

THS024 Christopher Husbands

Track 1 [01:11:30] [Session one: 12 August 2015] Christopher Husbands [CH], born 1945. 1978-2011, now Reader Emeritus in Sociology. [00:30] CH's father had graduated from LSE in the 1930s and remained involved with the Alumni Association. CH went to a meeting with him where there was a debate about whether Britain should join the common market in about 1964/5. [01:15] This was the first time he visited campus and got odd looks as they inadvertently used a staff only lift in the Old Building. [01:43] While working at Bristol CH came to LSE to use the Library. Applied for a post at LSE in summer 1977. Taught part time at LSE from October 1977 and full time from January 1978. [02:52] Impressions of campus. [03:42] Describes his first office, S879 on the top floor of the St Clement's building extension. [04:48] CH joined as a lecturer in Sociology. Bristol had given him tenure. Taught classes as arrived mid-year, principally in modern Britain. [05:50] Worked to expand the teaching of methods and sociology, a couple of years later. [06:20] Comparison of Bristol and LSE students. LSE had a higher proportion of mature and overseas students but very London-based. [08:22] The staff and student culture also different to Bristol because commuting meant people didn't come in every day. [09:10] When CH arrived at LSE some historical legacies still affected relationships in the Sociology and Government departments, over an MSc course taught by Bob McKenzie. [10:35] Difference in social culture LSE and Bristol. Bristol was more social. [11:55] Difference in attitude towards examiners meetings at LSE and at Bristol. [13:50] Describes a prank he played which Professor McRae took as an insult. [16:00] Describes trying to change research methods teaching, it eventually became full unit which was praised by examiners. Professor McRae had tried to block the change. CH discusses the reasons he often blocked new initiatives. [20:15] Highlights of being at LSE. Describes IT facilities. Used University of London computer centre in Guildford St, had to take boxes of data there. [22:42] Describes the change to word processing at LSE during the early 1980s which was ahead of other universities. [24:40] CH got on well with other colleagues, but didn't socialise a lot. There was only one other staff member in department had no previous academic relationship with LSE. Sociology was a large department with around 25 staff. [27:43] Changes on campus. Student coffee bar Florrie's on the 1st floor of St Clement's building. Student Union bar in the basement in the early 1980s. The East Building Student Union bar had been a car park. The brewer approached the School to turn it into a student bar in the mid 1980s. The Vera Anstey room was above the student bar in St Clement's - but is now full of computers – before moving to its present location which is where the Director had his office and possibly his private toilet. [29:59] The Library was in the Old Building. The School moved into the Lionel Robbins Building in about 1980, more items were accessible so discovered more books – including some Swiss data books CH had unknowingly gone to Zurich to look at. [33:27] Economists' bookshop closed for some time in the mid 1980s when the staff went on strike and was subsequently taken over by Waterstones. [34:25] Future of LSE. LSE will remain on this site. Discussions about moving never came to anything. Describes as a new member of staff being invited to dinner with Ralf Dahrendorf where it was mentioned that the School might have moved to Croydon. Dahrendorf felt that the School would have lost its ethos with that move. John Ashworth wanted to move to Docklands.

[37:52] LSE took over the School of Sociology and it became the Department of Social Science and Administration in 1912 but LSE hasn't had any other mergers. [40:00] Relationship with University of London increasingly loose. [40:50] Describes teaching students at LSE compared to Bristol and in China. Change in student behaviour, texting in class. [45:00] In the 1980s there was no staff expansion in the Sociology department, it became stagnated. No new people or courses. Thatcher government cuts to university funding. [46:25] Early 1990s current focus on testing and student experience began. Established Teaching Quality Assessment Unit. John Ashworth asked CH to run it. Invigorating him to go and do something completely different. Published work on the subject. Cataloguers became confused by another Christopher Husbunds also writing on higher education. [50:28] Discusses foreign languages, CH sometimes did translations. Students did not have foreign language skills. [53:26] Discusses routes to university for students, himself and his father. CH went to a grammar school then straight to university. [54:28] CH's attraction to LSE. Father's connection in 1930s. [56:21] Health and Safety committee. [58:08] Association of the University of Teachers, had been involved since he started at LSE and acted as Treasurer, President and Vice President. Finished involvement in 2010. [01:01:55] Always looked for challenges like this, TQA, language courses at the University of Westminster, outside of Sociology. [01:04:10] Describes progress of Sociology. Taught political sociology with Bob McKenzie. Took over modern Britain course 1994-2008. [01:05:55] teaching changed over the years. Some of his time was bought out by union work. [01:06:43] CH's doctorate work was on George Wallace but he never taught about the far right.