Transcript of a recorded conversation between Glen Buchanan and Dr Gillian Murray (Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, Glasgow, May 2019)

Bio: From 1979 to 1981, Glen Buchanan, worked for the Scottish Council for Single Homeless managing a project looking at the housing experiences and needs of single people in Scotland. In 1981 he took up the position of research fellow in the Local Government Unit at Paisley College of Technology, where he first worked alongside John Pearce on the Local Enterprise Advisory Project (LEAP). In 1984 he began working for Strathclyde Community Business (SCB) as Training Officer, eventually becoming Depute General Manager for John Pearce. From 1991 to 1993 Glen worked as National Coordinator, Care and Repair Initiative, Glasgow, for Shelter Scotland. In 1993 he was appointed by Scottish Homes to coordinate national development of Care and Repair throughout Scotland, later working on local housing and planning strategy development. He worked for Communities Scotland when it took on the functions of Scottish Homes and widened its community regeneration remit and then for the Scottish Government as Policy Manager, Glasgow, from 2008 to 2010. He went on to work for various organisations in consumer rights, housing, health and social care, and social enterprise until his retirement in 2016.

During the conversation Glen talks about 'the papers downstairs' referring to the Social Enterprise Collection (Scotland) held by the Archive Centre at Glasgow Caledonian University. Glen kindly donated a collection of his papers to the Archive Centre in 2019: Glen Buchanan papers.

Glen my first question in these oral history interviews is always just at what point in your life and how did you come to work in what was back them community business, but eventually became social enterprise?

I saw an advert for a job at LEAP in late 1980, possibly in November or December 1980, and LEAP was expanding from a one-person John Pearce organisation to a four-person organisation; so there would be John Pearce, two development workers, and one training/education type worker. I had just finished a job in housing working on a major housing project and my degree was in public admin and economics then I did an MBA directly after it, so the whole idea of this community based employment was something I could see how that could be useful, particularly given the kind of the UK political context at the time, which I will maybe mention in a minute. So I applied for the job and I got interviewed in January '81, but I didn't get the job. But very shortly after that I did get a job, also at Paisley College, in the Local Government Unit. The Local Government Unit sponsored LEAP, so LEAP was part of the Local Government Unit, so funnily enough I found myself working with the LEAP staff which was John [Pearce], Margaret Lindsay, Colin Roxburgh, and Duncan McTavish. Not working directly on the same projects. I worked on kind of research on local government, but by '82 John [Pearce] asked me to do a tidy up of Flagstone Enterprises case study, for example. And in '83 I started working on the Govan Workspace case study, so again, apart from the other things I was doing I was getting involved in quite a lot of research on community business as we called it then, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Thoroughly enjoyed doing the Govan Workspace case study and then

we transitioned in ‘84 into Strathclyde Community Business, which was again another expansion. So you have gone from a John Pearce one -person outfit from ‘78-‘81 to LEAP 1 which was, sorry LEAP 1 was John Pearce ’78-’81, then you had LEAP 2, which was ’81-’84, and then LEAP -which was really just a division of a research part of Paisley College- became an independent company as Strathclyde Community Business Limited in ’84 and that existed in that format till ’91.

During that time people like John [Pearce], Colin [Roxburgh], Duncan [McTavish], myself were involved so it went through various transitions, got a bit more serious, a bit more money, the impact got bigger and bigger, and, you know, as a movement, as we called it at the time, it got more visible, so I am probably best qualified to talk about it in the ‘80s. I went back into housing in the ‘90s and then came back to social enterprise latterly in my career, and it was quite interesting reflecting on what we were doing in the 80s and what I came back to, in many ways, not an awful lot had changed. There was still a lot of the same issues, so exactly what we were saying earlier on about how little changes and how little people take on the lessons learned, but that is not unique to community enterprise/community business, whatever we call it, politicians find that out all the time and everything is the wheel of reinvention at the end of the day.

Great. That is a really nice summary of how things progressed. Can we maybe go back to 1981 then and just talk a bit more about day to day work that you were involved in at that time the kind of projects you were doing and why you were shaping them in the way that you did?

My role in the Local Government Unit in Paisley was much more about local government research, so I was not directly involved in the day to day side of LEAP, which was Colin and Duncan’s side, with John, but I was aware of what they were doing and obviously when I made the transition to going over to CB in ‘84 you were working much more, what they called, the ‘coal face’ sometimes, which was quite interesting because the miner’s strike was on, in ‘84, ‘85 and reflecting on a couple of things just before coming in for this interview, Brexit strikes me as the current version of the miner’s strike.

The miner’s strike went on for a year, it was desperate, it was on the news every day it was. What I do remember -it is hard now to remember 35 years ago- and the Thatcher government came in in ‘79 and they immediately took on the steel workers and they broke that strike, when the steel workers went on strike and basically had to go back with nothing really. Then of course the miner’s strike started in ‘84 and it wasn’t a strike about pay or anything, it was a strike about pit closures, and it went on for a year and it was heart breaking to see what was happening. So we had this collapse of traditional industries going on, particularly in Scotland, which was manufacturing-industry orientated at that time, can’t remember the exact figure, but I would be surprised if a third to 40% of the population didn’t work in manufacturing and think we are down to about 16% now, and so the collapse of the manufacturing industry was felt all the more in Scotland. You had iron and steel collapsing, you had ship building collapsing, mine working just getting finished everywhere. So huge numbers of unemployed, Scotland had an unemployment number in Scotland, in 1984 was something like 360,000. It

was running at, whatever, 15/20%, it was unbelievable, so people like us were working, trying to work in communities that had been ravaged by it all.

