

Interviewee: Anne Simpson (nee Pollock), Dr
UoS Dates: 1968 – 1972
Role(s): Undergraduate (Biology and Chemistry)



Interview summary:

Summary of content; with time (min:secs)

Start 00:28 – From Bannockburn in Stirling and a local, new university appealed to AS. Quite a few people from St Modan's (AS's High School) went to Stirling in the first and second intakes. Father was enrolled on an MSc at Stirling.

01:47 – When starting was unsure about what she wanted to do. The part one/part two system at Stirling allowed her to try different things which was helpful.

02:40 – First impressions. In 1968 the only building that was finished was Pathfoot. It was very modern and AS loved it. Lived at home and got the bus in to university. Liked the artwork and courtyards. Doesn't remember Matilda Mitchell who bought the art. Beautiful campus.

03:51 – Had no idea about what career to follow but did know she didn't want to be a teacher. Liked writing and wanted to continue with English and History. Started enjoying and performing better in the Sciences so decided to follow that route. Found the English Department quite difficult as she was naïve and it was outside her comfort zone.

05:07 – Remembers Anand Chitnis in History but doesn't remember any staff from the English Department.

05:33 – Sciences were made up of Chemistry, Biology and Physics. Had to decide which science to follow. There were only around 300 students then, which allowed AS to create a degree that was suited to her. Did her degree in Chemistry and Animal Biology. Willie Parker was an inspirational Chemistry professor. R. P. Bell was another Chemistry professor. Only three or four Chemistry students. Lots of staff were young and enthusiastic

07:28 – No social separation between staff and students. The Allangrange was a staff student shared common social space which AS liked.

08:00 – Decided for part two to put the Arts aside and pursue Science but couldn't decide between Chemistry and Biology. Talked it through with Director of Studies Stan Matthews and came up with a programme that would allow her to do both. Especially interested in Animal Biology. Still unsure about what to do for a career but now had a bespoke degree that was purpose built around her interests.

09:42 – Lived at home for first year and then moved in to a flat in Bridge of Allan with another couple of girls. In third and fourth year was working as a waitress in the MacRobert and working on her honours project so wanted to be on campus. Got a place in Andrew Stewart Hall, was one of the first residents. Peter Murray-Rust and his wife Judith were the wardens

12:34 – Unsure about what to do for a career but wanted to stay in Science, perhaps as a research scientist. Was pulled towards a PhD by staff. Professor Willie Parker had a friend at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and wanted AS to do her PhD there. AS had done her honours project on fish and worked at a marine lab in Aberdeen with Clem

