

# It wouldn't Happen Today

(By Tom Wood – Club Historian)



Prior to the commencement of the 1962/63 Grade season Australian Test captain **Richie Benaud** led a Cumberland team – a mixture of 1st and young lower grade players – on a trip to the NSW country town of Binnaway. The Cumbos travelled by train, the purpose of journey was to assist in the development of these promising youngsters by exposing them to the inspirational leadership of Benaud. Some of the players involved in the venture were John Benaud, Rex Flindt, John and Bobby Aitken, John Dwyer, John Parkinson and future Club Poet Laureate Bobby McMillan, who penned his poem 'My First Cap' about one of these matches.

The itinerary comprised of two matches, the first on the Saturday and the second on Sunday. **Game 1** began three hours after the team arrived in the township and after stumps were pulled, they dined at a BBQ staged on the property of Mr Renshaw (brother of the acting State Premier), and then they sauntered off to a dance at the local Golf Club. **Day 2** was an all-day game and Cumberland recorded another win; the small ground was packed with a crowd of over 300 fans engrossed with the contest between their 'local heroes' and the 'city slickers' – the playing arena was completely encircled by cars. The whole weekend was a great experience for the participating Cumberland players, Binnaway's hospitality was top-class, and it was fine advertisement for Sydney Grade Cricket.

In the modern world of professional cricket, it is highly unlikely that the Australian Test captain would take a team from his Premier Cricket Club on a weekend trip of social cricket.

Bob McMillan played second and third grade, as an opening bowler, for Parramatta (Cumberland) and first grade Rugby Union for Parramatta, but later in life he moved to the country and became a 'Bush Poet' – a great fan of Henry Lawson.

## My First Cap

When I was young and a colt in my prime,  
Headstrong and carefree, caring not a rhyme.  
I played cricket for Cumberland, men of two blues,  
"Wearing **the cap**," though I did not choose!  
'Twas a lid from the past, was all I could see,  
A fettle, a restriction, a halter, not free.  
A fielder, a bowler and a batter I be,  
But this baggy blue cap, sat not well upon me.

**Then** came my moment, such a brief snatch of fame,  
On a trip to the country, a Binnaway game.  
Handed the ball, this chance I must seize,  
Eager and willing for 'Twas Benaud to please.

**As** my captain and hero, he led us away,  
A team of young colts, mixed with masters that day.  
'Twas the chance of a lifetime, to make well my mark,  
Keep it up in the slot; don't be hit round the park!

The adrenalin pumping, the pupil was keen,  
The "best crowd for years," this old town had seen.  
For 'twas Richie, the throng, had gathered to see,  
Not an eager young tearaway that I knew as me.

**Back** to my disc, like Davo's thirteen,  
I rush to the stumps. All Agro and mean.  
I fling the arm over, an off-cutter, it seems,  
Bites in the wicket and my captain beams.

**But** I rattle the stumps, three balls in a row!  
Never before, did a hat-trick I know!

The elation was fleeting as he said, "Look here son,"  
They've come to see me, not the son of a gun.....  
Keep that form up and the game will be over,  
So, its fine leg for you – "best go for a rover."

**Saddened**, confused, I did as he said,  
He bowled them up "dollies" that they whacked to the shed.

The locals were heroes, as they took to the "Great",  
He winked at me often and said, "Sorry, young mate!"

**Now** that I'm older and look back upon time,  
I reflect on that moment, and I now care about rhyme.  
For how many in the history of cricket have been.....  
Sacked for a hat-trick, by the skipper, of the cap baggy green?

***So, my Cumberland cap I now cherish with pride,***  
'Twas a privilege, and an honour to play in that side!

(Bob McMillan)