

## 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: **Jackie McMullan**  
Interviewed by: **Joanna McMinn**  
Date of interview: **29/02/2011**

#### **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:** There was a great thirst for knowledge

**Duration:** 00:01:51

**Clip start point in full interview:** 00:01:39

**Clip end point in full interview:** 00:03:28

**Interview identifier:** 014\_S\_01

**Description:** Jackie MacMullan recalls his feelings at starting studying with The Open University in 1985 after the end of the Blanket Protest and Hunger Strikes in the H Blocks (1976-82) and how during the Blanket Protest, Republicans talked of books to each other through their cell doors.

**Transcript:**

*So then, okay, so when you were in Long Kesh, when did you actually start then to study?*

I suppose you know in one respect, the end of the Protest and the Hunger Strike, we were allowed reading materials, literature, books so we would have been studying Politics, History and other conflicts throughout the world. But in terms of formal study, it was 1985 when I started The Open University. I think Republican Prisoners - of which I was one - the first one started The Open University, it might have been 1983, '84. I signed up and started studying in 1985. I would have been one of dozens of prisoners, to do it at that time.

*And what was it like to study in the prison for you in that first year?*

It was great because throughout the five years that we were on protest and weren't allowed books or any reading material at all, a great hunger for knowledge had built up and we used to talk about books all the time and used to have conversations about our favourite books. People used to relate books that they had read out the doors, so as I say there was a great thirst for knowledge and starting the OU, I can remember being excited about it, looking forward to it.