

St Christopher's Lodge

1934 – c. 1959

Other Names:

- St Christopher's School for Boys
- St Christopher's Lodge for Boys
- St Christopher's Boys Lodge

Details

St Christopher's Lodge, situated at Brookfield, was operated by the Church of England, under the management of the Reverend Robert Bates and a ladies' committee. It opened in 1934 and accommodated boys only. The Home closed in the late 1950s and later became known as the Anglican Franciscan Friary.

The rector of All Saints, Wickham Terrace, the Rev. R B Bates owned property at Brookfield where he ran a stud for dairy cattle. The property formerly comprising the Brookfield Centre was settled by Bates on the incorporated body titled "Brisbane Franciscan Communities: A building on the property was used as a children's home and primary school.

St Christopher's Lodge was officially opened by Mr J F Maxwell MLA, on 12 May 1934. It functioned as a farm school which taught the rudiments of farming, as well as the usual academic subjects. The boys, aged between 6 and 14 years, worked on the farm after school. The dairy provided milk and butter for the home.

Around the same time that St Christopher's was established, Rev. Bates set up a branch of the Order of St Clare, and St Clare's Cottage was built close to St Christopher's. Four Franciscan nuns lived at St Clare's.

In 1949, Rev. Bates purchased a large family home at Riverton Street, Clayfield, for removal to the farm school at Brookfield, where it became the principal's residence.

The Anglican Archive SSFRS165-3 contains a letter from a former resident of St Christopher's Lodge which provides an insight into life at the institution:

My residence at St. Christopher's Lodge began in November 1934 and ended in August 1938. They were interesting years. When I went there four boys were in residence – Bill [G] or as he was known then, Bill [W], Noel [S] from Taroom, and Pat [B] whose father and mother were respectively the farmer and matron. I was the fourth. The Reverend R.E. McQuie was the chaplain [sic]. He had a unique [sic] ability to get the very best out of boys. It was his idea to call [sic] St. Christopher's Lodge "A home for boys" rather than "boys home".

Life was very pleasant at St. Christophers in those days – we had a horse (John) to ride and we could help around the farm and we each had a flower garden for which we were responsible. Pride and competition were the motivators for gardening. Mowing a huge lawn with the hand mower called for sterner measures.

At the time Father Bates was developing a stud jersey [sic] herd and in good ecclesiastical form the bull was named Trinity Dreaming Laddie and one cow I remember was Trinity Silver Spray and her daughter was named Trinity Silver Shower.

There was a Franciscan Community located at St. Clairs [sic] Lady's Home at Wickham Terrace. One nun who did not enjoy good health, Sister Catherine was at St. Christophers a lot of the time in 1934-1935. She made cassocks and surpluses for us so that we could participate in the services. She was a gently lady of English birth and as I write I can picture her sitting in the large part of the hall near the front door.

Fathe [sic] McQuee introduced us to good literature by reading to us each night. He read among other things Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Adventures and a magnificent play of St. Joan he translated from the French as he went along. I marvel at this even today.

About mid 1935 Father McQuie left us to take up a parish appointment at Nanango. The Beerdats had also left and gone to Melbourne. Father Angus Palmer took over as chaplain and Miss Stock, a trained nurse, took over as matron. Father Palmer still lives in Melbourne in poor health.

When Father Palmer left us Father Ray Campbell took over as chaplain and Brother Stephen became his assistant and cook. Both these men were from the House of Assention in Goulburn.

These men had quite a profound influence on life at St. Christophers. The matron at that time was Mrs. Clifford B.Sc. A former English [sic] high School teacher and her husband who was the farmer, was formerly an officer of the Royal Navy. These two people and their two daughters got on very well with the boys.

The chaplain at that time was Father Foote, he followed Fr. Campell.

It was a very happy time in my life, and while at school work I was very poor these people made me and all of us feel worthwhile people.

I could tell you all sorts of anecdotes about things that happened but for historical purposes – there were four boys there when I arrived in November 1934 and there were 26 when I left in August 1938.

Some of the boys I have never seen again, others I have kept in contact with for almost 50 years. We were all poor and were at St. Christophers for a variety of reasons. We had no juvenile delinquents in the modern sense though we got up to some hair raising things and deserved the punishment we got. Almost without exception these people, those in authority over us at St. Christophers were kind and considerate people. St. Christophers was our home and it is remembered with pleasant memories by those of us who keep in contact with each other.

We attended Kenmore State School and no history would be complete without mentioning the influence of Mr. T.J Laws the head teacher of that school. He was a warm hearted fatherly man who could bring out the best in us. While there is no evidence of real scholarship being attained by any of the students he was very strict about writing neatly and did not hesitate to use the cane to bring this quality out. Consequently all the boys from my days at there were very good at writing. He also was able to develop in us a great sense of self-worth and encouraged us to feel that we had a valuable role to play in life.

St Christopher's closed in the late 1950s. The Brothers of St Francis moved into the property in the early 1960s, and it became known as The Friary in 1961.

Gallery



[Old Friary]

Description: This is an image of the Brookfield Centre - also known as the 'Old Friary' - in Kenmore Hills. The building was formerly the site of St Christopher's Lodge and The Friary.

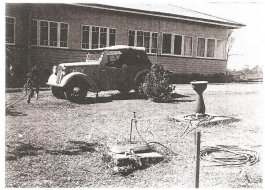


St Christopher's Lodge - back view 1950s



Photos of old house [St Christopher's Lodge]

Description: This is a copy of two images of St Christopher's Lodge. The title was provided by the researcher who scanned the images. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Anglican Diocese of Brisbane \(1859 - current\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [The Friary \(1966 - 1981\)](#)

The Friary was located in the same building as St Christopher's Lodge, in Brookfield.

Resources

- [Training Boys For Work On Farms](#), Courier Mail, 21 August 1939
- [House of rest](#), Brisbane Courier, 6 June 1932

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Miscellaneous, St Christopher's Lodge and The Friary \(1844 - 2002\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/st-christophers-lodge/>