



MR RICHARD WALKER

(1941 - 2023)



The Australian Polo Federation honours and recognises the outstanding contribution to the sport of polo by Richard Walker. The President and Committee of the APF and the entire Australian polo community extend their deepest condolences to the Walker family. Richard Walker will be forever remembered as one of the greatest characters in Australian polo history; acknowledged for his fierce determination both on and off the field. Richard made a significant contribution to Australian polo and will be forever remembered as a legend of the game.



Member of the APF Hall of Fame (2022)

Test Cap Number 34

Australian Captain 3 times

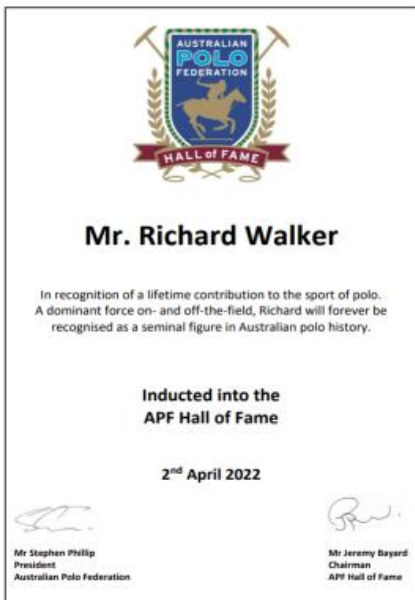
Australian test representative 17 times

Winner Countess of Dudley Cup 9 times

Winner Australasian Gold Cup 5 times

Morton Cup (Easter International) 3 times

Member of the Famous Emus Team that toured NZ in 1972



"Glynn Lawry, Rob Bell, Richard Walker and Richard Maple Brown, playing at Warwick farm for Australia"



Glen Gilmore

"My memories of Richard playing against my father shaped some of my earliest polo memories. They were epic battles on the field. I remember being struck by Richard's 100% commitment at all times. He was an absolutely fierce competitor and loved the game. I played golf against Richard and he was just as competitive there. He loved watching Simon play and was always ready to have a chat about polo. A true legend of the game"

Ted Mann

"Richard was a high achiever not only in polo but in many aspects of his life and especially in farming. He was enthusiastically passionate about his interests and winning was a very high priority, always and without compromise. On the rare occasions when he did lose he was quietly philosophical. He was inspiring to play with and to play against - the bar was always set high. He was a wonderful leader and led his beloved Goulburn teams to much success"

Sinclair Hill

"Richard was one of the greatest players in Australian polo history."

Richard is a great character and always stood his ground both on and off the field.

Richard certainly exerted great influence over the sport during his time in the game through his immense strength of character."

Kahlbetzer Family

"RIP Richard,

A family friend for many years.

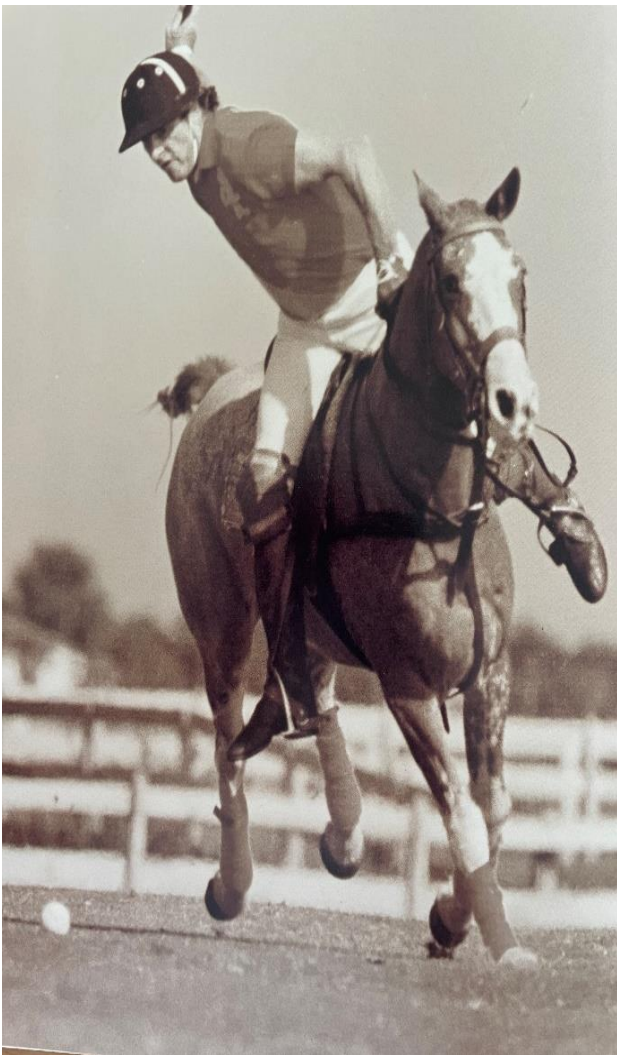
A fun loving and social guy who also had a hard competitive side.

