

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: **Barbara Hart**
Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**
Date of interview: **12/11/2013**

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.

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Barbara Hart Clip

Clip title: We have got to get The Open University in here.

Duration: 00:01:59

Clip start point in full interview: 00:00:30

Clip end point in full interview: 00:02:07

Interview identifier: 086_T_01

Description: Barbara Hart, biographer of Elizabeth Kennedy, describes Elizabeth's work in Long Kesh Internment Camp and her invitation to The Open University to teach there in 1972.

Transcript:

I got interested in Elizabeth Kennedy who I came across in stories and documents about Long Kesh [Internment Camp] because she was the Senior Welfare Officer there, starting in the days of Internment, so from the very earliest days of Long Kesh. She was a seconded Probation Officer who was thrown, I guess, along with everyone else, into the new Internment Camp at Long Kesh and she was leading the team of officers there to try to assist the new internees, and then later the sentenced prisoners, to make a go of that place and its awful conditions and sort of uncharted territory, if you will. And so it was her responsibility to somehow look after the welfare of the men who were there, and one of the first things that it's clear that she was aware of was their need to have something productive and constructive to do. She was a life long learner herself and very, very convinced that education could make a serious difference in people's lives. And so it wasn't long after she found herself there and saw the conditions and understood how dire the straits were for the people who were there that she contacted The Open University and said, 'We have got to get you in here. We need to get resources, books, and courses to give the men here something to do'.