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This is an interview with Nola Hosking recorded by Laura Nolan on Wednesday 23rd March 2005 at the Guildford Primary School.

TRACK 2

LN Would you please tell me your full name?

HOSKING Nola Jasmine Hosking.

LN And whereabouts were you born?

HOSKING In Midland.

LN And what was your date of birth?

HOSKING 10.04.1939

LN Please tell me your grandparents' and parents' names.

HOSKING My father's parents were William and Rosalind Finlay and my father's name was Wilfrid Lennard Finlay. My mother's parents were James and Mary Ross and my mother's name was Lina Hope Finlay.

LN And where did they live and what did they do?

HOSKING My father's father was a customs officer in the North West, on the whole West Australian coast actually. His father was the first mayor of Albany, so we're very proud - that was another William – very proud of him. And Grandfather and Grandma went from Albany as far north as Wyndham with the customs job. They lived for five years in a tin shed on the beach at Wyndham where my aunt was born. So it was a very rough life.

Mum's father and mother came over here from Broken Hill when Grandfather had a job here with the railways and Grandma was only fifteen, so the day before she turned sixteen they got married so she could go with him. She was violently ill all the way over on the ship so didn't go back to see her family until the first passenger train went through many years later, 1918. It was about 1880 they came over here. And Grandma and Grandpa had twelve children. Mum was the tenth. They lost three, two in infancy and one at eighteen with typhoid. And Grandfather sort-of looked ahead and saw that the job in the railways wasn't going to be much help for bringing up twelve children; besides which he was tired of staying away from home. So he built a store in Midland where all the children could work. Then of course the First World War came along. They had trouble there because Grandma had just lost one son of eighteen. She wasn't going to let her other sons go to war. So their store was black-listed.

LN What was the store?

HOSKING It was a general store and one of my uncles used to deliver groceries, with a horse and cart of course, and the others used to work in the store. Two of my aunts worked in the store and the other one was a music teacher and she played every organ in Midland every

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Sunday, so they were very musical. Grandma went out delivering babies to buy them a piano and she delivered something like fifty babies in the Midland area and bought them their piano. So they were both very hard-working people. And my father and my mother's brother Ted were very good friends and that's how Mum and Dad met. And at that stage Dad was living at West Swan because his father was like me, diabetic, but didn't know in those days and had to give up work at 46 because he was exhausted. So they

built a house at West Swan and Dad was brought up there from the age of 12 and he and his brothers had to do all the work. His father just lay on the verandah. Dad finally had done most of the work so he demanded half the property and built his own house in 1915 and he and Mum were married in 1924 and lived in that house which is now a craft shop and restaurant on West Swan Road.

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LN Did you mother work?

HOSKING Mum was a music teacher but not until I was about 11 or 12. We moved to Waterman when I was that age and that's when Mum started teaching music. My brother was twelve years older than I am, so I was all very much by myself. It was sort-of like a farming area, really, in those days: small farms, mainly vineyards.

LN And what was your brother's name?

HOSKING Bruce. My brother died the year before last with motor neurone disease. But I brought that *funeral leaflet with his photos* actually mainly for my cousin but I thought you might like to see it. Yes, he was twelve years older. He went to Caversham school and then on to Guildford Grammar. When war broke out, the Second World War, they moved Guildford Grammar to *Fairbridge* and Mum and Dad couldn't afford for him to go as a boarder, so he had to stop school at 14. He worked for Dad for a while and then got a job in Guildford and then he was working for Fauldings Proprietary Limited and then went into the postal service. So he was a postman for a long time. Then into Telecom, as it was in those days.

I was luckier that I was younger and had more possibilities really. I think Mum and Dad probably moved to Waterman to give me more chances. They had some idea it was closer to Perth than West Swan but it was still quite a hike.

LN So was West Swan called Caversham?

HOSKING No it was West Swan. It was north of Caversham. It still is.

LN Can you describe that area for me?