Enjoyed a yarn and a drink but always turned up and played hard.

The Goulburn polo days are legendary...

Love

The Kahlbetzer's"



"Playing at Warwick Farm in the 70's"



"L-R standing Hugh McLachlan, Sinclair Hill, Richard Walker, Sandy Tait seated Rob Bell, Richard Maple Brown"



Tim Boyd

"I first met Richard as a youngster, when he visited my parents to get polo and horse training lessons from my father. Even then, you could see that he was going to be a very good player because of his sporting ability, dedication and determination. I got inspired to play polo during my school holidays, watching Richard in the Goulburn team playing against Sinclair Hill's Gil Gil or Quirindi teams. They were always very competitive, thrilling, exciting matches.

I had the privilege on a few occasions to play with Richard in Goulburn and also in NSW teams. We were nearly always successful because of Richard's organisational skills and his sheer determination, which had a very positive effect on the whole team, however most of the time I was on the opposing team.

We had a lot of very intense games, where more often than not Richard's team came out victorious.

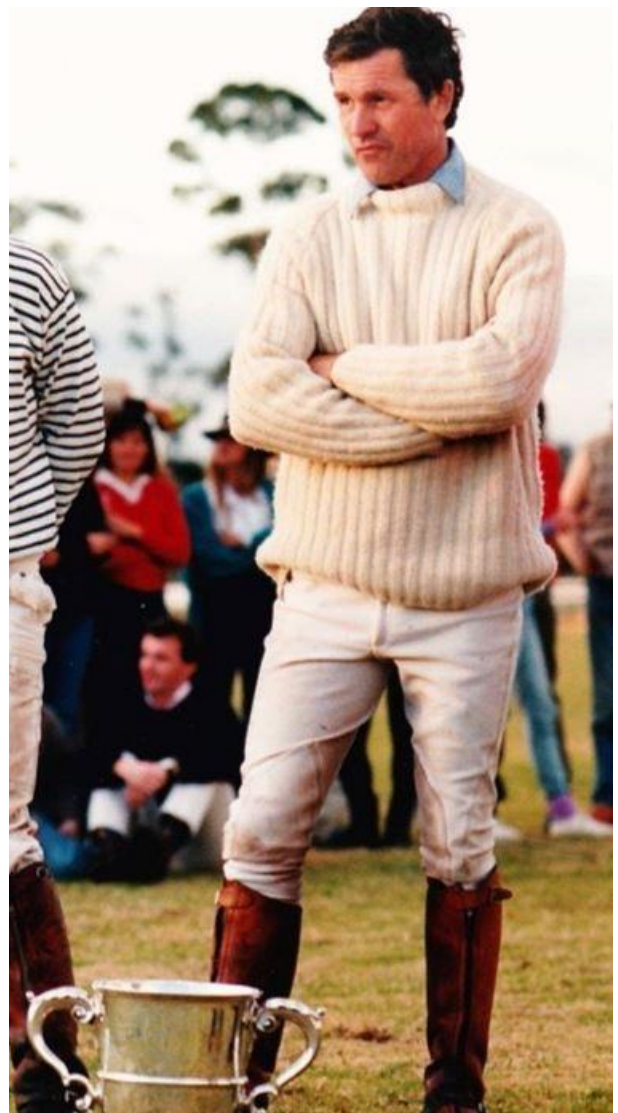
He enjoyed his horses, breeding and training them. Richard, with the help of Noel Southwell trained some of the best horses to play in Australia. I always enjoyed talking to Richard and catching up with him and Diana who was always such a caring, calming and supportive wife.

