

## Briars fist rugby Tour – Bathurst 1924

The footballers; had another successful season winning many games.

The opportunity was taken during this season to take a team to Bathurst for the Kings Birthday weekend.

Matches were played against Bathurst High School and "All Saints", with our fellows winning both games. Although it had been a practice in the past for cricket teams to go to Berowra, or for parties of the lads to go away for a week-end together, this was the first occasion when anything as big was attempted. The Mayor of Bathurst accorded the Club's representatives a Civic welcome and the following description of the match against Bathurst High School given some idea of the keenness of the play.

*The Briar's team was as follows:*

### Fullback

McMILLAN

### Three quarters.

MURRAY McDADE CLARK O'BRIEN

### Halves

HILL JENKYN

### Forwards

WICKS PAGE McANALLY

EVITT GOODSSELL

McGREGOR MEULAN PERRIN

There were a fair number of spectator's present, including many of the feminine sex, when Jenkyn set the ball in motion. Play hovered around half-way for the early part of the game. Scraggy play by both sides followed. brightened up by occasional dashes. Briars being slightly heavier than their opponents, were able to obtain the ball from the scrum, and line-out, but faulty handling, spoilt many movements, Bathurst put the ball in the air from a free kick and forced their way into Briars territory, where McMillan relieved with a splendid line kick. However, Bathurst came again and Bratten picking up near the line crossed in. Giddings converted, and Bathurst led by 5- nil. From the kick-off Briars worked down field by forward rushes. From a scrum Jenkyn obtained and gained much ground in a clever passing rush with Hill. These two passed and re-passed to one another and when blocked the ball was passed to Meulman who knocked-on when unopposed. A certain try was thus lost. Shortly after, however, Briars forwards came with another rush and McGregor scored after the ball had been toed over Bathurst's line. McMillan failed to convert, and the score stood 5-3.

Play again became scraggy. Jenkyn was injured and retired temporarily returning just before half-time. On the resumption the Briars commenced to play good football and delighted the crowd by the manner in which they threw the ball about. Jenkyn and Hill combined nicely and the handling was much better.

Briars went very close to scoring on several occasions. By now the game had livened up considerably and becoming more spectacular.

Bathurst was pressing and tried hard to score, but McMillan's sound defence drove them back. Hill now came into the limelight by breaking through and making an opening for McGregor who accepted his pass and scored his second try. McMillan again failed with the kick and the score was 6-5.

Both sides were playing great football and the feature of the game was the hard tackling of Bathurst. Several Briars receiving minor injuries. Bathurst was awarded a penalty and Giddings made a good but unsuccessful effort at goal with the ball going just outside the post. Briars were reproducing their old form and were handling and passing well, opening up the game and indulging in many forward movements. From one of these McGregor registered his third try. Murray failed at goal. Score 9 - 5 in Briars favour.

After this, play see - sawed from one end of the field to the other. Giddings of Bathurst repeatedly broke away but Briars defence was solid. On one occasion their wing-forward broke away unsupported but was grassed by McMillan with a splendid low tackle five yards from our line. From the ensuing scrum Briars relieved with a line - kick which gained forty yards . Jenkins obtained from the line- out and set his backs moving, the ball travelling right across the field to Murray who crossed in. The same player failed at goal. Score 12-5.

Shortly after this, the final whistle sounded.

For the lighter side of the trip we must call upon our worthy raconteur whose previous comments have already enlivened this chronicle. He has the following remarks to make:-"With coats and bags and rugs and with our lapels streaming with Maroon and Gold ribbons, the First XV set off on a remarkable Friday night in the 'City of the Plains' You, dear reader, will note that it pleased us to carry out the best school traditions, our blazers always being marked 1st XV or 1st XI despite the fact that there were no second teams in either sport. We prided ourselves on our Club flag and used any and every occasion for sporting yarns and yards of maroon and gold ribbon. "We even (Heaven forgive us I) had a War Cry which went as follows: -

*'Boom chinga Boom.*

*Boom chinga Boom.*

*Boom chinga chinga chinga Boom chinga Boom.*

*Sis boom bar .*

*Sis boom bar.*

*Briars Briars Briar.*

*YAH YAH YAH.'*

To the strains of this horrible chant we left Central filling in time (for all of us were too excited to sleep) with desperate games of penny Poker. In the early hours of the morning, tired and hardy but frozen to the bone with the bitter cold, we arrived at our hotel and promptly went to bed. Perc Murray, Ted Perrin and the writer, as inseparable in those days as the Three Musketeers , shared a room. We were awakened a few hours later by the squeaky voice of 'Spartan Ted ' complaining that the shower wouldn't work. That hardy individual wanted to indulge in his usual early morning cold shower. This mark you .- when the temperature was such that the very puddles in the street were frozen hard!

Apart from the actual matches played we had a great time. We roamed all over the picturesque old town going as far as attending the beautiful cathedral for Sunday night's service. Wandering through one of the many parks on one occasion, we jokingly challenged a team of the local college girls, who were practicing hockey, to a game. Much to our consternation, they accepted and produced sufficient sticks for us to use. After a little coaching by Ron Wicks, whose sisters were hockey Internationals, we started off but, like the little gentlemen we were, we did not win – probably because we were watching our opponents instead of the ball. At night we sat in the saloon bar of the pub in front of a roaring fire and pretended to be hardened toppers by drinking **O.T.** and lemonade out of pint pots (them was the days!). Our visit was climaxed by a grand dinner tendered by the local sporting bodies. Here let a little bit of scandal be introduced. Though our train left well after midnight, some of our 'Don Juans' almost missed it, so long did their farewells take"

*From Ready Skill and Manly Courage  
Briars History circa 1938*