

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: **Dominic Henry**

Interviewed by: **Pat Jess**

Date of interview: **06/10/2011**

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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Clip title: Nobody knew what to do with all these people

Duration: 00:01:11

Clip start point in full interview: 00:02:15

Clip end point in full interview: 00:03:36

Interview identifier: 089_O_01

Description: Dominic Henry, Education Officer in the Compounds (The Maze and Long Kesh Prison) describes the expansion of numbers imprisoned in the 1970s, those imprisoned seeing themselves as political prisoners and the need for them to have something to do.

Transcript:

Well initially, I started off as a teacher of Basic Education, Maths and English, and then that progressed actually to O level Maths and O level English. And at that time, the prisons were expanding, they were bursting at the seams. The prison service had expanded from just under 500 in the '60s to over 3500 in the '70s, so there were all these temporary prisons set up and as a result nobody knew what to do with all these people, because there was people on remand, there was people with political aspirations who were lifted as part of some campaign, there were people who were convicted, so there was real turmoil. And as well as that the people who were convicted on political crimes, they reckoned that they were prisoners of war, so they refused to conform to normal prison rules and regulations and because they were doing exceptionally long sentences, the management of the prisons were at their wits end to try and find out what these people could do which was structured over a long period of time.