

Church of England Orphanage

1893 – 1927

Other Names:

- Kilburn Orphanage
- Orphanage of Mercy
- Church of England Girls' Home, Burwood
- Church of England Boys' Home, Burwood

Details

The Church of England Orphanage was established in 1893 by the Community of Sisters of the Church of England, also known as the Kilburn Sisters. It was not connected with any of the official welfare agencies of the Church of England. It initially took in girls, and provided them with basic education and domestic training. The orphanage was originally located at a depot run by the Sisters in Surry Hills, before moving to Waverley. It then occupied several rented houses in Chatswood and Paddington before moving to Burwood in 1905. By 1912 the Orphanage included a Girls' Home on Weldon Street, and in 1917-1918 a Boys' Home, on Wyatt Avenue. In 1927 the Community of Sisters of the Church of England withdrew from the orphanage and its name was changed to Church of England Children's Homes, Burwood.

Despite its name, the Church of England Orphanage was not connected with any of the official welfare agencies of the Church of England in Australia. The orphanage was opened due to the revelations of cruelty to, and neglect of children, that had happened in 1892.

The orphanage was initially opened by the Kilburn Sisters in 1893 at their premises in Bourke Street, Surry Hills, which was also being used as a used-clothing depot. In May 1893 the Sisters rented Waverley House, on Old South Head Road, Waverley, for the purposes of running a school and orphanage there. The orphanage was located in a cottage on the grounds of Waverley House called 'Summaville', which also acted as the residence for the Sisters. In 1895 the orphanage moved to a rented house on the corner of Johnson and Devonshire streets, Chatswood. It remained in Chatswood until approximately 1901, when it returned to Waverley House. It moved again in 1904 to a rented house on Glenmore Road, Paddington, before moving to Minna street, Burwood, in 1905. During this time the orphanage was known by several names, including the Orphanage of Mercy, and the Kilburn Orphanage.

In its early days the orphanage had capacity for, on average, approximately 20 children. In 1895 there were only 5 children in the home, however this had grown to 19 by late 1896. By 1910 between 40 and 50 children had lived at the Church of England Orphanage.

The Sisters initially only took in girls, and aimed to keep them at the home until they were 21 years old, although some children were boarded out to private homes. The Sisters ran a school for the children in the orphanage, as well as providing them with domestic training.

A former Anglican missionary, Bishop Montagu John Stone-Wigg (1861-1918) moved to Burwood in 1908 and became interested in the Orphanage, creating a committee of local church and business people to place it on a sound financial footing. This committee took over the running of the home from the Community of Sisters of the Church of England.

In 1910 the Orphanage purchased a block of land on Weldon Street, Burwood, and in 1912 Lord Chelmsford, the Governor of New South Wales, laid the foundation stone for a Girls Home. This was completed within six months and opened by Archbishop Wright. The Boys Home, located next door (on Wyatt Avenue), was purchased, renovated and opened by Dame Margaret Davidson in August 1918.

The first president of the Church of England Orphanage was Arthur Yates, who had founded Arthur Yates & Co Ltd, the garden supply company. Stone-Wigg was listed as honorary organising secretary, but died of malaria and other health issues he had contracted in his time in Papua New Guinea in October 1918. His wife remained associated with the Home until the late 1950s.

Most of the supporters of the home were from Burwood and Ashfield. From 1922, the President of the Committee of the home was AW Green, the retired president of the State Children's Relief Department. Green also presided over the Church of England Children's Home, until his death in 1935.

The Church of England Orphanage buildings were described as 'eminently suitable for the work that is being done; there are wide sleeping-out balconies, ample playground areas and necessary accommodation and equipment.'

In 1927 the Homes were incorporated under the Companies Act, with limited liability, as The Church of England Children's Homes, Burwood. This created a new institution.

Gallery



Church of England Children's Homes (Burwood)

Description: This is a photograph of The Church of England Children's Home at Minna street, Burwood. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



The Boys' Home

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared on the letterhead of The [Church of England] Children's Homes, Weldon Street, Burwood in 1941.



The Girls' Home

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared on the letterhead of The [Church of England] Children's Homes, Weldon Street, Burwood in 1941.



Waverley House

Description: This is a photograph of Waverley House, which housed the Roman Catholic Orphan School from 1837-1844, and then the Church of England Orphanage during the 1890s and 1900s, before it was demolished in 1904. The photograph shows the front a two-storey mansion facing the road, with a front path leading through hedges up to the house. A man can be seen walking past the house. This photograph is undated, the date given is an estimate.

More info

Chronology

- **Church of England Orphanage (1893 – 1927)**
 - Church of England Children's Homes, Burwood (1927 - 1993)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Community of Sisters of the Church of England \(1892 - current\)](#)

Resources

- Langmore, Diane, [Stone-Wigg, Montagu John \(1861-1918\)](#), Australian Dictionary of Biography, 1990

Records

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

Records

- [Records of the Weldon Centre, Church of England Children's Homes, Burwood \(1893 - 1993\)](#)
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