

A Sociological Analysis of the Teaching of Boys  
in Physical Education in Secondary School

Keith Lyons

From one of the pupil interviews. It is a beautiful day, Wednesday, 25th June 1986 and I am at Rectory School. The first lesson is under way and I would like to talk to some of the pupils in the first lesson.

So what I want to do is talk.

Robbie and Justin

**K.L.**        **Robbie,** how old are you?

**Robbie:**    Twelve, coming on thirteen.

**K.L.**        **Justin,** you're the same are you?

**Justin:**    I'm thirteen.

**K.L.**        What I wanted to do is talk about two things really. Firstly, what makes P.E. enjoyable for both of you and then secondly, what can make it better?

**Robbie,** do you want to start?

**Robbie:**    It's all the sports we do, ...like javelin. I like that because I think I'm pretty good at it ...and running. I like doing that.

**K.L.**        So you think the summer sports are better than winter sports are they?

**Robbie:**    Yes. A lot better.

**K.L.**        **Justin,** are you the same, or would you rather do things like football and cricket?

**Justin:** No. I like javelin but I'm not that good at just saying "alright, I'm going out for a run you know." I'm alright at sprint but if I'm playing football I can run around a lot but otherwise I can't really... and I like rugby. But I think that P.E's. better if the teachers are a bit... sort of nice, you know. I like Mr. Smallcombe and Mr. Limerick; they're alright but sometimes Mr. Dare is a bit of a pain.

**K.L.** I'd better tell you that I'm not being a spy. I'm not going to go back and tell them.

**Justin:** I don't mind if you do or not.

**K.L.** No, no, but I wanted to tell you that, so at least you knew. Because what I wanted to do was to get their view, your view and just look at the two views together. Do you think the same **Robbie?**

**Robbie:** Yes, I like winter sports, like football. Mr. Smallcombe and Mr. Limerick are brilliant P.E. teachers; they join in with what we're doing and everything. They just don't boss you about. They tell you do something. They do it before so that they can do it.

**K.L.** Is there a difference between the teachers in P.E. and the teachers in the classrooms do you think? Is it a different type of lesson?

**Robbie:** Yes, they're more enjoyable. Yes. Sometimes the teachers help you more than when you're in a class you know.

**K.L.** Does it help not having to do exams in it?

**Justin:** Yes.

**K.L.** You know there's going to be a fourth year, fifth year option in P.E. Would you chose that. That's the G.C.S.E. isn't it?

**Both:** Yes.

**K.L.** That's fine. So, if I was to ask you now, well **Robbie** first, what's the one thing you enjoy more than anything else in P.E. or games?

**Robbie:** Javelin, discus and shot-putt.

**K.L.** First count throwing and things; and Justin, what do you like most?

**Justin:** Well I like football, softball, cricket and that sort of thing.

**K.L.** If that's the case, if I could ask you to put your finger on it, what would be the thing that makes those activities you've chosen most enjoyable?

**Robbie:** Well, we're so used to it because we do it a lot. And we just enjoy it.

**Justin:** And cricket because it's more of a team game you know. You can join in with other people, whereas when you're in a class you can't very well talk to everyone else. But when you're doing a team game it's different.

**K.L.** What effect does the weather have upon you enjoying it? Does the weather affect whether you enjoy it or not? Remember that in the winter it's very, very cold and wet.

**Robbie:** Yes, in the winter it does because it's cold and wet and everything. But in the summer if it just rains a bit it doesn't bother me because it makes you cool and I just carry on.

**K.L.** Justin, what about you?

**Justin:** Yes, in the summer I don't really mind if it rains, just as long as it isn't too much. But I prefer it when the sun's out and it's hot, and like there's a small wind to cool you down.

**K.L.** Well, how about now then the worst thing you do in P.E., the least enjoyable thing in P.E?

**Robbie:** Tennis.

**K.L.** Is there anything you dislike more than anything else Justin?

**Justin:** Yes, I don't really like rounders that much anymore but...

**K.L.** Do you have to do that?

**Justin:** No, not now but we used to. I suppose softball's a bit like it but it's better.

**Robbie:** I love rounders.

**K.L.** Do you? Why's that?

**Robbie:** Well, it's just enjoyable. You've got the team and you're trying to beat the other team. It's just great.

**K.L.** Now, if I train teachers to teach P.E., what advice would you give them about being a good teacher? What kind of thing should they be doing? Do you remember the Irish teacher who was here? Did he teach you at all?

**Justin:** No we didn't have him at all.

**K.L.** Well, he's the kind of student we're training.

**Robbie:** Who? Mr. Newbold?

**K.L.** No, Mr. McGovern.

**Both:** No we didn't have him.

**K.L.** If we're giving them advice about how to teach, what's the best thing a teacher can learn, to do with pupils? How can they make things much more enjoyable for you boys?

**Justin:** To join in and be friendly with the children.

**Robbie:** Yes, because if they can be friendly with the children, then the children can be friendly back. And then you can get on with your game or whatever you're doing.

**K.L.** One thing I've noticed, in the winter, is that a lot of people don't take part in P.E.

**Robbie:** I don't mind taking part in the winter, as long as I've got a track suit or something. If I haven't got a tracksuit, then I can't take part.

**K.L.** Are you allowed to have tracksuits?

**Both:** Yes, in the winter you are. In the summer they don't really like it but they still let us so it's alright.

**K.L.** So the teachers I'm going to train: I ask them to be friendly and join in. Sometimes though teachers take over games and the teacher tries to score all the goals or does all the bowling. How would you stop that happening.

**Justin:** When we were playing cricket, Mr. Smallcombe went round all the groups checking everything was alright and he'd say "Is it alright if I

take the next over?" and if we'd say "no", then it'd be alright and he'd go on to the next group.

**K.L.** How about things like discipline? Again I think it may be different in P.E. than other subjects. In the old days people used to whack people round the heads in P.E. and laugh about it. How do you think teachers could keep control in P.E. What's the best thing they could do?

**Robbie:** If we muck around too much then they say "go and get changed." They warn us. We have about two warnings you know and then they say "go and sit down" or they give us a 'D' merit.

**K.L.** Often people talk about 'D' merits. Is that a useful....?

**Robbie:** I don't really think they make any difference.

**K.L.** People just accept it do they?

**Robbie:** Yes, because all it is is minus five merits but all you have to do is stay in on a Friday for forty-five minutes and I don't really think that's too bad myself. What I think is worse if they tell you to sit out and not to take part.

**Justin:** If we have football or something and Mr. Smallcombe or Mr. Limerick play, they hit it towards the goal and then they pass it to one of the children and let them score. They don't take it on all by themselves.

**Robbie:** Yes, and they go on one side for a while and then on the other, which is quite fair. And with rugby and all them.

**K.L.** The other thing I wanted to talk about is how you chose people to work with in your lessons. You know how you often have to have partners, or teams. How do you chose partners or teams?

**Robbie:** You just stand in a line and go 'one two, one two'.

**K.L.** Would you rather have that, or would you rather chose friends?

**Robbie:** No, I'd rather chose friends. because it's more enjoyable with them. But you muck about with them too much.

**Justin:** But I prefer picking just a couple of my friends and pick some people I know are good at the game.

**K.L.** Now some people say that you chose the friends that you've had from Junior School. Do you find that? That the friends you have here are friends you had at Junior School or not?

**Justin:** I've only got a couple of friends that I go around with from my Junior School. But mainly I go around with people I didn't know before, like Robbie and Jamie.

**Robbie:** There's one person I go around with that I used to go around with at my Junior School.

**Justin:** I like long jump.

**K.L.** You know when you came here, with it being a new school, is it very hard to make new friends?

**Robbie:** No not really. Because all you have to do is go around with people who know everyone.

**Justin:** Really, it's the teachers who help you make friends. Because you're in the class and they say "go and give out the books" and people put out their hands and there you are. You make friends with some of them afterwards.

**K.L.** Do you think that P.E. helps you work together better than other subjects?

**Robbie:** Yes, I think so.

**Justin:** Yes, it's better in other subjects to work in a group or together.

**Robbie:** P.E. gets you friends too. What they do is put you in partners, and if you don't know the other ones, you just get to know them.

**K.L.** Yes. That's okay if you've got good friends you're working with but how do sort out.... Obviously there may be people you don't like in a group. If a teacher picks you to go with someone you don't like, how do you get over that? Do you just not work or do you try and change or...?

**Justin:** We ask if we can change. If they say no then there's nothing we can do about it. But I still

take part. I just don't talk to them if I don't like them. I just play the game like I normally do but it won't be so enjoyable.

**K.L.:** In most groups there's usually one person who doesn't get on with other people or is a bit hopeless. What happens to them in the end? Do they end up by themselves? ...separate?

**Robbie:** I think if someone isn't any good at anything, then they should play with someone good. But that person should be more friendly to them you know.

**K.L.:** You know we give teachers all sorts of ideas on what to teach. If I was to ask you what you'd learnt in the two years that you've been here, either have you learnt new skills, new rules... games. Have you learnt a lot, or not much?

**Robbie:** Nearly all the games.

**Justin:** We've learnt quite a few things. I've learnt a lot. In my Junior School we didn't do some of the sports we do here but we did some. Likewise did javelin, football, rugby and cricket but we didn't do softball. We only did rounders there.

**Robbie:** I've learned a lot because in my old school we hardly did anything. All we did was running. Or something like rounders. I've learnt all the others, like softball.

**K.L.** And the last thing, before you have to go in. Most of us know how to cheat at various things. Sometimes we have bad knees, or we've lost our kit. How do you know how to get out of the P.E. lessons?

**Robbie:** How? Just say you've lost your kit or you've hurt your leg. It depends on the teacher really, and what they're like. But I have hurt my leg, I've got a great big lump on it.

**K.L.** And how do you feel about having to have notes for P.E?

**Justin:** Well I think that's fair because you could just be putting it on.

**K.L.** Do you think people bunk off a lot in P.E?

**Both:** Yes.

**Robbie:** If I didn't like it, I'd just go off somewhere else.

**K.L.:** That's for me a big problem. Because if you have a lot of people bunking off then it may be a sign they're not enjoying it. They're not enjoying either the weather or what they're being taught. Do you ever have a chance to say to teachers if you're not enjoying it, or if you'd like to be doing something else?

**Justin:** Yes we do. They understand you and then they sort something else out.

**Robbie:** Mr. Dare does. Sometimes you say to him "I've hurt my leg" or "I havn't got my kit" and he says "have you got a note" and you say "no," he'll say well that's a 'D' merit. Mr. Smallcombe and Mr. Limerick they're alright like that because if you havn't got a kit and they know you havn't got the proper kit then they'll let you off. Or if they know you've got a bad leg, then that's alright.

**Justin:** Yes, but they might want a note on the next day or something mightn't they?

**Robbie:** Then they'll say "well bring me in a note next week or tomorrow...." or whenever you know.

Danny and Adrian

**K.L.** What I want to ask you first of all **Adrian** is how old are you, thirteen or fourteen?

**Adrian:** Thirteen and a half - fourteen soon though.

**K.L.** Right. Well the idea of my interview is to talk about P.E. All I wanted to know was two questions. Firstly, what made P.E. very good and secondly, what made it very bad. **Adrian**, do you want to say anything about that?

**Adrian:** Well it's good because you keep fit, it's enjoyable. It's a lesson that you can enjoy, playing cricket or something like that.

**K.L.** **Danny**, do you think the same?

**Danny:** Yes, the same.

**K.L.** Now it's nice in the summer when it's very warm but I remember being here last term when it was very, very cold, raining and frosty. Is P.E. difficult then or not enjoyable?

**Adrian:** Yes. It's difficult because you're all cold and you stand around a lot.

**K.L.** Okay. So that's the bad side of P.E?

**Both:** Yes.

**K.L.** Now how would a teacher go about making that bad side better?

**Adrian:** By warming them up, running around a bit.

**Danny:** Yes, going for a run.

**K.L.** How about the lessons themselves? What would you do in the lessons to keep you interested or keep you warm?

**Both:** Just run about a bit to keep warm.

**K.L.** You see it's difficult, in say your group, the third year group, there are people like yourselves who want to play and people who don't want to play. So sometimes those who don't want to play mess up the whole thing. So how would you go about making those who didn't want to play, play? What could any of the teachers do to make it better for everyone?

**Adrian:** Give them a chance with the ball, something like that. Just give them a chance.

**K.L.** What about the people who havn't got any skill at all, they can't kick it or throw it. How would you cope with that do you think, if you were a teacher?

**Adrian:** Well, you'd just make them join in with the others.

**K.L.** Do you remember you filled in some questions in that room one day. I didn't show it to the teachers then because it's nothing to do with them really and I won't be telling them what we've talked about, but the question I wanted to ask you was, what makes a good P.E. teacher?

**Danny:** Plenty of skill, teaches well and you can understand it well.

**K.L.** What do you mean by "teaches well?"

**Danny:** Well sort of some teachers they just tell you to get on with it and some teachers explain how you do it, where you go and things like that.

**K.L.** **Adrian,** do you feel the same?

**Adrian:** Yes, I feel the same.

**K.L.** How do you feel about demonstrating things? You know when sometimes a teacher might say "now Danny or Adrian show me what to do?" Is it okay or....

**Danny:** Yes, it's okay because if you don't do it they're going to think you're chicken or something but if you did it you've got the bottle and that.

**K.L.** How about things like if I was to ask the teachers or trained teachers to keep good discipline? How would the teacher keep control of the lessons.

**Adrian:** By watching everyone and if they're messing around then warn them or tell them off and if it happens again then send them off.

**K.L.** **Danny,** the same?

**Danny:** Yes, I suppose so but it's like bribery really isn't it?

**K.L.** Yes. That's a good point. The opposite side to bribing is to give 'D' merits. Does that work do you think?

**Danny:** No, not really. They should give us something harder, like detention or something like that.

**K.L.** In the winter, how would you go about.... When I was here in the winter, a lot of people didn't take part; they didn't have their kit or didn't want to do it....

**Adrian:** They did have their kit but they didn't want to do it because it's too cold.

**K.L.** So is that when they'd bunk off?

**Both:** Yes.

**K.L.** So when do people decide to do it, in the morning or when they get to the pitch or...?

**Adrian:** Yes, when they get to the pitch. Sometimes in the morning they'd decide in the class and not take their kit.

**K.L.** Do you bunk off, ...not you obviously but do you think people bunk off with certain teachers only so they only do it when certain teachers are around?

**Both:** Yes.

**K.L.** Now you've got three teachers here havn't you: Mr. Smallcombe, Mr. Dare and Mr. Limerick. Have you had all three teaching you. Do they all teach the same or differently?

**Danny:** Mr. Limerick is not that good. He just tells you what to do and you get on with it. Mr. Smallcombe and Mr. Dare tell you the most about it, they explain.

**K.L.** Do you think you've learned a lot since you came here from Junior School?

**Both:** Yes.

**K.L.** One of the things I did want to ask you two because you're friends was, were you both friends at Junior School?

**Both:** No we didn't know each other then. We made friends in the first year here at this school.

**K.L.** I wondered. Sometimes I watch teachers set up groups for practices - 'one two, one two', like that. Does that work, or would you rather work with friends do you think?

**Adrian:** Work with friends.

**Danny:** Sometimes it doesn't, because you can't get on well when you're with your best friends because you muck about too much and things like that.

**K.L.** Does it help sometimes to learn if you've got a friend with you?

**Adrian:** Not really.

**K.L.** What would happen if say there were people in the group you didn't get on with, and you're paired up with them?

**Adrian:** You wouldn't get on with them, they'd keep annoying you.

**K.L.** So how would you get over that?

**Danny:** You'd just ask if you could go with a different group, if they'd let us.

**Adrian:** Or just ignore them.

**K.L.** Do you end up doing very little then though if that's the case, when you're with groups that....

**Adrian:** Yes, people that mess around.

**Danny:** Sometimes yes.

**K.L.** When you think of all the activities you do,  
what do you like most in P.E?

**Both:** Football, cricket, tennis and basketball. Rugby  
is quite a good one. They're all really good.

**K.L.** So, you like team games?

**Both:** Yes.

**K.L.** What about individual sports like running,  
javelin and discus?

**Adrian:** Yes, I like that.

**K.L.** Is there anything that you don't like at all?

**Danny:** I don't like the shot-putt that much.

**Adrian:** There isn't anything that I don't like.

**K.L.** Last question. If I was to give one piece of advice to these teachers that we're training about helping to teach P.E., what would that advice be? What one thing could you say to a teacher to make them a better teacher?

**Adrian:** Be a bit harder I think.

**Danny:** Don't let them get away with things

**K.L.** All the time, or when you first start?

**Danny:** When you first start teaching you should be quite soft because you don't know what they're like but once you get to know what they're like and their habits, you just correct them.

**K.L.** That's excellent. Would you like a quick playback?

This recording of Danny and Adrian was made in the changing room down at the games field at the end of lesson four on Wednesday morning. I gave Danny and Adrian a lift back to school after the interview.

Alan

**Alan:** There is actually some writing on (inaudible) and how some people see that as a threat. For example, if I was to say that Mark was useless or Ed was useless, I couldn't be completely open with you.

**K.L.** Yes, that's right. In using a tape recorder...first of all I want to ask your permission to use it if that's o.k. and then say that the tapes are in confidence, and rather like with the pupil, although I was mentioning it as a joke, I didn't do it lightly and I wouldn't disclose things. There is nothing on the tape really that is of interest to other people.

**Alan:** I understand the situation. Coming back to my point: the Deputy Head was talking quite unprofessionally when I did my research and I was writing it down, and he said "don't put it down".

**K.L.** "Don't quote me", yes.

**Alan:** But he obviously didn't understand that as soon as he was out of the room, I was writing it all up!

**K.L.** But I think we would agree that part of the research contract was that I was going to...I'm buying a word processor in a few weeks time and I'm going to start typing and then you can have a look at what I write because it would be of interest to you....

**Alan:** It'll be fascinating to see what you are going to write.

**K.L.** Well, given that we've known each other for so long, I don't really know anything about you other than you've worked here for...ten years?

I was at Whitton in 1975....

**Alan:** That's when I came to Rectory. September '75.

**K.L.** I came in September '74. Goodness me, that's eleven years next September.

Can I ask you your age for the record?

**Alan:** Thirty-two last week.

**K.L.** Aha! I was thirty-four four weeks ago. In that case, we're very similar in terms of our sporting experience background, because culturally we are at the same time, whereas Ed and Mark would have come six years behind me and you're only two years behind and therefore at least when I talk about Aston Villa in the Cup Final, it's possible that you might have remembered that!

The first thing I wanted to ask, because there is evidence that we are what we were, not what we became at teacher training.... I wondered whether you had any background experiences within the family or with friends, which were very sporting?

**Alan:** Within the family: parents, uncle, grandfather; virtually nil. My uncle dabbled in football, dabbled in cricket. I come from a very workman-class background but my brother, who is thirty-four now, is a sports fanatic. Basically he used to take 'little brother' along with him, so I was heavily influenced by my brother, who in actual fact one could say is a frustrated non P.E. teacher, who left school with three C.S.Es., grade fours, who is self-employed but plays sport every weekend, Saturday

and Sunday and lives and dies by sport. So in some ways, I think I was pushed into P.E. teaching by big brother who really regretted not doing that himself.

**K.L.** And was there a wide range of sports you took part in with your brother or...?

**Alan:** Well, very briefly, my brother was a boxer, a runner and a rugby player, who moved into football much later. Because I played football, it was probably one of the only sports with which I didn't go along with him. But yes, a wide range of sports. No, that's not true. Myself? Very limited in fact. A little bit of athletics, which was nearly all running, football and rugby.

I was heavily influenced also by somebody who... the local football manager... within the community, a guy called Ivor Griffith, who heavily influenced people from about the ages of eleven to seventeen. I suppose you could say he was my mentor.

**K.L.** He wasn't a teacher? He was just somebody...?

**Alan:** No, he played senior amateur football and took children from the age of about eleven through to when they were sixteen or seventeen.

**K.L.** And where was that Martin?

**Alan:** That was in Hampton.

**K.L.** Was he Welsh?

**Alan:** No, he was English. Ivor Griffith.

**K.L.** Was there a team Hampton Rangers then aswell?

**Alan:** No, this was called Hampton and then in the end it affiliated because we were a very successful young side, we were taken over by Hampton Football Club and became part of Hampton Football Club and then he retired. But there is no doubt he was a mint influence. There were two influences, Ivor Griffith and my brother.

Within school there was virtually nobody at all. Ewart.... Did you go to him (inaudible) to ...?

**K.L.** No. Were you there when Ted Gummer was there, ... was it Ted Gummer?

**Alan:** Yes. Ted Gummer was in my view appalling, absolutely.... And that affects my teaching, because we didn't do any cricket and we didn't do any cricket at college either. No tennis, no athletics in terms of field events. We were given a rugby ball to play with in winter and quite often a football to play with but he couldn't be bothered to come out at all. Absolutely no coaching at all; no inside work at all. No badminton. No gymnastics to speak of, so that made my expertise limited although I've tried to widen my expertise to a certain extent, there is no doubt about it, there are areas of P.E. where I am extremely limited.

**K.L.** Yes, well that mirrors my experience completely because even though I was in North Wales, I had a similar experience in terms of a low content of P.E. and influences from outside the school. Certainly with the family not being active at all, and in fact I put down here "any particular members of school sport" and presumably yours are all negative in terms of the influence of teacher being.... Was there

any influential sports teacher or sports model at Thames Valley?

**Alan:** No.

**K.L.** No academic teacher who took over?

**Alan:** Well, there was Clive Morley in the Sixth Form. We were one of the.... to be notorious.... There were one or two very good rugby players when I was there, ...Bob Wardell. When I was in the first/second year he was in the Sixth Form. There was Burkett.... We were the year.... We won one game a season, we did well. We were having 80 points put passed us every time. But Clive Morley, you remember the teachers by the way? Clive Morley actually did get us together in the Sixth Form and we won as many as we lost. But he didn't know the stuff. He just showed an interest.

**K.L.** He's now a referee!

**Alan:** Is he?!

**K.L.** Yes! A local referee and very still involved in meetings and everything.

**Alan:** Well, that's right. He was... he showed an interest which no one else had done. I don't even know who \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ rugby side in the first, second, third and fourth years. We just took ourselves really.

**K.L.** That really covers all of it in one swoop because I mean it is hard to know how one survives that kind of experience with any kind of positive memories but....

**Alan:** Well, in so far as I gained a great deal of success in football at an early age, say eleven.... I was playing \_\_\_\_\_ level football matches at eleven. I was playing regularly on Saturday for rugby even though we were getting thrashed at the time. I was representing the school at running, these type of things.

**K.L.** It's interesting to know you were given that kind of experience. Did you want to be a P.E. teacher at Thames Valley or was it something that came later?

**Alan:** No. Academically I was quite poor at Thames Valley. We had one hundred and forty in the year, and at the end of the year you were

put in rank order and at the end of the first year, I came one hundred and thirtyseventh! I cried my eyes out! But that continued for several years. Half the problem was actually because French was compulsory throughout the five years and because I was so appalling at French, - I've still got hang-ups about foreign languages, - it had a knock on effect on the other subjects and I began to shine a bit more in the fourth and fifth year. It was only really when I was allowed to drop languages and doing my three 'A' levels, that they thought that I was a bright.... I think they were completely mistaken!

**K.L.** A late developer, yes!

**Alan:** They were completely mistaken but they did think that I ought to go to university and do history and I was enormously influenced by the history teacher. Over-influenced by him, because I read history books left, right and centre and when my 'A' levels didn't come up to expectations and I couldn't get into university because of those 'A' levels, I had as a back-up applied to Borough Road College. So, I went there because I failed to get into university. With no conception of what going to Borough Road College meant! None at all!

**K.L.** So the decision to follow initial teacher training in P.E. more or less came about by ...?

**Alan:** As a second choice....

**K.L.** Well that happened to me aswell in terms of my university career. I was going to do languages and ended up doing politics! Often though these fateful events can change the whole course of your life.

When it came to choosing Borough Road, was that simply because it was a local college, or had you been advised to do so by a teacher?

**Alan:** I think it was my brother again, a strong influence. He said go along to Borough Road in Croydon. I can even remember him giving me a lift there! You know it was one of those things where "oh, do I really have to go?" In fact I can't even remember filling in the form. I just turned up there. Basically, out of the forty-two in my year, I was the only one who wasn't an International of some description or other. I got in I think because they were very impressed with my reference from school, my academic reference from school.

**K.L.** I've put down here that given that you've such memories of school, Borough Road is, or was highly regarded as a P.E. college. Do you have positive memories of that?

**Alan:** Very negative again. I thought it was a poor college, in so far as the breadth of curriculum was extremely poor. We did four or five hours of gymnastics every week for three years. We did athletics throughout the summer for six or seven hours. Our football course, over three years, was timetabled for ten hours. Because of truancy and lateness we did six hours. The rugby course was timetabled for ten hours. After truancy and lateness we did two hours. That was Bernie Wright, the rugby guy. To his credit he was badly treated but even the planned timetable.... Somebody did a survey.... I think forty percent of all practicals and lectures were cancelled. No cricket. No tennis, no compulsory tennis. No compulsory trampolining. One benefit; they taught me how to swim well. I left school when I could swim about six widths. After three years I could swim over a mile. That helped me with summer time jobs aswell. But it was an appalling record, that's all you can say, of how to plan a curriculum or how to give P.E. teachers width of experience.

Now the actual standard of lecturing was extremely high: Jimmy Biddle who was there - exceptionally good. He wouldn't survive in a Comprehensive School because he was so abrupt a person. Tommy Tranter was pretty good at theory. He was more down to earth but I remember in our football finals, when we had practical finals, I was given a football which had no air pressure in it at all! And there was I in front of external examiners kicking a football that had no air in it! Now in ten years of teaching, I've never given a child a football like that, which.... Tommy actually arrived ten minutes late and tried to pump them up!

**K.L.** Did you do the four year course or the three year course?

**Alan:** Three year course. I wasn't good enough to get on the B.Ed. but the Certificate course but inaudible but God, you should've seen the education department! (inaudible) well to be honest with the P.E. department, I slated them quite rightly in my opinion about their truancy and their lateness and their planning of the whole curriculum. But on the plus side, the lectures they arrived to, they were very good. The practical sessions were very good, when they were there. The theory side: there

were weak areas and there's no doubt about it but by and large they were good, they knew their stuff! They just weren't interested in ....

**K.L.** Students were an inconvenience?!

**Alan:** Yes! Students were an inconvenience! And the education... the people didn't know their stuff or anything.

**K.L.** Some people researching into this era of P.E. teaching say that the most important part for most student teachers was the teaching practice. Did you find there were very good professional models available for you, either in the college or in the schools to help you develop your teaching skills?

**Alan:** Well yes, you would have been influenced by personalities. The Jimmy Biddle abrupt type of way of talking to people heavily influenced me. I don't think it's the right approach, but he probably got away with it; at that time he went to a Grammar School teaching. He could do it college. In theory, I mean even twenty year old, eighteen stone heavies in theory can. Jimmy Biddle influenced me greatly.

The two teaching practices I did undoubtedly the first teaching practice, the chap influenced me a great deal. That was John Doughty at Abbotsford in Ashford. Yes, he influenced me a great deal. The second one not at all. That was also in Ashford, called Ashford Grammar. He was a hopeless P.E. teacher (inaudible).

**K.L.** So, much of this that you're saying is that often, when we're teaching, we revert to how we were taught but you have no role models other than Jim and this person to fall back on. Some people say that as teachers, of P.E., we revert to how we were taught.

**Alan:** Oh yes, well then you've got to keep moving (inaudible) When I first came here we didn't get on at all but I will claim that that's because he manipulated me as somebody who didn't have a set way of teaching, or molded. I called him Mr. Nixon at first! You think I'm joking but I'm not! He didn't sort of say, "call me Mike". He was a pure authoritarian figure and, within my teaching style, immensely influenced by him.

**K.L.** Did you get a chance to watch him teach, or...?

**Alan:** He was more team-teaching in that day. We only had the gym and those fields, with sixty down at a time and two of us to, if you like, sort it out. Team-teaching is not the right word but we might both of us... one of us go on the run and the other one be... so we were living out of one another's pockets. But I think it was probably year four before calling him Mike! I was teaching in about my third year teaching, might've been my second year and we were doing the five star awards. It was my free period and I was busily trying to add up the totals and I was doing it out in the sun and he asked me to go inside! He didn't think it was right for me to be out, - I couldn't work properly! So you can see him as a bit of an over-domineering person but heavily influenced my style of teaching undoubtedly.

**K.L.** So was that the house style at Rectory? Was there a house style of teaching? A dominant style of teaching at Rectory?

**Alan:** When I first came here Rectory was in such a mess, they'd looked to people like Mike Nix, not only for the P.E. but they looked to him, and one or two other teachers and very quickly me, very early on, to be the disciplinarians at the school. There were about "hatchet men"

and you'd quite often see me walking down the corridor with plimsolls in my hand! Going back to '75, '76 and '77. Oh yes.

**K.L.** That's right. You ended up being a kind of Riot Squad; if there was a problem, you were wheeled out.

But that brings me on really to Section Three because we are from an age which was different I think than teachers coming out from St. Mary's or West London now; quite a different kind of experience that we had and I wondered, you've already talked about Mike Nix first, and we talked briefly in the Spring Term about this, are you aware of the style of teaching you employ now, which is either evolving or has evolved...?

**Alan:** Yes. I still say it is heavily Mike Nix influenced and more abrasive than I would like it to be but the style I try and play if you like is the 'old boy', been here a long time, seen it all and done it all and I play with that. I deliberately, (I don't know the childrens' names that well) deliberately play on that as well, even children who are good at P.E. So I play on that. I think that might help the other P.E. teachers as well. So I use that but ... I'm too abrasive. I don't

need to be at times but then, in my defence, I think I'm under pressures in areas, the physical moving, also the epidemic teaching I do. Whereas Mark and Ed are completely different but then they can cope with those pressures more internally than I can.

**K.L.** I think it varies from person to person.

I wondered, in the style you employ, given that I've only seen you work with a group, whether you felt your style was age and ability sensitive, that when you are in company with either second year, third year, fourth year, fifth year, mixed ability groups, whether your work and your style change to meet those or was there a basic framework which you use...?

**Alan:** Yes, I think. A basic framework. I do. Again I'm not too sure if that's like when you saw me sorting out the fourth year exams. There were one hundred and sixty children sent there and there was only room for one hundred and ten. I mean, sat down, you might have some redhead or somebody who's six foot two and thirteen stone who doesn't want to sit down. He's not going to sit down and that attitude is the same with eleven year olds and fifth years. I think that comes with time. I remember

when I started teaching, it was sit down to first and second years and I'm not too sure about the first years. Then you get to a situation with third years, fourth and fifth years and it's the same with everybody. Whether that's right or wrong I probably am unconscious of age and ability.

**K.L.** One of the problems we all have, particularly having seen that dreadful Spring Term, is motivating people to take part and actually bring their kit along to every lesson and be involved. Are you aware of any particular style of motivation that you have or strategy to motivate pupils to be involved in the lesson?

**Alan:** It's negative motivation I think. First of all I think that there's no doubt in my mind that from years gone by kids are at the situation at our school is very good, particularly as, I say that but there are problems with the fourth and fifth year, there is no one as far as I can see who never brings his P.E. kit out of kicking against the P.E. teachers or the system. There has been in years gone by; there's been droves of them but I don't think so. It's one of those situations where you're having to chip away at it all the time. I mean you've said to me before and I agree with you, that the

biggest problem for P.E. teachers is what have you got half of them doing and half of them not? I mean it is the number one priority. My way of dealing with it is very negative in so far as bellowing at them, moaning at them, nagging at them, particularly in a group situation. In fact I handed a boy today, quite rare I think for me, but he complained to the head because he's not been bringing his kit a lot and I showed him up in front of the others, deliberately being nasty but he thinks he'll bring his kit next week.

**K.L.** Which pupil was it?

**Alan:** It was a third year boy. He's fairly new, comes from Iran, don't know his name but I showed him up in front of the others. He went away, kicked and had a huff. He went and saw the Head, the Head was busy, (I only found this out afterwards). To be fair, after about half an hour of him being angry I then went over to him and had a ten minute quiet chat but not a "come and tell me your problems Johnny", it was more a "look, I want your P.E. kit. I expect you to bring it". This sort of negative way of dealing with it. But I think that in that way I think it is complimented by Ed's gentle talk or soft touch. When I say 'soft touch',

they probably get better results like that, because it's a more quiet, soothing approach.

**K.L.** Would there ever been a time when you gave up on a pupil and say "well this isn't worth the trouble"?

**Alan:** Oh yes. I have been known to say that. But I don't think in practice that that occurs. I think we're in a situation I have been before now where I send two or three letters home with no effect. So the (inaudible) or headmaster to do something about it.

Now the group you saw there were several children who weren't bringing their P.E. kit. Now within five years experience, the answer is I will do something about it. But there have been times when I won't do anything about for a term or even two terms. There have also been times when I've not done anything about for a year. Now I've let children.... I mean this kid from the second year now, he came the first year, he was trouble and didn't want to do P.E. There's another kid in the first year now, so I say okay don't do it. And I will leave that child for a year not doing P.E. but then we'll work on him then. But I find if you push too hard,

you have a negative effect. I'm not saying this is run of the mill. This is quite unusual. There was Brewer in the first year who's now in the second year and he does it now. I'm not too sure I'm going to have the same success with the other one in the first year called Gibson B\_\_\_\_. Coming back to the group you observed, it's one of those situations: it's not a conscious decision to sort them out but sooner or later, over the year, you're going to have five or ten minutes where you've got that \_\_\_\_ P.E. and you home in on them. But it could go easily for two terms before that's done.

**K.L.** That's often a big part of our day, sorting out the no-kitters or whatever. Within the lesson itself I wanted to ask, when you're teaching, and I remember one lesson particularly when you'd almost, - I could see it click that you'd decided to change the focus of the lesson, that it was going to work better a different way. How does a teacher become aware of the atmosphere in a lesson?

**Alan:** Pure intuition. It was this year I think and I was in the changing room down at the fields. I'd finished a lesson and had put my feet up but I could smell trouble. There was something

going on. I couldn't see anything. I couldn't hear anything but there was something wrong and there was a fight just going to start. They were working to meet behind the.... And it's a sixth sense, a third sense? You just begin to feel.... You walk into a classroom and you know that that mess or whatever.... You know that the children are going to be receptive within seconds. Well I think I'm tuned in to that.

**K.L.** How do you know when to intervene? Is it just this whole intuitive thing, or is there something, a piece of behaviour that triggers off ....?

**Alan:** What do you mean, to change the activity?

**K.L.** Yes. Is it the inactivity itself or noise or petulance.

**Alan:** Yes, I think it's the whole thing. You can also, particularly if you know the children, home in on the children and you can see when one or two of them get restless. Well, they always get restless but when you see one or two children who don't normally get restless, then you know to chip in. Sometimes you can chip in too quick. You see, you've got to be

in a situation I think when you've given them activity, you've got to lengthen that activity out. There's always a danger, particularly I find that with students. They come in and it's six activities, one for four minutes, another for four minutes and the children haven't really tried and tested that activity.

So again, it's a whole collection of things, rather than any .....

**K.L.** Well again, because I hopefully was going to get some feedback to the student teachers aswell, if one was to ask you, what the perfect lesson, if one were to attain that would like, or what an ideal course through the year would be, could you say what elements would be in that, for either a very good lesson or for a very good course \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ ?

**Alan:** Well I think there's more than one of skinning a cat so the idea of the perfect lesson would depend on the teacher's personality and the childrens' response. I mean, at the end of the day, as far as I can see, is have the children learnt, have they progressed, over that lesson. I think that one lesson is very difficult to be a good rule. I think half a term's work is a better guide.

We had a student here last year from Bahrain and I didn't really see the lesson of that and in actual fact I thought his lessons were quite poor. But I took the children...(inaudible) and it was really good. You could see that they had been well coached. And you could see that they had made, since when I had last had them and when he had had them, that they'd made some really good advances.

So I think, although it sounds naive in some ways but if you see them at the beginning and you see them at the end, - I'm exaggerating to say that you don't have to see the middle bit, but you can see that they've made some progress.

**K.L.** Again, that leads onto a further question.

I keep giving my own examples but in my first year at Whitton: I was threatened by a pupil with a javelin and I also very successfully embarrassed a fat boy in gymnastics. Those were key moments for me in changing my style of teaching, that I first had a situation that was confrontational and another one which was embarrassing.

I wonder whether you had.... I'd put down here "can you identify key moments or important lessons that you've learnt personally during your teaching?" Whether there were any key moments that you felt had changed your style, or instances.... For instance, today could have been one....

**Alan:** Yes I know. I don't.... Certainly my first teaching practice gave the... was not particularly good and I went to college able to reflect on the disaster I had. Again I think it's been my personality but I mean the massive disaster I had.... There were instances there with a complete lack of a sense of humour. "This is the work we've got to get through. Now do it!" You know, the children will accept it but I still thought I'm not going to be liked then and there were instances then. One first year class I remember, when the children were loving it! I mean, it was a riot! But that was because I had no humour. They just wanted to see a sense of humour from me.

Within this school, there is no doubt about it, the long memories or instances are few and far between. Years can go by without me having really.... You know, when I'm on my death bed, with the many memories from Rectory School,

the memory of that first year teaching practice drove home things; very few things from this school I would say.... I think in terms of your style of teaching, you are heavily influenced by the Head and two Deputies, what they accept and what they don't accept. For example, how you deal with the children: they set the tone. I'll give you one example. Perhaps in (pastoral?) last week, a child that's giving the whole school problems at the moment,... last week spat at another boy in a class. This week he got hold of all his work and ripped it up in front of his face. Now I couldn't find, going through all the right channels of these series of instances, couldn't find the year tutor so I went to find the Deputy Head. I said I think it was getting serious, "can't you deal with it?" So the tone of the situation is drawn by them, so in that situation you know what's expected of you.

Does that answer your question?

**K.L.** Yes, it does.

**Alan:** I'm regretful of the fact that I've got no.... You can come up with funny stories.... I mean very few....

**K.L.** I think that for me I can remember them because they were so traumatic. Traumatic in the sense of the way that I actually changed the way in which I dealt with the situations....

**Alan:** I think one of the reasons why I haven't got the same is because of Mike Nix and the fact that we were team-teaching about sixty children at a time.

There were one or two instances which could have been explosive had Mike not been who he is, but he was around, damping them down.

**K.L.** That day, Bob Wardell saved me from the javelin and I think that.... In fact the child died some weeks later from leukaemia so I was trying to rationalise his behaviour in those terms but I think I actually made it.... It was a javelin lesson and I couldn't possibly let him behave the way he was behaving. It was the end of my first year, my probationary year and the whole class was kind of willing him to stick me with a javelin!

**Alan:** Mike Nix saved me once or twice from actually "killing" children because they were being so abrasive....

**K.L.** Yes, well that's why I came into the notes here to ask the question about how does one assess one's teaching? Do you do it individually or is there some kind of collective focus, or an evaluation of what you do?

**Alan:** Looking through the broad spectrum of looking at some teachers: some teachers never learn by their mistakes. Some teachers never assess their ability. I hope it's reflective thought, your own reflective thought, your own conscience. If you have a bad lesson, you'll go "Oh God, it's awful" and you'll examine your conscience. I used to lie in bed thinking about it. Now I hope I've got this situation (superb?): get up really early in the morning and sit in the bath! But it's very important. It's nearly all... and this I think sets the difference between good teachers and poor teachers, some teachers could be very good in terms of ability but never reflect on, sometimes, your reflections and not the true perception; but if you don't actually go away and think about what you're doing, the disasters that may have occurred, usually can be negative like that but can be "that was a good lesson...."

If you don't think, I'm afraid that particularly in this school, there are several people who don't give it a moment's thought after nine and three thirty.

**K.L.** Some people might argue that because we had, or before the Action, had more contact with the pupils. There was a special kind of bond between P.E. teachers and pupils. I'm not sure whether that's the case or not but we had more contact and therefore were able to reflect much more about our relationships because we had more chance to build them....

**Alan:** I don't think we had more time to reflect upon them .... sorry, go on....

**K.L.** Sorry, no, it's just that I thought you had more data to work on in terms of reflecting on your teaching and I wondered what you thought about what was the significance of extra curricular work, or the absence of it during the Action. Did that change the relationship between you and your pupils in terms of your professional work?

**Alan:** There's no doubt about it in my mind, because I'm now quite heavily engaged in athletics, the bond you build up with some children is increased through doing extra curricula activities. I'm walking passed the corridor and the children are looking at me. Fair enough, my way of communicating is not through official channels, but through unofficial channels: stopping children in corridors. But I'm walking passed the corridors and the children are looking at me to see whether I'm checking them over. They're wanting to be beckoned and the actual aura you have walking through the school is up-tempo if you're doing things after school. There's no doubt about it....

**K.L.** Basically I wondered how significant extra curricular activities were in lubricating teaching both within and outside the lessons?

**Alan:** It affects your lessons badly. That's probably because... another reason is because I've got... I'm doing exams at the moment in my lessons. In the last two weeks I've come (poorer?) because I'm quite heavily engaged in these (inaudible).

I remember Mike Nix and I (inaudible) were non-existent. It was theatre football, because we were so busy doing other things so that's the negative aspect.

I think in terms of reflecting on your teaching, I think extra curricular activities can impinge on your teaching, rather than improve it. When Mike and I were working "full out", there did come a time when there was virtually no difference between what we were doing after school and what we were doing in school, because we were getting so many children involved and in any one class there must have been eight to ten children doing extra curricular activities.

So, lessons were just a continuation of extra curricular activities but whether you could keep that up.... I mean, that was just a year when we had the whole school buzzing. And I remember Clive Neathey, (inaudible) his cane and he couldn't believe what was going on in the school in terms of P.E. But whether you could keep that up; you ought to keep that up. Now the (inaudible) has come along, I wonder whether that might have some benefits in so far as quite a few children are doing things out of school that they would not have done. They've joined football clubs; they've joined athletic clubs;

they've joined rugby clubs. I wonder whether it's the P.E. teacher's job to introduce these activities within lesson time and introduce them to the community aspects.

I'll never forget.... I could give you.... There were a number of children who did extra curricular activities for five children and then retired, and the second one, (I'm talking about memories).

I remember having a football team. We'd got into the minibus and I was driving towards Richmond and I said, "who are we playing?" I couldn't remember who we were playing! They didn't have a clue, even though the team we were playing and the place was up on the noticeboard and we had to drive all the way back here to find out who we were playing! In fact, we were playing in Ashford; we were playing Abbotsford and that shows the mentality of that, what I call ludicrous situation.

Each football team was playing thirty-five, forty fixtures a year. There were twenty basketball matches a year; athletic fixtures every week: stupid!

(whole next sentence inaudible)

You can do cricket at school 'til you're....  
Children need to know what a proper game of  
cricket is like, with umpires, stumps, the lot,  
and it's very sad but what the answer is....

I do feel that the answer is P.E. teachers taking  
children out into the community and I think  
that that makes them more mature aswell.

**K.L.** Before you're too late for athletics, I'd like  
to ask you two more questions.

The first one is, and an impossible one to  
answer: if you can identify one aspect of your  
work you could improve, what could you do to  
improve your teaching or your work do you think?

**Alan:** If I could identify one aspect?

**K.L.** Or is there anything that you could do to improve  
at all?

**Alan:** The P.E. teaching side of it?

Yes. The mental pressure I put on myself and  
the children at times is the one aspect. I  
am conscious of it but don't seem to.... It  
is the mental pressure that you build up, the  
anxieties and stress.

**K.L.** That seems particularly to link to multi-site facilities where.... It seems to be a feature which everyone shares.

The second question was double-headed really.

Given that you've been here for so long and that you have looked for alternative posts, what would you least miss about the school if you were to leave?

**Alan:** Least miss? I don't think... and this is going to sound awful, I don't think there would be very much I would not miss in this school.

I remember when I went to Exeter and there's no doubt about it,... constant contact with people, children particularly.... It's like a drug and I had terrible withdrawal symptoms in the loneliness of my study but I recognised that and got over it once and thoroughly enjoyed it, so I am sure that I'd get over that.

Again, and there's no doubt in my mind, that I've lived and breathed playing in this athletics team for the last three or four weeks and although it's been hard work I've enjoyed every moment.

So in terms of.... I enjoy the extra curricular activities. That's what I'll miss the most, the extra curricular activities. But as that's not going on much, that much, at the moment, very little.

**K.L.** That's answered the question very neatly in both ways.

I'm sorry Alan, the tape ended there.

Could you answer the questions on the sheet we  
discussed in your own time. Thanks.

Ed

**K.L.** Thank you first of all formally for offering to be interviewed and to check that you don't mind being taped.

Some of the questions in Section 1 may be personal; I don't really mean them to be intrusive but I wonder if I may ask you how old you are for my records...?

**Ed:** Twenty-seven.

**K.L.** That's the same as Bob which is interesting. Then I wondered whether perhaps we could go through.... What I'm trying to get at in Section 1 is: I wondered how much your early years down in the South West have affected the way you see P.E. and Games now. So I wondered firstly in terms of your early experiences of sport... with those people down there... family, friends, neighbourhood, media and school.... Can you think of....

**Ed:** Well certainly I've always had a positive feedback from home. Father's obviously interested in sailing and in sport in general, although he doesn't participate to that greater extent but then I've always been pushed,... well not

pushed but helped; whenever I've found an interest, I've always been supported. So in that sense I've been very lucky and I think through that, I gained experience at school. It helped, having parents who actually taught at the school. It gave me chances to use facilities that I might not have otherwise had. The teachers were, I felt, very good and very supportive. I don't know really how much natural talent I had but I felt that I was being pushed. I became successful at sport and obviously being successful, it makes you interested to a greater extent.

**K.L.** Was that for sport in general or did you find that you had particular interests from a very young age... sailing obviously...?

**Ed:** No I think it was sport in general. That's one thing I think I'm lucky in, that I didn't specialise in one sport. I found that I've tried every sport that has been offered to me and I've enjoyed every sport that has been offered to me.

**K.L.** Did you grow up in Helston?

**Ed:** Yes I did.

**K.L.** Having seen the area, it's kind of a wild area and the facilities may be limited. Did you find there were lots of things to do, or did you have to travel a long way to do lots of the activities?

**Ed:** To do various activities yes. Some activities could be dealt with within the Helston area. Swimming, until I was about fifteen: there wasn't a pool in Helston, so I had to travel and in actual fact I couldn't swim properly until I was about fifteen. Although I sailed a lot, I stayed on the water rather than in it and then Carnbrae Leisure Centre was about ten miles away from Helston. That was the nearest big centre for swimming, tennis coaching, badminton coaching although Helston School was very well equipped and had a very large sports hall, two gymnasiums....

**K.L.** Were you involved in teams, or activities outside school whilst you were still at school?

**Ed:** Yes. I played tennis for the local tennis club. I played badminton for a local club and rugby. And I was also a member of the local sailing club.

**K.L.** And did your parents used to take you?

**Ed:** My parents used to take me.... Well, in fact the badminton and tennis were both in Helston and so I made my own way there. Sailing obviously I had to have a lift because it was over in Falmouth. Rugby I could get to myself but as far as coaching went, my parents used to take me to badminton and tennis coaching as that was quite a way away.

**K.L.** And both mum and dad were supportive of you...?

**Ed:** Oh yes.

**K.L.** Because I'm slightly older, the media effect on me was much smaller. Are you aware of anything in the media affecting your interest in sport at all; the coverage of sport on television, or were you so active you naturally didn't see any television?

**Ed:** Not at an early age, I don't remember it affecting me. It used to be a treat to stay up and watch Match of the Day and things like that. Apart from that, no, not really.

**K.L.** How about things like the Olympic Games or Cup Finals or...? Were you aware of those?

**Ed:** Aware of them yes but I don't think they played that much....

**K.L.** And the next Section: I put down 'Memories of School Sport', which I think we all have and you've already mentioned that the teachers pushed you towards achievement. Was there a teacher or teachers of P.E. who...?

**Ed:** No, I think that all the members of the P.E. department were gifted in some way and helped me in some way. The head of P.E. was a footballer and also a good motivator; another member was a good rugby player and pushed me in that way, so all of them were helpful.

**K.L.** I have put in at the bottom of this Section, whether you consciously or subconsciously modelled yourself in your teacher-training or in your teaching career on anybody you met during your own experience of teaching. There is some argument that we all teach the way we were taught.

**Ed:** I think that certain things you do that you know have worked for you at school.... you'll try. I don't think consciously, to be honest; it's just something that you picked up. I've never really said "I must do this..." the same way as somebody else.

**K.L.** There were two things I was thinking about. Firstly discipline, which was quite austere in some schools some time ago... and the second thing was content. I wondered whether in some way, the way the lessons were structured or the way you were disciplined yourself, you've used that at all?

