

Interviewee: Brenda McIntosh (BM)	Interviewer: Caroline Milligan (CM)
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BM: I went to Glasgow School of Art, yes, and enjoyed my time there. I specialised in textile and printing which was very helpful from my mother's point to view because having lived close to Manchester and worked in Manchester, she had lot of friends who were in the business of textiles and I was able to tell her about, all about it and she was able to enjoy that side of things. So, it built up a talking relationship with my mother which I hardly had had before, you know, we were always working, not talking so much. And when I finished my degree at Glasgow School of Art, which wasn't at all as I imagined it, the bell went at nine o'clock and you had to be there and bells went during the day and you changed...

MM: Really?

BM: ...yes, it was just like school all over again, which was good.

MM: Yea.

BM: I was in such a miss, just at that time, it was good to be told what to do and the lecturers were more like teachers than I heard lecturers were supposed to be and discovered were later on. So, it was very regimented at that time, [REDACTED] except once a week he gave a very, very long lecture [sighs], [laughter] on drawing and painting but mainly painters and we all went into the lecture theatre and the lights went off and he turned on and the majority of us fell asleep [laughter]. So, we organised it, a little group of us, that one person was detailed each week to stay awake and take the notes and the rest of us just fell asleep because it really was very hard work. Behaving, at that time in our lives, like school children so the following day we were all busy scribbling, you know, in our break times we were scribbling down the notes from the previous night's lecture. I don't know if he ever realised, it was really dark, did we snore? I don't know [laughter].

MM: Probably very quietly.

BM: Very quietly, yes, where was I? That's what Art School was like and our lecturers were pretty seriously out to get every drop of obedience out of us into giving our best performances, I think they were all judged as well, perhaps we didn't realise it at the time.

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So, at the end of that I decided I would become a teacher, because I did want to marry and I did marry at the end of my Art School course, and I did want to have children and my two childless aunts had always told me what a great thing it was for their compatriots who were married and had children that they were able to have the school holidays with their families and that school hours suited school children and so on, so I was pretty well brainwashed that if I wanted to have children I really ought to be a teacher and I'd been teaching, for instance, from when I was about thirteen, my Guide Patrol, so I fell into it quite happily. My mother was pleased.

CM: And what age children did you teach?

BM: Well, I trained as an art teacher but, in my time, I've taught all ages of children. At one point when I was not well, I was having a bad pregnancy, I just made a little nursery school for all the children in the village I was living in, pre-school, and taught them all how to read and count and the infant teacher was absolutely appalled when she got this load of little children who could read and who could count and I got a good telling-off *[laughter]*. Luckily, she was a Roman Catholic nun so she didn't use swear words *[laughter]*. But I had such fun with those nursery school children. However, I dragged myself back to teaching normal.

CM: So, where were you based at this point, were you still up in Edinburgh, or Glasgow, or had you come back-?

BM: Well, I finished my degree course at Glasgow and then we moved to Edinburgh so that my husband could be at Coates Hall College, training to be a minister, so we were there for another year, if not two, I can't quite remember, I didn't really like Edinburgh very much, good exhibitions but not as good as Glasgow *[laughter]*.

MM: Well.

BM: Funny neighbours, funny neighbours, who had their own lives, you know, and wanted us to have ours, not theirs. I did have one absolute peak experience in Edinburgh. We had a house-warming party, the Bishop of Dumfries and Galloway owned a flat in Edinburgh and he let us have it rent-free so we had this house warming and we had everybody that I knew in Edinburgh, who'd been at school with me, and everybody who was a student at the college with my husband that was broadminded and this girl came and my husband said to me 'Can she bring her brothers?' and I said 'Yes, of course.'

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And so all three of them came and they were triplets and she told me her name and she said 'My mother comes from Glasgow'. Now, how did Bridge of Weir come into it? The name Bridge of Weir

came into it, she must have said 'My mother comes from Glasgow' and I must have said 'Oh well, I studied in Glasgow but I spent lots of weekends at Bridge of Weir', something like that. And she said 'Oh my mother was once engaged to a young man from Bridge of Weir and they were going to be married when he came back from the Army and I remembered then, it clicked with my mother saying, that my father had once been engaged to a girl in Glasgow, yes, but when he realised he was going to be blind and disabled, he had written to her, or one of the ladies had written to, his carers had written to her, to say she was released from the engagement and that when I was born, they remained friends, they remained correspondents, and mother met them when she had to live in Bridge of Weir for a year, looking after family business, and when I was born Mum and Dad sent a telegram to her to say 'Number two is here and she's a girl' and they got a telegram back within, they knew, Mum knew that she was pregnant at the same time and they got a telegram back saying 'We've got triplets, two boys and a girl' and it clicked instantly and this girl said she knew Bridge of Weir, and she said 'We're triplets' and I looked at them and they were the same age as me, nearly. So, wasn't that amazing? That's probably one of the most amazing things.

MM: That's astonishing.

BM: Yes.

MM: And did you keep in touch with them at all?

BM: Yes, we kept in touch until we went to Africa and I can't remember when we lost touch, after Africa we moved around a great deal, from parish to parish.

MM: It's astonishing though, isn't it?

BM: But it was astonishing, yes. I think possibly I lost their name and address and recently I've been trying to remember names, it's too late, I should have written down all the names I remembered. But, yes, but we had a wonderful evening, that evening.

CM: And then so, then after Edinburgh did you-?

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BM: After Edinburgh to Ayr, my husband got a parish in Ayr and I taught in Dalmellington, quite a long journey every day but it was worth it. And then I taught in Ayr itself and then from Ayr we went out to the Transkei, you would see it recently on television, where Mandela was born and was buried, it was lovely to see it again. And from Transkei we came back to Scotland, to Fife where I had loads of relatives, which was nice to see them again, and then to Stonehaven, he went back to University, in

Aberdeen, where he originated and that's where our marriage broke up, I think, *[laughs]* too many girls at University, and I was teaching in Stonehaven at the time, so can't remember what happened after that.

CM: So then-?

BM: We led our own lives and I met a very nice second husband that I had a lot in common with, he was from Cumbria and we'd had one adopted child, we adopted before we went to Africa because we knew that if we went to Africa childless we would not be able to adopt in Africa so everybody so everyone wants their own children or somebody else's children in Africa, they're so disposable, horrible thing to say, but, you know. And then we had, I had a very surprise diagnosis from a little Jewish doctor that if he took, removed my thyroid, I had a goitre that he'd spotted and I never thought about, then I might become fertile and sure enough I had three children after that.

End of interview.