

## Bob Beresford's Articles

This article was written after the 1995 World Cup and sent all over, including to IRB. Surprising how much of this has actually been happening – inspiration is catching? However, when the IRB's World in Union song came out it was clear they really needed a proper songwriter – ideally me - to truly capture the spirit of Rugby for them. That has now been corrected with the arrival of my Game of Union song – sent around the 1999 World Cup as lyrics, but now on CD, available as MP3.

Anyone is welcome to reprint this article at no charge, but it must be in full, with author's name. Please advise us, also, for interest.

### NEW AGE RUGBY (1996)

As rugby has been pushing, groping and generally rucking its way into a new era, a vision of a sublime new age of rugby has struck me (ouch, there it goes again). As the whole meaning of rugby changes, entire teams will look for fulfilment in the coming game as they have positive, non-aggressive dialogue in their designer dressing rooms, decorated in pastel colours. Training will be inspired, with both planned moves, and especially colours, coordinated in every way and reinforced with a diet that contains plenty of quiche.

Before the game, the players assertively put on their designer outfits – making a statement to the opposition and to the fashion world at large. Then soft boots (usually suede) with the new facially friendly synthetic studs – which have the same cutting power as plasticine. Then it's into an intensive hairstyle adjustment session, before running in slow motion down beige coloured corridors, to the sound of mating whales, and emerging with a roar of the appreciative crowd (who roar equally for both teams) onto the field of play.

Pre-game hugging of the opposition – and anyone else in the vicinity – will be quite in order as players build up for an intensely harmonious playing experience, with dazzling footwork and environmentally friendly tackling. Well choreographed moves will be in order, especially by the forward packs – who will develop advanced new movements and steps before engaging the scrum.

To heighten the appreciation of all this, games will now feature expert panels of judges who sit prominently in the main stand with their large score cards (1-10), rewarding any interesting move – especially a spectacular line-out jump. They will also have cards of minus 1-10 for foul play, with a clever trip being worth at least minus 8.

After an exhausting, but not necessarily bruising, first half, the players sit and suck on their organically grown oranges and while sound of the rainforests play gently in the background on a portable tape recorder, the coach gives the positive affirmation (taking care not to invalidate anyone) that they need to find harmony and self fulfilment during the second spell. This will accentuate the sportsmanship in the game, and soon it won't be uncommon to apologise to the person who missed the tackle that led to your try.

Referees making negative decisions, such as penalties, will at all times try to console the errant player and explain (even tearfully) how he can improve and not stray from the ways of the rulebook in the future. Referees will also now carry a battery operated horn that has a less startling effect than a whistle.

At full time, after the equal applause for both teams and no matter what the score is, there will be even more intense and intimate hugging, some of which may have to be edited off the television broadcast until audience consciousness is generally raised. Celebrations will involve mineral water, more quiche, and even alcohol free beer, but absolutely no gloating.

To help cope with the stresses of the modern game, counselling is needed. Not just publicity and financial advice, and styling for body, clothes and especially hair, but more importantly to cope with on-field traumas. Fore example – encounter groups for lock forwards, anger management classes for props and special therapy sessions for hookers who don't like each other very much, no matter how hard they try.

Recognising the new international nature of rugby, each country will be able to make its own vital contribution, based on experience, to harmony and understanding in the world game. But these experiences will later be transcended.

For example, at first the New Zealanders could explain why they always have the point to prove that they aren't inferior just because they live in a colony at the bottom of the world.

The South African's might explain how the blacks would be able to play rugby well if the whites show them how to do it.

The Aussies will be able to explain how all mankind is absolutely equal and best mates as long as they drink beer.

The Welsh can explain the value of leeks and singing of 'Men of Harlech' to their game.

The French might relate how more wine and womanising adds flair on the field.

The Canadians will insist that they're not Americans, show a maple leaf flag to prove it and then keep training by playing ice hockey.

The Irish may express how the after match ambience can be improved with Guinness, baked potatoes and folk music.

The Scots might discuss the training advantages of running around hillsides dodging heather and low flying mist.

The Samoans could explain why bruising tackles get you in the right mood for going to church.

The English, unfortunately, will have to confess the negative effects of playing slowly straight up the middle, and having affairs with the Royal family.

The Argentineans might talk about the psychological advantage of roping wild bulls before a game.

The Japanese will run headlong into packs of larger players, for the glory of the fatherland.

