

## CHEERING TIGERS ON

Footy has always been a game for the fans. And the fans love their Tigers.

The Bay Army has kept Glenelg Oval rocking for a century, creating an atmosphere that has lifted its heroes to greater heights.

In the glory years of the 1970s and '80s Glenelg Oval came to life on a Saturday afternoon with a cacophony of noise and sea of frenzied colour. Black-and-gold floggers and flags were in constant motion and steamers skipped across the ground in the breeze, while players ran through huge banners before big games and, in the days before there was advertising everywhere, the epic sign that stretched out over the eastern-side fence from the northern end of the ground to the southern, said it all: OUR TREMENDOUS TEAM OF TALENTED TENACIOUS TITANIC TERRIFYING TEAR-AWAY TIGERS.

Supporters wore duffle coats with their favourite player's number plastered across their back – No. 12 and No. 5 were pretty popular – and adorned with badges and hand-drawn cartoon Tigers patches on every available spot. They were decked out in black-and-gold beanies and scarfs and, most importantly, made plenty of noise. The pride and passion that has emanated from Snout's Hill over the past 20-odd years continued to intimidate opposition players and supporters and inspire Tiger triumphs.

Glenelg in 1965 was the first SANFL club to introduce cheerleaders. They didn't dance with pom-poms like the ones of the 1980s but these enthusiastic young women did have a uniform and they chanted and barracked from behind the boundary fence. They were a big hit, although club magazine *Tiger* noted, "it says a lot for 20 teenage girls to withstand a barrage of heckling from opposition supporters and still come back cheering our side week after week".

The magazine included a membership application form asking if youngsters were "interested in becoming part of the cheer squad". *Tiger* appealed "to all junior supporters to make streamer sticks of yellow and black and gather around the cheerleaders at each game to give them all the support they can".

Streamers and floggers were everywhere when Glenelg played off in the 1969 grand final at Adelaide Oval. As the Bays' premiership dreams went up in smoke the streamers in the south-eastern pocket near the Tigers cheer squad caught fire and smoke billowed. In a sign of the times, a discarded cigarette butt would have been to blame.

In the 1970s, the cheer squad was led by Gerri and Vivian Pye and the late Rick Bayliss.

They made and sold felt patches for duffle coats and sold lucky square envelopes to raise money for the crepe and tape to make floggers, paddy dukes and flags and what was known as a 'race'. These were the banners made for a player's milestone game when he would lead the team out of the players' race.

For Daryl Rady's 100th-game 'race', the cheer squad put extra tape across it around waist height because they knew he would do something crazy – and he did. He became stuck in the tape trying to cartwheel through it instead of running through.

In the 1980s, the squad leaders were Tim Meyers, David Schell and Steve Wilson and the secretary was Chris Marshall.



It was Tiger Land on the scoreboard hill for the premiership win in 2019 – and the Bay Army was celebrating. There was massive support on grand final day but how about the cheer squad from the 1980s? There were 600 members in those halcyon years.

In the early '80s they continued to sell badges for fundraising and one Saturday night most of the team, knowing what these fans did for the club, became members to tip a bit in to help out. In the late '80s the cheer squad had its own sponsors, including Geoff Blethyn (Major Pants), who sourced rolls of crepe from Melbourne and had it transported on the Overland, and Suzi Parts (thanks to Ray Bradtke, who was a member).

Incredibly, at its peak in the mid 1980s, Glenelg's cheer squad had 600 members. They wielded 52 floggers, a few dozen flags, about a dozen paddy dukes and fence banners with 'Glenelg', 'Peter Carey' and more emblazoned on them. All this was stored in the air-raid shelter at the northern end of Glenelg Oval – and there were more than a few memorable nights spent down there.

By the premiership year of 1985 a 'race' became known as a banner and the Tigers' ones were being made in the Glenelg Primary School hall (now the library). Banners were made on a Thursday night after league training. At the peak, there would be 30 or 40 cheer squad members strolling over to the fish and chip shop on Brighton Road for tea, taking it back to the oval to watch training, then going to the school to make the banner.

The 1985 grand final banner was constructed of crepe paper one third at a time – it was too big for the hall the squad was constructing it in. Lisa Dempsey had drawn and cut the 'Boys From The Bay' lettering and in a surprising show of unity members of the Sturt cheer squad helped out with the construction.



