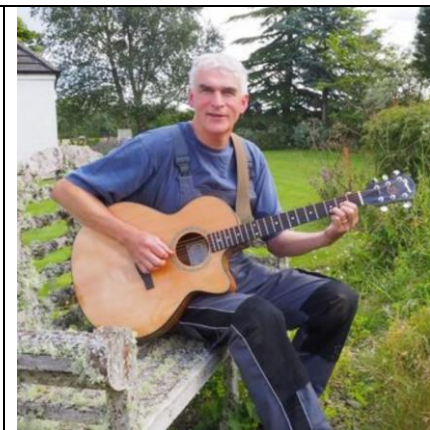


Interviewee: John Boyd
UoS Dates: 1975 - 1991 (with several breaks)
Role(s): Biochemistry undergraduate 1975 - 1977
Technician, Institute of Aquaculture 1978-1980
Technician, Biology 1980 -
Conservator, University Library 1985-1987



Interview summary:

Summary of content; with time (min:secs)

Start Arrived at UoS in September 1975, having had interview with Professor [Hans] Meidner, and moved into self-catering flats in Geddes. Impression of UoS as friendly, personal place, as opposed to the more impersonal nature of Aberdeen University, where he had already studied for two years.

03:00 Entered year 2 at UoS. Had not found the botany and zoology course studied at Aberdeen to be relevant; discussion with Professor Meidner had enthused JB about the career possibilities in biochemistry. JB loved his two undergraduate years at UoS, and found the Biochemistry department congenial. Remembers his lecturers Mick North, who has remained a friend, Grant Reid, Lewis Stevens and Nick Price. Also became friends, through music, with Peter Brophy, who after many years as a researcher at UoS currently works in neuroresearch in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary

07:00 The folk/blues music scene at Stirling is JB's special interest. Completely self-taught. Aged 10 he was given a ukelele; at 16 bought his first guitar in Spain for £6.

10:40 Played relatively little during undergraduate days, but after graduating in June 1977 went regularly to Stirling Folk Club, where he caught the performing bug, which over time has continued to grow. First experience of the daily public performance necessary for confidence was busking in Freiburg, Germany.

14:05 After a year in England gaining an additional qualification in biochemistry, JB was employed in Autumn 1978 in the Unit of Aquatic Pathobiology, following interview with Ian Macrae, chief technician at the unit. JB spent next two years there, during which time the unit was renamed the Institute of Aquaculture.

17:35 JB by now performing at Stirling Folk Club, encouraged by the offer of free entry to performers who passed the audition

19:30 JB moved to Biology Department, where he was employed in Donald McLusky's research team.

21:00 Conceived the idea of putting on music in the MacRobert Centre foyer; informal Friday evening concerts at around 6 pm. JB now knew a network of musicians who were usually happy to agree to play, e.g. Walter Perrie (accordion), Ian Grant (guitar and vocals) and Roy Newman (classical guitar). [Editor's note: Walter Perrie's playing in 2009 can be sampled at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzU8rLCjX-s>]

24:40 Job in Biology ended in April 1982. Busking trip through Europe, then back to Bridge of Allan. From early

1983 started playing in Maisie's bar upstairs in the Grange, because Maisie's was to close on Sunday evenings due to lack of customers. Those very successful Sunday evening concerts became a focal point for musicians across the university.
29:00 Hired Studio Theatre in MacRobert Centre at own expense to bring musicians to a new audience. Despite management's scepticism, the concert was a sell-out and made a profit.
30:18 The Grange closed in 1986 and the new student union opened in Robbins, where the top bar was still named Maisie's, and where music continued on a larger scale, with a PA. Diverse groups spun off. During this time JB had bar work in Maisie's.
33:35 Worked in University Library doing paper conservation for around two years, based in the John Grierson Archive, treating the Grierson papers, David Livingstone's diaries of his African journeys (from the museum in Blantyre), and ledgers from the Howietoun Fishery.
37:30 In April 1987 started Nursing training on Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh's graduate programme, qualifying in late 1989. Stayed in touch with Stirling, where he joined a 12 piece blues band called Cosa Nostra; 10 of the band were from UoS and two from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. Returned to UoS as student on IT course with application to nursing career, finally graduating in 1991
44:54 Interview ends
44:59-49:49 Performance of JB's composition The Boys from Passchendaele: John Boyd (vocals, guitar) with John McAleavy (Northumbrian pipes, drum) [editor's note: YouTube video version is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I98lh2AdANY]

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