

Interviewee: Penny Dade (née Penelope Watt)
UoS Dates: 1969 - 1973
Role(s): Undergraduate (BA Hons German)



Interview summary:

Summary of content; with time (min:secs)

Start 00:00 – PD grew up in Aberdeen. Attended Univ of Stirling Open Day, and matriculated in September 1969. Initially, there being no accommodation on campus, shared a room in digs in Dunblane, hitch-hiking to university during lengthy bus strike. Hons German. Work was hard: teaching started with 8:30am lecture on Mondays and ended with tutorial in same subject at 4pm on Fridays.

02:30 – Close staff-student relations: all in Pathfoot, and socialised at Allangrange. PD entered halls when first opened in 1970. Enjoyable and unique closeness of being in university with so few students. Director of Studies and Personal Tutor both very helpful and approachable.

04:55 – PD's Part 1 subjects in addition to German were German History and Economics. Out of her depth in Economics, patiently taught by Mark Brownrigg, though in later life as a manager it made sense to her. Approaches & Methods course consisted of Logic, Reasoning and other topics, all of which she hated; staff seemed to dislike teaching it, and it was discontinued.

07:14 – In Part 2 single honours German offered exciting courses: remembers studying Language of the Third Reich taught by Brian Murdoch, and attending Wagner's Ring Cycle in Glasgow. Choice of career as Arts Librarian was inspired by studying Albrecht Dürer at Stirling. Disliked language labs - found her time living in Germany for six months in 1972, much more useful and enjoyable. Three months at Würzburg University, then stayed on in Germany, working in chocolate factory. Issues living in Germany in the era of Baader-Meinhof terrorism. Decided after hesitation to return to finish degree.

12:00 – Flat 181 top floor in Donnelly student residence - six women shared single toilet, bath and kitchen. All had wonderful time. All studying different subjects so in/out at different times. Student in next flat, Stewart Walkely, was nicknamed Bishop of Tewkesbury.

13:14 – PD present during Queen's Visit, October 1972, not protesting but at Stewart's insistence playing patriotic music from open window of residence. From tutorial, saw police vans arriving. PD and her friends were upset by negative and unfair Press portrayal of their university. Was unaware of any resulting local hostility - has impression

that hostile reaction was anti-Scots and came from south of border.

16:10 – Graduation June 1973 in Albert Hall, where Lord Robbins conferred her degree. Celebration outside Pathfoot throwing caps in air. Only four German Hons students, of whom even the two native German speakers didn't gain a First. PD had greatly enjoyed Old High German, and would have opted for further study if her degree had been better.

19:00 – Socialising at Allangrange: recalls watching the first series of Monty Python on communal TV, when bogus removal men arrived and brazenly stole the set. On another occasion their Christmas dinner was stolen. Socialising across disciplines.


21:20 – PD volunteered as usher when Scottish Opera came to MacRobert, giving free privileged access to rehearsals and performances. Film Society. Had very reluctantly to cross picket line to get to degree final exams during student protest. Member of German Society. Not greatly interested in sport, but played volleyball in the Barracuda behind Pathfoot, and canoed on Airthrey Loch. No swimming pool or tennis courts.

25:12 – Recalls German department staff: Professor [Jim] Trainer, Mike Mitchell, Brian Murdoch, Lou Jillings and, especially, Heather Valencia (née Ritchie). Residence staff provided change of bedlinen weekly. Jewish flatmates arranged Friday night suppers in flat with rabbi present; someone had to give up her bedsheet to use as tablecloth. Flatmates were Marni Sands, Alison Arnott, Steph Granite, Mary Brown, Judy Stone, all of whom soon married and had children; PD married at 23 but chose career over starting family. Other students Martin Everett, Alan Dyas, Brian Loboziński, Isobel Armstrong, Dave & Jill Scott, Howard Birch, Ian Simpson, Kames Meldrum. In the History department, John McCracken and Anand Chitnis were enthusiastic teachers.

30:55 – Teaching was innovative, and because Library was small, had to use other sources, which students found via printed indexing journals. Proud at the time to be at innovative university, with semester system etc. Much reading to do, and helpful Library staff. Bookshop on campus. Drudgery of hand writing or typing all work. More studying and contact time than nowadays. PD had to type long dissertation on Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*.

35:14 – Overall impression of very happy student days. During final year in 8-person flat, PD learned to cook. With three others held regular Sunday lunches to which four male Masters students were invited on payment of 10p. That was how she met her future husband, Steve. Staff at all levels were supportive, and staff also felt privileged to be teaching small numbers. Sometimes PD got flak because her university was so small. Charities Week collecting - remembers generosity of townspeople in Raploch, a poor area, in contrast to the lack of donations in rich King's Park. Charities Week helped bring community together, as did MacRobert.

[Ends 39:41]

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