It was just awful, because, I am trying not to paint too desperate a picture, but, I mean, you were working in areas, places that had been built after the war, or post-war council schemes that were now 30 years on, or 25/ 30 years on, were beginning to feel the effects. The housing stock hadn't been modernised, it was left the way it was built and, you know, whole communities were falling apart. Work, which had been, you know, they weren't ever in the schemes, so people had to go out of the schemes to work, so then they couldn't get out of the schemes to work, so everything came a bit more insular and that's why you had local reaction and folks saying, 'what can we do to create some sort of opportunities?' And the whole community business side of things, in Strathclyde certainly, was targeted at what were called 'Areas for Priority Treatment'. Generally speaking, places which had higher than above unemployment and all the various and myriad of social and economic problems that went along with that. So that is how community business was attempting to come up with some new solutions but it is quite interesting reading the paperwork downstairs. I am saying 360,000 people were unemployed in Scotland. We are working in 20, 30, 40, 50 areas of Strathclyde with 10, 12, 14 staff, whatever. I mean there is only so much you can do, you know, to try and get things moving. It was always the spirit of local folk that kept you going, you know, it was amazing how some people -we weren't living in these areas- they were living in them and it was incredible the guts and determination people were showing to fight back.

Do you remember any particular communities or community meetings that struck you that people were really giving it their best shot?

You would go along to meetings at night -and in those days everyone smoked- and lots of folk smoked and you would come out these meetings covered in smoke, 9 million cigarettes or something, but when people; I think one of the things, again looking at the paperwork down the stairs, quite a lot of people, quite a lot of articles about how you keep folk involved, I think that was one of the issues that you came across. You could get people involved initially and you would have two or three public meetings in the smoke-filled rooms and, you know, folk would be angry and they would have energy, enthusiasm, dynamism, it was keeping that going over the piece that was the challenge. How can you keep going in meeting, after meeting, after meeting when you are getting slapped in the face? -it's bloody, bloody, hard. And I think, Tommy Clark, who was the chairperson of Govan Workspace, he summed it up really well, in that *Little Pockets of Hope* study because he said, that is exactly what they did in Govan Workspace. There is a direct quote, he says something like 'all the officialdom depends on stringing you out till you get fed up and you go away: the thing is we didn't go away'. And that's where it worked, when folk said, 'no, we are not taking that, you are going to have to come up with something better than that. Come up with a different solution, or give us some money to do it', but that was the exception. But it was, you did tend to find the slackening off of interest, the numbers, the enthusiasm. It's hard to keep that going when you are getting slapped in the face all the time and it was really therefore only the really, really determined folk that got there.

So who was it the local communities were up against was it local and district council that were trying to shape things in a different direction or what was the dynamics there?

I think for most people in these areas they didn't know, 'who are you up against?' Say you had lived in an area, a council estate, naturally you think that the council's responsible for things. And it was interesting to read the interview with Colin [Roxburgh], as Colin had said about how dependent some people had been, and they couldn't do things because they waited for the council to repair things, it wasn't their responsibility. Now you had that one kind of mentality, I am not sure if Colin drew this analogy, but you had that kind of one mentality, the dependency, the council will do it for them, then you had the countervailing philosophy coming out of the Thatcher government, which was all about 'there is no such thing as society' -do it for yourself- society should work by the individual, the individual should sort things -wealth will trickle down- and we were always saying, 'no, it doesn't ever happen like that, it never trickles down'. It wasn't in the interest of people up there to 'trickle it down' and so you had individual capitalism and if you like and then you have this sort of benevolent kind of idea, State Socialism, and whatever on the other, and so we were trying to do something in between.

And working with folk who wanted to do something about it and try and get the kind of people from all sides of the equation left, right, centre, whatever, politically to come together and come up with new models. So that was what was clear by the '70s was, the post-war consensus about how you did things, Keynesian economics, wasn't working. So therefore you had Mosley going on, you had the right wing answer to it, and the left wing answer to it, and the left wing answer to Michael Foot was to nationalise things even further, to state control over things, and you had Thatcher who just wanted to sell off everything, because the 'state couldn't run it' and private capitalism can 'run it a lot better than the state would ever do'. And the folk who were affected in between were just getting shunted from pillar to post so I suppose that was what we were doing, we were trying to come in and just say well, these two models might work for some people but they don't work for everyone, what about having this sort of third sector idea, which again now when you think about it how widely social enterprise, as it is called now, is accepted –it's mainstream- it's third sector back then, it was really fundamentally challenged.

