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OPEN FORUM 77

PRINCE CHARLES VISITS WALTON HALL

PRODUCER.....Roger Tucker
ASSISTANT.....Shirley Taylor
VOICEOVER COMMENTARY.....Wymie Brindle

This programme is a complete re-edit of Prince Charles' visit to Walton Hall on Friday, 14 May 1982. The visit was first transmitted 'LIVE' on 14 May.

TRANSMISSION: Saturday, 24 July 1982 on BBC-2 at 1215 p.m.

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OPENING MUSIC

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

The 14th of May 1982 was one of those days which linger in the memory for a lifetime: just after 11 O'Clock a large, traditional looking Rolls Royce brought His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to the Open University's campus at Milton Keynes. He was accompanied by Lord Campbell of Eskan, Chairman of Milton Keynes Development Corporation.

(CROWD NOISE)

On the steps of Walton Hall he was greeted by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr John Herlock and his wife.

(CROWDS)

Large crowds of staff, their families and friends had gathered. The Prince was in relaxed and chatty mood, his schedule stretched from the word go.

(CROWDS)

The purpose of the Prince's visit was a double one: to perform the opening ceremony of the new BBC Open University Production Centre and to receive an honorary degree.

(CROWDS)

Prince Charles spotted Alan Redmile's impressive display of medals. He works as a University porter at Walton Hall.

(PRINCE CHARLES SPEAKING TO CHILDREN. CROWDS
CHEERING)

The Prince stopped to speak to Carol Hall in her wheelchair. She's a clerk who works in the assignment handling office. He was particularly concerned about provision for disabled people working on the campus.

The Prince was escorted into the Production Centre by BBC Chairman George Howard, who introduced the Director General Designate, Alisdair Milne. After the introductions Prince Charles was taken on tour by Robert Rowland, the Head of the Production Centre.

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

The party first visited the larger of the two television studios where he met George Wisner, Senior Designer, who had designed the set for the Degree Ceremony which we'll be seeing later. And then he moved on to Alan Bird, Senior Engineer of the television studios.

As often happens on Royal visits there was an unscheduled attraction which caught the Prince's eye as he left the studio.

(BACKGROUND NOISE OF CAMERAS CLICKING AND PEOPLE MUMBLING)

HRH PRINCE OF WALES

Are you all special effects? ("OVER HERE, WE ARE")
Just the people I wanted to meet.

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

What he had seen was a welcoming balloon beside a life-size model of a teranodon, which doubled as a stork for the occasion. He was very amused by this topical touch and asked one of the design assistants about the creature. He was told that the phrehistoric reptile had been made for a programme on the Evolution of Flight.

Then he met Gerry Abouaf, who is Senior Designer in the section. He was also clearly fascinated by the work of this department, it was one of those informal moments which everyone will remember. This unexpected addition to the planned tour was captured on a domestic video recorder by one of the visual effects staff.

Then the party made its way into the reception hall where the formal opening ceremony was to take place. There the Prince met the founding Vice-Chancellor, Lord Perry and Lady Perry. The BBC Chairman, George Howard, made the welcoming speech.

GEORGE HOWARD

Your Royal Highness, this is a signal honour you do us by coming here this morning to celebrate the partnership between the Open University and the BBC, which is now 14 years old. It's an absolutely unique partnership - never before had there been this kind of collaboration in the educational field and it did need for the BBC to rethink whole areas of educational broadcasting and what they were all about. It needed to create new departments in order to service the Open University and to produce programmes for them. We were working in untrodden territory both educationally and quite literally here, where there were only muddy fields in

GEORGE HOWARD
(contd)

which to operate and, I would like to pay a tribute now to the founding staff both of the Open University and the BBC, and in particular the first Vice-Chancellor, Lord Perry.

The BBC's indeed very proud to be associated with the Open University and even prouder that Your Royal Highness has come here today to declare this building formerly open and to unveil this plaque which names the building after the founder of it all, Lord Perry.

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

HRH THE 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, it was 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 I hope and trust that these will in fact provide the sort of facilities that are badly needed as the first purpose-built educational broadcasting studios and from that point of view it is very encouraging for me to be able to come here today and open them. I was interested when going around to find the most extraordinary pieces of equipment that are installed here; it's frightening nowadays the jargon that is used in these things; you probably all know there was a thing called three-bank vision mixer with multiple re-entry (LAUGHTER) and I think they ought to be part of the SALT talks. And there's also something incorporating the BBC fringe suppression system which must please a lot of people at the Edinburgh festival.

