

Swiss at 60

Interviewee: Honora Morrissey

Date of Birth: 1947

Parents' occupations: father: worked in a factory; mother: ran a shop

Interview location: Swiss Cottage Library (meeting room); 19th September 2025

Interviewer: Helen Richardson; Summariser: Claire Barwell

Honora first came to Swiss Cottage in 1980. Everything was done manually and there were a lot more staff. The building is beautiful and the lighting is magnificent after dark. She came to borrow books, particularly on Bridge and Mahjong, and from 1998 ran a user group which dissolved after COVID.

They had a suggestion box and ran campaigns to keep libraries open and to provide facilities for the visually impaired. They held public meetings with Martin Bell and Jonathan Ross giving talks in support. They had a book group and she would like to start a Mahjong group.

She particularly likes the energy saving and the disabled access since the refurbishment and the route from the swimming pool. She likes coming up the stairs and passing the children's library at rhyme time. She enjoys the gallery, the display of new books and the book swap in the cafe.

Computer literacy courses were run by the user group in the library and the user group helped Mark Osterfield with the Open House tours

It's a very nice place to come in. It is good for the elderly and you feel safe and secure. The staff are excellent and very helpful.

She has studied all her life and would never have been able to if she had to pay for the books.