

The Queen Wilhelmina Fund, was formed and is now more than seventy years old. Its aim is, to help people of Dutch origin who are in financial or other trouble not of their own making. Help is not restricted to Dutch people. Substantial financial help was given when Darwin was hit by a cyclone in 1974.

When the Juliana Village Association had bought the land where the Village is now standing there was a large old house on the site. At about the same time, parents of three children died in an accident. There were two girls, one of 19 years old one of 15 and there was a boy of 17. The children could not pay the high rent of the house where they had lived with their parents and were told to leave. The Social worker of the Council asked us if we could help. We made the house available for them on a quarter of the rent a real estate agent could have got for us, from one of his clients. We dropped two quarters and the Queen Wilhelmina Fund paid the last quarter. The two girls were good and clean housekeepers. The boy was lost after his parents died. He started to drink and was maybe on drugs. One evening he crossed the railway line illegally and was found dead the next morning. A tragic affair.

The house was really too big and too uncomfortable for the two girls, so when the youngest had finished her course in graphic art, and was also earning money, they hired a two bedroom flat somewhere else. The real estate agent who was, free of charge, looking after the house put a sign in his window that the house was for rent. A young man, conservatively dressed wanted to hire it for a friend and himself. The house was let to him for a reasonable rent.

When he moved in, not a friend, but about seven of them and not so conservatively dressed moved in with him. They made a nuisance of themselves to the neighbours and fell behind with the rent. We gave them notice to move. They disappeared without paying. In the house we found injection needles, a half burned mattress and a mess.

It took six volunteers a full day to clean up.

It is easy to criticise these lost young people, but if one can't do anything to help them all that is left to do is pity them.

I have always said, " the Age Pension should come when you are twenty five. " If you are young you can do so many things you can't do later.

I thought that again when Nel and I, with another retired couple, came to Lightning Ridge, the little mining town where the black opals come from.

Many young couples spend a year or two there digging. A hole, about two metres wide is drilled in the ground by a big machine, until the depth is reached where the ground is supposed to hold opals. Iron ladders are fixed to the wall and a winch is fixed across the top to bring up the earth. This is then washed to see if somewhere an opal is hiding. I would have loved to live there for a while if I had been younger and stronger.

While still working to get Juliana Village built, I decided to spend more time on my hobby 'painting'!

The previous years I had taken some painting lessons and of course it was not a new hobby for me.

In my nineteenth year I had obtained a diploma to give drawing lessons, although I never tried to get a position at a school.

