

**OH 788/2**

**Transcript of an interview with Rosemary Luxton**

**by Catherine Murphy**

**Recorded on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006**

**for the Royal Zoological Society of SA Inc**

**Volunteer OH Project**

**Tape recording available 59 minutes**

OH 788/2  
Rosemary Luxton

**OK, we're recording now and this in an interview with Rosemary Luxton L-U-X-T-O-N at the Adelaide Zoo on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and Rosemary has been a volunteer at the zoo for a long time and has lots of interesting stories and memories from coming here as a child. The interviewer is Catherine Murphy.**

**So Rosemary tell me first of all your full name, maybe your maiden name and your date of birth so I can get it recorded.**

Rosemary Ann Wood, born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of the third '34 and my married name is Luxton and I'm now divorced. (laughs)

**What's your first memory of coming here to Adelaide Zoo?**

My first memory is probably the elephant and the elephant was Lillian and that would probably have been in 1937 or 38. And I used to come on Sunday mornings with my father who was an honorary member of the zoo. He was a Professor of Botany at the University of Adelaide and most Professors in those days had some sort of honorary position with the zoo so they could come in on Sunday mornings when it wasn't open to the public. So my memories of going out with my father with this public free, lots of space to see the animals, not crowds of people. My father knew a lot about animals because he was a botanist, he also knew a lot about plants. We used to come and feed the elephant carob beans and the elephant loved carob beans. We would usually do it via the keeper, bring in a bag. In those days you could bring in your paper bag full of these great long beans. And the keepers always knew that they loved these beans and so they'd say 'Would you like to give her one or two.' That was a great privilege. And I came years later with my two children when we returned to Adelaide and I remembered about the carob beans so I would go out with the children and collect carob beans before we came to the zoo. In those days it was Samorn and Samorn would go round the elephant circle and there were posts and people would put peanuts on the post and jelly beans and all sorts of odd things, but we would put our carob beans, our great long carob beans. And they were a great success. All the other children used to get frightfully offended because she always picked up carob beans and left the other things behind. So carob beans and elephants are some of my great memories of this zoo.

**What a wonderful story. So would they take the carob bean and crack the pod or  
- - -**

Just put it in whole.

**Put it in whole. And where did you gather the carob beans**

Adelaide has a lot of them still around. There's still one tree left in the zoo actually. But there are a lot in the parklands. When we came back to Adelaide my mother's house was an old lodge which was about the 1850's and that's about the time the

carob trees were planted and so she had a whole great row of carob trees which we used to pick and take in.

**Gorgeous. I suppose the elephant must have been huge to a child of four or five.**

I was probably about three or four when I first came. Lillian was one of the smaller elephants but I think you are right and I wouldn't have known that. And I was brought up with Barbar books and so elephants were a very important part of my childhood. My parents read to me and the Barbar books were one of the things that they read. Elephants were a **big** part of my life. I remember pictures of me feeding an elephant in Regent's Park in London when I was about two and a half. Obviously I was impressed with elephants from an early age.

**They are very intelligent creatures aren't they? I suppose you had rides in the cart.**

Well Lillian pulled a cart but I don't remember that. I do remember my children having rides and were smaller than the cart. I just remember really feeding the elephant. Sunday mornings the carts probably wouldn't have been operating. That was largely when I came to the zoo. That would have been the public openings wouldn't it, when the cart operated and the elephant pulled it.

**And having such a special opportunity with your dad who was knowledgeable, what other memories do you have about seeing the animals and learning a little bit about them at that time?**

I remember, I'm not even sure now if it was an alligator or a crocodile but it was one that we had for years and it was killed in the Children's Zoo in the disaster, but I remember that for years and it just used to sit there. And it was down by the old elephant house in those days, it moved later, but in the time that I remember it was down where there are now emus in a small enclosure there. And it just used to lie there and it never moved.

**Was that a white one, they said it was white.**

It was white with age apparently, it was very very old, I'm not even sure how old it was. But I remember another animal down in that area, it is probably where the sponsorship forms are opposite the giraffe. I remember going past and seeing a small bird aviary, the sort of thing about the size you might put a couple of budgerigars in now. And it had this tiny little animal in the corner. And of course at the age I always thought my father knew everything but he didn't know what this animal was. And that sort of surprised me tremendously and we had to ask Mr Haggard what it was and it turned out to be a sugar glider. And it was just curled up in the corner. In those days they probably didn't bother much about vegetation. They probably didn't even know much about some of the Australian animals. So it was just all curled up in the corner.

