>26</sup>

On the surface this appeared to be yet another blow, but in reality it was the beginning of a process which would see the organisation once and for all obtain the land it required for their proposed seaside home.<sup>27</sup> In returning the Kwinana site the government offered, instead, to provide the society with land elsewhere. Bureaucracy prolonged the discussions over two years, from July 1953 to July 1955. Two main sites were considered by both the government and the society: one at Coogee where the first camps had taken place and, the other, at Palm Beach in Point Peron, near Rockingham. Ultimately the society was allowed to choose between the two sites and, in late 1954 or early 1955 they settled on Point Peron.<sup>28</sup>

The society must have been both pleased and relieved with the result. They had finally obtained the land they for which they had long awaited and work could commence on building the camp site. The continuing high price of building materials and labour prevented the organisation from erecting the accommodation in new materials and, in 1955, Hines confessed that

it was regretted that the high cost of material and labour prevented the erection of a home as originally planned. The society was fortunate, however, to secure six dormitory buildings completely furnished and with ablution, laundry and lavatory blocks that had been

used by the Cannstrian Company at Kwinana while building the refinery.<sup>29</sup>

Other buildings were also acquired for use on the site, including an assembly hall and administration centre from the State Housing Commission which they received in exchange for the society's storage hut at the naval base in Rockingham.<sup>30</sup>

The society was delighted. In 1956 Hines delivered the organisation's annual report and briefly described the new seaside home which was to be finished here that year:

The Home which will accommodate 100 children and staff, is particularly designed for comfort and hygiene. Hot and cold water, shower and bath, hospital and laundry, modern kitchen with a cool room and refrigerator and large hall, 100 x 50, which will be used as a Dining Room and Entertainment Hall, beautifully lighted with fluorescent lighting. It is situated near the Beach with a beautiful view of Cockburn Sound, the refinery and Garden Island.<sup>31</sup>

In the same report he recalled the history of the past fifteen years:

The idea of establishing and providing a holiday home for crippled and disabled children was formulated in 1943-43 when four weeks Holiday Camp was held at Coogee. This proved to be very successful and was attended by 48 children mostly from inner-city areas. Each year since then an ever increasing number of crippled children have attended our Holiday Camps and this fact makes so very obvious the real need for a permanent Home in which afflicted children may be brought at regular intervals for proper care and treatment.<sup>32</sup>

It was clear that the new property would go well beyond offering occasional recreational camps. Indeed, the facility would prove to be a permanent home at which disabled children and their families could seek respite, care and treatment. It was an extraordinary mission, and a generous service to Western Australians.



Hines discussed the impact of the organisation's work on the lives of children:

One result of a crippled or a handicapped body or mind, is often a rather different psychological outlook and when such disabled children learn and realize that with proper care and tuition they may be usefully employed and thereby attain their own place in Society, it makes a tremendous difference to their whole view upon life. They may then look with faith and self-confidence to the future ahead of them. A complete and suitably equipped Home will be a great asset to the State, because, in the absence of such an organisation at present, hundreds of afflicted children are tied to life-long disability by reason of the fact that they cannot be given suitable treatment with the proper facilities. Generally speaking, these children are not concentrated in certain areas, but they are scattered throughout the land and it is no reflection to say that the general practitioner and the smaller hospitals are frequently are inadequate to handle the complicated and often obscure cases of juvenile deformities and disabilities, while on the other hand, if carried out under the most favourable conditions diagnosis may often point to underlying causes which may be overcome or alleviated by appropriate treatment.

On viewing the matter from another angle, it is observed that many of the children come from poorer homes and their parents may neither have the financial means nor the knowledge whereby the children may be enabled to receive the necessary attention and treatment. There is also the other aspect, that of helping to lighten the care and burden of parents who feel that they are not able to do the proper thing in the matter of care for such children and it gives a deep sense of satisfaction to those who have witnessed the manifest of happiness of parents who have seen the atmosphere of the holiday camps; the experience of the

joy and happiness of the children—the obvious feeling of equality and freedom of the children among themselves, with the absence of that feeling of inferiority and pity so often experienced when such children are thrown into contact with normal children who suffer no such disabilities.<sup>83</sup>

The state government, historically, had provided little services for families with disabled children, and only small improvements had been made after the 1948 epidemic. It is certainly clear that both the society and families were relieved to see the completion of the home approaching.

It was therefore in 1957 that the first camp was run at the society's new home in Point Peron. A report on the camp was included in that year's annual report and, given its historical significance, is worth reprinting here

This camp was most significant, as it is the reflection of many years of hard work and planning by a small group of interested people, whose aim it was to provide a holiday home for unfortunate children such as these.

Early Saturday morning found an excited crowd of disabled children gathered at the Perth Station, armed with shovels, buckets, beach hats and all the necessary requirements for a really happy holiday. The bus duly arrived to transport the children, and after checking each child aboard, they set off. On arrival at the Camp, there was much sorting out to be done, and the children were shown to their rooms, then they all assembled in the dining room to eat and meet the staff who would be caring for them during the next three weeks. There were many happy hours spent on the beach, where the children had exercise in the water, or browned themselves in the sun. We say thankyou to Mr Waterhouse who took the children for a boat ride several times a week.



