

# The Revival

## University Camp for Children Post-War

based on an interview by Mel Wiese with June Jones (nee Eggington)

In June's 2nd year of University, an influential senior lecturer in Psychology, Elwyn Morey suggested she take on the role of President of University Camp for Children which needed to be restarted after the war. Morey's influence encouraged many psychology students to be involved and Morey herself attended the camps.

Morey was a well known psychologist and very committed to helping needy kids. She recognised that there were few similar services available in Perth.

June attended camps over three years, 1950-52 from her second year onward at University.

The process was very experimental but they contacted various social workers and organisations to gauge interest and ultimately the nominations of children.

Once they worked out how many children they could take, Morey and the social workers chose which children would attend with the only criteria to have 'never had a holiday before'.

Mrs Wyatt, the wife of a well known psychologist, agreed to be cook on the first camp, and everyone attending split into groups of a male and female leader and 6 or so kids. Chores and activities were rostered for each day, and there was an end of camp concert. All activities were based at the campsite and they were mainly physical -walking on the beach, dancing etc.

In the next few years it became more sophisticated and they started running picnics as well. The same selection criteria applied, though some children attended more than once.

They had around 50-60 kids on each camp, with about 8-10 families. They couldn't expand far beyond these numbers due to the limits of the accommodation. The children were usually aged between 9 and 12 years old. Camps went for around a week.

In that period they tried to develop good procedures to take care of the children, and to adequately inform and train the leaders. They also decided that the focus should be on a fun experience, not about teaching or anything else and they didn't have any kids that didn't enjoy it.

Funding was sourced from private companies and was usually a very small amount of money or in-kind product. They also received some of the funds raised by PROSH.

The children were very well behaved, either because they were used to strong discipline at school or because they were completely overwhelmed. June can't recall a single child causing enormous problems by refusing to do activities. In the end the children didn't want to leave and would cling to the leaders.

June's favourite memories were the fun they all had -both the kids and the leaders, and how well all the leaders got to know each other. Seeing the children happy and the activities working as planned, and of course, the leaders' concerts are all fond memories.

There were a lot of ex-service people attending Uni and the camps. They were all around 24 years old and this led to quite a distinction between them and the eighteen year old women. The older group would tend to drink once the children had gone to bed but the younger women would smoke but not drink.