HOSKING In those days? Yes well the strange thing is I've been to that house where I used to live. Dad actually built the house with his own hands which is exciting, but I've been there a couple of times and I can't believe how close it is to West Swan Road. And I think perhaps that it was just that I was much smaller. It seems a hop, step and jump to the main street now – almost from here to that street – and yet when I was small it was such a long, long way. We had a vineyard and that was along West Swan Road was the vineyard. We had 50 acres altogether. The house was back only a little bit, I find now, from the street. We had fruit trees

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around the house and behind the house there was a lot of useless clay that Dad used to call 'pipe clay'. It was white and since then I've heard a lot of it's been used by different companies for making porcelain. But we didn't have that opportunity. At the back of there – the land dipped where the pipe clay was and rose again – and up there Dad grew carnations because we only had grapes and dried fruit which was summer work and he needed a winter crop. So he went to all the florists in Perth and asked what they would like for the winter and they said long stemmed carnations for brides because the brides carried long-stemmed sheaths of flowers then. So he developed a long-stemmed, pale pink carnation which I still grow and he was going in three times a week with his suitcases full of carnations. He'd drive to the Guildford station and put his things on the train and go by train up to Perth, walk round Perth with two suitcases full of carnations and sell them and come home. And he was always scared of the car being stolen so he used to turn off the petrol, and then he'd get back into the car and get into the middle of the railway crossing, with the train coming, and the car would stall because he'd forgotten to turn the petrol [on]. That seemed to be the regular thing. And as he got home again, we had a hen that would only lay in his car, at one stage; so the hen would

be sitting on the – we had a bread box, a big box out the front for the bread and the mail, and the hen would be sitting on there waiting for him to open the gate. And she'd dive in and lay and if he wasn't lucky he'd put his feet on new laid egg as he got in. But that was more or less the life. It was quite lonely, I guess, but to me it didn't seem to matter because I had my own way of amusing myself but I think children, in particular in those days, had a lot more idea of how to amuse themselves; no television and no computer and no computer games, we had to amuse ourselves somehow. I had neighbours who had children but it was a difficult thing because we lived – even though we were neighbours – they lived a couple of kilometres away. I was only 11 when I left there so I hadn't really got around to walking to neighbours' places.

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LN Did you have to help out on the vineyard?

HOSKING I used to. My brother worked there for Dad quite well. I mainly used to mess around and play, I think, but when Dad was working with the carnations I used to go over there with him some days and make him pretend cups of tea with swamp water and real rocks for rock cakes. I more played than actually worked. Yes, life was free and fun, mostly.

LN How did your mother cope with the isolation?

HOSKING She found it very hard even 'til the day we left there. Even 'til the day she died she was talking about how lonely she used to be, because when she lived in Midland she played in an orchestra. She was Second Violin in the local orchestra and her sister was a violinist. Her other sister was a pianist and two of her brothers and another sister sang beautifully. But she had that very full life there and such a big family. Then when they married, she was very much alone, she said, when Dad was off working, in particular. She'd often go and help him with the work. But she said she used to look out at the vines and wish they were waves of the ocean 'cause she loved the beach – wishing she were near the beach. And until not long before I was born, they didn't have electricity. It went to the next-door house but that was as far as it went for about five years, so every night they'd sit on the verandah and look at the lights in the next-door house and wish they'd had them. So it was a

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wishful way of living. They got their first fridge when I would have been about five. We had an ice chest before then, a cooler thing. Actually it's two different things: the ice chest you put ice in – it looked like a fridge-freezer with a freezer on top but you put the ice in the top and that kept the whole thing cool. This dreadful cooling safe – I think they call them a Coolgardie cooler – that were made of Hessian. It was metal-framed with Hessian and a little dish on the top where you put ice in the top. And it melted and dribbled down the sides of the Hessian to keep things cool.

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LN So, initially, you've told me you went to Caversham Primary School.

HOSKING Yes.

LN Which was in Caversham?

HOSKING That's right, yes.

LN The old school?

HOSKING That's right. It's still there. It was only two rooms in those days. Miss Southall had the Infants, Standards I and II then. And Mr Franks had Standards III, IV, V and VI and that was where it finished.

LN What was it like going to such a small school?

