I Can you think about a day recently, could be yesterday if you like and talk me through what happened in that day. And try and tell me all the different people that you came in to contact with in that day.

P Could I take Tuesday ?

I Yeh

P ‘cause Tuesday is the only day of the week when I got a set thing to do.

I Right

P otherwise days blur

I Right

P I don’t normally do very much, but I do make myself do things like going out, if I’ve gone out early one day, I have a lazy morning perhaps (----?) but it sort of works. But Tuesdays I go to the school up on the hill which is now called ‘Harbour’. Names have changed now schools, and I play a piano for the Nursery.

I Oh Lovely

P and that started 3 years ago when my youngest grandson finished at nursery and started school. And I happened to say – stop me if I’m waffling - I happened to say to the head teacher “I’m not going to see you again”, so she said

“Why not!” So I said, “well Abby goes to school in September”, “Oh what can you do”, So I said “have you got a piano?” She said “no but I’ll get one by September”

And I’ve been going ever since, and Eddy is in year three, and the old one is in year 5, so I’m in the same building as they are.

I So you go and play and do the kids, is it songs they can sing along to, or do they just mostly …?

P Well they tell me what to play

I Right

P I’ve got books and books, I don't want to take any more, but it’s just nursery rhymes.

I Ok

P and the children come they go, they play the songs somebody else comes and we have twinkle twinkle little star, till I can play it without looking at it. It drives me mad sometimes, but that's why I’m there

I 2:10 is that one of their favourites

P I think it’s the one they all know, favourites yes, but they know the words to some better than others and I report back to the head teacher at the end of the day, what they said, what they done, what they sung. But she’s there it’s an open building like this, with lots of rooms they flit in they flit out, but it’s lovely and I feel included, and she says “thank you so much for what you’ve done” and I have to say “thank *you*” because its done as much good I think for me, probably more. Because I went right down when my youngest grandson went to school. I thought I’m redundant, what do I do ???

I So did you used to go with him to the nursery ?

P I used to take them both, once over about five years, that was one. And then the second one came along, I looked after him, he was just in his push chair and then I’d go and pick the little one up, and big one, and he started school so we were split, and unfortunately the nursery we went to at the time was the other side of the river so it's a fair old trek and then the little one started and the older one was at school so both started the children I do pick up so yeh, but because of that I moved here.

I yeh, because of your grandchildren. Right so when did you move to Newhaven

P I moved six years ago, My son said to me pointing to a new block being built said, “this would suit you” I thought I don’t want to live in Newhaven, why would I live in Newhaven? I actually think I said it, and then after they were built he said again, and I lived at Shoreham at the time, because you know, a bit of a drive late at night, cause my family are lovely, we’re all close and just picking up the children take them home and they would say, “Oh stay for dinner”, and I’d get home at 10 o’clock sometimes

I So you thought it made sense to just move to Newhaven

P yeh, but I didn’t like Newhaven, I didn’t feel I belonged to it at all, it was only the children, and as a result of that all my acquaintances / friends like those two there, are my daughter’s friends, not mine, well their parents are my grandchildren’s age

I So did you meet them through the nursery, is that kind of, or through school?

P Um, yes because they’ve moved their children at similar ages, they were at Nursery and then were at School, meet them at school, so and I do help with fundraising for the School, and some of them are actually on the same committee.

And so you know, I don’t think of them as so and so’s mum, I know them by name. and but that’s, you can trace that back to how I know them. I don’t know too many dads, because they don’t come you know, to many events. But yeh, the head teacher she acknowledges me, head teacher of the school now, because it's a combined, she’s always called me by my Christian name and I thought “they didn’t do that when I was a parent! in Brighton”, now I’m a grandparent I’m always called “Oh hiya Janet, what you doing today” --- again you can tell it fills my life. – but I do other things

I So on a Tuesday you go to the Nursery and you are there all day?

P No because it's a morning only Nursery – they do put on other groups for the children that are there all day but the Nursery finishes at twelve. And I go soon after, but I’m fortunate because the um head teacher includes me in everything so I may go to groups and different things, I always go with her and she brings me in to anything she’s telling the children. I may meet them in Sainsbury’s, the children, and they call out “Janet” I wonder where they know me from I think ….. but you know it’s nice.

