



**1993 Potato & Leak Club on the Occasion of the Men's First Grade Premiership
Grand Leak Duncan Allen centre with blanket**



Peter (Whale) Churack "Striding Out"

MATESHIP, TEAM EFFORT, LARRIKINISM, EGALITARIANISM

By Peter (Whale) Churack who joined the club in 1979 from Old Aquinians

I am sitting here on the Anzac day holiday contemplating my hockey club memoirs and it occurs to me that some of the themes of Anzac seem to apply the University Hockey Club.

I am in no way comparing the heroism, hardship and sacrifice of the "Diggers" to playing for the UHC, however, the traditions of mateship, team effort; larrikinism and egalitarianism have in my experience been an integral part of my life through the club.

Mateship

Upon transferring to the club in the late seventies from a college based inferior club it soon became apparent to me that firstly, I would need to improve my drinking and secondly, I would be here for life.

The people I met, Blades, Fear, Doc, Later, Chuck, Tim Casey, Sticky, Rover, Speed, Roger Gray and the Greenman all showed me by example how there is a lot more to the hockey club than the 70 minutes on the field. At the post game drinks spontaneous song would erupt which by the way was extremely harmonious, this was then followed by a series of anecdotes usually on the silly exploits of club members over the previous week either hockey related or otherwise.

These stories known as the "Wood Ducks" were tales told by master story tellers involving much humour and suspense as the identity of the club member was withheld until the completion of the story (even then some nominees were unsure it was them as exaggeration was essential to a good nomination) to this end I must mention Jim (Jimbo) Ashby for his creative acts which lead to such fine nominations.

In this environment people could not help but become friends, indeed lifelong friends. Today I number among my closest friend's club members and of course, in the true sense of the word "mate", my wife, Lianne, for whom I will always be as grateful to the club as one can be.

Team Effort

As Uni is a student based club, we fielded teams, (outside of the 1's & 2's) consisting mainly of students invariably aged in their late teens and early 20's pitted against established very experienced teams from other clubs. As a result we were traditionally slow starters but once underway with the effect of extra curricular activities such as the Easter Albany Carnival, the Religious Games and of course IV, our teams soon gelled and often though outside of the 4 midway through the season they just as often ended up playing off in the Grand Final.

The team effort theme extended beyond the playing arena of the club. In 1983/4, the club made the decision to establish clubrooms of our own as the experiment of sharing the AJ Williams Pavilion with the Uni Football and Athletics Clubs was never going to work. As a group we raised the funds, dug the foundations and wherever possible assisted in its construction. This was the first major club building project which was only made possible by the leadership of Bob Brindley. The new clubrooms were subsequently named the RF Brindley Pavilion in 1984.

This success was followed by the vision of an artificial surface and again the teamwork of club members made this vision happen, from the fundraising to the design, to assisting in construction, many members contributed their time, money and effort.

Today we enjoy a facility equal to any club facility in the world and one that is the envy of most. The teamwork between the club and the University, including the valuable contribution of long time caretaker Chris (Marshy) Marsh, continues.

Larrikinism

As with any club with such youthful members, larrikinism was ever apparent. I remember to this day

the words Fear imparted to me on my first Fresher's show "sure we have fun, but we always look out for each other and never undertake activities that may upset others, unless they are Vic Park!". Very rarely over the last 25 years have I seen club members deviate from this philosophy.

Also, as you can imagine with any such club, youth and alcohol have created some moments of concern but the edict of always looking out for each other has meant that no serious problems have arisen. This combined with a level of irreverence towards stuffy regulations and pompous authority has resulted in some very humorous situations including the Bunbury Nude Olympics, the Piccadilly Arcade rally drive, Nostradamus Tour of Albany and the Castle Rock run throughs.

However in my view the perfect illustration of this sense of larrikinism is the Potato & Leek Club. Not only are there 10 commandments laid down by the Grand Leek Duncan (Duncs) Allen, but originally there were sponsored tee shirts, membership cards and club dinners with potato and leek soup provided.

Even the usual stuffy WAHA recognises the role the Potato and Leek Club has made in providing a sense of atmosphere at finals. Who but the most stuck up could not appreciate the half time rendition of "singing the rain" as performed by David (Herpex) Albrecht and the assembled Potato & Leek Choir?

Egalitarianism

I truly wonder whether many members appreciate the extent and value of this attribute of the club. Hockey as a team sport with a longer playing life than most sports lends itself to a level of egalitarianism that say football could never aspire to but when one plays for Uni you could be training alongside an Australian player or slotting one past a world eleven goalkeeper.

But Uni's egalitarianism is more than just the on field sports, for once you played for Uni it was the way you played the game, the commitment you made to your side and your contribution to the social life of the club that is valued by your fellow club members and not the job you held or the money you made, or the school you attended. Sadly this is not true of all clubs.

As a result of my time at the UHC, I number among my friends Architects, Doctors, Lawyers, Dentists, Electricians, Plumbers, Property Developers, Politicians, Entrepreneurs, Engineers, Teachers, Magistrates etc. The point being not that I can number these professions among my group of friends but that without my association with the UHC I would have had no way meeting and making lifelong friends with such fine people.

The University Hockey Club has certainly played and continues to play a major role in my life. Now, as my children start their time with the junior club, I sincerely hope that they too will enjoy all the aspects of University Hockey that I have had the privilege to enjoy over the last 25 years.
