



Helen Howe

Born 21, January 1976

Elected Life Member in 2018

Helen was born into a Glebe hockey family. Her parents Martin and Margaret met on the sidelines of a hockey carnival in Newcastle in the early 1970s and they both went on to become Life-Members of the Glebe District Hockey Club (GDHC). From when she was a toddler Helen had hit a hockey ball around on the sidelines, while her father Martin played his hockey games for Glebe.

When Helen had decided she wanted to start playing hockey, her dad, Martin, approached the Sutherland District Hockey Club (as they lived in Caringbah in the Sutherland Shire) about Helen playing for them. At the time, Sutherland was a strictly men/ boys only club and no girls played in their teams. Sutherland officials at the time “rejected” the family’s request for Helen to play so Martin took her to Glebe. The policy stopping girls playing for the Sutherland junior teams was overturned in the 1990s.

Helen started with the Glebe juniors in 1984 with the U/11 Two team coached by her uncle Jamie Howe. Jamie referred to the team in his end of year report as the “Tiny Terriers” and further “If sheer guts and determination could win games our team would have finished up as undefeated premiers.” Giving away years in age to their



A photo of Helen Howe 8 and Colleen Howe 6 in Glebe uniforms at Sutherland Hockey Park, Sylvania about to run on for the Glebe under 11 team.

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opponents, the team did not score a goal let alone win a game, but the players had a very enjoyable season none the less.

Glebe's Minkey program for young players was not well established until 1989, and up until that time young hockey players, often as young as 6 or 7 would start in U/11 teams. Teams with significant numbers of "tiny tots" struggled to be competitive.

By 1986, Helen's U/11 team were a bit older, bigger and stronger and the team scored its first goal and, after two seasons of trying, had its first win. This was a memorable Saturday morning for the team. The team won a hand-full of games this season and finished one point short of qualifying for a semi-finals berth.

In 1988 Helen moved up into the U/13 team coached by Bevan Ineson and Martin Howe. Players in this team were: Glen Baker, Peter McKeown, Morgan Newall, Ban and Hayden Sully, Adam Farrawell, Scott Sheppard, Hugh Rutherford, James Wright, Amanda Daly, Samantha Knight and Chris Hale.

The coaches had this to say about the team "It was a pleasure to coach this team of young boys and girls as their manners and sportsmanship was exemplary, also their improvement in skills and ability progressed well throughout the season."

In 1990 Helen moved into the U/15s and her coaches Darryl Farrawell and Martin Howe had this to say about Helen in their end of year report, "Fullback, 100% player, never stopped trying and showed that girls can compete with the boys at this level. The best tackler in the team."

In 1992 Helen played in the U/17 team with her future husband Dean Benfield, coached by Ken Wark snr and managed by Ian Trehane. Players in this team were Dean Benfield, Ben Sully, Scott Sheppard, Ben Farrawell, Matthew Bass, Adam Farrawell, Karen Bowden, Adam Campano, Shane Casey, Mark Baxter, Peter McKeown, Garth Fain, and Brook Anderson.

At the end of her 9 years with the Glebe juniors Helen had played 166 junior games. Most of the teams she played in were competitive but were never premiership contenders. Despite their lack of finals series finishes the players in these teams were good friends, enjoyed each other's company, and revelled in the esprit de corps of playing in a team sport.



Glebe U/15's circa 1991 at Jubilee Oval Glebe

L-R (top): Ben Farrawell, Jeremy Craig, Tim Culquhon, Peter McKeown, Adrian 'AJ' White, Ben Howe, Mark Short (Coach)

L-R (bottom): Christian Terry, Unknown, Helen Howe, Adam Campano, David Baxter

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In 1991 aged 15, Helen had commenced playing with the GDHC Women's teams in the Eastern District's Hockey Women's Association (EDWHA) Competitions. 1991 marked the return of women's teams to the GDHC after a break of 11 years. The women who had played as the Glebe Women's Hockey Club, which was a separate entity from the Glebe District Hockey Club (GDHC) from 1979 to 1990, and who did not wish to play with the GDHC continued on as the Glebe Women's Sports' Club in the North Shore Hockey Association Competition. This Club was a member of an amalgamation of hockey clubs that in 2021 now play as the Mosman Harbourside Hockey Club.

