

**Interview summary:** Carla O’Kane, attended pre-school in the late 1970s.  
**Interviewer:** Diane Gold  
**Interviewee:** Carla O’Kane  
**Interview date:** 23 April 2013

**Interview code:** MG201307A  
**Recording length:** 00:00:36

[00:00:00 – 00:00:37] (Tags: introductions)

Carla introduces herself. She was born in London in 1977.

END OF RECORDING

**Interview code:** MG201307B  
**Recording length:** 00:22:30

[00:00:00 – 00:05:40] (Tags: introductions; relationship with the centre; early memories; setting the scene; activities and services)

Carla talks about how she first became involved with the centre. Her mother worked there, and she attended the pre-school. After reaching school age, Carla would continue to spend afternoons at the pre-school with her sister, whilst their mother finished work.

Carla recalls early memories of the centre. She says it was a fun place to be and she had lots of friends there, some of whom she is still friends with today. She remembers the centre as a friendly environment, a really happy, fun place to be.

She describes the centre’s layout and some of the equipment, including a rope climbing frame, which she has fond memories of. She says there was lots to do, and mentions activities including painting, water play, and costumes. The children were also able to attend the centre in the school holidays.

Carla talks about the centre’s services for those with disabilities and learning difficulties. She mentions that her sister did some volunteering and getting involved helped Carla to better understand issues she hadn’t encountered before.

She has fond memories of the staff and pre-school volunteers.

[00:05:40 - 00:10:15] (Tags: past and present; diversity; parents)

Carla speaks about how the centre has changed over the years. It has become more diverse and has probably seen some improvements with regards to Health and Safety; the staff are as friendly as ever though. She mentions that her son attends the pre-school, which she feels has had a positive influence on him. She suggests that there may, however, be too much focus on paperwork and learning today, and less time for children to play and have fun.

Carla mentions that other parents have fond memories of the pre-school, having attended themselves, and that is why they've sent their children there.

**[00:10:15 - 00:18:54]** (Tags: staff; environment)

She speaks about her mother's upcoming retirement, having worked at the centre for some 35 years. She manages the pre-school, having taken over from Ann Jennings - who is a close friend of the family.

Carla then talks a little more about the staff. She shares her memories of Ann Jennings and recalls only one man working in the pre-school. She describes the environment as very connected, with staff tending to stay for long periods.

Carla reiterates that staff today seem to have more paperwork and perhaps a bit too much pressure on them. She feels that children should have more time to play and enjoy themselves at this age, but nevertheless feels that the staff have created a positive environment for the children.

**[00:18:54 - 00:22:30]** (Tags: key events; Queen Mother visit; centenary)

Carla speaks about the Queen Mother visiting the centre in the '80s [1988]. She was not present, but recalls everyone feeling nervous about her arrival and seeing pictures of it in the newspapers and on the News.

Carla expresses her pleasure at being involved in the Centenary event. She recalls the nurses running the pre-school in their white gowns and finds it fascinating that the pre-school is still going today. She also mentions staff parties and celebrations, such as when her mother had been there for 25 years.

END OF RECORDING

**Interview code:** MG201307C

**Recording length:** 00:20:38

**[00:00:00 – 00:05:45]** (Tags: past and present; centre services; community)

Carla speaks more about changes over the years, and feels that there has been many. She isn't sure if it's just how she recalls things, but thinks perhaps there used to be more going on. She mentions various services - the Stroke Club, pre-school, Women's Health and a chiropodist. She says that there was a medical team who moved to the Royal Northern.

Carla also suggests that the community spirit was stronger in the past, and she is no longer familiar with everyone she sees in the centre. She thinks that the café going has contributed to this - she says it was a such a nice place and everyone used to go there. Carla shares fond memories of the café in more detail.

[00:05:45 – 00:12:45] (Tags: community relationships)

Carla recalls forming friendships with members of the Stroke Club, which she gained a lot from and which helped her to understand and be sensitive towards differences. She was able to form such friendships due to the close interaction between everyone at the centre.

Carla isn't sure whether she has lost her personal connection with the centre, or whether that sense of connection has just changed over time in general.

She discusses how there were many regular faces at the centre when she was a child, and recalls some particular characters.

[00:12:45 – 00:20:38] (Tags: diversity; parents, involving parents)

She says that the pre-school school is very diverse now, in terms of staff and children, and discusses ethnicity and religion. Carla feels that everyone is equal there.

Carla speaks about current ways in which the centre involves parents, including summer and Christmas parties and newsletters.

END OF RECORDING

**Interview code:** MG201307D

**Recording length:** 00:09:39 (Tags: early memories; past and present; community; centre services; future of the centre)

Carla shares her memories of a large concrete paddling pool. She speaks about contemporary concerns surrounding health and safety and child welfare and draws contrasts between the relaxed atmosphere of her childhood, which perhaps felt like a safer time.

Carla speaks about how she sometimes sees those she attended the pre-school with, now adults, in the community. She says you often hear updates about people from the centre, and how her mother still receives cards from some of the parents.

She speaks about medical services and recollected visiting the dentist at the centre, as well as giving blood there when she was a teenager.

Looking to the future, Carla wishes that things could be more like her recollections of childhood, or offering a more relaxed environment whilst ensuring children's safety. She sums up Manor Gardens as 'one big, fond, happy memory', with 'such lovely people ... throughout the years.'

END OF RECORDING

**Interview code:** MG201307E

**Recording length:** 00:03:50 (Tags: volunteering)

Carla speaks about volunteering at the pre-school for a short while as an adult. She loved working with the children and it was a great opportunity to gain an insight into the staff's work, without being burdened by paperwork!

Carla says she would have loved to continue volunteering if she had the time, but she now has her own family to take care of.

END OF RECORDING