

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: **Geoff Moore**

Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**

Date of interview: **18/06/2012**

Important

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Clip title: And that is how they taught me about non-Euclidean geometry

Duration: 00:02:28

Clip start point in full interview: 00:12:31

Clip end point in full interview: 00:16:15

Interview identifier: 091_O_01

Description: Geoff Moore, Prison Education teacher in the H Blocks in the 1980s, recalls supervising two students who were watching an Open University television programme on non-Euclidean geometry. He describes how the students took time out to explain it to him in an understandable way which made it perfectly clear, a lesson he says will never forget.

Transcript:

From my point of view, I loved it. I loved doing The Open University work with the guys. Now, I wasn't the tutor obviously, I mean I was a teacher but my job in those days with The Open University guys was what we called the road show. Now, the road show, talking about in the early '80s, in the mid '80s and so on there was no such thing as apps or iphones or computers or whatever—

Or even telephones—

Or even telephones. There just was nothing like that, but there were video machines and all of The Open University programmes were supported by video programmes of the university lecturers talking about the courses that the guys were doing. But of course, I had a slight interest in Maths myself, so I used to sit and watch the programmes with them and I was taking notes as well. But I wasn't anywhere near the intelligence level of the two guys. But one recollection that I have, very vivid- it was a programme about non-Euclidean geometry and I watched this programme with them, and the two guys were laughing at me, and they were saying, "You can't understand this at all" And I said "No, I can't. I can't understand it at all" And they said "This programme is all about the rules, you know, the Euclidean rules of geometry being completely turned upside down". In other words, this is before by the way there was a big bang theory or anything like that. And I remember these guys trying to tell me that the universe was infinite and that straight lines, parallel lines, would cross that infinity and would eventually come back round and twist round on themselves. And I remember me saying to them "How can that happen? How can that be? That is impossible, that's impossible." And I remember very vividly the two guys took a piece of paper and they twisted the paper and put the two ends of the paper together and they said, "Now, no matter where you start in this paper you can always keep going round and round and round and round and round and round and round forever, never ending". And that is how they taught me about what non-Euclidean geometry was, and I never 'til my dying day, I will never forget that lesson that the two guys taught me.