

Glebe District Hockey Club

Life Membership Biography

Kelvin Dickey

Glebe District Hockey Club Life Member

Elected Life Member in 1967

Born on 4th November 1923

Died on 17th May 1993

Kelvin Dickey had his first season with the Glebe District Hockey Club in 1938 aged 15 years. His older brother Len (1919- ?) started playing for the Club in 1934 and Kelvin often came down to Jubilee Oval Glebe to see his brother play. He lived 500 metres from Jubilee Oval at 8B Leichhardt Street in Glebe and commenced playing hockey for Glebe as soon as he was old enough to qualify. In those days Glebe did not field junior teams.

Len Dickey was a NSW school-boy hockey representative in 1934 and 1935 after having played in the Metropolitan Juniors (Sydney Juniors), and played first grade for the Glebe Club in 1936 and 1937. In the 1940's Len enlisted in the Australian Armed forces and this restricted his opportunities to play hockey for Glebe and disrupted his hockey career. Len played 66 games for Glebe, with his last Club game being played in 1948.

Len and Kelvin's mother Mrs M Dickey became involved in Club affairs when Len Dickey commenced playing with the Club in 1934. Mrs Dickey was a stalwart of the Club and was a Club Vice President for 10 years from 1946-1955. She provided support and assistance in providing oranges for games, afternoon teas, catering at social functions, and in helping make playing shirts.

Len and Kelvin's father Andrew Dickey were active oarsmen with the Glebe District Rowing Club. He was a clerk by profession and rowed in the 1897 Glebe maiden eight that won the Balmain regatta event for maiden eights in November 1897. Kelvin rowed for the Glebe Rowing Club in the 1940s, during the summer rowing season, as did several other Hockey Club Members including Bob Needham, Jack Lansley and Paul Scott.

The Dickey family home at 8B Leichhardt Street Glebe was 100 metres away from the Glebe Rowing Club Boat Shed on Blackwattle Bay.

Kelvin had hit the hockey ball around with brother Len and when he started playing in 1938 he had a good grasp of the fundamentals of the game. He commenced in the Club's third grade team and that year won the third grade trophy for the most improved player. This trophy was donated by Mr William Ryan and Sidney Cairnduff. The 1938 Annual Report relates "Kelvin is only a lad of 15 and if he continues to improve as rapidly as last year he will gain all honours that Hockey Players strive for."

The following year he was promoted to the Club's second grade team and was also selected in the NSW Junior (School boy) Team. Kelvin was promoted to the Club's first grade team in 1940 and scored 9 goals for the team in that season behind George Mockler who scored 16, and equal with the team's penalty corner taker Tom Taylor on 9 goals. For most of the mid 1940s Kel was the first grade team's highest goal scorer.

His rapid promotion to first grade was aided somewhat by many Club Members being absent due to enlistment in the Australian Armed Forces following the outbreak of World War Two in 1939. The 1942 Annual Report listed 25 Glebe Club Members who were absent from the Club's playing ranks due to enlistment.

In 1943 the Annual Report conveyed the sad news "It was with regret that we learned of the death of B. Bluey Gardiner who was killed in action. Bluey was an excellent hockey player and as a Club Mate had no peer." An aircraft in which Bluey was a crew member was shot down over Germany during a bombing raid.

At the end of the 1944 season Kel had played 144 games for Glebe.

Kelvin played in the Glebe first grade team from 1940 until 1949, He retired from playing hockey at the age of 26 years after he got married and moved to 14 Middleton St Petersham, and then on to Ryde. Kelvin played 190 games for Glebe in the 11 years from 1938 to 1949 and won eight first grade premierships along the way.

Kelvin stood at six foot, was solidly built, and had a long reach and a good turn of speed. He read the game well, had excellent understanding with his halves and his circle craft was impressive. He could sniff a goal from a long way out. Opposition defences found him a handful to mark. His ability to score goals was a major reason the Glebe first grade team of the 1940s won eight out of ten Metropolitan Hockey Association First Grade Premiership from 1940-1949. He scored many a goal for Glebe playing in the centre-forward position. In the 1943 season he scored 19 goals and in the 1946 season he scored 21 goals.

In 1940 and from 1945-47 Kelvin played in the Metropolitan Senior Team and in 1946 was selected in the NSW Senior Men's Hockey Team that played in the Australian Championships. During some of the World War Two years 1941-44, Representative Hockey was suspended in Australia which meant promising young hockey players of this era had to be content with playing club hockey and were denied the opportunity to play at State and Australian Championships

The First Grade Report published in the 1942 Annual Report had this to say about Kelvin "Centre forward and the main stay of the attack. He was always a menace to the opposition."

In 1953 Kel was enticed out of retirement and played third grade for the Club. At the end of the 1953 season Kel had played 205 games for Glebe. In 1954 Kel played first grade, and the annual Report had this to say about Kel "Kel Dickey making a welcome reappearance more than held his own in the top grade and combined well with the other forwards in consistent attacking movements."

From 1955-58 Kel had the occasional game, filling in when the teams were short of players, playing 31 games in five years. In 1955 he filled-in for the first grade team, which would indicate that even in his early 30s he was still playing reasonably good hockey. After a 20 year career as a player, with a year off here and there, Kelvin retired completely from after the 1958 season aged 35 years, with 236 Club games to his credit.

