

**TOM RICHMOND OAM  
CRICKETER, COACH and ADMINISTRATOR**

**REMARKABLE INTERSECTION BETWEEN EDUCATION, HISTORY and CRICKET**

Awarded an Order of Australia Medal for Services to Youth through Sport and Education [2002] and the Australian Sports Medal for Service to Cricket [2000] attest to Tom Richmond's distinguished and lifelong contribution to education and cricket, as a coach, manager and administrator. He was a masterful educator, historian, cricket coach and administrator whose endeavours raised standards, and brought joy to a legion of students, coaches and cricketers.

Born on 4 July 1941 to Bob and May Thomas [Tom] Stanley Richmond was raised in Asquith with his brother Peter, and sister Judy. In his early years Tom attended the local public school and later Barker College where he excelled as student. An emerging cricketer, Tom was selected in the Barker 1<sup>st</sup> XI in 1957 as a pace bowler. It was during this time he forged friendships with fellow Barker students and later Northern District cricketers in Neil and Lynn Marks, and the Blazey brothers; John, Phillip [Phil or Feather] and Douglas [Doug].

Following matriculation, Tom relocated to Wagga Wagga to undertake a Diploma of Teaching where the foundations were set for what would become a stellar career in education. Thereafter, he took up his first appointment as an English and History teacher at Woodenbong High School near the Queensland border [1960 – 1961], then Bonalbo HS on the NSW Far North Coast. Unsurprisingly, Tom immersed himself in the community including playing inter-district cricket and coaching the school 1<sup>st</sup> XI.

In 1964, Tom returned to Sydney to take up a position at Normanhurst Boys High as an English and History teacher. At the same time, he joined Thornleigh Cricket Club playing A Grade in the Hornsby Kuring-Gai and Hills District Cricket Association with good effect and this led to his selection in the Martin Shield team XI [in the NSW Inter-District Competition]. Parallel with this the Association's overseers recognised Tom's potential as a coach and appointed him as Jack McCormack's assistant to the 1965-66 CS Watson Shield [Under 16] team.

In 1966-67, Tom was appointed manager of the Northern District AW Green Shield team on the recommendation of Club President Tim Caldwell OBE and Neil Marks OAM. By any reckoning this proved an excellent appointment with the team reaching the final on seven [7] occasions in the following 15 years, including four [4] premierships. As Alistair Kennedy, author of *Blue Gum and Willow – A History of the Northern District Cricket Club – 1925 – 2000* writes:

‘there is no doubt that [Tom] Richmond's ability to identify, coach and encourage the district's talented young cricketers was a major factor in this success and in the development of emerging players over the next three [3] decades.

It is appropriate to mention here that Tim Caldwell, who at a later stage would become the Chairman of the ACB [now Cricket Australia], and Neil Marks provided a clear and concise brief for the newly appointed AW Green Shield manager which was ‘to identify prospective first grade cricketers and provide them with a necessary grounding to attain this outcome’. It is reasonable to suggest that Tom delivered on his assigned task and more. In fact, he would provide a positive influence on hundreds of young[er] cricketers at the Club, and at the same time become an authority on youth cricket, talent development and coaching across the northern region of Sydney.

In the years since his direct involvement with AW Green Shield Tom provided clarion advice and support to those undertaking management and coaching roles including Hilary Griffith – premiers in 1977-78 and 1978-79. The current coaches, in Josh Miller and Tom Felton [premiers in 2018-19 and 2020-21], are beneficiaries of Tom's behind-the-scenes architecture that would see the selection of players based on their performance at club and / or

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school level, and at the same time, fulfil Messrs Caldwell and Marks' criteria. This instance alone affirmed Tom's standing as a referential resource; a person with immense knowledge, open, decisive and always prepared to assist.

In the meantime, Tom's professional trajectory as an educator [Teacher, Head of Faculty, Deputy Principal then Principal] forged ahead. Aged 27, and now having completed a Bachelor of Arts from UNE, he was appointed Head of English at Riverstone High School [1968], then Deputy Principal at Galston High School in 1974 where his personal and professional interest in History came to the fore.

Tom had always been interested in the history of Hornsby Shire. He said this was something that came from his grandmother, Anne Johnson, who was born in Brooklyn in 1871 and lived there until her death in 1962. Tom spent numerous holidays with his grandmother and became partial to Brooklyn in the process.

