

Glebe District Hockey Club

Life Membership Biography

Mrs Esther Taylor

Glebe District Hockey Club Life Member

Elected Life Member in 1947

Born 18 April 1874

Died 27 August 1953

Esther Taylor was born on 18th April 1874 at Riley Street Sydney to John William Dickinson, a compositor by trade, and Mary Dickinson (nee Alleyne). Mary was 26 at the time of Esther's birth. John William Dickinson and Mary Alleyne were married on 23rd November 1867 in Sydney. Esther's mother, Mary, had come to Australia from Ireland as a two year old, having been born in Golden, County Tipperary in the Irish Province of Munster.

Mary Alleyne's parents, both Catholics, were Samuel, a butcher, and Mary Alleyne (nee Hammond). They were married in Tipperary on 20th January 1833 and had six children, all born in Ireland with Mary being the youngest child. The Alleyne's arrived in Australia in 1850 on board the ship Thetis.

There were thirteen children in the Dickinson family, John Henry (1868 - 1887), Mary (1870 - died in infancy), Florence Mary (1872 -died in infancy), Esther (1874 1953), Harry (1876 - ?), Tom (1879 - 1952), Victor (1882 - 1938), Ellen (1884 - ?), twins, Samuel (1886 - ? and Mary 1886 - ?), May (1988 - ?), John William (1889 - ?) and Pearl (1891 - ?). Esther was the



Esther Taylor & William Taylor at a wedding Circa 1939. They were driving forces in the Club. Esther the first female Life Member.

William Taylor succeeded Br. McCarten Keegan as the Patron of the Club.

fourth of the thirteen children in the Dickinson family.

The family lived at 78 Forsyth Street Glebe a stone's throw from Blackwattle Bay and the Glebe Rowing Club. Esther's father John Dickinson died on 13th October 1905 aged 64 years at the Dickinson residence 78 Forsyth St Glebe. Esther's mother Mary Dickinson (nee Alleyne) died at Randwick on 23rd May 1921 aged 72 years.

Max Solling's Book The Boatshed on Blackwattle Bay, Glebe Rowing Club 1879-1993 had this to say about Esther's father and the Dickinson Family, "John Dickinson, the champion of the Glebe Bowling Club in 1886 and 1887, and an intercolonial representative, encouraged his boys to participate in games. However, when the eldest son, John, died from a kick in the stomach playing for the Glebe Rugby Union Team aged 20, rugby was off-limits for the other children. Tom Dickinson took up rowing in 1903, followed by brothers Vic in 1907 and Sam in 1909. They were all useful lightweight oarsmen."

"At the 1904 Anniversary regatta the Glebe junior four of E Vass, E Marriott, A Royle and T Dickinson (stroke) defeated Mercantile by five lengths to win the six guinea prize."

"At the Glebe regatta of 1909 the Glebe men V Dickinson (bow), A Russell, R Bruce, S Dickinson (stroke), M Nell (cox) finished in grand style to win the lightweight maiden four."

For several years Tom Dickinson (1879-1952) was a top Australian amateur boxer in the bantamweight division. In 1903 and 1904 he won the Australian Amateur Bantamweight Boxing Championship. His sister Esther was a second in his corner for many of his bouts. It was not common in the early 1900s for a late twenty - year old female to be a boxing second at an elite level of the sport. Esther must have been a hardy, resilient woman to cope with the jokes, witticisms, slagging, sledging and put-downs which probably emanated from the opposite corner. Vic (1882-1938) became a prominent first grade rugby league referee and he saw active service during World War One.

Esther married William John Taylor on 20th April 1912 at Saint James Catholic Church Forest Lodge (Glebe) officiated by Father J Smith. On their marriage certificate William John Taylor's occupation was give as a carrier, and the occupation of his father was given as a farmer. William and Esther had two children John William Taylor born 6th October 1914 and Tom Dickinson Taylor born 10th May 1916. Most of their married life Esther and William lived at 3 Boyce Street Glebe. When they married Esther was 38 years old and William John Taylor was 37 years old. Both Esther and William John were born in Darlinghurst, in Central Sydney and their births were registered at Woolloomooloo.

Esther, having had a brother die playing rugby union, was keen that her sons did not become involved in that sport. Her eldest son, John, played in the first hockey team fielded by the Saint James Sport's Club in 1931 when he was aged 16 years. The Club Founder, Irishman and Patrician

Brother the Reverend Macartan Keegan was Captain/Coach of this team. Esther was a keen supporter of the Saint James 'Hockey teams in 1931 and again in 1932. Esther's keen support continued when the Saint James' Sport's Club Hockey Team morphed into the Glebe District Hockey Club in December 1932. For the first fifteen years of the Club's existence many of Club's Committee Meetings were held at the 3 Boyce St Glebe residence of the Taylors.

