



IN THIS PICTURE I am wearing proper men's flags because you couldn't purchase girl's flags and I loved them. Just lucky I found some in wide hip.  
Memory by Linda

WE WERE Northcote Sharpies from around 1967 so it wasn't all in the 1970s. We hung around Brunswick, Thornbury etc. Occasionally straying into Collingwood (dangerous). Flags made at Hersch's in Lennox Street Richmond, Cusmano shoes, Crestknit one colour tops (three buttons always done up.) Box Chester coat in winter. Gave Collingwood Boys shit when we could find 'em in small numbers. Chicks just like the photos. The Croc, Heidelberg Town Hall etc, Unique times. Got belted up more times than I won but me and my mates, Marty and Crabby had fun around Auburn,

Hawthorn and Camberwell. Good people, good growing up days. I couldn't fight for shit, but fuck we had some laughs. Lickin' our wound's at Marty's mums on Sunday mornings drinking tallies of Abbott's Lager.

Shane F on skinsnsharps

IN COLLINGWOOD the three quarter length coats were called Box Chesters, we were wearing them in the early 1970s, they had three large plastic buttons down the front. They were thick and heavy with no belt.

Tufftimes on skinsnsharps

SHARPIES! YOUSE are about as original as my big toe! You copied everything from the Collingwood Boys! They were the TRUE Sharpies, not all you piss swilling, gutless when not in a gang, outer suburban nine to fivers!

Alex on skinsnsharps

HAD A BEER with a bloke the other day, who said his Dad was in the Collingwood Boys 1967-1969. He spoke about how his feet are shaped pointed because of his shoes, he has the Collingwood Boys' tatts, and one time Chopper Read came up to Collingwood back in the day with a group of blokes but he didn't go too well.

Roland on Slackbastard

THE OAKLEIGH Boys were always at war with Collingwood Boys. We would go get our tattoos in the garage at Alfie Mingin's house in Collingwood

and would have to outrun the Collingwood Boys if we came across them, which was always at night as Alfie had a day job and only tattooed in the evenings. St Kilda Sharps were another group we were at war with especially after I got king hit by Pixie in the hamburger shop. Mordialloc Sharpies were another gang we were at war with.

Memory by Rod Oakleigh Sharp

ONE DAY I left Cusmano's shoe store with two boxes of shoes under my arm. The Collingwood Boys were at the fish and chip shop and chased me the whole distance of Smith Street until I was able to jump on a tram.

Memory by Chris O'H

THE HAWTHORN Boys don't get much credit but they could handle most mobs in Melbourne and a lot of them ended up in the boob for murder, hold ups etc. And as a group they were rarely beaten! Talk about *Underbelly*, and with assorted other nutters, it was quite a crew! These young dickheads these days think they're tough, knives and all that shit. Real heroes! You know that if they came across any of our lads in the old days it would have been over before it started.

Tomo on skinsnsharps

I WOULD just like to say that from a Collingwood Boy's perspective, in our early days, out of all the gangs we fought, we won them all except for one gang. This gang was the Hawthorn Boys. Our last confrontation was a night in 1969,



Sharpie Brush 1967 Coburg

when about thirty of us Collingwood Boys were at a party in a unit, opposite the St Kilda beach, just near Luna Park. As we were leaving, Lee T and his mates from Hawthorn pulled up at the end of the driveway and open fired on us, wounding a few of us, I was just lucky that I jumped into a prickly bush when I heard the gun go off. From that day forth we learned that you don't 'fuck' with the Hawthorn Boys. This is a true story and can be confirmed in the archives of any of the newspapers of that day.

