

BDOHP Biographical Details and Interview Index

Sir (Gerald) Hayden Phillips (born 9 February 1943)

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Sir Hayden Phillips

interviewed by Malcolm McBain on 16 May 2011

MM: Sir Hayden, could I ask you to give me a brief description of how you joined the Civil Service and how you came in contact first of all with Roy Jenkins?

HP: I joined in 1967 having gone to Yale after Cambridge. I had taken the Civil Service exams before going to Yale and had been offered a place, which I had deferred for two years. For a variety of reasons, although I enjoyed my time in America, I decided to come back to London and take up my place and I was allocated to the Home Office. For a few years I did some quite interesting but not very exciting jobs and then in 1974 after the first election that year, Roy became Home Secretary for the second time and after a couple of months I was invited to be his deputy Private Secretary. Then, after the second election in 1974 he invited me to be his Principal Private Secretary. I was quite young when I became his Principal Private Secretary, just 31. That was the beginning of a long personal and professional relationship and it was undoubtedly the beginning of the way in which I became slightly more of an internationally engaged civil servant than I would have been, if I had not had that opportunity.

MM: And you had a strong personal relationship with Lord Jenkins.

HP: Yes I did indeed. I remember when something had gone wrong, I forget what it was but I thought it was my fault, and this was very early on in our relationship. I told him that I was really very sorry about this and he replied "What is it, your 12th cock up?" I looked at him and he said "Don't worry dear boy, I like you working with me, you don't need to worry about how many disasters we meet along the way." So from quite an early time we became friends, although he was obviously very senior and I was very junior. I was his Private Secretary in London for two years and then of course he lost in the Labour leadership election in 1976, but he had in his pocket, if I can put it that way, a promise from Giscard and from Schmidt that if he wanted to become President of the European Commission, he would have their support. This was already in the bank, and he knew this at the time he stood in the election, and so there was a possible outcome for him of that election which didn't look, on the face of it, quite as bad as things otherwise would have done. And (Prime Minister) Harold

Wilson had no objection to that, although he said to me later on that he would have preferred Roy to have succeeded him. I think that was always the plan, but it all went wrong over Europe in the early 1970s. And then I went with Roy to Brussels.

MM: What year was that?

HP: We were planning it in 1976 and we started in Brussels on 1 January 1977.

MM: How had Roy Jenkins succeeded in getting support from Giscard d'Estaing?

HP: As Chancellor, and subsequently as deputy leader of the Labour Party, he obviously had a whole series of high-level international political contacts and as the leader of the pro-European Union element of the Labour party and particularly as the President of the pro-Europe Referendum campaign in 1975, which was of course a tremendous success for those of us who at that time were passionately in favour of Britain not leaving the European Community, he obviously got to know them extremely well and had many conversations with them. I think they were approaching him about the possibility of him taking this on rather than the other way round, on the grounds that the British had to have the Presidency at a certain point and he was their preferred candidate because he was known to be highly supportive of the European enterprise and very knowledgeable about it. So in a way, although I was surprised to learn it at the time, looking back it is not a great shock at all to think that he already had this piece of paper in his pocket as it were.

MM: Did he regard that as a satisfactory alternative to being leader of the Labour party?

HP: I think that any domestic politician with ambition would want to be the leader of the party to which they belong, and any domestic politician becoming the leader would want to become Prime Minister, and undoubtedly he would have been fully capable of both those things. Having said that he was, even then in the 1970s, rather out of kilter with the way in which the Labour party was tending to develop and certainly during his time in Brussels he became profoundly disenchanted with the way in which it was moving, hence the decision to break away and to create the Social Democratic party in the early 1980s. But during that time both when he was Home Secretary and we were based in London and then in Brussels, he was a very international figure, and he and I travelled backwards and forwards both to the United States and to various European countries just in the ordinary course of making contacts and doing business.

