

The following appeared in the September 1997 edition of the Red Rag Newsletter:

Vale Bobby "Rocker" Fox

Bob Fox died of a heart attack; at his Chipping Norton home on the evening of Monday August 11th. His death was sudden and unexpected. Several hours earlier he was at the Australian Primary Schools Hockey- Championships at Homebush and was as in good form. Bob and his wife Kathy were billeting a boy from the Northern Territory and Bob had taken his son Andrew- and their billet out to Homebush for their games.

This season Bob was as the manager of the Under Eleven Redbacks, the team in which his son Andrew played Geoff Paterson is the coach of the Redbacks and, together, Bob and Geoff formed an impressive combination and had a great understanding. In the 1966 season Bob coached the Under Eleven Strikers with Lee Farlow as his manager. From 1993 to 1995 Bob had taken his children Andrew and Emma to Jubilee and helped the Minkey organisers in whatever capacity he could. Bob's half-time talks to his team would be dotted with gems such as "Hit it wide, Andrew – the sideline is a full-back's best friend" and "Work, Work – Work Harder" when his team was hard pressed in defence.

Bob's parents died when he was young, and with his older brother Alan came to live with his grandmother at 51 Arundle Street Forest Lodge, four doors up from the Howes who lived at 43 Arundle Street. It was back; In 1950 that Bob and Alan Fox's association with Glebe District Hockey Club began, where under the guidance of the Founding Father of the Glebe Junior movement, Vernon Turner, they began playing in the Club's Under Sixteen team. Arundle Street behind the City Morgue was home to many Glebe Juniors of the fifties – Brian, Peter, Gavin, Martin, Bobby, Johnny and Greg Howe, Alan and Bobby Fox, Bob Cullen, Maxy Jeffs, John Letts and Graham Gale all lived in the street. Alan Fox played 56 senior games for Glebe between 1950 and 1955. In 1951, while still under sixteen, Bob played his first season in the senior grades where he chalked up 13 games. By 1956 Bob had played 70 grade games, mostly at either inside right or right wing but it was not until the 1957 season that he was selected for the first grade team. In 1959 Bob was selected for the NSW Under 21 team and he was as a regular first grader until 1965. Although he retired for a season in 1964, Bob played close to 150 first grade games.

From 1966 to 1969 Bob played a few first grade games but the demands of family life and his interest in greyhound dogs meant he had less time to train for hockey. A *Red Rag* of 1967 reported that "Rocker Fox had a good first half at centre-half, but ran out of steam in the latter part of the game. The President of the day, Kel Dickey, was heard to give Bobby some advice: "Those dogs of yours, Bob – get a gun and shoot them". At the end of the 1969 season Bob had played 279 games for the Club and at the age of 32 retired from the game.

After home games at Jubilee in the mid-fifties, Bobby, Victor Westacott, Lenny Needham, Maxy Jeffs, Donny West, Allan "Wocker" Westacott and a few others would have a quick shower in the dressing sheds under number three arch and change into their "glad rags", which included stovepipe trousers and pointy shoes. At that time Bobby and all the troops had fashionable flat top haircuts, Brylcreme aplenty, brushed back at the sides. After discussing tactics, the group would head up to the tram terminus outside Max Factor at the bottom of Glebe Point Road and catch the tram to the legendary Trocadero night spot in George Street, Sydney. There they would bop, dance and rock to the wee hours of the morning. A popular song at that time was "Rock Around the Clock" and Bobby's dancing to this particular song impressed his fellow Glebe players, and most probably quite a few of the young ladies at the dance hall. It was from Bobby's impressive grooving at the City dance spots in the early and mid fifties that he acquired his lifelong nickname "Rocker".

Bob attended Forest Lodge Primary School before moving to the Newtown Technical College for his secondary education. Most of Bob's working life was spent with the Department of Veteran's Affairs on the clerical side. In 1958 Bob married his first wife Elaine and they had two children – Stephen, born in 1959, and Kim, born in 1961. With his second wife Christine, Bob had a daughter, Tracey, born in 1963.

