

## PHOTO COMMENTARY

### THERE WAS A TIME

David Lloyd



#### **It Was A Time When Nothing Mattered**

Duffield Rd, Margate

It was a time when nothing mattered but the immediate. The '60s had just begun and puberty was still distant. The days were spent either at school, at home reading comics or at the beach. Actually it was mostly at the beach. We lived a five-minute walk from the sands of Margate and, in those days, a mother's warning was little more than 'stay together' as we walked out the gate. For my brother and me these days started early and ended late. I'm not sure what we did, but I know the world didn't exist outside of those moments. For my sister it was different. She was four years older and that made her a different species. I can't remember ever talking to Christina about what mattered to her. I just assumed her life was like mine. But it wasn't.



### **He Didn't Kiss Me**

Toilet Block: Redcliffe Show Grounds

I don't know when it happened, but a shade of grey descended over the blue skies and yellow sands. There was a vulnerability about everything. Its beginning is only a vague memory but I suspect it began in 1962. That was the year my sister was raped.

It wasn't talked about in the family. At best, I was only slightly aware of the whispers and fractured conversations. Christina was fourteen, a virgin. That didn't matter. But when she finally told me the story, being a virgin was important to her. She told me she always felt ugly, her friends were pretty and she wore her poverty with embarrassment. On this day, she had gone to the movies with a friend and there they met a couple of boys. She knew them so she felt safe and, besides, it was 1962, Margate and everyone felt safe. On her way home she went to the toilet at the Redcliffe Showgrounds. She said, he came in, grabbed her head and thrust her into the wall. As she fell he was on top of her. She said she thought it might have been her fault. She didn't scream. She was just so scared. She recalls saying no, but she is uncertain whether it was in her head or out loud. Anyway, no-one came. She doesn't remember leaving the toilet block or how she got home. She felt uglier, used and somehow responsible. She told me she remembers thinking 'he didn't even kiss me'.



### **Two Weeks Later He Dropped Me**

Settlement Cove, Redcliffe

It was 1964 and life moved on. Puberty separated my brother and me and our age difference now seemed insurmountable. Days flowed into each other with little to distinguish them. Christina had repaired physically, but back then I didn't know there was anything that needed repairing. She was dating, well at least boys would come to take her out and return her late. That is until she met Alan. Alan was different. They dated for six months. He came by each morning after his night shift and drove her to school. She said she felt loved – in his car, in his arms. They had sex, just the once. She said it was special. He took her to the beach at the Settlement Cove, laid out a blanket and he brought some food. It all seemed so romantic. Two weeks passed without seeing him. One morning on his way home from work he came by and said it was over. He didn't tell her why but she knew somehow it must be her.



### **Doreen Lambert's Grave**

Redcliffe Cemetery

Four years into the decade and life didn't seem as carefree anymore. It's not that the days were purposeful, but an uneasiness lay beneath the surface. Our poverty was no longer invisible to me. For my mother each day was full of hardship. Without a husband she was alone and her children offered her little companionship. My sister was beyond control and my brother was delinquent. One day in late September Doreen Lambert went missing. She was a school friend of my sister and her brother was my brother's friend. It would be two years before her raped and discarded body was found. Yet from the beginning, the shock and horror of imagining the worst became a dark cloud in our lives. Dinner times became filled with sinister musings of Doreen's fate. I never met Doreen, but of all of us I think I knew her the best. Doreen's fate was mythologised in my mother's warnings. I imagined the worst and feared the unknown. The beach was no longer our playground. We moved on. Yet in so many ways Doreen has been a part of my life. We were never together, but still today we are attached.