

A Conversation with Mrs Cherry Hopkins

Part 2

by

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This is the second interview with Mrs Charity (Cherry) Hopkins, Life Fellow of Girton College, University of Cambridge.

This interview was held at the Squire Law Library in Cambridge.

Questions in the interviews are sequentially numbered for use in a database of citations to personalities mentioned across the Eminent Scholars Archive.

Interviewer: John Magyar (JM). His questions are in **bold type**.

Mrs Hopkins's answers are in normal type.

Comments added by JM, [*in italics*]. Footnotes added by JM.

1. I am here with Mrs. Cherry Hopkins for our second interview for the Eminent Scholars Archive, and what I'd like to do: we will start with just finishing off chronologically your career, and then we're going to loop back around to some things that stand out to me, and perhaps you have some issues you want to raise as well. But just to refresh your memory, where we left off with the last interview, you had mentioned that Girton College in 1989 had been advertising for a fellow at which time Graham Virgo became a fellow at Downing and was able to take over the teaching responsibilities that you had been taking on there, and Poppy Jolowicz encouraged you to apply and?

And I got it, which was lovely. It was just right and so nice to be going back to my old college.

2. And what specifically were you – what were your main roles as a fellow? What were you doing? That was from 1990 to approximately the year 2000, for ten years?

Well, it was 1989. That's right. Well, the first year I was entirely concentrating on supervising, as I was teaching four subjects: contract, tort, international and commercial. A year later, I became a tutor with a panel of 60 students, and that was a ten year appointment. And then in 1992 I was asked to become secretary to the College Council, which at first I was a bit reluctant to do, but I found that, in fact, I really rather enjoyed the work, minuting a lot of meetings and it was nice because it brought me so much into contact with, in particular other fellows, but really the college in general, because the business of taking the minutes and then making sure that people who were being asked to do things knew that they were being asked to do them, and all the follow up correspondence, I really found it suited me very well. In order to fit that in with other things, I gave up teaching international law at that point. I knew that that was a subject that I could always get back quite easily for teaching purposes because I was still the Assistant Editor of the *British Yearbook*, so international law was very much in my mind, but I just couldn't cope with the full load of teaching with the administrative responsibilities as well. But that all worked out nicely and I went on with those various jobs, the tutorship came to an end, I became a director of studies, sharing the role with Stephanie Palmer, and that's the way it was until I retired in 2007.

3. Okay, but you've kind of zipped over 17 years there, more or less. So you had a panel of 60 students that you're responsible for as tutor.

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As moral tutor in Oxford terms.

4. Right.

But being a tutor in the Cambridge sense is: sometimes there's very little to do, and then sometimes there's a great crisis when somebody is desperately short of money or very unhappy or something like that. And so it tends to have sort of busy patches of a rather unpredictable sort.

5. And based on your CV, at any rate, at the same time that you were a fellow, around roughly 1989, 90-ish to 2000, you were an affiliated lecturer.

Yes, in the faculty.

6. Yes.

I was giving just a small number of lectures each year. They were, for the faculty, I think it was probably entirely in tort. In those days there were two courses of tort lectures running: one for the people who had taken Part One-A, and the other for people who had changed in from other subjects, of which there are always quite a number, though obviously many fewer than had taken Part One-A, and for a number of years I gave, I think it was probably just eight lectures – might have been a whole term's lectures, I'm not sure – on the smaller course.

7. Right.

And that was rather fun.

8. Right, and it being a period of roughly 11 years, does anything stand out to you in your recollection of your time as a fellow, as your second stretch?

Well, of course, Girton was a very different place from when I had been there before because men had been admitted, which was, in most ways, a very good thing. It meant that there was much more going on in the college, particularly in the evenings, where as previously when it was all women the students used to dash in to Cambridge as soon as dinner was over to take part in societies, etc. That had changed very much because there was much more happening in the college and I think it was just generally a better arrangement. Just a few downsides, like when it was all women, we never had trouble with light bulbs getting broken because of people playing football in the corridors, that sort of thing.

