

Church of England Homes for Children

1894 – c. 1968

- Other Names:**
- The Church of England Children's Homes
 - The Church of England Children's Home
 - The Church of England Children and Babies' Homes
 - Church of England Girls' Hostel
 - St Faith's
 - Home for Neglected Children
 - The Home for Children and Girls' Hostel
 - Brighton Children's Home

Details

The Church of England Homes for Children was established in Wilson Street, Brighton, in 1894 by the Mission to the Streets and Lanes to care for neglected children. In 1916, the property next door was purchased, and the Home expanded to include a babies' Home for children over one. In 1927 the babies' Home moved and the building was turned into a Girls' Hostel. From this time, girls aged between 5 and 14 years were accepted, with younger girls accommodated in the children's Home and older girls in the Girls' Hostel. In the 1960s the buildings were renovated to include smaller family group home units and in 1968, the Church of England Homes for Children became The Homes for Children and Family Counselling Service.

Sister Esther of the Community of the Holy Name founded a Home for Neglected Children in Wilson Street, Brighton, in 1894. The Home began in two terraced cottages pending the construction of a suitable house further along the street. The Sisters and children moved into the new house in 1897, which accommodated 40 children. At first, children attended a school on the premises of the Home. In later years, they attended local schools.

In the 1910s, children from the Home participated in the annual children's motor picnic put on by the Automobile Club of Victoria where over 400 children from institutions would be collected and driven to an outdoor venue for a picnic and afternoon of fun activities.

In 1916, the Mission bought the house next door to the children's Home, which became a babies' home. Between 60 and 70 children could be accommodated across the two Homes. Children under the age of 12 months did not live at Brighton, but were in foster homes, under the supervision of the Sisters. In 1927, there were 42 children and 23 babies living at the Homes, ranging in age from 1 to 15.

The Mission often spoke of its aim to establish a separate babies' home, away from the 'keen' air of Brighton, and in 1927 opened the Darling Babies' Home in Malvern. This enabled the Brighton babies' Home property to be redeveloped as a hostel for older girls.

From 1927, the Home took in girls aged between 5 and 14 years. Younger girls were accommodated in the children's Home, while older girls lived at the Girls' Hostel, which was also known as the Church of England Girls' Hostel. In 1932 *The Herald* reported on the Homes, commenting that "Schoolwork, housework, and play are divided in pleasant proportion" and that the children did not have a uniform. All children were given domestic training, and were most commonly found positions in domestic service, however some had gone onto higher education and become teachers or worked in offices. Girls living at the Hostel paid board according to their

means, and “Others too, when they have time off from their work, spend it at the hostel, where they can stay for the night, do their washing and ironing, and read and rest.”

The Homes were mainly funded through charitable activities including donations and fundraising. It was common for Christmas to be a large celebration with a large meal made up of donated food, and donated gifts handed out to the children. In 1936 *The Argus* reported funds were raised to build an administrative wing, creating space for five more beds, updating the bathroom, laundry and kitchen facilities, and also a large section of the playground was concreted.

In the 1940s *The Age* reported on an initiative that was started by local families to host two girls every Saturday so they could “be entertained with a taste of home life and jollity.” It provided the girls access to different toys, food, and sometimes experiences such as a visit to Luna Park.

In 1954, the Department of Child Welfare declared that the Hostel did not meet its standards. The Mission was no longer able to accept government subsidised placements, and from that time it only accommodated older girls, ‘graduating’ from the children’s Home. In late 1957, renovations were completed, and the Hostel became known as St Faith’s.

In December 1957, the Mission held Diamond Jubilee celebrations for the Community of the Holy Name’s involvement at Brighton.

The annual report for 1958 paid tribute to ‘Bluey’, ‘a wise patient “cocker” who sits at the front gate all day waiting for his friends to return home from school’.

In the 1960s, the Homes were redeveloped as the Mission moved away from institutional models of care. In 1962-63, the children’s Home and St Faith’s were renovated, with the residents moving into smaller four-bed dormitories. In 1966, the children’s Home was converted into three self-contained flats to operate as family group home units, with cottage parents.

The 1966 annual report stated:

The children can now feel that they have a home of their own to invite their friends to on special occasions; they do the shopping and cooking at weekends and lead a more normal family life.

The new living arrangements also made it possible for siblings to remain together. With the closure of the Darling Babies’ Home in 1967, nine toddlers were moved into the small family group home units at Brighton. The name of the Homes across the two properties in Wilson Street, Brighton also changed at this time to St Anne’s, St Margaret’s, St Elizabeth’s and St Faith’s Flats.

As the Homes made this transition, the Sisters from the Community of the Holy Name became less involved in the Mission to the Streets and Lanes’ work with children. In 1968, the Mission established the Brighton Family Centre on the site, providing family counselling and preventive services. The service was now known as ‘The Homes for Children and Family Counselling Service’.

Gallery



Wattle Day

Description: This is a copy of an illustrated article published in *The Argus* on Saturday 24 August 1935, p.30. The image shows babies and adults on Wattle Day. The original caption reads: 'Babies from the Church of England Home made a compelling appeal for Wattle Day contributions outside the Elizabeth street post-office yesterday.'

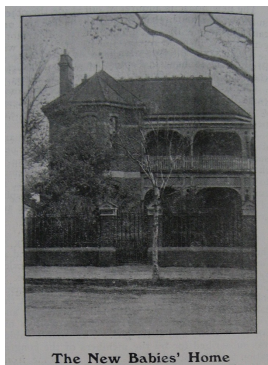


Church of England Home for Children



The Children's Playground

Description: This is an image which was published in the Mission to the Streets and Lanes' newsletter, *In our midst* in April 1903.



The New Babies' Home (editor's note: Brighton)

Description: This is an image which was published in the Mission to the Streets and Lanes' newsletter, *In our midst* in 1915. It shows a building adjacent to the Children's Home in Brighton which the committee had recently purchased, with plans for it to become a new babies' home.



Brighton Babies' Home

Description: This image shows the property where the Church of England Babies' Home and later Church of England Girls' Hostel was located.



Church of England Children's Home

Description: This image shows the property where the Church of England Children's Home was located.



Church of England Home for Children

Description: This image shows the property where the Church of England Home for Children was located.

More info

Chronology

- **Church of England Homes for Children (1894 – c. 1968)**
 - The Homes for Children and Family Counselling Service (1968 - c. 1975)
 - Unit 64 (1975 - c. 1984)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Mission to the Streets and Lanes \(1886 - 1997\)](#)

Related Events

- [Interstate movement of Northern Territory children \(1930s - 1970s\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Darling Babies' Home \(1927 - 1967\)](#)
The Darling Babies' Home was established partly to alleviate overcrowding at the Children's Home in Brighton
- [Community of the Holy Name \(1888 - current\)](#)

Resources

- Nunn, H.W., [Social Services \(Chapter VIII of A Short History of the Church of England in Victoria 1847-1947\)](#), Issued by the Editorial Committee of the Centenary Celebrations, Melbourne Diocese, 1947
- McKew, Mim, [Submission no 6 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- [Sixty years of friendship](#), The Argus, 11 October 1949
- Symes, Margaret, [Submission no 370 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2004
- Name withheld, [Submission no 446 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Duff, G.B., *Social work of the Church: child rescue agencies of Melbourne*, The Spectator, 23 June 1899
- [Christmas is party time ...](#), The Argus, 15 December 1952
- [Marge Crawford interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project](#), 2011

Records

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

Records

- [Anglicare Victoria Records \(1886 - current\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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