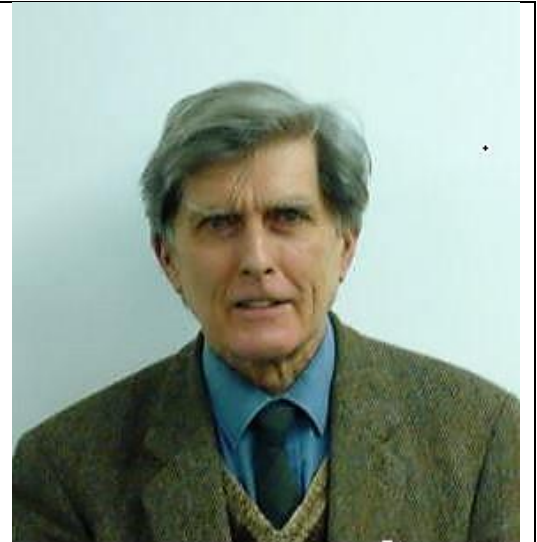




Interviewee: Mike Makower (M S Makower)
UoS Dates: 1966 (Appointed) - 2007
Role(s): Senior Lecturer in Operational Research and Personal Assistant to the first Principal.
Dean of the Scottish Business School.



Interview summary:

Summary of content; with time (min:secs)

Start 00:21 – MM was Senior Lecturer in Operational Research at the University of Stirling appointed during November of 1966. He knew of Tom Cottrell but had not personally met him until Stirling was created. The post he occupied was joint with the role of being personal assistant to the Principal. Frank Bradbury was a founding professor who was also an ex colleague. All three men were scientists.

02:31 – November of 1966 to September 1967 was all about completing and furnishing Pathfoot. MM can remember students' applications, the appointment of fellow staff both academic and non-academic, along with the preparation for time tables.

03:06 – The Principal's office was in a pink cottage located north east on the Airthrey estate. The University Secretary, Harry Donnelly, its accountant, Bob Bomont, and the Estates and Buildings Officer, Norman Walker were all close by. Airthrey Castle was used as a maternity hospital for Stirling.

04:00 – There was money allocated every seven years to universities by the Computer Board which gave grants for machines. Stirling narrowly missed out on this as it opened the year after the grants had already been distributed. The university did however get a computer as no other university had taken up that specific model. The machine needed air conditioning and a dedicated staff to look after it.

06:00 – The two semester system instead of the traditional three terms allowed for smooth assessment and even re-assessment of each complete course unit. Students were given the option to make different choices and evolve them each semester. Great emphasis on this freedom of choice which became Stirling's unique selling point. This system gave staff a little less freedom to attend conferences but allowed students to gain an advantage of a head start against the competition for summer jobs.

07:14 – Stirling started its semester a month before the other universities in Scotland. MM recalls one student coming to Stirling for the first day of the new semester but then leaving for Aberdeen, whose offer she received only after accepting Stirling's. The Principal read every successful applicant's file as he was dedicated to getting to know all 150 of them personally.

08:50 – Every undergraduate had to take the compulsory unit "Approaches and Methods". All staff had to teach tutorials in the course regardless of the subject they taught. Frank Bradbury led a small core group of staff who delivered lectures in the course, and he persuaded Edinburgh University Press to publish the text book. All other academic staff were required to conduct weekly small group tutorials, but they became increasingly resistant and

from the 1970 onwards the course was no longer taught.

11:00 –With a target of 3,000 full-time students, and a major capital grant from the Treasury , further construction work was undertaken. The Pathfoot building was good for the first three years when numbers were relatively small but designs had to be prepared for the long-term operation. John Richards, the architect for the university, worked closely with Tom Cottrell on the layout of the campus. The Cottrell building was flexible, and big enough to house all subjects within a single frame. The Library and MacRobert building were also planned in the new building phase.

12:30 – It was a constant wish of the staff to increase the contents of the Library. MM suggested that the Library should be designed in a spiral and capable of ever-increasing extension. This proved too costly however, and a rectangular shoe box was built. The MacRobert was founded with a grant of £1 million by the Trust of that name, and became an asset for all the local community. A fixed sum within the Treasury capital grant was provided for lecture theatres and seminar rooms. Its subdivision into individual rooms was a matter for the university. Decisions on size had to be made very early in the design process and study of enrolment data at other universities proved very helpful.

16:30 – There were both postgraduates and undergraduates in Technological Economics from day one . MM was involved in the innovative taught Master’s degree in Technological Economics. It was intended for graduate engineers and scientists wanting to be skilled in economics and financial analysis and practice. Professor Bradbury taught on innovation, Professor Andrew Bain taught macroeconomics and Brian Loasby taught management economics. Eventually doctoral students enrolled and a few personally knew Professor Bradbury. There was a group of undergraduates recruited by British Petroleum and admitted to honours degrees in Technological Economics, with a specially modified timetable. Such sandwich programmes did not run for many years..

19:30 – Cottrell was partially useable by September of 1970 with further completions being done in ‘71 and the full building being done by ‘72. 2,000 students were in attendance by 1972. It was possible to cater for expansion in a simple way by adding another spine parallel to the Cottrell south elevation, with cross-connecting links.

21:38 – October of 1972 saw the Queen visiting the university to mark the completion of the construction at Stirling. There were a few who felt the money being spent on the lunch could have been better spent adding to the Library. The headlines the next day of the events during the Queen’s visit were catastrophic for the university. Schools no longer considered sending their students to Stirling, financial support dried up; there was even a report of assault with an umbrella carried out by a member of the public against an innocent student. The university was put into dire straits and became infamous for what occurred on that day.