9. Yes, and water fights.

When it was women only there wasn't a bar, and therefore not the consequences that you sometimes get of having a bar. But generally speaking, it was definitely a change for the better, and academic standards had become higher I think. On the whole in the 1960s, women students were pretty industrious, but I have to say there were a lot of male students in Cambridge who were not in the least industrious. That has changed quite significantly over the years and, while I can't speak for the present time because I'm no longer teaching, but my impression is that that sort of general attitude to work, taking it quite seriously has been maintained.

10. Certainly when I was doing some supervising back in 2017, the students seem to be under an enormous amount of pressure. They seemed to feel this immense weight of being at Cambridge and having to work really hard in order to hang onto their place.

Yes. Yes.

11. And being a director of studies, as opposed to being a fellow.

That's uh, I think it's a very enjoyable job because obviously it involves arranging supervision for the students in all the various subjects and keeping an eye on their overall progress, seeing them at the end of term to discuss their supervision reports and trying to help them towards satisfying careers, giving them advice about becoming solicitors or going to the bar or doing

something totally different.

12. Occasionally writing letters of recommendation?

Oh, very much so. Yes. That's a big part director of studies work, but certainly I enjoyed that very much indeed.

13. Right. You also, from, according to your CV at any rate, from roughly 1996 to 2003, taught an A-level course.

Oh, no, it wasn't that. It was a course run every Easter vacation by the Institute of Continuing Education for Teachers of A-level Law in schools. They – I don't know if it still happens – but they used to come for a refresher course at Madingley Hall, and Nicky Padfield³ organized lecturers for them. And I used to do a lecture giving an update on the law of contract because contract was a component of the A-level course. So I would sort of talk to them about recent cases.

14. This is teachers' education.

Yes. Yes.

15. Excellent. And are there, are there any any things in particular that stands out from your time as a director of studies, a seven year period, roughly?

Oh, well. The day the exam results came out was always an absolutely crucial day because there would be some people who had done well and therefore it was a day of rejoicing, and there would be some people who were disappointed and that could be very heart rending. But, and that period, with the exam results, always rather an exciting time. You just hope that things are going to go well for everybody.

16. Did you develop skills for managing the reactions to the students' emotions?

I don't know if I did I. I tried to, but every person is different and you just have to do your best.

17. And we're all human. We feel, don't we?

Yes. Yes, exactly. And usually things work out all right in the long run, even if people are disappointed in their immediate expectations.

18. And as the saying goes, we often learn more from failures than from successes.

Yes. Yes, indeed.

19. So that takes us through to your retirement. I'm just wondering, you had mentioned in our discussions since the last conversation, that there were some people you had supervised and taught who ended up having very interesting careers. We had mentioned in the last round Mary Arden and Brenda Hale.

Yes.

20. I'm not sure if we got around to anyone else.

Well, another person just slightly younger than this to Dame Elizabeth Gloster,⁴ who rose to the Court of Appeal, now is an independent arbitrator, who has remained a very good friend and is always a great deal of fun. And this will be a very improper comment, I'm sure, but adds a great

³ Nicola Padfield KC (Hon), British barrister. Fellow of Fitzwilliam College. Lecturer, University of Cambridge 1992–2012. Professor of Criminal and Penal Justice; Director, Cambridge Centre for Criminal Justice. Master of Fitzwilliam College 2013–19.

⁴ Lady Popplewell KC, DBE, British barrister. High Court judge 2004–12. Lady Justice of Appeal 2013–18, Vice-President of the Court of Appeal 2016–18.

deal of glamour to the legal scene.

21. You know, a woman can be glamorous and very excellent in her profession as well. There's no contradiction.

Yes. And continuing with judges, some eminent Downing people, notably Lord Lloyd-Jones,⁵ very much in the news because of yesterday's Supreme Court decision on the Rwanda Scheme.

22. True.

Sir Richard McCombe⁶ as well. And of course not everybody goes into legal practice or stays in it necessarily. There are two members of the present Cabinet whom my supervised who have both had legal careers, but now I think are concentrating on politics.

23. Namely?

Victoria Prentis,⁷ the Attorney General, and Lucy Frazer,⁸ the Culture Minister.

