

## Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Sally Colechin

Interviewer: John Witte

Date of interview: 17 October 2016

Location of interview: Ramsay Street, Haberfield 2045

Reason for interview: Day of International Solidarity 1978

Restrictions: None



Time	Summary	Key words
0055	This interview supplements 081124_SC, the interview with Sally Colechin conducted by Digby Duncan in 2008.	
0200	Sally was involved in organising the 4 <sup>th</sup> National Homosexual Conference in August prior to 24 June 1978. Had attended the 3 <sup>rd</sup> in Adelaide with girlfriend Susan Brumby and wanted to get involved in the 4 <sup>th</sup> . The Gay Solidarity Group (GSG) and CAMP approached the Conference Collective to do something to commemorate the Stonewall Riots. Sally and Susan met with these people to organise events for the 24 June 1978.	Fourth National Homosexual Conference (4NHC); Adelaide; Susan Brumby; Gay Solidarity Group (GSG); CAMP; Stonewall Riots;
0325	The events had three prongs. Sally knew Marg McMann from CAMP and her girlfriend Jan Forrester and Marg had been at a meeting at CAMP that suggested a “festive evening” to round the day off - a street parade like a ‘mardi gras”.	Marg McMann; CAMP; Jan Forrester; Mardi Gras;
0415	Because of the need for law reform for men, an afternoon forum was suggested with representatives from the NSW government and the community. They wanted a morning march. A way to get together as a group to say there had to be changes.	NSW Government;
0500	This was a separate group which Sally had volunteered to go to. She was involved in all three events and took photos of the two day events.	
0545	Perhaps eight people attended the organising meetings. Lance Gowland was proactive and had time to do things, as did Sally who was studying. A permit was obtained for both street events. The space they booked at Paddington Town Hall was not large.	Lance Gowland; Paddington Town Hall; Forum;
0705	Frank Walker the NSW Attorney General, some male lawyers attended the afternoon event. Maurice (Blackman) and Terry Batterham were more involved organising this event.	Frank Walker; Maurice Blackman; Terry Batterham;
0900	She was nervous at the Conference about another planned demonstration after so many recent arrests.	
0925	At the morning march, Sally took photos. There was one Kombi van, a lot of banners. Some of the women from Hereford Street Susanne Keys, Chris Burke, Penny Stewart, plus Robyn Plaister all pitched in.	Hereford Street; Susanne Keys; Chris Burke; Penny Stewart; Robyn Plaister;
1000	Various political groups attended. The Spartacists. Some teachers. Her and Mystery Carnage were taking photos. The march had assembled at Town Hall and went to Martin Place.	Spartacists; Mystery Carnage, Sydney Town Hall; Martin Place;
1145	Sally thought the march was “quite big”. It was beautiful crisp winter morning, sun shining. Some had not heard about the night time event. There was a wide range of people – age, gender, not so much ethnicity. At least half the people were politically savvy in terms of gay politics.	
1420	The afternoon forum started around the middle of the afternoon. Recalls women speakers talking about common purpose of men and women walking down George Street together. Sally’s previous involvement in demonstrations was in the feminist movement rather than mixed gay events.	George Street;