**Maybe there weren't many Australian animals in zoos then, they would be more exotics.**

Yes, my memory is of large animals but I think as a small child that is what you remember. It is certainly now days what children ask for. They are the ones that they are impressed by, hippos and giraffes, things that are big that they can see.

**So when you say that you asked Mr Haggard I know that you are referring to one of the directors of the zoo. And we are sitting now in Minchin House in what was the home of the Minchins. Did you come here as a child?**

No, I didn't ever come here. I went to the Koala Farm though, which was run by Minchin. I remember that too as part of my childhood but that must have been later because Mr Haggard took over from the Minchin brother who died. It was the other brother who ran the Koala Farm, so he must have lived there a bit longer. It must have been during the war I think. I remember going there in a train for a children's party to the koala farm.

**So it was something some way out of Adelaide?**

No, no the koala farm was on the other side of the bridge near the zoo, where the university playing fields are now. So the two were very close together.

**Gee, that was a fantastic outing.**

Yes it was.

**A train ride to the koala farm**

Yes (both laugh).

**And did you handle the koalas in those days?**

Yes you could handle koalas. They also had what I thought were seals but were possibly Californian sea lions. My memory is that they were smaller than the current sea lions we have in the Adelaide Zoo. But they used to perform there. So that probably means that the zoo did not have seals or sea lions at that stage because they were at the koala farm. They used to do performances with balls and diving.

**Wow. Did you find any photos of that when you were looking through photos of that?**

No. None at all.

**That's interesting. So would you just be able to give us a sketchy idea of your father's participation. I know that it won't be from the time that you were a child, but any knowledge that you would have from later years about your dad's participation as a member of the Board of the zoo I think and what that meant. How the zoo ran in those days.**

I think he was an honorary member so he probably wasn't actually on the Board as such. I think, rather as it is now, I would suspect that the university and there are a lot of affiliations, both direct and indirect between Botany and Zoology Departments for research. And Psychology and things like that for research and students. So it would

probably be that sort of thing. But of course Adelaide was smaller in those days. You are going back a very large number of years to 1939, 40s. And also it was war time so I suppose people were left behind and not actually serving in the war, sort of bonded together a bit more for discussion and exchange of information. But I was too young to really know how it worked.

**Are there still animals in the zoo today that were here in those early days when you visited?**

Yes, there is, the flamingo.

**Is that all?**

Yes it's the only one.

**That's extraordinary isn't it?**

I mean that flamingo is actually a bit older than me (both laugh).

**Wonderful. So it sounds from what you said at the beginning that you had an intense connection with the zoo as a child and maybe through your school years, I'm not sure, and then you broke and went somewhere else to live and then came back to Adelaide. Is that right?**

Well as I said I've got another memory of the zoo in the earlier days and that was of one of the monkeys which I think was a baboon of some sort. And that was probably certainly during the war because my father always used to go up to this animal and say 'Sarg salute'. And so Sarg would salute. And again it was probably symptomatic of those times that I remember him as an animal alone and baboons of course are group animals. So that is something that definitely has changed over the years. So that's another of the earlier animal memories that I have. Another memory that I have is not being able to go to the zoo because there was a polio outbreak in 1939 and I remember being very upset at not being able to go. But the advice was again from someone with a scientific mind like my father that you don't do anywhere where you get infections. I also think that the zoo lost some animals at that time because of course polio was transmissible across ---. But I'm not sure about that. I had a feeling that I was told that some of the animals died and it wasn't a safe place to go. So for that period of course I didn't go. But my memory is that I went pretty frequently during the war years. Then I had younger sisters and maybe my father took them. I probably didn't go so often. And then I moved. After university years I really was too busy which is interesting because I notice now that we get quite a lot of students that actually do pop into the zoo just for an hour or so from university. But in my time I didn't go to the zoo. And then I went overseas. Just about everywhere that I went – London, Whipsnade I always went to the zoo. And then we came back to Sydney. So the early years of my children were at Taronga. So I did have a gap of about 20 years away from Adelaide Zoo.

**What was the impression when you came back to Adelaide and saw the zoo in the 60's? Had it changed much at all or - - -**

It was the 70's by the time I came back. Yes it had changed. There were a - - - there were still an awful lot of barred enclosures. But then most of the zoos I had visited in Europe had too. Taronga was not a good zoo for children. Taronga, I used to go with a lot of my friends because they knew that I loved zoos. And they would take me with them with their children. And my memory of Taronga is lifting children up constantly to show them things because they couldn't actually see them at their level. And I remember coming back here and finding with great relief it was far, far easier to take children around the zoo. Not only was it all on the same level it was also much easier to see the animals. A lot of the enclosures were bigger, I remember there was a large monkey enclosure in the seventies where the baboons are now. Of course that was demolished later to make even more open range enclosures. And I was a volunteer by the time they opened South East Asia 1 which was the first of the really 'new age' developments at the zoo.

