

KAREN FOLEY: Welcome to the Student Hub Live. Well, a lot of what we've been talking about is how fantastic the Open University community is. But did you know it's been going for quite a long time and has a really interesting heritage? And some of the reasons why the OU is involved with things like putting material out there on OpenLearn for anyone to be able to access is very, very interesting. There's a great social mission behind the OU, and it's wonderful that you're a part of it.

So I have with me Ruth Cammies, who is the university archivist. And I know because I found you in the library actually, where a lot of good things are kept. And we've got these wonderful things here, not too close to the water, from the archive. You've got a lot of stuff in there. What is in the university archive?

RUTH CAMMIES: Well, hi, Karen. We've got several types of materials in the archive. One of the types of materials we've got is what we call special collections. So this is material that has been created outside of the OU but donated to us.

So one of our main collections is the Jenny Lee collection. And I think we've got a picture of Jenny Lee that we can show to people.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, yes, let's see Jenny Lee. There she is.

RUTH CAMMIES: Jenny Lee was an amazing, amazing individual, very, very passionate about the OU, and I'll be talking about Jenny Lee a bit more in a while. But we have her full personal papers, her full personal collection right from her Sunday school hymn books through to letters with heads of state, Winston Churchill, Indira Gandhi. She helped set up the National Theatre.

She was the first ever minister of the arts and then helped to found The Open University. So her collection is amazing. So we have her personal collection.

We also have the collection of Betty Boothroyd, and I think we've got a picture of Betty Boothroyd as well I can show you. Many people remember Betty Boothroyd as the Speaker of the House of Commons, obviously. But she was also the chancellor of the OU from mid-'90s till about 2006. So her collection is all about her time as Speaker of the House of Commons or about that the events that she went to and the speeches that she did.

KAREN FOLEY: What do you do with these collections?

RUTH CAMMIES: So we look after them. We catalogue them.

KAREN FOLEY: Dust them.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yeah, make sure that they're OK. But we make them accessible. So once they're catalogued, we answer inquiries about them, make sure that people out there can find what they want if they're interested in various different collections, various different topics.

So they might be interested in politics, women's history, that kind of thing. So Jenn Lee and Betty Boothroyd are both brilliant for that. We've also got kind of lots of collections about various different topics in our special collection, so history of policing, social welfare, systems, cybernetics kind of thing, the history of mathematics.

So we've got kind of varied and special collections. But our biggest collections, our main collections are the materials around The Open University itself. And so as you said, we're based in the library. I think we've got a picture of the archive office that we can put up.

KAREN FOLEY: We've certainly been looking at that with our tour with Dan Weinbren, who's been taking us around campus, because he, of course, wrote the book *The History of the OU*.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yep. So worked together with Dan on that. And yeah, so the history of the OU materials, we've got all sorts of materials and collections. So we've got serials archives, so magazines, the very early student *Sesame* magazines, *Open House*, the staff magazine.

KAREN FOLEY: I remember *Sesame* magazine.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yeah, so we've got all of those, every edition. We've also got thousands of thousands of photographs of students, of events at the OU, that kind of thing, as well as--

KAREN FOLEY: You have all the videotapes.

RUTH CAMMIES: We have.

KAREN FOLEY: I remember the videos.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: I'm showing my age now.

RUTH CAMMIES: So we're probably fairly unique, I would imagine, in that usually archives don't have the teaching materials of their university, because obviously it's lecturers giving lectures to students. But with the OU it's all materials. It's all things that were actually given to students.

So we have all of the printed materials right back to the very first ones in 1971, all the print, all the audiovisual materials, the videos, the audio. We've also got some of the home experiment kits that were sent out to students. I think we've got a picture of some of those we can show.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes. [INAUDIBLE]

RUTH CAMMIES: Yeah, so you can see that they sent out all sorts of materials-- microscopes, Bunsen burners. You could set up a full lab in your kitchen.

KAREN FOLEY: [INAUDIBLE]

RUTH CAMMIES: They did, yeah, huge boxes of things.

KAREN FOLEY: [INAUDIBLE]

RUTH CAMMIES: So those are home experiment kits. And people have always been able to visit the archive and visit the library to view these materials. But what we really want to do is make sure that they're accessible to people out there, to our students who perhaps can't come to Milton Keynes. And so that's why we've set up the digital archive.

KAREN FOLEY: So tell us about the digital archive. And I think we've got an image of the home page that we can look at. And also, do you keep other things, like degree ceremonies and footage of things that we're doing?

RUTH CAMMIES: We do. So we've got-- we're so lucky, really, with the OU and the way the OU's been set up because we have been able to capture so many important moments of the OU's history, and we'll show you some of those in a while.