The new camp site at Point Peron opened in 1957. Here, the many children, helpers and volunteers celebrated in the new recreational hall with a gala event including lots of dress ups and party food.



The programme of entertainment was full and varied. Firstly, there was a trip to Perth to His Majesty's Theatre to see the pantomime "Jack and the Beanstalk". At interval ice cream and drinks were donated by the theatre. Then in the evening Mr Morris, the magician came down to the camp, also "Dornette" and the performing dogs. This was a wonderful evening, much enjoyed by the children and staff alike.

Among many other highlights of the holiday, was a trip to the Rockingham Fun Park, where amusements were free for the afternoon and as you can imagine, the children made the most of them. On Tuesday they went to the zoo for the day, where the train and merry-go-round were available to all free of charge.

The Fremantle Club, who have for the last few years, given the children and staff a lovely evenings entertainment, followed by a party, did so again this year and at the conclusion, handed over to Mr Hines a handsome cheque. We all say a big thankyou to these people, for their wonderful gesture.

We will all remember the happy time we spent at the refinery at Kwinana. The kiddies were driven all around the plant and shown the points of interest, and before leaving were given cool drinks, sweets and popcorn.

Many of the evenings were spent seeing films shown at the camp hall by Shell, also from the W.A. Meat Exports. Mrs Stewart from the Lucy Creeth Hospital showed us some interesting coloured slides.

Saturday was also a gala day, as this was the day the Soroptimists bought their party to the camp. What a wonderful spread it was. Nothing was spared to see the children had a party to remember. To these kind ladies we also express our thanks.

Each Sunday all children were cared for and each denomination were taken to their own church. The Salvation Army came by request and the children thoroughly enjoyed themselves taking part in the services. They were quick to learn the songs and the accompanying actions. On looking over the congregation, we found most of the staff were there also and singing sometimes louder than the kiddies.

A lovely evenings entertainment was arranged by Mr Bidstrup of Rockingham Picture Show. A fleet of taxis volunteered to transport the children. This was much appreciated, as the problem of transport is sometimes hard to overcome. A delightful programme was shown and at interval, the management provided ice cream and drinks to all.<sup>84</sup>

The camp, like all the others, was deemed to be a complete success. The society had finally achieved its goal of a permanent home at which crippled children could look forward to many future holidays. It was the first of its kind ever erected in the state. The work of Hines in securing the home and preserving the society's dream was recognised when, at some time prior to 1962, the Point Peron site was named in his honour, the 'Alfred Hines Seaside Home for Crippled Children'. The society thus entered the 1960s with confidence and a steady foundation upon which it could advance.





Dormitory accommodations at Point Peron.





# Chapter Five

## THE CAMPS

After lunch the children had their first dip in the sea—how they enjoyed it! Some of them had never seen the sea before, and one little chap from the country remarked: ‘It’s bigger than daddy’s dam.’<sup>85</sup>

The new Point Peron site was opened for its first camp in 1957, but the society had been running annual camps since January 1942. 1949 was the only exception to this rule, when health concerns after the recent polio epidemic forced the society to cancel its planned event.

Most Australian children have grown up with the experience of school, church or other kinds of camps, and many are left with happy memories of the events which they treasure for life. Such camps must have been all the more special for those children with physical disabilities for whom the camps were a rare opportunity to have fun and mix equally with other children.

Of all the children who attended the Crippled Children’s Seaside Home Society camps, the vast majority believe that the events were among the most special of their childhood. The camps were specially designed to accommodate their needs and provide them with activities and care they would not normally have received elsewhere. And it provided them with an opportunity to relax, enjoy themselves, have special treats, attend special outings and to be entertained. So rich were the opportunities for fun that in 1950 Hines reported ‘We had so much entertainment during the holiday that there was in fact no single day that we did not have some outing or special amusement’.<sup>86</sup>

Though the camps were designed first and foremost as an opportunity for children to have fun, they also provided other services or facilities. The children all received special medical attention while on the camps. This was, in fact, surprisingly important. As many of the children leaved in regional or remote areas, the camps were in some cases the only opportunity they had to be seen by specialist medical practitioners such as Dr MacKellar-Hall. The camps were equally important in that they provided an opportunity for rest to those families who cared for disabled children. The working lives of many families, particularly those in the bush, was long and demanding, and life was made all the more difficult in having to care also for a crippled child and to do so with little or no government assistance.

The camps were run each summer, normally in January but occasionally into February. The committee’s preparations seemed to commence in November and December. Prior to 1957, their first role was to find a location for the event and a few key locations were used repeatedly: in the 1940s camps were held at Coogee, at the naval base (Leeuwin) in Fremantle and at the Swanbourne military barracks. In the 1950s the

military hospital at Garden Island and the Immigration Department buildings at Point Walter were also used.

Children who attended the camp were disabled due to a range of medical conditions. Most in the 1940s and 1950s were victims of polio, though some suffered instead from muscular dystrophy. In the late 1950s blind and mentally disabled children were also invited to the camps.

