

Conversations with Mrs Cherry Hopkins

Part 3

by

John Magyar¹ and Daniel Bates²

Date: 14th February 2024

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

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

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

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

Mrs Hopkins's answers are in normal type.

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

1. I am here with Mrs. Cherry Hopkins for her third interview with the Eminent Scholars Archive, and today we're going to focus on her late husband, John Hopkins, to whom you were married for some 54 years?

That's right, yes.

2. And if I might summarize briefly his history, he was born in 1936 in Hemsworth, Yorkshire, spent part of his youth in that region, and was educated at the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Wakefield until 1949, at which point his family moved to Wales, and he finished his schooling at the Pontypridd Boys Grammar School, endured 18 months with the Royal Artillery in Oswestry before attending Queen's College, Cambridge from 1957 to 1961. He obtained firsts in both parts of the Law Tripos and in the LLB, and received the Whewell Scholarship in International Law. He subsequently became a research fellow at Downing College in 1961, and then in 1965 became an official fellow until his retirement in 2004, and was a university lecturer and did an awful lot of other things which I hope we can get into with you. So if we could start at the beginning, what do you remember about his family?

Well, they were Welsh. Both his parents were Welsh, from South Wales, and his father was an accountant and his mother was a primary school teacher. The reason why they moved to Yorkshire in the 1930s was that the employment situation in South Wales was very difficult, and job prospects in the north were much better. So his father got a job, I think in Pontefract, but somewhere in Yorkshire anyway, and that was why they went there. But then, after the war, he was appointed as an accountant to the Welsh Board of Health and they went back to South Wales, and certainly John always regarded himself as a Welshman.

3. Ah, okay.

Except that he supported Yorkshire for cricket. Yorkshire for cricket and Wales for rugby, but he was definitely Welsh although often people didn't realize that because he didn't speak with a Welsh accent, though his parents did, but he could put on the most marvellous Welsh accent if he wanted to.

¹ Barrister and solicitor, University of Cambridge.

² Legal Research Training and Communications Specialist, Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge.



4. I was going to ask. Certainly it would be native to him, wouldn't it?

yes.

5. He was an only child?

Yes, he was.

6. Right, and did he talk at all about his days at either grammar school? Were those formative years for him?

A certain amount, yes. I don't know very much about his time at Queen Elizabeth's Wakefield other than the fact that Bob Hardy,³ who much later became Bishop of Lincoln, sat on his head in a rugby scrum.

7. Okay.

And, the late bishop did remember that incident. Pontypridd, yes, I heard much more about Pontypridd Grammar School, and for quite a while he kept in touch with some of his former teachers there and, indeed, we both went to the school in, it must have been in 1970 when he spoke at the speech day, and I presented the prizes, and that included handing out a prize for woodwork to the gentleman who is now Lord Lloyd Jones⁴ of the Supreme Court.

8. Okay.

So David Lloyd Jones and John were educated at the same school in Pontypridd.

9. Excellent, and then moving on, the Royal Artillery. The obituary I read said that he didn't really enjoy it, didn't enjoy his years there.

National service. No, he hated it, but he always said he was glad that he'd done it because, having had a fairly sheltered childhood living at home, it was his first time of being independent and learning to look after himself, and he felt it was a good preparation for coming up to university.

10. Right. Did he forge any long term friendships there?

No.

11. No, okay, and it was 18 months, I believe. Was it?

Well, yes, I think so, although the period was always regarded as two years, but it must have fallen a little bit short of that I think, but I wouldn't like to say quite how much.

12. Right, and so his parents, they stayed, obviously, in South Wales.

Yes.

13. Because the – Oswestry is kind of in central Wales isn't it?

Well, it's actually in Shropshire, and he always said that he spent his time defending the Welsh Marshes.

14. Right. I've seen it on a map.

³ Robert Maynard Hardy, CBE (1936-2021). Bishop of Maidstone 1980-77, Bishop of Lincoln 1987-2001.

⁴ David Lloyd Jones KC, British barrister. Fellow, Downing College 1975-91; Assistant Recorder 1989-94, Recorder, 1994-2005, Judge of the High Court 2005-12; Lord Justice of Appeal 2012-17, Justice of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom 2017-present.