Helen played 22 games in the 1991 season, mainly second grade, some games in third grade, and one game in first grade. The second-grade team was made up of Judy Dean, Rebecca Pincham, Lesley Mates, Monique Beguely, Penny Brown, Margaret Balandin, Joanne Davison, Kerryn Divall, Jane Hoddinott, Kathy Hadley, Michelle Opitz, Cathy Andrews, Margaret Bourke and Helen Howe with Jeff Busch as coach.

In 1992 Helen was promoted to the first grade, coached by Peter Busch, which made it through to the Sydney Women's Hockey League (SWHL) semi-finals where they were beaten by Mirrabooka. Players in this team included 2021 GDHC Women's convenor Kate Alexander, and Lisa Williams, the first girl to play with the Glebe juniors. Lisa started in the Glebe under 10 team of 1975. In addition to playing in the SWHL, the Glebe first grade played in the EDWHA third grade competition, which they won beating YWCA 2-1 in the final at David Phillips field at Daceyville.

Helen won the team's player's player award in 1992 and 1993, obtained her umpiring badge, and played in U/16 and U/18 teams that represented Eastern Districts at the Half-State Champions. The first-grade team of 1992 comprised Linda Tait, Elaine Trodden, Christine McNicol, Melanie Reid, Nicole Horley, Adele Lucas, Ann Rochester, Lisa McPhail, Helen Howe, Carole Wark, Jane Goldsmith, Leanne Hodges, Collen Millar, Jill Strachan, and Vanessa Hardman.

In 1994-1997 Helen was selected for the Eastern Districts Senior Team that played in the Half-State Championships. In 1994 Helen brought up her 50 first grade games milestone.

In 1995-1999 Helen was the GDHC's Women's Junior Convenor with the EDWHA, and



The Glebe first grade team of 1992 after it won the Eastern Districts third grade competition at Heffron Park, Maroubra.

Back row left to right: Peter Busch (coach), Linda Tait, Elaine Trodden, Christine McNicol, Melanie Reid, Nicole Horley, Adele Lucas (goalkeeper), Anne Rochester, Lise McPhail.

Front row left to right: Helen Howe, Carole Wark, Jane Goldsmith, Leanne Hodges, Jill



in addition organised women players to help with the GDHC Minkey squad of a Saturday morning. In 1995, together with her mother Margaret, Helen was a member of the GHDC Social and Fund-Raising Committee. Helen was a member of the Women's Committee from 1992-1999.

At the end of the 1996 season Helen had played 103 senior games for the GDHC and won the first-grade team player's player award. After finishing minor premiers, the first-grade team in which Helen played lost the grand-final to YMCA 3-2. Personnel in this team were Mary Wark, Rowena Mackie, Stacey Turner, Kate Rowe, Kerrie Wark, Bethan Richards, Rebecca Harrison, Dale Phipps, Jane Whitham, Cathy Savill, Helen Howe, Colleen Howe, Megan Rivers and Megan Byrnes with Les Wark as coach and Margaret Howe as manager.

Coach Les Wark had this to say about Helen in his end of season report, "Miss Consistency played it hard (the way I like it) and tackled strongly. She always played to the best of her ability and played well all season, even though she might not say so." In 1997 Helen captained the first-grade team, which were beaten 2-1 in the minor semi-final of the Eastern District's first grade competition by the University of New South Wales.

1998 saw Glebe's first grade women's team play in the Sydney Women's Hockey League (SWHL), Metro 1 Competition where they finished fourth. Players in this team were Catriona (Fish)

Owens, Helen Howe, Amy Roams, Mary Wark, Stacey Wallace, Krissie Auld, Kelly Needham, Alison Dally, Lisa Ellick, Coleen Howe, Nicole Avar, Kerrie Wark, Anne Howard, and Anna Ancher. In 1998 Helen reached the 100 first grade mark and won the most consistent individual performance award.

