

Moore Park History

Since Brisbane's establishment as a penal settlement in 1825 the area of Moore Park has seen numerous changes. Land was opened up west of Brisbane for sheep and cattle farming and Moggill Road was built in 1849. A sheep quarantine reserve followed in 1879 reaching past the Western Freeway of today. Indooroopilly State School was established in 1889. After its closure the quarantine reserve area was divided and its eastern part became Moore Park, named after the local councillor and president of the Divisional Board T. John Moore. With land lost for the construction of the Western Freeway, Moore Park now covers just over 10 ha.



Pilates at Moore Park, one of the many activities offered under the Brisbane City Council's [active and healthy parks project](#).

The neighbourhood has always embraced Moore Park. We know of Sunday School picnics organised by Taringa Baptist Church before WWII, of cricket and Scouts events. Everybody has heard the sound of Jim Muir's bagpipe coming from the park. Children head to school, parents watch their young ones on the playground. Dogs are being walked. Early morning joggers meet those who want to observe nature, and since 2000 two local bushcare groups worked tirelessly to improve Moore Park.

Indooroopilly Sheep Quarantine Grounds

The area of land now called Moore Park at Indooroopilly was a sheep quarantine reserve from July 1876 to December 1905. Originally managed by the Chief Inspector of Sheep in the Colonial Secretary's Office it was transferred to the Department of Agriculture (now Department of Primary Industries) along with that function in July 1897. Harry Beck was resident Quarantine Keeper at the Indooroopilly Sheep Quarantine Grounds from its establishment to disposal.

A large area of land close to the City proved advantageous when research into cattle diseases began in Queensland and the site was used as an experimental station. In 1889 two of Louis Pasteur's students undertook an experiment there to provide a means for combating bovine pleuropneumonia in what was the first animal disease research trial in Queensland. This was undertaken for the Queensland Government.



Quarantine Keeper's Residence

Later, in 1897, CJ Pound, Queensland Government Bacteriologist, undertook tick fever inoculation studies. These, the first such trials in Australia, established a methodology and dosage that is still used worldwide. A cattle dip was built on the site in 1898 and until 1905 was used by the Department of Agriculture to establish a suitable dipping preparation and procedure for the destruction of cattle ticks.

[Information compiled in May 2003 by the Office of the Chief Scientist, Department of Primary Industries (DPI), and used with permission. For further information, contact the DPI Call Centre on 13 25 23]

Memories of a Local Family



Just upstream from Moore Park, alongside the cricket oval, is a new housing development. The area it occupies was owned by the McKenzie family. Wally and Betty McKenzie remembered that Witton Creek was a series of waterholes with deep swimming pools, and that tiger quolls and rufous bettongs were last seen in the 1950s, a dingo was sighted along the creek in 1981. Until 1982 natural vegetation remained along 509 metres of creek passing through the McKenzie property.

"The dominant tree, right through to Russell Terrace, was the weeping bottlebrush which, in late spring, became a ribbon of red with the spectacular display of flowers. Honeyeaters, lorikeets and numerous other birds fed in these trees, and ringtail possums built bulky nests of twigs and vines high in their twisting branches. The rough trunks were hosts to elkhorn ferns. Banks with a south-easterly aspect were the habitat of six different kinds of ground orchids – two species of greenhoods, helmet orchids, autumn bird orchids, pixie caps and pure white caladenias. Shading these were extensive communities of Brisbane "wattle and hovea, which were a glory of yellow and purple blossoms in late winter. Many fern varieties flourished near the water."

(Source: Ms McKenzie in W. Davies, *Wildlife of the Brisbane Area*, 1983 Jacaranda Press)



"Housing developments, the building of the current cricket oval as well as the extension of the Primary School's oval, and especially the construction of the Western Freeway have changed the landscape substantially. The wildlife corridor to the Mount Coot-tha Reserve disappeared and with it numerous native animals. The creek bed was changed in places, a tributary's water flow was diverted through a system of pipes. Exotic weeds such as camphor laurels, Chinese elms, ochna and many others invaded Moore Park."