The Italians will probably just keep eating more pasta and swear it doesn't slow them down.

But from these different, and apparently conflicting, viewpoints, a new 'United Nations' style universal consciousness and appreciation of rugby will emerge as the new age begins and harmony and understanding run rampant on the rugby fields of the world, in a caring and sharing kind of way.

Bob Beresford  
(Sporting Philosopher)

### **ABOUT 'WALTZING THE FOOTBALL' (Nov. 2003)**

Music – traditional (German)

Lyrics – © Bob Beresford (influenced by Banjo Patterson's lyrics)

Production, arrangement, lead voice, mandolin, guitar – Bob Beresford

Engineer – Ivan Shevchuk. Piano and Organ – John Bevin

Piano Accordion – Barry McDonald. Drums – Alan Cattermole

Bass – Dougal Canard. Backing Voices – Elle Walker, Bob, Laura Watson.

On CD here. Also freely downloadable as lyrics or MP3 at [bobberesford.com](http://bobberesford.com)

This light Rugby version of the popular 'Australian' song has been lovingly handcrafted in New Zealand by a dual national (me) a Ukrainian and a bunch of New Zealanders. So to any Australians who like it – no more silly sheep jokes, please.

Why a rugby version? Well the idea came to me back in 1996 as a way of singing the Aussie 'National song' in a light hearted rugby situation. Originally I figured the ARU might want to record it for promotions, eg with players joining in on the choruses – whether tone deaf or not. The ARU had previously done a promotional song that was sub – standard. So mid 1996 I sent them a letter

mentioning my idea for a song. Finally by 1998 I'd actually sent the song- lyrics, suggesting it could even be sung by the crowd at games (lyrics in programs), recorded and then played on PA systems, etc. Or I could even record it here in Christchurch myself and send it over.

As before, I got no reply, but soon after was surprised to see John Williamson singing Waltzing Matilda at the big games instead. I still thought a humorous Rugby version was a better idea and months later sent the ARU another letter suggesting they could always get John Williamson to record it (though my voice was probably better).

Anyway, years later I'm finally into music production properly and have recorded it. It's a song that should be 'out there' and ideally at the World Cup in Sydney. So now rugby enthusiasts have another choice. Since it was my idea to sing something like 'Waltzing Matilda' at rugby matches, in the first place, why not try my version? It's downloadable for free as MP3 or lyrics at [bobberesford.com](http://bobberesford.com). No doubt the promotions dep. of ARU has changed by now and might even be responsive to this?

Like 'The Game of Union', it's entirely free to play or make a video to till further notice, no royalties. Tell us about it – for interest. The video for either song should just have details on screen for 12 seconds - six plus six, if full length, or once in a clip. That's: Music – traditional or Holst, lyrics – Bob Beresford, [bobberesford.com](http://bobberesford.com) ( please mention the website). Once more people download these songs, more will sing them – can only be good. The Game of Union will be on 'free play' for the next year anyway (eg before matches, radio, video) – contact us. We mastered this 'Waltzing' mix (at 'medium' compression) so voices, lyrics (and midrange) would carry well and realistically. Raising the low end could work better at times – eg in stadiums or for rock - oriented listeners.

Perhaps some people feel that I'm degrading the Aussie 'National Song' by doing this version? Not at all. It's an amusing rugby- oriented take on Banjo Patterson's version – which was a whimsical take on an original song. That song was German – by some guy who'd like to be dancing with his true love – Matilda. Banjo has taken a song with a very strong, lilting melody and harmony, that's emotional to sing, and added excellent lyrics, with a humorous Aussie twist. These are the lyrics of a poet rather than a song writer, bringing out the rebellious and independent side of Australia, with the loneliness that can entail. Here, the old wayfarer/swagman only has his baggage for company so that's the woman/Matilda he'll go wandering /dancing with. When the troopers catch up with him for theft, they want to go waltzing with his baggage/swag as well – they probably don't have women either?! Perhaps Banjo wrote this during an unfortunate state of celibacy?

The song isn't a waltz (3/4) – it's in 4/4 going on 2/4 marching rhythm, with a lilt which suited the original German lyrics. It sings best in lines 1,2 & 4 of the chorus. These lines appear to be translated from the German original, and you'd never write a song in English with that construction. The lines were perhaps – " Dearest Matilda, Darling Matilda, Won't you come dancing Matilda with me?" and "You'll come dancing Matilda with me "( waltzing never mentioned ). Banjo uses "Waltzing" because it sings well in context and it's still a type of dance ? The song, with its strong music, has been a great comfort to Australians, even during war. And the chorus is very German – lyrics and grammar. Note also there was a classic German melody liked by both sides in WWII, with different lyrics for either side, but I think Marlene Dietrich had also recorded both versions! Why not "Waltzing your Sheila" ?!

