

THE COHEN INTERVIEWS

GERALDINE AVES -- Interview no 2.

Edited by Tim Cook and Harry Marsh

Annotation research by Diana Wray

Transcription by Louise Knight for WISEArchive

This is one of 26 interviews with social work pioneers conducted by the late Alan Cohen in 1980 - 81. The period of social work history Alan wished to explore with the interviewees was 1929 - 59. With one exception (No 24, Clare Winnicott) the interviews were unpublished until this edition in 2013. The copyright is held by the not for profit organisation WISEArchive.

Each interview is presented as a free-standing publication with its own set of notes. However, readers interested in the Cohen Interviews as a whole and the period discussed are referred to:

- (a) the other 25 interviews
- (b) the Editors' Introduction,
- (c) the select Bibliography.

All of these can be found at

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/explore/further/subject_guides/social_work

Geraldine Aves (1898-1986) was born into a socially committed family that had traditions of social inquiry on her father's side and suffragist activism on her grandmother's. She graduated from Newnham College, Cambridge in 1920 and during her time there became president of the Women's University Settlement (in South London) and that, she said, had a determining influence on her choice of career. The Settlement, founded in 1887, was directly linked to 6 women's colleges within the universities of London, Cambridge and Oxford and its work was focused on the welfare of women and children "in the poorer districts of London."

Her first major job was as an assistant organiser for the care committee service of the London County Council 1924. In 1938 she was heavily involved in the planning for the evacuation of children from London in the event of war; and she was seconded to the Ministry of Health as chief welfare officer with responsibilities that included the recruitment of social workers. In 1946 she was appointed by the Ministry to the permanent position of Chief Welfare Officer and made key contributions to post-war reforms of welfare services and the development of personal social services and social work training.

Her Oxford DNB entry describes her as a “handsome woman, of regal appearance, she charmed many and overawed – on occasion bullied – some others, though her authoritarian manner softened in later years.”

Her wide experience and personal strengths gave her the platform for a second career at senior levels (often as chair or board member) in the voluntary and professional sectors. One of her many influential projects was chairing an independent inquiry into the roles of volunteers in the social services and her report in 1969 led to the foundation of the Volunteer Centre and its successor organisations. *Source:* Oxford DNB entry written by Phyllis Willmott.

A.C. How did you come into social work then Dame Geraldine?

G.A. I came in very much by the back door. I had no intention of being a social worker. My aspiration early on was to be a Director of Education because I thought education was the most important element in our provision of services, but I was given an opportunity to discuss this with the then head of the then Ministry of Education, in about 1923 or '24, and he said that there wouldn't be a hope of getting work of that kind when men coming out of the services were still looking for jobs that they would feel they could fill. He also said would he be right in thinking that I believed an interest in education was an essential element in being a Director? And when I agreed he said, 'well I think I must point out to you that people who become Directors of Education, generally speaking, want to administer something: not necessarily education.' Then he very kindly gave me an introduction to the new Education Officer for the LCC, Mr. (then afterwards Sir) George Gater [1]. He thought that Mr. Gater might have something to suggest in connection with the London Education Department's School Care Committee Service which in fact turned out to be the case. Now the head of that service, Miss Theodora Morton, [2] was a redoubtable character with a determination to have high standards of professional expertise on the part of her staff, in so far as that was humanly possible. And although I had certain ingredients of what was required I had not taken the then requisite course, namely Social Science Certificate at the London School of Economics. [3] So Miss Morton took a very poor view of the suggestion that I might be accepted on the staff, and had it not been that Mr. Gater was her new chief, and that she clearly didn't wish to cross swords with him, at the very beginning of her professional relationship, I don't doubt that I should have been thrown out! However, Mr. Gater won and I became an Organiser of School Care Committees. [4]

I may say that I had in the preceding year taken a good deal of trouble to inform myself about a good many aspects of the social services. I'd spent a day or two a week in a settlement. I had visited youth employment offices, (I don't think they were called that), Ministry of Labour centres, Exchanges. I had taught some boys part-time in a trade school and of course I had read quite a lot in the course of my economics degree on the subject of social provision. Although I may say at that date the University of Cambridge was anxious, I thought, that none of their students should really get near to the substance, the human beings, for whom these services are in fact created. But when I started in my first Care Committee office, I must admit that I had only the most hazy ideas as to what would be involved, and this was all too apparent to my District Organiser who decided that for the first at least 6 months of

my career, half of my time should be devoted to a sort of in-service training. This I'm sure was more rigorous than anything I would have got at that time in any place of learning. She, Miss F.A. Rackshaw, turned out to be to be a very remarkable woman, both as social worker then as an administrator. So although, technically, I was not properly equipped, in fact I've never felt a real draught as far as my own readiness to do that kind of work was concerned. And one must remember that the Social Science Certificate of those days was a fairly primitive introduction to social work, and would not now be thought of as a very impressive basis for professional work.

- A.C. Can I just ask you something about that early time? A lot of the other people I've spoken to, when talking about their first coming into social work have talked about the sort of things that brought them in, the 'why' really, and I've been impressed by the wide range of reasons. One of the things that has impressed me about, I suppose the people of your generation that I've spoken to, is the way they all mentioned the consequences of the First World War, and some have spoken almost in *Testament of Youth* [5] type terms about this time. They've also talked about the position of women at that time, and the difficulty for women in finding independent professional occupation, an occupation where they could be independent and be able to make decisions, and I wondered whether any of that figured in your situation at that time?
- G.A. No I don't think so. I've told you how I arrived on the doorstep of the London County Council. But perhaps it is very relevant to say that all my young life I had lived in a family situation where there were assumptions about social need and voluntary service. Well, my father [6] had worked with Canon Barnett [7] at Toynbee Hall [8] for many years. He had written parts of the great Charles Booth survey *Life and Labour in London*; he had been interested in, and a member of, the Committee of the Hampstead Council of Social Service where we lived. He was of course an expert on Minimum Wages as Chairman of all the Trade Boards. He was for me a paragon. Incidentally my maternal grandmother, Mrs Emma K. Maitland, [9] was one of the few women elected to the old London School Board. She was deeply interested in everything to do with education and services for people who needed them. So that really I didn't have to make any great transition from my ideas about education to joining in the social work field and I don't think the fact that there were troubles after the war, or anything of that kind, really came into it particularly.
- A.C. Thank you. Can I ask you one other thing about the care committee training you just mentioned. I wonder if you could say something about which district you worked in, and what sort of training your Organiser devised for you?
- G.A. Well I worked in Islington, and my training involved a certain amount of actual visiting with advice on how to go about it etc., but you learned most from the clients in these situations. It also involved two days a week in a branch of the old Charity Organisation Society [10] where I saw how volunteers and staff combined to look into the needs of people. I may say that then, and a few years later, I conceived a very great mistrust of the COS procedures of those days and I used to say that for me the COS branches divided into two categories. There were those that did an enormous amount of study, cross-questioning of clients, and so on, with the result that they proved to be 'undeserving'. And those other branches that would go through all these procedures with a view to discovering how they could help and then

helping. But I thought the system was open to abuse. So when the leopard changed its spots and became Family Welfare Association, I for one thought this was definitely a sign of progress. Well I think the other thing, of course, that was in the offing, was a comprehension of what was meant by casework. Now this was a very new concept recently imported from America, on which the Head of the School Care Committee Service was extremely enthusiastic. On the second day of my work in the Care Committee office a fellow staff member said to me “ Are you keen on casework?” and I said, “What is it? Ought I to be?” which shows the stage of development from which I started. It was during those early years that I went on more than one occasion to the weekend conferences that were set up by what were then the three significant social work bodies. Somebody else told you this have they?

A.C. No.

G.A. Well, the three significant bodies at that time were the COS, the LCC School Care Committee Organisation, and the hospital Almoners. And they planned weekend conferences at High Leigh in Hoddesdon to which speakers were invited and where representatives of these organisations were able to discuss what one of the Care Committee District Organisers invariably referred to as “whither are we tending?” Well, whither were we tending? We had a very interesting weekend on casework chaired by Mr. Pringle [11] of the COS but we had a speaker from the United States who talked to us about those very important early casework studies, I can’t remember their name now...those books on casework. Mary Richmond. [12] That’s it.

A.C. Mary Richmond. *Social Diagnosis* and *What is Social Case Work*?

G.A. That’s it! That’s it! Well, this was the fodder.

A.C. These were all part of your in-service training?

G.A. Well by then I was supposed to be fledged, by the time I was allowed to go to this conference. But I was very accepting of the significance of this development, and went along with it completely.

A.C. You eventually became a District Organiser yourself didn’t you?

G.A. Oh yes I did. Yes after a few years; four years. And I then had charge of the Woolwich, Greenwich and Lewisham area, until 1938.

A.C. That’s when you went to the Ministry of Health, ’38? Was it?

G.A. No. I went to the Ministry of Health much later. In 1938 as you may remember, we had the alarm of Munich and the remission of the date of war, which of course we always hoped wouldn’t happen. In 1938 the Home Office was the government department responsible for civil defence, for evacuation and all war time provisions of this sort. And about a week before Mr. Neville Chamberlain went to Munich a fairly large bevy of people who were supposed to be able to talk to local authorities about what they ought to do in terms of provision for the emergency, were loosed on the country. And I was one of these people, and I went to two areas in the south of England with singularly little brief, to warm up the local authorities responsible, and discuss with them, amongst other things, how they would staff whatever was to be done in the way of services, and above all to identify large houses etc., that could be

used for the accommodation of people evacuated from the big cities. Well it's perhaps a good thing for the country that at that point the exercise was called off because though I could expand easily on the extraordinary situation one found, the fact remains that by and large no one was in the least prepared. Well as soon as that crisis point was over the government decided that the responsibility for the war time social services should be transferred to the Ministry of Health which was also the housing department, because billeting would be one of the most important things and billeting and housing travelled together. Civil Defence as such remained with the Home Office.

A.C. I'm lost as to who you were employed by.

G.A. I was still employed by the London County Council (LCC). [13] Just borrowed from the Case Committee Staff.

A.C. Who borrowed you when you did that in 1938?

G.A. I suppose that we were borrowed by the Home Office. I don't really know. It must have been the Home Office.

A.C. Were all the District Care Organisers used in that way?

G.A. No. Just certain people.

A.C. Do you know why you were selected?

G.A. No, I have no idea.

A.C. Presumably they must have thought you were the sort of people who could get the thing across.

G.A. Yes. Well I suspect, you know, we were many and various. And some people no doubt showed greater organising ability than others. Some might have been essentially steeped in personal social work, as you might say, and some less so. It's always interested me that for many many years, (this idea has now died out), but for many years it seemed to be thought that if you had any administrative ability you couldn't possibly be a good social worker. It was either/or. It ought not to travel together, and it was really rather irritating sometimes that people would make assumptions of this sort.

A.C. Can I ask you a bit more about the evacuation planning? Were you given a brief to work from? What exactly were your tasks?

G.A. What in 1938? Well I don't remember what we were given but what we were given was of the slenderest. It was, 'Would you go to X and Y. See the Town Clerk, or whoever it was, maybe the Chief Administrator, and talk with him about the preparations which would involve receiving evacuated individuals and groups. But the briefing otherwise I should say was virtually nil.

