

THOMAS CHARLES VINCENT



VINCENT Thomas Charles 7832 (1960–67) AL
Vincent Engineer Ryde; Prep, Bur, Macq,
Cdt. Computer Engineer. [28.11]

Born 28 August 1949 Ryde, NSW

Died 24 August 2018 Ryde, NSW

Thomas Charles Vincent, Tom to everyone who knew him, loved life and played it – literally – on his terms.

The second son of Arthur Leslie Vincent and Grace (nee Hackney), Tom and brother Arthur both came to King's as day boys. Tom's paternal grandfather, also Arthur Leslie, had created A L Vincent Industries in the early 1930s, an engineering foundry and manufacturing works at Enfield.

His maternal grandfather – Thomas Charles Hackney – was a grazier near Bathurst. Tom was named after him.

At King's, Tom rarely spoke of his family's successful business, of his father's WW2 contributions as a Major in a machine gun battalion engaged in several campaigns during the war, his mother's war contribution in the Medical Women's Services or of his grandfather's rugby prowess in the Wests firsts during the 1930s.

Like many '67ers he had parents, uncles and aunts who had fought in WW2, all bearing the scars in different ways. Tom's uncle Ben Hackney was the only survivor of the massacre of Australian and Indian soldiers in Malaya in January 1942.

Friends and acquaintances would probably agree that at

the end of Tom's eight years at King's he could be considered an average student, a competitive and enthusiastic sportsman who gained his school colours in tennis, and a generally good bloke who you would like to spend some time with. Jeff Stevens, also in Macquarie House with Tom, remembers knocking around together at school and quite a bit during school holidays.

At the time, Tom lived at Top Ryde in a large rambling house which had a tennis court. He and Jeff were both keen tennis players so they would play for hours on the court, one set after another pretty much all day. Jeff saw Tom as always competitive and resilient, a fellow who loved a challenge and did not take kindly to losing, not that that happened too often. One year the two of them decided to play in the State Milo doubles tennis tournament – they were as keen as mustard and practised for days, winning the district competition at Parramatta and qualifying for the State finals at White City. They got through to the semi-finals only to be beaten by the eventual winners. But Tom loved playing any sport, so school holidays were pretty much always spent outdoors playing tennis, touch footy, table tennis, golf and surfing with two or three mates.



ROBB COLLEGE – 1ST XV, 1969 (PREMIERS)



Back: M Rose, P Pitman, T Vincent

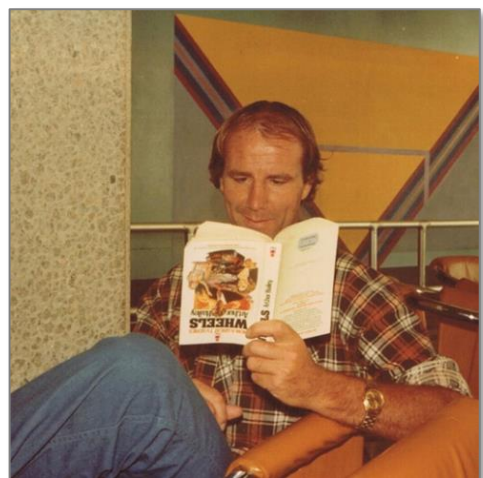
Middle: P Buzzacott, J Hudson, R Nichols, P Williams, G Souris, R Lander, J Wilson

Front: R Ward, W King, P Carter, Dr E Darling (Coach), J O'Connor (Capt), A Brett, V Cook, T Marshall, D Green

Tom's HSC results gave him entry to Economics at the University of New England (UNE) joining 13 others from King's Year of '67. Whilst Tom had only played in the 7ths rugby at school, afterwards he developed physically and was already in the Robb College 1st XV in 1969 when they won the 1st Grade Premiership of New England.¹ Tom went on to play rep rugby at No 8 for New England in the annual Country Championships. In his time at UNE Tom played competitively in most sports including tennis, squash and cricket. The one subject he tried with little success was *Fronting 101*, a subject he sat many times however acknowledging himself, that he always failed at the finals. He may have been right as he never married!

Tom left UNE in 1972 having done enough to finish his Economics degree but never got round to formally applying for it as you had to do in the day - his BEc gong still sits buried in the UNE archives. He then moved to Sydney and the financial demands of a rugby-dominated social round in the big city in part satiated by part-time maintenance and painting contract work with fellow enthusiasts from Eastwood Rugby Union Football Club.

