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Christopher John Audland, KCMG 1987 (CMG 1973).

Born 7 July 1926, son of Brigadier Edward Gordon Audland, CB, CBE, MC, and Violet Mary, daughter of Herbert Shepherd-Cross, MP; married 1955, Maura Daphne Sullivan. Educated at Twyford School; Winchester College.

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Whitehall and Europe. Interview n°19

Interview with Sir Christopher Audland, KCMG (CA), by Thomas Raineau (TR), University of Paris-Sorbonne.

The interview was conducted on Wednesday 20 June 2012.

TR: First of all Sir Christopher, let me thank you one more time for accepting this interview and for receiving me in your beautiful house in Milnthorpe. If you agree with this procedure, we will go through your career chronologically, and try to deal with some particular points and questions about British European policy in the Sixties and the Seventies, when you were closely involved in the formulation and implementation of this policy.

TR: First, of all, would you define yourself, and your career in the Civil Service, as pro-European? Why or why not?

CA: My career became European at a very early stage. It clearly started when I went briefly to Berlin in 1949, and soon after moved to the UK High Commission in Bonn, where I stayed until 1952. Before that, I was more of a traditional Brit, still thinking in terms of Empire, although India already had its independence, and still thinking of Britain as a world power, as a world financial leader with the sterling area, and all those sorts of things. It was very much part of the scenery politically, before I went to Germany. But I would say that going to Berlin opened my eyes to the grim realities of the Cold War, as it was soon after the USSR blockade of the City. And then, in Bonn, I was the British negotiator of one of the Bonn Conventions. I thus came in very direct personal contact with, particularly, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, and his Secretary of State, Walter Hallstein; and also, to some extent, with Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet. This was, of course, the period when the European Communities concept was taking off. I was following it, as it ran in parallel with the negotiation of Bonn Conventions, whose purpose was to give independence to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and enable it to join the family of nations again. I came to see that these two things were complementary, and that the concept of European integration was therefore very important. I think that's when my conversion started.

Fortunately my next posting was to the UK Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg. There, of course, I met again Schuman and Monnet, but also a whole lot of other Founding Fathers of today's European Union (EU), such as Paul-Henri Spaak, Jo Luns, and Joseph Bech. I listened to all the great debates about Europe which were taking place at the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. That was, of course, a tremendous experience. I lived through the creation of the ECSC; the negotiation and then failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) and the European Political Community (EPC) Treaties; and finally the adoption of the Paris Agreements of 1955, which allowed the Bonn Conventions to enter into force, and the FRG to enter NATO. So, through these different strands, I came to think that the closer union of European States was a very important matter indeed for the future of the world.

TR: So it is the story of a conversion, and indeed of a very early conversion. Would you mind talking about your family and your educational background? In what kind of family did you grow up? Did you have European connections? Did you travel? Did you speak foreign languages at home?

CA: A complex question ... Family life divides into different parts. I was born, if you like, into a structured family, with a father, a mother, and an older brother. We were soon living together, in the early 1930's, in Camberley, where my father was at the Staff College, he being a professional soldier. I don't remember much of that, because in 1930, when I was four years old, my father was posted to India: not to the Indian Army, but to the British Army in India. And he and my mother spent 6 years there. Obviously, at that time, the question for them was: "Do we take the kids or not?" Rightly or wrongly, they decided not. So, from that moment on, we were in the hands of other people. To begin with, the nanny who had been living with the family, took care of us in a little, rented cottage in Camberley. By then I'd had a sister. So at first we were three children living together. Shortly after that, we split up. My brother was sent to prep school - i.e. boarding school - at Twyford, at the age of 8. So the question was, what would happen to myself and my sister. In my case, I was sent to live at a house in Codford Saint Mary (Wiltshire), a delightful little village. We were right on the edge of it, with fields beyond us, so it was very countryfied.

I lived in the care of a lady, whose name was Miss Munn. Naturally, I did not use first names with her. Curiously enough, she had an aunt in residence, and we were allowed to call that lady "Fergie". Together, they brought up myself and another boy for the next 2 or 3 years. They were very nice people and good teachers. They also had lovely gardens, where we could play in the trees and all that sort of thing. I enjoyed that. From time to time, I used to be visited by my paternal grandfather's family. Or I would be taken to visit them. They were living in Oxford. So that was my pre-school period.

Then, I went on to prep-school, from 1934 to 1939. I don't need to say much about it, except that, really by accident, I went to what turned out eventually to be perhaps the best prep-school in England. It was not so when I first went there. But, by reading my autobiography, "Right Place, Right Time" [ISBN 1-84104-091-6], you will have noted the critical remarks I made about the first Headmaster. The second Headmaster, however, was quite extraordinary. He became Chairman of the Association of Prep-school Headmasters. He and his wife had an aura of parenthood about them. In reality, they had only one child - a son. But the boys in the school definitely felt they were also part of the family. So it was a very nice school to attend. Even under the first Headmaster, the academic standards had been of the highest. Twyford School was getting more scholarships to Winchester College – which is a good test – than any other school at that time.

Whilst there, since I had to go somewhere for school holidays, and my parents for the first 2 years were still abroad, we three children went increasingly to our paternal grandparents' home in Oxford. My grandparents, at that time, also owned the house we are now sitting in, and used it as a second residence. So we children would come up to Ackenthwaite; stay in a nearby farm; and visit them in this house. We thus got to know this part of the world at a very early stage. I regard it as my homeland – although I was born in Germany –and we loved being up here.

In the second part of my prep-school period, in 1936, my parents came back from India. At that stage, they probably felt that they had hadn't spent enough time with their kids, and also that their kids had been virtually homeless; so they clearly needed to do

something special. My father was posted to the Headquarters of Southern Command in Salisbury, and they rented what is arguably the nicest house in the Cathedral Close of Salisbury. It is the most beautiful Close in England. This is partly because it is the biggest, and the Cathedral is surrounded by enormous lawns, on 3 sides, so you get marvellous perspectives of it; and partly because it contains 75 delightful houses.

The Close was very much a community. At night, the three Close gates were shut, and after that you could only get in at all through one of them. You did this by ringing the bell, and asking the warden for permission. But otherwise you were locked out. The community was centered on the Cathedral. Although my Christian upbringing was well attended to at Twyford, it was greatly reinforced by having Salisbury's Cathedral as effectively my Parish Church in the holidays. We got to know the people in the Cathedral very well: in particular my brother and I were very friendly with somebody called the "Clerk of the Works". He would take us to the top of the tower, which is 200 feet high. On one occasion, using a series of ladders inside the spire, he took us up to a little door that looks out, just 23 feet from the top of the spire, over the countryside. The spire, by the way, is 404 feet high. So you would get a fantastic view.

Our house was itself superb. And it's actually better today than when we lived there. This is because the subsequent owners have taken off the tasteless Victorian entrance porch. The interior and the exterior of the house were lovely; and it was also very antique, as parts of it were constituted by the 13th century Close wall. It also included in the garden what we called a Summer House, a little Georgian construction of an apparently decorative nature. But what most people didn't know was that, in the gable of this Summer House, there was a hidden chamber, where priests used to hide during the persecution of the Roman Catholic Church in the 17th century. There was also an escape tunnel from there, underneath the Close wall, to the pub across the road. It was an exciting place to live.

TR: Do you think that your religious education played a role in the forming of your European/pro-European identity?

CA: I don't think a direct role, no. It has certainly played a major role in my career generally, in the sense that I have always believed that one should be fully committed to anything one does; and should do one's very best at it. That has been my motto since I was at school, and I see it is a Christian tenet. But not more than that. I think Europeanism came through a process of logic, rather than through religion. You could say, of course, that the Church has influenced all Europeans, but in my case it was limited to that.

TR: Did your parents share with you, with your brother and sister, their international experience, their cosmopolitan background?

