

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

West Australian Branch



Photographer: Patsy Vizents, 29 July, 2020

INTERVIEWEE: **MRS CAROL MANSFIELD**
INTERVIEWER: PATSY VIZENTS
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 29 JULY 2020

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MONTGOMERY HOUSE
1 HERITAGE LANE
MOUNT CLAREMONT, WA, 6010
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MRS CAROL MANSFIELD, AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION, INTERVIEWED 29 JULY 2020 BY PATSY VIZENTS

0.00

This interview is being conducted on behalf of the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society. It is an interview with Carol Mansfield at her home in Mount Claremont, Perth, Western Australia on Wednesday, 29th July, 2020 in the presence of John Viska, who will contribute to the interview. The interviewer is Patsy Vizents. So Carol, thank you for contributing to the National Oral History and for your time today.

My pleasure.

Let's start with the biographical information so, your full name and your date of birth.

My full name is Carol Mansfield and I was born on the 10th of September, 1935 in the UK, in a place called Teddington, just outside of London.

Is that south?

South (nods).

South of London. The name of your parents?

My mother's name was Winifred. Her maiden name was Ruten R-U-T-E-N. My father's name was Walter Turner, so that was my name, Turner.

Your maiden name was Turner. And what did Walter do?

My father?

What did your father do, what was he employed as?

He did a variety of things. During the war, we moved to Lancashire where he was involved in some seed testing to do with food production during the war; the second world war and my mother had trained as a short hand typist and she was always very keen on plants, she had studied botany so she was a very great help to me.

So, would you describe that gardening had an appeal or that gardening was part of your upbringing.

Yeah, I think it was part of my upbringing. We moved to Kent, just before the end of the war and we had a lovely garden there because my father grew a lot of fruit and vegetables and then we moved to . . . but we had a bigger flower garden there, which my mother attended to and I was about 10 and I remember my father giving me a little plot "and so that's for you", I remember growing radish and nasturtiums. I remember it particularly because we all had two-storey houses and there was a two-storey house overlooking my little patch and I was looking at it one morning, as all gardeners do and the window of the next-door lady's house opened and she said, you looked at that yesterday. I was so embarrassed, I've never forgotten it.

So, was your father really, he was supportive, did he give you clues, did you have training sessions? How did you know how to garden?

I think by osmosis really, it was infused into me by watching and helping my parents.

He was doing wheat testing?

He was in the north, but when we moved down into Kent, where I had my first garden, he was actually running the village store.

You mentioned primary school, where did you do your schooling?

Up until I was about 10 we were in Lancashire during the war, and the war had nearly finished when we moved down to Kent where I had my little plot. We moved to a smaller house in Kent and it must have been after I started nursing, which would be about 1956 I think.

So, you did your primary and secondary schooling and then straight into nursing?

Yes, yes.

Had you always wanted to be a nurse?

For some extraordinary reason, yes (laughing).

How long was the training to be, a general nurse was it?

The formal training was three years and you get your certificate after three years but because I trained at a prestigious London Hospital, you don't get your Hospital Badge, which was very valuable, until you had done an extra year.

Do you want to name that . . .

Oh yes, certainly. I trained at Guys Hospital in the East End, we had a lot of Cockney patients. We used to say, Guys Hospital get married, St Thomas's Hospital to be a lady and Westminster Hospital to be a nurse.

So, you got married.

I got married, I did (laughter) to a doctor.

So, this is 1950?

Yes, I finished my training in '58.

When we are working and we are busy, gardening was probably a secondary thing but was with you all through training and then working?

No, I think it was in the background because it was pretty full-on. You had to live-in, in the nurses quarters in London so there was no opportunity for gardening.

One thing I was going to ask you, did you have a favourite plant when you did have your plot?

No, well nasturtiums I have always liked, but my mother and father had always had the scented tobacco plant and so I was brought up being very aware of that and its perfume.

It's quite a strong scent isn't it, the smell? OK, so you met your husband . . .

At the hospital.

Was that rather quick?

Yes it was quite quick and after he graduated, he went into general practice and we bought a house in Surrey. We were married quite quickly in '58, bought a house in Surrey because he had obtained a job as a junior in a General Practice.

What actually drove you to come to Australia?