Helen's mother Margaret, a Club stalwart and Club Captain for many years suffered a catastrophic health event in 2000 and this placed considerable strain on Helen and her family. At the Club's AGM held on 26 November 2000 Margaret was elected a Club Life-Member.



A photo of the 1997 Glebe Women's first grade team taken at the Little Bay Synthetic Turf. The team was beaten in the minor-semi-final.

Back row left to right: Raelene Lindeberg, Megan Gay, Allison Sollary, Rebecca Harrison (goalkeeper), Kerrie Wark, Rowena Mackie, Janelle Pike, Les Wark (coach).

Front row left to right: Stacey Turner, Helen Howe, Mary Wark, Colleen Howe, Megan Byrnes, Megan Rivers.



In 2000, the first-grade team progressed to the Grand Final of the SWHL, Metro A Competition. The game was played at Ryde, as the Homebush hockey precinct was unavailable as it was being readied for the 2000 Olympic Games. The Glebe team narrowly lost the game 3-2, after the score finished 2-2 at the end of ordinary time. Esquires scoring its winning goal in the second period of golden goal, sudden-death, drop off (7 v 7) extra-time. Players in this team included Sarah Stevenson, Lisa Ellick, Gretchen Riordan, Chrissy Auld, Anne Howard, Olivia Netzler, Angela James, Kelly Needham, Stacey Wallace, Tara Diamond, Bianca Netzler, Anna Anchor. Coach was Natalie White.

Natalie White the Women's first grade coach of 2001 noted in her end of year report that Helen performed consistently throughout the season.

Helen took a year off from hockey in 2002 to reflect and to recharge her batteries. She went overseas and visited her sister Colleen who was living in London at the time, as well as having a working/ travelling holiday around Europe, touring with Shaye Jordan a fellow Glebe first grade player of that period.

She was back in 2003 and at the end of the 2003 season had played 217 senior games for the GDHC and represented ED in the open women's team at the half-state championship. During 2003 Helen was a regular member of the Glebe SWHL, Metro 2 team which won the competition and filled in for the Metro 1 team when required. Members of the 2003 premiership winning Metro 2 team along with Helen were Anne Howard, Megan Byrnes, Kerrie Wark, Andrea Lum, Sue Church, Amy Smith, Raelene Lindberg, Sarah Lynn, Victoria Johnson, Rachael Barnett, Elly Williams, Amy Wark, Anita Martel. Phil Diamond was coach and Lee Johnson manager.

After a several years' break Helen was back on the Women's Committee in 2004, as well as being the Women's Club Captain for the season. She continued as Club Captain until 2006 when she was replaced by Raelene Lindeberg.



A photo of the Glebe Women's team of 2000 which lost narrowly the SWHL, Metro A grand-final to Esquires 3-2. At full-time the score was 2-2. Esquires scored in the second period of golden goal, drop-off, extra-time to win the game 3-2, with both teams down to seven players each.

Players in the team were:

left to right: Sarah Stevenson, Lisa Ellick, Gretchen Riordan, Chrissy Auld, Anne Howard, Olivia Netzler, Angela James, Kelly Needham, Stacey Wallace, Tara Diamond, Bianca Netzler, Anna Anchor, Natalie White, coach far right.

Helen Howe squatting at the front, drink in hand.

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In 2005 Helen was back in the first-grade team and coach Adam Campano had this to say about Helen in his end of year report: “Helen Howe proved to all that she can still compete at this level, and most importantly she had a terrific, positive influence on the team as a whole, especially to the younger girls. As a former team-mate and as a friend, I would like to thank Helen for her wholehearted contribution to the team and to the Club in general. You seemed to always put a positive spin on things, especially when I was tending to be overly critical.”

