

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: **Sean Wynne**

Interviewed by: **Pat Jess**

Date of interview: **12/03/2013**

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.

Personal/sensitive information regarding individuals who may be living has been removed from transcripts where necessary.

Copyright and Permissions

Rights owned or controlled by The Open University.

All use of this transcript in part or in full requires prior permission from The Open University Archive.

Please contact university-archive@open.ac.uk to discuss possible use of the content.

Clip title: It was totally unheard of in those days

Duration: 00:01:25

Clip start point in full interview: 00:19:18

Clip end point in full interview: 00:20:41

Interview identifier: 100_O_01

Description: Sean Wynne, Head Teacher in Portlaoise Prison 1978-2000, describes negotiations with the Governor in the late 1980s to enable an Open University student to have a computer in his cell, which was necessary for his study of a third level Technology course.

Transcript:

And I think one of the problems which I was negotiating with the Governor [Portlaoise Prison] over was we had a student who was doing an advanced [Open University] course in Computing and had to have access to his computer really every day for long hours and so on. And again we managed to get access to his computer, and we would get a computer into his cell, which was totally unheard of in those days. So he was allowed, but you see there was an agreement with the Governor and the political groups-particularly one particular group- that if they gave an undertaking, that they would abide by the conditions under which they got something, they would abide by them. They would do that. So given that was the track record this group had with the Governor, he was prepared given that I supported it; and the National Co-ordinator [Kevin Warner] and Diana Purcell would have supported the need for this computer, he was allowed a computer in his cell. Now what had happened actually after that is that others came along who also were doing Computing courses and they got their computer, and eventually we were able to make cases where we could afford to give, the school would give the access to a computer, we would have a computer given out to a landing [section of the Prison] and they could share it around the landing at night and anybody who was a serious student in the education programme as a result of what happened with The Open University, was allowed a computer in their cell.