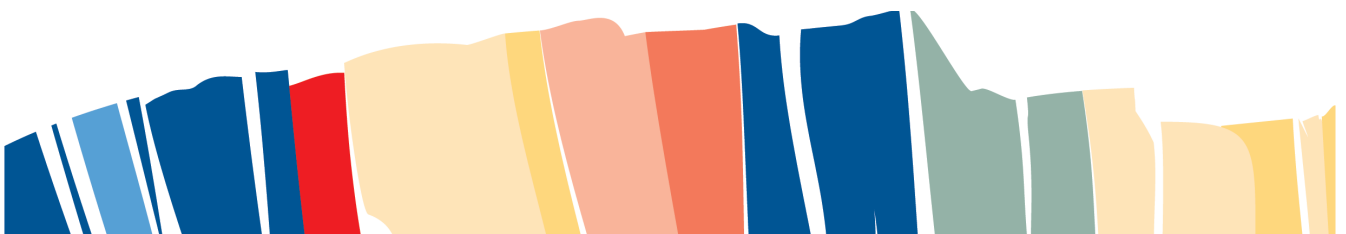


# Local Studies - Oral History 101

Summary of interview with ***Karen Ives*** by *Lorraine Thompson*.

Interviewee: Karen Ives  
Interviewer: Lorraine Thompson  
Date: 20 June 2018  
Collection: Capturing Community Memories

Karen Ives was born in 1954 and grew up on the Ives' orchard and market garden at "Tythrop", 206 Hat Hill Rd, Blackheath, N.S.W. Karen first attended the annual Rhododendron Festival as an infant and reflects on her Festival experiences over subsequent decades as child, teenager and adult.



## Interview Summary

00:01

Introduction

00:33

Describes 206 Hat Hill Rd, Blackheath the Ives orchard and market garden where produce was sold from the back door.

[Note: The property – also known as “Tythrop” – was established by Karen’s grandparents, Arthur and Adelaide Ives, and carried on by Karen’s parents, Harold and Eileen Ives.]

01:52

Harold Ives also worked as a gardener and established gardens at some of the big homes around Blackheath.

2:05

Comments further on the Ives orchard and market garden.

2:32

Refers to Arthur Ives (Karen’s grandfather) a carpenter from England

2:38

Discusses what it was like growing up in Blackheath in the 1960s. (Karen was born in 1954.)

- Friends visiting to play
- Building cubbies
- Childhood club called “The Shadows”
- Family pets and livestock
- Riding bikes
- Playing in a cave in the bush
- Attending St Aidan’s Church
- A happy family life

6:40

Eileen Ives (Karen’s mother) established the first Girls Brigade in the Blue Mountains.

7:08

Eileen and Harold Ives supported each other and provided a loving environment for their children.

7:52

School days at Blackheath Public School

Pet shows

Dolls

Playing elastics

Dancing – the Pride of Erin

8:31

School taxi – “the pink taxi”

- 9:20  
Perils of walking to school – gangs and rock throwing children
- 9:56  
Making mud pies from clay at the aerodrome.  
Kite flying at the aerodrome
- 11:00  
Bush walking
- 11:15  
Harold Ives – early life - helped parents on farm, did not go to high school, self-taught, clever and artistic.
- 11:34  
Eileen Ives – an accident at a 21st Birthday Party led to life-long back pain
- 12:04  
Harold Ives from Blackheath and Eileen Montgomery from Glebe  
- introduction at a Blackheath card evening  
- long correspondence and friendship  
- married in 1947
- 14:40  
Eileen Ives - a city girl who became involved in country life and became active in many organisations
- 15:07  
Harold Ives - a bass singer who played the violin and was very artistic
- 15:25  
Harold's family:  
- Arthur Ives, was a carpenter from England who built part of St Aidan's Blackheath and built the Ives family home at 206 Hat Hill Rd, Blackheath  
- Adelaide North, married Arthur and came from England to Australia  
- Sisters – Emily and Coralie Ives
- 16:04  
Corrie Ives was employed to care for two ladies at "The Chalet".
- 17:01  
Some of the families of Hat Hill Rd and their occupations
- 18:06  
Discusses life at 206 Hat Hill Rd further:  
- Conduct of the market garden and orchard business  
- Family ate "the seconds"  
- Wood stove in the house  
- "Tough times, but happy times"

