

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: **Raymond McCartney**
Interviewed by: **Joanna McMinn**
Date of interview: **13/10/2011**

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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Raymond McCartney Clip

Clip title: We entered into the formal education system

Duration: 00:01:22

Clip start point in full interview: 00:05:12

Clip end point in full interview: 00:07:02

Interview identifier: 030_S_01

Description: Raymond McCartney describes education among Republican prisoners on the Blanket Protest in the H Blocks (the Maze and Long Kesh Prison) in the late 1970s, the start of them engaging with the formal education system in the prison in 1982 and beginning his Open University studies in 1984.

Transcript:

I was arrested in '77 and then went on the Protest. And on the Protest, I think the Protest gave a lot of us a sense that, given the right opportunity, then you could develop yourself educationally, whatever way you want to put it. We all learnt the Irish Language, people who were good at history and had a great sense of history when they did lectures out the door there was a fascination about it. I think as a political activist you always knew that prison was a place where you had the time and space to develop whatever you felt politically and education was like a natural add on to that.

So, when did you start education then, in the prison after the protest?

In—

Formal education?

In 1982 we ended the protest about November 1982, the Blanket [Protest] would have ended in '81. We had our clothes but we were on a no work protest for about a year, and then we all went out and entered into what was known as the formal education system. And I think in 1983 there were the applications for The Open University so I was one of the people applied and was successful for that. So I started into The Open University about 1984.