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Full transcript of an interview with

ROMOLA WOLLASTON

on 22 June 2006

by Helen Miller

Recording available on CD

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Today is June 22nd 2006 and present are Helen Miller, 1957 graduate, Pauline Butler, 1977 graduate and Romola Wollaston, 1947 graduate.

//////////////////// indicates word/s that I couldn't be sure about – JR.

???????????????????? please check spelling – JR.

Romola, perhaps you could give us an outline of how you came to hear about kindergarten teaching as a career.

Yes, well, my mother was a kindergarten teacher and from my very early days always talked about her kindergartens; she talked about it a lot. I think my father was also Treasurer of the Glenelg Kindergarten at some stage and certainly very involved because, as a family, we were always involved with each other. From as long as I can remember, I decided I would be a kindergarten teacher. When it came to choosing a career, my headmistress was not pleased because she thought I should be doing something at the University because I had good marks. I was quite determined and my family always encouraged us to do what we wanted to do so I started on the kindergarten track.

Where were you at school?

I was at The Wilderness.

And was there a kindergarten there?

Yes, there was, yes, it was run by the four Brown sisters and Miss Winnie had the kindergarten. I think they were probably six year-olds.

Perhaps you could tell us a little about your mother. Did she teach in kindergartens or schools?

Yes, she taught at Glenelg.

Can we just first of all establish her maiden name for the record?

Yes she was Jean Louise Robertson.

And she graduated in?

I'm not sure, I think your list will be better resourced.

1917.

'17, 1917. I don't think she taught for very long because she was married in 1920 when Dad came back from the War and got started in settling in Adelaide. Of course, in those days, if you were married you didn't go on doing anything like kindergarten teaching. She would have only had two or three years at Glenelg. She used to talk about it a lot and of course, we sang all the songs she had in her books and played the singing games. They played lots of singing games. She taught them all to us.

The only other thing I can remember about her was that she had a child called Edward Albert Prince of Wales, and I don't know if it was Smith, Jones or what but it was a very common surname but it was the time when the Prince of Wales was here I suppose. This little boy, she often spoke of him being called Edward Albert Prince of Wales something.

She was one of the first Montessori teachers while she was at the College, Lillian de Lissa went overseas and came back qualified to teach the Montessori method. Mum was one of the first of those. We, as children, played with the Montessori equipment, which I think now Dad must have made. He was very handy with those sort of things and interested. It wasn't strictly Montessori because we were allowed to do whatever we liked with the cylinders and the steps.

I was talking to my brother this morning and he said that Mum was much too busy to worry what we did with it so we had a lovely time building the blocks into other things. Her whole attitude to her family were the kindergarten method so we were brought up to very creative, lightly disciplined and expected to behave well and conventionally.

How many siblings were there?

I have an older sister and two younger brothers.

You've mentioned your mother at Glenelg, was she teaching at a school there?

In a kindergarten, yes, the Glenelg Kindergarten. I've just been trying to think about all these things but most kindergartens were set-up for the very poor children who didn't get a good meal or a sleep so they were set-up for children to have a good place to play and a good meal and a sleep every day, so they were in the very poor suburbs. The Glenelg Kindergarten must have been a little bit different because that was not such a poor area.

It would have been a private kindergarten would it?

No, it was a Kindergarten Union kindergarten I think, as I remember it; it should be somewhere in the records as that.

We can check.

Yes, so she was only there for a couple of years because then she married and then the Depression hit and they moved to the country. We grew up at Dingabledinga on a big farm where we didn't go to school until we were secondary school age.

Did your mother teach you?

Mother taught us a bit. My sister had a pretty good time because another girl used to come, another little girl came and Mum taught them both. She tried the Correspondence and she didn't like that, it was too restrictive. Elizabeth used to come every day and have school lessons and then Liz went to boarding school when she was thirteen.

There was a gap between Liz and me of five years so we stayed on and Mum sort of taught us and Dad used to teach me my Mathematics while he cleaned the eggs. Then Liz finished school and came home to live and for two years she taught the three of us and she's the best teacher I've ever had.

Your mother sounded very enlightened.

She really was. The whole family was. It's really amazing, in that day we were encouraged to do whatever we wanted to and if you wanted to do the outdoor things with Dad you were welcome to and if the boys wanted to come in the house and do the family things that was welcome too.

