

Church of England Girls' Home, Carlingford

1928 – 1977

Other Names:

- Minden, Carlingford
- Strathmore
- Molly Trigg Cottage
- TA Field Cottage
- Tress-Manning Home
- Carlingford Girls' Homes
- Mary McGarvey Home for Girls, Carlingford

Details

The Church of England Girls' Home was opened by the [Church of England Homes](#) in Carlingford in 1928. It was located in the same buildings, Minden and No. 2 Home (which was renamed the Tress-Manning Home in 1929), that had previously operated as the [Church of England Boys' Home](#). It was a Home for girls between the ages of 3 and 18, although girls under the age of 7 were usually sent to the [Havilah Children's Home](#) first, and transferred to the Girls' Home after they turned 7.

From 1928, girls were transferred to Carlingford from the four Church of England Homes for Girls in Glebe Point – [Avona](#), [Tress-Manning](#), [Arden](#), and [Strathmore](#). The transfer of the girls was gradual, as there was not initially enough room at Carlingford for all the girls to move in, and a new building needed to be constructed to accommodate them. This new building, known as the Mary McGarvey Home (named after the matron who had run the Homes since 1895), officially opened on 14th September 1929, bringing the Home's capacity up to 150. This allowed the final girls to move across from Glebe Point, and the Glebe Point Homes officially closed.

The Mary McGarvey Home functioned as accommodation for girls, as well as the dining area and administrative headquarters for the whole Girls' Home. On its opening it was described as having four dormitories to sleep a total of 50 children. These rooms were named the pink, blue, green, and mauve rooms, and each bed had bedspreads in the appropriate colour for the room. There were two dining rooms in the Home – the main dining room which could seat 100, and the kindergarten dining room which could seat 50 younger children. It also included a small hospital room.

Schooling for girls at the Home was initially conducted on site. When the Mary McGarvey Home first opened it included three classrooms which were able to hold 100 children in total. This was expanded in 1931 with the opening of a new school room which increased total capacity to 200. By 1939 girls were attending school at both the Home and at the local Carlingford Public School (also known as the Carlingford Rural School), and the local High School.

Gwen Pearce shared her recollections of walking to school from the Home in her submission to the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care (submission number 352)

My first home was a Church of England Home in Carlingford, we used to go out to school there. My brother Ken was in the boys home and we would see each other on the way to school. We would try to talk to each other but would be stopped and get into trouble for talking to the opposite gender even though we were brother and sister as this was not allowed.

In addition to their regular schooling, girls at the Home were also “trained” in kitchen work and in the hospital wing, where they would assist the nurse with basic duties such as taking temperatures. Older girls were also required to work in the kindergarten caring for the young children. All girls were expected to do the housework for the Home, and assist in the gardens. In her submission to the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care (submission number 425), Phyllis Findlay recalls working in the Home.

We worked hard for little children washing and polishing floors, stomping in troughs to wash them. We use to each season take our beds apart and tease the horse hair mattress and remake, it was dusty and hard on the hands, if it turned out lumpy, there was nothing one could do about, you were stuck with a lump until next time.

On the Home property along side the school, our garden handyman grew vegetables, when they were ready we spent some time picking peas, beans. I think we ate as many as we put into our buckets; it was a backbreaking job. But just to out in the fresh air was good, also when we had time to ourselves we'd lay on the grass looking for plum puddings, a little green seed I assume, we'd eat it, it was quite sweet, hence we would pass time. Also I remember that I packed my small suitcase with some clothing, I was going to run away, where to goodness knows and at night, I just wanted to go home. Matron gave me a lecture, it seemed like hours about how bad I was and selfish.

During the Second World War girls aged 14-18 received training in first-aid and air raid precautions. Training lectures were held in the Home's hall, and were also attended by the staff. Within the first month of war being declared 26 girls had already received their first aid certificates. As the war progressed it became more difficult for the Home to find teaching staff, and so more girls traveled by bus to local schools and technical colleges to receive their education.

The Second World War may have also been a period that saw Aboriginal girls sent to the Home. According to research done by the staff of the Northern Territory Department of Health, the Church of England Girls' Home, Carlingford was a place where children from the Northern Territory were sent. The Home was also mentioned in the Bringing Them Home Report (1997) as an institution that housed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their families. One submission to the Bringing Them Home Inquiry (submission number 557) discusses a teenage Aboriginal girl who was sent to the Church of England Girls' Home from [Mulgoa Mission](#) in the 1940s. This girl was sent to the Home not as a resident, but as a maid, and had to care for and clean up after the girls at the Home. Although she was employed by the Home, she never received any wages for her work.