1600	At Paddington Town Hall, 30 – 40 attended. 60% were men. Representatives of the NSW Government were questioned by the community lawyers about law change and the consequences of the current law on the lives of gay men.	Paddington Town Hall; Law Reform;
1720	What lesbian issues would have been raised? Lesbians focused on seeking acknowledgement in the feminist movement. The lesbian separatist movement did not generally want to engage with men in a political way.	
1810	There was always discussion when conferences were held that adequate childcare be provided.	Childcare;
1855	Sally wanted to make sure she would be warm on the night.	
1905	Her job on the back of the truck was to make sure the cassette tape was turned so the two songs (Glad to be Gay and Ode to a Gym Teacher) played continuously.	Mardi Gras Parade; Glad to be Gay; Ode to a Gym Teacher;
1945	She felt exhilarated after the march in the morning and the forum had engaged legal experts with decision makers.	
2015	They had a permit to go down Oxford Street and go to Hyde Park. The plan was to disband everybody by having a couple of brief speeches.	Oxford Street; Hyde Park;
2030	The organisers had planned to have one truck, music and the aim was to engage with people along Oxford Street and get them into the street and down to Hyde Park. Believes the permit allowed for the truck to be used at Hyde Park to talk to the crowd.	Oxford Street; Hyde Park;
2130	Came with Susan Brumby, Margaret McMann, Jan Forrester and none were dressed up. Marg and Jan maybe were on the back of the truck. The truck was at the Courthouse and they moved it over onto the road (Oxford Street). The truck had been decorated. It was a small flattop.	Susan Brumby; Margaret McMann; Jan Forrester; Oxford Street; Court House;
2310	Sally stayed on the truck up to Hyde Park. Tape deck was at the back of the truck for better acoustics. The music was provided by Lance or Graham Chuck.	Hyde Park; Lance Gowland; Graham Chuck;
2430	Had a good view of the crowd. It was a celebratory crowd. And at the beginning there weren't many police gathering "at the top" six – twelve maximum. Became aware of more as the parade progressed. People were joining the parade along Oxford Street, and she believes the police were not expecting this. They were joining from the side of the street. She saw police cars in Crown Street, but not before. The vibe from the police along Oxford Street, began to change by the time they got down to Crown Street. "They wanted to sweep us down the street. We want this over with."	Crown Street;
2620	At the beginning Sally saw 100 – 200 people.	
2700	Before Hyde Park, the police began hassling them. Lance was ignoring the police and focussed on driving the truck. They demanded he get out of the truck and give them the keys. People were yelling back that they had a right and a permit. There was a dispute about what was going to happen if they surrendered the keys.	Hyde Park; Lance Gowland;
2750	The dykes stopped the police getting to Lance and Lance got away.	Lance Gowland; Police;
2830	Believes that the police had not planned for the parade and were overwhelmed by it and then reacted aggressively to stop it. The marchers were concerned about not being able to tell the parade what was happening.	
2930	At this stage, Sally believes the marchers weren't willing to argue their right to have speeches and then disperse in the face of the police aggression.	
3035	Susan or Sally got their hands on the keys. They were aware that more police were coming. They were on their walkie-talkies.	Police;
3120	People were getting uppity and a call went up to go to Kings Cross. This was a part of Sydney where people went out on a Saturday night, like Oxford Street. When this happened a call went out on the police radio "go down to the Fountain and close it	Kings Cross; Oxford Street; El Alamein Fountain; Police;

	off". People on the truck believed the police were setting up a trap.	
3230	They then moved the truck and parked it in a steep street and headed up to the Kings Cross.	Kings Cross;
3300	The first marchers to the Cross were stopped at the El Alamein Fountain by the time Sally got to the Cross and went down to the Fountain. Susan pulled Sally away into a shop front. There were metal garbage bins in the street. The police moved in quickly without badges and the people in the Cross seemed to take sides against the police.	El Alamein Fountain; Police;
3405	"I could see women being dragged by their hair, by their clothes, men being thrown against sides of paddy wagons and the police behaviour was unnecessarily aggressive". People were not given any time to move.	Paddy Wagons;
3505	Sally walked up to the Cross via Filmmakers Co-op. The police didn't direct her down Darlinghurst Road. The police appeared to be waiting to close off that end (William Street end of Darlinghurst Road)"	Darlinghurst Road;
3600	The police had batons she thinks and the people in the Cross appeared to be supporting the marchers.	
3650	Police paddy wagons came up Macleay Street (?). The rears of the paddy wagons were facing the march with their doors open. They did not give the marchers the chance to disperse.	Macleay Street; Paddy Wagons;
3840	It went on for about a half hour, or an hour.	
3850	People suspected the arrestees had been taken Darlinghurst Police Station and she went there. They predicted there would be injuries and people had to be bailed out.	Darlinghurst Police Station;
3950	Recalls counting money for bail. Julie McCrossin turned up. Lawyers arrived at different times. Call went out for cash.	Julie McCrossin;
4045	They heard from the cells that one guy was being badly treated. There was a concern for all arrestees' physical well-being. They wanted to get doctors to the arrestees.	
4215	It felt like 50-60 people were there all night. Digby continued filming. The news of someone being assaulted spread through the crowd. Police weren't saying what they were doing. Sally speculates that there may have been consultation between the police and the Police Minister.	Digby Duncan;
4350	In the early morning went down to Central Street Police Station.	Central Street Police Station;
4410	The next day the organisers met at Maurice Blackman's house in Darlinghurst. Brian McGahen attended. Only eight went. Marg McMann and Jan. Discussed having community meetings to support those who had been charged. Cases were being heard the next day (Monday). Stanley Palmer Culture Palace was suggested because it was a large space and someone knew someone who had something to do with it.	Maurice Blackman; Brian McGahen; Marg McMann, Jan Forrester; Stanley Palmer Culture Palace;
4540	Can't recall a meeting at CAMP the same day.	CAMP;
4700	The meeting at Stanley Palmer. Not a formal meeting. Feeling that there must be another demonstration because they had permission for the parade and the police then behaved inappropriately and people who had been assaulted now had to appear in court. Arguments about getting a permit or not. Feelings were high and getting consensus was difficult with all the political persuasions there.	Stanley Palmer Culture Palace;
4945	Prior to that, on the following Monday arrestees had to appear at the Liverpool Street Court. A line of police barricaded the court. Police did not have their identifying numbers. People were eventually allowed to enter. People were formally charged and dates set for court cases. People were arrested. Questions about who was in charge and where was the Clerk of the Court?	Liverpool Street Courthouse; Central Local Court; Clerk of the Court;
5355	<i>(Back to the meeting at Stanley Palmer and a decision to march without a permit which was rescinded. JW)</i> Description of the venue and the way the meeting happened. Marg McMann and Julie McCrossin tried to chair or mediate, but it was a	Margaret McMann; Julie McCrossin;

