

## ROCHESTER, Maxine Kathryn, NGHS Year of '52 - OBITUARY

This obituary was written by Alison NICHOLS nee Hunt, Captain NGHS 1952.

The interview with Maxine Rochester, NGHS 1952, can be found at <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-254939181/listen> - this is the site for the National Library. Once you are in the National Library site, enter Maxine Rochester's name. She is interviewed by David Jones. It is an aural recording with much of the interview also in print form.

This item was given by Robbie Gordon, 9 June 2023.

### Thoughts for an Obituary for Maxine Kathryn Rochester (7<sup>th</sup> March 1936 – 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023)

1. Our first sighting of each other was probably at Adamstown Public School when we were in 3<sup>rd</sup> Class in 1944, although there was absolutely no fraternization permitted between the Adamstown cohort & the displaced students from New Lambton Public School. It was wartime & the whole of the New Lambton complex of Infants', Girls' & Boys' Departments were emptied of youngsters as the school was commandeered for Defence purposes. The Girls' Department had the highest elevation of the three departments so it was chosen as the site for night-time spotting of enemy aircraft coming over Newcastle. It was where my mother volunteered as a "spotter", in addition to her daylight crafting of camouflage netting for the troops at war, carried out in the local Methodist church hall.
2. The separation of the two groups of students from neighbouring Newcastle suburbs of Adamstown & New Lambton was extraordinary. New Lambton children were delivered by Government buses & no fares were collected. Seatbelts had not been installed then & we were crammed three of the younger pupils to a bus seat designed for two adult passengers & the older students were standing, packed in the aisle. I think "double decker" buses were used but I have no idea if the upper deck was occupied by youngsters. We had our own classrooms & playground areas, as if we were possessed of some incurable disease which needed to be prevented from infecting the Adamstown pupils.
3. However, when Maxine, her closest school friend, Ruth Thomas, & I became part of 1A at Newcastle Girls' High School we remarked to each other that we had vague memories of seeing each other all those four years before as the New Lambton arrivals were marched past the Adamstown Primary School students in their playground, albeit separating their schools of origin by a fence or hedge.
4. Maxine & Ruth had been through their complete scholastic education in the same classes & they were both "top of the class" students all the way through high school.
5. In our 1950-1951 summer vacation Maxine, Ruth & I were part of a group who had the wonderful experience of a flying boat journey from Rose Bay to Hobart to pick raspberries on Mr Crane's farm at Snug in Tasmania.
6. After the Leaving Certificate at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> year, Maxine went on to Sydney University to do an Arts course & from there went into Librarianship which took her to many Universities around the world. She gained a PhD. Then she met her partner of 30 years, Gordon Barlin, an eminent Scientist.
7. Gordon introduced Maxine to his passion for fly fishing which she so enjoyed, be it in Tasmania or New Zealand. A delightful photo of Maxine carefully holding a trout she had

8. On 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016 David John Jones interviewed Maxine Kathryn Rochester & the 8 hours and 9 minutes of these sound files are part of the National Library of Australia's digital collection.
9. For Maxine's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in 2016 Gordon hosted a most memorable late afternoon cocktail party. It was an extremely hot day in late February but the National Library cast a most welcomed & dense shadow over the pop-up venue between the National Library & Lake Burley Griffin. There was a vacant seat next to my husband, Michael, & another guest asked if it was unclaimed. All Michael said was "yes" & with that one-word response this guest asked from what part of Yorkshire did Michael hail. It eventuated that they had been to the same Beverley Grammar School in about 1947 where Michael's abiding memory was of the lad who had played Lady Macbeth, only a short time before David Denham had also been cast in the role of Lady Macbeth at the same school. Michael had left Hull & Beverley Grammar in October 1947 to settle in Australia & believed he had lost all traces of his Yorkshire accent.
10. In December 2022 did Maxine felt so overjoyed when she was given an "all clear" from the bladder cancer she had so bravely fought. Macular degeneration was such a cruel disability she had endured but she found a way to continue to be an active member of her book club.
11. Maxine's funeral was a gracious tribute to her life by so many of Gordon's wider family & Maxine's nephew & his wife. It was held at the Norwood Crematorium in Mitchell to the north of Canberra. There was a fishing rod placed on Maxine's coffin.