



ROSS

(No. 18)

Background

Miss Ruby Fanny Ross who died on 8th September 1931 left a bequest to the Burnside Homes of 6,500 pounds in memory of her late brother, John Reginald Ross, whose estate she inherited, with the stipulation that the bequest be used for the building and permanent endowment of a home similar to the Blackwood Home, to be known as the John Reginald Ross Memorial Home.

The architects, Power, Adam, and Munnings designed the building and the Burnside Board awarded the tender to W H Davis who costed the construction at 5,505 pounds. The construction commenced on 10th May 1935 and His Excellency, the Governor of NSW, Sir Alexander Gore Arkwright Hore-Ruthven opened the Home on 27th November 1935.

War Years

Thirty boys previously housed in Lincluden lived at Ross until January 1942 when due to the danger posed by World War II all the children at the Homes were evacuated to the Blue Mountains returning in January 1945.

During the evacuation the Eastern Command of the Australian Army occupied the whole Burnside site and used Ross as Officers' Quarters.

1945 to present

After the War 30 boys continued to live at Ross under the care of house parents Mr and Mrs Semmler (1949 to December 1956), Mr and Mrs Bromhead (1957) and Mr and Mrs Anderson (1958 to 1963). The number of boys at the Home was reduced by about half during 1960 and in the Christmas holidays of 1962 to 1963 some remodelling occurred to give greater privacy to the children. House parents in the following years included Mr and Mrs McCloskey (1964 to 1965), Mr and Mrs Bond (1966), Mr and Mrs Little (1967 to September 1970), and Mr and Mrs Riley until February 1974 when the Home was temporarily closed. This was so alterations could be carried out to the bathroom and toilet facilities, so that brothers and sisters could be accommodated together.

When Ross reopened in 1975 Mr and Mrs Taylor were appointed as house parents, followed by Mr and Mrs Thornley in 1976 and Mrs McCurdy in 1977. Mr and Mrs Higgins, appointed in 1978, remained at Ross until August 1983 when the numbers at Ross reduced to 4 in the care of Mrs Shirley Brown. During 1984 Ross was developed as a therapeutic unit for emotionally disturbed children.

Finally it was decided that a large area of land fronting Masons Drive that included Ross Home and the Margaret Harris Hospital was surplus to Burnside's needs, so in 1985 Ross was sold to the Uniting Church to be used as part of their Theological Training Centre.