**Ed:** To be honest... you don't... you remember occasions.... I don't really remember how the lessons were structured in that much detail because I was just involved in what I was doing.

**K.L.** But were you aware at the time of any distinction between playing and skills being taught? Was there any distinction between...? Can you remember...?

**Ed:** Oh yes. There would be a time when you were being taught things and a time when you were actually involved in a game situation.

**K.L.** How about.... We talked last term about health-related P.E. Was there any sense in which that was taught without that label? Did you know how to look after yourself or what to do in terms of warming-up, mobility...?

**Ed:** No, not really. Rugby was really the only one where there was a definite warm-up. The other areas: I don't really remember that.

**K.L.** I've put down that part of that whole question: whether there were any very positive experiences of negative experiences in your P.E. at school, whether.... Some people talk about being 'shown up' or not being able to do things, or doing things well. Are there any positive things that you remember from... those days?

**Ed:** I think the things I got out of P.E., the positive things, outweighed the negative things which is one reason why I was pushed in P.E. and why I've continued to do P.E. because I've found success in it. I was used to demonstrate things.

**K.L.** How about negative aspects...? Anything negative at all about your being experienced...?

**Ed:** Well, very little. I mean a negative experience would mean going out in atrocious weather and having to do certain sports. At times it was a little painful if it was hailing or whatever....

**K.L.** We all have anxieties but how about things like showering.... Do you ever recall being very young and being aware of that,... or being embarrassed or...?

**Ed:** No, not really.

**K.L.** So really there was nothing in your experience that would put a black mark against P.E. in any sense at all?

**Ed:** No. I would consider myself probably very lucky in that sense.

**K.L.** We've already talked about the kinds of things.... the extra curricular activities but, given hindsight, how would you describe the P.E. programme at the secondary school? Was it a balanced programme of activities, or was there a focus on particular aspects...?

**Ed:** When I first started, it was a secondary modern school and it was limited and we didn't do any rugby. We didn't start that until the third year. It was basically a soccer school, with gymnastics. Those were the two main sports. When it was summer, it was basically athletics but with some cricket. Then when we went comprehensive, which was when I was in the third year, it seemed to open up doors which I don't know whether they would have opened up in any way in the third year. But we were taught hockey; rugby obviously came in, cricket, tennis and so the options seemed to widen and whether that was due to it going comprehensive or whether that was due to the programming....

**K.L.** And the other thing I've put down here is 'extra curricular' - with all the sports you were doing, you must have been fairly heavily involved out of school. Did you have any free time?

**Ed:** No, not really and what free time I did have I spent it either kicking a football or going fishing. I think probably fishing was the most relaxing thing I did.

**K.L.** Sea fishing or coarse fishing?

**Ed:** Trout fishing.

I don't know whether this is really a bad thing but I never used to read much. I never used to sit down and unwind and read.

**K.L.** I think the only thing I read at thirteen was Football Monthly!

Were you a member of any other club at school? Were there things like debating clubs, chess clubs or...?

**Ed:** Yes, I used to go to.... This is later on.... I used to go to listen to the debating clubs and I think I used to try and get involved as much as possible in anything that was going on in extra curriculum activities.

**K.L.** Did the school have a Prefect system and were you one?

**Ed:** Yes, and I was Head of House aswell.

**K.L.** The final part of this section I thought to ask: we often talk about P.E. being a special kind of subject, a different kind of subject.

Did you feel there was any strong link in a way that was different between you and P.E. teachers and other classroom teachers. Was there a strong bond between you or was it just..., like other teachers?

**Ed:** Well I'd have more contact with the P.E. teachers and in that sense yes, I probably did have a stronger bond with them but then there were other academic subject teachers I got on very well with too, I think partially because my parents were involved with a school and I would see them outside the school situation aswell.

**K.L.** The final thing is.... I wonder, because of that experience, when did you first think about being a P.E. teacher? Was it whilst you were at school?

**Ed:** Whilst at school, yes. I think I had two careers in mind: one was to go into P.E., the second one to go into boatbuilding.

**K.L.** And you could still do both of course?

**Ed:** That's true, yes. But I think if I'd failed academically, I would have gone into boatbuilding

but because I got the academic side, I went  
into college and P.E. was the one thing I  
really....(inaudible).

"Hullo Ed, I'm sorry to have to ask you to do it this way but please could you answer the remaining questions on your sheet. Please do it how you wish. Thanks for your help."

Mark

25th June 1988

**K.L.** If we're going through section by section....  
I've asked everyone about their age. Can I  
ask you how old you are?

**Mark:** Yes, twenty-six.

**K.L.** The reason I've taken this section first was  
that many people believe that it is not teacher-  
training that changes you as a teacher, but  
your experiences when you were much younger,  
so I wonder, both Bob at Hampton and Ed here  
seem to think there was a strong family influence  
in their own growing up with sport. Is that  
the same for you?

**Mark:** Yes, though I'm not quite sure which came first  
really, whether it was the family interest in  
sport or whether my involvement came first and  
then the family interest. So really I can't  
answer that specifically, but I can remember  
mum and dad going along to football with me  
at an early age and that's my early memory of  
sport.

**K.L.** Sometimes family albums have photographs of... holding cricket bats or heading footballs. Do you recall having photographs of you doing things...?

**Mark:** I recall photographs of school teams, primary school teams. Primary school football was very "big" in Cornwall, very well supported by the teachers and parents alike.

**K.L.** How did you get involved in football? Was it through friends or...?

**Mark:** Yes, neighbourhood friends and an elder brother. I can always remember playing street football.

**K.L.** And did football become the main activity for you or were you able to do a range of things?

**Mark:** Yes, it was mainly football, almost exclusively.

**K.L.** And did the school teams start very young... seven or eight?

**Mark:** The school team was under fourth year primary school age, ...ten, or is it eleven. But I played from the second year; I was physically

quite big for that stage. I played for two or three years for the same team.

**K.L.** And you played representative football.... Did the group represent the school?

**Mark:** No we didn't.

**K.L.** I was younger long before you but I have very few memories of how the radio or television affected my own involvement in sport. Do you ever remember seeing things on television, people that might have inspired you or...?

**Mark:** I remember being asked if I wanted to watch the '66 World Cup Final and saying "no", I'd rather be doing something else! Then two years later I sat down and watched the European Cup Final with Manchester United. (inaudible)... and I think that's the first real memory I have of watching sport.

**K.L.** And after that... did you watch it then?

**Mark:** Again, it was soccer on Saturday and Sunday afternoons....

**K.L.** What about summer sports? In Cornwall... did you have cricket or athletics... water sports...?

**Mark:** I only started doing anything other soccer when I was at the secondary school, quite a lot later but again, soccer was carried on throughout the year and that was the main interest.

**K.L.** Did you chose a secondary school which played soccer or did you just happen to go to one that...?

**Mark:** No. Well I actually went to grammar school initially and we were doing a lot of rugby. It was a very strong rugby school and I got quite involved in that at district level. But again we played soccer and when I went into the third year, we went into the comprehensive school and continued playing football, rugby and that's when the athletics started to take off aswell.

**K.L.** Another part of this which is important for me reading it, is that a lot of people argue that we teach as we were taught ourselves. Were there any P.E. teachers at your secondary school... and I put down here... were there any influential teachers in your secondary school experiences that you have memories of or...?

**Mark:** I think I can remember all the P.E. teachers I've had. I don't know if they influenced me in a positive way.

**K.L.** Were they footballers?

**Mark:** They tended not to be. They tended to be rugby players but I always remember that they seemed to be mainly interested in the able children which suited me at that stage I suppose because I was one of the more able. But I also had friends who weren't very good and I felt sorry for them because they were ignored, certainly at some stage.

**K.L.** I've asked whether there were negative experiences: some children are put off P.E. for life because they're either embarrassed or shown up by teachers when they're not able and not very big. Did you have any negative experiences at all?

**Mark:** Not that I can remember and I suppose I would if there had been of any importance.

**K.L.** For instance: my negative experience was that my P.E. teacher smoked and threw us a ball and that was our P.E. lesson and I felt very strongly about that....

**Mark:** Well I don't know....

**K.L.** We've kind of touched upon the content.... Did they go for a range of activities in the grammar school or was it rugby or cricket...?

**Mark:** I don't remember so much about the grammar school. I know there was a lot of rugby and soccer. We doubled in cricket. We were very restricted by the facilities; we only had a small field and a hall and I remember doing a lot of indoor lessons like box work and gymnastics. But I think that the programme was broader than at a lot of comprehensive schools, including athletics and tennis....

**K.L.** Did your grammar school become a comprehensive or did it change...?

**Mark:** Yes, it became amalgamated....

**K.L.** Was that when you were in year two or three?

**Mark:** Yes, the end of year two. We joined up....

**K.L.** (Inaudible) ...comprehensives across Cornwall because Ed at the same time went into a comprehensive school.

Quite often, if you are good, you're heavily involved in extra curricular activities. Was a lot of your time taken up in games outside school time...?

**Mark:** Yes, a great deal I would say. Every Saturday, at that stage we were doing something and by the third year at secondary school there was rugby, football and in the summer I was involved in athletics and also by that time, I was involved with Argyle. So Saturday afternoons there were all sorts of things.... I travelled down to Plymouth to play and Sundays sometimes for trials and things. The majority of holidays: they were spent in Plymouth, playing football aswell.

**K.L.** Did you .....(inaudible)..... when you were at school?

**Mark:** Yes I did.

**K.L.** Was that at fourteen?

**Mark:** Yes I was.

**K.L.** How did that come about... through the school recommending you, or playing for a school...?

**Mark:** By that time I was playing for the county and schoolboy trials just led on from that.

**K.L.** And did someone approach Plymouth on your behalf or did someone come to you...?

**Mark:** No. They approached me.

**K.L.** Did Torquay approach you aswell?

**Mark:** No. There were a number of clubs that made approaches but at that stage I.... Plymouth was a good side! It was a nice club aswell and I enjoyed it and I'd been going there for quite a long time. I started when I was about thirteen so I knew everyone. For me it seemed the natural thing to do.

**K.L.** Well, given that part of your life, could you decide.... Did you decide on teaching as a

career way after you'd left school or had it occurred to you during school years...?

**Mark:** I'd always thought that I'd play football but I realised it wasn't a certainty and I was lucky enough at sixteen that I'd got all the exams I wanted. I'd made a decision to go into football but I did think about what else I could do. From quite an early stage I thought it was something involved with sport and that seemed to narrow down directions so I wasn't too aware of what else I could do, not very aware at all. I had no.... My family weren't too enlightened either and it was very much my own decision.

**K.L.** Same with me. So you left at sixteen...?

**Mark:** Yes, sixteen and then almost two and a half years of football and then to college.

**K.L.** Well that leads on quite nicely to Section 2 really: I wondered, when you had gone through this experience, did the P.F.A. counsel you at all about careers outside football?

**Mark:** No.

**K.L.** I think that they're still very weak there in terms of their advice....

**Mark:** I have had some dealings with the P.F.A. because when I was actually 'released' I was quite badly injured and no club was prepared to take me on until I'd passed the medical. I wasn't likely to be able to do that for another six months so I took advice from them, but it wasn't too helpful as there was nothing they could do. That was my only dealings with them. We went on day release course to learn how to give interviews and things like that... but they were very valuable.

**K.L.** So how did you come to chose a college to go to to do P.E?

**Mark:** Simply because the year before I'd left Plymouth, another lad had left and he went to the college in Plymouth. And when I knew I was going to be released he said, "well why don't you go to college?" I said I'd been thinking about it but I think it is too late for this year, because I think I was released at the end of May, start of June and I didn't think I'd get in anywhere. But he said he'd have a word and it was done that way. They got in touch with me and sorted everything out.

**K.L.** Well many of the questions that I want to ask....  
Some people chose because they're P.E. teachers themselves and others because of friendships and very few seem to have range of (inaudible) there's always one source which directs them in a certain way.

It's rather similar to the first section: I wonder whether.... Was it a three year or four year course?

**Mark:** Well I ended up doing the four year course. I was taken on the Certificate course but managed to change at the end of year two.

**K.L.** Did you have any positive or negative memories of that course; were there things that you thoroughly enjoyed on it, the P.E. course?

**Mark:** On the P.E. course itself? For me college was a very negative experience again because of problems over playing football really. It was still very important to me at that stage. The college team wasn't very strong and I agreed to play for them initially and the head of the P.E. department was (inaudible) .... By the time Christmas came, it was obvious that we were going nowhere, it was dreadful.

I'd just come out of a professional set up and I really took it very seriously and I was doing all the right things: training. The boys were getting drunk on Friday nights, not going home and doing all sorts, intending to play football.

I asked the Head of the department to see if they would release me because a number of clubs were enquiring to see whether I would be available to play and it was important that I did play because my grant wasn't very good and I needed the extra money. He refused and said no and that was that. That was a breakdown in relations there; it was a very bad experience. I had problems with grades.

They tried to get me off the course at one time. It came to a head and I said I wasn't going to play because it was two years of wasting away really. In the end I said I wouldn't play. My grades were well above average and they found excuses to try and get me off the course. That went to 'higher up'. I won that battle but it caused a lot of ill-feeling.

**K.L.** So did that affect all your professional course in terms of teacher-training experience?

**Mark:** It was the overriding memory of college: all the hassle and I always thought "well I should be enjoying this"... there's not as much pressure as I've been having for the past two and a half years - there shouldn't be as much pressure but there was, a lot of pressure.

**K.L.** There you were made to feel guilty but here they've given you a chance to do education and you're biting the hand that fed them or was it implied or...?

**Mark:** No I don't think that was implied but the manner that things were done.... I was very.... When I came out of football I was disillusioned with the people involved in football and how unprofessional they were. How uncaring they were. And when I got to college I made the mistake of thinking well these people are educated people and they will be caring and supportive. I felt very let down by that. Probably wrong though but....

**K.L.** I agree, I think that if you're educated you must have a certain ....(inaudible) and that leads me to ask you.... The influence of college can be great or minimal or whatever and I wonder whether it was after your experience, you

actually learnt anything professionally about how to deal with people. It sounds that if in the negative sense that you've learnt a great deal how to care for people. I mean you're not going to make their mistakes in their treatment of you? Do you think that affected you in the way you treat children, because having observed you, for me the main thing that comes across in your lessons is the amount of care and concern you have...?

**Mark:** Yes, I think.... I'd say yes to that. I think it's a combination of the experience in football and college.

**K.L.** It could be for instance.... I mean, I know.... My brother played professional football as well and I also went to P.E. college and I can contrast the two. Both are concerned with elitism, and in the rush to be excellent, a lot of people are lost in between. You can throw away people because you are recruiting the best. I just wondered if that, in terms of your experience, had led you to view the way you taught in a certain way or the way you treat people in a certain way. Because it is obvious from your lessons that you do care about people in your lessons.

**Mark:** Yes, I always find it difficult to cater for the very able children and yet not forget the less able. I'm sure I don't succeed. In the group that you've been seeing, it's easy in that group because they're not very able: there are a lot of different personalities, people like Joshua - quiet, and John, who's exactly the opposite. But in terms of ability there's not a great deal to choose between them so in that case I know how to pitch the lesson. But I do find it difficult in some of the groups that we have to not ignore the less able or even the able ones. Who is to say that I should spend all my time with the less able and let the able kids get on with it? It's very difficult to know where to pitch the lesson

**K.L.** That takes me onto the third section outlined, which was that given you teach different age groups, different ability groups and different backgrounds, I wondered whether you were consciously aware of a teaching style you adopted for a particular group. So, say it was the first years who you knew behaved in a certain way or.... Are you aware consciously of what you do...?

**Mark:** I don't think you can generalise and say that I have this approach for all third years.... I think it's down to groups and you get to know the groups quite well, hopefully anyway. You do need different approaches for different groups. But again, it comes down to personalities. You have to try and get to know the kids. That's the struggle, to get to know the kids. A lot of the kids have a lot of bravado and if you can overcome that....

**K.L.** Do you have a lot of time to get to know them? It always struck me when I was a student and noticing, it's here and it's gone as a lesson and....

**Mark:** I think.... Well not in the school context but doing the extra work outside of school I get to know a lot of the kids that way. It can be very helpful. There are some disadvantages of seeing the lads out of school but on that level you can cut through a lot of the barriers that they put up in school, because a lot of them do. Perhaps they get to know me better aswell which....

**K.L.** One of the questions I wanted to ask later was this idea of the P.E. teacher in the school being a different kind of person and certainly if you're a community tutor aswell then you are obviously a different kind of person. And I wondered whether the bond you had between yourself and the pupils was different than perhaps in other relationships between teacher and pupil...?

**Mark:** I'm sure it is, because I don't think we'd survive otherwise. Well I certainly wouldn't, not doing the jobs I do because I have to drop barriers and some.... I think that the majority of kids can cope with that, the dual image that they have.... I think in school I have to uphold certain values which outside of school are important to them and they..., most of them can appreciate that. Some overstep the mark in school but I don't see that as a major problem.

**K.L.** I think because of your work there are things going for you which wouldn't go for other teachers but one problem that strikes me in all teaching is this question of motivation, and I've put it down there "coping with mixed ability and motivation" because it does seem

that... we've talked about (inaudible)  
....rushing around trying to keep the plates  
on the stick. Do you think you have a way of  
motivating people that's particular to you,  
or do you have strategies of motivation which  
work with different pupils, or is it again down  
individuals and knowing what makes them tick  
after a long time of getting to know them?  
I wondered how... you've got to be involved  
with P.E?

**Mark:** I'm not really quite sure on that one. I think  
I would tend to go to the personal level again  
but I think I'd tend to do that most of the  
time but if I have the time. Yes, you can  
motivate groups by talking to them initially  
whatever.... A lot of it is down to the content;  
it you can motivate them through the content....

**K.L.** Do you think that taking part with them in an  
activity is part of motivation aswell. Is that  
something you do. Do you take part in lessons?

**Mark:** Yes I tend to but at some stage. It's  
difficult to get the balance between instructing  
and going around coaching... if there's any  
coaching involved. I certainly get involved  
in tournaments and games at the end of the

lessons. Whether that's a positive (inaudible) I'm not sure.

**K.L.** Well I was thinking of that lesson in the Spring term, on a very cold day, when you managed to persuade them to ruck and (inaudible) around you, which was the right time and place for that kind of thing.

If you look at the case teacher, who takes over, picks the teams, scores the goals and takes the penalties kind of person is obviously intruding too much but I mean.... Do you think that the way you motivate the pupils now is different from when you first started or is it basically the same person with small refinements?

**Mark:** Well I think it's changed because I think when I came initially I did everything by the book but I think if I'd continued doing that, I'd have been dead and gone by now.... Or ended up having had a nervous breakdown.... Because with groups that you can (inaudible).... You have to drop your own standards initially and say what do I want to get out of the lesson. You can spend forty minutes doing practices

in pairs and grids and say "well if you're good, we'll play a ten minutes game at the end" and they'll say "well sod that, we're going now!" So you have to change your approach. I think it's a compromise, especially.... With a lot of kids it's a compromise. If you say at the start of the lesson, "we'll do forty minutes practice and ten minute game" and then if you say "well okay, if you're good we'll do a twenty minute game at the end" which is.... You'd be happier than if you did a five minute game. So I think that a lot of it is bluff.

**K.L.** Well that's another question I wanted to ask you. One of the things that seems to be lacking in many student teachers is a sense of an atmosphere in a lesson. Do you now know in most lessons when you should change the activities or change the pace or content or form to change the atmosphere if it's not working correctly?

**Mark:** Well I hope so but I don't know if I do but I think I do.

**K.L.** Are you aware of recognising if something isn't going right, - or wrong. Because, in that lesson I saw, you changed tack....

**Mark:** Well yes. In my own mind I think there's a time to change if it's not working but whether I can think or know enough to practice is another question.... Because sometimes it's very difficult to know how the kids are going to react.

**K.L.** We're encouraged in college to plan and prepare for a lesson and the lesson follows a prepared plan but many people say that teachers teach by the seat of their pants and they know what it's like when they're in there and teaching. Do you think you have basic rules or guidelines that help you solve most problems that you'll meet in a lesson, even though you haven't planned for them? It's called "teaching ability" and it's obvious in your lessons... and I just wondered whether you were aware that there were certain things you fell back upon?

**Mark:** Not too aware no!

**K.L.** For instance, it could be that if you had a practice which wasn't working, it might become simpler... or that children were dropping off.... I was thinking about one bad lesson in particular if children were dropping off in their attention, you'd change their focus to a game of continuous

badminton... and got them involved that way. So could there be some kind of feeling that you might have, that they're not active enough or it's not working because this isn't....

**Mark:** Well I suppose there are the practices in the games that you do tend to use quite often and because you know them so well and they're easy to organise, perhaps you do tend to use them as things to fall back on.

**K.L.** Did those come from college or are they things that you've developed, or from your professional football days or...?

**Mark:** Yes, picked them up in a variety of places. I just don't really think much about it.

**K.L.** Because many students when they leave college reproduce their college notes in their first year of teaching....

**Mark:** I'm certainly aware that I did that when I first came here. Certainly for two terms I taught as a student teacher would teach. And then I found that no one cared anyway. No one bothered to check, so I decided to be myself!

**K.L.** And I've put down here and it's linked....  
If you were to assess yourself for someone else,  
what kind of things happen in a lesson or in  
a course with a group that make it very good  
or near ideal lesson or course? Is there  
anything you could say, if you were assessing  
the course at the end of it, or evaluating it,  
said "that went well because...."

**Mark:** Involvement I suppose. That's the thing I strive  
for, is involvement. And I like to see the  
kids enjoying themselves because I think they'll  
learn things.... I mean, if they don't think  
they're being taught then they'll learn but  
if you start teaching, then a lot of them tend  
to switch off. Well that's not strictly true....

I keep coming back to that group that you....

**K.L.** But there was an excellent example you see  
because I know what you're talking about. You're  
talking about those.... So, for instance,  
a good lesson with them, even though they're  
a different ability group, may have the same  
outcome as say group one in the third year;  
they've enjoyed it, they've been involved and  
possibly learnt something.

**Mark:** I'd expect the group one children to have picked up more technically. I think technically, I don't teach that group a great deal simply because I don't have the energy to organise....

**K.L.** Well I think in the winter term, in the spring term, it's just a large group, with such diverse characters that it... even one of them is exhausting, let alone a number of them....

**Mark:** I wish I could teach them. I don't think I do teach them enough.

**K.L.** That group or all groups?

**Mark:** Generally. But I don't think that that situation is conducive to good P.E. teaching because we're off side, the lessons are too short; the kids abuse the situation by taking their time to get down there. You have half a group ready to start and you have to get the other half out; to finish them early to get them back to school and it's so much hassle at the start of every lesson. That in itself wears you down because if you were there, waiting afresh, the kids are there. Get on, hit them hard and start. It's a poor start to any lesson.

**K.L.** Yes I'm sure. They're out of your control and they can't....

**Mark:** They come down undisciplined, half of them are eating. They have to finish what they're eating, get changed....

**K.L.** That again leads onto a question I want to ask about, and I have it down here, can you identify key moments or important lessons you have learnt.... From what you are saying and from what I observed, it seems that you have to negotiate all the time the ideal and the real. Did you find that you tried certain things at one time and they didn't work so you changed.... Were there important questions that have learnt?

**Mark:** There's a lot that I've tried before: I still think the practices are valuable but I no longer use them unless I'm doing coaching courses in the summer because in the teaching situation here, it's unrealistic. There's too much organisation involved with the less able kids, and I think that time is of a premium with us. I don't want to switch kids off by not getting them involved... just learning a practice for the sake of it. I mean, if the skill's

that important, I'm sure there are other ways of learning a new skill.

**K.L.** I had an experience once which kind of transformed my teaching: I managed to embarrass a very fat boy in a gymnastics lesson and I learnt from that.... Have you had any traumatic moments like that with pupils, or confrontations...? I was threatened with a javelin once for instance by a third year pupil.... Any things that have really made you sit up and pay attention?

**Mark:** I can't think of one at the moment but there have been cases when I've felt sorry for kids after I've said things and I've had confrontations with children but afterwards I've thought I could have avoided and I try to avoid confrontations.... It's not to say that I let things go but I think there are other ways of.... With regard to embarrassing people and things like that, it has occurred but I can't think of the case at present.

**K.L.** I was thinking, after that one case with me, with the fat boy, I constantly tried to make sure if I had to have a team where there were skins and shirts, the fat boys were always in shirts.

**Mark:** I think I was made aware of that at college in the teaching practice; I think it's very interesting when the students come in because they often tend to overlook that sort of thing. They don't know the kids as well as we do.

**K.L.** How about things like.... I always have problems getting children showered. Did you ever have problems with that, or is that something you've dealt with aswell...?

**Mark:** Shower? Well the policy of the department is not to make the kids shower because we don't have the time; it'd take another five minutes off the teaching time. I've not had to confront that yet. Interesting.

**K.L.** We're getting towards the end of this. I've asked some questions about the wider sense of your work. You've mentioned the problems of going down to the field. Is that something that the whole department shares or you're more aware of than others perhaps? In other words, do you collectively evaluate lessons or courses, or do you do it individually and get on with your own work? Or would you make comments to Ed and Ed say "I felt that was a...."

**Mark:** Yes I think we do discuss these things. I feel it's done informally. We don't sit down at departmental meetings and discuss the problems of going to the fields etc. but we're all well aware of it and I think we all experience the same problems. Perhaps I'm more aware occasionally because I don't have personal transport. I'm left to walk to the fields. Having been caught by registration and being caught by someone... I'm ten minutes late getting there 'til the kids arrive and then I have to get back to another lesson. So it adds to the problem.

I think there is a fair amount of discussion that goes on in the... done informally.

**K.L.** One of the problems of the situation of facilities is that you're always caught between two jobs, in the classroom and down in the fields. How do you trade off those conflicting demands? I mean, do you ever feel that you set up a lesson because you move around so much, or is it easier after a while to get used to moving around with other teachers...?

**Mark:** Well I see it as a big problem. I don't think that enough is done to help the school solve

the problem. There have been instances where I'm so late getting to a lesson and so harassed getting there that I occasionally say "okay, I'll scrap the lesson I had planned and we'll do something that'll give me a bit of a break..." before I rush back to the classroom, get the science equipment out and do a practical session. Basically it's for me to recover. I mean, what sort of way is that to go about your job?

**K.L.** I think that most people do that actually anyhow but they have peaks and troughs.

What help are you given in terms of... and we have talked about this... what help have you been given in terms of timetabling, in terms of simply knowing about the problems, certainly in winter, about being wet and...?

**Mark:** Well I don't think there's any thought that goes into it whatsoever. In fact when you're teaching in the classroom for the first two periods and then to the fields for periods three and four, it doesn't give you a great deal of thought does it...? Well, I don't think that people are aware of what they're doing.

**K.L.** Well the final point in this kind of area really relates to that.

Given that you've had a teachers 'Action', I wondered what you felt about the extra curricular demands on your time now and peoples awareness of it. I mean the community job which takes up vast amounts of your time and effort and energy. How do you balance all these conflicting demands? Sometimes in the Spring term you've looked very, very tired and I think you'll just blow a fuse eventually, or... just run down completely and you'll be ill....

**Mark:** Well yes. I think there's no way we'll return to normal as such. The Headmaster's been to departmental meetings and has asked us to consider doing fixtures etc. again next year... and there's a certain amount of pressure to go back to doing that as school activities. There's no way that I can do that and my community jobs, so I've decided to withdraw from all my evening activities, community jobs.... But that's not to say I automatically accept the fixtures and clubs. It doesn't make it any easier, the way that things have been dealt with.

This particular school, with people being paid for (inaudible)... but we're still expected to do activities after school. The boss sees it as part and parcel of our duties. He would expect us to go on, needing to stay on and do extra curricular activities. Another negative aspect to that is the fact that there's only a certain number of boys.... Well, there won't be any (slow?) boys for P.E. next year. Yet other people in other departments... are doing the job relatively well... with their share of problems.... So I think you have to question the value of what we're doing. If we're not doing it, then why do more of it after school?

I must admit I don't value it but....

K.L. That's a very well made point and I think that the whole issue of the strike has thrown a lot of things that we had before into focus. One thing that perhaps it's given people time to do is to reflect on their teaching. So a question I've put down here, which is very unfair because one can't answer it in a sense is, if you were to sit down now and say next year, in order to improve my lessons I will do this... is there anything you could do that'd change...?

**Mark:** I'd probably change to a school which had all on-site facilities.... I suppose having less commitment after school, outside of school would improve my teaching because my teaching obviously suffers for my being tired and doing all the communal work. I just feel the biggest problem is overcoming fatigue and the stress of the situation here. That all detracts from the teachers. If I go in and not have to work in the evenings... go in on a Wednesday morning, I can actually teach. I feel like I used to feel, where teaching is the focus of the day. Unfortunately now, the teaching is of secondary importance with all the extra jobs that we have... well, that I certainly have and that is wrong but the situation dictates it I feel.

**K.L.** So we're talking about teaching becoming a quantity rather than a quality... just turning up to do the work you're paid to do, rather than being an enjoyable experience....

**Mark:** I do enjoy it but not as much as if I was doing it well.

**K.L.** Well there are two supplementary questions to that really. The first one was do you think that in P.E. we have more of a chance to observe people teaching or do you rarely see each other teaching. I wonder whether you can learn from seeing others teach, or they could learn from you teaching....

**Mark:** We do have the opportunity to see other people teach. That can't be a bad thing can it? There again, you're always concerned with your own group so.... I've never actually, apart from in my first year, gone along and watched another teacher teach and I'm not sure how many people in this school have done....

**K.L.** I think that the three of you have been under undue pressure in the Spring term because even though I wasn't there for any other reason, to have someone observe your lessons.... I mean, I would find that stressful myself....

**Mark:** I found it.... That term you were in, I felt... and I was struggling to keep my head above water anyway.... With your presence, although I would like to have been seen to be doing some reasonable teaching, I wasn't physically or mentally able to sit down and prepare anything

special. But, what it did do... it made me very conscious of the fact that I'm doing the job as well as I ought to be. I've been aware of that for a long time but I got to the stage where they were putting all these extra demands on me, so they must expect something to fall away from the teaching.

When you were around, I became aware of the fact that I'm not doing as well as I'm capable of... that I should be doing. And yet I thought that, well, why am I not? I've been considering for a long time to say well, I'm not actually interested in the responsibility; I'd just like to go back to a Scale I teacher and do the job properly. That's really what I'd like to do but from a career point of view it'd be a bad move but... at the end of the day, I'm not going to have a career worth going on with.

**K.L.** But ironically, I felt that I was privileged to watch your lessons because that group did things in a way... I don't think... many other teachers could get them to do things.

For instance, I had sometimes worked with them in a half group or that day when I had them for a double period in a classroom.... I found that even with a small group it was very

difficult to get them.... So quite honestly, at the end of the term and throughout the term, I was full of admiration for the way that even something was possible because I think that with that group a lot of things weren't possible. So I think, you know... I haven't seen the class in that sense at all. I didn't want to be a threat....

**Mark:** No, I didn't think you were a threat. It was just that your presence made me aware of my own feelings and I knew I wasn't doing as well as I could do....

**K.L.** That is very unfair in a sense in that no one has that.... I've probably seen you more than any other teacher or supervisor....

I think we know what you least miss about this in terms of the timetabling, the respect, the communication between the management and so on... but I wonder, if you could say, what it would be that you'd miss most, and I think in our conversations before it's always been the children, the content with the children.... Would that be it...? Would it be the children that you'd miss most if you weren't here? What is it about Rectory School that would keep you here if at all possible...?

**Mark:** Not a lot at the moment really. I can't think of anything that would keep me here. I'm staying here because.... I made a mistake by not resigning this term and really I'll be getting out as soon as I've got something else to go to.

It would be the kids.... It's the contact with them that I enjoy. I'd miss some in the department a little bit. I think we've got a good relationship amongst the staff.... I can't really say that this place offers anything I couldn't get elsewhere and the only thing that's kept me here have been things that I've wanted to develop in the community and that seems to have developed as far as it can go. So under the circumstances that's probably why it's time to go....

**K.L.** Are we eating into your time now or...?

**Mark:** No I'm free so there's no problem as.... It's up to you.

**K.L.** If I cover Section IV and you could then.... I could leave the tape and you could do your own comments on five to seven if you wanted....

**Mark:** It's up to you, I don't mind. As I say, I've got a lot of things I can do in school anyway.

**K.L.** Well, shall we do Section IV and then... because we'll take up the whole afternoon otherwise and I don't want to do that....

Really, without being bullish or anything like that, I really think that, of all the teachers I've seen, your link with them seems to be much more epithetic than other teachers and I just wondered... and I'm asking this of all the teachers.... I wondered how you yourself have come to understand what pupils are, what they want and what they feel because it does come through your lessons quite strongly?

**Mark:** I'm not really quite sure. I should have sat down and thought about these things before.... I think that what's helped is seeing a lot of them outside school. I think that's probably the biggest thing: they see me outside of school in a slightly different role and a number of the kids now have known.... I do play schemes in the summer for primary school kids where I've actually seen them at a primary school and they then (inaudible) on a play scheme suddenly comes to school and sees me as

Mr. Smith, the P.E. teacher and, although that can be a difficult thing to adjust to, they do adjust. Then I see them in the school and in the summer holidays so I think that that's probably the biggest....

**K.L.** Yes. I think that if you're a parent, you get to know your children by being with them much more and I think that if you're a teacher, with....

**Mark:** I think I see them in different situations and that helps.

**K.L.** I've put down here, what chances do you have personally to listen them and to observe them, a group of say twenty.... Are there chances for the children to talk to you about their interests, likes and dislikes... or do you have a chance to observe them learning or not learning as the case may be? Are you aware of moments like that?

**Mark:** Yes there are. I think there aren't enough moments like that. I think again that that comes back to our situation here with us always running from pillar to post. There are the opportunities to listen to them.... Again, I think that that's something I get out of doing

at Youth Clubs with the children that I don't get in school, because I actually have the time whilst I'm there. I'm there for three hours and I'm there if they want me to be. I think that that's where a lot of the chats go on.

**K.L.** Watching all of you teach, made me very happy with my own teaching aswell.... I think it was an experience for me aswell. It made me think of one question I would ask of myself. And that is, if I named a pupil, could you tell me how he learnt and... the bigger question is: we talked about able children, less able children: how do you learn to profile the child in terms of his ability. Because we do profile them don't we, saying "this is a good pupil". Are you are aware of looking at them, over a year, in a sport, in a lesson? Have you thought about how you assess somebody?

**Mark:** I think if you said to me "what do you think of John?" for instance, I could give you a fairly.... I mean, he's an outstanding pupil. I could give you a fairly accurate description of what John is like as a person in and around school. But if you said how would you rate him for P.E., then I'd have to sit down and think about what he's done and I probably couldn't remember what he was like last year.

I'd have to go back through the records. But I would know John as a person, and I'm not saying I'd know all the kids... there are some I don't even know the names of unfortunately but I try to.... I always find it difficult when we're doing P.E. assessments to isolate P.E. ability from the whole person because if you have the "Danny Weaver", then you can understand why perhaps he's not very good at football, when he's playing with boys twice his size, much more mature. But put a football in the playing ground and you can demonstrate a lot of the skills that you're trying to teach. If you sit down and talk to him, you get to know him.

**K.L.** That's led me on to asking about ability, absence and illness. Because when some children are ill, or injured, how difficult is it to resume teaching that is ongoing.... when they have missed the whole point of it. How would you deal with that, with their are gaps in knowledge?

**Mark:** Well, you adapt. Yes, unfortunately there's a lot of repetition but I suppose there'd be (inaudible) from term to term, from year to year and unless they were particularly sick they wouldn't miss great big chunks but I don't think this system can cater for those children.

If they're away, they have to fit in at the present time.

**K.L.** I then asked if you could objectively recognise that learning was taking place...? Are you aware.... Education is supposed to be about changing people. If you look at your groups, are you aware that objectively, they've learnt something, have changed their behaviour as a result? Are you aware for instance in a change of skills or a development of skills?

**Mark:** I'm aware of individuals changing.

**K.L.** Does that give you pleasure, when you see people who can perform skilled activities?

**Mark:** Yes. Not always because of what were doing, but sometimes despite of what we're doing. But I do see changes in children and it is nice to see. And the feedback you get from them because you do get a certain feedback from the kids. They're keen to show what they've learnt aswell.

**K.L.** Would that relate also to attitudes, that you got positive enjoyment from seeing their attitudes change in terms of, from, say, being selfish and becoming fairer or open and honest.

Is that much harder to measure do you think or seeing peoples values change...? Because I think we do try and do that don't we... we do try and change....

**Mark:** It is very difficult but I think if you see enough of the children, then you do see those changes.

**K.L.** The final question in this section leads me on to ask questions about the curriculum. Given the problems you have, how suitable do you think the curriculum you have is to what the children want to learn, are going to learn, need to learn, or....

**Mark:** If you talk about what they want to learn, then I think you're restricted to football and American football. I don't know what they'd need to learn. I really don't. I think it's important for them to experience a number of different activities. I would tend to think that we ought to have a broader base for the first three years but I don't think that some of the other teachers would agree with me on that, because they feel that if you're doing that, you just dabble and don't get into real teaching. But there's so much repetition in what we do that we could afford to introduce

other sports and activities. I think it would make it more interesting for us and probably for the kids. But whether we'd have the skill to teach those other activities is another question at this stage.

**K.L.** Another question which leads on from that is, given that you have a curriculum, what are your feelings about the necessity for uniform and control in P.E. There seems to be this legacy of being dressed in uniform and having a relatively strict code of practice.... Does that pose any problems at all with your pupils?

**Mark:** You talk about kit: I personally don't mind what the kids do it in as long as it's some sort of P.E. kit whatever. I'd much rather a kid did it in that than not do it. I can see why we do push the kids in some senses. It's very difficult when you're teaching in such large groups.

**K.L.** How about control? Do you feel heir to a legacy of strict discipline in P.E., or do you think that time has changed now and it's much more informal now in the way you teach...? In the past it used to be very strict and explicitly controlled. Now there seems to be an implicit control....

**Mark:** Again I think it varies from group to group. I think it comes down to compromise again; when we talk about javelin, discus etc. then you have to be incredibly strict. I tend to go over the top on things like that. But I think that in other lessons, I'm pretty relaxed in some aspects of the lessons. I find that very difficult to talk about. I've never really considered discipline.

**K.L.** The final one really: given that P.E. is very much a seasonal activity and with weather on a day like today, playing cricket with no shirt and we had minus 40° that day playing rugby, what can a P.E. teacher do to encourage all pupils to be involved if they are fit and healthy? How would one stop large scale bunking off? Or would you want?!

**Mark:** Well obviously the lessons have to hold some appeal for the kids and I think that that's where we fall down. Kids that have been turned off football in their primary schools or first year of this school, and you ask them to do football for another two years compulsorily.... A lot of the kids who havn't achieved anything by Christmas... they come in dead keen, with all the gear. They don't achieve anything

because teachers are concerned with "well look this is a first year, and I don't really want to pick a first year football team by the end of the third week" and everything is geared toward picking the team, the able kids. The less able kids, the ones that maybe need more support, need a bit of self-confidence.

I think there are so many kids who don't have confidence in their own ability. You don't have the time to sit down and talk things through with them, or even encourage them. A lot of these kids... I'm sure they go through whole days, even weeks without a teacher saying "that was good, well done". It's "where's your tie? Where's your white shirt? Don't do it like that, do it this way?" If that was me, I wouldn't turn up.

**K.L.** When you look at encouragement, one has to be positive rather than negative....

**Mark:** I mean obviously you can go overboard with the able kids. The able kids, if they have a few (inaudible) they can accept criticism and I think it's constructive. But I think the majority.... Initially I think you need to be positive to turn them on to things. You don't need to turn them off.

**K.L.** Well it is a problem because it seems to... as I said before that in our lessons, non-participation is much more obvious than in any other lesson and we can be left feeling guilty about those not taking part, even though proportionately it may not even be the same scale as other lessons.

**Mark:** We discuss this within the department. Some people feel that our onus is to encourage as many people to participate in sport in this school as possible but others feel that that's taking.... a size too high, that we're simply providing the opportunity to take part and we shouldn't feel as though we've failed if kids at the age of sixteen decide no, I don't want to take part in physical activity.

**K.L.** Section VII was going to be about that kind of curricular issue. Shall we leave it there because I don't want to take any more time.

Thanks. I hope that wasn't too painful.

Hullo Mark, sorry to have to ask you to finish the tape this way. Could you answer the questions on the sheets that we've discussed so far. Thanks.

Bob

19th June 1986

**Bob:** Start with the background?

I'll talk through these and then you could ask any questions as we go along.

First of all it seems to me that from my own background in sport that my father was a sportsman which was the most important influence in sport that I had. As soon as I could walk I was given a ball and I was always given racquets, bikes and other activity things.

I've got photographs of being nearly as big as the ball and that's obviously important. I think that a kid who comes through to being an outstanding sportsman or an outstanding performer in P.E. of any kind, with a non-physical background would be very much an exception.

If we could produce more kids who are involved in some kind of activity, growing up to have their own families, would therefore do the same thing. You'd get more and more.

The problems being, on the other side of the coin that when I was a boy, there was often a green near the houses where we'd play football, handball or whatever. That seems to be happening less and less these days with more traffic, smaller areas to play in around the homes.

**K.L.** I've often thought that P.E. was one of the few voluntary homeworks that children did but you see less of that now....

**Bob:** For all sorts of reasons. As I say, one of the reasons seems to me to be lack of space. You don't see kids out in the street playing football anymore.

**K.L.** But you came from a fairly urban area, a fairly built up area didn't you?

**Bob:** Yes, I came from Dagenham which was a very industrialised sort of town. There always seemed to be 'the game in the street' which, when I'm walking, (I walk everywhere, I don't drive)... there doesn't seem to be loads and loads of games in the street like when we were kids.

**K.L.** I've seen more now that the World Cup's on but I've not seen any.... In between the World Cup, you don't see very much.

**Bob:** But it was everything. We used to play tennis in the street, cricket.... You just don't see it now.

Thinking about the relationship between that and actually teaching P.E., or kids learning in P.E., I think one thing that P.E. teachers could remember is that a hell of a lot of skill learning and, if you like, the tactics and all sorts of cooperative things that go on within the game, are learnt by the kids in that environment with no teacher there at all. Statistics apparently show that by the age of twelve you've learnt 80% of all your skills etc., with no teacher. That's kids getting on with it on their own with no guidance at all. I think that if teachers do nothing else but simply organise a classroom, playground or field situation such as the kids can just get on and play, that'd be two-thirds of the job.

**K.L.** Yes, facilitating activity.

**Bob:** That's right. I mean, if you've got someone who just knew about putting teams in three or four, rather than having twenty-two a side with a ball which is obviously a classic example....

Thinking back to games in the street and kids going over to the park and organising their own games, kids will organise their own games often far better than members of staff will.

**K.L.** Yes, and that's the origin of P.E. of course; it was a pupil activity.

The other thing it seemed to me, in my own experience of growing up: there wasn't much t.v. coverage of sport. There was the football on television and some rugby but do you ever recollect the media having affected you?

**Bob:** Oh yes. From being in a sporting family it was obviously... every big sporting occasion was always.... I mean, me and my dad would always sit and watch it, because he ran a football team. Nearly every Saturday I'd go over with him; he was Manager of the team and I'd take my ball and kick around and warm up with the players and just be involved in that environment. You'd just get into the way of Saturday afternoons being given over to sport, of training nights. I used to go along and train with his team during the summer when they used to do their pre-season training and things like that.

**K.L.** How old were you then?

**Bob:** I was involved, going around with him, and following him around and doing kickabouts, from the age of five or six. And the team were then fourteen, fifteen year olds. By the time they went through and progressed and progressed, it was a "man's team" for want of a better word and I was a bit older and I used to run the line and that sort of thing.

**K.L.** Was your Dad a teacher or was he just interested in football?

**Bob:** No, he was just interested in football but he was a qualified coach aswell and it was a good standard of football. I got a good understanding of football from him and from that sort of activity.

**K.L.** One of the problems I had when I was growing up because I was playing a lot of football in the local rep., when you got to school, people who hadn't had that experience were nowhere near you in terms of skill. Did you find in Primary Junior School that you were ahead of the group?

**Bob:** Well yes. There was the football team in junior school which wasn't that.... We didn't have a great deal of fixtures, or not real coaching but there was obviously a group of perhaps twenty kids and we would always have our games at break times and dinner times. I think two or three of us went on to play for the district and that experience aswell obviously puts you under a bit more pressure... understanding the pressure of the game at a slightly higher level. That made it that much easier when I went to my grammar school, where I started playing rugby, which I didn't want to do. I hated the idea of it because my Dad hated the idea of it but I took to that very, very quickly.

Noticing now, as Head of Rugby here and seeing the kids that we get through, we've often played "minis", from the age of six or eight or whatever, and that generally speaking, the footballers make better rugby players. If you take a kid who's played football up to the age of ten or whatever and then start him playing rugby, he will generally speaking make a better rugby player by the age of eighteen than someone who's just played rugby.

We found that at school; our first fifteen, which was unbeaten in a very tough fixture list, comprised a very solid nucleus of about ten of the players who were footballers, who could put out a really decent football side.

**K.L.** Do you think those early experiences.... I wonder whether P.E. teachers are made at that stage, rather than at college, when you have an awareness of what ball sense is or what skill is. Can you judge on that basis do you think?

**Bob:** It's difficult for me. One of the things that's important, I think, and perhaps is one of my strengths, is that I've got a more general capability with several activities but that was just because I was lucky to go to a school where the rugby was very, very good. Football had been taken care of as a kid on my own. I also played cricket a lot as a kid. My Dad used to buy cricket stumps and we'd go to the park with my bat. I wasn't a great cricketer but I could play it and it was alright.

At school we had a basket ball team and a volley ball team; there was a wide range of activities and being one of the half dozen who I suppose played everything, that helped a lot.

It was surprising actually the number of people, when I was at Mabey, who were very, very good at one sport but very limited in a lot of others. You don't have to be a great player at anything necessarily to be a good P.E. teacher but I think it does help....

**K.L.** I found the same at Loughborough, that I wasn't very special in any one thing but I could do most of them....

**Bob:** You'd probably find that you were better than the stars who are international swimmers or international footballers and....

I think it's easy to underestimate the influence in really early years, both game-wise and with parental influence....

**K.L.** Some people say that when you're in trouble as a teacher you revert to those early memories of how you were taught and what it was like to be a pupil. Do you think...?

**Bob:** Yes certainly for me. My whole approach to teaching, which encompasses the fact that relatively speaking I'm a technician, I like to get people to do things properly

but particularly with the discipline and just the whole relationship between myself and kids of different ages and how therefore your attitude to them would differ comes from my own schooling. I remember very vividly my thoughts about the teachers, particularly the P.E. teachers because I was very keen.

When eventually I got into the sixth form and became involved in a little bit of teaching myself, you'd follow and watch and be aware of what teachers said to me or other kids that were affected and things that had a particular effect on me when they were said to me. A lot of those have been carried over.

**K.L.** Is there a model.... Of the teachers that taught you, was there one model or did you extract from all of them do you think?

**Bob:** There are bits and pieces from all and from both the P.E. and academic staff because I think I was lucky to be taught by some very good people.

As far as P.E. in sport is concerned, I think that a mixture of the two members of the P.E. department when I was at school, one of whom was I suppose a very typical Welsh rugby teacher

who was very small, very thick set, very frightening and a very good rugby coach.

The other one was a slightly more informed and up-to-date but nevertheless wouldn't be called a wishy-washy sort of teacher. He was once again a technician and was very hot on things being done properly, from formal activities down to behaviour and respect to this, that and the other. He's one that appealed to me.

**K.L.** Is there any sense that.... Obviously the knowledge transition is evident in your teaching. The discipline you have is very strong aswell. Is that in part based upon your experiences you had at school?

**Bob:** Yes, it's something I have endless interesting discussions about and sometimes disagreements with people here, in that generally speaking I don't think discipline is as good in schools as it should be. You can argue 'til Doomsday about what discipline should be. As far as I'm concerned it should be that I can create the kind of situation when kids can learn what I want them to learn. There is a lot of benefit to be gained from discipline for discipline's sake, especially for younger kids. It can make problems a lot less later on.

**K.L.** At college we had a lecturer who... her opinion was that all children are lazy. You get them into line and those that are good, benefit from it. The rest just conform. And her feeling was that you had to have a disciplined environment in which learning could take place.

Now last term it was obvious that there were disciplined environments and there was no learning. Is it evident here at Hampton that a lot of learning goes on in lessons?

**Bob:** Well the thing about here is that a lot of learning will go on in lessons, almost despite a lack of discipline because it's that sort of place. But to me that's no justification for the situations I see occurring in different parts of the school.

