

Interview summary: Megan Powis, office work at Manor Garden from 1947 to 1957
Interviewer: Angeles Ruiz
Interviewee: Megan Powis
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[00:00:00-00:05:53] (Tags: personal details, relationship with the centre; first memories)

Megan Powis was born in London in 1929. Megan talks about how she first came to work at Manor Gardens in 1947, after visiting an 'office bureau' and being told about a vacancy at the centre. Her first memory of Manor Gardens, however, was being taken to the dental clinic as a child - which she found very frightening!

Her job consisted of general clerical work and after a year she became assistant secretary. She also helped in the dispensary. Megan describes a typical day, working from 9 to 5, and one Saturday a month, and discusses her duties. These included typing up minutes of meetings, keeping a record of the dispensary's medicine stock, general office work, and collecting wages from the bank.

[00:05:53-00:10:54] (Tags: people at work, job details, volunteers)

Megan recalls two people working in the office.

Megan used to live close by in Upper Holloway. She later moved to Watford and has wonderful memories of her daily journey.

She remembers there were lots of volunteers, some of whom helped with record-keeping work.

Megan describes a task she really disliked - daily collections.

Megan also discusses the relationships between the staff themselves. She says everyone kept themselves to themselves. The nurses wore white, old-fashion uniforms and were all quite nice.

[00:10:55-00:12:55] (Tags: Queen Mother, key events)

Megan talks about the Queen Mother visiting the centre, though cannot recall the date [*Probably 1948*]. She remembers an embarrassing incident - she was told not to let anyone into the hall, and when she tried to prevent a rather large man going in, he turned out to be the Queen Mother's bodyguard!

Megan says the Queen Mother was very elegant and remembers all the staff practicing how to curtsy.

[00:12:55-00:19:02] (Tags: community, people at work, volunteers, key staff, job details)

Megan says the centre was an important institution for the community. It provided free advice and the doctors were very pleasant, as were all the other staff. The centre relied heavily on voluntary workers.

Megan shares her memories of Lady Crossfield [then the centre's Chairman], who she met many times and also discusses Mrs Edgar [Althea] Davis, the Hon. Secretary. She also recalls how disappointed everyone was when the Nurse Superintendent, Agnes Davies, left the centre.

Megan thoroughly enjoyed her 10 years of work at the centre.

Megan also discusses her responsibilities when the Secretary was off work and the equipment in the office during this period.

Megan is asked about diversity at the centre, but says the majority of users during her time there were English.

[00:19:04-00:21:15] (Tags: Mothers Committee, Fathers Committee, events)

Megan recalls the mothers and fathers committees and the activities they organised, including jumble sales and dance evenings. She recalls an embarrassing incident at a raffle - she used to pick the winning ticket and one time picked out her own ticket! She worries that everyone thought it was fixed.

[00:21:16-00:27:00] (Tags: present relationship with the centre; staff)

Megan is no longer involved with the centre, although for a while she used to receive a copy of the Annual Report.

She attended the centre's antenatal classes when she was pregnant, which were helpful.

Megan says that the centre was primarily staffed by women. She can only recall a couple of men working there, and all of the volunteers were women too.

[00:27:00-00:29:56] (Tags: proudest memories; job details)

Megan felt proud to work at the centre, as it provided a good service. She enjoyed working with such nice people.

Megan talks about Health and Safety and remembers the office's open fire, which wouldn't exist today.

Megan says that she loved serving in the dispensary and meeting lots of different people.

[00:29:56-00:38:19] (Tags: Holloway past and present; Second World War; family)

Megan recalls the Second World War breaking out when she 10. She was evacuated to Bedfordshire. Her family lost their home in London and moved to Wales, where she finished her education.

Megan discusses where she used to live in Holloway. She remembers the old Holloway bus garage, which has since been replaced by some nice houses.

Megan talks about her family, including her older sister Peg [Lunday]. She recalls things being quite tough for her mother after her husband passed away. Megan has one daughter, who she sees almost daily.

[00:38:20-00:41:54](Tags: closing thoughts)

Megan says it's been nice to talk about the old days, which she says felt much safer than the world today.

END OF INTERVIEW