THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

The Founding of a Politics Department

Politics at the University of Warwick

Wyn Grant

Preface

What follows is an account of the development of the Department of Politics and International Studies at Warwick from the opening of the University in 1965 to the end of the 1970s. It has been written as part of the University's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2015.

The end of the 1970s is an appropriate break point. Most of the early development of the department took place in the first fifteen years with key choices being made about personnel and curriculum. By 1981 universities had been affected by the cuts in funding introduced by the Thatcher Government and they had relatively few alternative sources of funds in contrast to today. As a consequence, the only additional post until the end of the decade was a 'new blood' appointment in Southern European politics filled by Richard Gillespie. The department's history then entered a new phase after 1990 with the merger with International Studies, the expansion of the graduate programme and the availability of new forms of funding.

This account has drawn on minutes of the staff meeting for the period, of which I have an almost complete set from 1971 to 1979, and the personal reminiscences of staff and students from the period. I am grateful to them for their help, but I am entirely responsible for the contents.

There is quite a substantial focus in the following account on the development of course structures and content. This is because it is what the department decided collectively and it throws light on how a politics department approached those choices about curriculum in that period. Reading the minutes of meetings, it can seem to be a rather dry debate. However, as one member of staff from the period recalled, 'The issues of curriculum design - and to a lesser extent of teaching method - were debated in a very lively way. Folk cared passionately about teaching issues, perhaps too passionately. There was a strong assumption of collegiality and this meant that when differences arose feelings could be inflamed or, if you prefer, staff got upset.' One point that should be emphasised is that there was always a strong commitment to impartiality in teaching.

Research was very much seen as an autonomous activity for individuals and, although there were some unsuccessful efforts to promote collective activity in the department, it was largely left to individuals to decide what they did and how much they did. There was relatively little pressure by contemporary standards to secure research grants or to publish in highly rated journals. In this respect it was a different age from the present one in which research output is closely monitored and steered as a departmental activity and where there is a clear research strategy.

The Department of Politics and International Studies has been transformed beyond recognition compared the much smaller entity that existed in the 1970s. Nevertheless, we owe a debt of gratitude to the individuals from that period for establishing the department at Warwick and ensuring that it fought for its share of scarce resources so that a platform existed for future development.

Wyn Grant

Political science in Britain

The study of politics in Britain in the 1950s was a relatively elitist, club like discipline, centred on a relatively small number of universities, in England principally Oxford, LSE and Manchester. (Grant, 2010). However, the publication of the Robbins Report in 1963 led to a rapid expansion in student numbers, not least in the social sciences, including politics.

This period saw the foundation of a number of new universities, known colloquially as the 'plate-glass' universities, of which Warwick was one. These universities saw a leading role for the social sciences, including the provision of politics teaching, as a key part of their mission and a number of these departments, such as Essex and York, became very successful. British relative decline had been identified as a key problem and it was felt that modernisation through institutional reform and renewal would play a role in halting and reversing it with political scientists offering appropriate advice. There was also considerable interest in the former colonial countries that had emerged in what was then referred to as the Third World, while the continuation of the Cold War stimulated interest in international relations and 'Kremlinolgists' attempted to work out what was happening in the Soviet Union. The pre-eminence of the United States led to a considerable interest in American politics, while the emergence of a new institutional architecture in Europe in the form of the European Economic Community was a growing focus of work, alongside the study of particular European countries. Political theory, particularly the history of political thought, remained a traditional strength of the British study of politics, but Brian Barry was pioneering the combination of philosophical work with the insights of the social sciences. There was considerable intellectual interest and ferment in the emerging discipline.

Wilfrid Harrison: the founding professor

The founding vice-chancellor at Warwick, Jack Butterworth, believed 'in giving the founding professors and their staff the opportunity to create the academic landscape'. (Burgess, 1991: 95). Thus, ' founding professors were "given their head" to develop their subject areas in whatever ways they found appropriate.' (Burgess, 2001: 179).

The history of Politics and International Studies (PAIS) at Warwick begins with the arrival of Professor Wilfrid Harrison in October 1964, one of the University's founding professors. He was recruited not just as professor of politics, but also as the University's first – and then only – Pro-Vice-Chancellor so he had a major administrative role in creating the new university (he would have seen himself as an 'administrator' rather than a 'manager'). He initially worked out of a house in Gibbet Hill Road along with the other founding professors.

Wilfrid Harrison was born and educated in Glasgow, but as was typical for able Scots of the time, he then went south to take PPE at Oxford. He was one of the pioneers of the subject there, becoming a lecturer and then a fellow at Queen's College. Like many of his generation, he worked in the civil service during the Second World War. He was principally a political theorist, undertaking well-regarded work on Bentham, but also published a widely used textbook on *The Government of Britain* which ran to many editions. In 1957 he became Professor of Political Theory and Institutions at the University of Liverpool. He was the founding editor of *Political Studies,* the journal of the Political Studies Association, from 1952 to 1963. As Harrison rather self depreciatingly later described himself: 'I was of about middling seniority in a small profession'. (Harrison, 1975: 38).

He saw the discipline of politics in terms 'of the general study of government and of political ideas.' (Harrison, 1953: 2). He very much agreed with the eclectic approach to the study of politics that was prevalent in Britain that did not give priority to any particular theoretical perspective or methodology and this informed the formation of the Warwick department. He was willing to consider a variety of approaches and perspectives to the study of politics and that remains a hallmark of the Warwick department to this day, avoiding too narrow a focus either theoretically or in terms of subject matter. 'To use language that has since become more popular, there is no paradigm.' (Harrison, 1975: 185). He wanted 'to try and keep as many doors as possible open, not to try to move quickly to the establishment of any paradigm, but to proceed cautiously and see whether one could discern what might be emerging.' (Harrison, 1975: 186). In his view, a paradigm never did emerge and he was relieved that it did not.