A.C. It was really just an official way of dropping the notion into somebody's ear that action was needed?

G.A. That's right and seeing that they did something. I well remember one of the Clerks I saw, the first one in fact, who was a solicitor, (as was often the case of course), and I

went to see him on a Friday, and of course speed was of the essence at that time and quite early in conversation he said “Now let me make it quite clear to you, young lady, that I’m a gardener and of Saturday afternoon I dig and nothing else.”

A.C. That was scrapped that 1938 thing?

G.A. Yes. Well it was irrelevant.

A.C. Yes, irrelevant. Then the Ministry of Health took over. And you were still with the Care Committee?

G.A. Well I had been with the Care Committee up to September 1938, but at that point the London County Council Education Department was made responsible, (nothing to do with the Care Committee), made responsible for planning evacuation from London, which was a massive exercise. And I was then asked to transfer to the Education Department as such, at County Hall, to take charge of the element in the planning that involved the staffing of all the evacuation parties. And this is where I had my first direct experience of very large plans to use thousands of volunteers in case of need. I can imagine no more trying post than that one I held, because firstly you had to get people to commit themselves to doing something very important on an unknown date, secondly you hoped the date would never come, but thirdly if it did come the importance of those people really doing what they said they would do was terrific. And so you had forever to keep a machine turning, a recruitment process going on, an interviewing business going on and be absolutely ready for the unwanted day.

A.C. Were they the billeting officers that you were recruiting as well as escorts?

G.A. No. This is from London. This is nothing to do with the reception area at this point.

A.C. When I was evacuated I remember the billeting officer went with us on the train I remember, and took us round the billets.

G.A. Do you mean from London?

A.C. Yes. From Hampstead, yes.

G.A. But that was a work of supererogation, there was not as a rule a billet officer with the outgoing parties. It was an excellent idea of course. Wonderful. But that was not normally done. What normally happened was that volunteer escorts were recruited, some of whom would stay on in the country to help the local billeting officer and the evacuees. The LCC was exclusively concerned with a plan to get people out of London. Nothing to do with the reception at that point. It was solely to get mothers and children parties, school children parties, expectant mother parties and so on out of London with escorts. That’s what it was. And of course the other parts of the Education Department’s Evacuation Scheme Staff had all the business of planning the train schedules, buses and so on for the immediate movement of thousands of people. We had to be a little imaginative about what the volunteer might need. I remember well that one of the things we suggested every volunteer should take with him or her was a copy of *The Times* because it was the thickest paper you could find. Very reliable and many of the railway carriages used for evacuees had no corridors or other facilities and *The Times* was an element of your equipment. Then of course war came and the scheme worked as we know now. The people went out but there wasn’t a proper war then, and lots of them came back and so on.

However, the next challenge was the impact of the evacuees on the reception areas was such that the local authorities receiving them were confronted with a host of problems that they'd never thought about before, were quite unready to deal with, and they were submerged with problems. Also there were two features that were distressing. One was nobody had realised how extremely liable to head lice many of the children were, so that dirt was brought into hitherto allegedly clean areas. Secondly that people hadn't appreciated in the reception areas what the movement of children from their families into an unknown environment would do to their behaviour and reactions. So that, from every point of view, the local authorities were stuck. Now the Ministry of Health which of course had many things to think about had not envisaged any of these problems. The LCC was not responsible in any sense for what was done by local authorities in the reception area; but since it was the LCC, (and I'm only talking about the evacuation from London of course: comparable things happened from other big population centres), that had sent the parties out naturally the local authorities wrote to the LCC because they'd exported problems. So for quite a time all kinds of correspondence reached the LCC on the subject of problems in the reception areas. And at that point these mothers had to be faced and much of this correspondence and many of the problems were remitted to my bit of the works, because it was the obvious place it was thought, given that I was a social worker, for the reception of this kind of complaint; the problems.

After a time, the Ministry of Health asked if we could release four Care Committee Organisers to help in the Regions with the most stricken reception areas, help the local authorities to wrestle with them, and we found four stalwart women who went out and did an excellent job. Now at some point the government set up a very small, not exactly commission, group of people anyway (I think Sir Geoffrey Shakespeare [14] was in charge of it) to visit the reception areas and see what was going on. And they came up with a recommendation that the kind of support that had been provided in the 4 Regions should be provided to all Regions, all over the country. And more than one person per Region, where the numbers were justified with the result that the Ministry of Health decided to appoint 30 people with some knowledge, experience and if possible qualifications in social work and I was asked to serve as an adviser on the appointments. So for the first time I crossed the Thames to put my oar in, on the Ministry of Health's side. By and large we didn't do too badly. We made, I made, two mistakes. But two out of thirty is not too ghastly. And one subsequently left quite soon so that was a good thing, and the other one we had to endure for the rest of the War! But she wasn't fatal!

- A.C. Are we talking about now the welfare officers who were appointed to deal with the hostels and so on where the difficult evacuated children were. The sort of job that Clare Winncott did (Interviewee no 24) - or is this another group?
- G.A. No. These are people who really were the prototypes of the Ministry's regional social work staff that went on after the war. They were appointed to regions. Wales for example had 4 people. I forget the numbers now but they varied from 2 to 4 per Region over the country. They were available to help local authorities to wrestle with what they were meeting. And of course this was an immensely difficult task for these officers, not to mention the local authorities. But they made a very good stab at it.
- A.C. Can I just ask you one more thing? Did you realise yourself when, I'm going right back again to 1938, what sort of problems the local authorities in the reception areas

would encounter once London started exporting all these children – having seen the children as from the Care Committee angle in the first place?

G.A. I don't think I devoted a great deal of thought to it. I think I was vaguely conscious of the welter of problems that would come up. But of course when you're trying to get a framework of staff, volunteers mainly, established for a task of this magnitude, it is in itself such a big job that you really have to concentrate on that at the time. As soon as the parties had gone out of course one could bend one's mind to what it all meant, but if I had seriously considered the impact of evacuation I don't know what I could have done about it at that stage. My hands were more than full.

A.C. It wasn't really the immediate job was it?

G.A. No. And especially as you see, you were always doing it against the background of 'this may never happen'. Which is a most defeating situation for any worker. Well anyway, these 30 social workers were appointed and went out and tried to help the authorities. And of course one of the things that they felt the authorities desperately needed were some people with some knowledge of social work to help them with these issues. But social workers in those days were few and far between in any service. And therefore it really meant borrowing people from the few organisations, and from London, that had some idea of what was inherent in this kind of situation. And local authorities by and large had never heard of social workers and so selling the idea was not all that easy. Of course there were very important voluntary counterparts and one must not overlook the role of a body like the Women's Voluntary Services (WVS) [15] in those times. Although sometimes the WVS was maddeningly oblivious of the contribution of professional social workers, at the same time they did do, in most of the areas, a very excellent job and so one must be fair on that.

A.C. Do you have any reminiscences of the problem just mentioned of having to try and persuade the Ministry of Health of the need for social workers? Was it you that persuaded them that they should have social workers?

G.A. Those first 4 you mean?

A.C. You said they knew nothing about social workers. Was it very difficult to persuade them to take on board that they were needed?

G.A. Well I suppose by then the Ministry found itself in difficulties. Certainly I was asked to go and talk with the deputy secretary there, and was asked in fact could we provide people of the kind I thought we needed. And I said I thought we could.

A.C. What were the problems, for them?

G.A. Well the enormous embarrassment. After all it was the local government Department. The enormous embarrassment of having half the local authorities in the country submerged with problems they didn't know how to tackle, and the Department didn't either. So that was that.

Well now, time ground on and we had these 30 people, or rather the Ministry of Health had these 30 people in the field, with nobody in charge of them at headquarters. And from my vantage point, on the wrong side of the Thames, I thought that those workers really needed to meet and discuss their problems and

see what they were all trying to do and learn from one another. So I laid on a conference to which they all came and they found extremely useful, and it was held of course in the LCC buildings. No doubt this came to the ears of the Ministry of Health who must have reflected that this was the sort of thing they should have laid on and not the LCC. And so this led to the Ministry of Health deciding that it ought to have somebody in the Department to head up this service and to take this kind of action and any other action, and I was asked if I would cross the water and be what they called the Chief Welfare Officer. And the LCC agreed that I should go and I was seconded.

I well remember an interview very early on, that must have been when we were getting the 30 appointed; that's right. The Deputy Secretary said, as all administrators do, "What will this cost us?" and when we told him the salaries paid to the District and other Organisers he said, "Oh well that's nothing!" And I've often thought how important, and how sad it was that we had to have the wrong answer about the salaries you have to pay to people who are to some extent equipped to do a professional job. Because for all the years that followed, it was a struggle to get the Ministry of Health, in fact one never did succeed, to recognise that for professional people in social work they ought to pay a proper professional salary; and if I may jump a few years, it's one of the reasons why it was so difficult to make a proper relationship between the social workers in the Home Office and the social workers in the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health was always obscurantist about this business of salaries, whilst the Home Office which had virtually no standards about the social work expertise of the people they appointed later for the Children's Department, but had got a point of view about their resembling the Inspectorate in the Ministry of Education, because they had appointed a person as their Chief of Child Care Service, who was out of the education stable. So for reasons that had nothing to do with appropriate qualifications really, the Home Office always paid higher salaries. And this made it very difficult to get those staffs really to cooperate comfortably, and it was only as you know, relatively recently, that when they all got stuck together that at last the equation was established. But this was one of the things that one had to contend with, I'm a much more experienced person now than I was then, and I think I didn't know how to play the cards. Because we had a very charming, neurotic and ineffectual Director of Establishments, and it was through him that everything was handled. And of course now I know that I should have gone to the Permanent Secretary or to the Minister or somebody. Well there it is.

We've got to where I was appointed to the Ministry of Health. Yes. Well, then I think the real importance of that period 'till the end of the war, was firstly that our regional staff did everything that they found to be humanly possible to get local authorities to appreciate the role of the social worker and to appoint them if they could and would. They were in very short supply. They had also to explain the difference between the well intentioned worker without qualifications, and the person who has some qualifications, and this in itself was a difficulty. And for some years we used to keep in my section in the Ministry of Health, we used to keep a file in which we recorded any appointments to a local authority of a social worker which just shows the stage we started from. It distinguished between social workers when they didn't specify in the advertisement whether they should be qualified or not, and qualified social workers. We had two columns in the register, and the figures were very very slow to mount up. But that was what we tried to do, the other thing I think that was very important was, that because we had some very good social workers, and because

we were able to get a small number of really well qualified people to work in the field like Clare Winnicott and Robina Addis,(Interviewee no 1) who did first class pioneering jobs in small settings, it was possible to introduce ideas about the care of children, especially children who were showing behaviour problems, and get them tackled in ways that were new. We were obliged, though we didn't want to, to set up hostels which were known as "Hostels for Difficult Children", [16] and towards the end of the war a very interesting publication was produced by the Ministry of Health which summarised the experience we had gained in that field, and the changing attitudes to children in trouble that our experience had engendered. This was written by Gwyneth Wansbrough-Jones [17] who became my deputy at the Ministry of Health and was a very useful precursor for many of the ideas that were developed afterwards by the Curtis Committee. [18]

A.C. What I'm very interested in is the personal impact you were making during this time. Because I guess if you were the Chief Welfare Officer you were presumably producing papers for the appropriate people with decision making responsibility. Did you have decision making responsibilities of your own? You must have been shaping a lot of things that were happening. If only by saying 'Yes you can do that. No you can't do that'.