24:20 – Tom Cottrell passed away very suddenly at the end of the academic year of 72-73. MM believes that the aftermath of the Queen’s visit had something to do with Cottrell’s passing. The committee set up to deal with discipline of students after the notorious visit was headed by Professor Frank Bradbury. It took up a great deal of his time and took him away from Technological Economics, which was felt to be a great loss to the students who were deprived of his teaching.

25:00 – Student numbers took a great deal of time to grow after the Queen's visit but eventually they did. The target of 3,000 was reached and eventually even doubled; however there was no further Treasury funding available for new facilities.

26:25 – Cottrell supported MM on his project initially planned when MM was in Edinburgh. He launched and operated the Edinburgh Finance and Investment Seminars in 1967, to be joined in 1970 by the parallel Glasgow Discussion Group. The forty years of these have been significant for both the Scottish financial community and the University of Stirling.

28:37 – Due to being the Principal’s personal assistant MM attended many meetings with architects. He feels that his scientific background gave him the capacity to pick up on debates about planning and facility issues. The main focus was very much to get the Pathfoot building up and running. The Cottrell building became an ongoing process.

29:57 – There were many key players in the university’s early days, Principal Cottrell clearly being one of them. Professor Bradbury having a scientific past, and being academically oriented and an ex-colleague of Cottrell’s was another. The relationship between Cottrell and Bradbury meant there was a focus on educational issues. One way this was further extended was through the appointment of Charles Suckling from ICI as an Honorary Professor. He was considered an experienced and delightful person to work with. MM felt that no other academic department had the closeness that his enjoyed.

32:17 – In the early days it was part of the academic plan that there should not be departments or faculties. There was of course an emphasis on academic staff being highly qualified and respectable, but they were not rigidly compartmentalised. Particular people had to be responsible for semester units and there were groups of colleagues who would take specific issues forward. There was a great focus on the democratic intellect and the free flow of knowledge between subjects, which was the driving force for the semester system. The physical design of the Cottrell building was meant to encourage interdisciplinary approaches. The Cottrell building worked well in the earlier days but later, as it became crowded, became frozen. MM and Professor Bradbury were the only people in their subject area, but were in interdisciplinary mode. It was easy to do joint projects with the other university science

departments, especially Aquaculture. After the cuts to operations in 1981 it got difficult to carry on with joint projects. Atmosphere changed for the worse.
38:32 – The subject of Technological Economics changed across the years. At the beginning they partly tried to get large cohorts of engineers who could be more formally educated in the economic aspects with which they would have to get to grips in their profession. Even the phrase Technological Economics didn't stay around for long. Many of the traditionally trained people did not have technical backgrounds which could be seen as a problem. In the early days computing was an astronomer's game according to MM. The advances in computing meant that drawing on databases and analytical tools became universal. Big investors to the subject such as BP did not continue to support the ideas of the programme and it became difficult to sustain.
43:02 – Staff resistance to Approaches and Methods is believed to be the reason for why it was abandoned. The four lecturers were Professor Graham Bird from Philosophy, Professor Bradbury, John Leech of Computing and Ian Lockerbie of French. The unit addressed matters of logic, scientific method, social arithmetic and computing and communications. It could be fun having tutorials with a wide variety of students. The lecturers were considered good at communicating. Many of the tutors were not comfortable in working with colleagues of different backgrounds.
47:17 – With the first intake of students only reaching 150 it allowed the Principal to know everybody and there was a very social atmosphere. Social space was shared in the early days between staff and students. Even when the second (University) Secretary started he wanted to be approachable and accessible. This was harder to maintain once the number of students rose. It was a little contentious when space started to get divided between students and staff. The MacRobert opened the university to the community and was successful at attracting people. The programmes used to interest a great deal of people with varying interests.
50:56 –The accommodation for students in the early days couldn't be in the local B&Bs as there weren't enough of them available - hence the residence building programme was put in place. There were many opportunities for staff and students to get off the campus and socialise. There was a happy and comfortable atmosphere around the university.
52:41 – MM believes the fact that the university survived the Queen's visit shows the University is set to endure. Also in surviving, many developments have been made possible. There is a vibrancy, freedom and positivity about the university's set up that is delightful.
54:08 – MM wrote the book " <i>Teach yourself operational research</i> " which was popular in the short loan section of the Library. Co-wrote with Eric Williamson, a mathematician, when he was at Edinburgh, to communicate to a wide public. The book became part of the prescribed reading list of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland. Publication stopped when the whole computing field became so widely disseminated.
58:02 – MM felt that over his time at , Professor Bradbury and he developed management education, and more generally business studies. There was a significant student enrolment and related grants for business studies and stiff competition with other university business departments. One role he was asked to take on was Dean of the Scottish Business School, originally a consortium between three universities in Scotland. Stirling was the fourth to join. An issue was what Stirling could offer as its contribution. MM's subject areas of management science and operational research became part of the consortium programme and on a scale which would be recognized by the University Grants Committee. It was difficult for Stirling to sustain an external profile without full support internally. Some academics think the business world is too applied. Periods where internal things weren't completely positive, and there were a few arguments amongst staff. It was a disappointment for him and it didn't reach the heights it could have.
[Ends 62:25]

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