Can we just go back? Where was it that you grew up?

D-i-n-g-a-b-l-e-d-i-n-g-a. Six miles from Willunga. At the top of the Willunga Hill you turn left and that ridge along there is Dingabledinga and it still is.

We grew up on a farm there. Dad started with an apiary but bees were not a success in the Depression. Nobody wanted honey; he got a half-penny a pound for his honey. He gradually built up a, then he tried poultry. We had lots of white chooks for a long time. Then the one cow that he got for the baby when he went there, my

sister was two, they got a cow and the cow had a calf and then he acquired some more cows and we ended up with a dairy.

By the time there were three more of us to go to boarding school or something we had to move. We moved from Dingabledinga to Bridgewater where we had quite a large property and kept the cow. My Father needed a cow. It was one of his good friends! There were sort of a very free life, no sexism in it, the boys and the girls did what they wanted.

Idyllic.

I think it was pretty good. It was socially depriving. We didn't go to school. Mum was a bit of a snob. The schools were the local settlements, the post-war settlements. There were two near us and the nearest one was through the back paddocks. The school was just outside the required distance, so she was allowed to teach us at home. If we weren't doing our work properly we were told we would be sent to school. The Education Department would come and send us to school – that was a threat!

What sort of schooling did your mother have?

She was educated at MLC. I suppose she was there all her life. They lived at Wayville and her father was one of the Adelaide Town Councillors, James Robertson. She and her youngest, she was the youngest but she and her sister close in age went to MLC. I'm not sure what happened to the older members of the family where they went to school, but she completed her total schooling and was a very well-educated person. She loved languages, French and German, I don't think

she was so keen on Latin, but French and German were about the only things you could learn.

Romola did you go to boarding school?

No. You see the family had to move, there were the three of us so we moved to Bridgewater where I went when I had to go to school, I was fourteen. I stayed with an aunt for a month until we actually moved then I travelled by train from Bridgewater to Medindie.

My two little brothers went to the state school which was not very happy for them. It wasn't a very good state school at that stage. During the War, Scotch College moved up to Belair and that was not too far and they went to Belair to Scotch College and they finished their education there.

So you'd go down on the train to.

On the train and then the tram, the Walkerville tram out to Medindie.

Quite a long day.

Yes but it wasn't really – we enjoyed it. I thoroughly enjoyed it and did my homework on the train.

Were there any other Wilderness girls of your group who did the course with you?

June Hone was in my class at school and she was one year ahead of me. She went to College. You had to have your Leaving Certificate was the requirement and June finished her Leaving Certificate and went off to College and I had another year, a Leaving Honours year, so I was one year after her. I can't think of any other Wilderness girls who went to College. Miss Mamie wasn't too keen about it. She

thought you should really go to the University. A Kindergarten College was not her choice for her girls.

Did you have an interview at the College?

When it was time for me to enrol Mother took me in to talk to Hazel Harrison and discuss how I could do it and all of the details and whether I could somehow get a scholarship because Dad was trying to educate these three younger children. Liz was through school and doing her own things then. He had to educate the three of us and Mum really wanted us to be at very good schools and have careers of what we wanted to do, so they enquired. Scholarships were granted on need, not on ability so we waited. In the meantime, we talked about what else I could do if I couldn't get a scholarship and investigated what was called Mothercraft nursing at that stage.

At Torrens House.

At Torrens House was it?

On South Terrace.

Princess Elizabeth Hospital or something anyway we investigated it but I don't think any of us were very serious about it. Fortunately, I was granted a two-year scholarship, for two of the three years I had a scholarship.

Do you remember how much it was?

No I don't. I don't know how I could work that out. So then I could start.

So then you started. What happened on the first day, do you recall that?

Not very clearly, we had some sort of assembly and we were allocated our kindergartens and we met each other. I've been trying to think of it but I can't remember. I know I was allocated to Bowden because I would be able to get there by

train. Eileen Thomas was the Director who was known to my family so that was rather nice. She was quite a character. Joan McKay and I went off in our uniforms with our uniforms. Now uniforms were not compulsory.

Were they not?