In 2006-2011 Helen played first grade, being its captain for several years and in 2006, 2008 and 2009 she won the Molly Wark Trophy which is awarded annually to the Clubwoman who has contributed most to the Club both on and off the field and/or in administrative affairs.

In 2007 and 2008 Helen was the Women’s Secretary, and by the end of the 2007 season had played 300 senior games for the GDHC. In the 2008 season Helen won the first-grade coach’s award for the most consistent player, and with her then boyfriend Dean Benfield (now husband) she coached the Women’s third grade team.

From 2009 to 2011 Helen was the Women’s Convenor and a Member of the GDHC Management Committee. The Glebe Women’s first grade coach of 2009 Martin Bishop had this to say about Helen in his end of season report: “Outstanding commitment at training and matches, formed a seemingly impenetrable central defence with Angela Wark, great leader and good short corner taker.”

On a sad note, Helen’s father Martin Howe, a Club Life Member, died in 2009. In her 2009 Women’s Convenor Report published in the GDHC Annual report Helen had this to say with relation to her father’s passing:

“I would like to thank everybody in the greater Glebe community/family who gave me and my family so much support with my dad’s accident, illness and final passing. I could not have got through it without you all. I would not be playing and doing all of this for the Club if it wasn’t for my parents and the love of hockey and the Club, they instilled in me at an early age. Honestly though, this Club has given me so much in life and I love every minute of being involved in every capacity. This year really highlights for me the strength and unity we have as a Club. I think it is something we should be proud of and I hope it is always there.”

2010 Women’s Club Captain Angela Phillips had this to say about Helen in her end of year report:

“The season was enjoyable for all but could not have happened without the enormous efforts of our Women’s Convenor - Helen Howe. Helen took on the role of not just convenor but a combination of the work of about six or seven people and did an extraordinary job. She coordinated coaches, teams, attended a range of meetings, chased fees, managed and played first grade, sent a plethora of emails and made many phone calls. Without Helen’s dedication to the Club, the Women’s Club would not function. Hopefully we dig-out babysitter so we can have Helen back on-board next season.”

In 2010 Helen Benfield (nee Howe) won the GDHC’s Carole Wark most outstanding umpire award and the Molly Wark Trophy for the fourth time. Helen’s mother Margaret

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also won the Molly Wark Trophy four times in 1993,1997,1998 and 2000. In 2011 she shared the Club's Pat Nilan Trophy with Danny O'Brien. The Pat Nilan Trophy is presented to the most outstanding Club member, junior or senior, for the year as adjudicated by the Management Committee.

In 2011 Helen played in the Glebe first grade team that finished sixth in the SWHL, Metro 2 Competition. Players in this team were Jo Symes, Alex Gladding, Helen Howe, Josie Barron, Saskia Andriessen-Kleijer, Jessica Higgs, Louise Tapsell, Lynsey Askew, Hannah Momot, Sophie Momot, Amy Lovegrove, Natasha DeWeerd and Rebecca DeWeerd.

Helen had this to say at the end of her 2011 Women's Convenor's Report: "Finally, I would like to thank all the people who made it possible for me to play and to be involved this year. Maureen Paterson, Tina Barron, Mrs Goodrick, Mrs Phillips (with Anna and Lucy's help), my Auntie Liz Howe and of course Dean all helped out looking after my son James during the year. I could not have played or trained without your help so thank you."

Quoting from Angela Wark (nee Phillips)'s Women's Club Captain Report of 2011 "Once again, our biggest thanks must go to the Women's Convenor—Helen Howe. Helen returned at the beginning of this season after having James only a few months earlier getting herself straight back into organizing, fitness and playing. The girls couldn't have gotten on the pitch this year if it wasn't for Helen's dedication and time even with a newborn. Thank you so much Helen for everything you have done".



