

Requests to share excerpts from passionate sports fan Hughie Longmore’s eulogy see us celebrating the life and times of . . .

A LIKEABLE MAN-ABOUT-TOWN

- Born the third child of David and Madge Longmore at Cobden on May 1st, 1942.
- Educated at Cobden Primary School and Camperdown High School.
- Happy childhood with brother John, sister Wendy and friends.
- Loved racing pigeons, achieving success at local shows.
- Completed a plumbing/gasfitting apprenticeship in Warrnambool, Colac and Portland.
- Loved uncle of four nieces and nephews, and their families.

Robert Hugh Longmore was a bloke everyone liked. He didn’t seem to have an enemy and he treated everyone with the greatest respect - unless you were one of his closest mates. If that was the case, you were in the firing line to cop a hiding . . . probably a well-deserved one too.

Everyone knew him as Hughie. There was only one Hughie in sporting circles around Cobden. He loved his sport, he loved his cricket, loved it with a passion.

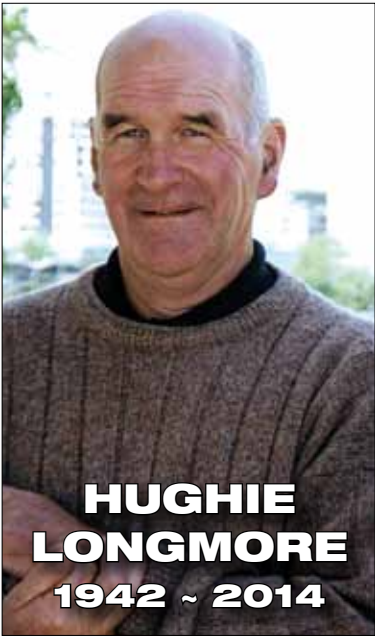
In 2007, he ventured to the West Indies to watch the Aussie one-day team in the World Cup. That was a great experience for Hughie who enjoyed all that part of the world could offer. Until he actually got on the plane, we weren’t sure he was going!

Unlike his flamboyant brother John who lives a more bohemian-type lifestyle and has jetted around the world twice, Hughie was a conservative, stay-at-home type so we were rapt that he was following his dreams to the Jamaicas and the Barbadoses of the world. He reckoned his mate ‘Hutchie’ Rohan was scared of water or just too tight to pay the fare to go with him.

When Hughie returned from Warrnambool in about 1964 where he had worked as a gasfitter, he played cricket at Cobrico. The club won premierships in the Hampden competition in 1966-67 and 1967-68 and were runners-up in 1964-65. The names in those teams indicate their strength – Harding, McNerney, Errey, Maskell, Finlayson, Hammond, Howarth, Rohan, Hunter, Sumner, Walsh . . .

Hughie could put his left-arm swinging deliveries where he wanted to - on the spot. As a first change bowler behind Denis McNerney, Jim Hammond and Robert Sumner, he might have taken a couple of overs to warm-up but, watch out after that! Robbie Sumner said he was able to tie down the best batsmen in the competition – even blokes like Bill Dalziel.

Because he was a gun left-arm swing bowler, Hughie was more than qualified to express his opinions about all other left arm swing bowlers -



players like Mitchell Johnson - so he did!

Hughie was not a fast bowler who gave batsmen ugly send-offs and the like. Apparently, he accepted the umpire’s decisions with great respect. He didn’t even abuse his teammate Tommy Horsted when he dropped Bill Dalziel first ball - only to see him go on to make 130-plus!

However, his attitude may have changed in later years - one day Colin Gaut was umpiring (no independent umpires back then) and Hughie reckoned Col robbed him of a hat-trick when he refused to give the Cobden batsman out lbw. Hughie reminded Col about that many times since!

