

# Bill Bradley - A Man With A Mission

- Date:** Saturday, 16 September 2006
- Time:** 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
- Lunch:** Bringing your own lunch is not an option at this venue  
Bistro lunches start at around \$7.00 for non-members (members \$6.50)  
The Palms Cafe has sandwiches at around \$4.50 for non members
- Afternoon Tea:** Courtesy of the Network – **RSVP before 12 September essential**
- Venue:** Boronia Room  
Hornsby RSL Club  
4 High Street, Hornsby

Bill Bradley is indeed a man with a mission. At the age of 70 when most men have been comfortably retired for some years, Bill is not only still working at Hornsby Hospital but has now taken on the next in a long line of challenges. He is in training to qualify to represent Australia in sailing at the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing. What is more remarkable is that Bill only took up the sport a couple of years ago and yet already has competition victories under his belt.

At school in the 1940s Bill excelled at all sport. His class was a team of dreamers who learned that you have to make your own dreams come true. Two of them were dreaming of the Olympics – Bill and his mate Betty Cuthbert. Her dream came true in 1956 when she won three gold medals at the Melbourne Olympics. Bill's dream was shattered at the age of fourteen when he contracted polio which left him an incomplete quadriplegic.

Not to be daunted by the prospect of never playing elite sport, Bill made the decision to organise sport for youth. Over many years he has held numerous positions in a variety of sporting and community organisations thus helping to keep thousands of children off the street through organised sport. He has been involved with junior rugby league, cricket, basketball and little athletics, to name but a few. In 1983 Bill started mini harness racing in the metropolitan area. This is a sport for children between the ages of 5 and 16 driving Shetlands or ponies. Bill believed that encouraging children into the sport of mini trotting meant that they had to look after their horse and stable, train the horse and then attend trotting meetings. His theory was that in learning to care for an animal they did not have much spare time to get into mischief!

The beginning of 1995 saw Bill's life change once more. Appearing in the local paper was a pictorial story about a wheelchair athlete who was going to a National Lawn Bowls Championship. After the tournament a team was to be picked to play in South Africa. Bill said to his wife Clover "*That would be a great trip, I'm taking up bowls*". After a few roll-ups on the grass, and hurriedly organising his entry into the event, Bill's sporting career was rekindled. Against all odds, Bill won that event and the rest, as they say, is history.

To learn more about Bill's life and varied sporting career, and his current quest to represent Australia again, come along and hear him speak – it promises to be a enthralling afternoon.

*In order to ensure that Afternoon Tea is sufficiently catered, you are requested to telephone Alice on 9747 4694 to confirm your attendance, or email her at <ea@post-polionetwork.org.au>.*

***Final numbers for Afternoon Tea must be advised to the Club on 12 September, so please get in touch with Alice as soon as you receive this Network News.***

*We look forward to seeing everyone there and hope that the move to Hornsby for this event will make it easier for some of you to get to a Seminar. If this will be the first Seminar you have attended, please be sure to introduce yourself to a Committee member.*

# From Iron Lung to Paralympic Legend

Bill Bradley contracted polio in 1950 at the age of 14 and spent three weeks in an iron lung, followed by fifteen months on his back in hospital.

He is pictured here with Nurse Paddy Knight (now Marshall) shortly after leaving the iron lung.

Bill and Paddy never forgot each other, and on 27 June 2000 they met up again for the first time in fifty years at the *Prince Henry Hospital Reunion of Polio Patients and Staff* organised by PPN member Doug Sutherland in conjunction with the Network.



Bill wins the International Paralympic Committee's World Championship Quadriplegic Division in South Africa in 1998. As the finals day went on the point score for countries was even between Australia and South Africa. The Aussie manager was pacing up and down as Bill played the last South African on the green. In front from the start, Bill kept the pressure on until he gained the gold medal. Bill's win was also a win for Australia as the team won the point score trophy.



Bill (at the rear) in the Skud 18 he hopes to qualify to sail in the 2008 Beijing Paralympics.