

Interviewee: Lorna Paterson (nee Begg)
UoS Dates: 1968? - 1974
Role(s): Administrative Assistant, latterly Deputy Academic Secretary.
Married Rev JL Paterson (Ian Paterson, qv)



Interview summary:

Start 00:00 – LP held an administration role in the early days of the University. Had worked previously at Strathclyde University and Stirling High School. Can remember herself and fellow staff at the High School raising money to buy the University its first piano which was housed in the MacRobert Centre.

01:46 – In late 1967 LP had an interview with Professor Elizabeth Perrott (the founding Professor of Education at the University) and Harry Donnelly (the first Secretary at the University) in Garden Cottage. Can recall attending the first graduation held at the Albert Halls in Stirling.

03:05 – The first role undertaken was Administrative Assistant to Ian Ainsworth who was the first Academic Registrar. LP then became Deputy Academic Secretary until 1974. She made the move to the Department of Education. Roles involved arranging teaching placements for students. Would often take minutes at meetings and states that a lot was learnt from Ainsworth.

06:38 – There were a great deal of committees which LP attended. The first was one ran by Chemistry lecturer Peter Murray-Rust on radiation and protection. Overall there were 19 committees to look after. One that is well remembered is the Discipline Committee which had very little work to do, before the Queen's visit in 1972.

07:40 – LP found that her job entailed her to host and entertain business people who may be interested in employing students in the future. She was also Secretary of the Chaplaincy Board and also helped conduct interviews of potential lecturers.

09:30 – Stirling University was aiming to learn from the mistakes of previous universities and how it could be different from them. There was a discussion in the early days about whether the University would hold graduations or not. The semester system at the University was also new to Scotland and was believed to be based on an American format.

11:36 – The University was opened at a time during academic upheaval, mainly from student rebellions in France. LP believes there was a feeling of anxiety for change in the air. Stirling was new and it is believed that is what attracted people to study at the University.

12:56 – Pathfoot originally was the only building on campus as there was no student accommodation in the early days. Many of the students were either sent to live with locals or came in from areas such as Dollar. Having the one building created a great sense of cohesion between everyone. There was believed to be only around 150 students in the first intake. LP recalls helping to set up an International Programme Committee which created links abroad for exchange.


18:22 – A few of the founding professors came from Oxford University, with Professor Bell of Chemistry being one of them. Stirling aimed to offer new subjects and break away from purely academic studies. This created a great reputation for Stirling University amongst schools.

20:16 – Stirling University was a socially and enriching place. The MacRobert helped towards this. LP remembers

putting on a performance of *The Importance of being Ernest* with the drama society. She also helped set up the first choir.

25:06 – The Queen’s visit in 1972 was remarked as doing immeasurable damage to the University. Due to the negative actions of some students the University could not launch its second appeal for funding. There were a great deal of complaints sent into the University. It damaged the relationships between the community and the students of Stirling. Expansion continued slowly with Aquaculture being hailed as a great success. There was a horrible atmosphere between staff and students for a while. It was felt that there could perhaps be a student revolution.

[Ends 31:48]

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