





<p>Interviewee: Rob Marshall and Alistair Scolley UoS Dates: RM: 1971 – 2009 AM: 1975 - 2011 Role(s):</p> <p>RM: Computer Programmer, Computer Unit, latterly Computing Adviser and Team Manager, Computing, Liaison and Training Team, Information Services.</p> <p>AS: Programmer, Computer Unit, 1975. Latterly Senior Network Specialist, Information Services</p>	 	 
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## Interview summary:

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

**Start 00:06** – RM came to Stirling in June 1971, had [previously been working in Manchester. Employed as a computer programmer in the Computer Unit which was based in Pathfoot B corridor. Staff at the time were: Computer Manager John Teale, a typist, programmers Tony Osborne, Charlie Foster and Anne Kruzycka, five computer operators and a punch operator. Computer was an ICL 4130 held in D corridor.

**01:18** – Initial work was making programmes to analyse data, documenting the programmes and providing user documentation for the programmes. Punched cards were used. Did some collaboration with other universities. Ten teleprinter terminals to give users access to the mainframe.

**02:33** – Advisory service established in 1977 in Cottrell. At the same time the Department established a connection to the University of Manchester which allowed users to run packages that weren't available at Stirling or jobs that were too big for the ICL 4130 to handle.

**03:28** – AS started in September 1975, came straight from postgraduate study. Replaced Dave Mercer. Initially employed as a general programmer but quickly took over a programme that Dave Mercer had been working on that would connect Stirling to Edinburgh University. This would allow users access to bigger programmes than they had access to at Stirling. The same package was used to connect to Cambridge University as Peter Murray-Rust was doing similar work in Chemistry at Stirling to the work of the Chemistry Department at Cambridge

**05:46** – University started with Pathfoot building and so the Computing Service was held there. When Cottrell building opened many user departments moved over and so had to travel between Pathfoot and Cottrell to use the service. Tried to get permission to run a shuttle service but it was rejected. When the connection with Manchester was established, the computer that ran it was put in Cottrell with the Advisory Service next door.

**07:30** – Operators worked in two shifts. Tuesday mornings there was no service to users as hardware maintenance was done then.

**08:13** – Some administration computing was going on but mostly done on paper.

**08:36** – An alternator smoothed out the power supply for the computer. The computer filled room D2 where it was held.

<b>09:04</b> – Physics Department was still in Pathfoot at the time.
<b>09:30</b> – Physics, Chemistry, Maths, Psychology, Education, Biology and Sociology were departments that used the Computer Service most often. Richard Bland was in the Sociology department, he was one of the individuals that interviewed AS.
<b>10:54</b> – Some staff changes. Paul Roberts started 18 months before AS. Anne Kruzycka and Dave Mercer left before AS started. Tony Hewitt was appointed Director in 1977, it was his idea to start the link to Manchester. Users liked the link as it gave a quick response and they could see what was happening.
<b>12:15</b> – Academic computing was confined to a small number of departments and users. Later when the service expanded RM was exclusively employed in the Advisory Service while AS moved over to Systems and Communications.
<b>14:15</b> – Computers went down often in the early days, usually for half the day
<b>14:51</b> – Was a very sociable unit, would go to the pub at lunchtime. Always had a Christmas lunch and night out.
<b>15:51</b> – There was a six a side football competition, Computing Unit had a successful team called the Debuggers. Won the competition many times. In the beginning most departments had a team. Another famous team were the Hasbeens from Shared Technical Services. Students had their own six- a- side competition.
<b>17:20</b> – RM doesn't remember meeting students much in the early days, would have worked with postgraduates but not undergraduates.
<b>17:50</b> – Computing Science Department didn't have their own computer and so used the ICL 4130 and later the Manchester service.
<b>19:07</b> – Early on there was adequate funding and so always new equipment and enhancements. Users were specialists who would develop their own software and the Department would help them with it. Two major enhancements: the Manchester service in 1977 and when the first Vax computer came in 1979. First major setback was the funding crisis of 1981. Didn't affect equipment but did affect staff numbers. After the Vax came, had recruited two new programmers but they left due to lack of funding. Department was back to Paul Roberts, AS and RM. Later Rob Isbister, Simon Booth, Alan Nairn, Graham Cameron and David Hazeldine joined.
<b>23:15</b> – Most satisfying part for AS was the technical side. Excited by technology. RM found writing programmes satisfying and was disappointed that as he moved up the ladder he was no longer writing programmes.
<b>25:13</b> – A problem with the electricity in Pathfoot led to the ICL 4130 becoming unreliable.
<b>26:34</b> – RM enjoyed the sporting facilities in the early days and throughout. Was involved in snooker, football and golf.
<b>[Ends 27:02 ]</b>

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