Kelvin was first elected to the Management Committee in 1941 at the young age of 18 years, which is an indication of the faith and trust which other Club Members had in his abilities. He displayed administrative and leadership talent at a young age. He served for eight years on the Club's Management Committee in 1946, 1954-56, and again from 1962-65.

In 1942 Kelvin was on the Club's Social Committee. In 1944 he was on the Club's Grading Committee. In 1948 Kel was Glebe's Representative to the Metropolitan Hockey Association.

Kelvin became Patron of the Club after the death of W J Taylor during the 1953 season and held this position for nine years from 1953-1961, until succeeded in 1962 by the late Mr Jim Kenny.

In 1962 Kelvin became President of the Club succeeding Mr Noel Walker and held this position for four years until 1965. In 1966 he was succeeded as President by Mr Greg Harris.

Kelvin was an electrician by trade; an optimistic outgoing person, he was an excellent communicator, a good teacher and a patient person to boot. These qualities were the reason he was elected to the position of Patron of the Club at the relatively young age, for the Patron position, of 30 years. Most Patrons of the Club have been well over 50 years of age before their election to the position.

He always encouraged younger players to pursue ethical dealings with others, and to have honesty and to display good sportsmanship, qualities which his protégés endeavoured to pass on

the upcoming crop of junior players. Kelvin was always interested and attentive to what the young and the lower grade players had to say. He was an inclusive person and had a talent for sorting out differences of opinion, bad blood, nastiness, and a lack of insight and tact between individual Club Members and between Club Members and the Club Executives.

Kelvin worked for the Adelaide Steamship Company at Balmain, where the Company operated a fleet of tugs. In the 1960s he was heavily involved in the training of apprentices at the Company and in 1966 he moved to Melbourne as the Adelaide Steamship Company's Director of Apprentices. The skills he had honed as Patron, President and Management Committee Member of the Glebe District Hockey Club made him an ideal person to manage young apprentices through the ups and downs of workplace politics and vocational learning at TAFE.

He remained in Melbourne for many years, which meant his close involvement with the Glebe Hockey Club could not be maintained. Kelvin had been a great contributor to the life and times of the Hockey Club for 28 years. In gratitude for his significant contribution to Club affairs over a long time period, at the 1966 Annual General Meeting he was elected the Club's sixth Life-Member.

After spending decades in Melbourne, Kel and Phyl moved back to Sydney, and lived at Cronulla where he played golf to keep active and fit and to socialise with like-minded people. He was an active Member of the Cronulla Golf Club. In his mid-60s Kelvin was diagnosed with colon cancer and he died of the condition on 17 May 1993 aged 69.

Kel became engaged to Phyllis Ada Tamsett from Werriwa St Goulburn in 1947. Phyllis worked at the Railway Maintenance Engineering Department at Goulburn. Kel and Phil were married by the Very Reverend Dean King the third Dean of Saint Saviour's Anglican Church 170 Bourke Street Goulburn on 9 April 1949, with the wedding reception being held at the Masonic Hall in Goulburn. Jack Worley the then President of the Glebe District Hockey Club was Master of Ceremonies at the wedding reception.

The marriage that lasted for 44 years until Kel died. They had one child, a daughter Pam who lives in Melbourne with her family. Pam's two daughters played hockey in Melbourne.

Phyl Dickey was active on the Club's Women's Committee in the late 1940s, '50s and '60s. She helped organise dances, picnics and other outings and made a substantial contribution to the social life of the Glebe District Hockey Club for 17 years from 1949 to 1965. She willingly helped where and when she could in a low key way. Phyl had an even temperament, which was combined with good grace, style and affability.

In his President's Address for the 1965 Annual Report Kelvin had the following to say:

“I would like you to remember Gentlemen, being the leading Club in Sydney carries with it certain obligations and amongst them is the fact we should set an example to other clubs, not only an example of playing ability and club spirit but one of sportsmanship both on and off the field. With this in mind I feel we should try to control our supporters a little more, particularly in our ‘at home fixtures’”.

Kelvin’s comments in his 1963 President’s Address make for interesting reading:

“During the year your Management Committee has been endeavouring to find a solution to the lack of new players, this is something which your Club has been suffering from for a number of years now and if something is not done soon the name of the Glebe District Hockey Club will become extinct. We seem to be able to get boys in the 10 to 14 year age group but then they move out of the area and we lose them---.

With this thought in mind your Committee approached the Western Suburbs Hockey Club with a view of having talks regarding a possible amalgamation of the two clubs.”---And further “Unless someone can come up with a better suggestion I am afraid there will be nothing left for us but to combine with Western Suburbs.”

Fast forward over 50 years to 2015, Glebe is still an independent hockey club with six senior men’s teams, six senior women’s teams, seven junior teams, a Minkey squad of 40 players and over 100 social, non-playing Members. In 2015 Western Suburbs has one senior men’s team in division 9, out of the ten divisions of the Sydney Hockey Association Competition. Wests has no junior teams, no women’s teams and it seems, unfortunately, that its future is very much in jeopardy.

Fortunately after Kelvin’s dismal forecast in 1963, the Glebe District Hockey Club, under his guidance and wise counsel were able to turn things around and re-invigorate the Club.

Kelvin and his family made a mighty contribution to the GDHC—Thank-you Kelvin and your family.