Well, my husband had been about three or four years of general practice and at that time, the British Health System was going through the doldrums and there was no encouragement for professional development or

anything and he came home and said, "I can't do this for the rest of my life, there must be more." So he went back into hospital and did a post graduate degree in medicine where he met a Perth doctor, also doing a post graduate degree, it happened to be in surgery and we got to know John because he didn't know anybody else in the UK. His family was with him and he had two or three daughters, we had two daughters much the same age. So we got to know John quite well. When my husband decided we had to move somewhere, he decided to come to Perth because he knew John came from Perth.

One thing I haven't asked, is your husband's name.

Frank, simply Frank.

Mansfield

Yes.

And John's name?

Hanrahan. He may still be alive, we kept in touch for a long time

What year did you come to Australia, to Perth?

1965, we came by sea. And I have omitted a period, I am just trying to think when it happened, it must have been after he graduated and before he went into general practice, he had to do two year's military service.

10:00

That was in the days when all young men had to do two years military service by law and you could either do it before you graduated or after and he opted to do it after. So, in fact I missed out two years after he graduated and we married in '58, he almost immediately joined the army and was posted to Aden in Saudi Arabia where he went for two years.

Without you?

Without me. I was able to get a job as sanatorium assistant at a Public School in Essex called Felsted (?) and saved enough money for my voyage out. So I sailed out and spent the last six months with him in Aden, where I got a job as Sister-in-charge of an Arab Women's Ward.

That's fantastic!

It was. No gardens there?

No, my husband found some interesting plants when he went up country, I recorded, which he often did and he found some interesting plants but the only think I remember were oleanders. Because it never rained, ever.

So, that was around 1960 and he comes back?

Yes, that's right.

Back to Surrey?

Back to Surrey, and then thereafter, what I said before.

Yes, John Hanrahan.

We came to Perth in 1965.

OK, did Frank have a job to go to?

Yes, that's why we came to Collie to have 12 months in Collie because one of the GPs was leaving, they wanted a replacement and I think they advertised in the Medical Journal and my husband answered and said he would take the job. But it was only for 12 months but that was where I came to know the wildflowers.

And you certainly would have had rain there?

We certainly did and frost and heat so it was baptism by fire. As a matter of fact, I didn't want to live in Collie the rest of my life, but it was a wonderful opportunity to get to know the bush. Looking back on it you know, I did the stupidest things. My husband went to work and left me with the car and two young children aged three and five and I'd just take off and drive through the bush. I didn't have a map or anything.

Did you have a road?

Tracks, yes, only gravel tracks. The silly things you do when you are young and naïve. I never got lost.

But you would never (have) had any idea of the space or size of the bush.

No, but I fell in love with the bush, I fell in love with the wildflowers, I couldn't get over them. Especially the orchids. And my daughter, even now, because she was five at the time, even now can remember when I found some Boronia growing; "I remember mum, I remember how excited you were." I remember the perfume (laughing). So, that was Collie, we only stayed 12 months because we didn't particularly, looking ahead, think that there was opportunity for the girl's education so a job came up in Bunbury. We moved there in '67 and spent the next nine years there in general practice.

This is all sand-dune country, not so much Collie but Bunbury. So you came face to face with issues of gardening in a very limey, sandy soil.

Yes.

Did you have assistance, how did you come to terms with growing things? Did you join any groups or something along those . . .

Not gardening groups, no. I made a lot of friends but I don't think any of them were actual gardeners. There were one or two who were interested in the wildflowers but I think with gardening, I just had to feel my way. I did a lot of reading. And we spent, when my husband had some free time, we spent quite a lot of time driving south to places like Nannup and Balingup, which weren't developed like they are now.

Did you enjoy that period of time?

Yes, very much. Yes, because it was the time with the ilmenite factory was just starting south of Bunbury and they were employing a lot of British Engineers, even a lawyer and so on so, there were quite a lot of people around our age with children all arriving around the same time without family.

So, Bunbury and then up to Perth?

Yes, my husband, while we were in Bunbury became very interested in professional development and community medicine and general practice from a scholarly point of view. So he started going up to Perth for meetings with in the city and the meetings became more and more and he got more and more involved with the University of WA. It must have been about '75 we moved up to the city so my husband could attend UWA and he and another GP were asked to form the inaugural branch of what was known as the Family Medicine Programme which was designed to train GPs, or to train the young graduates who wanted to go into general practice, to give them some help. Prior to that, if they wanted to go into general practice after they graduated, they were just thrown to the wolves. They had to learn on the job. So this program was established then and my husband and another Doctor named Hugh Cook, were invited to start the program in Western Australia. So, he

carried on doing a little part time general practice in the Hills, in Kalamunda, which was where we moved to and the rest of his time was in the city.