Are there any stories you can tell me about that?

G.A. Well, from the beginning I had a regular staff conference to which all the regional staff came. And it started by being rather grand with the Chief Medical Officer and an Under Secretary and one or two other administrators attending, and if I remember rightly I was not initially in the chair. I may be wrong because I must have got into it very quickly. But I have a feeling that we had one or two rather stiff sort of meetings that weren't exactly what I wanted. Then there soon became proper professional staff meeting when the regional welfare officers would discuss the policies that we were pursuing, with me, and incidentally had the comfort of knowing that there were others wrestling with these difficult issues, not only themselves, because although there were usually more than one person in a region, it was a rather lonely outpost job. And certainly the advice, in so far as they needed advice, whatever they received on the carrying out of their work, came from me or from any administrator or medical officer we had invited to join us. But I wouldn't like to claim too much for the wisdom of the staff conferences because we were all learners together.

A.C. It's quite a common experience isn't it, that in a situation like that, the people who are implementing the policy, particularly when it's a new policy, people beginning to feel their way a bit, are pushing at the boundaries and trying to get the rules altered or changed or relaxed in some way. Did you find that was going on? That you were having to in a sense make the rules together as well?

G.A. Well I think one would say that during the war the regional staff had very considerable freedom. There were things they couldn't do. They could not commit the department to expenditure without it being approved, but the people in the regions came from different fields and had different experiences and really they had very great freedom to develop what they thought they could develop in their areas. And as you probably realise the further you get from London, the larger authorities and even regional staff, feel that they know better than headquarters. And this is perfectly healthy situation provided it doesn't get out of hand. But I would say that

they were wonderfully untrammelled as far as rules went. What they were troubled about was lack of experience and that, after all everybody lacked. Another thing – you see in war time it is more accepted that people in a central department react to the realities of a situation. In peace time you start having all sorts of anxieties about what is both socially desirable and what line the department should be taking, what it should do.

- A.C. You were contrasting the Department in war time with that in peace time.
- G.A. Yes well, I've probably made the point. That in peace time the department becomes far more aware of what staff of this kind might be up to. But in the war time, I would say that one had enormous freedom. Actually, I would like to say at this point that one of the nice things about working for the Ministry of Health was that I never felt that my wings were being clipped, be it in war or peace time throughout all my period there.
- A.C. That is nice.
- G.A. They gave their Chief of Welfare Office great freedom. You can explain this in many ways. You could say that what you were doing wasn't thought sufficiently important policy-wise to need a great deal of supervision. I preferred to think that it was because they decided we were, by and large, making a useful contribution, and that they had confidence in the Chief of Welfare Officer; that she wouldn't involve the department in things that were clearly matters of policy, that should be decided elsewhere. But whatever the explanation, I really felt that it was a wonderful department to work in.
- A.C. Are you able to say that indirectly you made policy by virtue of dropping ideas in the right ears at the right time and so on?
- G.A. Oh yes. I would say, not indirectly only but also directly, because as the war period wore on, (and I think I mentioned that I was seconded, and so were the rest of the people appointed), as the war wore on, it became apparent, I'm glad to say, to the Department, that this was an element in their professional staff that they ought to preserve for after the war. And the regional welfare officers began to take an interest in other than just continue the services and to be consulted by local authorities about other things, so that when at the end of the war it was decided to establish this service, that was a real departure for the Department. They had of course many professional units, doctors, architects, engineers, nurses, and now they had social workers. And being who I am I can't over-emphasise what a big step this was.
- A.C. I guess during the war with this scheme, you gradually became better known as the Chief Welfare Officer at the Ministry of Health, and therefore subject yourself to other people lobbying, or trying to communicate various ideas to you, and trying to influence you in various ways.
- G.A. Yes, that's very true and I think I could say that I had relationships, and often discussions with a tremendous range of organisations, both voluntary and professional during that period.
- A.C. As I remember it, the country was getting more and more concerned with what was going to come after the war and a feeling there was going to be a new deal for everybody, with welfare legislation. Am I right in thinking that people like yourself

would also be concerned about what shape the social services would take and the place of social workers?

G.A. Yes, that was so. Actually what happened at the end of the war, well in 1945, was that the needs of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration became very apparent and I was asked to agree to be seconded to take charge of the Child Care operations in Europe for a time. Now I very much resisted this, because I felt that this was the time when I wanted to be in the Department influencing what they were thinking, and not out in the field doing an international job however important and interesting it might be. But I was persuaded that I ought to do it, at any rate for a time, largely I think because the USA had had a great hand in the setting up of that organisation and a senior American social worker from the U.S. Federal Agency, the Children's Bureau, who had been involved up to then for the planning of the UNRRA operation wanted me to take this post and the U.K. felt that we ought not to say "No we won't." So I very reluctantly said, "Oh all right, I'll go for three months." And they said "Well really three months is ridiculous you couldn't do anything. But we could review it in six months, if you'll see how it goes." And so for the six months I went and for fourteen months I was there. And that's another story. But of course the fact that I'd been so concerned with children in trouble in this country was conceived to be a basis for asking me to do this work for the children, mainly in the displaced persons camps, but not exclusively. I mean there were countries where children's needs had been terribly neglected for reasons of food shortage, or whatever it might be, like Italy for instance which as far as I recollect didn't have camps, but did have very acute child care and food problems. And so there I did my best and again how much better one could do it if one could only go over the ground again.

A.C. That's always the way.

G.A. Yes. So that's why I was missing from January '45 to August 1946 and I left behind me an extremely competent deputy in the person of Gwyneth Wansbrough-Jones, and she of course did everything she could to hold the fort and to put the pressures where she felt they ought to be put. But it's not quite the same as having the Chief of Service around.

A.C. What were the issues you would have been trying to influence, and she was trying to influence?

G.A. Well I would have been trying very much to get a better recognition on the part of the people who then inspected and advised on the Poor Law Service, to do a very different kind of job on children looked after by the Poor Law. [19] That was one very important thing. I also wanted to get a different approach to the care of old people because old people in the Poor Law institutions by and large didn't have a very rewarding kind of existence. You see as the war wore on this was one of the services one had been looking at a bit, and this was one that I thought we particularly should make a dent in.

A.C. Is it possible for you to pin point at this date who or how or what influenced your thinking about, say, the first thing you mentioned, care of the Poor Law children, you wanted that altered. Where did your ideas come from?

G.A. I'm trying to remember. I know that I became aware of practises in some of the Poor Law institutions that seemed totally archaic. But I honestly don't remember. I

suppose it was just one of the facts of life. Because I had been impressed in my earliest Care Committee days by the attitude of some Relieving Officers. Now I think that the positive work done by some Poor Law Officers has not been sufficiently recognised in this country. But the fact remains that there were some Dickensian characters still in that field, and I shall never forget going to interview (this is in my early Care Committee days), going to interview a Relieving Officer about a family who palpably hadn't enough to live on. And one knock on a sort of shutter which went up and the Relieving Officer said, "What do you want?" And I told him what I wanted and he said, "We are here to protect the Rate payers," and plonked down. I never forgot this. It was the worst side, but it existed and that went for some of the institutions and of course for some of the children's homes. One mustn't generalise. It's never wise. But there was too much that was totally out of date.

A.C. Could you say this then?

G.A. Yes: but only in School Care Committee circles. I remember on hearing of one London authority where it was the custom for the Guardians to have a wonderful 'do' as an annual event, and the Guardians had a fearful blow-out whilst the children in the institution were totally isolated from this. This is the kind of thing that gave one the creeps.

A.C. And it was that sort of thing. Say the O'Neill boy [20] hadn't died and, say, that Lady Allen of Hurtwood [21] had not written her letter to *The Times*, would there still have been a Curtis Enquiry [22] do you think? Were they ready anyway to enquire into the law relating to the care of children, because of the experience you were all having during the war?

G.A. I should like to think there would have been. But of course it's that sort of episode that touches off what government departments are pleased to call a head of steam. When you have a head of steam you do something, and there was a head of steam about the O'Neills.

A.C. Was it part of your thinking? Did you have thoughts like that going round in your mind when you saw these unsatisfactory children's homes you just mentioned, and did you mention it to various people within the department or was it coffee gossip.

G.A. Well, you see we published our report on hostels for difficult children, and it was very apparent in that, that there were ways in which you did meet the needs of children, and ways in which you didn't. Now this was nothing to do with boarded out children, as they were called. But on boarding out we did in fact think a lot and take some action and prepared really rather a good paper to use after the War which I may say the Home Office pinched and put out as their first document, which we found a little hard! But nevertheless it contained things that needed to be said so we tried to look on the bright side. Yes indeed. I expect there would in fullness of time have been a Curtis Committee. Whether it would have happened so quickly I don't know, because politicians and government, of course this is politicians primarily, are terribly susceptible to what they see as strong public opinion. And it's usually scandals that warm them up, not sensible presentation of philosophies. I find it very difficult to tell you that, 'yes, I thought this.' You know I'm essentially a person who reacts to what comes to her and I can't disentangle what came to me and became formulated as an idea from what I might have thought myself. It's very difficult and I wouldn't want to claim more than I should.

- A.C. Did you have any connection with Curtis at all?
- G.A. Well I gave evidence to it, on behalf of the Ministry of Health. And gave them I think some really very useful ideas and material. I always remember that the Chairman, Dame Myra [23], said when she thanked me for my appearance, "We shall certainly want to see you again." And of course they never did. This is what always happens with these enquiries you know; they feel all steamed up on the day, then they haven't time. But that was exactly what happened.
- A.C. You'd already gone along with the Ministry of Health evidence about what sort of arrangements could be made or should be made.
- G.A. I really don't remember what evidence I gave now. But I think what I would have been talking about was our experience of a child new away from home. After all they were dealing with children without normal home life. Well we were concerned with children without normal home life. I'm sure I would have been talking about how that presented itself and what the issues were, and quite a bit about children's homes and probably boarding out.
- A.C. When somebody like yourself does a job like that, is it done in the same way as I've seen it done in small organisations, say like the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers (APSW) [24], something like that, where beforehand you get together with one or two people who you think know something of it, and say, 'We're going to have to act, now what are we going to say?' and you hammer it out together what it is you think you ought to say, and then you go up and say it.
- G.A. I can't remember at all, but I should be surprised if I discussed it with outside bodies.
- A.C. No I didn't mean that.
- G.A. I would have discussed it I think certainly with two or three key staff people.
- A.C. Yes that's what I meant. Would they be people within the Ministry, or would you also look to those welfare officers –
- G.A. Oh yes, I include them as the staff of the department, which they were. Oh yes I include them certainly.
- A.C. Do you have to work quickly on evidence for a Commission? I mean how much time do you actually have to get around and talk to people about it, formulate some thoughts, put them down on paper?
- G.A. I haven't the slightest recollection. I don't really remember. I should have expected that it was some weeks. Certainly some weeks. I should have thought so, because Commissions have a time table after all.
- A.C. My fantasy is that it's, all of a sudden something arrives on your desk.
- G.A. No I don't think it was like that. I've no recollection of having been, you know, shocked to find that next Wednesday I would be giving evidence. No. Because after all the Curtis Committee had to have a programme of whom they would see and when stretching out, so there's no point in not telling one in good time. I don't remember the process now. But it wasn't anything that shocked me or surprised me.

