

Vernon Howe (30 April 1957-)

A Lifetime's Involvement with the Glebe District Hockey Club

Vernon Howe started playing hockey in the Glebe juniors Under 10 team in 1966, playing for another seven seasons as he worked his way through the junior ranks. In 1973 he played in the Glebe Under 16 team which won the Premiership. The team was comprised of: Vernon and his brother Jamie Howe, Robert Diviney, Peter Casey, Roger McDonald, Gary Lewis, Michael Atterton, Patrick Diviney, Joe Cerro, Michael Murphy and Tony Cowan. During those eight junior years I estimate Vernon would have played between 120-150 games for the Club. Official records of games played for each junior player did not appear in the Club's Annual Report until 1993. Vernon represented Sydney at the NSW State Championships in several age groups and played for the NSW juniors in 1971.

In 1985 Vernon first became involved in coaching the Club's junior teams, taking on the Under 15 team that year, his younger brother Jamie Howe being the Club's Junior Convenor. In 1986 Vernon's older brother, the late Martin Howe, took over as Junior Convenor and in that year Vernon coached the Under 13 team with Eric "Chook" Fraser. The following year, in his Under 13 report for the 1987 Junior Annual Report, Vernon wrote that the things he tried to impart to the players were "hockey skills, sportsmanship, comradeship and team work". Vernon has been espousing and teaching these four objectives for the last 27 years. He coached again in 1988.

Vernon returned to the junior coaching ranks in 1995 to take on the Under 11 Strikers with the late Bob Fox. The following year he ran Minkey with Robert Wark as co-coaches, and then became the Principal Minkey coach in 1997 and held that position until the end of the 2017 season. He coached the Club's Minkey Squad continuously for 22 seasons, which by any measure is an extraordinary achievement.

Vernon started playing senior hockey with Glebe when he was 15 years of age, in 1972. He played for the Club until 2004. In these 34 years of senior hockey Vernon played 639 games for Glebe. Vernon's two older brothers Martin and Peter were his only brothers to play more games for Glebe than Vernon. Like Vernon, Martin and Peter also made substantial contributions to the GDHC on the coaching and administrative side. Martin was a GDHC Life Member and Peter was President of the Club in 1985.

The Howe brothers, of which there were 12, all played hockey for Glebe: Adrian 467 games, Alan 204 games, Barry 364 games, Bobby 83 games, Brian 330 games, Gavin 20 games, Greg 326 games, Jamie 249 games, John 137 games, Martin 712 games, and Peter 641 games. Vernon has had nieces Helen, Colleen, Jemima, and Rebecca Howe, sister-in-law Christine Howe, nephews Ben Howe, Richard McKeough, great nieces Alanna and Tegan and great nephew Ryan play for hockey for Glebe.

Vernon's three children Dylan, Jackson and Jasmine, all play hockey for Glebe. Dylan played nine years, Jackson eleven years and Jasmine eight years in the Glebe junior ranks before they all progressed to the Club's senior teams. Vernon is a dedicated Glebe Junior and Senior Teams supporter. He has selflessly umpired junior games for many decades.

Vernon's eldest brother, the late Brian Howe, started with the GDHC junior teams in 1955 aged 13 years, when he played for the Saint James School Hockey Team. There has been at least one Howe

playing hockey for Glebe continuously ever since, a 64 year period. Vernon played some First Grade hockey, but most of his 639 senior Club games were played in the Club's lower grades. Like a lot of us, Vernon could have progressed his hockey career a lot further with more dedication to training, but he loved the camaraderie, the social aspects of the game and the people he met playing the game, be they good or not-so-good hockey players. These things were more important to him than climbing through the grades to the Club's First Grade team. When Vernon was at his hockey peak, he also had an education to complete, and he had to house, feed and clothe himself. These things mitigated against a dedicated pursuit of hockey excellence.

Vernon played in the 1974 Premiership winning Third Grade team which comprised: Len Needham (captain), Billy Stubbs, Graham Bell, Darryl Seed, Bob McLachlan, Peter Naylor, Vernon, Robert Diviney, Barry Howe, Chris McIntosh, Steve Casey, Graham Shirley and Graeme Gilmour.

In 1975 Glebe entered two teams in the Saint George Easter Carnival, which for many years was held at Gardiner's Park Banksia, Sydney. One team comprised eleven Howe boys: Brain, Gavin (goalkeeper), Peter, Martin, Bobby, Johnny, Barry, Greg, Adrian, Vernon and Jamie. The youngest of the twelve male Howe children, Alan, was still too young to play senior hockey. To bolster the ranks, and to ensure that the Howe Brother's Team had an available substitute in case of injury, Glen Puckeridge was co-opted for the carnival and made an honorary Howe.

