

Archive No. 72

Fi Cutting, pen name Phoebe Thorndyke (24 December, 1951 -)

Born at Yarra Junction and raised in Don Valley, Fi graduated from Melbourne Uni in 1976 with a BA Hons and went on to work as a kindergarten teacher amongst other jobs.

Fi became involved in the WLM when she started on roster at the WL Centre at 100 Little Lonsdale Street, in 1976. She continued as a member of the roster group, answering the phone and general enquiries from women who dropped in to the Centre, till the Centre closed in 1978. She was then involved with the Women's Liberation Switchboard (WLS) from the time it was in Rosslyn Street, then Victoria Street, West Melbourne (1980s).

Fi helped to start the Women's Environment Action Group (WEAG in 1977) and was an active member of many collectives, including the Lesbian Action Group (LAG 1977 - 1979), the Women's Abortion Action Coalition (WAAC: 1976 - 1981) the IWD organising collective in 1981, Women Against Nuclear Energy (WANE: 1977 - 1979), Open C-R Lesbian Group (1977 - 1978) the Women's Theatre Group (1978) the Women's Health Group (1978) and the Women's Self-Defence Group (1978) Women Against Violence and Exploitation (WAVE: 1983) and the Women's Health Resource Collective (1980s).

Fi attended many rallies and marches over the years: IWD, Reclaim the Night, pro-abortion, anti-Right to Life, the Ring-Around Fairlea and more recently, the anti-war rallies. She participated in conferences, Women and Uranium Conference, the Women and Sexuality Conference (1976) and the Women and Health Conference (1977). She danced at women's dances, was an occasional speaker and discussion facilitator and was a politically active member of the WLM in Melbourne for many years.

Fi was also a member of Friends of the Earth (FOE: 1977) Children By Choice at Melbourne Uni (1973), the Abortion Law Repeal Association and a couple of food co-ops and was the feminist representative on the Movement Against Uranium Mining steering committee (MAUM: 1977). Fi's present focus is an increasing awareness of early music within the wider community and awareness of social justice within the early music community. Everything she does has an environmentalist lesbian feminist perspective, so this informs her work in this area.

At the beginning of 2000, Fi became a member of the VWL&LF Archives. She participated in the meetings to get a constitution together so that the Archives group could be incorporated, was part of the decision-making process to move the Archives to the University of Melbourne Archives by the end of 2000 and has continued to be an active member of the group ever since.

Fi has written and contributed many articles to lesbian, feminist and other magazines for many years including the WL Newsletter, Vashti, Chain Reaction, MSO, Farrago and the Australian Women's Book Review. Her book, Lucky Ducks: Companions in the Organic Garden, was published by Hyland House, Melbourne, in 2000.