

Interviewee: Rolland Munro
UoS Dates: 1967- 1971, BA Hons Economics (with Philosophy)
Role(s): Undergraduate



Interview summary:

Start 0:00 – Chose Stirling because of its beautiful design, and because as one of the first students he would be ‘on top’. He started with Technological Economics, but switched because of the Physics part to Philosophy, and also took Economics.

01:23 – He came from Edinburgh; the first person he met was Matilda, who was “eccentric and wonderful”, she was the secretary of Tom Cottrell, she did a lot of the work “to get you off the ground”; at that time she worked in Garden Cottage.

02:35 - He also made good friends with Harry Donnelly (HD), the University Secretary, because they came from the same tennis club in Edinburgh; HD was “the big push behind the university”; he died after the first year, very young. Tom Cottrell did two jobs “and it took him out”; originally, he would mix with students, sit in the coffee lounge with them, but after Harry’s death, he “disappeared”.

03:35 – RM once suggested a change to HD, who didn’t just say no, but explained with ten reasons. Normally students were encouraged to make suggestions; it was a special situation with only 150 undergraduates, about 20 postgraduates and 80 staff, and they were all thrown together.

04:30 – He lived in a postwar home with a family with a mentally disabled child; long walk to the university and freezing room, so he moved in to Allangrange. He was the only non-postgraduate who was allowed to move there; there were just 12 people, including an Indian professor of Philosophy, whom he enjoyed watching cooking. As a Scot, he was amazed that the professor could live without meat - even though he later became a vegetarian himself.

06:15 – Just two international undergraduate students, mainly postgraduates; the two of them were in their 50s, studying English, and lived in a B&B in Bridge of Allan. (Accommodation arrangements were very *ad hoc* at that time). Their landlady “made them walk on the black tiles”, and took the bath plug away: they could have a bath once a week, at a charge.

07:30 – There were a lot of mature students; it was deliberate policy to have slightly older students. Recalls fondly Monica Clough who, as some other mature women who had missed earlier opportunities, waited for the university to open. Played bridge with Sue Wilkie [Ed: now Roberts]

09:30 – RM went to a few English classes as well; remembers Robin Mayhead; the class would sit long past its scheduled end.

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| 10:25 – All appreciated Pathfoot as a special building; he spent most of his days in the coffee lounge, chatting to others, with a nice view through the big windows; he “lived in the building”, J-corridor was open and a wonderful space for people to be sitting or parading by. |
| 11:40 – There were a lot of people involved in plays, but he was too busy talking; he belonged to different groups of people, including even members of staff. |
| 13:05 – Rather than joining the strike [Ed: relating to a proposal to have some separate social space for staff], he went up to Tom Cottrell’s house, chatted with him and eventually he got lectured for putting his feet up on the table – RM saw how much Cottrell had changed, through the sheer weight of his responsibilities. Cottrell had appointed Sir Derek Lang as University Secretary, and Col Lamb had also been recruited. RM felt that that the culture began to change. |
| 16:00 – RM, without intending to, became a banker, on being invited to the Queen’s bank in London. A year after he left, somebody produced a newspaper with a photograph of a “chap with a whisky bottle” during the Queen’s visit to Stirling. His colleagues were intrigued that he had been at Stirling. Later, he was told authoritatively that the Queen had found the visit amusing; however, the impact on the University was devastating. He discussed a possible PHD topic with Andrew Bain. |
| Ends 19:51 |

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| Interviewed by: | Angela Smith | | |
| Date of interview: | 2 nd September 2017 | | |
| Summary completed by: | Julia Schoenthaler/CR | | |
| Date: | 30 th October 2017 | | |