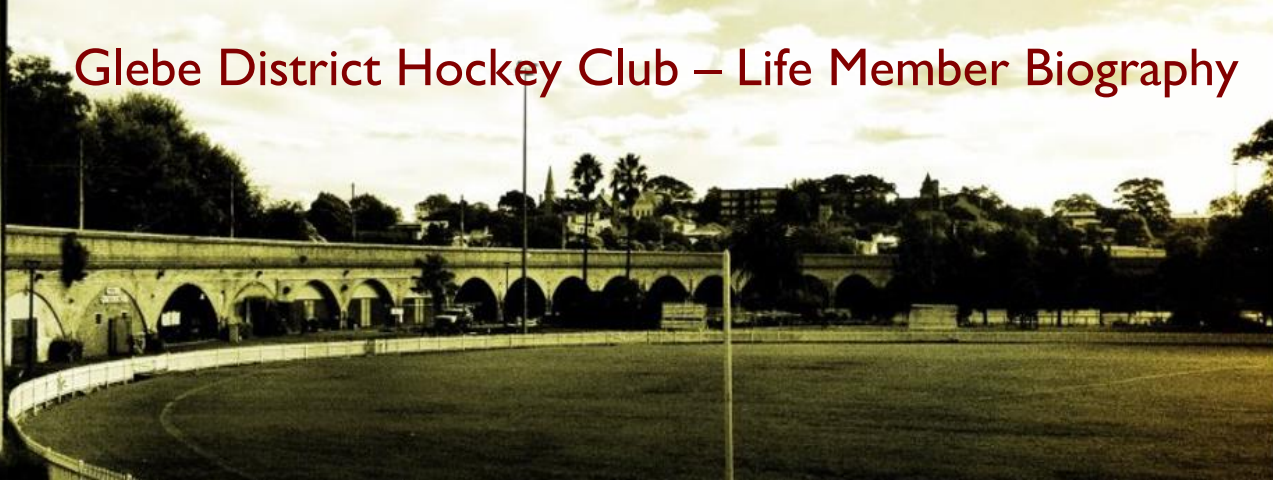


Glebe District Hockey Club – Life Member Biography



Fred Letts

Born 9 December 1942

Elected Life Member in 1975



For the first 12 months of his life Fred lived in a flat at Chippendale, after which he moved to 13 Arundel Street Glebe and then to 135 Arundel Street Glebe. Both Fred's paternal and maternal grandparents' families lived in Arundel Street. His father and mother met as a result of these family connections and they were married at Saint Pius Church Enmore by Father Tom Kerr. Father Kerr was an assistant priest at Saint James' Catholic Church Glebe from 1935-1940.

Fred was born at Saint Margaret's Hospital Darlinghurst, NSW, on December 9, 1942. Growing up, Fred lived in Glebe and started school at the Saint Benedict's Broadway Catholic School in 1947, where he was first taught by the Good Samaritan Sisters. In third class he moved to the Saint Benedict's Broadway Marist Brothers School, which was on the same campus as the school run by the Good Samaritan Sisters. He remained at the Marist Brothers School for seven years, when he completed his schooling with the Intermediate Certificate at the end of Third Year. Fred was in the class below Pat Nilan, another GDHC Life Member, at Saint Benedict's School.

In 1954 Fred was at a football match at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) watching Australia play the British Lions when he saw a friend of his, Johnny Millar, carrying a hockey stick. Johnny had finished his hockey game, played on top of the water reservoir in Centennial Park and had come 500 metres down the road to the SCG to watch the footy. Johnny informed Fred about his hockey exploits and this piqued Fred's interest in the sport. One thing led to another and Fred decided to give hockey a try.



This photo of Fred was taken in 1975, when he was aged 33 years.

Glebe District Hockey Club Life Member – Fred Letts



Despite his young age for the senior ranks, Fred played the last four games of the 1954 competition for the Glebe Minor B team, which was the Club's senior fourth grade team at the time.

In 1950s the Junior Competition in which the Glebe teams competed each Saturday morning was held at Saint Paul's Oval Darlington. Saint Paul's is an Anglican Residential College of the University of Sydney, which was close to Fred's home in Arundel Street. Vernon Turner was the driving force in running the Glebe Hockey Club junior program in the 1950s and due to Vernon Turner's enthusiasm and efforts there was a rapid increase in the number of junior teams fielded by the Club. Vernon established a thriving junior hockey competition. In 1955 Glebe entered six teams in the zone hockey competition held at Saint Paul's Oval. Eastern Suburbs, Randwick and YMCA were the other clubs that participated in this competition.