Quite frankly, here you could be useless and not be able to control a bunch of four year olds but they'll still learn because the whole environment of the place helps in that way. I like to know that when I'm there explaining things, the kids are silent and they're listening to me and that once they start to do their activities they do them properly as far as performance is concerned, as far as looking

after each other is concerned, in cooperation and all the other bits and pieces that go with it. Discipline is necessary there and I don't think that you should be so quick to abrogate their own responsibilities in that respect.

It is very easy, particularly in the sort of environment that I teach, to let discipline take care of itself and sort of "pass the buck" as it were. The difficult thing always in teaching is to say no rather than say yes. I think that a lot of people are frightened to say to kids "no, you can't do that" either because they might actually be frightened themselves to do so or because there is a danger of becoming unpopular. This is where I think it's important that a certain degree of confidence exists in a P.E. teacher who for instance is not.... It doesn't matter to me whether the kids like me or hate me. I think in the end they like me because they know where they stand and know that I'm fair. But it's a balance of things. Kids won't appreciate praise unless you criticise. To go into a gym and say to everybody "well done, fantastic, marvellous, brilliant, you've been great havn't you...." is nonsense, because it'll just wash over the kid in the end.

**K.L.** I've always felt, almost from the first day in fact and found it a bit of a shock, that children in your lessons always know where they stand. There's never a time when they don't know where they stand. I seem to remember seeing one boy with an odd sock on and he was torn apart in the first lesson and you were saying how disappointed you were in him. In some schools if they're actually doing it.....(inaudible)

There are a couple of things to finish off this section Bob. One would be your age?

**Bob:** Twenty-seven.

**K.L.** And a question which I always found interesting for myself is: given that you've a first degree in something else, was there ever a time when you thought you would be a P.E. teacher other than at the end of your first degree or...?

**Bob:** Yes, it was in the back of my mind when I was thinking about my career, when I was in the sixth form and doing 'A' levels. A lot of my friends in the rugby team and being a year older, had gone on to Cardiff College and I was going to do the same thing but I was actually persuaded

by my Russian teacher that a degree in Russian would finally be useful eventually than a qualification in P.E. Looking back, I'm glad I took that course.

**K.L.** Do you think that 3 + 1 is.... Now that we've come to Section II, do you think 3 + 1 is...?

**Bob:** I think it's difficult because I think in my case because one, I'd played a hell of a lot of sport that I had hopefully a lot of attributes to be a good teacher anyway. That's not meant to be boasting. So 3 + 1 was fine. Some of the people doing the post grad. course with me at Madeley, 3 + 1 would not have been perhaps the best preparation to be a P.E. teacher. I think it depends... and this is where there's got to be a lot more... well the situation doesn't exist so much nowadays anyway... but on the part of colleges to actually pick people who if they have got a degree in something else, they've got enough of a grounding in physical activities generally speaking to get the most out of a one year course. And obviously again, the one year course would have to be of a very high quality and the one at Madeley was outstanding. A fantastic course.

**K.L.** One of the questions I put down here was: when it came to chose an institution, how come Madeley?

**Bob:** In fact that was completely pot luck. I'd put down Borough Road as first choice because my friend was there and he told me that basically it was a good place. I didn't get in there because their selection procedure actually precluded the possibility of doing it the way I was doing it. I got refusals from Carnegie and one of the Catholic colleges in Liverpool, Christ in Notre Dame. Madeley was fourth choice and by that time I was really upset; I didn't think I was going to get in anywhere and because they were actually very keen to accept post grads. and they were, they liked the idea of having the post grad. people there. It was one of the best things that ever happened to me.

**K.L.** I think my own experience was the same. By chance you go somewhere and it couldn't have worked out better in the long term....

And I've put down here,... my first thing to think about: you've always spoken very highly of Madeley or North Staffs. Was it North Staffs?

**Bob:** It was officially North Staffs. Poly.

**K.L.:** Whilst you seem to have very strong memories about parts of the course and probably all the course, were there particularly positive aspects that you thought were important?

**Bob:** The arrangement as far as teaching practice was concerned was very, very good. Having spoken to other people who've done teaching practices at other institutions, whether universities or P.E. colleges or whatever, things like travel arrangements were very, very good; contacts with the schools were very strong; there were ample opportunities to go and visit and get sorted out with various members of staff etc. etc. The actual courses, whether they were four week or eight week whatever were timed very well around teaching practices. I think that everyone felt very well prepared when they went into their first teaching practices to teach a number of subjects. Before we did our first three week practice towards the end of the Christmas term, we did eight weeks in basketball, eight weeks on gymnastics, eight weeks on swimming, etc. etc. and I felt well enough equipped. I think everybody did.

Then the second term was all teaching practice and the third term was concentration on cricket and athletics etc.

We did a hell of a lot in my one year course and I know other people who have done full B.Ed. degrees at other quite high-powered institutions who have not done at all.

**K.L.** Was there any feeling of difference between you and the B.Eds. at Madeley?

**Bob:** Yes, certainly. Not on our part, but I think there was definitely a feeling that because of the very aggressive, very competitive and macho image of the typical B.Ed. student, male or female at the P.E. college, we were seen as the 'clever people' which, turned on its head, was really not the way to be. But in fact we were lucky because we did have a good group that year and we did manage to establish ourselves quite quickly within teams. I was playing in the first fifteen and played for the first eleven football and it all helped.

**K.L.** Was it.... I know from my own experience, going from York to Loughborough that there's quite a difference in the student culture between

an academic kind of department or college and the very much physical....

**Bob:** I found there were times when I literally sat back in the bar of an evening and was at once horrified and amazed at what was going on; some of the clashes that occurred within our campus, which was so small... and the fact that everybody knew everyone else and you were living on top of people and at times it was really amazing what was going on. Generally it was a very aggressive, very competitive.... Some of the friendships that came out of it were very strong friendships but the opposite worked aswell.

**K.L.** How about things like dress and standards...?

**Bob:** Madeley were very, very hot with.... For instance, with the B.Eds. they were much more strict than they were with us. But they were strict with us aswell about turning up for lectures in the appropriate kit and people were actually sent out of lectures regularly for not having the proper tracksuit bottoms or not having the proper vest or proper shorts even. That was very strict as far as the B.Eds. were concerned and some of ours were pretty strong on things like that aswell.

**K.L.** Did you fit in easily with that or did you find it hard to...?

**Bob:** It was something I'd always been used to put it that way because I was treated the same at school. Having said that, some of the better lecturers,... one or two of them were terribly anti any kind of uniform at all. Ian Ward springs to mind, one of the nicest men I've ever met, a fantastic lecturer and very capable: I remember talking to him one afternoon before an athletics lecture and he was saying that he didn't give a damn about what the kids looked like as long as they were out there doing things. Every little experience like that puts something extra into your own picture.

**K.L.** So how do you negotiate that, if you have say...?

**Bob:** What I do, having said there's a need for a discipline in the junior years, which there should be in every type of school, ... I don't care what type of school it is... I tend to be very strict with the first and second years, down to the last sock and untied shoe and then when they get to the fourth year and I'm starting the health-related P.E. where the emphasis is on involvement and just activity,

participation and a sympathetic approach to boys who haven't perhaps previously been very active, then concentrating on the activity being enjoyable rather than a punishment or too pressured. I say the time has come that as long as they're there and doing something, I'm not really bothered what they look like. They don't abuse that; they come wearing what they like but their response to that kind of approach in the fifth year has been very positive.

**K.L.** Well certainly in the case of the Tuesday lunch-time group is remarkable.

**Bob:** Yes, well having fifty kids in the gym pushing weights down from the fatties to the skinnies, to the very muscular ones is proof of the pudding really.

**K.L.** One thing I've found when I was doing my post-graduate was that, because I was so nervous during my first year of teaching, I tended to reproduce on mass my lecture notes and experiences of my postgraduate course. Did you find the same, or were you able to change...?

**Bob:** A lot more of mine comes from my own school, where as I say the P.E. was very, very good.

I've got almost whole blocks of lessons that come from my memories of things I was taught at school. Obviously a lot of things that I picked up at Madeley were "flesh around the bones" as it were.

Generally speaking, apart from some of the more specific things which you wouldn't necessarily do at school unless you were involved in that activity, for instance throwing discus, throwing high jump in etc., I wouldn't have had much of an idea about how to teach those effectively until I'd been to Madeley but the major games, and even gymnastics and things like that... my memories from school carry me through much more there. But then the health-related stuff comes from Madeley. That was the stimulus through to the sources and materials, and approach. That all comes from Madeley.

**K.L.** Did you ever see a lecturer teach at Madeley, or did they lecture?

**Bob:** We saw films of lecturers teaching a class. One of them was filmed teaching three different activities which was interesting to see. He did that well aswell.

We were taught by visiting lecturers aswell. We had one or two specimen lessons of a health-related fitness class and generally.... Some of the lecturers actually had as their policy to teach us as if they were teaching a class, others were much more aloof. We were exposed to that kind of film.

**K.L.** I think some of the things we've already discussed have been clarified but the one thing I meant to ask you about school and college was.... There were some problems obviously.... But how did you manage to negotiate the academic with the physical side of your school or college career. Did you find that was a problem at all?

**Bob:** What, do you mean sharing time between the two?

**K.L.** Yes, and whether the status you had in either, affected the other.

**Bob:** First of all, at Nottingham I didn't play any cricket at all, having played cricket at school and been reasonably keen on it, didn't play any at all. I played rugby throughout the three years, training regularly, playing Wednesdays and Saturdays and generally weight-training

and keeping fit, that sort of thing. But I think at universities, because they're bigger you do tend to have very separate lives and people in the department know you for what you are in the Russian department; the rugby club know you for what you are in the rugby club. They know that you do Russian but that's it. And everyone's doing something but it's very separate.

At P.E. colleges I feel that your reputation can be destroyed or maintained on how you perform in certain ways. That's not always true because there are some people who did very individual activities who might well have been a long-distance runner or something, who you'd never see doing things around campus. But they got credit for being either a good teacher or just a good bloke or whatever.

One thing that did obviously stand out very much was the different intellectual/academic approach at the P.E. college. I approached the few essays we had to do during the post grad. year in pretty much the same way as I'd have approached at university. I don't think I ever got a first for an essay at university but I got flying colours for all the essays

I did at P.E. college purely because it was stuff that they weren't used to reading. They were more used to dealing with people who were physically orientated than academically.

**K.L.** Is that a problem for the profession in general still do you think, that somehow P.E. is regarded as the low-status....

**Bob:** Yes I do. I think that... obviously there are jokes made about it... sometimes people can make quite disparaging remarks about P.E. teaching. At the same time I think that most people, parents particularly, would put their hands on their hearts and say that having met a lot of the staff at school, they often like the P.E. teacher more than the others because they tend to be sympathetic; they seem to be helpful, they know they put a lot of time in etc. etc. But I do think though.... Well there are several things to be careful of....

First of all, whilst it's important for P.E. teachers to have an awareness of the other aspects of P.E. which aren't necessarily covered by just the ability to be physical, we mustn't get too far away from the very practical aspects of P.E. I'd hate to think that, and this is happening a lot these days, that a lot of people

are coming out of P.E. colleges after three years who don't actually know how to teach properly things that have been for a long time traditional activities. I think that would be a dreadful shame.

Kids do like jumping over boxes and kids do like playing games and kids do like playing all the other things that have been associated with P.E. for a long time and I'm sure that now, more and more people are coming out of P.E. colleges who are not really qualified to teach or supervise a session with a classroom of kids doing vaulting activities or generally using apparatus or whatever. It's a bit of shame.

I think this is one reason for looking for P.E. teachers from perhaps less orthodox directions than what have come from previously. That might well be useful.

**K.L.** I know some people in education feel that the profession of P.E. will never progress; it has this kind of incestuous recruitment pattern or a particular type of person with particular values.

**Bob:** One thing that struck me at Madeley when we were doing the health and fitness course there which was like, completely new and fantastic to all of us was, I found out later from a couple of the lecturers who were friends of mine that in fact, even though this was the case being presented to us, within the hierarchy of the college, the situation was the same as anywhere else. That it was very difficult to get time for what seemed to me to be a very important aspect of P.E. simply because there had to be cricket courses that were done; there had to be rugby courses that had to be done; there had to be.... And there's perhaps a balance that's got to be struck there.

**K.L.** Perhaps a point to end this section Bob would be that in some books they say that P.E. hasn't changed in colleges or schools for at least thirty years. We still do the same activities in many schools in the same ways that were recognisable after the end of the Second World War. Do you think that in some way the profession is teaching for the past rather than the future or...?

**Bob:** I must admit that having now been teaching something relatively new in P.E. for four years, which I was very, very excited about in the first and second years and which for me has now become pretty much of a muchness, obviously with the exception of when new material comes through or when you find a new way, or a new approach, that I can't understand how a more refreshing or new approach to teaching the more orthodox aspects of P.E. hasn't come around yet. It still baffles me that here we're very lucky; we've got a very good department and we've got a good approach to all aspects of P.E. When we compete against other schools... it might be a first year collection of games, six a side football, six a side rugby, with no real rules but an emphasis on activity etc., that we still come up against schools where the emphasis is on classic, traditional approach with large numbers, fallen attitude generally and often the reaction of the staff at the school can be quite aggressive and hostile. They see you trying to do what they see as a liberal, wishy-washy way of teaching people, when all you're really trying to do is get the kids playing, having more fun and getting something from it.

**K.L.** Well that leads on quite nicely to the third section which was about your own experience of teaching and, having observed you for so long now.... It's quite rare that somebody observes somebody else teaching as you know and.... It's very private.... I wondered whether you were aware of the style of teaching you employed? We've talked about your approaches. Is it a conscious choice of style or do you find that...?

**Bob:** I think it's the one that I like and the one that I think is best. I'm not so big-headed or pig-headed as to think there's no other way but I happen to think there are benefits to be gained from doing things my way which outweigh the benefits from doing things someone else's way.

**K.L.** If you chose two words, one to describe what you were as a teacher in terms of your teaching style and one as the opposite.... Is that an unfair question...? You use the word "technician". Would you summarise yourself as a technician above all else, or is that only part of the work...? Or could you describe in a sentence what you do?

**Bob:** I think perhaps 'adaptable' would be a better word because obviously my role with the first fifteen at school would be far more technical than my role with a group of fifth years who you're trying to persuade to be active. And there the emphasis is on sympathy, on friendly cajolling somebody who really isn't interested and wants to talk about how many fags he's smoked that day and he's trying to pack it in. Obviously to say you were a technician would be to ignore that side of things, so perhaps just 'adaptable'.

**K.L.** Again on the list, the next group of things I wanted to ask was whether your style you felt was age and ability sensitive... and whether coping with mixed ability and motivation was difficult or you found that relatively easy, the more you talked?

Your answer is in the first part when you said that about adaptable. Is that hard work, that adaptability?

**Bob:** I think it fits in with my general approach to teaching that we talked about, in that I do think that there are certain standards that have to be set fairly early on and there

is a reason for setting those. Therefore you can then change according to the group that you've got.

**K.L.** Again in the questions in this section it seemed to me that I mentioned the awareness of atmosphere in a lesson which was obvious again from last term.

Some people would argue that teachers are actually born and not made and that it requires really social skills. Are you aware of changing at all or do you think that essentially you are now what you've always been as a teacher.

**Bob:** Yes I think so. I would agree with that... that they are born and not made. I think there is far too little in colleges of education that prepare teachers; there is far too little emphasis placed on the sort of things that a teacher can bring personally to a class, rather than what you can bring out of a manual. That's important.

**K.L.** Then I've got down here... and it's probably an impossible question aswell but.... If you were asked what made a really special lesson, or an ideal course, could you say anything briefly about that?

**Bob:** It would depend very much on the class you were taking. I mean, if you were taking the first fifteen when everything clicks together and if you're taking a class of 'wallies' and the biggest wally does something tremendous and he gets a kick out of it, it's .... It depends.

**K.L.:** Are there elements like reproducing knowledge that you've given?

**Bob:** Oh sure. When you've been spending two or three sessions working on a particular skill of rugby and the first fifteen actually produce it on a Saturday effectively and it works for them, and they see it's worked for them and they get pleasure from it, then that's a big kick.

**K.L.:** How about things which are much more difficult to assess or evaluate... when they reproduce behaviour patterns like fairness, evenhandedness or respect for people who have done well. Are those some of the things that give you pleasure?

**Bob:** That's something that I think, even though I don't make a big point of things like that, there are times in lessons when I become aware

that I've spent so much time worrying about making sure that partner A is running to the right point for partner B to pass the ball to him, I've ignored questions like, for instance, if you knock the ball off but the referee doesn't see it, then it's your responsibility to say that's the other team's ball. I think that that's something that could be stressed more and more often. It's particularly nice to see that with senior kids, like for instance the first eleven playing football, training with each other in a real pressure situation and everything is buzzing, will actually come up and say no, it's your ball.

**K.L.** How difficult is that now, in a very pressurised environment, to have this voluntary acceptance, even if you do it here, when they compete or go elsewhere and it's simply a matter of survival, is there a kind of dilemma for teachers there do you think...?

**Bob:** No. I think it depends: there are so many different influences on kids that can work either way it's difficult to say. But I think if you can instill into kids that if they do that, that it's actually one up for them and it actually looks good and reflects well on them, despite what their peers might say. It's some-

thing to be proud of. It might take a few years, it might take more than a few years for some of them but eventually they might come....

I may not have been that way inclined when I was playing in the first fifteen at school or even when I was in the first fifteen at university or whatever, but now hopefully that's formed an integral part of my behaviour.

**K.L.** At college the rugby team two years ago were described as 'innocent' when they played against Cardiff College and they seemed surprised that people were going to hurt them. There was a dangerous balance I had to try and redress there between naivety and the essence of what I thought games were.

**Bob:** I have had problems in the past two years with particular boys who've.... I've always stressed the need for instance to the forwards in the first fifteen to be far more uncompromising about getting the ball. I've never ever told anyone to kick anybody and I've never condoned anyone that's kicked anybody and I don't think that there's anything brave or hard about it.

It's important not only from the benefit of their own game but their own safety and everybody's safety really. But it's often in that situation that to be as uncompromising as possible within the laws of the game is a far better approach than to be, shall we say 'innocent' as you put it. That it's important that the boys aren't so naive as to expect everybody to be angels and that they can actually handle themselves in those situations while still.... It's nice I think when you can get a team who can be sufficiently uncompromising, as I think this year's first fifteen will be, who will still come off the field and complain about a team who's done nothing but punch and kick them. And that's really a refreshing complaint to hear.

**K.L.** Well, I think it happened for me two years ago when we were beaten by Cardiff and I couldn't do anything more with the side....

I wondered with your own side in developing teaching, whether there have been moments which you have remembered, which have distinctly changed your views of teaching, or pupils or activities...? Whether you could actually put a moment to an experience and say "that was when I realised...."

I'll give you an example from my own experience:

I'd structured a lesson so that everyone was going to achieve the final product, which was a reverse dismount from the beam and unfortunately I ended up with three fat boys, stuck on the beam. I persisted with one boy, trying to get him to do it. The other two did and the one who didn't cried, in front of all his friends and, from that moment on, rather like you and (Anouschan?) keeping his shirt on, I really felt that that was a lesson I'd learnt but I'd learnt it at someone else's expense.

Were there ever any moments like that for you?

**Bob:** Yes. Maybe not as singularly dramatic as that but there have been quite a few similar incidents with groups and individuals. And they do... there's nothing else... no temper... but perhaps it's just that you've been pushing too hard or... your point of view has been a few degrees to the left of what it should have been or.... Certainly I do remember moments like that vividly when things have happened. They often happen with me when I'm in a bad temper, which happens very, very frequently and I will later in the day, in the cold light of day, suddenly think

back and I will learn a lot from that. It's strange, it seems to me that a lot of teachers are frightened to lose their tempers aswell and you shouldn't be because kids should see you in your natural way anyway or they won't appreciate how fair you can be, or how kind, or nice or jokey you can be, unless they see you in a foul mood.

**K.L.** Well that takes me nicely onto another point which I wanted to ask you about which was, given that it's a very private thing that we do mainly about teaching.... How do you assess or evaluate your own performance as a teacher? Do you do it by reflecting on your own experience and what you think is.... Or do you talk to the pupils about it, or do you get feedback from the pupils, or other colleagues...?

**Bob:** Occasionally you get feedback from your colleagues, people on the academic staff who don't actually really realise what goes on in the gym and only venture down there on a rainy day when they've got nothing better to do but and will actually compliment or otherwise on something you've done, which is nice. I do tend to get feedback from the boys (whole remainder of sentence inaudible)... But a lot of self-evaluation comes into it.

- K.L.** Does that lead to change or just to...?
- Bob:** I learnt a hell of a lot from the mistakes I made with the first fifteen three years ago and that was a very important lesson to learn. I made several very serious errors which was due to lack of experience I think, as far as simple things like selection were concerned and putting certain boys in certain positions. I made some very serious mistakes which I learnt about one from the players themselves who told me what they thought afterwards to, from changing a little bit and seeing how things worked and seeing how the results came then.
- K.L.** Do you think we're ever encouraged in our training to consult people, because again I can never remember....
- Bob:** I like to have a chat with the first fifteen's hierarchy as it were as often as possible and ask them what they think. I ask them what they think and what they think about other players but you have to be very careful at school because they're only human and they've got vested interests in certain people and certain groups of people and.... there's no harm in asking.

**K.L.** The one thing I wanted to ask all five teachers was if there was an aspect of their teaching they could improve upon, what would it be? Would it be an area of knowledge for you or a type of presence...? How would you...?

**Bob:** I don't know: at times I think I'm a bit like a bull in a china shop in so far as the staffroom is concerned and things that I think should be done but... I'm a great believer in saying what you think and being relatively dynamic in that sense. I wouldn't like to lose that. I wouldn't like to think I've lost that and I'm pretty much the same in the gym aswell with very strong ideas about the way I think things should be done and the way kids should behave etc. etc.

To lose that very strong standpoint, in trying to achieve one, either popularity or two, any other thing that I might want to achieve, I would be disappointed if someone turned round to me and said "oh Bob, you've changed.... If that were ten years ago this would have happened... or that would have happened...." That would be a shame. And I've got to lose a bit of weight!

**K.L.**            (nothing on tape then)... it's very hard to have a massive change of style, approach. It can happen, but I wonder whether you might agree that change occurs at the fringes?

**Bob:**            If I was to go back to the school where I used to be a pupil and to watch a lesson taken by one of the teachers who taught me, I would be able to recognise... very distinct characteristics of any one person's teaching which would obviously be there until the day he dies.

**K.L.**            And do you think that's... we've talked about this... but secure for the pupils, they know.... Some of the literature says that the children don't mind what the teachers are like, as long as they're consistent. Is consistency more important than...?

**Bob:**            It's very difficult isn't it. I'm not a great worrier about what kids think. If there is someone who maybe takes a good long look at himself at any particular stage in his teaching career and doesn't like what he is and attempts to go about changing it, then if he's got the charisma to actually go into class and carry it off, then I don't think it matters what the kids think or....

If he's confident that he thinks he's doing the right thing and he is doing the right thing in as much as anybody could say so, that's fine.

**K.L.** There were two things linked to this question really. One was, because you do have team teaching and other activities here, do you have much chance to observe other teachers and for them to observe you?

**Bob:** No. I suppose in P.E. you get more chance than in any other subject because inevitably the two or three people in the department will be involved in the same activity on the same afternoon, or going to a meeting, to matches or refereeing or whatever.

I think it's a shame that teaching is such a private profession. It's often the case that a bloke can go through a whole academic year without anybody else seeing him teach. It's a strange.... If you put that into an office environment or a shop floor environment, it's crazy.

**K.L.** Has the Head ever seen you teach?

**Bob:** Well when you first come to the school, they do have a policy of watching you teach but because I was teaching with the Head of P.E. who was a quite elderly and respected member of staff and I think that he knew that I was okay. I think the Deputy Head came to watch me once and he was....

**K.L.** Do you ever have any P.E. advisors coming to see you at Hampton or is that separate?

**Bob:** No, I've never had an advisor come to watch me.

**K.L.** Obviously last term with me being in the lessons, it's slightly different in a sense that you have another pair of eyes there.... Do you think that having people watch you encourages you to work in a certain way or...?

**Bob:** Yes. I was very aware of my own teaching the year when we had a student here who, as it happened, we got on quite well. And in the end he was very much under my wing as opposed to under anybody else's. My teaching improved a hell of a lot because of that, because I was taking more care to make sure I was stood in the right places, did the right things

and was always thinking of little tips that I could give him and was therefore using them myself and....

**K.L.** In fact when I was a tutor one of the things I used to say to my students was that the knowledge you gain from a teacher giving out tips is virtually more important than the whole course because you can learn things, say if you were on a teaching practice. Do you remember any of your teaching practice with any great clarity?

**Bob:** Yes, one or two lessons from my first teaching practice which was in a very awkward school for me. It was a school run on very different lines to any school I'd ever been in or been associated with and I wouldn't necessarily like to be associated with one of its kind again. The Head of P.E. there was brilliant, he really was brilliant with the sort of kids he had and it took me quite a while to get used to the different kind of kids, the different levels and different objectives etc. But he was very, very good and I learnt one or two things from him. The fact that there was another bloke in the department that was with him who was nowhere near as effective was good and that was a nice play off between the two.

**K.L.** The other question I wanted to ask was, given the things of last term and so on: if you chose to leave, what would be the reason to stay, rather than go? Is there any particular thing that would invite you to stay?

**Bob:** Well, if they gave me about £5,000 more!!

Actually no.... It was funny because when I was actually applying for a job last term, that the very first Friday back, three days after starting the new term... and I still didn't know whether I was going to get this job or not and was looking forward to the possibility of it happening... by the end of that very first Friday, I was actually beginning to wonder whether I had done the right thing in applying for the other job.

It was after a particularly good session in the gym and some good work with next year's rugby players etc. etc., I thought maybe it was really in the classroom where I belonged, where I could actually be involved at the time. Not that it is not a classroom situation, teaching students but actually being involved....

**K.L.** And what do you think would be the reason to leave more than any other.... Personal development, prospects...?

**Bob:** It would be nice.... Having said what I've said, had I got that job I'd have been very pleased to get it and it would've been a nice chance to expand.

One of the problems is occasionally that I just get this nagging intellectual curiosity again; I feel I'm stagnating a bit intellectually. I would like to do, if I could afford it or if it was practical, which it isn't, I'd like to go and do another degree in something very different.... I don't know. If I ever thought that I was actually past the stage where I could really give usefully to the kids and where I was just getting no zip out of it anymore, then I think I would consider seriously about leaving.

**K.L.** I think that's the reason why Sue and I decided to leave St. Mary's, that we could carry on doing the job but the spark we thought we had.... We found it so draining you see to do it all the time.... At college it's "theatre" all the time it seems.

There were two other things, well at least one other thing I wanted to ask: the current strike in the State Sector has led them to redefine extra curricular work and the allocation of time. Have you had any problems at all meeting the demands, expectations and even the physical impossibility of various time expectations of you, or job description expectations...?

**Bob:** No, generally speaking. Apart from minor hiccups with my health, not really yet. No, I don't think so.

**K.L.** How do you trade off your own life and career with the open-ended time you spend with pupils before school, during school and after school?

**Bob:** I think you just get used to it. Having been involved in a lot of ways at school and being used to leaving school very late through my own involvement and then through all the university, being involved extra curricular-wise, for want of a better word, it's always been a part of my life really, so it doesn't seem to me that I'm putting in an extraordinary amount of hours, or time or effort. And being married to someone who does the same thing makes it.... Obviously in one sense it means that you see less of each other but you're both involved

in that way and you've both got that problem so in a way it ceases to be a problem.

**K.L.** Does school recognise the time you put in compared to, say, the work done by so-called academic teachers in marking terms or...?

**Bob:** I don't know, I'm not sure. I'm sure they do recognise it. The emphasis in this school is fairly and squarely placed on the academic side and there's no question about that.

One of the unfortunate things about sport and P.E. is that we have a department with a very good basis and outlook here, almost despite the attitude of the school or hierarchy. It's been the efforts on myself and other people who've got what we actually like to think is a good attitude to sport and P.E. almost despite the attitudes of the hierarchy....

(Speaking to schoolboy...) Yes sir...?

**Schoolboy:** You havn't seen a little purse with £2 in it...?

**Bob:** Correct! Where have you lost it?

**Schoolboy:** Around here somewhere. I need it to go on one of the coach trips, on a history trip this afternoon. It was in my pocket and it's not anymore....

**Bob:** You lost it around here? **[Yes....]** Are you sure? There's no possibility that you might've dropped it somewhere else?

**Schoolboy:** I've looked in the only other place where I could have dropped it, in Room 30, the audio-video room.

**Bob:** Have you taken everything else out of your pockets? There's no other time that you could have dropped it? **[No....]**

**Bob:** Well, you're stumped now....

**K.L.** That comes on quite nicely to the fourth section.... We do seem to be going on a long time. Perceptions of pupils. Paul, is somebody I've observed in the lessons for many weeks and we've talked about the way you managed his presence in the classroom. Are you aware of having a style of dealing with pupils, based upon a model you have of a pupil. Is there a pupil that you work....

**Bob:** I think that once you realise what makes a kid tick and what his problems are, you can approach it.... I think you've got to approach it in.... My best way is probably with a good degree of humour, mixed in with a big helping of understanding and occasional bouts of bad temper and physical violence!

**K.L.:** Humour has always seemed to have been part of your teaching and many of the books about teaching and sociology talk about the role of humour in coping with school itself.

Probably the last question before we start being invaded.... Is that again something that you've learnt, how to use humour rather than cynicism or sarcasm...?

**Bob:** Obviously it helps being perhaps a humourous person anyway. You do learn how to fit that in. You learn that with some groups of kids you can offend if you take the mickey out of them; some kids love it.... You always make mistakes but... it helps to brighten up the day a bit.

**K.L.** And I think it's nice that, again from the outside, the lessons I observed, all had at any moment, a potential for humour. And I think possibly for an outsider, to learn how those relationships between teacher and pupil have grown up.

I suppose the final thing about this would be, do you think that there's more opportunity for that kind of bonding between teacher and pupil, more than in other subjects? There are claims made for that.... Or we go back to the teacher and his view of the world again...?

**Bob:** Yes, I think it's just individual teachers. There are some classroom teachers who are superb, whether it's motivation-wise or humour-wise or relationship-wise and some P.E. teachers are awful. It just depends on the individual. I'd like to think that if I was teaching an academic subject, I'd be able to have my fair share of jokes and....

**K.L.** Does that work in your classroom subjects...?

**Bob:** Yes, I couldn't stand it otherwise!

**K.L.** Bob, it's now 26th June 1986 and thanks for giving me the chance to talk again.

We're on Section VI. One overriding thing I saw last term which shocked me was the treatment of the gym by rowers and although I don't want to make a wider point, it occurred to me that a good section to ask questions about would be the school.

Perhaps I ought to ask first about the curriculum, leadership and development in terms of the content because there was this obvious distinction between P.E., games and rowing. I wondered how you dealt with all those issues.

**Bob:** I think that one of the difficult things and it was something that obviously when I started teaching I was thinking about a lot was, whenever you're at college, you get this kind of picture of the perfect curriculum and the perfect situation which are always something you aim for at any school you come into and it's going to present a different situation which'll obviously be different from that perfect picture in one or many ways.

One of the things that I found a little bit difficult to come to terms with at first was the great difference between sport and P.E. when I came here; having been brought up as it were combining the two and that one is really an integral part of the other, whilst obviously being aware that there are differences and necessary differences.

First of all there was a vastly disproportionate amount of energy and time, effort, money and emphasis being put into sport rather than physical education in the wider sense.... Obviously, because as far as a school like this is concerned, particularly at this kind of school, it can bring prestige and have lots of other spin-offs which aren't necessarily to do with physical education.

So that really was my first aim when I came here, to try and change that emphasis a little bit and try to emphasise the need for physical education for classrooms of boys; to try and get away from this feeling of P.E. for half a dozen or P.E. for two or three and forgetting about... and using P.E. lessons to actually train teams or whatever.

I think that that was probably one of the definite things that I would consider to be a personal success in the first two years here, particularly with the introduction of the health-related fitness course. Now it gives me a great kick. It gives me as much pleasure to see one of my pupils out running on his own as seeing the first fifteen doing well. And that's the truth.

**K.L.** What I found very exciting, from the very first day was the sheer enthusiasm and involvement of pupils and that comes through very strongly in the P.E. side. I haven't seen that much of a games day to comment on the wider games aspect, but certainly there's a mass of enthusiasm in organised, structured P.E. lessons. In yours that I saw, it surprised me in a way that you had this big involvement. Has this developed do you think or...?

**Bob:** It would be easy to underestimate the amount of genuine willing effort and time that is put in by members of staff, on Saturday mornings etc. and I like to go out and see all the pitches full on a Saturday morning and I think that's tremendous and the number of kids involved is growing and growing and growing.

But I think that there is the other thing that needs to be taken care of aswell: that there is P.E. for boys who don't take part on a Saturday morning and that everybody has to be catered for.

What does annoy me is that sometimes I think that because one is easy measurable in terms of results and progress and improvement, that we tend to put too much emphasis on that, at the expense of things that aren't that easily measurable which might be the success that one fat boy can have in a first year P.E. lesson which no one sees and which I see and he will experience but which you cannot measure. And it therefore pails into insignificance, compared to the fact that the rowing eight won four medals or four cups last year. It's a big shame.

**K.L.** How would you as a P.E. teacher, with this relativistic notion of success.... How would you persuade pupils within a culture of a school which emphasises success and the publication of results...?

**Bob:** It's funny, because I think that in a way it's helped the success of the health-related fitness course here... because there is no doubt that in the school I went to, that boys who weren't

actually part of the clique, or part of the success story, certainly felt very left out of things and I was very, aware of that with the first fifth year class of boys that I took, who were very disillusioned... not disruptive, not badly behaved but were just slightly rebellious towards me because I was seen as a figure of continuing the never ending circuits and punishments or whatever.

When I actually took the steps to try and actually get a course going, it was at very skeleton stages in the first year. The response was marvellous. And I think that if you've got that kind of environment, where you're offering something as it were not out of desperation, that you're trying to get to the kids with this because they aren't appealing to anything else, but you're offering it to them because one, it's of general benefit, even to the sportsman and two, it's seen as a genuine attempt to involve everybody in activity, the response has been very, very good. Plus the fact that because generally speaking the boys are very intelligent here, one can offer the thing at quite an advanced and complex level which makes it for a start more exciting for me on an intellectual level and I think a little

bit more... it provokes them more and they can think that things they might be learning in biology and chemistry and other related subjects can actually start to be used in P.E., which to them would obviously be unheard of.

**K.L.** Given that change of emphasis, what control do you have over curriculum direction within the department?

**Bob:** When I came here, the Head of department then was a great believer in whatever the teacher was strong at, he should be able to do because he was a great believer in... if your strengths were there, then you would teach that and you would get a response. I think there's a lot of truth in that and in these days of generalised curricular and whatever, that's something that can often be overlooked. So he said to me, "whatever you want to do, do it". I think he knew that I was a "good" teacher and he really gave me a free rein. I took it upon myself to go and do these things and when the shake up took place in the department, I was still told that the P.E. department would actually use my curriculum, in as much as one has been drawn up in a fair amount of detail. Everything I had said would be a good idea at a certain time.

**K.L.** Was that a written record or was it a mental note that you had of the curricular?

**Bob:** No, we actually went out when Tony started here and John became Head of Department we actually went out and wrote down what we would try and do in the first few years. That kind of thing was a lot more loosely structured and obviously we wanted to introduce the kids to as many activities and wanted to make sure we fitness tested regularly and generally just make them enjoy it.

Then in the fourth and fifth year, fitness testing would be continued but obviously the course would be more designed towards why we were actually doing it, as opposed to just doing it. We'd actually talk about the ins and outs of personal fitness, of health-related fitness as opposed to skill-related and the whys and wherefores of...

**K.L.** How was that negotiated between yourself and John and yourself and the head teacher?

**Bob:** Well when I first came here the head was very anti any kind of health course. He was actually,

as I found out later, in the throws of very serious heart trouble and I think deep down he was probably quite pleased but he seemed to have this sticking point. He didn't want the parents complaining that their sons were being filled with physiological claptrap, going home and frightening them into believing that they were going to have a heart attack in ten years time etc. etc. The sort of thing which to me seemed to be half way towards a success.

I now know, having been here for four years that it's very difficult to bring about any kind of change here. I'm pleased that actually in the end I managed to persuade him to "see the light" as it were, to let me go forward with my plans.

There were one or two other changes, like I had to get four or five of the staff through a preliminary weight-training course so that they could supervise weight-training; buying some new equipment; fitness-testing equipment; weight-training equipment and just generally getting things centred around that in the senior school P.E. and that actually happened.

I think generally speaking that the forward, progressive moves that have taken place since I've been here have almost been despite the hierarchy rather than because of it. Very little has actually been done with active support; they've often thanked and encouraged and said they were very pleased with things when they'd happened but they were very slow with encouragement of the right kind in the early stages.

**K.L.** Is your work reported to parents?

**Bob:** Yes, I've had several.... I haven't actually been considered important enough to be invited to parents evenings for P.E. which says a lot about the school's attitude towards P.E. but I have had one or two parents come up to me and spoken on Saturday mornings or other occasions when you get to meet the parents, who've said how pleased they were. First of all that their boys were enjoying the course that they were doing and were also keeping fit and trying to do this, that and the other. That's always nice. It would be nicer if I could actually be invited to take part in senior parents evenings but then that would take valuable time away from talking about 'O' levels.

**K.L.** The question that strikes me from that is: the atmosphere in the staff room at Hampton seems to be very much based upon sporting ethos and sporting activity and the shove halfpenny board being a central part of the room. To what extent at Hampton School do you have a different kind of relationship with the staff than you might at other schools? Is the school staff room a sporting one or an anti sporting one or...?

**Bob:** Yes, definitely. There was a lot of ill feeling towards the hierarchy when it was decided that a new library would be built at the expense of the new sports hall. They actually asked the staff to vote on it and when two-thirds voted in favour of the sports hall and yet they went against that vote and went ahead and built the library anyway, there was a hell of a lot of ill feeling.

But a lot of the staff take part in sport. A lot of them help with school sport; taking teams for cricket, football, rugby etc. etc. The tennis is good. There's golf. There's everything and it is very much a sporting school.

**K.L.** A lot of researchers talk about the P.E. teacher being a marshall figure in the staff room. Have you felt any kind of status problems yourself within the staff room or...?

**Bob:** I think that because of the sort of bloke I am, any that there has been has been water off a duck's back sort of thing. Certainly I think the Headmaster would possibly like to think that at times I feel diminished and patronised by him. But then that's because I've got an academic degree myself and I'm confident that I can hold my own intellectually with any of the staff. That's no problem. I just see it perhaps as an extra string to my bow. So the problem doesn't arise. If there had been someone who came along who was a bit lacking perhaps in confidence, it would be very easy for him to be overawed in an atmosphere like this, which is sometimes overpoweringly academic.

**K.L.** There's just one final question on this range of ideas. Given that the school relies on recruiting paying parents and although you have done some work on exams in P.E., how will the future of P.E. be in terms of being a central or marginal aspect of the curriculum with exam pressures being brought to bear upon the school,

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increasingly by parents perhaps. Has the P.E. got a future as a non-exam subject?

**Bob:** I think it has for several years. First of all because now I think, with developments that are taking place in P.E. anyway and with particular reference to the way we've developed here, I think the hierarchy would be really very frightened of broaching the subject of either cutting down on P.E. periods or cutting them out altogether. I think, if I was perfectly honest, that we've actually got one of the best P.E. departments that I've ever experienced as far as approach and attitude and opportunities are concerned. I think they know it would be silly to try and nip that in the bud now, though it wouldn't surprise me if some attempt was made because that kind of thing has happened before when I've least expected it. And really at times, the Headmaster and others can be a law unto themselves, quite rightly.

**K.L.** That was a question that seemed to strike me at Rectory aswell. If you have key curricular decision makers who are not in your department and control the department.... Ironically enough at Rectory, all three senior management have a strong sporting background and interest.

To what extent here is the management structure... does it reflect sporting ability?

**Bob:** Senior management, yes. The Deputy Head has a very strong sporting attachment, aspirations if you like and is fairly strong in several sports. Of the rest of the hierarchy many heads of department... a lot of them have got strong sporting attachments. It's funny, it's just a question of emphasis. But having said all that, it will probably surprise people to hear me say that I still think that this school is.... it's very difficult to say.... It's still something that.... I'm always reminding other people in sporting positions of responsibility that sport is very definitely a second or even third place to other things. Sometimes it makes me feel bitter that they will take all the prestige and kudos that is coming from it and will at times do very little to encourage further improvement.

**K.L.** Given that what you've said and given the immense involvement I've seen here in lessons and extra curricular activity, where does the interest come from.... And that'll have to be the final question. From your parents? Is it generated here by the staff? Is it expected, traditional... what would you say?

**Bob:** I think it's probably a balance of being generated by the staff and also part of the tradition. A lot of parents chose this school in particular because they know it has a wide variety of sporting activities, aswell as a wide variety of all sorts of other activities. I think that that, combined with the fact that there is a hell of a lot of enthusiasm for all sports amongst many members of staff.... In fact I think the majority of staff are actually involved in sport of some kind which is a good basis for a thriving sports/P.E. department.

Hullo Bob. Sorry to ask you to do it this way but  
would you mind finishing off the tape with any questions  
that are left. Thanks.

Bob

Hampton School, 10th July 1987. The discussion on the tape relates to questions about the immediately preceeding school year.

**K.L.** I was going to come back to the idea that... from watching the lessons that every teacher had his own methodology. What I wanted to know really was that in this last year, is there any sense in which you've been evaluating how you teach and thought about whether that was sensitive to age and ability at all.

**Bob:** Well in fact I was talking to Steve Smith the other day who helps me with third year rugby and is actually in charge of third year rugby... but obviously I take the game sessions when we're out there... He said that he'd noticed that I'd mellowed very much with the junior boys because I used to be.... He thought I was far too hard with them and that used really to be counter-productive because many of the staff here I find are a little bit too friendly with the boys at times.... I think they are... they try to be friends with them and really they shouldn't be. They should be creating

a little bit of distance. And therefore I was so different in that respect it turned the boys off from doing rugby sometimes, because they thought they could get an easier option somewhere else.

So I still insist on standards of behaviour and cutting out language and making sure that they're on time etc. etc. but generally, as far as the content of the rugby lessons for instance are concerned, I'm far happier for it to be much more fun than perhaps I would have liked before, rather than necessarily making progress technically or whatever. Now I'd say that until they've finished the fourth year, if I can just see that they've enjoyed the season and are happy to keep playing, then that's really enough. It's a question of motivating them enough to just make them want to play.

**K.L.** So let's say that if anyone was interested in exploring teaching it's how you learn to teach and how you develop teaching.

How much is it kind of subconscious development and how much is it feedback from other people and just looking around and seeing....

**Bob:** I don't know. I think mostly it's subconscious because when I watch boys coming in on teaching practice.... We had another one this year at Borough Road who was relatively poor... and it just makes you realise when you see these people how much you know and how much you take for granted in your own teaching.

Sometimes I think "God, I'm incredibly lazy because I'm not doing this, that or the other..." but when you get a student come in and see the kind of problems he has with organisation, with discipline, with content, with progressions in techniques or skills learning or whatever, you realise how much you do know subconsciously.

I tend to go by 'feel'. I get the feel of a class and I know for instance if I'm doing things for instance at too high a level, if I'm spending too much time for instance in a health-related fitness course, either too much time on the theory or too much time on the practical side of the course which they're not interested in.... You just get a feel for it....

So the nice thing is, if I know I've been quite strict with them, I can then actually get to the point where I can say to them "are you bored with this?" "are you fed up with this?" "do you feel we ought to move on..." and they will not abuse that. They will actually be quite honest and tell me that....

Yes, actually I think a lot of it is subconscious but then the basis of it, when I first started teaching, was very much a learnt thing and things remembered from my own experiences at school.

**K.L.** So now, because your life's changing aswell, you're confident enough in your knowledge and status to almost be involved in fine tuning rather than major shifts....

**Bob:** Certainly. I find there are little things that I get interested in, rather than worrying for instance about whether a certain group of boys can triple-jump properly or something like that. I'll be thinking more about getting to a boy who may have a particular personality problem or a weakness, with regard to motivation or problems, self-image problems and things like this. I find that much more interesting now.

**K.L.** So would you say that as you've relaxed and been aware of your ability or what you can offer, you've been able to teach more and organise less because you have individuals now who are being taught things or being targetted...?

**Bob:** It takes very little time now for classes to be organised because if boys in the first and second years are regimented enough and things are instilled in them, as far as looking after equipment, how to put it out and set it up properly, you can then spend.... It'll just be a question of one command at the start of a lesson, like today, we'll do something, set the things up and then you can start working on....

Another thing, I'm moving much more away from worrying too much about boys being better, or performing much better, at certain physical tasks than I am about their actual personal development. I find myself, particularly with the senior rugby boys... the first fifteen who I have most contact with... far more about what sort of people they are, their development as characters and how they respond to situations that might occur in a game and I like it not so much from the point of view of the success

or failure as a rugby exercise but the success or failure as an exercise as a group of people or individuals and that's....

**K.L.** Well that leads on to the second set of questions about the career of a pupil. Last year I saw how you dealt with people and the Asian boy particularly was a good example. In what sense does a teacher like yourself get to know individual pupils. When would you get to meet them other than in lessons or.... What contact would you have that would improve what you know about them? Is it a deliberate thing that you do or...?

**Bob:** Not necessarily I don't think. Sometimes I worry that perhaps I show favouritism to boys. I certainly do sympathise and have a soft spot for boys who either are not particularly able or have particular problems or who are not particularly good but who work hard or whatever. Perhaps that's a mistake but.... Until they get into the senior school.... The only boys I'll have any social contact with are the rugby players because there is a genuine possibility, a realistic possibility, of sharing a different relationship with them, whereas boys that were just ordinary charges could be seen to be invidious in some way.

**K.L.** You'd be a kind of Mr. Chips figure where you....

So how much that you do formally with the pupils establishes the context with which you can then say "well tried" and not leave the ones who are very good and excelling and having a hang up about being good?

**Bob:** That's a difficult one I think. It depends very much on your own attitude and how you get your attitude across to the boys. I think that nearly every first year class that I have, in the first two or three weeks there will be an example of a boy who, having been put with a boy who maybe is obese or even ugly for instance, or a poor performer, will turn his nose up at being put with this boy and that always angers me and I'll make a big thing of that. Just to let them know straight away that it doesn't matter to me if a boy is obese, a performer or whatever, but everybody's got a right to be in the group and have the same amount of attention and the same possibilities to achieve.

Then it's a development from then. Even boys who are poor performers must know that they can't be too casual, or expect to be praised

for next to nothing all the time. They must be given genuine praise all the time and criticised if it's warranted, aswell otherwise the praise becomes empty. Alternatively, the boys who are very good, mustn't just be pulled up for being lazy, or arrogant or whatever. They've also got to be praised when they do do something very well and do try very hard and the more that you can reinforce what they do in that way, as a group and individually, they will then begin to respect what you say but almost for the fact that you've said it. That's important.

**K.L.** Can we move on from that and think about.... One of the ways you might develop as a teacher is to observe other people teaching but we know that doesn't happen unless it's an occasional freak occurrence, and the impression I had last year was that you and Tony compliment each other and that then John was somehow linked to that process. I wonder whether, and again I don't want to have any private things.... But without saying those kind of things... in what ways in the last year has working together grown or been diminished in some way? Because you are a department notionally aren't you?

**Bob:** We do quite a lot of various kinds of what might be called team teaching, to put things in a tidy box. We'll often take a large group together, Tony and I, a rugby group, an athletics group, or something in the gym on a wet day for instance, we'll take to all going in there and doing our little bit. But generally speaking, I find it very difficult not to want to dominate in those sort of situations... just because I feel I'm being lazy if I don't sort of thing.

**K.L.** Do the boys enjoy the team teaching do you think?

**Bob:** I think they enjoy it but occasionally, and this is certainly true in rugby, where they will sometimes be confused because not only of the different....

First of all there is a different technical ability for instance in rugby between Tony and myself and the ability to get technical points across... because of the different standards expected by both of us and thirdly by a different attitude expressed by the two of us. And I can see confusion in boys sometimes and it's very difficult once again, especially when you're teaching together and you're in the same school

and you spend a lot of time together to learn how to combat that.

