

The Nursery School Teachers' College

A life history

Dr Leone Huntsman



Cover images:

Left: Second year students, 1936. Taken at the Nursery School Training Centre, Woolloomooloo.

Middle: 'The Retreat', Nursery School Training College, 1946.

Right: Alison Thomas (née Colvin), former student and teacher, conducting a demonstration lesson for three year olds at the Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School, c.1965.



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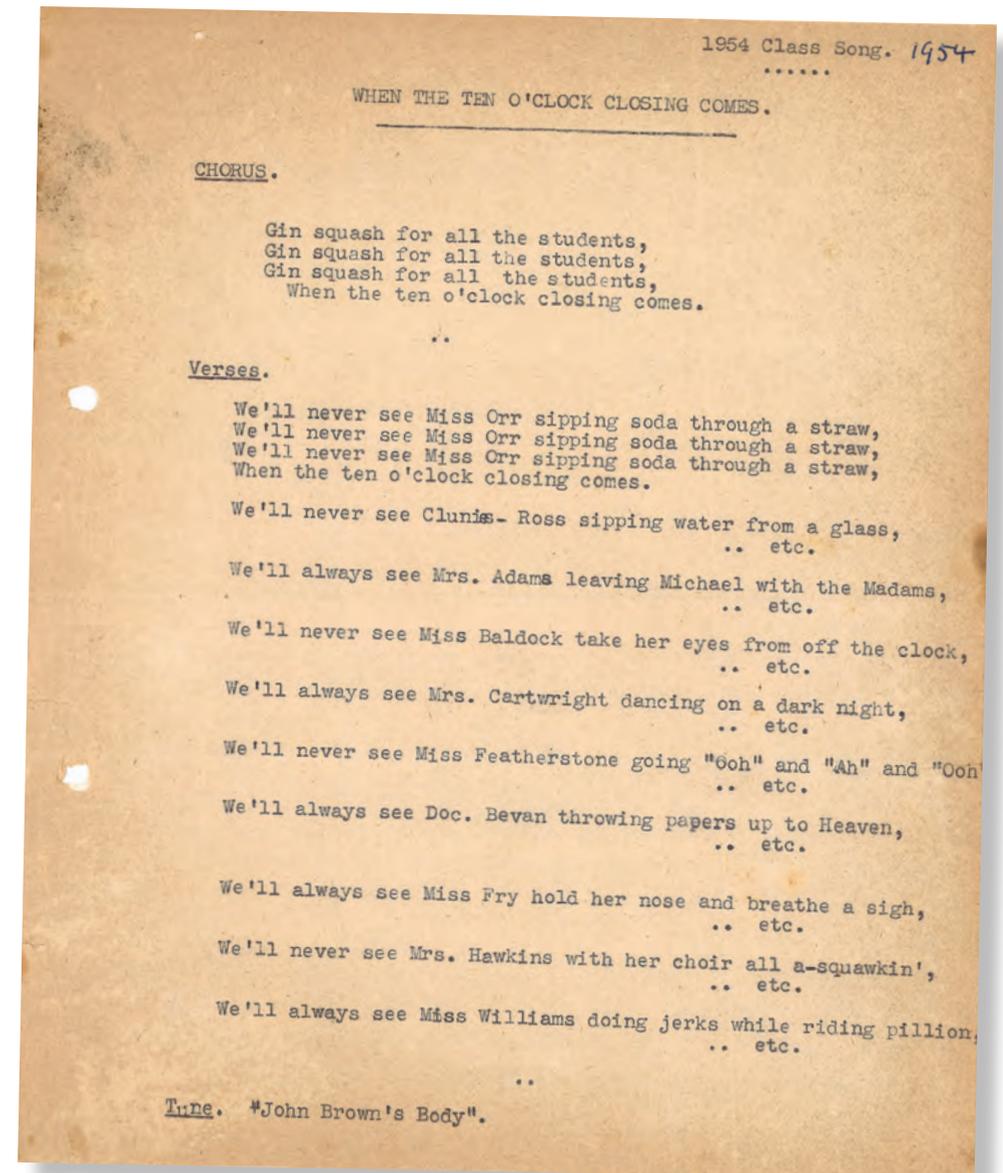
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1954 class song, written by students of the Nursery School Training College.

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1958 graduation of students, Nursery School Training College.



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Introduction

In the early 1930s, the Sydney Day Nursery Association sought to train teachers for its newly established nursery schools in what was known in its later years as the Nursery School Teachers' College. This book attempts to tell the story of the College, to celebrate its achievements and to commemorate those who taught, learnt and worked there.

In writing this history of the Nursery School Teachers' College (NSTC), my perspective is that of both an insider and an outsider. I joined the College staff in 1974 and worked there until its incorporation into Macquarie University was almost complete. Fascinated by the different personalities of our five young children, I had undertaken a Master's degree in child development at Macquarie University while tutoring there; I also became secretary of our local community kindergarten during this period. I was so impressed by the Director's professionalism and the insights she shared into the behaviour of our children that when I saw an advertisement for a lecturer in child development at the Nursery School Teachers' College, I decided to apply.

I had never heard of the Nursery School Teachers' College until then, and I suspect this was true of most Sydneysiders. There were few child care centres in those days, compared with their ubiquity today; the influx of married women into the workforce was just beginning, and most people disapproved of the idea of leaving very young children in the care of strangers (although this was beginning to change with the rise of the feminist

movement and the campaign of prominent feminist advocates for universal, 24-hour child care). No-one in my generation of my extended family had been to preschool, let alone attended a child care centre.

So I entered an unfamiliar culture, where staff and students spoke of the just-retired Principal, Joan Fry, in reverential tones and the range of courses taught were a mixture of the practical and the academic. The excellent working conditions within the 'new College', the way in which staff planned and taught courses co-operatively — all contributed to what was a fruitful and satisfying period of my working life. Having been a mature age student myself, I felt empathy with students in a similar situation.

Every staff member was required to visit centres to advise students doing their 'prac teaching', and I ended each period of practice teaching exhausted but full of admiration for the dedication of directors and centre staff, and the patience and attention to detail with which College staff, particularly those who had worked in centres themselves, sought to help and guide students. I did my best to learn from their example, and came to



Children at the Melanie Alexander Nursery School, c.1959. The Retreat at Burren Street is in the background.

realise how much more there was to teaching even very young children than met the eye, and how apparently simple experiences were carefully designed to build up and enrich the children's competence and understanding

of their world. I admired the way programming could be done not only for groups but for individuals, and how all this could be managed amidst the multitude of interactions that occurred daily in every centre.

I was inspired to write this history by being associated with the 75th anniversary of the first graduates of NSTC. At the joyful reunion sponsored by SDN Children's Services, I met many fine ex-students, some for the first time and some I remembered from College, and I was reminded yet again of their commitment to early childhood education, a commitment that is expressed in the College motto: *Pro Parvis Optima: For the little ones, the best.*

I have also been engaged in recent years by the ups and downs of funding for child care, the fierce debates that rage about the value of trained staff and the expense of caring for children, and the contest over the responsibilities of parents, society and government with regard to these matters. I have so often seen fine teachers who are 'grounded' and secure in knowledge of the importance of what they do, despite rates of pay that compare unfavourably with those associated with much less important work. It is just as well salary levels do not necessarily relate to a sense of satisfaction in a job worth doing and a job well done, otherwise few would undertake the work! It angers me that the value of trained staff can be so easily dismissed by many with the words 'anyone can look after babies and little children'.

But I have also seen that the skills of what I might call the craft of teaching need to have been instilled and thoroughly learned during training and applied in working with children, otherwise the centre's activities can simply be a case of 'getting through the day'. This persuades me that the quality of teacher preparation is critical. For those attempting to evaluate the quality of teacher education past and present, and concerned



Students at morning tea, Nursery School Training College, 1965.

by the underperformance of Australian schoolchildren when judged by international standards, this history of a small single-purpose College dedicated to the preparation of early childhood teachers may prove an interesting case study.

It is also an example, as was the history of the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, of the extraordinary talents, hard work and tenacity of the (mainly) women who founded the College and kept it going. At the time I joined the staff I was vaguely aware of some rather elderly people on the College Council who were helping to engineer the separation of the College from the Association. My research subsequently has make

me realise how remarkable they and their predecessors were, yet how unrecognised by society in general. To quote Wendy McCarthy in the foreword to Jan Roberts' book on Maybanke Anderson, another great early feminist and pioneer of early childhood education: 'Why am I continually surprised that women are invisible?'

Through my work in early childhood teacher education I have come to know some truly remarkable women. I hope that the publication of this book renders these women, and those who preceded them, a little less invisible.

Chapter 1

The Nursery School Teachers' College: a life history

We know that for yourself and for your Association, this is the fulfillment of a long cherished hope. We feel sure that the nursery school movement will be a success in every way.¹ An auspicious start and one full of hope and expectation. The enthusiasm was well placed, for it portrayed the significance of what had begun, namely the foundations of the Nursery School Teachers' College.

The author of such praise, Ms Aileen Fitzgerald, written in October 1931 in her role as Secretary of the Board of Social Studies and Training at the University of Sydney, knew how much this meant to the recipient. For Lady Dorette McCallum, President of the Sydney Day Nursery Association², it marked the reality of a vision she had striven for since 1921.

For the first 26 years of its existence, the Association (today known as SDN Children's Services) focused on nurturing and caring for the babies and toddlers of working mothers in the poorest suburbs of Sydney. But it gradually aspired to do more, namely bridging 'the gap that has existed between Infant Welfare and Kindergarten'.³

To appreciate what started as a project, then grew into an experiment, and finally became a 'movement', it is useful to understand a little about the nature of society in Australia at this time.

The late nineteenth century was a time of growing awareness among the wealthier classes of the miserable conditions in which so many of their countrymen

lived, and of intense debate for and against the need for social and political reform — debate that was often energetically translated into action. Describing late nineteenth century Britain, one writer commented that 'charity saturated people's lives'. Altogether around 500,000 women were working 'continuously and semi-professionally' as volunteers in philanthropic institutions by the end of the century.⁴

As in Britain, so in Australia. During the 1880s women formed a feminist network in NSW. Among their aims were the achievement of reforms in matters such as female suffrage, laws concerning women and children, child welfare, and the need for kindergartens. Prominent members included Mary Windeyer; her daughter Margaret; Louisa Lawson, mother of poet Henry Lawson; and Maybanke Anderson, great educational pioneer, social reformer, and founding president of the Kindergarten Union.

Mary Windeyer was the wife of NSW Attorney-General, William Charles Windeyer, who steered the passage of the Married Women's Property Act

through Parliament into law in 1892, thereby giving married women the right to their own earnings and property. There was much opposition to the Bill and debate dragged on for years, with many letters to the newspaper describing the sufferings of deserted women and children. This helped to put the needs of such families into the public spotlight.

In the mid-1890s, Margaret Windeyer went to the United States and Canada and became a friend of John Dewey and his family. Dewey (1859–1952) was an American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer whose ideas were extremely influential in educational and social reform.

Dewey was very interested in the ideas of Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852), 'the father of the Kindergarten'. In 1837 Froebel had founded a care, playing and activity institute for young children in Germany. He emphasised the importance of activity in learning in early childhood: singing, dancing and gardening were prominent activities in this first kindergarten. One of Froebel's students inspired Elizabeth Peabody to found the first English-speaking kindergarten in America, and so the kindergarten movement spread throughout the USA from its beginnings in Europe.

Margaret Windeyer undertook Kindergarten training in New York and Boston, returning to Sydney from America early in 1895. By July 1895 the Kindergarten Union of NSW (KU) was founded, its urgent aim 'To open Free Kindergartens wherever possible in poor

Ida Leonard's (née Rayward) graduation badge, 1936



neighbourhoods'⁵. The Kindergarten Union established its Kindergarten Training College, and the first Free Kindergarten opened in 1896 at Charles Street, Woolloomooloo.

In 1903, the Kindergarten Union confirmed that no children under the age of three were to be admitted to its kindergartens, because their students were trained as teachers, not nurses. Mothers for whom kindergarten for their preschool children had been a boon now found their older children were welcome, but little brothers and sisters were not.

This exclusion coincided with the 1904 *Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birth-Rate and on the Mortality of Infants in New South Wales*, which revealed a shockingly high rate of infant mortality, particularly among children who had been placed in institutions, often because their mothers could not afford to keep them. Awareness of the plight of deserted and widowed women was already in the spotlight; now horror at the death rate among children whose mothers had been forced to place them in institutions, together with the restriction of access to the new and valued kindergartens, led politically and socially aware women to take concerted and decisive action.

A breakaway movement from the Kindergarten Union began to take shape. The group held its first meeting on 3 August 1905 at the premises of the Kindergarten Training College at Roslyn Gardens, Darlinghurst. The aim of those attending was to establish a crèche for the children of poor working mothers. Many of those

who attended the meeting were members of the Kindergarten Union.

The new movement called itself the Sydney Crèche Association, but changed its name to the Sydney Day Nursery Association in February 1906, after it was realised that many people didn't know what 'crèche' meant. Its first Honorary Secretary, Mrs Dane, had been Acting Principal of the Kindergarten Training College (KTC) in 1901. Mrs Davenport, President of the Association had served as KU's Honorary Secretary. Three members of the Advisory Committee also came from the KTC. It is not surprising then, that students from the Kindergarten Training College were sent to the Association's first day nursery in Woolloomooloo to 'amuse the children'.

In the early years of the Association's existence, keeping children safe, clean and properly fed in the Day Nurseries was the overriding concern. However, Executive Committee members and staff in particular grew increasingly aware of the many ways in which children were deprived, above and beyond lack of life's basic necessities:

I am constantly coming into contact with homes where there is not enough money to buy the necessary comforts and food; not enough money for proper lighting facilities, thus compelling the children to read or study in the dim light [...] So the lives of the children are barren of comforts and joy, and there is nothing under God's blue sky so tragic as a joyless child. Many of the bairns that come to us have to be taught to play. Can you in your wildest dreams imagine anything so tragic?'⁶

In an effort to enhance 'the future welfare' of the children, the Association arranged that wherever there

In 1920–21 the Association's Annual Report listed its aims as follows:

To help working mothers who are trying to help themselves

To do this by caring for their infants and children under school age during working hours

To promote the health, happiness and future welfare of these little ones.

was a Free KU Kindergarten near a nursery school, children over three attended the Kindergarten for part of the day. At their Chippendale Nursery in 1916 for example, the Branch Committee stated that 'all children over three (3) years attend the 'Golden Fleece Kindergarten' for half a day'.⁷

Access to a local kindergarten was not always available. At the Forest Lodge Nursery in 1915–16:

'The older children badly needed some occupation and outlet for their energies, and unfortunately there was not a Kindergarten near enough to conveniently send them...'

So the Association took steps to remedy this situation:

'... the Committee agreed that the only thing to do was to engage a Kindergarten of our own, and we feel fully repaid for the venture, as the improvement in the manners and deportment of the children is certainly marvellous'.⁸

'Caring' thus meant much more than mere physical care, an idea spelt out in more detail in the 1928–29 and 1929–30 Annual Reports:

THE BOARD OF SOCIAL STUDY AND TRAINING OF NEW SOUTH WALES



WE HEREBY CERTIFY that *Jessie Constance Hutchinson*
has fulfilled all the requirements of the Board of Social Study and Training
of New South Wales for the Special Course in *Nursery School Work*.

A. Thomas Lovell
President
Mildred Munnis
Vice-President

Dated this *Twentyeighth* day of *November* 1935.
Mary C. ...
Secretary

Board of Social Study and Training of NSW certificate for Miss J Hutchinson, one of the first two students to receive practical nursery school training at Woolloomooloo, November 1935.⁹

... Day Nurseries do not exist merely for the purpose of 'minding' children [...] The Sydney Day Nurseries are given the opportunity to render an invaluable service to the community — that of caring for the child of pre-school age. Every effort is made [...] to safeguard the future as well as the present welfare of the little ones'.¹⁰

It is not enough to take a child and feed him and keep him clean and safe during the hours of separation from his mother. Much more is needed [...] the kind of play that will help him to develop intelligently and the wise handling that will help him adjust himself easily to his surroundings'.¹¹

Arrangements for children from the Sydney Day Nursery Association to attend the Free Kindergartens were often difficult to sustain however, and tensions between the two organisations arose. There was constant bickering over who should pay for what, and the Kindergarten teachers objected to the irregular attendance of the Association's children, their lack of compliance with rules, and their bright red 'nursery uniforms'. In Jan Kelly's words, 'the Kindergarten teachers continuously rejected the day nursery children'.¹² It became apparent that the Association would have to find other ways of providing the experiences they had sought from the Kindergartens for the children in their care.¹³

During the 1920s, the Association members, led by longtime Chairman of the Executive Committee Mrs (later Lady) Dorette MacCallum,¹⁴ began to look with interest at the Nursery School movements in England and America as models that might be adapted here to provide teachers for the nurseries. In the US many universities had established centres for the purposes of research and teaching in early childhood development, and these research centres established nursery schools for children from 18 months to school age.

A different course had been followed in the UK, where special nursery school teacher training programs had been set up — at the Rachel McMillan College in Deptford, by Margaret McMillan¹⁵, and at Gipsy Hill Training College, whose founding Principal, Lillian de Lissa, had trained at the Sydney Kindergarten Training College and was inspired to work with poor children

by the Woolloomooloo Free Kindergarten. There were no tuition fees at these Colleges as they had financial assistance provided by the government. Salaries of Nursery School teachers were not less than those for teachers in state elementary schools.¹⁶ It was significant that the McMillan sisters also were driven to set up their Nursery School and Training Centre by their experiences working with the poor — Rachel as a sanitation inspector and Margaret as a schools visitor. They set up an open-air nursery, later adding a training centre for teachers who wanted to work with disadvantaged children.¹⁷

A member of Sydney's professional and social elite (her husband Sir Mungo MacCallum was the Foundation Professor of Modern Languages and Literature at Sydney University and later Chancellor of the University), Lady MacCallum devoted much of her formidable energy to working for the underprivileged. The University Settlement, founded to assist 'anyone requiring and deserving help', purchased a property at Chippendale in 1925 thanks to the financial assistance of Lady MacCallum. She was also an active supporter of the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies, the New South Wales Society for Crippled Children, and played a significant role in the Ashfield Infants Home, which cared for babies who were foundlings or whose parents could not look after them.

Small wonder then that with its roots in women's activism and social welfare, the Association's Executive Committee deemed the British model more fitted to its needs. The linking of care and education was just what they were looking for. Members started gathering information about the English nursery school teacher training programs, and in 1930 the idea of initiating a course of teacher training in Nursery School work was floated. It must have seemed like a gift from heaven when the following year, Lady MacCallum met a Mrs Hamilton from the US, who had trained with Margaret



Second year students, 1936. Taken at the Nursery School Training Centre, Woolloomooloo.

McMillan in the UK, and who volunteered to organise and conduct a demonstration Nursery School at the Woolloomooloo Day Nursery during her stay in Sydney. The Association gratefully accepted this offer and a Nursery School opened on 6 October 1931. The success of this initiative emboldened the Association to find a way to keep the Nursery School going after she left.

Lady MacCallum led other key supporters in pledging donations towards a year's salary for a new teacher from

overseas, there being no qualified nursery school teachers here. Mrs McElhone, Vice-President of the Association, cabled the Nursery School Association of Great Britain asking for their assistance in finding a suitable teacher 'to train students and undertake pioneer work on loan for twelve months'. They found Winifred Gillespie, a Rachel McMillan graduate with a Montessori diploma, and she arrived in Sydney in 1932.

