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Into the blue: A celebration of 80 years for women in policing in Western Australia

Mel Ainsworth

Duane Bell

Irene Froyland

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INTO THE BLUE



A Celebration of 80 years for
Women in Policing
in Western Australia

The Centre for Police Research

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Sgt Mel Ainsworth, Det Sgt Duane Bell, Snr Sgt Lilly Cvijic APM, Chief Superintendent (Ret'd) Val Doherty, Dr Irene Froyland, Police Librarian Jean Hobson, Snr PC Carol Vernon and Sgt Jill Willoughby.

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Mel Ainsworth, Administrator; Duane Bell, Manager;
Irene Froyland, Director.

The Year It All Began

Western Australia was a state in turmoil in 1917. The First World War was raging, and every Australian family was affected. Fathers, sons and brothers were overseas and women had stepped into their jobs. They were working on farms and in factories, in packing sheds and print shops, and now that they had stretched their wings, there would be no holding them back.

They had discovered the excitement of being out in the world, they knew that they had something to contribute and they were determined to play their part. They had proved themselves in teaching and in nursing but now they wanted to do more. Most were no longer willing to accept that their life choices had to be limited by their gender.

Twenty years before, the issue had been votes for women, but that was achieved in 1899. Now the push was for the right to sit in Parliament and the right to enter various professions, and women were winning ground on both. It would be another four years before Edith Cowan would represent West Perth in the Legislative Assembly but late in 1917, two “Women Police Constables” were recruited into the State Police Force.

They were hardly equal partners, but they had a place in policing. Unlike their male counterparts, they had no training and wore no uniform, but each day they donned their hats and gloves, took up their handbags and headed off with

whichever male officers needed their assistance for the day. Their role was very much support and their clients were women and children, but the "Women's Police Unit" was underway.

By 1960 the female contingent had grown to twelve, but in spite of the enormous differences in the contribution of women on the outside, in policing their role had changed very little since 1917. Whenever a woman was involved in a crime a female police officer went with the male investigating officers. Her role was still the care and protection of women, children and wayward youth.

Pressure for equality was building though, and in 1975 the Women's Police Unit was abandoned. From that date on, women were recruited, trained and deployed as regular police officers. If they were not good enough to make the grade, then they were not accepted. If they were good enough, then they were given the same training and rostered to the same duties as every other police officer.

It is now eighty years since those first two women were recruited and many hundreds have served since then. Their stories would fill a dozen books, if only they had been recorded. Here we have chosen a mere handful in the hope that they will show the reader a little of the careers of these women. We offer them in celebration.

*It has not been easy for women in the
Police Service to get a status
equal to that of the men.*

*A brief history of the emerging
women's role in the Service,
and a background of some of those
individuals responsible for the acceptance
of these women, is on the following pages.*

THE EARLY ORIGINS OF WOMEN POLICE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Throughout the latter half of 1915, representations were made by women's groups to the Colonial Secretary, petitioning him to act as New South Wales and South Australia had done and appoint women police to care for the social and moral welfare of women and girls. The petitioners were however, more mindful of the quasi-police role of the Voluntary Women Patrols set up in England by the National Union of Women Workers in late 1914. They did preventative work among women and girls near military camps, in munitions factories, and in parks. The Women's Service Guild of Western Australia were most assertive petitioners directing their requests uncompromisingly to the Minister of Police, the Colonial Secretary and the Commissioner of Police.

On February 5, 1916, a significant snippet of information was tucked into a page of the West Australian. It attended to representations made to the government on the question of the appointment of women as police constables. At the request of the Colonial Secretary, the Commissioner of Police had sent a report. The latter expressed the opinion that the type of woman required was a middle aged experienced person of lovable nature, preferably a trained nurse, who, "by kindness, could exert an influence for good over unfortunate girls". However, the prospect of women entering the male preserve of policing was not to be countenanced. The Commissioner went on to say that in performing their duties, the women should be as little like police as possible. Better still, a much more attractive option to the Commissioner would be to appoint additional female inspectors and attach them to the State Children's Department. If they proved themselves capable, there would be no objection to appointing them as constables. The Commissioner would have been aware that there was little likelihood of the government following such a course, so he could be forgiven the momentary satisfaction that he had deferred the issue.

The ladies of the Guild pressed their cause with greater insistence. On July 4, 1917, the Colonial Secretary instructed the Commissioner of

Police, that Cabinet desired the employment of two women police. *The West Australian*, informed the previous day, heralded the decision with the following observations. "Whilst it is generally accepted that the comic opera dictum that 'a policeman's lot is not a happy one' may under existing circumstances apply more or less adequately to the members of the police force in general, it is a matter for conjecture as to whether their lot will be made the happier by the decision of the Coalition Government. The first momentous one to be announced, to appoint two women police to help in the detection of and prevention of misdemeanours".

The Colonial Secretary made it clear that extensive enquiries had been made in England and the Eastern States where policewomen had been appointed. The opinion received was "expressed emphatically" that very good results followed from their work. New South Wales and South Australia were so pleased, that they had actually increased the number of women police "considerably".

The Commissioner acknowledged, publicly, through his annual report, the Colonial Secretary's instruction, assuring the latter that the two women had been 'enrolled' in the police. Interestingly, neither was enrolled in the period covered by the annual report for the financial year, 1 July 1916 to 30, June 1917. As the report was not prepared until after this date, the Commissioner took the opportunity to show that he had acted promptly. The report is dated officially as 27th October 1917. Records indicate that a Mrs H.B.Dugdale, a widow, was enrolled on the 18th August 1917 and a Miss L.E. Chipper on 1 September 1917.

The duties of the newly appointed women police were as follows:

- To keep young children from the streets, more especially at night.
- To assist, where necessary, the Education Department in the prevention of truancy from school.
- To watch the newspapers and furnish reports of persons endeavouring to decoy young girls by advertisements or any other means.
- To patrol railway stations and visit picture shows, theatres, and other places of public entertainment, in order to guard and

The two policewomen who have been appointed in the city. They commenced duty last Monday. Mrs. Dugdale is a trained nurse and inspector, and previous to her appointment as a female-constable was connected with the Charities and State Children's Department. Miss Chipper has been engaged for the past 15 years in the social work of the Salvation Army. (From blocks lent by the Sunday Times to The Police Review in October, 1917)



advise women, girls, and children, who are strangers and have no friends waiting for them.

- To patrol the slum neighbourhoods and look after drunken women and to obtain assistance for their neglected children.
- To keep under observation reputed brothels, wine shops, hotels and other places frequented by women of ill fame, in order to prevent young girls being decoyed or drugged with liquor and entrapped.
- To protect women and girls in the public parks and gardens, and when going to and from work.
- To make inquiries for the State Children's Department and Charities Department in cases where it is desirable that the inquiry should be made by the police in plain clothes.
- To watch over and safeguard unprotected and innocent girls against unscrupulous employers and other persons.
- To keep a separate file for all young women and girls, whom they endeavour by their assistance to put on a straight path, such file to record their movements and behaviour until the officer is satisfied that they have either reformed or have become incorrigible.
- Duties to be performed in plain clothes, and the hours of duty will be eight hours a day or more as required, at times best suited for their carrying out, and such duties to be arranged by the inspector in charge.

In his report for the year ending June 1918, Commissioner Connell wrote that the women police had performed "useful and satisfactory work" which was seen as "fully justifying their attachment to the Constabulary". Because of their success, Cabinet had approved the addition of two extra women constables. As if to silence criticism for increasing the numbers of women police, the Commissioner added a detailed list of work performed from September 1917 to the 30 June 1918.

On November 1, 1918, Miss E. Austin was appointed to be followed by Miss M. Fogarty on November 11, 1918.

Bearing in mind the attitude taken towards women in the workforce generally and the then prevailing notion that a woman's labour could not be rated, monetarily, as favourably as a man's, it is most interesting that women police were given the same rates of pay as men. In contrast, women teachers were accorded only 85% of the male teachers pay. The women police were given lodgings and clothing allowances because the Commissioner decided against putting the women in uniform.

To fully understand the perspective in which women police in Western Australia developed it is necessary to understand the events occurring in England during the years of the Great War, from 1914 - 1918.

Two major women's organisations dominated the rise of women's voluntary patrols in industrial England during those years.

One which has already been referred to, the National Union of Women Workers, later to be known as the National Council of Women, had somewhere between 4000-5000 women trained by the organisation to do patrols aimed at providing help and protection for women and girls in a society disordered by the strains of war.

Rivalling the National Union was a group of well to do Chelsea ladies led by Miss Damer-Dawson. This group grew out of an attempt to give succour to Belgian refugees arriving in England in 1914. Similar to the National Union, the Chelsea ladies provided training for their members. Unfortunately, details about their training are not known. Significantly, however, Miss Damer-Dawson's ladies acquired the title of Women's Police Service, incurring the disfavour of the police authorities. It was a militant organisation with militaristic overtones and with the presence of some well-known suffragettes in its ranks, alienated many people. It paid its members to patrol and they wore uniforms. In 1919, the leaders were successfully prosecuted under a Section of the Police Act, which made it an offence to wear a uniform resembling that of a police officer. They modified the uniform and changed their name to the Auxiliary Women's Police.

In 1918, Sir Edward Henry, the Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police, having observed the success of the private women's pa-

trols obtained approval from the Home Office for an officially recognised number of patrols to be conducted under Superintendent Mrs Sophia Stanley. In 1919, Macready, Sir Edward's successor, absorbed them officially into the London Metropolitan Police. The move was appropriate and beautifully ironic. In the first place, the woman may have gone the way of their competitors and faded away, branded at last a nuisance, at worst malcontent. In the second place, Macready was unremittingly chauvinistic.

In 1919, the passage of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act effectively removed any legal disability-preventing woman being recruited and hired as police. The social exigencies of war years had been cited as special grounds for the appointment of women police and there had been a definite cooling by the police authorities against any increase in numbers. The situation was exacerbated by the inclusion of women police constables in the terms of reference of the March 1919 Committee of Inquiry on the Police Service. Following pressure on the government, a committee was formed under the chairmanship of Major Lawrence Baird.

The other members of the committees were Sir Francis Blake, Lord Cottesloe, Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, and Ben C. Spoor. Later Charles David Murray, Viscountess Astor, and Major William Murray were included. The inquiry was wide ranging, soliciting the views of all Chief Constables in England, Wales and Scotland. As well, 47 other witnesses gave evidence and the committee felt sufficiently informed to pass certain views. It found that there was indisputably a need to employ women police.

The Metropolitan Police Magistrate and the representative of the Scottish Police Federation put forthright declamation of the concept of women police to the committee. They urged the utility of the policing status quo. In their opinion, the present male force in every respect satisfactorily administered the law. Women could help by assisting the infirm or incapable across streets, but that be done by philanthropic ladies not dressed in a police uniform. Finally, male police did efficiently perform all the functions for which policewoman were said to be more suitable. Moreover, the males were capable of other and more strenuous work.

The committee said that although it agreed generally with the view that women could not be regarded as substitutes for men in a police force, there was urgent need for the employment of policewomen in thickly populated areas. Particularly where offences against the law relating to women and children were frequent.

On the issue of status and powers, the committee felt that policewomen had to have the power of a constable. The prospect of women arresting men did not sit easily with the committee. As a compromise, it suggested that although policewomen should be sworn in, their duties would be circumscribed by regulations. In short, it was up to the local police authority to apply whatever constraints it felt necessary.

As for control, the committee noted that although some experienced witnesses advocated differently, it recommended that the Chief Constable should appoint and control the work of both male and female constables. Where police forces were large in number, women police could be officered by females, but they would have to achieve their rank under the same conditions as their male colleagues. The committee made it clear that the scale of pay for policewoman of the rank corresponding to constable should be the same in every force in England, Scotland, and Wales. Sworn policewomen would have the same pay as the men.

It was left to Chief Constables to determine what and how much training should be given to women police as they were responsible for the recruitment of the women. Qualifications were suggested, to give some form of guidance. The age of entry should be between the ages of 25-30 years. Fitness was to be determined by a medical woman and passed on to the police surgeon for consideration. Education requirements were set at an ability to read well, write legibly, and show a fair knowledge of arithmetic, spelling, and composition. The question of marriage was side-stepped because experience was too short to make a definite recommendation on this important matter.

The situation at the Metropolitan Police was seen as a guide. Married women could be appointed as policewomen, provided they had no young children dependent on them and for whose care they could make satis-

factory arrangements. A single woman, once enlisted, had to obtain permission to marry. She could remain in the service until she became four months pregnant, and provided she could obtain suitable care for her child, she was allowed to rejoin.

This was forward thinking. There can be little doubt that this served as a framework for the employment and deployment of women police in Australia.

This article was written by John McArthur MA MEd, to support Western Australian women in policing.

ETHEL SCOTT — MANY FIRSTS

Ethel Scott, who joined the Western Australia Police Force in 1939, in 1947 became the first female Sergeant. She went on to gain the rank of Inspector, the first woman to do so, and on June 10, 1971, was promoted to Superintendent. After a successful career and one on which many others were modelled, Ethel was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in 1970. She retired on August 15, 1971.



Miss Ethel V Scott.

**Presentation of Long Service and
Good Conduct Medals (22 years)**



*Joan Taylor, Norma Thurstun, Val Doherty, Agnes Brown, Ethel Scott,
Dorothy Hughes, Helen Finey, Mrs Scott and friend.
Medal recipients are Agnes Brown and Ethel Scott.*

DOROTHY HUGHES

Dorothy Hughes joined the police force in 1957 after spending almost five years as a civil servant. In 1969, Dorothy was promoted to sergeant, one of three then in the Western Australia Police Force.



Dorothy typing up a report c.1965

THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF VAL DOHERTY

There is no doubt that the role of women police in Western Australia has changed dramatically over the years. Gone are the days when the women police were restricted to the handling of welfare problems involving women and children.

One woman who has been a part of the women police and seen many changes is Val Doherty. Val retired from the service in 1994, after an incredible 34 years. She also retired as the highest ranking female in the Western Australian Police, Chief Superintendent.

When Val joined in 1960, she was just one of 12 women serving then. Her mentor was Ethel Scott, who was later to become the Force's first woman Superintendent, a considerable achievement when significant advancement for any woman in the Force was challenging, to say the least.

In fact, women had been working with the WA Police Department since 1917, but only after considerable lobbying by the Women's Service Guild of Western Australia. Even back then their roles were predetermined by their gender. They had to keep young people off the streets, especially at night, help prevent truancy and monitor newspapers attempting to lure young women.

It is amazing that the women police officers stayed in the force as long as they did in those days, for the police culture then was incredibly sexist. The following is a statement from the Force's own files:

"A woman's efficiency has diminished in most cases by the time she has reached 45. Some are at their prime at 35-40, others go off in their work after 30 or 32".

The arrogant sexism might have improved 43 years later, but not much more appeared to have changed. The number of women officers had only increased from two to 12.



Miss Valma Frances Doherty joined the Western Australia Police Force on September 19, 1960. She was the first female police officer in Australia to attain the rank of Chief Superintendent. On March 20, 1989 she was appointed the Commissioner's Executive Officer. Between 1981 and 1987 she was the National President of the Australian section of the National Police Association. Val was awarded the Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1982 and the Australian Police Medal for Distinguished Service in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 1991. She retired on May 29, 1994.

Val Doherty believes that many of the policewomen today can rise to the rank of commissioned officer. It took Val ten years to be promoted to Sergeant, ten more years to reach first class Sergeant and five more years before being appointed as Senior Sergeant. By then the Women's Police Branch had been disbanded and female officers were working general duties.

This was evidenced by the progress Val had made during the second half of her career. She became an Inspector in 1987, Chief Inspector two years later, and Chief Superintendent the same year, serving as the Commissioner's Executive Officer. Val has worked in the Crime Prevention Unit, in Public Affairs, and in Community Affairs for ten years.