Eventually Tom went into computer work which in the '70s was installing and maintaining mainframe systems. Mobile phones and laptops were non-existent. His major client was in the airfreight business and Tom spent much of his time in their Mascot headquarters ensuring the systems were operating efficiently. In 1976 he played with Eastwood in the Shute Shield Grand Final and then secured some overseas interests in his services.

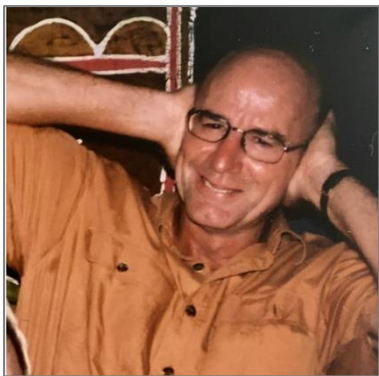


¹ Also in the team were Peter Buzzacott ('66), Mike Rose ('67), John Wilson ('68) and John Hudson ('68), see photo.

By November 1976 Tom had gathered enough resources to venture to London, playing rugby for London New Zealand with part-time employment in a ski equipment distribution centre. Salary from this employment was marginal at best but did enable him to travel to the ski fields in France, Canada and the US and other sights in Europe, UK and Scandinavia over the next two years.

Back in Sydney, Tom managed to secure odd jobs and computer work and of course a resumption of his playing with Woodies. Tom captained the Club and eventually retired after leading the 2nds to victory against an Eddie Jones-led Randwick team in 1983. He had played 185 games over 11 years, 133 of which were in 1st Grade.

His computer work saw him spend time in New Zealand and Misima Island off PNG working for a mining outfit.

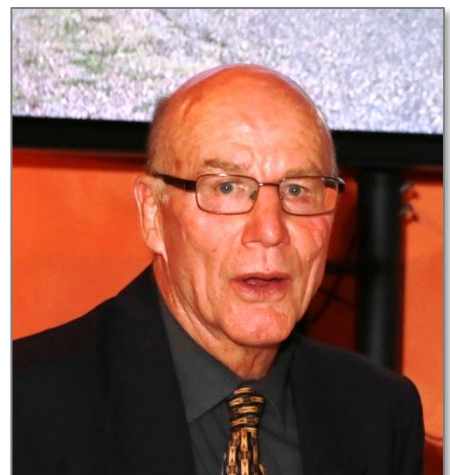


In retirement Tom spent a good deal of time working on the farm he shared with his sister Glenys at Bingara - Angus cattle mainly. He enjoyed the outdoors and outback life. He trekked with a camel train across the Simpson Desert and ended up at the Birdsville Pub. He had many other ventures into the Outback particularly with his nephew and niece, both of whom were working in Alice Springs and the Kimberley. He spent a lot of his time supporting his nephews and nieces and would call into see his brother Arthur on most trips to Bingara. But Tom always had to get back to his inner city home at Redfern and particularly to the Eastlakes Golf course where he tried to prove that the putting yips were only temporary, even though he had them for 25 years.

A few months before he died in 2018, Tom complained he had a very sore arm and after attending hospital, he was diagnosed with Myeloma - a blood cancer which develops from plasma cells in the bone marrow. Tom had a broken arm as a consequence of the Myeloma - no wonder it was sore. He commenced Chemotherapy at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA) and after some time was discharged with the aim of having a 'shoulder operation' to remedy his broken arm. During the time he was having Chemotherapy, his platelet levels had significantly dropped to such an extent that his doctors would not operate on his shoulder as his levels were far too low; most probably compromised by the Chemotherapy. In addition, he had a Heart Arrhythmia which was causing the anaesthetist concern in relation to the shoulder operation. To cap it off, Tom had a perforated bowel (diverticulitis), so sadly he had a trifecta of matters to handle, resulting in various stints in RPA.

A low key family funeral was requested by Glenys; however, many friends from his second home, the Eastwood Football Club, still in shock from the sudden demise of the strong man they knew, held a memorial at their Club.

Close friends remember Tom as a simple man with honourable values and manners who will be missed by all those who knew him. 67ers who caught up with Tom at the 50th Reunion in 2017 echo those sentiments.



Tom at the 50th Reunion

Contributors: John Hudson, Mike Muldoon, Jeff Stevens, David Payne, Rodney Hammett