After his four games in the Glebe Minor B team in 1954, Fred began playing in the 1955 Under Fourteen Junior Hockey Competition, and continued to play junior hockey in the Saint Benedict's School hockey team until after the end of the 1957 season.

In 1958 Fred, then aged 16, left the junior ranks and progressed to the senior ranks, where he played 18 games during this season. Players in Fred's 1958 premiership winning third Grade team included: Bernie Watson (goal keeper), Keith Riley, John Watson, Fred Needham, Noel Walker, Harry Butler, George Collett, Bob Needham, John Sutherland, Bennett Dunn and Don West. Players that filled in for the team included Richard (Dick) Payne-Scott, Dave Robertson, Pat Nilan, Lindsay Hackett, Ron Callaghan, Jack Buckley, Jim Kenny and Alan Westacott.



This photo was taken at Primrose Park North Sydney, of the Premiership winning second grade team of 1967

L-R Back Row: Harry Wark jnr. Peter Howe, Fred Letts, Graeme Kirkland, Barry Goodrick Peter Howe.

L-R Front Row: Harry Wark snr. Denis Brown, Jim Kenny (goalkeeper), Martin Howe Denis Lisk

In 1960-61 Fred played on the left wing for the first-grade team and was unlucky to miss out on Sydney under-21 selection. Players in Fred's 1960 first grade team, which was beaten by Saint George in the final, were Ray Thorpe, Bennett Dunn, Pat Nilan, Bob "Rocker" Fox, Victor Westacott, Len Needham, Jack C Taylor, Greg Harris, Ron Payne, Bill Stubbs, John Whittle, Jim Kenny, Vince Halls, Max Jeffs, Robert 'Charlie' Brown and Harry Wark snr.

Fred played most of his career in the 1960s and 70s in the second, third and fourth grades. His second-grade teams of 1960 and 1964 won the premiership. He won premierships with the third-grade team in 1966, 67, 68 and 1972, and was team captain in several of these teams. The 1966 third grade team was undefeated premiers and the team included: Bob Fox, Paul Rogers, Graeme Shirley, Brian Howe, Peter Howe, Tony Morley, Graeme Gilmour, Lindsay Weate and Gavin Howe. Fred played mostly in the half-line, but had a season or two as goalkeeper.

Glebe District Hockey Club Life Member – Fred Letts



Fred enjoyed his hockey; he enjoyed the camaraderie and the esprit de corps of the sport. He was one of the Club's great administrators. He was Assistant Secretary in 1961, 1962 and when Glebe's Secretary of nine years Ray Thorpe resigned in July 1963, Fred became the Club's Secretary and continued on as Secretary in 1964. He was elected Treasurer in 1966. In 1967 he became Secretary again and continued on as Secretary for 11 continuous years until 1977. All told he was the Club's Secretary or Assistant Secretary for 15 years.

In 1978 Fred stepped down from the Secretary's role and became Senior Vice-President, and progressed to the Club's President in 1979 and 1980 before being succeeded by Graeme Gilmour in 1981. Only two people in the 92-year history of the GDHC have been a Club Treasurer, Secretary and President, Fred Letts and Danny O'Brien. Fred was on the Club's Management Committee from 1962-64 and from 1967-1980, seventeen years in total. For his services to the Club over many years, in 1975 Fred was elected a Club Life Member.

In 1982 Fred was manager of that year's premiership winning GDHC first grade men's team, with Bill Stubbs the team's coach. Players in this team included Tony Cowan, Geoff Paterson (c), Keith Pritchard, Ian Mutton, Colin Rochester, Danny O'Brien, Craig Stubbs, Les Wark, Warren (Buster) Birmingham, Greg Corben, Gary Manou. Fred managed the team and played in the 1982 Glebe veterans' team. Players in this team along with Fred were Harry Wark snr, Bennett Dunn, Paul Rogers, Darryl Fishenden, Bill Stubbs, Pat Nilan, Martin Howe, Peter Howe, Graeme Gilmour, Tony Martin, Colin Smith, George Collet, Frank Whiteman, Don Oakley, Bob Fox, Max Jeffs, Barry Duroux, Graham Kirkland and Bob Taylor. This was the inaugural year of veterans' hockey in NSW.