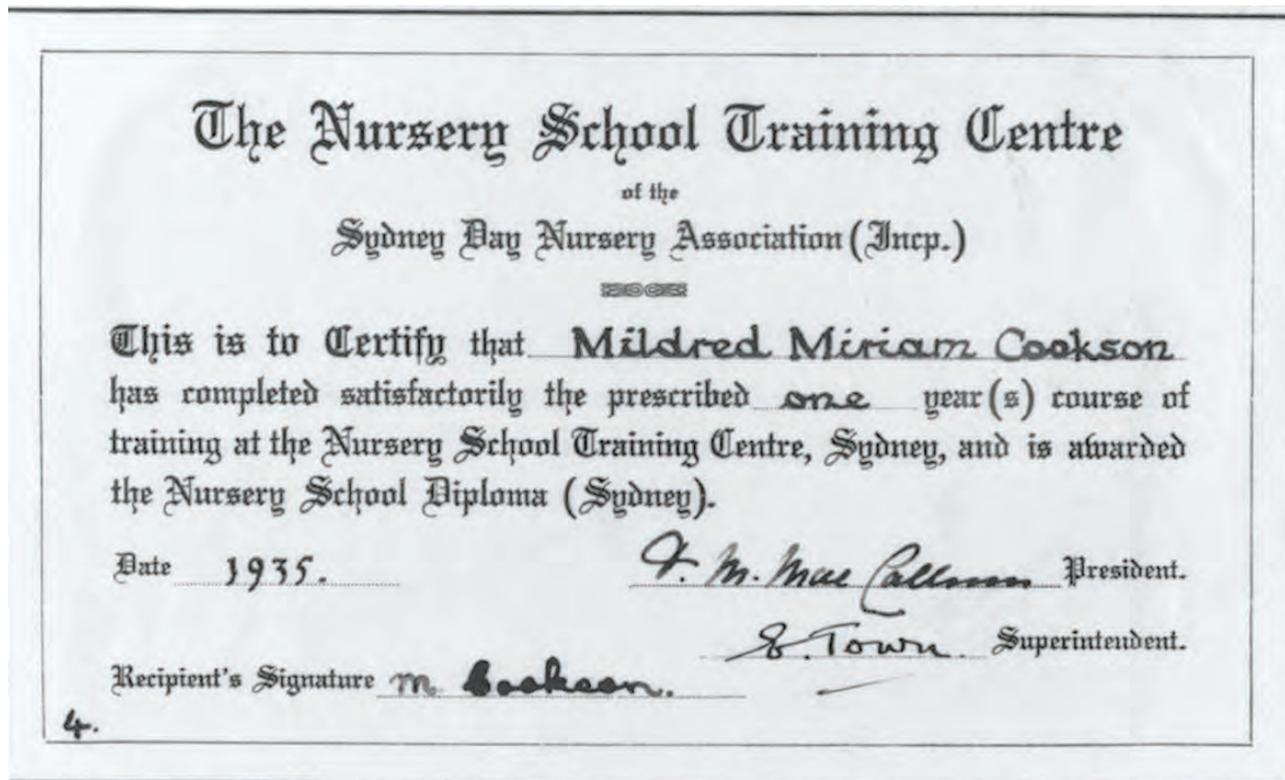
Unfortunately, there was friction over the disruption caused by incorporating a Nursery School into the Woolloomooloo premises, and some, especially



The upstairs playground at the Nursery School, Woolloomooloo Day Nursery, 1932.

members of the Surry Hills Branch Committee which was considering closing because of financial difficulties, grumbled at the extravagance involved in importing a teacher from England, particularly with it being the early years of the Depression that was to bring so much unemployment and family hardship. However, the Association's Executive Committee prevailed, and Miss Gillespie started working at the Nursery School at the Woolloomooloo Day Nursery. In May 1932, the Association approved a syllabus for the training of Nursery School teachers and by July, arrangements were made for cooperation with Sydney and Melbourne Kindergarten Training Colleges for the training of students.

Planning did not translate into effective practice, however. No-one in the Association or the Board for Social Study and Training, which had been set up by the University of Sydney in 1928 to train social workers and was enlisted to provide professional input, had professional knowledge of Nursery School principles and practices. Miss Gillespie was to train the students as well as conduct all teaching at the Woolloomooloo Nursery School — an impossible workload, and one Miss Gillespie was unable to sustain. Her health suffered, and



Diploma certificate for Mildred Cookson, student, 1935¹⁸

the 1932–33 Annual Report regretfully reported that Miss Gillespie’s ‘threatened blindness made it necessary for her to return to England after nine months’.¹⁹ Not an auspicious start to the ambitious training project!

For the next year or so the course for the two trainee teachers was specifically designed for them by Miss Gutteridge, Principal of the Melbourne Kindergarten Training College, with elements of the course approved by the Board of Social Study and Training at Sydney University. Their course completed in 1933, one graduate was appointed Directress of Woolloomooloo Nursery School, the other Directress of the Northern Suburbs

Nursery School. They were the first and only holders of the Board of Social Study and Training Nursery School Certificate.

After this rather shaky and piecemeal beginning, the Committee decided that to present a course that was of equivalent value and reputation to others (especially the Kindergarten Training College course, perhaps?) they must appeal to the NSW Education Department to allow students access to the Sydney Teachers College and Blackfriars (a Departmental Demonstration Primary School on Parramatta Road). The Association’s 1934–35 Annual Report thanked the NSW Minister for Education, the NSW Director of Education, and Professor Alexander Mackie of the Sydney Teachers College, for giving their permission for this access. Professor Mackie was among



The Newtown and District Day Nursery, 3 Linthorpe Street, Newtown, c.1930. It became home to the Nursery School Training College in 1941.

many Australian intellectuals and educators who had been greatly influenced by Froebel’s educational ideals, and would have known Professor MacCallum; no doubt these connections helped. So in 1934 the 18 students attended lectures at Sydney Teachers College and Blackfriars, while visiting lecturers took other subjects. According to the Association’s 1936–7 Annual Report, the training was based on the requirements of the Board of Education in England for Nursery School staff.

In the earliest days of the Association’s training of Nursery School teachers, students encountered a range of educational settings and were exposed to broader academic influences than might have been expected, given the meagre resources of the Association. Enlisting the cooperation of the Sydney Teachers College, the Social Work Department of the University of Sydney, and Departmental schools in planning and teaching the course demonstrated the initiative and organising ability of the Association’s Executive Committee, particularly its office-bearers. First year Nursery School students continued to do courses at Blackfriars until 1946, the



'The Retreat', Nursery School Training College, 1946

second year students at North Newtown Intermediate High School until 1951, and classes were attended at the Sydney Teachers' College until 1948.²⁰

After Miss Gillespie's departure, Miss Elizabeth Town was appointed Superintendent of Nursery Schools and of Training in 1934, at what was now known as the Nursery School Training Centre (though she did not actually arrive from England till the middle of 1935). On her arrival, an Advisory Committee was set up, the continuity

with previous planning being assisted by the membership of Miss Simpson, Inspector of Infants' Schools in the Department of Education, Miss E. Stevens of Blackfriars Demonstration School, and Mrs Clunies-Ross, Sydney University lecturer in psychology. Miss Town stayed at the College until 1938, to be followed by Miss Mary Bird (later Mary Martin).

During Miss Bird's time as Principal, the Training Centre moved from Woolloomooloo to Linthorpe Street, Newtown in January 1941, to share premises with the Association's Newtown Nursery School. The Nursery

Perhaps the boost to College morale motivated by settling into the new College led to the adoption of a College motto in 1946: *Pro Parvis Optima* — 'For the little ones, the best.'²²

College graduation badge presented to Marion Taylor (*née* Steer) at her graduation in 1956.



School Training Centre changed its name to the Nursery School Training College at the official opening in March of that year; practical work was now undertaken at the Redfern Nursery School, and with children aged five to eight at North Newtown Demonstration School.²¹

The renamed Nursery School Training College remained at Linthorpe Street from 1941 until 1945. Mary Bird, now Mrs Mary Martin, resigned at the end of 1943, and it was announced in the Annual Report that Elsie McLeod will come from England to replace her. But it was still wartime, Miss McLeod's arrival was delayed, and Mrs Eleanor Green was appointed Principal in January 1945.

During the war Mrs Melanie Alexander and the Newtown Branch Committee of the Association had set up and managed a canteen at the Sydney Showground. The canteen realised a profit of £12,000, enabling the purchase and refurbishing of a beautiful two-storey sandstone building, 'The Retreat', at 146 Burren Street Newtown.²³ The Minister for Education, RG Heffron, opened the new College in September 1945. By 1946 the building had been extended at the back to allow more room for students and classes. There was a lovely garden out the front, and students and staff settled into this very pleasant new 'home'. Comments by students of this era about their College days suggest a strong sense of identification with the College and with the building itself:



The common room, Nursery School Training College, Burren Street, Newtown c.1960.

‘I was overwhelmed by the beautiful old sandstone building with delightful open space around it as well as the high ceilings, a lecture room, common room, cedar staircase, the fairly new addition for Miss Gell’s eurythmics classes.’
 NANETTE SWINBURN (NÉE CAMPBELL), STUDENT, 1955–57

‘The beautiful old building with its small rooms had a homely feeling and I recall happy hours lounging in the old armchairs in the common room. The grounds with its beautiful old trees and gardens were a peaceful retreat.’
 BARBARA FEWINGS, STUDENT, (NÉE MCLENNAN) 1959–61

Pat Webster was a student during the transition from Linthorpe Street to Burren Street:

‘Before my time all lectures were conducted for the small group of students at Linthorpe Street, but a grand old house (two-storeyed) had been acquired by the Association in Burren Street, directly above Macdonaldtown railway station. My lectures, crafts, dance and movement etc were all conducted there, except for art classes, which were given in the original lecture room in the Linthorpe Street house on the upper floor. They also used a hall in Newtown for dance and movement for a time, but later all tuition took place in the ‘new college’.’

The connection with the Linthorpe Street building remained as it contained College House, a hostel where students, many from the country, and some staff lived in during term time. The availability of College-sponsored, and therefore safe and secure accommodation convenient to the College, was a boon for country students. Country parents could be assured that staff members took their duty to act ‘in loco parentis’ very seriously, and that their daughters would be properly supervised.

In 1946 Miss McLeod and Miss Duncan finally arrived from England. Both were graduates of the Rachel McMillan Nursery School Training College; Miss McLeod was to become Vice-Principal to support Principal Eleanor Green, and Miss Duncan was to be the Director and Demonstrator at Newtown Nursery School. The College was staffed by a small core of lecturers supported by visiting specialists. There were no clerical or administrative staff until the 1960s.

In 1950 Mrs Green resigned as Principal and was replaced as head of the College by Joan Fry, one of the most significant figures in the College’s history. Her coming coincided with a long period — more than 20 years — of relative stability. The governance of the College had initially been in the hands of a special

The library at the Nursery School Training College, c.1960

committee of the Association's Executive Committee. At the end of 1944, a College Council was established (although it did not really begin to function until the end of 1948). The calibre of Council members from that time onwards, such as Betty Archdale, Principal of the Sydney University Women's College in 1946 and Head of Abbotsleigh school from 1958 to 1970; Morven Brown, Professor of Social Work at the University of NSW; Ivan Turner, Principal of Sydney Teachers College and Cliff Turney, Professor of Education at Sydney University testified to the high standing of the College.

Students continued to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of 'The Retreat', observing skilled teachers at work in the Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School, which was built in the College grounds and opened in 1957. Meanwhile, Joan Fry was extremely politically and professionally active, as a list of the conference papers she gave in Australia and overseas, the articles she wrote and the interviews she gave attest. She constantly referred to the shortage of trained nursery school and preschool teachers and the need for more quality child care for the children of working mothers.

By 1965, Joan Fry was a prominent member of the Federal Executive of the Australian Preschool Association (APA). At its annual conference that year, all States agreed to promote the need for more facilities for teacher training. Here is the subsequent course of events as recalled later by Frances Norton²⁴,

“All this had its beginning at a meeting attended by Miss Fry late in 1965 when the then Minister for Education and Science [Senator John Gorton] was the Guest Speaker at a



Meeting of the Institute of Educational Research. The subject under discussion was the Martin Report and the relationship of the Commonwealth in the role of Teacher Education.

From this the opportunity arose for Miss Fry to ask the Minister why the Commonwealth did not finance Pre-school Teacher's [sic] Colleges, since the Government provided pre-school education in Federal territories, but relied on voluntary organisations in the various States to provide pre-school teachers.

The minister replied that he did not have the information and asked that he be informed regarding Pre-School Teachers' Colleges'.²⁵

At the same time, the four NSW delegates of the APA, including Joan Fry, were about to go to Canberra to attend the annual Executive. All State representatives spoke to the Minister, and all were invited to make submissions detailing their capital requirements in order to double the intake of students.

A small subcommittee was formed to prepare a College submission; its members were Joan Fry and Frances Norton, advised by Dr George Gray, Chairman of the College Council. The APA coordinated the proposal which was then forwarded to the Commonwealth Government.

In response, the Commonwealth Government allocated \$2.5 million in its 1968 budget to rebuild or



Images of the new Nursery School Teachers' College, opened in 1972.



expand the preschool Colleges in order to double the intake of students. The share allocated to the Nursery School Teachers' College, as an unmatched capital grant, was \$650,000.

This money was now available to the Association to either buy a new property or extend the capacity of the Burren Street campus in order to double the student intake. Despite much heartache over the loss of the beautiful old sandstone building, it was decided 'The Retreat' had to be demolished and a modern building designed and built in its place.

Through Dr Gray and the University of Sydney Property Office, executive members of the Association and Joan Fry were introduced to the architect Brian McKenzie, of Stafford Moor & Farrington, and together they designed a campus purpose-built for the delivery of a first-rate preschool teacher education program. Despite student protests, demolition proceeded and thanks to the kind offer of rent-free accommodation from Father McAuliffe, the Catholic parish priest of Forest Lodge,

the College was temporarily relocated to the vacant Parish School at St Kieran's, Golden Grove. Though it was hoped that the project would be completed by the middle of 1971, it was 30 October 1972 before the new College was opened by Malcolm Fraser, then Minister for Education and Science and later Prime Minister.

The opening of the College was truly 'a sparkling and joyous occasion', even if being ready for the opening was a 'near thing': 'Permission to move in was given late on Wednesday last, and not everything is finished'.²⁶ It seemed that the tide of history was turning in favour of preschool education and child care. In 1969 the Commonwealth Government had agreed that 'steps should be taken to set up a Government inquiry on day care'²⁷, and in 1970 it announced its intention to establish child care centres throughout Australia.²⁸ In 1972 the NSW government set up a Consultative Council on Pre-School Care and Education, and the *Child Care Act* — which proposed the first large-scale Commonwealth Government financial investment in child care — was introduced into Parliament.

Joan Fry had a major input into the design of the new building, and she could be justifiably proud of the result on that happy day. Stones from the original building were incorporated in the sandstone fence. On the first



floor was the library, lecture rooms, an observation room with a one-way screen and staff offices, with a north-facing terrace for sun. On the second floor was a music and movement room, science room, six tutorial rooms and six sound proof piano rooms. On the ground floor was the student dining and recreation room (and for a while, a tuck shop/canteen), a staff room, and administrative offices. Everything about the building was light, airy and spacious, with wide passageways to facilitate movement. All was planned to require minimum upkeep. And through careful management and organisation and shrewd buying of materials, the project came in within budget and free of debt, 'a very unusual experience for us', as Frances Norton drily remarked at the opening.

In a sense the new building was Joan Fry's parting gift to the College. She had been invited by the Commonwealth Government to Chair its Australian Preschools Committee and to prepare the report *Care and education of young children*, which was popularly known as the Fry Report. She moved to Canberra and left the College in 1973.

It is a great pity that staff and students were able to work in such a pleasant environment for such a short time. For while Joan Fry and others associated with



the College might have said on that day: 'our cup runneth over', they could not have foreseen that ahead lay perhaps the most unsettled period in the history of the College, the beginning of its end; a time when one challenge after another had to be faced and many changes occurred.

Truly, 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'; in accepting the Government's money, the Association relinquished ownership of and control over the College. While the Association was now free of the constant financial challenges the maintenance of the College and its program represented, the Commonwealth Government now had the total say about its future.





Students Jan Robson and Nanette Campbell with Mrs Bower, Director of Forest Lodge Day Nursery and Nursery School, 1957. Taken on holiday in Leura.

From this time onwards the history of the College, and of child care in Australia, is inextricably intertwined with politics.

While the Association and the College, represented by Joan Fry, had been focusing on the need for more trained preschool teachers and for quality child care, big changes were happening in teacher education and higher education generally in Australia. In 1965 a report commissioned by the Commonwealth Government, *Tertiary Education in Australia*²⁹ (known as the Martin Report), had recommended that control of teacher training be removed from State Education Departments,

that Colleges become autonomous and boards of teacher education be set up in each State, accrediting courses and advising government on resources and development. These recommendations were to be applied generally to colleges in the advanced education sector, that is, to the various specialist technical and vocational colleges offering shorter courses than universities, diplomas and certificates rather than degrees, and with staff who were not required to undertake research and were generally paid less than university academic staff. In effect, Australia was to have a two-tier higher education system; universities and Colleges or would-be Colleges of Advanced Education.

In accordance with the Martin Report's recommendations, the process of separating State

teachers' colleges from Education Department control in NSW was set in train. Other Colleges not associated with the Department were to come under the Advanced Education umbrella, with standards, courses, staffing and awards being subjected to assessment by the Advanced Education Board, which was replaced in January 1976 by the Higher Education Board.

As the restructuring of teachers' colleges began, the severance of the College from the Association was proceeding. From the end of 1973 to 30 June 1974, the College was administered by an interim Council of the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, who received emergency federal grants. On 1 July 1974, administrative functions were handed over to the Nursery School Teachers' College, an entity independent of the Association. The Federal Government now assumed responsibility for funding the College on the same basis as Colleges of Advanced Education, and it was gazetted as a College of Advanced Education on 14 November 1975.

Adrienne Fountain, who had been Acting Principal of the College since the departure of Joan Fry in 1973, was replaced by Jenny Simons who became Principal in November of that year. Jenny Simons had to manage both the transition of the College from ownership by the Association, and its incorporation into the nationwide advanced education sector. One of her first tasks was to appoint new academic staff with the qualifications needed to plan and present courses of an acceptable standard:

[the program] had to become more academically-focused, because that's where I could see all advanced education was moving... I realised I was stepping into a period of change'.³⁰

As new staff members with degrees in subject specialties were appointed, about 60% of existing staff quietly resigned as lecturers in the first year. For a while there was a sufficient number of the 'old' staff to ensure that essential features of the traditional program were retained along with the changes impelled by the new pressures for academic respectability. But no longer could the Principal decide which students should be selected and excluded. In place of individual judgment and discretion there were to be committees, rules, procedures, and an Academic Board.

For many new staff it was a good place to work: there was the challenge and stimulation of devising new courses to be discussed by colleagues, scrutinised by the Principal, and eventually accredited by the Higher Education Board. And Jenny Simons accorded a good deal of freedom in course development to her staff in an open and collegiate process of program development.

At the same time, great social change was occurring. Feminist authors such as Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer and others awakened in many women a sense that their lives could be different. Movements such as the Women's Electoral Lobby formed, and there were calls for equal opportunity for women in the workplace and a transformation in relations between men and women in marriage and the wider society — a trend collectively labeled 'women's liberation'. Some feminists saw the provision of more child care, even 24-hour child care, as essential if their aims were to be achieved. Coincidentally, at the beginning of 1974 the Whitlam Labor government announced the abolition of university and College fees.

These changes together led to a more diverse group of applicants applying for entrance to the College than had been the case in the past: some young women committed to feminist ideals about child care provision and women's rights, and married women with children who now had the opportunity to pursue career



2010 recreation of 1957 image. Left to right: Marion Taylor (*née* Steer), Nanette Swinburn (*née* Campbell), Adrienne Miles (*née* Fountain) and Ginie Udy, CEO of SDN Children's Services.

opportunities through further study. And for the first time, male students were enrolled.

The Government's role in doubling student enrolments, coupled with the new building and extra funding, added to the vibrancy of that period. The Diploma of Teaching of the Nursery School Teachers' College was duly accredited, and in 1976 NSTC graduates were finally regarded by the Department of Education as qualified to teach in Departmental schools (they had been highly regarded as infant teachers by private and Catholic schools for many years before this).

In July 1975, College graduates were able to undertake a course to convert their Diploma into the accredited Diploma of Teaching. At the same time College staff prepared and presented in-service (continuing education) courses both at College and in outside venues for staff of child care centres wishing to refresh or update their professional knowledge. The Commonwealth

Government also funded two intensive 'update' courses for past graduates. A student enrolment of 355 was forecast by the end of the 1976-1978 triennium.

All was humming along when a small cloud appeared on the horizon: the NSW Government asked the Higher Education Board to report on *The Future Development of Colleges of Advanced Education in the Inner City Area*. The Board established a committee under the Chairmanship of Professor G J Butland for this purpose in late 1976.

The Butland Committee issued its first report in 1977, recommending that the Nursery School Teachers' College be renamed the Centre for Early Childhood Studies. It would become a distinctive component of Sydney Teachers College, which itself would be renamed Sydney College of Advanced Education (CAE) from the start of the 1978 academic year. The new Centre for Early Childhood Studies would remain at Burren Street, with the possibility of an eventual relocation to the North Newtown campus of Sydney CAE in the future.

So soon after its move into the new building, the very survival of the College seemed to be threatened. The NSTC Council and staff worked to prepare a response to the Butland proposals, defending the College's unique purpose, philosophy and program; they argued that small specialist Colleges were important in maintaining variety and choice in tertiary education. Their submission stated NSTC's preference as remaining on the present campus as an independent College.

In 1979 the Higher Education Board reviewed its recommendations to take into account the need to reduce enrolments in pre-service teacher education: an over-supply of teachers was looming, for schools at least, though whether this was also the case for preschools and child care centres would have been hard to determine.

