

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN

ADVOCACY & RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2015
NEWSLETTER



Ellen Macneill, a turn of the century orphan adopted by a Prince Edward Island family is said to have been the inspiration for Anne Shirley in the quintessential Canadian book "Anne of Green Gables". The question remains, was she in fact, a British Home Child? And was she truly Anne Shirley?

In author Lucy Maud Montgomery's journals, released in 1992, she had written, "*The idea of getting a child from an orphan asylum was suggested to me years ago as a possible germ for a story by the fact that Pierce Macneill got a little girl from one, and I jotted it down in my notebook*" (Selected Journals, Vol. II, p. 40 1911).

Two of the main character's in the book, Matthew and Marilla, were older siblings who shared a home. They wanted to adopt a sturdy boy for help with the farm chores. When deciding where to obtain a boy, Marilla states:

"At first Matthew suggested getting a Barnardo Boy. But I said 'no' flat to that. They may be all right - I'm not saying they're not - but no London street Arabs for me, I said." Quoted from within the books pages, this statement clearly shows that by 1904, when Miss Montgomery began to write "Anne of Green Gables", Canadian's did not look with favour upon the British Home Children and considered them, generally, as unruly troublemakers.

The Nova Scotia orphanage, they chose, mistakenly sent the siblings a little girl. Anne Shirley, the precocious, freckle faced eleven year old mistakenly sent, would soon not only work her way into Matthew and Marilla's hearts, but also the hearts of the community and over the years, as readers of all ages enjoyed her escapades, Canada. There are very few Canadians who have not read these books or have not heard of Anne of Green Gables.

Not long after it's publication, Miss Montgomery was besieged with questions as to who the characters really were. Cavendish citizens recognized similarities in the characters in the book in their neighbours and friends. At first Miss Montgomery vigorously denied any characterization of community members in her book, but the similarities were too apparent. Miss Montgomery, in her journals, admitted that the Avonlea in her book was Cavendish, to a certain extent. Anne Shirley!, who was she in real life? - no one ever knew for sure.

Cavendish residents; Pierce Macneill, a cousin of Miss Montgomery, and his wife Rachel, were unable to have children of their own. Their friends, the Clarks, had heard about English orphan boys in Halifax. Together the two couples decided to apply for boys. On September 22, 1892, Pierce and John Clark made their way to the train station in Hunter River to pick up the two boys. They were both shocked to find a five year old boy clutching onto the hand of a little three year old girl, his sister. Their tags

Ellen MacNeill

Was the child who inspired
"Anne of Green Gables"
a British Home Child?



pinned to their shirts indicated the children were indeed for them, the boy for the Clarks and the girl was for the MacNeills. As the train pulled out of the station, the two men had little choice but to bring the children back to their homes.

This little orphaned girl, re-named Ellen Macneill remained in Cavendish with Pierce and Rachel, living directly across the road from what became Green Gables House. She was educated at the local school and attended the local Baptist Church.

Miss Montgomery admits in her journals, Ellen's arrival was the foundation for the story, however she wrote "*There is no resemblance of any kind between Anne and Ellen Macneill who is one of the most hopelessly commonplace and uninteresting girls imaginable*" (Selected Journals, Vol. II, p. 40.) The parallels between Ellen's life and Anne's fictional life leaves little doubt of the influence Ellen had on the formation of Anne's character, in spite of being "uninteresting".

On the cover of the very first publication, the drawing is not of a young freckle faced pigtailed girl, but the profile of a beautiful young lady, a lady who closely resembles Ellen at eighteen, as she would have been in 1908 when the book was published. However, this drawing was actually produced by artist George Gills in 1905 and was first featured as a magazine cover that year.

The question remains, was Ellen a BHC? The reference to Barnardo's in the book clearly shows the awareness in the country of these children and the stigma they carried. Barnardo's was, and still is, the best known of all the organizations sending children to Canada. However, Barnardo's is not known to have sent children to Nova Scotia. Middlemore Homes and Emma Stirling are the better known organizations from Eastern Canada and they are not mentioned in the book. Matthew and Marilla did not take in a Barnardo Home Child, but a Canadian born child, whom they considered "safer".

