

## **TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW**

**Interviewer:** **Shore Old Boys Union Oral History Project Tuesday 24th July 2007. Jenny Hudson talking with Margaret Orchard at 5 Virginia Place Forestville, NSW.**

**Mrs Orchard first came to Shore from 1973 to 1975 to teach music and play the organ for chapel services. She returned in 1983 after raising her family and developed a music program in the Prep School. She retired at the end of 2006, becoming the longest serving female staff member at Shore (26 years). She had served under three Headmasters: BH Travers, RAI Grant and Dr TA Wright.**

**Margaret, can you tell me where you were born, when, and something about your childhood and schooling?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, I'd love to do that. I was born in Sydney in 1948. I was a baby boomer, it was in that era, of course. My parents moved up to the northern rivers and my father was in CSR so I had a country upbringing. My father moved around a lot in CSR and so we were in the country in the northern rivers. We lived at a place called Harwood Island and at Broadwater.

When we were at Broadwater I went to primary school in a little one-teacher school with the local children, who were also Aboriginal children. At Woodburn, which was about 20 miles away, there was a convent. We were given a piano from my mother's aunt and Mum realised that I probably was interested in music, I was playing it all the time, so I then went to the convent and learned piano. Every Saturday I was taken for piano lessons.

**Interviewer:** **Did you attend school at the convent?**

Margaret Orchard: Only music on Saturdays. That was all.

**Interviewer:** **Was there a music tradition in your family?**

Margaret Orchard: Not particularly. My mother's aunt was a musician but both my parents claim they're tone deaf. I was very fortunate as a child to have that type of teaching because there were only two of us who went to the convent for lessons. We were the only children who played the piano in that little town.

I can remember going to a performance of the Australian Ballet which came to Ballina. My mother took me and I was entranced with all of that because we didn't have opportunities in the country to go to concerts or anything like that. It was rather in isolation that I learned.

Because my parents were moving around in CSR, they were concerned for my education for high school and I would have had to go to Grafton high school after we'd moved to Harwood Island. They decided that I should go to NEGS in Armidale, which was their family area and both my grandparents were in that area, and that I would do five years of boarding school there and then if my father moved I wouldn't have to move school. My father did move in my last year of school when he was posted to Sydney.

So I was very fortunate to go to NEGS and have my education in one go. Of course, there was piano teaching there. That was music teaching. That was all. I remember one girl came and she was a violinist and I'd never really seen or known about a violin. I found that wonderful and of course we had the organ in the Chapel.

**Interviewer:** **Is that where your interest in the organ stemmed from?**

Margaret Orchard: Indeed. My piano teacher at that stage used to play the organ but she was a pianist and she'd never been taught the organ. Then when I was in - I think it was the year before my Leaving Certificate, a girl came from Newcastle, she had studied at the cathedral and she was a proper

organist. So I pleaded with my parents to let me learn and I did my 7th grade piano and 6th grade organ when I did the Leaving. She probably saved me because it meant that during piano I was able to think about going to the Conservatorium in Sydney, which I was able to do because my parents had moved to Sydney at that stage.

So I came from having not ever caught a train, never caught a bus and didn't know anyone in Sydney. I got a Teacher's College scholarship to go to the Conservatorium of Music and Alexander Mackie College. That's how it all started.

**Interviewer: What was the attraction of the organ for you?**

Margaret Orchard: I think for me it offered a very great scope, more scope than piano because of all the wonderful sounds. I was quite passionate about it and I found I was drawn to it. Music in general, it was either sport or music. We had a lot of sport at NEGS and I loved all that, I was a Sports Prefect and so I had two things that I could have done, although my father said I should really get a steady job in the bank or in a pharmacy or something like that.

**Interviewer: They didn't suggest business college or nursing to you?**

Margaret Orchard: No. Not at that stage, definitely not. They were parents who'd been through the War, who'd given up everything that they'd ever wanted, and therefore they wanted their children to have everything. Because I got a scholarship my father allowed me to go. I think he felt they could manage to afford it because it was very expensive, as you can appreciate.

In those days, of course, a scholarship meant that you had a teaching bond so there was a five-year teaching bond attached to that which was a bit like HECS now, I suppose. So that's what I did. It was wonderful.

**Interviewer: What was the Conservatorium like in those days?**

Margaret Orchard: I thought it was a palace. I thought it was wonderful. I was very excited to be there. Old corridors, we were always frightened of our teachers, we revered our teachers, I think that's what it was.

I found I was at a big disadvantage compared with my friends that I met because they had been in Sydney, they had been at schools where music was a very big subject like maths or English. I only ever did it as an extra subject. I used to do my practice - hop up at six o'clock, race down to the practice rooms and do my practice and then I'd do sport all afternoon, whereas these girls had done music for their Leaving and they had had orchestral experience, they had done history, harmony, and were able to study music as a subject - which I had never been privy to. So I found it was like a Pandora's box for me. It was like Aladdin's cave. It was wonderful.

I had to work very hard to catch up, really catch up, in many areas: singing, everything, history, harmony.

**Interviewer: Had you belonged to a choir when you were a child?**

Margaret Orchard: At school, yes, but we were all girls at an all boarding school. There were no day girls and so it was very insular. It depended on the staff they had there. I didn't even do recorder. Other instruments were not catered for because the music staff employed there were pianists.

**Interviewer: Did you have to take another instrument at the Conservatorium?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, we all did because we were going to be doing teaching. I did piano and singing as my second subject. I did my organ outside. Nobody knew I did it. I did it without it being part of my course. Now you can do a double degree at the Conservatorium. That was hard because I wanted to

play organ, I wanted to be doing organ, I didn't tell my piano teacher that I was an organist as well and I learned from Norman Johnson outside the course.

**Interviewer:** **Did that complement your piano work?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, from the sight reading point of view. It's a totally different technique. My parents lived at Beecroft when we came to Sydney and I played the organ at St John's Beecroft - that was my first posting - for a short time and then I ended up at St Dunstan's Denistone East, which was a little parish church. Then I went to St Mark's Darling Point as an assistant organist and during this time I was studying with Norman Johnson at SCEGGS Darlinghurst chapel, which was then St Peter's at Darlinghurst. I loved organ most so that was a bit hard because I really wasn't studying that; it was extracurricular.

Eric Smith was at St Mark's Darling Point and he was a theatre organist. He went into the Wesley Mission in the city, into the big church there and so I then became organist at St Mark's Darling Point. Later, at the same time I was appointed to Shore, I was at St Stephen's Macquarie St. So that's how the organ progressed.

After I graduated from the Con I was appointed to Epping Boy's High School and that was very confrontational. I was 20, I was very young because I did my Leaving when I was 16, and I thought that Richard Gill was at Epping Boy's High School and he had been appointed to Epping Boy's but little did I know that he had decided to stay at Marsden High School and I was appointed in his place. I was absolutely aghast at that.

I had a particularly wonderful Headmaster called Jack Williams and he supported me greatly because it was very hard as a young girl teaching music in this all-boys school. There were not a lot of women on staff.

**Interviewer:** **During your teacher training, what component of teaching was there for music students like yourself?**

Margaret Orchard: The course we did was in conjunction with Alexander Mackie College. We were not full time. In those days you couldn't do a degree at the Conservatorium; it was always at a diploma in your performance. Our course was called a 'compromise'. It was the second cousin to the correct course, if you like. The musicians who did just performance looked down upon us because we were only doing half the time at the Con and half the time at Alexander Mackie. So we were always on the buses commuting between. Alexander Mackie now is the Fine Art College out at Paddington.