<p>Wardle. Fred Holliday, the Professor of Biology, told her that a friend of his from the Rowett Institute in Aberdeen was looking for a PhD student. Due to her relationship at the time AS decided to go to Aberdeen. Met her husband at the Rowett Institute</p>
<p>15:15 – Stayed in science for a while. Completed a PhD at the Rowett Institute and then did a three year postdoctoral fellowship. While there got into part time youth work. After the postdoctoral fellowship, found it difficult to get a job in science as a woman. She couldn't see that she was ever going to be able to get into this man's world despite the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975.</p>
<p>17:06 – Retrained in youth and community work at Northern College in Aberdeen. Began working in adult learning and worked up the ranks, eventually becoming service manager in local government until retirement. Fieldwork involved running activities for young people, often disadvantaged. Still works part-time with a charity that helps those who provide this service. The skills AS gained in her first career transferred to her new role, such as her analytical skills.</p>
<p>22:23 – Staff and other students at Stirling were influential for AS. Good group of students, particularly in biology where there were more students than in chemistry. Stirling had a different philosophy to other universities and students were given freedom to explore opportunities.</p>
<p>24:50 – Grew up at Stirling as was young and naïve when she started.</p>
<p>25:22 – Has kept up with friends from St Modan's, met with Rosemary Shields recently. While at university stayed friends with students from St Modan's such as Tom Balanowski and Tim Reynolds. Also made friends through the badminton club and halls. Met June Evans in halls and became good friends. Still in touch with Isabel McGuire (nee Chalmers) and her husband David. Was under 18 when started at Stirling and didn't drink underage. Was secretary of the badminton club, would go to Dundee for matches. Staff were also in the badminton club: Jim Wilson and Brian Povey. Attended Mick Reynold's mum's funeral last year. Remembers watching the moon landing in Allangrange. Rose (Rosemary Anne Shields?) and AS would go horse riding on a Wednesday afternoon, went walking, hostelling and trekking. Occasional trips to a brewery with the biology club.</p>
<p>31:40 – Wasn't political then but understood that others were. Remembers Michael Connarty and David Chalmers being political. Now in touch with Alistair Massey who was a Liberal Democrat at Stirling. Didn't participate in any sit ins but was aware of them. Left in 1972 before the Queen's visit. AS's boss from Aberdeen was at Stirling at the time with John Reid, Jack McConnell.</p>
<p>33:30 – Half past 8 lectures, long days with lectures all morning and then labs in the afternoon. Weren't many students so no pressure on lab accommodation. Dissected snakes and monkeys. Bought most of the books she needed. AS's parents were supporting her, she wasn't on a grant. Remembers a desktop computer that came in her last semester. Liked spending time in the library, possibly was a tight squeeze when it was in Pathfoot but AS can't remember it being a problem.</p>
<p>36:23 – Cottrell opened after AS's second or third year. Doesn't remember Pathfoot being crowded but biology and chemistry only had a handful of students.</p>
<p>37:50 – Doesn't remember any frustrations related to the university.</p>
<p>38:11 – Liked the semester system. Would work as an auxiliary nurse at Bannockburn hospital during the Christmas break from the middle of December until February. Also finished for the summer earlier than other universities so had first pick of student jobs. Went to Edinburgh for a few summers working with the Scottish Council for Research in Education.</p>
<p>39:27 – A lot of building work was still ongoing on campus which could have been a frustration. AS's brothers worked on the buildings during holidays from university. When June Evans started in first year, which would have been AS's third year, the accommodation wasn't ready so students had to be bussed in.</p>
<p>40:41 – Significant people. Remembers Tom Cottrell giving a talk to the students when they started in the Pathfoot lecture theatre. He was very influential. Willie Parker was an amazing person. Inspired by John Stewart's lectures, but doesn't remember any lectures in chemistry or biology being boring. Staff in Biology included: Fred Holliday, Don McLusky, John Stewart, Stan Matthews, Peter Bannister and Neville Dix. Staff in chemistry included: Professor Bell, Willie Parker, Jim or John Cowie [Editor's note: John (Ian) Cowie], Isobel Walker who named her son after Jimmy Maxton, Peter and Judith Murray-Rust, Howard and Jean Maskill and Frank Riddell. Also friends with Derek and Margaret Banks, Dave Roberts, and Tom Young. Later had a cousin Maureen Cooper and a niece Lesley Wilkinson teach at Stirling.</p>
<p>46:02 – AS's father had chosen to come to Stirling as the education was innovative. He had been principal teacher of science at St Modan's High School but left to go to Callendar Park College in 196 as he was interested in primary schools teaching science. Did an MSc at Stirling about how science is taught at primary level.</p>
<p>47:45 – Left work to the last minute and worst memories are of staying up all night to try and get work done. There were a lot of assignments, especially in science. Continuous assessment was new and AS liked it, although it came with a heavy workload. Best moments were the decision to let AS continue with two sciences, an opportunity she would not</p>

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50:08 – Martin Swords and AS were a couple and both made the same mistake in a calculation so were investigated for cheating. Plagiarism wasn't as big an issue then as it is now. AS was hurt that people would think she was a tutor. Had close relationships with tutors then.

51:37 – Young staff, innovative and exciting, small class sizes were all benefits of Stirling. Had the best of both worlds as was living on campus but could go home quickly and easily.

53:24 – Didn't see Elton John at Stirling before he was famous but her brother did.

[Ends 53:48]

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