CA: Well, when I was born, they were still living in Germany, and my father served in the British Army of Occupation there, starting shortly after the end of the war. I don't remember the exact dates, but they were there in the early twenties, for 2 or 3 years. I was born in Wiesbaden in 1926. We left for the UK six months later, so I did not learn a word of German. But my parents were clearly living in a very British or "Allied" circle. I saw later, when I was there from 1949 to 1952, just how British Army people abroad tend to live in their own circle, and mix with local people hardly at all. I think my parents must have been of that persuasion. So I did not learn much about Germany ever from them. India was another matter: by that time, they were taking photographs, and they had a photograph album of their time in India. They saw quite a lot of the huge country: in particular they saw quite a lot of the north west frontier, so that Afghanistan was more than a concept to them. And they were also in Quetta at the time of the massive earthquake in 1930, which, I believe, killed 50,000 people. And they would talk about these things. So yes: to that extent I learnt about the Indian Empire, as it was then called, from my parents at an early age, when I was between 10 and 13.

TR: Yes that was a rather, should I say, classic Empire education, in the sense that you were opened to the world overseas, but a world that was kind of framed within the concept of the British Empire.

CA: Absolutely. The period 1936-1939 - when my parents and I were living in Salisbury - saw the height of the British Empire. In real terms, the height had passed perhaps 10-15

years earlier, because independence movements were by now growing fast in India; but these had not yet matured, and were not perceived by my parents as a threat to the Empire at that particular time. In 1940, Winston Churchill, speaking about the Battle of Britain, referred to the possibility that the British Empire might "last for a thousand years". It was not just a figure of speech, it was something he clearly believed empires might do. My parents, in the late 1930s, would probably have had the same approach. Gandhi was seen by my parents as an important personality, but not as somebody who was threatening the British Empire.

If I can just complete your question about my youth. In 1939 World War 2 came, and my father was posted immediately abroad. He came and went during the war: mostly he was abroad. There was no question of my mother staying in a large house in Salisbury, which was seen as a place likely to be bombed by the Luftwaffe. The initial thought she had was to get as far away as possible. The parents had great friends who lived at a place called Cymmerau, near Llandafy, in Central West Wales. These people had a cottage, and had offered to rent it to them. My mother's initial idea was to go there for the whole war. But, for reasons I haven't yet got to the bottom of, she thought better of this. We were soon spending school holidays at my grandfather's house here. And what seemed to start by chance, became more or less permanent. We did actually spend the summer holidays of 1940, the moment of greatest threat to Britain, at Cymmerau. But that was the only visit; and the rest of the time, we used to come up here for our holidays.

TR: Which subjects were you reading in College? Did it influence your idea of Europe?

CA: Well, Winchester College is the top Public School, academically, in Britain; so obviously I had a good education. I also rose to the top form rather quickly; and there I had a very inspiring teacher, by the name of "Budge" Firth, who had a much wider world view than my parents. He also had a much better sense of the proportion of the things we have been discussing. I quote one of his sermons in my book. He was an inspiring person.

I chose to study languages: why did I do that? I think partly because, during the pre-war period that we talked about, my parents thought it good for us to learn French. Indeed,

we had a French girl, Odile de la Varenne, who came and lived in our family from time to time, and talked only French to us. After a while, she recommended, and my parents accepted, that the boys at least should be sent to France to stay with a family she knew, the Forest-Divonnes, at St Martin-du-Mont, near Bourg-en-Bresse, France. My brother was sent there in 1938, and Louis, his opposite number in the Forest-Divonne family, came over and stayed with us for one holiday. Then, in the next year, 1939, I was sent over, and my opposite number came to Salisbury.

The Forest-Divonne family was very nice. Of course by then, what with having Odile and also Louis around, we were speaking good French. It was very well taught at school anyway. I loved my 3 weeks in France, and was very sad when they were interrupted by Hitler starting WW2. But the experience gave me a taste for the language. I don't know what started me on German: perhaps the fact that I liked French, encouraged me to learn another language. Certainly, I was not pushed by my parents to study any particular subject; but I chose to learn French and German, and became proficient in both. I subsequently branched out into Spanish and Italian, all of which were taught well at Winchester College. Italian was the last language I learnt and I was never so proficient at that. But, over time, largely because of that early training, and also subsequently due to the practical use of the languages, I became bilingual in the first three. So I focused on languages. And of course, History was an obligatory part of the curriculum. Again my teacher was "Budge" Firth, and he was very good at it. He would enact pieces of History in front of the class, and it was always a pleasure to go to the History classes. So yes, that certainly helped further my further knowledge of the world and of Europe.

TR: What about your experience of the War: first, when you were a teenager, and then your experience in the Army?

CA: I didn't have any proper war experience in the Army. I joined up when I was 18, so we are talking about the summer of 1944, i.e. after D-Day. I had a long period of training: in those days, they did not hurry things. We did 8 weeks primary training in Scotland, when I was trained by soldiers of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. We used to march back to our camp, headed by the band of the Royal Scots, whose tie I am now wearing. After that, I wanted to follow my father in the Royal Artillery. As a result, I was

sent to a Royal Artillery school, at Larkhill in Wiltshire, and spent 6 months training there to be a gunner, a driver and a wireless operator. At the end of that time, I was vetted, so to speak, by some group, and found suitable to be sent to an Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU). I was posted to the Royal Artillery OCTU at Catterick in Yorkshire. That was about a 6 months course. At the end of that time, I was commissioned. Almost immediately after that, I was sent abroad. We are now talking about the January, 1946. The war was over, but the role of the British Army was not finished. At the end of the war, the British Empire, broadly defined as all the territories governed by Britain, was larger than before, because we had taken over territories from other countries, notably Italy. At that time, we were in charge of Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq and other places. I was sent to the Middle East, initially for a short while to Cairo, and then on to Palestine, where I spent most of my Middle East years. But, half-way through, I was sent off to Greece for a year. Being able to spend really quite a lot of spare time in countries like Palestine, Jordan, Egypt and perhaps especially Greece, was a huge privilege. We could travel where we wanted when off duty. Mind you, we had to be armed in most of these places. But we could go and see whatever we wanted, all over these countries. This immensely broadened my education. In the short period I was in Egypt, my German also came in handy, because I was used as an interpreter in prisoner of war camps for Germans. I did not learn modern Greek. I knew Ancient Greek and Latin from school. At least I could read the Greek alphabet, which was an advantage. I was in touch with Greeks, because my Battery became the Battery of the new Greek School of Artillery, so we were teaching Greek officers how to fire their guns. Mind you, we had to talk in English, but we got to understand quite a lot of modern Greek nevertheless. Also my father, who was Second-in-Command of British Forces in Greece at that time, knew people in Greek Government circles. So I got to know more than the usual Army circle of people. But I don't claim that I got to know a huge number of Greeks very well.

TR: Did these experiences abroad bring you to the idea of becoming a diplomat?

CA: No, I decided to become a diplomat at the age of 17 when still at Winchester College. Until that time, my father and mother had always assumed that both their boys would follow their father's footsteps and become regular Gunner Officers. Before I went to Public School, it never crossed my mind that there was any other option in life. One day,

I think when we were discussing what subject to learn next, in a bilateral talk with my Housemaster - once again "Budge Firth" - he said: "What are you going to do when you leave school?" I said "Well I'm expecting to enter the Army as a professional". And he said: "Are you sure that's the best job for you?" So I said: "Well, what else do you suggest?" He replied: "Well you're very good at languages, why don't you consider being a diplomat?" I said: "What's a diplomat?" He explained: and I said: "Well that's very interesting". I then wrote to my mother to say I had decided to become a diplomat. Thereupon there was a sort of nuclear explosion in Ackenthwaite: my mother soon caught a train down to Winchester; to spend the night there. In the evening, she called on my House-master, myself being present at the interview. She said effectively "What the hell is all this?" She did not use words like that, but that was the essence of her message.

Budge, who was a diplomatic character himself, answered very carefully, very clearly, and very persuasively. He said that diplomacy was very important to Britain, that diplomats performed a very useful role (which he described), that a key requirement for being one was to be good at languages, that I had that requirement, and that was what had led him to make the suggestion. After a certain amount of argument, much to my surprise, my mother accepted this, and said in effect: "Well, what do we do next?" She was advised that I should obtain a place at University. It so happened that an uncle of mine was the Bursar of Caius College, Cambridge. A place was immediately found for me there. So really, from the age of 17, I had determined that I would be a diplomat. Mind you, my parents went on hoping that with experience in the Army, I would change my mind and "see sense". But I didn't.