Offa's Dike more or less.

15. It looks like it's in the middle of nowhere.

Actually, in a way, he was rather lucky. During this time there his father had quite a serious illness, and had it not been for that, John would almost certainly have been sent to Suez during the Suez crisis, but he was allowed to stay in Oswestry on compassionate grounds, and fortunately, his father recovered.

16. Oh, good. Right, yes, Suez. So from there, in 1957 he moved to Cambridge to attend Queens' College, and what did he talk about there? It must have made a significant impression on him.

Yes, well, he loved Queens', though in much more recent years he deplored the architecture of their new building and said they'd ruined the college, but he had a very good time and I think there were two people there who influenced him a good deal. One was Arthur Armitage,⁵ who, I'm not sure if he was already president when John went up to Queens', but he certainly was for most of his time there. But he lectured and supervised on criminal law, and he was a great character, and John used to enjoy his supervisions very much. The other person was the then Dean of Chapel at Queens', Henry Hart,⁶ who was quite a noted theologian who used to take parties of Queen students during the long vacation to the Lake District and stay in a wonderful, little guest house in Rosthwaite, fairly near Keswick. And John went to the Lake District twice with Henry Hart, and that started a lifelong love of fell walking which, indeed, I shared.

17. And did that become something that he tried to do annually, every year?

Oh, yes. We, I mean, most of our holidays in later years were spent in the Lake District. Not always, but, he always liked to go somewhere where we could have a good walk.

18. Right. Okay, and he obviously – law – it worked out very well for him.

Yes.

19. He did very well. Were there any other professors or lecturers that were important to him at that time?

Well yes, indeed, because in his second year he was supervised by Clive Parry⁷ for international law, and Clive recruited him for the same scheme for which he recruited me two years later, of summer work in the Foreign Office library.

20. Right, *The Digest*.

Yeah, the *British Digest*. So that was how John got into that, and he did it for that summer at the end of his second year, again at the end of his third year, and then he wanted to take the LLB as it then was. And what happened was that it was agreed between him and

⁵ Sir Arthur Llewellyn Armitage (1916-84), British barrister. Law Fellow, Queen's College 1945–58; President, Queen's College 1958–70; Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge 1965–67; Vice-Chancellor, Victoria University of Manchester 1969–80.

⁶ Revd Henry St John Hart. Research Fellow, Fellow, Queen's College 1936–79, Life Fellow 1979–2004. "Served variously as Chaplain, Dean, Hebrew Lecturer, Director of Studies in Divinity & Oriental Languages, Tutor, Librarian, Garden Steward, Dean of College and Vice-President" according to the Queen's College web site: <https://www.queens.cam.ac.uk/the-henry-st-john-hart-fund> accessed 25 April 2024.

⁷ Prof Clive Parry, (1917–1982). Lecturer, London School of Economics 1945; Lecturer, Reader, then Professor, University of Cambridge 1945–82.



Clive that John would spend the academic year up till Easter in Cornwall House in the Foreign Office Library, carrying on the work of *The Digest* there, but at the same time studying for the international law LLB. That was very, very demanding, and with hindsight, I think John felt that a bit too much was being asked of him, but he did it, and he came into residence for the Easter term. So just one term of absolutely full on work for the LLB, living in digs and subsisting on sandwiches as far as I can make out, but he got a first and the Whewell Scholarship.

21. I mean, that's remarkable because law is incredibly demanding. There are people who who don't fare nearly that well who do strictly law.

Well, I thought it was pretty remarkable, but when I met him, it was just after the end of all that. He was as thin as a rake.

22. And probably exhausted.

Yes, I think he was, though he perked up pretty quickly.

23. Right, and that was – so he finished the LLB, that was in 1961.

That's right.

24. And that was around the time you met him?

Yes, yes, because the first time I actually met him, though, I had seen him once before in the Squire [*Law Library*], the first time I met him was at my meeting for a recruitment to the *British Digest* working party.

25. Right, and obviously, you found to be interesting and?

Well, then he was he was in charge of that summer's group of undergraduates, and yet when I turned up at Cornwall House he looked after me, and one thing led to another as you might say.

