

Object Summary



Oral history of the Malta Dockyard: Agnes

Mifsud

Date

25 January 2022

Primary Maker

Agnes Mifsud

null

Dimensions

37 minutes 10 seconds

null

Extent

1 digital audio recording (WAV)

Object Type

Oral history

null

null

Collection

Malta Dockyard Oral History project

Museum

Malta Maritime Museum

Registration Number

MMM.AV0100

Description

This recorded interview was made as part of the Malta Dockyard Oral History project by the Digitisation Unit, Heritage Malta, under the direction of Joe Meli. Agnes joined Malta Drydocks in 1968 after passing successfully her written examination, typing test and interview. She started her career as a typist with the personnel department and afterwards moved with the education department. She then joined the Commercial department as a short-hand typist up to 2003, with an early retirement scheme.

Transcript / Summary

(This summary is a work in progress. Timings are approximate.) (00:30) She applied and sat for the test to enter the Dockyard as a typist in 1967. The test was at the welfare centre in Cospicua and she had to take her own typewriter to do the test. She passed both typing exam and the interview. She was put on the waiting list up to December 1968 when she was accepted to join the yard. (02:30) She started with the personnel department and then moved to the apprentices' centre typing apprentices' notes, etc. During this period, she also applied to work with the public service, however at that time there was limited employment so she stayed with the dockyard. (04:00) She then applied for a post as a shorthand typist, and in the 1972 she joined the Commercial Department up to retirement in 2003. (05:45) The commercial department was one of the main departments in the yard, and she had a lot of work. She explained generally the work at the commercial, with various sections included and the transition from system to system. She also mentions that some work specifications received from the client were sometimes in French, Italian and other different languages, where she organised for the translation into English. (08:45) The filing was also one of her jobs, considering that the amount of correspondence within the commercial was vast. Industrial work

was also part of the commercial section. Telex /fax machines were extensively used. (11:45) She experience the transition from mechanical to electronic typewriters, which were much easier to use. She also used to type on stencils, which was a system to make multiple copies of the document. There was also the system of carbon copies. This was before the advent of photocopies, which made work much easier and faster. (16:45) She had various managers during her period at the commercial. She worked well with all her managers. The load of work at the commercial did give time for arguments and everyone had his work to do and a system to follow. (17:45) Agnes' s work involved a lot of foreign superintendents that came with the ships and always made their first meeting with the commercial. There were also a lot of Malta Drydocks agents that changed over and were continuously in contact with the commercial department. She explains in some detail, the work involved with the Dockyard overseas agents. (24:15) In the telex room there were three telex operators. Their work was to type telexes, some of which were very long especially the quotations for the work required by the client. Most of these had to be typed on urgent basis. The telex operators were also responsible to distribute the telexes to the various departments concerned. They had a standard distribution list and the commercial manager used to instruct them on the relative distribution required depending on the telex contents. The telexes' copies were then distributed manually by messengers. (28:45) She always worked with men. The working environment was not easy and on certain occasions she had to control the visitors entering the commercial manager' s office. She never felt uneasy with all the personnel that she worked with. She had to make sure to keep her dignity and respected her colleagues who in turn respected her. (00:30) She applied and sat for the test to enter the Dockyard as a typist in 1967. The test was at the welfare centre in Cospicua and she had to take her own typewriter to do the test. She passed both typing exam and the interview. She was put on the waiting list up to December 1968 when she was accepted to join the yard. (02:30) She started with the personnel department and then moved to the apprentices' centre typing apprentices' notes, etc. During this period, she also applied to work with the public service, however at that time there was limited employment so she stayed with the dockyard. (03:45) She then applied for a post as a shorthand typist, and in the 1972 she joined the Commercial Department up to retirement in 2003. (05:45) The commercial department was one of the main

departments in the yard, and she had a lot of work. She explained generally the work at the commercial, with various sections included and the transition from system to system. She also mentions that some work specifications received from the client were sometimes in French, Italian and other different languages, where she organised for the translation into English. (09:00) The filing was also one of her jobs, considering that the amount of correspondence within the commercial was vast. Industrial work was also part of the commercial section. Telex /fax machines were extensively used. (12:00) She experienced the transition from mechanical to electronic typewriters, which were much easier to use. She also used to type on stencils, which was a system to make multiple copies of the document. There was also the system of carbon copies. This was before the advent of photocopies, which made work much easier and faster. (17:00) She had various managers during her period at the commercial. She worked well with all her managers. The load of work at the commercial did give time for arguments and everyone had his work to do and a system to follow. (17:30) Agnes' work involved a lot of foreign superintendents that came with the ships and always made their first meeting with the commercial. There were also a lot of Malta Drydocks agents that changed over the years and were continuously in contact with the commercial department. She explains in some detail, the work involved with the Dockyard overseas agents. (24:15) In the telex room there were three telex operators. Their work was to type telexes, some of which were very long especially the quotations for the work required by the client. Most of these had to be typed on urgent basis. The telex operators were also responsible to distribute the telexes to the various departments concerned. They had a standard distribution list and the commercial manager used to instruct them on the relative distribution required depending on the telex contents. The telexes' copies were then distributed manually by messengers. (29:00) She always worked with men. The working environment was not easy and on certain occasions she had to control the visitors entering the commercial manager' s office. She never felt uneasy with all the personnel that she worked with. She had to make sure to keep her dignity and respected her colleagues who in turn respected her.