

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: **Liam McAnoy**
Interviewed by: **Pat Jess**
Date of interview: **05/10/2011**

Important

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.

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Clip title: Here's what it will do for you now

Duration: 00:01:15

Clip start point in full interview: 00:13:38

Clip end point in full interview: 00:15:24

Interview identifier: 021_S_01

Description: Liam McAnoy was imprisoned in the Official IRA Compounds (the Maze and Long Kesh Prison) and commenced his studies of Social Sciences with The Open University in 1981. This clip pays tribute to the seminal and inspirational role Diana Purcell played in encouraging him and others to engage in education and learning which she stressed was not just for their future, but also for its immediate and inherent worth.

Transcript:

Well the first person that we met from The Open University was a woman called Diana Purcell. Diana actually came into the Compounds at Long Kesh and, the first time I remember was we were all in the television room and Diana came in and sort of introduced herself, said where she was from, the OU, talked to us a bit about, you know, what do you do with your day, how do you get over the boredom, how do you get over the institutionalisation, and she introduced the idea of not the OU, she introduced the idea of learning and education as something that can help you get over that. So that was the introduction that we had to education generally, but then she began to talk about how the OU could make a very positive contribution to life inside the prison and in a sense it was that, that attracted, not just me but other people to the OU because she was talking about something that was immediate. She wasn't saying look if you do this, once you get out in ten, twenty, years or whatever, you may get a job out of it. She was saying, here's what it will do for you now and in a sense that was very, very persuasive and it was also very influential. She was very influential with a lot of the prisoners that I met.