In 1982, Bob married Kathy and they had three children – Emma, born in 1985; Andrew, born in 1987; and Adam, born in 1990. In the late eighties Bob had a heart attack, from which he made a good recovery and subsequently had artery by-pass surgery. Shortly after his surgery, Bob was offered and took voluntary redundancy. He continued to pick up the odd job here and there – counting money from poker machines at several RSL Clubs; working at polling booths of election days; etcetera; etcetera. True to his generous spirit, Bob also became involved in voluntary work for members of the RSL, helping them work through the bureaucratic maze that such an organisation can be at times.

Retirement from full-time work for Bob opened up a brave new world of participating and coaching hockey. In the nineties Bob played in Glebe lower grade and veteran's teams from which he was selected for the NSW Veterans and Vintage teams. In all Bob played 378 grade games for the Club. From 1993 Bob helped coach the Club's junior teams, both in the Minkey and Under Elevens.

For the last three years Bob was a regular at Wednesday night training at Jubilee where his help in coaching the Under Eleven teams was much appreciated. Wednesday training at Jubilee is usually attended by well over 100 kids and without people like Bobby Fox, training activities at Jubilee would grind to a halt. As well as helping with the Juniors at Glebe, Bob organised a school hockey competition in the Chipping Norton-Moorebank area where he lived. This competition provided a great community service and allowed Bob to contribute in an area of sport he knew well.

Bob had a cheerful disposition and was well liked by all who knew him. He made a positive contribution to the betterment of his fellow man. He made a difference while here on this mortal coil and hopefully Bob is now reaping his eternal reward in heaven.

To his devoted wife Kathy and their children Emma, Andrew and Adam, the Glebe District Hockey Club extends its deepest and sincere condolences. To paraphrase the old Irish blessing "May the road rise to meet him, may the wind be always at his back, may the sun shine warm upon his face and until we meet again may, God hold him in the palm of his hand".

Footnote (2014):

When Bob reunited with the Club in the early nineties, his uncle Tom Fox also rekindled his association with the Hockey Club. Tom who was single lived most of his life in Glebe and the inner city, but had retired to Laurieton on the mid-North Coast of NSW. In his teens, twenties and thirties Tom was a good friend of many of the Club's players, although he did not play himself. When he visited Sydney from Laurieton, Tom loved coming down to the Junior BBQs that were held on a Wednesday night at Jubilee Oval Glebe. He enjoyed discussing the good of days of the Club and took a keen interest in the Club's running and its prospects for the future.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s Tom went grantor for the Club to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars, when it was arranging finance for the proposed synthetic hockey field at the Harold Park Infield. Tom shared Bobby's love of the GDHC and showed that support by his offer of substantial financial assistance. The Hockey Club lost its Supreme Court Case against the Harness Club in December 2002 and a synthetic field at the Harold Park Infield was never built. In the end Tom's financial support could not be utilised. Tom died on 3rd August 2010.

To honour Bobby Fox's memory, in 1998 the Management Committee of the Club and the Club's Junior Committee of Jim Oman (Convenor), Ron Cheong, Mick Tapsell and Neil Lawson decided to name a perpetual trophy after Bob called the "Bobby "Rocker" Fox Memorial Trophy. An excerpt from the 1998 Junior Annual Report written by the Junior Convenor Mr Jim Oman is as follows:

"1998 will be the first year the Bobby Fox Memorial Trophy is presented. After consultation with Bobby's wife Kathy, it was felt that Bobby's junior coaching was devoted almost exclusively to the under 11s. The trophy should be presented in this age group to the player judged by the Junior Committee, Coaches and Managers to have shown outstanding potential."

Bob's widow Kathy attends junior presentation each year to present the trophy. The first winner was current 1st Grade player Ian Paterson. Other current 1st grade players who have won the trophy include Alister Cullen (1999), Ross Bougoukas (2002) and Dominic Tinter (2004). The winner of the trophy in 2013 was Riley Nilan, son of Aaron "Chopper" Nilan.