TR: You explained clearly in your book how entered the Foreign Office in 1948 via a special path, not the University one. Do you remember your first experience of the Foreign Office, your first memory of it?

CA: When I entered the Foreign Office, I was posted to a Department called the Commonwealth Liaison Department (CLD). And this was again a case of "Right Place, Right Time". The Commonwealth was growing, its importance was increasing, and its Member States had not yet - not even the Canadians or Australians - developed adequate

Foreign Services. In particular the new Commonwealth countries, such as India, Pakistan and Ceylon, did not have any Foreign Services at all. They were just beginning to think about the matter. In consequence, the British Government accepted without question that it was their duty to keep all Commonwealth countries informed about world affairs. So we in CLD sent out a whole series of telegrams, to our posts in all the Commonwealth countries, for the benefit of the Governments concerned. They were called "Intels" - a reference to "Intelligence" no doubt - on every aspect of British foreign policy or foreign affairs. The result of this was that, as a young man in that Department, I got to know people in every other Department in the Foreign Office. I would go to them and say "Hey, what's going on in your field?" They would give me the details. Then, I would draft a résumé of British Foreign Policy in that area; clear it with the responsible Department; amend it if necessary; and then get it sent off as an Intel.

This was enormously educational: it taught me so much about the whole world. At that time, you only had to mention a country, and I would tell you instantly what its capital was. I am afraid that's no longer the case. But I was also fortunate in terms of the Department's staff. It was very small. The Head of Department - the late Geoffrey Furlonge - left the work to his subordinates, and just nodded things through. Most things we did not even put up to him. But the Assistant - number 2 in the Department - was a chap by the name of Micky Joy, who would have had a major career in the Foreign Office if family events hadn't taken him out of the Service in mid career, which was a pity. He was very efficient, and indeed was effectively Head of the Department. I was reporting directly to him; and 95% of what I put to him went through without amendment. But he was very good at introducing me into patterns of behaviour in the Foreign Office. I was learning patterns of policy from the policy people, but I was learning patterns of behaviour from Micky. So, after that, I went to Berlin, as you know.

TR: Being posted to Berlin and Bonn, you had rather quickly important responsibilities in certain negotiations. Can you briefly sum them up, and say precisely what were the basic diplomatic skills that you had to acquire at such an early age?

CA: Let me prelude this by saying that, once again, I was part of a team of very remarkable people. When I first arrived, General Robertson was still Military Governor,

a position which soon became that of High Commissioner. Very shortly afterwards, he was replaced by Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, who became a legendary figure in the Foreign Office. Under him, the chain of command was all first class. His Deputy was Christopher Steel, who became an important Ambassador later. Next down, as Head of Chancery, was Con O'Neill, the most brilliant member of the Foreign Service I have ever met. Below him, as Head of the External Relations Section in Chancery, was Terence Garvey, another future good Ambassador. Under him was Peter Male, yet another future good Ambassador. And under him there was me. This was a quite extraordinary chain of command, and I learnt a lot from all my superiors

But, coming back to your question "How did I get into the negotiating function?", the answer is by happenstance. The Chancery is the Political Section of an Embassy - or in this case of a High Commission. In Bonn, there was an Internal Relations Section, which kept an eye on German domestic politics, and reported back to London about them. And then there was our External Relations Section, which dealt inter alia with any necessary negotiations with the Germans. The recently promulgated Occupation Statute had given the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) a form of semi independence. Clearly we were moving towards full FRG independence: there was no doubt about that. To me, this was very remarkable. We're talking about a period just 4 years after the war. If you consider the equivalent period after the First World War, we were going to be still occupying Germany for several more years. So how did it come about that the three Western Allies - the USA, the UK and France - were all of one mind, quite so early on, that the FRG should be given independence. Different factors played a part: the first factor, in my perception, is that there was a guilty conscience about the Versailles Treaty. There were thoughts by the Allies that they had over punished the Germans after the First World War, and that this indeed was one of the reasons for the Second World War. So there was a feeling that we mustn't do the same thing over again: we must act differently. Secondly of course, there was the Cold War. And, although Allied/USSR relations were bad before the Berlin airlift: the onset of the airlift, in 1948, brought the Cold War fully home, particularly in Germany, in a way nothing else had done. Many people realized that somehow we must consolidate Western Europe, and therefore we must re-integrate West Germany, which was a stand alone. (East Germany was of course fully subject to Soviet domination.) This approach led to the idea: "Right, we must work out a next move

to giving the West Germans their independence". This feeling was re-inforced, soon after, by the Schuman Declaration of 9 May, 1950, which gave yet another reason for FRG independence, because there was a family of nations being created, into which an independent West Germany could be safely integrated. All these things came together, to convince people to make the next move to full FRG independence, with all deliberate speed. So the next question was: "how do we do it?" Obviously we'd got to have Treaties, which we preferred to call Conventions for some reason, to give the FRG its independence. And so the idea of the Bonn Conventions emerged. I don't have in my mind which was the exact month when it was decided to begin the Allied/FRG negotiations. But there was an accepted need to have Conventions releasing the FRG from occupation.

Next question: what Conventions do we need? The most important was a General Relations Convention, which gave independence, and abandoned occupation of the FRG by the Allied Powers. The second most important Convention was the one which defined the rights and responsibilities of the Allied Forces. These were essentially limited to defending Berlin (which was not part of the FRG); and to helping to ensure that the FRG was not invaded by the rapacious USSR. The third was a Finance Convention. And the fourth was a "Convention on the Settlement of Matters arising from the War and the Occupation". This last was something of a ragbag: everything that didn't fit comfortably into the other Conventions was automatically allotted to this one. As a result, it dealt with such varied things as Reparations, the Restitution of Property to Victims of Nazi Oppression, Compensation to the Victims of Nazi Persecution, and also totally different things such as Civil Aviation. In the end, there were 9 separate Chapters. In the meanwhile, I had joined the Chancery staff. There was no obvious role for me at first. So, as things arose which existing staff were not particularly interested in, they were handed on to me.

By a happy coincidence, when the Bonn Conventions came to be negotiated, I was already the Desk Officer for virtually all the matters covered by the one last named above. So I was appointed to be the overall Co-ordinator of the British position. Obviously, when it came to things such as Civil Aviation, I could not negotiate alone. I had to have somebody fetched in to help, from wherever Department was concerned,

to advise me in the relevant Working Group. (We had different Working Groups for each of the 9 chapters.) This person would agree with me what should be said; but I had sole responsibility for reporting each development to the next meeting between the High Commissioners and the Chancellor on the Petersberg afterwards, and taking their instructions.

TR: And you were only 26?! No, excuse me, 24.

CA: Yes it was extraordinary. Again comes the question of “Right Place Right Time”

TR: Can you tell me more about Con O’Neill whom you praised a few minutes ago and who is still a rather mysterious figure for me?

CA: As a person, he was a perfectly normal family man, he had a nice wife and kids. You can look them up. I remember the oldest daughter is Onora. They lived in a nice house, where I later lived myself, in Bad Godesberg. I used to go there fairly often, because I used to play games with their kids, and also got invited to their parties. And they were, quite simply, a very straightforward, well-integrated, nice family. Con, in short, was a good family man.

Secondly, he was a great bird watcher. I think I may have described in my book the occasion when I went into his office when his Secretary was not there. I went straight into his room, and found him kneeling on the floor, looking out of the window, studying the birds.

So he was very much a human person. At the same time, as I remarked before, he was the most intelligent member of the Foreign Service I have ever met: very shrewd, very well-informed, very wise, and very good tactically. You couldn’t fault him as a diplomat. Fortunately, he was also good at teaching new staff. I went in, as the most newly joined member of his staff, and I was treated, I would say, more or less as an equal. If I raised a question, he would never just dismiss it. He would always answer it seriously and carefully. And he always gave valuable advice as to which way to move.

And then of course, he was a man of principles: that is very important. You know about his three resignations from the Service. They were all on matters of principle. To him, that was more important than his career: there's no doubt about that. But it so happened, nevertheless, that he was always invited back, and he ended his career brilliantly, in charge at Official level of the successful Rippon negotiations. You couldn't have chosen anybody better than him to get the deal.