The final Report of the Butland Committee, issued in 1979, became known as the Butland Report. Apparently unmoved by the submission from the NSTC, it reiterated

its recommendation that the Nursery School Teachers' College become associated with Sydney Teachers College (STC) from 1979, with the STC's infant and preschool teacher education units becoming the responsibility of the NSTC.

As so often happens, the NSW Government received the Butland Report with its recommendations and decided to do something else. On 11 October 1979, the NSW Minister for Education announced that he had approved the establishment of a 'single new college constituted as a federation of semi-autonomous academic institutes'.³¹ Five Colleges were to become one, with the Sydney Kindergarten Teachers College and Nursery School Teachers' College becoming a single entity within a new Sydney College of Advanced Education (SCAE).

On 19 June 1981 amendments to the *Colleges of Advanced Education Act* allowed the government to provide for the dissolution of colleges with a consequent transfer of staff and students. It was announced that the Sydney College of Advanced Education would come into being on 24 July 1981. The Diploma of Teaching of the Nursery School Teachers' College was to be phased out, with the last crop of NSTC graduates receiving their award in 1982; henceforth graduates would receive a Diploma of Teaching of the Sydney College of Advanced Education (Early Childhood). Courses to upgrade or convert the Diploma Award to a Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood) would also be provided.

If ceasing to produce graduates with its own unique award marks the end of a teaching or training institution, the Nursery School Teachers' College went out of existence after the graduation ceremony in 1982. However, its remnant survived in other forms for a while longer, and it is appropriate to briefly describe that subsequent history here.

Within the new Sydney College of Advanced Education (SCAE), the two early childhood teacher education

Colleges — Sydney Kindergarten Teachers College (SKTC) and the Nursery School Teachers' College (NSTC) — became one Institute — the Institute of Early Childhood Studies (IECS) within the new College structure. After so many years of adherence to different philosophies and pursuit of different aims, it was not easy for staff to contemplate working together. Adding to the strains of adjustment, they had to travel from the campus at Waverley to the campus at Newtown, and vice versa, as required for classes and meetings. In February 1983 SCAE established an independent committee of advice on the consolidation of the teaching of early childhood studies in the College. Its first favoured option was to consolidate IECS on the previous Sydney Teachers College Newtown site on Carillion Avenue, with the existing primary teacher's education program transferred to the St George Institute of Education at Oatley, on the Sutherland-Cronulla line.

There was pandemonium among staff of the former Sydney Teachers' College at the prospect of being moved to Oatley. The general view was that the government had come to regard the Oatley campus as something of a white elephant, and was looking for programs to be located there to increase its student intake. The SCAE Council decided to defer consideration of the matter until they had developed a long-term academic plan for the future of the entire College.

A Planning Group was set up and presented its Report to the SCAE in February 1985. Its task was complicated by the addition of the Guild Teachers College to the mix, and the proposed establishment of a new Institute of Nursing Studies. The Minister did not accept this Report, with the result that Council commissioned another report to be prepared by external consultants.

A special meeting of the SCAE Council took place on 28 October 1985; more reports were commissioned. At the end of 1987, what in 1972 had been the new

Reading with children at Melanie Alexander
Newtown Nursery School, c.1970

College building, now the Burren Street campus of IECS, was sold to Sydney University, to become part of its Business School, and accommodated the Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies until 2012. One wonders what its market-oriented staff made of the purpose-built art, music and movement rooms. As a consequence of the sale, in 1988 all IECS students and staff had to fit on the Waverley campus (previously SKTC).

Throughout this drawn-out process there was resistance on the part of academic staff and students throughout SCAE to whatever arrangement was proposed; their identity still lay with their Institutes, despite all the efforts of the College Principal, senior administrative staff and Council, to foster a College ethos. Negotiations continued to be characterised by conflict rather than consensus.

These changes had been mainly driven by the NSW Government through its Higher Education Board. Now the Commonwealth Government increasingly made its presence felt. The Higher Education Board was closed in mid-1988 as power over higher education in Australia was centralised by the Commonwealth Education Minister, John Dawkins. In December 1987 he issued a Green Paper proposing substantial reforms to higher education, reducing the number of institutions and introducing competition for student places between them – a so-called rationalisation of higher education facilities, with the introduction of a unified national system of higher education and the incorporation of Colleges of Advanced Education into universities.

The struggling SCAE now faced new problems: not being large enough to become a university in its own right, 'the forces pulling it beyond disequilibrium



to disintegration were mounting'.³² The SCAE administration reluctantly prepared for the splitting up of the college and the most appropriate distribution of its Institutes among existing universities. It had not gained the loyalty of Institute staff and students, and they were not prepared to fight for its survival. Late in February 1989 the NSW State Government introduced legislation that included provision for the Institute of

Early Childhood Studies to be merged with Macquarie University. Money from the sale of Burren Street and the Waverley campus was to be used to build a new home for IECS. Now renamed the Institute of Early Childhood (IEC), what had been the Nursery School Teachers' College now moved with what had been the Sydney Kindergarten Training College into a new building on the North Ryde campus of Macquarie University in 1994.

Chapter 2

Student life at the Nursery School Teachers' College

The Nursery School Training Centre was established at a time when opportunities for women in the paid workforce were virtually non-existent except for clerical, factory or shop work and the traditional caring professions — teaching and nursing. For many girls from families in comfortable yet modest circumstances, the prospect of teaching small children before getting married must have been among their more attractive options.

With few opportunities to choose from and no role models to set an example of other possibilities, Sheila Conway (*née* Makim), student 1938–39, may have been typical of her generation:

‘I was in the third intake of the Sydney Day Nursery School between 1938–1939. In those days the Principal, Miss Town, would visit schools to recruit students and as I really had no idea what career path I would follow, I thought it sounded like a good idea.’

How were students recruited, selected and enrolled?

Selection procedures: The College perspective

Initially promotion of the new program must have been made easier by the affiliation with the Association of the Fairfax family, who were publishers of the *Sydney Morning*

Herald and other newspapers and magazines. Thus an article appeared in the *Women's Budget* on 20 August 1934, entitled *Jobs for those who love children*:

‘Girls who are planning that all-important thing — a career — would do well to look carefully at this prospect [training with the NSTC]. It would be necessary to coax £20 a year from Dad for a two-year course, and if he said ‘tut, tut,’ and looked as if he were going to be difficult about the cheque, you could point out to him that you would not be on the family commissariat list for the morning biscuit, mid-day dinner, and tea. Besides, being happily occupied each day from nine till six, you wouldn't be worrying him for a new hat every Friday, or a cheque for a bridge party on Thursday. He'd see the economic force of any argument like that’.¹

Miss Elizabeth Town, the Principal from 1935 to 1938, selected students carefully. They were required to possess



Staff and students at Circular Quay, c.1945. Joan Fry, fifth from left.

at least the Intermediate Certificate or its equivalent and to have a satisfactory IQ. Personal suitability for Nursery School work was assessed first by a confidential report from an applicant's school Headmistress and then by close observation of her aptitude during the probationary first months. Students unsatisfactory on scholastic, social or health grounds were counselled out of the program.

There was a mere trickle of students at first and five graduated in 1941. But with the end of the war, numbers went up sharply. In 1945 there were 32 new students, with 87 overall the following year. By 1948 there were 'nearly 100' new students, with 34 graduating.

Mrs Eleanor Green, Principal from 1945–50 also took great care in selecting students:

I have been busy for weeks over prospective students. There are now thirty-three enrolled with others about to apply formally. There have been a great number of interviews besides those with students who are being admitted. Many were far too young — many simply wanted advice.’²

Sometimes potential students learnt about the course through ‘the friend of a friend’. Drora Booth (*née* Simpson) was a milliner but happened to mention to a friend that she had always wanted to be a kindergarten teacher. Her friend remarked that her sister was enrolled in a kindergarten course; she talked to her sister, who told Mrs Green; she contacted Drora and arranged to interview her. Mrs Green decided Drora would be suitable, and Drora enrolled the following year, in 1946.

In the postwar years, formal qualifications — the Leaving Certificate and the Higher School Certificate — were relied on more heavily. Students were then ‘on probation’ in their first year, with the Principal deciding on their suitability after this trial period. The College later evolved its own extra selection process, trialling a series of tests in conjunction with the Research and Counselling Unit of the University of New South Wales in 1961. The results of these tests were considered to indicate suitability for, and the likelihood of successfully completing, the course. Applicants had to take a written test — basically, a short essay on why you thought you would be good working with young children — and fill out a psychological questionnaire form that served as a screening device. Those who achieved a satisfactory score would then be interviewed by academic staff members. Joan Fry stated that this selection procedure led to a marked increase in applications and a significant fall in the dropout rate.

Jenny Simons, Principal from 1973, was somewhat sceptical of the validity of this procedure and felt it was

not appropriate, that it was the task of academic staff to counsel out or fail students who entered the program but turned out to be unsuitable. Besides, it was expensive in terms of staff time at the busy start of the College year. The practice was discontinued a few years after she became Principal and selection henceforth was based on College of Advanced Education, then university, selection procedures.

Self-selection: the students’ perspective

As might be expected, many of those who applied to enroll at the College had an early and abiding interest in working with very young children:

As a child I played constantly with dolls until at least 12 years of age. To me it was ‘serious stuff’. Long periods of play with a school friend in the cubby house included a definite schedule or plan for the day and much discussion of different suitable foods and methods of feeding e.g. demand feeding. From an early age I intended to be a Kindergarten teacher.’

ADRIENNE MILES (*NÉE* FOUNTAIN), STUDENT 1956–58 AND PRINCIPAL OF THE COLLEGE, 1973.

I had vivid memories of being a preschool child at Castlecrag, so I wanted to teach children aged two to six.’ DENISE BREWER (*NÉE* ROBBINS), STUDENT, 1960–62

I was so excited to start training at NSTC — since a young age it had been what I wanted to do ‘when I grew up’. I remember the thrill of building with hollow wooden blocks a structure I could actually get into; also vibrant, smooth paints for finger-painting (at three years of age). I can still remember the names of teachers 65 years later.’ MARGARET OLIVER (*NÉE* BAWTREE), STUDENT, 1961–63.

One of the earliest students in 1935, Mildred Cookson, put it simply:

Girls went into the course for the love of children; that was what they wanted to do.’

For others it was a convenient — or the best available — option:

My music teacher at Abbotsleigh suggested SDN because it was a course in which I could combine music and my love of art.’

JANE NORRIE (*NÉE* LAKE), STUDENT, 1967–69.

I applied for physiotherapy and orthoptics at Cumberland College, and I got into it. I got into those after the second round after I’d got into this [Nursery School Teachers’ College]. So I started this. I wanted to do forestry [...] but they didn’t take women. Town planning I wanted to do, but they said you’d never get a job. [...] And town planners were a dime a dozen. [...] So I ended up in early childhood and thought, ‘oh this could be alright.’ MEGAN BROPHY, STUDENT, 1977–79.³

There were also some for whom a sense of social justice influenced their choice to attend the College:

A very determined 16 year old attempted the Leaving Certificate to find somewhere I could learn to help children reach their full potential. This wish began when I was aged nine. An incident that had the biggest influence on my life began when I was ready to sit the huge test for OC classes⁴ in primary school [and I overheard]:’ Headmaster/Boys Department and OC classes: ‘Are you expecting any of your girls to come over to the OCs? Headmistress/Girls Dept.: ‘No, this year is not showing any potential’.



Students 'fashion through the ages' fundraiser, c.1957–58

Headmaster: 'Hasn't [my brother's name] got a sister here?'

Headmistress: 'Yes, but she's nothing.'

[As] that 9-year-old sister [I] was furious and thought: 'and she's a teacher!! ...of course I'm nothing like my brother but I am something.' " JENNY HILL (NÉE JARDINE), STUDENT, 1961–63.

I spent a short period as an observer in three Nursery Schools in Sydney. Only one group of children had a trained Early Childhood educator working with them; this was of considerable concern to me, even as a 'raw' observer. I realised that my real desire was to be able to ultimately teach in the then less enriched city areas of a major city eg Sydney.' CHRIS SMITH (NÉE TOWNER), STUDENT, 1953–55

Some wanted to work with preschool children and chose the College simply because, being on the train line near the centre of the city, it was more convenient than the Sydney Kindergarten Teachers College (SKTC) in

Waverley. Easy access by public transport was one reason why the Nursery School Teachers' College student intake was more diverse than that of the SKTC in the salubrious Eastern Suburbs. There was certainly a strong belief on the part of the students from both colleges that they differed significantly from each other. Mildred Cookson was particularly trenchant on this point:

The antipathy wasn't on our part. They [the SKTC] really looked down on us because we worked in the poorer areas. The basis of it was that they didn't recognise our curriculum as being training for teachers and the fact that we worked with disadvantaged children and we worked longer hours than they did. They frowned on working mothers and wouldn't take anyone who went to work. They thought the children in the day nursery were substandard and so were the teachers. We were the poor relations always'.⁵

The intensity of this antagonism may have waned over the years, but it would be fair to say evidence of such attitudes persisted, owing to the differing ideologies of the two Colleges regarding early education and care.

Irrespective of the Nursery School Teachers' College's focus on care for disadvantaged children, the circumstances of lower working-class life came as a shock to many students. It is not surprising that girls from middle-class families who came to the College straight from school had no appreciation of the difficult circumstances in which children who attended the Association's Nursery Schools often lived. For some, encountering these realities when practice teaching was a transformative experience:

A memory of prac: The joy and pleasure two little girls experienced in being bathed in a bath and having their hair washed — with

Mum's approval. She disclosed the three of them lived in a room on the third floor of a building where she had to bucket every drop of water they used from the ground floor'. CHRIS TOWNER (NÉE SMITH), STUDENT, 1953–55.

I remember what a shock it was to my system to go to places like Surry Hills, as I grew up on the North Shore line. The poor children there and in Woolloomooloo, I had never seen anything like them. I have been blessed with four happy healthy children, so remember the not-so-happy healthy youngsters from those early days at Macdonaldtown and the little nursery schools I worked in.' HELEN MARSHALL, STUDENT, 1952–54.

The course 'opened my eyes' to another world. Joan Fry's progressive and (for those days) often radical views introduced me to a new dimension of society and challenged my conservative values. The many visits we made as students to children's courts, institutions providing residential care for children whose parents were not able to care for them, and to institutions providing residential care for children with disabilities, all had a profound impact on me.' ADRIENNE MILES (NÉE FOUNTAIN), STUDENT 1956–58 AND PRINCIPAL OF THE COLLEGE, 1973.

Exposure to the realities of disadvantaged families affected choices made in subsequent careers:

Margaret Hine [...] resigned from the position in charge of Mosman Nursery School to take a subordinate one at the Woolloomooloo Day Nursery because 'I felt the children in a less privileged area needed me more,' she said. *THE SUN*, 11 MAY 1961.



Suzanne Jordan (*née* Tonnoir) on Charity Day at Circular Quay, 1946.

I have always been a passionate teacher and supporter of preschool services, especially to the disadvantaged and attribute that directly to attending NSTC and absorbing the teaching and philosophy provided there.' JACQUI NICHOLSON (*NÉE* BICKLEY) STUDENT, 1958–60.

Financing the College: the student contribution

Students (or, usually, their parents) had to pay fees to attend the College; hence potential students from the lower end of the socioeconomic scale mostly could not afford to attend, although exceptions might be made for particular students, with country kindergartens or charities such as Legacy (for the children of war widows) paying part or all of the necessary expenses.

Fees did not cover costs, and private benefactors — Association members or their families — often had to come to the financial rescue. One prominent member, who always insisted on remaining anonymous, constantly came to the rescue at times of financial difficulty, sending cheques to make up the shortfall and providing scholarships for worthy but needy students.

Students were aware of the College's often-precarious financial situation and a tradition of student involvement in fundraising was established. Joan Fry recalled at the opening of the new College in 1972 that '[in] about 1950 students on enquiry learned of the gap between income and expenditure, and asked permission to organise a fete to raise funds for specific equipment and, with the exception of two years, have done so ever since.'

In 1962 the students decided to put the profit from the annual dance into a building fund which assisted in the construction and furnishing of the new building. In 1965, a Parents and Friends Association was formed to help raise funds.

An effective way of raising money annually was 'Button Day' in which students participated as a matter of course, if reluctantly:

Other activities were selling nursery school badges in the city area each year — not an enjoyable task.' NANETTE SWINBURN (*NÉE* CAMPBELL), STUDENT, 1967–69

Fundraising button, sold on Button Day, 24 September 1952.



With the demands of course work, fundraising and the practicum, being a College student was a fulltime occupation. It was no wonder that close friendships were formed and attachment to the College was strong, as exemplified by Jacqui Bickley:

We were delighted to be offered the College building for our wedding reception in 1962; the only wedding reception to be held there, I understand.'

Eventually there was more government assistance with student fees, largely due to the lobbying effectiveness of Joan Fry. Out of 98 students in 1967, 19 were on Commonwealth scholarships, five on Repatriation scholarships, and one was on a scholarship from a country town. In 1969, again there were 98 students, of whom 60 were paid for from Commonwealth finance (four of these by the Department of Education and Science to work in the Northern Territory), and one Columbo Plan student.⁸ In 1971, 88 out of the 116 students were assisted under various scholarship schemes, and in 1975 the Whitlam government abolished university and College of Advanced Education fees altogether.

Life outside classes: College House

The Nursery School Teachers' College was always an attractive option for young women from country areas where job opportunities were few and far between; however, finding somewhere safe and secure for them to live while they attended College was difficult in a period of extreme housing shortage after the war. Principal Mrs



Bedroom at College House, Linthorpe Street, Newtown. c. 1945



Dining room at College House, Linthorpe Street, Newtown, c. 1950-60



Library at Linthorpe Street, Newtown. Note the students in their uniforms

Green tried hard to find places for intending students:

‘I have already accepted six students for 1946 [...] of these five wish to be in residence. [...] I have booked in three students at St Margaret’s C. of E. Hostel.’

‘The Supervisor at the Friendly Society Hostel, Arundel Street, Forest Lodge has a long waiting list, but she has put us down for three places in case any vacancies occur. St Michael’s (R.C.) hostel in City Road, Darlington say [...] they may be able to accommodate them. I rang the Presbyterian Hostel at Marrickville [...] everything there was uncertain and I am to ring later’.⁹

‘Wherever possible, I have encouraged students to find accommodation outside the College’.¹⁰

A few students were accommodated in part of the Linthorpe Street building; with more space available after the College moved to Burren Street, this became known

as College House. The following vivid description of life in College House is due to the photographic memory of student Pat Webster (1945-47):

‘[At the beginning of year 1945] I began my nursery school training with the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association in the year when the intake of students for first year was considerably larger than it had ever been in the years before ’45. There were at least thirty-five students enrolled. Only two of us boarded within the college, myself, as a scholarship student, and Marjorie Davidson. Marjorie’s family had a fairly large sheep-run ‘Bergen-ooop-zoom’, at Walcha, NSW. The boarding quarters were a short walk from the College and above the Newtown Day Nursery in Linthorpe Street Newtown.’

‘In addition to the student boarders, there were three other women living in: Eleanor Green the Principal, Heather Orr, the director of the Erskineville Day Nursery and Mrs Agnew, the housekeeper. A cook and cleaner came in by the day.

‘Marjorie and I took our meals in the small downstairs dining room with Mrs Agnew. The food was simple and palatable and cooked by the same hands as those that served the children in the nursery school (which adjoined the kitchen, dining room and front hall of the big old rambling house) but which was closed off completely, having another entrance.’

‘I rose quite early to dress, make breakfast so as to be at the Marrickville nursery school by seven thirty. That was part of my scholarship duty in return for full board and all fees connected with tuition, plus thirty shillings per week.’

‘My roommate Marjorie had that air of the country-bred coupled with a self-sufficiency gained by a secondary education at a private girls’ college in Armidale. I went out in the evening sometimes and never stayed at the big house on weekends.’

There may have only been five occupants of College House when Pat Webster started there in 1945, but



The 1957 graduates taken in the grounds of The Retreat, Nursery School Training College

by 1948 there were seven, with 'Miss McLeod and her mother' the live-in staff. Mrs Green, the Principal, lived in during term time. Numbers fluctuated over the years: there were eight in 1952, 10 in 1953; by 1957 there were 12, including some university students. College House was at its fullest in the 1960s, with a full complement of 21 in several years of that decade.

Anne Knox's memories were of a later time in 1963, what we might call the 'heyday' of College House:

The Matron whose name eludes me (huge English lady) showed me to my room (large) upstairs in front of the building with three beds, three cupboards, three tables, three chairs, one small mat. I shared with Pam Stringer from Bilpin (weekly boarder) who returned every Sunday with a box of apples which we consumed, and Julie Biddle. We had a great year group having adjoining rooms. Couldn't sleep for 6 months, noisy streets (often fights) street lights and trains (back of building was a train line).'