24. Right. It's very common for lawyers to go into politics, isn't it?

Oh, yes.

25. And frankly, given the primary role they have in making and changing the law, I think it's appropriate, myself.

Yes.

26. So at one point in time, you had supervised a significant portion of the sitting Supreme Court judges.

Yes, it was 25%, but it's gone down now.

27. It's going to be a moving percentage, isn't it. It's a rolling value, although that's interesting that you could claim that many and two members of Cabinet now.

It's very, very pleasing to see people doing so well, and the odd professor here and there.

28. Could you name them?

Well one my very, very first supervision groups was from Peterhouse. The then director of studies for Peterhouse, Paul O'Higgins,⁹ who also was a lecturer in the law faculty before he went off to, I think, Dublin. He very kindly had the faith in me to allow me to supervise the Peterhouse first year when in the year when I was taking the LLB and, there were three students and one of them was Martin Partington,¹⁰ who of course must be retired now, but for many years he was professor of law at the University of Warwick.

29. Right.

And there have been other very distinguished academics. Charles Harpum,¹¹ who was a

⁵ David Lloyd Jones KC, British barrister. Fellow of Downing College 1975-91. High Court Judge 2005-2012, Lord Justice of Appeal 2012-17, Justice of the Supreme Court 2017-present.

⁶ PC, British barrister. High Court Judge 2001-12, Lord Justice of Appeal 2012-21.

⁷ British barrister. Conservative MP 2015-present, Attorney General 2022-present.

⁸ KC, British barrister. Conservative MP 2015-present, Minister of State for Prisons and Probation 2021, Financial Secretary to the Treasury 2021-22, Minister of State for Transport 2022, Minister of State for Housing and Planning 2023, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport 2023-present.

⁹ (1927-2008) Irish barrister. Lecturer, University of Cambridge 1965-79, Reader in Law 1979-84, Regius Professor of Laws, Trinity College, Dublin 1984-87, Professor of Law, King's College London 1987-92, Vice-Master, Christ's College 1992-95.

¹⁰ CBE, KC (Hon), British barrister. Emeritus Professor, University of Bristol.

¹¹ QC (Hon), British barrister. Fellow, Downing College 1977-2001, Associate Lecturer 1979-84, Lecturer 1984-98,

lecturer here, then went to the Law Commission and then to the Bar and remains a very good friend of mine. An honorary QC, and a most diligent student in the days long ago when I taught him contract.

30. Right. Anyone else you can think of who had a very interesting career of any particular stripe or colour?

Those are the ones who stand out in my mind.

31. Okay, fair enough, and over the course of your time as a fellow, director of studies, supervisor, etc., etc., etc., had you made heavy use of the libraries, in particular the Squire Law Library?

The Squire was my home when I was an undergraduate. I think, not so much of later years, but back in the days, well, when I was an undergraduate, because of Girton being so far out, the Squire tended to act as a kind of base of operations. One came into the centre of Cambridge very often for the whole day, and I was great friends with Ted Hill, who was – I can't remember what his job description actually was – but he sat at the desk at the front of the Squire. I think he was probably called library assistant or something like that. He doubled up as a university bulldog, a proctor's assistant.

32. I was going to ask.

Uh, constables, that's what that proper title is, I think, but generally known as bulldogs who walk around with the proctors.

33. Right.

And Ted was a marvellous character. I think he'd been in the Squire ever since leaving school and he could be quite fierce with people. If you'd missed getting a handout from the lecturer because you've been late or something like that, he could be very unwilling to supply one, though everybody said he always favoured the girls. He would give them the handouts even though he wouldn't for the men. But he was a tremendous friend of mine, and because I played the viola and I often had rehearsals later in the day, he would very kindly store my viola under the desk at the front of the Squire until I needed to collect it. And then when I was doing the *Index of British Treaties*, I really almost moved into the Squire.

34. Right.

It was very much a full day. Of course, this is the old Squire I'm talking about.