Esther was a devoted supporter of the Glebe Hockey Club until at least the end of the 1948 season when her younger son Tom retired from playing hockey aged 33 because of family and work commitments. Esther always attended matches in this 18 year period from 1931 to 1948 keeping players well supplied with coffee and oranges. On occasions, the coffee was laced with a small dash of brandy to calm the nerves before a big game. Mr J C Taylor long time Glebe player (1940-1962, 401 Club Games, and no relation to Esther), recalled how the pre-match coffee often took his breath away. Esther was colloquially known in hockey circles as the "Orange Lady".

The 1937 Annual Report notes: "Thanks are due to Mesdames Taylor, Pearce and Quinlan for assistance at Social Functions."

In 1938 Esther was elected a Vice-President of the Club, as was her husband William John Taylor and Esther remained a Vice President of the Club for ten years until 1947

The 1938 Annual report relates: "Your thanks are due to our old friend and 'lone supporter' Mrs Taylor for the many services she rendered the Club during the past season and in previous seasons. "

In the 1940 Annual Report "Our Sincere thanks are again due to our old friend Mrs W Taylor for the many services rendered to the Club during the season. We hope to see and hear her on the sideline for many years to come. We would also like to thank Mr Taylor for his maintenance of the balls throughout the season."

The 1943 Annual Report comments: "Mrs Taylor who is our greatest supporter and the lady who so unselfishly supplies the oranges every week."

In the 1940s Mrs Taylor was as well known, if not better known in hockey circles than some of the prominent players.

The 1944 Annual Report relates: "Congratulations once again to Mrs Taylor who looked after her 'Boys' in a most unselfish manner. Congratulations are due to her son Jack and his wife Beryl on the birth of a manly looking boy whose name is also John."

Esther Taylor was an enthusiastic, dynamic, caring person who put her heart and soul into the affairs of the Club. She did it in a low key, efficient, effective manner, without fuss or bluster. She was always there to help, when and where needed. Nothing was too much trouble for her and she was very popular with players, in a matronly sort of way.

Her eldest son John William Taylor (1913-1946) died suddenly on 12th November 1946, at home at 11 Leichhardt Street Glebe from a heart attack. John was known to have heart disease and although his early death was tragic, at age 32 years, it was not unexpected. He had married Beryl Jean Waterhouse in 1944 and they had a son also called John who was born in that year.

After John's death it may have been that Esther wanted to give support to his widow Beryl and her grandson. Domestic and family commitments probably meant that Esther's ability to contribute to the affairs of the Hockey Club were somewhat curtailed particularly as in 1946 she was then 72 years old.

John William Taylor had played in the inaugural Saint James 'Team of 1931 and played for the Club until his untimely death aged 32. He missed a few years during the war when he was employed away from Sydney. He owned and ran a stationary shop in Glebe Point Road with Carl Shultz, who also played for the Hockey Club.

After John's death in 1946, the Management Committee of the Glebe District Hockey Club decided that his memory should be perpetuated. A decision was taken by the Committee to donate a trophy in John's honour to the Metropolitan Hockey Association, which became the Sydney Hockey Association in 1956. The trophy first presented in 1947, and awarded every year since this time. Initially the Trophy was awarded to the third grade premiers winners.

John was Treasurer of the Glebe District Hockey Club when it was formed in December 1932. He served the Club as Treasurer from 1932-1934 and again from 1943-1945. He was Secretary of the Club from 1935-1938 and again in 1942 and 1946, which is the year in which he died. He was Vice-President of the Club in 1939. He served on the Club's Grading Committee and Selection Committee.

John was a dedicated, hardworking, outstanding official of the Club, who contributed greatly to the running of the Club in its early years. He was a good player but not a great one. John William Taylor played 176 games for Glebe before his untimely death.

Up until 1946 there was no provision in the Club's Constitution for the election of Life Members. At the 12 March 1946 AGM held at the Glebe Town Hall, in Saint John's Rd Glebe, a motion was put to the floor of the Meeting by Assistant Secretary and Management Committee Member Mr Kelvin Dickey that Life Membership of the GDHC be constituted and that the rules and regulations for the awarding of Life Membership of the Club to be voted on at the 1947 AGM.

