

Glebe District Hockey Club

Life Membership Biography

Harry Austin Wark Snr

Born: 21st May 1924 - Died: 17th May 2002 aged 77

Elected life member of the Glebe District Hockey Club in 1964

Determination, dedication and discipline, the three D's, were Harry's basic tenets of coaching in Hockey and in Life.

A Successful carcass butcher and meat wholesaler, Foster Henry Wark (1896-1943) established a successful retail butcher shop business at 107 Mansfield Street Rozelle in 1941. He married Mary Ellen King in 1923. Before she was married his mother, Molly King was a dancer/actress with JC Williamson. She had started at the tender age of 10 and perused her dancing profession until she married at the age of 26. Harry's maternal great-grandfather Charles King, a timber worker, had migrated to Australia from Wexford in Ireland in the 1800's. His paternal grandfather Joseph Wark was an abattoir worker and his paternal great grandfather James Wark was a marine engineer who was born in Glasgow, and came to New South Wales from Scotland in 1854.



Harry Austin Wark was born in Sydney on the 21st of May 1924 to Foster Henry Wark and Mary Ellen Wark (nee King). He was born at 19 Victoria Street Rozelle, now called Quirk Street Rozelle.

Harry attended Rozelle Public School for his Primary School Education although it was called Rozelle Demonstration School back in the late 20's. Harry then attended Drummoyne Boys High School for his high school education; Harry had ability, but his teachers frequently

commented that he did not apply himself sufficiently to his schoolwork. “Better results could be achieved with more effort”, was a sentence frequently written on his school reports. It was at Drummoyne Boys High School that Harry first began playing hockey, which was a sport he would follow for the rest of his life. Transporting to School was also where he first meets his future wife Molly Wark (nee Johnston). Molly attended Riverside Girls School at Gladesville and they got the same tram going to School down Victoria Rd. Molly got on at the White Bay stop with Harry getting on at the Darling Street Rozelle stop. Romance didn't flourish at first, as this was to come a little later on in the piece at Allen's Reserve Annandale on the banks of Johnston's Creek. Balmain Police Boy's Club and Glebe Trained there in the 40's as did a woman's teams called the Telegraphs, which Molly was a player in.

When he was at the age of 9 years old in 1933, the Wark's moved from 28 Quirk Street Rozelle to 19 Red Lion Street Rozelle. The Red Lion Street site had a vacant block of ground alongside the house, where Harry's Father could garage his meat delivery trucks. In 1936, the family bought the house next door and Harry moved to 17 Red Lion Street Rozelle.

On leaving school in 1939 Harry first worked as a process worker for Cyclops at Leichhardt making children's strollers (Push Chairs). His task in the production line was to drill holes through timber that had already been cut to length. Harry commented that it was mindless work and left after 12 months. On leaving Cyclops he began working as an apprentice butcher for Bob

Joulie in Darling Street Rozelle. The shop was situated on Darling Street, between Waterloo Street and Victoria Road, on the Drummoyne side of Darling Street. After 12 months at Bon Joulie's butcher shop, he moved to a butcher shop at Victoria Road, Gladesville owned by Eddie Bateisse. The shop was on the western side of Victoria Road, 10 meters north of the war memorial at the corner of Linsley Street and Victoria Road.



In 1942 Harry's Father bought a butcher shop at 107 Mansfield Street Rozelle, which he then managed. At the age of 18 Harry began to manage his own butcher shop. Harry's father was keen to see Harry establish in business, as he was in poor health and wanted to ensure that his family was provided for, in the event of his death. Harry's father died in 1943. Harry worked as butcher at 107 Mansfield Street Rozelle continuously for 37 years, from 1942 to 1979. For the majority of this time he worked with his brother Ken. Butchering was long, hard physical work, but Harry enjoyed it. For the 37 years he

worked at Mansfield Street, he contributed much to the local community. Helping out elderly people, helping to keep a “look – out”, for people of marginal intelligence, “Slipping”, money to families on hard times and generally helping “where he could”, to assist the citizens of the area on “Struggle Street”.

During 1979 it became clear that there was no need for him and his Brother Ken, to continue to work the long hours required by the business. The business was leased to a younger man and Ken began working for the Maritime Services Board as a marine fitter and Harry began working for Australia Post as a postman in the city. From 1979 to 1990 Harry worked for Australia Post, before he was compulsorily retired at 65 years old. As a postman he worked the King Street, Pitt Street, Elizabeth Street run and greatly enjoyed the work and people he meet during his day. With Australia Post, Harry started work at 6am and finished at 2.30pm. the early afternoon finishes at Australia Post enabled Harry to work Friday afternoon and Saturday mornings at Byers butcher shop darling street Rozelle. Harry enjoyed meeting customers and enjoyed the Meat “game”. He worked at Byers from 1979 to early 2002, Friday afternoon, Saturday mornings and some two and three week block, holiday relief.