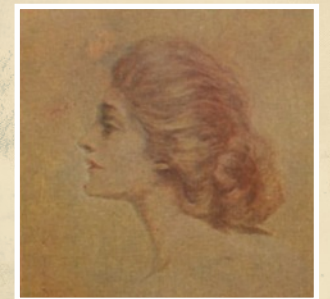
The roots of Ellen and her brother have never been discovered. Both of their names were changed. After careful research, no two children coming through the BHC schemes have been matched to these two siblings. Ellen's birthday had always been celebrated on September 22 - as that was the day she arrived in Cavendish. Her birth roots remain a mystery. The BHC question remains unanswered.

"At first Matthew suggested getting a Barnardo Boy. But I said a flat 'no' to that. They may be alright- I'm not saying they're not - but no London street Arabs for me. Give me a native born at least. There'll be a risk no matter who we get. But I'll feel easier in my mind and sleep sounder at nights if we get a born Canadian"

*Annie of Green Gables
Published in 1908
Lucy Maud Montgomery*



Ellen MacNeill above, and the original illustration on the First Edition of "Anne of Green Gables"



This illustration was drawn by George Gills and was first featured on the cover of The Delineator of New York in January 1905, before becoming the cover for Anne of Green Gables in 1908.

The late John Willoughby published a book in 1995 entitled "Ellen". In his book he extensively discusses the connection between Ellen and Anne. It's a very interesting read and one of the sources for this story.

Copies of "Ellen" are available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

BHCARA NEWS FOR DECEMBER



2015 OMAH History Award Gala



Above: Lori with the Certificate of Recognition recipients, with the Mayor of Orillia Steve Clarke and Lori's certificate with the evenings program.

CEO Lori Oschefski's work with the BHCARA and her book "Bleating of the Lambs" was recognized at a Gala event in Orillia, Ontario, Canada; on November 5 2015. Five judges, including one from Lakehead University and another from Laurentian University, chose the award recipients from a total of sixteen nominees. OMAH vice-chair Daphne Mainprize called the nominees "a pretty stellar group of people."

The gala award ceremony was attended by many dignitaries including two Mayors, The Mayor of Orillia, Steve Clarke and the Mayor of Oro-Medonte, Harry Hughes. Congratulatory letters were read by local MP's and one from Parliament.

Ms. Oschefski received a Certificate of Recognition. She considers it a great honour to have had her work recognized among such prestigious nominees and offers her sincerest congratulations to the recipients of these awards. Ms. Oschefski would also like to thank Dorothy MacDonald, Chair of the History Committee of OMAH, for her nomination and the two supporters of her nomination Jayne Poolton-Turvey and Shirley Joyce.

Both Jayne and Shirley are members of our BHCARA team. Shirley was on hand at our BHC Day celebration in September to help. Jayne works with the Orillia Public Library as head of their Community Services team. Jayne, also a nominee, was awarded the Judges Recognition award for her work in promoting local history and genealogy over the years. She has been a steadfast and firm supporter of the BHCARA and our BHC. We offer her our warmest congratulations on her achievements and award.

Library and Archives Canada (LAC) new database release

The LAC is thrilled to announce the release of their new updated database. With gracious thanks to the volunteers of the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa, especially John Sayers, the late Mr. Brian Rolfe, Gail Collins, Lori Oschefski, Dawn Heuston, Jenn Layne, Marjorie Kohli, Perry Snow, Dona Crawford and Carol Black; they have been able to increase the database from 125,000 entries to a quarter of a million! The new database contains information from the Ups and Downs (Barnardo's newsletter), Maria Rye 1869-1879, Middlemore, passenger lists, the BHCARA First World War index and more! Visit the LAC web site to check out this wonderful resource. [LAC Home Children, 1869-1932](#)

Bleating of the Lambs, Lori Oschefski's first book, is now available for purchase in a digital format. In efforts to maintain the quality of the numerous photos included and the integrity of the books structure, it has been released as a PDF file, password protected. Visit our web site ["British Home Children & Child Migrants"](#) for details. "Bleating of the Lambs", with great thanks to a special benefactor, will now be available in fourteen Simcoe County, Ontario Libraries.

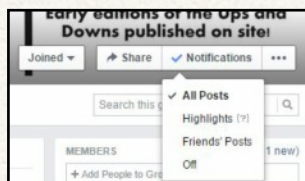
Canadian BHC documentary "Forgotten"

The award winning BHC documentary "Forgotten", the official selection at four film festivals, made it's UK premiere in London, England at the Crystal Palace Film Festival. The film was attended by staff members of Barnardo's in London.