It was really only through the dynamism and the energy of a few key councillors in the Region, guys like Ron Young [Ronald Young] and Tony Worthington -who became an MP for Clydebank and Bearsden- these guys were far sighted. They were not old-style Labour folk. They were bright, intellectuals, basically, who had no baggage. They were not beholden to anyone. They wanted new solutions. They went to these communities and saw how the old models didn't work, so you really could, forward-looking, modern councillors like them, you had a few key officers too, who, the guys who were writing the 'Social Strategy for the '80s' from the Regional Council perspective. Radical ideas about, 'it's not working, lets come up with something else, let's do some positive discrimination'. So that was what was good, but it did rest on, at times, I thought very, very few people to keep the thing moving. Most folk would just fall in with the Labour vote. And that was another thing, Labour just ran everything in Strathclyde. I can remember the figures, out of the 103 councillors in

Strathclyde at one point about 89 of them were Labour. And in the City Council it was a similar sort of situation. So you had this municipal Labour thing, but I think for a lot of folk it seemed like a long way away and that was probably reflected in how the votes for local elections started to fall off around that time.

The Regional Council and the District Council, which were the two principal sponsors of Strathclyde Community Business, I think anyone who was around at the time would tell you there was always that tension between those two authorities. I mean when you had one authority District Councils, which were responsible for housing and planning, essentially, and the Regional Council, which had education and social work, the huge money -that is where the huge money was- there was always a creative tension. So we were falling in between, chief execs, planning, physical planning side of the Region, and the housing/planning side of the District, but it would be kind of wrong to think just because you had a Labour council in Glasgow and a Labour council in the Region that it was all eye to eye stuff. But anyway, they basically both bought into the model, but then you had other organisations involved in Strathclyde Community Business like the SDA [Scottish Development Agency] who, as Colin Roxburgh said in his interview, was largely ambivalent to the whole idea: 'you can't go into housing schemes because there is no economy there, so we can't do anything', 'Why not? You are government's regeneration agency. Why can't you?' And the MSC [Manpower Services Commission] when it was temporary employment schemes as well and the business community, trying to get the business community, there was a thing called Scottish Business in the Community which was very good and very liberal in its interpretation of things and they were a key supporter, Scot-BIC, actually, so most of the time you were operating in that kind of environment.

What about other types of civic and community infrastructure things like tenant associations or trade unions did you build from relationships with those types of organisation or were they not really on the landscape of people you were working with?

I think mostly when people like Colin were doing early development work in communities they would be trying to work with anyone, either trade unions, tenant's associations, people involved. One of the things we particularly tried to do was make the link between community based responses to housing and community based responses to unemployment, economic initiatives etc so therefore, for example, back in December '84 we ran a major conference at the Lorne Hotel in Glasgow and it was great, there was about 120 to 150 folk there making links between community based employment and community based housing, we had a very successful conference there, it was good finding examples in the 80s of working together between community based associations and ourselves. I don't think anyone was precious about 'no we won't work with you' or anything, it's like any easy initiatives it tended to be who was around, whether people wanted -nothing seemed to work if people dug their heels in- but nothing will work if people are going to be precious. 'If you don't want to get involved fine, you don't need to criticise us for doing whatever we are doing -just don't get involved, that's fine, that's great, you do your bit'. I think particularly in the community based housing associations, again it would be kind of interesting for you to follow up with some of the people who were involved on that side of the fence, I think a lot of them understood that dynamic.

I, personally, found it a bit disappointing later on when I was working for Scottish Homes and Communities Scotland in the 2000/ 2010 period; a lot of that early dynamism of the housing association movement seemed to be kind of dissipated. There seemed to be - I came across people who sort of would say, 'Well our management says to me Glen, we are a housing organisation. What are you doing, getting involved in other things, we are here for our tenants, we do housing'. And you know it was disappointing that folk kinda, and some people who, and they are working to the management committee, so I can understand it, but it was kind of disappointing how some people seemed to think there was kind of one thing; housing only regeneration does not work, everyone learned -well you would think people would have learned that- but maybe they didn't. Employment based regeneration doesn't work. Nothing works if it is just a single discipline type response. It has to be far bigger than that or wider than that, so I personally was always keen to work with people like housing associations projects. When I was with Scottish Homes and Communities Scotland we did some good, good work using this budget called Wider Role. It was there to give housing associations a Wider Role in regeneration where by you would come up with some interesting projects that involved them in things other than housing, it might be employment, it might be credit, it might be training schemes, but to just to come up with new things. And that to me, again looking at the literature down the stairs, was one of the good things working in an organisation like Strathclyde Community Business; no one had done it before so we were all making it up and, you know, it was this kind of spirit, you know, 'we haven't tried this before, let's do that' and folk seemed to be up for that, that was good.

Do you remember any of the projects or any of the research you did that tried to link housing and jobs together what kind of outputs came from that kind of thinking?

The Housing Corporation in Scotland which became Scottish Homes was very forward thinking. A guy called Jim Hastie was the lead guy in the Housing Corporation of Scotland, became the Development Funding Director for Scottish Homes. And associations were not kind of directed not only to do housing, I am struggling to try and think of anything -an actual example- but there was loads of housing co-ops; there was Possil Housing Co-op and there was Possil Community Business. There was Calvay Housing Co-operative in Easterhouse and they got involved in Community Business. Barlanark Community Business, so there were these examples, I will probably remember other things as we keep talking, but they were definite examples of that. From my perspective, after I left community business, I got involved in a thing called Care and Repair, which was essentially trying to target repair and improvement grants -housing repair and improvement grants- to owner occupiers to try and help them stay in their homes; rather than what had tended to happen; somebody couldn't look after their home, they couldn't do the repair, so they got shunted into a long-term hostel, which cost the state tons of money. Whereas if you just did a wee bit of work in the house, they could stay in the house and it saves money. So, but I tried to look at that also as something a bit wider than just housing. So I tried to do initiatives that involved housing, social work, health care as well in Care and Repair.

