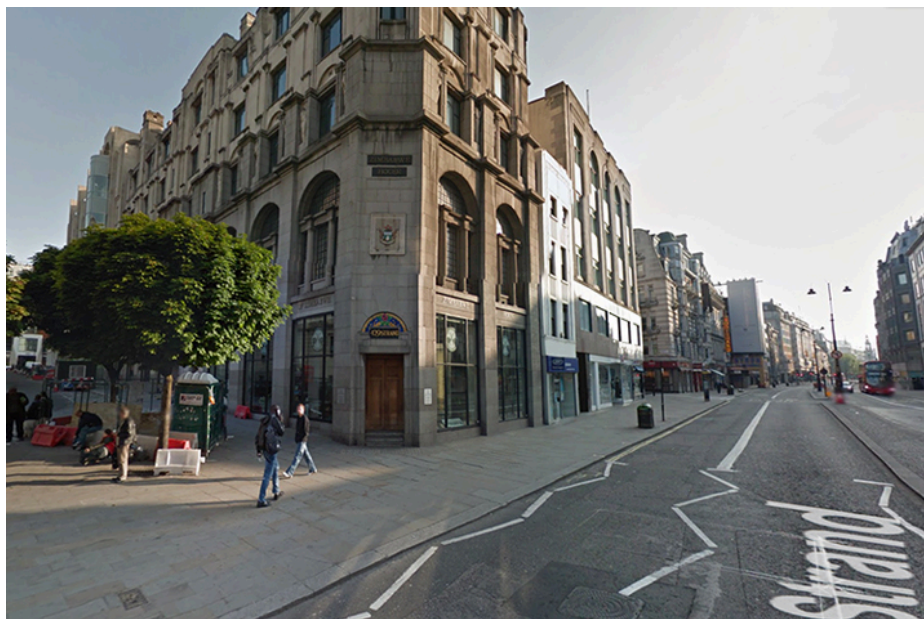


Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College

Rhodesia House, 429 Strand, London, W.C.2.



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The Grand Scheme

It is the object of this Scheme to select children from Great Britain, who wish to emigrate, to enable them to receive a sound education in the sunshine of Southern Rhodesia in order to become permanent settlers there. The Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College will enable such children to receive an education which will qualify them to gain access to the professions or to qualify for a career in industry or the public services. The children must be healthy and possess good natural intelligence. It is the intention of the Council to give preference to those candidates who, on account of their circumstances, whether financial or compassionate, are in real need of such an opportunity. The Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College is at present situated at Induna, ten miles north-east of Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia. The success of the Kingsley Fairbridge system of child migration to Australia and Canada (a system which, even in time of depression, was supported when no Dominion or Colony was prepared to consider any other form of migration) has laid a firm foundation for the start of the scheme in Southern Rhodesia.

Although the death of Kingsley Fairbridge in 1924 was a serious blow, his associates were determined to continue his scheme for filling the empty spaces of the Empire with selected children of sound stock from the over-crowded towns and cities of the United Kingdom, and confidence in the plan was shown by Sir Godfrey Huggins (Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia) when he expressed the very strong desire of the Rhodesian people that Fairbridge schools should be established in the Colony. When speaking at a meeting of the Southern Rhodesia Dinner Club, Sir Godfrey Huggins said:

“I have offered that every child in the scheme shall be a ward of the State, and have the same right to Rhodes or Beit Scholarships as any other child. This will enable even the humbles child, if he has the ability, to get to the top.”

The Rhodesian Scheme

As a result of careful investigation and examination of Rhodesian economic conditions, which are effected by the presence of a large native population providing the unskilled worker, it is felt that emphasis should not be specially laid on agricultural training, but that the College should make provision for children of all types able to fill a wide range of occupations, including the professions. An organisation, entirely separate from the Fairbridge Farm Schools, has been set up to for the scheme in Southern Rhodesia.

The Site

When the scheme was first considered in 1939, it was agreed that the General Council of the Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College in London would contribute the money for the buildings in Rhodesia. The War, however, intervened and delayed the commencement of the scheme. The College is fortunate, therefore, in having been granted by the Southern Rhodesian Government the use of the Royal Air Force training station at Induna until a range of buildings of a permanent type can be built. The present facilities at Induna include all the necessary buildings to provide accommodation and classrooms and Chapel.