Alan Ware recalls, 'Wilfrid's influence on how the department developed in the early years was enormous,

of course, and perhaps it is worth commenting on one significant factor – his age. He was 56 in 1964, while that same year, when Jean Blondel moved to Essex to found the department there he was 35. The generational difference accounts for a different approach to the balance between teaching and research that was considered appropriate. The older model of WH was based on the idea that the main purpose of a university was to educate; while not exactly a "hobby", research was seen as something that was desirable – as in the old aphorism that "every man should have a hobby" but up to the individual to decide what he or she should do about it.' This stance was perhaps exemplified when a complaint was made at a staff meeting that the departmental secretary had been undertaking 'private' work, i.e., typing up articles for publication.

Wilfrid and his wife Elizabeth had two daughters. They had a liking for large and boisterous German Shepherd dogs, one of which is alleged to have attacked an external examiner. Alan Ware, a lecturer in the department, also suffered an attack. Wilfrid Harrison was an accomplished cook and he used to invite groups of personal students to his home in Warwick for a meal cooked by him.

Forming the department

Malcolm Anderson, later to succeed Wilfrid Harrison as head of department, was appointed as a senior lecturer from Manchester University in January 1965. The department at Manchester, headed then by the influential W.J.M. Mackenize, had a considerable influence on British political science, providing senior staff for a number of departments. As well as Malcolm Anderson, Jim Bulpitt and John Halliday, both to become senior lecturers during this period, came from Manchester. Malcolm Anderson's principal specialism at the time was French politics, although he later developed a much broader range of interests. (Bort and Kent, 1999). He administered the first intake for October 1965 by making trips from Paris where he had a research fellowship. Graham Webster-Gardiner recalls, 'In 1965 I made a foggy and wet journey to the East Site mud campus of the "White Tiles" New University for an interview with Dr Malcom Anderson, Senior Lecturer in Politics, and a colleague from the History department. The degree being offered was Joint Honours in History and Politics. They offered me a place for the 2 subject degree. They were targeting Oxford rejects.'

He also recalls, 'Malcolm Anderson taught me each year and was my personal tutor. He was a good teacher, and counsellor, and encouraged my involvement in actual politics. I was President of the Students Union, negotiating a sabbatical year for myself and future Presidents.'

The initial degrees were History and Politics and Philosophy and Politics with the former having the larger intake. There was a certain irony in the importance of the History and Politics degree as Wilfrid Harrison had a profound suspicion of historians arising from his experience of them at Oxford. While his approach to the subject was pluralist, it was a pluralism very much constrained by his past relationships with historians. He recalled (1975: 185)

> There were, particularly at Oxford, the historians, who often appeared to resist any approaches other than those with which they were familiar, and even, in some extreme cases, appeared to hold that no approaches could be accepted that were not based 'entirely on documentary evidence' (which seemed to me to suggest that no approaches at all could be accepted. The new political scientists and the historians look askance at one another.

Jim Bulpitt was also appointed from Manchester in 1965, having already established a reputation with his *Party Politics in English Local Government*. His later book on *Territory and Power* was reprinted by the European Consortium for Political Research as an academic classic and a number of contemporary academics claim to be influenced by his intellectual tradition. At one time a Labour Party agent, Bulpitt had already started a shift to the right that eventually saw him join the executive council of the Solihull Conservative Association, although he was a rather maverick Conservative. As one of his contemporaries recalled, 'The department had a pretty right wing reputation in the early days – the combination of Wilfrid, who had a very conservative outlook, plus Jim and John [Halliday] who were very vocal Tories made this inevitable.' Paul Smith noted, 'It wasn't High Tory like parts of Oxford and Cambridge.' Another commented, 'The curious feature of the department was that in some ways it was an overtly Hobbesian world in which you looked out for the next assault on you by one of the right wingers; on the other hand, there was quite a strong form of male collegiality, which centred on the core activity of teaching.' Many members of staff used to meet together at lunchtime to eat their sandwiches and discuss everything from contemporary politics through teaching issues to football. Paul Smith recalled, 'The department was very friendly. I never felt patronised. I never felt put down because of my young left-wing politics.'

Graham Webster-Gardiner recalls the 'ebullient Jim Bulpitt' as 'an expert on Italian Fascism. Paul Smith recalls him coming to John Halliday's room to borrow a book on Gramsci, remarking 'Got to keep up.' One story that is told about Jim Bulpitt is that a neighbour, observing his irregular hours, asked what his job was. 'I'm a cat burglar,' he replied. 'I hope you are not going to do any of your burgling round here!' 'No, I never do it on my own doorstep' was Bulpitt's reply.

David Mervin, an American specialist, arrived in 1966, along with Carl Slevin, a political theorist, and Ian

Campbell, an Australian with an interest in France and social democracy. By 1966 the department (or 'School' as departments were known in a vain attempt to promote interdisciplinarity) had moved from the East Site (now Gibbet Hill) to the third floor of the Library and subsequently to the third floor of the Arts (now Humanities) building. John Halliday, an expert on John Stuart Mill, joined in 1967. He was a dominating personality who had a large influence on the department. Paul Smith recalled, 'We did Hobbes and Locke with John Halliday and that stayed with me. I found him inspiring despite totally different political views. His seminars reminded me in a good sense of A level poetry.' He was particularly prominent in the departmental seminar where he was an intimidating interrogator and made the department widely feared. On a lighter note, he advised the author when he obtained his PhD that he should not think that this meant that he could mend a broken concept. Nevil Johnson had a brief stay in the department as Volkswagen lecturer in German Politics, leaving for Oxford in 1969, having arrived in 1966-7. Paul Smith remembered him as 'very austere.' An early member of staff comments, 'Although he was the "couth face" of the department's right-wingery, he was yet another conservative in the operation.'