Visit <http://www.ardri.ca/forgotten/> for more information.

Facebook Notification Tip

As our [Facebook Group](#) continues to grow, by leaps and bounds, members who are not as schooled as some, in using Facebook, are being plagued with notifications in their e-mail from the group. The solution to this problem is simple. Go to the upper right hand corner of the group page, click on the icon "notifications". This will open up a drop down menu as shown here. Click on "off" and the notifications sent to you will no longer be sent.



The showing of "Forgotten" in London, England at the St. John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood. Photo courtesy of Martine King, Archivist at Barnardo's

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2015

BHC REMEMBERED FROM COAST TO COAST



**Lloydminster
Remembrance Day
Services (AB and SK)
Susan Brazeau**



**Frank Robbins Remembered
Kimberley Cameron Lamarche
Little Narrows, NS.**

Frank Robbins came to Canada in 1908 and joined the army when he was able. His enrolment papers listed his mother in the UK as his next of kin. He likely was hoping to return to see his family. Unfortunately he died in a war training accident.



**Ajax Ontario Legion #322
Laid by
Marsha Jones Dooley**



**Royal Canadian Legion Branch 162
of Pontiac County, Que
Laid by Sandy Stewart on behalf of the
Quebec chapter of the BHCARA**



**Lion's Park, Rutland B.C
Laid by Loretta Farquhar. Here with her
Granddaughter**



**Paris, Ontario Town Cenotaph
Wreath Bearer Linzey Davis**



**Claresholm, Alberta
Legion - Branch #41
Wreath Bearer
Hazel Perrier**

Wreath sponsored by
BHC John Vallance, descendants
Connie Falk, Bruce Skilling,
Donna Clarke &
Hazel Perrier

**Canada National
Remembrance Day
Ceremony in Ottawa**
Wreath Bearer Ian MacLeod
at the Canada National
Remembrance Day
Ceremony in Ottawa.
Sponsored by the Ontario
East British Home Child
Family





ANDREW SIMPSON

Visit Andrew's blog at:
chorltonhistory.blogspot.com



Now it is easy to lose sight of that simple fact that not all those of our families who were migrated from Britain came from a workhouse or an orphanage.

Many would have experienced warm and loving home environments which circumstances beyond their parents control had shattered. So with that in mind and because Lori wanted this edition to be a tad lighter I thought I would fasten on a scene which would be all too familiar too many British Home Children and their families in the first decade of the last century.

This is the shop of Thomas Charles Whittaker at the bottom of our road where it curves round into the old village green.

And for me the attractions are many. First we have a date, secondly it is possible to identify three of the four people in the picture and lastly there is that wonderful detail of all that the shop had to offer. The date is 1906 and judging by the adverts for "CHOICE NEW CURRANTS AND SULTANAS [for] XMAS" and the boxes of Mincemeat we must be in late November or December.*

Standing in front of the shop by the open door is Thomas who was 40 years old when the picture was taken and to his right is his son "Charlie" while away in the corner is Mr Fox who the caption tells us was about to become the manager of the Stanley Grove shop.

Now it says something about the concentration of people around the village green that old Thomas Whittaker could feel it made business sense to open two more shops just across from his main business which had been trading from this spot since 1851.

And over the years as the village grew and there was a bit more disposable income the Whittaker's capitalized on that with these wonderful shop displays which have all the brash marketing of that famous slogan "pile them high and sell them cheap."

The windows are covered with products and adverts for products, ranging from fruit to biscuits and those great sides of

meat hanging in the open while beside them over the door is an assortment of brushes.

All of which might allow Thomas to claim that from his shop there was all that the discerning customer might want.

And of course there are all the household names that are still familiar from OXO and Crawford's, to Bovril and Skipper Sardines which is rounded off by the carefully crafted descriptions either side of the family name announcing the shop as a place of "High class Provisions, Family Grocer and Italian Warehouseman."

I suppose if there is an irony in all of this and if you want to drift over to the dark side then it is the observation that as the British empire grew and its food companies sourced and imported their Christmas products from across the globe we were in that tawdry business of exporting our children.

But that is enough and instead on a grey wet day on the eve of December looking out on the old village green here in Chorlton-cum-Hardy I shall wish you all a happy Christmas and New Year.



Picture; Whittaker's on Beech Road circa 1906 from the Lloyd collection.

