

MY NAME IS SUZANNE PHILIPSON AND I AM INTERVIEWING MRS. JEAN VINEY ON HER EXPERIENCES AND RECOLLECTIONS OF RATHMINES PUBLIC SCHOOL. IT IS HOPED THAT THIS ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WILL HELP FORM AN HISTORICAL ARCHIVE AND RESEARCH RESOURCE WHICH WILL BE USED BY RATHMINES PUBLIC SCHOOL FOR MANY YEARS.

S.P. Mrs. Viney, during which years were you a teacher at Rathmines Public School?

J.V. I was there from 1959 to the end of 1962.

S.P. And which classes did you teach?

J.V. I taught the Infants Classes, Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd.

S.P. Where were you actually teaching; in which room?

J.V. In what was then called the new block. It's still there, as you face the School, at the left. And it consisted of an ample classroom, a staffroom, which I used as a storeroom also, and a nice verandah.

S.P. And was that staffroom used by the other teachers as well?

J.V. No, because they had their classroom in the main block.

S.P. And how many teachers did Rathmines have during the period in which you were there?

J.V. Mostly, three. But there were times when they had four.

S.P. And do you remember their names?

J.V. Yes, there was Mr. and Mrs. Clark, Mr. O'Donnell was one of the other teachers and myself.

S.P. What else can you tell me about the School Buildings and surroundings at that time?

J.V. Well the School Buildings that we taught in were much the same as they are now, the old buildings but the grounds were dreadful. There was an asphalt assembly area which was often cracked and there was no gardens or anything like that for the children to be proud of but there were some beautiful gum trees, fabulous gum trees and I regret that they have gone, but, of course, progress has to be catered for.

S.P. Do you know for what reason they were cut down?

J.V. Yes, oh, to make room for the fine buildings that are there now.

S.P. The new portables...

J.V. Yes, I know they are portables, but they certainly look very nice, and I have been in them and I know they are.

S.P. You mentioned that there were lots of magpies.

J.V. Yes, there were lots of magpies, especially in the springtime, which is natural, and when the children would leave the room to go down to the toilets, if they went unaccompanied, the magpies would attack them to such an extent that the parents who were in the Base, the Rathmines Base, some of them came up and they had to frighten the magpies away with their guns.

S.P. And were they successful?

J.V. Yes, they were very successful.

S.P. And I believe they had end-of-year concerts.

J.V. Yes, we had, I can remember several of those and they conducted, one at least that I recall, was conducted, down the theatre, the R.A.A.F. Base theatre.

S.P. What is now the Rathmines Hall?

J.V. Yes, that is right.

S.P. And who would be involved in these concerts?

J.V. Oh, just the children, and of course the staff and...

S.P. Did you have parental involvement?

J.V. Not so much involvement but the parents were very co-operative and whatever we wanted, they would make sure, no they were wonderful. They were friendly and most helpful.

S.P. Yes.

Can you remember what brought most families to the Rathmines area?

J.V. The fact that the Air Force was here at that time, that brought a lot of children here. And then there was the Mine at Awaba, oh there were numerous children there, and, oh their parents, and their fathers worked there, and the Wangi Power House and some people, there were a few people had little acreages and they worked those.

S.P. Could you name some of the families who had children attending the School?

J.V. Will I answer them just as their surname?

S.P. Yes, yes.

J.V. Right. There were many and I wouldn't like any one family to think I have forgotten them or left them out, but I'll do my best. There was the Bath family, and the Brown family, the Morgan family, the Fymble family, the Mountford family, the Webber family, the Woods family, and the Wood family, the Smith family, the Ramages, two delightful boys there,

and the artist, Irvine Homer's family. There was the Ovenstones and did I say the Webbers?

S.P. Yes you did.

J.V. Now there are others and I, they just don't come to mind.

S.P. What was it like teaching at Rathmines Public School?

J.V. Well, it was very rewarding in as much as the parents appreciated everything that the teachers tried to do for them. Believe me it was hard work because, we had face-to-face teaching, every day of the week, except sometimes, usually once a fortnight, the clergy from either the Presbyterian, or the Methodist Church, came out and took the class, my combined classes for half an hour and then they would go to the Primary School and that was the only break we had. But even though it was hard, as I said, it was rewarding and I remember it fondly.

S.P. What was the atmosphere of the School like?

J.V. It was like a country school, even though we weren't in the country I know but, you know, teachers often say that there is a difference between country children and town children, well, in my experience, Rathmines was a lovely country school.

S.P. What type of resources did you have to teach with.

J.V. Um, not very much, except those things that we provided ourselves.

S.P. Did you have electricity?

J.V. Oh yes, oh yes, there was electricity. Oh, I remember Mr. Clark allowed me to purchase the first percussion band instruments for the children and that was fun, we enjoyed that, and so did the children. And they had sporting equipment.

S.P. What type of sporting equipment.

J.V. Oh, cricket bats and basketball.

S.P. Did they play football?

J.V. Um, I presume they did but don't quote me on that.

S.P. Well thank you very much for your anecdotes and your memories and I am sure the children and parents and teachers of Rathmines Public School will find your information most invaluable.

J.V. Thank you Sue, thank you.

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