

The history of the Bronte Swimming Club

Bronte and Bondi Baths

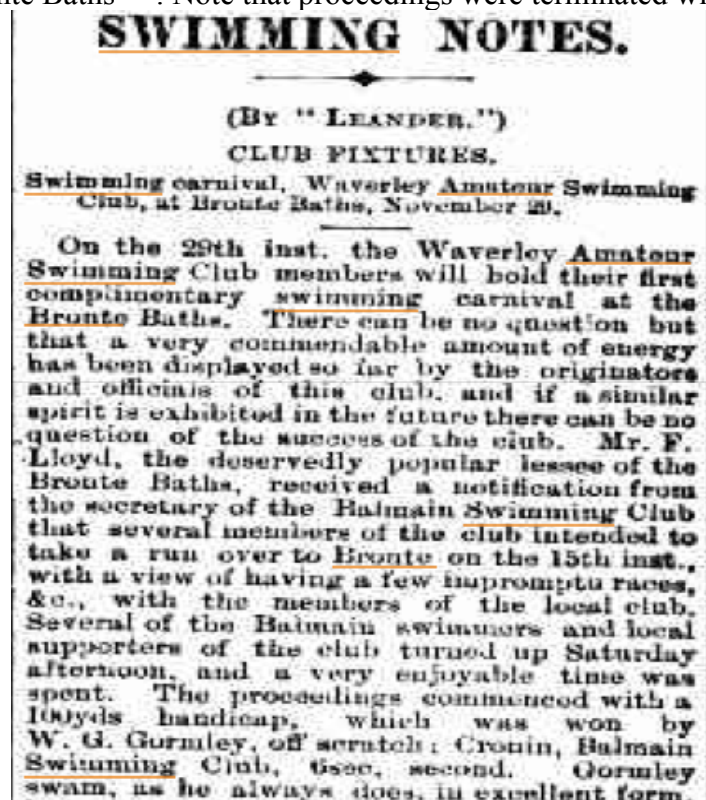
“in August, 1886, (Government) gave permission to Mr. A. Williams ... To design and supervise the construction of the public baths at Bondi and Bronte. Regulation for the conduct of these Baths was adopted by Council on October 4, 1887.”¹

“*it appears that the baths were completed about the middle of 1887.*”² The Bronte Baths were officially opened on 6 February 1888³

Waverley Amateur Swimming Club

“Apparently the first swimming club to use Bronte Baths was the **Waverley Amateur Swimming Club**. Evidence of this ... To be present at a swimming tournament Bronte Baths on November 29th, 1890.”⁴

“On the 29th Inst. (1890) The Waverley Amateur Swimming Club will hold their first complimentary swimming carnival at Bronte Baths”⁵. Note that proceedings were terminated with a duck hunt.



¹ Ibid p 129

² Ibid p148

³ SMH 9 Feb 1888

⁴ The Centenary of the Municipality of Waverley p272

⁵ Eva Steve Trove Notes Ref 13 19/11/1890

but was evidently all off as regards condition.
Time, 1min 27sec.

The proceedings terminated with a duck hunt, which was appropriated by G. Farmer. Several members of the Waverley Club will dine with him to-morrow.

I think the Balmaln Swimming Club are to be congratulated on the kindly spirit displayed by them towards a club which is as yet in its infancy. If a little more of this sportsmanlike spirit was shown, swimming would soon attain in this colony the prominence it for years has attained in England and America.

The final of the Enterprise Club 100yds Members Handicap was won by H. Lawton, with very little to spare, after a very exciting finish. Lawton is improving and will, no doubt, make some of the front rank men shift before long. Time, 1min 21sec.

The undermentioned are the names of the officials of the Waverley Swimming Club :—

Patron, Sir J. Cecil Read, Bart.; president, F. Guest, Esq.; vice-presidents, Aldermen W. P. Smairl, T. Read, W. Spring, and J. McLaughlin, Esqs.; committee, W. Andrews, G. Farmer, H. A. Lawton, O. R. Lawton, and G. Bernauer; captain, R. J. Morrison; handicappers, F. W. Lloyd and H. A. Lawton; hon. treasurer, O. Bernauer; hon. secretary, F. C. Mitchell.

