



BIRKDALE QLD



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Name: Birkdale School of Arts Hall

Address: 101 Birkdale Road, Birkdale QLD 4159

The Town/District:

.....a suburb facing the Waterloo Bay inlet on Moreton Bay, 19 km east of central Brisbane..... Situated on the Brisbane to Cleveland railway line (1889), Birkdale had the benefit of rail transport for its farm produce. A post office was opened in 1892 and a school in 1916, but Birkdale did not develop as a village in the way that Cleveland or Wellington Point did: Pugh's Queensland Directory listed only a store and a contractor in 1925, along with a school of arts and a Methodist church. ²

Birkdale, south-east of Brisbane, is a suburb of Redland City. It is thought to have been named by William Thorne after his birth place in England. It has a sub-tropical climate. In the 1920s, poultry farming was a major industry. Today it is a thriving area with a large suburban shopping complex, two State schools, a canal style housing estate, and a railway station.

¹ Photo taken 18th August 2012 by Les Warner

² queenslandplaces.com.au



Among the early residents of Birkdale was George Randall, an early Emigration Officer who was responsible for many English men, women and children travelling to Queensland to restart their lives in a new world in the antipodes.³ More recent residents have included Rugby League Legend, Wally Lewis, and world renowned opera singer, Mirusia Louweres.

Building:

Built circa 1920, the School of Arts Hall is a heritage listed wooden building with high ceilings and wooden floor.⁴

On the 1st July 1924, the following article was printed in the Brisbane Courier:

*Birkdale – School of Arts – At the Special Meeting called for last Friday, the Birkdale School of Arts Committee met in the School of Arts to deal with the tenders for the ceiling. The President, Mr. McNeilly, presided. The Committee finally decided to accept the tender of Mr. H.B. Wallis of Birkdale. The School of Arts has now a fine building and is free of debt.*⁵

The building was painted inside and out in 2011, with new sprung floors prior to that. A picket fence was removed prior to the painting.⁶

Uses for Building:

Some of the associations still using the Hall are –

- local theatre group MATES,
- cellist Shaohua Chen-Merritt who stages concerts in this hall because of the good acoustic provided by the high ceilings
- Tae Kwan Do classes
- Bayside Multiple Births Playgroup
- Zumba Classes
- Redlands Four Wheel Club

Social History:

Dances and other functions were held in the hall over the years by many different organisations including -.⁷

- The Methodist Church (a *shilling* afternoon)
- St. George's Church of England
- Birkdale Tennis Club
- Wellington Point Agricultural Horticultural & Industrial (A.H.& I.) Society
- Birkdale Fruit Growers' Co-operative Association Limited
- Orange Lodge
- Birkdale Masonic Lodge

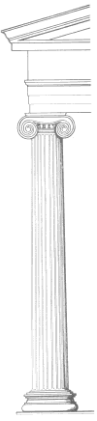
³ *George Randall – Emigration Officer Extraordinaire* by Jack Walton

⁴ Leaflet from Councillor Helen Murray dated 15/2/2011

⁵ NLA Trove

⁶ Leaflet from Councillor Helen Murray dated 6/4/2011

⁷ NLA Trove



In 1943, during World War II, 15 Land Army girls were accommodated in the Birkdale School of Arts to work at Hargreave's pineapple cannery for a few weeks.⁸ The hall was used as their combined cook house, dining room and recreation hall. The girls were accommodated in tents in the grounds of the hall but the girls' Matron slept in the hall. The girls would work on all the local farms throughout the district and catch the train to the city on their days off.⁹

The Courier Mail of 3rd June, 1942, reported on a concert and dance held which raised £8.1. 6. for the purchase of War Savings Certificates for district men in the fighting forces, with 69 Certificates having been bought for presentation to men from Wellington Point and Birkdale when the war ended.¹⁰



Side view of Birkdale School of Arts Hall

Photo taken 18th August 2012 by Les Warner

Acknowledgements:

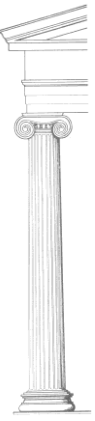
Redland City Council

Redland Museum

⁸ NLA Trove – Courier Mail 11 Aug 1943

⁹ www.ozatwar.com

¹⁰ NLA Trove



References:

National Library of Australia (Trove)

Wikipedia

A Redland Centenary Souvenir

Redland Times

queenslandplacenames.com

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Photos:

Photograph album donated to the Redland Museum.

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