

## 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: **Gerard Murray**

Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**

Date of interview: **29/10/2012**

#### **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.

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](mailto:university-archive@open.ac.uk) to discuss possible use of the content.

**Clip title:** Obstacles to Study in the H Blocks 1981

**Duration:** 00:02:09

**Clip start point in full interview:** 00:31:34

**Clip end point in full interview:** 00:33:40

**Interview identifier:** 103\_S\_01

**Description:**

Gerard Murray describes the difficulties of studying in the H Blocks in 1981 and the impact on his Open University studies of having to share a cell and then being moved without warning to Magilligan Prison.

**Transcript:**

What happened was, I got into the foundation course [Open University first year course] and I was doing, well I thought I was doing well. You don't get the whole thing until later, and I thought I was going great as I say. What happened then was towards the end of it, I got moved into a cell with four people in it. Disrupted. It wasn't their fault, because everybody does their time in their own specific way and you only had night time to do it, you see, because you were working during the day. So if you missed a night, it was hard to get back in it 'til the next night; and then you put it off until the next night, and then you must do this and you maybe have a wee class the next night, or you had a visit that day and maybe the visit was a bad visit where you are sitting thinking about it. So it just then didn't start to gel and I started losing interest in it. But I would have persevered, I think, if I had been on my own. And that is not pointing the finger and saying, "It is everybody else's fault, it wasn't mine" I am just saying it didn't help, it didn't help. So then, through all this hullabaloo and upheaval the Screws came one day and says, "Right, you are all going to Magilligan" And up we goes that night about three o'clock in the morning, two o'clock in the morning and put us all into these big meat wagons and handcuffed us and drove us up to Magilligan and that was the end of that thing in the Kesh [The Maze and Long Kesh Prison] because Magilligan was only a new prison. And when we went up, we all went into a brand new block which hadn't been opened before- H3- and there were no facilities there for education, for handicrafts even. There was nothing there at the time. And I lost a lot of stuff that I had gathered up regarding education in the Kesh because when we were moved to Magilligan as I say they came to you that day, "you are moving that night, there's a bag fill it" and the only thing that I could think of at the time was that I was making this big doll's house for my daughter, so that was priority. So once I had that and a couple of wee bits of clothing, everything else was all left behind and it was probably all destroyed,