

Church of England Boys' Society Training Farm

1937 – 1950

Other Names:

- Sweet Hills Training Farm
- Lysterfield Boys' Farm
- St Hubert's Training Farm

Details

The Church of England Boys' Society Training Farm was established in 1937 in Lysterfield. It was first managed by The Rev. R.G. Nichols, and in 1942 was taken over by the Church of England Boys' Society (CEBS). In 1945, the Farm moved to Yering. At this time, the institution was known as St Hubert's. In 1950, the Training Farm was transferred to Burton Hall at Tatura, and the Yering property was sold.

The Church of England Boys' Society Training Farm was originally situated at Lysterfield. The land was purchased in 1935 by The Rev. R.G. Nichols who was organiser and honorary secretary of the farm from 1937. The Rev. Nichols handed over management of the Training Farm to the Church of England Boys' Society (CEBS) in 1942. When CEBS took over the Farm in 1942, there were 40 boys in residence there.

At the farm the boys were taught skills necessary for farm life, including raising poultry and cows, dairy-work, vegetable gardening, ploughing of fields and harvesting of crops, and meal preparation. The training farm also had a school attached, Lysterfield Boys' Home No. 4601, to educate the younger boys and operated from June 1942 until 1950.

The Society saw the Farm as a social service 'through which the privileged boys of the Church helped their brothers to find a worthy and useful niche in life'.

In 1937, Committee member and vicar Rev RG Nichols said that 'boys are trained for eight months in all departments of mixed farming. They are then placed in employment at 15 shillings a week and keep' (The *Argus*, 6 July 1937).

At a meeting in 1944, the Society decided on the following objects for the Lysterfield Farm:

- To provide a Christian home for boys
- To train such boys under our care in Christian citizenship and to help them find their vocation in life
- To give a scientific training in mixed farming to those whose vocation will be on the land

An internal historical document produced for the 75th anniversary of Ceps in 1988 records details of staff movements at the Farm. Mr J.R. Senior was appointed Commissioner of the Farm in 1943. In 1944, Mr A.E. Walker who had managed the Farm for some years resigned, and the Farm's welfare officer, Mr S.J. Clough, became Acting Principal. Clough became Vice Principal with the appointment of Mr W.A. Glover (who had been the Chief Commissioner of Ceps).

On 3 June 1944, there was a fire at Lysterfield, destroying the main barn and farm equipment. As the Society was planning the redevelopment of the site, it was announced that the land was to become a catchment area for water supply. The government took over the site in c.1945 to build Lysterfield Lake.

On 4 December 1945, the Farm was officially transferred from Lysterfield to Yering, 'a lovely property of 523 acres called St Hubert's'. Mr R.E. Parsons was appointed the new Farm Commissioner.

The *Age* reported on the move to St Hubert's, describing its 'ecclesiastical-looking building, with spire and clock' which had been originally been used to store wine vats, later becoming a milking shed, and now expected to be converted into a chapel for the boys of the farm (17 August 1945).

When the new farm at Yering opened in December 1945, the *Argus* reported that the 500 acre farm 'will give many boys a chance to find their niche in life and it is intended to erect a model home for up to 80 boys'.

The boys moved from Lysterfield to Yering in April 1946. While the equipment was moved from the old farm to the new, the boys stayed for 8 days at the Cebes camp in Frankston (*The Argus*, 9 April 1946).

In May 1946, the new farm at Yering was hallowed by the Archbishop. In 1947, Mr J. Kemp was appointed to assist Parsons as Farm Commissioner.

A fundraising drive to develop the Yering farm was launched in 1948, by the Lord Mayor. The official opening of this appeal entailed a relay from Yering to Melbourne, with members of Cebes carrying a message to the Lord Mayor. An advertisement in the *Argus* for the fundraising campaign used the slogan "A boy trained is a man gained", and mentioned that St Hubert's was "being developed to accept British boys as well as our own" (*The Argus*, 2 February 1948). The appeal involved selling "special St Hubert's rubber bricks" for a shilling each, they apparently made excellent pencil erasers.

The Society was preparing the Training Farm to receive child migrants from Britain. In 1948, a 330-acre farm at Tatura was donated to the Society by Mr AG Maskell. Initially, Cebes intended to use this property (Burton Hall) as an adjunct to the training farm at Yering, where boys would learn about irrigation and other branches of farming (*Church of England Messenger*, March 1948).

However, by 1949, the farm at Yering was experiencing difficulties, including the resignation of its Principal. The Society decided to sell the Yering property and transfer the farm's activities to Burton Hall at Tatura. Mr A.L. Browne was appointed Acting Principal at Yering until this transfer was completed.

In 1950, the Society placed an advertisement in the *Argus* reporting on its changed provision of farm training for boys. It stated that the anticipated supply of migrant boys for farm training was not materialising, and also that there was a shortage of local boys (partly due to the low wages offered for farm work at that time). For these reasons, the Society had decided to close the farm at Yering, and concentrate its activities at Burton Hall, Tatura. From mid 1950, the Society's activities in farm training were conducted under the name 'The CEBS Farm Training Scheme for Boys'.

The Lysterfield location has since become part of Lysterfield Park & Churchill National Park and has a Boys Farm Heritage Walk. The walk takes you through the former Boys Farm site, with interpretative signs explaining the remains including house foundations, cistern, a fireplace base marking the dormitory and remnants of a dairy.

Gallery



Church of England Boys Training Farm

Description: This is an image of the Church of England Boys Training Farm at Lysterfield. This image is provided on the Yarra Ranges Heritage Database for the Church of England Boys Training Farm page.



St. Huberts Clock Tower, c1950

Description: This is a photograph of the clock tower at St. Huberts Vineyard, Coldstream, taken around 1950. It shows the clock tower. It had previously been part of the Church of England Boys Society Training Farm at Yering, also known as St. Huberts Training Farm. According to the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum this clock tower was demolished in 1951.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Church of England Boys' Society \(1914 - current\)](#)

Date: 1942 - 1950

Related Organisations

- [Burton Hall Training Farm \(c. 1947 - 1967?\)](#)

In 1950, the Training Farm at Yering was sold, and boys were transferred to Burton Hall at Tatura.

Date: 1950 -

Resources

- Pear, David, [Nichols, Reginald Gordon Clement \(1888 - 1960\)](#), Australian Dictionary of Biography Online Edition, No date
- Church of England Boys' Society, [St Hubert's Church of England Boys' Society Training Farm, Yering, Vic.](#), 1948
- [Churches care for migrant orphans](#), The Argus, 5 February 1949
- Boyce, James, *For the record : background information on the work of the Anglican Church with Aboriginal children and directory of Anglican agencies providing residential care to children from 1830 to 1980*, 2003
- [Church of England Boys' Society Training Farm \(1937-50\)](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Church of England Boy's Society Training Farm
- Watts, Barry, [The Yering Boys](#), Yarra Glen & District Historical Society Newsletter, 2012
- *Fifty years on: a history of Ceb's in Melbourne - 1939-1988 - a companion volume to "The Surge of Youth"*, 1988

Other Resources



Title: Photographs from the Lysterfield Boys' Farm site

Type: Image

Date: June 2020

[Details](#)

Records

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

Records

- [Records of Church of England Boys' Society Farms \(1943 - 1977\)](#)
 - [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, Class 5 \(British Migrants\) \(1920 - 1957\)](#)
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