There are ample playing-fields, a gymnasium, squash-court and large swimming-bath.

The Council have now acquired land in the beautiful and healthy Vumba Hills, near Umtali, where Kingsley Fairbridge himself spent his childhood.

As soon as building materials and labour are available, the erection of the permanent home of the Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College will commence. (It never happened. Fairbridge College at Induna remained until 1965 when it closed as a boarding school.)

Numbers

The College opened on the arrival of the first draft of boys on the 7th December, 1946, and by the end of February, 1947, no fewer than 50 boys had reached the new College - a good proportion of the 100 with which it was intended to operate for the first year.

In the existing buildings at Induna there is accommodation for 250 children. The Southern Rhodesia Government, however, are prepared to provide the accommodation and to accept up to 700 children at any one time, preferring to receive that total number in annual groups of 100.

Education And Religion

The Rhodesian State system provides free education, including books, for all pupils from the kindergarten stage up to and including University matriculation or other approved school-leaving certificates. At the end of the primary school stage - when the pupil has completed Standard V of the primary school curriculum - he passes into the secondary school.

There are three types of secondary schools:
(a) Academic (b) Modern (c) Technical.

In certain centres the modern and the academic types are under one roof. School attendance is compulsory until the pupil is 16. At the end of the secondary (academic) school course the pupil is eligible for the valuable bursaries and scholarships tenable at Universities in the Union Of South Africa and in special cases at overseas universities. In addition, pupils will be eligible for three Rhodes scholarships at Oxford. In proportion to the population of Rhodesia, these scholarships and bursaries in number and value are greater than in any other Colony of the British Empire.

The children sent to the RFMC will be educated to the end of the primary school stage at the College itself, but in the secondary stage they will be educated with Rhodesian children at the most suitable schools in the Colony, either as day boarders or full boarders, while continuing to make the College their home.

The College is entirely non-sectarian, but every child receives the religious instruction desired by the parents or guardians. Simple services are held in the school Chapel every Sunday, and Ministers of all Churches have ready access to the children of their own Church. A school chaplain is a resident member of the staff.

The Land The Children Will Live In

The self-governing Colony of Southern Rhodesia lies as the land-locked heart of Southern Africa, bounded on the south by the Union of SA, on the north by the Crown Colony of Northern Rhodesia, on the east by Portuguese East Africa, and on the west by the Bechuanaland Protectorate. In area it is 154,000 sq. miles.

Although Southern Rhodesia has no port of its own, full use is made of the Portuguese harbour at Beira and of the great Union Ports of Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.

Travellers' tales of the 16th and 17th centuries had referred to a mysterious land where black kings ruled great empires rich in gold and minerals, but it was left to Cecil John Rhodes, combining vision with business acumen, to explore and develop the country which today bears his name.

Beyond the Limpopo River lived the warlike Matabele, themselves refugees from the wrath of the Zulu King Chaka. By ruthless pillage and slaughter they had conquered all the tribes in Matabeleland and Mashonaland (now the two main divisions of the Colony) and were not disposed to allow white men to come in to hunt or prospect.

In 1890 a Pioneer Column of some 500 men, organized by Cecil Rhodes, won its way through a wild, wooded country to plant the Union Jack in what was to become the capital city of Salisbury, and the British South Africa Company took over administrative as well as commercial responsibilities in the newest addition to the British Empire.

In 1893, after short years of peaceful settlement, came the Matabele War; in the final battles between black Impi and white fighting columns, which included the epic last stand of Major Allan Wilson and his thirty-two men on the Shangani River, the power of Lobengula, then King of the Matabele, was smashed and the royal kraal at Bulawayo laid in ruins.

Matabeleland was added to Mashonaland to form Southern Rhodesia, and new settlers poured into the young country. In 1896, however, the Matabele, this time aided by the Mashona, again rose in rebellion.

Cecil Rhodes, in the finest diplomatic achievement of his career, met the rebel leaders in the Matopo Hills and induced them to lay down their arms. By October, 1897, when the last chief had surrendered, peace had come to a troubled land.

