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OPEN FORUM
76 1982

POST PRODUCTION TRANSCRIPT

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

PROGRAMME NO: FOU F047D

SPOOL NO: HOU 4312

DURATION: 24'06"

OPEN FORUM 76

CAMPUS ON CAMERA

PRODUCER.....Roger Tucker
ASSISTANT.....Shirley Taylor
T.M.....Tony Powell
SOUND SUPERVISOR.....Martin Tillman
VISION MIXER.....Moirra Brown
GRAPHIC DESIGNER.....Jean-Pierre Sharp

VOICEOVER COMMENTARY.....Wyne Brindle

This programme is mostly film plus the following
VT inserts:

OPEN FORUM 45 - Spool No: OU 3335
Aerial shots - Spool No: HAP 0597

TRANSMISSION: Sunday, 18 July 1982 at 1125 a.m. on BBC-2

OPENING MUSIC

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

The 1982 setting for Walton Hall - the very heart of the Open University. A far cry from its appearance in 1969. The dilapidated hall stood amid fields and woodlands secluded to the point of being forgotten. The only other building on the estate - the 14th century St. Michael's Church - was equally in need of restoration and only in occasional use. The overgrown drive seemed an unlikely approach to a new and Open University.

The first task was to make the hall weatherproof and habitable, whilst over on the west side low rise blocks were being built for the first academic staff already involved in producing the first foundation courses. All new building was to be in brick - relatively cheap and available straight from the Bedfordshire Kilns nearby.

The second priority was to provide temporary accommodation for the library, an essential backup for academics working under pressure.

There were few concessions to architectural style - rapid construction and basic convenience were the order of the day.

Foundations were already appearing for the laboratories - urgently needed to develop the first home experiment kits for the science foundation course.

The only planning protection was given to the Rose Garden at the side of the hall and the mature trees on the estate.

The hall itself had a special destiny after its restoration - to house the top people.

Some minor refurbishing of the entrance hall created a main reception area. Unchanged but beautifully restored was the original 19th century, finely carved, oak staircase; this led to the principal offices on the first floor for the Vice-Chancellor, the University Secretary and their supporting staff.

The first occasion to attract the Press to Walton Hall was the visit of Lord Mountbatten, who was invited to open the now completed new buildings, which were already in use. He was received by the Open University's first Chancellor, Lord Crowther, the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Planning Committee, Sir Peter Venables, and the Vice-Chancellor.

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

The Minister given responsibility by Harold Wilson for launching the University - Jennie Lee - was among the guests.

LORD CROWTHER

Lord Mountbatten, Pro-Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen. We are met here this morning to mark the formal completion of the first phase of the construction of this permanent home for the Open University. Now it might at first sight seem odd that an institution whose habitat is the air, which only narrowly escaped being called the University of the Air should need a local habitation as well as a name. I suppose that when the idea of an Open University was first mooted the natural assumption might have been that it would occupy a few floors of some anonymous office building in London. That may have been the natural assumption but it was clearly the wrong one. We are not a society for the propagation of this or for the abolition of that; we are, we will be and we are, one of the great permanent institutions of the country, and though our nature is inevitably largely aerial, electronic, invisible, we must put down a tow on earth somewhere.

it

We count a great privilege to be able to have admiral of the fleet Lord Mountbatten of Burma to perform this dedication ceremony for us. We are greatly honoured by his presence. Lord Mountbatten. (APPLAUSE)

LORD MOUNTBATTEN

Mr Chancellor, Mr Pro-Chancellor, Mr Vice-Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen. I am indeed honoured to be invited to open the Open University but it is first puzzle, how one could make an open University more open than its name already implies. But I gather it is the buildings that house the staff and the means of dissemination of programmes that are to be opened today and I am proud to perform the opening ceremony.

This is a test of technology, will the strings work.
(PULLS STRINGS AND CURTAINS OPEN REVEALING PLAQUE)
(APPLAUSE)

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

The campus continued to grow rapidly during 1971 and 72. 1973 saw the next building ceremony, this time involving Jennie Lee herself, the laying of the foundation stone of the new library, which was to bear her name.