**So maybe tell me about how you reconnected and became a member again and what era that was? Were you involved in some of the very early MAC committees?**

No, I wasn't. As I said in the introduction that I'm divorced and that happened when I was 54, and I thought I would like another interest again with my life. And so I thought about the zoo again and I re-joined. At that stage they were doing zoo watches and I was still working, I was a librarian and I was working for the government and you could take flexi time. When they had zoo watches I would take a day off and come into the zoo and do watches on several of the primates, but also on the lyrebird. And it was during the time that the public service was actually being reduced, and my particular area of it was being greatly reduced. So the lyrebird got a lot of my problems.

**You told the lyrebird the truth.**

I just relaxed. It was rather terrible and you were having to carve up your department and decide how many librarians and how many library technicians and how many clericals you could retain and operate. So my day out with the lyrebird I suppose kept me sane.

**Oh, wonderful. I can hear the siamangs in the background starting to hoot a bit. So this is still in the 80's but a bit later I think.**

No, about 1989 I rejoined the zoo, yes. And zoo watch started about 1990, 91. I wasn't involved in the very beginning which I think Mac Boyle may have told you about because I think they did the very first watches on the mandrills and the lyrebird when it was in its other enclosure. I took up the lyrebird when it moved into its new enclosure, where it is now.

**And did the zoo watch become something that you had an on-going connection with?**

I was never on the committee but I think there were two of us who probably put in more hours than anybody else in the first few years of its operation.

**So, tell me about your interest in the observation of animal behaviour in that way and the recording of that detail. I mean it probably isn't that romantic being out in the sun and the rain, but there is a certain level of connection there between you and an animal there isn't there too, I imagine to observe?**

Well, I found the zoo watch very rewarding because it meant that you saw all sorts of behaviours which if you walked past an enclosure you would never see. And if you sit for two hours in front of an enclosure you notice all sorts of things that you don't at other times, I found. And it those days they gave us a lot of detailed background information on the animals, their names, their ages, all these sorts of things. I found that I was talking to the public if it was a watch that allowed you to do that, about the information about the animals. And it was suggested to me in about 1992, by which time I had retired, that I do the guide course. Because they heard me imparting this sort of information and they thought that it would be a good thing to become a guide. So I did the guide course in 1993. And I used a large amount of my zoo watch information in my guiding. And I found it invaluable. I guided very differently from a lot of the other guides because I knew their names, I knew their ages. And I did discover that the public really likes this. The idea that the animals have names intrigues the public. It really is a very good talking point.

**So what were your specialities from zoo watching into guiding, what were the animals that you carried that information from between zoo watching and guiding?**

Well I knew a lot about tree kangaroos, I'd done a lot of watching on tree kangaroos, I'd done watching on wombats, I'd done the lyrebird of course. I'd done a very large number of primate watches. I was doing ones on orang-utans and chimpanzees and I had a great interest in primates. I'd also done a lot on the siamangs. They moved the siamangs from the wired enclosure to the South East Asia 1 and I was involved in both the before watch there and got very, very involved with the siamang family, very, very intrigued by them because their family was very like the humans. And very, very interesting to watch the dynamics there. I was heart broken when the mother died and left the young baby who just didn't make it either because his mother died. Those who are involved in zoo watch understand how keepers get with their animals. Because if you have done watching, the same sort of thing happens. And I was also involved with the introduction of two groups of lion tailed macaques. And I've always continued the interest in them as well as a group. And now they've got a disease which is transmissible to humans so they've had to be kept a lot further apart than in the beginning. But just watching the introduction of those two groups – there was a terrible fight and you just realise how traumatic a thing like that were. And I remember having to dramatically call the keeper. And say 'Help Help'. And they had to separate them and actually have them vet checked. But eventually the group got together and you realise just what sort of power dynamics occur in groups of monkeys and apes. And another animal I had a lot of involvement with was Birri the male sea lion who I watched when he was first introduced into the sea lion pond. And I was there when he tried to climb out. And I had to actually call up the keeper and say 'Help, help, Birri is heading for the Torrens'. And Jason, who is still there, came back and got him down. They did a lot of hot wiring and Birri is still with us, a very large and enormous animal. He was then about two feet long. I suppose now he must be about 10 or 12 feet long.