TR: During your time in Bonn, what was your personal opinion about the British refusal to join the Schuman Plan? You mentioned those important statesmen whom you had met, and you also mentioned Monnet. How did you get in contact in that group of people?

CA: I don't claim that I then knew any of them very well in Bonn; but contact largely arose because the Allied Foreign Ministers would meet there from time to time, to review relations with the FRG, and more particularly to see how the Bonn Conventions were going; and also, later on, to talk about the proposal for the FRG to create a new Army of 12 Divisions. There was, if you like, an important "Allied/FRG Agenda", which had to be looked after at the highest level. Ernie Bevin, of course, was then the British Foreign Secretary. The Foreign Ministers would convene at the Petersberg, which was the standard meeting place for High Commissioners; and because the Bonn Conventions were normally discussed, I would often be in the room. So, without claiming that I spoke personally much to these gentlemen, I heard them a lot. That was the important thing. And I learnt to know how they would react in different sorts of situation.

Now, as regards to the Schuman Plan, I wouldn't say that in Bonn I formed a strong personal view on the matter. My principal work was on my Convention, and I focused primarily on that. The Schuman Plan was, if you like, a necessary con-comitant. I had to know about it. I had to know what the implications were. I had to know what the British Government's attitude was. But to me this was background material. At that stage, I was not taking a strong personal position on whether the Brits should join or not.

This changed when I moved on to Strasbourg, and heard all the great debates at the Council of Europe. In those days, Strasbourg had the only European Assembly. So I heard all the run-ups to major European events. The ECSC High Authority had just come into

being. And the first meetings of the Common Assembly were being held, also at Strasbourg. But the key new issues at that time were the proposal for the European Defence Community (EDC) and the European Political Community (EPC). People thought that, if they were to have a Defence Community, there must be a Political Community to top it. Those debates were enormously instructive, and at that stage you couldn't avoid taking a view. If you sit, day after day, listening to people debating the benefits or disadvantages of European integration, you are bound to come to a view of your own. In due course, I formed the view that they (Schuman, Monnet, de Gasperi, Luns, Spaak, etc.) were right, and the others were wrong.

TR: It is notorious that at that time London was fairly sceptical about the Council of Europe, to the potential development of that institution.

CA: No, that's not correct, not the Council of Europe. The Brits were strongly in favour of the Council of Europe: people in Britain forget this. It was after the Hague Conference of 1948, that the Council of Europe was set up, with full British support from the start. Please get that right. The main achievement of the Council of Europe in its early years was the European Convention of Human Rights, and who thought that up? Brits!

TR: Yes absolutely. But it was said in some recent research works that British politicians, despite that fact they valued the idea of a Council of Europe and the ECHR, feared, or at least did not wish that the institution might get bigger and have bigger influence. It was for instance demonstrated that the British supported strongly the idea that the Council of Europe should be located in Strasbourg which, at that time was, so to say, in the middle of nowhere, and not an important European city.

CA: Well, I don't think that's quite the point. The fact is that the Council of Europe was purely inter-Governmental at all times. It was the moment when the Six started talking about setting up separate supranational organisations that the opposition began to make its voice heard. I don't doubt that, at all times, there were people saying: "Let's keep out of Europe, we're not part of it, etc"; but it was certainly a very small minority when I went to Strasbourg in 1952. And I would not even know they were there; people who opposed the Council of Europe were not brought to my attention in the three years

I was in Strasbourg.

TR: Then you left for Washington and joined the Chancery. Your Ambassador at that time was Roger Makins (later Lord Sherfield). Do you remember him? He is today notorious for being one the key senior officials who advocated the rejection of the Schuman Plan in 1950. What is your main recollection of him?

CA: Well of course, I used to see him in a very different context from what we've been discussing. We were in the USA and I was concerned with 2 main themes. First of all, political developments in the USA, on which I was preparing the Ambassador's reports to the FO; and, second, South American and Antarctic affairs.

Roger was an excellent Ambassador: no doubt about that. In terms of his relations with the US President, entertaining and being entertained, and leading the team in the Embassy, you couldn't fault him.

I never had the occasion to discuss with him the precise question of Britain's relations with the European Communities; so, in a sense, I cannot usefully comment on your question. But it may interest you to know that, many years later, after the Falklands War, when I was in London giving evidence to a House of Lords' Committee, Roger was a member of it. After the meeting, we had a little talk: and I happened to say that I wrote a Despatch from Buenos Aires, in 1963, saying that, if the British Government were to maintain existing policies relating to the Falklands and the South Atlantic, there would in course of time be war with Argentina, and we might be easily driven out of the Islands, which of course we were. I added that it always seemed to me that the Argentine claim was valid. He said: "It's funny you should say that: I was Desk Officer responsible in the FO in the 1930's, and I wrote a memorandum saying exactly the same thing; and when I asked to see it recently, I was told it was classified". That conversation was in 1983 or 1982. So you see, it wasn't as if he were a strong imperialist; because he felt, as I feel, that there is case for saying that the Falklands actually do belong to Argentina.

I'd like to talk about the UK's "Special Relationship" with the USA. There's no doubt that there was still, when I was there, such a relationship. Of course it had been exceptionally

close during World War 2, when all secrets, including intelligence and nuclear secrets, and probably all plans, were fully shared. Afterwards it persisted for some years, and the Cold War helped it to survive. The fact that Eisenhower was President, during my time there, also helped to maintain it. But it was already apparent to me, even then, that it was being diluted. The USA was already more positive towards European integration than Britain was, and cultivated her relationships with other west European countries diligently. The breakup of the British Empire was in full swing, meaning that Britain was of steadily diminishing importance in world affairs. The sterling area was a declining asset to Britain. But it was nevertheless a tenet of British foreign policy to believe that Britain maintained its place as a World Power, and that the Special Relationship was unaffected. I thought this was simply unrealistic. I just wanted to make that point.

TR: Now turning to the time you were posted back to London, can you tell me a bit more about this questionnaire that had been circulated within Whitehall when you arrived in the Economic European Organizations Department (EEOD)? You were the person in charge of writing the summary of the answers, and reporting to the Cabinet, weren't you?

CA: It was John Robinson and myself together. He had himself drafted the questionnaire. He was, at that stage, definitely leading, and I was following. He had, by then, been in the Department for quite a while, and was well-established. Also there was a division of labour between us. Although we were always interchangeable – that was the extraordinary thing about our relationship – nevertheless, he focused on European Community affairs, and I focused on EFTA affairs, which then were time-consuming. But I did help him on this question, yes.

TR: Did he - or did you - in a way orientate a bit the conclusions of the summary, as you have suggested here and there? Because Whitehall was, at that stage, should I say overwhelmingly reluctant?

CA: No, that is not correct. I would say that Whitehall was broadly positive, apart from reticence or objections in the Ministry for Farming, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), in the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO), both for obvious reasons, and in the Treasury. But for other Departments, basically there were no problems.

TR: So the majority of the people in the Foreign Office were in favour at that time?

CA: I don't know what you mean by a majority. If we talk about the policy formers, yes we were all favourable. Ted Heath was Lord Privy Seal already; and Roger Lavelle, his Private Secretary, was entirely on his side. I have referred to my two Under-Secretaries in my book. Evelyn Shuckburgh, who was the political one, was favourable.

TR: And Roderick Barclay too ...

CA: Roddie, as always, sailed with the wind a bit. He was not opposed, but not tremendously in favour. However, he accepted the advice from John and from me. Our Head of Department, Ken Gallagher, was a virtual nonentity. John and I used to report directly to our Under-Secretaries. Ken had really no visible influence on the input that John Robinson and I were making to policy formation at high level. And Ted Heath had no problem with the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden. One further comment about officialdom at that time. I would say that those officials who were in charge of the Foreign Office in the late Forties and the early Fifties – the Schuman period if you like – had largely disappeared, and their successors were much more open to consider the European project.

TR: Talking about this old generation, did you know Sir Frank Lee?

CA: I knew him distantly, but did not deal directly with him. However, he was positive.

TR: Let's talk about the first negotiating team under the leadership of Ted Heath. Can you just remind me what was your function within the team and make a few comments about your closest colleagues?