So you are quite right to imply that being given the opportunity to work with someone like Roy opened up a whole new world of contacts and interests that otherwise might have been closed.

MM: We have never yet succeeded in refilling that position have we?

HP: No. It will presumably one day come round again but with so many members of the European Union now it will presumably take longer. Roy did his four years and I was only there with him for two of those years because I decided, rightly or wrongly, that I had already worked for him for almost five years and once you start to go beyond that with a single politician, it is quite difficult to easily retain your independent civil service objective roots. If you were to read Roy's European memoirs, and there is no reason why you would, you would see his various attempts in his diary to persuade me to stay, but I have the very clear recognition that I was probably doing the right thing by going back to the UK in 1979.

MM: Of course there are examples in the Foreign Office of people who have stayed too long in a private secretary role

HP: Well Charles Powell with Mrs T, and of course that changed the nature of his whole career and life, and there have been one or two other civil servants, on the press side occasionally who have stayed with a particular politician for a very long time and that again moves them away from the machine.

MM: Yes, especially if they are main cadre Civil Servants, as opposed to people who have been brought in on the information side.

HP: Exactly. But certainly when I said I was going to Brussels in 1976 the Home Office didn't really understand why. The Home Office didn't really do abroad. It did home and I think people thought that I was slightly unhinged. But there were two people who didn't – the first one was Michael Palliser (Sir Michael Palliser, head of the Diplomatic Service), who was incredibly keen for me to go with Roy. Roy wanted me to become his Chef de Cabinet, but because my languages were appallingly bad and I was incredibly young, only 33, Michael obviously really wanted to have a diplomat in charge of the Cabinet, which I totally understood. So we weaned Roy off that idea and I went as the deputy Chef de Cabinet. Michael Palliser was very keen on that idea. Robert Armstrong, who was at that moment a Deputy Secretary in the

Home Office and who subsequently became Permanent Secretary of the Home Office before becoming Cabinet Secretary – he also was very keen for me to go – whereas most of the other people in the Home Office thought it was rather a strange thing to do. It was very risky – they kept asking how are we going to sort you out when you get back? What are you going to do?

MM: And will you fit in?

HP: Yes (laughs). But I was very fortunate because Robert Armstrong became Permanent Secretary to the Home Office whilst I was in Brussels and we had become friends. I talked to him about coming back and what I was going to do and when I came back Robert gave me, and I had no reason to expect this, possibly the best job I had ever had in my career, which was in charge of terrorism and riots. Fortunately, we had a great deal of both (laughs), and so I came back into an absolutely critical job, which also, particularly in relation to the terrorism angle, had wide international ramifications. When I came back we started up the first attempt at European Union Anti-terrorism cooperation which, because of my European credentials which were by then quite strong ... you must stop me if I am going on about things that are not interesting to you. During that time, I for example spent six days as the person in charge of coordination at the Iranian embassy siege, which involved a very strong engagement with the Foreign Office, and with the security and intelligence agencies, in order to deal with the whole situation. At that time there was quite a bit of the beginnings of the Middle-Eastern extreme political/terrorist activity, which indeed was the first time I had come across things like that. In that job I had a close engagement with the Foreign Office and a close engagement with the Cabinet Office.

MM: Who were you dealing with in the Foreign Office?

HP: Well this is now in the mists of time so I can't remember precisely, but the main diplomat I dealt with at that time was Robert Wade-Gery who was at that point I think seconded to the Cabinet Office secretariat, and he was very much the senior coordinating figure. But obviously he was a diplomat and became, as you know, the British High Commissioner in India, where my wife and I used to visit him. We first went to India in 1982 when they had literally just arrived, four weeks before we came to visit them and we remained in touch for a long period of time.

MM: Going back to Brussels, your Chef de Cabinet was Crispin Tickell. How did you get on with him?