I'm assuming because of the children, you didn't work?

No, I didn't work. I volunteered at St Brigid's College in the library. I think we are talking about the mid '70s, the late '70s. I enjoyed it so much, I went off to Secondary Teachers College, which is now a part of UWA, and did a two-year diploma in Library Studies and went back to St Brigid's to run their High School Library. I looked around at the other staff, who had been to Uni and graduated, and I must have been in my 40s, and I thought well if you can go to Uni, so can I. So, thanks to Mr Whitlam, it didn't cost me anything to go to UWA and I graduated in English with a strong component in history, West Australian history. And all the while, I was gardening, (speaking to John Viska) was the Garden History Society extant by then?

JV: 1988 we formed.

Right, well that was the year we moved from our first Hills home to our second most important Hills home.

So, Kalamunda was the first?

Yes,

Was it a substantial garden that you had there?

Yes it was. It was in Carmel.

20:44

It was an old Federation homestead with a large garden all the way around it which had, I think it had been cultivated minimally but it had, I think, probably, part of the orchard which surrounded it so most of the soil had been tilled over the years.

By that time, had you become confident, or you understood growing conditions?

Yes, I think I had become quite confident and I had done a lot of reading and with John's encouragement, did a lot more (indicating John Viska).

So, where did you meet John Viska?

I think it must have been through Mary Hargreaves.

JV: That's correct.

But how I got on to Mary Hargreaves, I don't know. I wonder if there was an article in the paper about her garden?

JV: Can I add something here?

Absolutely.

JV: I think it was through Frank. Mary went to Frank and she's told me, a general discussion about gardening and Frank said, "oh my wife is interested in gardening". And so that is how it happened. I'd already known Mary going back to the early, mid 1970s and that's how it came about. And you rang me one day, Mary Hargreaves had given my name to you and that's when Falls Farm was starting to . . . So, you were looking for someone to give garden advice at Falls Farm.

So, you have met. So, you moved from Carmel to another Hills home. What was the second Hills home?

No, Carmel was the most important one where we both came up in '84 or we bought a house in Edward Road where we had five acres.

JV: That's where I first met you.

Yes.

JV: when you were at Edwards Road.

It was an old orchard property which had been excised; five acres had been excised. We bought there and it was a super block because the front of it was bush, then we put the house at the end of the bush at the top of the paddock, so it was bush, house, paddock. We were surrounded by bush and the children had horses and I used to walk through the bush frequently. I would have been working at St Brigid's then, probably voluntarily so I had plenty of time to walk through the bush to get to know it a bit better. And also cut my teeth on gardening in the hills at Edward Road. So that was where I met you (indicating John Viska) and Mary. But I do remember, John you must have told me that Mary had lived at Wirra Willa because I do remember driving past and I said to my husband, "oh that's Wirra Willa, that must be where Mary lives." So we stopped the car and with great impertinence, I knocked on the door and said, "hello, I'm Carol Mansfield (laughter) can I look around your garden please"? (laughter) and so it went on.

Did she escort you? It must have been extraordinary.

Yes, yes. But there were hardly any gardens of any consequence.

JV: No, no.

That's why hers was quite special.

Why was it special?

Well I thought, if she could grow those sorts of things, so can I. Obviously, the people I had met up until then, didn't know much about gardening like the people from Bunbury. So Mary was the first real gardener and John, that I had known.

What was in her garden?

Well, I remember the shrubs mainly, some unusual shrubs. There would have been azaleas and camellias and there would have been many others.

JV: holmskioldia. Remember the holmskioldia?

No,

JV: with a tiny little hat thing, that was a very rare plant she always talked about.

No . . .

So, exotics and deciduous trees?

Yes, yes.

Did that become a firm friendship?

It did, yes. (section is inaudible)

The way you described your house with the bush, then the house, then the garden, was there a threat of fire in the 1980s?

Yes, there was. We had one fire that came perilously close but not close enough, 1500 metres away one night but that was the only one.

You've covered the development of Edward Road, you introduced new plants

Yes, I think that's where I really started growing cool climate plants.

