

## 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: **David Smyth**

Interviewed by: **Pat Jess**

Date of interview: **05/12/2011**

#### **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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**Clip title:** Part of living is making use of all the time

**Duration:** 00:01:34

**Clip start point in full interview:** 00:12:09

**Clip end point in full interview:** 00:13:42

**Interview identifier:** 005\_S\_01

**Description:** David Smyth describes how Open University study and physical exercise became his way of life in the Loyalist Compounds (the Maze and Long Kesh Prison) in the 1980s and how he organized his entire daily routine around his various studies.

**Transcript:**

For any prisoner or long-term prisoner part of living is making use of all the time. We all have twenty four hours a day, but we all can put into it what we want to put into it. I had a lot of time on my hands, and it was spent between doing physical exercise and keeping a healthy body; but there was this other thing about education. Not only when I would be doing my Open University, but I would be studying other O levels [Ordinary level exams] and A levels [Advanced level exams]. I also got a football coaching certificate and fitness instructor certificate. I started refereeing, so I kept myself busy because one of the philosophies was the more you do, the quicker it goes. If you lie on your bed and feel sorry for yourself, it is not going to be a very nice life.

*So being busy then, being a student, became a way of life?*

It became my way of life. I would certainly get up in the morning and divide the day into two. There was a particular study hut set aside for anybody doing any of the qualifications and that I would go out to mid-morning and I would do, some years I did two courses, do one course in the morning and then have a slot in the afternoon, go out and do something totally different. And then obviously, as exam times came up, you would have to look to your revision, so I had quite a regime of mental and physical training.