LORD PERRY

Lady Lee, Ladies and Gentlemen. It's certainly true that since we came to this country house in February 19 it has seen a fair number of changes. I think we preserved the house rather well, in fact, I think we improved it a bit but we certainly surrounded it with

buildings on almost all sides. I think it's a remarkable feature of these surrounding buildings that all the new blocks put up have melted into the background without offending against the ambience of this very nice, little country estate, and for that we are indebted, very greatly indebted, to our architects, Brian Drew, to all the consultants who worked with the architects through these years and not least to the contractors, Messrs. Lovells and their staff who have in fact won the contract for all the buildings we put up on the campus. Some of their staff that I meet day by day have faces very much more familiar to me than many of my academic colleagues (LAUGHTER). The building programme of the Open University when we came here first was divided into various phases. The first phase in buildings was to provide a sort of home for those of us who came here first and it consisted of what is now the Arts Building, the Arts Faculty's building, the refectory and the Preparation Labs at the back.

Phase two of our building programme wasn't so much a home as a factory and perhaps in that sense was not a common sort of building for a University to have and it was allowed to come into existence, piecemeal, bit by bit, without any beating of drums and ceremonial occasion.

The third phase of buildings which consisted of the laboratories and the library, are much more the embodiment in bricks and mortar of the scholarship of the University and therefore it seems appropriate again to mark the, the laying of the foundation stone of this library with a ceremony, a small ceremony this morning, and it was I think with acclaim in every section of the University that it was agreed that the library should be called the Jennie Lee Library, and it is therefore with very particular pleasure because Jennie holds a special place in all our hearts that I invite her to lay the foundation stone this morning.

(APPLAUSE)

JENNIE LEE

Vice-Chancellor, fellow students, fellow dons, fellow workers all.---Before I show my skill as a bricklayer, I would just like to say this; coming down here recalls for me as it does for many others the mud right up to your eyebrows of those first years and I know that around here today there are pioneers 'o pioneers. There are some of you of course who came on later, you've had it easier but it really is wonderful to come to a University which has very much its distinctive ambience and I don't know whether it's an accident or good luck that the men who have been doing the actual building always seem to be so helpful. And, you know,

JENNIE LEE (contd)

nobody loves my friends Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry more than I do but Jane's a bit of a dictator, that's why we were so delighted that Jane and Max should be in charge of the architecture because as you know we were fighting time, we were really fighting time to get to a certain stage; and so it was really wonderful to be able to come here and to say 'thank you' to architects, to builders, to staff, students of every kind. I think all my life has been marked by libraries that I've loved and I hope that the library now beginning will give great happiness, great excitement, great sense of intellectual and aesthetic adventure to every kind of student who'll be using it. I thank you very much Vice-Chancellor, it's a very special honour for me to be here today and to have the privilege of now seeing how good a bricklayer I could be. (APPLAUSE)

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

The following six years saw a series of new buildings for staff many of whom had been housed in temporary prefabs. Then in 1979, to mark the 10th anniversary of the University came the greatest moment of all - a visit by Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to tour the campus, which was decked out as never before.

(CROWD TALKING AND APPLAUDING)

The Operations Building which the Queen and the Duke are entering houses several key departments involved in the production of students' course materials.

The Design Studio is responsible for designing the artwork and layout for most of the printed course units, the supplementary materials and other University publications. Designers and illustrators work closely with academic members of the course teams - and editors from the University's Publishing Division, who are housed in offices on the floor above.

(BACKGROUND TALKING)

Another section visited by the Queen and the Duke was the Student Records Office. It's here that details of students' progress and copies of all relevant documents are stored on microfiche. The information is also keyed into the O.U. computer's memory store and this can be called up on visual display units.

(CLAPPING AND MUMBLING)

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

By May 1982 much of the original 70 acres of park land had been covered with new buildings or layed out for University activities.

