

Time to Think

Open University Journeys in British and Irish prisons during the years of conflict, 1972-2000

Oral History interview clip transcript

Name of Interviewee: **Brendan Mackin**

Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**

Date of interview: **25/11/2011**

Important

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Clip title: A bit of a catalyst for further discussions

Duration: 00:01:28

Clip start point in full interview: 00:17:37

Clip end point in full interview: 00:22:48

Interview identifier: 003_S_01

Description: Brendan Mackin reflects on how Open University students from different Compounds (the Maze and Long Kesh prison) studying together in the early 1970s, found the space to build up working relationships which paved the way for other discussions to take place between them.

Transcript:

So you enjoyed studying the Level One Social Sciences course?

I did. I found it difficult at first. I didn't find it difficult to understand, I found it difficult to get a discipline and a methodology because I had no expertise or no experience of study and that was the hard part and there was nobody else round me had done that—

So you worked together with other—?

Yeah, we had some UDA in our study hut and some of the UVF, UDA and some of ourselves

That is very interesting and was this all done with The Open University study group, was that the vehicle for you doing it?

I think The Open University study group in many respects allowed people to discuss within their own environment, do you understand what I mean. There were the guys who were sitting in the hut, there was a screw standing, he used to go outside and leave us alone because we were all at our books and allowed us to have a discussion and tease out that type of discussion. So The Open University, I think in many respects was probably, played perhaps an unwitting role in being a bit of a catalyst for further discussions to take place in the camp.