

NSW DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

‘Millers Point Oral History Project’

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE:	Patricia Phillips
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00:00 START OF TAPE MP-SM8 SIDE A

00:03 Tape Identification

So Patricia, could you start perhaps by explaining to me what your background here in Millers Point is, when does it start with your family?

00:38 Well, I was living in Melbourne for about thirty years and then I came to Sydney

about 1970 and I had finished with a publishing company and the Argyle Arts Centre was to be opened and I became manager, I managed it for the first two years of its life. That started me off with the connection here in The Rocks.

What activities were going on at the Argyle Arts Centre?

01:10 It is a beautiful old building, have you not seen it, it is lovely. The concept was the very best of copper, enamel, leather, everything in that arts and crafts form that we could find. They had little stalls and a bookstall and a little restaurant, Mary Reiby's Restaurant, and the whole concept was to have them using their craft and people being able to see it. Well that just doesn't work, it was too crowded for them so in the end they just displayed their goods and sold them. Thousands used to come through, school children and adults and God knows what and it was a busy time.

So The Rocks then in 1970 was quite a big tourist destination?

02:04 Well it was just starting to become aware of its being, it was just starting to get to American tourists and things, and this was part of the basis of it.

Didn't you organise the Argyle Celebrations?

02:19 I didn't organise them, Shirley Ball organised them, but there was a committee of about ten of us and she had to have that because it was a huge organisation. The concept came from the fountain up in Argyle Square, which was built in 1869 and Shirley suddenly realised it was a hundred years so she conceived this idea of having a big parade through the streets and letting the charities come in, have a little space, for ten dollars each and they would keep everything they took that day, that is all we ever charged them. It grew and it grew and it grew. We had 'Caroline Chisholm' leading the parade. Marking that out, the night before along Hickson Road was some job. Everybody wanted into the act after a few years, we had Len London as the commentator all day, beautiful radio voice, up on the Square. Then we appointed a Governor of The Rocks for the year, a phoney governor. We had a banner made and all that sort of thing.

Was the Governor Frank Hyde?

03:29 One of the Governors was Frank Hyde. Sam McMahon, John Pierce, Bruce Webster, Bruce was the first, quite a selection of them. The idea was before the actual day we gathered the people that wanted to be involved and whoever raised the most money honestly became the Governor of The Rocks. So all these people, like Dawn Fraser, all sorts of people, lots of TV people, used to have their little groups. One year they decided they'd just give us a cheque and we said, 'No way, you didn't earn that,' and they couldn't believe

we gave it back to them, we were serious you had to do it. Then we had a paper in connection with that, Shirley wrote it, and that kept us all up-to-date. And a pub crawl, which was the first year, and you went round each pub and you had a prize the next day, well of course that developed into a free-for-all. By the end of ten years we'd had enough and we couldn't control them, they were drunk and disorderly, it just got too big. But it was a fascinating day, it really was.

It sounds like that was the beginning of the community starting to promote the place.

04:52 Well it made the community very aware, it did awaken them. Everybody loved it, thousands of people came down, thousands.

Where were you living Patricia at that time?

In the shop at 121 George Street, above the shop.

You didn't mention the shop, what was the shop?

05:16 121 George Street North, which is just down near the old police cells, was the Lion's Head. I brought it from a Greek and it was pretty dilapidated and he was anxious to sell. I'd had enough of the Argyle, I couldn't take it any more, it was like an eight to midnight thing because we having art shows. Strangely enough a dear old friend who was my music teacher decided she'd like a little bit of a change so we went into this business and it was going fairly cheaply, it was all I could afford, and he was gorgeous. He went home and he said, 'I told my wife I sold the business and there is a woman and she looks just like the Queen,' and this became a standard joke. However, we battled on and Frankie was still teaching so we brought a piano in and she used to give an odd lesson, but that didn't work. Then Val came to the rescue and we had such fun, we really did, and all sorts of people came in there.

It was a sandwich shop, was it?

