

A Warden's Recollections: Elizabeth Carrick

[At the end of the Second World War] when the Halls had been vacated by the army and everything that had been in the Halls had been in store, they arrived back in lorry after lorry and they came faster than any of us who were trying to put the place back as it had been in 1939 could ever manage to cope with. However, by the beginning of October more or less everything was in place and we started up again. Miss Looker was the Principal Warden who had been there before. I was warden in Buchanan Hall and Miss Gray, who had also been on the staff before the war, was in Playfair, and Balfour had no warden at that point. And so we got through all the hazards of the 'after-war' shortages and things that had been lost and we eventually got the Halls back but it took quite a while to get all the things back into place again.

And of course there was only Miss Looker and Miss Gray who knew the Halls - the rest of the staff were fresh - newly appointed ones. They were the only two who really knew where everything went.

Everybody was scrimping and saving after the war. There was nothing to buy and the production of everything was pretty low and what you had you made do with. There was no incentive to go and spend money on new things really.

We had ration books at the beginning - I am sure we must have had ration books for a couple of years. The students got their butter and their jam in pots and they had a cupboard that they kept these in.

I was up quite early and down for breakfast at 8 o'clock or whatever it was and then I went into the office and the secretary came and we dealt with the correspondence. There would be letters to do and accounts to see to and there would be - oh and yes, I forgot, there was half an hour for the students to come and see me about something or arrange something or talk about something.

Once a week all the staff - the warden staff and the bursar met for a meeting and we decided on the menu for the week and everybody had their favourites - but the menu was very critically looked at and everybody cooked the same - each hostel kitchen cooked the same - it wasn't always the same because cooks were different on the way they did things, but by and large it was. And that was discussed and then there would be other things about rules or regulations. It lasted about two hours, with various matters - staffing problems, maids and daily women and things like that.

[Extract from an interview between Miss Elizabeth Carrick (Warden) and Marjorie McCallum (Campus Manager) in 1977]