

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

## Oral History interview clip transcript

Name of Interviewee: **Dr Alfred Vella**  
Interviewed by: **Elizabeth Currie**  
Date of interview: **13/04/2021**

### **Important**

The content of oral history interviews is personal, experiential and interpretive, relying on the memories, perceptions and opinions of individuals. While all reasonable attempts are made to avoid inaccuracy, interviews should not be understood as statements of fact or opinion endorsed by The Open University.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it.

In some cases, interviewees may have made changes to the transcript.

Personal/sensitive information regarding individuals who may be living has been removed from transcripts where necessary.

### **Copyright and Permissions**

Rights owned or controlled by The Open University.

**All use of this transcript in part or in full requires prior permission from The Open University Archive.**

Please contact [university-archive@open.ac.uk](mailto:university-archive@open.ac.uk) to discuss possible use of the content.

phd\_010\_001\_01

Clip 1

[00:42:14-00:44:02]

After its tenth year of life, I think 1969, 1979, we did a little operetta, a Ballad of Walton Hall it was called. I hope there might be videos in the archives and I do have a photo which I must scan and send you, but anyway he played himself and I just played one of the extras in the Ballad of Walton Hall where essentially the first ten years' worth of history was played out on stage, an opera-type thing, operetta, and in the interval we went as a cast to his office for drinks. I'm not sure if vice chancellors do that anymore. And at Christmas he'd come round visiting each of the faculty parties. So he wasn't as aloof as most vice chancellors who I've met since have been. He was somebody who was hands-on and you would see eating in the refectory. So he wasn't some, a very important person that would speak to ordinary people. And I think that may, the ethos of early OU times. I played football with the maths faculty, the maths faculty team. I was probably a bit rough and would tackle any moving thing that was on the wrong, not on, if they're on my side of the pitch then they're fair game for tackling. I think maybe I learnt from a chap called Nobby Stiles who I think died fairly recently.