06:27 Yes a simple sandwich shop. I used to bake the teacakes and the date loaves and God knows what and Val used to make the patés and things, so there was a lot of homemade stuff. We had a lot of clientele from the New South Wales Water Police, they were just down on the Harbour's edge there, they used to ring us up, we opened at seven, and they'd say, 'Trish, twenty of us want twenty 'dribbles', bacon and egg, in a hurry. Be up in about half an hour.' Val and I would get to and there'd be eggs and bacon sizzling away and they liked them soft, that is why they called them 'dribbles'. All sorts of things like that, it was good fun.

So you would have really seen the community really beating around you, you would have seen the

residents and the tourists from that shop.

07:25 Oh yes. Well, the tourists are five times as many now. It was 1972 to 1976, then the recession came and round in the Argyle the engineers and architects, I had a few contacts there as customers, and the Maritime Services Board was open, we had fairly strong support but it was dwindling a bit. We really needed to spend more on the place and we were tired too, by that time.

What other kind of milk bars or sandwich bars were there in the area?

08:21 Oh, there was one that closed down very shortly, very ordinary stuff, we put real meat in our sandwiches, we always put a slice too much in. We had another friend, Sally Clough, who helped us and she was a business lady and she used to give us a kick and say, 'Take that off,' and we'd say, 'No, we can't. I mean that is profit but we didn't care, I couldn't serve a mean sandwich and neither could Val, we were just known for that. I tell you who used to love our sandwiches that was the musician, I can't think of his name, he is extremely well-known, Don Burrows, people like that used to wander in.

Around that time, 1971, I think it was, the Green Bans had started down The Rocks.

09:24 It was 1972 or 1973, I think it was our second year or something like that that the action day came.

Tell me what you remember about that, because it is a big day now in retrospect.

09:38 It was huge. Jack Munday had mustered the Builders' Labourers and they were up trees and down dales and things. We couldn't move from the shop. Then the Police Force came down and I kid you not, we served about three hundred police that day at least, we just kept seeing this flood of faces, we were going like steam, it was great, it was fun but it was serious. Shirley Ball and Nita McRae and lots of other people were also well behind all that, they had to be.

So how do you think the Green Bans impinged on the community, were the community really up in arms and behind them?

10:22 I believe they were, yes. I wasn't quite in touch until I got into the celebrations bit really and truly but they were. Shirley was adamant about preserving The Rocks as much as she could because they had a big plan to buy it up.

The government was going to redevelop it.

It was definitely there.

You say the police were there, was there any sort of hostility on that day?

10:54 A little bit but nothing much, nothing serious that I am aware of.

So after you had the sandwich shop from 1972 to 1976 what did you go on to do then, is that when you went and bought the residential?

11:13 No, I didn't get the residential until 1979. By this time I was about fifty and I'd had twelve years nursing and I'd been in a publishing company, I'd worked in a bank and I thought to go back into the workforce now, I thought I hadn't had any family, I'd look out for a family who needs help. I mentioned it to Shirley one day and of course the next day she is speaking to this woman who said, 'Oh my God, Harry's wife has just died,' blah, blah, blah, 'they need someone to go and look after them.' So Shirley rings and she said, 'I think I've got just the family for you,' and I said, 'Well who is it?' She said, 'Well dad is a lawyer, a solicitor, he is nearly blind and he can't drive cars or do anything, he has very, very poor eyesight, and he has two boys and a girl.' I said, 'Okay,' and I went there for thirteen years and I saw them right through, particularly the little girl she was only four, saw her right through to her Leaving, Higher School Certificate. Then I just sort of said it was my life now, but that was good, it was good experience.

Where were they living?

12:33 At Dover Heights. I moved them to Edgecliff because Harry had some units there and I thought oh God, you know, Dover Heights it was way out of the city a bit, one bus every so often, I did all the driving. Steps down, the stairs, and I thought this is ridiculous, for their future they could divide these six units up, one for Keira, one for Douglas, one for Max and Harry, and then have a big living area, so we transferred them there and that was very much better for them. The kids could be there but they had their independence, it hasn't quite happened that way but that was the general theory.

So that was a big change then to come back to Millers Point.