* There will be those Christmas experts who will point out that the date must be earlier in the year for no one serious about Christmas cakes and puddings would leave it till November to make them.

Our BHC Exhibit at the Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto will be closed for the season at the end of December. It will reopen in the spring of 2016

Visit: www.blackcreek.ca for details



HISTORIES OF THE RECEIVING HOMES

THE FEGAN HOME - 295 GEORGE STREET, TORONTO



Restoration has been started on a home once marked for demolition. The Preservation Board in Toronto, under pressure from Toronto film producer Eleanor McGrath, put forth its recommendation for heritage status in 2011 and it was passed by Council in about Jan. 2012. We believe it will become part of Seaton House or used for seniors housing. Seaton House provides temporary lodging, food, clothing, medical care, for single men and also attempts to provide tools for enabling them to establish their independence. This home was behind the making of the BHC film "Forgotten" by Eleanor McGrath.



Many Fegan boys scratched their names in the bricks of the home. They remain there today

Three thousand one hundred and sixty six boys migrated to Canada between 1884 to 1938 through the Fegan Homes. James William Condell Fegan (1852 - 1925) established his first home in 1872 at the High Street, Deptford, followed by The Little Wanderers' Home (Greenwich), the Southwark Home and The Red Lamp (Westminster). Fegan began immigrating children to Canada in 1884, with a group of ten children. Impressed with the opportunities he saw in Canada, he made a second trip that year, this time with fifty boys. This party of children were housed in Government Immigration Sheds, as Fegan did not yet have accommodations in Canada for his boys. Mr. William Gooderham, a supporter of Fegan's work, helped him send forty three of these children to Brandon, Manitoba. These boys were the first Home Children brought to Manitoba.

From 1885 until 1887 the Fegan children were received at Mr. William Gooderham's establishment, "The Boys' Home" located on George Street in Toronto. William Gooderham was the son of the famous Canadian distiller, also named William. William Sr. was the founder of the Gooderham and Worts company, once the largest largest distiller of alcoholic beverages in Canada. Their manufacturing facilities still exist today as Toronto's famous Distillery District. William Jr was a firm and consistent supporter of Fegan's work throughout the years and would sit on the Canadian Council of Juvenile Immigration in support of Fegan's work.

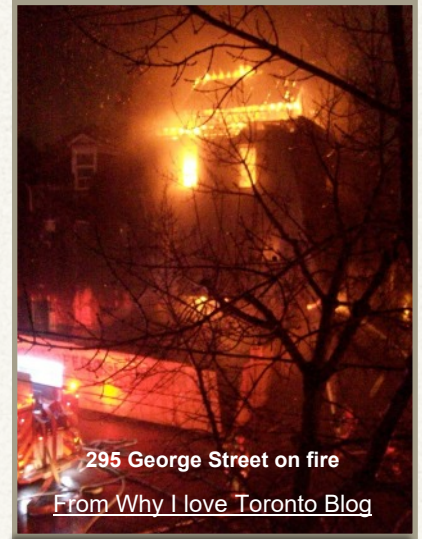
By 1885 Fegan, under the guidance of Mr. Gooderham, began the search for his own facility in Toronto. Fegan had home plans drawn, but funds could not be raised to build. In 1887 Mr. Gooderham donated his property, 295 George Street, Toronto, to the Fegan's. The home was originally known as the Colonial Distributing Home. Boys would continue to be received there until 1938 when child immigration to Ontario ended. Mr. Fegan had died in 1925, following which his wife, Mary Pope, continued his work until her death in a 1945. She was killed in an air raid bombing of their training farm in Goudhurst, England.

The original owner of 295 George Street was one of the wealthiest men in Toronto, George William Allan. Mr. Allan was the president of the Toronto Horticultural Society and at one time, the Mayor of Toronto. In 1853, he began to develop this area for residential use and this is when the Fegan Home, originally a semi detached home, was built. It had been used as a rental property before Mr. Gooderham purchased it in 1886. Although the home was not legally owned by Fegan's until 1894, updating of the home's appearance began in the late 1880's with additions of Second Empire and Gothic Revival designs. 1895 saw the addition of a mansard roof, a "new front" and 2 1/2-storey rear wing. The main entrance to the building was modified with stucco cladding, wood strap work and the main door was centred.