**Oh my goodness! And this is all information you can't get out of books, because it is particular to an individual animal or a group of animals isn't it? So while you might read about the generic behaviour of a group or species you can't get the detail about that group in that enclosure.**

No. And the story about Birri I can still use because he is still there. I can say you see that set of hot wire over there, they are there because he tried to climb out to the Torrens. And he was this long. People like stories like that.

**And guiding remains your interest, your core interest doesn't it really?**

I am still guiding but as I've got older I guide once a month now and I do the Information Booth two days a month because I find I just don't have the stamina that I had. But when I guide, I've also been involved with Cage to Conservation. I did the touch table area there. And I did actually say that I wanted to be involved with conservation part of it because when I guide that's the part I concentrate on and tell people about our conservation projects. So I try very hard to keep up to date with what the scientific researchers are doing. I suppose it dates back to my father and the background there, but I think they are important stories to tell so I always like to try to find out what Greg Johnson, David Taggart and people are actually researching and what the current state of their information is. And because I love wombats and David Taggart is actually doing research on the wombats, I always try and find out what the latest developments are there.

**Can you tell us a little bit about what the zoo is involved with in conservation at the moment?**

Well they are doing research into the mange in the wombats now. But originally David Taggart was trying to work out whether they could use the southern hairy nosed wombat in order to act as a surrogate for the northern hairy nosed which is highly endangered. But that is actually on hold now, because of the mange apart from anything else. It has been very hard to get animals that would be free of the mange. He has also done research on the Gilbert potoroo and I was actually involved at one stage trying to acclimatise some of the long nosed potoroos that they had in the vet centre. I was trying to acclimatise them to humans because they suffer stress very badly, but they discovered that when they reach maturity they just go berserk anyway and don't like humans. So that didn't actually work out. The previous vet was actually trying to de-stress the animals so that they were more "handlable" in order that this research could be undertaken to try again and will read up on the Gilbert's potoroo which is highly endangered in Western Australia, using the long nosed as surrogates. In much the same way as they do with the surrogacy with the yellow footed rock wallaby. And that's again a story that I like to tell people about. Though I've not been directly involved in any of the actual research.

**That's been very successful I understand.**

Yes it has. Except of course they had this terrible setback with the first ones that they bred. They sent to Canberra and they actually got wiped out in the Canberra bushfires. So it wasn't just the hazard of the Victorian bushfires that took the ones in the wild, but the ones that we had actually captive bred that had been released in Canberra that

got wiped out in their fires. So that was a double whammy. But I think they have retrieved the numbers now and it has been a very successful project.

**I suppose there are other ways of thinking about the conservation issue too, the way in which the children through the Education centre are participating in the survival of some of the animals in other countries. And the encouragement that is being given to local school children and through AZES? To think about the survival of animals in the wild.**

Well I do actually do food store tours with the education group here. You don't get much of a chance to talk about conservation programs. I think education does that largely. I think they are heavily involved with the tigers and the bears.

**Yes, particularly the bears.**

You take the children behind the bears and talk about the bears but largely as a dangerous animal in that context. And you have to keep the children far enough away from the dens, paw distance away from being able to stretch out. And of course while we had Jacobi the giraffe we were able to feed the giraffe from behind and demonstrate to the children how the giraffe actually takes the leaves and wraps its long tongue around, which was very good. But I think with our current giraffes that might be a long way down the track in doing that again.

**And the children are fascinated by the fact that you are actually breeding mice and rats to feed out to the reptiles.**

Well it is always a bit of a shock to them. The butcher's shop is always a bit of a shock. I usually hold up a small chicken and a large chicken and point out the lumps of meat. And when they know it's horse they always - - - a very large reaction. And you point out that in the wild the lion would eat the zebra. This is really the nearest thing that you can get to it. And I point out in fact that there are a large number of people who would prefer that their old horses would come to the zoo. Because the driver goes out there and actually shoots them in their home paddock. And they don't actually have to be transported and disturbed, which can upset old animals anyway. But it is quite a hard sell as are the rats and mice because they are very cute. And there are always the babies, the children tend to react badly. Particularly if you've got boys who have kept rats as pets, as my son did. They don't like to think of them as being fed out to the snakes. But it is just really - - - you just have to say to them well how else do you think we feed the animals to keep them alive. But it is something that people tend not to consider when they are thinking about the zoo.