That was one of the things that got to me in the '80s, I suppose, was just how, somebody talked about 'eternal verticals of departments' and that's what seemed to be. You had social work, like, the skyscraper called 'social work', then you had another skyscraper called

‘housing’ and another skyscraper called ‘planning’ and then Glasgow District was a skyscraper, the Region was a skyscraper, you know, and no one talked to each other and no one shared. There was no, this was in the days before you had community planning, or ideas of folk working together and sharing budgets. It was ‘that is your problem’ -point the finger- ‘that is your problem, we don’t do that, you do that, you sort it’. So there was a fair bit of that going on and that was going back to what we were talking about, keeping going, how do you keep going when people ‘that’s not my problem, I don’t do housing’, or ‘that’s not my problem. I don’t do health, that’s your problem’, ‘I don’t do planning’? ‘We are the SDA, we don’t do economic development to poor areas like this, we only work with private sectors, entrepreneurs’. So it was just incredibly hard. I think, looking back, giving everything that we were up against, it’s amazing what happened. In terms of the energy, the enthusiasm, the successes.

The other thing, just in case I forget later on, was towards the end of the decade in the ‘80s the thing sometimes, I felt, the response from the community enterprise the community business as the thing grew and got bigger you got numbers of community businesses employing big numbers of folk, your Possils, your Barrowfields and organisations like that. At some point Flagstone Enterprises, at some points they were employing 30/40/50 people, so 30/40/50/60 people cost an awful lot more than two or three people, so a business employing 40/50/60 people goes bust, which inevitably businesses will go bust, there was almost this feeling around in the late ‘80s that ‘we can’t let these things fail’, and, you know, of course it’s going to fail, things are going to fail at some point for lots of reasons. An awful lot of it was cash, or cash flow, or whatever. Or it could be bad management, or it could be a bad investment. Private businesses go bust all the time. Now the important point is, ‘why did they go bust?’ There was more doom and gloom, ‘Barrowfield has gone bust, oh God that means community business can’t work’. This kind of air of collective doom that sort of descended by the late ‘80s -just because one business employing 40 or 50 folk failed- was quite interesting and did give a bit of a kick in the belly to the kind of impetus that had been built up, but I don’t think… I think, it was used as an excuse to sort of, ‘the model is not working, it is all a bit utopia, it’s all a bit wishy washy, it’s all a bit not enough business orientated’. And when you were operating in the strict Thatcherite regime and local government cuts and SDA being told to work with private enterprise, you know. Councils to be fair, there was a fair amount of money going -not much in the scheme of things - there was a fair amount of money going in, so if something failed you would probably want to know why. If the ‘why’ had been investigated a bit more, kind of, a bit more robustly and sympathetically, rather than looking for excuses to get people, or to dump the model, or whatever it was, it certainly wasn’t to me a lot of lessons being learnt then. It was more about people not getting on with each other by that stage.

Was there pressure coming from within the movement or outside?

I don’t know, it’s hard to try and remember now 35 years on, but I had written down a few things. The thing I remember about, the thing I remember about the 80’s was just how, I don’t remember it particularly fondly, at that time it was you had the Cold War going on in the background internationally, you had Reagan, all these old men that were the face of the Soviet Empire and then you had Gorbachev came along, a ray of light, it was brilliant, but it

was a desperate international scene for a long time the Cold War, but it did get better. The Soviet Union collapsed eventually in the late 80's, but throughout the 80's you had a right-wing, privatising Government that showed no signs of letting go, it just - Mrs Thatcher famously coming up to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and starting lecturing them about 'We in Scotland' and I don't think the Conservative Party has ever recovered from those years, and to try out the Poll Tax in Scotland for a year before they introduced it throughout the UK, I mean, that is unbelievable insensitivity, you know, so there was always this thing about 'let's try it out in Scotland' –or it's a guinea pig- so while I am being vaguely critical of people in sponsors of SCB [Strathclyde Community Business], or whatever, you have got to be conscious of the fact that these officers and politicians were working in very, very difficult times as well and hard enough life without, perhaps, one other thing going wrong and having to cope with.

That, generally speaking, I thought what we did in the 80's was really quite interesting work, it was innovative work, it was a new response, we had fantastic interest not only from the other bits of Scotland who were perhaps not developing as quickly as we were in Strathclyde, but the whole of the UK. We had people coming nearly every week here and asking us about what we were doing, going round the businesses. It actually became a funny thing that we had to eventually ask people to make a contribution because we were asking people to give up their time from running a business to tell them 'How did you get staff?', 'What are the issues?', 'What's it like sacking folk?' So you had to say, 'Can you give a donation to the business', so that was quite interesting and also, internationally, there was tons of people coming in internationally to find out what we were doing.