The establishment of degree programmes

A priority was the establishment of a single honours degree in Politics. One of the students on the first year of the programme, Paul Smith recalls, 'It had an institutional focus. They had to start somewhere and they started where they knew. It was an exciting place to be.' Malcolm Anderson recalled, 'I realised that the department could not grow without it. It would have been a little fish in a sea of sharks.' The first intake was in 1967 with eleven students graduating in 1970. Malcolm Anderson recalled, 'Departments soon developed pretty tribal attitudes which created difficulties for joint degrees.'

Nevertheless, a joint degree was established in Economics and Politics and this led to an important innovation in terms of a third year bridging course in the Making of Economic Policy, taught jointly by both departments, which survives to this day. To bring the two disciplines together in this way was highly innovative. This was taught by Malcolm Anderson from the Politics side, initially with Professor John Williamson and then with Geoffrey Wood. Anderson made the Making of Economic Policy the theme of his inaugural lecture when he was promoted to professor at Warwick. A degree in Sociology and Politics was subsequently added, taking the first students in 1972. There was a jointly taught course on Political Sociology for a number of years.

However, this degree was not without its difficulties in subsequent years. A special committee had to be set up in 1974 to consider a number of issues relating to the degree, including the number of transfers taking place into single honours Sociology. It was reported that 'nothing could be done to resolve the ideological differences or differences in academic standards between the two departments.' Ian Proctor notes in his history of the Sociology department that 'students on Politics-Sociology have for years commented on the different culture of the two departments.' (Proctor, 2007: 13).

An important initiative was the establishment of a MA in Politics which took its first students in 1968, among them Bruce George, later to be a Labour MP for Walsall. The programme received scholarships from the then Social Science Research Council. It was built around a double weighted course called Advanced Political Analysis. Students then took one optional course from the third year undergraduate programme and completed a dissertation. This evidently caused some difficulty: 'The dissertation element of the M.A. has been disappointing and our outgoing external examiner has complained about both the presentation and content of the dissertations which have been submitted.' It may have been that expectations were too high as students were expected to complete 'a genuinely original piece of work in the time available' which is not what they would be expected to do today (Quotations from contemporary memorandum by Malcolm Anderson). By 1971-2, nine graduate students were registered with the department, five for the MA, one for the MPhil and three for a PhD.

The content of courses

A set of reading lists for courses in 1968-69 provides information about what they covered. Political Theory from Hobbes in the 2nd year was based around the close study of key texts**;** *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes and Rousseau's *The Social Contract* in the first term, followed by Mill's essays and selected writings by Marx in the second term. Locke, Montesquieu, Hegel and Oakeshott all featured in the bibliography. Sabine's *A History of Political Theory,* which had seen its 3rd edition in 1959 was one recommended text, as was Benn and Peters *Social Principles and the Democratic State*.

In line with Jim Bulpitt's historical interests, British Government and Politics started with an examination of the structure of British politics in the mid-18th century (1742-1769) and the mid-19th century (1846-1867). After a review of British political culture, the course examined the Conservative and Labour parties. The Liberal Party was treated alongside Welsh and Scottish Nationalism, Fascism and Communism as part of 'The Political Fringe'. Pressure groups, the structure of government and patterns of policy followed. After looking at the topical subject of the reform of local government, there was a consideration of the politics of civil aviation and the course concluded with Northern Ireland.

In the third year, the option on European Integration started with an examination of its history and some reference to theoretical perspectives. The policy-making process was examined, alongside particular policies such as agriculture. The European Parliament and the Court of Justice were covered and there was reading material on each member state, but with a particular emphasis on Britain. Relations with the developing countries were also considered.

The option on Marx and Marxism started with an examination of the historical origins of Marx's thought and his early writings and their interpretation. A section on the interpretation of history considering such key concepts as class and ideology was next, followed by a section devoted to dialectic and dialectical materialism. A thorough treatment of Marxian economics followed.

The second part of the course was concerned with Marxism in Russia, including Lenin and Bolshevism, and Marx in Germany and France, including Rosa Luxemburg, syndicalism and anarchism. This represented a very thorough treatment of the subject matter.

Strengthening the staff

Additions to the staff were Lincoln Allison from Nuffield College, Oxford; David Caldwell, a specialist on the Soviet Union, who subsequently had a distinguished career in university administration, at first at Warwick and then in Scotland; Zig Layton-Henry, who an interest in political behaviour but later in his career became the director of the University's Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations; and Willie Paterson, who came from Aberdeen. Willie Paterson and David Caldwell taught a popular course on Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia which ended with a comparative analysis of totalitarian regimes. Together with Wilfrid Harrison they taught the first year course and a student once earnestly asked Willie Paterson whether there was a village in Scotland which specialised in producing small Scottish political scientists for Warwick.

As in other departments, and derived from the Oxford model, comparative politics was thought to consist of studying the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France. (It should be noted, however, that the syllabus did not follow that of Oxford where the two core papers in finals were Political Institutions and British Political History). This created difficulties for Willie Paterson who had come to what he thought was a specialist post in German Politics (designated as the Volkwsagen lectureship, although Paterson drove a Ford) and was not able to teach it for some years.

Carl Pearson recalls Zig Layton-Henry: 'Zig Layton-Henry stands out as a great bloke. What a great name and a big personality – always friendly and helpful. He helped one of my friends, a mature student, get into study in the Department as a very late entry to the year.' Mature students, many of whom had been to Ruskin College, Oxford and had a trade union or other political background were an important element of the undergraduate intake at this time. Zig Layton-Henry started a new compulsory first year course for single honours Politics students on Introduction to Political Behaviour which critically examined the so-called 'behavioural revolution' in American political science.