HP: He and I got on fine, because he knew that I had already built a strong personal relationship with Roy, which he respected and I respected the fact that he was in charge and also he would deal with all the international stuff and I would deal with what I would call the domestic European stuff, i.e. I would run the show in Brussels whilst he and Roy were doing their international expeditions. It was a good training and development programme in Brussels. We were dealing with quite a number of different European nations with varying cultures and politics, although obviously not as many as now, so you got under the skin, as it were, of the nature of trying to produce a good diplomatic understanding and good relationships with people, even though there were many differences of opinion, which was an experience that I would never had had, if I had stayed in Whitehall.

MM: At the time when Roy was President, there would presumably have been a British delegation there as well ...

HP: Donald Maitland was the official in charge of the British delegation to Brussels. Christopher Tugendhat was our other British commissioner and of course Pauline Neville-Jones, much in the news currently, was Christopher's Chef de Cabinet. I had met Pauline before that in Washington, when Roy and I were doing one of our many visits to various American politicians and making speeches and things and she then turned up in Brussels. But Donald Maitland led the delegation. The Head of Chancery in Brussels then was Rodric Braithwaite and Charles Powell was also there, in Brussels, at the time I was there. So that is where I first got to know Donald Maitland, who was known charmingly as the 'electric mouse' because he was tiny, intensely energetic and very precise, and scuttled about. He was very engaging and with Rodric and him we used to, at weekends from time to time, during the winter months, go visiting the battlefields of the First World War as a contingent. This was a British delegation thing, but I joined in with it and it was a lot of fun. I made a lot of good and continuing friends from that time – Charles Powell, Rodric Braithwaite and people like that, throughout the rest of my time in government.

MM: Did you form any definite impressions about the ability of the British to represent themselves effectively in Brussels?

HP: I thought the quality of the officials was excellent. The chronic problem, that one knew about intellectually, but you didn't really understand it emotionally until you were there, was getting London, not Brussels, to behave in a sensible fashion because it was constantly frustrating to watch the way the British felt they had to handle a number of European issues that came up and how we believed, we may have been wrong, sitting inside the commission, but we believed that had they been a bit more cooperative on a number of issues at an earlier stage, they might have got a better compromise outcome than the sort of outcome they got. But despite the referendum result, which was a resounding yes, we were always battling with this sort of underlying scepticism, which infected large parts of Whitehall and a large number of ministers during that period.

MM: And still does.

HP: Yes it still does. And you still hear that sort of reluctance to engage. I was listening the other day to a radio programme during which people were discussing whether or not there should be another referendum on Europe and there was a complete failure on the part of those who were talking, who were clearly sceptical about Europe, to understand how the whole enterprise has changed so massively since the 1970s when I was there. There are now so many members, you can't argue that there was never a closer union of the nations when any observer of the situation has seen it begin to fall quite differently and disperse all over the place. So there is a sort of British mythology about this whole issue, which clouds the judgement in my view, but there we are.

MM: Yes, I'm afraid that is my impression as well, for what that is worth. Anyway, you enjoyed your two years in Brussels ...

HP: Yes I enjoyed my time in Brussels and I learned a lot – I learned to speak slightly better French, although not much better, my wife will tell you my French was pretty appalling, but of course it was the language of the commission and as the deputy Chef de Cabinet of the President, I had to take part in all the meetings that dealt with promotions of staff at the senior level. These were chaired by the Secretary General, who became a good friend, Emile Noel, with me as the President's representative and no translation was allowed, you couldn't have your headphones. And since Emile spoke the most immaculate French and spoke as far as I could see all of the time in

the subjunctive, I had to undergo a very sharp learning curve in languages. I managed to cope but it was jolly hard work. I found it fascinating to see how all the issues of national interest within the European Commission were ironed out. In other words you had to try always to promote people on the grounds of merit, but you also had to recognise the reality that if you never promoted a single Italian then you were just stirring up constant trouble. So you had to try to search out for the best quality of people from the full range of member states, which may sound boring to some people, but actually it was quite fascinating to find out how you had to handle that. I learned a lot about the way in which the Commission operated, about the way in which member states behaved in relation to international jobs and postings and it was a very good experience.