What was drawing those people in what were the innovations that you guys were putting into practice that was really intriguing people?

I think it might've just been this idea that there was a third way to do it, and it didn't need to be private, it didn't need to be public, you could do this third sector way of doing it; involving local people and placing them at the forefront, and I think that is also one of the better things. In Strathclyde we were good at promoting it as widely as we could. We published a lot of stuff, and I think that is the value -you can see that down the stairs. Now there is a body of work down there that actually charts what was going on and, I think, I said in one of the notes to you. I don't think there will be anything like that anywhere else in the UK at the time; of a detailed record of what was happening and it is fairly honest, it wasn't all gloss. We weren't just saying this will work anywhere, you know, we were coming from it with a point of view 'let's try something new, let's try something different, it might not work, but let's find out if it works, let's say why it works, or let's have a look at it', and I think it was just that we were coming up with some kind of answer to what became a very stratifying kind of policy context between left and right and we were saying 'there could be something else here, do you want a look at this?' And folk were going 'that sounds good' and so, internationally, there was tons of interest about what we were doing.

When you think about types of communities where this work was taking place was it in the peripheral housing estates that had lacked any kind of infrastructure for a local economy or was it in areas which had a strong industrial identity but that had been decimated in the

process of deindustrialisation was there any particular community group you felt this type of work took hold the best what were they dynamics there?

That's an interesting one. In Glasgow, for example, I was thinking about this just walking in there, you had the likes of Govan. I will tell you a story about Govan. It's in that *Little Pockets of Hope*, British shipbuilders, the Govan yard, Jimmy Miller -who was one of the directors at Govan Workspace- tells us the story about he had this delegation of people from the German Shipbuilding industry came over from Hamburg and they took a wee drive round. They met them at the airport, the bus was taking them round Govan to show them what the community was like, he said, and after a wee while the guy sitting next to him, his counter-part, the training manager for this yard in Hamburg was getting more and more sad looking and Jimmy eventually said to him, 'what's wrong? Are you okay?' And the guy goes -this is like 1980- and he goes, 'I am really, really sorry, I am sorry that this place, we bombed this place so badly during the war'. And he actually thought it was the Luftwaffe bombs that had bombed Govan and they hadn't rebuilt it. And Jimmy is going, 'we actually did this to ourselves, it wasn't your bombs, it was us that did this'. So you had places like Govan, places like Springburn that had built a motorway, or dual carriageway right through Springburn. Maryhill was going to have a motorway right up through the canal and Maryhill Road, that got shelved, but that would have been the same for Maryhill.

So the M8 charged right through the city and it's the only city in the UK that has a motorway running through it. So you had areas like that your Govans, your Springburns, your Maryhills that had been completely devastated, but still a very strong sense of community. When they say in Govan; call yourself a Glaswegian, but a Govanite is a Govanite -and you still have in place in those other inner city areas. Now in terms of your peripheral housing estates, your Drumchapel, your Pollok, your Castlemilks etc. You could argue, was there any, ever, a genuine sense of community in those places? You look at a map of Glasgow before the war and the one after the war and its completely different. It's like twice the size after the war because they had these big huge things stuck on the outside, rather than one million folk piled into a fairly small area. So, and even within, how can you talk about a community of 40,000 folk or 20,000 folk? There are huge constituent parts of a place like Easterhouse. It wasn't just Easterhouse -it was the size of Perth at one point, practically- so this thing that was about a community was quite interesting. So in the likes of Easterhouse you were working in a place like Barlanark, because Barlanark was a separate part, one of the component parts of Easterhouse, but it identified as a place. People came from Barlanank, they didn't come from Easterhouse. So again there was no right or wrong, you just went with who was coming forward with ideas, who wanted to try something.

And what we were doing in the central belt had, in a large extent, was pre-dated by the work in the HIDB Highlands and Islands the Community Co-operative programme, which was set up by the HIDB in 1977. HIDB had this very far-sighted chairman at the time, called Sir Kenneth Alexander, who had been the Principal at Stirling University who -HIDB was interesting from the outset in 1965 or 1966, whenever, the Wilson Government set it up -the regeneration of the Highlands and Islands was seen as not only an economic thing, but a social thing as well- so the HIDB from the outset had a social and economic regeneration dual role. And you saw how that worked, in the way, the policy responses. Here it was an

economic regeneration, or it was social work, or something it wasn't -these two traditions didn't come together in the central belt very well at all- and the guy in the Region said to me, 'You seem to think I am some sort of Community Business evangelist', but he goes, 'when you say Community Business you're probably seeing community with and big C in it and b with a small b in it. But where I come from, from my perspective here in the Regional Council's industrial development agency, I see business with a big B'. And I said, 'I am not saying that at all. I think if you are talking about getting any sort of enterprise or economic activity going for unemployed people in some of these areas, I think you are doing a bit of both'. But that was a key thing that didn't get married up down here, I think, they suffered from for a long, long time. You was seen as wishy washy, you didn't know anything about business, you were just a bunch of social workers -really disparaging, horrible- not horrible comments but, you know, comments that just failed to understand what the nature of the issue and the problem was. And that kind of attitude wasn't going to sort anything for anybody.

