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'1983 GRADUATE PRESS CONFERENCE'

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Production Assistants.....Jane Tillman

.....Anne Pearson

Sound.....Mike Reald

Lighting.....Geoff Dawe

PRESS CONFERENCE

ADDRESS BY:

DR. JOHN KORLOCK

OU VICE CHANCELLOR

TRANSCRIPT OF EDITED PROGRAMME

Opening Title Sequence + Music

VIDEO LOCATION RECORDING
WALDORF HOTEL - OU GRADUATES

VIVienne THURMAN

So I enrolled to do a BA really to up my qualifications and to advance myself you know in my job.

TONY COMM

...er the acquisition of the degree is er certainly going to probably point me in a er a better career prospects than I have at the moment.

VIVienne THURMAN

...I did erm an Arts Foundation course in the first year which I found absolutely fascinating and it really it really did I know it sounds corny but it really did open up doors for me.

COLIN TIVEY

....because of the Open University, er I've been able to further my development in terms of technical education erm so I I think it's it's a superb way of being able to study.

RALPH COX

...I think I'm too settled in life now to look for new horizons but I'm quite pleased I've done it...

JACQUELINE KELLY

...I think it's helped me to be more successful in my press career. I think it's given me confidence. I think it's proven to employers if you like that I'm capable of using self discipline, that I have drive, that I have initiative...

COLIN TIVEY

...with a degree, it certainly gives you more opportunity for promotion. That's not saying that because you've got a degree you'll gain a promotion, but certainly if there are two people for a job, one with a degree and one without a degree, then obviously they would favour the one with the degree.

JACQUELINE KELLY

....in the type of society in which we live, I think it's tremendously important to have more than one string to your bow. I think it's given me the confidence to look elsewhere, I think it's given me the confidence to not only perhaps only look at a career but perhaps to lead a much broader life than I once led...

VIDEO LOCATION RECORDING
WALDORF HOTEL - DR. JOHN HORLOCK

VICE CHANCELLOR

Can I thank the journalists for coming today. It's my third Open University Press Conference. The fact that you keep coming year after year I think's evidence of your continuing interest in the Open University and its graduates. And it's a very considerable encouragement to all of us that you keep on coming.

VICE CHANCELLOR (Cont'd)

Can I just give you briefly the statistics of the University which you've had from me on several occasions. Over 57,000 graduates now altogether including these latest results 6,000 this year. 65,000 undergraduates, 30,000 continuing education students, 95,000 registered students altogether. Clearly a very significant educational force in this country. But I've spoken about this aspect on several occasions, on these occasions before and what I'd like to do today is to break away from that usual conventional presentation over the OU to give you another view of the Open University, the Open University across the International scene. I've said before that there are three UK Universities which are well known abroad, Oxford, Cambridge and the Open and I'd like to give you some background to that statement today in a year when "Educating Rita" is going to be screened right the way round the world.

First of all you may not know we have some Open University students overseas. We have Merchant Seamen whose course material is mailed through the Marines Society, we have Servicemen and their relatives, UK civilians in Cyprus, in North West Europe and Belgium, Germany, Holland. A total of about 600 in all. In 1982 we had many Servicemen involved in the Falklands campaign. We had about 60 students in the South Atlantic and we have one Falklands graduate with us today.

VIDEO LOCATION RECORDING
WALBORF HOTEL - OU GRADUATE

-4-

FL.IT. BENN

..well in my last year, the Falklands happend and I was greatly involved as a Transport Pilot flying all sorts of things from Lyneham down to Ascension Island er while the fighting was going on and just after the cease-fire I was involved in shuttling from Ascension Island down to the Falklands. Erm a variety of things er over a great period. In fact our job is still going on down to the Falklands even though the fighting stopped a long time ago. And all sorts of things are going down, everything from guns to bombs to strawberries and cream beer which have been donated by various companies and if there's room on the aircraft, we generally fill it up with something. But my books have travelled with and er every now and again come out of my briefcase and er I try and do something while my co-pilot's flying the aircraft. Or more generally while we're sort of sitting down after we've been flying. Er a wind-down beer or two then away and have a look at the books.

