

Lynwood Hall

1939 – 1993

Other Names:

- Linnwood Hall
- Guildford Domestic Science Training School
- Guildford Special Training School
- Guildford Hostel
- Lynnwood Hall
- Linnwood

Details

Lynwood Hall was established in 1939 in 'Linwood', a house that had previously served as the Guildford School for Truants. Lynwood Hall was initially called the Guildford Domestic Science Training School and was known as Guildford Special Training School by 1966. It closed in 1993.

Lynwood Hall was first named 'Linnwood' and was built in 1891 by George McCredie, an architect and engineer. In 1917 Linnwood was leased to the Department of Education, which needed a new Truant School. The Department chose this house because it was in good repair, the grounds were spacious, the property had room enough for staff and it was located close to the railway. 'Linnwood' became the Guildford Truant School.

On 28 November 1936 the Child Welfare Department took over the site, intending it to be fitted out as a domestic science training school. The Child Welfare Department seems to have changed the name of the property, from 'Linnwood' to 'Lynwood Hall.' After painting and the installation of heating, it opened as 'a residential domestic science school for female wards', housing up to 58 girls aged from 12 to 15 years of age. Residents were 'unable to settle down in foster homes, or for other reasons are considered more suitable for the hostel type of life'.

Lynwood Hall changed little over the next three decades. In 1955 Donald McLean inspected the home and reported the girls in the home were not ready for foster placement or had been unhappy in previous placements and 'they need experiences which will reassure them of their own worth'. Girls were divided into five groups, two engaged on school work and the remainder on sewing, cookery and laundry. Some learned shorthand and typing at Technical College. Unusually for a government-run institution, girls learned ballet dances at the school – McLean thought 'the ballet lessons and the pleasure of expression through dance make an important contribution towards the growth of confidence.' McLean said girls were taught *Aurora's Wedding*, *Tarantella*, *Spectre de la Rose*, *Swan Lake*, *Les Sylphides* and modern pieces. Music and choir lessons were also comprehensive and the girls had many outings and joined the local Country Women's Association. McLean noted that, while it was difficult to assess how effective the education there had been, most of the girls 'achieved stability in employment' after their discharge. These jobs were traditional – nurses, telephonists, public servants – but some found careers in dancing.

On 12 July 1956 the building was damaged by a significant fire that started in the kitchen and spread through the roof. According to the NSW Heritage Council, newspaper reports of the fire describe the girls carrying furniture, bedding, clothes and crockery out of Lynwood onto the front lawn, and trying to help hose the fire down. The dormitory was used as accommodation while the main house was repaired.

This disruption did not affect the routine at the home. The 1961 Child Welfare Department Annual Report says that Lynwood Hall included a school with a curriculum adapted to the 'varying mental abilities and ages' of the girls, but 'cooking, needlework and home management' were central to the curriculum, plus 'special courses'. The report notes that many girls passed public service and nursing examinations, and many were placed in 'clerical positions'. Other activities included 'ballet, drama and choral work and such handicrafts as embroidery, needlecraft and flower arrangement.' Sporting activities included basketball, softball and swimming.

It is clear that the school emphasised traditional female roles, although it did provide space for the development of female accomplishments, and girls were taken on outings by Rotary and the Country Women's Association. These included the theatre, movies, exhibitions, and picnics.

Caroline Carroll, who was at Lynwood Hall in the 1960s, after spending time in a number of foster homes, depots and institutions, remembers Lynwood Hall as one of the few child welfare institutions in which she felt valued. She particularly appreciated the ballet lessons. However, another former resident who was at the home at the same time, remembers it rather differently:

... the superintendent at that time ... ran her school for girls like some sort of Nazi officer making us scrub and polish floors for hours on our hands and knees for being disobedient ... [The Home] had an isolation room which apparently the Child Welfare Department was aware of ... I spent many 24hour periods locked in isolation at the age of twelve to sit and stare at a wall. On one occasion I became hysterical, two officers came into the room, one held me down while the other forced a tablet down my throat, neither officer asked what was wrong or made any attempt to offer any form of comfort.

