

Carpentarian Reformatory for Boys

1894 – c. 1908

Other Names:

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

Details

The Carpentarian Reformatory was established by the Department of Charitable Institutions at Brush Farm, a historic property in Eastwood, in 1894. It was located in an area sometimes referred to as Dundas Heights, so is often described as being in Dundas.

In 1897, the management of the Reformatory was taken over by the State Children's Relief Department.

According to Peter Quinn, this institution was sometimes called the Shore Reformatory, as it was on land and was the counterpart of the *Sobraon* ship reformatory. In addition, boys at the Carpetarian dressed in naval uniforms, 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.

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 the children there. However, cricket matches were reported in local newspapers. 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.

In 1908, it was renamed to the Brush Farm Reformatory. It remained a reformatory until 1912.

More info

Chronology

- **Carpentarian Reformatory for Boys (1894 – c. 1908)**
 - Brush Farm Reformatory (1908 - 1912)
 - Gosford Farm Home for Boys (1911 - 1923)
 - Gosford Training School (1923 - 1945)
 - Mount Penang Training School for Boys (1946 - 1987)
 - Mount Penang Detention Centre (1988 - 1991)

Related Entries

Run by

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

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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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/carpentarian-reformatory-for-boys/>