**So does that offer opportunities to suggest to the children that this is an arena in which wild animals aren't really wild. Then there are animals in the wild who are quite different in many ways to the animals that we keep in the zoo? Do we do some of that?**

Well it's a bit hard on a food store tour really to bring that in. That would probably come out more when you work on the touch table and things like that. One of the things that I have done when we have special touch tables during school holidays and things like the lions and big cats is if you have the skull of a tiger say is to point at the teeth and say look at these are the killing teeth and these are the tearing teeth and look

how worn they are. Now this was a zoo animal. In the wild this animal would have died at 10 or 12. And this animal lived to 18, 20 22, which is what can happen in the zoo situation as opposed to a wild situation. And point out that animals do live far, far longer in the zoo. In fact we had a Siberian tiger here that they literally used to cut up its meat. The children used to think that was a tremendous joke. And I said not small pieces of meat like you would do for your dog, but I mean a piece this size for a Siberian tiger is really quite a small piece of meat and you don't expect the animal to tear it off the bone when it's got no teeth. So it's those sorts of things where you can bring it home to children the difference between the wild and the zoo situation. You can also point out that the ones in the zoo are sort of carrying a banner for the wild animals. It's very good with the bilbies, for instance, in the nocturnal house. You can talk about the conservation programs and how these are the captive bred ones and they have actually gone back to the wild, same with the yellow foots, they have actually been put back into the wild. And you can talk about the areas where you hope that might actually happen. Like one day being able to send Sumatran tigers maybe back to the wild. Or orang-utans back to the wild. I believe that Perth Zoo is actually currently planning to send the first orang-utan back to Indonesia. If that sort of thing happens it's a wonderful flag.

**Did you have any inkling of any of these behind the scenes issues when you were a young child coming her?**

No, not at all.

**It was completely ----**

Just front of house of Sunday mornings.

**So how do you describe that change that has occurred between the 1930's and 2006?**

Well, I suppose one of the things would be that perhaps they felt that behind the scenes was a bit cleaner and fitter to go to, although some of our areas are still not good. I was involved with the South East Asia 1 behind the scenes tours which were special ones that we did at the weekend which we called for interest and we charged some money. And that all went to the rhinoceros project in Sumatra. And that wasn't the new members behind the scenes tours, but this was actually paid for by the public. This was one of the first areas that was considered cleaner and fit enough and safe enough to be able to show off what could happen. What could happen with that was that the sun bears would come in. The keeper would allow them to come in and people could actually see them at a much closer range. But off course you had to make sure they kept back and point out the long claws. So that was probably the first area. And of course the new Immersion will offer far greater opportunities. But I have been involved in the new member tours since about - - - I suppose since I passed my guiding course. I've helped with those.

**We might just have a pause and a drink of water while - - - that was a shorter one, the one before went off for ages. So what does that contribute to the opportunities that are designed now bridge to the gap between humans and animals and educate people about what goes on to house animals in the zoo.**

**What does that contribute do you think to people, the general public, to the children who visit?**

I'm not sure how well we convince the children if they are coming on new member tours. I think it is different when they are in a school situation with the food store tours. Even then it is quite hard to convince them about the food because I usually do it on a Monday which is their first day at the zoo and they get very excited about the zoo and they haven't seen very much of the front of house of the zoo so taking them behind the scenes at that stage is usually a bit difficult because they really want to know about the animals in the front and how they operate up front, rather than all about the food. And the food can be a bit hard to absorb. In new members' tours we do food store as well and I think it is the adults that take that in much better. A lot of our new members now are young families. And it is a very good time to become a zoo member because it means that they can bring their children in for a short range of time and they can stay for a couple of hours and then go home. But it does mean that the children in that age group are not really suited for behind the scenes tours because it is a lot of information and I think the parents get quite a bit out of it and also sometimes photo opportunities. But for the children it can be a bit boring because we can't really gear it to both levels. So perhaps the children don't get as much out of it. I think the parents do because I think an understanding of how much it costs to run the zoo, how much the food bill is a week, the sort of people that are involved behind the scenes and how it works. I think it is an eye opener. Particularly to members, because members in any case are going to be rather dedicated people anyway. And so the new members' tours are something that we give them as part of their membership. So it is not a fund raiser, it's something to give them an understanding of the zoo. If they like to contribute in direct ways --- we tell them things like the sort of browse they can contribute. Like if they want to cut down suitable trees and prune and anything that could be useful in that way. And I know sometimes you find people with connections to butchers or some sort of element of food, of you know you can contribute to the zoo. It doesn't happen a tremendous amount. I mean all those things probably do help. It does make people realise when we talk about BEEZA the sort of things that people can contribute, like even pines cones and excess fruit and things like that. All those sort of things all help the operation of the zoo. And make people realise, particularly with the behavioural enrichment that we are all trying very hard to keep the animals amused all the time.