Berg on skinsnsharps

1966 SAW the emergence of the Sharpies who had short hair and wore wide check pants with flaps over the front pockets. These trousers were called flags because the leg was wide and straight. There was a lot of rivalry between Sharpies and Mods. Sharpie girls wore their hair short and the Mod girls wore it long, something they later came to regret when they were involved in gang fights with the Sharpie girls. Footwear accessories; Chisel toe shoes. Later, these were replaced by wide toe shoes. Mike from OZ on network54.com

1966 WAS the year it started. Most 'out there' kids were either Rockers or Jazzers, then all of a sudden, the new trend... Sharpies. Mostly Rockers got rid of the Brylcreem, hung up the red shirts and the stove pipe pants, pointy toe shoes and leather jackets. Hair cuts were short and sharp, pin stripe flags and if you could afford tailor made, Prince of Wales check, with button down flap pockets, you had made it! T-shirts predominantly maroon, light

blue or green done up to the top button and a maroon V neck jumper, chisel toe shoes and trench coat, some times maroon socks with open sandals. Girls (Brush) wore sunray skirts in navy blue and cable stitch jumpers in light blue. Hair was again short, but not normally as short as blokes.



Vicki 1966 Preston – Blue cable stitch jumper

For me 1966 was the start of a new revolution, more freedom. I'd just started working in the city, back home to Box Hill, it was sharpie hub, so many new found mates that grew and grew (twenty to

thirty blokes in funny pants and the girls with short hair) a daunting sight for anyone pulling up to buy *The Herald* and a bottle of milk) and we would gather every Monday to Thursday at the 'Shops' and decide what the adventure would be next Friday, Saturday and Sunday night. Normally dances won, and live bands, Billy Thorpe, Normie Rowe, Peter Doyle to name a few.

I have no idea how so many fights started, but it was on at every dance and all through the night, mates to back you up, loyal and staunch, fists and feet were used, they were the only weapons. Possibly the invasion of another clan from another suburb was the factor that brought it on, the same fight could again erupt three or four times over the night. The bonds and friendships made with Sharpie kids in the 1960s that I experienced is reflected by the posts I read. Long live the sharpie message.

Leo on Facebook

WHEN THE Purple Hearts first came down to Melbourne in 1967, we were a longhaired blues band. We started playing at the Circle Ballroom in Preston and I started noticing these strange people. I'd never seen anything like them and their distinct style! They had short hair and wore baggy trousers and cardigans; the girls wore knee-length pleated skirts, twin sets and pearls.'

Lobby Loyde

IN 1967 my best friend and I dressed up in our Sharpie gear, pleated skirt, twin set and pearls and caught the train to Flinders Street. When we were under the clocks, a tattooed Sharpie boy ran up and said 'Pretend you are my girlfriend, the cops are chasing me'. He put his arm around my waist as the cops ran past. Later I married the boy and we had three kids, but eventually divorced. He probably wishes the cops caught him!  
Memory by Rhonda from Coburg



Rhonda 1967 Coburg



HI THERE, this 'Brush' read with much interest your flashback to 1967/1969 life as a Sharpie. Oh the memories! I too was there, and so glad to be a teen in the 1960s. Living in Preston, one of the 'tougher' areas of Melbourne, Sharpies were widespread and well known here. The local dance, Preston Town Hall was Storyville. Here we lined up to dance the '66 Rock to Max Merritt my personal all time favourite.

With pleated skirt, top, pearl earrings, short hair and sandals we danced until midnight. Church dances were also the go, as were school formals. Northcote High and Preston Girls High combining to dance to the likes of Ram Jam Big Band. A lot of boxers became Sharpies, we hung around with several. I can still remember trying to get into a dance in Coburg and we were told to 'enter at own risk'! Swinger was Coburg Town Hall. 431 another popular dance. Opus also a large event.

There wasn't much of a choice back then, you either became a 'Mod' or a 'Sharpie'. Things just fell into place as to what you wanted to be. To me it was a 'magical' time, and if I could turn back the hands of time I would be 'there'. I also had a navy blue trench coat, the sign of a 'true' Sharpie.

