

Bruce in his own words from his 50th Birthday Speech

I would like to publicly thank you all for supporting me for the last 50 years in some way or another. I thought this day would never come. To be 50 not out is considered, in cricket terms, to be worth of a wave of the bat to the crowd. Well today is my wave to you. Steve Waugh, the current Aussie Capt., has a Test average of over 50 and he is proud of it, and that is good enough for me. Not many people here will reach the Bradmanesque average of a couple days short of 100.

I have been looking back at my life and have noticed that each decade has several people who have shaped my life and given me the will and courage to keep smiling and fight to survive. Some crossover into several decades:

1953 to 1963: my parents, Marion & Harold who created me and nine other brothers & sisters, to become the perfect support network.

1963 to 1973: my friend Jeff Rodgers, who was my sixer in the Red Six and 1st Tambourine Bay Sea Scouts in Cubs, then through Scouts and Senior Scouts. Also, we were friends throughout high school and after at the church fellowship at St Andrews in Lane Cove. Jeff, on guitar, and me, on flute, with several girls singing were all in a musical group that played at some coffee shops. We weren't brilliant, but we were committed.

1973 to 1983: my mate Chris Adams, what can I say? We met the first day I joined Life Savers and soon became the firmest of friends. Our mutual interest in motor sport, cycling and sailing made for great times together. We used to take the Friday before the long weekend off and go to see the Bathurst car race practices, just for the day. I would watch the race on the TV, while Chris would drive back early on Sunday to Bathurst.

Later, when Chris got the cycling bug, I used to drive him to the country races and follow, acting as team manager and support staff. We had a fab time.

Then in 1983, we went to the UK and Europe for 16 weeks, travelling in a modified Bedford van. We were at the San Marino, Monaco, Belgian and British F1 GPs. We fulfilled one of my childhood dreams to be at the Les Mans 24 hr race and watch an Aussie drive a Porsche to victory. We visited London, Edinburgh, Paris, Rome, Bonn, Brussels, the Riviera, Switzerland, Pompeii, Munich, Salzburg and more!

There was one place in particular that held a special affinity for me. The small town of Battle in Kent, where King Harold was slain by William the Conqueror on October 14 1066. The Battle of Hastings.

1983 to 1993: by 1983 I had developed a strong friendship with Rob Vaughn through the St Andrews Lane Cove Cricket Team. I had gone to watch my brother Robert in 1978 to play and had gotten a bit bored, so I volunteered to do the scoring. Fifteen seasons in all – I scored, I was treasurer, selector, confidante, and observer, even umpire in a practice match. I tell you now it is scary with only stumps between me, my wheelchair and a batsman hitting a drive back down the pitch. Umpires have my sympathy. One of the pleasing aspects of

being in a team is the mateship it gives. When we won C grade I was over the moon when I was presented with a winner's cap that said TEAM SCORER.

Also, to see a young boy, Matt Davis, who at 10 years old I would pick up and take to cricket to watch his older brother, Phil, play. Then see Matt, play and grow into an accomplished representative player himself.

1993 to 2003: Has been the toughest decade and the most rewarding so far. Ursula has been my rock and greatest champion. I love her dearly. We have together been able to survive nine months of my hospitalisation and recovery. We have added Kermit (our Poodle) to our family.

Finally, over the last 30 years, I have been involved in two enterprises. Namely, 15 years working at Life Savers, now Nestle Confectionery, until my retirement in 1989. Where I worked with a great assortment of people, some who've become firm friends, some who are here today.

Since retiring I have been heavily involved with the Muscular Dystrophy Association of NSW until recently, as Editor of Talking Point. After 50 editions, I thought it was time to do other things, while I still can. This involvement meant being fully immersed in the day-to-day issues that my disability and other people with disabilities have to contend with. This has given me opportunities to meet many interesting people, such as Greg Norman, NSW Governor's to name a few. As a Director of MDA, I have been very lucky to work with some remarkable people, two in particular, Prof. Graeme Morgan and his wife, Dr Jacqueline Morgan, who are here today.

Also, it is hard not to become friends with other disabled people, with one who shares the same struggles, the same subtle and not so subtle discriminations, but also understand what it like to be disabled. These fabulous friends are here also.

In closing, 30 odd years ago Prof. Morgan said to me: we know what you do, you've proved that, now it's time to preserve to conserve. Thank **God** you're still here!!!