Top Right: The Tigers' young supporters loved being precariously perched near the top of the Edward Rix Stand. In the black-and-white shot, Rod Doddridge and his mates watch a 1965 game and, in the colour one, David and Greg, Simon Hannagan and 'JJ' getting right into it in a big win in 1969.

Middle Left: High-flyer Ray Button with young fan Diana Newport, wearing a Tigers embroidered shirt featuring the names of her favourite Tigers, including Ray, of course.

Bottom Left: Stephanie Dempsey working on a banner in 2013.

Bottom Right: Cheryl Crabtree brought her 1979 'Graham Cornes' duffle coat out four decades later for the Tigers' finals campaigns.

Middle: Carol Hill was a member of Glenelg's 1966 cheer squad.

When the epic job was completed, the banner was attached to 4 x 4 poles and transported to Westfield at West Lakes the night before the game on the roof racks of Dave Schell's Galant. Ten or so cheer squad members stayed with the banner overnight. Around midnight, a few North supporters confronted them – the rivalry of the time wasn't just on the field – and there was a bit of a scuffle, enough for the police to turn up. The Roosters supporters threw water on the banner – not good on crepe. There was a drive back to the air-raid shelter around 2am to get black crepe and sticky tape to repair the damage.

In the morning, five carloads of floggers, flags and other equipment was transported to the ground and set up for the game. The cheer squad had not seen the banner in its entirety until it was rolled out on the grass ready to be raised – and when it went up there was a huge roar from the Football Park stands. The banner was shown on Channel 7's Sportsworld the next day.

For Peter Carey's 400th-game banner, David Schell did the calligraphy lettering and the cheer squad sponsor sourced two yacht masts for poles, so it wouldn't be as heavy. Unfortunately, the masts bent as it was being raised,

so it took a monumental effort to display it. Four games later it was back to the heavy wooden poles for Super's 404th – his Australian record game.

The cheer squad was pretty much wound up in 1992 as the Crows inflicted their damage on Glenelg Football Club. While no-one knows what happened to the floggers, flags and banners that were stored in the air-raid shelter, there reportedly was a fire there and that might have been the end of them.

For years Stephanie Dempsey, Bernie McNamara and Tigers trainers made milestone banners. In May 2016, David and Belinda Schell, Nadine Bolt and Chris Marshall made the 100-game banner for Andrew Bradley, with assistance from Bradley's dad David – who helped on a couple of others as well – and the Crows' supporters group. Banners since then have mostly been made by these four loyal, hard-working supporters and constructed of plastic, so there are no longer any problems with water damage.

The cheer squad has sprung back to life over the past couple of years thanks to the passionate support of Ryan Osborn. The fans still love their Bays.

## FIFTY YEARS WITHOUT A MISS

*By Steve Barrett*

*Fifty years is a massive time for anything. But to not miss seeing a single game your side has played in five decades is almost beyond belief. That's what remarkable Glenelg supporter Peter Eglinton did. It took getting Covid early in the 2022 season to end a streak that surely won't be beaten.*

*Glenelg Football Club's Facebook page in April '22 noted: "We simply can't believe it! Passionate Bays member Peter Eglinton hasn't missed a single Tigers game since 1972...that was until yesterday, when covid unfortunately kept him away (But in our opinion, it doesn't count and the streak should live on)." We reckon that gives us good enough reason to run Peter's remarkable story the way Steve Barrett wrote it after the Tigers' centenary season.*

It was 1972. Richard Nixon was US president, Don Dunstan was in his second term as South Australian Premier and *The Godfather* was a box-office smash. It was also, incredibly, the last time Peter Eglinton missed a Glenelg game.

That's almost 1100 consecutive matches – more than half the Bays have played in their league history – across 50 years. Unbelievable!

"If a mate hadn't put it on the SA Footy website many years ago, no-one would even know," Eglinton said with a self-deprecating laugh. "I'd been to a few games earlier but from '72 (as an eight-year-old) I was allowed to go every week because by then I'd stand by the fence with my brother and we'd watch the game, rather than run around everywhere."

Black and gold coursing through his veins, Eglinton attended school in the Bay area, has always lived in Glenelg North and his grandmother's house was unfailingly well located, firstly on High Street before she moved to a unit on Brighton Road, across the road from Glenelg Oval. Eglinton's unabated passion for the Tigers started early.



Peter Eglinton at his beloved Bay Oval with Thomas Cordwell-Eglinton and Logan Cordwell-Eglinton.