We were taught what we were taught. We were taught recorder so that we could teach at school. We were taught many other subjects. We had to choose a second teaching subject, like English or social studies. I chose social studies although I never taught it in school.

We used to do music repertoire, I suppose, for schools, but it had little relation to the reality of teaching. We changed from the Leaving Certificate to the Wyndham system and we went into Year 10 and Year 12. I graduated and my first year of teaching I had HSC students. I'd never seen an HSC paper, I'd never seen (an) HSC curriculum, and I had to learn it. Elective music was a saviour in many ways because those were the musicians that you had to work with. I found it very difficult.

I think I went through the second year of this course so they were sort of feeling their way, I think, with what would be useful. We did prac teaching, which was terrific because we did it in Infants and then we did it Primary and then we did it in High School. When I think back, they were very hard times because we were not prepared as well as we might have been and the staff who had us were wonderful.

When you do prac teaching you learn more probably by being there than being prepared and knowing exactly what it is.

**Interviewer:** **They're quite long periods in prac teaching, aren't they?**

Margaret Orchard: In those days probably two weeks, at the end of a year. Just a couple of weeks.

**Interviewer:** **That's not long.**

Margaret Orchard: It wasn't long. I would call it initiation by fire. Being appointed at a school was initiation by fire.

**Interviewer:** **What was the attitude to music teaching at Epping?**

Margaret Orchard: Very poor. At the bottom of the heap. Anyone who was musical was ostracised, I would say.

**Interviewer:** **By their peers?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes. In those days I think it was very hard. A girl who was appointed several years after I left went to the Sports Master and said she'd like the First XV in the choir. And she did. She got them. So Epping at that stage then flew musically because they had the positives.

I had some quite extraordinary students when I first went and some of the names you would know. I had Graham Pushee(?) who is now a world-famous counter tenor and Iva Davies who composed for the Bicentennial. He's known by the students as being from Icehouse, the rock band. He went through as a classical oboe player and ended up in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. It's quite extraordinary to have students like those, students who have carried on and who have also remained in touch.

I was very fortunate that I had a very small group of boys. We just carried on and because I was so young, I suppose,

it was nice because I didn't associate myself with the staff; I associated myself with the musicians, and there were some musicians on staff as well. It was a very tough time.

**Interviewer:**           **How long were you there?**

Margaret Orchard: I was there for four years. In that time we would do a musical every year. I think I did *Half a Sixpence* the second last year I was there and Graham Pushee was the lead baritone. Then he came back for *West Side Story* which was the next musical I did the year before I left. He came back and played the lead in that, which is ironical when you think he's now a counter tenor but of course this boy, when I first met him, was singing counter tenor and I'd never heard it. He sounded like me because at that stage I was a mezzo. He actually sang for me at St Mark's Darling Point as a counter tenor. He sang at school either as a baritone or as a counter tenor, whatever we needed in choir. Later on he studied with David Parker and he was singing with David as a baritone and singing for me at St Mark's Darling Point as the counter tenor.

**Interviewer:**           **And he could switch?**

Margaret Orchard: Oh yes. All men can. Yes, and I said to him, 'Graham, you really must tell David that you've got counter tenor', and he did and he never sang baritone after that. He went on to get a Churchill Fellowship from Australia to study overseas and that was wonderful. That's been one of the joys of teaching music, the students you meet who carry on with their music and they cross your path. It's just wonderful. You learn so much from them, quite extraordinary.

**Interviewer:**           **Very inspiring to have that quality of student in your first posting.**

Margaret Orchard: Absolutely. It's just quite extraordinary. Absolutely wonderful.



**Interviewer:** **And lucky?**

Margaret Orchard: Oh yes. Very much so. It's the luck of who you meet on your way. I was very, very lucky because the rest of the music was padding in the timetable, General music, non-examinable, a good time to muck up. I think my first lesson at Epping Boys High School three classes arrived to see the new music teacher and the class that was supposed to be coming came in through the door and the other two classes came in through the windows. That was what I was up against. It was tough times.

**Interviewer:** **Was putting on the musicals the way of disseminating music appreciation through the school with an element of theatrical discipline thrown in?**

Margaret Orchard: Possibly. I was so absorbed with the music that I probably wouldn't have been aware of all those things. Before school, after school, lunchtime was all rehearsals with boys, so I wouldn't have even known what the rest of the staff thought or what the rest of the boys thought.

I had inherited a brass band. I didn't even know what a cornet was, let alone a tenor horn. The boys basically taught me all that. We went into an eisteddfod and Cliff Bingham, who was the tuba player from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra was the adjudicator. We played Dvorak's *New World Symphony* and we came out with trophies. We walked into school and that was a turnaround, that was interesting. The school got a bit of a shock when that happened.

Then the choir went into the Kogarah Eisteddfod and we won a first place. I had voices like Graham (Pushee), I had some very good players. I also had an extremely good clarinettist in the band which was brass mainly. That person was on staff with me at Shore later. I'll talk more about that later.

When we came with some more trophies that was nice because it gave the boys a standing and it meant that there was a little more acceptance, I suppose. I had a boy in the brass band whose father was in the St George Leagues Club band and that was very highly regarded at that time. We actually had the Leagues Club band play, all of them, for *West Side Story*. That was absolutely extraordinary because they were such fabulous musicians. You don't normally put *West Side Story* on when you're a classical musician. I'd never done jazz. So for me to conduct it or even learn it, it was very difficult for me and at that stage I'd met Martin and so we were engaged and every time we went out I had my headphones on and I was trying to learn this music.

I was very lucky because it was a big learning curve for me and we'd never done musicals or anything like that in our teaching training. Of course, that's what we had to do. I'd done a bit of singing but it was all classical singing and scales and arpeggios, all of those sorts of things. You don't go and sing in the classroom like an opera singer. While it was good to be able to get up and sing in front of people, because that's what you had to do every day in the classroom ... so extraordinary times, I have to say.

**Interviewer:** **By 1973 what made you apply, did you apply for a job at Shore or were you invited?**

Margaret Orchard: I married Martin in 1972 and just before that I had done some auditions for Addington Palace, the Royal School of Church Music in London. I sent over my tapes and I was accepted to go and study there. So I was all set to go and I met Martin; he said, 'You're not going, you're marrying me and we're staying'. So that was wonderful.

So I had resigned from Epping and I then had to turn round and get my job back. I hadn't left Epping at that stage. I think the Department appointed me to Mosman High

School. We lived in Mosman. Several weeks before I got the appointment, we'd been to local voting at Mosman High and I said, 'I think I'll ring up', so I rang up, and I said, 'I'm just ringing, I've been appointed to a school and I just wondered how many music teachers you'd had this year'. They said 'four'. I said, 'Oh, four in a year!' I said to Martin, 'I can't'.

So I had to find a job. There was a job in the paper for Shore. They said they needed a teacher and an organist. I thought, well ... so I applied and had an interview with Jika (BH Travers) and, of course, prior to my appointment they had always had very good organists who were organists as a profession and who went on to other cathedrals. They had some outstanding musicians as organists.

**Interviewer:** **As a stepping stone in their careers.**

Margaret Orchard: Some, yes. Of course Michael (*M*) Dudman would be one case and I studied with him. I'd actually been to Shore before I was appointed because I'd studied with Norman Johnson he said to me at the end of one year, 'I'd like you to go and study with Michael Dudman', and I said, 'No, I'm not doing that, never heard of him', and he said, 'Well, you are, I'm not teaching you anymore'. So along I went to Shore and learnt from Michael while I was at the Conservatorium. That was very fortuitous. He was absolutely brilliant and wonderful.