13:32 Well it was but it was good for me. I'd be hanging out the washing and thinking 'God what I am doing' but I suppose it is no less boring than opening envelopes or something and I just took it that way. Keira went to St Catherine's, Douglas went to Sydney Grammar, way out of his depth, and Max had had a terrible accident, we won't go into all that, he was slightly retarded and he was at Cranbrook. I thought the only way I can help Keira is to join the parents because it was 1945 when I left school, 1944, so I did all that and I became President of the thing eventually and about eight years solidly I did this. But then I met people and it was good for me, it was like bringing up a family, I was very involved. Some weekends I had a break but I was there most of the time.

Did you keep in touch with your friends like Shirley here?

Shirley died.

Shirley died later, didn't she?

Yes, much later but no, I don't see them, we won't go into that. It was just a mutual parting.

So what brought you back to Millers Point in 1979?

14:43 Well I had bought this unit by then you see, because I was there from 1977 to 1989 and I bought the unit in 1979, the lease I mean.

The lease on the residential.

15:00 Yes. It didn't look anything like this. There are four floors to all these units and there were three units above with only one bathroom and one toilet. I only every had three tenants and I'd keep the attic for when I wanted to stay in town, or someone was visiting that wanted to use it. I kept it to a minimum because of that bathroom situation. Goodness me, it is hard to get good tenants, we will leave it at that.

Well what sort of people were they, I am interested in the tenants, who would want to stay?

15:37 Well one was a so-called friend, another was mother of a friend, they came and went a bit, the other fellow ended up being disgusting. Once the Department came into it we did not have proper access because they could either continue to pay the leaseholder, the tenants, or they could pay the Department of Housing. Well you knew they weren't paying you, but you had no idea if they were really paying the Department because they wouldn't tell you, they could have been living free, I don't know. It was just terrible, you had no access, you had no control over it.

Just take me through that because I think we start off in 1979, you get the head tenancy and I think it is 1985 when the Department of Housing takes over.

16:42 Oh no, 1980, it was quite soon after. I had more or less no sooner bought it than bingo, in they came, about 1980.

Did you envisage it as a way of keeping yourself?

I envisaged it as living here with a friend or whoever, just the two of us, it was my investment for my old age, but the government just eroded it away from me and I mean that.

Tell me how you felt about that, I mean when did you get news that they were going to change the rules?

17:20 Overnight. Apparently somebody put a notice down near the Harbourview Hotel, 'Lease for Sale for Forty-Five Thousand Dollars,' which was ridiculous. That stirred Jack Ferguson, he was walking down, and he thought 'my God'. Well it was awful, that stirred the

possums, so to speak. So back they went and decided everybody out, all those leaseholders have got to go, poof overnight, truly overnight, we had a couple of days. All hell broke loose because about thirty of us it was a small income for us. We were responsible for all the inside of the places. It was a perfect deal with the Maritime Services Board at that time, a gentleman's agreement, as long as you didn't have riff-raff in here and you were paying your rent there was no questions asked. But you were responsible for the interiors, to keep them decent. We then had to have solicitors, it was eight years of a liability rather than an asset, we all clubbed in but there was thousands of dollars worth of barristers between us because we kept going to court until we won, we persisted until we won, because it was so unfair.

Was Jack Ferguson in the government?

18:51 He was in the government. We have heard, and I think it is pretty accurate, that Neville Wran, who was Premier, and Sid Londish had this master plan to buy up all this stuff, truly, it has been verified quite a bit. As far as I am aware that is accurate. Unfortunately for Sid Sally and I happened to be a birthday party one night and met him before he had done this dirty deed, 'Oh, you come from The Rocks,' he says, 'Yes,' we said with a big grin. He said, 'Oh, you're my friends,' and I said, 'Are we?' He said, 'Oh yes.' Little did he know he let the cat out of the bag more or less, he didn't exactly say it, but I thought whee, what are you up to.

How did the tenants feel about the changes, did they have any ideas?

19:56 Shocking, some of them had lived here for years. I must admit some of them were not in good condition, we admitted that, and we were aware of that, but quite a few of them were looking after the places properly. We had to fight it because what are you supposed to do, where are you supposed to go? No money, no compensation. I remember one meeting particularly, where they called us all together and this blasted fellow kept talking about our stock, our furniture and personal stuff, 'You'll have to move all your stock out,' until someone got up and said, 'Would you cease calling our personal possessions stock please.' That is the sort of attitude they had, they were going to divide them up into little rooms.

