Elaine Walker interview

Date:

Time:

Location:

Present: KV Keith Vernon

EW Elaine Walker

MM Maya Mahmood

GD Elaine’s Granddaughter, Charlotte?

KV OK – can we start would you just say your name, and if you don’t mind, your date of birth?

EW Elaine Walker, date of birth 28-9-40.

KV OK, thank you. And when were you at the Harris? When did you attend?

EW I was at the Harris from 1954 to 1956 – 2 years, September to… 2 years.

KV Did you have to travel into Preston, or…?

EW No, no I lived in Fulwood.

KV OK. So where abouts in Fulwood?

EW Sorry, not Fulwood, Preston. It would be Ashton then. I actually took the exam at Roebuck Street School, Roebuck Street School.

KV Oh yes, I know that school, the little primary one on the corner?

EW The primary one on the corner of Blackpool Road.

KV Yes, I used to live near there.

EW Did you? I lived in Lulworth Avenue, round the corner.

KV Oh yes, yes, right.

EW Yes, one of five.

KV So what course did you to study at the Harris?

EW It was Commercial, it was the Commercial…scholarship, but we did… actually, it was quite heavy, because we did 12 subjects, we did mathematics *and* arithmetic, because the arithmetic would be Commercial arithmetic, which, when I did my O level, he said ‘You will use your Commercial arithmetic,’ and I said ‘Well if it gets me there,’ because that was embedded in my mind, the Commercial arithmetic really.

KV What was the difference?

EW Well the mathematics covered geometry and algebra and things, arithmetic - Commercial arithmetic, it still covered triangles, and measurements, but you should really have used the mathematics side, rather than… I don’t know, I don’t really know the difference?... but it was 2 separate exams. Then we did English language *and* English literature, then we did history, geography, French, [pauses]…then we had one art lesson, that was a pencil and a piece of paper, [KV chuckles] and she put a vase there, so me art was non-existent. And then we had 2 hours PE, then we did shorthand, typewriting, commerce and bookkeeping, so actually it was very… and all those, apart from PE, were examination subjects at the end, so we did work, we did work very hard, we did.

KV And was that the Junior Commercial School?

EW I would be 13 when I started to, going on 16 really, I was going on 14.

KV And was it full time? You went in every day?

EW Oh it was full time.

KV OK.

EW Actually, erm, and maybe that’s a question, erm, I went to 7 primary schools, going on 8 by the time I was 11, so that didn’t do my education… I can remember having to start different books and, it was a nightmare really, so, I failed the 11 plus scholarship and I was absolutely heartbroken, because in the exams at the end of the year in that school, at Roebuck Street School, I actually came much higher than people who’d actually got the examination, and I was told it probably went on the 3 years previous, the record, which wouldn’t be good, it wouldn’t be good, [KV Right, because you moved around so much] So I can remember now, coming out crying, and thinking I will show them that I can do this, so I worked on my maths and English, which were the main part of the scholarship, and er what’s the other one? Maths, English and? Where you look at different shapes and sizes: IQ, intelligence tests.

KV Oh yeah…So did you s…

EW I got through, I got through the exam. I mean I qualified.

KV So did you stay in Roebuck School after..?

EW No I mean I left then, you see…

KV I mean after the 11 plus, did you stay on at school?

EW Oh I stayed there, I stayed there, and actually, he moved myself, I was a twin, my sister and I moved up to a higher class, which was a leavers last 2 years, which I would have hated to stay because there was no high schools then, so it was a case of just going to school and the erm, the teacher was very good, he gave us extra maths and English, and I came top of that class because as I say, the scholarship people had gone…

KV So how many [EW …and I worked hard.] So how many were in… So after the 11 plus you stayed at Roebuck School…

EW I stayed there for 2 y… erm yeah probably 2 years.

KV So how many were… I was going to say, everybody would have stayed on then.

EW Apart from the grammar school people who left at 11, going on 12, they left. We probably got about 8 through there, and then, erm, majority stayed, majority stayed.