I also went to Newcastle Cathedral and studied with him when he did go up to the Cathedral for a little while.

The job at Shore was because I played the organ. All of the organists took music classes but my understanding was that Elective music was not on the curriculum at Shore before I went. Music was taught in the classroom.

**Interviewer:** At what level in the classroom?

Margaret Orchard: Up to Year 10.

**Interviewer:** What sort of music?

Margaret Orchard: Whatever the teacher felt like playing, I guess. I don't know what other people did. I think in those days the Chapel and Chapel music took up a lot of music time because Chapel, when I was appointed, was twice a week for every form. I can't remember the exact detail. I certainly played a lot more then than I did later on when the curriculums were changed to accommodate all of the various subjects' requirements. I think a lot of the music revolved around the Chapel and so there was the Chapel choir, I think Bill (WBS) Pearce in his Year 7, 8 and 9 classes would have been able to do a lot of choir work with the boys, even if they mightn't have been in the choir. The senior boys, the senior choir would have done Chapel music and not secular music. Putting on a concert in the hall with a choir, they did, I think they probably would have sung sacred music, classical sacred music, rather than what we would consider ordinary secular music.

Of course, music was also provided outside the curriculum with all the G&S (*Gilbert and Sullivan*) in those days.

**Interviewer:** That was a strong tradition.

Margaret Orchard: Very strong. All sorts of other people did the drama part and the music teacher, I don't know how they did the music in those days.

So when I came I had teaching as well as organ. There are some stories. Three boys came from Balgowlah, two of whom wanted to do elective music, so I was called in by Jika and met the parents and with a great sweep of the hand Jika said, 'Of course we can do elective music! We have elective music, don't we, Mrs Orchard?'

'Yes, Headmaster', blinking, because of course we didn't have elective music.

When those boys came elective music was out of school hours for a term and then I think it eventually got put in by Jika, into the timetable. I was very fortunate to get some students who were elective music students. So elective music did eventually get into the timetable.

**Interviewer:** **Not through a school initiative but through pupil pressure.**

Margaret Orchard: Pupil request, pupil need. These boys came in Year 10. They came late. They didn't come from Year 7. They came across.

**Interviewer:** **Jika was adaptive in that way, was he?**

Margaret Orchard: I found him to be wonderful. He enabled me at Shore and I think I was maybe younger than his daughters but he was extremely kind to me, extremely supportive, and I really only survived because of him. There's no two ways about that.

**Interviewer:** **That was 1973 to 1975, your first period at Shore.**

Margaret Orchard: That's right.

**Interviewer:** **Georgina (GR) Hart had been appointed Librarian in 1971. Were you the only two female teachers within the whole school?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes. The School at that stage – you say the whole school: in the Prep School I'm not sure but I don't think there were any more. Georgina and I were the only ones in the Senior School, yes.

**Interviewer:** **How did you find that?**

Margaret Orchard: I found that extremely confronting. Georgina and I looked after each other. We had many crying sessions in the

ladies. We had an immediate bond because of NEGS, because we shared that history.

We immediately became like sisters. It was extraordinary. She was really fabulous to me because it was very, very hard for both of us. The Common Room was not our room. In that, Common Room meant 'men's room'. To have women in the Common Room, I think, was very confronting for many of the male staff. The staff who were our age probably not so much, but tradition was very strong. When we were there, the staff didn't know what to call us. We were often called 'sir' or 'mum', I think.

The boys were addressed by their surnames, never by their first names. It was very much on the English public system, which I knew nothing about. To walk in the front gates, I probably felt as though I was walking into a book 50 years ago. It was another world and it was not a reflection of society, I felt at the time. It was just different. You weren't treated or you didn't behave in the way you would normally now. You don't feel there's difference.

The regimentation and the discipline, enforced discipline, all of those things, having been to an all-girls school, you can imagine it was shocking. It really shocked us. Having to survive in that era where it took me a long time to be comfortable there and I don't think I ever was comfortable for the first three years, really comfortable, to not be on my guard all the time.

**Interviewer:** **Was it how you behaved and what you had to say to other people?**

Margaret Orchard: I think not being able to call the boys by their first names. That sort of thing, I found quite difficult to handle, and being very young it was difficult. I wouldn't have been appointed if I wasn't married, that I do know.

It's not that you weren't respected at all; it was just that the tradition was so strong that we had to change for them. Probably I felt that the boys were there for the School. Now I think the School's there for the boys.

**Interviewer:** **Coming from a high school, was the atmosphere within Shore really extraordinarily different for the time?**

Margaret Orchard: Oh yes, because it centred on the Church, of course, and so they had what they called scripture lessons at Epping and many denominations were catered for. People came from outside for that; whereas Shore is centred on the Chapel, so yes, a totally different thing.

And of course the uniform. Epping was a new school and Shore was an established, traditional school, totally different in almost everything.

**Interviewer:** **I remember Georgina saying she always felt that hers was a service to the School and not really a part of the mainstream teaching effort. Did you feel like that, too?**

Margaret Orchard: I would have felt – it's a very interesting comment, isn't it – my service to the School would have been playing the hymns and playing for Chapel. Jika used to make me take hymn practice, stand up (in) the Chapel, can you imagine, (Year) 11 or 12 boys, and would I practise the hymns because they weren't good enough. All that sort of thing. I nearly died a thousand deaths.

**Interviewer:** **That was difficult?**

Margaret Orchard: Dreadful! My function there was to enable all of that. My classroom teaching didn't count at all, and so from that point of view that was just something that happened.

I wouldn't have said that then. I wouldn't have been aware of it. I probably walked through the front gate feeling physically ill every day. Every day my husband would push me through the gates just to get through the day and to

cope with all sorts of things that probably I can't even remember now – knowing that I was not one of them because we were women. Secretaries were women. If you were a woman, you were a secretary. So we were never on an even keel probably and even to go in the staff room, I wouldn't even – I'd sit in the corner if I sat at all. Georgie at least would sit in a seat; I'd never dream of sitting on a seat.

All that sort of thing. Everyone had their own seats and their own places and all of this hierarchy, this undercurrent that you had to somehow learn everything but no one would say anything because you were supposed to know.

From that point of view I don't think I would have survived without Georgie and Jika – probably not.

**Interviewer:** **As Head, did this attitude stem from him or was it an inheritance that was part of Shore?**

Margaret Orchard: I think it was part of Shore. I couldn't say that. There was a lot of older staff. Now I'm older staff I realise how quickly it all passes. I think the older staff dictated the tone of Common Room. That's how it was. I don't think the younger staff – they had to keep their place. We were all numbered, of course, as you would be aware.

**Interviewer:** **Numbered?**

Margaret Orchard: Of course. The Headmaster was 1 and the deputy was 2 and then the hierarchy from when you were appointed, so when you were appointed you were on the bottom. I don't know what number I was, and when you were given an extra lesson to take or something like that your name wasn't ever put on anything, or your initials were never put on anything; only your number. You were not even personalised.



Name-wise, if they did get your name, you were always addressed as your initials. So I was MNO and Georgie would have been whatever she was. Any correspondence - still not your name.

We're talking about wartime-type thinking. It's a bit like the English who have an abbreviation for everything. There's a very funny comedy where the comedian talks about all these short codes for all sorts of things, and it was a little bit like that at Shore.

**Interviewer:** **Interestingly, none of the male teachers has ever talked about that numbering system.**

Margaret Orchard: Isn't that amazing? I don't know what number I was when I left but I know I got pretty close to the top 10.

