

Arms of Jesus Babies' Home

1925 – 1935

Other Names: • Church of England Babies' Home

Details

The Arms of Jesus Babies' Home, East Melbourne, was established in 1925 by the Mission of St James and St John. It housed babies up to the age of two. In 1933, the Babies Home was sold and the Freemason's Hospital was erected on the site. The Mission purchased property in Balwyn, where the new St Gabriel's Babies' Home was established in 1935.

The Arms of Jesus Babies' Home, at 180 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne, was the first babies' home operated by the Mission of St James and St John.

Before it opened in 1925, there was no Home operated by the Church of England for infants under the age of two.

The official capacity of Arms of Jesus was 30 babies, but overcrowding soon made extensions necessary, with a new wing being opened in 1926.

The Chief Secretary of Victoria approached the Mission in 1930, to request that a number of 'Church of England' infants currently being 'boarded out' through the Children's Welfare Department, be transferred to the Arms of Jesus and St Luke's Toddlers' Home. However the Mission was unable to accommodate these extra children. This example demonstrates how from the 1920s onwards, the Victorian government had to deal with a drastic shortage of suitable homes in which to board out state wards.

The Mission was aware that the buildings in East Melbourne were already overcrowded, and there was a view that babies were better off away from the inner city. The Mission also wanted to start providing mothercraft training through its babies' home and the site was unsuitable for this purpose. The site of Arms of Jesus was sold to the Freemasons in 1933, where the Freemason's Hospital was erected.

The Mission purchased property in Balwyn, where the new St Gabriel's Babies' Home was established in 1935. In December 1934 the 36 babies at Arms of Jesus Babies' Home were moved to the new St Gabriel's Babies' Home for Babies building in Balwyn, which officially opened the following February. At the opening of St Gabriel's, Archdeacon Lambie reflected that 535 babies had 'passed through our hands' at Arms of Jesus.

In 1997 the Mission of St James and St John became part of Anglicare Victoria. At this time, records of the Mission were transferred to Anglicare Victoria. These included records of the various orphanages, homes and other residences run by the Mission. The custodian of these records is Anglicare Victoria.

Gallery



Wattle Day Twins

Description: This is a copy of an illustrated article published in *The Argus* on Saturday 31 August 1929, p.17. The image shows babies from the Arms of Jesus Babies' Home. The original caption reads: Twins, from the Arms of Jesus Baby Home, East Melbourne, attracted attention in their cot outside the Elizabeth street postal hall during the Wattle Day Appeal yesterday [altered from original caption].



Church of England Babies Home, East Melbourne

Description: Formerly Stanford House, the home of Thomas Welton Stanford. 1 photographic print : gelatin silver ; 7.0 x 11.5 cm.



Stanford House, Clarendon Street, now Freemason's Hospital

Description: House belonging to Thomas Welton Stanford. Single storey house with three dormer windows and dome of observatory to the right hand side. negative : glass ; 8.5 x 11.0 cm. (quarter plate) .



A Happy Anniversary

Description: This is a copy of an illustration published in *the Argus* on Friday 30 October 1931. The image shows children eating cake. The original caption reads: 'To commemorate the sixth anniversary of the Arms of Jesus Babies' Home, Clarendon street, East Melbourne, a birthday party was given to the little folks yesterday. One of the "veterans" of the institution cutting the birthday cake.'

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Mission of St James and St John \(1919 - 1997\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Kedesh Maternity Home \(1926 - 1986\)](#)
Some babies whose mothers were at Kedesh were transferred to the Arms of Jesus Babies' Home.
Date: 1926 - 1935
- [St Gabriel's Babies' Home \(1935 - 1975\)](#)
St Gabriel's Babies' Home opened in 1935, replacing the service previously run at Arms of Jesus Babies' Home.
Date: 1935 -

Resources

- Nunn, H.W., [Social Services \(Chapter VIII of A Short History of the Church of England in Victoria 1847-1947\)](#), Issued by the Editorial Committee of the Centenary Celebrations, Melbourne Diocese, 1947
- [East Melbourne Historical Society catalogue \[website\]](#), No date
- [Babies Home: New building at Balwyn](#), *The Age*, 25 February 1935

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Anglicare Victoria Records \(1886 - current\)](#)
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