**And well and happy.**

Well the vets make sure that they are well and happy and healthy. But the behavioural enrichment is really up to the keepers and what the keepers feel can be provided to give them that extra. And things like bears and primates do have to be kept fairly busy. I mean in the wild they spend most of their time looking for food. And of course in the zoo situation if you just stick it in a bowl and give it, it is just no answer. One of the great things has been to watch the new Immersion - what that has done to the orang-utans. That wasn't a terrible enclosure they were in before, but what has happened since they have moved and have got the ropes and they've got the transportable food up to the higher level has made such a huge difference to their behaviour and what people see that you can't help but be very, very pleased about it.

**I hear that they are acting up quite a lot (laughs).**

Yes, I think Karta (laughs) - - - We've always said that Karta is a one in a million orang-utan.

**Do you go up to Monarto at all? Are you connected in there?**

I used to, I used to be a Wednesday volunteer, but I had breast cancer and found that carrying buckets of water, which was a lot of the Wednesday activity - - - I believe they are watering a bit more with hoses and things now, but in those days it was carrying buckets so that really got a bit beyond me. I enjoyed that time because we were actually collecting seeds and learning how - - - I don't think I ever realised that you need hot water to germinate a very large number of eucalypts. I should have known being a botanist's daughter but I didn't.

**Plant propagation, we didn't know anything about Australian plants in those days did we?**

Well it's like Monarto, on the other side of the road it's got all those Western Australia plants. They are not even native to the area, which is what, when we started doing the propagation, we started to do.

**It seems like a wonderful combination Monarto and Adelaide Zoo, to have that opportunity for free ranging larger animals and then animals that are more contained right in the heart of Adelaide like this. That was a fantastic initiative. Do you remember anything about those times, I think it was the 70's 80's again wasn't it?**

I wasn't involved at any stage in the planning stage. I was involved before Monarto opened to the public we were going out there. And they were having tours with buses that went though behind the scenes originally and we were working up there then. One of the nice things about those days was that it wasn't terribly organised and because they were very short staffed, you actually went in with things like going in with the giraffes and helping to muck out the areas before they had the concrete slabs, and getting really, really close to Kitabi who was a hand-raised giraffe and very tame. So there were certain privileges that one had in those days which are probably no longer possible.

**That's gorgeous. What do you think the central contribution is that the volunteers make to Adelaide zoo?**

Well I guess it is our time and the fact that we are prepared to do such a wide range of activities. I think if you analyse the amount of time that some of the volunteers spend it is really quite a lot. And I think that we do things, particularly in zoo watch where the keepers are certainly better observers than we are because they know their animals better, but just simply don't have the time. So that we can, at least under their instructions provide them with a sort of another pair of eyes. To me that's very, very important. I think with the guiding there are a very large number of occasions when you are not really needed or wanted as a guide but you can as a static guide, perhaps take a position in a particular place and help an animal. Like if there's been a birth or something then you can talk about the birth of the animal, or if there is going to be a very crowded day you can do something in front of the baboon enclosure and try and protect those poor animals from the persecution that they inevitably get from large

volumes of the public. And even the lions, the lions when they were moved to that new enclosure, in the early days, we had problems, well in both enclosures, with the school children. And so sometimes just being a static around that area can be useful for the protection of the animals.

**And having seen many zoos in England and I think Europe as well, how does Adelaide compare do you think to those other places?**

Well I think it compares very well for its size, I really do. I think it is very, very good zoo for small children, and I think it is in a wonderful situation. There are not many zoos that are so close to the city centre and the big hotels. And I'm in guiding Monday morning usually and it's quite interesting that the people you will get to guide are the people who walk through the gate at 9.30 the minute it opens having walked from their city hotel. And you'll take round them, you won't wait for a 10.30 tour. You just say would you like a tour and off you go. So I think there are those advantages. And it would be a huge loss if we lost the city location. I know city locations have been a problem because London Zoo had exactly the same problem. It's one of the problems of ageing. And it's one of the problems of trying to replace areas. I mean, for instance, with the Immersion it has been wonderful now that it is finished but it did cause problems while it was being built. And SEA 1 probably caused more problems because it was more centrally located in the zoo so that you had more disruptions with traffic going through and around. On the other hand both developments have been wonderful behavioural enrichment for the great apes who always got on top of their poles and supervised everything.

**(Laughs) I bet you could never have imagined what Adelaide Zoo would become when you were a little girl.**

No I couldn't. I mean now there are no elephants and I would totally agree with that. I've taken people in to see the space that the elephant had. I mean that was tragic, because while they gave rides, while they pulled the carts around, and had the activity of course, they did get the exercise, but the elephants do need exercise. But once they were confined to the yard, poor Samorn had a bad time. On the other hand I don't think she should have been moved to Monarto. Because I think that animals do get used to where they are and she was heart broken because she --- I was out at Monarto at the time. She was heart broken at the loss of the public. She was used to the public and she only really got her spirits back when the buses started to come around again.

