

Walton Hall Buildings and Artworks Tour



Welcome to Walton Hall

The Open University purchased the site at Walton Hall in 1969 from the Milton Keynes Development Corporation. Building began in April of that year. Some years later the first Vice-Chancellor Walter Perry wrote about his initial impressions of the site:



It was a relatively small house, in a poor state of repair, but lay in a park of some 70 acres bordered on one side by the River Ouzel. It had potential, the sort of potential we had to have if we were going to develop in the way I foresaw.

Walter Perry

The OU's first Vice-Chancellor, on his initial impressions of the campus site

Since 1969 many university campus buildings have been erected, refurbished, extended, demolished and/or renamed. This tour will take you around The Open University campus, pointing out all of the main buildings on site and revealing the people behind the names given to the many buildings – Wilson, Jennie Lee, Christodoulou, Gardiner, Crowther and Briggs to name but a few. The tour also includes artworks located around the campus.

This tour guide, prepared by the University Archive Team, accompanies the online exhibition "OU Campus Tour" on the OU Digital Archive (OUDA). The tour route and map is on the central pages of this booklet.

The Open University Walton Hall Campus, Milton Keynes, 2012



Berrill Building



Construction of the Berrill building, 1996



The OU's main reception building was named after Sir Kenneth Berrill (1920–2009) who served as the OU Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Council from 1983 to 1996. In 1967 Berrill had been appointed as a special adviser to the Treasury on public expenditure, and two years later became chairman of the University Grants Committee. In 1985 Berrill was appointed as the first chair of the Securities and Investments Board (SIB).

The Berrill Building was opened in 1997 by Sir Kenneth and was designed to be a flagship building for the University, housing the main reception.



2 Millennium Knot Garden

Located in the courtyard of the Berrill Building, the Knot Garden was the brainchild of Vice Chancellor John Daniels' wife Lady Daniels to celebrate the Millennium and it also serves as a memorial garden to the late Ken Hollingshead who was the previous Head Gardener at The Open University. The topiary hedges depict the OU logo and are best seen from the upper floors of the surrounding buildings.



George Abel Observatory

Professor Abell (1927-1983) worked closely with the OU on the first 'Understanding Space and Time' course in 1983. Unfortunately he passed away later that year and the observatory, opened in 1984, now stands in his memory. One of the first objects seen through the telescope was Halley's Comet on its approach to pass the Sun in 1985-86.

Close to the George Abell Observatory is the Security Lodge which opened in 1992.



George Abell, presenting OU programme \$354/13, 1979



George Abell Observatory, 2018

4 Betty Boothroyd Library



The Betty Boothroyd Library, 2018



Vice Chancellor Brenda Gourley and Betty Boothroyd at the naming ceremony, 2006

The Library Building was named in 2006 by Baroness Boothroyd (1929–2023) who was Chancellor of The Open University from 1994 to 2006. Her archive of papers has been deposited into the University Archive in the Library.

5 Bounding Bull

This springstone bull inset with crushed dolomite is located outside the Library. The sculptor, Dominic Benhura, born in 1968, began his career in sculpture at the age of ten and sold his first piece professionally to architects at the age of twelve. He studied under his cousin, Tapfuma Gusta, a master sculptor.



Modern Misses

This springstone serpentinite sculpture inset with acrylic is located outside the Library. Sculptor Dominic Benhura's work is bold and daring and he captures balance and movement both physically and emotionally. His prime motivation is to explore new ideas, techniques, and methods to express and communicate powerfully simple ideas. Nature, family, and the relationships with his children are the main inspiration for his sculptures.





Viper Sniper

This springstone and opal stone snake is located beneath the oak tree at the front of the Library. Sculptor Dominic Benhura's work has been included in many major exhibitions both in Zimbabwe and internationally. He has also been involved in workshops in Botswana, USA, Holland, Belgium, Germany, and the UK.



We Walk Our Own Path

Located in front of the Library building. Sculptor Richard Harris' interventions in landscape are subtle and may be made from imported or local, natural materials. Crescent curves marking a change of level give an unexpected strength of impact, and the almost imperceptible slope of the curve requires close and quiet observation for the full glory to be revealed.

