

Interviewee: Andrew Bain (Professor A D Bain)
UoS Dates: 1966 (appointed) - 1977
Role(s): Founding Professor of Economics and Director of the Institute of Finance and Investment



Interview summary:

Summary of content; with time (min:secs)

Start 00:06 – Professor of Economics 1967-1977. Had been working in Cambridge and was interested in the idea of a new university for Scotland. Alan Peacock, who was a member of the original Academic Planning Board at Stirling, came to speak to AB's students. Afterwards AB spoke to him about Stirling and they discussed the notion of Technological Economics which was to be a major feature. Applied when the job was advertised. Interviewed in 1966.

02:47 – One of the first three professors appointed along with Douglas Munn of Maths and Harrison of Physics, who withdrew before he took up the post. Other leading staff were Principal Tom Cottrell, Secretary Harry Donnelly and assistant Matilda Mitchell. Offices were set up in Garden Cottage, and Airthrey Castle was still a maternity hospital.

04:02 – Was on secondment from Cambridge at the Bank of England at the time of appointment. Before leaving in summer 1967 AB visited Stirling, designed the course structure, liaised with Frank Bradbury who was Professor of Industrial Science which was the other half of Technological Economics, and appointed staff. Also helped Frank Bradbury develop a Masters in Technological Economics so that he would have something to teach in the first year, as undergraduates would not do Technological Economics in first year. Wasn't easy to recruit Economics lecturers. First recruits were Mark Brownrigg and Mike Greig. Neither had research experience and both did their PhD while at Stirling.

06:50 – Once the Department was up and running the recruitment situation improved and AB was able to recruit great young lecturers such as Peter Jackson, Paul Hare, David Ulph and Alistair Ulph. This enabled AB to set up a taught Masters programme for Economics. Students of that course included Ranee Jayamaha and Peter McGregor.

08:50 – A year or two afterwards the Department was able to hire some experienced Senior Lecturers such as David Simpson and Jim McGilvray.

09:56 – The undergraduate course in Technological Economics (also known as Tech-Ec) never took off. It was estimated that 10% of students at Stirling would be studying Technological Economics but in reality never had more than three in the final year. The idea for the course had come from Duncan Davies of ICI who had worked with Tom Cottrell and Frank Bradbury. It was felt there was a need for research scientists to know more about Economics in order to be more effective in industry. Similar ideas to Management Economics which was taught by Brian Loasby. In reality the course was more like a double Honours rather than a joint Honours as the disciplines were very different. Only the very best could cope with it. Remembers Malcolm Roome and Bob Hamilton being successful but only a handful of students completed the course. Didn't make much sense as an undergraduate course. The postgraduate course was moderately successful.

15:22 – After Stirling went to Strathclyde, which had a similar course to Technological Economics called Technology and

Business Studies. It took an extra year, which made sense. Technological Economics was too broad. It disappeared.

16:10 – The Institute for Finance and Investment. In the early stages of the University there were two research institutes: Aquatic Pathobiology set up by Fred Holliday and the Institute for Finance and Investment of which AB was Director. There could possibly have been a third in Education. Finance and Investment was open for a few years but then it was decided it wasn't viable. Investment came from a number of sources for specific projects. The core funder was the British Insurance Association. Other funders were fund managers Ivory and Sime, stockbrokers Joseph Sebag and the Social Science Research Council. After a year or two the Esme Fairbairn Foundation funded a chair in Finance. AB moved into that role which opened up space for another Professor in Economics, Chuck Brown was appointed. The Institute was reasonably successful in attaining funding. Research led to publishable but not exciting results. The BIA weren't happy with the outcome of their project. What the leadership of the BIA actually wanted was a degree in Insurance. Stirling offered an option in Banking and Finance but this wasn't enough. This left the Institute with a main sponsor who was unhappy. Another problem with the Institute was it didn't have any experienced researchers. Paul Draper was doing worthwhile work on the Ivory and Sime project. AB didn't have any experience of managing a research team and probably wasn't very good at it. It became clear after five years that the best people in the Institute were being trained up and then moving on. They were unable to recruit good Finance staff from the south as the salary wasn't as good. In the end AB recommended the Institute be absorbed back in to the Department of Economics. Wasn't a success but wasn't a disaster.

26:53 – Had research teams at Cambridge but had never led one before. There is much more team research now than there was then.

