

Barton Vale Girls' Home

1922 – 1947

Other Names:

- Barton Vale School
- Barton Vale Girls Reformatory

Details

Barton Vale Girls' Home was established at Harewood Avenue, Enfield by the Salvation Army in 1922. It took over the role of the government-run Redruth Girls' Reformatory which closed in the same year. As a reformatory it accommodated girls who were convicted for offences or for other reasons were deemed to be in need of strong discipline. In 1947 the Government took control of Barton Vale and renamed it Vaughan House.

In 1922 the South Australian State Government, upon the recommendation of the State Children's Council, decided to close the reformatory for girls at Redruth in Burra. The Government requested that The Salvation Army open a similar institution to replace Redruth and assisted the Army in its purchase of a 21 acre (8.5 hectares) estate on Harewood Avenue, Enfield, known as Barton Vale. According to a July 1922 newspaper article similar arrangements between the Victorian State Government and The Salvation Army had led to the creation of three Salvation Army homes for girls in that State. These included Riddells Creek Girls' Home, the William Booth Girls' Home at East Camberwell and the Catherine Booth Girls' Home at East Kew. Adjutant Ryder, who had worked for some years at both Riddells Creek and East Kew Girls' Homes, was to become the first matron of Barton Vale.

The Barton Vale property included an early Victorian, Gothic-style mansion with a high tower, originally built by pastoralist Edmund Bowman. The extensive grounds were said in newspaper reports to include; "a fine orange orchard, lawns and flower garden." At the death of the last member of the Bowman family the contents of the home were auctioned and the building was purchased by the Salvation Army for £2600. Alterations were made to the building to provide accommodation for up to 45 girls. In August of 1922 Barton Vale was declared 'a reformatory school' under the State Children's Act. The last 10 girls still resident at Burra were transferred to the Enfield premises and the Redruth Reformatory was closed.

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Mr JG Bice, the Chief Secretary, stated that the Government would contribute to the maintenance of the Home. He was quoted in a newspaper of the time as saying:

It will be a real home for the girls...and not a prison. This is the step I have had in view since the first time I saw the reformatory at Redruth.

Responding to a large deputation seeking prison reform Mr Bice said that he had been ashamed of the Redruth Reformatory. He stated that 'the Gladstone Gaol was a palace compared with the Redruth Reformatory' and he was glad to have been able to act on the State Children's Council recommendation and move the girls to Barton Vale.

In December 1923 it was reported that the girls at Barton Vale had much more freedom than had been possible at Burra and that so far the new situation was encouraging.

From as early as 1925, however, reports of disturbances at the Home and girls absconding began to appear in the newspapers. The instances of girls escaping increased over the next few years. A brief article in 1929 mentioned the escape of four girls, the recapture of two, and that four or five girls were 'missing at present'.

By 1930, increasing 'troubles' and abscondings from Barton Vale were causing concern. In February of that year a Judge questioned whether it was right for him to be committing girls to the Home, but said he had no other choice. The Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board held a meeting to discuss conditions at the Home.

In July 1930 a riot at the Home led to 10 girls being removed by the police to spend time at the Children's Welfare Department. One girl was arrested. Two girls escaped during the riot. After this dramatic event an unnamed 'Social Welfare Authority' was quoted in the newspaper in an article titled 'What's Wrong with Barton Vale?' saying that the system there was out of date.

To send 40 girls to bed at 8 o'clock every night is asking for mischief. Some of them are 20 years old! The girls need organised games and recreation. ... Their records are all hymns. The girls would like a little jazz occasionally and it would do them no harm: Why not an occasional picture show?

The person quoted then went on to say that the girls needed occupation – 'Let them do the washing for the Hospital, or something equally useful. After a few hours at the washtub they won't feel so much like screaming.' It was questioned at this time whether the Government should once again take over the running of the institution.

The mixing of girls of different religious denominations was also seen as a problem. In 1930 it was decided that girls of the Roman Catholic faith should be separated from the Protestant girls. After a new Roman Catholic Girls' Home at Parkside was established, with help from the government, 10 girls from Barton Vale were moved there and placed under the care of the Sisters of St Joseph. Later, Catholic girls were sent to The Convent of the Good Shepherd, 'The Pines'.