The rules of the club are based upon those of the Enterprise, with some slight alterations to meet local requirements.

Eastern Suburbs Swimming Club – Men Only

“The **Eastern Suburbs Swimming Club** ... was formed in 1892 at the Coogee Aquarium. ... After two seasons at the Coogee Aquarium the Club transferred its headquarters to Bronte Baths. Both the Waverley and Eastern Suburbs clubs must have operated at Bronte at least between 1894 and 1902 and some time between the latter year and 1906 the clubs amalgamated under the title of the Eastern Suburbs Swimming Club.”⁶

In January 1906, “a grant towards the debt incurred in building a club room at the baths was done under the name of the Eastern Suburb Swimming Club”⁷

“W. H. Brown was elected Secretary and Treasurer the first season at Bronte Baths and carried on for many years after that.”⁸

(W.H. Brown was Club Captain in 1892. In 1899 W. H. Bond won the first State Championship for the Club. In 1895 L.Leo won all events from 100 yards to 880 yards.)⁹

⁶ Ibid p272

⁷ Ibid p272

⁸ Ibid p 2725

⁹ Ibid p272



Collected by E.S. Marks, these volumes bring together diverse swimming association carnival programs from around Sydney in 1903/04 and from Western Australia in 1908.

Vol. 1 (E.S. Marks/0736).

1. Eleventh annual carnival / Bondi Swimming Club (Dec. 19, 1903) –

Vol. 2 (E.S. Marks/0736).

1. 7th annual carnival official programme / Waverley Swimming Club (Dec. 5, 1903)
2. Tenth annual carnival / East Sydney Swimming Club (Jan. 9, 1904) –
3. Thirteenth annual carnival / Eastern Suburbs Swimming Club (Jan. 20, 1904) –
4. Souvenir, Eighth annual swimming carnival / Randwick and Coogee Swimming Club (Feb. 6, 1904)

Collected by E.S. Marks, this volume brings together diverse swimming carnival programs from Sydney and Melbourne in 1904 and 1905

1. Keran record carnival / Randwick and Coogee Swimming Club (Mar. 28, 1905)
2. Souvenir, ninth annual swimming carnival / Randwick and Coogee Swimming Club (Jan. 25, 1905)
3. East Sydney Swimming Club (Mar. 18, 1905)
4. Eleventh annual carnival / East Sydney Swimming Club (Dec. 17, 1904)
5. Programme Fourteenth annual championship carnival / Eastern Suburbs Swimming Club (Feb. 18, 1905)
6. Official programme, eighth annual carnival / Waverly Swimming Club (Jan. 21, 1905)
7. Twelfth annual carnival / Bondi Swimming Club (Dec. 10, 1904)

EVOLUTION OF THE BRONTE SWIMMING CLUB INC

1. Eastern Suburbs Ladies Swimming Club – established 31 Oct 1905

Initially established as *Eastern Suburbs Swimming Club – Ladies Branch* of the male only Eastern Suburbs Swimming Club. By 1906 it was named the **Eastern Suburbs Ladies Swimming Club (ESLSC)**.

05/11/1905 – Sunday Times - Sydney

EASTERN SUBURBS CLUB.
The inaugural meeting of the ladies' branch of the Eastern Suburbs S.C. was held at **Brown's Hall, Bronte**, on Tuesday, October 31. The following officers were elected for the ensuing season: President, Mrs. G. H. Rowles; captain, **Miss K. Bishop**; starter and handicapper, Mr. G. H. Rowles; hon. treasurer and secretary, **Miss M. Brown**; committee, **Misses** T. Kerr, P. Burns, A. Sandilands, A. Marlwood, Kiss, and Hill. Already twenty-two ladies have become members, and there is every prospect of the club have a successful season. The next meeting to adopt rules and decide upon the programme for the season will be held at the same hall next Thursday, 8th inst. Ladies residing in the district are invited to attend.

