

Tiger O'Reilly

Written by David Johnson for the Centenary of the Wingello Mechanics Institute Hall 2018

Verse

Born in an o - pal min - ing town, White Cliffs New South Wales,
Where his fath - er built the school by hand ac - cord - ing to the tales.
He learnt crick - et with a gum - wood bat and hand carved bank - sia ball
And bowled a most pec - ul - iar style; he was gang - ly and tall.

Chorus

Tig - - er O' - Reil - ly, how you made those wick - ets fall
Tig - - er O' - Reil - ly, when you bowl'd and spun that ball.

Born in an opal mining town, White Cliffs New South Wales
Where his father built the school by hand according to the tales.
He learnt cricket with a gum-wood bat and hand carved banksia ball
And bowled a most peculiar style; he was gangly and tall.

Tiger O'Reilly how you made those wickets fall
Tiger O'Reilly when you bowled and spun the ball.

When he was twelve his family came to live in Wingello
Where everyone was a cricket crank according to Bill O.
His brother Jack described to him the Bosie spinning way
Which soon became a feature of his wicket-taking play.

In twenty-five at Bowral he first played against The Don,
Who gave the boys from Wingello some leather-hunting fun,
At close of play still not out with two hundred and thirty four;
But bowled him clean on the next week-end with his very first leg spin ball.

To Erskineville, then Griffith as a teacher he was sent
And played for club and state and made his mark where e'er he went.
But the green cap was elusive till in nineteen thirty-two
Seven wickets 'gainst South Africa in his Cricket Test debut.

For ten years more his googlies kept batsmen on the go.
The secret was his grip that hid the way the ball would flow.
Then forty years a columnist reporting on the game
And now he is remembered in the Cricket Hall of Fame.