

LAVALLA – THE FIELDS

From 22 acres of wild scrub has come one of Queensland's finest playing fields. Marist Brothers College Rosalie constructed four ovals in 6 months, and with a minimum of expense. They are tucked away in tranquil country surroundings in a valley at Fig Tree Pocket about 8 miles from the heart of Brisbane.

It is an incredible story of vision, patience, and plain hard work and sweat. Like many other big schools, Rosalie was faced with playing fields problems. Soccer fields at Milton, Auchenflower and Toowong had long ago outlived their capacity for over 450 boys with as many as 26 teams playing cricket or football each weekend and also on sports days during the week.

After many months of search and enquiries, well known businessman Luton White – of Barnes Auto – “We never sleep” fame – offered his land at Fig Tree Pocket. As Luton had 6 sons (and 3 daughters) attending or due to attend Rosalie, he well knew the urgency of the situation.

Most of the land was wild hilly scrub with a part time Dairy farm on it.

Brother Cyprian, the Principal at the time, was not a man to quibble over distance; the opportunity was there and he grabbed it.

The next step was to turn this rough hilly landscape into playing fields. Bulldozers and graders were used initially to even out a few of the lumps and bumps but most of the work was done by 1 horsepower, (a magnificent draught horse named Dolly) 7 Marist Brothers and 450 Boys plus assorted parents and friends who were seconded on tricky bits like surveying, plumbing, carpentering etc.

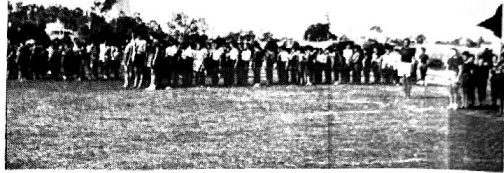
Giant “Emu” parades snaked their way up and down the area picking up stones, pulling out weeds and small trees to make the ground suitable for planting grass.

Brother Cyprian “suggested” that each boy at the school bring along a bag full of couch turf. This eventuated and on one particular “sports day”, 450 bags of couch turf were planted.

In this way every parent felt they owned a small allotment at the fields – about the same size as the bare patch in their front yard.

The cow bails were converted to showers and the cow sheds made into changing rooms. The Dairy Cool room was made into the referees change room. A septic system was installed and water was laid on from the main road. Only those boys from the first few years will remember how cold a cold shower can be in the middle of winter.

There are four main ovals, with the main cricket wicket between two of them. This means the pitch is protected during football season.



Because of this and also the tender loving care given to it by Brother Cyprian and Mr Goodwin the first caretaker, the wicket quickly became the best available of all the T.A.S. schools.

Trees planted by Brother Cyprian are now large enough to offer shade and beauty and will forever remain a memento of his foresight.

Since those early days, a new dressing shed, showers and tuckshop complex has been completed and the caretaker has a modern home which overlooks the area.

The fields were opened on October 16th by Monsignor Steele.

The Parents and Friends Association has played a major role in financing improvements to the fields. The Fathers' Club has also contributed to this project particularly through voluntary labour. The present caretaker and groundsman is Mr Henry Heyen, and he and his wife have faithfully supervised the grounds since 1970.

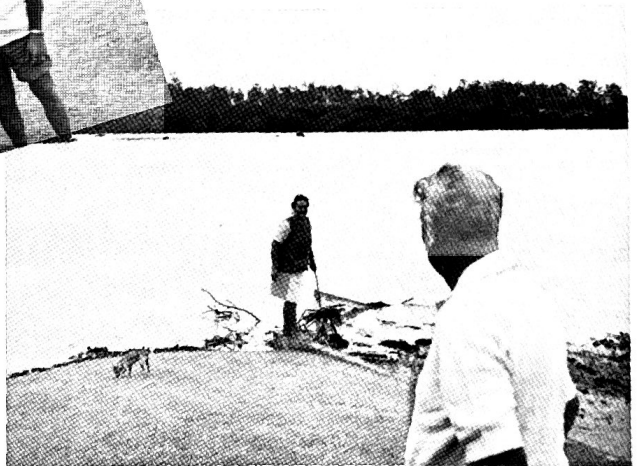


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1974 Floods at the Lavalla Fields. Mr and Mrs Henry Heyen are standing next to the pavilion.



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