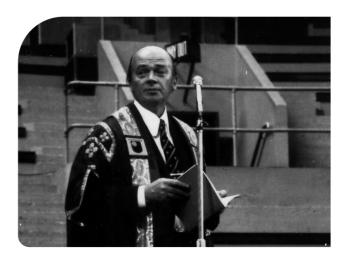


The Perry Building, 2018

Perry Building

Walter Perry (1921-2003), later Lord Perry of Walton, was the first Vice-Chancellor of the Open University, from 1969 to 1981. The Perry Building was opened by the Prince of Wales in 1982. It was built as a joint OU/BBC production centre. OU course programmes continued to be filmed in the Perry Building until 2001, when filming was outsourced. East Perry (Offices 5) opened in 1995.

Part of the Perry building was used as a 'clean room' for the preparation of the Beagle 2 'Mission to Mars' probe. The Perry building has since been refurbished for staff office accommodation.



Walter Perry at an OU Graduation Ceremony

10

Learning Together

This sculpture by Ray Castell was commissioned by The Open University to celebrate 40 years of providing open and equal education opportunities to thousands of people.

It is located at the main entrance to the Perry building (A & B) and is two androgenous people with their heads inclined towards each other. They could be anybody, any colour, any ability. They are enquiring and interested about our links worldwide and our wonder of it.





11

A Kind of Infinity

Most of Ray Castell's sculptures are based on natural shapes that are flowing and calming. He likes to try and strip away detail yet encapsulate the essence of the forms that evoke in him, and hopefully in others, a mostly pleasing emotion or reaction. The two parts of this sculpture mirror each other exactly. The plinth is green oak, and the main sculpture is of blue Purbeck marble. It is located at the main entrance to the Perry building (A & B).

12 Michael Young Building

During the 1960s Michael Young (1915–2002), later Lord Young of Dartington, called for the expansion of educational opportunity. He is often described as one of the Open University's founders. In 1962 he wrote an article advocating the creation of 'an open university' and went on to create the National Extension College in Cambridge.

The Michael Young building was built in 2001 as a low energy consumption building, with rainwater collection for toilets, the use of recycled and earth-friendly materials, and designed in such a way as to conserve solar heat. The building has won architectural awards for being environmentally friendly.

The Michael Young Building, 2007



Michael Young at an OU Graduates Dinner, 1973



13 St. Michael's Church

The first church on this site was built in 1189. At this time the area was 'walled' or fenced, giving it the name 'Walton'. It was thoroughly restored in 1861 and again in the 1970s.

The church and churchyard contain several gravestones and memorials to the families that have resided in the parish of Walton over the centuries. The oldest memorial inside the church is to Elizabeth Pyxe who died from plague aged 11 in 1617 and was the daughter of the then Rector of Walton, William Pyxe.

When the University moved onto the campus the church was quite dilapidated. The last parish service was held in 1974. The University leased the building and undertook a programme of extensive restoration.

The church reopened with a concert in 1978. Several staff of the Open University have been buried in the churchyard including the University's first Secretary Anastasios Christodoulou.

The building is now frequently used for university clubs, choir rehearsals and performances, and other functions.



St Michael's Church, 2017

14 Wilson Building

It was Harold Wilson (1916–1995), Prime Minister 1964–1970 and 1974–1976, who created The Open University, tasking Jennie Lee as responsible minister, effectively reporting directly to him. The Wilson building was the first major building to be completed and remains one of the largest on campus. It was mostly built in 1971, with K block built in 1978 and the H block extension added in 2000.

On 22 September 1990 Lord Wilson was invited to unveil a name plaque on the Wilson Building commemorating the 21st anniversary of the foundation of The Open University.



Vice Chancellor John Daniel with Chancellor Asa Briggs and Harold Wilson at the plaque unveiling, 1990

The Wilson Building, 2018





Back of Walton Hall, 2018

15 Walton Hall

In 1201 Walton appears in records as an estate, consisting of land that had been taken from the Bow Brickhill Parish. The earliest owners are believed to have been the Rixbauds around 1200.

The earliest surviving part of Walton Hall, the rear red brick portion, was built in the 1690s by the Gilpin family. They bought the Hall from the Beale family but sold it after a few years to London lawyer Sir Thomas Pinfold (1638-1701). The Pinfolds chose to live in nearby Walton Manor while most of Walton Hall was rebuilt. The front white square part of the Hall was built by Thomas' grandson and subsequent owner of the Hall, Captain Charles Pinfold (c.1777-1857), in 1830.

