

Narooma's Crown Reserves on the Flat

An Historical Review



*Narooma Sport and Leisure Centre
Narooma Swimming Pool
Nata Oval
Wagonga Inlet Foreshore Reserve
Bill Smyth Reserve
Narooma Bowling Club (part)
Ken Rose Park*

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Introduction

This is a brief summary of the changing uses of the Crown Reserves on the flat and the enormous contributions made by the Narooma community in establishing and usually maintaining the grounds and the facilities enjoyed by both locals and tourists over the years. It is a combination of anecdotal and limited primary source material, as well as limited time.

The concentration is on where use has changed over the years. Some stories, like that of Narooma Football Club and the ever-moving tennis courts, are beyond the scope of this study.

The Crown Reserves included in this summary are as follows:

- Reserve 63051, occupied by:
 - Narooma Sport and Leisure Centre
 - Narooma Swimming Pool
 - NATA Oval
 - Wagonga Inlet Foreshore Reserve

- Reserve 80515, occupied by Bill Smyth Reserve and part of the Bowling Club

BACK IN 1885 – THE FIRST TOWN SURVEY

The *NSW Government Survey of the Village of Noorooma 1885* shows that little of what is now called Crown Reserve 63051 (that now includes Narooma Swimming Pool, NATA Oval and the foreshore reserve) existed as dry land at that time.¹ It was mostly under water at high tide, with a shallow channel running along the then shore.

The part of Reserve 63051 that was dry land in 1885 plus what is now Reserve 80515 were part of a much larger 140 acre Reserve for the village's "water supply and depasturage". That Reserve was bounded by Garvan Street, the Inlet (on the entrance side), approximately the road from Wagonga (now the Old Highway), through to the Inlet to the west and an area set aside for a general cemetery further along the flat (towards the bridge end of the sandy flat).²

The 1885 survey also shows marked graves on the flat (as distinct from the area on the flat designated for a cemetery along further towards the bridge). They also appear on subsequent maps of the area, marked R 24353 (or R 24363?) which some locals say were still there in living memory inside the current caravan park fence, roughly opposite what is now Narooma Pharmacy and Katungul. They are now within R 63051.

Although the Reserve where the golf course is located is quite separate from the Reserves on Sandy Flat which are the subject of this Management Plan, their history is related.

The 1885 Survey shows 56 acres running along the coast for a Reserve for Public Recreation, dedicated in October 1893. In the early part of the twentieth century, Narooma's sportsground was where the golf course is today between Pilot Street and Ballingalla Streets and the sea. Like all Crown Reserves, its management was in the hands of three Trustees.

The late Arnim Willcocks remembered a cycle racing track there as well as a horse track which was also used for running races.³ The late Bertie Martin said that was also where they played football and cricket.⁴ Ron Constable, whose father was captain of the cricket team that played there, said the cricket pitch was

¹ Charles Potter (licensed surveyor), *Plan showing the survey of the Village of Noorooma, County of Dampier 1885*, Department of Lands, Mitchell Library ZM2 814-139 Narooma 1885.

² Charles Potter (licensed surveyor), *ibid.*

³ Arnim Willcocks,

⁴ Bertie Martin, interview by Laurelle Pacey 2 July 1990.

inside the track as well as the football ground, and there was a grandstand cum weather shed and change rooms.⁵ Apparently as golfing took off in the 1920s, golfers shared the area with other users.⁶ Doug Rose said his father would race his Douglas motor bike around the track, and when he was at school in the 1940s, school sports used an area in front of the clubhouse, and the bunkers were used for long and high jumps and they played football in an area east of the current Pro's shop.⁷



Narooma Football team of 1909 would have played on the Sportsground-recreation ground but the background looks more like the flat. Photo courtesy of John Annis.

Narooma Golf Club was formed at a public meeting in the School of Arts Memorial Hall on 2 July 1930, with Dr Gordon Thomas the inaugural president, although golf had been played for some years before that.⁸ The newly formed committee then wrote to the Recreation Ground Trustees about rental of the links and suggested improvements. Presumably they agreed with whatever they requested because the weather shed and changerooms were converted into the first clubhouse ready for the grand opening in December 1930.⁹

Bertie Martin, a keen footballer, said there was an argument when the golfers wanted to take the area over exclusively for golf.¹⁰ He said some cricketers and footballers were against it, as was John McMillan who said the golfers had no right to take over a public recreation ground. Bertie said McMillan eventually agreed provided another site was cleared for a sports ground.¹¹ That site of course

⁵ Alan Murphy, *The First 50 years of Narooma Golf Club 1930-1980*, Narooma Historical Society Archives.

⁶ Narooma Golf Club history. Unfortunately my inquiries at the Golf Club about original records to check this out resulted in the club stating they have no early records.

⁷ Conversation with Doug Rose, 30/7/2006

⁸ Alan Murphy, *ibid*, p.5

⁹ Ron Constable notes, 10/7/2006

¹⁰ Bertie Martin Interview by Laurelle Pacey 2 July 1990; Bertie Martin at Narooma Historical Society meeting 19 December 1993.

¹¹ Bertie Martin at Narooma Historical Society meeting 19 December 1993. John McMillan was also a foundation member of the Golf Club.

was on the flat where the oval is now. It would be interesting to find out more, because in April 1932 a meeting of football enthusiasts under the patronage of Dr Gordon Thomas and the presidency of J Inglis decided to form a new football club and start a new competition to include the Wallaga Lake team.¹²

The Golf Club's history mentions that for the Club to use the recreation ground, it had to tender for the grass rights at the beginning of each year.¹³ From 1935, the Golf Club paid the Trustees for exclusive agistment rights for the reserve where the Club charged people to graze their cattle on the reserve, effectively removing other sports from the area.¹⁴

At this stage, each Crown Reserve had its own trustees. It seems fair to assume, given the size of the town, there would have been some overlap in Trustees.

Over subsequent years, areas of the original reserve on the flat were excised for residential or other purposes or leased until we are left with the two much smaller reserves of today.

THE ROLE OF THE NAROOMA URBAN COMMITTEE

The first Narooma Urban Committee was formed in December 1931, at the instigation of Eurobodalla Shire Council, to manage matters within the Narooma urban boundaries, including garbage and sanitary collection, local roads, and camping. Council collected a levy with the rates to finance the Committee's work. Dr Thomas was the first chairman – obviously a busy man!¹⁵

One of the Committee's first requests to Council was to apply for the revocation of Trustees of all reserves etc in the Narooma urban area and to have those reserves come under the care and control of the Urban Committee.¹⁶ They told Council Narooma was “first and last a Tourist Resort” and to hold its place among first class resorts, several improvements were necessary along the foreshore and on other reserves, but the Trustees of these reserves had no funds to do anything. The committee said it had “a definite scheme for extending the facilities of the several reserves that would boost tourism”, but without executive power over those reserves they could do nothing about it.

For example, in July 1932, the committee asked the Trustees of the Sportsground (then the golf course) to “place an area outside of the golf ground fence southerly” under the care and control of the Urban Committee to create the Surf Beach camping area.¹⁷ C T Carter, on behalf of the Narooma Recreation Reserve Trustees (now the golf course land), agreed for an unlimited period.¹⁸

In September 1932, the Committee also asked the Trustees of the Reserve from the bridge to the tennis courts (then Reserve 6559-60?) to allow them to control it on a “purely experimental” basis. They also asked the Trustees of the tennis courts, then on the Sport and Leisure Centre site, to hand over their maintenance and control.¹⁹ From actions taken by the Committee it seems safe to assume that they agreed at least to their managing of the areas without necessarily handing over control. These areas were combined into one Reserve and came under the Trusteeship of Council on 6 May 1938.²⁰

¹² The Examiner, 16/4/1932.