There followed years of change and progress until, in 1922, the British Government decided to end the B.S.A. Company Charter. On October 27th, 1922, Rhodesians decided, by referendum, to govern themselves instead of joining the Union Of South Africa, and on Occupation Day, 1923, Britain formally annexed the country.

Health

Southern Rhodesia is sub-tropical; most of the country is on a plateau at an average height of between 4,000 and 5,500 ft. giving a climate which, in the dry winter, is crisp and invigorating, while in the wet and humid summers the nights are cool above 4,000 ft.

Even during the season of the rains, outdoor sports can be played, and this activity - characteristic of the average Rhodesian's love of open-air life - is no doubt largely responsible for the excellent standard of health throughout the Colony.

The Hospitals of Rhodesia are State-maintained, modern in design and equipment, and adequately staffed by highly trained doctors and nurses. The Fairbridge College boys receive free medical and dental advice and treatment.

The Future Of The Fairbridge Children

The vigorous and enterprising independence of Southern Rhodesia - it is probably the only part of the Empire which has never cost the British Taxpayer a penny, for even the cost of fighting the Matabele War and suppressing the rebellions was borne by the BSAC - it is a fine example for the Fairbridge boys who have become the immigrant pioneers of the first half of the 20th century.

They are reaching the Colony at a time when economic progress is outstanding. In a quarter of a century the white population has more than doubled itself. (In 1921 there were 33,620 Europeans; the preliminary census of May, 1946, placed this figure at 82,382).

In 1923, the revenue was £1,326,469 and expenditure £1,357,442. Twenty years later (the budget for 1943-44) revenue had risen to £10,317,000 and expenditure to £10,083,044. Although this great rise may be in some measure attributable to the war, it is also a sure sign of the Colony's financial buoyancy and economic stability.

No one factor, apart from initiative, has been responsible for the sturdy growth of Southern Rhodesia.

The courage of the Pioneers laid the foundation : the development of the gold mines, especially by the small-workers, produced a flow of money which backed the first farmers and ranchers : the increasing expansion of tobacco planting has, during the recent boom years, placed the crop value on a level with gold and is now exceeding it.

In the town, industry and engineering are accelerating to make good the start which primary industries, like farming and mining, must have in a new country. The stimulus to production of the war years was offset by the lack of man-power; but to-day secondary industry is well established. Given a greater European population, more capital from outside the country and the conserved use of the native labour supply, it will continue to develop at a rate commensurate with the already rapid general expansion of the Colony.

Finance

Southern Rhodesia's share in the financing of the scheme is a generous one.

The Government have made a large grant of land and buildings at Induna. They are providing full maintenance, a staff of trained teacher, books, school furniture and equipment, and are paying the salaries of the Cottage Mothers and other domestic staff at the College, although the General Council selects this staff, subject to Government approval.

The United Kingdom's contribution consists of:

- A grant by the British Government of half the cost of passages of children and escorts to Southern Rhodesia;
- A grant toward the cost of maintenance of the children at the College at the rate of 10/- per week per child, while the child is fully maintained by the Rhodesian Government;
- Generous contributions have been made by friends of Rhodesia in the United Kingdom toward the funds necessary for the administration expenses in the U.K. and the expenses incurred in the collection and the balance of cost of transportation of the children.

Funds are now being sought from the United Kingdom for erection of houses on the new site in the Vumba Hills. It is desired to house the children in home units of ten in number under the care of a "House Mother".

It is anticipated that the Rhodesian Government will meet the cost of erection of School buildings, but the Council in London will be forced to ask for contributions to pay for the erection of the home units. It is estimated that every "Cottage Home" will cost approximately £3,000.

As an Imperial investment the scheme must appeal to everyone who believes in the great mission of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and to every lover of children.



It is difficult to understand why such a misguided policy (which ran from the 1930's to the late 1960's) was ever allowed to happen. But the fact is, that the British government were getting rid of a very costly social problem, unsustainable in a post world war 1&2 environment, and the migrant scheme almost invariably involved children from deprived or disadvantaged backgrounds.

See [The Lost Children of Britain.pdf](#)