I A great way to get to know families in Newhaven – through their kids

P Because my daughter’s quite a social person, they come to the home and last week end it was Alfie’s birthday so I met all the mums bringing the children in, noisy boys party but never mind.

I it’s fantastic!

P that's the Newhaven part of me, I have got another daughter she lives in Shoreham, but she’s a career person. Actually in Thailand at the moment, but she worked in the States for two years so that thankfully is her back, so she’s back

I and you get to see her quite often as well

P Oh yeh, yeh, yeh, we’re very, very close – but my life really now is sort of through the boys again, I have them during the school holidays, I’m on the end of a phone if they are sick, so I can drop everything because I don't have a lot of things to drop, but its working out ok.

I and have you met other people - *you know*, outside of that group you meet to the Nursery or have met through the kids, do you know other people now, in Newhaven?

P I know a few, I belong to the U3A, and that is a joint one here at Peacehaven, so but we only meet once a month, which I don’t think is enough but… and there are groups but the favourite groups are always full up so I haven’t joined any groups, I’ve been doing that for about two years, It's a very lively group they go on outings and they have lunches, and I haven’t done much of that but I probably will, but - there’s that and then I go to church in Brighton still. I play the organ see, so not every week, ha ha thankfully. I enjoy that but I don’t go to Brighton because costs.

I Which Church is it?

P Stamford avenue Methodists

I Oh I know

P Do you?

I Yeh, Yeh

P I thought you were going to say you know somebody that went there, because it’s a quite a popular church

I I did a while ago – yeh she’s not around anymore – Sandra Whin

P Oh wee winnie - Oh bless her

I did you know Sandra?

P Yes I do – it’s always had a small hart, churches. But I’ve started going to a church in Seaford, on weeks that I don't play, which means I’ve always got somewhere nearer, somewhere to walk into, I don’t have any commitments it’s quite nice really.

I That’s nice, a different group of people

P Yes yes, and very friendly so, I might do that a bit more often next obviously 3 months as opposed to 10 and with petrol of course it is, I’ve been doing it for years because I moved away from Brighton, 15 years ago I moved to Ringmer, because I always wanted to live in Lewes I couldn’t afford Lewes so I went to Ringmer, that was a bit snooty, that was a mistake. Then I moved to Shoreham then I came here. I think I must have had itchy feet or something because I lived in the same house for Donkeys years before hand in Brighton – funny intit?

I This might have something to do with why you moved around, I’ve talked about community, and that word gets used a lot these days doesn’t it. What does community mean to you?

P Well at first I felt it was a taboo word because I didn’t feel I belonged to anything here. That was probably true, up until two or three years ago. Although I went to the school, I was part of that, but that didn’t mean much because I wasn’t a parent, I was a grandparent and you felt a bit removed from what is going on … But community, I sort of , I think I discounted lots of things, I don’t think I’m you know eternal youth. But I didn’t want to belong to things where people all came out of groups with walking sticks and taxis. I can’t imagine what goes on but that just put me off age concern, all the rest of it. I thought I would go and help, but that didn’t seem appropriate or needed.

I When you think of community, what is involved in it, what does it mean? When you feel part of a community what does that indicate to you?

P I think the only community I’ve felt is where I’ve lived, because where … biggish block, sprawling down the bottom of Fort road. Most of the people I knew lived there, yeh most of the people I knew are all from there. So we were our own community, so I haven’t done very much. I didn’t do much with my family at the time because they were all so busy bringing up little boys, and I was on the outside of it, and it seems that everybody had their place and I didn’t seem to fit in.

I So you didn’t feel part of it ….

P no but that was me, that was my fault probably. It wasn’t the community’s fault. I tried to find out what went on. Here I always feel that I’m in the middle of Seaford, it’s an obvious community. Parts of Newhaven don't to me gel coz it’s spread eagle and all you hear is negative comments” the town’s this, the town’s not that”, you know. And I thought the towns dying on its feet. It sounded like it. I haven’t come here until fairly recently, so no I couldn’t say I felt part of it because, I didn’t really know what went on. I blame myself though.

