

## 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: **Prison Governor A**

Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**

Date of interview: **23/10/2012**

#### **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.

In some cases, interviewees may have made changes to the transcript.

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## Prison Governor A Clip

**Clip title:** Studying the OU during sleepless nights

**Duration:** 00:01:48

**Clip start point in full interview:** 00:09:50

**Clip end point in full interview:** 00:13:06

**Interview identifier:** 098\_O\_01

### **Description:**

Prison Governor A describes the pressures of working in The Maze (the H Blocks the Maze and Long Kesh Prison) and how he and other Governors started to study with The Open University during sleepless nights as a coping mechanism.

### **Transcript:**

The environment in which we worked for staff was very oppressive, for a Governor grade was very oppressive. What I tended to find was that after about nine months in the job of working in Maze that I would go to bed at eleven o'clock at night very, very tired. I would wake up at eleven o'clock, or one o'clock in the morning and my head was buzzing. I couldn't get to sleep again and so you would try and get to sleep for half an hour and you would get up and watch TV, or read books or watch a film and by about five o'clock in the morning you would be tired and you would go to bed and you would fall asleep and I would wake up normal time half past six ready to get up to go to work. So there was this period of time, it was a bit of a waste, and I had a cousin who was doing the OU and I was talking to him and he says "you want to have a look at this". So, I signed up and started the OU and the nice thing was, I happened to mention to a couple of colleagues in Maze who were Governors and they were doing the same thing and they had the same problems. They were getting out of bed at one o'clock or eleven o'clock, getting up at one and they couldn't sleep for four hours and then they thought, well some were learning languages, some were doing different courses, they were doing OU they were doing something to try and settle their mind at night. And in those days most of the OU television programmes tended to be on at night or early morning anyway, so it sort of suited. And it was very difficult to study and also deal with the demands of the job because you would be working all day and at night I had to sit and read books and I had to go to tutorials and it was really a lot of pressure and a lot of difficulty but it was rewarding. So that is how I got involved with OU.