Being a Sharpie Brush (never did like that term) in 1966 was simply grouse! Maybe a girl's point of view is different to a guy's as it was a less physical



Vicki (right) in her navy blue trench coat

experience. (Well mine was anyway!) Nevertheless, it was a unique time in history that can never be replaced. The baggy pants, chiselled shoes, trench coats etc. were the trademark of a true Sharpie.

If you didn't have the attire, then you were not one of 'us'. For the girls, it was the same. No pleated skirts, cabled knit jumpers, sandals and short hair? Then sorry, you must be a 'Mod'! If you could not

dance to '66 Rock, then you had better learn to do it fast! I still love dancing and can still do '66 Rock, and also 'the break', another simple Sharpie dance.

Storyville (Preston Town Hall) was always packed; the line outside seemed to go forever. Same at Coburg Town Hall. Swinger every Saturday night was the same. FJs were the coolest car you could own and I was not particularly into cars, but my girlfriends were and so it didn't take long until they became familiar with who owned the hottest in the area! One particular day after high school tagging along (under sufferance) with my friend to take photos of one such car! I still remember his name and where he worked, strange but true.

Another was a guy who owned an amazing FJ. All the girls wanted to ride in this car, and one night we were the chosen three! Of course we agreed, and with speeds of 90 mph down High Street Reservoir, it was certainly worthwhile! He was obviously a Sharpie, but to you guys reading it will sound strange when I say that he used to spray the car with an Avon perfume called 'Wishing'. Nothing poofy about him, it was a real turn on for the girls!

Fights just seemed to be the norm; no matter where you were they just happened. One mate started them and finished them EVERY damn night. Hitting the grog early, we knew exactly what the night would entail. We all drank a lot back then, no C.S. Cowboys then, Pimms, Marsala and Coke or an

Advocaat. That was about it! The guys, whiskey, beer and plenty of it. Driving home, no seatbelts, (not compulsory then) and basically pissed! Eddies Lake a favourite spot to pash (Edwards Lake Reservoir) sometimes difficult to find a spot, car after car. Takeaway was either chips, Chinese or hamburger – that was it!

Gangs would fight (everywhere) and just by seeing what a person was wearing, would indicate whether you would be ‘safe’ or not. One would instantly be able to tell what side he or she was on, simply by their clothing, something that would be impossible to judge today. Guys fought with their fists only, no knives were ever used. It sickens me today as to what is used, at least back then it was a ‘fair’ fight between two people. (Unless of course mates decided to jump in also, but at least there were no weapons.) Well this Brush has rambled, but I do have magical memories of growing up in Preston, which I still call home even though I reside elsewhere. Growing up in this era I would not swap for anything, it was one of the happiest times in my life.

Some of the girls could be rough as guts. It wasn’t my thing. I was never rough, BUT when push came to shove, that’s exactly what happened! Still at school, probably fifteen, two girls who worked at factory near my house, rough as, would walk by me and my friend as we headed to school every day. Smart arse comments and glares were always made... whatever. One day, one of them decides to



Pinstripe Baggies and Checked Flags

THANK GOD I got the street education commencing from my first flags in 1966, it has held me in good stead for the last forty plus years!  
Noel on Slackbastard

push my friend into a wall that we were walking near and then continues on. Both in shock we were prepared for the following day, as I would not let anyone touch my (little) friend (who was and still is the sister I didn't have). So the following morning I was prepared to 'rumble!' Oh, well what do you know, in the distance not 'two' big mouth losers, but ONE. Great, not as difficult as I thought it could have been. So, closer and closer she approaches. Head down, she never made eye contact... until she hit the wall! 'Oh sorry', came from my lips, just as those words came from hers the previous morning. She limped away on her lonesome, and from that day, not one word was ever spoken from the two little factory people.

Another was a bit more serious as another friend was in a fight, again with a rough girl from the same working background. The thing is, back then, if you worked in a factory, you were automatically taken for being 'rough around the edges'. No one cares today who works where, but back then, there was a stigma attached to different professions chosen, or in some cases, there were no choices due to lack of education.