**Interviewer:** **As people left, you'd go up the number scale?**

Margaret Orchard: That's right.

**Interviewer:** **Jika appointed first of all Georgie, then you, and in the interval when you left at the end of 1975 after your first three years there, there were other women teachers appointed. So obviously he wasn't averse to having women on the teaching staff.**

Margaret Orchard: I just don't know. Obviously not. They were the ones that could do the job and had the qualifications. I think it's wonderful. I guess for him he'd know that he'd be taking on different problems and that they might leave. He offered me maternity leave. I was quite amazed at that. I didn't take maternity leave and I went back after I'd had the children, but I had never thought I would go back.

**Interviewer:** **Was there an unspoken dress code?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes. I know that Georgie would have spoken about this. Men always wore coats and ties at all times when they were in the classroom or outside walking. Georgie and I

always had to wear some sort of suit and high heels, which was not discussed for us. Men were never allowed to take their coats off unless they were just in Common Room. It was something you would never do in a classroom.

One year it was so freezing Georgie and I said, 'we really need to be in slack suits because the corridors were just so dreadful and the heating was nil'. So we went and asked him – 'May we wear slack suits to School?' He agreed, so we were very fortunate in that. I don't know if it was spoken for the men. They would never have dreamt of doing anything else, I think; but later on, after Jika had left and as time went on, that became quite an issue with some of the men as well.

**Interviewer:** **High summer in Sydney, at the beginning of first term, is tropical in some years.**

Margaret Orchard: Of course, this applies to the boys as well, you realise, with the uniforms, and even today, at the end of term, that's the last day they wear that uniform and the beginning of second term they're in winter uniform, but what's the temperature? So they haven't been quite so versatile in that one.

**Interviewer:** **From 1975 you took this voluntary break to raise a family. What made you go back? Was it a seven year break from Shore or a seven year break from teaching altogether?**

Margaret Orchard: It was from teaching altogether. I did have some students, just piano students, at home but that was not in a classroom, and I had never thought of going back to Shore. It had never occurred to me at all and it hadn't occurred to me to go back anywhere, actually. I got a phone call from Robert (RA) Fox who said, 'There's a vacancy, someone's leaving, and I want to make two jobs. I would like to split the job in half so that we have someone to teach in the

Senior School' and of course elective music was well and truly established at that time.

I was going to tell you that the year I left I went to England in the Christmas holidays and I got a phone call from Jika saying that two of the boys had come first and second in the State in music. I didn't even know you could come first and second in the State, I don't think, and I was absolutely thrilled to pieces, of course, and quite blown away. I had one student in particular who was outstanding. I haven't mentioned him before. He was one of the two boys who came from Balgowlah. This boy, Warren Shattles came in in Year 10 with 8<sup>th</sup> grade violin and licentiate piano. He was an extraordinary student. He had perfect pitch and so in retrospect I'm not at all surprised that he topped the state. He taught me lots; I don't think I taught him much. That was quite wonderful.

Elective music was established and that was really good, that Shore was able to do that and to offer that.

Robert said, 'I've got half a job in the Senior School or half a job in the Prep School'. I said, 'I've got three children under seven and I really can't reach elective music and have a family as well, because it is an enormous job'. I said, 'What's in the Prep School?' He said, 'Nothing', and I said, 'All right, that'll be fine' - having no idea what that meant.

I'd actually had a phone call a couple of weeks prior to that from a friend who did go and study at Addington Palace in the RSM, called Michael Desey, and he has been appointed to a cathedral in Canada and he then came back to St Andrew's Cathedral. We'd gone through the Con together; he was a year ahead of me. He rang up and said, 'Can you come over and teach music?' I said, 'Well, no, Michael, I've got three children'. He said, 'Yes, but I really need

somebody'. I said, 'Oh, I don't think so, Michael'. He said. 'Think about it'. And I said, 'Oh all right, I'll think about it'.

So it was extraordinary that I had these two phone calls within a couple of weeks. Needless to say I didn't go over to St Andrew's, which would have been nice because I'd known him and I've studied at the Cathedral with Michael on my way through when I did my Fellowship in organ. It was interesting that that all happened at the same sort of time, and I thought, I can't deal with the Harbour Bridge.

I thought, I guess it will be all right, it'll just be half time, and of course the other minor thing was that I really didn't know very much about primary school music, only my prac teaching.

Along I went and started there. David (*DL*) Anderson was the (Prep) Headmaster then. Bob (*RC*) Peterson was first and then David later, after a year.

**Interviewer:** **This was 1983 and it was just a year before Jika Travers retired.**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, and that was another thing, that I knew that, and I said to Martin, 'I guess it's an opportunity to go back' and at last I knew what I was going back to, but I just thought, maybe it's an opportunity, and I've got my organ. I thought, if I go back to a state school I probably won't be able to carry on my organ with a family because it would mean I'd have to take on a church as well. That's a big thing to do when you have a city church. So all things seemed to point to Shore and it was when David Anderson was appointed later that my job went to full time.

So I actually started half time and that's why I took it.

**Interviewer:** **What was the state of music in the Prep? Was it non-existent?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes. Non-existent. I can remember Malcolm (*MH*) Howard at that stage. He used to do all the music. He did all the art. He did all the cultural things. He was just extraordinary. When I was in the high school Malcolm used to come over and play in my band on whatever morning it was. He'd come over and my classroom, the two music classrooms were where the development office is now. The (*John*) Colebrook Room was the music room and the Development Office. They were my two classrooms that I taught in when I was in the Senior School.

**Interviewer:** **This was in the first period?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, that's right.

**Interviewer:** **What had happened in the Prep?**

Margaret Orchard: Malcolm taught them recorder. He did any Music that was to be done and any Art that was to be done. What was so interesting was they appointed a teacher but they had nowhere to put her. I was under the trees when it was not raining and the only place they could put me was in the boarders' muck-up room which was in Hodges House and it's where they put their bikes, their swimmers, their basketballs, their everything, where they could go whenever they had spare time. That's where I was.

**Interviewer:** **With a piano?**

Margaret Orchard: No.

**Interviewer:** **No piano, nothing.**

Margaret Orchard: Nothing. So we used to go to Chapel however many times it was. Yes, it was pretty tough. Hard times, and even harder for Bob Peterson because he didn't even have an office. The staff room was very, very small and Bob's desk was

the same size as anyone else's. I didn't have a desk or anything but the others did. His paperwork just went up. I don't know how he ever managed.

So we all were scrambling. I was sometimes allowed to go to the Hall and I ended up by being extremely frustrated because I really couldn't do – well, I just carried on, I just did what I could with what I had and we managed in some sort of way, did something. In the end I said to Bob, 'You've really got to make a decision', and we decided that I'd just go into the Hall. This was the Prep Hall that was used for all sorts of things. Anyone who needed to do anything did it in the Prep Hall. Likewise, I still was ousted all the time but I had some cupboards built along the front of the Hall and then at least I was able to buy some instruments and I was given a little bit of money to buy some instruments and then managed to get a piano. That's where I was.

**Interviewer:** **This very much ties in with Hilary Valence's experience because she'd come to the Prep School about 1978 in the interval while you were having your break. She said she existed in a cupboard.**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, that's a good description. I can understand that. Yes, I think the Prep was pretty austere.

**Interviewer:** **It sounded as though everybody existed in cupboards of some description.**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, I can remember Malcolm saying that he had a thermometer in his classroom and whatever the degree was that the boys were wrapped in everything they could including their raincoats because it was perishing. This was bringing up boys properly. Stiff upper lip and character building and all of these things. Yes, I think it was a backwater for a very long time.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned being able to buy instruments eventually when you got your cupboards. What sort of instruments did you decide to buy?