There is now a complete ringroad and car parks have been provided. The walled garden has been preserved and is used as a nursery for plants and flowers.

To the north of Walton hall there are still many temporary buildings providing offices for Social Sciences, Technology and Science faculty staff.

There is also the main boiler house and the estates offices - both permanent buildings. The triangular play lawn is for the University's Creche whose building is adjacent to the row of portable office cabins.

The big new cruciform complex at the north eastern corner of the campus is the VENABLES Building, which provides spacious new laboratories, animal houses and offices for the Science and Technology faculties. There is a new wing diagonally joining the arms of the cross, providing yet more offices.

The grassed area separates the VENABLES building from the biggest complex of all, which is the new BBC Open University Production Centre. The large square block with its many skylights contains the television and radio studios with their ancillary technical facilities, including, scenery, videotape and film areas.

Extending from the western end of this is the T-shaped office block providing the 400 BBC staff with offices and a restaurant.

Across the main axis of Walton drive is the Jennie Lee library and the earliest faculty office blocks. And it was along Walton Drive on May 14th 1982 that a large Rolls Royce with permanent flying brought His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales from the new Milton Keynes railway station up to the porch of Walton Hall, where he was received by Dr John Horlock, Lord Perry's successor as Vice-Chancellor, and the Chairman of the BBC Governors, Mr George Howard.

(CHEERING CROWD)

There were two main reasons for the Prince's visit: to receive the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University and to tour the new BBC Production Centre and perform the formal opening.

(CROWD NOISE AND APPLAUSE)

The Production Centre had been in full use for 8 months but had awaited a formal opening by His Royal Highness.

WYNNE BRINDIE
(V/O)

In the main reception area he met Lord Perry, after whom the building was to be named. He was welcomed by the BBC Chairman.

GEORGE HOWARD

The BBC is indeed very proud that your Royal Highness has come here today to declare this building formally open.

May I ask you Sir, now to unveil this plaque.

HRE PRINCE OF WALES

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. I've had a brief but interesting tour of the new production studios and managed to make a somewhat unscheduled, I suspect, visit to the Special Effects department, which had erected some ominous looking, it wasn't a Petradacta, some such bird carrying a child underneath it wrapped up in something which looked rather interesting. But I also looked at the other studios which you have and obviously they are extremely effective and they've managed to move all the equipment that wasn't burnt, I hear, from Alexandra Palace down to the new studios here.

So, it gives me great pleasure to unveil this plaque and to name this building after Lord Perry which I hope, as he says or as his wife says, will remain standing.

(UNVEILS PLAQUE THEN APPLAUSE)

WYNNE BRINDIE
(V/O)

During its thirteen years of life there have been a number of occasions specifically intended to encourage students to visit the headquarters of their University - although they are not normally users of it. These are the Open Days of which the most recent was in June 1982.

Students and their families are able to tour the buildings to look at the exhibitions and displays mounted by departments of each faculty. Research groups set up demonstrations of their work and here in the Venable Building there was a comprehensive shop window for Earth Science activities.

An electronic display in this area demonstrates satellite image processing. It's used as an aid in geological mapping and interpretation of structures. It uses orbiting satellites to acquire data about surface brightness in four different spectral bands.

DR STEVE DRURY

Now can any of you recognise what that might be. You should be able to get a sort of slightly 3-D effect from that from the shadows

WOMAN

(MUMBLING) A crater on the moon.

DR STEVE DRURY

It's in fact, it's a volcanic crater in the Himalayas, so you're pretty close to it, it's a crater. You know, you could use that picture as a sort of base map line structured, where it would prove very useful. One of my colleagues has been using it in a different mould in the old man.

(EXTERIOR ATMOS. BIRDS, MUSIC)

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

Walton Church has now been carefully restored by the University who have acquired it for use as a meeting place for discussion and the Arts. On Open Day there were two concerts being given there.

