**Ainslie School Days: memories of generations of Ainslie School students 1927-2017**

**Oral history interviews conducted by Ainslie School students**

**Transcript of excerpt from interview with Lenore Coltheart**

Lenore attended Ainslie School 1946-1952 and was dux of the school 1952.

Location: Ainslie School Library

Date: 7 December 2016

Interview facilitator: Mary Hutchison

Sound recordist: Kimmo Vennonen

Interviewers: Beth McLeod, Aarya Gururaj and Kai Hourigan.

Beth: So you said you remember the library, what was one of the things that you had the most fun of at the library?

Lenore: I loved the library. I loved the fact that the mural was really beautiful and it was like you… Reading was marvellous and it sort of opened up the whole world to you and you’d read a book and realise you could be anywhere in the world and the story would take you, or the information would take you. But when you looked up from your book, if you looked at the mural it really fired your imagination because you really felt like you were there - the crocodile was there, you were Peter Pan or Wendy - and it was almost like a great big window for your imagination to go through. I like - I now know that it’s the architecture of the library that was also part of why it was so lovely there. The windows are very beautiful. It was very light. And, it was my first library ever. I’d never been in a library before I came to this school and so to be in a room that had books and windows and a beautiful painting - it was like heaven.

Aarya: My name is Aarya. How did you get involved in editing the school magazine?

Lenore: Oh that was so much fun! I think, with my friend Sebastian Clark - he and I were interested in doing it. And because we both liked writing I think maybe we both got picked to do it. Editing anything requires a lot of patience and neither of us was all that patient, but we were quite good at getting people to write things and to give us submissions. The only pictures that we had in the school magazine were drawings that somebody would do. So as well as collecting all the things and seeing how to arrange it to put it in the school magazine, we were also in charge of getting everything typed out which was like, on a typewriter. And then we had to make the magazine. To make all the copies we had a thing called a gestetner which is a really old-fashioned way of reproducing paper, not at all like a photocopier. And it always looked a bit blotchy so the drawings came through in a really odd way but all the artists didn't mind a bit - the people who had done the drawings were so proud to have it.

Aarya: What do you remember most about doing the magazine?

Lenore: Oh, I remember the smell of the gestetner machine. It had a very, very particular smell a bit like - not methylated spirits or turpentine - but something strong like that, like the ink smelt really, really strong and I sometimes can still smell that smell

Aarya Oh!

Lenore: And I think, ‘There must be a gestetner!’ (laughter)

Beth: So what was your lunchtime like?

Lenore: Oh it was always terribly important lunchtime and the tuckshop which was just down below us where we are sitting in the library, was - They served what they called ‘Oslo lunch’. And this was another thing because it was immediately after the War, that giving children really good food was seen as being very important because a lot of things had been in short supply during the War. So the Oslo lunch was based on this special Scandinavian healthy food and it would be something like wholemeal bread or a wholemeal bread roll with cheese and tomato and ham and some salad vegetables in it. We would, at snack time - we called it little lunch or play lunch - we would have sultanas and peanuts wrapped up together in greaseproof paper.

Beth: So looking back on Ainslie School, what sort of impact did it have on you and your journey through life?

Lenore: I think that’s such a wonderful question. It gave me confidence in the things that I could do well. And it’s a beautiful school. And we didn't realise at the time that we were lucky to be Canberra kids and to have a school as beautiful as this. I think it still shapes me and that's why I like to come back to speech day.