

Fact sheet: *Methodist Children's Homes in New Zealand*

Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives National Archive of the Methodist Church of New Zealand

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Hours: Tuesday 1 pm-4 pm or by appointment. Closed weekends, public holidays, Christmas-New Year and Easter Tuesday

South Island Methodist Children's Home, Harewood Road, Christchurch

Brief history

In 1914 the South Island Orphanage Committee purchased a building on the corner of Harewood Road and Chapel Street for £2,750. The house had fourteen rooms and was situated on five acres of land. The building was redesigned by R Lovell-Smith so thirty children could be accommodated. Sister Mabel Morley was appointed Sister-in-Charge, and Sister Dora Cherrie her assistant. The Home opened on 25 April 1914 with six children already in residence.

By 30 June there were twelve children in residence. Two years later the roll had risen to 29. The building was extended in 1916 to accommodate fifty six children. In 1925 a new wing was added, then in 1930 a separate bungalow built to accommodate eight boys. By this time there were seventy two children being cared for.

It was clear the current premises were too small, so land was purchased opposite on Harewood Road at number 91. The building was a purpose-designed children's home and the architects were F T Lucas and W Melville Lawry. It was built by R C Jamieson. The New Zealand Depression delayed the erection of the building and it was not until 9 November 1934 that it opened. It was built in the Art Deco style.

Children in the Home usually attended Sunday School at Papanui Methodist Church. Unlike other children's homes in Christchurch it was extremely uncommon for adoptions to take place – the aim was to care for the child until they were old enough to support themselves.

Sometimes the Home is referred to as the Papanui Children's Home.

School attendance was not recorded in the records for the Home, but it is known that some children went to Waimairi Primary School, Christchurch Technical College, Papanui Technical College (later called Papanui High School).

On 31 October 1978, the Christchurch Methodist Central Mission took over management of the Home and the philosophy about care of children moved away from children living in institutional homes, to living in foster homes. On 28 August 1987 the Home in Harewood Road closed. The building was re-opened as The Sandcastle, the Child and Family Service Centre in 1991 but just one year later was the badly damaged by an arson attack on 29

October 1992. In 1996 the buildings were demolished. This enabled the Wesley Retirement village to be built on the site in 1996.

August 1967 the Barrington Street Family Home opened as an adjunct to the Home.

South Island Children's Home Masters and Matrons:

1914 Sister Mabel Morley
1920 Mr J G W and Mrs Ellis
1924 Mr F J Butler and Mrs Butler
1927 Mr and Mrs Haynes
1938 Mr and Mrs Butler
1940 Miss Barclay (matron)
1950 Mr G Howells and Mrs Howells
1957 Mr and Mrs Karsten (until August 1957)
1957 (from November) Mr W and Mrs Robertson
1960 Mr J E Scott and Mrs Scott
1971 Mr G Bostwick and Mrs Bostwick
1973 Mr L G Reed and Mrs Reed

Barrington Street Home

1967 Mr E J Overton and Mrs Overton
1971 Mr L G Reed and Mrs Reed
1973 Mr R Brown and Mrs Brown
1975 Mr L B Christian and Mrs Christian

Sister Rona Collins (Deaconess, Assistant Matron, Social Worker) 1950-1985

Sources of information for research:

Unrestricted sources of information

- Information about Christchurch orphanages:
<https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/family-history/hospitals-orphanages-charities/>
- Methodist newspapers to 1948. An Orphanage Supplement was printed each year from about the 1920s for all Methodist children's homes in Auckland, Masterton and Christchurch. They can be searched in digital format:
<http://kinderlibrary.recollect.co.nz/>

Issues which have not been digitised can be viewed at the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives, National Library of New Zealand and some university libraries
- Sometimes reports of children's activities were printed in local papers. See digitised newspapers at <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/>
- Printed minutes of Methodist Conference. These are a serial and can be found in most university collections and there is a set held in the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives. Yearly reports were presented to Conference and detail general activities within the Home. Individuals are not mentioned by name, other than some staff.
- Information file held in the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives Christchurch – includes copies of reports, ephemera and booklets about the Home.

- Book by M A Rugby Pratt published in 1934 which has photographs of the new building at 91 Harewood Road which has been digitised:
<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/DigitalCollection/Publications/1930s/MethodistOrphanage/>
- Digitised photographs, annual reports, ephemera, minute books:
http://www.methodist.org.nz/archives/methodist_children_s_homes

Access to South Island Children's Home records

The surviving records of the South Island Children's Home are held by the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives in Christchurch. They are designated **Restricted Access**.

