SOHC/OH 760/8

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DISK 1

This is an interview with Professor Trevor Wilson for the University of Adelaide Oral History Project, interviewer Rob Linn. The date is 15th August 2007 and the interview is taking place at the University of Adelaide, Napier Building.

Well, Trevor, I wonder could you give some background before you come to the University of Adelaide? I know you were raised in New Zealand; were you born in New Zealand?

I was born in New Zealand, yes. I was born in Auckland, New Zealand, and I lived in that same house for all the time I was in New Zealand, which was when I was at school and at university, and lectured for a couple of years there and left when I was about twenty-five and haven't really been back to New Zealand except for family visits since.

But, Trevor, were you born in 1930, is that right?

Late 1928, I'm sorry to say. I'm approaching my eightieth year, and this was 24th December 1928 so I just made it into that year. But yes, so it's quite a while ago.

Now, how did you come to university in New Zealand in the first place? Was that just straight from secondary school?

Straight from secondary school, yes, not knowing what to do next. I just went on with what I'd been doing at school under, I guess, more congenial circumstances, less directed circumstances, but not with the sort of friendliness and the chumminess that you get at school if you get with a gang of friends.

And you said you taught a couple of years at Auckland.

That's right. My first year of teaching was at Christchurch when I stood in for a lecturer who was overseas on leave, and then I came back to Auckland and taught for two-and-a-bit years there, and then I got a scholarship to go to Oxford, which I took up, so I did my doctorate at Oxford, having done the master's – which was actually the honours BA – at Auckland.

Could you talk a bit about your time at Oxford, please, Trevor? What did your postgraduate work there entail, for instance?

Well, I was doing a thesis on the British Liberal Party in decline under very inadequate supervision because Oxford didn't really recognise PhD students – or D.Phil students, as they are at Oxford – didn't really want them around, they made a great effort to persuade me to do an undergraduate sort of degree which they thought would take me much further. But I stuck with the D.Phil idea and I guess did a bit of work there and spent much more time meeting a girl and falling in love and getting married. So Oxford was the great romance of my life rather than that. That marriage is now reaching its fiftieth year, I might say, very shortly.

Well, Oxford was obviously worth its time, Trevor.

It was worth its time, it was, yes. I have strong feelings when I go back to Oxford, not so much of a scholarly nature – although I did hear A.J.P. Taylor give the Ford Lectures, were they?

Yes, that's my memory.

Yes. The lectures on the renegades of English political history. So I got one or two useful things from that, but mainly it was at Oxford I was romancing, yes, which was something was well worth doing by that time in my life, so I don't have any regrets; but I then had to go to Manchester to finish my Oxford degree, basically. I got a position at Manchester University with – what was the professor's name? Great man, who had been at Magdalene College, Oxford, and then went on to Manchester and sort of took pity on needy people. So I had a position in the department there, where I finished my – – –. I did some tutoring for them, but basically I was finishing the doctorate.

Now, Trevor, what led you to Adelaide? Was that direct from Manchester?

It was direct from Manchester, yes, and it was purely a matter that the D.Phil thesis was being finished, I was married and we had a baby, so I needed another source of income and Adelaide at that time was offering positions. It was a time when New Zealand universities were offering very little, quite apart from reservations I had of going back to Auckland and having a further spell of Professor James Rutherford, who was not one of my best memories, and the Adelaide department under Hugh Stretton was advertising positions and I heard fairly well about Hugh Stretton – one

or two other people here, Douglas Pike, Ken Inglis – so I put in for the job and when I was appointed here I took it.

Now, Trevor, how had you heard about Hugh Stretton, Douglas Pike and – who is it? – oh, Ken Inglis.