¹³ Alan Murphy, *ibid*

¹⁴ Alan Murphy, *ibid*, p. 14. The Club even bought and sold its own cattle in 1938. It undertook to make improvements to the property of at least £50. The Club entered into its first 30 year lease with the Trustees in 1950.

¹⁵ Two of the major items on the committee's first agendas were establishing a town water supply and a power supply;

¹⁶ Minutes of Narooma Urban Committee, 26 February 1932, Narooma Historical Society Collection.

¹⁷ Minutes of Narooma Urban Committee, 1 July 1932, Narooma Historical Society Collection.

¹⁸ Minutes of Narooma Urban Committee, 17 November 1932, Narooma Historical Society Collection.

¹⁹ Minutes of Narooma Urban Committee, 27 September 1932, Narooma Historical Society Collection.

²⁰ Email from Linda Barr at Department of Lands, 13 July 2006

The Urban Committee under President J P Hyland wrote to the Land Board Office in October 1940 stating that it “objected to the alienation of any portion of any reserve to any person”.²¹ This followed an application by F W Tober to lease part of Portion 451 on Reserve 31660 (?).

The Narooma Urban Committee employed a camping ranger/caretaker ranger for the flat from the early 1930s, initially just for the camping season. From late 1937 the job came with a house which is clearly seen on both the 1937/38 photo and the one from the early 1950s. The house was located on what is now the Croquet Lawn.



Camping at Narooma and Dalmeny became popular from the late 1920s with some families returning at the same time to the same site year after year. Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society.

²¹ Minutes of the Narooma Urban Committee, 10 October 1940, Narooma Historical Society archives.

1. RESERVE 80515

Narooma Common – Camping Reserve – Bill Smyth Reserve

Under the 1885 survey plan for Narooma, 140 acres was reserved for the town's water supply and cattle grazing which included this Reserve.

The Narooma and Corunna Progress Committee referred to this area as 'Narooma Common' in 1906 when they voted to write to their local member to see if the Government would match the public in providing ten guineas to erect a windmill there to water stock and travelling horses.²²

The Map of The Village of Noorooma 1906-1921 shows the Reserve had been greatly reduced by this stage with some areas excised for residential development.²³ This map notes it was then Reserve 54482 reserved as a Temporary Common and notified as such 4 March 1921. It was bounded by Garvan Street, what is now the Princes Highway on the flat, roughly where the upper part of Forsters Bay Rd is today and through to the Princes Highway.



The community gathers for a sports day on the reserve in the mid 1920s, before the sportsground relocated to the flat from the old recreation reserve where the golf course is now located. Crushes for the cattle and horses were then located around to the left of the photo. Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society.

With the growing popularity of motor vehicles, camping holidays in Narooma became really popular from the 1920s and this area became known as the camping reserve. Note there was a well on the reserve (where the Narooma Bowling Club's No. 1 green is located) used by locals during drought as well as

²² Minutes Narooma and Corunna Progress Committee, 3/10/1906, Narooma Historical Society Collection

²³ Plan of Village of Noorooma 1906-1921, Archives Office of NSW.

campers which had a windlass and a kerosene tin for bringing up water.²⁴ There was an old cricket pitch on the western side of the reserve.²⁵

Bertie Martin said Jack McMillan was instrumental in coming up with the compromise that this area would become the new recreation grounds for all sports except golf. The way Bertie told it, it was a decision that appealed everyone.²⁶ He suggested it should really have been called the McMillan Reserve. Up until then, the area had been used for camping and apparently various sports day, Narooma's equivalent of an annual show.



Narooma's football team on Narooma Oval on the flat circa 1930s. Photo courtesy John Annis and Narooma Historical Society.

What Narooma Football Club records exist suggest football competitions began on the new reserve in 1932.²⁷

Ron Constable, then a keen cricketer, recalls that a concrete cricket pitch had to be built on the sand-based oval on the flat after an unsuccessful attempt at a turf wicket using soil bought in from Kiama failed.²⁸ During the football season, the pitch would be covered in sawdust from Mitchell's Mill. The fence around the oval was built with voluntary labour and timber donated by Mitchell's Mill.²⁹ Older residents like Ron refer to the ground as Narooma Oval.

²⁴ Doug Rose, conversation 30/7/06.

²⁵ Doug Rose,

²⁶ Jack McMillan, a Narooma mover and shaker of the time, provided the impetus for Narooma to build a reticulated water supply in 1935.

²⁷ Conversation with George Barker, article from 'The Examiner' 16/4/1932.

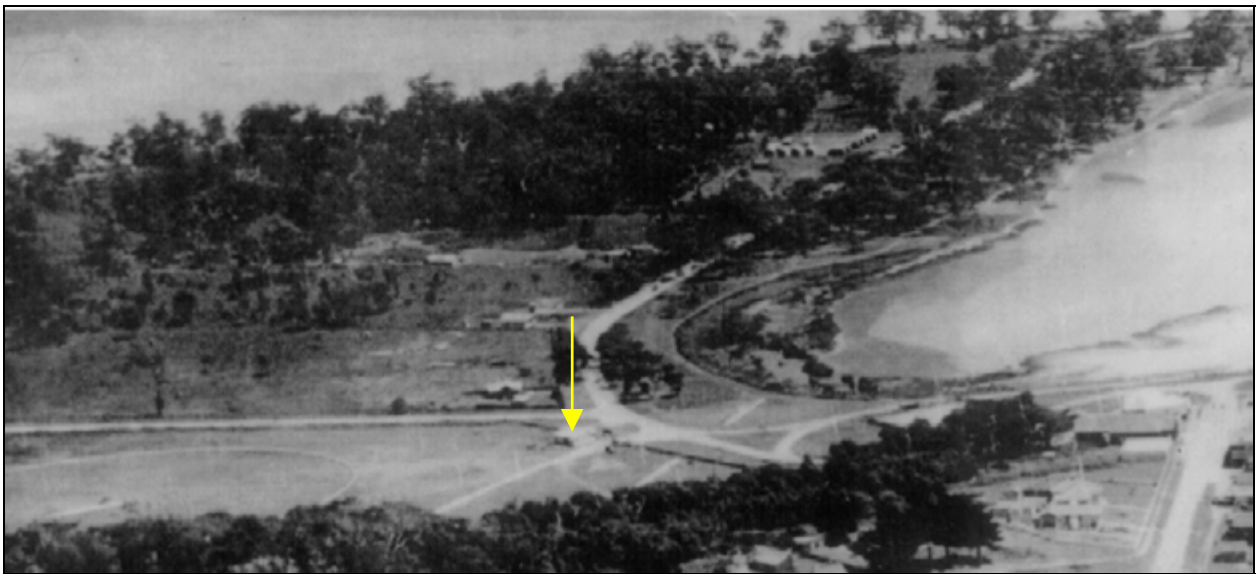
²⁸ Ron Constable notes 10 July 2006

²⁹ Ron Constable notes

It seems that the town's sports days - with woodchopping, crosscut sawing, sleeper squaring, footrace, a boxing ring and cattle events, including steer-riding, novelty events – may have been happening on this area before the football and serious cricket moved down to the flat. They were certainly happening on the flat in the 1920s and continued on the grounds each year after the oval was created³⁰ In the 1930s, Gordon Simpson of Punkally Creek would donate bullocks for the Narooma rodeo – he would drive them to Narooma with Reg Brice and then drive them back home afterwards. Sometimes they were sold on the day.³¹ These sports days were mainly used as fundraisers for the community, either to help pay for the construction of the town's then multi-purpose hall – the Narooma Soldiers Memorial School of Arts - or from 1948 and in the 1950s, to raise money for the Narooma Community Aid Centre.