Permission for information to be retrieved from the records is given by the General Secretary of the Methodist Church and applications must be made in writing.

Proof of identity is required (such as drivers' license or passport), plus date of birth and current address.

Contact the General Secretary of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Rev David Bush, email davidb@methodist.org.nz PO Box 931, Christchurch 8140. Phone 03 3666 049.

The records include an admission and discharge register, admission files (sometimes including correspondence about each family or child as well as the application for care), financial records relating to the operation of the Home, committee minute books. A full inventory of records held in the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives can be obtained.

Some admission files are missing because they were given to the people who were children from the Home when there was a re-union in 1984. Sister Rona Collins said she had given files to those people who had asked for them and no record was kept of who was given their own file.

Other sources of information

Government agencies also hold files on children who were in their care:

<https://archives.govt.nz/search-the-archive/using-our-records/requesting-personal-records>

Masterton Methodist Children's Home

Brief history

The Home was established by the Wellington Methodist Charitable and Educational Endowments Trust and the property vested in the Trust. In 1917 the Trust purchased 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres in Herbert Street Masterton. Building was delayed until after WW I, and the contract was not let until 1920 to C E Daniel Ltd for the first of the buildings.

The first matron was Sister May Moriarty who started work from 1 November 1920.

In 1921, the first six children were admitted to the Home and a Ladies Committee appointed to "assist the furnishing of the Home".

In 1922 a former YMCA Hall was purchased from Tauherenikau Camp and re-erected as the Recreation Hall. The veranda was extended 25 feet in 1925. The same year, sewerage was connected to the Home and electric lighting installed. 40 children were in the Home.

Rev J Cocker was appointed Secretary-Manager "in accordance with the requirements of the State Welfare Department" in 1928.

There were usually between 20 and 30 children in the Home in the 1930s. By 1946 forty three children were accommodated, this number decreased to 30-40 in the 1950s and further decreased to only 19 in the 1970s.

In 1947 there were major interior and exterior renovations. Grass tennis courts were laid in 1952. The following year the positions of Manager and Master were amalgamated, previously they had be separate positions.

Children usually attended Masterton Primary School.

In 1960 "Homeleigh" was adopted as the name for the Home. Children began to be placed in foster homes from 1966.

The property was subdivided in 1972 and 7 sections sold. The staff house at 31 Kiwi Street was completed in 1975.

The Home was closed December 1978 but the property and buildings were not sold until 1987.

Masterton Children's Home Managers, Masters and Matrons

1920 Sister May Moriarty
1926 Miss M I Allan
1943 Mr and Mrs H Bateup
1953 Mr and Mrs G W Thomas
1955 Mr and Mrs N W Lloyd
1962 Mr and Mrs A N Jolly
1973 Mr and Mrs K Harris
1974 Mr and Mrs J Dubbeldam
1977 Mr and Mrs B Jackways

Sources of information for research:

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- Methodist newspapers to 1948. An Orphanage Supplement was printed each year from about the 1920s for all Methodist children's homes in Auckland, Masterton and Christchurch. They can be searched in digital format: <http://kinderlibrary.recollect.co.nz/>
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- Sometimes reports of children's activities were printed in local papers. See PapersPast at <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/>
- Printed Minutes of Methodist Conference. These are a serial and can be found in most university collections and there is a set held in the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives. Yearly reports were presented to Conference and detail general activities within the Home. Individuals are not mentioned by name, other than some staff.
- Information file held in the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives Christchurch – includes copies of reports, ephemera and booklets about the Home.
- Book: *Methodism in Wellington 1839-1939* by Arthur L Olsson which includes a timeline and staff list of the Masterton Children's Home.
- Book: *Children's Home, Herbert Street, Masterton. Erected 1921*. Wellington Methodist Charitable and Education Trust. 1921
- Book: *A different kind of home. The Masterton Methodist Children's Home Homeleigh 1921-1978* by Margaret Robins and Brian Shaw. Includes recollections of children in the Home and main events extracted from Management Committee minutes. This is available digitally on the Methodist Church website
- Digitised photographs, annual reports, ephemera, minute books: http://www.methodist.org.nz/archives/methodist_children_s_homes

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The records include admission files which sometimes include correspondence about each family or child, financial records relating to the operation of the Home, committee minute books, Management Committee minutes books, scrapbook belonging to C E Daniell 1921-1934. A full inventory of records held can be obtained from the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives.

Other sources of information

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Auckland Methodist Children's Homes

Brief history

Wesley Children's Home, Mt Albert and Wesleydale Home, Mt Albert

The building was a joint gift to the Auckland Children's Home Board from Mr A C Caughey and his sister Mrs W H Smith. It was 2 ½ acres of land and a house of 18 rooms. It was opened in 1913, closed in 1955.