Ken Inglis, yes. Well, I don't know. Harry Hanham, who of course I'd known at school in New Zealand and at university, was one of the people who was at Manchester and he always kept a great professional interest in universities round the world. He liked to know who were important people, interesting people. And so he built up a knowledge of Hugh Stretton, who actually wrote a letter to *The Times* that created some interest just about the time I was making the application, so that there was a sort of feeling that Hugh Stretton was a person to take notice of in England. He had, of course, been at Balliol only a short time before, but he was writing from – – –. I don't know what the letter was about now. I don't know that I ever studied it very carefully, but other people studied it and the name became something you took notice of. So I think that made it seem worth a try, anyway; I didn't, as it were, commit myself to taking the offer if it didn't come ...., or if it did come, but when it came I accepted straight away, it seemed to be a good way to go.

Trevor, when did you and your family arrive in Adelaide, do you recall?

Well, beginning of 1960, yes. I've been here since 1960. I've lived more of my life here than I ever did in New Zealand – I was there for about twenty-five years. I still haven't become an Australian citizen. My wife has, because she was working on Aboriginal affairs and felt that she could not tell the Australians how they should treat Aborigines if she wasn't one herself, so she went through the business of securing Australian citizenship. I, somehow, didn't get in on the act and I've been meaning to ever since and I never have. So this AM I've just been awarded or I'm about to be awarded was an honorary one because I wasn't an Australian citizen. Being a New Zealand citizen doesn't seem to make any difference, so there we go. (laughter)

There you go. So, Trevor, what was the arrival like for you in 1960, do you remember?

Well, I guess we were fairly razzle-dazzled by the whole journey. We came by boat, as people did in those days. It was just a great upheaval, getting everything onto the

ship ourselves or getting people to transport these things. We went to New Zealand, because by then we had a child and my mum wanted to see the baby –

Of course.

– so we stopped off in New Zealand, then came across the Tasman. I remember that as a particularly ghastly time: the boat journey from Auckland to Sydney was no sort of fun. But we then flew to Adelaide and we were met by Douglas Pike, and from then on that was a very good experience. Douglas was a great person to meet you: he was so informal and so not standing on his dignity or his position in the department or any of those things, you know. So that was very nice, actually.

I was wanting you to describe Douglas Pike because he's such an interesting character. You said you'd known a little about him, but – – –.

No, I didn't really know that much about him. I guess it was Hugh Stretton that I knew about, but even him I didn't know much about him except that he was obviously a distinguished scholar. Douglas was, as it happened, running the department because Hugh was away on study leave, so I didn't meet Hugh Stretton for another six months, something like that. So Douglas was the sort of chief man in the department at the time and a very good person to be introduced to the department [by], he always seemed to be so relaxed and easygoing and you weren't just – wasn't having to worry about how the professor would feel about you and that sort of thing. It was quite a change from Auckland to meet Douglas Pike.

Was it a relief for you, Trevor?

Yes, it was, yes, yes. I mean the Auckland department had great people that I became very fond of, Willis Airy[?] and Robert Chapman – Bob has just died, a year or so a go, but it gave me a great sorrow, his loss – so I had some good feelings about the Auckland department; but there was this feeling of a weight of disfavour that I existed under Professor Rutherford, so I don't think I would have gone back there even if I could have. But I did find the Adelaide department, there wasn't at the top that figure who was bearing down on you and expecting his dignity to be paid great attention to and have his ridiculous demands that were made of you. The Adelaide department was so different from that, first under Douglas Pike then for a short time under Ken Inglis when Douglas was away for some reason.

That was nearly coming to the fruition of either his writing or his research for *Paradise of dissent*.

Yes, that's right. Was that out already?

The first edition may have been out by then.

I think it probably was and he was being approached by other departments, so I think he was off to Hobart to be looked over by them, something like that. Of course, George Rudé arrived here a couple of weeks after I did and people were aware that Rudé was a very distinguished name and one was aware that there were just very distinguished people in the department whose reputations spread beyond Adelaide, and that made you feel good about the place, I think.

So, Trevor, on a personal level, you and your family were very well-treated, did you feel? Welcomed, I should say.

Yes, we were certainly welcomed, yes, and there were welcoming people. I mean I saw a lot of Malcolm Jack[?] who was there then, and we shared an office for a while before we moved into this building. Once the Napier Building got established all was a bit different there, but that must have taken a few years to do.

Where was your original office in 1960?

