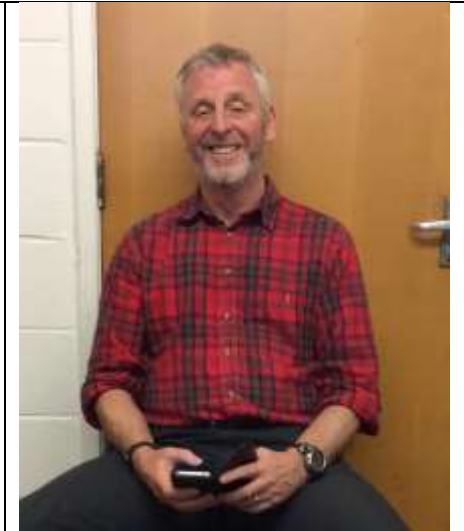


Interviewee: Alistair Spowage (A F Spowage)
UoS Dates: 1967 - 1971
Role(s): Undergraduate (BA Hons Philosophy), and founder member of the Rugby and Nationalist Clubs.
Currently Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Clackmannanshire.



Interview summary:

Summary of content; with time (min:secs)

Start 00:22 – Was 17 and all AS's friends were going to University after school and so AS decided to do the same. Applied to Edinburgh, Nottingham and Stirling. Stirling was the only university to offer an unconditional place and that's why AS decided to come. No regrets about that decision. Came from Haddington.

02:18 – Was always good at English so applied to study English and French. Was accepted to French despite only having a C at Higher. Professor of French suggested he drop it after one semester. Dr Ian Lockerbie was a Senior Lecturer in French but can't remember the name of the Professor [Editor's note: Glanville Price]. Picked up Philosophy in second semester and did well in it. At the end of Part One, results in Philosophy were better than results in English so pursued a Philosophy degree. Did one semester of Education but could not continue with it as you couldn't teach Philosophy in schools.

06:01 – Decided Philosophy wasn't for him towards the end of Philosophy. Asked Director of Studies Tony Pitson if he could finish then but had to stay on and do a fourth year. Achieved a third class Honours degree. Had already decided to become a Physical Education teacher by then.

07:02 – Degree from Stirling got AS into Carnegie College in Leeds to do a Physical Education course.


07:26 – Married his girlfriend at the end of fourth year. For his full four years at Stirling AS went home to Haddington every weekend.

08:15 – Came to visit Stirling with a friend from Haddington, John Short, who had got a place to study Economics. Pathfoot was still being built. There was no accommodation at all on campus. Also that day AS went to visit potential lodgings. Ended up living with the Cunninghams in Bridge of Allan. Stayed there with John Short for three years. By this time the residences had been built and John got a job as a sub-warden and moved out. The Cunninghams moved house and AS moved with them. Got a new roommate, Gordon Ford. Mr Cunningham died not long after graduation but AS visited Mrs Cunningham regularly until her death.

12:07 – Was never aware of any problems regarding resources and always had what he needed. The campus was a hive of industry the whole time. Was a building site for four years and looked very different when AS left. Spent a lot of time in the Gannochy.

12:47 – Hugely involved in the Rugby Club. Students had to start everything, there was nothing in the way of clubs when they arrived. The first year there were only 165 undergraduates. As soon as AS got to university the Rugby Club was organised. Played their first game against Stirling County. Joe Clark was the first captain.

