

Tally Ho Boys' Training Farm

1903 – 1986

Other Names:

- Central Methodist Mission Training Farm
- Tally Ho Boys' Village
- Tally Ho Village
- Central Mission Boys' Training Farm

Details

Tally Ho opened in 1903 in Burwood. This institution, run by the Wesley Central Mission, was for boys 'rescued' from the city slums to be trained in farm work. From 1977, Tally Ho received girls as well as boys. It closed in 1986.

Tally Ho Training Farm opened in 1903 under the auspices of the Wesley Central Mission. Disillusioned with boy rescue schemes to send unemployed boys up country during the 1890s depression, the Rev. George Cole (1859-1919) established Tally Ho to prepare city youth for farm work. An article in 1911 quotes Cole (described as a "happy combination of parson and farmer") saying that he used to work with elderly men at the Central Mission "and then I got tired of working with the old fellows. I found they knew too much for me. I started to work out here for the boys. When you save an old man you save a unit. When you save a boy you save a whole multiplication table" (*Weekly Times*, 9 December 1911).

The site was between Burwood and Highbury Roads, extending from Springvale Road to Newhaven Road. The 'village' itself (as opposed to the farm lands) was on Highbury Road. In 1911 the site comprised 160 acres, "50 of which are orchards, and 37 in full bearing. There are 43 boys" (*Weekly Times*, 1911).

The Burwood institution was often an innovator in youth welfare, introducing self-government during the 1930s and the cottage system in the 1950s and, 20 years later, developing on and off-site services for girls as well as boys.

Tally Ho had its own school on-site (No 3588) from 1905. Boys were educated there until the 1960s, when moves were made to educate Tally Ho residents in local schools.

The introduction of the 'boys' parliament' and the transition to a village comprising cottage homes were reforms introduced by Edgar Derrick, Superintendent at Tally Ho from 1930 to 1951. Derrick described Tally Ho's system of democratic self-government in 1932:

The farm is run as a community and each member has the right to vote. The laws are made by the Parliament, consisting of boys and staff, and the proceedings are carried out with much dignity. The laws are enforced by a police force and offenders are dealt with by a court. By giving the boys an opportunity to express themselves in this way, they feel that they are treated as peers, with no atmosphere in which they would feel inferior to an adult.

Derrick's time at Tally Ho was a time of reform and innovation. In line with international trends in child welfare, Derrick transformed Tally Ho from large-scale, dormitory-style accommodation to a collection of smaller 'homes' where smaller groups of boys lived with cottage parents.

Derrick was influenced by the ideas of Homer Lane (who managed the Ford Boys' Republic in Detroit, USA and later came to England to be the superintendent of the 'Little Commonwealth' children's village in Dorset). Derrick lobbied for the building of cottages for the boys at Tally Ho to live in. Cottage care was based on ideas that children needed to be housed in a situation resembling the 'normal' family, if they were to develop into healthy, productive adults. It was also influenced by the assumption that 'spatial designs could shape the individual's identity and regulate his or her role in the larger society' (Murdoch, 2006).

Derrick was influential not just at Tally Ho, but in the wider sector, serving as President of the Victorian Council of Social Service from 1954-56. He was also on the Executive of the Children's Welfare Association from 1950 to 1957, and was awarded life membership of the Association in 1957.

From 1937 to 1947, Tally Ho operated another farm at Lilydale, known as Woodlands Farm. A promotional publication from 1940 about Tally Ho described Woodlands as a "branch farm", where boys could study poultry-farming and orcharding. Woodlands could accommodate about 12 boys and staff.

From around 1939 until 1950, Tally Ho also ran a hostel in the city, known as Lincoln House, for boys leaving Tally Ho to pursue employment in non-farming work.

According to Howe and Swain, of the boys who left Tally Ho in 1947, only 25% went to be employed in farm work. Another 25% went to Lincoln House, and 50% went from Tally Ho to their families.

Some Aboriginal children from the Northern Territory were residents at Tally Ho during the 1950s. These boys were sent to Tally Ho in Victoria under a scholarship scheme of the Northern Territory Administration. In the 1950s, there were no high schools in Darwin, so young people wishing to do secondary or tertiary education had to attend boarding schools elsewhere. The NT Welfare Branch set up a scholarship scheme which enabled Aboriginal young people to be homed and schooled at locations interstate. Tally Ho was one of these locations, and Wesley Mission Victoria has admission and discharge records relating to placements organised by Harry Giese, the Director of Welfare in the Northern Territory Administration from 1954.

From the late 1950s, subsequent superintendents at Tally Ho introduced changes that made the Tally Ho 'village' more integrated with the community in which it was located, involved the boys' families, and sought to 'professionalise' its staff.

Ian Cox who became Tally Ho's superintendent in 1957 changed its admission policy. Tally Ho would no longer take 'voluntary admissions' and would concentrate on 'difficult offenders' referred from Turana.

The poet Shelton Lea was one young person sent from Turana to Tally Ho, as depicted in the book, *Delinquent Angel* (2007). The book describes Tally Ho as having

cottages with cottage parents, and a farm, and barbed wire fencing ... The boys had short shaved hair, and a history of trouble ... Tally Ho boys were contained and regimented and they had three square meals a day, a roof over their heads, and sores on their bodies were cleaned up by a nurse. There were women from the church who came to darn socks, and the husbands helped the boys make crystal sets. The ethos was one of discipline and work. The discipline was meted out with care and sympathy but it was always with the proviso that if the boys didn't behave they'd be moved on, and in the end there was a concentration camp kind of place, like [Turana](#) or [Bayswater](#), where they put boys in solitary confinement and in underground cells until their spirits were broken (Georgeff, 2007, p.105).