2. Eastern Suburbs Ladies Amateur Swimming Club – established 1916

Annie Brown and Fanny Durack met in 1916 and renamed the ESLSC the **Eastern Suburbs Ladies Amateur Swimming Club (ESLASC)** to enable competing in events of the NSW Amateur Ladies Swimming Association rules.

3. Bronte Ladies Amateur Swimming Club – established 1946

The ESLASC closed down for WW2 from 1940 and immediately after in 1946 it was renamed the **Bronte Ladies Amateur Swimming Club (BLASC)**. This was primarily a club for girls.

4. Bronte Swimming Club Inc – established 1999

The BLASC started to allow boys and then their fathers to swim in its regular summer events at Bronte Baths. A policy decision was made to completely open the club to both sexes and all ages. As well, legislative and insurance compliance requirements meant the club had to incorporate under NSW Association rules.

The Bronte Swimming Club (Inc) became the most recent variant of the original Eastern Suburbs Ladies Swimming Club established in 1905.

5. Further references to the early Eastern Suburbs Ladies Swimming Club are below

27/12/1905 – Sydney Sportsman – Surry Hills

EASTERN SUBURBS LADIES' CLUB.
The members of the above club wish to thank the numerous ladies and gentlemen of the Eastern Suburbs for their support in the formation of the Swimming Club, and also Mr. Coghlan, of Waverley Exchange, for generous donation.

13/5/1906 – Sunday Times – Sydney – ESLSC Ball at Paddington Town Hall

The members of the Eastern Suburbs Ladies' Swimming Club closed their season with a very successful "Veronique" Dance in the Paddington Town Hall on Thursday, May 3, over 300 being present. Much credit was due to the energetic ladies of the committee—Mrs. G. H. Rowles (president), Miss Cable (vice-president), Miss M. Brown and Miss E. Hegerty (hon. secs.), and Miss M. Marwood and Miss P. Gibson, (hon. trea.). The hall and supper tables were tastefully decorated with chrysanthemums, palms, and evergreens. The catering was provided by Mr. McIntosh, and music by Mr. L. L. Howarde's string band. Among those present were Mrs. P. H. Rowles, in blue crepe de chine and applique; Mrs. D. Brown, black broche and sequins; Mrs. W. Brown, black glace lace; Mrs. Stone, white silk muslin; Mrs. Poole, black tulle over glace; Mrs. Barnes, black silk; Mrs. Canny, pink crepe de chine, with black silk, roses; Mrs. Silburn, black merveilleux and chiffon; Mrs. Meade, cream voile with touches of pale blue; Mrs. Stuart (Braidwood), eau-de-nil silk; Mrs. Egerson, black glace; Mrs. Rosenfeld, cream silk and hyacinths; Miss M. Brown, silver sequin net and t lace over black glace; Miss Sandilands, cream silk and chiffon; Miss F. Gibson, pale pink crepe de chine and heather; Miss Ethel Hegerty, red, sunray silk and chiffon; Miss

12/4/1907 – SMH - Amateur vs Professional

SWIMMING.

Some correspondence was read at the annual meeting of the English Association between the association and the controlling body in France. It was then moved that Billington, who was suspended two years back, be reinstated, but the chairman ruled such discussion out of order.