Anyway, I witnessed more fights than I could possibly count. They eventuated every time we went anywhere, no matter what the event, or destination. Part of growing up, and being a Sharpie in the 1960s!

Vicki on Facebook and skinsnsharps

BEAUTIFULLY WRITTEN Vicki, I ventured over to Preston on some Saturdays all the way from Box Hill. What fun we had. 1959 FC for me, but several Sharps I hung with had the traditional FJ or FX; one particular one sprayed a beautiful Maroon with a chrome glove box lid which gave a great view of the Brushes legs! Oh what memories, those fish and chips in newspaper or the Greasy's burgers that have never been matched (Box Hill) I do remember a good Burger shop maybe in Bell Street? The Bell Burger? So right Vicki, no weapons just fists, although the occasional iron bar was produced from cars, and once only I recall a shottie going off out side Blue Stone dance in Box Hill. Take care and thanks for sharing. 1966 to 1970 the real living years mate!  
Noel on skinsnsharps

THANKS FOR the compliment. Yes, they were truly the best days from 1966 onwards. From memory my 'boyfriend' (now ex husband) had an FB and an FC. The car was such an important part of the Sharpie image, both to guys and girls. No hanging dice from mirrors yet, always a travelling rug in the back (and a colourful set of cups in the glove box!) Ours wasn't maroon or chrome though! Oh funny times. Sneaking a mate into the drive-in — in the boot! Sounds just like *Happy Days*! They were indeed happy days. The music, well that's another story — certainly contributing to the fabulous memories we hold close today.  
Vicki on skinsnsharps

WELL I am nearly sixty now and we were Sharps from approx 1966. Yes that's right that early. I belonged to the Preston Sharps. Typical clothing that a Sharp from that era wore — Crestknit top (like a modern polo but only one colour). Conte Cardigan (his business was in High Street Thornbury) and flag trousers, these were short waisted with flap pockets that were straight cut, and of course chisel toe shoes from either Acropolis or Cusmano Shoes that were in Collingwood. Hair was always short and either parted to one side or crew cut. A very clean look. This is all factual and any old Sharp will verify this. I hope you find this of some interest from one of the most interesting times of Melbourne history. I am proud that I was part of it.

Johnny on skinsnsharps

IN EARLY 1968, when I was a sixteen-year-old Mod working at the Melbourne GPO (Post Office), I became mates with a young lout from Preston. He had short hair and attitude! One lunchtime, he asked me if I wanted to come over to the Seven Little Tailors shop on Elizabeth Street. He was getting some 'flags' made. Flags? I thought, 'What the hell!' When we got there, I found out that flags were a necessary item of clothing worn by a Melbourne-based gang subculture called 'Sharpies'. They were trousers, baggy trousers, made of woollen material in hound's-tooth or check design with dull colours and rear pocket flaps. I was intrigued. I wanted to know more! My new mate informed me that along with flags, they wore Italian



fine knit cardigans and jumpers made by companies like Venito, no stripes, just plain colours usually maroon or bottle green. Mods were starting to sound a bit 'old hat' now. I was hooked! Italian leather shoes, chisel toe, Cuban heel, were the other required items of clothing and a Crestknit polo shirt to top it off! Sharpie girls were called 'Brush' and wore fairly drab outfits compared to the boys: twin sets, plain skirts, flat shoes, etc.

