**TRACEInterview-Roy-16Sept13**

**Speaker key**

IV Interviewer

PA1 Male Participant

PA2 Female Participant

00:00:

IV Right, so it’s Monday, the 16th of September, and we’re here, Cara and Roy, to do the community interview. I’ll pop that in the middle there. So we’re interested in understanding people’s social life and the role of different technologies, such as telephones and the internet in supporting the social life. So could we begin with… Could you walk me through yesterday or a typical day as a starting point, and do think about a day recently and walk me through what you did from waking up to going to bed?

PA1 What day do you want?

IV A typical day, and it says here, try and recount the activities and interactions you had with other people, however mundane they may seem now. Try to include people that you met in the street and had any communication with that you have engaged in by letters, telephone, or the internet. Thank you.

00:01:08

PA1 Well, a normal day for us… we’ve just got our oldest son at home. He goes off to work about half seven – he works in Eastbourne – to Hampden Park. He drives there and drives back. Angela gets up first, then she wakes us up… well, he’s already awake, mostly, or if she doesn’t wake him, he’s got an alarm clock. You know, it’s a digital thing. He gets up, they get up, and she always does his breakfast, and he takes his packed lunch and he goes off. I am just in bed still, getting up. I get up. I get dressed and then I make our bed and I go into the kitchen and mutt about and go into the lounge. And we have a quiet time. We’re Christians and we have a quiet time. We have a quiet time with Jesus and praying to reach stuff and all that.

We watch the television before for the news, breakfast channel, Breakfast at BBC. We watch that, some of it, the news, some of it, what’s on. And then we go into the… when we finish that, we go into the kitchen and have breakfast. And we’ve got a Roku box. It’s American thing. It’s about… so, so small. It’s marvellous, a marvellous thing. It works off the wireless, the phone line. We got brand-new programming [unclear] to do it, and you get loads and loads of channels on it. It’s marvellous. It’s a fantastic thing. It only costs £25 in Currys or PC World, but we got it in Currys, and it’s got marvellous channels on it, Christian channels and stuff, and loads of films you can watch for nothing – loads and loads and loads of films. It’s got a lot of stuff on in there. It’s brilliant.

00:03:22

Anyway, then we… this is for breakfast time and that, and a little bit after, this morning, we sat there listening to this testimony. It was absolutely unbelievable, wasn’t it, what happened? Mostly American testimonies, bloke called Andrew Wommack, he’s a Christian American guy. He’s a marvellous, marvellous guy, and some of these testaments are unbelievable. One we listened to this morning was a little girl. She had no heart… she had half a heart and she had one rib missing, and the doctors were telling the parents – so emotional, touching – to prepare for death. Anyway, they prayed and stuff like that, you know, and prayed and believed and all that, and they believed that God wanted her well. Fantastic, it is.

And after a while, she recovered. She had all her heart and the rib grew back. Unbelievable – healing from God. That’s powerful. The doctors said, there’s nothing wrong with your little girl. She can go home now. And the mother took her home. She said she never needs to come back to hospital. She hasn’t and she’s three now. This is when she was a little baby, just born, this was. She’s three now, and they showed you pictures of her running about and playing – unbelievable, you know. Anyway, we listen to things like that. It’s encouraging. And then… you done a bit of housework, this morning, didn’t you?

PA2 Oh, yes.

PA1 I got the lunch. I got the lunch this morning. This is a typical day. I got my lunch this morning… this afternoon, for lunchtime, and we had our lunch.

00:05:04

PA2 We try to eat in a slimming way.

PA1 Yes, we do today, yes. And we have two days a week slimming. Anyway, we try to, and then we got ready and came here. And then this afternoon, what we’ll do is go home. You’ve got to post a letter now, haven’t you?.

PA2 I’ve got one or two things to do.

PA1 In the town, yes. And we go home, and basically…

PA2 Perhaps do some housework or the gardening.

PA1 Yes, the garden’s in a bit of a state because of summer and everything’s grown. I’ve got to cut the back lawn sometime shortly. I cut the front one the other week, last week. The thing is, we sort of basically chill out, so kind of [unclear]. Actually, I watch the telly and she usually falls asleep; so do I. You know, basically, that’s it. And we get ready for dinner tonight and our oldest son comes home, and he goes into the garage because he’s got a running machine there. He runs on his treadmill, doesn’t he, quite a lot in the week – not every night – and he’s got a girlfriend in Brighton.

00:06:26

PA2 We see him rarely.

PA1 Basically now, over the weekend we never see him. He’s always around her flat, you know? He stays there… well, sleeps there, whatever, and we hardly see him except when he comes out with us to Southampton [?] to see our youngest son with a new baby, and this Saturday, we plan to go, don’t we? And basically, he might come in the house tonight and watch the telly with us. I don’t know what he’s going to do, but when he comes home, he’s on his mobile up, whatever he does. He talks to his girlfriend on it, and he texts people a lot, doesn’t he? You text as well, don’t you?

PA2 Yes.