Richard was passionate about his family, his farms and racehorses, so it was always an interesting and informative conversation."

Gus Campbell

"From first hearing his name in the dusty carparks of Toompang, Bungendore, Goulburn or Gundagai playing with our foot mallets, hearing the commentators call, "Walker, Walker, Richard Walker," it was clear he was a talent with a style of play, to which we kids would aspire.

Now 45 years later and lucky enough to have played countless games, many with STW, under his watchful gaze. Ever encouraging and always offering sage advice, his life that I've observed & the legacy he leaves is still something that inspires."





John Patterson

"When Richard Walker's name is mentioned, my first thoughts are the supreme competitor, great sportsman, wonderful team man and very loyal friend.

Having said the above, I thoroughly enjoyed playing with Richard, always thinking how to get the best out of his team with his encouraging comments and a never say die attitude.

To play against him was a different story all together. I will always cherish the Adelaide Vs Goulburn games, we were never playing for a cup, more like our country with our lives depending on it. But true to the spirit of those days, the final whistle meant a handshake and a welcome celebratory drink with a lot of laughter.

Richard will always be remembered as a wonderful sportsman, captain, host and mentor to many aspiring players but above all as a proud 10 goal family man."

Jeremy Bayard

"Richard Walker's legacy will be the high regard in which he was held by all who knew him.

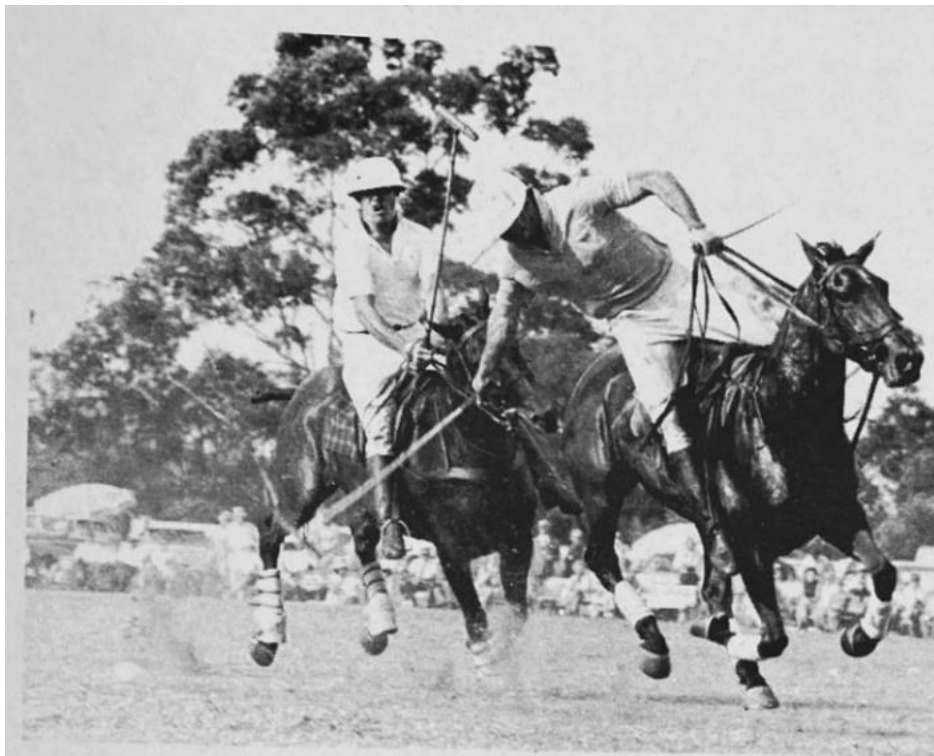
During his stellar career he was known nationwide for his fierce competitiveness and determination.