Hughie could bat too - not like Fred Errey, Bazil Hammond, Graham Hunter or any of those blokes - but he stood up when the big occasion arose. Batting in the late order, if there were twenty or thirty runs to get for a win, he was the man to not only hold up an end but to actually score the runs. These sorts of batting performances also showed he was well-qualified to comment authoritatively on local and international batsmen as well - and he did!

Hughie’s father, the renowned cricketer D H Longmore, taught him to play a straight bat and helped him develop a good defence - traits he used off the field too.

While he could bowl really well and bat satisfactorily, it is generally agreed that Hughie’s fielding wasn’t his forte. As Bazil Hammond said, “We put him where we hoped the ball wouldn’t go.”

Hughie was also a member of a premiership-winning Hampden B-Group Melbourne Country Week team in 1965-66 with players like Terry Baker, Gaut, Hunter, Hammond and Barry Hutchison.

Before he returned to the Cobden area in 1964, Hughie played top-grade cricket in Warrnambool and Colac. At Warrnambool, he played A grade cricket at Wesley with the Hando boys and John Eccles. Apparently, Hughie was also a talented table-tennis player. The only other sport he ventured into around here was social bowls where he and ‘Hutchie’ were described as “none-too impressive”.

After Cobrico, Hughie returned to Cobden CC where he played for a few years before becoming a respected administrator and fund-raiser. In 1999, he took on the presidency of the club until 2003 and the club continued to prosper under his leadership.

He had the ability to bring people together and the younger players showed him total respect. He wasn’t far away from the action whether it be around the turf wicket on a Saturday morning or around the grounds on Saturday afternoons and Sundays with the juniors.

Hughie took a keen interest in the development of the young cricketers - co-coaching them for a couple of years. He also attended association meetings and association presentation evenings and was one of the stalwarts behind the famous pub raffle at Thommos every Friday night.

They were very funny nights with Hughie always keen to have a chat with the patrons while selling tickets. Competition chair Alby ‘Scratchy’ Mounsey used to get impatient but nothing would worry Hughie.

A few times, he stayed on at the pub after the draw . . . and that always created a few problems in at least one Cobden household.

The D H Longmore Trophy, presented by the family in honour of their father, a life-member at Cobden CC, will serve as a memorial to both Dave and Hughie’s contribution to the club. The fact that it’s a perpetual trophy given to the club’s best under 16 cricketer says it all really.

Hughie also loved his football - especially Geelong and Cobden. He followed his father into supporting the Cats, was enthusiastic about explaining their strengths and their occasional weaknesses and quickly summed up a footballer or a football team that didn’t rate. “They’re no good,” he’d say. “He’s no good,” he’d say. Straight out of the “Analysing Melbourne Football Club” manual.

With John ‘Jacko’ Howarth driving, ‘Poly’ Andrew and Hughie would travel to Skilled Stadium to watch the Abletts, reminisce about Polly Farmer and Bobby Davis, basically to enjoy their afternoon in the sun, have tea and a couple of beers on the way home - pretty simple formula really. Hughie was that sort of bloke - a man of simple tastes, he didn’t need or ask for anything more.

His weekly meat order didn’t change much - a pinwheel, two grenadier, half a dozen snags and a piece of porterhouse steak - every week. He loved his tucker - but it didn’t need to be too sophisticated. The boys did worry about his method of cooking fish though. They didn’t know whether he grilled it or killed it!

The boys (plus ‘Hutchie’ minus ‘Jacko’) also followed the local football with trips to away matches, often with Hughie driving, probably a bit of a concern in itself. A trip to the Dunkeld races may have come unstuck one day if ‘Stirlo’ hadn’t alerted Hughie to the dangers of an approaching vehicle in the loudest voice the butcher could muster.



Pam Andrew with Hughie at a footy club mock deb ball in 1996

He was on the Cobden footy committee from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, serving as vice-president under the likes of Colin Gaut, Tige Foster and Brian Beard for some of those years. He was a “go-to” man, doing jobs whenever asked - anything from gate-keeping to looking for a coach.