So who was the driving force?

Shirley Ball.

What sort of a woman was she?

20:54 She was our activist, she was a terrific woman. She was extremely well-known

around the place for thirty-odd years. She was the one who organised the celebrations and she loved The Rocks, she had a passion for them. She had lived here for years and years and years, one of her brothers owned Bryant (?) House, had a lease on it, the whole family were here and she was determined it wasn't going to lose its character, preserve it.

Without being unreasonable she always negotiated, Shirley, if you say something, you don't want that, you've got to have something ready to put in its place, an alternative, and she was excellent at it. She could ring up Frank Sartor, she could ring up anybody, and they'd respond, she was known, she was extremely well-known.

Did the battle of the landladies, as I know it was called...

That is what it became known as and that is what it was. The men did a little bit but the ladies were the ones who did the agitating.

Did that get the same kind of support as the whole preservation of The Rocks campaign had had?

21:59 It was very difficult to get any story on us because people perceived as us being greedy, living on public land and making lots of money and not looking after the houses, you see, it was all the wrong way around a bit. There were some, we admit quite honestly, that were not up to scratch but that doesn't excuse the fact that they can be brought up to scratch all right so we persisted in our court case. We had to do an enormous amount with the Ombudsman, everybody, they were finally the ones. We had two barristers and a solicitor, we had to. Finally after all that length of time we won every court case because they weren't prepared, the Department, they just used to think they would win but they didn't.

So how did it finally pan out?

22:56 We got a twenty year lease divided into ten years by ten years. We were so tired of it all by that time, we shouldn't have accepted that, we should have said twenty years without any interruption, we were so tired and so sick of fighting we accepted that and that was fair enough, I guess. At the end of ten years they come in and evaluate again and up goes your rent, they work steadily at pushing you out.

So you got ten years with the Department of Housing, did the tenants pay direct to the Department?

You paid the major rent, you still could let rooms but you had to pay the base rent.

How did the rents compare to what you had been paying before under the MSB?

23:53 The rents didn't go up immediately but slowly over a period of time they kept going up a little bit. At the end of ten years they came again and of course the valuation was

much higher. One of the funny moments was about the third or fourth year of the battle, Shirley says, 'Write banners,' so we had a banner made right along the whole of Lower Fort Street, that was some effort. Sally has the biggest place down at number 9 and she stitched the sides up, she'd be on the machine, Shirley was marvellous, she'd just scribble out the slogan or whatever it was and we'd be all there with our paintbrushes, filling them in and then Sandy used to hang them up. We did that and that really frightened hell out of the Department because then the public could see what was happening so down they came. They spent about a year up there and she said, 'Christmas time girls, we'll fool them,' and she got the words for 'Happy Christmas' in every language she could think of and put them up and of course the Department didn't know what some of them meant and they are all standing there going, 'My God, what's all this,' and all it was was 'Happy Christmas'. God, that took some doing, hours and hours.

So she was a pretty cluey activist wasn't she.

25:27 She'd been at it for many, many years, she knew exactly how to go about it. She was on Sydney Hospital, she was extremely well-known there. As I say, her negotiations were excellent, she'd be rational about it, she wouldn't have fiery meetings. We had a Resident Action Meeting every month, she would have no nonsense there at all, 'We negotiate firmly, but properly.' If she sent a letter to Carr or whoever it is she'd send it to everybody else you can think of at the same time, the Opposition and everybody.

Were all the landladies united?

26:14 Oh yes, we had to be, united we stand, divided we fall. They dribbled out after a while but in the end we were successful but it was very exhausting, I can tell you. I was out at Dover Heights, looking after the kids, I'd get in as much as I could. I didn't go to the court cases, I just couldn't spare the time, but Sally and a couple of others were absolutely right on the spot all the time.

So then Patricia, when did you come to live here?

1990.

What is your situation now then?

26:51 Well I was very fortunate from an unfortunate point of view. I've know this family, for sixty-four years I've been friends with them, and the elder son and his wife and two children had been very successful in business in Brisbane and they came to Sydney to expand and they went crash, we all went crash at the same time, they went bankrupt. I said, 'Well look, we've got a derelict house between us, just throw everything out, it is

disgusting.' Ian said, 'Well okay, at least we are in the heart of the city, at least we can function from there.' So they came, which was marvellous because I had people I could live with and I didn't have to have locked doors, they could use the courtyard, so they came and they are still there. Di now manages Darling House, which is the nursing home place.

