

Brother Macartan Keegan

Founder of the Glebe District Hockey Club

A collection of all known historical material related to the life and times of Patrician Brother, Macartan Keegan, born 3 January 1985 in Galway Ireland. Keegan died on the 12 April 1941 at Lahore, which at that time was part of India and the capitol city of the Punjab Region of the country. In 1947 predominantly Muslim Pakistan was separated from predominantly Hindu India and Lahore is now the second largest city in Pakistan.

Wark

From: "Michael Tapsell"
To: <awark@bigpond.net.au>
Sent: Sunday, 8 February 2004 12:49 PM
Subject: macartan keegan

BROTHER MAURICE MACARTAN KEEGAN

Michael Keegan, known to his friends as Maurice, was born in Galway, on the West coast of Ireland, in 1885, into a Catholic working class family. After being educated through the Catholic school system in Galway, he decided he wanted to become a pupil teacher, and after qualification took a post as Assistant in a National School at Drogheda, Ireland. However, he decided after two years of teaching to join the Patrician Brothers, possibly as a chance to educate others around the world. After taking his vows in August 1908, he adopted his religious name Macartan and was told he was to be transferred to St. George's College in the Punjab region of India one month later.

It was a tough call for Br. Keegan, as 1.2 million Indians had died of the plague the year before, with many refusing inoculation as they saw it as a threat worse than the disease it could heal. Also, India at the time was under British rule and unrest was starting to occur in various regions of Punjab. Shyamji Krishnavarma, editor of the *Indian Sociologist*, wrote in 1909, "I solemnly warn anyone against the risks they run by going to India in these troubled times, since every Englishman who goes there is regarded as a potential enemy by the Indian Nationalist party and its supporters." At only 23 Br. Keegan's job would have been to educate Hindus on the benefits of Catholicism and Western education, something that would have been entirely different to the people of Punjab, and would have been an enormous challenge.

While Br. Keegan would have learnt a lot about himself and other cultures, it was in the Punjab where he learnt a game that he is now famous for playing and establishing: hockey. It is a testament to Br. Keegan that he not only learnt from the people of Mussoorie (a town in Punjab) how to play hockey, but he became so good that he was selected in the All Indian hockey team, a great effort considering India at the time were undisputed world champions.

Br. Keegan continued to serve the Patrician Brothers during WWI, in which many Indians were conscripted to fight for the British cause, and was in India to see the rise of India's most famous man, Mohandas Gandhi. With the Indian plight against the British continuing, Keegan returned home for a holiday in 1926, only to find the Irish Republican movement in full cry. In his home of Galway, after a British policeman was murdered, three IRA men were seized in the middle of the night, and were shot dead. This was far from an isolated incident and Keegan's wish to return to a peaceful homeland was not granted. However, he remained in Ireland for two years as Principal at the Secondary school at Mallow, before transfer to Australia in 1929.

While Australia may have experienced less violence than Ireland or India, these were not easy times, as the Great Depression hit many Australians hard. During this time, Br. Keegan introduced hockey to the various schools he taught at, no doubt as a way for people to escape the burdens of everyday life. At Holy Cross Ryde, he instituted hockey as a sport for boys and men, and in 1929 both teams reached the semis. Then, in 1930 the A team went through undefeated with Br. Keegan as captain-coach, winning the Premiership 4-0 and scoring 83 goals to 10 against. He was described in the Holy Cross Ryde newsletter as "Centre half and trainer of the team, who employed knowledge of the game which he learnt when playing in India, with extremely good results. Always a hard player, and usually at his best when his team was hard put." No doubt over the years Br Keegan had to come through much adversity. This experience would have helped him enormously on the hockey field.

In 1931 he was transferred to Forest Lodge, Glebe, to teach, and there he established the St. James Sports Club Hockey Team with a group of students, some current, some graduated. Being the only player with experience, he was captain coach, and was described as being "tough crafty and as hard as nails, but always fair." In their inaugural year the team went on to claim the B grade Premiership, winning the Kippax Cup. The team was promoted to A grade 2nd division the next year. Br. Keegan, aged 47, did not take the field, instead focusing on coaching the team. It came as no surprise that they won the competition that year also, this time undefeated. The following year the

club was awarded District Status, as it had a first and third grade team, and became known as the Glebe District Hockey Club, thus Br. Keegan became the club's founder and patron, as he continued to serve Glebe until 1937, "providing yeoman service to the club", as one report noted. Br Keegan's influence on Glebe Hockey was; his tough Irish play, but always fair, (let's not forget – he was a man of God!); his belief in short passing and combinations rather than individual brilliance; his determination to instil the notion of 'no train, no game', and his general enjoyment and love of the game, which included having a beer afterwards with team-mates and opposition. The Glebe Club has since flourished, well over 10 000 people have played for the club that has since won 26 first grade, and numerous lower grade Premierships. It is written in *Under the Arches*, the history of the Glebe Hockey Club that "the hockey tradition in Glebe owes much to Macartan Keegan, who became something of a folk hero in the district". This period of Br. Keegan's time in Sydney would certainly have been his most relaxed, as Australia recovered from the Depression.