At Byers Butcher shop, he served many customers he had first served in 1942 at Mansfield Street Rozelle. Some customers he had known and served for 60 years. Going to work for Harry was a social occasion, meeting new customers, meeting old customers, meeting very old customers, meeting staff and sharing in work place camaraderie. After work the staff would “adjourn”, either to Balmain Leagues Club or the Pub across the road from the Butcher shop, for a “debriefing/Counselling”, session. As you might imagine Dr Toohey’s magic elixir always facilitated the debriefing session.



Harry met his wife Molly Johnstone, an Annandale girl, at Allen’s reserve Glebe in 1940 when he was 16 years old. Harry was training with his team, the Balmain Police Boys Club and Molly was training with her team the Telegraphs. Allen’s reserve was situated under the sewer viaduct on the banks of Johnston’s Creek Canal, which divides Glebe from Annandale. After World War Two, in 1946, houses were built on the Allen’s reserve Site. Harry and Molly kept company for four years before they were married at Saint Brendan’s Church Annandale on the 10th of November 1945.

After Harry and Molly married were married in 1945 where they then moved into a flat at the back of the butcher shop at 107 Mansfield Street Rozelle, where they lived until 1955. In March

1955 they bought a house at 12 Sisters Crescent, which is where Harry died on Saturday 18th of May 2002 at 0300 hours, after living 47 years in the house.

Harry and Molly had two children. The first-born was Harry Joseph Wark on 8th of May 1947 and the second was Leslie Patrick on the 17th of April 1955. Harry Joseph Wark attended Sydney University where he graduated in Pharmacy in 1967 and in Medicine in 1973. Since leaving school Les Wark has pursued a career in Property valuation and property/facilities management. Les has completed many TAFE courses related to this area of work.

Harry Joseph Wark Married Anne Fitzpatrick on the 12th of August 1977 and together they had six children: Mary, Anthony, Patrick, Gabrielle, Michael and Elizabeth. Leslie Patrick Wark married Carol Knight in March 1985 and together had two children, Amy and Simon. In total Harry had eight grandchildren.

When not occupied with business Harry had two great passions, hockey and boating. His first hockey team was the Drummoyne Boys High School team of 1937, which competed in a school's competition on a Wednesday afternoon. On leaving school Harry played with his younger brother Ken in the Balmain Police Boys Hockey Team. In 1946 this team won the second grade Sydney competition. Balmain was a one-team club and could not be promoted to first grade, as the first grade competition was restricted to District Club's who fielded at least three teams. Officials from the Glebe District Hockey Club, whom the Balmain Police Boys beat in the second grade Grand Final in 1946, encouraged Harry and Ken to join the Glebe District Hockey Club so they could further their Hockey Careers. For the 1947 season Harry and Ken both joined the Glebe District Hockey Club and forged a relationship, which would last until they both passed away. Harry was a member of the Glebe District Hockey Club for 56 years from 1947 to 2002 and played 756 games for the Club, which was a record for the club. He was elected life member of the Glebe District Hockey Club in 1964 and was its Patron for many Years.



Harry was a member of the Glebe District Hockey Club's first grade team of the late 40's, 50's and early 60's that dominated the Sydney First Grade competition. This team won 13 first grade premierships in 17 years. Harry's wife and two sons are Life Members of the Glebe District

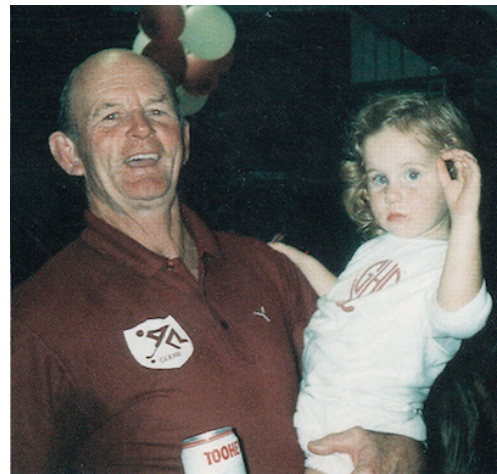
Hockey Club and all eight Grand Children play the game. Harry's contribution to the administration and social life of the Hockey Club has been enormous and has been greatly appreciated by the Club Members who have passed through the club's ranks.

Harry's father acquired a wool punt in 1934 and had a "house" built on it at a boat-building establishment on Rozelle Bay at the bottom of Glebe Point Road. To enable access to and from the houseboat Harry's father purchased an 18 – foot half cabin – cabin motorboat, powered by a simplex diesel motor. The house – boat was moored in Sailor's Bay, Northbridge. Harry's father developed poor health in 1940 and as a consequence, the upkeep of the houseboat suffered and it sank in 1941. Harry enjoyed his early experiences in the harbour and from this developed a love of boating and messing about in boats.