CA: My closest colleague was of course John Robinson, and we were the two work horses. We were both generalists. I'll comment on John in a minute. We were really interchangeable at that time. We had spent a year and a half together already, in EEOD, and our relationship was symbiotic.

As to the top members of the team, the Head was Sir Pierson Dixon - known as "Bob" - who was also British Ambassador in Paris. His Deputy was Sir Eric Roll. The next level consisted of very senior officials of different Government Departments. They became known as "The Flying Knights". They would fly in to Brussels on a Tuesday, and fly out again on Friday, or even on Thursday night. The Negotiations would occur, in the middle of the week, in a most unsuitable room in the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We used to compare it with the Black Hole of Calcutta: it was so overcrowded and airless. John and I knew all the Flying Knights. We were the contact points at all times. They had to keep us in the picture. Also, John and I both attended all the negotiating meetings with the Six Member States, no matter what they were about. If one of us had to be away, the other was certainly there. Eric [Roll], by the way, was never, in my opinion, a strong European, though some people would argue otherwise.

TR: It is indeed a rather unusual opinion to hear about him. Could you explain why?

CA: I don't say he was against integration, but let's say he was never enthusiastic, as Ted was. Just a difference of approach. I'm not suggesting that he got in the way, but I think that, if I had been Eric, I would have been doing much more to discipline and convert his former MAFF colleagues, who were a bloody nuisance. That was because the Under-Secretary in MAFF - Freddie Bishop - who was in charge on their side, was totally opposed to British Accession from start to finish. He simply created issues. For example, he said: "We'll stay with our deficiency payments, and if we're going to move out, my God, it would be at heavy cost". That was his approach to life. And I think Eric should have done much more to convert his old Department: that's why I say his heart was never totally with it.

TR: Do you think it was a feeling of Whitehall habitus that prevented him from being more assertive with his Department?

CA: He had a lot of experience of course. But his main experience was precisely in the MAFF. And a person of that seniority, who had been in a senior position in that Ministry, should have been able to do more. He should have been able to go to the Minister

personally and say: "Look, your Deputy-Under Secretary has got this wrong". There was never any sign of him doing anything to try to change the view of his own former Department. I think that John Robinson, if he was still alive, would agree with me that Eric was not what you and I would call a committed European. He was simply "doing a job."

TR: Yes, he was doing the job. Still he had a strong European background, having led the British Delegation at the OEEC in Paris for two years, being a personal friend of Robert Marjolin, former assistant of Monnet, who was one of the first French Commissioners in Brussels

CA: Well it was a funny arrangement, because we had Bob Dixon as our theoretical Head. But he was also Ambassador in Paris. That was, of course, a big job. And I don't think he gave the Brussels Negotiations as much time, or as much push, as he should have done. And the fact that - after De Gaulle's veto - he was prepared to sign Despatches from Paris and from Brussels, the first saying that De Gaulle would never have let us in, and the second saying that De Gaulle might have let us in if we had pushed faster and earlier, reflects a certain duality of approach. I don't think the arrangement was good. In my view, if they had put Con O'Neill in to lead us, we would probably have got the negotiations finished successfully by July. 1962.

TR: Were you still in touch with Con O'Neill at that time?

CA: Only in the sense of exchanging Christmas cards. He was Ambassador to Finland at that time. I kept in touch, but not in a close way.

TR: Can you say a word about Roger Lavelle?

CA: Roger was always totally like John and me. I mean he was committed, totally supportive of his boss, and very efficient.

TR: Let's come to your friendship and work with John Robinson. You knew him from the European Economic Organisations Department. Do you remember your first encounter

with him? Can you develop on what you called yourself your symbiotic relationship?

CA: When Peter Pooley got in touch with me about your wish to visit, I knew a question on John Robinson would arise. I thought to myself: "What exactly was your relationship? How did you create it"? There then developed an email correspondence between Peter Pooley and myself, which Peter entitled me to give to you today. Somehow I felt I had not said everything in my book, so I asked Peter his opinion of that relationship, and he wrote a page of email and I replied to that. When I was first posted to EEOD, it was obvious to me that John was supremely well-informed on European Community matters, for which I greatly respected him. I think he must have taken to me, for I made clear from the start that I was as committed as himself to the cause of European Community membership for the UK, unlike our pedestrian Head of Department, Ken Gallagher. He probably also appreciated the fact that I had known Schuman, Luns and Spaak personally, I had encountered them frequently for several years in Strasbourg. And we discussed all that. Of course he would not have extended his friendship if he had not also seen me as reasonably capable. So, as I mentioned, we deliberately made each other interchangeable, although we each had our own spheres in the negotiation to work on. For instance, I did all Old Commonwealth and Agriculture matters; and he did New Commonwealth, Associated Status etc. Each kept an eye on what the other was doing. We could and did stand in for each other when it would be useful. And each of us, faced with any question, even a quite new one, could be relied on to give the same answer.

I come back to my main point. Although I worked throughout my life closely with many excellent colleagues, I've never had such a symbiotic relationship with any other individual. I totally agree with your own comment: it was only later that I realized that John was like nobody else at all.

You'll see what Peter wrote. He was of course at a lower level in the UK Delegation for the Heath negotiations: I suppose the equivalent of a Foreign Office 2nd Secretary. And he was the resident MAFF official representative in Brussels. That did not mean he spoke in the negotiating meetings. He did not. But he was MAFF's contact person, and supported the Under-Secretary who came out to Brussels.

TR: John Robinson's role was made famous by Hugo Young's book "This Blessed Plot": but what kind of man was he?

CA: Firstly, let me tell you that he was a very good family man. He had a Swiss wife, Marianne, and two kids. I went to see him after he retired to Cordes, in France. He was a very normal family man. His kids by then were about 18 or 19. Secondly, when he liked you, you could get on very well together, as was proved in my case. This was not only in the office. We would frequently lunch together. Mind you, our lunches were not completely free of discussion about Europe, but we would also discuss other things. Throughout his time on Ted Heath's team, John and his wife owned a property in the Valais (Switzerland), and he loved going there on holidays. They weren't ski-ing persons as far as I recollect, but he loved the Swiss countryside. And he knew all the people around there: his wife encouraged him to integrate. To turn to another side of his personality, yes it is true that, because he was so efficient himself, he was perhaps a little bit short with people who weren't able to operate at his level. Certainly, if people came up with silly arguments, they would be bashed down pretty vigorously, but also very logically.

TR: There is very little biographic material available on him. From what kind of background was he coming?

CA: I think Hugo says something in his book about that. Background was not important, we simply worked together, and we were very busy, up to 18 hours a day. So we did not have a lot of time for social banter if you like.

TR: Was he a religious person?

CA: Not that I am aware of.

TR: He had a public school and Oxford background, right?

CA: Yes I think he was in Westminster School: that's in Hugo's book anyway. He was very straightforward. He had, if you like, a very strong intellect.

TR: When you were both in Brussels at the end of the negotiation, did you see him operate? Did he have already that large network on contacts in Brussels?

CA: Well of course, he would have contacts in France, because he had been in Paris before. But I think he built up his European contacts primarily in Brussels: certainly those with Rob Van Schaik. Rob was his Dutch contact. He was a very able young diplomat, just like John, and they got on very well together. But he had contacts in every Delegation; he was a contact person. He was very good at extracting information, and of course the other Delegations were very willing to brief him. I don't mean the French, but the other five. They were all keen to tell us everything we wanted to know. I'm sure that's where he built up his connections.

TR: When you met him throughout the Sixties from time to time, as you explained, did you talk about European affairs?

CA: Oh we would have done so. From 1963 to 1967, I went off to Argentina. This was the result of a deliberate agreement between us. We were told that only one of us could stay in Brussels, working on European Community affairs: and it was left to us, almost entirely, to choose who would stay and who would go. This was never a problem. I had reached a stage where I could see that nothing would happen about UK Accession in the immediate. And I had had such a busy time in Brussels that I wanted a change. John, on the other hand, was sufficiently hungry for more Europe that he wanted to stay. So we agreed in 5 minutes that he would stay and I would go.