Helen Howe playing for the Glebe first grade women's team against Briars at Cintra Park, Concord in 2008

In 2012 Louise Tapsell took over from Helen as the GDHC's Women's Convenor, but Helen continued to play in the Club's first grade Women's team and played all 20 games for the season. The team made the Metro 2 preliminary final, where they were beaten 2-1 by UTS.

Helen was pregnant with her second child during the 2013 season, which kept her off the hockey field. She was manager of the first-grade team during this year, with Matthew Wark being its coach. Helen recalls that Matthew "nearly had a coronary when I, past her due date, was seen on the turf collecting the balls after shots on goal. He swiftly told her to get off the field. I gave birth my second son Andrew the next day."

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In 2014 Helen and husband Dean moved to the Central Coast, but Helen travelled down each weekend to play with the Glebe second grade team and she won the coach's award for the season. 2014 was Helen's last season playing for the GDHC. At the end of the 2014 season Helen had played 403 senior games, to go with her 166 junior games for Glebe.

Angela Wark wrote in her 2014 Club Captain's Report published in the 2014 Annual Report:

"The big highlight was Helen Howe's 400th Club game! A big crowd turned out on a Sunday night to Olympic Park and were very vocal in their support of Hels. She was a little embarrassed for the attention but the little smirk also told us she was mighty proud to be doing it in her beloved maroon and white".

Second grade coach Martin Bishop commented in his 2014 second-grade end of season report:

"Helen Benfield returned to playing regular hockey (following the arrival of her second son, and a move to the Central Coast), and her commitment was evident to all."

Players in Helen's 2014 second grade team included: Kloe Mannering (goalkeeper), Ana Moraitakis, Mim Pritchard, Amy Molloy, Laura Schmahmann, Alisha Middleton, Erin McCleave, Sophie Momot, Hannah Momot, Nicki Osborne, Kate Gleeson, Izzy Thomson, Laura Bulley, Terrie Iglesias, and Jessica Luc, Martin Bishop (coach).

Throughout her hockey career Helen gave her all each and every time she went onto the hockey field, be it at training or during a game. Flashy, individual efforts were not Helen's style, she was a team player through and through, unselfish, and all she did was with the best interests of the team in mind. She was tenacious, had a hard hit, a good tackle and was difficult to get past. Throughout her long and successful career as a player Helen played at fullback. She often captained the teams in which she played and was usually part of her team's penalty corner battery.

After starting as a junior in 1984, Helen's playing career with Glebe came to an end 31 years later in 2014. Melissa Newton is the only other woman to have played more senior games for the GDHC than Helen. At the end of the 2020 season Melissa had played 450 senior games.

Off the field of play, Helen served the Club as a senior and junior coach, an umpire, a Management Committee Member, Club Captain, Women's Convenor and Delegate to the Eastern District Hockey Association. She was a well-liked devoted Club Member for over 30 years who contributed greatly to the life and times of the GDHC, with optimism, passion, tenacity, energy and enthusiasm.

Growing up Helen lived at Caringbah with her parents Martin and Margaret. She went to secondary school at De La Salle Cronulla and then Our Lady of Mercy College Burraneer Bay. After leaving school she worked with Australia Post. Helen married her long standing boyfriend Dean Benfield in 2009, shortly before her father Martin died. Helen and Dean got married in a small garden ceremony on a Sunday morning so that Martin could give her away. She played hockey for the Glebe first grade team later that afternoon, scored 2 short

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corner goals and the team won. Martin passed away four days later. Helen and goalkeeper Dean played in the Glebe 1992 U/17 team together, which is where they met. They have two children together, James born in 2012 and Andrew born in 2013.

Colleen Howe, Helen's younger sister was an accomplished hockey player and played for Glebe as both a junior (1987-1993) and a senior (1993-1998).

After she moved to Gosford Helen often came back to Sydney before the hockey season started and acted as a provisional selector for the Women's teams.

Helen continues her hockey interest on the Central Coast with the Gosford City Hockey Club, where she plays both regular senior competition and veterans' hockey. In addition, she has represented Gosford at NSW Master's Championships.

