

Interviewee: Sheila Newton
UoS Dates: 1972 – 1976
Role(s): Undergraduate (English and Sociology)



Interview summary:

Summary of content; with time (min:secs)

Start 00:18 – Lived in Tyneside before moving to complete High School in Scotland.

01:21 – A friend told SN that her Higher results would get her in to Stirling. Had assumed she would leave school and go in to the Civil Service. Was also accepted to Newcastle and got a conditional offer for Glasgow. Chose Stirling as it offered the courses she was interested in and it was a good distance from home.

02:20 – Prospectus showed an appealing and attractive University. Didn't visit the campus beforehand and didn't know anyone who had been to Stirling.

03:09 – Started off studying French and English but dropped French at the end of first year. Instead picked up Sociology. Didn't do Honours but was still at Stirling four years due to the change in degree. Stirling made it easy to change and was flexible.

04:20 – Loved university life. Difficult to find a work/play balance, sometimes missed deadlines. Social life was mainly on campus but SN went to a yoga class in Bridge of Allan. As Stirling was a campus university the social life was based on campus whereas at a city university you would have been in the city more.

05:45 – Wasn't a sporty person so wasn't involved in sport. Enjoyed films and shows at the MacRobert.

06:10 – Stirling surpassed expectations. Didn't think she would even go to university and was the first person in her family to go. Never felt homesick or disappointed with the teaching. There was a community spirit and the students were looked after. Campus felt very safe. Library facilities excellent.

08:00 – Staff and students had a good relationship. Lived in halls in first year and got to know the warden Bob Clay and his wife Sheila. SN would babysit for them. Postgraduate students were sub-wardens and would help with academic and personal problems. Staff could be firm but were approachable and had the student's interests at heart.

09:22 – Doesn't remember any cross-curricular links between Sociology and English.

09:50 – One disappointing feature of Stirling was the Careers Advice Service. SN's Adviser of Studies was in the Education Department and all she can remember of him was his advice that she not go in to teaching. Did one semester of Education during which SN did microteaching. Microteaching was when a group of local pupils were brought to the University and students were filmed teaching a lesson. His advice must have been based on that. SN defied his advice and did go in to teaching.

12:35 – After Stirling, SN went to Moray House to do a PGCE. They taught the students how to belt a child there and SN remembers having to order a tawse when she started teaching. The Psychology of Education lecturer spent lectures showing the students how best to laminate worksheets.

16:02 – Degree from Stirling got SN in to Moray House but didn't help her become a teacher as it wasn't a degree in Education. Earning her degree did give SN confidence and she felt a great sense of achievement.

17:01 – Taught at Lornshill Academy in Tullibody for five years and then went to Germany to teach children whose parents were in the army. Met her second husband while in Germany and they moved to Cumbria for 11 years, SN continued to teach. Briefly lived in France before returning to Germany. Returned to the UK in 2010.

20:00 – A city university would have been different as its location would be different. Stirling was pretty unique as it was small, rural and campus based. The semester system was also different. Remembers a rumour that Stirling had the highest incidence of student suicide but this might be a myth.

[Ends 29:39]

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Date:	18/07/2016		