

## Reminiscing

By Gerry Worsell

Warden of the UNE Sports Union

As Robb has played such a vital part in University sport, I welcome this opportunity to congratulate you on the occasion of your Silver Jubilee.

The invitation to contribute a few words to this publication triggered a flood of happy memories. Please bear with me while I share a few of them with you.

I had hardly stepped foot on campus in 1969 when Snow Barlow, one of your most distinguished rugby players and cricketers, invited me to a formal dinner in Robb. A few days later he invited me to a bucks' party. So at a very early stage I experienced the traditions of Robb high and low life, traditions which have been in good hands over the years.

No college has made a greater contribution to University sport than Robb. This contribution has taken many forms: superb individual performances, great team efforts at elite and mass-participation levels, and able administration.

Limitations of space preclude mention of many of Robb's champions but let me mention a few, taken almost at random, to convey some idea of Robb's talent.

Bill King was, without doubt, the best batsman ever to play for the Uni-

versity. Only the fact that he preferred rugby prevented him from playing Shield cricket and, perhaps, representing Australia. Neil Harvey, one of Australia's greatest batsmen and a shrewd judge of a cricketer, thought that Bill could have reached the top.

The University has had very few double Blues but Peter Wynn achieved this great distinction as a cricketer and tennis player. He also found time to work his way up through the various grades to first fifteen rugby where his forward play was somewhat less subtle than his slow spin.

Robb has supplied three University Sportsmen of the Year since the Hanlan Shield was first presented in 1976: Mitch Hooke, Rob Onus and Dave Pratten.

Mitch was selected to captain the Combined Australian Universities Australian Football Team in 1977. He also excelled on the race track - the Picnic Race track - where he could have taught Fine Cotton a thing or two. Rob Onus toured New Zealand with the Australian Rugby Team in 1978 and Dave Pratten was outstanding in the 1981 N.S.W. Country Rugby Fifteen. Dave was really a better cricketer than footballer. Only A.U.S.A.'s selection politics denied him

*A tranquil game of cricket provides the perfect setting for this view of the College, taken from Consett Davis in the mid-sixties. Photo: Courtesy of UNE Information Office.*







*This was the way the Robb men's first grade soccer side looked in 1978, the green and white 'Celtic' outfit having been brought to Australia by a Scottish import. The team did well, recording their first and only double figure win by 10-0 over Duval College. They are (back row) George Balis, Laurie Aspinall, Jeff Polley, Roger Berry, Warren Aitken, Peter Booth, Paul Hunt; (front row) Ross Wilson, Scott Craig, Romic Pajak, Mike Knowling, David George and Brian 'Rattler' Alston.*

a tour to England with the Australian Universities Team. Dave knew this but never said a word to anyone - a fine example of Robb sportsmanship.

There was a time when Robb men could play soccer, before they came to rely on the women to salvage their pride. Jim Warren was an outstanding goalkeeper in some very good University teams in the early 70's. In 1974 Jim was voted Best and Fairest in the match between Australian and New Zealand Universities. He would be very pleased with the latter day form of Tineke de Boer, Julie Duck, Chris Reading and company.

Andrew Cutler is a great example of Robb's sporting tenacity. Served only by Lake Zot and Dumaresq Creek, Andrew achieved international honours in ocean racing.

My recollections are tinged with sadness. Eric Darling, the energetic local doctor who coached and repaired Robb rugby teams in the early days of the College, is no longer with us. He died some years ago back in his beloved Ireland. Countless Robb footballers will never forget Eric's infectious enthusiasm for rugby. At Belfast's Queen's University, he was a contemporary of the great Jack Kyle, arguably the best five-eighth of all time, who captained a Queen's Fifteen

in which nearly every player was an Irish international. Eric Darling's vision of Robb as the Queen's of the southern hemisphere helped to establish traditions which were reflected in last year's Sterling Cup win.

I also have very fond memories of two other outstanding members of Robb in the early 70's, two young men who died long before they could achieve their full potential but men who lived life to the full and made their mark. Ron Gannaway was an outstanding Basketball Blue, a great team man. Tony Cartwright was dedicated to Robb, an outstanding President of the University Cricket Club and a most popular Australian Football umpire.