	difficult job.	
5530	15 July rally and march to the Darlinghurst Police Station. Sally took photos. There were a lot of women involved. This was unusual when Sally had difficulty getting women involved in organising for the National Conference.	15 July 1978; Darlinghurst Police Station;
5720	The art exhibition at the Frank Watters gallery in East Sydney. Frank suggested an exhibition. Sally, Mystery (Carnage), Viv Binns, David McDiarmid, Peter Tully, Frances Budden (Phoenix) were in the show. <i>Note: Sally and Jeffery Stewart have photos.</i> It was before the Conference. A mixed exhibition of homosexual artists was new for Sydney. A lesbian separatist attack on a David McDiarmid art work at Watters.	Watters Gallery; Frank Watters; Mystery Carnage; Viv Binns; David McDiarmid; Peter Tully; Frances Budden; Frances Phoenix;
10200	Sally was involved in putting on the show. Frank's assistant Geoff Weary (TBC) also helped.	Geoff Weary;
10320	The opening was filmed by Digby. It was a brave move by Frank, because only a couple of artists were known. Sally felt proud to have been selected. Viv Binns was a friend of Frank Watters and also Frances Budden/Phoenix. Frances and Sally were later involved in FARTS (Feminist Arts Movement)	Viv Binns; Frank Watters; Frances Budden; Frances Phoenix; Feminist Arts Movement; FARTS;
10600	The 4 <sup>th</sup> National Homosexual Conference – Gays at Work. National Homosexual Conferences – were annual meetings of homosexuals to discuss current important issues. The previous conference had declared the 4 <sup>th</sup> Conference would be about being openly gay at work. Students and some people from the wider gay community. Paddington Town Hall chosen because they could have it for a dance as well.	Fourth National Homosexual Conference; Gays at Work; Paddington Town Hall;
10830	Support rally for the arrestees was not planned until the court and the 15 July arrests. A walk to support all the arrestees was proposed from Paddington Town Hall to Taylor Square and to Hyde Park to retrace the route of the first parade. On Sunday the Conference found out about the Festival of Light rally in Hyde Park and people thought they could disrupt it.	24 June 1978; Paddington Town Hall; Hyde Park; Festival of Light; Hyde Park;
10950	There was discussion and warnings from some that they expected the police to be waiting for them. "The main thing was that we still felt as a community, violated. We still felt, we were not allowed to be treated like any other person who may be heterosexual in society and we felt that we had therefore the right...and that won the day."	
11055	Sally walked down and saw the wall of police at Taylor Square. She and others went around the back way. She felt scared. She got to Hyde Park. Mystery was arrested because she was running through the crowd at Hyde Park. Sally took photos.	Police; Taylor Square;
11215	The Mary Whitehouse Fred Nile event at the Sydney Town Hall. Sally joined a group which painted feminist slogans on umbrellas, dressed in feminine clothing, dispersed in the audience. At a given time, they stood up opened their umbrellas to the audience and then walked out.	Mary Whitehouse; Fred Nile;
11450	Impact of the events of 1978 on Sally. Sally began to back away. It was her last few months of art school. Politics and expressing herself in a "personal is political way" was always going to stay with her. In 1979 was involved in a lesbian feminist discussion group, Feminist Arts (FARTS), then a child care worker at Elsie, before pursuing photography. She received disapproval from her mother, her brother was supportive. Left her with distrust of the police. She knew Sue Thompson at that time and Sue has done an amazing job of working with a lot of police to create the notion of gay and lesbian officers. She had support from local officers when she lived in the Blue Mountains, but sees "we have a long way to go". She would not feel as comfortable holding her girlfriend's hand in suburbia as she should or can be in the	Feminist Arts (FARTS); Elsie; Sue Thompson; Blue Mountains;

	inner city of Sydney.	
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