- 19:35  
Importance of church and Sunday School
- 20:05  
Karen's siblings, Glenis and Lester
- 21:05  
Blackheath a place for relations to visit  
Snow in Blackheath  
Making ice cream from snow
- 22:00  
Auntie Emmie  
- very genteel  
- married an electrician, Keith Simon  
- had a pianola
- 23:53  
The Ives at Blackheath cemetery
- 24:25  
Blackheath Rhododendron Festival established in 1953. Karen has attended most festivals since her birth in 1954.
- 25:00  
Childhood memories of Blackheath Rhododendron Festival
- 25:28  
Home-made costumes for the Festival
- 26:42  
Making floats for the Festival procession  
Making crepe paper rhododendrons for floats in the Harris family's garage on Hat Hill Rd  
Various organisations had floats in the procession
- 27:57  
Gatum Gatum float created by Dick West
- 28:11  
Prizes for floats (various categories)
- 28:20  
Festival day was "like a reunion" – people returning to Blackheath for the Festival – "the excitement of having a special day in your town that you looked forward to every year"
- 29:00  
The Fire Brigade truck - in the procession – hosed the spectators

- 29:18  
Activities in the swimming pool park (Memorial Park):
- marching girls
  - dog demonstration
  - karate demonstration
  - synchronised swimming
  - crowning of the Rhododendron Princess [note: one Princess was crowned Queen]
  - speeches
  - stalls
  - music
- 29:48  
The route of the procession (commencing along the highway and ending in the Memorial Park).
- 30:29  
Mentions some of the volunteers who worked on the Festival:
- A very good committee
  - Dick West had a welding business and built park playground equipment
  - Harris Family (builders) – lived [nearby] on Hat Hill Rd
  - Hodgkinsons (milk delivery business)
  - "A lot of the families – everyone knew each other ... and when you went places the families were there"
- 33:00  
Experience of being a Rhododendron Princess in 1985. Comparison with Glenis Ives' experience in 1969.
- 34:40  
The reunion of Rhododendron Queens and Princesses in 2012 at the 60th Rhododendron Festival.  
Travelling around the town on a float in 2012.  
Attending a dinner at the Blackheath Golf Club
- 37:09  
Festival Week Events
- Art show
  - Fun Run (Hat Hill Rd)
  - Rhodo Revue
  - Rhododendron Ball.
- 39:17  
Karen's debut at the Rhododendron Ball (early 1970s?)  
Later Rhododendron Balls were held at the larger Radio Church of God Hall
- 43:23  
Harold Ives built some of the floats used in the Rhododendron Festival Procession over many years
- 46:15  
Harold Ives passed away in May 1970, but his design won a prize for best float at the Festival in November 1970.

47:56

Eileen Ives community involvement:

- participated in the Rhododendron Festival
- secretary of the Festival committee for over ten years
- active member of many different community organisations
- attended many different TAFE courses over many years
- being active in the community took her mind off her health problems

52:00

Harold Ives in the Fire Brigade.

52:10

Role of community organisations in providing facilities and improving Blackheath

52:44

Eileen Ives and Harold Ives

- Community involvement
- Partnership
- Long correspondence before their marriage
- Importance of religious faith to the family

55:22

Recalls "Dutch girl" costume worn to the Festival first by Glenis and later by Karen.

55:52

Corrie Ives' mountain devil costume, transformed some years later into a mountain devil float

56:24

Lack of controversy about the Festival - costumes, floats, activities did not appear to offend or upset anyone.

57:34

Audience for the festival

58:14

Multiple attractions of the Festival attracted thousands of visitors: the floral floats, the Campbell Rhododendron Gardens, the wood-chopping, model train exhibition, stalls, family-oriented attractions.