Wyn Grant joined the department in 1971 when the department's research interests were described as follows:

Wilfrid Harrison: political concepts
Malcolm Anderson: the Right in France
Lincoln Allison: the politics of conservation versus development
Jim Bulpitt: regionalism and local government
Ian Campbell: not stated
David Caldwell: the CPSU under Stalin
Wyn Grant: local politics
John Halliday: Darwin and Darwinism in relationships between sociology, biology and political theory in Britain
Zig Layton-Henry: political youth organisation in Britain
David Mervin: the US presidential election
Willie Paterson: The German Social Democratic Party and European Integration, 1949-57
Carl Slevin: aspects of contemporary French political thought

The distribution of students in all three years is shown below. Economics and Politics displayed a marked decline in numbers from the first to the third year with a tendency for students to decide to specialise in one or the other subject at the end of their third year. The continuing importance of the History and Politics degree is evident, although single honours Politics numbers were increasing.

Total student numbers in 1972

Degree	Total student numbers	Percentage of women
History/Politics	71	28%
Politics	54	37%
Philosophy/Politics	29	31%
Economics/Politics	33	2%
Sociology/Politics*	8	12%

*First years only

The Anderson memorandum

Despite the growth in student numbers and staff, there were some concerns about the state of the department, reflected in a memorandum composed by Malcolm Anderson at the end of the 1970/71 academic year. He noted that 'There is an impression in other departments in this and other universities that the staff in Politics is not very active in research. There is little substance behind this impression but it is true that the department whilst it has started several undergraduate degrees and a M.A. course, has done nothing collectively to sponsor or encourage research.' It should be remembered that a number of members of staff were busy finishing PhDs. 1972-3 was a key year when Burnell, Grant, Layton-Henry and Paterson completed their PhDs. By 1974 Willie Paterson had published two books and 6-7 articles in one year.

There may have been more substance to the difficulty than Anderson was prepared to admit on paper. Research output in 1971-2 consisted of nine pieces of work, three of which were contributed by an incoming member of staff. There were no books and only three of the publications were in what might be regarded as top ranked journals in today's terms. Anderson's proposed remedy was a loosely coordinated research programme on political parties. 'Quite apart from the public relations advantages of a research scheme identified with the department, it would have advantages of opening discussions with[in] the department to external influences.' It might remedy another perceived deficiency: 'The department has done little in the local community of any sort and this is felt by some to be an omission. The proposed programme would bring us into contact with the local MPs, area organisers, constituency agents, councillors and so on.' Although Malcolm Anderson's paper was endorsed as a 'departmental objective' this effectively amounted to kicking it into the long grass and nothing ever came of this proposal. Similarly, Jim Bulpitt reported to the staff meeting that there 'not overwhelming interest in his project for a joint textbook' which was a coded way of saying that there was very little interest.

Alan Ware points out, 'It's worth noting when thinking about research just how young the department was – and how little time most of them would have spent primarily doing research before their appointment . When I joined as the 14th member there were only four members who were over 35 and I think that at least half were under the age of 30. What was clearly the case was that the research that was being done was not yet showing up, at the aggregate level, in terms of publications, networking etc. ' Again the relatively small size of the department was a factor in creating an ethos about the importance of teaching (as a collective responsibility) [as distinct from research, seen as an individual responsibility].

International studies

Teaching in the department had been focused on political theory and the government of particular countries, which reflected the PPE syllabus at Oxford. The teaching of international relations was not introduced until 1972 with the appointment of Peter Byrd, later to become director of the part-time degrees programme and university senior tutor. Wilfrid Harrison was not a great enthusiast for the study of international relations, seeing it as a branch of geography. International Relations had also been weak in Manchester. Planning for the politics with international studies degree began in 1973-4. In 1972 it had already been decided that international relations would be developed as an interdisciplinary school and it was hoped that a similar model could be adopted for American Studies. This proposal was not followed through, but a separate department of international studies was established in the mid-1970s with Fred Hirsch, the distinguished author of *The Social Limits to Growth,* as the first professor, being appointed in 1975. He had been a financial journalist and a senior adviser to the International Monetary Fund, but sadly he died prematurely after a debilitating illness in 1978 at the age of 46.

It was always a small department, and a memorandum written by Alan Ware on course structure in 1977 raises the question of whether it would fold or survive with the University said to be reviewing its 'viability'. However, it had some distinguished staff such as Barry Buzan and Robert Skidelsky (who later moved to Economics). It reflected a view that international studies required a multi-disciplinary approach, rather than being treated as an offshoot of politics. Under conditions of internationalisation and globalisation, the separation of the two subjects became difficult to sustain and the two departments merged in 1990, ushering in a new era of growth, particularly in the graduate programme.

The range of options

Alan Ware joined the department in 1972 from Oxford and, as the department expanded, the range of options on offer grew. In 1972/3 they were:

- French Government and Politics (Malcolm Anderson)
- Soviet Government and Politics (David Caldwell)
- Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia (David Caldwell and Willie Paterson)
- International Relations (Peter Byrd)
- European Integration (Malcolm Anderson and Willie Paterson)
- Political Behaviour (Zig Layton-Henry)
- Territory and Power in the United Kingdom (Jim Bulpitt)
- Public Administration (Wyn Grant)
- Political Aspects of Environmental Planning (Lincoln Allison)
- Theories of Pluralism and Participation (Wilfrid Harrison)

An option on Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill proposed by John Halliday and Carl Slevin did not attract any students, but John Halliday developed an option on Hegel, Marx and Engels which found favour with students on the left of the political spectrum.

It was hoped to maintain the momentum of departmental expansion. Wilfrid Harrison reported to the staff meeting in September 1972 'that Registry projections allowed the possibility of three further members of staff and had therefore asked for three, including a second Professor. The student figures from the Registry were, however, very tentative and when firmer figures were available it was likely they would not support so high a staff claim.'