Near what then became the Staff Club: wooden buildings that have since been torn down, so I can't take you back to my original office. (laughter)

Was this the former Anatomy Building, Trevor, do you know?

I don't think so.

Had it been the Staff Club?

I don't think it was the Staff Club at that time; but when the History Department moved out it then became the Staff Club. But then that was all done away with, it was sort of in that area where people could park and there were trees there and people used to get in at an incredibly early hour to get the shade of the tree – I never managed that, myself – but there are no cars there now. It's where 5UV originally was, except it was on the ground. But it's in that sort of–

The Hughes Plaza area.

– the Hughes Plaza, yes, yes, that's where my bit of the History Department was. Most of the History Department was in the building down there, which was the Science Building mainly, but the History Department had a wing of it for some reason.

This is north of where we are now or north–west.

Yes, north, yes. We can't look down on it any more, but it was the building down there. One of the science faculties, I can't remember which it was.

So what were the expectations on you as a young academic, Trevor, what was your role to be?

To get on and publish my book, to turn my thesis into a book, and there were great contributions by the department to do that. Hugh ran the department with people's ambitions and expectations very much in his mind, that I needed to publish my book and he gave me the facilities to do that. Apart from that, I taught one half of History IC, which was a course on British Constitutional History and John Gilchrist taught the Medieval part of, and I took up in 1660 with Charles II and moved on through the eighteenth, nineteenth century, more or less to the present day or anyway to the First World War – I don't know how much further I went than that. And that was quite successful. The students, by and large – they were mainly law students, of course. At that time all those law students had to do History IC. It was available to any other person that wanted to do it, but mainly it was legal students, and I got on pretty well with them. My manner of presenting myself was very different from John Gilchrist and that sort of went down with them well. I remember one of them, a German student, saying, 'When Dr Gilchrist ceased and you came in we thought, "Oh, this is a great guy. He's a very friendly chap, we'll do well with him" – until we got our essays back.' (laughter) Then they found my friendliness did not run to the extent of overlooking the blatant shortcomings of their efforts. But that was mainly what I did, my thing: I tutored in the other, the main first-year course, for the first half of the year then taught IC for the second half of the year, that was my teaching commitment; and working on my thesis.

So the book you were working on, Trevor, was that the Lloyd George book?

That was *The downfall of the Liberal Party*, yes, yes. I'd written a thesis on it dealing with the period 1918–24 but I had to extend the period to take in the First World War and go a bit beyond it.

So you found that Hugh Stretton was very encouraging to you?

Very encouraging. Yes, he was, yes. I felt he sacrificed himself a lot to see that his staff got on with what they wanted to do. Yes, I formed a high opinion of him.

Trevor, could you give an overview of some of the other staff who were here? I was thinking was Heinz Kent here by that time?

Heinz was here.

Peter Phillips, perhaps?

Peter Phillips was here, Katherine Woodruff was here. Who else would there be? Because we stayed at Kath's place for a week or two when we first arrived.

Really?

Yes, yes. She regularly took people in, us and the baby – I mean that was while we were looking for somewhere to stay, and then we rented a place with a lady and gentleman who proved not to be very pleasant or well-disposed towards us, but we very soon after that moved into buying our own place, which we did at Klemzig originally, and then we bought our present residence in – or we moved in at the beginning of 1966.

This is at Medindie?

At Medindie – Medindie Gardens, I'm sorry, yes, which is not nearly as high-quality as Medindie, but it suits us quite well.

The real people live in Medindie Gardens, I've been told, Trevor.

Is that right? I'm pleased to hear that. (laughter) I'm sure that's not what the Medindie dwellers feel about it.

What about departmental governance in the 1960s, how did that function here?

That functioned according to the lights of Hugh Stretton, which was not the lights of the rest of the university. As far as the rest of the university was concerned the professor was god and he gave the orders, he made the appointments, he made all the

decisions and the rest of the people jumped into line, you know. As far as Hugh was concerned, it was a democratic department and decisions were reached by voting. Some of us felt that it would have been to the advantage if Hugh had laid down the law a bit more, that some of the appointments made were not made with the overall good of the department in mind, certainly not our mind. Some people laid down the law as to what *they* would accept and tolerate.