The extended Howe Clan had made a special effort to assemble for the occasion, and most of the Howe family were in attendance at the ground to enjoy the day. There was a festive atmosphere at the ground, and it was a significant Howe Family Reunion.

In 1972 British Tobacco had launched a cigarette brand called Winfield and one of its advertising lines, heavily promoted on television was "Anyhow, have a Winfield". In a satirical twist on the cigarette advertising slogan, the Howe Family Team was given the name "AnyHowe" to distinguish it from the other Glebe Team playing at the Carnival.

Leading up to the semi-finals the AnyHowe Team had not lost a game, and had not had a goal scored against it. The AnyHowe Team and the Glebe Team played in separate Major Division Semi-Finals.

The Semi-Final in which the AnyHowe team played was a tough, exciting, even encounter which finished in a nil-all draw, with corners awarded to each team being equal. The game was decided with a flick-off, and Vernon missed his flick!! The AnyHowe team were eliminated. The Glebe Team won the Final 2-1, much to the chagrin of the Saint George Hockey Club President Mr. George Watts.

A great day was had by all and sundry. It must be close to a world record where 11 siblings from a single family unit played in the same men's hockey team, in a hockey carnival event. The events of the 1975 Saint George Hockey Club Carnival Day are the stuff legends are made of, and it is still talked about and discussed with great pride and enthusiasm by the Howe Clan even to this day.

In 1976 Vernon played in the undefeated Second Grade team that won the premiership. The team comprised Robert "Charlie" Brown (captain), Colin Brown, Gary Wark, Graham Lisk, Victor Westacott, Wayne Sullivan, Harry Wark Jnr, Tony Cowan, Royce Jenkins, Robert Wark and Vernon and Peter Howe.

In 1978 he played in the 1978 Glebe Indoor Hockey Team, which won the Super 8 Indoor Competition. Players in this team were Graham Lisk, Ian Mutton, Les Wark, Geoff Paterson, Tony Cowan, Vernon Howe, Greg Corben, Graham Bell, Robert Diviney (captain). The team was coached by Robert (Charlie) Brown.

In 1985 the Third Grade team, which included five Howe brothers, won the premiership. The team was comprised of Barry Howe (captain), Martin, Adrian, Jamie and Vernon, Colin Brown, Craig and Grant Martin, David Rochester, Dave Cutler, Terrence and Michael Diviney, Pat Nilan, Geoff Paterson and Tony Cowan. In the grand-final game at Homebush Vernon Howe scored the winning goal in extra time.

Vernon won a Fourth Grade premiership with the Club in 1988. The team comprised; Bevan Ineson (captain), Colin Brown, Martin and Vernon Howe, Andrew Goodrick, Steve Casey, Victor Ferrari, Rick Delany, Vincent Carpenter, Mick Galluzzo, Gary Wark and Steve Arrowsmith.

In 1996 Vernon was a member of the Sixth Grade team that were beaten 2-1 by Bankstown in the final. The team comprised Geoff Roberts, Adrian, Martin and Vernon Howe, Robin Crowhurst, Arthur Moir, Alex McPhee, Peter Mitchell, John McDonald, Doug Cronin, Oleh Ploskodniak, Narian Singh and Amrat Parbhu.

For the last ten years of his playing career Vernon played sixth and seventh grade, playing for the fun of it. Not winning any premierships but having good fun with mates, exchanging jokes, sharing a laugh, having the occasional beer, and discussing the glories past. Vernon greatly valued just running onto the field with mates, friends and brothers. Vernon was always one to encourage his team mates.

He never dwelt on what a player did wrong but emphasised the player's good qualities and his overall contribution to the team effort. Vernon has an excellent sense of humour and could always see the bright side of a team's otherwise dismal performance. This sense of humour and his emphasis on the positive made him popular with his team mates, who lapped up Vernon's version of events rather than what appeared on the match scoresheet.

2004 was Vernon's last season as a player. His osteoarthritic hips were getting too painful for him to continue playing and, with much reluctance, he retired.