35. Of course.

The Old Schools. And I became very attached to that building. The present building is marvellous, but the old one I had a real fondness for. It also happens to be the place where I first set eyes on my future husband.

36. That adds a little bit of warmth to that memory, doesn't it?

It does, yes.

37. That's wonderful. Okay, and so you had mentioned how the addition of men, boys – men, I guess – to Girton had transformed the whole nature of the college. Did you find that in the law school itself there was any difference as more and more women became part of the student body?

I'm not sure that it made much difference to me. I know the outsiders' perception of law as a subject has changed very much because when I started studying it, it seemed an unusual thing for a girl to do. And of course it's anything but that now.

38. Well, the majority of students are women now, some 52 point something per cent if I recall.

Exactly, so there has been a huge change but, as far as Cambridge was concerned, that, of course, started to become much more pronounced in the end of the sixties and through the seventies into the eighties. But I don't think it actually made that much difference. I mean, you just accepted them as a normal part of the supervision groups.

39. You just got on with it. What did change over that period of time that you noticed or that you have thought about? Is there anything?

I think one thing that I noticed from supervising was that students became very focused on exam questions – that what they wanted to do was have the information that was going to get them through the exams with a good class, perhaps at the expense of thinking about subjects in more general terms. The other thing that changed the course, made a big change to teaching, was the advent of email, because once everybody started to have email, students made full use of it and the period in the run up to the exams actually could become quite fraught. Not – I'm sure it was fraught for the students, but for the supervisors as well. The sort of constant barrage of questions coming in by email, which I felt obliged to deal with as promptly as possible. And so that actually made quite a significant change.

40. And could very much eat into – it could take a lot of time.

Yes, yes, very much so.

41. That, and of course, you can't spoon feed them. That would be dereliction of duty, would it not?

Oh, well certainly.

42. Okay. So what I'm going to do now is I'm just going to ask you some random questions about some things I have noticed on your CV that you have done that are perhaps less related to the university.

Yes.

43. You were the governor of St Helens School in Northwood from 1967 to 71, approximately.

That's right. That school had a tradition of having a Girton governor and I was asked if I would take that role, and it meant going once a term roughly over to Northwood. It's a very good independent girls school and that was enjoyable. It was too far away for me to keep on doing it once the children were born.

44. Right. But it wasn't a heavy responsibility it was more of a.

No, no, not at all. And also, as you would have seen, I was governor of Queen Anne's Caversham, which was my old school. Of course, that's even further away. For various reasons, being able to park my children with my parents, that was more feasible and I did do that for a much longer period.

45. Yes, well, approximately 1970 to 2001, some 31 years.

That is right, yes, and obviously, I had the welfare of my former school very much at heart, and particularly when I started a lot of the staff were people who had been there when I was a pupil and I used to enjoy going over there.

46. Okay, and I see here also that you have a connection to the church. You were the Bishop's visitor to the Diocese of Ely.

Goodness, I'd forgotten I'd put that on there. Yes, I was. Very few people really know what a Bishop's visitor is. It is somebody who is appointed by the Bishop to deal with the non-clergy partner if a clergy marriage is in trouble, breaks down, and it's a question of trying to give help and advice about, mainly about financial problems because the Church of England looks after the clergy spouse but, or perhaps I should say the Bishop and the Archdeacon, people like that look after the clergy's spouse, but they like to have somebody independent to look after the non-clergy spouse. So I did my best with that for a while. It's not the easiest of things because although there are quite a number of charities which can provide help, I'm afraid people in this diocese tend to have savings and those have to be taken into account, and the charities tend, or in the period when I was doing this – I did give it up some years ago – they tended to be able to help those who have no savings to fall back on.

47. Oh gosh.

So it was a bit difficult, but I did manage sometimes to squeeze a bit of money out of somewhere.

48. And that was your primary responsibility?

Well, it was, and just trying to give a bit of help for the few practical things.

49. Right. A lot comes to mind, of course, because when I did practice, I was a divorce lawyer

Yes, yes.

50. So I know a little bit about what happens to, particularly, women.

Yes, yes. It was often a question of trying to point people in the appropriate direction for professional advice.