No, because it was wartime and you had to wear whatever you could. Joan had a properly made uniform, a commercial uniform and I think her family were struggling to buy her uniforms. My Mum made mine and I hated them. They weren't quite right.

What was it like?

They weren't that bad, they were little girls' frocks. They had to be a certain green, it wasn't quite a linen. Joan's was a silky sort of material – I can't remember the names of the material. They had Peter Pan collars and belts and button down the front and when you got to kindergarten you had to change into these uniforms. Mine wasn't quite the right material and Mum had bound the Peter Pan collar and Joan's was a double collar and I felt very scruffy. Most people didn't have these because it was war-time, they didn't want them but I had my two uniforms for the first and maybe the second year. By the third year, I got more daring and I had a very nice check frock with a square neck which was much nicer – it wasn't correct but it was accepted.

So you obviously enjoyed your first placement at Bowden.

I had a lovely time at Bowden, I really enjoyed that.

Can you remember who the teacher was?

Eileen Thomas.

She was the Director.

Peg, she'd just been married in the holidays to an airman or a sailor, a sailor. It was something like Maltby????.

Never mind.

You'll find her on the list anyway. She was in charge of the nursery school and of course we went in to the nursery school. Looking back, we did some strange things like trying to make two-year olds thread beads in a pattern. Looking back, I laugh heartily about that, trying to get these poor little two year olds to put a blue one then a red one then a yellow one and so on.

Where was your next placement?

After that was a disaster. I went to Barker with Eileen Terry. Two of us, I can't think who I was with. Doesn't matter, you'll probably find that out somewhere. Miss Terry was not a very efficient Director and the students were only there that term – we were removed after that. Usually we had two terms but that wasn't a great success and we were removed from there at the end of that year. She no longer had students.

I can't think of the assistant's name. She was an old lady who she believed that children needed a lot of butter and the assistant was in charge of the menu so we had this mashed potato with lashings and lashings of butter. It was horrible. I can remember a lot of these very humorous things about the place.

So it was still a meal and sleep?

Yes, it was a meal and sleep. A little boy called Blair with a most delightful voice. The other thing I remember about Barker. Barker was out in North Adelaide. It might still be there.

In Tynte Street. It still is. And do you recall where you went next?

Yes, well then I went to Lucy Morice in Lower North Adelaide with Yvonne Symonds. I can't think of the assistant. I don't think the assistant was trained. I think by that stage, it was wartime.

Romola about this time more kindergartens were opening and it wasn't very long before they started a one-year emergency course to fill the gap, so you're quite right, it could be an untrained person.

That's right, somebody called Pat was there. No, that was later; that was when I was there as the assistant. We had Pat as well, she was a volunteer. No that's not right. Anyway that's part of history, not of mine, you'll pick up.

So was this your second or third year you were at Lucy Morice?

That was my second year. I was lucky then because I really loved Lucy Morice and I was there for the whole year which was really most enjoyable. Then my last year, in third year you did stay in the same place. I went to Palmer Place with Pauline Martin and had to go, couldn't do my year's practical exam there. We had a week, a fortnight I think of practice where we had to do a fortnight in charge so I went back to Lucy Morice to do that which was good.

We will just mention that Pauline Martin was a Melbourne graduate.

Yes, that's right, Pauline was a Melbourne graduate and went back to Melbourne soon after that.

So you really, really enjoyed being a student by the sound of that.

Yes, I enjoyed it thoroughly. I think I was a very funny little immature student. Looking back, I was really very immature at that stage. I didn't get on too well, if I can put in names, but Kathleen Mellor and I were often not in tune. I was a bit, I was

terribly untidy which she didn't like, I wrote badly, I had opinions of my own even if I was a funny little immature thing. I had some strong views and what's more, when she came to visit me as a student in my first year she sat on the rocking-horse and tore her clothes and the students were berated for that for having a nail sticking out of the rocking horse. I don't forget that. I see her point far more than I did at that stage. But I enjoyed every minute of it.

Do you recall what sort of assignments or exams you had or materials you made?

We had, yes I can recall quite a bit. We had four mornings and one afternoon in kindergartens. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and we were also there on Tuesday afternoon which was for a staff meeting. Then on Friday, and the other three afternoons we were in College the whole time.