Camping also continued in the area, but now around the perimeter of the oval. “It was like a tent city, always called that,” Ron Constable said. “There weren't many flats or houses to rent in those days. Each year the visitors and local cricket teams would play several matches on the oval.”

The Narooma Urban Committee was advised in September 1941 of the notification of the ‘Reserve for Recreation at Narooma’, presumably that applied to this area on the flat including the areas now occupied by the bowling club and the Ambulance Station.



This section of a much larger aerial photo dates from 1937/38, dated from the house having been moved to the reserve for the camping ranger (see left arrow near the junction of McMillan Rd and the Princes Highway. Note tennis courts on the site where the Sport and Leisure Centre is now, but no courts over on the Crown Reserve where the Bowling Club's Number 2 green is today. The cabins were Ken Rose's. (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society).

Two more clay tennis courts with a grandstand were built for the community on the reserve in the late 1930s, presumably by the Narooma Tennis Club or the Narooma Urban Committee. The Narooma Urban Committee minutes of 20 August 1934 notes correspondence from the Department of Lands about an agreement for a permissive occupancy for Narooma Tennis Courts. This could be a different arrangement for the new courts or the existing courts. While there are various mentions of

³⁰ Ron Constable notes.

³¹ Bertie Martin

correspondence from Narooma Tennis Club to the Urban Committee in the Committee's 1937 minutes, it does not actually refer to the construction of two courts.

In July 1938, Narooma Cricket Club and the Football Club wrote to the Urban Committee about the possibility of erecting a sports pavilion at the new sports ground, but the committee replied it did not have the funds to it at that stage. But it added it was "very sympathetic towards the scheme" and would consider it again when funds became available.

Then in 1939, the Urban Committee proposed building a sports pavilion, presumably what was to become the grandstand beside the tennis courts. At the instigation of the Narooma Chamber of Commerce, the committee approached the Defence department for assistance so they could make provision for it to be also used as a Drill Hall.³² The football club used the change-rooms underneath the grandstand.³³



This photo, taken probably 1949/1950, shows the newly created Bowling Club house and original green with the two clay tennis courts and grandstand. Note football being played on the oval. (Photo courtesy Narooma Bowling Club.

Camping in Narooma had become very popular, particularly on this reserve. The Urban Committee appointed A Maver to clean lavatories and collect fees on the camping ground, take bookings and collect fees for tennis for the 1934/35 tourist season.³⁴ The Urban Committee also accepted Mason Johnson's offer of collecting camping fees for the season from Surf Beach.³⁵ Johnson also took on the job of camp ranger for the 1935-36 season, and was then kept on as full time camp ranger with the extra responsibilities of impounding officer and poundkeeper.

³² Minutes of the Narooma Urban Committee

³³ Ron Constable notes

³⁴ Minutes of the Narooma Urban Committee, 6 September 1934, Narooma Historical Society archives.

³⁵ Minutes of the Narooma Urban Committee, 7 December 1934, Narooma Historical Society archives.

He was given permission to occupy a tent alongside the tennis courts for the 1936/37 season.³⁶ By late 1937, the Committee had erected a caretaker's cottage - 'the urban cottage' - with front office complete with telephone. It was rented to Mr Johnson for £-/18/1 from 1 September that year.³⁷ The Committee decided the front office should only be used for Urban Committee business.³⁸ The cottage was where the croquet lawn is now. The back verandah was closed in the following year. The Urban Committee supplied Mr Johnson with a pair of gumboots "for use on the wet places on the camping area".³⁹ The reserve was well known for flooding problems, with swampy areas on the edge of the Reserve, particularly where the netball courts are now.

Andrew Carr stood in for Johnson during his holidays, before being appointed camp ranger and caretaker in 1941 at the ruling basic wage, less £-/18/9 per week for the use of the committee's cottage.⁴⁰ His son Bob remembers waiting out the front for months for the return home of local Prisoners of War. "The first Christmas holiday season after the end of the war was huge with about 5,000 people camped in Narooma," Bob said. "People were camped absolutely everywhere,"⁴¹



Camping ranger Andy Carr shows the problems campers sometimes faced on this reserve (Photo courtesy Angela Hansen .

³⁶ Minutes of the Narooma Urban Committee, 5 December 1936, Narooma Historical Society archives.

³⁷ Minutes of the Narooma Urban Committee, 24 August 1937, Narooma Historical Society archives.

³⁸ Minutes of the Narooma Urban Committee, 4 November 1937, Narooma Historical Society archives

³⁹ Minutes of the Narooma Urban Committee, 31 March 1939, Narooma Historical Society archives.

⁴⁰ Minutes Narooma Urban Committee (15 Dec 1931-Dec 1941),

⁴¹ Interview with Bob Carr, 9 July 2006.



The Urban Cottage for the camping ranger, that used to be located where the croquet lawn is now located. (Photo courtesy Angela Hansen).

Many campers had their regular spots year after year. Many played tennis on the courts at the grounds or across where the Sport and Leisure Centre is now. Bob Carr remembers the Armstrongs from Cootamundra and others from Sydney who played regularly. Many campers were also keen fishermen.



Camping on the other side of the oval. (Photo courtesy Angela Hansen).

Bob thinks they lived there until the early 1950s when Athol Wheatley took over as Camping Ranger. The cottage was still there in 1964, but part of the enclosed yard shown in the 1950s aerial photo had by then been taken over for the ambulance station.⁴²

Local dentist Paul Mood leased the cottage from the Lands Department for his surgery from 1975 for two to three years until his current premises were built.⁴³ Dr Jenny Wray then used the cottage as her temporary surgery while her current premises were completed in late 1980.⁴⁴ Paul thinks the cottage was demolished soon after. There was then a playground on the site for a number of years which became quite rundown and was dismantled before it became the croquet lawn.



This photo believed to be from the early 1950s (before extensions to School of Arts) shows the location of the town's four clay tennis courts – two on the site of what is now the Bowling Club's No. 2 Green (complete with grandstand), and two where the Sport and Leisure Centre is now. Note you can vaguely see the cattle yard for the steer-riding etc for the sports days just past the entrance off McMillan Road and the campers. Note camping around the perimeter of the oval and on the inlet side of the intersection of Bluewater Drive and the Princes Highway. Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society.

On 28 March 1958, the area was notified as Reserve 80515 for Public Recreation & Resting Place, but still included the area set aside for the Ambulance Station (Portions 660 and 546). Eurobodalla Shire Council was appointed Trustee on 1 August 1958 when Bill Smyth was a Eurobodalla Shire Councillor, hence the name of the Reserve.⁴⁵ At that stage the Reserve also still included the Bowling Club area. Over the years the Reserve has had a myriad of uses. It is the home of Narooma Football Club (which built the change room and kiosk facilities), initially Union and then League, and when AFL started playing on the ground, the netball courts that had been at one end of the oval went.⁴⁶

⁴² Letter with site plan of Ambulance Station site from Surveyors F S Mance & D N Allen to Builders Messrs Tober & Tober, 2/12/1964, Narooma Ambulance Station Records,

⁴³ Conversation with Paul Mood, 31/7/2006

⁴⁴ Conversation with Jock Munro, 31/7/2006

⁴⁵ Note from Department of Lands Linda Barr, via Council.

