

<h1>SURSA</h1>	<p>SURSA University of Stirling Stirling FK9 4LA</p> <p>info@sursa.org.uk www.sursa.org.uk</p>	<p>SURSA</p>  <p>Oral History</p>
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Interviewee:	Dr Chris Kelt (Christine Kelt)	
UoS Dates:	1977 - 1982	
Role(s):	Doctor in the campus Student Health Centre	

Interview summary:

<p><i>Summary of content; with time (min:secs)</i></p>
<p>Start 00.00 - Dr Chris Kelt part-time doctor in Student Health Centre at Airthrey Castle on campus from 1977.</p>
<p>02.20 - Dr Harry Gardner first medical officer already in post. Key member of British Student Health Association with keen interest in student health which became a specialty in its own right. He worked with a partner, Dr George McCulloch. CK taken on part-time as medical practices realised that a female doctor could bring something different. The practice was located in the Airthrey Castle annexe, built to accommodate nurses when castle was maternity hospital. Small rooms adapted well to consulting rooms and offices. Also Physiotherapy room, useful as a lot of sports injuries to deal with. George McCulloch and his wife, Joan, had been medical missionaries in Zambia and arrived in 1977 just before CK. Also a nursing sister and other staff.</p>
<p>05.55 - Student health service funded by University. No university counselling service at time, so many medical problems students presented were really based on psychological difficulties, homesickness, adapting to new circumstances, plus, of course, sex. CK expected to be consulted by many girls, but surprised so many boys chose to consult her on these matters. Problems often worry and exam stress. Occasionally, serious mental health issues identified. A doctor in student health deals with constantly changing population, so no longer term relationship with patients as in other forms of general practice.</p>
<p>10.30 - Practice on campus all year round, so in summer dealt with Open University students at summer schools. Also, provided medical care to holidaymakers with children and families who rented property on campus and occasionally to performers at the Macrobert.</p>
<p>12.19 - CK continued to work on campus till 1982. Cuts in funding to universities in 1981 meant University could no longer run or subsidise health service on campus. CK required to leave as the practice had to become self-sufficient general practice within NHS. Dr Gardner moved into</p>

Occupational Health, while Dr McCulloch kept the practice on but had to make huge changes to make a go of it financially. GP practices are small businesses, making income from fees etc. and employing staff. He widened practice out to neighbouring parts of Stirling, so more mixed population. As things worked in NHS then, every new patient attracted fee when joining practice. So at start of each session, huge influx of new patients and Dr McCulloch employed a nurse to do special medicals required. Good source of income. Student health service did not fit that well with the usual NHS model.

16.00 - Dr McCulloch later took on Dr Carol Rennick to help him and when he retired in 1992, she took on the practice. She dealt with transferring to the new building, funding etc and took on new partners. That building forms Airthrey Park Medical Centre as it is today.

17.55 - History of castle as medical centre is of interest to CK who enjoys studying history of medicine. CK learned more about history of Airthrey Castle when researching Dr Neil Reid, an early Medical Officer of Health for Stirling. CK discovered Scottish Society for the History of Medicine had meeting on campus in 1980s where both Dr Reid and Dr Elizabeth Rose, a consultant gynaecologist in Stirling, gave papers about history of Airthrey Castle. In his paper Dr Reid describes the edict arriving in September 1939 that Airthrey Castle was to become a maternity home. The day after, 3 September, war broke out. He had to start from scratch to create a maternity unit and recruited Dr Eva Cairns, a local GP, as medical officer. Very busy at first with pregnant mothers evacuated from Glasgow due to war. Maternity facilities in Stirling and Falkirk overcrowded and Airthrey Castle important addition. Dr Elizabeth Rose arrived in 1948, but pre-NHS. Her account describes living in castle, with good food and produce from gardens. When NHS was formed later in 1948, there was a Regional Health Board set up. However, Dr Neil Reid still chairman of the medical committee and in charge of local medical matters. So, when maternity unit was abruptly taken into NHS, although he did not run the unit, he was still a key medical figure in area. This was fortunate, as Dr Reid and the chairman of new health board very soon received edict to sell castle and estate. They prevaricated and at first sold off parts of the land. No doubt aware of difficulties that would ensue to maternity services locally if castle sold, they managed to continue prevaricating. The maternity home remained on site for a further 20 years and Airthrey Castle was still a maternity home when the university arrived and only closed in 1969, giving an overlap of two years. Had the estate been sold in the 1950s, the land would probably have been used for housing or some other development and the university would probably have been located elsewhere.

Ends 26.34

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Interviewed by:	Angela Smith		
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Summary completed by:	Moira Ball		
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