This determination extended off-the-field where he was always prepared to defend his views on all matters polo (and other).

Richard was inducted into the APF Hall of Fame in 2022 – one of only 11 individuals to be awarded the honor.

His playing record speaks for itself and his considerable influence on polo in NSW for many decades ensured his inclusion.

The history of the sport will speak highly of Richard Walker - and rightly so."



"Richard (NSW White) and Sinclair Hill (NSW Blue) playing a fierce game against each other for NSW"



Stephen Philip

"Living in the Yass district, I am fortunate to have known Richard, Di, Simon and Camilla over many years. Richard was an incredible character both on and off the field.

Off the field, Richard was hard-working, energetic, passionate and single minded about everything he did. He took those same qualities onto the polo field, and in combination with his competitiveness, natural sporting ability and athleticism, attained a handicap of 7 goals and ultimately captained the Australian team. He was a strong horseman, able to ride any horse and get them to perform at his level. He also had an incredible eye – he could hit them on the deck or a foot in the air. He was a very talented player.

As it was Richard who introduced me to polo, and helped encourage me to play by lending me horses and coaching me, I always considered him a friend and mentor and feel lucky to have played both with him and against him.

Richard was a larger-than-life character who will be sorely missed."



"Richard, Diana and Camila, Richard playing for Australia"

The Bell Family

"Richard was always referred to by dad as one of the best players he was lucky enough to play with. It didn't matter what game they were playing, Rich was always trying to win and always trying to get the most out of those with whom he was playing. However, it was off the field that our generation knew him well. He was always supportive of everything we did, and you would not find a more loyal friend to our family. We will miss him a lot."

Roger Fagan Past President of Windsor Polo Club

"I first met Richard when we sat together in History class in 1958. From our first meeting I realised how competitive he was and we shared a passion for horses.

After a gap of 20 years I again caught up with Richard through our joint love of polo.

His competitive streak and will to win was most impressive as the results of many tournaments prove.

He also made himself available to play and coach lesser players and the Windsor Polo Club is most appreciative his support of the Club's 14 goal event where he was willing to give up his time to mix with club members.

In later life I again was spending time with Richard and was impressed on what a thorough gentleman he was yet still retaining his incredible drive.

I will never forget watching Richard in his prime at Warrick Farm and at the Easter Show where he showed amazing skills and was hitting goals at all angles on his favourite mare Jill.

Unfortunately as I am in Greece and cannot attend the tribute to Richard so offer my condolences to Di and the family.

He will be greatly missed"



Sinclair Bell

“Rich was one of the greatest players of his era and the backbone of the club during one of its most prosperous periods. During his polo career, he represented Australia on 17 occasions and was captained during 3 of those tests. Representing Goulburn, he won the prestigious Countess of Dudley Cup an incredible nine times.

In his later years, Rich showed an unwavering loyalty to the club and our community of players. Often would ring after a good result with congratulations and also forthcoming with where improvements could be made. Whilst you knew where Rich stood he was always approachable and kind. Even after he wasn't actively playing, Rich and Diana would be at the working bees early and leave late. His dedication on display this year, whilst not well enough to come to the tournament he still made it to the working bee.

He was a great club man, a great family man and a great friend to many. He will be missed.”



“Richard, Simon and Camilla Walker”

David Head

“Whack'em Walker was the iconic hero to all of us in the NSW South in the 70's and 80's. he was one of those very rare players who just knew how to win a game, no matter the challenge, rain, hail or shine, and gave his players every confidence and encouragement to achieve the same. Richard wouldn't just hit the ball or ride off, when the game was tight there was no-one more determined and focussed.