Interruption

Yes, Edward Road garden was where I first realised the potential of gardening in the Hills, with the cooler climate and the soils, aided by Mary and John

You mentioned Falls Farm. Do you want to elaborate on that?

Yes, we already might have mentioned it, I don't know, I can't remember the date but the children always remind me that we went to church on Christmas morning and after church we chat – chat – chat, and Pauline Tonkin was there and she approached us and said, "oh, hello, I'm Pauline etc, etc, we are hoping to restore the Falls Farm cottage, would you like to help?" And we looked at each other and said, "yes, we'd love to." My husband got quite involved with the building side of things and I seemed to gravitate, as one does as a gardener, to the garden.

Were you living close to the farm itself?

Yes, it was only about five minutes drive away. Edward Road was just off the Welshpool Road.

I understand that John was involved with the Falls Farm restoration, was that before or after you had met him?

That would be after. Yes, and I think that by that time we had more or less decided on a (?) shape of the garden and decided in principle to fill it with old roses rather than modern ones. John came to the rescue with his students to do the paving. We were quite sure we would have been (?) without them, the garden as well.

Were you involved with Heritage Roses at that time?

30:00

I think I must have been but again, I don't remember how unless it was through Mary. I did volunteer, after I graduated, to help in Kalamunda Public Library and that led to my involvement with the Kalamunda Historical Society, which is a whole other area.

But it's about history

Yeah. And I guess joining the Garden History Society was very instrumental in increasing my knowledge of what was appropriate to the various conditions. I know I went over to several of the conferences and they were very enlightening and very enjoyable.

Were you part of the first branch that was formed in Western Australia?

I think so.

On the Committee?

JV: yes

Yes?

I can't remember.

JV: Original Committee member.

You must have been involved in the garden visits; visits to gardens?

Yes, I do remember being on the inaugural selection committee for the Open Gardens Scheme, I do remember that.

Did you have your own garden open for the public?

Yes. When we moved to Carmel from Edward Road about 1988 so, I suppose before I moved to Carmel, I was starting to learn about gardening in the Hills and the potential. So, we decided to leave Edward Road when the children had grown up and left, pursuing their own lives. It didn't make sense to keep the five acres with the horses, it was not sensible. Though it took us a long time to find the right place because I was determined that I was going to find the right house with the potential for the right garden and as soon as we walked in the driveway of the 1988 house, in Union Road Carmel, I turned and said to my husband, "this is it!" (laughter)

Why was that?

Because the house was beautiful to look at from the outside. A typical Australian Federation brick house and the garden went all the way around the house and it was only minimally worked but I could see the potential. So we got it and got to work. Yes, he did a lot.

He had to have enjoyed gardening

He did, he did. When we bought the property, there was a swimming pool right in front of the front steps. (To John Viska) Did you ever see that?

JV: yes, yes.

Yes, this beautiful Federation house with steps up to the front verandah and the swimming pool, right there at the bottom of the steps so you had to go all the way around the swimming pool to get to the beautiful verandah. So, we had the top metre or so of the pool jack-hammered away and all the debris put in the bottom of the pool, having made holes first so it drained and then filled it all with soil. My husband used to call it the biggest flower pot in Western Australia. (laughter) We were able to make a garden there. It had very good drainage (laughter).

I'm really interested in the difference in growing in the Hills to the plains. What was it that you could grow there?

Almost everything really. I don't think, much as I love the bush I didn't actually plant many natives, I planted exotics because it was my first opportunity to do so I think, having left the UK in '65, I wasn't really able to grow exotics successfully until we moved to Carmel in 1988. So I put in camellia, azaleas, primroses, primulas and hellebores and shrubs. *Garrya elliptica* I remember in particular (inaudible), things like that.

JV: and what about the cyclamen and the spinney?

Oh yes, I was able to get those, they began to seed themselves in what we called the spinney. The previous owners had planted a few deciduous trees that were quite young when we moved in. I was able to fill them out so we were able to have a rough cover but also a lot of light. And then of course on the sunny side of the house I was able to grow roses and at the front I was able to grow (them). My husband Frank was very interested in roses (?) so between the two of us we were able to grow roses in the sunny area.