In the early 1900s the Hall was sold to Dr Vaughan Harley, a Professor of Medicine and member of the family that gave its name to Harley Street in London. Dr Harley's eldest daughter Diana and her husband, Brigadier Eric Earle, were the last family to live there.

During the latter part of the Second World War the Hall was used to house forty WRNS who worked at Bletchley Park. The Earles moved into the nearby Walton Lodge cottage during the war. The Brigadier died in 1965 and the Hall was briefly occupied by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation Planning and Architects' Offices.

By November 1968 Walton Hall had been identified as a potential site for the new Open University through the offices of Lord Campbell of Eskan, the chairman of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation.

Building began on the Walton Hall site on 1 April 1969 and the move from Belgrave Square to Milton Keynes took place in October 1969. In 1970 Earl Mountbatten officially opened the first new buildings on the campus. Plaque on the wall of Walton Hall





Draft Walton Hall sale document from 1911. The Hall was not sold at this time. The original document is held in the OU Archive



Photograph of the front of the Hall, 1911

16 Contemplation

The cedar tree next to Walton Hall died due to an infestation by the Small Cedar Aphid. It was decided to make good use of what remained of this 250 year old historic tree and in 2010 wood carver Tom Harvey designed and created this magnificent sculpture. It depicts learning in its simplest form using observation of the world around us.

Tom Harvey specialises in working on large scale sculptures in wood, a natural, warm, organic, and readily available material. Using the chainsaw as his main tool he can produce large ambitious sculptures in a relatively short space of time.

The speed of the tool often allows ideas to flow freely and helps to create a sense of dynamism within the work. He also uses other power and hand tools to create smooth surfaces and areas of greater definition.



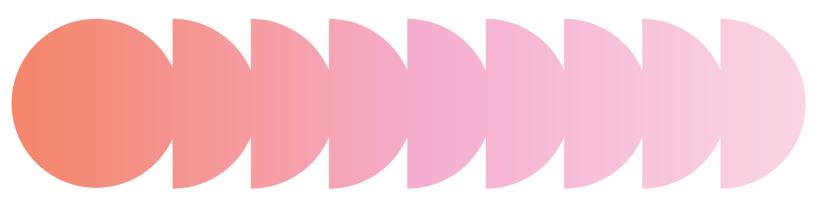
Tom works within the tradition of direct carving, without the use of a scale model, making each piece a journey towards resolution that can take a few twists and turns along the way.



17 ≺

The Bench

This bench was created by Tom Harvey from a huge log which formed part of the original cedar tree which grew next to Walton Hall. It gives an opportunity for anyone to sit and contemplate the beauty of the craft and skill of Tom Harvey's work.



18 Jennie Lee Building

Named after Jennie Lee MP (1904-1988), later Lady Lee of Asheridge. The building was built on the site of the original Jennie Lee Library which was demolished in 2006. The new building was opened in 2008.

In April 1973 Jennie Lee laid the foundation stone for the University's first library, which opened in 1974. She had been one of the earliest women MPs and in 1965 Harold Wilson appointed her as Minister of the Arts with additional responsibility for a 'University of the Air'. It was Jennie Lee who formulated the first solid ideas about the University, how it would be run, its independence from other educational institutions and that it would be open to all with no necessity for previous qualifications. Lee retained a very close relationship with the University and bequeathed her personal and political papers to the institution which are held in the University Archive.



The first Jennie Lee Library Building, 1999



Jennie Lee at the foundation stone ceremony for the original Jennie Lee Library Building, 1973



The second Jennie Lee Building, on the site of the first



19 Memorial Carving

Located on the lawn to the rear of the Jennie Lee building. This OU commissioned memorial sculpture, carved from the trunk of one of the fallen cedar trees was suggested by Gareth O'Shiel from the Grounds Team. Tom Harvey was appointed to carry out the work in 2023. Small brass memorial plaques will be fixed to the open pages like words in a paragraph.

Mulberry Lawn

To the west side of Walton Hall is the Mulberry Lawn, named after the large Mulberry tree which is thought to be the oldest tree on the Walton Hall estate. It is believed to have been planted in 1908 to commemorate the birth of Primrose Harley, whose family lived at Walton Hall.

21 The Hub

Built originally in 1970 the 'Catering Building', later called the Refectory until it was rebuilt and rebranded as 'The Hub' 2010.