**K.L.** Would you ever tell each other?

**Bob:** No, I don't think we would really. One, because I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings and two, I might not always be right and that's you know.... Obviously as far as rugby is concerned, I know how things... how I would like things to be done but generally speaking one of the problems I find is.... Perhaps it's because Tony is an international athlete and athletics is a very individual thing with a very specific kind of attitude associated with it. I sometimes think that that carries over into teaching boys who are poor performers. Perhaps there is a little bit of a clash there in standards that are expected at Madeley. It's a possibility

**K.L.** So would there ever be any circumstances where one of you would give feedback to another about, say, how a practice would work better, or whether there's a technique point you can....

**Bob:** Oh yes, that happens. Yes. There is a certain amount of feedback in that way.

It would be untrue to say that there isn't any sort of ideas being exchanged or that there aren't any differences of opinion or whatever. We do talk about it but I'm not sure how much of it is actually put into practice. I think in the end it isn't.... The important thing is not a question of a different idea of how to teach a certain skill. I think there's something far more important underlying. I think it's an attitude of mind which is more important.

**K.L.** Say then if a department of individuals had a (inaudible) about the process of where people acquired knowledge rather than a product, because you obviously had different products at the end because of your experiences....

**Bob:** Or the process whereby children are motivated and children can see themselves being watched, being cared for....

**K.L.** I think, as I've said to you before, that the activity is possible isn't it here and the children.... Whenever I come here, children are working... you look round now and they're all doing things and... it's a compliment to the school that there are all these racquets

here.... Boys going to organise their own cricket... and all these things make it possible....

**Bob:** I mean the nice thing here is... the boys can often.... I'm sure that if you wanted to, you could actually get through a whole week without teaching any P.E. and there would not be any real problems. The boys would come out and they would teach themselves. And that's not entirely a bad thing to be able to say.

**K.L.** And for the boys to teach themselves, do they need any kind of knowledge that you've given them or is it sufficient that they've got images that they've got outside school which they can use to inform themselves?

**Bob:** I think the two are important. There are other than the standards or the image that I might project of a certain thing or how a person should act or play or perform, there are the outside people to watch. That's important for anyone learning a skill. But I think the discipline and the ability to be independent and sensible and civilised, which will come in the early years here, is important for boys to be able to perform on their own.

But then having said that I think that a lot of it is natural anyway, because kids have always played on their own.

**K.L.** I call it 'voluntary homework'.

When you are conscious for whatever reason... say someone comes to talk to you about interviewing or whatever and lessons go on and you catch yourself looking around at the boys to make sure they're okay, are you ever aware that the boys themselves, in teaching each other, are actually using the frameworks that you set up for them, in terms of giving knowledge?

**Bob:** Definitely. Particularly for instance with the senior boys who I would teach rugby. If they are then given a situation where I put them in charge of six boys of first years, to teach them some chip and run rugby, they will then start.... They see themselves very much as a reflection of you and they will tend to say the same thing. I've actually heard a boy say the things that I would say in half-time team talks and things like this. That's inevitable I think and that's a reflection maybe of the respect they hold you in or how they regard what you're teaching them.

**K.L.** And that's both exciting and frightening because some people talk about the hidden curriculum of teaching and obviously you've seen what you've said, the aspects of your children that you would particularly like them to express. Have you seen any examples of them actually doing things that you perceive that are yours but you wouldn't like them particularly....

**Bob:** Wouldn't necessarily like them to learn.

**K.L.** That's very hard that I think to say.

**Bob:** That's difficult isn't it. I can't think of anything off hand but I'm sure....

**K.L.** Another example would be if you were teaching somebody and they did something which was quite surprising to you and you might have probed why they were doing that and they'd either misunderstood what you'd asked them to do, or they'd say "well we thought you meant this...."

**Bob:** What? Where for instance someone is learning something in the wrong way?

I've actually seen... and I don't know if this is the same thing entirely... but perhaps it's a reflection of the sort of boys we've got here, a student who was on teaching practice recently, was teaching a triple-jump lesson in the very early weeks that he was here and he had hardly done any of it except when he was at college, and he actually taught the boys to do triple-jump wrongly. He was actually teaching them to do it technically completely wrong. There was no hop phase. There were two steps... and it was awful. And the boys actually learnt to do it perfectly the way he was telling them to do it, which was of course completely wrong.

It was unimportant in the wider sense... but it was interesting to see that the boys here will do exactly what you tell them! If someone here tells them to do something, they will do it, perfectly, in the wrong way, which can make life very difficult if you have got people who are unqualified people or who haven't got a great deal of technical knowledge.

It can cause problems when you encounter boys later on who have then got to unlearn things that they've taken years to learn.

**K.L.** It's almost hard to understand your being here seven years but... with the first years, you will have established with them frameworks for teaching and learning which will be the bedrock of what they do in subsequent years....

**Bob:** I've said to someone recently that the first year that I took and have now finished their fifth year, will now be in sixth form next year and already, with regard to the rugby where I get the most sort of feel... but in other parts of P.E. aswell, but just the general attitude and things like that... I now feel much more at home and in sympathy with the boys that I've taught for that long even though I might not have taught them for every year, they will be taught by a great variety of teachers who have got different methods, different approaches.... I somehow feel that there is a little bit more of me and what I would like to see in them than there were in the boys that I taught when I first came here and will never have been taught by me.

**K.L.** What is interesting is that.... By being in somewhere long enough to see a long term development, you can talk about the career of learners.

If somebody goes out of your group for a year or so and then come back to your group, can you recognise the way they learn, or do you have to find out about them again and start all over again?

**Bob:** In all sorts of ways I can see that they will have got used to all sorts of different standards which is the easiest thing to spot and attitude and level of motivation, their level of discipline. I can see that they will have changed in that way, very quickly. I sometimes get classes from other people and will be amazed at the poor standard of dress and appearance, general demeanour of boys and it will often take me, perhaps three or four weeks to perhaps get those standards instilled again.

**K.L.** And is that a troubled time or do pupils recognise that it's a process to go through...?

**Bob:** I am certain now that they actually... they like the feeling.... It's strange.... In a funny sort of way, I think that the boys like to know that they're being supervised, or taught or whatever you want to say, by someone who isn't frightened to try and tell them what they shouldn't do, or to change them, or to actually insist on certain things rather than somebody

who will just let them go and maybe let them spiral downwards slightly.

**K.L.** So the boys here like certainty?

**Bob:** Yes, definitely. I think it would be not far from the truth to say that all children like certainty in that way.

**K.L.** Well all the evidence suggests that when the rules are clear and the thresholds are clear, there is a line which can't be crossed.

**Bob:** I found that certainly since I've been here in this school where the ethos of the school, which comes from the Head, is that we look for the boys' willing cooperation and create a civilised community which is not based on people being forced to do things, or being in fear of people if they don't do things. I've mellowed a lot and have certainly learnt a lot from that and can see a lot of advantages in that kind of atmosphere, as compared to perhaps the kind of atmosphere that I myself was taught in. But then I can see advantages both ways aswell. This is certainly a very nice place to teach and....

**K.L.** The successes are obvious and we talked last year about a couple of people who were not successes. What happens in the unlikely event that a pupil doesn't get on with either the process or the product which interests you? How are they dealt with?

**Bob:** It depends on the nature of the problem. A boy who is unable to cope for instance technically... that isn't a problem. That's just a different boy who will be taught differently as any boy would be, at whatever level. If it's a difference of.... If it's a boy who simply cannot appreciate for instance the level of discipline that I will require, or the level of civilisation that I will require from him, then we will inevitably clash and it's very difficult to say, further than that, what will happen. Often, if there is a boy who has particular problems in that way, the problem will cease to become my problem. It will become somebody else's problem, the head of the year or the form tutor or whatever. That does happen occasionally.

**K.L.** Is negotiation then one way, that they have to adapt?

**Bob:** No not always because one of the things that I've learnt since I've been here is that there are boys who can thrive in an atmosphere which might be somewhat different to the one I might expect and can achieve and maybe perform better in that sort of atmosphere. And I'm prepared to compromise on that but there are certain things which are not negotiable and if boys continue to transgress in that way, then there is no compromise.

But as far as giving boys a different atmosphere in which to attempt to achieve whatever I might have for him or he might have for himself, of course there is a possibility for compromise. And in fact it would be nice to actually discover there was a possibility for him, even to the extent where I would be quite happy for a boy to go and do an activity on his own, away from the class if he wanted for instance. That's just an example.

**K.L.** Do you think that boys come to your lessons equipped with a kind of background dossier on you, if they haven't been taught by you before... and what they should be doing?

**Bob:** Yes. By the nature of my personality.... Certainly the younger boys will be less aware of my sense of humour. They might know that I have one but it will perhaps be less evident to them... the boys perhaps third year downwards. I can tell for instance, that a lot of them are quite frightened of me because of simply just walking around school.... If we were to cross paths, they will go out of their way to make sure that they don't get in my way. Sometimes that is disturbing. I know that I can break that barrier down very easily and I will certainly rather have it that way than have boys who are taking things far too easily and are over confident.

**K.L.** And is this apprehension they have based on the verbal control you have over them or is there any subconscious physical threat that they perceive?

**Bob:** It's almost certainly the verbal control because most of my.... I mean a lot of my lesson time is spent with my verbalising! Even when it's not necessary a lot of the time! Also I think they're aware of an underlying insistence and that sometimes is off-putting.

I often have clashes with first years who simply have never been told that they can't do something and that can often be quite a shock to their system.

When collectively a group of them, who perhaps are used to running around and playing and being carefree are suddenly, as they would see it, being restricted, it can for me have what is the desired effect but for them sometimes it can take a little bit of getting used to. It doesn't take very long.

Then you come to the situation where you've got them where you want them and you can actually orchestrate situations where they can then learn and then of course there's the possibility for praise and for boosting of their confidence comes etc. and they then begin to appreciate the whole process. It takes some time, but they will.

**K.L.** Have you ever had any physical...?

**Bob:** I clip kids round the ear regularly. I've never had what I consider to be a physical clash with a boy never. Never.

**K.L.** And is the clipping accepted?

**Bob:** Yes. I almost always tell parents about it. When I have my parents evenings.... First P.E. parents evening... two weeks ago... First year parents evening... tremendous.... And in fact there was a boy there in the first year who's not a problem but he's a problem for some teachers. He's very lippy and obviously spoilt rotten. Basically a nice boy and quite able. I told his parents that he knows where he stands with me and if he opens his mouth he gets a clip and they were very keen that that should continue.

**K.L.** Again without wishing to go into a legal court about comments... giving my tapes to the wrong people... I have to be careful!

Two themes that came out from both scores last time was the relationship you had personally and as a department you had with the Head teacher and that you had about facilities. I wondered what had happened in a year that either changed or reinforced patterns. The sports hall's kind of a marvellous promise....

**Bob:** In a way the sports hall throws into perspective what I still feel about teaching and that isn't so much the facilities that are important but it's the teachers that are there. The P.E. programme which has thrived in the last two or three years in my opinion, has thrived almost despite the lack of resources and that isn't a problem.

It wouldn't have bothered me if the sports hall hadn't been built. In some ways I can see it causing more problems than it will solve but the obviously the opportunities that are going to be there because of it... it's going to be fantastic. But I still think the people are more important than the buildings.

**K.L.** In what sense has the Head, bearing in mind that he's retiring of course, has he in this year reinforced the patterns that were evident last year in terms of the status of different sports within the school, or his acknowledgment of certain activities of say activities that you were involved in perhaps...?

**Bob:** He's still the same about rugby. He's still frightened of rugby and he's frightened additionally now of anything untoward happening

in the run up to retirement, which for me is a shame. I can understand it, but it's a shame.

**K.L.** Has he told you that or have you just learnt that from the way he behaves?

**Bob:** No. He's actually said it before that he's petrified of someone having a serious accident and one of the difficulties is.... People are justified in being worried about it and I think it's very glib of me as a non-parent, yet, to just say "that's no problem..., people shouldn't worry". When I've got my own children, perhaps I will think differently. But at the same time I don't necessarily like the implicit assumption that I therefore don't care or I'm not aware of the problems and aren't seeking ways to solve them.

And one of the problems is that the fear that's growing, is starting to seep down and boys are beginning to come up to me saying that they will not, can't or shouldn't play rugby because their parents are frightened and... given the nature of rugby and the great things that can come from it, I find that in a way, it's a difficult thing for me to take sometimes.

**K.L.** Would there be any way in which you could approach him and tell him what you felt? Would he ask your advice?

**Bob:** He only asks advice when he's worried about something. He very rarely asks for advice in a positive way and that seems to me to be a shame. And he's a very difficult person to talk to informally. Very difficult.

**K.L.** Is that because he's never in a place where you might talk to him informally, or....

**Bob:** Not necessarily. He's got a very short span of attention with regard to things that to him are not of the utmost importance. I think rugby comes pretty firmly into that....

**K.L.** Does he consciously boost rowing, or is it something that's happened, or..?

**Bob:** He'll admit and say in as many words that rowing is his favourite sport and he's obviously overjoyed when the rowers do exceptionally well which they have done in the last few years and that is tremendous and it's great for the school. It's unfortunate that many people, myself included sometimes, are in a position where

we feel we're almost forced to begrudge the rowers their success and their glory, simply because of the disproportionate amount of time, effort and interest that goes into rowing in the school compared to anything else.

**K.L.** And is Steve still...?

**Bob:** He's going to pack in being head of rowing next year apparently. He's now head of year, head of fourth year which was, shall we say, a controversial appointment as far as the staff were concerned and he's going to stop being head of rowing which is.... It's going to be an important time for rowing as there's no one really automatically in a position to take over and do that job as well. So it remains to be seen what's going to happen there, especially with the new Head and everything else....

**K.L.** So the tension is still there. Are they still as unsympathetic to the environment as they were last year, in terms of what they...?

**Bob:** I get the impression that this year, no they haven't been. But I think for the wrong reasons. I don't think because they've become more civilised. I think that because they've become

aware that they're upsetting people and for me they can take very little credit for that. But hopefully the situation will change.

**K.L.** One thing we talked about last year was the elitism of the rowers and their differentness. Is it hard work when you have rowers in lessons, dealing with their temperaments?

**Bob:** Occasionally, yes. Because they will start.... The fourth years, the big boys, the rowers develop a sort of arrogance. Unfortunately some of it is caused because, in an effort to encourage staff to be involved in rowing, the head, or the head of rowing, however the system is worked and that I don't know, young experienced, sometimes very inexperienced teachers are put in charge of third year rowers and their job basically is to see them do one or two sessions in the gym a week, where they do races and relays or whatever and the standard of behaviour as far as I'm aware, on the rare occasions that I've watched for any length of time, are disgraceful and unfortunately the boys will learn very quickly that they can get away with bad language, abuse of each other, abuse of the staff sometimes, rowdiness, indiscipline and often the legacy can be passed on.

Therefore there will be created another situation in which there will be an almost inevitable clash between themselves and me.

**K.L.** And would there ever be a forum for you to discuss the problems with either the pupils or the staff concerned?

**Bob:** It's always just a thing that's talked about in small groups who happen to agree with each other in what really amounts to quite a childish, immature way which is a shame. It's very difficult to know how to get around that without wanting to put oneself in an invidious position, and given that people will know the feelings I have about rowing, without it seeming like sour grapes, which it isn't. It's very difficult.

**K.L.** Say that you were involved in a capacity in later life in terms of staff development, how would you go about, if it was possible at all, getting an environment in which teachers said openly and frankly what they felt and that was the basis for positive development rather than negative back-biting. Is there any way you could deal with that?

**Bob:** I think if I was put in that position now and told to deal with it this dinner time now, it would be far easier to deal with that situation in smaller groups than in a larger general common room group. Because my experience of common room meetings here is that you will very rarely get people to say what they actually think, for all sorts of obvious and perhaps not so obvious reasons. And I think that dealing with people in small groups, you can be more informal without so much risk of upsetting people or putting people ill at ease. It's better to do it that way.

**K.L.** Would a member of the rowing club ever come up to you and make comments about the way they had been treated in your lessons? The way you had dealt with a rower? Say they spent all their time boiling them up....

**Bob:** No. Because I think... partly because I think the staff respect my ability as a teacher and as a motivator and as a respecter of standards as it were... sounds awful to put it like that... but they will respect that. And I think that one of the difficulties, as I said before, is the possible embarrassment or awkwardness of a situation developing where one was trying

to persuade other members of staff that perhaps they could go about things differently, would be the fact that often I'm sure these members of staff are far aware of the shortcomings that they have and that compounds the problem.

There is a particular example at the moment with the third year rowers. There is a group of boys who are particularly unsavoury shall we say who need a very firm hand and unfortunately the hands that are controlling them at the moment are anything but firm and I can see that many of those boys will be awkward... well they've already got a reputation for themselves. It's a shame that that situation has been allowed to develop.

That is one way that the ethos of the school does not benefit some boys. The school must be prepared to treat some boys in the way that they need to be treated. If I tell that to the Headmaster.... and I think this is what I brought up in my appraisal to you, but he will, he misinterprets what I say too often. Every kid in the school is petrified of me, that I hate the kids, that I spend all the time regimenting them, hitting them, being violent with them, which is not true. The vast majority like me and they like you know, the situation

which I create for them and the head just seems to miss what I'm trying to say.

**K.L.** Where would he get the notion that you are that kind of person?

**Bob:** Because he knows my background, which is a Catholic and grammar school background from the east end of London and he knows the way I run my classes. He knows the atmosphere that prevails in my classes. I'm not sure why he doesn't seem to appreciate it.

**K.L.** How would he get that kind of knowledge? About how your classes are run and the atmosphere?

**Bob:** Partly because he will have seen occasionally, not very much because he doesn't watch that often, but he will have seen the standards that I expect and things that I've said in staff meetings because I'm always.... You know, when things of this nature are being discussed and I think it's really just lip service to it, I will always say what I think and it always seems to cause a clash which is almost inevitably because of a misunderstanding. Do you know what I'm saying.

I'm not after a black and white situation. There are grey areas and there are boys who need to be treated with the utmost sympathy and boys who need to be treated with a bit more of a firm hand.

I think that it is perhaps because I will talk about one rather more than the other because it is the point in question, therefore I think that everyone should be being beaten twice a day and given cold showers and sent to bed with no tea!

**K.L.** So there's also a staff grapevine about how teachers teach, aswell as a pupil grapevine.

Mark

10th July 1987

**K.L.** So, that if we took it now, that in our position we could look back at your teaching and talk about it, would that be okay?

So the first one was about your teaching methods. Now you're looking back from Teddington upon your methods, I wonder, whether with all your experience, you've eventually found a style of teaching or a method of teaching which was sensitive to peoples age and ability? Are you conscious of having a style?

**Mark:** I think.... I was conscious, when I stood back and looked at the way I taught and my approach compared to other members of staff, I was very aware that my approach was slightly different. But I don't think I ever sat back and evaluated my own methods. I don't think I'd have time.

**K.L.** What some people think is, that as you gain experience and knowledge, you're actually doing things like fine tuning your methods rather than changing them all the time.

I wondered whether that fine tuning that you would have done, was subconscious or whether

somebody has actually said to you "have you ever thought about doing it this way...?" or whatever.

**Mark:** I think it was subconscious. As you say, with experience you get a feel of the group and of the children, you can actually anticipate problems and really prevent them arising. I think that that was probably one of the biggest things I gained teaching here.

**K.L.** To take that point. Anticipating what's going to happen might be about three things coming together, I don't know. For instance, it may be to do with the environment, either the weather's not right or it's too hot or whatever the case may be.

The second one is, that you're aware that the content may be difficult with a particular group... like doing a fixed practice with a group who don't normally do those kind of things.

And the third one is, what you know about each individual pupil. And in your case it was interesting because you knew about them both in the school and in the evening context aswell.

How did you deal with those three elements, or were you aware that those were part of what you were doing?

**Mark:** I think that you always tend to be aware of environment although I know it sounds so obvious. I mean, when the kids say that they don't have a kit, en masse, then you know there's a problem like it's too cold or whatever so I think you're maybe aware of that at the start of each lesson.

**Content:** When you're dealing with the same groups over a long period of time, you become aware of what they can actually cope with and also different approaches. You can use the same content but maybe in a slightly different way. Some sort of different approach.

**K.L.:** Some of the groups we had last year fascinated me in terms of what you knew about them and how you helped them and protected them. It was obvious that you were doing that and....

**Mark:** Yes but I assume that all teachers... once you get to know the children like I do, would react in a similar way. I would hope so anyway.

**K.L.** Do you think teachers take trouble to get to know children? Or do you think it's P.E. that might be special in some way, about knowing children. Are you more aware of their anxieties?

**Mark:** I think you're made aware of obvious differences. For example, if you have a particularly fat child in a group, that is obvious when it comes to P.E. whereas in the classroom it may not matter that he's fat. I think you become more aware of these aspects of children....

**K.L.** Now that you're not teaching as much and you look back on what you were doing... as I was saying this morning, we kind of miss what we do with pupils or students.... Does teaching now seem much easier when you're not doing it or does it seem much harder when you're not doing it...?

**Mark:** I've realised how difficult my job here was, because of the off-site facilities, the amount of extras imposed on me. I really do appreciate the job the rest of the P.E. staff are attempting to do.

We also talked about stress. I feel less stressed in my present job. I think being

involved in children is stressful anyway but I would love to be in a position, dealing with the kids in this school, with purpose-built facilities on-site. That would cut down the hassle enormously.

**K.L.** I wondered if anyone were to ask you, how you would go about helping those still here? Are those things that you would pick on immediately, an integrated site?

**Mark:** Yes.

**K.L.** How about length of the school day?

**Mark:** I think that the length of.... It goes hand in hand actually, with the off-site facilities and the length of each period. That was a problem and still is a problem. But you would go some way to solving that problem if all the facilities were on-site.

**K.L.** So, if you came back here to teach, for whatever reason, how would what you do now differ from what you did full-time?

**Mark:** I'd probably come back on a Scale I! But not be involved with anything extra. That's the only way. I was aware that when I was teaching

here, I wasn't doing the job as well as I could and there's always a temptation to say "right, I will go back to a Scale I and be happy with the work I'm doing..." but then you get into the career structures and it wouldn't be a good career move. If I came back, I wouldn't come back and try and 'spin plates' like we spoke about before.

**K.L.** Does teaching mean that much, that you would actually give up salary to teach?

**Mark:** I think you get to a stage where you're earning enough money to provide a lifestyle that you're happy with. Above that, I think you have to weigh up the financial aspects against the quality of life and the enjoyment of the job satisfaction and I think the job satisfaction will probably win.

**K.L.** That's interesting. There is one difficulty that faces people who decide to take a cut in wages and that is that if you do take a cut, it may enhance your teaching with the lack of responsibility and other things.

On the other hand, people may be doing not the quality of work you are doing and being paid a lot more. So they would be cheating in effect.

Would that be a problem at all or would you just get on with your teaching?

**Mark:** I think that if I came back and did it, then it would be a decision I'd made and probably wouldn't be resentful. But I was becoming resentful in school because I felt I needed promotion and I could see other people around me getting it. Some people were doing very little, they just happened to be in the right subject area.... And I was resentful then....

**K.L.** And did leaving help that resentment of...?

**Mark:** Yes. I mean, good luck to them. It's just that I'm sorry that P.E. isn't valued more, because I feel it has a lot to offer.

**K.L.** When you think about your move, was it a positive move in the end? That you definitely went for a reason which was to do with your interests or...?

**Mark:** Yes, I think so. I'm still working with children who I think are disadvantaged in some way, well the majority of them that I deal with. And I'm still liaising with the schools and dealing with the kids that I enjoy working with in school. On that level I it's been a positive

move and I think personally a) I needed the change but it was moving in the right direction, broadening my experiences, giving me some management experience. So from the career point of view, it's been a good move aswell I think.

**K.L.** That's what I'd wanted to talk about later... personal development. We can all make definite choices if we think they're going to help us and in fact they turn out to be even better moves without us realising it.

The second thing I wanted to talk about was this one about pupils. If you're in a school for any length of time, the possibility is that you will see children growing up in your P.E. lessons, physically and in skill and all those things. How did you go about identifying what it was that the individual pupils could do? Did you ever have images of a pupil as a name: would you imagine them physically or how they learned or how skillful they were or how fit they were? How would you build up a picture of an individual?

**Mark:** I don't know actually.

**K.L.** Okay. Let's take John. All I remember about John was his scarf, and his language. It's lost to me a whole range of things, like how skillful he was....

**Mark:** I tended not to think of people purely from their physical sense. It was really their relationship with me. I would look at certain aspects of them in isolation but initially it would be, how do I get on with him, how does he relate to me. I think that's the initial thing. It's interesting now that I've come back into school and I've seen a much... I've seen a change in these youngsters so much more noticeably. I mean, John's grown and....

**K.L.** And does that become a positive link between you... when you think something very positive about them and....

**Mark:** It's great now. When I come into school and all the.... I think this is.... When I come into school now, I get such a positive reaction from the youngsters that I think "Christ, I've given up all of this", but I tend to forget that when I was in school, I was often too busy to say "Hullo John, how's things..." or whatever. I used to try but it wasn't always possible.

**K.L.** I think that often leaving, for both parties, puts into focus what you were doing.

**Mark:** And it's illustrated to me. It surprised me how strong a relationship I had with so many of them.

**K.L.** That's right, yes. Do think that, and it's a very difficult question for anyone to answer themselves but is that a personality thing or is it to do with the subject in part as well?

**Mark:** I'm sure.... I don't think I would have been able to have the same relationship with the youngsters had I been in a classroom. I think it was a combination of personality and subject. I think it was possible to carry over that relationship into the classroom to a limited extent but I think if I had been a classroom teacher, no, I wouldn't have had the same attitude.

**K.L.** So, what we said is that during the normal business at school, it's very hard to speak to individuals and often when you speak to them it's negative rather than positive, that we....

**Mark:** Certainly that was one reason why I didn't get into the year tutorship bit. That was on the cards when I was deputy year tutor. But I didn't really enjoy talking... telling people off about... (inaudible) and things like that. That was really going against what I'd built up in the past four years.

**K.L.** Again, if you were in a position to advise people about (totally inaudible) facilitate pupil development, what would you say to them, on the basis on the time you've now got to speak to them. Would you want smaller scale contact with pupils for instance in school.... There is a move to making schools much smaller within the unit of the school itself.

**Mark:** Anything that increases contact with individuals.

**K.L.** And is there a time when you have to tread very carefully do you think, now you're looking back on.... Is there an age group that is particularly vulnerable and therefore needs special treatment?

**Mark:** I really don't know. I think that they all have problems at different times and have different problems.

**K.L.** For instance, the first years coming in have all the difficulties of entry and second years have got status problems and third years are starting to become adolescent. Do you have any feedback ever about what pupils thought of you? I mean, did you invite comment at any time, or did you just listen to what they said, in a positive and negative sense of course?

**Mark:** I think you tend to pick things up. I never really actually invited comment but I think you can sense.... the children can sense how you feel towards them and you can sense that in the opposite direction. And I suppose, maybe wrongly, but I assume that in the youth club setting outside of school, they actually made the effort to speak but I think that must be a positive thing, a positive response or action. I think it's easy for them not to speak to you outside of school....

**K.L.** Again, and it's probably a difficult question for you to answer, but if a pupil was describing you to another pupil who probably wasn't at the school, what kind of thing would he say about you? Do you know what they would say in terms of teaching, style, discipline,

appearance or interest? Do you know what they would think about you in terms of.... Did you have a picture about you being a particular type of teacher for instance if they came to your lesson and you hadn't taught them,... would they think...?

**Mark:** I don't think I've ever seen it as an easy option. This maybe wishful thinking but I just had the impression that they thought, he sets his stall up early on and if you stay within those parameters, everyone gets on fine and it's quite enjoyable. But if you overstep too often and too far, then he'll come down on you.

**K.L.** The feeling I had was that no child was ever threatened in a negative way in your lessons and I think it would be because the atmosphere was always so pleasant.

I think if I was a pupil, that's the thing I think I'd pick up more than anything, the atmosphere. It wasn't stressful at all and it was very... in difficult circumstances, outside and indoors. There was never a kind of tense environment. So I think I'd pick up those.

The third thing which obviously has changed since your move is working with other people. Was there a sense in which... obviously it happened to some extent when I was here... until you left in January there was a sense of working as a team. What would you say about the relationship of the staff in the department, particularly the male staff?

**Mark:** I think the male... of the boys P.E. department had a very good relationship, working relationship. I think we all understood each other. It's very complex. You have to know the history of the department, which we won't go into.... But certain people would not do extra and although that often made it difficult for the others we understood why that person had decided that, we could appreciate that. I think there was respect for each other in the department. We all realised that we were all very different and we seemed to compliment each other.

**K.L.** So there was obvious respect. Was there ever a time, say when you were team teacher or whether you were observing a teacher or you were being observed by a colleague, were you able to make comments, or receive comments about the way you taught?

Was there ever a chance to do that, or did you fight shy of that?

**Mark:** I think that there probably was the opportunity to do it but it was never taken up. There was always sometimes, one person would be teaching in the gym and I'd be sitting in the gym office and I'd have the opportunity to go in. I'd quite often walk in on someone's lesson, have a quick look and come back out but.... I'm sure if we sat down at a meeting and said how about doing this... as long as we had a good reason for doing it, I'm sure people would've accepted the....

**K.L.** Like taking up the notion, in some schools they have curriculum leaders. With your football skills it might be that you could then say to Ed or Alan "well this is the way I would tackle it and it works because of these reasons..." Would there ever have been an exchange at their level where you said "well it won't work that way because..." or would it not be suitable?

**Mark:** I don't think that ever happened. In some of the sports where Ed has particular skills, i.e. badminton and Alan and myself work at such a high standard, and we went to Ed for advice, he was always better on a very informal level.

**K.L.** Was he always conscious that you were asking his advice, or were you saying... like,... I've got a friend who's teaching badminton next week...

**Mark:** We all had this relationship where we were all very open about our teaching... we weren't concerned about "well he's better at athletics teaching than I am..." although I think we all recognised that we had our strengths and people were prepared to share their skills if it was possible.

**K.L.** Would that ever have been something that.... Or would you want to do something to... some kind of written things that you could use for each other? An information pack or a resource pack...?

**Mark:** Some central resource where you need to have some sort of input because at the end of a period it's looked through as a department and discussed.

**K.L.** You've seen those things haven't you where they kind of... a card like this... where you pick a practice... a heading...

**Mark:** I remember when I first came to the school and I had a supervisor from then St. Mary's.... I was saying.... Quite often we'd swap groups so frequently that you'd discover that what you'd planned for that particular group... this was when I was actually committing things to paper in my first year... but certain aspects of it had already been done and if we had a central information held, we could at a glance say well they've already done this and you could plan your scheme around it.

**K.L.** Was there much record keeping?

**Mark:** No there wasn't.

**K.L.** It's one of the things that is interesting, how teachers decide what content to employ and for whom. Did you find that your memory is quite clear about the groups, you knew exactly where you were?

**Mark:** Yes. Mainly I was very clear about what I had done with groups in the past. If I wasn't sure then after the first lesson I'd have been made aware. What I did find difficult was to piece together what they picked up from other teachers. I think we could have overcome that.

**K.L.** I wondered what kind of thing caused anxieties. Was there any anxiety at all, given the politics of everything aswell. Was there anything else that caused tension at all, things like attendance perhaps or...?

**Mark:** What, within the P.E. department?

**K.L.** Yes, the boys P.E. department. How could tensions be improved, if there were any? Was there nothing that could have been improved?

**Mark:** I think we began to resent not each other but things being imposed upon individuals which detracted from what they could put into the P.E. department and that caused... not tension between us... there was never any problem in that direction... but we began to resent the boss's attitude towards our subject and that caused tension and we often discussed that with the group.

**K.L.** Without being in any kind of legal battle with slander and things: I thought the two things that struck me forcefully last year were the problems we had about the sports hall and the off-site facilities and this underlying feeling

of disregard that the hierarchy might have had or that the Head in particular might have had. You know, looking back on that, what could anyone have done to improve on the situation.... What could you have done to have improved things? We could talk about this I think at some length.

**Mark** We could have put some scale points into the P.E. department and not for pastoral responsibility or exam responsibility or community provision, for P.E. because there was a great deal of good work going on in the P.E. department. To talk about the boys for a moment, I'm sure there was in the girls department aswell, but I was aware of a lot of good work going on the boys P.E. department especially when I first came into the school. But I just felt that people were throwing up their arms and saying Why Bother! We've been slapped in the face so many times; we've really put in a lot of hours of effort and we haven't got anything to show for it. Yet.... It all came down to.... We all felt that we were undervalued. Our faces didn't fit into the P.E. department and whatever we did we would never progress.

**K.L.** Is there anything you could have done about that?

**Mark:** I suppose really we should have all moved to a school that put more emphasis on the subject.

**K.L.** You don't think you could have done anything internally to have changed...? For instance, what was it about what you were doing or who you were that on your side you could have worked on and what about ..... or whoever?

**Mark:** I think what I would do, if I came back into the school, everything I did I would commit to paper and submit as a memo to the Head Teacher, to make sure that he was aware of what was going on....

**K.L.** And that you could read and write.

**Mark:** That's basically it. If I could come into this school now and instead of.... I've never actually pushed my background in football.... I mean I still wouldn't do that if I came in but what I would do would be to try and push myself on the academic aspects of P.E. and come in with the all the up to date information and thoughts and that unfortunately is the way to get on. I'm getting on sticky ground now because of things that have happened recently in the P.E. department.

But if you're seen to be academic and.... I'm getting a bit bogged down because.... Alan always had a very academic approach to P.E. and various other interests. It never got him anywhere. I just don't know.... I think it's basically just down to personalities.

**K.L.** Well that obviously is an area which P.E. teachers in many schools have experienced.... I think that Hampton has the same kind of problem in a different kind of sense.

So we face a problem of our status, our image, and almost this view that P.E. is basically childminding and therefore "you can let them get on with that".

We talked didn't we about when somebody might have said "well done, you've got through a week of very bad weather and you're still smiling". Was there any kind of feedback from the Head or his group about what you were doing?

**Mark:** Never.

**K.L.** Part of the whole problem was the facility itself I thought. The sports hall was a disgrace in many senses, to ask you to teach there and then forcing you to go outside when perhaps you shouldn't go outside. Did that improve at all in the following Autumn term?

**Mark:** The heating system was fixed and the sports hall conditions improved inside. We were still faced with the problem of getting the children over to the sports hall. If it was raining they got wet going over there but yes, that....

**K.L.** Was there any parental support for the problems you had?

**Mark:** We got to the stage where we actually got the children down there and found it was too cold to ask them to change. So sometimes they would just walk back to the school to sit in a warm classroom, or sat in the changing rooms or in a warm area and I suppose that that got home by the pupils. We had a few letters from parents and that's when I suppose the governors got involved with it and got things to happen. I think it was pressure from the governors that caused action to be taken. It wasn't concern for the P.E. department or the P.E. curriculum.

**K.L.** That comes on nicely to curriculum development.

In what sense now, if you had the time and say you were back on the scale I post, what kind of developments have you seen or would like to see in terms of what people are doing? I've put down here for instance, whether you would follow some sort of national trend in health-related exercise, or this idea of teaching from the standard, where you play games to (inaudible) the problems, rather than do skills. Whether there would be any kind of move towards....

**Mark:** I think there's a great deal of room for experimentation with what we actually and how you do it. I think we see enough of the children.... If you look at it over a five year period you see them... enough time to experiment with the approach and method because I think we feel pressurised, probably wrongly, in teaching the skills as early as possible and reinforcing them throughout. I think we can expand them with other activities aswell.

**K.L.** Did you ever have a feeling about how the pupils felt that kind of approach, with their skills and practices and grids. Because it's what we're taught in college to do. But I just wondered....

**Mark:** Well they hate it, they just want to play games. Having said that, if they can't play a game effectively, then they soon switch off but I think there's a very fine balance between over-teaching and the lesson, throwing them the ball and saying "well there you are".

**K.L.** But again I remember vividly from last term, you looked very tired and it could have been very easy to have just tossed them the ball and said get on with it. But you didn't and there was always a purpose behind that. How difficult is it to maintain this interest on a daily basis, when you are feeling tired and perhaps pressurised and jaded? Is it difficult? Is there something that you....? Is there something inside you, that that's the bottom line that won't ever be changed...?

**Mark:** I have given in and said we'll have two five a side games today. At the end of it the children say... they'll have begun to suss

you out and think...(inaudible) They do appreciate that you give the time and effort to them.

**K.L.:** How much difference would it make arriving there before they do?

**Mark:** Yes, that would set the standard for the whole lesson. If you were there before them, you're in a very strong position and you can make your point very early on. Because if you arrive late, the kids will give you stick anyway.

**K.L.:** Did you ever go anywhere near developing written documents about the curriculum at all?

**Mark:** Yes. We discussed it. The boys department had a syllabus. When a new member of staff came in, it was suggested that she re-wrote the syllabus for the P.E. department and she did that but the boys felt that it ought to be discussed at the departmental meetings. We discussed it I think for two or three weeks and it was an on-going thing but then suddenly disappeared off the agenda and.... It was too difficult to agree on certain things and people would not give any ground. They couldn't appreciate that there can be differences and different approaches to teaching.

**K.L.** One of the dilemmas for the curriculum has been the balance for extra-curricular activities and whether you compensate in lessons for what you don't do outside and vice versa. In the one term you had before you went in January and the teachers Action actually ended... were you now back to club activities or was that not the case?

**Mark:** We were back to fixtures.

**K.L.** And did that change anything at all, did it change the time you were able to give to yourself or to...?

**Mark:** It changed.... I began to spend more time after school again actually out on the fields but much less so than before the Action actually started but it didn't actually affect what I did in school time, with the teaching.

**K.L.** Did it affect what actually happened in school time, in terms of relationships with pupils. Did things change because you were meeting them more....

**Mark:** It didn't really affect me.... I didn't notice any difference because I was still heavily

involved outside the school. I saw them a lot outside of school... to see me in a different light. I'm sure it would have affected some teachers more....

**K.L.** Both inside and outside the lessons, how did you deal with the seasonal fluctuations in the weather? This year and last year. Did you just say to yourself well that's going to be a difficult time and I'll think about what I'm going to do, or did you adapt to the weather when it came?

**Mark:** I think you just adapt as and when necessary.

**K.L.** Because the Spring Term I was with you was an awful Spring Term; it was snowing and....

**Mark:** We seemed to have a lot of bad weather then.

We used to spend a lot of time inside over the winter period. I often thought whether it was worth planning outside last year because there was so much hassle to change from an outside lesson to an inside lesson but I suppose we had to plan for outdoor activities because we didn't have sufficient indoor facilities.

**K.L.** So going back to the games idea again, about time. You felt that after the Action was over, your work extra curricular at the school was less intrusive than it had been almost a year before? And that was a conscious thing do you think or...?

**Mark:** Yes, a conscious decision not to get so heavily involved.

**K.L.** What kind of things did you do with the children? Was it competitive clubs or was it people of all kinds of abilities that were coming along to try and learn something or...?

**Mark:** It was actually restricted to a school team.

**K.L.** Was it a squad or just...?

**Mark:** Yes, a squad. We actually had enough for two teams. That's something I never really got time for, developing the non-competitive side.

**K.L.** The final one of this section I thought was, and was pretty germane in terms of professional development that you have changed your job:

I wonder simply how much help did you have in choosing where you were going or what you were doing, either here or where you moved to...?

**Mark:** Help from...?

**K.L.** People advising you as to what route to take was, or what it was about your skills that would be beneficial. Or was it just you finding out about yourself and doing it?

**Mark:** I don't think there was any help or support really. What made my decision easier was that I was working part-time for the youth service and they were obviously keen to get me more heavily involved. So it seemed to be a natural move really. At no time in school did any one ever talk to me about where my career was going and my strengths and weaknesses.

**K.L.** Did you see an alternative for yourself here. I mean, we've talked about there weren't much chances for promotion and those kind of things.

**Mark:** Yes. What I would still like to be involved with in the school on a part-time contract or a joint contract with the youth community department because I think as a community school

they should be putting more time and effort into that aspect.

**K.L.** Have you written to Mr. Jones about that?

**Mark:** No. I talked to him about it when I was at school but there was never any positive response to it.

**K.L.** And the fate of many P.E. teachers is just to grow old and then move sideways to something else. Is that something that you're consciously trying to avoid,... growing old and the burnt out P.E. teacher syndrome. Had you planned for that not to happen or...?

**Mark:** No. I felt that if I was going to stay in P.E. I would probably do a further degree and probably start doing more research and try and implement it into the school, rather than just having the straight teacher's role.

**K.L.** And would you have been able to support that further study, like sabbaticals or fees or...?

**Mark:** At that time they were giving secondments but very rarely to P.E. teachers. I think really

it would have been a case of getting out of the school and doing a course and seeing what happened at the end of the course really.

**K.L.** Well that section was one I wanted to ask about particularly.

The next one which is again... I think I can do it now because I'm not working full-time and I can think about it and become idealistic a bit.... But I was interested to know, obviously having seen everyone teach, and seen four hundred schools in ten years kind of thing: some lessons seem to work and others don't. And we've talked about the weather, the teaching and the children.... I'd be interested to know how you would characterise what a good lesson was for you... regardless of what group or whatever... the feeling of goodness you had about a lesson. What made it good?

**Mark:** I think activity. If there's plenty of activity I always felt well I think I've achieved something. And obviously if there were obvious signs of enjoyment. If there's a lot of involvement and kids enjoying themselves, where there's actually laughter and a bit of good humour between the teacher and the children, then I think it's worthwhile.

**K.L.** How about learning? Did that come into a good part of the lesson or...?

**Mark:** Well I just felt that if they were enjoying themselves and there was a nice atmosphere, then they'd learn. If you provided that environment, learning would... maybe I'm wrong but... I just felt it would happen.

**K.L.** So in other words you provided a context in which learning could take place because a) you were offering the environment and b) you were giving the knowledge there....

Did you ever feel that a good lesson was something like when you'd made all the teaching points that you had planned to make and made them, or that the points that you wanted to make were made well and they seemed to be adopting those points and improving....

**Mark:** I think if you actually tried to make a teaching point, or made a teaching point and then at some stage that was put into practice, then that was nice. But what I liked even more was when the kids would say "look, I've tried it that way and I still can't do it in the game... can you help me?" and then if that actually

happens, you think "Christ, I'm actually serving a purpose here". They're coming to me because they want to learn. That didn't happen that often but when it did, it was lovely.

**K.L.** I often regard those as "goose pimple moments" when suddenly you think.... It's rather like when a class is silent when you're talking.

Well that's your view. Is there anything else that you think that might be added? If not, what would a good lesson be from a pupil's point of view... when you think about the pupils. Again there all sorts of different pupils. It may be skipping, or whatever. But if a pupil was involved in a lesson, what do you think might be a good lesson for a pupil...?

**Mark:** I think that if they've actually enjoyed themselves. Having a pupil and joining in all these different things. I mean, sitting out for the whole lesson and watching may be enjoyable to some, for others it's total involvement and coming off the field sweaty and dirty and muddy. Others, they enjoy the lesson if they've managed to stay clean the whole time. But I think if there's some good humour and.... What I tried to discourage was kids, able children having a go at less able children.

If that goes on in the lesson then no one really enjoys it. It spoils the atmosphere for the teacher and for the children. And I think that as long as they can go out and do what they can and they get praise for making the effort, and told continually how bad that was or how bad they are compared to everyone else, then they're going to start enjoying the lessons but that's difficult to do.

**K.L.** Were you aware of different pupils requiring different kinds of input. Some children for instance seem to learn by doing; some learn by observing; some learn by being told....

**Mark:** Yes, I think you're aware of that. It's sometimes very difficult to make the (inaudible) in your lessons for that to happen. Because if they're.....(side of tape finishes).  
...learning through observing.

**K.L.** Do you think there would ever be pressure on teachers to assess learning. In America for instance they have this minimum competency standard where you actually test whether in fact they can volley a ball, head a ball or whatever. Would there be a need to do that?

**Mark:** I don't know really. We're leaning towards it in the C.S.E. in P.E. and our student G.C.S.E. Unless they attain a certain practical standard, then they don't gain a pass. But then, so what. If you are not particularly capable at something, it doesn't mean to say that you can't appreciate the skills involved and even enjoy the finding out. Like tennis: I enjoy trying and I get a lot from it.

**K.L.** Perhaps what we're saying, and we've said throughout the two years really, is that it's often as much the values as the outcome itself that's important so for instance if your pupils could, at the end of the day evaluate something and say "well that's difficult. I've tried it and can't do it...." or....

**Mark:** I mean, if they can go to a football match and appreciate the skills of the players and not stand with their mates and abuse the players, then I think they've learnt something. And this is going back to the discussion we had in school about the syllabus. There was a suggestion that if we didn't impart our skills to the children by the time they left school, then we'd failed whereas in fact some of us felt that if they could leave school

and appreciate how difficult it was to acquire that skill, then we had succeeded in our task.

**K.L.** Yes. Some people feel that if you've got the habit of activity, and you needn't be excellent in that activity, then at least you've got a chance in the future. Did you think that.... about children and what they got out of a good lesson. How did you feel, when it had become clear, that some children simply turned off it a bit... and the problems you had over the field with the notes and things.... What could one do about that hard core of pupils who seem not to want to know, over a period of a term say?

**Mark:** I don't know. In the situation we found ourselves in.... I suppose most P.E. teachers.... I don't know that there is a great deal that we can do.

**K.L.** Is it threat that brings people round eventually or is that too high a price to pay?

**Mark:** Well, if you threaten a.... Okay, if you threaten them and get them involved, they're doing it against their will, I don't see that they're actually going to learn a great deal or enjoy themselves. I think that if the school

had.... I suppose it's pie in the sky....  
But if you had a floating member of staff that  
could.... No, maybe that wouldn't work. If  
you could offer other activities to the  
youngsters so that everyone at least for a few  
weeks a term can actually achieve something  
and enjoy an activity, then maybe.... I suppose  
we do it a little bit at the school, with ten  
pin bowling and dry skiing or whatever....

There's a lot of children who don't really seem  
to be very good at P.E. in the lower school  
but they flourish in the upper school where  
there's some sort of choice. They make their  
choice, pay their money, go ten pin bowling  
and turn out to be very good at it. Quite a  
lot are turned off activity altogether by the  
end of the third year, if not beforehand.

**K.L.** Since you are away from it, do you think that  
this opting out is less of a threat once you've  
been through the process that you've been  
through? That somehow in college we're  
encouraged to make everyone take part and the  
lessons are forty minute lessons where we're  
teaching all the time.

Do you feel now there's less pressure to perform and that you think that you would be prepared to accept the fringes not wanting to take part, because it was their choice... or would you say at a certain age, I'll decide for you because you're not old enough to choose. I think one might say that for example about fitness.... If one was careful enough in the programme, it could be both a cardiovascular programme, it could build up mobility, suppleness, flexibility and all those things, and they'd actually not be stiffening up in later life. So, it's rather like religion I suppose. It's something you have to go through in order to appreciate it or do you still choose democratically not to do it. When your placed each day with notes, you can say "well hang on, what is it about....."

**Mark:** When you're not actually involved in it on a daily basis, you think... you assume that the teachers have time to talk through the reasons for the exercise... why aren't you actually taking part. You don't really have that time. It usually gets referred after a few weeks to the head of the year and he sends a note home or whatever. But you never actually discuss

with the youngster... or if you do... if you talk to John as to why he doesn't do P.E., he'll say because the rest of the kids take the piss out of him. So why do they take the piss out of him? Maybe if you could take John away in a small group, not by able youngsters, then you could talk about... negotiate with them about what they're going to do. If you can negotiate, then I am sure they would take part and maybe even enjoy what they're doing. It's interesting that John now goes to the sports club and is involved in all sorts because he makes that choice to go.

**K.L.** So, if we're kind of looking at, again in your role now as teacher advisor to Rectory School, if you were going to say to them, "we know there's going to be a problem in the Spring Term with participation if the weather's bad, what I would do now myself is this...." what would the statement be about what you would do in the Spring Term?

**Mark:** What I think would be nice but probably not practical, but use that Spring Term for more .... We could do the health and fitness. We could talk about diet. We could do some ten pin bowling, I don't know....

There must be numerous activities you could do in this sort of area, something different which would generate interest in P.E. I think.... You could take them into classrooms and start talking about fitness and.... I think that's important. I think it has to be done in the right way to generate interest and enthusiasm. Rather than religiously stick to four lessons of P.E. a week, probably just two a week spent sitting in a changing room or a classroom doing sports quizzes. If you planned that in advance, you could turn it to your advantage.

**K.L.** Where would you find the time to pre-plan things?

**Mark:** In the holidays, you'd have to unless you were given the responsibility .....(totally inaudible) Probably if you came in straight from college and spent the whole of the summer preparing for your first year...(inaudible).

