

# Tallong Twitterings

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As pictured last month, Tallong lays claim to “cricket grounds” though its whereabouts and history is little known. A survey of lands known as Reserve No 50833 was commissioned by the Lands Department on the 21st of May 1915 for the purpose of recreational use for the people of Tallong. The Reserve was a long wedge of land (22 acres) with access from the west via Barbers Creek Road which goes under the viaduct and runs along the length of the public land north of the Great Southern Railway. The southern boundary is formed by Barbers Creek. The eastern extremity of the reserve aligns with a small holding at the time belonging to A. Hoare with Hatter’s lands beyond. It was not until 10th July, 1920 that the Trustees (Mr. J G Hoare (Chair), Mr. R Kettle (Secretary) and Mr. R. Clout, Mr. T White and Mr. Scarlett) held the first meeting of the Tallong Recreation Park Trust at the residence of J G Hoare.

The Secretary Mr. R Kettle recorded the minutes of the Trust meetings and conducted all correspondence. From this record we see the main business of the Park Trust was to draw up contracts and call for tenders for grass rights, the five year lease of Mr. A Hoare having expired on 12th of July 1920. This income was supplemented by selling bark, access fees and various grants for improvements from the Lands Department. The main expense was the maintenance of fences, clearing an ever encroaching bush and building improving structures. A bank account in the name of Tallong Public Reserve Park was opened with Commonwealth bank Goulburn No S15 and from the balance of 15pounds a sum of 12 pounds was spent on removing scrub.

At this time Bill O’Reilly recalls in his autobiography his early days in Wingello where his abiding passion for cricket was fostered by a lively cricket competition amongst the Southern Villages of Wingecarribee Shire and the Southern Tablelands Cricket Association. His first real cricket match was a fixture between Wingello and the young men of Tallong. The Wingello team walked along the rail line, carrying their kit, which was useful for warding off the black snakes. Bill O’Reilly said, “the site of the game was Hatter’s Paddock where the Hatter family had built a concrete pitch which the local boys made use of”. Unfortunately, the outcome of this match was forgotten because he was bitten by a large ant “known to us school boys as a ‘Jumping Joey’ .....this dreaded bush marauder”.

By 1932 the depression had taken hold but did not diminish the enthusiasm for cricket as the Tallong Cricket Club’s president Mr. H Rumsey requested that the Trust establish a permanent cricket field on the eastern end of the park by erecting a concrete pitch, a weather shed, seats, tables and lavatories. The western end of the park was closer to the village and the local swimming hole and was a popular venue for community picnics. Today, as the photo adjacent shows proximity to the Viaduct is called the picnic and camping grounds.



In 1957 the Trustees receive a letter from district surveyor Thomas King re Mulwaree shire’s proposal to take over 14 acres of the park and in 1959 a letter from the Shire Clerk notifying the Trust of Council’s (in the 1940’s Tallong had become part of Mulwaree Shire’s local area)

intention to make it a sanitary repository. By 1960 amenities in the Park were in a bad state and the last minutes record that the community held protest meetings. Although alternative sites were investigated the Council operated a major part of the Park as a night soil depository. By 1964 the people of Tallong were reluctant to use the park, the Tennis Club asking the Trust to negotiate the sale of the Park with proceeds to go to establishing a public tennis court in the village.

Upon the amalgamation of Goulburn Mulwaree Council the park was turned into an unsuccessful garbage dump. The newly formed TCFG through a lengthy campaign lobbied to have the reserve back in the hands of the people of Tallong. On the 13th May 2009 the area comprising the picnic ground and the cricket ground were re gazette back to the Lands Department which organized the appointment of local trustees for the formation of the Tallong Picnic and Recreational Area Reserve Trust. In August 2019 new Trustees were appointed; Alan Weston (chair), Russell Montgomery (Vice Chair), Jeremy Porter (Treasurer), Christine Wursten (Secretary) and members Kerry Lawrence and Aleta Curry. The new trustees aim to make the Park a worthwhile community asset for the people of Tallong.