

The Blair Family

Malcolm Riggall Blair (1905 – 1963)

When we talk of standout sportsmen in The Briars club we cannot go past Malcolm Blair or Mal as he was known. His parents sent him to Sydney Grammar school, as was the case with son Ian Blair (1944 -). A gifted sportsman he played in the first fifteen Rugby Union side and in the first eleven cricket team. He was also a rower who stroked the first four but not the first eight as six boys from the previous year returned to school. That year Grammar won the Head of the River. He was school shot-put champion in his final year. A short time after school days were concluded Mal joined the Briars. The year 1920. He was to play for the club at both cricket and football including the 1934 Burke cup side. The state and national selectors came calling some years earlier. In 1927 – 28, aged 22, the versatile front row forward toured with The Waratahs on their tour of Britain, France and Canada. There was a premiership with Wests in 1929 where he played in the front row, three Tests and twenty games for NSW. Even though he only played 60 games for Wests he was still selected in the club's team of the century. Blair was the rugby coach at Briars in 1933, 1934 and 1938.

Briars gave Mal much in life and he sought to repay the club in various ways. He was appointed a Vice president in 1936. On the sporting fields he played cricket, he was in the clubs first ever cricket team in the 1922-23 season scoring the first runs for the club, golf, snooker and table tennis. His trophy cabinet at home was evident of his prowess. He served on the club committee for 15 years, was club treasurer for a period and a Vice President from 1938-1963. When he died in 1963 he had been a member of the club for 44 of its 45 years existence.

Ian Geoffrey Scott Blair (1944 -)

Sydney Grammar School has over the years been a channel by which the Briars have been the recipient of new members, either through club connections or family association. The oldest family membership at the time of writing is the Blair family 1920 to present. Ian played cricket and football at school and transferred his playing interest to Briars when he joined the club in December 1962. He was so keen to join the club that he finished school on the Thursday and was a Briar on the next day, following a grilling on why he wanted to be a member by Bob Clark and Bruce Trevenar. Ian has played cricket in all grades – C Juniors right through to A Shires. In the 1974 – 75 season he was captain the A Shires team and was captain of the A Shires team when they won the competition in the 1980-81 season after a drought of 25 seasons. Ian continued playing cricket until 1999. Football also featured including the 1964 and 1966 Burke Cup sides which were beaten in the finals. Ian travelled overseas in 1965 and 1973 with the Briars football teams to New Zealand. In 1973-74 it was crickets turn for Ian to tour overseas.

When one thinks of administration in the past 45 years one cannot go past Ian's capacity to serve. There have been time on club boards and committees, a director initially in 1973 and again -2005-2016, club secretary, Assistant Treasurer and President of Briars (1983-1985) a break of 15 years due to work commitments and then President of Briars at Greenlees (2010-2016). When the Briars foundation was set up Ian was the inaugural president (1995-2000) Ian was appointed as a life member in 2005. Ian has been the catalyst for the centenary, following up on old members, assisting in research and encouraging members past and present to be interested in the momentous occasion in 2018.

98 years Briars membership by the Blair Family



Mal Blair..joined Briars as its 14th member in 1920



Ian Blair..joined Briars in 1962 and is still serves on the board of directors