KV And then a group of you took the exam for the…

EW That was open, that was open to whoever wanted to take that, so I was determined that… I would show them that I had got… [KV And you did show them…] And I did, and then I did very well, I came… there was 60, there were two lots of 30 in the forms, at the Harris then, but it was whole of Lancashire you know, it wasn’t just Preston, it was also, they came from Burscough, Ormskirk, they travelled in, and I’ve never seen, there was no technology then as such, so, I’ve never seen them, most of them since I left. And, erm, what was I going to say? I’ve forgotten…

KV Never mind, it’ll come back to you. So there was an exam to get on the course, at the Harris, and you said, did you get a scholarship as well?

EW Oh that was a scholarship [KV oh right] That was the scholarship, yeah, yeah so there were only so many, there was er 60 places in the whole of Lancashire, so actually, yeah it was quite good to get, and then there was the Technical College for the boys, girls didn’t go to the Technical College, but boys could go to the Commercial.

KV Ok.

EW Actually, one boy I remember, Stuart Bebby, he became the secretary at Preston North End football club. So there would be about 6 boys.

KV So that’s 6… and the rest were girls of the 60?

EW The rest were girls, so it was girls. And then I came fourth in the exams [KV Excellent] so I did, er, I think I did prove that I had some brain.

MM: mutters…[inaudible]

KV Does this sound like your grandmother?

GD Yes [chuckles]

KV So you studied a lot of subjects and it was quite intensive wasn’t it [EW Yeah] so what erm, what were the teachers like?

EW It was very orderly there were no discipline problems whatsoever. You all had your own desks segregated. Very quiet. Mostly people wanting to work, they all wanted to work, I don't remember any, any problems within and the teachers could just teach, lecture really, more like, more as a college.

KV Did it feel different from being at school?

EW Oh much different. Because of the nuisances [laughter]. You could really get your head down and work.

KV And did you call the teachers Sir or…?

EW Oh yes we did.

KV Were the teachers mainly men or women or…?

EW They were mixed. Geography and French, erm, was a lady, Mrs Bairsto. And then er oh no shorthand was a man, Commercial, commerce, can’t write him as a lady, no it was a mix.

KV Ok. And but it felt different to being at school. 09:31

EW Oh it was much different, you could work, which we did, every lesson [laughs].

KV And erm did you have [inaudible], were there typewriters you could use? Or any other facilities?

EW Oh it was typewriters then, yes, so that was the beginning, so it was typewriting as a beginner from 13.

KV Yep. And erm did it seem like you had the facilities or the resources that you needed? 10:00

EW Well we didn’t know what facilities were coming in the future, did we, so like I say with art, it was a pencil and piece of paper and a vase of flowers on the teacher’s desk, no art room. We did have a gymnasium. We did go, which I loved because I did like gymnastics. That was our relief really, we loved that.

KV And were there any kind of extracurricular activities, were there clubs or societies or anything like that?

EW No, nothing, nothing at all.

KV No ok, so were there..

EW Actually the geography teacher, and her husband, were keen walkers and climbers, and they asked if anybody was interested in going to the lake district for three or four days, so I did go with her, yeah, that was the only outing. Nothing at the end of the 2 years. No parties, no celebrations. We left our berets on the lions! [All chuckle]

MM What was it like at the lake district? 11:10

EW Oh lovely because we’ve been a lot with [Tamara?] caravanning so we climbed there. Unfortunately, a mist fell and we had to shelter for several hours because we couldn’t move. [Indistinct reactions, chuckle] But she was experienced so we were fine.

KV Were there things like sports teams or anything like that, can you remember?

EW No, No, we never played any inter schools or colleges or… And we used to have to walk from Corporation Street to the other side of the river on Avenham Park to play hockey. We had no sports fields. [KV Ok, s..] The college had none, the university had none.

KV So were, right, so you were in the building up on Corporation Street?

EW I was in there up the steps, and we had the rooms on the first floor. They were the classrooms.

KV And you said about a beret, was there, did you wear a uniform?

EW Oh we had to have a very strict uniform. And erm, if prefects, if we saw anyone outside without their, the burberry was a long winter burberry, and a blazer in summer, if you didn’t have it fastened, belted and your beret on and your hat, then you were fined.

KV You were fined?

EW Well I might say you were fined – you were erm, you were given work, maybe 200 lines.