She was also the first woman to be elected to the Police Union Council, serving two terms in that role. The world of policing has always fascinated Val Doherty, which is probably why she became a foundation WA member of the International Police Association. She was awarded the Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1982 and the Australian Police Medal for distinguished service in 1991. A distinguished woman, and a distinguished career.

This story on Val Doherty's career was researched and written by Dawn Ellis.

IMPORTANT TO LET IT OUT, SAYS LILLY

**This story was written by Lilly Cvijic
with the collaboration of David Lloyd.**

It is 23 years since Lilly Cvijic joined the Western Australia Police Service, a longish time in career terms. It is almost eons in the change of attitude towards women police officers.

However, it is a period which has almost been revolutionary in the way we have come to think of those who suffer the consequences of crime. It is revolutionary that we think about victims of crime at all. After all, it is not that long since the victim's only post crime contribution was the indignity of giving evidence for the prosecution if the perpetrator was brought to justice. Unnerving, unsatisfactory and almost unappreciated in the overall scheme of things.

Those days the last thing on the mind of the court was the real consequences to the victim, especially the long-term trauma. So the real damage, not immediate material consequences, was something the victim had to contend with for years. Results of that compounded within society as the list of victims grew. Nevertheless, this was not a situation which society, not even one as macho and well entrenched as ours, could endure indefinitely. Especially when other nations could produce evidence of the real benefits of letting victims have their say.

What resulted was legislation which made offenders aware that the consequences of their actions often surpassed the materialistic, which could ensure those consequences are weighed in the checks and balances of justice. Nevertheless, most importantly the new system spotlighted the victim in human terms and created the impetus for something to be done which would correct their plight.

Enter Lilly Cvijic, a lady of proud Slav background, a member of a race which has been pushed around more than enough in the decades since WWII and which is not going to be pushed any more. One of those rare



Ljiljana (Lilly) Cvijic joined the Western Australia Police Force on May 13, 1974 and became the first female Detective Sergeant in Western Australia. In 1989 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship and in 1990 was awarded the National Medal. In 1996 Lilly received the Australian Police Medal for Distinguished Service in the Australia Day Honours List and she also holds the Paul Harris Fellowship of Rotary Foundation of Rotary International Award for service to Victims of Crime. She is currently one of the three most senior women in the Western Australia Police Service.

women who joined the service when the female role within it was so typecast and treated with an arrogance which bordered on contempt, it is a wonder any woman persevered.

Lilly did all the usual things. She looked after runaway children, promised never to get married if she wished to remain in the job, and fought injustices of the system. However, she stayed around long enough to cock a snoot at male colleagues who maintained women's appointments were short-term things. Lilly was one of those responsible for looking after the welfare of women and children in strife, and worries now about those returned to situations of danger because we didn't talk about abuse in the home in those days.

A verbal clip around the ear and delivery back to situations we can now identify as hazardous was considered good enough. But how many of those victims have become the offenders of the 80s and 90s because our actions led them to believe that everybody behaved that way? We will never know. However, with the confidence of better understanding and the knowledge of how to use it, we can now do something to prevent yesterday's victims becoming tomorrow's criminals.

It was something obviously ingrained into the heart and mind of Lilly Cvijic as she worked through six months of on the job training, 18 months at the Women's Police Office and 18 months' attachment to CIB assisting the detectives (all men of course). She bridged the gender gap with the appointment to detective a year and a half later becoming a detective first class and then a sergeant, the most senior female at CIB.

There followed stints in media and vice squad, the first such appointment for a woman in this country. There is no doubt that Lilly's work was well regarded, for in 1989 she was awarded the Churchill Fellowship. This enabled her to study child abuse investigation procedures in the USA, Canada and the UK.

Lilly began seriously to wonder just how many runaway children had been sent back home to face the risks which had caused them to run away in the first place. "How many went through horrific things as children and could not tell anyone about it?" she muses now the enlighten-

ment of the 90s has brought so many previously unmentionable topics into the open.

Lilly displays a remarkable cheerfulness considering the number of horrific personal stories she must hear every day. She is not a counsellor, there are specialists within the Justice Ministry who look after that side of things. However, she is often the first port of call for victims of crime who need help, guidance or just support. She has the ability to listen, and few of us can do that, has a highly developed sense of sympathetic understanding and a wealth of practical experience from the serious business of policing.

Women, she says, do a lot better than men when it comes to the sharp experiences and their consequences. "They can get together with other women and talk. They can have a good cry. Men should be able to cry too. You must be able to get rid of your worries, otherwise you end up suffering from stress and other health related problems."

Today's innovations are really the result of a mid 1980s conference which resolved to do something about the plight of victims of crime. From it came a plan involving different government departments working together under the chairmanship of the Commissioner of Police. That involvement grew into the Victim Support Services, now the Justice Ministry Unit, followed by the establishment of the Service's own Crime Unit in 1993.

Prime requirement of the job, says Lilly, is developing the ability to listen, to interpret and to relate, as sometimes minor incidents of the past become big issues of the present. Her job more often than not calls for the use of tact rather than the often accepted use of regulations. Certainly it demands development of the ability to look beyond the usually superficial impression we form of each other.

It is an area of specialisation supported by about 50 volunteer workers who become court companions and providers of help in more ways than could possibly be ever imagined. It is work which deserves more recognition, but as is often the case in such humanitarian organisations, nothing much will happen. As more people become victims, those re-

ceiving the help and support of the Victims of Crime Unit will see that they are not forgotten, and they and their families will discover that there are really people who care.

Victims and witnesses both suffer intense trauma, especially those who have to appear in court. Her job is something of a balancing act with reasoned discussion on one hand and trying to counter sometimes violent desire for revenge on the other. Victim impact statements have an important part to play, although those who make them sometimes have to be persuaded that such statements are not a wish list of punishments they would like to see meted out on the offender. They are a part of the process which enables people to come to terms with events and to be able to move on in their lives.

Lilly and her team have an extremely important role in society. They enable those who have had life threatening and soul destroying experiences to overcome the burdens they carry and pick up the pieces to start again.

If we are not directly involved in an event we can walk away from the consequences, but the victims cannot. Lilly does not walk away from anything; it is not her character. Perhaps that is why she was awarded the Australian Police Medal.

Editor's note: Lilly is now in uniform and working at Joondalup Police Station.

CHILD ABUSE UNIT

Undoubtedly the 80s and 90s have seen a development in the sense of social concern and outcry at the level of child abuse in our community. Every day on the television, in newspapers and magazines, we are confronted with devastating stories of neglect and abuse of children. We know that the issues and prevalence of child abuse have been around for a long time, but like so many other social issues, change has been slow in coming. Public awareness has

made many challenge the government and the community to help alleviate the conditions many children suffer. They realise that resources and time need to be spent to quash one of society's greatest evils, the systematic abuse of many children.

Even with the increase of media attention and the advent of public awareness, the actions of government agencies and legal agencies still face many challenges and difficulties. Many see it as interference into one of the most private areas of people's lives.

It is not just the child who suffers; abuse affects the family of the victim, and also that of the offender. Whether the abuse is by someone in the



Maria Coyne says that it is extremely important that child abuse victims have a safe environment in which to relate their story.

family or someone outside the family, the affects of abuse are wide spread and affect many lives.

Detective Sergeant Maria Coyne, works with the Police Child Abuse Unit. She has worked there over the past nine years. The following story is an account of Maria's working history in the child abuse unit. It is a description of a police woman's work ethic and contribution to the shattered lives she and the team come into contact with every day of the week. Maria undoubtedly works in one of the most gut wrenching areas of police work and investigation, but the passion to succeed and to help others overcome adversity is paramount.

Before 1984, matters of child abuse were dealt with by individual police officers around the metropolitan area. Children came in with a parent or friend, made a complaint about the abuse, and then the detectives would make the inquiries into the complaint. Each police station would see around three or four complaints a month. Considering there are around 50 police stations in the metropolitan area, these figures added up to a significant number.

As a result of so many complaints, it was acknowledged that something had to be done. The police were realising quite quickly that they needed to develop a professional unit for the specific needs of child abuse victims. Their resources were being stretched to their limits, and it was realised that the expertise needed was not being supplied. Furthermore, they wanted to ensure that everything which could possibly be done for these children was being done.

Just one of the areas that needed consideration was the development of a central office. Making the child feel comfortable with their surroundings is extremely important, as they are already traumatised and scared. It is necessary to provide a place that feels safe. These areas of sensitivity were becoming better established because this crime was being spoken about and investigated on a more regular basis.

In 1984 the Police Child Abuse Unit was established. Initially the office was at Police Headquarters where the squad had only one room at its disposal. Being in this building introduced several problems and challenges for the team. It was extremely difficult for victims to feel com-

fortable. There was only one entrance, one exit and one lift for their use, and they risked meeting with the offender.

The layout of offices is extremely important when you are working with abuse victims. "The last thing the investigators needed was for the victim and offender to cross paths," Maria said.

The building she and the team work from now has two separate entrances, one specifically for the child and the other for the offender.

"We have no uniformed police walking around and the child can feel completely anonymous in the surroundings. We only ever use plain police cars when driving the child from home to the office and home again."

Quite possibly, discussions bringing people's attention to the increasing incidence of child abuse placed demands on the police and led to the formation of the development of a specialised police unit.

Public awareness can help break down barriers, it makes people open up in personal areas which in the past have been easier to ignore rather than talk about in an open forum. Discussing the area of sexual assault, whether against man, woman or child, scares people. It can make them feel vulnerable, sick, and lead them to question people they know and trust. You also need to remember, whether your fears are justified or unjustified, and whether your suspicions are justified or unjustified, you are experiencing emotions that are extremely difficult to deal with.

The realisation that expertise was needed in the area of child abuse also demonstrated a greater understanding of community needs. Quite often after a crime was committed, the police would investigate and deal with the matter as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

But as Maria says, "You can't do this with victims of child abuse. You need to be patient, you can't rush in and have everything laid out for you. Time and patience is extremely important. We are dealing with very damaged people.

"Once we receive a complaint we have to investigate and this is extremely disruptive. Lives change forever, all their lives change. The abuse has to stop and for this to happen someone has to leave, someone has to be removed from the family. The protection of the child must be taken care of immediately."

Maria and the team have to work very closely with other agencies in the same area, during the investigation and often when the investigation has ended. This frequently results in the child and members of the family being referred to other agencies. She says there are a lot of good people who work in both government and non-government agencies.

"We couldn't do without them; they are extremely professional and extremely supportive, not only to us, but more importantly to the child and the child's family."

When a child tells people he or she has been the victim of abuse, it affects many people. "Not only is the child suffering tremendously, but there is also the child's family and the offender's family. They can't accept or believe that their husband or son could have done such a horrendous thing," Maria said.

When she joined the Child Abuse Unit it was not by choice. At first she found it quite depressing and the thought of having to deal with these types of crimes on a daily basis did not appeal to her at all.

"There were so few woman working at CIB. If you have a child who has been abused, and mostly they have been abused by a man, the last thing they need or want is to talk to a male officer. Many of the young victims, if not all, are absolutely terrified to be near a man, so the police service was forced into supplying women officers for the job.

"When I started in the job I had a really hard time coming to terms with how many offences were taking place. Before a central location was established, all the child victims were scattered around the suburbs. Now with the central office I was completely overwhelmed by the amount of kids I was encountering. I have worked in many suburban police stations and I really only saw dribs and drabs of kids coming in. So I really had to come to terms with it pretty quickly.

"I realised I was going to have to do this day in and day out. When you are working with children you question yourself all the time. Have I done the right thing? Have I done enough? Could I have done more? You need to come to terms with things very quickly. There is no choice. You soon realise that you are doing everything possible for these kids and you just can't give any more of yourself.

"Some of the cases are more tragic than others; I don't mean the experience for the child is any less tragic, but some of the kids you see really devastate you. You discuss some of the most private areas of their family as they sit there and pour their hearts out. A close affiliation with them occurs, it really is quite incredible."

Other agencies' involvement with the section make Maria's job much easier and reduces pressure. They are able to refer the children and family to the right agency to receive the best help and support. It's obvious that it is difficult for Maria and the team not to get attached, but as she said, "You can only offer them so much, you really do wish you could give them more, but for self preservation and to give the families the best care, you need other agencies to take care of them."

Maria and the team are police officers; they are not trained to be counsellors, but as the children and family have confided so much in them, told them the worst things imaginable, it is impossible not to bond in some way. "Each time they take a little piece of you with them. But you take a little piece of them, it is impossible not to, we aren't robots."

People are still ringing her from cases of nine years ago. Whether a family member or one of the victims, it seems that as many times as Maria has moved office, they still track her down. "No matter what you say and do, they are a part of your life for ever, and you are a part of theirs."

Even with awareness as it is today, people would still be shocked at the extent of child abuse. Maria and the team deal with at least 1000 inquiries a year. Those are just the reported cases and probably not even close to the amount of abuse that does occur to the kids in our community.

"The set up we have here is definitely reactive, not proactive. There isn't a lot we can do about that."

Maria wants to educate our children about the dangers of child abuse. "After what I have seen, I say that the minute children can walk and talk they should be told that no-one, absolutely no-one should touch their body in a way that is inappropriate. I don't know how you get that message to a child, but I feel we really need to do it."

Maria realises the difficulties: "I don't know how we can stop the abuse otherwise, and even then I'm not sure if that would stop it completely. For the kids who walk in this door, it is already too late, it has already happened.

"It is understandable people have no concerns with leaving their children with dad or grandad, uncle or cousin. Why would they? No-one would think or imagine that this is going to happen in their family. We read and hear about child abuse all the time, but never think it would happen to our family.

"You never forget that at the end of each inquiry there is a broken, shattered young child. You always hope and wish that you could do more and you try your absolute best to do more. It is frustrating that you can't do everything.

"You never lose track of the fact that the child and the child's family has experienced possibly one of the worst things they could. Frustration sets in when you have to put these people on hold, literally, because we have so much work to do. We can only do so much.

"We have a great support system, we are all in the same boat and we all work hard together and give each other as much support as we can. The team here gives every job it's best effort. It isn't just another job to us, we are always striving for that extra bit each time.

"We don't always win, and we are not always able to lock every offender up, but that just make us all the more determined to fight harder next time."

Maria said that they can't always be winners. But one thing is certain. The time, effort and commitment the Child Abuse Unit put into the job and the people they come across, makes them all winners.

GOING UNDERCOVER

This is a remarkable story of commitment and outstanding teamwork. For the purposes of security, the police officer's name has been changed.

During the mid 1980s, the Perth drug scene was expanding rapidly and in this case the Drug Squad was attempting to complete a covert operation involving a well-organised group of people dealing in heroin. The supervisor considered it was too dangerous to introduce a male agent because at least some of the suspects had first hand knowledge of the Drug Squad's operational procedures.

The undercover operative (whom we'll call Sue), explained what happened that day.

"The men involved in the drug scene were extremely suspicious and it would have been very difficult for a male person to successfully set up the job. Because of a very forward thinking Sergeant, I was asked to do some undercover work for them. I absolutely jumped at the opportunity. However, at this stage of my career I had no experience or training for this type of work, so the pressure was definitely on."

Sue's task was to infiltrate a heroin ring by establishing her credibility with the drug dealers and to successfully negotiate the purchase of a large quantity of heroin.

"Infiltrating the group, I knew, would be no easy task. Drug dealers are incredibly suspicious people and the threat to my own personal safety was ever present. I received and evaluated all the known facts and various courses of action which I could take to successfully infiltrate the group."

The first course of action that was considered was proving her allegiance and credibility to the members of the drug ring by seemingly supporting their successful drug dealing operation.