The abscondings, however, did not end there. Later in the same year three girls attempted escape by jumping from the high balcony of the tower. One was badly injured and could not escape. Two were later recaptured with injuries to their feet and ankles.

Girls continued to be committed to Barton Vale throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s. While in 1940 it was reported that only 11 girls were at Barton Vale, by September 1943, 35 girls were resident there. In March 1947 a newspaper reported that only 7 'delinquent girls' remained at Barton Vale.

The Salvation Army ran the Barton Vale home until 1947 when the Government resumed responsibility for the reformatory. Despite opposition to the change from the local council Barton Vale was renamed Vaughan House.

Gallery



Barton Vale Home

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



Residence of the Bowman family at Enfield

Description: This image shows the building that Barton Vale Girls' Home operated in from 1922. The library description states: ENFIELD: 'Barton Vale', the home of the Bowman family.

More info

Chronology

- Redruth Girls' Reformatory (1897 - 1922)
 - **Barton Vale Girls' Home (1922 – 1947)**
 - Vaughan House (1947 - 1979)

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory \(1921 - 2018\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [State Children's Council \(1886 - 1927\)](#)

Barton Vale Girls' Home was run by the Salvation Army, under the control of the State Children's Council and its successor the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board.

Date: 1922 - 1927
- [Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1927 - 1966\)](#)

Barton Vale Girls' Home was run by the Salvation Army, under the control of the State Children's Council and its successor the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board.

Date: 1927 - 1947
- [Catholic Girls' Home Parkside \(1930 - 1943\)](#)

Girls of the Catholic faith at Barton Vale Girls' Home were moved to the Catholic Girls' Home, Parkside, when it opened in 1930.

Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

Resources

- Cleland, Sharon, [Caring for the Children: A history of institutional care provided by The Salvation Army for Australian children and youth \(1893-1995\)](#), August 2012
- Steer, Hedley, *Social Salvation, Early development of the Social Wing of The Salvation Army*, 1996
- Kirkham, John C, *Southern Soup-Soap-Salvation, a compendium of Salvation Army Social Services in the Australian Southern Territory*, 2003
- The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territorial Headquarters (Vic), [Submission No. 46 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care: Appendix A: Children's Homes - A list of openings, closings and function](#), July 2003

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Historical records and memorabilia of Salvation Army institutions, Southern Territory](#)
- [Records of the Social Welfare Department and predecessors \(1849 - c. 1987\)](#)
- [Salvation Army Australia, Records of Homes in the former Southern Territory \(c. 1889 - c. 1988\)](#)
- [Register of New Committals \(1931 - 1968\)](#)

Held by State Records of SA. This thick register contains general admission information relating to Homes under the control of the government and includes admissions for Barton Vale Girls Home.

- [Minutes - State Children's Council, later the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1886 - 1965\)](#)

Held by State Records of SA. These two large volumes of minutes include some entries related to Barton Vale Girls Home. Information about state wards admitted to the home is often given including names and some details.

- [Annual Reports of the State Children's Council and the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department \(1887 - 1960\)](#)

Held by State Records of SA. These yearly reports provide updates on developments at homes under the control of the Department, including Barton Vale.

- [Correspondence files \('CW & PRD' and 'SW' files\) -Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department and successors \(1927 - c. 1979\)](#)

Held by State Records of SA. These correspondence files are comprised of letters and other documents filed chronologically. They include some correspondence related to homes run by the Salvation Army under the control of the Department.

- [State Ward Index Cards, State Children's Department and successors \(1900 - 1992\)](#)

Held by State Records of SA. State Ward Index Cards were small cards created when a child came under the control of the Department. They contain various amounts of information. Some may relate to children who were resident at Barton Vale.

- [Mandates committing children to the custody of the Department, Social Welfare Department and Predecessors \(1880 - 1930\)](#)

Held by State Records of SA. These mandates are legal documents committing 'neglected', 'destitute' or 'delinquent' children to a reformatory. They may include committals to Barton Vale.

- [Photographs of Departmental institutions, Social Welfare Department and Predecessors \(1945 - 1970\)](#)

Held by State Records of SA. This file of photographs of institutions under the control of the Department of Social Welfare and its predecessors, include photos of Barton Vale after it became known as Vaughan House.

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/barton-vale-girls-home/>