

ACHIEVEMENTS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Graham Thorne Dowling

After an outstanding sporting career at St Andrews College Graham joined the West Christchurch Cricket Club in December 1954 and over the next 24 years he played in 123 senior matches and scored 5,001 runs in 194 innings at an average of 28.6. There were five centuries, his highest score of 179 not out was scored in the 1967/68 season, and there were 28 fifties.

His aggregate is fifth on the all-time scoring record for the club. Graham was involved in two excellent partnerships against Lancaster Park in the 1967/68 season. He opened with Ian Walter and together they put on 188 in 146 minutes. Then Graham and Brian Hastings scored 173 in 84 minutes for the second wicket. He headed the club's averages in 1968/69 with an aggregate of 463 at an average of 51.4.

Graham undertook more than his share of administration for the club. He was Treasurer for three years from 1962/63 and when the West Christchurch University club merged with the Burnside club in 1972, Graham was a member of the initial four person committee that met the Burnside committee. He was deeply involved in all the discussions and the details that were necessary in bringing together two different clubs.

The concept for the merger was not universally popular with all club members and at the SGM in August 1972 the proposal was voted down by 53 votes to 31 and instead a move to the Ilam University grounds was approved. However a number of senior players, including Graham, were strongly opposed to establishing the club's headquarters at the University ground and two days after the meeting some

14 players tendered their resignation. Those who had resigned felt strongly that the Burnside area had a greater potential for expansion and the club would be better able to control its own destiny away from the University. So at the AGM two weeks later, and after much debate, the merger with the Burnside club was agreed.

There was much work required to ensure a successful outcome. Three new pitches had to be laid on Burnside Park, a new pavilion built over the old changing shed and the outfield improved with a new automatic irrigation system. Machinery had to be bought and all these expenses had to be paid for which required a good deal of fundraising.

Graham was the unanimous choice as the first President of the newly formed club where his attention to detail and a calm and relaxed approach was able to defuse potential difficult situations. He held this position until August 1979 and became Patron of the club in 2007 on the death of Jack Kerr. He was made a Life Member in 1981.

As well as his work as an administrator Graham was one of the best cricketers to ever play for Canterbury and New Zealand. He played 58 matches for Canterbury and scored a record 3,690 runs by the time of his last game in January 1972. His highest score of 206 was equal top score with Curly Page and he captained Canterbury on 43 occasions.

For New Zealand he played 39 tests, captain in 19, and from February 1960 until March 1972 he was an automatic selection for New Zealand. His highest score of 239 was made on his debut as captain, a feat that had not been achieved previously and since then on only one other occasion by Shivnarine Chanderpaul who scored 203 not out in March 2005 playing against South Africa.

Dick Brittenden, the well-respected cricket correspondent, captured him well when he wrote “that once he found a place in the Canterbury team he became a fixture, watchful, sound, often elegant, a precise cutter, strong on the pull stroke, a fluent driver through the covers. When he concluded his career, he never announced his retirement; he was remembered for his thoughtfulness and kindness to youthful cricket enthusiasts, for his utter dedication to the players under his command and for his many examples of selflessness on and off the field.