Margaret Orchard: I bought tuned percussion instruments, Karloff instruments, percussion instruments mainly, just so that we could have something that we could make music with that would sound very nice and we didn't have to sing.

**Interviewer:** Was there a choir?

Margaret Orchard: I think I must have had a choir, yes. We would have done the carol service, which had been established by Jamie (*LM Jamieson, Prep Headmaster 1955-68*)

**Interviewer:** What about the quality of the boys, their talents?

Margaret Orchard: Boys always have talent. The quality of the boys, they're just all wonderful. I must say I think in many cases boys have always got talent but it's opportunity, isn't it? So if they have the talent and there's no opportunity it's not developed. I think every year I had boys who were gifted or talented or who I think with music you enable them and it allows them to grow and to find the potential. That's what education is about.

From my point of view that was my thing. I was always interested in the boys who were musicians and who I felt I could do something for, whether they were an instrumentalist or a singer or whatever they wanted to do.

One boy said to me one day that he wanted to play the bagpipes. I went, 'Oh good ... Now what shall I do about this child?' We ended up finding a group of pipers up in North Sydney somewhere and he used to go up and do bagpipes on the chanter (?) with this group.

Things developed from nothing, and it was need, always. A child would come in playing something and you'd have to get a teacher or whatever it was, their interest.

The Shore Foundation, the Shore Association provided me with instruments and I was able to apply – it sounds so terrible, it was so long ago, it was so complicated, all of that sort of thing, as it all developed, but gradually I was able to build up a wind band and a wind set of instruments, a string set of instruments, so that we had basically a band or an orchestra over nearly 30 years.

That was all due to the support of the Headmaster. Bob (RAI) Grant, of course, when he came, coming from Canberra Grammar which is an extremely musical school, he opened the door for music because he allowed private musical lessons to take place in academic time. That single fact is the key to the Music Department as it stands today because before that no child ever came out of class and all lessons were before or after school, or at lunchtime. You can imagine trying to keep any peripatetic staff was really difficult and most children learned outside, of course.

To put on a concert you wouldn't have a band or an orchestra; you would have whatever child played whatever instrument, you put them all together and you did it. It didn't matter what it was. I think my first concert was probably something like 20 guitars, 10 drums, one flute and that sort of thing, as Georgie reminded me only recently, and I wrote for it. I wrote the music so that they could play. I had to arrange it so that you were putting on whatever you were putting on and we did it. When you had a pianist like Warren Shattles I did an abridged version of *Rhapsody in Blue*.

I was going to tell you about another boy I had at Epping who ended up on staff with me. That boy was Frank (FE) Sharpe, who ended up by being Maths Master. Frank was a clarinettist at Epping and his last year at Epping was my first year at Epping. We did a piece called *Silver Threads among the Gold* and Frank played this brilliant part in this



arrangement. That's one of the reasons we won this band competition, because of him.

He studied at Macquarie University and applied for a maths job. When he came in I said to Fred (*FH*) Ross (*Ed: Head of Maths Dept*), 'Forget the maths, he's a clarinettist, get him' Of course, he's participated in the Music Department ever since, and still does. It's been an amazing association. Frank is godparent to one of our sons. It's been a very lovely association.

**Interviewer:** **There were allies on the staff at various stages.**

Margaret Orchard: Yes. Having something in common, I guess.

**Interviewer:** **Did this make a difference to the acceptance you felt? Did you start to feel better about going through those gates every morning?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes and no.

**Interviewer:** **In this second period of going back to Shore, which was 1983 right through to the end of 2006, in the early '80s did you feel that there was a change in climate as a woman teacher?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes. I think there was and I found when I went back that I was more drawn to the Senior School Music Department than the Prep, as you can imagine, because there was just me, and I was very involved, became very involved in all the Senior music students because they'd come from the Prep and then also some of my previous students.

I actually did a lot of work in the Senior School as well. I did a great deal of the accompanying for everything that was on, it didn't matter what it was, and helped out with everything. While it was lovely being in the Prep, I actually found that I had great difficulty knowing what department I was in and I wore two hats. I was with Prep but I was also music and so I found that the full-time job very quickly

became full and a half- time because I just did everything in the Senior School, whatever was on, sang in the choir, played for the choir, accompanied all the boys, did exams, did eisteddfods, did musicals, did everything, as well as Prep music.

It got to the stage where they had music awards, which is an opportunity for all instrumentalists to play solo and to be heard by an adjudicator and then a concert put on. For several years I said to Steven (SJ) Bowers, 'Could I take a couple of weeks off from the Prep and prepare this and do it', so I did that and got a relief teacher in. So I was pulled very hard.

Many times I wondered if I might end up in the Senior School Music department. I missed the senior work greatly and tended to keep in touch and work with students whatever. I still considered myself part of the Senior School Music department, basically.

So that was interesting and it was also hair-raising stuff, I suppose, because at home my children were getting older and my husband sang in the philharmonic motet(?) choir for 25 years, so musically we were both doing. I also, of course, as part of my job had to play Chapel on Sundays and then Robert Fox and I shared that. So I was doing this pretty much six-day week.

**Interviewer:** **This was Chapel at Shore?**

Margaret Orchard: Oh yes. I couldn't continue doing St Stephen's Macquarie St as well because I couldn't play Sunday Chapel at Shore and at St Stephen's Macquarie St. I couldn't do it. So I gave up St Stephen's. You can't do everything. It's always been a bit of a pull which way you're going and wanting to do the best, I suppose, in all these different worlds that music offers.

**Interviewer:** **As a music teacher, not dealing with those developed students must have been very frustrating.**

Margaret Orchard: I think that's probably why – well, it all developed because one boy asked me if I'd play for an exam and he was a senior boy. He used to come over to the Prep and we'd prepare it and so on. One thing led to another. My boys would go into Year 7 and I'd just follow them through, I suppose, and it never occurred to me not to. I think all music departments are short-staffed. There's always something to do. There's so much to do and so I was very fortunate to be able to do that.

For boys to come back when they got married or whatever and to see them again and they'd ask me to play or they'd ask for the little Prep choir or whatever, just wonderful relationships. Shore's relationships are very strong, both with the boys and with the staff members. You grow to love them very much.

**Interviewer:** **During this time, had the School's traditional attitude changed by the 1980s? Had Mr Grant brought in a different feeling?**

Margaret Orchard: I believe so. I think Jika used two words and it was absolutely a dictatorship, not a democracy. That's how he ran things. Any request you wrote, the reply was always either yes or no; no grey area. That's how he ran his school.

With Bob Grant, a totally different era and a different age and a different outlook, so inevitably different. I think Bob didn't use that regimentation and therefore there was more creative flow allowed, probably in every department. I can't speak for others. It didn't matter to him if you weren't quite up to scratch, you weren't asked to practise. There was more a liberalisation and I think from a negative

perspective I've seen in my time a complete change round to a total positive one.

That came about more recently and of course with Ken (KM) Gilmour and then in the Prep very surprisingly the Senior School took notice of somebody in the Prep School and that was more the person called Ann Clark who came from Scotland. She was appointed on to the Discipline Committee and she instigated in the Prep School and also complemented what was happening in the Senior School with positive discipline and that has been a complete turnaround.

**Interviewer: Was she a teacher?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, she was. She is a more recent teacher in Steven Bowers' time and she was like a deputy GM, if you like. Before the infants school was at Northbridge.

