

PodMag S2 5 Nov 17 final

The PodMag

Karen Foley:

Hi and welcome to the PodMag. I'm Karen Foley.

Dave Middleton:

And I'm Dave Middleton.

Karen Foley:

How are you today Dave?

Dave Middleton:

I'm very well. How are you?

Karen Foley:

I've got a cold.

Dave Middleton:

It is that season.

Karen Foley:

Yeah, no it is that time of year. It's funny isn't it, I know. It would be nice to know if you're struggling out there or may be you're doing really well. May be you've got no colds and you're breezing through. Do you let us know. Email us PodMag@open.ac.uk and let us know how you're getting on with your module.

Dave Middleton:

And if this is the first time that you've actually listened to the PodMag let me welcome you because we always like new listeners don't we? This is the Faculty of Social Sciences' weekly podcast. We give you news and views and we update you on Karen's health.

Karen Foley:

Absolutely.

Dave Middleton:

On a regular basis.

Karen Foley:

Important as that is and most importantly we're going to tell you about our fantastic conference which is on 24th to 26th March 2015.

Dave Middleton:

But before we do that we're going to have some other news.

Karen Foley:

OK brilliant. OK let's do the jingle.

Dave Middleton:

Well there we are, that's the jingle.

Karen Foley:

Brilliant, well done Dave.

Dave Middleton:

OK that took me ages to work out how to do that.

Karen Foley:

I know, it's good isn't it.

Dave Middleton:

I'm not doing it again.

Karen Foley:

Well you're going to have to when we do the next bit of news.

Dave Middleton:

Oh, that's true. Anyway, the big news this week is so exciting.

Karen Foley:

The Open University have been involved in the Rosetta Project to launch a spaceship on a comet. And, yeah, some people we know have been involved in it.

Dave Middleton:

Yeah and that includes David Rothery.

Karen Foley:

Absolutely.

Dave Middleton:

He's a friend of ours and also Suzanne.

Karen Foley:

Yes, Suzanne **Stranser**. I mean they've been on news programmes and everything. I think we're in the wrong faculty. David Rothery was on Five Live I heard.

Dave Middleton:

Really?

Karen Foley:

Yeah, whatever that is.

Dave Middleton:

I don't know, nobody listens to that.

Karen Foley:

No.

Dave Middleton:

No. Anyway congratulations to our colleagues in ...

Karen Foley:

This is Why

Dave Middleton:

Right, well that's the first piece of news.

Karen Foley:

Yeah.

Dave Middleton:

The second piece of news is actually more local.

Karen Foley:

Yes.

Dave Middleton:

Our friend, David Humphreys.

Karen Foley:

Absolutely.

Dave Middleton:

I know I keep saying that don't I, our friend. But we do actually know quite a lot of people.

Karen Foley:

Well no, we only talk about the people we like on this programme I think.

Dave Middleton:

That's true. If you want to get on this programme you actually have to stay friendly with us.

Karen Foley:

Although our list of enemies isn't very long at all to be fair but that's only because we haven't met that many people.

Dave Middleton:

It's all over that wall. And it's not big writing either I've had to reduce it down a bit.

Karen Foley:

No David Humphreys has won a fabulous award and I hear he gets some great accessories with it.

Dave Middleton:

Well he's won a Fellowship of the Institute of Chartered Foresters which is a great honour, don't look confused, why would someone in Social Sciences. Because of his interest in the environment and he is a real advocate for the environment and a real friend of the environment. He's won a Fellowship to the Institute of Chartered Foresters. And I understand, I have emailed him to see whether the award comes with an axe and a checked shirt.

Karen Foley:

Yeah.

Dave Middleton:

But he assures me it doesn't.

Karen Foley:

Oh.

Dave Middleton:

I wouldn't bother then.

Karen Foley:

No.

Dave Middleton:

But I think, there's someone else ...

Karen Foley:

How disappointing.

Dave Middleton:

I would be very disappointed.

Karen Foley:

Yeah, oh well. Still a fabulous award nonetheless.

Dave Middleton:

Congratulations David, on the award.

Karen Foley:

Absolutely.

Dave Middleton:

The third piece of news.

Karen Foley:

Right.

Dave Middleton:

Your starter for ten Karen.

Karen Foley:

My starter for ten. Oh no, I keep getting this wrong. I know, I know, University Challenged.

Dave Middleton:

Yeah, University Challenged, as you are, University Challenge for the rest of us and fabulous news for our team of students.

Karen Foley:

Absolutely. They're doing very, very well.

Dave Middleton:

It is odd because I watch the OUSA Twitter feed, so the Open University Student Association. If you're not on their Twitter feed and you're not following them you should be.

Karen Foley:

Yeah, @OUstudents

Dave Middleton:

Yeah but otherwise follow us.

Karen Foley:

@PodMag.

Dave Middleton:

Or you can follow our Social Sciences Twitter feed as well which is ...

Karen Foley:

Don't get me to do them all though.