**What a show off.**

She just loved people. These current giraffes from Monarto don't seem to like people and are only used to them in buses. So Samorn was just the opposite.

**How gorgeous. So is there anything I haven't asked you about?**

I don't know if you want to talk about the photographs but if you do - - -.

**I do want to talk about the photographs because you spent some years didn't you, cataloguing - - -**

Four years.

**Four years. So what would you say about that experience.**

It was fascinating, it really was fascinating. I worked with Margaret Nagle and I'm very grateful for her good memory. Because unfortunately mine isn't very good anymore. And Margaret could remember things we looked up and dates. We did have a lot of reference books provided by the librarian and we did have to constantly refer to them. But it gave us a very good insight of the early years of the zoo before we were actually operating. And also how many animals were lost, I suppose because we had to look up records and things for dates of birth, trying to estimate when a photograph had been taken and who it was. And we had to get histories from some of the keepers who were still around who remembered them. And you would look up the animal records and realise that a huge number of animals were lost in the earlier years, which wouldn't be the case now. Then there were only honorary vets and things like that in the '30s when I would have started. Whereas now I think Dr Schulz only came --- he's been here 20 years, so he must have come in the 80's. And that's the first full-time vet. Before that, they were honorary position and people, usually a vet on Council I believe, or else a vet who was also a curator, something like that.

**And did you get an overview of how things changed in the way in which animals were represented, or species were represented, the way in which it was possible to import animals from one country to another, any of those.**

Yes, you got an inkling of the fact that for a long time the zoo paid for animals. They were either given, donated in the very early days. There were benefactors who not only gave buildings like the rotunda and things like that, but they also gave animals or paid for animals. But the animals like elephants had to be bought and then they were giving rides or pulling carts. The early elephants gave rides to cover their costs virtually. This was what was expected of a zoo. One of the things we had towards the end the librarian wanted to put all the photos on a disc. And this didn't actually turn out for the elephants. We did it actually for the elephants in the hope that it would save the original photo from too much use. But it turned out that this new technology is not quite up to the mark. The graphics artist had to actually go back to the originals for the elephant house graphics. What it made us do was put together our cataloguing, which had only been photos that hadn't been catalogued before. We had to amalgamate them with the ones that had previously been catalogued. And we did that for the buildings and that was particularly interesting because that gave us an overview of how the enclosures had changed over the years. And so, looking at the old maps and where things originally were was fascinating. We would get some of the older keepers to come in and take us through the maps and say what was in which enclosure in their day. And we actually did take an oral history from one of the keepers.

**Who was that from, was it Verner or ---?**

No, Verner hasn't been done, one hasn't been done, I think that's to be done.

Isn't it terrible, I am sorry, the name's gone.

**The New Zealand man?**

Yes

**I can't remember what his name is either, but he's been mentioned to me.**

Yes, well the librarian would be able to give you his details, I'm terribly sorry about that. But we drafted out a list of questions and then conducted an interview with him.

**I'd love to hear that. Rosemary would have that. Is it Rosemary?**

It's Silvia, Silvia would have it. She's good at that.

**Anything else about the photos?**

Well the other ones that we amalgamated were the primates. And that again was very interesting. And we also had to select some for banners and some for a calendar. That was very interesting. It was 125 years of the Society's, it was 120 years of the zoo and 125 years of the Society. And there was a calendar and banners. And some of the banners are still up and some of them aren't. We made some mistakes with the banners, we used tiny photos and you couldn't really see what they were and we took it on other people's memories of what they were and they turned out to be wrong. So it was an object lesson in life. And the calendar, we chose things that we thought were symptomatic of the old zoo and then they were overridden with the sort of photos of the current animals. And that turned out to be a total failure as a sales item. The keepers hated it, absolutely hated it and refused to buy it. I suppose it shows how far zoo keeping had moved that they really resented the photos that this represented. So if you haven't seen the calendar you must ask - - -

**They resented?**

They just felt it was the wrong image that we had - - -

**Oh, they wanted to choose the image? Like baby photos.**

I think they wanted a greater preponderance of current things. And to see all the bars and the sort of things and the dressed up chimpanzees and things like that, which is what they did, chimpanzee tea parties. And there was one chimpanzee that used to smoke. We didn't have that in the calendar, but we knew it happened. All these things are the zoo's past.