However, as Br. Keegan had spent so much of his adult life in India, the desire to return became too much, and he left Australia for St. George's College, Mussoorie, in 1938. He was instantly back into the action, as in the Punjab region there were violent religious clashes between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, and continuing protests over the British rule by Muslim tribes. Br. Keegan moved to St. Anthony's, Lahore, where there was demand for an independent Muslim state which meant greater violence in the region, with the death toll nearing 100 a day. With the outbreak of WWII and many Indians jailed for protests against British rule, the violence perhaps became too much for the 56 year-old Br. Keegan, and he died in Lahore of hypertension (high blood pressure) on April 12, 1941. There is little doubt he continued to be interested in hockey when he returned to India, and would have told many of the club he established back in Glebe. So much that his gravestone reads, "Introduced hockey into Australia."

Endnote: In a testament to the Brother from Galway, The Glebe Hockey Club established The Brother Maurice Macartan Keegan Trophy for "the Junior Player who constantly plays an unselfish team game, supports their mates, never gives up and is able to accept victory and defeat equally."



Records:

Mr Les Wark
Secretary
Glebe District Hockey Club
12 Sisters Cres
DRUMMOYNE NSW 2037

Received May
2003

Dear Mr Wark,

Following a visit by Brother Stephen Sweetman and Mr Kevin Scott to gather information on Brother Macartan Keegan-founder of the Glebe District Hockey Club – a proposal was put to the Brothers that we explore the idea of donating a trophy in perpetuity.

Perhaps a trophy called the “Brother Macartan Keegan” Award for whatever the club thinks suitable? May I suggest that the matter is discussed at your next meeting and a response sent to myself indicating if and how you would like to proceed.

Thanking you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

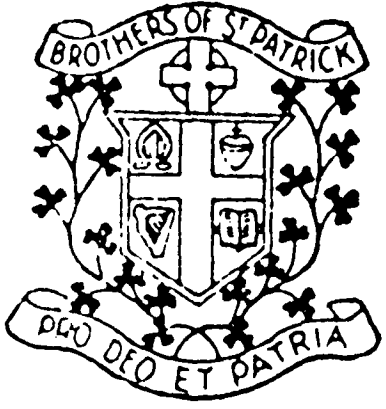
Brother Paul O'Keeffe -

Brother Paul O'Keeffe fsp
PROVINCIAL

P.S. Jim Oman, Junior Convenor in 1994, donated a Trophy in Perpetuity to honour the Founder of the Glebe District Hockey Club, Brother Macartan Keegan. Brother O'Keeffe informed.
See Junior Annual Reports for Trophy Recipients.



PATRICIAN BROTHERS' GENERALATE



Tullow Hill, Tullow, Co. Carlow, Ireland.

Tel: (0503) 51190. I.S.D. 353-503-51190

05.7. July 1996

Dear Mr Scott,

It's just over two months since I had your letter + the copies of 'The Green Book' which you so kindly forwarded for an archive. I should have thanked you long since but for your request for info on Bro Macartan Keegan which arrived at a time when I was struggling with five other such. Now, at last, I have a thumb-nail sketch comprising everything entered on him in our Annals. I hope it meets your requirements.

With thanks for your kindness & interest, and with sincere apologies for the long delay I remain

Sincerely yours

Bro James Walker.

BRO MACARTAN MICHAEL KEEGAN 1885-1941

Source: Patrician Annals, Vol 1

p. 38 (Summary):

NAME: Michael Keegan. Parents Names: Not Entered.
Address: Bowling Green, Galway [City, Ireland].
Born: 03 January 1885. Entered: 01 Sept. 1906
Religious Name: Macartan. 1st Profession: 15 Aug 1908
Final Profession: 07 January 1912. †
Date of Death: 12 Apl 1941. Place: Lahore [Pakistan].
Cause of Death: Blood Pressure.

p.43: SEPT 1908: Sailed [with two others] for India, via Genoa.

p.112 APL 1926: Home Vacation. Was retained for work in Ireland.

