

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: **Robert Kerr**

Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**

Date of interview: **16/04/2013**

Important

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Clip title: It was gold dust!

Duration: 00:01:41

Clip start point in full interview: 00:12:34

Clip end point in full interview: 00:14:14

Interview identifier: 032_S_01

Description:

Robert Kerr describes his reasons for studying the Social Sciences Foundation Course, D102, in the Republican Wings of the H Blocks (The Maze and Long Kesh Prison) in the 1980s, his enjoyment of the content, and memories of writing his first assignment.

Transcript:

So can you tell me, why did you choose D102? It was the Level One course in Social Sciences, why did you choose it?

Why? Well again, we got the prospectus in and it was very varied. But given my background and my interests were very much of a left wing nature, D102 was touching on so many important issues, in the Social, the Economics, even things like Psychology. Do you know, there was a wee taste of everything, and we hadn't really formalised or had the chance to explore all these regions and it was, gold dust, just went for us straight away and I have to say it was the best thing I did, in terms of choosing the courses. It was excellent, you know.

Do you remember anything about it?

The first thing I remember about, funny enough, I think one of the essays- the very first essay you marked- it was a terrible mark I got in it. Can't remember what it was, right, but I just about scraped and no more and I couldn't understand why I did so badly because I read the thing a million and one times. I put all the points down but I hadn't got the argument balanced. I had put it too much in favour of Marxism as opposed to the other thing. It was those wee skills and things like that there which I thought proved valuable later, and—

So you learned to put forward the Liberal position even though you didn't like it? [laughs]

Yes. I suppose that is it in a nutshell, yes.