In addition to the large catering facility the Hub complex also houses the Hub Theatre, the Mulberry Suite (formerly the Beale Suite), and the Medlar and Juniper Suites which are frequently used for a variety of functions and annual events.



Mulberry Lawn, 2018

The Hub, 2018



22 Horlock Building

Named after Sir John Horlock (1928-2015), the second Vice Chancellor of the University from 1981 to 1990.



Vice Chancellor John Horlock



Horlock Building 2011

23 Gardiner Building

Named after the second Chancellor (1973-1978) of The Open University, Lord Gardiner of Kittisford, this building opened in 1985 and was occupied by the Social Sciences Department. Gardiner Building 2 (Offices 3) opened in 1992.

When Lord Gardiner accepted the Chancellorship he himself enrolled for, and successfully completed, a three-year degree course in the social sciences, graduating in 1977. He regularly attended study centres and participated in student activities, where he was known only as a student.



Chancellor Lord Gardiner

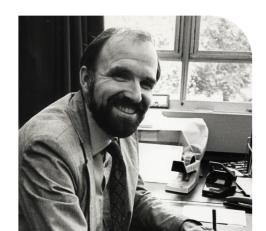


Plaque on the Gardiner Building

Drake Court, 2018

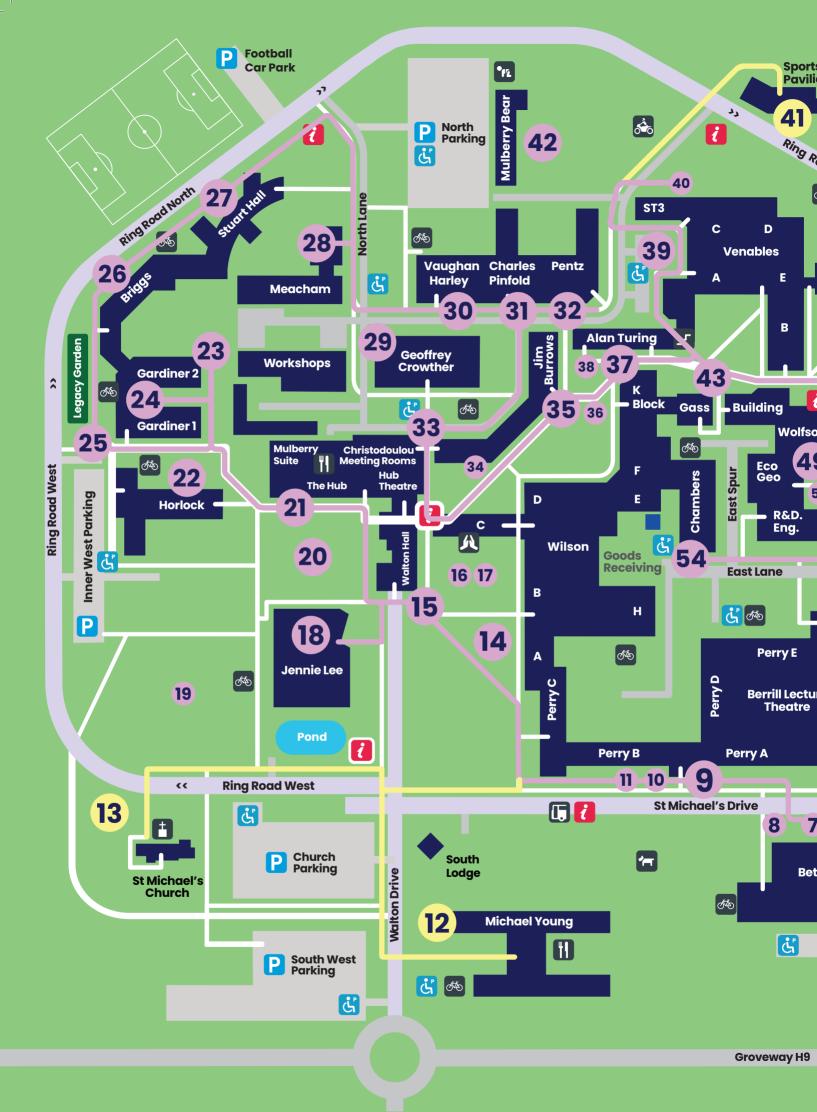
24 Drake Court

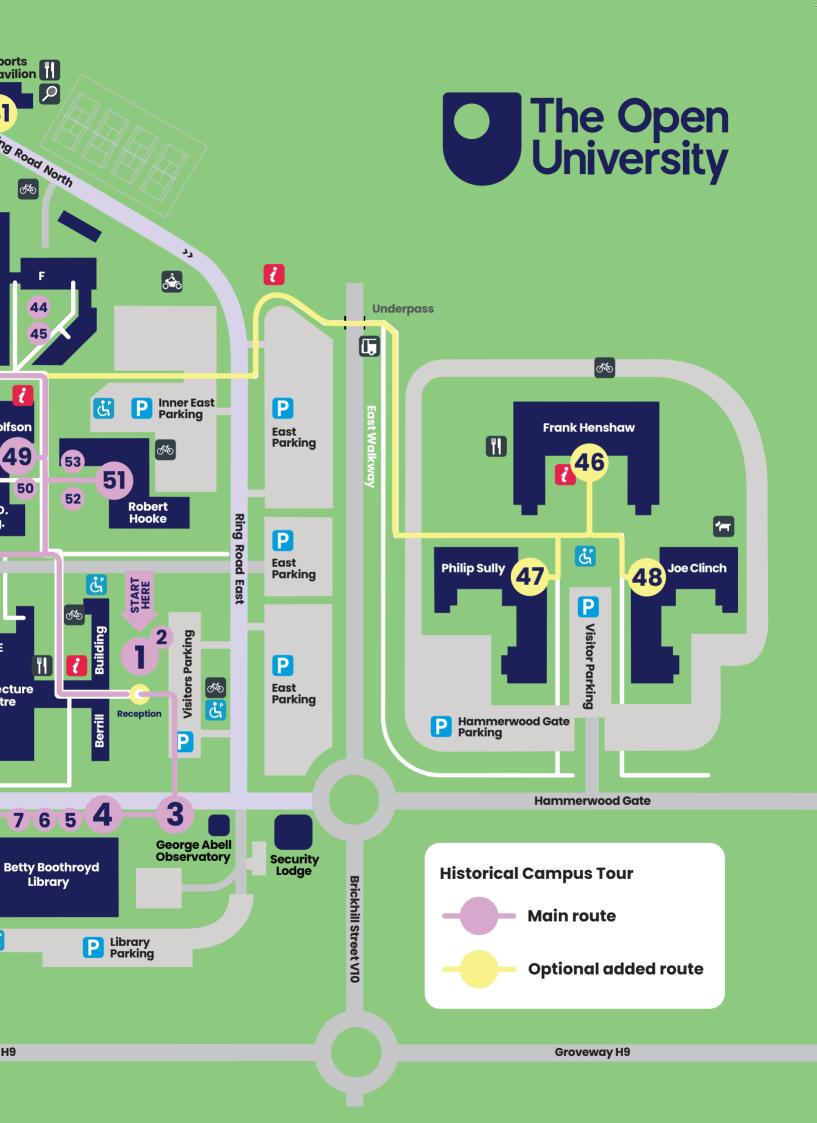
Located between Gardiner 1 and 2, Drake Court is named after Professor Michael Drake, the first Dean of the Social Sciences Faculty.



Michael Drake, undated









Legacy Garden, 2018

25 Legacy Garden

The walled garden, which has now almost entirely disappeared under the University buildings, was part of the Walton Hall Estate before 1969 when the University arrived. In the early years of the University's occupation of the site, the garden was cleared and uses included growing crops for use in home experiment kits.

In 2013 the University created the beautiful Legacy Garden on the site of a section of the original walled garden. Each year new plaques are unveiled in the Legacy Garden - paying tribute to those who have left a gift to the OU in their Will.

26 Briggs Building

Asa Briggs (1921-2016), Lord Briggs of Lewes, was a member of the original Planning Committee for the University and became the third Chancellor of the University from 1978 to 1994. The building that bears his name (Offices 4) opened in 1994.



