

# landra Methodist Rural Centre

1956 – 1974

- Other Names:**
- landra
  - Mount Oriel
  - landra Castle
  - Mt Oriel Homestead and Pastoral Estate
  - The Castle
  - Methodist Boys' Home

## Details

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The landra Methodist Rural Centre was at landra Castle at Greenthorpe, near Cowra. It was a training farm for boys aged 15 to 18 years who were first offenders and opened in 1956. In the first five years, over 50 young men lived there. landra was run by the Methodist Church's Department of Christian Citizenship from Sydney. It closed in 1974.

landra Methodist Rural Centre was established on the landra estate, using a concrete 'castle' that had been built over the top of an earlier brick homestead building in 1908. This 57-room Edwardian castle was the centrepiece of GH Greene's pastoral estate, and the 60 share farms and agricultural businesses that grew up around it were the basis for the development of the village of Greenethorpe. Greene died in 1911 and the property passed through the l'Anson family before it was bought by the Methodist Church in the 1950s and converted to a home for 'delinquent boys'.

The object of landra was to provide a home and mixed farm training for boys aged fifteen to eighteen years, who were from underprivileged homes or who had appeared before the Children's Court for whatever reason. The site used by the Church was 800 acres and it was run as a dairy and poultry farm and supervised by a committee of Methodist locals.

Film footage from 1966 about landra described it as being for boys from 'underprivileged or broken homes' and showed the boys undertaking various farming tasks on the self-sufficient property. It stated that there were up to 20 'lads' at landra, under the care of a superintendent and his wife, and receiving farming training from a farm manager. On Sundays, boys attended services at the on-site church that Greene had built for workers on his estate (British Pathe, 1966).

Reverend Harry Herbert, of UnitingCare ACT/NSW has acknowledged the high levels of institutionalisation and the unsatisfactory and sometimes abusive treatment of children at landra and other homes run by the Methodist Department of Christian Citizenship. Herbert credits Gordon Trickett, the head of the Methodist Department of Christian Citizenship, with overcoming the dehumanising institutionalisation of Methodist Homes. Trickett closed landra in 1974. Residents were transferred to Sydney to the new landra Lodge in Burwood, but that too was closed by Trickett, then the head of the Uniting Church Board of Social Responsibility, in the late 1970s.

landra Castle was sold to private owners in the 1970s and has been restored. It is officially called Mt Oriel Homestead and Pastoral Estate and is listed on the State Heritage Register because of its grand Federation Romanesque style, its unique concrete construction and outstanding gardens, outbuildings and grounds. The owners hold regular open days.

# Gallery

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**landra Castle (est by GH Greene), landra near Young [picture], by Brendon Kelson**

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**Manager's residence, landra near Young**

**Description:** This image shows the outside of the manager's home at landra Methodist Rural Centre.

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**Farm for underprivileged boys in New South Wales**

**Description:** This is footage from a voiceovered newsreel from 1966 about landra Methodist Rural Centre. The caption reads: 'VS Of large old mansion called landra. VS Some of the underprivileged boys who live in mansion and then they go off to work on the fields and in the pig pens. MS Group of boys, pan to flock of sheep. VS Boy collecting eggs from chicken battery. LS Boys attending the church. The boys are trained in farming techniques to get themselves a better start in life. GV Of farmlands from mansion. (Comb. F.G.) Old record suggests material dates from around 21/08/1966.'

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## More info

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### Chronology

- **landra Methodist Rural Centre (1956 – 1974)**
  - landra Lodge (1975 - c. 1979)

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Methodist Department of Christian Citizenship \(1965 - 1977\)](#)  
Date: 1965 - 1974
- [Methodist Department of Social Services \(c. 1943 - 1965\)](#)  
Date: 1956 - 1965

#### Related Organisations

- [Uniting Church Synod Archives \(1977? - current\)](#)  
Uniting Church Archives manages the records of Elsie Cook Cottage
- [Wesleyan Methodist Church of New South Wales \(1912 - current\)](#)

## Records

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

### Records

- [Former residents' files \(incomplete\), Iandra Methodist Rural Centre \(1956 - 1974\)](#)
  - [Letter Books, Iandra Methodist Rural Centre \(1960s - 1960s\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/iandra-methodist-rural-centre/>