Vernon's parents Jim and Molly came to Glebe in 1947 from Barellan in the Riverina area of NSW. Jim worked for the PMG (Post-Master General's Department), later called Telecom and then Telstra. The Howe family lived in Glebe, first in Arundel Street and then Pymont Bridge Road. Vernon was one of 18 children, one of whom died in the first weeks of life. Vernon was the fourth youngest of the family. There were 12 boys and 5 girls in the family. Siblings born after him were Jamie, Elaine, and Alan.

Vernon started primary school at Saint James' School Forest Lodge in 1962 aged 5 years. In his kindergarten class were Robyn Wark (nee Werren), and Maureen Paterson (nee Casey), both of whom are long term Members and Supporters of the GDHC. The Founder of the GDHC, Irishman the Reverend Brother Macartan Keegan taught at Saint James' School in 1931, 31 years before Vernon started at the School. Saint James' School Forest Lodge has always had a close association with the

GDHC and I suppose it was not surprising that all the Howe boys found their way into the ranks of the GDHC.

In 1969, after finishing primary school, Vernon went to secondary school at Marcellin Marist Brothers College Randwick. On leaving school Vernon studied at the Sydney Teacher's College where he did a Diploma of Teaching, and became a Physical Education Teacher (now called PD/H/PE Teacher). He commenced as a teacher with the NSW Department of Education in 1978 and stayed with the Department until he retired at the end of the 2016 school year, 39 continuous years as a teacher. The last school at which he taught was Canterbury Boy's High School.

Vernon married his long term girlfriend Elizabeth on 16 October 1993 at Saint Joseph's Catholic Church Newtown. After leaving school at Saint Scholasticas College Glebe, Elizabeth worked for an estate planning company as a secretary/administrator/office supervisor. Vernon and Elizabeth, along with their three children, Dylan, Jackson and Jasmine have lived in the Sydney suburb of Tempe for many years.

Vernon loves nothing better after his Saturday morning junior hockey commitments are finished then to head out and watch the Glebe senior teams play. He is a dedicated Glebe supporter and enjoys the sideline camaraderie and companionship of the Glebe Supporters.

Vernon is extraordinarily generous with his time and his talents. Watching him conduct a Minkey session at Jubilee Oval Glebe on a winter Saturday morning is a learning experience for children and adults alike. He establishes fantastic rapport with his young charges and makes the learning of hockey a rewarding, friendly, and interesting activity. Exercise, socialization, discipline, fun, enjoyment and inclusiveness are more important to Vernon than the strict technical aspects of the acquisition of hockey skills.

Many of his ex-Minkey graduates are, in 2019, playing first grade hockey for the GDHC, but much more importantly hundreds and hundreds of Vernon's ex-Minkey graduates have grown-up to be better adjusted, more social, and happier people as a result of Vernon's input into their development on winter Saturday mornings at Jubilee Oval Glebe.

Vernon is an ordinary, no nonsense, no fuss, no glitter, no pomp, no extravagance type of chap, who has made a mighty contribution to the GDHC for over 50 years, in his own low key, unobtrusive, under-the-radar style. He has always put his heart and soul into every contribution he has made to the activities of the GDHC. He is an enthusiast. In 2019 the GDHC is in its 89th year, and Vernon has helped it along its way for over half its existence.

All of us associated with the GDHC past, present and future wholeheartedly thank Vernon for his contribution to Club affairs for more than 50 years, a mighty effort by a very generous man.

One of Vernon's trademark phrases is "GO GLEBE" and who could argue with that!

A Glebe team comprised of Howes and Glen Puckeridge at the 1975 Easter Saint George Carnival at Gardiner's Park Banksia: Back Row L-R Jim Howe (civvies), Gavin goalkeeper, Barry, Greg, Peter, Glen Puckeridge, Martin, Vernon, Jamie (obscured), and Bobby. Front Row L-R: Brian, Adrian, Johnny. Youngest brother Alan Howe was still a junior in 1975, too young to play in the senior teams.



The 1985 Glebe Third Grade Team

Back Row: L-R Terry Diviney, David Rochester, Grant Martin, Pat Nilan, Craig Martin, Adrian Howe.

Front Row: L-R Vernon Howe, Barry Howe, Jamie Howe, Colin Brown, Michael Diviney



Vernon's Minkey Squad of 1996 at Federal Park Annandale



Vernon presenting the awards at a Glebe Carnival in the late 1990s: L-R: Danny O'Brien, Robyn Wark, Bevan Ineson, Pat Nilan and Vernon Howe.



Vernon (grey jacket) with the Minkies and Under 9s at the 2018 Glebe Junior Carnival held at Jubilee Oval, Glebe