⁴⁶ Former chairman of the Narooma Ovals Management Committee George Barker.

The Narooma Ovals Management Committee managed the Narooma Oval and NATA Oval (see later) for over 20 or so years.⁴⁷ George said soccer and cricket were played on the reserve for many years until they moved out to Dalmeny.

The tennis courts finally moved back onto the Crown Reserve in 1992/1993 after been removed from this reserve in 1954 and from the Sport and Leisure Centre site in 1967.

This Reserve is where circuses are located when they come to town, the destination of many town parades, and in the last few years the home of the Blues Festival. Last year, camping returned to the Reserve in association with the Blues Festival.

⁴⁷ George Barker, *ibid.*

Narooma Bowling Club

All of Narooma Bowling Club is located on a Crown Reserve, but the greens and club house area (Portion 829) are now under perpetual lease with the Club as Trustee not Council. That portion was revoked from Reserve 80515, then under Council's Trusteeship, in September 1967 and gazetted 18 April 1968. The parking area at the rear of the Club is on a term lease from Council as Trustee for Reserve 80515.⁴⁸

A public meeting was held on 27 August 1946 to consider forming Narooma Bowling Club. The meeting agreed that Narooma's Urban Committee be asked to make sufficient ground available between the tennis courts and the then septic tanks [for the camping area?] for a bowling green.

It also agreed that the Urban Committee be asked to approach Council for a loan (no more than £1500 to build the bowling green and auxiliary building). Noel Woods was elected Foundation president.

The new facility was officially opened on 11 December 1948, the first bowling club apparently in the Eurobodalla Shire.



Photo from 1948/49 shows the original clubhouse (before extensions in 1950), the tennis courts next door and camping on the Crown Reserve. (Photo courtesy Narooma Bowling Club).

This photo from 1948/49 shows the original clubhouse and the Number 1 bowling green. Recent work on that green showed it had been built on top of a well (at northern end of Rink No. 4 – note the whole area had been originally reserved for the town's water supply). The clubhouse was extended in 1950.

In May 1954, the committee decided the site of the two tennis courts next door with grandstand should be secured for an extra green, that £250 be paid to the Urban Committee for the removal of the Court, and that the Club should clinch the deal with the Urban Committee immediately with a £25 deposit.⁴⁹ The tennis courts became Number 2 green in 1956 - the Club signed a lease with Council for the new

⁴⁸ Graham Reeve, President Narooma Sporting and services Club, June 2006.

⁴⁹ That money was raised from loans from members.

green on 11 July 1956.⁵⁰ (It would be interesting to find out what the tennis players thought of this, especially the loss of the impressive grandstand or sports pavilion as it was called. Apparently about this time several private tennis courts were established in Narooma and this could have contributed to a lack of interest by tennis players in this facility.)

In 1965, the Club was looking to buy the land where the bowling greens were located and build a future clubhouse on the hill. Instead, in July 1968 the Department of Lands gazetted a lease to the Club in perpetuity over the land they had applied to buy (Special lease 1967/5 Land District Moruya). What had once been the camping area behind the clubhouse and greens became Number 3 green in 1973.

In January 1979, the Club approached Council for land south of the clubhouse. In December, the Club wrote to the Department of Lands about the possibility of acquiring more land for a fourth green. In December 1984, the *Southern Star* reported the Club's application for more land on the south-eastern corner to the Land Office would be supported by Council. That land had been used as a BMX track

In 1992, Council supported the Club in gaining a lease from the NSW Department of Lands for extra land at rear of the club for car parking, part of Reserve 80515 (DP 729206 – Lot 911).

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The Ambulance Station

The area where the Ambulance Station is located was once part of this Crown Reserve.

Narooma community raised money in the late 1940s/early 1950s towards building the Narooma Community Aid Centre. This was to consist of an ambulance station, baby health centre and an ex-servicemen's club for the town in Campbell Street (where the current Servos Club, CWA and council car park are located). But apparently it soon became apparent there was not enough room for all three so Council organised for the corner block of the Crown Reserve where the ambulance station is now located to be excised from the Crown Reserve in 1958.⁵¹ It had been part of the yard of the camping ranger's cottage.

The town's ambulance service started about 1951 with 12 volunteer drivers and no ambulance, initiated by Alf Compton and Les Flukes.⁵² Narooma Community Aid contributed £350 in 1951 to the town's first ambulance, a secondhand Buick purchased from the Armidale District for £650.⁵³ It was first housed at Alf Compton's residence.⁵⁴

In 1956, the community built a timber ambulance station on the present site using voluntary labour and donated materials.⁵⁵ The station consisted of a garage for the ambulance and a small casualty room (see top right of pic).



Narooma's voluntary ambulance drivers and ambulance. (Photo courtesy Joan Hyland and Narooma Historical Society) Note the camping ranger's cottage far left.

⁵¹ Notes from Cliff Field's talk on the early days of Narooma's ambulance service, Narooma Historical Society Minutes Book, 15 August 1999.

⁵² Notes from Cliff Field's talk on the early days of Narooma's ambulance service, Narooma Historical Society Minutes Book, 15 August 1999.

⁵³ Narooma Community Aid Centre Minute Book, Annual General Meeting 19 November 1951, Narooma Historical Society records; 'The History of the Ambulance Service in Narooma', Narooma Ambulance Station files.

⁵⁴ Narooma Community Aid Centre Minute Book

⁵⁵ The timber was donated by Mrs Face from Faces' Sawmill, the roofing tiles were donated by Mr W Heard, according to a handwritten note (in red biro) in the station's records. The shed was moved to the rear of the property when the present station prior to the present building being built in 1965 and became a garage. The ambulance was only stored in the shed when not in use. Otherwise it was taken to the home of the officer on duty. OIC Mark Jolly said it was demolished a few years ago because of extensive white ant damage.

Then Ted and Daisy Street of Streets Ice Cream fame, who had sold Streets to Unilever in 1960 for nearly £4 million, retired to Narooma where they became local philanthropists.⁵⁶ Ted Street recognised the community's efforts and the need to have a quality Ambulance Station especially because of its relative isolation. He gave a huge boost to the community's efforts.

The present station, complete with three-bedroom residence on top, was built by P J and T F Tober for £13,225 and officially opened by Ted Street on 1 May 1965. The Station's history states "this was made possible by the late Mr E Street and a loan with long term repayments at low interest".⁵⁷



New ambulance station . (Photo courtesy Narooma Ambulance Station).

The community raised money to pay Street back plus pay the wages of the permanent ambulance drivers and general running expenses through over 20 years of raffles, housie and running the skating rink and carnivals (see section on Sport and Leisure Centre).⁵⁸ It was a huge community effort. So apparently the community ended up owning the station (it paid Ted Street off) plus the service.

Portion 660 containing the Ambulance Station was revoked from Reserve 80515 and gazetted on 26 April 1968.

The Housie Room and rear of the residence were remodelled in 1971, with Ted Street lending more money to do it.⁵⁹ There were further renovations in 1975 to the rear of the station to form a bedroom for relief staff and a store room.⁶⁰

When the NSW Government took over the Ambulance Service in 1977, much to the relief of many, but all the assets automatically went to the Government, much to the upset of many others in the Narooma community.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Stephen Garton, 'Street, Edwin (1891-1975)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography – Online Edition*, Melbourne University Press, viewed 14 June 2006, pp. 371-372.

