

My first job:

'I was absolutely terrified'



Sue Malleson in the early 1970s

'I was straight out of college. I'd failed my London Chamber of Commerce secretary's certificate because I'd spent the night up partying the night before and actually went to sleep in the middle of the exam. I never took to shorthand...

I arrived at Milton Keynes Development Corporation and within a week I was told that all the secretaries had to take it in turns to minute the Corporation Board Meeting, and of course my shorthand was totally useless. I was absolutely terrified.

I arrived at the assigned time. They said, We should have a rogues' gallery of all the Board Members so you know who to attribute which remark to. They'd lost the photographs. Anyway, I went in with my shorthand notepad and everybody was pouring over maps. Great big Board table and they'd all got their bottoms in the air, looking at the maps and mumbling. I hadn't a clue what was going on so I took a few notes and typed them up and sent them in.

I never heard any more about it. I didn't get asked to do it again.'

Sue Malleson