So that was a great thing for the HIDB programme. That is why it worked in your Barras, your Harris's, your Helmsdale's, because people, it was so, if you like, if you are on a fairly small island there is clearly a sense of community there, or a small town. That is harder to engender, or promote, or project, or whatever the word would be, in Easterhouse as a concept of 40,000 people. Just when I said that, I remember thinking, Dick McClave, who was another guy who was involved in Govan Workspace, one of the other directors, he told this story too about -this is just what it was like in the '80s or '70s- when Govan got flattened, basically, and his mum who had been born and brought up in Govan all her days. She was in her 70s or 80s and they flattened her house, their tenement, and sent her out to Easterhouse to live, 8 miles away from where she knew everyone, and he just said something like, 'You can send an 80 year-old woman away to a place called Easterhouse when she had lived in Govan all her days, you might as well have sent her to Australia'. It was like pre mobile phones, pre everything. If you did do that, you were flung away people. I am not saying a lot of folk in a community like Govan, which was very integrated close-knit. OK there was 90,000 folk living there before the First World War, but in this tiny area of the city there was very much a community. Now, can you say the same thing about some of the communities created after the War? No, not really.

So that was the thing about third sector in those days, it was very much *community* business or *community* enterprise, whereas the social enterprise thing now has become a much wider model, a kind of model of enterprise rather than, it's much more generic, it doesn't need to be community based and community holding assets. I have never really got into the legal side of it too greatly, but John was great for that. But the idea of an asset lock thing, when I came back to community/social enterprise about 10 or 15 years ago, and a lot of talk was about the asset lock and, I thought, that is absolutely fundamental, 'why are you having a debate about that?' Back in the '80s it was all about, I think, that was the other thing about the challenges, we didn't get, you were constantly up against; we drew the parallel quite often between the housing associations by the very fact of a housing association developing you are acquiring this colossal asset base, so you are creating a successful business by definition because it is all going onto the balance sheet. You have a building worth blah, blah, millions of pounds. One becomes 10, becomes 100, becomes 1000s, but the community business model was always it was under capitalised and we kind of racketed about for bits and pieces of money

from here or there, but the main source of funding in Strathclyde was to help things get started, was the Urban Programme/ Urban Aid Programme as it was called. And all we could do for any business was stick in a £30,000 management grant, which in those days would have paid for about a manager and an administrator so it was like a £30,000 subsidy to get things going and it would be time limited for 3 to 5 years, I think, 7 years was the one you could put Urban Programming to anything but clearly that is not tailored to anything, that's just like £30,000 for business A, £30,000 for business B, so it not only limited what you could put in, but it probably limited the types of activity you could do. Because a whole pile of businesses was automatically excluded because you needed big money to do that.

So that again, I suppose, was one of the other debates about how do you move between getting away from low wage, low value work to something a bit more exciting. Or and that was difficult, it was really difficult because there wasn't the money around. You have the investment banks, the community enterprise now the 'Scottish Community…' anyway, you have got an investment bank specifically for community enterprise now. In our day you didn't have any source of private funding, that's why we set up SCEIF (Scottish Community Enterprise Investment Fund) in '89 as a response to that, because the private sector wasn't going to invest, public sector was precluded from doing it largely. So we came up with this idea, 'let's do a share issue'. This is what I mean about constantly trying to come up with something new and innovative, so we did a share issue basically to the public and enlightened organisations to invest in a fund that would basically provide capital for businesses, so that was great fun doing things like that, and we raised, the share capital thing raised about £250,000 to £300,000. Because when that investment bank with Scottish Enterprise was trying to raise something similar about 8, 9, 10 years ago, the guy was saying, one of the chaps he was saying, 'I don't know how we will get on', and I said, 'we did it twenty odd years ago and we got more than a £250,000, so I am sure now more in the more enlightened atmosphere that we are dealing with or living in you are bound to get it'. I think he was looking for 2 or 3 million pounds so, I think. That was just a ramble about how difficult the funding situation was, there wasn't anything tailored or made so.

Did you have aspirations with those kind of the potential for larger funding was it about trying to rebuild some manufacturing output in communities who had lost that or what were they kind of bigger ideas or aspirations around?

Well again as I say my skills never lay in tax or the legal side of things, but I was interested 'down the stair' -I think it would be interesting for future researchers to look at that- because in 1985 we did this thing called 'Manifesto for Community Enterprise' and, this was more like John's [John Pearce] side of things and other people like Steven Phillips, Alexander Stone and people like that, solicitors in Burness now, and that was about trying to create a tax situation that would encourage the opportunity for not only private investment, but it looked at things like VAT and registration how to make that whole process simpler, because there was enormous loops you had to go through, again, 'officialdom depends stringing you out'. So there in 1985 there was a 10-point manifesto on how the process could be simplified. Now, I didn't have enough time in 45 minutes to remember all the bits and pieces we were arguing for, but I bet half of them haven't even been done now.