Each camp generally lasted for around three weeks, though that did vary. Children would normally assemble in a central location such as the Perth bus station or the Fremantle train station, and from there were transported to the camp. Most camps were south of Fremantle and buses were used to take the children to the location, though when the camp was held on Garden Island they were ferried from Fremantle; for many children it would not just have the first time they saw the sea, but the first time they were on a boat.<sup>87</sup>

At camp the children spent practically every day for the next three weeks participating in fun activities and going on outings. The whole time was devoted to their entertainment, and they were expected only to enjoy themselves. Swimming was a regular activity that was often done soon after breakfast. Those children who were most affected by paralysis or disabilities were escorted into the water by volunteer helpers. In some of the earlier camps a ferry was also used for boat rides nearby.<sup>88</sup>

There was a plethora of other activities in which the children also participated. In the day time there were outings to the theatre, fun-parks and the zoo; at night there were slide shows, performances, community singing and games nights. Most such activities included ice cream, cool drink and sweets in abundance. The report offered by Hines of the 1955 camp was a good indication of how events normally developed:

During the camp, there was swimming every day and entertainment every night, including two picture evenings by the Shell Oil Company, with also Punch and Judy shows and the Amateur Magicians Association performed for the children for two nights. The Fremantle Y.M.C.A. led by Mr. Reg. Waddell gave



#### THE ALF WE KNEW AND LOVED—OUR ALF

Without a word he left us,  
Without a smile he withdrew,  
But not without our love he left us,  
And the memories that are not few.

To know him was to love him,  
And to love him was so grand,  
For he warmed the heart of all,  
When he shook them by the hand.

He founded his Crippled Childrens Home,  
On tears of hope and joy,  
And all the rewards he wanted,  
Came back from happy girls and boys.

The feet that never faltered,  
The eyes that never dimmed,  
Till the Saviour saw it fit,  
To call His servant back to Him.

Alf Hines was one in a million—  
The kind of man you'd meet,  
And stop and have a cheery word with,  
As you passed him in the street.

He lived his life to the fullest—  
From an old pioneer of the West,  
Till at last on September 25th,  
He was called to rest.

So pull out your box of treasures,  
And try not count the loss,  
Of the rainbow memories,  
Alf left to each and every one of you.

Yes there'll be others like him,  
But no-one quite the same,  
For this old Fremantle Councillor,  
There is no other name  
than — Our Alf.

—Rosemary Young.



a splendid display of tumbling and gymnasium. An outing to the Zoo was a most delightful day, more particularly for the country children and the help received from the staff at the Zoo was appreciated very much. Through the courtesy of the management of His Majesty's Theatre, the children were invited along to see the matinee "Cinderella" and also generously provided them with cool drinks and ice cream. They were given also a large bag of sweets kindly donated by a cripple, who runs a well known lottery kiosk in London Court. On Sunday the Fremantle Salvation Army Band gave a musical service which was enjoyed by the children and the visitors as well. Also they were invited by the management of the Princess Theatre, Fremantle, to a picture afternoon. Outings also included Launch trips by Mr. W. Lucas which the children enjoyed very much. One of the highlights of the Camp was a party given by the Soroptimists Society which took place on Saturday afternoon and what a time they had. No expense seems to have been spared, paper caps, balloons and eats galore. There were about three hundred visitors and all were served with afternoon tea.<sup>89</sup>

Some of the camps were particularly memorable: the 1954 camp held on Garden Island was given a nautical theme, the campsite renamed the 'ship Garden Island' and volunteers named as follows:

Commander, Sister Burns; Captain Male Nurse, Mr. Jeisman; Chief Officer Male Nurse, Mr. C. Millan; Second Officer, Mr. A. Armstrong; Bosun, Mr. L. Woolridge; Chief Cook, Mrs. E. Pass; Second Cook,

Mrs. M. Jeisman; Sick Bay Attendant, Mrs. Stewart; Sculleryman, Mr. Hodgekiss; Laundress, Mrs. L. Woolridge; Crew Members, Mr. H. Ledguard, Mr. G. Anderson, Mr. M.J. Westonholm, Christine McKenzie and Dawn; Ship's Surgeon, Dr. MacKellar Hall; Purser, Mr. A. Hines.<sup>90</sup>

In 1958 blind children were included in the society's camp for the first time, and in 1959 children were also included from the Spastic Welfare Association, the Slow Learner's Group of WA and the Blind School. On this occasion the camp was extended over six weeks, though this was almost certainly for two or three separate events of shorter duration. But in that period more than three hundred children attended the camp, one of the largest gatherings the society had yet pulled off. Numbers thereafter seemed to stay at about that level.<sup>91</sup>

One of the children who attended the camps during this period was Beverly MacDonnell, a girl who contracted polio at the age of five and who believes she attended four of the camps from the late 1950s to the early 1960s. She remembers spending time at the camp with children who were physically disabled, mentally disabled and blind. Her most vivid memories are of the mischief which she got up to with her friends

We used to do a lot of things like short sheeting the beds and putting tooth paste in people's pyjamas. It was mostly the boys who did that. I can remember one time the blind boys put a bucket of water over the doorway



and somebody walked in and copped the lot. They got into big trouble about that. And some of the blind boys had plastic eyes; they used to take their plastic eyes out.<sup>92</sup>

