

## **Briars Culture....what is it ???**

**The Briars club has lasted a century based on an ethos of volunteering and the promotion of Amateur Sport. A little while ago some of its long standing members explain what defines this special Briars culture.**

**Bill Hooker** *(Cricket and Hockey Player)*

I believe that the strong "family" nature of being a member of The Briars is very much imbedded in our history from those days in 1918 and the strong leadership that our past members have instilled within us.

Most of our members have joined The Briars as a teenager or in their early 20's. These are very much the formative years where a boy's attitudes, values & character are developed.

It was that fine leadership combined with a Club that valued it's history and achievements that made The Briars a unique sporting club whereby very few left to play elsewhere – and if they did they would respect the Briars family for what it had given them.

The Briars culture that was so successfully instilled within us as young members was to enjoy the mateship of your fellow members, the history and achievements of the past – those vivid memories of being a Briar.

**David Walker** *(deceased...ex Patron, President, Director, played all the major Briars sports of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century)*

In my years in at Briars at Burwood, we paid for own sporting gear, paid our match fees, didn't seek sponsorships or wear subsidized logos, we all worked voluntarily to run the different sports. We were happy to serve behind the bar, At Rothwell we provided BBQ's, Arvo teas, etc. At Burwood Park put up& took down those goal posts. We now have sponsorships to financially back our sports. All well and good, but this has taken away the individual's previous Briar tradition of giving their support & effort to the Club, not just taking from the Club what it has to offer.

**Ian Richard** *(ex President, director, Rugby Player)*

The ethos or culture of Briars is apparent and obvious and I find it hard to define. Such words as camaraderie, comradeship, conviviality, esprit de corps, fellowship, etc can all be used and all help but don't hit the mark exactly. The pride that a member had, by being a Briar, and the respect held by competing clubs' was apparent and obvious. This respect was known widely and extended interstate and overseas

**Jim Barrett** *(Rugby Player)*

I had pride and loyalty towards the Briars because it was 'Special'. It catered for youth who wanted to play a variety of amateur sport, who either because of level of skill, availability of time, preference, etc , did not participate in 'grade'. The club was a true amateur self help sporting club. 'No sport participation, no membership'. No bludgers.

**Peter Mansford** *(Cricket and Hockey)*

With regard to "the Briars Culture", I believe that this can best be defined as;Pride in being a member, and in being recognised as a BriarPride in representing Briars on the various sporting fields, as well as cherishing the camaraderie this developed off the field with your team-mates and/or opponents.

**Mike Matthews** *(Rugby)*

Culture of the Briars, to me is the total of many parts that made a terrific club. I'm sure you are familiar with the components, but as you asked me my views, here are some of what I think identify the culture of our sporting club.

In no particular order, 2 years qualification , new member functions, participation on committees, realistic training requirements, active recruitment programs, awareness of our history , enforceable behaviour standards, social functions.

### Chris Walker (Rugby)

"..... what our culture involved which for me includes the following:-."

- Our unique heritage
- Our focus on sporting involvement and the value of sports based friendships on and off the field.
- The automatic friendship and camaraderie which kicked in any time you met and were with Briars of any sport background anywhere around the world.
- The culture which derived from and thrived around our new members' process and 2 year competitive sport rules.
- The opportunity to grow up with older and younger blokes who shared the same club service ethic and social behaviour code.
- The fact that making profits was not our focus. Trying to win at sport, supporting the clubs culture of 100% voluntary service was our reason for being.
- Once the majority of your club do not share the same code of ethics, culture and membership criteria then your ethos is diluted.
- Meat raffles, lucky badge or some-such draws, drinking with complete strangers was never part of Briars culture.

### Philip England (Rugby)

It is vital that we respect and remember our founders. We must ensure that the generation of Briars to follow are able to experience the same spirit and culture of the Briars Sporting Club, that we received. Whilst we were influenced by our Rugby culture, it is important to ensure that sports like hockey (currently based at Cintra for most of their activities) and now bowls are actually really part of the Briars ethos and culture.

What does this culture mean? Well all things to all people but importantly:-

- \* **Working hard and playing hard** within social and ethical boundaries
- \* **Learning to function in a team** based environment and being responsible for ourselves and others
- \* **Supporting our friends** and developing young people to grow and foster in a positive atmosphere.
- \* **Enjoying a drink** without the hostilities and anger of many of today's teenagers in our now multi cultural society.
- \* **Setting standards** of excellence on and off the sporting field

### Greg McPhee's family thoughts (Rugby)

**Son's reply:** The reason I joined Briars was largely due to your association with them. When I started playing rugby for them, I did not live locally nor did I know anyone who played for them. I joined Briars largely due to how positive your experiences with them have been. The main recollections I have from childhood of your association with Briars are the long term friendships you had built from Briars and the Briars connection, where people from all walks of life were/are members of Briars and can be called upon from their industry of expertise by any other Briar.

What I think now is that I feel a sense of pride whenever I wear the briars jersey and could not play for any other rugby club. When I started playing rugby we had to attend a new members' night with a power point about the club's history. I thought it a bit strange at the time but now appreciate that the briars history, culture and visions are important for each player to know.

**Daughter's reply:** Having made lifelong friends not only for you but also for us. Running into Briars all around the world and knowing you can turn to almost any of them for help throughout any part of life, all Briars members are willing to help each other out.

Being a part of something that is well known throughout Sydney and brings some recognition to where you come from if you meet someone saying you are a Briar

Growing up I have come to find that many of the Briars my dad has befriended over the years have become a part of my extended family, I have grown up knowing their extended families.

**Briars currently play 6 major sports for seniors and juniors. They are Cricket, Rugby, Hockey, Squash, Lawn Bowls and Netball. All these offer opportunity to experience the culture this unique sporting club offers to members of our community.**