This photo of Glebe's first grade team of 1960 was taken at Saint Paul's Oval Sydney University.

L-R: Leo Hackett (goal Keeper), Ray Thorpe, Jack C Taylor, Fred Letts, Harry Wark, Bill Stubbs, Max Jeffs, Paul Rogers, Victor Westacott, Pat Nilan.

Fred was an active administrator for NSW Hockey. He was a Member of the NSW Hockey Executive for eight years, held an NSW Open State Umpires Badge, and was a Member of the Match Committee of the Australian Hockey Association (as representative of the NSW Hockey Association). He was a Publicity Officer for NSW Hockey and in 1972 and 1973 he was Manager of the NSW State Senior Team.

In the summer months Fred played cricket in the Moore Park competition. Over the years he played for the Catholic Club, Broadway Catholic Youth Club and for a Randwick club with a friend of his Peter Duffen. For a couple of years Pat Nilan played cricket with Fred.

Glebe District Hockey Club Life Member – Fred Letts



As Fred's daughter Kylie grew into her teens she enjoyed playing many sports, but specifically tennis. Through his daughter's involvement in that sport Fred became involved in the affairs of the Illawarra Lawn Tennis Association Junior Branch which oversaw over 3000 junior tennis players. Fred became an executive Member of the Committee and later its President. He organized interstate and international playing opportunities for players for many years and was Manager of the Illawarra Suburbs Irene Matthews Under 16 Girls Representative Team whilst his daughter was competing.

Fred was a Foundation Member of the Bardwell Valley Golf Club, Bexley. He enjoyed playing in the midweek and weekend competitions and was even able to score 3 holes in one. Fred remained a Member of Bardwell Valley Golf Club for over 30 years until he moved to the Gold Coast.

After completing his Intermediate Certificate at the end of his schooling, Fred started an Electrical Mechanic Apprenticeship with the NSW State Railways. He did not find the work to his liking and left in early June 1968. On 17th June 1968 he started work with the Commonwealth Bank at its Pennant Hills Branch. He retired from the Commonwealth Bank in 1996 after 28 years of continuous service.

Fred became engaged to Carole in 1963 and they married at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church, Randwick on 1 May 1965. Immediately after they married Carole and Fred lived in rented premises in Boyce Street Glebe. After a year they bought a house in Lakemba, where they lived until February 1972. They bought a house in Kogarah Bay in April 1972, with their daughter Kylie being born in October 1972. They lived at Kogarah Bay until 1999.



Photo taken in 1960

L-R: Victor Westacott, Brain Howe, Robert Charlie Brown and Fred Letts.

Kylie became a primary school teacher and then went on to qualify as a mid-wife. After she married, Kylie and her husband moved to the Gold Coast in Queensland and Fred and Carole followed shortly after. Kylie and her husband bought the management rights to a block of 43 holiday rental apartments on the Gold Coast and Fred and Carole were actively involved in the management of these apartments, which was a seven day a week commitment.

After a few years Kylie, her husband, Fred and Carole moved to another holiday rental apartment business at Bandoura Point, which is a suburb located in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, in Tweed Shire. They ran this business for some years before retiring and moving back to Pacific Pines, a northern suburb in the City of Gold Coast, where they live in a large house with Kylie and her husband and their two children, who are twins, Amy and Sean.

In the last five years Fred has had trouble with his back, which has limited his mobility and he now walks with the aid of a stick. In 2022 Fred still follows the affairs of the Club closely and is a strong supporter of the Club. He attends Club functions as and when circumstances permit.

Glebe District Hockey Club Life Member – Fred Letts



Fred had good people management skills, was unflappable, efficient, effective, a willing worker, a good organizer, cheerful and cooperative. Carole, Fred's wife, helped Fred every step of the way. She did his Hockey Club typing, sent his letters, opened the Club's mail, helped prepare the Club's Annual Reports, and helped in the production of the Club's Newsletter, the Red Rag. It was only because of Carole's help, enthusiasm, and expertise that Fred contributed so much for the Club on the administrative side, for so long. Carole's contribution to Club life was enormous.

Thanks Fred, for your outstanding contribution to Club life.



A photo of Fred aged 72 years, taken in 2014.

Glebe District Hockey Club Life Member – Fred Letts