HOSKING Well, looking back now I realise we were lucky. We had a neighbour who had a cow. He used to bring in a big bucket of cow's milk everyday in the winter, so we had hot milk. We had our own garden beds but they were hard clay so it was a bit of hard work digging in there. I can remember it quite happily for the younger years but Mr Franks was a very, very stern and unyielding sort of teacher and I didn't last long there because I got a belting for not knowing the next word in a reading book when I didn't know it. I wasn't just not paying attention, I didn't know it. And there was another girl who lost a toenail because he pushed her into a cupboard and slammed the door on her; a boy who had his wrist dislocated because Mr Franks threw something at him because Mr Franks was misquoting the Bible and this boy was a Seventh Day Adventist boy and knew his Bible very well and corrected him. And so that was wham! And so he had a terrible reputation and when I went home with a big bruise across the backs of my legs, Dad just said 'Right. You go there tomorrow, but I'll be in and I'll talk to him.' I was terrified as Dad was six-foot-four and an ex-cop. Actually, the reason he was a cop was he'd had to leave the vineyard for three years when my brother was born because the first three years they were married they lost their crops with rain coming at the wrong time and moulding them. And they went to Fremantle and Dad was a policeman in Fremantle for three years and our cousins minded the place. Then they went back there when Bruce was a baby. But anyway, Dad was a six-foot-four cop and Mr Franks wouldn't have been up to Dad's shoulder I don't think. And I could see Dad turn up and I was just about passing out with shock. And Dad was standing there and shaking his fist and carrying on and he had a terribly loud voice. I was terrified he was going to kill Mr Franks but it ended up Mr Franks just telling me to get my things and go. So I went and I was brought straight in here to

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Guildford and the first teacher was Miss Field. And she was such a gentle, kindly soul after Mr Franks, it was really rather nice.

LN Do you remember your first day?

HOSKING Which one?

LN Coming to Guildford?

HOSKING Yes, with Miss Field. I remember Dad standing in the doorway and she wasn't any bigger than Mr Franks had been so I was pretty nervous. But although it was a straight class, it would have been Standard III, it was a big class of IIIs, but you see I'd come from a class of III, IV, V, VI, so the size of the class didn't worry me. And I seemed to make friends fairly quickly. I think kids were pretty friendly though looking at the photo I'm amazed to see all the boys with bare feet when you just can't do that these days. There's too much worry about broken glass and syringes and germs.

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LN Tell me how you got to school then each day.

HOSKING At Caversham I used to catch the bus and when I started coming here I was catching the bus at first and then I found that Barry Waldeck and his brothers, the de Burgh children and Colin Kemp, and I think his older sister, they were riding in from the Caversham area. I found quite a group of ex-Caversham students who were riding here for the same reason that I was. And I used to ride as far as where I could meet them – I think it was the corner of Benara Road and then we'd ride in together. So it was quite good fun but of course on very wet days, or days when I didn't feel like riding, we'd get the bus again. It was ten pence for an orange ticket for a week.

LN Can you describe the school as you remember it from those days, Guildford Primary School?

HOSKING Looking at the building this morning and seeing the new parts that have been added since I was here, it was a lot smaller than I remember it being. I haven't looked around the back but that was the more interesting part where I think we had lines out there where we lined up and came in from the back. And I remember a verandah with a wooden railing along and we'd come up a couple of steps there and go to our rooms. There was the big hall. Do we still have the big hall? Well my first room I was in was on the Great Eastern Highway side and the second room was at the rear of the hall and the third room I was in was also back on the Great Eastern Highway. Yes and we would have lunch in the hall if it was wet. And we were able to build bits of cubby houses in bushes down at the end – I think it's Hill Street now on the corner of Helena. We used to build bits of cubbies there and in winter we had holes for playing marbles on the Great Eastern Highway end.

LN So Market Street would have continued...it would have been quite different the rear of the school wouldn't it?

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HOSKING There was no road. Is there a road now between the school and the river?

LN No.

HOSKING No it was like that and it was quite a sheer slope down there. I remember that much. And we had a lunch shed out there too. And I know there were steps going from the passageway down towards the lunch shed. And we had the school shop across the other side of Great Eastern Highway but we weren't really allowed to go there by ourselves. We'd order lunches from there and after school I had to catch the bus on Great Eastern Highway, so if we had time before the bus came we'd trot across and get things at the shop.

LN So the lunches were brought across to the shop were they?

HOSKING Yes. Normally Mum would cut my lunch but odd occasions, like she was quite sick once, I bought my lunch and it was such a treat. It was wonderful.

LN What sort of things did you have for lunch?

HOSKING Pretty much what children would order these days. I remember pies and sausage rolls 'though I think they were homemade at the shop, and sandwiches. But I loved the salad rolls best because they had all sorts of everything in them – cheese and lettuce and all sorts of things. They were lovely and crisp. They were beautiful.

LN And tell me about the lollies that you bought from the shop.

