

# Uncontrollable Little Bastards

## Extracts

I played number one against a 17-year-old, Bobby Angus. I hooked my tee shot off the first into the rough between the first and third fairways. Bruce and I were looking for my ball when Hec Harris, a left-hander, playing in the club competition, cut his tee shot off the third and hit me behind the ear. I was knocked unconscious and didn't come to for over two hours. Bruce was distraught, thinking that I was dead. The other three players and their caddies ran towards me as did Hec. There was pandemonium. The older men tried to tend to me, but were reluctant to move me, and had no skills to treat me on the spot. They saw immediately that it was too dangerous to carry me up the full distance to the clubhouse. They sent Bruce up the hill to get help, possibly to give him something to do to relieve his distress ...



Carnegie Clark, the professional golfer, and two of his sons Keith and Carnegie Jnr though not members of Woollahra, were dry cleaning customers of ours, and became friends. Carnegie emigrated from Scotland as a young bloke and won the Australian Open Golf Championship in 1906, 1910 and 1911. He introduced the Vardon grip to Australia and designed many golf courses along the eastern sea board. Carnegie lived on the corner of Newcastle Street and Norwich Lane in Rose Bay, just behind the first green at Royal Sydney. He and his two boys manufactured golf clubs there. They would sell their clubs to the club professionals across Australia.

I called on Carnegie and the boys twice a week and loved talking to the elder statesman about the old days and about golf course design. We used to chat in the same way I used to chat with my Dad about everything, and with Mr Rothery about the bushrangers. The knowledge I gained through my meetings with Carnegie throughout the 1950s helped me immeasurably when I was vice-captain of Castle Hill and captain of Woollahra. Quite early in our relationship, Carnegie asked to look at my swing. I obliged and in his thick Scottish accent he said,

'Ah, it's a pity Cass you couldn't hit it on your backswing' ...



Max was a three-handicapper and on this occasion took the longest carry over the dam but the shortest route to the hole and dumped it into the water. In a scene reminiscent of Kevin Coster in the movie Tin Cup, Max let his ego get the better of him and refused to take a drop nearer the dam and dumped three more balls in the drink. Max then threw his 4 wood into the dam and said:

'Take the lot you thirsty bastard.'

Becoming more and more amused with every wet ball, but trying to stay straight-faced, I was stunned only briefly by the sudden wet stick, and couldn't restrain myself any longer. This was a very funny spectacle and I laughed spontaneously.

'Well that will show the bastard,' I said.

Three years later the dam dried up during a severe drought ...



Many cricketers play golf as a social sport, however, somewhat undermining my argument, though I stand by it. Golf is a fascinating, frustrating and funny game, and one of my favourite stories concerns several of Australia's best cricketers. As mentioned earlier, the Australia cricket team used to play one day internationals in Brisbane on the Friday and Sunday of the second week of January. Tony Greig and the rest of the Channel Nine commentary team took advantage of the free Saturday to play golf with some former cricketers and the occasional golf pro at either Hope Island or Sanctuary Cove. Bruce was one of those former cricketers on one of the occasions that Wayne Grady, former United States PGA Champion, was also present, but in a different four. In the locker room after their round Wayne asked Bruce how he went. Bruce, who considers himself a hacker and never talks about his golf, said with self-disparaging good humour,

'I went in the water on the 1st, 2nd, 17th and 18th and they were my best holes.'

Wayne replied,

'Here's 20 cents; ring someone who cares. No one gives a stuff how many times you went in the water.'

Initially, Bruce was taken aback by Wayne's comment and, as Tony tells it, had a whinge to him about it. Tony was amused and assured Bruce that Wayne was only taking the mickey. Over a relaxed and friendly lunch at Wayne's restaurant Bruce realised that Tony was right and forgot about the comment.

Twelve months later many of the same participants were standing around the first tee at Hope Island when former Australian and Queensland batsman Greg Ritchie asked who was organising the fours. Tony jumped in,

'I'm playing with Francis and we're playing Chappell and Grady; the rest of you can make your own arrangements.'

They were all square after 16 holes ...