

Glebe District Hockey Club

Life Membership Biography

Robert Alfred 'Charlie' Brown

Glebe District Hockey Club Life Member

Elected Life Member of the GDHC in 1975

Born on the 18th of April 1942

Robert Alfred (Charlie) Brown was born at the King George Hospital, Camperdown Sydney NSW on the 18th of April 1942 to Alfred Dudley Brown and Phyllis Helen Brookes. Robert's Father Alfred was born in West Botany Sydney; Alfred had one brother and one sister. Alfred Brown was a boiler attendant and worked for the Fresh Food and Ice Company at Haymarket in Sydney. Robert's Mother Phyllis was born in Hobart Tasmania. The family consisted of five sisters and one brother. The Brookes Family moved to the mainland first settling in Melbourne but then later moving to Sydney.



Victor Westacott, Brian Howe, Robert 'Charlie' Brown (Right)

Robert received the nickname Charlie in the mid-50s, early in his junior hockey career, and the name has stuck with him for more than 60 years. Charlie Brown was the lovable main character in the comic strip Peanuts written by Charles M. Schulz. In the words of Professor Google “He was an everyman with ever-changing mood and grace; both befriended by all and ostracised by everyone; a loser-yet-leader who rises out of every downfall with shining hope and determination.”

Robert (Charlie) Brown was the eldest of three brothers who all played hockey for the Glebe District Hockey Club. Dennis (The Walt Disney) Brown born in 1946 dying in 1985 at the age of 39 was followed by the youngest sibling Colin Brown born in 1948.

Robert Brown is a product of the Glebe Public School situated at the Parramatta Road end of Glebe Point Road. Robert attended the School from 1950 to 1955 before furthering his education at Newtown Technical School. Robert left Newtown Technical College in 1957 at the age of 15 gaining an apprenticeship as a letterpress printer, at Concord Printing Company in Chippendale. Robert worked there until 1995 a total of 38 years, which in today's world is an astonishing occurrence. After leaving the Concord Printing Company in 1995 Robert then worked for the Sydney Morning Herald [Fairfax Media] for three years then in 1998 he transferred to the Lilyfield Printing Company till he retired in 2006 after nine years.

Robert married Gaye Marsden in 1968 who he met at the Concord Printing Company. Upon marrying Gaye in 1968 Robert moved to first Hurlstone Park then Canterbury finally settling in Yagoona where they have been for some years. Robert and Gaye had two children together Samantha Brown born in 1972 who now has two children Lyla and William and a son Graeme Brown born in 1974 who also has two children Carrington and Charlotte. Robert's Daughter Samantha is currently living in Bali. Samantha married Stuart McDonald in 1993. Together they are travel website owners for South-East Asian Countries [Travelfish.org].



Robert 'Charlie' Brown coaching juniors at Federal Park Annandale on 22nd July 1972.

Samantha played cricket and hockey at school. Charlie and Gaye son Graeme played hockey for Glebe both in the Junior and Senior ranks of the Club. Graeme played a total of 108 senior games for the club whilst also participating in many of the Easter Long Weekend festivities at the Annual Albury Carnival. Graeme married Rachael Thurtell in 1998, a few years later they moved to Yamba a small seaside town on the NSW mid-north coast where he is currently the head greenskeeper at the Bowling club.

Robert is now retired and enjoys playing golf, lawn bowls whilst also coaching women's hockey.

Robert (Charlie) Brown's illustrious playing career with the Glebe District Hockey started in 1952 at the age of 10. Robert for most of his adolescent and early adult life lived at both Cook and Forsyth Street Glebe a stones throw away from Jubilee Oval. His friends at Glebe Public School and also his friends in and around the Glebe area first attracted Robert to the game. Robert can vividly remember the sound of the hockey ball hitting against the wooden fences in Glebe, which stirred his curiosity in the game. After progressing through the junior ranks, Robert became a regular member of the Glebe First grade side from 1961 to 1972. Robert will be remembered as a very good team player that did the fundamentals well. Predominantly a right-winger Robert delivered fine passes to his forwards and midfielders in the circle. Robert was also a very good reader of the game and varied his playing style depending on the opposition's weaknesses.



The Premiership winning side of 1964 at number two oval, Sydney University, with the H.K Ward Gymnasium in the background.