She also recalled a normal day at camp:

You would get up in the morning; you would have your shower. The showers were behind where the blind kids were in a block and they had big cockroaches in them—horrible, disgusting things. I am sure they were concrete and cold. You would have breakfast—Wheaties, and I hate Wheaties. You didn't have cooked breakfasts that I can remember. I am pretty sure you had cereal, maybe toast. You all went for a swim in the morning. Then you would come back and have lunch—probably sandwiches or that of type thing. I don't think you all went swimming in the afternoon, probably because the sea breeze comes in and it gets too rough. The lolly shop was in the afternoon. I think your parents gave you money but I think you were dolled out the money each day. You used to have entertainment: people just came to entertain you really, probably in the evening or the late afternoon. I think teatime was probably quite early—probably about 5 o'clock. I can't remember having to go to bed early. We used to do a lot of singing, group singing.<sup>93</sup>

It was the 1960 camp which Beverley recalled the most fondly, when all the children were taken for a tour of the visiting British aircraft carrier, the HMS Centaur. The trip included a full tour of the ship as well as demonstrations of the helicopters taking off and landing. 'I just vividly remember the helicopter and sitting in the helicopter' she said, 'I just thought 'wow'. The smell of the whole ship, it was exciting—all those handsome sailors'.<sup>94</sup>

Camps were held each year until the death of Alfred Hines in September 1963, at which point the society's records go quiet for several months. It may have been that with his passing the camp of the following summer did not or could not go ahead; most likely it did though

it took several months for the society to reorganise its administrative affairs. Its records continue again from March 1964. But certainly with Hines' death the organisation lost not only its most active member and camp organiser, but also the many contacts which he relied on to provide volunteer helpers and entertainers for the camps. In late 1964 the society admitted that with the loss of Hines and with a string of resignations from its members, that the camp of 1965 would be difficult to manage.<sup>95</sup> It was soon agreed to cancel that summer's camp and to allow the site to be used by other organisations working to help disadvantaged children.<sup>96</sup>

Looking back, Hines' death and the cancellation of the 1965 camp began the process in which the society ceased operating its own camps and, instead, offered its campsite for use by other organisations. The leadership of the society fell first to Sir Frank Gibson and then to Sadie Stone, a long-serving member of the society who had been a member since the first camps were offered in the 1940s. She took on its presidency in 1965. From this time on the society became less an organisation which provided annual holiday camps for young people and, instead, began to see itself as a provider and maintainer of a venue which could be used by other philanthropic societies dedicated to serving children or people with disabilities.

One such group was the University Camp for Children club, a group which made contact with the society in 1966 and which then ran many of the annual summer camps at the site until the early 1980s. (At that point they were dismissed by the society for bad behaviour).<sup>97</sup> Since the 1980s the society has continued to let the site for a minimal fee to such charitable organisations as Activ and the Spina Bifida Foundation, both of whom continue to run summertime camps in the spirit first envisaged by Alfred Hines over sixty years ago.









# Chapter Six

## TO THE FUTURE

The death of Alfred Hines on 25 September 1963 marked the end of an era for the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society. More importantly, it saw the loss to the community of a man whom the *West Australian* simply described as a 'friend of children'.<sup>98</sup> Most agreed with Bill Mather-Brown that Hines was one of the 'greatest human beings' he'd ever met and there is little doubt that with his death Fremantle lost one of its greatest citizens.

With the loss of Hines the society's leadership passed first to Sir Frank Gibson until he, too, died in 1965. His death, like that of Hines, was a sad loss to the community of Fremantle, which he had served faithfully for many decades. Gibson was undoubtedly one of Fremantle's great historic figures, and his partnership with Hines extended from service in World War Two with the Mayor's Patriotic Fund to the 1960s with such organisations as the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society.

The death of Gibson in 1965 marked an important transition point for the society. It was then that Sadie Stone was appointed president, a post she would hold until 1983. Like Hines and Gibson, Mrs Stone was a prominent Fremantle personality and one of the society's most remembered figures. Her first involvement in the seaside camps came in the war years through her work with the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) who had supplied volunteers to the first camps. She soon joined the committee and was a foundation member when the organisation was incorporated in 1945.<sup>99</sup>

The Point Peron home had been run for eight years by the time that Mrs Stone took the society's presidency in 1965. By this time the group was well used to its role in managing and caring for the camp site. It no longer ran camps of its own, but offered the site free of charge to other charitable groups concerned with the welfare of disabled children. Minutes of the executive's meetings reflect its changing role and suggest how much of its time was now dedicated to maintaining a large facility on the beach: supervising the work of the caretaker (who had been appointed soon after the property was constructed); maintenance of the buildings and grounds; liaising with the summer camp provider; and leasing the accommodation to other societies during the rest of the year. These responsibilities became a year round task for the society in its changing role.

In this period the organisation also had to pay careful attention to fundraising for the ongoing maintenance of the property. This was particularly important as the camp was used throughout summer free of charge or at reduced rates by children's charitable groups. And maintenance on an aging seaside property was expensive. Annual reports for years stressed the need for continued

donations, though in time that pressure eased with the society being the recipient of several generous bequests. Nonetheless, its costs were always significant.