51. Yes.

And certainly there were one or two local solicitors who I came to know could be extremely helpful.

52. Right. That is fascinating, and you were appointed an Officer of the Most Excellent British Empire.

Well, that was one of the biggest surprises of my life.

53. That was in 1998.

Yes, that was, that was thanks to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who put my name forward in their list in recognition of the work I'd done on the *British Yearbook*, which it seemed they had found useful. I think actually the people behind this were the great Robbie Jennings,¹² who I think I said before, it was he who actually recruited me to be assistant editor of the *British Yearbook*, and he was the chairman of the editorial committee after he'd moved to the International Court of Justice. So he and Ian Brownlie,¹³ who was the editor with whom I worked for a very long time, I think they were the instigators of this move. But it actually came from the Foreign Office and my name appeared in the Foreign Office, the foreign and diplomatic list. But it was an enormous surprise. I know the honours system has been much criticised, but it does give a lot of people a lot of pleasure.

¹² Sir Robert Yewdall Jennings (1913–2004) British barrister. Fellow of Jesus College 1939–82; Senior Tutor 1949–55; Whewell Professor of International Law, University of Cambridge 1955–81. Judge of the International Court of Justice 1982–95, President of the Court 1991–94.

¹³ (1933–2010) British barrister. Lecturer, University of Nottingham 1957–63; Tutor, Wadham College, Oxford 1964–76; Professor, UCL 1976–80; Chichele Professor of Public International Law, University of Oxford 1980–99.

54. Particularly, you know, for those who have done something that's commendable. I think the criticisms come from – well, we won't go into details, but anyway, so you attended the ceremony.

I went to the palace and was lucky enough actually to have the Queen herself doing the pinning on of the medal. It was great fun.

55. And a moment I'm sure you will never forget.

Well, that's right.

56. Okay, that is amazing. Okay, so we now move on to post retirement.

Yes.

57. And you just can't stop.

No, I think that's an exaggeration.

58. You might have slowed down, but you set about indexing the archives of Girton College.

Well, just some of them. We have a marvellous archive at Girton with a specially constructed building. The downside to that is that it was built so as to maintain a constant temperature at all times, and when COVID struck, then it didn't come up to adequate ventilation standards, so had to be closed down completely for a long period and then only very gradually opened up and still great attention has to be paid to the quality of the air, and we have machines running all the time to control it.

59. Well, because it's not only temperature, but humidity controlled, is it not? So a rapid circulation would be very expensive, I should think. Not affordable.

Yes. Yes. So that actually put a two and a half year gap into my operations.

60. Right.

But, there's an archivist at Girton with a bit of part time assistance, but she well she – the present one and her predecessor – have welcomed any voluntary help they can get.

61. No doubt.

In sorting things out, and shortly after I retired, the then archivist said to me that what she would really very much like was a reasonably detailed index to the college council minutes, which I had been doing a not terribly detailed index for the years for which I had actually been writing the minutes. But there were years, a long period before that, when there was virtually nothing in the way of an index. So I thought that would actually be interesting to be able to read a lot of the old papers, as indeed it has proved. So I think I started in 1911, which is when Girton first had a council. Before that there had been an executive committee.

62. Ah, because I was going to ask. It was founded many decades before that.

In 1911 it had its first council and then that was formalized in 1924 when the college got its first charter and statutes, and they lasted until 1954 when there was a supplemental charter and new statutes. And so this was where the volumes labelled “council minutes” started in 1911. So I started then, and over the next few years, I indexed them right the way up to 1990, which coincided with the period that I had done myself anyway.

63. Right.

And when I'd done that, I went back to the executive committee minutes. Now there's a sad story there because although the college was founded in 1869 at Hitchin before it moved to Girton

in 1873, the founder, Emily Davies, most unfortunately, left the first minute book on a train and it was never found. So the executive committee made its start in 1872 with the second minute book, but at least that covers the move from Hitchin to Cambridge. And of course, all these minutes are handwritten by Emily Davies herself in the early years, and they are absolutely fascinating. And the whole history of the college is full of interest. So eventually I got all that done. Then I did the minutes of the governing body from – they do go back to 1869 up to 1924, up to the grant of the first charter.