HOSKING We had honeycomb which was made in one block and broken up after I think. So it was odd shapes of honeycomb, if I remember correctly. And the thing I liked best were liquorice squares that would have been about three centimetres square, I suppose, and one side was covered in coconut. And they were laid out like a chequerboard in the glass counter. I loved them. They were the best. We had the ordinary sorts of things that you still get: jubes and boiled sweets and so on. And I also liked the shop on the corner of – I can't remember now – down by Barker's Bridge, opposite St Matthew's church, there was a shop there that sold all sorts of exciting things too. Sometimes we would walk down as far as St Matthew's and have a swing and then catch the bus there too. So we had a lot of freedom that I don't think children these days would have. We also liked to walk down there to catch the bus because the Open Markets opposite the Guilford station and they used to sell pieces of sweet sugar cane with a hole cut in so that we could suck the sugar out and we rather liked doing that. And if we were riding, of course we would have to keep it 'til we got home. So I remember all the sweets very well.

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LN Did your day at school have a particular routine?

HOSKING Yes, very much. It was very, very structured. We didn't have a phys ed teacher as such, or art or anything. The teacher took every single class. I think sometimes they would swap so we'd have a different teacher for a thing – maybe someone who was good at sport

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would take us for softball or something. It was quite rare compared with these days. And we had the usual the children would have these days except everything was off the blackboard.

LN Did the day start with prayers?

HOSKING It did when we had a school assembly, and also the national anthem which in those days was 'God Save the Queen'. I can't remember having prayers at the beginning of the day in the classroom. I think we had assembly just one day a week. We also had scripture teachers coming in. I remember one asking us to make little dilly bags of things to send to Aboriginal communities. So Mum sewed up some little bags and we put in cakes of soap and combs and pretty things for a couple of girls and she sent those away. But really the school was structured – I mean recess and lunch were the same times as they have them these days. We did have an afternoon break. Of course there was no air conditioning so if it was hot we just sat and sweated but we were used to it. It didn't seem to worry us much. Yes, softball and netball – well we called it basketball – that we played, I was not particularly good at. I got worked into a team a couple of times. I hit the ball once in a softball match and got round. So it was fun although I was no champion.

LN Were those sports popular within the community at that time?

HOSKING Within the school but there wasn't the love or knowledge of need for sport in the community like there is now. I don't remember football, AFL or WAFL-type football, until I was about 14 actually, when I was at high school. But it may have been, I guess it was there; I just didn't know about it.

LN Were you involved in any drill or folk dancing?

HOSKING Yes, and I think that may have been when we swapped teachers a couple of times too. I remember doing folk dancing in the hall in winter. We would go out, I'm not sure how often, maybe a couple of half hours a week, for a phys ed-type activity and I seem to remember doing different activities at different points. We had sort of four activities in a circle and when the whistle blew we'd move to the next one. I remember doing that type of thing.

LN As you are a writer, do you remember things like English classes or writing?

HOSKING Not particularly although I had joined the Argonauts Club around about that time. So I remember, in particular, writing stories to send in to John K Ewers that was person - I can't think what we called him but he had an Argonaut name – and he would judge these and we would listen to hear them read out, perhaps, over the air. This is my first real memory of writing stories for anybody else though I know I wrote things to please myself before then. I can't particularly remember them at school. I remember winning a prize at Caversham for a chalk drawing once, but I wasn't particularly artistic.

LN Did you have an Argonauts name?

HOSKING Yes, I was Sirius Five and I became Double Golden Fleece Sirius Five before it folded in Western Australia when I was about 16. Mainly from writing stories I got my

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points and won books. It was a wonderful thing for kids and it's a shame we still don't have something like it to encourage children in creative activities and arts.

LN Were there other radio programs that you listened to?

HOSKING When I was small at West Swan there was the Kindergarten of the Air and I remember it was Margaret somebody, I can't think of her other name, but it was very much like you'd see in Playschool these days except it was over the air. And of course it was wartime at that stage and I remember one day because I didn't quite know what the war was about except my cousins were away fighting and it was pretty scary and I remember my grandmother telling me that her vacuum-cleaner was a bomb so I wouldn't play with it. And I remember one day listening to the Kindergarten of the Air and one of the valves in the radio blew because it was a huge radio with old valves and it was standing on a sideboard in front of a mirror. And I could see this flame reflected in the mirror and I was sure that the Japanese had struck and I was screaming! I remember that one very well. I remember another time I didn't want to go to bed so I came out and told Mum there were two Japs hiding under the bed, because we lived next-door to an airport in those days and Mum and Dad were petrified because that could quite easily have been so because we were next to the Caversham airstrip which was a war strip. I remember when I was quite small, I was only about three I think, deciding to go over there and have a look and I got as far as getting half-way through the barbed-wire fence to go across, which was quite a step from home, and an arm came round me and lifted me up and slapped my bottom and that was Dad and he made me walk all the way home. When he was very old, before he died, he apologised for smacking me that day and I said, 'Well look, you had to do it and I've never run away since. So you did a good job.' So the war was always with us though by the time I came here it was over. I remember the Victory Day we got a day off school from Caversham. I remember thinking, 'Well nothing's different! Everything's just the same,' except next time I went to Perth you could see things in shop windows; they'd had them all covered previously. And things like bobby-pins we couldn't buy. I remember Mum and Dad sending big tins, they were Nestles milk tins, full of dried fruit to friends in England who would send back things like bobby-pins and white cotton in return –and elastic. And I could go into stories about my auntie losing her panties on the step of the church one Easter morning, after she'd played the organ, and a button on the side fell off. [Laughter] There was no elastic of course.