PA1 I don’t. She does; she texts on her mobile phone. And basically, that’s our normal day in a week. But yesterday, we went… we will go to the marina now and have lunch in the midday.

PA2 We went to church.

PA1 In the morning, and we go basically after that. We come home, go out to the marina, and we go for lunch there, Wetherspoons. We always go every Sunday, but we go as a group. But the guy and… Max, he’s in Wales at the moment. He’s got a property in Wales in Swansea that he’s trying to let, and he’s been there nearly two weeks now, hasn’t he? This is the second week. He’s coming home this Friday.

IV These are friends…

00:07:55

PA1 Friends of ours, very good friends.

PA2 Friends. We meet together. We meet on the weekends, as well.

PA1 And we usually go out to Wetherspoons with him, but the last few weeks we’ve been going on our own. Our oldest son joined us last week, didn’t he?

PA2 We do, yes.

PA1 No, two weeks ago, he joined us, and that’s what we usually do on Sunday. Then we come home, chill out, go to sleep in the afternoon and watch the telly at night.

PA2 The television is a marvellous sleeping pill, darling.

00:08:29

IV So, your interactions with other people, it remains around your family, your friends?

PA2 Yes, around our family.

PA1 Yes, very much right now, family. Our youngest son has moved to Shoeburyness outside Southend with his new wife and his new baby.

PA2 New wife.

PA1 His baby – he’s only got one child – is Joshua, and we… Of course, our sons were living with us for quite a while. We’ve got a very close family thing, you know, a bond, which is good, and as I say, our oldest son is still home, but we don’t see him on the weekends at all, do we? We met on Sunday afternoon in Brighton for coffee because he had been out with some of his work friends for lunch in Brighton, and he joined us in the afternoon for coffee.

PA2 We went to the Brighton Heritage thing going on, and the museum and art gallery, and that was lovely. There was a chap on the piano, and we went around the museum for a while. That was nice.

IV Is it all right to ask you questions about community, which you’ve already started talking about?

00:09:40

PA1 Yes, yes.

PA2 Yes. If you want to ask me any questions, you can do, or just Roy – it’s up to you.

IV Is it all right just to focus on Roy at the moment, but we can always… if you wanted to be involved, we could have…

PA2 No, no, no, I don’t want to interfere.

IV No, no, it’s good that you’re here. I was going to ask what community means to you, which is quite a big question, really; if there are any particular thoughts that spring to mind?

PA1 Community. I think basically, trying to get to know people and basically get in touch with people. We go Fridays, midday, well just before midday, we go on a walk from the [overtalking] and people join us, and we chat and we walk around, don’t we, and it’s usually walks around Newhaven, and we get to know people like that, and we met a lady on the walk named Fran. But she hasn’t phoned us for a while, I phoned her this morning, left a message, no contact, but…

00:10:49

IV It’s all organised, so you agree to meet up.

PA2 Right.

PA1 Bu she’s been to our place for meals. We’ve been to her place for meals. We’ve made a sort of a friend with her, and other people we’ve been… Jackie, who leads a quiz time after we come back from the walk. We’ve been to her house for meals and that, haven’t we?

PA2 We’ve been to somebody else’s house, too.

PA1 Yes, somebody else’s house.

PA2 We would have them at our house, but we’ve got steps up the front. Some of them are a bit… have problems.

PA1 Yes, we live in a split-level bungalow, you see. That’s the trouble.

PA2 Then, on Tuesday, do you want to tell what we do Tuesday? In the afternoon?

00:11:31

PA1 Yes, we come here Tuesday afternoon, which is mostly people from Newhaven, and some come from Peacehaven and Telscombe Cliffs. We have an art class here Tuesday afternoon. It’s the room… you go out the café, go down that corridor, there’s a door opposite, and we go in that room there and from 2:00 to 4:00 tomorrow afternoon we do an art class, don’t we, and there’s no tuition, but this lady comes over and gives us pointers. She’s a good artist, she is. She gives people pointers, but it’s nothing pressurised. It’s free and easy.

PA2 We go off on… we went on a wonderful trip. Two trips.

PA1 Two trips.

PA2 Lovely trips.

PA1 We went to London near the Shard Building… that flipping… what’s it called?

PA2 The Shard.

IV The Shard.

00:12:32

PA2 The Gherkin.

PA1 The Gherkin. The whole day we went, and we went to Association for All Artists thing, and there’s lots of exhibitions, people sat down with people who’ve been on the telly. We’d recognise them on the telly on art channels – not normal channels, but on other channels, on special channels, art channels. We’ve done Norman Knights with one, didn’t we? We’ve done the London Lighthouse with them. But they’re good. You get pointers, and there’s loads of stuff to buy there. There was a… it’s sociable. We went with our art group here, and we enjoyed it, didn’t we?

PA2 Absolutely.

PA1 We enjoyed it. It’s a good day out.

IV That’s a sense of community there.

PA1 Very much, isn’t it, very much. We’ve made friends with quite a few people there.

