

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: **Rita Browne**

Interviewed by: **Pat Jess**

Date of interview: **06/03/2013**

Important

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Clip title: Organizing Open University tuition in the prisons

Duration: 00:01:53

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Clip end point in full interview: 00:11:04

Interview identifier: 078_T_01

Description:

Rita Browne, Open University staff member describes organizing security clearance and tutor timetables for prison tuition and reflects on her own attitude and that of Open University office staff to such work.

Transcript:

The way it would have worked, first of all we needed security clearance, so we did that. I did that for the North and for the South [of Ireland] and there were different arrangements for both sides of the border. Once that came through, I would liaise with the tutors to give a timetable. Now some of them gave it ad hoc and some of them gave it a whole list at a time and then I would liaise with Education Officers in the different prisons.

And was it day time access, or evening access or—?

Yes as far as I can remember it was day time. It is a while ago now, but I am sure it was morning or afternoon. It wasn't evenings, I don't think ever.

Working on the Prison Scheme as you were and working in the OU office as you did, can you remember was there any variation shall we say in attitude towards the OU's involvement in providing courses for students in prison at that time?

I think I probably eventually was aware that there might have been something, but having come from Holland, you know, it wasn't in front of my mind that there could ever be anybody who would have any objections or different views. It didn't come up in my mind but I was aware at some point that there were some people for one reason or another were against it and others were for it.

But once it went out the door so to speak the scheme ran as it was needed?

Yes, it ran well actually. It got bigger and bigger and expanded quite rapidly.