L - R: Robert 'Charlie' Brown, Ken Wark, Dennis Lisk, David Crocker, Greg Harris, Len Needham, Pat Nilan, Bennett Dunn, David Lisk, Victor Westacott.

He ran hard and fast, stayed wide and the opposition defence found it difficult to counter his bullet like crosses to the top of the circle, from the right hand sideline.

He was crafty, cunning and hard to mark out of the game and is remembered by long standing Club Members as one of the Club's best ever right wingers. He formed an outstanding combination with Pat Nilan in the Club's first grade forward line, where they played together for 12 years.

In the early sixties Robert was joined at the Club by his two younger Brothers Dennis and Colin, being local boys they also received their schooling at Glebe Public School and Newtown Technical College. Dennis Brown (1946 – 1985) played three seasons in the Glebe Firsts (1968, 1970, and 1973) as a centre forward and appeared for the club on 369 occasions between 1961 and 1979. Dennis (The Walt Disney) Brown worked on the wharves and obtained his nickname "The Walt Disney" as he will be fondly remembered as a fine story teller who greatly entertained the patrons at the Toxteth Hotel. Dennis Brown was the best stand-up comic the Club has ever produced - a real wit. Tragically, Dennis died aged 39 years old from Oral Cancer.

Roberts youngest Brother Colin Brown (1948) began playing for the Club in 1962 and at the end of the 1993 season had appeared for Glebe on 658 occasions. Childhood polio left Colin with a pronounced limp. A consistent goalie with a very good eye and a sound technique. Col never let in a soft goal. He played in the first grade sides of 1970 and 1974 and featured in several premierships sides in second grade and the clubs lower grades. The social fabric of the club has occupied a big parts of the Colin's life.



1978 Glebe Total Indoor Premiers

L - R: Ian Mutton, Greg Corben, Robert 'Charlie' Brown, Les Wark, Robert Diviney, Geoff Paterson

Front Row L - R: Graham Lisk, Graham 'Dinga' Bell

Col's direct coaching style is legendary with juniors. Never one to mince his words, Col has on occasion been known to call a spade a bloody shovel. On a one-time first grade coach (who shall remain nameless) who attained the premier coaching certificate after much practical experience and theoretical study, Col commented "he couldn't coach a choko vine over a country dunny". Col joined his eldest Brother Robert as a life member of the Glebe District Hockey Club in 1991 in recognition for his decades of involvement with the clubs juniors.

All told, the Brown Family has played 1,495 games for Glebe an outstanding achievement.

For Eight seasons Robert (Charlie) Brown was Glebe Club Captain (1967 – 1970, 1973 – 1975 and 1977), represented the NSW colts in 1963 and the NSW seniors in 1964 and 1970 and appeared for Glebe 426 times between 1958 and 1992. Charlie made a brief comeback in 1991 after a layoff of 10 years to play in the same team as his son Graeme.

After retiring from playing Hockey Robert moved on to coaching where he coached the Wagga Wagga Men's Hockey Association and also the NSW colts (U/21) team for three years. Robert has also coached numerous Sydney boys and Sydney Senior women's teams.

Robert list his many highlights with the club with winning multiple first grade premierships in the early sixties, coaching Glebe Juniors to premiership wins, captaining the Glebe first grade side and most recently co-coaching the Glebe Women's 2nd grade side alongside Alison Cheong to a premiership win in 2012.

Charlie is an astute coach, well-liked by his players and a great tactician. Robert believes that the Glebe District Hockey Clubs has always had good administrators and maintains this is why Glebe has been so successful over the many years.

Charlie Brown is truly one of Glebe's great sons. Charlie has been named by various distinguished members of the Club as one of its great forwards of all time. Charlie is a straight forward chap, what you see is what you get. He is never one to gloss over short comings and put the best possible light on things. He does not mince words; he tells it how it is in a direct style, which we have all become accustomed to here at Glebe.

He has always offered his services to the club and has never asked what the Club could do for Charlie but rather what Charlie can do for the Club. He still regularly attends first and second grade Men's games, 62 years after he first put on the Maroon and White colours of the Club as a 10 year old junior player.



The Glebe District Hockey club thanks Charlie for his life-time of unstinting service.