

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: **Jim Campbell**

Interviewed by: **Pat Jess**

Date of interview: **26/11/2012**

Important

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Jim Campbell Clip

Clip title: It is a very abnormal, strange place

Duration: 00:01:24

Clip start point in full interview: 00:07:34

Clip end point in full interview: 00:08:57

Interview identifier: 065_T

Description:

Jim Campbell, Open University Associate Lecturer, describes his feelings when going into the H Blocks of the Maze and Long Kesh Prison and Maghaberry Prison in the 1980s.

Transcript:

Do you remember how you felt, you have said that you had to consider whether you would do this work, do you remember when you actually went in, how you felt about that, was it intimidating, was it just another place?

Well it certainly wasn't another place, although I think because we are living in Northern Ireland, we often accept the abnormal to be normal and that was another experience, you know. We have seen lots of things growing up in Northern Ireland we sort of knew what was going on behind the walls in the prisons, there was lots of documentary stuff going on, so it wasn't unfamiliar when I first went there. But of course there is just underlying tension all along, whether it be with the guards themselves, the prison officers, you know getting frisked and having concerns about your own security going through and arriving and working with the people inside the prison, the prisoners. And my concern was I think whether I might say something that would be odd or unusual or too political that would upset the relationship and create risk outside of the prison for me. I mean it is a very abnormal, strange place, it wasn't really a normal prison in any respect