For her services to the GDHC, Carole Wark in 2019 recommended Helen for Life-Membership. She was elected a Life-Member at the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

Helen Howe – Life Member Testimonial for 2018 AGM written by Carole Wark

I recommend to the members of the Glebe District Hockey Club, Helen Howe, as a most worthy nominee for Life Membership. Helen was born on 21 January 1976 to Margaret and Martin Howe, both Life Members of the Club. She grew up in Caringbah with her younger sister, Colleen.

Despite her parents' Glebe hockey pedigree, it wasn't inevitable that she would play for Glebe. Her dad, Martin, actually approached Sutherland Hockey and was told that girls didn't play in the teams so that is how Helen came to begin her distinguished hockey career for Glebe. Helen can't quite remember when she began playing but she thinks it was when she was 6 or 7. Certainly she was described in the 1986 Junior Report as 'a super-sub' for the U13s, playing up from U11s often when needed.

Helen finished her junior hockey career in 1991 playing with the U15s. Comments from the Junior Reports say a lot about Helen's attitude and commitment to the game and her contribution to the Club: In 1990 playing U15s: 'Helen Howe showed that girls can compete with boys at this level. Best tackler in the team.' Helen's experience of junior hockey was often being the only girl in the team and as girls were not allowed to play past U15s in those days, she had to move into the senior ranks if she wished to continue playing.

The 1991 Annual Junior Report has this to say about Helen:

'Set an example to all with determination, ability and courage. Will be a major loss when she plays ladies full time next year.' Helen's loss to the Juniors was indeed a gain to the Women's senior teams. She played both Juniors and Seniors in 1991, starting the season in Third Grade Women's and finishing it in Second Grade where she won the Second Grade Players' Player award, quite an achievement in her first season as a 15-year-old.

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The following year Helen played First Grade and we won the Eastern Districts competition for the first time. She continued to play First Grade from 1992-2001 and then from 2004-2011. Helen played her last season for the Club in Second Grade in 2014 when her young family moved to the Central Coast. She had clocked up 402 games and bookended her playing career at the Club by winning the team's Most Consistent Player Award.

Helen began her work on the Women's Committee when she was 18 taking on the role of Women's Junior Convenor, assisting in the transition for girls into the senior ranks. This was a new position back then and has paid dividends for the Club in terms of retention of our home-grown junior players.

Helen was Club Captain from 2004 until 2006, winning the Molly Wark Trophy for the most outstanding Clubwoman for her efforts in 2006. She continued on the Women's Committee as Secretary in 2007 and 2008. In 2009 she took on the role of Women's Convenor, a position she held until 2011. Her outstanding commitment and contribution were recognised during this time when she was awarded the Molly Wark Trophy in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Helen has also held the positions of Registrar and SWHL delegate on the Women's Committee. She also attained her Level 2 umpiring accreditation and umpired for the Club as well as playing. Helen's move to the Central Coast has meant that she plays her hockey there, still playing First Grade for the Gosford City Hockey Club and Masters Over 40s with some of her former Glebe team-mates.

However, she has continued to be involved in the Women's area of the Club as a selector since 2016 where she makes a highly valuable contribution with her honesty, her fine organisational skills and her excellent hockey knowledge.

Being a Life Member is much more than simply having a list next to your name of playing achievements and committee positions that you've held. It's also about demonstrating the essential components of Club spirit and identity in the way you've played those games and worked with other members for their benefit and the promotion of the Club.

Helen has played life like she plays hockey with a tough never-say-die determination to always make your best effort, even when things are not going your way. She has been an outstanding role model for all Club members in her demeanour, her integrity, her stoicism in the face of adversity, her dedication and courage on the field and off it.

It has been my personal privilege to play hockey with Helen, to watch and support her considerable efforts over many years to make hockey for the women at Glebe enjoyable, possible and successful, and now to recommend her to you, our members, for the conferring of Life Membership, an honour which she very much deserves.

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