26. Yes, and that led to a marriage in 1964, I believe.

That's right.

27. But before we get to that, in 1961 he became a research fellow at Downing College and I'm assuming, of course, that Clive Parry was at Downing and that's why he went over there.

Yes. Yes.

28. And that was – did he commence full time on this project at that point?

No. Well, for the first year he was non-resident. He was still back in London, in Cornwall House, but he used to come up one day a week and do some supervisions.

29. Right.

So that was quite a tough year too.

30. That would be. He would have to keep on top of all of the cases for the supervisions, while, doing all of that work for the *British Digest*. Okay and that was from 1961 to 1965. He was a research fellow.

Yes, yes. So he actually came into residence in Cambridge in 62 and got his own college room and, and the started doing quite a lot more supervision and also did his first



course of lectures.

31. He started lecturing then, okay.

Yeah, it was for the, the disputes, war and neutrality paper in the LLB.

32. Right.

For which I was a candidate.

33. So he taught you, okay.

Yup, and I remember Arthur Armitage said to him, “make the most of it”, sort of haranguing me, “because you'll never get the same opportunity again.”

34. True, to have such complete access to your lecturer, yes.

But, like virtually all young lecturers, he tried to cram too much in and he talked too quickly, and the rest of the class used to say to me, “get him to slow down!”

35. Yes.

Which he did, of course, after a bit more experience.

36. There's a learning curve, isn't there? He also was doing his dinners at Gray's Inn?

Yes, yes.

37. And once again, I'm guessing that Clive Parry was the person who recommended Gray's Inn.

Yes, as with me, he said get a professional qualification. Yes, so he took one summer, then, it must have been the summer of '63 to swat for the finals during the long vacation and then got called to the bar later that year.

38. In 1964, it says here.

Oh, well that's probably right.

39. But, I mean, you know, you could do it in the summer and get called later.

Yes, it is right, yes, because he took the exams in the December exams in '63 and was called early in '64.

40. Right, because the calls happened strategically on certain dates.

Yes, that's right.

41. And as with you, not really a lot of need to practice was there, it was really, you just wanted that.

It was just getting the qualification.

42. A qualification for the stature.

He did do a little bit of professional work later on advising in 1 or 2 cases. He did something with Robbie Jennings on the Beagle Channel arbitration,⁸ and there was something else, but I forget now what it was.

⁸ *Dispute between Argentina and Chile concerning the Beagle Channel* (1977) 21 Reports of International Arbitral Awards 53.



43. Right. Okay, and then in 1965 he became an Official Fellow at Downing College and I made a timeline because helps just to see, from 65, yeah, he was an Official Fellow and Downing Tutor, and then in 1966 he became a university lecturer, and then in 1968.

I think that the lectureship was 65, well, it was an assistant lectureship but that was what qualified him to get an official fellowship at Downing. So the two went together.

44. So he was a lecturer, fellow and tutor.

So I reckon it was 65.

45. Yeah. Okay, then this is when he fell into his passion, shall we say, for supervising.

Yes. I mean, he was already doing quite a bit, but, then he took on the normal sort of load, which tended to increase over the years.

46. It said in his obituary that he regularly did more than the allotment.

He did. He broke every rule in sight.

47. As he genuinely liked it.

But he loved doing it, and his supervisions were popular so lots of people wanted him to teach for their colleges and, so he took on as much as he could fit in.

48. And what were the courses setting supervised?

Oh.

49. Do you recall?

Roman, constitutional, international, equity. Yeah, I think that – that's it.

50. That's a lot.

Yes it is. Yes.

51. The thing about Roman is it at least it won't change, but with the equity and international law, it keeps moving, you have to.

Yes, yes. The Roman, for umpteen years, he did the Downing Roman law supervision. So he occasionally did Roman for some other colleges, but the great thing with Downing was that he would teach them on a Saturday morning because he felt it was important for Cambridge students with only eight week terms to realize that it wasn't a five day week and so it kept them up to the mark if they had to turn out on a Saturday morning. I have to say this was not universally popular, and the 9:00 slot was particularly unpopular.

52. I could well imagine.

But he kept it going for a great many years.

53. Well, you know, a fair enough. In his obituary, it mentioned that one of the first students that he supervised way back in 1961 was John Cleese.

