

## Keith Wall – The Tradesman

Keith Wall was one of the ‘oldest surviving Cumbos’ at the time of his death in May 2009. It could be said that he was a Parramatta man to his bootstraps, at an advanced age, despite declining health and confinement to a wheelchair he still held his interest in the club. Accompanied by his son Dennis (who also played for the club) he made the effort to attend the annual fund-raising luncheons and regularly appeared as a spectator at Old Kings Oval 1st Grade matches. In fact, he was present at the final match of the season, against Gordon in March 2009, and only a few weeks later passed away.

In his playing he was of a robust build and was a strong, powerful cricketer who plied his trade with an earnest commitment to the job at hand.



His career with the Club spanned the years from **1940/41** to **1956/57** (interrupted by an Army stint in World War II, during which he served in New Guinea).

As a player Keith was regarded as a ‘tough cricketer’, in the old sense of the word – competitive and fully committed on the field, but with a strong ethic for fair play. He loved a post-match beer with his teammates and opposition players – a custom not often undertaken in the modern NSW Premier Cricket era.

A skilled all-rounder, he was a determined, aggressive lower-order batsman and talented big turning right-arm off-spin bowler. His all-round proficiency was well illustrated by his career statistics with Central Cumberland:

- Batting: **2,681 runs @ 21.45.**
- Bowling: **308 wickets @ 23.20** in all grades.

Keith made many appearances in **1st grade** between **1940/41** and **1956/57**, and his bowling statistics were very presentable - **55 wickets @ 22.49** (B.B. – **7/115** v. St. George [1954/55], 5/89 v. Sydney University [1948/49], 4/7 v. NDs [1955/56]). and 237 runs @ 9.87). But found it difficult to secure a permanent berth in that grade, because during his playing era the Parramatta club was blessed with spinners and all-rounders of the calibre of Richie Benaud, Ron James, Jack Treanor, Lou Benaud and

Wally Cornock. However, he played the full 1955/56 season in the 1sts, being mentioned in the Annual Report as a bowling mainstay and had a most successful season claiming 27 wickets @ 15.81 – not a bad performance in a team also containing State spinners Benaud and Treanor. In 1st grade his batting opportunities were very limited as evidenced by 237 runs @ **9.37** (H.S. – 36).

The bulk of Keith’s career was spent in 2nd grade – **2,041 runs @ 22.67** and **207 wickets @ 20.74**, where his batting came to the fore, and this combined with his bowling exploits made him an excellent cricketer at that level. His standout 2nd grade season was 1946/47 where he topped the batting with **500 runs @ 41.46** (best - 86) and backed this with **24 wickets @ 15.67** (best- **5/96**). In

1949/50 he scored **101** against Wests – his solitary century for the club, although he made 96 v. Mosman in the 3rds in 1950/51, his best individual bowling effort in 2nds was **6/33** v. Randwick in 1950/51.

He played intermittently in 3rd grade with some outstanding successes, he particularly seemed to relish playing against Mosman, as shown below:

- 1950/51 – he had a wonderful allrounder’s match – striking 96 runs with the bat and claimed **6/97** and **5/98** with the ball.
- 195/52 –he snared a sensational bowling performance – **9/88**.

As an ‘Old Cumbo’ Keith was a strong link with the past, a link in the long chain that has kept the Club going since its 1843 inception.

#### **Keith Wall and Richie Benaud at a Parramatta District Cricket Club Luncheon**



**(By Tom Wood – Parramatta District Cricket Club – Historian)**