

# West City Rugby League from Alan Gane

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I<sup>1</sup> was first approached about becoming a playing member of West City Football Team in 1946/47. As many men were discharged from the military forces in 1945/46 and there were other young men of appropriate age there were plenty keen to organise and compete in local competition. The Canberra League competition comprised first and reserve grades. Teams were entered from West City, North City, Causeway, Rovers, Souths and Eastlake Hostel. Selected players from these teams made up the Canberra representative team that played in Group 8 against Queanbeyan, Goulburn, Yass, Captain's Flat and Crookwell. As was tradition Canberra's *Arch Enemy* was the Queanbeyan Blues - no quarter given during the game but best of friends on completion.

West City was made up of people from Westlake and other areas as there were insufficient numbers from Westlake. I must say that our officials and supporters treated us well whether we won or lost. The above photograph<sup>2</sup> is circa 1948 and is of the First Grade Team of that time. L-R Top Row: *Towser Bourke*, Cyril Walters, Max O'Reilly, Frank Houter, *Dooley Hazelgrove*, unknown, *Lofty Harrington*, Jimmy Poulter. Middle Row L-R: Kevin Summerfield, Gorden Kelley, Alan Gane, Ron Freer, unknown, unknown. Front Row L-R : Leon Moore, *Popeye Noonan*, *Ackie Hawke*, Geoff Murray. I apologise for the forgotten names of those in the photo and for the others from Westlake whom I have not mentioned.



Normal training nights for Wests were at Manuka Oval. The ovals used for competition were Manuka, Northbourne, Ainslie, Kingston, University and an oval that is now under Lake Burley Griffin that was located at an area between the original Canberra Community Hospital and Hotel Acton. The photo was taken at University Oval off Barry Drive near Sullivan's Creek. temporary toilets installed and no showers. In addition to the local competition Wests arranged social games with various towns in the surrounding area with wives, girlfriends, children and supporters

attending. Transport in these days was varied, very few had their own means of transport and a bus would be hired and the team and some followers would travel in a flat tray truck generally with canvas canopy, thank goodness. It would be illegal today but we had no complaints. To sum up being a member of West City Rugby League gave me great pleasure to be associated with our dedicated officials, our supporters and all of my fellow team members and it would be remiss of me if I did not thank my wife, Gwynneth, others' wives, girlfriends, mothers etc etc for their efforts in helping to repair us after our game to be fit enough for the next combat. Alan Gane.

Above: Alan Gane home on leave on one of Llewellyn's horses. Mrs Llewellyn hired out horses. Her home was at Acton. The photograph was taken in the backyard of his mother's home (12 or 13) Westlake. Alan joined the AIF - lied about his age. When he turned 18 he rejoined the RAAF.

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Gane died in early 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The photograph is not attached in this file, it can be seen in *True Tales From Canberra's Vanished Suburbs of Westlake, Westridge & Acton* Gugler. My copy is out on loan in Queensland so I cannot copy it at this time. I have left the reference in because it notes the names of some of the players.