Cricket at Moore Park

"First there was a concrete cricket pitch just below the Indooroopilly School area. I played many games there against Taringa, Sherwood and other schools. When I was a little boy about eight years old my mother would dress me in whites (just like a cricketer) and she would give me one penny. I would buy eight lollies for the penny and off I would go down Russell Terrace to Moore Park to watch the cricket. Taringa Methodist Church played there in the "Church Competition".....The concrete cricket pitch [just above today's oval where the Freeway runs] was covered with coir matting on match days..... [Next to it] was another oval where Sunday cricket was played.....I remember Queensland cricketers play including Tex Rodgers.....About 1935 my two brothers George, Cecil and I began playing cricket [close to the entrance of Moore Park]All we had was a compo ball, an old bat and two rusty kerosene tins for a wicket and at the other end a stone to bowl from. The animal "dip" was about 30 yards beyond, and often the cricket ball would go into the dip. We would rub it off and carry on with the game. Of course, on the other side was Witton Creek. So we had to be careful not to hit the ball there.....



About 1936/37 we decided to form a team called Indooroopilly Rover Cricket Club.....We considered ourselves good enough to join the Warehouse Division in 1939. We played on concrete and as Taringa Methodist had vacated the oval at Moore Park, we played there.....In September 1939 war came and our entire team joined the various services.....Our fast bowler Allan MacArther was killed on the Kokoda Track... [After the war] it was decided to call ourselves "Indooroopilly Diggers Cricket Club", as another team had taken our old name.....of course, we played at our old pitch at Moore Park. We joined the Second Division Association, and as all teams played on 'turf' we decided to dig up the old concrete pitch and lay a turf wicket.....Our club grew and grew and by 1955 we were the most powerful club in our division with over 80 members. We held functions to raise money..... We held Christmas Tree parties at Moore Park with 150 children attending [and] Santa giving out presents.....We won several premierships..... Johnny Draney went on to play for Queensland..., Frankie Beaverson and Frank Spears played for Qld Colts and Andy Stewart and George Negus played for Wests. Our club was a nursery for West Cricket club. The Taringa Rovers Soccer Club used our oval during the off-season.....[When the Western Freeway was built during the 1970s] it ran through our oval at Moore Park.....The Council built a brand new oval below the old one.....The oval and pitch have become recognised as one of the best in the Division now known as Sub-District."

(Jim Watt, reproduced with his permission)

Scouts at Moore Park

Moore Park has played a positive role throughout the local Scout history. The Indooroopilly Scouts are one of the oldest continuously serving Scouting groups not



Photo: Libby Wager, courtesy Lexie Smiles

only in Australia but in the world. It is unclear whether the founder of the Scout Movement, Baden-Powell, ever came to Moore Park. But we know he met the local Scout leader 'Pal' Williams in nearby Ivy Street during his visit to Australia in 1934.



Photo: Bob Greet, courtesy Baden-Powell Museum

Lesleigh John 'Pal' Williams served Scouting throughout his life. He would have been there in 1927 when the Governor of Queensland Sir John Goodwin was welcomed as the new State Chief Scout during a combined rally held at Moore Park in 1927 (above and left).

The park hosted Scout Camps where "concerts and campfires were organised for the parents, and half a beast was cooked in a deep pit for lunch the following day." Cubs had many day outings to Moore Park.

When the old quarters in Ivy Street became too cramped and while a new den was built at Finney Road, the cubs held their meets in bushlands at Moore Park.

(Source: Lexie Smiles w. G. de Silva, *Around the Campfire, An illustrated History of Indooroopilly Scouts 1909-1991*, 2000 Indooroopilly, Indooroopilly Scout Group)



Photo: Jan Pieters, courtesy Lexie Smiles