59:33

Eileen Ives always prayed for fine weather during the procession. After her death in 1998, it rained during the procession

1:00:42

Marching girls – white outfits stained by tanning lotion after rain

1:01:25

Activities at Memorial Park on festival day:

- Synchronised swimming demonstrations
  - Dog demonstrations
  - Arjuken karate demonstrations
  - Bands
  - Crowning of the Rhododendron Queen
- "something going on in every corner"

1:02:56

1985 crowning of Cathy Craft as the Rhododendron Queen

"an honour to be there"

The Rhododendron Queen travelled to our sister city in Japan (Sanda City) as part of the Blue Mountains delegation to the Sanda City floral festival

1:04:57

Feelings about the future of the Festival

1:06:05

Reflections on the importance of the Festival to Karen and the Ives Family

## **People, Places, Organisations**

00:33

Ives Orchard, 206 Hat Hill Road, Blackheath.

01:52

Harold Ives.

2:32

Arthur Ives.

2:38

St Aidan's, Blackheath [Note: St Aidan's Anglican Church stands on the corner of Hat Hill Road and the Great Western Highway, Blackheath.]

6:40

Captain Eileen Ives. Glenis Ives. Harold Ives.

8:31

Mr [Ross] Hatswell, Hatswell's Garage, [216 Great Western Highway, Blackheath]. The Winkler Family, Hat Hill Road.

9:56

Aerodrome, Hat Hill Road. Harold Ives.

11:00

Harold Ives.

11:15  
Harold Ives

11:34  
Eileen Ives.

12:04  
Harold Ives. Eileen Ives, nee Montgomery. Elsie Caple. St Barnabas, Broadway.

14:40  
Eileen Ives. Country Women's Association (CWA).

15:07  
Harold Ives.

15:25  
Arthur Ives. Adelaide Ives, nee North. St Aidan's Anglican Church. Tythrop, 206 Hat Hill Road, Blackheath. Emily (Emmie) Simon, nee Ives. Coralie (Corrie) Ives. Keith Simon.

16:04  
Coralie (Corrie) Ives. Miss Dean. Miss Dawson. "The Chalet", 201 Hat Hill Road, Blackheath.

17:01  
Hodgkinsons (Jean and Lewis). Harris'. Winklers. Fergusons.

19:35  
St Aidan's Church.

20:05  
Glenis Peterson, nee Ives. Lester Ives.

21:05  
Harold Ives.

22:00  
Emily Simon, nee Ives. Keith Simon. Adelaide Ives. Hill 33, Blackheath. [The Simon home was at 164 Great Western Highway, Blackheath.]

23:53  
Blackheath Cemetery.

24:25  
Blackheath Rhododendron Festival.

25:28  
Ives family.

26:42  
Harris family's garage, Hat Hill Road, Blackheath. Blackheath Public School. Blackheath Girls Brigade. Country Women's Association (CWA)



- 27:57  
Dick West. Gatum Gatum [racehorse].
- 29:18  
Blackheath Memorial Park. Blackheath Swimming Pool.
- 30:29  
Dick West. The Harris Family. The Hodgkinson Family.
- 33:00  
Cathy Craft. Glenis Ives.
- 34:40  
Glenis Peterson, nee Ives. Sue Burrows. Blackheath Golf Club.
- 37:09  
Eileen Ives.
- 39:17  
Blackheath Community Centre. June Dally-Watkins Bridal Store, Sydney. Robert Stanbridge. Blackheath Masonic Hall. Radio Church of God Hall. Jean and George Hilton. George Montgomery. Sylvia, Eric and Wendy Bedwin.
- 43:23  
Harold Ives. Blackheath Girls' Brigade. Blackheath Public School. Country Women's Association (CWA).
- 46:15  
Harold Ives. Festival Committee. Eileen Ives. Blackheath Public School.
- 47:56  
Eileen Ives. Fire Brigade. Blackheath Rhododendron Festival Committee. Campbell Rhododendron Gardens. St Aidan's Anglican Church. Horticultural Society. Floral Society. TAFE. Blackheath Public School. Country Women's Association (CWA). Friendship Club at St Aidan's.
- 52:00  
Harold Ives.
- 52:10  
Quota Club.
- 52:44  
Eileen Ives. Harold Ives
- 55:22  
Glenis Ives.
- 55:52  
Coralie (Corrie) Ives.

58:14  
Campbell Rhododendron Gardens.

59:33  
Eileen Ives.

1:01:25  
Lester Ives. Phillip May.

1:02:56  
Cathy Craft. Sanda City, Japan.

1:06:05  
The Ives Family.

### **Citation for recording**

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