The highlights for the year were the children's camps held during the summer months. The University Camp for Kids normally ran the camp for crippled children until the 1980s. But there were also many other groups which used the site during the summer months and over the rest of the year. In summer it was mostly used by children who were associated with organisations serving children with physical or mental disabilities such as Activ and the Spina Bifida Association. These groups used the facility for free.<sup>100</sup> It was not uncommon for the camp to be leased for the whole year, there often being not half a day between the departure of one group and the arrival of another. Groups as diverse as the Christadelphian Bible School and the Churchlands Teachers College made use of the camp throughout the year and were often crucial to the financial survival of the society.

January remained the month when traditionally activities and special days were organised for crippled children attending the annual camp. An open day was run on second Sunday of January in 1959, an event which was so successful that it has been held every year since. At times the open day attracted such special visitors as the premier and other dignitaries. On almost every occasion the National Youth Brass Band of WA (now known as the Midland Brick Brass Band) has played. The event has always earned special mention in the society's annual report.

There have been many people and organisations which have demonstrated long years of support to the organisation and the children it serves. From 1957 to the early 1980s, for example, the Fremantle Club provided a spectacular party on the last day of the annual crippled children's camp and was a regular highlight of the organisation's calendar.<sup>101</sup> The campsite, during this time, remained popular with many social groups. In June 1977 it was reported that 4180 people had stayed at the site in the past year, 2651 of whom were children.<sup>102</sup> It was in the same year that the first major renovation to the site was conducted since its construction, and this was assisted by a grant of more than \$40,000 from the Lotteries Commission.<sup>103</sup> Major



## Plenty of fun on hand

DISABILITIES proved no barrier to having fun at the Rotary Handicamp this week, with campers enjoying activities on the Rockingham Beach foreshore.

The Handicamp, organised by Kwinana and Leeming Rotary clubs, provided a week of indoor and outdoor activities for campers, aged 18 to 25.

Spokesman Bob Thompson said they took part in such events as tennis, bowling, canoeing, lawn bowls and sailing on Rotary's purpose-built yacht.

Organisers also arranged visits to Penguin Island and the Warsho Aqua Jetty.

The camp was held at the Children's Holiday Home, with the help of volunteers.



Kathy Fraser (left) and Kathy Leavy try out the jukebox at the Rotary Handicamp. Picture: Neil Muligan

The society no longer runs its own camps but makes its facility available to many Western Australian organisations whose mission is to meet special community needs.

work was done on the dormitory buildings and ablution block, the home was re-roofed and a new home was constructed for the caretaker.<sup>104</sup> Work continued into 1978 and further financial assistance was received from the Lotteries Commission.<sup>105</sup> Matters were not assisted when, in 1979, the society had its boat ramp wrecked by a cyclone, though this was repaired at the cost of the Premier's office.<sup>106</sup> The society, since then, has continued to make major and minor repairs to the property, though in essence it remains the same structure that was constructed in 1957.

The makeup of the executive committee has changed significantly since the 1960s, particularly as many of the society's members passed away or retired from active service. Claude Nicholas, the society's honorary architect and long-serving member, died within twelve months of Gibson; in 1970 Mrs Stone also took on the role as secretary with the resignation of G.L. Davidson. There were other big losses: the vice-president, J.G. Smith, in 1968-9; the vice-president and Fremantle's longest serving mayor, Sir Fredrick Samson, in 1973-4; the matron of many of the early camps, Sister Kate Ballantyne, in the same year; and in 1975 the society lost a foundation member, E.M. Wauhop and long-serving member, Lloyd Oxbrow.

But there were also some important new additions to the committee in the 1960s and 1970s, most of whom brought real influence to the long-term future of the society. In the late 1960s Harry Kronberger and J.L. Oxbrow, son of the late Lloyd Oxbrow, were both elected to the committee. It was in the 1960s, too, that Pam and Cliff Seeber began their long association with the society. In 1981 Pam took the role of secretary from Mrs Stone.

Sadie Stone ruled the society with a firm hand in the years between 1965 and 1983—though some have suggested it was with an iron fist. Even after her

resignation as president her influence on the society remained strong, and she took the position of vice-president until her death in 2001. Though daunting in her enthusiasm, she ranks as one of Western Australia's most active philanthropists and supported many such organisations as the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society. She was, at least, also a Soroptimist, a member of the Library Board of Western Australia, a committee member of the Silver Chain Nursing Association and the Stan Riley Frail Aged Centre, and in 1967 became the first woman to be elected to the Fremantle City Council.<sup>107</sup> It is of no surprise that in 1980 she was awarded the British Empire Medal for her service to the community of Fremantle and Western Australia.

