

# PhD Pioneers: The Living Experiences of The Open University's First PhD Graduates

## Oral History interview clip transcript

Name of Interviewee: **Professor Max Bramer**

Interviewed by: **Elizabeth Currie**

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Clip 3

[00:41:51-00:42:34]

So that brings me onto graduation day. I hope I can be forgiven for being a bit self-indulgent about this, because this really means quite a lot to me. First of all it was a wonderful day, it couldn't really have been better. The sun was shining, it was a great day, but graduation was Alexandra Palace, and it was the 3rd June 1998 [sic], which was three days before my 30th birthday, which seemed to be quite significant in a way that I just got in just before my 30th birthday. And amazingly I've actually still got a copy of the graduation programme. I wondered whether my mother might have kept this and she did, amazingly enough she did. I've searched her piles of papers, she wouldn't throw something like that away and indeed she's got it.

[00:44:27-00:46:29]

So somehow I managed to get four people in. I think the official limit was two, but I didn't really care about that and they wouldn't know how to enforce that, don't worry about it.

So I got them in and my wife. For my father, mother and uncle this was a nostalgic place to visit, but the really great thing about this was it was broadcast live on BBC2, which not many people can say about their graduations, and I was the very first person presented. If you look in this booklet you can see that actually I was the second one listed under PhD, but the first one didn't come luckily, managed to stop him coming, so I was the first one presented, which is great. I was actually I believe the first person who'd ever got an internal, first internal person who'd ever got a part time PhD with the Open University and that was mentioned in the broadcast, I was quite proud about that. I think all the others had died or given up long ago and left or something, but nevertheless I actually was the last person standing, I got that distinction.

And it was broadcast live on BBC2 and there I was resplendent in my Open University PhD gown, beautiful blue gown. And quite honestly, this is arrogant to say this, but those gowns put to shame those boring Cambridge PhD, BA sorry IMA or MA gowns, the Oxbridge gowns on the stage. Those are terrible, rubbish, compared with the beautiful Open University PhD, so that felt really great. And I had my wife there in the audience taking photographs, recording it. And the people I was presented to, of all the people it could have been, one was Professor Mike Pengelly who I've mentioned before, my internal supervisor and the Dean of my faculty. I was also presented to the pro vice chancellor, who was Professor Don Swift, pro vice chancellor staff, who by sheer chance was the boss of my wife who's still working at the Open University and that was just a coincidence, but of course a really nice coincidence and I was also presented to Walter Perry, the first Vice Chancellor, who I must say I thought, I still think was a legend really.