The Home was supported by fundraising activities, including fetes where stalls were held selling items the girls had made. Girls gave demonstrations of activities they participated in at the Home such as musical performances, physical drills, and lace-making.

While lace-making had been an integral part of life for girls at the previous Church of England Girls Homes at Glebe Point, and made up a significant portion of the Home's income there, it was less prevalent at Carlingford. Only older girls were allowed to “practice the art continuously” (‘The Ancient Art of Lace-Making’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 September 1937), and younger girls were directed to focus on their schooling instead. By 1937 there were only three girls at the Home who were skilled lace-makers. They made items such as collars, cuffs, and handkerchiefs for sale at the Home's fundraising events, and even made a table cloth, which it was reported took them 6 months to complete.

Parties were often held for the girls at Christmas time. These parties would usually consist of games, a Christmas meal, and then distribution of gifts which had been donated by members of the local community. Children were sometimes taken to the seaside for the Christmas Holidays. Phyllis Findlay recalled that when she was admitted to the Home on Boxing Day 1937 the Home was empty because all of the children were on holiday at Cronulla. In later years, girls would be placed with Sydney families over the Christmas holidays. In 1957 all but 5 of the 60 girls at the home were boarded out over Christmas – the 5 who remained were all older girls who instead spent Christmas with the matron at the [Warrawillah Seaside Holiday Home for Girls](#) at Collaroy.

According to an interview given by the former Matron in 1953 (“A Good Name is Rather to be Chosen than Riches”: Former Matron of Girls’ Home Tells with Pride of Success of Her Charges’, *The Inverell Times*, 1 May 1953), girls at the home celebrated their birthdays. However, due to the large number of girls there was only one birthday event held each year on the 21st of June (the matron’s birthday), where all birthdays were acknowledged at once with a special dinner. Any girl living at the Home who did not know her birthday was given 21st June as her birthday. . The matron stated that girls would also receive cakes or gifts on their actual birthday, provided either by friends or family, or by a local philanthropist who was known to the girls as “The Birthday Lady”.

The numbers of girls at the Home began to decrease during the 1940s and 1950s, from 154 in 1939 down to 127 in 1945, to 80 in 1951, and down to 60 by 1957. Despite this decrease there were still plans to expand the Home, and in 1945 it was reported that the Home intended to build a hostel on the site for older girls who were entering the workforce and transitioning into independence. However, it took some time for these plans to eventuate, and funds for the hostel weren’t secured until 1954, at which time the plans included an additional 6 cottages to be built at the site (although this plan was not fully realised).

In 1956 the oldest building on the site, Minden, was demolished, and two new cottages built in its place. Molly Trigg Cottage was opened on 16th February 1957. It had capacity for 16 girls across two dormitories, which each had adjoining toilets and dressing-rooms with individual wardrobes. It was described in an article reporting on the opening (‘Gift Home for Girls’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 February 1957) as being painted in bright colours, with blue and white bathrooms. The T.A. Field cottage opened shortly after, on 22nd June 1957. This cottage was for the older girls, aged 13 to 16, who each slept in their own cubicle.

The Church of England Girls’ Home began to transition in the late 1960s as attitudes to out of home ‘care’ for children began to change and the number of children at the Home continued to decrease. The Church of England Homes started to place children in family group homes, which better resembled a typical family environment compared to the old institutional-style buildings with large dormitories. In 1969 both the Molly Trigg and T.A. Field cottages underwent renovations so that they better resembled the family group homes, and the Tress-Manning Home became a temporary care unit.

In an interview with *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 1978 the CEO of the Church of England Homes stated that it wasn’t unusual for children who had grown up in the large institutional-style Homes to be unprepared for life after the Home, and to get in trouble with police, ending up in a “home institution, jail institution” cycle. For this reason, as well as the increasing number of temporary placements over permanent placements, the Church of England Homes had decided to close the large Girls’ Home and Boys’ Home at Carlingford and focus their efforts exclusively on Family Group Homes and Foster Care. The Mary McGarvey Girls Home and the Molly Trigg and TA Field Cottages closed in 1976, and Tress-Manning closed in 1977.

The site continued to be used for a few years with Mary McGarvey Girls Home becoming an administration office, and the Trigg Working Boys Hostel from the Church of England Boys’ Home moving into the Molly Trigg Cottage from 1977 to 1979, before moving to a new property in Granville and becoming known as [Trigg Hostel](#). Tress-Manning also briefly operated at this time as a training hostel for children with additional needs. The property was sold in 1980. In 2025 the Girls’ Home site was being used as a school. The Tress-Manning, Mary McGarvey, Molly Trigg, and T.A. Field buildings all still stand, however as of the time of writing there is a development proposal in place for the demolition of Molly Trigg and T.A Field cottages.