I If you went back in time maybe, can you think of a moment or a time when you felt a sense of community, where you have felt a part of a community, and can you describe that time?

P Well it has to be the first sixty years of my life, when I was working I lived in Brighton, and the church was very important and the community was quite strong, but apart from the church I seemed to know loads of people, I never went out without meeting someone I knew. If I only went into Brighton as a town, into the town. I don’t know if I was even that conscious, unless you need to be, I mean I was going to work. I worked in central Brighton for quite a lot of years, but I also worked in the country, I was in a bank and I got sent to various places, I ended at Hassocks outside Brighton, so I didn’t have perhaps the time or the inclination, apart from what I just said that I knew a lot of people. You know, they were I suppose community, but then church was strongest, not because of I felt I should, but that was how it had always been, but time is different when you’re working and time is different now, so what you place as important I suppose changes.

I and you just seemed to know lots of people then

P yeh I do, I did, somebody who I’ve known for years and years said to me, because we both work at social functions, nothing to do with the church, it was wedding or birthday, she said “I didn’t know you knew them”, she said “I bet you are one of those people that knows a lot of people” So when I thought about it I have to admit “yeh, I suppose I did”. I don’t know why really, but it’s through my job but no I just happened to..

I and on your job when working for the bank did you meet lots of people?

P Oh yeh, yeh, yeh, I stopped seeing people that I used to know, I still keep in touch I worked with, but I’ve been retired for sixteen years. It’s not the same for everybody obviously, but I don’t know if that helps you with your research.

I So where you live now, do you have those same everyday conversations that you had when you were in Brighton, do you speak to people a lot in your ..

P I do, I see people. I think I’m the opposite, I’ve been out with my daughter occasionally and she said “did you know them?” “no”, “why you talking to them then?”. I think I’m fast approaching that sort of phase in my life, you do speak to people.

I So you are just generally a very gregarious and …

P I think so, before I knew what it meant!, I think I was. And I’ve heard people say, people that I used to serve in the bank, who just come in to talk to you, and they say, I bet you are the only person they’ve spoken to today, and I think, “I’m becoming that person”, you know I don’t mean foolishly I wouldn’t talk to just anybody.

I Do you have less people to talk to

P Yeh, Yeh. When my little grandson first went to school I thought “I’m going to become depressed if I’m not careful”, so I just go out I mean I’ve got a car so I take myself off somewhere. Although bus passes are very useful I’ve discovered, that’s preferable…… I try not to, I don’t want to get into a rut. I like to go to Eastbourne, I like to go to Brighton, I like to go to Seaford, I like to go to St Leonards, but not on a road tour or any set day of the week, not for any specific reason, just ….

I How do you think your experience of community, or knowing people, how has that changed since you’ve retired?

P Oh heck! In some cases, here particularly at first community does not exist, I didn’t know what went on. I mean I was here for a job, to look after my grandchildren, and that's what I did. The community must of gone on round me, but I wasn’t in a position to take part, but that was not a problem, but after they were both at school, I found I had to pick up some other …..

I Do you think it’s important to have a role in order to meet people?

P For me, yes, yes, I think so. Otherwise you’re just somebody who shuffles around the shops, and I don’t want to be that person, Oh I mean its ok, I don’t have a problem, I have loads of things I could do. I just try and do different things each day.

I And it sounds like you’re quite chatty anyway, that you get to meet people

P Yes I think so

I Thinking about the kind of relationships that are important in your life at the moment, who would you say are the most important people in your life, at this time?

P Oh my two daughters without doubt, because I was divorced over twenty years ago, and it was just us three against the world. Not in a bad way, you know it’s been fantastic. They stayed at home longer I think because they thought they should. Although we didn’t, you know three women, more sometimes, but now I think we are quite different, nothing said but things that get done. They think they are taking care of me, even when I think I’m taking care of myself. But it’s not intrusive at all, it’s positive.

I What makes those relationships so important?

