

Hagley Farm School

1936 – 1976?

Other Names:

- Hagley Area School
- Hagley Farm Primary School

Details

Hagley Farm School opened in 1936. It was run by the Tasmanian Education Department. In the 1940s, it provided a residential education to the children of Australian servicemen. From about 1948 until 1955, the School received child migrants from Belgium, Greece, and Britain. During the 1970s, it became Hagley Farm Primary School.

The first migrant children at Hagley Farm School were two Belgian war orphans sponsored by Geoffrey Lempriere of Lempriere Australia Pty Ltd, a company that produced fine wool. Lempriere had met the boys in Belgium and decided to pay for their passage to Australia and education at Hagley. When the boys graduated, they went to work on one of the company's farms in North-West Tasmania. In 1949, Lempriere planned to sponsor a boy from Greece selected by the Greek Red Cross.

Later the School took a total of nine British boys sent by the Fairbridge Society. The first two arrived in August 1952 and the last in 1954-5. Four of them came under the parent following scheme whereby the children came first and their parents later. The scheme made it possible for single mothers, who would otherwise not be eligible, to emigrate. The School stopped receiving these child migrants because the Fairbridge Society opened Tresca at Exeter in 1958. This enabled the Society to accommodate the children themselves.

In 1936, Hagley Farm School, formerly Hagley State School, after the consolidation of five one teacher schools, became one of the first area schools in Tasmania. The Tasmanian government established area schools to provide a better education to rural children and keep them in the local area after they left school. GV Brooks, the Director of the Tasmanian Education Department, was inspired by his observation of area schools in England.

Local parents took a great interest in area schools so that they also became centres of the community. The schools were allowed to adapt their curriculums so that there was less emphasis on academic studies and more on the skills needed in local industries. At Hagley, this was farming.

By the 1940s, the School already had a large vegetable patch, poultry run, dairy herd, and canteen. The Headmaster, JS Maslin, was keen to develop it according to the ideas of Kingsley Fairbridge, the founder of the Fairbridge Society which sent child migrants to various parts of the British Empire. By 1940, Maslin had persuaded the state government to expand the School's farming activities and build a cottage to accommodate child evacuees from bombed cities in Britain who would remain permanently in Tasmania. According to the *Burnie Advocate*, the government hoped to increase the population with: 'the very best type – children of British stock. It will train them for work on the land and in the home and through this training make them self-reliant and valuable citizens'.

The state government gave the school 200 acres. It had no fencing, pasture or farm buildings. During the 1940s, under the instruction of trade teachers, one of whom was an agricultural educationist employed by the Department of Agriculture, the boys fenced three quarters of the property, created pasture that could yield 40

tons of hay a year, and built a modern dairy, cow shed, laying pens for chickens, and a building for an incubator. The School acquired a pure bred herd of Jersey cows, four sows, a flock of sheep, and more chickens.

Maslin criticised the educational methods of the time because of their competitiveness, narrow emphasis on academic studies, and physical restriction of children. In 1944, he told the Launceston *Examiner* that:

We give an acre for a cow or sheep willingly...while we shut our children and our chickens up in too limited spaces, and they suffer in consequence. Schools of the future must be provided with estates where the children will be surrounded with many natural and beautiful things.

Maslin attempted to put his words into practice. At Hagley, the children did a wide range of activities, many of them outside the classroom. They included working in the garden, dairy, kitchen, workshop, and farm. Some of the boys learned trade work, including making working drawings. Four boys managed a poultry project. The girls practised home crafts, mostly in the cottage. Boys and girls helped in the canteen making jam, preserving fruit, and baking wholemeal bread. Children also pursued academic studies with a few going on to high school. In social studies, the emphasis was on research. The children did physical education and played football, cricket, basketball, and baseball. In the infant's classroom, the teacher used 'activity methods' of teaching. There was a miniature shop and cottage to encourage imaginative play.

Hagley offered training in citizenship that included a School Parliament with a minister for every aspect of the School's life. Ministers reported regularly on their departments, including information such as the sizes of pig litters, sporting results, and breaches in school rules. In this way, all the children knew what was going on in different parts of the School. The Parliament initiated new projects and appointed special committees to report on school activities. Everyone, including the teachers, had to address the Chairman, who was one of the children.

The day began with a service followed by a record played on a gramophone. The service was in the Community Hall where reproductions of paintings were hung to widen the children's experiences. At lunch time, the staff and children sat down to a two course meal, also in the Community Hall, made with produce from the farm.

A feature of area schools was their capacity to involve the local community. Hagley Farm School was also a community centre which held courses for adults in farming methods. Local people could hold dances and other activities in its Community Hall. The community had a considerable influence on the farm's management through a Board made up of three farmers from Hagley and an officer of the state Department of Agriculture.

The cottage for child migrants included a dormitory, Matron's quarters, a sick bay, living room, kitchenette and locker room. However, in the 1940s, the Fairbridge Society could not send any children because the dangers of travelling in war time were too great. Instead, the School used the cottage to provide a residential education for up to 14 sons of Australian World War One and World War Two soldiers. They stayed at the School until they were 16 and learned farm work and domestic science. The children were selected on the basis of their 'circumstances' and 'probability of making good'. The Repatriation Department, Child Endowments, and the Department of the Army funded them.

