

Mofflyn turns back the pages

Up to 2000 children lived in Methodist Children's Homes, later to be called Mofflyn, from 1922 until the last home closed in the mid 1990s.

The original home was in Sussex St, Victoria Park, and a number of other homes operated throughout WA. Mofflyn still operates a foster care program and a cottage for children with a serious intellectual disability.

From time to time, some of those children come back to Mofflyn seeking a record of their time in a home. On occasions they come with other members of their family so they, too, can know something of their family history.

Joan Panton was just six years old when she went to Sussex St on 29 October 1941 with her three sisters. She stayed until 9 April 1949.

Joan has some good memories and some 'not so good' memories of her time at the home. She remembers having a serious contagious illness and being taken to Shenton Park —

so serious in fact that the home was closed!

She was in the choir that used to perform at Eisteddfods and remembers the annual outings to the pictures. Brother McGee from a local church used to tell the children exciting stories and make them laugh.

The children used to go to market in a horse and cart and Joan can even remember the horse's name: Dolly. There were also trips to Mosman Park for sports against children from other homes.

Joan can remember lying in foxholes watching a candle because she had been told when it went out it meant there was not enough oxygen to breath!

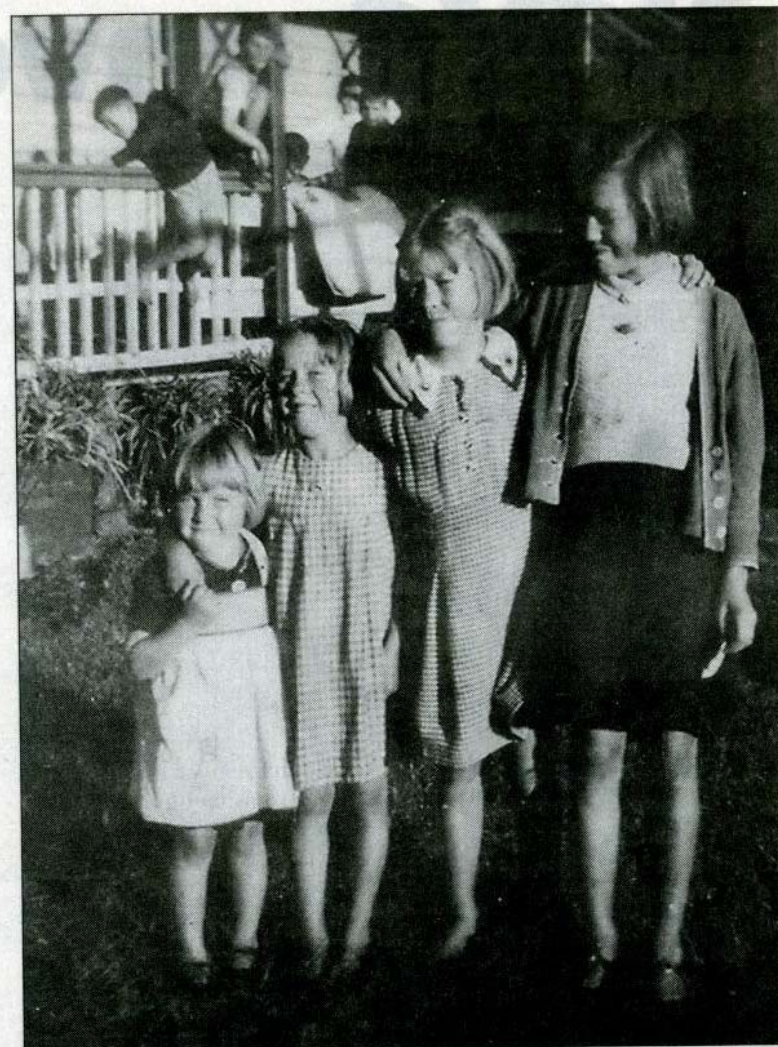
Children were usually billeted to families over the summer holidays. Joan went to Bengier (near Harvey), Nedlands and, in 1949, was sent to Kalgoorlie on the train. These were very happy times.

In March 1942, when Perth was believed to be under threat of invasion by Japan, the children at Sussex St were moved to Werribee farm, where older boys were cared for and learned farming. The children stayed there for three months.

Joan can remember lying in foxholes watching a candle because she had been told when it went out it meant there was not enough oxygen to breath! She also remembers being at primary school practicing what to do in the event of an air raid. All the children had to put a sugar bag over their heads, a cork in their mouth to stop them crying and go to the bomb shelter.

Joan is now 70 and a proud grandmother of nine grandchildren. She was hoping Mofflyn could help her find out more about her time at

Sussex St, but could not relate to any of the photographs available. Luckily, Joan brought in some old photographs of her own and the team at Mofflyn was able to get them professionally enhanced and enlarged for her.



Joan Panton and her sisters outside the children's home.

She graciously allowed Mofflyn to keep copies for its records.

Mofflyn is working in collaboration with Uniting Church Archives to collate and categorise its records, documents and photographs, as well as developing a more precise record of the history of Methodist

Children's Homes. This will provide a better resource for ex-residents and enable them to run another reunion.