"There were a few problems with this, because if I aligned myself too readily to their criminal activity they may have become suspicious. The

drug ring probably knew more than I did about the illicit drugs and their associated clandestine movement within the drug world."

At this stage of the operation there was little intelligence available to assist in the operation and Sue had incomplete information regarding the identity or number of people involved in the syndicate.

"Perth is a very small city. I was concerned that if I had chosen this approach my true identity may have been revealed."

The second course Sue considered was to introduce herself as a representative from a drug syndicate in Sydney, and say that she had come to Perth for the purpose of obtaining heroin.

"This was a plausible cover up but, after consideration, I decided against it. Although I had a reasonable knowledge of Sydney and the drug scene, I thought this approach was far too risky. I figured that it would not allow me to obtain the best advantage while attempting to establish my credibility within the network and could possibly place me under unnecessary pressure."

The final course of action that Sue considered was to act as if she was new to the drug scene in Perth and align her credibility to that of the female informant who was to introduce Sue to her supplier.

"I decided to allow the informant to portray me as a friend who was interested in acquiring drugs. I figured that I would be able to avoid questions that could put me in a precarious situation if questioned by the men in the drug ring in an attempt to test my credibility or identity.

"The young girl, who was my contact for the operation, was a drug user and an associate of the people we were interested in. Meeting the informant for the first time I had only ten minutes to contemplate strategies due to the unexpected arrival of her supplier. This really didn't leave us much time to get our stories straight, which made the job even more difficult."

The operation, initially expected to last two or three hours, took eight hours to complete. During the entire incident Sue was subjected to intense interrogation regarding her identity, her involvement in the drug

scene and why she required heroin. Due to the quantity of drugs being purchased, she was introduced to a number of suppliers.

"As the suppliers attempted to determine my credibility the negotiations became quite heated and my life was repeatedly threatened. I had to respond extremely quickly to the intense questioning so that I could maintain a rapport with the drug traffickers and ensure that my credibility was not damaged in any way."

Another problem arose for her during the intense questioning. "At one point the entire operation was put at risk when local detectives responding to an unrelated enquiry arrived at our location. They came to advise my informant that her best friend had just died from an overdose. I could not look at the officers, completely terrified that they may recognise me and blow my cover. My informant completely broke down and I tried to console her as best I could, ensuring I kept my identity concealed from the detectives. Fortunately they left quickly, but it was a close call."

Throughout the evening Sue was driven to a number of locations. "The men involved were extremely paranoid so, to ensure we were not being followed, they carried out anti-surveillance techniques. These techniques included travelling at high speed, running red lights and generally driving like madmen."

Sue was taken to a house at an unknown location. "When we arrived I was taken by a man to a bathroom at the rear of the premises. Once inside he shut and locked the door. My heart was already in my throat, and then to make matters worse, he undid his zip and dropped his jeans. Straight away I thought I was faced with another problem. You can't imagine my relief when all he pulled out was a fold of heroin.

"After I checked the quantity of the heroin we left the house and I was driven to an unfamiliar location in the bush. The driver told me to get out of the car and wait until he came back. I was left alone for around thirty minutes; the reason for this was to ensure I had not been followed. It's quite amazing how long thirty minutes can be when you are left alone in complete darkness."

When the operation finally went down, all Sue could hear was the screeching of tyres coming from all directions.

"I remember running. The adrenalin was really pumping and all I wanted was to be as far away from there as possible. I don't think I have ever run so fast in my life. I recall the familiar voice of a colleague yelling out after me, 'You can stop running now, stop, I can't catch you!'"

There is no doubt that the incident was one of the most exhilarating, but also most terrifying, of Sue's career.

"I was thrilled to participate in the bust. I know the devastation that heroin can cause in people's lives, not only to the users, but also to their families. There were also many officers involved in the operation and I was so proud to be a part of such a professional team."

Because of the operation a large quantity of heroin was seized and numerous people were arrested. They were ultimately convicted of drug related offences.

At the trial the District Court Judge said, "It is rare for me to make such an observation, but this officer showed a performance of duty to be commended in times of great personal danger to herself."

PRO MORTIUS - on behalf of the dead

Vicky Smith, Senior Detective at the Homicide Squad, has been working in the division for several years and is emphatic that it is the best area she has worked in a career that has spanned fifteen years.

This is a story of Vicky Smith at the Homicide Squad. An account that demonstrates the dedication and commitment to Pro Mortius (on behalf of the dead).

Vicky gave an extremely frank account of some of the people who cross her path on a daily basis. Typically, as in many other interviews for the book, the police women have shown incredible professionalism in what they do. It has been very difficult not to be a little overwhelmed by the exhaustive efforts they put into their jobs. None of the police women do it for recognition or praise. They do it because it is their job and they all find it hard to understand that others see what they do as something special. "It's my job, and all I want is to do it to the best of my ability. Nothing more, nothing less."

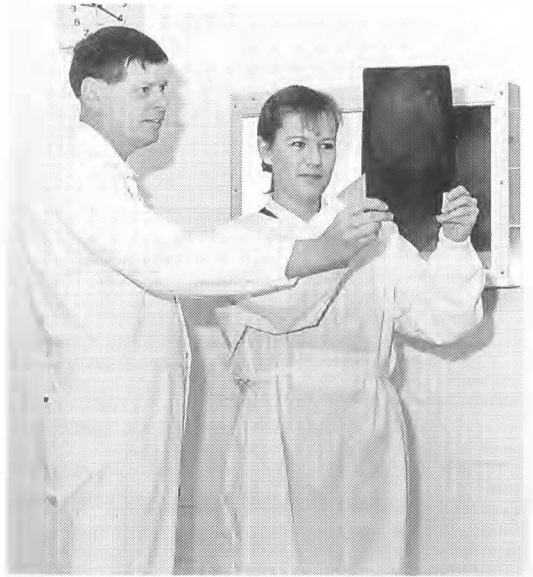
What they do is very special. The commitment they show to complete strangers demonstrates an exceptional group of people. This is an account of one of these people.

Vicky said that what the Homicide Squad does is not normal. "People do not generally have to deal with murder on a day to day basis. Most people are lucky enough to get through their lives without being confronted by murder, whether by a family member or a complete stranger."

"The families who have lost a loved one are absolutely devastated. Unless we have experienced the same, we can't possibly understand what they're going through. Often, not even counsellors can reach them. Many people have suffered grief in their lives, but it is not the same type of grief as these people have."

Western Australia's Victims of Homicide group that Vicky and her colleagues contribute to, and participate in, came about as a consequence of a program that was established in New South Wales out of a desperate need for victims to come together and share their experience and grief.

*Dr Clive Cooke,
forensic pathologist,
and Vicky Smith
study an Xray showing
a bullet injury
at the state mortuary
located at the
QEII Medical Centre.*



“Our involvement with the group is to help with any inquiries victims may have about the criminal justice system and its processes. We are there to help clear up any confusion. When they form their groups we do not get involved, we are unable to share the experience and pain that they are going through.”

Homicide Squad learns a lot from the victims. Many times the team thought they were doing the right thing, but events proved they were not. “We work very hard to protect the victims and we probably have been guilty of protecting them too much. We have wrapped them up in cotton wool. However, because of the support group, I have learned a great deal. You see, the families have told me, when I have gone to their home and told them that their loved one is deceased through homicide, ‘there is absolutely nothing more you can do to shatter me, I am the most shattered I can ever be.’”

It may be that in the early stages Vicky and the other members of the Homicide Squad tried too hard to protect family members from some-

times quite gruesome details. Vicky felt this would help the families get stronger and overcome their grief more readily. But the incredible effort to protect was the worst thing they could have done.

"The families tell us now that they need to know, they need to know the horrible details. One man told me that he had 150 horrifying accounts of how his daughter may have died. They were continually running through his head and he said if we told him that there are only 50 horrible accounts, he could discard the other hundred, and you can't beat that."

"We do tell now, how their loved one died. But if the homicide has been especially brutal, or perhaps a sexually orientated homicide, we might water down some of the things that occurred."

She says that when the family members appear a little stronger, especially before the trial, they will be told everything they need to know. Without this knowledge the family could be shocked when going through the trial process, when all the details will become known. "We still go out of our way to protect them, especially before the trial, I don't think we can help ourselves, but they tell us, please don't do that."

Not everyone wants to know the blow by blow details. "I give them the option that I can tell them everything now, or I can tell them what they think they can cope with right now. It is so important to be sensitive. I mean, how do you explain or tell someone that they can't see their loved one any more because their body is unrecognisable, and a lot of people just refuse to accept that. They just want to see them, no matter what you say.

Vicky makes her point strongly. "One minute the family have their loved one and the next minute they are gone. They could have just seen them that morning or perhaps only a few hours ago. Then we are faced with having to tell them that they are never going to see them again.

"You can't imagine how difficult that is. I find it even more difficult with missing persons. You could be talking about possibly days, weeks or even months later. To the families they are still missing, but we are trying to tell them, 'no, I'm sorry, but they are dead'. Sometimes we are placed into a position of damned if you do, damned if you don't."

The team that Vicky works with has its protective measures for each other. They are all incredibly supportive of each other and obviously know how to look after one another. Much of this results from nothing more than pure experience. Vicky said. "One of the first steps in your enquiry is your victimology. You get to a point where you know as much about the murder victim or the missing person, as the family members do.

"You can appreciate the immense team work that we share. If an inquiry has been going on for some time, the investigator who has been involved with the victimology is the person who has had the most contact and dealings with the family. You spend so much time with them you almost become a member of that family. The families get to know you well and you get to know them, especially the victim's family. We ensure the investigator who does this part of the work has absolutely nothing to do with the deceased when they are found.

"We make sure that they have nothing to do with the crime scene. They won't view the deceased and will not be a part of the post mortem. This is done to ensure that there isn't too much of a burden to carry."

This reflects the experience of officers. Stress is a major concern and taken very seriously at the Homicide Squad. Homicide officers put their hearts and souls into trying to solve cases. "We all get to the point where we are praying that this missing person is alive, we all experience complete and utter devastation when the body is found.

"When you see the absolute suffering that these family members are going through, we would love nothing more than to see the missing person walk into the front door of their home. Someone can be missing for 12 months, but we never give up hope. We continually do checks, but the reality is the longer they are missing the less likely they are going to walk through the door. We would be so happy if they did and our inquiry had been a waste of time, rather than see what the family have to go through."

Vicky never gives up. "We do that for the sake of the family. However, we do accept the reality a lot easier than they do. The reality will always be stronger for us than the family. We are more aware of the types of

offenders in our community, as we see the brutal side of human nature in its worse form.”

She continued that when dealing with missing persons the length and effort to keep the motivation going is incredible. “It always comes to the point where you get a certain piece of information and you are hoping that this will be the one, the big break you have been looking for. Quite often it will turn out to be nothing and when this process is repeated over and over again, we have to fight hard not to get disillusioned. This is where the managers come in and work so hard to keep everyone geared up.”

Vicky's work is mentally and physically draining. “It's alright to feel bad, and some days we all feel bad. What we do here is not normal, but that is why the people I work with are so special. We all give each other a lot of support and we all understand what the others are going through. We make it bearable for each other and nobody minds when someone says they don't feel good or they didn't handle that very well, we all understand.

“When I first joined the Homicide Squad I was the only woman and I really felt that I had to prove something. I was also guilty of thinking that I would be given all the menial tasks. But the complete opposite happened and I have always been treated as an equal. I have never been given a particular job because I am a woman and it was thought I would deal with it better than a man. I have never experienced this, I am part of a team and my contribution to the Homicide Squad is just as important as any other officer here.”

She says that the biggest priority to the squad is the deceased. “No one is there to speak for them any more, and we want to give them the respect of our professionalism. We are also desperate to find out who killed them for the sake of the family and we try hard to give them a result. Catching the killer is the best thing we can do for the deceased, and we are there to speak on their behalf.

“None of us at Homicide wants an unsolved case. We all have this incredible driving force and we want to make sure that when a file goes

into the cabinet it has "solved" on it. We would all love nothing more than a perfect track record, however, it is not all just statistics to us.

"When you are dealing with a personal crime portfolio, it is hard not to carry some of the devastation and the grief that the families are feeling. From the time of the homicide, to the time of the trial, our contact with the families is incredibly intense. It is impossible not to form bonds and to this day there are still certain families whom we still see every now and then.

"My four years at Homicide has been professionally and personally rewarding, I like to have a voice, I like to speak on behalf of the dead."

VICTIMS OF CRIME

There has never been a shortage of victims of crime, whether the crime is a car theft, burglary, sexual assault, or murder. As we progress towards the twenty-first century, interest and concern have been steadily growing in the area of victim's of crime. The issues of victim's of crime have been on legal, social and political agendas for some time. Research papers have been written, conferences held, and even legislative changes have occurred. In addition, the development of numerous support services has emerged.

Senior Sergeant Lilly Cvijic counsels a victim of crime.



A common cry that echoes through the media, research and conferences, is why does the offender seem to be given more rights than the victim? We are not here to dissect the legal system's application of the law, but to try to understand why the voices of victims of crime have been muted and stifled by a legal process that may have lost its way. It is

easy to understand how the victims of crime have become the forgotten party in our criminal justice system. However, things are slowly changing and the victims are fighting back.

When one looks back in time to earlier cultures, conflicts and disputes were a part of every day existence. Formal processes of legal function are a relatively new form of empowerment. Before formal processes existed, people dealt with such issues the only way they knew how. After a crime, either against a person or community, it was dealt with in a way it felt appropriate. Some may argue rather brutally, but they always had their own form of justice in place which took care of the victim. As society developed and grew, more organised methods of accountability were administered. Unfortunately, the down side saw the victim of a crime lose more power as the offence itself became a crime against the state, not the individual.

Regrettably victims of crime became lost in the criminal justice process. However, with the growth of criminological studies, the victim, rather slowly at first, began to receive attention. Criminologists have traditionally studied the criminal and the crimes they committed in relation to society. Now the victim is emerging as a serious contender in the criminological field.

With the advent of the women's movement and increasing public awareness of crimes against women, more attention has been given to the victims of crime in the justice system. The efforts of the women's movement and the Police Service have resulted in reforms being introduced in Australia. There has been a growth of support services managed by both volunteer and government groups working alongside self help groups.

Identifying victims of crime is not always that straight forward. A person who has suffered an injury may be more clearly identified compared to someone whose home was burgled. They are both victims, their needs are equally important, but they will be experiencing differing kinds of emotional and physical trauma. No one can be, or must be, categorised or treated as if they had experienced the same type of trauma.

Victims' needs and their rights are increasingly documented. The criminal justice process can be overwhelming, frightening and extremely confusing. Focussing our attention on the victim's needs from a humanitarian rather than a criminal perspective is an important step. Not just for the victims of crime, but for society as a whole.

Detective Sergeant Lilly Cvijic

GRADUATION — FRIDAY OF WEEK TWENTY-SIX

It is 5.00am, Friday morning. Just another Friday for the vast majority. But for a small group of special people, it is Friday of week twenty-six. Graduation Day. I set two alarm clocks, but awake before either of them rings. This is quite normal and like all instructors I do not sleep very well the night before. I did take to my bed early, but sleep eluded me for most of the night. It is hard to relax as you go through a mental checklist to make sure that everything is prepared and that you are as organised as you can be. Although I am an instructor and not the Squad Supervisor of the graduating squad, we all have a role to play on this very special Friday. The bosses, the serving members, the media, mums, dads and friends of graduates will all be watching. Even the smallest detail needs to run smoothly as it is a day that will always be remembered by all for a very long time. It must be right and it must be perfect.

I made sure my uniform was 'spot on'. Shirt and spare shirt ironed, skirt dry cleaned, shoes polished to a mirror shine, stockings and spare stockings packed. I always worry that someone will forget something so I make sure I pack a spare of everything. I have a fear that one of the graduates will forget something that I cannot offer a spare of. I also have a fear that someone will wear her favourite red bra and it will rain, making the cotton shirt transparent. I do, however, try to put that sort of 'hiccup' out of my mind.

