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T H E _ O P E N _ U N I V E R S I T Y

OPEN FORUM

OU GUILDHALL CEREMONY HIGHLIGHTS

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COMMENTRY

Wynne Brindle

LIVE TX BBC 10th May 1979
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KH

Introductory Music:

W. Brindle:

Welcome to Guildhall in the city of London. Earlier today in this historic setting the Open University held a special congregation to mark its 10th Anniversary and to install Lord Briggs of Lewes as its third Chancellor. This is one of fourteen ceremonies taking place this summer up and down the country, at which more than five thousand graduates will be presented and honorary degrees conferred. This afternoon there were three honorary graduates, the United States Ambassador the Honorable Kingman Brewster, the President of the European Commission, the Right Honorable Roy Jenkins, and the new Chancellor himself. The Ceremony began with the traditional academic procession entering Guildhall to the music by Melchior Franck and played by the Sinfoniae Sacrae Brass Ensemble.

Music:

W. Brindle:

At the head of the procession officers of the Students Association, followed by Senate Members including the central academic staff, members of the University's administration, Regional Directors, and Regional staff. And many representatives of other Universities and organisations, Vice Chancellors, Principals and Rectors. There's Frank Muir, Rector of St. Andrews, without the cap. At the rear of the procession two of the honorary graduates in gold and blue, and officers of the University, Pro Vice Chancellors, the Vice Chancellor Lord Perry of Walton and the Pro Chancellor Sir Frederick Warner who opens the proceedings.

Sir Frederick Warner:

It's a very great pleasure on behalf of the University to welcome you today to this ceremony in Guildhall which marks an important stage in the University and is a particular point in our tenth anniversary celebrations. We are particularly pleased that we should be able to hold this ceremony in these magnificent and historic surroundings and are glad that you've been able to join us here today.

W. Brindle:

The Royal Charter of the Open University contains provision for the installation of a new Chancellor and the Pro-Chancellor next called upon the University's Secretary, Anastasios Christodoulou to read appropriate sections.

A. Christodoulou:

Article 5 stipulates, there shall be a Chancellor of the University who shall be the head of the University and statute 3, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the second schedule to the Royal Charter state firstly, the successors to the first Chancellor shall be appointed by the council and the senate sitting in joint session. In accordance with these

- A. Christodoulou: procedures Sir, the council and the Senate, sitting in joint session on the 15th September 1978 appointed Lord Briggs as Chancellor of the Open University.
- W. Brindle: It was the Vice Chancellor who escorted Lord Briggs into Guildhall for his installation.
- Music:
- This is only the second degree ceremony at which a new Chancellor has been installed. The previous occasion was at the University's first degree ceremony held at Alexandra Palace in 1973, when Lord Gardiner of Wittisford was installed as the second Chancellor. The University's first Chancellor, Lord Crowther of Headingley, was installed ten years ago at the Charter Ceremony, the tenth anniversary of which we are celebrating today. The Mace Bearer is Will Straw, an administrative assistant in the Open University's registry section. The Mace is a modern design by Eric Clements, and made of titanium and presented to the University by Imperial Metal Industries.
- V. Chancellor: By the authority of the Royal Charter and in the name of the council and the Senate, I install you Lord Briggs of Leves as Chancellor of the Open University.
- Lord Briggs: I declare that I will to the best of my abilities strive always to promote the objects of the University as defined in article 3 of the Charter and to maintain the articles and statutes of the Charter in spirit and in fact.
- W. Brindle: After his installation, Lord Briggs was presented for an honorary degree by Professor Walter James who traced his academic career.
- Prof. James: The dawn of his academic career heralded the man. At Sydney Sussex he was the youngest under-graduate since Cromwell, and the first to also study concurrently as an external student of London University. He gave 'double-first' a new connotation when in 1941 he obtained a first in History at Cambridge and a first in economics from London, gathering en passant as it were the Gerstenberg prize for the best economics degree of the year. Quick from the starting blocks he's never flagged nor faltered, filling each unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run at record speed.. It is rumoured that half an hour before his wedding he was finishing a review for the New Statesman, and those that doubt that story have him finishing it only a little later.

Prof. James cont:

Translated from the chair of History at Leeds to become successively Dean of social studies, pro Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of the University of Sussex, he remained not only a Professor of History, but a working historian. The native hue of his Yorkshire resolution lacks not the name of action. Now Provost of Worcester College Oxford and Chancellor of this University, he continues to guide the development of International Universities and Institutes in Japan and Europe. There are many who assert that Concorde was invented to catch up with him, he pops up in so many places that a visitor from another planet could be forgiven for thinking that the world is full of men and women and Asa Briggs. There are some who have claimed, incidentally, that it will be a minor miracle if he stands still long enough for this honorary degree to be conferred.