P Oh what we’ve been through together, I’m sure, I’m sure. Without going into boring details ….

I Do you mean that hard times, getting through that time when it was just the three of you, that was tough going.

P Well it was difficult because, there was the finances first of all. My dad was alive then and he was very supportive and generous and kind, the four of us without making judgements about anything. I couldn’t of wished for anything different then. I think a lot of things were influenced by his input, so really this might sound really odd, but I said this to my younger daughter last week, one of my contemporaries has just lost her husband. She’s the forth one in our group of friends that has lost their husbands in the last five years, and I said to my daughter, this will probably come out strangely, I said I feel so lucky. So she said, she knew what I meant incidentally, she said yeh because you’ve been though that, you’ve done that, because I never married again. She said you’ve done that and you were young enough at the time to start a different life. Whereas I look at my friends, they’re shattered, you know and it’s it can’t be a good time but it’s come you know just when they were enjoying life and so forth and it just happened. I was in my forty’s, I have to remind myself when it happened to me, I was in my forty’s. Now here we are all of those people I’ve mentioned, were all in their seventy’s.

I So you mean it’s that same sense of loss, that dealing with life on your own.

P Yes definitely, yes it was hard, and it’s going to be really hard for these friend of mine, they are all coping in different ways. In some cases unexpected, I mean it’s obviously logical we’re all going to end up liars?? in some way in this period but unexpectedly when it happened. It’s funny though because people don’t actually realise because you got divorced that you do feel the same as a bereaved person. It’s too long ago to remind people.

I Do you think that that's ….., did that force you to engage with life differently. Is that what you are saying that there’s a ….

P What at the time? Oh yes, because I became a bread winner. That wasn’t anything I’d anticipated. I had a nice little part time job at the bank but and I was very fortunate. Our manager was somebody who I’d worked with years before, and it wouldn’t happen now I’m sure, but I just went and see him, said my circumstances had changed and told him and he sympathised, and said all the right things, he said “so you’ll be working full time from now on” and I thought Oh will I ? So he said “Monday will work bet for you?” So I did I went from Friday part time for years then and worked full time the following Monday until the time I retired. But that of course took care of my pension, so you know I have to be grateful and that, because I was in that sort of job. I don’t look back on it too often.

I How do you think the kinds of relationships you’ve have in your life, how do you think they’ve changed throughout your life time?

P What, as a result of family changes or …?

I It’s different for everyone I guess, when you think about when you were younger, say like in your twenty’s or thirty’s, think about what your relationships were about then, how do you think they have changed to how they are now?

P Well I think you have a role as a wife and a mother and that is what is worked out for you, by what you do I didn’t tend to have much social life in those days. But it was a big, I was going to say step, but it wasn’t a step it was a kick up the backside really when things changed drastically, overnight. I was a bit bewildered really, my friend said to me afterwards well you coped really well, that was about two years later by then it was jus a distant memory I think the most things I worry about was finding friends and I’m sure that that’s why it hadn’t happened sooner, because I was worried.

I So do you think like for your friends who are recently bereaved that that same change is going on for them, that they’re having to think about their social life again. Is that part of what’s going on? Is that what you are trying to say?

P I think it’s different because even with these four people, their situations are all different from each other. Two of them are related, two sister’s in laws, and they seem to always be together as a result because they’ve, you know, been friends I suppose for years, I suppose they support each other, but they’ve both got families. The one that it’s just happened to in the last couple of weeks a second marriage for both so that’s not to say there’s other strains that have his children and her children, so that sort of complicates things I suppose a bit. But I don’t know, they wouldn’t have to go to work and I’ve always thought and I might be wrong but the finances are the biggest strain, I mean you cope with it but I can’t say.

I So similar but different is it?