Chancellor Asa Briggs

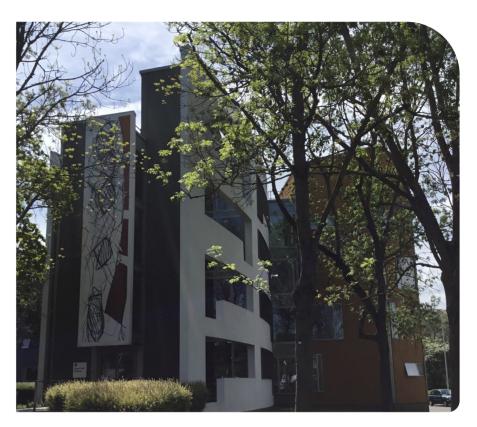
Briggs Building, 2018

27 Stuart Hall Building

Named after Professor Stuart Hall (1932-2014), pioneer of multiculturalism, leading cultural theorist and sociologist. He was Head of Sociology at The Open University. The building was built in 2002.







Stuart Hall Building, 2018

28 Meacham Building

Reg Meacham was Head Porter and the first Mace Bearer of the University.

He died in 1976, the year that the building bearing his name opened.





Meacham Building

Reg Meacham at the ceremony for the presentation of the OU Mace 1972

29 Crowther Building

Building 12 was officially named the Crowther Building in honour of the University's first Chancellor in a ceremony on Monday 21 July 2014. It replaced the original Geoffrey Crowther building which was demolished in 2011.

Lord Crowther (1907-1972), a successful journalist and editor of The Economist from 1938 to 1956, served as the first Chancellor of the OU until his death three years later. He was installed at the first meeting of the Congregation of the University on 23 July 1969, and it was on this occasion that he gave his visionary speech describing the new university 'as open as to people, places, methods and ideas' – the University's mission statement to this day.

The Crowther Building was designed as an exemplar sustainable building and achieved a BREEAM rating of Outstanding in 2012.



Chancellor Geoffrey Crowther at the OU Charter Ceremony in 1969

Crowther Building



30 Vaughan Harley Building

Professor Edward Vaughan Berkeley Harley (1864-1923) acquired Walton Hall around 1904. He was then Professor of Pathological Chemistry at University College, London, based in Harley Street, named after his family. The North Spur Building opened in 1985 and was renamed after Vaughan Harley in 2010. Vaughan Harley died at Walton Hall in 1923.







Vaughan Harley Building

Charles Pinfold Building

Offices 6 was built in 1996 and renamed the Charles Pinfold Building in 2010.

The Pinfolds owned the manor of Walton for much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Captain Charles Pinfold added the white brick and stucco mansion to Walton Hall in 1830. He died in 1857.



Charles Pinfold Building

32 Pentz Building



The Zen Garden, behind Pentz Building



Mike Pentz

Mike Pentz (1924-1995) was the first Dean of Science at the University.

He pioneered the teaching of science at a distance with the use of home experiment kits. The Pentz building was completed in 1993.

Christodoulou Meeting Rooms

Anastasios "Chris" Christodoulou (1932-2002) was the first University Secretary, serving in the role from 1968 to 1980. He welcomed students to The Open University in its very first BBC broadcast on 3rd January 1971, replacing Vice Chancellor Walter Perry who was unwell.

The meeting rooms that bear his name were built in 1996. Christodoulou is buried in St Michael's Churchyard.



Anastasios Christodoulou



Christodoulou Meeting Rooms

34 E=mc²

Located outside
Christodoulou Meeting Room
I this stone sculpture was
created by Scott Forrest.
Scott is fascinated with
contrasts – between finished
surface textures and raw
quarried stone.

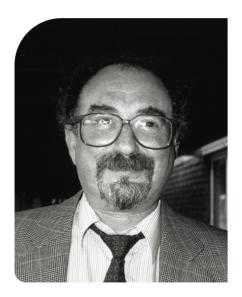
This sculpture represents the Einstein Theory of Relativity of 1905 AD carved into Jurassic limestone from 150-200,000,000 BC. It encapsulates an intellectual energy releasing from the unrefined mass. On the back it reads "the mass of an object warps the geometry of space time surrounding it".



35 Jim Burrows Building

Jim Burrows joined
The Open University to
help set up practical
computing activities for
the Mathematics Faculty in
1970. His early work evolved
into the Student Computing
Service housed in Wimpy
3, a temporary hut on
campus now removed.

In 1979 he moved to M block and in 1981 his operation was renamed Academic Computing Services. He headed that unit for almost 20 years until his retirement in 2000.