PA2 We have. We’ve made friends.

PA1 As I say, some of the people there from spring [?] used to go there. She doesn’t go there now. She’s been to our house for meals; we’ve been to her house for meals. There are two ladies, one from Eastbourne… the one from Eastbourne comes here. She was living in Seaford, but she moved to Eastbourne, Jenny, and there’s another friend who lives in Telscombe Cliffs. She comes to these art classes, as well, and they’ve been over our place for meals, haven’t they, and we’ve made friends with them, haven’t we? But basically, everybody in that group are lovely people. They’re nice people.

00:13:54

PA2 Lovely. But then there’s another activity. We’ve been on to this Love Newhaven thing.

PA1 Yes, we have Love Newhaven, that’s right. There’s a place here called the Breakout Centre and Angela, you volunteered. She volunteers once a week, Wednesday morning, to donate for the down and outs and things, you know, for people who are maybe some live in the streets and stuff – not all of them, but some of them got a lot of problems.

PA2 I’m mentioning that about the Love Newhaven not anything to do with us saying, well, don’t we do… what we’re doing is great. It’s just a marvellous social activity. You’ve got people joining together to see what they can do for the town, to try to give the town an uplift, also to introduce them to faith and God, which is great. We do it not that often because of people working because they’ve got commitments, but when it’s separate we did it last time, and there’s a French market, then there was a fish festival, things like that. People get together and do things like that, which is great.

00:15:07

PA1 We’ve got a bloke here, his name is John Lawson. He goes all over the world, and he used to be one of the Rolling Stones’ bodyguards years ago – tough guy, tough guy. He used to go around and threaten people for… extortionist for money. People used to hire him as a heavy man to go and threaten people to get money from them for gangsters. They used to hire him, pay him to get money, their money, from these people who wouldn’t pay up. He used a lot of violence. Anyway, he’s a Christian now. He’s a lovely guy, isn’t he, a lovely guy. He goes all around the world now, and he witnesses for Jesus. And he’s witnessed 18 million people since he’s been doing it in prisons all over the world for Christ, and a lot have come to Christ, so he’s amazing. And this guy gives a lot of encouragement to us, and he heads up… when we have a fish market, or the other week we had a French market here, and we had a stall and he was there, and we were witnessing with him, weren’t we, for Jesus, telling people about Jesus and stuff, you know? That’s what we do. That’s what we did two Saturdays ago. This guy was a real tough guy. Now he’s a lovely fellow, isn’t he? He’s a lovely person. He’s completely changed.

IV In the area where you live now, do you ever have conversations with people that you don’t know very well?

PA2 We do, really, yes. We always… whenever there’s a chance, do you, to chat.

PA1 No, I don’t. Hopefully not now.

00:16:52

PA2 One of the things… I’m going to interrupt only for this reason. The neighbours, we’ve got lovely neighbours, but we all respect each other’s privacy and space. You do, don’t you? But we never miss an opportunity. When they want to talk to us, we do. We involve them in our lives as much as we feel they want to and the same with us because we respect them and their need for privacy. The same… you feel probably… whatever you do, you feel the same, don’t you?

IV It’s that balance; it’s keeping a balance.

PA1 Actually, the person living on the right to us, looking at our front door on the right to us next door, she used to be my youngest son’s piano tutor years and years ago. She still does piano teaching in her house.

PA2 She says, I remember Andrew so well. He was the one who was always late.

IV How does that feel to have people that you already know sort of established in the street where you live?

00:17:59

PA2 It’s very, very good. It’s very good, but you’ve got to keep a balance. Very careful with neighbours. Not only that… sorry, [unclear]. Maybe I’ve got this intuition, I don’t know, with… because I’ve spent more time at home than Roy because he’s worked. You don’t establish relationships with neighbours when you’re working all the time. But I learned over the years that if you make a particular friend of one neighbour, that could cause resentment amongst the rest. Do you see what I’m saying? So we try and be nice to everyone, see, because then you don’t cause any… You know, maybe I’m a little bit too thoughtful. I don’t know. So you don’t make people feel left out. It’s difficult with neighbours, you know. It can be.

IV It becomes… It’s not that your neighbours are particularly… They fit well together.

PA2 That’s right, we do at the moment.

IV Do you think the experience of community has changed during your lifetime?

00:19:07

PA1 Yes, I do, because when I was younger, when I was a teenager, the people in families used to live more close together, but now they seem to have spread out away. Like, our youngest son, he’s moved where his wife’s side of the family are based in Shoeburyness, about a mile and a half outside Southend. These people in so many cases of families, their children have moved away. We hear a lot of cases where their children have moved far more away than… they moved to other parts of the world and the other side into Scotland or Newcastle, a lot further away than our son’s moved, but it’s… in a way, I don’t think it’s a good thing because when I was young, my gran and granddad used to be just down the road. I used to spend a lot of time in their place, as well as my house where I lived, and there was a sense… My uncles and aunties used to come around and I used to love it, you know. It was very personal, a very personal thing in families.