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| 14:59 – Following year the undergraduate population doubled. Still got to know everyone. In year three the population exploded and it became difficult to know everyone. Campus became more spread out as Cottrell opened. |
| 15:53 – Didn't feel special being in the first intake, that didn't hit home until later on. For AS it was an extension of school, he drifted into subjects as you could at Stirling. Continuous assessment was good. |
| 16:52 – As well as rugby was also a founding member of the Nationalist Club. Was either the first or an early President. An exciting time for the SNP. Dr McIntyre was in Stirling and had been the first SNP MP. He would come and spend time with the Club. AS was political before coming to Stirling. Had confrontations with Chairman of the Conservative club, John Gordon, also a rugby player. John Gordon formed the military corps at Stirling. AS signed up for officer training in fourth year but was never really involved. Also a member of the Football and Debating clubs. As AS went home at the weekends everything was crammed in to Monday to Thursday so was very busy. Despite going home at weekends always felt a part of the community. Lots of Northern Irish and English students. |
| 22:12 – Doesn't recall doing anything specifically for charity but assumes that clubs would have joined in with fundraising. Canvassed for the SNP in Causewayhead |
| 22:57 – Went to the cinema in Stirling regularly and would eat in Stirling but was never very involved with the community. |
| 24:49 – Liked sport and wanted to give Physical Education a go. Made enquiries in fourth year. Could go to Moray House to get a qualification as an English teacher and then go on to study PE at Jordanhill or could go straight into PE in England. Doing a semester of Education at Stirling helped AS decide to be a teacher. AS and a friend Stuart Duncan met a girl in the Allangrange who had worked in an American summer camp. This interested AS and so he wrote to the summer camp and was offered a job in North Wisconsin. Went in 1969, 1970, 1971, 1973 and 1997. Returned last summer with his two sons for a camp reunion. This had a huge influence on his teaching. The boss of the summer camp wrote a reference that helped AS get in to PE college. |
| 31:04 – Influenced by Tony Pitson and Stewart Sutherland. Stewart Sutherland was another Philosophy lecturer and tutored AS in his Honours year. AS wrote his dissertation on life after death and got an A minus. Wrote to congratulate Stewart Sutherland when he was elevated to the House of Lords. |
| 33:08 – Had a bad experience with careers guidance at school and so didn't use the service at Stirling. Had already decided on PE college. |
| 33:32 – Graduated from PE college and went to Renfrewshire. The first year was a nightmare, disliked it to the point of applying for a commission of the Royal Marines but was rejected. Changed schools to a nice, new school and liked it much better. In the third year of teaching was promoted to Assistant Principal Teacher of Leisure Education. Went on a course for Head Teachers of Leisure Education run by Stirling graduate Charlie Bissett. Moved to a school in Alloa. |
| 36:30 – Returned to Stirling in 1984. Had been working as Principal Teacher of PE at St Mungo's School in Alloa. The school was very small and eventually was closed. AS was attached to the Advisor of PE at the Council. After a short while went on to work with the Outdoor Education Advisor. Outdoor Education interested AS. Was introduced to computers by the Advisor for Maths who worked for half a day per week as the Advisor for Computer Education. He told AS about a new course at Stirling University aiming to get computer literate teachers in schools. To get on the course you only had to be a practising, qualified teacher. No computing experience was required. It was two nights and one afternoon per week. A tutor who had taught AS in Philosophy was a tutor on the course. By this time AS was a Training Officer for the cadets, a teacher at Falkirk High School and had a family. After completing the course he set up a Computing Department at Falkirk High with a Business Studies teacher who had also been on the course. Taught half a day in Computing and the rest of the week in PE. The school advertised for a Head of Computing and a Head of PE at the same time and so AS had to make a decision. Knew he wasn't good enough to keep up with Computing and so chose PE and stayed there for ten years. |
| 46:50 – Been out of teaching for 12 years now so isn't up to date on what is going on but AS's impression is that PE has been marginalised and made too academic |
| 47:57 – University now has a Faculty of Sports Science. AS tried to do an MSc or PhD through the Faculty but there wasn't enough people interested to run it. The University has always been into sport. Ian Thomson was influential in AS becoming a PE teacher. Gets annoyed at the reputation that PE and PE teachers have but understands it. |
| 49:49 – When came back to study in 1984 the course was based in Pathfoot. AS was too busy and so didn't spend much time on campus. |
| [Ends 50:24] |

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| Interview No: | SURSA OH / 056 | <p style="text-align: right;">SURSA University of Stirling Stirling FK9 4LA</p> <p>info@sursa.org.uk www.sursa.org.uk</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">SURSA</p>  <p>Oral History</p> |
| Interviewed by: | Christina Sommerville | | |
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| Summary completed by: | Aime Jaffray | | |
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