So, we finished up with a sort of formal garden in the front and then a woodland garden down the side, moving around the house to a veggie garden, overlooked by an ancient mulberry tree, which was lovely and then to the lawn area and flower beds and a grassed area which had been a tennis court, but we turned that into a croquet lawn so you could move all around. Then in front, the turning circle; we made a turning circle in which I planted rugosa roses and ground cover. Probably over did it but there were plants everywhere.

And that was open to the public?

We opened to the public. Possibly in 2000. I think I must have been there a couple of years before we opened.

Getting back to the Garden History Society, you went on conferences.

Yes,

Can you remember any in particular?

Yes, I remember going to the Melbourne one and Iris Leggat I had met in Darlington and apart from Mary Hargreaves, was the only local gardener I knew at the time and Iris and Bob had a lovely garden in Darlington. I got to know Iris very well so she and I went to Melbourne and John was there of course (referring to John Viska). Then there was one in New Zealand, that might have been Heritage Roses . . .

JV: it was, yes.

There was one in South Australia, I went to that one. I did go to several

JV: you did do a presentation about the gardens in Victoria when you went to that.

Did I?

JV: yes. You gave us a little talk and it was Joan Law Smith's garden, Bolobek

Oh, yes, yes, yes. My memory is impaired because I had treatment after Frank died, and it has taken patches of my memory away. But when my memory is jogged it really comes back (laughing).

(to John Viska) So Carol gave a talk, not on her garden?

JV: this was in the early days, so it was like a guest speaker at one of our meetings, an early function. And she had slides and she gave a talk about what she had seen at the conference.

OK. Did you participate with the journal; the AGHS Journal?

Yes, I did and unfortunately, I meant to get the copies that I retained, I meant to get them from my daughter, but I haven't unfortunately. I do remember writing the first paper quite early on in the piece, and that was stimulated because up the road from our house in Carmel, there was an elderly lady living and it transpired that she was the granddaughter of Benjamin Lacey, who was the first person to start a timber mill in our area and so I got to know her because I discovered who she was and what a source of local knowledge she was. And her simple cottage garden made me think about early cottage gardens in Western Australia, what they may have been like.

41:26

And then somehow or another, I got to know a much smarter garden in Kalamunda itself which had been made by a real estate agent who had imported a lot of plants from overseas and eastern states. His was a very formal garden and some examples of added garden ornamentation.

JV: was that the Thorogood's Garden?

Yes. Mr Thorogood in Traylen Road. He was much travelled and he imported quite a lot of exotic shrubs from overseas.

Was it easy to import?

Yes, it was then.

Did he have to use a go between, like a nursery to do the importing?

No, I think he brought them back himself.

How did you get your supplies of exotic shrubs?

I imported exotic bulbs, I may have imported some exotic shrubs, I probably did. A charming lady called Margaret Klemmer opened a nursery in Forrestfield and she imported a lot of exotic shrubs and propagated a lot of exotic shrubs so further on, I was able to top up what I had from her nursery. But getting back to the Garden History Society, the first article I wrote was the contrast between the little cottage garden up the road from me and Mr Thorogood's very formal, probably expensively laid out garden. I pointed to the differences and also I think I had become aware of people saying there's no garden history in Western Australia, there's nothing worth writing about. So I think I set out to prove them wrong (laughter).

JV: and you did.

I know I did one about Edgar Dell and I met him twice. Yes, he was an eccentric but I met his wife through the Historical Society and I remember propping up my courage and asking him if he would talk to me, which he did because he had met my husband professionally, so I had a start, yes. He didn't regard me with suspicion which I think he regarded most people.

Edgar Dell?

Edgar Dell, yes. He was a very talented artist

JV: Botanical, fabulous.

Dr Gardner used Dell's paintings to illustrate his book, *Wildflowers of Western Australia* which I think my daughter has a copy of, my copy has gone to my daughter. But having interviewed him and I could see how talented he was, I wrote an article about him and his ability to portray the wild flowers of Western Australia. He trained in London and for some reason, he was very eccentric, and for some reason when he came to Western Australia, he stopped painting professionally. Although he obviously he did do some for Dr Gardner. But when I met him, he refused to do any more for some reason. I can't remember what the other article was about. Do you remember John?

JV: Hamel Nursery, Bill Ross

Oh yes, I went down there and met Ron (?) Ross.

