

A great article about the Briars Centenary published in the Sydney Morning Herald  
By Peter Fitzsimons – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018

## Celebrating a century of Briars

Back. Waaay back when, after the Dreamtime, but well before Blue Hills started, back in early August 1918 I say, back in Sydney's western suburbs a group of likely lads, aged nine to 13, who delighted in playing street-cricket – “Over the fence is six, but if you break Mrs Cafoops window, you're out and on your own, cobber” – decided to form a sporting club. A sacred meeting thus took place in a chook pen in the backyard of Bob Clark's place, just off the Appian Way, Burwood. Bobby himself was the key driver, and so became, if you please, the “Honorary Secretary”.

What are we going to call it, lads? Well, what about the name of our first “President” Jacko's house? The Stones have a grand house in Kelso St, with its own indoor dunny and everyfink, and it's called “The Briars”.

Yes, that's it! “The Briars Sports Club,” has a nice ring to it. Initially, the lads just ran and swam and played cricket and rugby among themselves. But in 1922, by the time they are young bucks, they enter a Briars team in the local cricket competition and did likewise with rugby a year later. They go on to build a sporting library and a tennis court, and in 1929 – now young men and with a burgeoning membership – they lease a club room in Burwood. Two Briars, Mal Blair and Billy Mann, toured the UK with the famous Waratahs of 1927–28 and 157 members from a list of 187 served during World War II. Sixteen didn't come home. The club has produced Wallabies and Olympians, and today has 1200 juniors and 800 seniors participating in cricket, rugby, hockey, squash, netball and lawn bowls. No other sporting club has a story quite like it.

On August 4 at Sydney Olympic Park, Briars is holding a centenary dinner with, appropriately, a great marathon runner, Robert de Castella, as guest speaker. The centenary history of the club is also being launched. Deek follows in the footsteps of some famous names who have spoken at past annual dinners, including legends such as Alan McGilvray, John Thornett, Dawn Fraser, Nick Farr-Jones and Louise Sauvage.

Old and young Briars seeking details and tickets can visit  
[www.briarssports.com.au](http://www.briarssports.com.au)

Bravo, you Briars.

<https://www.smh.com.au/sport/great-danes-how-jedinak-s-outlaw-routine-shocked-the-old-world-order-20180622-p4zn48.html> (scroll down in article)