



what's in a name?

fact sheet

The origins of a place's name can often provide an interesting insight into its history and charm. In the case of Centennial Parklands, the names within its boundaries derive from a variety of past influences on the Parklands, such as politicians, engineers, solicitors, sportsmen, architects, directors and park activities, amongst others.

Parks

To meet the demands of Sydney's growing population, in 1811 the Governor of New South Wales, Lachlan Macquarie, dedicated the land known today as Centennial Parklands to the public as Sydney's Second Common.

Fifty-five years later in 1866, the Mayor of Sydney, Charles Moore, created Moore Park by setting aside 378 acres of the Common for recreational use. Moore Park was developed primarily to accommodate sporting pursuits and was the first of the three existing parks to be established.

Centennial Park and Queens Park followed later with the signing of the Centennial Celebrations Act in 1887. The development of Centennial Park is largely credited to three men, the Governor of New South Wales, Lord Charles Carrington; the Premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes; and the Director of the Botanic Gardens, also named Charles Moore. In 1887 the Director enlisted 435 men to transform the balance of the Common into a grand, nineteenth century Victorian-style parklands. On 26 January 1888, in commemoration of Australia's centenary, Centennial Park was proclaimed open by Sir Henry Parkes.

Drives, avenues and gates

Many of the other politicians' names which feature in the Parklands derive from those present at Centennial Park's official opening in 1888. On this day, in front of around 40,000 spectators, governors planted pines, figs, grevillea and Araucaria in the area known today as Cannon Triangle, named after the addition in the 1920s of two cannons from the Crimean War. Involved in the officialities were: Lord Charles Carrington; Sir Anthony Musgrave, Governor of Queensland; Sir William Robinson, Governor of South Australia; Sir Robert Hamilton, Governor of Tasmania; Sir Henry Loch, Governor of Victoria; Sir Frederick Broome, Governor of West Australia and Lieutenant General Sir William Jervois, Governor of New Zealand.

Most prominently involved in the formalities and plantings was Sir Henry Parkes, the politician probably most widely associated with Centennial Park. It is these names that account for many of the drives, avenues and gates adjoining and dissecting Grand Drive, the main circular road in Centennial Park. Grand Drive reflects the British park tradition of including an equestrian or carriage drive and a pedestrian walk.

Heading west towards Moore Park is Driver Avenue, which runs alongside the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG). This avenue is named after Richard Driver, a former minister for lands, Sydney City Council solicitor and keen cricketer. As minister, Driver spent £700 on improving the Military and Civil Ground, as the SCG was formally known, and in 1876 he became one of the first trustees of the Ground, representing the New South Wales Cricket Association.



Lakes

Adjacent to Driver Avenue is Kippax Lake, named after William Kippax a Sydney City Council Alderman from 1863 to 1889. In 1967 council held a competition to design a sculpture or fountain to recognise the achievements of Australian sportswomen, Diane Hunt's winning sculpture sits as a centrepiece to the Lake.

Swamps, reserves and bores

The person responsible for the oldest named area in Centennial Park is Lachlan Macquarie, Governor of New South Wales between 1810 and 1821. His name is attributed to Lachlan Swamp and Lachlan Reserve, as well as Lachlan Mill, a flour mill which operated in the swamplands between 1818 and 1828.

The significance of this area reached its peak in the 1830s when Lachlan Swamp became the primary water source for Sydneysiders on completion of Busby's Bore. John Busby was the engineer responsible for driving a tunnel to carry water from the swamplands to Hyde Park, supplying Sydney with water for over 20 years. The naming of Busbys Promontory and Busbys Pond further honour John Busby's achievement.

Fields and grounds

Ernest Samuel Marks was a former Lord Mayor of Sydney and another politician and sportsman to leave his mark in the Parklands. From 1888–1890 Marks won over 40 trophies as an athlete and the ES Marks Athletics Field in Moore Park is named in his honour.

Located almost at the centre of Centennial Park are the Brazilian Fields. For over 35 years the Brazilian Soccer Club has played soccer, their greatest passion, in Centennial Parklands. During this time staff at the Parklands referred to the fields as the 'Brazilian fields' and eventually the colloquial term caught on.

Hugging the south-western ring of Grand Drive are McKay Fields and McKay Sports Grounds. Robert McKay was one of two old boys from Sydney Boys High School instrumental in building a relationship between the school and the Park.

Pavilions

Three pavilions are positioned within Centennial Park, each with a distinct story attached to its name. Next to McKay Fields is Fairland Pavilion, named after Charles Fairland. Fairland was a friend of McKay's and a fellow old boy of Sydney Boys High School also involved with the Park. His relationship with the Park resulted in the School funding a sports pavilion, which opened in 1933. In 1952 the Pavilion was named after Fairland and today it is still owned and used by Sydney Boys High.

Positioned directly opposite Duck Pond is Shelter Pavilion, also known as Vernon Pavilion. Walter Vernon was the government architect vested with the duty of designing the Pavilion, which was completed in 1898. A year later the Martins Road Ranger's Residence, also designed by Vernon, was finished, which to this day is used as ranger accommodation.

The final and most recent pavilion is Federation Pavilion in Federation Valley. The current structure was ceremoniously opened on 1 January 1988 in the presence of 20,000 people, including the then Prime Minister Robert Hawke and New South Wales Premier, Barry Unsworth. The Pavilion stands on the site of the original temporary Federation Pavilion, which was built for the proclamation of the Federal Constitution on 1 January 1901.

**Ponds**

The presence of sporting life in the Parklands is very much apparent in the names of several ponds in Centennial Park. In the 1880s the sailing of model yachts became very popular and the naming of Model Yacht Pond reflects this longstanding activity still enjoyed today. Similarly Fly Casting Pond takes its name from fly casting competitions which were first held at the Pond in the early 1900s.

Nearby at One More Shot Pond is a concrete plinth which once supported a marble statue of a hunter. The statue was entitled One More Shot and was added to the Park in the 1890s, but removed in 1970 due to damage.

Paddocks and rows

Situated in the far southern corner of Centennial Park is Ash Paddock. This area was used as a dumping ground for ash generated from a coal-fuelled water pumping station which once operated in the Parklands in the mid 1800s. Water was pumped from low-lying ponds at the southern end of the Park up to Busbys Pond.

Perhaps the most recently named area in the Parklands is Maidens Row near Ash Paddock. Joseph Maiden was the second officer entrusted with managing Centennial Park from 1896 to 1924. In the year 2000, horticultural staff at Centennial Parklands planted 74 Broad Leaf Paperbarks in a pattern replicating Maiden's earlier plantings near Duck Pond. This row of trees was named in celebration of Maiden's influence on the Park and introducing the native Paperbarks species.

It's a mystery...

Many of the place names within the Parklands obviously reflect its natural features, such as Paperbark Grove, Sandstone Ridge, and Pine Grove. However a few names still remain a mystery. The Parklands cannot say with certainty where the names Frog Hollow and Church Grounds come from. If you have any information on the names of these places or others within the Parklands we'd love to hear from you.

Please contact us via email at info@centennialparklands.com.au