In the event Peter Burnell, a PhD student in the department, was appointed to a lectureship in 1973. Initially a political theorist, he later developed his work in the area of democratisation with particular reference to Africa. Stan Taylor, who had been at Nuffield College, Oxford, was appointed to a temporary lectureship which subsequently became a permanent appointment. He brought statistical and survey analysis skills to the department, later working in staff development at Newcastle University and subsequently Durham.

Carl Pearson recalls: 'I remember Stan Taylor taking a group of us down to London on a Saturday morning to do a street survey in Hackney and Wood Green looking at young people's attitudes to the National Front. Stan used the work to get a small piece published in *New Society* (whatever happened to that?). We were pleased to see our work published. Stan also gave me the chance to write a paper on voting theory as opposed to the set essay because I was interested in it and I think he had also done something in the same area. This approach of flexibility and innovation is something I recall as a characteristic of my experience of the department.'

More generally, he recalls, 'Quantitative research in those days was a right pain. You had to programme your SPSS queries onto IBM cards stack the deck and take it down to the computer centre and hand it in to be run. This took about half a day. If one card was inaccurate the whole run was lost and you had to start again. Hard to believe that at the time that was state of the art.'

Memories of staff members

Shaun Regan has provided the following recollections of staff members from this period:

Stan Taylor – Stan's 'Revolutions and Political Science' course became quite competitive, as students set the bar high in weekly tutorial-led discussions, and there was some pressure not to drop the ball. Stan was truly inspiring as an educator, and whilst linked to a political outlook unfashionable to teenagers of the time [he was for a time a Conservative councillor in Coventry], demonstrated that differing opinions remained valid when backed up with rigor and consistency.

Alan Ware – Alan lived for his lectern, notes carefully arranged on it, before inevitably an engaging, challenging and erudite exposition of some aspect of American politics followed.

Wyn Grant – eternally patient with finalists pushing deadlines and ever ready with advice to improve – and there was plenty of room for improvement; Wyn and his Economics colleague the late Dr. Shiv Nath made it obvious that Econ/Pol students had made the right choice.

Jack Lively – a personal anecdote; as a joint honours student, I only met Professor Lively once, and he told me that I could have got an Upper Second if I'd applied myself. It was a telling-off, but a kind one, and he might have been right...

Jim Bulpitt – Jim's rather abrasive style was not to all tastes, but it was designed to challenge, particularly first years with entrenched attitudes! 'Politics in the UK' was de rigueur for Second Years, but not Econ/Pol sadly due to timetable clashes. We lobbied Peter Burrell and I believe future generations benefited.

David Mervin – a thoughtful and thorough lecturer on American Politics, David (along with my Economics lecturer Geoff Renshaw) is now a regular contributor to The Guardian's letters page. I usually broadly agree with them both…and DM convinced me that LBJ was a more effective president than JFK so his worth as an educator stands proven!

Andy Reeve – Andy connected with undergraduates. Was it his corduroy jacket, his enormous poster of Kate Bush, or the fact that he seemed young enough to still pass as a student?

Peter Burnell – Peter was on sabbatical early on, but was a sympathetic and supportive Staff/Student Liaison member.

Finally, the inimitable Iris Host [departmental secretary]. I was never so pleased to see her as when I had a long essay to hand in. Amateurish efforts on John Locke, the Irish Language and Monetarism all passed through her and her colleagues' capable hands and no words on the department at the end of the Seventies would be complete without her formidable presence. [Iris had been a greengrocer earlier in her life and this had equipped her with a rather brisk manner].

Financial constraints

In this era funds were allocated to universities by the University Grants Committee who made occasional 'visitations' to inform themselves about what was going on. The money was then allocated to departments by the university through the Estimates and Grants Committee, but it is evident from reading through the staff meeting minutes of this period that money was very tight. Indeed, Wilfrid Harrison kept a close eye on the contents of the 'stationery cupboard'. It was not until after 1990 that departments were able to keep some of the money they generated through overseas students, giving them more flexibility in their operations. Budgets have subsequently been increasingly devolved, particularly to departments seen to be successful.

The library budget was particularly tight in the 1970s and this was a real constraint when there were no electronic means of consulting materials. Moreover, the department was expanding into new areas of interest which required books for students to consult. Admittedly in 1974 only three new options were added to what was on offer: European Governments (France and Germany) in the second year and United States Congress and Elections, Parties and American Democracy (taught by Alan Ware) in the third year. Even so, a library budget allocation of £800 for books (£8,200 in today's prices) was barely adequate.

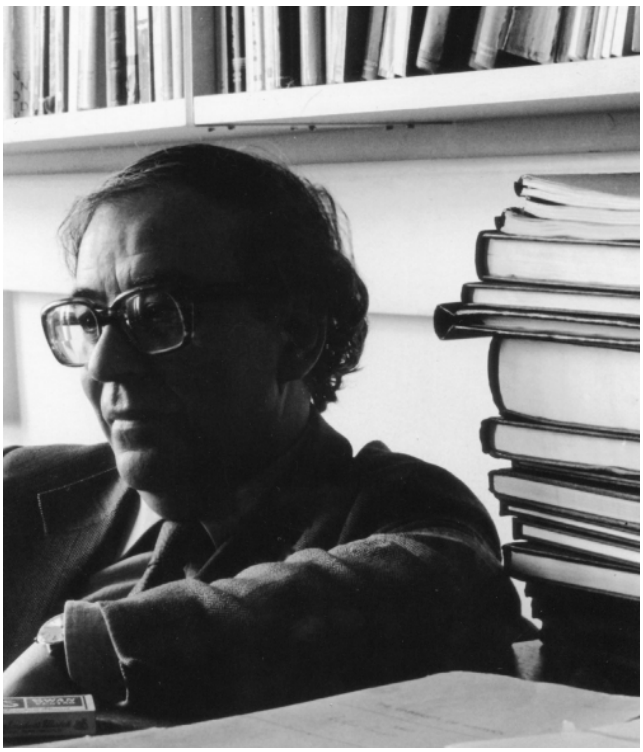
Financial constraints were also evident in the provision of secretarial support. For a long time the department had had to manage with one secretary who had to undertake the typing of reading lists and correspondence, but also act as a receptionist and a contact point for students. From 1974, the department was allowed a second secretary, but only in term times. Against this background, it is no surprise that staff were required to contribute £1.50 each (£10 in today's prices) towards a party for finalists.