I pack the clips, combs, brushes, elastic hair bands, and the extra three or four black scrunches. Someone is bound to forget hers or, worse, try



Carol Vernon reflects on the anxieties of getting ready for the recruits to graduate

to wear a trendy coloured number. In the bag goes the hair spray and gel; I cannot possibly forget those. Wisps of hair do tend to stand out and I am quite adamant that there will be no Tina Turner or Phyllis Diller look alikes on this day. I also make sure I carry a huge supply of safety pins and I never forget the needle, cotton, and spare buttons.

The mental checklist goes through my mind as I shower and braid my own hair. Unlike other days, I do not prepare for my jog around the block before work. Today I leave for work knowing there will be no time for my own pleasures. I travel the same route each day, but on this particular Friday, I seem to travel in a trance, mentally going through the list again.

At 5.45am I enter the Maylands Academy gate and give a nervous gaze to the skies above, they are grey and overcast and the horizon looks a little bit threatening. I have learnt over the years that there is no amount of checking or planning that can be done to change the weather. I have come to know that so I hope the clouds do not open while the parade is on. I think again about the transparent shirts made see-through with sudden down pours. I put it into the back of my mind as I select the parking bay which will give me close access to the changing rooms but will not interfere with the street cleaner due in five minutes. The cleaners noisily trundle along Swan Bank Road making their way into the complex. They go about their job of making the car park and parade ground leaf and dirt free.

The complex starts to buzz as car after car of nervous graduates arrives. They carry their bags and uniforms like ants carrying huge lumps of food back to their nest. They seem to be weighed down with loads twice their own weight.

When they arrive in the change room I ask each one of them how they are feeling. I know the answer; I felt exactly the same way 16 years ago. Each of them answers differently, yet you know the same feeling is there. They may have been nervous on that Monday morning, 26 weeks ago when they started to realise their dream, but that morning is long forgotten. They have been through a lot since; apprehension, exhaustion, excitement, fear, disappointment, elation, happiness, and sadness. They

have made friends with people who share their dreams and have been with them throughout the training. The bonds will be there forever although today is the last day they will be together as one squad.

I smile at the constant parade into the toilet area, the nervous trip to the loo. Some things do not change over the years. I share an experience or two with those who are nervously checking and re-checking their uniforms. The mood is electric, yet calm and I am conscious not to exhibit my own nervousness. You would think that after all these years I would be used to it, but I still get goosebumps when I talk to them on graduation morning. Some wander off to the cafeteria, while others head off to collect some forgotten item left in the car. I make my usual offer to braid anyone's hair who wants it done. I remember earlier schools when there were as many as ten girls waiting to get their hair braided. One's hair has a mind of its own and no matter how hard you try yourself, it just won't do what you want it to do.

The time arrives to put their uniforms on. I have already dressed myself ready to do the hair of anyone who wants it done and offer reassuring words or the spare whatever that has been forgotten. It takes no time at all and they are ready. Checking each other's appearance and chattering non-stop about their nerves, the threatening rain clouds or the family member who has just arrived sounds wonderful and I know exactly how they are all feeling.

I do a cursory check of their uniforms, openly if asked, but more often surreptitiously. As I leave, I remind them to put things away before they come outside, and I give them my best wishes and encouragement for the parade. I try very hard not to sound like a mother hen; they may not appreciate it. After all, they are trained now and ready to handle the variety of problems the public will put their way. But it is my nature, just the way I am made.

Doing a final check on my own appearance, I grab my hat and head off to the 'hub' of activity, the Recruit Training Office, to see what I can do to help. The coordinator for the parade is doing her first parade, and may have something that needs doing.

All is under control so I check my role in proceedings and head out to the seating area. Parents and friends have gathered and some are still arriving. Commissioned officers are everywhere and I throw a salute to the Principal as he approaches me. He is calm as he asks how things are going. He knows the drill, but like us, he is on display. He knows he has good staff working for him and we all know the standard he expects. I also know he is as nervous as we all are, and remember again the parade of 16 years ago when he was the drill sergeant. How could I forget; it was the day of my dreams and the day my dreams were realised.

I take a last look around and everything seems to be going well. I take my seat behind the seats of our commissioned officers and partners and notice our most senior female officer is seated with a female Navy officer, smartly dressed in her whites. I grit my teeth and say a silent prayer that everything will go well. I always wonder what other service personnel think of our graduation parades. Along from the Naval officer is one of our new Superintendents with his wife.

The band strikes up and my skin responds with a show of goosebumps. The commentator details the morning's program and then announces the arrival of the graduating squad who march on to the parade ground to the beat of the Pipe Band, accompanied by the Mounted section resplendent on their mounts. The Drill Sergeant leads the parade, a male instructor who has put the graduates through their paces over the 26 weeks. I remember another parade which was led by a female instructor. Proudly I watched her march at the head of the parade as the first female Drill Sergeant in Western Australia. I knew her nerves were razor sharp that day as I had commanded the colour party on a previous parade. I thought I was going to burst a blood vessel, having to shout out the orders in a voice loud enough for the bandmaster to hear.

Today there are five females graduating. They take their place alongside their male colleagues. They have done the same training as their male counterparts, and have achieved the same goals. The graduating squad comes to a halt in front of families and the officers. As they are intro-

duced a loud, warm and proud applause erupts, and the goosebumps are back.

The Commissioner's arrival is imminent and two female recruits have volunteered to open the vehicle door. They are former cadets currently going through the recruitment school and though they have had no experience in drill movements, are comfortable in themselves around the Commissioned Officers. They very smart in their recently issued uniforms and I feel a special pride in them as their former instructor. It will not be long before they will be graduating ...more goosebumps.

The Commissioner arrives and the formalities really begin. A review is conducted; the rain had started a little earlier, just before the parade started and I scan the graduates...no coloured bras showing through the now, very wet shirts. After the motorcycle escort and the band were inspected, it was over to the Mounted Police. The mounted contingent on this day was to be led by another senior female officer. The other riders were predominantly female and with their male colleagues presented a pleasing display.

The butterflies in my stomach now had a wingspan of at least two metres. It would only be a few minutes before I had to do my thing. The awards were about to be presented and I was to present the academic award on behalf of the Police Social Club. A simple task, I had however, to negotiate the two steps of the platform, step over the feet of the Naval officer, pick up an enormous book prize and head towards the 'Main man' without tripping over. The eyes of everyone were on me, and I knew it, and my heart was in my mouth. If I was ever going to make a fool of myself, it would be now. I managed my salute and handed the book to the graduate. Unable to shake the graduate's hand, as he had just received the Dux of the school as well, I simply congratulated him. One salute to go, an about turn, a short walk and I would be back to the safety of my seat.

Time was getting on and the strain was beginning to show on the faces of the graduates. The majority were coping quite well but some were turning a little grey. A sign that they had succumbed to the heat and the

excitement of the day. A combination of several things usually causes this reaction, but nerves and not breathing properly are usually the main reasons. Concern was evident on the faces of the squad supervisors seated nearby. All was made right when the formalities wound up and the graduates were called to attention. Under the command of the Drill Sergeant, they prepared for the final march with the blood flowing to their feet and hands again. Fingers crossed, we were nearly home. The band started and in perfect time they set off in columns en route to the career they had worked so hard for.

Like the proud parents, friends, and squad supervisors, I stood and applauded as they confidently marched past, eyes right. A tear always wells up in my eyes at this time. It could be through pure relief the parade went well but I think it is because I know they have all realised their dreams on this Friday, of week twenty-six.

Carol Vernon

SHARON LEONHARDT— ONE OF WA'S FINEST

Sharon is thirty-six years of age and has a seven-year-old daughter named Brooke. Sharon currently holds the rank of Detective Sergeant and is presently supervisor at the Asset Investigation Squad, within the Crime Operations Portfolio. The object of the squad is to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement measures by minimising the financial gain from criminal activities in addition to the forfeiture of property resulting from the commission of an offence.

Sharon joined the Western Australian Police Service as a cadet in 1978. She graduated from the Police Academy in March 1980 and throughout her career she has served in operational areas within both the Traffic Operations Support and the Crime Operations portfolio. She has been an instructor at the Detective Training School for four years and has also been a member of the Police Negotiations Unit since 1988, during which time she has been involved in numerous negotiated incidents involving persons threatening suicide and hostage incidents.



*Sharon finds life in the
Police Force
full and rewarding.*

*The following pages show some
of the things said about
women in the Police Service
in the past.*

WHY WOMEN TRAFFIC POLICE WERE EMPLOYED

From information furnished by the Department, we publish herewith an article setting out why two members of the Women Police were employed on point duty in regard to the handling of traffic.

For some time prior to his death, the late Mr McKay, Commissioner of Police, was concerned with the control of traffic at points where children cross roads to and from school. He conceived the idea that a special force of female auxiliaries, working in uniform, might be able to give very useful service in this important duty of protecting children.

Mr McKay's idea was that these women could work part time, as required, and thus relieve the difficulties of which every station Sergeant and Traffic Sergeant is all too well aware of finding police for this duty, often when their services are badly needed elsewhere.

Accordingly he called Women Police together and asked for two volunteers to be trained in point duty and traffic matters generally, to see how the use of females for this duty would work.

Miss Amy Millgate, and Miss Gladys Johnson volunteered for the duty. They were posted to the Police Traffic Branch, issued with uniforms, and commenced training under Acting Sergeant Spencer. Both these women police are ex-service women. They are being specially used only to try out the idea. If successful, consideration will be given to a scheme for employment of other women on part time duty of seeing children safely across roadways where there are regular school crossings.

There is no intention on the part of the department to continue the employment of Women Police on this particular duty, but the manner in which they have already acquitted themselves shows the possibilities of the scheme. Public comments in regard to their appearance, their capacity for the work, and their effectiveness has generally been most favourable.

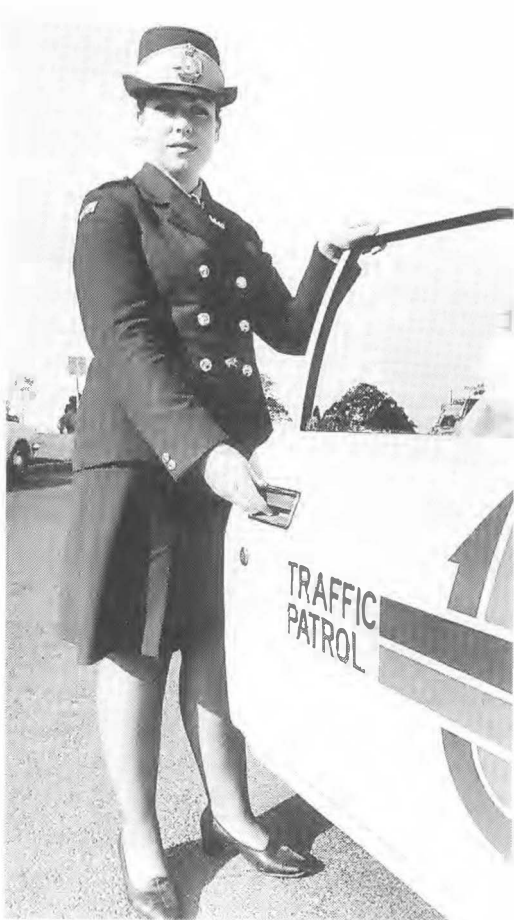
After a later date and with a little more experience the general question of using women, other than Police Women, on this duty will be reviewed, but there is no intention to replace regular members of the police force

on the duty of the control of traffic intersections in the metropolitan area or elsewhere.

All that is in mind is the safety of school children at particular crossings, where, it is thought, women specially employed for the purpose might do the duty, which is of a minor nature compared with that of regular traffic police.

(from the Police News 1948)

Constable Bridget Bachs graduated from the Police Academy in 1976 and in June the following year, became one of Western Australia's first woman traffic patrol officers.



AMONGST OTHER THINGS, POLICE WOMEN ALSO...

The question of women police opens up a big subject. In many parts of England, police women are employed with all the powers of an ordinary patrol man.

To expect women to take up the duties of an ordinary policeman would be extremely absurd, yea impossible, and yet the constable has to deal with every offence and violation of the law whether it affects man or women. The question then arises, what is left for the policewoman to do in the ordinary curriculum of police duties?

In the columns of the March (1917) issue of this journal, we published an article from the pen of the Deputy Commissioner of Police in Cape Town, commending the appointment of women police to the authorities. In that city there were voluntary policewomen who were under the eye of the ordinary policeman, and it was alleged, were doing good work.

When we analyse this work, also the work of the policewomen in England, among the duties, the women police search female ammunition workers prior to their entering the factories, examine passports, attend to complaints from parents concerning misconduct of boys and girls, keeping an eye on wives in the absence of their husband, illegitimate baby cases, cautioning wayward girls, etc. All these duties, although of commendable nature, are not the work of the police, and rightly so.

The advocates of women police wish them to act as a kind of purity force, whose duty should be to supervise the morals of young girls and women generally if their conduct gives ground for belief that they are likely to take the wrong turning. We can fully sympathise with this point of view, especially in view of the shocking state of affairs that exists morally in our cities, but we fail to see how women police can control the evil, or have any power to interfere with the morals of the people. The work undertaken in other lands was usually social work, and this could be more successfully accomplished by voluntary organisations than by State Policewomen.

This question was fully discussed recently in the African Union Assembly and some very sensible arguments brought forward. The Minister for Justice said that the police law made no provision for the employment of women police, only men could be employed. He objected to the police being saddled with the moral reclamation of the people.

It was good work, like holding prayer meetings at the street corners, but it was not the work of voluntary institutions. Another Minister said that so far as women police were concerned, the best policeman a woman could have was her mother.

Mothers do not look after their girls, whom you find sprawling about parks and avenues, and you expect a policeman to step in. It is the mother's duty to do all that is required. A result of these and other arguments, a motion to appoint women police in the Union was withdrawn.

There is a section of the community in this State who are strong advocates of women police, but with the law as it stands, what could women police do? They could not be expected to carry out the ordinary duties of a constable in any and every part of a city, and it would be extremely dangerous for them to frequent the haunts of immoral women alone. The class of female who require supervision of the arm of the law are usually found in the slum portions of our cities, where congregate the most immoral of both sexes, and to expect a women policeman to control this class under such circumstances would be absurd. Unfortunately there is a work to be done in our cities, especially among young girls and women, that can only be touched by their own sex, but it is a problem, we believe, that only finds a solution among the societies of women and religious bodies.

(from the Police News 1957)

The Police News of 41 years ago (1957) commenting on what Police News, July 1917, was saying.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN POLICE

The question of women police, which is by no means a new one for the I.C.P.O., was dealt with this year in two reports, one from the General Secretariat and the other submitted by the United Kingdom Delegation, says the "International Criminal Police Review".

I. The first report began by recalling several definitions, such as that of a policewoman: a police officer of the female sex, which excluded secretaries, telephonists, nurses, welfare assistants, filing clerks, etc; the police unit which was "mixed" when it contained both policemen and policewomen and "autonomous" when it comprised one or the other sex.

In order to determine the principle governing the recruitment of policewomen, in November, 1957, the General Secretariat consulted its members.

In the beginning of 1958, the police forces of twenty-six countries and territories affiliated to the I.C.P.O. employed policewomen:

The Argentine, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Burma, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Federal Germany, Greece, India, Israel, Japan, and the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Surinam, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America.

Four other countries expressed their intention to recruit policewomen sooner or later: Italy, Morocco, the United Arab Republic (Egypt) and Thailand.

