

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: **Paul Kavanagh**

Interviewed by: **Philip O'Sullivan**

Date of interview: **21/02/2018**

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: The TV programmes were a massive, massive help

Duration: 00:02:00

Clip start point in full interview: 00:32:12

Clip end point in full interview: 00:34:06

Interview identifier: 106_S_01

Description:

Paul Kavanagh remembers his time studying with The Open University when he was in an English prison and the study benefits and his real enjoyment of watching Open University TV programmes, even those for courses he wasn't studying, and then discussing all these with other students.

Transcript:

You know what I used to love even before I started? The TV programmes. I actually thought some of them were just brilliant.

The videos? Were you able to watch those in prison?

Yes. And even if they were on late, you could have got them recorded and then went in and watched. But they were sort of, and saw the characters in them, in a sense was what kept you going. I mean, I know one of the people I used to- long dead, probably- he'd have been from the Caribbean—

Was it Stuart Hall?

Stuart Hall.

Not long, only a couple of years actually.

And then even people like Benjamin Zephaniah, the poet- he was part of one of the courses. So you've a lot of interesting characters and you're seeing a lot of sort of different lifestyles and different approaches, so I always thought that the TV programmes were a massive, massive help.

Bringing things to life? Yes, that's interesting—

A massive, massive aid. Even for someone who wasn't doing the Open University, just to watch some of the stuff, and just to get a view of the world would be really, really interesting.

Yes, but it's good in a way. Sometimes there have been students who for whatever reason, they didn't give them access to a TV, or a video recorder or whatever it was in the day, but you didn't have any problems with that?

No. In that actually, they were great.

Ok, and that would have been in England as well as in Maghaberry?

Yes, and I'd have watched programmes that even had nothing to do with my course.

Other OU programmes?

Yes, just out of sheer interest.

What, like a Science course or something?

Yes. And somebody'd say to you, "Did you see that one?" Because someone else is watching it maybe for their course, and you'd go and watch it with them.

Right. And would you swap notes? I don't mean, like, physical notes but would you discuss it after?

No, no, we'd just talk about it and you'd be saying to them, "Well, you're doing that course- what does that mean? Or where is that going? Or what is that about?", and you'd be asking somebody because you didn't understand it all.