That is absolutely right. Yes, because John Cleese was, I don't know, perhaps in his second year then? I think John must have taught him international law, but it might have been



equity, he might have been in his third year, and John Cleese was in Footlights⁹ and very tied up with rehearsals for Footlights, so found it difficult to get supervisions at normal times so they used to meet late at night in Downing, about half past 10:00 or 11:00 o'clock at night and, sit around the fire having a supervision. Of course, they were actually quite close in age so, you know, it was friends together.

54. Right, and, he would apparently joke that John Cleese came up with his silly walks by dodging puddles on the Downing College grounds.

Yes.

55. Were there any other noteworthy people that you recall from his early years that, I mean, there must have, there must have been dozens of QCs and so forth, and judges over the years.

Yes, yes. Lots and lots of them. I can't say that I remember anybody particularly from the very early years, no.

56. Right, and so if I'm following the timeline, he became the Director of Studies in 1968, and that would add the whole pastoral element to it, would it not?

Yes, yes. I think being Director of Studies really was his favourite job because he loved being able to advise his pupils on immediate courses of action, you know, what papers to take, and also on their future careers. He was very interested in trying to ensure that people went to appropriate firms of solicitors or appropriate sets of chambers, and he would try and guide them in the right direction. On the question of what subjects to do, Graham Virgo mentioned in his marvellous address at John's memorial service, that all the Downing people assume that international law was a compulsory subject because they weren't given any option on the matter. At the same time, for many years they were vigorously discouraged from doing criminology, but in the end he had to give way on that one. The demand became too great.

57. Well, I mean, it's kind of the classic lawyers topic, isn't it?

Well, in John's view, it wasn't law.

58. And when you become a lawyer, you learn that criminal law is just this tiny, tiny little piece of a much larger practice, but of course, when you grew up watching TV, that's often what motivates people that study law, isn't it? And, so how did John cross paths with Graham Virgo?

Oh, Graham came up to Downing as an undergraduate in 1984, and, of course, John had interviewed him before that because, for, well, all while he was Senior Tutor, he interviewed all arts candidates for Downing. So he was, in effect, the arts admissions tutor as well and somebody else was the science admissions tutor. So Graham was during that period, and I think John had actually already been to Graham's School to give a talk. I may be wrong about that, but I think he had met him before the formal interview. Anyway, so in fact, he admitted him to Downing and then we both supervised Graham.

59. Right, and became friends.

Yes, and it was in the, the sort of glory days when the numbers of people reading law

⁹ The Cambridge Footlights is a University of Cambridge student sketch comedy society whose membership has included the likes of Stephen Fry, Robert Frost, Douglas Adams, John Oliver and Sophie Winkleman.



at Downing had become huge, and I think I'm right in saying that Graham was one of twenty one in his year reading law at Downing, and then there were a few people who changed over from other subjects in the second and third year, so it was a massive year group.

60. Right. How many students in total at Downing around that time?

Not much over 300.

61. And for one subject area that's a lot.

Well, the college was founded for law and medicine, but certainly for a very long time it had always taken other subjects, but with John being admissions tutor it did enable him to build up the law side. He had to give way a bit as time went on, with the demands of things like social and political sciences and all sorts of subjects that wanted places too but.

62. But he had a role to play in the revival of law at Downing?

I think that would certainly be fair and yeah, many people have said that he really built it up from – it had got to a rather small state. But certainly, the first Downing group that I supervised in 1963, there were just three people in the first year, and John very rapidly built it up to about a dozen a year, and then it went on growing until this massive year of twenty one, which I think was the biggest ever.

63. That was the apex.

It has gone down again since then.

64. And roughly around what year was that?

That was 1984.

65. It was in 1984.

Yes, and Graham, of course, was a very good student, and then he went off and well, he went off to do the BCL at Oxford and then Graham came back as a fellow at Downing in 1989, which was the year that I went back to Girton. So Graham was able to take over the contract teaching that I had been doing for Downing.

66. Right.

So that was the way that worked.

67. Right, we've, kind of slipped away from our timeline here.

Yes. I'm sorry.

