

Boys' Training School

1884 – 1926

Other Names:

- Training School for Juvenile Offenders
- State Farm and School for Boys
- BTS

Details

The Boys' Training School opened in South Hobart in 1884. It was a government institution for young male offenders. In 1896, it moved to the New Town Charitable Institution. In 1922, it moved again, this time to Deloraine where, in 1926, it became the Ashley Home for Boys.

The Boys' Training School was established under the provisions of the *Training Schools Act* (1867). The School was governed by a Board of Managers, which included Ministers of Religion and prominent members of the public. The Mayor of Hobart was an *ex-officio* member.

Like the Boys' Reformatory, which had closed in 1876, it was on the site of the former Female Factory at Cascades, this time in Yard Five. Before it opened, a new two storey building of offices and living areas, 15 feet wide along the length of the front wall of Yard Five, were built. At the rear of the yard, there was a play shed.

The boys wore a uniform of vest, moleskin trousers, and a cloth cap.

The boys worked in the garden, the carpentry shop, and in the kitchen as scullery and kitchen boys. They raised pigs. During the School's first year, they ploughed part of the hill behind the former Female Factory and put in a good crop. They planted fruit trees and looked after the new herd of five dairy cows. In 1891, they built a swimming pool out of bricks. The following year, they repaired the old chapel and laid a play yard with bricks. For entertainment, they had magic lantern, football and cricket. On one occasion, they presented an entertainment of their own. Boys who behaved well went into Hobart once a month. A few went to church every Sunday.

James Longmore, the Superintendent, had progressive ideas about managing child lawbreakers. For instance, he campaigned for the abolition of prison sentences for them. He also thought deeply about their care and later wrote a pamphlet about it. He had a reformist agenda for the Boys' Training School which, according to Joan Brown, the Board of Governors supported.

Brown wrote that his main aims were:

- (1) to inspire family feeling and create a home influence
- (2) to give as much freedom as is compatible to good order
- (3) to avoid corporal punishment and
- (4) to arouse good moral tone.

In addition:

The school was said to be governed by the law of kindness and to work by trust rather than repression. Trade instruction as well as formal education was part of the programme with particular emphasis on farm work.

The Managers said that there was almost no corporal punishment. Instead, if a boy misbehaved, he might lose a half holiday or leave.

To extend the School's influence over the boys, the governors sought to increase the age that they could remain there to 21. However, the government would not agree to this.

In 1896, the Boys' Training School moved to a new building on the grounds of the New Town Charitable Institution, formerly the site of the Queen's Orphan Asylum where there was room for 60 boys. Its Managers became George Richardson until 1898, and then FR Seager. Both were also Secretaries of the Neglected Children's Department. A history by Pearce and Doyle describes the School's conditions and routine:

Until 1913, when a dormitory was built, the boys slept in cell-like cubicles and were classified on admission in much the same way as convicts had been earlier in the century. They were expected to work long hours, either in one of the various trade shops associated with the School or at the Government Farm.

At the new site, until 1918, the boys did their lessons at night. In 1906, Seager argued against day time education on the grounds that many people had to do without it: 'as many thousands in the world (myself included) have had to fight the battle of life with the assistance of knowledge gained at night school, I fail to see the necessity for altering the system now in force at the B.T.S.'

The 1918 *Children of the State Act* brought the Boys' Training School under its auspices, after which the Children of the State Department ran it.

In 1922, the Boys' Training School moved from Hobart to Deloraine, in the north of Tasmania.

The government established the Mental Deficiency Board and State Psychological Clinic in 1922. The Boys' Training School was one of the first places that the Clinic conducted intelligence tests. Boys diagnosed with a mild intellectual disability (often wrongly) were placed under the dual management of the Board and the Children of the State Department and its successors. In the first few years of the Board's existence, a greater proportion of boys at the School came under its auspices than from any other sources. This reflected a widely held belief that 'delinquency' and intellectual disability were connected.

In 1925, the government appointed a Committee of Inquiry to investigate conditions at the School. It recommended:

- Better classification of the boys, with more responsibility going to the older, well behaved ones.
- 'Constructive discipline'.
- More emphasis on wholesome leisure activities.
- Increasing the types of manual work done by the boys.
- Changing the name to Ashley Home for Boys. This was to reduce the stigma of having been at the Home.

In 1926, in line with the recommendation of the Committee of Inquiry, the Boys' Training School became Ashley Home for Boys.

Gallery



Queens Orphan Asylum New Town



Female Factory Cascades from the east

Description: The photograph of the Female Factory Cascades, South Hobart, from the east is part of ER Pretyman's collection of photographs and glass plate negatives, 1880 - 1920

More info

Chronology

- Boys' Reformatory (1869 - 1876)
 - **Boys' Training School (1884 – 1926)**
 - Ashley Home for Boys (1926 - 1999)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Children of the State Department, State of Tasmania \(1918 - 1934\)](#)

Related Events

- [Committee of Inquiry into the State Farm and School for Boys, Deloraine, Tasmania \(1925\)](#)

The Committee of Inquiry was about the Boys' Training School, also known as the State Farm and School for Boys, Deloraine.

Related Glossary Terms

- [Juvenile Delinquency \(1850s - 1990s\)](#)

The Boys' Training School was for boys considered to be delinquent.

Related Organisations

- [Female Factory, Cascades \(1827 - 1853\)](#)

The Boys' Training School was located at the Female Factory between between 1884 and 1896.
- [Launceston Gaol \(1827 - 1917\)](#)

Boys could be sent to the Boys' Training School as an alternative to prison.
- [New Town Charitable Institution \(1879 - 1912\)](#)

The Boys' Training School was on the grounds of the New Town Charitable Institution.
- [Neglected Children's Department, Colony of Tasmania \(1896 - 1901\)](#)
- [Neglected Children's Department, State of Tasmania \(1901 - 1918\)](#)

The Secretary of the Neglected Children's Department was the Manager of the Boys' Training School.

Related Legislation

- [The Training Schools Act 1867, Tasmania \(1867 - 1896\)](#)

The Boys' Training School ran under the auspices of the *Training Schools Act* 1867.

Related Concepts

- [Training School \(1881 - 1926\)](#)

Resources

- Rimon, Wendy, [Children's homes](#), The companion to Tasmanian history, 2005
- [Treat to children of the charitable institutions](#), 22 May 1900
- [Demonstration at Hobart; the children entertained](#), Examiner, 22 May 1900
- [Boys' Training School](#), The Mercury, 22 July 1884
- Evans, Caroline, [Idealists, Pragmatists and 'Simple-Minded' Scamps: The Tasmanian Mental Deficiency Board and State 'Care' in the 1920s](#), Australian Historical Studies, 2017

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [General Correspondence-21-38, Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the State Farm and School for Boys, Deloraine \(1925 - 1925\)](#)
 - [Correspondence Files \(1919 - 1998\)](#)
 - [Alphabetical Admission Register, Boys' Training School \(1912 - 1922\)](#)
 - [Alphabetical Admission Register, Males and Females \(1914 - 1952\)](#)
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