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LN Was your brother Bruce old enough to go to war?

HOSKING No, he was too young. Dad was too old and Bruce was too young, so I was very lucky. Dad was in the United States for the First World War and busted himself to get back here to join up and by the time he got back here everyone had gone. So he was in the Home Guard and all they had to drill with was broomsticks because they had no rifles. That was Dad's war experience. And then he was too old and besides, being a farmer, he was needed on the land and Bruce was too young. I was six when the war finished so Bruce would have been eighteen. I remember the victory celebrations was the same time as Barker's Bridge was flooded and Barker's Bridge in those days was about half as high as the new one. And Bruce was determined to get to the celebrations so he put on his good clothes and put his good shoes and socks in a bag on his back, and a towel, and pedalled in as far as Barker's

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Bridge, took off his old shoes – he may have pedalled across with his old shoes I think - I don't know whether he pedalled across or walked the bike across or carried the bike or what, but he got the bike across without getting too wet and then got tidied up on the other side and rode into Guildford and caught the train into Perth and went down to the Esplanade for the victory celebrations and then did the reverse on the way home.

LN Do you have other memories of the river flooding?

HOSKING Well, not being able to get across and desperate to get into Guildford and the first time we tried it we got across with the water up round the tops of the wheels of this old Model-T Ford that Dad had but he wouldn't come home the same way. We had to drive through Middle Swan which was a change but it was a long way. I can remember after that Dad wouldn't try to cross; we always went through Middle

Swan - but that would have been before I started school, luckily. I don't remember it being flooded while I was coming here to school. It may have done but that first time was the exciting one.

LN Do you remember swimming in the river?

HOSKING Yes, yes, just near where the bridge is. We'd come in there quite often on a Sunday afternoon, in particular, and yes there'd be kids swimming there.

LN What's it like swimming in a river?

HOSKING Well it was very murky and I was a bit scared, actually, you couldn't see the bottom and I didn't like that. And I remember one time Mum and Dad taking me there on a boiling hot day and I was too scared to go in so they weren't too amused. It was sort-of murky and muddy on the bottom though nobody else seemed to mind but I have this thing for knowing where my feet are. [Laughter] I like to be in control of the situation.

LN And do you remember boats going up and down the river?

HOSKING I think there were probably boats though I don't remember motor boats at all. I remember the canoes.

LN With children or grown-ups?

HOSKING I don't remember. I think probably teenagers.

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LN If we go back into Guildford Primary School, what sort of clothes did you wear in those days?

HOSKING Just ordinary clothes. There were no uniforms, though I know one little girl that lived near me, the first year that she was at school her Mum made her a whole set of beautiful dresses, different colours with little spots on and she used to look gorgeous and it was like a little uniform with a different colour every day. And the next year her mother had a new baby and she bought her a uniform tunic and a whole set of little white blouses and that

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was it, because obviously she found it was too hard washing and ironing all these pretty dresses. But there were children like that that did wear a tunic but mostly we all wore dresses or other clothes we had. No T-shirts then. No jeans. I don't think girls wore slacks much.

LN And from your photo it looks like the girls had to have their hair tied back.

HOSKING Definitely, yes. There was a nit problem.

LN And the boys aren't wearing shoes.

HOSKING Mostly no.

LN Did the girls wear shoes?

HOSKING Well, I know I did and I think my friends did but I think the feeling was that boys were rough and wild anyway so it didn't matter if they got their feet dirty.

LN In the classroom, can you describe the sorts of things you might have done that involved rote learning, which is something we don't see in classrooms anymore?