Mrs Stone was succeeded as the society's president in 1983 by Robert (Bob) Kronberger, son of Harry Kronberger who sadly passed away the following year. The society continued to maintain the campsite for use by charitable groups in the summer months and to others for the rest of the year. Kronberger explained in his 1986 annual report that

We have continued our policy of making the camp available to community and service groups at those times of the year when the disabled and incapacitated are not making use of the camp. By charging those other parties a moderate fee, to cover the running costs, we are able to provide the camp to the disabled and incapacitated groups at no cost.<sup>108</sup>

The 1980s, in general, was a period of stability for the society. This was made possible by the foundations which had been laid for it in the previous decades and, indeed, little changed in its operations. The number of people who used the facility during the year remained at around 4000, and at the same time the society continued to make small additions to the property or renovate its accommodation. In 1986 an activities centre was added to the main kitchen and dining hall.<sup>109</sup> By this time a



Telegraph **NAVY FOCUS****Bike trek for charity**

HMAS Canberra crew members AB Wendy Bibby, with Kerry Howell, 7, AB Aaron Peerless, with Jasmine Adams, 7, AB Michelle Heath with Marion Johns, 7, and LS Scott Gallon with Andrew McLean, 7. Picture: ALLI FAIRLEY

CYCLING is not something people might normally associate with sailors.

But 11 eager crew members from HMAS Canberra spent four days cycling from Geraldton to Palm Beach, raising about \$3000 for their adopted charity, the Alfred Hines Seaside Children's Home.

HMAS Canberra has also established working bees among the crew to keep buildings at the home looking ship shape.

Commander Guy James said that it was a long-time tradition for each navy ship to adopt a charity.

Chairman of the home's

committee Frank Carville said the organisation was grateful for their support.

"It's wonderful effort on the Navy's part and we are really appreciative," he said.

Operating since 1939,

the home offers disabled children a chance to holiday away from home on camps tailored to their individual needs.

HMAS Canberra has been based at Garden Island since early 1996.

The society also maintains strong relationships with the community. Being positioned so close to the Naval Base at Garden Island, it has regularly caught the attention of HMAS Canberra crew.

series of generous bequests left the society financially secure.<sup>110</sup> Overall, one could say that the society had maintained itself well and it could well argue it the state's best equipped beachfront accommodation for people with disabilities.<sup>111</sup> They continued to make the campsite available in the summer months mostly to those charitable groups who served disabled people.<sup>112</sup>

In 1990 the society celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Such a significant milestone provided an opportunity for celebration and reflection. As Kronberger noted in the annual report for that year it was remarkable that the society had continued to serve its original mission during all those years and, also, that some of its original members remained part of the society. These members were Sadie Stone and Marion Fruin.<sup>113</sup> He later confessed that 'Some of the committee members claim to be aging, but I have seen little evidence of this in their attitude to, involvement in and contributions to the functions of the society'.<sup>114</sup>

The 1990s was a period of steady progress for the society. As well as attending to the organisation's normal business, the committee was delighted that the navy's frigate, the HMAS Canberra, 'adopted' the society as the charity it would principally support.<sup>115</sup> Frank Carville, former naval officer and then state manager of the Australian Defence Credit Union Australia (with a long attachment to Garden Island and the Point Peron area), assumed the presidency for several years after the resignation of Bob Kronberger. The following decade also witnessed some small but important changes to the committee: long-serving member of the executive, Robert Wright, joined in the early 1990s; many others retired from their active service. Indeed, most current committee members joined the organisation in more recent years: the society's current president, Dawn Bentley, joined in 2001, as did Robert and Eve Morris (current treasurer and secretary), while Albert Bentley joined in 2005. Pam Seeber retired as secretary in 2001, to be replaced by Jenny Notley, though Pam and Cliff







Seeber only retired from active service with the society's executive in 2006. Their long years of commitment to the organisation is another testament to the loyalty its mission has commanded in the sixty years in which it has operated. For, in truth, there have been many like Alfred Hines, Frank Gibson, Sadie Stone and Pam and Cliff Seeber who have given years of selfless service to the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society and the young people it cares for. Only a handful have been mentioned in this history, and it is not possible to do any of them the justice which they deserve in telling the story. Anyone who has ever served the society has been important in its past.

The society's future is another matter. As early as 1989 the society's president, Bob Kronberger, spoke ominously of the society's precarious location on the fringe of an ever-encroaching metropolitan spread:

Every year we feel the pressure of expansion of residential and industrial areas south of Fremantle. For example, the authority has now obtained City status and is continuing to grow rapidly. However, we trust that our unique position remains safe and that "the powers that be" appreciate the need for continuation. The Campsite is irreplaceable.<sup>116</sup>

Since then, it is fair to say, the pressure of residential and other development has only increased and the campsite continues to be encroached on by new building developments. With the migration to the region of affluent residents and businesses, the declining visual appeal of the campsite now causes some to complain that it is not best suited to the region. Many developers, of course, are keen to acquire the society's rare waterfront land. All in all, this does not bode well for the society, though in recent months it has been delighted with generous assistance from the local community to upgrade its facilities. It is essential that local and state authorities continue to value the service of the society and the role which the campsite has in the lives of many charitable and social groups around the state. For thought it has some element of financial security, there

is little income generated each year which could be put towards rebuilding the site or fighting for its own protection. Nor is the society able to sell its land and use the funds to move elsewhere: the title deeds to the Point Peron site ensure that the property returns to the state government when the society moves or ceases to exist.