Members present at the Wednesday 19 March 1947 AGM held at the Glebe Town Hall voted to have the position of Life Member added to the Constitution of the GDHC as recommended by the Club's Management Committee.

President Mr Jack Worley Chaired this 1947 AGM. Those Club Members present at the Meeting voted Jack Logan Quinlan a Life Member of the Club. Also elected a Life Member at the 1947 Annual Meeting was Mrs Esther Taylor. There is no record in the Minutes of the 1947 AGM, as to the order of election to Life Membership. It is impossible to know whether Jack or Esther was first to be elected to Life Membership.

Esther was elected to Life Membership in 1947 for her unstinting, unselfish work and devotion to the Club over 17 years. It is interesting that one of the first two Life Member of a Men's Hockey Club was a female. I think this shows that our forebears at the Club recognised and rewarded service and contribution irrespective of gender. Two other women have been elected Life Members of the Club, Molly Wark in 1986 and Margaret Howe in 2000. Of the 29 Life Members of the Club 3 are women. It should be noted however that the Glebe women's teams only amalgamated with the men's teams in 1990, 60 years after the inception of the Hockey Club.

Following her death on 27th August, 1953, Esther was buried at the Roman Catholic Cemetery, Rookwood. On her death certificate the cause of death was recorded as chronic myocardial degeneration, arteriosclerosis, diabetes and breast cancer.

Esther's husband William John Taylor was also a great supporter of the Club. He never played hockey himself, but became involved with the Club when his son John commenced playing in 1931. He attended almost all Glebe higher grade games from 1931 until his death on 13 September 1952 aged 78 years. William John Taylor was born in 1875.

William John Taylor was a Vice-President of the Club for five years from 1936-1940 and in 1941 he became Patron of the Club succeeding Mr E G Foskett, who was a prominent figure in the Metropolitan Hockey Association, but who did not have a specific allegiance with Glebe. Mr Foskett serviced as Patron from 1937 to 1940, having succeeded the Club's Founder Brother Macarten Keegan. William John Taylor served on the Club's social committee for some years. He remained as the Club's Patron until he died in 1952, a period of 12 years. He was succeeded in 1953 as Patron by Mr Kelvin Dickey, who also became a Life Member of the Club.

When he became Patron in 1941 William John Taylor donated a Perpetual Trophy to the Club for the "Most Improved Player". The Cup is known as the W J Taylor Cup and is still awarded today. Since 1954, the W J Taylor Cup has been awarded to "The Club Member who has set the best example by consistent play and general demeanour".

Esther and William's younger son Tom Dickinson Taylor (1916-1993) (known as Digger Taylor by his team mates) was reputed to be an "Artist with the Stick" and played his first, First Grade game in 1934 aged 17. Tom represented NSW in the Senior team in 1939 and would have played in the NSW team for a lot longer if World War II had not intervened. He won first grade

premierships in 1940, 41, 42,43,45,47 and 1948 with the dynamic Glebe teams of that era. Tom played 231 games for Glebe before a chronic knee injury, family and work commitments brought his career to an end in 1948. A hard but fair player, 'Digger' always strove for personal excellence and was supportive and encouraging of his teammates. On the administrative side Tom was the Glebe delegate to the Metropolitan Hockey association for several years in the 1940's.

Digger made a come-back for a season in 1954, which pushed his total games played to 250. The 1954 Annual Report had this to say about him: "Digger' Tom Taylor came out of retirement to captain the third grade team and we can only say that the Club gained its greatest acquisition for years. Digger was at all times an inspiration to the team, and often was seen hitting goals in the way we knew a few seasons ago".

For most of his working life Tom was a welder with the PMG (Post Master General's Department), cum Australia Post, cum Telecom, cum Telstra. It is reputed that Digger did a "spot "of SP bookmaking over the years, operating from a premises in Boyce Lane, behind the 3 Boyce St house in which the Taylor family lived. He was born in a cottage hospital in Glebe Point Road and lived all his life in Glebe, for the last 43 years in Arcadia Road. He was married to Mona for 55 years and they had four children together. Tom died on 22nd June 1993 aged 77 years and was buried from Saint James' Catholic Church Woolley Street Forest Lodge, the church where the St James Sporting Club was based. The St James' Sports Club Hockey Team was the foundation organisation from which the Glebe District Hockey Club evolved.

Thanks to Paula McCarry (nee Rowswell) a distant relative of Esther, Max Solling Hockey Club Historian and Chris Morton Hockey Club Genealogy Advisor for their help in writing Esther's Biography.