I'll see if I can remember what we had. We had Pre-school Education with Miss Mellor and that was a big subject and had all sorts of components to it. We had Biology with Mrs Simpson, who always wore a hat and I didn't like that at all, that wasn't my line at all. As for dissecting rabbits, that was right outside my enjoyment but we did it.

We had Miss Allen, who taught us Psychology and who had a little mannerism that she'd pause between most things and say, "Do you see?" which was to the students a bit hilarious. I think she was really very good and I remember particularly when she demonstrated IQ testing with one of the children from Palmer Place who was a six year old, five or six year old who was Sandy Youlle???? who is now a well known theologian. She gave him this psychological test with us watching her, IQ

test and started him at his level and he went on and on to two years above his level and was still passing all the tests and she turned round and she said, "Well, I think you see how it's done, you can go now Sandy." I certainly remember that.

That was Lois Allen?

It probably was but I don't remember her having a name except Miss Allen, very proper. We had to do some Music and I wasn't very good. I had been learning some Music from my mother but I would like to have been musical but I wasn't so I was allowed to do, Mrs Davis taught me. The proficient people had Mary Jolley, I think, to teach them but I wasn't proficient enough but I had nice Mrs Davis.

We're talking about piano lessons?

Piano, yes. I struggled along and when it came to the exam at the end, you could do it either with the piano, which the musical girls did, you could do it with melody only and percussion, which was my level. If you were absolutely totally hopeless you could just do it with percussion but I did manage the melody. I quite enjoyed the music but I wasn't good at it. I'd have loved to have been.

Then we had our Drawing with Mrs Harris, I don't know where it was, the Art School, yes. I was absolutely hopeless. The only thing she could say about my art was that she enjoyed my colours. "Well, your colours are very good dear," she said. I got my orange and green together. I did the basic things I needed to do with that and of course we had Music and Movement, Dalcroze, with Mary Jolley then with Lesley Cox, and I loved it, I really enjoyed that.

Where did you go for that?

We went into her studio, somewhere in the city, somewhere upstairs. We also did singing there, which I wasn't all that good at but I was always surprised, when she needed one more voice for something it was only part of the group singing without me never expecting that I was the added voice. I'm really not a singer or musical but funny little things that pop out at you like that but I enjoyed the Eurythmics very much.

What about the examinations or the assessments?

We had to do exams like you did at school. They were, I don't know what they were, I don't remember them. They were the usual sort of academic examinations in Biology and Psychology. Besides that there was some practical, oh there were reports for our practical work every term I think. I was always low marks on adapting temperature, lighting and ventilation. Having grown up in the country where the windows were open most of the time and you put another jumper on if you were cold, it wasn't in my sort of character to look at the windows being open or the heaters on or what happened so it was low marks on that.

I got pretty good marks for everything else and at the final grading at the end of my third year I got an A for Theory and an A for Practice, so that was pretty good. I don't think it makes a scrap of difference after you've finished but it was nice.

You wouldn't happen to have any of your reports would you?

No, I couldn't find any of my reports but I've got some, I'll show you later, the grading of that, that I completed it.

That's extremely interesting.

I don't know what we had. We had a lot of projects we had to do, I think every term. One of the things I was hopeless at was making doll's clothes, they didn't fit the doll. We had to make toys. Oh the other subject we had was Woodwork and we went to Mr Tuck in at the Mission in.

The Baptist Mission behind Lavis Kindergarten.

Yes, I think so. Our year, and probably others of our year will tell you, we were the bad girls, we were naughty, we did terrible things. We argued about things and if you catch up with Pam Kimber, what's her name now? She might tell you that she wanted to go on the Gulf Trip with her boyfriend and that was very much frowned upon and I, who was meek little me who never lifted a finger in such things, I was part of the deputation that went to the Principal and fought the case for Pam to go on the Gulf Trip.

Everybody found we were a difficult year except dear Mr Tuck and he was the one who thought our year was lovely with our woodwork. When I was moving a couple of years ago, I threw out my pegboard I'd made but I've still got the hammer. Now I should have brought you it. If you want the hammer I'll find it and let you have it as a souvenir.

Thank you.

