

1963-1974: Post-graduate and research fellow: learning the tools of the trade.

My school and undergraduate training had lasted (starting at the Dragon) for over twelve years. My post-graduate training was as long again, three years for a D.Phil., two years for an M.Phil., three years for a Ph.D. three years as a Research Fellow. The school days had provided me with my questions, the nature of the great transition to modernity, the loss of the enchanted world of earlier times, the extraordinary birth of the industrial and capitalist world. The next twelve years would provide some of the tools and methods for making a contribution to trying to approach these mysteries.

I remained at Oxford for my D.Phil. and the dominant figure for the next three years was my supervisor Keith Thomas, about whom I have written more fully. (q.v.) He shaped my life and work very greatly. I made many new friends and keep in contact with some of them still. For a while I came under the influence of the historian Hugh Trevor-Roper and used to visit him and gossip, but we later fell out over the history of witchcraft. The other major intellectual influence at this time, though somewhat indirectly was Edward Evans-Pritchard, the great anthropologist. I met him a number of times and devoured his writings, especially on witchcraft. His deep philosophical approach, beautiful clarity and wide vision inspired me and helped to turn me towards anthropology. He examined my D.Phil. on witchcraft (with Christopher Hill the Marxist historian) and I remember spending an inspiring day with him at his home on Headington Hill.

Then I went to the London School of Economics to do a two-year conversion M.Phil. into anthropology. L.S.E. at that time was an exciting place to be. No only in 1967-8 was it the centre of the British wing of the student 'revolution' which was also occurring in Paris and German, but it was in its golden autumn with a notable set of anthropologists of the older generation, Raymond Firth, Lucy Mair, Isaac Schapera, Maurice Freedman, as well as younger stars such as Robin Fox, Anthony Forge and James Woodburn. I was supervised in a laid-back way by Schapera and learnt a good deal from Raymond Firth in his famous seminars. I also got to know Lucy Mair a little through helping her proof-read her book on *Witchcraft*. Mary Douglas at University College for a time invited me to become part of her inner circle and we were all excited by her work and that of Edmund Leach. But it was my cohort of fellow students, many of whom later became distinguished teachers, who were my close friends and inspiration: Peter Loizos, David Seddon, Andrew and David Turton among them.

Three thinkers in other departments at the L.S.E. also had a very considerable influence. One was the demographer Chris Langford who remained a friend. The second was the classicist and historian Keith Hopkins whose writings I read with great excitement and whose brilliant lectures I attended (not knowing that one day I would share a set of rooms with him in Cambridge). Finally, there was the philosopher and sociologist Ernest Gellner. His influence on me has been so great that I have written separately on him. (q.v.)

After two stimulating years I went to do my Ph.D. in anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Again there were the remains of the great generation, John Middleton, Adrian Mayer, Lionel Caplan (who influenced me particularly, with his wife Pat, both as a friend and as a co-worker in Nepal). But the person who was to

have the most profound impact was my Ph.D. supervisor, Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, about whom I have written separately. (q.v.)

On returning from my fieldwork in Nepal, Gill and I settled down, I to write up my Ph.D. in Yorkshire, where I met the main later influence on my life, Sarah Harrison (q.v.) After a year or so I was elected to a Senior Research Fellowship in History and went to King's College, Cambridge. During the three years of my Fellowship, particularly traumatic (through marriage breakdown) but exciting years, I met a number of the to-me dazzling figures at King's, among them Dan Mackenzie (co-discoverer of tectonic plates), Sidney Brenner (involved in the discovery of D.N.A.), the Provost, the anthropologist Edmund Leach, the philosopher Bernard Williams, the eminent retired philosopher Richard Braithwaite, with whom I shared a room and others. The person who had organized the competition I had been elected under, John Dunn the political scientist was always kind, and Meyer Fortes, the retired William Wyse Professor of Anthropology and his wife likewise. I got to know the anthropologist Stanley Tambiah and a number of distinguished historians, economists and others. . I began to get to know the delightful Mary Wraith, mother of the distinguished mathematician Gavin Wraith, who became a family friend and typed several of my books out.

Among those who started to exercise a decisive influence from this time onwards were two who I have written about at greater length, Jack Goody (q.v.) and Peter Laslett (q.v.) They shaped my path. Among younger colleagues, Martin Ingram (who was to marry my first wife Gill), Richard Smith, who deeply influenced my view of medieval England, and other members of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure were also very influential. I first met the eminent zoologist, Sir Gabriel Horn, who has, with his wife Prill, become a friend and fellow villager. The most important relationship, however, was with Dr. Ken Moody, a Fellow in Mathematics and Computing. The story of that relationship is best told separately, as it is in the section on 'History and Computing'.