JV: And you did Charles Harper, Woodbridge

Yes, the reason I did him was because he employed Tom Price as his gardener at Woodbridge and it transpired that Tom Price had started a most successful orchard in the Kalamunda District and he was only known as an orchardist. People didn't realise that he was trained at Kew Gardens and knew his plants. So, when he retired from his orchard in about 19. . . he was about 70 something, he retired from his orchard and built the house called Pasadena on Kalamunda Road. It is still there and he called it Pasadena because he went to California to study fruit growing and fell in love with Pasadena, so he thought he'd call his new house Pasadena. After he left Harper's Nursery, as I said, he started the orchard and then he retired, he built Pasadena. We had a walk around, didn't we (to John Viska), looking at the exotics that he had planted and imported.

JV: and at our first conference on the option garden-viewing day, we took people up to Pasadena, going up to the hills garden in 1998.

Right. Yes, yes. It was quite overgrown I think it must be even more overgrown now.

JV: didn't you do one on the Loarings, the bulb . . . up there in . . .

Oh, the Loarings

JV: Murray Parten and the bulbs (?)

Yes, because of the Historical Society, I got really involved, deeply involved, I met so many local and interesting people and one of them was the Parmentier family, early settlers in Bickley and I met the old lady, Audrey Morley. That was her married name, but she had been a Parmentier and Parmentiers locally, were very well known for taking up a large area of land in Bickley, building a beautiful Federation house like ours. And she, the lady I talked to, was called Audrey. She was in her 80s at the time and she recalled her mother, who was called Lucy, her mother had been born and brought up in South Australia, so when she, for some reason, came to Western Australia and married into the Parmentier family, she brought quite a lot of unusual plants with her from South Australia. She was able to import unusual plants from South Australia because she was familiar, having lived there.

And no border control.

No, nothing like that (giggles). So Audrey, Lucy's daughter was very generous to me. She gave me some quite unusual bulbs. She gave me some different narcissi, she might have given me the ali genera (?) I'm really not sure. *Partially Indistinct next sentence.* . . from an old nursery. She may have given me the Eucalypts possibly and the eucovias (?) possibly but certainly Lucy's was the one from South Australia, her daughter was Audrey, the old lady who gave me the bulbs and Audrey's daughter, Margaret (?) Loring. She and her husband carried on selling bulbs and in fact did that commercially. So they finished up with a bulb farm and that's probably what I wrote about because it had an interesting historic background.

And it was local for you.

And it was local.

You contributed a lot.

Yes I think I probably did.

I know that John has been involved since 1988, when did you cease relationships with the Garden History Society?

When did I cease?

Yes, or are you still a member?

I am still a member, I still get the Journal and I've still got an interest. But after my husband died, I fell into a hole and had to give up a lot of my activities. The worse thing being, my psychiatrist doctor said I mustn't drive because of the medication I was on. So that stopped me from being a free agent. I couldn't go and see John whenever I felt like it. So that was a two-edged sword. The treatment helped me but by losing my independence, I was unable to keep up with my gardening colleagues but I was still able to go to the local Historical Society because I could walk.

When did he die?

2014, which is six years ago.

Not long. It seems you are a researcher, a plants woman, a historian . . .

JV: a collector; a collector of beautiful porcelain, your baskets,

Yes, yes, and the thing I love most about having a garden, and after my husband died, I moved to Gooseberry Hill, Landor Road which was a bush block sloping, we had a lot of shade, actually no soil. It was laterite, but that was where I was able to plant natives well, the only sensible thing to plant was natives. But, I managed to make a little protected corner and because it was a smaller garden, I had more time to attend to detail. And I fell in love with auriculas and I have got photos, not here but my daughter has them of all the beautiful auriculas I was able to grow, some of which I grew from seed. I can hardly believe it now.

So, a nurserywoman as well.

(laughter)

Yes, (to John Viska) do you remember the auriculas, John does.

JV: Oh, beautiful, absolutely. You had the little gold lace edged auriculas?

Yes, little gold edged Primulas and then I had the auriculas as well. I don't know where I got the first ones from.

JV: Bridgetown, we had a weekend in Bridgetown and there was a nursery there.

That's right, it probably was from there, you see, John is jogging my memory.

Well, he would know every nursery.

I bet (laughing). Yes, I probably started with one or two plants and I studied the literature carefully, as you can see from my library, it's nearly all about plant history, plant hunting. I was able to study the history of the plants and thereby elucidate what conditions they liked and try and mimic those conditions, particularly with the auriculas. But I maintained my interest in the Garden History Society, if I were able to go to a meeting, I would.

