

# Andrew Kerr Memorial Home

c. 1921 – c. 1980

**Other Names:** • Andrew Kerr Memorial Home for Boys and Girls

## Details

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The Andrew Kerr Memorial Home, in Mornington, was established by the Church of England in around 1921. From 1921 to 1941 it was run by a management committee. The Mission of St James and St John took over management in 1941. In the 1950s, the Home was for boys and girls aged 6 to 14 years. The site was sold off in 1980 and two family group homes were established in Mornington to care for some of the children from Andrew Kerr.

The Andrew Kerr Memorial Home in Mornington, was originally established in the 1920s as a large congregate care Home, established by the Church of England and run by a committee of management.

The building was donated to the Church by Mrs Andrew Kerr and other family members, and its name honoured the memory of Sergeant Andrew Kerr, killed in Fleurbaix, France in 1916.

In his history of the Mission of St James and St John, Cole writes that Andrew Kerr, from 1921 to 1941, functioned 'more or less as a holiday home for children'.

According to H.W. Nunn, its object was 'to provide and maintain a home for the homeless and other children, irrespective of creed, until provision can be made for their welfare.'

Before the Mission of St James and St John established the Ramoth Toddlers' Home in 1927, Andrew Kerr received 'toddlers', between their placements in babies' and children's homes.

The conditions at the Home were described in 1938 as a two-storey stone and wood building on 11 acres near the beach at Mornington, where children slept in the large enclosed verandahs – girls were upstairs and boys downstairs.

During these years, Miss Hale was the Matron, whose work was overseen by a Committee. Mrs A.E. McLennan was the honorary secretary of the Committee. Cole writes that this during this period up to 1941, very little was spent on maintenance and upkeep of the Home, and that it had a 'four figure' bank overdraft.

Presumably as a result of concerns about the management of the Home, the Mission of St James and St John was asked to take over Andrew Kerr in 1941.

However, Cole writes that Andrew Kerr was not, at least initially, seen as a part of the Mission's 'chain of Homes' (including St Gabriel's Babies' Home, St Luke's Toddlers' Homes and the Homes at Glenroy for girls and boys). Andrew Kerr was run by the Mission as a separate organisation, under its new Matron, Mrs Ida Curry.

After renovations and additions in 1955/56, the 'new' Andrew Kerr Memorial Home was opened in April 1956. Writing in 1969, Cole described Andrew Kerr Memorial Home, in the seaside surroundings of Mornington, as 'one

of the finest assets of the Mission'. Importantly, the additional accommodation at the extended Home meant that siblings could be housed together.

Many children from Andrew Kerr attended the Mornington State School. However, the 'home kids' felt like a separate group to those from 'normal' homes. Unlike the locals, at lunchtime, children returned to the Home for a cooked meal. 'Lorna' a former resident recalls being treated differently:

*especially in the winter, because the mothers used to make all these hot chocolate drinks for their children ... They had these big pots of hot chocolate and anyone that was from the orphanage was left till last, so if they ran out you didn't get it. You had to drink water.*

The Home was visited in 1960 by the Chief Secretary, Arthur Gordon Rylah together with other politicians, who were reportedly impressed by what they saw. Around this time, Lady Angliss from the Children's Welfare Association of Victoria, also visited Andrew Kerr, and was struck by its 'homely atmosphere', 'attractive surroundings' and 'excellent amenities'.

In 1961, a decision was made to place the Home entirely in the hands of the Mission of St James and St John, it previously having been funded by a separate Trust.

In 1969, Cole wrote that during the Christmas holidays, Andrew Kerr Home accommodated those children from other Mission Homes not going away for a summer break.

In 1976, the Mission developed a proposal for phasing out its remaining congregate care Homes (Andrew Kerr and St Luke's, Bendigo) in favour of alternative forms of residential 'care' and support services.

The site was sold off in 1980 as the Mission began phasing out its provision of congregate care in favour of alternative models. Two family group homes were established in Mornington to care for some of the children from Andrew Kerr.

In 1997 the Mission of St James and St John became part of Anglicare Victoria. At this time, records of the Mission were transferred to Anglicare Victoria. These included records of the various orphanages, homes and other residences run by the Mission. The custodian of these records is Anglicare Victoria.

## Gallery

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### **Carols by Candlelight at 'Andrew Kerr' Memorial Home, Mornington**

**Description:** This photograph was published in the Mission of St James and St John's journal, *The Brothers*.



### **Andrew Kerr Memorial Home**

**Description:** This is an image of the Andrew Kerr Memorial Home in Tanti Avenue, Mornington.

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# More info

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## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Mission of St James and St John \(1919 - 1997\)](#)

The Mission of St James and St John took over management of Andrew Kerr Memorial Home in 1941.

Date: 1941 - 1980

### Related Organisations

- [Ramoith Toddlers' Home \(1927 - c. 1932\)](#)

Before the establishment of Ramoith in 1927, Andrew Kerr Memorial Home received toddlers, between placements at babies' and children's homes.

Date: 1921 - 1927

- [Peninsula Family Services \(1980 - current\)](#)

Some children and young people were transferred from Andrew Kerr to family group homes run by Peninsula Family Services.

Date: 1980 -

## Resources

- Golding, Frank, [Submission no 18 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- [Kind Hearts Gave Them a Home](#), The Argus, 13 August 1955
- Testro, Ron, [He's a man with a mission](#), The Argus, 26 July 1956
- [Andrew Kerr Memorial Home \(c. 1920 - 1980\)](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Andrew Kerr Memorial Home
- [Frank Golding interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), 15 June 2010 - 16 June 2010

## Records

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For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

### Records

- [Anglicare Victoria Records \(1886 - current\)](#)
- [Clements Langford Pty Ltd \(1868 - 1960\)](#)
- [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)

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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/andrew-kerr-memorial-home-2/>