KV Oh right, so they were quite keen that…

EW And you couldn’t eat in the uniform. [KV chuckle] So we had to be smart in uniform outside the school.

KV Oh that’s interesting, so they were quite sticklers for…

EW A little bit like Lark Hill, the Catholic, they were very strict.

KV OK. Erm, so you couldn’t – surely you had to eat at lunchtime didn’t you?

EW We had to go in the refectory, and you had to eat in the refectory, nowhere else. No snacks, no break snacks, no drinks at break.

KV And erm, and [chuckles] did you ever come across the boys from the Technical School? 13:36

EW We *we* didn’t. I perhaps shouldn’t say this but [others chuckling] my brother-in-law actually went to the Technical School, he did very well also, he became a director at British Aerospace finally, from there. He said they used to wait for the girls to go down the corridors that led to the gymnasium in our knickers and t-shirts [laughter] Knickers then were were big, [laughter] and we didn’t know, but he said, and that was the only time they could glimpse a female [laughter]. No some of the boys did very well.

KV Yeah. And erm…what were the people in your class like?

EW Oh lovely, I made lovely friends. Mm. We were very competitive. So the girls at the desks either side and in front… when we had exams, we had them twice a year, we had formal exams at Christmas, formal exams in late year, erm… everybody would have been feverishly putting down their marks and I can see now the girls turning round and saying what did you get? what did you get? Because it was very competitive which made you work. That was good, yeah. [15:06]

KV So thinking about your time at the Harris, what’s kind of – are there particular memories that stand out of…?

EW I just, I loved, I enjoyed the whole 2 years. Some were quite glad to get away but I was a bit sad really, that it had come to an end, because I really enjoyed… Of course I didn’t leave, I actually didn’t leave. I stayed there for, erm, I went to evening classes, that’s how I got this award in the third year. So I did that for three years but, we didn’t need to do the first year, because we’d done that in the two years, so we already could typewrite, could type, and we'd shorthand, we were up to 70, 80 words a minute, and we’d done bookkeeping, which actually became office practice… 16:07

KV Yep. So what was, so you were two years full time?

EW I was two years full time, and then I, oh and erm employment wise was very good for us because we could get employment more or less anywhere. I was very fortunate I got on with Preston Corporation in the Citizen’s Advice Bureau and I earned a pound a week more than most people, which would be about £3.50 [laughs] [others laugh] So we did well. Employment wise, we were snatched up completely. 16:44

KV Excellent, and so you went to the Citizen’s Advice Bureau straight after?

EW Yes, when I left school, but then I went back to the college in Corporation Street 3 nights a week, to study second year, third year, fourth year. So I did probably 3 years in the evening. Then… I got the ‘student of the year’ award, this one, and then… the Principal asked me, er, it, this sounds ridiculous but, there were no more exams, [chuckles] [others laughing] I mean now you can go on til you’re 95 can’t you? [KV chuckles] There was nothing else to do, for girls especially, so he asked me would I like to do teacher training. So I’d left the Citizen’s Advice Bureau then, I worked in insurance, I moved on and on actually, improving myself, and, so, I did that, and he gave me, the first year he gave me a post as *assistant* tutor to an advanced class of shorthand and typewriting, and they were allowed assistants then for probably 30 pupils [18:04]

KV That was back at the Harris?

EW That was at the Harris.

KV Ok so you came back to teach? 18:08

EW So I carried on and then when I’d done, and then I did the…actually it was 18 months, I had just become qualified as a shorthand teacher, then I did probably the same again for typewriting, then bookkeeping, well it was office practice, commerce, so then I became a qualified teacher in each subject. So then, he gave me a post as a qualified teacher. 18:38

KV Who was the Principal then?

EW It was Mr Wilkinson, but Mr Cobham, Walter Cobham, was the head of the Commercial College, so he gave me the post, well he offered me the post when I got the post. 18:54

MM: I have a question, you know when you came back as a graduate, and you were a student at the Harris, do you remember there being other graduates who were teachers too at the Harris?