Some of the replies received are well worth quoting in full, but this is, unfortunately, impossible, so only the gist of their general trend can be given. In spite of this, it is of considerable interest:

The replies sent to the General Secretariat may be obtained on request in the form of micro-films by any affiliated country or territory.

It should be mentioned that women police units already exist in many different countries and the number of setbacks they have had up to the present is negligible.

Actual recruitment not only depends on local conditions, but on duties the recruits will have to perform. In the general police, the same qualifications should be required of both men and women (apart from physique) and preference given to single women.

In special police forces (criminal investigation, juveniles' police, social police, etc) preference is given to the candidate having already studied social welfare work and there is less objection to married women.

There are, therefore, two different concepts concerning the part to be played by women police. The "English" concept, which is characterised by the preference given to general police duties and consequently to uniformed autonomous female units.

The "continental" concept, characterised by a preference for special police forces and to plain clothes mixed units.

Naturally, these two concepts are reflected in the standards of the recruitment of policewomen. It is, therefore, very difficult, if not impossible, for the General Secretariat to propose a model scheme for the recruiting of policewomen. The following points should nevertheless be adhered to:

- 1) Before attempting to institute a women police force, it is advisable to prepare public opinion in advance for the innovation.
- 2) The recruiting of women by starting with a particularly qualified woman seems to have given very good results.
- 3) The qualifications required in recruits depend on what they are to be required to do, though they must always take a course of training in a police school.
- 4) The difficult question of marriage of recruits and policewomen might be solved by using the married women for duties (special police) for which their social situation might give them greater aptitude.
- 5) Marriage (like divorce) alone should never count against a candidate and, in particular, it should never result in a discharge.

6) Autonomous female units should have a woman for their immediate commander.

It might be a good thing to draw attention to the fact that a police force should never hesitate to take advantage of the experience of that of another country, either by sending the person in charge of organising the women police to this country to receive instruction or by asking for the services of a qualified adviser.

Many of these rules, standards or characteristics are to be found in the organisation of the women police in the United Kingdom. The report submitted by the United Kingdom delegation is one of the fullest and most instructive received by the General Secretariat.

Here are some extracts from this document:

"....the community should be policed by men and women. Both have a part to play in police work, which for most part is concerned with the day to day affairs of members of the public. As the police are recruited from all walks of life, they are a cross section of the public and are able to understand all the problems which may confront them.

"Much of the success of any police system depends on the confidence the public has in its absolute integrity and in its reputation for fair dealing in all matters.... Great Britain.... an essentially law abiding country. Only in such a situation could a population of 50,000,000 people be adequately served by a police strength of 79,000. This figure includes women (2,529) and we believe that women should take their full share in the general policing of the country and should not be limited to dealing only with the victims of sexual crimes and wayward or delinquent juveniles.

"Women recruits are selected for their qualities of human understanding, for their ordinary common sense, for their determination to preserve law and order and for their desire to help maintain the standards of a decent way of life....Women police recruits here are trained with men....taking exactly the same syllabus and examination. They receive additional training from women instructors (experienced police officers) in the matters affecting children and young persons...."

The report then goes on to enumerate three important principles to ensure success in the employment of women police.

1) "...they should wear uniforms and be out and about, easily identifiable and available to the public at all hours. Uniformed women can do much to prevent crime and by their very presence can curb rowdy and unseemly behaviour. On their patrols they become well acquainted with the public, who have no hesitation in approaching them with their difficulties and they are therefore able to give service to a far greater number of people than they could if their activities were limited to contacts with the victims of assault.

2) "...they have been recruited because they are women, to bring their special aptitude to the many problems involving women and children which come to the police everywhere.

3) "...they are in no sense a substitute for the men police but are complementary to them. In these days when road traffic problems take up so much of the time and attention of police officers it is natural to enlist the aid of women officers.... for traffic control duty, especially in the vicinity of schools.... should their special services as women be needed, they would be relieved of traffic duty and would concentrate their attention on the special case.

"There are women police in each one of the 126 separate police forces in England and Wales and in all the smallest and remote forces in Scotland. Generally speaking, the number of women in the force should be about six percent of the number of men....

"Besides receiving the identical recruit training as the men, the women are also included on mixed training courses on crime detection and they go to police college where officers are trained to hold the higher ranks in the police service. All promotion is by qualifying examination and selection from the ranks, as for the men.

"Many lessons have been learned....over the last forty years. The most important....first step must be to select a woman of the right calibre, with the initiative and vision to be a senior officer. She should be given as wide a training and experience as possible and then be allowed to help

select and train the main body of women police needed. So much depends on the outlook and example of this senior officer that it is difficult to over emphasise the importance of making this initial selection with the utmost care.

"It has been found valuable in this country to have a position of authority in the department responsible for police affairs of a women who can advise....

"To get the maximum value from the employment of women police there must be efficient welfare services available to which cases can be referred. Although women police are not trained social workers, they work in the closet partnership with welfare services.

"....the early fears for the safety of women police employed on patrol have proven groundless. Their uniform is a protection to them and the public has come to accept and respect them. Women police in Great Britain have been fortunate in that they have inherited the great tradition of the men who have accepted them into the service with such goodwill...."

The United Kingdom report included a very interesting appendix on the duties of uniformed women police (patrols, visits, station duties, court duties, etc) and of plain clothes policewomen (in connection with crime, women, children, women's organisations, prostitution, escort duties, etc).

II. In plenary session, the Secretariat-General recalled these generalisations, especially the difficult problem of whether to employ single or married women.

It was not the moment, he said, to ask the Assembly to draw conclusions. He felt that the most important thing was to exchange options, to get to know the facts and to learn something from them.

Mentioning the case of the United Kingdom, where there were some 2,500 policewomen, and comparing it with that of France, where there were only seventy-five of them in Paris, Mr Sicot felt that this would provide much interesting matter for discussion.

Mr Fernet (France) stated that for fifteen years there had been a women police force in Paris. In view of the fact that they had been concerned rather with prevention than suppression of crime, they needed to have the diploma of a social welfare worker. The service they had rendered had been very valuable in the case of child victims, because their intuition and understanding had made it possible to act more effectively than men in certain fields. At one time it had been thought that they might use women to keep watch in large stores in Paris, but they had shown some reluctance for this kind of work. In France, married women might join the police; although single were generally engaged. It had been noted, however, that once married, they usually left the service in order to concentrate on their duties as wife and mother.

In Cuba, said Mr de Castroverde, there were no women police, but he felt that the General Assembly might draft a resolution recognising the importance of women in the field of prevention of juvenile delinquency and asking other States to consider the matter.

Mr Amable (Ghana) said that in 1952 there had been 28 women police in his country and recently the Ghana Government had obtained the services of an English woman expert for the training of women who wished to work in the police.

The same qualifications were required of both sexes, since the salaries were the same. Married women were only employed for special duties and were not generally expected to take part in normal police duties.

Mr Jackson (United Kingdom) remarked that the forty women employed in the departments of New Scotland Yard were given exactly the same duties as the detectives.

Miss de Vitre (United Kingdom) felt that police needed teams made up of both men and women, each of whom could carry out the duties best suited to them. Women did not work better than men, but they worked in a different way. It should be explained to men that women were not rivals but colleagues. Nor were they substitutes for men, as they undertook tasks in which they were more liable to succeed because of their feminine qualities. In Great Britain, married women were accepted by

the police force just as single ones were. The only person who judged as to whether a woman should leave the force on marriage was the woman herself.

This statement from Miss de Vitre, who wrote the United Kingdom report on the subject, was greatly appreciated.

Although Mr Zentui (Libya) recognised the value of women in crime prevention, he felt that it would be premature to suggest their use to his Government. In Moslem countries, the place of women was strictly determined and public opinion would have to be prepared for any innovations.

The Secretary General had received some very interesting replies from American towns to which Mr Christides had forwarded copies of the questionnaire and he thanked them for their collaboration.

Mr Toumi (Tunisia) stated that his country, while approving the engaging of women for police work, could not, at the moment, in spite of the present day equality of the sexes, consider the formation of a body of women police. With regard to juvenile delinquency, the Tunis Government had established reduction centres under the control of the Secretary of State for National Education, Youth and Sport, directed by both men and women supervisors.

Mr Dutt (India) said that in India, policewomen were mainly used to prevent juvenile delinquency and prostitution, to combat illicit drug traffic and to maintain order during political demonstrations, owing to the fact that demonstrators had the habit of placing women in the front ranks so that the police would be disinclined to intervene.

Policewomen, considers Mr de la Quintana (Argentine), could play an important part on a national level. In Buenos Aires, there were 100 policewomen, 76 of whom worked in offices and dealt with administrative matters. Those on active duty dealt with juvenile delinquents and helped in road safety campaigns organised in schools. They also watched over women prisoners in hospitals. Both single and married women were recruited and received the same salaries as men. The only difference in

salary which could exist arises from the fact that women, for the moment at any rate, could not be promoted to a rank higher than that of assistant inspector.

The President then suggested that the Assembly should ask the General Secretariat to devote its attention to the matter of women police, which was agreed to.

(Police News, 1961)

WOMEN AND THE WHEEL

Two can drive cheaper than one.

One of Britain's big insurance companies now offers a reduced premium to private car owners who show that the then insured car is used for social, domestic and pleasure purposes by their wives as well as themselves.

This at first sight is rather surprising. Development has risen as a result of an examination of a very large number of insurance records in which the application forms indicate the wife is a regular driver of the family car:

In explanation the company announces that it has been found that women are less inclined to "chance it" and are less worried about arriving on time. More courtesy is shown to women on the roads and passers-by will give them assistance. Women are quicker to notice an unusual sound in a car and insist on its being put right. The increasing habit of wives to drop their husbands at the local railway station and use the car for their own purposes during the day means that their husbands are less likely to leave the office under tension after a hard day and attempt to drive through heavy traffic in the worst possible frame of mind.

And, on long runs, sharing the driving between husband and wife tends to reduce the strain that leads to accidents.

Men everywhere will be pleased to note that the insurance company was more tactful than to suggest that it was influenced in any way by a belief in womens' superior driving skills.

After all, it's the husband who pays the premium — still!

(Police News 1963)

“Traffic officials in Yugoslavia have come up with a very effective way of taking the wind out of speeding motorists. After giving the speedster a ticket, the officer lets down his tyres. Furthermore, the law requires the driver to do his own re-inflating with a hand pump.”

SUPERINTENDENT IS AS FAR AS SHE CAN GO....

Though the humblest W.A. policeman may dream of one day leading the force — just as every American citizen may have visions of one day becoming President — there is no chance of a woman police officer ever attaining the top police job in W.A. Under the present promotion system, no woman can ever hope to become Commissioner of Police.

Neither can she aspire to the three other top jobs in the force: Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner and Chief Superintendent. These jobs are only open to men and even in the case of the highest rank a policewoman can achieve — superintendent — there is a scope for just one woman superintendent compared with 15 such posts available to men.

Only one woman in the history of W.A. has reached superintendent's level. She was Miss Ethel Scott, who retired last August as head of the State's women police. And Miss Wilma Currie, promoted last month to the rank of inspector, is only the second woman in W.A. to have risen so high. Yet women's liberationists can take some satisfaction from the fact that W.A. is the only state in Australia where a woman police officer can go as far as superintendent.



At Ethel Scott's retirement in 1971 are Wilma Currie, Ethel, Val Doherty and J Shocniak (nee Staniforth)

The limit on women's advancement beyond this is the result of a system where promotion is strictly within departments of the force and females are employed only by their own section, The Women Police. There are women attached to other sections, like the Criminal Investigation Branch and the Missing Persons' Bureau, but they are, for the books, part of Women Police and can only be promoted within the department.

The system of staff ratios is such that numbers will not allow higher than a superintendent in that section. The predominance of men in the police force is the wider reason for the restriction on the advancement of women. This male dominance is traditional in probably all Western countries and stems partly from the fact, according to W.A. Police Commissioner Athol Wedd, that the female crime rate is so much lower than the male. "You are clearly the better behaved sex," he said.

Mr Wedd sees no prospect of a woman ever becoming Commissioner unless the number of women in the force at least equals the number of men, unlikely in the foreseeable future. As long as males greatly outnumber females — there are only 38 women police in a force numbering hundreds — or as long as they are employed only by their own section and not spread throughout the force, then prospects of forging ahead will be limited by the system.

Apart from this, which will doubtless have women's liberationist scowling, there will be more for women's lib to smile about in the position of women in the W.A. police force than in their position in many other fields. They have equal pay and allowances — Miss Currie has moved into a \$9332 a year bracket as inspector, identical with male inspectors — the same rules and promotion principles, they sit for the same exams and are identified by the same system of service numbers.

Quality of service is also taken into account, Inspector Currie, for instance, has risen from third class sergeant to inspector in just eight months, says her boss, completely skipping over one of the usual stages. While this is partly connected with staff ratios, it is also due to the high quality of her work, according to Commissioner Wedd.

"She has shown a high quality of service and a high level of leadership since she took command," he said. Miss Currie has studied to qualify

herself for the exacting and all around demands of her job. She had trained in the law of evidence at the Perth Technical College, done a welfare service course at the Commonwealth Defence School at Macedon in Victoria, a course in public speaking at PTC and had risen high in her former profession of nursing at a young age before joining the police force.

Commissioner Wedd said Inspector Currie had worked with him often during his years in the CIB. "There are numerous occasions when we were investigating crime where the victim was a female that I had Miss Currie helping me and I gained an impression then of leadership qualities and her broad knowledge of law procedure and its practical application. Essentially, she has always shown the expertise required of an officer who is conscious of our service being a career service."

(Police News 1971)

“Policewoman Robina Scott has had a spell of relieving at Kalgoorlie, while Policewoman Browne of that town has been on leave.”

(Police News, 1952)

PROMOTION WITH PRIDE

"The proudest moment of my life," was how Inspector Wilma Currie described her recent appointment to that rank in the W.A. Police Force.

She was promoted to inspector on February 23, making her the only woman inspector in Australia at present and only the second woman ever to be promoted to this position in W.A. (the other appointee was Miss Ethel Scott who later rose to Superintendent).



Miss Wilma Currie joined the Western Australia Police Force in 1953 and was promoted to Inspector in 1973.

In October 1976, Miss Currie became only the second woman Police Officer to receive the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. She retired on January 20, 1985.

"I first knew of my appointment when the Commissioner of Police handed me a letter addressed to Inspector Currie — it was the greatest thrill of my life," said the inspector.

Miss Currie joined the women police in 1953 and was made a sergeant in 1966. Before 1953 she was a deputy matron at Pinjarra Hospital.

"I decided to join the force because it was a challenge and I would still be dealing with people and their problems," she said. "There have been many changes since I joined — especially in the past few months. Applications are now accepted from women between the ages of 21 and 40. Before it was only up to 30 years. Senior women with nursing experience are very much sought after."

There are now women police directly connected with CIB, the Missing Persons' Bureau, between 9am and 5pm on weekdays, central communication and more women have been delegated to the country.

"Until recently there was only one woman police officer at Kalgoorlie. Now there are two there, one at Geraldton and one at Albany," Inspector Currie said. "I have no regrets about entering the women's police force. The work is so varied and interesting — you never know what will happen from day to day. I have not been involved in any violence. I have found a tactful approach and kindness helps avoid this.

"If there is any chance of violence the woman officer is accompanied by a male officer and most of the time the women police work in pairs in radio equipped cars.

"My duties are very much the same as when I was sergeant — that is being in charge of all the women police in this state. As a part of my duty I visit the women police in the country areas twice a year. I am going to Geraldton this week on inspection."

(Police News 1972)

“All the boys at Albany have been minding their Ps and Qs lately because of the presence of Woman Constable M O'Donnell who has been doing a spot of duty in our fair town.”

(Police News, 1954)

NEW WOMEN POLICE UNIFORMS

A major breakthrough for the women members of the W.A. Police Force has been achieved. In line with other States and overseas Police Forces, our Women Police have now a uniform of their own.