**K.L.** Yes, because one of the things teachers do is they change the content according to weather... on a daily basis, rather.... Obviously if they have a spell of snow and know it's going to be there for three weeks.... But then there always seems to be a scrabble for space and equipment which doesn't actually acknowledge

that we have to spend some time each year with this difficulty.

**Mark:** Yes, it seems to surprise us each year.

**K.L.** How would you then, having taken that idea about going and doing those various things, how would deal with the resistance to that both by perhaps say colleagues and pupils? Is it a long term fight?

**Mark:** I don't know. I think probably the most effective way is to write a paper on the subject and spread it around to be honest.

**K.L.** But that can't be done at a weekly meeting or... would that be a special meeting for that?

**Mark:** (Whole commentary totally inaudible)

**K.L.** It's one of my hobby-horses but it seems that opting out occurs in all lessons. We're made to feel particularly guilty because it's very symbolic in P.E. They just don't change. Opting out could be a theme for a school day almost. How one dealt with non-learners and resistance to (...inaudible). One of the worst things when you're a teacher is to plan quite a nice lesson, what you thought was quite a nice lesson,

and to then be bored within a couple of minutes because perhaps they weren't prepared to give it a chance themselves.

I'm talking about the patience and the concentration of young children because it does vary.

**Mark:** I've actually tried.... I've tried new things before. Maybe just out of interest in the summer I thought I'd try this area of gymnastics or whatever and maybe if I wasn't sold on the idea myself, I could tell within two or three minutes that it wasn't going to work. You could slog it all day and it wouldn't happen and I think that that comes from within but....

**K.L.** Perhaps that's where the curriculum views could come in because you could actually have people taking charge of particular skills and then doing them. The difficulty we have all the time is dealing with the vast numbers of people in terms of equipment and so on. Table tennis was a good example where there was one bat missing and it was disaster and as we were having them stolen all the time, it was a real pressure all the time to... and the ping pong balls being broken. Those kind of things which are very simple, but mean so much to everything.

How about things like organisation? Would those be important in terms of dealing with those who are.... For instance, it may be that because they have to walk down there and wait sometimes, they get a bit cheesed off and then feel "well, I won't bother today... I'm a bit cold...." What could the school do to help? I mean I know you're often detained by lessons and.... and things. But what could the school do? A timetable perhaps or...?

**Mark:** I think maybe if they... and it's pie in the sky again but if they.... The P.E. is always the last thing to be timetabled and with a bit of thought, it could be.... You would not be put in the situation where you would be teaching in a lab for periods one and two and then at the fields three and four and yet back at the school in a classroom for five and six. With a bit of thought a lot of them, not all of them, but a lot of those situations could be avoided. You often hear of people coming in, perhaps ex full-time members of staff who come in on supply and you ask them if they enjoyed it. They say no, it's not like having your own classroom. You're always rushing around carrying books from room to room. And you look back and say well, as a P.E. member of staff, we spend our whole lives rushing around finding

books and equipment and finding that the minibus is not working so that at the last minute you have to run down to the sports field.

**K.L.** Is is it therefore a job for a young person? Or is it a job for someone who has aged with the job and has experience. Do you need knowledge, or do you need a pair of lungs and legs and...?

**Mark:** Well I'm sure that the boss would like them to be young and enthusiastic members of staff that'll burn themselves out within three or four years and move on. But I think that if you look at people, some of the P.E. staff that have been here some time, they've merely said "well enough's enough". You do really the very bare minimum. And that's what you're paid for basically. I think that's okay as long as you do your bit when you are teaching.

**K.L.** I don't want to keep you too long.... We've already been out an hour now....

It seems to me from watching you teach and hearing you talk, that it's nice to be excited about what you're doing. At the end of the day, what could you say to the school about...

what factors a day have that could make P.E. teaching more exciting and interesting. What could they do to help? Would it be timetable? Some kind of respect for your work and worth? And then resourcing your work in a way that wasn't leaving you struggling....

**Mark:** I think the crux of it is to actually reward and value the teachers properly. I mean, they're doing a difficult job under often difficult circumstances. Make them feel that P.E. is on the timetable because it has to be. It's not all about winning shields and cups. They actually value the work your'e doing with the less able. I think time really and the interest shown... I don't think are too badly resourced. It's just knowing that the senior staff value what you're doing and take more interest.

**K.L.** You've been critical I think rightly for the past two years about that. Are there any members of staff whose value is recognised? Do think there are staff who are valued?

**Mark:** By the head teacher? Yes, I'm sure there are.

**K.L.** And what qualities would they have... curriculum, prestige?

**Mark:** Probably a degree from Cambridge I would think. It seems to be more about image and P.E., well not so much P.E. but image. Your image alone in school. You could be an excellent P.E. teacher and thought nothing of. You could be a very poor language teacher, that has the right degree, has the right contacts at university and your road to success is there, within the school.

**K.L.** So, the last question: Does that mean the prospects for P.E. here are limited ultimately by structure, rather than.... Are people fiddling while Rome burns or.... You're working away and the structure itself isn't supporting you. You can't carve a niche which is separate from what's going on?

**Mark:** I think if you're a new member of staff coming in, with the present existing members of staff, that wouldn't work. You would have to have a clearout and start from scratch....

**K.L.** Just!!

Thanks Mark.

John

24th March 1988

**K.L.** What I wanted to do was to write a report for you, for Tony and for Bob saying what I'd seen over the last two years and reflected upon and....

**John:** I'd appreciate it a lot.

**K.L.** The most important thing is this resource base which I would be very keen to do in terms of health education or anything. So all one could do then say, is to have access to ...(inaudible)... university library and update things....

**John:** Yes, lovely.

**K.L.** What I wanted to say was that my research is only part of the process, not a kind of end thing. I wouldn't want it to be a kind of hit and run thing where I just did it and never came back.... I feel a very strong moral responsibility to the school... and seeing this is fantastic. What's happened here is incredible.

**John:** It's been great. It's been very.... Okay, there have been one or two little problems but it's probably been better than I'd hoped I should think. Having someone like Walter around aswell has made my job so much easier. I've been able to develop other things, rather than 'protective things' as far as I was concerned... like looking after the kit!

**K.L.** That's right. That's critical. To be able to delegate and to ...(inaudible)... to that just seems to be part of the process.

Was there a policy of appointment linked in to the plan for the sports hall this year or did that come out of the...?

**John:** No, I wouldn't say there was a policy but there was.... It was something we pushed towards really. I went to the Head and said that unless something is done about it, I will have to be full-time over here and they'll have to get someone else to teach, because I would not be able to do the two jobs, it was as simple as that. Then he realised that this was a good idea and they went for someone from the services because he would help with the CCS and they were obviously get him cheaper because he'd be on a pension aswell....

- K.L.** Did you advertise, or did you know about Walter?
- John:** No. They advertised.... The Bursar advertised for a service... in the newspapers, looking for people coming out of the services. And he's just the right chap; takes a great deal of pride in the place and can be very useful.
- K.L.** Given the ethos of the school, what you wouldn't want is somebody like a local authority person, lounging around smoking and reading the Sun all day!
- John:** No, no. He's a gent and takes pride in the appearance of everything and that's what you want. I didn't want a sargent-major type of fellow either. And he's not that.
- K.L.** Is he on a contract or...?
- John:** He's not on a teaching contract, he's on more of an ancillary contract but he's doing more and more teaching so I'm trying to get him transferred over.
- K.L.** Is there an insurance problem about that, in terms of the D.E.S. status?

**John:** I don't think so. The Bursar dealt with all of that and he's obviously covered everything. We did discuss that.... We did discuss the problems of Walter teaching and I have to give the Bursar credit.... He said he'd look after it.

**K.L.** I've been very impressed by him because you know, I've caught him a few times now when Tony and Bob weren't around, and he was here and everything seemed neat. It's the same about the work you're doing I think really is enhanced by that....

**John:** It helps having someone who is on hand to help out and to get the gear ready and.... It's the ideal situation that I hoped for and that we did actually get! There are things wrong with it in a way but you've always got to complain about some things.

**K.L.** When I was talking to Bob about the sports hall plan, I understood that you were responsible for virtually all the planning. Is that right?

**John:** No. Well I was responsible for, I suppose, giving architects what we needed in terms of some changing facilities, office facilities,

storage facilities and a rough idea of what I thought the place would like. And exactly what I didn't want in terms of flooring and heating and things like this. But then the architects took over and to be honest, I was rather annoyed in a way that they changed a few things pathetically like internal things... with the male staff changing room. And the final kitting out of it, the Bursar kept absolutely quiet on and got his own people to do it and....

**K.L.** What? The equipment itself or...?

**John:** Yes. Suddenly it was taken out of my hands.

**K.L.** Was that because of cost do you think or...?

**John:** Yes I think so. And the Bursar worked very closely with these architects and with his builders and that's rather annoying, because you feel that there are problems, little problems that needn't have been there, if only I'd been involved in consultations all the way along the line instead of only just in the initial stages. Silly little things like the number of showers and ventilation. I could've walked in and said look, we're going to get problems

in here and things like that.... But the architects knew better and....

**K.L.** Do you think that the sports hall project as a whole, that it would be some kind of statement about the way P.E. and games are viewed? That somehow that there's space for you... but the rest of the space is theirs, which they then say well, you needn't worry about that because it's our responsibility. I just wondered whether, because it was a sports hall, rather than say a music facility or a drama theatre, whether they had a different relationship to you because of that?

**John:** No I don't think so really. I think on most of the buildings that we've had here, you've had similar sort of complaints, like the person in charge of the audio-visual and they didn't ask him on the final laying out of the seats and the stacking and... just final practical problems. They took over and....

**K.L.** Have there been any real shortfalls in terms of equipment or were you adequately provided for?

**John:** I would never.... No, I would never use an Olympic Gymnasium to kit the place out again.

The Bursar just came and he's got the Managing Director coming next Tuesday to show him....

**K.L.** What, so there's some shoddy workmanship is there?

**John:** Yes, they're very poor. The equipment that they've provided is poor. Whether that's because the Bursar asked them to arrive at the cheapest possible.... But even so, their equipment isn't good. Their workmanship.... the people who come in to kit the place out are rude and not very pleasant to have around the place. No, we've not been pleased with them at all. We certainly.... I've indicated to the Bursar that they shouldn't do it but they gave him a very cheap quote. So got what he paid for I suppose. But I wouldn't entertain them again, anywhere.

**K.L.** From what you're saying... there was a lot of research went into.... Did you go actually go around and see a number of...?

**John:** Yes, we saw quite a few I suppose, about ten altogether. Over about two years.

**K.L.** Many years ago when I was a young lecturer, I can remember the 'phone call to my office

in fact, Martin Cross's sister was at the college in her second or third year, so it was probably early '80s, was he here then?

**John:** Martin? Yes, I think he might just have been. No, he probably came about April. No, he probably didn't come 'til about '83.

**K.L.** Well in that case it would've been that year. I received a request for information about sports halls and gave him some material. Now, was that at about the time you were thinking about a sports hall or...?

**John:** Well, we'd been thinking about it ever since I came here, which was '78. The idea was in the pipeline but they built two buildings first because this was the most expensive and then finally it came to the stage, I suppose really about '85, when, I suppose we started looking in the summer '84 and then in '85 it was definite reality, it was going to take place.

**K.L.** And was the idea.... Did that come from you personally or was there some kind of feeling like "we just want a sports hall".

**John:** No. It was one that had been here before I came and I remember the deputy head saying

that "we're definitely going to have a sports hall sometime soon". And the (inaudible) that we had were inadequate for the kind of school we are and it was something that we were crying out for.

**K.L.** Was there any parental pressure do think to build a sports hall, or was it just a way of attracting more parents because of the facilities... with it being a very upfront....

**John:** That is there and it's there behind any new building that you build.

A few years ago, there was a big conflict really in the next building to be built.... It was going to be a sports hall or a library. And despite in fact... and it's caused a great deal of bad temper really... the Headmaster chose a library, when most of the staff in fact thought a sports hall would be better for the school. The Headmaster had his arguments and we respected his arguments. We didn't respect the way he came to his decision at the time and he would probably regret it now. There's no point in asking the staff what they think and then accusing them of not having the interests of the school at heart. I don't think he really

meant what he said. But I think certainly that a library was very important and it's very good. It's excellent but... had the sports hall been built then.... You can't really say what it would have done for the school. Certainly the parents are very, very impressed by it and it is a very important central part of the school. People come round it.

K.L. From the outside, I find the facilities here staggering. The gymnasiums were archaic and reflected over-use and poor use by certain groups with a lack of respect for the facilities. What it did show... about those gymnasiums... was that you could have relatively poor facilities but have excellent outcomes.

Perhaps the sports hall: what's happened since '86 in terms of development. If I was having a report about what had happened in the two years.... The last time I spent any time here was, we were looking at G.C.S.E., and a whole range of health-related activities and then there's the wider issue of the sense of P.E. within the school itself. All those things. Extra curricular support. The rowing in '86 reached a pinnacle of success, winning all those eights and.... I wonder if one was giving

a report about two years on, what you would pick out most in those two years?

**John:** Okay, we'll start with P.E. I would say that last year was a very bad year in that we were waiting for the thing to go up; we ran, the gyms got worse and worse and we were waiting for the thing to go up and for the building to begin and obviously that has changed things in that it's given a heck of a lot more room for this kind of lesson that you see going on at the moment and is a much nicer facility for it. The multi-gym upstairs has been very very popular. Just overall organisation... a much more pleasant place to work. It's a central place. Simply being on a telephone system has helped! It's entertaining... and the whole thing has been made so much better on a... as far as P.E. is concerned.

Another thing I think that has helped. Tony has been involved in health-related fitness courses a lot more, as from last summer really and I think that clearly it's given him a great deal of impetus in his teaching. He went to the Loughborough Summer School during the past few years and the course is very good and has kept him very interested; it's kept the department up to date with what's going on and,

to be honest, I've been able very much to leave all that to him, and Tony is.... Whereas in the past, when the health-related thing started, Bob really did it on his back because the Head of P.E. who had been here had been here for about thirty years as you probably know, and hadn't heard anything about this and Bob very bravely carried it on his own shoulders. And now Tony obviously knew quite a bit about it anyway and he's up to date with all the modern stuff and he's able to feed Bob the material. Bob is now looking for jobs and he should be able to get one and we'll have a new fellow along and that will keep the department....

**K.L.** I think sometimes you need impetus with ideas and alternative prospectives and....

**John:** Tony has come up with a lot of new stuff, and good stuff and I hope I've come up with a few ideas to help the sort of general game of staff in the courses that I've done.

**K.L.** Sometimes new courses or new content is resource intensive. Have you produced any materials or booklets or anything that the pupils and you will use. For example, would you think about producing a staff book or anything like that which you could use....

**John:** I was working on it but it's more or less ground to a halt. I was working on a guide to exercises programme, for staff largely. I hope to complete it perhaps in the summer. Really not so much for the benefit of P.E. staff but really for all those who do games and staff generally and indeed senior boys in particular.

Yes, we're certainly working on that.

One of the things I'm really trying to work on at the moment is this health programme in the fourth year. At the moment our health-related fitness courses in P.E. in the fourth year but... there's still a limit as to how much the boys actually want to sit in, in a classroom situation and learn, physiological... albeit very good... facts and figures... diet and heart disease or whatever.... They would rather be practising in the sports hall. Which is fair enough, ... they've only got it for one period a week.

What we're trying to do is to integrate the health related fitness work we do in P.E. with the moral responsibilities, different cultures, different people, the work we do in R.S. with something called.... We're not going to call

it Health Education but something like P.D.S., Personal Development and Studies. So that the three P.E., P.D.S., and R.S. will work together and we'll have a fourth year course commenting on the three. And that's what I'm trying to coordinate at the moment. I'm trying to get in all that, the health-related fitness stuff together with the R.S. So that three can work together, so that the P.E. lessons can then become the practice.

**K.L.** I think that one thing that Education Policy Advisors suggest is that if one could look at the way curriculums integrate, rather than diffuse, you would have a core that would be this. That is innovatory in a sense in that you're going across boundaries and using staff from all areas.

**John:** This is actually where my own situation has been useful, because I am the R.S. Department. It's really a question of whether the new Head gives it the go ahead and then we can lose a period of maths or physics to do it in.

**K.L.** Some people talk about statements and action, about how one's going to deal with a process and product. Is there going to be a formal

submission to the Head, or will it go to a verbal level?

**John:** We have put in an informal one to this Head. It's been in writing and it has been discussed at Head of Department meetings. I have had informal discussions with the Head. It's a tricky situation as yet in that the... with this changeover.... I'm trying to get two other people involved and get them together over the holidays and we will produce our actual course and we've got to thrash it out before the new Head and say that this is what we plan, this is how it will be done and these are the staff that will be teaching it.

**K.L.** Is the new Head committed to sport and activities like this?

**John:** Yes. He's a playing member of M.C.C. and he's a hockey player. He does seem very keen on sport. I've met him a few occasions.

**K.L.** Where is he now then?

**John:** Barnard Castle in Durham. So, we'll see. I think he will be interested in it. Whether he will want, in his first year, to remove a period of maths or physics from the timetable

is another point. Yes, we will try and put it all together, exactly as we want, and indeed... it's the question of getting the other two people together.

**K.L.** Well certainly I could offer to help.... I could do all the typing and put it down a line and change it as you want.

**John:** Well I can do that. I've got a wordprocessor at home.

**K.L.** Oh, which one?

**John:** Just an Amstrad.

**K.L.** I've got the 9512 with the daisy wheel printer. They're fantastic. I've got one at home now so it would be perfect.

**John:** I use it practically every night.

**K.L.** I think it's impossible not to have one now.

**John:** This is some of the stuff I've been doing and getting together. I have got some put together, maybe I've given them all away! This is using some of the National Coaching....

**K.L.** Yes, flexibility.

That's marvellous.

**John:** I'll put together what I've done anyway. It's purely for internal use, it's not for publication obviously....

**K.L.** One thing that we might talk about, in the longer term sense, is given that I have an interest in video, it might be eventually as a development, that you could make a video about the exercise as a demonstration. Show it to people.

**John:** Okay. This is something that I've got... that I want to put together over the next year anyway. Here's a video of the sports hall and in particular P.E. teaching in operation. I've got a lad that's.... I'm already getting involved in. He's already done me a video on the opening of the sports hall and I wanted him, because he wants to be a BBC... to work. If that works, we'll try and get it done professionally. But I think we could.... We've got facilities now to be able to do it.

**K.L.** Things like written documents: Is there a written syllabus for the department?

**John:** No there isn't and this is again something I've got to work on, probably for the new man. It's an area which I've found difficult because, having not been a specialist... I know what is taught and where and when it is taught. We haven't actually had a syllabus written down. Tony did write one down. I've always felt that I didn't want to interfere with Tony and Bob, who were both very much professionals and sort of lay down what I want. Certainly, should Bob leave at the end of this year, I will put it all together in writing, exactly what... because I'll have to do that before we advertise for a new post.

But coming back to what you said about putting it all on this new course, all that in writing, one of the impetus's of getting all that sorted out is, of course the business of sex education and having a policy from the governing bodies by September and we want to do that very much and put that together aswell... so that parents will know what goes on. We'll probably send it out to parents.

We do have a parents evening for boys in the fourth year where parents come in and discuss adolescent problems. It's very important that they actually do a little bit more in the fourth year and have a definite policy of what we do.

Again, it certainly won't be limited to the fourth year; we're trying to make it an ongoing thing.

So that's the big project on at moment.

**K.L.** That's interesting because again, if one looks outside education, then the two alternate words used are first of all, accountability... that although traditionally P.E. and games had autonomy, more and more now people want to have some kind of rationale, whether it's going to be competitive, cooperative, mixed ability or whatever.

And the second one is this kind of notion of some sort of internal audit, where you are a unit within the system which has to be audited, to make sure that the kind of,... to put it in very crude terms... the aims and objectives are there and somehow.... Say in pupil profile procedures, there has to be some way of measuring whether they are in fact, in an objective sense

what you set out to do. But in a kind of a report on P.E. in schools, which was a kind of state of the art review, one in ten sampled schools in England and Wales, it was found that 87% of the schools didn't have a written curriculum of any kind.

Again, some people say that it's been the malaise of the profession, that because of the autonomy, we've been left to traditional practices and certainly to the extent where a legacy of a thirty year member of staff and their inertia or whatever... and also the kind of creatures P.E. teachers were... they're not now, they've changed completely. I think that with the advent of microprocessing, your curriculum is both a static document and a changing one, as you change it in the.... So adapt resources and a whole range of things. I think that that seems to be quite important and some schools have gone so far as having their own booklets for pupils and whole range of things, explicitly stating how everyone's upfront about what it is your trying to do. So for instance.... I would find it interesting from the outside to recognise the effect of fitness testing once a term on the pupils because that is a very significant.... Although I think the sixth

form are doing an enormous amount... looking at the results.

That's an integral part of the whole process. But someone from the outside would say but how does that relate to the work you're doing in general? If it's to do with peoples lifestyles, then you can say well our aim is to raise consciousness about individual fitness levels and already, in your document, you've set out what you're doing in practice.

**John:** I did actually do quite a lot of this. We had (inaudible) or we had appeals meetings and I produced a lot of stuff that we had pinned up or we gave it to parents on what we were doing in the P.E. classes.

Yes, you're right. Actually having a written curriculum is a bit lacking at the moment and something I want to work on for next year and I'm hoping that I can bring it all in with (next phrase inaudible) aswell, so I'm sitting on it for the moment. It is an area that we really want to....

**K.L.** That's what I want to report to you. That because no one else in the country is doing it, even a small thing is an enormous

breakthrough and politically you can't then be accused by management structures that you haven't actually got your act together. Because in fact I think you have and I think that in the same way, "well we have the sports hall now and how are we going to evaluate its use...?" and all the time, if one's constantly monitoring things, without being hung up by the whole process, you can then report back and... I think it takes people by....

**John:** So this is, if I can say this.... One of the advantages we've got now in having someone like Walter doing the mundane tasks and now with the sports hall settled for a year, I'm hoping that next year I'll be able to devote more time, because he'll be more settled into his job and I want to do that kind of thing. Very much so. And it's usually ...(inaudible).

**K.L.** One of the kind of things I linked up too: the status one for me is a major one because I think that, in both schools, for different reasons, P.E. has a problem in terms of the curricular aspect. I think there are things happening extra curricular which are excellent and sell the schools in different ways but....

If we could talk about status the perhaps I can pick up the other point....

I just wondered what you felt about the status, either in curricular terms or extra curricular terms about the subject and how your experience is changing what that might be.

**John:** I think again, should we manage to get this programme off the ground that will help it, having everything written down... the status has improved immensely with the advent of health-related fitness work. The sports hall itself has also improved the status of it. It's suddenly P.E. now where staff are brought round and you have the staff...

**K.L.** And you have a staff activities evening don't you?

**John:** Yes we do.

(Broke off tape...for lunch)

**K.L.** It was rather appropriate: we got to 'status' when everyone walked in to the room.... The staff's Friday activity.

The feeling I have is, and there are so many members of staff involved in activity, there's this paradox between the activity and status. Is that a misreading of it?

Somehow people are very active here and yet, in terms of the subject status,.... I try and work out how it....

**John:** Are you talking about P.E?

**K.L.** Yes, P.E. and games.

**John:** Yes. I think it's natural the way that P.E. is going to be low down on the list. Certainly, the present Head wouldn't regard it nowhere near as important as physics and maths and those corps curriculum subjects. When it comes to timetabling for practicable reasons, it actually comes fairly early. I think it certainly has risen in status and the sports hall has helped. And the fact that lots of members of staff are involved in actual games, which as you've said creates an important problem with regard to the health and safety, I've written off to the R.F.U. and it's come through today, off all the courses. I want to get all the rugby people with at least a bit of paper behind them... whether that's useful or not.

I've done the same to the E.S.F.A. for the football. But I'm going to have to rethink my staffing of one or two activities. Certainly in staff time.... I've taken risks with the swimming pool for example....

**K.L.** That's something that struck me in a school like this, where you have a demarkation between games and physical education. As somebody with an overview of the area, as you have, how would one deal with the different approaches that many bring to the games day, as opposed to the P.E. side of it.

Is there any kind of disjunction there between the two...? What I'm trying to say is that if different staff deal with the same children, do the children themselves construe a difference between P.E. and games.

**John:** Yes I think they do. Yes I think so. I think P.E. is a subject in its own right. You cannot divorce it from games. I don't want to see it divorced from, for example, the work we're hoping to do in personal development studies or even religious studies aswell but.... I think it stands better in a way if it is a subject in its own right.

I would honestly like to work towards here, should I be here long enough, us doing some of the G.C.S.E. P.E. and I think that that would help to enhance its academic status aswell. Because there are some quite interesting courses.

**K.L.:** How about the 'A' level? Would that ever be on the agenda...?

**John:** Well certainly, yes. I've got no objections to doing that at the moment. It's a question of staffing. We would clearly need another member of staff full-time on P.E.... because they're overstretched in their work at the moment. That is the problem. I did write to the Head on a few occasions about the possibility of G.C.S.E. in P.E. He's not really very interested in that as such which is fair enough. He's got enough other problems with G.C.S.Es. But when that's died down I'm going to push it with the new Head and I think that will help.

The good thing is, about lots of staff being involved is the very fact that they are involved. It means you can offer such a variety of different sports, rather than it just being on the burden of the P.E. teachers. And indeed you're often going to get some real specialists.

For example, the Head of Football.... The person that runs the football team,... he's not a P.E. specialist at all but you're going to get people like that within.... I didn't come to this school having P.E. in mind at all. I came to teach religion and philosophy and it would have been silly for them not to use my cricket....

**K.L.** Do the disparate members of staff who're involved in games have a brief about skill development, tactical appreciation, or is it very much up to them to decide and define what it is that they do?

**John:** No. It's more or less left to them and almost always has been at this kind of school. What I have done this year, which I didn't do in the past... or it hadn't been done in the past. I gave them stuff on the exercises, flexibility work and warming up and cooling down as I think that people should at least encourage the kids to do because I think it's their duty to inform them and we're trying to redo the first aid procedures. We've now got a first aid room, all set up for next year. We are set up now but it'll be better next year when we've got a couch. We'll give them information on that and we're trying to be as one of the inset things

that we're going to do in here. We're going to try and make sure that all the sports staff are at least equipped in basic strapping and first aid and that will be an important thing.

As far as running their own teams are concerned and their own games are concerned, that's very much left up to the individuals but the individual is, in all the sports that you do, very much guided by the person who runs the top team or who is in charge. Like cricket, I will be around whenever cricket is taught more or less. I'll be there generally and follow the etiquette I want out of cricket and we try and play the football that Ian McLean wants in the First Team, we try and play it all down through the school. You won't find us trying to keep the ball miles up in the air... or that kind of football,... all the way down through the school. And Bob's influence on the rugby is tremendous.... So it's generally the influence of the person at the top in each particular sport. Bob is really Head of Rugby and Ian's Head of Football. It certainly works that way and those who are taking individual teams or coaching, will follow the pattern set by the person at the top. And it's fair enough to say the same with running.

**K.L.** There are two things about... The rowing is certainly one which is glaring from the outside, the kind of status of rowing and the space for rowing. Would that be a fair assessment, to say that rowing is almost larger than life in terms of the school's commitment to sport. Or is it just because of the expertise that you have available, people have pushed the school in that respect...?

**John:** No. I don't think that it is larger than life. It is an important part of the school. They are a very, very successful. They've won the Head of the River again this year as you know in the fourth year running... the top school.

So. It's not larger than life. That's a pretty good achievement anyway. There's certainly antagonism towards rowing from myself as well as some of the other games staff in that it does receive publicity and they are able to win trophies and things which perhaps we're not able to do in what we would regard as the 'more proper' sports. It's sport. Personally I don't like it as a sport. I can't see the attraction building yourself up as much as you can just to race, power upon water, backwards

as fast as you can! I have my doubts about the whole physiological, muscle-building process that they do. I think it's not terribly good but I've spoken to the Head about this and he's been in touch with the rowing people and they've had meetings about it and the rowing people have had assurances from doctors and experts and all sorts of ... they've got it in writing that it's not doing them any harm but I personally have my doubts about it. But I've done all I can to clear the books out

**K.L.** How about behavioural terms? Some members of the staff might feel that the behaviour of the rowers sometimes is unacceptable, because they become arrogant and detached they feel. Is that a....

**John:** They form a clique. They're bound to form a clique. They spend so much time together training and they are very, very dedicated. But it's a sport where you know that if you are very, very dedicated and work very hard, you've got a chance of national recognition where you're unlikely to for the average soccer player or whatever and you're not going to get this national recognition.

Having someone like Martin Cross on the staff, they can see... and he's not a particularly gifted sportsman at all... but here they can see that ... "I could actually be an Olympic Gold Medallist.... I'm not a terribly good sportsman but I've got the kind of mental character that might do it".

**K.L.** Is there any part of your job to smooth out this kind of difference and imbalance between activities and the space they're given and the problems....

**John:** No it isn't really. I must admit that rowing is something that doesn't really concern me, not because... from my point of view... but the rowing club is very much a unit on its own.

Yes I will make complaints, that I think their misuse of the weights and more or less their use of the gym, or if people I think are choosing rowing ahead of rugby for the wrong reasons and things like that. That's where there is an overlap with the general running of the sports. But really the rowing does look after itself by people who are experts. It's like a separate club. It raises its own money through

its own parents, although the school does give it a lot. The school does get... and it's got to face it in these schools... it does get a lot of publicity out of it.

**K.L.** There's no demand on your capitation, or rowing budget?

**John:** That's dealt with itself by the rowing club. I don't know what kind of capitation they have. The finances are all dealt with by the Bursar's secretary and they are all private. They're nothing to do with me. The only time it is is when it overlaps, in terms of weights....

**K.L.** Well again. One of the things I would say from the outside is, that is attention which everyone indulges but it is interesting because you do have this excellence. You have the same time. I don't think it would be unfair to say that P.E. staff might feel that their presence in their lessons can be disruptive because of their particular approach and their values which are inculcated....

**John:** I havn't heard that from the staff. That's interesting.

**K.L.** That's the impression I get... rather direct quotes... that because my links have been mainly watching second and third years, I haven't seen it directly happen but one can see that perhaps later in the school it might be a problem if one had fifth years or whatever. But that's just an impression I got....

**John:** Okay yes. A lot of it comes down from the top in a way. A headmaster of a school like this imposes his own particular character and personal desires and it's fair to say that the present Head does like rowing I think and does....

**K.L.** Well that's the impression I've been given certainly.

**John:** ...because of the publicity it brings the school. Perhaps a new head will emphasise things slightly differently. I sincerely hope he'll make a good push towards a decent cricket pavillion and an outdoor changing area, tea area and things like this. I really do from a games point of view.

**K.L.** The curriculum development one links in with that in a sense that outside Hampton, there is an enormous debate about the role of school

sport, the competition, the cooperation, the values that are there, physical development,... the child can... a whole conference series on that aspect there.

People can say that the curriculum developments that you're talking about in personal development studies and the extra curricular kudos from success and competitive sport....

How would that feed into what you're doing as a department, in terms of developing the content and the process, both teaching and learning. Is there any way that you sit down together and discuss and develop ideas or does curriculum development come about again by personal values and development?

**John:** It's personal. We don't actually sit down and discuss things... very seldom.... It's an area where we're lacking.

**K.L.** ...read a timetable every two weeks but they found by timetabling it formally, it lost its value, because they invented agendas. Whereas if you met on a (inaudible) basis it would actually be....

**John:** It's an area that.... It's hard, because you've got two very competent people working and they work in their own particular way and they communicate with themselves reasonably well between one another. That we know what's going on.... I'm never one actually terribly in favour of meetings, either because things get said and aren't done and.... I've tended to work much more on feeling and individual comments and we have had of course the odd meetings, especially with the setting up of this place.

If we have a new member of staff coming along, that's again something I'm going to have to tighten up a lot. But at the moment, I've left that very much in the hands of Bob and Tony. I know what they're doing and.... It's an area that we ought to do. From my point of view, I'm also heavily involved in religious studies... it's just difficult having to do....

**K.L.** I think that a lot of people are saying now that there are so many pressures, especially with G.C.S.E. and assessment procedures that are taking up time now that a word they use in Devon a lot now is "facilitating" and "empowering". So for instance one model might be to say that, as a group of three, you would like to produce a document about teaching skills

to first years for instance. The P.E. curriculum and the games curriculum. Then you might then say to Bob and Tony, well in two weeks time, I'd like us to sit down and discuss your ideas, the presentation.... By taking generics....

Let's take an example. Say you wanted to do with the first years a generic skills course, throwing, striking, hitting, kicking. In two weeks time I'd like you to produce a document which we will then discuss and you then kind of empower them, facilitate development without kind of double costing everyone's time. I think those kind of things are now happening in the department but it just takes up so much energy because.... And it's all the other things that you're doing, juggling all these things round.

It seems to me that there will be much more pressure now, particularly when we come to the Bacon process, which won't affect us directly but will in terms of the progression of the extra curricular, to have this monitoring assessment public and what we've found difficult to do as a profession I think is to make our private arts public. So Tony and Bob will talk about what practices they've done and that will bring about personal change....

**John:** This is very much the case with the sex education and.... It's something I want to work on very much next year, as I said... sorting all this out and tying in all those loose ends. I will have hopefully more time to do that and it's an area where.... I'm aware that we do have to get it all down on paper. I think it's quite right that we should be accountable.

**K.L.** And I think that now you have the space here, this could be a meeting room and you'd have your notes to hand and....

**John:** I'm not so much in favour of actually having meetings but I'm more in favour of your idea of giving people something to produce for me and I'll perhaps talk about that informally but I think to get.... The times when we actually have meetings are only really at the very beginning of term when there is that time set aside but otherwise, Bob's got a rugby practice then and Tony's got his running there or he couldn't make it because he was doing the basketball thing or something like that. It's just impossible for us to find the time when we can all sit down, unless it is actually

a part of our actual inset day and these are going to take place more and more now and we will have the chance for that kind of departmental meeting. But certainly I will be asking them to produce stuff on what they're doing....

**K.L.** There seems to be two approaches there that one could adopt. One might be to say let's decide what it is we're doing collectively in a gross sense and those are our aims,... our overall aims and objectives. Let's get the things in. On the other hand is to say to...(side of tape finishes).

**John:** ...the heads of various sports, the Headmaster, the Bursar and the Deputy Head. And they are actually a forum for this kind of debate and we do have those. And I suppose that if anything, that is the departmental meeting in terms of games. It isn't necessarily a P.E. meeting. But it does discuss games curricular and the games curricular isn't something that does drift on. It's continually being revised, continually being discussed, like policy on rugby, like policy on relationship between rugby and rowing or whatever, first form activities, sixth form games... these are discussed at these meetings, twice yearly. Once in the summer

and once usually in November. So there is actually what we call a games departmental meeting, a forum for discussion. In fact they used to be inter-termly but we found that wasn't necessary. Twice a year was enough.

**K.L.** Part of this process of not making it bureaucratic but making it at least accountable within a kind of formal sense, is to have some kind of evaluation procedure. Is evaluation built into.... For instance, some schools now ask pupils what they think in quite a detailed way or teachers look at their own practice and evaluate their own practice. Is that something that one would expect the profession to do or are there ways of evaluating it?

**John:** Yes. It's an important thing and that's really going to help education. I'm open to ideas of how you do evaluate. The way that I try and do it.... I do it through anonymous surveys as such, I'll ask them various questions.... even about alcohol and drugs and.... And indeed through informal discussions in the sixth form, as people leave school and like now, with my general studies. (Whole of next sentence mumbled). That is my own way of informal evaluation and I do pass on the findings, and will be passing on the findings to the Head...

and comments about P.E. One of the things that I do find with regard to P.E. is that they do like the health and fitness approach but they don't like it interrupting the possibility for exercise....

K.L. That's right. Unless they are consulted, we never actually find out.... And also I think, again, the feeling I have about the way I live in Devon is that for far too long I said yes, when I meant no. I think that the thing I would say to both Hampton and Rectory is that, if people have feelings about say, content, or form, or anything like that, they should make them quite open rather than leave them to fester in your imagination and discuss them quite actively and say well look, I think that isn't working from my point of view because....

I mean, an example came this morning. Tony said he was teaching a group last year that were being quite heavily treated by a drama teacher and he came in here looking like caged animals and he changed his whole curriculum for that reason. In the same way, it could be that if the same group are taught by different people, standards could change in behaviour because in the P.E. games area, they have different expectations at different times.

It might be say kit. Another one might be....  
A whole range of things could be and be made  
public and discussed or do you think that it's  
better for things to be left unsaid?

**John:** No, those things ought to be said.

Yes. It's a problem but a nice problem of having  
two competent people that make their own  
adjustments and decisions on their own, without  
too much outside guidance. It again is a  
question of finding the time for.... meetings  
to discuss those actual policies. They are  
going to be built into the timetable.

**K.L.** I only thought about that this morning... talking  
about the evaluation of... or the appraisal  
material. The one you've had. And I know that  
Bob was talking about his.

**John:** Again, it's something that the Head agrees should  
have been done years ago and we should do it  
regularly on individual members of staff. I  
think it's very useful to most people... find  
out what the Head thought of them and finding  
out where he thought they were going to go.  
It's useful, this kind of thing... from my point  
of view! We haven't actually done them up to  
that, at this kind of school. We're not really

watched or appraised, whereas perhaps you might be in a state school, certainly in your early years and this has actually crept in a lot more now; the Head does watch and other heads of department do watch certain members of staff...  
(mumble inaudible).

**K.L.** It seems to be very important that... the book I've just written on video... I was trying to say all the time that video is only good if it's a creative, positive one. If you're using procedures like appraisal, like video for negative lie-detector type testing of people, saying that you didn't do this, you didn't do that, I just wondered whether, at a kind of management level at a lower tier, would say, the department, whether if you sat down, not formally but more formally than informally, and talked to Bob and Tony and they talked to you about their definition of each other and developments and processes, that would again target things that you could all do collectively or individually, or does that go on anyhow in terms of your...?

**John:** I'm sure you're right. I'm sure it should be done and I think, given the facilities, those that we've got now.... I would certainly be expecting to do one towards the end of this year anyway, reviewing the sports hall sort of thing, the differences it's made, simply to report to the Governors anyway.

I would have one and I think that it is an area where it's right... a more formal communication. I hesitate. I have got a suspicion of meetings.

**K.L.** I agree entirely but what I felt, having seen Rectory particularly and here, and my own experience of teaching and lecturing, is that once you do the mundane and you do your job, your ignored completely and I just felt, and told the Head of Rectory this, that I said I felt it was wrong for staff and his management team to make comments about the P.E. staff's suntan in the summer-time when they're dressed, even if only in a jokey way, and never said anything about the way they performed in rain and wind or whatever. And I was saying to them that I felt very strongly that in motivational terms, if somebody recognised that they were doing the mundane, and just said well done, that would be a nice motivational technique.

He was saying that we don't have the time for that and I was suggesting to him that an opportunity cost involved, where you could chose something else that you wouldn't do.... It actually takes but one word, to say well done. It doesn't take very much to do but....

I was thinking about the kind of feedback one could give to people and the mutual reinforcement that it gives. I think that it's because we are brought up to be private people, particularly males, that we don't express our feelings a lot about each other and the irritation... say for instance, it might be something about somebody else, about the presentation of their self concerns you.

From your appearance, it seems to me that appearance is important to you personally.... But that could be something that needs to be said, about standards, expectations or whatever, uniform, all those things but are left at a hidden level, implicitly in what you do, rather than explicitly. It just seemed to me that by praising the mundane, you end up showing that you are sensitive to other peoples.... In the same way that sensitivity to other peoples needs is quite important aswell.

But I want to say that I would like to do whatever I could and with this commuter link now....

All the areas covered, they were my special topics. Is there anything that I haven't asked and should have asked you, about your work or about the department or about the relationships? This is just my view from the outside.

We've mentioned it briefly, but staff seem to have chances to go on courses....

**John:** It's one thing that is good here, that you can go on courses and....

**K.L.** And is that a structured choice or is it just picking and choosing like a market stall...?

**John:** You chose the course you want. Sometimes the Head will say I think you need to do this course and give you the guide to the D.E.S. ones but, generally if you find a course that you feel will be useful, the money is generally available. One thing that I think we're going to have to do... legal procedure... but is get everyone with a piece of paper to support their claim, to cover ourselves a little bit. Especially rugby staff. That's a real headache.

**K.L.** It is. This is why I asked the question about the difference between the P.E. and games side, because benevolence is no good in a court of law; you can't say well he was a keen chap and....

**John:** That's right, absolutely. It's a worry. I think we're more aware of this kind of problem in this school than in a lot of our competitive schools..

**K.L.** Well the state schools are certainly nowhere near that level... that even small things like footwear... we become critical.

**John:** That thing about eye protection... I remember. I did poo-poo that. Hence the articles and the ideas about battens and protecting you....

**K.L.** What you have to do.... the mathematical risk of it happening, if you've just got the one person who does it and then think....

**John:** You see, we do take enormous risks and you do get away with it most of the time but the chances are that even if something nasty did happen, not a lot would come of it anyway. Like I still bat when I go out with the kids... I make

the ball bang very hard some times. I don't have a go, only with the seniors because someone could get hit. I certainly don't bowl fast at them....

**K.L.** Another area which is interesting which is only at the dawn of our understanding is sexual harassment. Again one of the things that you might think about doing in this whole process is a code of conduct because, although it isn't a problem, it can be....

The P.E. profession is something that is very tactile, involving touching and holding things and in another context that would be quite threatening.

**John:** Within our proposed course, human sexuality is one of the problems, one of the areas that we intend to deal with and learn to come to terms with. Largely it's sparked by the Aids explosion of course but it's something you cannot ignore. Not only that, we want to make certain the boys here are much more aware of the female body and problems with disability when you're old. We're doing that whole area.

K.L. You were talking this morning about one boy who had problems with a broken home background. Well often, personal space begins to change with a good relationship. So whereas people, let's say for example, in secondary school... often teachers may be unaware of the personal space regarding that person. They invade that space and provoke a behavioural problem. So, they choke it back in a way but the teacher grabs hold of them and says stand here whilst I'm talking to you.... It's to do with space although I think that all those things, although on the periphery of our work, are things that one would, say, be actively thinking about in a sense of the curriculum and what you're trying to do, because the evidence is, and you obviously know about this, the hidden aspects of the curriculum are as important as the manifest aspects of it.

If we say something about the presentation of ourselves, treatment of other people.... Yesterday for instance, I was very, very impressed with Hampton School team, not that they were playing very well in their rugby sevens but they actually applauded opponents skill. There was one superb conversion by an opposing

team against the wind from the touchline and it went over and two of the boys from Hampton spontaneously applauded. Marvellous! And I think that those things which are a part of it aswell, all seem to be part of this whole process of finding out what it is you're going to do with the boys in development terms, in curriculum terms and be aware that although there are idiosyncrasies for individual teachers there is a uniformity about purpose and that may be there already because it's implicit.

As they would say in a court of law, that's too important to be left to chance. If it's made quite clear that, rather than we expect every teacher to make sure that in scrummaging the children wear footwear and there's no difference in weight. The statement in the curriculum document would be "No scrummaging whatsoever will occur when...." and there's no comeback then because they know about it and there's no.... But it just seems to me that the training is towards to make much more explicit frameworks which are achievable. Like saying to make this person a fine and better citizen, there's no way of assessing that but to be objective or for us to make sure his forward defensive stroke was competent, that's at the level we do it.

Another thing, and I don't know whether you've ever seen one of them, is this for instance, what some people did when it came to the current reorganisation...(commentary mumbled and inaudible) and so it's a kind of year I, lesson I, upper sixth, last lesson kind of thing and somehow, there was a development of.... In some areas, like probably R.S., you have concept trees. You'd start off somewhere like here, like maybe with the notion of faith as a concept and some (inaudible) ... examples of different faiths. There might be some kind of philosophical rationale about one's own value system.

But I think we're trapped through the whole concept of development.

**John:** (...inaudible...) ...do you start with the individuals, do you start with society...?!

**K.L.** Yes, but say in terms of what a very prescriptive motor school approach, if it was what you wanted.... Then in the first year, children would be able to hit a cricket ball, a tennis ball, a shuttlecock, whatever and they'd be able to play a forward stroke, a defensive stroke and an attacking stroke. But it could be any skill.

On the other hand it could be that the first year.... The other question is immersion in a range of activities, in which case immersion is the main requirement and you go for a kind of width instead of depth all the time. Some kind of framework in which.... If I had this group next year.... If that's their progress... well the next year that they are there, rather than regressing to worse than when they were at the primary school.

One of the things that I talked to Tony about was how one records, other than mentally, childrens progress. It is only mental; I was thinking about your cricket team. If you think about all your players, you must have a very clear mental map about their ability but that is a private domain almost, based upon your observational position. Whereas if someone else was to take the group, rather like plugging into your brain and getting everything out.... There would be somebody kind of saying well they are third years and they should, at this stage, be able to think about, from going from first year and doing nothing at all about cricket going to third year and being able to set a field and bowl to it or try and beat it as a batsman.

As some might say, well that's an evaluation in itself, if they can't do it by the third year, then what's happened in the intervening years? I just wondered how, if one had a model, which wouldn't take a lot of time, how would one go about saying if this child goes somewhere different in year two, .....inaudible..... gymnastics for five years and why are they bored with gymnastics and perhaps if one had a development of a model of skill acquisition or tactical awareness, then you have this public area aswell which is called the conceptual curricular rather than this private one where Bob will give you some gen on a pupil or someone will come and ask you what about so and so.

I'm not trying to do away with that private stuff but the public part of it is saying that we would expect by the time, in year three, to be able to play strokes on both sides of the wicket and so on. If they're not, then we have a remedial section there about working on leg side shots or whatever it may be. That would be over prescriptive in a sense but it would still....

**John:** Again it's that sort of approach.... We've sort of got it down in writing. It's a question,

again very much, that we've had the same staff now for about four years and we all know what everybody's doing. We did work out something like that a little while ago but it needs to be put down much more formally as you say.

**K.L.** The paradox is that it's only of use to outsiders infrequently, when they show an interest. And if it's not a benign outsider but an invasive one like, now come on, justify yourself, although the practice is there, the "theory" isn't and they use that as a beating stick for saying about status again.

And P.E. departments, because they've been conservative.... It's an interesting thing, if you look at P.E. teachers and look at the length of their hair, there's a relationship between the length of their hair and authority.... All groups who are subservient to authority or in lower status, tend to have very short hair. If you think about the prison service, the army, P.E. colleges, a whole range of things.... It's interesting, the shorter the hair the more authoritarian linked one tends to be. That's only a tendency. But we are assumed to have no thoughts, just like a "bungler" is a favourite word for P.E. teachers,

with nothing upstairs at all and to make a space, and to be not kind of saying I have to see x numbers of heads of department today and we'll put John L. in because he's in the P.E. and games.

What you're going to do sounds very important in terms of the status that will accrue and it's a very political thing. I'm not a kind of agent provocateur but it just seems to me that one wouldn't shout about what one's done but one could then have it as a result.

**John:** It's very important that we do something I fully agree with you.

**K.L.** I think that at the end of the day, the thing that strikes me so much about here is, it's a marvellous place to teach. I find this sports hall awesome in what it will do for the children. So that was the very positive side of it all. It is impossible not to learn here.

**John:** Have you any other comments, ...general...?

**K.L.** No, I think.... I feel very strongly about this framework for action which you have. I think that they are exciting times.

The profession is under a great deal of threat now and I think that once concerns are voiced about either competitive sport or about dangers or so on,... if one is prepared for those outcomes, then one is very impressive. I also think you need all the help you can to fight your corner in the curriculum debate.

I feel very strongly that the practice I've seen, certainly with the P.E. staff, is that what's going on is marvellous; the children are disciplined, both externally and internally; they have a joy of activity, or most that I've met at one, two and three level have it, and that the teachers are facilitating that development.

I was going to say that I thought your facilities in your changing room were dreadful but that was part of this question of moving to here. That seems critical now that you have a space which is remarkable.

**John:** They're still not right. Those changing rooms are still disappointing. As I say, I'm hoping to get extra changing facilities and a new pavilion on that side, which will also....

The plan is to get it as a sort of first aid room, tea room... and there'll be some classrooms aswell. A whole new complex over there... involving extra changing rooms for cricket... it'll be marvellous. That's the next major project.

But these points: I'm glad you've drawn them and for bringing them to my attention although they were planned anyway. I'm hoping that next year I will be able to sit down and do these and sort them all out.

K.L. What I've said is only describing what you, Tony and Bob have told me in the past about the issues. And that's very much the case. The thing that I've been very privileged to be is to be allowed into the school, to have access. Because it's very difficult being seen publicly when you're having most of the time to be private, even though you're an extrovert personality and that's been an immense privilege and I think that my research at the end of the day will only be about reporting and not imputing value because all I'm doing is, in some sense, only being a catalyst for what you've said and, although catalysts... they can often not react properly, they start something off which can either carry on or not.