KAREN FOLEY: Because we've just seen the digital archive home page, and so anyone can access this.

RUTH CAMMIES: Anybody can access it. It's fully publicly available. And it's got several main collections on it. So we've got images. We've got about just over 200 images, I think, of various events, people, the campus when it was being built and that kind of thing. We've also got clips from our course

materials, study materials, I should say, so various clips like that.

We've got, what we call, historical TV and radio, so things a little bit like this, so things like interviews, things that were recorded for students, the help guides, that kind of thing, those kind of series. But what we can also do with OUDA that we're quite excited about is--

KAREN FOLEY: The digital archive.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yeah. Sorry, yes.

KAREN FOLEY: No, that's fine. I just have to keep-- because there are all these acronyms. We're all struggling with TMA at the moment. We've got that sorted, but now all these others are confusing us.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yes, DA, Digital Archive. What we've got is featured items and exhibitions. And with these, we can really put some context around the archived materials and also show you a link to what's going on today. So we've got a number of exhibitions. And the first one we did was about Shakespeare. And I think we've got a clip from that exhibition that we can show you in just a sec.

But for the Shakespeare one, what we really want to show is how the OU has been able to teach Shakespeare differently to other universities, really being able to focus on the performance rather than necessarily the text. And that's because we've been able to get into showing videos, showing so much visual material, and showing performances, historical performances, things that might have been on television, but also even create bespoke performances for our videos. So we've got a quick clip that we can show you now.

KAREN FOLEY: Let's take a look at this Shakespeare clip.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- But I think that Shakespeare, in lots of different ways, was anticipating precisely the use of his text for all kinds of purposes other than this one strictly speaking, for which the texts were originally written. That's why an older historicism that simply tries to track down the relation of the text to its immediate historical setting doesn't get what the texts actually are, even in their own historical relation, which is much more open, much more vital, and much more disturbing than they might at first seem.

[END PLAYBACK]

KAREN FOLEY: So do you have any other exhibition?

RUTH CAMMIES: Yes, so we've got this year we launched an exhibition about the OU and Milton Keynes because it's Keynes' 50th anniversary. So we've talked about how the OU's worked with Milton Keynes over the years. We've also got an exhibition on Betty Boothroyd that we put out earlier this year as well and one on Harold Wilson. But we've also got our central kind of exhibition that we talk about a lot is the OU story. And that's telling the story of the university.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, good, because I wanted you to fill students in on some of this because it's a really, really interesting history.

RUTH CAMMIES: So the idea of distance learning and the idea of teaching, using television and using modern media was around from the 1920s as soon as television came along.

KAREN FOLEY: So this isn't new.

RUTH CAMMIES: Not new-- it's not new. But it really started kind of gaining pace in the 1960s with Harold Wilson. Harold Wilson had been out to the Soviet Union and had been out to America and seen what they were doing with distance learning and using television and using correspondence courses. And so he had this idea that he thought, yeah, the "university of the air." And I think we've got a clip from his "White Heat of Technology Speech," which was given in 1963, which really put his ideas down for what he imagined this university of the air would be. So if we can show that clip.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- The plans for the Open University were first outlined by Harold Wilson, the 1963 Labour Party conference in Scarborough.

- And relevant also to these problems are our plans for a "university of the air." It's designed to provide an opportunity for those, who for one reason or another, have not been able to take advantages of higher education now to do so. With all the TV and radio and the state-sponsored correspondence courses and the facilities of the university for setting and marking papers and conducting examinations and awarding degrees, that all these things can provide.

- When he became prime minister in 1964, few people believed that a university of the air was possible or even necessary. But he was determined to go ahead.

[END PLAYBACK]

KAREN FOLEY: Now, Rick's wondering how big the storage is. But we'll come back to that later in terms of the archive because there's an awful lot here. Harold Wilson, of course, one of the key people, but Jenny Lee, who we saw earlier, was also very important.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yes, she was indeed. So Harold Wilson became prime minister in 1964, and he needed somebody to take this idea forward. And he turned to Jenny Lee. And so as I said before, Jenny Lee was first minister of the arts. And she became such a passionate supporter of the idea of the Open University and the "university of the air," as the project was first called.

So we've got a clip now about Jenny Lee and how she faced the opposition. She had huge opposition to this idea everywhere she went. But she really opposed that and fought for the idea. So here's a clip of Jenny Lee.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- Now, it seemed to me just logic to try to bring the best in higher education within reach of people who felt that they could be advantaged by it. The prime minister made a bargain with me, and he kept it. I was minister for the arts. And he said, for God's sake, will you take on this university project because there was nobody in the department, none of the ministers, senior, nobody in the treasury.