And that was one of the other things, just in case I forget Gill, we regularly consulted with all the political parties, because we were very keen to try and reach out to all political parties. This was not any kind of, none of us were party political people, we were just trying to chart this new way of doing things. And it must have been the '87 general election, we met with all the Scottish political party leaders which was interesting in itself, but meeting people face to face, like you and me, so that was fascinating. And then taking them out for a wee drive and going into your Possils, Easterhouses and getting them to see exactly what it was like and, I know you always see pictures of politicians in, wherever, I wasn't quite sure that a lot of them had walked round Allander Street in Possil before, and it's like, I was remembering coming in, John McKay who, Lord McKay of Clashfern, as he became. He was a good guy, very nice, affable, friendly, forward looking, one-nation type Conservative. He was the lead person for the Scottish Conservatives, he was the one that I found was most conducive to having an interesting chat about things, to come round Possil and he had his 'Vote for John McKay' on the back of his big car in Allander Street in Possil and I am saying, 'John, I think we might just turn them over or something', and he got it, he totally got it. It was interesting, and there was Jim Sillars from SNP, Malcom Bruce from the Lib Dems, Bruce Millan from Labour in those days. It was all fascinating having these one to one discussions. We talked though, for example, the manifesto and what we were trying to do, but it wasn't as if one party was all for it or one was all against it, it just fell into one of those grey things and you just had to try and pitch in and say: 'this is what we are trying to do; Would you be interested in that? Would your party sponsor, could come round to supporting this way of things?' By and large they did, but the colour of the money wasn't always there.

When you were you trying to shape policy and try to get this cross social/economic divide, were you trying to make inroads into that at that time was that like Scottish Home office that you were trying to work with or was it Westminster as this was pre devolution how was the kind of the whole policy sphere on your radar was you trying to influence it or just trying to make the most of what was coming your way?

I think this is the key role Community Business Scotland played in all of this. Community Business Scotland was this national network for community business. It basically didn't have any staff, certainly not to begin with. It was just an association really of all of us who were involved from across the county and we did things; 1984 we put out the first Community Business Directory. 1986 we put out the next directory. And that, again, was just part of the process trying to push the idea to get it more widely out there, this pre-social media, is pre-everything. It was the published word that tried to get the message out, and we would try and circulate material widely and it probably would fall on empty desks mostly. But Community Business Scotland, I think, played a key role in all of that. And one if its key roles was helping to create and promote the case for development units like Strathclyde. CBS largely was responsible for setting up all the other development agencies outwith the HIDB, the Highlands and Islands area, so that by the late 1980s every area but Borders had some sort of development agency. And George Burt, who should be mentioned, was again was one of the key figures for Community Business Scotland. George had a key role in doing that leg work to create development units in every Region, as it was seen as a Regional Council kind of lead thing to have development agencies, so George played a key role in that in the mid-80s certainly, but you are right, politically, it was very Westminster orientated. The local

government was seen really as a counter, the best kind of counter force to, countervailing force to the worst excesses of the worst of the UK national governments policies locally.

So it was a very, very difficult operating atmosphere throughout that period. And I think it is really important to constantly refer to that, and maybe I am doing it far too much, maybe, I have made it more complicated than it was but, because why did they keep going for so long if it was that difficult, it couldn't have been all that difficult, but the scale of the challenges were. That is another thing people forget about. You look out that window now and see this beautiful university and the garden. Glasgow didn't look great in the '80s it was battered, it was bruised, it was kind of getting the 'miles better' thing was starting, but there was huge areas that had been knocked down and hadn't been rebuilt. And that would be reflected the industrial fall out of the industrial clearance that happened in the late '70s and throughout the '80s was there to see visually, it was grim, a lot of the places. And it wasn't colour, my abiding image of a lot of the '80s was greyness and, even architecture, was still grey -it wasn't colourful. So I suppose we were just trying to get a colour going to some extent in places that had got far too much of their share of, as Oscar Marzaroli called it, shades of grey, because that what he felt, shades of grey Glasgow, he spoke about Glasgow shades of grey. But I would hate to think I am making it sound a desperate thing it was as I say there was great folk around but going back to what we said earlier it did seem to be based on quite a few limited number of folk locally to keep the thing on an even keel and then I think by the time the '80s wound up there was a new model community enterprise, wider models started.

What was ushering that in was it changing at the end of the 80s that was provoking that change?

We talked earlier about one or two of the bigger businesses failed. I think a lot of folk thought that, maybe some of the response, 'well we have tried that', 'let's try something a bit more business orientated'. And maybe there was more money coming in then and maybe there were new models and an awful lot at the end of day everything is about, they say it is politics, it's not personality but, an awful lot of it is personalities: Who is running the Region? Who is running the District? Who is running the SDA? That covers an awful lot of what actually happens on the ground and 'we don't like that person, let's get the new person in' and so, you know, I think there was. I was away during the '90s so I lost track of what and I am not qualified to talk about what happened in the '90s, but by the time I came back 24, 25, 26 there was certainly a new generation of folk around and that was great, a far greater acceptance of community enterprise/social enterprise concept, but some of the big challenges were still there like: How you get public sector markets? How do you get to growth areas? And you were getting exciting, great things happening like the whole environment thing had taken off; wind farms owned by communities. The whole land reform thing, I mean that's a new dimension, that's brilliant, just the scale is so much bigger than it was back then.

Can we go back to that time in the more your more personal trajectory when did you move away from Strathclyde community business and what was your next job?