**Interviewer: The Prep originally was the only young age institution and that has been expanded.**

Margaret Orchard: That's right, and the Prep School when Jika was there was run like the Senior School. Of course, the names of the classes - You'll be teaching SB1, SB2, Remove A, Remove B - and you went, 'What, what are you talking about, what does that mean?' Even the terminology was quite foreign unless you knew about the Public School system in England. So there's been a complete turnaround.

**Interviewer: With the Prep, in 1983 that was Bob Peterson's last year.**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, that's right.

**Interviewer: Then David Anderson came just for a comparatively short time.**

Margaret Orchard: Just a short time, yes, and then he was appointed back into the Senior School.

**Interviewer:** **Then Steven Bowers has been there -**

Margaret Orchard: Ever since. Steven was put in teaching 4<sup>th</sup> class when he was first appointed to Shore and he taught my son, Philip, in 4<sup>th</sup> class.

**Interviewer:** **What was it like having a son at the School while you were teaching?**

Margaret Orchard: I think it had difficulties for Philip. I think it had a lot of difficulties for him. It was not easy for him when he was in my classes, and vice versa, of course. That's a price to pay. It certainly is. And the fact that I'm a female made it even more apparent, I guess, and the fact that he was a red head with glasses made it even harder for him.

Our other son went to St Andrew's in the city. We even thought about swapping them and letting them have a different opportunity but we didn't in the end and so Philip went right through to Year 12.

**Interviewer:** **Did he get on better when he wasn't associated as much with you?**

Margaret Orchard: In the Senior School? Oh, I'm sure, yes. I think everyone is very aware of that and there are many brothers and many staff members' children who go through and they're all very aware of that. I think we're all very caring about looking after each other's – if I was teaching the son of a staff member you just have that extra awareness and always an interest and ask how things are going. There was a tremendous amount of caring in the Prep School, certainly in the last era.

**Interviewer:** **It's been a long era.**

Margaret Orchard: It's been lovely, with many, many friendships and many, many wonderful developments. It's been so lovely to see, especially when the Prep was able to expand and then to have a new building – all of those things.

I suppose one has to say that it's very nice to see that we suddenly have a very unbalanced staff and we have only a few men teachers in the Prep and the infants' school and all these women who are all these wonderful young girls who are so talented and who are so capable. That's what's normal; the fact that it's like a family whereas before when you came to Shore everything was male. You'd have to enquire about where the toilets were and all this sort of thing; they wouldn't automatically think, we need to provide for the women. All these things were – the thinking was male and so when you were there you had to think like a male.

I should say that when I first started there innuendo I didn't know about it because I was so naïve, and it doesn't matter what you say in a male classroom, they can read something into it. Even that awareness is something that now all women are aware of it and so it's spoken about and you know not to say something that way; you'll say it another way so that you don't get yourself into a situation where you are embarrassed or you embarrass your class or you've lost them. That was the lesson.

Those are the things where it's more normal, as it were, in that it's more like a family, and I think that's really important. I think it's a balance. Now there's a balance and that's very, very good. The men's value and the women's value, the values of men and women are now equally appreciated, understood, recognised and I think it's now equal opportunity, isn't it.

**Interviewer:** **Does this balance rub off on the senior boys' lives in general, their relationships as they go through teenagehood?**

Margaret Orchard: I don't know how you'd estimate that. I think you'd be interviewing the boys when they're Old Boys and then you'll find out. They don't know any different now. They've not

experienced being in an all-boys school with an all-male staff. They haven't experienced being in that era. None of us can experience that. None of us can appreciate what it would have been like, even 100 years ago.

I think everybody makes a contribution and the staff value each other, they admire each other and I think that's very important, and they respect each other. Now when you walk into Common Room there is certainly no feeling of difference or non-acceptance. I feel really very, very happy about that and it's been a fantastic thing that women have been accepted at Shore in the senior school particularly.

In the Prep and the infants' school, it never existed except in my very early time. As Hilary (Vallance) said, 'women were there and so a start had been made'. There was a boarding school at first and the matrons were there, so the caring was there, a little bit of caring was there. Now the Prep boys who come in as boarders are in the Senior School boarding houses, so they go over to School House.

**Interviewer:** **Does that work all right?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, I think so. It seems to.

**Interviewer:** **Was that because of numbers?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, they couldn't continue to have enough Prep boarders to have a staff member and then staff members for the weekend and all those things. They're very little to be boarding.

**Interviewer:** **You were talking about positive discipline that came in. Was this a policy that Mr Grant initiated when he became Headmaster?**

Margaret Orchard: Whenever the cane was abolished, I think that was the point of turning round.

**Interviewer:** A state wide movement, wasn't it?

Margaret Orchard: That's right.

**Interviewer:** What were the measures of positive discipline?

Margaret Orchard: Staff were asked to do staff development days with people – I'm trying to think of the man who had written all these books on boys – a very tall man. There was more awareness and talk about boys' issues and why a boy might get a white card instead of just dealing with the behaviour, finding out why. I was in the Prep when the turnaround came and always focused on any positive that a child had, not on what the obvious negative was.

It made a colossal difference at staff meetings. People who had problems with children or if there was a problem that they'd lost a parent, they'd had an accident, the child was behaving badly, what was the cause? Well, now it was discussed and people became aware that that person's grandfather had died, that person's dog had been killed, that person was facing surgery, whatever it was, or why couldn't this child behave in class, he had an eating disorder or he was hyperactive or whatever it was, there was a reason and instead of the focus being on a negative outcome everyone was to see more positively but it was knowledge, you knew about it.

It's very difficult – the Senior School, for a boy's day in the Senior School he might have six different teachers he deals with and then he's got sport and then he's got the personal playground duty. He has up to ten staff he might cross, he might get reprimanded by, and that was talked about.

A child who was given a white card because he didn't have his assignments in, then they asked how many assignments he had. Staff didn't know who'd given assignments when, so the boy might have eight assignments due on a day.



**Interviewer:** **So there was much more cross-staff consultation?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, discussions, consultations, all that sort of thing. Communication. Things would happen in the Prep School which I thought were just wonderful. Pastoral care for me is one of the great strengths of Shore and when John Crerar was appointed in the Prep School his caring of the boys, I think I've never seen anybody anywhere near him for his caring of the boys.

**Interviewer:** **What was his position?**

Margaret Orchard: He was the Deputy Master in the Prep School with Steven Bowers. He was appointed after Ann Clark. He set up a positive and negative discipline whereby the boys, if there was a misdemeanour and it had to be dealt with, then at lunchtime the boy would just bring his work that had to be set and a staff member would supervise the boys and it was done in 20 minutes, and finished. The boys were always rewarded: pink cards in the Prep School, every child was always given a pink card within a couple of weeks so that no child would go through term without getting a pink card. Records were kept, all of that sort of thing; encouragement for anything they had achieved, it didn't matter what it was. Not winning at all costs. That's been a big lesson for Shore, I think.

**Interviewer:** **Less competitiveness?**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, I think so, and more adulation to the children who excel and the children who try, so that the child who runs the long distance race and comes in a mile behind everybody else gets the biggest ovation. Very interesting and really fantastic role models being offered because now we find ourselves out of step with society where you see on television some terrible stuff in competitive sport. You hear of some terrible parent behaviour on the sidelines. I think now, certainly at Prep School, the level of parenting by the

staff and the pastoral care of the staff is huge, is immense and the boys are extremely lucky with this wonderful caring.

