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But it was very exciting, quite daunting going to Alexandra Palace. I mean the very exciting thing about the OU in the early days is that all the math producers were people with mathematics degrees, and in some cases you had PhDs in mathematics. And, so... and their job was to take our batty ideas and turn them into good teaching television material. Because sometimes we had great ideas of what we wanted to do, which would have been impractical. And it was really a partnership and we really did work together. And some of those sessions I had with the BBC producer, and we had some superb producers, some of them were, some of... I mean I learnt so much about teaching through that, because, you know, they said, 'OK, it's a good idea. Now, I think we should do it this way,' or we talked about the most effective way of doing it. So you got something which you had taught often to students, but how do you get it across on television? What graphics do you use? Unlike a lecture where you just think of it the previous night and you turn up and lecture, or you even think of it while you're on your feet, of course everything had to be thought of six weeks in advance, because you had to commission the graphics. So you need to know exactly what you want to do. So actually, constructing scripts, and having your scripts pulled to pieces by the producer, and so working together, it was, I mean I think that was one of the most important features of the OU in the early days, working closely with the BBC.

And this was television and radio. Television, there were two studios at Alexandra Palace, Studio A and Studio B, and we used to usually rehearse in B and then do it in A. And in those days you didn't have teleprompters, autocue. So what we did, and the recording had to be done in an hour, so you spent two... you spent about a week beforehand you went to the studio and you had a basic run-through, you went through each of the scenes with whatever graphics they'd got by that time. A lot of these were magnetic boards and so on. And so you went through the best you could, and sometimes, of course they're just beginning to bring in film animation and some of the film animations people said, 'You just can't possibly do them,' and as some of our producers actually managed to film. A Klein bottle was one of the ones that they did as a topological surface. And so a week beforehand we ran through everything as far as you could, and then, the actual... Then we had two days to record and we ran... So we spent all the first day rehearsing the different scenes, so we got the camera work just right, we were, just right, we stood in exactly the right place, we said the right things. We did it over and over again so we knew what we had to say. And then, the next day we did that for most of the day, until half-past four, and then between half-past four and half-past five was the take. And it was a twenty five minute programme, and we had an hour. So we were able to make the occasional mistake, but we couldn't make mistakes with every scene. I remember one particularly traumatic occasion when, the very last scene we had, we'd run out of time, because there had been a sort of complicated sequence. So, the very last scene where I had to record, we didn't have time to rehearse, I had to do it straight and we had to get it right first time. And it involved cutting a sort of, cutting a cake or something like this, and sort of talking about it and everything, and getting everything... Fortunately it worked out OK, but there was a lot of tension involved.

Lots of stories about things that, going wrong. Oliver Penrose for example, he was writing, he was writing on, meant to be writing on a whiteboard, like that, and he kept on getting his shoulder in the way because the camera was looking over his shoulder. And they thought, how are we going to get round this? They couldn't cure the problem. So they... in the end they got him to write on glass and they filmed it from the other side and then they electronically reversed it. So if you look at the writing, you could actually see it. I mean, you'd got to get used to the fact that he looks as though he's writing backwards, but... So, that's how they got rid of one. And there was also a wonderful scene where Ralph Smith was rehearsing or recording and he's sort of standing there, and at one stage he seems to sort of disappear and get, you know, get smaller and smaller and disappeared out of the corner. Because the camera was moving all the time, and so that was one thing.