If you have like a constant nagging, they can help or not. But I strongly believe that everyone needs help from the outside occasionally, to see yourself and to use that person as a lever....

**John:** This is something in a way that's happened recently, that when I look at the developments that have taken place over the last few years.... I'm not saying that I've had anything to do with it really but it's just things that have happened. But we are much more open now to the outside and we're not just in a little closet, certainly in terms of the P.E. it has improved an awful lot. But the school generally is much more accountable now in terms of all the legal things, but in terms of HMC. There are of course some who keep themselves to themselves a lot at this kind of school, being the kind that it has to be a lot more open... purely on the practical side of things... of selling itself. In the market, it has to present itself... open, and parents have to be able to see what is going on. And they are going to want to know what is going on in terms of sport and safety and that kind of area as much as....

K.L.           The best compliment I can pay to you as a department and as a school, is that I'd like Sam, my son, to come to you. I'd be very happy if he came here. I'd not say the same about next door. I'd consciously avoid going there for a number of reasons, not necessarily to do with P.E. I feel very happy here, about the atmosphere and everything and it occurred to me that in that wider group of the school, the P.E. department has a lot to be very proud about and if one was using things like documents, like your handouts to staff,... which you can say they're not just following, they're actually doing things creatively, then an idea you might think about in terms of your friend, not only to record events but to make programmes like the sports hall and show things going on. You might want to think about the growing development of resource based learning, open learning, so for instance let's say you have on the staff seventeen members of staff or so who are experts, then why not use those skills to create learning resources which can be viewed by the children in their own time so if you have some A.V. material, you can use that. And all those things which are innovative and which are surprising that they take....

Ed

24th March 1988

K.L. ...That I did on the wordprocessor. Did you mind doing that?

Ed: No, not at all.

K.L. Thanks for doing that.

My aim eventually is that I will have five descriptions of teachers: Mark, who is no longer here was one of those. And I just wanted to factually be able to say that at no stage will I have peoples names or use.... So things that you say to me I'll never say... and vice versa. None of that at all. And some people who do PhDs. have an embargo of three years before anyone can read it and that's not what I want at all so I wanted you to give a factual statement of the whole range of experience.

I feel like now it's a bit like writing a book 'loose change': when I saw you all first, since we first met, you've got married and had a baby. I've moved house and got a new lifestyle. Is Alan married at all? He's the only one who hasn't changed substantially his lifestyle;

Mark's gone on to the Youth Service; Bob's got married and has a baby; Tony has a baby on the way, has changed,... doing the Marathon. It's incredible.... It's been interesting. I just wanted to make sure that I had a correct thing there.

Which ones of those did you think were... need explaining a bit?

**Ed:** The ones that I've left. You'll see that I've left gaps. I mean this one, on the institutional basis. I didn't quite know whether you meant this institution or other....

**K.L.** This thing I've had all along about people not doing their best to help you here and now and the same with....

**Ed:** Yes I left that purely because I'm unsure what type of informal and formal (inaudible) there are. I'm sure there are, but I'm sure I haven't explored them

**K.L.** For instance, some people say that if I drop a hint in somebody's ear, something happens. For instance, it could be that the state of the.... I told John about the urine in the hall and the whole thing about the sports hall...

it's a disgrace. That it was so bad that it was a matter of raising an issue at the staff meeting or a forum full of issues.

I just wondered whether there was a public forum, to have these things done. Say you weren't getting enough resources for reproducing things, or the equipment wasn't good enough. I just wondered whether this notion of somehow helping you, which is what I wanted you to tell me about really.

I must say, J.G. took everything.... I said I thought there was a fundamental breakdown in communication between what you both wanted to achieve separately, which is the same thing in fact but of course there's no communication about that. And he felt that now he was an invalid, he had more time than ever to sit and listen if you wanted to go and open up to him and be honest. Because he said he could then be openly honest back and this report could be a way of starting that process.

I also said to him that it was a most important time now for P.E. in terms of curriculum and all those things.

So I think what you have as a potential basis for support and I think he would be the first to argue that your (inaudible) around the department has actually given him a reason to look afresh at P.E. and his boys achievements. And it's surprised him.

So that's why I was trying to get valued form of procedures. So if you have something that has to be done or whatever, is there anybody you can go to. Is there a Mr. or Mrs. Fixit that could help you?

**Ed:** : It depends on what you're going to sort out. I mean I can go to people and open up but whether it's the right thing to do, either for myself or for the thing that I want to be done, is a different matter.

**K.L.** So what I'm trying to ask I suppose is....

**Ed:** It's probably more informal than formal.

**K.L.** Because we've always had those networks like the groundsman and the typist being the most important people... and the caretaker and all those things. It's just sometimes you know if you go to so and so, it can be done without

all the red tape and you just get it done. Same with resources. If you want something, if you go to the right person, they'll say yes, have it. Sometimes you find that if you ask other people the same question, the same people will keep being thrown up by.... And that really was what I wanted to talk about and am most interested to know because what I've felt all along is that if you've given yourself into a public thing,...

I felt very embarrassed when I first came because I didn't want to be seen as a snoop. And I wasn't that but... everything we do in life... that we do... people are going to think that it is snooping... and teachers don't let themselves be seen and it's a very brave thing to do. I've been watched now many times when I've taught and even though I've had some experience, I still feel quite nervous at the prospect. I know things change. But what I did I think was only what teachers do themselves in terms of research in their own practice. You do that every lesson anyhow. And what I was trying to say in that was that research isn't something that's done to you, like an injection... and that's why I think what I want to do is more than that.

**Ed:** I think that people are always critical of research if it's not being done with them.

**K.L.** That's right. And I also think that many things that I've done are interests that I have. I didn't come to school and say that I wanted to know what you.... Because quite frankly, when I first came, with the Teachers Action, if I'd come then and said that, they'd have said well look, we don't want the hassle at the moment because it's....

So the word now is collaborative research but the idea is that somehow.... Well you know, you could look at say.... You are concerned perhaps about the time it takes between leaving here and getting to the sports field because of duties with Year Tutor's jobs. You might then say, why don't I keep a diary for a week about what's happening. That's legitimate research.

Another one might be, why don't I talk to Alan and Charles about practices that actually work in soccer. And that's exactly what research is.

The next step might be to say, could those practices work for all games, which is another interesting thing about research work. How one can have a core of activities which will say the same for a number of different sports.

**Ed:** We found something that works very well and I think it's been used on a number of occasions but I think it's used even more now, and that is to make more small-sided games. The lessons are that much... even in games such as rugby, which are, have always been deemed dangerous, and you must be watching all the time. You get a lot more from putting on two small sided games and being involved in both. The kids get a lot more out of it.

**K.L.** And that's a nice piece of research, because it's to do with people's practice, and all the time you're changing.... Yes, I've found the same.... It's partly been given to us by this notion of teaching for understanding. But the problems emerge from games and not from the skills that you used to do in fragments.

The thing I've learnt more than anything else is in this progressive area, is that if you give children responsibility, they'll take it but because of their background, it may take

a long long time, so they're going to be silly or not going to work for a while and you may lose people in the interim. But in the longer term sense, people are controlling their own.... You then require some knowledge to control and referee the game.

That's the difficult part isn't it... to say well, we're not going to allow "knock on's", forward passes or we're going to have scrums... chicken scratches for the ball. Whatever you do, you have to know that so we can apply it. We have to be able to recognise it and be honest. So in fact some people might say what we'll do is, in such and such a session, we'll have a big game, knocking at many touches, explain the rules and referee them carefully and then go back and do the small-sided games rather than say in this game, explain that a forward pass stops and you say forward pass stops here. That's another way of doing it. And all the time you're just refining things. That's what I was thinking about in terms of the research.

The real thing is that research isn't done by people who kind of arrive in a Volvo and come and see you for like a day, kind of like a tea party. It's about your own development as a teacher and how it has evolved from Day I....

That constant, some people call it, "evaluation". And curriculum development isn't it. It's next year I won't do this and I won't do that....

**Ed:** Oh yes. Virtually every lesson changes slightly. It's never the same right the way through.

**K.L.** That's right. That's why in my research, I've called this 'Alchemy of Moments' because I think very much about the magic of moments in teaching. Because even in the winter, we change our lesson outside. Like when I was here in 1986 I checked some days who was teaching and actually taking part in minus 18 wind chill. The boys are out there and there's a game going on. I can remember on the coldest day of all, they went out for literally for ten minutes and then went straight back.

**Ed:** Oh I've done that, since this year. We had a very short game and we got out there and did something and took part....

**K.L.** It's quite important because it recognised that things can't always be the same but there is a need for children particularly in an urban environment, to be exposed to things other than their usual, or they would never change.

I thought because we weren't going to have a lot of time, this would actually provide what I was trying to talk about....

Would you mind talking about some of those?  
If we just go through....

That point.... It's almost like saying, we haven't written, we haven't spoken for a while....  
So just very briefly....

**Ed:** I can't even remember where I was in '86. Head of Boys, caring for the P.E. department I think I was at the time.

**K.L.** And there was still the debate about who was going to be Head of Department and what was going to happen?

**Ed:** Yes, that was at that time. Yes. But now obviously I've got Head of Year, which although it should have changed my role quite a bit in the P.E. department, I still do a lot of the organising. The boys side... I still play quite a lot and that's been discussed in quite some detail with the hierarchy also. There are still frictions in the department and I'm the person... the 'Go Between'.

**K.L.** Also in '86 they had the Teacher's Action which stopped all games. I just wondered whether since then, had the games restarted or were...?

**Ed:** Oh yes, they've restarted. They've been reshaped. We don't do Saturday mornings. It used to be virtually every Saturday morning. Now we play occasionally on Saturday but that's because I've the district matches. I've taken on less. Because I'm Head of Fourth Year, I take on the fourth year teams so I've done football and rugby and still maintained the Borough,... cross country and help out with the athletics with the Borough, aswell as just doing general school practices anyway. We have a fourth year sports club down at the sports hall. (next phrase mumbled and inaudible)... not conducive to getting lots of people down there having a social sporting session.

**K.L.** What I was wondering was, whether all this extra curricular activity was different now. Whether there was a different emphasis or a different feeling about it, or whether you'd returned to....

**Ed:** Not really no. This year there havn't been any cups or leagues. It's all been friendlys. I get very torn between wanting to do more and doing more.

**K.L.** Did Borough Poly. have any competitions?

**Ed:** Yes, for this year.

**K.L.** It was an experiment or...?

**Ed:** I think it was to make a point really, that they hadn't thought about P.E. teachers when they made the Act. They hadn't thought about their Contracts.

**K.L.** We talked about the curriculum before, whether it was going to be a written curriculum or... and that's going to be Sharon's responsibility is it?

**Ed:** Yes. She's taken on.... She's written a syllabus in a brief way, certainly not a detailed one for each of the sports.

**K.L.** And the G.C.S.E?

**Ed:** Yes. I went to phase two with Sharon and Sharon's now one of the... not moderators but leading informed persons in G.C.S.E. in the southern area. I think there are only about four. So she's very much in the know. I've taken on more of the background. I've done the anatomy and physiology side. I've taken on that side although I haven't been able to devote the time I would have liked to and in fact Alan's taken over the present fourth year and is playing a much greater role. In fact, he's written his own.... So that's on that side.

**K.L.** The third one was: A book came out in 1983 called The P.E. Curriculum Policy and Implementation and I wondered whether the focus of the curriculum had changed at all or whether policy had changed in the last two years in terms of mostly competitive and non-competitive, mixed ability, mixed sex....

**Ed:** It's been discussed. When in '86, or it might have been '85, I tried an upper school mixed options which didn't work. Basically the children that age, couldn't chose and stick to choices.

Maybe that was a result of trying it the wrong year and it should have been brought from lower down.

Although we do a first year programme, which I think now is a very good programme, which has some mixed and we do the swimming and the boys schools programme are mixed, which I think the first year's programme is very successful.

The rest of the programme is very similar.

**K.L.** And was the First Year Programme based on the evaluation of other years programmes or was it an idea you invented jointly?

**Ed:** I think it had two ways of.... Firstly, we recognised that swimming must be in, for all First Years. That's when we started. Initially it was tied in with mixed gym but we changed that. Sharon brought in this ball skills programme where they could actually evaluate children and come up with a set of numbers or figures for each pupil which is needed and reported in profile. So that was done just to give us a ground work and it's been successful.

**K.L.** And the evaluation: is there any way that you kind of evaluate what it is that you do on other say than a personal basis, for instance would you sit down and discuss with the staff evaluations as an aspect of your work or would you ask children to evaluate what they've done. Would you ask them questions about their... other than in an informal sense?

**Ed:** Not in a formal way, no.

**K.L.** Seeing the pupils today, it made me realise how, if you're outside, you see people grow and develop. I just wondered. Sometimes you have different intakes and different backgrounds of sport. In terms of the pupils' interest in P.E. and sport, is that still as extensive or has it grown since the Action stopped?

**Ed:** It does grow from year to year. It also affects what we do in G.C.S.E. It affects which subjects we offer. Now the present Fifth Year are very much outdoor group of pupils so what we offer them is more outdoor based, although obviously today, you've got the other side. I think we stick fairly closely to a similar pattern right the way through.

**K.L.** There were... I think it was in the Spring Term... there were a number of children "no kitters" and people not taking part. Have you had any problems with that increasing, or decreasing. Is it seasonal?

**Ed:** It's seasonal. It depends on what group it is. It depends on what sport they're doing. It's very interesting: you can go to some groups and there'll be nobody, or possibly just one, with a note and yet I had a group last week, or maybe early this week, where there were ten not doing it, eight of which had their notes and their kit and twelve doing it. So out of twenty two, you had half of them doing it. Yet the next lesson, everybody was doing it. The same group.

**K.L.** Do you still use the 'D' merits or whatever?

**Ed:** Yes we still have 'D' merits. In fact, eight of them who had their notes, they reported back here at quarter past three. So it was followed up. Maybe it was just a while. But yes, it tends to be more seasonal. Wet weather: forgot my kit.

**K.L.** There were people that Alan was telling me about, somebody called "Tom Sawyer", who's become one of C.K's. runners.

**Ed:** That's right... 120 miles.

**K.L.** Another boy that Mark had was John. He used to wear a scarf. He was in that lower fifth group. John A. Is he still here?

**Ed:** He's still here yes. He's one of the bowlers. Gets a fair amount out of bowling.

**K.L.** Hampton have found that their first year intake this year is probably the most sporting they've had in a long time. Did you have a similar intake?

**Ed:** No. Probably.... Sportswise, it's difficult to say but as a First Year goes, it's not a very good First Year. Normally you can tell an awful lot in a P.E. side. Football-wise they havn't won a game. They're a hard core of runners obviously which has got to be mentioned, which I think Rectory now has.

**K.L.** That's one of the things, I must say that Hampton are keen to have whatever links you want to develop with athletics, because Tony is very keen all the time to offer for competitive or non-competitive athletes who just want to take part. That'd be a nice link between the two.

And the sixth thing I've put there is, given all the thumbs up facilities, I said expectations, hopes and trends and wondered whether there were things that you've seen over the past few years which led you to believe that things would happen or not or what hopes you had or what trends expected...?

**Ed:** Recently I suppose my expectations have moved away from this place.... I can't see there really being a great deal of change here. Things either seem to happen very quickly or not at all, and I think we've been in the same boat for a number of years. It's nice, the idea of complex on site but it's locked up....

**K.L.** Any change in the curriculum or the children responding to say competitive or mixed activities. Are there any kind of feelings that you have which you could put your finger

on and say is happening in P.E. now which is surprising you or you're becoming aware of,... anything like that?

**Ed:** I think that the trend from my point of view probably from the other P.E. staff is more involvement of children... not worrying so much about the discipline side of you must have the correct kit. It is more, get out there and take part in something, some activity.

**K.L.** And do they respond to that?

**Ed:** I think they respond a lot more to that than they do to regiment type,... you know, check the kit, register.... I think at times I might feel slightly guilty that I'm not teaching them as much or I'm not talking as much to them yet at the same time, they're probably getting more out of it.

**K.L.** Yes. That's certainly our experience of the school in Devon that if they have enough imagination, we simply give them the stimulus to deal with it.

The difficulty I found say watching Alan's rugby yesterday was that of the... there was a five three five game and four three four game...

and of those eighteen people, only two had boots on a very slippery pitch. Is there a problem with kit, in terms of footwear...?

**Ed:** Yes, definitely with footwear. That's a problem with the boots.

**K.L.** Is that because of low income or just people don't buy boots anymore...?

**Ed:** People don't buy boots. You get those who take part in football or rugby or a sport outside who have them, the other families don't have them. It is a great problem. It's one that I'm sure Alan's talked about.

**K.L.** In fact there's going to be quite an important.... Once this Bedford thing's sorted out, about the rugby case, it's going to be quite a serious implication for everyone, in terms of if you allow children to scrummage in.... It's quite important in terms of your own cover.

How about things like.... There was talk about children being less fit now than ever. Do you have any awareness of that?

**Ed:** Not really, no.

school.  
P.E., of it taking quite a major role in the  
Oh yes, I can still see the purpose of having

Ed:

it's just being, for instance, worthwhile?  
is that don't change? In terms of whether  
of basic assumptions you have about what P.E.  
what was changing about P.E.? Are there kind  
principles which you'd uphold regardless of  
what you're doing, are there some raw basic  
be: given that you have changed in some ways  
The last thing on this I'd like to ask would

K.L.:

but those who don't are less, more reluctant.  
it are more enthusiastic I'd say than before  
with kit and those without. Those who bring  
think that's why you get a big divide on those  
it wouldn't have been that great. Again, I  
they used to have some interest, even though  
before they used to go through the process and  
really take part that much at all now, whereas  
way yet those who aren't as educated, who don't  
who do take part, take part in a much bigger  
No. I think there is a greater divide. Those

Ed:

is it a kind of persuasion job on your part?  
Are they exercise orientated do you think, or

K.L.:

**K.L.** But things like control and discipline have changed in terms of... or would there be a level which wouldn't....

**Ed:** Certainly there are levels... there are standards that are kept. As I've said in the written part, one of my strengths I feel is the relationships with pupils which I'm fortunate to have. Yet if I was to get a new group in or a group that didn't know me, I think I wouldn't still be.... I'd set standards before relaxing.

**K.L.** One thing about your present post in the Year Tutor is that the classical muddle for P.E. promotion is through the pastoral system, because of that relationship side. If you aren't going to stay here, would you be prepared to apply for a pastoral post elsewhere, without P.E.

**Ed:** Yes. I have looked and applied for jobs in that light. I think the thing that will probably hold me back in that light is my inexperience.

**K.L.** Have you thought about doing any counselling part time qualification or anything like that or...?

**Ed:** Not.... I mean we have had an (inaudible) down there on counselling. This is where really I need career guidance.

**K.L.** There is actually an M.A. in Educational Guidance!

So those seem to be... other trends for you to do, other than P.E.

**Ed:** I still want to do P.E. I'd like to be a head of P.E. in a school where I know I could be given the right support and the right environment.

**K.L.** One thing perhaps we might talk about in the future is what you actually... the ideal curriculum would be in terms of... because presumably if you are head of P.E., you inherit things but you also learn to change things.

**Ed:** I would want to go to a school that was fairly well established... anywhere. I wouldn't want to go to a place where there was a great battle from the word go!

**K.L.** And the kind of curriculum model you'd have, which I've kind of put next is... for instance

some argue that the model for P.E. curriculum now is to question the value of team games, whether the model for the future of P.E. should be based on team competitive games. Another one is which we've talked about... is this teaching of understanding. Are you aware of how the outside world is affecting you, even subconsciously through things like say, Panorama programmes, newspapers or school sports magazines, or anything like that. Are you aware that some force from outside, which is suggesting change, or do you think that P.E. is quite resilient to that kind of....

**Ed:** I'm aware that there are outside forces but at the same time, I think a number of them have been tested, a variety of things. I still think that it comes back to the basic model, with a few changes but not many.

**K.L.** Do you have any access to this kind of outside information, about.... For instance, the P.E. Association was reporting the state of P.E. in schools and giving detailed hours of how much was being allocated, a whole range of things.

Next door, they get magazines like the British Journal of P.E., which I'm sure.... They also get a thing called School Sport which is a national....

**Ed:** ...and the P.E. Teacher, I think it's called. And there are magazines that come through. We don't have the whole range.

**K.L.** Not that we read much when we're at university or college, but do you find you ever have time to read at all about...?

**Ed:** Very little. Particularly at the moment.

**K.L.** So, one of the interesting things is that people involved in curriculum development often find that people are under so much pressure that innovation is quite difficult.

**Ed:** The people who seem to want change or introduce change are those people who are actually not in the teaching side of it, because there isn't the time.

**K.L.** Or they might be very inexperienced teachers who come in with a plan of action which needs some children to be fit into it first.

Mixed ability and coeducational or mixed lessons is a big thing at the moment and of course health-related P.E. which is another aspect of that. Will that play a part in (inaudible) and other courses?

**Ed:** Certainly the health-related fitness side has affected what we do. We do a lot more circuit training which is linked in with taking half (rest of sentence inaudible). It's much more giving reasons for exercise and the effects from exercise rather than "here you are, this is what we're going to do...." with no explanation. That certainly is much more evident now.

**K.L.** And it's much more expressive all the time rather than saying that we train because it helps our hearts... that you can actually take measurements and they know that and....

**Ed:** We do circuit training.... I don't know whether you've seen the programme? Well, we do it before and after and we look at the exercises that they do... what exactly ....(inaudible) part of the body they're working on.

**K.L.** And people think that that's going to equip them for a more rational choice of activity later in life, or at least make them aware of the options.

**Ed:** Hopefully it'll make them more aware overall, and their choice into certain sports. That they're doing this because it's better for this part of you or for that aspect....

**K.L.** Does that require a lot of reinforcement or do they...?

**Ed:** Yes. Lots of combined (Inaudible).... what's scrummaging good for, which part of your....

**K.L.** Bob at Hampton yesterday was saying that the thing he found being a parent now, was how long it takes to change people's perceptions and yet my daughter who's five and Sam who's three... they will tell me they can't do things when the teacher has told them otherwise. Already at that age, they have this view that teacher defines.... And if teachings that powerful, then it's almost a bit late at eleven to try and change it.

**Ed:** I agree, that at that age there probably isn't enough....

**K.L.** Do you take think like anthropomorphic measurements, like height, weight, skin fold, or anything like that?

**Ed:** No. We're getting facilities for that. It's coming to the G.C.S.E. but it would be lovely to do with all children and it's something that we have discussed and I'm sure it will come about.

**K.L.** Hampton have allocated one lesson each term for every group.

**Ed:** Yes. We're talking about similar....

**K.L.** You could then actually have a child's profile throughout the school. You could have enormous data to use for the exams themselves.

The other thing I mentioned there was the impact there of the Action and we've talked about that mainly but I wonder whether, from the inside, the atmosphere at the school had changed because of the Action or have people just forgotten there was Action and just got on with it?

**Ed:** I think the atmosphere's certainly changed as far as help for teachers, although now with the directed time, we have a few volunteers wanting to use their time in sport, rather than being told they must use it in some other way.

**K.L.** What is directed time?

**Ed:** That is the time that you're supposed to do, the time that you're directed to do.

**K.L.** And is that paid?

**Ed:** No, that is part of your contract. You must spend so many hours in contact with children of which not all of it is ever used or is only in pure teaching. So there are spare hours for everybody.

**K.L.** Some people have suggested that since the Action people are what we call very instrumental, that they only do things of it's either going to get them more money or get them status. Has it become a very financial thing now or a very mechanical thing that "I will do it if I have to.... or if I'm going to get some money for it.... or it's going to get me a further rung up the scale...."

**Ed:** You'd probably notice it more nowadays although I'm sure that it was the same before.... I'm sure we have members of staff who after doing it for a year, realised that well, the Head never came down to watch them do it, so who is watching? Why do they do it?

**K.L.** And how about the children. At the time, they were talking in '86 about how the children missed the activities and there was some feeling about what.... Did they go to clubs and stay there or did they come back to within the school activities?

**Ed:** Because we stopped Saturdays.... I'm sure that there'll be a difficulty over the older pupils on Saturdays now that we've lost that. But midweek wise, there's no difference. In fact I would have said that the lay off, for one year, did them the world of good. I think it did them a world of good in that they realised that it wasn't to be expected that we would do this after school. Some of them appreciated us spending the times....

**K.L.** To be taken for granted and that was a change.

In terms of numbers, of clubs and pupils, have things expanded or have you consolidated on certain areas that were there before? I saw an angling cup for instance... whether that was a development of activities.

**Ed:** That's not part of our.... But because of the support and help that we need, I would say that it's restricted what we do. I think we still offer the same, but in a more skeleton fashion. I'd like to offer a lot more. I can see the reasons and the purpose of offering them more.

**K.L.** And have the parents become involved at all, terms of....

**Ed:** A few have. It's very patchy.

**K.L.** It's based on them coming to you rather than you....

**Ed:** Yes.

**K.L.** It's a quarter to five.... A couple more...?

The other things....

If you can't speak about them don't. But perhaps interpret them how you want to interpret them.

We've talked about your thinking and teaching now in terms of looking at involvement as much as the skills side. I wonder.... My question really, having seen you teach during that time is whether you feel that teaching is about the outcome or the way that you deal with it. You've almost said that in terms of your relationship with the children. Are both of equal importance? Is the performance at the end of the day significant or is it something to do with the way you and they have worked together to produce something, ... the way you teach them, or the way you relate to them. Somebody once said it's about time we treated pupils as though they were human. And in some schools, children are just objects we order around.

**Ed:** I think that due to my nature, it's all about working together. I'm not the type of person to stand and shout for no reason.

**K.L.** I now realise.... That's because you come from the South West! Laid back.... There are no threats down there. Life is very gentle and there aren't that many people, so it could be to do with a personal dimension.

So do you think that your background, your teacher training and your development as a teacher yourself... was that ever threatened, that kind of laid back approach. Were you encouraged to think otherwise about how you should teach.

**Ed:** No.... There were times that I thought I should.... I wasn't actually told but in situations I thought well, perhaps I'm not being... my role model at college was probably a lot different to what it is now although I still say that I based a lot of my teaching on what I'd done before and what I'd seen of my own personal teachers at school. I'm not sure whether I modelled myself on the head of the department when I was at school....

**K.L.** Was he from the South West?

**Ed:** Yes, a true Cornishman!

**K.L.** And all the time you have this regression towards a life which is.... Yes. I think that a sense of humour in everything is linked to that significance and almost.... Well, it goes on in intervening periods, just an irritation towards that development....

**Ed:** It's quite interesting... peoples comments to me also in private, like Oh, you're not like a normal P.E. teacher! You're not like a normal P.E. teacher!

**K.L.** Which is quite a shock really because you see how they perceive P.E. teachers. Normally insensitive brutes and extrovert and assertive. And it probably reflects in the way you play in the game of rugby aswell because to have that control and understatement.

Do pupils need to achieve things? And so how would one deal with the contradiction between say, what they do together at the end of the day or do those fit quite easily together? You have excellence as a performance and you still have this process going on at the same time.

**Ed:** It's difficult in some groups but it very much depends on the make up of the group as to whether they can work together and produce a superb result at the end. Whereas some groups, and that's probably the difficulty that you'll find, whatever you do with them.... You'll find that some of them don't gel therefore the end results

will never be.... Even if you shout at them or take a more direct line, you still won't get....

**K.L.** What reference points do they have for excellence. Do they have your verbal, visual demonstrations?

**Ed:** Yes, probably the visual. That's one area again where I feel fairly strong aswell as personality. I feel that I'm quite reasonable all round and therefore can set a good example.

**K.L.** And do you think experience largely to be able to demonstrate, more and more effectively, because you cut out what is irrelevant and just do the main thing?

**Ed:** Yes.

**K.L.** Because it seems to me that when I was observing you, the more I watched you teach, the more I realised that you needed to say less and less because you were doing things that were directing their attention anyhow. Whereas young teachers are so excited by the whole thing that they're doing many many things at once and confusing people.

I think what experience shows, is how very little children learn. You needn't have a million points. If you have two or three, it seems to work out... maybe not for a term even, or even a year. But that was certainly, in terms of this process product and that one, "Pupils in your Care", I was just wondering about... in some classes there are thirty children and some fifteen and some ten. How do you keep records, mental or otherwise about each child or is that impossible to do?

Do you remember I asked you a long time ago how each child learnt and we had no idea. I had no idea how I learnt or how anybody else learnt and I lectured. I just wonder, what mental map you had of your pupils and their needs and their achievements. So if I mentioned a pupil's name, would you draw out images of him performing a variety of subjects, activities, or would you just think of him as a person?

**Ed:** I could probably have quite a good picture of him and I think that's fairly important in my role as a teacher and again, I'm sure if you discuss in detail with Alan over the profile, with him going out with a paper and pen and actually marking it down, I'm sure I would

lose track of children far quicker doing that and although I'd have it on paper I wouldn't know... I wouldn't be able to refer to it as accurately as you can when you spend nearly all your time observing.

**K.L.** And is this somewhere where there's a kind of ongoing thing, a formative assessment, where you add to your information about the child constantly, rather than discovering it all at the end of the year.

**Ed:** If a child does something in one lesson that you've not seen him do before, then it registers....

(side of tape finishes)

**K.L.** ...targetting pupils and going to see them, to talk to them?

**Ed:** I'm aware of when I do it but I'm sure I don't do it in that....

**K.L.** But if you look at all the figures for teacher contact with pupils, most of us have about five minutes a year with a child, one to one, and it could be that that is an inappropriate way of them learning so it's something to be hung up about. But it's the reality that you can't be talking to all of them all of the time.

**Ed:** If I can actually see a child that I can praise about what they've just done, which will hopefully reinforce it, yet at the same time it won't go much beyond that. I won't start going into detail about why he did it, how he did it etc. I don't think.... I very rarely do that unless it's in a very small group and it's an activity where you can.

**K.L.** Some people have this developmental notion of P.E. where they start in year one and they have had some private experience but they're going to end up in year five with this kind of project that they're going to go through.... Do you have any way in checking that they have followed that pattern in terms of, by year two, they are a different kind of person by year three. To do with age and maturity and a whole range of things.

**Ed:** There are some children in the fifth year who are probably still only able to do things that we would expect of a second year. I don't think you can.... I don't think you can ever say by this stage you will be at this level.

**K.L.** So, the final thing would be, how do you decide what the appropriate level of expectation is for the pupils that you look after?

**Ed:** A lot goes on your initial sighting, your initial impression. You know, somebody's... you meet him for the first time and you get a picture of them. If they've progressed from there at the end, then yes, you have had an effect and you have a success.

**K.L.** And last of all really is, those expectations about what they are going to achieve. To what extent are they your interpretations of them or your comparison of them against some other reference point which might either be you at their age, or you now, or a pupil in that group who was good or bad.... Is their performance and achievement relevant to something, or is it just them themselves.

I always found it hard to assess and place people because as I used to say to people about football teams, they're just here and now and that's it.

Would you have some kind of informal scale along which you place them, like I remember John Adams at this stage was nowhere near that but so and so was,.... Is there a reference...? The pupil peer group or...?

**Ed:** It would have to be the pupil peer group, as opposed to.... From years... this person was similar... ten years ago I remember he was like him when he came in first year but he ended up like this.... You can draw pictures like that but I don't think it's a point to judge.

**K.L.** But you have a private stock of knowledge if somebody comes.... For instance, you could say he's quite good for a third year, rather than he's quite good for a third year in years 1972 to 1975. You have kind of an overall impression?

**Ed:** Yes. That's why P.E. or sport at this school has changed so much because I think that the standards have gone up. The only exception

is the first year which again is something that will take time.

**K.L.** But in a sense this seems to me to be critical. That somehow you are aware that people can be different and you give them space to do that.

**Ed:** I wouldn't dream of thinking that you could actually place everybody in the same mould and say "right, you're going to be like this at the end. This is my expectation for you". There are so many variables.

**K.L.** That's interesting because I mean.... From the outside, there's a fundamental link there between the assumptions you now have about the knowledge you think is worth doing in the activity and the image you have of the child itself. So both of them are to do with something.... Is that something you've always had or do you think it's something you moved in towards as you've got older and more laid back or...? The way you link the knowledge and the model of the child to a process which is to do with expression....

**Ed:** Well I think I've always had.... I've probably found it easier to work that way because of I'm more mature and more senior in the school.

I don't feel quite so pressured that I feel "I shouldn't allow this to happen" or I should be shouting at them and telling them to do this or that.

**K.L.** It seems to me that the more competent you are, the easier it is to teach.

**Ed:** You don't feel there are so many barriers, so many threats....

**K.L.** And there are no threats really. Well the threat strangely is if somebody else sees you doing something that you think you're doing well but they might interpret otherwise so that....

**Ed:** Yes, there's the threat that somebody might see you doing something which in your mind is acceptable but in perhaps society's, or somebody's mind, it's not.

**K.L.** That's one with the progressive schools of course because the children there behave in quite a different way. But it's only what you're doing in your small lessons here. It's the process that matters.

The difference is that I have a school now which is totally supportive and parents who are but whereas the culture of the school here, eleven hundred pupils or whatever...(inaudible)... there's no way the scale is going to be allowed to do that and the children are different. And rural children, as you know, coming from Devon. And it's to do with the space you give people. That's why I feel really privileged to have been allowed to see your lessons because we are very good at being private and it really is a time to be public now because P.E. needs to sort itself out in a way.

**Ed:** It's interesting actually, the whole interview, for the two days...(inaudible)...and to teach a lesson. When I say teach a lesson, it was an attempt at teaching a lesson within those fifteen minutes....

**K.L.:** What did you do?

**Ed:** They all had the same brief. It was the first lesson that they'd had in the gym which is quite interesting, how we drew for the interviews on the second day because they asked people to do that. But I did stay behind to get feedback. It was interesting that I was one of the few who did very little teaching, because

I gave them handouts to (colour in?) about the gymn and (inaudible) and talked to the children because it was their first visit and obviously there were boundaries that had to be established. And some of them went straight into the lessons, straight into their warm-up sequence. But it was an interesting experience.

**K.L.** And how many watched you teach?

**Ed:** Two, both (Deputys?). One had P.E. training, the other one who was linked to watching teachers and supervising them...(inaudible mumble).

**K.L.** Were you aware of giving a good impression that day in terms of appearance, or voice or positioning or anything or did you...? You weren't conscious of anything that you did differently? Like, had you ironed your kit specially for it and had you taken special care?

**Ed:** Well yes. I wouldn't have gone dressed quite like this. I went to create a certain impression yet, actually in the place I was perfectly normal. I felt quite relaxed because I felt I had planned what I was going to do very well.

**K.L.** And how did the pupils respond?

**Ed:** They were very good. They were very friendly so it was nice that I could act normally, rather than go in sort of very strict and straight when I'm sure they would have responded to that but....

**K.L.** In our school when people teach lessons, part of the (inaudible) power is the child. It's interesting how we give power to children....(inaudible).... how did you respond to us today. It's interesting. They've got the power of hiring and firing. It's fascinating to turn round.....

(recording ends abruptly).

Alan

24th March 1988

**K.L.** I just wondered whether the perceptions you had of the first years, or any of the years, whether they're skillful, fit...?

**Alan:** Oh yes, fitness and diet is a national scandal and it's going to get worse in our school, like nationally. Comprehensive schools are doing away with playtimes, doing away with dinner times. They're seeing it as a pain. Our school will next year go down to half hour lunchtimes and all that'll entail for children in terms of play, all that entails in terms of civilisation, having a restful conversation with people, teachers... all that advice with kids with what they eat and then doing say, circuit training afterwards, after half an hour. It will encourage 'nibbles' throughout the day, eating whilst walking down corridors. We are in comprehensive schools, driven away from civilised situations. I don't know what happens in schools like.... in the staff room, a cup and saucer and a biscuit. In our situation, it's completely different.

**K.L.** What advice can you give children about this? Because it seems to me,... I found when I was here two years ago, that that one o' clock break for lunch was so bad in terms of the childrens sugar levels and nutritional levels that you end up with children going across to the sports hall and spending a lot of time in the baker's shop and buying buns and eating those. I just wondered how... whether the day being changed to half and hour lunch break whether lunch should come forward or would they keep the one o' clock time?

**Alan:** It's still in the planning stage but obviously the Head is trying to push it through. They will do away with break time as such. They'll make break time half an hour,... what we traditionally call break time, half an hour which is say half eleven to twelve and they will make that lunchtime for first and second years, if they can have their lunch down here. Then they will have lunchtime for half an hour and have that lunchtime for third, fourth and fifth years, with no one allowed to leave the premises, theoretically. Everybody's got to eat here.

It's not on educational grounds, but on the public image. They're having lots of problems with the kids ....(inaudible).... there are lots of complaints and they'd rather have it here than over there. That's the way they see it. And there are more problems, discipline problems for them, in the second half of the rush hour.

In fact, the lunch hour is not an hour anymore, it's fifty-five minutes; they whittle it away. Last year it was an hour and this year it's fifty-five minutes. It was, when you were here.... It might have even been an hour and ten minutes.

**K.L.** How about the Vietnamese intake.... Has that ceased now or do you still have...?

**Alan:** No, we constantly have a trickle. No problems.

**K.L.** And are they still sporting?

**Alan:** Well not all of them. You do find there's a cross-section aswell. A lot of them are but you do get a cross-section.

**K.L.** And any problems like the last time, when it was kind of like World War Three here, with the children fighting, the Vietnamese against the Rectory People...?

**Alan:** Was there? I never noticed it. I think you would have seen the Vietnamese grouped together but I never saw any large racist or....

**K.L.** For instance, I popped in last year to see J.G. but he couldn't see me because there had been an enormous fight.

**Alan:** I think that's rare and unusual. I think that they were accepted partly because of the physical prowess, very quickly into this....

**K.L.** Do you take any anthropomorphic or physical measurements in children at all, in their fitness measurement and assessment? Would you know how tall the first years are and what they weigh or...?

**Alan:** This is part of the sports skills.... I think it partly comes from.... Oh, and I want to talk to you about health-related fitness in a minute.... It's part of the Sharon sport-skills thing which she's picked up from college

and of course she wants to retest them in the third year and compare that with the N.F.E.R.

She's by and large a student of physical education; she takes more than just a practical view of it. She sees it in an academic way and there's nothing wrong with that at all.

The crunch comes because I think she wants allocated time, rather like "English is cancelled folks, you're doing your N.F.E.R. non-verbal", "maths is cancelled folks, you're doing your P.E." and of course she's not going to get it. Whether she realises that now I don't know and what effect that will have on her motivation in the first year group, and they might go back to circuit training. At the moment, they're not, they're doing ball skill stuff. But that comes with her,.... I don't think it's that precise.

Let's take flexibility for example. The problem with cricket in schools, in comprehensive schools, is children going and like.... I've written down... are very interested in yoga at the moment. And I thought..... the need the children have for yoga is sitting there. But P.E. teachers, particularly the younger teachers who havn't got strong control....

Children want action. If you want them.... If you tell them to go and run around and jump twenty five benches and just go around and do that for twenty minutes, you've got not discipline problems at all. They will go and jump. And I do it with them sometimes. You ask them to stand up and touch their toes, don't jolt and hold it,.... they'll do it for two minutes and then get bored. Everything's action. They want action.

When you're talking about these rather static measurements in a group situation,... flexibility... like this type of thing where you measure it on the wall.... You're asking for the world, because you're not going to get it. You're not going to get the kids doing it properly. They'll find it boring, because they want action. Whether you should give them some action, whether it's desirable or not I don't know.

I think... we do do circuit training and (inaudible) and things. Although I think they're aware of that, they've become more aware of that,... it would be interesting and a good motivation force and I can see it, if children could see changes in them, in their flexibility for example. In an objective, written way.

**K.L.** Hampton allocate one lesson a term in their P.E. programme to measure flexibility, each child has as skin fold measurement in three places and there's a run and a whole range of things that go together. And that's an assessment we... so there are profiles now of the children from their first year through the school. And they've found that quite a motivation and they can use the measurements to draw up principles about the children.

**Alan:** Yes, I can see somebody getting hold of them and devising a good programme. It'd have to be somebody who knew their stuff pretty well I think. I think that that could develop into a sort of.... It'd have to be good.

**K.L.** There's is pretty quick and cheap and cheerful stuff and it really.... There are cheaper and cheaper skin fold calipers to do those kind of things. And it may be that that's a good idea to get anthropomorphic measurements. Because one of our claims is about cardiovascular endurance and flexibility and a whole range of things which they're helping them to achieve and be aware of. And just being verbal about that kind of thing.

**Alan:** I think... like the first years, take again J.Gs. son, marked flexibility and a lot of flexibility in the first year... did a big programme on him, the equivalent of eight or ten lessons in the gym. We did have apparatus aswell and he was down to about here.... as far as he can go. But my practice everyday situation,... about a term later he could touch his toes. Now I hadn't actually mentioned it again,... I'd just sat them down and said that if you practice, and this is the way you practice, then you will do it. And then I'll move onto something else. Some children listen, some don't but I mean he's just one example of a boy who's an excellent athlete in the second year.

In the first year he broke the (inaudible) record... 26.9 200... an eleven year old. Also an excellent footballer. Now I have the situation where "I can't touch my hamstrings and I've always got injuries." I just pulled him to one side and said "you've got a problem there. Unless you're flexible in that situation, this is how you do it". It was part of a lesson, it wasn't just me.... I actually took a group and pinpointed him as somebody who'll have problems, because he's one of the worst.

He sorted himself out but I can see a situation where a teacher enthusiastic in that range could make a jolly good course.

**K.L.** How about calculated P.E. What do....?

**Alan:** Well. From what I've seen from Sharon, I think it's a sort of.... I can see disappointments or gaps in what perhaps St. Mary's taught Sharon. I think the emphasis on indoor work... the record player blared... eleven year old kids came in to the school and they were listening to John Travolta... and I mean dance just took off and the kids just never saw fresh air. It's changed slightly now. I don't know why it's changed but basically the girls do not see or smell fresh air. They don't go out now.

It seems to me that the emphasis in college was away from netball and hockey and things, which I'm not knocking.... In doing that it was indoor work, aerobics, dance and the effect on.... The effect was more on participation but the messages that the girls in particular were getting I think were jolly poor. And I do think that that was an element of the college, probably didn't get balanced. And the college also stressed health-related fitness.

I think that Ed had picked it up before and I poo-pood it.

Intellectually, the more I think about it, the more it has meaning to me but I think it would be fundamentally.... I mean, Sharon is very keen on health-related fitness and yet none of the girls or boys, shower!

We do football and yet anybody who plays football competitively for ten or fifteen years has an injury and a lifelong injury and some people have more than just a nagging injury, like you and I for example. My problems: I've got knee problems, got back problems,... are through playing fifteen years competitive football.

So when people talk about health-related fitness as a title, if we are actually going to move into that area, the questions raised are enormous. I mean, and Sharon would know a lot more about it than me... whether in her course this has been driven home to her as through my reflection,... "well hang on a moment...." Sharon is just one classic.... I mean, the boys don't shower and use the excuse... (inaudible)... but basically it's hard enough to get them in kit, let alone get them to bring a towel!

Although there have been improvements and I've put them down here. Improvements come to the parent... and I thought it was wrong. I explained that we were off site and things but you know.... It should be there and I've been encouraging people to shower more and it has had some effect.

Now the girls used to make... when N.H. was Head of P.E.... used to make them shower and of course that was a large reason why there was no participation. You know, it was..."You have to shower!" And that's all gone by the.... None of the girls shower now and probably if you turned the showers on, a bronzed rust would come out!

But all this health-related fitness in theory and reality is a complete miss-match. It sounds good to me but there are all sorts of connotations. For example: taking kids on a run, or a jog. I mean I can't think of any.... The feeling of well-being I get when I've been on say a two mile run is great. But unless you've got the real McCoy, if you've got the flat.... You could get hill problems, car problems.... Now all these situations have not been addressed in any shape or form.

Obviously we would move very heavily... and we'll talk about health-related fitness programme... very heavily into things like yoga and more....

**K.L.** ...(inaudible)... relaxation and meditation and a whole range of things. But perhaps health-related exercise or health-related P.E., whatever it's being called, is to do about giving people eventually the tools to control their lifestyle and wellbeing. And one can offer them a range of dietary advice, exercise advice, which offer them a choice for themselves so instead they become informed people.

**Alan:** Oh yes, I agree with you. I think that there's an enormous moral issue here. It may be a way of giving P.E. that philosophical thing it needs, to earmark it as an important part of the curriculum but, you'll have to start taking.... Well, giving you football: football in small doses is okay....

**K.L.** ...evidence about heading the ball and brain damage is quite interesting and in itself....

**Alan:** Well when I played serious football, well Jesus!... He's old, he's twenty-three or twenty-four and he's still playing football!

When I was a youngster, people didn't play football after twenty-four, twenty-five. That was the age of retirement. Now these days, people go on to thirty-five, forty. As far as I know, there is no evidence or research to actually find out what's happening to their bodies. I think a lot of bloody harm!

So although we're introducing these physical sports, football and rugby and things, the long term effect of playing them year in, year out.... I'm not talking about what you do in schools.

**K.L.** Well that will tie in with the last part of this first theme I'm reporting about what's happened: expectations, hopes and trends. I wonder whether over the two years... what you would say your hopes might be for P.E. within the school or within your own development. We've talked about how small-sided games were then controlling it and becoming part of your teaching style now. What are the kind of hopes you might have now, based upon your experience in the last two years, since we last met?

**Alan:** What would my hopes for me or for P.E?

**K.L.** For both.

**Alan:** Well, for P.E. politically my, as I told you, (next few words inaudible). My hopes for P.E: I can't see any under the present regime, I've given up on them. I don't think your influence is going to be that great.

**K.L.** ....After just forty years in China, Mao was just a member of it, so there's nothing more than that....

Yes, I think it's very pragmatic and I think it changed things a long time....

**Alan:** I think that probably a P.E. inspector coming in may have an effect, it depends on how forceful that P.E. teacher is. As I say, they'd never appoint an outsider as Head of P.E. here because they'd give him a bad time.

**K.L.** Well, what could they show him in terms of the sports hall at Rectory...?

**Alan:** So, you know, within sport in the school, I can't see any change until there's a change in regime.

For me, personally, I think the sourest part of my career here was when I was Head of Boys P.E. I'd had that job for a year and I'd had these brilliant visions I thought. I was organising 'E' team fixtures and I organised a whole list of them for the next year. We were going to have P.E. on a grand scale. Anybody who wanted to play for the school can. And he destroyed in one moment, for me.

I came back in September to find I had half a P.E. timetable. The rest was maths and geography... on the first day back. I went into him and said "what's happening?" And of course he had shortages in those areas and he had gaps to fill. And because he thought I was conscientious, he filled them. I wrote him this long... saying these were my hopes because I'd .... It had an effect, but he called me in with A.J. and said I'm not going to be blackmailed. I basically said that if you give me maths and geography at this enormous scale, on the first day of term... I think I was teaching it that day!

I said this is the effect; I'm going to have to cancel all these fixtures. Basically, geography, I was doing first and third years. Basically what was the capital of Australia?!

I had that on my first.... I didn't know!  
I thought... Melbourne?! You know! Literally,  
I was dropped in the shit....

**K.L.** And you weren't asked if you'd do it?

**Alan:** No. I was just given it, as a fait accompli.

**K.L.** With no prior notice...?

**Alan:** I wasn't even told verbally. I was just given  
a timetable in the letter, like everybody else  
had got and whereas in July, it was all P.E.,  
I opened it and it was maths and geography!

**K.L.** ...and you thought somebody had given you the  
wrong timetable by mistake!

**Alan:** I just said to B.E. is this right?... he was  
the Head of Maths, and to R.E. who was the Head  
of Geography, is this right?... So I said well  
you go and see him and they came back and said  
it was right. "We've got problems, a teacher's  
left". And all this. One teacher had left  
and the Deputy Head who'd come back from  
secondment refused to teach geography.

As far as I was concerned,... and I'd only been in the job for a year you see... and I was on M.N's. football, athletics, that was it. I had broadened the curriculum in the first year but we were still at a fairly exploratory stage because he had a very regimented way of organising things and I was never given my head. I was building on that you see.

And the second year was the year in which things really came to a head. And all the years, well not all the years, the first, second and third years had 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', and 'E' team fixtures not just once. 'E' team had about four or five fixtures. It killed it for me. In actual fact, in December, I think he knew he'd given me a bad line and took away one geography class from me, or offered two more frees or something. But it wasn't enough. So that was the big regret and I don't think there's much for this school....