Why did the Foreign Office post me to Argentina? Probably because I spoke good Spanish. It meant that I did not see John at all from 1963 to 1967. After that, when I went back to London in 1967, I saw a lot of him. He was back in the FO, but still working on European affairs. I was in the Rhodesian Sanctions Unit to begin with, so I had nothing technically to do with Europe; but we would certainly have had lunches together, so that I could catch up with what was going on, and renew the bond. And then, later in this London period, when Harold Wilson wanted to make his abortive attempt to re-open negotiations with the Six, I was diverted from Rhodesian Sanctions and sent to be

Assistant to Ken Gallagher in what was then the Commonwealth Relations Office's Common Market Department. Of course, from that moment on, I was working hand in glove with John. He was my opposite number in the Foreign Office. We were back on the same relationship again. That only lasted during the brief Wilson period of trying to get into the Community. Shortly after that, I was posted abroad again. And once I was in Bonn, for the second time, I was far too busy on Berlin questions to have much time to spare on the European Communities. Within the Embassy, the Rippon negotiations were followed by a Desk Officer, who was working for me. I would see John occasionally, for example when he came with Ted Heath to Bonn, but no more than that.

TR: A book that was published recently on the so-called Soames Affair¹, and it showed very clearly from the papers that there were 2 competing lines in the FO as to how to make Britain join the EEC and overcome France's veto. And one of them was the Robinson line that was aiming at isolating the French and trying to gang the "friendly five" against them. The plot at the heart of the Soames Affair, i.e. the leak to the press, was probably orchestrated by Donald Maitland and John Robinson in London. Would you concur with that view?

CA: I would not be surprised if John had organized all that. That's the sort of thing he would not hesitate to do, if he thought it was for the good of the country. But I have no direct information.

TR: A last question on John Robinson. Did you know what his opinions were about France? Was it just that he had been, as many, infuriated by the first veto? Or was it something else? For he seemed to be, in some papers, quite hostile to France.

CA: Well, the French were a bloody nuisance you see, right through the negotiations, so there was nothing new about John or me thinking the French were being a bit of a pest. The feeling would have been aggravated, obviously, by De Gaulle's manifest duplicity. But I think it was there before. And we were constantly dealing informally with the Five, right through the negotiation. We would talk to the Dutch, or the Luxembourgers, or the

¹ Claire Sanderson, *Perfide Albion ? L'affaire Soames et les arcanes de la diplomatie britannique*, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011

Germans, when we could not get this or that point through, in discussion with all the Six. We were, you might say, manipulating the Five.

TR: What do you think of the end of his diplomatic career which he finished prematurely after 2 or 3 controversial postings? Do you think that he had gone so obsessed with European affairs that he was not able - or willing - to deal with anything else after Britain joined the EEC?

CA: I did not know him at that time, because we were in separate places. My feeling is that the bluntness he had shown throughout his European career, did not suit in an Embassy. But I have no personal knowledge. There's no doubt that he was blunt to the Algerians, and blunt to the Israelis, and to Peter Jay in Washington. That might have seemed natural, because, as I explained earlier, he did not get on with everybody; and clearly, with these people, certainly with Jay, he disagreed fundamentally. So there's a reason for being brutal and blunt if you like. As to Algerians, he just said we were wasting too much time on Algeria. With Israel again, he was blunt. I would myself be blunt with Israel, for the Israelis are the biggest imperialists in the world at the moment. And he probably said something like that! So I think you know as much as I know on this matter. Hugo's book is probably the best source on it.

TR: What could you say about the transmission of European expertise within Whitehall in the 1960s?

CA: I don't know what happened when I was in Argentina. But that book I showed you - the "Narrative Reports by the UK Delegations to the Conferences at Brussels and Luxembourg for British Accession to the three European Communities, 1961-1963", obtainable through the UK's National Archives - to a large extent, answers your question. Everybody who was concerned with advancing the Rippon negotiations was first directed to that book. So there was a high degree of continuity really, and if you look at the point reached in the Heath negotiations, and then compare it with the final Accession Treaty, you will see that a very high proportion of the Accession Treaty was in fact elaborated in the Heath negotiations.

TR: Did a network of, say, "EEC people" exist in Whitehall? An informal group or a European milieu?

CA: I would not put it that way. I would say that the atmosphere changed after the Heath negotiations. As a result of them, Whitehall had been assuming that British entry into the European Communities was going to come about in due course, on the terms already 70% agreed in the Heath negotiations. Being kicked in the teeth by De Gaulle, left many officials very annoyed, and by definition in favour of another try. The continual presence of John meant that Whitehall was kept well informed. And we knew that the integration project had made in fact a very good start. It did not appear to have, but it had. And the drawbacks of non-membership had become increasingly apparent.

TR: When you refer to the reaction of officials to the vetoes, do you think there was a sort of professional pride to defend, a revenge to take?

CA: Yes, everybody agreed that De Gaulle's behaviour had been unfair. If he was going to come out on the 14th of January 1963 with what he then said, he should have done so at the time of the Accession Application. What he said then, was no more or less valid than it was nearly two years earlier. So it was a dirty trick. There's no doubt about that. And British people don't like dirty tricks. Thinking back about De Gaulle, we had always felt that he was a bit over the top. We worked on the fact that in WW2 he was there, as an ally; but he was very self-important during the War, in relation to what he produced in terms of armed force; he wanted always to be at the top table, even though, in military terms, he was a very junior performer. And when he became French President, of course, he carried this forward and assumed enormous self-importance, both in his own country and outside it. British people, on the whole, don't like self-important, pompous people.

TR: You stayed then for a brief time in the Science and Technology Department at the Foreign Office. What were you doing there, and to what extent did it have to do with Europe? I think Con O'Neill was then one of your Deputy Under-Secretaries.

CA: If you say so, OK. But I don't particularly remember that. I didn't have to work

closely with him. A key point in that Department was that we had a big breakthrough on nuclear matters. With the Almelo Agreement², which was very important indeed – the notion of Britain, a Nuclear Weapon State, going into partnership with the Dutch and Germans, who were Non-nuclear Weapon States, was divisive. And we had to overcome quite a lot of resistance in the Whitehall machine, before it could be given a go ahead. That was my principal work. The other principal issue I dealt with, was the law of the sea. I talk a lot about in my book. It was definitely very important. The Law of the Sea Conference I attended in Rio de Janeiro, in 1968, effectively started a process, which led, in 1982, to the entry into force of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which established the 200 mile exclusive economic zone around all coastal States, fixed the limits of territorial waters, and did much else besides. Those were the two main things that I got up to when I was in that Department. And also I changed its name from “Scientific Relations Department” into “Science and Technology Department”. But there wasn’t a close connection, for example, with the EEC Sciences people, or anything like that.

TR: Going back to Bonn in 1970, were you happy with that assignment? And did you follow closely the Rippon negotiations from the Embassy?

CA: I was certainly happy with the job, and especially the negotiation of the Berlin Agreements. As to the Rippon negotiations, I had to know what was going on. As Head of Chancery, you have to know everything which is affecting the country where you're posted. And yes, I followed them, but I didn't intervene in them. I was not an operator, but observed closely.

TR: What was your opinion about the deal secured by the negotiating teams on the terms of entry?

CA: Broadly speaking, I think it's OK. I have no particular concern.

TR: Did you have second thoughts about the budgetary arrangements?

² Agreement between the UK, the FRG and the Netherlands on Collaboration in the Development and Exploitation of the Gas Centrifuge Process for producing Enriched Uranium

CA: No.

TR: Would you say that, in the course of the 1960s, the Foreign Office had changed, and in which way? The way diplomacy was conceived, the decline of bilateral versus the growing importance of multilateral diplomacy for example?

CA: I don't think I noticed any big change. As I said, the attitude toward the European integration project had changed. For the rest, the old traditions were still going on.

TR: I suppose that, at that stage, you knew Michael Palliser?

CA: Well, I don't remember when I got to know Michael; just remind me of his career.

TR: He was the Foreign Office Private Secretary to Harold Wilson between 1964 and 1968.

CA: I didn't have much to do with him at that time, because the Wilson bid never took off.

TR: Then he asked to be posted as N°2 to Christopher Soames at the Paris Embassy in 1969, and stayed there until 1973, when he left to be the first British Permanent Representative to the EEC in Brussels.

CA: I got to know him seriously when he came to be the UK Permanent Representative (UKREP) in Brussels.

