

The History of The Children's Family Trust



Top to bottom
Paul and Ruby Field: Lynwode manor, where the family moved in 1946; and Christmas at the manor ten years later.

It is hard to imagine the world of the 1930's and 40's for children who did not have a natural, loving and caring family home. The options of life within local authority or charitable children's homes and orphanages were often bleak. At this time there were still operational workhouses and despite regulations in 1930 to prevent children over three years of age being held in such institutions, many still remained in residence within them. Institutional life was often grim.

In 1945 the 'Care of Children Committee' set up by the Government to investigate the plight of children in care, found much cause for concern. In its recommendations it contended that deprived children needed a home that supplied affection, security, and personal interest. It also argued that there should be an understanding of the child's needs, care for their future and regard for their personality and self-esteem, with a share in the common life of a small group of people in a homely environment.

Paul Field agreed with all these sentiments, but saw them as a minimum. Paul worked for the Waifs and Strays Society from 1935 and had always been troubled by the requirement to turn the children in his care out into the world alone at the age of just fourteen. They were found a job and lodging, but were then expected to stand on their own two feet just when he saw that they needed so much guidance, support, and love.

In 1946, Paul decided to leave his work with the Waifs and Strays Society to found The Children's Family Trust and to take into his own family the same kinds of children he had looked after previously but now, however, they were to stay within his family for life – on equal terms with his own children.

Despite the struggle to provide for his own extended family, Paul had the vision to see a series of such 'families'. Once, if barely, established, he set about finding other couples who shared his vision and who were prepared to take up his innovative approach. Over the years that followed, many other families were established and The CFT has since taken into its network of families several hundred children. Each set of 'parents' could have brought up well over twenty children in their careers, often with over a dozen at home at any one time. Now many of those pioneering 'parents' have many grandchildren and great-children within their family.

The CFT has always prided itself on the stability offered to the children it cares for many of whom have remained with their families for over five years and even longer.

The CFT has lived through many changes in the professional thinking and orthodoxy regarding child-care and has adapted several times to live within the prevailing rules and regulations. However, the basic principles and values of the organisation have never been compromised from Paul's view that a loving natural family is every child's birthright.

Paul Field's work was given national recognition through being the subject of a TV programme 'This is Your Life' in 1958 and in a biography published in 1960. The work of The CFT thereafter was chronicled in a second book, published in 1996.

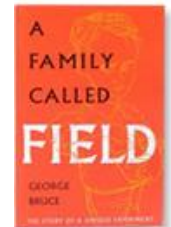
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The Children's Family Trust in literature...

Two books have been written about The CFT's history, one a biography of Paul Field, and the other telling the story of the second CFT family.

Full of detail and anecdote, 'A Family Called Field' tells Paul Field's story, a courageous, rare and intensely human one, from his early life in Japan, time in the Merchant Service during World War I, an epiphany in Calcutta which lead him to give up on his business ambitions and concentrate on welfare activities. This lead to his decision to run a home for the Waifs and Strays Society and eventually to the post-war foundation of The Children's Family Trust.



The story of the second Trust family unfolds in Time for Reflection. After wartime service Gus Goodyer and his wife Doreen decided to devote the remainder of their lives to providing a lasting and natural family for children who would otherwise face long-term institutional care. Inspired by Paul Field and The Children's Family Trust, they strove to further the principles and ideals of The CFT, and to expand its work.

A few more pictures of some of the children Paul cared for...



Many Years Later....



[For more information about the history of The CFT, please contact our Head Office.](#)