

– NARRABURRA RECREATION –

Narraburra residents have always worked hard to maintain an active social life. During the 19th Century, life on the land was often difficult; consequently any recreational time was enjoyed to the hilt. Up until the 1940s, picnics and organised sporting days were in vogue and attended en masse.

Narraburra locals enjoyed music, dances and other social gatherings regularly, however sport was always a favoured pastime with residents competing against other farming districts in various sports in local com-petition/tournaments among much rivalry.

As transportation improved, the reliance on recreational facilities in small rural districts decreased, with most sporting and recreational organisations becoming centralised in Temora or neighbouring towns. With this, the majority of recreational facilities gradually disappeared. As residents came and went and the effects of outside influences such as wars, economic conditions and environmental factors, recreational pursuits may have fluctuated, but remained a constant thread for the community.

RECREATION RESERVES

Both official and unofficial reserves were the centrepiece for much of the recreational and sporting activities shared by the Narraburra community.

Narraburra Recreation Reserve

The first recreation ground was located in an area where most of the earlier settlers were located, close to the Narraburra Hotel and the Narraburra Creek. It is not known the exact date when this ground was established, but it was recorded in the 1895 Parish of Narraburra map.

This ground was Portion 75 in the Parish of Narraburra. The old Narraburra School block, (Portion 13, 2 acres) was in the northwest corner of this block. This reserve was used for sports and was the site for football matches. The Narraburra races were conducted on a separate area opposite the Narraburra Hotel.

According to Ralph Heinrich in his Narraburra Memories, the old recreation ground was inclined to flood so a new ground was sought.

In 1912 the recreation ground moved to its present site, south of the old of Narraburra Post Office, being in front of the original Richard Warren farm (later owned by Jack and then Kevin Kite called "Pine Flat") in the Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR). The site has tennis courts and a cricket pitch.

It was on May 19, 1915 that the reserve was finally confirmed, and trustees nominated at a meeting in July, as reported in the Temora Independent on July 15, 1915.

A very successful meeting was held at the Narraburra Hotel on Saturday evening, 10th instant. Mr. W. Schliebs occupied the chair. The meeting was called for the dual purpose of appointing trustees for the newly granted recreation ground and for making arrangements for the celebration of Australia Day in some suitable manner.

For the recreation ground the following were appointed: Fred Traeger, W. Schliebs, R. Warren, G Doolan, H. Muir and T. Kite Jnr.

Regular sporting competitions were held within the reserve, including cricket, tennis (up until the 1980s) and football, but the area also became a focus for social events of the district.

The mere existence of the reserve was not without controversy, with a Local Land Board sitting held at Barmedman in September 1934 to consider an application to have the Narraburra recreation reserve transferred from its present site to Little Narraburra, adjacent to the hall and Burlington tennis courts.

The hearing, nearing 11 hours, was told that the application that the transfer of the site should benefit the majority of residents of the district. It would be more central and convenient.

In opposition it was stressed that the ground had been at its present site for about 21 years, and said there was no logical reason for its transfer, as it had served a good purpose where it was.

The Land Board refused the application to move the recreation reserve.

While formal documentation has not been revealed for other reserves in the district, it is believed there was a recreation area, consisting of tennis courts and a cricket pitch, up in the Narraburra Hills where the stock route meets the creek, located in the corner of 'Chasewater' (part of Bill Ferguson's farm, now owned by Phil Davies). There were tennis courts at the bottom of 'Brockley' and a cricket pitch nearby, both located in the TSR.

A map from 1891 also reveals The Rocks Recreation Area, along Traeger's Lane, in the vicinity of The Rocks Hotel.

Little Narraburra Hall also had some tennis courts nearby, with the hall facilities used for afternoon teas, and the toilets also used by players. The courts were erected on land owned by Henry Byrnes, and were thought to have been used up until the 1940s, and later pulled down after a lack of use. Likewise, a recreation area surrounded Narraburra Hall, which was the focus of community events.

SPORTS

The most common sports contested throughout the district were those typical of the era, cricket and tennis, along with Australia Rules Football and even horse racing.

Cricket

In 1925, the cricket teams in the district were Narraburra and Little Narraburra, Duck Creek (now Trungley Hall). It was also noted in the Temora Independent that some interesting games had been played between Carumbi and Milvale, contesting the Smith Trophy.

By 1934 there didn't appear to be any Narraburra cricket teams but teams from Morangorell (now Morangarell), Chellington and Lintondale. Some of the players for Morangorell and Chellington often had some of the same players as they lived in a similar area and often relatives and friends were dragged in.

Tennis

Reports as early as 1906 detailed tennis games between teams formed around the district. Most of the small farming areas had a tennis team which contested the district competition. This saw players travelling between areas including Milvale, Gidginbung, Burlington, Willundry, Springdale, Clear Hills, Narraburra, Kelvin Grove (Combaning) and Red Hills.

Narraburra Tennis Tournaments were held as late as the 1980s, with players travelling from throughout and beyond the district to contest sections for men, ladies and juniors.

Horse Racing

Narraburra Racing Club was thought to have been formed around 1885, and held meetings through until the early 1920s.

Football

Few records are held from the early days of football in the Narraburra district, but it is thought the Narraburra Australian Rules Football Club began around 1913. Among the memorabilia which still exists is a photograph of the Narraburra team from 1938. complete with team names.



L to R BACK ROW: J. Woods, B. Steinhardt, Theo Mangelsdorf, M. Debritt, C. Muir, J. Murphy, Mr. Andy Frater (with shield) Mr. Forbes, A. Debritt, Tony Debritt.
FRONT ROW: D. Steinhardt, G. Misson, N. Dew, Allan Forbes, Herb Dew (CAPT.) V. Debritt, W. Wardought, K. Hamilton, J. Macilannie