The same resident reported a degrading lack of privacy, particularly around showering and the management of girls' menstrual periods. According to the New South Wales Heritage Council, others women who have shared their memories of the home remember being locked in 'the klink', a narrow room beside the laundry, and that forced silences were used as punishments. Apparently staff never used girls' first names, addressing them only by their surnames and, sometimes, by a number. Bobby, another former resident of Lynwood commented on the treatment of the girls there, stating "we weren't allowed to talk except for a 15-minute break. We had to march everywhere" (*Tribune*, 29 July 1975).

McCredie Cottage was built on the site in July 1970, to accommodate 28 preschool aged state wards, later taking in children up to the age of eight. Faulds House was added in April 1976, to provide accommodation for girls who were of primary and secondary school age, while they attended local schools. Faulds House was staffed by cottage parents, and the main house, after renovations, became a hostel for wards who were of working age but could not return to their families.

By 1977 Lynwood Hall was described as a 'group house' by the Department, and served as a hostel for 16 wards, male and female. They paid for their board and had a degree of independence. From 1983 until its closure in 1993 it was used as a Receiving Home for adolescents on remand or returning from foster care placements. After the home closed Lynwood served as office space for the Department. In 1996 it housed staff and students from Minali, which was under review, and it also housed staff from an Education Department assessment and tutorial service.

A Museum has been established on the site, and the Heritage Office has controlled it since 2002, in partnership with Holroyd Council. The Friends of Linnwood was formed to protect the heritage values of the site, and to preserve the memories of people who lived there as children. They provide tours and organise reunions for former residents of the site, usually in October every year.

Gallery



Lynwood Hall

Description: This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



Lynnwood Hall dormitory

Description: This is a digital copy of a photograph from an album collected by Child Welfare Department officers in the late 1940s. From the collection of Leonie Knapman.



"Lynwood Hall" - front entrance, grounds, and ornamental fountain

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1966.



Lynwood Hall grounds

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1966.



Linnwood Hall

Description: This is a copy of a photograph of Linnwood Hall that is published on 'The Life of Riley' website (the autobiography by Christina Green).

More info

Chronology

- Guildford Truant School for Boys (1917 - 1935)
 - **Lynwood Hall (1939 – 1993)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare, State Government of New South Wales \(1970 - 1973\)](#)
- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1973 - 1975\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)
- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1976 - 1988\)](#)
- [Department of Youth, Ethnic and Community Affairs, State Government of New South Wales \(1975 - 1976\)](#)
- [Department of Family and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1988 - 1991\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Country Women's Association of New South Wales \(1922 - current\)](#)
The Country Women's Association was involved in working with girls at Lynwood Hall.
- [Faulds House \(1976 - 1988\)](#)
Faulds House was located in the grounds of Lynwood Hall. When it opened Lynwood closed for renovations and reopened as a hostel.
Date: 1976 -
- [King Edward Home \(c. 1930 - c. 1989\)](#)
Girls from King Edward Home were sometimes sent to Lynwood Hall.
- [McCredie Cottage \(1970 - 1993\)](#)
McCredie Cottage is located in the grounds of Linnwood Hall (Lynwood Hall).

Resources

- Friends of Linnwood Inc., *The History of Linnwood - from family home to community asset.*, 2011
- Holroyd City Council, [Historic Buildings](#), No date
- Carroll, Caroline, [Finally, we Forgotten Australians are believed](#), 16 November 2009
- Greater Western Sydney Heritage Action Group & NSW Heritage Network Inc - Linked To Protect, [Linnwood House, 1891 built by George and Susan McCredie under Threat because of Lack of Funds for ongoing maintenance and future conservation](#), Heritage Watch NSW, 2013
- Green, Christina, [The Life of Riley](#), 2014
- Boyle, Brian, *The Child Welfare Schools: Recollections of these unique schools and the men and women who taught in them often under considerable difficulty*, 1996
- [Caroline Carroll interviewed by Karen George in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), June 2010 - August 2010

Records

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

Records

- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/lynwood-hall-2/>