TR: Let's now head to your appointment to the European Commission in 1973: how did it happen? What was your first impression of Brussels?

CA: For the appointment, everything is in the book.

As to my first impression of Brussels; I had no significant problems in integrating myself. And the Six - with the temporary exception of France - had always wanted us in the EEC,

and were pleased to see us. Whitehall, as an organisation, was seen by continental civil servants as a fundamentally effective machine. There was a feeling that the Brits might bring in some fresh ideas about policy handling and administration. By and large, also, the Brits sent high quality officials to the EU Institutions. As a result, British ideas were easily worked into the Commission and Council machinery. But the biggest impact of the UK entry was certainly on the European Parliament. The new British MEPs were used to a Parliament that was much more demanding on the Executive than the Assembly had been on the Commission and on the Council. Question time was very soon imported from Westminster. And the Assembly started to look for more powers, which progressively it got from the Member States.

TR: On a more personal side: when you arrived in Brussels in 1973, who were the people you knew already in the Commission and in UKREP?

CA: Was Michael Palliser already in UKREP? As we have seen, I certainly knew him before he came, but not very well. To tell you the truth, I can't remember all the people there, which is indicative in itself.

In the Commission, I moved straight to the Secretariat General. Emile Noël was a personal friend before I got there. And of course, that made an enormous difference. Here was the man who had been the Secretary-General (SG) of the Commission even since the Merger Treaty of 1958, and who knew everything. He was also someone who had worked personally with Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman and all the Founding Fathers of the European Communities. And he had shared my experience of the Council of Europe. We had an enormous amount in common.

Also, Emile was a shy but very nice person, and we immediately got on. He liked Maura [Lady Audland]; we did not see much of his wife, because his family lived in Bordeaux, and he behaved more as a bachelor when he was in Brussels. He would go off for long week-ends in Bordeaux – to plant a bit more of his forest, or whatever it was. But, as I said, his door was always open to me. It didn't matter what on earth was going on: if I knocked on the door, I went in. We understood each other. I suppose you can say I had a symbiotic relation with him too, perhaps not so perfect as with John: different

traditions of nationality have a certain play on these things, although as you see I'm not greatly infected by that! But we simply got on very, very well. I would ask him a straight question, he would give a straight but considered answer. And I knew I could act on that, and count on his support. Similarly, if he told me to get something done, he knew that it would be well done and that he would be happy with the result.

This put me, of course, in a very strong position in the Commission as a whole. Emile, without being in the slightest bit aggressive, but just by a sheer personality, wisdom and knowledge, overshadowed the whole Commission. Every Director-General, every Director, all looked up to Emile. And, in consequence, they took a good view of his N°2.

Klaus Maier was initially also a fellow Deputy Secretary-General (DSG). Indeed, he was in a way more important than me because - for my first 4 years - he was representing the Commission in the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER). Klaus was a good friend and a good colleague. Initially, from a very early stage, I think I had more of Emile's confidence than Klaus ever had. I have absolutely nothing negative to say about him. But he was never as close to Emile as I was. And I suppose that other people took notice of that.

TR: Did you socialize with other British people in Brussels? Did you know, and were you friends with the British people in the Cabinets of the British Commissioners for instance?

CA: Of course I knew them, I knew everyone in the Cabinets. To me this is a misleading question. It presupposes that I had a predilection for working with Brits. Quite untrue. Officials working in the Community Institutions know from the start that they owe full allegiance to those Institutions, and of course to the Community as a whole. They have no accountability towards their national Government. The very few people who acted contrary to this principle simply broke the rule. So yes, I knew all these Brits. Did I have a special clique of Brits? Definitely not.

TR: But still, from an external point of view, could you observe this process of socialization? Did you know the places – pubs, clubs, Churches – where the Britons in Brussels used to meet or gather?

CA: I saw very little of the British Embassy, although I would automatically be invited to The Queen's Birthday parties and things like that. But I was invited as a Brit, not as a DSG. So I would go to that, and occasional Dinner Parties at the Embassy. On the other hand, when, in UKREP, Michael Palliser and his successors were holding parties, these would be Community-type parties by definition, and they would normally invite me, so I would see a lot of them through that social sector; but it was very much a European approach to things. I don't remember ever going to a party of UKREP which was specifically devoted to Brits only. It would very much surprise me; if it ever happened. But I did go to lots of parties there, because I was a useful channel for him [Michael Palliser] to introduce other European people to his Ministerial visitors.

TR: Did you keep contact with people in Whitehall, either socially or professionally?

CA: No. Well, if they came over I would normally expect to see them, but I would see them because I was DSG.

TR: Ok. So you did not ring Whitehall to ask more details about such or such policy element that you would not have known or understood?

CA: If I wanted to know that, I would ring Michael Palliser or his staff. Just like I would ring the French or German Permanent Representative in the same way.

TR: Going on with the topic of the "British in Brussels". Were you aware of, say the difficulty that Whitehall had in the early days to find people who were willing to go to Brussels? I am not talking about the most senior staff – people like Palliser, Hannay or yourself - but of other people at more junior level. There are indeed accounts of those difficulties in the papers.

CA: I believe what you say. But I had no direct involvement in that matter at all. In my case, I was simply called back from Bonn to London; and, if I remember rightly, it was Roy Denman who interviewed me: that was a very straightforward interview. But that was the only contact I had, if you like, with the selection machinery in Whitehall for

Brussels, so really I know nothing.

TR: And did you know Roy Denman before?

CA: No I didn't. Because I hadn't been involved in the Rippon negotiations, I didn't know Roy. But he was a great personality. I know his widow very well; in fact she stayed here recently, and I took her on a tour of the Lake District. Do you know Moya [Lady Denman]? She lives in London. She recently set up a Trust - the Bruges-Natolin Foundation - to replace the funds for scholarships that used to be provided by the British Government to support young scholars studying at the two Branches of the Collège de l'Europe, in Bruges and Natolin (Poland). If you want to talk about Roy, you should talk to Moya.

TR: Let's turn to you work as Deputy-Secretary-General. If I'm not wrong, the writing of the "Manual of procedures" for officials in the Commission was very much at your initiative. When you started to write this book, what was your main preoccupation? What were the bureaucratic habits or flaws that you were hoping to improve most?

CA: I'm not sure I will answer quite in the way that you put the matter. I had initially raised the question with Emile, asking: "Is there some kind of document that explains to people how they ought to do things, because I have noticed that DG X does a thing this way, DG Y does it in another way, and DG Z does it in a different way again?" He replied that there wasn't any, but that it was actually time to have one. He asked: "Why don't you write it"? The task was thus laid upon me. So I constituted an inter-DG group. Obviously certain DG's - like Admin for example - had permanent positions. Others came in for discussion on particular points, and then went away again. But this major inter-DG group had a fairly lengthy existence. What we did was simply to look at different elements of procedure, and consider them in turn. I would say "This is handled by DG X in this way, by DG Y in that way, and so on. So now let's just think about it: what is the best way to do this?" And either we would choose the approach of, say DG Y, or alternatively, we would say: "Look, none of them has got it right, so why don't we have something new?"

I, for example, produced some suggestions inspired by British practice as to how to do this or that. But it was all very cooperative. We not only considered DG experiences thoroughly, but we also considered national habits, particularly of the new Member States, to see if they could bring something new into the system. And, once we'd reviewed everything, we would simply settle on what seemed like the best practice. And that's how the "Manual of Procedures" was written. The whole exercise proved much easier than I had expected. Perhaps it is relevant to recall that, by then, I myself had very wide treaty negotiating experience. I was used to chairing complex and sensitive meetings. All this helped. But it was definitely a cooperative experience from start to finish.

You have mentioned the question of the "Manual" but I would refer you also to other things covered in my book under the heading: "Modernizing and Improving the Commission's machinery" (see pp. 241-250); and also under the heading on "Briefing methods for Commissioners" (p. 266). All these were things which, in some way, I was instrumental in bringing about in the Commission, and all of them were important. Just to give you one practical example, I would mention computerisation. Computers were not widespread at that date. I contributed to bringing their use to the fore in the Commission. I think that, when I was recruited, the Commission had just one or two mainframe computers. By the time I left, I don't know how many hundred computers it had. We had a special group that was responsible for introducing computerization as a whole into the Commission's psyche.