He helped with Footy Club bingo - assisting blokes like Joe Moore,

Ian Matthews and Bazil Hammond between 1986 and 1990 - and he was even involved in a mock deb ball at a footy club function.

Hughie Longmore was the inaugural winner of the Cobden Football Netball Club’s Gary Raselli Club Person of the Year Award in 1994 - an indication of how his work and qualities were appreciated.

Although he never played footy, Hughie began his involvement as a young fellow in short pants field umpiring the tough junior competition played in paddocks around Cobden. He used to umpire at primary school too. Tells you more about the Hughie Longmore persona - fair, impartial, unbiased . . . well, if Geelong weren’t involved.

He loved going to Dunkeld races. One day, he backed five winners - all ridden by Craig Williams. Hughie didn’t even know how to put the money on but he just kept following Williams who just kept winning. His mates said, “No, he can’t keep winning,” but he did.

Hughie was interested in what other people were doing and how well they were going. He loved to just drop in and have a beer - whether it be at Mick Barlings, the butcher’s shop, Gaut Motors at Christmas or Col and Jan’s on Wednesday nights.

From a work perspective, on his return to Cobden, Hughie spent some time at McQuinns and 16 years at the butter factory with blokes like ‘Hutchie’, Graeme Fagan and Tony Merrett.

But he loved his farm - 90-odd acres out at Jancourt - and working with cattle, mainly black polls. He loved going to sales as far away as Winchelsea with ‘Poly’ and meeting people - as brother John described him, a “friend to the world”.

John and Hughie had a magic relationship. They were charged with the responsibility of looking out for each other, the task of sticking together . . . and they did. Both have had their health issues, particularly in recent years when the bond between them has never been so obvious. Supporting one another, checking on one another, respecting one another . . . an example to us all.

Hughie has inspired all of us. He fought a brave battle. His mates are indebted to him for providing that inspiration, that companionship, the laughs, the advice and just his time. As ‘Stirlo’ reflected: “You know, in lots of ways, he was a father-type figure.”



Back: D Rohan (left), J Howarth, G Hunter, P Maskell, D McNerney, H Longmore, J Wilkinson. Front: J Rohan, R Sumner, A Finlayson (president), B Hammond (captain), S Harding, P Walsh. (Absent: A Rantall)

SOME LIGHT-HEARTED LONGMORE MOMENTS:

- The story of Hughie, the gasfitter, who has a gas stove in his own home that was a danger to himself and others. Boom! He's had to stick his head in the oven to light it - and it remains the case today! Poor old Sharon Stirlo had to stick her head in Hughie's oven to cook some biscuits. Boom! A gasfitter's stove, this is is!
- Clarrie Smith tells the story of Hughie nipping into the local pub, the “Zoo”, on the way to a sale. Hughie grabbed his hat which was stuck on another hat - in he went, wearing two hats on his head.
- ‘Hutchie’ was receiving dubious material from Amsterdam. ‘Hutchie’ couldn’t work out who was behind it all. It was his mate, Hughie.
- Not long ago, one of his Cat heroes Billy Brownless came to town for a sportsman’s night and Hughie turned up in his shorts on a warm night. After a couple of beers each, Hughie and Billy were engaged in animated conversation, the only trouble being neither could understand the other. The line of the night came later when Billy put it plainly to all present (with expletives deleted): “Hey Hughie, with legs like those, I reckon you’d better go home and put a pair of long pants on.” The Sports Club nearly fell down there and then.

COBDEN CALENDAR

Monday 5th May:

7.30pm Progressing Cobden meeting, Heytesbury Room.

Monday 19th May:

7.30pm CopRice Festival meeting, Heytesbury Room.

Senior Citizens' Hall:

Bowls

1pm Mondays.

Cards

1pm Mondays, Thursdays, Saturdays.

Hoy

1.30pm first Saturday of the month.

Connecting Cobden - Registered email: kelvin@swllen.net.au