It was therefore pleasing that the department managed to secure an additional appointment. The Chairman of Estimates and Grants tried to downgrade this post to a temporary one on his own authority, but Wilfrid Harrison was at his fiercest when confronted with breaches of procedure and managed to ensure that the post was a permanent one. It was simply advertised as 'A Lecturer in Politics', but the staff meeting minutes recorded: 'However in the further particulars the areas of interest of the present members of staff would be indicated, with a view to discouraging applicants in fields in which the Department was already very strong. It was further agreed that some of the areas not covered by the present members would be listed as areas in which we were especially interested.' At this stage of the department's development, it was not possible to create strength in depth in particular specialisms within the discipline as happens today. Roger Duclaud-Williams, a specialist in comparative public policy, was appointed to the post and became one of the department's longest-serving members.

Continued expansion depended on at least maintain student numbers and in May 1974 Malcolm Anderson 'reported a serious decline in the number of [undergraduate] applications, particularly for the Economics and Politics degree.' It was agreed to speak informally to the School of Law about the possibility of a Politics and Law degree and/or the provision of Politics options for the Law degree, but this never led to the creation of a joint honours programme. It was noted that this would only be possible if the Law Department was allowed to initiate four year degree courses.

Another area that was investigated without result was the possibility of a Politics with Psychology or Psychology with Politics degree, despite a sympathetic reaction from the head of department. While he was willing to discuss the possible content of such a degree, he 'considered that the introduction of a joint degree would have to wait the expansion of facilities in the Psychology Department.' Both of these ventures could have been stimulating for staff and attractive to students. However, progress was made on the establishment of a Politics with French degree which remains part of the department's offering at undergraduate level.

Warwick had been established without a Geography department, the subject then having a rather old fashioned image. The department opposed a proposal to establish a Geography department, particularly if this involved 'the exclusion of Urban Studies.' The department was interested in the possibility of a Politics with Urban Studies proposal, and this might have been an attractive proposition, albeit that the University was effectively located on the rural-urban interface with the boundary between Coventry and Warwickshire. However, this was another interesting idea which fell on stony ground. This also applied to a proposed joint degree on Politics and Industrial Relations on which talks began in 1979. Warwick was very strong in Industrial Relations, and this was a missed opportunity, although discussions continued into the 1980s.



The department in the mid-1970s

By 1975-6 the department had two professors, four senior lecturers and twelve lecturers. Wilfrid Harrison had retired and been replaced as professor by Jack Lively, a political theorist from Oxford, who had been the department's external examiner. Malcolm Anderson became chair of the department. David Caldwell had moved across to the University administration and was replaced as an expert in Communist politics by Peter Ferdinand, who had been pursuing a DPhil at Oxford, from September 1976.

Single honours Politics had 86 students across the three years, more than the 76 taking History and Politics. Politics with International Studies had 26 students, although only three in the final year. Economics and Politics had 34 students, but only five in the final year. Politics and Sociology had 31 students and Philosophy and Politics just 20. Graduate numbers were small with a total of nine with just one part-time PhD student.

A sign of enhanced research activity and a more international orientation was that the department joined the European Consortium for Political Research with Jack Lively serving as the convenor of its Political Theory section. He also served on the Politics and International Relations committee of the Social Science Research Council. A later research interest of the department was presaged by Fred Hirsch becoming convenor of the British International Studies Association's International Political Economy Group.

Alan Ware comments, 'As young academics become older and more senior, so their networking with political scientists elsewhere increased. Warwick's isolation from the research community in political science, such as it was, slowly changed. For example, in 1978 David Mervin and I organised the annual conference of the American Politics Group at Warwick, something I would not have been in a position to a few years earlier when I was poorly networked.' In 1977 the annual conference of the Political Studies Association was held at Warwick.

Ware also comments that Warwick's generous sabbatical leave policy started to pay dividends. He also points out that 'The promotion "rules" changed around 1975 or 1976, because of the financial constraints imposed on universities. This was the last year when being around and being a good citizen would get you promoted to senior lecturer. If you wanted to avoid being at the top of the pay scale for lecturers, then a research record was the only way out of this.'

First year teaching

A committee on course structure had been established in the spring of 1973 and finally reported in October 1974. This led to a double weighted first year Introduction to Politics course replacing two single weight courses, Ideas and Analysis and Political Systems. Nevertheless, despite this structural reform, first year teaching was giving some concern in the mid-1970s and was the subject of a paper written by Alan Ware and submitted to the staff meeting in January 1975. He identified three main problems:

1. 'Some students believe that they do not receive enough formal teaching in their first year courses.'
2. 'Some members of the Department believe that the arrangements by which first year teaching has been done by people other than members of the Department has been unsatisfactory.
3. 'Some members of the department believe that insufficient priority is given to first year teaching by the department.'

However, Ware suggested that 'the problem is more complex than it seems at first sight.' In the previous year, Politics/Sociology students had spent the first term complaining that they had too little formal teaching in Politics and the second term complaining about the amount of preparation they had to do for weekly seminars in Sociology. 'Unless savings were to be made in teaching hours elsewhere, the department must either maintain the status quo or accept an increased number of teaching hours per week.' Reducing the number of third year options 'would constrain the development of research in the Department.'

