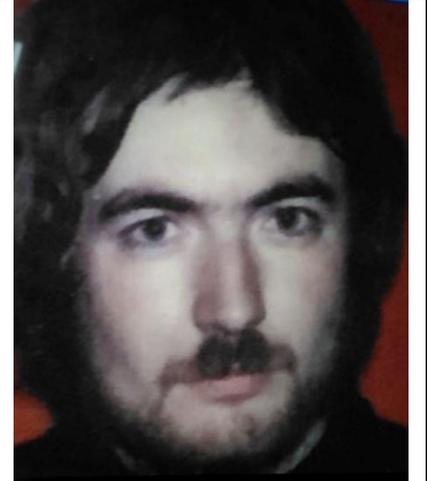


Interviewee: Paul Martin  
Dates: 1967-1972  
Role(s): Student  
Student Association Sabbatical Officer



## Interview summary:

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

**Start:** Paul Martin (PM) is asked by the interviewer Christina Sommerville (CS) to explain why he came to Stirling University. PM explains how the birthrate after the Second World War meant an increase in young people for further and higher education in the 1960s and that there were not enough universities to cater for the numbers then wanting to enter higher education. Politicians wanted an educated workforce and instituted a several new universities, like Stirling. PM was at Music College in Liverpool but decided that was not for him and applied for Stirling. He visited the site early in 1967 where he saw Garden Cottage, met Matilda Mitchell and Harry Donnelly, saw the loch and the castle. He later discovered he had relatives from the 1830s buried in Logie Kirk. The idea of a blank canvas was his motivation and he became student 23. When the University opened there was Pathfoot building, still to be completed, a bar, a canteen and accommodation arranged. PM reckoned the attitude was to build the University together from that basis. PM studied Approaches and Methods, English and Philosophy. He wanted to take History as well as a Major, but three Majors were not allowed in the structure. PM then started to get involved in student politics.

**03.05** PM explains he got involved in student politics because there was a disparate mix of people, including some young and straight from school, who, he felt, would benefit from control, organization, motivation and planning. He wanted the student body to have a coherent voice and representation and to be consulted by the University about issues, such as canteen provision and residences, for example. CS remarks on the maturity of perspective he had for 20 and PM explains he came from a political background. His great-grandfather started the Irish Cooperative Movement and his grandmother was heavily involved in Conservative politics. He'd also gained experience as a young professional musician working in clubs, in bands so was used to dealing with management. He was experienced and feels he fitted the criteria the University was looking for. Talking to Tom Cottrell and Harry Donnelly, PM gathered they were not looking for academic brilliance but students with Duke of Edinburgh awards or Outward Bound, experience of doing something in life before coming to study. CS suggests they were looking for potential leadership qualities, which PM accepts. Examples of student matters to be dealt with after opening, were no residences, no social centre, no sporting facilities and no on-campus entertainment.

**06.30** CS asks whether much competition for Presidency. PM explains that he and Mick Connarty (MC) decided together that PM would get elected first and MC would get elected second. They needed to put Stirling on the map as it was underfinanced compared to other universities like Glasgow and Edinburgh, for example, with huge numbers of students and money. At Stirling the student organization was getting only about £3 per capita for a small number of students. Other universities had traditions. An issue which took up a lot of PM's time was controlling a small, but vociferous, negative, anarchist, destructive political wing within a very small number of students. It was important to keep that element under control. PM felt it was important to have better communication with the student body and that was the motivation for starting Brig. He wrote for the newspaper and he got a lot of support from the sports clubs who were keen to advertise for members. PM started the paper in 1969 and he is very proud that it is still going. PM mentioned that he has created resourcing systems for 31 different organisations in Britain and that Brig is the only one still standing. Brig is coming up for 50 now. His involvement has brought much fun and continues, more recently pushing them towards Twitter and on-line versions. He recently attended a planning meeting with them and is very proud of the way they communicate within the University and with the local community. The model of a free paper, using advertising to cover printing costs has also been important and is the model used today by Metro, for example.