HOSKING Drilling tables, we'd say the tables. And spelling I also think we would recite it off, spell it off from the board. I think we had a spelling book of words to learn though I don't remember the content very well. But reading books: we had the old, they were green readers and red readers. I think the red came first and the green came second. And that reader was sort-of spread over most of a term, and there were three terms. And we'd have library books as well. The library books were just a class library, there was no central library.

LN And did you do recitation or drama?

HOSKING Oh yes, we had to learn a lot of poetry, and that extended through into high school in those days. And I vaguely remember plays but it isn't a big memory. I was always very shy so I probably didn't get picked to be in anything. I remember stories like Brer Rabbit, my teacher reading us those. And I remember she had a book called 'Hygiene'. That was Miss Nairn in Standard V, a book called 'Hygiene' and there was a girl jumping on it [the cover] and I just thought that her name must have been Giene because she was up high. So even though I was Standard V, we were all pretty naïve and easily taken in.

LN Did you have hygiene inspections at all?

HOSKING Oh yes, fingernails – clean handkerchief, fingernails and pencils sharpened. Every morning they had to be checked. There were no tissues naturally.

LN So everyone used handkerchiefs?

HOSKING Yes and if you didn't have one you were in trouble. We also had wood fires in the winter too.

LN And who prepared the fires, do you know?

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HOSKING I've got a feeling that in some cases the boys may have done it or they at least would have brought in the wood. And also cleaners may have done some of that.

LN *Do you remember if you can remember any of the teachers, can you describe them, or just what they looked like?*

HOSKING Well Miss Field I remember being not much taller than I was, though I was tall for my age, and sort-of cuddly and friendly and nice and a lovely smile. And I think she was grey-haired. The next teacher who's name – I can't think why it escapes me because we really loved her –but I remember her being quite young and pretty and rode a bike to school.

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LN We've just turned the recorder back on after a short pause to look up some staff names and Nola would you please describe Henry Heseltine, the principal at the time, for me please, in 1949?

HOSKING I remember him mostly as being a quite authoritative manner about him and sort-of terribly important and I stayed out of his way. I remember him being very pleasant as well. I remember Mr Bradley used to get us lined up for assemblies. Miss Nairn I had in 1950 and she was tall and dark-haired and quite slender and had a book called 'Hygiene' and I can remember her with that. I remember her getting quite angry and yelling but with the number of the children in the class that's not surprising. Miss Field I remember from '48 being quite smallish and cuddly and comfortably-covered, but I wouldn't call her fat, and very pleasant and smiley and kind and I **think** Mrs Finney would have been the one I had in 1949. I'm not very certain. And she was very pleasant and very pretty and quite newly married and we used to ride

our bikes to meet her when she rode to school in the mornings until Mr Heseltine put a stop to it because, I guess, he was afraid of one of us getting killed on the road.

LN And you were there in 1948 when Cecil Kershaw was principal?

HOSKING Yes, I remember Mr Kershaw there then and I'm wondering if, when it says there 'on leave' [from 'Staff and Staffing', Education Department] I wonder if he left during the year and Mr Heseltine may have come during that year, actually, because he was in my memory but I remember Mr Heseltine better.

LN The children that were at the school, were there many migrant children?

HOSKING Yes there were quite a lot. There was a migrant camp in South Guildford and they used to come by bus and I had the impression the camp was only just over the other side of the river but I think it must have been a bit further than that if they came by bus. And they seemed to be a bit nervous and shy at first but joined in pretty quickly. I don't remember them having accents at all, so I guess at that age we just accepted that type of thing without questioning it.

LN So do you remember if any children were unable to speak English?

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HOSKING No, they seemed to be mostly British migrants, though where I lived in West Swan we had a lot of Italian and Yugoslav people with vineyards around there. I remember one man, Mr Pavlinovich, had a huge, long name. He put up a mail box and he tried to write it on; he couldn't fit it all on. He had to squeeze up the end to get it on. We also had Pevaks living opposite and Beros and they were all Yugoslav or Italian. I don't remember those in my classes in any case, but definitely British migrants.

LN And you've told me there was an aeroplane crash.

HOSKING Yes, at the migrant camp – either at it or very close to it. Because I remember hearing on the news on the radio that there was a terrible uproar at the migrant camp and people were panic-stricken and I was a bit scared to come to school in case any of the friends I had amongst the migrant children might have been injured. But they all came just as usual and they were full of stories about it but none of them was hurt. Apparently it was passengers on the plane injured and killed but not anyone at the migrant camp and I can't remember which year that would have been. I think it may have been '48, actually.