EW I only knew one, and then she gave up because she didn’t get the post. [MM Oh ok] So no, and I was the only one as far as I know, and I even checked up on the ones who’d qualified at 11, and I didn’t, and I enquired as to where they’d gone, and they’d more or less got clerical jobs in the hospitals, and nobody had actually done as well I did so… But it was very difficult for women in those days, you had to do it the hard way. In the 50s, 2%, and the 60s, 2% of women went to university. So when people say why didn’t you go full time, there was no, and I don’t think my father could have afforded it anyway. 20:00

KV So who’s kind of (get it right) so you did 2 years at…

EW …full time school…

KV …at the school, and then you did… 20:14

EW I did 3 years…

KV …evening class…

EW …evening and studying…

KV So what subjects were you studying in the evening?

EW Shorthand typewriting, it was a separate teacher’s certificate. Actually I could have brought them. So Royal Society of Arts, I had a very, very difficult shorthand exam. I think I had to do 120 to 140 words a minute, which I qualified for, and then I did advanced typewriting. Then I did, erm… I’ve forgotten, they changed the names - office practice… office studies… business - so I’ve got 3 separate teaching certificates for each subject.

KV And this is, so the evening classes were to train to teach those subjects? 21: 10

EW They were specialist, yes, classes. Then I did day release, then I did also… I gave up, I got married and I had my first child. So, there were no creche then, no nurseries, there was nothing actually, my mother had too many grandchildren so, I had to give up my employment. So then I was offered day release… students who worked and also I did postgraduate journalists, erm shorthand. 21: 44

KV Ok.

EW Yeah.

KV So when, erm, I’m trying to get a sense of the time scale of this so…

EW That would be in the…60s.

KV Right OK so sometime later.

EW 60s, and then I never really left. I never left til the 90s, the college, but I did other work as well.

KV So did you, so were you teaching at the college right up to the 90s?

EW I was really, yes, part time, just an evening, two evenings, because - it was getting difficult because I was doing erm, hotel receptionist courses, erm different erm qualifications, and some of them they would mostly be for people who worked, so therefore I was going at - teatime classes they were called - and evenings and it didn’t fit in with my family life, because by, well all in all I had 3 children, so, I actually was offered, no I didn’t, I applied for a post at Ribbleton Hall High School, which was 4 days a week, and I got that post so I only did one or 2 evenings and then I finally gave those up because I was snapped up in schools. So I’ve worked in most high schools in Preston. The sad thing was, which is ridiculous really, I think, me, I had only teaching qualifications for higher… further and higher education, but it wasn’t acceptable in schools, so you had to have GCSE rather than the UCLan certificate and the teachers,’ so, I was paid less money, which was unbelievable because the school I didn’t need the knowledge that I needed in college or uni, I didn’t need anywhere near that. The problem that I met was discipline, that I hadn’t met because in college, if you didn’t like it you left, or you could throw them out but you didn’t. So at school they couldn’t leave, so therefore you did get an element of problems, but I mean that didn’t cover the teaching. I did psychology, I did do psychology. So I actually went back and I went to Bolton College. Manchester University did this qualification but were based at Bolton, and I did my teacher training one year for schools, part time. But it was very, very, a lot of work, it was, which, I erm, disputed really, because I *knew* it, you know, it just seemed a waste of time, but anyway I had to do it, so I qualified for schools, and I also went back to do English and Maths GCSE. And I got those as well. 25:22

KV So you, so I suppose most of your career you’ve been teaching? 25:29

EW I’ve been teaching yeah right up to retiring in… when I was 65.

KV Yeah And erm…

EW …Everywhere really,

KV Yeah so at the college, and then in the schools …

EW And then in the high schools…

KV And you kept on learning…

EW Yeah…

KV Lets go back a bit. You talked a little bit about you had to move around a lot when you were younger. Did your mum and dad have…

EW Moved house…

KV …had they gone to further education or anything like that? 26:08

EW No, no, I was the only one, and my sister, we were the only ones. My father encouraged me very much.

KV And what did your mother and father do?

EW My father was an engineer, but my mum was, there were five of us, me mum was just a mum, housewife, in those days. 26:26

KV Yes. And can you remember where your dad worked?

EW Well it was the English Electric. Actually he did do very well. He finished as manager of the east works, which was one full half of Strand Road.

KV Right yeah.

EW Yeah.