29:53 – *Approaches and Methods* was an innovation of the University. Ancient universities in Scotland would have science students take an arts course in first year and vice versa. *Approaches and Methods* was Stirling's equivalent or answer to this. It taught methods, rhetoric and statistics to all students. Tom Cottrell's initial idea was that all academic staff would take tutorials and appropriate staff would give lectures depending on the topic. Some push back from staff including AB resulted in an opt-out system. AB didn't feel competent enough to take tutorials. It folded after a few years. Most staff did not have a breadth of intellectual experience like Tom Cottrell had. Frank Bradbury gave some lectures on Methods which the Social Science Department were not happy about. A book was produced using the course materials for students but it was produced to be sold, which staff weren't happy with. *Approaches and Methods* was run by Frank Bradbury and John Riddy.

36:18 – University Secretaries. A lot of the smooth running of the University in the early years can be attributed to Harry Donnelly. He was a very experienced administrator and his early death was a huge loss to the University. Successor was Derek Lang. He was outward looking and had a lot of contacts. AB was on the appointments committee and they picked Derek Lang for what were good reasons at the time but in hindsight this was a mistake. He didn't have the confidence or experience that would allow him to exercise the leadership expected of a University Secretary.

39:23 – The Queen's visit was to be a precursor to a second fundraising appeal and it was a disaster. Once it was going ahead there was little Derek Lang could do as the student leaders could not be dissuaded. It set the University back a decade and the stress killed Tom Cottrell. University would have taken a different course if Harry Donnelly hadn't died. Local community reacted very negatively. Harassed by the press to take disciplinary action against the students but the press wouldn't share the photographs they had taken. A few cases were brought against students but Lord Wheatley found up to five reasons as to why the cases couldn't succeed. Staff were divided between those who thought no action should be taken and those who thought it should. Tom Cottrell lost lots of support. AB thought something should be done but nothing really could.

43:24 – Was chair of Estates and Buildings Committee for a long time but doesn't remember much about it. All the detailed work was taken care of by the architects, John Richards, Norman Walker, Ian Miller, Tom Cottrell and Harry Donnelly. Can't imagine why they had him as the Chair instead of a businessman.

46:16 – University started with Pathfoot which was an attractive building. Having all the staff together contributed to cohesion and everyone knew each other. At the beginning of year four the move to Cottrell began. It was difficult as the building was late and so they had to move in before it was completed. Externally the building was fine but internally showed the restriction on funding by the UGC. Residences were also late and so students had to be bussed in from Dollar and elsewhere. Construction began on Cottrell before the designs were finished and so modifications had to be made. This led to a dispute with the contractors which was still ongoing when AB left Stirling

49:41 – Art Collection at the University is a glory and is entirely thanks to Tom Cottrell. His mother was an artist and he was very knowledgeable and well connected in the arts. From the beginning the aim was to spend 1% of capital costs on art. Having art around has a huge impact on the environment. Gift of the Fergusson memorial collection was amazing. The arts collection is one of Tom Cottrell's lasting legacies.

53:01 – Airthrey Estate is a beautiful location, Lord Robbins thought it was tremendous and the second best in the Commonwealth after Simon Fraser in Canada. Macfarlane Gray, the Provost of Stirling, took the UGC to the castle when

Stirling was bidding for the new university. Development has generally been done sympathetically to the site.
55:26 – Attempted to promote connection with local community through dinners with local industry and academics but this was not successful.
56:27 – Sociable university but AB not very sociable. There was a staff club early on but some staff were opposed to this. Tom Cottrell thought staff needed to make a connection. Staff club didn't survive, they aren't economic. Loss of the informal contact. Much more administration expected of academics now. Less likely that these spaces will perform a valuable function.
59:57 – Doesn't recall staff meetings in the Economics Department.
60:15 – Always wanted more resources but did okay. Initially the allocation of staff between departments was done by a formula that Tom Cottrell had devised. This worked reasonably well.
61:01 – Library was able to provide for the Department and for students. Sir Alec Cairncross arranged for a collection of Ely Devons books to come to the University but the Librarian broke it up and sold what he didn't want. Libraries don't have space for books now.
63:59 – Committee system was fit for purpose. Structure was decided very early on. Of the initial professors half went on the Academic Planning Board and the other half to Estates and Buildings. Tommy Dunn was in charge of academic planning, very involved even early on. He developed the semester system. AB wasn't a fan of semesters but recognises that other universities have moved in line with it. There were practical disadvantages such as Stirling still being teaching during conference season.
[Ends 66:33]

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