IV So community in that sense was more family based.

PA2 Absolutely.

PA1 I think so.

IV But you were talking more about neighbours as being your community.

PA2 Yes, that’s right.

IV Is that perhaps some way in which it’s changed?

00:20:46

PA2 Regarding my own, if you looked on the map where I was born, in Derby, you’ve got my… it was very poor. People were very poor just after the war, and you’ve got my grandma and granddad, if you looked on the map of where they lived, it’s like a spider’s web. All their children lived around them, streets around. They were always there for one another, but things have changed completely through road transport. I’m sure that people have said this to you. You know that. It’s not always a good thing, is it?

IV It’s a common… has come up. Would you say it’s a bad… I don’t know if bad’s the right word.

PA2 Sad, because when you’re in crisis, never mind about us at our age, you’ve got, say, a young mum who’s had a baby. She wants the support. There’s nobody because her husband’s gone the other end of the country from her family. I know that from when I had my children. We lived in Worthing. That wasn’t far away. We had the car at the time, but that felt isolated. But in, say, 50 years ago, you were not isolated. You had your family around you. And in other countries, they are still very family oriented.

PA1 Especially Italy.

00:22:05

PA2 Yes, so that is, I think… I think there’s more negativity attached to what’s happening today. When you’re young, you don’t care about that, but as you get older, and especially when you develop a family, and then the realities of the need of support, that’s when it hits you, really. That’s what I think, anyway.

IV And you feel the same?

PA1 Yes, I do.

IV Going on to the social relationships – there’s four, I think, altogether, who would you say are the most important people in your life at the moment, and if you could give a bit of details where they are. I know you’ve alluded already to members of your family, for example.

PA1 My wife, my two sons, and the new baby now, and his wife, you know, at the moment. Actually, my oldest son has got a girlfriend. She’s in Brighton. We don’t really see a lot of her, do we? She never tends… she’s been over to our place a few times, but she doesn’t tend to come over to our… Matthew tends to go over to her place more.

PA2 She left home very early. Her mother died three years ago, so she’s a very independent sort of girl at the moment. She may change. But also, our oldest son has got a child…

00:23:34

PA1 In Seaford.

PA2 … in Seaford. There’s no hope [?] for… It just happened. Who knows? We might be able to develop a sort of relationship with that little boy. He’s a very endearing little chap…

PA1 He’s three now.

PA2 … but it depends entirely on the mother who has now got a partner, living with someone else, so we don’t know about that. We don’t know. We’re not… We keep ourselves detached from it because that could be an area [unclear], so we have to be careful about that.

IV And then you’ve spoken about friends and things.

00:24:16

PA2 We’ve got friends, yes, we have people in our lives, but, yes, we’ve got, actually, quite a well-balanced life in that way. We love one another’s company, so we don’t crave to keep going out all the time, you know. I think if you’re not fulfilled within yourselves, then you do. You want to keep going out all the time, but then you do see the need, well, if you got each other all the time, it could be boring. So we’ve got a good mixture of friends and, you know, we meet with them, and they… As somebody said to us, I think it’s our climate that keeps us from… How much more have we socialised this year in the summer because of the climate? See now, we’re much more… what’s the word… insular from other countries. Our television, as somebody said, is absolutely top notch compared to France and Italy because they don’t do television much. They sit around the table talking. See, they don’t depend on TV like we do because they’re not shut in with our weather all day. I think that’s got a lot to do with it.

IV So with regard to the most important people in your life, what is it about these relationships that make them so important? You were saying about your son’s partner… you’ve mentioned her, but then said that there were difficulties with her coming over this way. So she’s one of the important people, as well.

PA1 Yes, she’s been out with us a few times to Southend. The only time we’ve seen our grandchild…

PA2 You mean our oldest son, the one who’s got the girlfriend?

PA1 No, his girlfriend, yes. She came with us the first and only time at the moment we’d seen our grandchild, our new grandchild. She came with us and she was holding him, as well, wasn’t he.

PA2 She was very enchanted with him, yes.

00:26:28

PA1 And she seems to, in a way, she has a good job. What does she do?

PA2 She’s a kind of clinical psychologist nurse. She’s involved in mental health. She works at a doctor’s surgery. She has cases. She handles people who have mental health issues, and she has been a nurse in that way, a mental health nurse, as well. I’m not quite sure what she does, but she sees people by appointment. Her caseload, workload is enormous at the moment.

PA1 She’s got quite a busy job, and she seems to be a bit, like, as if she’s sometimes not here. She seems to be sort of, like, a bit vague and on another planet sometimes. She seems a bit out of it sometimes, the way she acts, just the way she acts.

PA2 Because of her lifestyle, that’s the way she is. I’m going to say this not because I’m being nice. She’s a very, very nice girl, very sincere, not stuck up, not pretentious in any way at all, but she’s not a homely girl. She left home many years ago, and she’s been to Uni, she’s been to a kibbutz in Israel, did she? She’s done all sorts of stuff with Y1, youth with a mission in Brazil. So she’s really been around.

