

# Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women

1883 – 1904

**Other Names:**

- Home of Hope
- Home of Hope Lying-In Home
- Home of Hope Laundry
- Mr Ardill's Home
- The Babies Home

## Details

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The Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women was a refuge and rescue home founded in Sydney in October 1883 by George Edward Ardill of the Sydney Rescue Work Society. From 1890 it was based in Gilpin Street (Stanley Street) Camperdown and was a lying-in home for unmarried pregnant women who were waiting to give birth. It became South Sydney Women's Hospital in 1904.

The 'Home of Hope' began as a refuge founded by the philanthropist and evangelical Christian George Edward Ardill, under the auspices of the Blue Ribbon Gospel Army. It started in October 1883, in rented premises in Darlinghurst, moving frequently until settling at 34 Cooper Street, Surry Hills in September 1884. In 1886 it moved to Brisbane Cottage, in Knox Street, Newtown. Initially, women were recruited from prison cells, police stations and the streets of the city, but, under the guidance of Ardill's wife Louisa, it began to specialise in maternity cases.

In 1890 Ardill created the Sydney Rescue Work Society and acquired a building in Stanley Street, Camperdown (now Gilpin Street). There he established the Home of Hope as a lying-in hospital. A laundry was also established, with a Memorial Stone laid by Miss Sarah Taylor at Stanley Street Newtown (a.k.a. Camperdown) on 28 February 1891. To the disgust of members of the Sydney labour movement, pregnant inmates worked in the laundry and the profits paid for Ardill's other institutions.

An 1895 *Evening News* article reported that the Home of Hope occupied a former hotel. Entry to the Home could be gained by visiting the offices of George Ardill and the Sydney Rescue Work Society in Pitt Street, and getting a card that stated 'Home of Hope. Please admit bearer.' The author of the article was a keen supporter of the institution and wrote a poetic account:

*I looked at this ticket, and thought of the scores of women that had carried that precious card with its well known legend, for here many weary, broken-spirited girls, with sin and sorrow for their lot, had at last found a haven where a kindly hand was held out, and a cheery voice said, "Come inside." The general air of neatness, freshness, and brightness is pleasant, and takes away a little of the gloom that gathers as one thinks of the causes that led to it being a needed institution. There were such young mothers there – scarcely into their girlhood – with such hunted, fearful look in their pretty faces.*

The author went on to describe the day nursery as ‘a scene for an artist, with the happy little ones singing and sleeping away the sunny hours.’ He interviewed Mr Ardill about the Home, who said that most girls got into trouble from ‘absolute ignorance’ and ‘blind trust and affection’, but that ‘religion gets a firmer grip over the good in their nature than anything else’, and was a lasting influence. The reporter also said girls were kept busy, to stop them brooding over the past, and part of that work was the laundry, which primarily served shipping firms.

Ardill considered that laundry work was considered essential to women’s redemption, as the labour both improved their souls and fitted them for jobs in domestic service. After the residents of the Home of Hope gave birth they could either take their baby with them to a domestic service placement, usually as a laundress, or place the child in one of Ardill’s children’s or babies homes. The Sydney Rescue Work Society also arranged adoptions privately, advertising in its newspapers and in the press, although it appears few records were kept of this practice before adoption was formalised in New South Wales in 1923.

This Home was a specialised service, rare in Sydney and, as a result, the New South Wales Government sent pregnant state wards and Aboriginal apprentices to the Home of Hope to await the birth of their babies.

The Home of Hope did not just take unmarried mothers. There was strong local demand from pregnant women for a safe birthing service and by 1904 Louisa Ardill had set up a separate maternity hospital, South Sydney Women’s Hospital. The Home of Hope was then renamed Bethesda Home for Waiting Mothers.

South Sydney Women’s Hospital became a major obstetric, gynaecological and nursing institution, which has an important role in the history of midwifery. It was taken over by the New South Wales Government in the 1960s and was closed in 1972.

South Sydney Women’s Hospital also played a role in arranging adoptions, and its records are held by the Benevolent Society.

## Gallery

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**House of Hope laundry, Stanley St., Newtown [Home of Hope]**

**Description:** This is a digital copy of an image held at the State Library of New South Wales in Series 04: Photographs, postcards, and clippings including views in New South Wales, ships, and portraits, ca. 1870-1915.



**[Silver trowel] presented to Miss Sarah Taylor by the former inmates of the Home [of Hope] on the occasion of laying the Memorial Stone of the Home of Hope Laundry, Newtown, 28th Feb. 1891**

**Description:** A silver trowel presented to Miss Sarah Taylor by former inmates of the Home of Hope, on the occasion of laying the Memorial Stone of the Home of Hope Laundry, Newtown [Camperdown], 28 February 1891.

## More info

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### Chronology

- **Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women (1883 – 1904)**
  - South Sydney Women's Hospital (1905 - 1976)

## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Sydney Rescue Work Society \(1890 - 1982\)](#)  
The Sydney Rescue Work Society took over the management of the Home of Hope in 1890.  
Date: 1890 - 1904
- [Blue Ribbon Gospel Army \(c. 1882 - c. 1890\)](#)  
The Blue Ribbon Gospel Army set up the Home of Hope.  
Date: 1882 - 1890

### Related Organisations

- [Open All Night Refuge \(c. 1882 - 1950s\)](#)  
During 1883 and 1884 Open All Night Refuge was co-located with the Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women
- [Our Children's Home, Liverpool \(1887 - 1936\)](#)  
Children born at the Home of Hope were sent to Our Children's Home, Liverpool
- [Bethesda Home for Waiting Mothers \(c. 1904 - 1976\)](#)  
When South Sydney Hospital was created in 1904 Bethesda Home for Waiting Mothers took over the lying-in functions of the Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women.  
Date: 1904 -

## Resources

- Sydney Rescue Work Society/Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children, *The Rescue: official organ of the Sydney Rescue Work Society and Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children*, 1880 - 1910
- Nursing History Research Unit (NHRU), *Our Research in Nursing History*, No date
- [The Home of Hope](#), The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 June 1884
- [A Visit to the "Home of Hope"](#), Evening News, 31 May 1884
- [Advertising: Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen](#), The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 January 1884
- [The Sydney Home of Hope](#), The Daily Telegraph, 27 May 1887
- [General News](#), The Daily Telegraph, 20 July 1886

## Records

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

### Records

- [Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women Admissions Registers \(1903 - 1905\)](#)

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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/home-of-hope-for-friendless-and-fallen-women/>