As the 7g leader of Goulburn with Richard 'Mapes', Rob Bell and #1's such as Glynn Lawry or Jim Hoskins as a 20-22g team they won every club tournament throughout the NSW South and onto the Dudley Cup. I recall so many hard-fought finals between Goulburn and Toomping, Bungendore, Jemalong and Cobbitty, with Goulburn edging out wins so many times.

And then when those Northerners would come down, such as Sinclair with Gill Gill or Quirindi, or Jamie Mackay and the Munroes with Scone or Wirragulla, the battles were a thrill for everyone to see – Whack'em and his boys against the very best and it was always a great tussle.

I was lucky to join with Richard and the Goulburn fellas on a tour through Vic on our way to play in Adelaide for the Gold Cup, a fantastic experience I'll never forget.

I mostly admired Richard's toughness and tenacity – it seems not that long ago he was telling me how he was still breaking young racehorses and riding them in early trackwork in his seventies.”



“Walker, Bell and Hoskins Family, winning the Dudley Cup 1984”



Stuart Gilmore

"To reach 7 goals in polo you need to have a great understanding of the game and the ability to match. Richard had both qualities. Always very well mounted, the love for his horses was apparent along with the love for his home club Goulburn and especially his team mates - Richard Maple-Brown, Rob Bell, Tim Skyring to name a few. Goulburn was often on the winner's dais. My tussles with Richard on the field were very hard fought and I loved that side of his character, he never gave up or took a backward step. Richard represented his country with pride and success, and in later years, took a lot of pleasure in being involved in Simon's polo. A player Australia was proud of."

Gary Johnson, Jemalong and Forbes Polo Club

"Richard Walker was a great friend and contributor to the Polo community across many polo clubs. Richard was the first polo coach at Jemalong and was very influential in many new and young polo players careers and will be sadly missed. He was one of those players who had an incredible ability to lift teams and win.

For anyone that was interested in club polo over the decades who could forget the classic battles on Sunday afternoons with Richard steering his team to so many victories."

Peter White

"A memory of Richard that I will never forget.

We were selected to play with Richard in a NSW team for the Australian Gold Cup in 1986 down in Adelaide SA. (team: Richard Walker, Richard Cowan, Peter and Anto White approx. 18 g team .

We managed to get thru to the finals V Retama; a guest team from Texas USA (Ruben Gracida, Steve and Tom Goss) and came up victorious.

Richard's winning acceptance speech went like this;

"I came down from NSW to play with a bloke with one leg, a bloke with one eye and a bloke with ½ heart!! We clearly weren't expected to win as you want me to accept a bloody bronze trophy of a bloke bending over a sheep shearing it!! As if I haven't seen plenty of that in my time!"

To the end Richard was a fierce competitor and a winner. You knew he would take it all the way. But it was done with a sense of charm and humour that ignited his personality and the way he played. If you played with him, he had your back; against him, you needed to watch your back. He was good; really good.

Fond memories"



"Richard Walker dispenses wisdom to Simon Walker, Stirling Mcgregor, Callum Maclachlan and Gus Campbell"



"Richard riding his legendary Hall of Fame mare "Princes"s at Ellerston"



Anto White

*"Richard Walker – a great character
I was lucky enough to have played with, against and sit on the NSW Polo Board with Richard for many years. Richard was a very tough competitor. He would always call a spade a spade. We had the odd run in but were always friends afterwards.
I remember playing for NSW in the Australasian Gold Cup in Adelaide with Richard, Richard Cowan and my brother Pete. We played the Retama team from Texas USA in the final and won. We were presented with a bronze trophy of a shearer shearing a sheep. Richard said in his speech as winning Captain "obviously we were not meant to win, I see this every day" and gave his trophy to the American Team. He then said "as a matter of fact I don't know how we won, I had to play with a player with one leg (Pete), a player with one eye (me) and a player with no heart (Richard Cowan)".
A great character that gave so much to our game.
Thanks Richard, missed but never forgotten. Our thoughts are with Di, Simon, Camilla and their families."*