MM: That is indeed interesting. And did you maintain your relationship with Roy Jenkins?

HP: Absolutely, right up until he died. I think my wife and I had lunch with him and his wife, Jennifer, three days before he died. We used to meet up in a pub half way between them, near Oxford, and us, near here. We were often there at weekends and they came to stay with us here. We remained in very close touch and they used to come on holiday with my late step-father in law and my mother-in-law, Mark and Leslie Bonham-Carter. My wife Laura is Leslie's only daughter from her first marriage, but she was very much brought up within the Bonham-Carter household. So that whole clan are my family and Jennifer Jenkins remains a close friend. She is now in her nineties and we see her from time to time and we keep in touch. It was a long-standing and deep personal relationship, which is very nice.

MM: It is, and it's a tremendous endorsement of his sympathy as a character. I think it is a real tragedy that he never made Prime Minister.

HP: Yes. I think had he have stayed on in the leadership battle, and had he garnered a few more votes as he might have done, I think he might not have beaten Jim Callaghan to the leadership, but Callaghan would probably have had to make him Foreign Secretary. Then things would have changed. The first thing that would have happened – I know he would have gone to see the Permanent Secretary at the time and said I want this man Hayden Phillips to join the Foreign Office now (laughs) and I would have found myself possibly, having a very different career. But I think that Callaghan would have had to offer Roy the Foreign Secretary role in those

circumstances, although he would not have wanted to because of Roy's, what some would have thought of as fanatical pro-European views. But of course it went to Roy's great friend and rival Tony Crosland, who then died, just like that, and David Owen took it on. So it was with David Owen that Roy was dealing for the majority of his time until Mrs T took over, when of course he had the great delight of dealing with Peter Carrington, which made up for a lot. Again, you see, as a result of my terrorist and international work, I worked for Willie Whitelaw, but I used to see quite a lot of the Foreign Secretary. I remember one occasion when we were dealing with a Libyan difficulty. The Libyan difficulty at the time was a man called Mr Musa Kusa who was indeed then the Libyan ambassador in London. He was going around, Mr Musa Kusa, who is a very topical figure now of course, threatening to kill Libyan dissidents in the streets of London, and we had to get him removed from London and sent back to Tripoli. Over that issue, because it involved threats of terror and other things, I had to go and have meetings with Peter Carrington and Malcolm Rifkind, who was then the Minister of State at the Foreign Office. So although the formative period of such international engagement with the Foreign Office began with Roy, you are quite right, it developed in Brussels, it then so happened that by virtue of the job that I then did for the next two and a half years, and then again in the mid eighties, when I was put in charge of the immigration department of the Home Office, I found myself in a succession of domestic jobs but which had a decided international and Foreign Office dimension. So right up until the time I left the Home Office in 1986, I was quite closely engaged with various parts of the Foreign Office in dealing with international issues as they affected the UK.

MM: Then you went to the Department of Media, Culture and Sport

HP: I was in the Cabinet Office and the Treasury before that. I went to the Cabinet Office for 18 months and then to the Treasury from 1988 to 1992, in charge first of all of public expenditure and then in charge of the Civil Service and pay policy and various other strange things. Then in 1992 I became Permanent Secretary for the first time at what was then called the Department of National Heritage under John Major, whom I worked for in the Treasury when he was Chief Secretary. I did that for six years and then I went to look after the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg at what is now the Ministry of Justice. So from 1992 to 1998 I was in Media, Culture, and Sport and then from 1998 to 2004 it was the Courts, the Law and Justice.

MM: Quite a spread.