But I seem to be heavily involved myself with the BBC nowadays. I was in Merseyside recently when opening their new local Radio Station and I seem to be a subject of a BBC monopoly, and, anyway, it's always a great pleasure to be of any assistance. And it shows also, this particular studio, I think, the great value of videotapes as far as education is concerned. I have a recorder myself and I know a lot of other people do and although I have to read the instructions each time I try to operate the thing they are extraordinarily helpful for people who can't always be in at the times the programmes are on. So clearly as far as education is concerned and taking a course at the Open University, they are revolutionary and I'm sure that their effectiveness will grow and continue.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure on that note 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. (LAUGHTER)

(UNVEILS PLAQUE. APPLAUSE)

GEORGE HOWARD

I'll now ask Lord Perry to say a few words.

LORD PERRY

Your Royal Highness, Chairman, Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen. I am of course extremely honoured by the decision of the University and the BBC to name this building after me. It's probably the nearest I shall ever come to immortality and I'm doubly honoured, Sir, that you should have consented to open it. Of all the buildings on this campus I think I would have, if I'd been asked to choose, chosen this particular one because as the Chairman has said, it embodies the partnership between the BBC and the Open University. It was this partnership designed by Lord Goodman and Sir Hugh Green, built by the efforts of the staffs of both sides and furnished, often with great difficulty, by compromise accommodation and goodwill, it was this partnership that lay at the very heart of the success of the Open University. Alone amongst the distance learning institutions of the world the Open University has made what I regard as a proper use of radio and television for educational purposes using these media only when there is a good pedagogical reason for an audio or a video signal but ensuring that when the media are used the programmes are produced to the very highest possible quality. It's a success story which is the envy of the educational world. Sir, you have today formerly imogulated a new phase of that partnership. Alexandra Palace was redolent of the early history of television. I hope that the spirit that developed there will flourish and grow in this magnificent new setting. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

At the end of the formal opening ceremony, Prince Charles was escorted by Lord Perry and Dr Horlock from the BBC building to the O.U. Lecture Theatre, where the special degree ceremony was being held.

(MUSIC PLAYING IN BACKGROUND)

Lord Perry by now resplendent in his Doctor of Medicine gown. Next in the procession came the four Pro Vice-Chancellors; Professor Len Haynes, Academic Policy; Professor Ralph Smith, Continuing Education; Dr Ian Dey, Planning; and Dr Richard Holmes, Students.

Jo Clinch, the University Secretary; the Pro-Chancellor, Sir Peter Thornton; the Vice-Chancellor and Professor Walter James who was to present Prince Charles for his degree.

Then finally came the University's modern style Mace followed by the Chancellor, Lord Briggs of Lewes.

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

The processional music was specially composed by the University's Professor of Music, Gerald Hendrie and played by the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble.

Let's now hear part of the eulogy spoken by Professor James.

PROFESSOR JAMES

My Lord and Chancellor. Prince Charles, as the Poet Laureate wrote at his investiture, has the hard task to be both man and symbol. That task is the harder when you are a Prince of Wales for you are by definition a Monarch in waiting. It is not therefore surprising that some in the past have chosen a life of strenuous idleness; and others like the Gilbertian House of Lords have done nothing in particular but done it rather well. This Prince of Wales has chosen to do some things in particular and to do them well.

As President of the Royal Jubilee Trust he presides over and takes a personal interest in the award of grants to help young people help others. His own Prince's Trust gives a special aid to the disadvantaged and the delinquent. A vigorous President of the United World Colleges he is constantly alert to develop global understanding and there are many, especially at this present time, who are deeply grateful to the Prince for his public appreciation of the strength and values which the new ethnic minorities contribute to this multi-cultural Britain.

The Prince of Wales makes a virtue of his status, not yet constrained by the full duties of the Crown which he will one day inherit, he has set himself the energetic task of refreshing those parts of national life that other members of the Royal Family cannot reach. Edwin Muir puts it well, "he awakes in us and we in him what else could never be". It is said of Orpheus that such was the sound of his voice and the harmony of his lyer that even the infernal deities submitted to him. The Prince of Wales has a similar effect on Bankers, Trade Union Leaders, Company Directors and others of the great and powerful. He has lost none of the potency of Princes by being born to sue rather than to command. Armed with the faith that moves mountains and melts the flinty hearts of those who make a virtue of the status quo he puts down the mighty from their scepticism and he charmingly fails to grasp in his dealings with local and national authorities even the most elementary of their theories of professional and bureaucratic procrastination. In none of the rooms that open off the corridors of power is there the legend that Prince Charles slept here, nor does he allow others to sleep; a republican senator once awarded him that country's supreme accolade "my God," he said "That guy works so hard you'd think he was running for office."

PROFESSOR JAMES
(contd)

It has been rightly said that a man with a vision and no task is a dreamer, a man with a task and no vision is a drudge, a man with a vision and a task is a prophet; we are extremely fortunate that the Prince of Wales brings a vision both to the selection and the performance of his Royal tasks.

My Lord and Chancellor, it is especially fitting that this University, charged to make ancient values more relevant and more accessible to these rapidly changing times, should wish to honour a person who in his own sphere is attempting with conspicuous success a similar task.