VIDEO RECORDING OF BRUSSELS STUDY
CENTRE BY BELGISHE RADIO EN
TELEVISIE (Mr. Vandersichel)

VICE CHANCELLOR V/O

Last year in conjunction with the British Council, we started Open University courses for UK residents in Belgium. And last week I went to Brussels to inaugurate a scheme in which Belgium and other Nationals may become students of the Open University. Any English speaking resident in Belgium who's prepared to pay the not inconsiderable Associate Student fee.

VICE CHANCELLOR IN BRUSSELS

I think that I would say to begin with that

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VICE CHANCELLOR (Cont'd)

you yourselves and particularly the Belgium students and students of other nationalities, that you are unique in a unique University. You're not the first Open University students outside the United Kingdom. Er as you know, the normal rules of the game are that if you have a UK address you can register as an Open University student and the University genuinely is open we don't require qualifications. You are the first foreign students who are residents who are resident overseas. First ones within the Open University so it's to you that I give a special welcome as well as the the UK nationals here tonight. I might say Mr. Ambassador that we don't know how many British students there are here tonight and we don't know how many there are from other nationalities because the Open University doesn't make a practice of asking its students what their nationalities are. The second point is you're what we call associate students. You're not registered students for the undergraduate degree. You do our undergraduate courses one off, one at a time and I know that many of you students studying here last year and those of you joining us this year will want to do the BA degree if you possibly can. It's difficult for us because you're small numbers judged by OU standards, and there are difficulties for the OU in providing some of the courses and providing adequate tutorials. The thing that I've learned very very quickly is that the Open University system doesn't always export abroad unchanged.

VICE CHANCELLOR (Cont'd)

Erm it depends what the boundary conditions are, what the basic education of the country is whether it's got a good tv radio network, the number of people who go forward to Universities and the number of people who need a second chance later on. We're particularly dependent for instance on our University network in the United Kingdom because we call on our fellow Universities to help us with courses, to help us with tutorials and that's a great help to us. But I think the Brussels scheme clearly does export more or less as it is and this is simply because you're our students really as much as any other students in the United Kingdom at the present time. And I think you might just glance at the papers that you have and you'll find that in the Open University Northern Regional Guide here for instance, to my astonishment you'll find Brussels inbetween the Ambleside and Durham in fact. So it's very much apart of the er the North East region surprisingly enough.

VICE CHANCELLOR V/C

So much for Open University students abroad but what about the influence, the concept of the Open University elsewhere? I'm always amazed by the hundred or so visitors that we get at Milton Keynes who come to see how the OU works from overseas governments, overseas institutions and these visits usually result in much advice and expertise being passed on or shared. In 1982 for example we had about 1500 such visitors to the University and we have an International office which coordinates these overseas contacts. Particularly those

VIDEO LOCATION RECORDING
WALTON HALL

VICE CHANCELLOR (Cont'd)

Involving formal consultancies which we undertake and it works very closely with the British Council.

And just to give you a picture of the countries where we've formally helped overseas to establish Open Universities through workshops and seminars, feasibility studies, secondment of staff. These countries include Iran, India, Pakistan, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It's an impressive list. We've also done work for Nigeria and Columbia but they haven't yet set up their Open Universities. And there are many other Universities throughout the world where we've had members of staff who've helped in a private capacity, Germany, Canada, USA, China, Israel, Spain.

My predecessor, Lord Perry was very keen on this International aspect of the University. He's continued his work through the United Nations University and he's documenting the activities of all the distance learning Universities like ourselves.

LORD PERRY

The idea underlying all this documentation is that it's needed because of the explosive growth in the number of Open Universities all over the world because there is a desperate need to exchange courses to save spending money on making the same course over and over again, to exchange ideas in methods and people. And

LORD PERRY (Cont'd)

I started working on this in the late 70's trying to establish an International institute of distance learning, though we couldn't get the money. And when I retired the United Nations University got interested in it and came and said would I be a consultant to them and I've been working towards the idea of having an International Centre under their aegis based here in in the documentation centre at the Open University because we have the the start of all this and we're beginning to get computerised records on on the hundreds of Open University distance learning systems. The United Nations University is very appropriate because its sort it's a relatively new organisation. It was set up about eight years ago with money that was given by member states in the form of endowment so that they don't rely on on annual politically biased or contributions from member states. And the idea was to work on problems of that were global in nature with especially to help the third world and they started by doing a lot of research work with units scattered all over the world. But recently they got interested in this idea of actually do some education at a University and the best way they thought very sensibly was to use this this learning method and this is why I was brought in and what I'm trying to do.

