

Interviewee: Angus Annan  
UoS Dates: 1966 - 2000  
Role(s): 1966 – 1980 Dept of Psychology (latterly Senior Experimental Officer); 1980 - 1990 Manager, Microprocessor Group, Computer Unit; 1990 – 2000 Associate Director (IT and Media), Information Services



## Interview summary:

**Start 00:07** – Worked at the University between 1967 and 2000. Started as a technician in Psychology for 13 years before becoming Manager of the Microprocessor Group and then became Associate Director for Information Services in 1990 until he left in 2000.

**01:19** – Stirling has a low staff turnover as it is a nice place to work and live. This can be a problem. Worked for 10 years with the same group of people and grew bored. Left to become Director of Information Services at Thames Valley University.

**02:48** – Started at Queen’s University Belfast in 1966 as a technical research assistant on a project led by Peter McEwen in the Psychology Department. Enjoyed time at Queen’s and made friends with many post graduates. This group of people became the core of Psychology at Stirling.

**04:02** – Peter McEwen was appointed chair of Psychology at Stirling and invited AA to come with him. David Mack, Hazel Cairns, Michael Moore and others also followed Peter.

**05:06** – When AA arrived Pathfoot wasn’t finished. His desk was in a terrapin building and he shared it with Professor Bradbury. Remembers Matilda Mitchell chastising his messy desk. Lodged in Cambus with Magnus Pike. At that time there were only two rows of terrapin buildings and Garden Cottage. Moved in to Pathfoot when it was ready.

**06:13** – Iain McFarlane was the first to join as academic staff, the Department soon built up. When Cottrell Building was ready the Department moved up there. This was a shame as Pathfoot was lovely and spacious with wide corridors.


**07:22** – Psychology became more intensive technologically. Built up a lot of machinery to run the experiments before they had computers.

**08:11** – Different atmosphere at Stirling. Young technicians were only tolerated at Queen’s but were treated well at Stirling. It was Tom Cottrell’s intention to make it informal. The staff/student club exemplified this but didn’t work and was eventually scrapped. Staff had a building at Fairview but this wasn’t entirely successful. Little University-sponsored social activity. Michael Moore led a small group that put on social events.

**10:04** – Left school at 16 to become an apprentice and moved up by traditional means. Relieved to move on from Psychology, had been there too long. Knew students well: Paul Lewis, Macdonald, and Alistair Watson. Spent time at the staff/student club. Some staff didn’t like this in the early years as it felt like a glorified high school. Little privacy for staff.

**11:52** – Worked in Psychology for 13 years and then moved on to the Microprocessor Group. AA was manager and needed to fill another post. Knew Arlen Michaels, a student who did hobby work on microprocessors. He was

<p>appointed. They were to create the scientific equipment needed for post graduates and convey to them the new technology. Met lots of nice and interesting characters. Graham Bruce was seconded from education but hadn't adapted well to academic life.</p>
<p><b>13:56</b> – Work in Psychology started with developing something similar to closed circuit television but then went on to do lots of different things. Became responsible for the Primate Unit.</p>
<p><b>14:47</b> – Was in the Microprocessor Group for 10 years. Period had its ups and downs.</p>
<p><b>15:22</b> – Discusses the 1990 computer procurement and the formation of Information Services. For further information see also <i>Room of memorabilia</i> and article by Angus Annan.(click left hand link on home page)</p>
<p><b>24:26</b> – Apple Macs came in later, mainly driven by the Mathematics Department and Professor Greenman, but the Arts were also more comfortable with Macs. A new focus on Macs, especially in Pathfoot.</p>
<p><b>25:49</b> – Arrival of the primates in Psychology was an interesting time. It was very eccentric and expensive to run. There was also a field group in Tanzania run by Dr Bill McGrew. In the end the university decided the Primatology Unit and animal house was too tricky to run and expensive. Peter McEwen had a vision of an interconnected Developmental Psychology Department that didn't materialise. Another early focus was Mathematical Psychology with Michael Moore.</p>
<p><b>27:43</b> – In 1972 or 73 Alan Baddeley was appointed as the second Professor of Psychology. Came from Sussex University which is very research focused, and was disappointed with the research at Stirling. Left after two years to become director of Applied Psychology at Cambridge. Called AA one day and offered him a job, but AA turned it down. Neville Moray replaced Alan Baddeley.</p>
<p><b>30:07</b> – Psychology Department was hard work and people stayed well into the evenings, especially Peter McEwen. The residences were late being built and there were faults with the Cottrell building, more ground settling than was expected</p>
<p><b>31:21</b> – Macfarlane Gray gathered a steering group to bid for the new university to be built in Stirling following the Robbins report. Stirling was a dark horse, it was expected it would go to Inverness or Falkirk. He showed great foresight. Having the University has had a great impact on the district. Harry Donnelly was also a part of this steering group.</p>
<p><b>33:14</b> – Queen's visit was rowdy. The student body was dominated by left wing thinking. After John Reid arrived some order was restored in student politics, before it was hostile, with Linda Quinn and others. The first general appeal for the University had brought in funding of a million pounds but the second appeal had to be abandoned after the Queen's visit. Secretary at the time was Derek Lang. As a result the administration moved out of Airthrey Castle and back in to spaces around the teaching buildings as it was thought they had become too physically removed.</p>
<p><b>35:49</b> – Stirling has fulfilled its potential and more. Early on it was expected to be a classical university but it has evolved since then. Tom Cannon starting business studies helped the evolution. That was the beginning of the University as we know it now. Have maintained the delightful campus. Bought Airthrey Wood in 1960. Ranald Macdonald bet a pound that colleagues couldn't run from the Gannochy to Dumyat in less than an hour. Ian Thomson heard of this and created the Dumyat Hill Run which has just had its 44<sup>th</sup> year.</p>
<p><b>39:06</b> – In 1986 microcomputers were marketed as an office tool. AA and Arlen Michaels went to a conference in the Chemistry Department, expecting to hear about microcomputers but left as it was about word processors. Short of money in the 1980s. A Principal who was involved in the industrial scene in Scotland wanted to get a computer company on campus. Wang bought a piece of land on campus and built a factory producing word processors. Tony Hewitt had been appointed by then and didn't necessarily want to use Wang processors but the Principal wanted them installed. They lasted well, but the benefits of having Wang on campus never materialised and there were no connections with the university.</p>
<p><b>43:35</b> – Lost a few colleagues over the years: Alistair Watson, Ranald Macdonald, David Mack and John Anderson from Belfast.</p>
<p><b>44:42</b> – Was decided that universities in general needed a new finance system. Before Peter Kemp but Bruce Royan, AA and Tony Osborne were there. It was decided that consortiums would be created with universities grouped together in families dependent on what technologies they were using. They were useless and cost a lot of money. Too focused on technologies instead of processes.</p>
<p><b>48:20</b> – Was more aware of collaborations with other universities as an Associate Director.</p>
<p><b>50:05</b> – Integrating IT and the Library and creating Information Services was the idea of John Forty. It was opportune, after Tony Hewitt and Gordon Peacock had retired. Bruce Royan was appointed Director.</p>
<p><b>50:46</b> – Difficult time for the service as well as the procurement was not going to plan. Bruce Royan did well in getting the two cultures to unify. It was a harmonised service.</p>
<p><b>53:38</b> – Quite a move for AA to go from an academic department to a service department.</p>
<p><b>[Ends 54:16]</b></p>

<b>Interview No:</b>	SURSA OH / 026	<p style="text-align: center;"> <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 style="text-align: center;"> <b>SURSA</b>    <b>Oral History</b> </p>
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