

Mt Gibraltar

1930 – 1974

Other Names:

- Sydney City Mission Home for Under Nourished Children
- Gibraltar Home
- Mt Gibraltar Mission Home
- Gibraltar Home for Girls
- Mt Gibraltar Boys' Home

Details

Mt Gibraltar, a Home run by Sydney City Mission at Bowral, opened in November 1930. The first residents were girls who had previously been at Lawson Cottage in the Blue Mountains. In its early years, Mt Gibraltar's purpose was to care for 'under nourished' girls under 12 years of age. From 1936, a new wing was opened and Mt Gibraltar began to take older girls also. The home had capacity for 35 and the average stay was thirteen to eighteen weeks. The girls attended local schools in Bowral. In 1951 the girls were moved to the Mission's home at Hazelbrook, Haddon Hall. At that time, the boys from Haddon Hall were moved to Mt Gibraltar and it became an institution for boys. The Home closed in 1974.

Mt Gibraltar was built on land acquired by the Sydney City Mission from the Beer family. It was set up primarily, but not exclusively, for the care of undernourished girls and those recovering from illness. The Bowral property was described in an article from 1937 as 'a glorious site ... ideal surroundings ... a health-giving climate' for children to 'build up their frail bodies and come in contact with the beauties of the Australian bushlands'.

When it opened in 1930, the nation was feeling the effects of the Depression. An article from 1951 described how Mt Gibraltar's establishment was a response to the economy's impact on children and families:

many children were suffering under very severe nutritional handicaps due to various causes. In about 50 per cent of the cases living conditions such as overcrowding and unsuitable housing were the cause. There was also a great number of children who did not receive proper or adequate food or were debilitated after sickness. There were also children whose parents, either one or both, were ill or for some reason were unable to look after them in a proper manner.

It initially provided accommodation for 20 in one 'large airy dormitory'. In its first 6 years, Mt Gibraltar took in 520 girls for 'rest and recuperation'.

In 1937, a new two-storey block was built, increasing capacity to 35, and Mt Gibraltar began to also take in older girls, aged between 12 and 15.

An article from 1951, on the Home's 21st anniversary, stated that Mt Gibraltar had taken in 1500 children since it opened. The article referred to the effects of World War Two on children and families:

There was no doubt that many of the handicaps that numbers of children were labouring under could be directly attributed to the so called war neuroses of their parents. Following the war there had been a marked increase in the breaking down of home life and domestic harmony and in many cases marriage had lost its true spiritual meaning. As a consequence many wives and husbands had deserted each other and their children had also deteriorated, not only mentally but physically. As a result of that children had frequently been accepted in the home and kept for longer periods on different grounds than was the case in the early history of the home.

In 1951, Mt Gibraltar became a Home for boys. The previous year, the Superintendent of Sydney City Mission had spoken of there being a greater demand for the care of 'neglected and under nourished boys' than at any stage in the past 25 years. He stated that a surprising number of children are suffering ill-health, including rickets, due to a lack of fruit and vegetables because of the high cost of nutritious food.

According to one newspaper article, the change from girls' to boys' Home occurred because the girls' home matron could no longer cope with the stairs at Mt Gibraltar. In 1951, the girls were moved into Haddon Hall, another institution run by Sydney City Mission. The boys from Haddon Hall were moved into Mt Gibraltar.

The boys at Mt Gibraltar worked to improve the property, including digging and building a swimming pool with the assistance of Bowral Rotary Club.

According to Joanna Penglase in *Orphans of the Living*, during its time as a boys' home, Mt Gibraltar was run by a married couple, along with paid help, with accommodation for 30 boys.

Bruce Randle, a resident of Mt Gibraltar in 1954 told Penglase that the manager of the home 'assaulted and victimised the kids: he treated them with utter contempt'. After one beating Randle was hospitalised, but the manager warned him not to say anything. Penglase has written that such discipline was customary at the time.

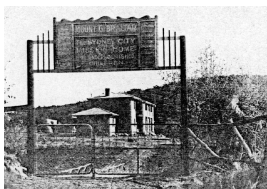
In 2017, the property is being used a retirement village, Gibraltar Park Estate.

Gallery



Mt Gibraltar

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



Mount Gibraltar gate

Description: This is a digital copy of an image published in an article in the Southern Highland News on 7 September 2015.



Mt Gibraltar, with swimming pool

Description: This is a digital copy of an image published in an article in the Southern Highland News on 7 September 2015.



Mt Gibraltar Mission home at Bowral, opened in 1930

Description: This is a digital copy of an image published in an article in the Southern Highland News in 2015.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Sydney City Mission \(1862 - 1996\)](#)

Date: 1930 - 1974

Related Organisations

- [Lawson Cottage \(1927 - 1930\)](#)

Mt Gibraltar took girls from Lawson Cottage in 1930

- [Haddon Hall \(1950 - 1967\)](#)

In 1951 the boys at Haddon Hall were sent to Mt Gibraltar and the girls who had been at Mt Gibraltar were placed in Haddon Hall.

- [Mission Australia \(1996 - current\)](#)

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Sydney City Mission records, 1862-1983, including minute books and historical papers \(1862 - 1983\)](#)
- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)

Item B85 of the Child Endowment correspondence files relates to Mt Gibraltar.

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/mt-gibraltar-2/>