Dave Middleton:

Well you've got to do something while you're here, @OUSocSci. OK. But the OUSA one, it's really interesting because the amount of students across the university who said how proud they were to be a member of the Open University watching University Challenge.

Karen Foley:

But it's lovely to be behind something and to be part of that community. Because I think everyone can identify with that, you know, and I think that's a lovely thing.

Dave Middleton:

And it's wonderful to see our students doing so well as well. So the next round is on 24th November. Good luck.

Karen Foley:

And we should also do some conference news Dave, because we've got a lot going on on the conference as well.

Dave Middleton:

I think you're absolutely right.

Karen Foley:

I always am.

Dave Middleton:

So you tell me.

OK, here's our conference **theme** music.

So what's happening on the conference Karen?

Karen Foley:

OK. Well as everyone should know and have marked in their diary the conference is on 24th to 26th March 2015. So, on the website you can find out all the news about the conference. But before the conference actually happens we've got lots of things going on because as you know Student Connections is all about connecting students. And one of the ways we do that is through the conference but there are lots of other ways that

you can get involved, that you can get networks and then you can connect yourself with an academic and a student community.

Dave Middleton:

Yeah. I mean one of the best ways would be to attend one of our road shows.

Karen Foley:

It's in Milton Keynes and it's on 2nd December.

Dave Middleton:

Which is a Tuesday.

Karen Foley:

Yeah.

Dave Middleton:

So if you've got nothing on on a Tuesday, you're able to get yourself to Milton Keynes, you can come along and you can see our road show. What's going to happen at the road show Karen?

Karen Foley:

Well, we're going to be having the road show from mid morning till mid afternoon. It's completely free. We provide a buffet lunch. The workshops will be absolutely brilliant. Spaces are limited though so we need you to book in on it. So you can either do that by going to the website, connections.kmi.open.ac.uk and going in from there. Or you can just email us and tell us that you'd like to come along and we'll email you back.

And you can email PodMag@open.ac.uk to book your place.

Dave Middleton:

We've got some big news for that day.

Karen Foley:

Yes.

Dave Middleton:

We have found somebody who wants to join us and be a guest speaker.

Karen Foley:

Oh brilliant.

Dave Middleton:

That person will be Jane McCarthy who's from our Department of Social Policy. She's a top notch researcher and a top notch person.

Karen Foley:

Brilliant.

Dave Middleton:

I'm really pleased about that.

Karen Foley:

Ah fabulous. Oh that will be really, really good.

Dave Middleton:

The other thing we should mention about the conference, when is it again?

Karen Foley:

The 24th to 26th March. I've got it in my diary.

Dave Middleton:

So the other thing though that we should mention is if you are really keen to find out what the conference is all about then you should come along to an Activate session on a Monday evening. And they are virtually every Monday evening.

Karen Foley:

Yes.

Dave Middleton:

They are between 8 and 9 o'clock. It's usually about 20 to 30 of us.

Karen Foley:

Yeah.

Dave Middleton:

And we are having a ball aren't we?

Karen Foley:

Oh brilliant. It all happens on OU Live and you can access that from the Student Connections website. Everybody is welcome but you do have to be an OU student.

Dave Middleton:

Hey, I'll tell you what.

Karen Foley:

What.

Dave Middleton:

This Student Life.

Karen Foley:

Ah, loving the Student Life.

Dave Middleton:

Well This Student Life is now getting to the nitty gritty of the story. Neil has got back in touch with Katie.

Karen Foley:

Ah I love that story line, I really do.

Dave Middleton:

You wrote it Karen.

Karen Foley:

Well, yeah I know, but I still love it. And I think Neil was absolutely brilliant. If only he listened to the PodMag he'd know how brilliant I think he was, but he won't.

Dave Middleton:

And we've got Neesha started to go to tutorials. And last week we had a big special guest didn't we?

Karen Foley:

We did, we had Matt Staples who's one of the Chair's of DD102.

Dave Middleton:

And he was playing himself.

Karen Foley:

He was.

Dave Middleton:

Rachel MacLeod and Harleyjack Muckell were our two student reps who are actually the student actors and they've never acted before. We gave Rachel a microphone and we sent her off to talk to some of the cast and you've already heard some of these but we've got the one now with Mike Bullivant who plays, and I want you to boo when I say his name, who plays Ted.

Karen Foley:

Boo. Everyone hates Ted.

Dave Middleton:

They do don't they.

Karen Foley:

He's not that bad. He really isn't that bad.

Dave Middleton:

Let's hear what he's like in real life.

Rachel MacLeod:

I'm Rachel MacLeod and I'm here with Mike Bullivant with a Behind the Scenes interview about recording series two of This Student Life. So firstly Mike, hi and welcome.

Why do you think this series is important for students?

Mike Bullivant:

Studying with the OU can be a pretty terrifying experience. And it's this kind of material that will help students overcome that fear and that anxiety and help them with their studies. I think it's really important.

Rachel MacLeod:

That's perfect. I think confidence is quite a big issue for many students especially when they're starting out with their studies.