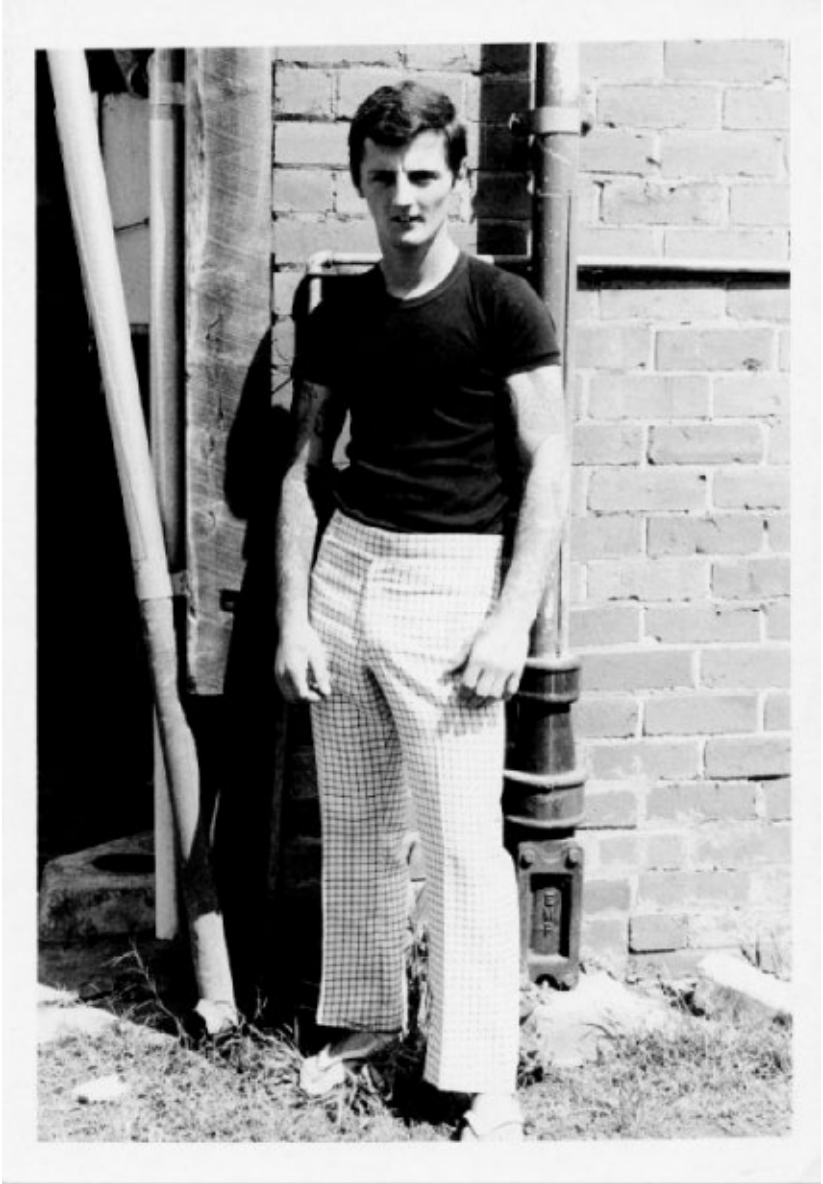


1966 Oakleigh Sharps

A few months later, I went to a dance on Flinders Lane called Traffik to see The Loved Ones. And who were hanging around outside, leaning on lowered HD and EH Holden's with Tasman mags? Sharpies! I later found out that most dances had 'Sharpie bans' so they would stay out the front 'picking' the long hairs or trying to chat up some Mod 'chicks'. Fun!

A few weeks later, I went with a few mates to Glenferrie oval to see the Hawks play and the Sharpies were everywhere! Dressed to impress! Three quarter length woollen coats, flags, some with 'pork pie' hats, all with attitude! It was more entertaining watching the crowd than watching the game! This was home grown, not teddy boys, Mods or Hippies, etc. This was Melbourne-fantastic!