PA1 She’s a Christian, as well.

00:27:58

PA2 She’s a lovely Christian girl. So how can a person like that be domesticated very much? Not really.

PA1 She has her own flat in Brighton, but she seems sometimes not so warm as… doesn’t she? She seems not so warm sometimes. Sometimes she feel a bit cold.

IV I’m just interested only in the sense that you mentioned family as very important to you, and then your son’s girlfriend, so I was wondering that that’s quite a nice thing to say, really.

PA2 Yes, she’s nice.

PA1 Yes, she’s okay. She’s probably coming with us this weekend, too, to Southend possibly.

PA2 What you see is what you get with her. She’s not pretentious.

IV Is there anything in terms of the important people in your life, in terms of your friends, are there meaningful conversations that you have, there are connections there. So your church group, perhaps, you’ve got a shared interest. Do you meet up on that basis?

00:29:07

PA2 Absolutely, we do. We meet up on that basis, but we have… I’m taking over and you shouldn’t let me, really, but I do a lot of the talking and he just[unclear] which is wrong, but we have a lot of other interests, as well, all sorts of stuff. We’ve got the friend who we haven’t seen for a fortnight. He’s lovely. He loves to research all sorts of what’s going on in the world regarding conspiracies, all sorts of what’s going on in the high-ups, how we’re being taken for a ride and all sorts of stuff. Oh, boy, you know? And it’s very… he’s into that and he tells us this stuff. It’s very interesting about what is going on, for instance, in the royal family, you know. Oh, dear.

PA1 About Freemasonry.

PA2 Oh, dear, dear, dear, the Freemasonry.

PA1 It’s a cult, very involved in the royal family.

PA2 It’s how they’re all synced in all of this stuff. It’s a huge, great club that they belong to.

PA1 The queen, especially.

00:30:20

PA2 And, you know, if it’s true, they have to adhere to certain things. The royal family have to adhere to certain things. Otherwise, it would collapse like a pack of cards. This is what he’s been saying to us because they… unless… they have such power, these people who are… power beyond our royal family, beyond everything, like a kind of controlling… like a Mafia organisation, only plus, plus, plus, plus, plus. They could harm the royal family enormously. So they have to adhere to certain conditions. I’ve listened to this from other sources. You and I should thank God a few thousand times we’re just ordinary, we were just born into an ordinary family. When you think about what could happen to them, kidnapped, all sorts. Isn’t it great that we’re just ordinary, you know? So that’s what he tells us.

PA1 Lots of stuff he tells us.

PA2 Lots of stuff, yes. He’s very interested in that, yes.

IV How do you think the nature of your relationships has changed during your lifetime?

PA1 Us two?

IV Well, you, yes, what do you think? Have relationships changed during your lifetime?

00:31:43

PA1 They can alter. They can alter. Relationships with yourself and with other people, they can alter because I think in a lot of cases, we’re always sort of, like, changing in a way. We never… sometimes we think, that’s right, in that way, but another time we’ll have a different angle on it, and we won’t think the same, what we did before about the thing we thought of before being right. We might now… we probably have another angle on it and say that was right and that was wrong, you know, and we change like that, I think, in our views. I think our views change a lot. Mine does. My views change a lot. They alter. My views alter.

PA2 You know, certain things you learn only through life experiences over years and how people can… people you put your faith and trust in can let you down.

PA1 Yes, we’ve been let down a lot, haven’t we?

PA2 Let down a lot, people we trusted, and, you know, your attitudes do change and hopefully, not for the worst, but for the better in not putting all your trust in something which is, you know, we’ve learned lessons about that, all sorts of stuff.

00:33:17

PA1 I think once bitten, twice shy.

PA2 That’s right. There are many people out there who are out to pull the wool over your eyes, sometimes even in the Christian world, because quite simply, they can… people think, oh, great, you know, they’re a right load of mugs, you know, you learn, and that’s good to learn that.

PA1 See, what we find is we come up against sometimes there are personalities that dominate, and…

IV Is that within a social sort of way?

PA1 It can be, yes. It has happened to us before, hasn’t it? But the people we know and associate with now, they’re not like that. They’re great, you know, easygoing, sort of like easygoing like us. We trust that we’re easygoing and in the past, we’ve come up against people that their personalities dominate and they take over. They can’t help it. That’s just the way they’re made, but we tend to stay clear of people like that, don’t we?

PA2 But the lesson from that is you see how they affect people, people who are dominant, try to dominate with a dominant personality, and you see how people shy away from them, including us, the one thing you want to do is think, well, I don’t want to be like that because, you know, the last thing you want to do is have people to reject you because even though we’re not perfect, not at all, and you see how dominance can affect people, then you don’t want to be like that yourself. Do you see what I mean? So we have come across that, and it’s hurt us in the past. It’s very hurtful. People, as someone said to us, people who feel they’ve got to dominate – for instance, a person who likes to dominate women – it’s because something’s happened to them in their past. Maybe they’ve had a dominant mother or something like that. There’s always a reason why people do those things.