**Yes, it is like talking about the past. The Germans talking about their past and the zoo talking about it. It's something that needs to be done to acknowledge where you have been and where you are going.**

Yes, but it was interesting that not one keeper would buy it. So that was really rather sad because we put a lot of energy into choosing what we thought were fairly representative of old photos of various aspects of the zoo and getting a history.

**So, you did primates?**

Yes, primates were interesting because there was a lot of hand-rearing of primates in the early days. In fact, when I first started zoo watch the one on the siamangs was

fascinating because they thought that she wasn't feeding it, and it was only by doing the zoo watch that it proved that she actually was. But the siamang baby actually hangs very low. It doesn't hang high up, it hangs virtually from its mother's hips because the mother is swinging through the trees and this leaves her arms free to actually move.

**Can we just pause while this - - - sorry. I am so aware of the background noise, I'm sorry to interrupt you.**

That's all right. We found as a result of our zoo watch that she was actually doing adequate feeding. Up till then they had always taken the siamang young away and hand reared them. And of course this was standard practice with orang-utans. Karta was only partly mother reared and is one of the troubles with her really. She hasn't been reared as an orang-utan really. And so she is a bad mother (both laugh). And that is San Diego, that's not here.

**So how many animals currently in the zoo would have been raised by their mothers or even come from the wild?**

Well all of them, they have all been raised by their mothers, but it has been a cost to the baboons, because, if you read the history poster that is up on the baboon kitchen wall we do have a father who kills his young. So that has been a problem. But they did insist that they didn't want to have to hand-rear baboons. And so they have persevered and they have actually got three, we hope, through to, might get through to, adulthood.

**Wonderful. We were talking to Sue Huddy this morning.**

She probably told you all about that.

**She told us a little bit about the infanticide of the babies.**

And they've got a langur, you see, and langurs are group monkeys, like baboons and we've only got three. We've got the problem that none of the females have actually seen a baby reared. We've got a pregnant langur now and she may not be able to rear her second one. There's always a problem that the first one, even in the wild, quite often a primate will lose its first baby. But I don't know what they'll do with the langur. Our zoo is not alone in this. I went to Perth for a primate conference earlier in the year and they've got a family of gibbons who have much the same problem. They've partly raised the young one, but next to its mother, close enough that they were able to reintroduce it, but they had to give it extra milk, extra feeds and so they may do that with this langur, if you've got a mother that doesn't know how to feed it, and doesn't want it.

**It just makes me feel how close we are to animals – humans, you know how there is so very little difference, really, behaviourally.**

And how important it is that they see something happen. They have to learn by seeing it.

**To experience something is to learn.**

And particularly with primates, which I am sure Sue would have conveyed to you.

**I'm sure you've got lots of other little stories that are fascinating in there – the chimpanzee tea party, which just slipped out.**

Well that was from the photographs, I didn't go to it.

**Any other little stories like that from the photos?**

We used to have the koala, the bush fire koala, but I think that moved up to Cleland once Cleland opened. That used to be centred here. The elephant used to have a birthday party.

**Gorgeous. With cake?**

Yes, with cake, edible cake suitable for an elephant, but with food in it suitable for an elephant. Yes there were lots of things like that in those days. And as I said, the two chimpanzees were hand-reared by one of the keeper's wives. And she used to push him around in a pusher. I think there was sponsorship on the pusher. I mean, these photographs exist, they are fascinating.

**I love the one of the lion cub on the leash with the Director.**

Yes, that's beautiful. That's not the Director.

**Oh, who is it, is it a keeper?**

That's a keeper, he actually raised that lioness and she's actually a wonder story because, although she was hand reared, she actually reared her own and lived to be about 18 and had a very large number of cubs. She was a success story, but Lancaster, the Director, Lanky, he did actually hand rear a very large number of cats. He was mad on lions and Caesar was his favourite. And there were some absolutely wonderful photos of Lanky, face to face with Caesar. And this wonderful story. Did Mac Boyle tell you the story? It was actually her husband's story.

**The giraffe story?**

No, the story of the lion.

**No.**

It's a story about how Lanky was worried because the lion Caesar had just gone back to the enclosure. It was decided that he was too big and that he needed to get out of the house and into something more stable. But it was a very cold wet night and Lanky was worried about it and he went to check on him. And apparently he fell over and in the morning the keeper came in to find the lion sitting on top of Lanky's chest in the yard. 'Horror, horror what am I going to find'. And the lion was just keeping him warm.

**Oh, how gorgeous. Listen, we've only got a few seconds left on this tape. So I am going to say thank you very, very, very much for the interview, it was a most fascinating interview Rosemary. And Glenice who was sitting in here too. Thanks heaps.**

Well, you'll probably need to prune it.

**Finish.**