The finalisation of months of negotiations has not been reached without a considerable amount of research and discussions.

Negotiations commenced early in 1975 when Women Police approached the then Union Research Officer, Peter Williams. He aided in the formation of a committee and as a result of many discussions, Mrs Barton of the Perth Technical College was approached and it was arranged with her and her students at the college to design summer and winter uniforms suitable for use by Women Police in this State.

From these designs, outfits were selected and presented to the Department along with material samples and after a little over 12 months of negotiations the end result was a well designed, smart looking uniform.

Members of Women Police were given every encouragement to select the outfit they would ultimately be wearing once it was agreed that they should go into uniform.

(Police News, 1976)

Around 1985 the policewomen of Western Australia were finally issued with trousers. The only problem was, they were not allowed to wear them until the sun had gone down... The bosses must have been concerned that the public might actually have seen them!!!!



Women police officers in Western Australia were provided with uniforms for the first time in 1976. On the left is the summer uniform and on the right the winter uniform, both worn to good effect by Constable Judi O'Halloran (nee Matson).

The roles of women have become more varied



*Dianne Bickhoff and
Beth Brady of the
Mounted Section.*



*Siobhan O'Loughlin
in Ballistics.*



*Natalie Morris puts recruit
Narelle Woods over the wall,
showing that the women of
the police force have to be
prepared for anything.*

*The job has always
had its moments....
here some of the officers
tell of theirs.*

Drowning Attempt Thwarted

Constable Katherine Schober had graduated from the WA Police Academy 14 days earlier, when she was called on to perform an act of bravery above and beyond the extent of her training.

At 8.47pm on June 19, 1989, a distressed woman telephoned the Police Communications Centre with a plea for help.

The young woman, who was later reported missing from the psychiatric ward of Royal Perth Hospital, had told police she was drunk and intended drowning herself by jumping into the Swan River.

Constable Schober, who was a member of a mobile police patrol, was directed to the location of the caller along the Swan River foreshore, near Barrack Street Jetty, in Perth.

They located her on a park bench on the bank of the Swan River, west of the jetty.

First Woman to receive the Certificate of Merit

As the van approached, the distressed woman rose from the seat, walked to a retaining wall, jumped down into shallow water and began wading into the deep water.

She started swimming and Schober volunteered to follow.

As Schober swam out, the distressed woman produced a pair of scissors and began slashing herself. She then submerged.

Schober grabbed the woman, pulled her to the surface and assisted her to shore after gaining control of the situation.

In September, 1989, Schober became the first woman to receive the Certificate of Merit. She was also awarded a Bronze Medal for bravery by the Royal Humane Society of Australasia in April, 1991, and accepted a letter of citation and a life saving certificate from the Royal Australian Life Saving Association.

From the Police News

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

We stopped a woman one day while we were on traffic duty, she was quite young and driving on her own. She was not driving particularly well so we decided to pull her over and have a quick chat with her. I got out of the van and on this particular day I was wearing my pants not a skirt. When I got up to her car window she had unbuttoned her shirt and pulled her skirt right up so that most of her legs were showing. I couldn't believe it. I just looked at her and said, "Get dressed and then come over to the side of the road."

The poor girl nearly died of shock and she didn't know what to do with herself. All I wanted to do was to have a quick chat and what I ended up getting was a half dressed woman.

When the girl got out of the car I just looked at her and said, "What do you think you are doing?" The girl could not stop apologising.

"I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, I thought you were going to be a man." Because the girl was so embarrassed I just let her go. I think she had learnt her lesson.

(Sue Young)



*Sue faces the
(near naked) truth on
at least two occasions
(see page 82).*

AN ARRESTING DAY

I can't actually remember my first arrest, but there is one particular arrest that does come to mind that I thought was extremely amusing. I was with my partner on patrol duty and we had just pulled over a bikie and this guy was absolutely huge and dressed in the full get up. Long beard, long hair, dressed in leathers, denims, and studs all over his jacket and covered in tattoos, and he was also about seventeen stone. Straight away my partner and the bikie took an instant dislike to each other and as a consequence anything my partner said he completely ignored. However, to everything I said, the bikie gave his undivided attention.

Now, as you can imagine, as this guy was so huge, we wanted to keep the situation as calm as possible and neither of us wanted to upset him as he would have been very difficult to restrain. So far so good as we headed back to the lock up. Now you have to know that it was a Friday night, and most, if not all Friday nights at the lockup are usually full of incidences of people screaming, fighting and yelling; all quite the usual fare.

I asked the bikie to empty his pockets on the counter which is the usual routine when you have taken someone to the lockup, and he did. As we were going through this process the constable behind the desk came over to search the bikie. Again this was the usual routine and this is where the fun started. "Look mate," the bikie said. "don't you dare touch me. The lady officer can search me, but not you."

At this stage things were still quite calm and the constable totally ignored him as you do get used to this type of crap and pay no attention to it. However, you could feel the storm brewing as the constable went about his business, grabbing the rubber gloves and snapping them onto his hands a little like a doctor ready to examine someone. The bikie took one look at him and screamed at the top of his voice, "I'm not having no f***** faggot searching me."

As you can imagine it was on for young and old, trying to calm down and restraining a 17 stone bikie was no easy task, everyone and everything went flying in every possible direction.

Needless to say the situation calmed down and we all lived to tell the tale. I probably should have been scared, but the whole situation just amused me.

(Michelle Porteus)

“Pleading “not guilty” to a drunkenness charge, a man in Chicago claimed he had “only one drink.”
“From a glass or a bathtub?” roared the judge. ””

(Police News, 1946)

NO HORISING AROUND PLEASE

We were working in Geraldton for two weeks and the whole time we had been there it had been extremely quiet and very uneventful. It was actually our last day working in Geraldton when we received a call to attend a disturbance at one of the local restaurants. When we arrived the place was in absolute chaos as people were fighting and the restaurant was being completely turned upside down. We assessed the situation, checked out the type of floor in the restaurant, decided it was safe, and rode our horses straight through the door.

Here we were, two mounted police women on our horses, riding through the front door of the restaurant. Needless to say the fighting came to an immediate stop, not due to any sense of responsibility, but out of sheer shock of what they were looking at. No one could believe their eyes. Back-up arrived, we left, and order was restored.

(Di and Beth)

The Mounted Section.

They don't all take their horses to the restaurant.



A TALL ORDER

While I was working at Central many of the guys I worked with were huge, and I don't mean fat, I mean built big. After some time of using the patrol cars the seats became lower and lower, pushed down by the weight of these guys. Now you see, I am only 5ft 4 so when I started work there I jumped in the patrol car and couldn't see over the steering wheel. Not a problem I thought, and every morning after that I would show up to muster with my pillow under my arm, ready for duty. Everyone thought it was quite amusing, but if I didn't have the pillow there was no way I could have seen over the steering wheel to drive the car.

(Sharon Leonhardt)

“ The mounted police no longer look after the footy matches any more. The horses kept turning up the pitch and making it look a mess. Not like the guys playing footy, heh! ”

YES DEAR, WE UNDERSTAND

Two incidents that come to mind are from the early days when we didn't wear uniforms. I accompanied a male uniformed officer, and a female mental patient to Heathcote Hospital. When we arrived the doctor discussed the circumstances of the patient being taken there and asked me to accompany him to a ward.

Inside I saw people rocking to and fro, and patients were asking me if I was their mum come to take them home. Anyway, while I was standing there the doctor came over to me and told me I could get changed. I tried to explain to the doctor that I shouldn't be here. I attempted to explain that I was a policewoman and not a patient. The doctor just looked at me and said, "That's all right dear," and proceeded to leave.

The mental patient that we brought in was left standing outside with the constable and after what seemed an eternity the constable told the staff he was waiting for the policewoman. The doctor nearly died and he couldn't stop apologising to me for the mistake. The constable on the other hand laughed all the way back to the station.

The other incident that occurred was on a day I was sent to Bandyup Women's Prison when the prison officers went on strike. I was taken there by a fellow police officer, given a bundle of keys and was told there was a telephone in the office if I needed assistance.

When I arrived I had no history of the inmates. I did read, however, that there was a pair of scissors missing, but I had to get on with business so I selected three people to work in the kitchen. Everything was going along quite smoothly and as I let all the prisoners out into the exercise yard saw they were not particularly happy as all visits had been cancelled due to the strike.

At first I thought it wouldn't take much for one of the inmates to hit me over the head, take the keys and walk out, or poison the food I ate. However, I knew I had to think positively, but I kept wondering who had the scissors.

I knew many of the Aboriginal inmates and selected one of them to sort out the occasional squabbles that occurred. I nearly died when I thought I had lost one of the prisoners after I did a count and one was missing. However, my mind was put to rest when I was informed she was visiting another inmate at the time.

The nights were disturbed by the occasional sobs and the cries of those withdrawing from drugs, the throwing of things out of the cells and those requiring guidance with their problems. At the end of the four days one of the ladies I had selected to work in the kitchen came to me and thanked me for allowing her to work there as she told me that she had never been trusted to work in the kitchen before.

I later found out she had murdered a taxi driver and put his body in the boot of a car. And I had allowed her to work with knives! I couldn't believe it. However, working in the prison was an experience that was very rewarding and presented a great challenge. By the way, those scissors were never found.

(Willemina Curtis)

“ For information on taxation matters, consult Const. Joseph (Kremlin) Rosich, and Joe will supply all the dope. ”

(Police News 1947)

THAT'S THE "SPIRIT"

I was working in Albany where we had a young male cadet by the name of Allan working with us. He was a really nice guy and as he was new to the job he was extremely eager to please. Allan was only 17, so to say he was a little green around the edges is quite an understatement. One day he asked my partner and me if he could join us on afternoon patrol. This was not a problem and we were quite happy to have him join us. Now to set the scene, there had been a new hospital built in Albany as the old hospital was rather out dated. However they didn't knock down the old hospital so it became a favourite hiding place for kids to hang out and for those who had run away from home.

That afternoon we received a phone call from a concerned parent that their child had gone missing. At this stage we were not concerned but assured the mother we would keep an eye out and have a look around. Our first stop was to go and check the old hospital to see if the kid was there. As we were on afternoon shift it was quite dark by the time we arrived at the hospital, got out of the patrol car and headed up the path. As we were walking up to the building our young cadet was extremely nervous. As a result he kept holding onto my partners belt.

We got inside the building and it was quite obvious that some kids had been staying there. Our young cadet Allan was still holding on to my partner and as it was apparent that no-one was around we decided it would be better to come back later in the evening. The night was proceeding quite nicely so we headed back to the office for a coffee break. On the way back my partner decided to discuss how rumour had it, the old hospital was haunted. Allan was already nervous so we decided to wind him up even more and as the story progressed he became even more intrigued. He just couldn't believe it and I think he was scared and excited at the same time.

We got back to the office for our coffee break Allan disappeared somewhere, so my partner and I thought we might play a practical joke on him.

You see I only lived around the corner from the old hospital so I suggested that I should go home and get a white sheet, go back to the hospital, and hide behind one of the doors and when they came back to do another check on the place I'd jump out at them and make a ghost sound. My partner loved the idea, and when Allan came back to join us I made some excuse that I wasn't feeling well and that I was going home.

So I headed off, got a white sheet and went to the old hospital. I don't mind telling you I was petrified, it was so creepy in there, especially at night time when every minute sound seemed to be magnified. I had my torch underneath the sheet as I lay in waiting for our unsuspecting cadet.

They finally arrived and I am not kidding you, in that place it felt like I had waited hours. My partner and I had already organised a signal for when I was to jump out from behind the door. I could hear my partner coming up the pathway saying, "Get off my belt, will you please get off my belt." As I was listening to this it took everything to stop myself from laughing. I had visions of our young cadet practically on my partner's back, gripping him as hard as possible.

Anyway, the moment had arrived. I got the signal and I jumped out from behind the door and did the ghost sound of ooooooo! I tried to make it as ghostly as possible, and, well, it nearly killed him. He fell on the floor gasping for air and he nearly fainted. My partner and I took one look at each other and fell to the floor trying to calm him down. "It's O.K., it's O.K., Allan. It's only me, it's only me." We had no idea what we were going to do. At one stage I thought I was going to have to give the kid mouth to mouth resuscitation, he was an absolute mess and we thought we had given him a heart attack.

So, in the end our wonderful practical joke backfired and it took us around 20 minutes to revive him.

(Maria Coyne)

TOUGH GUY? I DON'T THINK SO

In 1972 I was stationed in the Women's Police office at Fremantle. The women usually worked alone during the weekends and it was my habit on Sundays, if things were quiet and my inquiry files were up to date, to do a foot patrol of the licensed premises, looking for under aged drinkers.

On one such patrol I was talking to some young girls at Cleos Hotel in High Street, who were obviously under age, and wrote their details in my police notebook so they could be issued a notice to attend a police lecture. While I was doing this someone kept trying to interrupt me. I told him I was a police officer and warned him of the consequences of carrying on like this, but he persisted and I arrested him for "hindering".

As I was on foot and without a radio or handcuffs, I marched him along High Street and back to Fremantle Station where he was put through the charge book. While I was completing the brief for the arrest, a Sergeant from the station came over to see if I was alright. He was concerned because the person I had arrested was well known to the uniformed branch for assaulting police and resisting arrest. I didn't know that, and, as it turned out, the person I arrested was so surprised to be arrested by a woman that he didn't resist at all. Even though his reputation as a "tough guy" amongst his peers suffered as a result of being arrested by a woman police officer, after that episode I met up with him quite often on my travels around the licensed premises in the Fremantle area and he always said hello and was always very polite.

(Bronwyn Keighly-Gerardy)

FIRST DAY ON THE JOB

My first day on the job produced some interesting results. It was June, 1980, I was straight out of the academy and was posted to Central. I was on night shift and my partner and I were issued with a patrol car which we had to drive around the city ensuring everything was quiet.

It was around 2am and I was driving down Murray Street which was extremely quiet and there was only our patrol car and one other car on the road. The other car was further ahead than us at that stage and had actually pulled over. There wasn't anything wrong so we pulled out and overtook it, pretty straight forward, so I thought.

About ten minutes later we received a call on the radio to return back to base. My partner and I were unaware of any problems and headed back to central. Back at the office my sergeant called me into his office and, as it was my first day on the job, I presumed he was just checking up on me, wanting to make sure I was O.K. Boy, I couldn't have been further from the truth. My sergeant actually wanted to charge me with dangerous driving. I couldn't believe it.

My first day on the job, really excited, high expectations, and all he wanted to do was give me a driving ticket. You see, the other car that I overtook on Murray Street was actually my sergeant, and he tried to tell me that I overtook too fast and basically that I did everything wrong. So there you have it, things could only get better, right?

(Michelle Porteus)

THE NAKED TRUTH

We drove into the car park, doing a usual sweep of the area, as it is quite common for men to congregate there, if you get my drift. Well anyway, here we were, late at night in an unmarked car, when a man walked straight in front of the car, completely naked. And it was freezing outside. He couldn't see us because of the headlights so he waved in a very friendly manner and smiled. We drove the car further forward and my partner unwound his window to have a bit of a chat. Naturally when the window came down the guy got a glimpse of the police badge and just took off. We couldn't believe it. We were yelling at him to come back, but it was to no avail.

So we got out of our car and went over to his. If you are wondering how we knew it was his car, it's just that at this stage every other car in the car park had made a very swift retreat. The car was unlocked, his keys were in the ignition and his clothes were on the front seat. So, being good police officers, we couldn't leave his car unlocked with his clothes there, so we decided to lock the car up for him, take his keys and try to find him.