The 1975 graduating students — the last Nursery School Teachers' College diplomates.

We had a book of house rules. Two nights a week including Friday night we had to be in by 10 pm. Saturday night midnight. Sunday night 9.30 pm. Had to get permission from Matron and sign a book when leaving and returning plus report to her. Matron's bedroom was under the stairs (squeaky) near the entrance (side door). Hence she heard everything — we were not permitted to talk outside the door, forget a kiss goodnight. The boys had to come to the door; we were not permitted to meet them out the front. Our bedroom in the first year often had stones thrown at the window by the third year students; one of us had to sneak downstairs and unbolt the door after curfew time. If we got caught we would be gated.'

The demise of College House occurred early in the 1970s. In the late 1960s, not long after the occupancy of College House had been at its height, a revolution in social attitudes and behaviour meant that living in a boarding institution with strict rules and supervision was no longer desirable. Young people were enjoying

unprecedented new freedoms, and those studying away from home typically moved into shared houses with other students. The Association, in discussing the Nursery School at Linthorpe Street in 1973 called it 'our property which was at one time the Students' Hostel'.¹¹

Diversity in the student population

For a while after the end of the Second World War, there was a more varied intake than had formerly been the case. Mrs Green reported in 1946 that there were 'six [...] ex-service women [young women returning from war service] and two are widows of Servicemen'.¹² One of those, Greta Deem, became a lecturer at the College. She and her fiancée married just before he left for active duty and before they could have a honeymoon. He was killed in action. Such sad stories were not uncommon at this time.

Chris Smith (*née* Towner, student 1953–1955) saw her fellow students as 'a varied lot; they were from all walks



Staff and students on holiday, Echo Point, Katoomba, September 1957. Joan Fry, front row, first on left.

of life, some country 'girls', some who had lost fathers in World War II, some from financially sound families, others from a single parent'. Girls from the country certainly figure prominently among early NSTC graduates. Jenny Hill (student, 1961–63) noted, however, that, 'I joined about 54 girls, with only seven of us from state schools'.

The student population remained relatively homogeneous until the 1970s, when the abolition of fees and changing social attitudes meant that new kinds of students were enrolled. There was a small number with radical political ideas and beliefs about the vital role child care would play in women's liberation.

In keeping with the ideal of providing equal opportunity to both women and men, males were admitted, though not without resistance:

[...] a lot of people said 'No, we don't want males, we are fine without them. We don't need males, males would be a trouble'; but I felt we were moving into a modern era and why shouldn't men have a chance. So having organised the toilet arrangements, we could then go ahead.'
JENNY SIMONS, PRINCIPAL OF THE NTSC, 1973–85¹³

Men in child care were a sufficiently novel idea for the Sunday Telegraph on 10 March 1974 to announce that five men had begun to train at the Nursery School Teachers' College under the heading 'A blow for men's lib'. There was a small trickle of male students each year after that. Their presence was often welcomed by female students:

What progressive young men (two male students) they were for those times! They had a huge positive influence on our class dynamics, and brought just a teensy bit of balance to the group.' **BABETTE URBAN, STUDENT, 1976–78**

They were a diverse group, sometimes with creative talent, in music for example, and usually not school leavers¹⁴. Nick Hespe was similar to others in 'having tried various things after school, including university', but 'always enjoying interacting with small children, interested in the idea of working with them'.¹⁵

In the 1960s and 70s some students received scholarships to work in the Northern Territory with Aboriginal children. In 1971, 34 second and third year students and four staff visited Bourke in western NSW to observe a special educational program that was achieving some success with Aboriginal children. In 1975, a couple of College lecturers visited Murawina, an Aboriginal child care centre in Redfern, and got to know some of the women there. As a result of these and other contacts, a

few Aboriginal students were enrolled. Lack of previous adequate schooling and the difficulties often associated with Aboriginal family and community life meant that a lot of hard work was needed on the part of both students and staff if they were to graduate, and the dropout rate was high. Nevertheless, College staff retained a commitment to the advancement of Aboriginal students wherever possible.¹⁶

Another change was the influx of mature age students: married women, usually with children, who now had the opportunity to acquire a tertiary qualification that would equip them for a congenial and 'family-friendly' career in the paid workforce. Financial constraints and social attitudes prescribing the family model of male breadwinner/stay-at-home wife had previously made such an option unthinkable for most. But now traditional views were under challenge and tertiary education was free.

Many of these women starting College were anxious at first, uncertain of their ability to succeed in the program (years 'out of the swim' will do that to you). Often they blossomed when they started to get good marks for their assignments and found that they brought valued experience and considered views on educational matters to tutorial discussions.

Sometimes, however, it seemed that husbands found it hard to accept changes in their wives as they developed new confidence, new interests and new friendships. Some marriages became stronger as couples worked through these alterations in their relationship. Others broke down or women withdrew from the course, unable to withstand the tensions at home. One student, explaining her tiredness during classes to a lecturer, said her husband was so averse to her taking time from her wifely and motherly duties to attend to College work that she had to wait until he was asleep, slip out of bed and go out to the kitchen to work on her assignments.

Chapter 3

What the students learned: the NSTC program

The program in the early years

Since local expertise in the preparation of teachers for Nursery Schools was unavailable when the Nursery School Training Centre was started, it was only to be expected that those planning the program would take their cue from leaders in the field overseas. Joan Fry, one of the College's earliest graduates recalled many years after her graduation that, 'The course I attended was set up in 1934 by Miss Town from the Rachel McMillan Training College in Britain, and was substantially the same as those recognised in that country'.¹

Margaret McMillan² believed students should have training in voice production, music, and experience in painting and modelling. Teaching was to be based on observation and experience; therefore, no set formula or pattern was to be prescribed. Her influence can be seen in the inclusion in the early College program of courses in speech training, music, art and toy making, and, especially, observation of and practical work with children.

Joan Fry's reminiscences convey the flavour of those early student days:

'During my first year of training [in 1940] with four fellow students and a similar number of students in second year, we were accommodated in one room at Woolloomooloo Nursery School, with part time use of the staff dining room. Classes were conducted round a table which ensured constant attention and full participation if one wished to avoid being kicked in the shins by fellow students.

The Principal, and only full time lecturer, was responsible for the administration of six centres and for teaching courses in Study Methods, Education, History of Education, Child Development, Research Method, Piano and Children's Handwork.

Visiting specialists taught English Literature, Child Health, Eurythmics, Art and Toy Making. Courses in Biology, Nature Study, Children's Literature, Speech Training and Physical Education were taken at Sydney Teachers College with Infant School Teacher Trainees. Mental



health lectures were provided by the Social Work Department of Sydney University.

We had regular and frequent observation assignments with children from 2 weeks to 5 years and practical work with children from 2 years to 5 years. Practical work with children from 5–8 years was provided at Black Friars [sic] Infant Demonstration School.

[...] Library stocks were very limited but we did have access to the Library at Sydney Teachers College. We were required to read the library books we did have, such as Plato's Republic, Rousseau's Emile, the works of Froebel, Montessori, MacMillan and A S Neill as part of the history of education curriculum.

Sheila Conway (née Makim) student, 1938–39, also remembered the courses she studied:

'There were five in my class and we trained at Woolloomooloo and attended lectures at the Teachers' College. The course was two years and we studied music, art, handwork and physical training, also musical movement with Heather Gell; hygiene and child psychology, as well as going to Rowe Street to learn music and practice on a cardboard keyboard. I went to Blackfriars Demonstration School for practical work with infants.'

The Child Development books I remember most were Gesell and Susan Isaacs.

[...] We no doubt missed a lot in terms of present day academic standards, but we benefited greatly from face to face experience with staff, students in a number of settings, and with children on a regular and frequent basis'.³



Heather Gell, at her investiture as a Member of the British Empire, Government House, Sydney, 1977

The inclusion of English literature in this list is a reminder that from the beginning, subjects that provided elements of a liberal or general education were a feature of the program, alongside the obviously practical and vocational courses. This was in line with the view of founders of the early Colleges, especially Lillian de Lissa at Gipsy Hill Training College, that courses should aim at the overall development of a teacher; for educators, in John Dewey's words, 'shall not rate themselves as leaders of children, but as makers of society'.⁴

Music and movement

Joan Fry and Sheila Makim referred to eurhythmics and to Heather Gell, one of the best-remembered and certainly one of the longest serving lecturers in the history of the College, retiring in 1973 at the age of 77. She was the most prominent Australian proponent of the Dalcroze method of teaching 'music through movement' — an approach known as *eurhythmics*.⁵ From 1934 she presented 'music and movement' radio programs on the ABC, improvising on the piano and talking to children as if talking directly to a class. Many schools took the program, especially in the country and in private and independent schools. Heather Gell became the most influential and best-known teacher of music to young children during this period, and many mothers enrolled their young children in her eurhythmics classes. Margaret Oliver's (*née* Bawtree), student 1961–63, experience mirrored that of many preschool children:

As a young child I was encouraged to listen to 'Kindergarten of the Air' with Heather Gell — to do the movements she suggested, to dance and prance around the wireless in the lounge room.'

College students learnt and practiced eurhythmics with Miss Gell in the music and movement room especially designed by her. She believed that they learnt through these activities to 'free the body' as they listened to the music she improvised on the piano, then moved in response to it. Her reputation had preceded her, as Jacqui Nicholson (*née* Bickley), student 1958–60, recalled:

My friend and I were eagerly waiting to see her at her first lecture, having in mind a slim, lithe, small lady. She was certainly light on her feet but rather large and, at first encounter, a bit

daunting. Sitting at our desks we were entranced when she came in, sort of collapsed against the top table and proceeded to tell us of the awful day she was having, starting with having grabbed a pressure can to spray her hair only to find it was fly spray. We weren't sure if was appropriate to be silent or laugh. Time taught us to admire and respect this talented lady.'

A musical experience was mandated every day in the Nursery Schools; students had to learn to play the piano and to have a suitable collection of music books:

There was a small music room, where Mrs Davis laboured to teach those who had not had lessons on the piano. We had to be efficient enough to play nursery rhymes and small pieces of the children's movement and singing. We were examined at the end of two years.'

PAT WEBSTER (*NÉE* SHAW), STUDENT 1945–47.

Heather Gell's gift to the College when she retired in 1973 was a beautiful Ronisch grand piano. This was an extremely generous act on her part, given that a lifetime teaching music and movement is not a highly-paid profession!⁶

One of the criticisms most strongly voiced by the Association about the course content after the College became a College of Advanced Education, was that students were no longer required to learn to play the piano. Yet even in these later days music remained a strong feature of the College program. Dr Doreen Bridges, the first person to be awarded a doctorate in music education in Australia in 1971, was appointed Senior Lecturer in Music in 1975. She was awarded the AM for services to music education in 1984. Doreen had been a pupil in Miss Gell's classes from the age of five, so the Dalcroze approach to music education was



Music room, Nursery School Teachers' College, 1975



Above and below: Eurythmics class in the music room, Nursery School Training College, c.1962

a significant and long-lasting influence, as the beautiful music and movement room and the piano practice rooms in the new (post-1972) College building attest.

The practice rooms continued to be used during Dr Bridges' regime as all students were taught to improvise freely for movement without being able to read music. Also, piano lessons could be selected by those taking electives. The College employed a part-time piano teacher.

After her retirement from the College, Dr Bridges taught courses in early childhood music in the External Studies Program offered by the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She was also consultant for the Saturday morning classes for young children instituted by the

Conservatorium; teachers in these classes came from those whom she had trained.

Dr Bridges later paid tribute to the College as a valuable part of her life experience:

I was Senior Lecturer in charge of Music at NSTC from 1974–78 and this experience changed my life. I realised how music can contribute to children's total, as well as musical, development. Following 'retirement' I conducted classes for very young children with carers at the North Sydney Community Centre, resulting in my book, *Music, Young Children and You.*





Craft class at the Nursery School Training College, July 1959

Practical courses: Teaching materials, toys and equipment

If subjects like handwork, woodwork and art feature prominently in early course content, it is because in these courses students learned to develop the skills needed to create, improvise or adapt materials for teaching purposes. In these days of cheap and mass-produced — indeed, over-abundant — toys, books, games, and other products designed to appeal to children, it is hard to realise how scarce such materials were until well into the post-World War II period:

Up to the 1930s such toys as were available [in the Nurseries] were on the whole second-hand, donated by ‘well-to-do Sydney families... when Reggie had outgrown his Noah’s Ark and Mabel had tired of her dolls’.⁷

Children in less well-off families devised their own playthings from simple basic objects and materials. The manufacture and marketing of children’s puzzles and blocks only started in the late 1920s and 1930s, and not a penny was spent on children’s toys in the Day Nurseries until the 1930s.⁸ Books of poems and songs for children and picture books were not widely produced until well after World War II, and for much of the College’s



First year students demonstrate painting at the Nursery School Training College Open Day, 18 September 1953.

existence, students were expected to compile their own collections of such resources. In the days before photocopying, this was a time-consuming and laborious process.

The general shortage of equipment in the Nursery Schools meant that students needed to show ingenuity in making do, constructing and repairing their own teaching aids, following the early example set by Elizabeth Town:



Second year students Elaine Stephens and Margaret McKay, demonstrate the art of clay modelling at the Nursery School Training College Open Day, 18 September 1953. (Appeared in the *Sunday Herald*, 'Nursery Training College shows what it can do', 20 September 1953)

I enjoyed the practical lectures with Mrs Deem making folders for a picture collection, collecting stories, poetry, music for the different age groups, making puppets, dressing a doll, creative imaginative environments and craft area, these skills were a great help working in schools where equipment was scarce.'

NANETTE SWINBURN (NÉE CAMPBELL), STUDENT, 1955–57.

Woodwork was still being taught well into the 1970s. Pat Webster (née Shaw), student, 1945–47, fondly remembered these sessions:

My time in training for the first two years was so enjoyable! On the upper floor, one room was set aside for 'woodwork'. We learnt to make wooden educational toys. My



First year student Marion Steer demonstrating clothing made by NSTC students. The large buttons and elasticated waistbands made them suitable for two year olds.

first project was a posting box. The plywood box was constructed with a lid, with geometrical shapes cut out. The small solid shapes, i.e. triangle, square, round, were cut to size, so that they were just right to be inserted and dropped through the corresponding holes.'

It was a very satisfying craft, as we worked from scratch with good materials and had coloured enamels to finish each piece off.'

Students' toys had to be made to last:

Heather Orr took us for woodwork and toy making and insisted on testing the finished products of our labours to see if they were strong enough for a schoolroom. Miss Orr was not a small person. Her way of testing was to jump on the toy or drop it on the ground with some force. You held your breath during this pass or fail.'

BEVERLEY TINWORTH (NÉE TODD), STUDENT, 1953.



Handmade felt puppet. The puppet has two faces, one happy, one sad. Made by student Mimi Wellisch (*née* Reiner), 1976.

“Heather was always there and ready to be a constructive helper with ‘how to’ ideas for toy making activities.”

CHRIS SMITH (*NÉE* TOWNER), STUDENT, 1953–55

One attraction of the woodwork classes before the building of the new College was that students travelled to East Sydney Technical College on Friday afternoons to



Table with teddy bear stand, made by student Dorothea Tanner (*née* Priest), c.1936

attend them, and that this was one of their few chances to mingle with members of the opposite sex during class times:

“Friday sessions at [East] Sydney Technical College to do woodwork were eagerly anticipated as the army cadets worked alongside us. The wooden train, pull along elephant on wheels, and the box of building blocks, are still proudly produced 50 years on... It taught us to be very handy at repairing anything and everything in years to come.” BARBARA FEWINGS (*NÉE* MCLENNAN), STUDENT, 1959–61

Beyond these practical purposes, teaching young children, especially boys, to make things with wood using hammer and nails was believed to be a way for children to expend energy and release feelings of aggression. Certainly many believed it served this purpose. Woodwork continued to be taught in the early days of the College of Advanced Education period, but over time was displaced by more academic subjects.



Wooden red painted train with metal wheels, made by student Ruth Hermann (*née* Weis) as part of her coursework c.1945–47.

Child development

Child development as a subject was mentioned by Joan Fry in her account of her first year as a student in 1940. It had not been consistently listed among courses each year until 1939–1940 onwards. However, psychology often appears among the courses taught from the earliest years: no doubt theories of and information about children’s development were presented in this and similar courses.⁹ From the time Joan Fry assumed leadership of the College in 1950, child development was clearly a core element of the program.

The travelling scholarship awarded by the Association’s Thyne Reid Education Trust in 1946 had taken Miss Fry to the Child Development Department at the Institute of Education, University of London, where in 1933, Susan Isaacs had founded an advanced course in child development for teachers of young children. Isaacs was a member of the British Psychoanalytical Society and course content was heavily influenced by prominent theorists



Handmade wooden pelican. One of a set of Noah's Ark animals made by Barbara Selby (née Phillips) as a student, 1937.

of a psychoanalytic bent, some of whom lectured at the Institute — Donald Winnicott, for example, and later John Bowlby. Isaacs was also interested in, though somewhat critical of, Jean Piaget's theories on the intellectual development of young children.

A later Thyne Reid Scholar, Marion Taylor (née Steer), enrolled in the same course in 1961. She attended lectures given by Winnicott, Bowlby, and AS Neill, a radical educational theorist and founder of the school Summerhill, Suffolk, England, which is still operating and generating great loyalty and equally intense controversy today.¹⁰ She describes these men as inspiring, confident and charismatic lecturers; certainly the legacy of each of the three is influential and enduring.¹¹

As Marion observed when speaking of Joan Fry, child development 'was [her] love, her interest'.¹² Throughout her time at the College, Joan planned and taught courses in child development and past students testify to the impact of her lectures:



The woodwork room, Nursery School Teachers' College, c.1972

Miss Fry took us for Child Development and her lectures consisted of the most wonderful stories of children she had known and worked with. She was a gifted storyteller and had insights into children's behaviour that have stayed with me all my life. It was impossible to take notes in her lectures, but by the end of them you knew that what you had learnt was invaluable.' HEATHER McCALMAN (NÉE MINTY), STUDENT, 1974

An important component of the course was visits arranged to such places as the children's court and child welfare institutions. These visits often made a profound impression and could vividly demonstrate for students the consequences of 'maternal deprivation', a concept highlighted by the research of psychiatrist Rene Spitz who observed babies failing to thrive in orphanages



Children using hammers and nails, Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School, 1964

immediately following the Second World War.¹³ An English couple, James and Joyce Robertson, made a series of five documentary films collectively entitled *Young children in brief separation*, observing the behaviour of very young children who went into hospital or were placed in residential nurseries, experiences which separated them from their caregivers for periods from a few days up to several weeks.¹⁴ The Robertson films were shown regularly to students in the College's child development courses to illustrate the consequences for a child of the lack or loss of a close loving relationship with its mother.

By the time Adrienne Miles (*née* Fountain) became a student, John Bowlby's work on the importance of a close and continuous relationship with a 'primary attachment figure' and the ill-effects of 'maternal deprivation' had been widely promoted for political purposes in order to discourage women from working, by governments concerned about maximising employment for returned and returning servicemen. Adrienne Miles vividly describes the attitudes she encountered when she told people what she was studying:

Friends asked 'why didn't you go to KTC [Sydney Kindergarten Teachers College]?' and when my reply turned to an explanation involving 'child care', their interest ended. Women who chose to work, or who could not stay home and care for their preschool children in the 1950s and 1960s were in the same category on the North Shore as people with disabilities and teenage pregnancy — not to be discussed, certainly not between dances at a party.'

Miss Fry's intention in showing the films was not to promote the idea that children would suffer damage if their mothers did not care for them full-time; she was pragmatic about the need for child care and the adequacy of a 'good enough' mother (Winnicott's term) for healthy emotional development. Nevertheless, in the minds of students there was often ambivalence about children 'being put into child care' when evidence of the harmful effects of parent-child separation were regularly being presented, and given prevailing social attitudes. Even in the 1970s students often expressed the view that they would not put their own children into child care, or that they would not work until their children started school. This debate has never really gone away, despite the expansion of child care places since the 1970s.

After Joan Fry left the College in 1973, child development remained a core component of the program; general aspects of development being taught over the first two years, with the development of children with special needs being the focus of the third year program. Child development theories were always presented in an eclectic fashion, with various theorists rising to prominence and eventually being superseded by others: Arnold Gesell, associated with the concept of developmental norms, in the 1950s and 1960s; Jean



Alison Thomas (*née* Colvin), former student and teacher, conducting a demonstration lesson for three year olds at the Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School, c.1965

Piaget and the highlighting of theories of cognitive development, associated with Head Start (which commenced in the US in 1964) and other preschool programs for disadvantaged children in the 1970s; the burgeoning of research into the implications of Bowlby's work on attachment and loss amid controversies over whether daycare is harmful for babies and young children in the late 1970s and 1980s. A course on research methods introduced students to the ways in which child growth and development could be studied scientifically.