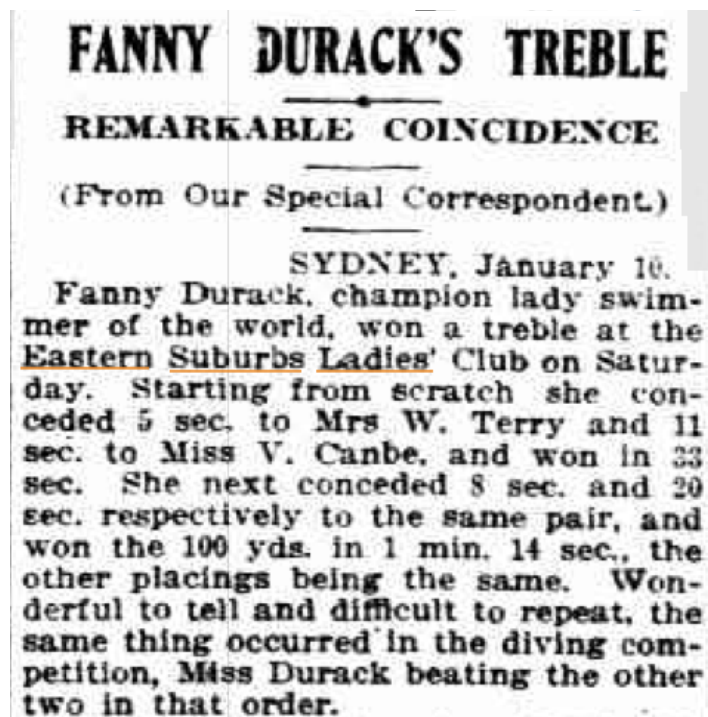
Miss Gladys Tate, who is only 16, is making her name as a swimmer. Within the last week she has won the 100yds championship of the East Sydney Ladies' Club, in which she defeated Miss Dorothy Hill and Miss Fanny Durack, and a 100yds handicap. The time for the championship was 1min 22 3-5sec.

The English Association has declined to sanction a championship in which amateurs and professionals could compete together from any part of the world.

29/1/1908 – Evening News - Gladys Tate beats Fanny Durack

SWIMMING.

At Farmer's Baths the race for the championship of the Eastern Suburbs Ladies' Club took place, and resulted in an easy win for last year's champion, Miss Gladys Tate, who swam the distance in 1min 18sec, beating her last year's time by 4sec. Miss Dorothy Hill was again second, and Miss Fannie Durack third.



OTHER CLUBS

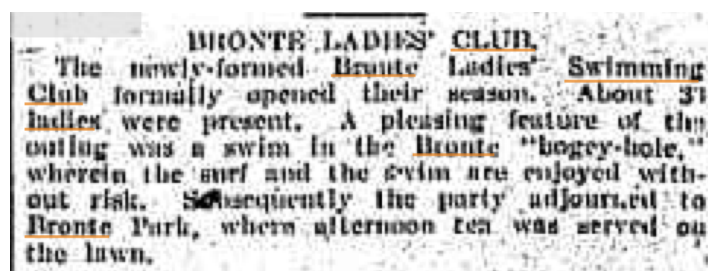
Bronte Amateur Swimming Club – Men Only

Originated from the male-only Eastern Suburbs Swimming Club soon after WW2. Closed down in 1960's.

Bronte Ladies Swimming Club

The first meeting of the Bronte Ladies Swimming Club occurred on 31 October 1909.

31/10/1909 – Bronte Ladies Swimming Club – Sunday Times



This club did not last beyond a year or two from 1909. It appeared primarily social.

Eastern Suburbs Ladies League Swimming Club

3/11/1909 – SMH - Eastern Suburbs Ladies League Swimming Club formed 1909.



This club operated for approximately 3 years. There is no further evidence of its operation beyond 1912.

Bronte Splashers Swimming Club

‘The Bronte Splashers Swimming Club was formed in the year 1921.’¹⁰ It has been operating continuously since then as a Winter swimming club.

Bondi Amateur Swimming Club.

“Founded in 1892, the Bondi Amateur Swimming Club is one of the oldest amateur sporting bodies in the Eastern Suburbs, and the second oldest swimming Club in the Commonwealth...”¹¹

“The foundation of the Club is believed to have come about through the natural rock pool which occupied almost the same position as the present day baths.”¹²

“Waverley Municipal Council improved the rock pool for the public, making it 33 yards in length. It remained that size for about 20 years when it was lengthened to 50 yards, and in 1930 to fifty metres..”¹³

¹⁰ Ibid p274

¹¹ The Centenary of the Municipality of Waverley p271

¹² Ibid p271

¹³ Ibid p271