One of the aims was to encourage the children to become farmers. The Commonwealth government wanted Australia to grow enough food to support its armed forces and civilians. In 1942, the Minister for the Army, Frank Forde, visited the School. According to the Launceston *Examiner*, in an address, he said:

One of the problems confronting Australia was to grow foodstuffs for the forces and civil population and Australia would be much greater if the importance of primary products was realised. The government wanted the people to stay on the land and not flock to the cities, but many who went on the land did not know anything about it. Judging by what he had seen the boys had learned a lot about farming and were destined to become useful citizens.

In an interview that followed the address, Forde said:

It was pleasing to find in Northern Tasmania an institution giving wonderful service for Australian boys and girls. It was destined to grow to greater proportions. In that way the democracies were providing for the rising generations to enjoy democratic institutions.

Even so, Maslin stressed that the children did not have to become farmers. Instead, he preferred that they find an occupation that suited their interests. In his book, *Hagley : the story of a Tasmanian Area School*, he wrote:

While a considerable amount of their training is on the farm and a number have left us for farm life we do not in any way attempt to regiment them all to be farmers. The regimentation of any group of children to any particular avocation would be ignoring the aspiration, the ability and the ambitions of the individual and is completely unsound. We subscribe to the belief that it is sound for every child to have a period in his life when he is close to the soil, to nature, and to animals, and better still to the primeval bush if that is possible, but we would be circumscribing their lives and limiting their progress if we attempted to regiment them towards one avenue of employment, just as much as we do when we sit children in desks for the whole of their school hours each day of the week.

In 2013, Hagley Farm School is Hagley Farm Primary School. It has a mixed dairy farm of 63 acres. Since 1976, it has provided day trips and camps for Tasmanian primary school children.

Gallery



Hagley Farm School, classroom (exterior)



Hagley Farm School, Boy's Dormitory, waking up at 6:30am



Hagley Farm School, swimming pool



Hagley Area School



Hagley Area School



Hagley Area School playing field



Hagley Farm School, going for a trip on the school lorry



Hagley Farm School, school canteen



Hagley Farm School, corner school canteen, prefects in charge of tables



Hagley Farm School, leisure time in the cottage



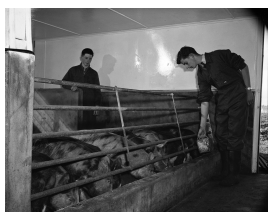
Hagley Farm School, student rotary hoeing a field



Hagley Farm School, student ploughing a field on a Ferguson tractor



Hagley Farm School, haystack



Hagley Farm School, pigs



Hagley Farm School, student and ram



Hagley Farm School, original outside door circa 1865



The ABC Exhibition Touring Trailer at Hagley Farm School

More info

Chronology

- Hagley State School (1855 - 1936)
 - **Hagley Farm School (1936 – 1976?)**
 - Hagley Farm Primary School (c. 1976 - current)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Education Department, State of Tasmania \(1885 - current\)](#)
The Education Department ran Hagley Farm School.

Related Events

- [Visit of John Moss \(1951\)](#)
John Moss inspected this home as part of his 1951 tour and report
- [Fact-Finding Mission on Child Migration \(1956\)](#)

Related Glossary Terms

- [Child Endowment \(1941 - 1976\)](#)
Hagley Farm School accommodated and educated the sons of Australian servicemen during the 1940s, partially funded by child endowment payments.

Related Organisations

- [Fairbridge Society Inc. \(1909 - 1987\)](#)
The Fairbridge Society sent child migrants to Hagley Farm School.

Related Concepts

- [Child Migration \(1800s - 1970s\)](#)

Resources

- Immigration Museum, [Stolen childhoods](#), 2012
- [Wants families to aid child migrants](#), The Mercury, 26 September 1951
- [Hagley Farm School](#), Examiner, 21 December 1945
- [Praise for achievements of Hagley Farm School](#), Advocate, 9 September 1953
- Hagley Farm School, [Hagley Farm School : an experiment in rural reorganisation, community life and education for citizenship](#), 1943
- [Any complaints? Not likely!](#), Examiner, 2 December 1953
- [With new friends](#), Examiner, 1 July 1953
- [Won trip](#), The Mercury, 8 September 1948
- Maslin, JS, *Hagley : the story of a Tasmanian Area School*, 1948

Records

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

Records

- [Hagley Farm Primary School Records \(1936 - current\)](#)
- [M3157 John Moss \(Child Welfare Expert of U.K\) \(1951 - 1952\)](#)
- [M3793 Fact Finding Mission on Child Migration \(1955 - 1956\)](#)
- [M82 Mr.J.S. Maslin, Hagley Area School \(1946 - 1957\)](#)
- [M135 Hagley Area Farm School \(1946 - 1962\)](#)

- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, multiple number series \(policy matters\) \(1922 - 1968\)](#)
 - [Correspondence Files \(1919 - 1998\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/hagley-farm-school/>