



Family Tracing Service

REVIEW OF 2007

Reunited after 45 years apart

'I had an overwhelming need to know answers about my past'

It wasn't until she was in her twenties and getting married that Carol found out about her real father Ken who moved away when she was a child. She needed her birth certificate and it was then her mum revealed the truth about Ken.

'I grew up in a close and happy family unit, but we all seemed to avoid the subject of my real dad out of respect for each other, though everyone spoke highly of him. Several major family events were taking place last year – two of my children were getting married – so the time seemed right to start looking for Ken.'

Carol's journey to find Ken through The Salvation Army's Family Tracing Service was one of three stories in the BBC One documentary *Reunited* broadcast the week before Christmas 2007. She explains: 'Agreeing to take part in the BBC documentary was something I felt I may as well add into the pot of emotions! It was nothing compared to what I had already put myself through to prepare for finding Ken.'

The search for Ken took three months. Carol and Ken exchanged letters, then she nervously phoned him. 'It was amazing, like we really knew each other,'



Together again: Carol and Ken have made up for lost time

recalls Carol. 'Next came the face-to-face meeting and I burst into tears! Ken was super. He'd brought old pictures of my childhood and that was a great ice-breaker. Now I feel complete and really happy. We talk to each other every week.'

Ken is equally delighted: 'Carol was always a part of my life and was never a secret from my family. I would think about her every birthday and on special occasions. I wanted to be a part of her life but I didn't know how. I worried I'd upset her.'

'Having contact with Carol has made my life more rounded. The missing bit is now back in place and the numbers of my grandchildren have grown from 12 to 18! I recommend using the Family Tracing Service very highly. Don't just think about using them – do it. You'll always be left wondering if you don't.'



Major Michael Sebbage, Director, Family Tracing Service

Harnessing the power of renewal and reconciliation

WE BELIEVE EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT FROM THE SENSE OF BELONGING A FAMILY PROVIDES.

When people are separated from their loved ones, for whatever reason, it can cause great unhappiness. This is why, after 122 years, The Salvation Army feels privileged to continue operating one of the oldest family tracing services in the world, and reuniting thousands of families each year. We are proud of an 87% success rate in 2007.

Inside this Annual Review we have included some of the highlights of our busy year, with some personal accounts of the life-changing impact our service has had on individual lives. We can't always guarantee happy outcomes but, even if our search doesn't produce the desired ending, closure often brings its own peace of mind.

If you have lost touch with a loved one, don't delay any longer. Contact us today.

Review of 2007 Highlights from a busy year

The Salvation Army's Family Tracing Service began in 1885 and continues to be greatly needed in helping families who are out of touch with each other.

In 2007 we maintained a high rate in solving enquiries as **87% of concluded cases were successful**, with information obtained about the person sought. This is the result of hard work by our dedicated team of 14 staff who take care of the whole tracing process, with searches taking from as little as two hours to as much as two years. We're also grateful to the agencies, organisations and individuals whose co-operation in our tracing work is invaluable.

The office was extremely busy in 2007, handling 276 telephone calls a day. We received over 24,200 written enquiries and a further 28,200 forms and letters were posted out by the Family Tracing Service.

There was a considerable amount of national and regional media interest in people who have been reunited with their loved ones via the Family Tracing Service. Coverage included features in women's

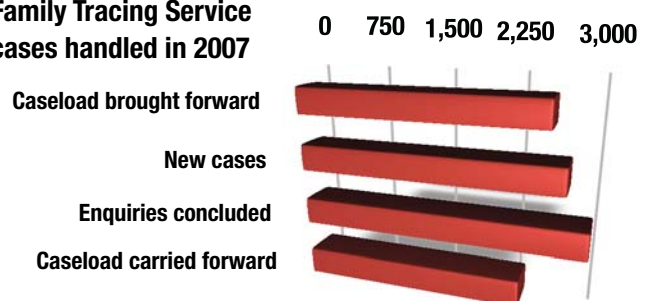
interest magazines, as well as a BBC One TV documentary and website as part of the BBC's Hard Christmas season.

Numerous press articles were placed and radio interviews were arranged in the lead up to and after the TV broadcast of *Reunited*. This led to a 28% rise in traffic to our Family Tracing Service website, along with a four-fold increase in emails requesting assistance. We also benefited from a fundraising carol concert organised by The Salvation Army in Croydon.

Thanks to everyone for their support in 2007!

We aim to continue to provide answers for families and to promote reconciliation and wholeness during 2008.

Family Tracing Service cases handled in 2007



'Our meeting will forever be imprinted in my memory,' says Vivienne who met her half-brother John for the first time in 2007. 'Having John in my life has made such a difference. We have a deep understanding and we're very protective and supportive of each other. We have already helped each other through some of the difficult times over the past year.'



'I was lost before. Now I feel I belong'

The past four years were difficult for Stuart who suffered several strokes in that time.

He was in hospital for eight weeks and then moved to supported accommodation. His mail and belongings were never forwarded to him so Stuart was unaware his sister Suzanne was writing to his old address, while Suzanne thought he was not responding to her letters.

In 2007 a care assistant heard about his story and helped Stuart to contact The Salvation Army who found his sister in less than a month. Today

he's a different man under the tender loving care of Suzanne.

His sister explains: 'I hadn't heard from Stuart in over four years and didn't realise he hadn't been getting my letters. When I got the call from the Family Tracing Service, I was on the phone speaking to Stuart within 30 minutes.'

One week later Suzanne had organised for Stuart to come home and live with her – and her six dogs.

'It wasn't easy. Stuart was in a wheelchair and had very limited mobility and speech, but I was so glad I could be there for him and support him. It's just lovely to be together now and



Stuart, while still poorly, continues to make good progress, which makes me so happy.'