I mean this is one of the things that amazed me about Adelaide: you were asked what did you feel qualified and eager to teach; when I was 22 in New Zealand you just taught what you were *told* to teach, and if it was a subject of which you knew little well then you damn well read it up and got to know it by the time the lectures began. That was my experience in both Christchurch and in Auckland, you did what was handed out to you, which made the whole lecturing business extremely exhausting because you were getting up a subject and usually you'd master the one you were about to give a lecture on and knew very little about the one you were *next* going to lecture on.

So was the History Department here under Hugh unique, or was it just Australia at the time, do you think? Well, you may not have known, Trevor.

No, the History Department was unique in those respects, that this department ran much more on a democratic basis than any other department you knew about. All other departments, the head of department was the only person who made the decisions; the head of department was the only person who was ever supposed to see references on candidates. They were seen more widely in the History Department than they should have been.

Just thinking about the people who were here in the '60s with you, Trevor, like George Rudé –

Yes.

– and Peter Phillips and Heinz and Ken Inglis.

Bill Mandle, of course.

Oh, yes, of course, Bill Mandle.

He arrived only a few weeks after I did.

All of you young –

Yes.

– enthusiastic, probably at the time when you're all producing your early books or book, whatever.

Yes.

But it must have been an extraordinary *pot pourri* of ideas going on.

Oh, yes, it was. Yes, yes. And of course it produced many rivalries and hostilities as a result. There was a longstanding hostility between Peter Phillips and Heinz Kent, and this branched off with some members of the department into rival camps and each in their way was wanting the department to be made the way *they* wanted it to be made and were making demands of the department that were not necessarily just for other people, or certainly with the head of the department. But in that sense people look back on the 'good old days' – and they were good because we were expanding, we had money to do things and the department was an exciting place; but I suspect it's a much better-natured department nowadays than it happened to be with that group of people.

John Tregenza of course came along shortly after I did, in the next year or so, so the expansion of the department was always very exciting and interesting and it meant you could put on a range of courses that really did cover a lot of history, mostly history since the Renaissance and Reformation. There wasn't much Medieval, and of course Classical History was in the Classics Department, so there were those limitations; but Hector Kinloch joined the department very soon after I did, as I remember, and was teaching American History, as was Kath Woodruff; so that the range of subjects we were dealing with was really quite astonishing.

Had Ken Inglis left by, what, '62 or '3?

Yes, he did.

Was Gordon Buxton his replacement do you recall, Trevor?

I don't remember. Gordon Buxton was Heinz's man. He was appointed to teach the Economic History courses that Heinz was teaching, and Heinz was always insisting he needed more staff because he had such large demands for his courses – which he tended to do because he put his courses on part-time, so that a lot of part-time students by necessity took Heinz's courses and I think enjoyed them well enough, I

think he was a good teacher. But that again also – there were elements of rivalry and hostility got caught up in that, but that's rather usual for academic departments as far as I can see.

I think it a very true statement.

I don't think academics necessarily take a wide view of what's (laughs) the benefit of the academic world. But that's part of the devotion to their aspect of it, this is why they produce books that are fairly cutting-edge, because they feel deeply about what they're writing about and therefore they feel other people who are writing about other things or have other interest, or don't write as much as they should, become the subject of disfavour. So there were all those things, yes, yes.

Trevor, what about across the wider university: did you mix outside the department with other academics?

Not really, no. This is probably peculiar to myself more than it was to the university at whole, but the university was very much divided into departments and there was certainly no closeness with the English Department, which I sort of expected there would be because in Auckland History and English ran very much side by side. Most people who specialised in History also specialised in English, as I had done. I was surprised by the extent to which they weren't at all associated.

They had been originally.

Had they?

Yes. Henderson was professor of both.

He was professor of both, yes.

But then separate professorships were established after his time – no; *during* his time.

He became History Professor, did he?

Yes.

