



Interviewee: Rosemary Bland  
UoS Dates: 1981 - 1993  
Role(s): Research Fellow, Dept of Social Work.  
Latterly Hon Fellow in Social Work



## Interview summary:

### *Summary of content; with time (min:secs)*

**Start 00:12** – At Stirling between 1981 and 1993. Began as a Research Fellow on a study of residential homes in the Central Region. Became an Honorary Fellow of Social Work and also lectured in Social Work. Husband was a member of staff at the University and they had just returned from two years on secondment at Hertfordshire. Worked in Social Work with the Council for a year and then applied for funding with husband for the research project and came on as Research Fellow, part-time.

**03:34** – Already knew Stirling a little from husband working there. Beautiful campus with a small population. Knew a lot of the staff which made it easier to settle in. Mostly out doing fieldwork, only spent time in the university periodically.

**05:31** – Interviewed individuals from residential homes, mostly clients. Wanted to get the users' perspective with an aim to empowering older people. Found it was often an involuntary movement in to residential care, with the decisions made by the family or other people. Research gave a perspective on the disempowerment people felt moving in to care. Conversely, some people went in to residential care from institutionalisation and felt liberated.

**11:58** – Wasn't working towards a degree at that time but later got a PhD. When lecturing, was still doing lots of research with the Social Work Research Centre. A grant holder for two projects: a national study of residential care and a care management study. Employed two research assistants.

**13:41** – When beginning to lecture had to go on a two day course in St Andrews. Never felt like a skilled lecturer. Gave lectures, tutorials and visited students out on placement. Some students had difficulties on placement. Very occasionally they would fail, some would be asked to leave the course. This was very painful. Social work took on mature students who had made sacrifices to go to university and sometimes it was a mistake. Had to remember that they would not have become good social workers. Became harder to find good placements as it was very time consuming and social workers don't have time to give up.

**19:03** – Only ever taught at Stirling so couldn't say how it compares to other places.

**19:43** – A small group of staff in social work, part of a much larger department in the applied social sciences. Social work course was very different and didn't interact much with the rest of the department. Students were hypercritical of lecturers, especially those brought in from outside the university. They were also idealistic. Made them difficult to teach.

**22:14** – National study of residential homes attracted a lot of attention. RB spoke at conferences and wrote papers. It

was a huge study of 100 homes across Scotland. Got a hard time at some conferences.
<b>24:21</b> – Someone from the Scottish office came to a seminar RB gave on the study and was impressed. She was asked to work on secondment as a social work inspector. Did that for two years and then moved in to that role permanently.
<b>25:21</b> – Stirling was a productive place for research. Never taught full time so didn't feel fully involved in the university. The social work research centre was very successful and good to work in. Remembers a small study with Mike Bennett.
<b>27:01</b> – Remained friends with some staff and has got to know more people since joining the retired staff association.
<b>29:27</b> – Some reluctance in the department to promote part time staff to full time. Someone at the time commented that part time staff were good value as they always worked more than they should. The department head changed three times during RB's time which was disruptive.
<b>31:34</b> – The Local Authority had some people who were difficult to work with. There was a suspicion of the University. It was difficult at first to gain access for research. A lot of politics between the Local Authority and the Health Board. In the end parted on good terms and was fruitful.
<b>34:51</b> – Social Work extended to become a degree, was initially just a postgraduate course.
<b>35:10</b> – Just before going out on secondment RB signed on to do a PhD part time. Alison Bowes suggested she should after the national study. Continued to do it in her own time while working full time as an Inspector. Very difficult, could only work on it at weekends. Was lonely to have no one to discuss writing chapters with. Alison Bowes and Sue Tester were great supervisors.
<b>[Ends 37:08]</b>

<b>Interview No:</b>	SURSA OH / 039	<p><b>SURSA</b>  <b>University of Stirling</b>  <b>Stirling</b>  <b>FK9 4LA</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:info@sursa.org.uk">info@sursa.org.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.sursa.org.uk">www.sursa.org.uk</a></p>	 <p><b>SURSA</b>  Oral History</p>
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