

Monte Pio Orphanage

1910 – 1973

Other Names:

- Bishop Murray Memorial Girls' Group Home
- Monte Pio Girls' Home
- Bishop Murray Memorial Girls' Home
- Bishop Murray Memorial Home

Details

The Bishop Murray Memorial Home at Campbells Hill, near Maitland, was more commonly known as Monte Pio Orphanage. The Home was established on the property of the Catholic Bishop of Maitland 1910 by the Sisters of Mercy. It was for girls aged from birth to sixteen years. From 1942 until 1945 Murray-Dwyer Boys' Home shared the facilities at the Bishop Murray Memorial Home. Monte Pio closed on 23 January 1973.

The Bishop Murray Memorial Home was named after the Right Reverend Dr Murray and was established in a cottage that had been purchased by the Rev Dr Murray in 1870. Bishop Murray bought a number of adjacent properties and left in 1875. The cottages became Sacred Heart College for Boys (1875-1904). The site was then leased as a residence during the construction of the North Coast Railway Line.

In June 1909 a school at Campbell's Hill opened with about 27 boys and girls. Three Sisters of Mercy travelled from East Maitland Convent to run the school, but by May 1910 the Convent and Orphanage were ready for occupation. Nineteen girls and three more Sisters of Mercy arrived from Singleton to start the institution.

On 23 May 1910 the Right Reverend Dwyer, Bishop of Maitland, blessed and reopened the renovated buildings of the college as the Bishop Murray Memorial Home. Sacred Heart Infants' School was added in 1915. In 1918 Sacred Heart Church was opened next to the Orphanage, making Monte Pio a hub for education and religious activities for the Maitland community.

By 1919 there were 90 girls living at the school, eight Sisters and 169 school children. In 1941 there were 66 children under the age of 16 in the home. Funds to run the home were raised from fees for families, donations from locals and an annual concert called 'The Continental.'

In 1942, after a Japanese submarine bombed Newcastle Harbour, the children at the Murray Dwyer Home for Boys, and the Daughters of Charity who ran the boys' home, moved to Monte Pio. They remained for the duration of the war and returned to Newcastle in 1945. Monte Pio also billeted evacuees during the Maitland floods of 1949 and 1955.

The Monte Pio Orphanage was approved to receive child migrants, and was visited by John Moss in 1951 as part of his investigations into child migration. However, it does not appear to have ever received any child migrants and the Lost Innocents report (2001) noted that there was no evidence of child migrants ever being sent to Monte Pio.

Secondary education was not offered to girls at Monte Pio until 1953, when a Home Science School, and a general programme of education, was added. This was called Our Lady of Mercy Science High School for Girls but closed in 1962. From 1963 girls travelled to Dominican College and the local state high school for secondary

education.

Around 1940-1950 a new wing of the Orphanage was built, replacing the 1870s buildings on site. As attitudes changed to the institutional care of children the Sisters of Mercy decided to close Monte Pio.

The Monte Pio Orphanage closed on 23 January 1973 and the remaining girls were moved to Adamstown, to the care of house parents. Sacred Heart Infant School remained and the buildings were taken over by the Edmund Gleeson House of Studies, under the Redemptorist Fathers. From 1985 the site has been converted to a conference centre and motel and in 1990 it was sold to Country Comfort. In 2005 it was sold to a private operator. In 2013 it is called Monte Pio and is an accommodation and conference venue.

Unfortunately, very few records of children accommodated at this Home have survived. The information that does exist is located at the offices of CatholicCare Hunter-Manning Social Services. This agency has developed a database which lists the name of the child in care, their date of admission and discharge, and a cross reference to the surviving original records.

Gallery



Monte Pio early years

Description: This image shows the building and grounds of the Bishop Murray Memorial Home.



Dining Room and Dormitory (Monte Pio)

Description: This image shows the outside windows of the dining room and dormitory of the Bishop Murray Memorial Home.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Sisters of Mercy, Singleton Congregation \(1875 - 2011\)](#)
Bishop Murray Memorial Home was staffed by the Sisters of Mercy, Singleton Congregation.

Related Events

- [Visit of John Moss \(1951\)](#)
John Moss inspected this home as part of his 1951 tour and report

Related Organisations

- [Murray-Dwyer Boys' Home \(1933 - 1970\)](#)
Murray-Dwyer Boys' Home moved to Bishop Murray Memorial Home during the war years.
Date: 1942 - 1945

Related Concepts

- [Child Migration \(1800s - 1970s\)](#)

Resources

- Community Affairs References Committee, [Lost Innocents: Righting the record - Report on child migration](#), 30 August 2001
- Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, [The Forgotten Australians, Business of the House, Speakers Horner Ms Sonia; Goward Ms Pru; Ashton Mr Alan; Maguire Mr Daryl; Morris Mr Matthew](#), Hansard, 25 November 2010
- Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, [The Monte Pio Girls' Home & Orphanage Website](#), 2008
- [Monte Pio Girls Home & Convent after final renovations in the early 1950's till its closure in 1972 & early photo of Monte Pio Motor Inn](#), The Monte Pio Girls' Home and Orphanage Website, 2008
- [The Cry of the Children: Mr P McGarry Introduces a Deputation: The Chief Secretary's Sympathetic Words](#), Freeman's Journal, 25 November 1915
- Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, [A piece of the story : national directory of records of Catholic organisations caring for children separated from families](#), November 1999

Other Resources



Title: Monte Pio Girls Home and Convent after final renovations in the early 1950s till its closure in 1972 & early photo of Monte Pio Motor Inn

Type: Image

Date: c. 2008

[Details](#)

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Records held by CatholicCare Social Services Hunter-Manning \(c. 1911 - current\)](#)
- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
Item B61 of the Child Endowment correspondence files relates to Bishop Murray Memorial Home
- [Correspondence files, multiple number series \(policy matters\) \(1922 - 1968\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/bishop-murray-memorial-home/>