KV Had he done an apprenticeship or something like that? 26:49

EW He served his time as apprenticeship and junior.

KV And did any of your erm, did your brothers and sisters, had they gone to…?

EW No they didn’t. My sister, my twin. No, not like I did. They didn’t do business education, no.

KV Did they go on to anything beyond school education?

EW Well, me brother did well in engineering, he was also… which most of my family were at, the men, were at, well it was English Electric then British Aerospace. He did do very well. Actually, you probably won’t want this on record, they were me half brothers and sisters. I lost me mother when I was born, so, that was the reason for the moves. I had a sad few years really. So then when me father remarried, they weren’t as actually as studious as me sister and I were. But they did well in their own areas.

KV So your dad was sort of encouraging for you, [EW My dad was…] and they were quite happy for you to go to the Harris and…?

EW Oh yes very much so, he wanted me to do this. Probably because we’d had such tumulus few years before really, yeah. 28:23

KV And was he proud of you?

EW Oh he was, he was, he was very proud. Actually this is another sad story, him and his brother and sister all actually did qualify for their 11 plus from his school, and do you know, they didn’t go, because they rented the house, they had 4 or 5, and they couldn’t afford the uniforms in those days, so he didn’t go because he didn’t want to be emba… You could go in non-uniform I believe…

KV Oh that’s interesting, I hadn’t heard that.

EW Yes, but he wouldn’t go because he said they would be too embarrassed. But he said to me later, never feel embarrassed, because I should have gone. Which in your teens you don’t, well younger than that. It’s designer labels now. 29 19

KV So when, when you got your scholarship, did that, so that would have paid for your tuition fees, did you get grant…

EW Yes, we didn’t have tuition fees, no.

KV Did you get any support for things like the uniform or…?

EW No, no.

KV So the family had to provide.

EW Yes they had to do that. [KV ok] No. But he did instil in us, that never, if you have the opportunity, never feel inferior, because he obviously had the brain, and he’d let the [peers?] and things take him over. So I always remembered that really, which is true, isn’t it? 30:00

KV Yeah. And… So going to attend the Harris made quite an impact on your career? 30:22

EW Oh it was – it was the best thing since sliced bread as they say [chuckles]. Oh it made it, I would have, I don’t know, but when I think of the last 2 years in those days, before, they did build Fulwood, I think it was Fulwood High School within 2 years after I left, which was, well it would take a few years… my brother went there… it would take a few years to get on its feet, because there would be just one year, 2 years, which offered a much wider scope of subjects at high school, well they were comprehensive schools then, weren’t they?

KV I think it was in the mid 50s that, in a way the sort of Junior Commercial and Technical School, they went to form Preston College, and the Harris College was more for post eighteen, and so I think that’s when it came in the mid f.., so it was probably just after you left.

EW But they had a lot more choice then of vocational subjects. But if you stayed at an elementary school, you more or less just…got through those few years I think. No, I wouldn’t have enjoyed that.

KV And were there any [pauses] down sides of going to the Harris? 32:00

EW No I loved it, I would go back tomorrow if I was young enough [laughter]. I think I would have liked just being a student. No I did enjoy teaching.

KV I think you’ve been a student all your life really.

EW I have really, I’ve just carried on and carried on. And then of course IT came in [pauses] [KV chuckles] Well, the changes were so drastic… “We’re getting a white board,” “We’re getting electronic this, that and the other and you’ve got to teach it to 35 1st year pupils…” [chuckles]…

KV It’s a bit erm, So people who’ve been to the Harris said they were quite popular with employers…

EW From the scholarship course? I don’t know anyone who couldn’t get work. And with, you know, the most well paid employers, because in those days, most people, most girls, they went in sewing factories or shop work.

KV And what kind of work did you do when you went to the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, was it clerical work there? 33:21

EW Well I was a shorthand typist, for what we called the organising secretary she was called then, and erm…you didn’t need to make an appointment, it was in the old town hall, and people could just call in, and because there wasn’t the technology then, so people came in and said where’s the education department, or I’ve got a problem, so you direct them to the, so you had to know where every office was. It was educational because you knew the housing, the education department, where to go for accommodation… and we had to keep all that up to date.