You say that you still get the Journal. Do you find it stimulating?

Yes I do, yes. More and more, I can see it leading towards conservation and towards park land as well as gardens which is important especially now with our increased population and these awful multi-storied units going up. It's terribly important to try and maintain as much natural bush and park land as we can.

It might be fitting to do a follow up article now, where you have the original cottage garden, the cultivated with exotics to now, a much, much smaller domestic garden?

Yes,

The evolution is happening.

Yes.

When you talk about the Carmel garden, are you talking about Fawkes House?

Yes.

Did you name it Fawkes House?

We did. But we never put the name on the gate. In our mind, it was Fawkes House. The people who built it turned it into a bed and breakfast and gave it the official name Fawkes House.

What does that refer to?

The family who built the house about 1919, I learned from a local and they were Plymouth Brethren and they had a car, I was told and drove every Sunday, down to Vic Park to the Plymouth Brethren meetings. But I was really surprised and still am, that a member of the Plymouth Brethren should have built such an outstanding house because he had indulged in conspicuous consumption which I thought the Brethren were not supposed to do. That appealed to me, a quirky side of it (giggles).

To John Viska: **Is there anything else you would like to ask Carol, John?**

JV: What about the bird life at Carmel, the fire-tailed finches?

Yes, I'd forgotten those until I looked up on my diary and at some stage, I must have gone through my old diary and left out a shoot of significant events and situations and it was only a few days ago, to my surprise that Frank had written that he had been drawn to see the fire-tailed finches in the vicinity.

JV: And the white form of the Algerian Iris that you told me, a little old lady in Bunbury, you've still got it here in your courtyard garden,

Yes, I've been carrying it around haven't I?

JV: yes, and I'm going to get a bit and try in my garden also.

It must have been the old lady, Parmentier I think from Bickley.

JV: I had a feeling you said you got it from someone in Bunbury, I could be wrong. I may be wrong, it could be something else.

I don't think it was from Bunbury, no.

JV: OK. Just one thing, remember when you got to Carmel, you started looking around and what you called the rose in the ditch . . .

Oh yes, that was opposite, what was it, Forrestfield? It all came from Margaret Klemmer who started an unusual plant nursery in Forrestfield. It had transpired that it was her nursery was opposite the site of the original Forrestfield Post Office's store, now long gone. In a ditch was this rose that was suckering all over the place so I pulled up a couple of suckers and put one in the History Village that was the Historical Society in Kalamunda and I must have planted one at Gooseberry Hill, though I don't know what happened to it. I did explain to the people at the History Village that it was significant because it was on the site of Anderson's original store. I have a nasty feeling that they may have removed it since I left working in the garden.

JV: was it a tea rose or a one of the more rambling roses?

It wasn't a tea rose it was more like a form of cabbage rose. I think it was like one I saw growing wild in Turkey. The other thing was because of my interest in plants, which was fed by the Garden History Society very much, and the history of gardens and plants, my husband and I, we chose to go on a wildflower tour through Turkey to see the wildflowers growing as they should be growing, as nature intended them, and to China. We went down the Yangtze River; it wasn't one of those smart cruises, it was just a small boat which stopped every day and we were able to get out and climb through the mountain tracks and see the wild roses and the wild camellias, and the wild philadelphus and viburnums all growing everywhere.

Was that an organised tour or did you just do it?

It was an organised tour and I realised, having gone back on some of my information that it was an English tour. We had to fly to Heathrow to pick it up. The other members of the tour; the British, thought we were quite crazy going all the way to London to go on the tour to China.

JV: Also your collecting, not so much collecting but finding old garden books and things, you had a little commercial venture?

Yes, I collected a lot of old gardening books on my travels, a number of which I sold. I do a lot of reading on the plant hunters, which is why we went to China and Turkey to see the situation that the plant hunters had seen. Although there is much that I have forgotten, I do remember the time in China, we had to take a chairlift to get to the higher mountain area and as we got out of the chairlift and I looked at those mountains, I thought I was walking into a Japanese painting. It was China, not Japan but the natural bonsais were there, growing out of the mountains. It took my breath away it was so beautiful. I remember that.

Thank you Carol, thank you very much for your time, that's lovely.

Interview concludes 1 hour 05 minutes 43 seconds