By the authority of the senate I confer upon you the Honorary degree of Doctor of the University.

W. Brindle:

After signing the honorary graduates register Lord Briggs delivered his inaugural address.

Lord Briggs:

My association with the Open University goes back to the distant time when there were no academics, no vice-Chancellor and above all no students. As a member of the University's planning committee I count myself one of the founding fathers so ably and so wisely guided by Sir Peter VENABLES. Although the word fathers is very misleadingly discriminatory since the University owes such an immense debt to Jenny Lee. Jenny Lee's imagination and determination give her a very special place in the history of the University. The first Chancellor Lord CROWTHER was installed in July 1969, and I had the privilege of being present on that occasion. He expressed his deep sense of gratitude for being offered so elevated a platform from which to observe the course of the great experiment. I share his deep sense of gratitude on being invited to become Chancellor, and I count it a very great privilege to have been given an Honorary degree of the University. I have re-read with appreciation Lord CROWTHER's eloquent inaugural remarks in which he claimed that there were four grounds for calling the Open University, Open. That it would be open as to people, open as to places, open as to methods and not least open as to ideas. I trust too that the perception that he had of a great experiment, has not and will never be lost. At the same time, there are big differences between 1969 and 1979. Ten years presents a very short span in the life of any educational institution. But during these particular ten years spanning what

Lord Briggs cont:

historians will doubtless consider to be two very sharply contrasting decades, the Open University has become far more than an experiment. It now has more than thirty thousand graduates, for whom it has been their University experience, and large numbers of other students have benefited and are still benefiting from its courses. It must be judged now, not by its plans, but by its results. I'm very happy to feel that my distinguished predecessor^{as} Chancellor, was himself an Open University student. Not observing from an elevated platform but participating in the fray of the University's life. I've gained very great pleasure myself from participating from the start, in the making and presenting of Open University programmes. And I hope that whatever the constraints applied to Chancellors, very necessary constraints in my view, speaking as an ex vice-Chancellor, my own opportunities will remain open in this particular field. I'm told that in cooperation with the B.B.C., over five thousand programmes in radio and television have been broadcast since 1971. I know too however, that the University has never rested content with Broadcasting methods alone, it has set out to combine as Lord Crowther hoped that it would combine, every kind of approach to learning, including printed and published materials, never obsolete, and personal tuition. The Open University will always have to take account of change, local change and global change, and its very openness will carry with it a unique vulnerability. I will do my best as Chancellor to see it through new phases of its history. Like everyone else present today however, I know that it is vice Chancellors not Chancellors who really guide the affairs of Universities, and I would like to end by paying my tribute to the University's first vice Chancellor, Lord Perry, who with his colleagues has turned a dream into a reality.

W. Brindle:

Following Lord Briggs inaugural speech, Dr. Kenneth Thompson presented the Honorable Kingman Brewster for an honorary degree.

Dr. K. Thompson:

We still have much to learn from American higher education, with its greater outreach to all sections of the community, its willingness to experiment, and its consumer oriented posture. Among Kingman Brewster's great achievements at Yale was the expansion of opportunities for members of under privileged groups to enter the University, whilst at the same time maintaining high academic standards. It's fitting that the Open University which has also had some small success in combining greater openness with high standards, should honour such a man and his achievements. My Lord and Chancellor by the authority of Senate I present to you for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University, the Honourable Kingman Brewster, Ambassador of the United States of America.

W. Brindle:

Dr. Brewster has been both President of Yale and before that Professor of Law at Harvard.

Kingman Brewster:

The Open University is well and favourably known, excitingly admired in the United States. It is indeed, as suggested, undoubtedly the most significant positive progressive development of higher education anywhere in the world in the post war period. I say that because, your great country and mine are dedicated to a vision never fully realised of a truly voluntary society. A vision that is increasingly difficult perhaps to realise because of not just pressures of social inequality, economic difficulty but pressures of the over organised society.

W. Brindle:

After Dr. Brewster's speech which continued rich in its praise for the Open University, Dr. James Barber, Professor of Political Science presented the Right Honorable Roy Jenkins.

