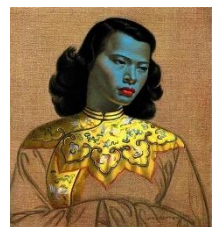


In July 2011 Norma was advised that she was suffering from terminal Leukaemia and that she would only have a limited time left. She passed away at St Andrew's Hospital, Glendowie, Auckland on 11 Dec 2011 in her 82nd year. Her funeral was held at St Paul's Church, St Helier's and she was laid to rest at Purewa Cemetery, in Meadowbank, Auckland. We decided to farewell her in a style to which she would have approved – we sprinkled a large amount of sequins and glitter from her sewing room on her coffin as it was laid to rest.



I was born in the front room of our home. The house then was a 2-bedroom square dwelling with two East facing bedrooms (front of house) and kitchen/dining and lounge at the rear. There was a T shaped hallway with a bathroom to the left and lounge to the right. A separate laundry sat at the top of a set of concrete stairs leading to the back door. The property was quarter of an acre. My father paid £500 for the house in 1953 (it sold recently for \$1,325,000).

The decoration of the house was certainly different. The bathroom had a black lino floor speckled with random colour bits, the kitchen had alternating pastel blue and pastel pink cupboards, the wallpaper in the hallway was a German special imbedded with sand (it grazed elbows if you were not careful). We had the “Chinese Girl”, a 1952 painting by Vladimir Tretchikoff, in the lounge room. Mass-produced prints of the work in subsequent years were among the best-selling of the twentieth century. The painting is of a Chinese young woman and is best known for the unusual skin tone used for her face—a blue-green colour, which gives the painting its popular name The Green Lady.





Our House – 9 Farrington Street

Glen Innes Intermediate School

Aerial view of Glen Innes

“All you need is the plan, the road map, and the courage to press on to your destination”



Glen Innes 1959 showing construction of Glen Innes Shopping centre



Mr Samuels - Shop owner in Glen Innes



Glen Innes 1960 showing construction of Glen Innes Shopping centre

“Home is one's birthplace, ratified by memory”



*9 Farrington St - Mum and me (in the pram)- 1955
I was born in the front room to the right of my mother*

The telephone sat in the hallway – a black Bakelite model (I still remember the phone number 587-174) and back then it was illegal to transmit music over the phone, toll calls were very expensive and a thick phone book sat alongside to provide a list of contact numbers. We had a Tellus vacuum cleaner (which lasted and performed perfectly for well over 50 years) and an Iron Horse lawnmower, which like my father’s cars, spent a good deal of time in the garage being repaired (it did however, keep on working for more than 50 years as well).

My earliest memory is playing in the front garden alongside a slow-growing yellow-leaved shrub – I was probably 4 years old at the time. I do remember clearly my first day at school – Glen Innes Primary – where I was greeted by my first teacher, Mrs Adams.



My first School photo - 1960 Glen Innes Primary (I'm 4th from left back row)



*The only family photo with all 5 of us
(NIGEL – Norma, Ian, Glenn, Eddie Lynette)*

Life at home was a casserole of eccentricities, 1950/60's culture, theatrics and neighbourhood dynamics. Much of our day-to-day living was determined by my father's irascibility, parsimony and stubbornness and my mother's flighty and theatrical personality. I have many memories of some peculiar habits and unusual activities we all were affected by during our early years.

Some of these included Mum's call for us to be at the dining table for meals – she would rapidly flick the hall light on and off (like a theatre strobe light) and we were expected to hustle to the meal table. The dinner was eaten and was often followed by junket (a questionable watery, milk-based dessert, made with sweetened milk and rennet, the digestive enzyme that curdles milk) that was usually "cured" in the hot water cupboard – the same hot water cupboard where our used newspapers were stacked (and would spill out on the floor each time the cupboard was opened!)

It was only at Christmas that we ever had chicken! Chickens were hard to find, small and expensive back then and reserved only for special occasions. Ours was a "Bell Tea" house – my parents consumed mega-gallons of the stuff and dad always poured it into his saucer and drank from that or worse still, he would dunk his toast and marmalade in his tea before he ate it! Mum collected the tea packet coupons – 1000's of them and when sufficient had been saved, traded them in on some trifling doo-dad of little value!

Us kids were assigned the job of doing the dishes, a task we loathed and tried to avoid. My father was a tyrant when it came to dishes – he would inspect every item to ensure it was cleaned to "his standards" and one item failed to pass his scrutiny, we were at best made to re-wash and re-dry every item or worse every item in the cupboards would be offloaded to us to wash and dry. We were still doing dishes at 11:00pm some nights. A wholly unpleasant memory.

Mum had a large copper bowl in the laundry where she would make marmalade and preserves. These were "vacuum-sealed" in Agee jars. I used to be given the wooden spoon to lick clean.



Me licking the spoon from mum's preserves making (note old Bakerlite radio in background)