"Sinclair Hill and Richard at Richards induction into the Hall of Fame at Garangula 2022"

Sandy Tait

*Richard was a great polo player and I was lucky to play with him on quite a few occasions and against him more frequently.
I really enjoyed playing with him and we were close friends.
Our trip to NZ as The Emus was a memorable trip.
He was very competitive on the field which made him so successful and integral to the long success of that Goulburn team.
Richard was a brilliant horseman who broke and trained all his own ponies.
Off the field Richard was a remarkably nice fellow and I proudly call him a friend.*



"Richard and the Emu team, touring New Zealand"



GOONDIWINDI POLO CLUB

Vale Richard Walker

05/06/1941 - 06/07/2023

On Behalf of the Goondiwindi and North Star Polo Clubs, we would like to send our deepest condolences to the Walker Family on the sad passing of Richard. A wonderful Sportsman and True gentleman.

RIP Richard.

From the Coulton, Gunn, Benson, Glasser, Doolin, Keen, Jackson, Field, Doyle and Holcombe families and all our other members

Glynn Lawry

Richard Walker was already one of the bright young stars of Australian polo when I began playing in 1970. However, it wasn't until 1976, in an Australasian Gold Cup, that I had the privilege of playing with him.

I was also fortunate to then play club polo with Richard from 1978 to 1980, and a Test Match alongside him in 1981 (v USA Retama). Later, wins with him and the other Goulburn boys (Richard Maple-Brown & Rob Bell) in both the Morton Cup (1984) and the Test Match in 1985 (v USA Maui), highlighted his qualities as an exceptional player and team captain.

No matter what level of polo being played, he was always the fiercest of competitors, the toughest of warriors, and an inspirational leader.

Until my retirement in 1990, I also had the "misfortune", at times, to play against Richard. These encounters were always a reminder of his great ball skills, his horsemanship, and the determination that so often made him a winner. He was a forceful character, with a forceful game.

It was an honour and a privilege to have shared so many special polo moments with Richard - a champion player and teammate.

Rest in peace old warrior."

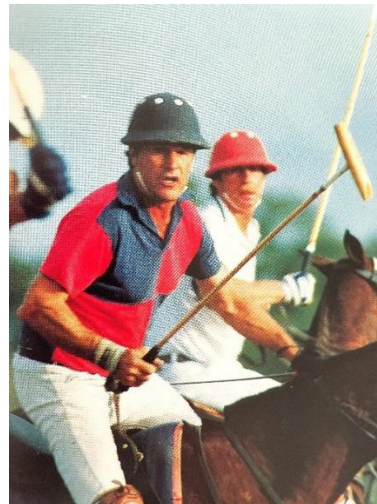
John Kilmartin

Former President Bungendore Polo Club, NSW Polo Association, Australian Polo Council, Vice-President International Polo Federation."

"The Family of Polo has lost one of its favourite sons. Loud, irascible, talented, generous, a champion horseman and player, courageous and humorous, you always knew he was around, especially if you were playing against him.

He was the ultimate competitor, never beaten and still swinging until the final whistle and that was his life as well as his game. He was a great personality who has left an indelible imprint on his time in Polo.

We will not forget him"





Richard Maple-Brown

I was fortunate enough to play the majority of my polo with Richard.

You never went out for a canter. Richard had an unbelievable desire to win combined with a great natural talent. His enthusiasm had the effect of lifting the performance of his team mates and certainly benefited my game.

For someone who put so much into winning a game he had an amazing ability to play young horses, never asking too much of them. In fact you hardly ever saw him having horse trouble.

His many successes at all levels of polo are well documented including his recent induction into the Polo Hall of Fame. What is not so well known is the amount he put back into the game. He was on the board of the NSW Polo Association for 20 years. He was at countless working bees for the Goulburn Polo Club. He coached and helped many new players to the game. To these things Richard brought the same energy and work ethic that he showed in his very successful business life.