P Well yeh but I’ve always thought, I know it’s corny and cheesy but what is it – better to have loved and lost than never to have loved and these people didn’t want their partners to go. Mine was a bit different. I nearly put the flags out, that’s another story [laughs] not really but it’s very different they will face it differently because of their ages. The social side that you said, my ex-husband said to me more or less when he was leaving – divorce is OK it’s not the stigma it used to be, hmm, which is true I don’t think anyone ever judged me about that but you aren’t invited to things because you are on your own, you might be a threat, somebody who’s there I spose but I knew, it was there at the bag of my mind but I never really dwelled on that. There was just one couple who tried to be friendly but even to this day I think what I do and what the girls do is reported back to him. That’s a story in itself but you know nothing happens coz they’re not in touch so nothing happens that’s bad. We’ve always been mature when we’ve met.

I So these days if you, you know that’s in the past for you, if you wanted to meet new people, go out and socialise, how would you do that ?

P Yes, that’s something I’ve thought about this. Yeh I think that’s where church life would be reassuring because people take you as you are whether you’re with somebody or not with somebody. But on the whole perhaps I don’t do as much coz I used to do a lot because my husband did a lot, things that he was involved in, I went along to but I still some of those people, they don’t treat me any differently, they see me, they see him but separately. No I wouldn’t, I don’t think that there is a particular way that people re-emerge, let’s put it that way. Everyone’s different, every view that you have of anything is different. I don’t think, I mean I didn’t suffer, let’s put it that way. I didn’t do much but when you go to work full time suddenly, socialising wasn’t high on my list of priorities. I don’t know if that answers your question, I think the answer is I don’t know

I Yeh, yeh, I think, well let me tell you what I thought you were getting to, I think you were saying, it was difficult to say how you make new friends but somehow it happens.

P I don’t think I wanted to make new friends particularly, I think I was secure in the friendships I had but mostly I didn’t lose friends, I think that’s the bottom line, I still saw the same people but maybe that’s not normal to do that

I No, no no

P Well perhaps I was fortunate

I That you had good friends

P Yeh and people that are friends, really friends, do stay friends don’t they

I So on to the question of technology and how we keep in contact with the people we love and other people we know. What kinds of technologies do you use to keep in contact with the people that we’ve talked about ?

P What’s classified as technology these days?

I Telephone counts, things like mobile phones, email

P No

I No email

P I’ve got no computer

I Right no computer, what about mobile phone, do you use a mobile phone?

P Yeh, I text

I Oh you’re a texter?

P Yes I like texting, I even use some of the jargon,well I find it really difficult coz I spell correctly all the time and it drives me nuts but I do it.

I What because you end up with a really long text you mean?

P No because I won’t bore you with what words I’m thinking of but I’d much rather text a whole word than use the shortened version. I can’t understand some of the shortened versions that people use. Not to me, my daughter..

I So, who do you text, who’s your main?

P My daughters. The school send me texts of the PTA, but I don’t have to answer that. I’ve only got a limited number of people I text with me. My friends aren’t as technical as I am; I don’t think I am but we phone each other and I write.

I So, you still write letters?

P Oh yes, yes. I feel that’s good.

I And who do you write to? Do you have some people that you regularly write to?

P Yes, I’ve got a few friends that like me, prefer to speak or to write. I’ve got one particular friend who lives in London who I met on holiday about 10 years ago and we still keep in touch and I know and hear her voice for an hour or 59 minutes which I keep a very close eye on because of the cost.

I You don’t have to pay for those ones.

P She’ll say, “I have to go now” and I think, “Yes, I know why.” I speak to relatives, my cousin. I don’t do that much but I do keep in touch with – I’ve got a friend phone this afternoon who used to be my neighbour at Ringmer and that was 6, 12, 15 years ago probably so we used to keep in touch regularly. We take it in turns to phone. Sometimes I write because she’s been poorly. It’s just what I’ve always done.

I And is that part of your routine to write? Do you have days where you kind of think, ‘this is the day I’m going to write some letters’?

P No, I don’t write that often but I keep a journal and I write that every day but the idea of that was that I went through a period when every day was the same so I couldn’t remember what I did last Thursday for instance, now I can. But it’s quite interesting actually.

I And when was that period when every day was the same?