Yes. Well, I don't know what caused – I mean I think there were departmental arrangements which kept them apart, I think the History Department was always happy for students to do a joint English and History final honours degree, but the English Department demanded so much of that degree that the History Department

didn't feel a student had a right to say he had an honours degree in History as well as English because they'd have done so little History. So anyway, those departments didn't get on particularly. Well, they got on all right, but they didn't co-operate with each other as I had sort of anticipated.

The History Department and Politics, on the other hand, did function fairly closely together. Old Dunc[?] had been Professor of History and Politics, I think, and then when they divided them into two he decided to take the Politics side of it and so Professor Rowe went looking for a historian.

Was Professor Rowe still here when you came, Trevor?

No, he wasn't. His memory certainly lingered. (laughter) One heard very much *about* Professor Rowe. But I never met him, no.

Just trying to think who would have been in his place at the time: Badger, was it, by then?

No, no, no. Geoff, no. He was still in Science. Oh, God, I can't remember the man's name. I met him once.

I'm sorry, I've had a complete blank. I do know it.

You do know it – well, that's right.

Rowe sounds like a very interesting man. Hugh told me one or two stories.

Did he? Yes. Well, as I say, I didn't know Rowe, but I picked up these stories about the Abominable Roweman and things.

Roweman.

Yes, yes, yes. And I think by and large Hugh did not have a high regard for him. I mean he regarded him as an expert in his field and on appearances well-qualified for the job, but it did create a division between the administration side and the academic side, which I think is always a bad thing, and it was clearly felt that Rowe had treated the academics as his servants and not as his equals and not people who were bound in a common endeavour.

Trevor, one of the things I gathered from talking with Hugh was that at a time when you were here through the '60s there was the money came in from the Commonwealth and things grew –

Yes.

– but the student numbers went through the roof, pretty much. Did this happen to you? Were the demands of teaching ever-present and growing?

No, though one was always aware there was a lot of students. Yes, we were always in problems, that's right, about tutorials, giving first-year tutorials. We really had more first-year students than we could give tutorials to, so we were giving them a tutorial once a fortnight and then once a three weeks, which meant that when you saw your tutorial it was a different body of people from week to week, which was partly because Hugh would not overwork his staff, as other departments did: they just said, 'Well, you've got to teach as many students as we've got on a weekly basis.' But for some time there was a real issue about how we accommodated the number of students we got when they were just allowed to come in in huge numbers and we did not have – despite the fact it was a well-sized department at that time. I remember when I was head of department I think it was something like twenty-six full-time people on the staff, that would include tutors, but they weren't twenty-six full-time people; got down to eight or nine thirty years later.

Did you take over from Hugh?

No, I took over from George Rudé.

Oh, okay.

That was another of Hugh's great innovations: making Rudé also a professor of the department, which the university was very averse to.

Why would they have been averse to that?

Because you had a god professor. The professor was god, so he made the decisions. Well, you couldn't have two gods. (laughter) It might lead to confusion or even hostility. Never was between Hugh and George, of course, they got on so well. So George was made a professor – you know, if you weren't going to make him a professor there were a good many professors around the place who weren't going to retain their chairs for long. So George Rudé became a professor, and then Hugh insisted on passing the headship of the department to him, which was all quite extraordinary.

Was that Hugh's desire to get on with his research again, or what did that, I wonder?

I think it was much more that he wanted a more democratic department, and if he could kill this idea of the god professor who went on being god for the rest of time, or until his death or retirement, then he was clearly advancing something. Hugh did, I think – well, obviously did – get tired of being a professor in the department, he wanted to get on with his research, he wanted to become an academic again; so while I was head of department he came to me one day and said, 'I'm going to resign my chair in History. I see you're advertising a senior lectureship. I will apply for it, but of course I have no idea who will get it.' I went to the Appointments Committee and said, 'You'll give this man a readership. Can't say he's not *deserving* of a readership seeing you had him as a professor all this time.' (laughs) They were quite horrified that anyone should step down in this way, even to a readership. They couldn't understand it.