KV And when you came back in the evening to do your training qualifications, did you have to pay for that?

EW Erm, I don’t think so, no. No, day release, evening, no.

MM: You know when you worked after the Harris and you said you were earning £1 more than your friends, how far could a £ go in those days?

EW Oh a long way when it was 2 shillings to go dancing! [laughter]

MM And you know when you were a student in the Harris, what sort of activities did you and your school friends do afterwards?

EW I didn’t really, in my school years, because I worked, and then going to evening school we would have, especially in the 1st year of… most people from the scholarship course would go to the 1st year 3 nights a week so, we would meet and we’d go on the bus, we had to go to Fishwick, we had to go to Fishwick one evening, so we’d worked all day and we had to get a bus to town and a bus to Fishwick, which is, is it Ribbleton way? So we had to get 2 buses, so we’d get home at 10 at night [others: wow]. That was 7 til 9 the class, and then we had to get there before half 6, [eat?] and then we’d chat. That, that, I started to go dancing on a Friday night, with several girls you know, that we kept together, and that was the only time, we had, [MM inaudible] because really there was no gyms, [MM Yes] there was only cinemas and dance halls, mainly church related. [MM Yes] All the churches had social events. I was in girl guides and rangers and things. [MM Nice] I think social life was very much church orientated really, which is sad in a way because that’s where you met most friends. 36:35

KV And where did you meet your husband?

EW Oh that was quite a bit later. Erm, [pauses] Oh, I also lived in a hotel for a couple of years.

KV Oh!

EW And erm, I learnt the bar work and everything, and did their books.

KV And was that in Preston?

EW Yeah. [KV Right ok] And then, we did weddings, parties and things, and he came to one or two wedding receptions. So I met him then a few times over a few years really, and then socially I think I met him at a party or something, yeah, so I’d known him for a few years [GD in passing] just in passing, yeah…

KV And what did he do? 37:28

EW He was self-employed, he was in building trade. So he worked for himself, and then we s…, oh and then we set our own company up, so I did the company… I still do…I still do [KV you’ve done so much!] [MM yes] We rent them off now, we built four units.

GD Industrial units.

KV Ok

GD My dad actually rents one of them now, my grandad taught him the trade [chuckles].

EW Yes, her father trained with my husband, and now he’s, and then when Bill retired, he took over one unit, and he manages, more or less, the four units, and I still do the, so I still did the books, and the tax, I did…

GD You [indistinct] don’t you…

EW Keep my brain going.

KV And did any of your children go on to further or higher education? 38 26

EW They all three did, yeah. Charlotte’s mother… actually she did nursing. She’s a.. she would have [inaudible] didn’t stay. She’s excellent isn’t she in caring and social…

GD Yes

EW …and then she did mentally disabled, and she became manager of a hospital where they lived in… Then she was going to go to Stangeways, they wanted her to go. She became pregnant with you, [GD With me yeah] and your father didn’t like it, she was attacked once or twice, so she actually left, and then she started doing business, and now she’s a manager over quite a lot of staff in a housing association, so she’s done well. And the other two did erm.. actually one of them qualified here. She got ‘student of the year’ as well. They did – they can speak 5 languages the other two, and they live in Holland now, so they know Dutch. They did Language and International Business, I think that title changed twice, anyway it finally became International Business, and they both travelled and used their languages. They’re both linguistics. I think I would have been, with my shorthand, because I loved it, and it really is a language isn’t it, the old Pitman shorthand? So we only did French, and in those days, nobody really travelled so I never put my heart and soul in me French. So I think I would have probably gone down that line today. 40:17

KV Yeah?

EW Maybe…

MM I was thinking when you said how good you are at shorthand, you would probably be a good journalist, because they have to...

EW I probably would have been, I probably would. I don’t think journalism was on the menu when I was…

GD On the menu…[chuckles]

EW Were they nearly all males going back in time?

KV Most were, I mean its erm it’s…

EW I think so..

KV It’s, it’s…

EW I think they are these days really aren’t they?

KV It might be changing, it’s still relatively recently that ….

EW I think so…

KV Just erm, reflecting on your time when you were at the Harris.. what erm…

EW So I feel part of that building really.