HP: Well, rather strange, because I remember Robin Butler who was then Cabinet Secretary, said to me, “you can’t stay at Culture and Sport forever, we must send you somewhere else”. Various suggestions were made and I wasn’t sure I wanted to do any of them. Finally he said “I’ve got it! We need someone to look after Lord Irvine of Lairg and so go to the Lord Chancellor’s Department” to which I replied “You can’t do that, you have to be a lawyer”, which was true, and I wasn’t a lawyer. He said “That’s all right. We are going to change the law”. So I got the job. It’s a very unusual anecdote this, nothing to do with international diplomacy, but I think I am the only permanent secretary who got his job as a result of primary legislation. They had to put through a Bill in the House of Commons and the House of Lords saying that the Permanent Secretary of the Lord Chancellor’s Department could be an ordinary person. So that was me. Anyway, I’ve shot ahead of where you want to be Malcolm ...

MM: Yes. I’m sorry but I was simply thinking about the BBC in connection with Culture, Media and Sport, I mean that largely fell within your remit didn’t it? That presumably would be the major part of the BBC, the home service ...

HP: Yes, it did indeed. That remained the case, but the Foreign Office dealt with the World Service although it was, and remains, the jewel in the crown. I find I sleep more lightly as I get older, and the World Service at night, if I wake up, is of great interest.

MM: Yes, it is a good deal better than the Home Service isn’t it?

HP: (Laughs) Yes. The BBC was a big issue, particularly in the early years, when we had to have the renewal of the BBC charter. There was a legacy there of course. Mrs Thatcher was undoubtedly slightly hostile to the BBC and I remember her coming to the Home Office years before when I was in charge of terrorism and a lot of us were gathered by Willie Whitelaw to talk to Mrs T and the person then in charge of broadcasting policy was invited to talk at the beginning. She said perfectly clearly that the Home Office, which was then in charge of this subject, was not in charge of broadcasting, it was in charge of the government’s policy towards broadcasters. Mrs Thatcher got really incensed about this, because the lady in charge of broadcasting

said that we had the best television in the world to which Mrs T replied “Well why is it that I can only get four channels then, and when I go to America I can get 36 channels.’ And a row began to develop in the room between these two ladies. At this point I received a note from the Prime Minister’s Private Secretary saying “Hayden, you’re on next, we’ve got to stop this row developing”. And he suddenly turned and said to her “Prime Minister, I would like Hayden Phillips to talk about terrorism”. She turned and smiled, because she rather approved of me as I was doing the job of keeping terrorists out, and the situation was eased. But the BBC was a major preoccupation when I was at DCMS.

MM: Is it your opinion that the BBC is a good organisation?

HP: Oh I think it’s an outstanding organisation. Of course, with anything as big as that you are going to have all sorts of problems and issues, but I think that if you take it over the whole span of time, certainly over the last two decades of the last century and the first decade of this one, I think it is one of the great jewels of the crown. Despite its size and despite some of the criticisms, I think that it remains very creative and alert on its feet. I think its news coverage, its coverage of international events are pretty good. No, I have a lot of admiration and time for the BBC and I enjoyed working with them a great deal during that period.

MM: But of course they are going to have to face some pain as a result of the requirement to cut down on government expenditure.

HP: Yes. Chris Patten is now going to have to manage a process of change, which involves substantial reductions in expenditure. It involves taking on the World Service without additional resources and it will involve him appointing the next Director General, which is probably the most important decision that the Chairman and the Trust will make. But I admire Chris Patten very much and I think he will make a good fist of that job, very good indeed.

MM: It needs to be handled by a tough character, of course.

HP: Absolutely.

MM: How did you come across Chris Patten?