In June of 1938, the Fegan's sold the home to the Society of Crippled Civilians and it was used to house the disabled. This society would become Goodwill. Goodwill's first clothing store was at 295 George Street. In 1945 the owners of Howlett and Smith Limited, photo engravers purchased the home. From 1945 until 1999 it served as a warehouse for Interlalia Co. Ltd. It was sold in 2000 and again in 2005 to a numbered company.

In October of 2011, the home caught the interest of Eleanor

McGrath, a Toronto film producer. She contacted the Heritage Preservation Services and asked that they begin the process to get the home declared a Heritage site. The very next day, the home went up in flames!



295 George Street on fire
From Why I love Toronto Blog

In spite of the damage, the council determined the architectural integrity remained intact. 295 George Street is one of the the oldest surviving residential structures in the city. Many of the Fegan boys had scratched their names into the bricks of this home! Eleanor's interest peaked, she decided to make a film about this home. What began to her, as a story about this home, became a documentary about much more, The British Home Children.

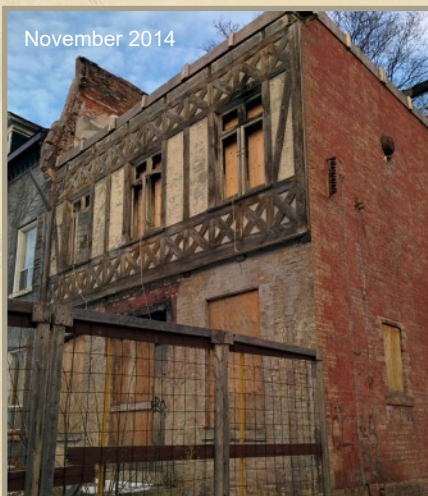
The city outlined plans, in 2013, to secure the building and, in late 2014 early 2015, to proceed with stabilization of the structure which will remain in place until redevelopment begins, likely in 2018. The Ontario Genealogical Society stepped in in 2013 to ensure the BHC history and the bricks with the boys names will be preserved.

In September of 2015, Eleanor's documentary, "Forgotten", premiered in Toronto.



Photo courtesy of Barb Waller

History Left to Rot



November 2014

November 2015

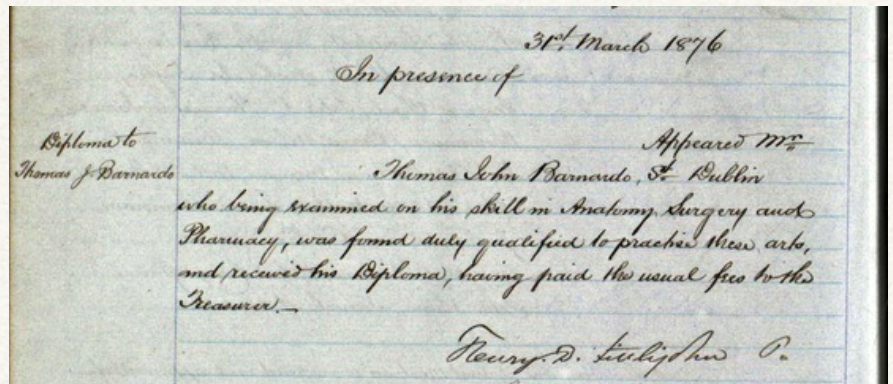
WAS DR. BARNARDO A REAL DOCTOR?



Rumours swirl that Dr. Barnardo fraudulently used the title of “Dr.”
Was he or was he not a real Doctor?

While it is true that Thomas John Barnardo did not obtain a university degree, he was certainly a fully qualified medical practitioner (surgeon) being as he was a Licentiate and Fellow of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. After the 1858 Medical Act, UK practitioners could acquire qualifications from a number of licensing bodies recognised by the General Medical Council, be they universities, Royal Colleges or (in England) the Society of Apothecaries. As well The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh had also awarded a Licentiate qualification since 1815, which was developed from the various “diploma” qualifications we had offered since the 1770s to country surgeons or those who intended to serve in the military.