⁵⁷ Station Officer I C Bagster, 'History of Narooma Ambulance Service', 1978, Narooma Ambulance Station records.

⁵⁸ Notes from Cliff Field's talk on the early days of Narooma's ambulance service, Narooma Historical Society Minutes Book, 15 August 1999.

⁵⁹ Notes from Cliff Field's talk on the early days of Narooma's ambulance service, Narooma Historical Society Minutes Book, 15 August 1999; Mark Jolly, OIC Narooma Ambulance Station..

⁶⁰ Station Officer I C Bagster, 'History of Narooma Ambulance Service', 1978, Narooma Ambulance Station records.

2. RESERVE 63051

What was then the foreshore was gazetted as Reserve 63051 for public Recreation and Resting Place on 13 November 1931, following some small reclamation following the construction of the western training wall.

At that stage it did not include the land now occupied by much of NATA Oval, the swimming pool, nor some of the foreshore land. Council was appointed Trustee on 6 May 1938, no doubt following representations of the Narooma Urban Committee.

The Reserve today extends from opposite the current town wharf to along the foreshore to the bridge.

Narooma Sport & Leisure Centre site

Originally it was part of the original Reserve for Water and Depasturage but formed into a separate reserve some time after. It had been a Crown Reserve though before that with its own three Trustees.⁶² It was part of Reserve 63051 gazetted in 1931.

In the early 1900s, at least one boat was built where the Sport & Leisure Centre is today, fronting the shallow channel. The boat was nowhere near the size of the ships like the *Kianga* built in Mill Bay or over near Apex Park which were used for the coastal trade. Doug Rose said that as a boy in the late 1930s/1940s, he would go prawning in front of the shipyard site and there were big girders and old logs in the water there. He believes they would still be there under the sand.

Sometime pre 1930s, two clay tennis courts were built by the community on what was the old shipyard site, roughly where the Sport and Leisure Centre is now located. It is not clear at this stage when they were built or by whom. (Another two courts were built in the late 1930s/ early 1940s where the Bowling Green No.2 is now.) In the 1930s and later, bookings and collection of fees for the courts were done by the Urban Committee's Camping Ranger.

At some stage, Council (or the Urban Committee) must have decided to asphalt the courts on the Sport and Leisure Centre site, possibly in the early 1960s.⁶³ Keen tennis player at the time Kevin Young is not sure if it was a botched job or what, but says it was disastrous for serious tennis players because it made the balls and the racquets go black. This increased the popularity of the Young's Girrahween Courts on Cemetery Road although the town courts continued to be used for casual games and visitors. Youngs sold the Girrahween Courts and surrounding block to Garry Darnell, Kevin thinks probably in the mid 1960s.⁶⁴

This coincided with the time of Ted Street's grand plan of the community running regular fundraising events to pay for the new Ambulance Service, particularly when tourists were in town. He recognised the strategic importance of this site, then occupied by the community's two tennis courts.

Street encouraged local tennis players to form, or rather re-form, the Narooma Tennis Club (the inaugural meeting was held on 20 June 1967) and relocate the town's remaining tennis courts to a new site in McMillan Road which Ted bought on the club's behalf. He also helped finance the Club's building of the new all-weather courts of plastic covered concrete (opened December 1967), with another low interest loan, which the club eventually repaid.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Laura Field and Bob Carr at Narooma Historical Society meeting, 16 July 2006.

⁶² Narooma Urban Committee Minutes Book,

⁶³ Kevin Young conversation.

⁶⁴ Phone conversation with Kevin Young, 14 July 2006.

⁶⁵ Narooma Tennis Club minute books. Ted Street also encouraged the Club to buy an adjoining block of land from Bill Hyland. That block was bought by Council on the club's behalf, and the money repaid over four years.



Tennis moves off the Crown Reserves for over 30 years to McMillan Road. (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society).

Ted Street then had the old courts dismantled on the Sport and Leisure Centre site and organised a generous loan to pay for a concrete slab to be poured for an open air skating rink. George Barker says a specialist Italian concreter came down from Wollongong especially to do the job. A permanent carnival ground was located alongside.⁶⁶ It was completed in time for the 1966-67 holiday season.⁶⁷

The community through the Ambulance Auxiliary ran carnivals on the skating rink site for many years and operated the open air skating rink each weekend and through the holiday season. They also ran housie from the rear of the ambulance station, and sold raffle and art union tickets. Funds raised in this way bought ambulances, financed the local service, paid for the ambulance station, and there were also generous contributions from residents of items for the Service.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ George Barker, interviewed 9 July 2006; Chairman' Report, 'NSW Ambulance Transport Service Far South Coast District Thirty-third Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 30 June 1967'

⁶⁷

⁶⁸



Outdoor roller skating funded the operation of the town's Ambulance Service for many years and helped pay for the building of the station (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society).

Initially all drivers were voluntary. The community continued to be responsible for financing the service until it was finally taken over by the NSW Government-funded NSW Ambulance Service in 1977.⁶⁹ It appears some fundraising continued for a few years for the Ambulance Service after that.

Narooma Rotary Club, assisted by other volunteers, incorporated the open-air skating rink into the Narooma Sports and Leisure Complex in 1984. The concrete floor is still that built by Ted Street. This was a major undertaking for Rotary using their own and voluntary labour, assisted by a Government grant, a \$10,000 loan from Eurobodalla Shire Council, and with financial contributions and loans from its own members.



Narooma Rotary Club dismantles the fencing around the open-air skating rink ready for the construction of the Sport and Leisure Centre. (Photo courtesy Narooma Rotary Club).

⁶⁹ OIC Narooma Ambulance Station Mark Jolly 11/7/2006.



The enclosure of the open air rink is underway. (Photo courtesy Narooma Rotary Club).

When Narooma High burnt down in 1987, the centre was rented by the school for use as several temporary classrooms for a few months until sufficient demountables were on site at the school for everyone to return to the school.

Mick Turner managed the centre from about 1987 to 1997. He said the centre was run by a voluntary management committee under chairman Neville Gough answerable to Eurobodalla Shire Council. He said the bulk of the business was rollerskating, followed by indoor cricket, regular basketball and netball, indoor soccer, and also inline hockey.

“One of the things that ultimately beat the centre was insurance,” Mick said. “Council brought in that people had to belong to associated sporting bodies which covered them for insurance, and council picked up the insurance for rollerskating and inline hockey and the prices had to go up accordingly. Many Narooma people just couldn’t afford to play.”

He said it also coincided with the time when people over 30 were concerned at the damage concrete floors could have on their knees, but to put a sprung wooden floor in at that time was difficult to justify because rollerskating was the bulk of the business.

The centre has also been used for a range of functions, from weddings to exhibitions, various auctions including the Apex (later VRA), music concerts and festivals, elections, and public meetings. It continues to be used in this way.

Narooma High used the premises for tutorials for students having difficulties with normal classes for a number of years, up until fairly recently.

Swimming baths to covered pool on reclaimed land

Training walls create first swimming baths

This was not part of a Reserve, but its history affects it.

The first big change to the foreshore area was the construction of the first training wall in the inlet to try to overcome the increasing problems the port was having with ships crossing the bar at the entrance and shoaling within the inlet. Many entries in the Narooma Pilot station logs and notes report the bar at this time was playing havoc with shipping.⁷⁰

As the training wall on this side of the inlet was extended, it created a shark-free area which could be used as the town's swimming baths by both tourists and locals. This was a time of increasing tourism for Narooma, with guest houses like St Kilda shown on the hill (top right), and Noorooma House and Hyland's Hotel nearby.



