

The Making of Milton Keynes

DIVERSITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Geoff Cooksey

Director of Stantonbury Campus, 1972 - 1986



'The comprehensive spirit was about and I thought I'd have a go. Got a Deputy Headship in Huddersfield... then became Head of Shirebrook Grammar in Derbyshire for a year to convert it to a comprehensive. Because I was, by then, imbued with a strong feeling that everything should be available to everybody – not chopped up and cut off.'

'I got seconded to the Schools Curriculum Council for England and Wales which took me all over the world to learn about how things should be done in education. And I was going back to Shirebrook to plough all this deep, profound new knowledge when somebody in a pub said, "Why don't you apply for that job?" and that was Stantonbury.'

'It's always struck me as rather strange that people called Stantonbury Campus radical. It always seemed to us as immensely normal. You actually treated children in the same way that you treat your own kids.'

'And you treated parents in the same way that you treat your neighbours. And the school didn't belong to you, it belonged to everybody. And if you're out to get the best out of life, you could do it by co-operation. And if you wanted people to co-operate then you would use every skill, every trick, every guile to ensure people did co-operate.'

Geoff Cooksey, Director (1972–86) of Stantonbury Campus, Milton Keynes' first purpose-built community comprehensive school, leisure centre and theatre, opening 1974.