- A.C. Were you happy at the outcome of the Curtis Enquiry in terms of the interim report which set up the training arrangements and secondly the [1948 Children] Act **[18]** that was the outcome.
- G.A. I was very happy about their trying to do something about training ahead of the actual legislation. I thought that was good, and as you may know I was borrowed for what was called 75% of my time to look after their Advisory Committee and to get the training courses started. I was happy about that. And just to follow that piece, you may know, or you may not, that when at the end of the period the Home Office was given the responsibilities for child care, or limited child care, the Home Office was very anxious that I should be the person in charge of their training. And I refused. As you know they appointed somebody as the Chief of the Service from the education service, who had no social work experience at all, an able woman let me say, but not, I would have thought a very suitable choice. The Home Office had decided that I would be the person in charge of training. Well, I explained to them that in the Ministry of Health I had a far wider remit. I mean it might not seem to them a grand post, but it had enormous scope and (a) I didn't want to be specialised in training and (b) more important, I didn't consider I knew enough about training. I thought they should have someone who did know about training, and it was at this point that I turned to Clement Brown (Interviewee no 7) and said, "You know you really should do this." And she was very hesitant at the time, I don't know if she ever said that, but she was very hesitant before she finally agreed.

Well now, was I pleased with the Curtis Committee Report? I was pleased on this front, I thought it was good that they looked at all this and it was a very good inoculation for the advisory committee that was eventually appointed. They had to think about a lot of issues they wouldn't have thought about otherwise ahead of time. But I always remember, the Home Office was a funny department and the under secretary in charge of it was new to Child Care and came from another bit. I used to, of course, attend these meetings of this committee and the chairman was a very nice good man. I've forgotten who he was now, but he didn't know a great deal about the subject so at the meetings I used to do a lot of talking, and I remember after the second meeting the under secretary saying to me in a slightly stuffy way, "I suppose in the Ministry of Health secretaries to the committees do take a very prominent part in the discussion." I said "No on the contrary they are practically mute, but you need somebody to give some leads." Yes it was rather funny really! Absolutely what life is like you know. I hadn't the courage then that I had after retirement. That's the time you know, that's the time! However, I do remember this conversation.

- A.C. Was it then that you met Letty Harford, (Interviewee no 11) or did you know her during the war?
- G.A. Yes during the war, in her capacity of woman officer for the National Council of Social Service as it then was. Because she had a finger in so many important pies you know. And she was somebody I felt it very useful to be in touch with. And the National Council for Social Services (NCSS) **[25]** of course played quite an important part then in, for example getting the Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CABx) **[26]** set up. Yes they did get them set up in the war didn't they? Except in London where the FWA took the responsibility. Then after the war a member of our regional staff went to be their first Head of CABx.

- A.C. Do you have any other recollections of Letty Harford because I feel that although I've spent a couple of hours with her, she actually hasn't been able to say as much about all that she did.
- G.A. Did she talk about her work in Chesterfield at all?
- A.C. She did, but she had great difficulty in remembering it. I wasn't even clear in what capacity she was employed in Chesterfield. She said she was employed by the Ministry of Health (MOH).
- G.A. I don't really know. MOH was she?
- A.C. She was somehow related to the Public Assistance Committees (PAC) [27] but she was employed by the MOH.
- G.A. Don't know.
- A.C. She did say she was secretary of that group that produced *Our Towns: a Close Up* [28].
- G.A. All my life, perhaps due to my original background, I've always been interested in the contribution of voluntary bodies, and whenever I got a chance when the Department needed an observer on something, there was I. And you know observers again are apt not to very vocal, and I always remember Mr. Astbury of the COS on some committee or other, when I said "I know I'm only an observer but I wonder if you would allow me to say X Y Z" and he said "Miss Aves, I've never known you be a mute observer!" and of course that's true. I behaved as if I was there as a contributor, and they didn't seem to mind, and my administrative colleagues in the Ministry chose too ignore this fact. I never did any damage after all, and that went for the National Old People's Welfare Council, (NOPWC) [29] the body that became responsible for old people's welfare, on which I served for years.
- A.C. That's lovely that story because, interestingly enough Clement Brown told me a similar story about when she had been on, was it the Mackintosh Committee [30], then she got the job in the Home Office and it was thought unsuitable that she should be on it, and in the end the compromise was that she should be an observer, and somebody, the chairman said, "I wonder how long it will take you to learn to be an observer Miss Clement Brown?" Because she was always having her say.
- G.A. Yes, she'd do more than observe I guess.
- A.C. Did you have a connection with the Mackintosh?
- G.A. Yes I did. I was one of the Department's observers. It was an extremely good Committee; Professor Mackintosh [31] was superb. As time went on, I was very keen and ultimately achieved it, getting mental health accepted as one of the services that my Division in the Department would be concerned with. Because it started by being old people, the handicapped, anything we could pick up to do with families, which wasn't much because family welfare didn't exist as a subject you know. And I felt that it was absolutely essential that the PSW element should be there. Finally we accomplished this but many years after the Mackintosh Committee reported.

A.C. I have a specific question about all that...

G.A. Although I say I loved the Ministry of Health because it gave me freedom, the Ministry of Health also contained some of the blocking elements that can make life difficult. Now, at the very beginning the medical staff were prepared, or some members of the medical staff were prepared, to be very difficult, because they hadn't been consulted about my appointment. But fortunately the then Chief Medical Officer was a wide broad-minded understanding person, and once he woke up to the fact that we were there, he was nothing but helpful. So that was all right.

One element in the situation was the fact that the Board of Control, a body separate from the Ministry of Health, had been responsible for mental health services until shortly after the NHS Act of 1946 [32] when these became part of the general health service. The Board however retained responsibility for procedures related to individual patients, specifically dementia, and employed Women Inspectors for this purpose. This presented us with certain problems but gradually the Women Inspectors were transferred to the Welfare Division staff. The Royal Commission (of the Law Relating to Mental Illness and Mental Deficiency) recommended the dissolution of the Board of Control and this was duly carried out under the provision of the Mental Health Act 1959 [33]. Then the thing all began to fall into place, and I was able to appoint one or two psychiatric social workers to the staff. And there we were: one headquarters and one regional staff.

A.C. Well after the Mackintosh Report the APSW made an approach to the Ministry of Health about training arrangements for Mental Welfare Officers (MWOs) to which they received no response. Do you know anything about that?

The Mackintosh Committee did recommend training for mental welfare officers didn't they? The point I was wondering: was it you that was pushing for training of local authority workers inside the Ministry of Health?

G.A. Yes that would be true, but not very effectively I think. We certainly pushed for the appointment of trained people, but I can't remember that we pushed very successfully. There were committees at the LSE that I served on that were worried about training and extending it and so on. What happened was that a very senior administrator in the Department came to me one day and said "Would you think it helpful if we appointed a working party to look at all this question." Well I did, and subsequently, "Would you think it helpful if we appointed Miss Younghusband (Interviewee no 26) to chair it?" And I said, "I think that would be a first class idea." And so it was you know. But I can't claim to have suggested it. It seemed so much an answer to prayer that I couldn't have thought I would ever get away with it. But of course the deputy secretary was a different matter, a strong minded party.

A.C. When I spoke to Eileen Younghusband about the Younghusband working party, she described a lunch she had with you and some other people at the women's university club, when you told her you were going to set up this working party, and half way through the lunch asked her if she would take the chair.

G.A. No. Eileen Younghusband lunched at the Club with Enid Russell-Smith [34] and myself and Enid offered her the Chairmanship.

- A.C. Then she said, “But will I be acceptable to the local authorities?” And she said that the thing that then impressed her was that it had already been checked out with the local authorities. Who would do that?
- G.A. That would be done with administrative people.
- A.C. How do they do a thing like that?
- G.A. They would have consulted the Associations probably. The secretaries I should think of the associations.
- A.C. Oh like the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA). [35]
- G.A. I should think so, and the Secretary might consult the Chairman, I would think that would be how they did it. Funny I’ve not the slightest recollection of a luncheon. It seems a funny way of doing it!
- A.C. Being invited to lunch at the women’s university club. She spoke about it very vividly.
- G.A. Yes well of course, it would have gone home to her. And of course as is always the way with departments, when she suggested that I should be, as it were, the expert advisor, (I forget what they were called; consultant, or something), the Department had fearful worries over this, because they always want to be seen to be keeping out of it. And Eileen was determined and so was the deputy Chairman Robin Huws-Jones [36], they were determined that I should be in it. And I had to square the department that if I were permitted to do this desperate deed, I should be very careful not to appear to be advising them on behalf of the department, as to what they ought to do and say. This is very understandable you know, but it’s one of the things that are very wing-clipping to staff. I’ve seen it happening of recent years from the distance and am quite sure that after two social work staff of the Home Office and Ministry of Health came together and they were to be deployed, I’m quite sure that the reason they did virtually nothing for some years, was that the Department would have said “Be careful now, post-Seebohm [see note 43 below] we don’t want to be responsible for what happens.” And of course you can handle this situation but it wasn’t handled. I would never feel that I couldn’t have got past that in the department, but you’ve got to know your way around and it’s not easy for people who are new to know their way around. How can they? However, this is long after ’59.
- A.C. But it’s still absolutely fascinating from the social policy point of view to hear you saying that. What was going through my mind just prior to that was something to do with the informal network that existed at the time that I’m concerned about, and you remember I mentioned before. On the phone you said you had no memory of working with Eileen Younghusband on a made-up family situation in which they were visited by umpteen different social workers. This was 1952/53, and there was an attempt to do something about a family social service, and draw attention to the multiplicity of visiting that was going on.
- G.A. I said I had no recollection?
- A.C. She had no recollection either, until I prompted her and produced the photocopy of the article that she wrote and she said, “Ah yes, I wrote that with Geraldine Aves, but she couldn’t be in it for political reasons because she was with the Ministry of Health.

