

**This story was filmed and recorded during early February 2006 for ‘Hear all about it!’**

**This campaign is a wonderful selection of inspiring adult learning stories told by the learners themselves. The highlights from Harry’s interview which can be watched and read; this is the transcript of the whole interview. The on-line learning champions would be delighted if His stories were used to promote learning in your organisation, college or charity. You can link you webpage to the West Midlands Learning Directory – Hear all about it! page**

**[www.wmld.org/pages/hear\\_all\\_about\\_it/](http://www.wmld.org/pages/hear_all_about_it/).**



Harry’s story –

“At the moment I’m doing an IT access course at Solihull College. Before I went to Solihull College I went along to boarding school and got 3 A Levels there, but basically I didn’t feel that I’d achieved my full potential so I thought I would do an access course at Solihull College then apply for University.

At the moment I’m still completing the course but then I plan to a degree in Human Resource management. At Aston, Portsmouth, or Plymouth. I haven’t quite decided yet.

On the access course I’m covering everything to do with business and IT really. Accounting, finance, marketing, management, information technology, presentations, spreadsheets. It’s really good, actually. I’m really enjoying it.

I think the motivation for getting back in to training was to challenge myself. I’ve taken a few years off and gone travelling round the world and felt like I’ve really grown up. So, I’m 21 now, I’ve got the 3 A-Levels, but I could’ve done better so I want another crack at it. So the government’s given me another chance, given me 200 quid and given me a chance to do a whole year again to achieve the qualifications I need to get me in to university. So that was the main motivation to challenge myself and do a bit better.

I don’t think anyone really wants to come home after going round the world and having a really good time, but I think reality hit in a bit and I thought do I want to work in Australia as a diving instructor forever or do I come back and try and do some work and find some direction. It’s a difficult choice but I think sometimes you just have to return to normal life and find your direction so I think that’s what I did. So I had a few worries like my working visa running out and together with money sort of running out I thought maybe its time to go home and try and find a real job.

The idea of doing Human Resources as a degree stemmed from my love of working with people. I love the interaction with people. Dealing with their problems, being shouted at. It just gives me a buzz. So I thought go away and do a degree in HR management, its something that specifically targets within business, so that way I can get a sort of birds-eye view of business as well as going in to managing people. And learning about Employment Law and things like that. So ideally at the end of the day, I’d like a career in people management, or Human Resources, Personnel management. Because I think I’d really enjoy it.

It was a difficult choice, coming back from overseas, because you know you're leaving one world behind and going back to another. But then at the end of the day you think it's much easier to go back to the world I'm going back to, you know the diving instructor, but then you've got to think that in 30 or 40 years time when I'm still there in the tropical waters and I've got 2 dependants I'll think 'hang on, how am I going to do this and a normal job? I'm not qualified, I need a degree'. So that's my sort of main thought behind it.

Coming back to Solihull College has really opened up my mind further as well, because there are so many different kinds of people. There's a really nice deaf guy on our course, you get lots of Internationals, a real blend of different people and you see that they really want to achieve. And so that motivates you as well. It's been a real eye-opener.

One of the big things I'm sort of realising on the course, is that some of the other students, are only a couple of years older it shouldn't really make a difference, but you see some of these guys they just haven't quite reached the same level, in that they really are going out every night, instead of working on an assignment. And I think well I was like that a couple of years ago and now I'm sort of a little bit more focused and I think I've got an assignment to hand in tomorrow. They're out partying and I'm doing work. Is that normal? But then I thought, well maybe I have grown up a little bit and I am actually doing the work nowadays. So that's the main thing. That's the main kind of social barrier that you come across – the age does slightly affect it a bit. It doesn't seem so at first, it seems like everyone wants to have a good time, but it does seem like there's a bit of separation there. But other than that, we get on really well. Which is really good.

The lectures? I really take my hat off to them, because they are really good. They pass on a lot of motivation, they obviously care about what they're teaching. And of course there are different lecturers for each module that we're doing. Business, marketing and they've all got their different attributes so it's been really good working with them and they've been very supportive. So I've really enjoyed it.

I've found it really useful and very supportive. Because it's highly subsidised by the government, it's also very cheap, which is a big, big bonus. They also take on all sorts of people. There's fewer and fewer barriers to education now, and so if they're deciding on whether or not to go then I would say go for it, because it's done me a lot of good.

This project was managed by [jo.knight@niace.org.uk](mailto:jo.knight@niace.org.uk) - who can be contracted for more information. She works for NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education). Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council funded the project.