When we've lost boys or lost parents, it's been an absolutely unifying experience for the whole school. It's like this invisible thread. Every single person becomes part of this very strong core, something that's not written down, it's not said, but if you meet anybody from Shore, and I recently met a man in low care where my mother is, he's in a wheelchair with no legs, he said he's a Shore boy, we immediately got this wonderful bridge. We've got all this in common. He's in his 90s. It's extraordinary.

The wonderful things about Shore are – it's something I think the Old Boys I've met, you say, 'who were you at School with and who was there and what did you do?'; it doesn't matter what it is, you're able to talk about all these wonderful things. It's something I think a state school just doesn't have, with the same strength and bonding. There's a real bonding. I guess that may not be for everybody but I find it so and I find that I've been so fortunate and so enveloped with a warmth, all engrossing.

My life is so enriched by Shore, after experiencing being a staff member and then a parent. The time seems to be so long ago when I started and you never think you're ever going to get to the end of it, you think these people have been there for so long, and then when you are at the other end you look at all these wonderful people that you are teaching with, who are younger than your children, and you think, these wonderful people.

I've found it to be an extraordinary experience. I think the reason I was there was that I had organ playing, not because of any teaching, and I was very fortunate to be there in the right place at the right time, I guess. Maybe no one else applied for the job. It's been wonderful for me.

**Interviewer:** **When you first went, only in the 1970s, the sense of tradition just about shut you out, literally from the Common Room and shut you out of the mentality of the boys school. That's turned around so much, in a comparatively short time.**

Margaret Orchard: Musically, I've had some wonderful boys and therefore wonderful parents. Through the music I've been able to have this wonderful feeling where I can get very close to boys, whereas before I became close to my boys from Balgowlah because I didn't have a common room. I spent recess and lunchtime with them. They had nothing in common with other boys because they'd come from another school, so the musicians ended up having a little core and then I had people like Graham (GJ) Lewarne who did all the musicals because of his drama and some staff members who were all friends – Georgina, Stan (SW) Gillespie, Bill (W) Foulkes, Fred Ross, all people who were all friends and they included Martin and me. One of the most wonderful things was that Martin was included as a staff member because, as Dick Hart will say to you, he carries the flowers behind Georgina. You can imagine Martin was integral to me staying there.

**Interviewer:** **It sounds as though he encouraged you through those gates.**

Margaret Orchard: Oh yes, he had to push me and every year he had to push me, but once I got there and got going again it was OK. I think I was hypersensitive and I found it extremely difficult. A bit of an A-type personality and I found it quite hard, for many reasons.

It has turned around and it's wonderful to see. I've also experienced the Infants school and I've taught 3<sup>rd</sup> class. I had to go over to the other school and teach kindergarten when it was first instigated with the 15 boys. That was actually terrifying because I'd never taught kindergarten. I

didn't know any of their songs, I knew nothing about them and we had nothing in common. I survived that and I think they did, and then when they were in 3<sup>rd</sup> class they were my boys and it was wonderful.

That's been a real joy to see, and then to see some of the musicians who have passed through my paths. Nicholas Bentivoglio, Scott Mathers, boys that I had from 5<sup>th</sup> class, Lukas Opacic I had in 3<sup>rd</sup> class and he's now at a music Institute in Russia. People with the most amazing musicianship who are all going to be on the world stage. It's just so wonderful to see that you can be lifetime friends and it's very special. I think any teacher will tell you that, but of course for me it's been music.

Those boys, when they came into 3<sup>rd</sup> class, they were always on my level, they were always musicians. I never looked at them as an eight year old or whatever it was; I only ever looked at them as musicians. For me, that's very special to have children who are obviously musicians. It doesn't matter what their age is; they have all the gifts and all the talents, and all you have to do is give them the tools. Well, I didn't give them any tools because they were extraordinary and they learned outside and they were wonderful. Very interesting.

One boy I must mention is Harry Sutherland. He was a most gifted boy who is now in Year 9. He is a jazz musician and I think he was in 5<sup>th</sup> class when I took him over to the senior school and asked Peter (PI) Dorich if there was a band or something where he could play with some Year 7 boys. I think Harry played with one little group in Year 8 for a couple of weeks and then he suddenly was the pianist in the senior stage band. This remarkable boy is going to have a wonderful musical career if he wants to but I think he'll be a medico. He's being coached now by James Morrison and has played with James Morrison and Judy Bailey. I often see him up at New York Café because he

has a small trio that he plays with and these students are much older than him, they're all studying at the Conservatorium. I see him often on Thursday evenings when I do running; I run past him and I go and listen to him play at the café, I meet his parents. It's quite wonderful to have students at Shore who are not necessarily rowing or rugby but a lot of them do that as well, but who are musicians and I'm thrilled to think that Shore now has got a fantastic facility for the Music Department to flourish and to grow.

**Interviewer:** **To whom do you attribute that?**

Margaret Orchard: I think the fact that they were able to build the auditorium, the music centre, then it puts music there. It's up there with other subjects. It's now a recognised subject and there was a need, boys have a need for this. Boys have a need for dressing up, expressing themselves, and it is so important that they can do drama, they can do music.

There's an ocker image in Australia that is often projected that it's not manly, it's feminine, and this ocker image, I think society has it. I can remember parents coming and saying, 'My son's not going to play the violin', and I'd say, 'I'm sorry, he will and maybe you will as well'. It's just not having a closed mind, so whatever wants to try they should be able to try.

We have a dance program that started before I was appointed in Prep school. Judith (?) was appointed by Robert Fox and she coached the gymnastic team in the Commonwealth Games. She did a lot of dance work in Prep School. It was called 'movement' then. Now every class in the Prep and the Infants school has dance. There is an elective dance group in the Prep School; there has been for a long time. There is always a waiting list to get into it. That has fed over into the Senior School so that a lot of

Prep boys go into the music course; they can all dance, they can all move, and it opens something for them.

Two boys that come to mind – one boy, Jack Bertinshaw, learned from Grant Davies who taught dance, and more recently at School, in this man's private studio, and he's now doing ballet through the Melbourne Ballet School. Another boy who's also learned with Grant, who's done popular dancing, he is one of the four boys who will be a lead in *Billy Elliott*. That's Nick Twiney. It's wonderful to see. These boys all have the ability but do they have the opportunity? Shore now is able to offer so much opportunity and it's one thing to say 'Aren't they talented' but it's another thing to say, 'We give them the opportunity and the springboard.'

I find it so remarkably personally rewarding to think that Shore offers that. It makes me really proud for Shore.

**Interviewer:** **It's a combined effort, if you're saying the physical space to perform is an important element of this opportunity. For people who raised the money as well as the people who provide the philosophic framework are equally important.**

Margaret Orchard: Indeed and I admire them so much for their foresight. Robert Fox, of course, did a huge amount of research. He was Performing Arts master and his background of being in the theatre meant he had tremendous expertise. The School was very lucky to have him. He did a lot of research on the music facility and I think the School owes him a great debt to all of that research and then for what his expertise put into place and the fact that he knew how to run the theatre. How fortuitous and how wonderful.

To have a world-class facility that is used outside the School is extraordinary for a school, to have that. Without that, we used to put on musicals in the Hall. Those days

were just extraordinary. You made do with what you had. It's the School community and the School Council and all the advisors and the architects – they have gathered the best around them and they've made it happen. You have to enable the boys. That's why I mean that the School is there for the boys now.