Child development was inextricably linked to the practicum, as the planning of educational experiences for children was based on close observation of their behaviour and understanding of the implications of child development theories and their application to teaching and learning. This became the framework for the way students prepared for their practical work with



Above and right: Marion Taylor (*née* Steer) takes a music class for children at the Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School, 1960.



children — the component of the program known as the practicum, as outlined below.

While the practicum was undertaken in a variety of settings — child care centres, kindergartens, infants schools, schools for children with special needs — the distinctive feature of the Nursery School Teachers' College program was the focus on teaching in long day care. It is therefore useful to consider how the program in such centres was typically organised.

Learning to teach: the role of Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School ¹⁵

Routines and timetables were strictly followed in the early Day Nurseries, and regimentation was also characteristic of nursery school classes. The Nursery Schools ranged in size from 40 or 50 children at smaller centres, to 100 at Woolloomooloo. They were usually organised into two groups with 20 in the toddler or younger group (two and three year olds) and 30 in the older group, with a teacher

and a helper for each group. Activities were timetabled so that the younger children were outside when the older ones were inside, and vice versa. There was free play on arrival at 7am; morning milk at 8.45am; 45 minutes of group work, and periods of music, language, sense training and other occupations for older children. After early dinner, there was an hour or more sleep. Free play followed in the afternoon, except for half an hour of creative activities after afternoon tea at 3pm. There were two washes during the day; teeth and lavatory after dinner; hair combing and lavatory after sleep. For toddlers the timetable was the same only morning group

times were shorter and there was another rest period before dinner.

Despite a few attempts at more flexible programming, these practices continued to prevail up until Joan Fry's time as Principal. Convinced there was a better way of doing things, her ambition was to create a model Nursery School that would develop and demonstrate 'best practice' and greater flexibility in Nursery School/child care organisation and teaching. Realisation of this ambition was made possible by the purchase of property adjoining the College in Burren Street by Mr and Mrs Thyne Reid, longtime benefactors to the Association. Following the



Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School, c. 1958

redevelopment of this land, part of it became 'The Stables', where some classes were held, with the rest becoming the building and grounds of the Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School. The close association of the College with Nursery School children, which had been the case at Linthorpe Street, was now re-established. On 18 September 1957, after 'eleven years of waiting, four years' planning, and nearly two years' building activity and disorder',¹⁶ the Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School opened its doors. Joan Fry and Marion Taylor (*née* Steer), the first Melanie Alexander Director, had spent

months beforehand carefully planning the program and selecting equipment. This was to be 'a centre of excellence' before the term came into common currency.

The College's link with the Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School became a vital element in its program, which was approved by the College. Students observed lessons, activities and 'free play' regularly. They were able to hone their observational skills by observing and recording the behaviour of individual children in great detail, as was required in many of their assignments, visiting 'Melanie' to do this work whenever timetabling allowed.

Directors were carefully selected for their organisational and teaching expertise. Marion Taylor was succeeded by

Maria Byron, another Thyne Reid Scholar, and Adrienne Fountain. During her time as Director, Maria Byron worked closely and over a long period with a dietician from the NSW Health Commission on devising healthy and practical menus for the guidance of cooks in child care centres; of especial value was her calculation of quantities needed for the number of children to be fed, in order that they would enjoy tasty, nutritious and adequate meals and eliminate the wastage that so often occurred. The result was *A Guide to Meal Planning in Preschool Centres* published by the Health Commission in 1976, and reissued in 1983¹⁷. Its use was adopted in all Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association centres and Council child care facilities. Along with the adoption of this approach to meal planning, improved mealtime routines were established, with children being allowed to follow well-mannered procedures in serving, eating, and clearing away at tables.

When the College was sold in 1987, the Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School continued to function as an SDN centre under lease from Sydney University. In 2006 it was found that extensive repairs were needed because of rising damp and mould, and Melanie Alexander closed its doors on 30 March 2006. The University was unable to fund repairs to the building, terminating the lease in 2007.

Practice teaching

Nanette Campbell, student 1967–69, described the organisation of practice teaching that prevailed throughout the life of the College until it became a College of Advanced Education (CAE):

Third year students were in the school four days a week, Fridays returning to college. Second year students took over the third year students' class for one term. First year students came for observation, having a prac. teaching



Children playing outside at Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School, c.1957–60

experience at the end of the year. A system I thought worked extremely well, with students able to put what they learnt at college into practice while it was fresh in their memory.'

When Jenny Simons became Principal and the program was being reorganised for accreditation as a CAE Diploma, she reduced the amount of practice teaching, replacing the large block periods with a 'continuous' day a week practice with a two or three week block practice at the end of the semester: 'So there were big changes there which seemed to fit in better and give the students more access to their book learning than they had had before.' She acknowledged that 'a lot of people felt that we were running down the importance of actual experience';¹⁸ she disagreed with this view, and likened it to reaction to changes in nurse education, which had become a CAE program instead of being carried out in the wards. Despite these changes in the way practice teaching was organised, its central role in the teaching program continued to be recognised and respected.

As part of their course work and preparation for

practice teaching, students were required to record detailed observations of individual children, ponder what these observations revealed about the child and various aspects of his or her development, and decide how insights gained from their study of child development could be applied to the planning and design of appropriate educational experiences. On this basis lesson plans were devised, lessons presented and, as soon as possible after the event, evaluated.

Students were always expected to prepare and often create teaching materials to augment or make up for the lack of equipment in the centre. Many student reminiscences feature such attractions for the children as silkworms, emu chicks, large picture collections, musical instruments and wooden toys or cardboard constructions which often had to be carried to and from the practicum on public transport.

College staff and specially selected advisors, usually early childhood graduates with substantial teaching experience, were assigned to a number of students whom they visited during the practicum, liaising with the teachers with whom the students worked, observing students working with children in free play and during the group activities they had prepared. After the presentation of the planned 'group time', the advisor would go back over what had happened in great detail, helping the student to analyse the way she had managed the children, what the children's responses had been, what had worked well and what could have been done better, and what the student had learnt that would be helpful in planning future experiences for the children.

In the more structured infants' school classes, students were more likely to have to fit in with the curriculum being followed by the classroom teacher. Perhaps they were less likely to feel 'the gap between the theory and the practice we observed' in the child care centres, commented on by Adrienne Miles (*née*



Second year student, Lorna Lowbridge with her pet tortoise 'George' at the Nursery School Training College Open Day, 18 September 1953. (Appeared in the *Sunday Herald*, 'Nursery Training College shows what it can do', 20 September 1953)

Fountain). As she points out, 'the group sizes were large, the hours were long.' Students aimed for an ideal, but often had to cope with the unexpected. Along with other planned outcomes of the practice teaching experience came (hopefully) adaptability and resourcefulness!



Art room at The Retreat, Nursery School Training College, c.1960



The art room at The Retreat, Nursery School Training College, c.1960



The art room in the new building, Nursery School Teachers' College, c.1975

The College program in the CAE years

In 1979 Adrienne Fountain, as a major focus of a year's Professional Experience Program, visited 22 Colleges of Advanced Education in five Australian states in order to study various models of practice teaching. The result was a course that sought to ensure that elements of the program fed into the preparation and evaluation of the practicum, with the necessary integrating and coordinating of the whole being the task of the Practicum Coordinator through a strand of the program known as Integrated Teaching Studies.

As well as learning 'how to teach' in the practicum, students had to learn 'what to teach'. Observation and theoretical knowledge of the stages of children's

development guided the choice of activities for particular children and groups. Jenny Simons showed an understanding of the importance of play in early childhood learning and teaching when she introduced Play in Early Childhood as a curriculum subject. In this course, different kinds and functions of play were discerned and the ways in which the different curriculum areas could 'playfully' be introduced to children were explored. It therefore held a central, organising place in early childhood curriculum studies.

While maths and science were now added to curriculum studies, the time-honoured core elements of the College's curriculum strand — children's literature, art/visual awareness, music and movement — continued to be a special strength of the program. Those who taught these subjects combined experience in teaching young children with enthusiasm for the particular area of the curriculum in which they specialised. Their combined understanding of both subject and children enabled them to help students analyse and sequence activities presented to children in order to optimise their learning. For many students, the inspiring influence of

a lecturer with a passion for art, children's literature or music, for example, is their most enduring memory and legacy of their time at College.

As the demands of incorporation into the advanced education sector increased pressure for time and space in the College program, the curriculum subjects in particular had to fight hard to defend their territory against more 'academic' courses. The NSTC Calendar in 1978 lists newer subjects such as special education, ethnic education,¹⁹ educational administration and sociology, all of which reflected the changing emphasis to education and society. There was more scope for the pursuit of individual interests in a senior year individual curriculum study, and in the opportunities in each year to choose an elective subject (equivalent to the old liberal studies). More time was devoted to language studies, including theories and research on language acquisition and the development of reading and writing skills.

Throughout the changes in these later years, the College strove to maintain its goal of enabling students to acquire the skills and knowledge required in the effective care and education of young children.



Tutorial conducted by George Lewis, c.1970s

Those who taught the courses

When considering how much space to devote in this history to students' recollections of their lecturers, a dilemma presents itself. It is tempting to revel in a rosy-coloured view of the past; but as in any teaching institution, NSTC students were taught by staff of varying degrees of commitment, competence, energy and charisma. Some lecturers' names come up frequently in students' memories of those who most strongly influenced them, and some of them have been mentioned here, such as Joan Fry and Heather Gell, for example; but for other students who were not taught by these particular lecturers, their names may mean little or nothing. 'Comparisons are odious', as they say; in praising some lecturers there is a danger of leaving out others of even greater merit. Besides, some preferences



The observation room at the Nursery School Teachers' College, c.1975

are individual, and one student can be inspired, another bored, by the same lecturer.

So, with apologies to all the other outstanding colleagues at the College, and in celebration of the dedicated staff who have taught at the College, this tribute is to one of NSTC's early lecturers, Mrs Seemann, from one of her early students, Pat Webster. Shorn of its references to the particular subject taught

(art), and the idiosyncrasies of the person described, it stands as an example of recalled experience that is fortunately quite common; of an inspiring and well-remembered teacher whose influence has been profound and long lasting. See feature overleaf.



Marianne Seemann (middle) with Professor Frank Cizek (left) and assistant, c.1920–30 at Cizek's Juvenile Art Class, Vienna

Recollections of Marianne Seemann, lecturer at the Nursery School Training College, 1945–50

Mrs Seemann gave me the most valuable working knowledge in relation to the nurturing process of children that I would ever receive. She imparted her philosophy gradually, never carping, but making her long experience and thinking process evident by talking to us about her own children (two girls about ten and twelve years) while she was supervising our art lessons. She had

a very mixed group of young women. Some had been ill-taught and badly influenced by 'art teachers' at school. Some had not taken art or crafts as a secondary school subject. I'm sure no-one had ever had the opportunity to express themselves freely with paint, chalk or pen.

Yet two years with Mrs Seemann gave each of us the wherewithal to foster the



development of and interest in art, and above all, how to gently stimulate and enthuse preschool children. She worked her magic in this way. She designed the art period so that each step would be related to the way in which we would present our own teaching method to a group of children under five years. She would breeze in, always with a bright smile, a short, plump Austrian matron, dressed always in summer in a bright print shift with broad shoulder straps and leather sandals. In winter she would add a cardigan and heavy stockings. Some of us would buy pigments at a hardware store — yellow, blue and red. Large shells had been collected and the pigments were mixed in these with a little gum Arabic. We mixed our own secondary colours. Later white would be added to our palette but never black. She would say 'Use Prussian blue for a very dark colour, not black. Black makes a hole in the paper!'

By the end of the first year's sheer enjoyment, all my fellow students (and I most of all) had thrown 'caution to the winds', and were producing free, interesting drawings, pleasurably uninhibited, childishly charming!

Several times when we had been concentrating hard for two hours we would feel her presence at our elbow. She would be standing with a large jar of honey in one hand, a spoon in the other, saying, 'Time for artists' food'. No one ever objected, each emptying the spoon.



At other times we would hear the pearls of wisdom that she let fall in her many anecdotes and skillfully veiled 'advice'.

Some of the most inhibited students who started out with me by the second year were producing works of art! Girls drew pencil line sketches of elves, crossed legs, sitting on toad stools, or fairies in tutus with gossamer wings and wands with stars. From when Mrs Seemann asked us to draw just anything on our first day, we had undergone the most complete metamorphosis.

It was as though someone had untied all the conventional knots that held fast our creative thinking and released the strands of thought, so that they now dipped and darted, floating upward and outward like bright colourful streamers on a summer breeze. I had seen Marianne Seemann effect this exciting

change. She had described her youth, working with Professor Cizek in his domed gallery, wherein every wall was covered with the art of young children.

I haven't forgotten your words Marianne, your thinking and practice was tested by me, throughout my own nurturing of two sons and a daughter. You said, never destroy a child's creativity. Keep their paintings and drawings. Let them feel that for you, they have value. This is the great discovery I have made from listening to Marianne Seemann fifty-five years ago: if you can leave as much material, as many tools and the chance to experience as much reality as possible in the path of a young child, you will have bestowed a precious gift — the gift of self-discovery, of self-discipline, and ultimately independence of spirit.²⁰

Pat Webster, Student

Student artwork produced at the Nursery School Training College.



Chapter 4

The women who led the College: from Elizabeth Town to Jenny Simons

Looking back through the history of the Nursery School Teachers' College, one can only conclude that the choice of those women who led the College through the 50-odd years of its existence was inspired by good luck, good judgment, or a mixture of both. While Miss Gillespie's time at Woolloomooloo in 1932 could be looked upon as a false start in the establishment of early childhood teacher training, things were quickly set on course with the arrival of her replacement.

Elizabeth Town 1935–1938

After Miss Gillespie's departure in 1933, Mrs McElhone (Vice-President of the Association) happened to be spending a year in England. The President, Lady MacCallum asked her to find a replacement Director. Mrs McElhone met with several Principals of Nursery School Training Colleges in the UK, including Australian Lillian de Lissa, Principal of the Gipsy Hill College. Candidates were interviewed and two were shortlisted. In 1934, the Association offered the position to Elizabeth Town, a graduate of the Rachel McMillan College with a distinction in the British Board of Education Certificate. She arrived in Sydney in 1935.

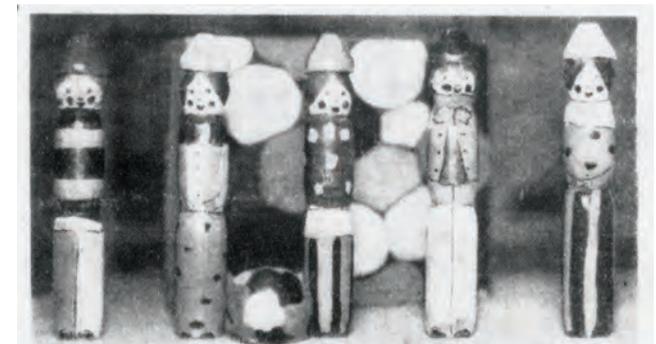
The Nursery School Training Centre was fortunate in having Elizabeth Town as its founding Superintendent. Her training had convinced her of the importance of sensory and perceptual training in the development

of young children, and she exercised her ingenuity in constructing and adapting materials for use in the nursery schools. In so doing, she established the tradition of students making and mending equipment for use in schools which was such an enduring feature of the College's programs.

Jan Kelly states: '[...] she was gentle and sensitive, but she was sufficiently strong not to crumble when faced by autocratic and unsympathetic committee women'.¹

Mildred Cookson, one of the earliest graduates and a member of NSTC teaching staff for many years, recalled that, 'Miss Town was the sort of person who told you things and then let you work it out for yourself. She changed my ideas about a lot of things, about life and whatnot. I'll never forget her.'²

After organising and gaining accreditation of the teaching award, Miss Town returned to England in March 1938.



Miss Town has turned a discarded broom-handle into a set of skittles with a saw, a file, and some bright paints.

Excerpt from an article in 1934, published in the *Women's Budget* titled 'Jobs for those who love children.'³

Mary Bird (1938–1944)

Mary Bird was selected as Miss Town's replacement by Lillian De Lissa, foundation Principal of Gipsy Hill College in England, and influential in the formation of the Kindergarten Union of South Australia. Miss Bird was a 23-year-old Gipsy Hill graduate, with three years' teaching experience in English Nursery Schools when she arrived. She quickly won the respect of the Committee women of the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, and while her title when she arrived was that of Superintendent, soon Mary Bird was being referred to as Principal and had prompted the Association to change

the name of the Training Centre to the Nursery School Training College. Mrs Katharine Thyne Reid recalled that, 'She was a strong minded kind of woman — red hair. I think they all admired her. She made some changes — took a bit of fitting in... She had a very good opinion of herself. She might have been socialistic [...] With the children you know you must grow on the socialist side of things'.⁴

During the College's time at Linthorpe Street, Newtown, Mary Bird strengthened the program by increasing its academic content and introducing study skills courses. She also established a proper library. She was politically and professionally astute, promoting the value of the College's Diploma to other educators by becoming an active and respected member of the Pre-School Child Committee of the Child Welfare Advisory Council, which advised the State Government on

NURSERY SCHOOL TRAINING CENTRE

5 LINTHORPE STREET, NEWTOWN



Offers a course of professional training for day and resident students who wish to train as teachers of pre-school children. New Term commences Feb. 5th, 1941.

Illustrated prospectus and further particulars on application. 'Phone: FA 3935

**Principal,
MISS MARY BIRD**

Advertisement for the Nursery School Training Centre, 1941. Source unknown.



Students of the Nursery School Training Centre, staff and students on excursion to Taronga Zoo, c.1935-36. Note the uniforms worn by the students.

matters of early childhood health and education. She used standards developed by this group to pressure the Association into upgrading its Diploma program.

By attending the first conference of the Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development in Melbourne in 1939, she established a precedent vigorously built upon by Joan Fry in later years. It was through such active participation and contribution that the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association gradually gained acceptance by the Kindergarten Union, who were very reluctant to accord equal status to the Nursery Schools and their teachers.⁵ Finally, in 1950, the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association was admitted to membership of the Australian Preschool Association.

A keynote speaker at the NSW Teachers Federation conference in 1943 on 'The Pre-School and Infants' School Child', Mary Bird championed campaigns for improved salaries and working conditions for teachers. Perhaps her experience at Gipsy Hill was of assistance here: it had a College Council, a forum where College rules were constructed jointly by staff and students, and issues resolved democratically. Students also learnt about leadership, public speaking and meeting procedures⁶. In contrast, Miss Bird clashed with the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association Committee women on several issues ranging from staff and student uniforms to

the respective responsibilities of teachers and Matrons.

Although it might be expected that Mary Bird, now Mary Martin, resigned in 1944 because she had married, and that being married and in the workforce was not acceptable for respectable women, it appears that she resigned mainly for reasons she presented in her straightforward way:

I was still the only full-time lecturer and I had to supervise all the nurseries and I was on the government committees not to mention all the Association's committees and I was doing a part-time degree. I was working all day, still at 9pm, only got one month's holiday a year, not school holidays. I had married and I wanted something less, so I applied for a job with the Department of Education and started their first Nursery annexe at Annandale'.⁷

Eleanor Green 1945–1950

Two other Gipsy Hill graduates were organised by the Association's Committee to replace Mary Martin: Elsie McLeod, and Margaret Duncan who became Director and Demonstrator at Newtown Nursery School. But their arrival was delayed, perhaps because of the exigencies of wartime, and in January 1945, Mrs Eleanor Green was appointed Principal.

Eleanor Green stands out among those who have led the College as one who had no early childhood background and no qualification for or experience of teaching young children (all Principals except Jenny Simons, were NSTC graduates, and Jenny Simons had taught in infants' schools). Despite this, Mrs Green was highly regarded by students, according to reminiscences of those who were students during her time; some remained friends after she left the College.

Eleanor Green took us for English. She had lived previously in the grounds of Sydney University where her husband had lectured.