68. No, no, don't be. You're merely just answering the questions I'm asking. But, so I notice, when I look at the book reviews he published, which he published many, they run from 1962 to 1974, and in fact, there were, I think four in 1973 he published. But, they stop in 1974, which is also around the time when your second child was born, was it not?

Yes, yes. I think he was probably just too busy with all the demands of teaching and obviously family demands, because there was an additional thing. In 1975 his parents moved to Cambridge. It was again, sadly, a situation where his father had been seriously ill, and they took the very brave decision to leave Wales, come to Cambridge and make their home in a block of flats next door to our house.



69. Right.

Which, it was a wonderful arrangement of, sort of, mutual support, meant we had babysitters on tap whenever needed.

70. And very, very willing babysitters.

Indeed, yes, and we did our best to support them in various ways, and, that was in 1975. His father died in 1982, and his mother five years later, but he very willingly devoted a lot of time to them.

71. Right.

And of course, it meant that there was less time for reading and that sort of thing.

72. Right, and of course, with his various other obligations, which were many.

Well, the college work was, there was a lot of it.

73. Right. The other thing about his publications, of course, it's in 1974 that he and Clive Parry worked on the Commonwealth international law cases.

Yes.

74. So that was another obligation that came up in that year, I noticed, which he worked on until 1994.

Yes, yes. So that was ongoing, yes. It was, you know, one of those things that spare time could be devoted to, more or less. He, although he published very little in the way of articles, one thing one has to remember is that in the earlier years of his career, there wasn't nearly the same pressure on young academics to publish as there is now, and so he was very much involved in these collaborative things but they didn't leave very much time for him to do things under his own steam and in his own name.

75. Right.

And in any case, he really enjoyed teaching more than writing, I think. So that was what he devoted his energies to.

76. And, you know, fair enough. I suspect he had a – he enjoyed his life, did he not?

He did.

77. So, in the 1970s as well, there was a change in 1978. Oh, so he became Senior Tutor.

That was the year he became Senior Tutor. Yes, yes. That was, it was a less onerous job than being a senior tutor is nowadays. There was a lot less administration, a lot less need to account to central bodies of the university, give reports on what was going on, and so forth. But for all that, it did have a certain amount of administrative work attached to it, but he was able to keep his own tutorial side. He always had at least sixty tutorial pupils over a range of subjects because he felt it was important for the Senior Tutor to have plenty of day-to-day contact with undergraduates, and you know, actually to be a tutor, not just an administrator. Nowadays, the way things have gone in many colleges that simply isn't possible, but it was then.

78. Right. When did Downing become co-ed? Do you recall?

I think it was 1980.



79. Right. Okay. So a few years after that.

Yes, yes, and John had been very opposed to the idea initially, but once the change had taken place, he realized that it had been the right thing to do, that it didn't cause problems, and he just accepted the situation and found it very good, very effective. And he admitted that his earlier opposition had been wrong. But he was, you know, by nature a conservative and perhaps rather old fashioned by many people's standards.

80. Never owned a computer?

Well, he did have a sort of share of one.

81. Okay, So he used a computer. He did.

Yeah, well.

82. You'd have to at a certain point, by the time you get into the 90s you didn't have a choice, did you?

I think it was in 1990 that I bought one of those little box-like classic Macintoshes. That was our first computer, and he did manage to use that, but he used to use it like a glorified typewriter. So he bash away like anything on it and type out his lectures. Well, that was fine for a bit, but I came to realize that we needed to upgrade, so it must have been, well, it was when email was getting generally more prevalent sometime in the late 1990s, I got it superior model.

83. Right.

But John couldn't cope with that because it required a lighter touch. I mean, he taught himself to type and he was very heavy fisted.

84. Because he learned that an old manual typewriter, no doubt.

Yes, an old Olivetti 22, and I tried to persuade him to use the new one, but he really couldn't cope with it, and email was a closed book to him. He never sent an email in his life. So he kept on using the old classic, and we developed a system whereby I would then put something that he had typed onto a floppy disk, because one of the problems with the classic was the printer broke down and they'd stopped making them. It couldn't be replaced, so I would then put what he typed onto a floppy disk, take it across the room, feed it into my computer, upgrade it, print it out on my printer. It was a somewhat laborious process, but we made it work.