HP: When I was in the Treasury and in charge of public expenditure, I got to know quite a number of ministers in the Major government for example Ken Clarke, because I was dealing with the management of expenditure in the ministries of which both Chris and Ken were in charge. In those days we used to have these long negotiations about the amount of money they would be allowed for the following year, negotiations which often lasted hours. So I spent a lot of time with these people and we were all part of the team, ministers and officials, and I got to know them well. Of course when we came to the 1992 election, Chris Patten was the chairman of the party. John Major won this unexpected but outstanding victory against Kinnock, I became a Permanent Secretary and Chris Patten lost his seat. Although we have remained in touch from time to time (and I sit on a board which he chairs, which advises on a great Japanese prize funded by the Japanese), he then set off on a different career, to Hong Kong and so on and then to Brussels. So I enjoyed working with him very much. He is a very good man.

MM: I'm sure that he will deal with reductions in expenditure with the BBC, but what about the Foreign Office? They too are going to have to face quite a lot of pain, how are they going to do it? How should they do it?

HP: I read somewhere the other day that they were increasing posts in certain parts of the world and reducing posts very sharply in other parts of the world. Precisely what that distribution is going to be I don't know, I'm not close enough to that now, but I think on the whole the only way that the Foreign Office can make substantial reductions is to reduce the size of its operation. It will have to do that selectively in places which perhaps no longer have quite the same priority as they had 30 years ago and it will have to find a whole range of savings apart from staffing, probably by conducting some of its work in a slightly different way. Embassies abroad are vital and in my various different jobs I have spent quite a bit of time abroad, certainly in the sub-continent, in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and then when I went to work in the Lord Chancellor's Department in a number of the former Eastern Soviet Union countries. Lord Irvine and I were invited to do a great tour of the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia in order to help these countries with their applications to the European Union, they had asked for British help with human rights issues. And I noticed both in that period of my life when I was doing work on behalf of the Foreign Office in the field in which I was temporarily an expert, and also

at that time when I was in charge of immigration when the preoccupation was obviously immigration from the sub-continent and I spent quite a lot of time going backwards and forward to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and indeed I had large numbers of my own staff stationed out there as part of the Foreign Office dealing with all the issues of visas and permissions to enter and so on, that a number of domestic departments directly in support of the diplomatic operation abroad increased. There were more people from agriculture, people from trade and industry. Obviously there had always been a tradition of people from the Ministry of Defence being part of the Foreign Office's arm abroad so the Foreign Office, as it were, progressively stood less apart from the rest of Whitehall in the way in which it gathered together and delivered its expertise. It may be that some of the ways in which the Foreign Office can weather part of the storm that may hit it now, would be to try to build on that tradition of actually engaging domestically-based civil servants with particular areas of expertise that are relevant as temporary members of the Foreign Office and I think that may be a way of helping them a bit. But I must say that in the jobs that I did including, rather strangely, the last job that I did in charge of the Lord Chancellor's department which is now the Justice Department, we did quite a bit abroad on behalf of the Foreign Office. I was a member of two very interesting and long standing international link programmes - one between here and the United States and one between here and India, which engaged a lot of the most senior judges and lawyers. I was a member of that group, in fact its convener in a way, and we had sessions in the UK and in Delhi and in Washington over the six years that I was doing it. They cemented high level links between the people in charge of law and justice in these countries in a way which the Foreign Office welcomed but could not have achieved on its own. So in doing those sorts of things you were able to see the way in which the Foreign Office could, with great good sense, use other people in furthering links between the countries concerned, which I always thought was very sensible. And I always welcomed the fact that that opportunity existed.

MM: I think that the legal links are extremely important and it is deep in the psychology of the Indians to respect the law and that is all derived from us.

HP: Exactly. And it was interesting in that job that because within the department we dealt with constitutional issues and human rights legislation. All these things were handed to my department by the Cabinet Office and the Home Office quite early on in

my time, which were previously done elsewhere. It meant that basing it on the law and our constitution and traditions, we built as it were with the Home Office bilateral links with a whole series of old and new Commonwealth countries as well as with the United States and so on. It was and is an interest of common language and assumptions here which still stands the test of time even in a country as vibrant and enormous as India. The Supreme Court of India, I was told by one Indian, is the one institution in which we know there is no corruption. And it is absolutely true – they are of the highest calibre. And this has lived on.