When the Wesley Children's Home was opened, the NZ Government was also running an industrial home in Mt Albert called the Children's Home. To avoid confusion, the Methodist Home was called "The Methodist Orphanage, Mt Albert". Six children were in residence on opening day 20 December 1913.

A further two acres of land was donated by Mr Caughey in 1918. In 1929 the name was changed to the Auckland Methodist Children's Homes and Orphanage, Mt Albert and Epsom. The name change reflected the need to care for more than orphans.

In 1936 the Board decided to close Epworth Home at Mt Albert. All boys were centralised at Wesley. All girls and young boys were moved to Epsom. 44 boys were in residence at Wesley, Epsom Home had 29 girls and 12 young boys – 85 children in total.

Foundation stone laid for new building 14 April 1954. Wesleydale was chosen as the name for the new Home. In 1956 all the children were moved to Wesleydale Home, Mt Roskill which was divided into boys and girls sections.

In the 1960s, family homes were considered preferable and several proposals were made including 1107 Dominion Road. During this period the policy was to keep families intact and more work was done with families in their own homes. A social worker was employed.

In 1974 the Board discussed the future of Wesleydale and in 1975 the Ministry of Social Welfare leased the building for a home for special training of boys.

On 25 June 1976 the final meeting of the Auckland Methodist Children's Home Board was held. All properties were transferred to the Auckland Methodist Central Mission.

The Mission opened family homes, providing for eight children with house parents. By 1979 the Child Care Committee of the Auckland Methodist Central Mission was receiving 50% of its costs from Government subsidies. The director of Child Care Services was Mr Keith Hayes. Responsible to him were social workers (two full time and three part time). There were four Homes, two of which were Family Homes, one home for teenage care and one a family centre for social projects.

Keith Hayes resigned in 1985 and the name was changed to be Methodist Family Services after the amalgamation of the Auckland Central Parish and Auckland Methodist Central Mission.

The Family Services Committee held its last meeting in December 1986.

Main appointments (Board minutes do not always record appointment and leaving dates)

1913 Mrs E J Blight (Matron). Rev Joseph Blight assistant and House Father
1923 -1937 Miss Coatman (both Mt Albert and Epsom) (Matron)
1930s Miss Johnson (Matron)
1936 Rev G Frost (Manager)
1942 Mr and Mrs Cook (Master and Matron)
1944 Mr and Mrs Maitland Jones (Master and Matron)
1946 Miss Grove (Matron)
1948 Miss F Archer
1952 Mrs Rosina Butterworth (Matron)
1949 Mr F E S Long (Housemaster)
1958 Mr Buckley (Master)
1959 Mr and Mrs Riley (Master and Matron)
1965 Miss Colmer (Matron)
1966 Mr Smith (Master)
1967 Mrs Smith (Matron)
1969 Mr and Mrs Roy Bowden (Master and Matron)
1971 Mr and Mrs Hollis (Master and Matron)
1972 Mr and Mrs A Huggins (Master and Matron)
1972 Mr and Mrs Bowden (Master and Matron)

Epworth Home, Mt Albert

Opened 1922, closed 1936 and sold due to increased maintenance costs and age of building.

Buckland Road Home, Epsom

(Now called Buckley Road).

Also called Epsom Methodist Children's Home and Orphanage

Opened in 1925 and known as the Epsom Branch Home. Fifteen children were in residence when it was opened. In 1936 all girls and young boys were moved to Epsom. Closed 1944. Altered to become a girls hostel which opened in 1944

Matrons

1925 Miss F E Smith
1925 Mrs Everiss
1933 Miss Doris Spooner
1936 Miss E Coatman
1937 Mrs Rosina Butterworth
1945 Miss Benton

Manurewa Family Home

Opened 1973, closed 1970s

Dominion Road Family Home

Opened 1974, closed soon after

Sunnynook Family Home, North Shore, Takapuna

Opened 1976, unknown when closed

New Lynn Family Home

Opened 1979, closed 1980s

Source: Rev G I Laurenson, *The Auckland Methodist Children's Homes Board and the Child Care Committee of the Auckland Methodist Central Mission* 1977.

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- Information file held in the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives Christchurch – includes copies of reports, ephemera and booklets about the Home including research by Rev G I Laurenson *The Auckland Methodist Children's Homes Board and the Child Care Committee of the Auckland Methodist Central Mission* 1977 and appendix giving details 1977-1986.
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