- G.A. Well I'm interested! I have no recollection of it but, certainly, you asked me a long time back this morning, if I was happy about the Curtis Committee Report. And of course I wasn't happy about the isolation of the child deprived of normal home life, from the family background situation. I couldn't feel that you could set up services in that kind of way. And that was something that I felt ought to have been discussed after the Curtis Committee Report. But you see people who serve on a committee, usually feel that it is impeccable doctrine. And if the people outside aren't given a chance to discuss it, and particularly if the Secretary, (in this case it was Miss [Mary] Rosling [37], of the Home Office) felt it was all perfect; if they'd spoken, they'd spoken, it never got discussed by the rest of us. And this was a major criticism from me because I didn't feel that that was the way to start.
- A.C. Can I press you a bit more about the network? Because for someone outside from a different generation looking in, the impression one gets is of actually a very small group of influential people who had ties by virtue of their common interest in social work, who also had sort of social ties, just knew each other socially, and could just pick up the 'phone and speak to each other. I wonder how important that kind of informal network was in shaping what went on a formal level. For example, the fact that you and Eileen Younghusband, although you can't remember, you must have actually discussed the Committee.
- G.A. Oh yes, and Robin Huwys-Jones. I think this is true. I think although the committee was open to get information from a very wide spectrum, the actual discussion of where to go and so on probably was in a limited circle. After all, when a committee is set up, you don't discuss with outside people what the committee's going to say in the end. You discuss their evidence, but you don't say, 'Do you think it would be right if we say X Y Z?' You have to decide that internally, and Eileen may well have said that a feature of that working party was that after the discussions she and Robin Huwys-Jones and I used to repair to some local tea-shop for what they were pleased to call a strong cup of cocoa, and really go over where we had got to, where we were travelling to and so on. That's quite true. And of course the fact that we knew one another well, made it extremely easy. We didn't have to keep saying don't quote me. We just got on with it.
- A.C. So how did the training issue become central? How was the need for training injected into the Ministry of Health?
- G.A. Well I think we were for ever talking about the need for social workers in the local authorities. It was a fact of life. At least it was an omission and it was the thing that would condition all other developments. So long as the local authorities didn't have that kind of animal, so long they would go on reviewing inadequate services.
- A.C. For someone like an outsider who's never been inside the Ministry of Health ...
- G.A. You mean, why did they ever grasp it? Well, inside the department you really have a very close working relationship. You have an assistant secretary who's the first person who concerns himself with policy. You have an under secretary who has a number of assistant secretaries working to him, and then you have the deputy secretary, (or at least this was how it was in my time). Well now, my contacts with the assistant secretary would also be a person I would have known very well, and persecute from time to time. So it simply ground upwards. It didn't grind downwards then. Now later in my life in the department when the position of the Chief Welfare

Officer was slightly better established, it might have ground downwards. Because before I left I was a member of the permanent secretary's weekly staff discussion of where the department was going, and I saw a little more of Ministers than I had before and anyway I knew better how to work in the department.

A.C. Did you all know those people within the department you were mentioning socially as well as professionally? Were they the people you could pick up the telephone to, or might meet at a party?

G.A. Not normally no. Actually I happened to know the then deputy secretary because she came out of the same university stable that I did. I don't think it particularly affected work— well it might have a little, a little yes. But not for parties no, although I did get to know the last permanent secretary well, we happened to have close unusual friends; and we did have social relations yes, which was very nice, but I don't think it particularly affected work. Inside the department you see it can be a very free and easy relationship. To the outside world it looks very hierarchical, to the persons working in it they are just colleagues.

Take the medical front which was always important in a way especially in a department like the Ministry of Health. Well now as I told you at the very beginning, there were people in the medical department who took a very poor view of this invention of social workers because they hadn't been consulted. Well it was very stupid of whoever handled my introduction to the Department. Anyhow, that first Chief Medical Officer said what I needed was a medical person who would be my link with the medical staff and he suggested a fairly new recruit to the department who proved to be absolutely staunch ally from then until my retirement. That person became the second Deputy Chief Medical Officer. And the later Chief Medical Officer, I must say, treated me extremely well. As time wore on he said "I shall regard you as the equivalent of one of my Principal Medical Officers and you will be invited to my staff meeting" etc., etc., Now he wanted, I think it would be safe to say that the whole of the medical staff, if they thought about it at all, wanted the social work element to be part of the Chief Medical Officers department. I was determined from the start that this would not be wise. And I resisted it successfully, until the end of my days, although sometimes it was quite touch and go. But I thought that once you got the social work service recognised as a part of the medical service, then wing-clipping could very easily set in, and it would be misleading to agencies outside who needed to preserve the idea of an independent social work service. And well I don't think I will tell you one or two very priceless episodes when it was nearly pulled off. But I defeated it!

A.C. Did you have to be tough?

G.A. No I had to be cunning.

It was periodically suggested by the Medical Department that there would be advantages in the social work element being a part of the responsibilities of the Chief Medical Officer, but I never could subscribe to this view, because I thought, quite apart from the importance of independence within the Department, it would not be a helpful prototype for social workers working in other agencies or authorities. And this was successfully resisted throughout my tenure as Chief Welfare Officer. Later of course the question could not arise.

- A.C. Thank you. Can I ask you a bit more about the Younghusband Committee? First thing is when I spoke to Robina Addis (Interviewee no 1) on the first occasion I spoke to her, she told me that she held out on the Committee for some kind of specialist training and eventually there was a weekend that you all had together, in which you sorted yourselves out. Nobody else has any memory of that controversy. I've spoken to Tom Tinto (Interviewee no 19) and Dame Eileen and two other people and they don't remember her holding out or this particularly being an issue. Or that the purpose of the weekend was for the Committee to sort themselves out over this. So I wondered whether you had any memories of it?
- G.A. I can't honestly say I have, I mean it doesn't follow that it didn't happen, because I don't remember it. I do remember the weekend and I would have said that the weekend had a much broader objective which was really to have an informal opportunity of discussing where they were going on the committee, generally and what their main objectives would be etc. I thought it was for that. Does Eileen remember it?
- A.C. No she doesn't.
- G.A. But does she remember the weekend?
- A.C. Yes.
- G.A. I mean she would have gone along with what I've just said wouldn't she?
- A.C. Yes. When I spoke to Robina Addis on the phone she said she would talk to me a bit more about it.
- G.A. You see this is what life does to one. You have a special interest and you see it as the main purpose, but I think it was a very much wider one.
- A.C. Tom Tinto and Eileen Younghusband told me another very nice story, I don't know if you can remember it, something else that happened on that weekend.
- G.A. Was it at Ashridge?
- A.C. They haven't told me where it was but it was to do with an idea which I think grew out of the conversation between you and Tom Tinto which led to the National Institute. Do you have any memory of that conversation?
- G.A. No.
- A.C. Well he and Eileen Younghusband say that you were both just chatting together and he was saying something to you about the civil defence staff college that you had at Sunningdale and you both just talking inconsequently about this, but gradually out of that came the idea that social work should have its own staff college, and that then being worked up in the report, came the idea that there should be a National Institute of Social Work Training [38]. Have you any memory of this idea of the civil defence staff college leading to the idea that there should be a similar college for social workers?
- G.A. As I sort of sit and wonder about it I can't say I remember it in any detail. If Tom remembers it like that then I expect he's right, I don't know. He might be.

A.C. The other thing that Robina Addis and Tom Tinto both mentioned was that there was some discussion as to whether or not the training, the course work on the new course could be done by correspondence and there was no need for people to be seconded to full-time training. Do you remember that?

G.A. No who's supposed to have thought of that?

A.C. Well it was the employers more who were concerned.

G.A. Well I mean it's the sort of thing that people do put up and that you shoot down! No I don't remember having taken it very seriously I must say.

A.C. I've got two more questions that I've put to everybody.

The first question is really about all the criticisms that were made of social workers of the 1929-1959 period. The reason why I've ended in '59 was because that's the year *Social Science and Social Pathology* was published. Barbara Wootton [39] I suppose for my generation epitomises all the criticisms that were made of those social workers at that time. I just wondered what you would say about it all now, looking back?

G.A. I've always been a supporter of having people who were trained. But I don't think I had for many years a very exaggerated idea of what kind of person would be produced by the said training. I had a built-in dislike, which I maintain to this day, of jargon, and for many years I thought social workers in this country were led astray by a good deal of the American approach to social work. This had of course a very important influence and much of the American thinking, and the people who were pioneering, was extremely sound. But there was a terrible overlay of what I regarded as pseudo- professionalism and Freudian jargon which I didn't care for, and I felt that this was something that one had to be aware of. Perhaps I should say in parenthesis that in the 1920s I suppose it was, I was offered the second opportunity to train as a PSW in the States.

Anyhow I didn't wish to go for the reason that I didn't wish to specialise and that I also had a real mistrust of half-digested psychological learning. When I was at Cambridge it was in the period when Freud was terribly fashionable, and young people used to say to one another, "Let me psychoanalyse you" and so on, and I was one of these stuffy types in the wings who said "I'll either study this properly or have nothing to do with it." And I think this feeling persisted with me, but then later on the training for PSW became more established it was one of the training courses for which I developed a very real respect. But I didn't want to go at that early stage and specialise.

But to go back to where we came in, I thought I ought just to say this about my attitude. Well I did attach a great importance to training and I used to say, "I want trained staff not because I think they'll be very remarkable, different, but I shall know what I can assume they know, and they'll go on learning from there on. "And I still think that's a very good attitude to any training actually. But in those days of course as I've said, the training was first the Social Science Certificate [40], and as it got more sophisticated, so it began to mean more. And I don't belittle the social science certificate because of course it was a first opportunity for people to concentrate on a particular element, a particular kind of contribution.

From my early years I always used to feel I wasn't quite nice to know because I hadn't taken that certificate. I recovered from this as time wore on but reflected that I should not describe myself as professionally trained because unless you'd done some of these other courses, you weren't. But then, for my generation of course, this would be irrelevant. And it's a funny thing. After all Eileen never trained did she? Well you see these old ones do what they do without the benefit of what subsequent people have, and they just have to do the best they can don't they?

A.C. Yes. And a very good best.

G.A. Yes with some people. Take Octavia Hill [41] you see; she would be another of that type wouldn't she?

A.C. There's a lovely story about Octavia Hill saying something about training. It doesn't matter how much you know, and no doubt there are a lot of very important things you should know, but in the end it's who you are that will matter.

G.A. Oh how true! Well I think this is something that sometimes escapes the trainers. Today anyway.

A.C. When I finished my sabbatical year and I started teaching again, the course I'm responsible for will start from that standpoint.

G.A. What actual subject?

A.C. I'll be teaching in the first year diploma I teach along with a colleague an Introductory course to social work, and in the second year I teach a special option on social work with the mentally disordered.

Do I take it then that during the early 50's, when Eileen Younghusband was working to get money from the Carnegie Foundation to get the Applied Social Studies [42] course going, you took a long standing view which was opposed to specialism. You would be along with the generic approach to people. You welcomed the course?

G.A. I did. Yes I did very much so. I welcomed it but I think it's one of things that kind of went wrong in the Seebohm Report [43]. The lack of recognition of the role of the specialist. That's another matter.

A.C. Yes. She said something similar.

G.A. Yes well I would expect her to say that.

A.C. But what would you say, if I can be a devil's advocate for a moment on the point that the sort of criticisms Barbara Wootton was making of social workers, in their apparent belief in their omnipotence, the capacity to sort out anything and everything and the point you were making yourself earlier about their misuse or naïve use of psycho analytic knowledge, was largely fostered by the generic movement and encouraged a generation of social workers to think and be like that. That all that came actually from the generic idea, Charlotte Towle [44] was imported from America to help get that course started wasn't she?