00:35:28

IV So you think the nature of relationships has changed or do you think it’s always been that way?

PA1 I think it’s probably always been that way.

PA2 Always been that way.

PA1 I think so, yes, yes.

PA2 I think that what is good today is that things are coming out of the woodwork. It’s been now longer [overtalking] child abuse.

PA1 It’s been exposed, which is good.

00:35:57

PA2 We know, we absolutely believe and know that child abuse was just as rampant in the old days as it is now, but it was kept under wraps. Children were not to be seen, not to be heard. We know that there’ve been cases in our own age group, so that is excellent that people are much more free and there’s not the prejudice toward unmarried mother, they’ve gone to the other extreme now. So that is good that we live in a more open society now, which is good.

PA1 That’s right.

IV If you wanted to make new friends, how would you go… what would you do?

PA1 We’d probably go to some, like, meeting place or something where we’d enjoy going and start taking to people, you know, that sort of thing. That’s what we do. We wouldn’t go out in the streetlights of Brighton or to Eastbourne or somewhere or to Hastings. We wouldn’t go out and start talking in the streets. It might be inappropriate, because it’s quite hard doing it like that, but where everybody meets in a social environment where there’s people go there, that’ve got more or less the same sort of interest or, you know, having a good time or whatever it is, that, you know, that’s the sort of social environment is just start talking to people and get to know people, I think.

IV So it would be, like, a local place.

PA1 It doesn’t necessarily have to be. It could be, like, you know, in Brighton or Eastport or something like that, you know.

00:37:38

PA2 And also… do you mind me interrupting like this?

IV Go on.

PA2 I was just simply to… well, the old saying is if you want a friend, be a friend, and learning from the examples of others who say, come on and see me. Come and have coffee. When are you going to come out? That is how we make friends, and I do the same when I’m not too tired, when we’re not too tired. But you do, to me, if you want to make friends, you’ve got to put yourself out. Otherwise, it just remains an acquaintance, really. Do you see what I’m saying?

IV Yes. I was going to move into technology and communications along the same, similar sorts of lines. These are questions about the part that technology plays in supporting a social life. What technologies do you use to keep in contact with other people?

00:38:33

PA1 Well, you might find it hard to believe, but that first email I sent you was the first one I’ve ever sent to you. You got it, didn’t you, because it said on the screen, sent. So I know it went.

IV I think I replied to you, as well.

PA1 You did. I read that. You said, okay, today, here at one o’clock, but that is the first one I’ve ever sent.

IV Good. Thank you.

PA1 But that is… I think it’s easier on the phone. It’s quicker on the phone. Then again, you’ve got an answering machine. Well, we have on our phone, we have got an answering just as you probably have. You’re not always in, but on a computer you won’t be always in, so the two, I think… phone, computer, I mean, you’ve got more to muck about on the computer, you’ve got to turn it on. You’ve got to get the little arrow out and click, click, on wherever you’re, you know, to get into it. Then you’ve got to wait a bit. Then you’ve got to wait till it comes up on the screen, blah, blah, blah, and that’s it. And you go to favourites and you get email. You know, it takes a little while, but it might be probably quicker on the phone. It’s like, da, da, da, da, da, hello, you know.

IV So that’s how you would normally communicate with…

PA1 One the phone, normally.

IV … with friends and family.

00:40:01

PA1 On the phone, normally.

PA2 We’re not in your age group, darling.

IV No, that’s okay, but it’s just trying to find…

PA2 People we know, they do the same. I do texting when I feel I have to, but it’s the same. I use the mobile, but…

PA1 It’s cheaper than phoning on mobiles, isn’t it? It comes cheaper.

PA2 The problem for us, as our son says, while you think of the computer as a chore, you’ve got to break through. Stop thinking of it as a chore. How do you not think of it as a chore?

IV So that’s how you normally keep in touch with close friends and family?

00:40:39

PA1 Mostly on the phone, but on Facebook now, because somebody in our class put me on the Facebook. She said this, that and the other. We’ve got pictures on there. We’ve got the wedding photograph along there like that. I’ve got pictures of you and me here on the end here, and it’s great, the page is great, but I don’t know how to get into it now. I get it on email. It comes up on email, and I was just on Facebook, people. I haven’t even answered them yet, you know, on email. Why should it come up on email?

IV It may just be that it’s linked in that way, so that every time you get new… someone’s updated something, it can email you, but I think you can turn that off in some way, so we can [overtalking], I can look. So do you think that might be some way, Facebook might be the next way to keep in touch?

PA1 Yes, I’ve got loads of people who are on, but I don’t know how to get onto them. .

PA2 What we’re going to have to do… I haven’t been on it for ages except when Roy was behind me, but we’re going to have to persevere so that we will be able, then, to get into the world of our young folk. See? This is what they do. They Facebook and sending emails all the time. This is what I’ve got to do.

PA1 We have a computer in the house, a personal computer.