MM: I think we have probably ploughed the depths of your relationship with Europe and Roy Jenkins. Would you like to say anything about the Churchill Archives and their relationship with the Heritage Lottery Fund?

HP: Well as you know when I went to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, two things happened. First of all it was the first time that the department existed. It was a wholly new creation. And John Major must be given the credit for it. He hasn't yet been given the full credit. He gave us the national lottery. He said "you start it, you do it, you run it". So we had two things - a new department and a wholly new source of income. And despite all the good advice we got, it turned out that we actually got in three times more money than we ever expected. Even the people who knew about this kind of business underestimated how keen the British people are on having a bet. Anyone who had looked at the history would have known that this would be a resounding success. Anyway it was set up and we set up all these lottery distributing bodies. We set up the Heritage Lottery Fund out of the National Heritage Memorial Fund which was a tiny organisation. Jacob Rothschild became the chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund - the three people most involved in this were Lord Rothschild, myself and Robin Butler the Secretary of the Cabinet. The first issue we confronted was about the Churchill archives. They were going to be sold, distributed to the far flung corners of what is no longer the empire, the United States and countries like that. And we took the view that if we received an application, as we indeed did, to purchase the archives, we should do so in the national interest. It was so evident to us that this was the right thing to do, but what we hadn't grasped was that it wasn't at all evident to a large section of the British press or the British public, who firstly thought that the state already owned the Churchill archives and secondly were very resentful of the idea that the first big slug of lottery money should appear to go to a single

member of the Churchill family. So what we thought was going to be a decision that would be applauded by the British public as a whole, turned out to be absolutely ghastly. I have had one similar experience of whatever the truth may be, the truth can be well out of kilter with what the British public thinks it ought to be. This was when Windsor castle burned down while I was in charge of royal palaces. Peter Brooke was my Secretary of State and we explained to the press when they asked who would have to pay for the damage, that Windsor castle was not owned by the Queen, it was owned by the nation and that the nation at the end of the day would have to foot the bill. I'm telling you this story because it is rather like the Churchill archives story. We told the press on Saturday, the Sunday papers were full of criticism of this fact and by Wednesday of the following week the Prime Minister John Major was standing up in the House of Commons announcing two things; firstly that the Queen would be paying tax for the first time, which was to allay public criticism, and secondly that Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace would be opened to the public – that people would pay to visit them and that would partly pay for the repairs. Similarly, with the Churchill archive – we expected there to be a great outburst of applause from the British public but there was an outburst of booing really. Nonetheless I am sure that it was the right thing to do and I visited it a couple of times in its early years, when John Boyd was master of Churchill, our former ambassador in Japan.

MM: Yes, it has been a huge success I think. They have now got Margaret Thatcher's papers there and they are getting John Major's and they are acquiring a lot of really important stuff. I think it is the most important repository of 20th century political archives.

HP: I think it is now, which is excellent; really really good.

MM: I have wondered, privately, whether they ought to undertake part of the research abilities of the Foreign Office itself, as a way of reducing outright expenditure from the Foreign Office. I don't know whether that is feasible or not, it is obviously something for the government to decide, but it is a thought that has crossed my mind.

HP: Yes, I can see that. And as far as the Foreign Office is spending resources on its own archives and its own record systems, there is no reason actually why any major

government department couldn't consider contracting that out to a respected academic institution.

MM: As a way of concealing government expenditure, because they would then have to pay.

HP: Yes, I presume that Churchill would not do it for love, they would have to be paid. But it might mean that you could do it possibly more economically if it meant that staff at the Foreign Office were no longer required. That is an interesting point.

MM: Anyway, I think that is probably the end of our interview. Thank you very much indeed.

HP: I hope you have got enough little anecdotes. It is just a footnote in your great work, no more than that, but it has been very nice to meet you.