**Brian Ward**

For those that don't know me, my name is Michael Blumor and I'm the retiring Treasurer at Gymea United Football Club.

I might add retiring after a feeble five years in the seat, which of course pails into insignificance compared to Mr Ward’s nearly 20 years as Treasurer of GUFC.

Unfortunately for me as I penned these words for today, this became somewhat of a recurring theme....Mr Ward 10 out of 10 for most things he did and Michael Blumor,or yours truly let’s just say a number much less than that.

I really first got to know Brian well when I first started to play All Age Soccer at Gymea at the time Brian was playing over 35s. Our two teams trained at the same time so we used to finish a session with a friendly game.

I was never much of a soccer player really, couldn't beat a player, weak shot, hated tackling and loathed running (you can see the result today) and Brian by contrast was quite the soccer player.

I however given my limited ability had honed my game over the years realising I was fairly ordinary, to the point where as soon I received the ball my immediate goal was to kick it to someone better than me not that difficult a task really given my skill level.

In my mind over this time, I had become somewhat of a thru ball specialist. Brian played sweeper I think for most of his life and his job in that role amongst other was to cut out the thru ball. So after a number of very frustrating sessions where I would play one after another of my glorious thru balls and time and time again Brian would cut them out, I was surprised when Brian came up to me after a session put his arm around me and said Mike they are really good ball you were playing tonight....When I inquire of Brian if they were so good why did he intercept every single one of them...he smiled gave me his wink (and in his classic English understated way) and said I said they were good … not great my lad.

Brian playing sweeper is something of a legend at GUFC. I remember Brian playing sweeper at his testimonial game 10 years ago under lights at GUFC, even then he was one of the best on field until he was cruelly hacked down by Dixie Dean. Brian if you are listening in research for this speech Dixie finally admitted his challenge many have been a little late (good judges at the times recorded about two or three minutes late) .

Or 2 years ago when the committee played one of our all-conquering U9 sides and Brian detecting Uncle Harry in goal may not have been as flexible, lithe or nimble as he once was, played a very deep sweeper indeed.

I think it is one of the few occasions I have seen a sweeper playing behind his goal keeper!

Brian was a wonderful player, however I think it is arguable he was an even better Administrator. As I said Brian served our club for nearly 20 years as Treasurer, is a Life Member of the Club and in 1998 received a Merit Award from the Sutherland Shire Association. This is the highest award the Association gives to folk from Club land. In the nomination in 1998 was included a note saying Brian had never once in nearly 50 years as a player been given a yellow or red card. Quite remarkable!

He also captained and organised the first and only overseas tour for both GUFC and Gymea Bay Cricket Club to Singapore. I would like to be able to go into more colourful details here but as you know "what goes on tour stays on tour".

When I took over as GUFC Treasurer (after making the mistake of nipping off to the toilets when the voting was on only to find out I had been elected to the Executive), I remember I was quite nervous about the job ahead. This fear was not made any easier by the words of encouragement given to me by our then President Stuart Teal. While Stuart is many good things I think even he would admit Financial Genius was not one of the skills listed on his CV. So when I approached him about what he wanted from me as Treasurer his response was typically brief “just do what Brian did.”

Much as he had done with my thru ball work, Brian took me under his wing, and explained how the business model worked at GUFC and all the things a Treasurer needed to know. He also helped out by doing all the MYOB work. Some would argue credit for my first 2 years as Treasurer should have accrued to Brian himself.

Well let me tell you, me, GUFC and our community owe Brian a great deal. The Business model Brian put in place is still in operation at GUFC has been largely responsible for all the capital work and the improvements to members’ amenities at the oval, the new hall (which Brian told proudly he had still not reimbursed the council for.... hopefully there is no one here from Council today), the lighting, the irrigation, the Great Wall and next year the raised viewing platform and ladies change rooms are all a direct result of Mr Ward’s business model.

Simply put, along with Mrs Ward, Brian was the best administrator this club has ever had and is really ever likely to have.

We will all miss Brian greatly whether it be :

1) The memory of him sitting in the balcony outside of Harrys Boomerang Bar criticising the work of those on the field. Listening to his insightful comments and his well-placed praise and even the areas for improvement, including that for the referees who always seemed to fall just short of Brian's expectations.

2) Or listening to Brian and David Birch bicker about the English Soccer. Especially when David got onto the subject of his beloved Blackburn Rovers. Now let me admit upfront I follow Blackburn but even for me the level of detail David holds in his head about Blackburn can be at some time a little "over whelming" (yawn if you know what I mean)

So it was not uncommon once Dave started on one of his monologues for Brian despite having a beer in front of him to quickly decide he was extra thirsty and take refuge in the Bar to very slowly order another beer. So if Mrs Ward you were ever a bit cranky about Brian state of intoxication on a Sunday afternoon.... take it from me he had two very good reasons for his condition …David and Blackburn.

Next year will be like watching an episode of the Muppets with only one of the grumpy old men,

3) I personally will miss sitting around Brian's pool with a quiet lager talking about debits and credits, GST and external disclosure requirements for incorporated entities and the other fun stuff accountants like to do on sunny weekends. Brian was very proud of his profession and in my estimation (as a failed accountant now a banker it’s so much easier) a very good one.

While Brian has left us with so many great memories, there is one little part of Brian's make up I will miss a bit less.

I don't know if you all found this…. but with Brian you pretty much always knew where you stand. You could say Brian was somewhat direct.

I remember making the mistake of ringing the Ward household between 6 and 7 (the allotted dinner time) on one too many occasions and hearing Brian in the background strongly making the case to Mrs Ward that he wanted to talk to me about basic time keeping and manners in general.

Needless to say I did not make that error again. And if I did, I was part of a flood of prank call hang ups the Ward's experience between the hours of 6 and 7pm.

On another occasion Uncle Harry came scuttling up to me at the bar to warn me "Brian was on the War Path" at the time I worried he had figured I was the one hanging up all the time between 6 and 7 pm.

So on making gentle inquiry of Brian I was informed that Uncle Harry had paid cash to a chap to fix the fridges. At the time it was quite a lot of money and Harry thought by paying cash we could save some small amount. What he did not factor in was that there would be no tax invoice issued and so the club could not claim GST.

This situation was apparently a direct result of my mismanagement and simply not good enough. Needless to say from that point forward the club moved right away from cash deals and if I ever found one I quickly manufactured a fake tax invoice for inclusion in my weekly document drop to Brian. If he caught me he never let on. Hopefully there is no one here from the tax department.

In closing while Brian’s passing will leave a huge gap in our Club and our community I would like to remind Mrs Ward, Michael and the entire family that that community that Brian and you played such a big part in creating is there for you and ready to render you any assistance or help you may need.

Thank you

Michael Blumor

(ps still GUFC Treasurer in 2015)