The shark-proof swimming baths. Note the St Kilda Guesthouse on the hill, top right. (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society).

In 1932, the newly created Narooma Urban Committee cleared the swimming baths of "seaweed and refuse" and provided two lavatories at the dressing sheds, at the request of the Narooma Swimming Club. The Urban Committee gave C M F Johnson permission to erect a diving tower etc at the baths in December 1932, provided the Committee had the option of purchasing them in two years, or they may be removed to the committee's satisfaction.

⁷⁰ Narooma Pilot Station Logbooks 1.11.1910- 30.11.1931 CGS 4789 State Archives Kingswood 6/5124-24, 2 vols; Laurelle Pacey, *Narooma's Past – steamers, salmon and sawmills*, Revised edition 2005, pp.



This photo from the 1930s shows the dressing sheds, and the diving tower. (Photo courtesy of the Douglas Fox collection and Narooma Historical Society).

The Narooma Urban Committee strongly opposed an application for an oyster lease on the training walls round the Narooma Baths in 1936. They gained permission from the Department of Public Works to insert four sets of pipes through the training wall to improve the circulation of water in the baths.⁷¹ The swimming baths continued to be a great attraction for the area, with change sheds, a diving tower and later swimming lanes. They continued to be used until pool was built in 1966.

⁷¹ Minutes of the Narooma Urban Committee, 24 March and 8 May 1936, Narooma Historical Society archives.

Narooma creates in-ground pool on reclaimed land

The inaugural president of Narooma Amateur Swimming Club John Burbidge said it was at Ted Street's prompting that the community started pushing for an in-ground pool. One problem with the existing pool behind the training wall was the difficulty of running races there because the turning boards would grow oysters that cut swimmers' feet.⁷²

In 1964 the Streets gave £5,000 towards the construction of the Moruya pool and a similar amount towards Batemans Bay's pool, but they gave £10,000 towards the construction of Narooma's pool and offered to back loans for construction.⁷³ Mr Burbidge said the Streets always wanted to give something back to kids because they believed it was because of kids their company had been such a success.⁷⁴

First though the ground had to be elevated above the tide. Sand was dredged from behind the training wall and placed on site. "Council had a dredge in there, operated by Roy Face I think, pumping sand up into this area," said the new pool's first manager and coach Alan Dufty. "Before that, this was all swamp."

The resulting land was gazetted as a Reserve for Resting Place and Public Recreation on 27/1/1967 and added to the existing Reserve 63051.

The swimming centre with 50 metre six-lane main pool, toddlers' pool, dressing sheds, a kiosk and a plant room, opened to the public on 16 December 1966 with the official opening in February the following year. Alan Dufty took up his appointment as manager on 20 December 1966.⁷⁵



Narooma's Olympic size in-ground swimming pool became a major tourist attraction, as it appeared in a late 1960s tourist brochure. (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society).

⁷² Neville Gough.

⁷³ William A Bayley, *Behind Broulee - Central South Coast New South Wales*, Eurobodalla Shire Council 1978, p.127.

⁷⁴ John Burbidge, conversation 31/7/06

⁷⁵ Alan Dufty,

“The pool was just ‘a pimple on a pumpkin’ then with sand all around it,” Alan said. Long time Narooma Pool manager and coach Alan Dufty said Ted Street had plans drawn up by an architect in Sydney for the construction of the pool which included a manager’s house as part of the complex.⁷⁶ “Ted’s original plans were better than what we ended up with...⁷⁷ I think if they [Council] had gone with that [those plans], Ted probably would have paid for the whole lot,” Alan said.

Alan had a fair bit to do with Ted over the years. “Everybody used to say ‘Oh, Ted’s always got strings attached’. He didn’t believe in giving things away. He would say, ‘people don’t appreciate it if you just give it to them, they’ve got to contribute somehow’. All the things I got the swimming club through Ted, the swimming club had to raise the rest of the money. The first thing the club got was grandstands. It cost \$5,000 at the time. Ted put in \$4,000 so the swimming club had to raise \$1,000. We created a windbreak along the back of the grandstand – we had big letters along them saying ‘Narooma Olympic Pool’. Those grandstands are still at the pool and belong to the Club.”

Alan said the Swimming Club put in a two million BTU oil-fired boiler to keep the water warm in summer because at the start of the season it would be 15 degrees. The swimming club paid for the oil. “But we found it was losing a lot of heat so we went to Sydney and found a mob and bought covers,” Alan said. “Ray McCarthy of Tilba Engineering built us a big roller so we then put covers on both the main and toddlers’ pools at night.”

He said the swimming club also built a shadecloth windbreak at the southern end, put in hot showers with the two water heaters donated by “the electricity mob then”. The swimming club also put in the anti-wave ropes which are still there.

In 1981 the Swimming Club built the Fitness Centre and Club rooms. “Theo Schutz was Club president then,” said Alan. “The pillars and beams were donated by Davis & Herbert where Theo worked.” The Club received some financial assistance from the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation. Labour was provided by various Narooma service clubs.

Then the Club put solar heating on the Club Room roof to assist the boiler, after fundraising by the swimming club with assistance from various groups around town.⁷⁸ “It was never as efficient as it could have been – the slope of the roof didn’t help. That solar system went down to Cobargo but was never used. This new building would have been ideal now – it was built to take a solar system.

Alan said Ted Street wanted to build the manager’s house for Alan Dufty, but Council didn’t want Ted to build it so they did.”

⁷⁶ Alan Dufty was manager from December 1966 until about 1995, but then stayed on until about 1997 helping his son Shane Dufty and his wife Wendy who had taken on the pool’s management.

⁷⁷ Alan Dufty said when he moved house he threw the plans away

⁷⁸ Narooma School of Arts \$500, Letter Narooma School of Arts secretary Henry Ramage to Narooma Amateur Swimming Club secretary Pauline Gill, 8/5/1981. It was a Zane Solar Heating System, Letter Narooma Amateur Swimming Club president Theo Schutz to Narooma School of Arts secretary 1/9/80

Covering the pool

The covering of Narooma Swimming Pool in 1992 and the extra heating was a joint community effort initiated by Narooma Hydrotherapy Club and the Swimming Club.

“Pop Brown was terrific, he was the driving force,” Alan said. “He’d been running exercise classes in the pool but said it was too cold for old people. He wanted to build a wall as a windbreak, but I said it wouldn’t work. They also needed hydrotherapy through the year. So we decided we had to cover it. We formed the Hydrotherapy Club in April 1989, and started going about, looking at things.”

The Hydrotherapy Club wanted to provide gentle exercises for those suffering from arthritis, cardiovascular problems and other ailments all through the year. The Swimming Club wanted to be able to provide year-round training for its talented swimmers, year-round learn to swim classes, as well as other water activities like aquarobics, water polo, and underwater diving.

In May 1989, the two clubs formed a joint committee to gain community support and interest in fundraising for the project. That committee consisted of Gordon ‘Pop’ Brown (chairman), Dot Philip (secretary), Hilton Philip (?), Barbara McEwen, Swimming Club president Carol Mead and Alan Mulhall.⁷⁹ They set about investigating various grants and their availability, and possible fundraising activities.

A deputation approached Council for a grant or interest free loan to help the ‘Cover the Pool’ Project proceed, the project’s estimate then being about \$230,000.⁸⁰ The first public meeting was held on 16 October 1990 at Narooma Ex-Servicemen’s Club.