We enjoyed that, we were sort of a practical lot who enjoyed the woodwork. We had to make a child's picture book, we had to collect stories, and one of the big projects, and I gave this away a while back to a Melbourne kindergarten teacher. It was a huge book that had to, we had to find pictures and write up quotations for every age group from birth to five to six years I think was the last page. Find these matching

pictures and print underneath them and again, I had trouble with my printing, where they came from.

My father was in touch with stationery people and he got us our books for our year, all the girls in our year. It was wartime remember and difficult to get these things but he got these books from one of the publishers so they had stiff covers and lots of pages in. We went through magazines, books and newspapers and family photographs and documented child development from birth to six years.

It's the equivalent of that that your mother made when she was a student we've got in our archives.

That's nice. Yes, I don't remember having anything like that. We had things like blueprints of hers; she had to do a nature blueprint book. You mention something like that, I can't think what else she had. Those were the projects I can remember.

Romola, after you graduated, which you obviously achieved very well indeed which is very pleasing for you, what came next?

I'd been on a scholarship and so I had to do two years teaching. We had to apply for our positions as assistants and I didn't apply for anything except Lucy Morice. I said, "If I don't get to Lucy Morice, I don't care!" I didn't have any preference after that; I was a bit obstinate like my Dad. I applied for Lucy Morice and I got it.

I went to Lucy Morice with June Hone; she was a year ahead of me and she was the Director of Lucy Morice at that stage and I was the assistant in charge of the nursery school. We ran a very, I think we were a bit innovative because I don't think

we were strictly keeping the children separate, I think we did a lot of things together as I remember it.

In my second year there, the Immigration Centre at Woodside was opened and I lived at Bridgewater and I was sent up to Woodside to help set up a Play Centre for pre-school children at Woodside. I was released from Lucy Morice I suppose, yes, to go up and help set that up. Again, I was very immature but I did something and we got it going. At the end of the year it was advertised and Eileen Thomas went and took it over and I must have, I think that might have been my first year because I think I then went back to Lucy Morice for a year; they wouldn't release me to take the job at Woodside so I didn't go there until the next year, after that, when I'd done my two years. There was a position there for an assistant and I went to Woodside Immigration. Eileen Thomas left and I was in charge there. Before that I got polio so I, of course, was out of action for most of the year then I went back for a month.

What year was that?

1950 and I was home with polio from about March to, I've got my employment dates there so I can know when it was. Then I went back for half-time. I used to have to work in the morning, there was no transport except the school bus so I had a snooze in Miss Thomas' room, because she lived in there, until the bus came in the afternoon but that only lasted for about a month because I was quite fit and well to continue full-time. When she left at the end of the year, I took the position and Helen Anderson/Andersen??? was my assistant.

Very likely.

Then the Immigration Department asked me to go to Greta in NSW. They were called Pre-school Play Centres, to go and look after that. Organise work in Greta which was a big immigration centre and there were actually four play centres with untrained staff from the Centre, migrant people, and I was supervising the four of them. That was good, I enjoyed that. It was a big experience; I think I grew up a lot there. I spent the next three years there much to my mother's disappointment, she thought I went for one year and I stayed for three. She didn't like her family getting out of the nest. Dad was much more supportive. After that, I can't quite remember why I decided I didn't want to stay on there, I went to Somers in Victoria to a little Migrant Centre there which I very much enjoyed. It closed down so I went back to Woodside.

Was Somers a place or the name of the Centre?

Somers is the name of the little town, the little place and there had been a military camp there and then after that it closed down as a migrant centre and became a school camp.

So you were actually employed by the Commonwealth Government by this stage?

Yes, yes all this immigration time was Commonwealth Government. That closed down and I went back to Woodside and the immigration services were all closing down so I started applying for other positions and what I got was a Pre-school Advisor position in Victoria with the state government which was under the Health Department, Maternal and Child Welfare, part of the Health Department and I stayed there for twenty-seven years until I retired. I think it was twenty seven years! I also enjoyed that very much. I had a lovely career. I had the Vera Scantlebury Brown Scholarship in 1962, 1961-62 and went to England to study Maladjustment.

That's a very well respected name in Victoria isn't it? Where did you go in the UK for your study?