Inside the cabinet, they either didn't understand what it was about, preoccupied with their own jobs, or were actively hostile. And I said, Harold, I'll take it on on the same conditions as the arts. That you will back me when I need money. Now, he never let me down.

[END PLAYBACK]

KAREN FOLEY: Wow, an amazing woman!

RUTH CAMMIES: She was, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: And the Open University gained its charter, and we have our charter day celebration. And this was important.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yes. So Jenny fought for the OU, and we finally gained our charter and became a university in 1969. And at that ceremony, when we gained the charter, that was when our first chancellor

Lord Crowther gave the mission speech that we're open to people, places, methods, and ideas. And so after that, we got to work. And so we first launched our first courses in 1971. That was just the four first courses in maths, social science, arts, and-- maths, social science, arts, and science.

But our first programme was a kind of magazine-style programme that was broadcast in January in 1971. And it really kind of introduced the idea. We've got a clip from that programme that we're going to show you now. OK.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- Hello, and welcome to *Open Forum*. This is, in fact, first of all the Open University television programmes. And the Vice Chancellor Dr. Walter Perry had hoped to be with us today. Unfortunately he's unwell and so hasn't been able to come.

But here in the studio with me is the University Secretary Mr. Christodoulou, and he's going to speak to you first, Chris.

- Good morning, and a very happy new year to all of you. I doubt that any university officer has ever had the opportunity of addressing 25,000 students of his own university and hundreds of thousands of the general public at one and the same time. And the fact that I have this opportunity today marks the fulfilment of one of the most exciting dreams of educationists and broadcasters, the Open University, culminating in a partnership between two national bodies under royal charter dedicated to promoting the general educational well-being of the community at large. It is therefore my privilege and pleasure to welcome you all to the Open University, students and general public alike.

[END PLAYBACK]

KAREN FOLEY: Wow, 25,000 students, that is enormous, and a very different welcome to the Student Hub Live. Now, Ruth's been asking about how big the archive is, and we're going to talk about the OU digital archive. But HJ, are there any other questions or comments? HJ: We're just talking about Fran said she loves this. It's so interesting to see where it's all started. And Lee was saying about university of the air, or Open University, we're playing with names. And Howard says openness is the key to inclusivity, so she definitely wants to stick with Open University

there. But, yeah, we've been wondering about--

LEE: Ruth, who's studying one of engineering and technology modules, is just a bit curious about the digital archive and how big it is, because there's so much history to the Open University. And we were wondering whether it's measured in gigabytes, in terabytes, or even, as we've been informed, by [INAUDIBLE] petabytes. And she's studying that sort of module. Do we know how big that is?

RUTH CAMMIES: At the moment, I'm going to talk about my work to digitise them. But we've probably got around 160 terabytes of master archive for our digital files. That's a very small percentage of our total archive that we've got.

KAREN FOLEY: Is that impressive, Ruth? It's a fair size. Good. All right, good. And you've got a sort of area as well, where you store all of these in the library. And there's some really nice displays also with some of these things in there. Well, let's talk about the digital archive and how you actually-- well, how students can see it.

RUTH CAMMIES: So, yeah, we've got various different collections. I have to say, we've got kind of-- we've digitised materials. I'll show you that. So this is some of the original material. So we've got-- it's a U-matic tape. We've got lots of U-matic tapes in the archive. And so you can open it up them and have a look at the cassette, if you want.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, wow, yeah.

RUTH CAMMIES: This is pre-VHS, kind of broadcast standard tape.

KAREN FOLEY: When we called things courses--

RUTH CAMMIES: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: --before. Now they're modules.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yes. OK, so this is an example of some of the materials that we digitise. That's videotape, obviously. We've then got audiotape. We've got thousands and thousands of these.

KAREN FOLEY: Wow. I'm not going to pull that or touch it even.

RUTH CAMMIES: So this is quarter-inch audiotape.

KAREN FOLEY: Because I've still got some of my cassette tapes.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yes, this is the same material. It's just on a reel.

KAREN FOLEY: Right, OK.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: How do you digitise a lot of these things? I mean, that must be incredibly complicated and--

RUTH CAMMIES: Yeah, we can do some of it in-house. We have some machines that we keep going and get serviced so that we can keep playing these things. Or we send them out to be done by other services.

KAREN FOLEY: [INAUDIBLE] archivists.

RUTH CAMMIES: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: What are some of these other things?

RUTH CAMMIES: So I've got a very unusual type of tape here. We call it a Philips tape. I think it's a VTR.

KAREN FOLEY: Summer school.

RUTH CAMMIES: Very, very unusual type of tape. That and the machines to play that are very, very rare. So with these things, again, we look around to see if anybody's got a machine that can play them. Luckily, with this one, we've got it on another format, so we don't have to try and find that one.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, good, because I was feeling old thinking about tapes.

