

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: **William Mitchell**
Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**
Date of interview: **07/03/2017**

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: Studying 'Health Choices'

Duration: 00:01:51

Clip start point in full interview: 00:41:07

Clip end point in full interview: 00:43:02

Interview identifier: 046_S_01

Description:

William Mitchell describes his passion for studying physical and mental health, running over 100 miles a week while in the UVF Compound 21 (the Maze and Long Kesh Prison), studying The Open University short Community Education course 'Health Choices' in the early 1980s and how he still has his original certificate from The Open University, after over 30 years.

Transcript:

I was a serious runner in prison, so there was a period of time, and I kept records daily of all my activities, but I averaged a hundred and five miles a week for almost nine years round the Compounds [Compound 21 in the Maze and Long Kesh Prison]. As did others, like Billy Hutchinson and others. I was infatuated with everything associated with physical and mental health, so you know I took a coaching badge in athletics with the then Northern Ireland coach, who was brought in to, and so on and so forth. And this is what led me into Open University, because one of the correspondence courses - and you will see it in the documentation there - I had applied to the Institute in London to study Physiotherapy on a correspondence course, so these were personal interests. And in some way, I had this notion that this could lead to a particular employment on the outside, because I wanted to get involved in sport, particularly coaching young people, and I thought 'Well okay, I will take some of these coaches badges' and then with that then came, 'Well, I need a greater understanding of health, nutrition and all those associated things' and that is where the short course, Open University 'Health Choices' provided that for me.

And you have got your certificates?

As you can see it is in pristine order, it is as good as the day it was sent to me in 1984.

We noticed that it had, it actually has, c/o Education Officer, HMP Maze Compound on it—

Yes, there on the front you can see C21, was written probably by a Prison Officer on that very day that it came up, the same envelope.