

St Alban's Home for Boys

1920 – 1980

Other Names:

- St Alban's
- St Alban's Boys' Home
- Morpeth Home for Children
- St Alban's School

Details

St Alban's Home for Boys was opened in the old Bishops court, Morpeth in 1920. The Home was owned by the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, but day to day operations were overseen by the Sisters of the Community of the Holy Name until 1935. From 1935 until 1948 it was overseen by the Church Army. In 1942 St Alban's Home for Boys relocated to Murrurundi. From 1948 the Home was run by staff appointed directly by the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle. In 1952 St Alban's moved to 'Winncourt', Mayfield and in 1964 the Home relocated to Aberdare, a suburb of Cessnock. St Alban's Home for Boys closed in 1980 and became St Alban's Family Group Home in 1981.

'Bishops court', formerly known as 'Closebourne', had been the residence of the Bishop of Newcastle and was renovated at a cost of £3000 to become St Alban's Home for Boys. The official opening of the 'hostel' was performed by Mrs H Crotty, wife of the Dean of Newcastle, 9 October 1920.

While officially owned by the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle from its establishment, the Diocese appointed the Sisters of the Community of the Holy Name to oversee the day to day operations of the Home and provide staffing until 1935. The Church Army was then appointed to oversee the day to day operations of the home until 1948. The Anglican Diocese of Newcastle subsequently assumed full management of the home, and staff were appointed directly by the Diocese from 1948.

The boys' home remained at Morpeth until 1942, when it was relocated to a property at Murrurundi. 'Bishops court' then became St John's College.

The Muswellbrook Chronicle reported in May 1942 on the relocation of St Alban's Home for Boys to a property called Myo'a in Haydon Street that had been bought by the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle:

Useful additions and alterations have been carried out, including two large dormitories and glassed-in verandahs. Rooms have been enlarged, making it a comfortable and suitable home for the boys and staff. There are 35 boys in the home. They are in the charge of Captain and Mrs Roberts. Later the grounds will be improved by the planting of trees and shrubs.

The home was officially opened and blessed by the Bishop of Newcastle. The Bishop was accompanied by Archdeacon Wood and the Rev M Redman.

The Murrurundi property proved inadequate for the needs of the Home, and it was moved in 1952 to 'Winncourt', Mayfield, which had formerly been St Elizabeth's Girls' Home.

According to CLAN, the University of Newcastle Archives states that the building occupied by St Alban's at this time was built in the 1880s by Charles Uphold. It was then bought by William Arnott, of Arnott's Biscuits, who were based in Mayfield, and renamed 'Arnott Holme'. In 1898 the house was bought by Isaac Winn, who renamed it 'Winncourt'. In 1921 the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle bought the house and converted it to St Elizabeth's Girls Home.

In 1964, St Alban's Home for Boys was relocated to Aberdare, near Cessnock. This new facility was purpose-built as a boys' home and was designed to accommodate 32 boys aged between 8 to 14. St Alban's Home for Boys was officially opened at Aberdare on Sunday 7 February 1965.

According to the Facebook group 'St Albans Home for Children – Cessnock, NSW, Australia' the home started to take girls as well as boys from 1976. St Alban's closed in 1980. 'Bishopscourt' was redeveloped in 1981 to become a community centre and new premises were built to house the St Alban's Family Group Home on the same grounds.

In 2013 'Bishopscourt' was converted to a retirement village called 'Closebourne Village' in Morpeth. 'Winncourt' also became an aged care facility called Annesley Court in Mayfield.

Numerous former residents of St Alban's Home for Boys have spoken out about the sexual, physical, and mental abuse that they endured at the Home. A former resident, "John", gave an interview for an ABC article in 2016 recalling his experiences at St Alban's in the 1960's.

"You had sexual abuse, you had physical abuse and you had mental abuse," John said. "Apart from the religious bullshit that was thrown down our necks and how good they were [morally], the sexual advances were put on us."

John said he was abused at St Albans when the home was based in the Newcastle suburb of Mayfield in the 1960s. He alleged he had been passed around between clergy members and lay people.

"There were people who were somehow connected with the congregations, because I was billeted out one Christmas I think and I was manipulated in the bed" he said.