Dr. James Barber:

Mr. Jenkins is now President of the European Commission, the chief executive of the Community, which binds together nine European States. There is a certain irony that a Briton holds this post, for while it may be an exaggeration to say that we were dragged to the European altar, for most of us it is a marriage of convenience, and for some even that convenience is disputed. But there have always been people in this country who shared the vision of Europe which was born under Nazi occupation and bore fruit in the post war years, a Europe united in peace and purpose overstepping the old national boundaries, Roy Jenkins is one of these. For him, the community is not simply a matter of convenience, a safe haven in a storm, for him it fulfills radical aspirations by rejecting the narrow nationalisms and rigid frontiers which led to two terrible wars. In their place the community offers a revolutionary framework for greater cooperation which has already helped to produce undreamt of wealth for its peoples, and provides the opportunity for a major role in international relations, in aid to the Third World, in reordering trade and monetary relations and in increasing international security. It's this broad vision of Western Europe which has finally shaped Mr. Jenkins' career. Yet this was not clear from his early background, a son of a miner, a trade union official who became an M.P., Roy Jenkins won his way to Oxford where he distinguished himself academically. Then he followed his father into Parliament. He spent twenty-seven years at Westminster and it appeared that the talents which were soon demonstrated would be fully realised in British Politics.

W. Brindle:..

Roy Jenkins receiving his honorary degree from the O.U.'s new Chancellor Lord Briggs. In his reply, Mr. Jenkins turned the clock back to the time when he was a member of the Labour Government.

Hon. Roy Jenkins:

Ten years ago when the Charter of this University was established, I was at the treasury and there were I believe, many sceptics at the Treasury, you may find it difficult to believe, still prepared to question the concepts and the ideas which formed the basis of the projected Open University. Now Chancellors, Chancellors of the Exchequer that is, not Chancellors of Universities of course, tend to be sceptics about all expenditure projects. And, I must not exaggerate even on this occasion and even through the mists of time, the strength of my early vision. What I think I can say, however, is that I was less sceptical about this project than about most others, and indeed, against the enthusiasm of the Prime Minister of the day, which was itself inspired, fortified, even disciplined by the fervour of Jenny Lee, there was no room for faint hearts about the subject of the Open University. And therefore the Charter establishing it as an independent and autonomous institution was granted in 1969. Still with many major questions of administration and finance at issue, but they have been resolved, and resolved with great skill and leadership by those who have directed the University, and now without question, the sceptics have been routed, completely and comprehensively routed. Now ten years on, the success and remarkable achievements of this unique University are a matter of record. More than twice the number of applicants available for the annual number of places, the Open University has established itself, in a remarkably short time as an incandescent star in this country's University constellation.

W. Brindle:

The Right Honorable Roy Jenkins tracing a celestial path for the Open University. By contrast the Vice Chancellor's speech to the new graduates contains some very down to earth statistics.

Vice Chancellor
Lord Perry:

As I said you were joining a company already thirty-three thousand strong, by 1986, you the graduates will outnumber the students. By the time we reach a steady state, that's the unfortunate time when as many old graduates are dying each year, as new graduates are graduating, by that time, which given no change in the average length of life, will be about 2015, by that time the total number of Open University graduates will be something like a quarter of a million, and that doesn't take any account at all of our former associate students. What a very formidable force, political force, for good or for ill, you will be, it's a sobering thought. Perhaps you may

Vice Chancellor cont: even be able to force the government of the day to do something about mandatory grants for Open University students. What else will you take away with you from the University? I think you'll take three things in perhaps varied amounts. The first thing you'll take away is the quality, the quality of determination of staying power of gut. This isn't something that we gave to you, it's something you've brought to us, and it's why you're here today, because those who started on their way to a degree in the Open University without that quality have fallen by the wayside, the road was too long and too hard for them. But that is a quality that is much sort after by employers and they are gradually discovering that you all have it, but it takes time. The second thing you'll take away, is a training, and you shouldn't despise a training because without the training you can't do things. People I think in this country have often regarded education which originally meant leading out, as somehow superior to training but there's no way in which a teacher can lead out of a pupil the knowledge of, how to wipe a joint, or remove an appendix, or programme a computer, training is essential and it should be highly regarded. And the third thing you'll take away, is of course an education. And I said training is important and I meant it, but so indeed is education. Perhaps we can regard training as a necessary preparation for work, and education as a necessary preparation for leisure.

L. Brindle:

For the ninety or so recipients of the earned degrees, to whom Lord Perry was directing his remarks, the most significant part of the ceremony was of course, their presentation to the Chancellor. First came the higher degrees, six Doctors of Philosophy in their Royal blue and gold gowns. The titles of their thesis gave an idea of the increasing diversity of the University's research activities. Then it was the turn of the Bachelors of Arts in their darker blue gowns. For this special Guildhall congregation, they have come from all parts of the country, with their families and friends, and in this splendid setting, it's certainly been a day for everyone to remember.

Archer.... Pauline Bell.....Joan Bennett....Richard Bennett...Irene Blackthorne.....