Mike Bullivant:

Well a lot of students haven't studied for years, perhaps since they were at school. It's such a strange experience, even writing an essay. It can be intimidating. It can be a fearsome thing. And the more help that the Open University can give through things like this, initiatives like this then I think that's better for students.

Rachel MacLeod:

How do you think that your character contributes to student experiences?

Mike Bullivant:

There must be quite a few OU students whose partners or whose families unfortunately don't support them in what they're doing.

Doing an OU course for the first time and taken the decision to take an OU course is an important one. It's a difficult choice to make not only from the perspective of the student but also from the people who are going to, not suffer, I don't want to use that word, but that are going to be effected by OU studies. It is very time consuming. The Open University doesn't give its degrees away, you have to work hard for it. And often the people that pay the price of that are the close relatives, spouses, children, they can be the casualty of the OU, they needn't necessarily be.

Now some families, some students don't have the support of their family and spouses as I say, and Ted is one of those awful characters. And so Ted is in the script I guess to show what an effect that can have on an OU student and undermining it can be. Ted is not a nice character. It's all about me. He name should be Me Me. Me, me, me, me me, it's all about me and his golf club and that's far more important. And just offering ... when you get home from work, how did you get on with your studies today? It doesn't cost much. Just showing a little bit of interest.

But the OU is a wonderful institution. It does give lots of support. It is a very supportive institution, perhaps more so than other university in the UK, university that I know.

Rachel MacLeod:

If I could ask you a little bit about how you found the experience this week? How has it been taking part in this series?

Mike Bullivant:

It's really good. I get invited to be involved in it and then you get sent a script. And then we have a read through. But it's been fun. It always is fun working with Dave, Dave Middleton.

I notice he's written himself a very funny part. This is the second series of This Student Life. In the first series Dave hardly featured at all, in this series now Dave has written the script with Karen, or Karen wrote it with Dave. And he's written himself a bigger part. And I notice the part that I play, Ted, is a lot smaller than it was last year.

And what I fear is that if we do ever get to do a third series of This Student Life then the opening lines will be, a **table 00:11:45** will be written out and the opening lines will be something like, as Ted's coffin slips behind the curtains of the crematorium.

Rachel MacLeod:

OK Mike. Well thank you ever so much for your time and we look forward to hearing more from Ted in the future in series three.

Mike Bullivant:

It's a pleasure.

Dave Middleton:

Ah, changing the subject slightly.

Karen Foley:

Yes.

Dave Middleton:

Look who's just walked past.

Karen Foley:

Ah, Tatiana.

Dave Middleton:

Tatiana **Blackmore**. A good friend of ours. Come in Tatiana, how are you?

Tatiana Blackmore:

I'm fine, thank you.

Dave Middleton:

Tatiana you work with us and have worked with us for a few years and you and I have worked together for a number of years. You've got one of the most important roles in the Open University haven't you? Can you tell us a little bit about what you do?

Tatiana Blackmore:

Yes, I believe the role of the tutor in the university is one of the most important ones. Yes, we do deal with OU students on a daily basis and I suppose we are on the front line and we are just dealing with any queries and helping our students on this learning journey.

Dave Middleton:

Fabulous. Now I've got two DD102 tutors with me here. And we're also going to have quite a few students who are doing DD102 and I know that they are very nervous. Many of them would have just got their TMA 1 back and just received their feedback and their marks. Any advice you want to give them?

Tatiana Blackmore:

Yes. I think, you know, first of all congratulations to everybody who has actually overcome the barrier and fear of submitting TMA 1. So 1 is done, a few more to go. So the next TMA is coming up very soon and I know that this TMA might feel a bit more daunting because it's an essay so a little bit different.

What I would like, kind of advice to the students is that you might find that TMA 02 will be harder to write. So just take it in your stride and take on board all the advice that tutors give you.

Karen Foley:

Absolutely. Yeah, I think sometimes tutors forget just how important they are to students. Because like you say they're on the front line there.

Tatiana Blackmore:

Yes indeed. And I think that's why I always keep saying to my students, well don't suffer in silence and just don't be ashamed to, or don't feel awkward to actually drop email,

make a phone call to your tutors and just say, I'm a little bit stuck or I'm not sure about this course material.

Karen Foley:

Brilliant.

Dave Middleton:

Tatiana, I've got to say, you're wearing a lovely bracelet there which is smashing against the desk as you speak, so we're just picking up that little bit of background noise, never mind about that.

OK, well thank you Tatiana for popping in to see us. It's been lovely to see you today. Next week don't forget Monday night the Activate session is 8 till 9pm.

Karen Foley:

Yeah, that's Monday the ...

Dave Middleton:

Well it's Monday every Monday.

Karen Foley:

We have to say the date.

Dave Middleton:

Do we? The 17th or 24th November and we'll see you there hopefully.

Karen Foley:

Yeah. We need to finish Dave.

Dave Middleton:

We do.

Karen Foley:

More news next week.

Dave Middleton:

It will be great. Well thanks for listening. We'll see you all next week.

Karen Foley:

Bye for now.

Dave Middleton:

Bye.

The PodMag