

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: **Noel Quigley**
Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**
Date of interview: **18/10/2011**

Important

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Noel Quigley Clip

Clip title: I was on the very first course

Duration: 00:02:13

Clip start point in full interview: 00:15:01

Clip end point in full interview: 00:19:04

Interview identifier: 026_S_01

Description:

Noel Quigley, Education Officer for Provisional IRA prisoners in 1973 describes a meeting with the Prison Governor and someone from The Open University which led to the start of Open University studies in Long Kesh (Compounds of the Maze and Long Kesh prison) in 1974, memories of the Social Science course D100, jokingly recalling how studying Thomas Paine was indeed a pain and the impact of the fire in Long Kesh on Open University exams and study.

Transcript:

We had a meeting with the Governor at the time to get the facility for The Open University, and then someone from The Open University came down and said, "Well you are going to need a certain amount of people, you know, in order for them to be able to send someone down to it". We said, "No problem with that". So the best course we could get to get the most people involved in was the Social Sciences. We opted for that then, just to get the ball rolling, so that the thing could develop. Once we got the education started, we knew it would develop among the rest of the people inside. So we got that going and I was on that first course, the very first course for sentenced prisoners inside the prison in Northern Ireland for Open University then.

Oh, yes, I remember a fair bit about it. I especially remember the works of Paine, and it was pain [laughs]. So, you took it seriously, you went through the stuff and you did your homework. And you went in and you had to present your stuff at each lecture, so if you weren't up to scratch it was, so you had to do that there. But unfortunately, before we could finish and do the first year exams at it, the camp was set on fire. So that was about a month, two months short of when we should have been doing our exams. So we didn't get as far as the exam then, and The Open University didn't start back again for a few years because we were living in different conditions and everything else then.