Stuart is equally happy: 'It's made a big difference being with Suzanne. I was lost before, now I feel I belong. She's looking after me now, bossing me around and keeping me in order. I feel so much better.'

Family Tracing Service Ready when you are

The break-up of her son's marriage meant Mavis last saw her grandson Glenn Darren in 1977 when he was just 18 months old.

Her grandson and his mum moved to Canada and contact was lost.

'We often talked about Glenn Darren but we were afraid to try to find him in case we caused any problems,' says Mavis.

'Then two years ago my son found a message on the internet that Glenn Darren was looking for his dad. We had no response but I knew he wanted to find us so I contacted the Family Tracing Service.'

Glenn Darren was found within two months and Mavis called him right away. 'Family Tracing is a fantastic service and it feels absolutely magnificent to have found my grandson and to be back in touch,' says Mavis. Her son is also delighted. All three are now in regular contact and Glenn Darren hopes to come over to England and meet his dad and grandma.



Robert keeps in close contact with his late brother's family. (From left to right) nieces Fiona and Sally, Robert and his wife Pat, and sister-in-law Jean

Robert last saw his brother almost 30 years ago when he left home to work abroad

'I'd tried to find Neil myself through internet searches but I only had very sketchy information,' says Robert. 'I was told to hire an investigator but the fees were extortionate and there was no guarantee they would be successful. Then a friend told me to contact The Salvation Army.'

Neil was found in just six weeks but sadly Robert was given the devastating news that after a heart attack, Neil had passed away the previous week.

'Instead of the happy reunion I had imagined, I was attending Neil's memorial service where I met his wife and family,' he recalls.

'I'm grateful to be back in touch with them but I just wish I'd known about The Salvation Army sooner.'

If you're looking for a loved one, don't delay. Contact The Salvation Army right away.'

Robert has resolved to stay in contact with his late brother's family, especially his niece Sally. She says: 'I didn't know about the Family Tracing Service and it's important to get the message out there for people in the same position as us. If you are thinking of tracing a family member, do it as soon as you can.'

'It's mind-blowing to have found my family after all these years!'

Gillian waited more than 40 years to hear the Kiwi accent of her brother Steve. 'My phone rang in the middle of the night,' she recalls. 'It was Steve calling from New Zealand. We spoke for ages. Two days later my sister phoned from Australia.'

This happy ending was the result of an eight-week search to find Steve and involved the help of Salvation Army colleagues in New Zealand. Steve moved hemispheres to get

married but he and Gillian managed to stay in contact until she lost many of her personal belongings in a flood.

It was only in 2007 that Gillian felt strong enough to approach the Family Tracing Service for help. Fear of rejection from her only remaining family made Gillian think it would be easier to avoid contact altogether.

'My mum died when I was just 19 years old and my life became pretty chaotic. I missed my brother and sister but I was ashamed as I was battling with addictions. I was afraid they would reject me when they realised what a mess I was in. Now I've found them, it's amazing!'



Coming clean about her fears helped Gillian find her family

Profile



Meet retired policeman and FTS caseworker John Rodgers

I SPENT 31 YEARS AS A POLICE

OFFICER looking for people who didn't want to be found. Not by me, anyway! I wanted a second career where I could make a difference to people's lives and became a caseworker in 1994.

This job has been far more than I expected. I've spoken to many wonderful people and I've worked on a wide variety of cases. People don't always want to be found, that's true, but The Salvation Army's Family Tracing Service is changing lives daily and it's always rewarding when you spot the smallest clue within a file which leads to a positive result.

Many cases are memorable but recently a lady called Barbara was looking for her father who she last saw in 1947. I found he had re-married in a Salvation Army corps where he was a bandsman for 25 years. Sadly he had died in 1970, but I was able to locate a nephew who has since helped Barbara to piece together her father's life. While she was very emotional regarding her father's death, she was happy to meet a whole new family.

When I retire from the service later this year I shall miss the work, of course, but I shall also miss the wonderful hard-working and cheerful people I work with day by day. I hope, in some small way, I've helped to change people's lives for the better by reuniting them with their loved ones.

Reunited: five years on

'It's wonderful to know we can talk, and we're all safe and happy,' says Barbara, five years after the Family Tracing Service found her brother Raymond.

The siblings had not seen each other for 16

years. 'I was the eldest and was always protective of my four brothers. I left home at 18 and we all just seemed to gradually lose contact,' she explains.

After a 12-month search by the Family Tracing Service, their first contact was by phone. Later they enjoyed a family holiday.

To celebrate the family reunion Barbara, Raymond and two other brothers regularly take a trip home to Rochester, Kent, to visit the annual Dickens Festival.

'We dress up in full costume and it's a lot of fun,' says Barbara. 'We enjoy being back on home ground where we all grew up together.'



Dressed for success: Barbara and Raymond at last year's Dickens Festival

Frequently asked questions

Why does The Salvation Army have a Family Tracing Service?

Losing touch with family members often brings great unhappiness and insecurity. The Salvation Army believes in the family unit and in restoring family relationships.

Who do you look for?

We trace known and named family members who are 18 years of age and over. Due to limited resources we do not normally become involved in searches where adoption has taken place.

Who does the tracing?

Our staff of 14 includes skilled and experienced caseworkers, researchers and administrators in our London office. We can also draw on support from The

Salvation Army's many corps and centres throughout the UK, and colleagues around the world.

What about confidentiality?

The service is strongly committed to the principles of confidentiality. Contact details will not be disclosed without prior consent and relatives can choose to direct initial correspondence to each other through our office.

Is there a charge for the service?

Each search costs more than £150. However, we only charge £45 (or £25 for those whose only income is state support). The deficit is funded from Salvation Army central funds as no government or other grants are available. Donations are therefore always welcome.



The Salvation Army
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Charity

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