In addition to his administrative and teaching responsibilities at Galston High School, Tom led the restoration of Waddell Cottage [1866], a project that also entailed the researching of the history of Dural including the establishment of a resource bank at the school, supported by State Archives. Meanwhile, Tom had a 1<sup>st</sup> XI to develop including a young Brad Patterson at the helm. As an aside, Craig Waddell [first grade premier 1992-93], was a graduate of Galston High School which points to Tom's broader legacy.

At this juncture it is worth reflecting on the personal influence Tom had on his charges during their involvement in AW Green Shield and beyond. Suffice to say, that Tom was proud of his achievements, however, it was his interaction with each person that set him apart.

Tom spoke with a certain delight about the tactics applied in the 1968-69 final against Petersham Marrickville DCC and the manner in which pace bowlers Alan Haynes [4 for 27] and Kevin Shepherd [3 for 19] dismantled a strong opposition batting line up [twice] to secure Northern District's first flag. Tom's tutelage of captain Alan White was remarkable, and this set the standard for successive captains.

In the following season, Barry Piper led an undefeated AW Green Shield Team to a joint-premiership with Bankstown-Canterbury DCC with the final being abandoned due to inclement weather. Piper's fine all-round performances which included 102\* vs Balmain, and 28 wickets with his fast-paced leg spin earmarked him for higher honours. He was selected in the first-grade team led by Barry Rothwell in 1970-71.

John [Jack] Moran, highest run scorer for the Club, topped the batting aggregate in the 1969-70 season with 304 runs at an average of 38. Tom brought out the best in this quiet, though tenacious competitor. Respect and good humour characterised this relationship. Tom would set a challenge and John would respond. This included John 'keeping wickets as a stand in when the incumbent gloveman, Bruce Virtue, was unwell. As part of his preparation, John met Tom at Headen Park, Thornleigh one afternoon for a master class in wicket keeping. End result, mission accomplished.

Peter Tout\*, captain of the 1971-72 AW Green Shield team describes Tom as the 'finest person; one who had a remarkable effect on him at the time, and a wonderful influence on the balance of my life'. Peter led his team with distinction [undefeated] in season that was marred by wet weather. His stylish, though

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powerful unbeaten 103 against [Old] Sydney CC was telling on the day, and for the fact that he was a first-grade cricketer in the making.

Brad Patterson, graduate of Galston High School and dual first grade premiership player, put it succinctly, 'Tom had had more knowledge of the game of cricket than anyone I'd met and always had a genuine love of the sport. His calmness [in all situations] masked a fierce desire to win'. Of his coaching, Brad remarks 'he developed cricketers, not just batsmen, bowlers and fielders'. The Club's ensuing senior level success was attributed to Tom's remarkable efforts.

Ross Toohey, AW Green Shield and first grade cricketer [with the Club] captures Tom's essence beautifully: 'I can remember my first Thornleigh Cricket Club cricket practice. I was eight [in 1976] and first to arrive at the nets and Tom told me to get my pads on and he bowled a few at me. I never looked back'.

Peter Vilimaa, 1985-86 and 1986-87 first-grade premiership pace bowling allrounder, said Tom was my first and only coach. Put simply, he was a brilliant tactician and communicator'.

Tim Ebbeck, multiple AW Green Shield representative and 1985-86 and 1986-87 first-grade premiership wicket keeper, had a deep appreciation for the way Tom defined roles and made each player feel valued. His preparation and communication was sublime. Tim also recalled that as a contest intensified so would the plumes smoke emitted from Tom's pipe.

Tom relished telling a story against himself and there was no better example than Peter Taylor's omission from the 1971-72 AW Green Shield team. He re-lived his selection faux pas' season-by-season as Peter bounded through the grades and established himself a marquee player. It got better; Peter was selected for NSW in 1985-86 then debuted for Australia in an Ashes Test at the SCG [1987] including being awarded Player of the Match. Tom's retort was that Peter did not meet the Caldwell – Marks' criteria given that he was a player destined for international cricket rather than first grade.

In 1976, Tom and Neil Marks co-founded the Northern District Cricket Club Schools Cup, a competition that promoted cricket in schools in the northern region of Sydney. Tom's influence was instrumental in promoting and delivering this competition which, in 2021, attained a 45-year milestone. In April 2021, Jack Bray of Barker College was the inaugural recipient of the Tom Richmond Medal.

In the late 70s, Tom relocated to Brooklyn and resided in his late grandmother's home. In 1981 he demolished the old house and built a new cottage on the property where his mother was born, which was land that was acquired by his grandparents in 1906. Tom was a proud member and fine contributor to the Brooklyn community for [the next] 40 years.