G.A. She was. But Charlotte Towle managed to steer a course which didn't land her in a sea of pseudo psychological work. Charlotte Towle was a realist and I think that she applied a great deal of common sense to the doctrines. I mean after all Charlotte

belonged to the Chicago school [45]. I would have thought, though I must admit that I never studied there, but I would have thought the New York School of Social Work [46] was far more liable for criticism on this score, than ever the Chicago school was. But you can't expect young people who are training to distinguish these things. And there's a fatal fascination about the jargon merchants you know.

A.C. Yes indeed.

G.A. I don't think it's fair really or at least I don't think it would have been fair in the early days, to say that our belief in the generic approach to training caused us to have a lot of people who were a bit off-beam psychologically. I don't think that would be quite fair, although no doubt there were some individuals who got the bug. But I don't think that kind of training as such was a result. On the other hand I think we must all see, much as we deplored Baroness Wootton's influence, and the kind of comments she made which were quite damaging really to social work – I don't think we feel that they are justified though we have to accept that for some social workers what she said was eminently true! I think that the most important change during my whole experience in this field has been the change between the assumption by social workers, and indeed by all virtuous citizens, that they know best. That they know what is good. That it is proper for them to have a moral judgement about things, and to impose that on others. The change from that to the non-judgemental, to the working with the client instead of telling them, that for me is the important change in this century. I think it's much more significant than any of these others. Because in those early COS days one of things that was so apparent. It wasn't a case of the social worker knows best, it was a case of the good citizen knows best. There was no question about it. If you've been living in sin then you've been doing wrong, and we'll tell you so and we will regard you as undeserving. It's as simple as that. Well that faded you see. It faded as training began to take over.

A.C. I've thought of something else. Was there a Ministry of Health view as to whether social work training should follow the model set out, as represented by the Carnegie [Social Casework] Course at LSE rather than the model represented by the Home Office Child Care Course and the PSW courses that existed?

G.A. Well I think I have to say that in so far as the Department had a view it would have been my view. There was nobody who would have set up in business as having a basis for judgement between these things. I personally thought generic training important, and the Department accepted this, and very modestly contributed to the financing of the Carnegie Course. But at that point in time I don't think anybody, I didn't think that it was one's duty to disrupt any other courses that might be going. And they persisted.

A.C. Can I ask one more supplementary a propos of something you said right at the beginning when we were talking about your coming into social work and you described your family background? One of the things that has impressed me going around meeting the people I have met, is the changes which have been brought about I suppose largely by 1944 Education Act [47]. The changing social structure of social work seems to reflect the changing social structure of the country as a whole as we go through this period, and one can't help but be struck by the number of people who seem to come from quite well-to-do backgrounds and that's very often

raised by my younger colleagues and certainly by my students as some kind of black mark. The thing that has struck me, particularly talking to the medical social workers, is that if they hadn't had that background they would never ever have held their own in the hospitals. I mean people like Helen Rees [48], if she hadn't been the sister of Tom Rees a doctor and also come from a well to do background; however would she hold up in the hierarchy of a hospital which was so strongly dominated by doctors who were of that social group themselves. And no one would ever make space for themselves, I wonder whether it's cheeky of me to ask, but whether coming from your background whether you would ever have held your own in the Ministry of Health as Chief Welfare Officer, if you hadn't had all the confidence that your background and education had given you. Whether that is a fair comment to make?

G.A. Well it's difficult really to be sure about this, because I think if somebody had come up from another social background, but had had the training and had carried out the studies, it's difficult to argue I think that they would not have made as good a job, if not a better one than somebody who came from a middle class background. The point is that they didn't exist. I think that's the reality. One is talking about a situation that didn't exist, because by and large they hadn't had the opportunity to take these courses and find their way. But after all one can think of quite a lot of people now in reasonably senior positions who in fact made the grade without having come from a middle class background, and who do jolly well. I don't know about doctors because they are rather more class conscious, but I don't think administrators would have cared a button where you came from. They're only concerned with the quality of what you can give and they're not interested particularly in your social attributes etc. That would be my view.

A.C. Thank you very much for letting me ask you that question.

Can I ask you my last question? It's a nice question but people find it a bit of a block buster. Looking back on your career what do you look back on with greatest pride or satisfaction? What do you look on as your greatest professional achievement?

G.A. I look on my 17 years of retirement as the great lively contributory period. Because if you use that period rightly you are at last freed from any considerations of diplomacy, tact, how it will appear to others, whether it will damage your career, and so on. You are a free person. And you ought to be able to operate like a quite young person who also has the same freedoms, but with the addition of a wealth of experience. So I think that provided you are fit mentally and physically, this for me has been a very interesting period, and I would like to think that some of the things I've done in this patch have really been constructive and a contribution. That's not to denigrate the efforts made in the other part of my career; and I am certainly am proud to have established social workers as a professional element in a Government Department. But I'm so conscious about the deficiencies, the missed opportunities, and so on of all that period when the challenges were very great, and I wasn't sufficiently experienced to know how to use them. Whilst now, in the last 17 years I can use all my experience and get things done. It is very interesting. You see I've had three decorations. The first was for war time social services, and that was almost as you might say, everybody who'd done anything had to be rewarded. But it's nice to have it nonetheless. You don't get it if you really made a total hash, but otherwise you do. Then a CBE when I retired, because of my general contribution to the social services. Well that I think was alright. I mean it was quite decent. But later

to be made a Dame because of your contribution to voluntary work seems to me really specially worth having. And so that's how I rate these things. Not that being made a Dame is terribly important, though it's nice in a way. But I did think it was good from the point of view of people who work in voluntary services. And that gave me very great pleasure, and still does.

A.C. Thank you very much.

EDITORS' NOTES TO THE AVES INTERVIEW

1 **Sir George Henry Gater** (1886–1963), educational administrator and civil servant. Joined Lancashire County Council as Director of Education in 1919 and then in 1924 to the same position in London County Council (LCC). At the time of Gater's directorship, the Labour Party in the LCC was working to promote equality of educational opportunity through the introduction of free secondary education and Gater administered the reorganisation of schools in 1925–8. In 1933, he became Clerk to the LCC and was knighted in 1936.

2 **Theodora Matilda Morton** (1872–1949), welfare worker. She gained experience of social work through working for the Charity Organisation Society (COS), which visited the homes of poor families seeking charitable relief. In January 1908 she was employed by the London County Council (LCC) as a temporary organiser of its new school care service. In 1914, the LCC divided the care committees between the education department and the public health department. Those committees under the education department were responsible for welfare issues like school dinners and clothing, while those under the public health department took care of medical inspections and matters of hygiene. Morton was appointed as a half-time principal organiser in each department. She retired from the LCC in 1930.

3 **The London School of Economics and Political Science** (informally, the London School of Economics or **LSE**) was founded in 1895, the moving Fabian spirits being Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Graham Wallas and George Bernard Shaw. The initial finance came from a bequest of £20,000 from the estate of Henry Hunt Hutchinson, a lawyer and member of the Fabian Society. He left the money in trust to be put "towards advancing its [The Fabian Society's] objects in any way they [the trustees] deem advisable". The aim of the School was the betterment of society through the study of social science subjects such as poverty and inequality.

The important role of the LSE in the development of social work education is referred to in several of the Cohen Interviews. The Charity Organisation Society (COS) sociology department - that had provided some theoretical training for social workers - was absorbed in 1912 into the LSE's new Department of Social Science and Administration. As a graduate, Geraldine Aves would have been allowed to take the Social Science Certificate in one year. The range of courses later provided by the Department was described by David Donnison in 1975: "The Department was teaching about 300 students at this time (1956): about sixty were taking the Social Administration options in the second and third years of a course leading to an honours degree in sociology, ninety were taking a course leading to a

Certificate in Social Science (later renamed the Diploma in Social Administration) and twenty five graduate students were taking the same course in one year. The Department also provided four one-year professional training courses designed in the main for graduates in social sciences: the Personnel Management course for about twenty five students, the Mental Health Course [established in 1929] for about thirty five students training for psychiatric social work, the Child Care Course for about twenty students training to work in local authorities' children's departments and involuntary child care organisations, and the Applied Social Studies Course for about twenty five students entering various branches of social work. A number of graduate students were reading for higher degrees, and various others were temporarily attached to the Department."

The School ceased to offer professional social work qualifications in 1998.

4 **The School Care Committee service** was set up in 1908 by the London County Council to provide a welfare service to London's school children, using large numbers of volunteers directly employed by the local authority. Published histories include: Willmott, P. *London's School Care Committee Service 1908-1989* in *Voluntary Action Journal* (6, 2 (Spring 2004, 95-110) and Jennings, H. (1930) *The Private Citizen in Public Social Work*. Allen & Unwin.

5 **Vera Mary Brittain** (1893-1970). Writer. *Testament of Youth: An autobiographical study of the years 1900-1925*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1933. The book was a best-seller on publication and earned Vera Brittain instant international fame. Based on her First World War diary and research notes, it quoted poems and letters by Roland Leighton and others, to represent both personal and collective experience. The book argued for peace, in the face of the coming Second World War, while respecting the bravery of those who had sacrificed their lives in the First.

6 **Ernest Aves** (1857-1917). Chairman of the Office of Trade Boards during the First World War.

7 **Samuel Augustus Barnett** (1844–1913). Church of England clergyman and social reformer. Studied at Wadham College, Oxford. Was later admired by generations of university men for bringing them into direct contact with the problems of the urban poor. He was a co-founder of the Society for Repressing Mendicity and Organising Charity (better known as the Charity Organisation Society or COS) in 1869.

8 In 1884 Samuel Barnett launched **Toynbee Hall**, the university settlement in Whitechapel, a residential colony of university men, committed to no particular religious creed, who would live among the poor as friends, neighbours, social-scientific observers, and practical social workers. He served as Warden until 1906 and he kept his connections with Whitechapel throughout his life, though he resigned from St Jude's in 1893 to serve as a canon of Bristol, by which title he is best-known to posterity. He was also actively involved in many initiatives to improve the economic and material conditions of the poor, including slum clearance and housing reforms such as the Artisans' Dwelling Act of 1875, old-age pensions, and labour farm colonies.

9 **Emma Knox Maitland** (1844–1923), suffragist and educationist, attended one of the first drawing-room meetings to discuss the issue of women's suffrage in 1866. In 1893 she joined the executive of the Women's Local Government Society (WLGS), a non-party feminist group established to promote the eligibility of women to serve on all local

government bodies. Canvassed for Elizabeth Garrett [Anderson, Elizabeth Garrett (1836–1917), physician] at Marylebone in 1870 during the first election for the London School Board which was created by the Education Act of 1870 and passed its responsibilities to the LCC in 1904.. She was also a school manager in the early years of the Board and took a practical interest in the administration of a college for working women.