In 1969, Superintendent Albert Godbehere resigned, and was replaced by Rev. Denis Oakley, a trained social worker. Oakley appointed more 'professionals' to work at Tally Ho, including John Smith, who started in 1970.

With the arrival of girls, the institution changed its name to Tally Ho Village in March 1978. Under the director, Rev. Bob Murphy, Tally Ho ran a Reality Therapy Program aimed at rehabilitation of young offenders.

In the late 1970s, Tally Ho Village comprised 7 cottages (with up to 6 children in each) and 4 family group homes (which aimed to have 4 children in each). The Tally Ho School was closed in 1977.

Despite these changes in practice, a review of Tally Ho in 1977 described the place as 'inescapably institutional', and recommended the sale of the land and a new system of scattered family group homes.

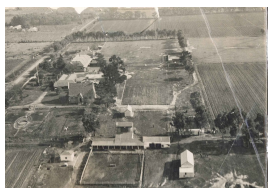
Wesley Mission held a 'celebration day' for former residents and staff of Tally Ho and members of the community on 29 June 1986. Tally Ho finally closed on 26 August 1986. The site was subsequently redeveloped, and the majority of the buildings demolished. In 2020 the Tally Ho church still exists, and is being used as a private home.

From this time, Tally Ho Youth Services ran some services for young people in different regions of Melbourne.

Gallery



Central Mission Boys' Training Farm, Tally Ho - staff and boys outside main dormitory 1908



Central Mission Boys' Training Farm Tally Ho - aerial view of the farm 1935



Tally Ho Village from the air 1980s



Tally Ho Village - Wesley Cottage 1980s



Tally Ho Village - Administration Building 1980s



Tally Ho Boys' Village - entrance 1972



Woodlands homestead

Description: This is a copy of an image of "Woodlands" homestead (a farm in Lilydale that was a 'branch' of Tally Ho Boys' Training Farm. The image appeared in the publication, *For whom the trail is steep* (1940).

More info

Chronology

- **Tally Ho Boys' Training Farm (1903 – 1986)**
 - Tally Ho Youth Services (1986 - 1989)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Family Group Homes and Residential Units run by Tally Ho and Wesley Mission \(1970s - 2000s\)](#)

Run by

- [Wesley Central Mission \(1893 - 1977\)](#)
Date: 1903 - 1977
- [Wesley Central Parish Mission \(1977 - 2001\)](#)
Date: 1977 - 1986

Related Organisations

- [Grassmere Youth Services \(1973 - 1998\)](#)
Date: 1973 - 1986
- [Lincoln House \(c. 1939 - 1950\)](#)
Boys leaving Tally Ho to work in the city sometimes lived at Lincoln House.
- [Melrose Training Farm for Boys \(1938 - 1957\)](#)
Some residents of Melrose Training Farm were transferred to Tally Ho when Melrose was closed in August 1957.

Resources

- McCalman, Janet, [Cole, George Henry \(1859 - 1919\)](#), Australian Dictionary of Biography Online Edition, 2006
- UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania, *Uniting Church in Australia: agencies in Victoria delivering substitute care services*, April 2008
- Swain, Shurlee, [Derrick, Edgar Marsh \(1905 - 1976\)](#), Australian Dictionary of Biography Online Edition, 1993

- Murray, Suellen, John Murphy, Elizabeth Branigan, Jenny Malone, *After the orphanage: life beyond the children's home*, 2009
- Swain, Shurlee, *Traces in the archives: evidence of institutional abuse in surviving child welfare records*, Children Australia, 2007
- Coverdale, Douglas, *It all turns out for the better: one man's story of his time in an Australian boys' home 1928-1935, and his life thereafter*, 1995
- Menzies, D.W., *The grey people : a study of the criminal mind*, 1965
- Patterson, Jeffrey & Hillman, Robert, *What a life!*, 2005
- Brown, John, [Submission no 153 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Shingles, Stephen, [Submission no 188 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Rowlands, Tom, [Submission no 342 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Crawford, Mavis, [Submission no 532 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Farrar, Lindsay, [Submission no 479 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Dean, R.M., [Submission no 432 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2004
- *Tally Ho Boys in Real Home*, The Sun News-Pictorial, 2 August 1952
- Turner, Laurence, [Victoria's Unwanted Children - 6: Willing Hearts Handicapped by Lack of Cash](#), The Herald, 31 October 1952
- [It's love a child misses in an institution](#), Australian Women's Weekly, 3 March 1945
- [Readers stirred by orphan's story](#), Australian Women's Weekly, 17 March 1945
- [Tally Ho Boys Training Farm \(1903-78\)](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Tally Ho Boys' Training Farm
- Wesley Central Mission, Melbourne, *The Central Mission Report for 1940*, 1940
- [Expert's ideal home](#), The Australian Women's Weekly, 3 March 1945

Other Resources

Title: Report on fire at Tally Ho Boys' Village

Type: Image

Date: 1964

[Details](#)

Records

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

Records

- [Wesley Mission Victoria Records \(1902 - current\)](#)
 - [Records held by Uniting Church Archives \(1923 - 1994\)](#)
 - [Samuel MacMahon Wadham Papers \(1926 - 1969\)](#)
 - [Records from Tally Ho \(1903 - 2019\)](#)
 - [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/tally-ho-boys-training-farm/>