Our families have been friends for 4 generations and I always felt that if I found myself in a bad situation and need help Richard would be the one I would turn to.

We will miss him greatly.



"Richard at Garangula, being inducted into the Hall of Fame"

Joe Curran

Some reflections on my dear friend Richard Walker:

Some 45 years ago my life changed forever when Richard Walker invited me to spend my school holidays at his beautiful farm Black Range at Yass.

In the early years Richard taught me how to ride horses, play polo and particularly how to work.

In my twenties, Richard offered me the experience of a lifetime becoming his teammate in the Goulburn Polo Team; winning a Dudley Cup and many other trophies. Richard carried his less experienced teammates and always made them feel like equal winners.

Richard's horsemanship was something you had to see to believe. Winning champion polo pony awards at nearly every tournament where he competed. He bred, broke in and trained nearly all his horses throughout his long and distinguished career in polo. A few of his champion horses that come to mind are Prince, Jill, Venus and of course Princess (who 10 goaler Gonzalo Pieres regarded as one of the greatest horses he had ever played).

Richard also put a lot back into the game of polo, being a board member of the NSWPA, a polo handicapper and coaching at polo schools. Furthermore, Richard was never backward in giving advice to umpires, referees, commentators and opposing players!

As a Farmer/Grazier, Richard was regarded by his peers as the best in the business. In the space of five decades Richard was able to grow a small family grazing block in Yass into an Agricultural Dynasty; this of course was achieved with the support of Diana, Camilla and Simon.

I was so lucky to have had Richard as a friend, teammate, and mentor for nearly my whole life.

Richard leaves behind him a tightly knit loving family and so many friends who he had a profound influence on; he will be sadly missed.



Angus McLachlan

Richard walker – a man to be reckoned with.

The first time I saw Richard he was walking off the tennis courts at Royal Sydney with Diana, both dressed in whites he was wearing a white narrow bandanna around his forehead. An imposing looking couple I thought, little realising how much time over the years we would spend in each other's company.

Much of it was around the polo fields of Australia, where he and his various teams, mainly Goulburn and NSW were annoyingly dominant. Beating Richard and Goulburn was beyond all but the most resolute of teams.

His determination to win was ever apparent, his engagement with the umpires usually worth listening to, but his endeavour was always fair, physically courageous (getting back on his grey mare Jill two, or was it three times, when she fell in the mud on a wet Warwick farm international) and his ability to bring his team mates along with him, endless.

What you saw of "Whackem", "Ruffy" or just "Richard" was what you got. His views on any subject could well be controversial; what was not, was his reluctance to have his mind changed either by lengthy argument or even weight of numbers of people with opposing ideas, that said he was always the bloke one wanted to spend time with away from the polo scene, whether golfing, skiing, or sailing in the Whitsundays, where rocketing sou-easters were his idea of just a bit of a challenge to enjoy as much sail as could be, got up with the spreaders nearly in the water typified his way of life. He wasted no opportunity to challenge the norm from testing sheep stocking rates to importing untried polo stallions and querying the way the various organisations involved in his sports or businesses were run.

That he was dealt such a savage hand with his health undoubtedly had him apply the same uncomplaining courage that had been his hallmark all his days.

He lived a very big admirable and generous life .

No-one who came into his very wide orbit will ever forget the name Richard Walker.



"Richard, Dianna and Camilla"

Peter Bennetto

Richard was too good-looking for his male friends, too assured in his views, too talented and too competitive for his opposition.

My images of Richard, pouring his tea, sipping a calming beer before playing, chewing gum whilst playing, feet through the stirrups, toes down.

His Introduction, at Windsor Polo Club, playing the 14 Goal 1983 Final. Walker leading Rob Bell, Earl Herbert and Graham McGregor to victory over Richard Cowan, Hurricane Hughie Higgins, JK Mackay and myself, it was hard but fair, Walker's Tommy Raudonikis attitude demolishing others' talents.

I was very grateful that Richard was in my life and I wish I was little more like him, he is remembered with a smile.