*Tireless workers to cover the pool – Pop Brown and Dot Philip.
(Photo courtesy Narooma Hydrotherapy Club).*

⁷⁹ Alan Dufty and Hydrotherapy Club records.

⁸⁰ Narooma Area News, 30 August 1989

From all accounts, Gordon ‘Pop’ Brown was a remarkable man. He was a former chairman of Warringah Shire Council and understood the workings of all levels of government. He also knew how to bring people together to get something done.

“No words could do justice to the relentless campaign Pop Brown undertook on the community’s behalf,” said Eurobodalla Mayor at that time Chris Vardon. “He would appear at home without warning, his big booming voice filling the air with a ‘dare to go against’ me attitude. We had some pretty good arguments but he always went away knowing that if he could back his argument Council would support him. I remember him with affection.”

Pop Brown said the Club was “fortunate to have members like Doug Tribe with a lifetime of building experience and Peter Phelps, the local architectural designer, who put together this superb structure.” Doug became the honorary project director and laboured long and hard for the community.⁸¹

The committee refused to engage expensive consultants, which Pop Brown said saved them \$15,000-\$18,000 as a result. Some committee members visited other pools to check out at how they had been enclosed.



Former pool manager and coach Alan Dufty inside the covered pool.

“Doug Tribe, Ash Garrard and Peter Phelps picked out the best ideas and incorporated them into the design,” Alan said. “These big doors, for example, were an idea from Blacktown. The idea was to use nature and have an air flow through system but they never use it now. Like, if it’s a real hot day with a nor-easter blowing, you can keep this side open and it creates a beautiful atmosphere. That was why it was designed like that... And then we put louvres up the top at both ends of the pool so you could open it up to let air flow right through the pool. The main purpose was to get rid of the condensation, because we didn’t have air conditioning then and condensation was a real problem.” Pop Brown claimed this design in conjunction with the great doors (each cost \$10,500) saved thousands of dollars in air-conditioning costs at that stage.⁸²

⁸¹ Pop Brown’s notes, *ibid*.

⁸² Narooma Hydrotherapy Club records

Peter drew up the plans free of charge and lodged them with Council on 17 June 1991. Council approved the plans about a year later. Mr Vardon said technical details were dealt with by senior Council engineers. "They had some disagreement with the advice Doug and Ash were giving but eventually the project was approved," Mr Vardon said. "Council contributed about \$12,000 to the building program."

The committee's emphasis from the start was that the facility should be for the use of the whole community, hence their push to cover the whole pool. These clubs eventually managed to get Council on side, after some councillors initially felt the community was railroading council.⁸³ Hydrotherapy Club records state Council had wanted them to build and cover a small hydrotherapy pool, but the Club wanted something to benefit the whole community, young and old. The Hydrotherapy Club felt it would not be fair to raise funds in the community to cover a pool just for the use of the elderly.

The Club's records also state Council was concerned the building and running of the covered pool could be a strain on ratepayers' money. This was confirmed by Mr Vardon. "Some councillors believed the project was a 'white elephant' and would prove to be too costly to run and maintain," he said. "This was food for thought and the Committee had much fast talking to do to convince Council. But Pop Brown was unrelenting in his pursuit of this project."⁸⁴

Council said they wouldn't even look at the project until their committee had raised \$80,000-\$90,000. Once Council saw how the community had got behind the project and raised about \$86,000 even before the project had really got underway, Council agreed to support it.

Pop Brown said that from the start the Hydrotherapy Club and the Swimming Club had "splendid community support". They received Council's support and the cooperation of the then two MPs Russell Smith (State) and Jim Snow (Federal).

In an article in the *Narooma Area News* soon after the opening, Pop Brown acknowledged the support of the project from day one of Councilors Vardon, Cairney, Blacker, Pollock, Reid and Doust, with Cr Doust Council's representative on the committee.⁸⁵

Work began on 18 July 1992 with the help of the swimming club and many volunteer and trades people giving their time to clear fences and seats so the work could begin. The new covered pool was officially opened by Eurobodalla Mayor Chris Vardon on 23 January 1993.

Pop Brown believed their fundraising efforts were unprecedented "because in fact we [the community] were responsible for raising all the funds from the Federal Government, the NSW Government, Local Government and a wonderful community of approximately 5,000 people." He said the whole project ended up costing about \$450,000. That money was raised by the fundraising committee and members of the two clubs (\$171,000), as well as from generous Federal and State Government grants and contributions by Eurobodalla Shire Council which the clubs applied for.⁸⁶

The massive community fundraising effort was headed by Dorothy Wilson and assisted by members of both the Hydrotherapy and Swimming clubs. Activities included market stalls, theatre nights, street stalls, a monster car raffle, a recession buster raffle and of course the clubs' famous lamingtons which appeared to be everywhere. In one year, Dorothy Wilson and her team made and sold 12,000 lamingtons.⁸⁷

Pop Brown proudly stated in 1996, Narooma's was the only 50 metre fully covered enclosed and heated pool in NSW outside of Sydney.⁸⁸ It was also the biggest single span in the Eurobodalla Shire. He

⁸³ Narooma Hydrotherapy Club records

⁸⁴ Email Chris Vardon to Laurelle Pacey 12 July 2006.

⁸⁵ Narooma Area News, xx 1993

⁸⁶ Narooma Hydrotherapy Club records – 'Questions and Answers'.

⁸⁷ Pat Eaton said Dorothy Wilson's team included Betty Bettini, Betty Halford, Bee Beaumont and ?

⁸⁸ Notes by 'Pop' Brown for something on 1 March 1996, Narooma Hydrotherapy Club records.

always said the shire's pools belong to the people of the shire and are administered and held in trust by Council on the community's behalf.

Pop Brown said that covering the pool "... was achieved because a group of the older generation had the vision to convert an existing facility which lay idle for at least six months of the year [April to late September], into a superb sporting venue that everyone from the unborn to the most elderly could enjoy seven days a week all year round".⁸⁹

That vision is now under threat with major structural repairs now underway and the heat pumps possibly needing to be replaced.

Alan Dufty said part of the work in 1992 involved changing over to a gas-fired burner. After a few years the decision was made to up the water temperature which created greater condensation. He said that's when they added the air conditioning with all the piping and heat pumps to cope with the extra condensation. He also maintains the structure has not been operated over the intervening years in the way it was intended which could well have contributed to the problems.

⁸⁹ Notes by 'Pop' Brown for something on 1 March 1996, Narooma Hydrotherapy Club records.

NATA Oval

NATA Oval, sometimes these days referred to it as NATA Park, was mainly created from sand dredged from the inlet in the mid 1960s. Only the fringe of the reserve between Bluewater Drive and about the caravan park existed as dry land before then (See 1950s aerial pic).

Former Chairman of the Ovals Management Committee George Barker said it was used for town cricket in its early days before it moved to Dalmeny as well as hockey up to the 1990s. It was used by Narooma Public School for weekly sports (cricket, soccer and softball) in the 1970s through to the late 1990s as well as Infants School sports carnivals until recent years.⁹⁰

NATA stands for the Narooma Area Tourist Association which existed to promote tourism in Narooma, before it amalgamated with the Chamber of Commerce. NATA was responsible for building the Narooma Visitors Information Centre on part of the reserve in 1981. Various businesses and organisations contributed towards the cost of building the centre, including the Narooma School of Arts Committee.⁹¹



NATA Oval was the venue for the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron in Narooma, done by Narooma local Deb Tinson with Matt Tate. (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society).