P Oh, I suppose it was when my grandson started going to school and I started going through that. I didn’t dwell on it but it must have been there. It all felt a bit aimless, I said to my daughter, ‘I feel horrible, I’ve been made redundant and I thought I can’t put that on, you know, I can’t lay that at her door it wasn’t her fault so. But that was a deliberate exercise to write down, not because I was forgetful but because there wasn’t anything to report really. So I wrote trivia, but trivia I could do so when I read it, it’s interesting to me. Probably not to anyone else but I’ve been trying to organise myself to write things my daughters have said to me. It’s so morbid! Do you want this and that at your funeral? And I have written a few things down in that respect, not morbidly, but after I did that thought I’m going to write down what I’ve done.

I You mean your life?

P I’ve got a socking great book and a pen and the pages are still empty but I will do it because my Pat did it, my Patrick, so I’ve got to read his but I’ve got to………I thought if I read it and try to carry on from what I know that he put and one day it might be helpful.

I And how about your grand-children? How do they keep in contact with you because presumably they’re all kitted up with mobile phones.

P They are not old enough for mobile phones. They are, one’s 7, one’s 10. They’re into Xbox and iPod and Kindle and all that, but I phone them and the eldest one answers the phone – he’s been told that he must listen to see if it’s a recorded message so when I phone him I have to make sure that some recording……..so I really quickly go, “Hello Darling, it’s Grandma!”. Then my daughter says to me, ‘he’s so funny I always know when it’s you on the phone, he’s got a ‘Grandma’ voice, he goes into ‘Oh hello Grandma, how are you?’. Even though he’s seen me yesterday. You know, she said it’s almost like you’re a stranger but a welcome one. So, we speak on the phone but mostly I see them, so they’re not yet doing anything. The eldest one wants to, but he’s ok, he agrees with everything, he’s easygoing boy. It will happen. Different things have changed in their lives so, at the moment he rings me and he texts my other daughter on his iPod. So, they’re in touch, she’s got one and they keep in touch so I’m not in that circle, but we still have nice phone calls but I see them quite often so we’re not really isolated from each other and the eldest one now is old enough to walk down to me.

I So, are you anticipating that at some point they will start using things like mobile phones and the Internet and computers?

P Oh, they do all that because at school has got a learning platform and they report things on there, on their own laptops and things. I just don’t get involved.

I So, you’re not interested in the whole computer thing?

P The day I retired I thought, that’s it, I’ve done it. I didn’t want to do it at work, but I don’t want to do it at home. I think that’s all it is, it’s just me being awkward.

I So, do you relate computers to work? Is that the…?

P Yeah, I suppose so, and of course, it was specialised. It’s not general like it is but when my daughter was in New York we did SKPYE and that I found quite fascinating. It was the next best thing to seeing her.

I So, you did that on your daughter’s computer?

P Yes, she’d say come at 3, we’re going to SKPYE and we’d all talk to her and spend a reasonable amount of time doing that so, yes, I mean, I’m quite happy to hear about what they do but not particularly to get involved. They have set it up for me to do things but I’m not keen on this Ebay stuff they do. They don’t do it very often, it sounds, but all I wanted to do really was to do my ancestry. But I haven’t done that yet. I might do.

I You mean on Ancestry.com?

P Yes, I’d quite like to do that but they are always so busy when I see them, my daughters, trying to cook meals and get children off to bed and so forth. My son-in-law says he’ll do it but I don’t know when, so, I don’t want to nag them.

I So, you mean it’s just the hassle of having to learn how to use these things?

P Well, I think they think I don’t need to know how to do it, actually, strangely enough. But, they’re probably right, I don’t, in my opinion. My life goes on without it. It’s interesting to hear people talking about what they do but this Facebook thing….

I So, do they use Facebook, then?

P Yes, my daughter does and then when I say, ‘It’s so and so’s birthday, shall I send them a card?’. ‘No, I’m going to send them greetings.’. ‘Ok’.

I What on Facebook?

P Yeah! And I don’t understand if it’s public or just a few people would know so I have to ask every time, who’s going to read it?

I So, do they post things on there for you? Do they?

