

A PARADISE FOR BOYS

HIGH on the inland side of the Stirling range in South Australia, and only a few miles off the Hume highway, is situated the Salvation Army Eden Park home for boys. This healthy mountain farm setting, 48 boys are accommodated under ideal conditions in a home which provides every modern amenity and where a staff of able and willing workers, under the management of Brigadier Reg-

inald Lawler, toils for the physical and spiritual well-being of the lads.

A new building recently opened is soon to be followed by a second similar extension. The stately old stone building of the original home are facilities undreamed of when the Army first leased the

building in the year 1900.

The history book of the home records that at the turn of the century the Army established the home with Captain Michel and Lieut. Cresswell in charge. "This magnificent property," wrote the historian, "consisting of 133 acres of good land, a

large house of 17 rooms, all outbuildings and stables . . . was accepted by Commandant H. H. Booth as a boys' home." In 1905 Staff Captain (later Colonel) Arthur Arnott helped to raise funds to purchase the property, and 10 years later some extensions were added,



TOP RIGHT: A view taken from the tower of the old building, showing the layout of the two new home units with the married officers' flat in the centre, and the sloping farmlands in the distance. Another similar building is to be erected during the centenary year.

ABOVE: The stately original homestead of Eden Park was erected in the 19th century from stone quarried on the property, leased by the Army in 1900, and purchased five years later.

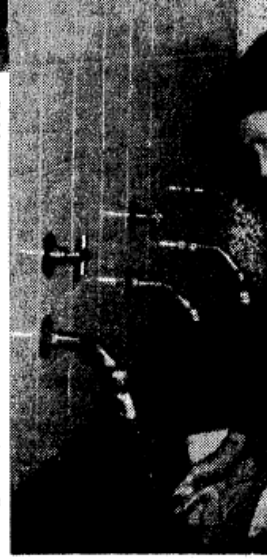
BELOW: Typical of the well-appointed and adequate ablution facilities of the home is this stainless steel foot-washing trough. Terrazzo floors and chrome fittings make for easy maintenance.



ABOVE: Mrs. S. Heinze takes the junior class at the home school. Her husband teaches the older group, and 10 boys go to Mt. Barker high school where two of them (twins) are prefects.

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The manager chats with some of the boys in a spacious lounge room in the new section. The room has a slow combustion heater, lino tile floors, large mats, a comfortable soft vinyl covered chair for each of the eight boys who use it, and a 23-in. television set donated by the Lions club.

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RIGHT: Mr. Fred Clark (left) is in charge of the dairy, where 30 cows are milked with a four unit machine and the help of two or three of the older boys. The herd includes 45 cows and some calves, and a change is being made from Jersey to Holstein. (The black-and-white cow in the centre is a Holstein.) See also page 8.



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Alexandrina, at the mouth of the Murray river, is still in a sense the nerve centre of the institution.

For instance, it houses a new water heating system, adequate for present and future extensions, which uses oil from an underground tank. An oil company tanker pumps 1½ tons of oil into the outdoor filler at regular intervals.

The large kitchen, which is still being remodelled, has stainless steel-topped benches, power potato masher, pie warmer, a slow combustion stove, other electric appliances, and a 200 cub. ft. cool room.

Another ultra modern ablution block is housed in this building, and there is also the dining room and bedrooms. Upstairs are staff quarters.

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The manager is happy to show visitors the spot in a bedroom, formerly the dining room-meeting hall, where a boy who came to the home in 1912 accepted Christ. The particular significance of the event is that the lad is now a senior Salvation Army officer holding an important post in the Southern territory.

The old walls have been silent detectors of a total of 4,000 boys who have passed through the corridors over the years, and many of them freely acknowledge their indebtedness to the home and to the officers who have laboured there.

The Methodist minister at a large centre in South Australia attributes his Christian experience to the influence of the home, and his relatives send clothing every year in gratitude for the help given.

Another boy who lived at Mt. Barker became the mayor of one of the larger cities within the Adelaide metropolitan area, and a funeral service was conducted recently by an Army officer.

A recent visitor was a Sydney health inspector who came back after 52 years to show his wife where he had received his early

Christian training. He had left the home at 16 and, with no relatives to guide him, had tried to model his life on the lives of the officers at the home. He married a Christian girl, and one of their sons is a Methodist minister.

A more recent story concerns a boy who, although only 9 years of age, had been expelled from more than one school, and was supposedly incapable of learning or of behaving himself. But with the kind direction of Mr. and Mrs. S. Heinze (both dedicated school teachers) at the home school the lad turned out well.

While on a holiday at his own home, he cried for his friends at Eden Park—he missed them so much!

Any story about this historic home would be incomplete without mentioning the late Brigadier Edward Townsend (R), who was appointed to Mt. Barker in 1906 as a Lieutenant and served there for seven years. He was married at this home in the hills, and later served again as manager. Last year, aged 83, he came from Lithgow (N.S.W.) for the opening of the new building. Another manager still living is Major Harry Parkes (R) of Adelaide. The present manager has held that position for 13 years—and is happy to continue!

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HOLIDAY CAMP

THERE are recreational facilities at the home, but holiday times bring special thrills for the boys. During the September and January holiday periods Brigadier Lawler takes the boys to the Coorong, facing Encounter Bay on the coast of South Australia, where the home has a 36 ft. by 16 ft. mission hut and a large shed. There is swimming, surfing, fishing and "rabbiting." The boys learn to take care of themselves in the bush and to live off the land.

The camp is reached after a

journey by truck. Then a boat is rowed across the stretch of water to where a 20 ft. by 6 ft. pontoon capable of carrying one and a half tons is waiting, stored in the hut.

All of the boys who do not go home for holidays go on this trip. In the September 1964 holidays the 36 boys netted 500 fish (the manager has a fisherman's licence) and caught 130 rabbits, besides other game. The boys are taught to cook their own catches, and are permitted to "go bush" now and then for a day, taking supplies, with the proviso that certain rules be observed.

In the May holidays they go to another camp site near Overland Corner, on the Murray.

Dairying is the main farm activity, but grain crops are also grown; bee-keeping has in some seasons yielded well (the highest year was about 26 cwt. of honey) and fruit and vegetables grown there also assist the finances and help vary the menu.

Spiritual activities have proper place (several of the boys are converted), and besides regular meetings at the home, there is an occasional visit to the corps at Murray Bridge.

The capable and dedicated staff includes, besides Brigadier and Mrs. Lawler, Captain and Mrs. Ian Huxley and five employees.

When Alfred Tennyson wrote the words: "This other Eden, this demi-paradise . . ." he was eulogising England, his native land. An Australian poet might find similar inspiration if in spring-time he visited the Eden Park boys' home as it clings firmly to the flowing, billowed skirts of the green clad old hills near Adelaide.

But the Salvationist—poet or no—will appreciate most of all the continual work being done to give less privileged boys a good help along on the road of life, together with some advice from the best of all guide books, and an introduction to the most faithful of Friends.