p.323 NOV 1937: Transferred from Australia to India.

p.330 OBITUARY [Written by Bro. Boniface Carroll, Tullow, Irl]

MICHAEL KEEGAN was born at Bowling Green, Galway, on 3rd January 1885 and entered our Brotherhood at Tullow on 1st September 1906. He took 1st Temporary Vows on 15th August 1908 and Final Vows on 7th January 1910. †
He was educated at the Brothers' Primary school and at St. Joseph's Seminary, Nuns' Island, Galway. Having passed the Public Examinations of the Intermediate Board of Education he became a Pupil Teacher with the Brothers at Lombard St. Monastery School, Galway, and after qualification took a post as Assistant in a National School at Drogheda, [Co. Louth]. This he resigned after two years in order to join the Patrician Brothers at Tullow, [Co. Carlow]. Professed in August 1908 he was transferred to the Indian Province in September of that year, remaining there until 1926 when he had his first vacation at home. He was then appointed Principal at the Secondary School, Mallow, [Co. Cork] where he remained two years before transfer to Australia. †
In 1938 he returned to India, going first to St. George's College, [UP], and later to St. Anthony's, Lahore [modern Pakistan]. RIP.

Compiler's Note: Entries in square brackets [] do not appear in the original, and are added by way of explanation.

"The Bowling Green" [otherwise Saunder's Lane] was immediately to the rear of the Brother's Monastery, Lombard St. Galway. The fact that the boy attended Primary School at Nuns' Island, where a small fee was payable, may indicate that his parents were slightly better off.

The term "National School" indicates a Primary School in connection with the Government's "Commissioners for National Education, Ireland", i.e. receiving State Aid.

The dearth of information in the Obituary indicates that Bro. Boniface did not have any personal knowledge of Bro. Macartan.

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* 1929/30 RYSE

1932/37 FOREST LODGE

+ NOTE VARIANCE IN DATE -

o Bro BONIFACE CARROLL
IN AUSTRALIA 1903/19

MY NOTES
KS.



HOCKEY



This year, for the first time in the history of the College, hockey was introduced. The introduction of the game was due to the Rev. Bro. McCarten, who arrived this year from India. In India he took an active interest in the game and when he arrived here he was anxious to see how Holy Cross would like the game. Inside a month he had two teams playing regularly in competition, and for a new club their results were remarkable. Out of twenty-six matches played by the A team only five were lost. In this team the most outstanding members were: H. Johansen, J. Connolly, F. Page, P. Maher, R. Browne and F. Bailey. Bro. McCarten himself played in the forward line and it was mainly due to his tuition and encouragement that the team attained such a degree of proficiency. As a forward P. Maher was most conspicuous because of the record number of goals he netted. Five in one match was his best.

The second team, owing to their lack of weight, were not nearly so successful, but put up a few great fights. Their defeat of North Sydney was a very creditable performance. Out of seventeen matches they won nine. Their best members were: E. Reardon, S. Wanless, T. O'Donnell and R. Richardson.

J. Connolly, the captain of the first team, secured his position as left back in the State junior eleven, which met Queensland at Rushcutter's Bay Oval on August 3. There were 105 nominations from the various clubs and of our own five candidates Connolly was successful. This may be regarded as a record, and for a team which had only been playing a mere five months it was a remarkable privilege to have a representative in a State eleven.

Of the non-competition matches the one most appreciated by the students was that

against the runners-up of the A grade competition, Northern Districts. This match, although we were well beaten, provided our players with experience and taught them many new strokes and ideas. During the stay of the Queenslanders, the Hockey Association arranged for them to meet a combined team from Teachers' College and Holy Cross College, on the H.C.C. Oval. The home team, however, was too weak and were beaten by five points to two.

The following is the personnel of the team:

J. Connolly (capt.). An excellent skipper. A hefty, hard-hitting player, sound in tackling and clearing and possessing the qualifications of an inter-State player.

H. Johansen. A heady full-back and a good tackler. No one but a suicidist gets in front of Harry when he executes one of his famous "stoves."

N. Fox. A good half-back, especially skilled in tackling. A good man when things do not look too rosy. An expert "stover."

P. Maher. The team's best forward. A fast man and an exceptionally good shot.

J. Ryan. A fast man and a hard man to tackle. Seems to have a special knack in getting maimed.

R. Browne. A very heady forward who can manipulate his club uncannily. Most difficult to tackle.

Frank Page. The goalie. Frank never misses a "shot" unless it is an impossibility. Was unfortunate not to get his place in the State team.

F. Bailey. A fine right-half. Good tackler and quick on his feet.