I was always grateful that I came in contact with Eleanor. She gave me a taste for Australian literature, all, but particularly the women — Eleanor Dark, Miles Franklin etc.' PAT WEBSTER (NÉE SHAW), STUDENT 1945–47.⁸

Many challenges faced Mrs Green. The war was coming to an end, the student intake was expanding, the College was moving to new premises, and the change to a three-year Diploma course was about to be implemented. Her Principal's Reports to the Association, from which the quotes below are taken, suggest that she had almost unlimited authority (within financial constraints, obviously) to make decisions about management of College courses, students and staff. These Reports also reveal how much time, effort and thought Mrs Green devoted to these matters. She reports instances of cooperation with the Sydney Teachers College and Departmental (state) schools:

Professor MacRae and the [Sydney] Teachers College staff have been very considerate and willing to co-operate with us as far as possible. They leave me free to make use of their lecturers or to find others if it seemed advisable. We were anxious to keep our students in touch with a big efficient body like the Teachers College, so I have arranged that each year does some lectures there. [...] Also, all the students are allowed to use the Teachers College Library, and that is a very great privilege.⁹

It is that our students work with children from 2 to 5½ years in our own Nursery Schools, but that the work with older children should be second year and that they should be divided up amongst as

many Departmental Schools as the Teachers College thought necessary. Prof. Macrae [sic], Miss Bannon, Miss McCauley and Miss Stevens all agreed.¹⁰

The Principals of these schools [North Newtown, Blackfriars and Forest Lodge] are delighted with our girls especially the 1st years and tell me their work has reached a high standard. [...] Apparently at the Teachers College they were all struck with the enthusiasm of our girls and their attitudes towards their work'.¹¹

She strove to improve College resources:

I have done what I could to build up the Library. [...] Books are hard to get, but by delving into second-hand shops I have managed to procure about 70 books for, on the whole, very little money (about £8).¹²

and to deploy staff and students effectively:

Next term [the 2nd year students will] have about two and a half days for lectures, a half-day free for Library work or extra work in a Nursery School, and about two days in the Nursery Schools'.¹³

I should like to suggest one or two alterations in the prospectus if we are printing a new one.
a) Students should be not younger than 16 years of age, and should be up to L.C. [Leaving Certificate] standard. [...] I would also suggest a covering fee for equipment say £1:10:0 per year. The questions of providing mid-day lunch should be reviewed'.¹⁴

Mrs Glanfield gave her short course in Domestic Economy. She and I plotted it out together and in her final lecture I asked her to talk to students about co-operation, also to stress the importance of avoiding gossip and hostile criticism in nurseries and discussion with untrained staff. I also spoke to both years on this subject’.¹⁵

By November 1945 the College had moved into the new building ‘The Retreat’ in Burren Street: ‘the students love it and all visitors are charmed with it’¹⁶. As well as managing the change of premises, Mrs Green faced an expansion in student numbers. ‘The College is nearly six times as big as it was fifteen months ago and so there has had to be a lot of readjustment’¹⁷ — and uncertainties — ‘Each time we [have worked out suggestions for the third years], we hear something new that alters it, e.g the uncertainty about the date of arrival of Miss Duncan and Miss McLeod.’¹⁸ Despite these pressures, Mrs Green found time to introduce ‘machinery for students’ representation. They elect a President, Secretary and Treasurer for each year [...] the 2nd year president is College Representative. [...] This is an important development in College life.’¹⁹

Later in this period Mrs Green had the assistance of Miss Duncan and Miss McLeod, who had finally arrived from England. In 1950 Mrs Green resigned, the position of Principal was abandoned and the role divided, with the appointment of a Warden (Emily Baldock, B.Sc (Syd) Dip Ed (Melb)) and a Director of Preschool Training (Joan Fry, Dip NSTC, Thyne Reid Travelling Scholar 1946).

Joan Fry 1950–1973

Miss Joan Fry was a second year student at the time the Nursery School Training Centre moved from Woolloomooloo to Linthorpe Street at the beginning of 1941. Joan graduated as one of five College students who received their Diploma from Dr McRae, Principal of the Sydney Teachers College. She was appointed to Woolloomooloo Nursery School, where she became Director in 1944. On the recommendation of Professor Tasman Lovell and Miss McLeod, the Association awarded Joan the first Thyne Reid Educational Trust Scholarship for Child Development; she was the successful applicant out of nine applications received. She studied at the London University in the Department of Child Development, which had been established by Susan Isaacs.

At the time Joan was awarded the scholarship, Eleanor Green suggested that when Joan returned from London, she should help with student supervision and give lectures on child development. In 1948, Mrs Green reported that ‘Miss Fry will also lecture [...] on Child Development to the 1st and 2nd Year with a Course on Nursery School Developments here and abroad for the 3rd Year’.²⁰ In 1949, Joan Fry was appointed Vice-Principal of the College and Supervisor of Practical Training, and in 1950 she assumed leadership of the College until she left to become Chairman of the Pre-School Committee established by the Commonwealth Government in 1973. She was thus the longest-serving College leader, a charismatic lecturer, and a politically effective and hugely influential advocate of the need for a supply of trained teachers to ensure the quality of early childhood education.

In an address at her valedictory dinner in Canberra in 1990, Joan recalled that, ‘My decision to become a teacher was not made out of any interest in teaching,



Joan Fry, c.1980

but out of a desire to understand why people behaved in what appeared to me to be very strange ways’. Perhaps this curiosity arose because of the contrast in home circumstances between her early upbringing and later schooling. In her preschool years, her father was working with the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission along the banks of the Murray River, his wife and family living with him; later she stayed with her aunts in the city and attended Hornsby High School.

In an interview with Jan Kelly in 1979, Joan Fry revealed that her father didn’t believe women should work, so



Nursery School Training College graduation, 1956.
Joan Fry, front row, third from right

she applied to enter the College without her parents knowing. She had never been to the city by herself when she attended the interview. All of her aunts, her father's sisters, were Sydney University graduates. One of them, Mildred Muscio, was a noted feminist and founding member of the Board of Social Studies and Training, and her signature is on the certificates issued in 1935 to the first two students 'graduating' from the Nursery School Training Centre.²¹ Joan's father asked Mildred if the Nursery School Training Centre was 'respectable or not'; the answer must have been in the affirmative.²²

Most of the children who attended the Nursery School at Woolloomooloo came from homes that were no more than single rooms, often at basement level without water indoors; when times were hard, families were often helped by acts of kindness on the part of the Association Branch committees. Thus Joan had reason to reflect on the effects of upbringing, circumstance and health on the development of young children.

From the time the Demonstration Melanie Alexander Nursery Newtown School opened in the College grounds in 1957, Miss Fry always began her working day at College by visiting the school and interacting with the children. Thus she never lost touch with the realities of

children's personalities and behaviour, in effect testing, validating and deepening the understanding of children that she had gained through teaching, observation, theory and reading.

While in England, Joan had encountered, for the first time, the belief that long day care was not in the best interests of young children. This was before the ideas of John Bowlby on attachment and loss in infancy began to be published. Perhaps this negative view was expressed at this time simply because, as Joan commented:

Some of the day nurseries staffed by Nurses I saw in Britain were not good, and teachers declined to work in day care centres. Their reason, or excuse, seemed to be that if such places were bad the reputation of the teachers who worked in them would somehow be tainted. Surely if the centres were bad, something should have been done to identify the cause, and to eliminate it'.²³

That statement encapsulated Joan's practical and political commitment to ensuring that the education and care of preschool children should be of the highest possible quality. She pursued this aim in her teaching and through hundreds of papers, reports, interviews and lectures prepared and presented at meetings of professional associations, printed in journals or quoted in newspaper articles. She addressed groups ranging from mothers' clubs to the National Council of Women. She frequently spoke at meetings and conferences in country areas, perhaps reflecting a concern for the preschool education of children in isolated regions based on her own early experience.

Joan Fry also represented Australia at preliminary meetings of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEPE) held in Paris in 1946 and at its Stockholm conference in 1964. She was a Columbo Plan

consultant to the Singapore Government in 1957 and was an Australian representative at UNESCO meetings relating to early childhood programs. She was Chairman of the NSW Committee for Mental Health in Young Children in 1960–64, and a member of the NSW Health Education Advisory Committee; also a member and sometime president of the NSW Institute for Educational Research.

Through all these activities Miss Fry consistently and effectively promoted three clear messages:

- The early years were of critical importance for nurturing young children’s intellectual, social and emotional development, and society should promote such development through the provision of high quality preschool education for all children;
- ‘High quality preschool education for all children’ must apply to the experiences provided in child care centres catering for the children of women in the paid workforce;
- There was a critical shortage of trained and qualified early childhood teachers, and government had a responsibility to rectify this.

Irrespective of the time she spent on tireless advocacy, Joan remained a charismatic presence at the College for staff and students alike, and there was sadness as well as pride when she resigned in 1973. One student sums up the impact she made on the lives of many:

What a brilliant advocate for early childhood education! Where do I begin to tell of her many vast, warm, implacable and awe-inspiring skills and abilities? Her years of dedication and leadership skills undoubtedly projected SDN, the College, SDN staff and students a splendid image into the communities of inner city areas of Sydney,

ultimately beyond into NSW, the other states and the ACT. Joan was always fair and firm, students were treated with respect and sensitivity, and respect was always expected from them to all staff members.’
CHRIS SMITH (NÉE TOWNER), STUDENT, 1953–55.

Joan continued to speak out on behalf of quality care for children, and in 1980 she was awarded an OBE (Order of the British Empire) for services to early childhood education. At her valedictory dinner in Canberra in 1990, Joan summed up society’s progress — or lack of progress — in meeting the needs of children over the course of her working life:

‘The care and education of young children as a community responsibility developed in what was called the century of the Child. It has now passed through the decade of Woman, the supremacy of the Social Scientist and the social workers and is now influenced primarily by the Era of the Economists’.²⁴

However, she invested hope for the future in the teachers in her audience, ‘committed people like yourselves who can pass on your traditions to coming generations of child care workers’.

Joan died in Canberra in 2006, mourned by those who had known and worked with her.²⁵

Adrienne Fountain 1973

Following Joan Fry’s departure from the College in early 1973, the College Council faced the difficult task of selecting a new Principal, one who could guide the College through the great changes that were anticipated in the near future. Adrienne Fountain, a graduate of the



Adrienne Fountain, at her graduation in 1958

College and a member of College staff since 1969, was appointed Acting Principal, and she remained in that role until Jenny Simons, who had previously been a visiting lecturer and was therefore known to staff and students, took up the position of Principal in November 1973.

Adrienne welcomed the appointment of Jenny Simons, recognising that a new era was dawning and that the College needed someone with higher-level academic

qualifications at the helm if it was to maintain its reputation in a new era of teacher education. She had herself acknowledged the need to build on what she had learned at College through further study:

The process [of developing the observational and analytical skills needed to understand child behaviour] made me aware of how little I knew about children and their development. Within a few years of graduating I was studying again, attempting to find answers to many developmental questions.'

Adrienne paid no mere lip service to the need for higher qualifications. In 1965 she had been awarded the Alice Creswick Scholarship by the Australian Preschool Association. This enabled her to successfully complete a postgraduate early childhood education course at Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers' College. Later she gained a Bachelor and later a Master of Arts degree from Macquarie University.

During this interim period, the student intake increased and, along with anticipation, tinged with a degree of apprehension about what Joan Fry's successor would bring to the College, students and staff had the pleasure and excitement of using the facilities the new building had to offer:

We now have available increased technical aids such as audio visual equipment and a well equipped observation booth. This room has been used to provide additional opportunities for direct observation of children's behaviour in a variety of situations.'

The completion of the art wing in May has allowed the visual awareness programme offered to students to be extended.

Activities now available include pottery, silkscreen printing, leather work and collage'.²⁶

After capably 'holding the fort' during this interim period, Adrienne relinquished the position of Acting Principal and Jenny Simons assumed leadership of the College.²⁷

Jenny Simons 1973–1985

The appointment of Jenny Simons as Principal marked a distinct and necessary break with the past — necessary, with the College becoming a College of Advanced Education. The College needed a leader with academic qualifications acceptable to the sector, and there were no eligible NSTC graduates at the time.

After gaining an Arts degree at Sydney University, Jenny applied for an Education scholarship but was told 'you are married, we can't give you one'²⁸. Perhaps this played a part in provoking the feminist consciousness she displayed later on. Despite this setback, she went on to teach in private schools, then in schools in England. On return to Australia she taught again in private schools, a coaching college and her local departmental primary school. After years teaching there she found she was ineligible for promotion because of her lack of a teaching qualification, so she became a high school library and TAFE teacher, eventually studying at the new Macquarie University and graduating with a Master of Arts degree with Honours in Education, the topic of her thesis being the teaching of reading to young children.

During her study at Macquarie University, Jenny joined



Jenny Simons at the Nursery School Teachers' College, 1977

the Women's Electoral Lobby and was influenced by the women's liberation movement. She chose to call herself Ms instead of Mrs Simons when she became a teacher-educator at Mitchell College of Advanced Education (formerly Bathurst Teachers' College). In charge of the Early Childhood branch of the College, Jenny organised and supervised practice teaching. Her attitudes were in accord later on with pro-feminist attitudes among some staff and students at Nursery School Teachers' College.²⁹

While studying for her Master's degree, Jenny had been a part-time visiting lecturer at the College. Thus she was interested in applying when an advertisement for a

new Principal appeared, and realistic about the reactions to her appointment: 'a lot of people didn't personally agree with my appointment, but on the other hand (I guess) to be brutally honest, I guess there wasn't a lot of competition. There weren't many people who had a higher degree [...] who were offering at that time. Luck has been on my side'.

Jenny saw her new role as being 'principally an organiser, an administrator, a person who saw that everything that had to happen, happened'; and she applied herself diligently to that task and to doing it well. Apart from organising the early childhood practicum at Mitchell College of Advanced Education, she had little formal administrative experience, and before she started at the College she made a point of consulting the principal at Mitchell about 'what I was facing, what was going to happen, how things work in colleges of advanced education' — discussions she found very helpful. Later she found members of the College Council an invaluable source of advice and support, especially the Chairman, Dr George Gray, head of the Counselling Unit at the University of NSW. Eventually she wrote *Administering early childhood services*³⁰ to help those who rose to administrative positions but lacked guidance on the new tasks they now faced.

From 1974 on, Jenny sought to recruit new staff who had subject specialties, including mathematics and science, and who could plan a course in their specialty, present lectures and organise tutorials. Specialists who had also taught young children were preferred, but a degree was perhaps more essential. There were not always applicants with both sets of qualifications, so the percentage of lecturers without early childhood teaching experience increased.

In 1976 Jenny established a Board of Studies consisting of all academic staff and charged with the responsibility of planning and presenting a three-year Diploma of

Teaching acceptable to the Higher Education Board. Jenny was also awarded a Churchill Fellowship that enabled her to go to the US for four months to study the administration of early childhood services there. To her amazement she found that the preparation of early childhood teachers there was generally 'woefully inadequate', which was disappointing in one sense. But it also stimulated an upsurge of 'enthusiasm and confidence' in what the College was doing.

As the student population became larger and more diverse, staff worked on upgrading and diversifying College programs. Visiting overseas early childhood notables from England and the US provided stimulating input. The College ran smoothly, and there was probably little awareness among staff or students of how much of Jenny's time was taken up in meetings and administration. The first year of her appointment must have been particularly difficult in that an Interim Council consisting of Association members was appointed while the sale and transfer of College ownership and governance was being finalised. Jenny was required to arrange for the serving of afternoon tea from a silver service by non-academic staff at these first Council meetings — 'that struck me as quite extraordinary, to be doing that [arranging tea parties] instead of getting on with my affairs'. The Council Chairman, Mrs Frances Norton, was a formidable and competent person bent on negotiating the best possible financial deal for the Sydney Day Nursery Association.³¹ The settlement dragged on, to the apparent irritation of Association members. Jenny never discussed Council affairs with staff, but it was apparent that the atmosphere was easier when the sale and transfer of the College was finally concluded and a new Council under the chairmanship of Dr George Gray was appointed.

There were many other meetings. Jenny became the only woman on the NSW Teacher Education Board,

later the Higher Education Board. She was also on the Teachers' Education Committee, the Australian Conference of Principals of Colleges of Advanced Education and the Australian Principals' Association Professional Development Council. As proposals to reorganise the higher education sector advanced, were amended or adopted, and amalgamations started to proceed, meetings proliferated.

When the Nursery School Teachers' College (NSTC) and the Sydney Kindergarten Teachers College (SKTC) amalgamated to become the Institute of Early Childhood Studies (IECS), Jenny responded as she had when appointed principal of NSTC: with the attitude that this was an exciting challenge to be faced and that she would be 'a person who saw that everything that had to happen, happened'. Ruth Harrison, Principal of SKTC, had decided to retire and 'instead of just [being] in charge of the Nursery School Teachers' College I was in charge of two teachers' colleges, that was great, I liked that, that was a wonderful challenge for me I thought what a wonderful thing to be able to work towards, bringing these two fairly warring groups together and achieving something that must happen.'

The new IECS Academic Board doubled in size as the two academic staffs became one and tried to arrive at a consensus regarding the program: 'both believed that their ways were the best ways and that they knew better than the others... this makes for a lot of tension. [However] I felt they were well and truly settled by the time I left.'

As the Sydney College of Advanced Education (SCAE) took shape, Jenny participated fully and competently in the various committees associated with the larger amalgamation and was an eloquent and effective advocate for the IECS position (for example, in opposing a move of the Institute to the campus at Oatley which was proposed at one stage). She shares a memory that

serves as a poignant reminder of the personal cost associated with commitment to work:

I suppose about a third of my life seemed to be involved in sitting on committees [...] Once a dear friend of mine had died and his funeral was on the day when a very important committee meeting was taking place at which I was to present an impassioned plea for [the Institute] and I forewent his funeral, went to the meeting, was successful in whatever it was I had to do and the staff was so grateful they gave me a huge bunch of flowers. But I still regret missing that funeral.'

Perhaps it is not surprising that in retirement Jenny declared, 'nowadays I don't want to be on anybody's committees. I've done it a little bit but I am worn out with committees'.

By the mid-1980s Jenny felt that the amalgamation of the two early childhood colleges had settled down and that she had done what she could to influence the direction SCAE would take in the future. She recalled Joan Fry's example: 'I imagine she felt she had done her piece for the college [...] so I think she probably thought 'well perhaps now is the time to move on'. [...] Interestingly I did the same thing some years later when the Institute of Early Childhood Studies was moving to Macquarie, I knew it was going to happen but I thought I have done my bit, I feel now is a good time for me to get out and the next person can oversee [the next] change.' She retired in 1985.

Conclusion

In considering the role that each of its leaders played during the course of the College's existence, it seems to me that each of them, whether because of personal characteristics or capacity to adapt to or influence contemporary circumstances, was the right person for the place and the time.

Elizabeth Town was in effect one of the co-founders of what became The Nursery School Teachers' College. She brought professional knowledge from the heartland of Nursery School teacher training, the McMillan College; and in cooperation with Association members, the Board of Social Study and Training and other academic advisors, she brought order out of the somewhat chaotic arrangements for training heretofore in place, and established one of what long remained one of the distinguishing features of the College program: the careful selection, collection, improvisation and construction of developmentally appropriate play materials and equipment. And if Mildred Cookson's memory of her is typical, she made a lasting impression on those early students.

Mary Martin (née Bird) consolidated the training program on the foundations laid by Miss Town. She asserted the authority of the Principal in educational and College matters, and was active in promoting the professionalism of early childhood education and teacher education, a precedent later followed so effectively by Joan Fry.

Eleanor Green can be regarded as both a transitional leader and the leader of the College in a period of transition. She almost seems to have taken up her place as a 'stop gap', filling in while the arrival of Miss Duncan and Miss McLeod was delayed; but she dealt with significant challenges in the transition from wartime to

peacetime, in the transition from Linthorpe Street to Burren Street, in the expansion in student numbers, the introduction of an approved three-year program, and the recruitment and management of staff.

Joan Fry, like Mary Bird, oversaw a period of consolidation, perhaps the most stable period in the life of the College, and worked unceasingly to raise the status of child care in the eyes of other early childhood professionals. She raised public consciousness of the need for quality child care through her advocacy, and undoubtedly played a major role in the process that led to the expansion and transformation of early childhood teacher education in the 1960s and 1970s.

Adrienne Miles (née Fountain) Adrienne Fountain's brief period as Acting Principal 'bridged the gap' between the principalships of Joan Fry and Jenny Simons. In a more profound and vital sense, she was a bridge, a link, between the era when most full-time staff were people with Nursery School experience and imbued with the culture of the Association, to the time when many academic staff had no previous connection with the College or long day care. Her links with the early childhood field in general were also invaluable.

Adrienne was a history-keeper, an exemplar and an explainer of the values, aims and skills that the College stood for. She retired in 1988 as Principal Lecturer and a uniquely important member of staff.

Jenny Simons was leader in a final period of transition. She managed and oversaw the excitement and innovations associated with the change to College of Advanced Education; and she led staff and students through the stresses and changes of the late 1970s and early 80s.

The College has indeed been fortunate in the remarkable women who did so much to shape the course of its history.

Chapter 5

W(h)ither the preparation of teachers for early childhood services in the 21st century?