London. London School of Education, the University of London and there was a course, I didn't actually know when I applied but I was interested in children who were not quite normal. Not physically disabled but what we'd call now would be intellectually disabled or emotionally disabled or something like that. They call it, there was a big movement at that time about maladjustment and actually when I was awarded the scholarship I was enrolled for the course, even though I hadn't really known it existed. People went to London to do the Child Development course at London or the, whatever it was called in Manchester I think.

Birmingham.

Birmingham, yes. When I was told I was awarded the scholarship they'd already enrolled me in this course in London for Maladjustment which was tremendous.

Romola, you would have seen, I think, a lot of difficulty in that area with children of migrant parents?

Yes, I wished I'd known earlier what I knew later, because I really lost a lot of confidence in my early migrant days because they were all maladjusted children. I thought I was the one that wasn't coping with them. I really was extremely grateful to the lovely untrained assistants I had in the Immigration Centre.

Were they Australians or were they?

No, they were part of them.

There would have been language problems with the children wouldn't there?

Not the children, they pretty soon learned English. I remember one little girl looking at me in great puzzlement on her face around Christmas and said, "Miss Wollaston, what does it mean, sweet?"

"Oh Bianca, it means sugar and."

"But how do you say laid down his sweet head?"

The children were very quick and the migrants, special people who were in staff positions had to learn English, so we didn't have a lot of problems like that. With parents, it was more difficult. Everyone spoke DP English, DP German, everybody spoke DP German because they'd been in camps in Germany.

What's DP?

Displaced persons. So I learned a bit of German, I taught myself some German, enough German to cope with talking to parents. You mustn't say it to the Dutch but the Dutch language is very like the German language and when we had Dutch people it wasn't hard to communicate with them.

Did you see a number of families settled during your time?

I don't think so because it wasn't, it didn't work like that. People came in to the Centres. Oh, I suppose I did in some of the other Centres but on the whole people, families came in to the Centres and were allocated accommodation and community meals. They set up their own arrangements for themselves, they were very creative. The group meals were pretty horrible and they could sometimes get the, persuade the kitchen staff to give them the ingredients and they'd somehow fit up some of their own cooking.

The husbands then had to be found somewhere to work and they would leave the family, wife and family, in the Centre and they would go off to Adelaide and be in a hostel in Adelaide, come home at weekends. The camps, they were very unhappy socially. On the whole, the systems were poor. They were run by people who had high rank in the Army so they were a mixture of Army and all sorts of things.

That was your experience in each of the states, the same?

It varied a little, Somers was a bit different because by that time the whole system had changed somewhat and it was quite a small Centre and I think the families might have been more intact for some reason.

Whereabouts did most of the migrants come from?

They came from all over Europe; they were people who couldn't go back to their own countries after the war. Their countries were politically not accepting them; they were people who were not acceptable and they came from all sorts of countries. You'd have an influx of one particular nationality.

The first ones were very, very mixed because they'd all been gathered in these DP camps in Europe. Then they'd come from there. One of the people I had as an assistant in the early days said that they'd arrived in Adelaide on a big ship and they did not have any money to buy a postage stamp to write home to tell the people who were still at home that they had arrived. They had absolutely nothing when they came. By the time I'd finished there it was a very different matter and they were people who'd chose to come, who wanted to come, who came on quite a different basis.

Romola, coming back to your supervisory years, did you supervise in the City of Melbourne and in the country? How did that work?

Yes, yes. You had different, it worked in municipalities, on a municipal basis. It was divided up.

We're talking about the Health Department now?

The Maternal and Child Welfare Branch of the Health Department.

And we need to understand, in Victoria, there were several of them, about four different authorities who administered them.

Victoria was very progressive in Early Education, Early Childhood. It was really very progressive. I'll have to go back, Vera Scantlebury Brown. I've already mentioned I had a scholarship. She was the first Director of Maternal and Child Health for the Victorian government. I think, Gladys Pendrid???? had fought for that. Somehow, they'd set-up this government department which had Early Childhood from birth to six, to school age. There was an Infant Welfare; the names of things change and I forget which was where but the Infant Welfare, the Child Health nurses were responsible to that part of it.

Government subsidised kindergartens that were responsible to municipalities or independent organisations, came under the supervision and the school Medical Service, the doctors who worked in the schools. Over my time that changed what they did; what everyone did.