RUTH CAMMIES: So, Yeah. And then some of the oldest material we have is on one-inch and two-inch tape.

KAREN FOLEY: Videotape.

RUTH CAMMIES: Again, that's like your-- that's like a VHS, but it's on a reel. And then we have some cine film, which is kind of the older type of film as well. So we get these digitised. We get a very big file from that, a very big, uncompressed archive file, which we keep on a hard drive. And then we transfer them into formats that we can play and put onto the digital archives. It's a bit more accessible. We can't put everything on the digital archive unfortunately.

KAREN FOLEY: No, I was going to say, how do you select it? And I guess I wanted to also pick up on the point of going back to the teaching materials, because it's really interesting. The OU is so innovative, and I'm always mindful that at whatever stage, we were always ahead of the game, even with tapes. There was a sort of way of using media to enable people to learn in a really, really, yeah, unique way. So it's great to be able to just look back on some of this and think about how brilliant we are.

RUTH CAMMIES: It really is, yeah. It's great. So we've been digitising and putting some of these selected items on the digital archive. I think we've got a clip from one of the first science programmes that we can show you from the very first Science Foundation course which was S100. So this is a great clip.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, let's take a look at S100.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- I might use these ball bearings to represent atoms. If I did, I would still require a repulsive and an attractive force. Well, there's the repulsive force, all right. They drive each other apart.

Some motor oil-- and there's the attractive force. Pull one, and the other follows. So oily ball bearings represent our atoms. Now, I've only used two ball bearings here. And on any rail system, there's going to be a great many more than two atoms.

But how should I add more bearings? Should I perhaps take this one and flick it in gently? Or should I really go to town on it? Well, that's just it. It's the speed with which this one comes in that determines whether a material is a solid, a liquid, or a gas.

[END PLAYBACK]

KAREN FOLEY: And how that things change so much? Yesterday we had some people from the chemistry department doing some live science and talking about the open stem laboratories and how we've now got digital ways that students can perform experiments from the comfort of their own armchairs, as Mike kept saying. So if you missed that, do check it out on the Catch Up.

RUTH CAMMIES: And that's what we love doing with the archive. It's great to look back, but it's also looking forward and seeing we were pioneering then, and we're still pioneering, and to reflect on what we're doing now with virtual microscopes and that kind of thing, so it's great.

KAREN FOLEY: So what's next for the archive?

RUTH CAMMIES: So we've got lots of plans. Of course our 50th anniversary of the university is coming up in 2019. So we're thinking about that now and thinking about the kind of materials that we might want to put on the archive, on the digital archive.

So we've digitised quite a few of our *Sesame* magazines, going right back to '71, '72. So we're planning to think about putting those on, and more exhibitions reflecting about the history of the OU and different themes and that kind of thing. So it'll be quite exciting times ahead.

KAREN FOLEY: Is there any sense of sort of capturing history in the making and thinking we're archiving something for the next 50 years to look back on?

RUTH CAMMIES: Of course, yeah. Yeah, we're doing that all the time. So things like the Student Hub Live, we will be archiving that as well. So it's--

KAREN FOLEY: And lots of it. I'm warning you. It's going to take loads of space.

RUTH CAMMIES: So, yeah, and we try to capture today's university as well as the past, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Ruth, thanks for filling us in. That's been a really, really interesting session and great to get a brief glimpse of the history of the OU and some of the ways that you're using some of this material and also to think about how innovative the teaching and learning has been. HJ and Lee, any other gossip or news or chat from the hot desk?

LEE: Well, a lot of the students have been commenting on how the logo's stayed almost the same throughout the years as well, unlike other businesses or organisations, where the logos change. They're really quite impressed that it's stayed the same. So in all it's kind of a sort of historic theme that's run completely with the OU, and it's quite an important part of our image and quite an important part for the students as well. And just a few people talking about coming to visit the library soon and hopefully having a look at some of that digital archive as well.

HJ: And Harriet said, "loved the DIY science experiment. How exciting it must have been to open those boxes." And as you said, we talked about yesterday, I put up the link for the chemistry Catch Up. That'll be on there. And we have lots of links to home experiments as well through MOOCs and things like that. So we'll pop those in there. So maybe you can send us some

pictures of you having a go at those.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Well, thank you very much. Oh, for those of you who don't know, actually, I must plug Lee's other job apart from the hot desk, which is on the student support team. And we've been talking a lot about how you can get in touch with the student support team.

So do you put any questions in there. If you're unsure about anything at all, and Lee can try and answer that in the chat as well. Ruth, that's all we've got time for. But thank you very much for coming along. We're now going to show you a short video, which will be one of our campus tours. And we'll be back in a few minutes.