

Interviewee: Sally Brown, OBE, Professor
UoS Dates: 1971 – 2001
Role(s): 1971 – 1986 Research Officer, postgraduate student (PhD 1975) and seconded adviser on education to the Scottish Office.
1990: Professor of Education.
1996 – 2001: Deputy Principal.
Emeritus Professor, D Univ (2002)



Interview summary:

Start 00:14 – Followed her husband to Stirling University, as you did back then. He had a Chair in Economics. SB had been involved in curriculum development in America. When she came to Stirling a new curriculum for the sciences had just been introduced in Scotland which seemed to be based on a curriculum SB had worked on in America. Got a grant from the Scottish Education Department to do research into this. This was her PhD. Ian Morris was an HMI at the time, came to know him. The first intake at Stirling in 1967 of about 150 were all undergraduates, the postgraduates came in bits and pieces. SB felt welcomed.

04:24 – The head of the Education department at that time was Elizabeth Perrott, also a scientist. She was extremely good at bringing money in. She had very good ideas and along with Jack Duthie and Donald McIntyre was very innovative. Together they developed a different way to train teachers in Scotland, which had previously relied on colleges that did not do research. People came who were keen to do research. The Department had a different and special way of teaching education

07:08 – Elizabeth Perrott was good at getting money both externally and internally. She persuaded Tom Cottrell to give education a good share of the resources. Elizabeth Perrott could be difficult and got on badly with some people. If you wanted to publish a paper, she insisted you put her name on it. The Biology curriculum was heavily influenced by curriculums in America. Elizabeth Perrott knew people in teacher education in America and brought them over. She hit her secretary once. SB kept out of her way

10:46 – SB's PhD was supervised by Terry Davies who also insisted that she put his name on her research. He went on to live in Mauritius. New supervisor was Donald McIntyre. Elizabeth Perrott wanted to form an educational research centre. Jack Duthie informed SB that her research project had been given over to the research centre. Furious about this. Went to Tom Cottrell who was very understanding. Relations between Elizabeth Perrott and the rest of the Department were poor, apart from Ian Milligan who supported her. Elizabeth Perrott left to go to Lancaster. Her innovation was a good influence on staff. She had been the only female professor at the University, and there wasn't another for years.

16:19 – The Education Department has always been distinctive. People from other universities would call SB and ask for advice on setting up a concurrent degree. SB thought it was only possible in new universities as old universities saw education as being at the bottom of the heap. A few years ago a report on teacher education said that all universities should move towards the concurrent degree. The concurrent degree was quite often looked down upon.
17:55 – Approaches and Methods taught students how to take an academic perspective. Everyone had to do it. Staff were of two kinds, one kind were young with young ideas. Another kind were middle aged and had some experience of working in a university. They thought Approaches and Methods was a waste of time. They also disliked how Stirling allowed people to swap degree programmes. They undermined Approaches and Methods, also the semester system.
24:10 – A group of three came into the Education Department to do a Masters: Gordon MacLeod, a local Scot and a Rhodesian. Donald McIntyre was almost too good, it was difficult to keep up with him. They were a stimulating trio
27:37 – Ian Morris was an important person then and an unusual inspector.
28:04 – The year SB arrived they were still building the Cottrell building. Everyone was squashed in Pathfoot together. The tea trolley was wonderful. Better sense of community.
29:58 – The University was generally innovative. Tom Cottrell was an innovative man. Was dashed too quickly with the events of the Queen’s visit. He was a stubborn man and some opposed him. Staff were young and keen to have their say. A really innovative feature was the shared staff/student facilities. It was nice to meet students socially but difficult to find a place to talk about students outside of a formal meeting. As the university grew this deteriorated. Some people felt undermined at Stirling, felt the pressure of negative opinions held by other universities.
34:21 – The Queen’s visit was a major watershed for the university. It had an impact on applications and admissions. In the early 1980s the UGC cut grants and Stirling was hit hardest in Scotland. Thinks this was a result of the Queen’s visit. Later the culture changed and people stopped thinking about the incident in the same way. Remembers Anne Richley in Tommy Lamb’s publicity office receiving many newspaper cuttings that mentioned Stirling.
37:26 – As it was a small institution you knew most of the staff. One of the problems in the long term was that the same staff stayed for a long time, meaning that the staff got older. There weren’t enough young staff coming in.
38:49 – Technological Economics degrees were great but before their time. Teaching would be split between Departments who didn’t take the interdisciplinary degrees seriously.
[Ends 39:50]

Interview No:	SURSA OH / 025	SURSA University of Stirling Stirling FK9 4LA info@sursa.org.uk www.sursa.org.uk	
Interviewed by:	Bill Inglis		
Date of interview:	05/05/2014		
Summary completed by:	Aime Jaffray		
Date:	20/06/2016		