

Carpentarian Reformatory for Boys

1894 – c. 1908

Other Names:

- Shore Reformatory
- Dundas Reformatory
- Carpentarian Reformatory
- Carpentarian Reformatory, Dundas
- Boys' Home, Dundas

Details

The Carpentarian Reformatory was established by the Department of Charitable Institutions at Brush Farm, Eastwood, in 1894. The Carpentarian Reformatory was taken over by the State Children's Relief Department in 1897 and became the Brush Farm Reformatory in 1908.

The Carpentarian Reformatory was established by the Department of Charitable Institutions at Brush Farm, a historic property in Eastwood, in 1894. It was then taken over by the State Children's Relief Department. It was a reformatory until 1912.

Brush Farm was located in Eastwood, in an area sometimes referred to as 'Dundas Heights', so is often described as being in Dundas.

This institution was sometimes called the Shore Reformatory, as it was on land and, in 1897, replaced the nautical ship reformatory *Sobraon*. Boys dressed in naval uniform, slept in hammocks and rang a ships' bell and the Superintendent's office was referred to as the quarter-deck.

Detention at this reformatory was for nine months, considerably shorter than the three years favoured by the Department of Public Instruction for its reformatories and industrial schools. A school was provided on site.

As well as accommodating boys from *Sobraon*, Peter Quinn writes that the new reformatory had a separate division for 40 boys from Rydalmere Probationary Home, who were considered 'too vicious to be kept in ordinary homes.' It quickly became overcrowded with boys convicted of offences and was investigated by Frederick Neitenstein, the former superintendent of the *Sobraon*, in 1897.

There are few records of this home or its inmates. However, cricket matches were reported in local newspapers. From 1894 to 1897 boys played against teams from the *Sobraon*, but after the institutions were merged, played against each other. Tragically, in 1906 two boys came to blows during a cricket match and George Barron Thomas died of injuries to his head and neck. His assailant was committed to stand trial for manslaughter. The case was reported as far afield as Tasmania.

In 1909 the *Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate* reported that five boys, aged 15-16 years, had escaped from the Carpentarian Reformatory. Three were caught in the railway station waiting room at Mount Colah, while two got as far as the Hawkesbury before giving themselves up to police. One was described as 'a very clever lad' and the boys, knowing descriptions of their clothes would be circulated, had managed to hide some other garments before making their escape. They were all returned to the reformatory.

More info

Chronology

- **Carpentarian Reformatory for Boys (1894 – c. 1908)**
 - Brush Farm Reformatory (1908 - 1912)

Related Entries

Run by

- [State Children's Relief Board \(1881 - 1923\)](#)
Date: 1897 - 1908
- [Department of Charitable Institutions \(1888 - 1911\)](#)
Date: 1894 - 1897

Related Places

- [Brush Farm \(1803 - current\)](#)
Carpentarian Reformatory for Boys, run by the Department of Public Instruction, was located at Brush Farm.
Date: 1894 - 1908

Related Organisations

- [Probationary Farm Home, Rydalmere \(1891 - 1894\)](#)
When the Probationary Farm Home was closed the boys were sent to the Carpentarian Refomatory.

Resources

- Museums of History NSW, [Child Care and Protection Guide](#), No date
- [Brush Farm](#), State Heritage Inventory, 2003
- Department of Justice, [History](#), Children's Court of New South Wales, 2012

Records

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

Records

- [Copies of letters sent concerning the administration of public schools \(1880 - 1896\)](#)

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