As it turned out, not long down the track, I became a Sharp myself at the end of what I call 'phase one' of the Sharpie reign. I got a pair of flags made by Maurice the Tailor in Camberwell, grey Venito v-neck jumper, a pair of 'chisels' from Cusmano in Collingwood, navy blue trench coat, and of course: Sharpie Brush! An original Melbourne youth culture, and I was proud to be part of it. Later came the Staggers jeans, stripped cardigans, hair tails, etc. But for me, I was glad to be involved and have witnessed the 'first phase of Sharp' 1967 to 1969, a period which not many people are aware of!  
Chris O' Halloran on skinsnsharps



Before we had flags, pants were narrow,  
in this 'window pane' pattern or tartan  
Rod 1966 Oakleigh

GREAT TO find this site on a lazy Sunday afternoon, I was speaking with my wife only last night about the good ol' days as a Sharpie in 1966 in beautiful Box Hill! (She said she would have never married me had she known what I was like in those days.) The dances — Blue Stone was also called 'Blood Stone' as it went off every Saturday night. (Fists, bottles and even a shottie some nights.) Glue Pot Sunday night, St Peter's Friday nights. Town Hall some times. Ah, the visits or the phantom threats of proposed visits by other Sharpie groups that rarely took place.

Chisel toe shoes, flaps boys, not flairs. I had the most wonderful pair of flaps, woollen check pants purchased from Bachelors Menswear, top end of Bourke Street Melbourne Also used to buy our pin striped flaps from Fairways corner Elizabeth Street and Little Collins. (They had a closing down sale for years and years.) With t-shirts only pale blue or maroon three buttons always done up to the top. Maroon jumper and in winter the famous gabardine trench coat with the belt always looped to the back. Yes chisel toe shoes the wider the better just in case you need to kick with them.

Hanging around the station or The Bowl or the local milk bar every night ten to thirty of us. The walks home as our numbers dwindled some nights to one or two could lead to a car full of Sharpies stopping next to us asking 'Where are you from?' Out numbered the easy answer was Chatham, it was

three stations on from Box Hill towards the city, not one dumb ass had ever heard of that place. If you had said Box Hill, six in the car would have beaten the living crap out of you; you may have even got a few blows with the trusty metal pipe around the head. Ah the good ol' days 1966 to 1970 in Box Hill, and ya know I would not have changed one thing had I had my time over again. It was a time of growing up and hanging around with the most eclectic group of individuals one would ever desire to meet and providing you were in the group/gang most times you were untouchable.

And today all those years on, most of those kids are fine outstanding citizens. I saw an outsider all those years ago one night have the living crap beaten out of himself at Blue Stone (Blood Stone) dance — never forgotten him and it was forty-three years ago about, he cleaned himself up after the beating and came back again for a fight with the same Box Hill kid again and again, this happened four times. The outsider kid's face was mincemeat in the end, but as I said I have never forgotten his guts or his stupidity maybe, so if you are out there mate and around sixty years of age, you did have guts I must say. I got my worst beating ever in a fenced paddock around the corner from Odd Modd (Q Club's prior name).

The Mod girls mostly were all stunners (why the hell didn't I become a Mod?) but we were never allowed in that dance due to our clothing. Even

used to try and pin our flags so they looked like drain pipes, but ah no, the second job cops (bouncers) would tell us to go. They were actually smart, although we never thought it in the 1960s; they knew our faces and our very short hair never helped either.

One Saturday night even prior to trying to get in to Odd Modd, four wonderful uniformed policemen and the Sarge stopped myself and my mate in Glenferrie Road, took us across the road into this fenced paddock and beat the living hell out of us, saddest thing he would knock me down and stand on my lovely trench coat and tell me to get up, it was a little difficult Sarge, especially when you were intentionally standing on it with your size eighty plod hoppers. Wish you hadn't torn my treasured trench coat Sarge!

It was a lesson in life and thanks Sarge, it took the two of us to legendary status to be beaten up by four plods with number five watching the gate. But if you gave it you had to be prepared to take it and although I will now sound like an old fart by saying: 'The streets today may be a little safer if this swift police justice was still allowed.' Thanks for reading chaps; I will now do the Sharpie Shuffle as I ponder what's for dinner!

Noel on slackbastard