Chancellor, by the authority of the Senate I present to you for the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

(APPLAUSE)

(PRESENTATION OF SCROLL AND HANDSHAKING)

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

His Royal Highness then signed the Honorary Graduates Book, which already contained many distinguished names but his is the first one belonging to a member of the Royal family.

Afterwards he addressed the congregation.

HRH THE PRINCE OF
WALES

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen. I'm always interested on occasions such as this to note that you require the honorary graduate to make an address after he has received his honorary degree; perhaps it is a blessing that the Open University doesn't operate like the elders of a Church of Scotland Parish who require the candidates for the Ministry to give at least one sermon before making a selection. As the Vice-Chancellor said, or as he is to say, history was my subject at Cambridge and his friend, the senior tutor of Trinity College; it's at this point that I now realise that I thought he was going to give his speech but he hasn't done so, anyway you'll hear it later probably. (LAUGHTER) Anyway, his friend was my senior tutor at Cambridge and he always used to say that I would have achieved a much better degree if I hadn't rushed off to do various engagements in my last year at University and I have often thought how useful it would be if I could do a short refresher course or even a course in some new subject I wish to pursue but although the Open University sounds the ideal means of achieving this I don't think I would be able to contribute the 12 to 14 hours necessary each week and on that score I must say that I'm full of admiration for those students

HRH THE PRINCE OF
WALES (contd)

of this University who despite all their other commitments are determined and enthusiastic enough to make very considerable sacrifices in the pursuit of knowledge and qualifications. What an imaginative idea the Open University was. It has helped to fill an educational gap which existed for those of us who frequently find that the urge to learn suddenly assails us long after we've left the compulsory atmosphere of the schooling process. I don't know whether some of the new graduates here today would agree with me because I believe roughly 10 per cent of them left school at 15.

Education through the medium of television is an exciting development. It has the ability to make some of the driest subjects fascinating and can certainly make history come more alive. But I never cease to be amazed at the speed of advance and the sophistication of present day communications. I dare say my children will take it all for granted and will be brought up with every kind of audio visual educational aid leaving me desperately trying to find out from the Open University how I can keep up with my children and understand what exactly they are talking about. A struggle for control of the dissemination of information and thus a very considerable power over men's minds has long been a part of human history and one of the greatest advances made by man it seems to me is in the development of reasonably civilized democracies which have made possible the freedom of the Press and therefore, to a certain extent, the freedom of choice to the individual. Those who disseminate the information, or who interpret or comment upon the facts that make up the information, may get it wrong from time to time, and, my goodness, you certainly can't please everybody, but at least they are independent personalities and not the servants of the state machine. Totalitarian regimes of the right and the left owe their very existence to the fact that they can successfully control the dissemination of information and grossly distort the facts to suit their opportunist requirements.

With the advent of satellite television we are entering a totally new era in the field of communications. National boundaries are made virtually non-existent by the signal imprint of the satellite and while the possibilities for commercial exploitation are enormous there are various implications that need careful thought and discussion, lest we create some awkward problems for the future.

Whatever the case, I dare say the Open University will be at the forefront in terms of utilising the modern developments at its disposal, and I wish it every possible success in its second decade.

(APPLAUSE)

WYNNE BRINDLE
(V/O)

As a final highlight in this historic event let's here part of the Vice-Chancellor's address to the graduates, starting with his reference to Cambridge, the point which Prince Charles had already anticipated.

DR JOHN HORLOCK

I was indeed, Chancellor, Professor of Engineering in Cambridge when Prince Charles came to study there and he was placed in the care of one of my friends, the Senior Tutor of Trinity College. I well remember my friend meeting the Press at his first Press Conference, and on being asked what the Prince would study, he replied that the history faculty was currently rewriting history and that that course would be most suitable.

We're delighted to have you with us here today, Sir, your opening of the new Perry Building, the studio centre has inaugurated a new and important phase of the partnership between the Open University and the BBC. We hope that you as an honorary graduate of the Open University will take a particular interest in our graduates and in our 95 thousand students.

But today, Sir, is a degree day also for 35 of our 6 thousand graduates this year. Some of them have obtained credit exemptions - not the full number granted to our honorary graduate today - but most of them have slogged away for six years, at a credit a year, to earn their degrees. But for each and every one of you today this is really a day of tremendous achievement for your families and friends as well. You can now take a year off if you so wish - paint the kitchen, dig the garden, perhaps even visit the grandchildren. I'm sure you've benefitted greatly from your degree, from your University education and I'm sure you'll benefit in the future as well. Perhaps materially in your job prospects but certainly in the general widening of your horizons.

My Lord and Chancellor, I congratulate all 36 graduates of the Open University today, and I wish them all well in the future.

END CREDITS OVER:

(APPLAUSE)