Now we couldn't use our car to try and follow him because he had run down a path and into the sand dunes. We put our jackets on, grabbed our torches and went looking for him. As we were walking along the path we were calling out to him the whole time, and carried on doing this for quite a while, but it was obvious he had no intention of coming out. We headed back to the car, stayed there for a little while longer and then decided to leave. We headed straight for Claremont police station, entered the information into a book and told the police on duty to expect a very cold, naked man looking for his car keys.

(Sue Young)

NO BUTTS ABOUT IT

Working in the mounted police we quite often have to do beach patrol. It is not a regular shift but it is necessary to do every now and then as there are a few complaints or concerns expressed by women about the number of men who are perverting on them. Beach patrol quite often produces some of the most amazing situations. Without fail, every time we head towards the dunes there is a complete scurry of activity. All you see are these white bottoms running away from you, all of them men who are hiding in the dunes perverting on all the topless women. There really is a pervert born every minute.

(Di and Beth)

“ LAWYER: You say the defendant ran his car into the show window of a millinery store. But that doesn't prove that he was intoxicated, does it?

OFFICER: Well, no. But when I arrested him he was trying on the hats. ”

(Police News, 1952)

THEY CAN BE HARD

I was still working down in the country when one afternoon a lady came in claiming her son was missing. He was around six years of age and had been swimming with his mates down at the beach. His friends thought that he had left the water and run on ahead of them all. His mother was concerned that he had been abducted. The boy's mother did not say she thought he had drowned, and at this stage of the enquiries neither did we, so we approached the case as a missing person and hence organised a search party to go down to the beach. We headed off down the beach and as a natural measure of precaution had the divers going through the water.

At around six o'clock in the evening the boy's body was found. The poor lad had fallen into a hole or a dip in the ocean bed and had drowned. It was quite devastating and not the type of finish we were hoping for, but anyway that was the end of the search and also the end of my shift. I went home and the next day was my day off.

First thing in the morning there came a knock at my door. I got up and answered it and there was one of the policemen I worked with. "The doctor is going to perform the autopsy on the boy here, instead of sending him to Perth. Thought it might be less traumatic on the parents," he said.

My reply was not long in coming, "So what? It's got absolutely nothing to do with me, the case is finished for me and this is my day off."

Not that it mattered to him. None of the guys on duty back at the station wanted to go to the autopsy so I had to go. Some of the guys had kids so it would have been uncomfortable for them, others just wanted to see if I could go through with it. Unfortunately, on many occasions in the job you have to prove yourself. After a while it becomes very tedious and quite boring.

I wasn't happy about doing this autopsy, though it's not that I haven't done one before. But on a six year old it's a little harder. I arrived at the

doctor's and we had a quick chat, then headed into the room. He said he would try and get through it as quickly as possible and he shut the door. I just stood there and asked where the other others were — the others being the people who always assist the doctor during an autopsy.

You wouldn't believe it, but they were all on strike. So it was just me and the doc and I ended up having to assist him with this autopsy. It was absolutely awful. It was bad enough being there in the first place, but having to assist was not pleasant at all. Having said that, this is sometimes what the job is all about. We all have to do things we don't like, be part of cases that are sad or horrific, but at the end of the day someone has to do it. That is why we are there.

(Maria Coyne)

COUNTRY BLUES

It was about 1979 and my first country posting was in Busselton. My boss there presumed he was getting a male officer, in fact he believed that right up until the last minute when I walked in the door. I'll never forget it, he took one look at me and said, "What the hell am I going to do with you?"

I was eighteen, straight out of the cadets and raring to go. My last posting had been with the CIB stolen vehicles branch and I was really keen to learn some new and different duties. I told him I was anxious to get my 40 hours in and could I go out on the afternoon patrol shift. He just looked at me and said "no". I couldn't believe it and asked why. The reply was, "If the locals see a woman in a police patrol they'll think the boys are out with their good time girls."

I never asked after that, and also I was never allowed to do night time patrols.

(Sharon Leonhardt)

LOCK UP

I was working at the lock up on night shift when two police officers brought in a woman, a very large woman. She was also quite a well known offender to us all. As with the usual routine I went over to her to do a search, take down the information and then place her in a cell.

Well, this woman was not very happy when I approached her and just as I reached her she picked me up and threw me across the room. I literally went sailing past everyone and everything. I got back up and ran back over to her and she started actually bouncing me off the walls. At one stage she had me held high above her head and I just looked at the two guys who brought her in and said, "Whenever you're ready boys, feel free to step in anytime." They finally got the message.

(Sue Young)

WHAT A JOB

On 18 May, 1987, I arrived at Broome Airport at about 0930 hours. I was so excited, it was my first country posting since I became a police officer three years before. Broome is situated 2,300 kilometres north of Perth on the coast of the Kimberley; the population was roughly 2,000 and the main industry was pearling.

Although I had anticipated the weather, the humidity hit me like a brick wall. The Kimberley is well known for its monsoon and tropical climate. I was collected at the airport by a sergeant dressed in "stubby" shorts, a singlet and thongs, and dropped off at a house that resembled a broken down humpy. My first thought was "what have I done?" as I dissolved into tears and contemplated the mistake I had made.

I commenced duty a couple of days later and discovered that I was somewhat of a celebrity. I hadn't had much experience in dealing with full blood tribal Aboriginals and I seemed to be something of an enigma to them. I quickly became accustomed to being an observer when dealing with any full blood male, particularly tribal seniors. Their law forbids women to address them directly and I was forewarned about it. Not that my authority was usurped, but it was necessary to observe their customs in order to have a satisfactory relationship with them.

As time passed I noticed that I was earning the respect of many of the locals. People would ask to speak to me and I was able to participate in the conversation without being ignored.

I don't know if many remember the TV show *Dempsey and Makepeace*. That was a popular series at the time. I quickly became known as Makepeace, and the funny thing is that that name stuck with me and it ended up that nobody remembered what my real name was.

As time went by I no longer regretted my move. The experience I gained and the friendships I made I will never forget. I was successful in an

application to join CIB and unfortunately had to cut short my time in Broome. I transferred back to Perth on September 20, 1988. I quite often think of my time in the Kimberley and could quite easily slip back into “Broome time”.

(Nicole Hill)

A STATE OF UNDRRESS

One hot afternoon on day shift at Central, we received a call to pick up a drunk at the Perth train station. When we arrived and spoke to the person causing the disturbance, he became aggressive and decided that he didn't want to get in the back of the van. A struggle ensued and the young constable and I were having a difficult time. Within moments two more vans arrived and the extra help was wonderful as the drunk was quickly overpowered and locked away.

I walked over to the guys to thank them for such prompt attention to our plight. I followed my comrades gaze only to find, much to my horror, that the buttons of my dress had come undone and I was naked almost to the waist!! To add to my embarrassment, I found out later that my fellow Police Officers had no intention of telling me about my state of undress as they were too busy enjoying the show.

Needless to say, from that day onwards, I wore a petticoat under the "old summer dress", even in 40 degree heat.

(Carol Fry)

LEFT TURN, NO, RIGHT TURN, OH ****

The day of my graduation parade, the day I had finally made it through the police academy, was an extremely exciting day. I could barely sleep the night before due to my nervousness and excitement. We had practiced our drills for weeks and this was the day that you really get to show off to your family and friends and of course, the police hierarchy.

During our rehearsals our drill instructor marched us off to his left as he was facing us. The sequence of marching and turning had to be to absolute perfection — I mean, we were the cream of the crop, so to speak. All through our practices the orders had been reversed so that our drill instructor could watch us as he yelled out the orders.

Graduation morning finally arrived and there we all were looking our best and parading our best. When the orders came for us to depart the ceremony ground our drill instructor yelled out the wrong order. Half the graduates turned the way we had practised, the other half turned as was ordered. Half the parade was facing one way and the other half was facing the other. My great day was turning into a nightmare, and to make matters worse, I could hear my sister killing herself laughing — she could barely hold her camera straight while trying to photograph us. Naturally the look on our drill instructor's face was priceless. I can't remember now how he did it, but he managed to give us an order that got us all back on track. When we got off the parade ground we then gave him an order. Get down and give us 50.

(Carol Vernon)

A LITTLE BIT MORE PAYS OFF

I joined the Police Force in 1969, or should I say that I joined the women police, since female officers were treated differently from their male counterparts in those days. Although we were part of the same organisation and received equal pay, women police had their own promotion system, they were not trained at the Police Academy, and essentially performed a welfare role, rather than policing in the organisation.

My work involved searching for local or missing persons, including State Ward absconders, patrolling areas of the City and keeping an eye out for women and children in physical or moral danger. I also helped in investigating and dealing with cases of child neglect and assisting the uniformed branch and detectives with female victims or offenders.

This required us to be present whenever a detective interviewed and charged a female offender, or whenever a female victim was interviewed. However, our presence on those occasions was to protect the detective from any allegations of sexual impropriety being made against him. I remember being given clear instructions not to interfere with the work of the detectives and was expected to sit quietly in the corner, observe what occurred and to guard the female offender if she wanted to go to the toilet, and to search her when she was taken to the East Perth Lockup.

At the time the Woman Police office was located on the first floor of Central Police Station in East Perth and the CIB was located in James Street, where the Art Gallery is now situated.



*Bronwyn Keighley-Gerardy
was one of the first
female detectives in
Western Australia*

I remember being asked to assist Detective Evans (later Chief Superintendent Mal Evans) on one occasion with a female shoplifter. I dutifully sat in the corner minding my own business and became increasingly frustrated with the whole process and questioned (in my own mind) why I was there. I asked Detective Evans if there was anything I could do to help him prepare the brief for the court appearance of the offender. He asked me if I knew how to prepare a brief for a "Stealing and Receiving" charge.

Naturally I said no, because that was not something women police were taught to do. He taught me how to fill in the Complaint, Brief Jacket, Face Sheet, Apprehension Information and other documents that comprised the Brief. I might add that I was not, and still am not, a typist and this was all done with one finger typing. However, I finished the Brief to his satisfaction, except that he added my name to the front of the Face Sheet as being the officer responsible for the arrest.

This was significant because all offenders charged by the police were listed in the Police Gazette in those days along with the name of the arresting officer. Having one's name appear in the Police Gazette was something of a status symbol among detectives because the number of arrests made was indicative of one's effectiveness as a police officer and as a detective. Indeed, the lack of acknowledgment by the CIB for the part played by general duties police in the arrest of many offenders was often a sore point.

From that point on, whenever I was sent to CIB to assist detectives, I helped with the necessary paperwork. Being prepared to do more than usual and certainly more than most other women police were prepared to do in the same situation, was an attribute that remained with me throughout my police career. It was also a factor in my appointment in 1975 as one of the State's first two female detectives.

(Bronwyn Keighley-Gerardy)

JUST ANOTHER DAY

We were looking after a patient who during her stay in prison was transferred frequently between Bandyup and Graylands. On this particular day we went to Sir Charles Gardner Hospital as she was there to have an operation. We had arrived to take over from the night shift guard who were in great spirits as the woman hadn't woken up all night. They had a very peaceful time and they knew that when she woke up she was bound to give us trouble. This seemed to amuse the two officers.

The woman finally had woken up and of course was not very happy to see us. However, the morning progressed quite nicely and before we knew it lunch time had arrived. The hospital staff brought in lunch. Without going into too much detail, this woman had been and could be, extremely violent, so no sharp instruments of any kind were allowed near her, or given to her for any reason. You can imagine my concern when the hospital staff served her lunch on a tray with china plates, metal knife and fork and a stainless steel tea pot. Alarm bells rang, and I asked them to take the lunch away and bring it back on plastic. Everything had to be plastic.

Lunch went quite smoothly and when it was over it was time to take her back to Graylands. "Am I going home?" she asked, and quite quickly I replied, "Yes, yes, we are taking you home."

I knew if I had told her we were taking her back to Graylands things would get nasty. I told the nurse I wanted two very strong men and a stretcher that had straps on it so we could tie her down as we were not prepared to take any chances. The nurse sent us only one guy who was about 5ft 2 and a rickety old wheelchair. Good grief!

Well, we had no choice, as usual we had to make do with what we had. Quietly we got her outside and into the ambulance, thrilled everything was still going so well. So far so good, this is turning out to be quite an easy assignment. We really should have known better.

As we drove over the first speed bump heading into Graylands straight away her head popped up from the ambulance bed. "You f***** lied to me you f***** bitch, I'm going to f***** kill you. You said you were taking me home."

All hell broke loose and she went absolutely berserk. My partner and I jumped on top of her to try and restrain her and she just picked us up and bounced us off the walls of the ambulance. We were really grateful that we didn't have much further to go and we felt the ambulance reversing up to the final drop off point. When we came to a stop one of the men outside opened the ambulance door just in time for me to go sailing past and just as I landed, my partner came flying out straight after me.

We picked ourselves up and the four men who had been waiting for us had taken control of the woman. A nurse came to us and enquired where the rest of us were and she nearly fell over when we told her it was just the two of us, explaining that it usually took eight men to restrain this woman. The nurse then proceeded to show us a huge two seater lounge suite in the foyer and told us quite seriously that the woman has picked the sofa up on numerous occasions and thrown it at everyone. So by the end of the day we realised it had turned out to be quite successful, except for a few cuts and bruises.

(Sue Young)

MY FIRST ARREST

I remember my first arrest as a police officer. Although an arrest should not be remarkable, given the work of the women police was mainly welfare in nature, arresting a male offender for drunk driving was unusual to say the least. It happened this way.

I was on patrol one evening in South Perth with another female officer, Margaret Dare. In those days the women police vehicles were unmarked blue Ford Cortinas and we wore plain clothes. We were driving along Canning Highway and the driver of another vehicle passed ours at high speed and cut in so close to us that our car was almost forced off the road. After following behind and watching the car weave from side to side it was apparent that the driver was drunk and we decided to do something about it.

I called for assistance over VKI and the Victoria Park vehicle responded. In the meantime, we had drawn alongside the other car and waved him to stop. I'm sure the driver thought he was being picked up by two women as there was nothing to distinguish us as police officers. In any case he stopped his vehicle and by the time Margaret and I had got out of ours, the back up car from Victoria Park Police Station had arrived.

The driver was taken to the East Perth Lockup by the Victoria Park police and Margaret and I followed them. The driver kept telling the male officers that he had been arrested by civilians, and I told him he had been arrested by women police! At the lockup, my Sergeant from Victoria Park showed me how to administer the sobriety test and he conducted the breathalyser test. The driver had a blood alcohol reading of 0.26. I remember the reading because it was so high. The Sergeant also helped me complete the Brief and the driver was charged with drunk driving.

I was feeling pretty pleased with myself until the next morning when I had to front Inspector Scott, the Officer in Charge of the Women Police. She proceeded to dress me down for what I had done — arresting a drunk driver, because women police didn't do those sorts of things.

I stood up for myself and told her that I was a police officer and that it was my duty to do something and that I would be neglecting my duty if I had ignored the offender and let the driver continue on his way and possibly kill someone.

However, that was to no avail. I was told in no uncertain terms not to do it again. I remember leaving Inspector Scott's office somewhat bewildered because I had merely done my duty as a police officer. During the day I received a number of phone calls from uniformed police officers at suburban stations and in the Traffic Branch telling me what a good job I had done and how it was about time the women police did some police work. The calls did make me feel good.