Since the 1960s the society has remained steady in its mission to maintain and improve the Alfred Hines Seaside Holiday Home for use by disadvantaged children and other social groups. In that task the society has been more than successful. But if the organisation itself has not changed, society around them has. Public liability, for example, has become a necessity in the new world, yet at \$20 million is an impossible acquisition for the society. The pool of volunteers who are available to aid the organisation and its camping activities has also steadily declined and, with lifestyle changes of the past decades, is unlikely to improve. Finally, the society's *raison d'être* now also seems in question: on the one hand there have been welcome changes in the provision of social services to people with disabilities since the 1940s when Hines first recognised how little was available to help them; on the other, social values and activities have changed which have limited the number of people who are available to assist the society and which also affect the demand for its service.

It is fair, in conclusion, to suggest that there is a question mark over the future of the society. It is yet to be determined whether the society will rise to meet the challenges of the new world, whether it will alter its mission and transform itself into a new (or amalgamated) organisation, or even whether it will be able to continue in any recognisable fashion. Yet there is no doubt that the Crippled Children's Seaside Home Society has proven by its history that it is a unique provider of special services to children, in particular, and to the disadvantaged in Western Australia. Whatever its future may hold, the organisation which has advanced the dream of Alfred Hines these past sixty years has touched the lives of many children and their legacy will be preserved in their memories.



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# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> A similar conclusion was reflected in a special report on community and child health services prepared for the Western Australian health minister in 1991. See C.D.J. Holman and H.M. Corster, *Report of the Special Consultant on Community and Child Health Services*, 'The History of Community and Child Health Services in Western Australia', Vol. 1., Epidemiology and Research Branch, Health Department of Western Australia, Perth, 1991, p. 85.
- <sup>2</sup> Mary Anne O'Hara, 'Child Health in the Interwar Years' in Penelope Hetherington (ed.), *Childhood and Society in Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1988, p. 175.
- <sup>3</sup> Public Health Department, Annual Report, 1944-45.
- <sup>4</sup> Penelope Hetherington, 'Families and Children in Wartime Western Australia' in Jenny Gregory (ed.), *On the Homefront: Western Australia and World War II*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1996, p. 94.
- <sup>5</sup> See Public Health Department, Annual Reports, 1930 onwards.
- <sup>6</sup> C.D.J. Holman and H.M. Corster in *Report of the Special Consultant on Community and Child Health Services*, p. 85.
- <sup>7</sup> Hetherington in Gregory (ed.), p. 103.
- <sup>8</sup> Jennifer Gordon, *A History of Poliomyelitis in Western Australia*, unpublished thesis, p. 11.
- <sup>9</sup> Gordon, p. 6.
- <sup>10</sup> Gordon, p. 6.
- <sup>11</sup> C.D.J. Holman and H.M. Corster in *Report of the Special Consultant on Community and Child Health Services*, p. 143.
- <sup>12</sup> C.D.J. Holman and H.M. Corster in *Report of the Special Consultant on Community and Child Health Services*, pp. 146-147.
- <sup>13</sup> C.D.J. Holman and H.M. Corster in *Report of the Special Consultant on Community and Child Health Services*, p. 147.
- <sup>14</sup> Bill Mather-Brown and Tinsley Beck, *The Fight in the Dog*, Tinsley Beck, Beckenham, 2002, p. 39, 41.
- <sup>15</sup> Mather-Brown and Beck, p. 39.
- <sup>16</sup> Bill Mather-Brown and Tinsley Beck, *The Fight in the Dog*, Tinsley Beck, Beckenham, 2002, p. 39.
- <sup>17</sup> *Daily News*, 11 December 1958, p.?
- <sup>18</sup> *Daily News*, 11 December 1958.
- <sup>19</sup> *Minutes*, City of Fremantle Council, 20 November 1943.
- <sup>20</sup> John K Ewers, *The Western Gateway: A History of Fremantle*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Fremantle City Council, Fremantle, 1971, p. 143.
- <sup>21</sup> Rosemary Young, 'The Alf We Knew and Loved - "Our Alf"'.  
<sup>22</sup> *Annual Report*, Public Department of Health, 1939-43.  
<sup>23</sup> *Annual Report*, 1961; *Annual Report*, 1990.  
<sup>24</sup> *Annual Report*, 1956.  
<sup>25</sup> Mather-Brown and Beck, p.39.  
<sup>26</sup> Robert Andrews, interview with Bill Mather-Brown, 6 February 2005; Mather-Brown and Beck, p. 39.  
<sup>27</sup> Mather-Brown and Beck, pp. 39-41.  
<sup>28</sup> *Annual Report*, 1950-51.  
<sup>29</sup> *Minutes*, 22 September 1946.  
<sup>30</sup> *Annual Report*, 1990; *Minutes*, 22 January 1946, 21 May 1946, 25 June 1946.  
<sup>31</sup> *Minutes*, 25 June 1946.  
<sup>32</sup> 18 in favor of, 5 against; the results of individual letters being sent to each committee member asking whether the dual offers be accepted.  
<sup>33</sup> *Minutes*, 9 & 16 July 1946, 4 November 1946, 23 September 1946.  
<sup>34</sup> *Minutes*, 23 September 1946.  
<sup>35</sup> *Minutes*, 9 December 1946; *Minutes*, 6 January 1947.  
<sup>36</sup> *Minutes*, 6 January 1947; this entry demonstrates the last positive report about the building project.  
<sup>37</sup> *Minutes*, 9 June 1947.  
<sup>38</sup> *Minutes*, 4 August 1947.  
<sup>39</sup> *Minutes*, 4 August 1947.  
<sup>40</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>41</sup> *Minutes*, Annual General Meeting, 22 September 1947.  
<sup>42</sup> *Minutes*, 30 August 1948.  
<sup>43</sup> *Annual Report*, 5 December 1949.  
<sup>44</sup> *Annual Report*, 1949-50.  
<sup>45</sup> *Annual Report*, 1954.  
<sup>46</sup> *Annual Report*, 5 December 1949.  
<sup>47</sup> *Annual Report*, 5 December 1949.  
<sup>48</sup> *Minutes*, 10 May 1948.  
<sup>49</sup> *Minutes*, 6 December 1948.  
<sup>50</sup> Jennifer Gordon, *A History of Poliomyelitis in Western Australia*, p. 12.  
<sup>51</sup> Gordon, p. 16.  
<sup>52</sup> Gordon, pp. 16,31.  
<sup>53</sup> Gordon, p. 16.  
<sup>54</sup> *Annual Report*, 5 December 1949.