10 **The Charity Organisation Society (COS)** was founded in London in 1869 and led by Helen Bosanquet (1860–1925), social theorist and social reformer and Octavia Hill ((1838–1912), housing and social reformer. It supported the concept of self help and limited government intervention to deal with the effects of poverty. The organisation claimed to use "scientific principles to root out scroungers and target relief where it was most needed". It organised charitable grants and pioneered a volunteer home-visiting service that formed the basis for modern social work. The original COS philosophy later attracted much criticism and, as Geraldine Aves observes, some branches were much less doctrinaire than others.

Gradually volunteer visitors were supplanted by paid staff. In 1938 the COS initiated the first Citizens' Advice Bureau, and continued to run CABx branches until the 1970s. The COS was renamed Family Welfare Association in 1946 and still operates today as Family Action a leading provider of support to disadvantaged families. [For more information, see Charles Loch Mowat *The Charity Organisation Society 1869-1913* (1961), Madeline Roof A *Hundred Years of Family Welfare: A Study of the Family Welfare Association (Formerly Charity Organisation Society) 1869–1969* (Michael Joseph 1972) and Jane Lewis *The Voluntary Sector, the State and Social Work in Britain* (Brookfield 1995). Michael J.D. Roberts, in an article 'Charity Disestablished? The Origins of the Charity Organisation Society Revisited, 1868-1871' in the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (CUP 2003, vol 54 pp40-61)]

11 **John Christian Pringle** (1872–1938), Church of England clergyman and social work administrator. From 1912 he was Assistant Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society (COS), responsible for the districts subcommittee, becoming Secretary to the COS Council from 1914-1918. He served as an expert investigator for the Royal Commission on the Poor Law from 1906 to 1907. After the First World War he became Rector of St George-in-the-East, Stepney, where he was involved in social work and a member of the Board of Guardians. In 1925 he returned to the COS as Secretary, and from 1936 to 1938 was Director and Consulting Secretary. (Edited from BL record and Oxford DNB Online entry, which also contains further information about COS.)

12 **Mary Ellen Richmond** (1861-1928). was a well known USA practitioner, teacher, and theoretician who formulated the first comprehensive statement of principles of direct social work practice. Concerned about the frequent failures of people to respond to service, in 1897 she delivered her historic speech at the National Conference of Charities and Correction, calling for schools to train professional social workers. In 1899, she published the first comprehensive presentation of practical suggestions: *Friendly Visiting Among the Poor*. Her most celebrated book, *Social Diagnosis*, was based on her lectures and on her wide readings in history, law, logic, medical social work, psychology, and psychiatry.

13 **London County Council (LCC)** was the principal local government body for the County of London, throughout its 1889–1965 existence, and the first London-wide general municipal authority to be directly elected. It covered the area today known as Inner London and was replaced by the Greater London Council in 1964; this in turn abolished in 1986 and eventually replaced in part by the Greater London Assembly and an elected Mayor.

14 **Sir Geoffrey Hithersay Shakespeare**, (1893–1980). Liberal politician concerned with several social issues including housing. After the war he remained active in Liberal National affairs, and outside politics was involved in various commercial activities. His memoirs were entitled, *Let Candles Be Brought In* (Macdonald, 1949).

15 **The Women's Voluntary Services (WVS)** was established in 1938 by Stella Isaacs (later Marchioness of Reading). It was initially formed to help recruit women into the Air Raid Precaution (ARP) movement assisting civilians during and after air raids by providing emergency rest centres, feeding, first aid, and assisting with the evacuation and billeting of children. It moved 1.5 million people out of cities in the early days of September 1939. By 1941, 1 million women belonged to the WVS. After the war it was transformed to become a leading voluntary organisation in the field of social care, the Women's Royal Voluntary Service in 1966; and in 2004 simply WRVS in recognition of the fact that 11% of its 60,000 volunteers were men.

16 **Hostels for 'difficult' children:** a survey of experience under the evacuation scheme. Issued by Ministry of Health. HMSO, 1944.

17 **Gwyneth Marianne Wansbrough-Jones** (1903-1979). Children's Officer and Child Welfare Officer, Essex County Council. Graduate of Newnham College, Cambridge and later studied social welfare at LSE. During Second World War was attached to Ministry of Health looking after the welfare of women and children evacuated around the country and had 1,600 children under her care. Deputy to Geraldine Aves at MOH. In 1956 was a member of a UK team visiting Australia to establish how British children sent there by churches and other organisations were settling down. Served as Hon Secretary to the *Aves Commission on the Role of the Voluntary Worker in the Social Services*. (1966-1969).

18 **The Curtis Committee** partly had its origins in a letter to *The Times*, published on 15 July 1944 by Marjory, Lady Allen of Hurtwood. Early in the Second World War, she came across a home for children who had been evacuated from town centres for their own safety and was horrified at the way they were treated. More than a million children had been landed on local councils that had inadequate resources to care for them. Her letter exposed the isolation, neglect, and lack of affection suffered by children in care and *The Times* received more letters about deprived children than any other single subject during the war.

In December 1944 Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, announced that he intended to set up a Committee to examine the plight of deprived children - but nothing happened. Then in January 1945, a 13-year-old child, Dennis O'Neill, was so badly treated by his foster father that he died. The case became a national scandal and Lady Allen published an emotive pamphlet *Whose Children?* (Faulk Press Ltd), which received national publicity. The next month Morrison named the members of two Committees, one for England and Wales and one for Scotland. After the Committee reported, the Children Act was passed in July 1948. A new local authority committee, the children's committee, was given statutory

responsibility for all children whose parents could not look after them. The State rather than voluntary bodies now led the system. Fostering was expanded, the size of residential homes reduced and childcare officers appointed, who became the nucleus of a new social work profession.

19 **The Poor Laws.** The only legislation protecting children prior to 1948 was the Poor Law which was a system of poor relief that developed out of late-medieval and Tudor-era laws before being codified in 1587–98. The history of the Poor Law in England and Wales is usually divided between two statutes, the Old Poor Law passed during the reign of Elizabeth I and the New Poor Law, passed in 1834 (The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 — An Act for the Amendment and better Administration of the Laws relating to the Poor in England and Wales -- which significantly modified the existing system of poor relief, changing it from one which was administered haphazardly at a local parish level to a highly centralised system which encouraged the large scale development of workhouses by Poor Law Unions.

20 **Dennis O'Neill.** The opening words of the book *A Place Called Hope: caring for children in distress*, by Tom O'Neill (Blackwell, 1981) who, when it was published, had just retired from his career as a residential social worker with Kent County Council are “On 9 January 1945 my brother, Dennis O'Neill was beaten to death by his foster-father (Reginald Gough) in a lonely farmhouse in Shropshire”. The trial of the foster parents two months later, at which their barrister tried to pin the blame on Dennis' brother Terence, prompted the local authorities concerned to ask the Home Secretary to set up a public inquiry (*Report by Sir William Monckton KCMG KCVO MC KC on the circumstances which led to the boarding out of Dennis and Terence O'Neill at Bank Farm, Minsterly and the steps taken to supervise their welfare, etc.* Cmd 6636 London: Home Office, 1945). This in turn led to the appointment of the Curtis Committee. Terence O'Neill published his first-hand account in 2010. (*Someone To Love Us: the shocking true story of two brothers fostered into brutality and neglect.* Harper).

21 **Lady (Marjory) Allen of Hurtwood** (1897–1976). Landscape architect and promoter of child welfare. During her life she became increasingly interested in the well-being of children, both in Britain and beyond. In 1944 she ran a campaign to expose the conditions under which children in institutions were living. She was chairman and president of the Nursery School Association, a founder president of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education, and a member of the Central Advisory Council for Education. In 1950, as liaison officer with UNICEF, she developed programmes for disabled children in Europe and the Middle East.

22 **Curtis Report.** [*Report of the Care of Children Committee / Presented by the Secretary of State for the Home Department to Parliament. September 1946.* HMSO, 1946 (Cmd: 6922). The modern statutory framework of public provision for deprived children was created following the recommendations of the Curtis Committee, set up in 1944. It was chaired by Miss (later Dame) Myra Curtis. The Committee's findings focused on three areas: the absence of a single centralised authority responsible for deprived children, who were left to the charge of five different authorities; the lack of properly trained staff; and the insensitive and sometimes excessive discipline of the residential regimes. It insisted on the need to establish personal links in the care of children, and recommended the appointment by local authorities of children's officers: qualified women who would specialise in childcare and take an interest in each individual child. This was important in opening and securing

the status of a new vocation for educated women. A single central department would have responsibility for maintaining standards in homes run by both local authorities and voluntary organisations. The recommendations were embodied in the Children Act of 1948, which vested in the Home Office responsibility for overseeing the care of homeless or deprived children.

23 **Dame Myra Curtis** (1886–1971), civil servant and college Principal, attended Newnham College, Cambridge. From 1915 onwards she had various positions in the Civil Service and in 1937 she moved to the Treasury as assistant secretary and director of women's establishments. Following her retirement in 1941 Curtis, who had retained her links with Cambridge as a member of the university's Women's Appointments Board, was elected principal of Newnham College from January 1942. In November 1944 she was appointed by Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, as a member of a committee chaired by Sir Godfrey Russell Vick to investigate conditions in remand homes administered by the London County Council. This inquiry began her interest in addressing the needs of the nation's distressed children and thus to her appointment to the Committee of Inquiry that bears her name. In recognition of her work on the inquiry, Curtis, who had been made CBE in 1942, was appointed DBE in 1949.

24 **The Association of Psychiatric Social Workers (APSW)** was the main professional body for social workers looking after the welfare of mentally ill people in the United Kingdom from 1929 to 1970 in which year Association merged with six other social workers' organisations to form the British Association of Social Workers (BASW). The archives of the seven organisations are lodged, and listed online, with the Modern Record Centre at the University of Warwick. R.T. Stacey and A.T. Collins (1987) assembled the *Catalogue and Guide to the Archives of the Predecessor Organisations 1890-1970* published by BASW.

25 **The National Council of Social Services (NCSS)** was launched in 1919 to bring various voluntary bodies together and into closer relationships with government departments. Its foundation was made possible through a legacy from Edward Vivian Birchall (1884–1916) who had played a large part in the evolving voluntary sector before he was killed during the First World War. NCSS became the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in 1980.

26 A **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)** is one of a network of independent charities throughout the UK that give free, confidential information and advice on money, legal, consumer and other problems. The origins of the modern Citizens Advice service can be traced back to the *Betterton Report on Public Assistance* (1924). During the 1930s, as preparations and plans were drawn up for the possibility of war, the voluntary sector's role was determined. The National Council of Social Services (NCSS) called a meeting in 1938 in which plans to establish 'Citizens Aid Bureaux' were devised in the event of war. The first 200 bureaux opened in September 1939 immediately after Great Britain declared war.

27 **Public Assistance Committees (PAC)** were created after the abolition of the Boards of Guardians in 1930, when workhouses were also abolished. The Committees inherited responsibility for the administration of poor relief in the U.K.