In the Social Sciences area there were displays related to the work of the Faculty's discipline and research groups. Psychology has a project designed to help students overcome their fear of computers.

DR MARC EISENSTADT

But, they're interested in this kind of thing 'cos they're always interested in 'use your friendly computer'.

DON FEASEY

Yes, now can you explain that because I'm not quite sure what this word really means, you know, use your friendly computers, I mean, make your best friend your computer, sort of stuff.

DR MARC EISENSTADT

Right. Well, the idea is to get away from the daunting or intimidating aspect of computing; typically if you are a novice computer user and you type something into the computer and make a slight mistake, it comes back to you with some question mark, it says 'syntax error' or 'error 403' or whatever, which is very frightening, very threatening, and what we want to do is let the computer that you're speaking to or that you're typing to have a bit of common sense so that it could do exactly what you or I would do if you made a trivial error, trivial typing mistake in a message that you sent to me, I wouldn't complain about it and throw the message away and say 'syntax error' or '403'; I would make sense of what you send, I would apply my own common sense. So we write computer programmes that try to build in some of that common sense, and that's what we mean by use your friendly, it's that kind of common sense.

DON FEASEY

What's your impression of the campus? Is this your first visit?

GRAHAM COOPER

It is my first visit yes, and it seemed very strange when you first arrived, you don't know where to go and you struggle with the map and you find the bar and the restaurant and things look brighter straight away.

JEANETTE
CUNNINGHAM-GREEN

Well, when we first arrived we both thought it was like arriving at summer school - and you didn't think you knew anybody and it seemed rather strange, and then you recognise people.

JILL BECKETT

I'm very impressed. I expected it to be much bleaker than it is but I really like the layout of the campus, I think it's very pleasant indeed.

ELIZABETH NORTON

It's so huge, I thought it would only be one or two buildings and when I came I thought I would see the people I knew straight away but I've only so far been to the HBC building and into the Walton Hall reception, I'm very impressed, especially with the HBC building with all the facilities they've got in there.

GREGG CHALK

It's different. I've never seen anything like this before, it's very open, in more ways than one, it's interesting, yeh, sure.

YVONNE MILLS

I think it's lovely, yes. I think it's a very pleasant campus and we've thoroughly enjoyed it.

MR MILLS

I didn't think it was going to be as vast as it is; it's enormous. You go round corners, there are more buildings, quite impressive the variety of departments that there are here.

JILL BECKETT

I've just been wandering around drinking in the atmosphere, really.

BOY
(Mills' son)

I've been watching the Knockout.

(BACKGROUND NOISE)

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

The most colourful events on Open Days are the very informal student games and this year there was an inter-regional 'It's a Knockout' competition.

(COMPETITORS SHOUTING, TALKING, CHEERING)

DR JOHN HORLOCK

The winner of this competition is Josie Smith, Josie Smith of Sheffield.

JOSIE SMITH

What have I won?

DR JOHN HORLOCK

You've guessed the combined weight.

JOSIE SMITH

Really! (LAUGHING) I win the Vice-Chancellor of my choice, do I! (LAUGHING, OVERTALKING)

Thank you very much indeed, thank you.

DR JOHN HORLOCK

Don't spend it all at once!
(OVERTALKING)

DON FEASEY

And what about the TAD, you seem to be enjoying it despite the weather.

JEANETTE
CUNNINGHAM-GREEN

Yes I do. I had a lot of reservations about TAD when I started it.

DON FEASEY

Can you tell me briefly what TAD is, because I think most people, theres a bit of shorthand and most people don't actually understand.

JEANETTE
CUNNINGHAM-GREEN

It's difficult to explain, I can only say what another student said, which was 'putting back the boundaries' and I think that's quite a good summation of what it's about. It's a new way of looking at life and at other people.

END CREDITS OVER:

(CHILDREN AND ADULTS PLAYING MUSHROOM GAME.)
(TALKING, SHOUTING, CHILDREN SCREAMING, ETC)