Tony Cartwright, like many other members of Robb, somehow found time to contribute to the administration of University sport in general by serving on the Sports Union's Executive Committee. The Sports Union owes much to people like Wayne Bryden, Peter Wynn, Glen Druitt and Fay Stewart who spent countless hours at meetings helping to shape Sports Union policy. Robb has also provided more than its fair share of Sports Union Club Presidents. Additionally the college has been well represented in the Sports Union's most senior



offices. John Stanley (it took him rather long to see the light and join Robb) and Don McRae (I think he was born in a bottle green jumper) have made contributions to University sport both on and off the field unsurpassed in the history of the Sports Union. Incidentally, there is every truth in the rumour that you can still turn Don from a gentle giant to a raving lunatic by whispering "Chalkies".

When Robb was emancipated in 1977, the women added a new dimension to the College's sporting excellence. On four occasions in the past eight years Robb has won the Mary Bagnall Trophy for inter-college sport. This percentage of success surpasses even the proud record of the men who have won the President's Trophy more times than any other college. Robb's enthusiasm for the mass-participation events is renowned and, in the end, this is even more important than the achievements of Robb's international representatives.

To the Australian public, the most significant development in sport at the University during recent years has been the establishment of the National Sports Camps. These Camps, staffed by world class coaches, have attracted national and international attention. The Sports Union is indebted to Robb College for

opening its doors to the campers who take over the College throughout the whole of January each year. The Camps have complemented the magnificent Cape-to-Cape Run in increasing Robb's public profile in recent years. This can do nothing but good for both Robb and the University.

Mike Knowling, a liaison officer at each of the eight National Soccer Camps held in Robb College, was a schoolboy fan on Glasgow Celtic's terraces when Willie Wallace, co-director of the Soccer Camps, was Celtic's and Scotland's star. Mike's selection as a liaison officer was a shrewd move to overcome the language problem. Now you also know why, soon after Mike's arrival in Armidale, Robb's Soccer Team played in green and white **hooped** jerseys. This was not in deference to Robb's rugby tradition; Mike imported Celtic's unusual strip.

My wife and I have enjoyed Robb's hospitality on many occasions over the years. The Robb Sports Dinner, in particular, has become for us a highlight of the University sporting calendar. It is a function of which the members of Robb College should be very proud. Of course, there has been much for you to celebrate every year and I hope that your second twenty-five years will be at least as successful as your first.



*No-one who took part will ever forget the 1984 'Run For Your Life' project, in which Robb featured prominently. The brainchild of Robb's Fay Stewart and St Albert's Peter Cunich, the run saw six teams raise almost \$100,000 for cancer research. Pictured arriving back in Armidale on May 20, 1984, is Team Four from Adelaide and among the faces are John 'Spock' Burgess, Lynn Kennedy, Sam Tainsh, Lisa Middleton, John 'Joel' Garner, Peter Hall, Andrew Brissett and Duncan 'Beagle' Cameron. The 'Run For Your Life' project celebrated UNE's 30th anniversary and followed the successful 1981 'Cape-to-Cape' run, in which runners from Port Douglas on Cape York and Wilson's Promontory in Victoria raised funds which established the Australian Foundation for Disabled Students. Photo: Courtesy*





*These classic 'before-and-after' photographs were taken as the Robb women's soccer team posed to celebrate winning the 1983 UNE first grade minor premiership. With blue skies all around, an unexpected 'shower' suddenly fell right on top of the assembled team. Curiously enough, the shower was almost exactly equivalent to a bucketful in quantity and came from the general direction of College President 'Baz' Adams' balcony immediately above. The girls who found themselves 'under the weather' were (back row) Janelle Smith, Karen Hochkins, Cate Lemann, Janeen Robb, Christine Reading, Kaye Nowland, Iona ('out of my way') Dyer, Sandra Lanz, Julie Duck, Amanda Willis; (front row) Robyn Allomes, Judy Wightman, Melanie Manton, Amanda York, Susan Barrett, Susan Clift and Sally Sholl.  
Photos: Courtesy of The Armidale Express/Danieli Studios.*