85. You know, I could think of some stories about my parents and computers that, you know, run like that.

You see, one of the problems was, for most of his time at, well certainly all through his time as a tutor and senior tutor and director of studies, he had access to a secretary. So his way of dealing with correspondence was to use a dictaphone, and then the secretary would transcribe.

86. That was that era, wasn't it? You you had the typing pool. The Kelly girls, or you probably had an equivalent her in the UK.

Yes, he had wonderful support from the staff of the Downing Tutorial Office, but he wasn't really used to having to do things for himself, and he did find email baffling, so I don't – I just do not know how, whether he would have come round to it when it became so terribly important during the pandemic. It's difficult to say. Certainly, after I retired I was able, in



effect, to act as his secretary, which I was very happy to do, and, you know, send and receive emails on his behalf. I can't help feeling that we might have found it difficult in this present day and age if he hadn't been able to cope with smart phones and, you know. But who knows?

87. And he never owned a TV?

Oh, yes, yes, we had a TV. We had a great principle that we wouldn't get one until both our children could read.

88. Okay.

Because we didn't want them being glued to The Magic Roundabout or something and not learning to read.

89. Right.

But once they both could read we relented and we got one, but he wasn't particularly keen on it, except he used to watch rugby and golf, and cricket.

90. Right. He was a member of the which cricket club?

MCC.

91. It was, wasn't it Marylebone? Do you remember the?

He was in, yes, that's the Marylebone Cricket Club, yes. The Lord's Cricket ground in Saint John's Wood, that's their base of operations. Yeah. I'm really not quite sure how that came about. I just can't remember. He was on a waiting list for a long time. He didn't make much use his membership but he was very proud of his MCC tie. That's the one he's wearing in the Hughes Hall portrait of him, and it was his party tie

92. Right, and as a social creature, he enjoyed a good party now and again?

He did. He did, yes.

93. I mean, you definitely paint a picture of a people person.

Very much so.

94. Now in his obituary, a theme that kept on coming up was his struggle with his pipe. He was a pipe smoker, and of course, in his day you could smoke indoors in lecture halls.

Yes you could.

95. Students were all considered to be of age, and this is an adult activity and there's no regulations on it.

Yes, yes. So he did. I know he did smoke a great deal in supervisions or at least he had his pipe out a great deal in supervisions, but people have always told me he used to strike a match and go on talking and that match went out. The pipe didn't all that often actually get lit. But sometimes he would throw a match into the waste paper basket when it wasn't complete out. There's certainly at least one occasion on which the fire alarm went off.

96. Oh boy! That would interrupt the supervision, I should think.

Yes, yes. I always said that he did all this because it gave him a thinking time and he was working out the answer to a question somebody had asked, but I have to say, when



smoking inside college rooms was prohibited, he was very, very good about giving it up.

97. Right. So he did he just quit?

Yeah, well he didn't quit smoking, which is unfortunate.

98. Oh, I say he just stopped doing it in the college.

He stopped going into college with a pipe, yes.

99. There is something iconic about the thinking person or the philosophy professor, you know, with the pipe, pondering, isn't there?

There is, there is. Yes, certainly.

100. So amongst his other views, so he had views about women, he had views about television, he had his views about computers and presumably technology more generally, he also had views on the European project.

Yes. Yes, he was definitely Eurosceptic.

101. Right.

And remained so to the end of his life, though, of course, it was a tremendous surprise to both of us when the referendum went in favour of Brexit.

102. Right.

Hard to believe, actually.

103. Yes, I think no one expected that, least of all the Prime Minister, although I gather he was a lifelong conservative.

Oh, definitely. Yes. Yes.

104. And he had, apparently, a passion for Winnie the Pooh.

Yes. He was terribly keen on Winnie the Pooh. Of course, he used to read it to our children when they were small, but yes, he used to use characters from Winnie the Pooh to illustrate points.

105. Even when interviewing students, apparently.

Yes. Yes, that's right. But then he was also keen on Beatrix Potter and, for instance, used to say "he liked people to be bouncy, like Squirrel Nutkin".

