

Dr Barnardo

1845 – 1905



Dr Thomas Barnardo

Thomas Barnardo was born in Dublin in 1845.

He became a Doctor in 1876.

During his lifetime he was to become one of the most famous men in Victorian Britain due to his work with orphans.

The Victorians thought poverty was the result of laziness and an unwillingness to work. To them, it was something to be ashamed of.



Dr Thomas Barnardo

Thomas Barnardo fought against these ideas by accepting any child into his children's homes.

He was determined to give any child the best possible start in life, no matter where they had come from.

This meant that during most of his life he battled against these traditional Victorian beliefs.

Thomas Barnardo became aware of many homeless and destitute children in the cities of England.



The Barnardo's Charity

Hundreds of thousands of people lined the streets of London to watch the funeral of Thomas Barnardo after he died in 1905.

At his death, in 1905, the Barnardo's charity was established, housing over 8000 children.

Watch this video about the work of Dr Barnardo. Listen to how Barnardo took children out of dangerous situations and gave them a safe place to stay, even if it meant breaking the law!



Dr Barnardo's London

In 1866 Thomas Barnardo arrived in London to train as a doctor.

The population in London had increased rapidly due to the Industrial Revolution - particularly in the East End where the poorest people lived.

This led to terrible unemployment, overcrowding, poverty and disease.



Dangers in Victorian London

Cholera was a deadly disease that was a daily threat in Victorian London.

Shortly after Thomas Barnardo arrived in London, cholera swept through the East End, killing more than 5500 people.



Thousands of children were forced to sleep on the streets and beg to survive.

Many had been injured terribly working in factories.

23 boys at Crumpsall Workhouse, circa 1895-1897

Dangers in Victorian London

The life of a Victorian child was hard work. Workhouses were dangerous and paid very little. The food was tasteless and was the same every day.



This, along with poor living conditions, meant disease and hunger lead to a higher death rate for children. In some cities, children under the age of five made up about half of all deaths.

Photo courtesy of William Murphy@flickr.com - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

Child Labour in Victorian London

Do you know the story of Oliver Twist, about a boy who runs away from a workhouse then joins a gang of pickpockets?

It was written in the 1830s and was based on real life.

Watch these videos about child labour in Victorian London:



Dr Barnardo's First School

Education in Victorian England had to be paid for and many parents were too poor to afford this, so lots of children never learnt to read and write.

As a result of everything Thomas Barnardo had seen, he decided to open a school in the East End so children could get a basic education.

Thomas Barnardo started teaching London's poor children in a donkey stable in 1866, before opening his own school.

Hope Place was opened in 1867 and termed a 'ragged school'.



Dr Barnardo and the East End

Thomas Barnardo continued to take a great interest in destitute children.

One day a child called Jim Jarvis took him around the East End, showing him young children sleeping in gutters and on top of roofs.

The sight affected Barnardo so much that he decided to devote himself to helping these children.

WEALTHY	
WELL-TO-DO	
COMFORTABLE	
POOR & COMFORTABLE (MIXED)	
POOR	
VERY POOR	
SEMI-GRIMAL	

Poverty map of
Old Nichol
slum, East End
of London.



Stepney Causeway, London

This house in Stepney Causeway was to become the first of Thomas Barnardo's homes for children.

It was opened in 1870 as a Home for Boys.

Barnardo would go out every night looking for homeless children.

One night an 11-year-old boy was turned away as the home was full.

Two days later he was found dead. From that day on, Barnardo's motto was 'No Destitute Child Ever Refused Admission.'

Girls' Village Home

When Thomas Barnardo married his wife, Syrie, in 1873, a supporter gave them a house to use as a children's home. The Girls' Village Home in Barkingside was opened in 1876.

It housed over 1500 girls at any one time.

This was different to the boys' home as it was set in its own grounds; each cottage had its own front and back gardens and there was also a steam laundry on the grounds.

The girls who stayed at the Village Home received training as cooks and domestic service maids. This meant that every child could find employment once they had left the home.

Barnardo's Today

The last Dr Barnardo's home closed in 1981.

Today Barnardo's helps over 110 000 vulnerable children and families through projects run at homes, schools and in local communities. Barnardo's helps all sorts of children and young people, including those who have disabilities, or who have problems at school or with their families, or who don't have any family of their own to support and look after them.

The main aim of Barnardo's continues to be to support and encourage disadvantaged children to achieve success in their lives.



Barnardo's Today

Did you know . . . ?



Barnardo's works with more than 100 000 children, young people and families every year?

That's more than you can pack into the Emirates Stadium, home of Arsenal FC.



**Believe in
children**
Barnardo's