Having been “examined on his skill in Anatomy, Surgery and Pharmacy”, Barnardo obtained his Licentiate (LRCSEd) on 31st March 1876, and registered to practice on 28th October that year. He did indeed go on to receive full Fellowship of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh three years later, although it should be noted that this was not obtained by examination. In 1850, the separate examination for Fellowship candidates was discontinued, requiring them only to have the Licentiate and then petition for election by vote of Fellows. However, this policy met with growing criticism, and the Fellowship examination was reinstated in October 1885.



documents and information courtesy of
The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DW

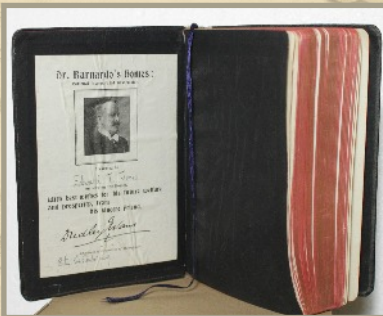
New to our collection - The Edward Jones 1949 Barnardo Bible

In April of 1934, when Edward was just three months old, his mother died. On that same day, in the very same family home, her brother also died. After the death of his mother, Edward was taken to the Barnardo's Hawkhurst Babies Castle. Although Barnardo's was a charity, his father had to pay to have him there. At three and a half, the day the photo on the lower left was taken, Edward was fostered out to the Gostling family in Stowmarket, Suffolk. Here Edward lived until he was nine years old. His years spent with the Gostling family were happy ones. Sadly his foster mother suffered a stroke and became unable to care for Edward. He was sent to live with an older couple who had five Barnardo children already with them. At nine years of age, Edward was put to work at this home doing milk rounds with another Barnardo child named Frank. Together they rose at 5:30 am, walked a mile to the dairy and worked their way back home measuring milk out on the door steps. When they were finished, they grabbed their school things and off to school they went.

In 1945 Edward was sent to Barnardo's Watts Naval Training Center. In 1947 Edward's name was on the list to be sent to Canada. It was only then that he learned he actually had a father and two sisters, who were alive and living in London. Edward was never relocated to Canada, staying at the Watts Naval Training Centre until 1949. Upon leaving Barnardo's care, Edward was presented with the traditional Barnardo Home Bible. Edward has donated his bible to the BHCARA collection to be used to continue promoting the story of the Barnardo children.

Edward's story can be read at: www.CanadianBritishHomeChildren.weebly.com

More photos of this bible can be viewed in our [Virtual Museum](#)



Edward Jones at 3 years of
age - 1937



Merry Christmas to all



Kerry receives her award from HRH Prince Edward

Descendant of BHC Marion Elizabeth Kelly, Kerry Munro, daughter of member Sharon, was recently awarded the gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Open to youth ages 14 to 25, the gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award goes to those who excel in community service, learn a new skill, finish a live-in volunteer project, take up physical recreation and complete a four-day journey. Kerry travelled to Costa Rica to help rebuild a basket ball court, raced a Laser sailboat on Lake Ontario, volunteered in Regent Park at ArtHeart and did a 70 km hike through Algonquin Park! On October 27, Kerry was presented her award by HRH Prince Edward. Read about Kerry's adventures at: [Upper Beach woman wins gold in adventure and outreach](#)



Kerry Munro, left, travelled to Costa Rica with Patrick Erskine, right, and other members of Forward Baptist Church to help rebuild a basketball court on the island of Chira. The live-in residential project was one of five tasks that Munro completed before her 25th birthday to earn the gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. PHOTO: Submitted by Kerry Munro.



British Home Child, 93 year old, Muriel Oschefski has recently moved into a Retirement Home. Here she is pictured attending her Grandson's Ottawa Wedding this past August. We wish Mrs. Oschefski all the best in her new home.



Patricia Lynn Moore, who runs the Facebook group "Reclaim our British Home Children" - our only UK based BHC group - has released a CD of the Carpenters! Patricia is using her beautiful voice to help raise funds for her Care Homes Garden. To purchase her CD please e-mail Patricia at: adriang14510@gmail.com



Image from our vintage 1890's Barnardo Bubbles magazines

Christmas message from the BHCARA

group, to those who come out and help at our events, those who share driving and help with our surviving BHC, to our volunteers LeeAnn Beer and her husband working on our BHC Registry and Andrew Simpson who writes each month for our newsletter. We do not walk this road alone. This work could not be done without the contributions of each and every one of you. Together our team grows stronger each day! 2015 has proven again, to be a highly successful year. Plans for 2016 are falling into place and we are looking forward to another exciting year for our BHC. We wish all our members a joyful Christmas season and all the best wishes in the New Year!

The BHCARA's CEO Lori Oschefski would like to thank each and every person who contributed to the success of the organization this year. From our awesome team of researchers in our Facebook