106. Right, and one student had, given him a Winnie the Pooh bear.

Yeah. That's right,

107. With a communist patch, was it?

I can't remember what it was.

108. It was a – I've got it here – a badge of Karl Marx pinned to the bear's chest to kind of poke him for his conservative sentiment.

Yes, yes. It used to sit on a, on a bookcase in his college room, and actually, in the year that he retired, there was a lovely group of undergraduates running the Cranworth Law Society in Downing, and they wanted to do something special to mark the retirement. And, rather with my connivance, they kidnapped Winnie the Pooh and took Winnie the Pooh



around to various places associated with the law such as the Middle Temple, some place that featured in a particular case, I can't remember what it was, but they took photographs of this bear in all sorts of different situations and made an album of photographs, and then eventually Winnie the Pooh was restored to his proper place.

109. I'm assuming at some sort of event, like a retirement party or something they presented the bear.

Yes, there was a great retirement dinner in Downing which was when the album of photographs was presented.

110. What a lovely story. He also had set up something called the Cambridge University Pooh Sticks Society?

Well, do you know, I didn't actually know anything about that, but it's perfectly possible. It's the story of Christopher Robin and Winnie the Pooh and Piglet dropping sticks and seeing whose stick comes under the bridge first.

111. Ah, okay, sticks into the river, got it. Okay, and I'm just trying to think what else we have got to cover here. He also was, so he was into rugby and cricket, he was an opera fan?

Yes. Well, he liked music generally,

112. Right.

He was very knowledgeable about music. He never played an instrument, but he did know a lot about music, but certainly in his later years, opera became a very major interest, and we used to go, a certain, amount to the Royal Opera House in London, and what he really, really loved was Glyndebourne.¹⁰

113. Right.

We were first taken there by some friends back in the 1960s and thought it was marvellous, and so John put his name down on the waiting list for membership at that point, thinking it would be years and years before it came up. Well, actually, not so very long after that they doubled the membership. I think they doubled it, certainly increased it, and he got in, but at that time we were, well, we had children to look after and we were paying school fees and, and there was really no way we could get there until, I think, the first time we went after that was 1990.

114. Oh, wow! Okay.

And, but, it is a lovely place and we so much enjoyed our visits there so in later years we used to try and go a couple of times a year and that was really, for him, the big thing of the summer. If people said to us at parties, maybe, you know, "what, are you going to in the summer?" I would usually say, "oh, we're going to the Lake District," or "we're going to Scotland" or whatever it was, and John would say, "we're going to Glyndebourne!"

115. Right. He also had a passion for history?

Yes, he was very interested in history and, after all, most of his international law work was of a semi-historical nature, all the *British Digest* stuff, because the period of the digest that we both worked on was the early years of the 20th century.

¹⁰ The Glyndebourne Opera House in East Sussex.



116. 1200 forward?

So yeah, but he read a great deal of history

117. Right, or 1066, wouldn't it be? Okay, and upon his retirement they set up the Hopkins Parry Fellowship at Downing?

Yes, that was – a lot of old members of Downing subscribed to it – it was largely organized by the late George Pulman QC,¹¹ who was a member of Downing who masterminded a fundraising campaign with the assistance of the Downing development office, and I thought that, was it was a million they had to raise, a million pounds? Whatever the target was, they got it.

118. So it was a big figure, but they wanted to fully endow it.

Yes, that's right. That's right, and so that was established and the first holder of it was Amy Goymour.¹²

119. And, of course, obviously it continues, it's going on in perpetuity, I would assume.

Yes, because it was designed so that it could provide a full stipend for a college teaching officer, and when Amy got her university appointment then the Hopkins Parry Fellowship passed to somebody else.

120. Right.

and it still exists.

121. It's still going and it becomes this entranceway for teaching staff.

Yes, and it's not time-limited so if there happens to be a dearth of university appointments going vacant it would enable somebody to stay for longer than, I mean, many college teaching fellowships have a time limit of 3 or 5 years. So this one does mean that somebody can stay longer.

122. So it's not defined in that way.

That's right.

123. I'd imagine there is an enormous amount of flexibility, and you just decide what are the parameters you want lock in with this endowment, and then, of course, whatever is written into the instrument you are stuck with. There might be ways to change it, I would suppose.