When the Commonwealth Government provided funding in the 1969–1971 triennium which enabled early childhood teachers' colleges to double their student intake, future prospects for the employment of graduates must have seemed bright indeed. Early childhood education and care were on the political agenda for two main reasons:

- a growing interest in the potential for enhancing the intellectual development, and hence life chances, of disadvantaged children through high-quality preschool programs. This interest had been stimulated by controversy over the effectiveness of different approaches to learning (for example, 'direct instruction' based on learning theory, and programs inspired by Jean Piaget's theories and research)
- growing pressures to increase the provision of child care for the children of working mothers, with intense debate between feminists primarily concerned with women's rights, and traditional preschool advocates who were just as insistent that children's needs for the highest quality care and education must be paramount.

Whatever the outcome of these struggles, it seemed that the importance of early childhood education was at last being acknowledged by the wider community.

Society has changed a great deal since then, particularly for women. Women outnumber men as

university graduates, and are succeeding in traditionally male occupations like engineering. In traditionally male-dominated roles, such as banking, financial and managerial services, women are represented up to board and directorial level. What amounts to a revolution in career opportunities has meant that most girls leaving school today do not consider teaching or nursing as their most likely option.

Unfortunately, some aspects of early childhood care and teaching remain the same. An abysmally low level of pay and lack of opportunities for career advancement remain as characteristic of employment in children's services as ever. In 1990, summing up half a century of working with children, Joan Fry's sad verdict was that, 'Australians do not like children. As a community, we don't do anything to indicate that we do'.¹ If the value that society ascribes to children is reflected in what we are prepared to pay those who care for them, it is hard to disagree with her.

The hope that the value of early childhood education was to achieve due recognition at last has not yet been



Girls playing at Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School, taken for Education Week, 1961



Boy playing at Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School c.1960.

achieved, notwithstanding the publication of recent research on brain development showing the importance of early learning.² Despite some supportive political rhetoric, the discourse around child care is almost totally focused on the need to improve productivity by facilitating the workforce participation of mothers. The voices of children and those who would speak for them are muted.

As a consequence of all these factors — hard work, low pay, low status, the attractiveness of other career options — there is a chronic shortage of staff in the early childhood education and care sector.

How has the preparation, supply of and demand for graduates in children’s services responded to, and been affected by, these changes? As described in Chapter One, pre-service teacher education was folded into the Colleges of Advanced Education and thereafter absorbed into universities. At the same time, within the technical education sector (TAFE), diploma and certificate courses were set up to provide childcare workers who were skilled but expected to take a lower level of responsibility than those with a three or four-year teaching degree.

To say that the field is fragmented today is to understate the situation. A comprehensive survey of current practices in the delivery of qualifications in early childhood education and care³ revealed that these include certificates and diplomas of children’s services, early childhood teaching degrees, degrees in junior primary and primary teaching, courses for Indigenous Education Workers and Teachers’ Aides/Assistants. There are TAFE providers of children’s services diplomas, private providers in the field of multi-cultural education, and several major private childcare providers who, as Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) deliver children’s services training. Several hundred organisations are registered to deliver Certificates and Diplomas in children’s services, although not all of these may be ‘approved courses’ for the purpose of children’s services regulations.

Regulations governing children’s services specify staff qualification requirements. In NSW the 1980s, regulations required that the supervisor of a service be a qualified teacher. The community childcare sector at this time strongly resisted what it saw as moves to ‘water down’ standards by the granting of exemptions from this requirement which allowed a TAFE graduate to fill such a position.

The regulation on staffing qualifications in New South Wales today indicates that this battle has been lost. It reads:

52 (4) In this clause, teaching staff member of an education and care service means a member of staff of the service who:

- (a) has a degree or diploma in early childhood education from a university following a course with a duration (on a full-time basis) of not less than 3 years, or**
- (b) has some other approved qualification, or**
- (c) has other approved training and other approved experience.⁴**

It appears that ensuring the maintenance, monitoring and assessment of quality in children’s services has moved from reliance on pre-service qualifications to reliance on on-the-job training. At the end of 2009, all Australian State Governments agreed to a new National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care. National Quality Standards⁵ came into effect with the establishment of the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) on 1 January 2012, replacing the previous Quality Improvement and Accreditation System which had been managed nationally by the National Childcare Accreditation Council.

To be approved for Childcare Benefit purposes, childcare providers are required to meet a National Quality Standard, details of which are set out in the National Quality Framework. Each centre must have a Quality Improvement Plan, and is assessed against the National Quality Standards. Centres are visited and rated by agents of the regulatory authority, which in NSW is the Early Education and Care Directorate of the Department of Education and Communities. The children’s services sector has generally welcomed this commitment to quality by all governments, although some complain about the costs involved.

ACECQA publishes National Quality Framework Resource Kits which consist of guides to relevant laws and regulations; the National Quality Standard; a guide to developing a Quality Improvement Plan; and *Belonging, Being, Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)*. The EYLF describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. Each state and territory has responsibility for the approval, monitoring and assessment of services.

As Watson and Axford point out, 'Given chronic shortages of staff in the childcare sector, many childcare services receive exemptions from the staff qualification requirements to continue operating.[...] In 2005, when the survey was conducted, no jurisdiction required a childcare service provider to employ an Early Childhood professional with a four-year degree'.⁶

While there are undoubtedly graduates from university early childhood education courses working in children's services today, high levels of staff turnover would make any estimate of numbers unreliable.

Watson determined that 'until the wages and working conditions in childcare improve, the pathways to university in early childhood will remain pathways out of childcare [by those with lesser qualifications into the relatively well-paid and respected profession of teaching] rather than career pathways within the profession of ECEC as a whole'.⁷

Pathways *out* of childcare? This was not the goal envisaged when the former Nursery School Teachers' College finally became the Institute of Early Childhood in Macquarie University.

What's in a name?

In a way, changes in the name of the Nursery School Teachers' College are landmarks along the course of its history. It began as the Nursery School Training Centre in 1931, lodged in the recently built Welfare Centre for Mothers and Babies in Woolloomooloo and strongly linked to the Woolloomooloo Nursery School within the same four walls. The aim was to provide teachers for the Association's centres. With the move to a new location in Linthorpe Street, Newtown in 1941, and perhaps reflecting a sense that the Centre had overcome its teething problems and could be confident of its future and its status, it became the Nursery School Training College.

The term teacher training reflects a belief that, while the education of the whole person may be part of pre-service preparation, the priority is to enable students to learn and practice the skills they will need to foster the skills necessary for educational success in the children they will go on to teach, as well as other educational outcomes. This purpose was still implicit in the change of name in the mid-1960s to the Nursery School Teachers' College. This was a time of educational ferment, with preschool teachers' colleges asserting their equivalent status to the State departmental teachers' colleges.

Along with the name change to the Institute of Early Childhood Studies in 1982, came the suggestion, for the first time, that the purpose of the former College had broadened beyond teacher preparation to the study of early childhood as a discipline or disciplines. Finally becoming the Institute of Early Childhood in 1994, it took on a much more general name suggesting a range of possibilities, untethered to any explicit statement about teacher training or education.

There appears to have been almost no critical discussion or attempt to evaluate the consequences of moving teacher training from specific-purpose colleges

to the universities. One paper, by Polesel & Teese,⁸ is a useful compendium of data relating to the former Colleges of Advanced Education over the period during which they were gradually incorporated into universities. It outlines the gradual process and the rationale for the changes that took place from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. Only towards the end of their historical summary of the changes to higher education (in *A retrospect from the Nineties, Chapter 2: historical overview: revisiting the Martin Report*), is there any attempt to sum up the impact of these changes. An important consequence has been the separation of the training institutions from the authorities who will employ the graduates — in the case of teaching, schools and children's services. The paper also notes that teacher training now operates within universities where the key measures of output and opportunities for employment and promotion are related to academic qualifications and research publications rather than excellence in teaching and the successful transmission of vocational skills.

It is left to others to assess the consequences of the incorporation of teaching pre-service preparation into universities. But in the end, it is economic and social forces rather than changing approaches to training and education that have been responsible for the changes described here.

Conclusion

Relecting on the history of the Nursery School Teachers' College, what strikes me most is that this is a story about women and their achievements. When the College began, women had a limited public role in society's economic and commercial affairs, and they had almost no political voice. Long day care for the children of working women was certainly not a fashionable cause. As the Annual Report of the Association noted in 1936 when it changed its name to the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, 'We were the first body in New South Wales to introduce the system of Nursery Schools in spite of much opposition and criticism at the outset'.¹

Later judgments could also be harsh, as Brennan observed in her history of the politics of child care in Australia:

Curiously, although [1970s] feminists were generally very keen to 'reclaim their history' and find their forgotten fore-mothers, they did not wish to claim the day nursery movement as part of their heritage. They showed little interest in, or sympathy for, the work that had been carried on by the Victorian Association of Day Nurseries or the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Associations — women's organisations which had struggled to provide day care for the children of impoverished working-class women for almost a century.²

Providing high quality professional training for those who could be paid very little for caring for 'the children of impoverished working-class women' must have

seemed quixotic at best; more likely unnecessary, even absurd. Yet the College was founded, grew, survived and prospered (educationally if not financially), thanks to the competence, adroit use of contacts and sheer strength of will of those women who brought it into being. Recognition of their efforts is long overdue.

Some names stand out among the founders and early supporters:

Lady MacCallum, a seemingly indomitable force, gathering information, organising staffing and establishing connections that shaped the program during its early years.

Melanie Alexander, Chairman of the Newtown Branch Committee of the Association, whose hard work in the canteen at the Royal Agricultural Showground during World War II raised the money to buy 'The Retreat' in Burren Street and who sadly died shortly afterwards.



Left: Lady MacCallum, taken at Surry Hills in 1934



Melanie Alexander, c.1945. This photograph was hung in SDN Melanie Alexander in Newtown until 2006, when the centre closed.

Katharine Thyne Reid, who discreetly and generously provided financial support for students who might not otherwise have been able to attend the College, established the Thyne Reid Scholarship for outstanding students, and often helped out in other ways.

Frances Norton, one of only ten qualified women accountants in 1938, an office-bearer of the Association for 40 years, a member of the College Council from 1961 to 1974, and a great help to Joan Fry during the years of the College's expansion.



Mrs Katharine Thyne Reid, 1965 at the Nursery School Teachers' College graduation, Sydney Town Hall.

More generally, it was the hard work of the Office-bearers and Committee members of the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association over the years that kept the College going, and who ensured the quality of its Principals and its staff.

It must be admitted that part of the reason the College was able to attract students was the lack of other career opportunities for women, and the fact that learning skills associated with caring for children was seen to dovetail neatly with the expected future of the students as wives and mothers. Nevertheless, many of those who entered the course were serious about their intended vocation and became teachers in the Association's centres.

It also has to be acknowledged however, that many did not, or did not remain as teachers in long day care for very long. No matter how dedicated a graduate may have been, pay was low, working hours were long,



Mrs Frances Norton at the refurbished Northern Suburbs Nursery, Crows Nest, December 1976.

conditions often less than optimal; 'burn-out' was all too common — and still is. It is small wonder that work in infants' schools and preschools, with shorter hours, longer holidays, and better pay (in infants' schools at least) has attracted many graduates. This had been noted as early as Mary Bird's time as Principal. She observed that, 'If they could get a job with the Department they would take it — it was much easier'.³

Despite this, some worked, and some still work with dedication for years in long day care centres. Other



45th anniversary reunion of 1966 graduates of the Nursery School Teachers' College, 2006.

graduates' accounts of their career paths after leaving College show that if they did not work or ceased working in child care, they commonly entered 'caring' occupations that drew on the same kinds of skills. Here are some of the occupations listed by graduates in the years since they left College:

Child care consultant; Area Manager, KU Children's Services; Family day care coordinator; Teaching in TAFE Child care diploma and certificate courses; National Childcare Accreditation Council validator; Children's Services Advisors; Family Support Services Coordinator; Counsellor; Infants and primary school teacher; Aged care worker; Special needs teacher; Practicum advisor.

In countless ways graduates have been advocates and volunteer workers for families and children in their communities.

When the move towards College of Advanced Education status began in the 1970s, there were some Council members and current students who supported a proposal to change the name of the College to something more modern, less 'old-fashioned'.

Approaches were made to the Higher Education Board between 1977 and 1979, with such names as South Sydney College of Early Childhood Studies; Sydney College of Early Childhood Studies and College of Early Childhood Studies. Jenny Simons observed that the name Nursery School Teachers' College encapsulated a proud history and reputation, which would be in danger of being forgotten with a change of name.

Attachment of earlier graduates to the name of the College, and the College itself, is evident in an incident cited by Jenny Hill (NSTC student, 1961–63). She and other students had undertaken a conversion course to upgrade their NSTC Diplomas. The conversion course students were to graduate in March 1979:

At the end of 1978 we were all asked to hand in our NSTC Diplomas — well! We had an overwhelming regard for that Diploma. The students won the battle as they would not attend the graduation or accept the conversion Diploma unless we maintained our NSTC diplomas.'

Perhaps the most fitting testimony to the value of the College can be found in the words of its graduates:

I had three happy years and was far more confident than when I started. I knew that I enjoyed the challenge of bringing happiness, an ability to explore and learn, especially with children who had additional needs.' NANETTE SWINBURN (NÉE CAMPBELL), 1955–57

I could not have chosen a better college to fulfil my ambition to become a preschool teacher. The education, practical experience and wonderful friendships have played a significant role in my life for which I will be forever grateful.' ALISON THOMAS (NÉE COLVIN), 1959–61

I have truly loved being a K teacher and if all the cards, letters and messages of thanks and appreciation over the many, many years are anything to go by, I feel that I have, in some small way, helped to play a part in the nurturing and shaping of thousands of little lives.' THEA HOLMES (NÉE NICHOLSON), STUDENT, 1961–63

All staff modelled dedication to the field of early childhood — it was catching to most students. College so well equipped us for teaching — it did prepare us for the ‘all-rounders’ we had to be.’ JENNY HILL (NÉE JARDINE), STUDENT, 1961–63

I found the education I had gained at College invaluable when raising my own three children. They had an experience rich childhood due to my appreciation of the value of literature, communication, free play, nutrition and so much more. My college years were three of the happiest of my young life. Everything I learned was so interesting and the people I met such genuine friends.’ LORELLE DEMPSEY (NÉE SHEPPARD), STUDENT, 1969–71

I cannot imagine a life without my work in early childhood. Indeed, those years at NSTC changed my life so dramatically that I will forever feel blessed that I was fortunate enough to attend such a wonderful learning institution.’ JULIANNE SIEMER (NÉE LEWIS), STUDENT, 1969–71

An incredibly ‘growthful’ three years which was an enormous experience and a catalyst to my future roles in early childhood education. College really was the starting block from which to dive, knowing that the capabilities, drive, impulse was there to tackle the many challenges that were ahead. College taught me how vital it is to constantly develop and practice listening, and all observational skills; to learn to be flexible in situations involving children, parents, adults, diverse communities. College — and life while there — taught me to appreciate life in all its many moods.’ CHRIS SMITH (NÉE TOWNER), STUDENT, 1953–55



Graduates at the 75th Reunion of the Nursery School Teachers’ College, 11 September 2010.

I often reflect on the wonderful teaching we had and how this really did set the foundation for my career. I firmly believe the training at NSTC was special.’ DEBBIE ZAPPIA, STUDENT, 1980

How will we care for children in the 21st century, when parents spend much more time at work away from their children, and the electronic revolution in information and communications technology is transforming our lives? Will we ever have what Willms describes as a ‘family-enabling society’,⁴ where social policies are framed to ensure that families and communities receive the support they need to raise their children?

The founding mothers of the College knew that what is worthwhile is hard won and has to be striven for constantly. As Mrs Norton observed on the occasion of her retirement from the Association:

We lived on faith, hope and charity — plenty of mortgages, always in debt, always fighting for money. But if a thing had to be done, we’d find a way of doing it.’⁵

Let us hope that the ideals that animated and inspired the foundation of the College will survive and find newer ways of expression and execution as we face new challenges, and that the best of what the Nursery School Teachers’ College had to offer its students can be captured and applied in the education and training of those who will work in children’s services in the future.

Notes

Chapter One

1. Aileen Fitzpatrick to Lady MacCallum, 26 October 1931. Board of Social Study and Training, Correspondence with Sydney Day Nursery Association, G17/8 (Sydney University Archives), University of Sydney. Ms Fitzgerald was a director at the Board of Social Studies and Training, teaching industrial history and casework, and had been highly regarded by Professor Tasman Lovell, Chairman of the Board, and the first Professor of Psychology at the University of Sydney.
2. Subsequently referred to as the Association. Following the first Committee Meeting in August 1905, the organisation was officially named the Sydney Crèche Association in December 1905. It was renamed The Sydney Day Nursery Association shortly after in February 1906, in view of the fact that many were puzzled by the meaning of the word 'Crèche'. In 1937, it became the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association to reflect the introduction of their Nursery Schools. It was renamed SDN Children's Services Inc in 1999 and finally SDN Children's Services in 2010.
3. See note 1.
4. Marquand, D 2004, *The decline of the public*, Wiley, London. p.51.
5. The story of the founding of the free kindergartens is told in Jan Roberts' excellent biography: Roberts, J 1997, *Maybanke Anderson: sex, suffrage and social reform*, 2nd edn, Ruskin Rowe Press, Sydney.
Maybanke Anderson was a strong advocate of early childhood education:
A State system of education which neglects the care of its infants, common as it is, has never existed without a warning from the thinkers of its era. Aristotle told his disciples that State education should begin in early childhood and that the playthings of the child should have a bearing on the life and work of the man. (*Women's Voice*, editorial, November 1895).
6. Jessie Gratton, Matron, Forest Lodge Nursery report, Sydney Day Nursery Association, *Annual Report 1916–17*. p.7–8.
7. Sydney Day Nursery Association, *Annual Report 1916–17*. p.14.
8. Sydney Day Nursery Association, *Annual Report 1915–16*. p.6. The Forest Lodge Nursery employed this teacher until 1932.
9. Kelly, J 1988, *Not merely minded: care and education for the young children of working women in Sydney*, *The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association 1905–1945*, University of Sydney.
10. Sydney Day Nursery Association, *Annual Report 1928–29*. p.3.
11. Sydney Day Nursery Association, *Annual Report 1929–30*. p.6.
12. Kelly, J 1988, *Not merely minded: care and education for the young children of working women in Sydney*, *The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association 1905–1945*, University of Sydney.
13. Reflecting on the Kindergarten teachers' negative perceptions of children from the Sydney Day Nursery Association, it is interesting to consider Adrienne Miles' account of her experience observing children in centres while practice teaching more than 50 years later: 'Every group had several children who had problems coping within the group. Intolerance towards other children as well as problems attending to a task or finding an interest was common behaviour... There was a lot of aggressive behaviour and many unhappy children... we observed the very much calmer atmosphere that was apparent when we visited preschools associated with the Kindergarten Union'. Adrienne acknowledged that working in day care was challenging, but never doubted its value or the important role competent caring teachers played in meeting the complex needs of children and their parents.
14. Mrs/Lady MacCallum's name is sometimes given as Doretta, but in most biographical references she is Dorette MacCallum.
15. Margaret McMillan and her sister Rachel, started an open-air nursery and training centre in Peckham, London in 1914. After Rachel's death in 1917, the renamed Rachel McMillan College moved to Deptford.
16. The government in the UK did not promote the expansion of nursery schools however, being mindful of the costs involved.
17. For further reading about the remarkable McMillan sisters, see Bradburn, E 1976, *Margaret McMillan: framework and expansion of nursery education*. Denholm House Press, Surrey, England. and Bradburn, E 1984, *Margaret McMillan: portrait of a pioneer*, Routledge, London.
18. Kelly, J 1988, *Not merely minded: care and education for the young children of working women in Sydney*, *The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery School Association 1905–1945*, University of Sydney.
19. Sydney Day Nursery Association, *Annual Report 1932–33*. p.4.
20. In that year because of 'their own huge numbers' [due to returning servicemen and women electing to train to be teachers] the Teachers College [were] not able to give [...] students lectures. Sydney Teachers College lecturers from then on visited the College rather than the students venturing forth to attend lectures. College students continued to have access to the STC Library and go to the Departmental Schools for a while, however the postwar 'bulge' in trainee teacher numbers is probably the reason the arrangements with Blackfriars and North Newtown also ended at a later date. Source: Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association Inc Training College, *Principal's Report, February 1948*.
21. It is interesting that from the beginning, College students were observing and working with children aged 5 to 8, even though they were being prepared to teach children of preschool age in nursery schools. Experience with, and learning about, children in this age group would be an asset for many graduates in later years as their training was recognised by non-government and Catholic schools as being a high-quality preparation for teaching in infants' schools. However, despite the early close relationship between Sydney Teachers College, local State

infants schools and NSTC, it was 1976 before NSTC graduates were formally regarded by the Department of Education as qualified to teach in Departmental schools.