After he moved from Rozelle to Drummoyne in 1955, he bought an 18 foot half cabin "putt-putt" boat to indulge his passion for exploring the harbour and viewing the sights and sounds associated with a working port. He joined the Half Moon Bay Yacht club in the mid 50's and was a member of this club for over 47 years. He sold his 18 foot half cabin boat in the late 50's and bought a 28 foot munitions storage vessel from the navy. On this 28 foot hull he had a cabin built and an engine installed. The boat, which gave him and his family much pleasure for 30 years he named the yellow tail, as the stern section was painted yellow. In the early 90's he sold the "Yellowtail", and bought a 36 foot, ex-Cockatoo workers ferry called the "Gira Gira", in which he had installed "all amenities". The Gira Gira was sold in 1999, when his son Les bought a faster, "Slicker" craft called the Scott.

Harry was the Half Moon Bay's Club President for many years and was elected a life member in 2002, just weeks before he died. Harry was actively involved in the administration and social life of the boat club.

Harry's Butcher shop was the place Club members rang to find out where they were picked for the Saturday game if they could not attend the Wednesday night training session. The team lists were pinned to the wall next to the butcher shop phone. Many Club members would just call into the butcher shop for a chat, find out where they were picked, have a whinge about the selectors and buy some meat. Harry Wark played alongside his brother Ken in the Glebe First grade side between 1947 and 1959 where they won ten premierships. After an outstanding season in 1958, some thought this might be his final blaze of glory. They were a long way short of the mark. Club records continually referred to Harry's speed on the field. He was very fast. Playing at inside right, he possessed a powerful and accurate shot for goal which, combined with his acceleration, enabled



him to score more goals for Glebe than any other player. He hit 226 goals between 1947 and 1959 alone.

Club captain from 1954 to 1957 and in 1961, Harry Wark passed the 200 games mark in 1959 and thought out the sixties, seventies and eighties the outstanding goal scorer continued to be a force to be reckoned with in the lower grades, captaining a number of Glebe side's to premiership success along the way. He had played more than 400 games for Glebe in 1969 and when he retired in 1989 at 65 years of age, he had appeared for the club on 757 occasions, an extraordinary record by any standard. It is rumoured that Harry never officially retired and when he had played his last game it was because the selection panel at the time had to stop picking him.

Up to the late 60's, eligibility rules dictated that a player had to reside within the designated boundaries of the area. Often, people who had played for many years for the club had built up friendships and loyalties' and were reluctant to change clubs just because they had moved house. Thus, in the mid 1960's, 18 Glebe players were recorded as living at 107 Mansfield Street, Rozelle, where Harry Wark's mother rented out two flats behind Harry's butcher shop. By 1970, the rules regarding residential qualifications had been scrapped.



In 1982 Harry Wark Snr coached the newly formed under 17 team which came from fifth spot with four rounds remaining to beat the previously undefeated Randwick team in the Grand Final. Harry again coached the U/17 team in 1983 taking them to another premiership where they defeated Moorebank-Liverpool in a flick off after the score was even after extra time. 1984 also saw Harry's U/17 team make the Grand-Final however they were defeated in the Grand-Final by Moorebank-Liverpool. Harry Wark commented in the 1984 Annual report "Again, it has been pleasure for me to be associated with these fine young men". Harry handed over the reins to Danny O'Brien in 1985 and through Harry's legacy and Danny's fine coaching the for the Third time in four years the U/17 team won.

Harry was, all his life, a hard worker. He worked hard as a butcher in his own business. He worked hard as a butcher working for the son of one of his butcher friends. He worked hard as a postman and he worked hard for both the Glebe District Hockey Club and The Half Moon Bay Yacht Club.

He died 2 Kilometres from where he was born. For 38 years he worked within 2 kilometres of where he was born and for 10 years he worked in the city, which is 5 kilometres from where he was born. The boat club was 500 meters from where he lived in Drummoyne and the Hockey club was 3 kilometres away in Glebe. He lived a simple life, helping ordinary people, in his own neighbourhood. He never sort self-aggrandisement and did the job because it needed to be done and not for the kudos he might derive from his actions. He lived in the same area for a lifetime, he was married for 56 years, he was a butcher for 60 years, a hockey devotee for 62 years, a



boatie for over 60 years, a member of the Half Moon Bay Yacht Club for 47 years and lived in the same house at Drummoyne for 47 years. Harry was not the “Flash in the pan” type. His 78 years were full of contributions to the society and the community of which he lived.

Harry always performed to the best of his ability and encouraged others to do likewise. He would not take the easy option, if it meant compromise and this compromise diminished the end result. Harry was fair and reasonable in his dealings with others and strove, at all times to do the right thing. The saying goes “if you’re not on the edge, your wasting space”. Harry was always on the edge, always doing the hard yards on the coalface. He was not a philosopher he was doer and he fitted much into his 78 years. If there was a job to be done he just “did it”, and did not think much about it.

Harry was not a particularly religious man, but he did believe in God and hopefully his tremendous contribution here on earth, will enable our merciful God to grant him an eternal reward.