(Bronwyn Keighley-Gerardy)

“ In 1447, a sow and her litter was tried for having killed and eaten a child; the sow was found guilty, but the litters were acquitted on account of their youth. ”

(Police News, 1952)

SMOOTH AS SILK

There was one particular man I have always remembered as being one of the most colourful characters that I had met over the years. I was working on night shift in one of the northern suburbs, it would have been around 3 o'clock in the morning and I saw a man walking the streets, the same man I had seen on two previous mornings. As this was not a particularly safe suburb to be walking around in, I decided it was time to pull this gentleman over and have a bit of a chat. The man was wearing a long coat, but as it was the middle of winter there was nothing unusual about that. I asked him what he was doing walking the streets at this time of the morning and he was extremely evasive and started acting a little strange. As he was wearing a long coat I became a little concerned that he may have a weapon under it, so I placed him against the police car and started to search him. As I put my hands around his waist and opened up his jacket I got quite a shock. I found he was wearing ladies lingerie. Then I looked down at his feet, and saw he must have had size 13 feet. He was wearing bright red stilettos and I was trying so hard to keep a straight face as I did not want to embarrass this man any more than he already was. I finally found some ID in his purse and he had a warrant out, so we had to arrest him.

Consequently we had to escort him to East Perth lock up and he started to get really upset. He was married with five children and his wife had no idea that he enjoyed dressing up in women's clothes. He was perfectly harmless, he just unfortunately got busted. We also realised that it would have been a nightmare for him to have been processed and put in the lock up dressed as he was and we went to our local station to look through lost property to find him some clothes to wear. We don't know if he ever told his wife what had happened, but it certainly was one of the most memorable moments for me.

(Raelene Longdon)

THAT TWIST OF FATE

Before I decided to join the police service I was working at a building society in Perth. I had thought about joining the police for some time, but for some reason my dad kept discouraging me. Anyway, I was at work one morning and when I was accused of misappropriating twenty-two million dollars, I realised it was not going to be a good day. To cut a long story short, there had been a little mix up and a slight computer error in my work. Obviously I had not stolen twenty-two million dollars, but the bosses at the bank were more than a little upset with me and I couldn't see what all the fuss was about really. My name was subsequently cleared, but as a result of the stuff up I was demoted, so I decided to make that ever so fateful phone call to police recruitment. I realise that this is quite an anti-climax after the twenty-two million dollars, but this was how my career with the Western Australia Police Service began, and I have never looked back.

(Carol Vernon)

OFF THE CUFF REMARK

In 1975 when Anna Schaper and I were appointed as detectives in the CIB, we were told to go to the police store and get our handcuffs. The police store in those days was at the rear of Central Police Station, run by a grumpy old man whose name escapes me.

When we asked for handcuffs, we were told that women police did not have handcuffs. We told him that we were detectives and were entitled to have handcuffs, but he didn't believe us. It was only when he telephoned someone in CIB that we were begrudgingly supplied with that essential piece of equipment.

(Bronwyn Keighly-Gerardy)

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM, JOIN THEM

I was working at the WACA at a cricket match one afternoon. It wasn't anything special and the day seem to be progressing quite nicely. Then it happened. A stalker went running onto the ground. Not that much of an unusual occurrence at these events but I was quite a way back in the stands and could see several of my colleagues attempting to wrestle the stalker to the ground.

All of a sudden I realised that some of the spectators were looking at me and asking me what I was going to do. To be quite honest I wasn't going to do anything, as the situation was being handled quite well enough. Unfortunately though, I felt under immense pressure to do something, and so as not to disappoint the people around me, I went running down the stairs towards the ground. I soon realised that I was going to have to climb over the fence and as I was wearing a skirt I knew that this wasn't going to be an easy or pleasant experience. As I got closer, I could see the only way I was going to get over in one piece was to hitch my skirt up. So I did, and I can quite honestly say that if I had not been a member of the law, I too would have been arrested for flashing.

My efforts were greatly appreciated by the spectators and I felt that they had definitely got more than their money's worth, and at my expense, too.

(Raelene Longdon)

NOT A LEG TO STAND ON

We were on nighttime patrol and an urgent call came in from a bouncer at a nightclub. When we arrived he informed us that a man inside was drunk, and was upsetting many of the patrons. We asked this huge bouncer why he had not thrown the man out himself. The bouncer became very uncomfortable and began to explain that the man was in a wheel chair, had no legs and only one arm. We stood there for a moment in total disbelief. It was obvious the bouncer was a little embarrassed and felt quite uncomfortable about the whole thing.

We entered the nightclub and sure enough, the wheelchair bound man was creating quite a disturbance. We approached him and asked if he wouldn't mind accompanying us outside. To our absolute amazement he threw himself out of the wheelchair and manoeuvred himself up the stairs of the club. I could not believe the speed at which he went. We ran up the stairs after him and tried to convince him that it would be better if he stopped playing up and came with us. Unfortunately the man refused to move and with his one arm held onto the bannister. It took me, my partner and the bouncer to pull the man off as he was incredibly strong. We also had very little of him to grab so we were all a bit nervous. As a consequence of all this we had to arrest the man for causing a disturbance and resisting arrest.

Can you imagine it, resisting arrest. I could see the headlines flashing before my eyes, *"One armed, no legged man in wheelchair arrested for resisting arrest"*. When the case went to the court you can't imagine the magistrate's face when he read the file. Luckily for us though, he pleaded guilty and we didn't have to deal with it any further.

(Cheryl Wilson-Cross)

PETUNIA PARK

I was the first woman officer to ride a motor bike in WA so it was a big occasion for me and my first day on the job started pretty well. I was out with my sergeant and we were parked near a stop sign to catch people that went through without stopping. We moved around quite a bit that day, and on one particular occasion we were parked up on a gentleman's front garden. In fact he had just finished watering his garden and I was admiring his petunia patch. I had never seen anything like it, it was beautiful. He had colour coordinated all the flowers and he also had just mulched so they looked superb. The man was very kind and let me park the bike on the front of his lawn which would ensure we were well hidden from the road where no one could spot us. I hadn't been sitting there very long when I became aware of a slow sinking feeling and by the time I realised what was happening it was too late to do anything about it.

You see, as I had said, the man had just finished watering his garden and the weight of the bike on the wet lawn had made it gradually sink into the ground. Then it happened. The bike completely fell over and I was trapped underneath. To make matters worse I fell straight onto his fabulous petunia patch.

It was totally ruined, totally destroyed. The man walked up to me as I lay under the bike and asked if I needed a hand. I thanked him for his concern and assured him I was perfectly O.K. I couldn't move, I had no idea how the hell I was going to get up, but no matter what, I could not have enlisted the man's help after I had just destroyed his flower bed.

(Ann Winton)

WHICH ONE DO YOU WANT?

MIAMI ADVERTISER

A man was trying to set up a brothel in the southern suburbs and had placed an advertisement in the newspaper for women to come and work for him and his associate. I was asked to assist in the case along side Vicky Smith. I made a phone call and the gentleman in question told me to come and pick him up and we would drive to the place where the work was to take place. Vicky and I dressed up in business suits, just like you would dress for any job interview and when we got to the man's house and saw him Vicky and I nearly fell out the car. He was an old man who had a walking stick and he looked about 150 years old.

We arrived at the house where we were to work and the other gentleman there was just as bad, but not quite as old. We were shown in and sat down. An important fact is that we were wired for the job so everything that was being said was being recorded.

The conversation was quite straight forward and they told us what they wanted us to do and how the business was going to be run. The younger man was going to be our minder and the little old man with the stick was going to be the brains behind the operation. They explained how much money we would get paid and, as part of the deal, we would have to now and then give these old guys a little nookie, free of charge of course.

When they had finally finished telling us everything they asked if we would be interested. Vicky and I excused ourselves, saying that we would like to talk it over first before we committed to anything and they were quite happy with that. So we headed outside for our so-called little chat and waiting for the bust to go down. While we were standing out there I couldn't help but ask Vicky, "So which one do you want, Vick?" Honestly, we nearly wet ourselves laughing.

They were arrested, but to our complete and utter amazement, the two men pleaded not guilty when it came to court time. Vicky and I had to go to court and give evidence, but the worse thing about the whole case, was the conversation we had together. We had forgotten about

the wire and the laugh that we had and during the trial they played the tape. Right at the end you can hear me saying, "So which one do you want, Vick?" and then the both of us laughing hysterically.

(Shirline Higgs)



Shirline insists she's not that sort of girl.

AND I'LL DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN

Vicky Watts has done it all. Joined the Police Service, married, had children, left the Police Service. Now at the comfortable age of 48, she is back doing it all again. Joining the Police Service, that is.

Vicky was practically born at Fremantle Police Quarters, and there is no way she could have escaped policing. Not that she would have wished to, for it is in her blood. Her father, Les Watts, had a career that spanned 43 years, and saw him rise to the rank of Superintendent.

For years, as a young girl, Vicky played endlessly in the yard of the police station, and when the Royal Show visited, she spent every day there with her mother. "It was a really big thing in those days to go to the Royal Show, I really loved watching the Mounted Police."

Vicky also took a liking to swimming at a very early age and when she was about two she was found at Police Headquarters swimming in a pot hole in the laneway — naturally, she was in her finest clothes. When she was six the family was stationed at Cunderdin and she used to swim with Dawn Fraser, who had just won her Olympic medals and was travelling the country giving swimming lessons. It was a good step for Vicky to move from potholes to a real swimming pool.

Vicky's recollections of her growing-up days are filled with happy memories. "It was a wonderful time in my life, I remember when we were transferred to Norseman the Eyre Highway wasn't even sealed, and those people on the stations out on the plains still used pedal radios."

Vicky also learnt how to type on the police station's typewriter and was continually having practical jokes played on her by the constables stationed there. Many of those constables later became her Sergeants.

In 1974, after many years of travel, she decided that she was going to join the police force. Vicky recalls how her dad was not particularly happy about this. "I was 24, single, considered on the shelf in those days, and I still wanted to travel. However, I really needed to get some

job security and a job that paid me reasonably well. I also knew the job was going to be very interesting."

Vicky submitted her application through the Police Academy, was interviewed by Sergeant Norma Thurstan and commenced work on September 11, 1977.

There were 35 women working under the direction of Wilma Currie at the time. "We worked day and afternoon shifts from the Women's Police Office. At this stage we all worked in plain clothes, mostly did child welfare work, prisoner escorts and Petty Session Court guard duty. Also if any women were in detention we did searches and were often seconded over to CIB."

One particular character that Vicky fondly remembers was Roma. "She was quite an intelligent, very clean woman when sober. When drunk a different person altogether. I had to go down to the lock up to search her one night and as I got there she came flying out of the back of the van completely naked. I was mortified. Another time when I was on guard duty with the prisoners for the Petty Session Court, Roma got really agitated and picked up the bucket of urine and threw it at me. Luckily it missed, but the guys found it very amusing.

"Another funny occasion down at the lock up, in which the guys positioned me beautifully for this, a woman was brought in. As usual you ask her to declare any items she has on her, get her name and address, and ask if she has any distinguishing marks etc. You do all this and place all the information and possessions in a property book.

"Anyway, when asked if she had any tattoos or distinguishing marks, the lady pulled up her top. She was not wearing a bra and put her huge breasts on the counter so I could have a look at her tattoos. The big joke was obviously my reaction and naturally I was horrified."

Vicky resigned from the police in 1981 to have her first child. Maternity leave had been brought in by this time, but there seemed to be many pressures for women to leave on a permanent basis as they felt you were keeping a man out of the job.

It took Vicky months to get up the courage to submit an application to rejoin the service. "The move to re-engage is, despite hardship and many new learning experiences, turning out to be a wonderful experience and achievement."

It seems that Vicky is getting plenty of support and encouragement from her family, and you can't beat the fact that her two children are incredibly proud of their mum.

“ A resignation that overlooked a mention was that of Woman Constable Mary O' Donnell, who has resigned to be married. We now believe she is in Kalgoorlie. ”

(Police News, 1959)

Some of the moments on the job



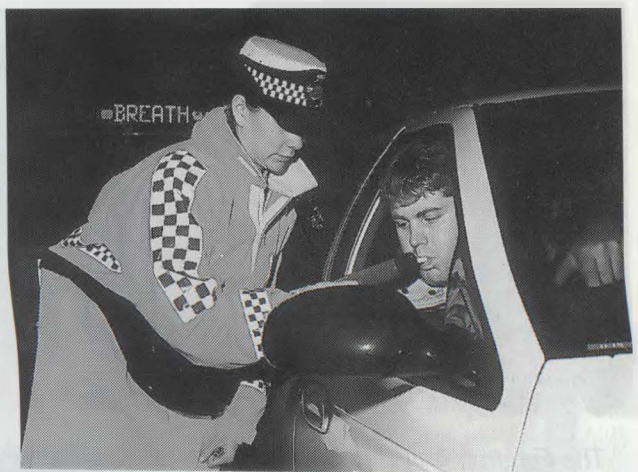
WPCs J Nicholson and V Doherty find a lost child in 1966.

Fitness comes in handy in the job, as Sheryl Henley puts recruits Natalie Morris and Sue Parmer through their paces.



Taking care of the animals is all in a day's work, says Andrea Richardson.

Checking drivers' blood alcohol levels forms part of the modern day traffic duties.



Jennifer Milligan takes part in an anti-shoplifting campaign.



Jill Willoughby, above, is one of our high profile young officers, and left, Heidi Roberts sees action of a different kind.





The Forensic Branch plays an important role in solving crime.



Tanya Fitzgerald shows the importance of using firearms safely.



Lisa Foppoli of the Geraldton Police works in harmony with her male counterparts.



Jo Wells takes a moment to ponder the day's events.



In 1983 Senior Sergeant Jennifer Leete was the first female officer to be selected as Western Australia's Police Officer of the Year.



Aboriginal Liaison Officers give advice and help to solve any problem areas their people may have.



It pays to be always well turned out as Joneene Ivey found in 1986 when Princess Anne dropped in.



Chris Canny keeps the ever popular Constable Care company at the 1995 Royal Show.



The Crime Stoppers campaign has been highly successful.

And the next 80 years...?

This book set out to celebrate 80 years of women in policing and in the process celebrates changes which shaped the lives of all who served over that time. In some cases the stories have described discrimination that might shock a policewoman of today, but each must be read against the context of its times. Attitudes and behaviours that would seem strange to us now were normal for the time, place and circumstance in which they were expressed.

Nevertheless, it is timely to address the issue of the contribution women might make to policing in the next 80 years and to consider that old topic of same or different. It is too easy to point to cases of different treatment and criticise. Let us, for a moment, reflect a little more carefully on the issue, so that we will more clearly see the way ahead.

In some cases, men have treated women differently, but this has not always been out of malice. Sometimes it has happened out of respect or out of the need to protect. Often it has been an attempt to use the special skills and talents many women bring to their role.

Women, for their part, are not always clear about what they want. Do they want to be treated absolutely equally, or do they want to be employed so that they can use the special sensitivity, skills and abilities generally attributed to women?

As we read these stories, we looked back at 80 years of women in policing and celebrated the contributions of all who made it possible. It is now time to look forwards towards the next 80 years and to attempt to position ourselves more

effectively. It might have been appropriate to separate policing into men's roles and women's roles at one time because that was the way the community thought. We are moving, however, into a time when gender differences will seem insignificant when compared with individual differences in society at large. The rigid gender based roles are giving way to roles that acknowledge the diversity of skills and abilities of the individual and if policing is to reflect society it must be open to similar change.

The ideal police service in the twenty-first century will stop seeing its members as simply male and female and be aware of their individual strengths and weaknesses. In this way the tasks of policing and the abilities of police officers can be better matched for effective policing. This is more than a system change, however. The real flexibility must come from the men and women of the service who will need to abandon their old stereotypes and cease being oversensitive about discrimination both real and imagined. They will have to be prepared to look beyond 'traditional' roles as they attempt to match individual and task. When this happens, and it will probably be sooner rather than later, all members will be better positioned to achieve their individual potential and the service will be better able to meet the challenge of the complex community it serves.

We have much to celebrate about eighty years of women in policing, but if we can then turn to meet the challenge of the next 80 years, we will truly have celebrated this contribution.

Dr Irene Froyland

NOTES

INTO THE BLUE

**A Celebration of 80 years for
Women in Policing
in Western Australia**