So it was quite controversial for them?

Oh, it was quite controversial, yes. I mean as long as I was head of department it could have been said he wasn't administering the place at all, but he was aware that after a certain number of years I was going to say, 'Stuff this for a lark and it's your turn now,' and he didn't want it to be his turn again.

Yes.

So he laid down professorship, became a reader, and refused to accept elevation to a professorship, which it was being proposed to do – to make him a professor on the strength of what he'd done since he *ceased* to be a professor, that his achievements were such that (laughs) obviously we made this man a professor – and that was becoming by then quite usual, of course; by the 1970s, the whole picture of power in the university had changed. But Hugh declined to accept a professorship.

So Austin Gough was appointed in his place?

I appointed Austin, yes, in his place. Yes. George left, didn't he –

Yes, he did.

– George Rudé left, that's right – and I took his position. And then Hugh resigned *his* chair so we then had to find a replacement and I sort of hunted around Australia,

and Barry Smith said, 'The best man in Australia who *isn't* occupying a chair is Austin Gough,' so I got him appointed, which was .....

Trevor, on the student side, during the 1960s, were there some outstanding people that you recall – apart from Robin Prior.

John Bannon was quite oustanding. Who else? Another name was in my mind. Obviously, the ones who became distinguished in other fields, you remember they were History students. But the quality of the History students was good. We sent off Rhodes Scholarships, several in a row, at one time; it was very gratifying. No, we were getting a very good class of student and History was being seen as something that a good student did. It made demands on the students which the good ones could cope with, it introduced them to the past world and the present world in a way, even if they were looking at the past, they were finding out about the world that they lived in and how people had behaved in the world – in the recent past or even the distant past – so that we had a lot of quite outstanding students. Who was that one that went to La Trobe?

John Hirst.

John Hirst, yes, he was another one – whose political views I think have changed somewhat over the years.

We all noticed that.

Even I dropped to it eventually: 'What is this many saying?' Not that I've ever been a party-line person myself, but I've always been pinkish, as it were, and I've never felt any regret or need to change and you're aware of those people who were much more to the left of me who then swung over much more to the right.

Trevor, were you aware of the volatility of the students on campus in the late '60s, was that very much a part of History, or was that apart from you?

No. One went through that phase, which I think was the late '60s, yes, when suddenly you had a student uprising on your hands – never something that wasn't under control, but most of them were in the Politics Department or the History Department, so one was seeing these people in close encounters and one was having to sort of cope with their demands either by agreeing to them or refusing them or moderating them or something, yes. There was a big change in student attitudes

round the world and we got some of it here, but never to the extent that it wasn't copeable – specially with a Vice-Chancellor like Geoff Badger, who really, you know, from being a fairly dictatorial head of department became just an absolutely ideal vice-chancellor for dealing with those people.

So you found him very accommodating, did you, Trevor?

Oh, yes, I had an enormous regard for Geoff Badger, I thought he was a splendid person. I mean he used to come round, talk to me all about the History Department, what were its problems and things like that. But all the time he was aware that there was a student problem waiting in the wings if he didn't cope with this with a fair degree of expertise, and he was really very expert in coping with it – keeping the police off the campus. He was absolutely furious when he found that the police had some people in plain clothes stationed on the campus, he did not welcome their presence. If they were going to act, they should be acting in co-ordination with him and he'd tell them when to act. He didn't want that conflict between students and police ever to develop, and he avoided that fairly well, yes.

I can recall Marian and Kay[?] Quartly, as they were then –

Oh, yes.

– telling me that that period at the end of the '60s and the early '70s was very much a high point in their academic memory –

I see.

– particularly here in this History Department –

Yes.

– but that there was this bubbling over in the student body as well.

Yes, yes, there was. I guess I was head of the department when that all came to fruition and we had to decide what concessions we were going to make to the students. Some people, like Peter Phillips, were very hostile to them, one might have thought oddly, because he always had sort of close relations with the students; but I think he felt that these people didn't want close relations with him. He resented that rather a lot. So we had to deal with that. I rather look back on the student uprising days as fairly good days because it was followed immediately by the succession of

students who were only interested in getting a job, and the only thing they wanted to know of the department was how many marks this piece of work would give them, you know, and how this would prepare them for a job with lots of money at the end of it. I was so dismayed by the conservatism that suddenly struck the student body I thought, 'Oh, what happened to those good old day?'