**K.L.** Just four things to ask:

We've talked about, and it's coming through all the time in our conversation. But there are a lot of things happening outside of Rectory School and the P.E. world. Often outside events leave schools untouched but I just put down here whether you had any feelings or views about the appropriate model for P.E. in the curriculum or the appropriate model for a P.E. curriculum.

Whether you were actively engaged in thinking about that, or whether it was something that carried on with a stock of knowledge you had from your past experience or whether you're constantly revising and renewing?

**Alan:** What do you mean? Nationally?

**K.L.** How you chose to teach what you teach? Whether one read coaching or teaching texts or curriculum documents or whatever. How you came about to, say for instance, the move you've made towards the teaching side you have about games and sharing and so on. Whether you moved towards a team games perspective which involves skill, a team games perspective which involves

participation, whether you were involved in giving children options in lifestyles and a whole range of models. Whether you had any model you used, which is any different perhaps from what you've employed in your teaching, or even experienced during your years at Borough Road?

**Alan:** I think we use a common sense approach. For example: you mentioned choice, which seemed to have occurred since the late seventies and nearly all schools take it on board without any great thought and it was before I actually even thought about choice being the whole curriculum, I didn't like it. And yet there were still people who.... I don't like that choice situation. Well first of all kids can't get all their first choices.

Let's just take the thing you watched yesterday. There were kids out there who really don't want to be outside and, with the best will in the world, even if you were the best gifted teacher in the world, you are not going to make them outdoor types. So do you put them on physical activity or do you make them go outside? And that, when I was with M.N., that was the reason why I introduced choice because I could foresee

a situation where it was wrong to make those children to go outside. I don't think I believe that anymore. I think they should get a feel of it so we'll try and balance the inside and outside situation.

Now we still give them a choice, but it's much more structured now. It goes in waves; some kids are really good inside and some outside. The year group thrives on badminton or racquet sport, the year group thrives on.... The problem comes when you've got a group that likes racquet sports, 'cos all the buggers want to go in the sports hall and the problem is getting them in the fourth and fifth year, outside. But over the last few years the numbers have actually fallen quite well but we do insist that they do some inside activity and some outside activity. Out of the year, they've got to have some inside experience and some outside.

I've found in my experience that children prefer being told what to do because it implies that we know what's good for you and they've fallen into that much more quickly than.... The message is well, we don't really know what to do with you... chose.

I had a kid turn up yesterday, I was telling Ed, or was it the day before yesterday? It was a Teddington kid who was meant to be doing golf. It's one of these, you know, "Out you go, we'll have a teacher...." We do golf, we do canoeing, and they sort of go out and most of them end up in Kingston! I've got the answer. I'm just giving you my quick thoughts.

On that, I think it's funny how, perhaps it's unconscious... things like choice occur and all of a sudden they...(rapid mumble inaudible)

And what was the other thing you mentioned?

**K.L.** I just wondered whether the model would involve traditional patterns of team games, or a traditional model of values, that were going to be... like fairness, or whatever or trying....

**Alan:** I think the quality of opportunity and things like that are very strong powerful motivational forces.... We change groups every term and a half so that no one teacher hogs the best groups and the kids all see that what they consider the best teacher, gets.... I don't know whether I'm answering your question.

**K.L.** I just wondered. If one was to adopt a curriculum pattern which was consensual amongst the P.E. department, whether there would be any need to look beyond the traditional content of team games, summer activities, a whole range of things or whether you go to generic activities like racquet games, team invasive games, outdoor games...?

**Alan:** The main problem is the unthinking way that P.E. teachers do things, automatically football and rugby without actually thinking why. And perhaps, as I put on my application, one of the ways in terms of justifying P.E. is to look at each activity in its isolation and think 'why?' As I've seen before, I think it's got to be flexible, any curriculum that we do.

I remember one year they were doing brilliant cricket and yet we didn't do much cricket that year. Now we should have dropped like.... But on reflection, athletics not cricket. So I think there ought to be that flexibility within, which we havn't got but we havn't really had that sort of unique year which happened to be cricket I suppose!

**K.L.** Yes, that does happen.

**Alan:** But I think we do rely basically on what went on before although, upon saying that, St. Mary's College have gone the other way, in my view, in their teaching. That's all foul, let's throw that out of the window and let's do aerobics and dance...! You're starting afresh without looking at what went on before I think.

**K.L.** Well that would leave me with just two more questions.

We've talked a lot about how you teach and what you do and your feelings about it. Perhaps if I asked you the same as Ed that, how you think about your teaching in terms of.... Some people delight in saying that teaching is to do with both the process with which you teach and the product at the end of it. So in other words, the way you relate to children, the way you stretch your content, the way you phase it is one aspect of it. But there may be an important element which might be called the performance end, which is the excellence, the achievement beyond personal levels which are relative.

I wondered whether you had any feelings about how you see your teaching in terms of this process and product. Whether you're conscious of a process that you go through when you teach or strive for a product at the end?

**Alan:** I think I'm a "product man". If you're asking me what's more important, sitting here now I would say process. It's got to be. Actually a good evaluation of any successful P.E. department would be to get hold of all the people you taught when they were nineteen and twenty and find out how many are still taking part in P.E.

It's not that you're a failure if they're not taking part in P.E. but if they can give you good reason why they're not, that would count as a success. They should build a yardstick.... What better evaluation I would have thought than that.

P.E. schools are renowned that children will play football 'til they're sixteen, with forty fixtures a year for their school and then hang up their boots. I mean, really good athletes, in the broad sense of the term... tons of them retire. Partly I think because they just lift off that individual teacher's motivation

and when that hypnotic sort of "Come on!"... when that's all gone, there's nothing there! The process is by far the most important thing. We're not trying to educate children to sixteen and then, you know.... And yet P.E. teachers are a bit obsessed with product and results.

I found out today.... We've got a boy in the fourth year who plays rugby for a school every Saturday. He's at Rectory School but plays at Hampton! They're a bit short so he goes over there! But he's a good rugby player you see.

**K.L.** Yes, but how did he come to...?

**Alan:** He's got a friend.... He plays for Staines on a Sunday and they were having a few heavy losses so they talked him into playing.... But the point being that it's cheating in some respects because he's denying children from there an opportunity to play. But the product has obsessed P.E. teachers ever since I've been here. I went to Thames Valley Grammar School and I used to play, when I didn't have a fixture, for Orleans. When I was fifteen I used to play for fourteen year olds. The wrong age group and I didn't even go to that school.

Again, results and product are there and the same with me. You can see the tension sometimes that I get when the kids aren't doing what I want them to do. If you stood back and let them play a bit more, gave them a bit more expression, probably later in their young manhood lives, they would probably view it in a much more free and natural way. And probably that's one reason why you send your children to progressive schools. But I think there's an element of control there. We're not just P.E. teachers. We've got to control the situation.

**K.L.** That question leads to a final question about pupils themselves. Often it's easy for the young teachers to forget that the children are involved. They're just objects. I wondered whether you had any thoughts or feelings about the children in your care, when you're saying about achievement and so on. Whether you had a notion about achievement which was relative to them only and their group or whether it was relative to the year or whether, with your vast historical knowledge now of all the pupils at Rectory since 1975, you compared them to particular types. Let's take for instance John Adams, who was in the third year when I came and is now in the fifth year.

John Adams was quite unusual for a third year in a sense that he was the only one out playing any activity with a scarf on! I could locate him in a context of other third years that I've known across time. He also then becomes a reference point aswell because so and so isn't as bad as John Adams at least. That could be one framework of comparison.

Another framework could be to say, well when I was that age, I wasn't doing that, or another one could be, being aware of a whole range of skill now in our activity because of your exposure to models....

So I just wondered how you viewed children in your care because "in your care" is quite an important phrase I use now.

**Alan:** John Adams got drunk, with a friend. Friend bashed him, dislocated his jaw. He's got real bad problems. He was all wired up for about six months and it's really brittle. They took the kid to court and he got fined about.... We talk about society and things but.... He got fined about fifty pounds. And literally, if he gets thwacked across the jaw, since his jaw is so brittle now, he's got problems in his later life. But that's by the way.

Clearly I think that one of my weaknesses, one of my greatest weaknesses, is seeing kids as objects. You know, a bit of a "standards man", the old type, partly probably because of my background, havn't got kids myself... not married. I see them like that and, unconsciously a yard stick is, what was I like at their age? Sometimes I see myself as being a model pupil and yet sometimes.... I mean, I can't remember that much about it... but I remember when I was fourteen, the cricket team weren't doing very well and the master asked me to go along for practice. I went along and he obviously gave me a bat straight away... and I bowled... and obviously was fairly good but also very cocky. He asked me to put the gear away but I ran off! I wasn't going to put the gear away!

**K.L.** Was that Ted G?

**Alan:** No, that wasn't Ted G. He was bone idle wasn't he? That was a geography master doing a bit of sport. Actually I came late sometimes, not always but sometimes. And I think "well hang on a moment Alan, you were like that"... but they're few and far between.

**K.L.** I asked Ed whether he was able, if I said a pupil's name, to categorise the way that pupil learnt, or the way that pupil performed. Do you have some sort of mental filing system about every pupil that you teach and you know about their performance? Do you know their characteristics and what they do and how they achieve and...?

**Alan:** No. If you ask me about the kids I teach, like the one you saw yesterday, how many of those kids do I know their names... Of the twenty in that group, I know eight of their names. That's partly because of the fact that because of this equal quality of opportunity bit, that we change Christmas and it means that with the other subjects that I teach, I come across per year several hundred children that I have to teach. It's got its advantages: I am a limbo... I am a school figure of I think quite big magnitude... completely the wrong word... but I mean that I'm not a... and I think that that's got great advantages in terms of corporate spirit amongst people. The fact that I don't know their names and Ed knows them a heck of a lot more, is laziness.

I've got into the situation where I'm lazy. I mean, if I have a few truants, I'll take their registers and I'll learn their names more. Because I don't have truants, I don't know their names. It's partly deliberate: in the first year I've always deliberately not gone out of my way to.... You're not so important, you're just somebody else I teach.... So I evaluate them through their faces. I know their faces and evaluate them, but in terms of names....

I think that educationally.... I think that the biggest thing, if I get a chance to write it, is this drift towards individuality and individualism and not groups. And corporate spirit. And yet, on saying that, I should know their names.

**K.L.** But physically you would recognise them and you would know...?

**Alan:** Oh yes. One of the mistakes I had with the group I had then.... Basically, when I've got a group of twenty kids in front of me and I'm picking up two teams, I know normally that the score at the end is roughly going to be twelve each. And nine times out of ten, it is.

One of the reasons why that failed was because you were around and I was getting a bit nervous.

But one of the major things, one of the important things, is that you pick up their signs... and I kept swapping them around a bit. But it's important and normally, in that situation, the analysis of the child's ability, which is ongoing.... Just for an easy life for me. The way you pick up signs is vital.

**K.L.** So you have a mental set up of most children you teach over a period of time?

**Alan:** Oh yes, but I can't put a name to them. And I probably label them, you know, "useless" and whatever. In the context of what we're doing, it is extremely precise.

**K.L.** And do you have an historical reference aswell, so you know for instance, let's take John A: you know what he was like if you met him the first year, the second year, the third year and so on...?

**Alan:** Oh yes. And you know how they improve and you know whether they're quiet and unassuming, they come on or they go into a shell.

**K.L.** And how do you use that information to... if the development is important... how do you know, let's take the boy for instance, Adam: What is there you could do, knowing about him, to help him?

**Alan:** Well he's been helped .... I've had lots of chats with Adam. I mean, you could take another child if you like. I do have quite a few individual chats with kids.

**K.L.** When does that happen? Is it usually during when they're changing?....

**Alan:** It's usually the best time... the most pressurised time I find for a teacher is at the beginning of the game when you're getting them going and I often say to children, quite rudely, "go away" and they've got notes because they want.... And I say "you've got burdens, so have I, go away. If you want to put your own burdens on me I don't want to know, clear off!" And they've come, fully polite and they've got letters. I've got the problem.

Another thing... talking about what we ought to do together, apart from warming up: we ought to teach children to get the stuff out themselves

and I've got into a situation where I was getting the kids... "you set up the bollards. It's your bloody lesson not mine!" but of course when I get my next group they.... In the end, it's easier to do it yourself. But it's wrong.

So the major problem time is beginning of a lesson so the chats tend to come at the end of a lesson. Whereas if you've got a good class, you can set them off and then beckon them over and say "look, what's wrong with you?" The chaps by and large were.... Adams had the sharp end of my tongue; he'd arrived fifteen minutes late, on a dawdle. He would get changed which would take him half an hour, thirty-five minutes.... I mean quite often, in the first year and the second year. I mean, again, the hard horrible bastard I am, he would end up sitting on the bench in one sock,... the other two boots and sock would be locked in the changing rooms because he does as much time as I can give him. I'm not leaving the changing rooms open in case the children play around in there... "...and I'm over there mate...!"

And again that's that massive conflict, between individual and groups, which occurs not only in P.E. but everywhere.

**K.L.** And in all contexts.

I think that what happens in P.E.... It's much more public it seems. If you're not taking part or you haven't got your kit, a whole range of things, it's very public. Whereas in lessons often it's very much concealed.

**Alan:** Like "Johnny hasn't got his pen" or...!

**K.L.** The pupils seem to end it really.

You have a view of what P.E. is, which is fairly clearly articulated. You have a view of what a pupil is. Does one drive the other? Say for instance, the P.E. will determine how you view the child... or your sensitivities to children will allow you to determine....

**Alan:** ...you're talking about individuals? You're talking about me again? I mean other people are other people and you've got to ask them.

With me, a bit of a "standards man", the subject is the child. I think that's pretty well true in most secondary schools and in junior schools I think, within the curriculum, it's more child bent... traditionally anyway.

Whether, I think in the '80s, if I read my books right, a lot of junior schools had switched to a sort of secondary school "diet" again but by and large, I think it's subject bent. It's a pity. Again I think I do do a lesson this morning, slightly different, where the kids get out all the apparatus and they explore it. And they're up over the metal girders.... The ropes have gone and the grey (inaudible) has gone; they're up to the metal girders and things... and it's lovely to see. And the confidence amongst.... I mean, I've tried it before from fifth years and most of them won't go over the wall bars. I've got kids now who are five foot up who are on things which are roof supports and there's lots of mileage in that and the confidence it gives people is a lot. We don't do enough of that I know....

That again actually comes through. I used to do formal gymnastics and I got broken arms and all sorts and... do a roll this way... it used to bore me to tears. I mean Chris K. is good at it. Chris K., because he is a junior school trained teacher,... he can do this jump in the air and linking this with a roll on a mat. For me, when I have gym it's, "let's get the gear out and give it a go..." It's all action.

Now I say to that one particular group, of mixed ability "as soon as you've changed, go in and start getting it out..." You might get one or two fooling around but you can say "you're going to have a go on it anyway, what do you want to piss about for, because it's just wasting time for other people...." I get some good sessions like that. I can't do it with the fourth and fifth years because all they want to do is swing on ropes. Basically they've become fearful, perhaps because they didn't have it in the years before, in the first and second years. Again it could be hell... if some kid fell off the girder...

(side of tape finishes)

**K.L.** Given that we've talked a lot over the time, I thought that.... I've seen so much in the past few days which have been kind of like a rushing through, like a postcard thing.... Since I havn't been here for two days, the first two questions were really about what's happened since 1986 and your perceptions of what's happened.

So the first one I've put down is "the flow of events since 1986". G.C.S.E. hadn't come on stream then. There was teachers Action...

a whole range of things. I wonder if you can reflect back and think about those two years and the things that have happened since then.

**Alan:** I think, following my conversation with you before,... I think you've got to see it in a whole school context. The teacher Action here was quite strong. There were some nasty situations.

For example, with me: I was threatened, along with Ed, with being reprimanded by the Governors and the Head Teacher. That situation was... simply we out on strike on a Tuesday I think, and the Head wanted to know where we were timetabled and he wanted it Thursday afternoon and I gave it to him on Friday morning with Ed and others. He gave us an hour, or two hours that evening. We gave it to him first thing in the morning and he said that that wasn't good enough. I've now got to come in and teach. He's so busy, he has not got enough time to send out letters to parents. In actual fact he had two or three working days but his back was up against the wall. He said "you'll not go on strike" and we got our School Union rep in,... "if you do, we will have you go before the School Governors and have you reprimanded".

We saw him on the Monday morning and said that we were sorry but we were going to go on strike and actually that was the first situation I can remember when we did go on strike, and we told him Monday morning. He didn't inform the children to stay at home and they went to P.E. and hung around. That, because they didn't actually come back to the school, that was a development of "when the P.E. teacher's away, let's not bother getting supply teachers in...." Obviously he was in a very precarious position and he climbed down. He called us both in, saying he didn't want to ruin the careers for young teachers there, with witnesses down on his point. There was no animosity from me towards him on that point. It just gives you an idea of the difficult times. He is settling old scores with some teachers.

For example, the Head of History, was the N.U.T. rep. and he had a Scale II as the Head of History. Under the reorganisation, there is no equating between a Scale II because our Head hasn't got any A's, so he's made it a scale B and he's advertising it internally. And obviously the teacher, who is a good teacher, is not going to get it. The Head is going to settle old scores in his own way so I think, when I speak to other people in other schools,

our school was let off more lightly in terms of friction, than other schools. The Head, by and large, took two or three steps backwards. There were times when.... There was a staff meeting where he threatened to take us all to court and his union would back him. There were times of friction but the dust by and large has settled and the Head is getting his own way. He wrote a thing in the Times, which was a,...not the Times Educational Supplement but the Times,... where he had a Times reporter here,... I mean he went through bad times and I think that the school, in terms of effort from him,... I think is still recovering in many ways. Relationships did sour and the momentum of the school is nowhere near what it was before. In fact the school is regressing. Whether it's due to that strike action I don't know.

In the context of P.E. clearly things came to a stop. (inaudible) wide, and the teachers I've spoken to, I think most of them are relieved it's come to a stop. By and large they didn't have much status. They began to leave... to feel that there was a life outside teaching... you know, with Saturday mornings and things and they began to enjoy life a bit more themselves.

I think that this school was a good example of what was happening around in other schools. Not much has happened since.

P.E. teachers, including us.... There's a common element. They're not really too sure if they're doing their job properly because they're not doing extra curricular activities. They want reassurance from somebody,... to say something. "We think you ought to be doing this.... It's part of your job". They want it clear cut. Is this part of their or job.

Is that enough for you?

**K.L.** What I was wondering was: do you think that people have become more instrumental since the Action, in terms of doing things because they have to be done; they're contractual. Has there been a loss of goodwill since the Action? Has P.E. and games suffered because people won't take teams out? Is there no money for transport? All those sort of things, ... in terms of P.E. as part of the curriculum. Is it substantially different from what it was?

**Alan:** Yes. Whether it was going that way anyway or not I don't know. I think by and large it was going that way. I think teachers were looking

to reduce the amount of time they had. For example, you often go to Barn Elms.... When I started teaching in 1975, up to about 1979 all pitches were used. In 1982 you'd only have four or five schools there whereas before you'd have fifteen to twenty schools. There was a large reduction anyway before the teachers Action in my opinion....

Alan's conversation interrupted...

**K.L.** Chris, Ed was very, very embarrassed. He didn't give you the message and he wants to apologise to you most sincerely....

**Chris:** Do you know where the keys have gone to the field, that's all I want to know...?

**K.L.** He gave the boy the keys.

Alan's conversation then resumes.

**Alan:** ...I think things were reduced anyway. At Grey Court School for example the Head of P.E. there could see it, in the early '80s and moved towards fixtures to public schools because he could see the situation. He had the foresight to cancel the fixtures with us which we were opposed

to but it was a policy. He could see the P.E. being run down in the state system,... low status. Basically, P.E. teachers having enough.

**K.L.** That's the one with the buses...? Mark...?

**Alan:** Yes, Mark T. In actually fact Mark T. has taken a sideways move now. Same money, become a Head of Year and moved into C.D.T. because no one cares. So, it's a similar situation at Borough Way, partly due I think to the lack of inspector, who has any dominance. I don't know if the P.E. inspector interviewed Sharon but he didn't interview Chris K. and Helen Ch.... I don't think she's P.E. trained is she? Isn't her first subject music...?

**K.L.** She first joined as music,... then P.E.

**Alan:** I don't know how much P.E. she teaches.... That's another story anyway.

But he hasn't been involved in interviews for example and when you havn't got a strong inspector saying "look, what's going on here?" and the Headmaster's got conflicting demands upon him....

**K.L.** I remember the time of starting the research....  
Terry R. told me about the review of the curriculum which was being undertaken by the P.E. group in the Borough. Was that a figment of his imagination, or was there a group working on the curriculum,... the guidelines?

**Alan:** Again... into a political situation.

What happened was in about that time, is that John G. was the blue-eyed boy of Borough.... It was after Vic.... I think, I'm almost certain, perhaps 98% sure, that he denied it, because I mentioned it to him. But I have got it on excellent sources, that he got a 10 per cent salary increase for being designated a community school. On top of that, because he was I think a figure ...(inaudible)... outside, he was also given a good Eleven status, when all the other Borough schools were grouped Ten, for being in charge of Richmond House. Now they couldn't keep quiet... this Group Eleven promotion, although I think no one knows about his 10 per cent increase for community school, because we are the only designated community school in the Borough....

Ted C. of Grey Court who considers himself to be the leader of the Heads... and our Head considers himself to be the leader,... cried foul! They had to therefore give Ted C. a Group Eleven because he kicked up stink. So they gave him a Group Eleven in charge of curriculum at Borough Wide and he saw that role in organising consultative groups, in I think thirty-two consultative groups. All the standard subjects.

I have never seen any publication, minutes of any meetings made, of any consultative group. Their impact, and they still meet, is not negligible. It is nothing! And not only are they consultative groups, but they meet during the school day. No they don't. They can meet after school but they can have time off in lieu. So Sharon goes to the P.E. ones I presume.

**K.L.** Does she report back at all?

**Alan:** No, she's never reported back. But I don't know what was said in these.... Alan J. chairs them now... but not only in P.E. but across the curriculum.... People have days off for attending.... After they've gone to three meetings or so, it's equivalent to a day off. It's just political.... It's just mushroomed

into a nonsense! As I say, I think there are thirty-two consultative curriculum groups, talking out of the back of their arses!

**K.L.** So there's no external focus then. Is there an internal focus with your meetings?

**Alan:** There's no external focus. The internal focus: the things are headed by Sharon, although there have been one or two times when we wanted to meet and thrash things out.... And I think in all honesty.... Sharon lives in Wimbledon, she doesn't like getting caught up in traffic and prefers the meetings on a Friday lunchtime so, by the time we've eaten, we get there at 1.30 p.m., the bell goes at 1.55., and you have twenty-five minutes of nothing. But Sharon, learning to be a political animal, will type out minutes, some of it fictitious... rather like the first minute in January 1988 was "a year ahead"! And it was the first point on a three point agenda. We knocked that off in the first four minutes and moved on to point two. And out of that came a typed up minute which said that we'd discussed the year ahead and the positive moves we'd made in I don't know what. Although we have tactfully asked for meetings after school, we are getting in fact a twenty-five, twenty minute meeting.

We have wheaned her off doing it in the staffroom. We're now actually doing them in a classroom but... that's it! I'd put it down to the Wimbledon problem!

**K.L.** I've put down here "curriculum matters, policy implementation and evaluation".

George Underwood wrote a book in 1983 on a P.E. curriculum and the policy implementation and evaluation. I wondered whether there was some kind of process you enter into. We talked earlier on about you and Ed working very well together because of experience....

**Alan:** But then Chris K. And then, although I must admit I'm pleased to see Kevin to the bank, Kevin S., because I felt he was a taker more than giver and we did open up our arms to him aswell and I think he gets on much better with Ed. I got on fine with Kevin aswell, I just didn't trust him!

There were other things I gave him, very political things which helped him boost his career, which I've never had back and which have benefitted him and probably got me in trouble with John G. over community and things.

But leaving that aside, I think you're on the wrong track here. I've given you some.... There's a book I think I've recommended to you. This written word lark.... I see it much more as a ball of wool, much more messy than that and I pass Ed and Chris K.....

Our departmental meetings are probably about thirty minutes a day. Constant conversations. My relationship with Ed is going downhill slightly. I think that whereas I'm happy to leave that void, I can see friction that he's one of those "come on we've got to.... things aren't good but let's keep it going...." and I'm saying "no, let's just pull out. Let's just leave it...." Chris K.... well, he's the hardest working.... It's all rush, busy and bossy. He's usually the first person here at 8 o' clock and will normally be the last one home. But frustration creeps in I think because of the lack of overall direction.

**K.L.** I see that written document, which I keep stressing all the time, as simply a political tool. It's like an insurance policy almost because the rules of the game are about that at the moment, what everybody thinks.

**Alan:** The aims and objectives thing, in the way that it's been done in the past, is just a complete waste of time. If you want.... I'm not saying that things shouldn't be written down, although I think they're not that important.... I think a general philosophy statement of probably one side of A4 of how you feel the department can grow and develop and mature, within the foreseeable future, to be reviewed every year, is the type of thing to be of benefit

**K.L.** I agree entirely. A \_\_\_\_\_ at the school in Devon is to develop with the teachers, Sue and I, a statement in action. That's what we do, not in more than A4 size, a couple of sides only. To identify the principle and then that principle is one half of the A4 side, the other half is the practice. The action taken. For instance, it may be a principle. We recognise the responsibility of children to control their own affairs and practice. We have developed small-sided games which are refereed/umpired by the children.

**Alan:** That kind of thing is needed. For example: I am lazy in doing warming up exercises. Ed is very good. We ought to do warming up exercises and that kind of thing.... Ed has them for three or four months and I have them for three or four months and he might be doing warming-up exercises when he has them and me, it's a quick run round. And there are general themes,... which is why we're frustrated that people say look, we ought to have warming-up exercises for example.

Another example would probably be ... let me see.... I can't off the top of my head. There are things, let's take the football boot situation. It bugs me, kids going to Ed and asking "got any shorts?" He'll give them shorts. I'll say, no. I mean, obviously once or twice.... But Ed usually has two track suits down there and he'd give them his track suit bottoms if they'd fit! And his spare football boots! There are children I think who won't bother because they know Ed is going to provide it. So that kind of thing ought to be aired. It's not that we feel any animosity towards each other over it, I don't think. I don't certainly. But time to have general rules that apply across the board for all of us.

**K.L.** ...To go onto the kind of evaluation part, once you have a document or some shared consensus verbal, not necessarily felt, it can be both, perhaps you can then evaluate what you're achieving what you're doing.

Some people see evaluations as very formal i.e. asking children to respond to a set questions about the course and so on or sitting down and talking amongst yourselves about it or observing each other teach, or even having someone like myself say something about what you do.

There's evaluation at various levels. We do it everyday in terms of our on-going refinement. What kind of evaluation would have been engaged in the last say two years, in terms of, apart from your thirty minute conversation each day.... Has there been any kind of formal process that's gone on?

**Alan:** None at all no. I think we sense that it's an ongoing process and I know that you've shown me, through my talking with you, that there ought to be a consensus of opinion on the way to approaching things like warming-up I think was a good example.

On evaluation: I still think we're sensitive enough to respond to children's.... You know, children will vote with their feet on many occasions and you're a fool if you don't recognise... that they've recognised that. So that would be an ongoing thing. But by and large, there is no formal evaluation.

**K.L.** Giving something which happened when I was with you last time....

There seems to be quite a large seasonal variation in "no-kitters"....

**Alan:** Yes, which you pointed out and that increased my awareness of it....

**K.L.** How would you ever go about understanding whether that "no-kitting" was a response to the climate, the content, their developmental stage. Or would you have something like a quantitative analysis? Last week there were twelve "no-kitters", this week there are eight. Therefore things are getting better. Next week there are four, so things must be getting better. In terms of "no-kitters" is for instance an example of non-participation in the activity.

How would one evaluate whether a programme was working about, say, involving children, participating without the pressure of competition and so on.

**Alan:** There are no kit problems in P.E. In general I think the kit problem in our school is very good. The lessons you saw yesterday, with the "vegetable group", as they like to see themselves... there was one boy without kit and the other two had legitimate letters. I think the kit problem is probably very good in the school and I think that this has been Ed's influence, of taking two steps backwards. If the kid wants to be anti P.E. for a while, let him and we have, in the past. I know in the first year, there was a kid who wanted to be in the other group and I let him not do P.E. for six or seven months, which is a long time for an eleven or twelve year old. He came round in the end. By and large, we havn't got any out and out non-kitters. I know I havn't answered your question but I'll move on to that.

First of all I think you have to analyse it in the school context, and I do say to some children "I've just had a group doing this activity, your age and they were good. I'm still teaching, so why aren't you good...?"

So, within the school situation, I immediately reflect it back on them. Because we have got good kids here and you must ask these children sometimes, "why aren't you responding in the same way that that group did...?" It then puts the onus back on them and it is a very good way of making them reflect.

If you've still got a group of large, non-kitters for example, another way I would try and evaluate it would be to look at their record books. What are they like in other lessons? Is it me, or is it them? I normally find it's them but obviously if I found that this child had a well-kept record book with no problems but he wasn't doing P.E., then as far as I'm concerned that's serious. I want to know why. And I will talk to them and find out why. If I find that they are not bringing their P.E. kit and they've got a duff old record book... you find that political situation in the school,... what's your support like?

I have started writing letters home. I must have written home ten or twelve in the last month and I think they are the only P.E. "no-kitters" letters that have been sent home for a couple of years. And it did have a good response.

In actual fact, and it's an interesting thing, it did have a good response: it rallied the troops round, but we had a situation.

When you do actually confront issues like no kit.... I did inherit this bloody bastard group... Wednesday seven and eight now... and they were basically on strike. I had them and I was getting eight with kit, twelve to fifteen without kit. We had all the chats, all the persuasion.... I know these children. I know that there was this cult thing going, which is the worst type. Anyway... confront the issue, send letters home, good response, chipping away but one day, I think we got down to about six without kit. It's now down to one or two.

One day I had the kids out doing football on a wet day, windy weather. Four of them decided to go for a cup of tea round a friend's house. So, in full view of me they all waved at me and at a lot of the people.... A lot of them I'd twisted their arms but it was one of those horrible days when you sort of lie down.... They waved at me and went into a friend's house over the fields. We're only going back a month. They came back after a nice cup of tea.... Mother had let them in. The son was truanting

anyway. They came back after half an hour. I said to them to wait outside the Deputy Head's room. And out of the four, three were due to go back to the Deputy Head's room anyway on another misdemeanour. One turned up.

So, I talked this through with Netta F., gave her facts and dates of no-kit letters that I'd sent home to which I'd had no response, and the one that turned up, she made me keep him in. Well, she didn't make me. I kept him in for forty-five minutes. Mum wrote apologising for his terrible behaviour... 'cos he was the goody-goody out of them. The other three were real terrors. Nothing happened! Absolutely nothing. The fact that they didn't even turn up for her, because she wanted to see them, the fact that they weren't bringing kit and I could give her dates, with copies in the files. Nothing happened!

So, in that situation, what do you do? What do you do? You can send letters home, as when the Head first came here. I said "I've sent three letters home.... The parents have failed to reply. Where do I go now?" He said "well don't send anymore letters home".

So, you are in a dilemma. I think in some ways I would like Ed to leave and for me to leave and let the bloody place fall down, 'cos I think it would! In that situation with no kit, you chivvy along.

On the evaluation front, you do ask yourself questions. I think that looking at the record books is the main yardstick to see what that child is like. But by and large, the no-kit tends to be seasonal and, if I want to generalise, it's because kids round here are too whimpish.

**K.L.** That's kind of the pupil side of it in a sense, that, we talked about the content of the activities and how you've got a fairly stable programme of activities which are changed. I understand from Ed that there's a new first year course, or that there's been a change in the first year course... a ball skills course, with an integral swimming course as part of the first year. Was that part of a conscious decision?

**Alan:** It came about rather.... It was a "Sharon idea", in some ways. It came about rather oddly actually. When Leslie H. was head of department, there was no swimming going on. When Ed became

interim body he introduced swimming. I mean, he drives that ruddy great red bus and takes them swimming, which is good. I think it's great. The reason why swimming: the Head was very keen to swimming in for first years, a political move because he can tell prospective parents we do swimming. I must admit, I've always pushed for swimming in this school but I think it's wrong that there's no coherent thing for people who can't swim, I think. As I've said to him, you've got reading, writing.... I mean, swimming must come as a first... learning to swim a length or width, must come in the first sixth or seventh thing in my book within the school, whether they come in yours John! But, the fact that a kid can swim a mile.... I think that there should be positive discrimination in favour of non-swimmers, which doesn't occur... kids get a little.... It's a good course but it's a first year political thing from September to April.

Given the fact that we're going to do swimming, given the fact that the girls won't drive the red bus... but then nor will I...! because I'm not going to become a coach driver but Ed is prepared to do it and so is Chris K. Because

the girls won't do it, it has to be a mixed group "go".

If it's a mixed group that go down there, then one of the girls has got to take a mixed group down here and because one of the girls got to do a mixed group, Sharon came up with ball skills.

In the first year it was, if I remember rightly, the girls in particular don't like teaching the boys anyway... they don't mind first years that much but... I think it was in that year that it got a bit like circuit training. That's a bit nasty on the girls, particularly Sharon and Leslie. They came up with the idea but then I think they had a bit of a culture shock when they had these eleven or twelve year old boys running around and I was a bit concerned because I know that they were doing circuits and they weren't doing what they were meant to be doing.

We had an excellent male student come, who was part of that group and they gave him that, like a hot potato and he knew he was offered a job here... this was before Chris K. came, but he turned it down 'cos his supervisor said no status in this school.

**K.L.** At Borough Road?

**Alan:** ...at Borough Road. Because his supervisor said you can do better than this. They don't give a shit.

Anyway... I think he helped them along, because I think that Sharon does need help in that situation. She's better than I was when I was her age but she's never had and can't ask for help you see because she was put in that prestigious position straight away.

There's nowhere for her turn and in fact I learnt a lot of him aswell. And in that situation, she saw in that situation and she learnt from the situation and I think the course is a good one now.

**K.L.** So the original idea to deal with the curricular innovation was to deal with a pragmatic problem of what to do with them. So it was a rationalisation of there only being one bus driver, or two bus drivers who are male.

**Alan:** But you see, that's where I think that teachers are at their best: given practical problems that they've got to deal with and they've got to come up with immediate solutions because

they've got the kids and, in that situation, teachers are at their best.... Not philosophising about... you know, refining. And they come up with a solution.

I had no part of it.

**K.L.** But this year's programme has been an outcome of reflecting on the outcome of the input of the student, plus the experience of teaching the course and the realities of mixed groupings and mixed ability.

**Alan:** Although I think the girls see what boys are like and say "no thank you!".... second, third, fourth and fifth year... they don't want to know! I don't blame them in many ways, that they don't want to.

**K.L.** How about the G.C.S.E. development and the health-related fitness and those kind of aspects? Have they taken off yet?

**Alan:** Well I don't want it to be another "knocking Sharon" situation.... I think partly because of her personality, she sees a situation where she sees more kudos in this G.C.S.E. than all of the rest of the P.E. department put together.

The Head likes it in the option system, it's a mock-up job but, plus the fact there's a long history to it actually. I'd better go through this slightly because it's very relevant....

**K.L.** It's a free option though isn't it?

**Alan:** Yes, it's a free option. I first suggested it when I applied for P.E. I didn't get the job but they twisted Leslie's arm to do it, Leslie H. She's not very talented... she's not that bright either! And she refused to do the anatomy and physiology because she wasn't qualified so they got the head of science to do it. But I think, ...and it was absolute chaos, total chaos. It was one of those things when the Head brings it in and in the first month it's a quick innovation and after that it's part of the status quo. "Just leave it to yourselves mate!" "Just get on with it!" And we really did have the wallys aswell. It was 1980, 1981 it first came in.

Over the years, Leslie was doing it and by golly, I'll give her her due... she started working on that course and it was her, nobody else, it was her that established that course and we have outstanding results and C.S.E. The Grade Ones that we get are more than in languages

and languages have the entire year. We have twenty-five wallys. But out of those twenty-five wallys, it's the girls who produce the results.... The boys have only had one grade one and the girls get four, five, six grade ones every year out of children who get grade fours or grade fives in all the other subjects. Now they'd had one or two quality children who actually have ended up with three or four 'O' levels but it has actually been Leslie H. who has developed the course.

But Sharon has obtained a lot of kudos out of attending courses. She's attended Phase Two, Phase Three, Phase Four G.C.S.E. day courses and has come back as the trainer image of a leader... "I've come back to train you", which gets to be swallowed hard at times. I think, not just me but Ed aswell, ... with the G.C.S.E last year for example with Ed... because there are two groups, boys and girls,... the G.C.S.E. has changed slightly. The old C.S.E. was very heavy on anatomy. It was basically a human biology course, with very little P.E. relevant: human biology and first aid. Leslie had devised a beautiful programme but by and large... the relationships is not good with Leslie and you couldn't ask her for her notes... she's just not that type of person.

Let's take this year's fourth year. Ed last year did anatomy and physiology, with combined groups which gave Sharon two more frees. I think that Ed would be the first to admit it's basically 8.30, and he's teaching at 9 o' clock and it was a hand to mouth job. Mark tried because he was a biologist anyway. He tried to do the boys side but after about two or three months got disenchanted with it. So it really was a hand to mouth situation.

Now Sharon this year, like Leslie used to do, it's her time to do the sociology. This is probably the reason why it hasn't developed with the boys.

Because of the small numbers for the free option, they usually say twenty-five kids, they immediately see them as boys and girls. Usually the boys are sixteen and the girls are nine or ten. The P.E. department see it as a good opportunity by and large to combine groups now and then.

Traditionally it's always been the boys combining the groups in the fourth year and the girls combine in groups in the fifth year and of course, within two or three lessons, half of the boys are thrown out because they disrupt

the girls. So for example, in this year's G.C.S.E., Sharon's got the whole group, twenty-five, and about seven have been thrown out because of being disruptive.

I had a situation last year with Leslie H. where she had a class... because it was meant to be Mark, so I took it over in January and I had twelve boys thrown out of the class and she only had two in. The rest had been thrown out.

So, upon saying that Leslie had done a superb job whatever, it'd all been with girls as I'm reflecting with you now. It was traditionally because it had been combined, the theory side had been combined, not the practical. The theory side had been combined and the girls just can't handle the boys. Whether that is a reflection on their professional expertise or they find it odd anyway because they don't mix.... I'm not going to make a judgment.... I think it's probably a bit of both. You know, the lads.... "P.E! Yeah, great!" ... they're a bit show-offy and the girls simply can't handle it. It is then very difficult to then motivate boys who have been thrown out of the mainstream class to do something. Obviously Ed's lost his frees over it. He tried to push them back again.

Leslie would never have them back. That's it! They'd mucked her about, whallop... they were out! And I was left picking up the pieces and sometimes they were difficult pieces.

This year, with me, I took over the fourth year and it's been my major work this year to organise a syllabus. By a syllabus, I mean teaching material. Basically writing a book if you like. I spend three or four hours a week. Because there's not that much decent material around. It's going well.

**K.L.** This is one of the things that I wanted to put down the line to you. That there are various course resources for the G.C.S.E. if you need them.

**Alan:** But you see.... I think it's also very interesting that teachers don't tend to use other people's material. I think it's probably... and the more I think about it, I work at the Teachers Centre on a Wednesday. They produce books. The science advisors sit there and produce book after book after book and no one ever reads them. And you could give me material and I wouldn't use it.

The reason I wouldn't use it is because I probably lack a little bit of confidence in that area. I'm not an expert in anatomy and physiology. I just about know where my quadriceps are and where my hamstrings are but if you start giving me a book and I give it out to the children, I lose the sort of controllable knowledge type of situation which I can't really afford to do. The course I'm giving them I think, and the stuff I've produced so far is superb and for quite a low level of ability, I get a hell of a lot of work out of them. They all respect me and basically, half the time, I'm not in the lesson. I've given them their work and I've explained to them what I want them to do and I can go out and prepare more materials for the next lesson and things. It's in and out. There's a buzz and it's good. There's a buzz of work in there and I know that if I leave them for five minutes, they're not going to be out of the windows. And that kind of thing I would like to pass on to Ed next year. But in some ways, there's still this... and I've done it... this "hoarding it to myself" situation. But then you could do a PhD on why people don't use other people's material.

**K.L.**

We mentioned on the 'phone Tom Sawyer.

- Alan:** ...and what a remarkable turnaround that's been.
- K.L.** ...I just wondered whether your perceptions of the pupils over the last two years, whether the pupils are now interested in P.E. more, or games, or more active, less active, more fit, less aware, whatever? You used the word "whinging" before. Do you think that children are becoming soft relative to those you've known previously or is it just part of a social trend in itself?
- Alan:** I think schools, and I've heard conservative deep thinkers say this,... in this era and I think this is part of what Thatcher's trying to do and I'm not a Thatcherite by any means... but I think if they look at it deeply, they see that society at the moment, in broad terms, is a victim of the hippie days of the Sixties and parents who were teenagers at that time have that carefree sort of situation.
- There are still people, a lot of parents around and it's affecting their children and not really prepared to bite the bullet and get on with things.

I'm not talking about the rigid structure of... but Thatcher has seen, in the society that we live in, a lot of people who will, in her terms "sponge off the state" and she is actually producing a large social revolution in this country which will help in the long term education. So, as people if you like, develop hardships and they will, there will be some people who will fall by the wayside.... I'm using her opinion; I don't believe they should fall by the wayside, I think there should be that sort of helping hand. Basically she's introduced hard times for people and saying "stand up on your feet and be counted" and I think overall.....

(this tape ends abruptly)

Tony

14th July 1988

**K.L.** I just felt that when I started the research, it was to do with teacher training and now you're actually involved with that aren't you? Doing some work at St. Mary's.

**Tony:** Yes I was. I did enjoy it although I found it a bit of a strain when Dix asked me to go back and do it some more. I'd like to do it. I think it's good fun but at the same time, teaching a lesson and then, while they're getting changed, jumping in the car and sprinting down to St. Mary's, lecturing, then sprinting in the car and getting back.... It makes.... Well they have it on a Monday morning and it transpired that my free periods were okay. But there are times when you feel you need a free period just to sort yourself out nice and slowly, rather than... racing from A to B and so on.

It is nice, though I found it frightening aswell to see just how appallingly unfit a number of people were going into physical education. You wondered why some of them were doing it, when they had no interest in doing any training

themselves, or about themselves being in such a bad state. It's an eye-opener again to see just how little knowledge many people do have of most aspects of athletics.

I think very little is taught in many schools but, you come to a place like this and you can understand why people... I mean, with all the goodwill in the world, we do try and most kids have got the basics. And athletics is so low....

**K.L.** You see, I think that with the arrival of Dick, athletics will be transformed at St. Mary's. In the past Dudley's done some, John B. came in to do some bits and pieces....

**Tony:** ...but there's never really ever been anybody on the staff who's really been motivated, has there...? Well, they're beginning to build up aren't they?

**K.L.** John C. has always worked with the students in their own time and worked with non-(inaudible) performers. Marvellous.

But if one looks at events since then, and you're getting outside and doing that kind of lecturing now but the first few were just trying to update me. We've talked about this.

For instance, curriculum matters: well, it was really nice to see you at Loughborough last year and I wondered whether anything has come of that at all.

**Tony:** Well I think in many ways that course transformed the sort of teaching I was doing, quite dramatically. The only problem is of course that... I would like to carry on doing some more. That's why I find that at the moment there's so much to do and I'm being held back in many of those areas by say, personal bits and pieces, for instance,... the baby and the injury and all this sort of thing. There isn't time to do all that I would like to do....

**K.L.** It seems to me that we're in an area that will develop.

**Tony:** I think it has been developing anyway but.... Bob started it off and every member of staff here is very much into the sort of health-related fitness side. We were discussing early on the problems, and all that sort of business, if you are turning out teams to the extent that we are and it is annoying that you should waste as many free periods as you do, chasing up people to put on matches and you wonder why the hell.

For the sake of the few who do want to put on matches and you think, why are you wasting time? When we have, certainly from the school's (inaudible), they'd much rather be (next few words inaudible)

We have so many members of staff involved in sport, we offer so much to the kids though at the same time there is always more to offer them, the kids want to do more but the kids will say "when are we going to have a junior basketball match? When are we going to have a junior badminton match? And you think to yourself, "well, who's going to run them?" You just run out of time.

I do think, looking at Bob at the moment, he looks absolutely exhausted and there must come a stage when you turn round and say "well hang on a minute. I'd like to put on all these fixtures for all these people but I'm just wearing myself out totally..." and the general standard of everything is going to start falling aswell.

You've got to find more people who are willing to spend a lot of their time. I think the kids should organise more for themselves at times.

**K.L.** Do you think, say, if one looks back on the changes you've seen in the time you've been here, that there is more difficulty now in helping other members of staff to work with teams. Are they all withdrawing from various responsibilities?

**Tony:** No, I don't think so. I think the staff are as good as ever. There are some staff who,... a couple of staff who ought to be more involved but one says "ought to be more involved...." But then, why should they? They give up....

In the rugby side, there are two people who could give, if it was agreed at the times that they would turn out to help and coach during lunchbreaks occasionally: they could give a lot more than they do. The only problem is, that once you start helping out, you find that there's more responsibility than you want on your shoulders. But that's the problem with our school, of having as many sports teams as we do.

**K.L.** So, say you were looking at this health-related P.E. or whatever, what kind of space would you need to be able to develop that?

**Tony:** I need to do more.... I need to have time, and that's one of the advantages of not being.... I do have more time to sort things out. I think you need a couple of years of just trying out certain ways of doing things and saying "well that worked well and that worked well and that was good. And I'll do it differently next time...."

**K.L.** So, is it to do with method or to do with resources or...?

**Tony:** Hopefully. I mean resources-wise: we are very fortunate with this sports hall now which has also radically affected the type of teaching and from which the kids are benefitting massively. The majority of our lessons do revolve around trying to get maximum activity out of the kids, so we're helped there.

The only thing is, there are times when one could do with resources spent in other areas, lesser areas. It's all very well having a plush sports hall but if you're lacking some of the finer details inside the sports hall, it seems a bit stupid or, for health education purposes, we could do with a classroom which is set up for that. There ought really to be a classroom

where kids could go and read and everything else. There is a board upstairs.

**K.L.** There's no teaching in the sports hall?

**Tony:** Well no. You see they were more worried about putting in a nice balcony in at the top of the stairs for people to sit down in, rather than putting an extra two feet in on the multi-gym. I think that if you're offering a multi-gym, then I think that you ought to have room for people to walk round the multi-gym.

**K.L.** Yes. I think in terms of the other resources you might need: Stuart B. at Exeter University. What I was going to say was, as I'm almost next door, Exeter University have this P.E.A. research centre there, what I could send stuff to....

**Tony:** Yes. The more one gets, the better. The danger is that you get so obsessed into that side that you can start losing out on some of the other sides. It's all very well having maximum activity all the time, but at the same time it's got to come to a stage when you actually start teaching some skills again. But then they've got to have the correct basic desire to want to play the game.

There's no point trying to teach skills to kids who don't want to play the sport. Hopefully you'll get to a stage where they want to learn an awful amount of skills because they want to improve it and play the sport. It's a which comes first situation.

**K.L.** Given that you've had that experience, which seems critical for everyone to go out and.... If you think about the curriculum over the last few years, is it changing in any way within the timetable day, is there a changing emphasis or is it just your experience and obviously your confidence allowing you to do what you want to do?

**Tony:** It's trying to change during the day. John was pushing for it. The Headmaster had been keen to have more of a health education programme and it is trying to change. The only trouble is that we came to an impasse in the past where we're trying to move some of the stuff lower down and deal with diet with the first years and a similar idea with hygiene and the rest. The only trouble is that, once you start bringing into, certainly the second and third years, they only get one P.E. lesson with games afterwards.

So, what we're trying to do is have an extra lesson a week during which health education could have been moved in, as opposed to saying that that is definitely the province of biology (inaudible mumble)... or one of them lessons. One talks about losing but you do lose. If you've got to get people through exams or, in our case if you come in for P.E. lesson a week and your lesson is games, how the hell do we teach you volleyball, basketball and all these other things, which is more important than health and so on but you'll get health through carrying on sport and.... If you then have got to be spending those lessons also doing theoretical stuff,... 'cos kids at a place like this, they need the chance to go beserk at times.

**K.L.** Was that Mr. Alexander or the new Head?

**Tony:** The new Head. But they wouldn't give us the experts so it's gone out somewhere. [K.L. This sentence very mumbled and not clear].

**K.L.** How was it argued? Was it argued by you at a meeting or was it argued for you by somebody?

**Tony:** By John I presume.

**K.L.** So at the moment then the....

**Tony:** ...The only way the curriculum has changed is the extra emphasis, as teachers, opt to do. We have got a curriculum which is all nicely put out, with...(inaudible mumble)....

