

# **LIFE MEMBERSHIP – John (Puggy) Williams**

Well what do you say about someone who has done it all in Cricket Terms for the Warradale Cricket Club? Honour him with Life Membership I suppose. Well Puggy, congratulations.

This is probably the last honour that could be bestowed on you and in my opinion, very well deserved.

As a player, Puggy could not have given more for the Club, that I'm sure provided him with some of the great moments and fun of his sporting career.

Some of the records and great performances that Pug has achieved in his 14 seasons after starting with the Club in 1984/85 are:

- Cricketer of the Year a record 6 times
- 151 Games Played (Ranked 9<sup>th</sup>)
- 3338 Runs (Ranked 6<sup>th</sup>)
- 2 x Centuries
- 325 Wickets @ 15.5% (Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- 66 Catches (Ranked 9<sup>th</sup>)
- Club Record 6<sup>th</sup> Wicket partnership with V. Hodge – 165
- 1 of only 4 Hat Tricks in the Club's History
- 7 times Association Player (3 as Captain)
- 'A' Grade Captain for 3 Years
- Played in 4 x 'A' Grade Premierships

Pug was an incredibly correct batsman and although he was not a 'big hitter' I saw him tear opposition bowling attacks apart on his day. It was always done in a way that belied his style – all timing and flair.

Two knocks (where I was at the other end) that come to mind are games against ANZ and a Semi against Coromandel.

I'm not sure of the exact facts but in the ANZ game, Pug had been struggling with a bad migraine (yeah right, he was just 'seedy') all day and had dropped down the batting order. I was already batting at the time and was on about 40 when Pug came in with about 15 overs to go. Well, by the time the innings had finished Pug had made 108 and had got to his 100 before me. He flayed the ANZ bowlers all around their 'dust bowl' of an oval.

In the Semi against Coromandel, it wasn't so much his score but the way he got them. Apart from the usual nerves of a Final, the game was in the balance when Pug came in. Instead of playing conservatively and trying to survive he took the attack up to the Bowlers. He ended up with 60 odd but his innings broke their backs and enabled our lower order to come in and take a few risks. We ended up with a respectable score - 200 plus and we went on to win the game. Once again, there was no slogging. They were just great cricket shots.

With the ball, Puggy always bowled aggressively and always served it up to opposition batsmen. I suppose the one thing that I will always remember about his bowling was his 'in swinger' (to the uninitiated, that has nothing to do with his 'twig & berries'). When it was on line and moving, it was basically unplayable. It is therefore no surprise to me to know that nearly half of all the wickets that he took for the club were 'bowled'. As I said, Pug was aggressive, however he had a strange way of sending some batsmen off. He would just laugh at them. I think it was his way of letting them know that he just didn't rate them.

I don't think that there was a better all round fieldsmen than Pug. He could field brilliantly in any position. Generally there were never too many games go by that Pug did not take a screamer on the Deep Square Leg boundary. If you ask me, I reckon he used to put a couple of short steps in as the ball was hit to him, so that he was forced to dive forward, parallel to the ground, to take the catch in his left hand a couple of inches off the ground (you lair).

I always used to marvel at how Pug was always in control of his emotions and had a very relaxed manner. This 'cool' exterior did desert him once however. It was in a Semi Final Vs Coromandel and Pug had decided to experiment with some 'No Dose' chewing Gum to see if he could really get fired up before going out on to the Field. The 'Gum' worked, albeit not in the way he had hoped. Pug spent most of the first hour gazing at the stars and wondering what life would be like with World Peace?????

Apart from being Captain, Pug never held an official capacity with the Club. However, you would never meet a more committed Clubman than Pug. He, along with Mary was always at the Club functions and booze ups (same thing I suppose). In fact I can actually recall when we finally coerced Pug to participate in a Players Concert. Now those of you who know Pug really well, know that even though he is only a little bloke, he really packs a lunch. Hence, when a few of the boys told him that the act involved flashing the 'Wedding Tackle' to the crowd he was the first in line. Amazing that.

As I mentioned before Pug was always happy to be involved in a Party, as long as he didn't have to be involved in the organisation. However it wouldn't have been a Grand Final celebration at the Club if it wasn't at John & Mary's place. Boy did a few people lose some brain cells at those do's – didn't they Pazz. Thank God that Pug had strategically positioned a sand pit in his back yard for people to collapse in once they had drunk too much – didn't they Pazz. Pug's attitude to it all was, "drink, be merry and at the end of the night, let yourself out". Thanks for some great memories Pug.

Well Pug, on behalf of every one that has ever been involved in the Club, thank you for all your efforts over so many years. I consider you a great mate and as you said to me during one of our Finals campaigns, what we share at the moment will be with all of us for the rest of our lives. I hope you are right and I hope that we will always find time to re-live the moments.

Congratulations on the Life Membership. You are a very worthy recipient.

Bill Burnett