⁹⁰ Conversation with Bob Burnside, 4/8/2006

⁹¹ The School of Arts contributed \$3,000. Letter from NATA Tourist Officer Robyn Hoyer to Narooma Hall Committee, 12/9/1982, Narooma School of Arts archives.

Narooma Chamber of Commerce in the late 1990s suggested that NATA Oval should be considered as a possible site for the new town library and community health centre met, but it met with some community opposition. Many felt it should be kept as green open space, a kind of village green which could be adapted for a multiple of uses.

It has had many uses since it was created. It is often used for informal recreation, just kicking a ball around, the odd game of cricket by campers or passers by, school sports, regular dog training, the Narooma Rotary markets on the fourth Sunday of the month, carnivals, Beach Missions over the summer, and various public events.



NATA Oval is the venue for the monthly Narooma Rotary Markets.

It has also been used for Australia Day ceremonies, the Sydney Olympic Torch relay in 2000, and Blues Festivals.



The Blues Festival covered NATA Oval and the outside of the Sport and Leisure Centre site for the 2003 Telstra Great Southern Blues and Rockabilly Festival. (Photo courtesy of Telstra).

Wagonga Inlet Foreshore Reserve & Ken Rose Park

The following photo shows the greatly reduced area of the foreshore reserve prior to the reclamation, possibly some in the 1930s, and also as a result of the reclamation for the swimming pool.

Camping fees were collected by the Urban camping ranger from the 1930s on.



The foreshore reserve before the reclamation showing camping in the early days on the reserve along towards the bridge. (Photo courtesy Doug Rose).

The Narooma Urban Committee which managed the Reserve on Council's behalf from the late 1930s, decided in November 1940 that the trees in the camping area along the waterfront should be lopped.⁹² They also cleared a lot of undergrowth to provide extra areas for camping.

⁹² Minutes Narooma Urban Committee , 10 October 1940, Narooma Historical Society Archives



*Camping along the foreshore reserve in the 1960s, possibly before reclamation
(Photo courtesy Doug Rose).*

This has been a popular camping area since at least the 1930s, as this postcard pic above shows. Apparently the camping area was leased to someone before Easts, details unknown at this stage. Easts have leased the area since 1986.⁹³

The foreshore area was opened up to the public with the construction of the cycleway-pathway in the late 1990s. Local architect Phil Rose came up with the concept while working on the Design guidelines for Development Control Plan the Narooma town centre for Eurobodalla Shire Council in 1995. It was an extension to his brief.⁹⁴

That concept was developed further by him in association with Connybeare & Morrison in the Narooma Foreshore and Township Masterplan, adopted by Council in 1998.

Ken Rose Park near the bridge was named after the ferryman who with his brother Alan operated the ferry for many years up until the bridge was built. Ken Rose's house is the old cottage opposite. Ken also had holiday cabins on the flat for many years.

⁹³ Lyn Field of Easts.

⁹⁴ Phil Rose, conversation 14/8/2006



Ken Rose Park – Federation Arch

The Federation Arch was built to commemorate the Centenary of Federation and Narooma's Federation Festival which was held on 3 November 2001. It was funded by donations by the people of Narooma and surrounding district organised through Project Manager Coral Phillips. The arch was unveiled Australia Day 2002. Australia Day ceremonies have been held in the Ken Rose Park ever since.

CAPTIONS SUMMARY

1. *Narooma Football team of 1909 would have played on the Sportsground-recreation ground but the background looks more like the flat. Photo courtesy of John Annis.*
2. *Camping at Narooma and Dalmeny became popular from the late 1920s with some families returning at the same time to the same site year after year. Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society.*
3. *The community gathers for a sports day on the reserve in the mid 1920s, before the sportsground relocated to the flat from the old recreation reserve where the golf course is now located. Crushes for the cattle and horses were then located around to the left of the photo. Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society.*
4. *Narooma's football team on Narooma Oval on the flat circa 1930s. Photo courtesy John Annis and Narooma Historical Society.*
5. *This section of a much larger aerial photo dates from 1937/38, dated from the house having been moved to the reserve for the camping ranger (see left arrow near the junction of McMillan Rd and the Princes Highway. Note tennis courts on the site where the Sport and Leisure Centre is now, but no courts over on the Crown Reserve where the Bowling Club's Number 2 green is today. The cabins were Ken Rose's. (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society)*
6. *This photo, taken probably 1949/1950, shows the newly created Bowling Club house and original green with the two clay tennis courts and grandstand. Note football being played on the oval. (Photo courtesy Narooma Bowling Club)*
7. *Camping ranger Andy Carr shows the problems campers sometimes faced on this reserve (Photo courtesy Angela Hansen)*
8. *The Urban Cottage for the camping ranger, that used to be located where the croquet lawn is now located. (Photo courtesy Angela Hansen)*
- 8b. *Camping on the other side of the oval. (Photo courtesy Angela Hansen)*
9. *This photo believed to be from the early 1950s (before extensions to School of Arts) shows the location of the town's four clay tennis courts – two on the site of what is now the Bowling Club's No. 2 Green (complete with grandstand), and two where the Sport and Leisure Centre is now. Note you can vaguely see the cattle yard for the steer-riding etc for the sports days just past the entrance off McMillan Road and the campers. Note camping around the perimeter of the oval and on the inlet side of the intersection of Bluewater Drive and the Princes Highway. Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society)*
10. *Photo from 1948/49 shows the original clubhouse (before extensions in 1950), the tennis courts next door and camping on the Crown Reserve. (Photo courtesy Narooma Bowling Club)*

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12. Narooma's voluntary ambulance drivers and ambulance. (Photo courtesy Joan Hyland and Narooma Historical Society) Note the camping ranger's cottage far left.
13. PIC of new ambulance station. (Photo courtesy Narooma Ambulance Station)
- 14a. Tennis moves off the Crown Reserves for over 30 years to McMillan Road. (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society)
- 14b. Outdoor roller skating funded the operation of the town's Ambulance Service for many years and helped pay for the building of the station (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society)
15. Narooma Rotary Club dismantles the fencing around the open-air skating rink ready for the construction of the Sport and Leisure Centre. (Photo courtesy Narooma Rotary Club)
16. The enclosure of the open air rink is underway. (Photo courtesy Narooma Rotary Club)
17. The shark-proof swimming baths. Note the St Kilda Guesthouse on the hill, top right. (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society)
18. This photo from the 1930s shows the dressing sheds, and the diving tower. (Photo courtesy of the Douglas Fox collection and Narooma Historical Society)
19. Narooma's Olympic size in-ground swimming pool became a major tourist attraction, as it appeared in a late 1960s tourist brochure. (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society)
20. Tireless workers to cover the pool – Pop Brown and Dot Philip. (Photo courtesy Narooma Hydrotherapy Club)
21. Former pool manager and coach Alan Dufty inside the covered pool.
22. NATA Oval was the venue for the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron in Narooma, done by Narooma local Deb Tinson with Matt Tate. (Photo courtesy Narooma Historical Society)
23. NATA Oval is the venue for the monthly Narooma Rotary Markets.
24. The Blues Festival covered NATA Oval and the outside of the Sport and Leisure Centre site for the 2003 Telstra Great Southern Blues and Rockabilly Festival. (Photo courtesy of Telstra).
25. The foreshore reserve before the reclamation showing camping on the reserve along towards the bridge. (Photo courtesy Doug Rose)
26. Camping along the foreshore reserve in the 1960s, possibly before reclamation. (Photo courtesy Doug Rose)
27. Ken Rose Park Federation Arch