This must have been after my time, I think, Trevor.

They were still fairly – – –?

I was here in the early to mid-'70s as a student –

Yes.

– so that was still the carry-over.

And you remember them as being times of – – –.

Oh, it was still pretty hot.

Really hot.

Well, I wouldn't call it 'hot'; it was just very interesting times.

Yes.

I think the conservatism probably came when I was teaching in the late '70s, early '80s is my memory.

Yes, that's right. Yes, that's when the change really struck.

Now, Trevor, I don't know if you want to talk about this, but Austin Gough succeeded you as head of department and then himself was replaced by what became a non-professorial head.

That's right, the elected headship, yes.

I had gathered from Austin on one occasion that he was very upset by that.

He never liked sort of the democratic flavour of the department that really dated from Hugh Stretton, so it was well-established long before he came, but it was clearly not his ideal. His ideal was a department that was, he used to say, 'shaped' by the head of department so that the head had special authority to direct people in the way that he thought it should go and he never liked this business of comparative youngsters without the professorial status running the department. But by the time he became

head of the department this was well-established. I made it clear I was in the job for four years – I'd been in it for three years, I think I'd been a successful head of department – but that fourth year was just too much for me, I did not cope with it nearly as well as I wish I had. Then I went off on study leave and thinking, 'What becomes of me?' (knock at the door, break in recording)

So we were talking about Austin –

Yes.

– and his view of departmental governance which differed from what Hugh had established.

Yes, it really did, yes. He didn't like this idea that you called a staff meeting and people voted and things went according to that vote; he really thought that was just giving authority away.

Trevor, on a personal level, your own research had moved from the Liberal Party in the UK –

Yes.

– gradually into the history of the First World War.

Yes. I was asked to do that, I was asked.

That's what I wanted to ask you.

I see. Yes, I was asked to write a book in a series that Collins were bringing out in their Pan Paperbacks of Britain and wars, Britain in the Napoleonic War, Crimean War, Boer War, First World War, Second World War, of which the very last one, the Second World War, did get published because it was Henry P..... and if Henry P..... was given a job he just sat down and did it, you know. And his is the only one that I think has ever appeared. But I accepted the First World War because I wasn't sure – I'd written *The downfall of the Liberal Party* and *The diaries of C.P. Scott*, and that had sort of played out the Liberal Party thing and I wasn't sure where to go next, so when I was asked to write this book on Britain's society and World War I I thought, 'Well, that's somewhere to go.' I was then head of the department so I wasn't making much progress with it, but as soon as I got study leave and went to Cambridge for a year I threw myself into it, though you wouldn't have thought so, how long it took to get written. But the editor of the series just ceased to be

interested so I wasn't under any publisher's pressure to get on with it, and what was supposed to be a short, paperback book became a book of a half a million words because I just couldn't stop writing once I got onto it, and then I had difficulty finding a publisher because Collins by this time had been taken over by Rupert Murdoch –

Correct.

– and they were all scared out of their minds as to what would happen if they associated themselves with a book which didn't make a handsome profit, sort of thing. So they went cool on the idea so I eventually was taken up by someone else. Yes, so that got me into the World War I as a whole, and *The myriad faces of war* is about all of the war: it's about politics and the war, it's about the military caste of the war, it's about the navy and the war; but it's also about education and housing and women in the war, so it really was trying to cover the whole span of how society responded to a war. I was pleased that I got caught up to that and stuck it to the end, though Hugh isn't always – – –.

Thank you – we're all pleased, Trevor.

(laughter) Haven't read it for a while, actually, but if I do I think, 'Oh, that's quite interesting.'

So, Trevor, just trying to tie this together, in terms of an overview of your years with the department, do you still have very strong feelings about this was the right place for you at the right time?