So let's not be too patriotic about it all – good music is what counts, wherever it comes from. For anyone surprised that Banjo's popular version features robbery, guns, 'the law' and death, remember that Australia has a lot of Irish heritage (not to mention the convicts) and this is all perfectly normal in Irish folk music, where armed robbery is arguably the main topic – and the Irish do tend to argue.

Best regards  
Bob Beresford

PS: Rugby definitely wasn't one of the sports I was actually good at. I only scored one try at school – practically an accident. Using boots several sizes too large didn't help either. I'm born in Australia but living in New Zealand, where rugby is the National Sport and there's too much (negative) pressure on the national team to win.

The popularity of rugby now depends on an 'open' nature to the game and an exciting style of play. Like most viewers, I'd prefer to see a clean, fast exciting game with lots of tries where the favourite team loses than a dour, boring match decided on fouls, penalty kicks and pedantic refereeing, where the favourite team wins. As a professional game, the style of play is crucial. Improving the rules

would help there. It's also unrealistic for one team to be winning all the time, and probably not good for the game either. For inspiration for any rugby- oriented person, check out my Game of Union song (also on this CD).

P.S. – 14/11- Was told yesterday by an expert in the Northern Territory that the original Matilda was a German marching tune in WW1. Also, Banjo probably based his version on an original Aussie song ( sounds like that – some phrasing is clumsy ).

### **Introduction to the America's Cup Sailing Article**

Do you realise that there was a huge yachting event in Auckland, New Zealand, this year? Well there was – the American's Cup challenge.

It was big, spectacular and outrageously expensive. The America's Cup is the biggest event in sailing – happening once every few years. It's a very expensive business – the syndicates who have a chance have spent many millions. But it's interesting that all the syndicates really in contention in the last 15 years have been lead by sailors – whether billionaires or not. New Zealand, surprisingly, for such a small country, has dominated since 1995, and there have been many New Zealanders on the teams challenging.

This time around the New Zealand A Team was leading a Swiss challenge and won the Cup for Alinghi, Switzerland.

The New Zealand team, defending the Cup, had been led by a board of directors – a terrible mistake – especially with one of them the head of a big advertising agency. So you wouldn't expect sailing know-how and common sense to always prevail. Eventually, the boat itself self destructed. The successful New Zealand challenges had been lead by the great sailor Sir Peter Blake, recently murdered in Brazil while defending his ship. He had left the 2002 defence initially in the hand of lawyers, which was the beginning of the end.

Now the New Zealand team has an outstanding sailor again running things though reclaiming the America's Cup now would be very difficult. It will be held in Europe, for the first time.

The challenge event before the final America's Cup challenge is the 'Louis Vuitton Cup', sponsored by the French fashion giant. One of the big challengers, again, was Prada – the Italian fashion giant. What is it with high fashion and sailing?

Unfortunately there was the usual manoeuvrings in boardrooms and courtrooms which turned a lot of people off the event at times. But eventually, sailing won through – sometimes dramatically.

I sent this article out for free publication before the main event. Obviously it could have added to the atmosphere of the occasion – but no-one printed it – shows what kind of taste the editors have, doesn't it?

Hope you find it inspiring.

### **AMERICA'S CUP SAILING (2003)**

` Let's put the fun back into sailing ` or ` Sailing's not what it used to be `

As the sun rises and sets, then rises, then sets, then rises again and eventually sets, then rises on more frantic yachting and politics in the ancient port of Auckland, ` City of Sailors `, one is left to wonder "Is this what sailing is all about". After all, before all this America's Cup carry on, sailing meant many things to many people.

To some it might be little dinghys dancing on a sunlit bay; to others a full wind on a big yacht or the acceleration of a sail board. Or it could even mean sitting around a holiday home in the country, drugged to the eyeballs and writing a strange poem about an albatross.

