

Interviewee: -Stuart McKelvie
UoS Dates: -1968-1969
Role(s): -Post-graduate M.Sc Mathematical Psychology



Interview summary:

Summary of content; with time (min:secs)

Start

00.00 Interviewer Angus Annan and interviewee Stuart McKelvie recall early days in Pathfoot when as a post-grad student SM was reading renowned Canadian psychologist D. O. Heb and another psychologist in that field at the time, A. Yonke. Later, when he went on to McGill University, SM attended classes given by Heb.

Asked about his decision to study at Stirling on completion of his first degree at Glasgow University, SM explains he switched from maths and economics to study psychology at Glasgow but retained his interest in the quantitative side so the post-grad degree at Stirling in mathematical psychology was the perfect combination for him.

02.24 SM had very positive first impressions of Stirling, very different from Glasgow as on campus, in one building and very small. Struck by friendliness of people. Shared an office with Rob Ranyard who became great friend. Returned to visit in early 1970s and met up with Michael Moore, and also Ranald Macdonald who had joined staff. Also returned in the 80s to run in a half marathon. Asked by AA if he would like to return to run in the Dumyat Race the following year, SM explains he was not into fitness activities while at Stirling and would now find that Race beyond him. AA recalls the race was started by their friend Ranald Macdonald over 40 years previously and attracts about 400 runners every year.

05.19 SM recalls the staff student club at Alangrange for the mix of people – undergraduate and post-graduate students, teaching staff and all the different people at Stirling. This was a major difference from his experience at Glasgow where he knew only people in his class and year plus those in the psychology department. At Stirling it was smaller and a great place to mix and socialize. Alangrange has now been replaced by other facilities on campus. AA and SM then share some banter around AA's stag night.

06.48 Both SM and AA recall their late colleague Michael Moore and his important contribution to establishing the activities of the department and keeping business activities on track. Michael Moore had started the course in mathematical psychology the year prior to SM enrolling. Michael Moore was still busy getting the course built up and taught several units, both on the mathematical side and the mathematical psychology side. He also supervised theses. He was a great academic leader and is very fondly remembered. Michael Moore was also good fun and both SM and AA recall enjoying his company and that of Professor Peter McEwen as well. Both were from Belfast and AA had worked with them there as a

technician.
.09.09 SM is asked if the course was important for his career. It was and he had gone to McGill University to continue mathematical psychology there with Tony Marley and Jim Ramsay, both on the quantitative side. At that time, not many people specialised in mathematical psychology. However, SM then switched to cognitive psychology. Where the course at Stirling was a real benefit was when he started teaching himself and taught a number of courses where he could draw on the material, such as a course in research methods and another in perception. He also taught statistics and psychometrics where the knowledge gained during the course at Stirling was useful.
10.40 Both AA and SM discuss the growth of the university from a few hundred to around 12000 students today. They consider that the legacy of Tom Cottrell is still evident, particularly the informality. Stirling was the first to use continuous assessment and the semester system. AA came from Queen's University Belfast where there was an attitude of deference and he had felt scared of the erudite and articulate people around him. Stirling was completely different with informality and access to everyone, including a shared coffee lounge where everyone mixed.
12.13 SM recalls how helpful AA was as psychology technician and agrees about the informality, reckoning it came from the top, from Tom Cottrell. SM served on committees with Tom Cottrell and travelled with him to meetings, saying that Stirling's informality contrasted with his experience at Glasgow.
13.16 Asked for advice for current Stirling students, SM advises keeping an open mind, exploring and challenging yourself.
14.24 Asked about further points, SM remembers fondly students from the first intake of the M.Sc. Psychology course and others from his own year, as well as PhD students of that period, such as Alastair Watson, Dave Mack and Roger Woodward, among others. He also reflects on the advances in computer technology from the computer of those days which took up a whole room and involved writing programmes in ALGOL and Fortran.
15.53 SM and AA also recall the innovative political coordination group put together at Stirling by student politicians of all hues. The group invited a range of speakers, including Tariq Ali, the psychologist BF Skinner, the SNP MP Winnie Ewing, Tam Dalyell a Labour MP and Jo Grimond, who was Liberal MP for Orkney and Shetland.
17.33 AA also recalls the contribution of W. MacFarlane Gray who was chairman of the steering committee that brought the university here. SM mentions the prominent place given in a video on the university website to celebrate 50 years to Tom Cottrell talking about his role in starting up the university.
18.41 Both speakers thank Michael McDonald for his help in setting up this interview by remote link. They finish by looking forward to meeting up at the 1968 reunion in June 2018 and by recording their pleasure that the university has developed so well.
Ends

Interview No:	SURSA OH / 102 -	<p>SURSA University of Stirling Stirling FK9 4LA</p> <p>info@sursa.org.uk www.sursa.org.uk</p>	
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Date of interview:	2017		
Summary completed by:	Moira Ball		
Date:	9 March 2020		