Jim Burrows

Jim Burrows Building, 2019



For and Against

A mosaic relief mural located along the Central Walkway by K Block. This was created by Jane Muir who sourced the mosaic pieces in Italy and worked on this piece in situ in the late 1970s. Over many years, Jane has concentrated on easel mosaics with a high artistic content using the highest quality smalti, golds, own hand made glass fusions plus found objects.



Alan Turing Building

The Mathematics block was built in 1973. In 2010 it was officially re-named the Alan Turing Building

Alan Turing (1916-1954), described as 'the father of computer science', was a mathematician, logician, cryptanalyst and computer scientist who was a main participant in the code-breaking work at Bletchley Park, not far from the Walton Hall campus.



Alan Turing Building, 2018



38 C4 in S4

This piece, located outside the Alan Turing Building, was designed in 1989 for a BBC TV's 'Co-sets and Lagrange's Theorem' for the OU course M203 'Introduction to Pure Mathematics' by the show's producer John Jaworski. It represents the 24 elements of the mathematical group S4, each represented by one of the 24 corners. The central set of 4 elements (corners) represents a normal subgroup C4 of S4 with 4 elements, and each of the other sets of 4 elements (corners) is a co-set of C4.



Peter Venables Building, 2018

39 Venables Building

Sir Peter Venables (1904-1979) was Chair of the University's Planning Committee, set up by Jennie Lee in 1967. The Planning Committee was responsible for the structure and initial course layout of the University. Sir Peter was also Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Council from 1969 to 1974. In 1976 Venables chaired an OU Committee on continuing education which paved the way for significant expansion of the University.

The Venables Building was built in various stages from 1975 to 1988.



Peter Venables laying the foundation stone, 1976

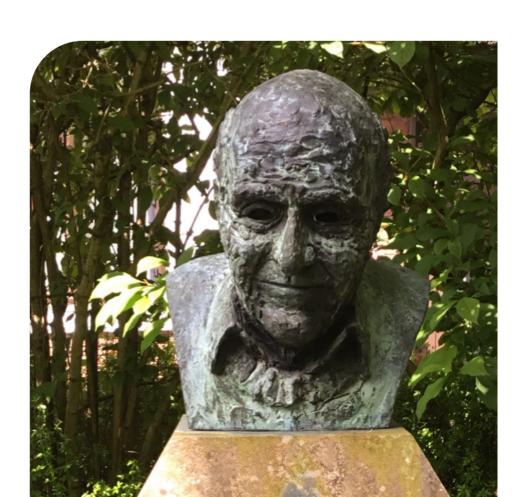
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Francis Aprahamian Bust

Francis Aprahamian (1917-1991) was the OU's first editor and senior science editor.

The bust was sculpted by Scott Forrest in 1994 and was erected by friends and colleagues to honour Aprahamian's contributions to science education, and to the musical and political life of The Open University.

Francis Aprahamian bust, 2018





Sports Pavillion, 2018

41 Sports Pavillion

The sports pavilion, squash courts and tennis courts were completed in 1977.

Mulberry Bear Day Nursery

The current nursery opened in 1988 following the destruction of the previous Children's Centre by fire in 1987. It is now known as the Mulberry Bear Day Nursery.

Mulberry Bear Day Nursery, 2019

43 Gass Building

The Gass Building was completed in 1974 and named after Ian Gass (1926-1992), the founding Professor of the OU Earth Sciences Department and later Deputy-Vice-Chancellor.





Ian Gass, 1970 Gass Building

44 Squishy and Squashy

Created by Scott Forrest and located in the Venables Courtyard Garden. Scott enjoys working in local limestone formed in the salty tropical waters of the Jurassic period, long before thought. He uses machines and tools that cut, slice, hammer and abrade to explore his fascination with contrasts. Between finished surface texture and raw quarried stone, between hard materials and soft concepts, between text and context.



45 This Land is Our Land

Also located in the Venables Courtyard Garden, this work in slate represents the pioneering spirit of all settlers who inhabit the most unlikely of spaces. This echoes our collective Milton Keynes experience in the early days. Artist Graham Mills' journey from a distant northern art college to these pieces has been a long one. He says "Greet these brave little people with a smile and it will be returned".



East Campus

The East Campus was originally built as the Milton Keynes branch of De Montfort University and was opened by the Queen in 1992. De Montfort University withdrew from the site in 2003. In April 2006 the site was officially opened as The Open University's East Campus by Chancellor Baroness Boothroyd.