The fundamental problem was not, however, finding additional teaching hours: 'A more important one is that to some extent first year teaching is treated as a residual, something which has to be done but is not particularly welcomed. It is regarded as the "problem" of those who happen to give lectures in the courses; the teaching hours are allocated on the basis that those who have "spare" hours do first year teaching. This has resulted in a low commitment amongst us to the first year courses.' As a result of this paper, it was agreed to provide three additional seminars per term in Introduction to Politics II and Introduction to Political Behaviour. When the department was asked to consider forward planning for the 1977-82 period, it was agreed that 'a major problem in the future would be an increase in the amount of teaching required of members of the Department.'

Students' expectations of teaching may have been very different from the reality. Nick Male recalls, 'I had – mistakenly – thought that the course would be filled with political activists like myself. I hadn't understood the difference between partisanship and the objective study of politics.' Paul Smith said that he wanted to come to a new university, 'I noticed that they were all in county towns and Coventry wasn't. I supposed I considered myself a Marxist in some sense. I wouldn't know what that meant, but I did understand class analysis.'

Course structure

In October 1977 Alan Ware proposed the establishment of a new committee to review course structure, an earlier review having taken place in 1973/4. He argued, 'At present we have a reasonable expectation of gaining new members of staff in the next few years and it is important for the development of the department that the main consideration is not current teaching needs. This year our high student numbers give us a strong claim in relation to other departments for a new member of staff. In addition it seems likely that the University will designate Politics an expanding degree course 1978/9 – 1980/1.'

Ware noted that a decision taken by the department in October 1974 to offer a second political theory course as an alternative to Political Theory from Hobbes had never been implemented. At Oxford, Political Theory from Hobbes was an option not a core course. It had been envisaged that this alternative offering would be an expanded version of the half course that constituted the politics component of the Economic and Political Theories course provided for the Economics and Politics degree. Ware argued that 'offering a choice of theory courses may partially dispel student resentment of PTH because it is compulsory.'

The earlier committee had discussed whether Politics in the UK should be compulsory. The department was 'divided between those who thought it was desirable for all Politics students to take it, but it should not be compulsory, and those who thought that no reputable university should Politics students to graduate without expertise in British Politics.' When the 1977 committee on course structure came to look at this issue it conclude that 'We are sure that other University Departments, employers, and the public at large, expect graduates in politics to have followed a course in British politics, and this expectation seems reasonable to us. A second argument which has more academic force is that in this area there is a high quality of literature which can be made available to students. In part this is because this area has attracted some of the best British and American political scientists.'

The committee's report continued, 'We are aware that an increasing number of students have taken A level courses in British Constitution or British Politics but the current British Politics course can be distinguished from these in a number of ways. It is more conceptual, more systematically interested in the historical roots of contemporary politics, less exclusively concerned with the machinery of central government and more concerned with explanations than with description. It is also important to remember that a certain number of students go on to teach history or politics and will be much better qualified to do this as a result of taking this course.' It was only relatively recently that the department decided to drop the treatment of the module as compulsory without any dissent. Although the undergraduate student intake is now much more cosmopolitan, it remains a popular second year option.

Ware set out a detailed plan for revising the course structure. A key element of his proposed reforms related to the compulsory Research Design in Political Science course in the third year which he proposed should be moved to the second year as an option from a limited list. He argued: 'My belief is that its subject matter is more appropriate to the work of students before their final year – before they engage in the research of many of our specialized options. At the moment only those students who go on to graduate work get the full benefit of it.' As a result of this memorandum, a course review committee was set up with Alan Ware as convenor.

Malcolm Anderson, who was on study leave, responded to these proposals, writing from Vienna in January 1979. He noted, 'As far as student opinion is concerned, there will always be a vocal minority who find the notion of compulsory courses, and examinations, distasteful. I hope that this minority is not exercising undue influence.' In particular, 'Political Theory from Hobbes has, over the years, attracted a good deal of hostility from students. If the present moves in syllabus reform are, in large part, a response to student feeling, there seems a grave risk that there will be a determined attempt to reduce the compulsory element in the degree even further by removing PTH.'

Anderson mounted a comprehensive defence of the third year Research Design course. The absence of such a course at Oxford, it should be noted, was a real lack. He explained, 'I have never regarded the course as primarily one to prepare students for graduate study in political science but to further their understanding of

the intellectual and practical problems of writing about political institutions and political processes so that they can criticise with greater sensitivity the literature they read in other courses. There are elements in the course, which I regard as important which may be difficult to absorb into other courses.' A number of examples were provided such as the history of political science as a discipline and the uses, limitations and varieties of documentary sources. These topics survived in the Introduction to Research Methods course in the first year which replaced Research Design some years later after Malcolm Anderson had moved to the University of Edinburgh.

Anderson also argued that 'The place of project and practical work in the course is educationally valuable … It may be hard to provide adequate substitutes for the type of work done in preparing and administering a sample survey and designing their own research project based on original materials. These activities are of vocational utility to some of our students.' Moreover, 'The course is flexible and broad ranging which allows for the possibility of considering new directions in political research to be integrated from year to year.'

There was also a more general issue: 'The range of compulsory courses remaining in the syllabus had two defects. (1) They are weighted two to one in favour of political theory which reflects neither the balance of interest of the department nor the relative balance of intellectual activity among political science more generally nor student preferences in recent years. (2) The combination of compulsory courses would have a very traditional and perhaps even old-fashioned appearance which may give the impression externally of a department lacking a desire for innovation.'

The department then set up a Working Party on Research Design which was unable to come to an agreement on which of three options it preferred. One was to retain it as a compulsory course, but one which could be taken either in the second or a third year. A second option was to have it as a compulsory second year course either as a third compulsory course or replacing Politics in the UK which would become a third year option. A third option was to replace it by a first year course which would provide the degree with a 3:2:1 compulsory gradient. This is what eventually happened.