28 **The Women's Forum** was originally established in 1939 as the Women's Group on Problems Arising from Evacuation by the National Council of Social Services. In 1940 the

group changed its name to the Women's Group on Public Welfare in order to reflect its widened scope of interest into all aspects of the welfare of women and children. The 1939-1940 Evacuation group was chaired by Margaret Bondfield (1873-1953). Its members included Lady Allen of Hurtwood and the secretary was Letty Harford (Cohen interviewee no 11) of the NCSS. It produced *Our towns: a close-up: a study made in 1939-42 with certain recommendations by the Hygiene Committee of the Women's Group on Public Welfare*. London: OUP, 1943. The major achievement of the group in the post-war period was the publication of the report *The Neglected Child and His Family* in 1946, which highlighted the need for a new child welfare service.

29 **The National Old People's Welfare Council (NOPWC)** was founded in 1940 as a national body with Government funding to co-ordinate a range of local activities for older people. It played an important policy role in the late 1940's and in 1971 became independent of Government. Changed its name to Age Concern and later merged to form Age UK.

30 **Report of the Committee on Social Workers in the Mental Health Services.** [Chairman J. M. Mackintosh.] London, 1951 (Cmd. 8260). The Mackintosh Committee sat from 1948 to 1951, but by the time that the Committee had reported and made its recommendations, a working party on health visitors had been set up under Sir William Jameson. That working party took another three years to consider the matter and action had to wait until it was seen how the social workers in the mental health services would fit into the general picture of social work provision.

31 **James Macalister Mackintosh** (1891–1966), public health teacher and administrator. A graduate of the University of Glasgow. He established himself as an expert on rural housing and his reports on that subject are a permanent contribution to social history. In 1937 Mackintosh was appointed chief medical officer in the Department of Health for Scotland, and he was there for four years. In 1944 he became Professor of Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. From that base his interests and reputation expanded to the international stage and he made important contributions to the teaching and practice of public health in Europe and in the World Health Organisation.

32 **The NHS Act of 1946**, based on the White Paper of 1944, was the legislation that created the Health Service for England and Wales, fully launched in 1948. Parallel legislation was passed for Scotland and also for Northern Ireland. The two breakthrough principles were (a) that good quality medical care should be available to all citizens and (b) that all medical care should be free of charges at the point of delivery of the service.

33 **The Mental Health Act of 1959** was a landmark piece of legislation which codified and modernised the previous laws. Informal treatments became possible for most patients. Greater powers were made available to local authorities through the roles of specialist social workers and new services, the provision of residential accommodation and improved training.

34 **Enid Mary Russell-Smith** (1903–1989). Civil servant and college Principal. She joined the Civil Service in 1925, - one of the first women to enter through open competition - and joined the Ministry of Health as assistant principal. During a long career in that Department she rose through the ranks to become deputy secretary and one of her many

responsibilities was to co-ordinate provision for evacuees during the Second World War. After the Second World War she helped to introduce the National Health Service and allied social services. From 1950 she took charge of the general practitioners' services, nursing, and local health services division. Other divisions were later amalgamated as the home and health services division, for which she held responsibility until 1957. She worked on the hospital plan, launched in 1962 to expand hospital care, as well as on the health and welfare plan of 1963. She was made a DBE in 1953 and retired from the civil service in 1963. After her retirement she served as Principal of St Aidan's College, University of Durham, until 1970.

35 **Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA).** One of the local authority associations that merged in 1997 to form the Local Government Association.

36 **Robin Huwys-Jones** (1909-2001), social work policy maker and academic. In the mid-1950s, while Director of social science courses at University College, Swansea, Huwys-Jones joined, and later became vice chairman of the Ministry of Health working party (chaired by Eileen Younghusband) investigating the staffing needs of social services. The Report led to the establishment of a staff college to train the trainers of local social service staff, the National Institute for Social Work Training, and Huws- Jones became its first Principal. He was an active member of the **1968 Seebohm Committee** (Home Office. *Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services*. London, HMSO (Cmd, 3703)) which led to the 1970 Local Authority Social Services Act and the birth of new local social services departments in 1971.

37 **Mary D Rosling**, Home Office official, was one of two joint Secretaries to the Curtis Committee, the other being G.T. Milne.

38 **National Institute for Social Work Training (NISWT).** A Government appointed working party, chaired by Eileen Younghusband, recommended the establishment of a staff college to train the trainers of local social service staff. This was agreed and the National Institute for Social Work Training (often referred to as **NISW**) was established in 1961 with Robin Huwys- Jones (see note 36 above) as its first Principal. Over the next 40 years the Institute sought to raise standards of social work policy making, social work practice and management. Many of its functions were passed to the Social Care Institute of Excellence in 2002 and it was formally wound up in 2003. Many of its archives are deposited at the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.

39 **Barbara Frances Wootton** (née Adam), Baroness Wootton of Abinger (1897–1988). Eminent economist, criminologist and social scientist. After leaving Cambridge, Wootton took up a research studentship at the LSE and later worked for the research department of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress. Was Principal of Morley College from 1926, and Director of studies for tutorial classes at London University from 1927 until she became Reader at Bedford College in 1944 and Professor in 1948.

She published widely and her *Social Science and Social Pathology* (with Vera G. Seal and Rosalind Chambers. Allen & Unwin, 1959) remains a classic in the application of utilitarian philosophy and empirical sociology to the enlightened management of society. Alan Cohen's interviews focus on a section of the book ("Contemporary attitudes in social work") that was very critical of some approaches to social work and the claims made about what social work could achieve. From 1952 to 1957 she was Nuffield research fellow at Bedford

College. She was created a life peer in 1958 and was the first woman to sit on the woolsack in the House of Lords; and later held several senior public appointments.

Accounts of her life and work are available from her autobiography, *In a World I Never Made* (1967) and from Ann Oakley's biography *A Critical Woman* (2011).

40 **The Certificate in Social Science** was awarded by the London School of Economics usually after two years of study but could be taken by graduates in one year. During the life of the course lectures included Richard Titmuss on Social Policy; Morris Ginsberg on Social Psychology; Herman Mannheim on Criminology; Dr E J Anthony on Family Relationships; Claus Moser on Social Investigation; and Dorothy Gardner on Child Development.

41 **Octavia Hill** (1838–1912). Housing and social reformer. With financial support from John Ruskin, Hill was able to realise her ambition to establish improved housing for 'my friends among the poor'. She also became involved in the Charity Organisation Society (COS). In 1884 she was asked by the ecclesiastical commissioners, embarrassed to find that the church had become a slum landlord, to take on the management of certain properties, initially in Deptford and Southwark. In 1889 she became actively involved with the Women's University Settlement in Nelson Square, Southwark.

42 There was considerable deliberation at LSE and elsewhere about the introduction of a one year "**Carnegie**" **Applied Social Studies Course**, sometimes referred to as a Social Casework course, which was eventually established in 1954 and ran for four academic years. Lectures included Eileen Younghusband on Social Administration and Social Policy; Dr Winner on Problems of Health and Disease; Mr E.M. Eppel on Social Influences on Behaviour; Miss Bell on Services for the Handicapped; George Newton on Law for Probation Officers; Dr William Goodey on Neurology; and Professor Raymond Fisher on Group Dynamics. Donald Winnicott and Dr Stewart Prince also gave lectures.

43 **The 1968 Seebohm Committee and Report.** (Home Office. *Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services*. [Chairman, Frederic Seebohm, later Baron Seebohm (1909–1990), banker and philanthropist.] London, HMSO (Cmd, 3703) which gave birth to the new local social services departments in England and Wales in 1971. The Report recommended that an essential feature of these departments was that they should be unified in character; that service users would have to enter only one door rather than apply to several; and that services should be integrated under a single management structure, but accessible through local area offices. This inevitably led to comment and debate about the implied loss of specialist knowledge and expertise.

44 **Charlotte Towle** (1896-1966). Social work leader and scholar. Her major accomplishments included her work in creating a generic casework curriculum, her study of the educational process of training social workers and other professionals in human service, and her attempts to link the understanding of human behaviour and needs with the administration of public assistance and other public programmes.

She graduated from Goucher College and in 1928 she went to the Institution for Child Guidance in New York City where she supervised students and in 1932 became a full time faculty member at the University of Chicago School of Social Service where she taught until her retirement in 1962. Her initial assignment was to develop a sequence in psychiatric

casework to balance the school's emphasis on social welfare policy. She deeply influenced the profession of social work through the development of a client-centred casework curriculum which focussed on knowledge of human behaviour. Perhaps her most famous publication was *Common Human Needs* (1945), a manual written for public assistance workers. Government Printing Office ceased its publication and destroyed its inventory. Social workers and others protested the banning but it was not lifted. The National Association of Social Workers Foundation (NASW) subsequently republished the book. Towle's papers are located in the Department of Special Collections, Joseph Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago.

45 **The School of Social Service Administration (SSA)** at the University of Chicago specialises in the training of social workers and researchers in social welfare scholarship. It was founded in 1903 by, minister and social work educator, Graham Taylor as the “Social Science Centre for Practical Training in Philanthropic and Social Work.” By 1920, through the efforts of founding mothers Edith Abbott, Grace Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge, and such notable trustees as social worker Jane Addams and philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, the school merged with the University of Chicago as one of its graduate schools and became known as the SSA. It is one of a handful of institutions that helped create and define the social work profession and the social welfare field. The SSA’s first leaders were activists in the Chicago settlement house movement and concentrated on practical training for caseworkers. In its first decade, the faculty and students of The Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy were investigating such issues as juvenile delinquency, truancy, vocational training, and housing in the rapidly growing city of Chicago. In 1927, it began publishing *Social Service Review*, the first scholarly journal in the field of social work.

46 **New York School of Social Work** (now the Columbia University School of Social Work) is the USA’s oldest, with roots extending back to 1898 when the New York Charity Organization Society’s first summer course was announced in the *New York Times*. The combination of its age, the influence of its staff and its size led to the School becoming a repository for much of the reference literature in the social work field. The Summer School continued as the primary training course until 1904. That year, it expanded the coursework as the first full-time course of graduate study at the newly renamed New York School of Philanthropy. The name was changed to the New York School of Social Work in 1917 and in 1963 to its current title.

47 **The 1944 Education Act** –and its equivalent Act for Scotland - set out a detailed plan of reform for the whole primary and secondary school education system, including wide ranging new duties for local education authorities. This was a major and radical upheaval and it fell to the post-war Labour Government to implement the changes, including the raising of the school leaving age to 15, the abolition of fee paying for the grammar schools and the introduction of three types of secondary school – grammar, secondary modern and technical.

48 **Helen Rees** (1903--1989) influenced important developments in social work education in England and Australia. She read English at Newnham College, Cambridge and then in 1928 trained as a hospital almoner, serving for five years at Sheffield City Hospital. She went to Australia in 1933 to take up an appointment as Almoner at the Melbourne Hospital and as Director of Training at the Victorian Institute of Hospital Almoners. She held four important posts in Australia from 1935 to 1941 when she returned

to England to study medical social work under wartime conditions and its role in post-war reconstruction. For the next twenty five years she was strategically involved in most of the major British developments in social work education and practice. From 1942-- 46 she was Head Almoner at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford and then became Director of Studies at the Institute of Almoners in London until 1958. (Source: *Australian Social Work* March 1990, 43 (11), 46-47).