Well, goodness knows.

124. Fair enough, it would be much like what you had done with Girton, getting into the statutes. I'm wondering if you could sum up from your perspective, your, your thoughts your feelings about his career, and is there anything you can say about it that I haven't asked you about that you think is missing?

Well, perhaps one thing I haven't mentioned is his contact with schools, and this was connected with his work on admissions, that he was very anxious to foster good relations

¹¹ George Pulman QC (1949-2021) British barrister. Deputy High Court Judge and Associate Fellow of Downing College.

¹² Fellow, Fitzwilliam College 2004-06; Fellow, Downing College 2006-20; Lecturer 2012, Senior Lecturer 2012, Associate Professor 2020.



with both state and independent schools and try to attract good candidates. So he used to do a great deal of school visiting. He was also governor of several independent schools.

125. Do you recall which schools?

Well, the first one was Eastbourne College, then Sherborne School, Harrow, which in many ways was the one he enjoyed most, though he found it a bit daunting at first, and.

126. It being, shall we say, one of the pre-eminent public schools in the country.

That's right, and he was a Welsh grammar school boy. He wasn't used to all these, sort of, boaters, and a rather unintelligible school jargon and, you know, he had to find out what "ducker" was, which turned out to be the swimming pool, and what were people talking about when they referred to "bluers". Well, it turned out that it was the Harrow blazers.

127. Ah, so it's a foreign language.

He had a lot to learn, and then I think the last one he did for some years, Wellington College, but these all, such as were still running, I think he'd resigned from Eastbourne and possibly from Sherborne as well, but when he turned 70 these came to an end. Most schools then, I don't know if they still have an age limit but they did then. So, yes, there was that, and of course, although he formally retired from his university appointment and his Downing appointment in 2004, he did actually keep on a lot of teaching. He did lots of supervision. Hughes Hall kept him on as their Director of Studies because they didn't seem to have an age limit, and he very much enjoyed that because the Hughes Hall community is very diverse – people from all over the world, a little bit older than the average undergraduate, usually – and so he had a good time there. And then they very kindly, after he'd finished, when they started to get law fellows of their own, he stopped and they gave him an honorary fellowship, which astonished him, but he was very grateful for that. But he did keep on doing that, and then the long vacations used to be very busy because he would do lecture courses for American summer schools. This is in Cambridge.

128. Of course, the summer schools, yes.

So for many years he did a course for University of Richmond Virginia who were based in Emmanuel, and the University of Mississippi who were based in Downing.

129. Oh really?

And the people who ran those, some of them came over year after year and became very good friends, and I'm still exchanging Christmas cards with one of the former Richmond professors and one of the Mississippi ones. And then in addition he used to do the, something on the English Legal Method course in the faculty here. Easter vacations were always, there was always the one week course run by the Institute of Continuing Education for the London [*external degree*] students. They had a one week residential course here in the faculty, and we actually both lectured on that and John became the person who arranged the lectures. It fizzled, I can't remember when, quite a while ago when the demand became less and they were able to do more, I think, online courses, but he did that for many years. So, Easter, well, all vacations were busy because Christmas vacation, immediately after the end of term there were interviews. I remember one year when interviewed approximately two hundred people.

130. Wow!

And Easter, there was always this London course and then summer, there was the



American summer school, so putting in holidays was sometimes quite difficult but we managed it.

131. Right, he just didn't stop.

He didn't stop.

132. And I guess having this – the work at Hughes Hall would be great because he'd be shoved into retirement and now he could keep on going, he could, kind of, slow down and not stop.

That's right. That's right and yes, and also the supervisions, they reduced in numbers but he was – he had to give up, in the February of the year that he died, after a fall. He only had one group that was a Peterhouse group.

133. He was still supervising. How old would he have been?

He was 81, but he had to give up in the February and he died in the September, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that I persuaded him that he really could not go out and do a supervision after this fall.

134. Wow! So, to the end, this is what he loved. He was going to do it.

Well, as he would have said, "KBO".

135. KBO?

Keep bugging on.

136. Ah, okay. Well, this seems like a lovely place to stop if you think we've covered it.

We've covered it. I think we've covered it.

137. We've covered it.

