

Edgar Lloyd Waddy – An Accomplished Batsman

E.L. 'Gar' Waddy is a name that holds a place of honour in the annals of the Parramatta District Cricket Club – without doubt he was one of the finest attacking batsmen to ever *'don his pads'* for the club and one of its most enduring and respected personalities. Two of his siblings, both ordained Anglican Ministers - Rev. Percy 'Stacy' Waddy and Rev. Ernest 'Mick' Waddy also represented Central Cumberland in First grade and like 'Gar' played at first-class level.



When he died in August 1963 just short of his 85th birthday, he was the last survivor of the glamorous Cumberland **premiership** side of **1899/00** – in which he topped the batting averages with 374 runs @ 46.74 (best – 133 v. Leichhardt). At that stage of his life, he was still living on the family estate in Morpeth in the Hunter Valley – to play for Cumberland this entailed an early Saturday morning train journey to Parramatta, and a midnight return home – a clear demonstration of his love of cricket.

As a former schoolboy star at the King's School, he made a number of irregular appearances for Cumberland in the 1897/98 and 1898/99 seasons and was initially selected as an 18-year-old to make his first-class debut for NSW in 1897 against Queensland in Brisbane – a match in which fellow Cumbo L.W. Pye also debuted and starred with

166, the future legendary Test batsman Victor Trumper was the 12th man.

Between 1900/01 and 1903/04 he only played a handful of grade games in Sydney, because he had *'gone on the land'* at Morpeth and his pastoral pursuits took up much of his time. He did however continue to engage in cricket in the Maitland area, from where he continued to gain first-class selection for NSW.

From 1907/08 until his retirement in 1929/30 (except for the three World War 1 years when Cumberland didn't field teams and he played for Western Suburbs), E.L. Waddy played continuously with Central Cumberland. In a sparkling career, that won him a great spectator following, he compiled **8,014** runs at **35.14** – including **12 centuries** (best 144 v. Waverley) and **51 half-centuries** and featured in six 150+ partnerships (best – 171 for 2nd wicket with Stan Thomas v. Wests in 1918/19). As a batsman he was of the highest order, very few of his contemporaries could surpass his excellent footwork, he was very severe on short, pitched bowling and played with a free-flowing power. An insight into "Gar's" batting is provided by the following extracts from articles written about him:

- *"E.L. Waddy is a fine batsman, a mixture of brilliancy and solidity. Imagine a whirlwind, followed by a nice steady breeze, and you have E.L.'s batting to a "T".* – An Australian correspondent in *Cricket* 12/4/1906.
- *"E.L. Waddy has been playing first grade cricket well over 30 years, and yet to-day shapes as ably as almost any man in the game. He was always a natural batsman, a man with clean, forceful shots with the full face of the willow. He is still the best batsman in Central Cumberland."* – Not Out in *The Referee* 9/3/1927.
- His batting partner in many a Cumberland innings "Mudgee" Cranney wrote – *"Heaven help the bowler who stuck him up! He would walk around hitch up his trousers and formulate a means of attack – and could trounce the bowling!"* – Central Cumberland Annual Report 1963/64.

As a fieldsman Waddy carried a reputation as an inspiring and competitive exponent – the 1929/30 Central Cumberland annual report said – *"Perhaps there was no keener player than "Gar" on the field. At times his keenness may have made him a little unpopular, particularly when skipping a side.*

Always on his toes, he set a fine example to the side, and tried to infuse a similar spirit, which was not always understood”.

When grade cricket resumed in 1918/19 after World War 1, Waddy was in the veteran stage, yet for the following 10 years he was to play some of his best cricket, batting with remarkable consistency – captaining the Cumberland 1st grade team for a number of years and holding the team together with his comrade in arms Harold ‘Mudgee’ Cranney – he was forced to retire in 1929/30 at the tender age of 50 years, due to injury.

His last century scored in 1926/27 at the age of 48, ranks on a pure skill basis as one of his very best – against Randwick on a rain damaged Sydney Cricket Ground pitch, considerably favouring their dangerous State medium-pacer McNamee. The Cumbos toppled for 239 of which Waddy made 123 (including 13 x 4s) in 138 minutes, utilizing his strong on-side play to master the difficult conditions.

In a sound **first-class** career spanning from 1896/97 to 1920/21 he played a total of 58 matches for **2,775 runs @ 32.64** (including 6 x 100s and 11 x 50+), 41 of these matches were for NSW whom he captained on occasions. Probably his best season at first-class level was 1909/10, when he made a dashing 118 out of NSW’s team total of 184 in a Sheffield Shield match v. South Australia, and in the same season hit up 133 for NSW v. The Rest of Australia in the C.T.B. Turner Benefit Match.

1908 saw him selected in an Australian Eleven team for it’s tour of New Zealand, but he was unable to make the trip. However, the chance to tour New Zealand occurred again in 1914, when he was chosen in a strong Australian Eleven team (including Trumper, Noble, Armstrong, Ransford and Mailey) – no **‘Official Tests’** were played but in the two games against **Combined New Zealand** Waddy scored **59** at Wellington and **140** in the Auckland match (totalling 684 runs @ 45.60 for the tour). Whilst in 1921 he was selected as vice-captain in the Australian Eleven team that again toured New Zealand – scoring 48 in the first of two Combined New Zealand unofficial international matches.

Gar Waddy didn’t just confine his activities to the playing fields, he was a staunch servant of the Cumberland Club and cricket in general - being President of Cumberland for three years from **1931** to **1934**, its NSW Cricket Association delegate from **1918/19** to **1933/34**, he also served on various club committees and performed the role of club selector for a few seasons – “Gar” was undoubtedly a Parramatta Club Great!

At NSWCA level he was actively engaged as an administrator – managed the NSW Sheffield Shield team on several interstate visits, served two years as a state selector, engaged in a three year stint on the Country Committee of the NSWCA, and was a member of the Grades Committee for ten years (including several as Chairman).

His level of service to cricket was formally recognised by the awarding of **Life Membership** to him by both his grade club **Central Cumberland**, and by the **New South Wales Cricket Association**.

Ever the cricket enthusiast, after his grade career ended, he played City and Suburban cricket for some years, continuing to participate in the occasional game to the end of his life. His last game with Cumberland was 1951/52 (at 73-years-of-age) in a City and Suburban match against I. Zingari Veterans, and he scored 35 runs in a partnership of 91 - rejecting with scorn the suggestion that perhaps he should accept the offer of a runner.

One of his sons John Lloyd Waddy, was a man of considerable historical significance. A Senior R.A.A.F. Officer and Aviator, in the Second World War he won acclaim as one of Australia’s best Fighter Pilot Aces in the European Theatre of War, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, and as a Squadron Leader in the Pacific Theatre he was awarded the United States Air Medal, and added to those honours he was also awarded the Order of the British Empire. He later engaged in a long career in NSW Politics, serving as the Liberal Member for Kirribilli from 1962 – 1976 – holding the Ministerial posts of Child Welfare, Social Welfare, Health and Police during this period.

The picture below is of the 'Australian Eleven' team on the 1914 tour of New Zealand. Gar Waddy is sitting on the ground in the front row with M.A. Noble's arms on his shoulders, the great Victor Trumper is second from the right in the back row.



[By Tom Wood – Parramatta District Cricket Club Historian]