PA2 Netbook.

PA1 No, [unclear], but it’s our oldest son’s, in his bedroom. It’s got a big screen on it here, and he’s got his keyboard there and he’s got his brains down here underneath. He’s got a computer [unclear], he says, you’ve got a proper computer. He hasn’t got a notebook or he hasn’t got a netbook or he hasn’t got a laptop. He’s just got his computer.

00:42:21

PA2 The netbook does everything apart from sending CDs and DVDs.

PA1 Yes, you can’t play CDs on it or DVDs on it. That’s the only thing you can’t do, but everything else you can.

PA2 So that’s what we do… well, that’s what Roy does.

PA1 Well, not always.

IV So, how do you maintain contact with people in the local area?

PA1 Well, mostly talk to them, don’t we? Face to face, we talk to people, don’t we? That’s how we do it.

PA2 And on the phone.

PA1 Not on the phone all the time, but mostly talking to people, you know, face to face.

00:42:56

IV If you meet somebody at a group, for example, so you have to obviously talk then.

PA2 That’s right, and then we say, perhaps we’ll phone you or whatever.

IV That builds into other ways of communicating after that initial meeting.

PA2 That’s right.

IV Right, okay. Could I ask you to walk me through yesterday or another typical day online?

PA1 Online?

IV Yes.

PA1 What do you mean, online?

IV So, think of a time recently that you went to your computer, a day that was typical for you. Walk me through what you did from switching it on to closing it down, and try to recount all the activities that you engaged in and the communications that you had with other, however mundane they may seem now.

00:43:47

PA1 The last few days, I’m trying to get on Facebook. I don’t know how to, and I can’t. I’ve tried different ways and it’s goofed up and I’ve turned the screen over, put it on again and try it again.

PA2 We’ll have to ask Matthew to do it.

PA1 The lady who set me up in the class, she showed me how to do it, but I’ve forgotten. But we have a home page. We’ve got our own page. We’ve got our own… on the Facebook. Is that where you receive your messages...

IV Yes, once you’ve signed in.

PA1 … somebody sends to us?

IV Yes, yes.

PA1 Yes, I don’t even know how to get onto other people’s Facebooks, you know, other people? I don’t even get on our own, so I’ve been trying, but it keeps goofing it up. I’ll get a bit annoyed with it – not annoyed, but frustrated a bit – and then I give up. Well, I don’t give up. I’ll try again and I’ll go, I’m not going to do it in case I goof the program up, you know. I don’t… you know. But email, I find it easy. Email’s all right. Sometimes you get all these adverts come up. It’s a nuisance. Sometimes I turn it off and go back to clicking in again and putting it on again to get rid of it, and sometimes it does and sometimes it’s still there. And after a while it goes away, the adverts, but I’ll get really annoyed. What are they doing there, you know? I’m trying to get into email. Like, AOL, we are, and when you’ve got [unclear] because all the adverts are there stuck across the screen.

00:45:41

IV So it’s just difficult to get from one screen to the other…

PA1 Sometimes.

IV … let alone having contacts with other people.

PA1 Yes, but sometimes when I got your message, the last time I tried it – this was yesterday afternoon, wasn’t it? I got on great, it was, and it went off again and I got it back and it was all right. Then I got your message about this afternoon, and I get all these annoying things on there, like actors and stuff, on your… right now… special offers and all this rubbish, but now I’ve got… the Facebook has taken over. The people sending emails, it’s taken over. There’s loads, everybody.

IV So who are these… are these people family?

00:46:30

PA1 There’s some local people here. There’s my oldest son’s girlfriend. She wants to be a friend. I told Matthew to tell her that I don’t know how to do it at the moment. Well, the lady set us up and other people want to be friends with us on it, and I thought I had to… you know, forget it, forget it. But I find the online is great for finding information. I find out a lot about different things in history and… well, especially the Battle of Waterloo and about the American war ships and stuff because they have the biggest fleet in the world, and they have the huge, massive aircraft carriers, and I love all that. I love looking at it, not because it’s massive and big and it’s great, you know. It just interests me. And their jet fighters they have on the aircraft carriers, you know, it’s mindboggling what they’ve got, what [unclear] they’ve got, it’s mindboggling.

I know these things are evil. I mean, they can kill people. They’re missiles and everything, the cruise missiles on the ships and that’s evil. And they’ve got heat seeking missiles where other planes can’t go and the heat seeks to the target. It’s unbelievable technology. And the star wars they’ve got in the atmosphere, the star wars. They’ve got star wars up here, not like Star Wars you see with the light sabres, but they’ve got missiles, deadly missiles in the atmosphere. They can press buttons and then come down there, that sort of thing. It’s just like information about it all, not because it’s… it’s just interesting. Not because it’s… I know it has to do with killing. That’s not good, but it’s interesting, that’s all. And certain people in history you look up and stuff like that, you know, it’s quite a lot of information, loads of information on it, and I find that interesting.

IV Is it something… Do you think community is something that can exist online?

