

Interview with Val YOUNG who was a teacher at Rathmines P.S. from 1972 until halfway through 1982.

A: This is Anne Britt interviewing Val Young who was a teacher at Rathmines Public School from 1972 to 1982.

V: Came with George at the beginning of 1972.

A: Right.

V: Zona Cameron was there with him & then, on doctors orders she left after 5 weeks & then I came. So it was the same year but 5 weeks later.

A: Right, um, can you remember which year you left?

V: I was there almost 10 years, I think. Probably at the end of term 2 in '82 but I'm not sure.

A: Check it then. Yeah. And there were only the two teachers then?

V: Not when I left.

A: No, no. When you went there in 1972.

V: Yeah, yeah. 48 or so children. I had lower division and George had upper division.

A: Right, um, anything.... can you remember anything from those times that you'd like to...

V: Oh well, I like small schools. The numbers was great so even though it was more work because somebody was always on playground duty. Nobody was ever, the two of us were never in the staffroom at the same time, um, we both used to do playground duty together. One would go & get the morning tea & at lunchtime one would be on first half and one would be on second half. But we tended to stay out there together & talk because, uh, you need a bit of adult conversation.

A: Um, so when did the third teacher arrive?

V: I can't quite remember. I think I was there a couple of years before... it was Leigh, wasn't it, Leigh Wilson came?

A: Mm. He wasn't there very long, or... there was one fellow

A: that wasn't there very long.

V: That was Terry Boyd.

A: Oh right.

V: Oh, Leigh was there a while. Leigh had an experimental year where he had an open classroom without tables and chairs arranged in the usual order. I think he had some down the back that the children could go to if they wanted to do writing. But they used to do a lot of their work on the floor.

A: Which classroom did he have it in?

V: In the end one next to the path coming down from the main... from the gate on the right hand side as you come down the path.

A: Room C, yes.

V: I don't know what it's called now.

A: Yeah, um, George mentioned you put on a lot of plays & concerts in the....

V: Yeah, mm. We used the hall down the road... walk down to practise.

A: What sort of concerts did you put on?

V: Oh... some plays some musical, musical-type productions. I like music, so we did a fair bit of singing & ... we did one play that George wrote that was very good. I can't remember what it was called, but I know that... he had, um... choir boys in there & they were doing, um, actions like cricket scores, you know. As the, uh, preacher was preaching.... he'd say things, & put his hands up, & they'd hold up a six &, you know, do this sort of action (cricket signal for four runs) & they'd hold up a four. And they were keeping score. So he was talented, George at writing things. He had such a good sense of humour. He was also very artistic. Extremely artistic.

A: Mm. He also mentioned you took them down for swimming at the lake ... in the swimming pool.

V: Mm.

A: Did you just do that for sport or did you have swimming

A: lessons, or...?

V: Yes, yes.

A: Both of those things?

V: For.... for sw.... Oh, just to teach them to swim. Yes. And for sport, yes.

A: Yeah, um, you would have been there, uh when the Arts / Crafts Festival was started by the school. Colleen Jones started exhibiting some things.

V: Yes.

A: George said the Dobell Arts / Craft Festival hadn't started when he was there, so I was hoping you could clear up when it started.

V: I can't remember.

A: It was run by the P & C?

V: Yes. Got a vague recollection. I can't remember much about it at all.

A: You can't remember anything?

V: I remember that we had paintings there, original paintings. What was the artist?

A: Homer Irvine.

V: Yes. Uh. On the wall & then they discovered how valuable they were &, uh, gave them on permanent loan to the Art Gallery.

A: Them...

V: There was more than one. There was that big one, that "Red Hill" one & then there were small... I think they were plates. Small, or little ones & they... only one big one.

A: Yeah. So you don't know what year they were donated to the Art Gallery?

V: It was while I was there but I couldn't tell you when, no.

A: Right.

V: If... when the school went in there... they said if Rathmines School went in that they could... we could request & that they could be put out so we could see them. We did do that once & they put them right out in the foyer so we... so that the

- V: children got to see them.
- A: Mm. Did any demountables arrive... some would have arrived before you left, wouldn't they?
- V: 1982 ... yes. They would have had to.
- A: How many teachers were there in 1982?
- V: No, no, I can't....
- A: Can you remember the order in which they came?
- V: I think... was Colleen before Ruth? I'm not sure about that.
- A: Um, I'd have to go back to the photos.
- V: Yes. No, I'm not sure. And there was Kerry Grenell. Um. No, I can't remember. It just changed gradually.
- A: Mm. You were there through several Principals. You were....
- V: Mm. Yes, well. George & John Leishman the first time. And, um, Beth Miles.
- A: Right, well. Those were the questions I had to ask. Have you got any anecdotes you'd like.....
- V: No, not really. The only thing that stays in my mind is that play. I can't remember anything else, no.

When the tape was turned off Val remembered other details:

The parents were always very supportive & helpful.

There was no canteen when she went there. They used to get things down at the shop. The shop used to send the orders up. Then the canteen started over in the funny little building. It was very small, outside the Kinder room, but at right angles to it. It had push up, hook up, 2 little windows. It didn't have much in it - only a sink and pie oven. They didn't sell very much because they didn't have much room to prepare things. It was used as a craft store room for a while, she thinks.

She had all 3 of her children there. They started off at Morisset because her husband was at Wyong. When he was transferred to another school, she took them with her to Rathmines. That was from about the second year she was there onwards.

They finished at Rathmines - went right through. One was school captain in the same year as Steven Gelagin. There were 2 captains that year. It is on a board in the hall. So that was the year he left.

Bev Gelagin was there a fair bit. She used to do relief teaching. She took Val's class when she was off sick for a term. The kids liked her. They were both fun people. The kids adored George. They thought he was wonderful. They would do anything for him. He used to get out & play with them. When he was on playground duty he used to go down on the oval & play soccer with them - whatever they were playing.

She had a nice overall feeling about the time she was there, especially early on when it was small. It was friendly & everybody got on well. There didn't seem to be any behaviour problems, mainly because they had such respect for George. He made school fun & a place to want to be.