I've met Di because we interviewed Harry Lapham over there. I've met her, she is terrific, it is a lovely place over there.

28:11 Well she was teaching before she was married and then she was working at Hermes just to fill in. Then Shirley one day said, 'Do you think Di would be interested?' We had a lass in there who was not at all suitable, she was a trained nurse and we thought we really don't need a trained nurse for there and she was off. Anyhow, a couple of years we managed to slide her sideways and to my surprise Di was interested, I thought she wouldn't be interested, so that was fine. Of course Molly the dog goes over there every day and Di does a fantastic job, couldn't be better, better than any trained nurse because she is not governed by all that stuff, she is really terrific.

So you've got this family living in part of the house.

Well they are family, really.

Then Val, who is your old colleague and friend?

No, she lives at Drummoyne.

Sorry, so the house is between you and these family friends.

29:20 Yes, it couldn't be better, I tell you, it is just bliss. Of course Cameron is now married and Felicity is at university and most of the time there is only the three of us. It is just gorgeous it really is.

29:44 END OF TAPE MP-SM8 SIDE A

29:47 START OF TAPE MP-SH8 SIDE B

So now that you are with the Department of Housing as a landlord how are you finding them?

30:02 They are fine as far as I'm concerned. In the end I had to relinquish my lease, they put the rent up, they doubled the rent virtually, well there was no way I could charge Di

and Ian or anybody that sort of rent and give me a little bit of income so I had to relinquish it. In the end that negotiation is fine, I have a life tenancy here and it protects Di and Ian, they can stay there as long as I'm here, so as a long-term arrangement it was fine. I just pay the rent and we've done all the hack work and I just don't fuss, just leave it at that.

Who paid for all the renovations?

We did all this.

At your expense?

30:50 Yes, thousands of dollars. That extension was on but it was all derelict, I had to start again, it was fourteen thousand bucks worth to rebuild it. Di had painted throughout. You wouldn't know upstairs, it is now comfortable and reasonable.

What about the area, the people in the street, how is it to be living here now?

31:17 I find it fine, there is a few odd-bods but there is always an odd-bod somewhere. We are in the height of a tourist area and I don't mind it, I think it is fine. There is quite a variety of people living here and of course the demographics are changing, with the Walsh Bay development and all sorts of different types of people are coming in now. All the ancient, real Rocks people, you have got to live here forever and two generations to be a Rocks person, but no, it is a very good community by and large.

Some people I have spoken to feel that there isn't the same sense of, I suppose people looking out for each other that their used to be, the same sense of tight-knit community, have you noticed that?

32:09 Look, the shop next door, they see me pull up in a taxi, they come and help me, Ivan the licensee of the Hero walks me home, everybody helps and that is the way it is, isn't it, everybody helps. There is an odd one in the community, whether they live in The Rocks or anywhere, they'll live by themselves, but by and large it is a very caring community.

So how would you like to see the future of Millers Point?

32:08 I think it is to a stage where it is pretty good but I'm realistic enough to know that this sort of Housing Department thing can't go on forever, these places need wealthy people looking after them. I really think that no harm is done if they go on a ninety-nine year lease under the condition that they can't touch the facades and they really look after the houses. I would say if you have got to pay a big sum of money like that wealthy people will by and large look after the places and keep them restored and I think that is the realistic approach, I don't think this sort of situation can go on much longer. It depends on how they want to work it of course, I can't control that. A lot of people would not like that

but I see that as being quite a reasonable protection into the future.

How do you feel about the end of the Patrick's lease down on the waterfront? Patricks are stopping work next year on the waterfront - how do you think that will affect things?

33:49 Well, we are trying to fight that. We've got one member in the community who is great at research and he has been burrowing in there with all the other people concerned and we've already had one big meeting at the Town Hall with Clover and O'Keefe, and a union fellow, and a shipping fellow, and a journalist and the Treasurer of the Opposition, big panel, and that was jam-packed. So next time the meeting comes it is in the whole of the Town Hall and we felt a glimmer of hope that we might win, we just don't know, but we are trying to fight it a bit.