**12.18** Another important achievement of the student organization was bringing music acts to Stirling. They contacted agents in London and artists like Elton John, John Martin, Billy Connolly, Jerry Rafferty, Alex Harvey, Queen, Pink Floyd performed in Pathfoot. Pink Floyd came because they wanted a golfing holiday in Scotland. It was 1971 and they performed in the canteen in J corridor to 1100 people for £1000. A profit of £100 was made. Another achievement was setting up a Political Coordination Group, as they thought numbers were too small to have individual clubs. They invited politicians of various parties to speak. Lord George Brown and Jack Straw spoke, as well as Winnie Ewing and Donald Dewar. These visitors and events helped put Stirling on the map.

**15.27** CS asks if the University administration was receptive to what the student organization was doing. PM recalls the University management was preoccupied with the construction work at that time but was not difficult to deal with. They had provided all the basic facilities the students needed. They listened to the student organization but were busy with development matters with the local council and with architects. In addition, the company building the residences went bust and had to be bailed out by the government to finish the work. PM found there were no barriers in talking to the Principal, Tom Cottrell, to represent the student needs. As President, PM was an ex officio member of almost every committee, including the Court. This was fascinating because he was dealing with, for example, Lord John Wheatley who established the Legal Aid scheme in Scotland. PM was also on the SUS executive, the Scottish Union of Students executive. That was an ex officio post but Stirling had no money or voice until it got bigger. PM also dealt with the media which was interesting after the Queen's visit when major newspapers were on the campus for 5 or 6 weeks. It was fascinating for PM to compare the information in the different papers. PM already knew the stringers from the various newspapers and, with setting up Brig, he worked with Johnsons of Falkirk, publishers of the Falkirk Herald and, later, The Scotsman. This was a difficult time for PM as Chair of the SRU, the student body, because the vociferous minority had to be controlled. Other responsibilities for PM were representing the University in formal situations, such as being invited along to the balls at St Andrews and Aberdeen. He was also a focal point for students and had an open-door policy if a student had an issue, such as seeking advice due to financial problems, lack of family support.

**22.10** Liaison with the public was also important. Stirling was a former mining town, not used to Summer of Love kids arriving from Belfast or London. Also, students had a label as 1967-1971 was a time of student revolution in America and France. The students decided to have a Rag Day although some people wanted to avoid traditional student activities. Rag day was a way of raising charitable funding. PM also went to talk to community clubs such as the Rotary Club, Inner Wheel, for example, about Stirling University. He went to Alloa and Falkirk as well as the Stirling area. Falkirk – the Mudflats campus - had been one of the sites considered as the University location, but when the committee visited the Stirling site they realized it was perfect. PM recalls that he knew most of the individuals who have buildings named after them on the campus, such as A.K. Davidson, Harry Donnelly, Robins, Cottrell and can remember them very well. PM was only in the job as President for 9 months, that was the agreed period of office. Thereafter, Mick Connarty was

elected, so there was continuity. PM also mentions important liaison work with June Marjoribanks who was the Welfare Officer who helped with softer issues. There were drugs on campus, LSD and cannabis but no hard drugs. It wasn't an issue. The main drug that was available was alcohol. PM mentions that he is still often in touch with friends Claire Ford and Sue Holland, who was the first rag queen.

**28.30** CS invites PM to talk about any other matters he would like to mention and he talks about the Queen's visit. He was still at Stirling in 1972 having spent a year on a studentship at the University of Berkeley and that took a year out. He was chairman of Alangrange, the student union, a staff student club and felt it was unfortunate that staff and students did not have separate social space. CS mentions the University principle of having communal social space, but PM suggests it was the best the University could do in the circumstances. Howard Birch was President for 3 months, then Linda Quinn (LQ), became the first woman President. PM was advising her at the time of the Queen's visit not to demonstrate. PM feels the University made two mistakes on the day, giving everyone the day off, which resulted in the bars being busy. If classes had been running, a small silent protest could have taken place. This was what LQ thought was going to happen. CS asks what the protest was to be about. PM explains the University had spent £46,000 preparing for the visit and the student argument was that this sum could have been better spent. It all went wrong which PM puts this down to drink and the mistake of opening the bars. PM and LQ were not expecting the outcry in the press the next morning. Hate mail arrived and well-known figures also sent letters to condemn the events.