The Church of England Girls’ Home was mentioned in the Lost Innocents Report (2001) as an institution involved in the migration of children to Australia, however it is unclear if any child migrants were ever sent there. Further research about this matter is required.

Gallery



Minden/Strathmore - Carlingford

Description: This is a photo of the building known as 'Minden', or sometimes 'Strathmore', at Carlingford. It shows a large two-storey building with ornate wrought-iron verandahs circling the top floor. The building was initially used by the Church of England as a home for 'delicate' children, then from 1918 it became the Boys' Home, and from 1928 it was used as a Girls' Home. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



Church of England Girls' Home [Carlingford]

Description: This photo shows the front of the Church of England Girls' Home at Carlingford. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



Common room, Molly Trigg Home

Description: This is an image of the 'common room' in the Molly Trigg Home, which was a cottage at Church of England Girls' Home at 216 Pennant Hills Road in Carlingford. The caption reads: 'Looking into the delightfully bright Common Room of the Molly Trigg Home'.



McGarvey House - front view, residents, 1 adult, car (1930s)

Description: This is a copy of a photograph from the collection of Anglicare. It shows the Mary McGarvey Home at the Church of England Girls' Home.



Carlingford Girls' Home

Description: This is a photo showing young girls standing in front of the gates of the Church of England Girls' Home at Carlingford, with the Mary McGarvey Home visible behind them. It shows 9 girls in white dresses standing in front of brick and iron gates in front of a large two-storey brick building. This image was published in *The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate* on 10 November 1932 with the caption "Carlingford Girls' Home. A glimpse at one of the Homes which provided shelter from Life's stormy blast. The children are cared for under ideal conditions."



Molly Trigg Girls Home - Carlingford

Description: This is a photo of the Molly Trigg Cottage at the Church of England Girls' Home, Carlingford. It shows two girls walking away from the camera along a path in front of a brick single-storey building with large windows. There are rose-beds in front of the building. The T.A. Field cottage is just visible behind the Molly Trigg cottage. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



T.A. Field Girls Home - Carlingford

Description: This is a photo of two girls standing in the doorway of the T.A. Field Cottage at the Church of England Home for Girls, Carlingford. It shows two older girls in white dresses standing in the front doorway of a brick building. There is a small paved porch in front of them. On one of the walls is a plaque commemorating the opening of the T.A. Field Home. The image has been captioned by Anglicare with "As the T.A. Field Home is for our 13-16 years old each girl has her own cubicle... completely self contained. Does not this give them a sense of security?". This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



Tress-Manning Home - Girls Carlingford

Description: This is a photo of young girls and a staff member outside the Tress-Manning Home at the Church of England Girls' Home, Carlingford. It shows a staff member standing with six young girls on the lawn in front of a two-storey brick house with verandahs on one side. The staff member and the girls are all wearing white dresses. Some of the girls have white bows in their hair, and one is holding a stuffed toy. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.

More info

Chronology

- Strathmore Girls' Home (1923 - 1929)
- Church of England Home for Girls (1904 - 1929)
- Church of England Training Home for Girls (1909 - 1929)
- Church Rescue Home (1885 - 1923)
 - **Church of England Girls' Home, Carlingford (1928 – 1977)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [Church of England Homes \(c. 1884 - 1984\)](#)

Related Events

- [Visit of John Moss \(1951\)](#)
John Moss inspected this home as part of his 1951 tour and report
- [Interstate movement of Northern Territory children \(1930s - 1970s\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Church of England Boys' Home \(1918 - 1976\)](#)
The Church of England Girls' Home opened on the same site that had previously operated as the Church of England Boys' Home.
- [Havilah Little Children's Home \(1918 - 1976\)](#)
Girls were transferred from Havilah Little Children's Home to Church of England Girls' Home, Carlingford
- [Carlingford Children's Home \(1914 - 1920\)](#)
- [Warrawillah Seaside Holiday Home for Girls \(1956 - 1976\)](#)

Related Concepts

- [Child Migration \(1800s - 1970s\)](#)

Resources

- [In Equity](#), They Sydney Morning Herald, 11 March 1933

Records

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

Records

- [Anglicare Children's Homes, Foster Care and Out-of-Home Care Records \(1932 - 2010s\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/church-of-england-girls-home-carlingford-2/>