

THS019 Eileen Barker

Track 1 [14:24] [Session one 24 July 2015] Eileen Barker [EB], born 1938. 1967-70: BSc Sociology, PhD Sociology. 1970-present: Professor, Department of Sociology, Emeritus Professor of Sociology with special reference to the study of Religion. EB first came to LSE as a student in 1967 and was appointed as lecturer in 1970. Previously EB worked as an actress, stopping working when she had a family. After studying social history at local technical college and doing evening classes at Regent's Street she signed up to do a degree in Sociology. Intended to return to the theatre but was offered a lectureship at the end of her degree. [00:19] First impressions were that LSE was grotty but fun compares it to being backstage. The students were interesting and exciting. [3:24] Remembers the Shaw Library was a good place to escape to although the main library was grotty [4:24]. EB was involved in student politics describes herself as a militant moderate. Percy Cohen taught classes in his home when students were locked out. [5:09] Student Union meetings rowdy, vindictive, exciting, fun describes how Socialist Society orchestrated the students' responses. [6:10] Describes a meeting in Shaw Library attended with Paul Rock and the response of the students when the police; describes Roger Alford as trying to control the meeting. [7:10] EB used the Three Tuns and refectory as places to meet friends. [8:13] The quality of teaching varied enormously but EB liked ability to attend lectures not directly on your curriculum and ability to swap options. [8:55] Reports that Bob Mackenzie told personal stories and name dropped but his knowledge meant he could do that. [10:05] EB was one of three or four older students who became friends and she enjoyed the mix of overseas students. [10:31] EB discusses the similarity between acting and sociology research in particularly balancing empathy and technical skills eg in undertaking participant observation. [11:21] Notes that she did not have an LSE social life as she had a young family. [12:52] Notes the change from being a student to staff. [13:38]

Track 2 [32:24] EB describes her first visit to the SCR. [00:15] Discusses teaching fellow students. She taught seven courses including social and moral philosophy, sociology of religion, MSc in religion in contemporary Britain; sociological theory; methods classes, and introduction to sociology. [00:40] EB discusses changing roles as career developed - taking on administrative roles. She enjoyed her appointment as Dean of Undergraduate Studies and worked with Ralph Dahrendorf. It was more difficult as Head of Department to keep colleagues happy. Working on committees allowed EB to meet colleagues for other departments - had friends in Government, International History, Anthropology and she liked being in a social science school. [2:33] EB mainly undertook qualitative research although had some involvement in surveys. [4:21] She developed her own style of teaching describes organising field trips got to different religious communities. EB describes aspects of her teaching including role play workshop, students giving short lectures and chairing meetings, learning to speak without notes and debate. [4:39] EB describes factions in Sociology Department. Although many individuals were pleasant Sociology was not a coherent or friendly department. [8:11] Talks about current use of the Emeritus Room. [9:58] Remembers taking her children to the sports day at New Malden. EB was Chair of SCR Committee and discusses its role in the School. [10:42] EB talks about producing and performing in the Centenary cabaret in the Shaw Library and Old Theatre with David Starkey, Geoffrey Stern, Kenneth Minogue and Mike Reddin. [12:19] Main challenges trying to organise life, doing too much, loved the work. EB still travels and lectures. [15:16] EB describes setting up the charity INFORM in the 1980s to study new religious movements. [16:49] Describes

receiving an honorary fellowship, an OBE and being a Fellow of British Academy. [19:29]. Notes that there are now more constraints on academic life eg REF but liked the permissive nature of LSE. [20:20] She has mixed feelings about changes to the LSE campus but it was very grotty. She regrets 'losing a few ghosts'. Sometimes feel that surroundings now take up resources that could be spent on students and staff – balance of resources. EB discusses plans to move LSE out of London and also the suggested relocation to County Hall. St Clements was being built when she arrived at LSE. [21:50] EB hopes that the future will retain the mix of overseas students and undergraduate and postgraduate students. Hopes that the importance of teaching will continue with the sharing of work with students. [26:41]. Notes the affection of alumni for LSE. [30:31]