Why is it so important to fight it?

34:40 Because Carr has just blankly announced that Sydney will no longer be a working port, well it has been a working port since its inception. You hear these horror stories of shipping stuff to Newcastle, or Port Stephens, or Botany and then what happens, you have these huge trucks. You get the goods to the port and you've got to transport them back in these huge trucks, it is just insane, it just doesn't make one atom of sense. Newcastle can't take any more than it is taking, I understand, there is always a backlog up there. It is a money-grab, this millions of dollars worth of land he is grabbing to sell off for real estate, there is no two ways about it. Just to hear the chug of the odd big tankers coming in, it is a lovely sound. Could you imagine the horrors of it? It can be both, properly controlled it can be a pleasure harbour, it works now as a pleasure and a busy port harbour.

Are there any down sides to the working harbour, what about the noise?

35:55 That is what I am just saying - there is not that much noise. I mean what are you going to do about noise, it is a fact of life and it doesn't go on for twenty-four hours a day. Sally's kitchen overlooks the Harbour and you are just sitting there, and there is just this little chug, chug, chug and a huge tanker or container will go by. It is not like the blast of people drilling, or something like that. There is a bit of noise down Hickson Road way, where the trucks come in to pick up but that is away from most of the residential area. Of course it would be in the way if they want to make it residential all along there.

So how has the Walsh Bay development worked? You said that new people were coming into the area but is there a sense of the old residents and the new people mixing?

36:47 There were many against it but this paddock, as we call it still was a paddock. It was just a rat-infested rubbishy heap of nothing, absolutely nothing, and the old warehouses were becoming derelict, they were just shut, so it was a perfectly reasonable idea. Took

nearly twenty years, I might add, tenders came and went forever. Eventually Transfield and Mirvac got hold of it and they have done a magnificent job with it. Through Shirley and architects and people we have negotiated and they have kept the facades of all the old wharves and things. Have you been down there?

I have just seen it from the ferry.

37:33 It is magnificent. All the old pillars and equipment from the wharves and things is still there, they've done a fantastic job. They won something like thirty-odd design prizes all over the world for it. It doesn't intrude, it has improved the whole area, it is just a delight. This of course is five times better than it ever was, Downshire Street is a proper street, it used to be a filthy dirty old lane.

Do the people from the new Walsh Bay development mingle with the other people?

38:07 Well not so much from Walsh Bay but from Kent Street, the high-rise people, they have been very active with us. We haven't yet managed to draw that Walsh Bay crowd in, it will probably come, it will have to come. Well, it is fairly new and they are busy settling into the area, I guess, and we haven't tried terribly hard but it will eventually come, I'm sure.

So Patricia you've been associated with the area for about thirty-five years, what would you say are the biggest changes that you've noticed in that time?

38:45 Well Walsh Bay for starters and just a few odd buildings that are going, but not a huge amount. Certainly more tourists etcetera around. Of course the Argyle Centre is no longer, that is shops whatever, it has never been successful, but by and large it is much the same.

In the old days a lot of people who lived here used to work on the waterfront or in associated industries but now a very small percentage seems to work on the waterfront.

39:22 I would say practically zilch, I am not sure, but you are right, they were mostly waterside workers but I'd say there'd be very few left that do that now.

So where do people work?

All along Lower Fort Street there are young girls and boys in offices, there is a solicitor down the road, all sorts of people. We've got a much better mix of people, a great variety. One of our old-timers is Molly Dyer on the *Herald*, Geraldine Thomas, she was highly involved with the whole thing.

What about things like the traffic and the tourism, is that intrusive?

40:08 Look, I accept it. I think you are there, you are in the oldest developed part of Australia, you are in the middle of history, and they don't really intrude, a few. Quite a

number walk along here but most of it is down in George Street and down that way and down in Argyle Street. Really, this area here is affected a little bit but not grossly. I mean it is lovely to walk out there and a Yank will say, 'How do you get there?' or something, it is fine. If you are going to live in an area like this you must accept that, you can't change the world. It will never be perfect and wherever you go you will get noise, so what the hell.
You sound as though you have really developed a very strong feeling for the place.