- 55 *Annual Report*, 1949-50.
- 56 *Minutes*, 10 May 1948.
- 57 *Minutes*, 10 May 1948, 12 April 1948 and 14 June 1948.
- 58 *Minutes*, 1 November 1948.
- 59 *Annual Report*, 1949-50.
- 60 David Webb and David Warren, *Fremantle Beyond the Round House*, Longley Books, Fremantle, 2005, pp.24-25.
- 61 *Minutes*, 1 November 1948; *Minutes*, 22 November 1944.
- 62 *Minutes*, 14 March 1949.
- 63 Letter to State Housing Commission, 8 March 1949.
- 64 *Minutes*, 4 April 1949.
- 65 *Minutes*, Special Meeting of the Executive Committee, 11 July 1949.
- 66 *Minutes*, Meeting of the Executive Committee, 5 September 1949.
- 67 *Minutes*, 5 September 1949.
- 68 *Minutes*, 5 September 1949, Annual General Meeting 5 December 1949.
- 69 *Minutes*, 27 February 1950.
- 70 *Minutes*, 13 March 1950.
- 71 *Minutes*, 13 March 1950.
- 72 *Minutes*, 12 June 1950.
- 73 *Minutes*, 7 August 1950, 2 October 1950.
- 74 *Minutes*, 2 October 1950, 6 November 1950, 15 February 1950.
- 75 *Minutes*, 15 February 1951.
- 76 *Annual Report*, 1954.
- 77 *Annual Report*, 1954.
- 78 The primary sources available—the minutes and annual reports—differ on exactly when the site at Point Peron was granted to the society. For example, the 1954 Annual Report states that the society had obtained in that year the Point Peron site, while the society's minutes reveal that in June 1955 they were still deciding on whether to choose between Point Peron and a site at Coogee Beach. What probably happened was that the society was again caught up in state government indecision. In any event, they chose Point Peron.
- 79 *Annual Report*, 1955.
- 80 *Annual Report*, 1955.
- 81 *Annual Report*, 1956.
- 82 *Annual Report*, 1956.
- 83 *Annual Report*, 1956.
- 84 *Annual Report*, 1957.
- 85 *Annual Report*, 1959.
- 86 *Annual Report*, 1949-50.
- 87 *Annual Report*, 1954.
- 88 Interview with Beverly MacDonell, 30 January 06; Mather-Brown and Beck, pp. 40-41; *Annual Report*, 1955.
- 89 *Annual Report*, 1955.
- 90 *Annual Report*, 1954.
- 91 *Annual Report*, 1959.
- 92 Interview with Beverly MacDonell, 30 January 06.
- 93 Interview with Beverly MacDonell, 30 January 06.
- 94 Interview with Beverly MacDonell, 30 January 06.
- 95 *Minutes*, 5 October 1964.
- 96 *Minutes*, 5 October 1964.
- 97 *Minutes*, 13 February 1983.
- 98 *West Australian*, 27 September 1963, p?
- 99 Margaret Howroyd, Interview with Sarah May Stone, 25 January 1984, Fremantle City Council; *Annual Report*, 1990.
- 100 Intellectually disabled.
- 101 After then the group stops being mentioned.
- 102 *Annual Report*, 1977.
- 103 *Annual Report*, 1976.
- 104 *Annual Report*, 1977; *Annual Report*, 1978.
- 105 *Annual Report*, 1978.
- 106 *Annual Report*, 1978.
- 107 *West Australian*, 8 February 2002, p. 40.
- 108 *Annual Report*, 1986.
- 109 *Annual Report*, 1986.
- 110 *Annual Report*, 1986.
- 111 *Annual Report*, 1987.
- 112 *Annual Report*, 1987.
- 113 *Annual Report*, 1990.
- 114 *Annual Report*, 1995.
- 115 *Annual Report*, 1997.
- 116 *Annual Report*, 1989.





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