LN Were there Aboriginal children at the school?

HOSKING I don't remember them. I think there probably must have been and I'm fairly sure there were at Caversham but I don't remember them in particular. We had a lot of Aboriginal people who used to pick grapes for my father in the summer. We used to have one family that came back every time and I remember Jack was the Dad but Jack didn't work. [mobile phone interference] And he had a couple of wives, actually, and quite a few older children and they would do the picking and my Dad said to him one day, 'Why don't you pick? It's two and six a bucket,' and Jack said, 'No I don't need to work. I've got plenty of child endowment.' But his ladies and the children were all beautifully dressed and nicely spoken and I used to play with the children and Mum was always scared I'd get nits. I never did. But I don't actually remember them at the school. Two dark-skinned girls we had in the class I think were both from Burma.

TRACK 11

LN Tell me, on another tack, tell me about your first experience with sticky-tape.

HOSKING Oh that was when the library books in the room were starting to fall apart and I know it was either Miss Field or Miss Nairn, I can't remember which, sent one of the boys down the street to get sticky-tape. And she wouldn't let him cross the Great Eastern Highway. She sent him across Helena Street

and there was a shop just further down there apparently that sold it. And he came back with sticky-tape and we were fascinated, mending the books with sticky-tape.

LN How had things been mended before that, do you recall?

HOSKING My aunts, when they wanted to mend their sheets of music – because you'd get music books with stitches through the middle and they'd start falling apart – and they would bind them with ribbon and sew it on. I think it was either like that, that we would mend books, or alternately you'd get starch paste, made with the starch that mothers put in clothes

TRACK 11 Cont.

to make them look nice, and we'd boil that up and make a thin starch mixture and use it as glue and put in a few drops of Dettol so it wouldn't go bad and so it wouldn't attract the mice. And we'd cut slim strips of paper, greaseproof wrapping paper I think we'd use, and glue the pages across as if it was sticky-tape except it would be a strip of white paper. Or occasionally brown paper, if we were desperate.

LN Of course.

Now you've also told me that you remember fetes.

HOSKING Yes, yes I remember them in front of the school on Helena Street and we would have stalls set up and also we'd have decorated bike competitions which in my year Lesley-Gaye Gibson always won because they had a marvellous rose garden. And her father was a butcher and he'd spend the day before the fete decorating her bike magnificently with climbing roses and put it in the cool room overnight and she would come with this fantastic bike. None of us could touch her. She always won. And we also had best dressed doll competitions, which I won one year.

LN Tell me about that doll 'Alice'.

HOSKING My aunt went to America. My aunt's husband at that stage was the governor of the Reserve Bank. I think it was called the Commonwealth Bank back then. He had been in charge of rationing during the war – it was Dr Coombs – and he went from being in charge of rationing to being a governor of the Commonwealth Bank and he had business in America and I think it was New York they went to, and Auntie promised me a doll. In those days dolls were – just straight after the war – made of mums' old stockings usually but this doll was rather special because it was china. I've still got it. It has a calico body, a face and arms from the elbow down and legs from the knee down made of china and it said 'Mama', which was something special. I'd heard of them but I'd never seen one, and it had a beautifully curled little wig and a pretty little face and I thought it was wonderful. And it was dressed very lavishly in pink filmy-sort-of material with a silk, pink petticoat under it and a big, white collar. And Alice won the prize Best Dressed Doll the following year. I think that was '48 actually, or it may have been '49.

LN With the decorated bike competitions, did everyone enter that? Did everyone have a bike?

HOSKING Everyone who had a bike. Yes, some of them were very quickly thrown together and obviously the kid would have done its best. There were a few balloons and that type of thing and a lot of crepe-paper streamers used and artificial flowers. And mostly, I would say, everyone who had a bike entered, and I'm pretty sure it was done in year groups so there must have been quite a few from each class. I **think** we had only one class to each year; from the look of the list of the teachers, I'd say it was that.

LN And did everyone ride two-wheeler bikes? Were there tricycles as well?

HOSKING No, they were all two-wheelers. And there were no such things as training-wheels in those days.

TRACK 12

LN Tell me what it was like for someone who came to visit Guildford from West Swan to visit Guildford as a child.