Absolutely. Yes, yes. We always felt that we'd come here for three years or so and then we'd go back to England, or certainly look somewhere else. After four years I got a year's study leave in England and I don't think you've seen two people happier to be back in South Australia than Jane and I were. Far from bursting into tears on seeing the white cliffs of Dover come into view, when we saw Adelaide come into view, you know: 'Thank God!' Partly because it was a bad time for us family-wise – Jane's father died of a heart attack after we'd been there a month and her mother who'd been in a hospital died a month after that and we were stuck with an elderly aunt who had to be placed somewhere and if you tried to say to her, 'Well, where do you want to go?' she'd say, 'The future is a dark cloud.' (laughs) So we had – family, we had a fairly bad year. Academically we had quite a good year, in that I

got the book finished – this is *The downfall of the Liberal Party* I'm talking about – yes, and I got Collins, who were publishing George Rudé's book, he got into his man at Collins and said, 'There's another promising book.' So Collins took that. That worked fine. So I had a good year. But when we left England we didn't want to go back – I mean we wanted to go back to visit; but no, 'We're living here, such a good place for the kids to live.' It was just such a nice place to raise a family and there was enough happening here, there were more things happening than we could go to, and you just felt this is a good, relaxed life.

Jane was having piano lessons by then, she was developing her musical career, which reaches its climax on 2nd September when, to celebrate our fiftieth wedding anniversary, she's putting on a concert for which people have to pay a moderate amount of money because it's for a good cause: refugee women in South Australia. So that has developed well. Then she got the job in 5UV, of course, which she held down for twenty-one years so kept her well-occupied.

I mean obviously if I was somewhere else there'd be more interesting people in my *field* around, there have always been interesting people in the *history* field, but in my particular area there aren't that many, but there's Robin Prior: you know, you're not going to get closer [?to here than you are to him or since we've been writing generally?]. For God's sake, know when you're well-off, man!

Now, Trevor, you've raised the one thing I wanted to finish on, which is 5UV –

Oh!

And one of my enduring memories is your jazz program on 5UV. Did that come about through Jane, or did you – – –?

No, I think – well, I guess – yes, Keith Conlon rang Jane to see if she was interested in the job because he was just looking for a music graduate and she'd just finished her master's in Music, and she rang me and I was in Canberra and said, 'Look, isn't it exciting? I've been asked to apply for this job. I mean, I'm not going to apply for it but it's very nice that someone even thinks – – –.' I said, 'What the hell do you mean, you're not going to apply for it? You *get there tomorrow morning* and say "Here I am, I'm available!"' (laughter) This was a sort of lack of self-belief on her part, that she didn't think she could – – –. 'But,' she says, 'there are people who are girls, not married and they haven't got a job. They need the income more than I do.'

I said, 'The job should go to the best person available. If they offer you the appointment it's because you're the best person. You need a job, too; take it.' So we had a little difference of opinion about that. But anyway, she therefore was involved. But I think Keith also knew I was a jazz lover – 5UV had just got permission to broadcast music; when it was first established they could not broadcast any music, they had to take music out of the introduction of the series on Shakespeare and things, it was just bizarre. But once Keith Conlon got that opportunity then he sort of indicated to me that anything in the jazz line would be welcome and I welcomed the opportunity to do it. And I loved doing it. It took too much of my time, this was the trouble. It was when I woke up to the fact that *The myriad faces of war* wasn't getting written and wouldn't as long as (laughs) I was doing this on the side, as it were, and I got the opportunity to go to Canberra for a term, I gave up 5UV then and I've never come back to it because I was then deep into writing and getting the writing finished. But I loved the jazz program. I thought, 'There's room for a sort of thinking man's program, a program in which people don't want to just hear the title of the music you're going to play, would like to know something about how it's come about and who the people are.' So yes.

Well, Trevor, thank you very, very much for providing the time for me to talk with you.

Not at all.

And I'm sure we could talk for much, much longer; but I do appreciate that, thank you.

No, no, no. I love it all.

END OF INTERVIEW.