Then more recently I've done the informal meetings that the fellows used to have and they're in some ways quite hilarious because they range from quite important matters about students' discipline and so forth to things about the lack of variety in the cake provided for tea.

64. Right.

But what I found with those was they shed an enormous amount of light on wartime conditions, the Second World War in particular, and how everybody took turns at fire watching.

65. Right.

And all the arrangements that had to be made and doing voluntary work in the gardens, digging potatoes and that sort of thing.

66. Ah, for food, yes.

And it's all very, very fascinating. But those informal meetings came to an end in 1954, when the college acquired its supplemental charter and new statutes, because they created a body that still exists today which is actually quite unusual amongst the colleges, what's called the augmented council, which is all the official and professorial fellows, but not the research fellows, not the life fellows, not the honorary fellows.

67. So the functional fellows, shall we say.

That's right. So it's a larger body, much larger body than the council, which is only 12 members, but the augmented council takes some of the really big decisions about building and finance in particular. So, but doesn't discuss varieties of cake.

68. Sadly, we lose that.

As far as I know.

69. Well, you would know.

I would know, actually.

70. So going back to the early years of a college, what are the interesting parts of the history that are that are perhaps not known. I mean, you know this, I can't help asking you.

Well, there has been quite a lot published about it, in fact. So I think most things are known, but, I mean, it was very different from Newnham because from the word go, Emily Davis insisted that her students must jump through all the same hoops as the men did, so they had to take the university preliminary examination known as the little go. But whereas Newnham started much more as a system of special lectures for women and was less concerned with qualifications, but they very soon started to combine, to a certain extent, though also with a good deal of rivalry. But the really early years are extraordinary because somehow they managed to persuade lecturers from Cambridge to get on the train and go to Hitchin in those first four years when the college was at Hitchin.

71. Right.

And give lectures, there. What I am at present working on in the archives is some of the old ledgers, and so you can see the payments to these lecturers and it's fairly clear that they include some expenses that is the train fares.

72. Travel costs, yes. To be fair, reasonable.

Yes. Yes, exactly. But then of course when the college moved to Girton, getting the lecturers there was less demanding, but it was still very largely a question of the lecturers coming out from Cambridge to Girton, and then little by little, women within the college became college lecturers as they were known.

73. How long did that process take? How many decades are we talking about?

Oh, goodness. Well, certainly through the 1870s and 1880s, but then more and more, the women were admitted to the university lectures and that, of course, made a big difference. So actually they started coming into Cambridge.

74. Right.

In lecture carriages, as they were first known.

75. Interesting.

Chaperoned, needless to say. One finds out a very interesting amount about chaperonage.

76. It was a very different time, wasn't it, culturally?

Oh yes.

77. The expectations between the interactions of men and women were much more rule-bounded, shall we say.

Certainly, yes, yes. So eventually the university lectures took over. But even so, the women were being allowed to attend as a matter of courtesy because they weren't members of the university.

78. And they weren't entitled to receive a degree.

No, no, that's right.

79. But this this founding woman was quite a force of nature, I guess.

Oh, she was, yes, and with some very supportive colleagues. Barbara Bodichon,¹⁴ and one person who was very supportive but was kept rather in the background was the novelist George Eliot.¹⁵

80. Oh, really.

But her help couldn't be very widely acknowledged because of the disapproval that she was living with somebody, a man who was not her husband.

81. Ah, yes.

And some of the Victorian people who were prepared to support the college might have been less willing to do so if they had known about that.

82. It was absolutely socially unacceptable then, was it not?

Yes.

83. And are there any other remarkable details that stand out from those early years?

Well, there was a period when there was a bit of a tussle between Emily Davis, who was keen to do more and more building, and others who thought that such resources as the college had,

¹⁴ (1827-91). Feminist and advocate of women's education. Member of the 'The Ladies of Langham Place' and a key figure for the Married Women's Property Act 1882.