Allegations have also been made that records of St Alban's from this time have been lost or destroyed.

But there is little in John's records outlining his history at the home.

"They [the records] were that thin. There's nothing of my school life," he said. "There's nothing of anything, any description of my health, of my visits to a doctor or anything like that, nothing." (ABC, 2016)

University of Newcastle Archives subsequently advised that it had records in its custody relating to St Alban's (Wakatama, 2016).

St Alban's Home for Boys was included in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse's investigation into abuse in the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, and its findings were published as Case Study 42 in 2016.

Gallery



St Alban's Boys' Home

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



Arnott Holme (1885)

Description: Originally built on a 5 acre block by Charles Uphold, owner of the Soap and Candle Factory which opened in Mayfield from 1886 east of Ingall St. The estate was sold to William Arnott in 1888 and named Arnott Holme. The Arnotts remained here until 1898. The bakery was in Hunter Street, while members of the family resided here in Mayfield. The house was then sold to Isaac Winn, who renamed it Winn Court. Many social functions, including fetes and Bible classes, were held in the home and grounds. In 1921 the house was acquired by the Church of England and became St Elizabeth's Girls Home and, later, St. Albans Boys Home.



St Alban's Boys' Home, Mayfield, Newcastle

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



Closebourne (aka Bishops court), NSW

Description: This is an image of the building known as Closebourne, and later Bishops court, that was house St Alban's Home for Boys in Morpeth. The description reads "'Closebourne", later "Bishops court", as it was last century."



Girl's Home Anniversary

Description: This image shows the outside of the St Elizabeth's Home for Girls in Mayfield. The building is also known as Winn court. It was published in the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* on 20 September 1937 as one of two photos taken at the 11th anniversary celebrations of the Home. The photo is captioned "The garden and home".



Three boys playing footy out the front of St Alban's Anglican Home for Boys, Cessnock, circa 1970s?

Description: This is a digital copy of a photograph held by the University of Newcastle Archives

More info

Chronology

- **St Alban's Home for Boys (1920 – 1980)**
 - St Alban's Family Group Home (29 November 1981 - 1986?)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Anglican Diocese of Newcastle \(c. 1800 - current\)](#)
St Alban's Home for Boys was supported by the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle from 1920 but did not run the Home directly until 1948.
Date: 1948 - 1980

Related Events

- [Case study 42: The Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse \(2017\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [St Elizabeth's Home for Girls \(1926 - 1977\)](#)
St Alban's Home for Boys took over 'Winncourt', Mayfield that had been used by St Elizabeth's Girls Home.
Date: 1952 -
- [St Christopher's Home for Little Children \(1928 - 1978\)](#)
Once boys at St Christopher's Home for Little Children reached the age of seven they were sent to St Alban's Home for Boys.
Date: 1928 - 1956
- [St George's Training Farm Home for Boys \(1927 - 1930\)](#)
St George's Training Farm Home for Boys took boys aged 12 and above from St Alban's Home for Boys, Morpeth.
Date: 1927 - 1930
- [Church Army \(1932 - 2024\)](#)
Date: 1935 - 1948
- [Community of the Holy Name \(1888 - current\)](#)
The Sisters of the Community of the Holy Name was appointed by the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle to oversee the day to day operations of the Home
Date: 1920 - 1935

Resources

- University of Newcastle Library, [Anglican Diocese of Newcastle Archives](#), Archives of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, including parish registers, records of the Bishops of Newcastle and the records of St John's Theological College at Morpeth held by Cultural Collections, 2014
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, [Report of Case Study No. 42: The responses of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle to instances and allegations of child sexual abuse](#), November 2017
- Manne, Anne, [Rape among the lamingtons](#), The Monthly, May 2017
- [Improving Access to Children's Homes Records for Care Leavers in the Hunter Region](#), Hunter Living Histories, 5 June 2019
- [New Purpose for Stately Home](#), Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 2 May 1953
- [Doing Good](#), The Newcastle Sun, 6 April 1935

Records

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

Records

- [Diocese of Newcastle Children's Homes \(1918 - 1987\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/st-albans-home-for-boys/>