**Interviewer:** **Parents were traditionally in nearly all schools shut out of the organisation and not given the opportunity to share in much except presence at a speech day. Parental participation can be difficult. How did you find it?**

Margaret Orchard: The parents became very involved with Prep school and that came through the reading program, the literacy program. When it was realised that boys need a lot more encouragement with their reading, the School had a policy right through the School of "*drop everything and read*", which Georgie would have talked about. That again – do boys think it's manly to read a book? Of course, the role model of the ocker image is not sitting down and reading and I think parents are not going to be able to come home and read to their sons.

The primary school teachers were women because it was a bit like 'mum' so getting boys to read, getting men to be teaching in primary schools, there was now an awareness of all of that. That was really important and parents did come into the School and still do. The reading program is extremely strong in the Prep and a lot of fathers come. It's been encouraged and it's been fantastic. The men come and stand on the sidelines, so do the mothers, and now the fathers come and do the reading groups and so do the mothers. That's what I mean – more like a family, more normal.

It's wonderful to see that and I think the parental involvement is colossal. Certainly in the Prep School,

everything, parents were always involved – excursions, sports days, raising money, whatever it is, the parents are encouraged to be there. I think it's been fantastic.

**Interviewer:** **Are the parents appreciating the width of opportunity that this generation of school children has?**

Margaret Orchard: I would think so. We also had morning teas with parents to thank them. Judy and Pam Wyles always had the Library mothers come. I think that allowed the parents to talk as well, the mothers. Fathers can talk on the sidelines or the Old Boys. Every year the 6<sup>th</sup> class parents put on a dinner and they all meet and then in Year 12 the Prep boys and Prep parents have a dinner, just the Prep ones, and they get out all of their photos again and put them all up. There are many stories and many thank yous.

Once you're in the Prep school the Prep boys remain an entity. They've got this strength that stays with them. Certainly from my son's point of view his friends are from 3<sup>rd</sup> class. Very strong. Others as well but it does last, the bonding and the friendships are wonderful. I think the parents are integral to Shore, as are the Old Boys who are part of it.

My greatest honour is to be an 'Old Boy'. I am an official Old Boy and I'm so honoured. I got this wonderful letter and I'm absolutely overwhelmed to be an Old Boy.

**Interviewer:** **You're one of the few teachers who has been through three Headmasters. Headmasters are a rare commodity at Shore because they don't change very often. Are there major changes coming up?**

Margaret Orchard: I think inevitably with a new Headmaster. You're enabled to move on. Every Headmaster is going to see somewhere where he enables the school to move on more, or further, or different, or develop. So yes, I would think so.



**Interviewer:** **Were any of these directions emerging when you retired at the end of last year?**

Margaret Orchard: It's hard, isn't it. Not being in the Senior school, because the Prep school has doubled in student size and staff size, the Prep staff now includes all the Infants staff as well and they have combined staff meetings. We don't necessarily have meetings with the Senior school, so the Senior school tends to operate in its own entity without the Prep school and that's a major problem for Common Room. I will say that that needs to be addressed and that certainly has started because the Infants school don't know the Senior staff necessarily at all. When do they meet? They can meet once a year on the first day of school before the boys come. That's when the staff meet and that's it. So that's an interesting one.

I think inevitably there will be changes but probably the immediate change was the facility in the Prep school. That has had a huge impact on many things – just learning to use it, because learning to use the buildings takes quite a long time. It takes the boys and the staff – because you think you're somewhere else; it's all new, it's all different, the place is run a different way, everything changed, everything is in a different place, and then you've got new things and it's the newness. For someone who's been there for a long time, it's all the newness. You haven't got a blackboard, you haven't got a whiteboard, you've got a Smartboard. For the younger generation, that's not new because that's where they are. So yes, there will be lots of changes and I can't foresee what they will be but I know there will be.

**Interviewer:** **The impact of technology – what does a Smartboard do?**

Margaret Orchard: A Smartboard is basically a computer. It's hooked up to a computer. When I was first there, the only person who

would ever have their fingers on a typewriter was a secretary. No man would be seen dead doing typing. The typists, secretaries did everybody's work, all their exam papers, all the programs, and we used to have to write it on the old roneo carbon whatever and roneo things off.

Now, of course, every staff member has a computer on their desk and they do all their own work. Technology has been a colossal impact and a very big learning curve. Now the joke is if you want to know anything about computers you ask 3<sup>rd</sup> class. Now the staff are asking the students.

For the staff to take that on, if you were at the end of your career and computers had just come in, it is enormous unless you have done it. Someone of my mother's generation would say, 'I can type'. That's the least skill you need. It's taken enormous time and not only just ordinary technology but music technology. The Senior school has taken all that on and I was able to do some of that.

In the last five years I got computer programs that I was able to use, using music technology, and I was able to use the computer rooms in the Senior school. That was wonderful because now it was sight and sound together and that is fantastic. You could play something on a keyboard on a computer as if you were playing a piano or whatever and hear it straight away and remember, play back, all these things. An enormous amount of change with technology to enable more students to access music readily.

**Interviewer:** **It brings music into the ambience of the world they're starting to understand. It makes it more acceptable?**

Margaret Orchard: It makes it more relevant, yes, I think so, because in the past if you were learning music, you learned classical music.

**Interviewer:** **In a little room by yourself.**

Margaret Orchard: That's right. In order to learn an instrument, you really had to go through the classical system. If you were a boarder and you had a guitar you might do country and western. Now, you see, classical musicians don't necessarily know much about that at all. So I think technology enables students much more and they feel it's part of them. It's their world and I think it's wonderful.

**Interviewer:** **It's a paralleled mainstream world.**

Margaret Orchard: That's right.

**Interviewer:** **Peer opinion and peer pressure are so important.**

Margaret Orchard: Yes, and acceptability for those students who want to do it. Now everybody does everything and everybody has a go. Isn't that wonderful. I think it's fantastic.

**Interviewer:** **It's difficult for you if you weren't completely involved with the Senior school to judge whether this opening up of opportunities has affected teenage behaviour at all. Does the fact of allowing people to develop in their hidden directions help them adjust through this period or is behaviour on the whole much the same as it always was?**

Margaret Orchard: The Senior school went to a 17-house system consisting of 75 boys from Year 7 to Year 12, that has made a big difference to the overall behaviour. I think Years 9 and 10 always posed a bit of a problem *en masse*. I think the School has taken advice if they felt there was something that could be done differently, done better. I think the School has enabled itself by being able to take on these different things and see that there was a need and do something about it. The boys need to have better marks in English – good, do something about it. What are we going

to do about it? 'Drop everything, and read' – everybody does it, including the staff. So role modelling as well.

**Interviewer:** **You've certainly seen a very interesting period.**

Margaret Orchard: I have indeed, yes.

**Interviewer:** **Have you worked out what you're going to do in your retirement?**

Margaret Orchard: The first thing is not to retire. No, I haven't. I'm keeping very open, I keep open-minded and the last thing I'll be doing is retiring. There's much to do and many different things to do. I'm just waiting to see what happens.

**Interviewer:** **Is there any link with Shore that you feel you can contribute to?**

Margaret Orchard: I don't know. I think once you've left, it's nice to leave. You've done your bit, you've done your time, and you've progressed through and it's time for new people to do new things. That's lovely. That's really important.

I'm going to the card day. I'm going to go and see all these wonderful mothers that normally you haven't got the time to speak to. Many of them are friends and so from that point of view I'm looking forward to that immensely. I go and see the Prep musical and I'll go to the carol service and all those lovely things, go to the performances which I always loved doing and they're so kind and they invite me to go.

I think it's not what I can contribute to Shore but what it contributes to me all the time.

**Interviewer:** **Thank you very much.**

**[END TRANSCRIPT]**