To sum up on the subject of internal co-ordination, I wasn't constantly producing "bright ideas of my own". I was much more involved in sifting the bright ideas of other people and then pulling them together.

TR: With the distance, would you be able to identify 1 or 2 things, trends, procedures, that really came from Whitehall and that the Brits contributed to transfer to the Commission?

CA. Well I've never even considered the matter this way. I mean it was all so co-operative that, at the end of the day, if I had been asked to remember where any particular idea came from, I would not usually have been able to do so. That was very

much a collective work. It was very good, because it brought the “new boys”, so to speak, in touch with the “old boys”, not in a “new boys/old boy framework”; but rather in a “let’s all work together framework”. It was a great pleasure to do that actually.

TR: Did you have an opinion in those years about the creation of the European Monetary System?

CA: No. Of course it was Roy Jenkins who came up with the idea, not directly of a proper monetary system, but of monetary cooperation. That was Roy’s idea, so I was following around and, as it were, repeating what he was saying. I didn’t make a significant injection into policy formation.

TR: When and how did you make the decision to become a permanent European official, which meant having to leave the Diplomatic Service for good?

CA: I think the initial arrangement was that I would go for 4 or 5 years, before I would have to make that decision. But I had certainly made it by the end of the first 4 year Commission that I served (1973-1977). I was very happy with the work.

TR: You were happy with the work and with the life you were leading in Brussels then?

CA: Yes, and I also thought it was useful public service.

TR: When you became Director General for Energy in 1981, were you happy with appointment, and how did you manage the transition from your previous job to this one?

CA: I was perfectly happy about it. I had been DSG for 8 years, and I was beginning to feel that some change of scene might be interesting. I did hope that I might become DG for External Relations, but Roy [Denman] was appointed to that, and did the job well, so that door closed. Then, when in 1981 my Energy predecessor – Leonard Williams (a Brit) - was leaving, he actually said: “Why don’t you take over from me?” I must have discussed it with him at some length. And I put it to him: “Doesn’t it require a bit more energy expertise than I’ve got?” Of course I had acquired some in the FO Science and

Technology Department. I had, for example, been in charge of British civil nuclear policy, as far as the Foreign Office was concerned. So I wasn't an energy infant; but I certainly couldn't claim to be a specialist in energy policy. He replied: "No. You have the administrative skills necessary to be a DG. You've got a certain amount of knowledge in this field. You can very easily pick up the rest. And I've got a good staff to support you". Encouraged by this, and also because Stevy Davignon was going to be my Commissioner, I said OK. Stevy, by the way, was the best Commissioner the Commission had ever had up to that time. I've always maintained that view. I'm still in touch with him from time to time. He has become a Trustee of the European Opera Centre, at my request!

TR: If you agree, we will go a bit backward to finish this interview. On the 1961-63 Heath negotiations, you mentioned the hostility of people in the MAFF. What about those who were posted in Brussels immediately after entry? Obviously the MAFF had been able to produce a handful of very able "European" officials. I am thinking particularly of Michael Franklin. Did you know him before?

CA: I did not know him before, but Michael was fine. I honestly don't know how opinions developed within the MAFF; but obviously, by the time we joined, they had accepted that they had to take their medicine. And, I suppose, in true British fashion, they felt it had to be swallowed down whole. That's what I assumed. Although the MAFF has always been a nuisance in Brussels about agriculture, they were never absolutely pestilential, as they were in the Heath negotiations.

TR: Did you know David (now Lord) Hannay?

CA: I knew David before he came to Brussels. I knew him when he was in the Paris Embassy. We would have lunch together occasionally, when I happened to be in Paris for OECD meetings, or things like that. I would also sometimes call at the Embassy, as a matter of courtesy. I didn't know him well, but I knew him. Obviously, when he came to Brussels, I knew him very well. I think I mentioned it in my book. David revolutionized or re-invented the task of being a Chef de Cabinet, because he added Whitehall procedural skills to the basically francophone Chef de Cabinet idea.

TR: Yes you described it very clearly in the book indeed. The plus that the Brits brought to the Commission was that the officials in a Cabinet - the equivalent of a British Minister's Private Office - should be not only providers of information but also advisers.

CA: Yes, exactly so. And that was revolutionary. Previously, the French system - the "énarques" system - was very prevalent. (The term "énarques" is the accepted word to mean graduates of the French "École Nationale d'Administration".) This indicated that the Cabinet did not give advice to the Commissioner, they only passed information up at him in an ordered fashion.

TR: You mean, stating the facts only, not giving recommendations?

CA: Putting the facts, and maybe putting the arguments for this or that course of action, but not "therefore we recommend you to do something". That was very clear. What a French Commissioner - or any other Commissioner, because they would all follow the same pattern - would get, was a document which set out: a) there was a problem; b) the basic background facts; and c) this is what different people are saying should be done. Full stop.

TR: That's interesting because political scientists usually oppose the system of the Cabinet, with a politician surrounded by political advisers, more or less politically labelled and pushing for this or that kind of policy, and prefer the British/Whitehall system where the officials advising Ministers are neutral and supposedly able to advise any course of policy. It suggests that behind the image and ideal of neutrality, officials can have clear policy preferences and push for this or that course of action, rather than leaving the Minister make his/her own mind.

CA: Well, this issue is actually under review in Britain, as you may know, and a Report was published - was it yesterday? - by the Secretary of the Cabinet, suggesting some changes. In my day, the situation was different. First of all, there were few - if any - Political Advisers [i.e. non Civil Servants] in the FO. I haven't checked the number today, but I guess there must now be 6 or 10, or something like that. Those people have no detailed professional knowledge, very often, of the subject they're talking about. They

are politicians, like the Minister himself. They just think: "Oh, I've got a bright idea, and we should do this".

Now, in my days such people didn't exist. The Minister relied entirely on his Private Office. And if you got a Minister, like Ernie Bevin at the FO for example, he wanted people to come up with recommendations on what he should do. And when you were working with him, you didn't just come up with an idea. You carefully considered the political situation that the Government were facing in the House of Commons, and what might or might not be put through the House. And you would weight your advice accordingly.

For instance, you may have been a European integrationist yourself; but, in the days of Ernie Bevin, it would not have made sense to recommend an immediate adoption of the Schuman Plan, because it would never have gone through the House. So you would perhaps suggest something that was going that way, but not too far. What about the role of the Private Secretary? The Departmental officials below him would make submissions to the Minister, on which the Private Secretary himself then delivered his opinion. The Private Secretary is the closest person to the Minister who is going to take the decision, and therefore his advice is appreciated. It has changed now, it is quite obvious, I suppose, that, with all these Political Advisers, the bureaucrats are putting forward more options. I don't know that for a fact: don't take anything I say on this subject about today's world as being necessarily true.

TR: To come back again to your second period in Bonn. Did Nicholas Henderson who was your Ambassador at the very end of your period there, influence your views on Europe?

CA: No. Nicko's previous post had been Warsaw. He came from there to Bonn, and later went on to Paris. So, on arrival, he was a great expert on, if you like, Cold War problems: Poland, East Germany, that sort of thing. I don't know if he held strong views on West European integration at that time or not. It was not a subject that would have come up in the discussions between us, because by then the Rippon negotiations would have been concluded, and we would be clearly set on the accession path. So I certainly don't remember any discussion on this with him.

TR: A last question; for you, what was the best of times and what was the worst of times? Let's divide the question into 2 periods: before and after 1973.

CA: I think the achievement of the Bonn Conventions was extremely important, and therefore welcome. What saddened me was that they did not enter into force for another three years. But you know that. So that was a first massive move forward, as far as I was concerned.

It was a bad time when we had the period of the different European Community proposals, and the British being negative about all of them. Was it the worst of times? I don't know, but it was clearly a bad time for people like me, who thought we should be going in. Of course, the time of the Heath negotiations was a good time, until they fell to the ground. And, after we joined the Community, the rest of my career was all a good time, as far as I was concerned.

TR: That is a pleasant conclusion to draw from all this. Thank you very much indeed, Sir Christopher, for this fascinating interview.