

J D BASHFORD TRUST – HISTORY

Kaupokonui farmer James Dawson Bashford had a far-reaching dream of helping Kiwi boys gain an education in agriculture.

He hoped that that when he died, his 66-hectare farm on Rama Rd would become a place of agricultural learning.

In his last will, dated 15 May 1962, he asked that it be called the Margaret Bashford Memorial Home For Boys, in remembrance of his late wife.

The home was to be for boys aged under 21 “who being orphans or needing assistance for any other reason are willing to live in a home where they can learn practical farming out of school hours”.

Mr Bashford’s big dreams were matched by his size and personality. The former publican was 6 feet 1 inch (1.85cm) and highly affable. He was a common sight at stock sale yards throughout Taranaki, and was a member of both Federated Farmers and the National Party.

Known by his second name, and called Dawes by those who knew him well, Mr Bashford fought in World War I.

He was posted to the Wellington Mounted Rifles at the Suez Canal in January 1916.

In March the following year he received a gunshot wound to his right arm and was admitted to hospital in Alexandra, Egypt.

His time as a trooper with B Squadron 7th Reinforcements earned him three medals – the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Mr Bashford and his wife, Margaret, had no children.

He died on 9 June 1963, with high hopes his legacy would live on through education.

But the boys’ home never came to fruition, simply because the advisory trustees of his estate looked at the logistics and believed the plan wasn’t practical.

Still, they held true to Mr Bashford’s vision of providing boys with agricultural education, and pushed for a scholarship trust to provide bursaries for students to attend various farm training establishments or study veterinary science.

In 1979, the Public Trustee applied to the High Court to change the terms and conditions of the will so this could happen.

That change was granted in 1984, and at the same time, the Anglican Boys Home Society, took over the trust.

Originally, the Margaret Bashford Scholarship was just for boys aged under 21.

Those conditions were legally changed in 2003, enabling females to apply for scholarships and the age of applicants was extended to 30.

The money for the scholarship comes from farm profits. The Rama Rd property, now 87.4 hectares in size, continues to be farmed by sharemilkers.

From 1998 to 2003, the trust recorded a cash surplus of \$924,162, while the total grants made for the same period were \$273,770.

At the start of 2008, the trust gave out \$92,500 in scholarships.

That same year, management of the trust was taken over by the Bishop’s Action Foundation, which is keeping alive Mr Bashford’s dream of helping young people fulfil their agricultural and veterinary ambitions.