Returning to Tom's career path. In 1981, he transferred to Windsor High School as Deputy Principal then relocated to Ku-ring-Gai High School in 1984 as Deputy Principal before he took up his initial Principal posting at Evans High School, Blacktown from 1987.

Tom returned to Ku-ring-Gai High School as the Principal in 1990, when the school was experiencing low enrolment to the point of imminent closure. He is attributed with circumventing closure by transitioning Ku-ring-Gai High School

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to a Creative Arts High School, and through improved teaching standards including a focus on the arts, the school flourished.

Given increased professional responsibilities, Tom focused his energies on cricket administration although he still managed to keep his coaching flame alive with Hornsby Kuring-Gai and Hills District Cricket Association [HKandHDCA] representative teams, and Berowra Cricket Club including cricket devotees Nathan Tilbury [Hornsby Shire Counsellor and Author], and Matt Kean MP, Member for Hornsby.

By any reckoning his contribution was immense as evidenced by the following:

Tom immersed himself in coach education initiatives in the late 70s with like-minded colleagues in Alf James OAM, Col Cooper, Glenn Hourigan, and John McQuillan delivering seminars and producing written resources for club coaches on behalf of the HKandHDCA and in doing so pre-dated the peak cricket body certificate system.

During the period of 1980 – 1984, Tom, Col Cooper and Mark Bolger led an Association's-wide coaching certificate program that resulted in improved coaching standards and increased numbers of players. In addition, Tom served the HKandHDCA with aplomb in various designations including Publicity Officer, Representative Secretary, and Liaison Officer to Northern District Cricket Club and Local Schools.

In 1981, Tom was awarded Life Membership of the Hornsby Kuring-Gai and Hills District Cricket Association and later became a Patron of the same organisation [2014].

In 1993, Tom was appointed as the inaugural Chairperson of the Northern Metropolitan Cricket Council, an initiative of Cricket NSW, designed to enhance the coordination of cricket in the northern region of Sydney. This forum brought together a coalition of grade and shire clubs, associations and schools with the aim of advocating cricket's position in the community and LGAs. In his role as Chair, Tom's brilliant strategic skills came to the fore as did his capacity to relate and communicate with all parties.

In 1998, Tom founded the annual Ross Turner Cup, an annual showcase fixture for talented Under 15 Year cricketers representing eastern and western geographic zone of the Association. In 2011, Tom passed the baton to Bruce Wood and this initiative continues to flourish, now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> edition.

In 2003, Tom initiated the Glenn Hourigan Trophy, an annual fixture for talented Under 13 Year cricketers. This match is played in parallel with the Turner Cup and operate within the auspices of the [now] Coaches' Association.

In 2000, Tom was a recipient of the Australian Sports Medal for Services to Cricket.

In 2002, Tom received an Order of Australia Medal for Services to Youth through Sport and Education [2002]. In an interview with the Hornsby Advocate Tom said:

'I feel deeply honoured at receiving the Order of Australia Medal. One of the things I have always tried to develop in students was a pride in this wonderful country of ours and its traditions.

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At the time of the award Tom was still involved in coaching young cricketers the art of spin bowling as part of the Northern Cricket's winter spin clinics [established in 1997] held at James Park, Hornsby on Friday afternoons.

In 2009, Tom invited Mark Rushton, President of HKandHDCA, and Michael Langford, President of Northern District Cricket Club to a meeting to discuss the prospect of establishing a cricket coaches association in the northern region of Sydney. Agreement was reached and the newly formed Hornsby Kuring-Gai and Hills District Cricket Coaches Association with Bruce Wood as Chairman embarked on its charter of promoting and developing coaches in the region through a host of initiatives that would involve Blowfly Cricket[ers], Special Olympics, international tours, clinics and invitational matches.

The Coaches' Association is a tangible conduit between players and coaches [at every stage of development] and has strengthened cricket's reach into the local community. Andrew Miedler, President of Hornsby Kuring-Gai and Hills District Association, and Jeremy Hook, President of Northern District Cricket Club recognise the importance of this agency and committed to the endeavours being undertaken. Long may it continue.

In 2012, Tom was awarded Life Membership of the Northern District Cricket Club. In 2014, Tom was installed as a Life Member of the Hornsby Kuring-Gai and Hills District Cricket Coaches Association and Patron of the same organisation [2014].

To capsulate, Tom studied and learned from history [as we all should] and this influenced his actions and those within his sphere of influence; students, historian and cricketers alike. He was a person of conviction and his manner and voice carried a level of authority as it did compassion. His capacity to relate and communicate with others was arguably his greatest strength.