VIDEO LOCATION RECORDING
WALDORF HOTEL

VICE CHANCELLOR

Just one or two other points about our International work. We've got a separate Company - Open University Educational

VICE CHANCELLOR (Cont'd)

Enterprises wholly owned by the OU which markets our materials to non students.

The Company's turnover is about one and a half million a year, we translate some courses into other languages. For example the first years of life has been translated into Spanish sold very well overseas South America.

Another aspect is that we've internationalised our teaching by obtaining contributions from academics overseas and I think the most obvious example is the under, understanding space and time course where we collaborated with the University of California.

We've got an International Documentation Centre, we've organised an international conference on the education of adults, we run a series of international conferences on particular subjects. One for instance recently on motor vehicle design which is a particular interest of some of my Engineering colleagues. Well attended by Design Engineers from all over Europe.

Most recently the BBC's been working with the British Council putting on a three month course to teach overseas Producers about educational television. They operated the first one this year. 14 participants from 12 countries including China, Saudi Arabia, Jamaica, Gambia, Hong Kong.

So this is a brief sketch I think of the many U, OU activities overseas. We undertake this work in the hope of helping overseas

VICE CHANCELLOR (Cont'd)

countries in developing distance education in the way that suits them best.

The initial hope of the University's Planning Committee was that what happened at the OU would influence the shape of education in this country and thirteen years after the establishment of the University, it's extremely satisfying I think to those of us with an international view that the influence of the University has spread well beyond this country. If I can express a personal view, I hope that our activities within the European community will develop very much further and we might see our own particular brand of the Open University concept become more widely available in Europe beyond the Brussels pilot scheme.

But if I can return to our home graduates and congratulate those on the platform with me, the 1983 graduates all of them, erm in this particular year. Thankyou.

JOHN GREENALL

Er would anyone like to ask any questions whether it's on what the Vice Chancellor's been talking about or on any other aspect.

MAN FROM PRESS

Er how many students are dropping out of courses because they can't afford the fees?

DR. HORLOCK

I think of the people who are offered places

DR. HORLOCK (Cont'd)

in fact, about 40% decline, we think largely because of the fee level. Erm within the courses, within the number of students who register, that's where I think we have a very high success rate the erm the people who registered in the early years in fact about 69/70% of those got through to graduation in the end.

MAN FROM PRESS

To what extent is the Open University pricing itself out of the market?

DR. HORLOCK

Erm I think there are two points there that I would make. First of all as a method of educating University graduates it is cheap in comparison with the conventional University so we're a very cost effective way of doing it. Erm I've said in recent years that we're right at the cliff edge as far as fees are concerned and if we put the fees up any for, any further, we would in fact be pricing ourselves out of the market and our student numbers would come right down. I think we're seeing some evidence of this in the decline rate but at the present time we're still filling the places we have on offer in the UK undergraduate programme. Erm I think that we have made a point this last year we have pressed this very hard that the fees are high, many of you have helped us in making that statement and this year the fees have gone up by about the inflation rate. I wouldn't say that we've won a victory but I think we've made a point this year that they have gone far

DR. HORLOCK (Cont'd)

enough.

BRIAN BENNETT (OU GRADUATE)

The only thing I would say about the level of fees as they are at present. I think it tends to negate the concept of the Open University of being open cause now it tends to restrict people who might otherwise be ordinary purely because of financial cost of doing it. So you're getting perhaps people on the shop floor or that sort of level, who are saying well I just can't afford it in the present situation.

WOMAN FROM PRESS

Isn't there a danger that you're going to become a more and more middle class institution because the 40% is is it's been shooting up

DR. HORLOCK

Erm I think this does worry us. What we're always anxious to have is a spread of people right the way across the community across if you like all social classes. And there's some figures in the papers that you've got in the press pack about the distribution of students and you can see that man, people in manual jobs account for about 7% flows in, office sales service industry about 15% and I think that we would feel that that's not as high a percentage as we would like to see and we think that the fees are critical in this...

WOMAN FROM PRESS

Is, is it going down, I mean is the manual
erm share....

DR. HORLOCK

It's gone down slightly I think we got up
to something like 9 or 10% I think it's
come down a couple of percent over the last
two or three years..

WOMAN FROM PRESS

And you do think that's fees

DR. HORLOCK

I think it's certainly related to that.
I I should emphasise that we're talking
about the undergraduate courses here. The
continuing education side is is self
financing..

