

Transcript of Mr Jim Bannerman, 1999, 17 Bloomsbury Square

Former President Jim Bannerman explains the Pharmaceutical Society Headquarters at 17 Bloomsbury Square as they were in the 1970s

Interviewer: Mr John Hunt

JH: So, I mean by this time you were only in your...about 32?

JB: Yes

JH: What were your impressions Jim the first time you came to a council meeting. We're still in Bloomsbury Square of course.

JB: I was president in Bloomsbury Square

JH: Of course you were, yes of course you were. Tell me what it was like

JB: I missed F W Evan, I mean I knew him, I heard wonderful stories about him. In all things, John, you know that the people that have gone before always appear giant but you know the people like Tristram, Brocklehurst and Steinman and Tiny Heseltine they were huge guys, they really were. They were so dominant; they'd been there for so long. They impressed me enormously.

JH: You were standing on the shoulders of giants, as they say.

JB: Yes, yes, I really felt that and the sense of occasion that that building had when you looked at it, the council tables were not really very nice; they were sort of regency but the ceiling was absolutely gorgeous and the drapes were gorgeous, it, it was a very close room. It was a very mediate room, you weren't far away from everyone but there was room for everyone and there was a very, very proper, very proper respect for the occasion. Lewis had just come into it. It didn't take very long for Desmond to develop particular consciousness of what the past is, and I mean I often think of Desmond when I think of Edmund Burke's statement that – I think it's true for pharmacy, I have to say, that no nation knows who it is unless it recognises its ancestors. I mean Desmond would frequently go over history. Sometimes he was very boring, so often he actually got you the right line because he made you realise where you were coming from and that is important in all things and that was what impressed me enormously this organisation had been there for so long and even now, I was just speaking to Doug Simpson this morning, everything is happening in pharmacy. They're shooting all ways, people doing this and the one constant through everything is the Pharmaceutical Society; it is the one constant. Organisations come and go, responsibilities come and go, governments come and go – it's gone to Edinburgh as far as we're concerned to some extent and yet the Pharmaceutical Society's still there and yet it's that awareness of where it's coming from. I could believe that Jacob Bell walked these corridors in Bloomsbury, I really could. In fact, I heard him when I was in my office as president, I heard him.

JH: They used to say that Glynn Jones did as well, didn't they?

JB: Well, yes. It was very creaky, a very creaky place. The stairs were gorgeous. The committee rooms weren't very good but the council room with the hall. Can you imagine the pleasure of presenting your father the Fellowship Certificate? I mean that was just out of this world.

JH: Yes

JB: It really took you back to saying what it's about, what are you about, what is he about, what is the Society about, what is it recognising? You know, it's just recognising continuous endeavour over a long period.

JH: And so, you as the young man in his 30's walking into this environment at Bloomsbury Square it must have been a little bit overawed at first with all the great figures of the day?

JB: Yes. I was very, very impressed.