They came under the Health Department and there was also the Free Kindergarten Union that had been there for a very long time, the Presbyterian Church had their

own and the Anglican Church, Church of England at that stage, had their own centres. These received a government subsidy if they met the requirements but were not directly, were responsible to their own people for their day-to-day running but the government had to supervise them to be sure that they were keeping the conditions of subsidy. A large number were municipally organised, responsible to municipal councils or to independent committees or independent organisations.

Our job was to give the professional support to all those people who were not linked with the Free Kindergarten Union and the Presbyterian Church or the Church of England but at the same time we had to visit those people and see that they were keeping the conditions of subsidy. It was a very progressive law. The people in charge of it, Vera Scantlebury Brown, involved with all that, she was a doctor and she got this all going. She certainly wasn't there in my time, I can't remember if she had already died. The things I don't remember!

The next person, Dr Meredith, was a very powerful lady who was in charge. She was followed by Dr Elizabeth Willmott but the actual pre-school people were very strong people too. They worked well with the government support. Really, it was the heyday of early childhood education. I think my time there in the 1960s, '70s, and then it changed after that.

Did you see a lot of growth?

Oh, yes. It was growing; yes, there was a lot of growth. It was fairly well done well grown by the time I was there in 1959, there were a lot of centres.

Was there a good rapport between the different organisations, the Church of England and the Health Department //?????

Mostly, yes, on a personal basis certainly, because they were all people who had gone through their training and things together. There was some sort of friction between the organisations that were protective of their own areas and didn't want to be pushed around. I think it was what was uniting everyone was that everybody at that era was really dedicated to the best things for children. So much was done, it deteriorated, we think of course, our age was always the best but it changed a lot after that, after the government changed.

They changed from Health Department to Social Welfare it was or something like that and different people were in charge and you didn't have to have Early Childhood qualifications to be administrators and things like that changed. I actually was, when the government brought in early retirement an earlier age for retirement I immediately retired. I couldn't ethically stay with some of it, it was very distressing.

Can I ask how old you were when you chose to retire?

Yes, I was 59 $\frac{3}{4}$ actually! No, may be only 59 $\frac{1}{2}$, I was only a few months off sixty and retirement but I was very glad to be able to retire and people expected me to go into great declines of grief and I had a lovely time!

You were just mentioning another qualification.

Yes, I did my Kindergarten College, I'm a person with, I know people who collect strings of letters because they like the letters. I've collected a few because I like doing the investigations and the studies so I went to London and did the Diploma of

Education in Maladjusted Children. I'm a fully qualified Maladjusted teacher, then the Latrobe University was setting up an Early Childhood, Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood and I was interested and was encouraged to do that so I was one of the first group of people to do the Bachelor of Education at Latrobe. It was very interesting.

Was that a one year course?

I met some interesting people. Yes, it was only a part-time course and I think it was only one year.

You had to have a previous qualification.

Oh, you had to have a previous post-graduate qualification too, so my Diploma got me into that. I did other things later. I did Bachelor of Theology for interest too but that's.

In Melbourne?

In Melbourne, yes. Melbourne College of Divinity. They've all been interesting things to do. I don't care if I've got letters after my name or not that's not what matters, it's just that it was so interesting doing them.

So what have you got there?

You were asking if I had any of my reports and I'd have a look and see what I did have. I've got some various things. Perhaps this is my Diploma. When I was at the College first, Hazel Harrison was the Principal but she then went to London and I think she only went to London briefly but later on she went back to London and had a kindergarten in London. When I was doing my Maladjustment Diploma, one of the places I went for some practical work was to her kindergarten which was nice.

Whereabouts.

I saw her in a different light too.

Whereabouts was her kindergarten?

I can't remember.

It was in London?

Yes, it was in London, yes it was in London.

So who was the Principal of the College during that time? Who was the Acting Principal?

Edna Hill. I think she came from Queensland, I'm not quite certain. She came from somewhere else. We were really very fond of her. So I have got my Diploma.

You were just saying that not many women have a long professional history as you have.

Continuous, you know. I had nine months when I had polio but otherwise I'd been in Early Childhood Education from the time I was seventeen until I was sixty.

Romola, it's been so interesting and I really, really enjoyed talking with you today, so thank you so very much.

It's been good fun.

Thank you.