Originally, the three buildings were named after people associated with De Montfort University – the Green, Edwards, and Henshaw buildings.



Philip Sully, Chancellor Betty Boothroyd and Frank Henshaw, 2006



46 Frank Henshaw Building

Frank Henshaw, while being associated with De Montfort University, also had links with The Open University.

He was a member of Council between 1994 and 2002 and Chair of the Estates Committee from 1995 to 2002. It was decided to retain the name of the Henshaw building.



Frank Henshaw Building, 2019

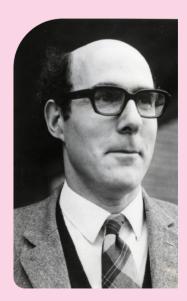
47 Philip Sully Building

Philip Sully is a prolific OU student. By 2006 he had completed a total of 61 courses including a Masters, PhD and two degrees.

48

Joe Clinch Building

Joe Clinch was University Secretary from 1981 to 1998, to date the University's longest serving Secretary.



Joe Clinch

49 Wolfson building

The Earth Sciences Extension to the Gass building was opened in 1993. The Wolfson Foundation helped to finance the building of the extension. The foundation, founded in 1955 by Sir Isaac Wolfson (1897-1991) and his family, is a charity that awards grants to support excellence in the fields of science and medicine, health, education, the arts and humanities.



Wolfson Building, 2019

50 Star

Located outside the Wolfson Building this is a simple shape of a six pointed star, an awkward form which never seems to stand up but always seems to have been cast aside or fallen at random, incongruous, and surprising in the natural environment. Created by Anthony Hayes who is attracted to exploring the mass of large abstract forms which seem to exert a powerful presence, particularly as they approach human scale.



51 Robert Hooke Building

Robert Hooke (1635-1703) was, amongst other things, an inventor, scientist, natural philosopher and architect. He is most famously known for Hooke's law of elasticity. From a local perspective he designed Willen Parish Church in Milton Keynes. The building was completed in 2004.

Robert Hooke Building, 2011, featuring the Gort, Klaatu Barada Nikto Installation



52 Gort, Klaatu Barada Nikto

The title of this lighting installation refers to the 1951 sci-fi film 'The Day the Earth Stood Still'. The artwork uses sound and light to animate the approach to the Robert Hooke Building using a series of aircraft runway landing lights. Artist Simon Patterson who created the installation, was born in the UK in 1967 and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1996.

53

Aspiration

Located outside the entrance to the Robert Hooke Building, this sculpture was created by Professor Russell Stannard OBE (1931–2022). He was a physicist, inspirational science communicator, founding member of staff of The Open University, former Head of Department and Pro Vice Chancellor.



54 Chambers Building

The Chambers Building was built in 1973 and is named after Sir Paul Chambers (1904-1981) who served as the first Treasurer of the University from 1969 to 1975.





Paul Chambers, 1973 Chambers Building, 2011

Further explore the unique history of The Open University on the OU Digital Archive (OUDA) website



Explore the archive www.open.ac.uk/library/digital-archive

Some highlights on the site:

- Watch the first OU programme and many more key OU moments on the OU Story exhibition
- Learn about the OU's connection with key individuals such as Betty Boothroyd and Harold Wilson
- View over 800 historical images
- Watch clips and full programmes of selected OU television and radio broadcasts
- Browse a collection of recorded OU degree ceremonies
- Browse and search the catalogue of over 25,000 items held in the OU Archive in the Library

Additional materials are regularly being uploaded to the site. Signed-in OU staff are able to access hundreds of digitised OU television and radio programmes.

Visiting Walton Hall

The Open University campus is a private estate. If you are a group of more than six visitors who wish to visit the campus, please call the Events Office on 01908 653006 in order to make arrangements.

If you are a group of six visitors or less and wish to visit the campus, please report to the Security lodge on arrival, and then inform them again when you are leaving.

If you are travelling a distance it is advisable that you telephone in advance to check that it is convenient to visit.

The tour route provided in this booklet may include steps. If you would like to visit the University Archive during your visit, please email the archive team in advance to make an appointment (email address below).

Written and compiled by Amanda Saladine and Ruth Cammies, University Archive, Library Services, 2018, updated 2023.











www.open.ac.uk/library/digital-archive

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