The department did, however, agree to replace European Governments by two separate courses on French and German politics, it being noted that there had been a considerable growth of English language literature on these countries. The second year options now included Comparative Communist Systems and Politics of Developing Areas, as well as old stalwarts like Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia. The mix of third year options had become broader, including Political Aspects of Environmental Planning, Political Science and Revolutions and Armed Forces and Military Rule.

Joint degree structures

The Ware memorandum had described the large joint honours degree in History and Politics as 'in the 3rd year the most unstructured of all our degrees.' There was no jointly taught course and students could veer towards History or Politics in terms of a 3:1 ratio in the courses they took.

The development of a jointly taught course in Political Sociology re-opened the question of whether something similar might be possible in History and Politics. A committee looked at the issue and Andrew Reeve, who had joined the department from Oxford as a political theorist in 1976, reported that it was considered that a course on the Development of the Modern State might meet this need. The History department already had a course on the Rise of the European State and Bureaucracy, but it did not cover England or Britain. It was considered that this could be developed as a jointly taught course which also covered Britain (but presumably not Ireland).

The jointly taught course in Political Sociology had been made possible by the appointment of Duncan Gallie to the Sociology department. In a memorandum to the department written in October 1979, Alan Ware noted that the creation of this course 'would boost morale in a degree course in which many students feel caught between the two departments whom they see as having mutual disrespect for one another …. Whatever reservations we may have had about co-operation with the Sociology department in the past, I cannot imagine more favourable circumstances in the foreseeable future in which to make improvements to the degree.'

Student representation

The Politics staff-student liaison committee became more active towards the end of the 1970s and it was flanked by a 'Politics Assembly'. In January 1979 the Liaison Committee expressed concern about the absence of the discussion of 'class' in the Political Concepts course. The student representatives also argued 'that material on women should be included in courses wherever possible' but the staff meeting decided that decisions should be left to individual members of the department. The Politics Assembly passed a motion that more time should be devoted to studying Marx and Marxist thinkers.

The Politics Assembly asked that a student observer should be permitted to attend staff meetings. This led to a ballot of staff members on the proposal which saw five in favour, nine against, one abstention and three non-voters.

Composition of the department

The department at the end of the 1970s was entirely white and male. In many respects the department was not atypical in terms of its gender composition. A survey conducted at the beginning of the 1980s found that only 11 per cent of the political science profession in the UK were women and this figure dropped to 9 per cent in universities. (Lovenduski , 1981). However, in the case of Warwick, there does appear to have been a selection bias against women. One well qualified woman candidate, who subsequently obtained a post at a leading university, was not included on the short list, evidently because of her gender.

The first woman to join the staff of the department was Moya Lloyd, a PhD student in the department, who was a temporary lecturer from 1986-7. Shirin Rai was the first woman to join on a permanent basis in 1989.

Conclusions

The development of the curriculum was largely driven in this period by the arrival of new members of staff and their particular research interests, although in making appointments the department took considerable account of teaching requirements and the need to provide as comprehensive a coverage as possible of an evolving discipline.

The department also went through two course review processes, although these hardly led to radical changes in structure on content. Particular individual members of staff played a key role in driving these reviews. Student discontent about particular courses, especially compulsory courses, was taken into account, but it was felt that students should not be allowed to veto courses that formed an essential part of a core Politics curriculum. There was some reference in these discussions to skills needed in the labour market, although equipping students for graduate study was also an important consideration. There was possibly an unresolved tension, never directly discussed, about what role political theory should play in the teaching programme as a whole.

Joint degrees presented a number of challenges and initiatives to add to the original offering were unsuccessful. Relations with Economics were relatively harmonious and this degree developed the most distinctive and successful specifically designed modules. Philosophy and Politics was a relatively small degree, but posed relatively few problems. Relations with Philosophy were generally harmonious, even though the founding professor, Phillips Griffiths or 'Griff' as he was generally known, could be combative. However, he recalled that 'our greatest contact was politics at the early stage'. (Quoted in Burgess, 1991: 100). Given this background, it is notable that one of the most successful undergraduate programmes in recent years has been Philosophy, Politics and Economics.

History and Politics was the largest joint degree, but never developed any distinctive modules. Why this might have been the case is a matter for speculation, although politics as a discipline was trying to shake off its origins in the study of history and Wilfrid Harrison was suspicious of historians on the basis of his experiences at Oxford. Malcolm Anderson, Jim Bulpitt and Willie Paterson had all taken History degrees, but this did not seem to help in the development of relationships. Indeed, there was some personal tension between Jim Bulpitt and a leading member of the History department. Much of his work was deeply historical, but he did not like versions of history uninformed, as he saw it, by ideas. The most fraught relations in this period were with Sociology, partly for ideological reasons, but relations improved towards the end of the 1970s.

Alan Ware comments, 'I think there would always have been problems facing the History and Politics degree. One was that there were, and still are, relatively few historians whose intellectual interests fit with those who study politics. Most historians are very shy of 'macro-theorizing' – especially in relation to politics – while many political scientists of that era were very interested in it.'

A major contrast with the department today was the relative insignificance of the graduate programme with one relatively small M.A. and just a few PhD students. Research grants were few and far between and generally small and research output did not match contemporary standards, even allowing for the much smaller size of the department.

The department did not seek to develop a particular specialism in depth in the way that electoral studies was a feature of the department at the University of Essex. This was in line with Wilfrid Harrison's commitment to eclecticism and also the attention paid to the needs of the teaching programme. However, in the 1980s the department did develop something of a reputation for work on the major governments of mainland Europe and European Integration.

What can be said is that a solid platform was developed for further progress when the external context became more favourable in the 1990s. It is also evident that students generally enjoyed their time at the department and at Warwick and many went on to enjoy successful careers in a wide range of fields, having been intellectually challenged and given the opportunity to develop personally. Relations between staff and students were generally close and this interaction with students was regarded as a main part of the task of an academic.

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