

THS017 George Jones

Track 1 [01:17:23] [Session one: 22 July 2015] George Jones [GJ], born 1938. Emeritus Professor, Department of Government. Greater London Group. Public Policy Group; 2009 Honorary Fellow. [00:29] First contact with LSE in 1960. [01:06] Impressed by Professor Titmuss and his social policy group, the Titmice. [01:37] Already had a place at Nuffield College, Oxford, and did his doctorate there on the coming of party politics to his hometown, Wolverhampton, in the period 1888-1960. [02:26] Came across LSE's Greater London Group (GLG) led by William Robson. Assistant lecturer Jim Sharp. GJ came to LSE to talk to them because of their work on the politics of London government. [03:12] visited a historic building where at present the Towers are. [05:09] WA Robson attended a conference at Jesus College, Cambridge where GJ was an undergraduate. Asked GJ to accompany him to a telephone box because he couldn't operate it properly. [05:46] GJ later realised it was a 'helpless old man' act. [05:59] GJ and William Robson got on very well. [06:46] GJ had lots of contact with LSE before coming to LSE and becoming a full time member of staff. [06:13] GJ also wanted to be at LSE because it was in London, GJ born and brought up in Wolverhampton, West Midlands. [07:14] After finishing at Nuffield in 1963 GJ worked at Leeds as a lecturer for three years [07:36] and eventually came to work at LSE in 1966 and been at LSE ever since, in the same building, Lincoln's Chamber. GJ stayed in his final room with a view over Lincoln's Inn Fields from 1977 until retirement in 2003. [09:33] GJ was also involved with the Greater London Group, now LSE London, and on retirement moved to share their office. [10:15] GJ lists the positions he has held at LSE, ending with Emeritus Professor and Honorary Fellow [10:43] and Father Christmas at the staff children's Christmas party. [11:54] Teaching in Government department: general government, how country governed and misgoverned. GJ was always involved in the first year course introduction to British government and politics [12:28] and became lead lecturer in that course with Bernard Donohue. [13:28] GJ believed it was important for first year students to meet professors [14:09] and he loved lecturing in the Old Theatre. [14:04] and [14:21] GJ describes the different types of students on the course and how he realised the need to express yourself very clearly in early lectures. [16:03] GJ worked with Peter Self, who succeeded William Robson as Professor of Public Administration on courses about comparative public administration, largely Master's students. [17:24] GJ's speciality was local government, taught comparatively. [18:02] Students were an international group, came from a wide range of countries and in seminars he could ask them to talk about government in their own countries. [18:50] LSE students are superb [19:08] and LSE still has a powerful international reputation and a network of alumni. [21:34] Challenges of working at LSE: 1966 student unrest over appointment of Walter Adams as Director, then over American involvement in Vietnam. [22:14] GJ describes his involvement in unrest. [22:48] GJ spoke at Academic Board against people who were on the side of student rebels. [24:00] Asked to join General Purposes Committee. GJ describes how the School was very divided. [24:54] GJ and Government department believed in reasoned argument not direct action. [25:24] The opposing side included the Sociology and Law departments however Ralph Miliband in the Government department was on the side of the students. [26:53] GJ describes how this was led largely by American students who had experience leading rebellion

against the Vietnam War. GJ describes how gates were erected which became a symbol of oppression and how they were torn down. School took legal proceedings against those in the Student's Union and some members of staff who had urged action against the gates. [32:12] School closed for a month but teachers found ways to meet their students and carry on teaching. Majority of staff just wanted to carry on with research and teaching. [34:29] One victory for students was that the small Old Building lift had been reserved for staff but became available for anyone to use. [35:00] Troubles were bad for School's reputation, however helped staff get to know each other across departments, which was good for the cohesion of the School. [36:40] GJ discusses a move towards departmental co-location. [38:24] GJ had been attracted to LSE by the staff, top in their disciplines. The common room was a lively place for discussion, in the late '60s and early '70s [39:24] including Bob McKenzie. [40:11] At LSE, academic stars were close at hand. [41:09] Staff lived quite far away, social lives therefore did not revolve around LSE. [42:45] Changes over the years: expansion, new buildings. GJ mentions the new student centre and 32 Lincoln's Inn Fields. [44:17] When GJ started there were 3,000 staff, now expanded to 10,000. [44:57] He was involved in school government [45:18] and became Chair of Graduate School committee, Secretary was Anne Bohm [47:06] and then Vice Chair of the Appointments Committee for around four years. [50:45] This was in addition to work as an academic. [51:08] LSE was a community of self-governing academic pursuing research and students came to learn from them. [52:26] From the late '70s LSE pursued a business model instead and the governing body changed. [55:42] Future of LSE. [57:12] Fear about expansion plans. [58:11] However LSE's reputation is very strong and likely to last. [59:20] Closest people GJ has interacted with are colleagues in Government department. He was a Convenor of the department in the 1980s. Michael Oakeshott wanted the term to be "Convenor" and not "Head". GJ describes the composition of the Government department and impact of the arrival of Michael Oakeshott, whose inaugural lecture shocked the traditionalists in the department. [01:06:00] GJ was initially blocked from becoming Convenor. Once in post he recruited to two important Chairs, Brian Barry and Christopher Hood. He also brought in Patrick Dunleavy. [01:10:20] GJ is still in contact with Tony Travers. 1974-76 he was on Layfield Committee on local government finance and noticed they were receiving exceptional papers from Tony Travers and eventually recruited him to LSE. [01:13:04] Government was a friendly department despite political differences. [01:14:44] GJ discusses his feelings when the Alumni Association organised an event to celebrate the Troubles, seen through the eyes of the students [01:15:50] and remembers Professor Morris changing sides.