All chuckle

KV What do you think might have been the most significant outcome of having gone?

EW As a result of attending there? I think that was it just changed my life completely. I was professional, professionally educated and erm, the results proved it, and it means - actually I was in demand – but I had 3 children, and I left Ribbleton Hall, which is now being pulled down, and they actually came back once or twice and begged me would I find [time ?] to go but I really didn’t have time with my timetable, to go back. So I had a very varied…and high schools were so different than college, but I didn’t really enjoy WR Tuson College when that was built, it was like a prefab after being in Miller House in Winckley Square, with the beautiful woodwork and staircases…

KV Ok, so that’s where you did the…

EW And it wasn’t soundproof, so I was doing top line shorthand…

GD chuckles

EW …and they could hear me in the next room!

KV When you were teaching that, was that a full time thing? Or were you doing it part time?

EW No, that was all part time again, so I was doing both, I did erm, I did – well it became WR Tuson College and I did schools, I combined the two, but I finally left college because of the hours that they were offering me and I went in schools. I didn’t do full time because I tended to do two schools. I’d go to one school and then I’d go to another school. I did enjoy the schools in the fact that we had our own room. I had my own room. I did more or less full time at Ribbleton, because, I did one day at Bolton, but erm I did like it that I could leave and have my own desk and my own files, [KV Mm your own space] and I could walk in and out and leave it, whereas at College there wasn’t anything personal if you were part time. I believe offices are like that now, they are sharing accommodation and desks. 43:46

KV Yes, yes… So you taught for a while when it was based in Winckley Square?

EW I was there a few years, I loved it, yes I did.

KV Was it part of Tuson then?

EW Pardon?

KV Was it part of the Tuson College then?

EW No, it was, no, no – they hadn’t built Tuson College then. It was the polytechnic who moved some of it to Winckley Square, and then they started doing cookery and various other subjects, but that was mainly commercial and business, anything to do with commercial and business, other than full time students, all the part time day…which were very popular then. Every evening, and part time day, you could go for accounts, you could go secretarial subjects, accountancy because as I say, women particularly, I didn’t have any males, they were all female, because there wasn’t the scope to do anything else really – so, they were full, the classes, of people who worked and what we called got day release, or in a ‘tea time class’ they called them 4 til 7, or 5 til 7 or so. So they were very, very popular you see, which I regret now that there is nowhere... I tried to, for some pupils, to do A level subjects, English, maths, and some O levels, but no they don’t do them anymore, because you had to do a course, and they couldn’t because they were employed. Now I think that was sad, that evening classes, they’re all 6-, 10-week courses. Erm….I daren’t say what I was going to say…

KV Erm I think that’s covered just about everything we wanted to talk about Elaine. Is there anything that we haven’t touched on that you wanted to talk about?

EW No I don’t think so, I’ve done all that… [pause]

EW No, I think women had to fight, like suffragettes, I think you had to fight for education. You had to want to study, because there wasn’t the opportunities, that now there’s so much literature.

KV Do you think it was harder for girls to…?

EW It was so much harder and of course there wasn’t literature anywhere really.

KV Sorry – going back to it… so when you were, you must have… [pauses] …known about the Harris when you were at school.

EW Oh yes, I think all the schools knew and they asked would you, erm would anybody like to take – and quite a lot took the exam. They didn’t all get it of course, but most of the bright ones would want to do that scholarship exam, it was very popular. And I had friends who’d had sisters, older sisters, and then a younger one, and all three of them would have got through the scholarship, which proved…and they all did very well actually. No I think, you had to look for it, you’d to look where you could extend your education. Because the literature didn’t come through the door. It wasn’t, like most things really that you read about, you had to know where to go to find out about anything in life really. It just wasn’t available. And the media… we didn’t have a television did we, oh now I didn’t, and we didn’t have a television until I was probably 15 years old, so I never was a tv addict because I wasn’t used to a television, [coughs] so it was socially, education was also social aspect really.

KV Well I think we’ve grilled you for long enough. Thank you so much for sharing your memories with us. It’s been lovely to talk to you, is there anything else anybody wanted to say?

MM Thank you very much, it’s been lovely seeing you…