22. This was mentioned in the 1957/8 Annual Report: 'In 1946 a motto chosen for College badge: *Pro Parvis Optima* — 'for the little ones, the best'. As a community we try to live up to this motto.' It is unclear who made this decision. Mrs Eleanor Green, Principal at the time, was a notable Sydney University Arts graduate and would have been familiar with the University's coat of arms and Latin motto; perhaps she suggested it.
23. Built in c.1845 for auctioneer John Blackman, and later known as Twickenham, 'The Retreat' stood out among the small surrounding workers' terraces and semi-detached houses.
24. Mrs Norton served as Honorary Treasurer of the Woolloomooloo Day Nursery Committee for 18 years and as President (and later) Vice-President on the Association's Executive Committee for 22 years. She also served as a member of Council of the Nursery School Teachers' College for 13 years. A tribute to Mrs EA (Frances) Norton written by Jan Kelly, appeared in the AECA Newsletter in 1982.
25. Norton, F *Address of Welcome*, Official opening of the new building, Nursery School Teachers' College, Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, 30 October 1972.
26. Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, *Annual Report 1972*.
27. Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, *Annual Report 1969*.
28. Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, *Annual Report 1970*.
29. Known as the Martin Report after its author, Sir Leslie Martin.
30. Jennifer Simons interviewed by Roslyn Burge, SDN Children's Services, 2004. The audio file and transcript are held in the SDN Archive.
31. Hughes, SJ & Robinson, TJ, 'The former Colleges and the Butland Committee Report,' in Koder, LM (ed) *In transit: Sydney CAE, 1982–1989*, Sydney College of Advanced Education.
32. Hodges, P 1989, 'Disestablishment: the catalytic factors', in Koder LM (ed), *In Transit: Sydney CAE 1982–1989*, Sydney College of Advanced Education, Sydney. p. 296.

Chapter Two

1. In its archness and condescension, this quote serves as a sharp reminder of attitudes to women that persisted long after these words were written.
2. The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association Inc. Training College, *Principal's Report, November 1945*. Mrs Green suggested in July 1945, that the College prospectus should state that 'Students should not be younger than 16 years of age, and should be up to L.C [Leaving Certificate] standard'.
3. Megan Brophy interviewed by Dr Sandie Wong, 23 June 2010, SDN Children's Services. This apparently haphazard approach to choice of career is apparently not a predictor of later capability and commitment. In 2013 Megan remains a highly regarded member of the team at SDN Paddington, and is one of SDN's longest serving staff members.
4. Children who performed best in these tests went into the special Opportunity Classes (OC) for gifted and talented students.
5. Kelly, J 1988, *Not merely minded: care and education for the young children of working women in Sydney, The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association 1905–1945*, University of Sydney. p.326.
6. Fry, J 1972, Speech at the opening of the Nursery School Teachers' College, Burren Street, Newtown.
7. In 1953 £2000 was collected on Button Day. The previous year the Association had requested, and the Queen had approved, a special likeness of the then baby Prince Charles on the SDN button.
8. The Columbo Plan was launched in 1951. It was a cooperative venture by Commonwealth governments providing economic and social aid to countries in South and South East Asia. Through the scheme, Australia supported around 20,000 students from regional countries such as Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia between 1952 and 1985.
9. The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association Inc. Training College, *Principal's Report, July 1945*.
10. The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association Inc. Training College, *Principal's Report, 29 November 1945*.
11. Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, *Annual Report 1973*.
12. Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, *Annual Report 1945–46*.

13. Jennifer Simons interviewed by Roslyn Burge, 29 November 2004.
14. This continued to be the case in the later versions of the College: three of the wildly successful 'The Wiggles' — Anthony Field, Greg Page and Murray Cooke — being undoubtedly the most famous male Institute of Early Childhood graduates at Macquarie University.
15. Unfortunately, the slow increase in the number of men in child care was almost extinguished by rising public concern in the 1980s about the sexual abuse of children. There were widely publicised cases — sometimes found to be unjust and misguided later — of accusations of child sexual abuse in child care centres both here and overseas. Male students and graduates began to report feeling uncomfortable on practice teaching or in employment, and that they were subjected to more scrutiny and suspicion than women in child care. When one observes how regularly small children cluster around male staff and visitors in child care centres, this discouragement is a matter for regret.
16. This eventually led, through many faltering steps, to the establishment at Macquarie University of a Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Services) degree designed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who wish to specialise in teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Chapter Three

1. Fry, J (unknown) *Fifty years of child care: a personal perspective of care and education of young children, 1940–1990*.
2. Margaret McMillan opened the Rachel McMillan Training College in Deptford, London in 1930, naming it after her sister, who died in 1917.
3. Fry, J (unknown) *Fifty years of child care: a personal perspective of care and education of young children, 1940–1990*.
4. Dewey, J 1897 *My pedagogic creed*, E.L. Kellogg & Co, New York & Chicago. Listing the liberal studies in the program year by year is difficult because their presence or absence partly depended on the availability of Sydney Teachers College lecturers, or guest lecturers visiting the College: 'To some extent our time-table depends on the Teachers' College [...] We were anxious to keep our students in touch with a big efficient body like the [Sydney] Teachers College, so I have arranged that each year does some lectures there' Eleanor Green, *Principal's Report, 1 March 1945*.

5. An excellent historical overview of the eurythmic movement and Heather Gell can be heard on *Playing the body*, Hindsight 2011, radio program, ABC Radio National, Sydney, 13 November.
 6. *Recollections: 100 Tributes to the Life and Work of Heather Gell MBE*, collected by Lesley Cox, Patricia Holmes and Joan Pope, in celebration of the centenary of her birth, 1896–1996.
 7. Kelly, J 1988 *Not merely minded: care and education for the young children of working women in Sydney*, *The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association 1905–1945*, University of Sydney.
 8. As above.
 9. This early recognition of the importance of psychological theory and research may reflect the connection between the Association and Professor Tasman Lovell, a brilliant graduate of Sydney University and the first Professor of the first Psychology Department in an Australian University. As well as being Chairman of the Board for Social Study and Training, he was Chairman of the Child Welfare Advisory Committee, President of the Council of Social Service of NSW, and a teacher on the staff of Blackfriars for a time. His signature appears on the Board of Social Studies and Training Nursery School Certificate p.6.
 10. There are independent schools operating in Sydney today whose founding was inspired by Neill's ideas.
 11. I find it thrilling to consider that the College had such a direct link to theorists, particularly Winnicott and Bowlby, for whom I have enormous respect and from whose theories I continue to derive understandings and insights.
 12. Marion Taylor interviewed by Jean Barrett, 25 June 2010 & 2 July 2010, SDN Children's Services.
 13. Spitz, RA 1945, 'Hospitalism: an inquiry into the genesis of psychiatric conditions in early childhood', *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 1, p.53–74.
 14. *Young children in separation*, 1976, video recording, Robertson Centre and Concord Films Council, London. Parents were often discouraged or actually forbidden from staying with their children in hospital or visiting them frequently; the reason given was that visits upset the children too much, and this was inconvenient for nurses. Partly as a result of the Robertson films, and partly for the advocacy of groups such as the Australian Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospitals (AAWCH), practices regarding visiting in children's wards gradually changed.
 15. Mrs Melanie Alexander was born in Angus, Scotland in 1888 and immigrated to Sydney in 1923. Melanie Alexander was President of the Newtown Day Nursery and Nursery School Committee during World War II. Together with Committee members, Melanie Alexander conducted a canteen for soldiers during the war at the Royal Agricultural Showground, and raised enough finance to purchase the Burren Street property in 1944.
 16. Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, *Annual Report 1957–58*.
 17. Harding, R and Clarke, L 1976, *A guide to meal planning in preschool centres*, Health Commission of New South Wales, Sydney.
 18. Jennifer Simons interviewed by Roslyn Burge, 29 November 2004, SDN Children's Services.
 19. In this course, students studied the basic skills needed to teach English as a second language. Students gained first-hand experience during a short practice in a school of 'high migrant density'. *Calendar 1978*, The Nursery School Teachers' College: a College of Advanced Education, Sydney, NSW.
 20. Fine examples of artwork by children and students inspired by the Cizek method taught by Mrs Seemann are held in the SDN Archives. One of Mrs Seemann's students, Drora Booth (née Simpson), went on to devote a large part of her life to the study of children's 'art'; however, her interest was to take her down a very different path from the style of art taught by Mrs Seemann. She developed an impressive theory regarding what she calls 'children's intuitive pattern painting', the developmental stages that can be discerned as children go on creating their pattern paintings, and how this activity relates to and facilitates other kinds of learning, especially mathematics. When they adopted this approach in their classrooms, Drora and Kathleen Anderson, a teacher who had been a fellow student, acquired collections of beautiful children's paintings. Drora went on to develop her ideas through work theses for Master's Degree and a Doctorate. She continues, at the age of 89, to work on her collection. Kathleen's collection along with part of Drora Booth's, are held in the SDN Archive.
- ### Chapter Four
1. Kelly, J 1988, *Not merely minded: care and education for the young children of working women in Sydney*, *The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association 1905–1945*, University of Sydney.
 2. As above.
 3. 'Jobs for those who love children', *Woman's Budget*, 20 August 1934.
 4. Kelly, J 1988, *Not merely minded: care and education for the young children of working women in Sydney*, *The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association 1905–1945*, University of Sydney.
 5. Teachers in the Nursery Schools worked from 7am to 6pm plus Saturday mornings. Their salaries were determined by the Association. Mildred Cookson did not paint a happy picture of Association members' attitudes to their teachers: 'we were so hamstrung around with rules and regulations – had to wear certain uniforms, had to do this... those old ladies still considered us as nurses... we were sort of nursery maids. Most of them were very condescending to us...' On the other hand, despite clashes on some issues, Mary Bird thought 'they were very very nice people, very genuinely interested.'
 6. Whitehead, K 2008, 'The construction of early childhood teachers' professional identities, then and now', *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, September.
 7. From Jan Kelly's interview with Mrs Mary Martin (Bird) on 30 December 1981, reported in Kelly, J 1988, *Not merely minded: care and education for the young children of working women in Sydney*, *The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery School Association 1905–1945*, University of Sydney. p.330.

I am indebted to Jan's thesis for much of this account of Mary Bird's principalship.
 8. Mrs Green's husband was H M Green, Librarian of the Fisher Library at Sydney University and author of *A History of Australian Literature*, perhaps the most authoritative work on the subject published up to that time. Eleanor was also a university graduate. The couple shared literary interests and were prominent in Sydney literary circles. They were divorced in 1944 after 33 years of marriage, and he remarried the same year. Lady MacCallum, President of the Association, was highly involved in University affairs; her husband and University Vice-Chancellor Sir Mungo MacCallum, 'an institution in himself' had died in 1942. It is tempting to speculate that she influenced the selection of Mrs Green as the College's Principal.
 9. The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association Inc. Training College, *Principal's Report*, 1 March 1945.
 10. *Principal's Report*, 29 November 1945.

11. *Principal's Report, 31 January 1946.*
12. *Principal's Report, 1 March 1945.*
13. *Principal's Report, July 1945.*
14. *Principal's Report, July 1945.*
15. *Principal's Report, 29 November 1945.*
16. *Principal's Report, 29 November 1945.*
17. *Principal's Report, 28 March 1946.*
18. *Principal's Report, 29 November 1945.*
19. *Principal's Report, 28 March 1946.*
20. *Principal's Report, February 1948.*
21. See Chapter 1, p.6 for a copy of J Hutchinson's graduation certificate. The Australian Dictionary of Biography entry on Mildred Muscio states that she was an honours graduate from Sydney University and a member, and later President, of the National Council of Women. She defended the right of women to employment during the Depression, and served on the Commonwealth Royal Commission on Child Endowment in 1927. She was awarded an OBE in 1938.
22. Jan Kelly interviewed Joan Fry on 12 September 1979 and 12 May 1981.
23. From Joan Fry's valedictory speech, Fry J 1990, *Fifty years of child care: a personal perspective of care and education of young children 1940–1990.*
24. As above.
25. Joan Fry's obituary appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 March 2006. See also 'Obituary: Joan Fry, OBE (1920–2006)' *Every Child Magazine*, Vol 12 No.2 2006. Early Childhood Australia.
26. From Adrienne Fountain's address to graduating students at the NSTC's Annual Presentation of Diplomas in 1973.
27. This administrative experience stood Adrienne in good stead when she was again Acting Principal during the time Jenny Simons was in the US on a Churchill Fellowship.
28. All quotes from Jenny Simons in this account are taken from Jennifer Simons interviewed by Roslyn Burge, 29 November 2004, SDN Children's Services.
29. Some staff — but not all, as noted by Heather McCalman (*née* Minty), student, 1972–74: 'Feminism was gathering strength in the early seventies and some of our lecturers were in the

vanguard, while others were most certainly not.'

30. Simons, J 1986, *Administering early childhood services*, Institute of Early Childhood Studies, Sydney College of Advanced Education, Sydney.
31. Jenny stated in her interview with Roslyn Burge in 2004, that 'she [Mrs Norton] would tell me if she thought I was stupid about what I wanted to do but I would go ahead and do it. But we did become good friends and eventually I visited her a few times after she retired...'

Chapter Five

1. *Canberra Times*, May 13 1990, p.7.
2. Phillips, D and Shonkoff, JP and National Research Council (US). Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development 2000, *From neurons to neighborhoods: the science of early childhood development*, National Academy Press, Washington, DC.
3. Watson, L 2006, *Pathways to a profession: education and training in early childhood education and care, Australia: Final Report*, Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra.
4. *Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation 2012 under the Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Act 2011* (NSW).
5. Set out in *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law* (NSW)
6. Watson, L and Axford, B 2008, *Characteristics and delivery of early childhood education degrees in Australia, part A: final report*, Lifelong Learning Network, Faculty of Education, University of Canberra.
7. Watson, L 2006, *Pathways to a profession: education and training in early childhood education and care, Australia*, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra.
8. Polesel, J and Teese, R 1998, *The 'colleges': growth and diversity in the non-university tertiary studies sector (1965–1974)*, Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.

Conclusion

1. Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, *Annual Report 1936–37.*
2. Brennan, D 1998, *The politics of Australian child care: Philanthropy to Feminism and Beyond*, Cambridge University Press, revised edition: p.79.
3. Kelly, J 1988, *Not merely minded: care and education for the young children of working women in Sydney, The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association 1905–1945*, University of Sydney.
4. Willms, JD 2002, *Vulnerable children: Findings from Canada's National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth*, University of Alberta Press, Edmonton.
5. From Jan Kelly's tribute to Mrs EA Norton, published in the *Australia Early Childhood Association Newsletter*, February 1982.

Acknowledgements

Many of the facts from which this history is drawn are taken from SDN and Nursery School Teachers' College Annual and Committee reports, which are held in the SDN Archive. This rich archive is a wonderful resource for those interested in the history of child care and the associated social history of NSW, especially Sydney; I am indebted to the volunteers of SDN's original History Committee and its Chair Effie Bland who worked so hard to bring it into being.

I am especially grateful to the many ex-students and staff who provided their memories of the College, particularly at the time of the 2010 College reunion, and who have generously allowed me to include them in this history. These individual reminiscences provide light and colour to enhance the facts and ideas presented here.

I am also indebted to the painstaking research undertaken by Dr Jan Kelly and assembled in her 1988 Ph.D. thesis *Not merely minded: Care and education for the young children of working women in Sydney: The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association 1905–1945*. I owe much of the detail about the early history of the College to her work. Sources other than Association and College reports are acknowledged in endnotes to the text of the history.

All images for this publication are sourced from the SDN Archive unless otherwise stated.

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In this work, I first outline what might be called the life and death of the College — a chronological account of the course of events over its 50 years. The later chapters deal with the life within: the students; the College program, courses taught and goals pursued; the Principals who steered the College through each stage of its existence. Some memorable lecturers and benefactors are acknowledged, though such a list can never be exhaustive.

Finally, an attempt is made to assess the significance of the College, both in its own terms and as part of the history of vocational/ professional education in the twentieth century. My hope is that future generations of early childhood professionals will draw inspiration and encouragement from the visions and efforts of those who have gone before. I know I have.

Leone Huntsman, Pyrmont, 2013



Girl painting at Melanie Alexander Newtown Nursery School, taken for Education Week, 1964

SDN today

SDN, students and the early childhood sector

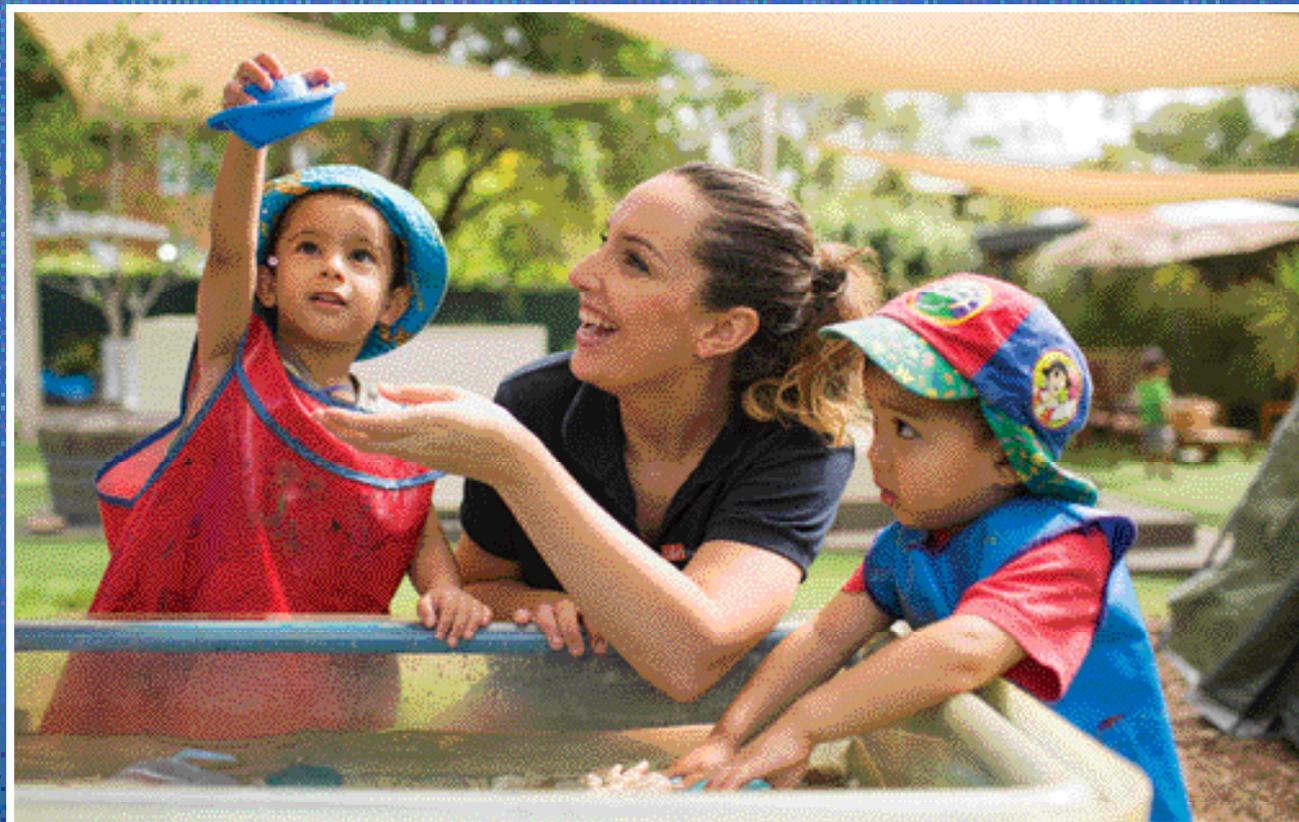
SDN Children's Services is a not-for profit organisation that has been providing quality early childhood education and care since 1905. We were founded to provide child care for the children of poor women who needed to work in order to survive.

Our first centre was located at 126 Dowling Street Woolloomooloo. From that one location, SDN now has 25 Children's Education and Care Centres across NSW and ACT, and 24 government-funded programs.

We are proud of our long history in teacher education and the provision of a range of children's services. Not only did we establish the Nursery School Teachers' College, we were the first to employ qualified teachers to work in our centres. We continue to support the education of early childhood professionals through structured student placements in our centres that support university and TAFE students to gain practical experience.

We have maintained close links with the Institute of Early Childhood at Macquarie University (the eventual home of the Nursery School Teachers' College), and our CEO, Ginie Udy is a member of the Advisory Board of the Institute.

We award a number of scholarships and prizes each year to university and TAFE students studying



early childhood education and other courses relevant to the work we do. These scholarships and prizes recognise and acknowledge leadership as well as academic performance, and are given in honour of the women who built SDN through

their hard work, perseverance and vision.

SDN remains committed to contributing to the early childhood sector, and supporting our vision of a world where children's services are valued and well resourced.



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