But then came the America's Cup/Louis Vuitton series and we watched in wonder as teams from around the globe rose to the challenge. From England came, a futile attempt at disciplining the Colonies. From Sweden, a strong neo-Viking challenge. Out of cold New York Harbour sailed a group of patriots with stars and stripes in their eyes. From Seattle it was a team apparently representing

the rest of the planet. Then sailing out of the Tofu infested waters of San Francisco Bay were men with a vision and a powerful computer programme.

But some really did it in style. The French, fully charged with strong coffee and croissants for the day's duties. Off the catwalks of Milan stepped a team of men with superb fashion sense, challenging for a cup representing the ultimate in expensive leather ware. And from Switzerland it was a band of men with confidential bank accounts and an absolutely neutral position at all times, that could have been instrumental in their triumph.

All came to challenge little New Zealand, sailing a boat – Black Magic - apparently designed with sorcery. But then there were all the technical intrigues, politics, accusations and court cases, leaving the normal person, or even someone like me, to wonder if that's how sailing should be.

Well, it's good to know that it hasn't always been like this, and wouldn't we do better to just get back to the simple old traditions and pleasures of sailing once more?

Those were the good old glory days when an athletic young chap could go down to the waterfront looking for a good time – get drunk, then struck over the head and wake up on board an America's Cup yacht. Now it's actually a career choice where the crew even get paid. Back then you'd be happy if your food wasn't mouldy.

Out on the water, boats might playfully fire broadsides at each other before sailing off on the seven seas in search of adventure. Some nearly went off the edge of the world before they knew better, but it was all good fun - just like sailing circles around icebergs.

Sailors would clamber around rigging with raw hands as the ship tossed in a storm, but never complain. Your clothes may have been damp and rotting but you knew how to look at the bright side – they came free with the job, and if you had no clothes at all you'd be even colder and everyone on board would be making fun of you.

Yes, a sailor knew how to face danger. The ship might be pitching in high seas, rounding the Horn, but that wouldn't stop him from swinging from mast to mast on a spare rope, to set the sails. Or a man could almost stand, drunk, desperately clutching the railing in mountainous seas and still laugh at the idea of personal insurance.

But there were quiet, reflective, moments too... like being becalmed for months in the tropics under a relentless sun. A man could feel hardship and not mind that he was caked with salt and couldn't wash for months. He had a crew for company that smelt much the same as himself and some times there were big sea monsters to talk to, or mermaids floating around on the waves.

But sailors knew how to make music and merriment. Someone may have brought along a fiddle and could actually play a hornpipe, or they might just settle for banging each others heads in rhythm with iron food dishes, while anyone with quick feet did a jig.

And talk about humour – there was the traditional jest of tying ropes across stairways to trip officers and crew. Or what could be more fun than waking with a thud in the dark of the night to realise that some hearty seafaring wag had just cut the chords to your hammock and you'd now be spending the next three months in heavy seas and sleeping on the boards!?

And there was discipline. Back then a man could expect to be tied to a rack and severely whipped, while these days people have to pay good money for it!

But it wasn't all fun at sea, a sailor knew he could look forward to fun in port with saucy young wenches while these days he has to try picking them up in Auckland discos with weird dance moves, overpriced drinks and outrageous stories about how he's sailing the boat single-handedly. So much for the liberation of women.

But in the old times a man always knew what to do with a woman because, above all, those were the days when men were men. Sometimes the women were men too, but a sailor might be too drunk to notice. Or if he did notice in time he might be too drunk to care. I mean, these were difficult times and as a famous transsexual said "You can't always get what you want". Sometimes you can't get any satisfaction either, even when you're getting what you need.....where was I ? ..... oh yes, sailing.

Well, with all this talk about returning to the roots of other sports, why not get back to the roots of sailing? Fortunately Auckland has just the kind of Mayor to make this happen and I'll propose new tourist attractions to help city finances. Why not charge visitors to walk the plank in the Viaduct Basin, or be put in the stocks for an hour and pelted with rotten vegetables by more paying customers (a real money spinner). Journalists who don't like sailing could be publicly flogged, for an admission price.

Or for anyone who disagrees with Auckland's electoral processes hanging them upside down from the Sky Tower during a stiff wind should bring them to their senses while providing fun for all. Or if that doesn't work, what about keel-hauling from the Harbour Bridge with a high speed winch (never mind this bungy stuff)?

If you survived the impact, swallowing a few gallons of Auckland Harbour would soon change your thinking.

So there it is, time to be creative and get back to what sailing is all about, while I'm being placed under medication, again.

Bob Beresford