

Interviewee: Cate King
Dates: 1969-1972
Role(s): Student



Interview summary:

Summary of content; with time (min:secs)

00.02 Interview with Cate King who was Cate Houston when she started at Stirling in 1969, interviewed at a reunion of students from 1968 and 1969 intakes. CK chose Stirling as she liked the feel of the place, it was small and she felt it was exciting to be part of shaping Scotland's new university. She liked the idea of staff and student links, there not being separate facilities, especially joint social facilities at Alangrange, for example. She was also attracted by being able to mix subjects together as not sure what she wanted to do. CK mixed Maths with Sociology and Psychology since it was not required to stick to those subjects throughout, also did a bit of Education. Interesting, as education was to form her final career. CK hadn't been interested in being a teacher but did the one or two semester course which was an introduction to education, philosophies and theories of education and became really interested in the area. Stirling had an innovative approach to practical teaching practice. Pupils were bussed to the campus from Stirling High School. Students prepared an 8-minute lesson for 6 pupils which was recorded on video, then watched immediately afterwards. It was a bit of a shock for CK as she had not seen herself much on video with her mannerisms etc. Having discussed the session with a tutor, students then went back to improve the teaching aspect and work with a different group of children. This was a fascinating introduction to practical teaching.

03.40 CK went on to become a full-time teacher and enjoyed it, then became an advanced skills teacher in early years education, before becoming involved in training teachers. Later CK did some training of teachers to use the outdoors, which was another passion and a reason she had enjoyed the wonderful environment at Stirling. CK appreciates that being able to mix subjects brought her to this interest in education. When she left in 1972 it was still necessary for her to do a post-graduate year of teacher training to enter teaching. That has changed now.

04.05 Pathfoot was the only building in 1969, but CK was one of the first students to stay in the HH Donnelly residence. She was photographed for the company that supplied the orange curtains and noted in the tour of the artwork at the reunion how much orange fabric there was at the time. CK moved into HH Donnelly in her second year, having stayed in the Strathallan Hotel in Bridge of Allan which was like a mini student residence with 20 or so other people. In her third year she lived off campus. It was interesting to be in the first halls of residence and it was exciting to see the bridge being built across to the MacRobert Centre. Once the

Macrobert opened, CK was able to volunteer as a steward, dealing with tickets and programmes and see some shows for free.

06.20 CK recalls that, although not studying arts subjects, she loved the poetry of Norman MacCaig who was a lecturer at Stirling at the time. He did a poetry club at lunchtime once a week for a while and CK went along with a friend. They loved listening to his precise, slow delivery of his poems. CK recalls, as one of the highlights of her time at Stirling, plucking up the courage to go and speak to Norman MacCaig in the Macrobert bar and sharing a whisky with him.

07.25 CK recollects the J corridor and lounge were where it all happened. CK became the charities queen in her first year, 1969, which was fun. She remembers the candidates lined up on the stairs inside Pathfoot. There were about 8 in the final set. CK thinks people voted to select the charities queen, but noticed during the reunion visit a document which implied it was the person who collected the most money for charity, but she is not sure when that change was introduced. She recalls a busload of students going to Murrayfield for a rugby international and that her face was on the cover of the magazine they were trying to sell. The charities procession with people dressed up on floats is a clear memory. CK was in the horse and trap that was used in the TV programme 'Dr Finlay's Casebook' which had been brought from Callander. She wore a yellow silk bridesmaid dress she had from a cousin's wedding, velvet black cloak with orange lining and a crown. The black cloak came from her childhood dressing-up box. The procession started at the station and went through the town. Another memory for CK is the Christmas pantomime at the Museum Hall in Bridge of Allan. She had a non-speaking part where she was a lion and growled.

10.05 CK also recalls the computers at Stirling as her then boyfriend, now husband of 44 years, was studying Computing. She recalls the enormous room where there was a huge computer and the stress that her boyfriend and another friend, Ros, had doing programming in the days before numbered order or punch cards. CK recalls how time-consuming it was, the noisy, clunking machine and how she came along sometimes to help.

10.46 Another important memory for CK is that Stirling was the first university in Scotland, if not the UK, to have a student with dyslexia. She knew Ian briefly from school in Edinburgh and he also studied Psychology. He sat at the back of lectures and got notes from other students, some of whom also volunteered to record sections from Psychology textbooks for him to help him study. He also used to hand in his essays on audio cassettes. He's had a successful career since and was attending the reunion.

12.15 CK had taken the tour of the art works and sculptures on campus as part of the reunion, and realized how much she enjoys sculpture especially. She wonders if the art and sculpture she was exposed to at Stirling has soaked in and had a lasting effect. (The interviewer remarks that was the hope of Tom Cottrell, the first Principal.) CK thinks it is fabulous to hear that the furniture and fabrics for the curtains are treasures, now on display. She sums up by concluding that the one semester course she took in Education with micro-teaching directed the rest of her life and career. She made friends she is still in touch with and met her husband at Stirling. They have very fond memories of starting university.

Ends

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