

## Clip: ap\_aclip4: Robert Rowland clip 2

### Robert Rowland:

Well, one of the, one of the main aims we had in the move to Milton Keynes was to try and bring with us the spirit of 'Ally', of 'Ally Pally', mm, this strange, odd, lugubrious building with lots of unknown corners and places in it. There was even a bowling, an inside bowling green there up in, up in one of our floors there. Not part of the OU but just so old chaps used to come (like me now) to play bowls on an, on an artificial surface. And there was a big theatre at the back which was held as a kind of design store for props for the BBC as a whole. But there was something with 'Ally Pally' which was a kind of not, not the witch I mentioned earlier on but there was a really creative ghost there.

That painting up there you may see was given to me when I left the BBC. That was, that's of Alexandra Palace Studio 'A' painted in 1936 for the front page of *The Listener*, mm, commissioned by a man called Cecil Madden the world's first television producer. So I'm very pleased to have that.

And that's part of the spirit of, of AP. And last week I attended a reunion of all old, of old AP staff up at Alexandra Palace...and that was for all the old news hounds and one or two sprinklings of OUPC people. And which I hope the OUPC people will, will go to more and more, more and more go to that. There was a great spirit there and I think we, we achieved that I think in the move to Milton Keynes. But it's all changed now I believe and the Centre is now no longer the BBC's Centre.

*The spirit of 'Ally Pally' moving to Milton Keynes, what was that?*

A very difficult question to answer. I think to, to do with a shared sense of adventure. A kind of democratic attitude to life. A sense of fun. A sense of good comradeship and good family and I think a sense of shared objectives all distilled together into a very bonding creative thing. Not unlike years ago in, the same sort of thing happened in Lime Grove. That's another place where I worked but Lime, Lime Grove had something of the same quality. A labyrinthine place with corridors you didn't know existed and even little houses up the street which were, which *Panorama* lived in and so on and so forth. There's something about crazy buildings creates great harmony among the staff and something about well made buildings which perhaps creates disharmony. I don't know what it is about that but there's something, there's

something in that. I don't know but the, the building, the BBC building in the OU, the original plans from the architects was one long building and I said 'can't we make it 'L' shaped so that people will not quite as easily know where they are'? And it became 'L' shaped so, so there was an element of slight mystery. But I think it needs, you need mystery in a building too.