HOSKING It was quite wildly exciting because there were shops and we had no shops to speak of out there. If I could see my parents now and tell them there's a chocolate factory very close to our old house, they'd probably believe me because they were nice people, but they'd be amazed! There was just **nothing** except farm houses and coming into Guildford was very special because there was shops, so I really loved it for that reason. There were the packing sheds on the way in. The packing sheds were where Dad would deliver his dried fruit. They were round about where the Reid Highway goes through these days, on the right going in towards Guildford. And in Guildford of course the railway station was there which was a ticket to freedom because we could go and see Grandma or go to Perth. Occasionally we'd go to Perth and then get the bus and go out to Waterman's which was the best of the lot! And I liked the shops in Guildford, of course, because you bought pretty dresses and you bought food! I remember being upset one year because they had a bill at C & G stores. They had to put stuff 'on tick' because the carnations had finished and the grapes hadn't come in. So it was something you tried terribly hard not to do; it was terribly embarrassing to have a bill. C & G's I think is where we did the most of our shopping. Tuckers, opposite the Guildford station was where you went for clothes and cotton and wool and haberdashery-types of things. The little shop on the corner, opposite the Post Office and St Matthew's – the corner opposite both of those – was a deli which I loved because Mum would stand and talk to the lady owner for quite a while and [mobile phone interference] we'd have quite a chat session and they sold sweets of course too. I had my first drink of Passiona, or something that was a passionfruit drink, there. Going on up to Midland, was probably my favourite shop of all. It was under the Town Hall, there was the shop that sold the most wonderful ice blocks that had a layer of crushed fruit and ice cream in the middle. And I'd go to ballet lessons on Saturday afternoon and after that Mum and I would get ourselves one of these wonderful ice blocks, and I've never seen anything so great since!

LN So you would drive to Guildford to catch the train?

HOSKING Yes.

LN People didn't drive on then – most people would catch the train?

HOSKING I believe so, yes, and remember it wasn't long since the war so I don't think petrol was all that lavishly consumed. We were very careful of everything. I remember for my sixth birthday I got an apron that was heart-shaped. I thought it was wonderful. That was sort-of about the level of what we would get for birthdays and Christmases, or a doll made of Mum's old stockings.

TRACK 13

LN What would you do on the weekends?

HOSKING Well, I would play at home at West Swan. I would play with dolls and I'd make up stories though they were always doing something. I wasn't just dressing them to see

TRACK 13 Cont.

them get dressed up like girls do these days. There were no Barbie dolls of course. At one stage, I remember sitting with my dolls on a seat we had under our trellis we had leading from the back door. I was sitting there for ages until Mum came out and said, 'What are you doing?' And I said, 'We're all waiting for the bus. We're going to the beach.' Then when they got to the beach, all they had to do was turn around and they'd be facing the lawn and I'd put all their swim-suits on them and I'd drop them face-down on the lawn and they'd be swimming. So that was the type of thing and of course drawing and once I'd joined the Argonauts I'd spend the whole weekend writing stories and making up poetry to send into there. And I did a lot of reading. Dad would go to second-hand book shops and bring home books from there. So I've got things like Australian Girls' Annuals was my favourite as I got a little older.

LN Did you read comics?

HOSKING Yes but not a lot. They were there but I didn't see a lot of them. We saved wherever we could and they were probably an extra expense. Once I was at the age of about 12, we went to live at Waterman, I started reading the 'Girls' Crystal' which was a weekly girls' comic and story thing.

LN How do you think Guildford's changed in your opinion?

HOSKING Well around the railway station area, it's almost identical – to the point when my poor old Dad, when he got Alzheimer's going back about twenty years, he thought it was the same. He would get a bus from Waterman and get it into Perth. It'd stop right next to the station and he'd hear the trains. He'd get on the train in Perth and go to Guildford and get out and walk to West Swan. The police would have to take him home. So twenty years ago there was very, very little change and I still see around the Guildford station area and around the church – the St Matthew's area – very little change. And I think it's good really. And a lot of the old houses are still here. I think once you get up around Midland and north of there, and east, you see some changes. But I find this area – well, the school has grown in proportion, but the old houses that have been lovingly restored and so on very much the same. Same trees.

LN Well, finally, looking back on your childhood, what do you think was the best thing about coming to Guildford Primary School?

HOSKING Well I think friendships, really. I had a lot of friends. I remember them a lot more clearly than the friends I had at Caversham, but of course I was older. And the games we played and the fetes, of course, and yes I think that is really it: friendships mainly.

LN Well thank you very much for sharing your wonderful stories.

HOSKING Thank you.