P No, not usually but I do sometimes get somebody that has sent their love and they’ll tell me. So, that’s fine. You know, that’s the way of life, but it’s when I hear about some of the parents at the school put…… not bad messages but negative things. They moan about the school, they moan about buildings, you know, stuff they can’t alter; it just irritates me as you can tell! I don’t see the point of that, it’s such a time waster. It’s such a time waster! Well, I think so, for some people.

I And why does it seem like a time waster?

P Well, because these women, mostly that are at home. Surely they’ve got housework to do? Surely they’ve got things to do before they pick up their children instead they’re….

I posting things on to Facebook.

P And they’re selling stuff on Ebay. One ……. Somebody got into serious debt because of that, not in my family. Buying things, selling them at a loss. Bankrupt. I can see the dangers, that’s all. Perhaps I’m too cautious.

I Does the Internet seem like a dangerous thing to be involved in?

P I think it’s a lovely thing. If it keeps people together and keeps them talking, then, but you can’t be selective about, only positive stuff can you? I mean, my daughters both use it and keep in touch with people they don’t see which I think is wonderful, you know, and if it makes people feel better about themselves that’s great but I think there are, like everywhere, traps and people overdo it perhaps, but that’s only my view, I’m so out of it, not out of it, but out of touch.

I So, if you had to describe what it is you object to, how would you describe it?

P It’s just not for me, that’s what. I can’t tell other people what they should do and my daughters tell me things and I think, ‘Oh, really? Nice!’. But I don’t pass an opinion, you know, they’re adults they have their lives, they are both sensible, they don’t do anything that they shouldn’t. In fact I’m sure they wouldn’t but don’t think that really is an issue, just me being a bit OTT. I think, I can see with my daughter that’s got 2 children she’s trained them in the way that I would want her to go so.

I You mean the way they deal with these things?

P Yes, the next generation, isn’t it. I mean they don’t know all the things I’ve done and I do try hard to tell some things but it’s out of date, isn’t it? Stuff that I did, but they do actually say to me, especially when they don’t want to go to sleep, they want to prolong story time, ‘Tell us what you used to do, Grandma, when you were little?’ I say, ‘Yes, darling, tomorrow.’

I Why do you say it’s out of date?

P Well, because I lived during the war, …….., that didn’t affect us particularly in Brighton but some of the, I could talk about how hard up we were, how often food was in short supply. You know, I don’t want to be negative. It’s not only that you know what I did at school, my son-in-law asks me to tell them but takes the mickey! Tell them about when you used to write on slates and chalk and all the rest of it, which I don’t…

I That’s because he’s heard them before probably?

P Oh yeah, he’s just taking the mickey, that’s all.

I Well, I don’t know, it’s fascinating to hear about how life has been different in the past but some of those same things that are difficult in life are eternal, aren’t they?

P Yes, yes and I read an article. It was only the Daily Mail, but they said that grand parents have not just a place in their grand children’s lives but the family that were there and maybe not now but you can’t drum it into children, can you? How hard up we were and how cold the house was. It depresses me, so I’m sure it would depress them!

I It was a different world, wasn’t it?

P Yes, sometimes I can’t believe I was in that world because I still feel young, you see, that’s my problem and I’m not.

I It’s like that inner person doesn’t really change, does it?

P No.

I It’s just our bodies get older

P Yes, I can vividly remember lots of things that I could tell my, you know, I’ve told my contemporaries things that I can remember that we used to do when. I did actually go back to my junior school at it’s centenary two or three years ago and my daughter was so emotionally involved in what I was telling her that for a long time afterwards when they had company she used to say, ‘Mum, tell so and so about when you went back to your school.’, because I got emotional telling the story to her and that my Dad turned up at school in his RAF uniform and I just happened to see out the corner of my eye the door open and there was this man came home unexpectedly on leave and he was standing there looking handsome and smart and I put my hand up and said to the teacher, ‘My Daddy’s outside.’ And of course, that just set me off …… and I had to tell a story and her brother-in-law said, ‘You just brought history to life!’ and I thought ‘Oh’ I hadn’t thought of it like that and it was obviously meaningful to me and it was meaningful to them.

I And I think kids see it in movies and you know, history at school maybe but it doesn’t really seem ‘real’ until

RECORDING ENDS