

Interviewee: Tony Pitson and Alan Millar ,
Professor
UoS Dates: TP: 1967 – 2002 AM: 1971 -
2010
Role(s): TP: Lecturer, Dept of Philosophy
AM: Lecturer, Latterly (1994)
Professor, Dept of Philosophy.
Emeritus Professor



Interview summary:

Summary of content; with time (min:secs)

Start 00:22 – TP was interviewed by Graham Bird the then head of the Philosophy Department at Stirling. He found the idea of the new University very exciting and recalls that Pathfoot was still being finished when teaching was starting. AM can recall Stirling was advertising three posts; the one he applied for related to Religious Studies. He liked the idea of coming back to Scotland and felt the University being new meant there would be more scope for innovation.

02:56 – Everyone had to devise the syllabus for the course they taught. It was felt that it was easy to have departmental discussions and that you could raise a point and believe that you were genuinely being listened to. Everything was new and made completely from scratch. There was a feeling of being thrown in at the deep end. TP recalls doing classes on the works of Bertrand Russell and also more historical teachings rather early on in the subject's development. To begin with it was only TP and Graham Bird in the Philosophy Department. A wide range of students from different backgrounds, including mature students.

05:56 – Both AM and TP spent time with students due to their shared social spaces, they also socialised in the evenings. They also interacted with students and staff from different subjects. AM felt that Stirling was deliberately trying to be innovative and unique. They both recall the course Approaches and Methods which everyone had to take. It was believed to give an intellectual foundation which would be useful regardless of what subject the student was taking.

08:28 – There was a gradual increase in numbers of staff joining the Philosophy Department with a believed two new appointments every year. Stanley Kleinberg and Stewart Sutherland were the first to join in 1968. Sandra Marshall and Ian Wilson in 1970. AM, Antony Duff, Patricia McAuliffe in 1971. They each took up the role of Advisors of Studies, which involved helping a dozen students in making the right choices in their degrees.

11:44 – AM says that Stewart Sutherland initiated the Religious Studies programme. People who did not have backgrounds in Philosophy were appointed to the Department when Religion became part of it. Religious Studies eventually split from Philosophy into its own department, AM worked for both the Religious Studies Department and Philosophy.

13:26 – TP recalls there were no postgraduates studying Philosophy at Stirling in the early days. There was no programme specifically for this available. It eventually developed due to a partnership with St Andrews University. It involved lecturers from Stirling going to St Andrews to lecture once a week in the late 80s-90s. Many students chose older, more established universities for their postgraduate.

17:26 – There were no restrictions found in the finance the Philosophy Department received for research. The University was also very generous with the sabbatical leave it provided with it being distributed evenly. A number of the departmental staff took on other roles in the university. Kleinberg was part of the University Court and Sutherland was on the Academic Council.

20:27 – TP remembers Matilda Mitchell, Tom Cottrell's first secretary. He found her terrifying and felt she bullied you

into doing tasks the staff did not wish to do. TP can recall the bad experiences he had when he went to high schools to boost Stirling's reputation. Teachers in the south west were bitter over Scotland's new university being built in Stirling. Both TP and AM recall other academic staff such as Tommy Dunn, the head of the English Department as well as Jim Trainer from the German Department. There once were Boards of Studies for the Arts and Sciences: they functioned like faculties. Tommy Dunn and Robin Mayhead were on the Board of Studies for Arts.

23:37 – TP recalls there were only a few huts present on the campus when he came for his interview 6-8 months before the University was meant to open. Pathfoot was extremely attractive when it first opened with fewer offices in it than there are today. Both can recall the Library and dining room in Pathfoot. TP remembers the first degree ceremony taking place in the Pathfoot dining room which was being filmed and one of his students had to leave the hall. TP was worried the student would cause damage or embarrass himself on camera.

27:00 – The Queen's visit was meant to build up the University's reputation but instead damaged it greatly. It very likely put parents off letting their children go to Stirling. There was tension after the visit and there were many student marches and demonstrations. It was a disturbing time with a great deal of disunity.

28:52 – The University developed way beyond what was envisioned for it. Believed that the university doubled its goal for student numbers - however it is felt that it lost its original character over time. AM believes academic staff felt more remote from centres of support from the 1980s onward. A sense of ultra-managerialism took over.

[Ends 33:02]

Interview No:	SURSA OH / 035	<p>SURSA University of Stirling Stirling FK9 4LA</p> <p>info@sursa.org.uk www.sursa.org.uk</p>	
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