

Interviewee: Malcolm Beveridge  
Dates: 1980-2000,  
Role(s): Research Fellow.  
Lecturer. Senior lecturer  
Reader in Aquaculture  
  
2008-11  
Honorary Professor of Aquaculture



## Interview summary:

**Start 00:00** Malcolm Beveridge (MB), while writing up his Glasgow University PhD thesis in autumn 1979, applied for a postdoctoral research post at Stirling to work on water quality issues and carrying capacity of cage fish farming. MB relates how the invitation to the interview, posted second-class, reached his remote location after the day of the interview. Allowed a second chance, he was interviewed by Professor Ron Roberts, James Muir and Andrew Henderson (Biology). Eventually started at Easter 1980.


**04:10** Fieldwork at Loch Fad (Isle of Bute), working for Rossi Fisheries. Fortnightly full-day field visits, accompanied by Alan Chalmers from the Tropical House. Based on campus, where the samples were processed. MB shared an office with various people, including Balfour Heffer, a visiting aquaculture scientist from Israel, who was a huge influence on MB.

**05:15** Began networking with other scientists in the university, including Lindsay Ross. Worked with Lindsay Ross on behaviour of rainbow trout if they escaped from cages into the loch. Used ultrasonic tracking tags; and jointly wrote it up in a published paper. Mentions working with Mike Phillips, then a PhD student, who later became a member of staff. Another PhD student, Tradeep Dey, from India, worked alongside MB sampling at Loch Fad.

**06:55** MB was on short term funding for a long time. Taught on Masters in Aquaculture course, starting 1980/81. Recalls students Mike Akester, Chris Price, Carlos Martinez, Malcolm Dixon. Participated in British Council and Overseas Development Agency (ODA) projects in Israel, Malaysia and Malawi. Left the Institute in 1983 for an FAO-funded post in the Philippines working on carrying capacity in tropical cage aquaculture. Restarted work at the Institute in 1984, now with ODA funding. Expectation of staff, said Professor Roberts, was to attract funds, teach and publish good research, all of which MB achieved. After 10 or 12 years, with encouragement from Roberts, MB gained a lectureship and then a senior lectureship, which gave him financial security.

**10:20** MB attracted external research funds from ODA and DFID between 1988 and 2001, taking him regularly to Bangladesh, India. Latterly he had European Commission funding to work alongside Wageningen University in Bangladesh. Focus of research was development of simple predictive models for carrying capacity and waste loadings in cage aquaculture. With Lindsay Ross wrote software for use in teaching and training. This was written up as a widely-used FAO technical paper, and led to overseas consultancy work in many parts of the world.

<b>15:20</b>	MB worked closely with Derek Robertson, director of Howietoun, which was selling trout to restock lochs for angling. Offered a service, charging for surveying a loch of an evening, and writing a report, surplus money going to the Institute's endowment fund. The report could generate sales of fish to clubs and riparian owners for restocking, and the data fed into models and into papers on exploitation of Scottish freshwaters.
<b>17:00</b>	MB's teaching load was comparatively light. The block of Masters teaching was well defined. The Masters projects were useful because some could generate published research, for example on bird predation or rainbow trout spawning. MB was asked to be second supervisor for PhD student Tradeep Dey. Greatly enjoyed the classes, and had strong social bond with the students, who were often of similar age to himself, a bond which strengthened when he subsequently encountered his graduates overseas.
<b>20:44</b>	Recalls particularly Muhammad Abdul Wahab from Bangladesh, initially as a Stirling PhD student who under Hadrian Stirling was developing an amazing sediment pump. MB was Wahab's PhD supervisor in Hadrian's absence abroad. Then they worked together at Bangladesh Agricultural University and over the years produced 30 to 40 papers. Their collaboration continued in a big European Community project; then years later, 2006-14, as staff members at World Fish, they published together, their research focus having moved beyond aquaculture into to nutrition security in Bangladesh and South Asia.
<b>23:10</b>	Involvement with training students from Bangladesh Agricultural University. MB spent part of every year for over ten years in Bangladesh, where aquaculture has made an astonishing contribution, lifting tens of millions of people out of poverty.
<b>25:44</b>	Teaching on the BSc programme in 1981. Realisation that, contrary to the general assumption at universities at the time, education even to PhD level did not make staff into competent teachers, and MB was given external and in-house teacher training. Challenge of teaching younger, less knowledgeable students.
<b>27:55</b>	Much overseas work at the Institute in the 1980s. MB describes the honour and joy of gaining insights into how the world worked and what poverty meant. Spent up to 25% of time overseas including in Mexico, Brazil, Chile.
<b>29:42</b>	The Tropical House at the Institute. MB relates anecdotes about bringing live fish back from Bangladesh. Describes constructing the containment system; and Home Office inspections. Recalls the opening of Howietoun Fishery.
<b>32:30</b>	MB's wife was the first editor of <i>Aquaculture News</i> , an innovative publication which in pre-internet days helped to put the Institute on the map.
<b>33:50</b>	Consultancy work. Knew the staff at Stirling Aquaculture, e.g. David Scott, John Bostock, but mainly worked in parallel, taking on staff to do the environmental monitoring that the river purification boards had begun to require of fish farmers. In fact, at that time Stirling was doing all such monitoring in Scotland.
<b>35:48</b>	Visit of Diana, Princess of Wales, to open Wolfson Aquatic Biology Laboratories. MB witnessed the excitement of the build-up, amusingly described, but missed the actual visit because of a prior engagement to travel to Mexico. Regular staff-student social events were great fun. International food nights at the Guild Hall in Stirling, Christmas parties, barbecues at Howietoun, receptions for Bangladeshi students.
<b>39:20</b>	By late 1990s MB, now a Reader, was running the Master's course, which he loved, and was greatly assisted by Trevor Telfer. Had active career in research, teaching and attracting grants. But looking for other opportunities left Stirling to run the freshwater research lab at Pitlochry. After five or six years, missing research, MB went to work for World Fish, in Egypt and Zambia, for eight years until retiring. Continued collaboration at World Fish with old colleagues and Stirling graduates: Wahab, Mike Phillips, Don Griffiths, Mike Acaster, Malcolm Dixon, Alan Brooks. External examiner for Stirling Masters course, 2008-11.
<b>43:55</b>	Anecdote about a convivial night at Loch Fad. In conclusion, MB recalls a wonderful time at the university and, despite issues with funding etc, the optimistic, positive ethos at Pathfoot.
[Ends 45:46]	

<b>Interview No:</b>	SURSA OH / - 126	<p><b>SURSA</b> University of Stirling Stirling FK9 4LA</p> <p><a href="mailto:info@sursa.org.uk">info@sursa.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.sursa.org.uk">www.sursa.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>SURSA</b></p>  <p>Oral History</p>
<b>Interviewed by:</b>	- Christina Sommerville, with Lindsay Ross		
<b>Date of interview:</b>	- 13/04/2022		
<b>Summary completed by:</b>	- Gordon Willis		
<b>Date:</b>	- 17/12/2024		