Typically, he would set the scene, use his extensive knowledge or experience as a guide, define roles, and artfully engage his players in the task at hand. Importantly, Tom would empower his captain to implement plans and to use their wits in a quest to reach a position of advantage. He was attentive at every stage, rarely meddled once plans were set, and encouraged input from all. He created an open environment that enabled players to perform and this bred confidence as it did a sense of fulfilment and fun.

We were propelled into senior levels of cricket and I / we sought to abide the principles and practices that Tom had instilled in us. We embraced his approach, remaining confident in the knowledge that each element of a team's performance mattered and that building effective relationships were key to attaining an end goal.

Tom was a fine enabler. We enjoyed our success. He did too.

In closing, it is essential that we recognise and celebrate Tom Richmond's lifelong contribution to a game he loved and served with honour and remarkable commitment. We, a younger generation, are indebted to Tom Richmond and his kindred in Alf James, Tim Caldwell, Neil Marks, Glenn Hourigan and others for the opportunities created for us to play, coach and share the good company of others.

I am a better person for knowing Tom Richmond. We are better people for his brilliant, sustained and honorable contributions in education, history and cricket.

Tom passed away in Hornsby Hospital on 14 September 2021 aged 80.

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**End Note**

*\*Peter Tout and Tom Richmond*

Peter and Tom reconnected at Brooklyn in 2019, some 47 years since their last meeting. It was a riveting conversation between Peter, now a prominent architect with international experience, and Tom a retired leading educator and active historian [held beside Tom's beloved Hawkesbury River].

**Ross Turner**

Life Member, Northern District Cricket Club

Patron, Hornsby Kuring-Gai and Hills District Cricket Association

Life Member, Hornsby Kuring-Gai and Hills District Cricket Coaches Association

**ANNEXURE I**

**ATTAINMENTS and AWARDS**

Order of Australia Medal for Services to Youth through Sport and Education [2002]

Australian Sports Medal for Service to Cricket [2000]

Patron and Life Member [2014] of Hornsby Kuring Gai and Hills District Cricket Association

Life Member of Northern District Cricket Club [2012]

Patron and Life Member Hornsby Kuring Gai and Hills District Cricket Coaches Association [2014]

Chairman of Northern Metropolitan Cricket Council [1993 - 1996]

Premiers' Community Service Award [service to the community]

**PLAYING**

Barker College 1st XI [1957]

Teachers' College Wagga Wagga [1958-59]

North Coast Inter-District Team

HKandHDCA A Grade - Kissing Point CC, Perseverance CC, Thornleigh CC [captain] and Berowra CC [specialist pace bowler and leg spinner]

Represented HKandHDCA Martin Shield

**COACHING**

***Schools***

Regional Schools: Coached Woodenbong HS 1<sup>st</sup> XI and Bonalbo HS 1<sup>st</sup> XI

Metropolitan Schools: Coached Normanhurst BHS, Riverstone HS, and Galston HS 1<sup>st</sup> XI

Cricket Convener in North-West Metropolitan Zone

President of Blacktown and Ku-ring-gai Zones

Combined High Schools [CHS] selector and team manager

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***Club and Representative***

Northern District CC AW Green Shield Team [1966-67 – 1978-81]; premiers 1968-69 and 1969-70 and runner up 1970-71 [undefeated for 18 matches from 1968 - 1971] then assistant to Hilary Griffith; premierships in 1977-78 and 1978-79

Combined AW Green Shield Metropolitan XI Manager [1970 – 1975] vs NSW Country Under 17 XI

HKandHDCA representative team coach [20 seasons], principally CS Watson Shield; Tom Richmond Trophy for most successful team plus award for young – emerging coach

**ADMINISTRATION**

***HKandHDCA***

Initiated and organised coaching seminars at Hornsby prior to the introduction of the certificate system

Organised first training for coach certificates in the Association with Col Cooper; first Associated-wide coaching venture [1980 – 1984]

Publicity Officer, Representative Secretary, Vice-President and Liaison Officer

Ross Turner Cup annual Under 15 fixture [1998 – 2021]; added Glenn Hourigan Cup match for Under 13 cricketers [2003 – 2021]

Organised and conducted specialist spin bowling coaching [known as the Winter Spin Program] for junior representative players [1999 – 2007]

*Hornsby Advocate* reporter of HKandHDCA A Grade competition

***Associated Functions***

Inaugural Chairperson of the Northern Metropolitan Cricket Council [1993 – 1996]; coalition of grade and shire clubs, associations and schools in the northern region of Sydney

Foundation Director of *Northern Cricket* [1997]; a body which provided organised coaching to HKandHDCA junior players

End.