**K.L.** Has that been done recently...?

**Tony:** Yes, it's been done for us but, at the same time, whether I teach it or not is entirely up to them.... I'm not going to be (inaudible) 4th April ...(inaudible). It depends on the will of the mood and the level and... how many lessons have been suddenly removed through drama, or through a field trip or so on. But there has been a general trend....

**K.L.** And have you (informed?) that change now that you're the "expert". Have you fed that back to the others, information or other ideas?

**Tony:** That's one of the problem areas I think. There's still.... I think we actually need to sit down and have a form of departmental meeting at times. It's never been done yet.

I'd like us one day to actually sit down and have time to actually... for everybody to get all the resources that they've got and bring them in. Bob has got a lot of chores at home which he keeps saying that he's going to bring in but I've never seen any of them yet I mean, mine was in there. It ought to be more and we ought to know what each other is teaching more than just arguing.... But there just doesn't seem to be time.

**K.L.** I've asked Rectory whether they would like to have an inset day and they're going to give up their whole year's allocation of time to one whole day just to be together as a department, not to go to meetings anywhere else, not to rush off anywhere but to sit down, within the school day and have their lessons taken care of. Would it be of any help do you think for the curriculum development here, if there was a similar sort of day. For instance, one particular title could "introducing a health focus into the curriculum" where resources never happen or....

**Tony:** The first day of term we actually have a departmental meeting. The only trouble is, that'll end up being used for other bits and pieces rather than for what it should be.

**K.L.** If I was to write to John say, which I have to do, and propose the idea, do you think it'd be acceptable, or would the school not be able to support that because the other....

**Tony:** ...I think they'd be more inclined to say that it should be done at.... What you mean is John, myself and Bob spending the day sorting things out? I'm sure it'd be very worthwhile if it should ever take place. The school ought to be interested in doing it. They can only try.

**K.L.** So, the kind of developments together are, as with most departments, such as the conversations and ideas you share....

**Tony:** People seem to be very loathed... when one goes to a staff meeting occasionally.... I can't personally see what is desperately wrong about this idea of meetings and appraisals... no, I'm not saying "appraisals" but development... and if we're supposed to be improving as teachers I would have thought that we ought to have occasionally conversations between us. On learns: every time you see someone doing something else you can either agree or disagree... or suggest different ways or get different ideas or more courses....

I wish there are a hell of a lot more courses that we could go on for physical education. One day courses and that sort of thing.

**K.L.** What kind of things?

**Tony:** I had initially pictured myself this year.... I know that I could do with a badminton course, a basketball course, or rugby course. I mean, one knows the basics but I would love to attend courses on all these things, the only problem is having the time to do them. There's holiday time... but this summer I can't lose any time. I'm hoping to sneak away for two days to go to Loughborough, for two days of the course, if I'm given permission. But that I find incredibly frustrating: you want to go and do these courses. We've got a sports hall: we ought to know the basics of teaching volley ball for example. You learn so much from going to them.... I mean, if there's a three day course, a two day course on badminton teaching.... There must be courses somewhere.

**K.L.** Is there any way you can get...?

**Tony:** The school will let us do it... if anyone could find out about these courses. I assume that the school would not mind us doing it during

school time. It's got to be for the benefit of the school, the better we are to teach them.

**K.L.** Is that information that you should be serviced with or information that you should be seeking for yourself?

**Tony:** Well I don't know if it does come in. I think we must be in a slightly different situation than most state schools and presumably the local education authority sends the stuff to them, or someone in the borough is responsible for sending it. But I don't think it comes here. I know there are courses at Blackpool and one down at Winchester though I've never ever seen any information. The only way one ever finds out is by going to somewhere like Loughborough and finding out about it.

**K.L.** I think the network in future will be through decking the (P.A?) type stuff because you have these (rest inaudible).

**Tony:** Yes. That's right.

**K.L.** But it again takes time for you to....

**Tony:** But we're not getting the information to tell us about the courses, to go on the courses, but I'm sure that everybody here would like to do them. I'm sure Bob would like to do them and I'm sure John would, although John does do some. We had one on sports injuries that Walter went to,... but then you can say that only one person can go and.... It's finding the time and a convenient day in which to do it. So, it's frustrating at times because.... There are so many things you'd like to do.

**K.L.** So what we're saying really is, that whilst professionally one might want to develop and the aspiration is to develop, the reality is it's becoming harder and harder as one gets older to find the time to do things that one starts to see as important as a good P.E. teacher, whatever that may mean.

**Tony:** Yes, you just don't have the time and the knowledge and times to go out and find the courses that you want. That again comes I suppose with your teams, your practices and all these sorts of things and this belief that you're invaluable on certain days. I found it.... Take the leg problem: now I had organised the (inaudible) matches....

Generally if I'm organising fixtures and I'm not really the only person who knows what's going on and if you're away for two weeks, the hell happens! Basically I suppose you stay at home and organise everything from there instead...(rest of sentence an inaudible mumble).

**K.L.** The world closes down whilst you're recovering.

**Tony:** ...whether it matters or not. But it does matter in some ways if you're trying to get a sport off the ground.

**K.L.** For instance, where I teach at the primary school, voluntarily, I've used orienteering in a very basic way as a secret way of getting the children to run.

**Tony:** That's the only way to get them to run.... (inaudible).... and girls orienteering.

**K.L.** That's right. The thing I've found is that because it's a non-sporting, non-games culture in Totnes, it's quite different. I think that this... and I've been thinking about this as well,... I think it'd be an appropriate model for the P.E. curriculum. And what you were saying before about the difficulty in organising

teams and then the games lesson itself, raises the question which one has asked at undergraduate level as a student, what matters more, the pupils, the lesson or the teams you're going to excell with or their hoping to push to higher their subordinates?

Do you think, as you're getting more and more experience as a teacher, you're getting more and more feelings now about the balance that ought to be achieved in the curriculum between....

**Tony:** It must have done in the school. And the amount of staff we have available.... At a place like this, I feel you need to be offering teams, you need to be offering competition. I mean, if you're any good at badminton, you ought to be able to take part in badminton competitions. What I would like to see is far more liaison between the school and the clubs. I know athletically there are very few clubs around in the area that our kids come from which would be able to cater for them. I think we are still fortunate here that we have such a good mix of facilities for these that do want to take part in teams and also I think that most of the kids realise that the emphasis whilst it is on, is getting good teams out.

There is still a place for them if they're not. When it comes down to lunchtimes here and with the badminton that's going on, it's absolutely littered with the first years. I know our present second and third years are rubbish and I don't know why. They're just hopeless but the first year and the fourth year were... for example: if they were told that there was badminton at any time or some of the other sports, they'd be here all the time and that's the people who can only just hit the (inaudible) level aswell. It's a novelty sport but I think it's a sport that will carry on.

**K.L.** You've obviously come up against the situation of games days and so on. Do you think the games model and the P.E. lesson is an appropriate one?

**Tony:** What we have here?

The situation whereby you had three P.E. lessons, one would be a P.E. lesson and the other two would be P.E. lessons....(inaudible mumble).

**K.L.** The thing that interested me about the the games this afternoon is how, as a P.E. teacher professionally you then hand over children to other members of staff who are either

enthusiastic amateurs ("in-cycle experts")... and how you feel about whether there's any sense that you could have a coherent structure for any child's learning through the P.E. programme at Hampton School?

**Tony:** I think in some ways ours does survive quite well. A lot of the staff taking the sports are very knowledgeable. We have a funny mix at times. There are kids who've gone through the system and I think by the end of the second year they do know quite a lot of what's going on, quite a lot of the skills and if they want to improve them, then they can go further.

But also there are some games afternoons where, I think one would agree, that the kids are learning absolutely nothing but if they're having a great time, they do have the facility to opt for what they want to do and, on a fourth year's games afternoon, there's generally a third game of football who would far rather be given the ball, allowed to pick their own teams,... but they always want to play, the last team.... They always want to play on a full-sized pitch. They always want to do it and they have a great time.

If they're thoroughly enjoying their sport, as long as they're getting some input then why on earth shouldn't they go out and enjoy themselves? They not getting any skill training but they're actually learning much about the sport and they're getting fitness.

When I first came here, I took the absolute dossers for a football game and I thought if I can't get this lot to improve and enjoy it, then there's no hope. They just didn't want to know, because all they wanted to do was play a game of football; they didn't want to know about skills. Their abilities weren't that good but they thoroughly enjoyed using what they'd got and you started thinking well, I'm ruining their game for them. They know they're never going to be that good at the sport but they'd like to play it at a sort of proper level and that's what they're going to do.

If we can keep them interested, then at least they'll do that when they leave school, rather than being put off the sport because they know, "oh here we go... thirty minutes of the school practice and we can't do that... and I can't head and I don't like heading... and I never head anyway so....

K.L.           What some teachers have which perhaps you only have is certain groups with you throughout their experience,... say you had a department which only had two teachers, one of the teachers is likely to look after a child and his or learning through (seen on double lessons??).... At some stage one could feel confident perhaps the values that you are presenting as a P.E. teacher (stands you back??)... were accountable to you alone because you felt that that way you could do that.

Say your expectations for the pupils to only (hit them??) where you meet them in the P.E. lessons and then you happen to meet them in the games lessons. What seems to then happen is possibly a games department which has any number of strands of value which are being inculcated.

We've talked a lot havn't we about the ethos of rowing. Technically rowing is a sport, pursuit or whatever and therefore under some schools ...(inaudible)... the department completely. Here the structure is quite different.

I just wondered how one dealt with that obvious antagonism of values and say respect for facilities which was witnesss before the sports hall came... the use of the gymnasias and the arrogance sometimes of peoples expectations.

If one was planning a curriculum, would that be a problem at all?

**Tony:** I think it's taken out of our hands here. The rowing is a law unto itself. I don't think one will ever be able to change it. I think it's just one of those ones you just wash your hands of.... "Nothing I can do here... why bother?" And Bob's very grateful at times that some of the rowers.... The rowers definitely put something into the kids because some of the kids, when they drop out, are far more reliable at times perhaps than.... They (inaudible) on people that weren't that good and then Bob can use them. They can enjoy taking part in other sports again afterwards. I find it's terrible, the fact that you can't have a "casual row".

**K.L.** You can't?

**Tony:** Oh no. Unless you want to train, you're not wanted in the rowing club. You either go down there and make an eight, or row your little socks off or get lost!

**K.L.** So there's no enjoyment...?

**Tony:** No. Say one of your kids comes along and was injured from football, like myself in St. Pauls when I was out from athletics once from a stress fracture ...(rest inaudible)... any problems give us a shout and it's okay. You couldn't do that here. They're tighter in some ways on the safety perhaps but their view is that they haven't got staff to waste on people who just want to enjoy themselves.

One comes round to the situation of is it better to have success as a school kid and you want to give it up when you leave school because you're totally blown out because of the competitive aspect.... Like the total obsession in competitive swimming I should think.

Will there ever be an answer to that one? I think at times it's a great shame that the kids who opt for rowing basically disappear from all the other sports.

It's four years of their life, which is, to be honest, great because they're achieving. I don't think they'd do it if they weren't Great Britain vests at the end of it and a guaranteed Great Britain vest for anybody who made the first eight.

If you could guarantee that in rugby, I'm sure we'd have a great rugby side... or football side etc. That's the peculiarity of the sport I suppose.

**K.L.** You were talking before about links with clubs. How about the curriculum as a way of inducting children in the whole cultural range of sports... you know, we were talking about the individual sports like athletics. Is that part of a model you have in a curriculum? What the P.E. curriculum is going to be like? To get a range of experiences which are enjoyable?

**Tony:** Yes. I think what we try and do is, introduce them to as many as we possibly can, that they will find some kind of sport that they will enjoy and which they will want to carry on with after school but used to keep fit. The great encouraging thing is to see people who are not sportsmen, coming in their own spare time to teach some badminton or something like that.

That is the success of any P.E. programme, that absolutely hopeless people should enjoy their games.

**K.L.** Is that Agenda led by you or would the students/pupils have some say in what might be offered? Is there a fixed Agenda of which you're going to give a range of... or...?

**Tony:** It does change to a certain extent I must admit....

**K.L.** ...through pupil feedback or just through your own experience of the content itself?

**Tony:** Both. One tends to listen to the kids. I'm not sure whether.... What you mean is, for examples, when we offered the first year's tennis and cricket... when forty something people... (inaudible) for tennis, you only want to give twenty places you then have to start saying "well we'll have to allow more people to play tennis" because more people want to play the sport.

The only trouble is, is I'm not at all sure that that's a right way of going about it because, and this is where we come in and say "well you may not want to do it, but 'unlucky'!"

Basically we allow people to do it no matter how good they might be in something else. But you have to have a big question mark over it if you've only got six courts.... What on earth is the point of allowing forty people to do tennis. And one of the father's.... His son was a bit upset....(rest inaudible).... he'd be better off doing athletics. And I think the father took my point. I said well he's only going to play one every two weeks.... We haven't got a coach. If there was a good coach for tennis, then you could see the point of people going along but what happens is that the team players rightly I think in some ways, should be allowed at least one court between six of them... and it probably goes on towards two courts. So, two of the six courts are given over to eight people and that leaves all the other courts for the other people. So, they play once every two weeks for half an hour, forty minutes and never have any coaching! Now that to me is absolutely pointless!

Do you think we need to say "okay, we'll build more tennis courts" or "we will allocate more staff to tennis. I mean, you do allocate more staff to tennis anyway because there are more people free but they're not tennis people.

**K.L.** We've talked again before about skill development and how one could say that a model for a P.E. curriculum might be children that....

**Tony:** ...There are certain sports that have got to have skills. And there are certain sports.... Say badminton: you can quite happily allow kids to go in there and do just very basic play but then tennis is not the same as badminton to my mind. Say Bob was taking the non-sportsmen and putting them on a tennis court, because they'll get no fitness. They'll get very little satisfaction because they won't get the ball and spend most of their time trying to get it from miles away. That's why the \_\_\_\_\_-tennis is so good.

**K.L.** But it seems to me that half the problem here, if a problem, is that you are so successful in encouraging children to take part in sport, like seeing the \_\_\_\_\_ ??-tennis boom kind of thing, you're playing lots and lots of games. You kind of introduce them and I wondered whether there was some kind of hierarchy where you say well introduction is the important thing and enjoyment obviously and whether there is a question mark about skill components or whether skill was that important...?

**Tony:** It does if you want to improve I think. I think we give them the skills in the first few lessons but after that, I think it's a case of getting them playing and wandering round different lots and suggesting different techniques as opposed to stopping the whole.... I mean, if you perhaps had sixty minute lessons, it would be better because then you would be able, with a clear conscience to say, well we'll have a mess around with the ball for five or ten minutes, where they do a bit of running, a bit of flexibility and a bit of dodging this and... then we'll do some skill work and then we'll do a free for all type situation. But if the most you can get is twenty-five minutes of playing, I think it's totally harmless to have them sitting down and listening to you spend no more of five minutes of it. You'll never get the ideal situation.

**K.L.** How close is it to being that for you? Do you have an idea of what you work on?

**Tony:** Well there's a vague idea. I think in many ways we're as close to getting what we could ever hope to get because of the number of staff we have. You'd need more time in the lessons.

I think really the kids should have more. The games afternoons are quite a good idea. It is successful but I think we need at least one more lesson a week.

**K.L.** And is there any (inaudible) help for that?

**Tony:** The academic side's too important. For a while when people are going for eleven G.C.S.Es., five 'A' levels... there's no time.

**K.L.** You're looking very tired. Shall we stop there or do you want to carry on for a while?

**Tony:** Well what's next on your Agenda?

**K.L.** There are just those sorts of things, perhaps you could do some other way, but those are about you and particularly your teaching and lessons.

**Tony:** Let's give it another ten minutes.

**K.L.** Okay, if we just go through them and I can then elaborate on those when we talk again.

The thing I wanted to ask about was, what I could do to help. What I wanted to say was, if there's anything I could do, I'd be very keen to do them.

**Tony:** Well, there's certain information. Any information on courses. I'm sure there must be a lot more visual aid stuff, which I'm building up slowly but surely. The Health Education people must have some very good cassettes which we could use. I don't know whether you agree. I'm sure kids at times learn far more like they do in history... my lot yesterday whilst I was away got ...(inaudible mumble)... a whole load of stuff on the First World War showing what life was like in the trenches and so on. Sometimes they do learn more from watching a film than from what they can learn, in twenty minutes from the film especially with me standing in front of them because they can actually see the heart working, they can see the heart pumping away. Me telling them about it is not the same as actually seeing the thing. We could get hold of a kid and...(inaudible)....

**K.L.** ...the power of literature is incredible. But what people are leaning much more toward now is this so-called open learning and self-paced learning so all the teacher becomes is a guide to sort out..... On your desk here, in your history thing, on teaching children how to use evidence and enquiring and....

**Tony:** Well we do that in the testing side at times I think but I think we need more facilities for that aswell.

Another thing I'd like us to have is a couple on blood pressure and that sort of thing but you never have time. There's no point in showing one person's blood pressure when they can come.... If we had the resources centrally they could come along ...(inaudible mumbling)... learn how to use it...(inaudible again)... blood pressure in another room. But those are the sorts of things that kids.... If you could set up a nice room where they could go and test themselves in their own time and knew what ...(inaudible)... in the first and second year, then a lot of kids would be in and out all the time. There's no point talking about blood pressure unless you've actually really shown them, can get them to take their own.

I mean there are a lot of people having their own blood pressure reading meters aren't there?

**K.L.** There's a lot of equipment which I've seen recently which I could dig out and show you.

**Tony:** I'm sure the Bursar would love to see it...!

**K.L.** ...the Bursar on your ankle!

Obviously watching your teaching and talking over these past couple of years, there are things which I see and understand and hopefully think about, there are questions I wanted to ask you about particularly which I thought was reasonable to ask you in order to make sense of what I've been observing. So the first one was how you chose to teach particular subject content to a particular group. When I watched the lessons that the five of you taught, I was aware of some kind of very careful assessment of how you were feeling personally, of what the group was like and a whole number of things. I just wondered....

**Tony:** That can only come from experience can't it, and knowing the characters in your group. That was one of the worst things about yesterday, that if you don't know the people you're dealing with, if they are a very mixed ability group and you don't know the personalities, then you're struggling. Once you know the personalities and the whims and what they're like on a Tuesday, second period in the afternoon than the one they've just had that before them (??), you know whether it's worth trying things or not.

**K.L.** Are your notes mental...? And also I would imagine you build up say a biography of a particular pupil.

**Tony:** Yes, it's all mental. I think we're bad at writing things down.

**K.L.** And how much mental preparation goes into thinking about particular.... Is it to do with the atmosphere on the day and everything as you get there and you chose from a stock of knowledge or do you try and get through a pre-planned...?

**Tony:** There are times when you do pre-plan but there are also very often times, take the weather for example. There's no point in you pre-planning it and carrying it through if the weather's.... The more experience I'm sure you get, the more plans you've got and there are different ways of skinning your particular cat and all that different stuff you've got and all the different ways you're likely to use, depending on what the mood of the class is like when they come in, what mood you're in....

**K.L.** Do you find that happens when you're doing it, you recognise some.... You see something or you get a signal from the children or you get a signal from yourself about something.

**Tony:** Well, it comes automatically doesn't it? When sometimes you can see that the kids want to spend more time on something, or they need to spend more time on something and you can have your little lesson plan worked out but.... There are times when you just forget it and I think we all try and put too much into it. It's very rare that you come to a lesson and ....(inaudible)....

**K.L.** I found at my first lot of lecturing how on earth I was going to fill the time in but gradually you just get a sense of space.

That leads onto another thing which we'll go through quickly.

How do you go about acknowledging subject and pupils(??...[spoken so fast unable to comprehend]).

**Tony:** First they're dealt with and the second is actual. That's again one of the problems about first (again inaudible)... form masters. In some ways I think it's unfair to have them because.... From their point of view I think it was good, it was a very nice form and maybe the reason we won the athletics.... and swimming... might have something to do with it, the fact that I was there, as opposed to someone who just wasn't interested in sport. It probably raised some of them. But there just wasn't enough time to spend with them because I can't give up my lunchtimes and one felt that one should be there ten minutes before the start of each day, sitting down and chatting with them as they come in and all lunchtimes. Sitting down and chatting, "how are you getting on...?" and that sort of thing. And after school, you forget about everything after school anyway. But that's the frustrating thing because you know you're not doing the job as well as you could but then tough! You just can't do it.

**K.L.** One of the questions I was asking the people at Rectory was, if I chose a person at random in a lesson, could you tell me anything about the way they learnt?

Are you aware of structuring content and your methods for individuals or do you think it's something that one couldn't do as a teacher because you're teaching to a group and....

**Tony:** I think you can only do that by work, by setting a lot early at times and then.... Most of the lessons you tend to gauge to somebody just below the middle and certainly when you're starting off. Because then at least 90% of the people can actually do it in some way or other. I don't see that there's anything wrong with spending a massive amount of time doing forward rolls if it's a couple of people down the bottom who need to improve,... we can have all sorts of different ways for the better people. There's nothing wrong with them doing stuff that's that easy.

**K.L.** Again, going back to your point about experience: dealing with a mixed ability group, which we probably do more than any other subject, it's quite a long term process of learning for the teacher himself isn't it, because just knowing where to pitch it and what the appropriate content is and how to vary up between individuals....

**Tony:** Yes, but it's all so very unsatisfactory isn't it because you haven't got time to....

**K.L.** What about the third one, linked into that?

**Tony:** It's such a shame isn't it? There are some sports which are great for playing with a mixed group... we keep going back to ...(inaudible)... from here.....(inaudible).... sit around playing doubles and you can move round quickly and help the group a little bit and you can also spend a lot of time.... That's an ideal time if you can get a couple of lads.... There's one guy particularly who's useless and you can spend, while watching the others, you spend most of your time actually with a pad, a bat and an air ball or a sponge ball, trying to get him to tap the ball and just improve his coordination. Whereas if you decide to go out every so often and play rounders, because I think that's a ...(inaudible)... at times if the weather's nice, for his purposes, he's not going to learn anything about success at hitting but then that's just too bad.

What would be lovely to have of course is if you had a floating teacher which is where Walter does come in at times. Certainly we've done a lot more gymnastics this year, more formal education, but then I'm not ...(inaudible).... I'd like to spend more time at Loughborough because he was very very good. Some of the ideas that came in. But with two people you actually get so many people playing, you can take Walter across aswell because he can look after....

(side of tape finishes)

...if you can bowl the ball fast, you've got to have the ability to do it!

**K.L.** I was wondering whether you and Bob are aware of what's going on and whether you were consciously throughout the whole lesson looking at people and their performance, or whether you were focusing on particular people or, the skill itself or.... My question came from wondering how to help student teachers and what advice would one give them about when a class is working.... Are you aware of "patrolling a particular beat" or trying to see all the children or picking out the problem ones and focusing them or helping the excellent or...?

**Tony:** I think it very much depends on your mood on the day and sometimes I've consciously said "right, I'll have to ignore that bloke, despite the fact that I'd like to help him and he needs more help than anyone else does..." because it would be unfair to the others. But you do try and get around to as many people as possible.

It must depend again upon your knowledge of that particular sport aswell. If you don't have a great deal of knowledge in that particular sport, then it's probably just as well to leave the best people there anyway. But that doesn't mean you have to ignore the sport, just 'cos you don't know much about it. A little bit of your nothing is better than....

**K.L.** I was aware when I was a young teacher,... the P.G.C.E. course was a one year course,... very much aware of inventing a problem and answering it for the children. Say for instance you could say "a lot of people aren't bending their leg when they volley the ball here..." in volley ball. I mean, you could say which pupil is it? It was like a rehearsed thing I wanted to get through....

I find it lot easier now I've had a little bit more experience to pick out key factors or principles which I wanted to get across.

**Tony:** Sometimes you go to a lesson and you're able to teach that anyway aren't you. It's a question of will be....

**K.L.** Structure is quite important because structure seems to me to be the basis for creativity. It's like taking charge of a race when you're running,... one presumably does that because of the quality of the training you've done prior to that. You can't take charge of a race... you couldn't take charge of a London Marathon after one hour's hobbling around the streets.

**Tony:** Well you could do, but you wouldn't last long.

**K.L.** Exactly, and you'd burn out and....

To talk about 'four' briefly: what notes do you keep on personal or pupil development. Was there ever a time when you kept records, or notes?

**Tony:** I keep a few but not that many. Really there's no call here in this school that I should be able to account for exactly how coordinated

a certain person is. Well, the parents aren't interested and as long as he ends up with his bits and pieces.... Those that are interested I could tell you how good they are anyway at most things. In certain areas I have got records of some kids but then again it's the kids who've particularly shown an interest in something as opposed to.... I would say that there were a couple of those people.... One often wonders whether one should be calling in outside help for them, if they're as poor as they are, or whether you should actually be getting hold of the parents and saying.... What would happen in the state schools if a boy with a bat.... the boy has difficulty actually hitting the ball. Where would you go then?

**K.L.** They're ignored. But some schools have remedial motor help for children outside....

**Tony:** Does it help them or does it stigmatize them into... a moron session...?

**K.L.** I don't know. I tried it myself and it lasted for two weeks and the person got very embarrassed, when it was just one to one.

**Tony:** That's the problem isn't it? The other kids I'm sure... and that's where we're fortunate

with a place like this... the other kids are very understanding of each other's... these eccentricities. Presumably because they are as intelligent as they are but they pick them up immediately and then they... after a little while they realise it's a waste of time because they don't get any great attention and nobody really appreciates them showing up everybody else's faults because most of the kids are here because of some ability that they do have. Whereas perhaps at some schools they're there not because they've got ability but because they're just around.

**K.L.** I'm constantly impressed by the way you've used your outside experience and the confidence that that gives into your lessons. Do you find that that actually enhances your role as a teacher, that you have had this experience and success and comparative range...?

**Tony:** It does. I think it's great to be able to draw on other staff's experience. Kids at times they love to feel that somebody is good at something and they love to see somebody doing something that works. We were discussing yesterday... that whether putting weaker kids in with better kids does actually raise their standards or not.

If you say you're not much good at physics and chemistry, is it your fault or whose fault is it? Is it because you didn't understand things and when you have the ability to be good at physics and chemistry, the way it was taught to you and the way you picked it up and that time you spent on it just wasn't enough. If anybody's not good at something, is it because they haven't got the interest, inertia and so on...?

**K.L.** The question I wanted to ask now was... you keep saying about not having knowledge and other things and would like to get more: I wonder say with your experience and all the years of training and so on, whether that gives you a framework and a picture of understanding what your first year pupil will be like, as an athlete in the second year sixth. So that you can place your lesson or your year's work in a much wider context of the activity itself because what some people,... what all teachers do for some sports,... is to give them fragments and some how the fragments are supposed to make up a picture... but the total is more than the past put together.

I wondered how you dealt with... whether you were aware of having this vision about what \_\_\_\_\_?? effect was, which allows you to see the activity in a particular way and you were able to short-circuit people's learning. I suppose it must sound a strange question but what I'm saying is, are you conscious of the fact that your experiences themselves allow you to teach in a particular facilitating way?

**Tony:** They can be, but it's probably frustrating at times isn't it,... if one knows what is required for success but it's frustrating in many ways. I just.... I can see what's required for school-boy success in athletics and I don't see why anybody should be doing it. Because I don't see why, and this goes back to Dick again, and the American research or whatever or Russian into... if by the age of eighteen you take a kid who you've been training seriously from the age of eleven to eighteen, someone of the age of sixteen of the same ability, will catch him up within a year and a half if they get good coaching. Do you actually need to get hold of the kid and thrash them all the way through and risk turning them off or is it not risk turning them on by not.... I mean, how hard should you coach them. I still don't know.

It's difficult isn't it? This is the whole thing about just how hard should you train and how important is the success if you get it, in long term views? That's the thing that worries me about the rowing. I'm sure that one can get kids as athletes and there could be some great kids here who could really get to top levels, but to do that you'll probably be knocking out some other people on the way, you'd be using them as scapegoats..... (mumble) and you'd probably get a few injuries on the way, and if you made it out, would the work you'd put in be really worthwhile? When you leave school, would you want to carry it on and have the ability to do so.

It's a very difficult question to answer because I'd love to have people discuss it.

In your own mind, do you think the rowing is done correctly here or do you think it's...?

**K.L.** I've always kept clear of it because ...(inaudible)... find out what P.E. was and I've never been involved.

**Tony:** But it is P.E. isn't it? It is an educational learning process and there must be ...(rest inaudible)... and everything else and as people,

in many cases, they're far more committed, far more polite and so on. As sportsmen they're far more mature; they're far more willing to take a sensible attitude but it just worries me at times.

**K.L.** I think so. I would agree.

**Tony:** I just hate the idea that people can't switch off... you're either there or you're not. But then that is one of the school's greatest successes and it just seems totally wrong! It's the reason I think that all the staff here... like the P.E. staff here, are very cynical of the rowing.

**K.L.** And that's why I never really got engaged with the rowing. I have no experience of rowing. I couldn't even enter.... I felt they'd feel the same about me going to talk to them, in the same way that they'd regard "enjoyment rowers".

**Tony:** You started earlier on about the rowing staff being highly trained or so on and so forth....

(discussion with Tony ends abruptly)

Alan

14th July 1988

**K.L.** I had a chat with Ed, with \_\_\_\_\_ and a chat with Sharon and....

**Tony:** You have been busy! It's alright for these people not on activities! And what was Sharon doing may I ask?!

**K.L.** It was during lunchtime that I caught her....

**Tony:** And Martin? Or is he doing fourth years?

**K.L.** Yes. And it suddenly occurred to me that why don't I come back after the summer holidays and give a report about my research and the report could in fact be the first part of an inset day for the department here at Rectory School. From that, there could be a whole inset day to discuss teaching P.E. on a multisite facility. I talked about the possibility of you being covered and released for those kind of things. I asked also that it is essential that the management gave their policy on P.E. in the curriculum and they probably would have to go to the meetings to talk about it and then spent some time in the day identifying directions and resources.

So they simply want now a letter suggesting the framework and it seems to me that a possible date would be the second Friday of the new term next year. So the first year ...(inaudible)... find it easy to arrange things and then the school would actually give you the time off as an inset day either so that you could go somewhere else to look at the curriculum. I havn't written anything.

My contract is that whatever I write you'll see to read through, not all of it because it would be too expensive to repeat everything that I've written but anything that relates or mentions either to you personally or to the school, you'd be able to read.

**Alan:** Yes but personally, your PhD... how are you getting on with it? You've got an external examiner? So have you written anything?

**K.L.** No, I havn't written anything yet.

**Alan:** There must be about 80,000 words! And doesn't that worry you that you've only got 'til January 1989 to....

**K.L.** No, I think it's quite good myself. I'll get into the habit of writing daily and....

It's a daunting task when you think of having to finish a book of 40,000 words and typed it. My wife's... a 50,000 or something.... I know how long it takes physically to....

**Alan:** Have you just done a book did you say?

**K.L.** The book I wrote last year on video in teaching and there were some sections on popular culture so I've got a feeling... and I enjoy writing very much but I see what I do now as a matter of work, rather than enjoyment.

**Alan:** Oh, part-time job at Dartington College of Arts? Doing what?

**K.L.** There's a new Dean's office there... course development and staff development and I'm involved in the staff development there. It's very exciting.

**Alan:** What type of....

**K.L.** Well, say encouraging.... Dartington College of Art has to renew its courses with C.N.A.A. ...(rest of sentence inaudible)... Some staff are ill-equipped to take part in it at the moment and what we hope to do is give them courses which help.....(inaudible)... It's a critical

time when...(inaudible). So that's what the process is.

Do you by any chance have Tony's tape?

**Alan:** I did have somebody's tape didn't I? It could have been Tony's. God knows what's happened to it. I thought I'd sent them on. I certainly haven't got them now. I'm sorry about that.

**K.L.** ...No problem at all. He thoroughly enjoyed the day with (Sally?) and they hoped perhaps that there'd be more cooperation with ...(inaudible).... The barriers are coming up between the schools again.

I asked him what he'd read or whether he didn't. He just remembered reading something somewhere and said that it was a conflict of interest. And you wanted to say there was no barrier between....

**Alan:** Oh no. I mean I don't know anything about it.

**K.L.** One thing I mentioned to Ed was that you might like to take up is that they had a suggestion over there that perhaps for a couple of days you could swap over, you go and teach there and him teach here.

**Alan:** I'll take him up on that alright! Who suggested that?

**K.L.** I talked to Bob and Tony about it.

**Alan:** I'd love to, absolutely love to.

**K.L.** That's basically.... I think they want your health-related components with their P.E. programme. I think there's a lot for you and a lot for them that you ought to try and... the possibility (mumbled).

The questions on the paper were about teaching style... because I've always had this idea (whole sentence totally inaudible) and..... [K.L. writing on blackboard...]

**Alan:** Are those the areas that we haven't spoken of?

**K.L.** Well there's a question on the second page about teaching styles and things,... so I'll try and remember what the right questions were.

The first one: given that I've seen five people teaching and each has different ways of teaching, I wondered how your experience of sports, say the variety of sports that you're interested

in and you have qualifications in, how your experience of sports give somehow a total view of what the end product will be rather than the fragments of lesson plans.

For instance, I'll give you an example. I wasn't very good at gymnastics but I was taught at Loughborough how to do lesson contact (packages??), so I could have say, lesson I... handstand, lesson II... forward roll, whatever it was, altogether, but the whole wasn't anything understood. It was just bits. I just wondered how you deal with framing lessons and your expectations within the context of your experience. Does that make sense?

**Alan:** I think you're basically asking how,... you've got some idea of ends in view, how do you get towards those ends in view,... are you not clouded by individual lesson ideas. Is that right?

I think from the early stage, for example when I first started teaching in say football, the children never were put out of the grids and as I say, when we played football against other teams, after the second or third year, we were really good at passing,... very short areas. But the end in view, to make them better

footballers in a football game was lost. So I imagine there's no conscious decision of mine to make those ends in view clearer through the lessons but I think, I hope through continual reflection....

I like to tell children at the beginning of the term or the beginning of the year, the ends in view and actually talking it through with them. Normally they don't say much but I try and do that.

Now, with the G.C.S.E., which is new to me aswell, that's an interesting one because I'm new to it. I think the ends in view become clearer the more experience you've had and the more you've done the job and therefore your lessons become toned up and geared towards that, whereas as an early teacher, you do actually lose sight of it. Now in G.C.S.E., again it's rather fragmented because you can easily lose sight of what is going on and get waylaid and that's certainly happened to me.

I'm keeping a very, very neat file of what's happened, what's going on in the future but, upon saying that, you do get waylaid. You give, you spend too long on one aspect. One aspect

all of a sudden interests you personally and so you want to look at it more than perhaps you ought to and one thing that perhaps you don't fully understand. So you bypass that rather quickly. I mean, things like posture I'm very interested in at the moment and so I probably over-emphasise that to the detriment of joints and the names of bones which I don't know and I don't really care about.... I don't really understand a condyle on a joint myself.... Although you give them the information, you're not confident about it.

Now obviously, things will be put into more perspective, the longer you're teaching provided you're conscientious and you reflect. It has helped me to keep scrupulous notes of what I've done and where I've been.

**K.L.** Linked to that very much is how you keep a record of not only what you're doing, but what the pupils are doing aswell because.... What you know about them, what you know about your own work.

If it's only a mental note, how you might forget things that are quite important. So you kept quite clear notes about...?

**Alan:** Of my course, the G.C.S.E course. On the P.E. front, I'll try and twist Ed's arm next year.... What we always do, because we want equal respect for the children and the children have equal respect, we do a little circuit, like every term we swap because then the children... so I don't hog what I consider to be the best groups and things and the children can see that they're getting a fair share of the teachers and the facilities.

Upon saying that, that means I'm teaching about, including pastoral lessons which I have, for which I have girls aswell as boys I must be seeing about seven hundred, seven hundred and twenty children over the year and you don't get to know all their names but you do get to know their.... Like I was quite proud of the fact that.... I had a first year parents evening and quite honestly, out of the one hundred and forty boys, I know about forty names and I fill in reports on kids I don't know anything about.

I go down to the secretary's office and look for photographs but they havn't been done this year,.... Little things that Alan J. did, they don't get done anymore so you don't have photographs to relate to so you basically,...

"he must be quiet and conscientious, because I don't know him...." so you write that down. But upon saying that, some of the children came up to me because they wanted their parents to see me. I didn't know who they were so I said put your name down on that buff piece of paper, put a time and I'll copy it up later on. I had the paper in my pocket, but I simply don't know their name. But once they put their name down, I make a mental record of them and when I spoke to their parents, several parents said "you really know my child..." because I could talk about whether they... I could talk about them as people, whether they're good sportsmen or, one particular child I remember, I said "I think he'd be a really good sportsman but we just don't do his type of sports at this school" because he was quite studious and conscientious but not rugby thank you very much, or football.

There were other instances and they said "well thank you very much" and yet I don't really know the kids names.

K.L. I just wondered that you're able to keep a map of mental progress of each child that you recognise because I found it impossible to do when I was teaching.

What I feel now is that we ought to feel something about the way children learn, but how do you do that when you have this flow of seven hundred children?

**Alan:** I think, upon saying that, I firmly believe that school's falsely feel that they're there to cater for individuals. I think that most P.E. experiences are group experiences and not individual experiences and I think that in the last five or six years... and this is the biggest thing I've thought of. If I had to write a PhD it would be on this:

Schools are very much upon individualism: profiles, modules, counselling. We had a big inset on counselling and it was all individual. It's all about group counselling. The expert... well what's that? The counselling, as far as he was concerned, was one to one over a cup of coffee and body language and the art of counselling to groups is beginning to be lost.

I feel with P.E.... I've got something from Waldegrave School I can show to you... a profile, so the children have to fill what they think of this lesson and how it can improve. And one or two departments have tried this.

Like the science department. It looked all magnificent but when you actually dig down, I mean, they're basically a pile of these... and they're marking them away and children are doing other things. Because of the size of numbers, one to twenty, one to twenty-five, I don't think you can deal with individuals.

The idea of individual negotiation about facilities is a complete falsehood. I think that schools and education are travelling the wrong way. I mean, you do negotiate with children 'cos you go into the classroom or.... "Cor, this is boring! We don't want to do that!" And so the target you may have had will alter as to how the group feel about it and provided you are sensitive and reflective, it won't always be the mouthy children you react to. You react to the three or four, five or six ones who aren't really saying very much but not getting much out of it. But then conversely you can say, like we did orienteering today.... Now I know it's AI and I'm really enthusiastic about it. But some... "this is boring!" Now I feel experienced enough to feel "it's you, it's not this, this is good stuff, it's you". I think you have to have that confidence aswell and not always listen to what the children are saying and adapt to it. But you do adapt to situations.

Sometimes you've got a group and the lesson doesn't go very well and you ought to reflect upon it. The idea of individual contracts, negotiations... I don't believe in it. I think that education is moving in the wrong way.

To talk about individualism again, collective responsibility... "can you pick that piece of paper up for me and put it in the bin for me?" "I didn't put it down there" "nothing to do with me!" or "well he put a bit of paper down over there and you havn't said anything to him!" and the whole flow of sort of egocentric children that we're churning out at the moment.

**K.L.** That would take us Alan quite nicely to Two, because we're now talking about quite important indications that the model of P.E. that you would hold, because the tendency has been, in this debate about individual activities, collaborative, cooperative game-playing, rather than competitive game-playing... the debate that's going on at the moment and whether it should be mixed or mixed ability, coeducational activities... I just wondered whether you could say anything about the model you use.

**Alan:** Sharon's told us we're going to be mixed ability next year. There was no discussion. It was Item 4 of 7, term, Item, ...(inaudible) half an hour, so Ed said well, she's head of department, let her do that. He's sympathetic towards her anyway.

I find mixed ability teaching rugby very very difficult and provided, the system we've had is set very early, like the first lesson, in football. But it's not rigid and children are unaware of what's going on. By year two they're aware and we've had children say that they want to go down a group or they want to go up a group. Quite frankly, it happens, unless the reason is because they want to be with their mates and fool around. So it's not rigid to any extent at all. And the fact that those staff have rotated, has given those children equal respect, perfectly. But in fact, I've found that the groups I've had, mixed ability... because sometimes it happens due to the timetable and you're the only teacher on and you're the only group. I've had them for a year and I've found that my relationship with them has been far better.

Different teachers have different methods. For instance, Ed is far more relaxed,... perhaps the wrong word but his attitude towards uniform, like all white kit, is different to mine you see. When you've got them half way through the year, it's difficult to push that. So, over the last fifteen years, they've been set according to football.

We've never had any problems, in terms of children being disillusioned because they have been labelled. We may have had problems the other way round, in so far as children who are "able". We've always had problems with prima donnas. They're "top dogs" and I've always been keen to stamp that down, not always successfully.

**K.L.** Within that kind of mixed ability stratified group, whatever... debate, do you have a feeling about what P.E. should be doing. For instance, some people say that P.E. should induct or engage children in activities for lifelong pursuit.

Some people say that it's about enjoyment, that they take it on and it's fine. So it's a kind of education for leisure and the skill component....

Some people would say it's to do with movement, articulate movement, an aesthetic thing.

**Alan:** What really disappoints me about the girls side and always has (inaudible) and I think it's something which I... you know, I do my G.C.S.E. group and there are some less able people there and they might do a 1500 metres in eight minutes, but they've got that feeling of well-being, that up-lifting feeling that you get from engaging in P.E. and doing it well. Feeling that you like being "fit" and feeling that.... You know, when you see a child who's got that feeling, you can see it, and they don't have to run 1500 metres in 4.5 or 4.10 ... the big fat lump can run it in eight minutes, but he's finished and he's breathing good and he feels good and the feeling is there.

So I think a lot of P.E.... there's that transformation... you get it with a lot... that transformation from actually doing and going if you like through the motions to that higher plane of feeling good within yourself. Your body and everything's functioning and... nicely. I think that that's what we've got to try and give to children.

**K.L.** Would that be as a one-off experience, an ongoing experience or does... we talked about summative, formative experience earlier, whether by the end of time here, in the fifth form, they're aware of that kind of feeling that's possible whereas something perhaps that's potentially going to happen every time they engage in activity.

**Alan:** No. It's an ongoing thing. It's something that I've (inaudible) on more and more in the last three or four years and I actually say to people, you know, the (inaudible)-developers "you've actually achieved something more than most people here" "you look good, you work hard, you feel good..." you know, I've got to put that feeling of well-being and I will point people out and they're not always the best. They tend to... you see, in the first, second or third year, children tend to be reasonably fit anyway, reasonably fit and if they do something very quickly... their powers of recovery are very quick.

When it comes to fourth and fifth year, and why it is I don't know, but physiologically

they are simply knackered! They haven't got that feeling. They do something and "God, that's knacking sir!" and you know that they're "not there" and there are others who... I mean, they might moan about it but when they've actually done it and they feel nice within themselves, you know that they've got something a bit more special than the others.

The things that you mentioned, like teaching, in lessons you've got to teach. You can't do it on feel. You teach skills, I think so. I mean, if it's a football lesson, you teach them a game of football. If it's a badminton lesson, you teach them a game of badminton. But, beyond all that, that higher plane of general well-being and general feeling good within yourself, comes through the teaching of skills and it does disappoint me that I can't think of any girl.... They can't, because it's just going through the motions situation. Eighteen a side rounders or something like that. It just doesn't happen. No one's ever going to get that doing that type of activity.

**K.L.** Is it something that you can evaluate then, to say whether it's an aim or objective of the course or that your model is being evaluated by that. I mean, how would you ever know....

Sometimes when you're talking about it, it seems to be personal and subjective....

**Alan:** Yes, but there's nothing wrong with.... You see I've done a bit.... Like, define the colour red. How can you evaluate whether that's red. You can't. It's never red. Now, the only way.... Whether it's be chance I fell upon this, probably was, or through my reading and my thoughts.

Again this reflective thought thing that we'll come back to but I mean, I've seen children with it and I think they've got it, partly through contact with me. I wish I had that fear, the back's killing me half the time!

But I mean, the G.C.S.E course: since they started that course and some of them will say "I'm not very able" a lot of them have now got that feeling. So, when you see it, it's there probably. I'm sure, I'm not saying that.... I'm saying that's.... You can probably be more specific about it. I've never tried....

**K.L.** I certainly agree about this empathy, that you can sense when other people are sensing things but if one was to follow some of the prescriptions for rational curriculum planning,

somehow, at the end of the process of instruction or education, something can be evaluated as to whether it's been a success or not.

**Alan:** I'm not a rational curriculum planner!

**K.L.** I don't think any of us are!

The thing that I would then ask I suppose is: is this experience you're talking about available to all, or is it in some sense already, not devisive, but you recognise that not everybody will have that anyhow?

**Alan:** I think it's available to all. I think that that feeling of well-being is available to all. One word I latch onto when teaching children is, "have you transformed them?" and it's a word.... Sometimes you have teachers, sometimes teach kids.... I'm not talking about putting them over to your point of view but you actually enthuse them, or uplift them, make it an uplifting experience, rather than teachers who just go through the motions. Again, you're not putting them round to your point of view but just through the contact with you, the way you feel about things. They're uplifting.

**K.L.** I know exactly what you're saying because I feel exactly the same about some of the aspects of P.E.

I suppose one is left to ask: is this experience a plateau experience in a sense that somehow we get them up to that plateau of experience and...

**Alan:** ...they fall down!

**K.L.** ...or do they come down like snakes and ladders? Is it exponential that once you've exposed them to it, they just keep going on upwards?

**Alan:** I haven't looked at it in that greater depth but there's no doubt,... when you say well what does P.E. give you? Some children don't quite reach and I'm sure that there are others that do... reach that height but you only have to look around at some of the children at seventeen, eighteen, nineteen... big, big beer guts! Unbelievably obese! They haven't done anything since they left school and there they've just simply gone downhill. It's through.... It's amazing I think that through.... The fourth and fifth year P.E. programme is the active... it needs to keep the children active, rather

than giving them solely leisure time for pursuits, because.... It's never happened to me and it's probably never happened to you. We're both as thin as rakes but I've noticed so many people around here who walk out of the Court Jester pub and there about seventeen, eighteen, nineteen and they're like beer barrels! And they havn't seen a minute's exercise since they left school.

Now, if they were back at school and they were seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, they might be drinking down at the Court Jester, I don't mind, but they'd be a lot healthier looking than what they look now. But even those people who've got that feeling of well-being which I've had before now...(inaudible) than I have now, but I'm aware that I lack that feeling because I've received that feeling and I want that feeling back thank you very much! Partly because of lack of time of course. Partly because of the back. And I think I actually say to them "you've got...." and if I do say it, they might not recognise that that.... They probably recognise that they are fit.

In my G.C.S.E group, we talk about what fitness really means. Just reflecting upon it, just to say to the kids, "you've got this special feeling and I can see it in you, join the club!"

I said to Tony he should have taught at a comprehensive school because he's got superb patience.

**K.L.** You see, there could be a nice space there for P.E. teaching there where you could swap over and....

**Alan:** My girlfriend has moved out of the private sector into the public sector and in four weeks time, she's head of the publicity campaign for "Look after your Heart".... I would quite like you to talk to her and obviously her to talk to you. She's doing the "Look after your Heart" campaign and of course they're slogan is "It doesn't have to be hell to be healthy" or something like that. I mean, she hasn't started yet but she's... it's like food and drink to her.

**K.L.** I agree with you. We've more or less merged them all into one there but how important then if it's the outcome, which is this well-being

or whatever, are there certain activities that facilitate that more than others or is it variagated with any activity that's possible....

**Alan:** I think.... You could actually talk about the curriculum in a very similar way. What subjects... presumably one thing you're developing is the rational mind.

One thing that people claim ought to be developed is a rational mind. Like the Rouss... We're going through books now, but have you ever read Rousseau? The thing that marked men away from animals is the rational mind. Instead, Rousseau said, the philosopher, said that the fact that it's marked away from animals, doesn't mean to say that it ought to be developed so I think it ought not to be developed.

But leaving that aside, if you look at the curriculum, there are subjects which some people say are better placed to develop the mind than others. You know, mathematics, P.E., the approach to logic will help to develop the mind better than bingo, or English. These deeply logical have unique properties which help them to develop the mind. I mean, the mind better.

Whether that's true or not, one wonders. Chess is a logical one. Why do maths instead of chess if you want to develop that part of your mind?

Coming back to P.E. you're obviously now looking for a magic formula which will say that there are certain activities which will develop that feeling of well-being better than others. Perhaps they all do. But perhaps you're getting a... perhaps you're wanting a drink in it's purest form rather than dilute it. I would actually go along with that.....

(tape finishes)