MAN FROM PRESS

Isn't there a case for erm the OU to take
more 18-21 year old students particularly
those who are well qualified or show a
particular motivation to get a degree and
haven't been able to get places at er
conventional Universities?

DR. HORLOCK

We had a long discussion about this and
we decided marginally against taking 18-21
year olds. I think the arguments against
were that our courses are prepared for
adults for adults to study and erm the
previous experience with er an experiment
I think which Mrs Thatcher initiated when
she was Secretary of State showed that the

DR. HORLOCK (Cont'd)

18 year olds who took that course erm didn't achieve the same success rate, not the same stickability if you like as mature people. And I think that's made an impact on the University and the arguments for taking them were really just the ones you've made in your question that erm you know people turned down from conventional Universities might have another opportunity here. Er I think it wouldn't surprise me if the University had another look at this in the near future.

MAN FROM PRESS

Sorry just to get one thing straight on this Belgium experiment. Are you saying that, I realise it's on the continuing education side but that it's it's being implemented without any cost to erm British places on the courses?

DR. HORLOCK

Yes it, the cost is what we would call the marginal cost. What we do is we recover the cost of adding another student to the system if you like, a marginal cost.

MAN FROM PRESS

There are additional places, they're not places that at the expense of British places

DR. HORLOCK

...we're only talking about 100 students and there were 50 UK nationals in that 100 and about 50 from Belgium and the other countries.

MAN FROM PRESS

VHF covering, er local radio coverage and er scheduling times of shown to be notoriously difficult in the past with the increase of the widening out of prime viewing time. What er what has the Open Uni, University done about that and what affect has it er caused?

DR. HORLOCK

Well as far as the tv is concerned, we've got a very good offer of total time from the BBC. We have something like 37 hours I think altogether but they are in odd times as you say. We've been I've spoken about this before, we've been squeezed out of the two evening slots into one evening slot erm we're putting on programmes after the end of BBC 2 because we've lost some time in the morning to Breakfast Television as well. Weekend time is very good. And er there are some enormous audiences for OU programmes on Saturday and Sunday mornings. I mean they, they are comparable to many BBC 2 conventional programmes. 3 or 400,000 in some cases watching of course which is therefore 4 or 5,000 students perhaps. Erm on radio, we've been putting a lot of the material onto cassettes and what we're coming down to is erm a limited amount of good time we hope but we're very interested in the erm radio in the 90's programme. In fact what the BBC is going to do whether they're going to have a 4th channel in addition to 1,2,3, 4.

MAN FROM PRESS

In connection er setting up Open Universities overseas, er are you saying that the Open University here would be prepared to help any country provided that that country would be prepared to pay a commercial rate?

DR. HORLOCK

Yes I think that that has to be our position really and that's what has been our position in the past.

JOHN GREENALL DIRECTOR INFORMATION SERVICES

Well shall we close the this session here. Very glad to see Julie Walters here who's the star with Michael Caine in the forthcoming film "Educating Rita". We'll have a break for photos or if you want to talk to people individually. And the bar is now open I hope.

LOCATION VIDEO RECORDING
WALDORF HOTEL - JULIE WALTERS
PROMOTING FILM "EDUCATING RITA"

JULIE WALTERS

The story of how I came to do the play, well erm, well I knew Willy Russell I did, I worked at the Everyman Theatre in Liverpool, that was my first job ever, my first professional job and he was there as a sort of new writer as well. So that's how that sort of partnership arose and then he he was commissioned to write a play by the Royal Shakespeare Company. I think they wanted a great big sort of musical effort because he'd done John Paul Ringo and Bert earlier. And that was a big success you know it was based on the Beatles, that was a big success in the West End and

JULIE WALTERS (Cont'd)

everything and I think they were expecting something like that. Then this two hander arrived, you know they were.. I didn't think they were that pleased with it actually, it'll probably be the biggest box office success they've ever had. I don't know whether that's true but I I imagine it's nearer it anyway, near the truth. And erm and he asked me to play it and that's how it started. And I was delighted to.

MUSIC

Closing Music over end of Press Conference

SOUND

MIKE HEALD

Lighting

GEOFF DAWE

Producer

ROGER TUCKER

A Production for The Open University

RBC tv

c. The OU MCMLXXXI11