41:02 I do, I feel I am most fortunate. You see the Bridge, I love the Bridge, it is a tower of strength. Look, here you are in this beautiful walk down to Walsh Bay, buses, taxis, ferries, all within very easy reach. Get into the city in about two minutes, walk when you are well enough, sort of thing, fantastic.

Do you know your neighbours on Fort Street, what kind of people are they, what do they do?

41:34 Well, there is a Chinese lass and her son next door, don't see much of them, they are quiet ordinary people. Sally Parslow, she was involved, she has one daughter who is just about through her Veterinary Science. Sally is the eyes of the district a bit. There is another family on the end I don't know, Christina and Christopher. I know most of them, not all of them, there is quite a few of them along the street.

Do you still go down to the Hero of Waterloo?

42:09 I love the Hero because I know Ivan and Kay very well now and it is a dear old pub, it is wonderful.

They have music there on a Sunday, don't they?

42:15 Very loud music, the old jazz band or whatever they call them. The old darling, she is damned near eighty, I think, she still plays the trumpet like you wouldn't believe. Have you heard her, she's marvellous? I don't know whether they are there at the moment but they've been there for some time. I don't go to that but I quite often go for a meal there, they serve very good meals there.

Some people worry about pubs, drunkenness, loutishness.

42:48 Well there is a bit of that but see, I'm in a bunker here I don't hear anything. Di and Ian get a little bit of noise up there but it is only momentary. I mean it is a bit annoying, I guess, sometimes when you are sound asleep and it is an Irish pub really, they are all Irish staff, and they get a bit raucous, but by and large it is not that bad. There is better control now, the publicans all ring each other up and say, 'Hey listen, so and so is on their way, you had better stop them, they are a bit full,' or something. It is better controlled but there is always an odd outbreak here and there. That goes on in any area, doesn't matter if you are

in Double Bay or whatever, it goes on.

Just going back to your time when you were running this place in Fort Street as a residential and your tenants, I believe you had Jack Munday as a tenant.

43:48 Well much to my chagrin, and I cringe, Shirley was anxious to break the Labor nexus on the City Council, it was getting too strong, so she says, 'Right, we'll put Munday in, we'll get Munday in. You and Beverley Sutton can go on the ticket.' I said, 'Oh God.' She said, 'You won't have to do anything.' Well, Jack did not have an office and that front flat was empty and I thought oh well, and I said, 'Jack, would you like a little office?' 'Would I what,' so I let him have that. It was bad news, but we won't go into that, and it was really a dismal failure, he didn't do a damned thing. He has got a record of using the Council cars more than anybody else. He did absolutely nothing, to be perfectly honest.

So this was when he was on the Sydney City Council?

44:53 One year it lasted, one year of wasted time. Here I am, I found one the other day and I thought oh my God, here I am with Jack and Beverley. Absolutely useless but there you go, but it served a bit of purpose, it broke it down a bit.

Did he stay here or just work from here?

He lived here and worked here, horror story. Three hours it took a cleaner and I to clean the place out after him, that will do.

With the other tenants, I know they were self-sufficient, you didn't provide meals or anything, but some people talk about their tenants as though they were part of a big extended family.

45:41 Well they are the ones that mostly have bedsitters, see these had a kitchen each. A lot of those other places have a bedroom and a shared kitchen and they changed their linen and stuff like that, but mine were let as little flatettes, so I didn't do any of that.

How did you try and vet the tenants to try and see if they were people that were reliable, not troublesome?

46:11 Have you ever tried. I thought a so-called friend from Pearl Beach might be all right but she was a disaster too. Never mind, it is gone now. They wouldn't ever clean anything, forget it.

Just trying to figure out just for the sake of history and research purposes - do you remember how expensive it was to get the head lease? I mean was it hard?

No it wasn't. A lot of people used advertising but I used to do it by word of mouth.

I mean when you bought the lease for here, or when you acquired the lease, was it very expensive in 1979?

47:05 No, they were quite reasonable, that is one of the reasons why I bought it, they

weren't too bad at all. I think it was thirty thousand, which is pretty good. That was accepted by the previous owner and you, it was just a pure gentleman's agreement, no one was fussed about it, everyone was happy about it.

