

Physical Culture - Memories

Debby Millington (nee Alderton)

I was born at Craignish Private Hospital Windsor in 1958 to Betty (nee Dillon) and Arthur (Pom) Alderton, the youngest of four. The family home was in Garfield Road Riverstone not far from where the Museum is today.

It was a carefree life with everyone either walking or riding their bikes to visit friends, playing sport, going to the local pool or running errands. Not a lot of families had cars and it didn't seem to be a great inconvenience back then.

I used to attend Physical Culture which is a form of structured routines to music at the Masonic Hall which seemed so much bigger then. As with most sports it was grouped by age up to seniors.

I would either walk or ride my bike which was just left out the front until we finished and then ride home again. We would all gather in the entry and kitchen before our allotted time, joking and laughing without a care in the world. Quite often we would be chastised for being too loud. We would have our leotards on and ballet shoes at the ready.

End of year club competitions and regional team events were a big deal. Competition time would see us sporting new coloured leotards and often matching coloured painted ballet shoes. In most cases the parents took on the job of dying the shoes and it would be a trip to Parramatta to get the new leotard. This was a really big treat.

Then would come the hair appointments with what felt like can upon can of hairspray, there was no way those hairdos were going to flop with all the jumping around that's for sure. Most of us would go to the Hairdresser's at the back of Mrs Coulter's shop just down from the hall on the opposite side.

After the hair was done it would be the leg tan, heaven forbid the mum's if you ended up with streaky legs. No spray on like today it was done by hand.

Our local comps were held in the Church of England Hall in Elizabeth St, and the regionals would be held in the Parramatta Hall & transport was with whoever had a car at the time fitting in as many of us and our mums in as possible.

It was my great fortune to experience the thrill of being awarded a first place in my age group & then going on to win club champion. All first place getters would be called to march around the hall and the club champion was then selected.

Growing up in Riverstone where everyone looked out for each other was very carefree and what I now consider to have been a privilege.

Debby Millington (nee Alderton) 2019



1970 Grand Champion trophy.



Certificate of Merit and badges.



Ready for Physie.



With Mum and Dad, Arthur and Betty Alderton.

Photos: Debby Millington.