¹⁵ Mary Ann Evans (1819-80). Famed author of such classics as *The Mill on the Floss* and *Silas Marner*.

and it was pretty hard to mouth for quite a while, should be put more into academic appointments, teaching, books, that sort of thing. So there were sometimes tensions.

84. Between bricks and mortar more, shall we say, and social types of infrastructure.

Yes, yes. But the whole history is very fascinating.

85. And so, Emily Davis, how long was she involved?

Well, she – I can't remember how long she lived – but she stayed, she had a short period as mistress. She wasn't the original mistress though she was the guiding spirit who set the college up. She was mistress for I think two years in the 1870s, but most of the time she was London based and working as secretary of the executive committee, and actually very much a guiding influence to the whole thing. She stayed involved, oh, well into the 1900s.

86. Right.

So she had a huge influence, but she knew that, she herself had not had a great deal of education and she knew that she couldn't really contribute anything on the academic front. Her role was administrative, to give girls the chance of a good education. It was very philanthropic.

87. Paying it forward, as it were, trying to give to others what she herself probably wanted but could not have gotten.

Exactly. Yes.

88. That is extraordinary. And so the, getting the first statute back in 1924, you said it was.

Yes.

89. Who was the big pusher, who was the prime mover with that? Do you recall how that came about?

I think it was the council as a whole, which in those days was chaired by Peter Giles,¹⁶ the master of Emmanuel. Over the years there were a number of men who did a great deal to promote the interests of Girton, but I think it was the council under him that really pushed for it. It was a mixture of, there were a few good fellows on the council in those days, but the other members were outsiders, so to speak. So what the first statutes did was to, in effect, make the college self-governing and dispense with outsiders role.

90. Because if I understand it correctly, in essence, it's similar to a corporation where you have a document that serves as a description of how the entity works, how it is structured, and then you need to pass it through parliament as a private act.

Well, the statutes have to be approved by the Privy Council.

91. Ah, okay.

One of the most demanding things I did during my time as secretary to the college council was to see through a change of statutes.

92. So it doesn't go through parliament?

No, it goes through the Privy Council.

93. Through essentially the executive, really.

So it takes quite a long time to get it, but also it has to go through the university.

94. Right.

¹⁶ (1860–1935), Scottish philologist. Master of Emmanuel College 1910–35, Vice-Chancellor 1919–20.

You'll see notices quite often in the Reporter¹⁷ saying that an amending statute for a particular college raises no matter of concern to the university.

95. Was there a deed of settlement at the beginning of the college? Do you know?

No, it was incorporated as a company.

96. Okay.

So that was the big change, really, when the statutes came in, that they replaced the memorandum with articles of association.

97. Right. So it literally was a corporation. It wasn't like, it literally was, in its, in conception – inception, sorry. Fascinating, because of course, you know, I can't talk about this sort of thing with my friends who are not – actually I can even talk about this sort of thing with people that are legally educated because it's pretty obscure.

Yes.

98. And then 1954.

Yes. Then there were the, what are in effect, the present day statutes.

99. And so once more to the Privy Council.

And there have been a half a dozen, if not more, amendments, but yes. And one of the interesting features in the Girton statutes is that they refer throughout to women. So “any woman who”, etc, and then there's a statute at the end which says that any reference to a woman can be taken to refer to men as well.

100. Ah yes. There is a, an identical, although an article going the other way, in the Interpretation Act.

Yes, yes.

101. I don't remember what year, 18...

1889 is it?

102. Somewhere thereabouts. Don't quote me.

No, nor me. Yes, so it's that in reverse.

103. Which is entirely appropriate.

Well, yes, I think so.

104. And do you remember what year?

I say ‘at the end’ but it's not right at the end because at the very end there's the dreadful long statute that was whooshed on all the colleges by the university commissioners around 1990 that deals with dismissal and grievances and all the rest of it. A terribly complicated statute on which there were endless inter-college discussions at the time. I remember being involved in one of them, which took place in the East Room in the Old Schools, and of course most colleges were represented by their law fellows, and I think at the end of an hour and a half, we had not got beyond article one of the proposed model statute.