As I said by the late '80s, I can't remember when Barrowfield collapsed, I think it was '89 or perhaps into 1990 and there was a feeling of, I think, you can probably those of us that were

around and been around throughout that time, Duncan left -he ended up here actually, Duncan- and Colin had left and I think the model we had been pushing out it, I had been John's deputy in Strathclyde, and I think they wanted a new approach. The sponsors, people like Ron Young -Tony Warrington had left to become an MP- Ron was starting to do other things. So an awful lot of folk that had been around both politically, and as officers, were moving on, so it was a new generation, fine, great, it happens. So John left, then I just left when he left. It was not going to be the same, so I went back to housing for a while and, as I said, I came back to social enterprise and it was interesting to see what had changed and what hadn't changed. But generally speaking I think what we achieved was quite remarkable giving the conditions we were operating in and I think as Colin also said in his interview said there are things going now that were set up then. I spent, just rolling back, to where we started, I have taken a couple of my friends in the last two months to the latest facility that Govan Workspace has developed in Govan Road, the former Fairfield ship-building company offices on Govan Road, it's absolutely fantastic. And you see the video what that place looked like, I mean it is just fantastic when you see things that are going 40 years on or 30/40 years on inspirational, brilliant.

Two big changes in the infrastructure of Scotland really would be the reshuffling of local government in '96 into unitary local authorities and then of course devolution and a Scottish parliament which really changes the landscape that people are operating in coming back into the sector in the early 2000s post those changes do you think that has made a difference to the way people are working today?

I think so, I haven't been, my main time was in the '80s, I was only ever really properly involved then, and in a fairly minor role. Communities Scotland had started to have a wider regeneration role by then, early 2000s, and as I say the policy context was much more accepting. The thing that doesn't ever seem to get cracked to me is this issue about procurement: How can social enterprises get into the real big service delivery contracts? Now that seems to be a nut that, perhaps, there are great examples around I am not really *au fait* with what is happening on that front, but health contracts. But that's more about health and social care integrating, that's been going on about 10 years now and it doesn't seem to be hugely integrated even yet.

So you are just dealing with vertical, internal departments as someone called them, the 'eternal verticals'. Public sector procurement. Is the public sector set up to deliver big contracts through third sector vehicles? Is it in their interest to do that? Is it set up legally to do that? I don't know but local government is still the big service delivery organisation and it farms out an awful lot to the private sector. I am not quite sure how much is going to the third sector right now whether what is going out to. Or whether the third sector is seen as a cheaper alternative as doing it through their own people, a cheaper/better, but cheaper being the operative word. I don't know but as I say you do see the impact and great initiatives like land reform and environment enterprises, which is good, but as I say, I suppose when you are as deeply involved and have to go away and do other things to get your brain working again, sometimes. I think you can get too sucked into something if you sit in it for too long. And possibly I was in it for too long myself in the '80s and became a bit of a dinosaur myself.

One thing I always find interesting about social enterprise is that there always seems to be a bit of a, within the different models of organisation that you can call a social enterprise some that are more community orientated there are some that are more enterprise with a social arm orientated. How do you see the balancing of that working and what are the benefits are there benefits of one over the other or would you even agree with me? Maybe you disagree entirely?

I suppose I am running out of anything new to say. I think as long as there is a local response to whatever is happening. I think that theme I touched on at the beginning about how do you keep the thing moving? How do you keep regenerating it? I have got the same issue -we have a community garden where I live, for example, and it is just classic, it is the classic social enterprise kind of model: you have tons of enthusiasm, people get involved and I remember writing an article about it. And somebody had done it as part of a university essay and one of the people who had been on the committee. And I said the problem would be if we think this is done now, we have set the garden up, I said the work only starts now. We now have to keep it going and we have to regenerate ourselves and rejuvenate and re everything. And we are just the same microcosm. We are now down to four folk. It's the same four. Somebody is on our Facebook page last night, moaning about dogs using it to pee in and 'Why don't you get involved? Why don't you come, rather than complaining, and do anything about it?' I am, maybe being completely wrong, but that person might become fully involved in the next 15 or 20 years just like me. And a few others they might rather sit back and say 'Well why don't you do something about it? Why don't you get involved -so people are, it's like Doctor Who, you have to regenerate.

If you were giving a few tips to people starting out today basing it on keeping people interested and keeping people going is there anything you found worked particularly well in trying to do that?

Don't know. It is the perennial. It's like, I did Marketing when I did my degree. And as they say, if you stand still, you're dead. So any business, any community initiative, or any anything has to do something new or it will outlive its time. And that is the good thing about community enterprise, its moving on, it's got new interpretations. It's got new legal models. I welcome all that, that's great, because what happened in the '80s is what happened in the '80s. Its right that that probably ended in the '80s, or new versions of it took over, or it became new persons, because it wasn't going to exist outwith the '80s. But, I think, as body of work what happened then was important, was exciting, and it tells a story down the stairs about what it was like operating in that context and I think it is a very useful contemporary account that I hope your future researchers will get something out of.

I don't have any further questions?

I don't think you haven't extracted anything I can possibly remember from 35 years ago out of me so thank you.

Thank you very much.