

# VINCENT 'BUSHY' PARKER PARK



## HISTORY

The park was named after Vincent 'Bushy' Parker to acknowledge his significance; to many Vincent 'Bushy' Parker is known as a war hero.

Born Vincent Wheatley on 11 February 1918, Vincent's mother Lydia died suddenly at age 26. Lydia's sister Edith and brother in law John Parker formally adopted Vincent and hence his name changed to Vincent Parker. The Parker Family immigrated to Australia in 1928 and settled in Purono, his mother worked as a station mistress and father worked on the railways with Vincent attending the Bohlevale State School.

After school Vincent worked for Kodak in Flinders Street before travelling to New Zealand. Vincent was good at acrobatics and was very athletic although he was especially interested in magic and sleight of hand. Whilst in New Zealand he spent some time learning to become a magician and even assisted a magician called 'The Great Levante'. During that time he learnt various escapology methods.

Vincent returned to Australia but shortly after he and a friend decided to join the RAF to become pilots and travelled to England, Parker worked his passage as a steward. Vincent 'Bushy' Parker joined the Royal Air Force in 1939. Bushy Parker flew in the 'Battle of Britain' downing at least five German Bombers but his Spitfire was shot down over the English Channel in 1940.

After four hours in the water Bushy Parker was picked up by a German Boat and was taken as a POW and held in various Stalag Luft Camps. However due to being involved in various escape attempts he was sent to the thought to be escape proof Colditz Castle. This however stop Vincent being involved in other escape attempts, making at least two himself as well as being involved most of the other attempts. His skill at sleight of hand assisted with the attempts and he pick the locks allowing inmates to get to parts of the castle thought to be inaccessible and to storerooms that often held red cross packages.

Vincent along with the other POW's was released in 1945 by the Americans, spending four years in captivity. After the war Parker continued with the RAF, based in Milfield Airbase. During a training flight problems occurred and Vincent 'Bushy' Parker was killed only some eight months after being released from imprisonment.

## THE PARK

Vincent 'Bushy' Parker Park is a designated limited free tent and vehicle camping area with an attractive freshwater creek swimming area next to the park. The park is popular for picnics with shade shelters and BBQ's. The restored Rollingstone Railway Station is filled with historical mementos of the area, as well as a network of historic signage.