105. Right. Yes, you'd need three weeks to get through it all.

Yes. But that was a tiresome episode and probably the less said about it, the better.

106. Fair enough. So having covered all of this ground, looking back on, I can't remember

¹⁷ *Cambridge University Reporter*.

how many, stretching across five decades you've had this career and what was your favourite part? What did you like the most about the time you spent doing all these various things?

Oh, dear, how difficult. Probably I liked being director of studies best. But maybe doing the *British Yearbook* because that – the really nice thing about the *British Yearbook* was the number of people I came into contact with, and the variety, and the sort of sense of excitement of sitting down with a new typescript and starting to do the copy editing. That always gave me quite a thrill, in a way. So I think that, maybe.

107. That was your favourite part. The legal community of international law owes you and these teams that you've been involved with an immense debt of gratitude for organising so much primary literature.

Well, you know, a lot of that goes back to the great Clive Parry who really was a huge influence on my life and on a number of other people's lives, and the sad thing is that he died when he was only 65 in 1982, leaving all sorts of things unfinished, and it was really impossible for anybody to take things on and complete them to a very large extent.

108. Right. As with Miss Davis who founded Girton, I'm guessing that really, that Clive Parry was this force of nature, wasn't he?

He was a person of tremendous vision but also somebody who took a lot of trouble to help the people who were working for him, and the other day I look back at the eulogy that Robbie Jennings gave at Clive's memorial service, and one of the things he says in that is “it's clear that the people who worked with him always had a lot of fun,” and that is absolutely true. I think we were all rather in awe of him, but he would, in the days of the summer, working parties down in the Foreign Office library, we'd be slaving away, looking through the files and taking copies of things and so on, and all of a sudden Clive would walk in through the door and say, “come on, we're going out somewhere.” I remember one day he took us all over to Fortnum & Mason's for ice cream sodas.

109. Oh, nice!

And that was, there was just a very nice atmosphere. The summer working parties were terrific, a half a dozen of us sitting around a table, we sometimes used to burst into song. I can remember Paul Fairest,¹⁸ who became a fellow of Selwyn here and then went to a chair at Hull. He used to lead us all and singing “On Ilkla Moor Baht 'at.”

110. And you, of course, as a violist, had the music in you. You had the love of the music.

Well, I don't know about that. We made a fat fair old noise. What the regular staff of the Foreign Office library thought about it, I really hate to think, but though, somebody did there once tell my husband John that it brightened their lives to have some young people in the building. But I think we were a bit rowdy at times.

111. I think those are those are wonderful stories. That brings a human dimension to all of this that often gets missed when people look at what happened.

Yes, yes. Right. And so, working in Cambridge with Clive was fun, too, and he looked after us very well. I mean, it must have been when shortly after I'd graduated, I think when – it was probably in the year when I was a graduate student before I got my research fellowship. I was being urged by Bill Wedderburn, whom I mentioned last time, he wanted me to apply for a fellowship at an Oxford college and he thought I would have a good chance of getting it if I applied for it. Well, I was very worried about the whole idea because I didn't want to leave Cambridge, and I went to see Clive quite late on the evening about this, and it was before we were married, but John was there as

¹⁸ (1940-2012). A brief search yielded no bios. He is mentioned by John Spencer as being a recently appointed lecturer at Selwyn College in the 1969. Eminent Scholars Archive <https://www.squire.law.cam.ac.uk/eminentscholars-archiveprofessor-john-rason-spencer/extended-biography-professor-john-rason-spencer>

well, and we talked it over and he said to me, "don't go, stay here and I will look after you." And he did. And after that he said, "I think you need this." And he gave me my first ever glass of whiskey.

112. Ah!

But that was the sort of person he was. He made sure his were okay.

113. The kind of boss we all wish we had all of the time.

Yes.

114. We've been going for very nearly an hour and I'm thinking it might be a good place here to stop for now.

Sure, fine. Yes. Well, I think anyway, we probably covered the most important things.

115. I think we have. I think we've covered as much as there is to cover. Wonderful. Well, thank you very much for your time.

Not at all. It's a great pleasure.