

The Ballad Of Butch Drayton.

Foreword by Judith Lewis, poem by Paul Lewis

Noel Richard (Butch) Drayton was born in Riverstone on 13th February 1922, the third child and second son of George and Ellen Drayton. He had three brothers and two sisters and the Drayton family home was in Piccadilly Street and comprised most of the land between where Dingle Street and Ailsa Place now stand.

Butch's early life would have mirrored that of most young men in Riverstone at that time. He completed his schooling at Riverstone Public School and his first job was as Butcher's Boy for the local butcher's shop, hence his nickname.

At school he had another nickname, "Tin Hare", because it was said he could run as fast as one. A natural sportsman, he excelled at rugby league, cricket and tennis. He was also a fine Coach and in later years many Riverstone children were coached by Butch in each of these sports. His daughter, Wendy, played tennis at State level, won the Coca Cola Little Masters' whilst at primary school and represented N.S.W, high schools against Queensland.

Butch joined the C.M.F. and fought with the Australian Imperial Forces in Papua / New Guinea where he was a signalman. He was discharged from the army in December 1945, suffering from a severe case of malaria. He went to work at Riverstone Meat Works. In 1953 he married Gwen Lewis and they had two children, Wendy and Dale.

In the early 1970s-with the Meat Company going through lean times, Butch left there to work as the made cleaner at Riverstone Public School, a position he held until 1985 when ill health forced him to resign. He died on 2nd April 1988.

At the school Butch was in his element. He loved kids and they loved him. He had the uncanny ability to get down to their level. He was great at birthday parties. He just took over and organised the kids into games. The school's principal at the time, Ron Hill, recognised Butch's potential and soon had him as his "assistant" coach of the open rugby league football team. In 1976 they did the impossible and wrested the Panthers' Trophy from Patrician Brothers' Blacktown who always won it.

In 1978 a Year 8 English Class was studying ballads. The teacher told the class to think of a character they knew and try to write a ballad about that person. Paul Lewis wrote

The Ballad Of Butch Drayton

A friend to all the kids in school,
While cleaning up the place,
Is Butchy Drayton like a clown,
Around the fireplace.

He makes a joke, Then skips around,
He's really very snappy.
He's always acting like a clown,
And always very happy.

Chorus

For life's a joke to Butchy boy,
And people are more than money.
He's always very full of joy,
And continuously funny.

And as we walk home through the school,
We always bomb his bins.
And while he's acting like a fool,
Down fall his garbage tins.

Chorus

He rides his bike home every day,
And shoots us with his broom.
He never watches on his way,
And crashes to his doom!

Chorus

He coaches us in many sports,
And teaches us quite well,
And if we don't do as he says
He'll hardly even yell.

Chorus

He'll go on joking through his life,
And never ever stop.
And when he gets to Heaven,
He'll be laughing at the top.