

Fun Scotch Facts

G is for Grounds

Grounds of its own for recreation were something that Scotch did not always have. Only since coming to Hawthorn has it truly had its own grounds:

- When Scotch was at East Melbourne, the Fitzroy Gardens across the road were used by Scotch boys during recess and lunchtimes, as Scotch's playground was uninviting bitumen
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- Scotch's only oval before acquiring Hawthorn Glen was the former Civil Service Cricket Club Ground at Yarra Park. Scotch had permissive occupancy of it from 1879 to 1925, giving it up after completing the move to Hawthorn. The Old Scotch Football Club used it from 1921 to 1992, and St. Kevin's College used it in 1932. It is now the site of Melbourne Park, the home of the Australian Open (tennis)
- Saturday 13 September 1919 was an important date in the history of what Scotch at Hawthorn has become: the Building and Grounds Sub-Committee met on the site at 11:00am to choose where to situate the Main Oval. The first Public School match played on it was against Scots College, Sydney, on 15 December 1922
- Robert 'Bob' Horne was Scotch's groundsman from 1895 to 1929, starting at the Yarra Park ground, with a break of several years in Western Australia before returning in time for the move to Hawthorn. He was renowned for creating the Main Oval in a place where others deemed it impossible to create a decent ground. His wickets were lauded by international players, and he died – perhaps appropriately – while rolling a wicket at Scotch on 3 December 1929, aged 66.
- Regrettably ignoring its proper name, the Lower Oval is, in fact, the Melville Oval. Its worthy eponym, William Henry Melville, attended Scotch from 1870 to 1879, playing in the 1st XI (1875-79; 1879 Captain) and 1st XVIII (1876-78; 1878 Captain). He was an original member of the Old Scotch Collegians' Club and the Old Scotch Collegians' Association, helping to form the latter, and becoming its third president in 1916. William was a solicitor at Hamilton, and a member of the Scotch College Council until 1921. He played an important role in establishing the new school at Hawthorn, and even paid for water for its sports grounds until the end of 1922. Four generations of descendants have attended Scotch
- The Meares Oval is often wrongly thought to be named in memory of George Chancellor Meares (SC 1919-24), who was killed in a plane crash near Brewarrina, New South Wales, on 4 May 1930. It was instead named for his father (if not the family, which had three sons at Scotch), Robert Chancellor Meares (born 21 December 1870, died 2 December 1938), a Scotch Council member, who donated £500 in Term 1, 1927 for its construction. It was completed in time for the 1928 football season
- The Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club might never have existed: that site could instead have been Scotch, but for a decision of the Scotch College Council on 13 November 1919. Estate agents C.J. & T. Ham offered Scotch the 17.5 acre Moonga Estate (including Moonga mansion), with frontages to Glenferrie Road, bounded by Gardiner's Creek and the Heyington railway line. The opportunity was declined without reasons being recorded. However, having just bought Hawthorn Glen in 1915, building the Junior School in 1917 (with additions in 1918 and 1919), and being on the verge of building the Senior School, money would have been a bit tight (the land was also flood-prone)

- Lost in the mists of time is when and why the New Oval was renamed the McKendrick Oval. Its low-key formation occurred following a Council decision in 1939, and up until the 1972 edition of the *Guide to Scotch College* it was shown on as map as the New Oval. The 1977 edition's map named it the McKendrick Oval, yet the 18 June 1943 edition of *Satura*, Scotch's now-defunct student newspaper, asked the quiz question: Down by the Rugby Oval there is a playing field which often is referred to as the New Oval. However, a more recent name has been attached to this oval after a former member of the staff. It is - The McKendrick Oval, the Littlejohn Oval, the Lawson Oval, the Morrison Oval, or Riley's Oval?' The answer was The McKendrick Oval. He was William Turner McKendrick, a boy at Scotch from 1921 to 1925 who played in the 1925 1st XVIII and rowed in the winning 1925 Head of the River crew. He was Bursar from 1934 to 1947 (with a break for RAN service from 1942 to 1945) and a member of the School Council from 1950 to 1976. As Bursar, he did much to improve the appearance of the grounds
- Scotch's grounds only remain as good as they are now because (in part) of a collaboration with St. Kevin's. When (what is now) the Monash Freeway was first conceived, government plans had an off-ramp into Glenferrie Road north of the Heyington railway line going over Scotch's grounds. It was also to be a ground-level freeway that would have had a far greater impact on Scotch and St. Kevin's than the raised freeway the schools proposed. The schools' plan was pushed for being cheaper, less invasive, saving acres of parks, dozens of houses, and over £1.6 million
- The seating around the Main Oval comes from the MCG. It dates from at least 1906, when the Grey Smith Stand was built. The stand was demolished in November 1966 to make way for what is now the W.H. Ponsford Stand. Old Boy Hector Ralston 'Hec' Ingram (SC 1923-26) was the perfect blend of Old Boy, MCC member and current parent, and he made a deal to get the seats for Scotch. During the Christmas 1966 holidays, he and his 13 year old son Bruce (SC 1966-70) dug holes, mixed and poured concrete and installed the seats around the Main Oval at Hec's own cost, after he had first restored them