So this person who tried to sell the lease really put a spanner in the works then, the person who put up the notice down at the Harbourview, that would have started the whole trouble really, wouldn't it?

47:38 Well the woman that put the bloody notice up asked about forty-five thousand, so she started it, unintentionally. That is what stirred everybody up because that was much too high.

How do you feel things have panned out, do you think you did fairly reasonably out of things or do you feel hard done by?

48:07 No, I don't. I feel the government have been unfair perhaps, but in the end I think I'm very, very fortunate, very fortunate. I have ended up living in a good area, a simple little blip, but that will do me, I am cosy and warm. The courtyard is divine, you can sit out there, we've had lots of barbecues and stuff out there - everybody loves it.

Is there anything else that you would like to add for the sake of the interview?

48:42 I just hope life continues on its merry way here, I think it will. The old order fadeth a bit, we are all not getting any younger by any means and Shirley is not with us, and a few of us are not too much longer for this world, I don't think. But times have to change, other people come and go, and there is quite a number round in Kent Street who will keep an eye on it all. It will perceptibly change I guess, I don't know, but I would hope it maintains most of what it has, it is a wonderful area.

Do you think it has enough services to keep residents here? I notice the butcher has closed recently.

49:25 That sort of thing is happening, or has happened, but I think that is almost inevitable too. He was getting older, as far as I am aware most of his trade was to the local restaurants and not too many of the locals. I used to buy from him but he was too expensive for most of the older locals. Good meat but you think of Perry in The Rockpool and places like that, they would have had other suppliers, he would be too small for them, so I think that is probably inevitable.

Well Patricia, thank you very much for participating.

It has been charming to meet you.

Just a postscript, an addendum from Patricia about The Rocks Push, what was it, Patricia?

50:30 Well it was an old meeting ground really, and it served food etcetera. A lot of

people, great friends, who loved discussing art and books and things like that used to meet there, people like that. I had just come to Sydney and we had just produced an Australian arts series, huge volumes on Australian art, and I thought I've got to find somewhere to launch this properly. John Hughes ran The Rocks Push and I met his sister, who ran a little gallery a bit further along in George Street and she said, 'Look, that sounds great Patricia, what about you get in touch with John,' which I did duly and he was delighted.

He had a little restaurant didn't he?

51:19 It was a sort of a little restaurant, wasn't much but it was a great atmosphere. He said, 'Oh yes, I'd be delighted,' rubbing his hands together and I said, 'Okay, what are we going to serve?' He said, 'I'll tell you what we'll serve damb lanks and damper,' which was lamb shanks and damper, and we had a riotous night and all went well. We got a few decent people there to take interest in it.

That restaurant later became The Rockpool, I believe.

51:54 It became The Rockpool, run by Noel Perry, one of the most expensive restaurants in Sydney and in the world now, very different character.

Apparently those people from Hughie's, The Rocks Push, they came to your sandwich shop for a while.

52:09 Yes they did. They used to go to there and obviously John was folding up and Margaret and Fitzie, dear friends of mine, were part of this group and they said, 'Listen, what about we come here for lunch every fortnight,' or whatever it was, 'Okay' we said, so we'd have six, or seven, or eight, we never knew quite who. They would all gather there and we'd give them a bit of extra lunch, spaghetti or whatever, and they used to enjoy it all. We enjoyed having them, it was a bit of a hassle but never mind, we had many a laugh over it. It was a nice cosy atmosphere in my lounge.

You hosted them on a Melbourne Cup one year.

52:54 We did indeed hosted them unintentionally, we had a right royal do, the place was absolutely rocking. We all got a little bit over the general eight or nine and the following day I said, 'Val, did you get any money?' she said, 'No, did you?' I said 'No,' so we ended up sporting the whole party, cost us quite a bit of dough, but it was worth it.

VC: Plus what we lost.

Val, what is your name just for the tape?

VC: Valerie Chick.

Valerie Chick who was Patricia's partner, worked with Patricia, in the sandwich shop for many years

and she is visiting today. Thank you for that story.

VC: I will never forget that.

53:53 END OF INTERVIEW WITH PATRICIA PHILLIPS & END OF TAPE MP-SM8 SIDE B