00:48:55

PA1 Well, I wouldn’t say that. I would say basically, there’s nothing like personal contact. I mean, you’re on the screen. I mean, you talk to people on the screen. You get messages on the screen. It’s not like personal contact. It’s good. Our son in Southend sends us an email saying… or phones us up. It’s not the same as being there, shaking his hand and hugging him and having personal contact with people. It’s not the same. But it’s, I suppose, your friend in Barcombe, Molly, she lives on her computer because she lives on her own, and that is her world, basically, isn’t it?

PA2 The phone and the computer.

PA1 Internet. That is basically her world, but it isn’t basically our world, is it?

PA2 Not at all.

IV So it can exist; this sense of community can exist.

PA1 It can, but it’s not the same.

00:50:02

PA2 If there was a balance.

PA1 It’s not personal.

PA2 If… okay, you can communicate with your friends on Facebook, great, but then if it can be used to the positive, and that’s just saying, okay, guys, let’s meet up now. We’ve contacted one another. Nothing can take the place of personal contact.

IV So it fits together, so if you meet both online and in person.

PA2 Yes, that’s fine. You’ve got balance. But if you’re having an online relationship, like a pen pal, really, it’s not the same thing. You’re isolated. It’s kind of make-believe, really. It isn’t real.

PA1 That’s what it was years ago. It used to be pen pals, but now it’s on the internet now, isn’t it? They don’t have to do that anymore, do they?

IV I suppose. I’m not sure if it still… I’m sure it still exists, but…

PA1 Not so much. I think the computer’s taking over now, but mainly.

00:51:01

IV The next question is about social networking sites, and you’ve already mentioned Facebook, and the question is do you know what social networking sites are, like perhaps beyond Facebook? What do you think they’re for or how do you use them? I know you’ve already…

PA1 You’ve struck me big time.

IV But do you have a motivation to use Facebook in a particular way?

PA1 I wouldn’t mind using it, yes. I wouldn’t mind using it because you get pictures up as well on that, don’t you? I won’t mind using it, yes.

PA2 You certainly used… we’ve never bothered, and we’ve been forced into it, really, but once we’ve got into it, we’d probably be only too glad.

IV So it’s just this initial bit.

PA2 That’s right. It’s like being forced like we did climbing up Mount Caburn on a six-and-a-half mile walk. I thought, what am I doing this for? When we got up to the top, we were very glad we did it. It was fantastic. Same sort of thing, really.

IV Yes, so that would be in a sense, achievement.

00:52:28

PA2 That’s right. That’s it.

IV But then, having the opportunity to talk to family members in that way, is that the… that’s your encouragement?

PA2 That’s the encouragement. As long as it’s not the only way because there’s no way, as I’ve said, that the old way, the human way, of contacting personally, person to person, this computer should never, ever get rid of that – never. I don’t believe that is right. Nothing could take the place of human contact, togetherness, you know. I just don’t think… I’m tempted to ask, what do you think about that?

IV It’s good to get your opinions really, because there is no one opinion on how it all is, but it’s interesting to hear how you feel about it.

PA2 People who are shy… Thinking out loud like this, people who are shy say, oh, yes, I’ve got the computer. I can hide behind that. It’s going to make them more shy. It’s not going to break any ground with that, is it? Do you see what I’m saying?

IV It’s still… your words are still [overtalking] in terms of being shy.

00:53:46

PA1 What I’ve noticed around the streets, around when we go anywhere – well, not anywhere, but some places – there are these youngsters, all they’re doing… they’re not aware of anything around them, really, I can see. On their phones, tick, tick, tick, like that all day, texting or whatever, you know, texting – loads of people I’ve noticed like that. And they basically tend to be younger than older, and they’re basically not aware of anything around them, really.

PA2 It’s good if they are making appointments to see their pals so they can talk. That’s good.

PA1 Yes, but could that be, as Angela’s just said, that the computer, they’ll be doing it all the time, talking to the people on the computer, especially if they’ve got a webcam on it. They can see the people when they talk to them that way. When they go out into the environment, outside in the street, outside in the city or the town, would they be numb? Would they be shutting their mouths because they’ve been talking to people or contacting people on the phone, their mobile or the internet or on Facebook or whatever, on a webcam on their computer, would it make them withdraw more? Do you know what I mean? That’s what I was wondering.

IV I don’t know. I don’t know how it all fits together, really.

00:55:14

PA1 Could it be this would be the future, years and years and years to come, that people won’t be talking to anybody anymore? I don’t know.

PA2 I think maybe it’ll go full circle, that people will get so fed up with being isolated that they’ll decide to do something about it, start getting back together again.

PA1 You know, it’s a bit of a worry there.

IV Are there any questions that you were expecting me to ask that I haven’t, or anything else that you would like to add?

00:55:58

PA1 I can’t think of anything.

IV No?

PA1 No.

IV It’s been brilliant. Thank you so much for your time, both of you.

PA2 Sorry, I didn’t mean to… I thought I had something. It vibrated.