**40.30** PM says the University had to be seen to be doing something. A disciplinary committee was set up with a prosecuting counsel, Malcolm Rifkind, who PM considered very good, even-handed. There was also a High Sheriff called Robert Reid, also very good and two juniors. Tom Cottrell asked PM to be the student representative. PM says Malcolm Rifkind felt the matter could have been dealt with by the University Court. However, the University had to be seen to be doing something substantial. PM reports that at the time there was criticism from some politicians and Whitehall that the initial selection of students was faulty. CS mentions a rumour that extremist students were bussed in from other universities but PM says that was not the case and there were no external voices. LQ was seen as not controlling the student body as she had been party to the discussions that led to the situation. She was sent down for 6 months and never came back. About a dozen students were put before the disciplinary committee. They were identified by the many press photographs. The student Jackie McKee, who was photographed with the bottle on the bridge, wrote a letter of apology to the Queen and received a reply. Other groups of students also wrote letters of apology to the Queen.

**45.10** CS asks PM about the immediate and long-term consequences for the University. PM says it affected the intake for some years as teachers were advising pupils not to put Stirling on their form. Tom Cottrell died from a heart attack in 1973. Two students were killed in a car crash on their way to address the NUS Student Conference. For support. PM and LQ attended instead and got much support from the NUS.

**49.05** PM explains that John Reid took over and sorted things out and got rid of troublemakers. He was very popular and took a mature, sensible approach. The next President was another sensible person, Bill Bratner.

**51.45** PM left to join the Civil Service and married a fellow student, Margaret Buchanan, who became a lecturer in higher education at Glasgow University. Their daughter, Ruth, was working as a director at the Trustee Savings Bank. CS asks if PM feels his career was influenced by his roles at Stirling. He feels that he learned how to deal with fiercely political situations. PM worked for the Crown Prosecution Service where his role was to devise resourcing systems for the Crown Prosecution Service but he got sidelined into legal consultancy due to his skill in converting human activity into numbers within computer systems. He has done this for 31 organizations in the public sector. PM explains how this was used in practice with a variety of examples. CS points out that these jobs do not involve dealing with people which was the focus of his sabbatical year. PM agrees but points out that in the legal system he had to deal with many people. He dealt with the European Union as he helped set up the International College of Prosecutors in Brussels and Strasbourg and The Hague. This meant learning to deal with politicians at the highest level. PM gives examples of well-known figures he met.

**55.23** PM recalls his time at Stirling as an exciting period as he watched the place develop and helped it to develop. He feels slightly proprietorial as he was on all the planning committees, for the MacRobert, for example, and the early residences. Returning to Stirling, he finds many changes. He feels it is and a much

greener place and that the University has contributed to that, particularly the contribution of the MacRobert Centre to culture. PM is grateful that modern technology has enabled him to keep in touch with many people from his Stirling days.

**1.00.35** CS asks PM for closing points. PM is interested in how the University developed an identity. PM feels overcoming the effects of the Queen's visit is a contributing factor and that Stirling created its own identity rather than adopting the traditions of older universities. He highlights the success of its specialisms – Alzheimer research, Nursing, the Highland Campus and Sport and Aquaculture. He also mentions how staff and students from those early years went on to do well in public life and gives some examples. For example, Professor Fred Holliday went on to become Chancellor of Durham University, and PM became an executive with the Crown Prosecution Service. PM and CS conclude that Tom Cottrell would be proud of what the University has become.

**1.05.10** In an additional interview with Angela Smith on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2017, PM recalls how the University organized a tour of local radio stations in the north of England to promote Stirling University as a place to study, given that it didn't have a national reputation at the time. PM and a Sociology lecturer, David Wilson, spoke to local radio stations recently developed by the BBC. PM recalls being interviewed by Katie Adie for Radio Durham. PM thinks it is important to emphasise that not just the University, but its academics and students were keen to promote the good name of Stirling and develop it as a place of further education not just for Scotland, but for the whole country.

Ends

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<b>Date of interview:</b>	June 23 2017		
<b>Summary completed by:</b>	Moira Ball		
<b>Date:</b>	March 26 2026		